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Hieronim Kajsiewicz – Home, Dreams, and Calling

Hieronim Kajsiewicz – la casa, i sogni e la vocazione

Hieronim Kajsiewicz (1812–1873) è stato una figura straordinaria nella storia della Polonia e della Chiesa del XIX secolo, un sacerdote e monaco devoto, un patriota e co-fondatore della Congregazione della Resurrezione. Fu un Superiore Generale saggio e coraggioso, un predicatore assolutamente unico – lo “Skarga del XIX secolo”, una guida per le anime di molte grandi donne e uomini polacchi. Inoltre, fu uno scrittore religioso, un difensore della Chiesa, del Papa e della famiglia, un co-fondatore della filosofia e della teologia della nazione e del sistema educativo risurrezionalista. Nacque il 7 dicembre 1812 a Slavikai, in Lituania, e crebbe in una famiglia profondamente religiosa e patriottica.

Nella sua prima gioventù aveva obiettivi e prospettive di vita molto diverse. Il suo percorso verso la prima comunità di Resurrezionisti ebbe le sue tappe, la prima delle quali si concluse con la pubblicazione dei suoi ‘Sonetti’ a Parigi nel 1833, dove espresse le sue esperienze della Rivolta di Novembre e i suoi primi mesi in esilio, soprattutto a Parigi.

Fu educato a Raseiniai e successivamente a Sejny, dove si diplomò nel 1829, sviluppando in modo significativo il suo talento. Fu estremamente dotato nel campo della letteratura e molto ambizioso. Dopo il diploma, iniziò a studiare a Varsavia presso la Facoltà di Giurisprudenza e Amministrazione. Nel frattempo, data la sua passione per la letteratura e le belle arti, frequentò le lezioni complementari di Kazimierz Brodziński e Ludwik Osiński. Inoltre, diede loro le sue opere da recensire, che loro lodarono molto e lo aiutarono a pubblicarle sulla stampa letteraria di Varsavia. Kajsiewicz fu anche

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traduttore delle opere di Friedrich Schiller. Il giovane scrittore pubblicò anche poesie e romanzi. Uno di questi lo rese famoso grazie a una recensione di Maurycy Mochna-cki. Ottenendo il riconoscimento nei circoli letterari, Jan Ordyniec gli offrì una collaborazione, un appartamento e un anno di stipendio. Da quel momento in poi, Kajsiewicz non volle solo diventare un avvocato, ma soprattutto un poeta e un pubblicista, fon- dando persino una propria rivista letteraria.

Durante gli anni dell'università, interruppe le sue pratiche religiose e condusse una vita alquanto disinvolta. Quando scoppiò la Rivolta di Novembre, vi aderì senza esi- tazione. In seguito catturò gli eventi della rivolta nei suoi sonetti. Questi riguardano, tra l'altro, la sua partecipazione alla Guardia d'Onore sotto il Generale Józef Chłopicki, il suo ritorno a casa per chiedere la benedizione dei suoi genitori a combattere nell'in- surrezione, così come il suo percorso di battaglia, in particolare a Stoczek e Nowa Wieś. I sonetti testimoniano l'amore della sua famiglia e della sua piccola patria in Lituania, così come i suoi pensieri e le sue esperienze dopo la sanguinosa battaglia di Nowa Wieś, dove era stato ferito quasi mortalmente e condotto in prigionia dagli zaristi. Kajsiewicz attraversò allora uno stato di depressione causato dalla convinzione di non essere più "utile alla Patria".

Dopo la sconfitta della rivolta, fu internato a Tczew, dopodiché andò in esilio. Lì non solo tornò alla devozione religiosa sotto l'influenza di Adam Mickiewicz, ma rico- nobbe la sua vocazione sacerdotale e religiosa nella comunità della "Casa di Jański". Nel 1841 fu ordinato sacerdote a Roma, iniziando il percorso di attuazione del carisma risurrezionalista.

Parole chiave: infanzia, sogni, progetti, vocazione, sacerdote, Resurrezionalista, emi- grante, guida dell'anima, patriota, Adam Mickiewicz, Bogdan Jański.

Słowa kluczowe: dzieciństwo, marzenia, plany, powołanie, ksiądz, zmartwychwstaniec, emigrant, przewodnik duszy, patriota, Adam Mickiewicz, Bogdan Jański.

Keywords: childhood, dreams, plans, calling, priest, Resurrectionist, emigrant, soul guide, patriot, Adam Mickiewicz, Bogdan Jański.

My Father and Friend! [...]
 You would not believe how much and how often I miss You.
 To You I would like to confess always, since I have not found anymore,
 since our separation, a spiritual father like You.
 Whenever, I go to confession,
 My whole soul longs for You.¹

Who are we supposed to be talking about?

Father Hieronim Kajsiewicz – Resurrectionist, was an extraordinary figure in the history of Poland and the Church of the 19th century, a holy priest and religious, patriot, insurgent of 1830, Parisian émigré, poet, one of the first members of the Bogdan Jański House and co-founder of the Congregation of the Resurrection. He was a long-serving, courageous and wise superior general, who internationalized the congregation and greatly expanded the fields of its pastoral work; a completely unique preacher – “the Skarga of the 19th century.” He was honored by the people of Cracow and Poznań with a bust and epitaph in their most important churches, in Cracow, in St. Mary’s Church, and in Poznań, in the Pantheon of Merited People of Greater Poland and Great Poles, on St. Wojciech’s Hill. Kajsiewicz was a tender and wise priest, a guide to the souls of great Polish men and women (including Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Eliza and Zygmunt Krasiński, the Servant of God Józefa Karska, Blessed Marcelina Darowska and many others). Moreover, he was a religious writer, a relentless defender of the Church, the Pope and the family, the co-creator of the nation’s philosophy and theology as well as the Congregation’s educational system. It should be emphasized that he was one of the most famous Resurrectionists, since it is difficult to find a study of the history of the 19th century, particularly of the Great Emigration, without his name appearing at least once. He is, along with Father Aleksander Jełowicki,² the most widely mentioned and quoted – in various contexts – Resurrectionist.

