

## Pius Vates

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**Abstract:** The question dealt with in the paper is as follows: to what extent might the notion of “religious literature” be functional if applied both to the early modern literature and the contemporary literary culture? Does it mean “sacred literature,” simply opposed to the “secular” one, whatever it might mean? The author’s suggestion is to use the notion of “religious literature” more consistently, depending strictly on the liturgical functions of the text (e.g. of prayers, hymns or homilies), while the term “sacred literature” should be used only with reference to the so-called “Sacred Books,” i.e. the Revelation recognized in a given religious system. The sense of the terms “pious literature” or “pious poet,” however, should be much broader, going beyond the limitations of religious functions of the text and reflecting a quasi-prophetic intellectual and moral status of the writer.

**Keywords:** pious poetry, liturgical function of the text, religious literary themes, poet as a prophet

“Religious literature,” “religious writer” – these and similar expressions (used both by experts on literature and unprofessional readers, more or less interested in artistic writings) are the most numerous and ubiquitous ones among those present in contemporary cultural discourse, though they are not always applied appropriately. The popularity of these and other related terms, resulting in the ever expanding scope of their meaning and, consequently, inversely proportional to their functionality, forces anyone who wants to use them reasonably and effectively to verify their meaning every time they are to be applied. The same is the case when we ask who, in fact, is “a religious poet” – the personality that remains fascinating despite that being pointed to and identified in contemporary literary culture perhaps more frequently than a few hundred or merely one hundred years ago. Consequently, the critical methodology of a researcher into old literature (hence, old Polish literature too) seems to depend on the clarity of this and similar terms to a much greater extent. Notably, questions about the identity of “a religious poet” and the indicators of “religious literature” have been asked in the context of discussing the writings by Czesław Miłosz on the one hand, and John Paul II on the other.

The term *pius vates* used in the title may be translated and understood differently. Originally, it was used with reference to, inter alia, Virgil, who – being the author of the *Aeneid* – was revered by the posterity, especially in the Middle Ages, as a “pious poet,” or even a sorcerer, endowed with a prophetic charisma, defining the paradigm of the religiously motivated decency, as well as individual and social “goodness” (within family and within society).<sup>1</sup> Indirectly, in Poland, the concept of *pius vates* has given rise to the quasi-religiously construed authority of a “prophet-poet” (*wieszcz*), perceived as a possible teacher, guide or even leader of the nation deprived of the institution of its own state.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, this concept narrows down the scope of reflection on “a religious poet” quite dramatically, making the issues included in it more specific. Also, it is related – in a presumably most explicit (or at least clear) way, which took hold in the Mediterranean tradition centuries ago – to two, actually quite different, functions of poetic (today, we would rather use the ahistorical term “literary”) works, and also two (equally different, though mutually overlapping) areas of reality: the lay and the sacred.

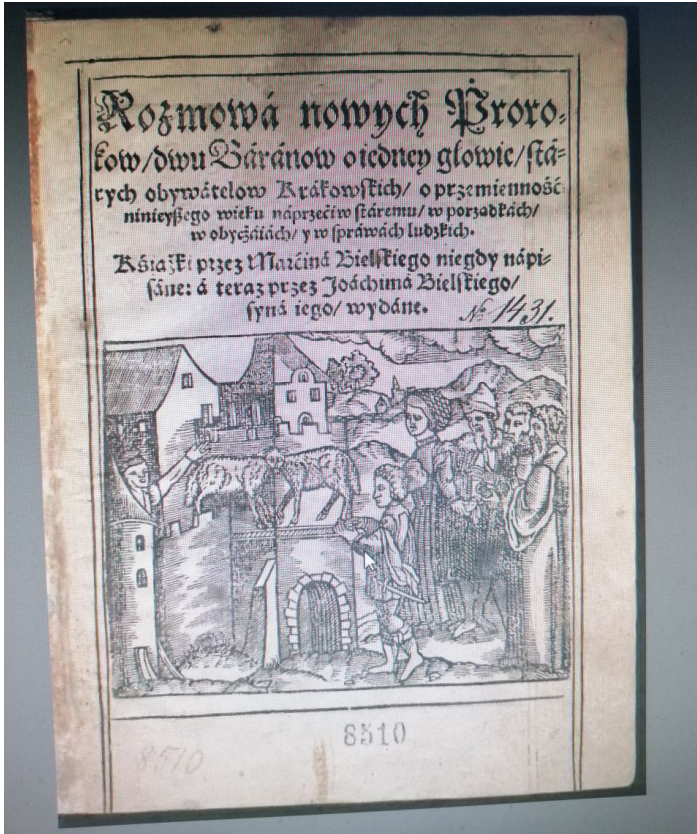
Religion and literature – the very juxtaposition of these terms brings to the attention of anyone who approaches the two seriously not only the distance between the meanings associated with them, but also their thematic scope, practically unlimited to the researcher into such issues.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of “religious literature”, used most frequently in literary studies, both in theory and practice, makes the subject matter involved much more specific. However, if such a general term is to be of any use at all, it must refer clearly to some well-defined criteria, which should not limit the subject at hand or particular textual studies and interpretations down to only one indicator – i.e. the thematic indicator, according to quite a widespread belief. This is because no one could reasonably intend to count or record all the texts on religious subjects, even if the aforesaid conspicuous thematic indicator were to be the only one applied. Moreover, it would not be possible to determine any common identity of all the texts related, in this way or another, to the subject of religion.

