

***Travelling along the Enlightened road.  
A European journey through Polish quills***

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**Abstract**

Travel gave birth to Europe. This action and the different kind of journeys that followed are linked with our subcontinent's history and with our European civilisation. How have they come to our knowledge? Through their written legacy: their story told by other persons, their personal diaries or their memoirs, especially since the eighteenth century. Can we actually call these travellers Europeans, Easterners and Westerners, or would it be an anachronism? Hence, could it be said that in the late eighteenth century there might have been the germ of a European feeling, perception, or identity? To tackle this problématique, I analysed personal documents written by two Poles who travelled to England and Scotland in the second part of the century: the travel diary of Princess Izabela Czatoryska, and the memoirs of the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski. They both agree in some views (education, manners), while they sometimes notice or focus on different ones (gardens, industry/progress). This said, using analytic, comparative and gender approaches, and taking into account that the two of them were raised in an elite environment, there will be an attempt to verify the possibility of the existence of a European elite (or should we rather call it Enlight-ened?) identity *avant la lettre*, and to study whether the national identity was compatible with this transnational one.

## Travelling along the Enlightened road. A European journey through Polish quills

### 1. Foretravel

Travel gave birth to Europe. It was neither planned nor pleasant, but imposed by the rule of force: the kidnapping of a young mortal by a selfish god. This god might not have known what his action would mean for millennia. Yet now we do, as going back in time it is possible to see how journeys are linked to our subcontinent's history and with our European civilisation.

These journeys include those of the Phoenicians and Vikings, Romans and Greeks. Among them are foreign incursions, such as those of the Huns, the Mongols and the Arabs, as well as European military excursions abroad such as those of the Crusaders and *Conquistadores*. The movements inside Europe brought by economic or ideological violence cannot be forgotten either. Therefore, it can be said that Europe is a place constantly on the move. However, there many individual journeys are, whereas there are relatively few group movements, and their aim tends to differ. Some individual journeys are well-known, for instance, those starring Odysseus, a wanderer by the will of the gods, the merchant Marco Polo, or the adventurer and seeker of glory and new trade routes, Christopher Columbus. These, and many others, have come to our knowledge through their written legacy: their story told by others, their personal diaries or their memoirs.

The eighteenth century saw not only an increase in travel, but also an increase in its written testimony. Eastern and Western travellers have passed through the subcontinent facing the same problems, such as road insecurity, border crossings, accommodation, and so on. Nonetheless, could we designate these voyagers as *Eastern* and *Western*? It appears that the European perspective was different back then, in comparison to the current one, which seems to be the victim of the mental wall that the Cold War built and maintained through three European generations. The main goal of this thesis is to understand European self-representation, even its *identity*, if it can be already expressed. In order to understand if there was a considerable contrast in between Eastern/Central and Western populations, I have analysed the documents of two Polish persons who travelled to Britain in the second part of the century: the travel diary of Princess Izabela Czartoryska and the memoirs of the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski. They both

agree on some points, on others they either disagree or simply do not notice the same things. Hence, the question arises, could there have been the germ of a European feeling, perception, or *identity* in the late eighteenth century?

## 2. An enlightened suitcase

### 2.1. Travel and Travellers

*Let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about.*  
(Orwell 264)

Peter Rietbergen suggests that *travel* is nothing but a cultural exchange (Rietbergen 306-307). He gives several examples and the ones that fit better in our study are the spreading of knowledge and ideas throughout the sub-continent and the increase of cosmopolitan culture, which brought the elites of different countries closer to each other while separating them from the rest of their compatriots. Furthermore, he highlights that from the sixteenth century onwards, largely due to the invention of printing, Europe became more complex in cultural terms, which means that it might have been, or at least begun, developing into a deeper and stronger cultural entity.

Let us now dwell on the main character of these travels: the traveller her/himself. Indeed, the few people that could travel frequently and, hence, experienced actual cultural exchanges, were the elites. The purposes of their journeys can be divided in three categories: the *business* trip, the *diplomatic* trip, and the *educational* trip (Rietbergen 310-324)<sup>1</sup>.

Merchants and bankers were the professionals that mostly undertook the first kind of trip. This was the result of the opening of new trade routes from the fifteenth, and especially from the sixteenth, century. The first were mainly Portuguese and Spanish expeditions. To make these journeys easier, the number of published travel guides with useful information began to rise. There were around 1000 such publications between 1500 and 1600.

The second type of journey, the diplomatic trip, was undertaken primarily by ambassadors and politicians because, owing to the increasing complexity and scope of early modern states, more contacts were necessary between the different European courts. One of the first kings to realise this was Ferdinand II of Aragon who, following the Republic of Venice, established the precursor to modern permanent embassies (Martínez 154). These needed a diplomatic corps which was ultimately formed by the country's elite. Therefore, it became a sort of obligation for the elite's youth to complement their studies with a training abroad at one of these destinations. Let us take a cul-

<sup>1</sup> This division is certainly adapted to the travellers to be studied in this article. There are, indeed, other kinds of trips such as pleasure, religious or exploratory ones.

tural example of the importance of this kind of travel. European cultural pre-eminence was assumed by Italy and Spain until the late seventeenth century when the Hispanic Monarchy started declining and that of France under Louis XIV soared. The Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt (1713-1714), gave the final *coup de grâce* and France superseded Spain. This new French style (language, manners) was spread across the continent by means of embassies and diplomatic missions.

