Constructing a Polish Landscape: The Example of the Carpathian Frontier

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In the age of modern nationalisms, the first attempt that Poles made to construct a national landscape came in the last third of the nineteenth century. The stateless Poles, subjects of three different imperial powers, somehow managed to transform a remote mountain borderland along the internal Austro-Hungarian frontier into a recognizable and important national icon. While many attempts have been made to transform the *natural* environment into a *national* environment since then, this accomplishment helped to make the Carpathian Mountains, and in particular a section of them known as the Tatra Mountains, one of the most recognizable parts of "Poland," however it is defined.

The story I am about to tell is but one episode demonstrating how a relatively inaccessible and wild landscape, albeit one of strategic importance, could be "tamed" and assimilated into the popular consciousness. It also demonstrates the peculiar intersection of backwardness and modernity as well as the challenges that face an isolated region of great natural beauty when "outsiders" stream in. This influx of "outsiders"—in this case, lowlanders—can be thought of as a by-product of the "discovery" of the region. What we see is that, in the course of their encounter with the highland landscape and people, all sides are transformed. This essay, thus, can be situated within the mountain of literature on tourism as well as within the realm of environmental history.

The importance of the highland landscape for Poles, people, and state may strike some readers as paradoxical. Anyone familiar with the etymology of the words "Poland" and "Pole" knows that these terms connote lowlands and plains—*pola*, whence terms like Polane, Polak, Polacy, Polonia—the very territories with which we associate this people and land. Why, then, investigate the role played by mountains and mountaineers in Polish national consciousness? Surely such matters cannot be significant, given the overwhelmingly "flat" experience of most of the region's people. Yet Polish attitudes toward such remote alpine regions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are instructive. They shed light on the emerging modern form of Polish national identity, its interaction and relationship with other identities—local, regional, and national—as well as on concerns about "modernity" in general.

Polish elites of the period projected their own visions of Poland onto the southern borderlands, imagining both the land and the people in ways that suited their new, socially broader sense of what constituted the modern Polish nation. They used the human and natural landscape of the Carpathian Mountains creatively—and here I mean this literally by recasting, in a very public way, the definition of Polishness. In their encounter with a remote

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and wild frontier, the Poles transformed it into a part of their heritage. In the process, the indigenous inhabitants of this region—the highlanders—found themselves not only written into the Polish national narrative, but they also became a repository of the core values and characteristics of the Polish nation and served as inspiration for their lowland neighbors. At the same time, other inhabitants of the province of Galicia, where the Tatra Mountains lay—people we would call Poles, although they themselves may have had more of an imperial or regional than national identity—found themselves, perhaps, becoming more "Polish."

The present essay is organized as follows: I will proceed by discussing the particulars of the frontier landscape and then turn to the Tatra Mountains region, discussing earlier encounters as well as the so-called "discovery" of 1873 and its repercussions. Among the most important encounters was the establishment of the region's first alpine association, the Tatra Society, which ultimately helped nationalists "appropriate" both the territory and its people for the Polish nation, as demonstrated by the role the society played in a territorial dispute along the Galician border with Hungary.

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That the Tatra Mountains were part of a particular landscape—a border or frontier landscape—has special meaning for the way nineteenth-century Poles imagined them. By definition, frontiers exist on the edge or periphery of something else: a country, a nation, even a new state of mind (as when we speak of frontiers of knowledge). They can be places of transit as well, areas where one passes from one state (again, understood both literally and figuratively) to another—even places where people go to gain new identities. These people include renegades, escaped serfs, and those with an independent streak who escape from their cares and begin new, freer lives.

Frontiers are also places of encounter. Here the term "frontier" is used in a very American sense. Scholars of the Americas differentiate between what they call a "European" frontier—that is, a "fortified line on inhabited territory"—from what they see as native to the Americas, "a vaguely delineated and scarcely populated area."[1] Initiating a discussion in the *American Historical Review*, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron defined the term as "a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined."[2] The Carpathian frontier explored in this essay—the Tatra Mountains region—seems to fit this definition. Not only was it sparsely inhabited; as we will see, its borders were also to a certain degree fluid at the time.[3] It likewise is helpful to think of the interaction of those from outside the region—tourists, travelers, colonists, officials sent from the imperial or provincial centers of Vienna or Lemberg—with the indigenous folk in terms of a clash of cultures. Following the definition forwarded by the editors of a recent volume on the Americas, frontiers are "geographic zones of interaction between two or more distinctive

[1]Hebe Clementi, "National Identity and the Frontier," in *Where Cultures Meet: Frontiers in Latin American History*, ed. David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, Jaguar Books on Latin America 6 (Wilmington, 1994), 143.

[2]Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999): 815.

[3]In a sense, this is a slightly different usage from more traditional definitions of the frontier as the "outer limits," in a Turnerian sense of the word, and closer to Mary Louise Pratt's "transcultural zones." See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York, 1992). For a stimulating discussion of this subject, see the Guided Discussion Forum initiated by Eva-Marie Stolberg on H-Russia: "Frontier and Space in Russian History: Is Turner's 'Frontier' Useful for Russia's Empire-Building?" (begun July 4, 2002).

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cultures…, places where cultures contend with one another and with their physical environment to produce a dynamic that is unique to time and place."[4]

One way frontiers affect those who venture into them is in the realm of national identity. According to Peter Sahlins, "Frontier regions are privileged sites for the articulation of national distinctions."[5] Part of the fascination of such regions lies in the indeterminacy of identities associated with them. Remote alpine regions generally inspire local or at most regional—not national—identities. These isolated pockets often exist in a premodern age; their inhabitants appear to be relics from another era. It is the process of imagining such relatively backward groups as members of larger communities, as well as the interaction of "Polish" elite culture with local native cultures, that concerns me here.

Indeed, what holds for Sahlins's Pyrenees is even more striking when applied to the much larger and more complex mountain range of the Carpathians. Here a multitude of cultures intersects. People we now may be inclined to describe in national terms—that is, as Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Germans, Romanians, and the like—did not always think of themselves in this way. They saw themselves, for example, as Górale, Zipser, Hutsuls, or Lemkos. The location of this encounter is also significant. The Carpathians bisect Eastern Europe as a whole. While in the larger geographical scheme the Carpathians are central to the region, this over 900-mile-long mountain range is also oddly peripheral when examined from the point of view of most individual nations—again, attributable to the borderland effect.

The present essay focuses on a small but significant portion of the Carpathians at a certain moment in time: the "Polish" Carpathians in the last half century of the period of partitions (from the 1870s to the first years of the twentieth century). It should be noted that "Polish" is not meant in an ethnic sense. Rather, the adjective refers to the fact that these lands were once part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the large multiethnic, premodern state that disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795. The part of the Carpathians most identified with Poland, historically as well as in the present, are the Tatra Mountains.

The concept of borderland regions, of course, is not new to Polish historiography. The Polish past has spawned numerous regional identities, some dating back to the days of the medieval and early modern state and others emerging from the arrangements imposed by the partitioning powers. Those familiar with Polish romanticism, for example, have most certainly heard of the so-called *kresy*—the eastern borderlands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—that gave the nation so many of its illustrious poets and activists.[6] The borderlands that concern us here seem to be the country's one natural frontier: the Carpathian Mountains. This alpine region historically served as Poland's southern border. During the period under investigation, the mountains belonged to the Austrian zone and formed the borderland of one of its provinces, the Crownland (*Kronland, kraj*) of Galicia. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Galicia was accorded a degree of autonomy, making it the one area of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that Poles themselves controlled. Opportunities for more or less independent action, thus, were greatest in Galicia.

As stated at the outset, the impact of this alpine border region, far to the south of the vast plains that form the bulk of the territory we associate with modern-day Poland, transcends

[4]Clementi, introduction to *Where Cultures Meet*, xiv.

[5]Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989), 271.

[6]A recent work that deals expertly with this region is Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, CT, 2003).

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its geographical remoteness. One might even say that, during this period, this frontier moved from the periphery of Polish consciousness into its center. What happened when nationally self-conscious Poles encountered this borderland territory? The Polish elites who came into contact with both the land and the people perceived the southern borderlands as distinctive, unique, inspiring—as well as malleable. The remoteness, the primitive folk quality or "backwardness," as well as the historic national connection of the region combined to lend it a particular salience.

While nineteenth-century Poles may have had ample sources of inspiration for their nation building—about which I have written elsewhere[7]—they did not have any better area to carry out their own national experiments than in the alpine borderlands. The region provided a unique opportunity for ideas about (Polish) nationhood to assume concrete form. Furthermore, interactions in the borderlands had an impact on all parties concerned, changing the configuration of identities—local, regional, national, imperial—that helped to define the various players in the "discovery," appropriation, and reconceptualization of the Carpathian borderlands and their inhabitants.