<sup>1</sup> The inspiration for such a direction of the reflections on the significance of the *pius vates* motif in literature is provided by *Virgil and the Christian World*, an essay by T.S. Eliot (transl. into Polish by H. Pręczkowska, in *Szkice literackie*, edited, selected, prefaced and annotated by W. Chwalewik, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Pax, 1963, pp. 245–260).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the explanation of the etymology of the word *wieszcz* in W. Boryś, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005, p. 696.

<sup>3</sup> By using the wording “religion and literature,” I refer to the title and the thoughts included in the book *Religion and Culture* by C. Dawson (*Religia i kultura*, transl. into Polish by J.W. Zielińska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Pax, 1958), which are largely applicable to the literary culture, hence the texts that – depending on their functions – did and do contribute to the creation of culture. This is emphasized by Dawson’s comment: “Religion is the starting point for all the great literatures of the world.” *Ibidem*, p. 58.



Marcin Bielski, *Rozmowa nowych Prorokow, dwu Baranow o iedney glowie, starzych obywatelow Krakowskich, o przemienność ninieyszego wieku naprzeciw staremu, w porzadkach, obycaizach, y w sprawach ludzkich* [...], Cracow 1566/67 – the title page.

The original is located at Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – The Ossolineum (the public domain)

That is why overestimating the thematic criterion while determining the object of research into religious literature, also in Poland, as well as merely considering this criterion to be on a par with others, is untenable. Neither the stylistic criterion is precise enough, as long as it consisted only in identifying the motifs or figurative language adopted from the *Holy Scriptures* or other religious texts (construed in the sense we intend to specify). Especially informative examples are offered by various types of Christian satires, which have been resorting to the religious subject matter surprisingly frequently and carelessly for a long time. Examples may be found in the texts as distant in terms of time and bizarre as the famous *parodia sacra*, i.e. *Coena Cypriani*, a replica of which was included unin-

identally in *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco.<sup>4</sup> Another example of such a project, this time executed with extreme consistency, is *Gargantua and Pantagruel* by Rabelais. The presence of the religious theme in the texts qualified as religious satires is indisputable; however, it is hardly possible to refer to such a text as “religious writing.” An example less distant to us, both chronologically and culturally, is the 16<sup>th</sup>-century satire by Marcin Bielski, *Rozmowa dwu baranów o jednej głowie* [Conversation of Two Rams with One Head], which opens quite maliciously with jocular hint at the practice of invoking the authority of biblical texts and naïve belief in miracles, uttered by the famous bas-reliefs which have survived on the façade of the house in the main market square in Cracow, today known (having been extensively reconstructed) as the ‘Under the Rams’ Palace:

Długośmy tu niemymi stali na tym rogu,	We have been long standing mute on this corner,
Już nam duch usta otwarł, chwala Pana Bogu. Którzy idą do Rzymu, powiedzcie te cuda,	The spirit has opened our mouths, praise the Lord. Those who travel to Rome talk about this miracle,
Iż już kamienie woła do wszystkiego luda. Powiedzcie też tam bratu, zwłaszcza Paskwillowi,	That even stones start calling on all the people. When you arrive, tell them, especially brother Pasquil,
Iż w Krakowie powstali już prorocy nowi. Będziemy społu wołać i roześlem wici.	That new prophets have risen in Cracow. We will be calling together, sending the news.
Iż Pan Bóg świat zawiesił na cieniuchnej nici: Leda kiedy się urwie, niech się ostrzegają,	The Lord hung the world on a thin thread: It will snap any time, they must warn everyone,
Pewny koniec już świata w rychłym czasie mają. Wołają Odmieńcowie, dzicy Satyrowie,	Doomsday is bound to come very soon. Gargoyles, wild Satyrs keep calling,
Po chwili będą wołać i leśni kotowie. Wołają Pustelnicy i my też wołajmy,	Soon even forest cats will be calling. If Hermits are calling, we should be calling too,
A ludzie nieopatrne pilnie przestrzegajmy.	Giving a word of warning to ignorant people.
Po tym chóralnym wstępie „baran prawy” mówi:	After this choral prologue, “the ram on the right” says:
Święte Pismo powiada: Jeśli przestaniecie	The Holy Scripture says: If you keep quiet

