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# Asnyk's notebook of rhymes

## Usage of the notebook

In the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow, among Adam Asnyk's preserved documents, under the reference number 7185 I, is the poet's notebook entitled "with sets of words which rhyme."<sup>1</sup> Maria Szybowska included a photograph of a fragment of a page from it in her book entitled *Asnyk znany i nieznan*<sup>2</sup>. It is impossible to define when the notebook was created. At the end of the notebook, the poet wrote "21 January" (sh. 57) and "Thursday, 7 December" with a note "I gave for charcoals 1 PLN" (sh. 57). The managerial nature of the note does not help in establishing its chronology. Neither does the note on sheet 56, where the poet included an "upside down" stanza of a poem, as it was most probably an attempt at a work he eventually abandoned. Some chronology may be defined through the fact that in the record of words which rhymed, Asnyk wrote:

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1 Jagiellonian Library, manuscript, ref no. 7185 I, inventory no. 16261: "Adam Asnyk. Adam Asnyk's notebook with sets of words which rhyme. Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., paper, 12.5 x 6.5 cm, sh. /IV/ 56 (sh. 10 missing). Single-sidedly inscribed sheets: 2." Consecutive segments consisting of several words in the notebook begin in capital letters, words after the first word are written in lower case. Thus, groups of rhymed words form separate paragraphs. The poet did not separate consecutive words using commas, instead he consistently used exclamation marks to indicate imperative and Vocative, and question marks. All proper names begin with an upper-case letter. The final dozen or so sheets are different: the poet (inconsistently) used lower case letters without distinguishing rhyme paragraphs. One paragraph of rhymed words includes from 2 to 9 words, in each sheet Asnyk included 6–9 paragraphs on average. In this article, I will use the locations of quotations from the notebook directly after the quotation stating the number of the sheet. Due to the documentary qualities of the author's language (phonetics and spelling), I retained the poet's notes in their original form, without any linguistic modifications. I also retained the exclamation marks after some words as that way the poet defined grammatical categories. [Unless specified otherwise, English versions translated from Polish]

2 M. Szybowska, *Asnyk znany i nieznan*, Warsaw: PIW, 1971, photograph 86 (between pages 768 and 769).

*Herod sierot Pierrot* [Herod orphaned Pierrot] (sh. 27)

*Proletariat warjat sekretariat* [Proletariat nut secretariat] (sh. 41)

Rhyme couples: *Herod – orphaned* and *nut – proletariat* can be found in Asnyk's 1890 poem entitled *Historyczna nowa szkoła*:

Jasną gwiazdą lśni despotyzm  
I wychodzi czysto na wierzch  
Targowicy patriotyzm...  
Gdyż Kościuszko to był *wariat*,  
Co buntował *proletariat*!

I tak dalej... i tak dalej...  
Coraz śmielsze wnioski przędzie  
I nicując dawne sądy,  
Nie powstrzyma się w zapędzie,  
Aż dowiedzie, że król *Herod*  
Dobroczyńcą był dla *sierot*<sup>3</sup>

Brightly shines despotism  
And emerges right away  
Targowica's patriotism...  
As Kościuszko was a *nut*,  
Instigating *proletariat*!

Et cetera... et cetera...  
Ever bolder claims he raises  
Capping old judgements,  
He cannot curb his impulses,  
Until he proves king *Herod*  
was a benefactor for the *orphaned*

The rhyme couple *rooster – stupor* (sh. 42) can be found in an 1894 poem entitled *Przyczynowość*:

Nasz rozum, ułatwiając poznanie zagadki,  
Wiąże następujące po sobie wypadki  
I związek zależności przeprowadza ścisły  
W szeregu, co najbliższej podpada pod zmysły.

<sup>3</sup> A. Asnyk, "Historyczna nowa szkoła", in: idem, *Poezje wybrane*, Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1960, pp. 404–405.

Więc o zjawiskach twierdzi w dochodzeniu krótkiem,  
 Że jedno jest przyczyną, a drugie jest skutkiem.  
 Szukając zaś przyczyny, często nasza wiedza  
 Bierze za nią fakt błahy, co skutek poprzedza,  
 I gotowa nauczać, że sprawcą *niepogód* –  
 Był piejący przed deszczem na podwórzu *kogut*<sup>4</sup>

Our mind, making it easier to solve puzzles,  
 Connects consecutive events  
 And draws strong associations  
 In a line between what falls best under senses.  
 So, on phenomena it states in a short consult,  
 That one is the cause and the other the result.  
 While seeking the cause, often our mind  
 Accepts it to be a minor fact which precedes the find,  
 And is ready to announce that the originator of the *stupor* –  
 Was a crowing *rooster*

In tracing those rare combinations, one might also find other repetitions, though not as original. The notebook entry *Eros cigarette polianthes* (sh. 23) can be found in a poem from (1895?<sup>5</sup>) *Szkic do współczesnego obrazu...*

W ogrodzie strojnym w rzeźb klasycznych szereg,  
 Pełnym róż, mirtów, jaśminów, *tuberoz*,  
 W gronie wykwintnych paziów i pasterek  
 Renesansowy cicho stąpa *Eros*<sup>6</sup>

In a garden adorned with a row of classic sculptures,  
 Full of roses, myrtle, jasmine, *polianthes*,  
 In the company of exquisite pages and shepherds,  
 Quietly trods the Renaissance *Eros*

4 A. Asnyk, "Przyczynowość", in: *Poezje wybrane*, p. 411.

5 I inserted the question mark for the generally accepted date of creation of the work, though 1895 is certain only as the date when the poem was published. There are several indications for treating the dates of its creation and publication disjointly. Vide T. Budrewicz, "Asnyk między symbolizmem a socjalizmem (Przeoczone konteksty 'Szkicu do współczesnego obrazu')", *Prace Polonistyczne* 2000, p. 55, pp. 81–112; T. Budrewicz, *Rymowane spory: Asnyk*, Krakow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP, 2015, pp. 172–186.