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All of this is best demonstrated by example. Let us begin by considering attitudes toward, as well as images and visions of, the Tatra Mountains in the nineteenth century. For those unfamiliar with the territory, the Tatra Mountains comprise a distinct part of the vast Carpathian range. The westernmost part of the Carpathians, bordering modern Poland and Slovakia, the Tatra Mountains can be thought of as miniature Alps. With over 60 peaks at around 8,000 feet and a combined area of 303 square miles (less than one-quarter—about 68 square miles—of which falls on the Polish side), the Tatras were the most conspicuous geographical formation of the Carpathian range. While not as high as the highest peaks elsewhere (the tallest is Gierlach, at over 8,700 feet above sea level), the Tatras' stark peaks tower above the nearby settlements, in particular above the picturesquely situated village of Zakopane, making them seem higher than they are. The Tatra Mountains were essentially an uninhabited borderland in the medieval period and became a genuine "frontier" in the thirteenth century.

"Pioneers" came to the region from all directions. In ethnic terms, colonists would be identified as Polish, Slovak, Ruthenian (Ukrainian and other East Slavs), Hungarian, "Saxon" (that is, German) peasants, artisans, and pastoralists as well as Wallachian (Romanian) shepherds migrating with their herds from the east. Many originally resided at the foot of the mountains: in Podhale on the northern, Polish/Galician side of the border, and in Orawa (Orava, Arva, Árva), Liptów (Liptov, Liptau, Liptó), and Spisz (Spiš, Zips, Szepes) on the Hungarian side. Others such as hunters, shepherds, miners, and bandits penetrated the mountains themselves. The resultant highlanders, or *górale*, were shaped by various forces: their experience of the terrain, the migrations to the region (particularly from east to west), and the mutual interaction of the different ethnic groups.[8]

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[7]See Patrice M. Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland* (Bloomington, IN, 2004); Patrice M. Dabrowski, "Folk, Faith, and Fatherland: Defining the Polish Nation in 1883," *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 3 (September 2000): 397–416; Patrice M. Dabrowski, "What Kind of Modernity Did Poles Need? A Look at Nineteenth-Century Nation-Making" (book review article), *Nationalities Papers* 29, no. 3 (September 2001): 509–23.

[8]Witold Piksa, *Spojrzenie na Tatry poprzez wieki: Od pierwszych wzmianek do oświecenia* [A look at the Tatras through the ages: from the first references to the Enlightenment] (Cracow, 1995), 101 and elsewhere; "Górale"

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Polish elites first encountered the Tatras essentially at the time of the partitions. One of the earliest to leave a mark on the region was the Polish Enlightenment figure Stanisław Staszic (1755–1826), the first Polish scientist to investigate the Tatra Mountains. His encounter with the Tatras at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stemmed from his interest in geology, mining, and metallurgy. Now known as the "father of Polish geology," Staszic visited the Western, High, and Bielskie (Belanské) Tatras, as well as a number of valleys, and climbed a number of mountain peaks, even spending the night on one to take scientific measurements. Staszic later both lectured and wrote on the subject, his major work being *On the Geology of the Carpathians, and Other Polish Mountains and Plains*. Staszic's observations encompassed the fields of geology, climatology, limnology, atmospheric electricity, and magnetism. He measured the height above sea level of the areas he visited, analyzed the air, observed the flora and fauna, and examined mines. Staszic also took an interest in *spiski* (that is, in written guidebooks that supposedly led to Tatra treasure) as well as in the local population and its way of life.[9]

Despite these scientific concerns, Staszic was also moved by his encounter with the mountains. An excerpt from his book hints at the type of impression that the region was yet to make on his compatriots. Recall that Staszic's trips—in 1802, 1804, and 1805—came at a difficult time for the Poles. They had just lost their independence. Staszic projected onto the mountains he "conquered" an undeniably Polish, even messianic, message. As if addressing the very mountains themselves, he intoned: "You enormous cemetery of past centuries, you most lasting monuments for future centuries, in an inaccessible elevated height, your peaks fill the clouds, you will preserve the indestructible name of the Poles. Unreachable by any human violence, you will preserve this sign and convey it to the next centuries as testimony that the first one to stand on this your polished summit was a Pole."[10]

The Tatra Mountains, thus, became a metaphor for the Polish nation. By leaving his mark on Łomnica (Lomnický štít), thought at the time to be the Tatras' highest peak, Staszic was, in essence, demonstrating that the nation still existed. A Pole conquered this peak, thus in a way ensuring that the memory of the stateless, territoryless Polish nation would somehow endure. (That the peak fell on the Hungarian side of the border and that Staszic was not actually the first, but the second, person to reach the summit—the first was the English naturalist Robert Townson—made the observation all the more bittersweet.[11])

This example shows how, from the outset, even those inclined to see the Carpathians as a site of scientific inquiry were not immune to its potential national symbolism. Nor were they impervious to the impact of the status of the region as a borderland. Coming generations would continue Staszic's scientific investigations. Here one might cite the work of Seweryn Goszczyński (1801–76), the "father of Podhale ethnography," whose *Dziennik podróży do Tatrów* (Diary of a Trip to the Tatras), published in 1853, also had a tremendous influence on the literature of the region, or of the poet, geographer, and ethnographer Wincenty Pol (1807–72) who escorted students to the Tatras in 1852. Many others likewise contributed to the scientific and scholarly understanding of the region.

Why, then, begin in the 1870s when so much appears to have been written already on the subject of the Carpathians? This period marked a quantitative leap forward, insofar as interest in and travel to the region were concerned. Indeed, it has been said that the Tatra

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[Highlanders] and "Historia" [History], *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska* [The great Tatra encyclopedia], ed. Zofia Radwańska-Paryska and Witold H. Paryski (Poronin, 1995), 356–57, 409–13.

[9]"Staszic Stanisław," *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 1143–45.

[10]Staszic, cited in Piksa, *Spojrzenie na Tatry poprzez wieki*, 103.

[11]"Łomnica, szczyt" [Łomnica, mountain] in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 690–91.

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Mountains were "discovered" in 1873.[12] Much as European adventurers "discovered" parts of Africa perfectly well known to the natives, here a Polish physician from Warsaw, Dr. Tytus Chałubiński, made the trek to the Tatras that summer.[13] Enchanted by his visit, he made the destination popular among residents of the Russian zone. Chałubiński returned each summer to continue his acquaintance with the region and to introduce others to it.

Such treks were really quite an undertaking in the 1870s. Those traveling to the Tatras from outside of Galicia most likely made the first leg of their journey to Galicia by train, ending up in Cracow, the former capital of the medieval Polish state. Fortified by this encounter with Polish history—for doubtless they strolled about the historic city, taking in sights such as the Wawel Castle and cathedral and growing increasingly accustomed to the relative freedom that Galicia offered them—they set off for the mountains. This leg of the trip was much more arduous. In Cracow, trekkers hired highlanders with wagons to take them slowly along the bumpy high roads to their destination—a two day's journey away. As befitted a true expedition, they had to pack all manner of provisions for the duration of their stay in the mountains. No stores or other amenities of modern life were available in the village of their destination, Zakopane, nestled at the feet of the Tatras.

The slow advance of Poles from abroad through the piedmont into the Tatras provided travelers with ample chance to observe this new and refreshing, if not comfortable, landscape (something that accounts of the period make clear). The trip itself, thus, already underscored the passage from one state to another: from the civilized world to a natural backwoods and from the stifling atmosphere of the partitions to a land where one could breathe freely. It proved to be a truly liminal experience. They seemed to be heeding the words of the *Pieśń o Ziemi Naszej* (Song of Our Land), written by yet another scientist turned poet, Wincenty Pol, "To the mountains! To the mountains, dear brother!—There freedom awaits you."[14]

More than freedom awaited those who braved the journey to Zakopane and beyond. A major attraction of Chałubiński's excursions was the way they combined the enjoyment of the wild and majestic nature—the towering peaks with their bare summits and steep approaches, the lush green valleys and forests, the sight of cavorting chamois and other wildlife—with an encounter with the indigenous people, the Tatra highlanders (*górale*). The highlanders were an inseparable part of the highland landscape—something that even those primarily interested in scaling the heights quickly

[12]See, for example, Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Na przełęczy: Wrażenia i obrazy z Tatr* [On the col: impressions and images from the Tatras] (Warsaw, 1891), 38, 122. The second citation on Chałubiński's contribution reads: "Jest to człowiek, który dla nas odkrył Tatry." (He is the person who discovered the Tatras for us.)

[13]How different regions—often territories we would think of as borderlands or frontiers—become the object of intense scrutiny of various national communities is a fascinating and telling story. It is one I explore in much greater depth for several regions of the Carpathian Mountains in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in my latest book-length project, tentatively entitled "'Discovering' The Carpathians: Episodes in Imagining and Reshaping Alpine Borderland Regions."

