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# How to Explore Vilnius? To Know and to See: Proposals by Kirkor (1856) and Bułhak (1936)

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The aim of the article is to compare two original proposals for the exploration of Vilnius, depicted in the publications by the historian Adam Kirkor (1818–1886) *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego okolicach* and the photographer Jan Bułhak (1876–1950) *Pejzaż Wilna*. The juxtaposition of both works highlights the difference between the perception of the city as a historical configuration of the urban layout and architecture ‘told’ from the perspective of historical events and the lives of famous inhabitants, and the city as a space combining the values of the natural environment, urban planning, architecture, and the living culture of its inhabitants.

Key words: *Adam Kirkor, Jan Bułhak, Wilno, city guides, tour guide literature.*

Straipsnyje siekiama palyginti istoriko Adamo Kirkoro (1818–1886) *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego okolicach* ir fotografo Jano Bułhako (1876–1950) *Pejzaż Wilna* pateiktus pasiūlymus, kaip pažinti Vilnių. Dviejų darbų sugretinimas išryškina skirtumą tarp Vilniaus kaip istorinės miesto išplanavimo ir architektūros konfigūracijos, „papasakotos“ iš istorinių įvykių ir garsių gyventojų biografijų perspektyvos, suvokimo, ir miesto kaip erdvės, kuri susieja gamtą, urbanistiką, architektūrą ir vietos gyventojų kultūrinės vertybes.

Raktiniai žodžiai: *Adamas Kirkoras, Janas Bułhakas, Vilnius, miesto gidai, kelionių literatūra.*

## Introduction

Anniversaries, especially the exceptional ones called jubilees, are occasions which prompt us to look back to our past. Anniversaries of foundation or the placing of the locality are distinguished by their unique character: they highlight what is diachronic, and therefore collective, especially if long standing is considered. Towns and cities join together stories of people and places, combining accidental existences and places into a collective process. When I was thinking

about the contents of this article, bearing in mind that the history of Vilnius spans seven centuries, I presupposed two fundamental cultural categories: time and space. To be more precise, according to the concept of Yi-Fu Tuan, place, i.e. Vilnius, as separated from space, an identified, tamed, domesticated and axiologised area (Tuan 1977). My initially chosen research material was Polish travel guidebooks, or more extensively, publications of a travel guide character published in the Polish language published between the second half of the 19th century up to 1939. I looked not at those focusing on the broader territory, but ones describing Vilnius only, due to the fact that any additional context would complicate and change the vision of the city by embedding it in a much more complex web of relations. The collection of such publications is so vast that it might constitute an autonomous field of research itself, and studies on guidebooks, or, more extensively, travel literature focused solely on Vilnius, have a history of their own and connect experts interested in various kinds of specific issues.<sup>1</sup> Finally, I compared two publications which are noticeably different to each other, and the publication dates of which are eight decades apart. Before characterising the proposals included in them, I will briefly present the body of work I could choose from, and who was involved in writing Vilnius guidebooks. I will not describe the full range, for two reasons. The first is technical. Not all publications were available, I assume, not every item has been digitalised, and not all academic libraries have the full set of works that I was interested in. The second reason, however, was that not every guidebook distinguished itself by a noticeably unique authorial character. The ones I mention further were compiled by people who are important to Vilnius for various reasons. Publications of a guidebook character constitute an addition to their actual work, and not its core. Some guidebooks connected a particular author who, metaphorically speaking, corresponded with one another to highlight (or add) aspects of the image of Vilnius that I perceive as exceptionally important, yet not vividly enough described in the previous proposal.

<sup>1</sup> The material is the focus of interest of Joanna Januszewska-Jurkiewicz (Januszewska-Jurkiewicz 2017), and of Joanna Degler (Lisek) in her two papers (Degler (Lisek) 2021a; 2021b). Januszewska-Jurkiewicz addresses, among other issues, Vilnius realities and the bloom of civilisational changes reported in guidebooks (by Adam Kirkor, Władysław Zahorski and Waclaw Gizbert-Studnicki), and in memoirs of trips to Vilnius. Degler (Lisek), recalls the guidebook in Yiddish *Tojznt yor Wilne* (A Thousand Years of Vilnius) by Zelman Szyk, published shortly before the war by Gezelszaft far Landkenntnisz for Pojln Wilner Optejlung (the Vilnius Department of the Jewish Sightseeing Society in Poland) in Vilnius in 1939, and draws attention to the fact that the authors of previous guidebooks (Kirkor, Zahorski, Kłos, and others) perceive, describe and appraise the multicultural heritage of Vilnius.

Cross-sectional works in which the material appears partially are the comprehensive monographs by Dariusz Opalinski (Opaliński 2012) and Dominik Ziarkowski (Ziarkowski 2021), devoted to tourist literature by Adam Kirkor.

In the article, I refer to the tradition of literary studies research (in relation to genological issues), and in order to outline the context of the creation of both works and their cultural and historical entanglements, I present short biographies of the authors, Adam Kirkor (1818–1886) and Jan Bułhak (1876–1950). The main aim of the article is to make a comparative presentation of two interesting (and, compared to other works, to some extent formative) examples of tour guide literature: *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego okolicach* (Walks around Vilnius and its Surroundings) and *Pejzaż Wilna* (The Landscape of Vilnius). The choice is not accidental: this combination highlights the difference between the perception of the city as a historical configuration of the urban layout and architecture ‘told’ from the perspective of historical events and biographies of its famous inhabitants, and the city as a space combining the values of the natural environment, urban planning, architecture, and a living culture in the ethnographic sense.

The basic method I employ is classic text analysis, as I use secondary sources, both documenting and subjectively presenting Vilnius. The analysis of older texts may prove interesting to those interested in contemporary Vilnius, as it directs attention to continuity and change, both of the city itself (as a material substrate) and its living culture, and, at the epistemological level, the ways of ‘talking’ and writing about the city, as well as other forms of presenting it.

