

Non-Germanic Central Europe: can Christian Europe survive without it?

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The expression “non-Germanic Central Europe” is not a household word. You are familiar with the phrase “Western and Eastern Europe,” but what is “non-Germanic Central Europe?” Well, if you remember anything from this talk, it should be this expression.

Non-Germanic Central Europe consists of Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and the Baltic Republics. Add to this parts of the Balkans and, yes, Ukraine and Belarus. The plurality of people there are Catholic, but there are substantial minorities of Protestants, Orthodox, Jews, and atheists. In international scholarly writings, this Catholic plurality is an almost invisible category. I shall try to bring it to life in my talk.

Why don't I use such terms as “Eastern and Western Europe?” Because the **term “Eastern Europe” was invented to cover up the sins of empires, and the sins of empires have contributed to the decline of Christianity in European countries.** If you look at the map of contemporary Europe and compare it to the map of medieval Europe, you will see that the contemporary map is much closer to the medieval one than to the map of Europe in the nineteenth century. Why? Until the First World War, the nations east of Germany were under **colonial occupation of four empires:** German, Austrian, Ottoman, and Russian. It was in the empires' self-interest to create a narrative in which Europe ended somewhere on the Oder River. To the east was a no-man's land—neither Asia nor Europe. It was convenient to rename it “Eastern Europe.” Only after the First World War did those nations regain some visibility.

Historian Larry Wolff wrote a book titled *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994), where he pointed out that this phrase was invented by Enlightenment thinkers in order to trivialize the non-Germanic Central European nations swallowed up by European empires. Ever since this phrase gained traction, Western Europe has regarded itself as Europe proper and the center of Western civilization, while non-Germanic Central Europe was dismissed as a territory without history and without an ability to say something important.

But non-Germanic Central Europe has many stories to tell. It sometimes played a key role in safeguarding European Christianity and Western civilization. And this also is the situation today:

look at Ukraine fighting for Europe against an empire hostile to Europe. Knowing the history of these nations helps us understand where the empires went wrong, how they wasted away the contribution of Central Europe that could have had a salutary influence on events. How they developed an arrogance of self-righteous superiority regarding non-Germanic Central European nations.

Without familiarity with Central Europe one cannot fully understand Pope John Paul II and his writings. It is like in Goethe's remark: **“Wer den Dichter will verstehen/Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.”**

I'll tell you three stories in support of what I have just proposed. The first takes place toward the end of the Middle Ages, at the Council of Konstanz (1414-1418). The Council put an end to Avignon papacy and reunited Catholics under one pope, and this is what it is remembered for today. But the Council was also a place of debate between Polish lawyer **Paul Wlodkovic** (“Paulus Vladimiri” in Latin) and representatives of the Teutonic Knights who were ravaging the Baltic coast under the pretext of converting pagans to Christianity. The Polish lawyer argued that those pagans who wished to live in peace with the Christians should not be attacked, because true conversion is done in a peaceful way. Wlodkovic accused the Teutonic Knights of hypocrisy and heresy, stating that they were worse than pagans, because they knew the Christian doctrine but instead of following it, used it as a screen for their heinous deeds.¹

This was the first time in European history that the principle of religious tolerance, international law, and the rights of nations was articulated and promoted in an international arena. These were the truly innovative ideas, and they should have become the starting point of a discussion about political tolerance and international peace. But they did not—because the Teutonic Knights had numerous lawyers and friends in Europe including the pope, and their plea to allow them to conquer militarily pagan lands was favored by many. The idea of the rights of nations was forgotten and the idea of toleration was put aside. It was dusted off centuries later, during the Enlightenment, when it was re-introduced by secular thinkers. Paul Wlodkovic's treaty *De potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium* [About the power of pope and emperor over pagans] was not studied at Western European universities. His other writings about international law were not introduced into mainstream Catholic thought.² It was not in the interest of Germans, who dominated theological writings in many periods of European history, to

keep alive the writings of a person from the country of Poland whose disappearance from the map was engineered by them. Naked force trumped the rights of nations and Wlodkovic was forgotten, his writings never translated from Latin or republished. Today Wlodkovic is mentioned in Polish history books but hardly anywhere else. Yet his arguments at the Council were so persuasive that he did claim some victories: specifically, the Council forbade the Teutonic Knights to ravage the province of Samogitia (a part of Lithuania today) where a new bishopric was established thanks to Wlodkovic's intervention. Wlodkovic also argued before Emperor Sigismund that certain disputed towns and lands (Pomerania, Culm and Michałów) were Polish property, rather than the property of the Teutonic Knights.³

