

JAN ZIELIŃSKI

**FROM LATE WORONICZ TO EARLY WITTGENSTEIN:  
THE RECEPTION OF *PIEŚŃ O WILKLEFIE* (A SONG  
ABOUT WYCLIFFE) AND OF JOHN WYCLIFFE IN  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLAND**

The only known example of Polish fifteenth-century lyric poetry, *Pieśń o Wiklefie* (*A Song about Wycliffe*) by Jędrzej Gałka from Dobczyn—resurfaced only in 1815, the very same year in which the Old English epic poem *Beowulf* was published, at the beginning of the Romantic period in Polish literature. This is one reason why it is worth looking in some detail at its reception in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century is understood in this paper as the one hundred years from the fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna to the beginning of the Great War. But it seems proper to start with a brief look at the presence of Wycliffe—Gałka’s poem was not known then—in the Polish literary and religious tradition of the eighteenth century.

The work which is important here is Rev. Jan Poszakowski’s *Historia kalwińska* (*The History of Calvinism*) (1747), which includes a long chapter entitled “O Wiklefie” (“On Wycliffe”). The English reformer was, obviously, depicted as a heretic and a renegade, but with some admiration for his methods. And so Wycliffe, while teaching theology in Oxford, “came up with new ideas and presented them in such a way that they were received with admiration by his students”.<sup>1</sup> To confirm the unity of his teachings with God’s words and with

---

<sup>1</sup> Ks. Jan Poszakowski, *Historia kalwińska. O Początkach, progresie y upadku tey Sekty we Francyi, z różnych Authorow, którzy żyli tych wiekow, których się to stało, y na co sami patrzyli*, Warszawa 1747, vol. I, 83.

apostolic poverty, Wycliffe started “as if in imitation of the Apostles to go around barefoot and in cheap clothes”.<sup>2</sup> Paszakowski colourfully presents the social repercussions of Wycliffe’s teachings: a dramatic attack by rebelling peasants on London. He presents Wycliffe’s radicalism in the following way: “He was not content with this madness. He went even further, abolishing confession and refusing to acknowledge the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist”.<sup>3</sup> Later Wycliffe was duly punished with paralysis, and died a few days later on “the day of St Silvestre, the Pope against whom he had spoken vehemently during his sermons [...]”.<sup>4</sup> However, Wycliffe’s sect “twenty years later moved to Bohemia, when one Bohemian nobleman who studied in Oxford got some books of this heretic and took them to his country”.<sup>5</sup> The next chapter of Paszakowski’s book is entitled “O kacerstwie Husa” (“Of Hus’s Heresy”).

In the poetry of the Enlightenment period Wycliffe’s name was used mostly as an epithet. Stanisław Trembecki shouted in “Kazanie do kaznodziejów” (“A Sermon to Preachers”) (1788):

O kapłani! kapłani! grube wasze winy  
Mnożą Wiklefy, Husy, Lutry i Kalwiny.  
Słudzy niebios! Dla waszych maksym branych z piekła  
Wieleż się razy ziemia żałobą oblekła.  
Byli, lecz już minęła ta pora obrzydła,  
Jedni na kształt pasterzów, drudzy na kształt bydła.  
Dziś, gdy światło powszechniej fortuna rozniosła,  
Znajcie lepiej przepisy waszego rzemiosła.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>6</sup> Stanisław Trembecki, *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. by Jan Kott, Warszawa 1953, vol. I, 180. “O Priests! Priests / Your sins are multiplied by / Wycliffes, Huses, Luthers, Calvins / Servants of Heaven! For your ideas taken from hell / The earth was in mourning many times / They were, but their horrible time is no more / Some like shepherds, some like cattle / Today, when the Fortune has brought more light / You should better know the rules of your profession.”

The characteristic features of this fragment include: the plural used with names and the selection of names with which Wycliffe is listed, and the epithet "obrzydła" ("filthy"), which rhymes with "bydła" ("cattle").