1 Z. Krasiński, *List do Hieronima Kajsiewicza*, Heidelberg, 10 I 1855, in: idem, *Listy do różnych adresatów*, Warszawa 1991, vol. 2, p. 259.

2 Aleksander Jełowicki (1804–1877) – Resurrectionist, rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in France, prominent pastor of the Great Emigration, November insurrectionist, member of parliament, member of the Patriotic Society and the Committee

The interesting thing about his path to the community of the first Resurrectionists is that he had entirely different goals and plans of personal development. It is crucial not only to commemorate his figure on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death, but also to present him as a model for the modern priest as his achievements continue to inspire not only his spiritual sons.

The purpose of the text is to show some of the dominant features of his life during childhood and youth, his desires, character, and religiosity, which changed under the influences – first of Adam Mickiewicz, who played a significant role in the first stage of his return to religious fervor, and then Bogdan Jański, whose first community – called *Jański's House*, Jełowicki joined on February 17th, 1836.

Hieronim Kajsiwicz, after the fall of the November Uprising, wrote the following about Poland and Poles: "Mistaken, hugely... those who think that Poles, mortified by misfortune, would fall asleep forever or for a long time, forgetting what they were, what they are, and what they must be. It is a lion healing its wounds in a secluded forest, being like a volcano with a congealed crater – woe to those who, teasing the lion, will awaken it; woe to those who, dancing with mocking security across the volcano's top, will drill a hole."³

of the Russian Lands. In exile in Paris, a member of the Polish National Committee and other organizations and associations, a patron of Adam Mickiewicz, publishing, among others: *Dziady Part III* or *Pan Tadeusz*. Since 1835 he ran the famous Polish Bookstore and Printing House in Paris and, in partnership with Eustachy Januszkiewicz, the Commission House, publisher of the works of, among others: Kazimierz Brodziński, Klementyna Hoffmanowa of Tańska, Ignacy Krasiński, Zygmunt Krasiński, Joachim Lelewel, Maurycy Mochnacki, Juliusz Słowacki, Stefan Witwicki and many others. Editor of emigration periodicals such as: „Yearbook of Polish Emigration” [Rocznik Emigracji Polskiej] or „Domestic and Emigration News” [Wiadomości Krajowe i Emigracyjne]; was the author of numerous articles, translations and his own *Memoirs* [*Wspomnienia*] (1839). He entered the seminary in 1838 and the Resurrectionists in 1843. Until his death, he was a valued superior of the Polish Mission in Paris, fought against Towianism, supported the January Uprising, was a protector of Makryna Mieczysławska and as a priest he was a respected preacher and a good organizer of émigré life especially in Paris. He famously confessed Fryderyk Chopin on his deathbed as well as Zygmunt Krasiński. Jełowicki is buried in the Campo Verano cemetery in Rome in the tomb of the Resurrectionists.

3 H. Kajsiwicz, *Do Czytelnika*, in: idem, *Sonety i inne wiersze*, Kraków 2005, pp. 29–30.

This was the conviction of the twenty-one-year-old Kajsiewicz when he published his *Sonnets* [*Sonety*] in Paris in 1833. He was near-fatally wounded during the November Uprising in the battle of Nowa Wieś, and it marked the beginning of his journey to awakening from spiritual lethargy. In a letter to his school friend Leonard Niedźwiecki⁴ in 1836, he wrote:

The revolution came. And it has crushed me! [...] In battle newly covered with wounds, certain of death, falling off my horse I cried out: Jesus, Mary! And that was the end of it, and yet I believe that this exclamation alone reached the ears of the Mother of God.⁵

Probably the outcry reached the ears of the Mother of God, but the road to the awakening of religious devotion was still very long for Kajsiewicz and had its stages. The first of them is closed by the publication of these “Sonnets”. According to an expert on the period of Polish Romanticism, Professor Alina Witkowska, this poetry contains an “intriguing idea of enclosing one’s own biography in a sonnet cycle.”⁶ Kajsiewicz wrote them in retrospect, although not far, in exile. He was undoubtedly stimulated to create and publish them by frequent meetings with his friend Adam Mickiewicz. Youthful pride, the desire to “rule the soul” like his “beloved Adam”, and a certain dream, characteristic of the Romantics, also played their part. In a letter to the said Niedźwiecki, he wrote:

I had a dream once of my home and parents, as if I had returned to Poland, and I arranged the sonnet in my dream in such a way that, having awakened, I transcribed it. I read it to Rettel, who applauded it with his usual enthusiasm. Then I wrote several and a dozen more: I read some of them to Mickiewicz...

- 4 Leonard Niedźwiecki (1811–1892) – Hieronim Kajsiewicz’s classmate in Sejny and at the University of Warsaw, insurgent of 1830–1831, initially in exile in London, then in Paris. In London worked as a correspondent of the „Yearbook of Polish Emigration” [Rocznik Emigracji Polskiej] and „Chronicle of Polish Emigration” [Kroniki Emigracji Polskiej]. In Paris became an agent of the bookstore of Aleksander Jełowicki and Eustachy Januszkiewicz, tutor of Adam Mickiewicz’s children and a secretary of General Władysław Zamoyski.
- 5 H. Kajsiewicz, *List do Leonarda Niedźwieckiego, Paryż, 24 V 1836*, in: idem, *Listy*, vol. 1, Rzym 2004, p. 38.
- 6 A. Witkowska, R. Przybylski, *Romantyzm*, Warszawa 1997, p. 226.

It is necessary for you to know that in writing sonnets I worked all day with a hammer in the forge, at night in bed, hence the thoughts at times wild, at times shallow ... I cannot fall into a good track of my own yet, and nevertheless I feel the need and external desire in poetry Mickiewicz wrote that it is a native bullion, one's own, though not forged.⁷

Leonard Niedźwiecki, on the other hand, in one of his letters to Kajsiewicz in 1833, criticized the "Sonnets", although at the end he confessed:

Having said all this, if it can be a kind of praise, I confess to you that I am satisfied – you have ripped off the wings of your Pegasus, but for this you have made the feet volatile – instead of the wind of wings one can hear the clatter of armor joined with the thud of hooves.⁸

Wonderful family home, idyllic and angelic life...

