

The Person and the Challenges
Volume 9 (2019) Number 1, p. 127-153
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15633/pch.3366>

Jacek Popiel

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8790-2757>

Jagiellonian University, Poland

The History of Editing Literary and Theatrical Works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II*

Abstract

The article is devoted to the history of the edition of literary and theater works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. Based on the surviving materials in the archives, often unknown facts were presented showing the subsequent phases of discovery of Wojtyła as a poet, playwright, and actor.

Keywords

John Paul II, history of literature, poetry, drama, theatre.

The editing of literary and theatrical works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II – is warranted by a conviction that you cannot fully understand the person of the Holy Father without an insight into this part of his biography that concerns his fascination with poetry, drama and theatre. Therefore, you need to refer to the sources: manuscripts and typescripts, Church and private archives, and to carry out a comparative study of the preserved materials. In the event of each researcher, such work is combined with the hope of managing to get to the

* The text is an introduction to the book: Karol Wojtyła. Jan Paweł II, *Dzieła literackie i teatralne*. Tom I. *Juwenilia (1938-1946)*, ed. Jacek Popiel, Kraków 2019.

texts not known so far. Literature and theatre – these areas of creativity were close to Wojtyła since the times of attending the Wadowice high school. Until 1979, when the volume *Poezje i dramaty*¹ was released, only the closest friends knew about his juvenile works, poems and dramas. These texts were not published by Wojtyła. They circulated in copies addressed to friends, first of all to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk, the theatrical tutor from the Wadowice period, later on, the founder of the Rhapsodic Theatre. From various materials and recollections pertaining to Wojtyła's biography you can conclude that, as early as in Wadowice, he wrote the first volume of poems *Ballady Beskidzkie (Beskid Ballads)*, arguably maintained in the climate of "Czartak", a group of poets gathered around Emil Zegadłowicz². The volume has not been found. There is no information about its content, either. However, we may assume that Wojtyła presented some works from this small collection during poetry gatherings or competitions he participated in.³

From the juvenile period, a group of poems, under a common title *Psalterz Dawidów (Księga Słowiańska) (The Psalter of David (Slavic Book))*, by the author also referred to as *Psalterz (Księga Słowiańska) (The Psalter (Slavic Book))* or *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga Słowiańska) (The Renaissance Psalter (Slavic Book))*, has been preserved. *The Psalter*, in its manuscript version, was completed in spring 1939. Karol Wojtyła wrote these texts already in Cracow, where he moved together with his father in summer 1938. The Wojtyłas settled down in Dębniki (a district of Cracow) at 10 Tyniecka Street. Karol Wojtyła began his Polish studies in the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. In the first year of his studies, among his female and male colleagues, there were many future writers, artists and scientists, among others Jerzy Bober, Maria Bobrownicka, Janina Garycka, Tadeusz Hołuj, Irena Klemensiewiczówna (later Bajerowa), Halina Królikiewicz (later Kwiatkowska), Juliusz Kydryński, Tadeusz Kwiatkowski, Jerzy Lau, Maria Pachówna (later Przetacznikowa), Marian Pankowski, Krystyna Zbijewska, and Wojciech Żukrowski. On 15 October 1938 (two weeks after starting his studies) Wojtyła interpreted his poems entitled *Drogą topolowy most (Through the Poplar Bridge)* at a poetic soiree in the Sky

¹ K. Wojtyła (A. Jawień, A. J., S. A. Gruda, P. Jasień), *Poezje i dramaty*, wybór i układ z upoważnienia Autora M. Skwarnicki, J. Turowicz, redakcja filologiczna J. Okoń, Kraków 1979.

² Emil Zegadłowicz (1888–1941), a poet, prose writer, novelist, playwright and translator, co-founder of the group *Czartak*.

³ See, among others, D. Michałowska, *Pamięć nie zawsze święta. Wspomnienia*, Kraków 2004; *Młodzieńcze lata Karola Wojtyły. Wspomnienia*, ed. J. Kydryński, Kraków 1990.

Blue Hall of the Catholic House (now the building of the Cracow Philharmonic). He participated in numerous meetings of the Circle of Polish Literature students, especially its literary section, organizing authors' evenings for students of Polish language and literature and debates dedicated to poetry.

This was the first year spent out of Wadowice, away from his native mountains. In many poems from the volume *The Psalter of David*, Karol Wojtyła voiced his affection to nature of the Beskids. The content of this series of poems was probably known to the group of his friends of the time. In the letter to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk of 14 November 1939, Wojtyła wrote:

"I am sending you these few fragments of *Księga Słowiańska*. I read them here to Zosia [Kotlarczykowa, Mieczysław's wife] and some others, and to You, in a copy, I am providing this work of spring longings, this matter of my soul and my heart. I read these sonnets to Wicek [Bałys, a Wadowice artist] as early as in June. I did not happen to read them to you somehow.⁴

This was a period in Wojtyła's biography, when fascinated with drama, he did not have courage to try his hand in this field himself.

"We have to revive and distinguish. And a juvenile attempt to do so are those lyrics: sonnets and symphonies, and hymns. [...] You may be surprised, Beloved Mieciu, that those are lyrics. [...] Thus, I will only list the reasons I have been contemplating upon more than once: Firstly, a kind of an inner urge and simply some imposition of the genre, then great haphazardness and fragmentariness of this work while drama requires continuity and focus, thirdly – youth. Don't think I didn't try also this Apollo' livelihood. I did. But was discontent with the results. After all, there is in me a swarm of ideas, merely sensed out and outlined; they need peace and work and maturity to ripen. You see, through these poems, I am simply learning to speak, before I am able to converse. In any way, I think in [very] theatrical images. At one time, Emil Zegadłowicz already drew attention to this fact."⁵

In the same letter, he – in an extremely emotional style – was justifying the need of expressing his ideas in poetry:

"That idea that persists in us must be specified, this current that presses the stream of our youth must be revealed, and it could not be revealed so far. And

⁴ *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka*, in: M. Kotlarczyk, K. Wojtyła, *O Teatrze Rapsodycznym. 60-lecie powstania Teatru Rapsodycznego*, wstęp i opracowanie Jacek Popiel, wybór tekstów J. Popiel, T. Malak, Kraków 2001, p. 308.

⁵ *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka...*, pp. 309-310.

that stream has a common source in us: deep Love, Slavic and Sarmatian Freedom and – no more a longing but a desire of Beauty.⁶

For young Wojtyła, “Art [capitalized] cannot be looked upon exclusively as a realistic truth, or else as an element of play or fun, but it should be regarded, above all, as a superstructure; it is a glance forward and upward, a companion of religion and a guide on the road towards God.”⁷

As I have already mentioned, this first cycle of poems was not published by Wojtyła and over time forgotten even by his close friends. However, Wojtyła did not abandon literary activity. The following dramas come from the time of the German occupation: *Dawid (David)* (1939, the text not found until today⁸), *Hiob. Drama ze Starego Testamentu i Jeremiasz. Drama narodowe we trzech działach (Job. A Drama Based on the Old Testament and Jeremiah. A National Drama in Three Acts)* (both 1940). Today, we know that during the war the first drafts of *Brat naszego Boga (Our God’s Brother)* drama, inspired by the person of Brother Albert Chmielowski, were written.

Over time, it turned out that poetry and drama were not only a fascination of Wojtyła – a student of the Jagiellonian University, Wojtyła – a worker in Solvay Soda Works, Wojtyła – a seminarian of the Cracow Seminary. He kept writing – poems, dramas and articles dedicated to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk’s Rhapsodic Theatre.

