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How to Read a Historical Source through a Literary Lens?

The article presents some possibilities of using contemporary literary research methods for analyzing historical sources. However, in the analysis of literary work as a historical source, attempts at "reversed" reading (i.e. source as literature) are still insufficient. The article presents some research tools based on text theory, which could be adapted to reading historical sources. There are privileged texts with some aesthetic features. The above-mentioned methods could not be used directly to analyze historical sources; they should be completed with extra-textual data.

Some remarks on the history of research paradigms

The nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century brought developments in the critique of historical sources; research methods slowly became more advanced, and the list of research questions gradually became longer. However, we must not forget that at the time historical sources were still treated as witnesses of the past, and as such they were supposed to be analyzed in a way allowing the reconstruction of as many facts as possible.[1]

Even in the 1960s, Herbert Grundmann, author of an excellent companion to medieval historiography, saw chronicles as works written according to the rules of rhetoric, and so rather useless for historians.[2] Indeed, it is difficult to extract information referring directly to the past from a history composed according to aesthetic rules.

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[1] G. Labuda, *Próba nowej systematyki i nowej interpretacji źródeł historycznych* [New Systematicity and Interpretation of Historical Sources], "Studia Źródłoznawcze" 1957, vol. 1, pp. 3–52, offers an excellent analysis of this phase of development of source studies, and remains a valuable resource, despite being published almost fifty years ago. For a fascinating discussion of history of textual criticism, see S. Timpanaro, *Die Entstehung der Lachmannschen Methode*, 2. erw. Aufl., Hamburg 1971. J.-D. Müller, *Mediävistische Kulturwissenschaft*, Berlin and New York 2010, p. 5, who pointed out the naïve understanding of some scholars of L. von Ranke's plot "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist".

[2] H. Grundmann, *Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter. Gattungen – Epochen – Eigenart*, Göttingen 1965, p. 5.

For decades literary scholars have been aware that literature is a capacious term; nobody equates it with written texts, and even more so with fiction. From the perspective of time, clearly the introduction of the notion of *text* did not eliminate all the problems regarding whether we are dealing with literature either. According to Teresa Dobrzyńska, "text includes a passage of words of various length, complexity, and transmission."[3] There is an agreement that text is a non-uniform reality, which can be defined in various ways; it is a general-cultural form of discourse.[4] This resulted in extending the field of traditional literary studies from poetry, novels or essays to such diverse texts as newspaper articles, an application, or sports commentary. Thanks to Michaił Bachtin, we know there are speech genres, i.e. creations with specific organization, with a far greater scope than individual utterances, and clearly oriented to a goal.[5]

The turn towards psychology and cognitive studies, along with the gradual but noticeable disappearance of clear divisions between linguistics and literary studies, resulted in modern literary scholars feeling comfortable not only in traditional philology, but also on its fringes. The subsequent turn in the broadly understood humanities resulted in new research postulates, such as "practicing theory,"[6] i.e. blurring more lines within the humanities.

For historians, research attitudes reshuffled mostly in the 1960s; the group *Annales*, fighting for "a more human history"[7] should be mentioned

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[3] T. Dobrzyńska, *Tekst. Próba syntezy* [Text: An Attempt at a Synthesis], Warszawa 1993, p. 7. I would like to point out two studies by Dobrzyńska: *Spójność tekstu w perspektywie stylistycznej* [Text Cohesion from the Perspective of Style], [in:] *Systematyzacja pojęć w stylistyce* [Systematization of Notions in Style], ed. S. Gajda, Opole 1992, pp. 49–55 and *Tekst – kategoria stara i nowa* [Text – a New and Old Category], [in:] *Wiedza o literaturze i edukacja. Księga referatów Zjazdu Polonistów Warszawa 1995* [Literary Studies and Education: Conference Proceedings from the 1995 Conference of Polish Philologists], eds. Z. Goliński, T. Michałowska, Z. Jarosiński, Warszawa 1996, pp. 559–570. See also T.A. van Dijk, *Textwissenschaft. Eine interdisziplinäre Einführung*, Tübingen 1980 (original, Dutch edition: *Tekstwetenschap. Een interdisciplinaire inleiding*, Utrecht and Antwerpen 1978).

