

# Franciscus Bargieł: Adamus Quirinus Krasnodębski SJ (1628–1702) and His Philosophical Works

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This issue features a translation of another paper by Franciszek Bargieł, this time dedicated to the profile of another Jesuit philosopher, Adam Quirinus Krasnodębski. The article was originally published in Latin in *Forum Philosophicum* 9, (2004): 259–63. It has since been translated into English.

## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

This brief introduction to Jesuit philosophy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth will focus on the role and influence of the Jesuit order on the development of philosophy in Poland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. An analysis of the history of the order in Poland and its impact on the intellectual life of the country is of the utmost importance for an understanding of the context in which Jesuit philosophy developed. An examination of the principal themes, doctrines and philosophical methods espoused by the Jesuits during this period represents an indispensable component of any introduction to the subject of Jesuit philosophy in Poland.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was, within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a period of significant political, social and cultural transformation. At that time, this state was a powerful entity with a vast territory that included the lands of modern-day Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia. The century in question was also a period of significant challenges for Poland, characterised by internal and external conflicts. The country was affected by wars with Russia, Sweden and Turkey, as well as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. It was also a time of prominence for the

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth itself, and the activities of the Jesuits were a crucial aspect of its intellectual and social life.

The Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, exerted a pivotal influence on the intellectual and social milieu of Poland during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their educational mission, which focused on the establishment of schools and colleges, constituted a significant contribution to the dissemination of Catholic philosophical and theological thought. This intellectual influence, in conjunction with their pastoral activities, served to reinforce their position as one of the most influential orders in the country.

The Jesuits established a considerable number of schools and colleges throughout Poland, thereby ensuring the provision of quality education to a diverse student population. Their curriculum placed considerable emphasis on classical studies, philosophy and theology, thereby fostering a robust intellectual foundation among their students. A considerable number of Poland's most prominent intellectuals and statesmen received their education from the Jesuits, thereby reinforcing their influence on the nation's intellectual and political life.

Moreover, the Jesuits were actively engaged in the education of young people, offering spiritual guidance and moral instruction. They played a pivotal role in the formation of the social elite, providing education to members of the nobility and aristocracy. Beyond this, they were engaged in missionary activities, with the objective of disseminating Catholicism among non-Catholic populations within Poland and beyond.

The Jesuits fulfilled their educational mandate across numerous scientific disciplines within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Additionally, they made significant contributions to the field of philosophy—ones that regrettably continue to be undervalued in Poland even to this day. It is worth noting that Jan Morawski (1633–1700) represents an excellent example of the esteemed philosophers and theologians who emerged from Poland during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His contributions to the field are numerous, and include such works as “*Totius philosophiae principia ... de ente in communi, Palaestra christianae pietatis, Quaestiones de Verbo Incarnato et de ejusdem admirabili Matre Virgine, or Quaestiones de Deo uno et trino.*” They achieved considerable renown and were widely read and discussed beyond the confines of Poland itself. Another Jesuit philosopher and theologian of the period, Marcin Śmiglecki (1563–1618), achieved perhaps even greater renown. His most celebrated work was entitled *Logica*. This substantial volume, first published in Germany in 1618 and subsequently reprinted in England on multiple occasions (Oxford, 1634, 1638 and 1658), achieved considerable popularity and was read widely. In this work, Śmiglecki primarily

addresses logical problems, although he also makes reference to a number of metaphysical issues. For an extended period, *Logica* was regarded as one of the most esteemed and pervasive textbooks in the Western world, particularly in England (where it was a mandatory component of the Oxford University curriculum), and was still in use in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Notable philosophers such as John Locke cited this work. Śmiglecki builds on the views of Aristotle, taking into account the contributions of various commentators, including Thomas Aquinas and Suárez. Scholars of his thought, most notably Fathers Bargieł and Darowski of the Ignatianum University in Cracow, have demonstrated that Śmiglecki can be regarded as the originator of the contemporaneous neo-scholastic metaphysical tradition that served as the foundation for the development of the so-called “school of metaphysics”, primarily in Germany, based on the concepts of Leibniz and Wolff.

Furthermore, Adam Quirinus Krasnodebski (1628–1702) himself falls within this group. While he did not attain the same degree of renown as the aforementioned thinkers, he nevertheless merits recognition and remembrance. This is because he appears to have played an exceptional role in the dissemination and popularisation of philosophy in 17<sup>th</sup> century Poland and, moreover, demonstrated remarkable pedagogical abilities. Additionally, he was the author of a work entitled *Philosophia Aristotelis explicata* (1678), in which he presented an attempt at systematising the philosophical tradition derived from Aristotle, particularly within the context of school systematisation, which seems to have been of particular importance within the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* programme. A study of Krasnodebski’s oeuvre and thought, which resulted in a dissertation, was undertaken by Father Franciszek Bargieł. Bargieł sought to introduce the figure of Krasnodebski to the public, resulting in the publication of “Adam Quirinus Krasnodebski SJ (1628–1702) and His Philosophical Work” in 1981.<sup>1</sup>

1. Franciszek Bargieł, 1981. “Adam Quirinus Krasnodebski SJ (1628–1702) and His Philosophical Work.” *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej* 27: 291–332.