“Becoming a priest, Karol Wojtyła never engaged (as it was the case in his earlier youth) in artistic life. Neither did he participate in the literary life. [...] The fact that he wrote poetry was quite a closely guarded secret, known only to a tiny group of friends and collaborators, lay and clerical.”⁹

He published selected works, however signing them with pen names: Andrzej Jawień: *Przed sklepem jubilera (The Jeweller’s Shop)*, 1960; *Drama słowa i gestu (Theatre of the Word and Gesture)*, 1957, *Rapsody Tysiąclecia (Rhapsods of the*

⁶ *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka...*, p. 308.

⁷ *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka...*, p. 308.

⁸ Wojtyła recalls it in the letter to Kotlarczyk of 28 December 1939: “I have written a drama, and more precisely – a dramatic poem. Its title is *David*, he wears the biblical outfit, and a Piast homespun peasant shirt, and a crimson *delia*. I have revealed in it many things, many issues of my soul. I am really interested in what you would say about it. [...] *David* is from prose, from a poem, from blank verse, from rhyme poem. It is cordial. *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka...*, p. 312.

⁹ M. Skwarnicki, *Słowo wstępne*, in: Karol Wojtyła (A. Jawień, A. J., S. A. Gruda, P. Jasień), *Poezje i dramaty*, p. 7.

Millenium), 1958; A. J.: *Dziady i dwudziestolecie (Forefathers' Eve and the Twenty-Year Period Between the Wars)*, 1961; Stanisław Andrzej Gruda: *Promieniowanie ojcostwa (Radiation of Fatherhood)*, 1979); Piotr Jasień: *O teatrze słowa (On the Theatre of the Word)*, 1952).

It is difficult not to agree with Marek Skwarnicki that for Wojtyła – a priest, “poetic composition, apart from scientific activity, especially philosophical one, became [...] one of many ways of getting to know and exploring the human reality.”¹⁰

It is characteristic that when writing the foreword to the volume *Słowa na pustyni (Words on the Desert)* issued in 1971 in London, an anthology of poems written contemporarily by Polish priests, he did not surface as a poet and did not include his texts into the anthology. Nevertheless, he asked important questions about the mutual connection and complementarity of the priest's and the poet's vocations.¹¹

The last work written immediately before being elected pope was the poem *Stanisław (Stanislaus)*, whose manuscript was given, as a gift, to Rev. Franciszek Macharski on the day he was consecrated bishop on 6 January 1979.

Wojtyła's election as pope on 16 October 1978 aroused great interest in everything related to his life to that date. News spread fast that John Paul II was in the past an actor, a poet and a playwright. “Znak” Publishing House asked the Holy Father for his permission to issue his poems, dramas and articles about theatre matters. A clear suggestion came from the Vatican that the selection of the works and the arrangement of the collective edition would be made by Marek Skwarnicki and Jerzy Turowicz. Skwarnicki repeatedly highlighted that in 1978 “the only specific wish of the author was to publish exclusively the works and texts that had been printed before.”¹²

The preparatory works for the edition of *Poezje i dramaty*, planned by “Znak”, began in winter 1978/1979. In the first weeks, attention was focused exclusively on the texts published before. Typescripts of works were prepared on the basis of their versions printed in “Znak” – a monthly periodical and “Tygodnik

¹⁰ M. Skwarnicki, *Słowo wstępne...*, p. 8.

¹¹ *Słowa na pustyni. Antologia współczesnej poezji kapłańskiej*, wstęp K. Wojtyła, wybór tekstów i opracowanie B. Miązek. Londyn 1971.

¹² M. Skwarnicki, *Poetycka droga papieża Wojtyły*, in: K. Wojtyła, Jan Paweł II, *Poezje, dramaty, szkice. Tryptyk rzymski*, Kraków 2004, p. 5.

Powszechny” – a Catholic weekly magazine.¹³ In January 1979, Jan Okoń was asked for help in their philological and editorial compilation.¹⁴ At his initiative, Krystyna Chmielecka from “Znak” publishing house, in a letter of February 1979, asked Rev. Professor Tadeusz Pieronek to make available “original copies” of previously published works of Wojtyła (including their list) “to prepare a critical, canonical volume of these poems”.

“We need these texts only for checking. We will return them immediately after their use. Could you provide us with any information whom we could possibly approach in this case? Stanisław Grygiel, the editor, told us that you are involved in gathering these materials. Therefore, we are addressing this request, hoping that we will receive help.”¹⁵

In March, Rev. Pieronek passed information about manuscripts and typescripts of Wojtyła’s works kept in the Metropolitan Curia. The catalogue of texts, preserved in “Znak” Publishing House is an invaluable document. We get to know from it that in 1979 “the Holy Father’s literary texts” were segregated in five folders. It is those materials that found their way to Marek Skwarnicki’s hands. The juvenile works were kept in folders 2-5. The second folder contained manuscripts and typescripts of *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga Słowiańska)*, the third – the typescript of *Hiob*, the fourth – the manuscript of *Ballady wawelskich arkad (The Ballad of the Wawel Arcades)*, the fifth – the manuscript and the typescript of *Jeremiasz*. Outside the folders there was the manuscript of *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym (Song of the Hidden God)*.

Since in the successive weeks of the work, it was still contemplated to use, in the volume being prepared by “Znak”, only the works previously published, subsequent letters addressed to Rev. Pieronek were about a possibility of making available their manuscripts, alternatively typescripts, including the author’s amendments.

“Neither in “Znak” nor in “Tygodnik Powszechny”, where these poems were printed, are there any manuscripts. If you help us to get hold of them, we would be much obliged. If they do not exist, never mind, but the editor’s integrity requires to check, at all costs, whatever is possible.”¹⁶

¹³ At that stage of Marek Skwarnicki’s work, he was supported by Zofia Skwarnicka, who drew up abibliography of the Pope’s printed narrative poems.

¹⁴ From the first days of work on publishing Wojtyła’s texts, “Znak” publication house was supported by Bolesław Taborski, who was translating the Pope’s works into English.

¹⁵ The letter of 1 February 1979 preserved in the archives of “Znak” publishing house.

¹⁶ The letter of 16 June 1979 preserved in the archives of “Znak” publishing house.

According to Skwarnicki's account, a divergence appeared between the editors as to the legitimacy of publication of Wojtyła's juvenile plays. Turowicz opted for the fulfilment of the author's will that is to publish only the works that had been printed before. However, hoping for John Paul II's consent to publishing at least a few of his *juvenilia*, Jan Okoń edited also *Hiob*, *Jeremiasz* and *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*. Moreover, at the turn of May and June, Rev. Pieronek delivered manuscripts of further works, so far unknown, to the publishing house: *Dialog w ciemności* (*Dialogue in Darkness*), *Przełom* (*Breakthrough*), *Mściciele* (*The Avengers*), *Proletariat* (*The Proletariat*), *Harfiarz* (*the Harpist*).

The concept of the volume *Poezje i dramaty*, edited by Skwarnicki and Turowicz, was presented by Skwarnicki to John Paul II in June 1979. A copy of the letter to the Holy Father of 16 June 1979, preserved in the special collections of the National Library in Warsaw (in materials received from Skwarnicki's and Turowicz's private archives), is an extremely valuable testimony of the talks held then.

“Holy Father,

I am sending, for your final decision, our proposals for the volume of Your poetry works that we want – possibly quickly – to publish in our «Znak» publishing house.

According to Your wish, we selected these works. After studying conscientiously Your whole oeuvre being at our disposal, we reached the following conclusions:

All works divide into two groups that fit in the time they were written. The first group includes *juvenilia* written between 1938-1940, namely *Renesansowy psalterz*, *Ballada wawelskich arkad* (*The Ballad of the Wawel Arcades*), *Hiob*, *Jeremiasz*, and a couple of minor works. The second group includes all poetry works and dramas printed in «Znak» and «Tygodnik Powszechny», as well as *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym* (*Song of the Hidden God*), the drama *Our God's Brother*, and the mystery *Radiation of Fatherhood*.

