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Zofia Krasnopolska-Wesner

**ARTISTS AND ANTHROPOSOPHY.  
CASE STUDY OF THE WARSAW,  
KRAKOW AND LVIV ARTISTIC  
MILIEUX IN THE FIRST HALF  
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

The history of anthroposophy is inseparable from the charismatic personality of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), who went down in history and earned his place in encyclopaedias as its originator more than anything else.<sup>2</sup> Numerous documents portray him as a man of extraordinary character. Steiner's activity as a Freemason (in 1904, he attained the supreme 96th degree of the Rite), philosopher, educator, scholar and the editor of Johann Wolfgang's Goethe's works, the architect of the School of Spiritual Science (the so-called Goetheanum) in Dornach near Basel, the author of mystery plays,<sup>3</sup> the originator of eurhythmy,<sup>4</sup> anthroposophic medicine, new pedagogy, biodynamic agriculture, etc., are but a complement to his image as a person. The incomparable influence of Steiner, one of the greatest mystics of the twentieth century, became apparent during the period of his membership in the Theosophical Society (from 1902), where he amassed quite a following as the founder and General Secretary of the Society's German Section (from 1904). His numerous lectures (he delivered more than six thousand of these) held throughout Europe (in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Poland) attracted large and multinational – also Polish – audiences.<sup>5</sup> Having an impressive number of auditors and students, Steiner started

- 1 This paper presents the findings of the research I carried out within the framework of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) National Programme for the Development of Humanities in the years 2016–2019: 'Polish Culture in Relation to Western Esoteric Philosophy in the Years 1890–1939', No. 0186/NPRH4/H2b/83/2016. For more on the research results, see <http://www.tradycjajezoteryczna.ug.edu.pl> [accessed 05 Dec. 2021].
- 2 Cf. the entries 'Steiner Rudolf', in J. Brosse, *Religious Leaders*, transl. by S. Newberry, Edinburgh – New York: Chambers, 1991, 191; 'Steiner Rudolf', in *Nowa encyklopedia powszechna pwn*, vol. 6: S–Z, B. Petrozolin-Skowrońska (ed.), Warszawa: PWN, 1996, 43.
- 3 R. Steiner's first mystery play, *Die Pforte der Einweihung* (The Portal of Initiation), premiered in 1912 in Munich. His three subsequent mystery plays: *Die Prüfung der Seele*, *Der Hüter der Schwelle*, and *Der Seelen Erwachen*, were staged in 1913.
- 4 Eurhythmy (Gr. *eurhythmia* – order, tact, harmony) is an original branch of art originated by R. Steiner and developed further by his wife Maria von Sivers to whom it owes its name. Eurhythmy is the art of movement aimed at expressing man's inner life and his attitude towards the universe. Steiner referred to it as 'visible singing' and physicalisation of the internal. Oftentimes, movement can express more than can be conveyed with words, H. Depta, 'Pedagogika R. Steinera – teoria i praktyka', *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 3–4 (1992): 23–50.
- 5 In his activity as a lecturer, R. Steiner's focused, among others, on religion, art, occultism, and the initiation. Among his most influential lectures were: 'Goethe als Thosoph', 'Mathematik und Okkultismus', 'Theosophie an Hand der Apokalypse', 'Theosophie des Rosenkreuzers'. On R. Steiner's activity, see, for instance, M. Rzczycka, 'Młodopolska antropozofia (Kraków i okolice)', in *Wokół*

to organise the so-called original lodges. It is out of these that during the theosophical general assembly<sup>6</sup> – the World's Congress of Theosophy in Stockholm in February 1913 – the General Anthroposophical Society was established with Steiner at the helm, who, interestingly, never joined it as a member.

The formal and informal branches established Steiner's emissaries in many cities across Europe played a major role in the activity of the General Anthroposophical Society. The information was disseminated through various channels. Steiner's lecture tours served as the basis here. Of considerable importance were his students who returned from Dornach to their home countries, whether for good or temporarily, and brought with them the 'good news' of anthroposophy. Members of the Association were in constant correspondence. Lectures were copied and circulated, speeches were abridged and commented on, new projects were discussed. Without a doubt, what captured imaginations was Steiner's legend to which contributed his vast knowledge, his exceptional personality (there were even talks of a bizarre shiny aura emanating from him during lectures), as well as the consistently applied policy of admitting new candidates solely on the basis of personal recommendations from most