6 A. Asnyk, "Szkic do współczesnego obrazu ofiarowany Jackowi Malczewskiemu", in: *Poezje wybrane*, p. 433.

The rhyme couple *prosperity – residency* (sh. 27) can be found in a poem created almost at the same time (1896) entitled *W loży*:

Socjalistyczny trybun Pankracy,  
Co w karczmie stały ma *pobyt*,  
Naucza rzesze, że im mniej pracy,  
Tym większy będzie *dobrobyt*<sup>7</sup>

The Socialist tribune Pankracy,  
With tavern as his permanent *residency*,  
Teaches crowds that the less work there is,  
The greater *prosperity*

In sheet 22 the poet recorded a series of words: *chorąży* (*ensign*), *krąży* (*circles*), *dąży* (*moves*), *ciąży* (*weighs*), *wydrąży* (*drill*), *pogrąży* (*immerse*). Almost exactly the same combination appears in sonnet XXI in the series *Nad głębiami* (1887):

W coraz to wyższe przeradza się wzory  
Pył ożywiony, co w przestrzeniach *krąży*;  
Ledwie się w cieniu śmiertelnym *pogrąży*,  
Wnet go z martwośći świt rozbudzi skory.

Śmierć – to ciągłego postępu *chorąży*!  
Który na nowe świat prowadzi tory,  
Wschodzącym kielkom usuwa zapory  
I z rzeszą istot w nieskończoność *dąży*<sup>8</sup>

Transforms into ever higher patterns  
Animate dust, which in space *circles*;  
Barely in the deadly shadow *immerses*,  
Immediately the eager dawn shall wake it from death.

Death – the continued progress' *ensign*!  
Who leads the world onto new tracks,  
Removes the hurdles from emerging sprouts  
And into eternity with a crowd of beings *moves*

<sup>7</sup> A. Asnyk, "W loży", in: *Poezje wybrane*, p. 448.

<sup>8</sup> A. Asnyk, "Nad głębiami", in: *Poezje wybrane*, p. 383.

On that basis one can conclude that there exists a high correspondence between the theoretical combinations of rhymes recorded by Asnyk and his output in the last decade of his life. That, however, does not settle the question whether the notebook with rhyme combinations served him as a tool, a database which he used when he lacked inspiration, or quite the opposite: he recorded in it proposed rhyme sets which he had already used, and which functioned well. The notebook's content is undoubtedly associated with Asnyk's own works, which is why it can be analysed in the context of his poetic output. If the linguistic resources of a language are considered as raw material, and the selection of specific words becomes a prefabricated element, then the final outcome (i.e. the poem) is a product. Since Asnyk filled his notebook with possible combinations of word consonances, it becomes clear that he considered rhymes an important matter, worth the time and effort. The notebook can also shed new light on the matter of rhymes in Asnyk's works.

### Asnyk's rhymes

Asnyk was considered the "master of rhyme and rhythm" whose achievements equaled the foremost "paragons of the past."<sup>9</sup> Even Piotr Chmielowski agreed with that, for even though he was critical of Asnyk the poet for a long time, and only eventually confirmed his greatness, he did not have to change his opinion of Asnyk's rhymes, as from the very beginning he posited that the poet "toyed with the problems of rhyming with extreme ease."<sup>10</sup> According to Eugeniusz Kucharski "Asnyk could easily be considered a true virtuoso" when one considered his rhymes alone, but he added that Asnyk was no virtuoso as he overused "incomplete rhymes, calculated for a careless pronunciation of endings."<sup>11</sup> He would explain such rhymes as: *krainę – sine* (land – blue), *na nowo – różową* (anew – rosé) with "an almost total loss of final nasals in everyday speech of the educated general popular." At the same time, he stated that

9 L. Belmont, "O prawdę", *Prawda* 1897, issue 37, p. 443. It was a polemic towards A.G. Bem's opinion included in Asnyk's obituary (*Prawda* 1897, issue 33–35). In his response to Belmont, Bem indicated that sonnet XIX from the series *Nad głębiami* was failed in terms of versification as the "constantly repeated suffix *-em* exacted a deadly blow to the poem"; in sonnet XVIII he saw "monotonous repetitions of participles" and "and an excess of sounds: *ę, q* – 26 nasal vowels in 14 poems is a tad too much" – A.G. Bem, "O prawdę. Odpowiedź p. Leo Belmontowi", *Prawda* 1897, issue 39, p. 466.

10 P. Chmielowski, *Zarys literatury polskiej z ostatnich lat szesnastu*, Vilnius: Wydawnictwo Elizy Orzeszkowej i spółki, 1881, p. 176. The evolution of the critics views on Asnyk's poetry was discussed by: K. Wóycicki, *Asnyk wśród prądów epoki (Materiały i opracowanie): Próba bibliografii pism Asnyka*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Kasy im. Mianowskiego, 1931, pp. 26–30, 48–52 and D.M. Osiński, "Dziewiętnastowieczne ratowanie ciągłości. Poezja Adama Asnyka w refleksji Piotra Chmielowskiego", *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* 19 (39): 2012, pp. 125–140.

11 E. Kucharski, *Twórczość liryczna Asnyka*, Krakow: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1924, p. LXIII.

It would be difficult to consider in the literary language of today the following as perfect rhymes: *złowrogiej – trwogi, rozkoszy – rozprószy, znikomej – ogromy, dalej – fali* (*Oda*), *młodzieńczą – jęczą* (e.g. *Wierzba*), *liści – czyściej* (*Noc p. W.*), *ostatniej – bratni* (*Przem. czas.*), *zaskoczą – oczom* (*Noc p. W.*), etc. And those were the kinds of imperfect rhymes, sometimes transitioning into assonances [!], that Asnyk often used<sup>12</sup>.

One could bitterly remark: Asnyk could had been the master of rhymes if Kucharski was not prejudiced against assonances and imperfect rhymes, and the fact that a severe battle over assonances as a new trend or a fad in poetry broke out in Poland when Kucharski was researching Asnyk<sup>13</sup>. Kucharski supported perfect rhymes, while Asnyk, who was departing from the principle, displayed excellent artistic intuition and preceded the style which triumphed after World War I.<sup>14</sup> Kucharski also stated that Asnyk's works included poems devoid of grammatical rhymes, while in fact the poet did use that kind of rhyme "but did not abuse it."<sup>15</sup> Maria Grzędzińska calculated, with the stipulation that Felicjan M. Faleński was the master of versification in post-January Uprising poetry, that grammatical rhymes in Asnyk's poetry exceeded 60% of the total stock of rhymes, i.e. twice as much as in Franciszek Krupiński's works.<sup>16</sup> The high frequency of grammatical rhymes was justified by the song-related needs of phrasing. Therefore, despite the general conviction that Asnyk was a "master of rhyming"<sup>17</sup>, there were many nuanced opinions, for which it was difficult to define whether they were based on sufficiently extensive (and representative) material, or whether those clearly original views discussed only some (random) qualities of the specific delivery of the poet.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, LXIV.

