



ERASMUS LECTURES AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

TOMASZ MRÓZ

Selected Issues in the
History of Polish Philosophy



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This book is dedicated to
Professor Ryszard Palacz,
who, some years ago now, succesfully applied
the mediaeval theory of *impetus* to the author
of these lectures.



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History of Polish Philosophy

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Edited by Nijolė Radavičienė



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Erasmus lectures at Vilnius University

The initiative of the *Erasmus lectures at Vilnius University* symbolically starts with the lectures delivered at the Faculty of Philosophy, the oldest faculty of Vilnius University founded in 1579. According to Johannes Scotus Eriugena: *Nemo intrat in caelum nisi per philosophiam*. It is also symbolic that the series is opened by the cycle of lectures of a Polish scientist – Professor adjunct dr. hab. Tomasz Mróz, from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Zielona Góra. Histories of Polish and Lithuanian Philosophies overlap to a considerable extent and researchers of both histories discover the most interesting and important material in the Archives of both countries.

The mission of Vilnius University is to create, accumulate and disseminate knowledge by ensuring continuity of authentic university culture distinguished by the atmosphere where old traditions and new ideas enrich each other. The exchange of ideas via the Erasmus+ programme gives a great opportunity for the university students and professors of European and not only European countries to face different national traditions, to share ideas and values, and to contribute to the mutual understanding of nations.

I believe the initiative of *Erasmus lectures at Vilnius University* will be a valuable resource and inspiration for further studies and discussions amongst students and professors, and will contribute to the circulation of ideas on an international level.

Prof. Tomasz Mróz delivered lectures on the history of Polish Philosophy during his two visits at Vilnius University in 2013-2015 and was warmly welcomed by the students of Philosophy at Vilnius University. The discussions at the Department of Logic and History of Philosophy offered a good opportunity to exchange ideas on the development of national traditions and the role of Philosophy in it.

Valdas Jaskūnas
Pro-Rector for Studies
Vilnius University

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Preface

The material for this book stems from lectures prepared for an Erasmus teaching exchange in the Faculty of Philosophy at Vilnius University. The majority of the material was delivered during one-week stays in Vilnius in the autumns of 2013 and 2015.

The three texts are not general lectures or introductions to philosophy nor its history, but rather they comprise original research results presented in an easily approachable form. Since the subjects are likely to be of interest not only to philosophers, the author decided to prepare them for publication. They were preceded by books published in Polish and numerous papers in Polish and English, in which the author's research first saw the light of day, accompanied by exhaustive bibliographies, detailed footnotes, methodological introductions, discussions of *status quaestionis* etc. All of this apparatus would appear to be dispensable in a book based generally on lectures, therefore instead of this, the author has provided bibliographic references to the works in which the results presented here were more fully developed.

The first paper presents the main points of the discussion between Polish philosophers and historians of philosophy on the question of the nature of Polish and any other national philosophy. The topicality of this question goes far beyond historical interest because the views stated in this discussion affected the methods of researching the history of philosophy in Poland, and most of these views still appear to be valid for Polish historians of philosophy and for historians researching other national philosophical traditions¹.

¹ This issue was previously presented by the author in the following papers: 1) *Filozofia polska czy filozofia w Polsce? Opinie pierwszych polskich historyków filozofii*, in: *Filozofia jako mądrość bycia*, eds. S. Konstańczak and T. Turowski, Zielona Góra 2009, pp. 35-44; 2) *Kulturozofia wobec zagadnienia filozofii polskiej*, w: *Człowiek świadomością istnienia*, ed. W. Zięba, Rzeszów 2009, pp. 641-655; 3) *Dyskusja nad*

The second lecture reviews the outcomes of long-term research on the reception of Plato in Polish philosophy in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. The diversity of interests in Plato held by Polish philosophers and historians of philosophy can be divided into three general types, according to their relations to the Platonic legacy and the influence Plato had (or did not have) on their original philosophical production. On the one hand, this provides evidence of the perpetual vitality of the Platonic heritage and, on the other, it may well prove to be useful as a methodological classification tool in reception studies in the history of philosophy².

The final paper is almost purely historical and biographical. It focuses on Wincenty Lutosławski (1863-1954) and the years 1919-1931 which he spent in Vilnius as a professor of philosophy at the Stefan Batory University. His works and lectures are briefly presented, as well as his conflicts with the Faculty and some personal biographical facts. In short, it is an important chapter in the history of philosophy in Vilnius. Most of the university's documents quoted in this paper are held in the

pojęciem filozofii polskiej u progu lat siedemdziesiątych XX wieku, „Lumen Poloniae: Studia z Filozofii Polskiej” 2010, nr 1, pp. 23-41. 1) and 3) are available online.

2 The results discussed here were synthetically presented by the author in the book: *Platon w Polsce 1800–1950. Typy recepcji – autorzy – problemy*, „Fundamenta. Studia z historii filozofii” vol. LXXIV, Kęty 2012, 496 pp.; and more fully developed in numerous papers in Polish. There are too many of them to be noted here, therefore only the papers in English will be listed: 1) *Wincenty Lutosławski Platonic Studies. Plato as an Inspiration for Polish Messianism*, in: *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern Times*, ed. J. F. Finamore, R. M. Berchman, Dilton Marsh 2014, pp. 185–198; 2) *Plato in Polish Philosophy and Literature 1800–950*, „The Classics Library Journal” 2014: *Classical Reception in Classics Teaching*, pp. 38–41; 3) *The Reception of Schleiermacher's View on Plato in 19th Century Poland*, in: *Literary, Philosophical, and Religious Studies in the Platonic Tradition*, eds. J. F. Finamore, J. Phillips, Sankt Augustin 2013, pp. 179–189; 4) *On the Reception of Plato's Political Ideas in Polish Philosophy of the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, „Problemos” 2012, vol. 81, pp. 124–130; 5) *Some Remarks on the Nineteenth Century Studies of the „Euthyphro” in Poland*, „Peitho: Examina Antiqua” 2011, vol. 1, pp. 191–202; 6) *Philebus Interpreted by Paul Natorp and Wincenty Lutosławski*, in: *Plato's Philebus*, eds. J. Dillon, L. Brisson, Sankt Augustin 2010, pp. 382–389. 2), 4) and 5) are available online.

Central Lithuanian State Archive and were investigated by the author during his stay in Vilnius in 2005³.

I cannot fail to mention my deep gratitude to the late Professor Romanas Plečkaitis (1933-2009), without whose enthusiasm and interest in the common history of Lithuanian and Polish philosophies these lectures would never have taken place. He was to have been the first beneficiary of the Erasmus agreement in philosophy between the University of Vilnius and the University of Zielona Góra. He had planned to deliver lectures in Zielona Góra in the autumn of 2009, and arrangements for this had already been made, but, unfortunately, he passed away in the summer that year.

Co-operation in organizing the following lectures in Vilnius required a great deal of patience from Assoc. Professor Nijolė Radavičienė, the then Vice-Dean and Erasmus coordinator in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Vilnius University, to whom I am extremely grateful. The author also wishes to thank the Professors, without whose kind help his lectures would not have been delivered in such comfort, they are: Dalius Viliūnas, Skirmantas Jankauskas and Margarita Poškutė. The discussion held *extra facultatis muros*, with the first of them in the friendly atmosphere of the city of Vilnius and its marvelous vicinity, were extraordinarily informative and beneficial. My thanks go also to Professor Marius Povilas Šaulauskas, Head of the Department of Logic and History of Philosophy, and to Vygandas Aleksandravičius, who enriched the author's knowledge on the organizational and historical conditions and circumstances of the development of philosophy in Lithuania. Last but not least, the philosophy students of Vilnius University must be

3 These documents and the results of the archival query in Vilnius were deployed in the book: *Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954). Jestem Obywatelom Utopii*, „Komisja Historii Nauki. Monografie” vol. 15, Kraków 2008, 291 pp.; and in the paper: *Wincenty Lutosławski w Wilnie (1919–1931). Próby sprowadzenia M. Borowskiego, powołanie T. Czeżowskiego i doktorat B. Woyczyńskiego*, „Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki” 2007, vol. 52, nr 3/4, pp. 97–130 (available online); consult also: *Wincenty Lutosławski – rys biograficzny*, „Studia Łomżyńskie” 2006, vol. 17, pp. 179–187; *Popularyzatorska działalność wykładowa Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, „Wszechnica Polska: Kwartalnik Naukowy” 2002, nr 4, pp. 79–92.

mentioned, since they patiently listened to my lectures, and by asking questions, contributed to the work in its final version.

The final form of the text owes its stylistic smoothness to Una Maclean-Hańckowiak, who carefully read it and suggested valuable improvements. Any remaining language defects undoubtedly result from the author's persistence.

Tomasz Mróz
Vilnius-Zielona Góra,
2013–2016



I.

.....

**“Polish Philosophy”
or “Philosophy in Poland”?**

Introduction

Is it justified to discuss the nationality of philosophy, or its state or political affiliation? It is generally acknowledged that one of the most noble subjects in the study of the history of philosophy is Greek philosophy. The same may be said of Roman philosophy. Both are philosophies with a specific cultural, geographical and linguistic background. Yet philosophical questions are generally thought to be universal and equally inspiring irrespective of the cultural environment of the philosophers who undertake them.

What is more problematic, however, is how to refer to the subject examined by historians of philosophy in Poland, or in Lithuania, or anywhere else. What do they examine? What is their field of research? Is it the history of Polish philosophy or the history of philosophy in Poland? Is there any difference between these two similar sounding terms? The present talk will relate to Polish issues but these will most probably prove to be useful and of value for Lithuanian historians of their own philosophical tradition as well. The problem of naming the subject is shared by these two philosophical traditions as well as by many others which, unlike Greece and Rome, did not originate in the most significant and prevailing cultural environments. Yet another problem arises as a result of the shared area in the histories of philosophies in Poland and in Lithuania, namely the history of philosophy undertaken in Vilnius, at Vilnius University, in the past centuries: to which philosophical tradition should it be ascribed?

The aim of this lecture is to outline the problem of national adjectives attributed to philosophical traditions and to present some attitudes and positions in the discussion on the subject which began more than a century ago and involved Polish philosophers and historians of philosophy. I hope this subject will be of interest to anyone undertaking a study of the history of their own native philosophical and intellectual tradition. Nevertheless the story is about the Polish tradition, but pretty much the same instructions and remarks could be applied to other philosophical traditions, for example: the Lithuanian tradition.

Controversial Issues

Let us first take a look at some terminological issues. The subject called ‘the history of Polish philosophy’ requires some special explanation or justification. Let us restate our question: is there any difference between the two terms ‘the history of philosophy in Poland’ and ‘the history of Polish philosophy’? It seems that such a difference exists. The first term, ‘the history of philosophy in Poland’ encompasses all the philosophical phenomena that emerged in Poland, all the philosophical problems with which Poles were beset, and all the discussions in the Polish philosophical milieu, on condition that some material trace of these phenomena, problems and discussions has been preserved. In other words, the subject of research of the historian of philosophy in Poland concerns everything on the subject of philosophy that has been written, published, and preserved until contemporary times.

‘The history of philosophy in Poland’ thus includes virtually all that has been written in the field of philosophy, any discussion that was held on any philosophical topic, in the broadest sense of the term *philosophy*. Among these broadly considered philosophical phenomena, we must include the reception of philosophical currents, as well as the impact of the work of Polish philosophers on European philosophy, which was not as uncommon as is most frequently believed.

If the subject is thus specified and called ‘the history of philosophy in Poland’, it must then be stated that since the thirteenth century all Polish thinkers, or those who were born on Polish soil, or those who declared their Polish identity or Polish origins were all involved in the philosophical life of Europe. In order to clarify the issue, let us consider some individual cases starting from the 13th century.

One might reasonably doubt whether Vitello (ca. 1230–after 1280) was a Polish philosopher. Did he speak Polish? We cannot be sure of that, his works were written in Latin. He declared, however, Polish origins: „in terra nostra scilicet Polonia”, and also „Turingorum et Polonorum filius”.

And what about Copernicus (1473–1543)? Was he a Polish philosopher? To carry out his church responsibilities among Poles he had

to use the help of an interpreter. His mother-tongue was German, but he declared his loyalty to the Polish king.

Another problematic character is Faustus Socinus (Sozzini, 1539–1604), who was an Italian-born thinker of the 16th century, a philosopher and theologian who composed his most important works in Poland, where he found his most devoted students and readers and where he also died.

Let's consider the 19th century philosopher, teacher, and also historian of Polish philosophy, Henryk Struve (1840–1912), who spent almost all of his life in Warsaw; was he a Polish philosopher, since his origins were German? Can we include his works in the area of the history of philosophy in Poland? Was Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938) a Polish philosopher? He grew up in Vienna, taught at Lvov University, which was then under Austrian rule. He is considered to have been a founder of the original school of philosophy, the Lvov-Warsaw school, the intellectual roots of which must, in fact, be sought in the philosophical currents transplanted from Austria and Germany.

Despite such objections, all of the above mentioned authors, as well as many others, should be included in the broad field of 'philosophy in Poland'. But what about 'Polish philosophy'? What should be considered as the criteria for membership of the category 'Polish philosophy'? To be classified as 'Polish philosophy' a philosophical work or a philosophical system should perhaps bear some kind of a 'national stamp', should have some kind of Polish character, or as one philosopher said: 'Polish colour'. There must, therefore, be philosophical works which may be considered as belonging to the field of 'Polish philosophy', and not just to the field of 'philosophy in Poland'. However, examples of Polish philosophy should not be sought for in the period before the Renaissance. Medieval European philosophy's universal language was Latin. It was not until the Renaissance that philosophers intentionally started to use their national languages for doing philosophy, and then they coined the first philosophical terms in these languages. Consequently, it was from this time that European philosophical traditions started to undergo a process of divergence.

The distinction between „the history of philosophy in Poland” and „the history of Polish philosophy” may be regarded as a purely artificial problem. Is it just a matter of quibbling over words, so much ado about nothing? If philosophy were considered to be a creation unrelated to the national element, a universal philosophy with no frills like Anglo-Saxon, German, Russian, French or Polish, then the philosophical content would be abstracted from its context, whether geographical, linguistic or cultural. And if philosophy were considered as isolated from any changing circumstances, then philosophy, its questions and answers, would have to be abstracted from the philosophers who asked themselves these questions and answered them.

I think that philosophy, by its very nature, is one of the components of culture, namely intellectual culture. It is also the most synthetic of all cultural components, because the subject of philosophical reflection is culture itself. Since one may indicate cultural differences between peoples and nations in different areas of culture, then one can also observe them in philosophy. The cultural differences between nations, however, should not lead us to believe that national cultures and philosophical currents are insulated. Nevertheless, there are some differences which allow historians of philosophy to point out some distinctive features of English or German thought. By analogy, the same can be said of Polish, Lithuanian, French, American and other philosophies.

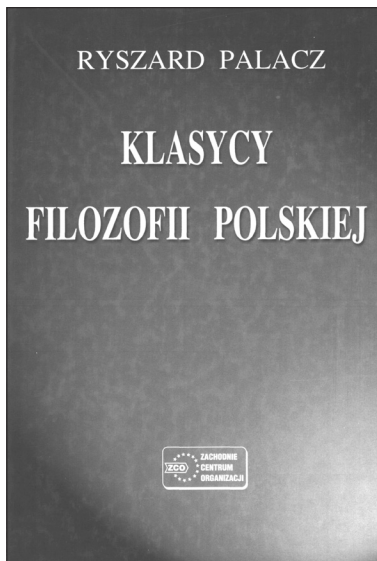
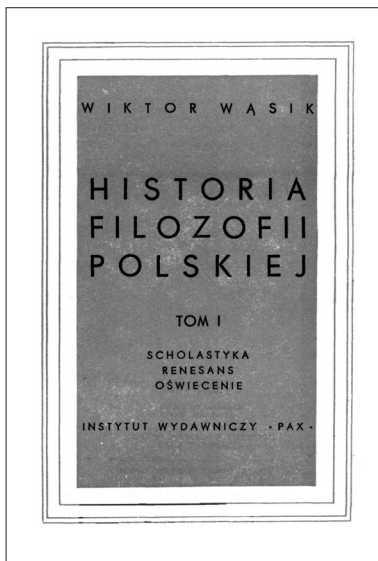
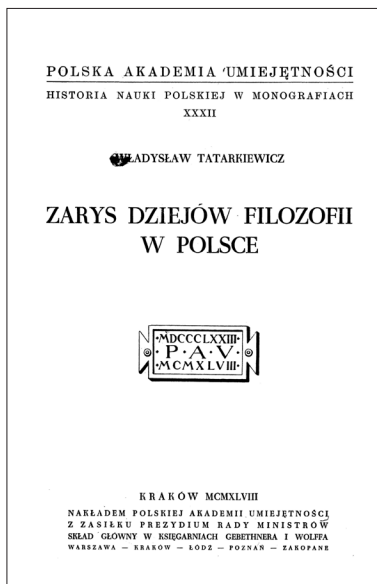
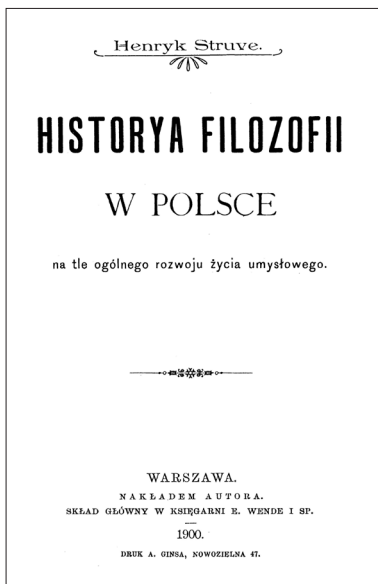
Allow me to digress for a moment from the main subject and complement the argumentation with a few remarks on studies on the inter-cultural, inter-national reception of philosophical ideas. In spite of individual characteristics of national philosophical traditions, interaction and communication between these philosophical worlds exist. Examples of one-way impact or mutual exchange of ideas constitute – at least in my opinion – one of the most interesting historical and philosophical facts. Therefore, in the studies on the history of any „local” philosophy, attention should also be drawn to the history of inter-national reception of the various philosophical currents. The specific and unique character of philosophy in Poland, France, or Germany, is

also reflected in the character of the reception of new philosophical ideas. The reception may be selective or incomplete, and sometimes even grotesque, but still, reception often reflects the true colours of the recipient.

Let us now turn back to national and philosophical issues. No one will ever doubt the existence of German literature, Italian painting, or French poetry. Therefore philosophy, as a cultural phenomenon, can also be qualified with a national adjective. Of course, in listing the philosophies of the European nations, such as English, German, French and Polish philosophies, we should be under no illusions about the role played by Polish philosophers on the European stage. They certainly did not play a big part; they were not great stars on the philosophical stage in the play titled „European philosophy”, for they did not mark any turning points in the history of European philosophy, though some of them did significantly influence western philosophers. Nevertheless, despite their minor role, the philosophical discussions that were engaged in concerned the same issues as those which were under discussion in western Europe.

