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## The current state of research on the life and creative work of Stanisław Wasylewski in years 1945–2015

More than sixty years have passed since the death of Stanisław Wasylewski, and still there is no monograph of this one of the most popular writers of the interwar period. This outstanding and prolific author frequently became the inspiration for a variety of analyses, but no research interest has led to preparation of the substantial dissertation devoted to him and comprehensively describing one of the notions of his work or biography.

In 2015 one hundred and thirty years passed since the birth of the writer. Over the past few years, his works once again resurface on the publishing market<sup>1</sup> and knowledge about him and his work remains in a considerable dispersion. Also selected topics have been worked out only partially. There is a need to collect and discuss materials published until now. The development of the research concerning Wasylewski should be demonstrated, as well as the further investigation on the personality and the creative work of the author should be prepared.

Stanisław Wasylewski was born in Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) on December 18th, 1885, and he died in Opole on July 26th, 1953. He studied Polish literature and history at the University of Lviv and made his literary debut in 1905 in „Pamiętnik Literacki”. For a long time he was associated with Lviv, where he resided since student years. In years 1911–1914 he was the editor of the literary and theatre column in „Gazeta Poranna” and „Gazeta Wieczorna” (from 1910) in Lviv, and between 1915–1918 he served as the editor-in-chief of the „Gazeta Poranna”. In November 1917 he went abroad. Among others things, he was at the front of Verdun. From there he wrote reports for „Gazeta Wieczorna” and „Nowa Reforma”<sup>2</sup>, also published in the book titled *Westward (Na Zachód)*. In 1927, after marrying Stanisława Nowacka-Stamirowska<sup>3</sup> in Wilno, he moved to Poznań, where he remained until the

<sup>1</sup> These are: S. Wasylewski, *Klasztor i kobieta: studium z dziejów kultury polskiej w średniowieczu; O miłości romantycznej; Pod urokiem zaświatów*, Warszawa 2013; S. Wasylewski, *Portrety pań wytwornych*, Warszawa 2011; S. Wasylewski, *Romans prababki*, Warszawa 2012; S. Wasylewski, *U księżnej pani*, Warszawa 2012; S. Wasylewski, *Życie polskie w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>2</sup> S. Wasylewski, *Na Zachód! Berlin-Wilhelmshaven-Helgoland-Bruksela-front Verdun*, Lwów 1918, p. I.

<sup>3</sup> K. Kowalski, *Opole: ostatni przystanek w życiowej podróży Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, Opole 1986, p. 3.

outbreak of World War II. Wasylewski worked there as an editor, publicist, publisher and translator. He cooperated with such papers as „Kurier Poznański”, „Tęcza”, „Gazeta Polska”, „Wiadomości Literackie”, „Tygodnik Ilustrowany”, „Sygnały”.

In 1937 in Katowice he published his book *In Opole's Silesia (Na Śląsku Opolskim)* which, as it turned out, gained him a circle of devoted friends and the esteem of the Silesians. In the interwar period he was the winner of many awards and distinctions<sup>4</sup>: Golden Laurel of Polish Literary Academy (1936)<sup>5</sup>, Literary Award of the City of Poznań (1937)<sup>6</sup>, Officer's Cross of Order of Rebirth of Poland for outstanding achievements in the field of literature (1937)<sup>7</sup>.

During the occupation the writer resided in Lviv. From December 1941 to July 1944 he worked in the newspaper „Gazeta Lwowska”, the organ of German propaganda. Initially, he was employed as the head of the cultural department and then became responsible for the general management of the paper.

In September 1945, Trade Union of Polish Writers passed resolution denouncing collaborationist writers, Stanisław Wasylewski among them. After the war, in December 1946 at the District Court in Cracow, the trial of Stanisław Wasylewski began. The case was inspired, among others, by the actions of the Trade Union of Polish Writers, which excluded the writer from its ranks, justifying the decision by moral reasons. After the trial exonerating the writer, the Main Board of the mentioned Trade Union did not change its decision, and the author could not publish officially. This situation forced him to continue his journalistic activity under pseudonyms. Since 1947 the author still worked using various pseudonyms: Kajetan Stopa, Tadeusz Szafraniec, Kujawus<sup>8</sup>. It is worth to quote the fragment of the writer's letter to his wife from February 20th 1946, when he was still in Cracow prison:

It is necessary to try to look objectively at oneself, as at some strange, other person. To look as much as possible from the outside and to assess. So I assessed that from the first moments of my success the envy had been hidden and waited to jump and to bite. Twenty years it waited for the opportunity and finally got it<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Determining the date of receiving honors was important, because the source, also encyclopedias, give a different date indicating that both the Golden Laurel and the awarded Officer's Cross were given to the writer in 1938, but the author is determined that he was the winner of the Golden Laurel in 1936 and Officer's Cross in 1937.

<sup>5</sup> *Zarządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 7 listopada 1936 r. o nadaniu odznaczenia „Wawrzyn Akademicki”, „Monitor Polski” 1936, no. 261, position 460. In the above-mentioned Ordinance of the Minister... Academic Golden Laurel for outstanding literary work was awarded to seven writers: Waclaw Grubiński, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, Ludwik Hieronim Morstin, Jan Parandowski, Stanisław Wasylewski, Józef Wittlin.*

<sup>6</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” 1937, no. 275, p. 1; „Gazeta Lwowska” 1937, no. 294, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” 1937, no. 258, p. 3; *Zarządzenie o nadaniu Wielkiej Wstęgi Orderu Odrodzenia Polski, Krzyża Komandorskiego z Gwiazdą Orderu Odrodzenia Polski, Krzyża Komandorskiego Orderu Odrodzenia Polski, Krzyża Oficerskiego Orderu Odrodzenia Polski oraz Krzyża Kawalerskiego Orderu Odrodzenia Polski*, „Monitor Polski” 1937, no. 260, position 410. The award was granted at the same time to Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and Stanisław Wasylewski.

<sup>8</sup> After the war, he also published as Tellus and probably as Paweł Stachura, however, the careful examinati Contents” proves that the indexes were only mentioned in the text of pseudonyms. on of the „Polish Literary Bibliography” and „Bibliography of Journal

<sup>9</sup> J. Pośpiech, *Stan i potrzeby badań nad biografią i twórczością Stanisława Wasylewskiego (1885–1953)*, „Studia Śląskie” 1990, vol. 48, p. 294 [translated by the author of the article].