<sup>13</sup> The course of the dispute that engaged both poets and renowned linguists was discussed by L. Pszczołowska, "Boje o rym", *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1970, col. 4, pp. 161-177.

<sup>14</sup> L. Pszczołowska, *Wiersz polski: Zarys historyczny*, Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1997, p. 268 indicated the imperfect rhyme in Asnyk's works as an example of a minor break "in the once strong foundation of the perfect rhyme". Asnyk's contribution to the opening of Polish poems to the imperfect rhyme was overlooked by Stanisław Furmanik, who in his grand monograph entitled *Podstawy wersyfikacji polskiej (Nauka o wierszu polskim)*, Warsaw-Krakow: Wydawnictwo Eugeniusza Kothana, 1947, p. 223, posited that the imperfect rhyme was, in principle, used by the "first probably Young Poland poets."

<sup>15</sup> E. Kucharski, *Twórczość liryczna Asnyka*, p. LXII.

<sup>16</sup> M. Grzędzińska, "Grammatyka i instrumentowka polskiej rymowki w XIX wieku", in: *Poetics, Poetyka, Poetika*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966, p. 308.

<sup>17</sup> M. Giergielewicz, *Rym i wiersz*, London 1957, p. 105.

<sup>18</sup> M. Giergielewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 105 wrote that Asnyk "sought out rich consonances; in the case of a vowel-final prefix, he tried to find support in a consonant", a striking phenomenon of his art of rhyming was the smoothing out of a poem in order for the "rhymes to match the poetic flow perfectly" and not to create a sense of artificiality. Another opinion could be considered

A side effect of the analysis of the catalogue of rhyming words may be the emphasis of the still unclear problems with the relations between the notion of “a rhyming word” (“rhyme vocabulary” or “lexeme content”<sup>19</sup>) and a rhyme, i.e. a part of a word in which “identical or similar sound sets are repeated”<sup>20</sup> (the rhyme component). Linguistic (lexical and grammatical<sup>21</sup>) analyses of rhymes apply to a word, yet one can find opinions which state that a rhyme is a “coda consonance of words, usually used in verse endings” being one type of phone instrumentations, while its role is to constitute the “keystone of two layers of the structure of a work of literature: instrumentational and prosodical.”<sup>22</sup> Contrary to Władysław Lubaś’ optimistic position (“The category of the rhyme has in our knowledge base such discerning and strong definitions, that any re-assignment or detailed discussion of those seems the proverbial waste of time”<sup>23</sup>), the suspension of analytic studies into rhymes in poems along with superficial partial discussions on the theories of rhymes resulted in a situation where textbook classifications of rhymes do not respect the definition itself.<sup>24</sup> Fortunately, the most recent academic textbooks utilise

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as a covert polemic with Kucharski, though the fact of assigning Asnyk with rationalised versification decisions remains unsupported: “It was, however, Asnyk’s intention to exclude consonances which are tonally imperfect yet are justified linguistically [...] The poet was also aware of the futility of using fanciful consonances in completely emotional works.” (p. 105)

- 19 I. Nowakowska-Kempny, “Struktury składniowe a rym”, in: *Język Artystyczny* Vol. 3, Katowice 1985, p. 66: “I understand a rhyme as a pair of rhyming words” [...] Some researchers understand a rhyme only as the rhyming area, i.e. a part of a word, not the whole word.” Cf. K. Wrońska, “Próba leksykalnego opisu rymu ‘Jerozolimy wyzwolonej’”, in: *Język Artystyczny* Vol. 1, Katowice 1978, pp. 78–79.
- 20 aos [A. Okopień-Sławińska], “Rym”, in: *Słownik terminów literackich*, J. Sławiński (ed.), Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1976, p. 385.
- 21 W. Lubaś, *Rym Jana Kochanowskiego: Próba lingwistycznej charakterystyki i oceny*, Katowice: University of Silesia, 1975.
- 22 W.J. Darasz, *Mały przewodnik po wierszu polskim*, Krakow: Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego, 2003, pp. 185–186. Such an absolute statement prevents any questions regarding the creative and semantic functions of a rhyme. Furthermore, it invalidates rhyme classifications based on grammatical categories. That was the consistency with which S. Furmanik operated in *Podstawy wersyfikacji polskiej* (identifying only the perfect rhyme and the imperfect rhyme). But even he did in practice use the notion of a grammatical rhyme and considered parts of speech in organising them – vide S. Furmanik, “O polskiej prozie rymowanej”, in: *Słowo i obraz*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1967, p. 40.
- 23 W. Lubaś, *Rym Jana Kochanowskiego...*, p. 12.
- 24 It is worth mentioning that K. Wóycicki, the classic researcher of Polish poetry, in his 1912 cornerstone monograph entitled *Forma dźwiękowa prozy polskiej i wiersza polskiego* (re-released by Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe in Warsaw in 1960 – this is the edition that I am quoting from), posited that the term rhyme is used to mean two things (p. 136), and he claimed that “in order for a rhyme to form, compliance is required between certain sounds, i.e. final,

a formula which does not propagate multiple redundant doubts: “**Rhyme** – the consonance of final couples of words, a device consisting of matching words with recurring phone sets in their endings (the so-called *rhyme components*)”<sup>25</sup>. The content of Asnyk’s notebook re-emphasises the notion of a word when considering the notion of a rhyme.

