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**Jacob Breynius „botanicus celeberrimus” (1637-1697). Życie,
powiązania międzynarodowe, dzieła i ich recepcja**

**Jacob Breynius “botanicus celeberrimus” (1637-1697). His life,
international ties, works and their reception**

SUMMARY

The paper is part of a broader study devoted to the botanist Jacob Breynius, who stands alongside Johann Hevelius as one of the most eminent scholars of the Gdańsk (Danzig) milieu in the 17th century, when the city formed part of the Commonwealth of Two Nations – Poland and Lithuania. The life and work of Breynius have been the focus of interest and publications in the fields of history of botany, history of bookmaking and printing, and botanical illustration. The topic is, however, far from exhausted, for even not all of the data contained in Breynius’s major work, *Exoticarum aliarumque minus cognitarum planarum centuria prima*, have yet been fully exploited.

The current paper presents in more detail than hitherto the life of Jacob Breynius. He was born to a Calvinist family from Brabant, which had had to emigrate from there due to religious wars, and had been dispersed across Europe. Jacob’s father was a merchant, and so was Jacob himself, but in addition to that, he was also an amateur scientist and a real botany buff, one of the few botanists at that time who did not have a medical background. He acquired an education in the field of his choice already in his youth, in his hometown of Gdańsk and at Leiden, where he changed a period of merchant’s apprenticeship into one of informal studies at the local university. He developed his passion for botany throughout his life, thanks to lively contacts, mainly with Dutch scholars (but he refused an offer to accept a chair at Leiden university).

In the successive sections of the paper, all of Breynius’s publications are analysed: twenty-six observations published in “Miscellanea Curiosa Medico-Physica” between 1673-1676, the above mentioned *Centuria*, which has never been discussed before, *Prodromus I* (Gdańsk 1680), *Prodromus II* (Gdańsk 1689), as well as *Prodromi* and *Icones*, re-editions and supplements to Breynius’s works made after his death by his Johann Philipp. In his major work, *Centuria*, Jacob Breynius discussed and presented, on exquisite copperplate charts, one hundred plants (mostly exotic), which had come to be known thanks to Dutch explorations all over the world (almost half of the plants derived from the lands in the vicinity of Cape of Good Hope).

The paper focuses on the contacts Breynius had with the international community of scholars – beginning with his teachers, Christian Mentzelius, Adolph Vorstius and Jacob Golius, through patrons, the important of whom was the renowned diplomat of the United Provinces of Northern Netherlands, Hieronymus van Bevemink, all the way to friends and collaborators among his relatives, Gdańsk burghers and Dutch scholars, including Arnold Syen, Paul Hermann, and Willem Ten Rhyne. In the paper, those personages, who have so far been

known only by name, have been described in terms of their biographies, careers and scientific achievements, as well as the mutual benefits that Breynius and they themselves drew from their acquaintance.

The last section of the paper is devoted to the citations and assessments of Breynius's works until the middle of the 18th century found in later works and in Linnaeus's work. In their light, the work of the botanist from Gdańsk acquires a deserved European dimension, reflected in the fact that Breynius was designated "botanicus celeberrimus" by later generations of scholars. All the theses in the paper are based strictly on source materials, hence the large number of quotations from Breynius's Latin works.

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