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ART IN THE SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS. VISUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE EXECUTION OF TEOFIL WIŚNIEWSKI AND JÓZEF KAPUŚCIŃSKI

Abstract: On 31 July 1847, two political activists who had played a role in the events of the 1846 revolution were executed in Lviv: Teofil Wiśniowski and Józef Kapuściński. This was an unprecedented event in the political history of Galicia. The public execution, attended by large crowds of observers, became a manifestation of resistance against the Austrian authorities. From the moment the death penalty was announced, para-hagiographic cult of the two fighters for the country's freedom started to develop. Although all forms of commemoration of the revolutionary figures encountered opposition from the occupying authorities, commemorative works in various forms were produced, including publications, literary pieces, musical compositions and, of course, visual artworks. According to numerous sources, on the day of the executions, any attempt to create a portrait sketch of the two men or a study depicting the ongoing events was strictly forbidden. Artists who sought to take any notes were arrested and their works were forcibly destroyed. Nonetheless, it is known that some were able to record these observations from hiding, with the subsequent intention of producing works based on them that were to be widely circulated. The aim of this article is to analyse the works dedicated to the executions of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński, with a particular focus on those which may have been created from nature or made by the direct observers of the events. It can be seen that in almost all cases the reporter's fidelity to historical realities was subordinated, in accordance with the conventions of the era, to propaganda purposes, and the realism of dramatic scenes was concealed beneath national liberation symbolism.

Keywords: Polish art, 19th-century art, patriotic iconography, Teofil Wiśniowski, Józef Kapuściński

Saturday 31 July 1847 in Lviv was cloudy and the temperature was relatively low, with a maximum of 12.4 °C recorded¹. Therefore, the weather was decidedly uninviting for spending time outdoors, particularly given the season. For several days, newspapers had been encouraging visitors to attend a large exhibition of paintings, whose opening time had been extended "by popular demand" (with reduced admission prices). This was to be the last day of the exhibition². And yet, on the morning in question, the public did not flock to the Ossolineum, where the exhibition was held. Instead, in the drizzling rain, the city streets were filled with citizens accompanying two revolutionaries, Teofil Wiśniowski and Józef Kapuściński, who had been sentenced to death and were being taken to the scaffold on their final journey. Although the political situation was already becoming increasingly tense in Galicia at this time, the execution of the political prisoners was an unprecedented event. The Austrian authorities attempted to limit the publicity surrounding the event and to carry out the sentence in a discreet manner, but the public of Lviv transformed the event into a manifestation of anti-occupation attitudes. Local artists sought to record these pivotal moments despite police efforts to prevent it. Art became a tool of political struggle.

"You have probably heard that gallows are being erected in Lviv for two political prisoners. Well, a few hours ago the sentence was carried out. Although during their lifetime they were not exactly praised by the Poles themselves, in death they became brothers to all. [...] may God grant us all such a serene, solemn and beautiful death. They died with true martyr's courage: one (Wiśniowski) - in solemn silence, full of consolation and tranquillity, the other (Kapuściński), a simple man, but of unbreakable character - defending his innocence with a loud voice on the very scaffolding"³. In these brief words, Karol Szajnocha, a member of a patriotic conspiracy in Lviv and a prominent historian in the future, recounted one of the most important events of 1847 in a letter to his mother. On 31 July, the two revolutionaries who had been involved in the preparations for an armed uprising in 1846 were executed. The role played by the two convicts in the conspiracy and their merits to the national liberation cause differed, and Zygmunt Zygmuntowicz later emphasised the fact that an equal punishment was handed down to "Teofil Wiśniowski, a tried and tested officer in conspiracy and revolution, and Józef Kapuściński, inferior

¹ „Dodatek do Gazety Lwowskiej” 1847, no. 89, p. 2597.

² „Gazeta Lwowska” 1847, no. 84, p. 498.

³ A letter written by Karol Szajnocha to his mother on the 31st of July, 1847. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu - Library, Manuscript no. 5881. Quoted in: *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku*. Wybór źródeł, ed. S. Kieniewicz, Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1950, pp. 225-226.

in importance and position to the national movement"⁴. Nevertheless, their shared demise in defence of the Fatherland meant that in the 19th century they were not only included together in the pantheon of national heroes, but were even venerated as 'martyrs for Polish freedom'.

This phenomenon also manifested itself in art, contrary to the intentions of the Austrian authorities. There are numerous testimonies to the fact that it was strictly forbidden to immortalise these events. One of the direct participants in these incidents emphasised that "All the pictures of our Martyr [Wiśniowski – footnote by A.Ś.] had to be drawn surreptitiously, somewhere from behind a window and too hastily"⁵. This motif also reappears in memoirs written many years later. In an article published on the fiftieth anniversary of the execution of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński, Kazimierz Ostaszewski-Barański, editor of "Dziennik Polski", quoted the recollections of a certain Mr T. According to this source, Korneli Szlegel is said to have sketched the dead conspirators from nature: "Upon the deaths of both victims, renowned portraitist Schlögel depicted them in a sketching, standing in proximity to the gallows. He was tracked down by one of the so-called 'police confidence men', who ordered to take him into the custody. He was arrested and the drawing was destroyed. Nevertheless, Schlögel was released immediately and returned to the scene, where he completed the sketches"⁶. No similar works attributed to this artist are known to exist today. This account, however, demonstrates the strength of the public's desire to preserve the last image of the convicts, even in the face of potential repression threatening the artists. Scenes illustrating the event and posthumous images of the two revolutionaries were created by both professional artists and dilettantes. The drawing notes created in the face of a threat from state authorities, as well as the commemorative compositions performed later in defiance of censorship, were united by the intention to influence the viewer with the power of strong messages.

Both convicts were among the organisers of the 1846 uprising on behalf of the Polish Democratic Society⁷. Józef Kapuściński (1818-1847), who was

⁴ Z. Zyguntowicz, *Zbrodnia Austriaków*, Polskie Towarzystwo Opieki nad Grobami Bohaterów, Lwów 1934, p. 36.

