

PHILOSOPHY IN VILNIUS IN THE FIRST HALF OF XIXth CENTURY

Monograph

Summary

In the first part of XIXth century Vilnius used to be a cultural capital of at least three nations – Lithuanians, Byelorussians and Poles. Many aspects of its life – art and science, the start of Romanticism, liberal press, University, being the main scientific and education center of a vast area in Eastern Europe, have been thoroughly investigated. Philosophy in Vilnius University in 1803–1832 served as an object of numerous scientific investigations and research papers that have been published – firstly in Poland – for already more than a century. The object of this monograph would be to tie up the results of the above-mentioned investigations of the researchers of three nations, provide an expanded and enriched picture of the philosophical culture in Vilnius contributing to it an element of Lithuanian studies. Up until recently the philosophical thinking of that period has been treated as a phenomenon of exceptionally Polish culture. The author of the monograph doesn't overestimate the ethnical background of the philosophers, taking as basic a thesis that Vilnius used to be an open, multilingual, multicultural and polyphonic city, historical capital of Lithuania *propria*. People who used to work and create in Vilnius called themselves “litwyny” – “Lithuanians”.

The extremes of philosophical worldview have been distinguished in the monograph. It concludes that the differentiation of the worldviews was at the peak of diversity and internal tension at the beginning of the XIXth century. The philosophical space could be structured by distinguishing a) deism (a product of theoretical formation of the Enlightenment related with a reception of Physiocracy and development of natural sciences), b) theism (represented by traditionalism and a spiritualism of Romanticism of the second decade of XIXth century) and c) atheism (not yet enough investigated radical trend of Enlightenment related with a reception of D'Holbach and Diderot). The monograph provides the data on a relatively high philosophical engagement of Vilnius citizens, their feministic and libertine outlooks, and broad curiosity in Philosophy. These are brand new phenomena both for Lithuanian and Polish studies.

The novelty in investigations is an identification of vast textual mass of Christian traditionalism (far overreaching in numbers the texts of the Enlightenment authors). A hypothesis is raised that theistic thinking was in a phase of renewal related with a reception of works of Ch. Wolff. Christian philosophy is tightly related with Lithuanian religious moralism of that time, presents us with a heuristic phone for a phenomenon of its proliferating publications in Vilnius.

The arguments for a completely new concept of the development of the philosophy of Enlightenment are provided. There was no breach in the empiricist tradition of Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which had been formed by Educational Commission: a reception of E. B. Condillac was broad, logic has been supplemented and developed as a psychologized epistemology; in second decade it has even got a name of Vilnius school of epistemology. It's main characteristics are: a) epistemological realism and fundamentalism; b) attempt to surpass skepticism, agnosticism and all kinds of idealism; c) attention to the philosophy of science and an attempt to provide a basics for it; d) alternative suggestions for a Kantian resolution of the problem of transcendence; e) supplement of empiricism with the elements of rationalism, turning back to the philosophy of J. Lock and f) the reception of featuring elements of Scottish so-called "common sense" philosophical camp.

The reception of the "Common sense" philosophy of Thomas Reid had been less significant than it was considered before; this conception (the only viable alternative to Kantian transcendentalism) has been adapted through the prism of the French school of so-called "ideologists" (J. M. Degérand); the dogmatic postulates of T. Reid had been accepted without direct realism (so-called Presentationalism); A. Daugirdas and J. Sniadeckis thoroughly developed Phenomenalism, which still has some positions even in the contemporary analytical thinking.

The conclusion is made that all arguments of J. Sniadecki against Kant are taken from J. M. Degérand and miss the point. This evaluation summarizes the century long discussion on the value of criticism of Kant.

We might distinguish two major trends within Vilnius school of epistemology in interpreting the problem of transcendence: the common sense fundamentalism of Daugirdas and pre-positivism of Sniadeckis (who refuses to accept this problem as philosophical). The pre-positivism of Vilnius – is a clear example of the reception of French Encyclopedists (d'Alamber and others).

The scientism of Enlightenment in Vilnius University has developed very interesting and modern for these times forms of scientific theory. Here Lithuanian studies encounter for the first time such concepts as scientific structure, includes different problems and achievements of various disciplines in science, observes some interesting though obsolete for present times scientific solutions. Philosophy of Art, which had an impact on early Lithuanian literature, had been presented here.

We have attempted to provide a thorough analysis of a culminating point in philosophical life of Vilnius – a competition of a year 1820 to occupy the post of Professor of Philosophy in Vilnius University. New hypotheses on its process and participants have been suggested here. Lithuanian studies thus have been enriched with representative scripts of Vilnius period lectures of J. Goluchovskis – the first Lithuanian and Polish Romantic philosopher. We attempt to argue for the thesis of close relation of his Romanticism with the later Philosophy of Life.

Original attempt to state and analyze an impact of professional philosophy on the early Lithuanian literature has been presented in the monograph.

This monograph belongs to the series of books “History of Lithuanian Philosophy. Monuments and Inquires”. The translation from Latin of the treatise in Natural theology of Angelas Daugirdas “On Miracles” is presented in the part on Monuments. It criticizes skepticism of Hume, argues the reality of world and miracles within it. Another monument – the odes of Paul Tharengi – the Professor of Rhetoric – dedicated for Vilnius philosophers. It gives additional information on the intellectual atmosphere in the city, its poetical phon.

Vilnius is presented as an established center of philosophical culture, full of theoretical tension, disputes, competition between different theoretical paradigms. Dispute, argument, dialogue, relation of differences and competition – are authentic conditions of philosophical and scientific creativity. They were present in Vilnius in spite of huge pressure from oppressive apparatus of tsarist Russia. These gloomy conditions couldn't however suppress the old preserved spiritual tradition and the creation of new intellectual values. These Philosophical activities have important historical meaning today, especially in an attempt to understand the value of philosophical heritage of Central and Eastern Europe. The monograph presents this value also as belonging to Lithuanian nation as cherished inheritance of its creative powers.