Such Polish thinkers as Wlodkovic left a strong impression on their home country, however, in particular on the Polish view of international affairs. There have been no religious wars in Poland, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Poland welcomed religious dissidents from other countries, even though they were not Catholics. By comparison to other European countries, Poland was also hospitable to Jews –the result was that before the partitions in the eighteenth century, the majority of Ashkenazi Jews lived in Poland and enjoyed self-government unheard of in other European countries. The Polish idea of tolerance is not however identical to the idea of tolerance of the Enlightenment. In Poland, tolerance does not mean approval. Thus in free modern Poland no legal punishment for homosexuality has ever been enacted, while in several western European countries—Great Britain, for instance—homosexuality was punishable by law.⁴

The suppression of the Polish attempt to honestly evaluate doings of the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic area delayed by several centuries European debates about tolerance of Others. The standard opinion of European historians has been that the **idea of tolerance was invented by the Spanish monk Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566), and later upheld in a major way by philosophers of the Enlightenment.** Wrong. It was there in the writings and speeches of Paul Wlodkovic, a Polish bishop and scholar of the early fifteenth century. But the interpretation of history proposed by supporters of the Teutonic Knights prevailed. The Teutons were not anxious to preserve the chapter of history unfavorable to them. So Paul Wlodkovic simply disappeared from history and with him, the arguments that could have helped avoid many European wars. Also, an assimilation of Wlodkovic's writings into standard Catholic texts taught at universities

and seminaries could have helped to fend off unjust accusations leveled at Christian thinkers during the Enlightenment. A great deal of anti-Catholic prejudice would not have arisen if Wlodkovic's voice were heard early in European history.⁵

A few months ago there appeared an English-language history of the Middle Ages by Dan Jones.⁶ There is the word "new" in the title, but so far as I can see, it presents an old and tired version of medieval history whereby all action and actors are Germanic or Romance, while non-Germanic Catholics in Central Europe are absent. Yet Catholic life went on uninterruptedly in these countries, and while Western European clerics and rulers were engaged in mutual condemnations and wars, the defense of Christianity from enemies in the east proceeded without being noted in the West. Again, the debates at the Council of Konstanz were an opportunity to introduce and uphold in Europe the principle of international law. Instead of being chastised, in subsequent centuries, by secular thinkers hostile to Christianity, the Catholic Church would have had to be acknowledged as a creator and supporter of this concept. But Wlodkovic's work has not been noticed either by Dan Jones or by any prominent Western historian preceding him. In the fifteenth century the Teutonic Knights controlled the historical narrative about nations east of Germany, and they bequeathed their version of history to future generations. Speaking of "cancel culture:" it was already practiced in the Middle Ages against non-Germanic Central Europe, to the detriment of Catholicism in Europe.

I will give you two more examples of the unfortunate effects of ignoring and undervaluing the voice of non-Germanic nations of Central Europe. Starting with the Battle of Vienna in 1683. This was the opening chapter of what turned out to be the final defeat of the Muslim advance on Europe. The Habsburg emperor, Leopold I, was desperate. The Turks were about to take Vienna. Leopold turned to a fellow Catholic, the King of Poland named Jan Sobieski. In response to a plea for help from the Holy Roman Emperor, Sobieski rushed to Vienna with the Polish army--took command of Austrian, German and Polish forces, attacked the Turks and changed the fate of Europe in one week. After his spectacular victory, the Pope himself congratulated Sobieski and called him a savior of Western civilization.

Sobieski and Poland got no political or economic rewards from that victory. Not even a reimbursement for military expenses. A descendant of Leopold I, Maria-Theresa Habsburg, was one of the cannibals who attacked Poland in the eighteenth century and literally tore it apart,

annexing parts of it to their empires. Sobieski's success demonstrates the truth of the saying "no good deed goes unpunished."

