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ON PHILISTINES, GYPSIES *ALIAS WALEŚAS*.
AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF ROMANY STUDIES IN POLAND

Gypsies (Romanies) are one of those communities about which is a great deal of confusing or even outright false information. This refers there not only to the Gypsies who live in Poland and Polish literature about them — confusion and misunderstanding in this respect are fairly universal. One reason is the lack of source knowledge (both as regards documents of the past and the results of present ethnological research), the other a certain stereotypical image of the Gypsies deriving from the beginnings of their European history.

The 15th c. chronicles which recorded the arrival of Gypsies to various towns and countries are usually quite favorable as the newcomers were treated with curiosity as exotic guests. Very rare are entries that inform about cases of theft or any unfavorable features of the Gypsies. This can be explained mostly by the general situation in contemporary Europe and the prevailing social tendencies. On the roads of medieval Europe one could meet all kinds of wanderers — those who wished to go to famous schools and those who wanted to improve their craftsmanship, runaway serfs, knights searching for fame and a sovereign, mountebanks, robbers, monks wandering from one monastery to another, and, above all, pilgrims going to sacred places or penitents who wanted to repent for their own sins or the sins of their ancestors. Sometimes, the roads were crowded with refugees who tried to escape plague, crusaders who hoped to recapture the tomb of Christ from the Saracens or, finally, flagellants, Beguines, Beghards, and others defined by the Catholic Church as heretics. In such a crowd Gypsies were not unique, even though they were different. The change of the attitude towards them occurred only in the next century. The era of the Renaissance brought about a fundamental transformation in the approach to work and concept of good life. Holy Scripture, the basis of knowledge and source of attitudes to the world and other people, was reinterpreted and that interpretation considerably affected the approach to the poor and loiterers — including pilgrims. The pilgrim, wanderer, ceased to be treated as a holy man, as someone who may be Jesus Christ himself in disguise and who, therefore, deserved hospitality. The evolution in scholarship — in

philosophy, theology, and the Renaissance humanities in general — led to essential modifications of attitude toward strangers. The wanderer is no longer a distinguished figure, a God-fearing pilgrim, but he has become transformed into a bum who avoids work and lives at the expense of others. In the previous decades Gypsies had not only acquired some rudimentary knowledge of the lifestyle and cultures of particular European countries, but also learned about the way of thinking and mental characteristics of Europeans. Most probably, that was why they chose to claim that the reason for their wandering was penitence imposed on them by the Pope or that their pilgrimage from one cult center to another was caused by religious zeal (as it is clearly confirmed by chronicles from various regions of the 15th century Europe). Historical documents indicate that such stories were eagerly accepted and guaranteed the assistance of local authorities and common people. A hundred years later — even though Gypsies still wished to be taken for pilgrims — their stories bring about the opposite effect. Persecutions that began at that time would last for centuries, increasing the distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies and contributing to a negative image of the Romany community.

Biblical studies and the general development of knowledge resulted in attempts to explain the origin of Gypsies. That was also the moment when the idea of their Egyptian descent became so widespread — the annals and chronicles recorded the word “Philistines” which, together with “Tartars” and “Egyptians”, became popular with respect to Gypsy wanderers. That latter term was perhaps in the widest use both in the Catholic and Protestant part of Europe. From the very beginning — the first records from Dubrovnik, the Peloponnese, and Walachia — they have also been known as “Tsigane” (obviously, the names have been phonetically different in various languages and countries, yet they all derive from one and the same root). Along with the changes in mentality and the new image of the wanderer, new developments brought about a modification of law. From the turn of the 16th c. till the end of the 18th (another major change anticipated by the works of French philosophers and the French revolution), Gypsies were subject to very strict laws. The increasing distance gradually resulted in the image of Gypsies as permanent outcasts of society — notorious loiterers, fortune tellers, thieves and confidence men. Attention paid to this process is fully justified of information and quite desirable, for it has been directly reflected in literature about Gypsies.

The first message from Poland about a man referred to as a “Gypsy” comes from 1401 from Cracow. Since the mid-16th c. Gypsies became the object of interest of the royal chancellery and parliament which issued the first decrees ordering Gypsies to leave the country. In the 1630s they ceased to be the object of attention of the parliament, yet until the time of partitions local councils and administration officials reminded citizens that Gypsies must not be put up, and courts examined charges against those who “maintain Gypsies in their estates”,

according to a 1736 citation recorded in the Cracow archive files [APK (Wawel) Castr. Crac. Rel. 116, pp. 115-118]. The oldest Polish publication particularly mentioning Gypsies is *Kronika, tho iesth Historya Świata* [Chronicle or, History of the World] by Marcin Bielski, originally published in Cracow in 1564. This is how Gypsies are described in that work: "Idle, cunning, mysterious, wild, black people... with the language best suited for theft, so that no one would understand what they say... which makes them master thieves... they trade in horses, sell gilded copper and silvered iron, make picklocks for thieves" (Bielski, ed. 1976, pp. 261-262). Bielski's approach is by no means original — the fragment on Gypsies is a fairly adequate transcription of the content of *Cosmographia universalis* by Sebastian Münster, published in Basel. In turn, Bielski's *Chronicle* became a standard reference source for other Polish writers: it has no value for the history of Gypsy studies, being only a manifestation of the attitude towards them.

