

The First Archival Material Presented in “Wojtyła Studies” – Introduction

It seems that Karol Wojtyła’s intellectual legacy no longer holds awe for scholars. Are we doomed to reading his papers as a closed set? There may be new and crucial materials that will broaden our perspectives of reading and understanding his work. While preparing the first issue of *Wojtyła Studies*, the editorial team was aware of the latest archival discoveries made in Poland and as such has decided to publish translations of some of the elements of them regularly in future issues.

In this issue, we will begin by presenting a letter which was probably written to the Dean of the Department of Philosophy, Fr. Józef Życiński, by John Paul II. The letter is undated, however, it is possible to establish an approximate date of sometime after 1989 but before 1991. That it was written after 1989 is certain however the 1991 date is more questionable. Three pieces of information support the dating the letter to this time period:

1. The explanation contained in the letter refers to the situation in Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries (especially Russia), indicating that this letter was written after the first declaration of independence by the Soviet Republics (the first was in November 1988). The content of the letter suggests that it was written sometime after the first declarations of independence. This is why Fr. Hołub has proposed 1989 as the earliest date.
2. John Paul II mentions Leszek Kołakowski and his activity at Oxford University. This, *prima facie*, could indicate 1991 as the latest possible date of writing the letter because Kołakowski was employed at Oxford University until 1991. On the other hand, two doubts may be raised. First, it is too optimistic to presuppose that John Paul II had updated information about Kołakowski. Second, it is an unwritten convention that the academic title is tied to a particular University, notwithstanding the employment relationship.
3. From 1988 to 1991, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow was Bishop Józef Życiński. The philosophical context of the letter’s content suggests that he could be the addressee. However, we should emphasize that this is only a hypothesis.

The importance of presenting this material is foremost a straightforward pointer to three pieces of information:

1. Wojtyła's intellectual and philosophical formation—let us underline the passage in which John Paul II presents the impact of Wais' textbook on him, a wholly overlooked issue in Wojtyła's studies.
2. John Paul II's outlook on the Polish philosophical milieu.
3. The role of Polish philosophy in supporting Soviet bloc countries as seen through the eyes of John Paul II.

It is not known why this letter was found among Cardinal Marian Jaworski possessions. The sources which could explain this are not available at this time.

With this in mind, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the content of the letter translated by Sydney Sadowski (ed. Fr. Grzegorz Hołub).

The Short History of the exploration of Wojtyła's legacy

In order to make the range and issues contained in the set of newly discovered materials more familiar to international readers, we are presenting, in this introduction, elements of this set with short descriptions. This includes some references to broader projects and published materials which are presented or discussed.

In 2019, a two-person group of researchers, Marta Burghardt and Karol Petryszak, began work on the critical edition of Karol Wojtyła's philosophical works. The editor of the entire series is Fr. Grzegorz Hołub. Soon after, the group expanded to include Fr. Dariusz Radziechowski. This project is funded by Instytut Dialogu Międzykulturowego im. Jana Pawła II w Krakowie [The Institute of Intercultural Dialog of John Paul II in Krakow]. Our main archival reservoir is the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow. Their collections include philosophical papers written by Wojtyła from the early 1950s until his papal election in 1978. During the first visits to the archive, we were not convinced that it would be possible to find anything new. We expected to see some previous versions of well-known articles or other papers. However, it turned out that we repeatedly found astonishing new things. Here is a list of only the important and completely new materials found in the archive:

1. A lecture from March 7, 1954: *The Teaching of St Thomas Aquinas on Love* [Nauka św. Tomasza z Akwinu o miłości], given at the Catholic University of Lublin. The content of it is very interesting. Wojtyła not only presents St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching on love – he entirely agrees with Angelic Doctor – but he also carries out a devastating critique of Scheler's philosophy, pointing out that both Scheler and phenomenology as a method cannot quite reach Thomism despite apparent similarities in certain areas.
2. There are three versions of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis, one from 1953 and two from 1954. In 2023, the translation of the 1954 version (by Grzegorz Ignatik) was presented in *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, ed. by Fr. Antonio Lopez FSCB (et al.).¹ From the first page of this translation, the reader knows it is based on the 1954 version.² Unfortunately, there is no indication of which version from 1954 Ignatik used as the basis for his translation. I checked and it is, of course, the later version that is almost identical to the first published version from 1959.³ That is a very good choice but vague and only seemingly revealing, especially in light of the fact that in the following folder in the archive are two other (previous) versions, which must be used if someone wants to prepare a critical edition – and so it is in this case. Discussing the first two volumes of the English critical edition should be conducted precisely and more extensively.⁴ I mention this here because after reading the second volume, one might conclude that the translated version is the first or only preserved. But this is not true. Moreover, the version from 1953 has many phrases which Wojtyła changed in 1954 (the first version). These changes are essential in studying Wojtyła's intellectual/philosophical formation. Regardless, it is important to mention a fact discovered and developed by Petryszak, that in 1953 Wojtyła defended his habilitation thesis with different conclusions than those presented in the 1959 edition and the archival version translated by Ignatik.⁵

¹ K. Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*. "The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," vol. 2, edited by Antonio López et al. Translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023, 383-500.

² Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 383.

³ Wojtyła. *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach system Maksa Schelera*. Lublin: TN KUL, 1959.

⁴ The volumes are: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and related essays*. "The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," vol. 1, edited by Antonio López et al. Translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021; and Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*.

⁵ K. Petryszak. "Evidence of Karol Wojtyła's thought formation as preserved in archival materials." *Logos i Ethos* 61, no. 1 (2023): 7-28.

3. We also found the almost complete, ‘raw,’ translation of Scheler’s book *Der Formalismus in der Ethik...* This translation (including notes) into Polish gives us very good insight into Wojtyła’s understanding of Scheler’s philosophy.⁶ The edition of this book from 1921 is preserved in the archive in the set from the Cardinal Wojtyła private library and contains the original notations and notes made by Wojtyła as well as sections of the text he had underlined.
4. The first two versions of *Love and Responsibility* — after Fr. Radziechowski’s comparison — present philosophical material which is very different from the well-known 1960 version.

As is emphasized above, this short list presents only the most critical archival discoveries from the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow to date.

Apart from the abovementioned project, Petryszak discovered other archival materials that shed some light on Wojtyła’s early philosophy. Some of these were discovered as part of a research project, “Kwerenda archiwalna teczek habilitacyjnych Karola Wojtyły” [Archival research of Karol Wojtyła’s postdoctoral files] founded by the Poland National Science Center [no. 2023/07/X/HS1/00725]. Here is the list of them:

1. In the Archive of the Jagiellonian University: a) Some letters from this collection shed some light on the little-known article by Wojtyła: “Traktat o pokucie w Dekrecie Gracjana w świetle rękopisu gdańskiego Mar. F. 275.” (“A Treatise on Penance in the *Decretum Gratiani* in Light of the Gdańsk Manuscript Mar. F. 275”). Over 100 letters, postcards, and note cards from Wojtyła to Adam Vetulani some of which show that he was very engaged in and greatly enjoyed his work.⁷ b) Crucial contextual information about issues elaborated on by the students of the Theology department at the Jagiellonian University, where Wojtyła defended his habilitation thesis. This material reveals that Scheler and phenomenology – especially in the context of ethics and religion – were well-known in this milieu. This represents an essential contribution in studying Wojtyła’s very early philosophical thought.

⁶ Cf. Petryszak, “The Origins of Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Anthropology as Recorded in *Coll.[atio]* and *Corr.[igenda]* Included in the Notes for his Habilitation Thesis.” *Wojtyła Studies* 1, no 1 (Feb. 2024): 110-125. Petryszak “The Perspective of Archival Discoveries in the Study of Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy.” *The Person and the Challenges* 13, no. 2 (2023): 117-132.

⁷ Wojtyła, “Traktat o pokucie w Dekrecie Gracjana w świetle rękopisu gdańskiego Mar. F. 275.” *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne KUL* 4, no. 1 (1957): 31-71.

2. In the Archive of the Catholic University of Lublin: a) three reviews of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis (by Stefan Swieżawski, Aleksander Usowicz, and Władysław Wicher) which can help us understand why his conclusion was changed in 1954. b) A master's thesis reviewed by Wojtyła in the academic year 1954/55 titled *The Teaching of St. John of the Cross on Man According to his Work "Ascent of Mount Carmel"* [Nauka o człowieku u św. Jana od Krzyża według jego dzieła *Droga na górę Karmel*] by Fr. Eliaz T. Zbyszyński OCD. This material can be helpful in better understanding Wojtyła's approach to the Mystical Doctor's philosophical thought (especially the anthropological). c) Other contextual materials present the broader context of Wojtyła's early years at the Catholic University of Lublin.⁸

The above discoveries are just the tip of the iceberg. Based on the material and information collected during work in the archives, we can say that new tips and guidance indicate that much of the material presents Wojtyła's philosophical (and probably theological) thoughts in a way that is more profound, comprehensive, and closer to his true thinking which hopefully will continue to be exposed in still undiscovered material. This is a task for all researchers, not just Polish researchers alone. However, it must be made only by those researchers who know the original language of the source material as well as their own mother tongue. It is an essential indication in the context of the translation section of *Wojtyła Studies*, which aims to present and bring the new material closer to everyone who reads it in English. We believe these new materials shared in current *lingua franca* will contribute to the further development in the study of Wojtyła's thought.

The aim of this introduction is to encourage you to familiarize yourself regularly with new translations of short but crucial new materials prepared by knowledgeable philosophers and Polish users.

Karol Petryszak⁹

⁸ Not all of them are presented in the famous book *Obecność. Karol Wojtyła – Jan Paweł II w Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim. Dar i odpowiedzialność*, edited by Andrzej Szostek & Maria Filipiak. Lublin: TN KUL, 2008.

⁹ Karol Petryszak – The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland
e-mail: karol.petryszak@upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0001-9058-4721