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Платон и современность

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Plato's Reception in Polish Philosophy (1800–1950): An Outline*

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ABSTRACT. The paper aims to outline the reception of Plato's work among philosophers in Poland. During the period 1800–1950 many cultural phenomena related to Plato occurred in Poland. The overall account of the direct reception of Plato in Polish philosophy distinguishes between three types of reception, 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 part of the wider process of the reception of contemporary philosophical currents. 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. 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.

KEYWORDS: Platonism, Plato's reception, Polish philosophy of 19–20 centuries.

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The paper aims to outline the reception of Plato's work among philosophers in Poland, to present a wide spectrum of Plato's influence on thinkers in a Central European country. The chronological framework for the research is 1800–1950, it covers the entire 19th century, which is a unique period in the history of Polish philosophy. The inter-war 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), still continued to publish their works concerning Plato.

During the period 1800–1950 many cultural phenomena related to Plato occurred in Poland. 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 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.¹ Teachers were also the authors 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.²

The most important and productive interpreter of Plato into Polish in the 19th century was Antoni Bronikowski (1817–1884), a clas-

¹ Siedlecki 1879, 1880, 1881; Kaszewski 1880a; Maszewski 1885; Kašinowski 1888; Świdorski 1888; Biela 1898–1899; Okołów 1907, 1908; Okołów 1909; *cf.* Mróz 2012a.

² *Cf.* Mróz 2011, 2016a.

sics 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.³ 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 it lacked originality, he nevertheless deserves to be mentioned.⁴ The later translators, Stanisław Lisiecki (1872–1960),⁵ and the more famous Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948),⁶ produced works on Plato's philosophy and commentaries which were of excellent quality. Their work went far beyond mere translation and therefore requires more detailed presentation.

An overall account of the direct reception of Plato in Polish philosophy should distinguish between three types of reception, 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 part of the wider process of the reception of contemporary philosophical currents by Polish authors who introduced the Polish philosophical 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. At this stage Plato became the initial material, on the basis of which they de-

³ Bronikowski 1858, 1858a, 1860, 1879, 1884; *cf.* Mróz 2013, 2014.

⁴ Kozłowski 1845.

⁵ Lisiecki 1928.

⁶ Witwicki 1909, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1937a, 1938, 1948; *cf.* Domański 1984, 1999; Mróz 2014a, 2017.

veloped 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 19th and 20th 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 inspirations for the 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, though, to argue against them from the perspective of the 21st century. These works, however, shaped the image of Plato in Polish philosophy, and at the same time they were a part of Polish intellectual history. Some of their results and conclusions may appear to be obsolete today, but obsolescence fails to touch the ever-lasting problems regarding Plato.

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's 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. 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 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.

First of all, it should be noted that neither a common Polish image of Plato nor a common Polish interpretation of Platonism exist. 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.

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 studies.⁷ The same applies to F.A. Kozłowski's introduction to

⁷ Zabellewicz 1821; cf. Mróz 2009, 2010.

his translations of three dialogues, which bears the mark of Hegelianism.⁸ These studies, produced in the first half of the 19th 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 19th 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) 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 readers.⁹ 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, the *History of Philosophy*, resulted in a more schematic treatment of Plato in volume I of Tatarkiewicz's book. 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.¹⁰

Let us turn now to the second type of reception and to the scholars in this category. The second half of the 19th century moved the

⁸ Kozłowski 1845a; cf. Mróz 2011a.

⁹ Tatarkiewicz 1911.

¹⁰ Cf. Mróz 2011b.

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 gained a wider reception and elicited diverse responses ranging from criticism to enthusiasm. The main material referred to was related to ethical and political issues.

A constant current of reception 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 ideas 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 from 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),¹¹ but at the same time Plato was criticized as a revolutionary ideologist from the conservative position of Wojciech Dzierżycki (1848–1909).¹² A little later, at the beginning of the 20th century, Plato's political project met 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 someone's place in the social hierarchy depended solely on their merits.¹³

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 encounter 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 for the above deliberations.