In the context of the rise of ethnography, the most authoritative source of knowledge about the 17th c. Polish village is the study by Jakub Kazimierz Haur, *Skład abo Skarbiec znakomitych sekretów oekonomiey ziemiańskiej* [A Collection or Treasury of the Most Precious Secrets of Land Economy] (Kraków 1693). The same treatise contains the first Polish engraving showing a Gypsy couple. In contrast to the description by Bielski, the value of Haur's picture as an illustration documenting the Gypsy costume can be granted (although it would be a mistake to assume that all the Gypsies wore such clothes).

That is basically all that can be found in Polish literature about Gypsies until the beginning of the 19th c., apart from brief notes occasionally included in various studies. For an attempt to present the lifestyle, internal organization, and culture of the Gypsy community the value of these notes is (apart from Haur's engraving) indeed minimal — actually, they reveal much more about their authors and the society in which Gypsies lived. Yet, some 16th-18th c. source documents, such as safe conduct letters, privileges, and entries in town and court files, contain very interesting information about the Gypsy community itself and its relations with non-Gypsies.

In that period the knowledge of Gypsies in Poland did not particularly differ from the European standard. Only the discovery made by the Hungarian Etienne Valyi in the end of the 18th c. that the speech of Gypsies was similar to the languages spoken in India became a major stimulus to the development of Gypsy studies and, by the same token, increased the number of relevant publications. The studies published in Germany and France later would inspire Polish scholars.

The first text which originated Polish Gypsy studies was a lengthy footnote included in the fundamental work *O litewskich i polskich prawach* [On Lithuanian and Polish Laws] by Tadeusz Czacki (Warszawa 1800-1801).

Several years later, Czacki – an outstanding personality, highly appreciated by contemporary scholars both for his organizing abilities (he founded the famous Liceum Krzemienieckie) and through and reliable historical knowledge – prepared a longer study called *O Cyganach* [On Gypsies]. The author's death in 1813 considerably delayed the work's publication, and for a long time the manuscript circulated only among a small group of readers. Most certainly, it was known to and appreciated by Joachim Lelewel, which is evidenced by the outstanding historian's correspondence with Ignacy Ołdakowski who was a professor in Liceum Krzemienieckie. Lelewel's interest in Gypsies was not limited to his care for the legacy of Czacki – besides his correspondence with Ołdakowski, he wrote on the subject in his letters to another Vilna historian, Ignacy Daniłowicz, and then, already in exile, corresponded with one of the renowned contemporary students of the Gypsy culture, Paul Bataillard. One of Daniłowicz's studies indicates also Czacki's work was highly appreciated by another outstanding humanist and philosopher, Hugo Kołłątaj. *O Cyganach* was finally published many years after Czacki's death – it appeared in print in 1835 in Cracow, as a part of the second volume of *Pomniki historii i literatury polskiej* [Monuments of Polish History and Literature] edited by Michał Wiszniewski. Later, in 1845, it was included in the third volume of Czacki's *Dziela* [Works] published in Poznań.

Czacki started working on his essay only after extensive research, and his familiarity with foreign publications, including detailed knowledge of major works such as the book by H. M. G. Grellmann, proves that he treated his Gypsy studies very seriously. He was also the first to publish some source records pertaining to the history of Gypsies in Poland. Czacki – as we may infer it from his other works, e.g. the still valuable volume *O litewskich i polskich prawach*, spent a lot of time studying ancient documents and in that way he revealed much previously unknown information. Hence, there is no doubt that he may be considered the founder or father of Polish Gypsy studies. One of very few weak points of his study is the lack of precision in quoting historical records. This is the reason why we cannot retrace the oldest of Czacki's references (from 1501) which is important also because it contains the name of a Gypsy leader mentioned in earlier Hungarian documents. In fact, however, the fault may be not Czacki's but his editor's – at any rate, the truth remains out of our reach and no verification of quoted information is possible.

In 1824 in Vilna a study was published called *O Cyganach wiadomość historyczna, czytana na posiedzeniu publicznem cesarskiego uniwersytetu wileńskiego dnia 30 czerwca 1824 r., przez Ignacego Daniłowicza* [On Gypsies, A Historical Message Read During a Public Session in the Imperial University of Vilna on June 30, 1824 by Ignacy Daniłowicz]. The author of the study was a historian and a professor of Vilna University, soon to be expelled from the school after a trial of the student conspiracy (Towarzystwo Filomatów).

