

Summary

The „Viennese” in Cracow. Life and work of Ludwik Szczepański

Key words: Young Poland, Cracow, Vienna, Polish-Austrian borderland, poetry, modernism, decadence, modern journalism, press photography, mediumship, conscious maternity

The aim of this thesis is to introduce Ludwik Szczepański (1872-1954) - a forgotten poet of the Young Poland period, the founder of "Życie" (1897) - a weekly published in Cracow, one of the forefathers of Polish modern journalism, as well as the founder of two Cracovian Associations: "Towarzystwo Krzewienia Świadomego Macierzyństwa i Reformy Obyczajów" (The Society of Conscious Maternity and Moral Reform) and "Towarzystwo Metapsychiczne" (Metapsychic Society).

Szczepański was born in Cracow. As an eight-year-old he moved with his parents to Vienna, where his father Alfred Szczepański, a writer and journalist, took a job as a Secretary General of Länderbank.

The capital of Austria-Hungary played a key role in Ludwik Szczepański's life: it shaped him into a modern artist with transnational artistic identity (in the words of one of his reviewers, Szczepański was a proper European, who only accidentally created his works in Polish). As his everyday functioning was connected with the German language, it made him a bilingual artist, on the borderline of Polish and Austrian culture (a perspective which is completely unfamiliar to Polish literary studies).

Despite his fascination with Vienna, Szczepański decided to bond with Cracow. Between 1891 and 1893 he studied law at Jagiellonian University, which he, admittedly, continued in Vienna, but in 1897 he returned to Cracow, where he was already recognised as "modern" poet, to establish a modernist socio-artistic weekly "Życie". The generation of his father's friends labeled him as "the Viennese". The term meant to be ironic and referred to a modern eccentric, bringing new Western European trends to conservative Cracow. The title of this dissertation refers to this very term.

This paper is an attempt at overviewing Szczepański's huge literary and journalistic output. The six chapters present: his Cracovian roots and Viennese connections (chapter "Vaterland: Galizien"), his collage days and the choice of a career path ("Między Wiedniem a Krakowem"), still unexamined press publishers such as "Ilustracja Polska" and "Nowiny dla Wszystkich", the organisation of the first Polish photo exhibition, as well as a quarter of a century of his journalistic work for "Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny" ("Dziennikarz nowoczesny"), three novels: "W naszej letniej stolicy, Zakopanem...", "Król powietrza" and "Przewrót" ("Pisarz *minorum gentium*"), establishing and actively participating in "Towarzystwo Krzewienia Świadomego Macierzyństwa i Reformy Obyczajów" and "Towarzystwo Metapsychiczne" accociations ("Walka postępu z zabobonem"), the Second World War and the last years of his life ("Ostatnie 15 lat").

Ludwik Szczepański still has not received a monograph. With the exception of some major events in his life, he mostly remains "persona incognita". This dissertation aims to save from oblivion the artist who contributed to both Polish literature and journalism, and to the city of Cracow.

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