Asnyk’s notebook can be considered as an original, non-organised, most probably intuitive, yet confirmed in the material form, idealistic concept (the word “theory” would probably be an overstatement) of the rhyme, organic in terms of the lexical layer, i.e. not offering an answer for the major questions on the function of rhymes in a poem. Despite that limitation, one can notice that in choosing rhyming words, Asnyk considered linguistic correctness. He shared the position with other writers of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup>. The main objective was to ensure the purity of language (avoid borrowings), and consider literary language as the basis of communication between people of diverse regional traditions<sup>27</sup>. What is striking is the near lack of Russian borrowings, which had already been found in literature before (*durak* – sh. 31, *zwozycznyk* – sh. 34, *sowietnik* – sh. 38) and the complete lack of German borrowings, with instead a high frequency of words borrowed from Latin, Greek, and French. The large group of scholarly lexis (the culture of antiquity, classic literature, proper names referring to global geography and general history) might indicate the model of “drawing room Polish”, a cy-

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while other neighbouring, i.e. the beginnings of words, remain discordant; a rhyme requires a non-rhyme.” In that approach “a rhyme is the compliance of endings of words discordant in their beginnings, and, as a result, different in terms of their contents.” (p. 137) At the same time Edward Leszczyński, a poet and a researcher of poetry, in a study entitled *Harmonia słowa: Studium o poezji*, Krakow 1912, wrote almost identically about the rhyme, i.e. that it is “co-sonance of different words.” (p. 81) “Diversity” as a *sine qua non* of a rhyme, apart from “similarity”, was accepted after Wóycicki by Józef Gołąbek, *Sztuka rymowania*, Lviv–Warsaw: Książnica Atlas, 1939, pp. 37–38. Furmanik (*Podstawy wersyfikacji polskiej...*, pp. 208–209) raised a serious counter-argument against Wóycicki’s concept, though he himself used the notions of “rhyme” and “word” interchangeably (p. 209). Giergielewicz indicated the restrictive implications of Furmanik’s position and the excessive permissiveness in terms of meaning consequences of Wóycicki’s final definition, which was why he considered Wóycicki’s initial position, that a rhyme is the “compliance of the final sounds of a poem or its part” or “only those very endings sounding identically” (M. Giergielewicz, *Rym i wiersz*, p. 11) more accurate. That, however, was only a way to avoid considering the problem of the part of a word prior to the stress, from which the rhyme area begins.

25 D. Korwin-Piotrowska, *Poetyka: Przewodnik po świecie tekstów*, Krakow: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2011, p. 281 (author’s emphasis).

26 Cf. T. Budrewicz, „Lalka”: *Konteksty stylu*, Krakow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1990, pp. 10–41 (chapter *Między gramatyką a estetyką*; it includes a larger bibliography on the scope of the views on linguistic culture in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.)

27 R. Zawiliński, “O poprawności języka”, *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1893, Vol. 1, pp. 367–368, 370–371.



pher of the Intelligentsia as the model of the recommended language, and a sign of social prestige.<sup>28</sup> In terms of meaning, the register proves a quality of Asnyk's poetic language which has been known for many years, defined as a lack of "optical vision of a specific shape", the "blurred visibility of an item", and an "idealised abstraction."<sup>29</sup> It seems striking that there are no erotic and frivolous items (one exception, and even hardly that, is the word pair inscribed in sh. 42 *zagość/nagość* (stay! bare) – while an indirect proof of corporeality is the following infinitive *zeszczupleć* (become slim)). Another striking fact is the near lack of obscenity, one exception being:

*jakość, psiakość* [quality, damn]  
*klamać, łamać, psiamać* [lie, snap, darn] (sh. 36).

What is typical, then, are Asnyk's immediate strikes of words which came to his mind (sometimes, though rarely, he would passionately blur out a word as if trying to forget the very possibility of having that association, e.g. sh. 28):

*Klamrze, zamrze* [Buckle, die] (sh. 4)  
*zwalisk, wykopalisk* [ruins, excavations] (sh. 22)  
*meteor, przeor, confiteor* [meteor, prior, Confiteor] (sh. 26)  
*chlewik, trzewik* [sty, shoe] (sh. 54)  
*słownik, wojownik, buntownik* [dictionary, warrior, rebel] (sh. 56)

For some reason he considered them inappropriate for rhyme pairs. It could not have been for the reasons of phonetics (difficulty with articulation) since in other cases Asnyk virtually toyed with combinations of words generally considered challenging in terms of their articulation (e.g. *na rozścież* [widely], *proścież* [beg] – sh. 46; *pieprzę* [pepper], *wieprze* [hogs], *lepsze* [better], *odeprze* [fend off], *przeprze* [press through], *Dnieprze* [Dnieper] – sh. 33). Therefore, one may assume that the poet abandoned those examples because he perceived such combinations as violations of the principle of fitness. Maybe Asnyk recorded the associations that came to his mind and immediately afterwards saw in such combinations something which he considered an aesthetic and ethical dissonance? The shortage of material prevents me from drawing a hypothesis which can be justified in a convincing manner. Nor is there a good answer to the question of why Asnyk recorded

<sup>28</sup> E. Umińska-Tytoń, *Polszczyzna dziewiętnastowiecznych salonów*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2011, p. 251.

<sup>29</sup> M. des Loges, *Słowo w poezji Asnyka (szkic z pogranicza semantyki i stylistyki)*, offprint from *Księga pamiątkowa ku uczczeniu czterdziestolecia pracy naukowej prof. dra Juliusza Kleinera*, Łódź: Towarzystwo Literackie im. A. Mickiewicza, 1949, pp. 380–381.

individual words without their rhyming counterparts. Maybe at the moment of writing them he was not able to find the right consonance. He was probably not planning on returning to those, as otherwise he would have left considerable space for adding chains of words. Asnyk recorded the following words without their rhyming pairs: *kudły* [shag] (sh. 5), *Apelles* (sh. 28), *kanal* [canal] (sh. 29), *Helikonikon* (sh. 31), *zapobiedz* [prevent] (sh. 32), *ciężki* [heavy] (sh. 35), *gospodyń* [hostesses] (sh. 41), *wnucząt* [grandkids] (sh. 42), *Zabrze* (sh. 48), *waszeć* [Thou] (sh. 48), *kwiecień* [April] (sh. 54).