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wizji i fascynacji Srebrnego Wieku, eds. F. Apanowicz, M. Rzczycka, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2008, 106–22; M. Rzczycka, K. Arciszewska-Tomczak, 'Z dziejów polskiej antropozofii', in *Polskie tradycje ezoteryczne 1890–1939*, vol. 1: *Teozofia i antropozofia*, eds. M. Rzczycka, I. Trzczińska, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2019, 131–210; E. Biernat, 'Symboliści rosyjscy i Rudolf Steiner', in *Światło i ciemność. Motywy ezoteryczne w kulturze rosyjskiej początku xx wieku*, vol. 2, eds. E. Biernat, M. Rzczycka, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2006, 50–69; eadem, '«Doktor i Dornach». Wspomnienia o Rudolffie Steinerze', in *Literatura rosyjska przełomu xix i xx wieku*, eds. J. Sałajczyk, L. Kalita, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2005, 97–108; M. Rzczycka, *Wtajemniczenie. Ezoteryczna proza rosyjska końca xix – początku xx wieku*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2010.

- 6 During this event, the painter K. Stabrowski, at the time the Headmaster of the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw, organised an exhibition of several dozens of his own occultist paintings which we only know by title today, among them: *Promienisty, Larwy, Na granicy niewidzialnego, W astralu*. All works presented at the exhibition were subsequently lost; the twenty loaned by R. Steiner disappeared in Germany. For more on this issue, see K. Kalinowski, *K. Stabrowski. Sylwetka malarza-poety*, Poznań: WZAP, 1927, 5–6. Stabrowski authored many works on mystical themes (sometimes read as visions of a seer or prophet). His greatest paintings of this kind include *Skarga Duszy*, and *Rycerz Świętego Graala*. In the cycle *Pochód burzy* (created in 1912), he presented a prophetic vision of the universal conflagration of war and, consequently, the revival of Poland. Stabrowski won over to spiritism his acquaintances and his students at the Warsaw School of Fine Arts, holding talks on occultism, the practice likely to have resulted in him being released from his duties as the Headmaster of the said institution.

trusted disciples. Thus, the membership in the General Anthroposophical Society remained a desired and worthwhile objective. Its members, particularly those who belonged to the small group of the initiated attendees of the *Esoterische Stunde* (ES), felt like contemporary apostles, the chosen ones, upon whom the great task of transforming the world had been bestowed.<sup>7</sup> The interest of the European creative elite was particularly piqued by the bold artistic concepts discussed by Steiner in his talks, the suggestions of new formal means to foster spiritual invigoration among the adherents of anthroposophy and help express esoteric truths that could not be communicated by traditional art forms. Many artists (also in Poland) were fascinated by the visionary projects developed by Steiner, ranging from architecture, industrial design, sculpture, stained-glass making, to the aforementioned new stage forms (eurhythmy).

The popularity of anthroposophy, as acknowledged by a growing number of Steiner scholars, was dictated by the need of the hour. After all, it occurred at the outset of the twentieth century, the time of the turn to exotic and ancient cultures of the East and of the interest in the various mystical systems of the past (including gnosis, Kabbalah, magic, spiritism, and parapsychology), implying a coincident turn to metaphysics. The reasons for such fascinations were sought in the nuisance brought on by the civilisation dominated by technological, industrial, and urban advances – the predilection for superficial pleasures over spiritual development. It was the task of anthroposophy to reverse this paradigm by focusing on the core aspects of being human and the values related not only to the sphere of the *physis*, but above all to the realm of the spirit, constituting essences, as it were, of, *inter alia*, mental, social, aesthetic and cultural values. The implementation of Steiner's concept was to encompass various areas of life, starting from philosophy and sociology, through education and medicine, all the way to fine arts and architecture. And that it did.

Anthroposophy, as its etymology suggests (Gr. *anthropos* – man; *sophia* – wisdom, knowledge), is to be 'the knowledge (wisdom) about man'. The term 'anthroposophy' itself did not originate with Steiner, as claimed in numerous publications. It emerged much earlier and independently of Steiner's concepts; furthermore, it was applied in a slightly different sense. For the first time, the term was used in an anonymous work published in Basel in 1575, titled *Arbatel de magia veterum*.<sup>8</sup> Therein, anthroposophy was defined as the unity of natural and human sciences. In 1650, we discover this notion in a work by a Rosicrucian from

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7 M. Rzczycka, 'Młodopolska antropozofia (Kraków i okolice)', op. cit., 106–22.

8 W. Schad, 'Die geschichtliche Voraussetzung der Anthroposophie in der Neuzeit', in *Zivilisation der Zukunft. Arbeitsfelder der Anthroposophie*, eds. H. Rieche, W. Schuchhardt, Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1981, 21.