Up until recently, little was known to us Resurrectionists about Father Kajsiewicz's family life or his plans in his early years. In recent years, thanks to intensive exploration and research, it has been possible to reach many interesting documents, particularly letters from the father and sisters of the eminent Resurrectionist, as well as the living descendants of his brother Kazimierz.⁹ All the sources have contributed to better outline the footprints of his life before joining the Jański community.

Hieronim Kajsiewicz had, above all, a devoted mother and a wonderful father, as well as remarkable sisters and a less than polite brother. It was a deeply religious and patriotic family, who came from Lithuania, from the Kaunas area. Initially, the Kajsiewicz family leased small estates of Słowiki and Gudlanki, in the property of the wealthy baron Teodor Henryk Keudell of Giełgudyszki, from whom Dominik (Kajsiewicz's father) learned farming. Two years before the outbreak of the November Uprising, the family leased a large estate called Freda Dolna near Kaunas (today it is a suburb of the city), which was very prof-

7 H. Kajsiewicz, *List do Leonarda Niedźwieckiego, Paryż, 24 v 1836*, in: idem, *Listy*, vol. 1, pp. 39–40.

8 L. Niedźwiecki, *Listy wybrane z lat 1832–1839*, Warszawa 2009, p. 20.

9 More on the life of the Kajsiewicz family can be found in: A. Kardaś, *Wielkopolskie ślady rodziny Kajsiewiczów*, Kraków 2003.

itable. The family wanted to buy it from the friendly marshal of the Marijampole district, Józef Godlewski, soon after taking over its administration, but the outbreak of the November Uprising destroyed these plans.¹⁰

The Kajsiwicz family, Dominik and Anna (née Pawłowska), had nine children, and until 1831 Heruś was the eldest among six sisters.¹¹ He was born in Słowiki on the river Szeszupa (near the Nemunas) on December 7th, 1812,¹² after a spring of hope for independence, when Napoleon Bonaparte wanted to conquer Moscow. He was baptized by the local parish priest Rafał Olechnowicz. He grew up surrounded by the Neman River countryside and was a child full of energy. Even as a young boy he spoke to the nuns from a pile of leaves and ended one of his speeches with: “when you grow up, you will no longer listen to me, so I will go where they will listen to me.”¹³ As a matter of fact, later crowds would listen to him. The siblings were fond of each other as demonstrated by their correspondence, full of brotherly and sisterly love and evoking the best possible feelings and admiration in the reader. This was the case for the rest of their lives.

10 Ibid., p. 11; idem, *Droga charyzmatyczna Hieronima Kajsiwicza*, Kraków 2006, pp. 81–85.

11 The children of Dominik and Anna Kajsiwicz: Monika Maria – became a teacher and married Ludwik Zaeitheim, head of the customs chamber (died May 25th, 1881 in Warsaw and was buried there); Weronika – died at the age of 18; Józefa – married in 1841 to Napoleon Pronaszko (who was an alcoholic) and had a very troubled life. They lived in Suwałki and had three children: Stanisław, Franciszek and Natalia. Konstanty and Feliks both died in childhood; Teresa – married Dworzecki and died young of typhus, Waleria (1826–1896) – became a nun in the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul (Daughter of Charity) and died in Krotoszyn in an aura of sainthood. The last one was Kazimierz born in Freda in 1831, who married Izabela Gońska from Rogalin in 1853, and they had five children (Kazimierz Leon, Maria, NN, Tadeusz Tomasz – a priest of the Diocese of Poznań, Zygmunt – from whom the living Kajsiwicz family descends to this day).

12 Unfortunately, many encyclopedias and dictionaries as well as various studies incorrectly provide the birthplace of Hieronim Kajsiwicz as Giełgudyszki, while it was Słowiki!

13 Roman Resurrectionist Archives, ref. 8380, M. Zeitheim, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych śp. X. Hieronima o Rodzicach jego i otoczeniu*. The document was written on October 10th, 1876, where the author lived at the time, upon the request of either Father Piotr Semenkeno or Father Walerian Kalinka.

The earliest memory of Hieronim Kajsiewicz, a very amusing one that dates back to his childhood in Słowiki, comes from when he was about six years old. His father took him to the local church not only for the parish indulgence (Our Lady of the Scapular – July 16th), but also to join the priests for lunch at the refectory. There, however, the clergy who ate and drunk well, must have gotten hot in the small rooms, which made them sweat a lot. Years later, Kajsiewicz's first biographer, Bronisław Zaleski noted that: "after a lavish lunch, some priests were dusting off their heads, and little Heruś took this as special proof of their holiness."¹⁴

Hieronim was homeschooled until the age of nine – as was customary – in the family home. The parents cared very much about the education and upbringing of their children, and despite the economic weakness of the estate, they employed a home tutor, additionally two professors commuted from Kaunas, and religious teachings were provided by a priest called Domański.¹⁵ In 1821 Hieronim went for further education to the Piarist Fathers' school in Rosienki, but due to the poor level of teaching, the very next year he transferred to the Provincial School in Sejny, where he passed his *matura* exam in 1829. There he considerably developed his talents. He was unusually gifted in literature and very ambitious and was even called the "revolutionary spirit of the school." Being aware of his abilities, he had the courage to speak his mind on a wide variety of subjects, but as his schoolmate Leonard Niedźwiecki pointed out, without associating this with dislike for any person.¹⁶

The whole family always anticipated the summer vacations with their dear Heruś. He would be greeted with joy on the white-coated veranda of the mansion. Back then, the house was very joyful, they would play together, sing, and go horseback riding to the beloved Neman River. His sister Monika, years later reminisced, among other things, about evenings spent together with village maidens while spinning yarn. Undoubtedly, working together as a noble family with representatives of the countryside society developed a mutual

14 B. Zaleski, *Ksiądz Hieronim Kajsiewicz. Wyciągi z listów i notatek zmarłego 1812–1873*, Poznań 1878, p. 9.

15 M. Zeithem, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, pp. 9–10.

16 A. Kardaś, *Droga charyzmatyczna*, p. 81.

sense of respect and bonding. These good relationships with the countryside ensured Kajsiewicz's respect and were something unique among the commonly observed practices and against the policy of the tsarist authorities, which fueled antagonisms between the nobility and the peasantry in the partitioned lands.

