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NORWID AND EDMUND CHOJECKI – THE TRAVELLER

Among the acquaintances of Norwid a prominent place was occupied, already since the poet's Warsaw years (and later in Berlin, Italy and finally in Paris), by Edmund Franciszek Maurycy Chojecki (1822-1899), later known under the French pseudonym Charles Edmond.



Photo 1. Charles Edmond, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b531008763> (accessed 15 March 2019)

Chojecki had an intriguing, multidimensional personality, and realized himself in several fields: as a bilingual writer, poet, journalist, and columnist (even though he had no higher education¹), Polish-French translator (he translated, for example, *Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* by Jan Potocki; Lipsk 1847), traveller, librarian, political activist – in short, a man of inexhaustible energy, broad interests and considerable literary achievements (mostly in French), who has so far remained undiscovered in Poland (the fundamental problem being the lack of a Polish translation of the French, six-volume biography of Chojecki, written by his “late grandson” Emmanuel Desurvire, or any Polish monograph devoted to him for that matter²).

¹ “The young Chojecki did not decide to enter the university. His cousin and later biographer Artur wrote, not without reason, that ‘lack of higher education and scientific discipline negatively impacted his later political and literary efforts.’ Studying was expensive and social life was made difficult by the required discipline of learning. Chojecki – a Romantic through and through – felt the urge to write about and comment on current affairs and important events.” After: B. PIOTROWSKI, *Edmunda Chojeckiego wyprawa na Islandię w 1856 r.* [in the series “Materiały o Islandii,” vol. 53], Warszawa 1982, p. 3. The biographical note mentioned in this quotation was written by Artur Chojecki for *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 3, eds. J. Brożek, F. Chwałczewski, Kraków 1937, pp. 391-392.

² The author of the abovementioned biographical note in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* – Artur Chojecki (grandson of Edmund’s brother, Artur Chojecki) – claimed that his family papers contain the manuscript of a monograph by Maria Chojecka (Edmund’s daughter): *Próba monografii E. Ch. (rękopis)*. See: A. CHOJECKI, *Chojecki Edmund*, p. 392. In the 1960s and 1970s, Z. Markiewicz wrote several texts about Chojecki: “Charles Edmond – voyageur et comparatiste oublié,” [in:] *Études de littérature étrangère et comparée. Connaissance de l’étranger*, Paris 1964, pp. 292-300; *Les relations de Charles Edmond avec Herzen et les émigrés (1849-1867)*, “Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale. Sezione Slava” 7 (1964); *La servitude sans grandeur d’un écrivain bilingue (Ch. Edmond Chojecki)*, [in:] *Actes du VI^e Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée*, La Hague-Paris 1966; *Charles Edmond Chojecki collaborateur de Sainte-Beuve*, [in:] *Mélanges de Littérature Comparée et de Philologie*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 337-343; *Charles Edmond Chojecki intermédiaire entre le monde slave et la France*, “Canadian Slavonic Papers” 9 (1967), no. 1, pp. 122-130; *Charles Edmond Chojecki et son activité dans le camp des démocrates (1847-1899)*, “Acta Poloniae Historica” 37 (1978), pp. 163-174. Markiewicz also published the correspondence of Chojecki and G. Flaubert: *Flaubert et Charles Edmond, leur correspondance (1857-1877)*, Paris 1967. In the twenty-first century, B. Piotrowski published the aforementioned article *Edmunda Chojeckiego wyprawa na Islandię w 1856 r.*, while K. Westermark wrote *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata. Islandia w ‘Voyage dans les mers du nord’ Edmunda Chojeckiego*, [in:] *Romantycy na krańcach świata. Podróże egzotyczne i peregrynacje wewnętrzne*, eds. E. Modzelewska, P. Sobol, Kraków 2015, pp. 63-76. Omissions on the part of Polish literary studies were redressed by the French descendant of the writer – Emmanuel Desurvire, an exceptional physicist. In the years 2013-2014, his six-volume biography of Edmund was published in France under the title *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais, explorateur, soldat, poète, dramaturge, romansier, journaliste, bibliothécaire...*, Saint-Escobille 2011-2014. Excerpts from the book are available at Google Books and the Amazon web store (both accessed 20 November 2018). See also: J. CHAPLAIN, “[Nota o książce:] *Emmanuel Desur-*

Born in Wiski, in the Podlasie province, in the year when Mickiewicz first published his ballads, which makes him one year younger than Norwid, Chojecki was educated at the former Warsaw Lyceum, whose director at the time was the eminent lexicographer and linguist Samuel Bogumił Linde (and where French was taught by the father of Frédéric Chopin – Mikołaj). Among Chojecki's peers were Felicjan Faleński and Waław Szymanowski.³ Finally, he struck up friendship with Cyprian Norwid in the 1840s.

In the first volume of Chojecki's biography by Desurvire, which covers the years 1822-1856, Norwid's name appears only twice: in the introduction and in the chapter devoted to Warsaw's literary and political life during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴ Other volumes are similar in this respect.⁵ The single-volume biography *Charles Edmond Chojecki. L'Oeuvre et la Vie* also contains several mentions of Norwid.⁶ These scant appearances might suggest the fleeting character of their relationship, but in fact it lasted almost throughout Norwid's life (at least until the 1870s), and was certainly important for both.⁷ Epistolographic

vire 'Karol Edmund Chojecki, polski patriota, odkrywca, żołnierz, dramaturg, powieściopisarz, publicysta, bibliotekarz...', "Studia Polonistyczne" 49 (2014), pp. 223-225. E. Desurvire is also the author of the single-volume biography of Chojecki: *Charles Edmond Chojecki. L'Oeuvre et la Vie*, Saint-Escobille 2014. He also published his extant correspondence: Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondance*, ed. E. Desurvire, Paris 2014. See also: E. DESURVIRE, *Francuska twórczość teatralna Charles'a Edmonda*, trans. P. Śniedziewski, "Prace Polonistyczne" 70 (2015), pp. 51-80; IDEM, *La comtesse Laura Czosnowska ou le malheureux destin d'une lionne*, "Studia Norwidiana" 32: 2014, pp. 207-231.

³ See: A. CHOJECKI, "Chojecki Edmund," p. 391.

⁴ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonaise...*, vol. 1, p. 13, 34. It is understandable that a monograph published in France by a French author focuses predominantly on the French background, while the Polish context is identified and discussed to a much lesser degree. Desurvire naturally notes that Chojecki was "l'ami intime de Chopine et de Norwid" (*ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 14), but he does not discuss his relation with Norwid in detail.

⁵ The second volume (which covers the years 1857-1872) contains no mention of Norwid, while in the third (which covers the years 1873-1899) his name appears four times (p. 333, 334, 363, 438). In volumes 4-6, the poet is mentioned several times.

⁶ Norwid's name appears several times in it – five, to be precise.

⁷ Desurvire was certainly aware of the importance of this relation. Writing about the Warsaw circle of Edmund's friends he concludes: "To complete the circle [of Chojecki's Warsaw friends – R.G.-S.], let us finally mention Cyprian Norwid, who was just one year older than Edmund. He was enchanted by the beautiful Countess Kalergis, and was close with her trusted friend Maria [Trębicka – R.G.-S.], Edmund's cousin. Norwid was to become one of the most important Polish poets. Their friendship proved to be one of a lifetime, with Norwid calling Edmund Chojecki 'my brother'." E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. L'Oeuvre et la Vie*, p. 25. Naturally, the Warsaw years – when their friendship peaked – was a period of intense contacts between the two. However, after Cyprian's

testimonies are scarce: among Norwid's letters there are only three from Chojecki (from Egypt, dated 25 October, and two from Paris, dated 3 May 1869 and 1 December 1876⁸). No letters from Norwid to Chojecki have survived.⁹ However, the latter is mentioned several times in letters to others, mainly to Maria Trębacka and Emmy Herwegh (cf. the names index in: PWSz X, 419).