England, T. Vaughan, as a term for anthropocentric philosophy, and then in the works by F.W.J. Schelling (1804), the Swiss philosopher I.P.V. Troxler (1828), and the Danish pedagogue P. Hjort (1832), in J.H. Fichte's *Anthropology* (1856), while in 1882, in the thought of R. Zimmerman, a Viennese philosopher, who Steiner was perfectly familiar with and who presented the argument on anthroposophy understood as a specific system in his book *Anthroposophy: An Outline Sketch of an Idealistic Worldview on a Realist Foundation*.<sup>9</sup> It was aimed at laying the groundwork for the philosophy of anthropology as the field that is currently referred to as philosophical anthropology.

Some tend to think that 'anthroposophy is almost as old as humanity itself'.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the scope of the notion is at times generous. Steiner understood and defined it rather enigmatically, 'as human knowledge, or, more profoundly, as the knowledge of the spirit (conceived of as a being, in other words, the potential man), contrasting it in this way with anthropology as a science of the actual man', but also as 'the knowledge of man' or the 'acquaintance with the specificity of being human'.<sup>11</sup>

Anthroposophy is neither a religion, nor a complete worldview. According to Jerzy Prokopiuk, it is above all 'a system of personal transformation and development, and only secondarily a doctrine and a proposal for an alternative civilisation (a plurality of inspirations aimed at creating new Christianity, new art, new forms of science, such as pedagogy, medicine, and agriculture)'.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the central issue of anthroposophy in Steiner's view is the question of the essence of man, founded on the attention paid to personal development and the pursuit of paths or, to rephrase it, methods (a system of exercises and meditation) leading to an exhaustive answer thereto.

In order to demonstrate that anthroposophy is not purely theoretical, Steiner designed and erected in Dornach the Goetheanum: the High School of Spiritual Science, the symbol of the culture to come, and of the love and brotherhood of nations.<sup>13</sup> Originally, the Goetheanum was to serve as a theatre and the seat for the international and ecumen-

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9 Ibid. In today's encyclopaedic works, the notion of anthroposophy is almost exclusively identified with that put forth by R. Steiner.

10 K. Maurin, 'Antropozofia stara jak ludzkość', [https://www.gnosis.art.pl/numery/gn04\\_maurin\\_wywiad.htm](https://www.gnosis.art.pl/numery/gn04_maurin_wywiad.htm) [accessed 10 Dec. 2021].

11 J. Prokopiuk, 'Od filozofii do antropozofii', *Studia Filozoficzne*, 5–6 (1983): 129.

12 Idem, 'Pech czy reguła? O pewnym hasle w «Encyklopedii katolickiej»', *Gnosis*, 2 (2021): 55, [https://www.gnosis.art.pl/numery/gn02\\_prokopiuk\\_pieszcz\\_ost.htm](https://www.gnosis.art.pl/numery/gn02_prokopiuk_pieszcz_ost.htm) [accessed 15 Dec. 2021].

13 The hope for establishing from the ground up a new multicultural society in Europe, comprising various nations but – because of the implementation of Steiner's idea – coexisting in peace, ends in 1939 with the outbreak of the war.

ical General Anthroposophical Society, whose General Secretary Steiner remained until his death in 1925. The edifice – as ‘the incarnation of the secrets of the universe and the fusion between a temple and life’ – evoked Goethe’s theory of colours and metamorphosis (hence its name). It was an instance of a holistic work, arts integration, anthroposophical architecture of the future, protecting the human soul from the harmful effects of the environment. The first Goetheanum, erected in the years 1914–1921, was completely destroyed in the fire on the New Year’s Eve night of 1922/1923. Steiner instantly went on to design a model of the second temple, this time made of reinforced concrete (which exists to this day); the building works commenced in 1924 and were completed in 1928.

The most numerous group among Steiner’s students participating in the construction of Goetheanum on the outskirts of Basel, i.e., near the German-Swiss-French border, were the Germans and the Swiss. A relatively large and colourful group of artists-constructors hailed from Russia (for instance, A. Turgeneva, M. Sabashnikova, A. Biely, M. Voloshin). German was the official language in Dornach and many anthroposophists were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, including the inhabitants of Galicia (i.e., Krakow and Lviv).

