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# The *Legiony* (Legions) Project On Henryk Sienkiewicz's final novel<sup>1</sup>

In November 1911, Sienkiewicz wrote to Adam Krechowiecki on creating *Legiony* (Legions): “The more I study the sources, the bigger the difficulties I face.”<sup>2</sup> Judging from the material left by the author of *Quo Vadis*, he surveyed a considerable number of sources. Actually, that was nothing special for Sienkiewicz; one might find it admirable that the ageing author (in 1911 he was 65), quite familiar with the history of Poland, would still so diligently prepare for writing a new novel, conducting detailed historical and cultural research; he approached the matter just as seriously as when writing his first and major historical novels.

His surviving notes include lists of the collections of libraries regarding the source material for *Legiony*. Those lists were not recorded by Sienkiewicz. They constitute a collection labeled by Ossolineum as *Papiery Henryka Sienkiewicza* (Henryk Sienkiewicz's Papers). Most of the notes were recorded on the header paper of the Academy of Learning in Krakow, the sheets are usually inscribed single-sidedly per the model: the title *Legiony* in the right-hand upper corner, the name of the library, the resources of which are listed in the middle of the upper section of a sheet. The lists include authors and titles of their works, and reference numbers. Some were underlined in blue pencil, probably by Sienkiewicz indicating the most interesting entries in the lists. Those included, e.g. *Listy Ignacego Potockiego*,

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1 Topic fulfilled under grant by the NSC 2012/06/A/HS2/00252: *Henryk Sienkiewicz. obecność w kulturze polskiej XX wieku. Polskość i nowoczesność. Recepcja i nowe odczytania* (Henryk Sienkiewicz. Presence in the Polish culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Polishness and modernity. Reception and new readings).

2 H. Sienkiewicz, letter to A. Krechowiecki of 30 November 1911, in: idem, *Listy*, Maria Bokszczanin (ed.), vol. III, part 1, Warsaw: PIW, p. 391. [Unless specified otherwise, English version translated from Polish]

*Dekada Polska*, a periodical published in Italy when the legions were stationed there; extracts from newspapers, *Testament Hugona Kollątaja*.

The sheer extent of the collected bibliography probably terrified the writer; in 1911 he mentioned several times that the novel applied to a particular period in the history of Poland, but to write it in the form of a novel was no easy task, and caused him many problems.<sup>3</sup> However, in developing new plots, and organising the story, he gradually reached a conviction that the novel would be valuable, and it was important to work on it. Yet, as it was customary for him, in his letters to his family and friends, he wrote both of the problems and his concerns; both of the moments of joyful work, and moments of creative blocks.<sup>4</sup>

What manuscript material do we possess? 139 sheets, 29 x 23 cm, some smaller. Inscribed single-sidedly, few were inscribed in full. Most of those were attempts at creating small fragments, drafts of new ideas, sometimes individual sentences. The entire material was combined by Julian Krzyżanowski, and divided into 6 groups, and thus it is stored in Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich:

- Version A: beginning of *Legiony* in the form of a journal;
- *Legiony*, part I, Edition A (chapters 1 and 2) and abandoned beginnings of further sheets;
- *Legiony*, part I, Edition B (chapters 1 and 2, end of 5, and chapter 6);
- ***Legiony*, part II**, abandoned initial fragments;
- ***Legiony*, part II**, Edition A (chapters 1–4);
- ***Legiony*, part II**, Edition B, covering exclusions from sheets with text abandoned in final editing.

As it is easy to calculate, half of the summarised surviving material includes manuscript records of the printed novel, while the other half includes variant material. As is often the case when researching rough drafts: the bibliographic records differ slightly from the actual contents of a collection. A careful study of the folder with the manuscript of *Legiony* indicates that fragments in line with the printed version dominate over the abandoned text (Krzyżanowski), yet in the collected material there are many variant fragments which differ only slightly from the first printed version.

