

NB. Translation provided in 2022 by Jakub Wolak.

The transcript of the book in Old Polish follows this translation below.

Fabian Birkowski

Stephan Chmielecki

**or a Tombstone of the Honorable His Majesty Stephan Chmielecki, the
Voivode of Kyiv, the Pious, the Chivalric, the Blessed, Commemorated with
a funeral remembrance¹**

Warsaw 1632

[fragment]

You unworthy Saracens and Pagans, did you sell your souls to the Devil and your bodies and virtue to the Paganism for just one bakhmat and for lawlessness, only to plunder and ravage your beloved Motherland with them [i.e. the Tatars], and to bereave her of her sons and daughters²? Tell me, at least now, since you have learned of this victory over Baal, the Pagan seer³. How are we to maledict the Worthy Polish Crowne, if it is not maledicted by God? How are we to despise our Motherland, if God does not despise it? Behold!, the people have risen like a lioness, they stood up like a lion. They will not lay until they devour their prey and drink the blood of

¹ This is a funerary speech given in 1632 by a Dominican friar, Fabian Birkowski, in honor of Stefan Chmielecki, the late voivode of Kyiv and one of the most celebrated Polish military leaders of his times.

² The Author seems to mean unspecified former Christians, possibly Polish, Ruthenian or Cossack nobles, who, having previously fought with Turks and Tatars, converted to Islam.

³ He was previously speaking of a Polish-Cossack victory over the Tatars in which one of the sons of Khan Temir, ruler of Budjak Horde, was killed (possibly the battle of Gniła Lipa of 1629, at the banks of river Hnyla Lypa, modern-day Ukraine). Now he seems to compare Islam with the cult of Baal known from the Old Testament; he is not willing to call Baal a „god” and instead calls him, quite oddly, a „seer” („wieszczek”).

the dead, the unworthy Tatars. You have seen how God's mighty hand liberated His Christians from the hands of the Pagans, similar to the captivity in Egypt. And the virility of Christians is as the virility of Rhinoceros, *Rhinoceroti*⁴. Osman, the Turkish Emperor, being recently seen at Chocim⁵, have led some Elephants with him, he himself being a bestial elephant. To counter the Elephant, God have deployed the Rhinoceros, the people of Poland, whose virility was similar to the virility of Rhinoceros. Plinius, lib. 8, c. 20⁶, gives a description of Rhinoceros and says that it is of a color of a box-tree, has a horn growing out of its nose, a horn which is not straight but crooked and oblique, and therefore it is called Rhinoceros, from *Rin*, the nose, and *Keras*, the horn, from which it draws its strange virility and with which it wages war with the Elephant, with which it of almost equal height but of shorter shins. It sharpens its horn by rubbing it against a rock, and in such a way it prepares for a battle, in which it aims for the Elephant's abdomen, which it recognizes as it's weakest point; if it hits it, the Elephant is immediately defeated. In such manner Emanuel, the King of Lustania⁷, enjoyed a great spectacle in Lisbon in Year 1515, when he set Elephant against Rhinoceros, and witnessed the Elephant defeated. Therefore Rhinoceros is a *symbolum* of virility, and thence of God, who is the most virile.

Moreover, Rhinoceros is a sign of wrath, a wrath which is unhasteful, yet terrifying. It needs a lot of wrath until it becomes wrathful, but when it is wrathful, it is very cruel; just as God, whose punishments come late but are very heavy. Thence the proverb: *Dii laneos pedes habent*. God has woolen feet, *sed ferreas manus*, but iron hands. The first man to deploy Rhinoceros in a theatre, *in dedicatione Amphitheatri*⁸ clashing him with a bull and a bear, the Emperor Domitian, ordered to mint a coin with a depiction of Rhinoceros, meaning that he himself is similar to this beast. Firstly, that he has a great heart, and that he is of a kingly virility. Secondly, that he does not become wrathful speedily, but when he does, he is merciless. This was expressed in two epigrams by Martial, who was dear to Domitian. In the first poem he describes the unbelievable power of Rhinoceros, which, fighting in a duel with a cruel bull, threw the bull as if it was some kind of a ball.

⁴ Pol.: „których meztwo podobne iest Nosorożcowi *Rhinoceroti*” – first comes the Polish, then the Latin name of the animal. I decided to retain the capitalized names of animals.

⁵ In 1621 in the battle of Chocim (modern-day Khotyn, Ukraine) the outnumbered Poles and Cossacks successfully repelled the attack of a vast Turkish force and won one of the most celebrated military victories in the history of Poland and Ukraine.