Let us now make a historical overview of philosophy. Given that philosophy originated in ancient Greece, one can assume, and one can do so reasonably, that the entire history of philosophy is equivalent to the history of the reception of this ancient invention. In other words, according to Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), the history of European philosophy may be regarded as a series of footnotes to Plato. These footnotes have accumulated over the centuries, so that they can be, and indeed they have to be, classified and arranged in order to be understood. There are many ways of arranging the rich material of the history of philosophy, and the methodology of the history of philosophy looks like a noisy battlefield. It is the task of historians of philosophy to attempt to find their way among the leftovers of the writings, ideas, systems and philosophical currents.

Let me draw another imperfect picture of the history of philosophy. It may be presented as a fully-grown, healthy oak-tree. It has its roots which still feed it, has its firm trunk and numerous fresh, green



Studies of the overall history of Polish Philosophy
by the authors discussed in Lecture I

branches growing out in all directions. Philosophy has its Greek origins, this is an indisputable fact, and contemporary philosophy is still deeply rooted in ancient ideas.

If philosophy has its roots in antiquity, then the medieval Latin philosophical culture of Western Europe is certainly the heavy trunk drawing its substance from the strong ancient radices. Many different branches stem from the trunk (which may represent medieval philosophy). They grow and develop close to each other, but also independently. Modern philosophy splits the apparently homogeneous medieval heritage; philosophy is transformed from the relative uniformity of scholastic thought and splits into schools, trends and directions. Their dominance or decline, their rise and fall, determine the division of the history of European philosophy into periods. At the dawn of the modern era strong national cultures emerged, and national languages overcame the essential unity of medieval philosophical culture, which was based on its linguistic unity. The same happened in Poland and Lithuania.

The divisions and periods in the history of philosophy are continuously interwoven with geographical and chronological characteristics. Ancient European philosophy is split traditionally into Greek and Roman; two cultures and two periods of dominance. The philosophy of the Middle Ages was not affected by significant national characteristics. There are geographical characteristics of the philosophical schools or currents of that time, for the historians of medieval philosophy talk about Parisian or Oxford scholasticism, but they are not national. It was not until the beginning of modernity that philosophy came to be systematized in national terms. We have all heard about the Italian Renaissance, which emerged in a different place and at a different time from the English Renaissance or Polish Renaissance. What is far more important, however, is that all these Renaissances differed from each other, each of them bearing the distinguishing marks of its time and place. The same can be said about the Enlightenment etc., but also about German, Polish or American Hegelianism and so on.

What then makes a philosophy national? What is the subject of research of the historians of Polish or Lithuanian philosophy? Is it philos-

ophy in Poland or in Lithuania, or Polish and Lithuanian philosophy? Do they study the history of philosophy in a certain geographically limited area? Or maybe they study a specific local philosophical current, different from any other kind of philosophy: Polish philosophy?

It may be worth quoting some arguments produced by Polish philosophers and historians of philosophy who considered the problem of Polish philosophy. Let us now ask the wise men, and see what they say. The discussion on the concept of Polish philosophy could not emerge earlier than the first generation of modern historians of philosophy – and historians of Polish philosophy – appeared. Some names and opinions will now be presented, their purpose being to present the rich material, including the questions and problems which were and are faced by historians of Polish philosophy, and to offer some conclusions, which – again – might be found useful for application in studies of the native philosophy in Lithuania. Let us now take a look at some historical debates, let us search for something interesting in the clutter in grandma's attic.

First Discussions

We should begin with H. Struve, who was a philosopher, logician and historian of philosophy and logic. For over 40 years he lectured at the Imperial (Russian) University of Warsaw. In 1900 he published a book entitled *The History of Philosophy in Poland against a Background of the Universal Development of Intellectual Life*. Since Struve decided to write the history of philosophy in Poland, it must have meant that Polish philosophers had already made some progress in this field, especially, as Struve argued, in the 19th century.

The very title of Struve's book suggests the term 'history of philosophy in Poland', but the author admitted his doubts about its validity. He argued for the aptness of this term, rather than the 'history of Polish philosophy', as follows: "*Polish philosophy*, as well as the *Polish* language and *Polish* literature, indicates that we are referring to the direct

product of the Polish nation, which is owned by its spirit, originated and developed by intellects born from its bosom. *Polish philosophy* means the same as the *philosophy of the Poles*. Well, there is no doubt that in some ways we can talk about the philosophy of the Poles, as well as that every individual and every nation has its own philosophy, if we mean by it [=philosophy] an overall view of the world and life”¹. Struve concluded that such a broad concept of philosophy could in fact be replaced by the concept of Polish culture. He argued against equating philosophy with culture, though philosophy is the highest manifestation of culture. It is only philosophy, in the strictest sense of the word, however, that results from critical thought and scientific tendencies.

Struve, however, mentioned English, French or German philosophies after the Greek and Indian. So, the question arises, what is different in the works of Polish philosophers, since they did not contribute to Polish philosophy, whereas English philosophers produced English philosophy, not only ‘philosophy in England’? Struve’s answer goes as follows: the national philosophy’s genesis must result from the national culture. If it does not, then it is just a philosophy in the given country, and not the philosophy of the nation dwelling in this country.

Struve associated philosophy with national character, and he stated that the original English philosophy began with Francis Bacon (1561–1626), before whom only philosophy in England existed. Along with Bacon English philosophy started in England, and its orientation remains essentially empirical. The same applies to French philosophy, which starts with Rene Descartes (1596–1650), who gave it a rationalist character. German philosophy did not exist before G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716), and its main area of interest is metaphysics. And what about Polish philosophy? Struve argued that the term ‘Polish philosophy’ is justified only from the nineteenth century, when Polish thought gained independence, became autonomous. Struve continued: “philosophy, as a self-sufficient science, fought with many difficulties in

¹ H. Struve, *Historia filozofii w Polsce na tle ogólnego rozwoju życia umysłowego*, Warszawa 1900, p. 7. This and all the following translations from the works of Polish scholars are by the author.

our land, until it took roots and acclimatized here; therefore it will be undoubtedly more accurate to call its development *history of philosophy in Poland*, than *history of Polish philosophy*². To conclude Struve's argumentation: 'Polish philosophy' is a particular part of 'philosophy in Poland' which is qualitatively original and does not consist only of a mixture of foreign and indigenous elements, but is an original and distinct combination of both.

Struve's considerations were continued by Stanisław Garfein-Garski (1867–1928) in his lecture on the issue of Polish national philosophy. He grappled with the same problem as Struve: "The matter which is under our consideration seems at first glance to be paradoxical. For how can one combine philosophy or science, probably the most universal manifestation of culture, with something *par excellence* totally particular, with something negatively expressing itself in particularism, with *nationality*?"³

Garfein-Garski attempted to search for potential features of the special character of Polish philosophy, but one by one he rejected them: its synthetic character – this characteristic was an important feature of philosophy in general; its practical nature – this is reflected in similar trends in European philosophy; its vivid and figurative language – this is a general feature of Polish literature. He also rejected Messianism as having been present in European culture since its beginning, though in Poland it took on a specific form. The close relationship between philosophy and religion was rejected as well. Consequently, Garfein-Garski arrived at a conclusion concerning all of the areas of philosophy: "truths valid for one nation only cannot exist"⁴. According to Garfein-Garski, there is, however, one field of philosophical reflection which has a significant national character; it is the philosophy of history, historiosophy, which is not limited to the explanation of the past, but also determines the future, goals and objectives for the nation. Only

2 *Ibidem*, p. 10.

3 S. Garfein-Garski, *Zagadnienie filozofji narodowej*, in: *Polska filozofja narodowa*, ed. M. Straszewski, Kraków 1921, p. 3.

4 *Ibidem*, p. 23.

historiosophy, then, can be truly national. Let us conclude this part with Garski's opinion on the Polish philosophy of his times. These remarks may sound reasonable not only for historians of Polish philosophy, but also for historians of all the minor philosophical traditions: "We are intensively occupied with philosophy from all around the world and our own philosophy is almost a barren land. One of the major reasons for that fact is the lack of primary sources for our philosophy. We are like the rich, who have lost the key to their treasures. We have great philosophical traditions, but we have almost no access to them. Source texts of our national philosophy require publication without delay [...]. *We need primary sources*"⁵. This conclusion still appears reasonable and is from time to time repeated by historians of philosophy, and sometimes this idea is taken up.

Struve returned to the topic of Polish philosophy a decade later. He formulated some requirements to be met in order for philosophy to become essentially national, for Polish philosophy to stand along with German, French and English philosophies. Struve rejected mysticism and Messianism as distinctive marks of Polish philosophy, though he granted them historical significance. To gain national character philosophy should have a certain continuity of tradition and development: "continuity mostly consists in taking into account the predecessors in Polish literature by each new student of it"⁶. In other words, Struve's argument is: quote your predecessors, refer to them! Otherwise, Polish philosophy will never come into being, and Poles will only continue to produce philosophy in Poland.

Struve's opinion was endorsed by K. Twardowski, one of the most important figures in Polish philosophy. He observed that native, local philosophical aspirations, though they appeared weak, could be reconciled and combined with foreign influences. Foreign inspirations should, however, be drawn from diverse traditions, in order not to become one-sided. As Twardowski stated: "Then none of the foreign

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 28–29.

⁶ H. Struve, *Słowo o filozofii narodowej polskiej*, „Ruch Filozoficzny” 1911, vol. I, no. 1, p. 2.

philosophies will be able to invade the area of native philosophy, [...] but all of them [=foreign philosophies] will fertilize the soil on which the native philosophy will grow up luxuriantly”⁷. In other texts Twardowski voiced the need to organise a bibliographical listing of Polish philosophical works and to set up one central catalogue of philosophical works available in Polish libraries. Such a catalogue and bibliography would be essential to fulfil the idea of philosophy built on Polish tradition. He expressed a similar opinion to that of Garfein-Garski: “We have, in fact, much richer philosophical achievements than one might think. We neither use them properly in philosophical research, nor in teaching philosophy. And we do not use them, because we do not know them”⁸.

Another philosopher and historian of philosophy, Adam Zieleńczyk (1880–1943), pointed out the double genealogy of the concept of ‘Polish philosophy’. On one hand, Polish philosophy is in fact philosophy as such, philosophy in general. Nevertheless, Polish philosophy is also Polish, local, so to a certain extent it has some specific features: “Therefore the term Polish philosophy is not equal to the general term of philosophy in Poland, but it is not an exclusive concept of the philosophy of the Polish people, since it has features of universal philosophy combined with these unique features given to this science by Polish intellect”⁹. Zieleńczyk argued, however, that it is better for every science when generality, versatility and universality prevail. He continued: “[philosophy] should strive to present the truth as objectively as possible, and to reject any ties which restrain it. Philosophy has to strive for the truth and must not abandon this path once chosen for any national reasons. It would be better for philosophy not to be national, rather than to become false”¹⁰. In short, according

7 K. Twardowski, *Jeszcze słówko o polskiej filozofii narodowej*, „Ruch Filozoficzny” 1911, vol. I, no. 6, p. 114.

8 *Idem*, *O potrzebach filozofii polskiej*, in: *idem*, *Rozprawy i artykuły filozoficzne*, Lwów 1927, p. 138.

9 A. Zieleńczyk, *Drogi i bezdroża filozofii polskiej*, in: *Spór o charakter narodowy filozofii polskiej. Antologia tekstów 1810–1946*, ed. S. Pieróg, Warszawa 1999, p. 278.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 278–279.

to Zielenćzyk, the scientific character of philosophy is the foundation on which its national variant can be built.

One of the famous Polish philosophers, Roman Ingarden (1893–1970), also expressed his views on national philosophy. He first studied mathematics and philosophy in Lwów under K. Twardowski, then moved to Göttingen to study philosophy and attended Edmund Husserl’s philosophical seminar. He was considered by Husserl to be one of his best students and in 1918 Ingarden submitted his doctoral dissertation with Husserl as its supervisor. Ingarden’s opinion was expressed briefly, yet clearly. First, he criticized the popular, unprofessional meaning of philosophy: “philosophy is considered as something significantly associated with one mental structure or another, as an expression of this or that individual attitude towards the ‘world’, some even talk of ‘national philosophy’, they call to establish it; just like with equal rightness one could speak of ‘national mathematics’ or ‘national zoology!’”¹¹

In response to Ingarden’s allegations Bolesław Gawecki (1889–1984) took the floor. He argued in favour of the use of the term ‘Polish philosophy’. According to Gawecki, the term is justified by the fact that Poles have “rendered considerable services to this field, and applied unique, original methods to this science, and lastly, they have given it a distinct character and form, with Polish national characteristics. In any case, on account of its content, ‘Polish philosophy’ would still be universal philosophy”¹². Ingarden’s attempts to ridicule national philosophy could have been effective provided that philosophy was just a regular science like all others. According to Gawecki, however, philosophy is not an ordinary science, for philosophical theses are not usually intersubjectively verifiable, and their synthetic nature provides philosophy with a unique place among sciences and culture in general.

So much then for the period before the Second World War. All of the above opinions originated in the period when Polish philoso-

¹¹ R. Ingarden, *Spór o istotę filozofii*, „Przegląd Warszawski” 1922, vol. II, no. 14, p. 162.

¹² B. Gawecki, *O filozofię narodową*, in: *Spór o charakter narodowy...*, ed. cit., p. 374; cf.: *idem, Polscy myśliciele romantyczni*, Warszawa 1972, p. 7.

phers were attempting to free themselves from the influence of decades of Messianic and Romantic philosophy. Most of them, especially the younger generation, were trying to step out of the shadows of 19th century thought. They aimed to produce modern philosophy, but still, the old tradition remained alive and, in fact, the above quoted participants of the discussion were unable to distinguish controversial issues in the history of philosophy from the calls and demands for the future development of philosophy in Poland.

The situation changed after the war, when historians of philosophy systematically attempted to research their own philosophical, intellectual tradition. One of the most important events in this development was the publication of a two-volume *History of Polish Philosophy* (vol. I: 1958, vol. II: posthumously 1966) by Wiktor Wąsik (1883–1963). In the introduction to his work, the Polish researcher attempted to explain his desire to break with the tradition of regarding the philosophical works of Poles as ‘philosophy in Poland’. He argued that if the whole history of philosophy can be described as the history of the reception of the Greek invention, then the history of Polish philosophy can be considered as the Polish variant of this reception. Reception in each of the European philosophies carried with it some clear national intellectual features. Wąsik wanted to put the greatest emphasis on the history of Polish philosophy, rather than on philosophy in Poland just as the historians of literature study the history of Polish literature, not literature in Poland. Wąsik claimed that ‘national colour’ had existed in Polish philosophy since the Middle Ages, although he acknowledged that it had not been too clear then, but in the course of time it had grown stronger.

Following the previous discussion and Wąsik’s considerations, one can draw some terminological conclusions, which allow us to systematize the results of the foregoing controversy:

The most general term is without doubt ‘philosophy in Poland’. It encompasses all the phenomena of philosophy in Polish culture. Where medieval philosophy is concerned, there appears to have been almost no uniquely Polish content apart from geographical reference to Poland.

It is not until the Renaissance era that it is possible to talk about special features of Polish thought and to introduce the concept of:

‘Polish philosophy’ which starts during the Renaissance. It is only then that a certain independence of Polish philosophers can be observed, and some national and local elements come to the fore, revealing the specificity of the Polish Renaissance, and thus of Polish philosophy. However, this is only a certain local cultural specificity of an intellectual current engulfing the whole of Europe. Therefore, besides the ‘history of philosophy in Poland’ and ‘history of Polish philosophy’, one more phenomenon appears in Polish culture with such force that it has become necessary to introduce one more term, which is:

‘Polish national philosophy’ as the phenomenon of Polish philosophy in the 19th century, also referred to as ‘philosophy of nation’, or the ‘philosophy of Polish national Messianism’. This third phenomenon is an intensification of Polish philosophy growing to its highest degree, in which the national element had been strongly accumulated. Thus, while empiricism is generally considered as a distinguishing mark of British philosophy and the 19th century idealism – of German philosophy, Poland in the 19th century can be described as a country of philosophical Messianism¹³.

Recent Debates

The above specification set the framework for the more recent debate, in which the issue has been deliberately transformed into a historical and methodological problem. The starting point for the new stage in this ongoing discussion was set by Józef Bańka (1934–), who called for a search in the history of Polish philosophy for those features which were distinct from the European tradition. The unique and specific features of Polish philosophy, according to Bańka, had come to light in Poland during the Renaissance, for it was then that ‘national colour’ came to the

13 Cf.: W. Wąsik, *Historia filozofii polskiej*, vol. I, Warszawa 1958, p. 9–16.

fore and culminated in Romantic and pre-positivist thought, which essentially were Polish philosophy. An additional remark made by Bańka, sounds like a *signum temporis*. He stated that it was to be regretted that there was no printed and available study on the history of Polish national philosophy presenting it as national and progressive at the same time, and not as backward, reactionary and fideist. He was very critical of books in which the specificity of Polish philosophy was diluted into the abstract notion of ‘world culture’, and in which authors manifested a lack of ‘national self-affirmation’. According to Bańka, the cosmopolitan treatment of Polish philosophy did considerable damage to philosophy, since Polish readers were not interested only in philosophy in Poland, but also in Polish philosophy. Bańka therefore demanded that the many achievements of Polish philosophers, their talents, efforts and sacrifice, be rescued from the darkness of oblivion and silence, and their example followed and used in teaching practice. Bańka stressed the relationship between national pride and the history of philosophy, and the importance of research in the field of the history of philosophy in the formation of national identity. Bańka’s text thus became a starting point for the discussion on the merits of methodology in the study of the history of Polish philosophy¹⁴.

The discussion on Polish philosophy was deliberately directed to methodological issues by Andrzej Walicki (1930–), one of the historians of Polish and Russian philosophies most recognized in Poland and abroad. Considering Bańka’s criticism of lack of ‘national self-affirmation’ as close to nationalism and ethnocentrism, Walicki tended to be much more balanced in his remarks. He defended the validity of presenting historical studies on Polish philosophy in a way that does not disregard its relations with European culture, but at the same time, avoids reducing Polish philosophy to a mere series of philosophical influences.

Although Bańka and Walicki differed with regard to methodological issues, they both saw the need for intensification of research and teaching. They both had a deep respect for the area of study under

14 J. Bańka, *O prawdziwy obraz filozofii polskiej*, „Współczesność” 14/1968, p. 9.

discussion, Walicki wrote: “The history of Polish philosophy should not be studied on the margins of the general history of philosophy; the methods applied by a historian to investigate philosophy as an intellectual biography of a nation differ from the methods applied by a researcher of the universal history of philosophical problems”¹⁵.