## TRANSLATION

Franciscus Bargieł, "Adamus Quirinus Krasnodębski SJ (1628–1702) and His Philosophical Works," *Forum Philosophicum* 9 (2004): 259–63.

## INTRODUCTION

A 40-page dissertation on one of the most esteemed authors of the Society of Jesus in the philosophical field of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was published in a Polish-language journal, "Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej" (1981, 291–332). A brief Latin synthesis is proposed here for the readers of "Forum Philosophicum." The author had only obtained limited information thus far, but "Philosophia Aristotelis explicata" (1678) nevertheless appeared to merit further detailed consideration. This was explicitly stated in one of his reviews. The present article on the life and works of Adam Quirinus Krasnodębski is therefore warranted.

## THE LIFE OF ADAM QUIRINUS KRASNODEBSKI

Krasnodębski was born on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1628 in the Polish region adjacent to Lithuania, known as Subsilvania, from which he derived the name "Subsilvanus." He died in Warsaw on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1702. He was received into the Society of Jesus in the Lithuanian Province of Vilna in 1645, and completed a two-year novitiate. He studied scholastic philosophy (logic, physics, and metaphysics) at the Pultovia Jesuit College (Pułtusk) from 1647 to 1650. Subsequently, he spent three years teaching grammar at the minor schools of the Płock Jesuit College.

Krasnodębski began studying theology at Brunsberg (Braniewo), but was forced to interrupt his studies due to the Swedish invasion of Poland. He sought refuge in Tyrnavia in Slovakia within the Austrian Jesuit Province, where he completed his theological studies (1655–1657), received priestly ordination, and served in pastoral care for several years (until 1661).

Upon returning to his homeland in the Lithuanian province, he was directed to the pedagogical ministry, where he taught a range of subjects in schools. He taught rhetoric at the colleges of Pułtusk, Reszel, and Płock for ten years (1661–1670). He then served as Rector of the college in Łomża for three years. Upon returning to Pultovia (Pułtusk), he taught philosophy for three years (1674–1677). The following year, he became director of the Diocesan Seminary. In 1680, he was transferred to Warsaw to teach theology, completing his doctorate at Vilnius Academy. He subsequently served as Professor of Theology and Canon Law in Warsaw (1684–1686).

For the next six years (1686–1692), he held the position of Rector in Nieśwież (now in Belarus) and Płock. He spent the final decade of his career

(1692–1702) in Warsaw, occupying the Chair of Canon Law and serving as Director of Studies and Schools. During this period, he engaged in a diverse range of activities, including teaching various disciplines, assuming administrative responsibilities for academic programs, educational institutions and colleges, and providing pastoral care and spiritual guidance. In the official testimony sent to Rome in 1665, it was stated that he was deemed fit for teaching, lecturing, governing, economic matters and missions. In 1700, the listing was more concise and systematic: he was deemed suitable for “speculation, canons, and government.”

#### PUBLISHED WRITINGS

Following the demonstration of his philosophical expertise, he proceeded to publish his principal written work, which was subsequently released to the public one year after the conclusion of his academic programme. This publication was formally approved by the press on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1677, and was subsequently entitled “The Philosophy of Aristotle,” as elucidated by P. Adamus Quirinus Krasnodebski SJ, published in Warsaw in 1678 by Elean, 12° (436 folia). Similarly, a number of smaller works were published in print as a result of Krasnodebski’s theological didactic activity, comprising collected theses for scholarly debate: “*Assertiones ex uniuersa theologia*” [Assertions from Universal Theology] (*Varsaviae*, 1683, 4°); “*Corona divinae sapientiae theologica quadriennalis studii privilegio contexta*” [A Crown of Divine Theological Wisdom Woven with the Privilege of a Four-Year Study] (1683); “*Theologicae SS. Patrum et Doctorum Ecclesiae assertiones de Verbi Divini incarnatione propugnatae*” [Theological Assertions of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church about the Incarnation of the Divine Word Defended] (1683); “*Suspensio indulgentiarum, remissionum, facultatum sub magno Anni Sacri Jubilaeo explicata per P. A. Qu. Krasnodebski S.J.*” [The suspension of indulgences, remissions, and privileges under the Great Year of the Holy Jubilee, explained by P. A. Qu. Krasnodebski S.J.] (without place or year).