While writing about this incredibly prolific writer it should be mentioned that he authored more than 6 000 columns and articles in the press, about 400 reading-texts for young people in school textbooks, more than 300 radio broadcasts bringing up literary, historical, cultural or social issues<sup>10</sup>. In the biobibliographical dictionary *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* published in 2004, the bibliography of the works of the writer notes 39 titles. Translations and adaptations (also for the radio) contain 11 titles, and editorial works include 12 titles. This gives 65 titles in total. It is necessary to recall the lack of bibliographical lists covering the journalism of Stanisław Wasylewski, which is more difficult, because the author himself says in his memories about a considerable amount of his works:

During 35 years of journalistic and literary work I wrote: a) about 16 books on the history of customs and culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, tourism and popularization of knowledge, b) about 6,000 columns and articles, c) about 400 reading texts for young people in school textbooks of several publishers, d) about 300 radio broadcasts<sup>11</sup>.

In our discussion about Stanisław Wasylewski we should also refer to the biographical entries listed in various general and specialized directories. Despite the fact that they are indirect sources, they demonstrate the state of knowledge about the writer and the degree of interest in him as well. The study began with the traditional and very popular encyclopedia of the *Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe*. For the analysis, which is not the primary subject of discussion, several editions of this publication were randomly selected. In the first edition of the *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* 1969, so during the rule of Władysław Gomułka, the entry for Stanisław Wasylewski appears in volume 12. Among the basic biographical pieces of information there is a long bibliographic note listing fifteen titles of works of the writer with the dates of the first edition. The entry contains 20 verses, more than half of which are the titles of books<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, in the second edition of the *Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* from 1987 (i.e. the period of late Polish People's Republic), there is the entry dedicated to the writer without supplements as compared to the previous encyclopedia biograms. The charges of collaborating with the Nazi Germans are not mentioned<sup>13</sup>. Also, the entry in the *Wielka Encyklopedia* from 2005 contains no new biographical information on the author compared to the biographical entries from 1969 and 1987<sup>14</sup>. However, looking into specialist publications it is possible to find a relatively extensive biographical entry devoted to the author in *Słownik polskich pisarzy współczesnych* (1964). In the third volume the facts from the writer's life are presented in detail, even the post-war court trial, which resulted in writer's rehabilitation, was mentioned<sup>15</sup>. In the second volume

<sup>10</sup> S. Wasylewski, *Pod kopułą lwowskiego Ossolineum: pamiętnik stypendysty i asystenta Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich w latach 1905–1910*, Wrocław 1958, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> W. Nawrocki, *Stanisław Wasylewski, czyli czterdzieści lat powodzenia*, [in:] Ibidem, *Trwanie i powrót: szkice o literaturze Ziemi Zachodnich*, Poznań 1969, p. 274.

<sup>12</sup> *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN*, vol. 12, *Usa-Ż*, Warszawa 1969, p. 142.

<sup>13</sup> *Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN*, second edition, vol. 4, Warszawa 1987, p. 657.

<sup>14</sup> *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN*, vol. 29, *Warszawska organizacja-Woźnicki Próg*, Warszawa 1969, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> *Słownik współczesnych pisarzy polskich*, vol. 3, *R-Ż*, ed. E. Korzeniowska, Warszawa 1964, p. 431–439.

of *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny* (1985) there is a very extensive entry dedicated to the writer, but without mentioning the cooperation with the Nazi German newspapers, later accusations and the famous trial. The publication states, that while living in Opole he actively participated in reviving the literary and cultural life<sup>16</sup>. The most complete information about the writer was published in a work issued by Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne – *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny* of 2004. In the entry there is also information that in 1989, during the general convention of Polish Writers Association, the resolution was passed, saying that the proceedings against the writer were unfair and unlawful<sup>17</sup>. Publications specialized in the field of literature were printed in small numbers, for example, *Słownik pisarzy polskich* was printed in 2 500 copies in 1964, and editions of encyclopedias of PWN numbered as much as 180 000 copies. As a result we can say that the general biographical information given in the most popular sources was very limited<sup>18</sup>.

The analysis of the state of research was limited by the chronological range. The search for materials began with the post-war period and was completed in 2015. Such a research scope covers several decades and in the next part should be supplemented by the pre-war years, bringing numerous press publications devoted to the writer<sup>19</sup>. In order to determine the current state of knowledge about the life and creative work of Wasylewski, *Polska Bibliografia Literacka* (for years 1945 to 2002), *Przewodnik Bibliograficzny* (for years 1944 to 2015) and *Bibliografia Zawartości Czasopism* (for years 1947–2015) were explored. There is a small number of cohesive publications on Stanisław Wasylewski<sup>20</sup>. However, the situation is different when articles of the very writer and with works of researchers published in the press are concerned. This work, apart from discussing only a few cohesive works devoted to the writer, has also a character of the preliminary diagnosis of the market of press publications of subjective-objective character concerning Stanisław

<sup>16</sup> *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, vol. 2, N–Ż, Warszawa 1985, p. 569.

<sup>17</sup> *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik bibliograficzny*, ed. J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan, Warszawa 2004, p. 60–65.

<sup>18</sup> For a brief analysis of the selected reference books and dictionaries, it is possible that a deeper analysis of the specialized sources of the history of literature could provide additional information; however, such a statement is not the aim of this study.