⁶ He means Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, book 8, chapter 20.

⁷ Manuel I, King of Portugal.

⁸ For the occasion of inaugurating an amphitheatre.

Praestitit exhibitus tota tibi Caesar arena,

Quae non promisit proelia Rhinoceros.

O quam terribilis exarsit pronus in iras!

*Quantus erat cornu, cui pila taurus erat!*⁹

Rhinoceros excelled in whatever kind of battle it was sent to on the sand [of the arena]. Behold, how terribly wrathful he became, how mighty is its horn, for which the bull is like a ball, that is a bullet filled with straw. In the second poem he tells that this beast does not become wrathful quickly, but when it is angry, it is very fiery and it hits its enemy not with one horn, but with two. It says so:

Sollicitant pavidum dum Rhinocerotam magistri,

Seque diu magnae colligit ira ferae.

Desperabantur promissi proelia Martis,

Sed tamen is rediit cognitus ante furor.

Namque gravem gemino cornu sic extulit ursum

*Iactat ut inpositas taurus in astra pilas*¹⁰.

The keepers made the beast angry, but it did not become infuriated too quickly; yet when it finally did, it tossed the big bear such forcefully as a bull which tosses up balls.

The same Plinius, lib. 8. c. 21, describes the Unicorn and says: „Monoceros is a cruel animal, similar to a horse in everything except for the head, which is like the deer’s head, and the legs, which are elephant-like, and the tail, which is hog-like. Its roaring is heavy, it has one horn in the middle of its forehead, two ells long; it is said that no one can catch this creature alive”. This is also confirmed by Aelianus, lib. 16 *de Animal*, c. 20 and lib. 17 c. 44¹¹. He says that the

⁹ Martial, *On the Spectacles*, 9. Birkowski provides a short Polish prose translation right afterwards. W.C.A. Ker’s translation from 1897 goes as follows: „The rhinoceros, exhibited for thee, Caesar, in the whole space of the arena, fought battles of which he gave no promise. Oh, into what terrible wrath did he with lowered head, blaze forth! How powerful was that tusk to whom a bull was a mere ball!”

¹⁰ Martial, *On the Spectacles*, 22. W.C.A. Ker’s translation: „While the trembling keepers were exciting the rhinoceros, and the wrath of the huge animal had been long arousing itself the conflicts of the promised engagement were beginning to be despaired of; but at length his fury, well-known of old, returned. For easily as a bull tosses to the skies the balls placed upon *his horns* so with his double horn did he hurl aloft the heavy bear”.

¹¹ Claudius Aelianus, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, book 16, chapter 20, and book 17, chapter 44.

Unicorn has black mane and fur, swift legs, black horn, benign towards other beasts and severe in towards its own kin. Pierius in *hieroglyphico Rhinocerotis*¹² calls it a halicorn; he identifies it with that which is called *monoceros* in the Septuagint and *unicornis* in the Vulgate. Indeed, the Jewish word *reem* means both the Unicorn and the Rhinoceros¹³, as often happens with the names of animals in the Jewish tongue, that they often signify another animals.

The Unicorn (as St. Gregory and St. Isidore say) is of such might that it cannot be captured by any deceit the hunters would employ; but, as the Physicians say, they set a young lady before it; when it comes to meet her, she lets it lay on her hands; it gives up all its severity, lays down its head, and, falling into a sleep, gets captured as it would be a lamb. This is confirmed by Rupertus¹⁴, Pierius and Albertus Magnus, lib. 22 *de Animal*¹⁵. If this story is true, then this Unicorn very elegantly signifies Christ the Lord. Rupertus bespeaks this beautifully: God, the most virile among all spirits, speaks as an Unicorn, that is a being of a peculiar might, the uncomprehensible God of unconquerable power; it is carried away by the scent of Virgin's life and shut within it; and it could have never been captured by any other means except for that one; and it is murdered. Thence both Tertullian, *Contr. Iudaeos* 10 and Justin, *Contra Triphonum* pag. 16¹⁶, present an allegoric interpretation of the words *cornua monocerotis* (they read so after Septuagint, instead of *Rhinoceotis*) *cornua eius* from Deuteronomy 33, 17¹⁷. They hold that this is an allegory of the Holy Cross; Christ's horns, that is the might and virility, with which he vanquished the Devil and broke through sin and death are no other but the Cross.