As a reminder: *Legiony* was Sienkiewicz's final novel, first printed in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* in issue 49 of 1913 and appearing there until issue 31 of the following year<sup>5</sup>. In short, it is a story of two men travelling to Rome to join the ranks of

<sup>3</sup> Vide other letters by Henryk Sienkiewicz to Adam Krechowicki, in: H. Sienkiewicz, *Listy*, vol. III, part 1, *op. cit.*, and H. Sienkiewicz, letter to M. Babska of 6–7 April 1913, in: idem, *Listy*, vol. IV, part 2, M. Bokszczanin (ed.), Warsaw: PIW, 2008, p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> The writer's changes of heart, as well as his particular concerns were preserved in the sheets of his correspondence with Jadwiga Janczewska, Sydon Lorent, and his last wife Maria Babska.

<sup>5</sup> *Legiony* was printed consecutively: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1913 issue 49 (6 XII) to issue 52; in 1914 issues 1–17, then part II from issue 18 to 31. The novel was reprinted by the Krakow-based *Czas*

Gen. Dąbrowski's legions. However, before they depart, each of them experienced in the first part of the novel entitled *W kraju* (In the country) various adventures and romantic adventures. Eventually, Marek Kwiatkowski, a rejected lover, and Stanisław Cywiński, a newlywed, leave their home and their loved ones to serve their motherland.

For the analysis I selected the second part of *Legiony* entitled *Pod Dąbrowskim* (Under Dąbrowski). Its story centers on the journey of the two men from Venice to Rome, depicted here more as army men than boys in love, as they were portrayed in the first part. The discussed rough drafts constitute the most characteristic fragments selected from the entire material.

The first fragment is an attempt to write the initial sections of the second part of the novel. Previous studies indicated that Sienkiewicz often struggled with either the form of delivery or with the beginning of the novel. Sometimes he worked on the idea of an important break-through fragment. That was also the case here, as the second part of *Legiony* could be somewhat considered as an autonomous fragment. The characters seldom refer to what happened earlier.

The second part of the novel takes the protagonists directly from where they lived (the village of Różyce) to Venice, which becomes the initial stage in their path to legion history. The initial lines read as follows:

“Cywiński, he was eager to reach the camp, agreed, however, to Marek's demand to spend a few days in Venice. He agreed, first of all, because he himself wanted to visit the city, and, secondly, because officer Drzewiecki whom both young men met immediately after their arrival, assured them that they did not have to hurry too much as the legions since the peace had been concluded in Campio Formio were stationed in Rimini, and were getting ready to set out for Rome, but had nothing to do for the time being.”<sup>6</sup>

That introduction, it would seem, was supposed to explain the boys' visit to Venice, and why they were reluctant to complete their mission. Thanks to the initial fragment, which continued for the next 1.5 pages, the reader becomes familiar with other officers and the plan for the following stages of the journey.

In the surviving manuscript records, there are no traces of similar lines, though the beginning of the second part has a total of three rough draft versions. The first one begins with a description focusing on the air of St. Mark's Square:

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(issues 565–587 of 1913 and issues 1–313 of 1914), *Dziennik Poznański* (issues 282–297 of 1913 and issues 3–175 of 1914).

6 H. Sienkiewicz, “Legiony. Powieść historyczna”, in: idem, *Pisma w układzie I. Chrzanowskiego*, vol. 32, Lviv: Gebethner i Wolff, 1932, p. 131.

Spring came early, but the evening was quiet and warm. St. Mark's Square in Venice was flush with lights, and a Czech army orchestra was playing in the centre. Crowds of people were passing by along the prosecutor's offices, and their conversations mixed with the sounds of musical instruments and the flutter of pigeons' wings startled by the sounds of horns and drums. Cywiński and Kwiatkowski were sitting at a table in front of the Florian's café in the company of captains Drzewiecki and Nadolski, whom they met ~~that same day~~ <sup>↑</sup> a few days prior] – and were talking about the wonders of the city

– “Well this is swarmed,” said Cywiński. “Is it always like this?” [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 1, sheet 1 *recto*]