<sup>4</sup> *Uczta Cypriana*, translated and edited by J. Krocak, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Atut, 2007.

Wolać, kamienie będzie, kiedy wy nie  
chcecie.  
Już tedy nasz czas przyszedł [...].<sup>5</sup>

These stones will start shouting if you will  
not.  
Thus, our time has come [...].<sup>6</sup>

In the introduction to the poem, several motifs characteristic of biblical prophetic discourse are emphasized, such as the miraculous gift of human speech granted to animals and the “apocalyptic” context (*adynata*) for that “miracle.” Other references thereto include the well-known contemporary satirical “figures,” such as the Roman Pasquino, or the native Polish “satyr or oddity,” a character in Jan Kochanowski’s poem *Satyr*.

It is obvious to anyone, even to contemporary readers less knowledgeable about the sources of such allusions, that such a text can hardly be considered as a religious one (though it includes references to religious subject matter and topics); yet, it cannot be called “antireligious” either. Indeed, the views of the author, Marcin Bielski, critical of a certain style of Catholic piety (not religion!) and sympathetic to the Reformation (although he never broke with the Catholic Church), are very clear here, but the function of the reference to a biblical topic cannot be interpreted as religious. This example is very particular, but, consequently, it illustrates the trap of limiting oneself to the thematic-stylistic criterion.

Similarly inept, hence of no use for the purpose of distinguishing the specific meaning of the terms “religious poetry” or “a religious poet,” would be any attempts to apply the genological criteria. Observing the convention of a “psalm” or a “hymn” does not determine the function of such a text; on the other hand, prayers may be expressed in any genre, as confirmed by the numerous examples referred to below.

Even more problematic would be to adopt the criterion of the world view, ideological in character (which, I believe, would be the first to recognize, because it is usually articulated very clearly), assuming that anyone’s world view may be reasonably described and commented on at all, keeping a matter-of-fact distance between the author’s personal convictions and what may be read from the texts he or she has written. What would be the significance then of the idea, or even knowledge, about a certain “religious world view” of a given author? That he or she was a follower of a certain religion, observing its precepts and proscriptions? Or, perhaps, only that he or she applied a certain religious code temporarily? Indeed, the very formula of “a religious writer” (not to be mistaken for the physically existent individual following the observances of a particular denomination) – which, perhaps, is present too frequently in the literary theoretical and literary

<sup>5</sup> M. Bielski, *Rozmowa nowych proroków, dwu baranów o jednej głowie, starych obywatelów krakowskich, o przemienność niniejszego wieku naprzeciw staremu w porządkach, w obyczajach i w sprawach ludzkich*, Kraków 1566/1567. Quoted after: [https://archive.org/stream/satyrysenmajowyoobielloog/satyrysenmajowyoobielloog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/satyrysenmajowyoobielloog/satyrysenmajowyoobielloog_djvu.txt). (accessed: 17.04.2014).

<sup>6</sup> A loose translation.

critical discourse, and applied without any reflection – should constitute a separate problem and subject of discussion.

In order to somehow systematize, again, this problem area and the concepts related to it, one must begin with fundamental findings. To my mind, when conducting such analyses, the most important factor would be consistent observance of the distinction between the categories of a religion (construed as a system of linguistic relations between the subject and the Absolute in a sacred space) and religiousness, i.e. religious culture, shaped and practiced individually or communally, conditioned historically or socially, and thus especially susceptible to the dynamics of the changes in social conventions, as well as aesthetic or even political changes. In fact, one should talk about numerous religiousnesses, rather than one paradigm of the many available. What both these categories have in common is the fundamental fact of being rooted in linguistic texts, especially the original Text, i.e. The Revelation (if we are to refer to the so-called revealed religions, or, in other words, the religions of the Book or the religions of the Word). Religiousness may be then understood as a term referring to various forms of linguistic expression (also “literary” forms – poetic or rhetorical), but also iconographic representations, gestures or (musical) compositions, which express the afore-said religious (i.e. systematic) relations between the subject and the Absolute on various levels of simplification (popularity) and thus desacralization.