Yet Marcus Paulus Venetus, lib. 3 c. 15¹⁸, and Gesnerus in *Monocerote*¹⁹, as well as another Scholars call this story about Unicorn tamed by the maiden a fable, which originated from the fact (so Gesnerus) that the Unicorn is a very wild animal and can never be tamed; except from the time when it mates with its female; therefore there is no mention of this taming nor in Plinius, nor in Aelianus, nor in Aristotle. This opinion [of Venetus] is also found in Andrea Bacci, *Medicus tractatus de Halicorno*, pag. 67²⁰, where he quotes Aelianus: „Halicornus is so

¹² Piero Valeriano Bolzani, *Hieroglyphica, sive, De sacris Aegyptiorvm literis commentarii*. There must be a chapter on rhinoceros in that book.

¹³ In fact *re'em* does not mean unicorn nor rhinoceros but rather oryx or wild mountain buffalo (Sokolski 2017, 94)

¹⁴ Rupert of Deutz.

¹⁵ Albert the Great, *On Animals*, book 22.

¹⁶ Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, 10; Justin the Martyr, *Against Trypho*, 16.

¹⁷ In Deuteronomy 33, 17 Moses blesses Jacob: „His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (King James's Version).

¹⁸ Marco Polo, *Book of the Marvels of the World*, book 3, chapter 15.

¹⁹ Conrad Gessner, *History of animals*.

²⁰ Andrea Bacci, *Discorso dell'alicorno*, p. 67.

wild, that it found no joy in the sight of its female; and having left her, he roams alone in the wilderness, until a lust is kindled within him in the time of mating; then he benignly comes to the female, grazes together with her and fraternizes with her. But when he sees her inseminated and pregnant, he returns to his former cruelty and loneliness”.

This Monoceros, as I already mentioned, is a sign of God himself; and a sign of the People of Israel, for they praised one God only and they received great might from Him, very wonderful might which they showed when chasing their enemies. But I will ascribe this name and virility of Monoceros to my Chmielecki, for he is kindly worthy of it for the sake of his virile deeds. God himself asks St. Job: „Will the Rhinoceros be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the Rhinoceros with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?”²¹ And I ask the unworthy Khan Temir²²: „How are you to bind Chmielecki and lead him to yourhrde, as you did to many other before? Don’t you know that it is impossible to bound this Monoceros, who have died before ever letting bounds fall upon his hands and feet?” Oh, the most worthy Voivode, you, who have never succumbed to the Pagans, you well deserve the tombstone made for Abner by the Great King David: „Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters²³; nor thou were ever yoked to the plough of ugly slavery, not thy hands were ever strained by a harsh strap; it was rather thou who bound the ugly Pagans, and among them the foremost Saracen men, whom thou led before the majesty of your Lord”.

Translated by Jakub Wolak

²¹ Job 39, 9-10. King James’s Version. I changed „unicorn” used by KJV to „Rhinoceros”, following Birkowski’s use of „Nosorożec” and not „Jednorożec”.

²² The ruler of Budjak Horde since ca. 1603 until his death 1637.

²³ 2 Samuel 3, 34. King James’s Version. The latter verses are Birkowski’s invention.

Fabian Birkowski

Stephan Chmielecki

**albo Nagrobek Jaśnie Wielmożnego Jego Mości Pana Stephana
Chmieleckiego Woiewody Kiiwoskiego, Pobożnego, Rycerskiego,
Szczęśliwego, Pamięcią pogrzebną wspomniony**

Warszawa 1632

[fragment]

