JOANNA MARSZAŁEK-KAWA¹

AHMET BURAK²

Polonezköy³

*I come from a Polish village, and so
I feel at home in every village.
Perhaps more so in Polonezköy – because
it's so far from home, and yet it feels like home*
Lech Walesa, July 21, 1994 (Consulate General..., n.d.a)

ABSTRACT

There is a village on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus,⁴ initially called Adampol, but now known as Polonezköy. The Polish village is located 40 km. east of Istanbul, and was established by Poles in the nineteenth century as a shelter for the country's immigrant community. This bound the destinies of many Poles with Turkey in the nineteenth century. Once people described the village „*Soplicowo on the Bosphorus*”. Although the Polish village in Turkey has lost much of its original character through time, it remains one of the most extraordinary centres of Polish immigrants in

¹ Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, kawadj@box43.pl.

² Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, ahmet83burak@gmail.com.

³ Adampol has the Turkish name of Polonezköy, which means “*Polish village*”, and is called a “paradise beauty spot” in the advertisements.

⁴ The Bosphorus (tur. Boğaziçi) is a natural strait and internationally-significant waterway located in northwestern Turkey that forms part of the continental boundary between Europe and Asia, and separates Asian Turkey from European Turkey. The world's narrowest strait used for international navigation, the Bosphorus connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, and by extension via the Dardanelles, the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas (Chiladakis, 2016).

the world (Wyszynska, 2016). This paper analyzes the main problems in Polonezköy and investigates how Polonezköy takes an important place in bilateral relations between Turkey and Poland.

Keywords:

Polonezköy-Adampol, Turkey, Istanbul

1. HISTORY OF POLONEZKÖY

In 1772, and following the partitioning of Poland between Prussia, Austria, and Russia, as well as the vain attempts at rebellion by the Poles, the circles of Polish political emigration began to focus on Paris and Istanbul. Many of these immigrants even decided to stay in the Ottoman Empire after fleeing Poland. Moreover, some, like *Konstanty Borzecki*,⁵ even converted to Islam; Borzecki changed his name to *Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha*. Another example which linked these two countries is one of the greatest Polish poets, *Adam Mickiewicz*. He went to Constantinople in 1855, where he tried to organize Polish forces to fight against Russia in the “Crimean War”.⁶ Mickiewicz lived in the Ottoman Empire for only three months before he died. The house where he lived in is now a museum (Biernat, 2013, p. 165).

Conversion to Islam by activists within the Polish independence movement, who found protection within the Ottoman Empire, was thoroughly justified at the time. However, it represented a serious dilemma for the *émigré* community. First

⁵ Konstanty Borzecki, or Mustafa Celaleddin (1826–1876) – was born in Poland, where he received classical and religious education, and joined 1848 Revolution. Upon the failure of the Revolution, he took refuge in Turkey in 1849 together with other Polish and Hungarian refugees. He entered the Turkish army, and became a staff officer and general. He became a Muslim upon Russian pressure for the expatriation of the refugees. Celaleddin wrote for “Le Courrier d’Orient” and “Basiret” (see: *Ali Istanbul’da...*, 1908, pp. 4–5; Berkes, 1999, p. 316).

⁶ “The Crimean War (1853–1856) stemmed from Russia’s threat to multiple European interests with its pressure of Turkey. After demanding Russian evacuation of the Danubian Principalities, British and French forces laid siege to the city of Sevastopol in 1854. The campaign lasted for a full year, with the Battle of Balaclava and its «Charge of the Light Brigade» among its famous skirmishes. Facing mounting losses and increased resistance from Austria, Russia agreed to the terms of the 1856 Treaty of Paris. Remembered in part for Florence Nightingale’s work for the wounded, the Crimean War reshaped Europe’s power structure. The Crimean War was the result of Russian pressure on Turkey; this threatened British commercial and strategic interests in the Middle East and India. France, having provoked the crisis for prestige purposes, used the war to cement an alliance with Britain and to reassert its military power” (Lambert, 1991).