### Rhyme micro-forms

Some of Asnyk's entries organised the register of words in clear verse pre-forms. Apparently, the poet organised the associations coming to his mind in line with mnemonic techniques, following the micro-logic forms present in everyday speech. Therefore, the main function of the notes was to reinforce consonance associations, and, additionally, to organise those words. That resulted in micro-texts. There is no doubt the poet saw those textual outcomes because the punctuation he used when recording them corresponds to sentence structure, and the models can usually be clearly divided into phrases with equal numbers of syllables:

*Kiełbie we łbie* [Fish in your brain] (sh. 32)

*Ty się nie leń rozweselań* [Don't be lazy get crazy] (sh. 13).

*Ocen Miocen, on jest mocen* [Miocene of opinions, he is strong] (sh. 3).

It was probably by accident that he created a micro-form which could be considered a simple couplet (Asnyk, began the second line in lower case, as if intentionally creating a syntactic whole, which is uncommon in the notes. Another hypothesis is that the random outcome of structuring was caused by an idiosyncrasy of not separating words with punctuation marks):

*Oryginał zaczynał* [Original started]

*final wspominał* [finale reminisced] (sh. 17).

*Ruda, chuda, nuda* [Red, lean, boredom]

*obłuda, cuda, wielkoluda* [cant, wonders, giant,]

*uda, gdy się uda* [thighs if it not fails] (sh. 13; possible frivolous meaning).

The poet was surely testing the rhyming potential of grammatical categories matching nouns and verbs. The result was an enumeration with a somewhat intentionally rhythmic organisation:

*nahaj, wahaj, machaj* [whip, hesitate, wave]  
*kahał, wahał, machał* [qahal, hesitated, waved] (sh. 14).

Most probably, the creation of the rhythmic quasi-formulas was also random when the poet matched rhyming homonyms:

*połów, z dwóch połów*<sup>30</sup> [catch, from two halves] (sh. 7).  
*szalej! dalej, szalej*<sup>31</sup>, *alej* [rave! more, cowbane, alleys] (sh. 19).

Since homonyms made their way to Asnyk's sets of rhyming words, we can assume that he considered them as fully-fledged rhymes, not some simple lexical repetitions (the matter was highly debated by poetry researchers). It was no accident that Asnyk was developing the verse seeking a corresponding meaning (proper names firmly set in culture) and, additionally, a rhythm:

*epos – Korneliusz Nepos* (sh. 37)  
*kielich drelich, Anhelich* [goblet, overalls, Anhelich]  
*Marków-Aurelich* (sh. 32).

Once again one might assume that the poet was consciously organizing the words he filled a considerable portion of his notebook with. Thus, he created word chains corresponding to the so-called Behaghel's Law (the principle of increasing elements, a shorter element precedes a longer one):

*jąka, błąka, pająka* [falter, wander, spider]  
*ląka, rozląka, przesiąka* [field, parting, transiting]  
*czyńcie! gińcie! labiryńcie* [act! perish! labyrinth] (sh. 25).

However, the majority of records include directions which suggest that it was less difficult to retrieve words with similar endings when the poet was recalling words from the same thematic field:

*Styczeń, życzeń, ćwiczeń, obliczeń* [January, wishes, practice, calculations]  
*Marzec, starzec, zarzec* [March, oldster, promise]  
*Kwiecień* [April]  
*Kwietnia, letnia, fletnia* [April's, summer's, flute] (sh. 54).

<sup>30</sup> In this case *połów* refers to: 1) catching fish, 2) Genitive of the noun *połowa*.

<sup>31</sup> *Szalej* – 1) the imperative of the verb *szaleć*, 2) a poisonous plant or the poison derived from it.

These seemingly random chains of lexical associations form textualised lexical sets in Asnyk's notebook. It is clear that any action requires some intent (plan), but also that "the aim may be defined once the activity is completed."<sup>32</sup> Maybe the poet, having decided to record a few words, saw not only their meaning-based relationship but also the aesthetic qualities (e.g. humour) they carried:

*parobek, zarobek, nagrobek* [farmhand, earn, tombstone] (sh. 32) [field LABOUR, bitter irony]

*heban, pleban, pogrzeban* [ebony, prior, buried] (sh. 30) [field FUNERAL]

*pijatyk, bijatyk, wiatyk* [drunkard, fights, viaticum] (sh. 25) [field ALCOHOL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, irony]

*pobijem, czyjem, ryjem* [beat up, whose, snout] [field CONFLICT]

*uwijem, kijem, wypijem* [weave, stick, drink] (sh. 46) [field MORALS, ALCOHOL, satire]

*żeński, małżeński, męczeński* [feminine, marital, martyr]

*panieński, reński* [maidenly, Rhiny] (sh. 26). [field MARRIAGE, gag, moral satire]

Asnyk often recorded in his notebook chains of words drawing associations with the European culture of the world of antiquity. The number of nouns in this group is strikingly high. Since, theoretically at least, they were supposed to constitute a stock of potential rhymes in poems; and since we can, based on those registers, discuss the matter of exotic rhymes for Asnyk, there emerges another argument for Zofia Mocarska-Tycowa's thesis about his "classicist taste" (antiquity-based themes, academicism in painting). She proved that the 19<sup>th</sup>-century classicism "was an attempt at organising that period, to tame, through form, its amorphous nature by increasing references to traditions in its most perfect form; an attempt spurred by a fear for an overflow of rubbish and a loss of taste [...] conducted with a deep sense of a growing gap between the values sanctioned by traditions and the times revelling in their achievements and self-complacent."<sup>33</sup> At the same time, numerous traces of classical knowledge in emphasised sections of poems, i.e. rhymes, require one to reference Grzędzińska's en passant remark on the Parnassianistic tendencies in Asnyk's art of the rhyme<sup>34</sup>. Those two positions were not mutually exclusive, on the contrary: "This is where a Parnassist *par excel-*

<sup>32</sup> S. Jaworski, „Piszę, więc jestem”: *O procesie twórczym w literaturze*, Kraków: Universitas, 1993, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Z. Mocarska-Tycowa, *Wybory i konieczności: Poezja Asnyka wobec gustów estetycznych i najważniejszych pytań swoich czasów*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2005, p. 148. The author also discussed the poet's fancy for visual arts. In that respect as well, Asnyk's notebook offers arguments which emphasise the researcher's thesis, because among the rhyming words he included, e.g. *planet* – *Manet* (sh. 17), *Dikens* [!], *Kamoens* [!], *Rubens* (sh. 6), *Laokon* – *cocoon* (sh. 24).