The discussion between the two scholars was continued by some as a dispute on the form of future patriotism, but the most interesting voices spoke on methods and their results in the study of the history of Polish philosophy. Discussion moved to the columns of “Philosophical Studies”, the most important philosophical journal of that time. Walicki’s views were expressed there more precisely. He reflected on the lack of synthetic studies on Polish thought, the lack of works on particular periods, and finally, the lack of monographs on individual thinkers. In a word: the shortcomings outweighed the work already carried out. Walicki intended to revise the opinion on the non-autonomous character of the history of Polish philosophy and its dependence on Western thought: “history of Polish philosophy should be distinguished from the general history of philosophy and should be established as an independent discipline, not as a subordinate to the general history of philosophy, but its coordinate”¹⁶. This could be achieved only by separating the history of Polish philosophy from the general history of philosophy in terms of scope and method. For on the one hand, the history of Polish philosophy is a part of the global history of philosophy, but on the other – it constitutes a part of the history of Polish culture, of Polish intellectual history.

Walicki called on Polish scholars to contribute substantially to research on the history of Polish philosophy, and his demands are currently still valid and they concern not only Polish philosophy, but all the minor European philosophical traditions. Let us quote a longer part of his argumentation: “to study Polish philosophy (regardless of what was or what may be contributed by foreign researchers) all the responsibility

¹⁵ A. Walicki, *W sprawie badań nad filozofią polską*, „Współczesność” 15/1968, p. 2.

¹⁶ A. Walicki, *Historia filozofii polskiej jako przedmiot badań i jako problem kultury współczesnej*, „Studia Filozoficzne” 1/1969, p. 108.

lies with us, is our duty to take care of the regularity of these studies, their completeness and balance. We can meet our needs in the field of the [general] history of philosophy with suitably selected translations (since we lack our own studies), but the gaps in our knowledge of Polish philosophy can be filled up only by our own research”¹⁷.

The history of Polish philosophy, according to Walicki, had a dual affiliation; it was a sub-field of both history of general philosophy and of Polish culture. This provided a great opportunity for this branch of study, as an interdisciplinary area, often leading to valuable results. Although research on the history of Polish philosophy may not contribute significantly to the history of philosophy in general, its contribution to the history of Polish culture would be invaluable. When evaluating a specific philosophical phenomenon, its significance in the context of Polish philosophy and culture is disproportionate to its significance in the context of universal philosophy. Additionally, the history of Polish philosophy can improve self-knowledge and the historical consciousness of the nation. However, the key to successful research was considered to be the ability to strike a reasonable balance between the two contexts of Polish philosophy so that affirmation of the native tradition should not imply losing contact with general philosophy.

The subsequent issues of “Philosophical Studies” were inundated with opinions on the subject. Most panellists considered Walicki’s proposition to be valuable in many respects, as an accurate diagnosis of the condition and needs of research on the history of Polish philosophy. Jan Legowicz (1909–1992), a famous medievalist, confirmed the validity of the methodological demands made by Walicki, especially on the interdisciplinary nature of research on the history of Polish philosophy. Legowicz, as a specialist in the history of medieval philosophy, insisted on taking the initial steps by undertaking rudimentary archival and library searches¹⁸.

Władysław Tatarkiewicz (1886–1980) tried to calm the initial enthusiasm. He considered a number of demands to be exaggerated; for

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 108–109.

¹⁸ *Dyskusja o historii filozofii polskiej*, „Studia Filozoficzne” 2/1969, p. 123–125.

example, he did not believe that the demand to treat the history of Polish philosophy as a separate field of research was sufficiently justified¹⁹.

Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886–1981), a student of Twardowski in Lvov, a philosopher and a logician, and one of the most representative figures of the Lvov-Warsaw school, responded positively to the idea of treating the history of Polish philosophy as a part of Polish history, and Polish intellectual culture. He added, however, an essential remark on the field of philosophy which interested him most: “We must remember, however, that the history of Polish logic requires a different treatment, especially the recent mathematizing formal logic, and this is due both to the nature of logic as well as to the global position of Polish logic”²⁰.

Stefan Swieżawski (1907–2004), another medievalist, and the author of studies on the methods of the history of philosophy, came up with an important methodological pointer which was not quite in line with Walicki’s thesis. Swieżawski focused on the concept of philosophy itself and on the fact that throughout the centuries its content had been changing, therefore he regarded the proposal to integrate research on the history of Polish philosophy and on the history of Polish national culture as risky. He said: “it seems to be dangerous and methodologically incorrect to mix the two different and distinct types of historical sciences”²¹. The threat for historical research, according to Swieżawski, was that the combination of strictly philosophical issues with these belonging to a broader philosophical, cultural and social background might result in a redefinition of the scope of the history of philosophy. If the history of philosophy ceased to be restricted to the history of philosophical problems then, consequently, the historian of philosophy might experience difficulties in answering the questions about progress or regress in philosophy.

Barbara Skarga (1909–2009) developed some of Walicki’s initial theses. She was a historian of philosophy, a philosopher and ethicist,

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 125–127.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

and it is worth mentioning that she studied philosophy in Vilnius. She stressed, in particular, the need to bond the history of Polish philosophy with Polish culture, and subsequently, with the universal history of philosophy. Since such a history of Polish philosophy constituted a field of study which was distinct in scope and method, Skarga suggested a new term for it: 'the history of philosophical culture in Poland' or 'Polish intellectual history'. The rationale for this methodological approach was, first of all, the scope of the research field: "This discipline is rather interested in what can be called 'philosophical thinking' or an 'outlook on life', that is, a structure which consists of ethical and religious values, as well as social and political beliefs and philosophical views, but the latter do not play the autonomous role; they are a sort of cement that holds the varied content in a reasonable unity"²². Such a redefinition of the scope of historical research in philosophy, and thus, the redefinition of philosophy itself, resulted from tying up all the philosophical phenomena with the social context, and the phenomena could then be described as 'philosophical culture'. And this philosophical culture is expressed not only in philosophical treatises, but also, and perhaps above all, in journalism, literature, and even in economic theory. Therefore the historian of Polish philosophy, as defined by Skarga, would be required to take into account a number of historical, social and economic phenomena, not to mention Polish literature. She considered research on the history of Polish philosophy as an 'unrewarding effort' because the study of the history of native philosophy is a painful and difficult job, since it requires an extensive research perspective. The historian must resist the temptation of studying only the works of philosophers acknowledged undoubtedly as great, though every historian of philosophy is tempted to do so, since significant ideas of lasting value are simply attractive.

According to Skarga, the Marxist method of historiography rendered services to the history of Polish philosophy because "even little known phenomena not arousing any curiosity appeared in a different light. Human thoughts ceased to be suspended in a social void; thus

22 *Ibidem*, p. 129.

apparently trivial world-views, when considered today with their social functions, have taken on new and unexpected values”²³. Furthermore, the study of Polish philosophy, also as a study of literary texts, can also enrich reflection on the history of literature and serve as a study integrating various historical fields and this is the essence of the interdisciplinary function of studies on the history of Polish philosophy. General education on the history of philosophy was considered by Skarga as indispensable, since it allows researchers of Polish – and any national – philosophy, who are deeply rooted in and attracted by their national culture, to avoid becoming excessively fascinated and falling into national megalomania. If this fascination is not sufficiently avoided, then “some phenomena are regarded as great and significant though in fact they were not; the novelty of certain philosophical theories is overrated though they were only quite poor transformations of the ideas and theories of others”²⁴. This is not true patriotism. Such a notion of patriotism is fundamentally wrong. What then is true patriotism? Skarga answered referring to Kotarbiński: “patriotism is to be measured only with diligence, with responsibility for one’s work; good work is true patriotism”²⁵.

Zbigniew Kuderowicz (1931–2015), another historian of German and Polish philosophies, raised two objections of a methodological nature. He pointed to the difficulty of separating philosophical phenomena from other spheres of culture. This difficulty arises when the history of philosophy is simply considered as a part of cultural history. Since philosophical culture is manifested also in literature, this should also be included in the area of research, as well as historical works which are deeply permeated with their authors’ world-views. One danger which emerges from this approach is that the historian of philosophy would become just a historian of culture and would lose all the specificity of the original object of study. That is why Kuderowicz argued that the history of Polish philosophy “has to remain the *his-*

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

tory of philosophy, but has to use material not only of a philosophical nature”²⁶. The most important task of a historian of Polish philosophy is then to extract the philosophical content from the material under examination. Since this material is on the whole not only philosophical, the historian of philosophy does not grasp the entire history of culture and does not have to grasp it. It is, however, extremely important to apply philosophical criteria to the non-philosophical content. The literary texts are interesting for a historian of Polish philosophy only “to the degree and extent to which they meet ideological functions and provide statements on the meaning of human life”²⁷. Kuderowicz also found an additional advantage of this wide approach to the history of philosophy, namely its independence from the historical variability of the concept of philosophy.

The second objection which Kuderowicz raised concerned the problem of evaluating past philosophical views: “In accordance with the principle of historicism, the evaluation criteria must be sought within the period in which the view under examination originated and functioned. [...] The intention of these assessments is by no means to search for national colour in Polish philosophy”²⁸.

Other scholars who took part in the discussion shared the opinions expressed in the foregoing discussions, so it is not necessary to repeat them extensively. The discussion was closed by Ryszard Palacz (1935–), historian of medieval philosophy, who argued for abolishing ethnic criteria for inclusion in Polish philosophy, in order not to overlook foreign philosophers who were active and influential in Poland²⁹.

After a long discussion, a summary and final conclusions were presented by its initiator, Walicki. The most certain conclusion was a confirmation of the need to strengthen and deepen the research on the history of Polish philosophy because much still remained to be done in this field. Most of the participants in the discussion agreed that, on

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 133–134.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 134.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 142–144.

methodological and material grounds, the history of Polish philosophy was a subject distinct from the general history of philosophy.

The opposing views presented by Tatarkiewicz and Swieżawski involved a different emphases; they stressed rather the relations between the history of Polish and European philosophies, as well as the necessity to research the development of philosophical problems rather than the history of philosophical culture. Walicki did not seek to tear these areas apart from each other. He acknowledged that the history of Polish philosophy is a special sub-area of the general history of philosophy. Let me quote a long passage from his final statement: "I believe, however, that for the sake of the history of Polish philosophy, it was worth putting the emphasis on the fact that [...] this is a typical 'interdisciplinary' area and not just a part of any of the existing and institutionalized disciplines. Moreover, it appears to me that the specific developments in the history of Polish philosophy can only be recognized when we consider them as a branch of the history of Polish culture and a particular aspect of the intellectual history of the Polish nation. Such a treatment brings to light the significance of a number of phenomena which are of little importance, if any, from the point of view of the general history of philosophical problems. [...] It may also be worth noting that with the appropriate approach to such research, the danger of 'closing within one's own fences' does not appear – after all, Polish culture and what is called the intellectual history of Poland must also be considered in a broad, international comparative context. Personally, I think that this context would have to include much more than just philosophy, but the whole of the essential ideological phenomena in the culture of every era, so that the field of comparative research would be much wider than that of the universal history of philosophy in the traditional sense"³⁰.

³⁰ A. Walicki, *Dyskusja o historii filozofii polskiej – słowo końcowe*, „Studia Filozoficzne” 1/1970, p. 190.

Concluding Remarks

Apparently, the most important and still relevant conclusion from the whole discussion in „Philosophical Studies” is the statement concerning the interdisciplinary nature of the history of Polish philosophy. Since its object is located on the border of two areas, history of philosophy and history of Polish culture, it should therefore draw on both of them, but it requires its own methodology. That does not mean, however, that these areas should be in any way isolated – only together do they constitute the subject of the history of Polish philosophy; they are both indispensable. The conclusions of the discussion can still be considered valid, since their application allows two dangers to be avoided. The first consists in the treatment of the history of Polish philosophy as a subject which is unworthy of any serious study, especially when compared to the richness of the history of universal philosophy. The second danger consists in studying the history of Polish philosophy in its immanent development.

The above outline of the century-long discussion covers areas that may still be valid and applicable. Some issues, of course, may not have been interesting or relevant, but others might be applied to research on the history of Lithuanian philosophy. And this is the additional purpose of this lecture. At the end of the day, we can reach some more general conclusions aimed at encouraging younger scholars and philosophy students to conduct research and write their theses on their own national, native philosophical traditions. I would form the following advice in this area:

1. consider minor authors, though, naturally, those in the top international philosophical league seem to be the most attractive;
2. search for material outside the works traditionally considered to be philosophical; study literature and poetry, for example;
3. consider the following: is it more fruitful to write another study on Hegel or Kant, or to do a pioneering work on a little known author?

Our national philosophical traditions are not less important to us than the well-known and recognized philosophers. Researching the history of Polish or Lithuanian philosophy is still researching the history of philosophy. Nothing should prevent us from examining our own philosophical traditions. As a final word, I would like to add a quotation from Barry Smith (1952–), an ontologist, who investigated the history of philosophy in Austria and who in a slightly perverse way argues that Polish, and any other national philosophy, is a part of general world philosophy: “Just as the term ‘Austrian Philosophy’ is a misnomer to the degree that it suggests that there is a corresponding national or regional or ethnic philosophy, or a special Austrian *way of doing philosophy* that is unavailable to those born (say) outside the borders of the former Habsburg Empire; and just as the term ‘women’s philosophy’ is a misnomer to the extent that it suggests that there is a special way of doing philosophy that is available only to those of feminine gender, so also the term ‘Polish philosophy’ is a misnomer – and for just the same reasons. For Polish philosophy is philosophy *per se*, it is part and parcel of the mainstream of world philosophy”³¹. Investigating a history of any given philosophical tradition, one still does research in philosophy. Moreover, history of Polish philosophy, as all the other philosophies with an adjective, is not an exclusive subject of research for Poles only. These various parts of philosophy are open for anyone willing to do philosophy, therefore everyone interested in the history of Polish philosophy is invited to research it.

³¹ B. Smith, *Why Polish Philosophy Does Not Exist?*, in: *The Lvov-Warsaw School: The New Generation*, eds. J. J. Jadacki, J. Pańniczek, „Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities” vol. 89, Poznań 2006, p. 34.



II.

Plato's Reception in
Polish Philosophy (1800–1950)

Introduction

The aim of this lecture is to outline the reception of Plato's works and ideas among philosophers in Poland. The chronological framework for the research is 1800–1950, but this framework needs to be specified more precisely. The research covers the entire 19th century, which is a unique period in the history of Polish philosophy. The interwar period is covered as well, and some post-war years in which the two most important Polish Plato scholars, namely Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) and Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948), were still publishing their works related to Plato. Certain aspects of Plato's reception during the period have, however, been omitted and these omissions are explained below.

What is Omitted and Why

During the period 1800–1950 many cultural phenomena related to Plato occurred in Poland. Some, however, have had to be omitted from this analysis since they were of secondary importance for philosophy, though significant for Polish culture in general. The poetic and literary metamorphoses of Plato, deeply rooted in the Enlightenment tradition, have not been included in this research. It has also been found necessary to omit the neo-humanism and neo-Hellenism associated with Vilnius. These were inspired directly by Gotfryd Ernest Grodek (1762–1825), who proved to be capable of instilling a passion for the ancient Greek language, for the ancient world, and particularly for Plato, in the intellectual milieu of Vilnius. Unfortunately, his influence did not leave any continuous tradition of Hellenistic studies. Grodek's students, Józef Jeżowski (1793–1855) and Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), were also interested in Plato, but their work was not philosophically fruitful. They considered Plato as a writer, a poet and an exponent of humanist ideals. He was an important subject of

Jeżowski's studies in history and philology, but most of the members of the Philomathes association treated the dialogues as a source of moral ideals, as an example of the aristocratic spirit and as a pattern of *arete*. Their interest in Plato is sometimes described as „literary Platonism”¹, and Mickiewicz is considered as a leading exponent of this Platonism. The neo-humanism of Vilnius was essentially a unique phenomenon that affected the development of the personality and work of the poet, and many researchers, above all historians of Polish literature, produced a considerable amount of literature on this subject. Mickiewicz's references to Plato were usually rudimentary, and sometimes Platonism was processed and transformed to such an extent that the difficulty of distinguishing the superficial similarities from the actual influence is so huge that it does not allow any clear identification of the real impact of Plato on the poet.

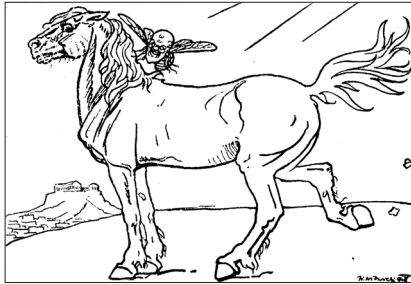
Another omitted work, which has been described by some authors as a translation of Plato's *Phaedo*, is, in fact, a translation of an adaptation of the *Phaedo*, written by Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786)², who used the dramatic frame of Plato's dialogue depicting Socrates' death to present his own arguments in favor of the immortality of the soul. This work played a significant role in Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment in Poland, but it remains actually irrelevant to the reception of Plato in Polish philosophy.

The history of Polish translations of the dialogues, the first of which appeared during the inter-uprising period, is a separate issue. Among the numerous translators, those who took up only single dialogues prevailed, usually selecting the Socratic writings of Plato. Their reason for rendering these translations was related to the main character, Socrates, his heroism, and the moral message expressed in these

¹ Cf.: M. Rudaś-Grodzka, „Sprawić, aby idee śpiewały”. *Motywy platońskie w życiu i twórczości Adama Mickiewicza w okresie wileńsko-kowieńskim*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 8–9. A selection of primary sources in Plato's reception in Poland, including most of the works, or their parts, discussed in the present lecture were reprinted in: *Platon w Polsce 1800–1950. Antologia*, ed. T. Mróz, Zielona Góra 2010.

² Mendelssohn Moses, *Fedon o nieśmiertelności duszy w trzech rozmowach*, transl. J. Tugendhold, Warszawa 1829 (2nd ed. 1842).

dialogues. The translators were mostly recruited among philologists and teachers of classical languages in gymnasiums. Their interest in the dialogues was primarily didactic, their goal being to introduce students to the colourful and relatively simple language of Plato's Socratic dialogues, and at the same time to draw students' attention to moral issues, to basic concepts of logic, *etc.* Teachers were also the authors



Apology

of numerous works, published mostly in gymnasium reports, which presented detailed analyses of the dialogue structure and the structure of Socrates' logical arguments. Their aim was to explain the philological intricacies of the Greek text, proposing corrections to the texts or providing suggestions concerning

the chronology of the dialogues. All of these works were, however, of minor philosophical significance.