<sup>19</sup> The analysis of the contemporary state of research is difficult due to the lack of bibliography and the need to analyze the content of many newspapers of the period.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to those in the text books devoted to Wasylewski it must be noted that information about the writer and evaluation of his literary achievements can be found in collective publications and studies. A list below shows only a few of them: K. Czachowski, *Obraz współczesnej literatury polskiej 1884–1933*, vol. 3, *Ekspresjonizm i neorealizm*, Lwów 1936, p. 155–160; W. Nawrocki, *Stanisław Wasylewski, czyli czterdzieści lat powodzenia*, [in:] *Trwanie i powrót*, Poznań 1969, p. 274–297; W. Nawrocki, *Przedmowa*, [in:] S. Wasylewski, *Wspomnienia i szkice znad Warty*, Poznań 1973, p. 5–24; J. Pośpiech, *Postowie*, [in:] S. Wasylewski, *Na Śląsku Opolskim*, wydanie fototypiczne, Opole 1987, p. 287–291; M. Fazan, W. Nawrocki, *Katowickie środowisko literackie w latach 1945–1967*, Katowice 1969, p. 276–284; J. Tazbir, *Opus vitae Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, [in:] S. Wasylewski, *Życie polskie w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 2008, p. 5–13; S. Nicieja, *Casus Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, [in:] S. Wasylewski, *Życie polskie w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 2008, p. 423–439; B. Langer, *Stanisław Wasylewski jako stypendysta i asystent w Zakładzie Narodowym im. Ossolińskich (1905–1910)*, [in:] *Kraków–Lwów: biblioteki XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 13, Kraków 2014, p. 109–123. The author also appears in the published memoirs of Stanisław Łempicki, Marian Tyrowicz, Stanisław Lam.

Wasylewski. It constitutes a basis for further discussion, which undoubtedly should be supplemented and continued. The article organizes existing knowledge and findings of researchers dealing with the post-war creative works of the writer. There are six cohesive publications devoted to this well-known prose writer<sup>21</sup>. Half of them are brochures of the length of 21, 23 and 36 pages. The first book to be published was the study by Danuta Zielonkova *Stanisław Wasylewski's ties with Silesia (Stanisława Wasylewskiego związki ze Śląskiem)* published in 1969 in Opole<sup>22</sup>. The work was issued in 720 copies. The main part focuses on the author's interest in Silesian studies. The introduction contains information concerning the literary works of the writer, especially in the period of his stay in Silesia. The first chapter describes the circumstances regarding writing of the book *In Opole's Silesia (Na Śląsku Opolskim)*, published for the first time in 1937. The next chapter analyses Silesian fairy tales of the writer, and the last part is focused on *Watchtower on Pasięka – pages from the history of the Piast castle in Opole in 1288–1928 (Strażnica na Pasięce – kartki z dziejów zamku piastowskiego w Opolu w 1288–1928)*, printed in 1955, already after the death of the author of *On the Court of King Staś (Na dworze króla Stasia)*. The study by the discussed researcher focused above all on the Silesian elements in the works of the writer and on the analysis of biographical elements related to his stays on this land and with his ultimate settling in the Opole region.

Following was a work by Kazimierz Kowalski, published in 1986 by the Society of Friends of Opole under the title *Opole: the last stop in Stanisław Wasylewski's journey through life (Opole: ostatni przystanek w życiowej podróży Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*<sup>23</sup>. The small booklet contains the biographical entry of the writer and the list of books, confining itself to establish the title and the date of the first edition of each work. According to the researcher, 32 works were issued under the name s. Wasylewski, and of books written in Opole and published only after his death he mentions 7 titles. Reissues of prewar publications were also given (11 titles). The third part of the discussed short volume is a brief description of the author's famous albums in which the most eminent artists of the twenties wrote down dedications, poems, notes. The first diary covered the interwar period, in the second there were entries of friends of the Wasylewski couple from the Opole period, already post-war. In the last part the researcher briefly presents the basic facts from the biography of the writer from 1947 to 1953, the long-term effects of the collaboration trial, the move to Opole and the death of the author. In the conclusion the information was given, that the legacy remaining after Wasylewski's death, consisting of literary materials, albums, cards with dedications and correspondence, were handed over to Ossolineum. The other books from the writer's library in Opole were transferred

<sup>21</sup> A. Wierciński, *Dyskretny erudyta (o pisarstwie Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*, Opole 2003; *Stanisław Wasylewski na Śląsku Opolskim: w 40 rocznicę śmierci – pamiętnik sesji popularnonaukowej [Opole 22 września 1993 r.]*, ed. K. Lenart-Januszewska, Opole 1994; *Z życia i twórczości Stanisława Wasylewskiego: materiały z sesji naukowej odbytej w Opolu w dniu 12 grudnia 1989 roku.*, ed. J. Pośpiech, Opole 1991; D. Zielonkova, *Stanisława Wasylewskiego związki ze Śląskiem*, Opole 1969; A. Brożek, *Po pięćdziesięciu latach: wokół Stanisława Wasylewskiego i jego „Na Śląsku Opolskim”*, Opole 1995.

<sup>22</sup> D. Zielonkova, *Stanisława Wasylewskiego...*

<sup>23</sup> K. Kowalski, *Opole: ostatni przystanek w życiowej podróży Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, Opole 1986.



to the Library of Pedagogical University<sup>24</sup>. The brochure is of informational nature and indicates issues in which researchers of the life and works of the famous author should be interested.

The next book was published by the Silesian Institute in Opole in 1991 and contains materials from the scientific session, which was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1989. Jerzy Pośpiech was responsible for the editing of the volume *From the life and work of Stanisław Wasylewski (Z życia i twórczości Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*<sup>25</sup>. The work contains six reprinted texts of papers given during the Opole conference, and each of them focuses on a different topic. In the materials there were the following articles: Marcelli Kosman's *Stanisław Wasylewski as the Expert and Popularizer of History (Stanisław Wasylewski jako znawca i popularyzator historii)*, Ludwik Kozołub's *Stanisław Wasylewski as the Historian of Polish Culture (Stanisław Wasylewski jako historyk kultury polskiej)*, Feliks Pluta's *Linguistic Interests of Stanisław Wasylewski (Zainteresowania językoznawcze Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*, Ewa Jedrzejewska's *Stanisław Wasylewski's Spectacle about Adam Mickiewicz (Stanisława Wasylewskiego Widowisko o Adamie Mickiewiczu)*, and Katarzyna Florczak's *Album of Stanisław Wasylewski (Sztambuch Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*. Each text analyzed different part of the works of the writer. The book was published in 150 copies.