The entire fragment was recorded on a single sheet, not numbered by Sienkiewicz, organised by Krzyżanowski as the first one. There is no reliable information that it was the beginning of the second half of the novel. It is difficult to make an argument proving that the text included therein featured the very initial fragments of the second half of the work. Even more so since the corresponding section, with almost identical content, was included in the printed version but after the rather lengthy introduction previously mentioned:

They remained silent for a while and began to observe the stream of people flowing through St. Mark's Square towards San Moisè and back. Despite it were the early days of spring, the evening was surprisingly warm and calm. A star-studded sky hung above the square, while the framework of the prosecutor's offices and the grey copulas of the church reflected in silver the month's glare. The square itself was flush in light. In the centre, Czech army music was played on a stage erected there. Crowds of men and women were passing by along the prosecutor's offices, and their conversations mixed with the sounds of musical instruments and the flutter of pigeons' wings startled by the sudden sounds of horns and drums. In front of the church, there were bundles of torches burning in iron bins casting pink glare onto light mosaics, golden recesses and huge yellow banners hung on poles in front of the temple.<sup>7</sup>

The second rough draft outline casts more light, as it includes the following passage:

Despite spring came early, the evening was surprisingly warm. St. Mark's Square in Venice was flush with lights, and a Czech army orchestra was playing in the centre. Crowds of people were passing by along the prosecutor's offices, and their conver-

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<sup>7</sup> H. Sienkiewicz, *Legiony*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

sations mixed with the sounds of musical instruments and the flutter of pigeons' wings startled by the sounds of horns and drums.

Cywiński and Kwiatkowski were sitting at a table put in the square in front of a café and were drinking Cyprus wine in the company of captains Drzewiecki and Nadolski, whom they met a few days prior Drzewiecki, sleek and talkative officer, who had spent several weeks in Venice and knew it well, showed ↑[that day] both young men ↑[until] late in the evening around local churches, and afterwards they sat down together in the square to stretch out their tired legs and observe the people. [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 2, sheet 2 *recto*]

"It's swarmed, here, yes sir!" Said Cywiński. "Is it always like this?" [second rough draft outline, abandoned initial fragments, sh. 2r]

It is included on the second sheet of the collection, which is likewise not numbered by the writer. The sheet does, however, include more significant signs that enable a more complete analysis. First, it includes a header "Legiony pod Dąbrowskim Część II" (Legions under Dąbrowski Part II) [original layout], which could suggest it constitutes the opening section of the work. Secondly, it can be considered as complementary to the second sheet *recto* numbered by Sienkiewicz, and a continuation of the argument from the first sheet *recto*. Both sheets are struck across with a thin pen line, which was the writer's trademark, indicating that those fragments had already been copied with the intention to be released for printing. Of course, if it had not been for the first print, one could assume that it was the writer's plan for the initial chapter of the second part of the work.

Stopping for a moment at this stage of the writer's work, it is worth mentioning that there are few (in either outline) traces of his deliberations on the text. There are virtually no deletions, apart from a change in the first version: "that day in the morning" to: "a few days prior", which seems significant, as in the second rough draft version there appears the phrase "a few days prior". Other time frames are also defined: "Drzewiecki, sleek and talkative officer, who had spent several weeks in Venice and knew the city well, showed both young men around until late in the evening." The sentence was supplemented with the phrase "that day" and an emphasis intended to indicate that the sightseeing took very long, as Sienkiewicz changed "late evening" into "late into the evening":

"Drzewiecki, sleek and talkative officer, who had spent several weeks in Venice and knew the city well, showed ↑[that day] both young men ↑[until] late into the evening around the churches, and afterwards they sat down together in the square to stretch out their tired legs and observe people." [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 2, sheet 2 *recto*]