All of them were written in the period from 1944 to the seventies. The differences between them are only of an artistic nature. Their internal, intellectual and spiritual, content is a kind of monolith. Your entire output is a continuation of the same internal threads: the relation to God, to the world and to people – despite changing themes and the way of encompassing them, the language, and the style. Your own creative style appears along with *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym* and develops throughout Your further mature poetical road. *Juvenilia* are

distinguished by some compositional clumsiness and the language of Young Poland¹⁷, post-Romantic poetry, full of phrases and expressions today felt as “mannerism”, typical for that period of Polish poetry. However, also among these works we find some that, within that time stylistics, are characterized by great lyrical power and a very important, religious, or historic and national, content.

In accordance with Your repeatedly expressed opinion, the works already published by «Tygodnik Powszechny» and «Znak», or those that were ready for printing, for example *Radiation of Fatherhood* (the more comprehensive version) do not pose any problem for being printed in a book.”¹⁸

Since the Pope was against printing previously unpublished texts (except for the poem *Stanisław*), a compromise offer appeared – to introduce into *Poezje i dramaty* a chapter titled *Juvenilia*. This decision concerning the editorial destiny of Wojtyła’s juvenile texts was justified in the already cited letter by Skwarnicki and Turowicz in the following words:

“The issue of *Juvenilia* and two works, not printed in whole, being on the borderline between one and the other period, is left for consideration.

We suggest the following solution: The book should be split into two parts – the first including the whole already printed and mature poetry and drama output, and – the second – the selected *Juvenilia*, placed at the end of the volume, preceded by the publisher’s note about “special rights” under which they were made available to the reader. In the second part, only the poem *Magnificat* and two dramas *Hiob* and *Jeremiasz* would appear. These works, despite their formal and stylistic specificity, are very beautiful and extremely intellectually interesting. Moreover, they reflect issues of the war time, the sense of human suffering (*Hiob*), a moral national drama (*Jeremiasz*). It can be also said that they give, despite the time distance, premises for a deeper understanding of many subjects of Your pontificate rooted in those experiences and thoughts.

As a kind of motto, we suggest printing at the beginning of the first part, a juvenile poem *Do matki* (*To Mother*), which is characterised by extreme simplicity and beauty.

The “borderline” works include *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym* partially printed in “Głos Karmelu” – a Carmelite periodical. The text we hold has an annotation

¹⁷ Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*) was a modernist period in Polish visual arts, literature and music covering roughly the years between 1890 and 1918.

¹⁸ The National Library, special collections. Marek Skwarnicki’s Archives (18848, here: copies of letters) and Jerzy Turowicz’s Archives (collections being edited). Copies of the cited letter kept in two collections, the date appears only in Turowicz’s Archives.

“not for publication.” If there are no reasons, unknown to us, that come into play, we ask for Your permission to print the poem that is regarded by us as one of more beautiful Polish religious lyrics of the last decades.”

Another important problem to be solved was publication of the third drama – the play dedicated to Brother Albert Chmielowski. At that time the correspondence only concerned possible publication of the version of the text completed in 1950 when Rev. Karol Wojtyła was a priest in St. Florian parish in Cracow.¹⁹ The manuscript was delivered to “Tygodnik Powszechny” in December 1978. The editorial board, despite certain resistance of the author, published the work (issue No. 51-52 of 23-30 December 1979).

“Now, the question of the play *Our God’s Brother*, about Brother Albert, that we would be happy to include in the first part together with the texts *The Jeweller’s Shop* and *Radiation of Fatherhood*. Even though *Our God’s Brother* bears traits of, as if, a lack of formal polishing, this, however, does not lower its rank. The other issue is the content. There are two questions – of art and social revolution – revalued in it, in the light of service to God and people. It seems to us that the second question was resolved intellectually and artistically in an identical manner in Your address in Puebla, Mexico²⁰, staring each reader in the face. However, due to the current situation and circumstances, we are highlighting this issue that cannot be found in Your other works. We feel that the publishing of *Our God’s Brother* would not create opportunities of erroneous interpretations as the “theses” of the play fit in with Your current magisterium and Your style of papacy.”

In the cited letter there is an offer of including, in the planned volume, Wojtyła’s articles about the Rhapsodic Theatre, which would interestingly complement poems and dramas.

From today’s perspective it is difficult even to imagine Skwarnicki’s and Turowicz’s immense responsibility. They were to present to readers in Poland, and then across the world, the Pope – a poet and a playwright.

“While dreading to think what might happen to us, we are presenting a comprehensive offer to be approved by the Author, being aware of our responsibility towards Him, and towards the public function of printed poetry that will have

¹⁹ The text of the drama was delivered by Zofia Poźniakowa (this was a clean copy, without a signature or date, with minor corrections).

²⁰ Cf. Address of His Holiness John Paul II, Puebla, Mexico, Sunday, 28 January 1979, see: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1979/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19790128_messico-puebla-episc-latam.html (28.04.2019).

not only a literary meaning, but first of all will testify to beautiful mysteries of God and people.

We ask You Father that after reading this letter and reviewing the enclosed set of typescripts – if you find it necessary – You would like to send us Your “final word” without which we would not dare to go for printing.”

Skwarnicki’s and Turowicz’s offers were accepted. *Poezje i dramaty* were published in 1979 in a circulation of 12,000 copies²¹, which was very quickly sold out. Additional printings and subsequent editions appeared.

The volume *Poezje i dramaty* played a crucial role in the reception of Wojtyła’s literary output. Firstly, because Skwarnicki and Turowicz selected the works and arranged them within the volume with the Author’s consent. Secondly, Jan Okoń was in charge of editing the texts. Thirdly, the arrangement suggested by the editors: 1. *Wiersze (Poems)*, 2. *Dramaty (Plays)*, 3. *Juvenilia*, 4. *Artykuły (Articles)* – made further researchers realize how diversified and rich the sphere of Wojtyła’s literary and theatrical expressions is. It is just a pity that *The Publisher’s Note* did not include more detailed information about the manuscripts and typescripts that formed the basis for printing.²² The fates of these source texts have been different, and from today’s perspective, it is difficult to resolve some doubts concerning the shape of Wojtyła’s works. However, it is worth presenting the rules followed by the editors of the first edition of his literary works:

“Due to a great diversification of the material itself (texts known only in typescripts; in typescripts and manuscripts, in any case of a different type; finally only in a manuscript or manuscripts) – consistent criteria could not be adopted. The overriding factor, each time, became the Author’s last creative will expressed in a relevant form (typescript and only in a lack thereof – manuscript). In the event of many versions, texts were compared, capturing casual inaccuracies or even plain typos. Rough copy editing and stylistic variations (also the whole rough copy version of *Our God’s Brother*) were disregarded.”²³

Over the years, readers received Wojtyła’s new literary works, not included in the publication of “Znak”. One of the breakthrough moments in making Wojtyła’s literary output available was in 1995 when Stanisław Dziedzic, with John

²¹ K. Wojtyła (A. Jawień, A. J., S. A. Gruda, P. Jasień), *Poezje i dramaty...*

²² There are no annotations, at least brief, explaining their earlier storing place, before they found their way to the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow.

²³ J. O. [J. Okoń], *Nota Wydawcy*, in: K. Wojtyła (A. Jawień, A. J., S. A. Gruda, P. Jasień), *Poezje i dramaty...*, p. 404.

Paul II's consent, issued Wojtyła's volume entitled *Sonety. Magnificat (Sonnets. Magnificat)* with "Wydawnictwo Literackie" publishing house.²⁴ The printing was based on a series of seventeen handwritten juvenile sonnets and the poem-hymn *Magnificat*, held by Aniela Pakosiewicz, Zofia and Mieczysław Kotlarczyk's daughter, fortunately preserved in the Kotlarczyk family. After reading the manuscripts, it turned out that they were part of the juvenile volume *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga Słowiańska)* but had been, so far, unknown to readers. Only the hymn *Magnificat* had been published in the volume released by "Znak" Publishing House, but based on a different source.

