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**Gustaw Zieliński – network of social,
scientific, family relationships
(on example of friendship with Wincenty Pol)**

**Gustaw Zieliński – w sieci relacji towarzyskich,
naukowych, rodzinnych
(na przykładzie przyjaźni z Wincentym Polem)**

Summary: The article want to find out, what was the reason of Gustaw Zieliński and Wincenty Pol mutual fascination. The fact remains, that a lot differ them – but probably biographical-personality-cultural similarities, evoked „literary” sentiment.

Keywords: literature and culture of the 19th century, epistolography and poetry of Romanticism, exile literature.

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie, co było przyczyną wzajemnej fascynacji Gustawa Zielińskiego i Wincentego Pola. Faktem jest, że wiele poetów dzieliło – ale biograficzno-osobowościowo-kulturowe podobieństwa, na które artykuł zwraca uwagę, sprawiły, że pojawił się „literacki” sentyment.

Słowa kluczowe: literatura i kultura XIX wieku, epistolografia i poezja romantyczna, literatura zesłańcza.

The circle of social, scientific and family contacts surrounding Gustaw Zieliński was by all means impressive. Being well known himself, he gathered around himself also no ordinary figures. Friendship with Ignacy Orpiszewski dating since school years, long-lasting one with

Erazm Wróblewski, difficult, for its adverse Siberian circumstances, acquaintance with Onufry Pietraszkiewicz, Konstanty Wolicki, Adolf Januskiewicz, corresponding one with his brother January and mother Tekla Januskiewiczowa can be given as examples. Among people of science Zieliński was close with Józef Szujski, among men of letters with Teofil Lenartowicz, Edmund Chojecki, and so on. The surnames can be multiplied much further. A bit is known of these relations. However, in this ring of acquaintances, a non less recognizable person appeared, but of whose relations with Gustaw Zieliński we know relatively not too much. I want to find out, what was the reason of Gustaw Zieliński and Wincenty Pol mutual social fascination. The fact remains, that a lot differ them – but probably biographical-personality-cultural similarities, to which I will pay attention, evoked „literary” sentiment.

* * *

Gustaw Zieliński (1809-1881) and Wincenty Pol (1807-1872) were almost age-mates, the poets of national Romanticism, which allows to put them next to each other. During their lifetime respected, held in esteem – nowadays they are nearly unknown. This is **the first reason for my parallel – both the men of letters are connected by the oblivion.** In general opinion Zieliński is the author of one text. As for Pol? perhaps of a few... It is not my intention to prove, that they are the poets from the first row, however such an anecdote I will recall. I know, that just as much parts them, but more puzzling than the divisions is this simply terrifying silence (scientific, research), by which they are surrounded today... I will try to infringe, interrupt it, and remind a little of these forgotten persons, indicating a few reasons of the possible parallel.

Second reason: BATTLE. Pol, when the November uprising broke out, as a 23 years old scientist (deputy to German Language and Literature teacher at the University in Vilnius) abandoned the university and joined up the 10th Regiment of the Lithuanian Uhlans. He was wounded in the combat and for the prowess was awarded the Virtuti Military Cross. When in 1832 the Lithuanian corps was forced to cross the Prussia border and surrender the weapons, Pol together with others went to Dresden. There he met Goethe, Mickiewicz, Odyniec and other representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, who noticed his poetic achievements...

It was different for Zieliński. Though a bit younger, for in the age of 21, he also actively participated in the events of the memorable November. When the uprising broke out he was a student of law at the University of Warsaw. On the 29th of November 1830 together with his cousin Józef Feliks Zieliński accompanied by Jan Turowski and Erazm Wróblewski he was the member of the uprising patrol, supporting belvederians¹. Among others he fought in the engagements at Paprotnia, Królikarnia and Warsaw on 6th and 7th of September 1831². After the the uprising fall, he crossed the Prussia border. A couple of months later, with the benefit of amnesty, he returned³ to the country. In his unpublished so far *Dziennik*, in reference to this decision we can read: „My family, of which possessions I was the sole heir, did not wish for me to go in the wide world, so on the strenuous calls of my father, at the beginning of the 1832, I returned to the country”⁴. And he was meant to become a farmstead manager. With irony, not to say with nonchalance, he was writing in *Dziennik* about that first managing of his:

For not by a handicap nor by unfittment could I defend myself against conscription into the military service, it was necessary to have some estate. After various wangling it was decided, that my paternal uncle would sell me a little grange, that is, as a matter of fact, a colony Kierz. And so it happened, at the end of May or at the beginning of June I settled at my new domicile and property. [...] So I began a profession of a farmstead manager, however the estate itself was ludicrous. Firstly too small [about 200 hectares] to get down to it seriously, secondly I received it in miserable condition, fields were partially sown, poorly cultivated, buildings in the worst condition⁵.

Not to suffer the effects of the government decree, according to which all military men serving in the Polish army during the uprising were

¹ <https://skepe.pl/18-historia?start=15> Access 5th July 2016 cf A. Stogowska, *Wpisany w epokę*, Płock 1996, p. 42.

² W. Śliwowska, *Gustaw Zieliński*, [in:] *Zesłańcy polscy w Imperium Rosyjskim w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku. Słownik biograficzny*, Warszawa 1998, p. 714-715.

³ J. Odrowąż-Pieniążek, [foreword to:] G. Zieliński „*Kirgiz*” i inne poezje, Warszawa 1956, p. 9.

⁴ G. Zieliński, *Dzienniki mojego życia*, ms. Dział Zbiorów Specjalnych. Biblioteka im. Zielińskich w Płocku, sign. 777, c. 118r. Further on for indicating collections from Dział Zbiorów Specjalnych of Biblioteka im. Zielińskich, I will use the abbreviation BZ.

⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 118v.

to be conscripted into the Russian army (with the exception of people unfit for military service or owning the property providing maintenance) paternal uncle ceded to Gustaw the Kierz grange⁶. But the young man did not escape his fate. Shortly after helping the members of Zaliwski expedition – his own schoolmates – he was arrested, deprived of any rights and property and was sent to the indefinite settling in Siberia.

THIRDLY: FAME. To begin with, an anecdote. Władysław Bełza, in his work entitled *Wincenty Pol. Wspomnienie w 40-stą rocznicę zgonu poety*, inserted the story on how Mickiewicz, during one of the Dresden evenings read, instead of his own, a text written by Pol. The piece was enthusiastically received and when the bard was congratulated, he turned to the real author with felicitations and the warning, so as „[...] not to deny the holy fire, which he nourishes in his heart”⁷. Whether such situation took place – can be questioned. Undeniable however is the fact of big Pol's popularity in the first half of the 19th century. He was publishing a lot – already even on emigration: in 1833 a German translation of his folksongs came out, then he also finished the collection of popular and patriotic songs, which in honour of his camp mate and friend, a priest Janusz Czetwertyński, he entitled *Pieśni Janusza*. Since 1837 he had maintained regular contacts with count Ksawery Jasiński, and those meetings would result in subsequently published *Mohort*. I make a stop here. *Mohort* – nowadays poorly known, almost forgotten – at the times of national bondage was put next to *Pan Tadeusz*. Władysław Dropiowski in his foreword to *Mohort* edition in Biblioteka Arcydział Polskich i Obcych, (Brody 1907), wrote:

The poet wanted to preserve the past dismissing into shadows and hand it over to the memory, just like Mickiewicz his 'last court apparitors', wardens, chamberlains, etc. [...]. The character of the old lieutenant from the Ukrainian borderlands is therefore a symbol of armed, agricultural, religious Old Poland, symbol which is supposed to appeal to younger generation: there were such vigours in fathers, such a spirit, such virtues, so they lived, so they died. [...] And again a comparison with „Pan Tadeusz” comes into mind. [Pol] like Mickiewicz juxtaposes two

⁶ T. Polanowski, *Gustaw Zieliński*, [in:] *Obraz literatury polskiej XIX i XX wieku*, p. III, vol. 2, ed. M. Janion, M. Denarłowicz, M. Maciejewski, Kraków 1988, p. 828.

⁷ W. Bełza, *Wincenty Pol: wspomnienie w 40-stą rocznicę zgonu poety*, Kraków 1912, p. 12-13.

worlds: dying old one and a new one, different, lower in spirits, although not crucially dissimilar⁸.