The remaining differences are more cosmetic, not offering any new content to the argument, nor do they change what was observed in the first version. Together with the corresponding fragment of what made its way to print, both rough draft versions constitute an almost coherent whole. A question arises why the writer decided to insert into a legion novel such a lengthy fragment describing the atmosphere of Venice (and, actually, not the only one), and also how the fragment was shifted from the beginning to further sections of the text. The answer to the first issue ceases to be surprising after a moment's thought. Sienkiewicz, having visited Venice several times, experienced some of the major moments of his life there; in 1879 he wrote for *Gazeta Polska* a report on his visit to the water city. The inspiration becomes clear once you compare that report to the events described in all the versions of the fragment of the novel. And even though there is a 34-year gap between the report and the novel drafts, the analogy is striking. This is how Sienkiewicz perceived Venice:

“The population pours out in swarms into the streets only before the evening, when the heat of the day passes. (...) In the evening, the square is the place of *rendez-vous* of the entire beautiful world of Venice. Those who do not wish to sit at home, cannot be anywhere else than here. This is where you listen to music, this is where you drink refreshing drinks, this is where you stroll, observe people, accompany women, meet whomever you wish to meet, make new friends, in short: you are at a public ball. The sounds of music, the flutter of hand fans, the ardent gazes of Italian eyes, a flood of lights.”<sup>8</sup>

All text outlines include the word (or derivatives thereof) used in the text entitled *Z Wenecji*: “swarmed”. It somewhat organises the world of Venice’s square, it offers a sense of the atmosphere present there: people pouring out in swarms, Ciwiński notes: “it’s swarmed”, “It’s swarmed, here, yes sir!”, only to conclude: “It’s beautiful here, and swarmed.” On top of that, there is the omnipresent music, the role of which the writer emphasised in each stage of creating the description of Venice: “this is where you listen to music”, “a Czech army orchestra was playing in the centre” (twice), “In the centre, Czech army music was played on a stage” (the final choice, which should probably be considered as the worst in terms of stylistics).

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<sup>8</sup> H. Sienkiewicz, “Z Wenecji”, in: idem, *Pisma Henryka Sienkiewicza*, vol. 3, Warsaw: Gebethner i Wolff, 1880, pp. 219–220.

**Table 1.** Comparison of consecutive outlines and versions of printed texts

In Venice	Rough draft outline 1	Rough draft outline 2	First printing
The population pours out into the streets	"Well, this is swarmed," said Cywiński.	"It's swarmed, here, yes sir!"	But it is, actually, beautiful here and swarmed
this is where you listen to music	a Czech army orchestra played in the centre of the square	a Czech army orchestra played in the centre of the square	In the centre, army music was played on a stage

Another attempt at writing the initial part of the second half of the novel can be found in the next rough draft sheet, not numbered by Sienkiewicz, which includes the header "Legiony Cz. II. Pod Dąbrowskim" (Legions Part II. Under Dąbrowski), which has already been considered a sign that the fragment was intended as the opening one. It is a completely different outline both from the first print, and from the previously mentioned rough drafts. In it Sienkiewicz focussed on presenting the current political situation:

In Venice, Cywiński and Kwiatkowski learnt that Polish troops were stationed in Rimini. Venice itself with its lands all the way to the left bank of the Adige was returned to Austria, but Austrian had not yet settled completely in ~~the city and the surrounding lands~~ ↑new lands]. Army ↑commissioners] of the emperor were slowly taking to governing in and around the city. new era of life. [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 3, not numbered by Sienkiewicz]

In the first printed version, such declarations were, of course, present, but in later sections of the work, usually introduced into dialogues. After the introduction covering half a sheet, the author immediately transitioned to discussing the charms of the city on water, which seen for the first time by the men "seemed a neutral ground", therefore

Because peace was declared, it was where French officers met, as they were drawn by the great intention to view the most peculiar of the world's settlements, with incoming Austrian officials, and with soldiers of all banners of those diverse countries which formed Austria. In general, the inflow of foreigners was higher than ~~in the sleepy and desolate city~~ anyone living remembers. The sleepy and desolate city was bristling with life new life. Riva dei Schiavoli and St. Mark's Square swarmed with crowds ↑people]. Cafés in prosecutors' offices were flush with light throughout the night. Army music played for those crowds passing through the square in crowds, among which you could see many women with lace burqas on their heads, young and beautiful. At moon-lit spring nights sparrow-black gondolas filled



canale grande, from Santa Maria delle Salute. All the way to Rialto. [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 3, not numbered by Sienkiewicz]