Among materials received by Stanisław Dziedzic, there was also an extremely precious, text by Zofia Kotlarczykowa written in June 1983 entitled *Wiosna przyniosła mi te myśli (Spring Has Brought Me These Thoughts)* (the title is a quotation from Wojtyła's letter), including, among others, fragments of Wojtyła's letters of 14 November 1939 and 7 October 1940, addressed to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk, then living in Wadowice. Kotlarczykowa's text, important from the point of view of the circumstances in which the sonnets were written, were published by Dziedzic by the said publishing house. For the editor, the most important was the information that *Sonety* and *Magnificat* were attached by Wojtyła to the letter of 14 November 1939 together with the request that Kotlarczyk, the Wadowice master and friend, a doctor in literary and theatre studies, would evaluate those juvenile works.²⁵ Dziedzic, on various occasions, reported the circumstances in which he received John Paul II's consent to print those poems.²⁶ The Pope also acquiesced to include facsimiles of his manuscripts from 1939 in the volume, which additionally made that publication credible.

It is worth mentioning that John Paul II had doubts as to his authorship of the *Magnificat* hymn. Only the manuscripts from the Kotlarczyks' collection, handed over to him, confirmed his conviction that it was his work. This is reflected in Dziedzic's correspondence with the Apostolic See. In the letter of 14 February 1994, Prelate Stanisław Dziwisz, the Personal Secretary to the

²⁴ K. Wojtyła, *Sonety. Magnificat*, do druku podał i posłowiem opatrzył Stanisław Dziedzic, Kraków 1995.

²⁵ Halina Królikiewicz-Kwiatkowska, Danuta Michałowska and Tadeusz Ulewicz, the persons having an excellent knowledge of the handwriting of the author of *Sonety*, helped Dziedzic in deciphering Wojtyła's manuscripts in some fragments underlined or amended (but always with his hand).

²⁶ See, *inter alia*, S. Dziedzic, *Refleksje nad sonetami Karola Wojtyły*, "Hybryda". Pismo Artystyczno-Literackie Stowarzyszenia Twórczego POLART, 2017 nr 30, pp. 39-48.

Pope, used the Pope's words: "Indeed, these sonnets you got interested in, kept by the late Zofia Kotlarczyk and Her Daughter, are of my authorship. I have totally forgotten about them. This is why they were not included in the volume issued by Marek Skwarnicki in "Znak" [1979]. As for *Magnificat* I have always had doubts. However, I have become convinced now, as this work found itself in the manuscript in the Kotlarczyks' house. These are all juvenile poems, written perhaps in the first year of the Second World War, still be with the climate of *Powsinogi beskidzkie* (*The Beskid Tramps*).²⁷ I think that their publishing will make Mr Bolesław Taborski, from the UK, really happy, as he is still completing my poetic works." In turn, in the letter of 27 October 1994, Rev. Stanisław Dziwisz wrote: "I would be grateful if you could send photocopies for the Author's inspection, who – frankly speaking – is not too much delighted with his juvenile work."²⁸

After publishing the volume *Sonety. Magnificat*, Stanisław Dziedzic began work on publishing the whole *Psalterz* (*Psalter*). The basis for that edition was the manuscript kept in the Archives of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia. *Psalterz – Księga Słowiańska*, edited by Dziedzic, appeared in 1996 in "Oficyna Cracovia" Publishing House.²⁹ Even at that stage, it was noticed that in that edition, both the sonnets and *Magnificat* differ from their version published earlier by Dziedzic, based on the manuscripts preserved in the collection of the Kotlarczyk family.

Such a detailed presentation of the history of publishing Karol Wojtyła's early writings is necessary to understand the dilemmas faced by a publisher who wants to prepare a critical edition of *Psalterz Dawidów* because this history has its dramaturgy and mysteries that most likely can never be solved. Twenty years after the first edition of *Poezja i dramaty* in "Znak" publishing house, Marek Skwarnicki published *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga słowiańska)*.³⁰ A beautifully issued volume appeared by "Biały Kruk" Publishing House as the third part of the triptych *Poezje słowem i światłem pisane* (*Poetry Written With the Word and Light*). According to Skwarnicki's account, the Holy Father, having received

²⁷ A volume of ballads by Emil Zegadłowicz, published in 1923.

²⁸ Letters kept in Stanisław Dziedzic's private archives.

²⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Psalterz – Księga Słowiańska*, do druku podał i postawiem opatrzył S. Dziedzic, Kraków 1996.

³⁰ K. Wojtyła, A. Bujak, *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga słowiańska)*. *Poezje słowem i światłem pisane*, wiersze opracował z upoważnienia autora M. Skwarnicki, Kraków 1999.

from Adam Bujak³¹ the album *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*, the first book of the series, gave his consent to issuing his juvenile poems, however on condition that they would be presented exactly in the form of the said album. The information given in the foreword to that edition is surprising. Marek Skwarnicki admitted preparing the edition of *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga słowiańska)* based on typescripts received in 1979 from the Archives of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia at the moment of preparing the edition of *Poezja i dramaty*.

“At my expressed request, the typescript version of these poems were returned to me as a keepsake in the year 1979, with the provision that they should neither be published nor shown to anyone. They were kept in my home archive for twenty years.³²

Skwarnicki was induced to use the archive materials only when the two editions prepared by Dziedzic had appeared.³³

It is characteristic that the edition of the last three volumes raised, amongst the circle of researchers of Wojtyła’s writings, suggestions about the need to prepare a critical edition of the Pope’s literary texts and to use sources, i.e. the preserved manuscripts and typescripts kept in different places, often in private collections. There was an ever clearer conviction that there were important differences between particular versions of the texts.³⁴ The meaning of Wojtyła’s correspondence, connected with his literary and theatrical fascinations, was also noticed then.

In 2001, Ludwik Solski State Drama School in Cracow, published a thick volume: Mieczysław Kotlarczyk, Karol Wojtyła, *O Teatrze Rapsodycznym. 60-lecie*

³¹ One of the most well-known Polish photographers, see his biography: <http://portfoliofotografii.pl/adam-bujak/> (28.04.2019).

³² M. Skwarnicki, *Poetycka droga papieża Wojtyły...*, p. 11.

³³ It is worth highlighting that even in the third edition of *Poezja i dramaty* by “Znak” Publishing House [1999] it was decided not to include the text of *Renesansowy psalterz*.

³⁴ Disturbing were, in particular, unjustified abbreviations made without any markings or explanations, appearing in Skwarnicki’s first editions, which unfortunately influenced the text content also in translations into foreign languages. While for translations into Italian and Spanish, the basis were manuscripts, in the German version, for example, the juvenile works are much abridged. See for example the translation into German: *Die Jugendgedichte des Papstes: Renaissance-Psalter*, transl. by B. Chudoba, Graz- Wien-Köln, Nürnberg 2000; Spanish: *Pensamientos de luz*, ed. and transl. by B. Piotrowski, Bogota 2003; *Mousiké. De la poética juvenil de Karol Wojtyła. Valoración de sus dos poemas “Mousiké”* transl. by B. Piotrowski, Bogota 2008; and Italian: *Le poesie giovanili (Salterio di Davide, Libro slavo, Salterio rinascimentale) Cracovia, primavera-estate 1939*, ed. and transl. by M. Burghardt, Roma 2004.

powstania Teatru Rapsodycznego (On the Rhapsodic Theatre. 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Rhapsodic Theatre) (introduction and edition by Jacek Popiel, selection of writings by Tadeusz Malak and Jacek Popiel), including Wojtyła's writings about the Rhapsodic Theatre and his letters to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk. In particular, the letters became an extremely important source of information about the circumstances in which Wojtyła's juvenile poetry and drama works were written.³⁵