It was not in Poland's interest to help the Austrians. Sobieski's action was not a political calculation but a Christian response to another Catholic monarch who was in mortal danger. What would have happened if Sobieski calculated that Austria's weakness benefited Poland? If Sobieski thought along the lines of his royal and national self-interest, the Turks would have taken Vienna. The Austrian empire would have disintegrated two centuries before it actually had; wars weakening Western European countries would likely have taken place. Western powers—such as France, Germany, England—might have been drawn into a war with the Ottomans. This would have weakened Western Europe economically: wars are costly enterprises. Poland would have grown in strength and perhaps would have avoided the cannibalistic partition that ended its existence in 1795. As a consequence, Roman Catholicism might have taken strong root east of ethnic Poland. History shows that Catholic Christianity is more resilient in times of persecution than Eastern Orthodoxy which did not do well under communism. Yet because of Poland's political nonexistence in the nineteenth century--when interpretations of European history congealed and when the West's cultural codes solidified--the Vienna victory of 1683 and its possible implications have been largely ignored by historians.

My third example of erasure of historical memory and negative consequences of doing so comes from the twentieth century, from the epilogue to the First World War, when Poland and the Soviet Union were fighting over borders. Or rather, it was not just a fight over borders. It was a fight for Europe. The USSR was trying to conquer not only Poland but also Western Europe, in order to bring to reality the Bolshevik dream of a Sovietized continent.

At that time, Germany was in the throes of hyperinflation, there was political infighting between the left and the right, and German communists, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, came close to seizing power. In Hungary, communists under Bela Kun were also winning. If Poland lost the Polish-Soviet war, the Bolsheviks were likely to seize power not only in Poland but also in Germany. Polish victory in that war saved Europe from Bolshevik invasion. Why is this not remembered? Why was this victory trivialized? Because it is the empire's servants who write history, and they make sure that the voices of conquered nations are not heard. Germany was unhappy that Poland was reconstituted as a state after the First World War. Many so-called

conservatives were unhappy that Empires had fallen and that after the war Europe resembled medieval Europe rather than the Europe of empires. If you read a standard history of that period, you may not even be informed that a war between Bolshevik Russia and the newly-liberated Poland took place. E.g., the historian Paul Johnson in his popular book *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* (1983) does not even mention the Polish-Soviet war. In contrast, a British diplomat, Lord Edgar d'Abernon, who witnessed that war, considered the Battle of Warsaw to be the eighteenth most important battle in history. Again, the role of Poland in making room for Christianity in Europe has been disregarded.

To quote G.K. Chesterton: “The Western nations, and especially the commercial nations of England and America, always saw Eastern Europe through a German professor's spectacles. And those goblin goggles, if they sometimes magnified Russia, always diminished Poland.”⁷

The First World War is viewed as a disaster by Western Christian conservatives, even though it brought liberation to several Catholic nations in non-Germanic Central Europe. It weakened the Prussian spirit, so hostile to Catholicism. That great enemy of Catholicism, Otto von Bismarck, could no longer order the beatings of Polish children who said their Catholic prayers in Polish.⁸ Thanks to the Great War the nations of Central Europe returned to political existence, revived their proselytizing spirit, and strengthened Christianity from within. Why have these important developments been ignored by conservative Americans and Europeans? Wasn't safeguarding of Catholicism more important than the preservation of empires? Thousands of books have been written imprinting on European memory the interpretation of the First World War in which the newly revived Catholic countries, Poland in particular, counted for nothing. This trivialization of Catholicism in Central Europe has to come to an end if a Christian revival is to take place in the West.

At this point you might say, well, perhaps non-Germanic Central Europe played a role in preserving Christianity in Europe in the past. But where is the proof that it can play such a role in the future? Aren't they being secularized like the rest of Europe?

My answer is, there is no such proof. Yes, all Europe is now secularizing. The leading universities of Paris and London and Berlin have long stopped supplying Christian sustenance. The culture produced there is not a Christian culture. Douglas Murray writes of “the strange death of Europe.”⁹ To use Chantal Delsol's language,¹⁰ today the Christian overlay of Western

cultural life is being removed, revealing a lot of pagan urges that it had covered up. But, as Christopher Caldwell put it, one has to distinguish between Christian beliefs and the culture that these beliefs have created.¹¹ Because of a lack of Christian belief in the Western world, Christian culture is disappearing. Because in Central Europe the belief is still there, disappearance of Christian culture proceeds more slowly, indeed there are places where Christian culture is growing rather than disappearing.¹²