During his vacation, Hieronim enjoyed discussing about literature and music, and at the same time being humorous and elegant, "he was capable of grabbing everyone's heart... and refinement flashed from his every step", recalled his sister Monica. This is why he was popular and the local maidens from neighboring manors fell in love with him. This was because he was tall, handsome, his hair was raven-black, and he was considered the best dancer in the area. However, as his sister observed,

[...] he would also often escape alone, on foot, on horseback, to the banks of his beloved Neman River. There he dreamed, made poetry and cried, and then he would read us his poetry, which was full of enthusiasm, tenderness and sublimity of spirit.¹⁷

Perhaps for this reason these poems were so full of enthusiasm and sublimity of spirit, because Kajsiewicz, as a student of the Sejny school, was for the first time in love with his distant relative, Mrs. Żaba. However, we know little about this "love".

Studies and dreams

The young Kajsiewicz, having passed his high school diploma with flying colors in 1829, began studying at the Faculty of Law and Administration in Warsaw. Meanwhile, because of his passion for literature and fine arts, he used to attend supplementary lectures by the then famous professors Kazimierz Brodziński – a poet, translator, historian of Polish literature, representative of sentimentalism, and Ludwik Osinski – also a poet, critic, theater scholar, editor of the popular "Warsaw Diary" [Pamiętnik Warszawski], and above all – director

17 M. Zeithem, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, pp. 13–14.

of the National Theater, a leading exponent of Post-Stanislawic classicism.¹⁸ Kajsiewicz showed them his literary works, which earned him their favor and was publicly praised during lectures. In turn, they helped him publish his writings in the Warsaw press. Moreover, Kajsiewicz was a translator of the works of Friedrich Schiller, who he considered, like a whole generation of Romantics, a teacher of love and freedom of the fatherland. He became the idol of prisoners and conspirators. The young writer also published the poem “The Seduced Spouse” and a novel about Count Wilczek, which earned him considerable fame thanks to a good review by Maurycy Mochnacki¹⁹ in the “Polish Courier” [Kurier Polski]. This novel was published by Jan Ordyniec.²⁰

The famous editor and publisher of “Warsaw Journal” [Dziennik Warszawski] and “Polish Decameron” [Dekameron Polski], proposed the young poet a collaboration, an apartment and a year’s salary. Until then, Kajsiewicz only wanted to be a lawyer, but now he wished above all to be a well-known poet and publicist. He also knew that he could achieve exceptional prestige if he started his own literary magazine, and he began to seriously considering it. For this reason, he wrote a letter to his father and, during the vacations, talked to him about borrowing money for this purpose. However, his father firmly refused and urged his son instead to complete the studies he had begun.

- 18 Kazimierz Brodziński (1791–1835) – poet, translator, critic, and Polish literature historian, was appointed chair of Polish literature at Warsaw University in 1822. Supporter of the 1831 uprising, representative of Polish sentimentalism, author of numerous articles, works and reviews. Ludwik Osinski (1775–1838), literary critic and theater scholar, poet and translator, editor of „Memoirs of Warsaw” [Pamiętnik Warszawski], director of the National Theater and professor at Warsaw University, prominent representative of classicism, author of many literary works and articles.
- 19 Maurycy Mochnacki (1803–1834) – publicist and the most distinguished Polish literary critic, Romanticism theorist, political activist, participant and historian of the November Uprising, knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, founder of „Polish Gazette” [Gazeta Polska] and „Polish Courier,” [Kurier Polski]. After the fall of the November Uprising, together with his brother Kamil went to Paris, where he was politically engaged and cooperated among others with Bogdan Jański, being the chief publicist in „Memoirs of Polish Emigration” [Pamiętnik Emigracji Polskiej]. Columnist and author of many literary treatises.
- 20 Jan Ordyniec (1797–1863) – literary critic, between 1826 and 1829 editor and publisher of „Warsaw Daily” [Dziennik Warszawski] and „Polish Decameron,” [Dekameron Polski], insurgent of 1831, emigrant and socio-political activist.

Only eighteen years old Kajsiewicz, already enjoying recognition in literary life, was a supporter of a new trend in poetry – Romanticism. He loved the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz and dreamed of meeting him someday. He could not have foreseen then, that they would soon even become friends! At the time, a career in law, literature and journalism seemed to unfold before him. In letters to his family from this period (1829–1830), Kajsiewicz shared his literary successes, and included the latest works for piano and songs from the latest operas. He played the piano and violin himself. Return letters from his sisters clearly testified how delighted they were with their brother, how much authority he had among them.²¹

What was his spiritual life like at the time? He was delighted not only with Warsaw's cultural development and his student social life in the great world of the capital. He abandoned religious practices and – unfortunately – led a rather casual life. He wrote to Niedźwiecki after a few years: “in what a bizarre madness one lived, drinking, cafes, nights spent dancing with harlots, women!”²² The addressee did not quite agree with such a harsh moral self-esteem of the sender. In response he wrote back:

While you explain your former life, you want to blame yourself for your behavior in Warsaw and appear to be what you were not. Even in the moments of your chase after entertainments and pleasures, I have never seen you enter and leave the church without saying the prayer. “Although a man will cross himself and say the prayer in church,” you once said to me, while leaving the church, “that’s enough,” you added, and I always saw you in church. However now you do not consider your former life to be in line with the order you profess today, believe me, you have always been Lithuanian, and to be Lithuanian is to have a foundation of the soul paved with the chiseled stone of religion. You may not know yourself – that is why I am voicing to you – that in my eye I do not see that the changes that have taken place in you as to your inner constitution, on the outside, as you know, you have shown yourself differently. But if only we had people with your inner constitution.²³

21 M. Zeithem, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, p. 14.

22 H. Kajsiewicz, *List do Leonarda Niedźwieckiego, Paryż, 24 V 1836*, in: idem, *Listy*, vol. 1, p. 38.

23 L. Niedźwiecki, *Listy wybrane z lat 1832–1839*, Warszawa 2009, p. 167.

The words are significant and beautiful, although there has indeed been a great change in Kajsiewicz, after 1835. He judged himself so harshly to a friend, because – it is necessary to emphasize – Bogdan Jański instructed the members of his first fraternity and everyone coming forward, after a general confession, to apologize to everyone, especially those closest to him – even with a letter – for his past life, even more so for his bad words and behaviors. Jański's request was fulfilled by Kajsiewicz to the best of his ability. After his spiritual transformation, more deeply religious and devoted, he felt more the unworthiness of his past words and behavior, including his poetry and novels, judging himself – indeed – too harshly.