Sentenced in the trial, he was ordered to move to Kharkov and then hired by the local university.

For Daniłowicz Gypsies were a minor subject, as he spent most of his time studying the legal systems of Poland and Lithuania. A legal historian, he undertook that research for reasons which are impossible to ascertain, especially given that his approach to Gypsies is evidently very critical. It was perhaps mainly due to the influence of Lelewel who became Daniłowicz's friend and who — as we know — was very interested in Gypsies. *O Cyganach wiadomość historyczna* is a kind of monograph — next to the chapters devoted to the origin and history of Romanies, the author included an account of the Gypsy customs, religion, way of life, costumes, and professions. The most valuable and original section is the part focusing on the situation in Poland and Russia and the legal status of Gypsies in these two countries. Daniłowicz's study is largely based on a book by the German author Grellmann, *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner...* (Göttingen 1787). In 1823, a translated fragment of Grellmann's work was published with a critical review in the journal "Lech. Dziennik poświęcony literaturze. Dziejom ojczystym i współczesnym" (vol. 1, No 7, pp. 201-209). *O Cyganach wiadomość historyczna* appeared in the following year; Daniłowicz disparaged the "Lech" publication, but a comparison of both texts shows far-reaching similarities (cf. Mróz, 1994). What is, however, most surprising, is Daniłowicz's lack of criticism and sometimes naivete, even though otherwise he was an inquisitive and discriminating historian. Grellmann's study was published 30 years earlier, and since then the knowledge of Gypsies was considerably extended. Daniłowicz supplemented it with a few documents issued for Gypsy leaders. Apart from one of them, a privilege of Karol Radziwiłł which was then published for the first time, all the remaining ones had already been known from earlier, foreign sources. Later authors, from Narbutt to the present accused Daniłowicz of a bias against Gypsies — partly was due the prejudice of Grellmann, but also to some extent reflecting Daniłowicz's own opinion about Romanies must have been unfavorable as well.

Six years after the publication of Daniłowicz's study, in Vilna appeared a book by Teodor Narbutt, *Rys historyczny ludu cygańskiego* [An Outline History of the Gypsy People]. When Daniłowicz delivered his lecture to his academic audience, romantic ideas were already quite familiar the Vilna scholars, yet, oddly enough, even though the author of *O Cyganach wiadomość historyczna* had widespread local contacts, no trace of the romantic influence may be detected in his reasoning. It was only Narbutt who adopted the romantic view of the country people, Gypsies, and vestiges of the past. The difference between Daniłowicz and Narbutt comes out most distinctly when we compare respective fragments of their opinions on particular issue (cf. e.g. Daniłowicz, 1824, pp. 30-31; Narbutt, 1830, pp. 78-79). Narbutt's

book is also of a monographic character, yet the author's primary intention was to modify the overly unfavorable image of Gypsies created by Daniłowicz. *Rys historyczny ludu cygańskiego* contains parts on the origin of Gypsies, their European and Polish history, and various aspects of the Gypsy culture. Finally, Narbutt presented an outline of the Romany language and a list of words, as well as including several documents of the Gypsy history. Among them, the most interesting is a safe conduct letter from 1501, issued and signed by King Alexander I. The problem is, though, that the date on the document does not fit the reign of King Alexander. It is an open question whether Narbutt was not aware of publishing a forgery (Gypsies were known to use forged letters quite frequently), or forged the document himself? The answer may never be provided. Narbutt has been commonly considered by other historians unreliable — a fantast who would “supplement the historical lacunae” by himself. It has been proved that employed this strategy frequently to validate his own studies about the past of Lithuania. Narbutt was a true enthusiast of Lithuania and Lithuanian antiquities, but so many documents were missing (especially those from the remotest past — the beginnings of the Lithuanian state and pagan times), that he could not resist supplying them. Many contemporary authors mixed fantasy with real knowledge, but Narbutt was above average in this respect. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the fact that he “supplied” documents of Lithuanian history necessarily means that he supplement the Gypsy past as well. There is no doubt, however, that the text of the document quoted by Narbutt provokes serious doubts, and besides, it has never been found in the files from which it had been supposedly copied (cf. Mróz, 1988, pp. 305 - 322).

Regardless of all the weaknesses of the studies by Czacki and Daniłowicz as well as doubts concerning Narbutt, the first half of the 19th c. was most important for the development of Gypsy studies in Poland. Later on, until the most recent years, never again were so many wide-ranging works written in such a short period of time.