In Warsaw, Norwid and Chojecki published in "Przegląd Warszawski" and "Biblioteka Warszawska", and both were popular socialites.¹⁰ For example, they would meet at evenings organized by Katarzyna Lewocka, which gathered people associated with "Przegląd" and "Gazeta Warszawska". Further, they were regulars at Nina Łuszczewska's, at the castellan Jan Nepomucen Bieliński's, and finally at Grassow's café in Trębacka Street.¹¹ They were friends with Władysław Wężyk, whose recent journeys "around the ancient world" inspired in them a passion for Egypt and the desire to travel there. Chojecki would soon realize his oriental project in exile, but Norwid would do so only in literature by writing *Kleopatra i Cezar* in the 1870s.

Interesting details about the Warsaw friendship of Norwid and Chojecki are contained in letters from Wojciech Potocki to Andrzej Edward Koźmian.¹² Their author mentions, for example, that Cyprian would tend to the battered Edmund when "the horses bolted" ("Norwid is a sister of charity to him, a guardian angel at his bedside"¹³).

Nevertheless, the two young men were very different. In Warsaw, Chojecki was regarded as "a witty socialite, a pocket poet, an exquisite conjurer, one of the first storytellers of the new type in Poland."¹⁴

return from America they went separate ways and their contacts became rare. We can only imagine that the time of the 1867 International Exposition was special since they could again meet more often.

⁸ Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondance*, p. 189, letter no. 442.

⁹ As it arises from the correspondence, at least four letters from Norwid to Chojecki were lost (see: *Listy zaginione*, PWSz X, 294, 296, 304, 307).

¹⁰ Their presence at Warsaw salons is recalled, among other places, in: E. SKRODZKI, *Wieczory piątkowe i inne gawędy*, ed. M. Opalek, Warszawa 1962, p. 149.

¹¹ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, vol. 1: 1821-1860, Poznań 2007, pp. 64-82.

¹² This was noted by the authors of the Norwid calendar. See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 64, 67, 69, 78, 107.

¹³ Letter from W. Potocki to A. E. Koźmian, dated 20-22 July 1841. Signature: Rkps Bibl. Nauk. Pau i PAN 2039, pp. 178-179. After: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 87.

¹⁴ F. FALEŃSKI, "Wspomnienia z mojego życia," ed. J. Rudnicka, *Archiwum Literackie. Miscelanea z pogranicza XIX i XX wieku* 1964, p. 37.

His poetic passion, great memory, general aptitude and conversational ease as well as talent for improvisation made him a beloved man of fashion. He was in the centre of attention and attracted crowds wherever he was invited to improvise.¹⁵

Differences in character and attitude between these two promising writers is accurately captured in a letter from Wojciech Potocki to Andrzej Edward Koźmian:

These two young men [Norwid and Chojecki] are very promising, but Chojecki is vain, while Norwid keeps working and immerses himself in old books¹⁶;

Chojecki – the pet of love and luck – wrote different poems, but he and Norwid love each other dearly. Amicable and beloved, they are like two pure crystals from Warsaw. Still, Chojecki – who is beautiful, celebrated, and astonishing – draws a lot of attention, whereas Norwid – taciturn, grim, and silent – does not. Only when he grows and becomes a giant shall he, like Byron, crush in one strut all the worms and rats swirling at his feet.¹⁷

In time, Potocki became clearly more fond of Norwid:

I have not loved anyone so much for a long time, and have not known anyone worth it. Poor Norwid – he is among people like a pigeon between vultures, hawks, and sparrowhawks.¹⁸

Indeed, unlike Norwid, Chojecki was self-confident, go-getting and extrovert already as a young man, displaying great resourcefulness, pragmatism and flexibility, adapting to new circumstances, seizing on opportunities given to him in life, and easily developing useful acquaintances (in his Warsaw years his patrons included Franciszek Ksawery Branicki, Roger Raczyński, and Duchess Jadwiga Lubomirska). As an émigré, he would befriend many outstanding people of his time, including writers, thinkers, scientists, members of the academy and scholarly associations, economists, politicians and diplomats, as well as influential aris-

¹⁵ E. SKRODZKI, *Wieczory piątkowe*, p. 150.

¹⁶ Letter from W. Potocki to A. E. Koźmian (not dated [1841]). After: J.W. GOMULICKI, *Nieznane relacje o Norwidzie*, “Stolica” 1962, no. 23, p. 19.

¹⁷ Letter from W. Potocki to A. E. Koźmian, dated 25 March 1841. After: J.W. GOMULICKI, *O nieznanym dramacie Norwida*, “Pamiętnik Teatralny” 1961, vol. 2, p. 203.

¹⁸ Letter from W. Potocki to A. E. Koźmian, dated July 1841. Signature: Rkps Bibl. Nauk. PAN i PAN 2039, pp. 143 r. and v. After: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 90. Chojecki seemed to be too dignified in the eyes of the letter’s author – not as straightforward and impeccable as Norwid. After arriving in Warsaw in July 1841, Wojciech Potocki wrote from Hotel Saski to Koźmian: “in the morning I was visited by the good-natured Norwid, and soon after him there came Chojecki, perfumed and all dolled up.” Letter from W. Potocki to A. E. Koźmian. Signature: Rkps Bibl. Nauk. PAU i PAN 2039, p. 164. After: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 86.

toocrats¹⁹, including crowned figures such as Ismā‘īl Pasha, the viceroy of Egypt, or the almost-crowned “Plon-Plon” – Prince Napoléon Bonaparte. His vast connections among the literary and political elites helped Edmund realize ambitious projects, at the same time often rescuing him from oppression.

The differences between Norwid and Chojecki, discerned by Potocki already in Warsaw, later translated into the radical dissimilarity of their fates: the growing isolation and defeat of the former, and the staggering career of the latter.

Their friendship had many aspects (importantly including the political dimension, which was connected with Chojecki’s activity in leftist circles and his association with Emma Herwegh, who gathered many engaged people around herself; the figure of Maria Trębicka, who was closely related to Chojecki²⁰; the history of Laura Czosnowska, who may have also died at the Œuvre de Saint Casimir²¹, and others). It is impossible to display the entirety of this relationship in a single article, which makes it necessary to investigate only one aspect.

The history of Polish and French literature recognizes Chojecki as a poet and writer (and a playwright), but he was also one of the most important Polish travellers in the nineteenth century. Such experiences constitute the subject of this article because they have ignited a desire in Norwid to learn about the world (especially the East) – the desire to “breathe in some of that unknown world and feed it to imagination” (PWsz VIII, 387).²² Norwid’s extant letters (which Gomułcki estimates to comprise only a half of all he wrote) do not mention reading travel books by his friend²³ but it seems impossible that Chojecki’s journeys would not interest and inspire him, all the more so since Norwid made efforts to join Chojecki on the journey to the northern seas (which is discussed in greater detail further in the article).

¹⁹ Chojecki’s biography and letters feature names such as A. Mickiewicz, J. Słowacki, C. Norwid, G. Flaubert, T. Gautier, brothers J. and E. de Goncourt, G. Sand, A. Herzen, I. Turgenyev, Ch.-A. Sainte-Beuve, F. Liszt, P. J. Proudhon, August Mariette (exceptional archaeologist and Egyptologist), and others.

²⁰ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. L’Oeuvre et la Vie*, p. 25.

²¹ Chojecki had an affair with L. Czosnowska, who gave birth to his illegitimate daughter Maria Chojecka. See: E. DESURVIRE, “La comtesse Laura Czosnowska ou le malheureux destin d’une lionne.”

²² In 1859, Norwid wrote in a letter to his cousin M. Kleczkowski: “It could be useful for both writer and artist to explore and experience unknown colours and elements – it could complete my collection of enchanted treasures, next to which I am invariably naked” (DW XI, 336).

²³ We nevertheless know that Norwid would eagerly read Egyptian reports by W. Wężyk in his youth.

