

EWA SZCZEGLACKA-PAWŁOWSKA

**“ANIOŁ OGNISTY—MÓJ ANIOŁ LEWY” (“THAT
ANGEL BURNING AT MY LEFT SIDE”):
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SŁOWACKI’S POEM
TURNED OUT TO BE LONGER?**

1. MYSTERIOUS EDITIONS OF THE POEM

The jubilee edition of Słowacki’s works edited by Tadeusz Pini (from 1909 till 1933) contains a different (from other editions, for example Kleiner’s,¹ which is usually the one referred to by scholars) version of the poem “Anioł ognisty—Mój anioł lewy” (“That Angel Burning at My Left Side”). The difference is in the last, third stanza, which in this edition has two more lines at the end (the stanza is a full sestina). The problem seems to be even more interesting when we see that the third stanza in this different version also appeared in the selection of Romantic poetry prepared by Zofia Szmydtowa.² The stanza in both editions appears as:

Ty sama jedna na szafir święty
Modlisz się głośno – a z twego włosa,
Jedna za drugą, jak dyjamenty,
Gwiazdy modlitwy lecą w niebiosy –
Łask twych najświętszych spłynęła rosa
I jestem, święta, przy tobie – święty³.

¹ See J. Słowacki, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. by J. Kleiner, Wrocław 1952-1975, vol. XII/I.

² See *Liryka romantyczna part 1: Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Norwid*, ed. by Z. Szmydtowa, Warszawa 1947, 117-118.

³ J. Słowacki, *Pisma*, ed. by T. Pini, Lwów 1909. The English translation of the poem contains only 4 lines of this stanza as it is the translation of the ‘orthodox’ standard

Where did this version of the poem come from? Pini gave the year 1848⁴ and added information that this edition of poems had not been based on autographs, but on prints. It may have happened that Szmydtowa, in her selection of poems, used Pini's edition (in her edition no sources of texts are mentioned). The manuscript of the poem exists in *Raptularz 1843-1847*. The last stanza there has four lines and it is this version which Kleiner published. Following bibliographical information (included in Kleiner's edition, v. XII/I), I tried to get to the first edition of the poem which was to be in *Warta* (1881, number 363). I was curious to find in which version the poem was published in this periodical and what was the source of this publication. It turned out that the poem "That Angel Burning at My Left Side" could not be found in any number of *Warta* from 1881 or from 'neighbouring' years. The poem was probably published for the first time in 1901 in Słowacki's memoirs, published by H. Biegeleisen. The poem was also published in the edition of *Pisma Juliusza Słowackiego (Works of Juliusz Słowacki)*, published with an introduction and a selection of Artur Górski (Kraków, 1908, it was the first edition of Słowacki's work based on *Raptularz*). It is only my hypothesis that the poem "That Angel Burning at My Left Side" was first published in 1901.

Hahn, in the bibliography (included in the twelfth volume of Kleiner's edition) wrote that in *Słowo Polskie* from 1908 (number 464, pp. 5-6) the poem "That Angel Burning at My Left Side" was

version. The translation of this poem has an English title "That Angel Burning at My Left Side", and appeared in: Jerzy Peterkiewicz and Burns Singers, *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry, 1450-1970*, the second edition with new poems translated in collaboration with John Stallworthy, Greenwood Press Publishing, Westport, Connecticut, 1979, 50. The first four lines were translated as follows: "Alone, You say your prayers. You go on speaking/Into the holy sapphire. And from your hair,/Like diamonds, a chain of stars is streaking/Into the heavens—and each star is a prayer." The final two verses, which are discussed in this paper, may be 'philologically' translated in the following way: "The dew of Your Holy grace has flown down/And I am here, the saint, close to you—the saint."