Only after many years are a few studies about the Gypsy history published — these were all short articles, but they referred to an interesting chapter of the Romany past. In 1900, Antoni Prochaska published in “Kwartalnik Historyczny” (No 3, pp. 453 - 457) an article *Przywileje dla cygańskiej starszozyny w Polsce* [Privileges for the Gypsy Elders in Poland]. The author — an outstanding historian, editor of many of the oldest documents from the Lvov archives — included in that text two privileges: from 1652 (the oldest known one) and from 1705, which he found during his archive queries. The privileges were supplemented with an account of the very institution of Gypsy superior appointed by the royal chancellery. Another publication on the same subject appeared only thirty years later. In 1929, Teodor Modelski published in “Ateneum Wileńskie” (No 1 - 4, pp. 583 - 588) his article *Przywilej na starszeństwo*

cygańskie z r. 1703 [The Gypsy Authority Privilege from 1703]. Then, the question of privileges for Gypsy superiors was examined by Józef Broda who in 1951 published in "Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne" a short study *Przywileje nominacyjne dla króla cygańskiego w Polsce z 1731 r. i na wójtostwo cygańskie z 1732 r.* [Nomination Privileges for the Gypsy King in Poland from 1732 and for the Gypsy Village Head from 1732] (pp. 346-356). Even though the ideological jargon and the class point of view make most of Broda's conclusions entirely irrelevant, the essential value of that publication consists in two documents which are mentioned in the title and which until then had remained unknown. The historical aspect was also discussed by Jerzy Ficowski (in the first edition of his *Cyganie polscy* [Polish Gypsies] from 1953), but the author limited his scope only to a report from literature. Only later would Ficowski's publications make valuable contributions -to the study of the Romany past.

The next decades brought hardly any new information, even though many articles about Gypsies appeared in the press. The second half of the 19th c., and in particular the 1880s and 1890s which were so important for the development of Gypsy studies in Europe as well as a time of the publication of numerous works of lasting value, did not prove to be a particularly fruitful period in Poland. Nothing significant was produced, with the one possible exception of the study *La langue des Tsiganes Slovaques* by Antoni Kalina, published in Poznań. Various periodicals contained articles about Gypsies, yet they were all intended for the general public and contributed little to specialist knowledge — many of them were actually reprints from the foreign press.

In the second half of the 19th c. several articles were included in various calendars and in "Dodatek do Gazety Lwowskiej" ["Supplement to Gazeta Lwowska"]. In 1851 Wincenty Pol published his *Rzut oka na północne stoki Karpat* [A Glimpse at the Northern Slopes of the Carpathians]. Among other things, it contains an interesting account of the author's meeting with a group of Gypsies occupied with rinsing gold out of the Carpathian rivers. The same fragment, next to another one featuring Gypsies living on islets on the Polesie marshes, was later included in the second volume of Pol's works entitled *Północny Wschód Europy* [North-East of Europe] and published in 1870. Since the 1860s, much attention was paid to Gypsies by "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", publishing reports about the appearance, costumes, and camps of the Lovari and Kelderashi tribes that came a few decades earlier from Transylvania and Walachia. "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", as well as "Praca", also contained a variety of illustrations (especially in the issues from the late 19th c. and the years preceding World War I). Many contemporary artists would draw pictures of Gypsies: types, camps, fair and wandering scenes — it was a result of a universally European vogue. The country and the life of the country people were often represented in art and literature. But the *fin-de-siècle* bohemia and

literary Young Poland treated the Gypsy subject in a special way, as a representation of an idea, a symbol with often has little in common with reality. Thus, only some of the engravings to be found in "Praca" and "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" (as well as in "Wędrowiec", "Orli Lot", and other journals) are of iconographic value — most of them just reflect the prevalent fashion and freely develop inspiration, which is also the case of written texts. Consequently, even though they undoubtedly enriched the general knowledge, they cannot be considered as legitimate results of research on Gypsies.

The only ethnographic periodical which more or less systematically published various materials concerning Gypsies from its very beginnings was *Wisła*. These often included folk tales and proverbs as well as, somewhat less often, notes and descriptions of Gypsies themselves and their culture (language, fairy tales, disposition, way of life, etc.). It was very important that "Wisła" accounted for new interesting articles and books — the bibliography included also publications on Gypsies.

In 1887 in Britain appeared the first issue of the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society", a quarterly which has been very important for the development and progress of Gypsy studies. The appearance of the periodical was acknowledged in the second volume of "Wisła". The author of the account of the content and objectives of the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society" was Izydor Kopernicki. Kopernicki was the only outstanding Polish scholar who systematically wrote about Gypsies (although usually in foreign periodicals).

