

**Źródłowe podstawy opisu starożytnej Palestyny i Fenicji (Kanaanu)  
w książkach szkolnych polskiego Oświecenia**

**The source basis for the description of ancient Palestine and Phoenicia  
(Canaan) in the textbooks of the Polish Enlightenment**

SUMMARY

The article presents the picture of ancient Palestine and Phoenicia in the textbooks of the Polish Enlightenment and points to the sources on which 18th century authors based their reconstructions of the history of ancient Canaan. In spite of the strong cultural and ethnic ties between the various peoples of ancient Canaan, the 18th century descriptions of the region never presented it as a whole, being quite consistent in separating Hebrew history from the history of the other peoples of the area. This resulted mainly from the fact that Hebrew history was tightly connected with theology, but also from the fact that there was a relative scarcity of sources relating to the history of Phoenicia.

The most comprehensive account of Judaeo-Israeli history in 18th century Poland was contained in *Historia powszechna skrócona* [An abridged general history] by K. Wyrwicz. In his account of the history and culture of ancient Judaea and Israel, Wyrwicz based mainly on the Bible and the apocryphal books of the Septuagint, but also on the works of Josephus Flavius, and perhaps on the Talmud. In his interpretation of sources Wyrwicz followed the Dictionary of the Holy Scripture by A. Calmet. Apart from political history Wyrwicz, in line with the convention of his times, was also concerned with the broadly understood history of culture. His reconstruction of Hebrew history, unlike the historical accounts of other Ancient Oriental countries produced in the 18th century, did not differ dramatically from the current state of knowledge. This has to do with the continuing high value of the sources used by Wyrwicz, and shows that the Hebrews were the only people of the Ancient East whose history could be investigated in a scientific way.

Apart from Wyrwicz's book, a rather cursory account of the region's history, based on the books of the Old Testament, was given in his *Historia polityczna dla szlachetnej młodzieży* [Political history for noble youth] by K.J. Skrzetuski.

Brief outlines of Phoenician history were given by D. Szybiński in his book *Krótkie wiadomości o znakomitszych w świecie monarchiach...* and by K. Skrzetuski in the textbook *Historia powszechna dla szkół narodowych na klasę III*. The only sources for Phoenician history available in the 18th century consisted of copies of a lost work by Philo of Byblos.

In line with the views on the role of history current in the age of Enlightenment, Wyrwicz, Szybiński and Skrzetuski treated the history of Canaan as a way to inculcate in students some universal principles, which, they believed, governed the rise and fall of all states.