Finally, there was the kind of trip that was supposed to enlighten and form young European elites, a voyage that was strongly supported by Erasmus of Rotterdam, who defended in one of his writings the importance of studying abroad (Rietbergen 318): the educational trip. Similar to the previous kind of journey, the aim of this one was relatively broad; to form and develop European culture at an individual level by participating in it and experiencing it. This was to be accomplished by sending the elite of European youth abroad to complete their education in the best places to do so, such as Bologna, Paris or Salamanca. This sort of academic ritual ended up being labelled *peregrinatio academica* (Rietbergen 306-307). In a later variant, it became the famous (or infamous) *Grand Tour* experienced by English youth (Langford 25, Black 7). In this way, culture continued travelling across the subcontinent and facilitated a European convergence in architecture (baroque, rococo), painting, and even gardening. This did not necessarily mean that national styles were erased, but rather that there was a common base upon which every region or nation would add its own character.

Nonetheless, it is also important to consider that borders (especially in the eighteenth century) were not always as easy to cross as they tend to be nowadays in Europe. For instance, Philip II of Spain decided to close his borders as a *cordon sanitaire* to avoid Protestant influence in his Catholic territories. Hence, there was a period of preparation before the trip (Rietbergen 324-326). As it is the case today, official documents were extremely important: passports, letters of recommendation or introduction (Czartoryska 13-15)<sup>2</sup>, and bills of exchange were the basic requirements. Apart from the official part, there was also the practical aspect: travel literature was often useful to know which roads to take, which inns to stay in for the night, what to visit, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> It is not unusual to read of travellers not admitted in some places for not having such letters, as it happened to Izabela and her son in Lancaster.

## 2.2. Sources and Methodology

History, as a branch of Humanities, is composed of people; their actions and experiences only enrich it further. But, who are they? The answer is all of us, without any kind of distinction. This is why studying history is a thrilling profession because it enables dialogue between eras and different people thanks to documents preserved in the archives and libraries of the world. Official documents tend not to be personal at all, so it is difficult for Historians to use them to learn about actual people. Thus, to get as close as possible to them, we should use more personal documents, two of which have been chosen for this essay. One is a diary written by Izabela Czartoryska while travelling around England and Scotland in 1790, and the other is the memoirs of the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski (which he began to write in 1771) (Poniatowski 26).

A *diary*, derived from the Latin word “dies, diei”, which means “day”, is a notebook here a person records his/her daily experiences (Merriam-Webster). It is meant to be a personal log, closed to outsiders in which the writer tends to express himself/herself openly. In this paper, we study a specific kind of diary, a *travel diary*, which is a diary kept during a journey. Although, as this definition is quite broad and vague, we are going to use the one suggested by David Chirico:

A non-fictional first-person prose narrative describing a person's travel(s) and the spaces passed through or visited, which is ordered in accordance with, and whose plot is determined by, the order of the narrator's act of travelling (39).

Per contra, a *memoir* is destined to be read by others. Indeed, derived from the French “*mémoire*”, which means “memory”, it is a ‘written account in which someone (such as a famous performer or politician) describes past experiences’ (Merriam-Webster). It can be, for instance, a way of defending or explaining to him/herself past actions that could have been controversial.

Nevertheless, these sources have their own limitations for a historical approach as, I believe, all microhistorical studies do. Therefore, we must be extremely careful and follow the strictest possible methodology to be as faithful as possible to reality and to history. Two points of view are not enough to make generalization, even though both belong to the same class (the Polish aristocratic elite). The European elite tended to be more homogeneous than the society within one nation (Pagden 40). However, as both travelled within four decades of each other to some of the same places, we can analyse and compare them.

### 3. The Princess and the (future) King

#### 3.1. Historical and personal surroundings

A brief and simplified overview of the eighteenth-century Polish political situation, as well as Izabela Czartoryska and Stanisław August Poniatowski's biographies are needed to place our main characters in context<sup>3</sup>.

##### 3.1.1. Historical view

The united Republic or Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania was born in the Treaty of Lublin in 1569. Since then, and apart from certain exceptions (*election viritim*, Władysław Jagiełło, *electio regis libera*), the King was elected, which also meant that he was strongly controlled by his electors, the nobles, whose delegates sat in the Commonwealth's parliament - the *Sejm* (Davies 296-297). Furthermore, this nobility, or *szlachta*, was the most numerous in Europe; although the proportion of the population has since been revised down from about ten percent to about seven percent, it was still much larger than the French nobility, for example. Hence, while their internal political power was increasing, so was their power over their peasants<sup>4</sup>. This situation was maintained until the nineteenth century (Frost 183-222).

In the seventeenth century, the political situation started to deteriorate, especially with the use of the *liberum veto* which made it possible for just one of the nobles in the *Sejm* to veto any of the propositions brought up by the King. This brought not only paralysis to the country's legislature, but also foreign interference and bribery. As the years passed, the situation worsened: after the decisive victory of Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava (1709), the *Rzeczpospolita* gradually became a Russian protectorate, reaching its peak in the election of Stanisław Leszczyński as new king in 1733. Russia did not agree with this election and drove him out, pushing through of Saxony as King August III. Nonetheless, the 'legitimate' king still had some indirect influence in the country. As he left Poland for France<sup>5</sup>, where he became well versed in the Enlightenment and even 'inspired numerous disciples and admirers, among them [...] and the last Polish king, Stanisław-August, who

<sup>3</sup> For further information, the works of E. Rostworowski, J. Łojek, A. Zahorski, Z. Gołębiewska, A. Aleksandrowicz, among others are highly recommended.

<sup>4</sup> This has been coined by some historians as the "Second Serfdom", which would have started in 1496 in Poland due to an agreement between the *szlachta* and the king. However, newer works question this theory.

<sup>5</sup> He became the last Duke of Lorraine. If someone walks around Nancy, capital of the Duchy, nowadays he/she is able to still see the importance of this enlightened character for the Duchy.

carefully nurtured the ideals of science, constitutional government, secular education, and economic improvement' (Davies 304-307).

Who was this *last Polish king*, what were his projects and vision for Poland? We shall briefly examine his reign in the next section.