Kopernicki had been interested in Gypsies already before; together with the well-known French scholar, Bataillard, he wrote an article about the Gypsies of Galicia making shepherd bells. In the first fascicles of the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore" we come across several texts by Kopernicki, mostly presentations of fairy-tales. Besides, he conducted research in physical anthropology, publishing the results in "Archiv für Anthropologie", but his primary interest was the Romany language: both in the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore" (vol. 1, No 2) and in "Wisła" (vol. 3), Kopernicki published short notes on the dialect of the Gypsies from Bosnia. The most outstanding work of Kopernicki in the field of Gypsy studies are *Textes Tsiganes. Contes et Poesies* published in Cracow in 1925 (vol. 1) and 1930 (vol. 2). The collection is fully bilingual — all the included fables and tales are in the original Romany and in French. Kopernicki was also working on a Gypsy language dictionary, but unfortunately he did not manage to complete it — a small fragment was published in the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore" and the rest of the manuscript is kept in the collection of the Cracow branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences. "Wisła" also published texts of several Gypsy fairy tales from Lithuania submitted by a collector of Lithuanian folklore and co-worker of Jan Karłowicz, Sylwester Dowojno-Sylwestrowicz. Another author who, next to Kopernicki, published in the first issues of the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore" and in "Wisła" materials about Gypsies in Poland, Russia, and Hungary was Władysław Kornel Zieliński.

None of the Polish ethnographers of those times conducted any systematic research on Gypsies — the subject was approached only marginally and was related to other materials collected among the rural population (Kopernicki's studies focused primarily on the Romany language). The largest number of short notes on Gypsies may be found in "Wisła" and while "Lud" published a brief account of Gypsies in Galicia only in its 6th volume, the editorial board did not pay too much further attention to Romanies. Almost all the publications from that period stem from the folklore passions of their authors and it is virtually impossible to trace in them any methodological inspirations or propensities. The only exception in this respect may be the linguistic studies by Kopernicki written to meet the criteria of formal scholarship.

Another fruitful period which came a whole century after the successful inauguration of the Gypsy studies in the early 19th c. were the years between the two world wars. However, it was the Romany language and not history, which became at that time the main object of scholarly interest. The first step to examine the Romany language was taken already by Narbutt and Daniłowicz who supplemented their works with grammatical paradigms and vocabularies. Later on, the novelist Józef Ignacy Kraszewski used Narbutt's word list in his novel *Chata za wsią* [A Cottage Outside of the Village].

However, serious research on the Romany language was begun at the end of the 19th c. by Kalina and Kopernicki. The most significant studies in this field appeared between the world wars in Cracow: that was the time of publication of both volumes of Gypsy texts by Kopernicki (1925 and 1930). In 1927 Edward Klich published two articles on the speech of the Gypsies from the Rabka region and the influence of Polish on Gypsy dialects. An essential part of another Klich's study — *Cygańszczyzna w "Chacie za wsią" Kraszewskiego* [Gypsy Elements in Kraszewski's *Chata za wsią*] ("Prace Filologiczne" vol. 25, pp. 171-220) — was an introduction to the general knowledge of the Romany language. Several years later still another crucial publication appeared — *Wörterbuch des Zigeunerndialekt von Zakopane* by Jan Rozwadowski (1936). Before that, together with Stanisław Estreicher, Rozwadowski wrote a long entry, *Język cygański i Cyganie w Polsce* [The Gypsy Language and Gypsies in Poland], included in *Encyklopedia polska* [The Polish Encyclopedia], vol. 3 from 1915. The decades between the two wars were an exceptional period in Polish Gypsy studies: research in the field was conducted by scholars with established reputation. Unfortunately, their achievements are known only to a small academic audience.

World War II destroyed the academic centers and brought the initiated projects to a halt. Right after the war, Gypsies became an object of interest mainly of the administration and police, and only two scholars — quite exceptional in an indifferent academic community — have been continuously doing research on Gypsies: in Cracow Tadeusz Pobożniak and in Warsaw Jerzy Ficowski. They are both outstanding specialists, for many years virtually

alone in the field (a short text by Broda and casual press articles may be legitimately ignored). Pobożniak, a linguist and orientalist (specializing in Indian studies), professor of Jagiellonian University, continued the work of Kopernicki, Klich, and Rozwadowski, but his achievement is thematically more extensive and no less valuable. In the forties and fifties, Pobożniak published several texts focused on some characteristics of the Gypsy language and first names. Then he became interested in the Lovari, one of the most interesting Gypsy groups widely scattered all over the world. In 1961, he published an article *Powstanie cygańskiej grupy Lowari* [The Rise of the Gypsy Lovari Group] (in: *Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji PAN*, pp. 127-129), and a few years later the result of a more comprehensive research project, a highly valuable *Grammar of the Lovari Dialect* (1966). A small booklet, *O Cyganach* [On Gypsies], issued in 1972 as a volume in the popular monograph series of the Polish Academy of Sciences, contained a brief account of the origin of Gypsies, their culture, and the features of the Romany language. Volume 1 of a two-volume collective study *Języki indo-europejskie* [Indo-European Languages] (1986) includes a chapter on Indian languages (*Języki indyjskie*), written by Pobożniak and also covering the Gypsy language. The chapter indicates that its author, continuously working on the issue, was familiar with the latest publication and achievements in the study of Gypsy origins and language. It is remarkable that Pobożniak (even when retired) kept teaching university seminars on the Gypsy language. Professor Pobożniak, who died in 1990, was one of the most eminent Polish linguists, an authority in the history of Polish Gypsy studies.