[4] See *Dyskurs jako struktura i proces*, ed. T.A. van Dijk, Warszawa 2001 (original, English edition: *Discourse as Structure and Process*, ed. T.A. van Dijk, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi 1998) and A. Duszak, *Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa* [Text, Discourse, Intercultural Communication], Warszawa 1998. There are also more recent works, e.g. P. Bohuszewicz, *Kulturowa teoria literatury jako styl badawczy* [Cultural Theory of Literature as a Research Style], "Teksty Drugie" 2023, no. 3, pp. 115–131.

[5] M. Bachtin, *Estetyka twórczości słownej* [Aesthetics of Verbal Art], ed. E. Czaplejewicz, Warszawa 1986.

[6] As evidenced by the subtitle: *Teoria – literatura – życie. Praktykowanie teorii w humanistyce współczesnej* [Theory – Literature – Life: Practicing Theory in Contemporary Humanities], eds. A. Legeżyńska and R. Nycz, Warszawa 2012.

[7] M. Bloch, *Pochwała historii czyli o zawodzie historyka* [Praise for History, i.e. on Historians' Work], foreword by W. Kula, Warszawa 1960, p. 25. It's a travesty of a sentence from

here. However, the most inspiring impulses came from social sciences; unsurprisingly, history has been considered a communicative system,[8] i.e. also a discourse. Jerzy Topolski's attempt at a new definition of a historical source from fifty years ago was a significant expression of that change:

> All sources of historical cognition (direct and indirect), i.e. any information (in the sense of theory-information) about the social past, wherever it can be found, together with the information channel, can be considered a historical source.[9]

This definition contains all the elements of traditional conceptualizations (a source informs about something or reflects something from the past), but its construction is based on a completely different set of tools, and it is founded on broadly understood social sciences rather than traditional history. This way of analyzing and understanding history became increasingly common in Poland, as evidenced by the growing popularity of novel ways of understanding it.[10] However, it was not a fascination with new methodologies but rather a heated academic debate with the followers of hermeneutics or source studies' followers, who strictly followed objective facts extracted from sources,[11] called "historiographic literalism" by Jan Pomorski.[12] Apart from tangible disputes among historians (especially in Poznań), tensions are also evidenced by the book *Hayden White w Polsce: fakty, krytyka, recepcja* [Hayden White in Poland: Facts, Criticism, Reception].[13]

At this point, the asynchronous course of changes among literary studies experts and historians should be highlighted; the former underwent a trans-

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the introduction: "For a long time we have been united in our fight for history understood more broadly and humanely".

[8] J.C.B. Barrera, *History as a Communication System*, [in:] Świat *historii. Prace z metodologii historii i historii historiografii dedykowane Jerzemu Topolskiemu z okazji siedemdziesięciolecia urodzin* [Essays in History Methodology and History of Historiography for Jerzy Topolski's Seventieth Birthday], ed. W. Wrzosek, Poznań 1998, pp. 63–80.

[9] J. Topolski, *Metodologia historii* [History's Methodology], 3rd edition, Warszawa 1984, p. 324.

[10] For an interesting description of changes in discussions on history, see J. Pomorski, *Rzecz o wyobraźni historycznej. Ćwiczenia z hermeneutyki* [On Historical Imagination: Exercises in Hermeneutics], Lublin 2021. For our discussion, *Studium Drugie. Teoria narracji historycznej Jerzego Topolskiego* [Second Study: Jan Topolski's Theory of Historical Narrative], based an outline of an unwritten book by Topolski (who died in 1998) about methodology of history at the turn of the twentieth century, is especially interesting.

[11] Dispute over the status of source studies was one of the main issues discussed during XIII General Conference of Polish Historians in Poznań in 1984.