and foremost, it constituted a guarantee of safety as Moslems, by virtue of Russia and Austria's treaties with the Porte,⁷ could not be extradited to those states for their political activities. Furthermore, Islam opened the door to high office for Poles in the Ottoman Empire. This was particularly true within military circles, offering at least the possibility of influencing the Porte with the question of the formation of Polish units. Immigrant Poles harbored great hopes that Turkey would assist them in the struggle to liberate Poland. Ultimately, a great number of Poles were to adopt Islam and enter the Turkish military service. Other *émigrés* were compelled to leave Turkey (Antonowicz-Bauer, 1992, p. 3).

Prince Adam Czartoryski,⁸ the uncrowned ruler of Poland, proposed the establishment of agricultural settlements of a military nature in Turkey. The Turkish government, though, was not inclined to consent to such a project. Instead, the government decided to wait for some sort of suggestion from England and France; at the same time, the Turkish government feared the reaction of Russia, who then dominated affairs in Europe and whose imperialism was aimed toward the expansion into the Balkans and Bosphorus (Antonowicz-Bauer, 1992, p. 3). Czartoryski founded the Eastern Agency in Istanbul with the purpose of encouraging the Ottoman Empire to support Polish initiatives aimed at regaining independence. Simultaneously, Polish political refugees were flooding into Paris and Istanbul, and Prince Adam Czartoryski, a deposed nobleman, found sympathy for his people in Mehmet Sadik Pasha.⁹ Furthermore, a Pole who had settled in

⁷ The Sublime Porte is the West's familiar name for the Ottoman Empire (1300–1924), which, at one point, encompassed parts of the Middle East, Europe and Africa, and which produced a great culture in this region and beyond. The “Sublime Porte” was used in the context of diplomacy by Western states, as their diplomats were received at the *porte* (meaning “gate”). During the second constitutional era of the Empire after 1908 (see Young Turk Revolution), the functions of the classical Divan-ı Hümayun were replaced by the reformed Imperial Government, and “porte” came to refer to the Foreign Ministry.

⁸ Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski was born in 1770, in a Polish aristocratic family in which the interest in English culture was already a certain tradition. Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski was appointed by the Russian Tsar Curator of the Vilna Scientific District in 1803. He remained at this post for exactly twenty years. During this period, he attempted to reorganize and raise the level of both high school and university education on the area that was subject to him, basing mainly on the examples of the Western Europe. The country he considered the worthiest example to follow was England. It was not an accidental choice. This country was then a leader in numerous fields of economic, social or scientific life. The prince had an opportunity to see it for himself during his one and a half year's journey across the British Isles, which he made in his youth. In the 18th century, the remote land of English Albion was relatively little known in the Republic of Both Peoples (Poland and Lithuania) (Goclon, 2011, p. 93).

⁹ Czajkowski Michał (also known as Sadyk Pasha), born September 19th, 1804, in Halchyn, Volhynia, died January 18th, 1886, in Parkhymiv, Kozelets county, Chernihiv gubernia (see Picture 1.1).

Picture 1.1. Michał Czajkowski (also known as Sadyk Pasha) (Akova, 2014, p. 55)

Turkey having changed his name from Tchaikovsky and risen to high rank in the Ottoman government. On September 25th, 1841, Michał Czajkowski arrived in Istanbul to be appointed Chief of the Agency (Consulate General..., n.d.b). Sadik Pasha ensured that Czartoryski's proposal to found a semi-autonomous Polish village not far from the shores of the Bosphorus met with approval from Sultan Abdülmecit and, in 1842, the Polish Mission in Istanbul signed an agreement with the Lazarite Order to settle on a property held by them. This was the beginning of the first Polish agricultural colony in the Turkish state, and it was named Adampol in honor of Prince Czartoryski. Turkish neighbors, however, were prone to refer to it simply as "*The Polish Village*", Polonezköy, and hence that was the name that eventually stuck.