The first information about a poem by Jędrzej Gałka from Dobczyn *A Song about Wycliffe* appeared in the Polish context in a letter of the Czech philologist Rev. Josef Dobrovsky to Jerzy Samuel Bandtke dated 26 November 1812. In 1815 Josef Dobrovsky sent copies of Gałka's poem to several of his Polish colleagues with whom he corresponded.<sup>7</sup>

This stage of the text's existence—in manuscript—apart from the direct addressees of Dobrovsky's letter and copies, included also some other people, such as the distinguished Enlightenment writers Niemcewicz and Woronicz. Niemcewicz, a member (and later a chairman) of Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk (Society of Sciences) was then in the process of preparing a monumental, and the first all-encompassing edition, of his *Śpiewy historyczne* (*Historical Songs*) (1816) and for this reason alone he must have been very interested in the monument of old Polish poetry. On 25 January 1816 Linde wrote to Dobrovsky:

Für das altpolnische Lied danke ich ihnen recht sehr: ich werde es unserem Niemcewicz, der Sie herzlich grüsst, und unserem Bandtke mittheilen.

[Thank You very much for this old Polish song, I will give it to our Niemcewicz, who sends you his best regards, and to our Bandtke.]

Things with Jan Paweł Woronicz were more complicated: it was the period when, after his appointment as bishop of Kraków (1815), his career in the Church was about to start (he finally became primate). Dobrovsky, who was a priest himself, was taken aback at first by Woronicz's excessive clericalism; he was afraid, therefore, how Woronicz would react to *A Song about Wycliffe*, and when on

---

<sup>7</sup> See *Korrespondence: Vzájemné dopisy Josefa Dobrovskeho a Fortunata Duricha z let 1778-1800*, Praha 1906, xiv. See also: Josef Dobrovsky 1753-1829, Praha 1929, 138.

26 February 1816 he sent Bandtke (who was a Protestant) a copy of stanzas 4-14, he made this reservation:

Den Hrn. Bischof Woronicz, dem ich mich gehorsamst empfehle, sind diese Verse nicht vorzuweisen. Es wurde an meiner Orthodoxie zweifeln. Mann muss niemanden stören, wenn er von jemandem eine seiner Überzeugung nach bessere Meinung hat.

[Please give my best regards to Bishop Woronicz, but do not send him these stanzas. It would raise doubts about my orthodoxy. One should not disturb people who in their own conviction have a better opinion about someone].<sup>8</sup>

Dobrovsky could forbid showing the copy of the manuscript, but he could not forbid Woronicz to read the text which was published in the spring of 1816 in *Pamiętnik Warszawski*. The trace of Woronicz's reading of the poem by Gałka is probably a poem which in Woronicz's *oeuvre* has a separate place, "Odpowiedź Antoniemu Goreckiemu w Karlsbadzie 1816 roku" ("An Answer to Antoni Gorecki in Karlsbad in 1816"). This poem is partly known from J. Czech's edition (*Poezje*, Kraków 1832, v. II) and from *Biesiada Literacka* (1885, v. XX, no. 23); the full version was published from the manuscript only in 2002 in the series *Biblioteka Narodowa*. The poem is a diversion from a typical *Polish alexandrine* (13 syllables) to *hendecasyllable* (11 syllables) with a strong, fixed *caesura*, practically tearing each line apart into short distiches of 5 and 6 syllables. This poem is a polemic with a close friend (who was later to become the father-in-law of Mickiewicz's daughter); it is constructed with a clear cut opposition into old and young—in the same way as *A Song of Wycliffe* is polemic and has an opposition of "Christs" and "anti-Christs". There are also clear textual parallels between the ending of Woronicz's poem, when the old poet instructs a young poet, who is about to travel to Bohemia, France and Italy:

---

<sup>8</sup> *Korrespondence: Vzájemné dopisy Josefa Dobrovskeho a Jiriho Samuele Bandthkeho z let 1810-1827*, Praha 1906, 95.

Zwiedzając Gallów i Latynów ziemie,  
Podawaj wielóm sercem i cytarą  
Nie zagładzone niczym lackie plemię,  
W którym zostawiasz gniazdową dziedzinę [...] <sup>9</sup>

and the first stanza of *A Song about Wycliffe* in which different nationalities are enumerated and in which for the first time in writing the term "Lachowie" (Poles) appeared.