[12] J. Pomorski, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

[13] *Hayden White w Polsce: fakty, krytyka, recepcja* [Hayden White in Poland: Facts, Criticism, Reception], eds. E. Domańska, E. Skibiński, and P. Stróżyk, Kraków 2019. Discussion papers, as well as those about White's visits in Poland, are especially significant here.

formation of research attitudes sooner and more profoundly.[14] However, both processes remain unfinished. Narrativism, which focused on cognitive constructs, proved to be a real challenge for historical considerations, to a great extent sharing research intuitions with postmodernist literary studies.[15] Transgressing borders between disciplines has been easier ever since.

The point of interdisciplinary research

Several decades ago, it was believed that although it was acceptable to use somebody else's tools, the research questionnaire should be strictly defined by one's own discipline. It was inconceivable for a historian to read a source text through a literary lens, and for a literature scholar to discuss the historical dimension of a text. This opinion may seem too harsh – after all, some tried to change that situation. In Poland, two such pioneers should be mentioned: the medievalists Marian Plezia and Brygida Kürbis. Plezia is a philologist who used historical tools; in his research into Polish chroniclers, he was aware that a literary work needs to be contextualized in an external (for us – historical) reality.[16] Kürbis was an outstanding historian, creator of the Poznań school of source studies, who already in the 1950s had realized that in order to understand a source, it is necessary to refer to literature studies.[17]

Dušan Třeštík's study in Kosmas's *Chronicle*, in which Třeštík considers a chronicle as both a historical source and a work of literature, brought a breakthrough.[18] Třeštík demonstrates that analyzing only the factual layer of a chronicle is not enough to recreate the chronicler's values or way of thinking. At the time, analyzing a chronicle as a literary text was innovative and risky – not in terms of literary borrowings (those had been studied for a long time), but in terms of studying what the chronicler read,

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[14] J. Pomorski, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–37, 74, 87–88, 144–145.

[15] E. Domańska, *Historia egzystencjalna. Krytyczne studium narratywizmu i humanistyki zaangażowanej* [Existential History: A Critical Study in Narrativism and Engaged Humanities], Warszawa 2012, pp. 25–47.

[16] M. Plezia, *Kronika Galla na tle historiografii XII wieku* [Gallus Anonymous' Chronicle and Twelfth-century Historiography], Kraków 1947; *idem*, *Kronika Kadłubka na tle renesansu XII wieku* [Wincenty Kadłubek's Chronicle and the Twelfth-century Renaissance], "Znak" 1962, vol. 14, no. 97–98 (7–8), pp. 978–994.

[17] B. Kürbis, *Literaturoznawstwo a historiografia średniowieczna* [Literary Studies and Medieval Historiography], "Roczniki Historyczne" 1951–1952, vol. 2, pp. 167–180. The specificity of Prof. Kürbis's research is documented in *Na progach historii* [At History's Doorstep], vol. 1–2, Poznań 1994–2001.

[18] D. Třeštík, *Kosmova Kronika. Studie k počátkům českého dějepisectví a politického myšlení* [Cosma's Chronicle: Studies on the Beginnings of Czech Historiography and Political Thought], Praha 1968.

which authors he preferred to cite, which passages were original, and which revealed insufficient literary skills. It was thus an attempt to recreate the chronicler's intellectual circle. Moreover, Třeštík situated Kosmas's chronicle within the historiographic – or, more broadly – literary tradition.

If it is known that reading a historical source, especially one with certain artistic ambitions, cannot be limited to *discernere vera ac falsa*, we should also ask about the point of reading a source as a literary text, or generally as a broadly-defined text.