<sup>34</sup> M. Grzędzińska, *Grammatika i instrumentowka...*, p. 308 (the researcher provided as an example a rhyme pair: *Eros* – *polianthes*, *ripped* – *Nirvanas*).

lence speaks: inhabitant of contemporary times full of doubt, who puts above them the golden age of ancient Greek, where the beauty of life was worth a beautiful song and fame after one's death."<sup>35</sup> Interestingly enough, in Asnyk's notebook groups of words with a meaning-based association with the culture of antiquity form the largest sets in terms of sheer numbers, and, at the same time, the most homogeneous (rarely interrupted with lexis from other thematic areas). There are sheets filled solely with such words, as if the poet felt particularly fulfilled imagining being present in the land of classical tradition:

*pean, ocean*  
*Eos, apoteoz*  
*Eros, papieros, tuberoz, [nieczyt.]*  
*flegeton, breton, Maneton,*  
*faeton, kreton*  
*edredon, Fedon,*  
*automedon*  
*Sinai, tai, odzwyczai,*  
*zagai, Himalai, zgrai*  
*ażeby, Teby, pogrzeby,*  
*gleby, potrzeby (k. 23).*

*paeon, ocean*  
*Eos, apotheoses*  
*Eros, cigarette, polianthes, [illegible]*  
*Phlegethon, Breton, Manethon,*  
*phaeton, cretonne*  
*eider, Phaedo,*  
*automedon*  
*Sinai, Thai, wean,*  
*talk, Himalayas, match*  
*if only, Thebes, funerals,*  
*soils, needs (sh. 23).*

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35 A. Mazur, "Obecność parnasistów francuskich wśród przedstawicieli drugiego pokolenia pozytywistów polskich", in: *Z badań nad literaturą i sztuką drugiego pokolenia pozytywistów polskich: Studia i szkice*, Z. Piasecki (ed.), Opole: Opolskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1992, p. 59. The complete concept of the Polish reception of Parnassism was presented by the researcher in her monograph entitled *Parnasizm w poezji polskiej drugiej połowy XIX i początku XX wieku*, Opole: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1993.

In traditional poetry studies, which highly valued rare and fancy rhymes, it was acceptable to use rhymes “from foreign proper names,” and acquired words<sup>36</sup>. The value of similar sets lies in the fact that proper names offer low repeatability, which is why they lessen the monotony of grammatical rhymes<sup>37</sup>. In this group, a separate subgroup is formed by proper names from literature. They proved the poet was erudite and, indirectly, indicated which works became ingrained in his memory the most:

*Rabagas fagas* (sh. 48)  
*cohort – Mohort* (sh. 48)  
*Szylok – epilogue* (sh. 48).

Rhymed literary allusions are rare, as they require very high competence in works of literature. Asnyk used them rarely, referring to commonly known poems by C.K. Norwid and A. Mickiewicz:

**Babylon** [!], *akwilon, Milon, pochylon, zapylon* (sh. 25)<sup>38</sup>  
*sielska, cielska, anielska, zielska, przyjacielska* [idyllic, body, angelic, weeds, friendly] (sh. 5)  
*urna, chmurna, górna, Saturna, poczwórna, kurna, koturna, czupurna, zaskórna* [urn, cloudy, upper, Saturn’s, quadruple, smoky, pumps, defiant, subcutaneous] (sh. 42).

The inclusion of well-known rhymes from Mickiewicz, which occupy a high position in Polish culture, into the register of common, or even non-poetic, words seems like a conscious decision of the poet. Thus, he questioned the foundations of the aesthetics of Romanticism. Another group of rhyme sets proves that within Asnyk’s lexical associations, words traditionally associated with the Romantic concept of a poet indicate the critical distance with which the author of *Nad głębiami* approached Romanticism. Therefore, the stylistic field rather produces a negative inclination:

*trzeszczy, wieszczy, dreszczy, zadeszczy, kleszczy, wrzeszczy* [creaks, prophecies, shivers, rains, clamps, screams] (sh. 41)  
*wieszczym, wrzeszczym* [we prophecy, we scream] (sh. 51)  
*deszczka, wieszczka, mieszczka* [rain, prophet, burger] (sh. 41)

<sup>36</sup> K. Wóycicki, *Forma dźwiękowa prozy polskiej i wiersza polskiego*, p. 146–147 (the researcher offered detailed classifications of similar uses).

<sup>37</sup> K. Wrońska, *Próba leksykalnego opisu rymu „Jerozolimy wyzwolonej”*, p. 84.

<sup>38</sup> Asnyk knew Norwid’s works well and appreciated them highly. Cf. T. Budrewicz, *Rymowane spory: Asnyk*, pp. 129–146.

*piewca, szewca, drzewca* [**singer**, cobbler, wood] (sh. 4)  
*antyk, romantyk, kantyk, Atlantyka* [antique, **romantic**, canticle, Atlantic] (sh. 30)  
*Deotym, złotym* [**Diotimas**, gold] (sh. 38)  
*mimo, zimo! Deotymo* [though, cold! **Diotima**] (sh. 39).

While the content of Asnyk's notebook cannot serve as the basis for discussing his personal anti-Romantic stance, one cannot ignore the fact that the poet's personal notes include many sets of words which prove that he (sometimes?) displayed a self-mocking or even scornful approach to poetic skills and theoretical knowledge of poems. That was exemplified in sets where poetics terms are matched with vocabulary referring to the world in its common, every day, and trivial dimension. Mind you, some immediate associations were discarded by the poet immediately, for he classified them, for some reason, as inappropriate or not offering any hope for their practical application. He did not delete the following ones, so they must have passed his initial evaluation:

*distich* [!], *mglistych* [**distich**, foggy] (sh. 21)  
*epik, sklepik, rzepik* [**proses**, store, velcro] (sh. 21)  
*madrygał, dźwigał, zastygał, migał* [**madrigal**, carried, solidified, flashed] (sh. 21)  
*amfibrach, kolibrach, librach, fibrach* [**amphibrach**, hummingbirds, books, fibres] (sh. 26)  
*jamby, a nam by, dytyramby* [**iamb**s, and us by, dithyrambs] (sh. 26)  
*heksametry, saletry* [**hexameters**, saltpeters] (sh. 26)  
*podje, odje, parodje* [!], *prozodje* [!], *melodje* [!] [eat up, eat out, parodies, **prosodies**, melodies] (sh. 30)  
*sonet, monet, baronet, marjonet* [!], *canconet* [**sonnet**, coins, baronet, marionettes, canconet] (sh. 9).