In the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1871), Christian philosophers found grounds and arguments for taking up studies on ancient philosophy:

¹¹ Limanowski 1872, 1872a, 1875.

¹² Dzierżycki 1908, 1914; cf. Mróz 2011c.

¹³ Jarra 1918; cf. Mróz 2012b.

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 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 unfinished but can be retrieved from Pawlicki's lecture scripts.¹⁴ 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 *Phaedrus*.¹⁵ 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 defended, Plato on 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 – and the most favourable – presentation of Plato's philosophy to originate in the Polish neo-Scholastic movement.¹⁶ Pawlicki's enormous enthusiasm for Plato is clear, so it is not surprising that a decade after his death, a study was published, in

¹⁴ Pawlicki 2013.

¹⁵ Cf. Mróz 2013a.

¹⁶ Pawlicki 1903–1917; cf. Mróz 2005, 2008.

which its author, Wiktor Potempa (1887–1942), synthetically revised the Christian approach to Plato, 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.¹⁷

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 of Plato's dialogues,¹⁸ Lutosławski took up the problem of the chronology of the dialogues. Whereas other Polish Plato scholars, such as Pawlicki, only incidentally announced their 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 method.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ The chronology of the dialogues provided by Lutosławski was for his Western critics an independent and crucial issue, although for Lutosławski himself it became only the foundation of his own philosophical thought which was based 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

¹⁷ Potempa 1925; cf. Mróz 2014b.

¹⁸ Lutosławski 1891.

¹⁹ Lutosławski 1895/1896, 1897, 1898.

²⁰ Cf. Thesleff 1982; Brandwood 1990; Bigaj 1999, 2002; Mróz 2003, 2018.

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.²¹ 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 mental concepts in the late works of Plato.²² 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 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 only confirmed Lutosławski in 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 afflicted.²³

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* and on the concept of the pre-existence of souls.²⁵ 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

²¹ Lutosławski 1946, 2004; cf. Mróz 2007, 2014c.

²² Lutosławski 1897; cf. Mróz 2003; Zaborowski 2004; Paczkowski 2016.

²³ Lutosławski 1948.

²⁴ Lisiecki 1928.

²⁵ Lisiecki 1927, 1927a.

not seem to him to be achievable at all. Because of his complicated biography (he lost his vocation as a priest 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ He translated a dozen or more dialogues, which were regrettably never published.

When philosopher, psychologist, translator and artist, Witwicki, first began his work on Plato, his interest arose 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 philosophy. This image of Plato dovetailed with Witwicki's own psyche and in fact, while talking about Plato, Witwicki was incidentally talking about him-

²⁶ Cf. Mróz 2018a.

²⁷ Cf. Mróz 2013b.

self.²⁸ In his occupation with Plato, Witwicki was alone among Twardowski's students and among the representatives 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 man.²⁹ 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

²⁸ See Witwicki's introductions and commentaries in Witwicki 1909, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1937a, 1938, 1948; Witwicki 1947; cf. Nowicki 1982; Rzepa 1988.

²⁹ See Witwicki's introduction and commentaries in Witwicki 1948; Witwicki 1947; cf. Mróz 2018a.

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 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 method.³⁰ 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 teachings.³¹

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; on the other, Pawlicki presented Plato as a moral thinker close to Christianity. Other disputes were of less importance, initiated by the reviews

³⁰ Jordan 1937.

³¹ Bornstein 1938, 1939; cf. Obolevitch 2007; Śleziński 2009.

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 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, were 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.³² 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

³² Woyczyński 2000; cf. Mróz 2008a.

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, and was 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 occasionally is much stronger than admitted. Due to changes in the education system after World War 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 21st century it is quite unlikely that anyone in Poland (if anywhere) begins their encounter with Plato from reading the *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 refer to 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 21st 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.

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