### 3.1.2. Biographies

#### Stanisław August Poniatowski

Stanisław Antoni was born at the beginning of 1732 in Wołczyn (now in Belarus). He soon experienced the consequences of factional politics, having been kidnapped (for the first but not the last time) by some of his father's opponents when he was only one-year old. His parents, Stanisław Poniatowski and Konstancja née Czartoryska gave him his education and a position in one of the most important Polish noble families, which was also on good terms with Russia.

His father, Stanisław Poniatowski, an important Polish diplomat, seeing that his son had the vocation to follow him as a politician or diplomat, gave him an education consistent with this career, for instance, sending him abroad<sup>6</sup>. Thus, when he was eighteen years old, Stanisław Antoni begun his European tours, using his father's network of contacts, visiting places as Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and London. It was precisely this last journey which impressed him the most and turned him into an Anglophile for the rest of his life (Poniatowski 11). During his journeys, he was able to consolidate and enlarge his father's network, adding acquaintances and friends that he made himself, for example, the future tsaritsa Catherine.

After the death of king August III, and as was customary during each interregnum, all noblemen were entitled to turn up to vote at the Sejm to arrange the election of the next king. Stanisław Antoni Poniatowski had everything in his favour. Although a junior member of the Czartoryski family, he was not rich in his own right, but as Catherine II already knew him, she supported his candidature. That proved decisive (Davies 308). On 25 November 1764, he was crowned as Stanisław II August (Poniatowski 12-14, Hupchnick and Cox map 29).

The new king of Poland wanted to implement different reforms that would improve the country's situation and turn it into a "modern European state, with an effective government" (Poniatowski 14)<sup>7</sup>. He proposed, for in-

<sup>6</sup> Even though, as we have already seen in the second part of this theses, this was not that strange as many European elites' children were sent abroad to be better formed.

<sup>7</sup> 'État européen moderne, gouverné avec efficacité', own translation.



stance, changes in the *liberum veto* in order to put an end to the paralysis of the political situation (a reform initially supported by the Czartoryski family). As could be expected, he confronted adverse circumstances and many of his enemies combined in the Confederation of Bar (1768). This league of nobles, which formed in defence of 'faith and freedom', portrayed him as a cosmopolitan, Anglophile, "European", not a proper Pole or Catholic, and thus against his country. He was again abducted, which only brought him the sympathies of other kingdoms when, and without wanting to fall into the teleology trap, they should have seen this as a first warning. It is probably in this period that he started writing or, at least, conceived the idea of writing his memoirs (Poniatowski 26). In the end, this delicate situation was resolved by the First Partition of Poland in 1772, with the participation of Austria and Prussia, and the empowering of the Russian ambassador to supervise the re-ordering of the remaining two thirds of the Commonwealth.

In this tough situation, Stanisław August decided that if he could not rule his state, he would at least run it. One of his distinguished reforms was the establishment of the National Education Commission following the suppression of the Jesuits by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. The Commission reformed the educational system from elementary schools to universities. The king was convinced that education was the only way of empowering and improving a society (Poniatowski 19, Davies 310). On 3 May 1791, a new Constitution was proclaimed, the first written constitution in Europe. Poniatowski was, ultimately, one of the children of the Enlightenment. These reforms continued until 1792, when Russia finished its wars abroad and invaded Poland-Lithuania. The counter-revolutionary Confederation of Targowica was formed with Russian support. Then came the Second Partition of Poland in 1793 and the Third Partition in 1795, leading to the abdication of King Stanisław August who finished his days without fulfilling all of his dreams for a country that no longer existed, and in the foreign country that had once supported him but ended up manipulating him (Poniatowski 21-23).

### **Izabela Czartoryska née Flemming**

Princess Izabela Czartoryska was born on 3 March 1746, of a matrimonial covenant between Johann Georg Detlev Graf von Flemming (a Pomeranian, and a minister of King August III) and Antonina Czartoryska (member of the important noble family), in the same place as her cousin Stanisław August (Whelan 32). Was this coincidence any kind of fate? It is not possible to know; however, it can be said that she and Stanisław August would come to agree in educational matters. As her mother died after giving birth to her,



her father let the Czartoryski family raise her, so it was her grandmother Eleonora who, together with Madame Petit, brought her up (Whelan 55–64).

The educational environment in which Izabela grew up is important in understanding her adult life, especially her future travel diary. Apart from soaking in Czartoryski's political and 'Sarmatian' environment, her grandmother instructed her in the "sensitivity to nature, the surrounding world and to works of art" but also in the duty to the peasants (Whelan 61). Her education might have been, as Agnieszka Whelan ventures, similar to the one that her daughter Zofia later received, following the educational programme conceived by Charles Rollin who "was convinced that the progress of civilisation depended on education and especially on the study of history" (Whelan 59). This hypothesis is relevant because the Princess can be seen as a "product" of her time, the Enlightenment. Rollin stood for a renewal in the French educational system, especially in higher education. His reforms mainly consisted of an increase in the study of the French language (and, thus, a decrease in Latin, but not its disappearance) and the establishment of history as a discipline by itself (Grell 3–281). As will be analysed later, history also became one of Izabela's preoccupations in adulthood, which can be seen in several of her diary entries. Apparently, she only complained about her lack of travel opportunities, a problem which ended when she married Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski (Whelan 63–64).