When he returned home for his first and last summer vacation during 1830, he asked with embarrassment for money from his father, not only for the planned magazine, but also because he had debts. His father once again severely reprimanded him, promised to pay the debts, and the whole shameful affair was concluded by his sister Monika with the statement: "An old-fashioned custom still existed in our house. Children had respect and the highest regard for Parents – their will was sacred."²⁴

Uprising and emigration

After returning from vacation, the young writer and law student began his second year at the university, which he never completed as the November Uprising started. He had previously had connections with conspirators, but his lack of direct engagement in student conspiracies against the Tsar might have been due to his literary activities during his short year of study and his attraction to Warsaw. Only his sister Monika, in her memoirs, implied his political engagement, writing: "the oath sworn among the academics to secrecy about the emerging uprising did not allow my brother to reveal it even to us."²⁵

Kajsiewicz began his studies with impetus. He consumed not only new currents and trends in law, philosophy, and literature, but was also fascinated

24 M. Zeitheim, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, p. 15.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

by all the inventions of the era. The aforementioned and beloved literature professor Kazimierz Brodziński used to say to his students:

You, young people, are the people of fiery imagination, passionate character!... Those people do everything “passionately”: they smoke pipes passionately, dance waltzes passionately, read Mickiewicz’s poetry passionately.²⁶

Kajsiewicz certainly belonged to such youth. He also passionately smoked a pipe (cigars), passionately danced and passionately read Mickiewicz’s poetry and dressed fashionably. He was called by his colleagues the “Neman dandy”. Didn’t he dress the way Stanisław Wasylewski wrote about fashionable attire for men of the time?

The man studded his eyes with inconceivable [...] polychromy: fabulously colored vests, white pantaloons, tailcoats of mottled black, snuff-colored, then blue, and artfully tied halternecks and fontazias. [...] Short haircuts a’ la Brutus are a must.²⁷

The outfit was mentioned because on November 29th, 1830, Kajsiewicz was returning around 7 p.m. from some kind of ball or theater. He was wearing an elegant white tie and had white gloves.²⁸ He suddenly noticed an officer riding his horse, who called out: “Whoever believes in God, should run to the arsenal for weapons, because the Moskals are murdering our people!” The energetic and proud young man, without hesitation, **joined the November Uprising** and took part in the famous operation at the Arsenal. He captured this event in a sonnet entitled. “November the 29th, 1830” [29 listopada 1830]:

The thunder rumbled – the light flashes – the young man was awakened.
grabbed his weapon – made the sign of the cross – soon faced the gate.
“Brothers, take up arms!” and towards where the battle was boiling, he turned.²⁹

26 S. Wasylewski, *Życie polskie w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 2008, p. 20.

27 Ibid., p. 73.

28 P. Smolikowski, *Krótki życiorys ks. H. Kajsiewicza CR*, Chicago 1912, p. 8.

29 H. Kajsiewicz, *Sonet i inne wiersze*, p. 40.

While a student, shortly after the outbreak of the uprising, he was enlisted into the Honor Guard (Academic Guard), formed on December 1st, 1830, and entirely subordinate to General Józef Chłopicki, the dictator of the uprising. It was a paramilitary student formation intended to protect the leaders of the uprising and the government office buildings, the strategic points in the capital. It was also involved in police activities and fighting against espionage. The Guard had its own chaplain, banner, uniforms, and anthem – the “Academic Song”, whose words were written by Hieronim Kajsiwicz! The song contained ten stanzas and appeared in print in “Bard of Liberated Poland” [Bard Oswobodzonej Polski], starting with the following words:

To arms! Brothers, to arms!
 Who values the gifts of freedom.
 Beneath the sign of the Eagle, the Pogonia,
 Kościuszko raised the flags.
 To arms! Brothers, to arms!³⁰.

Although the song had not become popular among the insurgents, as the Guard itself existed for a very short time, it is worth recalling.

Shortly after the beginning of the uprising, Kajsiwicz first showed up at his parents’ house in Freda and asked for their blessing. A moving account of this heart-wrenching visit was documented by his sister Monika:

What was happening! I will never forget, she wrote. His horse was roaring in front of the veranda, while I was sewing a bow. I can still see him, as I saw him for the last time in his life, wearing a long black coat, lying at his parents’ feet in tears. He was of marble paleness. One prolonged moan could be heard between us, but soon there was tranquility and hope for a better future. The parents blessed him wholeheartedly. The father, a passionate patriot, regretted that he could not stand for battle himself; but he sacrificed his only son and all his property for the needs of the homeland, literally all of it.³¹

30 Idem, *Pieśń Akademicka*, „Bard Oswobodzonej Polski”, 1 (1830) no. 8, pp. 123–125; idem, *Sonety i inne wiersze*, pp. 85–86.