### **A genological digression**

The history of guidebooks as a particular type of applied literature seems relatively short when compared with other literary genres. According to Antoni Mączak, who described the work of Charles Estienne, traces of its beginning can be found in the 16th century, although the more common use of such practical publications with very specific content and mass distribution was to start with the development of tourism (e.g. Ziarkowski 2018). Tourism is a time-restricted set of cultural practices which are distinguished from other forms of travelling or identified as a separate type. This identification can be witnessed in the lexis: derivatives of the noun *tour* occur in the late 18th century, first as the word *tourist*, and thereafter as *tourism*. A wider diachronic perspective would, obviously, allow us to search for the early days of tourism in Antiquity. However, that would not be necessary or desirable with regard to the purpose of this article, because it might obscure its principal question. Also, tourism can be broadly defined as a phenomenon embracing various aims of traveling. I will posit a much narrower concept, one which historically induced the need for a new lexis: travelling for recreational and cognitive purposes (cf. Przeclawski 1997: 30). Therefore, I find close to my understanding the commonly known and frequently quoted definition of a tourist of Valene Smith as ‘temporarily leisured person

who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change' (Smith 1989: 1). I will also recall types of tourism distinguished by this scholar: ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism, and recreational tourism (Smith 1989: 4–5).<sup>2</sup>

The development of contemporary tourism was correlated with evolution in the area of land, water and air transport, namely, means of transport: newly invented railways, cars, and, finally, planes. The functioning and development of each form of transport forced modifications to the infrastructure (ports, harbours) and, above all, building new elements, i.e. railway stations, petrol stations, airports, and more. Significantly important was also the new way of distribution of information, which was devoted to the masses, cheap, convenient, easily available, and promptly updated. This task was fulfilled by notices in the press, flyers, information brochures, and to some extent travel guidebooks.

In this article, I use the notions of guidebook (guidebook, guide), tour guide literature and publications of a guidebook character interchangeably, because the items that are the focus of my interest do not fulfil the formal requirements ascribed to the genre. What requirements do I have in mind? Regarding the aspect of the textual content of guidebooks, both practical information, as well as books about the natural, historical and cultural values of the visited place, are important. Practical information includes pointers about how to reach a chosen destination, in a broader sense (such as how to get to a particular town, which was the reason why, for example, train timetables could be found in old guidebooks), and a more detailed understanding (how to reach the most interesting places marked on the maps attached). Practical information also includes tips about the accommodation, gastronomic offerings (as in the already-mentioned guidebook by Estienne), and the opening hours of particular facilities. Their physical form is also not without meaning: the size, shape, weight (attributable to the type of cover and paper used in print); and also questions such as availability, what the results of the volume are, the number of editions, distribution and price, cannot be omitted.<sup>3</sup>

### **Adam H. Kirkor and the first Vilnius guidebooks**

The first Vilnius guidebooks were written in the middle of the 19th century, which is when the first similar publications on Warsaw and Cracow started to appear (cf. Opaliński 2012: 198). The oldest example is *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego*

<sup>2</sup> I refer to Valene Smith's idea to place the profile of both texts within the framework of contemporary reflection and tourism, but this study is not a work in the field of the history of tourism, or the anthropology of tourism.

<sup>3</sup> Experts working on guidebooks have dissected this issue in great detail, based on a wide corpus of texts, cf. in particular the extensive monograph by Opaliński (Opaliński 2012).



*okolicach* by Adam Honory Kirkor, who published it under the pseudonym Jan ze Śliwina (Jan of Śliwino).<sup>4</sup> The first edition appeared in 1856 (302 pages, [Kirkor] 1856), followed by a slightly modified edition in 1859, revised and expanded (384 pages, but in smaller size, i.e. 18 centimetres instead of 22 centimetres, [Kirkor] 1859). *Przechadzki po Wilnie* can be described by the word *spacerownik* ('a walkbook'), which is relatively new in our lexical resource, and bears the meaning increasingly popular nowadays of 'a guide to a city, which includes descriptions of strolling routes' (Spacerownik 2023). The book contains 18 walks of this type, of which the first to the 12th cover the city centre and the suburbs, the 13th to the 26th cover cemeteries, and the last two are walks through exhibitions that opened in 1856 in the Museum of Antiquities (the 27th) and the Ornithology Cabinet (the 28th), by Kajetan Tamulewicz.<sup>5</sup>

Kirkor was associated with the city for only three decades, from 1834 to 1867, since his schooldays. After completing school, he worked at the Vilnius Revenue Board (from 1838), and in the early 1840s he began more extensive journalistic activity, which, over time, gained a pronounced historical profile. In 1849 he was attached to the Registrar's Office of the Statistical Committee of Vilnius, for which he also managed and edited (from 1850 to 1854) the yearbook published by this institution (in the Russian language). Kirkor initiated the publishing of another part of this publication, thanks to which, apart from the current official data, the yearbook contained disquisitions on Vilnius and extensive studies on the history of the city. His work in this field also appeared in prominent historical journals. The number of his works cannot be specified here, even in the form of a selection; however, during the writing of the guidebook described in this article (the completion of which is dated 1855), he conducted very extensive historical, archaeological, and finally ethnological, research. In 1855 his *Wycieczka archeologiczna po guberni wileńskiej przez Jana ze Śliwina* (Archaeological Excursion through the Vilna Governorate by Jan of Śliwino), a work that combines research from these three disciplines, was published in *Biblioteka Warszawska* (a monthly magazine published between 1841 and 1914 in Warsaw). The year 1855 was the year when the efforts of Eustachy Tyszkiewicz resulted in the launching of the Provisional Archaeological Commission in Vilnius. Kirkor became a member of it; he was also a curator of the Archaeological Site Museum in Vilnius. Thus, who would

<sup>4</sup> However, as Joanna Januszewska-Jurkiewicz notes (annotating the passage with references to the works of the two writers mentioned above), 'Descriptions of tours by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and Władysław Syrokomla (Ludwik Kondratowicz) constituted a kind of tourist "proto-guide", in which the historical passions of the authors were clearly recognisable' (Januszewska-Jurkiewicz 2017: 53).