⁴ Słowacki scholars are not certain as to the time when the poem was written. Alina Kowalczykowa, for example, states that it was written in 1846.

published: "on the basis of a duplicate of Hipolit Błotnicki,⁵ different (longer) than the one published in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*." *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*. (1908, 2 półr, 679) published (pointing to the autograph) this poem without division into stanzas, with a slight change, which was different from the one reported by Hahn, who stated that in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* the incipit was different: "Płomienny anioł, anioł mój lewy".⁶ In *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (22 August 1938, no. 34, 679) the poem begins in the same way as in Kleiner's edition ("Anioł ognisty – mój anioł lewy..."); it is the tenth line which is different. What is interesting is that the autograph does not exclude such a form of the poem: "I dzwoni cicha dusza muzyczna", which in Kleiner's edition is almost identical "I dzwoni z cicha dusza muzyczna". In *Słowo Polskie* (which I could not find either in Poland, or in Lwów) a longer text may have been published, which, as Hahn claimed, came from Błotnicki's duplicate (It is possible that he met Słowacki in Paris in the 1840s). The key question, therefore, is: do we have two versions of this poem? The affirmative answer is (at this moment) purely hypothetical, but such an ending of this poem, if it was really written by Słowacki, would unequivocally point to a 'genetic'⁷ ideological basis (the transfiguration of the protagonist and his *theosis*) and the correctness of interpretation in 'genetic' spirit.

⁵ See M. Kukieł, *Błotnicki Hipolit*, [w:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 2, 140. Błotnicki was Słowacki's tutor in 1820-1821.

⁶ Translator's footnote: The word 'ognisty' was replaced by 'płomienny'. Both words are almost synonymous and could be translated as 'fiery'.

⁷ Translator's note: Polish scholars use an adjective 'genezyjski' to refer to Słowacki's mystical philosophy, which he presented most extensively in *Genezis z ducha*. English translation: *Genesis from the Spirit*. Trans. Kazimierz Chodkiewicz. London: West London Offset, 1966. Raymond Williams in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* explains that the adjective 'genetic', apart from the now dominant meaning (derived from 'genetics') was originally derived from the word 'genesis'. OUP, New York, 1983, 142. I am going to use it (in single quotation marks) whenever Słowacki's mystical 'genezyjska' philosophy appears.

2. A GHOSTLY EROTIC POEM FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

The poem “That Angel Burning at My Left Side” chronologically was written in the period called mystical and ‘genetic’. Researchers have treated it as such, for example: Andrzej Boleski⁸, Ireneusz Opacki⁹ and Czesław Zgorzelski, who also observed that the poem has elements of “poetics from earlier periods”¹⁰ as well as Alina Kowalczykowa.¹¹ Opacki¹² accurately called it “an erotic poem from beyond the grave”. This expression introduces the atmosphere of the poem, and points to the poetic relationship between the lyric ‘I’ and the unspecified addressee of amorous confession. This confession, however, is specific. We do not know exactly, who “he” is, if he is alive, and in his confession we have him presenting the vision of the grave as a “white goblet”, or if he is from ‘there’. The poem includes an image or a description of a (mystical?) experience/vision that someone, maybe the loved one, is keeping vigil at the grave (“his grave”?) to make “the spirit” (his spirit?) “sleep through”. Or maybe “he” expresses (addressing “her” directly) a strong longing to be together, in some unusual land, or even in “Siberian snow”, in the white grave (and not in other worlds or heavens) in close, eternal contact with someone he loves. Or maybe he “speaks” from beyond the grave, one would like to say: from the other side. No, it cannot be said in this way, because the boundary of the grave has not been transcendent, “he” is in it—as if trapped, and in this way, from this perspective, from this place he speaks with his beloved, he misses her, and someone (“she”) keeps the music silent so that his spirit “may sleep through”, she prays for him (we do not know if this is a prayer for the peace of his soul, a prayer for the dead, or is it union in prayer, agreement, the sign

⁸ See A. Boleski, *Juliusza Słowackiego liryka lat ostatnich. 1842-1848*, Łódź 1949.

⁹ I. Opacki, *Anioł ognisty – mój anioł lewy*. Interpretacja, in *Juliusza Słowackiego rym błyskawicowy. Analizy i interpretacje*, ed. by S. Makowski, Warszawa 1980, 120.