31 M. Zeitheim, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, pp. 20–21.

Together with Master Hieronim, the family's loyal servant Leopold went to war. The academician returned to Warsaw, what was recorded later in a sonnet:

I was running, farewelling forests, mountains and rifts,
 And Neman – witness my silent reverie –
 “Will I ever see you?” – I asked amidst the sobs...³²

It is worth adding that immediately after the departure of the young insurgent, an irreversible misfortune fell on the Kajsiwicz family and their mansion in Freda – it was invaded by the tsarist army, the “Donskoye Cossacks.” This was a superior military formation aimed at murdering people. They had also destroyed the house and surrounding estate, slaughtered the servants, while Dominik Kajsiwicz was imprisoned in Kaunas for several months. The savagery of the tsarist army had no restraints. One man deliberately tried to insult the cross, but his mother Anna, with the pride of a Christian woman and mistress of the house, “flying like an arrow,” rushed to defend it. The continuation of this dramatic but uplifting event was described by her daughter Monika:

“Give it back, or I’ll kill you!”, shouted the Moskal. Mother stood unmoved. I recall that at that time the blood in my veins froze with fear. Finally, I dropped to my knees while screaming in front of this cruel man, so that he would not kill Mother. This man, enraged, did not mind me at all, and when he pressed ever more dangerously against Mother, she said to him calmly: “Kill if you wish; but as long as I live, I will not allow you to insult our God!”. At that moment I felt such worship for my holy mother that fear abandoned me as well... and by a miracle, the cruel beast at these words softened and stepped aside. God clearly rewarded our mother’s Christian courage. Ah, she truly was a saint! Her arms were crossed on her chest; there was something heavenly about her. How beautiful she was at that moment, how her heart stirred us all, I cannot utter.³³

This narrative is truly poignant and moving, but it also gives a compelling conviction that Mrs. Anna really was a holy woman, a holy mother!

32 Ibid., p. 41.

33 Ibid., pp. 21–25; A. Kardaś, *Wielkopolskie ślady rodziny Kajsiwiczów*, pp. 11–13.

In addition, she was pregnant again at the time and was about to give birth – hiding in the forests – to a son, Kazimierz. There were several such invasions on the Kajsiewicz house which caused its complete devastation. It is worth emphasizing that this was the experience of so many Polish families! Ultimately, the tsarist authorities confiscated the estate due to Hieronim Kajsiewicz's participation in the uprising, and the Kajsiewicz family never returned to Freda. They also had no means of sustenance. They stayed in the woods for a few weeks, and then wandered for many years amongst family and friends. They unsuccessfully leased Klejwy and Jegliniszki along the way, eventually settling in the 1840s in Greater Poland, in Góra near Śrem with Count Cezary Plater, an External Brother and benefactor of the Resurrectionists, and later in Mielec, but that is another story.³⁴

Kajsiewicz was recruited to the sixth squadron of the Third Uhlan Regiment. He decided to take this step because, as he later confessed, “his lively temper riveted him to battle.” As a landsman and a student, he was quickly promoted to non-commissioned officer and a wachtmeister. He participated in the battle of Stoczek and Nowa Wieś.³⁵ At Stoczek the battle ended in victory for the Poles, which strengthened his sense of pride and battle skills. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of second lieutenant. In letters, he informed his loved ones about everything. Full of energy, he fought fearlessly. “These letters were extremely interesting, beautiful, and full of enthusiasm”, his sister Monika recalled after many years.³⁶

The young insurgent had to face another battle at Nowa Wieś on February 19th, 1831, where he was almost mortally wounded. The Polish command made disastrous mistakes in this battle. The Russians caused the Poles a “blood-bath.” The cavalry, including the Third Uhlan Regiment, where Kajsiewicz served, were expected to capture the enemy's artillery. After several unsuccess-

34 Ibid.; idem, *Droga charyzmatyczna*, s. 89; idem, *Hieronim Kajsiewicz pod Stoczkiem i Nową Wsią*, Kraków 2018, pp. 62–65.

35 The detailed descriptions of battles can be found in: T. Strzeżek, *Stoczek–Nowa Wieś 1831*, Warszawa 2010; A. Kardaś, *Hieronim Kajsiewicz pod Stoczkiem*.

36 M. Zeitheim, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, p. 20.

ful offensives, another order was given. “There was a compression of cavalrymen in a terrible tightness, in which they no longer fought with weapons, but with fists.”³⁷ In the course of the battle, when Kajsiwicz rushed behind the fleeing cannoners, he was unexpectedly surrounded by dragoons, who shouted *pardon*. Unfortunately, he did not listen.

I was pounding and I was being pounded, he wrote later. Blood was pouring out; the forces were escaping, and I fell. The horses romped after me – I blacked out in my eyes – I don’t know what was happening to me. But God wanted me to have a spark of memory still flashing. God’s judgment stood before me. I began to pray in spirit and swore to God that if He preserved my life, I would devote it all to His service.³⁸

In this attack, he was severely and deeply cut in the head on the right side through the eye four times with a saber and fell off his horse. Other sources say that he received a total of eight serious wounds.³⁹

The spiritual son of the future priest Kajsiwicz, Paweł Smolikowski,⁴⁰ writing his biography, added that before the uprising he had not been to holy confession, therefore on the battlefield he feared death. When he recovered a little after a few hours, he lifted himself up on his knees in the bloodstained snow and cried out: “Jesus, Mary!” and fell unconscious again.⁴¹ The near-death scenario of the aforementioned battle and his almost fatal injury was painted by Kajsiwicz in a sonnet under the title – *Battle [Bitwa]*:

37 T. Strzeżek, *Stoczek–Nowa Wieś 1831*, p. 250.

38 P. Smolikowski, *Krótki życiorys*, p. 11.

39 M. z Kajsiwiczów Zetheimowa, *Młodość Hieronima Kajsiwicza i jego udział w wojnie 1831 roku*, „Rodzina Polska”, 4 (1930), no. 12, pp. 360–362.

40 Paweł Smolikowski (1849–1926) – priest Resurrectionist, prominent educator, historian, spiritual director, rector of the Pontifical Polish College in Rome, teacher of saints and blessed, also worked in Bulgaria and Lviv, was General of the Congregation, spent his last years as master of the novitiate in Cracow, died in the aura of holiness. Today he is a candidate for the altars, in 2018 Pope Francis issued a decree on the heroicity of his virtues; his mortal remains rest in the vestibule of the Church of the Resurrection in Cracow in Łobzowska street number 10.