<sup>5</sup> In the second edition, the last walk also included the Mineralogical Cabinet; the author of the article was also Tamulewicz.

be a better potential author of a guidebook to the city than Kirkor? In his nearly 100-page study from which I took the information about Kirkor presented above, Michal Brensztejn writes:

In the several pre-January years, Kirkor, one could say without exaggeration, was the main initiator, inspirer and executor of the most important activities in Vilnius, whether in the field of archaeological and historical work, the organisation of publishing houses and the press, the development of the Polish scene, or the improvement of economic conditions; indeed, as contemporaries assert, even some steps in local politics at that time, although not entirely fortunate in concept and execution, but all too publicised, could not pass without Kirkor's guidance (Brensztejn 1930: 5).<sup>6</sup>

*Przechadzki po Wilnie*, to which I will devote a bit more attention later in the article, illustrates exploring Vilnius in a very detailed way, but it is difficult to recognise it as a tour guide with all the determinants of the genre. A few years after its publication, in his own publishing house, purchased from Krystian Teofil Glücksberg, Kirkor printed the first version of his authorial guidebook to Vilnius (Kirkor 1862). Its next, revised version, released under a modified title, appeared much later, published by Józef Zawadzki (Kirkor 1880),<sup>7</sup> when the author had been living in Cracow for more than dozen years. The publication date, the year 1862, was chosen on purpose. In the short first part, designated with Roman numerals, Kirkor provides information on the opening of railway lines to St Petersburg, Kaunas and Warsaw, inserts train schedules and a map, offers practical information for travellers, and characterises in footnotes selected towns where stations were located. The main part, which addresses Vilnius, begins with the relatively short 'Historical Outlines' (p. 40), followed by 'Statistical Outlines', covering information on the city's location, climate, internal divisions (e.g. parishes, circulars, quarters), the shape of the city's spatial arrangement and its development (rivers, bridges, roads, streets, houses, gardens, etc), demography,

<sup>6</sup> Naturally, Kirkor's later contributions to Polish culture, especially in the field of science (e.g. his activity in organising the Academy of Learning in Cracow), are also worth remembering.

<sup>7</sup> The title of the first edition was *Przewodnik. Wilno i koleje żelazne z Wilna do Petersburga i Rygi oraz do granic na Kowno i Warszawę z planem, widokami Wilna i mapką kolei żelaznych* (A Guide. Vilnius and the Railway from Vilnius to St Petersburg and Riga and to the Borders to Kaunas and Warsaw with a Plan, Views of Vilnius, and a Railway Map). When it came to the second edition, I found in different libraries two different versions of the title: *Przewodnik historyczny po Wilnie i jego okolicach* (A Historical guide to Vilnius and its Surroundings), and *Przewodnik po Wilnie i jego okolicach z wykazaniem historycznym najbliższych stacyj kolei żelaznych* (A Guide to Vilnius and its Surroundings with a Historical Indication of the Nearest Railway Stations), (Kirkor 1880) cf. <http://bc.wbp.lublin.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=12684> and <https://polona.pl/item-view/502bd6ba-ddb2-4feb-9cf3-a7c8bb5a5604?page=8> [accessed on 10 11 2023]. After the author's death, Zawadzki reissued this item in the 1889 version under the second of the stated titles (Kirkor 1889), cf. <https://polona.pl/item-view/f5015d00-008a-4ef8-9e70-7725c6570d6f?page=6> [accessed on 10 11 2023].

economy, and the administration of Vilnius in current times and in the past. The section on urban institutions and facilities (temples of several religions, cemeteries, charitable societies, hospitals, and educational and scientific institutions) begins with the extensive subsection on 'Churches' (starting on p. 89). The guidebook's layout is completely different from *Przechadzki*. The practical focus of the publication stands out clearly, which includes advertisements for hotels attached to the end of the volume (not covered in the table of contents). However, of course, there are also passages of a similar character to *Przechadzki* regarding their narrative, evident examples of which occur in the last subsection 'Vilnius Surroundings' (from p. 252).

### References and continuations: Władysław Zahorski, Waclaw Gizbert-Studnicki and Juliusz Kłos

After Kirkor, guides were written by authors who differed in their interests and formal education, as well as by their attitude towards the multiculturalism of Vilnius, but who were united by their fascination with the city, its history, specifics and landscape. One of them was Władysław Zahorski (1858–1927), a physician by education and profession, whose non-professional activity for the benefit of Vilnius culture was significant.<sup>8</sup> However, like Kirkor, Zahorski spent only part of his life in the city, the period of his school education and the years 1892 to 1927.<sup>9</sup> In 1904, Zahorski published an article entitled *Pamiętki narodowe w Wilnie. Uzupełnienie przewodnika po Wilnie Kirkora* (National Souvenirs in Vilnius. A Supplement to the Kirkor Guide to Vilnius) (Zahorski 1904).<sup>10</sup>

Zahorski did not question his predecessor's ideas of composition, although he believed that valuable information about Vilnius, especially what was important

<sup>8</sup> Stanisław Trzebiński wrote about his activity in his posthumous memoir: 'A tireless and fearless participant in Polish educational work during the captivity, chairman of the committee of the first collective Polish book after 1863 *Z nad Wilii i Niemna* (From the Neman and the Wilya), co-organiser of the first Polish theatre in our city during Russian rule, editor and contributor to the first Polish periodicals of the time, co-founder and president of the Society of Friends of Science in Wilno [...] and finally, one of those who undoubtedly contributed to the resurrection of our University [...]' (Trzebiński 1927: 292).