Subsequent years proved that Wojtyła as John Paul II was still writing. When *The Roman Triptych* appeared in 2003, it was a big surprise because it was thought that after writing the narrative poem *Stanisław*, just before being elected Pope, Wojtyła gave up literary activity forever. Certainly, the matters of literature, theatre and art were not alien to him. *Letter to Artists*,³⁶ published in Easter 1999, or numerous references to literary works in the Pope's homilies attested how important this area was in the Pope's thinking. However, it was not expected that a totally new poetic text would be written at his desk. Therefore *The Roman Triptych*, which was written in summer and autumn 2002, was world breaking news. These three narrative poems under a common title, stemmed most likely from the need to recapitulate his life in a language that had been close to the Author since his high school period. The Pope fully understood that poetical word, always born in pain, is a unique language that allows us to express what probably is not expressible in other forms of enunciations. Poetry creates an opportunity to voice thoughts, describe phenomena and processes and – through this creative act – gives a chance to understand events that cannot be grasped in other “languages”. For Wojtyła, poetry was always connected with the sphere of inspiration. How significant are the words here included in the middle part of *The Roman Triptych – Meditations on the Book of Genesis at the Threshold of the Sistine Chapel* trying – through showing the grandeur of Michelangelo's work – to bring closer the events “of the memorable year of the two Conclaves,”³⁷ when Wojtyła was elected Pope.

³⁵ This volume, in its core related to Wojtyła, was translated into Italian (K. Wojtyła, *Il Teatro Rapsodico. Articoli e lettere*, traduzione di Jadwiga Radzik Lanzetta, posfazione e cura di Jacek Popiel, Roma 2003).

³⁶ Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists, see: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html (29.04.2019).

³⁷ Pope John Paul II, *The Roman Triptych: Meditations, Epilogue*, see: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2POET.HTM> (29.04.2019).

In 2003, “Biały Kruk” Publishing House printed a beautiful album edition of Karol Wojtyła’s *Poezje zebrane* (*Selected Poems*) and John Paul II’s *The Roman Triptych*, with photographs by Adam Bujak. It is worth noting that in the editor’s footnote there is an annotation: “Compilation of poetry with the Author’s consent – Marek Skwarnicki.” Skwarnicki is also the author of the preface to the album (*Poezja Papieża Wojtyły. Wspomnienia rzymskich rozmów z Ojcem Świętym*) (*The Poetry of Pope Wojtyła, Recollections of the Roman Conversations with the Holy Father*), in which he covers the history of talks about poetry with John Paul II. I am recalling this text because Skwarnicki played a key role in decisions concerning further editions of Wojtyła’s poetry and dramas, in particular with regard to the works which the Author never published himself. I am referring here predominantly to his juvenile texts. It should be remembered that Skwarnicki’s contacts with Wojtyła, and then with John Paul II, were frequent and by no means related only to literature, since Skwarnicki was a member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and a journalist participating in a dozen or so papal pilgrimages, travelling on board the pope’s airplane.

When in 2004, “Znak” Publishing House released the most complete version of Wojtyła – John Paul II’s literary and theatrical works: Karol Wojtyła, Jan Paweł II, *Poezje, dramaty, szkice; Tryptyk rzymski* (*Poems, Plays and Essays; The Roman Triptych*), Skwarnicki was asked once again to write the preface, and in his article *Poetycka droga Papieża Wojtyły* (*The Poetic Road of Wojtyła, the Pope*) brought closer the circumstances of writing and publishing Wojtyła’s texts. This edition of collective works (except for *Renesansowy psalterz*) was based on the 1979 edition, in which Jan Okoń was responsible for the philological edition of the texts.

Further texts, important to understand the role of art in Wojtyła’s thought – a priest, were also being discovered. Among them we should list the first edition of the retreats for artists given by Bishop Wojtyła in 1962 in the Church of the Holy Cross in Cracow – *Ewangelia a sztuka. Rekolekcje dla artystów* (*The Gospel and Art. Spiritual Retreats for Artists*), Fundacja Jana Pawła II. Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studium Pontyfikatu w Rzymie, Kraków-Rzym 2011).³⁸

³⁸ In 2016 the second edition appeared: K. Wojtyła – Jan Paweł II, *Ewangelia a sztuka. Rekolekcje dla artystów*, Kraków 2016. This is a revised and supplemented edition of the book, including the text of the retreats for artists given by Bishop Karol Wojtyła in Holy Week of 1962 and John Paul II’s *Letter to Artists*, written on Easter Sunday of 1999, with a foreword by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, and preface by Jacek Popiel. This edition was translated into French, Italian and Spanish.

Another important moment in the history of the edition of Karol Wojtyła's literary texts was the publication of the book by Rev. Jan Machniak, *Święty brat Albert Chmielowski w myśli Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II (Saint Brother Albert Chmielowski in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II)*.³⁹ Apart from the already well-known play *Our God's Brother*, being printed since 1979 it also included, for the first time ever, its manuscript which had been preserved in the Archives of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia and which was regarded as the (first) draft version of the drama about Adam Chmielowski. Rev. Machniak's extremely valuable proposition was the inclusion of photocopies of subsequent versions of the text, kept in the said archives.⁴⁰

Wojtyła's early works, both poetic and theatrical, have been already the subject of many reviews. It is difficult to present their fundamental threads and message in a nutshell. As Zofia Zarębianka put it, the thought included in the juvenile poems was going

“on one hand to concepts of national art, and on the other – to the exploration of Slavic threads [...]. This combination of the concept of a nation and religious categories, as well as the vision of poetry growing from the Slavic trunk, seems to stem from the philosophy of the Romantics.”⁴¹

The poems included in *Renesansowy psalterz* are a testimony of young Wojtyła's literary and idealistic fascinations, clearly being under the influence of the culture of antiquity, the Renaissance, the Romanticism and Wyspiański.⁴²

“The fusion of all these elements contributes to the specificity of young Wojtyła's poetic discourse, saturated with pathos and using a solemn language. A characteristic loftiness, or even pompousness, plays a dominant role in his style.”⁴³

The dramas from that period are, on the one hand, a testimony to an in-depth reading of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, and on the other,

³⁹ J. Machniak, *Święty brat Albert Chmielowski w myśli Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2013.

⁴⁰ Rev. Jan Machniak included in this publication also the poems: *Proletariat, Mściciele* and *Przełom* together with photocopies of manuscripts and typescripts of these works, preserved in the Archives of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia.

⁴¹ Z. Zarębianka, *Spotkanie w Słowie. O twórczości literackiej Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 2018, p. 35.

⁴² Stanisław Wyspiański was a Polish playwright, painter and poet, and a patriotic writer, who created his works within the Young Poland Movement.

⁴³ Z. Zarębianka, *Spotkanie w Słowie...*, p. 51.

they demonstrate very clearly how Wojtyła, making references to David, Job and Jeremiah, tried to understand the tragedy of those years – the time of the war and German occupation. In any case, his friends, whom he presented his plays, understood those texts that way. Juliusz Kydryński, while recalling the evenings when Wojtyła was reading *Hiob* and *Jeremiasz*, noted down that those biblical-historic dramas were “written in a hieratic language, not free from the Young Poland tradition.” At that time they affected them mainly with “the power of the inherent message: the faith in regaining independence, in the ability to endure sufferings, and in the final redemption. After all, the war was raging,” he explained. “We risked our lives every day.”⁴⁴

This early literary body is at the same time a precious witness of changes occurring in Wojtyła that led him to taking the final decision to abandon his Polish studies and actor’s career to choose the priesthood. For Wojtyła, poetry was becoming an extremely important language (form), in which he could directly express his religious feelings and write down subsequent stages of the intimate self-cognizance processes.⁴⁵ This unique witness is found in the first versions of the dramas *Brat naszego Boga* (*Our God’s Brother*), *Ciągle jestem na tym samym brzegu* (*I Am Still on the Same Shore*), and *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*.

