

FROM PIEROGI TO LEWANDOWSKI

Before writing this foreword, I asked several foreigners I know who work at the University of Warsaw about what they had seen as most associated with Poland before coming to our country. They responded: pierogi (perceiving countries from the perspective of the palate is therefore still a dominating trend), Warsaw and Kraków (I assume this attests to the beauty of both cities, not that their eternal rivalry has made itself felt abroad), the artificial language esperanto (in this case, I cannot rule out that the respondent wanted to impress his superior, which – I must admit – he succeeded in doing), Nobel-winning author Olga Tokarczuk (which makes me think that Polish culture abroad is doing quite well), and footballer Robert Lewandowski (probably the country's most famous economic emigrant).

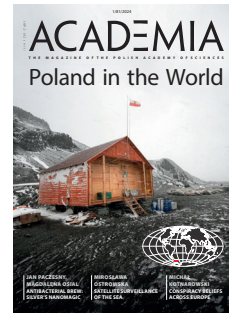
The vision of “Poland in the World” evident in this issue of ACADEMIA magazine has, contrary to appearances, many points in common with the responses presented above. They confirm, for instance, Michał Rusinek's assertion, in the opening article of this issue dedicated to the cultural diplomacy of Wisława Szymborska, that Polish culture is indeed an export commodity. In addition to our Nobel-winning writers, Poland's ambassadors also include numerous scientists working around the world, including in Antarctica (Małgorzata Korczak-Abshire writes about the extensive research tradition in the southern polar region), in South America (Grzegorz Pietrzyński describes the Polish astronomical observatory in Chile, while Wiesław Więckowski surveys the discoveries of Polish archaeologists in Peru), in the Middle East (Zuzanna Wygnańska and Tara Steimer-Herbet describe the work of Polish archaeologists in Lebanon) and in Europe, at CERN (Tadeusz Lesiak examines its extraordinary role as a platform for international scientific cooperation).

Polish culture and language are present around the world. Cultivating them is now the glue that keeps together the Polish-Brazilian community, dating back to mid-nineteenth century – as Mikołaj Radomski writes. Although Poles have been migrating for centuries, the last two decades have been a very interesting period in this respect. EU accession was a turning point that significantly altered the directions and dynamics of emigration processes involving Poles, which I had the pleasure of writing about in this issue, together with Dominika Pszczółkowska. This year's twentieth anniversary of Poland's EU membership makes for a good opportunity to consider how much this event has influenced Poland and Polish society, both in the country and beyond its borders, including in terms of how our country is perceived in the world.

PROF. MAGDALENA LESIŃSKA



Edward Dwurnik, “Castle Square – Castle, Trees”, from his “Warsaw” series, 1998, oil, canvas, 114×146 cm
Courtesy of the Edward Dwurnik Foundation, dwurnik.pl



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