<sup>9</sup> Zahorski spent two decades in Russia, first as a schoolboy and a student, and then as a physician working in Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk.

<sup>10</sup> The article is strongly anti-establishment in its language: Vilnius is indicated as the place where the first (and only) issue of *Noworocznik Litewski* was published, but was printed in Cracow. It is worth noting that the same year a publication of a fundamentally different nature appeared, a guidebook written by Aleksandr Aleksandrowiç Vinogradov (ca. 1870–after 1912), a tsarist official who was active on the committees to build monuments to Mikhail Muravyov and Catherine II, and the Muravyov Museum in the early 20th century (Виноградов 1904; Виноградов 1908). This was not the first guidebook in Russian: two decades earlier *Вильна и окрестности. Путеводитель и историческая справочная книжка* appeared without a mention of the author's name (Вильна... 1883).

to Poles, had been omitted from Kirkor's guide, due to the political circumstances. Kirkor and Zahorski differed in their sense of national identity,<sup>11</sup> their attitudes toward the partitioning power (Kirkor's agreeableness<sup>12</sup> and Zahorski's 'martyrologism', cf. Degler (Lisek) 2021b: 324 and later), and in their ability to actively apply and express their opinions, which was the result of them being placed in a particular situation. *Przechadzki* and the first edition of Kirkor's guide were published before the outbreak of the January Uprising, and therefore the perspectives of the two authors must have differed dramatically.

It was not long before Zahorski compiled the authorial *Przewodnik po Wilnie* (Guide to Vilnius), which was published in five editions until 1939 (first in 1910,<sup>13</sup> a new edition in 1921, a third revised and supplemented edition in 1923, a fourth edition in 1927, and the fifth edition revised and supplemented by Maria Łowmiańska<sup>14</sup> in 1935, all published in Vilnius by Józef Zawadzki). The year 1910 was also the year of the publication of a guide by Waclaw Gizbert-Studnicki (1874–1962), a historian, publicist, archivist, admirer, and Vilnius councillor in the interwar period.<sup>15</sup> This was *Wilno. Przewodnik ilustrowany po mieście i okolicach z planem miasta i dodatkami* (Vilnius. An Illustrated Guide to the City and its Surroundings with a Map and Appendix, Gizbert[Studnicki] 1910).<sup>16</sup> The Vilnius Enthusiasts Society then published *Wilno. Przewodnik ilustrowany po*

<sup>11</sup> According to the aforementioned Januszewska-Jurkiewicz, unlike Zahorski, Kirkor 'presented a two-tier national consciousness and the "closer homeland" for him was the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which he did not treat as identical to Poland, i.e. the Kingdom of Poland' (Januszewska-Jurkiewicz 2017: 52). Cf. The same topic in: Medišauskienė 2001; Buchowski 2006: 46–47.

<sup>12</sup> Also, the later one from the period when he was the editor of *Novoye Vremya* in St Petersburg (cf. Banaszkiwicz, Kotov 2021).

<sup>13</sup> With the subheading 'Opracowany na podstawie najnowszych źródeł' (Compiled from the Most Recent Sources).

<sup>14</sup> Maria Łowmiańska (née Plackowski, 1899–1961) graduated with a degree in history and received her doctorate from Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. Her dissertation, as well as the research work she published in the interwar period, was devoted to the history of Vilnius (cf. Kiaupa 1995: 58–66).

<sup>15</sup> Gizbert-Studnicki was connected with Vilnius archives from the first decade of the 20th century: he headed the Vilnius City Archive from 1908 to 1916, and after the war he organised the Vilnius State Archive (1921) and was associated with it until his retirement in 1939. After the First World War he belonged to the Vilnius Region Lovers Society and the Vilnius Region Tourist Promotion Association. In the USA, where he lived from 1951, he founded the Vilnius City Lovers Association (cf. Ryńca, Suleja 2007–2008: 121–125).

<sup>16</sup> Both tour guides were the basis for a short study of a guidebook character, prepared by the teacher, writer and columnist Ludwika Życka (1859–after 1939) entitled *Wilno z 8 rycinami*, which was published in the series Biblioteczka Młodzieży Szkolnej (Życka 1912). A few years later, in 1919, a booklet of a similar size and guidebook character entitled *Wilno* was published by Helena Romer (1875–1947) in the series Biblioteka Dzieł Wyborowych (Romer 1919). Like Życka, Helena Romer was involved in educational work, including clandestine education, as well as collaborating with periodicals in Vilnius. In addition to journalism, her works include novels, novellas and dramas.

*mieście i okolicach* (Vilnius. An Illustrated Guide to the City and its Surroundings, Gizbert-Studnicki 1919), which was much more modest in terms of the number of pages. Its 1921 republication (indicated as the second edition, but very limited compared to previous versions) included an appendix by Juliusz Kłos 'Rozwój architektoniczny Wilna' (The Architectural Development of Vilnius, [Gizbert-] Studnicki, Kłos 1921). When this study was published, Juliusz Kłos (1881–1933), an architect and professor at Stefan Batory University, had only lived in Vilnius for a year. Before the war he ran an architectural office in Warsaw which was involved in the restoration of mansions and sacral buildings. Later he started teaching architecture, and took part in organising the Department of Architecture at Warsaw University of Technology. After the war, he was employed temporarily as a government official, and in 1920, thanks to Ferdynand Ruszczyk, he established the Architecture Section in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Stefan Batory University and headed the Department of Polish Architecture.<sup>17</sup> He devoted numerous and various activities to Vilnius and the Vilnius region, including, in addition to his pedagogical and publishing activities, architectural, inventory and conservation works. He was a member of the District Conservation Commission and the District Museum Council, and vice-president of the Vilnius Enthusiasts Society (cf. e.g. Samujłło, Śniezko 1967–1968: 70–72). He published widely, and his works include *Wilno. Przewodnik krajoznawczy* (Vilnius. A Sightseeing Guide), published in three editions before 1939. The first edition, dedicated to Władysław Zahorski, was published in 1923 in Vilnius by the Vilnius Branch of the Polish Sightseeing Society (Kłos 1923). Its five-part structure highlights clearly the architectural content. The first part focuses on the history of the city, the next one focuses on the development of Vilnius' architecture, the third and most extensive one focuses on the topographical arrangement of sites and a description of them, the fourth presents Vilnius cemeteries, and the last and shortest part contains practical advice. The somewhat more extensive edition *Wilno. Przewodnik krajoznawczy (szkic monografii historyczno-architektonicznej)* (Vilnius. A Sightseeing Guide [Sketch of a Historical-Architectural Monograph]) was published in 1929 as a 'second edition, completely revised and supplemented', also by the Polish Sightseeing Society (Kłos 1929).

