

Micellanea Klukowskie

The miscellaneous works of Rev. Krzysztof Kluk

SUMMARY

Rev. Krzysztof Kluk (1739-1796) wrote fourteen volumes of naturalist works, of which the *Dykcjonarz roślinny* of 1786-1788 was the first modern Polish plant encyclopaedia. In 1785 and 1789 he published two textbooks for secondary schools: on botany and on zoology. His most widely read works, however, comprised popular compendia of botany, which were re-issued several times in the first half of the 19th century. It was also in that period that his textbooks on botany and zoology were re-issued (usually with some alterations).

Rev. Kluk was born and worked at Ciechanowiec, in the region of Podlasie (in the north-west of present-day Poland). He was educated in Jesuit and Piarist schools, and then at the seminary of the Priests of the Mission (Lazarists), where he was ordained as priest. In his pastoral duties, he established contacts with enlightened magnate families: the Ossolińskis and the Jabłonowskis. It was especially with duchess Anna Jabłonowska of Siemiatycze that Rev. Kluk shared an interest in nature. He made use of her natural history collection (the biggest of that kind in Poland) and her library. Common themes are to be found in the writings of the duchess Jabłonowska and of Rev. Kluk, especially concerning the applications of the theoretical achievements in natural science to agriculture.

Rev. Kluk's scientific attainments were recognized by the University in Wilno (Vilnius), which upon the publication of the first volume of the *Dykcjonarz* awarded the naturalist from Podlasie with the degree of doctor of philosophy and liberal sciences, and also granted him membership of the Collegium Physicum. Proof of this is contained in a letter by Rev. Kluk to the University's rector – Marcin Poczobut (the letter is reproduced in the article). The University was also planning to make Rev. Kluk head of the Chair of Natural History, but these plans never materialized.

The scientific and popularising work of Rev. Kluk has been of much interest to his contemporaries and successors. The author of the present article has compiled a bibliography of writings dealing with Rev. Kluk's work over the last two centuries. The number of those publications runs into several hundred; they related mainly to Rev. Kluk's works on botany and zoology, and associated works dealing with agriculture, forestry, veterinary science, bee-keeping, etc.

The work of Rev. Kluk has been the subject of a number of scholarly conferences organized at the Rev. Krzysztof Kluk Museum of Agriculture at Ciechanowiec (established in 1963). The first such conference was held in 1973, to commemorate the bicentenary of the establishment of the National Commission of Education, the first Polish ministry of education. Materials from this first conference were published in 1976, in a volume entitled *Krzysztof Kluk – przyrodnik i pisarz rolniczy* [Krzysztof Kluk – naturalist and writer on agriculture]. The papers from the 1986, 1996 and 1999 conferences have been published in a range of specialist journals. Their subject-matters covers not only natural history, but the public and political activities of Rev. Kluk, the analysis of the language he used in his scientific and

popular works etc. Irrespective of the publication of the conference papers, several monographs on Rev. Kluk have also been published, including a study by Stanisław Litak, dealing with the cartographic works of the parish-priest and naturalist of Ciechanowiec.

The conferences at Ciechanowiec have contributed in a significant way to extending our knowledge of Polish natural science of the late 18th century. They have also shown a need for more specialized research into church archives and various institutions in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiev. As far as St. Petersburg is concerned, this would be important in that the collection of duchess Jabłonowska is known to have been transferred there, together with the herbals compiled by Rev. Kluk. There is a good chance that these herbals have been preserved in the Botanical Gardens of St. Petersburg.

The current article consists of two parts. The first presents the ties of the Rev. Kluk with the University in Wilno. The second part contains a discussion of the bibliography of works on Rev. Kluk published in the years 1973-1999.

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