⁵ *O portretach Teofila Wiszniewskiego*, „Dziennik Mód Paryskich” 1848, no. 17, p. 137.

⁶ K. Ostaszewski-Barański, 31 VII 1847-1897, „Dziennik Polski” 1897, no. 210, p. 2.

⁷ The political activity, the course of the investigation and the trial of the two activists have been discussed in the most general terms, solely to indicate the historical context of the phenomena presented hereafter. This is due to the fact that these issues have already been the subject of comprehensive studies in the scientific literature to date, particularly in works written in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is noteworthy to mention

active in Pilzno, was responsible for collecting weapons and recruiting revolutionary troops to take part in the capture of Tarnów, which was a strategic point in the insurgents' plans. On 18 February 1846, presumably having received notification that the action had been accelerated, he initiated an effort to apprehend the mayor of Pilzno, Kasper Markel, who was suspected of inciting peasants against the "rebellion of the nobility". As a consequence of the injuries he had sustained during the course of the action, the official died. Kapuściński and his three accomplices attempted to reach Tarnów but were apprehended by the peasantry and handed over to the authorities. A much more experienced conspirator was the several years older Teofil Wiśniowski (1805/6-1847). A former participant in the November Uprising, founder of the Galician Carbonari unions and an émigré activist, he returned to conspiratorial activity as an emissary of the organization called Centralizacja from 1844. He undertook agitation in the Stanisław and Brześć districts. With the outbreak of the uprising, he took command of one of the revolutionary detachments, achieving a tactical victory in Narajów on 21 February 1846. After this skirmish, however, he was captured by the peasants and handed over to the Austrians.

In the autumn of 1846, the judicial proceedings of those accused of involvement in the insurrectionary activities occurring within the Galician region commenced in Lviv. The trial of the individuals responsible for organising the Narayev expedition ended with death sentences for 25 people, while 10 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from five to 15 years⁸. The case file was then forwarded to the Court of Appeal, with a recommendation to uphold the death sentences for Teofil Wiśniowski and Henryk Schmitt⁹.

the following publications: S. Schnür-Peplowski, *Życie za wolność! (Opowieść z przeszłości Galicyi)*, H. Altemberg Bookshop Publishers, Lwów 1897, pp. 90-91; E. Ciesielski, *Teofil Wiśniowski i Józef Kapuściński*, by Jan Maniszewski's bookshop, Lwów 1906; P. Stebelski, *Proces kryminalny Teofila Wiśniowskiego i towarzyszy o zbrodnię zdrady stanu*, s.n., Lwów 1909; Z. Zygmuntowicz, *Zbrodnia...* It should be noted, however, that some of these publications are not entirely reliable sources. Despite the considerable merits of their authors in accessing archival materials and witnesses' accounts, their emotional involvement in the described events occasionally compromised their ability to maintain scientific objectivity. A contemporary, fully reliable analysis of Wiśniowski's and Kapuściński's political activities, verifying previous inaccuracies, is presented in the following study: S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie. Stracenie Kapuścińskiego i Wiśniowskiego i ich kult we Lwowie*, [in:] *Rok 1846 w Galicji. Ludzie, wydarzenia, tradycje*, ed. M. Śliwa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, Kraków 1997, pp. 77-100.

⁸ *Wyrok śmierci w c. k. Sądzie karzącym Lwowskim, przeciw Teofilowi Wiśniowskiemu, także przybraną nazwę Karola Duval, Winnickiego, Dąbrowskiego, Zagórskiego i Benedykta Lewińskiego noszącemu, za popełnioną zbrodnię Stanu, zapadły, i na tymże w moc potwierdzenia wyższych sądowych Instancyj, dnia 31 lipca 1847 we Lwowie szubienicą wykonany*, [Lwów 1847], s.n.

⁹ P. Stebelski, *Proces kryminalny...*, p. 179; S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie...*, p. 88. In a decision handed down by the emperor, the sentence of Henryk Schmitt, who had

At the appeal hearing, the decision of the lower court was upheld. The verdict on the assassination attempt on the mayor of Pilzno was handed down in the Lviv court the following January. All the conspirators were sentenced to death and the decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court¹⁰. The convicts were held in custody in Lviv for the following months, awaiting the decision of the emperor. Requests were made to commute their sentences, but Ferdinand I did not exercise his right of pardon in the case of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński¹¹.

The first episode of the political drama occurred on 28 July 1847, when the sentence was publicly announced and read to the convicts, who were led to a pillory erected in front of the prison building for that specific purpose¹². Large groups of Lviv residents gathered in front of it, maintaining the hope that the sentence would be commuted until the very last moment. Furthermore, it marked the first occasion since the revolutionaries' capture that they were observed in a public setting. From the perspective of the authorities, the event served as a cautionary example, an attempt to deter other conspirators from taking action. Nevertheless, it had a markedly different impact, inaugurating the process of mythologizing the two figures at the helm of the national liberation struggle. Those assembled beneath the pillory viewed the revolutionaries as courageous and honourable fighters, an example to be followed. It is evident that artists felt a social obligation to immortalise the images of these individuals. There was at least one case of depicting convicts at the moment of reading their sentences. Szczesny Morawski sketched, allegedly from a hidden position (a window of one of the tenement houses neighbouring the prison), the figures of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński standing on the platform. Schnür-Peplowski reported that on the same day, "hundreds of images of Wisniewski" appeared in the city¹³.

The two drawings, formerly in the Pawlikowski family collection and now in the Wrocław Ossolineum, were initially sketched in pencil with outlines later

been arrested for participating in a skirmish with Wiśniowski in Narajów, was reduced from the original 20 years to a term of imprisonment. He was transferred to Spielberg at the end of July 1847. He was released the following year, following the outbreak of the Spring of Nations, and resumed his political activities.

¹⁰ *Wyrok śmierci przez c. k. Sąd karzący Lwowski wydany na Józefie Kapuścińskim, o zbrodnię Stanu i morderstwo na osobie Kaspra Markla, burmistrza miasta Pilsna, popełnione, prawnie przekonany, w skutek potwierdzenia przez wysoki i najwyższy C. K. Sąd Sprawiedliwości, we Lwowie dnia 31 lipca 1847 szubienicą wykonany*, [Lwów 1847], s.n.; B. Pawłowski, *Sprawa Józefa Kapuścińskiego*, „Tydzień” 1904, no. 32, p. 252.