A small booklet edited by Krystyna Lenart-Januszewska with the schedule of the next conference and with short texts entitled *Stanisław Wasylewski in the Opole's Silesia. In 40th anniversary of death – diary of the popular academic session. Opole, 22nd September 1993 (Stanisław Wasylewski na Śląsku Opolskim. W 40. rocznicę śmierci – pamiętnik sesji popularnonaukowej. Opole, 22 września 1993 r.)* was published in 1994<sup>26</sup>. The work briefly outlined issues from the epistolography of the author, published memoirs or aesthetics of the creative work.

A year later a book by Andrzej Brożek was published once again bringing up the matters associated with the Opole period in the life of the writer. The work titled *After Fifty Years: Around Stanisław Wasylewski and his „In Opole's Silesia” (Po pięćdziesięciu latach: wokół Stanisława Wasylewskiego i jego „Na Śląsku Opolskim”)* was published by Silesian Institute in Opole. The book can be divided into two parts. The first one, preceded by the extensive note from the publisher authored by Wiesław Lesiuk, is, as noted in the assessment of the work by Jerzy Pośpiech, a comprehensive editorial review of the work of Andrzej Brożek<sup>27</sup>. The second contains the study by the author, which concentrated on a single work of Stanisław Wasylewski.

The last publication dedicated to the writer is a brief analysis by Adam Wierciński *Discreet erudite (about the works of Stanisław Wasylewski) (Dyskretny erudyta (o pisarstwie Stanisława Wasylewskiego))*. The brochure was published in 100 copies by the Municipal Public Library in Opole in 2003 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of death of the writer. The work depicts the first edition of the novel *At the Duchess (U księżnej pani)*; it briefly recalls writer's biography and mentions his

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<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> *Z życia i twórczości Stanisława Wasylewskiego: materiały z sesji naukowej odbytej w Opolu w dniu 12 grudnia 1989 roku*, ed. J. Pośpiech, Opole 1991.

<sup>26</sup> *Stanisław Wasylewski na Śląsku Opolskim. W 40. rocznicę śmierci – pamiętnik sesji popularnonaukowej. Opole, 22 września 1993 r.*, ed. K. Lenart-Januszewska, Opole 1994.

<sup>27</sup> „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1996, nr 3–4, p. 128.

legacy. It is worth to quote a fragment of the author's findings, which previously no one wrote about:

In the sixties, after the death of his wife (1965), more than a hundred books from the Wasylewski's library was handed over to the Library of Opole WSP. In July 1997, a flood destroyed thousands of books from the University of Opole. Books remaining after Wasylewski in greater part were also destroyed<sup>28</sup>.

The last part presents the bibliography of the writer. It contains 31 books, 15 titles were presented amongst editorial, publishing and bibliographical works, and the list of translations contains only 4 publications.

Concluding characteristics of monographs devoted to Stanisław Wasylewski presented above we can notice that they are divided in two groups. The first involves the analysis of writer's relations with Silesia centered around both his biography and creative work, especially the book *In Opole's Silesia (Na Śląsku Opolskim)*. The second group converges publications consisted of contributory texts acquainting with the diversity of themes of this extremely active writer moving among different historical periods with excellent competence and with broad interests, focusing on the culture and customs in particular. Works describing writer's output were short and printed in very small editions, mostly as brochures. Periodicals were chosen for the further analysis. To avoid creating separate groups, magazines, daily press and collective scientific works published in series were gathered. To the moment of death of the writer in 1953 on pages of the Polish press 100 texts concerning the researched subject were published: 43 articles were by Stanisław Wasylewski, the remaining 57 publications were about the personality of the writer and his work, 2 notes informed about death of the author. In the most numerous group of texts only a few were reviews or articles of authors defending the writer accused of collaboration. The rest were reports from the course of the trial (there were as many as 41 articles in 1946). The majority of trial reports were neutral in tone, although Jan Kott's article published in the „Kuźnica” magazine in Łódź should be considered as one of the publications attacking the writer. Until the author's death the magazines most often publishing texts of Wasylewski and about Wasylewski were „Odra” (16 articles), „Ogniwa” (11 articles) and „Słowo Polskie” (8 articles). It should be clearly indicated that the study was conducted on the basis of the annotation in the aforementioned bibliographies, taking into consideration pseudonyms used by the writer. Reading contemporary texts analyzing the artistic work and activity of the writer proves that researchers discovered far larger number of texts, than recalled sources are making notes of. According to the findings of Jerzy Pośpiech, the daily newspaper „Słowo Polskie” and its Sunday supplement „Zwierciadło Polski i Świata” published in years 1947–1948 around 60 essays and columns by Stanisław Wasylewski. Furthermore, according to the findings of Anna Bonczar 19 texts of his authorship were published in Katowice's „Odra” in years 1948–1950<sup>29</sup>. Comparing these statements with a research work based on the bib-

<sup>28</sup> A. Wierciński, *Dyskretny erudyta (o pisarstwie Stanisława Wasylewskiego)*, Opole 2003, p. 22–23.

<sup>29</sup> A. Bonczar, *Felietony literackie Stanisława Wasylewskiego w katowickiej „Odrze” (1948–1950)*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 2002, nr 1, p. 65.

liography it is clearly visible that further detailed research, particularly in the case of „Słowo Polskie”, is necessary.

Returning to the matters related to writer's post-war articles, magazines which after the war printed the works of Stanisław Wasylewski (or rather “Tadeusz Szafraniec”) are worth mentioning. The first one to publish Wasylewski's work was a Wrocław's daily newspaper „Słowo Polskie”, depicted by Jerzy Pośpiech as the non-party and widely-read magazine. In 1947 Tadeusz Witek had been the editor-in-chief of „Słowo Polskie”, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1947 he was replaced by Stanisław Ziemak<sup>30</sup>. According to the bibliography, the writer commenced to publish his articles in the aforementioned newspaper in June 1947. However, such a statement needs not to be true, because in the text by Stanisław Jerzy Pośpiech *Stanisław Wasylewski in a circle of Wrocław's „Słowo Polskie”* (*Stanisław Wasylewski w kręgu wrocławskiego „Słowa Polskiego”*) one can find information that the creator started talking about cooperation with the editorial board in February 1947. Due to the lack of full bibliography one can only presume when exactly the first text by Tadeusz Szafraniec was released on the pages of this journal.