PART ONE. THE CRIMEA

In 1843, Chojecki attended Schelling's lectures in Berlin.²⁴ In the same year, Count Franciszek Ksawery Branicki²⁵ (whom Norwid also knew²⁶) – brother-in-law of Zygmunt Krasiński (brother to Elżbieta "Eliza" Krasińska and Zofia Odescalchi), who served at the time as an officer in the Tsarist army in the Caucasus and an aide to General Paskiewicz²⁷, took Chojecki on his first exotic trip to the Crimea, which lasted over six months (from August 1843 to March 1844).²⁸ The Branicki family had possessions and family there.²⁹ The outcome of the trip

²⁴ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Francuska twórczość teatralna Charles'a Edmonda*, p. 52. Chojecki studied in Berlin earlier (between the autumn of 1841 and the spring of 1842), where he went, as it were, "in place of" Norwid (whom August Cieszkowski wanted to send to Berlin to study philosophy in the early forties). See: E. LIJEWSKA, *O dwóch Quidamach. Norwid – Kierkegaard*, [in:] „*Quidam*". *Studia o poemacie*, ed. P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2011, pp. 256-257; IDEM, *Profetyczny ironista na przełomie epok*, "Roczniki Kulturoznawcze" 7 (2016), no. 3, p. 85, 87.

²⁵ Fr. Ksawery was the grandson of Ksawery Branicki, one of the leaders of the Targowica Confederation. It was through the mediation of Branicki that Chojecki could meet the family of the Italian princes Odescalchi (Fr. Ksawery's sister Zofia was the wife of Prince Livio III Odescalchi) and the Bonaparte family. The patronage of the leftist Count Branicki decided about the political preferences of Chojecki – a later follower of Proudhon and secretary at the editorial office of Mickiewicz's *Trybuna Ludów* (the periodical was funded by Branicki). Z. Krasiński warned Norwid about the leftist views of his brother-in-law and his circle. See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 343.

²⁶ Authors of the Norwid calendar suppose that it was through Chojecki that Norwid became acquainted with Branicki in Warsaw. See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 55. For more information on the relations between Norwid and Count F.K. Branicki see: A. CZARTKOWSKI, *Cyprian Norwid a Ksawery Branicki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 113 (1933), no. 140, pp. 4-6; Ł. NIEWCZAS, *Norwid – Branicki – Matejko – Berezowski*, "Studia Norwidiana" 34: 2016, pp. 125-138. Aleksander, brother of Ksawery Branicki, was also a traveller. He was interested in botany, collaborated with A. Waga, and financed research conducted by B. Dybowski. See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 55.

²⁷ Branicki was probably already trying to be released from the Russian army. In 1844 he left Russia, taking advantage of the Tsar's absence (who was in London at the time) and emigrated under the pretext of recuperating in Italy.

²⁸ See: E. DESURVIRE, *En Crimée avec le comte Branicki*, [in:] E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonaise*, vol. 1, pp. 35-40; E. DESURVIRE, *Francuska twórczość teatralna Charles'a Edmonda*, p. 52.

²⁹ The Branicki family owed these possessions to their dishonourable, cynical grandfather, member of the Targowica Confederation. After marrying Aleksandra Engelhardt (probably the daughter of Catherine II and Potemkin) he received them from Catherine II as gratification for political favours (he was also granted a lot of land in the Kiev region, with the centre in Bila Tserkva, and in Wołyń). The daughter of Aleksandra and Fr. Ksawery – Elżbieta – married Mikhail

sponsored by Count Branicki was the illustrated book *Wspomnienia z podróży po Krymie*, self-published by the author in Warsaw in 1845.³⁰

Norwid, who met with Chojecki in 1845 in Dresden while on his way to Berlin³¹, probably heard his account of the trip to the Crimea and news about the book. They would exchange letters when Norwid stayed in Berlin, and the two friends greeted each other through Edmund's cousin – Maria Trębicka. In his letters to her, Chojecki often confirmed his sympathy for, attachment to and admiration of Norwid: “I feel the need to strengthen myself in the presence of this evangelical character”³²; “With true joy I think of the moment when we shall see each other again [...]”³³

Over three hundred pages in length, the report is no ordinary account of a trip, abounding in tourist and historical details, although it could still serve as an interesting and exhaustive guide to the Crimea (perhaps even replacing such a journey). Genologically speaking, it is a varied and structured work, somewhat akin to *silva rerum*. Part travel diary, part guide, it includes detailed itineraries but is also an ambitious historical treatise. Finally, it reveals the author's literary and journalistic talents, containing many fictionalized stories, myths, legends, tales, eastern romances, and various modern digressions.

Certainly, Chojecki was not the first writer to invite Polish readers to ancient Greece, or to the lands of the Scythians and Mongols. Notions of these oriental lands have been deeply shaped by Mickiewicz's *Sonety krymskie* (creating a demand for accounts of travels to the Crimea – a demand that Chojecki capitalized on). However, the young author (who heard Mickiewicz's lectures at Collège de France) undermines the convention laid down by the said masterpiece. Chojecki was led by the inclination to verify, debunk and demythologize, to scrutinize Romantic stereotypes (e.g. the myth of the Ukrainian steppe, which he argued was replaced by “classical ruins and streams”³⁴ with little profit for literature). The Crimea of Mickiewicz is thus disenchanted as nature changes scale. Chojecki actually climbed the heaven-reaching and inaccessible “Padishah of Peaks” – Mount Chatyr-Dag – and his report contains details about the route to the summit,

Vorontsov, Tsar's governor and viceroy of the Caucasus. The couple had a beautiful palace in Alupka in the Crimea.

³⁰ See: E. CHOJECKI, *Wspomnienia z podróży po Krymie*, Warszawa 1845.

³¹ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 184.

³² J. CZARNOMORSKA, *Norwidiana w korespondencji Marii Trębickiej*, “*Studia Norwidiana*” 9-10: 1991-1992, p. 143.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁴ E. CHOJECKI, *Wspomnienia z podróży po Krymie*, p. 12.

the changing belts of flora, and even a discussion of the mountain's geological structure.³⁵

The book's conclusion also sketches a wider, equally evocative perspective: the mountains of the Caucasus, the Persia of Saadi, Hafiz, and Ferdousi, as well as the basins of Euphrates and Tigris, where "historians argue the Paradise was located."³⁶ This is how the dream about discovering the Orient began to bud in Chojecki's soul, and indirectly in Norwid's.

The two friends stayed in touch when Norwid was in Italy during the 1840s, which is confirmed by Ludwik Orpiszewski's reports sent to Adam Czartoryski³⁷ and the correspondence between Norwid and Józef Bohdan Zaleski, who passed to Chojecki the manuscript of Norwid's *Wanda* at the beginning of 1848 with the intention to publish it (which never happened because Chojecki submitted the piece for publishing in February 1848 and the manuscript was lost during the revolution). They were also close in Paris, where Chojecki was secretary at "Trybuna Ludów", and collaborated with "Revue Independente" and Proudhon's socialist *La Voix du Peuple*, beginning his period of political radicalism.

It was to Chojecki that Norwid owed his acquaintance with representatives of Parisian elites. It was probably thanks to him that he could meet Juliusz Słowacki shortly before his death.³⁸ Towards the end of the 1840s, Edmund also introduced him to the salon of Emma Herwegh³⁹, whose husband was the leader of the failed 1848 Baden Uprising. The salon "was frequented at the time by individuals more or less known for their liberal tendencies and activities" ("List Norwida do A. Hercena"; PWSz VIII, 200), including Herzen, Turgenev, Bakunin, Orsini (who later attempted to murder Napoleon III), people associated with Proudhon, Mierosławski, Cieszkowski, Libelt, and others.⁴⁰ At that time, Chojecki was already using (since 1849⁴¹) the French name Charles Edmond. Norwid remembered his presence at Herwegh's salon as "the eloquent Édouard" ("List do E. Herwegh"; DW X, 441).

³⁵ See: *ibid.*, p. 239.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

³⁷ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 253.

³⁸ Chojecki probably also told Norwid about rescuing the autograph of the poem "Do autora psalmów," which Słowacki wanted to burn. This anecdote is quoted by Norwid in the sixth lecture from *O Juliuszu Słowackim* (PWSz VI, 457). See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, vol. 2: 1861-1883, pp. 299-300.

³⁹ See: E.H. CARR, *The Romantic Exiles: a Nineteenth Century Portrait Gallery*, London 1933, p. 56, 119, 135. Emma Herwegh was another pen friend the two friends shared.

⁴⁰ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, pp. 354-355.