¹¹ S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie...*, p. 88.

¹² S. Schnür-Peplowski, *Życie za wolność...*, pp. 90-91.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

underlined in ink. They depict full-figure images of the shackled revolutionaries¹⁴. Both are signed on the reverse with the artist's initials, with additional annotations confirming that they were made 'from nature'. On both sheets, on the reverse, are quotations recalling the final words of the condemned: those uttered at the moment of the reading of the sentence and those spoken just before the execution¹⁵. Meanwhile, in the Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, there are two other works, unsigned, but undoubtedly also of Morawski's hand (Fig. 1, 2). They are slightly more refined variants created from live sketches. The compositional arrangement and depiction of the figures are almost identical, with the exception of the arrangement of Wiśniowski's head. In the Wrocław version, the head is shown in profile, whereas in the Lviv version it is depicted three-quarters to the left, with the gaze directed towards the viewer. Morawski's works is unquestionably dual in character. On the one hand, there is a clear intention to capture the distinctive physical characteristics of both men in the portraits. This is particularly evident in the Lviv portrait of Kapuściński, where part of his head is worked out in much greater detail, with pencil shading, which strongly contrasts with the rest of the silhouette marked only with contours (in places very sketchy). This approach is not surprising in an artist with the temperament of an attentive and accurately perceptive portraitist who left a substantial legacy of mainly drawn images of significant figures in Galician cultural, social, and political life¹⁶. However, in addition to providing a realistic representation of their appearance, the images of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński on the platform also function as metaphorical expressions of their political attitudes. The clear monumentalisation of their figures and poses borrowed from the conventions of heroic representations testify to a conscious intention to heroise them. Furthermore, the quotations from their speeches serve to reinforce this objective. In the Lviv versions, these

¹⁴ *Zbiory Pawlikowskich. Katalog*, ed. M. Grońska, M. Ochońska, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1960, pp. 145-146.

¹⁵ The image of Teofil Wiśniowski bears the text: „«Revolution is like the fairy tale of the poets' - Circe, which transforms its commanders either into destroyers of order when it fails, or into heroes and saviours when it has achieved its goal... ». Śniadecki. «I wanted to make you happy, and I am dying for it... Farewell, Poles.» (words he said while standing on the scaffold during the reading of the verdict on 28 July 1847 in Lviv) «Long live Poland!» (words he said after putting on the noose on 31 July 1847, before his death)”.
In the picture of Józef Kapuściński: „«Don't cry! Be glad, because /// I die cheerfully and bravely... Death is a moment of triumph for me» (Words he said while standing on the scaffold during the reading of the sentence on 28 July 1847 in Lviv:); «Long live the homeland!» (Words he said after putting of the noose on 31 July 1847, immediately after Wiśniowski's words before his death)”.

¹⁶ In the latter category, we may cite the crayon-drawn bust portrait of Julian Goslar, another emissary and convict. This work of art is held in the Lviv History Museum.

words are distilled to their essence and are no longer positioned on the reverse side as they were in the earlier versions; instead, they are placed on the front next to the silhouettes. While retaining their individuality, Morawski transforms the two men into distinctive allegories of resistance to the occupying authorities. Although these images were undoubtedly created as a result of direct observation, influenced by the experience of the moment, the artist subordinated reportage realism to patriotic propaganda, responding to the needs of Polish society. A similar mechanism can be observed in other works illustrating episodes of these events, especially the execution itself.

On the day of the scheduled execution, 31 July 1847, even larger crowds, estimated in the thousands, assembled outside the detention centre. It was reported that, in order to avoid the possibility of a disorderly demonstration, a decision was made to lead the prisoners out of the rear entrance and transport them on wagons to the designated execution site¹⁷. The townspeople, however, were not deceived – they assisted in the passage of the two condemned to the place of execution, "and the people looked at them with their heads uncovered, threw wreaths of flowers on their wagons and kept their tears and sobs to themselves"¹⁸. And artists sketched but tried to avoid catching the eye of the authorities. According to one written account, which was recorded decades after the events in question, a number of artists were to commemorate the prisoners' final journey: "From the windows of the houses near which the wagons with the convicts passed, their features were sketched greedily and surreptitiously and completed later from memory"¹⁹. Among the works preserved in private collections (showing the convicts during the reading of the sentence and the ride to the place of execution), the author of the text also mentions "the most widespread portrait, drawn by Maszkowski"²⁰. So perhaps Jan Maszkowski, one of Lviv's most esteemed painters of the period, may also have been involved in documenting this moment. However, there is no evidence to substantiate this hypothesis, as no work attributed to him has survived. It is possible that the author of a press article from the early 20th century confused the names of the painters and was referring to the drawing by Szczęsny Morawski, which was undoubtedly well-known and circulated in copies. Regardless of which Lviv artist succeeded in capturing this moment, the depiction firmly established itself in the popular memory.

A number of surviving depictions of Wiśniowski seated on a vehicle have been identified. While none of the extant works are signed, they do appear to

¹⁷ S. Schnür-Pepłowski, *Życie za wolność...*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁸ K. Ostaszewski-Barański, 31 VII..., p. 1.