The first to publish the opening three stanzas, from one of the copies sent by Dobrovsky, together with the commentary in Latin, was Paweł Czaykowski ("Miscellaneorum Cracoviensium" 1815, (2)). Linde published the whole poem in *Pamiętnik Warszawski* (1816, (5), 457). The poem was also published in 1816 in the second volume of *Pochwały, Mowy i Rozprawy* (*Praises, Speeches and Treatises*) by Stanisław Kostka Potocki, with a short description of the manuscript:

Quite recently in the famous Göttingen library on the internal side of the binding of an old manuscript, a glued sheet was found, the paper of which was undoubtedly from the fifteenth century with an inscription: *Excellentia magistri Joannis Wickleph edita ab Andrea de Dobschino olim magistro artium studii Cracoviensis.*

The poem itself was published in two columns in its entirety (fourteen numbered stanzas). Potocki also explained the manuscript's provenance ("This text was taken in Göttingen to be Czech. It was sent to Prague to a scholar named Dobrovsky, who, when he saw that it was Polish, sent it to Polish scholars, from whom I received it"). Then Potocki started deliberations on the influence of the Polish choice of Western Christianity, rather than Eastern Christianity, on the linguistic proximity with Czechs, which resulted in the situation in which, as he wrote:

---

<sup>9</sup> Jan Paweł Woronicz, *Pisma wybrane*, ed. by Małgorzata Nesteruk, Zofia Rejman, BN I, no. 299, Wrocław 2002, 110. "While visiting lands of Galls and Latimates / Give to many your heart and cither / The indestructible tribe of Lachs / Where you are leaving your nest."

In the year 1434, in the presence of the Polish King Władysław Jagiełło, there was a dispute with Hussites, lasting a few days, and both sides of it spoke Polish, which clearly suggests the proximity of these two languages in those times, languages which today are so different that it is easier for a Pole to communicate with a Ruthenian than with a Czech.

Wycliffe's teachings were factually described in a book by Franz Joseph Jekel about the history and constitution of Poland, which was translated into Polish and published in 1817:

The teachings of Waldensians were supported by John Wycliffe who in 1370 rejected the Church's dogmas about Consecration, Mass, Confession, indulgences and papal authority. Wycliffe's teachings, via Bohemia, where he was exiled, reached Poland. So the Poles were already prepared, when Jan Hus, a preacher in the Bethlehem church in Prague in 1400, rebelled against indulgences and clergymen because of the indulgence ordered by Pope John XXII, and started teaching according to Waldo and Wycliff, and he added one more claim: that Communion was to be taken under both kinds.<sup>10</sup>

Following *Pamiętnik Warszawski* the poem about Wycliffe was republished by Ignacy Benedykt Rakowiecki, a member of Warsaw Society of Science in the second volume of *Prawda Ruska (Ruthenian Truth)* (Warszawa 1822, 217-218). In the footnote Rakowiecki added information about the spelling of nasal vowels in the original manuscript.

It should be noted here that the importance of *A Song about Wycliffe* as an orthographic source material was noticed very early. Reverend Wojciech Szwejkowski, in his treatise "O znamionach nad samogłoskami" ("Of Diacritic Marks over Vowels"), delivered in 1816 and published in 1830 in the volume published under the auspices of the Society of Science, pointed out German influences, which were the result of the fact that "among other foreigners Germans were used

---

<sup>10</sup> Franz Joseph Jekel, *O Polszcze, iey dzieiach i konstytucyi*, transl. by Konstanty Słotwiński, Lwów 1819, 66-67.

as writers and print-setters” and that the traces of it “can be seen, for example, in the song about Wycliffe from the fifteenth century”.<sup>11</sup>

The whole song was also republished by Michał Wiszniewski in the third volume of his *Historia literatury polskiej* (*History of Polish Literature*); it was preceded with the following commentary (indicating the critical reading of the text):

Apparently, the only poet of the fifteenth century is Jędrzej Gałka from Dobczyn, who, in his song about Wycliffe, promoted Hussite ideas. This song, which Gałka sent to a Polish nobleman when he was already in exile, is probably a translation from Czech, which is shown by the eleventh stanza, which has no connection with the situation of Poland at that time.<sup>12</sup>

### Mickiewicz

Mickiewicz probably came across *A Song of Wycliffe* in the first full edition published in 1816 in *Pamiętnik Warszawski*. Later, in the treatise “O krytykach i recenzentach warszawskich” (“Of Warsaw Critics and Reviewers”), he would recall that several years earlier he had published reviews in *Pamiętnik Warszawski* (he was referring to “Uwagi nad ‘Jaggiellonidą’ [“Remarks on ‘Jaggielonida’] by Dyzma Bończa Tomaszewski from 1819) but he had read this paper even earlier. He also knew a lot about Wycliffe himself.