The research on the Romany language is still continued, although on a much smaller scale. Among the involved scholars, there are: Ignacy Ryszard Danka from the University of Łódź, specializing in the languages of Anatolia, who wrote a few studies on the Gypsy language, and Andrzej Lewkowicz. The 1983 volume of "Prace Komisji Językoznawstwa. Studia indo-iranica", prepared to celebrate the jubilee of Prof. Pobożniak, contained texts by foreign scholars doing research on the Romany language: Jan Kochanowski and Marcel Courtiade. Those were not the only works of both authors which were published in Polish — in particular, Courtiade contributed with his studies, lectures, and organizing activity to a revival of the Polish interest in Gypsies and their language. It was in Poland, in Jadwisin, where, during the 4th Congress of the Romani Union in 1991, Courtiade put forward his proposal of the standardization of the Gypsy language.

The only scholar to devote a unique effort to the Gypsy studies — he learned the language living among wandering Gypsies and wrote down his field observations — has been Jerzy Ficowski, the man who contributed the most to the knowledge of Gypsies in Poland. In 1953, he published a study *Cyganie polscy* [Polish Gypsies], and some time later, in 1964, *Cyganie na polskich*

drogach [Gypsies on the Polish Roads] — the latter work not only contains much new material, but brings a thorough revision of the first book. Only *Cyganie na polskich drogach* may be recognized as a magisterial work, based on long-lasting queries in libraries and archives, and, in the first place, observations and conversations with Gypsies themselves. It is a sizable monograph supplemented with many photos and a chapter on the Gypsy language and its grammar as well as a word list containing, apart from the vocabulary of the Polska Roma, some expressions from the dialects of Carpathian Gypsies and the Kelderashi. Ficowski is the first contemporary Polish scholar to have recapitulated all the historical knowledge about Gypsies: he quoted from documents (particularly the privileges concerning Gypsy elders) and added his own discoveries and valuable analyses. The historical part of the book contains also an account of the lot of Gypsies during World War II and the atrocities committed in Nazi concentration camps. The most valuable and truly original section of the study is that devoted to the Gypsy culture: the descriptions of the lifestyle and ways of earning money, clothes, homes, and wagons as well as customs related to such crucial moments in human life as birth, rites of passage, marriage, parenthood, and death, and finally, the functioning of the Gypsy community. Next, the author discusses the internal organization of particular groups and their division, the social hierarchy, role of authorities, systems of ethical norms, principles of the unwritten law, beliefs, and the practice of magic. Additionally, Ficowski has written about Gypsy folk art, tales, and songs — a unique achievement is the chapter on an outstanding Gypsy poet, Bronisława Wajs, called Papusha. The book ends with fragments of 19th c. literature and accounts of the Gypsy Holocaust.

In 1985 appeared — unfortunately with no illustrations — a new, expanded (in comparison to the 1964 one) edition of *Cyganie na polskich drogach*. It did not introduce any new problems, but particular chapters were enriched and developed, and certain ambiguities which had been detected in the first edition were eliminated.

Before Ficowski, many authors wrote about the Gypsy history and language, yet not a single study was a reflection of personal experience of the Gypsy customs, way of life, and the attitude to non-Gypsies. The interested audience had to wait for such an account for many years, until 1964. The earlier literature on the subject lacked the ethnographic component (apart from a few brief fragments) mainly because of the conditions of research. Czacki, Daniłowicz, Narbutt, Klich, Kopernicki, Rozwadowski, and even Pobożniak wrote about Gypsies with a kind of detachment — they examined the history and language, but never approached their object of interest directly. It was only after the World War II that Ficowski (and no none else) presented Gypsies as they were. It is no exaggeration to claim that *Cyganie na polskich drogach* is the fundamental Polish study in the field. Even if later other authors elaborated

on specific issues and enriched the knowledge of many details, none has ever produced a better global description of the culture of Polish Gypsies. The achievement of Jerzy Ficowski is not limited just to one book, but includes also articles in scholarly journals (“Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society”, “Etudes Tsiganes”) and Polish literary magazines as well as a translation and publication of *Pieśni Papuszy* [Songs of Papusha] which is a truly major accomplishment. (Besides, Gypsy motifs may be found quite frequently also in Ficowski’s own literary works).