The day when Karol Wojtyła decided to choose priesthood was likely a moment inducing him to take a new look at the whole previous world of feelings and personal experiences, also at the place and meaning of literature, theatre, and more broadly, art in a human’s life. That, more closely unidentified, day of 1942 was the climax of the process that had been taking place in young Wojtyła’s heart, mind and soul for a longer time. People who work on the Pope’s biography, list a whole series of events that were important moments in that process of growing up to priesthood: his mother’s and brother’s deaths, the experiences of a dozen or so months of the war and German occupation, his father’s death, getting to know Jan Tyranowski (a Cracow tailor, Christian mystic and spiritual guide of young Wojtyła). However, it seems that, in this process of getting to priesthood, an important role was also played by literary activity, allowing young Wojtyła – through words of poetry and dramas – to think over his key

⁴⁴ *Młodzieńcze lata Karola Wojtyły...*, p. 106.

⁴⁵ In recollections of Wojtyła’s friends from the period of youth, there are repeated comments about his religiousness, however very discreet. “We knew, of course,” recalled Juliusz Kydryński, “that he is a deeply believing and practising Catholic [...]. Karol did not manifest anything; but he lived in his inner discipline, very strict, but discreet, not flaunting.” *Młodzieńcze lata Karola Wojtyły...*, p. 99.

dilemmas. Karol Wojtyła believed, in particular, in the ethical power of art, primarily of literature and theatre. He was interested in art which is “a companion of religion and a guide on the way to God.”⁴⁶ It is his direct young literary and theatrical experiences that confirmed Wojtyła in the conviction that literature and theatre have their mission – the mission they have to carry out persistently and uncompromisingly, that through a word, being the basic material of poetry and acting, you can reach the most important matters of the world. For Wojtyła, creativity was a gift, while works of art, addressing the basic problems of the human existence, as well as matters of a nation and Christianity, was one of the ways of getting to know the truth.

The Author of *Our God's Brother* never treated poetry, drama, and acting as the path of a personal career. No doubt, both in Wadowice and Cracow, was he dreaming to be a poet, a playwright, and an actor. He was dreaming about these spheres of creativity mainly because they let him approach the mystery of existence, the mystery of man, and the mystery of God. In that juvenile period, experiences arising from having contact with a work of art, literature or theatre was the path to understand, a path to look for values worth living for. A young, sensitive man, permeated with the atmosphere of his family home and the unique interwar climate of Wadowice, at the same time growing up in an accelerated way because of tragic experiences, but also through an in-depth reading of the Bible, Romantic texts, Wyspiański's works, looking out longingly from Wadowice to Cracow, was searching for his place in the surrounding reality. His writing of the first poems and dramas, and exploring ever more deeply the world of theatre, created a chance to understand better himself and the surrounding world. The words of poets whose works he was passionately reading and interpreting on the stage, the words written in his first lyrics were used for cognizance and understanding. However, when that day of the breakthrough (choosing priesthood) finally came, he was probably aware of being within the mystery he was trying to explore. Is it me who chose God, or rather God who chose me? Understanding the mystery of this act through prayer, meditation, reading of the Holy Scripture, texts of Fathers of the Church, but also understanding through art. Wojtyła – a priest holding a pen, and writing poems and dramas – is getting involved in creativity to understand better his own life and his own choices.

⁴⁶ *Listy Karola Wojtyły do Mieczysława Kotlarczyka...*, p. 308.

The first talks about the project of the critical edition of literary works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II began in 2005, a couple of months after the Pope's death. The people dealing with this important element of his biography wanted to get to all preserved archive materials connected with Wojtyła's literary activity. In the scientific milieu there was also a strong conviction that both in the Church and private archives there might be texts or variants of works, so far unknown, copied by hand of the author and handed over to a group of his closest friends. In May 2015 Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the then Archbishop of Cracow, set up the Scientific Committee of the Critical Project for the Publishing of Literary Works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, consisting of: Jacek Popiel – the chairman, Jadwiga Puzynina – the deputy chairman, Marta Burghardt, Krzysztof Dybciak, Stanisław Dziedzic, Rev. Jan Machniak, Anna Karoń-Ostrowska – the project coordinator, Renata Przybylska, and Zofia Zarębianka. *The Letter of Intent* was signed on 28 September 2015 in Cracow Archbishop's Palace:

“In the year proclaimed by the Upper Chamber (*the Sejm*) of the Republic of Poland «The Year of John Paul II», following the initiative of scientific and cultural milieus of Cracow and Warsaw, we are launching a project of the critical edition of literary works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, also his letters connected with theatre and art. We want to complete this project with the edition of these works in 2020, at one hundredth anniversary of Karol Wojtyła – St. John Paul II's birth.

Honourary Patronage of the initiative was granted by:

His Eminence Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Archbishop of Cracow,
His Eminence Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw,
Hanna Gronkiewicz -Waltz, Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw,
Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of the Royal Capital City of Cracow,
Marek Sowa, the Marshal of the Province of Małopolska.

The completion of the project was assigned to The John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow and The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II in Warsaw. As early as at the first meeting of the editorial board, a decision was taken that the first volume would include *juvenilia*, the works from the years 1938-1946, the second volume – “mature poems”, and the third one – dramas, published after 1946 and possible supplements. The editorial board hopes that the publishing of the first two volumes will encourage possible holders of Wojtyła's unknown works to hand them over to the publishers. We also believe that prior to printing the last volume, we will have managed to catalogue all

home and foreign Church archive material connected with the person of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II and to reach the texts so far unknown to us.

Publisher's notes

The first volume of Karol Wojtyła's poems and dramas includes works that were created from 1938 to 1946. As the cut-off date of the first volume, we assume year 1946 – the moment of Karol Wojtyła's ordination. The first volume mainly includes a group of poems entitled *Psalterz Dawidów (Księga Słowańska)*. These works were written in 1938-1939.

Another part of the volume contains poems written during the Second World War: *Hiob. Drama ze Starego Testamentu* and *Jeremiasz. Drama narodowe we trzech działach* (both from 1940) and the first draft of the drama inspired by the person of Albert Chmielowski [*Our God's Brother*], written probably in 1942. Most likely, immediately prior to his ordination, a narrative poem *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym* was created.

We are publishing for the first time the work beginning with the words *Ciągle jestem na tym samym brzegu (I Am Still on the Same Shore)*. This is an extremely interesting, not only literary, testimony – a genuine editorial discovery. It is difficult to answer the question about the year this text found its way to the Archives of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia and why, after putting it into a catalogue, it was not published. Turowicz and Skwarnicki do not mention it. Most likely they did not know it. Perhaps in future, we will be able to say something more about its history. Reading the author's manuscript, written in pencil on both sides of five, very yellowed sheets of paper was a real challenge for the editors. Anna Karoń – Ostrowska in the publisher's note, preceding the text, highlights that “for the first time, the Author explores the issue of human love, which will be developing further throughout his life in dramas (*The Jeweller's Shop, Radiation of Fatherhood*) and in philosophical thought (*Love and Responsibility, Theology of the Body*).” We do not know the date when this poem was created. In Karoń-Ostrowska's view, some realities referred to in the text let us put forward a hypothesis that Wojtyła wrote it in spring 1942, between the date of his father's death (February 1941) and October 1942 when he began his studies in the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Cracow.

The first volume of the project will also include Karol Wojtyła's letters to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk from the period of the war and German occupation,

which are not only an invaluable source of information about events in the life of the future Pope at that time, but also one of the most important documents concerning his early literary creation. In this part, we are publishing, for the first time, Wojtyła's letter to Wincenty Bałys, being – apart from Kotlarczyk – his closest friend in the period of life spent in Wadowice.