The idea that the word is multilayered and ambiguous is the first reason why this approach is correct. This is the basic, irrefutable premise of all studies in textual linguistics,[19] especially given that this multi-layered character is confirmed by examples from everyday life. If the word is ambiguous, then – as proved by Kazimierz Liman forty years ago – "it does not always refer to the real phenomena of the surrounding world."[20] Oftentimes it is a reference to "ideology", which Jurij Łotman called a "secondary modeling system";[21] such references to systems rather than to reality can be read only through the specific idiolect of a work of literature,[22] which requires reading the source text as a product of culture and literary work. It extends traditional research methods rather than simply rejecting them. Moreover, as observed by Ewa Domańska, in the past decade history has lost its monopoly on studying the past.[23]

Reading combined with an analysis of an internal code, with searching for artistic values, i.e. ones determining the specificity of a given piece of work,[24] helps to capture and highlight the message about reality, rather than obscure it. There is one necessary condition: findings contained in

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[19] I would like to mention only two studies which clearly display the gradable and ambiguous character of phenomena analyzed by text linguistics: R.-A. de Beaugrande, W.U. Dressler, *Wstęp do lingwistyki tekstu* [Introduction to Text Linguistics], Warszawa 1990; E. Coseriu, *Textlinguistik. Eine Einführung*, hg. und bearb. von. J. Albrecht, 3 überarb. und erw. Aufl., Tübingen and Basel 1994.

[20] K. Liman, *Czy słowo w źródle historycznym zawsze odsyła do zjawisk rzeczywistych otaczającego nas świata?* [Do Words in Historical Sources Always Refer Us to Real Phenomena of the World Around Us?], [in:] *Werbalne i pozawerbalne środki wyrazu w źródle historycznym. Materiały II Sympozjum Nauk dających poznać źródła historyczne. Problemy warsztatu historyka* [Verbal and Non-verbal Means of Expression in Historical Sources: Proceedings of the 2nd Symposium of Historical Sciences. Issues in Historians' Work], Lublin 1981, p. 76.

[21] J. Łotman, *Struktura tekstu artystycznego* [Structure of an Artistic Text], Warszawa 1984, pp. 18–19; K. Liman, *Czy słowo…*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[22] *Ibidem*.

[23] E. Domańska, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[24] This echoes Russian formalists, especially R. Jakobson, who found the essence of poetry in a specific organization and selection of expressions, see *Poetyka w* świetle *językoznawstwa* [Poetics in the Light of Linguistics], "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1960, vol. 51, iss. 1–2, pp. 431–473.

a text, reached through more or less subtle research techniques, need to be confronted with a non-textual reality.[25]

Jerzy Ziomek's conclusions from his analysis of Kochanowski's use of Latin and Polish are a good example of the benefits of such an attitude. Those conclusions are ambiguous, and explanations regarding the poet's specific decisions require considering the contemporary cultural situation, e.g. the popularity of the antique tradition.[26] Somewhat simplifying Ziomek's argumentation, it should be stated that dogmatic, "in advance" judgments regarding Kochanowski's attitudes and inspirations are doomed to fail. The literary dimension of a literary work needs to be confronted with the author's contemporary world. This conviction is to a large degree shared by historians and theoreticians of literature, but it does not concern the proposed literary reading of a historical text. In his analysis of *Józwa*, a simple story which illustrates peculiar behaviors of different social groups from the Polish People's Republic, Michał Głowiński observes that "historical reading of a literary text can be limitless: it can include anything, from punctuation to global senses of a text."[27]

I shall try to change this statement by proposing to read a historical source[28] through a literary lens. This reading can have a different extent. Doubtless, extracting the discursive character of a text is an attempt at searching for its global senses,[29] which is why various "games" between the author and reader, both virtual and real, identifiable based on data from beyond the text, can take place.[30]

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[25] In this case I agree with E. Skibiński, *Hayden White w mediewistyce* [Hayden White in Medievalist Studies], [in:] *Hayden White w Polsce…*, p. 170.

[26] J. Ziomek, *Poeta jako źródło historyczne. Glosa do referatu Wiktora Weintrauba* [Poet as a Historical Source: A Comment on Wiktor Weintraub's Essay], [in:] *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne* [Literary Work as a Historical Source], eds. Z. Stefanowska and J. Topolski, Warszawa 1978, pp. 166–175.