Once married, she started travelling and Whelan highlights in her research that Izabela's two first journeys were to England. The first, between 1768 to 1769, could be classified as diplomatic travel because her husband was sent there to get British support for King Stanisław August after the Bar confederation (Whelan 99). As we have no record of her feelings and emotions during this first trip, Whelan underlines that it was probably 'inspirational' for her because of the changes she carried out in her garden following it (Whelan 99). Not too long after their return, two important changes took place in her life: her parents-in-law passed away and she gave birth to her son, Adam Jerzy. Then, they set out on a new journey to the Netherlands from where she travelled, in turn, to England (1772–1774). During this journey, she seems to have noticed British manners (Whelan 106), as well as experience her first symptoms of depression. On top of that, her husband planned not to return to Poland. This could be explained by the fact that he was used to travelling abroad and to political events (the First Partition). This was a plan with which Izabela completely disagreed, affirming that "the world has little to offer and it is best to give ourselves to the service of the country" (Whelan 102), which showed her devotion for her country. Eventu-

ally, this journey did end; however, she later made a third journey to England and Scotland, which will be analysed in depth in the next section.

Even though this extends beyond our time frame, it is worth saying a few words about her later life. She remained committed to educational work, establishing three schools and writing books that were used by some teachers. Moreover, Izabela was devoted to the pastoral landscape, and her grandmother's lessons became well rooted in her mind; she even called her the 'Princess of the Peasants' due to her constant care for them (Whelan 411, 429)<sup>8</sup>. She ended her days in 1835, and she continued gardening in the English style until the end.

### 3.2. Eighteenth-century Great Britain through Polish eyes

*I, too, have been a traveller, and have seen the country in the world  
which is the most worthy of our curiosity – I mean England.*  
(Montesquieu in Langford 5)

The second half of the eighteenth century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a tumultuous period. Nonetheless, its elites continued travelling abroad, discovering and interacting with other European elites, for instance, Stanisław Antoni in 1754 and Izabela Czartoryska in 1790. He travelled to improve his education and to "represent the political interests of the *Familia*" (Butterwick 193), whereas she did so to enable her son to complete his education and 'to gather in England everything that could be useful to his native land' (Whelan 242), as well as to herself far from Poland in order not to let her continue influencing, in one way or another, the political scene (Czartoryska 13-15).

#### 3.2.1. Society

Although Stanisław August Poniatowski and Izabela Czartoryska had been raised in the same milieu, they sometimes noticed different things. For instance, she paid more attention to society in general such as peasants, especially women, and to the industrial development than he did. Poniatowski was much more focused on his political network. This could be surprising since she was politically committed in her homeland as she had been brought up in *the* Polish political family *par excellence*. She starts her account with a political entry concerning the loss of Polish territory after the First Partition because she has to go through an outrageous registration process by

<sup>8</sup> Whelan states that peasants from her area of influence were more cultivated than others.

Imperial officers and then she adopts a sad tone while describing the Mogilany countryside that “is no longer ours” (Czartoryska 62). Apart from this, her comments on British political or judicial matters are scarce. She does not go into depth on these issues nor express her opinion, giving only a mere description of what she sees or hears, as evidenced in her diary entry on Hastings’ trial or on her trip to Portsmouth, where she saw two men hanged (Czartoryska 62, 68). On the other hand, in this last entry, she also manages to consider that elections intoxicate the people. Is it because she saw how they were manipulated by corruption that she stopped caring about British politics? (Czartoryska 74, Whelan 260). For his part, Stanisław August merges political and societal perspectives together. In a paragraph that gives the impression that he is talking about himself and the distance that existed, at a later stage, between him and his people, he remarks that King George II was not (until recently) loved by his own people (Poniatowski 94-95). This might, therefore, be a note of self-justification showing that he was not the only one having struggles in this area. However, he also adds that, despite this King’s virtues, he had a defect, unforgivable for an enlightened person like himself: he did not enjoy poetry (Poniatowski 94-95).

On religious matters, more comments could have been expected as both countries are quite different in this matter. Only the terminology used to categorise some people is related religious views, particularly when the person they are referring to is a Quaker (“Quaker’s simplicity” or “a Quaker takes us on a tour”) (Poniatowski 93, Czartoryska 78), which may suggest that they were still not well regarded despite the Toleration Act of 1689<sup>9</sup>. In Whelan’s words, many Quakers were industrialists, which is why Izabela entered more into contact with them than her cousin (Czartoryska 49). She also displays her apprehension towards Deists, presenting them as incoherent people (Czartoryska 74).

Furthermore, the Princess was also more interested in the industrial surroundings and technological development, as one of the goals of the trip was to help improve Poland by following the British example<sup>10</sup>. She describes the different manufacturing industries she visited, as well as the new engineering achievements such as the Dublin-Copenhagen canal and Herschel’s telescope (Czartoryska 105, 63). I tend to think that the level of specificity depended on her mood, the stage of the journey<sup>11</sup>, and sometimes a mix of both of these el-

<sup>9</sup> We will not go further in this matter as it is not the aim of this article and much has already been written on this issue.

<sup>10</sup> There was a great deal more industry and technology to see in 1790 than there had been in 1754.

<sup>11</sup> She appears to have had regular changes of mood, which in the end tended to deteriorate as the tour progressed. This was noticed during her second journey in Eng-

ements, which would be the level of her expectations in comparison with reality (Whelan 242). For instance, the description of the glass manufacturer or the buttons factory from the beginning compared to the “pitiful manufacture of wool” at the end (Czartoryska 71-72, 96). Nevertheless, she knew what the purpose of the journey was, and she had her son buy some of the machinery she seems to dislike given her pastoral preferences (Czartoryska 109).

These pastoral perspectives were rooted in her mind, and may have come directly from her grandmother’s aforementioned teachings. She did not enjoy watching that “country horribly destroyed by greed” (Czartoryska 100) while the peasants were abandoned. That is why, among other things, the Princess pays special attention to descriptions of women (“a woman with six children”, “a woman washing the legs of her husband”, “the view [...] embellished further by three hundred women”) (Czartoryska 67, 106). Regarding the portrayal of people, both Stanisław August and Izabela pay special attention to red-haired women and describing them as ugly: “his wife is red-haired, ugly, but good humoured” and “even the red-haired [women], did not use powder nor lipstick” (Poniatowski 101-102, Czartoryska 80). Probably, this reaction might be because they were not used to seeing many in their homeland, which caused shock.