¹⁰ Cz. Zgorzelski, *Liryka w pełni romantyczna*. Studia i szkice o wierszach Słowackiego, Warszawa 1981, 224.

¹¹ See. A. Kowalczykowa, *Wstęp*, in J. Słowacki, *Krąg pism mistycznych*, Wrocław 1997, BN I, 245.

¹² See. I. Opacki, *Anioł ognisty*, op. cit., 120.

of presence and reciprocity of love). We do not know if the poem is about some people in their material shapes, or if their ontological status is different. There are many things we do not know. The reader is left with an impressionistic atmosphere, melancholic mood, an aura of mystery, a sense that some secret knowledge of the world beyond the grave is revealed. The first stanza contains a dream about the loved one, about the rebirth of old emotions, about the possibility of a return to the past, to well-known landscapes, to the past, which only now, for the first time turns out to be special and beautiful, woken up by a fiery angel. A reader is certain of nothing. Danuta Zamaćńska, in her analysis of Słowacki's late lyric poetry, presented the specific situation of a reader and of the closed, hermetic world of these poems, possessed by "radical subjectivity", which "does not obey any communicative convention, and even does not want to keep up appearances."¹³

Ireneusz Opacki rightly stressed that despite the elegiac mood this poem is clearly different from the Romantic tradition of grave poetry. He even claimed that it is "probably the merriest grave in Polish poetry! There is no darkness of mourning in it whatsoever. There is also no perception of this grave as these people perceive it, for whom it is always the end and must be connected with emotions radically not jolly. Because [...] this grave is perceived from the perspective of the spirit, for whom in the mystical system of Słowacki it is the moment of transformation, the moment of transition to another form. And that is how it is presented in this poem: as a border, a point of transformation into a form more perfect."¹⁴ Boleski expressed a similar opinion; he wrote that in this poem death was transformed into "a phenomenon deeply spiritual, free from any type of bodily reality which had existed before."¹⁵

It is difficult to agree with Opacki's bold statement that it is "the merriest grave in Polish poetry". The picture presented appears

¹³ D. Zamaćńska, *Słynne – nieznanne. Wiersze późne Mickiewicza, Słowackiego, Norwida*, Lublin 1985, 52.

¹⁴ I. Opacki, op. cit., 120.

¹⁵ A. Boleski, op. cit., 53.

to be very melancholic. White can be the colour of mourning, the atmosphere of sorrow, or even terror is strengthened by winds: hyenas howl out to the wind, reindeer grazing on the graves, being locked “in the coffin”, but mostly through some feeling of reminiscence of loss of someone or something which cannot be forgotten. If we treat this poem as an erotic poem, then this poem contains a type of lover’s confession, or more precisely, a lover’s longing to be together with the loved one, to be united in the grave. It is not the longing to be together in blissful eternity so typical of erotic poems. The ‘genetic’ perspective, it should be added, of which researchers have written is not cheerful or unequivocally positive. Spiritual transformations are very painful while spirits are possessive and destructive.¹⁶ ‘Genetic’ protagonists undergo transformations, and they have some human stigma in them, which causes a painful split, because memory of the past still operates in them, and this memory becomes a force often stronger than death or metempsychosis.

The poem “That Angel Burning at My Left Side” does not really end with an unequivocal pointing to the perspective of ‘genetic’ transformations; some conflict is revealed, the drive towards spiritual transformation (higher necessity, order) is offset by the wish for return, memory, an atmosphere of preparation for something special (the music of the soul). Janusz Kleiner, Manfred Kridl and Ewa Łubieniewska¹⁷ interpreted this poem from the perspective of Słowacki’s earlier works, such as *Anhelli* (*Anhelli*). Kridl wrote that the “motives from *Anhelli* wake from the dead [...] [motives] connected with the old love [Ludmiła Śniadecka—E. Sz.], with the old reindeer and lilies”.¹⁸ Kleiner stressed the durability of *Anhelli* (the text is chronologically “pre-mystical”, but only chronologically). Kleiner

¹⁶ The possessive nature of spirits is discussed, among others, by Kwiryna Ziemia (*Głos w dyskusji*, in *Słowacki mistyczny*, ed. by M. Janion and M. Żmigrodzka, Warszawa 1981, 352).