The most important and productive interpreter of Plato into Polish in the 19th century was Antoni Bronikowski (1817–1884), a classics teacher at the gymnasium in Ostrów Wielkopolski, then under Prussian rule. His translations, however, were not received enthusiastically. Unfortunately, he did not include any introduction to his translations, in which he could have revealed his knowledge of philosophical issues. Unlike Bronikowski, Felicjan Antoni Kozłowski (1805–1870), the first Polish translator of the dialogues (who published only three), did attempt to write such an introduction. Although this lacked originality, he nevertheless deserves to be mentioned. The later translators, Stanisław Lisiecki (1872–1960), and the more famous, Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948), produced works on Plato's philosophy and commentaries which were of excellent quality. Their work went far beyond mere translation and therefore require more detailed presentation³.

³ This lecture is illustrated with the sketches by W. Witwicki: *Apology*, p. 42, in *Platon, Eutyfron, Obrona Sokratesa, Kriton*, transl. Witwicki W., Lwów-Warszawa

Methodological Remarks

While researching the subject of the reception of Plato's dialogues, one has to be aware of the variety of issues in many fields of study that are related to the reception of Plato. Since the reception of literary material and issues concerning translations of the dialogues have been left aside, the focus is centered on the philosophical aspects of the reception of Plato in Polish thought. The essential aim is to find such an influence of Plato on Polish thought that was as pure as possible and not diluted with other influences. So, the basic aim was to search for the reception of Plato himself, of Plato only, and not the reception of diverse historical forms of Platonisms, which have permeated European philosophy since the times of Plato. Tadeusz Sinko (1877–1966), philologist and historian of literature, who researched ancient influences in Polish culture, has written a meaningful sentence about these influences on Romanticism: „the main components of the wonderful scent of Romanticism were so closely interwoven with Hellenism, that it is impossible to distinguish where one ends and the other begins”⁴. For this reason, the discussions on the alleged “Platonisms”, for example, attributed to Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861) or August Cieszkowski (1814–1894) are of great interest, but do not fall within our current study. When determining whether these thinkers belonged to any particular current of Platonism, one must not overlook the level of their knowledge or ignorance of Plato's writings, or the frequency of their references to Plato. And it turns out that Czartoryski referred to Plato only incidentally, Cieszkowski – virtually never.

We already know, then, what is not going to be our subject. The non-philosophical reception and various forms of dubious Platonisms have been placed outside the scope of our research. What is left is an

1920.p. 112); *Crito*, p. 44, in *ibid.*, p. 173; *Phaedrus*, p. 47, in Platon, *Fajdros*, transl. Witwicki W., Lwów 1918, p. 73; *Phaedo*, p. 49, in Platon, *Fedon*, transl. Witwicki W., Lwów-Warszawa 1925, p. 102; *Timaeus*, p. 51, in Platon, *Timaios, Kritias*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1951, p. 26.

4 T. Sinko, *Hellenizm Juliusza Słowackiego*, Warszawa 1925, pp. 40–41.

overall account of the direct reception of Plato in Polish philosophy. It has been divided into three types, which essentially correspond – with only a few exceptions – to three chronological stages of the reception of Plato in Poland.

The first stage concerns the passive reception of Platonism as a part of the wider process of the reception of contemporary philosophical currents by Polish authors who introduced the Polish philosophical



Crito

milieu to the philosophy of Plato in its Kantian, Hegelian or neo-Kantian interpretations. The second stage consists of evaluations of Plato's philosophy provided by the representatives of the different philosophical currents and philosophical approaches, who referred directly to Plato and evaluated his philosophy

from their own point of view, from their philosophical position. Their studies on Plato had essentially no effect on the content and direction of their own philosophical research. The third stage involves implanting, or integrating the Platonic material into the tissue of Polish philosophy. The authors classified into this stage used Plato's dialogues to build their own philosophical views and systems. In this stage Plato became the initial material, on the basis of which they developed their own philosophical work. He became helpful and useful in the co-creation and co-production of works representing philosophical currents that originated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sometimes Polish philosophers integrated Plato so deeply into their philosophical thought that explanation and understanding of their own philosophical positions were made impossible without reference to Platonic sources and inspirations. Plato's dialogues were variously processed and interpreted by these philosophers and Platonism was integrated with their philosophies. Plato thus became one of the essential inspira-

tions for Polish philosophical tradition, whose representatives sometimes *expressis verbis* declared the ancient pedigree of their own works.

It would be pointless to assess the value of these works from the present point of view, or to compare them to the present state of research on Plato. Today's experts in ancient philosophy may find in these works both familiar ideas which are still discussed today and those which have already been rejected. Such an assessment of the ideas and works of our philosophical ancestors would probably produce a negative result in many cases. Sometimes the old views on Plato consisted of opinions which are certainly false or distorted. It would be futile, however, to argue against them from the perspective of the twenty-first century. For the historian of Polish philosophy, however, the following fact is essential: these works created the image of Plato in Polish philosophy, and at the same time they were a part of Polish intellectual history. The contemporary reader of Plato faces more or less the same problems as did the authors a century ago, though contemporary readers often fail to recognize that the tradition of solving these problems is much longer and richer than is generally believed.

Reception studies in the history of philosophy raise doubts regarding the particular area of historical studies in philosophy to which they should be affiliated. The research on the reception of ancient philosophy in modern thought does not belong to the field of the history of ancient philosophy, though the names of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and other ancient schools and philosophers appear frequently. It is necessary to state clearly that a work consisting of the study of the reception of Plato in Poland belongs to the area of the history of Polish philosophy. The decisive argument goes as follows: texts of Polish researchers form the fundamental corpus of sources for this kind of work. The content of these texts is a complex and many-sided analysis of the essential philosophical problem, which consists of – briefly speaking – Plato and his dialogues. Therefore despite the name of Plato in the title of such a reception study, it belongs to the history of Polish philosophy. The source material that has been subjected to the analysis is the effect of the work of the Polish historians of philosophy, philosophers and

sometimes philologists who confronted the problem of Plato, Platonism and the dialogues, and who used his works in their own studies. Some of their results and conclusions may appear to be obsolete today, but obsolescence fails to touch the ever-lasting problems regarding Plato.

The Problem of Reception in the Studies on the History of Philosophy

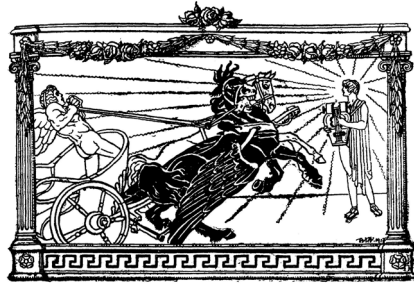
When one attempts to study the reception of a philosophical work, any philosophical idea, or the image of a certain philosopher in the age-long development of European philosophy, one might be tempted to precede the publication of such a study with a well-known and frequently repeated maxim: *Habent sua fata libelli*. When studying Plato reception, another comment immediately comes to mind, namely the famous opinion about the history of philosophy expressed by A. N. Whitehead, in which he referred to the post-Platonic history of philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato. The methodological founding of the study of Plato's reception has also been aptly described by one Polish researcher of the neo-Kantian interpretation of Plato, who said: „To grasp Plato means almost to grasp the basis of philosophy in general – and one can do this in many ways. It is in fact a meeting with thinking itself and every philosopher must constantly come through this meeting individually for oneself and on one's own”⁵. The study of the reception of Plato must not, then, be reduced to the history of the impact of a chronologically distant philosopher on a number of later thinkers, but rather that every philosophical era, many philosophical trends and many philosophers are substantially reflected in their interpretations of Plato. Their relation to Plato may be considered then as their relation to philosophy in general. Plato and his dialogues form a challenge and a task which is faced and should be constantly faced by every philosopher. The history of diverse interpretations of Plato

⁵ M. Czarnawska, *Dwa podejścia do Platona*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria” R. VI (1997), nr 3, p. 95.

is not just a history of reception, but it is the history of the answers to the questions which are posed by Plato and his legacy, since he is still a constant source of problems and inspiration. His dialogues are still the philosophers' *Bible*⁶.

It should also be remembered that research into Plato's reception in modern thought is a methodologically distinct task. The reception of Kant's philosophy, of Hegel's philosophy, or of any other author by contemporary philosophers does

not involve the same complications as those which are inevitable with regard to the reception of a chronologically distant ancient author, especially one whose name is still considered as synonymous with „philosopher”. The studies already conducted on various phenomena



Phaedrus

of Plato's philosophical recep-

tion prove that he should rather be treated as a complex philosophical, artistic, literary, philological and historical problem which the authors examined in our research had to confront. Philosophers who were chronologically and intellectually closer to these authors did not present such a problem. It was not necessary to determine the basic biographical facts nor the authenticity of their writings, and there was no need to separate the layers of myth or poetry from their philosophy. They attempted to resolve the problems that beset their contemporary readers and to express the common issues of their times. In the case of Plato's reception, the problems were attractive to his readers, since they were of a universal nature. That is why the Plato presented in this reception study is not just a thinker under reception; he is rather one of the many philosophical problems which have been tackled by modern historians of philosophy and philosophers, though they have sometimes had to reach far beyond philosophy to solve this problem.

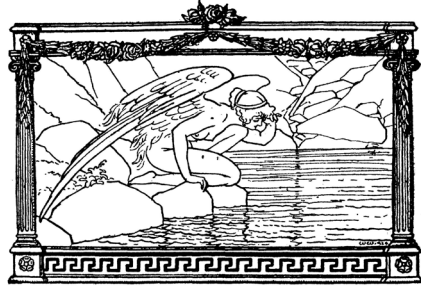
6 W. Stróżewski, *Arcydialog Platona*, „Znak” R. XV (1963), nr 4, p. 373.

Even when the issue of Plato's reception is reduced to philosophical problems only, it is still unique. When a less unique philosopher goes under reception, what is processed and subjected to criticism is the more or less defined image of that philosopher, a complex of distinct ideas, etc. When Plato goes under reception, all attempts to establish his image are included in the reception process. The reception of almost any philosopher can be considered as a survey of the history of a certain philosophical idea or of a certain philosophical concept. In the case of Plato, it is a reconstruction of the answers to the questions about Plato and Platonism themselves. For the reception of Plato is not a simple reception of a complex of well-defined ideas, but rather the reception of a problem, which consists of Platonism itself and of its author. To cut a long story short, when 19th century authors transformed the philosophy of Hegel, they knew what Hegelianism was, they knew what Hegel wrote; but when they attempted to study and transform Plato, they first had to determine what Platonism was.

Polish historians of philosophy have attempted to delineate a theoretical framework for reception studies in the history of philosophy. One of them was Jan Garewicz (1921–2002), who distinguished two layers in reception studies. The first involves merely factual reconstruction. The second layer concerns the diffusion of philosophical ideas that are capable of „changing a global structure, which could be called philosophical knowledge. This may mean only individual consciousness, when the reception of ideas of the philosopher by another philosopher is observed; or collective consciousness, and then the transformation can be characterized as a change in a particular philosophical tradition in general”⁷. It is relatively easy to collect the factual information which is the basis for determining the impact of Plato on Polish philosophy. It is difficult, however, to point to a certain current of Polish thought, or a philosophical tradition, and decide whether it might be in some part a result of the direct impact of Plato, or simply

7 J. Garewicz, *Kilka uwag o badaniu recepcji filozofii*, in: *Wybrane zagadnienia z historii filozofii polskiej na tle filozoficznej umysłowości europejskiej*, ed. Legowicz J., Wrocław-Warszawa 1979, pp. 104–105.

be a form of Platonism. Nevertheless, it is clear that the image of Plato held by the general philosophical audience has evolved, and this change can be attributed to the activity of Plato researchers. Undoubtedly, his dialogues influenced the philosophical views of numerous individual researchers as well. The impact of Plato is mutual, since in the process of reception „the object under reception is transformed, even if the recipient considers himself to be a follower of the ideas and views acquired”⁸.



Phaedo

For obvious reasons, any analysis of the reception of Plato must be essentially diachronic, although its synchronous aspect comes to the fore when contemporary interpretations or contemporary images of Plato go under reception. Among reception levels, Garewicz distinguished the following: „direct references, the level of the conceptual apparatus; the level of the subjects undertaken and their expression; the level of the main ideas. [...] it is not argued, however, that the study of philosophical reception must be conducted on all levels”⁹. When starting a study on the reception of Plato, the first of these levels must be explored, namely the direct references. Without direct references, attempts to examine the main ideas or concepts that have their origins in the dialogues, including the area of philosophical reflection, would most likely turn into the overall history of European philosophy, or at least a large part of it. Warning against such a broad understanding of the reception phenomenon, Stanisław Borzym (1939–), another historian of philosophy, provided the following example: „There are some who question the original character of Bergsonism; they want to consider it, say, as a continuation of neo-Platonism, and neo-Platonism, in turn, as you know, is

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 105.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

a reception of Platonism. Moreover Husserl and Bergson were included among the Platonists, so both of them would simply be the followers of Plato. Considerations of this kind can really discourage one from dealing with the problem of reception”¹⁰. It is clear, then, that only when a firm framework limited to direct references has been established can the other reception levels be examined within it.

Plato in Polish Philosophy. Preliminary Results

First of all, it should be noted that neither a common Polish image of Plato nor a common Polish interpretation of Platonism exists. The efforts of most researchers were scattered and they failed to create any lasting Polish school of research on Plato. Nevertheless, there were outstanding individuals who studied Plato.

The relationship between the philosophical views of Plato scholars and their interpretations of Plato is often reciprocal, for the philosophical attitude of modern authors affects their interpretation of Plato, and their reading of Plato has an impact on various dimensions of their own philosophical thinking. In particular, the mutual impact is evident in the works of the authors who were classified into the third of the above-mentioned groups. Stefan Pawlicki (1839–1916) turned Plato into a symbol of an unspoiled ancient beauty. It was sufficient to supplement Platonism with Christian thought to render the perfect essence of European culture. Lutosławski considered Plato as the predecessor of his own neo-Messianic philosophy. Lisiecki *expressis verbis* declared himself to be a Platonist, Witwicki deeply identified himself with his own vision of Plato as at once a scientist and an artist, and Zbigniew Jordan (1911–1977), together with Benedykt Bornstein (1880–1948), recognized Plato’s interests in mathematics and logic and deemed him to be a distant predecessor of their own scientific research.

¹⁰ S. Borzym, *Bergson a przemiany światopoglądowe w Polsce*, Wrocław-Warszawa 1984, p. 10.

Turning back to the three various types and stages of the reception of Plato in Polish philosophy, one must remark that the reception of Plato sometimes ran parallel to the Western currents then penetrating Polish philosophy. This happened undoubtedly in the works on Plato by Adam Ignacy Zabellewicz (1784–1831). His works can be considered as manifestations of the Polish reception of Kantianism in the field of Platonic studies¹¹. The same applies to F. A. Kozłowski's introduction to his translations of three dialogues, which bears the mark of Hegelianism¹². These studies, produced in the first half of the nineteenth century, are secondary and dependent on German philosophy. The merit of these authors lies therefore in transferring the subject of Plato's philosophy onto Polish soil. However, when the interest of readers in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel declined, and the anti-Hegelian trends in the second half of the nineteenth century arose, Zabellewicz and Kozłowski's studies on Plato no longer attracted attention. Nevertheless, a closer examination of Zabellewicz's works calls for a re-assessment of his reputation as an eclectic Kantian philosopher. In fact, he outlined an ambitious, but unfulfilled, plan for studies in the history of philosophy, a plan which is usually neglected.

Władysław Tatarkiewicz (1886–1980), though chronologically distant from Zabellewicz and Kozłowski, owed his interest in Plato to his influential teachers from Marburg, Hermann Cohen (1842–1918)



Timaeus

¹¹ A. I. Zabellewicz, *O zasługach Platona w filozofii*, w: *Posiedzenie publiczne Królewsko-Warszawskiego Uniwersytetu na uczczenie pamiętki uczonych mężów a mianowicie Polaków przy ukończeniu kursu rocznego nauk odbyte dnia 31 lipca 1821 roku*, Warszawa 1821, pp. 51–69.

¹² F. A. Kozłowski, *Wstęp. O dziełach i filozofii Platona*, in: *Platon, Dzieła. 1. Apologia czyli Obrona Sokratesa, 2. Kriton, 3. Phedon czyli O nieśmiertelności duszy*, transl. F. A. Kozłowski, Warszawa 1845, pp. 4–175.

and Paul Natorp (1854–1924), and their interpretation of Platonism. Their neo-Kantian interpretation of Plato was for Tatarkiewicz the first and essential reference to Platonic studies, which he enthusiastically reported to Polish readers¹³. When, 20 years after his Ph.D. in Marburg, Tatarkiewicz started to prepare his *History of Philosophy*, he abandoned the one-sidedness of the Marburg interpretation of Plato. The requirements of the genre of the academic handbook, *History of Philosophy*, resulted in a more schematic treatment of Plato in volume I of Tatarkiewicz's book¹⁴. At the same time, it should be emphasized that Tatarkiewicz's research on Plato, on ancient thought and on the history of philosophy in general was greatly influenced by his years spent in Marburg, under the supervision of Cohen and Natorp. Sometimes their influence is unfairly marginalized by adherents of the view that Tatarkiewicz's philosophical scope and method was formed primarily within the Lvov-Warsaw school.

Let us turn now to the second type of reception and to the scholars in this category. The second half of the nineteenth century moved the reception of Plato into another dimension, unrelated to specific philosophical currents dominant in Europe. Scholars of this type confronted Plato with their own philosophical views and, while reading Plato's dialogues, they evaluated his philosophy from their own philosophical standpoint. They recognized the obvious fact that Plato was a philosopher who could not be overlooked. The significance of Plato, the strength of his influence and the crucial, ethical and political questions he considered made him a philosopher who must be referred to. Plato was, then, recognized as a problematic philosophical ancestor, and due to the broad scope of his philosophical output, his works started to come under a widespread and diverse reception process, from criticism to enthusiasm. The main material referred to was related to ethical and political issues.

¹³ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Spór o Platona*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny” R. XIV (1911), no. 3, pp. 346–358; reprinted also in: *Idem, Szkoła marburska i jej idealizm*, ed. P. Parszutowicz, Kęty 2010, pp. 46–58.

¹⁴ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historja filozofii*, vol. I, Lwów 1931 (multiple later editions).