Returning to the peasants, the Princess finds the highlanders – “happy”, “full of joy”, and closer to her, as at last she manages to reach out to them in the way she used to with her serfs back in Poland, talking and drinking with them (Czartoryska 100). Furthermore, she notices that all Scottish women walk barefoot, even the aristocrats, which is when she adds that a priest affirmed that aristocrats had been the originators of Christ’s death (Czartoryska 95-96). These observations might suggest a return to the medieval and (very) early modern Catholic perspective of the poor, in which a poor man or woman is viewed as a good person, the incarnation of Christ, who needs to exist in order to help the rich purge their sins through charity works. If this was also Izabela’s conviction, she might have said something more about the poor house she saw close to Liverpool, and not only that “the poor must work. The house is quite clean” (Czartoryska 80), especially if we consider the deplorable conditions in which they had to work, akin to that of slaves. She could have denounced what Michel Foucault called the “Great Confinement”, but she did not. The reason for this is unclear. Perhaps Izabella had double standards as the people who were confined were considered lazy and idle, setting a bad example for the rest of society. However, the Polish peasants

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land by Elizabeth Craven, when she even tried Benjamin Franklin’s therapy (Whelan 106-109).

were *her* serfs, and for this reason she had to take care of them, giving them the opportunity to work and learn (Whelan 429).

### 3.2.2. Education

When travelling anywhere, there are always preconceived ideas regarding the destination, more commonly known as “stereotypes”. One regarding the English was their lack of hospitality (Poniatowski 91). Both of our travellers constantly mention this subject. Izabela frequently voices her opinion about her hosts and about the inns she visits, but her views are not consistent in this regard (“people here are very hospitable”, “detestable lodgings”, “great hospitality”) (Czartoryska 72, 73, 80). This is despite her complaints about the British character in other documents such as her personal correspondence. On the other hand, her cousin makes his point from the outset as he wants to prove that this stereotype has no foundations at all (again, in a memoir the discourse has a logical structure as the ending is already known) (Whelan 245).

Behind stereotypes are education and manners. Above all, both travellers recognized that, to take the fullest advantage of their journeys, but also to be able to communicate with and better understand their hosts, knowledge of the language was a key element. Thus, both decided to learn English. Having been raised in Rollin’s system of education, which gave priority to language teaching (Grell 3-281), and also because she came from an Anglophile family, the first thing Izabela did when she arrived in London was to “set up a learning routine for herself, taking English lessons” (Whelan 244). In turn, the future king, who had already had some lessons before arriving in England<sup>12</sup>, confesses that what pushed him to do his utmost to learn the language was the difficulty ‘to understand a single word that were said in that Chamber’ (Poniatowski 90)<sup>13</sup>. This attitude towards the language shows an openness that English youth seemed to lack, according to Stanisław August. He makes a very long point regarding the education of young men, analysing it from different perspectives; one of them being the language deficiency, mainly revealed when they travelled abroad (for instance, on the Grand Tour) as they knew no language other than their own (Poniatowski 99). However, he also highlights two older Englishmen, one of whom (Lord Chesterfield) spoke perfect French, and the other (Lord Granville), perfect Spanish; moreover, both of these Englishmen had immersed themselves in the respective

<sup>12</sup> He began to learn English in the 1740s. He continued to improve while in St Petersburg as Sir Charles Hanbury Williams’ secretary in 1755-56 (Butterwick 80-81).

<sup>13</sup> Own translation.

cultures (Poniatowski 104). These men might well once have been like the contemporary youth that the Polish aristocrat was encountering, but, as he points out, the English are a proud people and some of them decided to learn “a bit of a new language” (Poniatowski 100)<sup>14</sup>; hence, hope remained for English youth.

Even so, the discussion on education does not end with the point about language. Indeed, neither of our two travellers approve of the English educational system. It is the future king who disapproves of it the most, and it is something that particularly stood out for him<sup>15</sup>, as he mentions it almost twenty years later. He disagrees with the content as they mainly taught the Classics. This was something with which Rollin would also have disagreed with; as he argued in France, the youth needed updated programmes, including current ideas and concepts (Grell 3-281). They were apparently also given too much freedom<sup>16</sup>, which ultimately had a negative effect on their behaviour, manners, and academic progress. Taking these three aspects together, the result is an English youth that is not prepared to live in an enlightened Europe. Firstly, because they do not know other languages, perhaps in the belief that they do not need them as their culture is superior to others (Poniatowski 99). Secondly, their excessive liberty, their lack of respect for others and their behaviour caused them to be known as “savages” by other Europeans (Poniatowski 99, Langford 25). Nevertheless, their pride pushes them to catch up later, showing that this sort of *shock therapy* could have positive results. Regarding this theme of liberty, Izabela agrees with her cousin, chiefly because it leads to the widening of inequalities between students (not only due to the family wealth but also because of their appearance):

The learning conducted here [Oxford University] could be perfect, were it not for great liberties granted to students. They are subject to no one, coming and going as they wish just by paying the porters a shilling an hour. Children of lords are singled out from the rest by their status and clothes. Truly, this is great evil (Czartoryska 65)<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Own translation.

<sup>15</sup> I mention Rollin again because Stanisław August mentions that at the university, students were supposed to learn law, philosophy, theology, and history; and as I have already explained, this last subject was created as such by Rollin himself (Poniatowski 99).

<sup>16</sup> This high degree of liberty had also been noticed by David Hume and Immanuel Kant, whom link it to the national character (Langford 22).

<sup>17</sup> The question of equality was an important one for her, as it can also be seen in her comments on John Howard’s prison, where all the cells were the same size, with no distinction among them (Czartoryska 80).



