

**Alina Nowak\***

## **Aleksander Jełowicki (1804–1877) – an Extraordinary among the Extraordinary**

### **Aleksander Jełowicki (1804–1877) – uno straordinario tra gli straordinari**

Il testo è un approccio alla compilazione di informazioni sparse sulla vita e le attività di Aleksander Jełowicki in relazione ai risultati dei suoi contemporanei e del panorama culturale della fine del XIX secolo. L'autrice, partendo dalla teoria della percezione dei materiali d'archivio proposta da Roman Zimand, analizza le fonti primarie che testimoniano la vita e le attività di Jełowicki e delle figure ad esso correlate. All'inizio, l'autrice introduce la figura di Aleksander Jełowicki e l'epoca che lo ha formato. Poi tocca i temi molto importanti dell'emigrazione e delle relazioni interpersonali più significative che hanno influenzato la sua vita e il suo lavoro all'interno della congregazione. Vengono toccati anche i temi dello spazio negli scritti del Resurrezionista e la sua teoria del percorso sacerdotale. Molto importanti per il testo sono i confronti degli scritti di Padre Jełowicki con frammenti di opere letterarie e corrispondenze tra artisti polacchi e attivisti emigrati. Essi compongono un quadro non solo dell'epoca in cui visse il soggetto di questo studio, ma anche del pensiero patriottico che risuona nelle sue sezioni. Grazie alla raccolta di frammenti importanti di lettere, diari e opere, combinati con la riflessione scientifica su di essi contenuta nei lavori dei ricercatori, è stato possibile mostrare la complessa silhouette di una delle figure chiave dell'Ordine Resurrezionista, le cui attività continuano a fornire nuovi campi di ricerca.

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**Parole chiave:** Aleksander Jełowicki, Resurrezionisti, Grande Emigrazione Polacca, XIX secolo, Roman Zimand, Congregazioni.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Aleksander Jełowicki, zmartwychwstańcy, Wielka Emigracja, XIX w., Roman Zimand, kongregacje.

**Keywords:** Aleksander Jełowicki, Resurrectionists, Great Polish Emigration, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Roman Zimand, Congregations.

**S**ome characters enter my personal experience, including reading and cognition in general, and I have the impression, not just by accident, but as if they virtually “forced” me to get to know them. Further, not only to get to know them but also to talk about them. I was taught to “think Norwid” (in the 1980s, the centennial of his death was wisely celebrated through reliably prepared publications). I was taught to recognize and use the method of “seeing differently from those who do not educate the eye” that Wyspiański proposed (at a high school named after him). Gombrowicz, Mrozek, Herbert, not to mention Tischner and Wojtyła (the latter personally) “moved into” the space of meanings and senses. The list can be lengthened (essay aficionados from the best “school of Jerzy Stempowski” know that it would be infinite), and all of them would still lead us to the vast space of thoughts and signs of Romanticism, out of which one can read, equally vast syncretic “Polish thinking”. Sometimes it is the “dry and open narrows with the Akerman’s lamp”<sup>1</sup> the Neman River meanders, the Mazovian wilderness with its individual willow trees, or the dark labyrinths of European cities of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Cracow, where some have never been, but someone, “as if for them,” has been. Aleksander Jełowicki (1804–1877) discovered himself slowly, as if in secret. Perhaps I was blinded by my unexpired admiration for Bogdan Jański’s ideas and his way of thinking and acting (Fr. Bolesław Micewski CR’s first book on him, *Bogdan Jański, założyciel zmartwychwstańców 1807–1840* [*Bogdan Jański, the Founder of the Resurrectionists 1807–1840*], published in 1983, came to me by chance). This was followed by Hieronim Kajsiwicz starting with a fascina-

1 Translation by Leo Yankevich.

tion with a single sonnet (*Sonnet xxxi, Otwórzcie mi księgarnie wszystkich krajów świata... [Open to me the bookstores of all the countries of the world...]*).<sup>2</sup>

It is hard not to hear about Father Piotr Semenenko in Kęty, my hometown, where Resurrectionists' ideas were propagated by Blessed Celina Borzęcka. I "discovered" Jełowicki's portrait and a short biographical note in a CR promotional brochure, with the catchphrase: "Chopin's confessor". On the Internet, I found another: "Norwid dedicated a poem to him", "Wyspiański made him the hero of 'Legion'". Moreover, "he was friends with Maurycy Mochnacki" (another favorite character of mine since the 1980s),<sup>3</sup> and "he published the works of Mickiewicz." By philological integrity, where the method of associations alone is not enough, I was led to the source texts. Who can better tell about their "world" when lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, if not the participant of the events?