In May 1833 in the article “O bezpolitykowcach i polityce ‘Pielgrzymy’” (“Of No-Politicians and the Politics of *The Pilgrim*”) published in *Pielgrzym* Mickiewicz wrote:

We usually call something politics if it involves doing things, if it involves actions; but words and thoughts may also result in actions; such actions are fight, victory, martyrdom; such words were, for example, words of the New Testament, and later their imitations: words of the Quran, words of Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, Saint-Simon— words spoken during Rejtan’s session, during the sessions of the

<sup>11</sup> Wojciech Szwejkowski, *Rozprawy i wnioski o ortografii polskiej*, Warszawa 1830, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Michał Wiszniewski, *Historia literatury polskiej*, vol. 1-10, Kraków 1840-1857, III, 425.

Convent when war on the whole of Europe was declared, daily orders of Napoleon, the song about Dąbrowski, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The enumeration of names and titles reminds us, on the one hand, of Trembecki's *Sermon to Preachers*, and on the other of Słowacki's letter to his mother written two years earlier, which Mickiewicz could not, of course, have known, and in which Słowacki listed precious manuscripts seen in Dresden: "Luther's, Wycliffe's, Beyazed's Quran [...]". The words of Rejtan ("Rejtan spoke for the last time in the old language, calling God and begging not to commit such a crime") would be used by Mickiewicz in his later article ("O ludziach rozsądnych i ludziach szalonych" ("Of People of Sense and People of Madness") published in *Pielgrzym Polski* on 27 May 1833, which could be understood as applying the teaching of Wycliffe, adopted by Hus to the Czech situation to the Polish politics at the turn of the nineteenth century.

A few years later he would return to Wycliffe, while lecturing in College de France. I am going to quote a fragment of a lecture from 24 March 1841:

At this time Wycliffe's work was accidentally brought from England. Czechs, who often travelled with King John to France, and who accompanied a Czech princess on the way to England, got acquainted with Wycliffe's teachings in Oxford, brought his writings and translated them into the Czech language. Wycliffe was opposing the Catholic Church. Later, he was persecuted and convicted as a heretic; he found supporters in Slavic countries. Hus, a man famous for his learning and real deep faith, struck by the novelty of Wycliffe's system, started, in the King's chapel, to condemn the abuses of the Church.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, Wydanie Rocznicowe 1798-1998, ed. by: Zbigniew Jerzy Nowak, Maria Prussak, Zofia Stefanowska, Czesław Zgorzelski, vol. VI: *Pisma filomackie i pisma polityczne z lat 1832-1834*, Warszawa 2000, 266.

<sup>14</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, ed. Julian Krzyżanowski, Warszawa 1955, vol. VIII: *Literatura słowiańska*, 337.



In Mickiewicz's poetry, the work in which we may look, in a natural way, for the motifs connected with Wycliffe is, *Zdania i uwagi* (*Sentences and Remarks*). Although the extended title—*Z dzieł Jakuba Bema, Anioła Ślązaka (Angelus Silesius) i Sę-Martena (From the Works of Jacob Boehme, Angelus Silesius and Saint-Martin)*— lists other sources, this is not a complete list, as another subtitle *God's Breathing, (from Persian)* proves. Out of several "sentences and remarks" showing affinity with Wycliffe's ideas, and also with the form of *A Song about Wycliffe*, let us stop at the last text of the cycle, entitled "Reszta prawd" ("The Rest of Truths").

The similarity of the form is striking, particularly if we write Mickiewicz's couplets in four lines each. This division is justified by a strong caesura and internal assonance rhythm:

Jest i więcej prawd w piśmie,  
Lecz kto o nie pyta,  
Niech sam zostanie pismem –  
W sobie je wyczyta.<sup>15</sup>

As far as the content is concerned, this text refers to the third stanza of *A Song about Wycliffe*

Kto chce tego dowieść  
Ta jest o niem powieść.<sup>16</sup>

### Norwid

Paweł Czaykowski, one of the first publishers of *A Song about Wycliffe*, was also the father of Norwid's close friend from his youth, Antoni Czaykowski. In the volume by Czaykowski junior entitled *Niektóre poezye (Some Poems)* published in Warsaw in 1841 one of the "Przypiski Wydawcy" ("Editor's Notes") is as follows:

---

<sup>15</sup> "There are more truths in this text / Those who ask about them / Should become the text / And find these truth in themselves."

<sup>16</sup> "Who wants to prove it / this is a story about him."