¹⁷ See E. Łubieniewska, *Upiorny anioł*, Kraków 1998; Eadem, *Sen i przebudzenie Anhellego*, „Ruch Literacki” 2000, 6.

¹⁸ M. Kridl, *Juliusza Słowackiego liryki*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 1958, vol. VII, 56.

regarded *Anhelli* as a "melancholic mystical poem".¹⁹ It is true, because it is easy to find there reminiscences of reindeer and the unusual Siberian landscape; they will be returning to Słowacki's works many more times. Słowacki himself, even at the end of his life, stressed the importance of *Anhelli*.

This example, connecting earlier pictures (in this case from *Anhelli*) with the later poem, shows that the clear border 'breaking' Słowacki's writing into two parts: mystical and pre-mystical cannot be drawn. Thinking about Słowacki means thinking about pictures created by him which return at different stages of writing; are transformed and modified. Sometimes they explain one another. The analysis of pictures-motives in different works allows us to approach the meaning, which in many cases takes a multidimensional form. The works reciprocally shed light on one another, maybe they even complement one another.

3. A SHINING GRAVE

The central (visionary) picture of the poem is that of a grave ('Romantic cradle'²⁰). As the analysis of the autograph shows Słowacki changed the middle stanza many times, I am showing his corrections (in parenthesis):

Z grobowca mego < biało rosną lilije
Grób jako biała czara prześliczna <Jak z alabastru czystego
<greckiego> czary ->
Światło po nocy <z grobowca > spod wieka bije
< A w nocy światłość prześwieta bije>
Jako różany płomyk ofiary < A wkoło wichry – duchy – i mary>
I dzwoni <ja><dusza- wiecznie> cicha dusza muzyczna

¹⁹ J. Kleiner, *Juliusz Słowacki. Dzieje twórczości*, Warszawa – Lublin – Łódź – Poznań – Kraków 1927, vol. IV, part I, 7.

²⁰ This expression was coined by Ewa Łubieniewska, in Eadem, *Sen i przebudzenie Anhellego*, op. cit.

Ty każesz światłom onym zagasnąć
 Muzykom ustać <Dźwiękom ucichnąć> – duchowi zasnąć...²¹

This is the vision of one's own grave. It cannot be decided where it is located; probably not in Siberia, as in Siberia graves were made of snow, and this grave has a lid. It resembles "a white goblet", as if made of alabaster, and therefore it resembles a sarcophagus. The comparison with alabaster might point to a Siberian snow grave if it was not for the mysterious lid; the light is shining from underneath the goblet's lid, something extraordinary is happening inside, "the music of the soul"²² is proof of this. It was this picture which convinced many researchers of the 'genetic' character of the poem. A 'joyful' transformation is purportedly happening in the grave, which is like a kind of freeing of the spirit. There is a line in the autograph which was not crossed out (an earlier edition), which defines the light shining from under the lid: "as a rosy little flame of sacrifice". The grave, therefore, is something like a sacrificial goblet ("rosy", coming from roses, could suggest martyrdom). From this perspective it is not

²¹ J. Słowacki, *Raptularz 1843-1849*, ed. by M. Troszyński, Warszawa 1996. Translator's note: The middle stanza, in the translation by Petrkievich and Singers, runs like this: "The roots of lilies probe my corpse. It shines,/A white goblet wonderfully transformed,/A lantern corpse that fills the night with signs,/ And the music of the soul makes silence alarmed./You dim the lamp and ask the music to/Keep silent that my spirit may sleep through". This is a very 'poetic' translation and not very faithful to the original, while the alterations Słowacki made on the autograph could only be shown, I believe, in a 'philological', 'word for word' translation, which I am giving here. In parentheses are marked words and phrases altered by Słowacki: "From my grave (in white) grow lilies/The grave like a beautiful white goblet (as if from white alabaster, Greek goblet)/Light at night (from the grave) from underneath the lid shines/(At night the Holy light shines/ as a rosy flame of sacrifice, around winds, ghosts and goblins/And rings (I) (spirit eternally) quiet musical spirit/You order these lights to dim/Musicians to stop (sounds to silence) spirits to sleep."

