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Lech Szczucki – an Unconventional Historian of Philosophy

This article is not solely an occasional elaboration; for although it cannot be denied that an anniversary celebration was the incentive for its writing, it is not the author's intention to present a jubilee eulogy. Neither is "Archive of the History of Philosophy and Social Thought" a journal suitable for publishing congratulatory cards, nor is the author of this paper, unfortunately, a person who would be able to perform such a task in a stylish and graceful way. The aim I set for myself here is different – taking advantage of the anniversary character of the 47th volume of "The Archive", I would like to present, briefly and to the point, without embellishments, the information concerning the forms of the celebrant's scientific activity, rather untypical in the environment to which he belongs by profession, as well as to point out the results of this activity, materialised in the form of publications, though only the most important ones. On no account should this article be treated as an exhaustive discussion of Szczucki's academic achievements.

I am going to begin with a banal statement which, despite its obvious banality, must appear here with a suitable commentary – Prof. Szczucki, for many years the Head of the Department of Modern Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, is not, *sensu stricto*, only a historian of philosophy. Or to put it better – he is not a historian of philosophy only. What he deals with in his own research can be more aptly defined using the term "history of intellectual culture", or even a briefer one "intellectual history".

The second clarification due here is as follows: Szczucki's own research work is basically limited to two centuries – the 16th and the 17th; in particular the 16th century constitutes his preferred area of study – the one where he feels most at home.

The two above statements cannot yet be regarded as sufficient clarification, since the term “intellectual history of the 16th and 17th centuries” which I use here is, naturally, an unclear one. Therefore, it has to be reminded that the scope of the term in question covers at least such areas as religious and theological thought, philosophical thought, political and scientific thought, *etc.* Szczucki moves with ease among all the issues connected with the areas of intellectual culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, which are listed above (and hence goes beyond the interests of a typical historian of philosophy). What is more, it should be openly said that the history of philosophy *sensu stricto* does not belong to the main area of his interests, which is sometimes regarded in philosophical environment with slight disappointment or disapproval.

I must own that I myself was once not far removed from such an attitude, which happened on the following occasion. In 1980 one of the most famous philosophical texts of the Italian Renaissance, namely the treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* by Pietro Pomponazzi, was published in Polish translation in The Library of Philosophy Classics. Lech Szczucki was the person who critically revised the Polish version of Pomponazzi's treatise, corrected the translation and prepared the text for printing, adding the necessary footnotes and explanations, as well as an extensive preface, which in itself constituted a small treatise. It contained an extremely thorough philosophical analysis of the text, and presented it against the sweeping philosophical background of the period¹.

When I was finishing the perusal of that preface, the following thought appeared in my mind: Wouldn't it be better, if the author had devoted his energy and effort to an occupation which would bear fruit in the form of such treatises, familiarising the reader with rich and interesting philosophy of the Italian Renaissance, instead of wasting his time and energy on work, equally or perhaps even more time-consuming, concerning texts on radical religious heterodoxy, which – let us be honest – may be interesting only to a handful of people in Poland?

However, even then, on reflection, I considered such a thought as ridiculous. Although for me there can be no doubt that, had Szczucki followed that way, he would have reached an incomparably broader audience in Poland (particularly among historians of philosophy), it would have happened at the expense of the so-called basic research on radical Reformation. I am of the opinion that the outcome of such an exchange would be negative.

¹ Pietro Pomponazzi, *O nieśmiertelności duszy* [*On the Immortality of the Soul*]. Translated from Latin by Maria Cytowska. Edited, with annotations and preface by Lech Szczucki, Warszawa 1980. Szczucki's preface: „Pomponazzi – arystotelik wąpiący” [“Pomponazzi – a doubting Aristotelian”], pp. VII–LIV.

Let us be honest – in Poland there will always be a few or a dozen historians of philosophy, dealing more or less successfully with the philosophy of the 16th and 17th centuries; however, I somehow do not see on the horizon anyone who would like to, or would be able to tackle, in an equally competent manner, the radical Reformation of the 16th century, which subject is also strongly entangled in philosophical issues, and cannot be sensibly interpreted without very good knowledge of historical-philosophical background. Following these considerations further, it should be openly said: It is a good thing that there is someone who became seriously involved in this subject and, continuing with energy and on an unusually big scale the pre-war research traditions, moved that research so much forward that it was noticed in the world and gained extensive popularity among the best experts in Europe and in the United States.

Since we have already touched upon the issue of the scale of Szczucki's research interests, also including the religious-theological thought of the period (which subject does not attract the attention of Polish historians of philosophy, if it is regarded as a possible area of research at all), please allow me to make here, in this context and by way of a digression, the following statement: In some environments of Western European historians of philosophy where, by the way, the history of philosophy is practised in a highly professional way, there has been a tendency, for at least twenty years, to present this discipline in textbooks concerning the history of philosophy against such a broad background that the material contained therein goes, in its full form, beyond the area of philosophy; the history of philosophy is transformed here into the history of intellectual culture.

Perhaps the most spectacular manifestation of such perception of the history of European philosophy is the newest edition of Überweg's *An Outline of the History of Philosophy*, devoted to the 17th century (*Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie. Das 17. Jahrhundert*). In this completely re-elaborated edition of the old "Überweg", where only the 17th century is discussed in four volumes divided into 8 thick books², a great deal of space

² *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, begründet von Friedrich Überweg. Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Band 1–3, herausgegeben von Jean Pierre Schobinger, Basel 1988–1998; Band 4, herausgegeben von Helmut Holzhey und Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann unter Mitarbeit von Vilem Mudroch, Basel 2001. These volumes appeared inconsecutively order, vol. 3 as the first one (1988), devoted to England; then vol. 2 (1993), devoted to France and the Netherlands; vol. 1 (1998) is devoted to philosophy on the Iberian Peninsula and in Italy – this volume was preceded by a very extensive Part I (p. 318), titled "Allgemeine Themen", which part, divided into 9 chapters, addresses the intellectual culture of the 17th century in general, touching, *inter alia*, on such subjects as: "The Philosopher in the 17th Century" (pp. 3–30); "Respublica Litteraria" (pp. 31–48);

is devoted to the presentation of these areas of thought which, in traditionally constructed textbooks on the history of philosophy were either entirely ignored or treated marginally, as insignificant threads. Among the subjects which are broadly considered here are, *inter alia*, extensive presentations of religious thought. The fact that a discussion on Jansenism can be found among these presentations should not be surprising for anyone, as this subject was also addressed before in textbooks concerning the history of philosophy of the 17th century, while in the textbooks written by Frenchmen it appeared as a mandatory one. However, in the newest edition of Überweg's *An Outline of the History of Philosophy*, there are also included extensive discussions of such phenomena of the 17th century religious thought as the English puritanism, the Dutch Arminianism and – for the first time in a textbook of such rank and renown – the Polish Socinianism; the latter even occupying a particularly exposed position³.