[27] M. Głowiński, *Lektura dzieła a wiedza historyczna* [Reading a Text vs. Knowledge of History], [in:] *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne…*, p. 111.

[28] See K. Bartoszyński, *Aspekty i relacje tekstów* [Aspects and Relations of Texts], [in:] *Dzieło literackie jako* źródło *historyczne…*, pp. 52–93.

[29] J. Pomorski highlights this phenomenon in *Rzecz o wyobraźni…*, p. 31: "*Historical discourse* is more than communicated historical knowledge or research results," later proposing to introduce research into the sociology of historiography, analogous to the well-established sociology of literature.

[30] See M. Głowiński, *Gry powieściowe* [Novel Games], Warszawa 1973.

Some examples

Prologues to chronicles – *causae scribendi*, different forms of topicas – have attracted researchers' interest for a long time now. However, when a chronicle is read with the use of Bachtin's "speech genres," it can be seen in a new light. It turns out that it is possible to find two genres within one text, e.g. a lecture and a speech, depending on the writer's intention. In the former, they address everyone believing that the auditorium is curious about what they have to say. In the latter, the author is convinced that their message is necessary for the audience, and that the audience know they can learn a lot from them.[31]

I am going to try to refer those general comments to chronicles. When Gallus Anonymous explains the motifs behind writing a history of Polish rulers in *A Letter to the Third Book*, he addresses his words not only to explicitly listed chaplains, but also to some wider auditorium, using the second person plural. The recipient is inscribed in the text as "elliptical YOU," i.e. a community represented by the chaplains and others to whom the message is addressed. I shall define that personal category as "an extended person," following Janusz Lalewicz.[32] What can such an auditorium expect: a speech or a lecture? Both can be found in the text. Speech is suggested by addressing everyone (YOU), and a lecture by referring to various facts and the conviction that the audience needs this information.

However, the chronicle's narrative is not as unequivocal as one may think after reading the above paragraph. Personal categories do not explain everything, because the problem of "controlling" the narrative remains. Gallus wants to tell readers what he considers right and proper.[33] Witold Wojtowicz rather convincingly demonstrated that in Gallus's chronicle orality is to a large extent fictional. It results from skillfully using epic techniques,

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[31] In the Polish literature, this subject has been studied most extensively by A. Wierzbicka, *Genry mowy* [Speech Genres], [in:] *Tekst i zdanie* [Text and Sentence], eds. T. Dobrzyńska and E. Janus, Wrocław 1983, pp. 125–137; see also T. Dobrzyńska, *Gatunki pierwotne i wtórne (Czytając Bachtina)* [Primary and Secondary Genres], [in:] *eadem, Tekst – styl – poetyka* [Text – Style – Poetics], Kraków 2003, pp. 181–190.

[32] J. Lalewicz, *Retoryka kategorii osobowych* [Rhetorics of Personal Categories], [in:] *Tekst i zdanie…*, pp. 267–272.

[33] At this point my conclusions are the same as J. Banaszkiewicz's in reference to Kadłubek's *Kronika Polska* [Chronica Polonorum, Polish Chronicle]: "A cleric says as much as the chronicler expects, because he simply cannot say more"; see J. Banaszkiewicz, *Narrator w przebraniu, czyli Mistrz Wincenty o bitwie mozgawskiej* [A Narrator in Disguise, i.e. Master Wincenty on the Battle of Mozgawa], [in:] *Onus Athlanteum. Studia nad Kroniką biskupa Wincentego* [Studies in Bishop Wincenty's Chronicle], eds. A. Dąbrówka and W. Wojtowicz, Warszawa 2009, p. 432. I will refer to Banaszkiewicz's research later in the text.

supporting incomplete stories or memories with adequate writing measures. Wojtowicz observes:

> An almost paradigmatic tendency can be found in *Gesta* – everything forgotten by the author (and his informants) is "supplemented" using epic techniques (i.e. written tradition, or at least what was already known as text). […] Whereas in the case of discussing the heritage of oral traditions *tout court*, a different approach dominates, related to searching for alternative formulations and conceptualizations based on already existing lines. This is how a text is "supplemented," deprived of its original integrity by the author's limited memory. The latter tendency does not occur in Gallus […][34]

Although the passage cited above does not directly suggest which epic techniques were used by Gallus, it indicates an important aspect: it is impossible to read historical texts in the spirit of "historiographic literalism." Such a reading would be incomplete.