Usually, when speaking of the Polish artists associated with anthroposophy (or, more generally, with the ‘colony’ in Dornach) during the period of the Great War and the Second Polish Republic, only two or three names are mentioned. As it turns out, however, there were many more anthroposophists and sympathisers of the movement across the Polish lands in the years 1907–1939. It is evidenced by the largest extant collection of documents related to the said movement, which was preserved at the seat of the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach.<sup>14</sup> The Rudolf Steiner Archiv holds private letters from numerous Poles addressed to Rudolf Steiner and his wife, photographs of Polish anthroposophists, as well as some of their original artworks or their copies. The collection further includes documents associated with the foundation of Polish anthroposophical groups directly before the country’s regaining of independence in 1918 and with the first official registration of the Polish Anthroposophical Society in the then already independent Poland.<sup>15</sup>

*Bric à brac 1848–1939*,<sup>16</sup> a 1978 book by Halina Ostrowska-Grabska, is an interesting source of information on Polish anthroposophists. The memoirs of this actress, dancer, and the daughter of distinguished Kraków-based bohemians, the poet Bronisława Ostrowska

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14 M. Rzczycka, K. Arciszewska-Tomczak, ‘Z dziejów polskiej antropozofii’, op. cit., 131–210.

15 Ibid.

16 H. Ostrowska-Grabska, *Bric à brac 1848–1939*, Warszawa: PIW, 1978.

and the sculptor Stanisław Ostrowski (both anthroposophists, too), may serve as the starting point for the research into the history of the anthroposophical movement in Poland. Narrating the history of her family and friends, the author frequently mentions the Polish Anthroposophical Society and its members. This is a source well worth investigating, especially since it is probably the only Polish account of the pre-war anthroposophical movement.

Among the sympathisers of Steiner who Ostrowska-Grabska refers to most often is the painter, graphic artist and theatre stage designer Franciszek Siedlecki and his wife, Wiga Siedlecka, who had participated in the construction of the Goetheanum since 1914.<sup>17</sup> Wiga was a particularly ardent follower of Steiner. During her stay in Munich in 1907, she came in contact with his esoteric concepts for at the time she started to attend his lectures – popular among the Munich School of painters – held in the German Section of the Theosophical Society.<sup>18</sup> On 9 September 1911, Siedlecka became a member of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, while only a couple of months later, though in 1912 already, she started to organise a group of its adherents in Warsaw. Thanks to her efforts, Carl Alphonse Walleen-Bornemann<sup>19</sup> twice visited the city to give lectures on anthroposophical themes. In 1913, together with Steiner and the majority of members of the German Section Siedlecka left the Theosophical Society to join the General Anthroposophical Society. During this period, she often attended Steiner's lectures in Germany and other European countries. In 1913, the painter established the anthroposophical Juliusz Słowacki Society, registered in Dornach, with the seat at 6 Czysta St. in Warsaw, i.e., in her and her husband's apartment.<sup>20</sup>

In April 1914, together with Franciszek Siedlecki (a member of the General Anthroposophical Society in the years 1913–1919), and her col-

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17 On Franciszek Siedlecki and Wiga Siedlecka's cooperation with Steiner, see M. Rzczycka, 'Młodopolska antropozofia (Kraków i okolice)', op. cit., 109–14; A letter from W. Siedlecka to S. Markowski of 05 Sep. 1913, IS PAN's Special Collections, Inv. No.: 1311, k. 16.

18 See <http://www.tradycjajezoteryczna.ug.edu.pl/node/624> [accessed 10 Dec. 2021].

19 Carl Alphonse Walleen-Bornemann (1863–1941) was a Finnish-Danish soldier, writer and a translator. He studied at Lundt University. In the years 1901–1902, he was a Lieutenant in the Congo Free State. He then returned to Denmark where he worked as a translator. He was interested in occultism, particularly the Steiner movement; he delivered numerous lectures in Finland, and travelled, among others, to Switzerland, England, Turkey, Germany, America, and France.

20 The circle run by W. Siedlecka was independent from the other Polish societies which operated within the official framework of the Polish Anthroposophical Society (from 1923).

league, the Dutch painter Jeanne Marie (Sanne) Bruinier, Wiga Siedlecka arrived in Switzerland in order to join the group of international volunteers constructing the anthroposophical centre in Dornach. Under the painter Tadeusz Rychter,<sup>21</sup> a representative of the Young Poland movement, Franciszek and Wiga developed a technique of ‘glass-carving’ processing of coloured glass panes for the windows of the main edifice, the so-called Johannesbau (from 1917, the Goetheanum).<sup>22</sup> With the new technology (unrelated to stained-glass making) the respective monochromatic windows were put together of large glass panes, with the drawing being carved and filed onto their surface at various levels of depth. In 1915, Franciszek Siedlecki took over as the head of the glazier’s workshop. Besides the Poles, its staff was composed of: the brothers Hans and Walo von May, the painter Anna von May (Rychter’s future wife), as well as Emma Stolle from Germany, the Russian Konstantin Ligsky with his future wife Gertrud von Orth, and two Russian sisters, Asya Turgeneva and Turgeneva-Pozzo. In addition to working on large-sized glass panes, Siedlecka also practiced eurhythm – the new branch of stage art whose foundation was being laid at the time. In 1920, she returned to Poland where she devoted herself to the tasks of dissemination: she organised the Society’s work, served as an intermediary when admitting new members to the Polish Anthroposophical Society, gave lectures and taught eurhythm and arranged eurhythmic performances. Thanks to the artistic contacts of Siedlecka and her husband, Polish theatre artists (for instance, Mieczysław Limanowski and Juliusz Osterwa<sup>23</sup> – the founders of the Reduta Theatre) would draw inspiration from anthroposophy. Interestingly, in the archives of the General Anthroposophical Society,