The titles of Pol's poetic and prose works published before and after *Mohort* can be proliferated. His literary and journalistic activity was more than dynamic then, for it is to be kept in mind, that for many years he also had cooperated with „Rozmaitości”, „Dziennik Mód Paryskich”, the Ossoliński Library periodical...

Zieliński was also beginning his literary popularity abroad – but in Siberia. He was studying and reading there. Reading a lot – including Pol's texts. In his exile library he undoubtedly had *Przygody J.P. Benedykta Winnickiego w podróży z Krakowa...*, by Wincenty Pol, Lvov 1840. On account of that, Zieliński returned from Siberian exile (in 1842) not only as a martyr to the national cause, but also as a man of letters. The author of *Kirgiz*. Because there, in exile, this most known text of his came into existence.

After coming back he stays in Warsaw, where is enthusiastically welcomed and invited to the parlours. He especially often frequents to Nina Łuszczewska place, where he recites his works. He also doesn't neglect visiting other places. Going through unpublished Zieliński's correspondence, I came across Edmund Chojecki's letter, who wrote:

Leon Łubieński informed me, that we are to hear one of your works, which is to be evaluated tomorrow at Mrs. Łubieńska. From today's general meeting it occurred, that I am to ask you, to be so kind and send me in the morning what we are to read, for beforehand I would like to learn to read it perfectly and prove to you, that in some respects we are able to be concerned with feelings of an author. If my request is not ineffective, I will be infinitely obligated for sending me the manuscript.

Best regards: E. Chojecki⁹

⁸ W. Dropiowski, [foreword in:] *Mohort*, Brody 1907, p. 121-123.

⁹ Polish writer, journalist, traveller, publicist and poet, Polish-French translator. He spent young years in Warsaw, where he was friends, among others, with Norwid, cooperated with „Przegląd Warszawski”, „Echo” and „Biblioteka Warszawska”, was the secretary of the Management of Warsaw Theatres. A letter without the date, but certainly from years 1842-43, because in 1844 Chojecki already went to Paris. Listy różnych osób do Gustawa Zielińskiego: Edmund Chojecki, ms. BZ, sign. 796, c. 14 r.

Zieliński, just like Pol, easily established contact with the intellectual society, connecting himself for many years with people gathered round „Biblioteka Warszawska”, „Przegląd Naukowy”, „Lwowskie Rozmaitości”, „Snopek Nadwiślański”.

FOURTHLY: DISAPPOINTMENT. In 1846 Pol became a victim of Galicia rebellion. He hardly escaped death. Imprisoned, firstly in Jasło, then in Lvov, ill and beset by anxiety about the future of his family, he suffered that time with tremendous anguish. Then he wrote *Siedem psalmów pokutnych w duchu dawidowym*¹⁰. Dropiowski stated, that:

[...] under influence of terrible ordeals and harsh disappointment, which he experienced from his beloved folks, he underwent complete spiritual metamorphosis. From now on he averts [...] from folks, progress and newer times, from respecting and loving the past democrat he becomes a conservatist [...], detecting the bright sides only in the past¹¹.

The suffering was multiplied by the critique, who also was not kind to the poet.

Gustaw Zieliński's disappointment, what was confirmed by his son Józef in one of the memoirs about the father, was exactly the blow struck by the critique, who severely evaluated his father's works. Even the authorship of *Kirgiz* was questioned. Zieliński himself, publishing *Samobójca* already in the country, in a letter from 1878 to Erazm Wróblewski, drew a parallel between his and Pol's fate.

You evaluated my poem very kindly [...]. But will the literary critique be as well lenient?, this is a great question, I anticipate the opposite effect. Firstly they announce, that I thrilled the committee, to which nobody admittedly avows, but which, with some shades, has quite a number of adherents, secondly, that a party willing to trample and degrade all what is inconsistent with its level, has established. So Syrokomla got hit, then Pol, and now they slated Odyniec for his *Listy z podróży*, which public opinion received very warmly¹².

¹⁰ T. Polanowski, op. cit., p. 825.

¹¹ W. Dropiowski, op. cit., p. 24.