On the other hand, „Odra”, a newspaper from Katowice, started cooperation with Stanisław Wasylewski in April 1948 and ended it in January 1950. The magazine was published for only 5 years, until 1950. At first it was a fortnightly magazine that was later converted into the weekly one, dealing with social-cultural issues, and Wilhelm Szewczyk was its editor-in-chief. It should be noted that in 1945, before the writer's trial, „Odra” published a disputable article *Regarding the Case of Stanisław Wasylewski* (*W sprawie Stanisława Wasylewskiego*). Its author – Jan Brzoza, knew the writer well from the period of the occupation of Lviv and decided to stand in his defense. Unfortunately, the literary circle gathering mostly around magazine „Kuźnica” (from Łódź) slowly increased its role in shaping the opinions of the whole cultural movement<sup>31</sup>. Immediately after the Jan Brzoza's publication, „Kuźnica” published 2 articles negatively evaluating the moral stance of Stanisław Wasylewski. In the text *Aberrations of Jan Brzoza in Odra* (*Aberracje Jana Brzozy w Odrze*), Adam Ważyk called the publication defending the writer “a gloomy prank” and “apology of collaborationism”<sup>32</sup>. In the same year in number 19 of the mentioned magazine one more text indirectly connected to Wasylewski's case appeared. In the *Letter to Editor of „Kuźnica”*, Bolesław Kowalski expresses his opinion about writer's associates connected with newspaper „Gazeta Lwowska”, published under the occupation. He also recalls that “editor Wasylewski was stigmatized at the general congress of writers”<sup>33</sup>.

„Ogniwa” is the journal from Katowice, in which, according to bibliographical data, the writer published 11 texts in years 1947–1949. However, examining the cooperation of the author with the recalled periodical, Jerzy Pośpiech found out that during this period the author published 21 articles there. The researcher also clearly points out that cooperation of Stanisław Wasylewski with „Ogniwa” was interrupted by

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<sup>30</sup> J. Pośpiech, *Stanisław Wasylewski w kręgu wrocławskiego „Słowa Polskiego”* (na podstawie korespondencji z lat 1947–1953), „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1994, no. 2, p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> W. Szewczyk, *Z refleksji nad Stanisławem Wasylewskim i jego twórczością*, „Studia Śląskie” 1990, vol. 48, p. 238.

<sup>32</sup> [A. Ważyk], *Aberracje Jana Brzozy w Odrze*, „Kuźnica” 1945, no. 17, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> B. Kowalski, *Do Redaktora „Kuźnicy”*, „Kuźnica” 1945, no. 10, p. 8.



“brutal interference of personal enemies, influential party writers and columnists”<sup>34</sup>. Unfortunately, due to the absence of bibliographical data, it is possible only to presume that aggressive texts slandering the writer appeared in the press once again.

The year 1947 had brought the 17 texts of the writer published under pseudonyms. In 1948, 18 of his texts were printed. However, it has to be noticed that this tally is based on derivative sources. The articles about Stanisław Wasylewski are still in the similar tone of *defence* or of *absolving the collaborationism*. Among them are 3 identically sounding statements of the Main Board of the Union of Polish Writers. In a note published by the Cracow’s „Tygodnik Powszechny” it is clear that the Union agreed with the exoneration only outwardly, because it does not withdraw its opinion that the author violated the discipline of a professional, collegial and moral duties of a writer<sup>35</sup>.

The author of the *Romance of the Great-grandmother (Romans prababki)* died barely a few months after Józef Stalin’s passing. Unfortunately, for the entire post-war period, from the moment of a judicial acquittal, literary environment still did not allow him to publish under his own name. There is one exception from this rule: in 1948 Katowice editing cooperative „Ognisko” published *Silesian Legends and Fairy Tales (Legendy i baśnie śląskie)* edited by Stanisław Wasylewski. The book was published with the name of the writer on the cover and the title page. Coming back to press texts only Katowice’s „Odra” published two feature articles signing them with his real name<sup>36</sup>. After the author’s death in 1953, only two journals decided to publish notes about the decease of Stanisław Wasylewski. The first one is the Cracow’s „Tygodnik Powszechny”, the other is the London’s emigration newspaper „Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza”.

The national journal did not publish the information about the writer’s death until a month after his death. On 30<sup>th</sup> of August one short sentence turned up in the column “events”: “On July 26<sup>th</sup> died in Opole a prominent writer and historian, author of many volumes of essays and sketches of historical and literary manners – Stanisław Wasylewski”. How could we explain this delay and only a short mention on the pages of the national press? Perhaps the reports of people associated with the author and present at his funeral will facilitate the better understanding of this situation? In his memoirs, associate professor Zbyszko Bednorz and Maria Kwoczkowa accompanying author in the last journey, regretfully pointed out that his burial was unremarkable, expressionless, without official farewells, with the embarrassing number of mourners and the overall tragic situation of the entire austere ceremony<sup>37</sup>. One of the reflections of Zbyszko Bednorz is significant:

People did not come for the funeral because of fear. Perhaps they were afraid to march in a procession led by a priest, perhaps it was a paralysis of the times, or a political curse imposed on the deceased that resulted in a fact, that only a dramatically small number of people attended the funeral<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> J. Pośpiech, *Siedem opolskich...*, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> „Tygodnik Powszechny” 1947, no. 7, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> A. Bonczar, *Felietony literackie Stanisława Wasylewskiego w katowickiej „Odrze” (1948–1950)*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 2002, no. 1, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> K. Kossakowska-Jarosz, *Uroczysta promocja reedycji „Na Śląsku Opolskim” Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „Studia Śląskie” 1990, vol. 47, p. 276–277.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 277.