However, let us return to the main topic.



What has been said before about the subject of Prof. Szczucki's research work is slightly vague and does not give a clear picture of his scientific activity. Let us therefore try to express the issue in a more concrete way.

In the subject matter of Szczucki's research work we can roughly distinguish two areas – the first one is the history of philosophy in a narrower and broader sense. In the narrower sense it means the studies on the Italian Renaissance philosophy and on the school philosophy in Poland in the 16th century. In the broader sense it also denotes the studies concerning the political thought, particularly in the 16th century Poland, as well as these on the 16th century humanism, the programmes of religious tolerance, on the scientific revolution connected with Copernicanism, *etc.*

The second area is the religious and philosophical-religious thought of that period, from classical Reformation (Lutheran-Zwinglian-Calvinist) to the so-called radical Reformation. In turn, in the research on radical Reformation, clearly preferred by Prof. Szczucki, two thematic threads can be dis-

“Usage of Latin and National Languages” (pp. 49–61) *etc.* The fourth and last volume is devoted to the Empire and the countries of Northern and Central-Eastern Europe. This volume includes a separate, extensive chapter devoted to philosophy in Poland (Zweiter Teil, §§ 3–6, pp. 1259–1345).

³ Band IV. Erster Teil, § 21 (pp. 871–88 and 895–96), the influence of Socinianism in Germany was discussed here. Bd IV, Zweiter Teil, § 3 (pp. 1265–1287); here, in turn, the following issues were discussed: the genesis, development and decline of Socinianism in Poland, its religious-philosophical thought and its influence on the Western thought.

tinguished, namely a) Arianism or, strictly speaking the Antitrinitarianism in the 16th and 17th century Poland, which current of religious thought was by no means, as laymen consider, a homogeneous phenomenon, but a very diverse one, both theologically and philosophically, and b) the second thematic thread, *nota bene* connected with the first one, i. e. the currents of radical religious thought of the 16th century, placed, with regard to philosophical attitudes and religious dogma, to the left of Polish Arianism – the currents whose main representatives pursued their writing activity in Central-Eastern Europe). As far as these two threads are concerned, Prof. Szczucki is regarded by the environment of scientists dealing with this subject, both in European countries and in the United States, as an unquestioned authority.

Szczucki presents the results of his study in two different ways – conventionally, in the form of articles and monographs, and in a less conventional manner – in the form of publications which are the fruit of his editorial activity. The latter form of his scientific and publishing work requires a detailed description. First, however, we will address the former one.

We would have to begin with monographs. Taking chronology into consideration, the first work which has to be mentioned is a book, several hundred pages long, devoted to Marcin Czechowic, a leading Polish Arian in the 1570s and 1580s, whose religious-philosophical thought is presented here against the broad background of the history of Arian church. To know this book well is absolutely indispensable for anyone who is planning to commence studies on the 16th century Polish Arianism in future⁴.

The second monograph is a comprehensive outline of life and writing activity of Jacob Palaeologus, a heretic of Greek-Italian origin, one of the most interesting religious thinkers in the second half of the 16th century, who was active as an author in Transylvania, Moravia and Poland. The turbulent and somewhat adventurous fates of that heresiarch, which ended up with his beheading in Rome in the year 1585 have, since the 1950s, attracted, more and more often, the attention of historians. It is by no means due solely to that tragic finale; the most interesting thing are Palaeologus' original, even peculiar, but also far-sighted religious-philosophical conceptions. To put it as briefly as possible – in his conceptions, *nota bene* intertwined with interesting political ideas, Palaeologus aimed at such reinterpretation of Christian doctrine, which would allow for reconciliation of the three conflicting monotheistic religions, namely Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

⁴ *Marcin Czechowic (1532–16/3). Studium z dziejów antytrynitaryzmu polskiego XVI wieku, [Study on the History of Polish Antitrinitarianism in the 16th Century]*, Warszawa 1964, PWN, p. 321.

Prof. Szczucki, who became familiar with Palaeologus' thought not by way of reading secondary literature, but through tedious studies on his handwritten treatises, including those discovered recently, to whose publication he himself made a significant contribution, has presented an outline of Palaeologus' opinions, which may be regarded as the most comprehensive, or at least the most thorough one among those published to date⁵.

The third monograph is devoted to Christian Francken – a German heretic whose fate, like that of Palaeologus, was bound for a time with Polish Unitarian environment (his most interesting work was published in 1584, in Rodecki's printing house in Cracow). The unusual path of Francken's religious and philosophical search, marked with subsequent abjurations, and ending up in his death in the papal prison in Rome, was presented here – also based on the study of archive materials and source documents – in a very evocative way⁶.

Both the above-mentioned monographs differ considerably from the one devoted to Czechowic, with regard not only to the way in which the material was presented, but also to the writing technique which the author applied in them. To put it briefly and openly, the monograph on Czechowic, though excellent in the terms of its scientific layer, is written in a rather monotonous style and language, and it requires a certain effort to read through the author's very erudite, yet not necessarily exciting considerations. On the other hand, the monographs devoted to Palaeologus and Francken belong to these rare dissertations touching upon the intellectual history of that period, whose perusal, once commenced, is willingly and readily continued by the reader, and finished with reluctance. By the way, it is worth mentioning that the two monographs in question were published in Hungarian translation in Budapest, in the year 1980, while the monograph on Francken appeared in German translation a little earlier, in 1977, in Gottingen⁷.