The analysis of short self-presentations of the changing authors of *Kronika Pisarzy Miasta Poznania*[35] [Writers' Chronicle of the City of Poznań] offers equally interesting results. They display (sometimes imperfect) rhetorical skills. For instance: "Ego Lucas canonicus ecclesie s. Marie in Srzoda et altarista Poznaniensis […] assumsi stilum notariatus civitatis," or Mikołaj Ruczel insisting that "stilum civitatis Poznanie suscepi."[36] This is neither formal, nor documentary. It is thus clear that the authors have more to offer than a "usual" story about the past.

In Jacek Banaszkiewicz's research, text (this term is used here completely consciously) takes a unique place. In the analysis of his *modus procedendi*, Jan Pomorski aptly observed that the analysis of the narrative scheme takes the central position.[37] It is relatively easy to notice this in reference to a chronicle, but Banaszkiewicz traces individual issues shared by seemingly distant cycles of chronicles (Roman, Germanic, Iranian), discovering a coherent line of thought showcasing the unchanging human im-

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[34] W. Wojtowicz, *"Nobis hoc opus recitate". Kilka uwag o fikcji oralności w Kronice Anonima tzw. Galla* [Some Remarks on the Fiction of Orality in the Chronicle by the So-called Gallus Anonumous], [in:] *Nobis operique favete. Studia nad Gallem Anonimem* [Studies in Gallus Anonymous], eds. A. Dąbrówka, E. Skibiński, and W. Wojtowicz, Warszawa 2017, pp. 299–300.

[35] I used an old edition written in original languages: *Die Chronik der Stadtschreiber von Posen*, hg. von A. Warschauer, "Zeitschrift der Historischen Gesellschaft für Provinz Posen", Jg. 2 (1886), pp. 185–220, 313–328, 393–408; Jg. 3 (1888), pp. 1–52.

[36] For more on this topic, see my book *Struktury narracyjne w późnośredniowiecznych łacińskich kronikach regionalnych* [Narrative Structures in Late-medieval Regional Latin Chronicles], Gniezno 2001, pp. 46–47.

[37] "In the chronicle by Gallus Anonymous, Banaszkiewicz, in contrast to all historians before him, is interested exclusively in the narrative structure: Gallus's role as an observer and narrator", J. Pomorski, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

agination.[38] The process of arriving at this conclusion is even more interesting; it is based on searching for small, complete narrative units. Combining them allows a clear scheme to be obtained (i.e. a constructivist devise[39]). He notices similarities between Wincenty Kadłubek's patriotism found in the prologue, and patriotism proved by the actions of Manius Curius Dentatus, who dismissed Samnite and Sabine envoys offering him gold; he preferred his faithful soldiers, sending the envoys away while eating baked turnip.[40] Another example comes from Gallus Anonymous's Chronicle: Banaszkiewicz draws a parallel between the praise for his reception in Gniezno expressed by Otto III, and Saba visiting Salomon.[41]

Such constatations are possible only through consciously reading historical sources through a literary lens, though treating it as literature. It is an important decision, as it has practical consequences, allowing the use of the toolset available to contemporary literary studies.[42]