²² Such a description of "the music of the soul" reappeared in Słowacki's works on several occasions. For example in *Próby poematu filozoficznego* cyt. Quoted in J. Słowacki, *Krąg pism mistycznych*, op. cit., 221. "Muzyką wieczne jest ducha wzdychanie/A ton wysoki śpiewu – twórczą siłą... (Sighing of spirit is music/And the high pitch of singing—creative force...)"

the grave of joyful transformation; something important and painful is happening inside.

The motive of offering and of sacrifice is quite common in Słowacki's writings, and not only in his 'genetic' poetry. The sacrifice in the poem, because of the Siberian setting, resembles the ending of *Anhelli* and more specifically a promise that the protagonist was chosen for this sacrifice: angels portend darkness and loneliness stronger than any he has ever experienced: „Oto przyszliśmy ci zwiastować, że dzisiejsze słońce wstanie jeszcze, lecz jutrzejsze nie pokaże się nad ziemią. Przyszliśmy ci zwiastować ciemność zimową i większą okropność, niż jacy ludzie doznali kiedy: samotność w ciemnościach”.²³ The protagonist was sentenced to loneliness in total darkness, without any hope of resurrection. *Anhelli* was dying a tragic, lonely death, and the words of Shaman and Angel's prophecies showed the whole horror of this sacrifice. As if this protagonist/hero with the soul of an angel had no chance of resurrection or even of seeing after death truth, God's eternity, where there is no darkness, loneliness or fear. For him death ceases to be the way to new life. Kleiner rightly suggested that this sacrifice is not “an ordinary martyrdom. It is an unlimited absorption of sorrows of your own and of others, and later it becomes loneliness, which is not even lit by hope.”²⁴ Does the sacrifice have similar dimensions in “That Angel Burning At My Left Side”? Is it a type of ‘imprisonment’ in death, with no hope for resurrection, for a change? This statement is apparently absurd, but only apparently. It is the inability of crossing to the other side which may be sacrificial, the necessity to exist alone in the grave, which, as we are told in *Anhelli*, will be guarded by an angel (woman-angel?), an angel who has chosen to live on the earth. The further spiritual travails, which

²³ J. Słowacki, *Anhelli* in. Słowacki, *Dziela wszystkie*, op. cit., III, 53. “We have come to herald that today the sun will still rise, but tomorrow it will not appear above the earth. We have come to portend winter darkness and bigger atrocity than people have ever suffered: loneliness in darkness.”

²⁴ J. Kleiner, op. cit., 2, 200.

may be predicted in the world of the poem, erase the perspective of blissful solitude.

The pictures which appeared in his earlier works, such as a woman guarding a grave or "a left angel", return and are important to Słowacki's imagination. The vision of shining graves (tombs of ghosts) reappears many times, particularly in *King-Spirit*:

Duchy czystości ogromnej i siły
 A światła teraz ukarane głodem
 Od Boga za to - jedno... że nie zaświeciły,
 A fundamentem chciały być i spodem,
 To najstraszniejsze są duchów mogiły,
 Bo wiecznym prawie ducha mrozą lodem,
 A świat z nich czyni na świecie igrzyska
 Widząc, że z nich blask – w nieskończoność błyska.²⁵

This picture of tombs of ghosts is connected with some form of terror. Another unusual example of a motive of the grave with Mensiversary, "more beautiful than flames which revealed her keeping vigil at the grave", is the fragment when Mensiversary says:

[VIII]
 Cóż miałam czynić przejęta rozpaczą,
 Widząc, że ciebie twój duch świecić zmusza,
 A ty się kurczysz z pokorą żebraczą –
 Miłość usypia ciebie, lecz nie rusza.
 Pioruny na się rozbratnione skaczą,
 Zorza w dwa węże rozpryska – a dusza zmięszana walką w śnie aż
 do wnętrzości
 Wolę obraca przeciwko miłości.