41 P. Smolikowski, *Krótki życiorys*, p. 12.

Stabbed from the side to fall under the enemy's horseshoes –
 And as a result of deeper faith or habitual power
 He said: "Jesus, Mary – be my help."⁴²

And in the next sonnet entitled *The thought of dying on the battlefield* [*Mysł o skonaniu na polu bitwy*], he wrote:

This ground beneath me splashed with my warm blood;
 So many wounds – one enough to kill a man;
 I hear saving voices, but the vision is clouded with fog,
 Not without regret do I abandon you, my beloved homeland!⁴³

Kajsiewicz survived. He was found and rescued by two Cossacks who were stripping and robbing corpses. Determining that he was alive, however, they took him to the camp. The servant of Mr. and Mrs. Kajsiewicz, the aforementioned Leopold, also fought at Stoczek and Nowa Wieś. He was serving as a volunteer in the same squadron as "his master." When he spotted such an extent and bloody wound, he thought he had been killed. He cut off a button from his uniform and delivered it to his family. When he showed up at the Kajsiewicz home, bombarded with questions, he remained silent and cried," recalled his sister Monika. Then they understood that their son and brother was dead! "The screaming and lament and grave sorrow filled the household, she wrote. Mother lay under the cross all night – constantly immersed in prayer [...]."⁴⁴

All spring, summer and autumn of 1831, mourning masses were held for the "fallen insurgent." The mourning in the Kajsiewicz home continued for about eight months. Then on November 7th, 1831, a letter from the "dead man" reached those closest to him, that – HE IS ALIVE! Hieronim wrote it on July 27th, and it was delivered to his loved ones after more than three months. It is hard to even imagine how great their joy must have been!

42 H. Kajsiewicz, *Sonety i inne wiersze*, p. 44.

43 Ibid., p. 45.

44 M. Zeitheim, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, p. 26.

In the meantime, Kajsiwicz was treated in Puławy. He was very lucky, since he was taken care of by the excellent doctors of the Princes Czartoryski at their ancestral and magnificent residence. However, the condition of his spirit was bad, he became depressed. He had a conversation with a military priest, made confession and received Holy Communion. However, he did not want to accept the “last rites,” trusting that he would not die, that he would still ride his horse, that he would grab his lance and sword. *I will be sound in my hour of need*, he concluded in one of the sonnets. It is worth stressing again at this point that Kajsiwicz never lost his faith but needed awakening from spiritual laziness. This is also evidenced by his own words from the introduction to the published sonnets.

Regarding religion, he explained, I have grown up, I live in a time of turmoil, a distortion of pure ideas, a time of denial of living truths. The French philosophy of the 18th century, the philosophy of Voltaire, Diderot, Volney through various channels, undetected influenced the youthful mind – this is the true stigma of Cain weighing on the people of the 19th century. However these doctrines are completely extinct for me, sometimes materialism still manifests itself in places, if not in thought, then in the very expression.⁴⁵

“Clear thought” and “peace of mind” returned to the young and fearful insurgent on February 26th, 1831, when, after only over a week of captivity, help came from an unexpected side. On that day he was recaptured from the hands of the Moskals. He was transferred to a military hospital in Radom. Longing to fight, however, he decided to make his way to Łowicz, thinking that he would join his regiment, which unfortunately was not there. He went to Warsaw to the “ministry of war,” from where he was referred to the “Alexander’s hospital” as the wound on his eye still looked very bad. While there, the news of the fall of the capital reached him. He was heartbroken. After meeting the “Augustów regiment,” he marched near Brodnica to Prussia where he was interned in Tczew. Afterwards, he went into exile. He was forced to do so because, although the tsar announced an amnesty (on November 1st, 1831),

45 H. Kajsiwicz, *Sonety i inne wiersze*, p. 33.

the following were excluded from it: participants in the cadet conspiracy, members of the government, deputies who voted for the dethronement of the tsar and volunteers from the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including those from Volhynia and Podolia. Thus, Kajsiewicz, who came from Lithuania, had no choice.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, before leaving the Fatherland, he wrote another letter to his family. This was mentioned by his sister Monika:

His last letter before emigrating, a farewell letter, was very long, full of tenderness and sublime thoughts. He expressed gratitude to his parents for everything, he was hurt that he had to leave them. [...] He spoke with the greatest tenderness to each member of the family with such poignancy and festivity, and with such a refined overview of things, that truly, whoever did not know, would never have guessed that this was written by a 19-year-old young man [...].⁴⁷

In late December of 1831, with a not completely healed eye wound and an unformed character, Hieronim left the country. He took the love of his family home and a tendency to an exuberant social life with him, with an unstoppable ambition to lead, all the greater because it was reinforced by an awareness of his uncommon literary and speaking abilities. He left as a religiously neutral Catholic, but at the same time a sensitive young man, with a head full of ideas and – like many others – believing in an immediate return to the country under the victorious banners of the next uprising. “Only by leaving the country can I still be useful to it: to this Mother who raised me, you and all of us, he persuaded his loved ones in a letter.”⁴⁸

For the young émigré, the memories of his childhood and early youth were overwhelmingly happy. He expressed this in the introduction to the so generously quoted *Sonnets*, by saying: “[...] more precious is a family cottage, because of the memories attached to it, than any other village even more beautiful and inhabited by equally noble people. Who does not understand this, either has no

46 S. Kalemka, *Wielka Emigracja 1831–1863*, Toruń 2003, p. 17.

47 M. Zeithem, *Wspomnienia z lat młodych*, pp. 24–25.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

feelings, or wishes to lie to them.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, in the piece *To my poems* he added with exuberance: “The heart wildly plays in the chest after the dearest losses – brothers, relatives, parents, Fatherland! Oh God.”⁵⁰

After many years as a priest and Resurrectionist

While in exile in Paris, Kajsiewicz returned to religious devotion. The first stage of this return he owed, as I noted, to Adam Mickiewicz, thanks to ongoing conversations with him and encouraging letters, through which, as he put it, we were *catholicizing*,⁵¹ by “we” also referring to Leonard Rettel.⁵² The second stage he owed to Jański in the Brotherhood of National Service, where he recognized his priestly and later religious calling. On February 17th, 1836, he joined the first community of Resurrectionists, initially called the Jański House. Following a year of study in Paris at the College Stanislas that prepared him for the priesthood, he left with Piotr Semenenko⁵³ to continue his education in Rome. There, on December 5th, 1841, he was ordained a priest, and began a faithful path of development and realization of the Resurrectionist charism.⁵⁴