¹² Listy Gustawa Zielińskiego do różnych osób: Erazm Wróblewski, ms. BZ, sign. 795, c. 145v.

Disheartened he stops writing – he engages in ... history, but theoretically. History in practice is another disappointment. When the January uprising broke out, Zieliński left the borders of the Kingdom, making for the west of Europe. That was not his only journey, for he often was visiting France, Italy, Spain. But the participants of the uprising construed the departure as a voluntary banishment. Why did he do it? He didn't any longer believe in a success of such spurts? Or maybe ... he had too much to lose¹³?

FIFTHLY: SCIENCE. After leaving the prison Pol found himself destitute. He tried to earn his living from tutoring. Because apart from literature he was always fervently engaged in geography and ethnology of the lands of old Poland, therefore in 1849 count Thun, the then Minister of Education, appointed Pol for the professor of geography at the Kracow university. The post provided for his living, however it added to his trouble. Pol was not trained as a geographer, he lacked systematic, thorough studies. Preparing the lectures demanded big amount of labour. Thanks to self-education however, he gained an impressive knowledge and at the time of his three-year professorship published the following works: *Północny wschód Europy*, *Rzut oka na północne stoki Karpat*, *Rzut oka na umiejętność geografii*. At the end of 1852, for the political reasons, the government dismissed three university professors, including Pol.

Zieliński, as I pointed out above, was disappointed by „history in practice”. But not by its theoretical side. His biggest scientific achievement was monograph of Świnka family (Toruń 1881), called by the author *Rodowód*. The print was not intended for the bookstore circulation – so why did he devote few years of his life to prepare the print, which was not meant to be available for the readers? The answer to this question is brought by preserved but not published correspondence. The author wrote:

Now as regards *Rodowód*, for there were 100 copies printed, so it was acknowledged in advance, that this publication is not intended for the bookselling commerce, but because alongside the main text which may interest the family, a significant number of documents of historical and scientific importance was included, I considered it appropriate to

¹³ In the 40' Zieliński's farmstead consisted already of 15 000 ha. A. Stogowska, op. cit., p. 22.

grant this work to prior national libraries and more accurate of our scientists, mainly devoted to historical research. [...] When Władysław was going abroad and took the road by Krakow, I instructed him to hand one copy for each: the Society of Science in Poznań, Academy of Learning in Krakow, Jagiellonian Library and Czartoryscy Museum in Krakow, as well as to distribute a couple of copies to our historians. If Mr. Jan picked up 25 copies intended for him, it would be worth knowing how he disposed of them. [...] Anyway it behoves to hand one copy to Krasieńscy as well as Zamoyscy Library in Warsaw¹⁴.

The work got an enthusiastic reception – an exponent of that prevalent opinion was no one else but Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, who on 10th May 1881 wrote from Dresden to the co-author of *Rodowód*, Jan Zieliński:

Dear Sir! Coming the day before yesterday back from quite a long stay in southern France I had a true pleasure to receive Your letter from February and the first volume of extremely interesting and made with unexampled here thoroughness work on the Świnka-Zieliński family. I even do not need to repeat, that I read it with a vivid attention and I may congratulate you on accomplishing it. Not only for the family but also for the common history of Płock province this work is an exceptional contribution – fruit of a truly Benedictine research. I send my honest and sincere thanks and regards, with which I have a pleasure to be

Most Humble Servant
Your Benefactor's
J. I. Kraszewski¹⁵

This is one of his significant works, but not the only one – the others are for example *Z przeszłości Skepego*, *O Ziemi Dobrzyńskiej ...*

SIXTHLY: IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY. After failures of the consecutive freedom spurts, Pol became convinced, that the real chance for surviving of the subjugated nation and for its cultural salvation was the legal activity heading for improvement of national education and culture development. He wrote about the need for a whole

¹⁴ Listy Gustawa Zielińskiego do różnych osób: Erazm Wróblewski..., c. 286 r.