The last edition was published in 1937 after the author's death, with an introduction 'Przewodnik po duszach ludzkich' (A Guide to Human Souls) by Jan Bułhak. He describes Kłos, his service to Vilnius, and above all his deep emotional connection with the city, calling his work 'the first and only guide to Vilnius that is both scholarly and artistic' (Kłos 1937: VII). According to Bułhak, Kłos was

<sup>17</sup> The history of the Faculty of Fine Arts is the topic of the publication *The Faculty of Fine Arts of the Stefan Batory University in Wilno* (Geron 2022), where Kłos' activity there is described by Józef Pniewski (Pniewski 2022: 13–72).

able to convey not only ‘the historical, social and moral background’, but he also ‘knew how to give what is of the greatest importance: a cross-section of human souls who have incarnated in these walls and speak from them with immortality’. The next paragraph reads: ‘To be able to write like this, one must be a scholar and an artist, a man who not only knows, but also feels’ (Kłos 1937: VII).

### Vilnius landscapes by Jan Bułhak

Jan Bułhak, who worked in the same department as Kłos, headed the Department of Artistic Photography (cf. Szymanowicz 2022: 179–202) in the years 1919 to 1939, also thanks to Ruszczyc, who had encouraged him to become a professional photographer.<sup>18</sup> Ruszczyc initiated a municipal photographic archive, which was established in Vilnius for the purpose of creating an inventory of Vilnius monuments, and by which Bułhak was employed in July 1912. Maciej Szymanowicz wrote that Ruszczyc ‘was his mentor and first guide in Wilno, who also influenced Bułhak’s technique of photographing architecture’ (Szymanowicz 2018b: 49).<sup>19</sup>

In addition to close and friendly contacts, Bułhak and Kłos had common interests (Kłos was also involved in photography)<sup>20</sup> and numerous joint ventures.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Ruszczyc, a great organiser of cultural life in Vilnius, had a political vision and a range of artistic and political activities for the Polishness of Vilnius that joined him with Bułhak and Kłos. One of them was their joint project

<sup>18</sup> On the relationship with Ruszczyc and the long history of interaction (cf. Bułhak 1939), the publication also reports that Studnicki’s cooperation was ‘invaluable for finding old files’ (Bułhak 1939: 86).

<sup>19</sup> Szymanowicz also writes: ‘It should be noted, however, that Bułhak’s first commercial work was for the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in 1908, and in 1910 Bułhak published ethnographic and sightseeing photographs in *Ziemia* and *Kwartalnik Litewski*’ (Szymanowicz 2018b: 48; footnote 11).

<sup>20</sup> The first edition of the guide includes photographs by Kłos, but also by Zahorski and, the most numerous, by Bułhak. Photographs appeared frequently in guidebooks, but the photographers were not often indicated. It was different in the case of works by people associated with the Faculty of Fine Arts. I will mention, for example, the work of Jerzy Remer (1888–1979), who became head of the Department of Art History in 1922, and the first general conservator of monuments from 1930. Remer published an article about Vilnius (*Wilno i Województwo Wileńskie*) in the second volume of the monumental publication *Polska w krajobrazie i zabytkach* (Remer 1930: 115–122). Although it is difficult to consider this text a guidebook (the volume measures 33 centimetres, it is heavy, and lacks practical information), the description of the city is written in the form of a stroll (hence the numerous verbs indicating movement mostly in the first person plural), and is accompanied by many signed photographs, not only by Bułhak and Kłos, but also by others (pic. 1234–1446).

<sup>21</sup> They worked together on e.g. *Dwa dni w Wilnie* (text by Kłos, photographs by Bułhak), a short guidebook (ten pages and a map) published by the Polish Touring Club in 1929, which was also published in a German version as *Zwei Tage in Wilno* (Kłos, Bułhak 1929a; 1929b).

*Polskie Wilno* (Polish Vilnius), translated into several languages, with words by Kłos and photographs by Bułhak, by which the issue of 'Polish Vilnius' was promoted internationally.

An expression of this vision can also be found in Bułhak's 'guide' to Vilnius, which is what I call the booklet 'Landscape of Vilnius' published in 1936 by *Przegląd fotograficzny* as a double booklet in the series 'Wędrówki fotografa w słowie i w obrazie' (Wanderings of the Photographer in Word and Image, third series). The text has a two-part structure: the first is dedicated to Juliusz Kłos, and the second is 'The Joy of Approaching' (*Radość zbliżenia*). The beginning of the text is devoted to a general reflection about the city, which separates man from earth. The author argues that 'vastness and beauty lie mostly beyond the meagre tufts of so-called civilisation' (Bułhak 1936: 5–6). This image is contrasted with Vilnius, as a city that 'does not disturb the perspective of natural and important matters by its existence and is a notable exception in this law' (Bułhak 1936: 6). What is, then, the specificity of Vilnius? As we read:

Vilnius is not exactly a city and has never really been one. It only pretends to be a city, tries to be one without any significant results, and despite the flow and spirit of the times, it has not ceased to be a village [...] Vilnius is first and foremost a landscape, and, as such, a state of the soul, illuminated by the sunny grace of nature (Bułhak 1936: 6).