²⁵ J. Słowacki, *Król-Duch*, in *Dzieła wszystkie*, op. cit., xvii, 135. "Spirits of enormous purity and strength/And lights now punished with hunger/From God, for one thing only: that they did not shine/Though they wanted to be the foundation and basis/These are the most horrible spirits of graves/Because they freeze the spirit with eternal ice/And the world makes games of them, Seeing that/they give away light that shines to eternity."

[IX]

Cóż miałam czynić... gdybyś z tej świętej czary,
Która jasności pełna... była a tobie,
Wyrzucił ogień na kształt światła mary,
Przeciwny światłu – w odstępcy osobie,
Ogień, który wam urąga na grobie,
Ów ciał niszczyciel – ów szatan przeklęty,
Pod chłostą – z ducha waszego poczęty.²⁶

The pictures from different places and texts often overlap one over another, evolve, and supplement one another. It is clear that some of these motives were with Słowacki intensely and for a long time.²⁷ In the quoted fragments the ghost of the grave “forces [him] to shine”. Love (earthly?) appears here as a soporific force, slowing down the spiritual growth. The shining graves appeared already in *Anhelli* and ‘remained’ shining in the later texts. The source of this motif might be searched for in the sepulchre of the resurrected Christ lit by angels, and also in—so admired by Romantics—Roman graves (grottos in which lit lamps were left, therefore light was gleaming from them.) “Empty sarcophagi” which Słowacki saw in Egypt might have also provided a source of inspiration. In “List do Aleksandra H.” (“Letter to Alexander H.”) Słowacki writes in the following way: “When an Arab held a candlestick for me I looked into a coffin”; here he also described the alabaster grave of King Seti I (the father of Ramses II) which was “shining” (as a candlestick was placed inside).

²⁶ J. Słowacki, *Król-Duch*, in *Dzieła wszystkie*, op. cit., xvii, 85. [VIII] “What could I have done, filled with sorrow/Seeing that your spirit forces you to shine/And you shrink with beggar’s humility/Love puts you to sleep but does not move/Lightning bolts jump at one another/Aurora breaks into two snakes and soul confused/with internal fight in the dream/Turns the will against love. [IX]What would I have to do/If from this Holy Goblet/Full of light, were you/And the flame in the shape of the goblin/Against the light—in the person of a renegade/The flame which admonishes you on the grave/This destroyer of bodies/This damned Satan/Under flogging from your spirit begotten.”

²⁷ I have in mind not only *Anhelli*, but also, for example . *Beniowski* (Pieśń III, l. 569-576).

Słowacki saw it in London in 1831 (where the sarcophagus was brought by Giovanni Bettista Belzoni,²⁸ who had discovered it). Słowacki wrote in this poem:

Dziś gorsi i podobni do Mojżesza plagi,
 Cudzoziemcy wynoszą z grobów sarkofagi.
 Anglik dumny, w sterlingi zmienione na piastry,
 Rzuca trupy, trumniane bierze alabastry,
 I w Londynie zachwyca zgrają zadziwioną,
 Wstawiwszy świecznik w próżne alabastru łono.
 Rzekłbyś wtenczas, że wszystkie płaskorzeźby rusza
 Chrystusową nauką ożywiona dusza.
 Ze pełny nauk, ciemną przyszłością straszliwych,
 Grobowiec oświecony, stał się lampą żywych.²⁹

The examples presented here (from various periods of Słowacki's writings) prove that Słowacki displayed evolutionary continuity of ideas and motives.

4. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF...

It turned out that the duplicate of Hipolit Błotnicki really had existed, and Słowacki in 1848 (that is the date given by T. Pini and Z. Szmydtowa) wrote two extra lines (to the lyric poem which had been written earlier, perhaps in 1846). Therefore, we should treat it as an integral part of the poem, and its shorter version as an unfinished one (although probably better, and more unified stylistically) and present it only as a version of this poem. It is interesting that Słowacki in 1848 returned

²⁸ This information is provided in R. Przybylski, *Esencja i egzystencja w kosmicznej biografii Juliusza Słowackiego*, [w:] *Słowacki mistyczny*, op. cit., 258.