⁵ *Heterodoksja i polityka (Jakuba z Chios-Paleologa losy i doktryna)*, [*Heterodoxy and Politics (the Fates and Doctrine of Jacob Palaeologus of Chios)*], [in:] L. Szczucki, *W kręgu myślicieli heretyckich*, [*In the Circle of Heretic Thinkers*], Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1972, pp. 11–121.

⁶ *Filozofia i autorytet (casus Chrystiana Franckena)* [*Philosophy and Authority (the Case of Christian Francken)*], [in:] *W kręgu myślicieli heretyckich* [*In the Circle of Heretic Thinkers*], *ibidem*, pp. 122–195.

⁷ In the book *Reformation und Frühaufklärung in Polen...*, hg. von P. Wrecionko, Göttingen 1977, pp. 157–243. The above-mentioned book consists in four major studies. Apart from Szczucki's study, it also includes the studies by two Polish authors: Janusz Tazbir (*Die Sozinianer in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 9–77) and Zbigniew Ogonowski (*Der Sozinianismus und die Aufklärung*, pp. 78–156). The book is closed with the study by a German scientist, P. Wrecionko (who was also the editor of the whole): *Die Sozinianer und der Sozinianismus im Widerstreit der Beurteilungen*, pp. 244–272.

The preface to the treatise by Pomponazzi *On the Immortality of the Soul* (see footnote 1), as well as the preface (in the English language), which appeared in Holland in the year 1994, to Palaeologus' treaty, published for the first time from its manuscript and *Disputatio Scholastica*, should also be included among the monographs⁸.

Synthetic outlines constitute a separate group of Szczucki's important publications. They include, among others, the outline *Filozofia w Polsce XVI wieku* [*Philosophy in the 16th Century Poland*], with over one hundred pages and the form of a textbook⁹; there are also two extensive and clearly constructed, with regard to synthesis, entries "Antitrinitarianism" and "Socinianism", prepared for *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*¹⁰. And finally, there are, always carefully elaborated, the entries in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [*The Polish Biographical Dictionary*]¹¹. The synthetic, and quite extensive, draft *Inkwizycja rzymska w XVI wieku* [*The Roman Inquisition in the 16th Century*], elaborated, to a great extent, on the basis of Szczucki's own archival research in the Vatican Archives, should also be included in this group. This extremely interesting outline was cunningly hidden by the author in the publication on Philipp Camerarius¹², a little-known figure, whose name would surely not have an electrifying effect on the readers. In contrast, the text devoted to Roman Inquisition, written by

The book was prefaced by the foreword written by a renowned German scientist, Robert Stupperich, in which he describes how the work in question was published.

⁸ *Introduction*, [in:] Jacobus Palaeologus, *Disputatio scholastica*, ed. by Juliusz Domański and Lech Szczucki, Utrecht, Bibliotheca Unitariorum, 1994, pp. VII–XLVIII.

⁹ In: *Zarys dziejów filozofii w Polsce. Wieki XVI–XVII* [*An Outline of the History of Philosophy in Poland. The 16th and 17th Centuries*], Warszawa 1989, PWN, Part II: Lech Szczucki, „Wiek XVI” [“The 16th century”], pp. 220–328.

¹⁰ New York–Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 55–61 and 83–87.

¹¹ The entries mentioned are: Marcin Czechowic, Piotr of Goniądz, Jan Niemojewski (edited together with Janusz Tazbir), Jacob Palaeologus, Fausto Sozzini.

¹² Philippus Camerarius, *Prawdziwa i wierna relacja o uwieżnieniu w Rzymie* [*The True and Faithful Report on Incarceration in Rome*]. Translated by Mikołaj Szymański. Edited, prefaced and annotated by Lech Szczucki, Warszawa 1984, PIW. What is called here a “preface” by Lech Szczucki consists, in fact, of three separate parts, the first of which, titled “Preface” (pp. 8–15) has, in fact, the form of a preface and provides information on the situation in research on Roman Inquisition; then follows the above-mentioned draft, almost one hundred pages long, on Roman Inquisition in the 16th century (pp. 6–115); at the end there is an interesting description of the adventures of the hero of the book, Philipp Camerarius, with the newest research concerning that topic taken into consideration (pp. 116–142). The text written by Camerarius himself, which, we may say, served as a pretext for publishing the book, well translated by M. Szymański, is 152 pages long (pp. 254–267). The book ends with annotations to the text (pp. 254–267) which, as usual, are carefully prepared by Szczucki, out of a research on primary sources conducted by himself.

a well-known and trustworthy historian, would very likely have attracted the attention of a much greater number of readers, had it been either published separately or specifically marked. It seems that the author of the draft on the Inquisition clearly has a talent for anti-advertising¹³.

The last group of Szczucki's original publications (the last one in our discussion, as it is not our intention to address all the kinds of his works), which cannot be ignored, are his small treatises and articles devoted to various partial subjects. With regard to number, they constitute the most extensive part of his writing output. In this group there are, among others, articles on the issues of the Italian and Polish Renaissance philosophy, but the majority of papers is devoted to the topics connected with radical Reformation. They are published not only in Polish, but also in other languages – English, German, Hungarian, French and Italian, the latter being the most common one (more than 20 articles).

It is worth mentioning that some of those articles attracted particular interest among the scientists abroad. As an example and, somewhat, an illustration of this statement, I am going to use only one short article, *Nieznane wydanie „Explicatio” Fausta Socyna* [*The Unknown Edition of the “Explicatio” by Fausto Sozzini*], written during the early stage of Prof. Szczucki's scientific activity and first submitted for publication in the Polish language in Warsaw (1966)¹⁴, and soon afterwards in the Italian language in Florence (1967), in a slightly amended version¹⁵. We are going to say a bit more about it.

In this article Szczucki relates a discovery which he made, by accident, in the University Library in Warsaw. There he came across a print which, after thorough examination, proved to be none other than a copy of the first edition of a famous treatise ascribed to Fausto Sozzini, *Explicatio primae partis primi capituli Ioannis* (which can be translated as: *Explanation on How to Understand the First Part of the First Chapter of the Gospel of John*).