Similar unexpected combinations of words, leading to surprising semantic contrasts, a surprising outcome, and an atmosphere that undermines the position of notions with pre-established positions in culture (de-valuation), can be found in the following sets:

*satelit, jelit* [satellites, intestines] (sh. 17)  
*soliter, liter, Jupiter* [solitaire, letter, Jupiter] (sh. 19)  
*najad, zajad* [pester, fester] (sh. 20).

"Contrast-based associations," argued Julian Ochorowicz, Asnyk's contemporary, "play a major role in poetry, both in expressions and images, and in the entire

frame of art itself.”<sup>39</sup> In considering the choice of rhymes, Edward Leszczyński claimed that it was all about “dissonance of different words”, which meet somewhat by accident because “words may and should be selected based on some necessity; what may only seem random is the fact that thus selected words include the same sounds in their codas.”<sup>40</sup> Józef Gołąbek offered an interesting explanation for the psychology of associating rhymes:

A question arises whether if in his [the poet’s – T. B.] imagination a thought emerges, simultaneously the proper rhyme for it occurs, too. That seems doubtful. At that point, there rather begins work towards selecting, towards seeking strictly logical relations between the thought and words; if the words do not meet the artist’s expectations, he rejects them and seeks other, i.e. those which do not break his basic idea. [...] a rhyme surely constricts the author, often requiring him to hamper his thoughts, but it also constitutes the first measure of help for thoughts<sup>41</sup>.

The semantic proximity of the rhyming words recorded by Asnyk had another aspect which corresponds to the text theory category of deep cohesion and surface cohesion. Lexical associations, thanks to which he classified words of consonant endings, did not end with the final entry in a chain of words in the quasi-paragraph. The lexical field expanded, repeating some notions which transformed through word-formation and grammatical processes. The locations of those repetitions vary, just as a poem the initial and final positions carry particular significance:

*pierwiastki, gwiazdki, powiastki* [elements, stars, stories]  
*pierwiastek, ciastek, powiastek* [element, cookies, stories] (sh. 6)

*jedwabną, zgrabną, powabną, osłabną, zagabną* [silk, neat, graceful, weak, fit]  
*jedwabie, babie, zagrabię, grabie, osłabię, powabie* [silk, woman, seize, rake, weaken, grace] (sh. 9)

<sup>39</sup> J. Ochorowicz, *O twórczości poetyckiej*, Lviv: Karol Wild, 1877, p. 38.

<sup>40</sup> E. Leszczyński, *Harmonia słowa...*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>41</sup> J. Gołąbek, *Sztuka rymowania*, p. 88. On p. 39 he wrote: “The linking of two or more poems using one rhyme often constitutes a limitation of a thought because a rhyme is intended to associate not only identical syllables, but also two or more words symbolising a notion. In order for the meaning of a poem to be clear, two related notions should appear as rhymes. Sometimes the final syllables of words not related in terms of their meanings rhyme. It is hard to decide whether more valuable are rhymes where the rhyming words are related in terms of their meanings or not.” The analysis of Asnyk’s notebook will not bring one closer to answering that question, but it does highlight the semantic similarity and contrast (unity and diversity) as the principle for grouping the words which enter rhyme relations.



*powietrze, świętopietrze, wietrze, zetrze, obetrze, heksametrze, termometrze, saletrze, bledsze, przewietrzę* [air, Peter's Pence, smell, scrub, rub, **hexameter**, thermometer, **salt peter**, paler, ventilate]

*heksametry, saletry* [**hexameters, salt peters**] (sh. 27)

*draby, słaby, baby, aby, żaby, graby, Saby, powaby, Nababy, antaby* [**scamps**, weak, **women**, so, frogs, hornbeams, Saba's, graces, nawabs, handle]

*babie, wabię, korabie, grabię, drabie, osłabię* [**woman**, lure, korab, rake, **scamp**, weaken] (sh. 7)

*węgle, kręgle, niedosięgle, pocięgle* [**coals**, pins, unreachable, strap]

*zza węgła, dosięgła, przysięgła, rozprzęgła, wylękła* [around the **corner**, reached, promised, loosened, frightened] (sh. 9).

When seeking words with a final consonance, Asnyk also recorded series of words with additional onset consonances, which enriched the rhymes phonetically, but, at the same time, drove him towards monotony:

*puszcze, bluszcze, pluszcze, wpuszczę, dopuszczę, wyluszczę, poduszczę* [forests, ivies, splash, admit, accept, explain, pillow] (sh. 5)

*hula, kula, króla* [revel, ball, king] (sh. 38)

*kaik, kraik, gaik, laik* [dugout, country, grove, amateur] (sh. 43).

Asnyk's notebook draws one's attention to a problem in poetry studies, for which Lucylla Pszczołowska proposed a statistics-based solution. Based on a sample of Asnyk's poetry of 600 verses, she compared the distribution of grammatical forms in verse caesura and ending. She found a significant grammatical stiffening of endings, or even reductions of the forms of conjunctions, prepositions, or infinitives and indeclinable participles. Pszczołowska concluded:

Therefore, a rhyme ousts from verse endings also nominal forms with endings (e.g. *miłości* (love), *pokój* (peace), *marzeń* (dreams), *piekiel* (hell)), infinitives (e.g. *chodzić* (walk), *plakać* (cry)), imperatives (e.g. *prowadź* (lead), *pokaż* (show)), indeclinable participles (e.g. *niosąc* (carrying), *wziąwszy* (having taken)), short adjective forms (e.g. *godzien* (worthy), *winien* (owes)), and adverbs (e.g. *dobrze* (well), *smutno* (sadly))<sup>42</sup>.

Asnyk's notebook includes several combinations of words marked by the poet with exclamation marks, which makes it easier to classify them under specific parts of speech. Therefore, there are:

<sup>42</sup> L. Pszczołowska, *Rym*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1972, pp. 42–43.