A constant reception current in Polish philosophical disputes was formed by works on Plato created by Catholic thinkers, who initially presented various approaches to Platonism, sometimes radically diverse. It took some time for them to develop a widely accepted framework for thinking about ancient, pagan philosophy, with particular emphasis on Plato. After the initial period, as soon as Catholic authors noticed the possible accordance of Plato's philosophy with Christianity, they expressed a more balanced attitude to Plato. The most important issue for them then became the relation of Platonism to Christian thought. Although it proved to be difficult to reach a unanimous evaluation of Plato, a number of issues were judged positively, such as the concept of innate knowledge or the belief in ethics as the purpose of philosophy in general. Plato's idea of pre-existence and his exclusion of the phenomenal world outside the area of philosophical knowledge was not assessed positively. While some Platonic concepts underwent criticism, it was noted that many of his ideas were sophisticated and close to Christianity in spirit, though they had been formed in the pre-Christian era. In this way Christian thinkers justified their references to the pagan author.

Plato as a political thinker and a remote predecessor of socialism inspired the works of Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935)¹⁵, but at the same time Plato was criticized as a revolutionary ideologist from the conservative position of Wojciech Dzierżyński (1848–1909)¹⁶. A little later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Plato's political project met with the enthusiastic reception of Eugeniusz Jarra (1881–1973), who assessed *Politeia* from the viewpoint of the needs of a future independent Poland. The answer to questions about the shape of the future Polish state was sought for in Plato, who appeared to Jarra as a precursor of modern democracy, founded on „sophocracy”, in which one's place in the social hierarchy depended solely on their merits¹⁷.

15 B. Limanowski, *Prawa Platona*, in: *Sobótka. Księga zbiorowa na uczczenie pięćdziesięcioletniego jubileuszu Seweryna Goszczyńskiego*, Lwów 1875, pp. 491–500; *idem*, *Studjum socjologiczne. Plato i jego Rzeczpospolita*, in: *Na dziś*, vol. III, Kraków 1872, pp. 212–227.

16 W. Dzierżyński, *Sokrates i Platon. Odczyt IV*, „Niwa” 1881 R. X, no. 163, pp. 477–488; *idem*, *Historia filozofii*, vol. I: *Filozofia starożytna*, Brody-Lwów 1914.

17 E. Jarra, *Idea Państwa u Platona i jej dzieje*, Warszawa 1918.

The next stage and type of reception of Platonism in Polish philosophy, and the most significant type, begins at the turn of the 20th century; here, mere reception and evaluation turn into transformation. Scholars of that time were familiar with western studies on Plato, and sometimes they even influenced these studies. They assessed Plato's dialogues, but what distinguishes these scholars from their predecessors is the fact that the dialogues constitute the source and the material for their own philosophizing. While in the earlier stages of reception Plato did not essentially affect the philosophical reflections of the authors under consideration, the third stage is distinct from the preceding ones because the researchers integrated the Platonic material into their own reflections. It may be impossible to understand the origins of their thoughts, their intellectual biographies, without taking into account their meeting with Plato, which sometimes extended over half a century. It can be concluded that, starting with the late 19th century, Plato began to take roots in the fabric of Polish philosophy and the recognized philosophers incorporated substantial and multidimensional elements of Plato's dialogues into their own works. Let us turn now to the particular thinkers who provide evidence of the above deliberations.

In the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1871) Christian philosophers found grounds and arguments for taking up studies on ancient philosophy: since Thomism cannot be understood or provided with its historical explanation without Aristotle, it is necessary therefore to research Aristotelianism for a proper insight into the Aquinas system. Aristotle himself, in turn, could be presented correctly only in the context of Plato's philosophy. In this way, studies on Plato were justified for Catholic philosophers. The most important author of this current was Pawlicki. Initially, his works devoted to Plato concerned only biographical and historical issues. Some decades later, in his mature, though unfinished, synthetic study on the history of Greek philosophy, Plato occupied the most important place. Having devoted his time and energy to Plato, Pawlicki did not manage to complete his book, and even the part on Plato was left unfinished¹⁸ but can be retrieved from

18 S. Pawlicki, *Historia filozofii greckiej*, vol. II, Kraków 1903–1917.

Pawlicki's lecture scripts¹⁹. The impressive development of the philosophy of Plato as presented by Pawlicki bears testimony to his erudition and knowledge of the subject, but many of Pawlicki's conclusions, especially those formulated directly as a critique of Lutosławski's works, were subsequently refuted, such as his criticism of stylometry or adherence to the chronological priority of the *Phaedros*. While interpreting Plato, Pawlicki emphasized, above all, those of Plato's ideas which brought him close to Christian thought. These included the polemic against relativism, recognition of the purposefulness of the world, the existence of its wise and good creator, the emphasis on the primacy of the spiritual realm in human nature and the attempts to improve human beings by means of social and political change. Pawlicki did not agree to consider Plato as a socialist; moreover, he criticized, but also justified Plato for a number of issues of dubious moral value which were found in the dialogues and which were difficult for Pawlicki's contemporaries to accept. Pawlicki's work is the most comprehensive – yet the most favourable – presentation of Plato's philosophy to originate in the Polish neo-Scholastic movement. Pawlicki's enormous enthusiasm for Plato is clear, so it is not surprising that a decade after his death, a study was published, in which its author, Wiktor Potempa (1887–1942), synthetically revised the Christian approach to Plato²⁰, expressing a warning for any future Christian readers, discouraging them from following Pawlicki's enthusiasm for Plato since Plato's spiritual proximity to Christian thought was only apparent and misleading.

A separate and unique position in the history of Polish reception of Plato is occupied by Lutosławski. Having begun his research on Plato from rudimentary historical works on the history of manuscripts, editions and studies on Plato's dialogues²¹, Lutosławski took up the problem of the chronology of the dialogues. Whereas other Polish Plato scholars, such as Pawlicki, only incidentally announced their

¹⁹ *Idem, Platonica*, ed. T. Mróz, Kraków 2013.

²⁰ W. Potempa, *Przyczyny wziętości Platona u myślicieli chrześcijańskich*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 12/1925, pp. 56–72.

²¹ W. Lutosławski, *O logice Platona*, vol. I: *O tradycji tekstu Platona*, Kraków 1891.

results in Western languages, mostly in German, Lutosławski published his papers in Polish, as well as – or even primarily – in English and German, and also French. When he announced his results to the international public, he proposed both a complex method of linguistic statistics and the solution to the problem of the chronology of the dialogues based on this method²². The legitimacy of the method, its assumptions and results, were internationally discussed and continue to be discussed to this day. „Stylometry” as he called his method, was rejected by some, others accused its author of plagiarism, while still others modified the method, and in the modified form they used it to refute Lutosławski’s chronological conclusions. Most scholars, however, accepted its most general results, thus indirectly also confirming the efforts of many of Lutosławski’s predecessors, from whose works he had benefited. A side-effect of Lutosławski’s work was that, due to his erudition, German scholars realized their own ignorance of the achievements of their predecessors. The chronology of the dialogues provided by Lutosławski was for his Western critics an autonomous and crucial issue, although for Lutosławski himself, it became only the foundation of his own philosophical thought which was founded on the Polish Romantic tradition. Plato’s spiritualism in the late dialogues, as interpreted by Lutosławski, was an argument for the ancient roots of Polish philosophy and, in particular, 19th century Polish Messianism as a spiritual outlook, thus confirming the universal nature of Messianism, as well as the historical continuity of philosophical tradition from Plato to Polish philosophy. Lutosławski undertook philological and historical studies to interpret Plato’s evolution from idealism to spiritualism. He provided an analogical, evolutionary interpretation of the development of Plato’s theory of ideas as the transition from transcendent entities in the mature dialogues to concepts in mind in late works of Plato. The only field of Plato’s reception in which Lutosławski did not participate was the translation of the dialogues. His work, as a whole, represented an attempt to introduce Polish historians of

22 W. Lutosławski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato’s Logic*, London-New York-Bombay 1897.

philosophy to international discussions on Plato, but unfortunately, in this respect he did not find creative followers in Poland. Nevertheless, he sought to transfer his passion for Plato to the next generation of researchers and to educate his successors. The outbreak of World War II appeared to Lutosławski to be a confirmation of his vision of Plato's philosophy as a distant precursor of modern spiritualism, and also of Messianism, and 20th century personalism, or more generally, Christianity. Plato, the philosopher, who had travelled the long road from communism and idealism to spiritualism, and at the same time had in fact laid the foundations for personalism and Christian thought – this was the image of Plato that appeared to Lutosławski to be a remedy for the problems of totalitarianism and communism with which Europe was at that time afflicted²³.

Let us move on to the next scholar who has been almost totally forgotten in Polish philosophical culture: Lisiecki. Polish audiences knew only his translation of *Politeia*²⁴, his studies on Plato's *Phaedo*²⁵ and on the concept of the pre-existence of souls²⁶. Lisiecki did not share the enthusiasm which some pre-war researchers had for Plato's political philosophy. He was disappointed by the economic conditions in the independent Poland after World War I, and Plato's political project did not seem to him to be achievable at all. Because of his complicated biography (he lost his priest's vocation and became an apostate), Lisiecki was relegated to the margins of academic life in interwar Catholic Poland, though his diligence and skills should have predestined him to take an academic position. He considered himself to be a Platonist, writing – following Cicero – that it is much better to be wrong in Plato's company than to be right together with others. He translated a dozen or more dialogues, which were regrettably never published.

²³ W. Lutosławski, *Plato's Change of Mind*, in: *Proceedings of The Xth International Congress of Philosophy*, vol. I, Amsterdam 1948, pp. 68–72.

²⁴ Platon, *Rzeczpospolita*, transl. S. Lisiecki, Kraków 1928.

²⁵ S. Lisiecki, *Układ oraz zagadnienia w Platona Fedonie*, Warszawa 1927.

²⁶ S. Lisiecki, *Nauka Platona o prabycie duszy*, Kraków 1927.

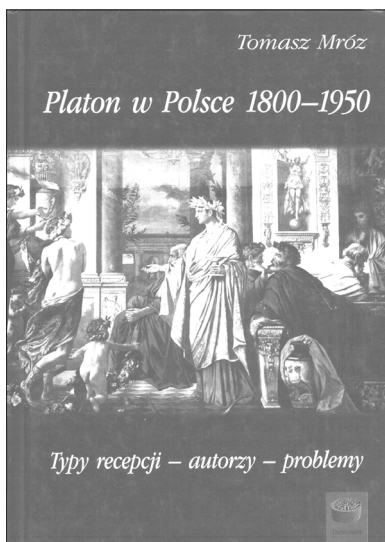
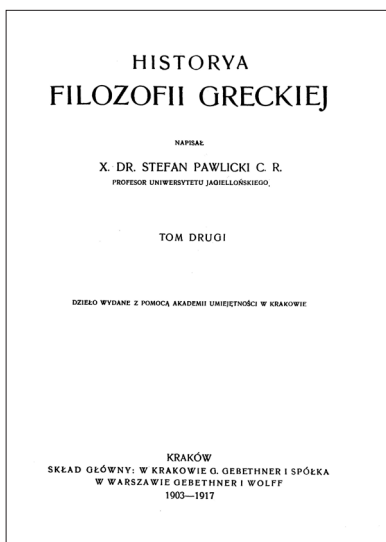
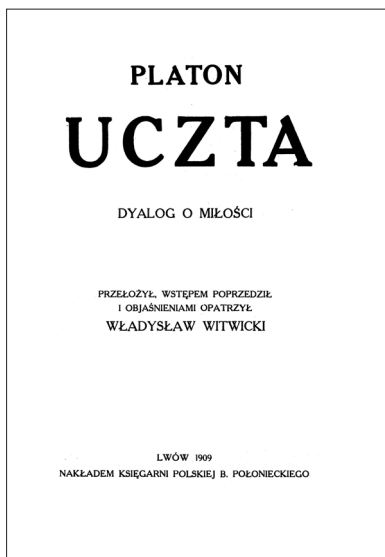
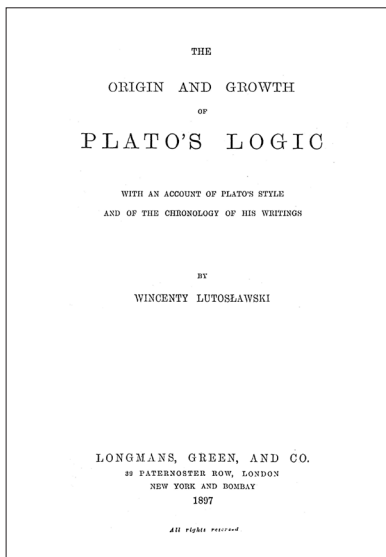
When philosopher, psychologist, translator and artist, Witwicki, first began his works on Plato, his interest resulted from literary and anti-religious premises. The position of this student of Twardowski in the reception of Plato in Poland is unique because of his versatility, being influential as a translator, commentator and promoter. Witwicki's method of explaining the texts of Plato's dialogues was based on psychological analysis. He searched for the sources of Plato's concepts in his biography, in his reconstructed psyche, in his type of vulnerability, and finally in his homosexuality. In the commentaries to the dialogues Witwicki deliberately claimed that Plato's works were still up-to-date, thus transforming them into a tool for criticizing the negative aspects of Christianity, of modern philosophy, or simply – human stupidity. He compared the irrationality of religion to the rationalism of philosophy, and took the side of the latter. He compared the empty verbalism of analytic philosophy and philosophy of language to the colorful philosophizing which touches the most essential problems of human life, and again, of course, he took the side of the latter. While criticizing Plato, Witwicki took advantage of the opportunity to express his own views on science, ethics and art and indeed the image of Plato produced by Witwicki is primarily the image of an artist and a thinker, a poet and a philosopher, who, while attempting to reconcile his own conflicting aspirations, produced excellent work in terms of art and philosophy²⁷. This image of Plato dovetailed with Witwicki's own psyche and in fact, while talking about Plato, Witwicki was in fact incidentally talking about himself. In his occupation with Plato, Witwicki

²⁷ Platon, *Uczta*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów 1909; Platon, *Fajdros*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów 1918; Platon, *Eutyfron, Obrona Sokratesa, Kriton*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów-Warszawa 1920; Platon, *Hippiasz mniejszy, Hippiasz większy, Ijon*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów-Warszawa 1921; Platon, *Gorgjasz*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów-Warszawa 1922; Platon, *Protagoras*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów-Warszawa 1923; Platon, *Fedon*, transl. W. Witwicki, Lwów-Warszawa 1925; Platon, *Menon*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1935; Platon, *Teajtet*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1936; Platon, *Charmides, Lyzys*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1937; Platon, *Laches*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1937; Platon, *Fileb*, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1938. All were and still are published in numerous editions, as well as parts of his other works made public posthumously.

was alone among Twardowski's students and among the representative of the entire Lvov-Warsaw school. They did not treat his Platonic works as belonging to the field of philosophy, but rather considered them as pieces of literary work. The image of Plato created by Witwicki cannot, therefore, be considered as a product of the Lvov-Warsaw school, but as the work of an isolated scholar whose creative individuality went far beyond the typical set of interests of the representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw school. World War II proved to be an event which affected Witwicki's reading of Plato. In contrast to Lutosławski, Witwicki did not regard Plato as a remedy, but rather blamed him for what had happened in 20th century Europe, for all the disasters of war and totalitarianism. According to Witwicki, Plato was to a great extent responsible for the appearance of oppressive state institutions. Luckily for Plato, Witwicki added that Plato could be partly justified, since his vision of man and of society was holistic, and the institutions of *Politeia* were in fact an inevitable result of this vision. Witwicki observed how the idea of Plato's social and political institutions were applied in post-war Poland, including censorship in literature and music, dictated national unity, attempts to control citizens' lives and children's education, but he believed that all this lacked Plato's universal and holistic vision, which meant that the focus was only on negative aspects which could not lead to the improvement of man²⁸. It is interesting to see that the extreme experience of war and the political conditions in post-war Poland resulted in two conflicting assessments of the philosophical and political heritage of Plato, produced by the two most eminent Polish experts on Plato, Lutosławski and Witwicki.

It was only at the end of the interwar period in Poland that there appeared a current of research on Plato which was not based on ideological premises and did not even touch upon Plato's philosophical outlook or ideology. Since this current was marginal, *ipso facto* the important role of the ideological factor in Polish philosophy is confirmed. Philosophical studies on Plato's mathematics were free from the influence

28 W. Witwicki, *Platon jako pedagog*, Warszawa 1947; *Platon, Państwo*, vols. I-II, transl. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1948.



Three important books forming the process of Plato reception
in Poland and one book on Plato reception in Poland

of ideology, and the most prominent representative of such studies was Jordan. He did not consider Plato to be a mathematician, but he confirmed Plato's thorough knowledge of the mathematics of his time. Jordan's interest in Plato is an effect of the works of his supervisor, Zygmunt Zawirski (1882–1948). It is to him that Jordan owed his methodological correctness, as well as the theoretical assumptions about the relationship between natural and formal sciences in their historical development. Jordan, as his doctoral student, applied this theoretical framework to the field of ancient thought. The result of this research consisted in ascribing to Plato the discovery of the axiomatic method²⁹. Plato's mathematical reflections, based on indirect testimonies, were then developed by Bornstein, who sought for the basis of his own original and abstract philosophical and metaphysical constructions in the reinterpretation of Plato's unwritten teachings³⁰.

Conclusions

As time passed, Polish studies on Plato became more and more autonomous, as did the discussions about Plato held in the Polish milieu. While the dispute concerning different Christian approaches to Plato was quickly replaced by a relatively homogeneous position in which arguments for and against the compliance of Plato with Christian thought were balanced, other contentious issues were not so easily settled. These include, above all, the argument about Plato between Pawlicki and Lutosławski, with its personal and ideological context. It was concerned with issues of the chronology of the dialogues, with the overall vision of Platonism and with some specific problems, including, for example, the alleged socialism of Plato. On the one hand, Plato was appropriated by Lutosławski for the Polish Messianic tradition, and was transformed into a distant precursor of that tradition;

²⁹ Z. Jordan, *O matematycznych podstawach systemu Platona*, Poznań 1937.

³⁰ B. Bornstein, *Początki logiki geometrycznej w filozofii Platona*, „Przegląd Klastyczny” vol. IV (1938), no. 8–9, pp. 529–545.

on the other – Pawlicki presented Plato as a moral thinker close to Christianity. Other disputes were of less importance, initiated by the reviews of the works of Tatarkiewicz, Bornstein, and a number of less-known authors. These disputes concerned the issues of chronology, the presence of the mystical element in the works of Plato, or the role of indirect sources for knowledge about Platonism. Sometimes the disputes on Plato were only exemplifications of broader issues, such as the dispute over the methodology of the history of philosophy between Pawlicki and Lutosławski; metaphilosophical issues were also disputed between Witwicki and other representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw school, especially concerning worldviews and the ideological function of philosophy and whether it should have such a function. Plato's works were also material for non-philosophical disputes, such as the method of translation of the ancient texts (between Bronikowski, Witwicki and others).