[14]"W góry! W góry, miły bracie!—Tam swoboda czeka na cię." [To the mountains! To the mountains, dear brother!— There freedom awaits you.], Wincenty Pol, *Pieśń o Ziemi Naszej* [Songs of our land], 8th ed. (Cracow, 1896), 45, cited in Jerzy M. Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie wobec sporu o Morskie Oko w latach 1873–1902" [The Tatra Society in the face of the dispute over the over Morskie Oko, 1873–1902], in *Spór o Morskie Oko: Materiały z sesji naukowej poświęconej 90 rocznicy procesu w Grazu, Zakopane 12–13 września 1992 r.* [The dispute over Morskie Oko: Material from the symposium dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the proceedings in Graz, Zakopane 12–13 September 1992], ed. Jerzy M. Roszkowski (Zakopane, 1993), 27. This poem was cited, without attribution, by the first president of the Tatra Society, Count Mieczysław Rey, in his opening speech to the gathered members ("Zagajenie pierwszego walnego zgromadzenia Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego przez Prezesa Mieczysława hr. Reya" [Opening address of the first general meeting of the Tatra Society by Chairman Mieczysław Count Rey], *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* [Journal of the Tatra Society] 1 [1876]: 8).

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learned. Indeed, one of the peculiarities of alpine tourism in the Tatras at this time was its communal nature. Elaborate and extensive affairs, Chałubiński's excursions generally included several dozen invited guests as well as thirty to forty highlanders.[15]

The locals would not only lead the visitors through the sometimes treacherous journey and carry the provisions, but they also entertained the visitors with aspects of their local culture presented in song, dance, and storytelling around the campfire. Guests were impressed by the highlander, well-built, strong, bold, and agile, whose very movements and build "reveal[ed] at first sight a child of liberty."[16] At the head of these expeditions was the old and most famous *góral* of all, Jan Krzeptowski-Sabała. A bandit and insurrectionist in his youth, later famous as a hunter (and sometime poacher), Sabała regaled those present with his alpine tales. Stories of the bandit Jánošík—a Slavic Robin Hood, as it were—or of King Boleslaw's sleeping knights, who hid deep under the Tatras and waited for the right moment to spring to life, fired the imagination of his listeners. The entire experience made a great impression on the visitors from the lowlands. In the words of one observer, "A person straightened himself up here after the constraint of banal culture not only amidst the free nature, but amidst the primeval, as well as so peculiar and poetic culture of this folk."[17]

There were other reasons why Zakopane and the Tatras became the destination of choice for growing numbers of Poles. The remoteness and primitiveness of the region made it ideal for those who sought not only to escape "banal culture" but also to work toward strengthening their own national culture and identity. This they could do far from the prying eyes of the police who made their lives miserable elsewhere. Secret police reportedly conducted no surveillance in Zakopane until 1900, which meant that the Poles had ample breathing room for several decades.[18] One could pay a pilgrimage to what in a few years would be referred to as a Polish "Mecca," thus, with impunity.

Although it may sound as though the excursions to the region were all play, the type of visitor attracted to this destination did not seek the comforts of everyday life. For that, he or she could have traveled with greater ease to any of a number of spas or health resorts.[19] Rather, most Tatra tourists tended to fall into a specific category: the intelligentsia. In 1890 nearly three-quarters of visitors to the region were bureaucrats, lawyers, doctors, clergy, teachers of all kinds, artists, and writers.[20] Stanisław Witkiewicz (1851–1915), himself an outsider (born in Lithuania) who became a fixture of Zakopane, noted the significance of this presence:

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[15]Descriptions of these trips can be found in Ferdynand Hoesick, *Tatry i Zakopane* [The Tatras and Zakopane] (Poznań, 1900); Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Na przełęczy*; and many other works.

[16]Walery Eljasz, "Kilka wrażeń z Tatr" [Several impressions from the Tatras] *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 4–6 (1879–81), 76.

[17]Władysław Szajnocha, "Pogląd na czterdziestoletnią działalność Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego" [A view of the forty years of activity of the Tatra Society], *Czterdzieści lat istnienia Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego w Krakowie: 1873–1913* [Forty years of the life of the Tatra Society in Cracow: 1873–1913] (Cracow, 1913), 34.

[18]Mieczysław Rokosz, "Zakopane—stolica polskiej irredenty" [Zakopane—capital of Polish irredentism], *Rocznik Podhalański* [Podhale yearbook] 5 (1992): 128.

[19]For more on the Krynica phenomenon, see, for example, Marek Czapliński and Teresa Kulak, "Zakopane i Krynica—życie kulturalne dwu polskich stacji klimatycznych na przełomie wieków: Próba porównania" [Zakopane and Krynica—the cultural life of two Polish climatic stations at the turn of the century: A comparative study], *Sobótka* [Midsummer] 47, no. 1–2 (1992): 279–89; Stanisław Pagaczewski, *Spotkamy się u wód* [We will meet at the waters] (Cracow, 1972).

[20]Irena Homola, "Od wsi do uzdrowiska: Zakopane w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej 1867–1914" [From village to spa resort: Zakopane at the time of Galician autonomy], *Zakopane: Czterysta lat dziejów* [Zakopane: Four hundred years of history], 2 vols., ed. Renata Dutkowa (Cracow, 1991), 1:182.

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> Through Zakopane each year flows practically the entire Polish intelligentsia, … a thousands-strong crowd of all social positions and categories. It is a point of intersection of all the roads along which Polish life flows. There are no such strange fates and such distant countries that would prevent a Pole from at least once in his lifetime stopping by Zakopane. Castaways from Siberia, wanderers from Brazil, Africa, from all the countries of Europe and from the entire territory of former Poland flow here…. In the course of several years here, one can meet more interesting, illustrious, influential people … than elsewhere in the course of one's entire life. And all these people come here in a specific spiritual state…, with the readiness to make personal and material sacrifices, with a desire to do something good and useful.[21]

The story of how tiny, backward, remote Zakopane became a recognizable feature on the Polish mental map, a well-frequented health resort, and a site of Polish pilgrimage began precisely with this influx of Poles from outside Galicia. Poles from Warsaw and elsewhere conceived of the Tatras as a place where they could do "something good and useful." These intellectuals were for the most part—certainly in this early period—adherents of what we term positivism. Positivists are generally regarded as those who are committed specifically to anational work—that is, to "work at the foundations" of society to improve the economic standing of the general population without thought of eventual political independence. However, this anational stance is belied by the work in which positivists engaged in the Tatras. To be sure, those who became active in Zakopane were not necessarily the major theoreticians of positivism (people like Aleksander Świętochowski and Bolesław Prus[22]). Instead, they tended to be rank-and-file supporters, if rather influential ones, of the idea. Here, positivists could be bolder in both word and deed. Indeed, the "discovery" of Zakopane marked the beginning of the "nationalization" of the borderlands.[23]

The preoccupation of Polish national elites with the fashion for things alpine—the so-called *zakopiańszczyzna* and *góralszczyzna*—has been treated by many scholars.[24] Here let me try to relate these ideas to broader conceptions of the Polish nation being propagated at the same time. In this, some of the conceptions advanced by Brian Porter in his recent book on Polish intellectual history are useful. Porter sees the positivists as emphasizing a new vision of the nation as an ethnolinguistic community situated in a specific social space and comprising an empirically identifiable society.[25] (This concretization or embodiment of the nation is contrasted with the more transcendent vision of the nation advanced by the romantic insurrectionists of the previous generation.) The Poland of the positivists was to be a "space for work and duty rather than for action and sacrifice."[26] This concrete approach to society

[21]Stanisław Witkiewicz, "Bagno" [Bog], *Przegląd Zakopiański* [Zakopane review] no. 32 (1902): 292–3, cited in Rokosz, "Zakopane—stolica polskiej irredenty," 125.

[22]Świętochowski traveled to the Tatras in 1883 and was very impressed by Chałubiński 's efforts there. See his "Z gór" [From the mountains] of that same year, republished in his memoirs (*Wspomnienia* [Wrocław, 1966]). Prus visited the Tatras three times but, as he suffered from agoraphobia, his acquaintance with the region was limited to easier outings in the vicinity. See "Prus Bolesław," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 972.

[23]Here I agree fully with David Crowley, who has noted the connection between the Warsaw positivists and Zakopane, as well as the connection between the local and the national, in his stimulating and insightful article, "Finding Poland in the Margins: The Case of the Zakopane Style," *Journal of Design History* 14, no. 2 (2001): 105–16.

[24]See, for example, chapters by Jacek Woźniakowski and Jan Majda in *Zakopane: Czterysta lat dziejów*, vol. 2; Jan Majda, *Góralszczyzna i Tatry w twórczości Stanisława Witkiewicza* [The highlander essence and the Tatras in the work of Stanisław Witkiewicz] (Cracow, 1998); Jan Majda, *Tatrzańskim szlakiem literatury* [On the Tatra trail of literature] (Cracow, 1982).

[25]Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York, 2000), 44.

[26]Ibid., 50.

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also meant that the positivists took a special interest in the peasantry as an important component of the Polish living organism and sought to integrate the folk into the nation.