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21 T. Rychter was a follower of R. Steiner. His fascination with the teachings of Steiner is attested to in the accounts of many artists visiting Dornach. Among them was A. Biely who referred to Rychter as one of the most important and kindest figures to serve as Steiner’s emissaries. During the construction of the edifice, the Polish artists was initially in charge of the carpenter’s shop and subsequently (until the autumn of 1915) of the glazier’s workshop, M. Rzczycka, K. Arciszewska-Tomczak, ‘Z dziejów polskiej antropozofii’, op. cit., 162–7.

22 On the New Year’s Eve night 1922/1923, the wooden building of the Goetheanum was destroyed by fire together with the coloured windows carved by Franciszek Siedlecki and his wife (the replica thereof for the new Goetheanum was later created by A. Turgeneva).

23 Juliusz Osterwa visited Dornach to see the mystery plays staged by anthroposophists. Among the actors of J. Osterwa’s famous Reduta Theatre, one should mention Ewa Kunina – a eurhythm artist and anthroposophist whose husband, the sculptor Henryk Kuna, belonged to the circle of friends of the Siedlecki and the Ostrowski families.

only Wiga Siedlecka<sup>24</sup> can be found on the member list but her husband is missing. On the Goetheanum internet website, Siedlecka has been given a rather exhaustive dossier with photographs. Such a distinction is reserved for the most prominent members of the Society.

Influenced by anthroposophy, Franciszek Siedlecki created the etching *Meditation* (1922), for which Steiner would express his great appreciation. The composition evokes the initiation process as conceptualised by the Doctor (Steiner), who claimed that at the final stage of wisdom, one acquires the knowledge of man having grown out of the Cosmos and that through adequate meditative practice it is possible to be transported into the spiritual Cosmos to the point of a total symphysis therewith. Siedlecki also authored the ex-libris of Doctor Józef Drzewiecki, a member of the Theosophical Society in London. The artist's design was published in *Chimera* magazine in 1905 with the following commentary: 'In his symbolic composition, the artist made a reference to the richest in books and most beloved by its owner field of arcane knowledge (alchemy, magic, Kabbalah, Indian philosophy, gnosis, and mysticism). Deep within the work, pure light emanates from an Egyptian false door – guarded by winged sphinges – the front panel of which reveals the name of the Almighty (*yod-he-waw-he*), and the star of the pentagram inscribed in a circle.'<sup>25</sup>

Among the many adherents of the teaching of Steiner, one should also mention the painter Stanisław Stückgold, who resided in Munich from 1911. He was an outstanding figure in the international intellectual community of Paris and Munich. He was the only Pole to penetrate the circle of the *Neue Künstler Vereinigung*, and later, thanks to Franz Marc, he was able to establish contact with *Der Blaue Reiter* group. Stückgold participated in the most prestigious exhibitions in Germany, such as the First German Autumn Salon organised by the Berlin gallery *Der Sturm* in 1913. Stückgold's fascinating personality enabled him to combine innovative attitude towards art with a profound interest in philosophy, including the Jewish Kabbalah, Maimonides, and Spinoza, as well as Christianity, which ultimately led him to occultism and relations with the Theosophical Society and subsequently with the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach. His group of friends included the Russian art historian Trifon Trapeznikov, Steiner's associate, and the latter's successor, Albert Steffen.

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24 Formed in 1924, the General Anthroposophical Society issued a membership card No. 12 to Siedlecka with the annotation (I), certifying that she was in possession of the so-called blue card of the 'First Class' as an attendee of the Free High School of Spiritual Science, established by Steiner in the same year.

25 *Chimera*, 9/25 (1905): 138.