Bułhak quotes Ruszczyk as one who recalled the beauty of the city which results from the combination of the natural terrain and the architecture in it. *Pejzaż* reveals in a somewhat abbreviated form what can be found in Juliusz Kłos' guides, and what Joanna Degler calls 'the apotheosis of Polishness' (cf. Degler (Lisek) 2021a: 83–88; 2021b: 325–328). It expresses admiration for what is associated with Polish culture, and an aversion to the achievements of other cultures related to Vilnius. This aspect should be mentioned, because the author emphasises that the only focus of his interest is 'old Polish Vilnius, stretching from the Gates of Dawn and Rasos, to Šnipiškės and Antakalnis' (Bułhak 1936: 9, footnote 1).

For Bułhak, a description of the specifics of a place should also include a description of the specifics of the people associated with it. Such is the case here as well: the booklet *Pejzaż Wilna* not only characterises views of Vilnius and presents them in the author's photographs, but also contains photographic depictions of the city's residents in a form resembling plates from anthropological works.<sup>22</sup> The formal similarity is also demonstrated by the caption under the photographs 'types of people of Vilnius'. The unusually favourable characterisation of Vilnius residents is accompanied by a philippic against modern cities, which, unlike Vilnius, destroy people and their relationship with nature. The view of the

<sup>22</sup> I will not elaborate on this, though the trail to look for inspiration among works describing 'land and people' may be interesting.

landscape of Vilnius is in line with what he declared earlier. In *Almanach fotografii wileńskiej* (Almanac of Vilnius Photography), published in 1931 by the Vilnius Photography Club (which was founded on Bułhak's initiative in 1928), an article appeared entitled 'The Problem of Nationality in Pictorial Photography'.<sup>23</sup> In the article, Bułhak argues against the programme of the 'New Objectivity' (*Neue Sachlichkeit*<sup>24</sup>). 'New photographic subjects are chiefly borrowed from the industrial life of large towns. They are like accumulations of motley and uninteresting objects from the everyday life of the large town' (Bułhak 1931: 20).

Such photography does not reflect the 'soul of the whole nation'. And yet 'A town [...] is neither a haberdashery shop nor a central depository of ugliness. A town is a gigantic effort of motion and energy which possesses a poetry of its own' (Bułhak 1931: 20). A similarly poetic can be found in *Pejzaż Wilna*.

## To know and to see

Why did I chose *Przechadzki* by Kirkor and *Pejzaż Wilna* by Bułhak? Primarily due to the fact that these publications are situated at opposite poles when it comes to the configuration of time and place mentioned at the beginning of this article. First, a superficial view allows us to conclude that *Przechadzki* is set in the domain of the past (the work of a historian), while *Pejzaż* is set in the domain of the present (the work of a photographer). Both, therefore, delineate a certain spectrum of possibilities for presenting the city.

Kirkor is interested in Vilnius as a historical structure, and a stroll in it is perceived by him as a form of cognition: 'Have you wished to resurrect the history of past times in your memory?' ([Kirkor] 1856: 9). This is the first sentence of *Przechadzki*<sup>25</sup> by Adam Kirkor, which definitely indicates that the publication should introduce visitors to history. Not only is Vilnius included in the scope of importance, but all of Lithuania. In the third sentence we read: 'Vilnius, a living chronicle of old Lithuania. A witness of its past glory and collapse' ([Kirkor] 1856: 9). These are not empty declarations: for the author, the topography of the

<sup>23</sup> By this article, Bułhak became part of a broader discussion, which included Antoni Wiczorek, *Narodowość a fotografia* (*Miesięcznik Fotograficzny* 1931, No 133), Józef Świtkowski, *Narodowość a fotografia* (*Miesięcznik Fotograficzny* 1931, No 134), and Jan Sunderland, *Cechy narodowe w fotografice* (*Ziemia* 1932, Nos 10–12) on this topic (Szymanowicz 2018a: 65–86).

<sup>24</sup> *Neue Sachlichkeit* was a current in German art in the interwar period. As a style in photography (expressed in an ascetic, objectified visual language), it opposed artistic tendencies such as, for example, Pictorialism (of which Bułhak was a representative). On the topic of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in photography, cf. Molderings 1977.

<sup>25</sup> What would be worth discussing, bearing in mind the purpose of this guide (but also other examples of this type of writing), is both the concept of a walk as a culturally important activity (on the subject, see Achtelik 2015), and a certain history of references to the title, on for example, in the prewar columns of Czesław Jankowski (Fedorowicz 2005: 184–201), or in more recent literature, e.g. Kasperavičienė, Surwiło 1997; Surwiło 2005.



city and its monuments constitute a pretext to recall past events and historical characters. It does not mean that the information on the viewed objects is scarce; however, its importance is not primary. Later in this paragraph, Kirkor declares:

Our intention, therefore, is to provide the reader with at least a cursory glimpse of the antiquities of Vilnius, to guide him through its narrow and crooked streets, to point out our churches, our cemeteries where so many men of action and fame rest and where so many hopes have fallen, our old buildings, with which so many memories are connected ... In order to make this work accessible to everyone, and so that it can serve as a **guide** or a **guideline** [my emphasis, A.G.], it seemed most appropriate to divide the city into several sections, in which, accompanying the reader, we will point out objects worthy of attention ([Kirkor] 1856: 9–10).