Kedyżeście teraz bezecni Bisurmańcy, y Pohańcy, ktorzyście przedali dusze wasze Dyabłu, a ciała y cnote Pogaństwu za iednego bachmata y za swawolą, abyście Oycyzne wasze miłą z nimi wespoł plondrowali, palili, z Synowiey y z corek odzierali? Przynamniey teraz zwyciestwo to obaczywszy z Baalem Pogańskim wieszczkiem mowicie? Jakoż mamy złorzeczyć Cney Koronie Polskiej, ktorey Bóg nie złorzeczy? Jako się mamy hydzić Oycyzną naszą, którą się nie hydzi Bóg? Oto lud iako lwica powstał, y podniosł się iako lew: nie układzie się, aż pożrze oblow, y napiie się krwi z zabitych, *Tatarow bezecznych*. Widzieliście iako mocną reką z Pogańskich rąk iako z Egiptu nieiakiego wyzwolił Bóg Chrześciany swoje; Chrześciany, których meztwo podobne iest Nosorożcowi *Rhinoceroti*. Osman Cesarz Turecki, który nie dawno pod Choćimem był, miał Słonie z soba, sam słoniem bestyalnym będąc. Przeciwko słoniowi Bog posłał Nosorożca, lud Polski, którego meztwo było podobne Nosorożcowi. *Plinius lib. 8. c. 20* opisuje Rynocerotą i mowi iż iest barwy bukszpanowey, ma rog, który od nosa pochodzi nie prosto, ale krzywo y na ukos, y z tąd nazwany iest Rynoceros od *Rin*, to iest nosy *Keras*, to iest rog, którym on dziwnie mężny iest, y woiuie z Elefantem, ktoremu w wysokości niemal iest rowny, ale goleni krotszych. Obostrza rog o skałę, y tak sie na woynie gotuie, w ktorey do brzucha elefantowey zmierza, o którym wie że nasłabszy; ten gdy zbodzie,

zaraz zmoże Elefanta. Y tak Emanuel Król Lusitański w Roku 1515 w Lisibonie znakomity widok sobie uczynił, spuściwszy Elefanta z Rynocerotem, na którym przegrał Elefant. Zaczynam Rynocerot *Symbolum* iest meztwa, a zatym Boga który iest nameźniejszy.

Znowu nosorożec jest znakiem gniewu nie rychłego, ale strasznego. Bo on potrzebuie wielkiego rozgniewania, ale skoro się gniewać pocznie, jest barzo okrutny: takowym iest Bóg, który leniwe karanie ciężkością nagradza. Stąd przysłowie: *Dii laneos pedes habent*. Bóg chodzi na wełnianych nogach, *sed ferreas manus*, ale ma ręce żelazne. Przeto pierwszy, który na teatrum wprowadził Rynocerota przeciwko bykowi i niedźwiedziowi Domicyan Cesarz, *in dedicatione Amphitheatri*, kazał monete bić z obrazem Nosorożca, aby dał znać, że podobnym iest tej bestyey. Naprzod, że wielkie ma serce, y Krolewskie meztwo przy nim iest. Po wtore, że leniwym iest do gniewu, ale iako sie rozgniewa nieubłaganym. Wyraził to dwiema Epigramaty Marcalis, który u Domicyjana był w wielkim kochaniu. Pierwszym wierszem niepodobną sile explikuie w Rynocerozie, który na pojedynku rzucił bykiem okrutnym, iako piłą nieiaką.

Praescitit exhibitus tota tibi Caesar arena,

Quae non promisit praelia Rhinoceros.

O quam terribiles exarsit pronus in iras?

Quantus erat cornu, cui pila taurus erat?

Iakich woien nie obiecował, takie czynił Nosorożec na piasku: O iako się straszno rozgniewał, iako potężny rog, u którego byk pił, to iest wymiotem słoma napchanym był? Drugi wiersz daie znać, iż ta bestya nie rychło się gniewa, ale skoro się rozie, zapalczywa iest barzo, y nieprzyaciela nie iednym, ale dwiema rogami biie. Bo tak mowi:

Sollicitant pavidum dum Rhinocerotam Magiferi,

Seque diu magne colligit ira ferae.

Desperabantur promisi praelia Martis,

Sed tamen is rediit cognitus ante furor.

Namque gravem gemino cornu sic extulit ursum

Iactat ut impositas taurus in astra pilas. T.i.

Gdy przystawowie gniewaia bestyą, y ona nie rychło bierze sie na furyą, przyszła potym do niey, y rzuciła tak potężnie wielkim niedźwiedziem, iako wiec byk do gory rzuca piłami.

Tenże Plinius *lib. 8. c. 21.* opisuje Jednorożca y mówi: „Monoceros iest okrutne zwierze, podobne koniowi we wszystkim oprócz głowy, która podobna iest yeleniowi, y nog które Elefantowi, ogona który wieprzowi; ryk iego cieszki, ieden ma rog wpulczoła na dwa łokcie długi; powiadaia iż tego zwierza żywcem nikt nie poima”. Toż pisze Aelianus *lib. 16. de Animal. c. 20. et lib. 17. c. 44,* który czyni Jednorożca na grzywie y na sierci czarnym, predkim w nogach, rog mu daie czarny, łaskawość przeciw innym bestyom, srogość przeciw swoim. Tego Pieryus *in hieroglyphico Rhinocerotis, halicornem* zowie z y rozumie tegoż, którego *Septuag. monocerodem* nazwali, a *Vulgat. Unicornem.* Bo Zydowskie słowo *Reem* y Jednorożca y Nosorożca znaczy, iako y drugie imiona zwierzętu Zydow są pospolite drugim.