⁴¹ See: A. CHOJECKI, *Edmund Chojecki*, p. 391.

In the early 1850s, the paths of Chojecki and Norwid diverged for some time. The former was expelled from France on the basis of a police order for his political activity in 1850. Advised by Victor Hugo, he went to Egypt⁴² and then, after the Crimean War broke out, volunteered to join the army of Omar Pasha (and later visited Italy and Switzerland). The latter, broken down by being rejected and misunderstood, left for America in November 1852. They met again in Paris probably as late as around 1855 (perhaps even later). In a 1859 letter to Emma Herwegh Norwid writes with deep resentment that Chojecki did not even come to visit him after he returned from America in late December 1854:

[...] after my return from America I found your former circle to be so elusive, primarily in spiritual terms, that I do not even see my childhood friend Charles-Edmond because he would not even come to see me...

Almost all of these men are now eminent officials, but I do not seek their patronage, while as far as honesty in relationships is concerned, it is inextricably tied to their continuity.

(“List C. Norwida do E. Herwegh z lutego? 1859 r.”; DW XI, 302)

It therefore seems that the mid-1850s was a turning point in the history of the friendship of Norwid and Chojecki. At that time, their priorities and fates became quite divergent. This was ultimately confirmed by the events connected with the journey to Iceland.

PART TWO. JOURNEY TO THE NORTHERN SEAS

Chojecki returned to France from exile in 1852 thanks to the support of the cousin of Napoleon III: “Plon-Plon” (Prince Napoléon Bonaparte; 1822-1891), whom he befriended in Italy one year before. In 1856, he became his personal secretary and participated in this role in the Prince’s sea expedition to Iceland and Greenland⁴³ on-board the corvette *Queen Hortense*. During this voyage, which

⁴² See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. L’Oeuvre et la Vie*, p. 8.

⁴³ See: B. PIOTROWSKI, *Edmunda Chojeckiego wyprawa na Islandię w 1856 r.*; K. WESTERMARK, *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata*. See also: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonaise*, vol. 1, pp. 347-413. Shortly before the journey with Prince Napoléon to the North Sea in June 1856 Charles Edmond had head surgery. See: E. DESURVIRE, *Francuska twórczość teatralna Charles’a Edmonda*, p. 55 (note 12). See also: M. JANION, *Skald jako poeta romantyczny*, [in:] *Zwierzciadła północy: związki i paralele literatur polskiej i skandynawskiej*, eds. M. Janion, N. Åke Nilsson, A. Sobolewska, Warszawa 1991, vol. 1; J. KAMIONKA-STRASZAK, ‘Barbarzyński’ heroizm i tkliwa melancholia. *Literatura skandynawska w polskich almanachach dobrego romantyzmu*, [in:] *Zwierzciadła północy. Związki i paralele literatur polskiej i skandynawskiej*, vol. 1, pp. 60-87.

lasted from 15 June to 6 September, he kept a diary. The route led from the coast of Scotland to Iceland, Greenland, the Shetlands and finally to Scandinavia. Its aim was to scout these rarely visited areas, examining volcanoes, glaciers, and natural resources (which probably constituted a covert colonial motive).

Norwid also ardently desired to participate in this research project, applying for the position of an artist-draughtsman. However, although he was initially accepted, he was ultimately rejected on the official grounds that his submission was late. As Lenartowicz wrote to Józef Zaleski,

[Norwid] was supposed to set sail as a draughtsman with Prince Napoléon to Sweden, but someone schemed against him and he received a polite reply claiming it was highly unfortunate he had not applied earlier because all scientific posts had been already filled, leaving the poor man in a pickle. (PWsz VIII, 530)

The poet, who already had the American experience and was long looking for any position that would guarantee him at least some basic stabilization in life⁴⁴ received yet another rejection with deep sadness:

[...] I received the letter from Prince N[apoléon], where he pities the fact that I had not applied earlier because he is unable to take even both of the artists he had already admitted (choosing only one) because of lack of physical space on the vessel. (“List C. Norwida do M. Pawlikowskiego”; (DW XI, 72))

In a letter to Maria Trębicka he places the blame for his fiasco on Chojecki, nevertheless withholding any details about the alleged scheming on the part of his friend (and her cousin!):

Next month I was supposed to leave for the North Pole, where Franklin [a British traveller – R.G. -S.]⁴⁵ went missing, as part of the retinue of His Highness Prince Napoléon Bonaparte, as a draughtsman in a scientific expedition, but the crew was reduced and the Prince regrettably had to turn me down, to which he was led by Mr Edmund***, knight of three orders, aide to the Prince. (Friend.)

⁴⁴ Norwid had huge financial problems at the time. He was paying back his debt to Mieczysław Pawlikowski in tiny instalments (he would return as little as thirty francs at a time); he would also borrow from him “a black uniform for an hour” (PWsz VIII, 262) since he had no formal clothes of his own.

⁴⁵ Admiral John Franklin and his crew were considered missing in 1845 in the Northwest Passage. The story of a fictional rescue mission meant to find members of the original expedition became later (in 1858) the basis of a sensational five-act drama by Chojecki titled *Les mers polaires*, which was one of the literary outcomes of his trip to the north.

It was not a question of honour, but a practical one, which I expressed, trying to make it clear that I was not applying for an honorary place.

[...] in the end, in my thirty third year I am utterly exhausted [...].
("List do M. Trębickiej"; DW XI, 80)⁴⁶

This event, which questioned the value of his friendship with "Mr Edmund" certainly contributed to a great extent to the cooling of their relationship. Although their contacts continued until the 1870s, they never reached the kind of intensity or warmth they had in Warsaw.

Thus, Norwid did not see the northern seas or the homeland of the *Edda*. We can only regret that he was deprived of the opportunity to expand his knowledge and enrich his imagination, which is probably a great loss for Polish literature and culture. The journey could have changed Norwid's dramatic fate, which – as he kept bemoaning – did not allow him to be put to "practical use." As usually, he missed his chance by a hair's breadth: "Indeed, on many occasions all it would take to change everything are four steps and a pair of gloves!..." ("List do M. Trębickiej"; DW XI, 80).

Chojecki – who visited Iceland as the first Pole in history⁴⁷ – published a lengthy, over seven-hundred-page-long report titled *Voyage dans les mers du Nord à bord de la corvette La Reine Hortense*.⁴⁸ It includes a map of the journey, a geological map of Iceland, and twelve steel engravings. An exhibition was opened in Palais-Royal, presenting details about the journey and its trophies.⁴⁹ The publication made the author famous in France and won much acclaim (three editions were published until 1862 and the book was enthusiastically received for example by George Sand⁵⁰), also for its popularizing role. It allegedly even inspired Jules Verne, who was quite interested in Franklin's tragic expedition and

⁴⁶ J.W. Gomulicki deduced from this letter that Chojecki simply took the place that was promised to Norwid: "In May or June he [Norwid – R.G.-S.] received from Prince Napoléon Bonaparte a promise that he would include him in his retinue as a draughtsman and chronicler on-board *Espérance*, which was to soon depart to the polar seas. At the last moment, however, he rescinded the promise, probably due to the scheming of Edmund Chojecki, a 'friend' who himself took the place that was meant for Norwid (PWsz VIII 263, 268, 530)." See: *Kalendarz biograficzny*, PWsz XI, 80.

⁴⁷ The first one is sometimes considered to be Daniel Strejca-Vetter, who arrived in Iceland in 1613. However, he was a Polonized Czech, who fled to Poland due to religious persecution. See: D. VETTER, *Islandia albo krótkie opisanie wyspy Islandyji*, ed. D. Rott, Katowice 1997.

⁴⁸ Ch. EDMOND, *Voyage dans les mers du Nord à bord de la corvette La Reine Hortense*, Paris 1857.

⁴⁹ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais*, vol. 1, p. 410.