This sentence and an embarrassing lack of posthumous memories in newspapers, can testify how badly the writer was received in the new political reality. It can be said that at that moment his work and life were completely ignored, probably for fear of exclusion and ostracism from the literary environment, extremely strongly defending its original decision of excluding Stanisław Wasylewski from the ranks of Polish Writers Association. At this point it is worth to analyze the content of the article published in London's „Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza”. In the issue 281 of 12<sup>th</sup> September (so even later than in the national catholic weekly!) on the third page the long text entitled *Death of Stanisław Wasylewski (Śmierć Stanisława Wasylewskiego)* appeared, signed with the pseudonym St. M. The author emphasizes that Wasylewski died almost at the same time as another writer from Lviv, Kornel Makuszyński. This article contains information that the prose-writer's exceptional feature articles written after the First World War were highly honored by the Lviv press („Gazeta Poranna”, „Słowo Polskie”) due to their significant popularity among the intelligentsia, beautiful Polish language, literary wit and the great erudition. It stressed that his ability to find the valuable information in the Ossoliński collection could be compared in his generation only with Ludwik Bernacki and Władysław T. Wisłocki. Writer's activity in Greater Poland was rated much lower, as the paid work mainly related to the publishing businesses and reissuing of the old novels:

After moving to Greater Poland he faded as the writer. He savoured the earnings flowing from various publishing interests and new editions of previously written books, married the “aristocrat” neurasthenized and froze in flowerism. He already wrote and published very little<sup>39</sup>.

The war and post-war period in biography of Stanisław Wasylewski was acknowledged only in 3 sentences, stating that the court acquitted the writer of charges of cooperation with the German invader. The court's ruling was recapitulated as follows: “inner peace it could not give him, nor did it stimulate his creativity”<sup>40</sup>. It seems that the author of the text, either intentionally omitted information that the writer certainly has not lost his creative powers, and continued to work, but was forced to publish under pseudonyms in order to earn a maintenance, or the author of the article wrongly understood the events taking place at that time in the country. Another important fact is that until 1955 there was still a kind of conspiracy of silence. Nobody had written about Wasylewski, his works had not been printed. Only in Opole a weekly „Catholic” published on October 30<sup>th</sup> 1955 one small piece of information about the writer. In the magazine a richly illustrated text *What these Crosses Resemble to Us* appeared, with the photo of the creator's tomb. The comment to the article said, that it depicted graves hiding the remains of people who devoted their life to fighting for the Polish thought and the Polish spirituality. There was only one photograph of the lonely grave, and still no mentions of the very person of the writer. The year 1956 also did not bring a great breakthrough when it comes to the presence of Wasylewski in the press. In „Kalendarz Górnolśląski” a fragment of writer's prose appeared, entitled *Three Needles, Three Voices and the Magic Pipe*.

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<sup>39</sup> „Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza” 1953, no. 281, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

On the basis of bibliographic data it is possible to state, that the true “thaw” associated with the attitude towards the writer, took place only in 1957, when some of his pre-war books were reissued. The seven titles were issued during this year under the name of Wasylewski<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, the press reviews of these publications also appeared. In turn, the year 1958 brought another re-editions of works of the writer and the first edition of his memories *Beneath the Dome of Lviv Ossolineum* (*Pod kopułą lwowskiego Ossolineum*). The press once again reacted with reviews or summaries. Only Warsaw’s scout newspaper „Świat Młodych” published one of the earlier texts of the writer: *In the Cave under Cyganka*, and Katowice’s newspaper „Dziennik Zachodni” reported the tribute of the Polish Writers Association on the writer’s grave in the anniversary of his death. The following years did not bring new research on creative work and biography of the writer. Further reprints of his novels are still being issued, and the new titles derived from the materials left by the writer are published<sup>42</sup>. The press notices it and reviews individual works, however, not recalling his post-war problems, and only partially recreating biography. Occasionally, some of the writer’s feature articles and longer texts about his work are published in the press. Above all, the issues concerning author’s work on the book *In Opole’s Silesia* (*Na Śląsku Opolskim*) in the thirties are covered. Only the year 1976 brings something interesting from the point of view of a researcher of the post-war fate of the author of *The Polish Life in the Nineteenth Century* (*Życie polskie w XIX wieku*). The information bulletin of the Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich „Ze Skarbca Kultury” printed the text concerning the manuscript legacy of the writer located in the collections of Ossolineum in Wrocław<sup>43</sup>. Jan Litwinek is reconstructing the history of the Wasylewski’s collection which is located at the library, as well as creating typology for the gathered material dividing documents into categories. In years 1951–1953 the writer sold to Ossolineum a part of his collection of manuscripts and several family memorabilia. After the inventory works these materials consisted of 27 units. In 1966 the next part of the author’s manuscripts found its way to the library mentioned above. After the death of the author’s wife, the new part of already much dispersed collection was given to Ossolineum. Just this part of his legacy is the basic framework of the Wasylewski’s collection. After the development, the documents contain 59 inventory units and, including materials purchased directly from the writer, the set has 86 units in 95 volumes<sup>44</sup>.

It is worth noting that in the eighties the essays, feature articles and excerpts of the prose were printed again in the magazines. The examples are the writer’s fairy tales repeatedly reprinted, independently or in collections as: *Godula, King of Zinc* (*Godula, król cynku*), *How a Magician from Cracow cheated the Silesian Robber* (*Jak magik z Krakowa nabrał śląskiego zbójnika*), *Three Needles, Three Voices and the*

<sup>41</sup> Among the new, post-war editions published in 1957 there appeared the following titles: *Klasztor i kobieta: studium z dziejów kultury polskiej w średniowieczu*; *Legends and Tales of Silesia*; *Na dworze króla Stasia*; *Na końcu języka*; *Niezapisany stan służby*; *Przypadki Króla Jegomości: opowieści ludzi współczesnych*.

<sup>42</sup> Among them is the volume: *Forty years of success: the course of my life* (*Czterdzieści lat powodzenia: przebieg mojego życia*), 1959.

<sup>43</sup> J. Litwinek, *Rękopiśmienna spuścizna Stanisława Wasylewskiego w Bibliotece Ossolineum*, „Ze Skarbca Kultury: biuletyn informacyjny Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich” 1976, vol. 22, p. 155–165.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 156.