¹³ Prof. Szczucki intended to write an extensive book on Roman Inquisition in the 16th and 17th centuries. At the end of his preface to the above-mentioned publication (on p. 15), he wrote, as follows: “I hope that my studies on Roman Inquisition in the 16th and 17th centuries, long lasting, albeit fragmentary and conducted somewhat on the margin of other works, will one day take the form of a separate, more exhaustive and properly documented book”.

¹⁴ *Ze studiów nad socynianizmem. Nieznane wydanie ‘Explicatio’ Fausta Socyna* [*From the Study on Socinianism. The Unknown Edition of the “Explicatio” by Fausto Sozzini*], „Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej”, Vol. IV, pp. 155–164. That volume, however, was published only in the year 1968.

¹⁵ *La prima edizione dell’ ‘Explicatio’ di Fausto Sozzini*, „Rinascimento”, XVIII, 1967, pp. 319–327.

This treatise, today numbered among the fundamental works of budding European Unitarianism (written – as we know – in Switzerland around 1562/63), attempts to prove that the traditional interpretation of the first chapter of the Gospel of John, regarded as the main support of the dogma on the Holy Trinity, is based on inappropriate understanding of John's words.

Sozzini presents an interpretation which is radically different and, in his opinion, the only correct and proper one (it partly relates, in some of its sections, to exegetical ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam), and suggests, in its light, that the thesis on the eternal existence of Christ is a misunderstanding.

Prof. Szczucki not only stated that the discovered text is, beyond any reasonable doubt, that of the first edition of the *Explicatio*, but also defined, based on the typographical analysis of the print, the place where it was published, namely the printing house belonging to a Unitarian typographer, Rafał Skrzetuski-Hoffhalter, in Alba Julia (Transylvania); finally, he established the approximate time of its publication.

Szczucki's discovery and findings constituted the news which was rather sensational for the experts in Italy and Hungary, as the discussions concerning the time when the treatise was written (A. Rotondó, V. Marchetti), and Sozzini's authorship, firmly questioned by some of the Hungarian researchers (A. Pirnat¹⁶) were in progress there at the time. Those discussions, as well as the role played in them by that short article written by Lech Szczucki were presented in detail by a Hungarian researcher, Mihaly Balazs, in his recently published book¹⁷.

Among the publications in this group there is a separate genre, consisting of articles depicting scientific profiles of renowned scientists, Polish and foreign ones, usually those who were somehow connected with the circle of issues falling within Szczucki's professional interests. We are going to mention only two most interesting cases. The first one – not chronologically first, but chosen due to the particularly successful form of that publication – is the scientific portrait of Stanisław Kot (1885–1975); in truth, not only a scientific

¹⁶ I have already expressed, in my book *Socynianizm a Oświecenie. Studia nad myślą filozoficzno-religijną arian w Polsce XVII wieku* [*Socinianism and Enlightenment. Study on Philosophical-Religious Thought of Arians in the 17th Century Poland*], Warszawa 1966, in a very extensive annotation 15, pp. 360–363, my opinions on the issue of rather peculiar views concerning the person and works of Fausto Sozzini, promoted by A. Pirnat (an otherwise distinguished researcher).

¹⁷ *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566–1571). From Servet to Palaeologus*, Baden-Baden et Bouxviller, 1996, Editions Valentin Koerner, „Bibliotheca Dissidentium, scripta et studia” N°7, pp. 79–89. Let us add, on the margin, that Balazs, following into the footsteps of L. Szczucki and A. Rotondó, convincingly establishes the date of publishing the first edition of *Explicatio* for April–May 1568.

one, since the author went beyond the scientific issues. That article, written by inspiration of the environment of Italian historians, was first published in Florence¹⁸, before, in a slightly changed version, it appeared in the Polish language¹⁹.

In turn, at the request of American scientists, Prof. Szczucki elaborated an analytical draft, where he discussed the research on radical Reformation in Central Europe, conducted for thirty years by G. H. Williams, a professor from Harvard University, unquestionably one of the best experts on the subject²⁰.



The monographs, as well as the articles and treatises of a smaller size constitute, as I have already mentioned, only one form of Szczucki's scientific and publishing activity. The second form, an unconventional one, since it is

¹⁸ "Rivista storica italiana", III, 1999, fasc. 1.

¹⁹ „Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce”, XLIII, 1995, pp. 195–212.

²⁰ L. Szczucki, *George H. Williams' Studies on the Radical Reformation in Central Europe*, [in:] *The Contentious Triangle: Church, State and University*. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor George Huntston Williams. Edited by R.L. Petersen et C.A. Pater, Volume LI, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1999, pp. 129–134.

It is worth mentioning here that the most famous work by Williams (born in 1914) was *The Radical Reformation* (1st edition 1962; 3rd edition 1992, whose length reached the impressive number of 1513 pages). It was in that work that the author already showed his excellent knowledge of radical Reformation in Central-Eastern European countries in the 16th century (the Polish-Lithuanian Republic, Moravia and Transylvania). In later years Williams, who – let us add on the margin – had mastered the Polish language, commenced detailed research on Socinianism in the 17th century Poland. His research resulted, apart from a number of smaller articles, in two important works: *The Socinian Anthology*, which contains important texts and documents concerning this movement, published in English translation (*The Polish Brethren. Documentation of the History and Thought of Unitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Diaspora, 1601–1685*), Part I–II, Harvard Theological Studies XXX, 1980), and *Historia reformationis polonicae* by Stanislaus Lubieniecki the younger (Amsterdam 1685), published in English translation in 1995 (*History of the Polish Reformation and Nine Related Documents*) – a text constituting an extremely important source for the history of radical Reformation in Poland. The English language edition of Lubieniecki's text was provided with very extensive commentaries, occupying 356 printed pages, and evidencing Williams' great erudition within the scope of political and radical history of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the 16th and 17th centuries.