According to Stanisław August, this liberty, apparently so damaging to students, was on the other hand an attractive feature in literature. The style of writing in Shakespeare's plays, for instance, showed flexibility and even innovation. Indeed, the future king compares this English characteristic to the French rigidity of the three units of time, place and action. In this case the French, rather than the British, appear arrogant (Poniatowski 94).

However, he also admits that the French have good things that should be copied by the English, such as their manners. As noted above, education is strongly associated with manners. Thus, it is not only the lack of manners of English youth that shocked Stanisław August; he was also astonished that they did not understand that with no manners and a bad education, the shape of the whole country and its reputation were called into question, for this youth was the country's future rulers. This is where France comes into play; for Stanisław August, French manners and education were far better than English<sup>18</sup>. He considers that an exchange in these matters would be beneficial for both countries, as he had noticed among women. He writes that English women's manners have much improved in the two decades since his voyage; Frenchwomen, in turn, would also gain in becoming "less superficial and more thinkers" (Poniatowski 101-102).

Notwithstanding, manners are not exclusive to elites. As Izabela remarks "The master and mistress [...] are very hospitable. I conclude this from the manner of their servants, who showered us with courtesies" (Czartoryska 112). This suggests that manners, just as education, are taught from the top down, which once again displays the princess's paternalistic (or perhaps maternalistic) views regarding household servants or serfs.

In a final point on educational, it should be emphasised that archaeology was born in the eighteenth century. Until then, this discipline had been linked to ancient texts, but it is during this period that archaeology starts to become its own field of study. Whereas France was still attached to the written legacy, England was already appreciating archaeology, as can be evidenced by their youth who travelled abroad, especially to Italy, to see and to depict the excavated vestiges of Antiquity (Grell 3-281). Taking into consideration Stanisław August's cultural exchange proposal, this would be another field in which the French would end up gaining. Izabela seems to acknowledge the importance of archaeology when she visits the College of Physicians in Glasgow, as she was able to use the artefacts discovered. This might be related, again, to her modern education (Czartoryska 104-105).

<sup>18</sup> Even though he does not specify why this is so in this part of his memoirs, in other parts he does (Butterwick 262-265).



### 3.2.3. Nature

The role of gardens and their political meaning was extremely important in the Enlightenment; it is no coincidence that French and English garden styles were born during this time (Whelan 243, Müllenbrock 291-299). Indeed, it is not by accident that Adam Kazimierz decided to send his son to England: the role of gardens and their structure was one of the things that Izabela's husband wanted his son to learn from Great Britain (Whelan 256). Maybe this is why, in order to make their task easier once they returned to Poland, Izabela decided to hire a true English gardener (Whelan 251-254).

While Stanisław August did not pay much attention, or at least did not report much on gardens, Izabela does. This might be due to several reasons, but most likely it is because Izabela travelled frequently across the countryside whereas her cousin undertook less travelling of this kind. Being much attached to the peasantry, she was also able to see what the building of fences (intensified during the last two decades of the century) and industrialisation were doing to parts of the countryside (Whelan 275). This human intervention in the natural environment was nothing more than a will to dominate and, if it can be said, to civilise the wild. The result of this taming of nature was an increased interest in gardens and gardening (García 53-54). However, as Whelan points out, and as can be deduced from the reading of Czartoryska's diary, even though Izabela was attached to that pastoral landscape, her descriptions are not very accurate most of the time, showing that she was neither enthusiastic about the gardens she visited, nor was she receptive to them (Whelan 251-254).

The only description that can be compared directly is the travellers' visits to Stowe. It was supposed to be the English garden *par excellence*. For his part, Stanisław August notices the Chinese garden (supposedly the first of its kind in England), but admits the importance of the new English style, consisting of reproducing artificial landscapes in a particular place, although he does not like it very much as he regretted the complete absence of straight lines (Poniatowski 98). Thirty-six years later, his cousin only states that the garden "was once thought beautiful" but has been badly kept and has terrible temples (Czartoryska 66). We know that Stanisław August also saw the temples; he mentions them, but does not express any feelings towards them.

Izabela and Stanisław August's lives were marked by their anglophile and generally modern education, which guided their minds and steps across the rest of the subcontinent. However, they were also marked by the different political events that took place in the *heart of Europe*. This frame made them agree on certain things, such as their negative view of the high degree of liberty of British youth or their lack of manners. Nevertheless, they also dis-

agree or simply notice different things. For instance, they disagree in regards of the English character. Izabela, who was more attached to the peasantry and to the pastoral landscape, denounces the industrialisation of the countryside – something that had hardly begun when her cousin visited England in 1754. Both their perspectives on Great Britain compared to other European countries, especially their homeland, reveal undeniably broad-minds which do not withdraw behind their country's boundaries. Both had what we would now call transnational outlooks.

#### 4. A precious common chest

*European culture is a perpetual creation.  
It is not a fixed point, but a road,  
which requires us to keep walking.*

(Ortega y Gasset in Pinheiro, Cieszyńska and Cranco 3)

##### 4.1. Old sharing, modern convergences

According to Jakobson's communication model, the code used is an important factor. This code can be, for instance, a language. Thus, if the people involved in a conversation do not use the same codification, there is no possible communication. This is something that has been known since the dawn of time, especially by travellers.

In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it is said that there was a time when everyone could understand each other as there was only one common language. However, because of humankind's pride, God decided to punish them by making them unable to interact as they had been accustomed to<sup>19</sup>. This created confusion but also a challenge: the challenge to learn other languages.