Warsaw's positivists nonetheless found it difficult to make headway with this essentially liberal program under tsarist rule. As Porter notes, censorship made it difficult for them even to discuss the components of national identity: language, history, folk practices, traditions.[27] In Galicia, however, these restrictions did not hold. Here Poles were able to avail themselves of opportunities for action, as well as work, to conduct, in the words of Aleksander Świętochowski, "a policy [based on] the interests of our society, a policy that is open, pure, [and] feasible within the bounds of the currently existing laws."[28] The engagement of Warsaw intellectuals in the southern borderlands of Galicia, part of the Habsburgs' Rechtsstaat, seemed to satisfy the spirit of Świętochowski's dictum: "Only a madman would lie in a dirty peasant hut and dream of crystal palaces. Let society, rather than complain about obstacles, work wherever it has an open field."[29] Instead of stewing in the confines of the Russian imperial city of Warsaw, the positivists could work in the fresh, healthy air of what they imagined as the Polish Tatras.

The region had more to offer Warsaw positivists than simply an "open field." Encounters with the alpine highlanders—an integral part of the borderland landscape—convinced positivists that highlanders were a particularly attractive lot. This peculiar "Polish" folk, so free and unfettered in its behavior and outlook, contrasted favorably with the peasants of the Russian zone, whose experience of serfdom had only just come to an end in 1864. While national activists who remained in the Russian zone saw their task as raising the peasantry to the level of the "noble" nation, the local mountain folk of the Tatras presented them with a different challenge. In many ways, the highlanders appeared superior to the Polish elites, worn out by their constant battle with the partitioning powers. It was the latter who felt compelled to travel to the Tatras for a change of pace and scenery as well as to interact with and take inspiration from the highlanders. Once again, this underscores the liminality of the situation. In the Tatra Mountains, roles were reversed, with the highlanders coming out on top—both literally (if we look at their role as mountain guides) and figuratively.

It should be added that the positivists were not the first to take an interest in the peasantry. This distinction fell to the precursors of the positivists, the romantics. They had seen the peasants as the repositories of true Polishness, particularly those who hailed from more remote parts of the old Commonwealth (the *kresy* mentioned earlier) where features of the ancient, pre-Christian culture were best preserved. The positivists seized this part of the romantic heritage and took it in more practical directions. At any rate, this amalgamation of romanticism and positivism in the Tatra highlands made it easier for our positivists to take a few steps in the direction of the newest cultural trend, neoromanticism, which was to develop closer to the end of the century. Indeed, positivists such as Stanislaw Witkiewicz proved to be right on the cusp of the neoromantic movement.

Regardless of how historians categorized them, these visitors from the lowlands imagined the mountaineers—who doubtless represented an amalgamation of generations of colonists from both Central and Eastern Europe—as unquestionably Polish. According to Walery Eljasz, a Cracow-based artist who did much to make the Tatras popular by writing numerous

[27]Ibid.

[28]Aleksander Świętochowski, "Polityka wlasna" [A politics of one's own], *Przegląd Tygodniowy* [The weekly review] 11 (1876), cited in Porter, *When Nationalism Learned to Hate*, 51.

[29]Aleksander Świętochowski, "Opinia publiczna" [Public opinion], *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 7 (1872), cited in Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 49.

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illustrated guidebooks and articles, as well as through his artistic renditions, the foreigners who had once colonized the region had been "completely digested" by the Polish "national element."[30] Eljasz presented the resultant "homogeneous Polish folk" as a distinct "universal type," which he contrasted with two other "universal types" found across the Hungarian border: the Swabian (German) settler of Zips and the Slovak highlander of Liptov, who, although they lived in neighboring villages, reportedly did not mix. (Magyars—that is, ethnic Hungarians—were nowhere to be found in the mountains. According to the Slavophile Eljasz, one could sense them "only in the inscriptions, governmental coats-of-arms, and in the effort to recast Slavic names on the model of the Prussians in Wielkopolska [part of the German empire at this time]."[31])

Those who came to Zakopane from the Russian zone were captivated by the highlanders, so unlike the peasants back home. They found this distinct variant of Polishness—again, as they defined it—very attractive, and they sought to place it within the Polish historical narrative. "Never bound by serfdom," the highlanders were seen as "preserv[ing] in a fresh and lively state elements of the old Polish culture in [their] customs and in [their] splendid speech, architecture and artistry."[32] These characteristics of the highlanders were being explored by tourists—especially frequent visitors to the region—at this time. A number of tourists began collecting old household artifacts, compiling dictionaries of highland dialect, jotting down tales, or sketching architectural details. The Warsaw surgeon Władysław Matlakowski even produced scholarly ethnographic volumes on such subjects.[33] Research was also being conducted into the music of the highland region.[34]

These forays into the local folk culture inspired outsiders to draw connections to old Polish culture. The highlanders were viewed as a kind of "*ur*-Pole," a relic of the original Polish type that elsewhere had been lost through contact with civilization. The remoteness of the region allowed them—again, in Eljasz's words—to "preserve the language of the forefathers, maintaining the memory of years long past in living tradition."[35] One might add that this image of the highlander as *ur*-Pole seemed to reflect an ethnographic vision of Poland represented by the earliest Polish kingdom under the Piast rulers, descendants of the quintessential Polish peasant Piast himself.

One prominent example of how the Polish highlander was included in the Polish historical narrative can be found in the work of Henryk Sienkiewicz. The Polish novelist, later to be the nation's first Nobel laureate in literature, was so taken with the mountaineers that he embellished his own account of the Polish-Swedish wars of the mid seventeenth century to include a scene in which patriotic highlanders come to the defense of the Polish king Jan Kazimierz. Given the popularity of the author's historical novels, this blatant rewriting of history in *The Deluge* (which Sienkiewicz—a frequent visitor to the region—finished writing in Zakopane in the summer of 1886) was bound to leave an imprint on the nation.

[30]Eljasz, "Kilka wrażeń z Tatr," 76.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Bagno* (Lwów, 1903), 6, cited in Anna Sidorek, "Środowisko taternickie w latach 1873–1913" [The Tatra community 1873–1913], *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* [Culture and society] 22, nos. 1–2 (1978): 255.

[33]For more on ethnographic developments at this time, see, for example, Edward Manouelian, "Invented Traditions: Primitivist Narrative and Design in the Polish Fin de Siècle," *Slavic Review* 59, no. 2 (2000): 391–405.

[34]A thorough and recent English-language survey of the study of highland music is found in chapter 3 of Timothy J. Cooley, *Making Music in the Polish Tatras: Tourists, Ethnographers, and Mountain Musicians* (Bloomington, IN, 2005).

[35]Cited in Manouelian, "Invented Traditions," 394.

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Sienkiewicz likewise shared Eljasz's views on the evolution of the Polish language, equating the highlanders' dialect with the language of the Poles of yore.

While Sienkiewicz was the first to write a story in this idiom[36], he also used the Podhale dialect to approximate medieval Polish speech in his *Teutonic Knights*. Sienkiewicz's choice of language, thus, potentially tied the partitioned nation tighter, providing generations of readers with more reason to believe that the highlanders were authentic primeval Poles. Anyone who visited the Tatra region after having read Sienkiewicz's novel would hear echoes of those old Polish heroes in the voices of the local shepherds and guides. In other words, the peripheral Tatra region was transformed into the true center of Polishness. At the same time, the "imagined community" of Poles—in which the connection between local speech patterns and the elite-dominated national history was being made—was becoming larger. It seems as though those active in shaping the way the modern Polish nation was perceived were trying to turn the Podhale highlander into an archetype "embody[ing] the highest national virtues in the minds of their … countrymen," putting him on par with the Argentine gaucho, Brazilian bandeirante, and North American pioneer in their respective countries.[37]

This reassessment of the role of the *góral* marks a watershed in Polish history. Here, peasants were being invested with historical significance by members of a nation long associated with the nobility or gentry.[38] Poles, after all, have been considered a "historic" nation. This attempt at melding together both historic (noble) and ethnographic (peasant) elements was part of a new approach to Polish nation building, one that is still generally underestimated in the literature.[39]

Sienkiewicz's use of the Podhale dialect to represent medieval Polish speech was praised by Stanisław Witkiewicz. Formulating a positivistic program of his own for the region, Witkiewicz aimed to transform the Polish landscape in a new way. Witkiewicz turned his attention to the creativity of the highlanders, as seen in their native art and architecture. Highlanders were masters of wooden construction who embellished their buildings, as well as household furniture and goods, with fanciful carvings. Struck by the artistry, Witkiewicz wondered: "perhaps the mountain people, locked in the depths of the valleys, cut off from the world, have preserved longer than anywhere else the most ancient general form specific to the mountainous regions of Poland"?[40] He came to maintain—apparently on the basis of research—that this style of "architecture and decorative arts once flowered on the entire territory of Poland."[41]

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[36]This was *Sabałowa bajka* [Sabała's tale], a highlander's tale, which was published in the newspaper *Czas* [Time] in 1889.

[37]Clementi, "National Identity and the Frontier," 141.