I am not suggesting that Central Europe is replete with Christian virtue. There is secularization there as well. And there is cynicism, the inevitable fruit of communist occupation. But there is enough enthusiasm and energy left for the Christian fire to flare up again. Central Europeans are not as advanced on the road to paganism as are Western Europeans. Their disinterested generosity toward Ukrainian refugees in Spring 2022 is one manifestation of the Christian world view they have imbibed through centuries of Catholic instruction. They went through the hard school of communism and they know what a rejection of Christianity brings to social life. They know first-hand what Marxism and liberal democracy that flirts with Marxism are all about: they are about power and not about improving the lives of workers or minorities. The citizens of non-Germanic Central Europe know what it is to lose spiritual and material goods, and they are not at all anxious to get rid of the old understanding of the world that came to them from Rome and Athens and Jerusalem. In scholarship and in everyday life, they hold on to this old understanding—old epistemology if you will-- more firmly than Western Europeans.

Speaking of epistemology. Here Central Europeans could teach the West a great deal, in my opinion. Because dechristianization of Europe is largely a function of the new epistemology that was buttressed up by the Enlightenment and further reshaped by a number of sophisticated philosophers who followed the Enlightenment. The epistemological foundation of Western civilization has been Aristotelian-Thomistic. (I am abbreviating here of course.) This way of looking at the world has been replaced by Hegelian-Marxist thinking, by the “school of suspicion”¹³ of the nineteenth century, by Enlightenment rationalism (as opposed to Aristotelian rationalism) and finally, by nihilistic philosophers of the twenty-first century. The Thomistic vision of reality no longer prevails at Western universities. I once wrote an article titled “Can We Communicate? On Epistemological Incompatibilities in Contemporary Academic Discourse”¹⁴ which follows Alasdair MacIntyre in reasserting the impossibility of genuine discussion in today’s academia because epistemological foundations of discussants are often so

diverse that they preclude communication. Briefly, in non-Germanic Central Europe Greek philosophers are still taken seriously and the Thomistic interpretation of reality comes close to being a national habit. It is taken for granted that morality is inescapably tied to reasoning (*Gorgias*¹⁵). You have to have a proper moral disposition in order to reason correctly. This is taken for granted in Central Europe, by ordinary people who believe in the Christian God, and even by some philosophers who do not believe in anything, like Leszek Kołakowski. In Western Europe, morality has been detached from reasoning, and the question “Is he a moral person?” is never asked of philosophers.

The words designating many foundational concepts changed their meaning in the last several centuries. Take the concept of liberty, for instance. Today in the Western world, those scholars and politicians who use the word “liberty” in their writings and speeches do not pay attention to the Christian grounding of that concept, the evangelical “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The Enlightenment-generated notion of liberty written into Western constitutions has little to do with the evangelical one. The Enlightenment stressed the freedom to do or not to do something, and the subsequent idea that “people can do with their bodies, properties, talents what they want,” is a derivative of this assumption. In contrast, the Gospels say that without the knowledge of God we cannot be free because freedom and truth are interconnected. This Gospel understanding of freedom has survived particularly well in Poland and needs to be revived in the Western world. Poles are passionate about liberty, not merely the Enlightenment liberty, but also, and primarily, that liberty which stems from the grounding of discourse in truth. Hence the Polish insistence, almost mania, to get the correct version of history on the table. Thus, it is not enough to maintain that liberty of citizens should not be diminished by an all-encompassing state, as do libertarians and some conservatives; we have to reach deeper. This “reaching deeper” requires collaboration and perhaps leadership of Central European intellectuals.

Finally, the question of piety. Something that is seldom visible in the Western world. If you have a gathering of bright minds in the West—whether it be a university meeting, a cabinet meeting, or any other get-together—the traces of piety are impossible to detect. If you take a walk in a prosperous Western European city, you will not see faces revealing at least an occasional surrender to piety. Visit the few churches in tourist-attended areas—they are empty. But if you walk on the streets of Warsaw, you can still see churches that are alive with piety not only on

feast days but also on weekdays. I know that this is a weak argument, but I invite anyone to enter a church in Warsaw's or Kraków's Old City during daytime and see a few people praying fervently: a brief encounter with the Almighty during the lunch hour or some other break from work.