¹⁹ *Po śmiertelnej drodze*, „Na ziemi naszej” 1910, no. 5, p. 34.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

derive from a common prototype, although it is likely that they were created by different artists. The surviving works depict the emissary up to his knees, obscured by the beam of a ladder wagon. In his handcuffed hands, he clutches a crucifix tightly, staring blankly ahead. In 1910, the collection of Stanisław Leitner of Grabie near Wieliczka contained a drawing with this exact image of the conspirator (Fig. 3)²¹. On the reverse was an inscription identifying the author as Sydonia Jazłowiecka, otherwise completely unknown. The unsteady hand betrays an artist rather than a dilettante circle. The key issue is whether this is the original composition, a sketch made from nature on the day of the execution and subsequently used by other artists, or whether it is an artist who copied the representation that was already in circulation. The best variant of this motif is a lithograph, a copy of which is in the collection of the National Museum in Cracow (Fig. 4)²². The print is unsigned, undated and does not even have a publisher's address, which may indicate that it was printed without the approval of censors, in order to protect those involved in its publication from possible consequences from the authorities. Nevertheless, it probably received some publicity, as other works based on it are known²³, and at the beginning of the 20th century it was reproduced in the form of a postcard issued for the "Committee for the Construction of a Monument on the Site of the Battle Fought by T. Wiśniowski and his Comrade in 1846 at Narajów"²⁴, thus permanently inscribing itself in the visual memory of these events.

The last journey of the second of the convicts, Kapuściński, was also recorded in a pencil drawing, which is kept in the National Museum in Cracow (Fig. 5)²⁵. It is listed in the institution's databases as the work of Szczęsny Morawski. However, the level of execution, which is disproportionately lower than in other pictures by this artist, casts doubt on this attribution and suggests that it is the work of a different, possibly amateur, artist. The similarity of the composition, the analogous treatment of the wagon beam as a frame for the figure, and the parallels in the way the man's figure is marked, suggest that they formed a diptych together with image of Wiśniowski. However, while the latter became an iconic representation of the freedom fighter's final moments, Kapuściński's portrait on the wagon does not seem to have been widely recognised or copied, despite the fact that both works have the same power of reportage and

²¹ Ibid., p. 35. The same illustration was also reproduced in: Z. Zygmuntowicz, *Zbrodnia...*, p. 37.

²² *Teofil Wiśniowski działacz rewolucyjny*, MNK III-N.I.-6747, lithograph, height 29.4 cm, width 23.6 cm.

²³ E.g., in the waffle technique, MNK III-N.I.-52851.

²⁴ One copy is held at the National Library in Warsaw (DŹS XII 8b/p.29/151). Based on the reverse layout, it is dated to post-1905.

²⁵ *W drodze na stracenie. Portret Józefa Kapuścińskiego (1918-1847) działacza rewolucyjnego w Galicji*, 1847, MNK III-r.a-14274, pencil, cardboard, height 16.5 cm, width 12.8 cm.

an equally strong emotional charge. This echoes written sources, which also portray the final journey of the prisoners as a particularly significant moment. In a letter written on 4 August and thus directly influenced by the events, one of the eyewitnesses emphasised with exaltation that "it is difficult to describe the crowds that lined the streets that morning when the martyrs of our cause were led through them, sitting on simple wagons with two priests, each in his own clothes, with an expression of serenity, even of freedom, so bright, so beautiful, especially Wiśniowski, that they aroused admiration and grief even among their enemies, the Austrians!"²⁶

However, for reasons that are apparent, it was the images that referred not so much to the last road, but to the very moment of the conspirators' death that became the most powerful vehicle of patriotic content. What happened was unprecedented in the political history of Galicia. Anticipating civil unrest, the police and military cordoned off the site of the execution – the gallows on Hycłowa Hill in Kleparow. Notably, the authorities sought to restrict contact between the convicts and the assembled observers, aiming to mitigate the ideological impact of their deaths on Lviv society. In his report, Maurycy Wittmann, the Austrian president of the criminal court, highlighted their achievements in this regard: "The prisoners uttered a certain number of patriotic words, but the crowd could not understand them because it was kept at an appropriate distance by the army"²⁷. Witness accounts confirm that the execution site was surrounded by a triple cordon of the army, behind which only judges and executioners were permitted access²⁸. "Just a moment later, Wiśniowski, with a cheerful face and great calm, looked towards where the countless crowds of compatriots were standing and called out: "Long live Poland", while Kapuściński, in a loud voice, spoke up: "Brothers, do not be discouraged by the demise of my..." but was prevented from finishing his sentence – the executioner's assistant carried out his duty with haste, and the sound of the drums drowned out the final words of the condemned man"²⁹. The public assembled to observe the final moments of the two conspirators remained at the scene for several hours following the execution. Only in the evening were the bodies of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński removed from the gallows and buried in an unmarked grave³⁰.

²⁶ *Wyjątek z listu pisanego ze Lwowa 4go Sierpnia 1847 r.*, „Dziennik Narodowy” 1847, no. 333, p. 1336.

²⁷ A. Laniewski, *Dzień 31 lipca 1847 r. na "Górze Tracenia" we Lwowie*, „Kurier Literacko-Naukowy” 1939, no. 31, p. II (494).

²⁸ The following account is taken from the diary of Ludwik Komarnicki from Pilzno, who was present at the execution. Quoted in: W. Zechenter, *Z pożółkłej księgi*, „Kurier Literacko-Naukowy” 1927, no. 31, p. II.

²⁹ Z. Zygmuntowicz, *Zbrodnia...*, p. 38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

The quasi-religious cult that developed around the figures of the heroes manifested itself already on the day of their execution. The crowds immediately took all the straw lining from the wagons used to transport the prisoners, treating it as a relic³¹. Contemporary accounts indicate that, despite inclement weather, "all day long, like a procession, people were dragging themselves to the gallows"³². Crowds gathered at the site to see the victims with their own eyes, but above all to pay tribute to them³³. Artists sought to convey the atmosphere under the gallows, as described by eyewitness Ludwik Komarnicki, the owner of the estate of Pilzno, in an account written "under fresh impression" and later quoted in the press: "[Wiśniowski and Kapuściński] Like saints they stood by the pillars, raised two feet above the ground. The people wept secretly. They wanted souvenirs from their clothes, but the thugs got in the way"³⁴. The phenomenon defined by Janion and Żmigrodzka (in relation to the period prior to the January Uprising) as a "national ritual of martyrdom and death"³⁵ was already becoming discernible. According to all written sources, the area around the gallows was surrounded by a cordon of police and military forces until the evening (the bodies were taken down at 7 p.m.), but it is said that the commander of the post, "the noble German Tupi", did not prevent the public's approach to the bodies³⁶.