Jednorożec tedy, (mowi Grzegorz S. y Isidor) takiey iest siły, iż żadnym fortelem łowcow nie może być poimany: ale iako Physikowie powiadaia, stawa przedem młoda panne, która gdy wybieży, przyimuie go na rece: a ten srogość wszelaką złożywszy, głowe skłania, y tak uspioy iako baranek poimany bywa. Tegoż uczy *Rupertus, y Pierius, y Albertus Magnus lib. 22. de Animal.* Historya ta iesli prawdziwa, bardzo przystoynie Jednorożec ten Chrystusa Pana znaczy. O czym *Rupertus* pieknie; Nameźnieyszy miedzy wszystkimi duchami Bog, mowi iako Jednorożec, to iest potegi osobliwey, Bog nieogarniony, y siły niezwyćeżoney, zaćiągniony wonnością żywota Pannieńskiego iest, y w nim się zamknął; y nie mógł inaczey poimany być, chyba ztamtąd, y zamordowany. Ztąd y *Tertulian contr. Iudaeos 10* y *Justyn contra Triphonem pag. 17* one słowa *Deuteron. 33. 17. Cornua monocerotis* (tak czytaia *Septuag.* Miasto *Rhinocerotis*) *cornua eius*; o rogach Krzyża S. rozumieią te słowa, według allegoriy: Chrystusowe abowiem rogi, to iest siła y meztwo, którym Czarta gromil, y przebil grzech y śmierć, nie było inne, iedno Krzyż.

Ale *Marcus Paulus venetus lib. 3. c. 15. Gesnerus in Monocerote,* y drudzy Učení te powieść o swoyskim Jednorożcu przez panne, bayką nazywaią, która się ztąd wszczęła (pisze *Gesnerus*) że Jednorożec iest zwierze barzo dzikie, które nie swoyszczecie nigdy, iedno na ten czas gdy się z samicą swoją kuma: zaczym ani *Plinius,* ani *Aelianus,* ani *Arystoteles* żadney wzmianki o tym uswoyszczeniu nie czynią. *AndreasBacci Medicus tractatus de Halicorno pag. 67* toż twierdzi, y przykłada z *Eliana:* Halikorn iest taki dziki, że y swoiey samicy nie rad widzi, bo odszedszy od niey samopas po pustyniach chodzi, aż się miłostka zapali, gdy iest czas rodzenia, łaskawie do samicy przychodzi, y z nią się pasie wesoł y braci. Ale skoro postrzeże, że poczeła y brzemie nosi, wraca się do dawnego okrućienstwa, y do osobności.

Ten *Monocerot,* iako sie wyżej rzekło, Boga samego znaczy; znaczy y lud izraelski, a to że iednego Boga chwalił, y przeto od Niego siły wielkie brał, cudowne barzo, gdy sie ugania z

nieprzyjaciołami swymi. A ja to imię i to meztwo Monocerotowe Chmieleckiemu moiemu oddam, ktorego mile godzien, dla meżnych dzieł swoich, ktore czynił. Pyta Joba świętego Bog sam: „czy bedzie chciał Nosorożec służyć tobie, czy się zabawi u żłobu twego? Czy go ty przywiążesz do pługu rzemieniem twoim? Czy on będzie przewracał ziemię dolin twoich za tobą?” Pytam ia Kantymira bezecnego: Jako? chcesz Chmieleckiego wiązać, y prowadzić do hordy, iakoś przedtym innym czynił? Nie wiesz tego że się nie da wiązać tobie ten Monocerot, który pierwey umarł, nim pęta na ręce jego i na nogi padły. Zacny Woiewodo nigdy niezwyćieżony od Pogaństwa, zarobiłeś dobrze na ten nagrobek, który napisał Abnerowi Krol Wielki Dawid: Rece twoie nie były związane; ani nogi twoie okowami były uciemężone, w pługu niewoli brzydkiey nie chodziłeś nigdy, rzemień suowy rąk twoich nigdy nie tykał, wiązałeś ty raczey Pogaństwo brzydkie, a miedzy innymi Pani przednie Bisurmańskie, ktoreś prowadził przed mayestat Pana twego.