Inconsolable Paweł Czaykowski, who contributed so immensely to Polish literature, as a sublime translator and writer, and as a professor of Polish literature at Jagiellonian university. A few months before his death he wrote to his son Antoni a letter filled with sad premonitions. Son's love dictated these lines in reply. But lamentably! The old Bard was right in his premonitions. Paweł Czaykowski died in 1839. (232)

This note refers to the poem "Do Pawła Czaykowskiego" ("To Paweł Czaykowski") (pages 97-99) from 1839, which is a poem about ... a prophet who has power over the elements. Its radicalism resembles the second stanza of *A Song about Wycliffe*—the English prophet.

Jemuż nie rownego  
Mistrza pogańskiego  
I krześcijańskiego,  
Ani będzie większego  
Aż do dnia sądnego.<sup>17</sup>

In this volume, there is another poem, dedicated to „Najdroższemu ojcu Pawłowi” (“To the Dearest Father Paweł”), entitled “Dies irae, dies illa” (pages 32-37), with an original construction of stanzas (triplets rhyming *aaa bbb ccc*), referring to the poetry of the Middle Ages and probably directly to *A Song about Wycliffe*, where the five verse stanzas rhyme *aa bbb*. A direct relationship could also be posited between the fourth stanza of *A Song about Wycliffe* („Od boskich rozumow / Aż do ludzkich umow/ Rzeczy pospolite, / Wiele mędrcom zakryte, / Uczynił odkryte”)<sup>18</sup> and the poem of Czaykowski entitled “Monada Świata” (“World’s Monad”) (pages 38-40), which starts with the words “Myśl Boska rozproszona po całym stworzeniu” (“God’s thought spread over the whole of creation”) and includes the following fragment:

<sup>17</sup> “No one equals him / Neither Pagan / Nor Christian Master / There will be no one greater / Till Doomsday.”

<sup>18</sup> “From God’s wisdom / To people’s pacts / Ordinary things / Hidden from many wise men / He revealed.”

Człowiek tę pieśń pojmuje, łączy huczne głosy,  
I odbija w swych piersiach ziemię i niebiosy,  
I sam, jako ognisko, zestrzela w głąb ducha  
Różnorodne ogniwa natury łańcucha.<sup>19</sup> (39)

The second moment when Norwid approached *A Song about Wycliffe* and its author is his visit to the monastery in Mogiła, during which he must have been shown the cell in which Jędrzej Gałka from Dobczyn was locked, accused of heresy. It is worth mentioning here that Josef Dobrovsky probably had also visited the monastery in Mogiła during his visit to Kraków in 1793, many years before the manuscript of *A Song about Wycliffe* was discovered. This is implied in the letter he wrote on 10 February 1793:

Krakau hatte viel anziehendes für mich der alten Grabmäler wegen. Man zeigt auch Krok's Grabhügel ausser der Stadt, auch der Manuscripte wegen, worunter viele Bohemica sind. Wjeliczka konnte ich ebenfalls nicht übergehen<sup>20</sup>.

[Kraków is interesting to me because of the old tombstones. They also show here the mound of Krak, located outside the city, and also because of the old manuscripts containing numerous *bohemica*. I could not miss Wieliczka.]

There are no precious manuscripts near the mound of Krak, but there were some in the monastery in Mogiła, at the feet of the Wanda mound. The eighth stanza of *A Song about Wycliffe* (Pierwszy pop Lassota / wziął moc od hobota / Konstantyna smoka / iegoż iad wylan z boka / w cerkwi rok od roka.<sup>21</sup>) can be heard in the speech of Krakus at the beginning of Norwid's drama *Krakus: Książę nieznan* (*Krakus: The Prince Unknown*). The 10-syllable verse with the strong *caesura*

<sup>19</sup> "A man understands these songs, connects noisy voices / And reflects in his heart earth and heaven / And on his own, as a prism, connects deep in spirit / Various links in the chain of nature."

<sup>20</sup> *Vzajemne dopisy Josefa Dobrovskeho a Josefa Valentina Zlobickeho z let 1781-1807, Praha 1908, 80.*

<sup>21</sup> "Pope Silvester the first / Took his power from the tail / Of Constantine's dragon / His venom pours from his side / In the church every year."

seems to break into shorter verses, reminiscent of *A Song about Wycliffe* also metrically:

Lecz czar się przeniósł w serce narodu  
 I pod czterema zamku węglami  
 Smok czarną jamę wykopał kłami.  
 Już w każdej z komnat drzwi, okna, progi  
 Posoki gadu spluskane czernią,  
 I człony jego wciąż się bezmiernią  
 I końca nie ma temu gadowi,  
 Aż ramię w bezwład opadać musi,  
 Aż z wiórów trupa zgnilizna dusi,  
 A nie ma końca temu smokowi!