With regards to all the works referred to above, there are no doubts that they were written by Wojtyła. In the *Annexe*, after many analyses, we decided to print also “works of unconfirmed authorship:” *Mousike II (Music II)*, *Proletariat*, *Mściciele*, and *Przełom*, which were written most likely in the period from autumn 1939 to winter 1940/1941. In the letter of June 1979, already quoted a few times before, Skwarnicki and Turowicz are writing about their doubts about these texts:

“The last issue: Having compiled the whole volume, Your five «freshly discovered» works got into our hands. These are: *Harfiarz*, *Mściciele*, *Przełom*, *Proletariat* and *Dialog w ciemności*. Out of them, most likely juvenile *Harfiarz*, in our opinion, does not deserve printing. *Mściciele*, *Przełom* and *Proletariat* are beautiful works, but these are rough drafts, sometimes difficult to decipher and to agree on the text. This is especially so with *Proletariat*, as we have it in four different versions and do not know whether any of them (and which one) is final. *Dialog w ciemności* is very beautiful and mature and we would willingly include it in the volume, but can't do that without Your *placet*. Therefore, we have attached this single poem to the folder of typescripts, asking for Your unanimous decision about its possible printing.”

Skwarnicki, recalling a conversation with John Paul II in June 1979 dedicated to publishing *Poezje i dramaty*, noted down that, at that time, the Pope did not confirm his authorship of *Proletariat*, *Mściciele*, and *Przełom*, kept in the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia, thereby they were not included in the first collection prepared by “Znak” Publishing House.⁴⁷ John Paul II's letter of 9 November 1979 to Professor Jacek Woźniakowski, director of “Znak”, kept

⁴⁷ However, their publishing was seriously contemplated. In the repeatedly quoted letter of June 1979 – the following editorial remarks are included:

I. *Przełom* – we suggest including it in *Juvenilia*

II. *Mściciele* – we also suggest including it (perhaps as an unfinished poem)

III. *Proletariat* (a conventional title) – one excerpt – at the beginning – titled, others on loose unnumbered sheets of paper (A4 paper size, unlined, pencil-written)

If His Holiness Author agreed at all to include this poem, we would perhaps ask You to mark certain excerpts that we would include in *Juvenilia* as fragments of a bigger, unfinished entirety.”

in the publishing house archives, contained important sentences written by the Pope on that subject:

“Thank you very much for the sent text: *The Publisher’s Note*. Relying on the details given there, I cannot much recall only *Harfiarz – Mściciele – Proletariat – Przełom* given in the chronological list with the approximate date of 1944? Admittedly, this is not about the works that are going to be published, but only about information about their existence. I do not know if this can be checked somehow.

Nevertheless, I would like to cordially thank you for so much effort put into this matter.”

In subsequent years, it was heard more and more often that these works could also be written by young Wojtyła. In editions by “Biały Kruk” and in the 2004 edition by “Znak”, the 1939 *Harfiarz* was included in the *Annexe* while the publisher’s note stated clearly that this is “a compilation of excerpts from *Akropolis (Acropolis)* by Wyspiański, attached to *Renesansowy psalterz*.”⁴⁸ Rev. Jan Machniak in the book *Święty brat Albert Chmielowski w myśli Karola Wojtyły – John Paul II (Saint Brother Albert Chmielowski in the Thought of Karol Woltyla – John Paul II)* published three out of the four works that raised Skwarnicki’s and Turowicz’s doubts: *Proletariat, Mściciele, Przełom*.⁴⁹ Without resolving the question of authorship, we are including the said works in *Annexe*.

In *Annexe* we are also publishing the work written on 25 May 1938 in Danuta Pukłówna’s diary, beginning from the words: *Są takie święte, jasne dni (There Are Such Holy, Bright Days)*.

Now, it is time we presented the editorial criteria of the critical edition of literary and theatrical works of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. The researchers studying his literary and theatrical legacy are fascinated with the wealth of the existing work of interpreters coming from different nationalities and scientific circles: literary scholars, theologians, philosophers, teatrologists, and anthropologists. In this extremely large corpus of studies, it is easy to spot an important flaw: this concerns textological research. As I have highlighted a couple of times before, successive editions of Wojtyła’s poetry and dramas used different sources as the basis for printing. With reference to *juvenilia* this problem is much more serious than in the case of the texts that Wojtyła referred to printing himself. The works from the years 1938–1946 were not only not published by the author

⁴⁸ K. Wojtyła, Jan Paweł II, *Poezje, dramaty, szkice. Tryptyk rzymski...*, p. 590.

⁴⁹ J. Machniak, *Święty brat Albert Chmielowski w myśli Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II...*, pp. 281–312.

(except for *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*), but according to his initial will were supposed to be left in manuscripts and typescripts. In the light of the available materials, it can be said that the first editors made efforts to present the reader with “the most perfect” versions of the works exemplifying Wojtyła’s juvenile work. Let the scale of dilemmas be illustrated just by the decision of printing, in the 1979 edition, an abbreviated (three-stanza) version of the poem of 1939 beginning with the words: “Over this, your white grave” and placing it at the beginning of the volume, even though *juvenilia* were placed later in the book, after the works published earlier. In the 2004 edition, it was decided to place the poem at the beginning of *Renesansowy psalterz* in its full five-stanza version, while the shorter version was placed in the *Annexe*.

With regard to Wojtyła’s juvenile creation, it has to be, once again, firmly stressed that none of the preserved texts were published by the author. These are the works that at the will of the author did not find their way to, and did not exist in the public domain. The editorial discussions with John Paul II, which were held in 1979, according to the information available to us, pertained to the consent to publishing and the confirmation of the authorship of the texts about which Skwarnicki, Turowicz and Okoń had doubts. The preserved evidence of that discussions (letters, oral accounts) do not let us conclude that John Paul II used to decide which version of a work should be printed. We can talk here only about variants of works written by hand, copied on a typewriter by the author himself (?) or by other people, typescripts with handwritten amendments made by the author and by other people, the author’s handwritten copies (perhaps also typescripts) sent to friends, asking them for reading and assessment (for example *Sonety* sent to Kotlarczyk).⁵⁰ Since the author did not decide to publish these works, it is difficult to treat any version of the text as approved by him for printing.⁵¹ We have no doubts that the disclosure of variants of individual texts (wherever possible now) broadens our knowledge not only of the dynamics of Karol Wojtyła’s literary creation, but also of himself. Successive versions

⁵⁰ In Juliusz Kydryński’s account we found a testimony – not confirmed by Wojtyła’s other friends from the period of the war – that the author of *Hiob* was copying on a typewriter his texts by himself. Kydryński, when recalling biblical-historical dramas (*Hiob, Jeremiasz*) noted: “Karol was reading to me these plays with his deep voice, then laboriously was typing them on a borrowed typewriter: I have kept until today these typescripts made by himself, with heartfelt dedications for our Mother and our whole family.” *Młodzieńcze lata Wojtyły...*, p. 107.

⁵¹ Cf. Z. Goliński, *O problemie tekstu kanonicznego w edytorstwie*, “Pamiętnik Literacki” 1967, z. 4.

of *Our God's Brother* should be regarded not only as the texts of a given stage of creativity but also as an important personal testimony to those moments of his life when they were written.

As early as while writing *Renesansowy psalterz*, we can notice Wojtyła's sensitivity to the role of the word. This can be seen in consecutive literary works and letters to friends from the period of the German occupation. This sensitivity, most likely taken from Wadowice high school and deepened by his own reading of the Bible, as well as texts of the Romantics and the neo-Romantics during his Polish studies at the university, Wojtyła confronted with a more conscious meditation on the role of the language and the word.