Later, in addition to this, came the theories of different language families, one of which is a European common protolanguage, known under different names depending on the period: "German-Celtic" for Leibnitz, or the more widely-spread "Indo-European". Hans-Gregor Gadamer defended, in Emanuel De Vanna Paparella's words, that "language which is universal and humanizes Man qua Man, reveals the culture, the history and the very soul of a particular people" (De Vanna 78-82). For this reason, not only would the sharing of the Latin language be one of the foundations of Europe, but also, and to a wider extent, that hypothetical Indo-European protolanguage could also have established the grounds for a theoretical common culture.

For their part, Izabela and Stanisław August are interesting examples for understanding the role played by languages among elites in the eighteenth

<sup>19</sup> Similar accounts appear in other traditions such as Sumer.

century. They decided to write in French, even though they wrote to different audiences. The Princess wrote for herself, to be able to remember her experiences in the future (Czartoryska 61), which makes me think that she might have written her diary in the language in which she felt most comfortable. On the other hand, as the king considered history his future judge, it seems logical that he recorded his testimony in the international language of the time (Poniatowski 29). In addition to the French language, they also learned English, therefore I deduce that they spoke at least three languages, if we consider that they also spoke Polish<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, both knew the value of languages for the purpose of communicating properly at different levels and in different situations, but also as a vehicle for cultural exchange.

In fact, cultural transfer was already taking place through languages, especially through translations and adaptations of old and/or foreign texts. English examples include Alexander Pope or James Macpherson's poetry, who both cousins mention them in their texts (Poniatowski 95, Czartoryska 101). Nonetheless, in France from around 1730, but mostly since 1750, there was a spectacular decrease in Latin editions whereas bilingual ones increased. These new publications in a vernacular language made knowledge more attractive and accessible to the general public. An open debate took place concerning translations: what would remain most faithful to the original in a translation or to adapt the content? Even though in 1730 Voltaire declared that this debate was already outdated, it had started in the seventeenth century, other authors continued it. Paul Jérémie Bitaubé saw translators as the perfect link between past and present, considering them 'artists' and 'referees of good taste' because they were able to adapt the discourse of the Ancients to the present time, modifying certain aspects but keeping their essence. Others such as Jacques Delille were given to thinking that an update of old texts with contemporary topics was more pragmatic (Grell 3-281). In any case, this is something that could have lead Europeans through cultural convergence and continue building a common culture and understanding in the European subcontinent (Sinko 455-460). Would it be then possible that, instead of learning several languages or building bridges among them (translation), Europeans created a language to be spoken by all of them? It is not that preposterous if the hypothesis of a former common protolanguage was to be true...

However, it must be remembered that the knowledge of various languages alone did not mark an enlightened person as interactions between different peoples required a mutual understanding, especially on the part of those who travelled abroad regularly such as diplomats. There is the example

<sup>20</sup> Poniatowski also knew Latin, German, Italian and Russian (Butterwick 80-81).

of Charles V. He was educated in Latin, French and Dutch. Then, to become closer to the nobilities of the territories he was about to rule, he learnt Spanish, Italian, and German. Although language is meant to unite, it can also divide, especially in political terms. To continue with Charles V's example, one of the many reasons that he divided his territories was because his son was not gifted in languages, which would prevent him from being on good terms with the local rulers of the different territories.

To this extent, Great Britain did not seem realise the importance of languages as most of its youth was not able to speak any other language than its own. Meanwhile, knowledge of foreign languages was increasing in Poland (Sinko 453).

#### 4.2. Towards a common education

Both cousins received a modern education. Let us consider at this stage what was meant by "modern education" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As both Francis Bacon and Immanuel Kant wrote, the (Early) Modern age saw the revolution of knowledge: a division in between the traditional and the modern (scientific method through experimentation) (De Vanna 78). It is commonly accepted that Izabela was educated according to Rollin's method, which was one of the more modern (and controversial) of her day. As for her cousin, it is not known what kind of system he followed, but he completed his studies by travelling abroad. So, it is not strange to see that they agreed in their view towards the English system of education. They were of the same mind in saying that this system gave too much liberty to the students, making them too individualistic and rude towards foreign people because they lacked knowledge of good manners. They needed to be framed following, for example, the French model. However, no one in the British Isles seemed to agree with this; even worse, they defended the traditional practice as it provided the perfect foundations to develop the boys' personality. Let us return to the example of language. As mentioned above, neither the Princess nor the future king liked the British system, especially as it made its young men self-centred until they travelled abroad, where they were confronted with *other* people. Until then, they did not seem to realise the importance of languages. This sort of *shock therapy*, like the situation that would have taken place after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, appeared to be the only way of showing Englishmen see the value of languages to communicate with people beyond their island. However, even these youth did not implement any language teaching reform once they reached a certain level in the political system.

As we know, Czartoryska and Poniatowski travelled abroad on educational trips. These journeys were supposed to enlighten and enhance the formation of young European elites. Until then, one of the most common ways of knowing about foreign people was through texts written about them, taking for instance Herodotus in ancient times as a raconteur or Thomas Walraven von Arkel in the Early Modern period as a receiver (who never left his house but was updated thanks to more than two thousand books on travel literature) (Rietbergen 327-328). This was an excellent breeding ground for the formation of stereotypes. However, travelling was the modern way of meeting and learning about people, it no longer occurred through other people's experience but rather through their own. This led to the formation and education of a new young European elite through direct contact with other people from abroad that were not themselves exclusively from the elite (innkeepers, industrials, scientists, and so on). Furthermore, these encounters paved the way to overcoming stereotypes and preconceptions and move towards greater cultural exchange and mutual understanding, something which will always be beneficial for everyone. The Polish king knew this, which is why he insisted on the positive aspects that cultural exchange would bring to England and France. This, at last, was also the vision of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who defended in one of his writings the importance of studying abroad (Rietbergen 318). Hence, it is not by accident that the scholarships now granted to young Europeans to study abroad bear his name.