The handful of the aforementioned names (and titles) constitute the achievement of Polish Gypsy studies in their best. Apart from that, there are a few short notes and papers as well as some popular essays and articles, but their value is either minor or nil – they were intended to impress the reader, yet they do not count as proper academic contributions. The academic knowledge about Gypsies started growing only in the seventies as a result of systematic commitment of scholars from two universities: in Warsaw and then in Cracow. Within a few years several M. A. theses were written: two in Warsaw and several more in Cracow. In fact, such theses usually do not affect the progress of knowledge, but in this case their significance cannot be ignored. This refers predominantly to the studies written in Cracow which focus on various aspects of the same group of Carpathian Gypsies hitherto much less known than the Polska Roma. Two authors particularly deserve honors: Adam Bartosz (who wrote about the economic foundations of the life of the Spisz Gypsies) and Andrzej Mirga (writing about the Gypsy ethnic stereotypes and the Gypsy attitudes to non-Gypsies). Both have successfully established themselves as Gypsy scholars with many academic publications. A study by Ignacy Marek Kamiński (from Warsaw) may be regarded as a sort of supplement to the works mentioned above, since it presents the results of research conducted in the Slovak part of Spisz. The materials obtained on that occasion by a group of M. A. students later provided the basis for articles included in a special issue of “Etnografia Polska” (1978, fasc. 2). That issue was the first Polish publication of its kind and it was favorably reviewed in foreign ethnographic periodicals and books.

At that time, research was conducted by three institutions. The Department of the Ethnography of Slavs of the Jagiellonian University continued the work in Spisz, planning a special monograph of the Spisz Gypsies. The project was abandoned after the death of its main advocate, Zbigniew Biały.

The Spisz research was continued in the eighties by Andrzej Mirga from the same department (and a group of students). Then he approached the problem of current changes in Gypsy communities (not only in Spisz) and the phenomena related to social adaptation. The results of Mirga’s studies were published in several Polish periodicals [e.g. in “Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Etnograficzne” (1985), “Ethnologia Polona”

(1987), "Polska Sztuka Ludowa" (1982)] and in a collection of articles by various authors published in Germany. A few years ago Mirga has become a socio-political Gypsy activist (he is now President of the Roma Association in Poland), cooperating with several international institutions and organizations, such as the Council of Europe. He left academic life and thus the Gypsy studies in the Department of the Ethnography of Slavs in Jagiellonian University in Cracow have been suspended.

In 1980 two scholars associated with the University of Warsaw earned their doctoral degrees through research in Gypsy topics. Lech Mróz defended his dissertation, which focused on general adaptation and assimilation processes and a shift from the nomadic lifestyle to life in settlements, in Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań. Several months later, on the basis of a study of Gypsies in Sweden and the immigration of Gypsies from Eastern Europe to Sweden as well as an analysis of certain phenomena in the field of social ecology, Kamiński received his doctorate at the University of Göteborg. In Polish Gypsy studies, Kamiński's book, *A State of Ambiguity. Studies of Gypsy Refugees*, is the most original and interesting achievement. Most publications from the same period reveal a collector's descriptive bias caused by a number of factors: the reading of earlier literature, individual approaches to the Gypsy research, and specific ethnographic education. Kamiński's study not only introduces a different mode of thought, but also locates Gypsies in the context of subjects analyzed by contemporary anthropology, which is a novelty in Poland. It is a pity that Kamiński's book is not familiar to Polish ethnographers, including those interested in Gypsies.

In the University of Warsaw, in the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Romany research has been carried out for many years under the supervision of Mróz, in whose regular course students also participate in various projects. At first, the study was focused on mutual relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, ethnic stereotype, and internal divisions within Gypsy groups as well as relations between the groups. In most cases, the object of research were the groups Polska Roma and Chaladytka Roma – then other groups were also taken into account (although to a somewhat lesser extent): the Lovari, Kelderashi, and Carpathian Gypsies. After some time, when it turned out that some issues could not be explained without recourse to history, researchers started archive queries and became more interested in the past.