²⁹ J. Słowacki, "List Do Aleksandra H.", op. cit., IV, 394. lines 165-174. "Today worth and similar to Moses's plagues/Foreigners take sarcophagi out of tombs/An Englishman proud with his sterlings exchanged into piastres/Throws away dead bodies and takes alabaster coffins/And he stuns a curious crowd in London/Inserting a candlestick into an empty alabaster womb/You might say then, that all reliefs are moved/By a re-awoken Christian soul/That the grave full of knowledge of the past/Has become a lamp of the living."

to motives from *Anhelli*. It is clearly seen in the poem "I wstał Anhelli z grobu" ("And Anhelli Has Arisen from the Sepulchre"). Słowacki, in this way, wrote a poetic ending to *Anhelli* (from letters written at that time we know that it was done only because Januszkiewicz asked him to). For some reasons, because of his 'genetic exaltation' he decided to give up Anhelli's sacrifice, which was to be a 'perennial' absorption of sorrow. It may be that the two most probable verses:

Łask twych najświętszych spłynęła rosa
I jestem, święta, przy tobie – święty³⁰

were born out of similar needs. In the poem "The Angel Burning at My Left Side" we would have had *theosis*. However, the question arises: Theosis of whom? A living man, a dead man, a ghost, an angel? We do not know.

If Słowacki's poem turned out to be longer, then 'genetic' interpretations would have been correct. But many questions still remain unanswered. Maybe we have more such questions now than before the possibility of a longer poem appeared. Does this erotic poem end with a sacral scene of the union with the beloved one (another *theosis*) in perfect love (a turn towards 'the saint')? Is this saint the one who prays at the grave and therefore belongs to the sphere 'of the earth' (or maybe—similarly to Eloe—she belongs to the sphere of the profane)? And is the effect of this prayer the transformation of 'I' who has been so far locked in the grave? Or maybe she is the Mother of God? It is a surprising idea, but the poem has Marian motives such as the alabaster tomb out of which lilies grow (we are not sure how exactly they grow: from underneath the lid? from the lid? from the coffin?) This is a reminiscence of the tomb of the Mother of God from Raphael's painting "The Crowning of the Virgin".³¹ Juliusz

³⁰ "The dew of Your Holy grace has flown down/And I am here, the saint, close to you—the saint."

³¹ Słowacki saw this painting in the Vatican. He referred to it a few times, for example in his sketch on the poetry of Bohdan Zaleski: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła wszystkie*, op. cit., X, 105 "The poet wanted to impress with this simplicity which grew out

Kleiner, Alina Kowalczykowa and Dorota Kudelska³² are among the scholars who have written about it. This scene is open to various interpretations and the whole poem is 'inaccessible', it leaves a reader in some antechamber of meanings and only at the threshold of a puzzle which is ...transcendental.

of the Italian Catholic painting school, and today is aped by a German school. The former may be derived from the Vatican painting of Raphael, its manners [...] where at the grave seven lilies bloom and around there angels, drawn in a very simple fashion, but extremely beautiful [...] the bottom of the heavens is pale, unvarying as a turquoise [...] but if you look into the faces of angels, you slowly, slowly, stop breathing, taken aback by the beauty of this painting." This is not a very accurate description of Raphael's painting, in which out of an empty grave grow: a lily (one but with some flowers), white and red roses, while the angels are at the top of the painting, close to the Virgin Mary, who is being crowned.

³² See J. Kleiner, *Juliusz Słowacki. Dzieje twórczości*, op. cit., vol. IV, part III, 368; A. Kowalczykowa, *Rafaël, czyli o stylu romantycznym*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1982, (1-2); D. Kudelska, *Juliusz Słowacki i sztuki plastyczne*, Lublin 1997.