It is impossible not to mention here the fact that Williams devoted a big book to John Paul II (*The Mind of John Paul II. Origins of His Thought and Action*, New York 1981). Williams had made Wojtyła's acquaintance as early as 1962, and then met him a few times, also – as far as I know, when the latter became Pope. Williams' book is written in a style which shows great liking for John Paul II. Williams died in October 2000. Lech Szczucki devoted to him *Wspomnienie pośmiertne* [*The Posthumous Memory*], „Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce”, XLV, 2001, pp. 293–296.

encountered much less frequently in the environment of typical historians of philosophy, is his editorial work.

It is an extremely important form in Szczucki's academic activity. What is more, sometimes one can be under the impression that Prof. Szczucki himself attaches to it more importance than to his own original publications. It is even possible to express an assumption that this activity, particularly with regard to a certain kind of these publications (which will be addressed in more detail later in here) is treated by him as a kind of mission. Therefore we have to look closer at this form of his activity.

It should be pointed out at the outset that this is an impressive activity, with regard to both its scope and editorial efficiency, as well as to the perseverance with which Szczucki has been pursuing it for so many years.

The texts edited by Prof. Szczucki are usually handwritten treatises and notes, most of them in the Latin language, whose correct deciphering sometimes requires Benedictine patience and, naturally, well-developed paleographic skills; furthermore, it is indispensable here to have great erudition within the range of historical realities and intellectual culture of the period. Without such qualifications it would be impossible not only to comment upon and elucidate (for the use of potential readers) more difficult excerpts, but also to simply understand the meaning of the text. This reminder is, of course, addressed not to the historians who perform such activities professionally, as for them it is an awfully banal statement, but to the persons who have never soiled their hands with this kind of work. Naturally, not all the texts prove to be so difficult; moreover, a great many texts published by Lech Szczucki are not taken from manuscripts but from old prints, which does not mean, however, that they presented no problems whatsoever. The choice of texts selected by Prof. Szczucki for publication may, of course, be a subject of comments, also critical ones. I myself perceive in this choice a clear and sensible plan, which does not mean that I approve it in all the details, with an equal degree of enthusiasm.

Following these general comments, let us see now how Szczucki's editorial activity looks in detail. We can distinguish three sections here, each of them important in a different way.

1. Anthologies. It does not concern – as the reader will find out in a moment – anthologies of little significance. I am going to mention them in accordance with the hierarchy of importance which I attach to them. The first, and probably the most important one, is *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XVI wieku* [*The Philosophy and Social Thought of the 16th Century*], which constitutes the 2nd volume of the series „700 lat myśli polskiej” [“700 Years of Polish Thought”]. It is a volume of great size, with approximately

670 pages²¹. The prestige of the series „700 lat myśli polskiej” makes all the comments on my part unnecessary.

Further, I would list *Literatura ariańska w Polsce XVI wieku* [*Arian Literature in the 16th Century Poland*], elaborated together with Janusz Tazbir and published at a very early stage of the scientific activity of both these scholars. It is also a large volume, consisting (together with the authors' preface) of over 740 pages²². This anthology is a carefully prepared collection of Arian texts from the 16th century, representative for that entire formation, and the first collection of the kind.

An ambitiously designed anthology of texts from the history of Reformation would occupy the third position on my list. The volume titled: *Myśl filozoficzno-religijna reformacji XVI wieku* [*The Philosophical-Religious Thought of the 16th Century Reformation*], which also is, like the previous two, a large one (543 pages), confronts, for the first time in Poland, the more interesting philosophical texts of classical Reformation, in its Lutheran-Zwinglian-Calvinist threads, with the texts of thinkers numbered among those of radical Reformation, also in Poland²³. The defect of this anthology is lack of a general preface, in which the author would organise the issues appearing in the texts, and thus made them more reader-friendly. It is difficult to deduct what made the author resign from writing such a preface.

Finally, the anthology section should include the selection of Miguel Servet's texts, as well as the documents concerning his case²⁴, also the first work of this kind in Poland. This volume, considerably smaller than the previous ones (303 pages), is provided with a relatively extensive preface (pp. 9–51), which successfully introduces the reader to the issues appearing in Servet's works, as well as to the historical details concerning “Servet's affair”.

All these anthologies together number two thousand two hundred printed pages. However, their volume is much larger, as numerous annota-

²¹ Selected, edited, prefaced and annotated by Lech Szczucki, Warszawa 1978, PWN.

²² *Literatura ariańska w Polsce XVI wieku. Antologia* [*Arian Literature in the 16th Century Poland. Anthology*]. Edited, prefaced and annotated by Lech Szczucki and Janusz Tazbir, Warszawa 1959, Książka i Wiedza, pp. V–LXXXVI + 664.

²³ Selected, elaborated, provided with a preliminary note and annotations by Lech Szczucki, Warszawa 1972, PWN, Series: „Wybrane teksty z historii filozofii” [“Selected Texts from History of Philosophy”]. The classical Reformation authors appearing here are: Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Philipp Melancton and John Calvin; the radical Reformation ones are: Thomas Müntzer, Balthazar Hubmeier, Sebastian Franck, Sebastian Castellio, Giacomo Aconcio, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Georgio Biandrata, Piotr of Goniądz, Szymon Budny, Grzegorz Paweł of Brzeziny.

²⁴ *Michał Servet (1511–1553). Wybór pism i dokumentów* [*Miguel Servet (1511–1553). Selected of Works and Documents*]. Edited, prefaced and annotated by Lech Szczucki, Warszawa 1967, Książka i Wiedza.

tions and explanations (particularly in “700 lat myśli polskiej”) are printed in nonpareil. Only an expert, well-acquainted with editorial works of this kind, is able to realise how much time and effort was required only to proof-read and correct the translations from Latin into Polish, and how much to prepare the prefaces, small prefaces, annotations and explanations. To put it briefly – it is extremely time-consuming work.

However, that bare fact cannot be, in itself, the only meaningful criterion used in the evaluation of these anthologies. Works which are not useful for anyone, prepared and elaborated by scribblers and maniacs, may also be time-consuming. The input of effort required by a given work may command respect and become the object of a high estimate only in the situation where such a work results in something meaningful and important. Well, it would be difficult for anyone who became better acquainted with the above-described anthologies to undermine or question their scientific and cognitive value. In short, they are excellently planned and equally excellently realised works, containing well-organised and professionally commented documentation in the form of texts which, together with explanations, allow us to better understand the mentality of people living in that period and to become more thoroughly familiar with large areas of the intellectual culture thereof.