Plato in Polish reception appears to be a complex of unfulfilled projects. It seems that some kind of fate weighed heavily on Platonic studies in Poland. None of his interpreters, neither Bronikowski, Lisiecki, nor Witwicki, was able to translate all of his legacy, though all of them declared such an intention. Lisiecki, the greatest rival of Witwicki in the field of translation, was rejected by the Polish academic milieu on non-scientific grounds, despite his talent, hard work and the style of his translations, which would have attracted readers today; moreover, his lengthy monograph on Plato was destroyed by the Germans during the war. The study on Plato by Zabellewicz was intended only as a preparatory work, to provide a philosophical ideal to which other Polish philosophers could be compared. This was only half fulfilled. The doctoral thesis on Plato by Benedykt Woyczyński (1895–1927), written under the supervision of Lutosławski and defended in Vilnius, proved to be his swan song, though it was meant to be just a starting point for his subsequent Platonic studies. Pawlicki was unable to complete his synthetic work on Greek philosophy, managing only to get as far as the lengthy chapter on Plato, which he left unfinished. Although Plato was Pawlicki's greatest philosophical passion, it was also

because of the charm of Plato and the author's polemical zeal that his book on Greek philosophy was never completed. Jarra, having written his Ph.D. thesis on the social and political philosophy of Plato, promised to conduct further research on this subject, but after World War I he took a position at the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw, and thereafter he published on the history of philosophy of law, never to return to Plato again. Both Jordan and Bornstein, the philosophers who, just before World War II, drew attention to mathematical issues in the dialogues, had plans for further research, but they were unable to continue their studies after the war. Bornstein died in 1948 and Jordan remained in Great Britain as a political exile. He still dealt with philosophy, but for financial reasons he did not return to his Platonic studies and took up the problems of contemporary Polish philosophy and Marxism, for he was able to gain scholarships for this area of study.

As for the correctness or topicality of the studies considered in this research, it is necessary to point to just a few names that are still cited as a source of sustainable results. These include Lutosławski's stylometric research, which, despite the criticism it has received, still presents synthetically and viably the results of research conducted by generations of scholars who preceded him. Lutosławski's work has not only proved to be a reliable source for the reconstruction of the 19th century dispute over the chronology of the dialogues, but the results of his method are treated as a starting point for further research or as an argument for specific chronological solutions, although there is still an ongoing dispute about the validity and significance of the method itself. What is significant is that he is more frequently referred to by foreign authors than in Poland. Another relevant and constantly cited work, but only in Poland, is Jordan's dissertation. Polish contemporary authors of works on Plato's late philosophy, or those studying the history of philosophy of mathematics, still refer to Jordan's results and confirm their validity. In yet another sphere of influence, it is the works of Witwicki that have proved unbeatable. The widespread impact on Poles of his translations and commentaries is sometimes much stronger than admitted. Due to changes in the education system after

WW II, Plato ceased to speak to his readers in his original language. Instead, the reading public received the easily assimilated translations by Witwicki, decorated with drawings, enriched with comments that presented Plato as an up-to-date philosopher, though perhaps the popular image of Plato that was presented was a little too simplified. Regardless of how Witwicki's Plato is assessed, his impact should not be underestimated. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is quite unlikely that anyone in Poland (if anywhere) begins their meeting with Plato from reading *Apology* or *Euthyphro* in Greek, which was natural a century ago. Therefore even professional scholars, who conduct their research on ancient philosophy and study the original Greek text, still read and study the translations, bearing in mind the arguments of Socrates, as they were translated into Polish by Witwicki. On the one hand, the wide circulation of his translations has helped to popularize the dialogues themselves to an extent previously absent in Polish culture, which is obviously significant; on the other hand, however, Witwicki has become a kind of monopolist on Plato in Poland, as the author who introduces the audience to the world of Plato's dialogues. Only specialists in this regard reach further and deeper. A small number of new translations have appeared, among which there are also some of controversial quality and usefulness, so they do not change the situation significantly.

Finally, it is worth asking another question: is the above review of Polish works on Plato over a period of one and a half centuries helpful in understanding Plato better? The answer to this question will not be unambiguous. It is impossible to expect a reader at the beginning of the twenty-first century to accept any of the presented images of Plato as the only solution or final answer. At the same time, contemporary scholars may find in this review a reflection of current discussions on the approach to Plato's dialogues. Hopefully, the method of division and classification of various phenomena of Plato's reception in Polish philosophy will also prove to be useful in other fields of reception in the history of philosophy.

The research results delivered
to the audience as a handout³¹

- I. Passive acquisition of the image of Plato (the acquisition of a certain interpretation of Plato):
 1. Adam Ignacy Zabellewicz (1784–1831), Józef Kalasanty Szaniawski (1764–1843) and Polish Kantianism's attitude towards Plato.
 2. Felicjan Antoni Kozłowski (1805–1870) and Hegelianism.
 3. Władysław Tatarkiewicz (1886–1980) and the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism.
- II. Recognition of the problem. Plato as a subject of opinions and interpretations:
 1. Piotr Semenenko (1814–1886) and Plato as material to be improved.
 2. Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935) and Plato as an opponent of democracy and precursor of socialism.
 3. Wojciech Dziędużycki (1848–1910), a conservative politician, and Plato as a revolutionary.
 4. Eugeniusz Jarra (1881–1973), a philosopher of law, and Plato as a precursor of modern democracy.
- III. The implementation of Plato into Polish philosophy.
 1. Stefan Pawlicki (1839–1916) and „Christianized” Plato. Plato in the Polish neo-Scholastic movement.
 2. Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) and Plato as the discoverer of Messianic dogmas. „Polish” Plato in international discussions. Plato as a remedy for the political and social situation after WW II.
 3. Stanisław Lisiecki (1872–1960) and Plato as a philosophical authority for a philosophizing philologist.

³¹ The structure of the handout reflects the final results of the research on the reception of Plato in Poland and the contents of the above mentioned book: T. Mróz, *Platon w Polsce*, op. cit.

4. Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948) and his philosophical alliance with Plato as an artist and philosopher. Philosophical *symmachia* outside the Lvov-Warsaw School. Plato as co-responsible for WWII and the post-war situation.
5. The mathematical face of Plato. Plato's philosophy not as a world-view inspiration. Zbigniew Jordan (1911–1977) and the methods of Lvov-Warsaw school applied to Plato. Plato's unwritten doctrines as a starting point for the speculative metaphysics of Benedykt Bornstein (1880–1948).

III.

**Wincenty Lutosławski's
Vilnius Period (1919–1931)**

Introduction

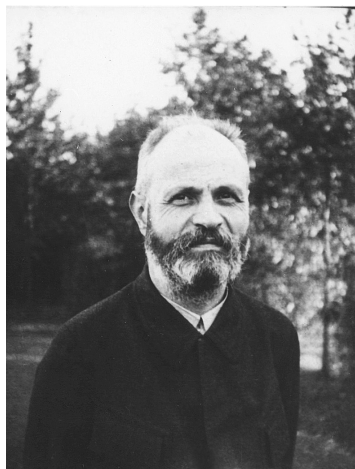
During his entire life, W. Lutosławski (1863–1954) did not have the good fortune to hold a long-term university post. This researcher of Plato's dialogues, philosopher, author of books in several languages, promoter of national Messianism and tireless lecturer was affiliated to a Polish University only three times in his long life. First, he taught as an unpaid assistant professor (Privatdozent) at the Jagiellonian University, and soon after his arrival in Kraków he became immersed in the Bohemian atmosphere that prevailed in this city at the turn of the 20th century. Again, after World War II, he returned for a short time to the university in Kraków as a lecturer in philosophy. In addition, he lectured regularly at the universities in Kazan, Russia, (1889–1893), and briefly in Lausanne and Geneva (1901–1902). If we take into account his occasional lectures and meetings, which attracted diverse audiences on account of his eccentric personality, then a larger number of universities and educational institutions in Europe and in the United States could be added to this list.

Unhindered by regular teaching duties for decades, Lutosławski was able to devote himself to very intensive research and writing. But it was undoubtedly at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius that he experienced the longest period of relatively peaceful academic employment. Before Lutosławski's arrival in Vilnius he was almost certain that Poland would not offer him any regular place of work and residence. He noted with bitter irony: "there is no post for me in Poland and I must live on as I did so far at the service of the great enterprise Providence and Co."¹ To his surprise, in August 1919, while staying in France, he received a letter in which the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment, and the minister Jan Łukasiewicz (1878–1956) himself, offered Lutosławski an appointment as an assistant professor to lecture in logic, psychology, ethics and metaphysics at the newly established Vilnius University. To all intents and purposes this appeared to

¹ *Wincenty Lutosławski. Z paryskich listów z 1919 r.*, ed. J. Dużyk, „Studia Historyczne” vol. XXXVII, 2/1994, p. 240.

be a perfect opportunity, but a day after receiving this offer, in a letter to his wife the philosopher wrote: “I wonder what to do with this Vilnius. Of course I will not haggle, although turning me into an assistant professor [=docent] is highly indecent. I prefer Vilnius to Warsaw and the lectures in Vilnius are in accordance with my line of work on the resumption of the Jagiellonian Union”². Vilnius and the newly established Stefan Batory University was a place that seemed to Lutosławski to be an outpost of Polish culture and European intellectual life. Since April 1919 the city had been under the authority of the Polish government, and attempts were being made to organize university life there.

After World War I intellectual life in Poland was beginning to revive, and hence the need to provide lectures in philosophy at the new universities. Lutosławski’s knowledge and experience could be of great value. The chairs of philosophy in Kraków, Lvov and Warsaw were, however, already occupied. At the University of



Wincenty Lutosławski.
Original photography kept in Archiwum
Nauki PAN-PAU (AN.KIII.155.746)

Warsaw lectures in philosophy were delivered by J. Łukasiewicz and T. Kotarbiński, both former students of K. Twardowski. Only two universities could therefore be taken into account for Lutosławski: the newly established institutions in Poznań and Vilnius. The philosopher seemed perfectly aware of this fact, but nonetheless he felt disappointed: “Only in the newly created Vilnius University could there be an appointment for someone who did not belong to these closed circles. That is why the unrewarding role of the professor in Vilnius fell to me”³. August Cieszkowski the younger (1861–1932), son of the famous

² *Ibidem*, p. 255.

³ W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy żywot*, Kraków 1994, p. 317.

philosopher of the same name, in answer to Lutosławski's wailful letter, advised him nonetheless to take the post, despite the poor qualifications of the educational authorities.

Arrival in Vilnius and First Disappointments

Full of concern, Lutosławski arrived in Vilnius in the autumn of 1919. Before being formally appointed, he was required to submit a written declaration of his obedience to the Rector's authority and his solidarity with the faculty members. Such precautions resulted from certain controversies that had taken place two decades earlier in Kraków, where the philosopher had delivered lectures attired in extraordinary folk costume and in an unusual environment: among the trees in the park. He was suspected of suffering from a mental illness. Incidents like this were still remembered and feared.

During the very first meeting of the Faculty of Humanities, before Lutosławski's first attendance, Władysław Horodyski (1885–1920) observed that Lutosławski's lecture and seminar proposals dovetailed with his own proposals. Indeed, they were both interested in Romanticism and Messianism. Horodyski focused specifically on the philosophy of Bronisław Trentowski (1808–1869), but they both studied the output of A. Cieszkowski and A. Mickiewicz. Unfortunately, Horodyski died shortly afterwards, and Lutosławski spoke on behalf of the Faculty at his funeral. Another problem stressed by the professors during the first Faculty meetings was the extreme shortage of book collections, a problem which had not been solved by the end of the interwar period.

From his first attendance at the Faculty meeting in November 1919, Lutosławski became a very active party during these assemblies. On one occasion a fierce debate erupted on the need to organize lectures of a very general and introductory nature, which would be both popular and easily accessible. Włodzimierz Szyłkarski (1884–1960) was a staunch opponent of this idea, but more Faculty members sup-

ported it. General lectures were intended as a fulfillment of the university's educational or cultural mission, especially in areas as culturally diverse as Vilnius was at that time considered. Lutosławski also voiced his opinion on the subject: „To put the main burden of studies on seminars and special classes is a German method. We must liberate ourselves from our dependance on German science”⁴. Finally, the supporters of the idea of open general lectures won. Lutosławski requested one hour per week for such talks. He was joined by W. Tatarkiewicz, another supporter of a broad perspective on philosophy within the context of culture. In the end, the Senate of the university formally accepted these open lectures in philosophy.

Initially, Lutosławski was employed only as a „docent” – associate professor. He openly expressed his dissatisfaction with this post, feeling that his new home would end up as another temporary location in his life. In a letter to his wife he wrote: “it seems very wrong to appoint me as a docent, because docents are usually subordinated to the professors of this subject”⁵. Soon, however, in May 1920, he was nominated to the professorship of Philosophy and, thus, Head of the 1st Department of Philosophy at the Stefan Batory University. Once, during his absence, his name was put forward as a candidate for the position of Dean of the Faculty. In the end, however, he received one vote only, most likely from the proposer – Marian Zdziechowski (1861–1938).

After being appointed to the position of professor, Lutosławski decided to move his family permanently to Vilnius and start a new life among his countrymen. In June 1920 Lutosławski went to France to take care of moving all his books and domestic appliances to Poland. This proved to be difficult due to the Russian-Polish war.

Despite his appointment to the Chair of Philosophy, Lutosławski continued to consider his post in Vilnius as a degradation. Not unreasonably, he was convinced of his significance as a historian of philosophy and as a philosopher, and yet he had not received his first appointment

4 Minutes of the 7th session of the Faculty of Arts (Dec. 13th, 1919), Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas (=LCVA) Ap. 5 IV B, b. 12/32.

5 *Wincenty Lutosławski. Z paryskich listów z 1919 r.*, op. cit., p. 255.

to a University Chair until the late age of 57. He attributed this to unfortunate circumstances, but his controversial behavior and attitudes must have played some role in this, and especially his messianic views, which were far from orthodox, though he declared himself to be a Catholic philosopher. His intransigence won him as many enemies as friends. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Polish Messianism was a current which could exist only beyond the official philosophical academic stage. Professional philosophers undoubtedly held his achievements in the history of philosophy in high esteem, but his sense of mission kept at bay even those people who had the greatest respect for him.

Lutosławski had believed that only in an independent Poland would there be an appropriate stage from which to deliver the truths on the special and unique historical role of the Polish nation. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Liberated from the yoke of the partitioners, people no longer needed an ideology to maintain unity, as had been true in times of political division and dependance. Having regained its state boundaries, the nation wanted to recover as quickly as possible from all residues of Romanticism. The possibility of being part of European politics acted as a discouragement from the broad historiosophical visions with which Poles had been fed by Romanticism. In short, Messianism had lost its important justification. Philosophy no longer had the role of solving vital, national issues, and so academic philosophy between the world wars set itself rather more minimal requirements. This is why Lutosławski did not find an appreciative audience among professional philosophers. He, however, looked for the causes of this failure elsewhere: „Poland is still mentally and spiritually dependent. There is still the influence of the German spirit at all universities. [...] If statistics of the books recommended by professors of philosophy to their students could be arranged, it would appear that nine-tenths of these works are misleading writings of German sophists, passing as philosophers. [...] Most of the professors of philosophy are the former students of Twardowski from Lvov, who is a typical German scholar, a disciple of the German philosopher Brentano”⁶.

6 W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy żywot, op. cit.*, p. 323.

Apart from Lutosławski, there were two other lecturers of philosophy in Vilnius: Marian Massonius (1862–1945) and W. Tatarkiewicz. The latter arrived in Vilnius with his newlywed wife several months after being awarded his post-doctoral degree (habilitation) in Lvov. The Tatarkiewiczzes stayed in Vilnius for only a year, but Lutosławski impressed them both, though they felt that he was “not really a good colleague”⁷. Tatarkiewicz called Lutosławski a famous and unusual figure, who was rather a *turbator chori*. In short, he was appreciated, though to most people he appeared to be unpredictable. Massonius, while continuing to teach the history of philosophy, preferred to take up the Chair of Pedagogy, in order not to have to deal with Lutosławski, who – surprisingly – sought to facilitate his older colleague’s functioning at the University of Vilnius and applied to the Faculty of Pedagogy to exempt Massonius from the obligation to complete his post-doctoral degree (habilitation) due to his well-known merits.

The newly created university struggled with many problems; some of the seminars were even held in the open air, and sometimes the professors’ homes constituted a better alternative. The professors also experienced more prosaic difficulties, namely food shortages, and University staff were provided with food parcels from various American organizations. The severe conditions had the effect of creating a bond between professors because of the need for mutual assistance, the necessity of sharing apartments and common leisure activities. For some time, especially in the early years of the university, Lutosławski participated in the social life of the faculty, though this was limited to meetings with meals and samovar, and trips outside the town.

On Sundays, the Professors’ Club held its meetings. The members were professors, along with their wives, and some younger academics. They commented on current events, and tried to alleviate their plight with conversation and jokes. Drinking tea, they read witty rhymes and jests, some of which touched upon problems still topical today. One example reads as follows: “Messages from the scientific world: The Association of Assistant Professors of the universities in Poland has filed

7 T. & W. Tatarkiewiczowie, *Wspomnienia*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 64–65.

a petition to the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment requesting that the wages of assistant professors be upgraded to the level of those of janitors and urban rolling stock labourers. Faced with such exorbitant demands, the Minister reserved the right to examine the case carefully and to respond within the next two years”⁸.

While working at the university of Vilnius, Lutosławski did not find his lectures rewarding, so he devoted much of his time to other activities. He published extensively in Polish magazines and newspapers, and wrote in English more than ever before. His view of Vilnius as a provincial, borderland town deprived of invigorating intellectual spirit, and his disappointment with intellectual life within the walls of the university resulted in his willing acceptance of proposals for lectures from various organizations. As teaching was his passion, he travelled all over Poland with series of popular lectures. The desire to establish a relationship with his audiences gave him the energy to travel by train around Poland, sleeping in trains during the night journeys between cities, despite being over sixty years old. This apparently affected the time and care devoted to his University lectures, for, according to the Dean’s report on student attendance at lectures during the academic year 1920/21, he occupied the tenth position out of the thirteen listed professors.

In the meantime, in January 1922, Lutosławski’s only daughter from his second marriage, Janina, was born. She was his pride and joy, and when his son, 9 years older than she was, had already left home, she turned out to be his only consolation. The birth of his daughter was nevertheless accompanied by less fortunate events, such as difficulties with obtaining a suitable apartment from the university, a litigation case against a dishonest chauffeur rented from the army, and complaints from the Catholic Association of Polish Women on issues touched upon in the philosopher’s lectures. Apart from these personal problems, like all the professors, he experienced annoying problems with the administrative staff at the university. University property and even professors’ personal possessions were stolen by janitors, while the seminar library was treated with a lack of care and respect.