In the beginning, the village was inhabited by 12 people, but there were not more than 220 people when the village was most populated (*Polish Bridge...*, 2007).

In the later years, officers taking part in the "*European Revolutions*" of 1848–1849 would also settle in the village, and with time Adampol expanded further. In 1850, the number of brick houses and granaries increased. Former soldiers turned into peasants and numerous inhabitants of Adampol – professionals and specialists in various fields – also built houses and factories in the Shumen area, as well as a road from Istanbul to Trebizond.¹⁰

Portrait of Michał Czajkowski). Polish writer and political émigré, Czajkowski was a representative of the Ukrainian school in Polish literature. He participated in the Polish Insurrection of 1830–1831 and after its defeat, emigrated to France and then, in 1841, to Constantinople. In 1850, he began to work for the Turkish government, converted to Islam, and during the Crimean War organized Cossack troops on the Turkish side. In 1873, he received amnesty from the Russian government and returned to Ukraine. Czajkowski wrote romantic novels on Cossack themes (see Cossacks), including *Powieści kozackie* (*The Cossack Tales*, 1837), *Wernyhora* (1838), *Kirdzali* (1839), *Owrućzanin* (*The Man from Ovruch*, 1841), and *Ukrainki* (*Ukrainian Women*, 1841). These novels were quite popular and were translated into many European languages (see: *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, 1984).

¹⁰ Trebizond – (tur. Trabzon), a seaport of Asiatic Turkey, capital of the vilayet Trebizond,

It was not easy to maintain the village. For former soldiers, who dreamt of returning to their motherland, farm work was quite a challenge. Some of them married Polish women, who had also started a new life in the village. By 1876, there were 123 people living in Adampol. In 1883, Władysław Czarторыski solved the issue of land rights by making an agreement with its owners, the *Lazarist priests*. By virtue of the decision made by the authorities of the Ottoman Empire, he received rights equal to those of the Turkish villages in 1908. He gained new privileges in 1923, on the basis of the arrangement made between the Republic of Poland and the newly formed Republic of Turkey. As a result, the village of Adampol was renamed as Polonezköy. In 1938, most of its dwellers received Turkish citizenship (Consulate General ..., n.d.b).

2. POLONEZKÖY IN 1957

In the 1950s Polonezköy was a wealthy village inhabited by 150 people. Its residents, who formed a Catholic group strongly united by the Polish national tradition and religion, dealt mainly with farming, breeding animals and dairy production (e.g. cheese and butter). A large part of their income came from renting houses to tourists coming for summer holidays (Archive of the Ministry..., n.d., pp. 1–8).

The reports concerning his village – prepared for the Polish intelligence – show that what was one of the main problems in Polonezköy was the issue of land ownership. Farmers residing there demanded that they should acquire ownership by prescription or by the heirs of Adam Czarторыski – the rightful owner of the land – renouncing their right to it. Moreover, a lot of residents were single farmers in the productive age, who had no sufficient financial resources to come to Poland to seek wives there and, at the same time, were reluctant to marry Turkish women. What is more, the Turkish government was not willing to help them in this respect as the inflow of Polish wives would strengthen the Polish character of this place. There was also a big controversy regarding one of Polish priests in the parish. The Turkish authorities demanded that he should be removed and a foreigner should

on eastern part of the coast of the Black Sea, 120 miles NW. of Erzurum. It presents externally a striking appearance, parched on a plateau like height, with rocky declivities on two sides, enclosed by medieval walls and dominated by an old castle in the rear. The region was populated mainly by ethnic Turks in the western half and Laz-speaking Muslims in the eastern half, although throughout the period of Ottoman rule there was a history of conversion to Turkish Islam of many of the region's Pontic Greeks – with even Gülbahar Hatun, the mother of sultan Selim the Grim, said to be of Pontic Greek origin (see: A. Heilprin. L. Heilprin, 1990, p. 1854).

be appointed in his place. The Roman Catholic archbishop delayed his decision on this matter. He explained that he had no proper candidate. The documents in the archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also show that it was forbidden to teach the catechism in Polish in Polonezköy at that time. Moreover, the parish priest was allowed to stay in Polonezköy only at the specific time, i.e. on Saturdays in summer and on Saturdays and Sundays in winter. Another source says that the issue of the Polish parish priest was not inspired by the oppressive policy of the Turkish authorities, but was rather the result of a conflict within the Catholic Church in Turkey (Archive of the Ministry..., n.d.; Raport Konsulatu..., 2013).