2. The second section contains comprehensive editions of individual treatises or collections of documents, each of which constitutes a separate whole. These editions always contain the works with important contents, often little-known or entirely unknown previously, which were recently discovered. As a rule, the basis of an edition is formed of manuscripts which are either not easily available or even inaccessible, and sometimes of old prints, namely the ones which have been preserved in very small numbers or literally in one copy.

The texts published from manuscripts (which were practically inaccessible before) include Latin works and small treatises by Jacob Palaeologus, placed by Prof. Szczucki in the annex to his book from the year 1972²⁵; then important materials concerning Francken, printed therein²⁶. An extremely interesting text by Palaeologus, *Disputatio Scholastica* (mentioned by me above on p. 10 and in footnote 7) is particularly worthy of attention. However, I have to remind the readers that Juliusz Domański was the co-author of the philological elaboration of that edition (See: “Editor’s Preface”). Finally, the

²⁵ In the annex titled *Materials* we have: 1. *Jacobus Palaeologus Pio V*, pp. 199–229; 2. *Jacobi Palaeologi «De tribus gentibus»*, pp. 229–241; 3. *Jacobi Palaeologi de peccato originis*, pp. 242–243; 4. *Jacobi Palaeologi «An omnes ab Uno Adamo descenderint»*, pp. 243–244.

²⁶ [*Laurentius Maggius Everardo Mercuricino*], pp. 245–255, and: *Christianus Francken Claudi Aquavivae*, pp. 265–267.

text containing protocols from the seminars conducted in Raków by Fausto Sozzini in the last years of his life and, as such, including the last statements made by that heresiarch with regard to numerous basic issues of Socinian dogmas, holds an important position here. This last edition was prepared in collaboration with Janusz Tazbir, and again with philological assistance provided by Juliusz Domański²⁷.

In turn, the editions prepared based on old prints include: the most important treatise by Marcin Czechowic from the year 1575, *Rozmowy chrystyjańskie* [Christian Talks]²⁸; a very important treatise by Szymon Budny *O przedniejszych wiary chrystyjańskiej artikulech* [On the More Important Issues of Christian Faith]²⁹; the text of the most famous treatise by Francken *Praecipuarum enumeratio causarum...*, originally published in the year 1584 in Cracow and preserved in a single copy³⁰. The text by Philipp Camerarius *The True and Faithful Report on Incarceration in Rome*, mentioned above (See: footnote 11), should also be added to this group.

3. The third section is a completely separate poem – the edition of Andrzej Dudycz's correspondence, undertaken on Szczucki's initiative and realised in close cooperation with Hungarian scientists. That cooperation was formalised in 1974, when an agreement was concluded between two Institutes: the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Literary Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Eight years later, in 1982, the cooperation in question was, so to speak, promoted to a higher rank – it became an official programme of both Polish and Hungarian Academies. Two teams were created – the Polish one, led by its originator and architect, i. e. Lech Szczucki, and the Hungarian one, first led by Antal Pirnat, later by Tibor Szepessy. We are not going to speak here at length about the details, as interested readers may find them in the preface to the first volume of Dudycz's correspondence. What we are going to deal with is the point of those edition. To make the readers understand this point, it is necessary to explain who Andrzej Dudycz was.

²⁷ *Epitome Colloqui Racoviae habiti Anno 1601*, ediderunt Lech Szczucki et Janusz Tazbir, Warszawa 1966, PWN, The Library of Reformation Writers, No. 5. Scientific editor – Juliusz Domański. (See also: *Praefatio*, in which Lech Szczucki and Janusz Tazbir thank J. Domański for the assistance he rendered to them).

²⁸ Edited by: Alina Linda, Maria Maciejewska, Lech Szczucki, Zdzisław Zawadzki. Scientific editor: Lech Szczucki. Warszawa–Łódź 1979, PWN, The Library of Reformation Writers, No. 12.

²⁹ Edited by: Maria Maciejewska, Lech Szczucki, Zdzisław Zawadzki, Warszawa–Łódź 1985, PWN, The Library of Reformation Writers, No. 16.

³⁰ L. Szczucki, *W kręgu myślicieli heretyckich* [In the Circle of Heretical Thinkers], *ibidem*, pp. 256–267.

First I will allow myself to make a humorous digression. Once – it was probably in the year 1967 – Leszek Kołakowski wrote a small humoresque in which he parodied the review of my book *Socynianizm a Oświecenie* [*Socinianism and Enlightenment*]. Into that book, at its very beginning, I put an extensive presentation devoted to Dudycz and his polemic with Fausto Sozzini. Kołakowski wrote in his humoresque as follows:

I have nothing against Ogonowski's book; however, I would like to make a tentative suggestion that the author's choice of the subject may not have been very apt. In fact, it is not quite true that Dudycz, as the author suggests, is nothing else than an unspecified musical instrument, and Sozzini – a certain kind of Hungarian wine,

etc.

Although it is not necessary for me to ensure that Dudycz is not the name of a musical instrument, I am fully aware of the fact that he is not a commonly known person – even among historians of philosophy. For example, I failed to find him in the Great Encyclopedia issued by PWN³¹. Therefore, as I have already said above, it befits to devote a few sentences to this person. And so: who was Dudycz?

Andrzej Dudycz or, strictly speaking, Andreas Dudith Sbardellati (1533–1589), a hungarianised Croatian, is one of the more interesting personages in the world of Central-European intellectuals in the second half of the 16th century. At first he was closely connected with the circles of Hungarian Catholicism, which was testified by numerous church honours; he was, *inter alia*, the secretary of the primate of Hungary, then a bishop, subsequently transferred to more and more lucrative and important dioceses. Because of his church rank, Dudycz participated in the sessions of the Council of Trent (1562–63). From 1563 he established close contacts with the imperial court. At the Emperor's command, in the year 1565 he went to Poland, where one of his tasks was to organise, among noblemen and magnates, a pro-Hapsburg party. Since that time Dudycz's fate was connected with Poland, yet not quite in the way originally planned by himself and by his church and political superiors.