[lines 116-118, 132-139]<sup>22</sup>

Another poem of Norwid, which has a characteristic strong *caesura* and radical ideas similar to these from *A Song about Wycliffe* is his important poem “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” (“To Walenty Pomian Z.”). The wounds of Christ in Jędrzej Gałka’s poem and nails in the wounds of Christ in Norwid’s poem are the same visible signs of the victory of truth.

### Kraszewski

Józef Ignacy Kraszewski wrote in 1841:

More or less about 1555 Radziwiłł returns to Lithuania and starts doing things about introducing the new faith, and there appears

---

<sup>22</sup> Cyprian Norwid, *Krakus. Książę nieznany. Tragedia*, in Idem, *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. by Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. IV, Warszawa 1971, 169, 170. “But the charm was moved into the nation’s heart / And under the four walls of the castle / The dragon dug a black hole with his fangs / Already in each room, doors, windows, thresholds / Covered with the reptile’s black blood / And his parts are multiplying / And there is no end to this reptile / Till the arm goes down limply / Till the carcass’s odour suffocates / Still there is no end to this reptile.”

a new disciple of Luther named Wiklef (Wycliffe), who has not been famous elsewhere, because he is not mentioned by his own people.<sup>23</sup>

Of, course, Kraszewski is writing not about 'our' Wycliffe, but about some enigmatic, sixteenth century imitator of him. This Protestant wore the clothes of a Catholic priest and received permission to give sermons in German to craftsmen and foreign merchants. The citizens of Wilno even wanted to lynch him, furious not with what he was preaching but because he used "meat and milk on days of fast".

The figure of the real John Wycliffe was remembered in an article written after the unveiling of the monument to Martin Luther in Worms in 1868. *Gazeta Polska*, where Kraszewski worked as an editor in 1861-1862 and with which he cooperated later, claimed that the monument, made by Ernst Rietschel and his co-workers, shows not only Luther himself, but the whole act of Reformation; that is why the monument includes many people, including four of his predecessors, sitting on tall columns:

[...] Hus with an eye fixed on a crucifix he is holding, seems to be showing the depth of faith; Savonarola is distinguished by a passionate liveliness; Waldo presented as a pauper points to an open Bible set on his bosom; Wycliffe, an old man, leaning on a pillar, is studying the Holy Bible.<sup>24</sup>

In the Polish press of 1868 the influence of Wycliffe on Hus was mentioned in the context of the pilgrimage of Czechs to Hus's monument in Konstanz. The very same *Gazeta Polska* wrote: "We remember all these reformist activities of the Czechs over the centuries, the repercussions of which, although faint now, are still visible"<sup>25</sup> and then the paper went on to describe the effects of these changes on the evolution of the Czech-German relationship in the nineteenth century. Kraszewski returned to Wycliffe in his book

---

<sup>23</sup> Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Wilno od początków jego do roku 1750*, vol. III, Wilno 1841, 107.

<sup>24</sup> *Posąg Lutra w Worms*, „*Gazeta Polska*” 1868, no. 149, 2.

<sup>25</sup> „*Gazeta Polska*” 1868, no. 158, 3.

about Krasicki (1879), where he wrote in the introductory remarks about the fact that the Reformation spread all over Europe at the same time and added:

Minds are everywhere prepared in a similar manner, the land is cultivated in the likewise manner—the thrown seeds sprout. Songs about Wycliffe had been translated into Polish, and in the same way the reformist movement born in Germany in the sixteenth century immediately had very serious effects on people in Poland.<sup>26</sup>

The phrase which was used seems to suggest that Kraszewski was convinced that *A Song about Wycliffe* was not an original work, but a translation, presumably from the Czech language—although the plural used makes the case more blurred.