⁵⁰ See: K. WESTERMARK, *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata*, pp. 72-73.

several years later published (in 1864) a novel about a journey to the North Pole titled *Voyages et aventures du capitaine Hatteras*.⁵¹

The Scandinavian account by Charles Edmond already became the subject of two essays in Polish⁵² (the journey is also discussed in depth by Desurvire⁵³), which does not make it necessary to elaborate on it in greater detail here. Just like the reports from the Crimea, the text is distinguished by independence of judgment, critical approach, as well as the predilection to compare first-hand observations with historical, mythological and literary accounts. Chojecki verified many fairy-tale-like notions from the *Edda*, correcting stereotypes (e.g. claims about the cruelty and barbarism of the Icelanders and the Scandinavians⁵⁴) and redefining concepts. Due to the political rank and the imperial prestige of the expedition, his report could not have a more private, casual or humorous character. He was bound by scientific discipline, which made him attempt to write in a dispassionate and objective manner. Despite this stylistic shift, the author, studying the geological structure of polar regions, turned out to be a typical Romantic who distances himself from the “demon of science”⁵⁵ and remains sensitive to natural beauty.⁵⁶ His work exemplifies the Romantic perspective on the world and culture, e.g. the belief about the importance of myth, unveiling before the readers of *Voyage dans les mers du Nord* the world of Nordic mythology:

[...] a pantheon of northern deities led by Odin and Thor. The narrator believes that thanks to its geographical isolation Iceland has preserved many tales and legends in their original form, which are still the basis of intellectual life among its inhabitants and are transmitted in oral form. He uses one citizen of Reykjavik as an example – the man would derive his genealogy from Odin and was able to list all the names of generations linking him to the deity. Chojecki also describes coming into contact with the Old Icelandic language and devotes attention to the culture-making activities of the scalds, comparing them to Celtic bards and Homeric rhapsodes, creators of a primary poetry that has not been tainted by outside influences. He considers the poetic *Edda* and stories gathered by Saemunda and Snorri Sturluson to be some of the most precious gems in world literature.⁵⁷

⁵¹ The germ of this novel was the 1855 novella “Un hivernage dans les glaces,” connected thematically with the Northern glaciers.

⁵² B. PIOTROWSKI, *Edmunda Chojeckiego wyprawa na Islandię w 1856 r.*; K. WESTERMARK, *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata*. See also: *Podróże i podróżopisarstwo w polskiej literaturze i kulturze XIX wieku. Studia i szkice*, eds. A. Kowalczyk, A. Kwiatek, Kraków 2015; W. and T. SŁABCZYŃSCY, *Słownik podróżników polskich*, Warszawa 1992; T. SŁABCZYŃSKI, *Słownik polskich podróżników i odkrywców*, Warszawa 2017.

⁵³ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais*, vol. 1, pp. 347-413.

⁵⁴ See: K. WESTERMARK, *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata*, p. 69.

⁵⁵ Ch. EDMOND, *Voyage dans les mers du Nord*, p. 145.

⁵⁶ See: K. WESTERMARK, *Między wyobrażonym a realnym końcem świata*, pp. 68, 71-72.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

However, has the book by Chojecki impacted Norwid? It is probable that he read this report from the journey he dreamed of, binding his artistic and scientific plans with it. It may not be accidental that Scandinavian or Nordic themes emerge in his poetry precisely around 1857 – the year when he wrote the poem “Odpowiedź [Jadwidze Łuszczewskiej],” which constitutes a link in a poetic dialogue and is full of images from Northern mythology:

Lecz na północy... nie etruska mowa;
Marmur się kończy, gdzie lody –
I młot Odyna, nie długo, w nich kowa
Ku innym światom przechody!*

*Wedle tak podań północnych, jako też wiary, a nawet mniemań klasycznych starożytnych historyków, pasmo pod biegunem północnym mrokami swymi daje przejście dla duchów na planetę. (PWsz I, 322-323)

Norwid might have drawn these inspirations from the book by Chojecki, although it could have just provided an impulse to closely study Northern culture. The poet was probably also preparing himself for the journey when it was being planned, reading literature on the subject. Either way, echoes of Edmund’s expedition to Scandinavia are clearly discernible in works by Norwid.⁵⁸

PART THREE. CHOJECKI, NORWID AND EGYPT. THE 1867 INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION IN PARIS

Nevertheless, Chojecki was to play, one more time, an important and stimulating role in Norwid’s creative life, inspiring him, as it seems, to develop the idea of a literary work about Egypt. Certainly, the original impulse came already in

⁵⁸ Even until his very last years: in the 1882 article *Żydy i mechesy* Norwid attributed himself (not even for the first time) a northern (Norman) genealogy, invoking on this occasion Nordic deities: “My forefathers worshipped Odin first, then Krywekrywejty, until they were Christened during the reign of Jagiełło” (PWsz VI, 649). The poet could admire various artefacts from Scandinavia at the 1867 International Exposition in Paris: “The Scandinavian countries provided some of the most interesting relics related to the pre-historical era. [...] The Antiquity Museum in Copenhagen submitted part of its collection, including tools from flint and granite, which for the most part have the shape of Thor’s hammer, as conveyed in Scandinavian legends. Usually the handles of these hammers are made of reindeer horns or ox bones.” *Listy z wystawy paryskiej*, “Dziennik Poznański” 1867, no. 177, p. 3. Norwid’s interest in northern mythology and culture is discussed by E. Kasperski in *Dyskursy romantyków. Norwid i inni* (Warszawa 2003) and by E. Lijewska in: *O dwóch Quidamach*. pp. 452-455.

Warsaw from the Polish Romantic discoverer of the ancient world Władysław Wężyk, but it was Edmund who infected Cyprian with a passion for Egyptology, and even became his guide to Egypt at the 1867 International Exposition in Paris.

Chojecki thoroughly studied Egypt already in the 1850s because he spent one year of his exile there⁵⁹: from June 1850 to July 1851⁶⁰ (acquainting Gustave Flaubert). This exile was not as onerous as his complaints in letters may suggest. Letters of recommendation from Prince Napoléon⁶¹ opened before Chojecki the doors to the Cairo palace of the French-born General Soliman Pasha (actually Joseph Sève⁶²), who used to serve under Muhammad Ali of Egypt, the country's former military leader. Soliman Pasha received the Pole as his guest and made him the secretary of his staff.⁶³

While in Egypt, Edmund devoted himself to anthropological studies (he was fascinated with the already well-known evolutionary theory) and archaeology, also learning Arabic. He would visit famous monuments from the times of the pharaohs, travelling across the entire Upper Egypt. A fervent socialist and Proudhon's collaborator, he also had the occasion to confront socialist theories with the social injustice and poverty he witnessed first-hand in Egypt.⁶⁴

Several months after arriving in Cairo, Chojecki received a letter from Norwid (now lost and of unknown content). The faithfulness of his friend clearly made him wistful, lifting him from the loneliness and isolation entailed by exile, dispelling the sense of uselessness that surrounded him. Thankful and moved, he thus replied on 25 October 1850:

⁵⁹ The reason for this was the writer's engagement with the political activities of radical circles, primarily the collaboration with Proudhon's periodical "La Voix du peuple".

⁶⁰ See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais*, vol. 1, p. 91.

⁶¹ Prince Napoléon was also a personal acquaintance of Prince Marcełi Lubomirski, whom Norwid befriended during his stay in America (and who helped the poet return to Europe by paying for his ticket).

⁶² See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki, l'Oeuvre et la Vie*, p. 74.

⁶³ Chojecki offered Soliman Pasha that he would write down his memoirs. He was also planning to send to France, twice a week, a press correspondence (columns from Egypt). See: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais*, vol. 1, p. 102. Although Chojecki lived in luxury (in a palace at the Nile, with access to a splendid library, and the ability to participate in feasts and hunts), the Egyptian exile did not arouse his enthusiasm: "[...] I prefer active life but from this perspective the East has little of what would resemble life." (*List E. Chojeckiego do ks. Napoleona z 10 X 1850 roku*, [in:] Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondance*, p. 22, letter no. 36). Unless stated otherwise, all translations from Chojecki's French text after the Polish rendition by the author of this article.

⁶⁴ Chojecki included many remarks about the Egypt of that time in letters to Proudhon, who was his chief correspondent during that period.

Dear Cyprian!