Aleksander Jełowicki left *My memoirs*<sup>4</sup> annotated with the date: Paris, on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1838. He also published them in Paris as early as 1839 in two volumes (a year before Bogdan Jański's death!). In 1877, the year of the author's death, Jan Konstanty Żupański published a second, single-volume edition in Poznań. The reader will find on Google the third edition from 1891 (Cracow, published by Księgarnia Spółka Wydawnicza Polska). Here one can already see the "routes" used by Jełowicki to reach further audiences with his ideas. The paperback version, I used edition VI (published by Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1970),<sup>5</sup> a copy of the Poznań edition, is reliable, without an introduction, with extensive footnotes, an index of persons and an index of geographical names, as well as a glossary *Chronicle of life and work*.<sup>6</sup> A second source of understanding the even more intimate world of the author, although translated into a conventional form, became *Letters to Ksaweryna Chodkiewiczowa from the years 1832–1839*<sup>7</sup> translated from the French by Maria Fredro Boniecka. Franciszek German,

2 H. Kajsiewicz, *Sonety*, Kraków 1995.

3 D. Sidorski, *Szalony Jasnowidz czyli rzecz o Maurycym Mochnackim*, Kraków 1977.

4 A. Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia*, Warszawa 1970.

5 Ibid.

6 F. German, *Jełowicki Aleksander*, in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 11, ed. E. Rostworowski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1964–1965, vol. 11, pp. 161–162.

7 A. Jełowicki, *Listy do Ksaweryny. Listy do Ksaweryny Chodkiewiczowej*, transl. M. Fredro-Boniecka, ed. F. German, Warszawa 1964.

the author of the study (with an introduction and footnotes), explains immediately that Jełowicki, an advocate of using the Polish language in personal writing, succumbed to the addressee of the letters.

Why he “succumbed” to women (his mother Honorata, his sister Hortensja, Ksaweryna, Makryna Mieczysławska), who he greatly respected, is a topic worth developing in a separate study. Roman Zimand, an expert in private document literature (a relatively new field within the humanities developed after World War II), analyzed the reading of intimate writings and identified two types: normal and specialized reading. He described the former method as follows: “[...] in a diary, correspondence or memoirs, the reader [...] looks for what seems to him to be the truth understood as the opposite of fabrication, a sincere confession, a testimony of the epoch, the virtues of one’s own nation or a social group with which one feels particularly connected.”<sup>8</sup> In *My Memoirs* I found a sincere confession and a testimony of the epoch. After applying philological methods of the perception of the author as a literary hero and narrator according to the romantic principle: “I live as I create and create as I live,” and the connection between the author/hero and the space – I discovered, first for myself and then for all who want to listen, an exceptional man, an extraordinary man among the extraordinary.

When writing about others, we speak unwillingly also about ourselves (choosing the purpose and the manner). Therefore, it will be difficult for me to hide the fact that I became enamored with Jełowicki “at first reading” – by his way of looking at the world and – above all – the people in it, with admiration, audacity, courage of a traveler through the Caucasus, which is reflected in a sense of freedom, an individual who consistently pursues an ideological/life “program” (only partially conceived with others; it seems that his experience may have been the source inspiration). Using the “metaphor shortcut” of a poem or song, a philosophical phrase or a sentence, is part of that world of spirit and practice that Jełowicki navigated. An in-depth analysis of the father’s words, therefore, requires adequate preparation.

8 R. Zimand, *Diarysta Stefan Ż.*, Wrocław 1990, p. 11.

**Ready for conscious, responsible, and active participation  
in the world he chooses and which is destined for him**

Nearly a peer of Jełowicki, Maurycy Gosławski (1802–1834), one of the youngest uhlans of the November Uprising, author of songs and poems, included one entitled *Chorągiewska* [*The Flag*] in a collection *Poezja Ułana Polskiego* [*Poetry of the Polish Uhlans*] published in Paris. I've excerpted a passage from it, which can be interpreted, as usual in the "Polish context" with either regret or irony, or being closer to Jełowicki's viewpoint, as a vision of a challenge and opportunity for the many exceptional:

Because God good and as a reward  
For so many tears, blood and losses,  
For the Fatherland, for freedom,  
Gave the wandering world in return.<sup>9</sup>

One must be prepared to emigrate, particularly when being forced to do so. What can happen when "a mighty and independent Poland is the only romance of youth"? (a paraphrase of M. Mochnacki's popular words from a letter to Michał Hube from August 1832).<sup>10</sup> Maurycy Gosławski "in 1834 took part in an expedition that he wished would renew fighting in the Kingdom, which ended tragically: with his death in a prison in Stanisławów."<sup>11</sup> Jełowicki's brother, Edward, abandoned his career as a scientist in London, while he had already patented his version of the steam engine, and he was executed in 1848 in a post-revolution Vienna (already a complex episode in the history of: the national liberation struggle, the Resurrectionists and Aleksander Jełowicki) for his conspiratorial activities. Extraordinary also means "crazy for love of someone or something."

After the death of Maurycy Mochnacki (1834), the doctors found his heart dilated, and all vital organs, despite the most humble life, as worn out as in a decayed old man.<sup>12</sup>

9 B. Urbanowski, *Romantyzm polski*, Kraków 2020, p. 271.

10 M. Mochnacki, *Pisma rozmaite. Oddział porewolucyjny*, vol. 1, ed. 2, Berlin 1860.

11 B. Urbanowski, *Romantyzm polski*, p. 270.

12 Ibid.

On the basis of this account by Michał Podczaszyński, Mochnacki's fellow traveler Cyprian Kamil Norwid wrote about the "mad clairvoyant" in 1850: "And the truths he carried, only then recognized, when from the dead corpse the cracked heart was taken out."<sup>13</sup>

Mochnacki (1803–1834) and Norwid (1821–1883) were close companions of Jełowicki, but seemingly from different "eras." If today one says that we live in a world of change and are supposed to be prepared for it, then one should examine the "epoch" changes that Jełowicki experienced. He lived 73 years (Mochnacki 31 years, Jański 33, Chopin 39, Słowacki 40). By the year of his death, 82 years of Poland's captivity had passed. His contemporary, also a Resurrectionist, general of the congregation in 1848–1854, Józef Hube (1804–1891), lived longer, 87 years. Changes during the lifetime of both were substantial, including: the Napoleonic period, the division of Europe and the systemic effects after the Congress of Vienna, revolutionary movements in France and Russia in the 1920s, the November Uprising, the Great Emigration, the Spring of Nations, the Balkan War, the January Uprising, the unification of Italy (and the resulting crisis in the Church), the unification of Germany, the Paris Commune. Among at the changes in civilization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one can distinguish the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the launch of the Iron Railway in England (that Jełowicki immediately "tried out"), Morse's telegraph, the construction of the Suez Canal, and a year before Jełowicki's death the invention of the telephone... In addition, rapidly advancing changes in the world's ideas, philosophical currents, styles in literature and art... Was Jełowicki ready not only to understand this world but to co-create it?

Previews of this "readiness" can be found in *My Memoirs* where Jełowicki wrote "my parents were wealthy and respectable"<sup>14</sup> (Wacław and Honorata managed a large estate in Hubnik in Podolia); "my father raised us in the old Polish way and toughened us from childhood."<sup>15</sup> "I remember how we used to recite Krasicki's poem *Święta miłości kochanej Ojczyzny* [*Holy Love of the Beloved Homeland*] with a chivalrous attitude." Jełowicki later met composer Wojciech Sowiński (1805–1880), who had lived in Paris since 1831 and was the author

13 D. Sidorski, *Szalony Jasnowidz czyli rzecz o Maurycym Mochnackim*, p. 7.

14 A. Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia*, p. 7.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

of the new melody to this song, as we know it today. When he was 11 years old he was sent to school in Vinnytsia (current territory of Ukraine, but in Bogdan Jański's biography a town in Mazovia). He regarded himself as more capable in scientific subjects. "The soul of the Vinnytsia Gymnasium was its head priest, Father Canon Maciejowski, a Piarist and a highly scholarly man. [...] He poured his spirit of zeal into the teachers, diligence into the students."<sup>16</sup> Jełowicki left an insightful, beautiful, not only full of anecdotes, but also understanding of the program and methods used in the school's description in the chapter *Schools in Vinnytsia*. He considered arranging poems to be one of the most difficult school tasks. They had a classmate who did it unofficially for more than 30 students, and later became the best translator of Molière's works, according to Jełowicki. Why was this so important to him? He was building a program for his life, taking advantage of every opportunity to learn something that came his way, which he sought everywhere and from anyone who succeeded in achieving a goal (he later best described successful people pursuing their long-term visions), or to which he was "lightly forced" as a young man.