¹⁵ Listy Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego do Jana Zielińskiego, ms. BZ, sign. 838, c. 90 r-v.

host of „men of pen and science” in Polish society. He formulated that postulate in the letter from 10th of June 1876¹⁶ to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. Pol sometimes also called those „men of pen and science” „[...] the men of good sowing in the Homeland”. This term appears in the poet's letter from 25 October 1849 addressed to Michał Wiszniewski¹⁷, a professor of universal history at the Jagiellonian University, whom Pol tried to induce to coming back to the country and university. He was also encouraging another men of „good sowing” to return from emigration and to compete for a chair in Department of Polish Literature at Jagiellonian Wszechnica – Sewewryn Goszczyński. In the letter from 27th of February 1859 Pol was convincing him of that idea as follows:

[...] Maybe there was never bigger shortage of people in the country as it is nowadays, because older ones have already got off the field, and the young generation publish nothing, for living in negation, they believe in nothing and can not find the faith, therefore more people of good sowing are needed in the country then ever...¹⁸.

And Zieliński? Gustaw Zieliński founded a library in Skepe, gathering there books not only necessary to develop his literary and historical interests, but also showing the splendour of national past. The book collection donated to society by his son Józef, constituted the foundations of existing until today, the seventh among the oldest scientific libraries in Poland – Zielińscy Library in Płock. Profits from the homestead, besides from buying books, he also devoted for supporting publishing houses and libraries. Just to give an example. Since 1848 he had been co-financing „Biblioteka Warszawska”, subsidising „Gazeta Łęcka”, supporting issue of Jan Kochanowski *Dzieła*, co-financing construction of the Adam Mickiewicz Monument in Krakow. It is worth remembering, that one of the biggest achievements in the field of regional research was publishing *Lauda Dobrzyńskie* by Academy of Learning in Krakow, the records gathered on the basis of archival researches, and subsidised by Zieliński¹⁹. From the remained

¹⁶ *Listy z ziemi naszej. Korespondencja Wincentego Pola z lat 1826-1872*, collected, comp. and pref. Z. Sudolski, Warszawa 2004, p. 427-431.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹⁹ Information drawn from unpublished correspondence, some of them also: T. Polanowski, *op. cit.*

correspondence with Szujski it results, that Zieliński remained in constant contact with Academy of Learning²⁰. He also was helping the men of letters. Once again from unpublished correspondence it is known, that it was Zieliński who strove for printing and disseminating the works of Teofil Lenartowicz.

[...] I shall ask you to see Wolf on account of Lenartowicz's *Jagoda*. When I was in Warsaw he promised to send me a listing, how many copies had been sold, but he didn't do it. I appealed to him, for they could send Lenartowicz some of these selling, he told me they don't have his address, because some autograph lover took it as a token. Lenartowicz's address is as follows: (Italy – Firenze via Montebello 24. Teophelo Lenartowicz). Altogether the bookshop brushes this matter off, and instead of coming to poor man of letters aid, they treat a thing with the greatest indifference [!]. First of all they should send a couple of copies to Warsaw literary magazines, so as one writes a review, more swiftly the buyers will appear, but what of it when even among notices on new books so often placed by the bookshop all over the newspapers, there is no single reference to this *Jagoda lasów mazowieckich*. Therefore be so kind to take care of this matter warmly²¹.

Did they know each other? Zieliński was reading Pol ... and Pol also knew Zieliński's texts, since in the *Pamiętnik do literatury polskiej w XIX w.* he wrote about his *Kirgiz*:

In *Kirgiz* we can see great fervent, loving soul, pushed out into the desert of the world. It is a lovely picture, but one has to have a key to that all life of emigrants in the Caucasus, whose situation was even worse from the others, because against their own beliefs they had to fight a nation defending the cradle of the humankind²².

They got to know each other late, because not until 1858. It is possible to speak about a specific fascination. They met for the first time on 22nd of June 1858 in Warsaw. In one of the parlours Pol was to deliver an improvisation in honour of Zieliński. Zieliński inscribed Pol

²⁰ Listy Gustawa Zielińskiego do różnych osób: Józef Szujski, ms. BZ, sign. 795, c. 75r-77v – s. 310.

²¹ Listy Gustawa Zielińskiego do różnych osób: Erazm Wróblewski..., c. 267v-268 r.