49 H. Kajsiewicz, *Sonety i inne wiersze*, p. 33.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

51 A. Kardaś, *Droga charyzmatyczna*, pp. 154–165.

52 Leonard Rettel (1811–1885) – Belvederer, November insurrectionist, émigré activist in Paris, supporter of the Polish Democratic Society, writer and translator, publicist, loyal fellow of Hieronim Kajsiewicz with whom he stayed in exile in Angers. Rettel remained in close contact with Mickiewicz and Jański, since 1841 supporter of Andrzej Towiański.

53 Piotr Semenenko (1814–1886) – co-founder and Superior General of the Congregation of the Resurrection, who participated in the November Uprising, an unusual philosopher and outstanding theologian, a highly demanded director of souls and confessor, initiator and co-founder of many female religious congregations, founder and first rector of the Pontifical Polish College in Rome, from his „school” came prominent priests, bishops, some of them elevated to the altars (S. J. S. Pelczar, S. J. Bilczewski and others). He left behind a vast theological, ascetic and philosophical legacy as well as a great number of letters and a diary. He is a candidate for the altars.

54 Cf. A. Kardaś, *Droga charyzmatyczna...*, pp. 90–137; J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, vol. 1, Katowice 1990, pp. 29–37, 46–77, 103–133 and the following.

In 1860 Father Kajsiewicz, by then already a noble and renowned “general of the new order,” came to Greater Poland, as reported in national newspapers. He appeared there and at his parents’ home in Góra, near Śrem, to bless them on the occasion of their golden jubilee of marriage. He was touched, as he described in a letter to his brothers in Paris⁵⁵, and spoke briefly. A passage from this speech is particularly beautiful and meaningful:

[...] I thank you, dear parents, that you taught me since childhood the order of God [...]. Thank you that you carefully protected me from depravity and from listening to non-constructive conversations [...], I did not understand everything at the time, but I remembered everything, and therefore I thank you...⁵⁶

The time spent in the family home was captured by Kajsiewicz in this beautiful sonnet, therefore worth quoting in full:

So sad and bored, I laugh bitterly here -
My homeland is in the grave, and you are unheard of;
As a potted flower I must slowly fade away,
And mankind so humiliated – where shall hope enter?

Happy the one, so happy, who sheds tears of sorrow;
I am troubled, unable neither to weep nor sigh;
Sometimes I listen, to I hear if the wind speaks of you -
But the winds bribed – where will hope enter?

Sometimes I look to see if any familiar bird
Does not fly here for the winter – does not mention you?..
But the birds also remain so silent in the land of captivity.

Ah, when bad fate allows the hair here to turn white,
By offending the oppressor, before my life I will be done,
I will go to embrace you once and happily die.⁵⁷

55 Cf. H. Kajsiewicz, *Listy*, vol. 7, Rzym 2008, p. 146.

56 Idem, *Pisma. Kazania przygodne*, vol. 1, Berlin 1870, p. 239.

57 Idem, *Sonet y i inne wiersze*, p. 52.

Abstract: Hieronim Kajsiwicz (1812–1873) was an extraordinary figure in the history of Poland and the 19th century Church, a dedicated priest and monk, a patriot, and co-founder of the Congregation of the Resurrection. He was a wise and courageous Superior General, a totally unique preacher – the „Skarga of the 19th century”, a guide to the souls of many great Polish women and men. Moreover, he was a religious writer, a defender of the Church, the Pope and the family, a co-founder of the nation's philosophy and theology and the Resurrectionist educational system. He was born on December 7th, 1812, in Slavikai in Lithuania, and grew up in a deeply religious and patriotic family.

In his early youth he had very different goals and visions for his life. His path to the first community of Resurrectionists had its stages, the first of which concluded the publication of his „Sonnets” in Paris in 1833, where he expressed his experiences of the November Uprising and his first months in exile, especially in Paris.

He was educated in Raseiniai, and later in Sejny, where he graduated from high school in 1829, significantly developing his talents. He was extremely gifted in the field of literature and very ambitious. Upon graduation from high school, he began studying in Warsaw at the Faculty of Law and Administration. Meanwhile, because of his passion for literature and fine arts, he attended complementary lectures by Kazimierz Brodziński and Ludwik Osiński. He would also give them his works to review, which they praised highly and helped him publish them in the Warsaw literary press. Kajsiwicz was also a translator of Friedrich Schiller's works. The young writer additionally published poems and novels. One of them made him famous thanks to a review by Maurycy Mochnacki. He was gaining recognition in literary circles; therefore, Jan Ordyńiec offered him collaboration, an apartment and a year's salary. From then on, Kajsiwicz wanted not only to be a lawyer, but first and foremost wanted to be a poet and publicist, even founding his own literary magazine.

During his university years, he stopped his religious practices and led a casual life. When the November Uprising broke out, he joined it without hesitation. He later captured the events of the uprising in his sonnets. They concern, among other things, his participation in the Honor Guard under General Józef Chłopicki, his homecoming requesting a blessing from his parents to fight in the uprising, as well as his battle route, especially at Stoczek and Nowa Wieś. The sonnets bear witness to the love of his immediate family and his small homeland in Lithuania, as well as his thoughts and experiences following the bloody battle of Nowa Wieś, where he had been almost mortally wounded and taken into Tsarist captivity. Kajsiwicz was then experiencing a state of depression caused by the conviction that he would no longer be „useful to the Fatherland.”

After the fall of the uprising, he was interned in Tczew, after which he went into exile. There he not only returned to religious devotion under the influence of Adam Mickiewicz but recognized his priestly and religious calling in the community of „Jański's House.” In 1841 he was ordained a priest in Rome, beginning the path of implementing the Resurrectionist charism.

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