*Magic Pipe* (*Trzy igły, trzy głosy i cudowna piszczałka*). The other exemplary fragment of his prose are: *Concert of Chopin in Paris* (*Koncert Chopina w Paryżu*), *God's Cloud* (*Tuman Boży*), part of *Rej of Nagłowice* (*Rej z Nagłowic*), *How Amor did not favour Mister Kościuszko* (*O tym jak Amor panu Kościuszce nie sprzyjał*) or *Fire in Nowogródek* (*Pożar w Nowogródku*). At the end of the eighties the interest grows in pre-war visits of the writer in Silesia and the already mentioned book about Opole region<sup>45</sup>. In the second half of the eighties there was a scientific symposium devoted to the writer. It was one of the few conferences dedicated entirely to Stanisław Wasylewski. It took place on February 17<sup>th</sup> 1988 at the Instytut Śląski in Opole, and was connected with the inauguration of the reader's circulation of the phototypic edition of *In Opole's Silesia* (*Na Śląsku Opolskim*)<sup>46</sup>. The articles of the speakers, Wilhelm Szewczyk and Jerzy Pośpiech, were printed in „*Studia Śląskie*” published in 1990. The second of the researchers reminded in his article:

So far there is no study or scientific dissertation which shows the output of Wasylewski's creative work in its entirety. What counts presently and what the historian of literature, as well as the enthusiast of literature have at their disposal – these are contributions written after the war by people residing and acting in Silesia. Therefore, for obvious reasons the so-called Silesian literary output by s. Wasylewski is what we know best<sup>47</sup>.

Despite the fact that until now several publications associated with the creator and discussed further in this article appeared, the words of Jerzy Pośpiech are still valid and still the dissertation widely describing the biography and works of the author of *Romance of Great-grandmother* has not been written. Amongst the research demands Jerzy Pośpiech listed as many as 21 themes for the study, for example: the subjective-objective bibliography, the biography, the scientific monograph, the reception of the writer's work or journalistic and editorial activity of the author. The nineties is the favourable period for the research on the artistic work and life of Wasylewski. Earlier, the writer had rarely been the object of a deeper scientific reflection. Already mentioned Jerzy Pośpiech was the extremely active researcher, regularly dealing with the issues of life and work of the writer from Stanisławów. Pośpiech was, tirelessly and regularly developing, commenting and publishing the author's correspondence, as well as documenting his ties with Silesia. In most cases he did this on the pages of „*Kwartalnik Opolski*” or occasionally in other publications such as „*Studia Śląskie*”. It is worth to mention but a few titles of researcher's work devoted to Wasylewski: *From the Opole letters of Stanisław Wasylewski* (*Z opolskich listów Stanisława Wasylewskiego*); *Wilhelm Szewczyk's Letters to Stanisław Wasylewski* (*Listy Wilhelma Szewczyka do Stanisława Wasylewskiego*); *The era of romanticism in the works of Stanisław Wasylewski* (*Epoka romantyzmu w pracach*

<sup>45</sup> In 1984 during the competition for coverage organized by „*Trybuna Opolska*” third prize assigned to Stanisław Nicieja for the *Librarian from Ostrówek*. The reportage bounced in 1993 for personal use in the number of 16 copies for the exhibition of books. It brought closer and recalled the figure of the writer, and gave many details of the last years of the writer's life, spent in Opole. The reportage does not record any bibliography on a national scale.

<sup>46</sup> Z. Kossakowska-Jarosz, *Uroczysta promocja reedycji „Na Śląsku Opolskim” Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „*Studia Śląskie*” 1990, vol. 48, p. 272.

<sup>47</sup> J. Pośpiech, *Stan i potrzeby badań nad biografią i twórczością Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „*Studia Śląskie*” 1990, vol. 48, p. 289.

*Stanisława Wasylewskiego*); *Stanisław Wasylewski as a screenwriter and author of school reading-texts (Stanisław Wasylewski jako scenarzysta filmowy i autor czytanek szkolnych)*<sup>48</sup>. Amongst researchers analyzing the works of the writer, some names appear at least twice, e.g. Henryka Andrzejczak, Anna Bonczar, Marceli Kosman, but no one devoted to him as many works as Jerzy Pośpiech. According to the documentation contained in the *Polska Bibliografia Literacka* and *Bibliografia Zawartości Czasopism* he is the author of 23 texts published in the press and associated with Stanisław Wasylewski (articles, as well as the study of correspondence).

For a very long time the works concerning Wasylewski were written in a vague and cautious way. People who could give the evidence of what kind of man he had been, in what way he worked, created and lived, have still been alive. Unfortunately, the texts trying to unravel the difficult biography and the sad end of the writer's life did not emerge until the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Years after the writer's death brought above all publications closely tied with his work, mostly with reissues of works popular before the war or with completely new titles. According to the collected data it can be concluded that a breakthrough in the research on Stanisław Wasylewski took place in 1990, which was connected with the events of February 1988, when his work *In Opole's Silesia (Na Śląsku Opolskim)* was re-edited. Report on the celebrations discussed already earlier, along with the papers were not published until the year 1990, which can be accepted as the significant period for the scientific reflection on the works and life of the writer. Since then a few texts clarifying certain issues have appeared. Among them especially one publication deserves the wider discussion. It is the article by Ludwik Kozołub from the year 1990 entitled *Stanisław Wasylewski's trial of collaboration and its consequences (Proces Stanisława Wasylewskiego o kolaborację i jego następstwa)*. The text was printed in „Kwartalnik Opolski”, the magazine most involved in issues related to Stanisław Wasylewski. It probably happened because of the editor-in-chief of the journal – this position since 1983 had been held by Jerzy Pośpiech. The case of the trial of the collaboration and its consequences were characterized thoroughly and with many details in the article.

Lack of any memories of the writer in the after-war press publications draws attention. There are no testimonies of people, who knew him in the post-war period and could tell a lot about him. A lot of information based on the writer's correspondence was gathered by Jerzy Pośpiech, but the comments of people who knew the writer personally are almost absent in the press. Published texts do not cover all the vast research area concerning Wasylewski.

