

## The Image of Interwar Poland in the Book *Pologne, Pologne...* by Olivier d'Etchegoyen

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**Abstract:** This work is a travel book published by a nowadays obscure French count in Paris in 1925. The author had formed part of the French military mission sent in the newly restored Polish state. The intention, moreover praiseworthy, was to cast a truer light on this Central European country, which had been acquiring, according to the author, a 'misty, legendary image'. Nevertheless, the narrative is confined to only a part of Poland, namely the eastern one, chiefly that which had been under Tsarist domination – including the capital – and parts of 21<sup>st</sup>-century states Lithuania and Belarus. This work is upon the general eclectic, mixing descriptions of urban centres with those of the life of the aristocracy, the clergy, peasants, and ethnic minorities such as the Jews. There is also a chapter on Bolshevism. This book aspires to being a great fresco, but in our opinion it does not succeed in this. Some aspects are treated in detail, including figures, whereas others are superficially written about and even overlooked. The general aspect is that of a more negative rather than positive picture of Poland, whereas the sources quoted are often subjective.

The Brukenthal Library is in possession of the book *Pologne, Pologne ...*, by Olivier d'Etchegoyen<sup>2</sup>. We have been able to collect only little information about this author, except the fact that he held an aristocratic title (a count), and that he was born in 1873. This work was published in 1925 in Paris by André Delpeuch, and we do not know in how many copies. D'Etchegoyen states at page 15 that „Commander X and I have been nominated to be put at the disposal of the French military mission in Poland”, whereas at page 48 it results that this was happening beginning with 1919. We also find out that this count had also written a book called *Ten Months of Campaign with the Boers*, so a youth work, produced as a result of the recollections from the Boer War (1899–1902), whereas at page 77 it appears that the author had commanded in turn a division in World War I.

The motto at the beginning of the book is a quotation from Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi*: “This is taking place in Poland, that is nowhere”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Shelf mark: I 12004; inventory number: 141815.

<sup>3</sup> “Ceci se passe en Pologne, // c'est-à-dire nulle part.” Olivier d'Etchegoyen, *Pologne, Pologne ...* (Paris: André Delpeuch, 1925), 5. A text, lost nowadays, called *Les Polonais*, written towards 1885 by Charles Morin, a boy from the Rennes high school, a text telling the adventures of one P. H. who had become king