²² *Pamiętnik Wincentego Pola do literatury polskiej w w. XIX w dwudziestu prelekcjach mianych w radnej sali miasta Lwowa*, Lwów 1866, p. 391.

a poem *Do Wincentego Pola*. A work preserved and known to us²³, for in 1878 it was reprinted (what's more interesting without author's knowledge and consent) in *Biesiada*. Surprised Zieliński wrote in September of the same year:

I kindly thank you for included excerpt from *Biesiada*, where they extracted a rhyme written once for Pol in an album from, this I cannot guess, only unless from that album itself²⁴.

Interestingly, a poem dedicated to Gustaw Zieliński didn't survive. It can be surprising, for such was a custom... But perhaps Pol looked upon the delivered improvisation as a literary gift? It has also to be honestly admitted, that in poets' works known to us, interdependences are not seen. The reason – more than obvious. After 1842 Zieliński writes little, very little. He devotes himself to scientific, research work, conducts extensive correspondence, manages the huge property. But he doesn't dedicate himself to belles-lettres.

For Pol – Zieliński's subjects, style, language, and finally technique were not too appealing. Zieliński (apparently successfully) wrote Mickiewicz-like.

Mutual fascination was strong, but probably rather short. They remembered about one another, what is confirmed by the fragments of letters and memoirs mentioned above, but they weren't maintaining the acquaintance, for maybe not even friendship, too intensely.

Pol and Zieliński therefore accomplished in polish society at least three reasons, for which they ought to be remembered. The first one is poetry born of romantic tradition. The second – scientific activity. And as for the third one the activity heading for the cultural salvation of the subjugated nation, should be indicated. Both of them were men-institution. Intellectuals, who (presumably unfortunately) no matter of achievements in the field of scientific and social-civic research, remain in the tradition of Polish culture first of all as men of letters. Pol as tireless eulogist of Polish land beauty and the nation past fame, Zieliński – of the Kyrgyz steppes. Both of them – didn't live on the margin of the nation, were not only active men of letters, but also citizens, scientists, important members of the society. And today,

²³ I enclose the poem in original version in appendix at the end of this article.

²⁴ Listy Gustawa Zielińskiego do różnych osób: Erazm Wróblewski..., c. 138v.

also both, as well Pol the poet-geographer as Zieliński the poet-historian, on this very margin of history and literature, and science, and Polish culture are located.

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Appendix (Aneks)

Do Wincentego Pola

Bracie! – my z jednej niwy pracownicy,
Chociaż nie jedną szliśmy w zawód drogą;
Tyś ujął lutnię – i pielgrzymią nogą
Puścił się w obszar lechickiej ziemicy;
Tyś trącił struny – i akordy czyste
Echem od wszystkich polskich serc odbrzmiały;
Tyś trącił struny – i pierś nam owiały
Łany pszeniczne i niebo ojczyste;
Tyś trącił struny – i spod wieków pleśni
Wystąpił orszak rycerskich postaci,
Których kraj cały ukochał jak braci,
Bracie! – tyś perły złożył w skarbcu pieśni.

*

I jam się puścił, ale w kraj nieznany,
Między lud dziki, między huragany,
Gdzie, jak świat stary, bój zacięty wiodą,
Człowiek — pył marny – z olbrzymią przyrodą.
Tam – mimo woli zgiąć musisz kolana,
A głos, co ci się wyrywa z płuc cieśni,
To już modlitwa do Zastępów Pana.
Jam – grosz ten wdowi złożył w skarbcu pieśni.

*

Czyż nam o marne chodziło oklaski?
Względy krytyki – lub w chwilowe blaski,
Którymi wieńczy ulubieńców – moda?
Nie – dla śpiewaka to żadna nagroda.
Niech jedna ręka serdecznie cię ściśnie,
Niech jedno serce silniej ci uderzy
I łza zapału w tęsknym oku błysnie,
A młoda dusza, co w lepszy świat wierzy,
Niech oko jedną chwilę słodko prześni –
To jest najwyższa nagroda dla pieśni²⁵.

²⁵ G. Zieliński, *Do Wincentego Pola*, [in:] *Kirgiz i inne poezje*, oprac. J. Odrowąż-Pieniążek, Warszawa 1956, p. 80-81.