In the collection of the Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine, within the group of drawings and graphic works associated with the figures of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński, a pencil drawing depicting the deceased Wiśniowski on the gallows is particularly noteworthy (Fig. 6). The work is anonymous and was previously part of the collection of the Lubomirski Museum. The central element is a silhouette of a man depicted to the level of the mid-thigh. The composition is completed by the gallows pillar, with the background omitted entirely. The somewhat simplified characteristics of the man's face and, above all, the slight stiffness of the drawing, along with issues related to the natural rendering of the body's position (particularly evident in the clumsy abbreviation of the line of the drooping shoulders), may indicate that this is the work of an amateur artist, one of the numerous artists-dilettantes in Lviv at that time. The artist's focus on the human figure classifies this work as a portrait, although it is a unique example: a posthumous image of a convict

31 Ibid., p. 38.

32 *Wyjatek z listu pisanego ze Lwowa...*, p. 1336.

33 Z. Zygmontowicz, *Zbrodnia...*, p. 39.

34 W. Zechnter, *Z pozostałości księgi...*, p. 2.

35 M. Janion, M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1978, p. 549.

36 S. Schnür-Peplowski, *Życie za wolność...*, p. 97.

after execution. While the motif of a heroic death in the struggle for national freedom was a significant theme in nineteenth-century Polish culture, with numerous representations in literature and the visual arts³⁷, this "hanging" portrait is a distinctive piece.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the artist deliberately abstained from portraying any overtly gruesome and violent details associated with the brutal act of capital punishment by hanging. Wiśniowski's head falls gently towards his right shoulder, his facial features displaying a calm expression, his eyes closed. Even his hands, though tied with a rope, appear to be entwined as if for prayer. This characterisation corresponds to the written descriptions of the event: Schnür-Peplowski, relying on earlier accounts, emphasised that after death "their facial features did not change at all, only Kapuściński's beard was cut off before his execution, so that the executioner could more easily put the noose around his neck"³⁸.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to assume that hanging left no visible marks on the bodies. The negation of such marks in both literary texts and iconographic material appears to be not a result of accuracy to reality, but rather a consequence of ideological motivations guiding the portrayal. In this manner, a mythologised image of valiant heroes, who laid down their lives fearlessly and calmly for the sake of the country's independence, was constructed. Wiśniowski and Kapuściński, who were subsequently regarded as "martyrs of Polish freedom" (as it was written), were presented to young people as exemplars of patriotic attitudes. In a proclamation to the people published in the émigré journal "Demokrata Polski" and later reprinted in "Orzeł Biały", Wiśniowski's last words (the authenticity of which is disputed by contemporary researchers³⁹) contain an appeal to continue the work of the conspirators. He encourages them to persevere, stating: "Be as strong as a man unbowed, as the Martyr of Poland – and you will create with your deeds this freedom, this happiness for which you have been longing for centuries"⁴⁰. In nineteenth-century Polish culture, however, death for the fatherland was portrayed in a romantic light, as beautiful and pathetic. In macabre realism, execution by hanging was not necessarily compatible with such a vision. Therefore, in order not to deter the next generation of fighters with a suggestive foreboding of a terrible end, it seemed appropriate

³⁷ *Obrazy śmierci w sztuce polskiej XIX i XX wieku*, ed. A. Król, E. Ryżewska, ex. cat. Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, Kraków 2000.

³⁸ S. Schnür-Peplowski, *Życie za wolność...*, p. 96.

³⁹ S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie...*, p. 91.

⁴⁰ *Ostatnie słowa Teofila Wiśniowskiego do Ludu Polskiego, trzy dni przed śmiercią*, „Orzeł Biały” 1847, no. 17, p. 67.

to omit the veristic physiological details⁴¹. An overly realistic portrayal of the horrors of death could have turned a similar image into a macabre one inspiring cheap sensationalism rather than admiration for the hero. The monumentalisation and idealisation of Wiśniowski's image is evident in the drawing in question, despite the fact that the author otherwise accurately reproduced the distinctive physiognomic characteristics of the figure, including the baldness on the top of the head, the thick moustache and the slightly protruding chin line, which are known from other images.

Although the necessity to depict the demise of a national hero can be presumed to have originated from sentiments associated with the events of the end of July 1847, this illustration does not display the characteristics of a work of documentary nature, accurately representing a historical incident. It is unlikely that this is a spontaneous sketch created in situ, although it may have been based on direct observation. The contour line is too controlled and precise, the composition carefully thought out, the details meticulously drawn. The introduction of the date of the execution is also significant: the inscription "31 July / 1847" was placed at the top of the beam, separated by a line of string. This indicates that the work was created with the intention of commemorating the event, rather than simply recording a historical fact. Its purpose was to preserve the memory of the events and the individuals involved.

An additional iconographic source is directly related to the execution of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński. This is a drawing by an otherwise unknown artist named Filipowski. The original's current whereabouts are, unfortunately, unknown. However, the image has survived in reproductions of poor quality produced prior to the Second World War. The illustration was first published in 1927 in the pages of the Kraków-based newspaper "Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny" (Fig. 7), where it accompanied an article commemorating the 80th anniversary of the execution. The text beneath the image stated: "The illustration is a reproduction drawing by Filipowski, which depicted the moment of the execution of the two national heroes"⁴². Subsequently, the same reproduction was used as an illustration in Zygmuntowicz's book. In contrast to the work in the Vasyl Stefanyk library collection, this drawing shows a narrative scene: the mourning

⁴¹ Furthermore, this phenomenon was not exclusive to Polish art, but rather pervaded the entire artistic landscape of the period. The depiction of the dramatic demise of celebrities was subject to established pictorial conventions, with Théodore Géricault being the notable exception, as evidenced by his attempts to portray the suicide of General Letellier and the murder of Councillor Faualdés. Throughout the nineteenth century, veristic depictions of the deceased were uncommon, appearing almost exclusively in private sketches rather than in works intended for a wider audience. A. Pieńkos, *Okropności sztuki, Słowo/Obraz* Terytoria, Gdańsk 2000, pp. 159, 163-165.