The career of that high church dignitary, hitherto so harmoniously developing, was interrupted and then radically changed by an affair he began in Cracow with a young Polish girl. Dudycz fell head over heels in love with a gentlewoman, Regina Straszówna, and married her secretly in

³¹ However, an article on Dudycz can be found in *The Polish Biographical Dictionary*, vol. V, pp. 443–448.

April 1567. That secret was naturally revealed very soon and Dudycz, who resigned from all his church and diplomatic honours, was excommunicated. However, that circumstance did not particularly affect the attitude towards his person at the imperial court. During the interregnum following the death of Sigismund II Augustus, Maximilian II entrusted Dudycz with the task of leading a campaign whose aim was to put a Hapsburg candidate on the Polish throne. During the second interregnum Dudycz was even nominated as the imperial deputy to participate in the electoral sejm in Warsaw in 1575. After Batory was elected the king, Dudycz was forced to leave Poland and, after a two-year stay in Moravia, finally settled down, in autumn 1579, in Wrocław, not far from the Polish border, where he spent the last ten years of his life.

However, it is not his biography, albeit interesting, that is the reason why contemporary historians are interested in the person of Andrzej Dudycz. He was an intellectual of a high rank. Having received excellent education in his youth (he studied in Venice and Padua, then in Paris), he afterwards intensively extended his knowledge, for example in Cracow, where he thoroughly studied logic and astronomy. His interests were extremely wide, from classical philology and history to mathematics and astronomy, from literature to philosophical and religious thought. Being well acquainted with theological problems, he keenly followed the discussions of the day, concerning those issues. After his excommunication, Dudycz established lasting contacts with circles of dissenters, both in the world of protestant orthodoxy and with the representatives of radical heterodoxy. He was extremely interested in the emerging Antitrinitarianism, as well as in religious groups which were more radical than Polish Arianism.

With that so diverse world of European intellectuals – philologists, historians, physicians, theologians and philosophers, and also with the imperial court, Dudycz carried on animated correspondence for many years. The letters from and to Dudycz, scattered around libraries and archives, as well as private collections almost everywhere in Europe constitute, all in all, a very important source of information on the world in his time; first and foremost, to tell the truth, concerning the world of diplomacy and politics, but also the world of science, philosophy and religion; in short – the intellectual culture in the second half of the 16th century.

The idea of gathering this correspondence, then ordering and publishing it together with explanations was therefore a happy, and even excellent, notion, although a very courageous one. The proponent and the *spiritus movens* of the entire enterprise, namely Prof. Szczucki, did not foresee, even in his worst forebodings, how difficult it would prove to realise the idea.

Those difficulties were not only of a material nature; they also consisted in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, finding sponsors who would agree to finance that costly project, carrying on extensive correspondence, indispensable for finding traces of letters written by and addressed to Dudycz, and finally in running searches in such countries as England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Holland, East and West Germany, Switzerland, Italy, as well as in Poland and Hungary.

Szczucki began to realise his idea in the year 1972 and, as far as I know, he intended to complete the project in a maximum of 7 years. However, it is only today, i. e. more than three decades after the first works were commenced, that it is possible to establish, with a high degree of probability, that the last, eighth volume of Dudycz's correspondence will be published in 2005³².

Here a perverse question comes to mind: would the initiator of the project have embroiled himself in that work, had he been able to predict, realistically, when it might be completed? He most probably wouldn't have done so. However, even if we can be surprised at the boldness with which Szczucki embarked on such a project, it is impossible not to regard with approval, and perhaps also with respect, the perseverance with which he has continued his efforts, despite all the difficulties (including the bureaucratic and material ones).

And it is clearly visible now that the project will be successfully completed. If, apart from that, and as a result of this edition, an extensive monograph on Dudycz, using the information contained therein, appeared in near future – a monograph already announced by Prof. Szczucki, and whose writing he has already commenced, we would probably receive a work containing fascinating material.



The last area of Szczucki's scientific activity, which cannot be ignored, is his work as a promoter and organiser of publication series and scientific events. I am going to mention, very briefly, only the most important ones:

³² The following volumes have been published to date (all in the Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest): 1992 – volume 1. Academic supervision: Lech Szczucki and Tibor Szepessy. Edition of texts: Tibor Szepessy and Susanna Kovacs. Commentary: Clara Pajorin and Halina Kowalska. 1995 – volume 2. Academic supervision – as above. Edition of texts: a team of Polish classical philologists led by prof. dr hab, Jerzy Axer. Commentaries: Halina Kowalska and Lech Szczucki. 1998 – volume 4. Academic supervision – as above. Edition of texts: Katarzyna Kotońska. Commentary; Halina Kowalska. 2000 – volume 3. Academic supervision – as above. Edition of texts: Andreas Szabó and Susanna Kovacs, of Polish texts: Maria Maciejewska. Commentary: Halina Kowalska. Volumes 5 and 6 are currently in press. Volume 7 is still in preparation.

1. „Biblioteka Pisarzy Reformacyjnych” [“The Library of Reformation Writers”], from the very start devised as a reference to the editorial initiative, commenced before the Second World War by Stanisław Kot, the aim of which was to publish the most important literary relics and documents connected with the history of Reformation in Poland including, of course, Arianism. At the beginning of the 1950s, when “Biblioteka” was originated, it was promoted by renowned scientists from the old school, those who made a name for themselves in that research area before World War II, among others Konrad Górski and Henryk Barycz. It has to be stated clearly, however, that the initiative came from Prof. Szczucki and Prof. Tazbir, and they shouldered the responsibility for the whole organisational side of that enterprise. In the end, Prof. Szczucki became the main person responsible for the series. 16 volumes have been published to date.

2. Editions of collections of studies devoted to the more interesting, and hitherto neglected, threads of philosophical thought, mostly concerning, naturally, the 16th and 17th centuries³³.