Sienkiewicz repeated some of the imagery he used in the first two rough draft outlines, emphasising the inflow of the crowds stimulating the usually sleepy everyday life of Venice. He also expanded the descriptions related to the richness of Venice considerably, which is best visible in the fragment which he struck out entirely:

Venice seemed to him something both astonishing and preposterous as his gentry reason gentry mind could not comprehend that people could for “people to live like ducks”. ~~Pink~~ <sup>↑Then</sup> marble of the Doge’s Palace, the colourful pillars and the rainbow mosaics of St. Mark’s sunlit mosaics of St. Mark’s aroused true unruffled admiration in both young men. Cywiński only regretted that ~~X~~ bronze horse standing in the church’s front, as he heard while still in Vienna about their beauty. While some gentle shimmer fell on their eyes <sup>↑of both young men</sup> from the pink marble of the Doge’s Palace, from the colourful pillars and the rainbow mosaics of St. Mark’s fell onto the eyes of both young men some joyful shimmer, so that when staring for hours at the church from the square, ~~they could not realise why~~ <sup>↑they felt</sup> what in their souls was happening <sup>↑some</sup> light and ~~X~~ driveziand cheerfulness. [rough draft, *Poniechane fragmenty początkowe*, outline 3, not numbered by Sienkiewicz]

It seems the writer wanted to include a lot of emotions in the description, hence the accumulation of terms related to colour, its oscillation, and optical illusions. He intended to present two young soldiers in a situation of complete fascination caused by experiencing architectural wonders, which is why he devised the contrast between the “gentry mind” and the surroundings. No similar fragment with such a form and with such an intensity of colours where the beauty of art triggers a burst of emotions was printed. Sienkiewicz decided that such emotions would be evoked by the sight of the beauty of a woman, the air coming from Venetian nights, and, rather significantly, the recollections of past readings:

He had a flashback quick as a summer lightning from *Nocy Younga*, which he read while still in Różyce<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that Sienkiewicz tried to choose his imagery, as well as his pre-selected “model”, to match the event he was composing and presenting. The analogy between Sienkiewicz’s early notes, coming from his own experience, and

9 H. Sienkiewicz, *Legiony*, op. cit., p. 145.



the recollections of those experiences in the novel written several decades later must be considered as something typical for the mode of writing of the author of *The Knights of the Cross*. Previous research into his legacy indicated that his imagination was shaped in contact with his environment, with art and artists in particular, but also under the influence of stimuli triggered by the atmosphere influencing his personal experiences<sup>10</sup>. That was the area that had the major impact on him. His personal experiences, a stimulus triggered by a specific painting or book, initiated the formation and transformation of his own visions and images for new works. That was probably the case in the fragment under analysis. The writer who met his first wife in Venice, who participated in many celebrations in the city, and who also knew the “everyday” Venice, translated his personal experiences and recollections into the language of a work of literature. That might had been why he returned to his notes and sensations from the beginning of his writing career, and also why he attempted to create something new, or at least adequate to the situation of the novel he was writing.

The printed version of the work differs only slightly from the surviving fragments of rough draft outlines. The differences apply to details. It is surprising, because previous studies indicated that the writer worked intensively on the text. He struggled with the form, the mode of building and developing the characters, the details regarding their names, and their national affiliations. In the manuscript of *Legiony* those types of operations can only be found in a few instances, more so in the first part, where Sienkiewicz was still hesitant whether to write a novel in the form of a memoir or whether to apply the classical realistic narrative<sup>11</sup>. On rare occasions, his pondering on first and last names can be found. His work on the first name of the lover of the protagonist is most visible. Initially Adolfinia, her name was very quickly changed, still in the rough draft, to Pandolfinia: “having lost ~~Adolfinia~~ Pandolfinia”, “Had I trusted ~~Adolfinia~~ Pandolfinia”. That procedure seems a mere mistake, as both in the earlier sections of the rough draft and in later sections the girl was consistently referred to as Pandolfinia. It is difficult to recreate the reason for changing the name in the Adolfinia sequence (used only twice, immediately deleted) – Pandolfinia (now in: Version A – beginning of *Legiony in the form of a journal*) – Klarybella (just like in remaining rough draft outlines, apart from the version in the journal form, as well as in printed version). Though the name Adolfinia is used in the form Adolfa (Adolpha – “noble she-wolf”), one would be hard struck to find a woman by the name of Pandolfinia. It seems Sienkiewicz's own