The more philosophical text, which is the subject of this discussion, is preceded by a special dedication of the individual parts of the work to the Inhabitants of Heaven, which serves as a testimony of solidarity between science and devotion. Consequently, the “Logic” is dedicated to the Divine Trinity, the “Physics” to God, Man and the Deiparaque of the Virgin, and the “Metaphysics” (soul and all being) to Mary, Queen of Poland and Patroness in the hereditary goods of Lord F. Bieliński, Royal Ensifer (Kingdom of Poland). The philosophical text is comprised of six parts, or treatises, which are further divided into assertions, paragraphs and numbers. The

first and second treatises pertain to logic, the subsequent three to physics, and the final treatise to metaphysics. All these treatises refer to the relevant writings of the Stagirite.

In the writings of Krasnodębski, it is physics that receives the greatest consideration, with approximately half of the text dedicated to three treatises on the subject. His account of logic was addressed in two treatises, while his metaphysics was covered in a single treatise spanning one hundred pages. However, there is no complete separation between the aforementioned problematics: metaphysical interjections are found both in the “Logic” and in the “Physics.” Similarly, there is not a complete demarcation between philosophical and theological conceptions and opinions; in proving theses and analysing difficulties, biblical-ecclesiastical texts are invoked to assist intellectual reasoning.

#### PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHING

“Logic”—The logic of Adam Quirinus is inherently formal in nature, encompassing dialectics of a kind that revolves around the three stages of the mind: consideration and explanation of concepts, judgments and reasoning, and methods of employing them in cognitive practices. The questions of criteriology, truth, certainty, and cognitive objectivity, which constitute the undoubted presuppositions of scholars and of Aristotle himself, are almost never addressed in this context. From a formal and methodological standpoint, the approach diverges from the conventional sequencing of mental operations. Specifically, it prioritizes the examination of reasoning and syllogisms, then judgments, and finally concepts. In the domain of judgments and conceptions, the external manifestations, such as propositions and terms, are initially considered. These elements offer insights into the potential emergence of future logical forms, elucidating the underlying progression.

“Physics”—The discipline of physics is not, in the modern sense, an experimental science. Rather, it is a philosophical investigation of the fundamental principles that govern the natural world, encompassing such areas as cosmology, etiology and psychology. From experience, only examples are selected that are deemed to be illustrative of the problem under consideration. It addresses the following topics, one after another: the natural body, with its structure and properties; the causal manifold within the created world (i.e. material, formal, efficient and final models of causation), with its reality, its nature, and the laws by which it is governed; divine activity outside of the created world; God acting and causing, creating and preserving the world and the human and the divine soul; and the categories of

material beings. The following topics are addressed with regard to quantity, motion, place and time: the substantial and accidental mutability of living and inorganic bodies (i.e. their arising, destruction, birth, death, transmutation, increase, intensification, and composition). Finally, the problem of the soul is discussed, construed in the general sense of the immanent principle of life and movement rather than the particular one of the rational and free human soul. The two species of the soul are both defended and explained. It is asserted that there is but one soul in each man, which forms the body and is at the same time endowed with sensitive and vegetative power in addition to the rational. It is immaterial, spiritual and immortal by its very nature, functioning cognitively and affectively in and of itself. The subject in question is endowed with a number of faculties and powers, including the capacity for rational thought and understanding. It is also possessed of the faculty of the will, which is identified with the subject's essence.

The speculative treatment of physical problems gave rise to a number of innovative concepts, including the idea of a "fifth essence" directed towards heaven, the notion of the stars being immersed in a specific heavenly fluid, and the four fundamental elements of the body (earth, water, air and fire), which were inherited from antiquity. In the field of psychology, the concept of spirit animals or life emerged. In contrast, the empirical provenance of knowledge can be observed in its evolution from sensory experiences and the formation of abstract, generalised concepts. This process occurs from the material to the spiritual, from accidental occurrences to the establishment of substances. Consequently, it is an inductive rather than deductive process.

"Metaphysics"—The field of metaphysics is characterised by a lack of clarity and coherence. It addresses a limited range of questions, including the concept of being, its properties (such as truth and goodness), the relationship between essence and existence (which it presents as a clear and distinct logical distinction), the notions of *suppositum* and person, and the nature of accidents. The fundamental problem of being, meaning the problem of its analogy, is not addressed. This is despite acceptance of the thesis of the perfect unity of the concept of being, which leads to its univocity rather than to analogies.

Krasnodebski's philosophy is situated within a historical and discursive context, and in this way the various perspectives on any given issue are duly considered. The intricacies, in the sense of arguments for and against, are meticulously examined, and from these opinions and justifications he ultimately derives a conclusion and thesis of his own, though this is frequently only put forward as probable.

Any things drawn from Aristotle's philosophy that invite ridicule when judged by contemporary standards are not merely some trivial notions espoused by Krasnodębski himself: rather, they represent the prevailing philosophical tenets of the era, inherited from antiquity. Despite these shortcomings, his written work remains a valuable contribution to the field, exhibiting a commendable degree of rigor, critical engagement and progressive thought, both in terms of the doctrine itself and the manner of its presentation.

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