Thank you for your long letter; it would be precious to any European staying in Egypt; I find it invaluable, because I live on charity of friendly words that are sometimes thrown at me from a distance. Moving from the tempestuous Paris to the lonely African desert was – as God sees – quite difficult for me. Deprived of my natural nourishment, I have violated my character and am now wounded and in pain.

In seclusion sadness ripens and bitterness becomes almost tangible. In Paris I had for a long time been on the right track, following my own path, set out with hardship; I saw the goal in front of me; I would have achieved it; future was within arm's reach and I was forming it freely like wax in a hot steel glove. I had to abandon everything, taking only my griefs with me; whatever lies in store for me is clear only to the wheeler-dealer fate, which plays with my life as if it were a metal ball, not really paying attention that it can fall out of the malicious hands. Today I am hammering for myself an armour that I allegedly could not make – indifference. [...]

The things they say in Paris about my reception in Egypt are largely false. Seraskier Basha received me suitably for a man carrying fourteen letters from eminent French people. It occurred to him that I could make myself helpful in Egypt as well; we talked a lot, but only the future will show the result of this since, on the one hand, there was some half-wild nobleness, an energy bathed in blood, and a sincerely favourable disposition towards the Poles, but on the other – a sense of independence that overrules everything else and a fatalistic, contrary aversion.⁶⁵

Further in the letter he discusses details regarding Egypt's internal affairs:

The European civilization mocks the Quran and intoxicates itself with wine. Meanwhile, underground streams are rife with people scheming or disappearing; plague, cholera, ophthalmia decimate the nation. The rest are secretly petting their yatagans. Amidst this pandemonium resides Seraskier Basha, severe in his manners as a hermit in the old Thebaid, frozen in military sternness, unable to see the present, and in love with power. Fatalism and disdain for life – these are the two passions that unwittingly capture one's soul and mind here. Thousands-strong forces take one on this path.

Sit at my window during the night – you can dip your hand in the Nile from it, and see an island right in front [...]. This is a place for sinking sacks that usually contain a woman and a cat. [...] Looking out the gate there is the road to Abyssinia (to the left), where black people often rebel and refuse to pay taxes. On this road you can easily meet Arnauts, each one with several black heads tied to his saddle. These things happened where the Turks live – the Christian parts of the city never learn about any of this. [...]

People here are low in spirit and demoralized by captivity. The Bedouins are indeed a heroic tribe. They chew on horse bits and curse their oppressors.⁶⁶

Finally, Chojecki reveals his ambitious plans regarding travels and scientific studies:

⁶⁵ E. CHOJECKI, *List do C. Norwida z 25 X 1850 roku*, [in:] Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondance*, p. 24, letter no. 38.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

As far as I am concerned, I started to learn Arabic on the second day after my arrival. Today I am visiting mosques and tents, able to have a conversation; I expect to master the language in one year. [...]

I will spend the winter in Cairo, where I would like to improve my Arabic and knowledge of the Quran. Next year, if I live and remain hopeful, I shall travel deeper into the Sahara. I will seek out the Bedouins between Gaza and Al.-Harisz, and visit Jerusalem, Baghdad, Aleppo, and especially Lebanon. Syria is much more interesting than Egypt. In Sennaar, [Maksymilian] Ryłło left strange souvenirs. The history of this man, who fought for the success of the Jesuits in the East, is very engrossing.

Should I return to France, and when? ... Back then I would give my life to stay there; today, I would rather die than to return there. Sometimes I am overcome with grief and despair... You know very well from experience how much the nerves can cost one! I would very much like to be useful to you; let me know, my dear, how I can help, and do not forget about your faithful friend and brother.

C. E.⁶⁷

Norwid sent this letter to Władysław Bentkowski at the Poznań editorial office of “Goniec Polski” “due to its colourful passages” (“List Norwida do W. Bentkowskiego z 3 grudnia 1850 r.”; DW X, 294-295). It was published (in its entirety) on 27 November 1850 (in issue no. 126, pp. 491-492), without even notifying Norwid, who already in December advised Bentkowski to publish only those excerpts that would not harm anyone (“there are names, even ones from passports, if I am not mistaken”; DW XI, 294).

Later, émigré life in Paris gave the two friends many occasions to meet: at the Easter breakfast held at the Polish School in Batignolles in 1860⁶⁸ or during Deotyma’s poetry evenings.⁶⁹ In 1861 Norwid spoke about Chojecki with Józef Bohdan Zaleski.⁷⁰ Both would also donate works to commemorative “gift” volumes (e.g. *Po ziarnie*, 1861).⁷¹ In 1861 Edmund received French citizenship, which radically changed his social and financial situation, allowing him to leave emigration behind him and take French posts.

Egyptian experiences and acquaintances from the 1850s helped Chojecki several years later when the idea was born to organize an Egyptian exhibition at the 1867 International Exposition in Paris.⁷²

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz*, p. 778.

⁶⁹ See: *ibid.*, p. 798.

⁷⁰ See: *ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷¹ See: *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁷² Chojecki travelled to Egypt already in January 1866 in order to initiate talks about the participation of this country in the exhibition. He stayed there for two and a half months. For more information about his work on the creation of the Egyptian section see: E. DESURVIRE, *Charles Edmond Chojecki. Patriote polonais*, vol. 2, pp. 163-169.

Great interest in Egypt was sparked among the French (and Europeans in general) already at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Napoleon's expedition of 1798-1801⁷³ and its fruits: the twelve-volume work *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1822) – a comprehensive scientific description of Egypt.⁷⁴ In this way, Napoleon has drawn the world's attention to Egypt, the genius of the Orient, and the need to reform this part of the world.

The International Exposition, open between 1 April and 3 November 1867, was organized in the military Field of Mars (and île de Billancourt). Part of the Exposition was housed in the specially constructed gigantic Palais Omnibus.⁷⁵ The very idea of the show was received with enthusiasm:

It will be possible to take a trip around the world during several walks along a number of promenades, visiting all epochs, presenting the entire history as filled by people and experienced by them. What a dream!⁷⁶

Patronage over the Egyptian exhibition was provided by the viceroy of Egypt Ismā'īl Pasha, who had been ruling the country for just four years, but was an enlightened, fervent reformer educated in Paris (two years later, in 1869, he also oversaw the festive opening of the Suez Canal).

Ismā'īl Pasha was personally involved in preparations of both the artistic and the industrial parts of the exhibition. He even assembled a special committee chaired by Nubara-Pasha (his right hand in Egypt), meant to supervise the realization of the project. The general organizer of the Egyptian exhibition, responsible for ensuring the safety of displayed objects and carrying out the ruler's orders in Paris was Edmund Chojecki, while other members of the committee included the eminent Egyptologist and French archaeologist August Mariette (1821-1881), Colonel Mircher (who oversaw the bas-relief map of Egypt), Antonio Figari (1804-1870), an Italian pharmacist and naturalist, author of *Studii scientifici sull'Egitto e sue adiacenze, compresa la penisola dell'Arabia Petrea*

⁷³ Napoleon took 167 scientists with him to Egypt to study the country and its history. Egypt was then under the control of the Ottoman Empire.

⁷⁴ Apart from numerous scientists, around 2,000 draughtsmen worked on the *Description*.

⁷⁵ The building was 325 meters long and 110 meters wide. There were sixteen doors leading inside. The palace was pulled down after the exhibition closed because it could not occupy a vital military area. See: <https://paryz.pl/wystawa-swiatowa-w-paryzu-w-1867-roku/> (accessed 23 November 2018).

⁷⁶ Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle de 1867*, Paris 1867, pp. 14-15. See also: *Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris. Documents iconographiques*, Paris 2008. Online: <http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/series/pdf/F12-1867-iconographie.pdf> (accessed 23 November 2018).