## – infinitives

*połać, wołać, podołać* [extent, call, cope] (sh. 14)

*boleć, woleć, poleć!* [ache, prefer, fly!] (sh. 6)

*zaleć! szaleć, zmaleć, ocaleć* [advise! rave, diminish, survive] (sh. 12)

*kłamać, łamać, psiamać* [lie, snap, darn] (sh. 36)

*przebrać, odebrać, zebrać* [change, retake, collect] (sh. 43)

*wymieć! zolbrzymieć* [wipe out! enlarge] (sh. 49)

## – imperatives

*bazalcie, palcie! chwalcie! użalcie! Alcie, szpalcie, Malcie, oddalcie! asfalcie* [basalt, burn! praise! pity! Alta, column, Malta, distance! asphalt] (sh. 14)

*chwaście, paście! gaście!* [weed, forage! put out!] (sh. 6)

*rozwalmy! palmy, chwalmy! oddalmy! psalmy, zapalmy!* [let's destroy! let's burn, let's praise! let's distance! psalms, let's ignite!] [...]

*kałuż, nałóż! załóż!* [puddles, add! put on!] (sh. 8)

*na przebój, zagrzebuj! potrzebuj! nie bój!* [across, bury! need! don't be afraid!] (sh. 13)

*czyńcie! gińcie! labiryńcie* [act! perish! labyrinth] (sh. 24)

## – short (simple) adjective forms

*nasion, wypasion* [seeds, pastured]

*jesion, odniesion* [ash, replaced] (sh. 5)

*szatan, platan, Lewiatan, zbratan, połatan, posplatan, szarlatan, Natan* [Satan, platanus, Leviathan, befriended, patched, intertwined, charlatan, Nathan]

*Babylon* [!], *akwilon, Mion, pochylon, zapylon* (sh. 25)

*zaginion, szynion, minion* [lost, rails, past] (sh. 41)

## – adverbs

*ucznie, włócznie, jutrznie, sztucznie* [students, spears, lauds, fake] (sh. 7)

*mądrze, skądże?* [smartly, why?] (sh. 8)

*bezecznie, niecznie, obecnie* [despicably, ignominiously, currently] (sh. 090).

My verification of the above-mentioned principle by Pszczołowska, based on a sample from Asnyk of 2,000 verses, proved the researcher's findings were only valid for imperatives and indeclinable participles. In his writing, the poet used infinitives in rhymes (e.g. "Slash and shoot!" in *Napad na Parnas*) and quite often adverbs (e.g. "deadly, drowsily, deafly" in sonnet "Czego ci trzeba dziś, posępny tłumie"). Despite the indicated exceptions, the rule noticed by Pszczołowska is, in principle, legitimate. In his poetic practice, Asnyk used only part of the rhyme dictionary. Maybe he expected a broadening of the scale of grammatical forms in rhymes. Since he did not delete those, leaving them as a potential reserve selection of words in rhymes, maybe, at least theoretically, in his imagination, he as-

sumed the possibility of some bolder rhyming experiments, just as he did in terms of rhyme arrangements in sonnets?<sup>43</sup> That would mean that he was an innovator of more than just imperfect rhymes and verse-based rhyme relations, something poetry studies have not yet discussed.

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<sup>43</sup> Antoni Bądzkiewicz in *Teoria poezji polskiej w związku z jej historią opowiedzianą*, new edition, Warsaw: Księgarnia Ungra i Banarskiego, 1875, p. 254 calculated theoretically that there are “six [possible] modes” of arranging terza rima in sonnets. In his series of sonnets entitled *Morskie oko* Asnyk created arrangements that had not been envisaged by Bądzkiewicz.

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Tadeusz Budrewicz

## Asnyka notes z rymami

### *Streszczenie*

Podstawą materiałową artykułu jest notes Adama Asnyka, który przechowuje Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (Oddział rękopisów, sygn. 7185 I, numer inwentarzowy 16261). Zawiera 56 kart zapisanych po stronach recto i verso. Asnyk notował w nim wyrazy, które się rymowały. Używał notesu z gotowymi zestawieniami rymów jako pomocy podczas pisania wierszy. Lista tych wyrazów wykazuje wysoką frekwencję słów przyswojonych z łaciny, greki oraz zapożyczeń francuskich. Dotyczą pojęć abstrakcyjnych, kultury antyku, klasyki literackiej i nazw własnych, które się odnoszą do geografii świata i historii powszechnej. Oznacza to intelektualny i inteligentcki model poezji. W zestawieniach słów częste są asocjacje wskazujące na ironiczną postawę poety wobec romantyzmu. Rymy nie tworzą przypadkowych układów słów o podobnej fonetyce, ale stanowią pola gramatyczne i semantycz-

ne. Analiza notesu Asnyka pozwoliła na sformułowanie wniosków, że: 1) wbrew ustaleniom wersologów Asnyk używał w rymach form gramatycznych nieodmiennych (bezokolicznik, przysłówki); 2) rym niedokładny w polskiej poezji pojawił się wcześniej, niż dotąd sądzono (koniec XIX w.).

**Słowa kluczowe:** Asnyk, wiersz, rym, rękopis, notatki

## Asnyk's notebook of rhymes

### *Summary*

The material basis for the article was Adam Asnyk's notebook, which is presently owned by The Jagiellonian Library in Kraków (Manuscript Archive, 7185I, no. 16261). The notebook contains 56 pages handwritten by Asnyk on both sides of a sheet. Asnyk wrote down the words which rhymed. He made use of the notebook when he needed set rhymes as a tool while composing poems. The list of these words demonstrates a high frequency of words borrowed from Latin, Greek, and French. They apply to abstract nouns, antiquity, literary classics, as well as proper nouns related to world geography and history. All indicates the intellectual and intelligentsia model of his poetry. The sets of words often included associations which emphasised Asnyk's irony towards Romanticism. The rhymes were not accidental sets of words phonetically similar but instead they indicated grammatical and semantic fields. The analysis of Asnyk's notebook enabled the following conclusions: 1) in spite of some scholars' opinions, in his rhymes Asnyk used noninflectional grammatical forms (infinitives, adverbs); and 2) partial rhyme in Polish poetry had appeared earlier than it was commonly assumed (the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

**Keywords:** Asnyk, poem, rhyme, manuscript, notes

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