What do you command me to do father? – Tomorrow morning you will go to Odessa. – And what for? You'll see the city, have some fun, and at the same time you'll sell grain and wool, as the merchants do not do their job.<sup>17</sup>

This was during a gap year before college. Later, he would associate Odessa with learning Italian, because the best opera companies in Europe performed there. He loved opera and associated experiences of fear and courage with Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. In exile it was to him of unquestionable use. In Paris, among other things, he set the program and selected actors at the Italian Opera; he was friends with Giovanni Batista Rubini, an Italian tenor as famous as Enrico Caruso later became.

In 1820, he enrolled in the Philosophy Department of the Cracow Academy. He had already written philosophical treatises at that time, which the professors read out during lectures. "The teachers in my time were good-hearted and quite competent," he writes, "but there were no particularly famous scholars

16 Ibid., p. 8.

17 Ibid., p. 19.

among them, so the teachings went along quite decently, but they had no sharp panache.”<sup>18</sup> He mentioned, however, a dissertation by Professor Józef Sołtykiewicz, a lawyer and writer, entitled *O wpływie umiejętności i nauk na towarzystwo ludzkie*. [*On the Influence of Skills and Sciences on Humanity*]. He leveraged the professor’s experience and ideas in carrying out his own educational intentions and establishing the Roman College. He was “forced” to study in Warsaw around 1822: “Grand Duke Konstanty began to tease my father so much, to take us away from Cracow, that despite his long resistance he had to send for us in the end.”<sup>19</sup> Jełowicki’s few remarks about his student life in Warsaw, although he wrote about it “lightly,” would be considered the beginning of his “life in exile”:

In Warsaw I already had a completely free will, no one guarded me, the temptations of the world swarmed around me, but the memory on the Blessed Virgin and the angels she gave me, with a blind hand, repelled these temptations.<sup>20</sup>

To my younger brother, who remained under my fraternal authority, I owed a good example.<sup>21</sup>

I had far more fun in Warsaw than in Cracow, I had a beautiful horse that I rode around the merry surroundings of Warsaw almost every day, [...] or seeing the turnover of the Polish army. What a beautiful Polish army it was! Man to man, horse to horse, and all light and agile, wild and cheerful.<sup>22</sup>

He would later experience and guard the fulfillment of the attitudes that Juliusz Słowacki included in *Mój testament* [*My Testament*]: “But I swear, let the living not lose hope and bring to the nation the torch of enlightenment...” as he thought of those he saw, of whom he had been told, and those who” went to their deaths one by one, like stones thrown by God on a rampage.”<sup>23</sup>

His philosophical background and natural capacity for reflection, combined with an unusually keen observation of the world and people, helped him

18 Ibid., p. 38.

19 Ibid., p. 47.

20 Ibid., p. 60.

21 Ibid., p. 61.

22 Ibid., p. 61.

23 J. Słowacki, *Testament mój*, in: idem, *Utwory wybrane*, Warszawa 1965, p. 41



formulate a program, which he consistently followed with the Resurrectionists, and “lightly,” as if he were still “sparring on his horse around life.” With his “invisible plan,” as some would call it, he would have been perfectly at home among today’s writers of the “new economy,” who give priority to the so-called “soft skills” in managing themselves and others (Covey, Sinec, Blanchard, Spencer). I have selected two of these reflections:

Everything that man looks at and experiences, if he is willing to ponder it, is a teaching or an admonition to him. God has sent down punishments for me, he sends admonitions both in our and in others’ misfortunes, he sends them in good thoughts, in dreams even...<sup>24</sup>

Father used to ask us often, what we plan of doing with ourselves. Edward had already been a marshal. Eustachy went with Leon Lipkowski to travel around foreign countries, and I answered my father with a treatise on the destiny of a Pole; the end was that one should be ready for whatever God delivers and wait. My father listened attentively and said: this is how I also waited a whole century – he sighed – waiting is not an art – and sighed again; we talked for a long time about the past, and tried to guess what the future would bring, and Edward finished speaking cheerfully – somehow it will be.<sup>25</sup>

It is worth revisiting the dream, which may have been a way of reading one’s own life program.<sup>26</sup> Jełowicki later included dreams, sometimes frightening, about the Last Judgment in his consistently implemented “program for saving sinners,” although these did not seem to be mystical dreams. They were rather, as I quoted above, an “opportunity” and a task.