The number of advocates of anthroposophy among the artists of Kraków included the co-founders of the renowned Krakow Workshops Association: Karol Homolacs and Henryk Kunzek. The former translated Steiner's works and lectures. Both men were listed as members of the Polish Anthroposophical Society. Kunzek, as Ostrowska-Grabska recalls, 'studied a lot. Philosophy, the history of art, and then Steiner's anthroposophy; towards the end of his life, he translated several of Steiner's works to Polish'.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the rare typescripts, passed on from hand to hand within a trusted circle, did not survive World War I. The ideas of Steiner's pedagogy were fervently disseminated by Karol Homolacs. He translated books (*Mistyka w zaraniu nowoczesnego życia duchowego oraz jej stosunek do dzisiejszego poglądu na świat* [Mysticism at the Dawn of the Modern Age] *Duchowe hierarchie oraz ich odzwierciedlenie w ciele fizycznym* [The Spiritual Hierarchies and Their Reflection in the Physical World]), and the lectures which he himself attended. There is an extant lecture that Homolacs delivered in Warsaw on 2 May 1938, titled *Wychowawcze znaczenie sztuki* (The Educational Significance of Art). In it, he overtly refers to anthroposophical undertakings. Within the span of thirty-six pages, the author presented a new (i.e., anthroposophical) model of education which consists in fostering children's spontaneous creativity to thus support their spiritual development. Homolacs used the opportunity to briefly present Steiner and his notion of the evolution of civilisation, outline the basic objectives of anthroposophy, and encourage readers to develop a profound interest in Steiner's works.

There were followers of Steiner's teaching also in Galicia, with the unique role among them played by the two famous Lviv-based sculptresses Luna Drexler and Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska, who was fascinated by Drexler's activity.

Like Siedlecka and her husband, Luna Drexler participated in the construction work at the Goetheanum, while from 1923 she presided over the Polish Anthroposophical Society.<sup>27</sup> The artist was an extremely socially engaged person. She had graduated from European art academies in Lviv, Paris, Rome, Munich, and Leipzig. The records of the Goetheanum archive reveal that she came in contact with the ideas of the Doctor thanks to Édouard Schuré, one of Steiner's closest students. Drexler would maintain a constant relationship with Dornach; as a member of the Polish Anthroposophical Society, she went on lecture tours, organised talks and courses of pedagogy (among these, one in Kartuzy in 1931); she established new branches of the Society. It is thanks to her efforts that on 18 October 1929 the Polish Anthroposophical Society was officially

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26 H. Ostrowska-Grabska, *Bric à brac 1848–1939*, op. cit., 61.

27 M. Rzczycka, 'Młodopolska antropozofia (Kraków i okolice)', op. cit., 116–18.

registered. Drexler's oeuvre reveals many religious motifs of distinctly gnostic origin. The titles of her (sculpting as well as painting) works constitute what amounts to a survey of themes and motifs recurring in Steiner's lectures. The most famous example thereof is the bas-relief *Flying Angel Holding a Cross with Seven Roses*, which can be seen on the artist's grave in Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv. The cross in a wreath of seven roses in the foreground is an element of the symbolism of Rosicrucianism which Steiner used, among others, in the meditations intended for his students.

As already mentioned, Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska was greatly under the influence of the activity of Luna Drexler. The sculptress – the first female student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, as a guest student in the studio of Konstanty Laszczka – paved the way for other women.<sup>28</sup> The artist also attended the painting classes of Drexler (in 1917), and for many years remained under her influence, as indicated by her decision to join the Polish Anthroposophical Society in January 1924.<sup>29</sup> In her voluminous memoirs, Baltarowicz-Dzielińska provided a detailed account of the Society's operation,<sup>30</sup> as she wrote, among others, about the eurhythmy classes she attended in the years 1928–1932 and her participation in the grand Congress of the Polish Anthroposophical Society held in Warsaw on 23–27 October 1929. The artist took part in open and closed (exclusive for the members of the Society) lectures, and in 1930, she delivered her first (of two) anthroposophical lecture in the anthroposophical group in Lviv.

The Archive of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow holds extensive records documenting this period in the life of Baltarowicz. Two notebooks of her notes are almost in their entirety devoted to anthroposophy. The sculptress cites Steiner's lectures in their original language; moreover, she details the activity of the Polish Anthroposophical Society and her (often difficult) relationship with Luna Drexler.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Z. Baltarowicz-Dzielińska, 'Pierwsza studentka na Akademii Sztuk Pięknych', *Życie Literackie*, 40 (1970); I. Demko, 'Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska. Pierwsza studentka Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie', *Art and Documentation*, 19 (2018): 27–32; eadem, 'Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska', *Wiadomości asp. Akademia Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki w Krakowie*, (2017): 112–17; eadem, 'Walka kobiet o prawo studiowania w Akademii w latach 1895–1919', *Wiadomości asp. Akademia Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki w Krakowie*, (2018): 39–48; M. Rzeczycka, K. Arciszewska, 'Z dziejów polskiej antropozofii', op. cit.