8 LCVA, Ap. 1 I A, b. 63/11.

In the first half of 1922 Lutosławski had a heavy work load, with university classes and administrative work. He was appointed to the committee responsible for filling two chairs: History of Culture and the 3rd Chair in Philosophy. During this time, the philosopher also succeeded in gaining funds for the books which were indispensable for his philosophy seminar. The philosophy seminar received almost a quarter of all estimated funds in the budget for the years 1922-23, so it must be said that Lutosławski had been effective, given that there were 13 seminars at the Faculty of Humanities. At the same time, however, the University Senate refused to reimburse his trips abroad, including a trip to the Philosophy Congress in Manchester, even though his goal was to draw the attention of the international public to the existence of the new Polish university, thus, from a more political standpoint, implicitly confirming the Polish character of Vilnius. In 1923, however, Lutosławski was granted paid leave to prepare a book based on his lectures on metaphysics.

„Lutosławski’s Case”

The issue of finding an incumbent for the 3rd Philosophy Chair (called also the Chair of Psychology) turned out to be a hotbed of controversial discussion, and a long struggle ensued between Lutosławski and the Faculty. In March 1923 Lutosławski formally recommended Dr. Marian Borowski (1879–1938). After presenting the candidate’s *curriculum vitae* and discussing his works, Lutosławski praised Borowski as a capable and conscientious candidate who had sufficient intellectual preparation to teach psychology. Nor did Lutosławski fail to mention his organizational talents and efficiency, especially important in the newly-founded university. In short, he was the most appropriate candidate. Members of the Faculty did not undermine the above merits of Borowski, but they expressed some doubts concerning his moral integrity. Two literature historians, Stanisław Pigoń (1885–1968) and Kazimierz Kolbuszewski (1884–1943) quoted an article published in

“Wolna Myśl” (“Free Thought”) by Romuald Minkiewicz (1878–1944), who had a personal dispute with Borowski over an apartment. In the article Minkiewicz accused his adversary of committing bigamy, throwing orgies, fetching prostitutes, abusing alcohol, polluting the building and the toilets with vomit, and other subtleties of this kind.

After a short investigation Borowski proved to have been the injured party in this dispute, which had previously been settled in his favor, and he had been exonerated unanimously by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw during the *viva voce* examination for his postdoctoral thesis. However, the problems raised by his candidacy for the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Vilnius caused Borowski to change his mind and he withdrew his application. The reasons for this decision were explained in a short letter to the Faculty, in which he freely shared his opinions concerning the University of Vilnius: “I have never striven for the chair, nor do I intend to do so, bearing in mind that it is the chair which should take the first steps. If I were to leave Warsaw for the Chair, I would do so out of a pure love for academic work. In Warsaw I have, for 2 years, had a decent apartment, perfect relations at work, a large group of friends, academics, and in addition, my wife earns almost twice as much as I do. It would be difficult to have all of these things elsewhere”⁹. The disregard shown to the members of the Vilnius Faculty and the following heated disputes between them and Lutosławski, his following absence during the meetings of the Faculty, and the letters from both parties resulted in a large folder entitled “Lutosławski’s case” which is held in the files of the Stefan Batory University. He was accused of breaching the confidentiality of the Faculty, and insulting its members, as a result of which the Faculty attempted to suspend him. He responded with allegations that the meetings of the Faculty had formal deficiencies resulting from the incompetence and lack of experience of its members; that the Faculty’s misleading resolutions originated from the personal animosity of some of its members towards him. In his letter to the Senate of the University he stated clearly: “the majority

9 Letter of Mar. 20th, 1923, LCVA, Ap. I Bb, b. 88/71.

of the Faculty is not aware of the relevant tasks, traditions and customs of academic life, the rights and duties of professors, as the unlawful resolution regarding me has proven”¹⁰. The University had to appoint a special commission to resolve “Lutosławski’s case”, and quite surprisingly, it concluded that Lutosławski himself was the offended party, that he had done nothing to transgress his duties as a professor and that he was without fault. The entire case should, then, be considered as an expression of the negative emotions which had accumulated around his unusual and charismatic personality for years, rather than any kind of formal offence. His academic work was highly respected by the Faculty, but, on a personal level, its members could hardly imagine any cooperation with the philosopher. The disturbances connected with the attempt to appoint Borowski to the Chair of Philosophy were quite a typical example of the relations and reactions Lutosławski caused among his contemporaries.

The Appointment of T. Czeżowski

Among those who worked in the field of philosophy, and were friendly to Lutosławski, we should mention Leon Chwistek (1884–1944), who concluded one letter to Lutosławski with the following words: “I consider Professor Lutosławski as almost the only bright spot on the dark horizon of Polish philosophy”¹¹. This „dark horizon” of Polish philosophy was described by Chwistek in another letter: “in Poland intellectual mediocrity prevails, and all creative efforts are deliberately covered in silence, or answered with a few more or less trivial phrases, in order to pay much more attention to school-level compositions, never intended to occupy a place in the development of modern thought”¹². Thus, in his negative opinion of Polish philosophy, Lutosławski was not alone. According to this letter, it becomes

¹⁰ Letter of May 15th, 1923, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 28/9.

¹¹ Postcard of 1923, K-III-155, Archiwum Nauki PAN i PAU w Krakowie (=AN).

¹² Letter of Oct. 23rd, 1923 r., AN.

clear that when, ten years later, Chwistek published his book entitled *Issues of Intellectual Culture in Poland*, in which he referred to several interesting individuals among philosophers of the older generation, he must have considered Lutosławski to be among them¹³.

One of the younger philosophers to address his letters to Lutosławski was Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981), who was to take up the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Vilnius. Lutosławski, not being acquainted with this student of Twardowski, asked him about his interests, teaching experience, publications and general views. Most probably he wanted to consult him directly about his qualifications in order to decide whether to vote for this candidate for the Chair of Philosophy. Czeżowski replied to all the questions in good faith, including the question on his general view of the world: “My education in natural sciences and logic leads me to adopt, as a fundamental methodological postulate, the struggle for developing the general view of the world by progressive generalizations based on properly identified facts and complying with logical accuracy”¹⁴. Czeżowski named his philosophical views: critical realism. No wonder he did not gain Lutosławski’s sympathy, even more so because he admitted bluntly: “My preparation in the field of history of philosophy is weak”¹⁵.

Before appointing Czeżowski, the Vilnius Faculty consulted several philosophers from other academic centers in Poland. The key recommendations were posted by Twardowski, Kotarbiński and Łukasiewicz. The preserved documents provide evidence that a number of negative comments were expressed concerning Czeżowski. In the end, he was appointed, but not as the best candidate without any doubts, but simply because of the lack of available other and better doctors of philosophy. Twardowski spoke positively about his former secretary, but he also noted that he would have preferred to put forward the candidacy of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890–1963), but this was made impossible

¹³ L. Chwistek, *Zagadnienia kultury duchowej w Polsce*, in: *idem, Pisma filozoficzne i logiczne*, vol. I, ed. K. Pasenkiewicz, Warszawa 1961, p. 190.

¹⁴ Letter of May 24th, 1922, AN.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

by family links – Ajdukiewicz was his son-in-law. Łukasiewicz wrote the following: “his [=Czeżowski’s] scientific achievements are so far of little significance [...], he has not presented any great creative idea or work of lasting scientific value”¹⁶ – and that was because of his numerous duties in the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment. These deficiencies were counterbalanced by his pedagogical talent. Kotarbiński listed all the shortcomings of the candidate: lack of works on the history of philosophy and lack of a broader historical or sociological perspective. In general, however, he referred to Czeżowski positively, because of his outstanding qualities as a conscientious employee and a good and demanding lecturer. However, he added that Ajdukiewicz was the best candidate, because his works were „much more profound than the works of Dr C. and they are a testimony of his distinguished abilities”¹⁷. He also named another candidate with wider interests: “Lastly I will mention Dr. Leon Chwistek (around 40 years old), a scholar from Kraków, whose works [...], according to some specialists in logistics [=mathematical logic], have earned him the title of the best Polish expert on the system of Bertrand Russell, a master of contemporary formal logic”¹⁸. The following opinion was also received from Mściśław Wartenberg (1868–1938): “using the strict measure of qualification, in my opinion at this very moment there is no suitable candidate for the Chair of Philosophy; neither among associate professors, nor outside the teaching milieu of our universities”¹⁹. Finally, in November 1922 the committee (of which Lutosławski was a member) decided to recommend Czeżowski for the third Chair of Philosophy and to put forward to the Senate a proposal to appoint him for the post of an extraordinary professor. The Ministry where he still worked allowed him to leave his office at the end of August 1923. With the procedure of appointing Czeżowski completed, Lutosławski ceased to attend the meetings of the Faculty, because,

¹⁶ Letter of Jul. 19th, 1922, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 297/43.

¹⁷ Letter of Jul. 19th, 1922, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 297/39-40.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Letter of Jun. 14th, 1922, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 297/46.

after the unpleasant events from the previous semester, he had already been granted a sabbatical leave.

During 1924 Lutosławski was busy lecturing in numerous Polish cities, therefore he was not involved in the works of the Faculty. His absence was met with understandable gratitude and the Faculty formally supported his applications for subsequent leaves without examining his motives in great detail.

Lutosławski's years in Vilnius were passed in a kind of provincial stability, not counting the conflicts with his co-professors. Nevertheless, it was hardly what he had expected from the Chair of Philosophy at a Polish university. He missed the direct contact with the audience and still desired to be active, but in the provinces his options were rather limited. He had perfect conditions for writing during his stay there, and he took advantage of this, but the need to travel did not let him stay there long. Although he conducted courses in Vilnius, at the same time, he did not waste any opportunity to leave the city and break away from its uninspiring atmosphere. The philosopher's voyages did not remain unnoticed by the professors. Among the jokes read in their club the following can be found: "Paris. *Temps* informs: We learn from the most authoritative sources that the tourist section of the League of Nations has proposed the appointment to its members of several professors from the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius because of their well-known and proven love of travel and their strict specialization in this very difficult profession"²⁰.

Benedykt Woyczyński and a Hope for a Continuator in Platonic Studies

In spite of his general disappointment with the University of Vilnius, Lutosławski found there a Ph.D. student who shared his fascination with Plato. This was B. Woyczyński, who defended his doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Lutosławski in 1925. The subject of

²⁰ LCVA, Ap. 1 I A, b. 63/13.

the thesis was the development of Plato's views on the soul. Even before receiving his Ph.D., while still an assistant at the philosophical seminar, he participated in the Philosophers' Congress in Lvov in 1923 together with his supervisor. It was unusual for Ph.D. students to take part in such congresses, therefore it was necessary for Twardowski to express in writing his consent for Woyczyński's participation. High hopes were pinned on Woyczyński and both his supervisor and Czeżowski concurred in their positive opinion of him, even more so because he was also involved in the functioning of the philosophical seminar.

In summer 1925 Woyczyński's doctoral examination in philosophy was held, and in the fall he took the exam in classics – for both he received excellent grades. Similarly, his dissertation was highly assessed. While presenting it to the Faculty, the supervisor even applied for exempting Woyczyński from taking the oral examinations. The only shortcoming of the dissertation was its wordy style here and there. Czeżowski was more critical and said that the chapters in which the author reported Plato's texts far exceeded in length the paragraphs with the original conclusions of the author. It should be added that these conclusions fully confirmed Lutosławski's previous research. Czeżowski stated, nevertheless, that the candidate had mastered the skills of research and writing: "The author formulates issues precisely, he is cautious in making claims and he evaluates them critically and strives to substantiate them accurately"²¹. After the successful defense of his dissertation, Woyczyński was promoted to the position of senior assistant.

Two years later, unfortunately, Lutosławski's and Czeżowski's plans for Woyczyński's academic future were shattered by his sudden death from tuberculosis, preceded by long periods of exhaustion and severe migraines. For this reason, Woyczyński had spent several months in Italy before finishing his thesis. His letters written there prove his lack of conviction as to the value of his work, of the subject itself and his doubt about his own talents in philosophy. He intended even to waive the defense of the thesis. The tone of the letters provides evidence

21 Opinion of Jun. 3rd, 1925, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 133/144.

of a close personal relationship between the student and his supervisor, who was not only interested in Woyczyński's scientific progress, but also took an interest in his personal life, and especially in his marriage which was being planned during this time. Although Woyczyński did not fully share Lutosławski's passion for Polish Messianism, his deep faith and trust in the power of Christianity to transform the world certainly connected him with the professor. In a letter to Lutosławski he revealed his life motto: „to strive with all our power to stand up and be a true Christian, and love for our fellow humans and everything else will be a simple consequence of our love of God”²².

Among the university documents only one report is to be found on the activities of the philosophy seminar conducted by Lutosławski. Czeżowski was the head of both philosophy seminars, but this position was limited to taking care of organizational and formal issues; he also had his own seminarians. Lutosławski's report illustrates how displeased he was with the necessity of dealing with pointless bureaucratic forms. The philosopher simply did not know what such a report should include. After specifying the subject of the seminar meetings, namely a comparison of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas with that of A. Cieszkowski and Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński (1776–1853), Lutosławski added the following conclusion: „participants produced essays which I eventually corrected. [...] The course of the meetings consisted of questions posed by the Supervisor and answered by participants, as well as questions posed by the participants to which I replied”²³. Czeżowski, on the contrary, as a former Ministry civil servant, drew up very detailed and comprehensive reports on the activities of his seminar. Moreover, as the formal head of both seminars, he wrote one letter to the Rector's Office, which is included here as a kind of curiosity, because the problems mentioned are still topical for some universities today: „The windows of the seminar room overlook the so-called Sarbiewski courtyard, where lecture halls VI-IX are also located, as well as the University Library, law seminars and theology seminars.

22 Letter of Feb. 8th, 1925, AN.

23 Report of May 30th, 1925, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 40/266.



Sarbiewski courtyard. Photo by Tomasz Mróz, 2004

It is therefore considered desirable that peace and quiet should pervade in the courtyard, as this is essential for academic work. Unfortunately, in this courtyard at various times of the day the following can be heard: younger children crying, older children playing, parrots singing, people practicing violin playing or taking part in singing lessons, carpet beating, the rattle of carts entering the courtyard, various types of tapping, etc. The undersigned understands that absolute peace is unattainable. The undersigned asks, however, that regulations be issued which would ensure at least comparative silence, necessary for academic work”²⁴. Fortunately, the university staff received the appropriate instructions and it was possible for seminar meetings to take place without major disruptions.

The May *Coup d’État* and its Influence on Lutosławski

The events of May 1926 were not without their impact on Lutosławski’s publishing plans. Unfortunately for him, when the edition of his book entitled *The Secret of the General Welfare* was ready to be circulated, the publisher, afraid that the entire print run would be

²⁴ LCVA, Ap. 1 I A, b. 8o8/7.

confiscated, filed for bankruptcy. Eventually, after much persuasion, the author was allowed to take a few hundred copies of the book and to sell them during his open lectures in Poland. It was not until the bankruptcy of the creditors that the author had the possibility of buying the rest of the copies as waste paper, at an extremely favorable price. After some changes in the text and even the title, the remaining copies were re-circulated after a ten-year delay.

One of the reasons why the book did not appear on time and in its original form was an explicit opinion it contained about Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935), the initiator of the *coup d'état*. Lutosławski wrote: “If the president is good, there is no need to change him; if he is bad, he must be removed as soon as possible and not be allowed to destroy the country for several years, as did the first head of state, who had neither mental nor moral qualifications for such high office”²⁵. Nevertheless, Piłsudski had undoubtedly played a great role in the attainment of Poland’s independence and this was considered as sufficient merit for holding the position of state leader, “the first head of the state”. The then presidency of Stanisław Wojciechowski (1869–1953) was regarded by the philosopher as sufficiently capable of carrying out all the necessary reforms which he had postulated in the book. So much for the first version of the text.

The book, released after all the problems with the editor, appeared with the above-cited fragment changed in favour of Piłsudski. This should not be surprising in view of the means of governing the country after May 1926 and the methods of bringing the *sanatio* into effect. It is true that the works of Lutosławski had virtually no influence on politicians, but he had to be cautious considering the large number of people who were prejudiced against him. The excerpt of the book authorized for sale now reads as follows: “If the president is good, there is no need to change him, but if despite all precautions taken, a harmful man has been elected, he must not be left in office for a number of years, but should be removed as soon as possible, even by means of a *coup d'état*, if the constitution does not foresee such an eventuality or any legal way

25 W. Lutosławski, *Tajemnica powszechnego dobrobytu*, Szamotuły 1926, pp. 125–126.

of repairing such an error”²⁶. The pages inserted in the released edition of the book with the revised text were printed in a slightly smaller font, therefore readers could easily notice the manipulation.

Notwithstanding the political upheaval, Lutosławski continued his teaching duties in Vilnius, though they were interspersed with his frequent leaves, travels and series of open lectures held throughout Poland. For Vilnius students he taught the theory of knowledge and scientific research methods. This course was deemed necessary by the Rector, not only for philosophers but also for the entire academic community.

Further Leaves and Lectures

In 1926 Józef Stemler (1888–1966) arrived in Vilnius, and among the events organized by the Polish Educational Society (Polska Macierz Szkolna) he presented a three-day course on teaching methods. Lutosławski was impressed: “vivid lecturing and a wealth of successive moods struck me as a surprisingly effective way to keep the audience attention in suspense”²⁷. Lutosławski formed a closer relationship with Stemler, inviting him to his home. Eventually, thanks to Stemler’s mediation, the philosopher became associated with Polska Macierz Szkolna and decided to lecture under its banner. Another figure who contributed to the form of Lutosławski’s lectures was Juliusz Osterwa (1885–1947). They met in Vilnius during one of the shows presented by Osterwa’s theatre: *The Redoubt (Reduta)*. His acquaintance with Osterwa provided a kind of inspiration for the philosopher to reflect on the analogy between lecturing methods and the art of acting. Under the influence of Osterwa, Lutosławski changed his previous method of delivering lectures: “I have stopped counting on my spontaneous inspiration, as I did before, and I have started to plan the way of expressing various paragraphs of my speeches, in order to

26 W. Lutosławski, *Jak rośnie dobrobyt?*, Kraków 1936, pp. 125–126.

27 W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy żywot*, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

best focus the audience's attention"²⁸. The relationship between the actor and philosopher grew into friendship after the Lutosławski family moved to Kraków. The philosopher held lectures for the members of *The Redoubt*, who in turn taught him the basics of acting expression, which was to be of assistance in his popular lectures. Osterwa's true kindness and understanding accompanied Lutosławski for many years, and he maintained cordial relations with the philosopher's family. His letters addressed to them were written in a very personal tone: "I miss the atmosphere of your home, as a gourmet misses caviar. When sadness shoots at me with its mitrailleuse, I feel that the best shelter for me would be your home, where conversation with you is calming and far-reaching like a periscope"²⁹.