Partial results of that research were published in "Etnografia Polska" (e.g. in the special Gypsy issue published in 1978) and in "Polska Sztuka Ludowa" (1982). In 1984 and 1986, the studies were continued in India: the focus of that project was on the origin of Gypsies and their ethnic and cultural ties with India. The results of that, and earlier programs, were partly presented by Mróz in various journals in Poland ("Etnografia Polska", "Polska Sztuka Ludowa", "Ethnologia Polona") and abroad ("Etudes Tsiganes", "Lacio

Drom”, and “Roma”). In 1992 Mróz published in Warsaw his post-doctoral dissertation, *Geneza Cyganów i ich kultury* [The Origin of Gypsies and their Culture]. The most important objective of the book was to analyze and reinterpret the available source records, starting with these from the most remote past, and, in particular, to analyze the history of the Romanies in Poland. At present, the Warsaw department is also carrying out research among Gypsies in the Republic of Lithuania. This is being done as one of the projects constituting a program of studies of ethnic groups and minorities in Lithuania and represents continuation of earlier work, since the Lithuanian Gypsies are closely related to Chaladytka Roma and Polska Roma – some of them have family in Poland.

The third Polish institution which has been important for Gypsy studies is the Regional Museum in Tarnów, with Adam Bartosz as its long time director. For several years, it is the only museum in the world with a separate Gypsy section and a permanent exhibition of Gypsy artifacts. Only much later, other museums outside Poland started organizing (temporary) exhibitions of the same kind, and a few years ago a Gypsy (Romany) Museum was established in Brno, in the Czech Republic. The Tarnów museum now holds the largest collection of iconographic materials, a rich library, and unique exhibits (such as a set of items used by Gypsy women in the practice of magic and fortune-telling, and wagons used until the early 1970s by wandering Gypsy groups). Apart from its exposition in Tarnów, the museum has prepared a number of exhibitions in Poland and abroad. Its director, Adam Bartosz, is also the author of many popular publications and catalogues.

The year 1994 was particularly good for the Gypsy studies in Poland, for Polish authors published two books: *Nie bój się Cygana* [Do Not Be Afraid of the Gypsy] by Bartosz, and *Cyganie. Odmiennosc i nietolerancja* [Gypsies. Otherness and Intolerance] by Mirga and Mróz. Both are intended for the general public, and as such they discuss a wide variety of problems concerning the Romany past and present (both in the aspect of history and culture. However, the mode of analysis, number of references to source records and literature on the subject as well as detailed presentation of particular issues leads to a classification of Mirga's and Mróz's work as an academic study, while Bartosz's work is more popular in character.

Finally, closing this account of the Polish interest in Gypsies, one should pay some attention to the question of methodology of research which is probably the most remarkable weakness of Polish Romany scholarship. The number of books and articles (both academic and popular) which have been published after the war, and even in the last 25 years, has far exceeded the sum total of all the earlier publications. However, the fundamental paradox is, that the fewer Gypsies still live in Poland, the more research is actually

conducted and the more material is produced. In fact, this phenomenon, which became acute through the last few decades, pertains to ethnology in general — what has developed, are the methods and institutions of research, while the object of study is clearly waning. The speed of ongoing changes has made the Gypsies gradually lose what is usually called tradition (the problem is complicated and reaches beyond the scope of this paper). Gypsies are able to adjust themselves to new circumstances — with no sense of connection with a specific territory, relatives living in many different countries, many of them (even whole Romany groups, with the exception of the Carpathian Gypsies) live on the border area or the periphery of the non-Gypsy world and, simultaneously, within it. This leads to such an enormous variety of paradoxes and problematic situations, that the available methods of research prove insufficient. The authors of the past did not supply us with enough descriptions which would today serve as a ground for comparison. Hence, the contemporary students of the Gypsies face the necessity of working in many directions: they have to account for and analyze specific situations, but also to create a comprehensive data base of records and basic information. Another crucial task is the completion of far too fragmentary historical knowledge of the subject.

In the last few years, the image of the Gypsies and the attitude of the authorities and the public towards them have considerably changed. For centuries, they used to be called Philistines and Tartars — suspicious vagabonds and *walesas*, then just Gypsies [Polish “Cyganie” derives from the verb “cyganić” which is a synonym of “to cheat” — trans.], in fact, more “Gypsy” than human. That was the case until recently. Whenever the press would write no matter if in the crime column or not — about a non-Gypsy (a Pole), the last name or the initial appeared, while with respect to Gypsies the ethnic identification was enough. Nowadays, for the first time Gypsies are identified by their names, and not even as “Gypsies” but as “Roma” (this is how they call themselves). It is an essential and very favorable change. Besides, Gypsies have begun developing contacts with non-Gypsies. All this bears out certain implications to be taken into account in future Gypsy studies. It would be desirable to: (a) publish as soon as possible all the collected historical records which are still not available to the public and continue archive queries, (b) classify, analyze, and publish the results of fieldwork which have been stored in the archives of the Cracow and Warsaw departments of ethnography as well as the Tarnów museum, (c) develop methods of research useful in the study of processes which are presently going on within the Gypsy communities. The general situation of the country favors such projects, and there is a group of qualified scholars ready to start the work. However, current financial problems will most probably turn all these proposals into wishful thinking.

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