29 She signed the pink membership card in L. Drexler's apartment at 14 Puławskiego St in Lviv.

30 Z. Baltarowicz-Dzielińska, *Mój życiorys* [n.d., MS], Documents of Zofia Baltarowicz-Dzielińska, Archive of Kraków Society of Friends of Fine Arts (TPSP).

31 L. Drexler recommended to her Steiner's books as well as manuscripts for exclusive use of the members of the Society. In 1921, Baltarowicz-Dzielińska received from Drexler a set of exercises she was to perform daily. There were six

The Archive is also where the only existing membership card of the Polish Anthroposophical Society can be seen. In 1921, Baltarowicz enrolled into a course of eurhythmy taught by the painter, anthroposophist and eurhythmy practitioner Elżbieta Dziubaniuk, who had come to Lviv from Switzerland at the invitation of Drexler. The classes were held in the small hall of the Polish Musical Society. The memoirs of Baltarowicz attest to her fascination with eurhythmy and her love for practicing it. She attended many paid courses (including some given by Drexler), while later she started to hold private lessons for her friends at 19 Halicka St. The artist claims in her journals that in the years 1928–1932 she practiced eurhythmy between one and three hours a day.

Baltarowicz attended the great Congress of the Polish Anthroposophical Society, held in Warsaw on 23–27 October 1929. Even though she participated in both closed and open lectures, she did not take part in the esoteric classes taught by Maria Steiner von Sivers. Indeed, these were exclusively reserved for the attendees of the Free High School of Spiritual Science, founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1924, and Baltarowicz was not a member of this inner esoteric formation of the General Anthroposophical Society. In 1932, she arrived in Paris, where she attended lectures and eurhythmy classes held in the Steiner school at 6 Rue Campagne Première, run by Elżbieta Dziubaniuk and Tatiana Kiseleva. In the late 1932 and early 1933, Baltarowicz ceased contact with the Society and though still formally a member, she no longer considered herself to belong to the Society. On 26 January 1938, the artist sent her resignation to the Polish Anthroposophical Society in Lviv, addressed to Józefa Chudzikowska. In the resignation letter she informed her addressee that she had not attended any meetings of the Society since 1932/1933, and had not felt herself to be a member since that time; therefore, she asked to be removed.

The analysis of artistic works of Baltarowicz-Dzielińska related to Steiner's teaching is only possible based on photographic documentation. A photograph taken around the year 1932, stored in the Archive of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, shows the sculptress in her studio at 3 Krukowa St. in Lviv. The paintings on the walls around the artist clearly attest to her fascination with Steiner's concepts: angels, rays of light, and two-headed characters. Even though a colour analysis of the discussed works is ruled out by the fact that this is a black and white photograph, it should be noted that Steiner, and consequently his followers, paid the most attention to the colours and the message of their paintings. The painter's canvases are devoid of the typical Renaissance perspective,

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of these: thought control, exercise in peacefulness and surrender to God's will, the exercise in positivity, *Hubefangenheit*, and a 'mantric' exercise.

as Steiner rejected spatial painting. He believed that by the medium of painting, that which exists as a colour in nature became an element shaping the human soul. Therefore, the third dimension was to be abandoned, spiritualised, replaced by the vivid harmony of colours; one should reach beyond the plane not in the material but in the spiritual sense. Colour is spiritual because it originates in the realm of the spirit. It is a living memory of the distant time of the act of creation. With such spiritual reception of colours, the character of paintings changes: the painting unifies the external with the internal.<sup>32</sup> Hence, it is associated with feeling, because the painter, instead of using spatial perspective, operates on emotions induced by colours. Steiner treated colours as the door to the cognition of the world, subject to a specific order of values.<sup>33</sup> The characters in the works surrounding the artist in the picture are also devoid of traditional proportions. According to Steiner, the true painter does not imitate; as nature will always be more beautiful and more lifelike than his painting, it is in no need of copies. Thus, the object remains nothing more than a stimulus for the interplay between light and darkness, becoming genuinely valuable only when it reflects the brilliance of the spirit. That is why – from the perspective of an anthroposophical analysis of painting – not only its colours but also its message proves important. Steiner presented his vision of painting in *Aus der Akasha-Chronik*,<sup>34</sup> with the Akasha Chronicle constituting the sacred memory of the world reminding man of everything that has occurred in it. In this treatise, the author re-interprets the Biblical revelation, claiming that attaining spiritual knowledge results in such an image of the world in which Christ takes the central position as the ruler of the kingdom of the Sun<sup>35</sup> (hence, the rays in one of the artist's paintings). In this way, the Biblical testimonials are proven and elucidated. Three of the paintings presented in Baltarowicz-Dzielińska's studio represent winged figures. Rather significantly, in his lectures, Steiner would frequently refer to the four archangels (Michael, Gabriel, Uriel,

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32 R. Steiner considered this issue in his *Theosophie: Einführung in übersinnliche Welterkenntnis und Menschenbestimmung*, 1st ed., Berlin: C.A. Schetschke und Sohn, 1904.