[38]The acknowledgment of the Warsaw positivists' new pragmatic focus on the peasantry is one of the strengths of Crowley's article, cited above, although it is worth underscoring that their desire to find a way to integrate peasants into the nation had been part of the program of Polish democrats before them. That the peasant was elevated in this way by non-Galicians is no accident. Galician Poles were still traumatized by what Norman Davies has termed "the most sensational event in Galicia's history": the peasant *jacquerie* of 1846, in which an attempt at insurrection on the part of Polish nobles (paradoxically seeking to engage the peasants in this effort) was transformed into a wholesale massacre of Galician nobles. See Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols. (New York, 1982), 2:147.

[39]This new approach to nation building can be seen in Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland*.

[40]Stanisław Witkiewicz, cited in Zbigniew Możdzierz, ed., *Stanisław Witkiewicz: Człowiek—artysta—myśliciel* [Stanisław Witkiewicz: Man—artist—thinker] (Zakopane, 1997), 310, cited in Manouelian, "Invented Traditions," 393.

[41]Witkiewicz, *Styl zakopiański* [Zakopane style], 1904 or 1911, cited by Stefan Żychoń, "Rozwój przestrzenny i budownictwo" [Spatial development and architecture], *Zakopane: Czterysta lat dziejów*, 1:445. Being familiar with neither old Polish architecture nor the extensive literature on this subject, I have chosen to report Witkiewicz's

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Witkiewicz nonetheless worried that the subsistence conditions of life in the mountains would restrict the impact these beautifully preserved ancient forms might have on broader Polish society. He sought a way to enliven and popularize this native art, this "treasury of the old culture," which otherwise was sentenced to die out.[42] Ultimately, Witkiewicz and other architects "saved" (his words) the artistry of the highlanders by allowing it to inspire a higher form of architecture. In having its decorative elements incorporated into a new artistic movement, the folk forms were transformed into what came to be called "Zakopane style"—or, as Witkiewicz would have preferred, "Polish [national] style."[43] Proponents of this style hoped that, like its ancient model, it would spread all over Poland.[44] The (re)introduction of this Polish style, one imagines, was designed to inject a degree of Polishness into a constructed landscape increasingly devoid of any real Polish characteristics, being the product of imperial-driven modernization.

In an article that touches on various aspects of Polish fin-de-siècle "primitivism," Edward Manouelian attributes this reception of highlander culture on the part of Witkiewicz, Eljasz, and others to "the ethnographic prism through which they approached the culture of the region."[45] While Manouelian is correct to note the importance of this ethnographic approach, there are other reasons for this interest that predate the turn of the century. These are related to the positivist program and its focus not only on the ethnographic nation but also on the physical location of the nation in space. To understand this development better, let us step back for a moment to the early years of the "discovery" of the Tatras to examine an organization that played an important role in bringing this peripheral region more squarely into Polish national consciousness and into the modern world. All these developments—from the influx of Polish intelligentsia from abroad through the theorizing about the Polish nation and the hope that the inspiration, liveliness, and creativity of this periphery might radiate throughout the Polish lands—were facilitated by the work of an organization whose inception dates from the same year as Chałubiński's famous first journey to Zakopane.[46] This was the Tatra Society.

Founded in 1873, the Tatra Society was the first tourist or hiking organization active in the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. I hesitate to call the Tatra Society Polish for its roots were hardly "national." Indeed, the idea of creating such an alpine society surfaced at a party given by a German from Berlin, Baron Ludwig Eichborn, who at the time (1870–81) owned the Zakopane domain. The party was in honor of the owner of Szczawnica, Józef Szalay,

views without commenting on whether they reflect the historical reality, as they reflect the elite views of the mountains and mountaineers that are the focus of this essay.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Zbigniew Moździerz, "Z dziejów 'Koliby', pierwszej willi w stylu zakopiańskim" [From the history of "Koliba," the first villa in the Zakopane style], *Wierchy* [Peaks] 59 (1993): 166.

[44]For a more detailed discussion, in English, of the "Zakopane style," see Crowley, "Finding Poland in the Margins." Examples of this architectural style eventually were constructed as far away as Lithuania. See Moździerz, "Z dziejów 'Koliby'," 166.

[45]Manouelian, "Invented Traditions," 394–95.

[46]Chałubiński happened to be present at the meeting when the idea for the organization emerged. In giving all the credit for the formation of the Tatra Society to Chałubiński and the Warsaw positivists, however, Crowley oversimplifies what—as shall be seen—was a much more complicated (and, indeed, fascinating) development. See Crowley, "Finding Poland in the Margins," 108. For a demythicization of Chałubiński's contribution, see A. Siemionow, "Bronisław Gustawicz o Chałubińskim" [Bronisław Gustawicz on Chałubiński], *Wierchy* 44 (1975): 278–83, and—regarding his role in the establishment of the Tatra Society—the important article by Wiesław A. Wójcik, "Tytus Chałubiński a Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie" [Tytus Chałubiński and the Tatra society], *Wierchy* 57 (1988–92): 181–89.

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who was of Hungarian ancestry. Both men, incidentally, were part of the original governing board of the Society, which meant that the first meetings were conducted in German (although the minutes of the meetings were written in Polish). The Tatra Society, thus, could be seen as part of a general and growing interest in alpine clubs across Europe. The Hungarians across the border were already forming their own Hungarian Carpathian Association (Magyaroszági Kárpátegyesület, Ungarischer Karpathenverein), formally established in 1873. The Tatra Society's initial statute, completed towards the end of 1873, was not approved by the authorities until 1874.[47]

That the Tatra Society did not become simply another generic alpine club was in part the work of outsiders—that is, of the visiting intelligentsia discussed earlier. Indeed, the founding of the society underscored a tension between those who identified themselves first and foremost as Poles (mainly from abroad) and those who saw themselves as residents of Galicia, some of whom were certainly Polish speakers but who may or may not have been thinking in "Polish" terms. Even if they did, they may have been inclined to equate Polishness with being "Galician," given the dominance of the so-called Polish elites (that is, descendants of the former nobles of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) in the Crownland. At any rate, it is likely that many of the Galician "Poles" had more in common with their noble counterparts in Vienna than with the positivists of Warsaw or the organicists of Wielkopolska (those interested in organic work, a trend similar to positivism, in the German Empire). Regardless of their primary sense of identity, all these activists had something in common. They intended to turn what had been, or could have been perceived as, a disadvantage (the region's marginality, remoteness, backwardness, stagnation) into an advantage. Whether the Tatras would become a major tourist site, popular resort, nature preserve, Polish national symbol, or any combination thereof, was yet to be determined.

This interaction between Galicians and outsiders very quickly changed the profile of the organization, as seen from the fact that the society's statute underwent revision later that same year. Some of the changes, such as the removal of the adjective "Galician" from the title of the organization, reflected the acknowledgment that not only Galicians took an interest in the Tatra Mountains. Implied but not stated was that the Tatra Society—which for political reasons could not easily be called Polish—was a more broadly conceived Polish organization. Over time numerous Poles from both the Russian and German Empires would enroll in the society. Membership was also democratized at this time. The yearly membership fee was reduced from three crowns to one crown, thus encouraging the less well-to-do to join. Even the mandate of the organization changed. Originally, the Tatra Society had three aims: (1) to explore the Carpathians in a competent way and to disseminate information gathered about them, (2) to foster tourism by encouraging tourists—in particular members of the society but also scholars and artists—to come and by improving access to the region, and (3) to protect rare alpine animals like the chamois and marmot. These aims seem in keeping with the general mandates of alpine clubs: to improve

[47]Homola, "Od wsi do uzdrowiska," 208; "Polskie Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 948; "Statut Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego z siedzibą w Krakowie" [Statute of the Tatra Society with the seat in Cracow], *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 1 (1876), 9–19. Here I am omitting some of the convolutions of the arrangements; those interested in greater detail may consult Witold H. Paryski, "Początki Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego i Zakopane" [The beginnings of the Tatra Society and Zakopane], *Wierchy* 47 (1978): 20–32. A recent work in English that also mentions the work of the Tatra Society is Timothy J. Cooley, *Making Music in the Polish Tatras: Tourists, Ethnographers, and Mountain Musicians* (Bloomington, IN, 2005).

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the infrastructure and educate the population about the region while protecting the natural habitat.

The revised statute broadened the mandate of the society to allow for more direct influence on local and human conditions. This was done in two ways. First, a fourth point was added to the main aims that permitted (one might say, even exhorted) members to "support alpine industry" (*wspieranie przemysłu górskiego*). By this was meant—as explained in a later assessment of the society's accomplishments—the "improvement of the fate of the impoverished alpine population."[48] Here we return to the interest in the indigenous folk discussed earlier. While appreciating the distinct highlander culture, visitors realized that their very presence helped to alter it—not always in positive ways, as guests in the valley remarked about the increasing greed of the locals. If highlanders were to become an archetype of Polishness, it was imperative that they have the means to persist in their natural way of life and avoid the demoralization that came with increased contact with civilization.