3. TOURISM IN POLONEZKÖY

Polonezköy is one of the most famous villages in the world. About 100 Poles still live and keep their own culture and history. The village is also the one and only place very close to the center of Istanbul as a holiday town. People prefer to spend their weekends in Polonezköy and taste the local food in its famous restaurants. There are many hotels, pensions, restaurants and gardens for barbecue parties, or weddings at Adampol (*History of Polonezköy...*, n.d.).

The village started changing from a typically agricultural village to a tourist town as early as the late 1920s, but the real boom came in the 1970s. The residents of Polonezköy were renting rooms in their own houses, offering guests a wide range of homemade delicacies. The quality turned into a brand, gaining its own customers in Istanbul, who started visiting the place more often and bringing other people with them (Romanowska, 2008). Polonezköy is twinned with Przemyśl and Zakopane. The oldest partner of Polonezköy is Przemyśl – the idea of cooperation between those two townships began in 1912, when a group of tourists took a picture of Polonezköy and presented it to the local museum. Current activities, such as a youth exchange, are organized due to the contribution of a Turk living in Przemyśl (Romanowska, 2008).

The ground belongs to the Adampol inhabitants or to very affluent and famous people who just want to relax. It is cultivated and maintained mainly by old people – in order to keep the tradition and for their own pleasure (*History of Adampol*, n.d.). Every year traditional „Polonezköy Cherry Festival” is organized in June, attended by politicians, local dancers and visitors coming from Poland. The Cherry Festival started in 1992 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the village and it has been held annually ever since. During the first or last two

weeks of June, weekend activities are organized: cultural events, concerts, folk dancing (*Ogród o zapachu...*, 2012).

Polonezköy keeps ties not only with Poland, where children go for holidays every year, but also with similar Polish migrant communities in Romania. In October 2008, Polonezköy welcomed 12 children and two teachers from Nowy Soloniec in Romania (Szewczyk, 2009). The mayor of Polonezköy, Daniel Ohotski (2009), said, “We also want to establish connections with Polish towns in Georgia. The origins of villages there are the same, as they were built by Polish patriots” (Szewczyk, 2009). Thanks to deep woods surrounding Polonezköy (under protection as a “*nature park*” since 1996) and the quite “exotic” appeal (according to the Turkish standards) of the village, it is now seen as something of a quick escape from the city by the Istanbulites, arriving in numbers to spend summer weekends.

Places to see around Polonezköy (Adampol) include: the “*House of the Memory of Zofia Ryży*”, where the photographs illustrating the history of the village are exhibited, “*Częstochowa’s Church*”, which was built during the years 1900–1914, and also: “*Polish Cemetery*”, “*Polonezköy Culture House*”, “*Open air exhibition center of wooden carving art*”, “*Apiculture Museum and Souvenir Shops*”, “*BMX Bicycle Track*”, and a “*5-kilometer walking and jogging track*” are the places of interest (*Attractions & Things...*, n.d.).

4. POLISH-TURKISH RELATIONS

Polonezköy has attracted many famous guests, including Hungarian pianist Franz Liszt, who visited the village in 1847, and French novelist Gustave Flaubert, in 1850. Kemal Atatürk, the revered founder and the first President of the Turkish Republic, visited the community in 1937, a year before his death (Antonowicz-Bauer, 1992, p. 21). Other visitors were Pope Nuncio Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII (in 1941 some children received confirmation from him during his visit), and the first Polish diplomat after the Second World War in 1960, Adam Rapacki, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRL, accompanied by Turkish dignitaries.