33 Steiner's vision of art, which inspired many painters, drew on J.W. Goethe and his cosmic theory of colours oscillating between the two polar opposites of existence: the light and the darkness.

34 Published in English as: R. Steiner, *Atlantis and Lemuria*, transl. by A. Blake, Whitefish (MT): Kessinger Publishing, 2010.

35 R. Steiner referred to Christ as the Great Solar Spirit who has accompanied mankind since primeval times. By the Sun, he understood the star in the planetary system as the cosmic seat of supreme spiritual beings who send love to the world.

Raphael), indicating their role in the development of civilisation.<sup>36</sup> Characteristic for his presentation is the vision of the divine beings as androgynous figures with beautiful faces. In his treatise *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*, Steiner claimed that the flourishing of culture during the Renaissance era had been inspired by the energy of the fundamental ideas of renewal delivered by the Archangel Gabriel, while the contemporary period (from 1879) was guided by the Archangel of the Sun – Michael. His mission was to turn humanity away from the materialist modes of thinking and consumerist lifestyle to the spiritual dimensions of existence and reaffirm the primeval bond with the Earth, that is, the attitudes forgotten in the preceding era. Perhaps the angel depicted by Baltarowicz-Dzielińska is indeed Michael. Worth noticing are his powerful wings, unprecedented in her other images of angels. Such wings could symbolise his mission and his being unbounded by earthly things.

Out of the fascination with Steiner's teaching stemmed various audacious artistic concepts as forms to express spiritual experiences but also as attempts at creating a new language that would facilitate the presentation of this perception of the 'higher worlds'. Besides, anthroposophy not only reflected the aspirations of its times – the synthesis of arts, the search for freedom, completeness, and unity – but it also enabled artists to achieve their most desired objective: the creation of the new, reinvigorated art that, according to Kandinsky, 'would effect a significant shift in the condition of man in the world and in inter-human relations ... It will render human life in a new dimension, ensuring universal consent and agreement ... On the foundation of the new creativity, the spiritual and artistic unity of the universe shall emerge.'<sup>37</sup>

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36 In 1908, R. Steiner held a cycle of thirteen lectures on the influence of spiritual beings on man.

37 S. Ringbom, 'Art in the Epoch of the Great Spiritual', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 29 (1966): 386.

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**Abstract:**

One of the factors determining the character of art at the outset of the twentieth century was the development of the occult sciences, which at that time were at the centre of European ideological debate. Esotericism attracted people striving to understand themselves and the world, seeking the truth and the meaning of life. For artists, anthroposophy proved to be one of the most inspiring esoteric sciences. The audacious artistic ideas put forth by Rudolf Steiner aroused interest in the artistic milieu of Warsaw, Lviv, and Krakow. Many Polish artists, fascinated by Steiner's visionary projects encompassing architecture, industrial design, sculpture, stained-glass making, and glass carving as well as new stage forms (the so-called eurhythmy) were actively involved in anthroposophical circles, attending the Doctor's lectures held throughout Europe.

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**Keywords:**

**anthroposophy, Steiner, esotericism**  
**Zofia Krasnopolska-Wesner**

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**Zofia Krasnopolska-Wesner**

Doctor of Humanities, art historian, philologist, historian of Russian literature. Since 2009 affiliated with the Interfaculty Department of History and Theory of Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk and the Faculty of Architecture at the Sopot University of Applied Sciences (SANS). In the years 2016–2019, she participated in the research project of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities 'Polish Culture in Relation to Western Esoteric Philosophy in the Years 1890-1939', realised together with the Institute of Russian and Eastern Studies at the University of Gdańsk. Co-editor of the publishing series *Sztuka Europy Wschodniej*, which presents the works of Polish and Russian historians of art. Author of numerous papers on the modernist concept of the correspondence of art, literature, and music. A special place in her research interest is reserved for the issues of esotericism, including the works by Polish and Russian artists that popularised R. Steiner's teaching. orcid: 0000-0002-5676-6940