The second means for influencing local conditions was provided by allowing the formation of branches of the society that would care for the alpine regions closest to them. This resulted in branches being established in Stanisławów, Kołomyja, and Lwów (today's Ivano-Frankivs'k, Kolomyia, and L'viv) in Eastern Galicia. These branches provided infrastructure for tourism (lodges and rooms in existing structures in nearby settlements), worked out routes for visiting, presented to a broader public the culture of the local Hutsul people—the *górale* of the Eastern Carpathians—and supported the "alpine industry" of this region.[49]

Over the next decades the society did much to further its proclaimed aims. For the local Tatra population, the society founded a woodworking school in 1876.[50] Zakopane acquired a post office and telegraph (1882), and the society helped to ensure that the town would be lit. It repaired worn roads and—even more important—lobbied the provincial authorities to improve access by bringing the railroad to the region (to Chabówka in 1884 and all the way to Zakopane as of 1899). As regards conditions for hikers and mountain climbers, the society constructed alpine lodges where tourists could stay (instead of camping in tents, as they had done earlier), the first being built in 1874 near the picturesquely situated lake known as Morskie Oko (Eye of the Sea) on land donated by Baron Eichborn. Society members marked trails for hikers and published articles of general interest and reports of the society's activities in its annals, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego*. The society also bought available tracts of land, when finances permitted, making it one of the three biggest landowners in the Polish Tatras.[51]

The popularization of the Tatras had a decided modernizing effect. The society's accomplishments fostered the development of a tourist industry that ensured that Zakopane

[48]Leopold Świerz, "Zarys działalności Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego w pierwszem jego dziesięcioleciu (od roku 1874 do r. 1883)" [An outline of the activites of the Tatra Society in its first decade (from 1874 to 1883)], *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 10 (1885): 94.

[49]For more on the activities of the Tatra Society in Eastern Galicia, see Patrice M. Dabrowski, "'Discovering' the Galician Borderlands: The Case of the Eastern Carpathians," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 380–402.

[50]There is an interesting—if somewhat paradoxical—connection between the woodworking school and the development of the "Zakopane style." At the outset, the school used German textbooks and propagated Tirolean styles, which Witkiewicz saw as adversely affecting the native character of the highlanders' work. This prompted him to develop the style discussed earlier. See, for example, Juliusz Zborowski, "Styl zakopiański [Szkic do referatu]" [The Zakopane style (A draft report)], in *Rocznik Podhalański* 5, 33–52.

[51]See, for example, Świerz, "Zarys działalności Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego w pierwszem jego dziesięcioleciu (od roku 1874 do r. 1883)"; Zofia Nowak, "Władysław hr. Zamoyski a spór o Morskie Oko" [Władysław Count Zamoyski and the dispute over Morskie Oko], in *Spór o Morskie Oko*.

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would join the ranks of Galician health resorts. It helped to turn the attention of the broader public to the beauty and uniqueness of this alpine region, which, in the words of the society's first president, Count Mieczysław Rey, "could boldly compete with the most famous mountains of other countries."[52] This had the beneficial effect of keeping residents of the province from traveling abroad for their vacations as well as attracting foreigners (by far the largest group being Poles from abroad). More of the locals were engaged likewise in housing guests and catering to their needs (for guides, porters), thus helping to develop the local economy. This seemed to be the type of positivist endeavor about which Świętochowski and others preached.

The society also furthered what others might term the Polish national interest. By providing better conditions and easier access to the mountains, the society enabled more people to travel to Zakopane, turning the village into a Polish "Mecca," a place where Poles from all over congregated, socialized, networked, and basked in the light of Galicia's relative freedom while absorbing lessons from the local highlanders. But this was a Mecca where Poles did more than make a pilgrimage. Many also served their nation while in the region.

One example of this national engagement was related to the physical health and well-being of the nation. The "vivifying alpine air" was particularly recommended for those suffering from tuberculosis and other lung ailments (which, incidentally, included Stanisław Witkiewicz).[53] Seeing the need for a sanatorium, proposed by Dr. Kazimierz Dłuski (a Socialist from the Russian zone who happened to be the brother-in-law of Maria Skłodowska-Curie), the Polish literary figures who congregated in Zakopane initiated a campaign appealing to public opinion for financial support. Writers like Jan Kasprowicz, Władysław Reymont, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Kazimierz Tetmajer, Gabriela Zapolska, and Stefan Żeromski donated the proceeds from literary readings. They also engaged the positivistic constituency back home. For example, in 1899 Witkiewicz asked one of Poland's preeminent positivists, Bolesław Prus, to advertise the endeavor in the Warsaw daily *Kurier Codzienny*. The same project saw the involvement of other artistic and literary lights such as Henryk Sienkiewicz and Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Three years later, the sanatorium opened in nearby Kościelisko.[54] This episode illustrates how even a small but dedicated group of writers, gathering in Zakopane, could mobilize society to support their social, political, and national projects.[55]

Another national initiative might be termed the demarcation of national space. The process of naming sites within the Tatra Mountains after illustrious Polish figures or activists began early. By 1888, one can find numerous physical features—natural or manufactured—that advertised the Polish presence. The first alpine lodge, constructed in 1874 on the banks of Morskie Oko, was named after Stanisław Staszic. The noted geologist and paleontologist Ludwik Zejszner also had a lodge (in the Valley of the Five Ponds) dedicated in his honor.

Much naming took place in Kościelisko Valley, where one could find Goszczyński's Bower and Pol's Cross as well as two natural features called gates (places where the valley narrowed) that were named after two Poles heralding from the German zone. These two were the historical novelist Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, who was fêted on the occasion of his

[52]"Zagajenie pierwszego walnego zgromadzenia Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego przez Prezesa Mieczysława hr. Reya," *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 1 (1876): 7.

[53]Świerz, "Zarys działalności Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego w pierwszem jego dziesięcioleciu," 93.

[54]With 110 shares in the sanatorium amounting to a total of 110,000 crowns—over one-fifth of the sanatorium's initial capital—Paderewski was by far the largest shareholder (as of 31 December 1902, as seen in the list of shareholders in the Central State Historical Archive of L'viv [TsDIAL], 146/58/2501: 22–23).

[55]See, for example, "Dłuski Kazimierz," entry in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 217.

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sixtieth jubilee of writing in 1878, and a patriotic Polish activist from Poznań (Posen), Kazimierz Kantak, who was honored posthumously. (Besides his political work in Prussia, Kantak had proven to be a very valuable member of the Tatra Society, recruiting new members at a rate much higher than any other Pole.[56]) Likewise, after the death of Chałubiński, yet another gate was named in his honor.[57] It is interesting to note that, while no "historic names" (that is, of Polish aristocrats) were attached to these places, a Slavophile tendency is suggested by the posthumous honoring of the Czech Edvard Jelínek (1855–97) with an iron tablet in Strążyska Valley (1897). Jelínek, who took a great interest in things Polish, had been a proponent of closer relations between Czechs and Poles (and in general among Slavic nations). (While Jelínek corresponded with many Poles, including Eljasz and Witkiewicz, the initiative for the tablet came from Henryk Sienkiewicz.)[58]

This business of naming may have been connected with the desire to ensure that the Tatra Mountains retain their Polish or Slavic character. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the "Polishness" of the territory came increasingly under threat. The borderlands had long been a place of conflict between various political entities: Poles and Hungarians had disputed ownership of various portions of the territory since the sixteenth century. Empress Maria Theresa had set a bad precedent when she helped precipitate the partitions of Poland by annexing all of the Nowy Targ and Nowy Sącz lands in 1769.[59] After the partitions, the royal Polish domain had been sold to private individuals. The Zakopane domain, for example, had gone through both Hungarian and German hands before it was put up for sale once again in the late 1880s. No longer oblivious to what was taking place in the borderlands, Polish activists decried the shortsighted approach of many foreign investors, who ravaged the natural environment through overzealous logging and hunting. They also were unhappy that these private owners restricted access to various parts of the Tatras. One interesting, if never realized, proposal for "nationalizing" (as well as conserving) the alpine space came from a member of the Tatra Society who hailed from the German zone. Writing under the pseudonym "X. Wielkopolanin," Father Bogusław Królikowski proposed that the nation create a national park in the Tatras and name it after Poland's preeminent poet, Adam Mickiewicz.[60]

That such a proposal should come from the German zone may be no accident. In the coming years, the fate of the Tatras would depend to no small extent on persons with a connection to that region—of German as well as Polish extraction. In 1879, a German prince, Christian Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Öhringen, acquired the Hungarian border territories of Javorina, Jurgov, and Lendak in Zips (home to many descendants of the Swabian colonists of prior centuries).

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[56]Between 1876 and 1883 he recruited a total of 677 new members. See Świerz, "Zarys działalności Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego w pierwszem jego dziesięcioleciu," 108; Jan Majda, "Środowisko literackie Zakopanego" [The literary community of Zakopane], in *Zakopane: Czterysta lat dziejów*, 2:293. These doubtless for the most part were Poles who had never set foot in the Tatra highlands but saw fit nonetheless to support the Tatra Society's activities.

