



Potop. Tom I

Henryk Sienkiewicz

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Trzytomowe wydanie klasyki polskiej literatury. Potop szwedzki przedstawiony z wnikliwo?ci? i dba?o?ci? o detale historyczne, a jednocze?nie pasjonuj?ca powie?? i ulubieni bohaterowie.

Potop. Tom I Details

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Phrodrick says

The Deluge is the name given by Henryk Sienkiewicz for book 2 in his trilogy. Among the Poles this is the great national novel and is known simply as The Trilogy. Given his near ubiquitous presence I prefer an alternate name for this series the Zagloba Trilogy.

Speaking of alternative names, quoting from Wikki:

The term Deluge (Polish: ??t??, Lithuanian: Tvanas, Cyrillic: ?????) denotes a series of mid-17th century campaigns in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In a wider sense it applies to the period between the Khmelnytsky (Chmielnicki) Uprising of 1648 and the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667, thus comprising the Polish-Lithuanian theatres of the Russo-Polish and Second Northern Wars. In a stricter sense, the term refers to the Swedish invasion and occupation of the Commonwealth as a theater of the Second Northern War only (1655-1660); In Poland and Lithuania this period is called the Swedish Deluge (Lithuanian: Šved? tvanas, Polish: Potop szwedzki), and the term deluge (or potop in Polish) was popularized by Henryk Sienkiewicz, in his 1886 book The Deluge.

During the wars the Commonwealth lost approximately 1/3 of its population as well as its status as a great power. According to Professor Andrzej Rottermund, manager of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the destruction of Poland in the deluge was more extensive than the destruction of the country in World War II. As Rottermund claims, Swedish invaders robbed the Commonwealth of its most important riches, and most of the stolen items never returned to Poland. Warsaw, the capital of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was completely destroyed by the Swedes, and out of a pre-war population of 20,000, only 2,000 remained in the city after the war. Close Quote

The problem of more than one names begins in the first book of the trilogy and is a central point in the plot of The Deluge. The good news is that Sienkiewicz has decided to refer to vodka only as gorlaki.

Book I centered on the wars between the Polish and the Commonwealth allies in the Ukraine as they fought and negotiated with the Cossack uprising. The Caucasus location and mixture of nationalities made book I hard to follow in terms of the Polish role in these events. Further the Commonwealth hardly achieves absolute victory over the Cossacks. If By Fire and Sword introduces us to the Polish national epic it is a conditional epic rather than the more typical nationalist, home and fatherland type national epic.

Book 2 seems to begin in a similar conditional vein. The Swedish Army led by King Charles Gustav has invaded the Commonwealth is nearly triumphant at all fronts. Many of the Polish nobility and of particular interest Starosta (again it is difficult to keep track of titles in this series) Radzivil and one of his Colonels, Prince Bogoslav defect to the Swedish and will become the major villains of this book.

The lesser nobleman Kmita is initially sworn into loyalty to Prince Bogoslav. In this role he will commit dastardly deeds while falling in love with Aleksandra Billewicz AKA Olenka. Olenka will find herself warring between her love for Kmita and her disgust with his pro-Swedish violence.

Unknown to Olenka, Kmita will change his loyalties and fight in defense of the church and town of Chemstovski. This defense will become the symbol of Polish refusal to accept Swedish dominance. Kmita assumes the name of Babinich, and heroically contributes to breaking the siege at Chemstovski. From there he seeks out the Polish King, John Casimir for whom he now becomes an equally vicious, arm of vengeance in the cause of the Polish Commonwealth and his personal need to be worthy of Olenka,

The balance of the book becomes a semi-historical and very pro-Polish retelling of the next several years of warfare between these two states. The novel will essentially retell this period A second time from the point of view of Olenka as the "guest" of Bogoslav.

This is a very old style of storytelling. At times it seems more adopted for reading before the campfire. There is grandness to the language. To the modern ear the consistent refusal to take prisoners or allow warriors to surrender becomes a reminder the bloody mindedness that could infuse the heroic pre-20th century novel. Taken in the context of its time in the intentional flag-waving of the author, The Deluge carries the trilogy forward as a more traditional grand scale national epic.

As The Trilogy is sometimes called the Romances of Zagloba, a few thoughts on this minor nobleman. Zabloba is not exactly a central character in either book I or book II. In The Deluge he functions as one of the key military leaders and because of his diplomatic skills earns his way among the king's sometimes inner circle. In book 1 he is a humorous Falstaffian character with the tricks of a Ulysses. In this book he retains his braggadocio but more often is a combat leader and insightful diplomat. There is an odd moment when he appears to lead a very threatening dissatisfaction with a decision by King but he is forgiven his independence. Because of the way Zagloba transforms from a figure of fun- as found early in book I into an important leader halfway into book II, Zagloba is established as a more complex figure, and more of an interesting study than either Falstaff or Ulysses.

The Deluge is an action filled adventure and a worthy continuation middle book. In fact it avoids the typical middle book problem of being the tie from book 1 to book 3. It stands alone well. Sienkiewicz continues to do an interesting job making his heroes less-than-perfect his villains not entirely despicable. He also continues to clutter his text with too many details. There is a serious effort for this to be historical fiction but it is fiction. As with book 1 I found it necessary to read this book in relatively short takes. More so than in With Fire and Sword I found myself rushing to return to and complete The Deluge.

Antonie says

Recomad amatorilor de romane istorice. Autorul nu are nevoie de nici o prezentare.

Ritiel says

A promising beginning for the "The Deluge" (I am reviewing the first of three books that comprises the second part of Sienkiewicz's Trilogy in Brazil), with new settings, new warriors and enemies (focus of the history has now changed, for the moment, to lithuanians and the nordic invaders). Apparently the author improved his style from the previous book of the Trilogy series.

The narrative is now more "catchy" and dynamics than the previous book, despite several characters and places that it has to present. Many of the good companions from the previous book are in this history, making it more attractive to whom have read the first.

If in the first book the historical setting was an uprising, now it is a war against many invaders, traitors and also the rebels from the first story. This complex scenario present many possibilities as well as tales and descriptions from the foreign cultures, through his invaders, leaving the story more exciting.

This historical fiction wrote a century ago deserves to be read for all those who likes the genre!

Natalia says

Smutno mi, że katuje się dzieci "Krzyżakami", podczas gdy Trylogię czyta się jak dobrą książkę akcji, która wciąga i motywuje, że przyjechałam dwa przystanki, tak zaczytana byłam... no zachwycam się i dziwię, bo nigdy nie przypuszczałam, że to powiem: "ale! świetny ten Sienkiewicz!"

Anna says

Beautiful work of historical fiction.

Laura says

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With Fire And Sword. 1 vol.

The Deluge. 2 vols.

Pan Michael. 1 vol.