⁴² „Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny” 1927, no. 210, p. 5.

of the death of the heroes by the Lviv community. The composition is centred on a depiction of the gallows, with the corpses of the executed individuals situated in the background; closer to the viewer is Wiśniowski, and Kapuściński is situated somewhat further back. In the foreground, despairing figures are portrayed, while a crowd of observers is also visible in the background, along with individual silhouettes of soldiers in Austrian uniforms.

The author of the drawing places particular emphasis on the dramatic experience of the man's death, as observed by the assembled spectators. On the one hand, the man embracing the two women crying on his shoulder or the young woman kneeling nearby in a prayer pose are motifs that are probably inspired by the observation of an authentic situation. However, they are at the same time in keeping with the sentimental convention typical of the time. Furthermore, beneath the pillar is depicted a kneeling young woman raising her arms towards the deceased's legs (in the gesture of Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross), accompanied by a small boy. A uniformed man standing next to her tries to chase them away with the butt of his gun, but without much effect. The intensity of their emotional response appears to indicate the profound grief experienced by those closest to the deceased, after the untimely and tragic loss of their husband and father. It is, however, a matter of record that Wiśniowski, although married, had no children. Such a 'misrepresentation' was probably intended to intensify the dramatic charge of the whole scene and to arouse stronger sympathy in the viewer for the victim, shown not only in his social role as a national liberation fighter, but also in a quite private family aspect. Such artistic concepts, bending biographical facts in the apotheosis of both the protagonist's socio-political activities and his respectable moral attitude, were not unheard of in the art of the time⁴³. The performance was thus structured in a way that presented the deaths of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński not as a mere historical event, but as a significant political occurrence. Primarily, however, it sought to emphasise the prevailing social mood in Lviv in the aftermath of the execution. Furthermore, Filipowski's drawing, from the perspective of an observer, displays a distinctive feature of Biedermeier conventions prevalent during that period. It depicts significant contemporary events not within the

⁴³ The most illustrative example of such a narrative can be referenced in the graphic cycles published in France and devoted to the life and death of Prince Józef Poniatowski. They included the scene of „Farewell to the wife” (also in the presence of a child), despite the general awareness that the commander, despite numerous, widely commented upon relationships with women, was not married. Z. Żygulski jun., *Z ikonografii ks. Józefa – narodziny i wędrówka mitu bohatera*, [in:] *Ikonografia romantyczna*, ed. M. Poprzęcka, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1977, pp. 251-283; H. Widacka, *Legenda księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego*, „Spotkania z Zabytkami” 2013, no. 9-10, pp. 10-13.

context of their political implications but in relation to the experiences of citizens, emphasising their impact on the lives of communities and, to a lesser extent, states. And this impact was undeniable.

In the following weeks, despite the official prohibition by the municipal authorities, services for the deceased and public demonstrations commemorating their deaths were held⁴⁴. Initially, the authorities exerted considerable pressure to prevent such activities. Information about the execution of the revolutionaries soon reached beyond the borders of the country. Émigré circles organised celebrations in memory of the dead. For example, the Polish Democratic Society organised a funeral mass in the Saint-Germain-des-Près church in Paris on 26 August. In Lviv, there was a prolonged period of mourning among the Polish inhabitants, during which any deviation from this custom was met with severe social disapproval. In his diaries, Franciszek Ksawery Prek documented incidents of attacks on carnival balls in February of the following year. During one party, unknown perpetrators threw a stone into the hall, with a piece of paper affixed to it. The message contained a couplet: "When the whole land mourns / And brothers' shackles sound / Thousands lie in graves / Only scoundrels dance around". Furthermore, it was observed that mud and excrement were thrown at attendees at the balls⁴⁵.

During the initial period following the execution, any form of commemoration of the revolutionary figures encountered opposition from the occupying authorities, and yet a number of publications emerged, including memoirs, high-volume reprints of Wiśniowski's final correspondence, literary works and even musical compositions⁴⁶. Following the liberalisation of politics in the Habsburg monarchy during the Spring of Nations in 1848, opportunities to commemorate the executed conspirators increased significantly. On the anniversaries of their deaths, patriotic demonstrations were regularly held⁴⁷. Additionally, publications were dedicated to them, including collections of poetry "in honour" and, in the subsequent period, scholarly studies on their role in the conspiracy of the early 19th century⁴⁸. These processes of consolidating the significance of the deeds and attitudes of the two activists in the public consciousness intensified particularly after Galicia gained autonomy. They culminated in the erection of an obelisk in honour of Teofil Wiśniowski on the Hill of Execution

⁴⁴ S. Schnür-Pepłowski, *Życie za wolność...*, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁵ F.K. Prek, *Czasy i ludzie*, ed. H. Barycz, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1959, pp. 320-321.

⁴⁶ An example is the Funeral March, published in 1847 by the Stauropigial Fraternity printing house and composed by Krystyna Grottger, the mother of the future artist.

⁴⁷ S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie...*, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁸ Examples of publications devoted to Wiśniowski and Kapuściński are analysed in: S. S. Nicieja, M. Patelski, *Rok 1846 we Lwowie...*, pp. 94-96, 98-100.

(as the place was commonly, though unofficially, called from 1847). It is clear that there was an awareness of the importance of visual representations in propagating the ideas that guided the revolutionaries and perpetuating their memory. It was only then that the sketches and studies made surreptitiously on the day of the execution could be brought out into wide circulation and fully reveal their propaganda potential.