\*

In 1910, the year of 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle at Grunwald, a young historian, who was later to become a general and an emigré activist, Marian Kukiel, contradicted “the religious hypocrisy of the Teutonic knights” with the religious multiplicity of the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian side, where Polish and Lithuanian knights who were Roman Catholics were fighting alongside Greek Catholic Ruthenians and “together with Czech regiments of mercenaries, supporters of the teachings of Wycliffe, and Muslim Tatars.”<sup>27</sup> If we take into consideration that Kukiel’s article is supplied with a motto from *Zawisza Czarny* by Słowacki, we can see how far we have gone from young Słowacki’s listing in Dresden in one breath of Wycliffe, Luther and the Quran.

A year later Wycliffe’s role was brought back to memories once again during a lecture in Warsaw about the Hussite movement delivered by professor Jaroslav Bidlo from Prague University: “Hus promoted a religious reform based on the teachings of the Oxford

<sup>26</sup> Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Krasicki. *Życie i dzieła. Kartka z dziejów literatury XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 1879, 14.

<sup>27</sup> [Marian Kukiel] W. Leliwa, “W 500-tną rocznicę”, „Nowa Gazeta” 1910, no. 3182.

professor John Wycliffe, and eventually formulated in four well known 'Prague articles'".<sup>28</sup>

\*

If we want to present another episode of Wycliffe's reception by Poles, which happened about a century after the discovery of *A Song about Wycliffe*, it is necessary, first, to introduce the figure of Michał Dziewicki (1851-1928). Dziewicki translated Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod* into English (1883), and later in the 1920s he translated novels of Nałkowska and Reymont. He was the son of a Polish emigrant to Britain, raised as a Quaker, and then when he moved to France he converted to Roman Catholicism and attempted to enter the Jesuit order. In 1880, for reasons unknown, he gave up the idea of becoming a priest and went to Kraków, where he got married. His wife, Adela Jastrzębska, was known for her charity work; she particularly looked after servant girls, this work was conducted within the frame of the society founded under the auspices of the Jesuits. Later she published a brochure entitled *Wskazówki dla dziewcząt służących*. (*Instructions for Servant Girls*). In the 1880s Dziewicki got in touch with the Wycliffe Society, which was founded in London in order to publish the works of Wycliffe which had remained in manuscripts for many centuries. Dziewicki published, as ordered by the society, in Latin, a series of unknown manuscripts of Wycliffe, some of which had been located in Prague and in Vienna.

The first two books of Wycliffe published by Dziewicki were: *Tractatus de logica* and *Miscellanea philosophica*.

Sounds familiar? Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote his main work during the Great War: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wittgenstein started his military service in the summer of 1914, patrolling the Vistula river in Kraków on the patrol boat "Goplana" (he was responsible for the operation of the searchlight). At the same time he started his journal. In May 1915 Bertrand Russell asked him to visit in Kraków,

---

<sup>28</sup> [St. Pyrowicz] stp, *Ruch husycki w Czechach*. Odczyt prof. Bidlo, „Nowa Gazeta” 1911, no. 194, 2.

at Szczepańska 11, “a lonely old logician”<sup>29</sup> Michał Dziewicki. The first meeting took place on 24 May 1915. The old logician and ‘a most genial young man’.<sup>30</sup> (as Dziewicki called Wittgenstein in a later letter to Russell) started to exchange letters. On 15 June 1915 Dziewicki wrote (in English):

Only I should like to know whether you also hold that the series of instants is compact. Wycliff thought not; for him all instants are contiguous. If not, there is never any instant at which any phenomenon begins: which seems absurd.<sup>31</sup>

This argument allows us, at the end, to return to Mickiewicz’s *Sentences and Remarks* and quote a text entitled “Wieczność nie ma chwili” (“Eternity Has No Moments”):

Czy wiecie, żeśmy dłużej niżeli Bóg żyli?  
Bóg jest wieczny, a przecież nie żył ani chwili.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> B. F. McGuinness and G. H. von Wright, *Unpublished Correspondence between Russell & Wittgenstein, Russell. The Journal of B. Russell Archives*, vol. 10, No 2, 1990-91, 103.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, 104.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted after in Józef Bremer, *Ludwig Wittgenstein – Michał Dziewicki, czyli “genialny młody człowiek” spotyka “milego starszego pana”*, in *Ludwig Wittgenstein “przydzielony do Krakowa” / “Krakau zugeteilt”*, ed. by Józef Bremer, Josef Rothaupt, Kraków 2009, 19.

<sup>32</sup> “Do you know that we have lived longer than God / God is eternal, and, yet, he has not lived for a single moment.”