<sup>10</sup> Vide: A. Kuniczuk-Trzciniowicz, *Czytane pod skreśleniem. Sienkiewiczowskie bruliony nowel jako wskazówki do analizy procesu twórczego*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SubLupa, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> I discussed the first part of the novel preserved in a rough draft in an article entitled: “Urwana powieść-rękopis-fragment. ‘Legiony’ jako rzecz trudna”, in: *Przekleństwo niekończącego*, K. Badowska (ed.), Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2014, pp. 282–298.

invention<sup>12</sup>. The final name, then, present in rough drafts and the first printed version, i.e. Klarybella, though not used very often, is known, e.g. from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*<sup>13</sup>.

The selected fragments of the rough drafts were surely not written under the influence of the material collected by Sienkiewicz in libraries. They were rather examples of the writer's activities where experience and familiarity with material culture became most important. At the same time, the mode of working on the text in the referenced consecutive rough draft outlines was not typical for Sienkiewicz. The same fragments preserved in several outlines, and, as for the amount of material left, the small number of deletions are puzzling. It seems clear that the writer had a clear vision of the novel from the very beginning. Though the process of writing was not fast and problem-free, as it was in the case of his previous works, paradoxically in the notes and fragments of his final novel he left surprisingly few traces of the hand of an unsatisfied writer seeking something better.

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<sup>12</sup> Unless we assume that in creating the name, the writer used the name of the Florence family of the Pandolfinis, whose palace was designed by Rafael Santi. Yet that seems a faint trace; what is known is that Sienkiewicz used to visit Florence, he might had even known the house by Via San Gallo.

<sup>13</sup> The name (Claribel) is the name of the daughter of Alonso, the just married "Queen of Tunis" and "So is she heir of Naples". One interesting, though completely loose, analogy emerges in that *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's final drama, just like *Legiony* was Sienkiewicz's final novel.

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Agnieszka Kuniczuk-Trzciniowicz

## Projekt *Legiony*. Wokół ostatniej powieści Henryka Sienkiewicza

### *Streszczenie*

Brulion *Legionów*, ostatniej powieści Henryka Sienkiewicza, zawiera 139 oddzielnych stron, w tym zarówno rzuty odmian tekstowych, kolejne warianty, jak i wersję drukowaną.

Zróżnicowany materiał i pozostałe notatki pisarza pozwalają badaczowi przedstawić metody pisania autora i jego dylematy. Bogata kolekcja listów jest źródłem dodatkowej wiedzy na temat procesu pisania.

Podobnie jak w innych sytuacjach twórczych, Henryk Sienkiewicz w swoisty sposób pracował nad koncepcją kluczowych fragmentów, a także sposobu narracji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Sienkiewicz, brulion, powieść, odmiany tekstu

## The *Legiony* (Legions) Project On Henryk Sienkiewicz's final novel

### *Summary*

The archived rough draft of *Legiony*, the last novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz, contains 139 separate pages, including drafts of textual varieties, subsequent variants, and the printed version.

The diverse material and the remaining writer's notes enabled the researcher to present the author's writing methods and his dilemmas. The rich collection of letters was the source of additional facts on his writing process.

Similarly to other creative situations, Henryk Sienkiewicz worked in his characteristic way on the concept of the crucial fragments as well as on the mode of narration.

**Keywords:** Sienkiewicz, rough draft, novel, textual varieties

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