The debate between J.A. Jabłonowski and J.A. Załuski on the value and tasks of Polish historiography

SUMMARY

The manuscript collections of Biblioteka Narodowa (rkps BN III 3263) and Biblioteka Czartoryskich (rkps 1162) contain traces of the epistolar debate between bishop Józef Andrzej Jabłonowski of Kiev, and the voivode (provincial governor) of Nowogródek, Józef Aleksander Załuski, two eminent personages who made a great contribution to Polish culture during the reign of King Augustus III. The correspondence, dating to 1763, concerned the value of Polish historiography up to that time and its tasks for the future. In the debate, which accompanied plans for the publications of a four-volume “collection of historians in the Polish language”, i.e. an edition of the most important historiography works on the history of Poland, Załuski and Jabłonowski touched upon many issues concerning the study of source materials.

The article presents a detailed account of how the conception of this work came into being, by setting it against the background of the whole scholarly publishing programme of the Załuski Library, which was spelled out in 1732 by Załuski in his famous brochure entitled *Programma literarium*. The article also describes the implementation of the project, completed finally in 1768 (when volume four was published) and entitled *Zbiór dziejopisów polskich we czterech tomach zawarty* [The collection of Polish historians contained in four volumes]. The text of the article is supplemented by an appendix containing the relevant fragments of the correspondence between Załuski and Jabłonowski. The source material contained in those fragments can serve as a basis for describing the historical awareness of the “Sarmatian” Commonwealth’s elite at the threshold of the epoch of King Stanislaus Augusts.