"Right from the beginning of the first year, however, I found myself attracted to *the study of the language itself*. We studied the descriptive grammar of modern Polish, as well as the historical evolution of the language, with a special interest in its ancient Slavic roots. This opened up completely new horizons for me; it introduced me to *the mystery of the language itself*."⁵²

Different variants of the extracts of the works, sometimes even of single words, included in this edition, are likely to make the reading of the book difficult for a reader not belonging to the group of philologists. Yet, they are very clear evidence of the author's struggle with the matter of the word. As Anna Kozłowska writes:

"We discover here an important quality of Wojtyła's reflection on the language: This is reflection constructed consciously, in a sense marked by "professionalism" that features a man familiarized with the knowledge of the language and the literary tradition."⁵³

Surely, Wojtyła's language is not easy in reception. Owing to numerous archaisms, biblical stylizations, regionalisms, neologisms, his texts require careful reading. Our interference into the text is mainly about the spelling update. We try to preserve inflectional, lexical, phonetic and syntactical archaisms. We preserve the author's use of punctuation, at times not fully compliant with the contemporary requirements. We believe that if these elements do not create an obstacle for understanding the text by a contemporary reader, they are important for the description of Wojtyła's style. Likewise, we preserve a specific

⁵² John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery: On the 50th Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination*, Pasay City 1997, p. 12.

⁵³ A. Kozłowska, *Język poetycki Karola Wojtyły: próba charakterystyki*, "Colloquia Litteraria" (2008), p. 195.

use of a hyphen (such as a quasi-etymological effort to introduce the old meaning of two words). Neither do we correct spelling as far as the author's use of capital letters is concerned.⁵⁴ "Wojtyła's sensitivity to axiological vocabulary is best borne out by the list of key words which are important for the spirituality of a young student of Polish literature, words that are always written with a capital letter," observes Renata Przybylska. "On this meaningful list we can find such words as: Faith, Hope, Love, Good, Beauty, Truth, Freedom, Humility, Grace, Knowledge, Art, Poetry, as well as Evolution, Progress, Motherland, Nation, National Culture, as well as Life and Motherhood."⁵⁵

It is symptomatic that John Paul II, already from a time perspective, emphasized the meaning of those discoveries concerning the word and the language:

"The word [...] is already present in human history as a fundamental dimension of man's spiritual experience. Ultimately, the mystery of language brings us back to *the inscrutable mystery of God himself*. As I came to appreciate the power of the word in my literary and linguistic studies, I inevitably drew closer to the mystery of the Word – that Word of which we speak every day in the Angelus: «And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us»" (Jn 1:14).⁵⁶

The reading of the juvenile works confirms, at the same time, the importance of "the conversation, the dialogue of the texts." Poems, narrative poems and dramas should be read in the context of two big linguistic and stylistic traditions to which Wojtyła continuously makes references. These are, as Anna Kozłowska puts it:

1. Biblical tradition, understood as the language and style of the Bible translations into Polish, usually connected with archaism;
2. Polish Romantic (mainly Norwid⁵⁷- derived) and neo-Romantic tradition.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ After all, it has to be clearly noted that both in the use of capital letters and the already indicated problems connected with vocabulary (flection, spelling ...) we observe Wojtyła's literary texts a lot of inconsistency. Therefore, efforts made in this edition to sort out this issue are justified, all the more that these changes – in important cases – were noted in "text variations" at the end of the volume.

⁵⁵ Cf. R. Przybylska, *Some Remarks about Karol Wojtyła's Letters to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk*, in: *the Space of the Word. The Litarary Activity of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II*, edited by: Z. Zarębianka, J. Machniak, Cracow 2011, p. 457.

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery ...*, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883), a Polish poet, dramatist, painter and sculptor.

⁵⁸ A. Kozłowska, *Język poetycki Karola Wojtyły: próba charakterystyki...*, p. 212.

Closing remarks

The starting point for taking our decision was an in-depth review of not only preserved manuscripts and typescripts but also previous editions, especially those prepared by “Znak” publishing house, including the last one of 2004. Since Skwarnicki’s preface to the volume: Karol Wojtyła, Jan Paweł II, *Poezje, dramaty, szkice. Tryptyk rzymski*, Kraków 2004 and *The Editor’s Note* included therein are the latest versions of the texts published earlier (since 1979), it is worth recalling, once again, the most important information concerning the editorial criteria applied in “Znak” publications. It is understood, therefore, that Jan Okoń’s remark, who in the first edition (1979) was responsible for philological edition and who wrote *The Publisher’s Note*, was repeated once again in the 2004 edition:

“Due to a great diversification of the material itself (texts known only in print-scripts; in typescripts and manuscripts, in any case of a different type; finally only in a manuscript or manuscripts) – consistent criteria for the editorial compilation of the texts could not be adopted.”⁵⁹

In case of the first volume of Karol Wojtyła’s *Literary and Theatrical Works*, including the works written in the years 1938-1946, I reiterate, that we handle the texts that the author did not publish (except for excerpts of *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*, printed in “Głos Karmelu”), hence the need of a detailed analysis of all versions that have been preserved. In previous publications of Karol Wojtyła’s poems, the publisher regarded as the basis for the text – its typescript with all amendments, treating it as the author’s final version. However, there is no evidence that the typescripts and the handwritten amendments were really Karol Wojtyła’s. Therefore, after many discussions, in the critical edition of his literary works – wherever possible – we regarded the author’s manuscripts as the basis for printing, giving other available versions of the text in editorial remarks. The comparison of the manuscripts to the typescripts illustrates the development of the author’s poetic thinking. Some doubts had to be cleared if we had more than one typescript version of the work. The detailed remarks concerning editorial criteria and most important differences between individual versions of a given text are included in the critical apparatus consisting of editorial notes, text varieties, information about differences between this and previous editions, as well as content-related and linguistic comments designed to assist in reading individual works.

⁵⁹ K. Wojtyła, Jan Paweł II, *Poezje. Dramaty. Szkice. Tryptyk rzymski...*, p. 586.

Bibliography

- Kolarczyk M., Wojtyła K., *O Teatrze Rapsodycznym. 60-lecie powstania Teatru Rapsodycznego*, wstęp i opracowanie Jacek Popiel, wybór tekstów J. Popiel, T. Malak, Kraków 2001.
- Kozłowska A., *Język poetycki Karola Wojtyły: próba charakterystyki*, "Colloquia Literaria" (2008).
- Machniak J., *Święty brat Albert Chmielowski w myśli Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2013.
- Michałowska D., *Pamięć nie zawsze święta. Wspomnienia*, Kraków 2004.
- Młodzieńcze lata Karola Wojtyły. Wspomnienia*, ed. J. Kydryński, Kraków 1990.
- The Space of the Word. The Litarary Activity of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II*, edited by: Z. Zarębianka, J. Machniak, Cracow 2011.
- Wojtyła K. (A. Jawień, A. J., S. A. Gruda, P. Jasień), *Poezje i dramaty*, wybór i układ z upoważnienia Autora M. Skwarnicki, J. Turowicz, redakcja filologiczna J. Okoń, Kraków 1979.
- Wojtyła K., Bujak A., *Renesansowy psalterz (Księga słowiańska). Poezje słowem i światłem pisane*, wiersze opracował z upoważnienia autora M. Skwarnicki, Kraków 1999.
- Wojtyła K., *Il Teatro Rapsodico. Articoli e lettere*, traduzione di Jadwiga Radzik Lanzetta, posfazione e cura di Jacek Popiel, Roma 2003.
- Wojtyła K., Jan Paweł II, *Poezje, dramaty, szkice. Tryptyk rzymski*, Kraków 2004.
- Wojtyła K., *Psalterz – Księga Słowiańska*, do druku podał i posłowiem opatrzył S. Dziedzic, Kraków 1996.
- Zarębianka Z., *Spotkanie w Słowie. O twórczości literackiej Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 2018.