In non-Germanic Central Europe, even at some state universities one still can encounter teachings similar to what Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger outlined in his Regensburg lecture. Ratzinger reminded us that St. Paul, in a vision, saw a Macedonian man who asked him to go to Macedonia—which Ratzinger interpreted as going toward Greece, to envelop in Christianity the Greek ways of thinking.¹⁶ This interpretation has met with skepticism of some Western commentators, but it had been taken for granted in Poland long before Cardinal Ratzinger verbalized it in his speech. The union between Christian belief and Greek logic is taken for granted in social and political life of Poland—in past centuries and now as well. I would even say that it has become part and parcel of Polish identity.

Poland still has universities such as the Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw or the Catholic University of Lublin, where one can find professors adhering to the epistemological principles that made Europe Europe. It is also worth noting that in May 2021, a new university was launched in Warsaw: *Collegium Intermarium*, dedicated to teaching the fundamentals of European civilization, with particular attention paid to law and family issues. Think tanks such as *Ordo iuris* provide legal support to those who take their grievances to courts of law. Portals and publishing houses such as *Teologia Polityczna* provide discussion on topics related to the cultural history of Europe. Central Europe is still a place of massive belief in Catholic dogmas among the common folk and among the educated. There are still large groups of Catholic intellectuals there, not tiny coffee tables surrounded by tombstones. Thomism has been taught in Poland practically without interruption (except for wars) since the Middle Ages. There are things in Poland that I think Western Europe forgot or pushed aside as it morphed from a civilization full of curiosity and thirst for knowledge to a civilization that conquered and colonized and consumed. As my friend Dr. Joanna Clark has recently stated in a letter, non-Germanic Central Europe, the Catholic Poland in particular, is now in the forefront of the struggle to defeat the utterly pagan Russian invasion of Ukraine. With a clear possibility of advancing into other parts of Europe. While Germany, fearing a loss of its economic might tied to Russia, wavers, Central

Europe still has the energy, the enthusiasm and the faith to undertake a revival of Western Christian culture. Will that energy suffice? I do not know. But it is worth trying.

American writer Rod Dreher recently spent time in Hungary and Poland, and upon return he wrote that non-Germanic Central Europe preserved the key features of European civilization that seem to have disappeared from Western European lands. He was invited to give the inaugural address at the launching of *Collegium Intermarium*. In his speech he opined that the future of Western civilization is being born in Central Europe.¹⁷ Upon return to the United States, he wrote a series of articles for *The American Conservative* where he reiterated his enthusiasm for Central Europe. Similarly, conservative writer Josh Hammer recently wrote the following in the *New York Post*: “Poland, along with its fellow Visegrad Group members. . . has emerged as a perhaps unlikely ground zero in the fight to save Western civilization from a debilitating and increasingly all-encompassing liberal decadence.”¹⁸ Polish social philosopher Jacek Bartosiak put it this way: “While the West is still much more powerful economically, I do not see that the power of thinking belongs to them rather than to us.”¹⁹

There have been attempts to revive Christian culture in the West, but so far they have not been successful. In my opinion, the reason is that they have tried to retain Enlightenment epistemology while promoting a Christian world view. They have ignored the necessity of reconnecting concepts to their ancient Greek and Roman and Hebrew roots. These failed attempts are based on the assumption that if we talk about Christian culture and establish institutions such as a Charlemagne Institute, or a periodical that aspires to leadership role, all will be well. But the ties to Charlemagne had long been broken by changes that occurred in the meaning of words and by interpretations of history that privilege Hegel and Voltaire over Aquinas. Those philosophers who have not understood the mistakes of the Enlightenment cannot be a fountainhead of Christian revival.

There are many orthodox Catholic texts written in non-Germanic Central European languages that have been ignored because they went against the interests of empires or they were written in languages which the mighty in the West do not understand. For instance—and this is really an off-the-cuff example—the Benedictine monks in Tyniec monastery and Benedictine nuns in Żarnowiec monastery have recently produced remarkable daily meditations—available on the

web—but they are in Polish (CSPB. Portal o duchowości monastycznej, or The Monastic Spirituality Portal). There are no translations.

This has to change. John Paul II has to be read in the context of the writings and spiritual reflection of his countrymen—not as someone who happened to have been born in Wadowice and began his real life when he ascended to the throne of Peter. The John Paul II Institutes launched recently in Houston, Texas, at the University of Saint Thomas; in Washington, DC, at the Catholic University of America, and here in Rome at the Angelicum will hopefully make possible the study of cultures of Central Europe. Languages have to be mastered even as books have to be translated. John Paul II did not ask for it directly. But now, 17 years after his demise, a plea to that effect can be made. My talk is just a small part of that plea.