When the President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel visited Poland in 1993 as the guest of Lech Walesa, he included in his delegation the Muhtar¹¹ of Polonezköy.

¹¹ Muhtar – is the elected village head in villages of Turkey. In cities, likewise, each quarter has a muhtar but with a slightly different status. Muhtars and their village councils are elected during local elections for five years. However, political parties are not permitted to stand candidates for these posts.

During the visit, the Poles claimed him as their own, to which Demirel retorted, “*No, he is my Muhtar, a Turkish national of Polish origin*”, a pleasant wrangle that continued in an amiable way, as Demirel recounted to the invited audience (Soylemez, 2006). In 1994, Lech Wałęsa became the first Polish president to visit the village. His successor, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, visited Polonezköy in 1996 and 2000. Famous Turks with partial Polish ancestry include the poet and playwright Nazım Hikmet and the soprano opera singer Leyla Gencer,¹² who was born in Polonezköy.

For Polish politicians and diplomats Adampol is a second place to visit after Ankara. Although the official meeting places remain the capitals of Poland and Turkey, i.e., Warsaw and Ankara, according to tradition, the Polish side is also visiting Polonezköy – settlement of Polish immigrants on the outskirts of Istanbul.

5. CONCLUSION

In 2014, Adampol celebrated the 170th anniversary of its founding, and the same year marked the 600th anniversary of Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations. Turkey and Poland have a long, tumultuous common history and their interests and friendship provide fertile ground for mutually beneficial development in the 21st century. Nowadays, about 1,000 people live in Adampol and 40 of them still speak Polish fluently after many years of its foundation. Polonezköy is a favorite place for Polish diplomats, politicians and military officials who visit Turkey. The Poles of Polonezköy feel like Poles despite the fact that they are Turkish citizens. First of all, they speak Polish with each other and continue the religious beliefs of their ancestors. Polish culture is reflected in all parts of their lives, from buildings through lifestyles to wedding ceremonies. Turkish and Polish flags hanging side-by-side are a normal sight in Polonezköy. Adampol is a showcase of ethnic and

¹² Leyla Gencer (10 October 1928–10 May 2008) – was a very beautiful woman, with large dark eyes, a wide, generous mouth and a natural command of the stage. Born Leyla Ceyrekçil in Istanbul, the daughter of a Turkish Muslim father and a Polish Catholic mother, she married Ibrahim Gencer, a wealthy banker, in 1946; he eventually predeceased her. She made her debut as Santuzza in Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the open-air summer festival in Naples in 1953, and remained a particular favourite with the Neapolitans (see: O’Conno, 2008).

racial harmony in Turkey, because both Muslims and Christians pray together in Polonezköy. This very important fact contributes to strengthening cultural relationship between Adampol, Poland and Turkey.

Picture 1.2. Wedding of Natalia and Adolf Wilkoszewcy in Polonezköy (Akova, 2014, p. 120)

Picture 1.3. Anna Dochoda with her two daughters Valeria and Natalia and their guests (Akova, 2014, p. 14)

Picture 1.4. Adam Mickiewicz and Mehmet Sadyk Pasha turn back to Burgas from hunting in 1857 (Akova, 2014, p. 57)

Picture 1.5. Sights from Polonezköy (Adampol-Polonezköy, n.d.)