(Lucca 1864)⁷⁷, who prepared the Sudan part and the geological map (the fruit of twenty-five years of work done by him and his fellow mineralogists⁷⁸); J. Claude, member of the International Committee on Money, Weights, and Measures, and Vidal, who designed the catalogue of the exhibition. Drevet was the lead architect, paintings were handled by the historical painter Bin, while sculptures – by two other artists: Mallet and Godin.⁷⁹

The greatest authority in this remarkable team was enjoyed by Mariette, founder of the Egyptian Department for Antiquity, a scholar whose discoveries laid the foundations for nineteenth-century Egyptology (Chojecki considered him to be more distinguished than Champollion, since the latter only “taught everyone to read the book that Mariette set out to open, reconstructing it for all the world to see”⁸⁰). Mariette made many fascinating discoveries in Egypt: he excavated Serapeum – the hypogeum of holy Apis bulls in Sakkara (1850), studied the necropolises in Meidum, Abydos and Thebes as well as the great temple in Dendera, unearthed the temple of Horus in Edfu, oversaw works in Karnak (cf. his *Karnak, étude topographique et archéologique*, Paris 1858⁸¹), Medinet Habu, Deir el-Bahari, and Tanis, and revealed the Sphinx Temple in Giza. He initiated methodical, scholarly research of Egyptian temples and created in 1857 the first museum gathering Egyptian pieces in Bulak (the northern district of Cairo)⁸², which later became the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

By the decision of Ismā‘īl Pasha, the International Exposition in Paris featured a presentation of many pieces from the Bulak collection, including, among other things, papyri, sculptures, and jewellery excavated by Mariette – a selection of highly rare, authentic and precious exhibits representative of Egypt from

⁷⁷ Online: https://books.google.pl/books/about/Studii_scientifici_sull_Egitto_e_sue_adi.html?id=pBwGAAAAQAAJ&redir_esc=y (accessed 20 November 2018). The work was quickly translated into Arabic.

⁷⁸ Figari, who arrived in Egypt when he was twenty-one, first worked at a hospital in Cairo, and a dozen or so years later headed a geological expedition into the desert, which aimed to find deposits of coal and marble.

⁷⁹ See: Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle*, p. 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43. Interestingly, Giuseppe Verdi wrote the libretto to the opera *Aida* on the basis of Mariette's text.

⁸¹ Online: <https://www.nakala.fr/nakala/data/11280/d2dd50be> (accessed 20 November 2018).

⁸² In order to end archaeological lawlessness and theft of Egyptian monuments, Ismā‘īl Pasha founded Service générale de conservation des antiquités de l'Égypte in 1858 to the delight of all archaeologists – an organization meant to protect and conserve monuments. It was at this time that the idea emerged to erect a proper building for the museum in Cairo. However, it was built only in 1902 – earlier, exhibits were kept in Pasha's palace in Giza (earlier – in Bulak, in Saladin's citadel and in the magazines of a Cairo language school).

the times of the pharaohs. For those like Norwid, who could not afford a trip to Egypt, the Cairo museum exhibition temporarily transplanted to Paris was a real treat.

The Egyptian exhibition – displaying the achievements of several thousand years of the civilization born at the River Nile – was installed in the north-western corner of the Field of Mars in a large space of six thousand square metres. It dazzled the visitors by offering a miniature version of Egypt “in all its grandeur, revealing the greatness of its past as well as the rich promises of the present, and leaving it for the public opinion to draw conclusions about its future.”⁸³

The Egyptian corner was unanimously hailed as the most interesting among all the wonders presented at the Exposition.⁸⁴ As the Paris correspondent for “Dziennik Poznański” enthusiastically wrote,

[w]hoever seeks a remarkable atmosphere and true picturesqueness may find both in the Egyptian part of the park. It is one of the most interesting and instructive sections of the International Exposition, featuring four buildings characterized by different architectural purposes: caravansary, temple, palace, and stables.

The caravansary, or *okel* as they say in the East, is a kind of a gallery that surrounds a large, rectangular yard with various stalls and shops, where Egyptian craftsmen sit and work hard. Among them are outstanding individuals, as if lifted from the Bible or paintings: jewellers from Cairo and Sudan, cutting and fitting gems, turners making long pipe stems, weavers preparing bulrush mats, and haberdashers working on silk accessories. There is even a barber waiting for someone to entrust their beard with him.

There is a café at the back, where you can smoke a *nargila*, drinking a *mocca* seasoned in the eastern manner. In short, the caravansary can remind anyone who travelled in the East of their experiences there [...]. The lower part of the caravansary is occupied by the present-day Egypt, alive and moving, while the upper story presents the dead ancient Egypt by way of twelve mummies.

In the palace one can admire a large, convex map of the entire Egypt, interestingly and craftily designed by French engineers. Also, there are beautiful photographs presenting some of the fabulous ruins and monuments. Two dromedaries of different races are kept in the stables. [...] Further, there are two donkeys, one black and one white, both in their prime, shapely and slender, their fur smooth and glistening – truly the ideal form of this species.

Grave sphinxes sit before the Egyptian temple, a structure that is remarkable both historically and architecturally. [...]

⁸³ Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle*, p. 15. Constructions works at the exhibition were made difficult by the weather (according to Chojecki, out of a total of ninety days, sixty-eight were rainy, and then winter brought chill and frost).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

The era of the pyramids is presented in the central hall. Art from the times of Moses is displayed on the outer walls, while the Ptolemaic period – under the colonnade that surrounds the entire building. All paintings that can be admired here have been copied from Egyptian monuments and tombs by Mr Bin, an artist. Statues from alabaster, marble, and wood, sent from the museum in Bulak, fill the temple, including an excellent one representing Queen Ameniritis of the twenty-fifth dynasty!⁸⁵ [...]

I have also seen here some beautiful women's jewels, rings, earrings, and necklaces that used to belong to Princess Aach-hotep. [...] I have also learned that the Princess, whose mummy was recently stripped of all precious gems, lived during the reign of King Tanis, which was the time when Joseph, the son of Jacob, became the vizier of Egypt.

The overall design of the Egyptian exhibition is the responsibility of Mr Edmund Chojecki.⁸⁶

Finally, let us also quote the director of the exhibition himself:

Let us enter. Here is the museum. Before our eyes lies the entire ancient Egypt, within an arm's length, on a splendid *résumé* [...]. Bas-reliefs, paintings painstakingly copied from originals, stelas filled with inscriptions older than the Bible itself, which can be now read thanks to science; massive, golden jewellery from excavations conducted at sites dating back to the pyramids; statues incomparably perfect and lifelike, which had slept in tombs for thirty, forty or even fifty centuries; mummies resting in coffins, as if speaking to us about the whole eternity. Even laymen find them deeply solemn. All of this has been selected and arranged in a scientific order that has been thought through so as to [...] recreate in our minds the oldest human civilization, including its religion, politics, arts, craftsmanship, customs, great names, and momentous historical events.⁸⁷

The ancient part of the Egyptian exhibition was overlooked by a temple whose dimensions were eighteen by forty-eight metres (since the Karnak temple measured three hundred and seventy metres, the Paris version was a miniature, a kind of a "chapel" as Mariette noted⁸⁸), modelled on the plane, proportions and details of the Isis temple on the island of File.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ The statue in question is an alabaster figure representing the daughter of a Cushitic ruler, pharaoh Tefnakht (eighth century BC), which was found in Thebes.

⁸⁶ J.S., *Listy z wystawy paryskiej*, "Dziennik Poznański" 1867, no. 124, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle*, p. 18.

⁸⁸ "Nous aurions eu ainsi un temple en quelque sorte détaché du sol égyptien, et transporté au Champ-de-Mars." A. MARIETTE, *Exposition universelle de 1867. Description du Parc égyptien*, Paris 1867, pp. 10-11.

⁸⁹ See: *Exposition Universelle de Paris 1867. Temple égyptien*. Online: https://www.world-fairs.info/expopavillondetails.php?expo_id=3&pavillon_id=3744 (accessed 20 November 2018). See also: Z. ÇELİK, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford 1992. Online: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft8x0nb62g/>



Le caravansérail.

Fig. 1. Caravansary at the World Exhibition (“L’Illustration”, 30 March 1867, p. 201), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069785247;view=1up;seq=219;size=150> (accessed 20 November 2018)

Objects from the caliphate era were exhibited inside a Salemlik (an Ottoman palace⁹⁰). Consequently, “the priestly severity and royal splendour of the pharaohs’ era contrasted with aristocratic lightness and knightly grace.”⁹¹ The achievements of modern-day Egypt were presented in an *okel*, a public building modelled on caravansaries from Upper Egypt – a combination of hotel, inn, bazaar, shop, atelier, and market (compared by Chojecki to a Parisian gallery).⁹² The two last projects were realized by Schmits, an architect from the Ministry of Public Works

(accessed 20 November 2018).