One of Banaszkiewicz's most interesting ideas was about applying methods from studying the cohesion of the text of *Kronika Dzierzwy* [Dzierzwa's Chronicle]. The research tool used directly for literary, but also non-literary texts – as evidenced by numerous studies[43] – was consciously used for analyzing a medieval chronicle, which, due to its compilatory character, has proved controversial in terms of composition and originality. For this reason, using such a non-standard tool in reference to a text of poor artistic value allowed an insight into its deeper layer.[44]

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[38] This is evident in the analysis of the legend about Popiel, in the tower and water are the most important elements, found in numerous geographically distant accounts, rather than the mice. See J. Banaszkiewicz, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu. Studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi* [The Legend of Piast and Popiel: A Comparative Study in Early Medieval Dynastic Tradition], Warszawa 1986, pp. 156–194.

[39] A. Russi, *L'arte e le arti: saggio di un'estetica della memoria e altri saggi*, Pisa 1960 is the starting point for such an understanding of constructivism. A. Dąbrówka caused quite a stir with *Konstruktywizm w badaniach literatury dawnej* [Constructivism in Studying Literature of the Past], "Nauka" 2009, no. 3, pp. 133–154.

[40] J. Banaszkiewicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne Mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka* [Polish Fairytale Legends by Master Wincenty Kadłubek], Wrocław 1998, pp. 7–35.

[41] J. Banaszkiewicz, *W stronę rytuałów i Galla Anonima* [Towards Rituals and Gallus Anonymous], Kraków 2018, pp. 322–343.

[42] See P. Bohuszewicz, *Po co literaturze dawnej współczesna teoria* [Why Literature of the Past Needs Modern Theory], "Litteraria Copernicana" 2008, no. 2, pp. 9–27 – an instructive, if somewhat controversial paper.

[43] There is abundant literature on this problem, but I would like to mention one monograph: A. Bogusławski, *Problems of the Thematic-Rhematic Structure of Sentences*, Warszawa 1977.

[44] J. Banaszkiewicz, *Kronika Dzierzwy. XIV-wieczne kompendium historii ojczystej* [Dzierzwa's Chronicle: Fourteenth-century Compendium of Polish History], Wrocław 1979. Pay attention especially to tables presenting the chronicler's compilation technique.

Such a way of reading texts, somewhat "heretical" and broadly understood as non-literary, uncovers what Henryk Markiewicz called the 'additional dimensions of a text'. Associations can be even more surprising: Banaszkiewicz managed to draw parallels between medieval chroniclers and Quentin Tarantino. For this reason, Pomorski proposes to refer to his work as "historiographic bizarre stories," identifying a similarity to the thought and work of Olga Tokarczuk.[45]

Banaszkiewicz consciously juxtaposes legends, well-established in high literary culture, with their travesties, compilations, etc., and legends passed on by less educated people. Therefore, it should not be surprising that when considering the scheme of writing about Piast known from Polish chronicles, he will relate it to *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, the brothers Grimm's fairy tales, and to the significance of hospitality to Romans, Germanic and Slavic peoples. Additional arguments are provided by historical linguistics.[46] It needs to be mentioned that Banaszkiewicz was inspired by Georges Dumézil, *Morphology of the Folktale* by Vladimir Propp, and Émile Benveniste's research into Proto-Indo-European.[47] In the introduction to one of his last works, Banaszkiewicz outlines his attitude to research:

> I think the most interesting thing is when a researcher converses with the source and illustrates this conversation in their paper as clearly as possible, rather than forcibly extracting facts from a source only to recite them with pathos. It is better to tell a story about how one studies a matter than to confidently state what it was like, and create mirages out of historical facts, skillfully (this is irony) reconstructed by a historian from sources.[48]

Such an understanding of historical sources paves the way to using methods traditionally applied to literature in analyzing source texts, especially historiographic ones. Such methods can help explain issues impossible to analyze using the traditional toolset of history. For decades (if not centuries) scholars have been debating the question of Sallusius's credibility: his way of writing, especially in the *proemium* (preface), allows an immediate insight into his preferences and assumptions.[49] However, this does not make research easier, because it is impossible to relate this peculiar manifesto directly to the historiographic narrative.