Picture 1.6. Polonezköy Cherry Festival in 2010 (Akova, 2014, p. 43)

References

- Adampol-Polonezköy (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.adampol-polonezkoy.pl/galeria.php?co=duze&id=17&zdzecie=8&j=en>.
- Akova, A. (2014). *Polonezköy. Orzeł biały pod niebem półksiężyca z gwiazdą*. Ankara: Ministerstwo Kultury i Turystyki Republiki Turcji.
- Ali Istanbul'da Yasırlık Vekay-i Muhimme (1908). Istanbul.
- Antonowicz-Bauer, L. (1992). *Polonezköyü Adampol*. Istanbul.
- Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Document of Polish People's Republic by Ambassador Kazimierz Dorosz in Ankara in 1957, *Adampol – polska wieś pod Stambulem*. Department V, Division II, Paper folder 585.
- Attractions & Things to Do in Polonezköy (Adampol), Istanbul (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.polonezkoy.com/en/things-to-do-in-polonezkoy.asp>.
- Berkes, N. (1999). *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. London: Routledge.
- Biernat, A. (2013). Poland and Turkey: True Partners? Political and Economic Relations Between These Two Countries After the End of the Cold War. In: K. Aksu (ed.). *Turkey: A Regional Power in the Making* (pp. 164–179). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Chiladakis, N. (2016, February 21). *Urgent: Turkey to Close the Bosphorus Strait to All Russian Military Vessels*. “Super Station 95”. Retrieved from: <https://www.superstation95.com/index.php/world/923>.
- Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Istanbul (n.d.a). *Lech Walesa's Palm*. Retrieved from: http://www.stambul.msz.gov.pl/en/polish_community_in_turkey/poland_and_turkey_two_countries_in_one_mirror/lech_walesas_palm/lech_walesa_s_palm.
- Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Istanbul (n.d.b). *A Polish Village in Istanbul*. Retrieved from http://www.stambul.msz.gov.pl/en/polish_community_in_turkey/poland_and_turkey_two_countries_in_one_mirror/a_polish_village_in_istanbul/.
- Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (1984). Vol. 1.
- Goclon, J. (2011). The Role of Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski in Developing the Contacts Between the Vilna Scientific District and England (1803–1824). *Słupskie Studia Historyczne*, 17, pp. 93–116.
- Heilprin, A., Heilprin, L. (1990). *Geographical Dictionary of the World*. New Delphi.
- History of Adampol* (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.adampol-polonezkoy.pl/index.php?co=adampol&j=en>.
- History of Polonezköy (Adampol), Istanbul* (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.polonezkoy.com/en/polonezkoy-adampol-history.asp>.
- Lambert, A.D. (1991). *Crimean War*. Retrieved from: <http://www.history.com/topics/british-history/crimean-war>.
- O'Conno, P. (2008, May 13). A Turkish soprano of great dramatic power, she excelled in a wide range of Italian opera. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/may/13/turkey>.
- Ogród o zapachu przyjaźni* (2012, June 19). Retrieved from: <https://poloniawstambule.com/2012/06/19/ogrod-o-zapachu-przyjazni/>.
- Polish Bridge Across the Bosphorus* (2007, January 5). „Polskie Radio”. Retrieved from: <http://www2.polskieradio.pl/eo/dokument.aspx?iid=17574>.

- Raport Konsulatu Generalnego RP w Stambule 2012 (2013, November 2). Retrieved from: <https://adampolpolonezkoy.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/a.jpg>.
- Romanowska, M. (2008, August 2). Polska osada na tureckiej ziemi. *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/polska-osada-na-tureckiej-ziemi.aspx?pageID=438&n=polska-osada-na-tureckiej-ziemi-2008-08-23>.
- Soylomez, Y. (2006, December 3). *Historic Polonezköy as an example for promoting multi-ethnic culture and tourism*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/historic-polonezkoy-as-an-example-for-promoting-multi-ethnic-culture-and-tourism.aspx?pageID=438&n=historic-polonezkoy-as-an-example-for-promoting-multi-ethnic-culture-and-tourism-2006-03-12>.
- Szewczyk, J. (2009, June 11). Muslims, Christians Pray Together in Polonezköy. *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/muslims-christians-pray-together-in-polonezkoy.aspx?pageID=438&n=muslim-and-christian-pray-together-in-polonezkoy-2009-11-05>.
- Wyszynska, A. (2016, April 2). *Polish Village on the Bosphorus*. Retrieved from: http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artykul.php?lg=gb&nr=&dz=z_historii&id_art=00021.