### **Jełowicki’s element was people**

The index of persons in the 1970 edition of *My Memoirs* lists more than 600 people. Obviously, as Wyspiański would say, there are also “people of the drama” whom Jełowicki knows from books or studies. He met the majority of them

24 Ibid., p. 61.

25 Ibid., p. 65.

26 B. Urbanowski, *Sny upatriotycznione – specjalność polska*, in: idem, *Romantyzm polski*.

in person, however this is material for a longer study. Raised by sentimentalists, aware of the passing of time and people, encouraged by thinkers, poets (of various eras) to take an individual look at each life, each path, each choice, he did so consistently in his *Memoirs*. He believed that great things can happen from one's decision and persistence in actions, although not always the initiator would see the outcome. After reading *My Memories*, one can get the impression that Jełowicki memorized people like a portrait painter who does not want to miss any detail, because he would paint from memory, or look for what the eye, sometimes the ear, can catch. Undoubtedly, he has a great memory. He repeatedly pointed out the methods by which he was taught. In Vinnytsia, for example, there were famous "show-offs" at the end of the school year, when students answered difficult questions about the material to be mastered in various classes in front of an audience (students of different classes, families, guests). It will also be mentioned that Jełowicki is a "man of space."

It is worth demonstrating the innovative way in which he characterized people through the space in which he "sees" them. This is how he describes Waław Rzewuski (Emir):

Something mysterious settled on his soul. [...] something burdened that eagle's wings, and he never took flight. Rzewuski, for what he was, was either too small or too big, because everything in his surroundings was messy, both on his farm and at home. [...] His chambers were full of rich equipment and costly weapons, full of curiosities from all parts of the world. [...] It seems that there was not a thing that Rzewuski could not know, because he was both a warrior, and a statesman, and a historian, and a bard, and a musician, and a painter. [...] Many interesting things were left behind but, just like him, they were lost somewhere. This is a pity, because there were, among other things, poetry written in non-rhyming verse, full of Eastern flare and beautiful Polish language. I liked to read his poems, and he liked to listen to them with his eyes closed, in order to focus more force on the sense of hearing and with a stronger feeling to recognize the sounds of words and the power of language.<sup>27</sup>

27 Ibid., p. 155.

This paragraph shows an excellent future preacher and one who worked on the skills of the clergy, knowing the power of spoken, read aloud language, according to the principle – not only the content but also execution matters! The second of his awe-inspiring distinguishing aspects was being a man of action, who managed to turn a great thought into a great work. Jełowicki devoted plenty of attention to Tadeusz Czacki, who “founded and equipped the famous school of Krzemieniec.”<sup>28</sup> He appreciated the ability to choose a place for this work (a small Jewish town, but with castle hill, a post-Jesuit church that could have become a school church, and a monastery) so that the students would not take their eyes off the saint and the Polish border (the idea was to stop the Polish nobility from going abroad to study).

“Krzemieniec was established by the strong and honest desire of one man,”<sup>29</sup> who knew how to plan and execute it. It is worth repeating this record as it is one of the best “recipes” for a good school: he collected treasures for the establishment and its later maintenance, gathered the best book collection, found teachers competent in all sciences, obtained legal privileges for the school from Adam Czartoryski, and ignited and propagated the desire for education in the Polish youth. “God blessed such pure intentions, such strenuous work and breathed the national spirit into this school,” he said. Jełowicki used this example in his emigration activities. It is known that Krzemieniec was plundered and destroyed on the orders of Tsar Nicholas. Yet Jełowicki wrote: “He (the tsar) thinks he destroyed Czacki’s work. You are mistaken, malignant! Czacki’s work has already grown into the hearts of two generations of Poles.”<sup>30</sup> He could see this later in the thoughts of Bogdan Jański and emigrant companions on the establishment of a congregation for people with great intellectual abilities, talents, but also great hearts. He believed in a plan, a wise goal that would please God, in collecting funds (he thought of a “fraternal tax” among the emigrants), gathering the best people, taking action and checking the results. Nowadays, pupils and students are learning the project work method. Why not from Jełowicki? From whom else and where did he take this knowledge?