Perceived as functionally close to such a definition is the frequently used concept of “spirituality”<sup>7</sup> (used too frequently and thoughtlessly, I believe). However, this “spirituality,” in its various types, is – characteristically – more likely to be studied by a theologian, using not only theological texts *sensu stricto* (i.e. treatises on the hermeneutics of the Revelation), but also “literary” texts, i.e. poetry, prose or other types of rhetorical statements. However, philologists or historians of literature address “spirituality” not so often and not so passionately. Admittedly, they sometimes succumb to the deceptive charm of the sophisticated metaphor of “metaphysical poetry,” with which the concept of “spirituality” may be coupled to some extent (though not always effectively). This is because the term “metaphysical poetry” is more frequently understood as a synonym to “religious poetry,” which results from ignoring the origins and history of the term. Actually, it is usually forgotten that the meaning of this expression, originally invented as a jocular anti-compliment (in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century), and used by Samuel Johnson in a virtually deprecating sense in the following century, was actually equivalent to “conceptual poetry.” Usually, the adjective “metaphysical” was associated with the paradoxes and ingenuity of the philosophical discourse applied by philosophers and theologians to the

<sup>7</sup> Here, we can content ourselves with a single reference: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, edited by M. Chmielewski, Lublin–Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2002, and its entry “Spirituality,” which obviously does not include all the contemporary (practically unpredictable) applications of the term.

so-called metaphysics, i.e. the theory of existence, rather than with theological and ontological problems. Only much later, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was this terminological inconsistency noticed by the editor and commentator of English “metaphysical poets,” sir Herbert Grierson, who – in the preface to his anthology of *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* – stated, inter alia, what follows:

*Metaphysical poetry, in the full sense of the term, is a poetry which has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence.*<sup>8</sup>

This intuition, void of any suggestion that such poetry might be religious, was taken up and popularized in a critical essay (or, in fact, a review of the aforesaid book) by Thomas Stearns Eliot. Another result of that was the “discovery” of the functionality of the conceit-based aesthetics, which had previously been disregarded by the classical literary aesthetics.<sup>9</sup> These generally known facts are recapitulated here to make it absolutely clear that I consider using the adjectives “religious” (which refers to “literature,” i.e. poetry or prose) and “metaphysical” as ahistorical and incorrect, as the latter term should be reserved for the texts meditative and philosophical in character, which make use of the conceit-based stylistics nevertheless.

Looking at the problems of “religious literature” in the light of the main and fundamental applicability of the writings that one would be prepared to consider as such literature, this term should be understood as referring primarily to the texts whose function is subordinated to practicing religious worship. The original and, in fact, main sense of this expression did, and probably still does, point to its main – one and only, actually – function, namely a liturgical function, which should be understood as subordinating a given text to the structure and objective of religious worship. In other words, the only – or, at least, the most important – criterion of recognizing a given text as a “religious” one is, I believe, defining its scope and purpose as “a liturgical function,” since liturgy, in a religious sense, means “serving God”. Using a more popular concept (popular, but hardly less applicable), one could specify the purpose of a given text as religious “worship” or practicing “piety” (*pietas*) in the broad sense of the word, both individual (e.g. personal prayers, mystical experiences) and communal (ritual texts, sacred songs, homilies, “liturgical dramas,” etc.). Hence, the closest to the formula of a religious poet is, I believe, such a construction of the lyrical subject, which turns it into the subject of an expression that is liturgical

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<sup>8</sup> *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the 17th Century. Donne to Butler. Selected and Edited with an Essay by Sir Herbert J.C. Grierson*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921. Quoted after: <http://thresholdsbu.wordpress.com/issues/1-2/metaphysical-poets-rede-canonized/><http://thresholdsbu.wordpress.com/issues/1-2/metaphysical-poets-rede-canonized/> (accessed: 14.04.2014 r.).

<sup>9</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Metaphysical Poets (Poeci metafizyczni*, translated by M. Żurowski, in: T.S. Eliot, *Kto to jest klasyk i inne eseje*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1998, pp. 130–141).

in character, i.e. the subject of a literally understood prayer. As regards its aesthetic qualities, the choice of the particular genre which should serve the purpose of expressing such a prayer is, in principle, of secondary importance (though certainly not irrelevant). In this respect, the psalm is undoubtedly the predominant genre in the old European literature (hence, old Polish literature too): originally the Hebrew psalm, usually European literatures mostly from the *Vulgate*, or – actually – its paraphrase, more or less poetic, hence distant from the originals included in *Sefer Tehillim*.