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NOTES

¹ S. F. Belch, *Paulus Vladimiri and His Doctrine Concerning International Law and Politics*, 2 vols. (The Hague: DeGruyter, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 101–103.

² Belch, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 444–445, 702–714; Grischka Vercamer, “The Origins of the Polish Piast Dynasty as Chronicled by Bishop Vincent of Kraków (Wincenty Kadłubek) to Serve as a Political Model for His Own Contemporary Time,” *The Medieval Chronicle 11*, edited by Erik Kooper and Sjoerd Levelt, Brill 2017, pp. 220–247

<https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004351875/B9789004351875_013.xml_>; Nelson H. Minnich, “Teutonic Knights and Poland at the Fifth Lateran Council,” *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum*, 2014 <https://brill.com/view/journals/ahc/46/1-2/article-p191_10.xml?ebody=previewpdf-49929>.

³ Belch, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 278–280.

⁴ A well known example is the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde.

⁵ Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz (Nobel 1905) wrote a novel titled *The Knights of the Cross* (*Krzyżacy*, 1900). Recommended to those who adhere to the rule *audiatur et altera pars*.

⁶ Dan Jones, *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages* (Viking, 2021).

⁷ G. K. Chesterton, Introduction,” Charles Sarolea, *Letters on Polish Affairs* (London, 1922), p. 10.

⁸ In 1902, or three years after Bismarck’s death, Polish school children in the town of Września (under Prussian colonial occupation) refused to speak German during religion lessons. For that they were beaten. The events in Września initiated a nationwide strike against Prussian rule.

⁹ Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2017).

¹⁰ Chantal Delsol, *La fin de la Chrétienté*, Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2021; also *Teologia Polityczna*,

¹¹ Christopher Caldwell, “Is the West Becoming Pagan Again?” *New York Times*, December 29, 2021 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/opinion/christianity-paganism-woke.html?searchResultPosition=1>>. However, Mr. Caldwell notes that “Ms. Delsol is quite clear that what is ending is not the Christian faith, with its rites and dogmas, but only Christian culture — the way Christian societies are governed and the art, philosophy and lore that have arisen under Christianity’s influence.”

¹² An example is a recent initiative by *Teologia Polityczna* leaders to sponsor the creation of a body of twenty-first century Christian paintings that would reflect contemporary sensibilities rather than those of centuries past.

¹³ Paul Ricoeur’s expression. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay in Interpretation*, tr. by Denis Savage (Yale, 1972).

¹⁴ Ewa Thompson, “Can We Communicate? On Epistemological Incompatibilities in Contemporary Academic Discourse,” *College/Kolegium*, ed. Mark O’Connor & Piotr Wilczek (University of Warsaw Press, 2011), pp. 230–236 <https://www.academia.edu/3485164/Can_We_Communicate_On_Epistemological_Incompatibilities_in_Contemporary_Academic_Discourse>.

¹⁵ In *Gorgias*, Callicles expresses an opinion that those who are the smartest and the most knowledgeable should rule the country. To which Socrates answers, can they rule themselves?

¹⁶ *The encounter between the Biblical message and Greek thought did not happen by chance. The vision of Saint Paul, who saw the roads to Asia barred and in a dream saw a Macedonian man plead with him: "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" (cf. Acts 16:6-10) - this vision can be interpreted as a "distillation" of the intrinsic necessity of a rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek inquiry.* The Regensburg Lecture,

<<https://familyofsites.bishopsconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/07/BXVI-2006-Regensburg-address.pdf>>.

¹⁷ Rod Dreher, “Light from the East,” *The American Conservative*, May 31, 2021 <<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/collegium-intermarium-light-from-the-east-mcc/>>.

¹⁸ <<https://nypost.com/2021/05/28/poland-and-its-eastern-european-neighbors-setting-a-fine-example.>>.

¹⁹ Jacek Bartosiak, "O ile przewaga Zachodu może wciąż istnieć obiektywnie z powodów materialnych, o tyle nie rozumiem, dlaczego miałyby wciąż, wręcz chronicznie, dotyczyć potęgi myślenia. A więc myślmy!" <<https://strategyandfuture.org>>.