This declaration may sound modest, but nevertheless the author requires the reader not only to pay close attention, but also to have some historical background. Reading the next passages, we may ask the question how to use this guidebook? Every type of verbal message is connected with a specific communication situation; applied literature, which includes guidebooks, also requires a specific context. Does guidebook reading precede the activity of sightseeing, does it accompany it, is it subsequent to it, or does it replace it? These are questions that are not without merit in the reflection on the genre. Reviewing a guidebook would certainly be beneficial when preparing for a trip (especially practical information); however, publications that offer a detailed route with descriptions of objects are a secondary, substitute form, one that replaces the person. In the Vilnius dictionary, which was published in 1861, the word *przewodnik* (also *przewodca* and *przewodźca*), which means ‘a guide’, has seven meanings, the first of which refers to ‘one who conducts, precedes to show the way’, while only the fifth is ‘the title of many portable books. A traveller’s guide’ (Zdanowicz i inn. 1861: 1273). Kirkor created a detailed work, saturated with historical information (the information about the sources he used is also relatively extensive; moreover, in the footnotes he occasionally corrects mistakes made by the authors of historical works<sup>26</sup>). Nevertheless, he stresses: ‘We are providing readers not with the history, not with a chronicle, but with a walk through’ ([Kirkor] 1856: 10). The topography of the city is the ‘trigger’ for the story of the past. The author guides readers, starting from Cathedral Square, because here begins ‘the first development of Vilnius’ historical life’<sup>27</sup> ([Kirkor] 1856: 11), through subsequent areas.

<sup>26</sup> A footnote on page 16 reads: ‘Perhaps our walks will reach the hands of the esteemed publisher of a supremely important work *Starożytności Polskie* [Poznań 1852], so we would recommend correcting the important mistake [...]’. Cf. also the final volume ‘Appendixes and Corrections’ ([Kirkor] 1856: 274–291).

<sup>27</sup> The beginning of an encounter with a city is essential, and defines the nature of guidebooks. Lucjan Rydel, in his publication *Wilno*, which can be considered a form of literary guidebook

The spatial arrangement of places adds meaning to past events, and binds them into an order superior to the absolute timeline. The dynamics of the walk dictate the chronology of the tour, thus building extra-temporal 'neighbourhoods' arising from the identity of the place. Objects, events and historical figures intertwine. Cemetery walks are particularly saturated with memories of famous Vilnius residents; they form a biographical dictionary, determined not by chronology or the alphabet, but by the topography of the necropolis.

Bułhak slowly invites the visitor in. After some longer, very literary descriptions, it is not until the second chapter of the section 'The Distance of Worship' (*Dystans uwielbienia*), after the remark 'Let's not rush inside. Let's stand on the threshold for a while' (Bułhak 1936: 17), he then continues, as if beginning the ritual of looking:<sup>28</sup>

Vilnius has placed itself among its hills in such a way as to offer the eyes of the beholder the distance of adoration.

Let's look at it from a distance. Let's walk from the surrounding roads winding through the northeastern hills, from the high and fateful gateway from where Moscow's invasions arrived for so many centuries.

From the east, whether we follow the undulating ribbon of the Calvary road, or the highland ridge of the Wilkomiersk road, or the iron road leading from Novi Vileyka through Rekanciszki by a string of beautiful valleys and hills, we will briefly catch a glimpse of the foggy mirage of the valley of Vilnius, wrapped in the forest heights, we will see the blue-gold sea on which church spires float in the shadowy dust like the flagpoles of a great flotilla. But soon the city will fade behind the domed backdrop of the roadside landscape (Bułhak 1936: 18).

This relatively long quote captures a sample of Bułhak's extremely picturesque style. It presents a change of viewpoints, and consequently a change of images. In the first part (Chapter III), the author views Vilnius from the tower of St John's. Reading it and the following passages, it becomes obvious that Bułhak's knowledge of the historical fabric of the city, gained over the years with the photographic documentation of the monuments, was very deep. However,

or guide-reportage, begins this encounter (presented after the first part, which took the form of a historical introduction), 'naturally', as a visitor, from the train station, and ends with a visit to the cemetery (Rydel 1915).

<sup>28</sup> In a book about his cooperation with Ruszczyk, Bułhak relates how the painter taught him to look at Vilnius, and how he himself matured to this perception. Over time, he began to recognise its 'essence' in the object: 'Amazed, I perceived in the manifestations of monumental art their living causes and direct necessity, flowing from the soul of the nation and the spirit of history, the embodiment of great feelings and desires, the solidification of custom into tradition, and tradition into the sacred books of national passion, virtue and glory. With pious delight I found these threads that were not visible, yet so strong the moment I became aware of them, the threads that bind the lives of individuals to the entire past of the nation' (Bułhak 1939: 94).

the viewer does not receive a complete, meticulous work saturated with details. On the contrary, Bułhak writes:

Our tour of Vilnius has a modest and limited purpose: it will sketch a handful of loose glimpses and a bundle of impressions, chosen at will from a long diary of experiences. It will show in more detail the idyllic character of the city, omitting a great variety of other matters worthy of attention and admiration, and will characterise only three main elements of Vilnius city: the church, with its presbytery or monastery, the mansion, and finally the plants, parks, gardens, overgrown squares, streets and mountains, suburban forests and all the elements of the landscape, which, together with the buildings, make up **the synthetic image of Vilnius, dominant and unchanging** [my emphasis, A.G.], despite the foreign impurities (Bułhak 1936: 29–30).