Lutosławski was not the only professor exercising his right to academic leave. It became common for professors to take leave of absence from their teaching at Vilnius University. This could have been justified if it had been motivated by the need to carry out scientific research, especially considering the limited facilities for library research in Vilnius. This specificity of the Vilnius Faculty became anecdotal, as is illustrated in a humorous speech at the forum of the Professors Club: "Cudno [≈Marvelous City] University has applied to the Ministry requesting the introduction of a new professorial rank. So far we know three ranks of professors: honorary, ordinary and extraordinary. Cudno University proposes the rank of professor on leave – a rank as yet unknown in the academic world. No further details [...]. The professor on leave is best suited to emerging universities and has contributed remarkably during the organization of Cudno University. The Senate takes the credit for inventing this new rank of professor"³⁰.

Joking aside, it was most probably due to his academic leaves that Lutosławski came to be regarded as highly active in the field of research, as the Dean's report for 1925/6 stated. Czeżowski, in turn, was praised

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 333.

²⁹ *Listy do Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, ed. J. Dużyk, „Życie Literackie” 1/1987, p. 5.

³⁰ LCVA, Ap. IA, b. 63/13.

for his works on university regulations. The Dean's report for the following academic year again listed Lutosławski as an active researcher.

After the death of his only assistant, Woyczyński, Lutosławski took an extended leave which was justified by the need to devote time to commercial lectures since he had received no grants for his academic research trips. Moreover, Lutosławski was once again to prepare a chapter on Polish philosophy in Ueberweg's handbook on the history of philosophy; he also took part in an educational congress in Italy. He summed up the effects of his efforts as follows: "My whole journey had mostly the character of missionary propaganda on national thought, which I have expressed verbally and in writing in German, English and French"³¹. After returning from his leave, Lutosławski lectured on metaphysics and held a seminar on this subject. The basic outline for this course had already been compiled by the philosopher, but he continued to improve on it until his latest years.

In 1927 the 2nd Polish Philosophy Congress took place in Warsaw. Lutosławski, though present, did not take the floor. Moreover, he had had some doubts about attending the meeting at all. B. Gawecki strongly urged him to do so: "For the first time representatives of various Slavic peoples are going to come to Warsaw. If you, dear Professor, are not there, they will get the general impression that mathematical logic [logistyka] and »praxeology« (Kotarb.[iński]) are flourishing in Poland, but they will learn nothing about original Polish metaphysics. We also owe this to our young people in the capital, many of whom are Jewish students, who are being systematically inculcated by the university with a contempt for the whole of philosophy (apart from materialism and positivism). Tatarkiewicz is here, apparently, an exception"³². It is worth noting that Gawecki kept watch over one of Lutosławski's initiatives in Warsaw – since 1925 he had been an informal supervisor of the Mickiewicz Club, which held meetings twice a month to read the works of the poet, as well as philosophical texts, such as Cieszkowski's *Our Father*. Since its establishment Gawecki had regularly

31 Report of Jan. 12th, 1928, LCVA, Ap. 5 I Bb, b. 88/120-121.

32 Postcard of Aug. 6th, 1927, AN.

sent Lutosławski information about the number of participants and current readings held in the Club. As for the Congress, Lutosławski had at first submitted a paper, which he later withdrew; at the last moment he changed his mind and decided to speak, but in the end he was not allowed to do so.

In his works Lutosławski encouraged readers to contact him directly by mail. The book *The World of Souls* (London 1924) fulfilled its role, and letters from the English-speaking world arrived. Upon completion of the lecture series on the national economy, Lutosławski decided to visit some of his readers in England. Among the people he met there was Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874–1936), whom the Polish philosopher visited several times in his home in Beaconsfield near London. In 1928 Arnold J. Toynbee (1889–1975) stayed with Lutosławski's family in their home in Vilnius, and he was very grateful for the warm hospitality he received there. He repaid it later when Lutosławski came to England.

Retirement

In June 1928 the extension of Lutosławski's contract for another term of office with Vilnius University was debated by the Faculty. Before the voting, a meeting was held to consult professors on this issue. In the end, while the contract extensions for the other older professors were accepted unanimously, Lutosławski got 7 votes in favor, 2 against and 1 abstention. To everyone's surprise, he submitted a letter directly to the Ministry asking for retirement. He wanted to move away from Vilnius. The Ministry referred the philosopher's request to the Faculty in Vilnius as the consultative body. But in March 1929 Lutosławski changed his mind, withdrew the letter and asked for an extension of his term of office. In his request, he quoted from his Faculty reference: "for his entire life Prof. Lutosławski [...] has worked diligently in the service of Poland, tirelessly conducting Polish propaganda in the strict sense of the word. The professor's academic merits, his numerous works, and especially his research on the writings of Plato, have

made his name famous in the scientific community worldwide and are of lasting value”³³. Taking the above opinion into consideration, he pointed out that he could not abandon his post in Vilnius, because there was no one to replace him. Moreover, considering the Faculty plans to appoint a new Chair of Philosophy, this would mean, in the case of Lutosławski’s retirement, that two chairs would be vacant. He wrote in another letter: “at present, it is unlikely that there would be other suitable candidates. [...] I am at the moment the only Professor of Philosophy representing the Polish worldview, and at the same time I contribute significantly to international philosophical studies by publishing a number of works in foreign languages and justifying the universal significance of Polish thought”³⁴. This does not sound too modest, but Lutosławski’s high self-esteem was substantiated. However, the reason for his change of mind and the sudden decision to stay longer in Vilnius was that the Ministry had informed him that he required one more year of service to qualify for the full retirement pension...

The Faculty acted according to standard procedures: a commission was appointed in order to decide whether Lutosławski should remain in his post until he was 70 years old, that is for another four years. The philosopher was almost certain of a positive outcome, and he announced his lecture courses for the next academic year. These were to be: metaphysics, history of Greek philosophy, theory of education for teachers and aesthetics; during his seminar classes he wanted to address the issues of education and provide tutorials in logic. The first subject clearly overlapped with the seminar of Massonius, and the second – with that of Czeżowski.

The Ministry responded positively to the philosopher’s request, but the Faculty decided to demonstrate its autonomy and delayed the decision, which was to be taken independently of Lutosławski’s correspondence with the Ministry. During one of the Faculty meetings, in Lutosławski’s absence, a vote was taken on the contracts of three

33 Lutosławski’s formal letter to the Faculty of Apr. 26th, 1929, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 102/42.

34 Letter of Apr. 28th, 1929, LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 102/40–41.

professors, namely, Feliks Koneczny (1862–1949), Massonius, and Lutosławski. It was decided unanimously that the first two should remain. As to the third of them, the protocol provides evidence of the merciless verdict: “out of 10 voters in general, there were 4 votes in favor, 5 votes against and 1 sheet was left blank. Prof. Massonius, who was present, for personal reasons abstained from taking part in voting”³⁵. In the end, he was the only one of the three lecturers to work until the age of 70, because in the case of Koneczny, the Faculty’s decision was not accepted by the Ministry.

Despite the decision of the Faculty, the Ministry sent a letter to the University, in which it was stated that there were no obstacles to Lutosławski’s remaining in the Chair of Philosophy. During the next meeting of the Faculty a request was submitted to reconsider the previous resolution concerning the philosopher. The request was signed by five professors, including Czeżowski and Zdziechowski. The voting results indicate, however, that one of them must have quickly changed his mind, because the outcome was 4 in favour of this request, to 5 against and 1 abstention. Therefore the initiative to reconsider the possibility of Lutosławski remaining in his post was rejected and he was deprived of the only Chair of Philosophy at a Polish University that he had held during his lifetime.

Lutosławski delivered his last official lectures at the University of Vilnius in 1929, but he was still associated with the city for about two more years. The manner in which his cooperation with the university had ended was, for him, additional evidence of the Faculty’s disrespect for him, but the truth may lie elsewhere. The university authorities had decided to gradually rejuvenate the teaching body. Moreover, Lutosławski had neglected his teaching duties due to his wide-ranging activities outside the university. He had, however, delivered a wide range of courses and lectures during his time at the University: philosophy of religion, the interpretation of Plato’s *Republic*, mysticism and Messianism as views of the world, the history of European philosophy,

³⁵ Minutes of the 9th session of the Faculty of Arts (Jun. 10th, 1929), LCVA, Ap. 5 IV B, b. 282/51.

ethics and politics (sociology and economics) or practical philosophy; he had also held a seminar devoted to practical philosophy and to *The Spirit King (Król-Duch)* by Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849). This generally took place in the seminar room, but when necessary, he had not been averse to receiving the seminar members in his home.

Upon completion of Lutosławski's university work, his family stayed in Vilnius because of his son, Tadeusz, who was studying for his high school diploma in 1931, and it was considered an unsuitable time for him to change his environment. It is also possible that the Lutosławskis had not yet made any plans concerning their future place of residence. Moreover, the ex-professor had to remain in Vilnius to negotiate the final decisions concerning his pension. Although his previous cooperation with the Faculty had not been very harmonious, he received from the university all the required letters of support to increase his benefits. The Faculty applied for his pension to be raised above the basic level, and the requests were posted to the appropriate Ministry and to the Tax Chamber. The Faculty also managed to obtain from the President's Office an exceptional decision to add the missing year which Lutosławski required to receive the full pension. All these unusual actions were justified by the philosopher's untiring and faithful service for the benefit of the nation, which stemmed from an internal calling rather than a professional obligation in his public post.

Lutosławski submitted a request for a family supplement to the pension. The officials in the Warsaw Tax Chamber provisionally agreed, subject to the submission of a copy of his wedding certificate to Wanda Lutosławska (1882–1952). In response to this request Lutosławski informed the Senate of the University that: "The certificate of the marriage concluded on June 29th, 1912 in Verdun in France between Wincenty Lutosławski and Wanda Peszyńska was destroyed during the war at the siege of Verdun in 1918, along with all the other civil and ecclesiastical files of this municipality"³⁶. The philosopher attached, however, ID cards, passports, birth and baptismal certificates of his children and documents issued by the university, all of which

36 Declaration of Dec. 30th, 1929, LCVA, Ap. I Bb, b. 88/184.

substantiated the legality of his marriage: “These documents, on the basis of which I have received family allowance for my wife and children for the ten years of my service at the Stefan Batory University, confirm the marriage. Bringing the wedding witnesses from France to certify the fact of marriage to the local office, or travelling to France in order to obtain such a certificate presents considerable difficulties and entails significant costs, therefore I ask the Tax Chamber to accept these documents as sufficient, and exempt me from further efforts to validate my marriage which was never questioned for the whole time of our stay in France, nor during the ten years of our mutual existence in Poland”³⁷. It appeared then that the act of marriage did not exist and could by no means be retrieved. The Senate of the university, however, supported its former professor and certified the married life of the couple for their entire stay in Vilnius, reinforcing their verbal support with ten attachments of various kinds. Certainly it can be assumed that even if the document legalizing the marriage had never existed, then from June 1912 the philosopher had presented Wanda (*née* Peszyńska) as Lutosławska.

Departure from Vilnius

To compensate for the lack of intellectual stimulus in Vilnius and from his departure from university lectures, Lutosławski threw himself into his trips and his correspondence on philosophical topics with thinkers and intellectuals from abroad. There is a postcard dated approx. 1929–1930, of which Lutosławski had many copies printed in English, and which he sent out to recipients on almost every continent. Here is the text of the postcard: „Whenever I like and esteem an author, a question occurs to me, which refers to a problem to which I have given forty years of my life. Have you ever in your life met persons fully convinced of having lived before? Are you not aware yourself that you must have existed before? I have myself this certainty, which

³⁷ *Ibidem*, LCVA, Ap. I Bb, b. 88/185.

I believe to have fully justified in my recent book, *Preexistence and Reincarnation*, published by Allen and Unwin in 1928. In it I have made the attempt to prove by new and convincingly decisive arguments that old truth, so well known in India, Greece and Celtic Gaul, now very much acknowledged chiefly in Poland and France, but also by such writers as Walt Whitman, Tennyson, Longfellow, Browning, Kipling, Edwin Arnold, Carpenter, Rider Haggard, Fielding Hall, Clifford Bax, Algernon Blackwood, Arnold Bennett, Lafcadio Hearn, namely that each of us has lived in human shape many times and that we reap now what we have sown ages ago. Did you ever come across another book on that subject? Do you know other authors betraying belief in reincarnation? I do not count so called Theosophists who blindly believe what they are told. What I seek are genuine spontaneous testimonies, independent of any literary suggestion. Do you know such? I am preparing a new edition of my book, in which I should like to include more references”³⁸. The purpose of this correspondence was to establish contacts and gather material for books in preparation. Indeed, the goal was achieved, for the correspondence grew, although its quantity did not always translate into quality.

In June of 1931 Wincenty, along with his son Tadeusz, went to Gdynia, where the latter boarded a ship bound for England. Thanks to his father’s many acquaintances, a job had been arranged for him on very decent conditions. He had been accepted for a post in the London branch of the Polish Telegraphic Agency. Tadeusz had only recently graduated; he was barely 18, but spoke excellent English and optimistically looked forward to the future, unafraid of new challenges. His mother was not sure of the advisability of his departure. She was worried about her son’s ambitions on account of the difficulties they had experienced with his upbringing during his adolescence. Nevertheless, the exceptional conditions in which he grew up had turned him into a valuable man. During his stay in England, on several occasions he stayed in the house A. Toynbee, whom he had met in Vilnius.

38 Postcard in the author’s collection.

Having packed his things and left the Vilnius apartment, Lutosławski managed to find a place on Wawel Hill in Cracow where he could safely store the family's furniture and books. The Ministry generously paid for the removal, although the Lutosławskis had not complied with the requirement of moving out within the statutory period of one year. Meanwhile, they started to look for a comfortable place to live in Cieszyn, Silesia. In the meantime, in order not to waste the summer of 1931, the temporarily homeless professor of philosophy decided to spend time in France, in Brittany. Only there could he finally devote more time, and actually all of his time, to his youngest daughter Janina. He recalled: "During these three months she manifested more curiosity for the essence of reality than all my students in the twelve years spent in Vilnius"³⁹. They spent long days walking empty beaches, talking, reading books and discussing them. At last Lutosławski was able to experience a real vacation with his family.

In the following year, Lutosławski delivered occasional lectures in Kraków, in Warsaw, and in... Vilnius. He discussed the classification of different views of the world. These non-academic lectures brought much better results than his regular teaching with students. Even in Vilnius, where he had previously complained about the lack of response, he managed to gather a full room of listeners for three days of popular lectures.

Ending

Summing up the Vilnius period, Lutosławski spared no bitterness. It is sufficient to quote some excerpts from his autobiography: "Ten years of lecturing in Vilnius passed unnoticed, without effect. [...] No one from the numerous audiences raised a hand to get anything more than was given during the lectures. [...] The audience was constantly changing and for ten years of lectures, which were attended by a few

39 W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy żywot, op. cit.*, p. 344.

dozen listeners, there is no face which has stuck in my mind. My lectures were redundant as far as the youth of Vilnius was concerned, some peculiarity not falling within the scope of their normal mental needs. [...] For ten years I was not given to discover any golden nature [...]. These were rather of clay or lead. [...] My words fell down unnoticed from the lectern into the abyss⁴⁰.

It is worth reconsidering the philosopher's opinion. Apparently the appointment in Vilnius at least partially fulfilled Lutosławski's dream of teaching in a Polish university for Polish youth. Unfortunately for him, due to the new philosophical currents represented by Twardowski and his followers, young people were no longer infatuated with the subject of Polish Messianism. A small consolation came in this respect from Woyczyński, who shared his supervisor's fascination with Platonic philosophy. However, his untimely death thwarted many plans. It is possible that if this highly touted young historian of philosophy had taken up the position in Vilnius, a chance would have occurred to organize a wider range of scholars in ancient philosophy, and perhaps to turn Vilnius into a research center in the history of philosophy. This, however, did not happen. Another cause of Lutosławski's resentment were the tensions among the professors and their reluctance to accept many of his initiatives, even those which were well substantiated. Lutosławski was uncompromising, and often brought matters to a head, doubtless the result of his conviction that he was acting in good faith. As had happened many times in his life, however, he did not adjust his conduct to reality, believing that it was the reality that should adjust to his way of thinking. His ideas were very often not taken seriously. Because of his colorful and anecdotal character, his opponents often belittled his merits and the legitimate purposes which he sought to achieve. It was also inaccurate to state that the youth in Vilnius did not benefit from his lectures. Coming into contact with a top class erudite can never pass without a trace. In this respect, Czeżowski could not compete with Lutosławski. And finally, was he a useful employee for the university? Undoubtedly so, because during his research trips

40 *Ibidem*, pp. 324–325.

he acquainted the international community with Polish philosophy. Admittedly, he treated the subject selectively, but he also pointed to new prospects for the development of Polish science, which had only had its own autonomous universities, such as the Stefan Batory University, since World War I. Lutosławski undoubtedly needed these trips for the development of his academic research, though they may also have entailed the neglect of his duties as a lecturer. In summary, his assessment of the decade in Vilnius was far from accurate, but it has to be admitted that the Vilnius period was, at the same time, felt by him to be far below his expectations, partly as a result of the Faculty conflicts. Yet it was also unfair of him to omit from his assessment his experience with Woyczyński and his doctoral thesis, which was for Lutosławski a rare opportunity for scientific collaboration on the most important topic of his research: Plato.

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Knygoje pateikiamas išplėstinis paskaitų apie lenkų filosofijos istoriją variantas. Šis paskaitų ciklas buvo skaitytas Vilniaus universiteto Filosofijos fakultete 2013 ir 2015 m., autoriui atvykus pagal Erasmus+ dėstytojų mainų programą. Pirmojoje paskaitoje nagrinėjamas klausimas apie „nacionalinės filosofijos“ galimybę, apie skirtį tarp sąvokų „lenkiška filosofija“ ir „filosofija Lenkijoje“. Antrojoje paskaitoje analizuojama Platono recepcija lenkų filosofijoje XIX–XX a. Trečiojoje paskaitoje pristatoma profesoriaus W. Lutosławskio (1863–1954) veikla ir idėjos, vystytos Vilniuje 1919–1931 metais Stepono Batoro universitete.

This book presents an extended version of the Erasmus lectures delivered in the Faculty of Philosophy at Vilnius University in 2013 and 2015. The first paper presents the main points of the discussion between Polish philosophers and historians of philosophy on the question of the nature of Polish and any other national philosophy. The second lecture reviews the outcomes of long-term research on the reception of Plato in Polish philosophy in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. The final paper is almost purely historical and biographical. It focuses on Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) and the years 1919–1931 which he spent in Vilnius, as a professor of philosophy at the Stefan Batory University.

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TOMASZ MRÓZ

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