### 4.3. Collective Heritage

French academies promoted the abovementioned educational trips to Italy (Grand Tour) to get their students to reproduce the vestiges of Antiquity<sup>21</sup>. I stress here the use of the term *vestige* rather than the more widespread, *ruin*, because the two “back to the antique” generations were fascinated by Antiquity. To accept that there were only remains – ruins in poor condition – of that glorious era was to acknowledge that it was dead and that it could not be glorious. The second “back to the antique” generation, starting in the early 1780s<sup>22</sup>, was more “rebellious”, proposing a reform in the predominant vision of Antiquity by depicting it in a more ‘idealistic’ way. This was because that

<sup>21</sup> We need to frame this fascination with Antiquity within a broader cultural context; let us recall that Europe is based on the idea of Renaissance again and again (from the time of Charlemagne to the Third Reich). What is then eighteenth-century classicism if not this?

<sup>22</sup> The first one started in the 1750s, concurrently with the publication of Rousseau's first discourse, and before Poniatowski's trip.

generation perceived contemporary civilisation to be completely corrupted and far from the exemplary past (Grell 3-281).

Stanisław August and Izabela were, consequently, framed in this epistemological context. In addition, they made, throughout their trips, several remarks about their surroundings. For her part, Izabela, as she travelled across the country, gives more details and impregnates them with her personal feelings, something that her cousin only does once (regarding the gardens he visited that were according to the new English style, whose main feature was an (idealistic) replication of ancient vestiges).

During this time, the intelligentsia were wondering whether the old texts were telling the truth about the vestiges. Was this a betrayal of the true Antiquity? Was this why the second 'back to the antique' generation decided to change its way of depicting it? Were these depictions a mere artistic transposition of what they saw, or was it the embodiment of an acquired knowledge by the vision of the vestige and its study?

Moreover, in the second half of the century, the first archaeological experiments took place at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Their excavation and analysis would raise the question of heritage. In Naples, the king protected the historical heritage because it was a source of income. However, France did not see the economic nor cultural interest. Thus, it was travellers who spread the idea of preserving historical heritage. Izabela, for instance, visited different places in England and Scotland that were supposed to be archaeological remains (an old Druidic temple, Fingal's tomb) and also paid special attention to those remains preserved at the College of Physicians in Glasgow. Indeed, it is not by chance that the European Union cares so much about its historical heritage: it can be a source of income, but it is far from being balanced with the associated expenditure that it represents for the Member States. Therefore, this means that feeling the need to preserve what older times have bequeathed important, especially seeing how the European Union tends to enhance heritage's disclosure throughout all Member States, making them feel another's heritage as their own, creating the common European heritage (Hester, Maughan et al. 32-46).

That said, history does not only remain in the textbooks, as it can also be tangible in museums, archives, and even outdoors at archaeological sites. In our materialistic culture, historical artefacts are a key element to fostering historical reflection. The physical object takes us closer to the people that lived in the past as, and it is precisely in that short period of time that we think about its designers that this dialogue takes place.

As per its first definition in the Oxford dictionary, heritage is the 'property that is or may be inherited; an inheritance', being that 'property' the set

of goods that someone has. This way, it can be affirmed that heritage is the inheritance left by previous generations, it is not only economic wealth, which can be exploited for tourism for example, but mainly cultural. The present is as it is because of its past; and the past is how the present decided to interpret it through the cultural heritage it received. In such a way, heritage is the strongest link between both time periods. Its maintenance is indispensable for keeping real and fluid dialogue, not only among historians, as we will always find a way to recreate the past, but above all, for all these people that are deprived of knowledge, even for those who get distorted knowledge. All people a right to know their past and establish a relationship with it, as it is one of the best ways to encounter the present. The destruction of heritage is not only a direct attack on culture, but also an attack on the past, present and future of humankind. Those who stop taking care of it, or decides to pulverise it, do not do so on negligent or fanatical grounds: they do so because they know that those pieces of paper or those old stones could turn against them.

## 5. The Journey Out

Europe is such a broad concept that it needs to be framed. I decided to delimit its space in between Portugal and the British Isles to the Caucasus and the Urals. Then, culturally speaking, by focusing only on its eighteenth-century common culture, mainly on the concepts that led me to dig into the possibility of a supposed identity. To tackle this task, and given my previous research experience, I have chosen to focus on individual experiences recorded in travel diaries and memoirs.

Izabela and Stanisław August's lives were marked by their anglophile and generally modern education, which guided their minds and paths across the rest of the subcontinent. However, they were also marked by the different political events that took place in the *heart of Europe*. This frame made them agree about certain things, such as their negative view of the high degree of liberty experienced by British youth, as well as their bad manners. Nevertheless, they also disagree or simply notice different things. For instance, they disagree about the English character. Izabela, who was more interested in the peasantry and to the pastoral landscape, denounces the industrialisation of the countryside – something that had hardly begun when her cousin visited England in 1754. Both their perspectives on Great Britain were compared to other European countries, especially their homeland, and reveal them to be undeniably broad-minded people who do not withdraw themselves behind their country's boundaries. Both had what we would now call transnational outlooks.



These two Poles acknowledged, though they did not directly specify in their writings, that the knowledge of languages, a modern educational system, and heritage are essential features and values of Europe and Europeans. Through their writings, we notice that there were more common ideas and values that could be expected. Consequently, every single shared element has gained pride of place in our common European treasure chest.

Stanisław August Poniatowski and Izabela Czartoryska, two representatives from the Polish elite have shown us, through their quills, that Europeans had several things in common despite their differences. These involuntary observations suggest that a European common perception of the Europeans can be found in the Enlightenment, the seeds of which might have been timidly sowed earlier in time... although this is to be discovered in other studies.

This journey has come to an end, but Europeans will still be on the road, delving as much into Europe and its common culture, values, and history as into its future.

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