3. An editorial series, designed by Prof. Szczucki, and continued by him uninterruptedly and with great consistency since the year 1985, is worthy of more particular attention. In this series studies and drafts concerning philosophy (broadly understood) in the 16th and 17th centuries, are published in the form of books, each with the length of 160–260 pages. The official name of the series is „Renesans i reformacja. Studia z historii filozofii i idei, pod redakcją Lecha Szczuckiego” [“Renaissance and Reformation. Studies on the history of philosophy and ideas, edited by Lech Szczucki”], and the publishing house where these volumes are printed is the Publishing House of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The authors of the studies published in this series are Polish and foreign writers, both from the older generation, for example Eugenio Garin, and the younger one, sometimes even debutants. Due to careful selection of authors and studies, performed by the editor, the series in question is an interesting and important phenomenon in philosophical literature. 23 volumes have hitherto been published.

4. Finally, it has to be mentioned that, for many years, Lech Szczucki have put a great deal of editorial effort into the preparation, performed

³³ The collection of studies: *Magia, astrologia e religione nel Rinascimento*, Wrocław, Ossolineum 1972, p. 226, or: *Nauczanie filozofii w Polsce XVI–XVII wieku. Zbiór studiów* [Teaching Philosophy in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries. The Collection of Studies], Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1978, p. 208; or finally: *Socinianism and its Role in the Culture of the 15th–17th Centuries*, Warszawa, PWN, 1983, p. 239 (in collaboration with Janusz Tazbir and Zbigniew Ogonowski) may serve as examples here.

together with Janusz Tazbir, of subsequent volumes of the periodical “Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce” (“Renaissance and Reformation in Poland”). As it can be seen, these two academics continually cooperate with each other on many fronts.




The portrait outlined here presents a historian and a scientist who prefers to publish source texts rather than his own, and when he does publish his own works, they are usually quite short. Let us quickly add that the above comment doesn't mean, of course, that Prof. Szczucki can boast but few original works. The first part of this article manifestly contradicts such an idea. It is rather a question of easily visible disproportion between Szczucki's editorial and authorial activities. One is under the impression that the first one is treated by Szczucki as some kind of mission. And it is probably so, at least with regard to a certain type of editorial publications.

When it comes to authorial activity, Lech Szczucki is, as I have already stated above, an author of small forms, wherein he feels most at ease. This reluctance to become involved in producing larger works naturally does not result from the fact that he lacks material, as within his area of expertise he is a great erudite, or from lack of skills to compose bigger pieces, since he gave a clear example of such skills at least in a few cases. I would say that it is a consequence of several traits being united in his personality, such as sense of responsibility for the word, as well as criticism displayed towards his own findings, thoughts and statements. You might say that such attitudes should be characteristic for everyone undertaking scientific work. It is true – they should. But do they always, or at least often, appear together? Secondly – and this is what I am mainly thinking about – if such traits are overly developed, if they are hypertrophied, they may, and in fact they do create restraints and obstacles which make it difficult to accept creative impulses and associations, which appear spontaneously, and they are far from helpful in processing material (on which one is working) into a product in the form of a publication. Also, they certainly do not create an incentive to become involved in writing work aimed at producing a very extensive publication.

However, such attitudes also have their measurable advantages. They can be seen with a naked eye in Szczucki's works. If you take any of his works (written after the debut period), you may be certain that it does not include unnecessary discussions or speculations, i. e. the so-called waffle, or showy attempts to produce rhetorical effects. What you will perceive, is a clear tendency to present opinions, usually well-balanced, in concise

sentence structures, as well as caution, with regard to establishing facts and forming assessments, which at times may be simply irritating; furthermore, invariably, willingness to admit lack of knowledge when such lack occurs; finally – unusual eagerness to emphasise other people’s merits and achievements in the area of his own activity.

There is a term in the German language which – in my opinion – is fitting to describe a set of such features, namely “Zuverlässigkeit”. The English and the Americans would probably use here the word “reliability”. In the Polish language it seems best to use the term introduced, *nota bene* in a slightly different context, by Tadeusz Kotarbiński: “spolegliwość” (“dependability”).

Lech Szczucki is a dependable historian and scholar. He is also dependable with regard to human interactions. However, this is another matter and a different subject, which we do not propose to discuss here. 

Przełożyła Joanna Skibicka

ZBIGNIEW OGONOWSKI (1924–2018) – profesor historii filozofii, wybitny znawca filozofii nowożytnej i dziejów socynianizmu. Pracował m.in. w PIW w Warszawie, w Redakcji Dzieł Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego oraz w Instytucie Filozofii i Socjologii PAN w Warszawie. Opublikował m.in. *Z zagadnień tolerancji w Polsce XVII wieku* (1958), *Locke* (1972), *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XVII wieku. 700 lat myśli polskiej*, cz. I i II (1979), *Zarys dziejów filozofii w Polsce. Wieki XIII–XVIII* (współaut. i red.) (1989), *Myśl ariańska w Polsce XVII wieku. Antologia tekstów* (1991), *Filozofia polityczna w Polsce XVII wieku i tradycje demokracji europejskiej* (1992). Wieloletni redaktor naczelny „Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej”.

ZBIGNIEW OGONOWSKI (1924–2018) – professor of history of philosophy. Worked at PIW in Warsaw, as a member of the Editing Committee of the *Collected Writings* of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology PAN in Warsaw. Among his works are: *Z zagadnień tolerancji w Polsce XVII wieku (Problem of Tolerance in Poland in XVII Century)* (1958), *Locke* (1972), *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XVII wieku. 700 lat myśli polskiej*, cz. I i II (*Philosophy and Social Thought of the XVII Century. 700 Years of the Polish Thought*, vol. I and II) (1979), *Zarys dziejów filozofii w Polsce. Wieki XIII–XVIII (An Outline of the History of Philosophy in Poland in XVII and XVIII Century)* (coauthor and editor), *Myśl ariańska w Polsce XVII wieku. Antologia tekstów (Arianic Thought in Poland in XVII Century. Anthology of Texts)* (1991), *Filozofia polityczna w Polsce XVII wieku i tradycje demokracji europejskiej (Political Philosophy in Poland in XVII Century and the Tradition of the European Democracy)* (1992). Former, longtime Editor-In-Chief of the “Archive of the History of Philosophy and Social Thought”.