It is clearly visible that since 2004 the interest in themes associated with Stanisław Wasylewski has collapsed. *Bibliografia Zawartości Czasopism* notes only 24 texts in period 2000–2015, from which only 9 have been published since 2004. It should be noted that Polish derivative sources unfortunately do not register all the materials related to the writer. They can make a starting point to commence a research, but without the addition of a tedious and time-consuming queries from

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<sup>48</sup> J. Pośpiech, *Stanisław Wasylewski jako scenarzysta filmowy i autor czytanek szkolnych*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1995, no. 3–4, p. 88–100; J. Pośpiech, *Epoka romantyzmu w pracach Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1994, no. 4, p. 3–21; J. Pośpiech, *Listy Wilhelma Szewczyka do Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1991, no. 3–4, p. 284–292; J. Pośpiech, *Z opolskich listów Stanisława Wasylewskiego*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 1995, no. 1, p. 84–107.



experience their value will never be full. While at the moment we know which magazines should be investigated again, there is always a possibility that we can discover a writer's new pseudonym or the text in a newspaper that were never mentioned in any memoirs or letters. Some issues need to be examined on the basis of fragmentary data, especially in terms of daily newspapers. In case of Stanisław Wasylewski it is much simpler because we have the reason to believe that he published only during the period from 1947 until 1950, therefore research in this area is feasible, especially since we know the journals in which Wasylewski published. Until now his cooperation with „Odra” and „Ogniwa” has been given scholar's attention. It seems that the next research of the content of the post-war press associated with Stanisław Wasylewski should be concentrated around Wrocław's „Słowo Polskie” and its supplements, especially because a correspondence of the author with the editors of the magazine was preserved and edited by Jerzy Pośpiech.

In the preface to the volume collecting several texts by Wasylewski, Janusz Tazbir characterized his creative work as follows:

Stanisław Wasylewski [...] drawing from the old monastery chronicles or from girl's diaries, could conjure up irretrievable worlds that are gone forever. He interwove the prose of everyday life with vivid anecdote which gained him a faithful circle of readers amongst consecutive generations<sup>49</sup>.

In turn, Stanisław Lam, a critic and literary historian, as well as editor and columnist in the review of *Portraits of Glamorous Ladies* called the writer the best narrator of Polish literature and depicted the mentioned work as follows:

If *Portraits of Glamorous Ladies* is the one of the most pleasant books, only the author deserves credit – not the described heroines<sup>50</sup>.

Stanisław Wasylewski was a popular, valued and widely read author. After the war and accusation of collaboration no one wanted to pay more attention to his achievements. After the death of the writer and subsequent reeditions of his works mainly elaborations and book reviews were published, while the scientific reflection devoted to both his life and creative work was still lacking. On the diagram attached to the text, which presents the number of the press publications dedicated to the writer in years 1945–2015, it is clearly visible that the highlighted trend line drops today to the lowest values. The writer, whose works are still in print, is ignored again by the next generation of scholars. A few texts devoted to Stanisław Wasylewski have been published in the nineties and in the noughties, mostly thanks to Jerzy Pośpiech's initiative, although it is still not enough to satisfy the need of the people interested both in the creative work and life of this highly esteemed and widely read writer of the interwar period.

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<sup>49</sup> J. Tazbir, *Wstęp. Cnotliwe mniszki i romantyczne królowe salonów*, [in:] S. Wasylewski, *Klasztor i kobieta; O miłości romantycznej...*, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> S. Lam, *Panie wytworne XVIII wieku*, „Tygodnik Ilustrowany” 1923, no. 52, p. 830.

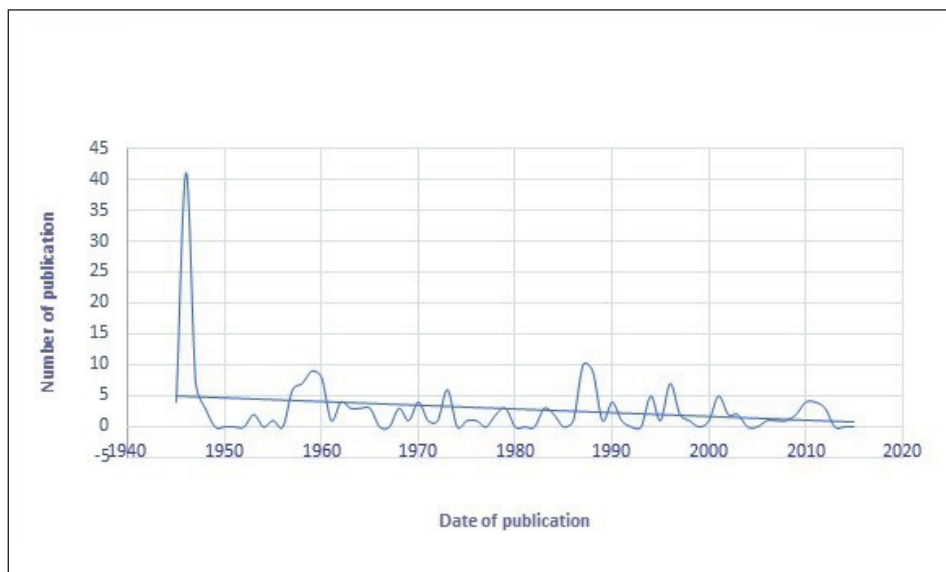


Fig. 1. The number of publications concerning Stanisław Wasylewski (1945–2015)

Source: author's own research.

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## The current state of research on the life and creative work of Stanisław Wasylewski in years 1945–2015

### Abstract

The article analyzes the compact publications and texts from Polish periodicals about one of the most popular Polish writers of the interwar period – Stanisław Wasylewski (1885–1953). In 2015, 130 years have passed since death of the creator, and the state of research on his life and work is still in considerable dispersion, and some selected issues are only partially studied, hence there is a need to gather and discuss so far published materials. The text discusses the few publications devoted to the writer in compact and press releases from years 1945–2015. The analysis shows that the profile of the writer, whose works are still being published, at the moment again is being ignored by the next generation of researchers. The largest number of articles devoted to this author was published just after the war and, above all, they were mostly the reports connected to the loud across the country process of collaboration. After the acquittal of Stanisław Wasylewski of charges and his exclusion from the Union of Writers, for a long time he became forgotten, until late fifties, when re-editions of his works, and publication of new titles that he left were issued. Later, mainly thanks to the initiative of Jerzy Pośpiech, several articles devoted to Stanisław Wasylewski were issued in the nineties and after 2000, but it is still not enough material for those interested in the life and work of one of the most acclaimed and widely read authors of the interwar period.

**Key words:** Stanisław Wasylewski (1885–1953), Polish writers between 1901–1953, biographies, Polish literature of the XIX–XX century

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