28 Ibid., p. 46.

29 Ibid., p. 64.

30 B. Urbanowski, *Romantyzm polski*, p. 103.

He made good use of his stay in Cracow. He has noted again that everything starts with one man. Thanks to the generosity of a student, a certain Obiedziński, around 1500, today's collection of the Jagiellonian Library began (later "contributed" by others as a matter of honor). He wrote the following about the St. Anne's Academic Church with the tomb of Jan Kanty "I do not remember anywhere a church so uplifting in prayer. Praying in this church, it seems that the Lord God will surely listen."<sup>31</sup> Jan came from Kęty, which adopted not only Father Piotr Semenenko's idea of a women's congregation, but earlier Napoleonic troops, and among them, in 1813, for two days, Kazimierz Brodziński, one of Jełowicki's favorite academic teachers (also of Hieronim Kajsiewicz's). He wrote of him as a "cordial, quiet, calm, affectionate, soldier, poet". "To Brodziński's lecture (he was 34) one went as if to a confidential friend, and one always left with a disheveled heart and a tear in one's eye."<sup>32</sup> It was thanks to him, among other things, that a whole generation would learn "synthetism" not only in poetry, but also in thinking.<sup>33</sup> Jełowicki was suited to combining a diversity of potential, which was invaluable, as he was extraordinarily curious about people. Synthetism, within the language of theater and philosophy, was attempted only by Stanisław Wyspiański.

### **Jełowicki the man of space**

The index of geographical names in *My Memoirs* lists almost 500 entries. The theory of space in a literary work and its connection to characters was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century among others by Nikolai Gogol. This theory is best illustrated in his work *The Overcoat*, published in 1842. Jełowicki's descriptions of places, varying from a wide area to an object, suggest that he was a man who thought and saw spatially. Wherever he happened to be, had a need to move around, to look, to peek where something interesting might be. He was curious about almost everything that served science and experience. It seems that

31 A. Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia*, p. 83.

32 Ibid., p. 156–157.

33 Ibid., p. 364.

he was destined to be a “man of nature”<sup>34</sup> and he was. However, he was also a “man of the city and architecture.” No matter if he embarked on a horseback trip to the Caucasus, or described the streets of European cities (Cracow, Lviv, Warsaw, Kyiv, Paris, Rome, Frankfurt-am-Main, Dresden, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Munich, Dublin...), he was always seeking the work of God and people. Similarly to Antoni Malczewski (1793–1826) he was meant to “make the trip” to the Mont Blanc, but in the end he climbed the Mount Beshtau, confessing there

what a vast world and beautiful and diverse, what an obliteration of these worlds, what an immeasurable power of the Creator. [...] A man will look around, and the fear of space will blind his eyes so much that a long time will pass before he can see. [...] You will return to this mountain more than once, and you will always come down from it humbled, corrected, pensive about yourself and your Creator, and you will miss this Mountain, like the temple where you were blissful to your soul.<sup>35</sup>

To be in line with the idea of romantic antinomies, Jełowicki descended into the Wieliczka salt mine to describe it as well. It is my conviction (and contemporary researchers such as Malcolm Gladwell confirm this) that these experiences trained Jełowicki to think spatially, conceptually, to build long-range visions, to see perspectives and dangers, and to be able to focus...

### **Jełowicki’s concept of the clerical path**

Jełowicki was not afraid to talk to Pope Pius IX (called “Polish”). He feared only for the fate of sinners (proven by the above-mentioned terrible dreams of the Last Judgment). The specific “plan” for the priesthood, or rather a list of motives why he should become a priest, can also be found in *My Memoirs*. Before the November Uprising they were:

- understanding the insignificance of all things human,
- desire for eternity,

34 A term I took from Fr. Jan Twardowski’s: *Autobiografia. Myśli nie tylko o sobie*, vol. 1–2, Kraków 2006–2007.

35 A. Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia*, pp. 156–157.

- human godlessness,
- lack of good priests (when he met one, he immediately described them),
- the oppression experienced by religion in Poland under foreign violence,
- sight of inner happiness that a saintly priest uses here on earth,
- “This is said to be the surest way to serve the Fatherland in times of affliction and misery.”<sup>36</sup> He could not avoid getting involved with the Resurrectionists. *My Memories* concludes thus:

Only when the thought rises to God, kneels before him with a plea for a priestly vocation does fervent prayer dry the tear of grief and sorrow, divine love fills my reason with faith and hope, and again a holy thought shines in my soul, serenity shines, and again my heart rejoices in suffering for the Fatherland.<sup>37</sup>

In 1838, Jełowicki enrolled at the St. Stanisław Kostka Seminary in Paris, and then at the Versailles Seminary. He was ordained on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1841. Two years later he joined the newly founded congregation of the Resurrectionists, whose ideological founders he had known before. Jełowicki’s goal was to fight for every sinner, of whom there were most in the clamorous, often tired of the emigration situation and the death of compatriots, circle of intelligentsia. In March 1848 Jełowicki confessed Mickiewicz (long before the latter’s death), but he failed to renounce him from the teachings of Andrzej Towiański.<sup>38</sup> The dictionary does not describe Jełowicki’s most spectacular victory in the battle for the soul of a sinner, that is, helping to convert Frederic Chopin. Although, as Franciszek German recalled, the truth of this event was said to have been undermined by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz’s writing about Chopin. In 1838, 11 years before the composer’s death, Jełowicki described their relationship as follows:

Another such musical soul with wings of poetry flew into the body like a spider web, and this is called Chopin. I experienced him as a child in War-

36 Ibid., p. 358.

37 Ibid.

38 Towiański Andrzej, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XI, Wrocław–Kraków–Warszawa 1964–1965, pp. 160–162.

saw, and at once I said that there is no equal to him in the world, and I was right. Chopin took his flight above everyone else, he promised to himself: I'm going to be a poet-musician; and so it happened; and no one can guess whether he had more music in poetry or poetry in music. With all this, simply like a good Pole, so much national feeling, that when he sits down to the clavichord, he leads the Polish listener with his thoughts to Poland, leads him all over Poland, and leads him all the way to the heart of Poland, all the way home.<sup>39</sup>

That's why Jełowicki fought so hard for Chopin to make his way to the Father's House, even though it required great courage. Fr. Jełowicki's letter to Ksaweryna Grocholska, sent to Podolia four days after Chopin's death in Paris on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1849, describing this struggle and fear. This letter can be found online and it is worth reading.

The trusted author of the Introduction to the edition of *Listy do Ksaweryny* [*Letters to Ksaweryna*] Franciszek German (1930–1988), a scholar from Gliwice who worked closely with the Resurrectionists to get to the primary sources, described Jełowicki as an advocate for every human misery in Paris. "They were angry at his sermons," but kept coming back to listen to them; "he won souls by storm like cannons in an uprising," "he would often distribute books free of charge," during the Prussian siege of Paris in 1870–71 he looked after wounded soldiers regardless of their nationality. After a year in the homeland, he traveled to Lourdes in 1874 to deposit a Polish flag with images of the major miraculous images of the Mother of God in Poland. He died in Rome on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1877, the holy oils were given to him by Father Semenenko, who later wrote for the Cracow "Czas" [Time].

It is worth concluding the text with a poetic staple, a stanza from the poem "Time" by Kazimierz Brodziński:

Although you do not finish, keep doing,  
 You, not the work, will be taken by the grave.  
 And although on earth we are briefly,  
 Time will finish everything as it has time.<sup>40</sup>

39 A. Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia*.

40 B. Urbanowski, *Romantyzm polski*, Kraków 2020, p. 111.

**Abstract:** The text is an approach to compiling scattered information on the life and activities of Aleksander Jełowicki against the background of the achievements of his contemporaries and the cultural panorama of the late 19th century. The author, starting from the theory of perception of archival materials proposed by Roman Zimand, analyzes primary sources that bear witness to the life and activities of Jełowicki and related figures. At the outset, the author introduces the figure of Aleksander Jełowicki and the era that formed him. She then touches on the very important themes of emigration and the most significant interpersonal relationships that influenced his life and work within the congregation. Also touched upon are the themes of space in the writings of the Resurrectionist and his theory of the priestly path. Very important for the text are the comparisons of Father Jełowicki's writings with fragments of literary works and correspondence of Polish artists and émigré activists. They make up a picture not only of the era in which the subject of this study lived, but also of the patriotic thought that resounds from his sections. Thanks to the compilation of representative fragments of letters, diaries and works, combined with the scholarly reflection on them contained in the works of researchers, it has been possible to show the complex silhouette of one of the key figures of the Resurrectionist Order, whose activities continue to provide new fields of research.

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