Evidence of a turning point in this process, when an individual sketch made from nature under the influence of events observed in person became an element of popular consciousness and thus a tool of political struggle, is an article published in the first moments of the political thaw, in April 1848, in the Lviv "Dziennik Mód Paryskich"⁴⁹. The text is unsigned, but Henryk Barycz suggested that its author might have been Szczesny Morawski, which seems a reasonable hypothesis⁵⁰. The impulse to write this text was the publication in Vienna "in the first days after the advent of the freedom of printing [...] by one of the young artists learning there" of a lithographic image of Wiśniowski at the moment of the sentence pronouncement. Suggestions included in the article indicate that the item was likely a print produced in Ludwig Mohn's lithographic printing house in Vienna (Fig. 8). It bears the date 20 March 1848 on the left-hand side of the composition, which lends further credence to this hypothesis. There is no author's signature. Was this done to avoid leaving any incriminating evidence in the event of a potential shift in the political landscape in the Austrian state? Nevertheless, it seems highly probable that it can be attributed to Leopold Löffler. Not only does it align with the details presented in the article, but more crucially, in terms of the portrayal of the figure, it is strikingly similar to the portrait lithographed by Jędrzej Kostkiewicz in Lviv, which is signed with Löffler's name⁵¹. The Viennese print prompted Morawski to consider the genesis and purpose of images of national heroes. While acknowledging the intention to immortalise and publicise Wiśniowski's image (and, by implication, the ideas he represented), Morawski identifies a problematic aspect in the fact that the author of the lithograph was not present in Lviv during these events

⁴⁹ *O portretach Teofila Wiszniewskiego...*, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁰ H. Barycz, *Szczesny Morawski regionalista sądecki*, [in:] idem, *Wśród gawędziarzy, pamiętnikarzy i uczonych galicyjskich*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1963, p. 330.

⁵¹ *Katalog portretów osobistości polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vol. 5, *T-Z. Supplements*, ed. H. Widacka, Biblioteka Narodowa, Warszawa 1995, p. 101. Widacka dates the print to 'after 1846', but this date should be revised. Although Kostkiewicz was already engaged in lithography by the 1840s, he initially worked for the Piller and Stauropigial printing houses and did not establish his own business until 1860. The publishing address on the work indicates that it was created during the period of his autonomy as a graphic artist. See: M. Opalek, *Litografia lwowska 1822-1860*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław-Kraków 1958, p. 68.

and did not personally observe the execution. The artist made use of the work of someone else and drew inspiration from another iconographic source. As a consequence, "with its resemblance and facial expression, this image cannot tell us who witnessed the announcement of the sentence and the death of Wiśniowski"⁵². From his point of view, the artist's own sketches, images stored in his memory and, most importantly, individual emotions resulting from direct participation in an event, are intrinsic to the creation of this type of work, and thus constitute its value. From a social perspective, the latter was of great importance. Consequently, the article concludes with an appeal "to our artists who witnessed this great, solemn scene - we look for and demand from a sketch then casually taken, a carefully finished image that would rise to the height of its subject"⁵³. It remains unclear why, if he was indeed the author of this article, Szczesny Morawski did not act upon this intention, given that he had the necessary materials to do so.

Works depicting the two conspirators actually appeared fairly quickly in Lviv. Among the most popular and widely distributed were lithographs by Stanislaw Bartus, published in Lviv in 1848 in the printing house of Piotr Piller (Fig. 9, 10)⁵⁴. These are half-figure portraits, in which the shackles on the men's wrists serve as a visual reference to their fate. The image of Wiśniowski is evidently derived from the aforementioned sketch by Morawski. This suggests that Bartus did not have his own sketches from nature at his disposal, but instead copied other images that were in common circulation. In any case, his compositions constituted the foundation for a multitude of subsequent copies, indelibly etched in popular consciousness as an exemplification of mythologising national heroes through iconography. In addition to portraits, there were also narrative scenes, such as the depiction of Teofil Wiśniowski being tortured in prison (Fig. 11). Wiśniowski is shown with his arms spread out, in the likeness of a crucifixion, chained to the cell walls. This scene was created by Jan Lewicki for the renowned series of woodcut images of Polish revolutionaries, which accompanied the Paris editions of Wiktor Heltman's *Boże słowa do ludu polskiego* and Jan Kanty Podolecki's *Słowa prawdy dla ludu polskiego*. This vision, which drew extensively from sacred iconography, was evidently not based on direct observation of the depicted events. Instead, it distorted historical accuracy for propaganda purposes, a fact that was already apparent to nineteenth-century observers⁵⁵. The execution of the revolutionaries in an oil

⁵² *O portretach Teofila Wiszniewskiego...*, p. 137.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ *Katalog portretów osobistości polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vol. 2, G-K, ed. H. Widacka, Biblioteka Narodowa, Warszawa 1992, p. 202; vol. 5, T-Z. *Suplementy*, ed. H. Widacka, Biblioteka Narodowa, Warszawa 1995, p. 101.

⁵⁵ S. Schnür-Pełtowski, *Życie za wolność...*, p. 116.

painting was portrayed by Florian Lunda, who shaped it into a 'contemporary Golgotha', as noted by Beata Długajczyk and Leszek Machnik⁵⁶. As these images increasingly assumed the role of hagiographic illustrations of the tragedy of the "Polish martyrs", they simultaneously receded from the documents and direct accounts that did exist. The ideological metaphor displaced the prose of historical truth. This mechanism was not exclusive to the cases of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński; it was typical of Polish national liberation iconography of the 1840s. Mieczysław Porębski, citing the representation of Wiśniowski in prison, situates it within the broader context of other representations of freedom fighters. He regards it as an illustration of the realisation of a program of Polish art, developed primarily through the efforts of Seweryn Goszczyński in the democrats' environment⁵⁷.

It is not possible to categorise the works mentioned here as historical documentary iconography. Although they make reference to a significant episode in the political history of the mid-19th century, they do not adhere entirely to the sequence of events or the factual content as presented in other written sources. However, the objective of these works was not to achieve the highest standards of precision, and the intention behind their creation was not merely to record historical facts. The goal of ideological patriotic propaganda took precedence over fidelity to the authentic situation and characters. The intention of these works was to establish a legend of unwavering heroic figures, even in the face of fatal adversity. The imperative of a national liberation narrative has prevailed over the necessity of historical accuracy. While none of these works may be regarded as a wholly reliable source of information concerning the circumstances of Wiśniowski's and Kapuściński's executions, they do nevertheless constitute a valuable testimony to the mentality and social mood of the era. These works represent an artistic expression of the emotions experienced by the inhabitants of Lviv and other Polish territories over an extended period of time. These emotions were subsequently manifested in various forms of commemoration including anniversary celebrations, solemn services and literary works that celebrated the actions and dramatic death of the conspirators. The trial, the announcement of the verdict and the public hanging of the two conspirators constituted an unprecedented event in Lviv, and contemporaries were already aware of its importance. It is therefore evident that there was a widespread desire to participate in the "last journey" of the condemned, their execution and the many hours of mourning. Local artists were also involved in these events, despite the danger posed by the police authorities. They accomplished their

⁵⁶ B. Długajczyk, L. Machnik, *Muzeum Lubomirskich 1823-1940. Zbiór malarstwa*, Ossolineum, Wrocław 2019, pp. 306-307.