This is another difference. Kirkor provides a feast of details: places, dates, names, a multiplicity and diversity from which a dense yet heterogeneous picture is supposed to emerge. Bułhak, on the other hand, models the picture and removes details: in his description, dates can scarcely be found, and not many names occur (cf. only Bułhak 1936: 41–42). There is the nation as a collective subject, its expressive but nameless representatives, and Vilnius, completely different to any other city in the world. There are descriptions of the architecture, but they also contain no information about the creators, the style, etc. There are small but varied<sup>29</sup> and very dynamic pictures of the ‘fair fest’ (*fest kiermaszowy*) and ‘market day’ (*dzień targowy*) (Bułhak 1936: 52–53), somewhat confirming the ‘rurality’ of Vilnius, similar to the ‘naturally’ emerging Vilnius paths (country roads, *drożyny wiejskie*, Bułhak 1936: 50), whose origins and form are rather different to planned urban streets. Bułhak’s depictions sometimes tend to be extremely anachronistic, but there are passages that are surprisingly ‘contemporary’, including complaints about the destruction of historic trees (and the infamous participation of the city authorities in this practice): ‘Century-old avenues and groups of trees, allegedly crumbling, are being cut down to build hastily hewn booths and sheds in their place and level the area for sporting stunts and fairground attractions’ (Bułhak 1936: 32).

I draw attention to this sentence, because it calls for a different view of the issue in this text than before. The image of Vilnius suggested by Bułhak is only partially contemporary: the artist does not agree to the changes that are taking place in the city, and selects only fragments that testify to the long persistence of the national spirit from the entire complex structure of Vilnius. On the other hand, in the case of Kirkor’s *Przechadzki*, especially its last parts, an approving openness to the present can be noticed. Referring to the semiotic proposition of

<sup>29</sup> In the description I emphasise the visual aspect, although in Bułhak’s work, references to sounds and smells (e.g. ‘sweet urban fetor’) are not uncommon (Bułhak 1936: 52).

Yuri M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspensky (Lotman, Uspensky 1978), it can be stated that for Bułhak there is a Vilnius (the 'real' one), and an anti-Vilnius, which threatens the existence of the former, and which the photographer does not want to see. Kirkor, on the contrary, appreciates novelties and civilisational changes (in *Przechadzki* it is the joy of the creation of the Museum of Antiquities, and in the 1862 *Przewodnik* the opening of the railway). In his optics, Vilnius has a potential for change.

### Concluding remarks

It may seem that the fundamental opposition between the discussed proposals is knowledge (Kirkor) and vision (Bułhak), but it is difficult to agree with this statement. Kirkor assembles the entire volume from a rich factography, which he consults with his readers (*Przechadzki* was published as booklets, so the already-mentioned 'Appendixes and Corrections' could be included in the volume). Bułhak has a deep inner conviction, which is primal to what he sees and presents to the reader.

Neither publication is not particularly suitable for use in the field. *Przechadzki* is consistent in guiding the reader, but overly detailed, and the form is unwieldy. *Pejzaż*, which is lighter in both form and content, allows one to 'feel the atmosphere' of Vilnius: it highlights what (according to its author) is most important, but it does not provide precisely defined routes. *Przechadzki* can be considered reliable material (regarding its time) for a guide to historical tourism. *Pejzaż* can be offered as a literary incentive for cultural tourism or environmental tourism.

Travel literature reveals the authors' knowledge, interests, attitudes and beliefs, and indicates the demands they placed on their assumed audiences. It can be perceived as an attempt to create and modify the 'canon' of knowledge about Vilnius as a city undergoing transformation due to political events and civilisational changes, but also as an attempt to present Vilnius as a city which, thanks to its peculiarities, resists the pressure of modernising changes. We can choose.

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## Kaip pažinti Vilnių? Žinoti ir pamatyti: Kirkoro (1856) ir Bułhako (1936) vadovai

*Anna Gomóła*

### *Santrauka*

Vilniui skirti pažintiniai vadovai žinomi nuo XIX a. vidurio. Iš pradžių jų leista nedaug, tačiau ilgainiui plėtojantis turizmui, tokių leidinių daugėjo. Iki 1939 m. didelę jų dalis buvo parašyta ir išleista lenkų kalba. Tarp tokių leidinių autorių buvo grupė žmonių, prisimenamų ir šiandien dėl jų indėlio į Vilniaus kultūrą ir miesto tyrinėjimus: istorikas ir leidėjas Adomas Honorijus Kirkoras (1818–1886), aistringas Vilniaus istorijos tyrinėtojas, pagal išsilavinimą ir profesiją gydytojas Władysławas Zahorski (1858–1927), istorikas, publicistas ir archyvaras Wacławas Gizbertas-Studnickis (1874–1962), architektas, Stepono Batoro



universiteto profesorius Juliuszas Kłosas (1881–1933) ir garsus fotografas Janas Bułhakas (1876–1950). Jų publikacijos sudaro seriją pasiūlymų, kaip pažvelgti į Vilnių ir jo istoriškai susiformavusius bruožus.

Savo tyrime daugiausia dėmesio skiriu dviem leidiniams, kuriuos skiria 80 metų. Tai Kirkoro *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego okolicach (Pasivaikščiojimai po Vilnių ir jo apylinkes, 1856)* ir Bułhako *Pejzaż Wilna (Vilniaus kraštovaizdis, 1936)*. Tai nėra tikri kelionių vadovai (juose nėra praktinės informacijos apie atvykimą į miestą ir apsistojimą jame), tačiau juose bandoma atsakyti į klausimą, kaip pažinti Vilnių. Abiejuose leidiniuose autoriai įvardija vietas, iš kurių jie žvelgia į miestą, nurodo maršrutus, kuriais skaitytojas turėtų eiti.

Kirkoras pabrėžia miesto istorinį turinį, o Bułhakui pirmiausia rūpi jo grožis, spalvos. Kirkoro Vilnius yra istorinių įvykių ir garsių veikėjų kūrinys, Bułhako – gyvas eilinių žmonių miestas, kuriame kultūriniai dalykai „išauga“ iš gamtos. Nors vadovai skirtingi, daug parankiau į juos žvelgti kaip į vienas kitą papildančius.

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