The criterion of liturgical applicability, or “the function of a prayer,” seems to be the most appropriate basis for delineating the subject of the research into what might be called, without any major reservations, “religious literature” and associated with the research methodologies adequate to the specificity of such a subject. At this point, it is worth making a comment on the limitation (sometimes quite conspicuous) of the scope of study to Christian literature, which may be justified, or at least not difficult to understand, from the viewpoint of the history of European and Polish culture, but which may be unfortunate if one wants to look at the entire problem from a wider perspective. Consequently, the aspects of the influence of religious literatures other than Christian on the topographic-cultural environment nearest to Polish culture, and also on Polish culture itself, are marginalized in universal consciousness or imagination. What I mean here is, above all, Judaist religious literature, and the texts related to the other influential monotheistic religion present in Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. Islam. Characteristic of this situation is the fact that Polish literature studies – especially their strain focused on the history of old literature, i.e. the times from the Middle Ages until the final years of the Early Modern Period – has too often discarded the inter-denominational Christian-Judaic and Christian-Islamic relations, leaving them to be studied by researchers into the history of religion or by Oriental philologists. Researchers into old Polish literature seem to have too rarely afforded the “extravagance” of delving into Hebrew, or possibly Yiddish texts, or those written in Turkish or Arabic, which obviously required much wider competence in foreign languages and the knowledge of religions. If anyone has attempted any research into the co-presence and co-influence of religious literatures within the spatial system of the cultures existent in the old Polish Commonwealth, it must have been done mainly within the framework of comparative literature studies. It is the criterion of ethnic-linguistic identity, rather than that of religion (domination), that has dominated the approach to such subjects as “the Polish-Jewish literary relations” (rather than Christian-Hebrew), “the Polish-Turkish literary relations” or “the Polish-Arabic literary relations” (rather than Christian-Islamic). So, if one were to stick to such a really one-sided and limited picture, practically the whole old Polish literature (and, naturally, Polish-Latin literature), with few exceptions, should be labelled as Christian “religious literature.” Certainly, the history of the repertory of Polish text goes back to the translations of biblical



texts, sermons and, in particular, the translation of the *Psalter*, which were especially important to the development of vernacular religious lyric. The same may be said about the influence of the genres of the early-Christian (and continued in the following centuries) liturgical lyric in Latin and Greek: hymns, sequences, sacred songs in vernacular languages, as well as legends, apocrypha or even chronicles, whose narration presenting the stories and deeds of outstanding individuals (*gesta*) was inseparably intertwined with “the sacred history.” However, if the texts of this type were not directly subordinated to the needs of practicing religious worship, I would still not consider them as religious pieces.

What use may be made of the *pius vates* concept by a historian of literature then? The noun *pietas* may be translated in different ways, and – incidentally – this ambiguity may be very useful. Certainly, it may denote piety understood in a religious sense, but also as an ethical attitude (including mercy) based on the observance of a certain moral paradigm. I would call such an attitude “decency” or “goodness” (i.e. nobleness), in the sense well-known from the didactic, parenetical story by Mikołaj Rej *Żywot człowieka poczciwego* [*A Faithful Image of an Honest Man*, 1558].<sup>10</sup> *Vates* means a poet dealing with the upper registers of the “high” or “significant” (*gravis*) literature, whose authority is based on a unique – if not supernatural – gift of perception and understanding of the world, human being, history, etc., as well as the power to make authoritative comments on the relations between them. Such an unusual, nearly prophetic, status of the poet boasting such a “title” is conveyed by the Polish word *wieszcz*, which carries further associations burdened with or – depending on our attitude – elevated by the national romantic tradition, ascribing him the role of a leader, both in a quasi-religious and social sense. It must be remembered though that Mikołaj Rej, referred to above, was honoured with this very title, which – in one and the same sentence – was also conveyed using the Polish word *rymarz*, i.e. “a poet” (lit. “rhyme maker,” not to be mistaken with the homonymous “leatherworker”).<sup>11</sup>

I would tend to consider the *pius vates* formula as especially applicable in the context of the doubts and problems related to the ambiguous concept of “religious literature” discussed here, since it defines the area between the texts whose liturgical function makes them “religious pieces,” and those whose purpose is didacticism, entertainment or philosophical reflection. In

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<sup>10</sup> English version of the title see: Harold B. Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland. The Rise of Humanism 1470-1543*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1989, p. 251.