[57]Wójcik, "Tytus Chałubiński," 189.

[58]"Jelínek Edvard," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 475–76. A medallion with the bust of Jelínek in relief was added two years later. There is more to the Czech connection here: the identification of the Carpathians/Tatras as the birthplace of Slavs is a recurring theme in the literature.

[59]Noted, for example, by Zofia Nowak, "Zamoyski," 49.

[60]Funds for the purchase of land were to be taken from the fund that had been established to construct a monument to the Polish bard in Cracow. See "Królikowski Bogusław," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 602; X. Wielkopolanin, "Tatry Polskie pomnikiem dla Mickiewicza" [The Polish Tatras—a monument for Mickiewicz], *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 12 (1888): 1–8. While Poles had to wait until after World War II for their national park in the Tatras, Mickiewicz was honored by the naming of three waterfalls of the Roztoka Stream after him in 1891, the year after his remains were buried in the Wawel crypts in Cracow.

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The newcomer soon quarreled with his neighbors across the Galician frontier, even to dispute a portion of the border. Hohenlohe maintained that the rights to half of Morskie Oko and surrounding lands had been ceded several decades earlier in an agreement between the Homolacs and the Palocsay families. Exchanging a piece of territory, the two landowners reportedly had agreed that the border between the two families' holdings would be the border between Galicia and Hungary.[61] Needless to say, even influential landowners were not entitled to reconfigure state or provincial borders.

It is hard to say precisely what besides "property rights" prompted Hohenlohe to dispute the border. His family's roots in Upper Silesia (another border territory inhabited by a mixed population of Germans, Poles, and locals) may have affected his view of Poles. That he had just embarked on a political career, at a time when Polish-German antagonisms were rising (as seen in the 1885 expulsions of Polish and Jewish immigrants from Berlin and the eastern provinces of the Reich), may also have colored his attitudes toward non-Germans. Perhaps the young German prince simply wanted to hunt in peace. At any rate, the presence of the Tatra Society's raft on the lake and the Nowobilski clan's sheep on nearby pasture irritated him. Claiming a Polish presence on what he considered his own private property, Hohenlohe lodged a formal complaint with the imperial authorities.[62]

By challenging the ownership of Morskie Oko, however, Hohenlohe was treading on Polish national toes. The lake, picturesquely situated at the base of Rysy, the highest of the Polish Tatra peaks, had already become a Polish icon. It was traditionally the end point of Tatra excursions, which is doubtless why the Tatra Society concentrated its initial endeavors there, building a lodge at its edge and fixing the road that led to it in 1874. The Tatra Society was likewise keen on keeping the area in Polish hands, buying up highlanders' parcels whenever possible to keep them out of the hands of landowners from across the Hungarian border; and it refused to countenance the joint construction of a lodge in 1874. The first marked trails in the Polish Tatras led to Morskie Oko. Not for nothing did the Tatra Society call Morskie Oko the "Mecca for all tourists who visit the Tatras."[63]

The story of the dispute over Morskie Oko has been told elsewhere.[64] What I would like to focus on here are various regional, national, and international aspects that complicated the matter, which ultimately took over twenty years to resolve. (The controversy finally was decided by a court of arbitration, which convened in Graz in 1902.) We can view the dispute on many levels. First, it was a personal quarrel between landowners. Hohenlohe was on one side, and a triumvirate—the Tatra Society, the Nowobilski family, and the owner of the Zakopane domain—was on the other.

Through this period, interestingly enough, Zakopane was owned by either German citizens or nobles with a German connection. First was Eichborn's successor, Magnus Peltz. Then Count Władysław Zamoyski, who owned the Kórnik estate in the former Grand Duchy of Posen,

[61]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 26. That the member of the Homolacs family to make this arrangement was Lady Klementyna nèe Sławińska Homolacs, who had compelled her future (Hungarian) husband to join the Polish insurgents in the 1830 November Uprising, reminds us of how hard it is to determine what precisely constituted patriotism during this period. See "Homolacsowa Klementyna," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 419, as well as Feliks Jelonek, "Rola rodziny Homolacsów w poznaniu Tatr" [The role of the Homolacs family in the coming to know of the Tatras], *Wierchy* 43 (1974): 151.

[62]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 26. Those familiar with the story will realize that I am providing the barest of outlines here.

[63]Ibid., 28–30.

[64]See in particular *Spór o Morskie Oko*.

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acquired Zakopane in 1889.[65] (To avoid German ownership, there was a curious attempt at putting the Zakopane domain in Galician—or even imperial—hands. One of the original founders of the Tatra Society, Feliks Pławicki, proposed to transform the Zakopane domain into a hunting preserve in honor of the fortieth anniversary of Emperor Francis Joseph's rule.[66]) Polish activists were relieved when Zamoyski acquired the territory. He had outbid other contenders, including Hohenlohe, who had been interested in adding these lands to his holdings.[67] Indeed, they had sought to find a wealthy Pole to purchase the land.

While Galician Poles apparently took little interest in becoming party to the dispute, Zamoyski was more sensitive to the threat of denationalization of formerly Polish territories. Zamoyski was certainly conscious of the work in the German Empire of the Colonization Commission, founded in 1886, that was established to purchase lands held by the Polish gentry and redistribute them to German peasants to strengthen the German hold over these formerly Polish lands. It seems ironic that the Polish-German conflict of the German Empire should spill over into the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where these two noblemen—one a French, the other a German citizen—ultimately fought in the name of Hungary and Austria/Galicia/Poland. ("Poland," of course, was nonexistent except in the minds of its potential citizenry, although doubtless the motivating factor behind Zamoyski's involvement).[68]

This dispute initially favored the citizen whose claim was backed by the might of the German Reich. Hohenlohe availed himself of German diplomatic channels to influence Vienna and Budapest, which clearly had an impact on some of the interim decisions. For example, Hungarian police were sent to patrol the territory, while the Austrian police were secretly warned not to interfere on the side of the Poles.[69] Other methods were similarly lacking in subtlety. Hohenlohe made his presence known by hunting, felling trees, and allowing his animals to graze on the disputed territory; constructing a fence and erecting buildings for the police; and erecting Hungarian signs and removing some of the border markings of the Polish owners.[70]

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[65]As a foreigner (Zamoyski held French citizenship), he had been forced to leave his hereditary holdings in Kórnik (under German rule) by the Prussian authorities in 1886, after which he settled in Galicia. See Władysław Bieńkowski, "Spór o Morskie Oko—wspomnienia" [The dispute over Morskie Oko—recollections], *Studia Historyczne* 30, no. 3 (1987): 453; Walery Goetel, *Wspomnienie pośmiertne o Władysławie Zamoyskim* [A posthumous recollection of Władysław Zamoyski] (Lwów, 1925), also published in *Wierchy* 3 (1925).

[66]See his brochure *Projekt do wniosku J. Ex. Pana Marszałka krajowego hr. Tarnowskiego, celem uczczenia 40-letniej rocznicy panowania Cesarza Franciszka Józefa* [Project for the motion of His Excellency the Provincial Marshal Count Tarnowski, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the reign of Emperor Francis Joseph] (Lwów, 1888), mentioned in "Pławicki Feliks," in *Wielka Encyklopedia Tatrzańska*, 925–26.

[67]Sienkiewicz, under the pseudonym K. Dobrzyński, published an article about this entitled "Kto da więcej?" [Who will give more?], *Słowo Polskie* [The Polish word], 22 May 1889.

[68]Although beyond the scope of this paper, it should be noted that there was another battle being fought in the region: one against Jews. To date I have found only incidental mention of this conflict (mostly in correspondence or memoirs). For example, Witkiewicz wrote in 1891: "Mr. Zamoyski fights with the Hungarians over Morskie Oko, with Jews over control (*panowanie*) in Podhale—in general one must fight here with everything and with everyone." (Zamoyski, 8 July 1891, IS PAN, sygn. 24, k.1133–1134, cited in Zdzisław Piasecki, "Zakopiańscy przyjaciele i znajomi Witkiewicza: Na podstawie nieznanych listów autora 'Na przełęczy'" [Zakopane friends and acquaintances of Witkiewicz: On the basis of unknown letters of the author of "On the col"], *Wierchy* 61 [1995]: 71.) The question of a Jewish challenge to Polish rule in the alpine borderlands deserves further study; I presented some preliminary findings in "Carpathians and Nations: Nineteenth-Century Polish Encounters in the Tatra Mountains," paper presented at the conference "Interethnic Coexistence and Violence in Europe's Eastern Borderlands: The Local Community and the State," Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, 14–16 May 2004.

[69]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 33.

[70]Nowak, "Zamoyski," 51. Much rich detail is found in Bieńkowski, "Spór o Morskie Oko—wspomnienia," 453–85, which suggests that the Polish side hardly remained passive in the face of these moves.