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[45] J. Pomorski, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145.

[46] J. Banaszkiewicz, *Podanie o Piaście…*, pp. 131–136.

[47] *Ibidem*.

[48] J. Banaszkiewicz, *W stronę rytuałów…*, pp. 8–9.

[49] H. Appel, *Z problematyki proemium do "Coniuratio Catilinae" Salustiusza* [The Issue of the Proemium to "*Coniuratio Catilinae*", [in:] *Łacińska proza naukowa* [Latin Scientific Prose], ed. A.W. Mikołajczak, Gniezno 2001, pp. 162–179.

Additionally, Salustius "did not promise to write *sine ira et studio*."[50] Traditional research methods used by historians resulted in numerous mutually exclusive judgments.[51] For example, considerations regarding whether Salustius used official but classified sources[52] sadly did not help determine his credibility as a historian. Therefore, Hanna Appel chose a different path: she compared speeches by Roman politicians (*de facto* reconstructed) found in Salustius's works; however, this was not enough to draw any definite conclusions. She also compared literary (I do not hesitate to use this word) portrayals of protagonists: Cicero, Cato the Younger, Caesar, and others. Only this, together with reading Salustius's meta-textual comments about particular actors allowed her to determine that Salustius "tried" (although sometimes unsuccessfully) to be objective. His major task was "*scribere*, not *proscribere*."[53]

Metatext can be used in different ways in analyzing historical sources. A lot can be deduced about authors' personalities from their autothematic comments. Kazimierz Liman analyzed *Kronika Wielkopolska* [Wielkopolska Chronicle] years ago, pointing to the chronicler's comment regarding the work of medieval historians.[54] For the chronicler, one account is reliable "satis ample et verissime"; another one, not so much "verius autem creditur"; he clearly distances himself from another one: "Quid autem certi sit, non invenio."[55] Note that in the second example the chronicler highlights his distance to the popular belief (using the passive voice), and in the last one, he clearly stresses his own opinion which is in opposition to the popular opinion.

If every text can be read considering the categories of sender, receiver, and channel, there is no contraindication to apply this strategy to historical texts. After all, **somebody** talks to **somebody** via **some channel**. Jerzy Topolski's definition of a historical source is useful here. Such a model of literary communication, enriched with non-textual elements (e.g. the chronicler's education and environment), but based on elements of a text in

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[50] See also H. Appel, *Animus liber. Kwestia obiektywizmu w pisarstwie historycznym Sallustiusza* [Animus Liber: The Question of Objectivity in Salustius's Historical Writing], Toruń 2004, p. 211.

[51] For a review of those opinions, see *ibidem*, pp. 7–18.

[52] As pointed out by I. Lewandowski, *Historiografia rzymska* [Roman Historiography], Poznań 2007, pp. 122–126.

[53] H. Appel, *Animus liber…*, p. 217.

[54] K. Liman, *Autothematisches in der „Chronica Poloniae Maioris"*, [in:] *Studien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters Jürgen Petersohn zum 65. Geburtstag*, hg. von M. Thumser, A. Wenz-Haubfleisch, P. Wiegand, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 302–310.

[55] *Ibidem*, p. 306.

which metatext, paratext and text can be distinguished, has been proposed by Kazimierz Liman.[56]

At the same time, this is an attempt at building an intellectual bridge between a "raw" historical account, and the world of literature, which should provide intellectual pleasure.[57]

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[56] K. Liman, *Das literarische Kommunikations-Modell in den mittellateinischen Chroniken*, [in:] *Conference The Medieval Chronicle – Die mittelalterliche Chronik – La chronique médiévale*, Utrecht 1996, pp. 56–58 (abstract) and full version: *Das literarische Kommunikationsmodell in den mittellateinischen Chroniken*, "Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium" 2010, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 23–32.

[57] See R. Barthes, *Przyjemność tekstu* [The Pleasure of the Text], Warszawa 1997.

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