<sup>11</sup> “To *Nicolao Rey, vati Polono alias rhyme maker*” – this is how the artistic status of Mikołaj Rej was named in the document in which Sigismund I the Old endowed the poet with the village of Temerowce as a prize “in literature,” for his Polish translation of the Latin paraphrase of the *Psalter* by the Belgian philologist and Hebrew scholar Johannes van den Campen (sponsored by Jan Dantyszek, the royal ambassador at the imperial court at that time). The prophetic status of King David (*vates*), credited with the authorship of the whole *Book of Psalms*, was thus transferred onto a translator.

between those two types of literature, distinguished by their function, the *pius vates* formula points to the possibility of another (third) category of the poet and his output, namely one given an exceptional status in a given cultural milieu. I believe that this ambiguity is the reason why the ambiguous metaphor of “a metaphysical poet” has been (and still is) used in this context. However, to my mind, it is the *pius vates* formula that offers the most functional description of the author’s and his audience’s attitude to the fundamental, one may say “final,” things. The “piety” of the artist and his readers or audience may be sanctioned religiously, i.e. “in the face of God” (*coram Deo*), or understood as “devoutness” (*nabożność*), i.e. solemnity in the face of transcendence understood in any other way.

Thy stylistic layer of the statement created by “a pious poet” (*pius vates*), namely any type of “fiction,” i.e. a myth and the imagery serving its implementation, may be deciphered as allegoresis according to the principles of the cultural code in which such a statement was formed. Thus, it is not contradictory to the main purpose of such a statement, which is to assume a most solemn and humble attitude to the Mystery. Consequently, the *pius vates* formula could encompass a large, but describable, groups of authors who cannot be qualified as “exclusively religious” poets. Besides the above-mentioned case of Mikołaj Rej, poetic paraphrases of the *Book of Psalms* (or particular texts selected from it) by Jan Kochanowski might be perceived as the creations of a pious poet, imbued with the reflections on human condition, as well as some pieces (inspired by psalms, too) by Stanisław Hozjusz (the author of a lengthy Latin paraphrase of Psalm 50), several “psalm-shaped songs” by Mikołaj Sęp Szarzyński, penitential poems by Kasper Miaskowski, or the *Psalmody* by Wespazjan Kochowski – to name but a few most important artists from the old Polish hall of fame. But what can be said about the text formally created outside the psalter tradition, such as the sonnets by the very same Sęp Szarzyński, or Sebastian Grabowiecki’s remakes of the sonnets by Fiamma? The religious convention discernible in their structure, highlighted in Sęp Szarzyński’s apostrophes to God (in Sonnets 2, 4 and 5) and to Our Lady (Sonnet 3), does not force the reader to recognize these texts as prayers, after all. A similar function is played by the invocation to God the Father and Jesus Christ in *Rymy duchowne* by Sebastian Grabowiecki, but also in other contemporary meditative-reflective texts. They constitute a structural framework that makes the lyrical subject (or any “speaking” subject) talk – similarly as in the biblical *Book of Psalms* – in an non-immediate, universal way, as it were, on behalf of the community it represents, voicing some advice, admonition and, above all, an appeal addressed to that community, giving moral strength, inspiring faith, hope and... love.

*Pius vates* is a poet (or “a poetry creator”) who is not necessarily “religious”, either in the sense of one’s personal “piety,” motivated by religious worship, or in the sense of being a creator of liturgical pieces. Rather than

that, he or she is “a poet of the principles”: the principles based on his or her religion, hence founded on “piety” in a literal sense, and/or those based on a moral imperative, not necessary sanctioned religiously, as in the case of Zbigniew Herbert’s “Mr. Cogito,” Jerzy Stempowski’s “unhurried passer-by,” the characters in Conrad’s novels, or the formulas of humanity to be found in the poems by Miłosz. This type of solemnity, adherence to principles or decency, which gives no consent to any relativization of moral categories, is the indicator of the status of a profound poet who does not have to be ascribed the gift of a visionary or a charisma of a prophet, who does not emphasize any paradoxes motivated by the conceit-based aesthetics, unlike “a metaphysical poet.” Simply put, what he writes or says is read or listened to with attention and solemnity. *Pius vates* is a poet not to be trifled with.

Translated by Piotr Cymbalista

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