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Having recourse to no extra-imperial channels, the Tatra Society lobbied the Galician Diet, emphasizing the importance of its own claims to the territory. The society requested that the Diet take "the necessary steps so that citizens on Polish ground would not experience interference with their activities and so that not even an 'inch of land' of our country would be acquired by the Hungarians."[71] Note the use of the national argument—the adjective "Polish"[72]—as well as the characterization of the opposition in statist terms ("the Hungarians"—perhaps an apt choice of term, given the presence of Hungarian police). Less understandable (from the Polish national point of view) was the problem with Galician officials. Amazingly little support was forthcoming from the highest officer of the land—the viceroy—or from lesser officials. The *starosta* of Nowy Targ refused to let Austrian police into the disputed territory while availing himself of Hohenlohe's protection for his son.[73] It was as though the old system of patronage and protection—as well as, perhaps, worries about what Vienna might think—still trumped any loyalties to the Polish nation.

The Tatra Society ultimately learned to couch its requests in a different language. Instead of speaking of a Galician-Hungarian conflict (much less a Polish-Hungarian one), the society sought to cast the matter as one of Hungary (for the Hungarian authorities did nothing to stop the German prince) insulting the Austrian authorities. The society likewise focused on the need for "impartial justice" and historic rights, documenting the latter in full. A major search in Polish archives and libraries had been undertaken to locate anything of pertinence to the case.[74] Ultimately, the court of arbitration, which deliberated for three weeks in 1902, held up the Galician claim.

The victory of 1902 electrified Polish society. Some cast it in Polish national terms, as seen from a version of *Dąbrowski's March* (the original of which would later become the Polish national anthem) that was sung and otherwise popularized at this time: "Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła,/Wiwat ptaszę lasze,/Dobra sprawa górę wzięła,/Morskie Oko nasze!"[75] (Poland has not yet perished,/Long live the Polish fledgling,/The good cause gained the upper hand,/Morskie Oko is ours!) The outcome of the battle for Morskie Oko nonetheless helped to "Polonize" Galicia, as well as the Tatras, Zakopane, and Morskie Oko. Eleven years after the victory, a chronicler of the Tatra Society characterized its work as follows: "The Tatra Society in the first instance took care above all to preserve for Poland each piece of alpine land and looked after the Polish character of each inch of the Carpathians and Tatras."[76] The numbers of pilgrimages made to this newly regained territory—with the obligatory visit to Morskie Oko—continued to skyrocket as the highly publicized victory wedged the mountains even more firmly into the national consciousness.

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[71]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 33.

[72]While I have rendered the word *kraj* as "country" (in keeping with the reference to Polish ground [again, a focus on the concrete as well as the national]), it could also be translated—for those mindful of regional politics—as the Galician "Crownland."

[73]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 34–36; Nowak, "Zamoyski," 54.

[74]Roszkowski, "Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie," 40.

[75]Cited in, among others, Jacek Kolbuszewski, "Siedem wizji Morskiego Oka" [Seven visions of Morskie Oko] in *Spór o Morskie Oko*, 18. I find the second line—"*wiwat ptaszę lasze*"—most interesting. Long live the Polish fledgling—meaning the national symbol of the eagle—but presented in what seems to be a multicultural form. Only the bird is Polish, "*wiwat*" coming from the Latin and the adjective "Polish" sounding like the moniker "Lach," often given Poles by Ruthenians or Ukrainians. Perhaps the last was used simply for the rhyme, but I would like to think that it reflected an inclusiveness still being preached at this time.

[76]The remark of the president of the Tatra Society, Władysław Szajnocha, in his "Pogląd na czterdziestoletnią działalność," 7.

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Some have seen the legal victory as a triumph of the idea of Polish statehood—as the success of the broader nation, which had shown that it could defend its natural borders. Others have compared it to the military victory of 1683 or to the Polish constitution of 1791.[77] These very rosy depictions notwithstanding, it is true that a Polish victory at this time set a positive tone for the new century just beginning.[78]

As of the 1890s, the centrality of the region was underscored by a new generation of writers and poets, the so-called "Young Poland" (Młoda Polska), the preeminent fin-de-siècle Polish literary movement. Witness Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński's quip that Young Poland was either "*tatrzańska*" or "*szatańska*" (that is, it occupied itself with either Tatra or Satanic themes). The strength of the Tatra strand of Polish literature—begun, incidentally, by our activists[79]—helped further to popularize the region. Images of the Tatra landscape likewise made their way to the general public. In addition to the usual range of paintings and engravings (reproductions of which often found their way into journals), an enormous panorama (painting-in-the-round) of the Tatras—the work of Antoni Piotrowski and Stanisław Janowski—was exhibited in Warsaw in 1896.[80] Soon, Zakopane would become not only the summer capital but also the winter capital of the nation. Poles would begin a new stage of Tatra exploration, one that focused less on coming to know the highlanders and more on increasing one's own physical hardiness. At the same time, they would send increasing numbers of postcards—for this was their heyday—to those unable to make the journey.[81] Images of Morskie Oko, various notable Tatra peaks, and the proud Tatra highlander came to symbolize the Polish nation and its value of, and longing for, freedom.

* * *

Walery Eljasz once wrote, "For the *kulturtreger* [sic] this world [of the Tatras] is a backwards land, progress enters here extremely slowly." He added, however, that it was heaven for artists and poets, for those "who sought impressions of a higher order."[82] We have seen how this rather sparsely inhabited alpine borderland proved a fertile playground for the "Polish" imagination. Although Varsovians figured prominently in the positivistic undertakings connected with this locale, ultimately a wide range of "Poles" hailing from all three zones took inspiration from the highlands and concocted their own visions of its future. Some

[77]Wacław Polakiewicz, "Doniosłość i wymiar moralny zwycięstwa w Grazu—1902" [The significance and moral dimension of the victory in Graz], in *Spór o Morskie Oko*, 96.

[78]Ibid., 99.

[79]Although a thorough discussion of literature is beyond the scope of this essay, one should note that the "discoverer" of the Tatras, Chałubiński, also had an impact on Polish literature with his account of one of his trips, "Sześć dni w Tatrach" [Six days in the Tatras], *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 2 (1879), also published in *Niwa* [The field]. It marked the beginning of a tradition of Polish tourist (hiking) literature, according to Jacek Kolbuszewski. See Jacek Kolbuszewski, "W stulecie 'Pamiętnika Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego" [On the centenary of the "Journal of the Tatra Society"], *Wierchy* 46 (1977): 8–9; Wójcik, "Tytus Chałubiński." Witkiewicz's *Na przełęczy* was likewise influential.

[80]The panorama is discussed in Franciszek Ziejka, *Panorama Racławicka* [The Racławice panorama] (Cracow, 1984), 61–65.

[81]Adam Czarnowski, "Dawne pocztówki tatrzańskie" [Early Zakopane postcards], *Wierchy* 52 (1983): 164–80. Postcard collecting was all the rage during this period—made easier by the habit of visitors to the Tatras of writing a minimum of a postcard a day to friends and family elsewhere. (Ibid., 169.)

[82]Eljasz, "Kilka wrażeń z Tatr," 76. *Kulturtreger* comes from the original Polish text, although the word appears to be a misspelling of the German *Kulturträger*.

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imagined increasing progress and economic development; yet others saw the region as a springboard for national development.

All sought to incorporate the territory more fully into the larger picture, whether provincial or national. In a way, Poles recolonized the Tatras, buying plots of land and refusing to give way to Hungarian or German claims (or even to Galician or Austrian indifference). They likewise integrated the indigenous peoples into a Polish historical narrative. The once nebulous frontier was becoming sharper, its inhabitants—permanent residents and visitors alike—more clearly defined relative to each other. Residents of Galicia were feeling themselves more Polish, thanks to the contributions of Poles from outside the province.

In the course of this essay, we have explored the effect this alpine borderland had on lowlanders and seen how this encounter—deliberate and conscious—with the local highlanders proved inspirational for those who identified with the Polish national cause. The effect the encounter had on the indigenous highlanders, which has only been hinted at here, deserves an article of its own. It is a complicated story. Even the intellectuals found themselves torn between trying to keep the highlanders as a repository of healthy "national" characteristics while ensuring that they would have the means to make a livelihood in an increasingly modern world. At the same time, though, the stimulus provided by the urban masses who flocked admiringly to Zakopane also helped to integrate the local into the national.

The "discovery" of the Tatras helped to strengthen the attachment of this distinct regional group of highlanders to the region writ large: the Polish nation. In the years that remained before the outbreak of the Great War, Tatra highlanders became not only integrated more fully into the nation: some activists proclaimed that it would be they—in the form of the King Bolesław's slumbering knights—who would rise to defend the nation, the next time with success.[83] None of this would have been possible without the work of the Warsaw positivists, the Tatra Society, and those who strove to broaden the concept of what it meant to be Polish in this remote alpine border region.

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[83]See most specifically an announcement made by Włodzimierz Tetmajer to the highlanders on 24 August 1914, calling them to join the Polish legions, cited in Rokosz, "Zakopane—stolica polskiej irredenty," 142. Rokosz provided many other examples of this new approach to highlander patriotism in the same article.

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