⁵⁷ M. Porębski, *Malowane dzieje*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1962, pp. 98-99.

task by documenting the course of events, recognising the ideological charge that the visual materials would carry and the social needs they would respond to. Ultimately, it was the layer of ideological symbolism that dominated the reportage truth of the historical moment.



Fig. 1. Szczęsny Morawski, *Teofil Wiśniowski during the reading of the sentence*, 1847, drawing, Vasyl Stefanyk National Academic Library of Ukraine, inv. no. 39088.



Fig. 2. Szczęśny Morawski, *Józef Kapuściński during the reading of the sentence*, 1847, rysunek, Vasyl Stefanyk National Academic Library of Ukraine, inv. no. 39087.



Fig. 3. *Teofil Wiśniowski on his way to execution*, after a drawing by Sydonia Jazłowiecka, *Po śmiertelnej drodze*, „Na ziemi naszej” 1910, no. 5, p. 35.



Fig. 4. Author unknown, *Teofil Wiśniowski on his way to execution*, lithograph, National Museum in Kraków, MNK III-N.I.-6747.



Fig. 5. Author unknown (Szczęsny Morawski?), *Józef Kapuściński on his way to execution*, drawing, National Museum in Kraków, MNK III-r.a-14274.



Fig. 6. Author unknown, *Teofil Wiśniowski on the gallows*, drawing, Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine, inv. no. 51334.



Fig. 7. Filipowski, *The execution of Wiśniowski and Kapuściński*, „Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny” 1927, no. 210, p. 5.



Fig. 8. Leopold Löffler?, *Portrait of the convict Teofil Wiśniowski*, 1848, lithograph, National Museum in Kraków, MNK III-ryc.-27777.



Fig. 9. Stanisław Bartus, *Teofil Wiśniowski martyr of Polish freedom*, 1848, lithograph, National Library in Warsaw, inv. no. G.6228/III.



Fig. 10. Stanisław Bartus, *Józef Kapuściński martyr of Polish freedom*, 1848, lithograph, National Library in Warsaw, inv. no. G.5952/II.



Fig. 11. Jan Lewicki, *Teofil Wiśniowski in prison*, [in:] W. Heltman, *Boże słowa do ludu polskiego*, L. Martinet, Paryż 1848, s. 85.

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Wyrok śmierci przez c. k. Sąd karzący Lwowski wydany na Józefie Kapuścińskim, o zbrodnię Stanu i morderstwo na osobie Kaspra Markla, burmistrza miasta Pilsna, popełnione, prawnie przekonanym, w skutek potwierdzenia przez wysoki i najwyższy C. K. Sąd Sprawiedliwości, we Lwowie dnia 31 lipca 1847 szubienicą wykonany (1847), Lwów: s.n.

Wyrok śmierci w c. k. Sądzie karzącym Lwowskim, przeciw Teofilowi Wiśniowskiemu, także przybraną nazwę Karola Duval, Winnickiego, Dąbrowskiego, Zagórskiego i Benedykta Lewińskiego noszącemu, za popełnioną zbrodnię Stanu, zapadły, i na tymże w moc potwierdzenia wyższych sądowych Instancji, dnia 31 lipca 1847 we Lwowie szubienicą wykonany (1847), Lwów: s.n.

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SZTUKA W CIENIU SZUBIENICY. WIZUALNE RELACJE Z EGZEKUCJI TEOFILA WIŚNIEWSKIEGO I JÓZEFA KAPUŚCIŃSKIEGO (streszczenie)

31 lipca 1847 roku we Lwowie wykonano karę śmierci na dwóch działaczach politycznych zaangażowanych w wydarzenia związane z rewolucją 1846 roku: Teofilu Wiśniowskim i Józefie Kapuścińskim. Było to wydarzenie bezprecedensowe w dotychczasowej historii politycznej Galicji. Publiczna egzekucja, która zebrała tłumy obserwatorów, stała się manifestacją postaw przeciwnych władzom austriackim. Obaj bojownicy o wolność kraju od momentu ogłoszenia kary śmierci otoczeni zostali para-hagiograficznym kultem. Choć wszelkie formy upamiętnienia rewolucjonistów spotykały się ze sprzeciwem władz zaborczych, to jednak były publikowane wydawnictwa kome-moratywne, utwory literackie, muzyczne, a także wizualne. Według licznych przekazów w dniu egzekucji obowiązywał zakaz wykonywania szkiców portretowych obu mężczyzn czy studiów ukazujących toczące się wydarzenia. Artyści, którzy usiłowali wykonywać jakiegokolwiek notatki byli aresztowani, a prace – niszczone. Pomimo tego wiadomo, że niektórym udało się odnotować te wrażenia z ukrycia, by następnie na ich podstawie wykonać prace, które miały trafić do szerokiego obiegu. Celem artykułu jest analiza dzieł poświęconych egzekucji Wiśniowskiego i Kapuścińskiego, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem tych, które mogły powstawać z natury bądź zostały wykonane przez bezpośrednich obserwatorów tych wydarzeń. Okazuje się, że we wszystkich właściwie przypadkach reporterska wierność realiom historycznym podporządkowana została, zgodnie z konwencjami epoki, celom propagandowym, a weryzm dramatycznych scen ukryty pod narodowowyzwoleńczą symboliką.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuka polska, sztuka XIX wieku, ikonografia patriotyczna, Teofil Wiśniowski, Józef Kapuściński

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