⁹⁰ See: *Exposition Universelle de Paris 1867. Salemlik*. Online: https://www.worldfairs.info/expopavillondetails.php?expo_id=3&pavillon_id=3599 (accessed 20 November 2018).

⁹¹ Ch. EDMOND, *L’Égypte à l’exposition universelle*, p. 190. A bas-relief map of Egypt was exhibited in the Palace. See: A. MARIETTE, *Exposition universelle de 1867*, p. V.

⁹² See: *Exposition Universelle de Paris 1867. Okel (Okala)*. Online: https://www.worldfairs.info/expopavillondetails.php?expo_id=3&pavillon_id=3756 (accessed 20 November 2018).

in Cairo. Next to the *okel* there was also the above-mentioned stable with two donkeys and two dromedaries.

The volume *L'Égypte à l'Exposition universelle de 1867* published in Paris in the same year by Chojecki is not a systematic catalogue of the exhibition, but a learned compendium meticulously yet accessibly presenting the then current state of Egyptology (e.g. the chronology of Egypt's history, as construed at the time⁹³ and often differing from the one accepted today; known monuments as well as the latest archaeological findings). The part of the book devoted to archaeology was enriched by Mariette, friend to Chojecki, and contains the results of studies carried out by members of Comité de monnaies, poids et mesures: Figari and Claude.⁹⁴ This publication remains to this day the fundamental source of information about the Egyptian part of the 1867 Paris Exposition⁹⁵ and an invaluable source for scholars, historians, museologists and archaeologists (apart from *Expositions universelle de 1867. Description du parc égyptienne* by Mariette-Bey⁹⁶).

Over three hundred and eighty pages long, the book consists of three parts, arranged chronologically, each one devoted to a specific era in the history of Egypt (and corresponding to one of the three parts of the Egyptian exhibition in Paris): ancient Egypt (era of the pharaohs), the middle ages (the Arab Egypt of the caliphs) and the modern Egypt of Ismā'īl Pasha. Each chapter contains a historical introduction, detailed descriptions of monuments and their location at the exhibition. Finally, the publication provides statistical data gathered by Colonel Mircher about the country's area, population, trade, army and fleet, finances, etc. as well as a catalogue of all exhibits grouped thematically (not chronologically).

Chojecki called Egypt “the world's father” and “a product of the whim and fantasy of nature” since the country owed its unmatched rise to astonishingly favourable natural conditions and human ingenuity. He brought to the attention of readers

⁹³ Chojecki followed the chronology of Egyptian history assumed by the German Egyptologist Heinrich C. Brugsch in *Histoire d'Égypte* (Leipzig 1859). See: Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte à l'exposition universelle*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ See: *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ See e.g.: A. NOUR, *Egyptian-French Cultural Encounters at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867*, “MDCCC 1800” 6 (2017). Online: <http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/article/mdccc-1800/2017/01e-arti-in-mostra-le-esposizioni-internazionali/art-10.14277-2280-8841-MDCCC-6-17-3.pdf> (accessed 20 November 2018).

⁹⁶ Apart from the following report: A. MARIETTE, *Exposition universelle de 1867. Description du Parc égyptien*; IDEM, “Document”. *Communications on the Egyptian Exhibition of 1867* (*Murassallat bi khousus maarad al Masri li aam 1867*), Cairo 1866: Egyptian National Archives of Egypt (Dar al-Wathaiq al-Qawmiyya), 5013-004219, and *L'Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée: publication internationale autorisée par la Commission imperiale*, ed. F. Ducuing, Paris 1867, vols. 1-2.

the radical difference between nineteenth-century Egypt and the demographic and economic potential of the country during the times of pharaohs and caliphs.⁹⁷ Further, he pointed out Egypt's temporal and spatial vastness – difficult to grasp for Europeans – connected with the development of its civilization (it was only after twenty centuries since its birth that the pyramids and Memphis were raised, the latter located as far away from Thebes as Babylon from Paris⁹⁸). He also recalled that the Egyptian civilization is older than Babylon and Nineveh, and was already five thousand years old in Persian times⁹⁹ – it blossomed when the future Europeans were still wandering in the steppes of Tartary, living a half-animal existence. Surrounded with barbarism, Egypt flourished in terms of art, culture, and science (astronomy, geometry, algebra), developing its own writing and units of measurement.

The part devoted to ancient Egypt begins with information about the life-bringing River Nile, its sources, deltas, and traffic capacity at various places. Splendid descriptions of its flooding are accompanied by accounts of the oldest ideas about irrigation canals and water reservoirs (developed by Amenemhat III from the eleventh dynasty, who lived in the nineteenth century BC). The history of Egypt is presented in the publication from the beginnings of monarchy, i.e. the reign of Menes (Narmer), founder of the first dynasty who unified the country (in the fourth millennium BC; Chojecki's chronology places him around the sixth and fifth millennium BC), through the times of the Hyksos ("shepherd kings"), Ramses II, Greek colonization (from the eighth to the sixth century BC), Persian reign (Cambyses II, son of Cyrus the Great), the rule of Alexander the Great, to the Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt until the adoption of Christianity as state religion in 381 by Theodosius the Great.¹⁰⁰ Chojecki also attempted to align biblical history with that of Egypt, placing biblical figures like Abraham, Joseph, or Moses on the Egyptian timeline (which archaeologists and historians find highly problematic even today).

The historical outline is followed by the description of the most important monuments of ancient Egypt, including many recent discoveries, e.g. the statue of Pharaoh Chefred of the fourth dynasty, or tomb frescoes excavated by François Mariette.

⁹⁷ Despite its large area, nineteenth-century Egypt had five to six million inhabitants, whereas during the Muslim invasion there were as many as fifteen million people living there in around ten thousand cities. See: Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte à l'exposition universelle*, p. 23.

⁹⁸ The author emphasises that the oldest Egyptian inscriptions displaying respect for law and personal dignity go back some four thousand years prior to the French Revolution. See: Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte à l'exposition universelle*, pp. 30-31.

⁹⁹ See: *ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Naturally, Chojecki knew nothing about Tutankhamun of the eighteenth dynasty.



Photo 2. The statue of Chefred discovered by Mariette in 1860, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khafa#/media/File:Khafre_statue.jpg (accessed 20 November 2018)

In the book, Chojecki also explains the mysteries of the Rosetta stone, which aided Champollion in deciphering hieroglyphs, and describes, with great expertise, the titanic architecture of two metropolises: Memphis and Thebes, intriguingly comparing them:

Memphis is elegant and grand in a simple and honest way, while Thebes has splendour and lavishness of an almost theatrical character. Even the riches of Louis XIV fade in comparison with Thebes.¹⁰¹

The author identifies two dominant ideas in ancient Egypt: the mysteries of life (embodied in the form of the sphinx) and death (expressed by the pyramids). He regarded the Egypt of the pharaohs to be primarily an “old cemetery”¹⁰² – a similar perspective also appears in Norwid’s *Kleopatra i Cezar*.

¹⁰¹ Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle*, p. 61.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Subsequent paragraphs are devoted to selected categories of Egyptian artefacts: the process of making papyri and the contents of those gathered by Mariette in the Bulak museum; the mythology of ancient Egypt and sacred architecture (which later inspired the Greeks); Egyptian realist painting (with detailed descriptions of paintings and decorations at the sites where Mariette worked, e.g. in Deir el-Bahari and Abydos); sculpture and jewellery (bracelets, armlets, necklaces excavated by Mariette: “originals that once pleased the eyes of Egyptians”¹⁰³).



Photo 3. August Mariette (photo by Nadar, 1861), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auguste_Mariette (accessed 20 November 2018)

Chojewski lists and briefly describes the Paris exhibits: statues, furniture, chests, polychrome sarcophagi, mummies, axes and daggers, mirrors, small cult objects, scarabs, utensils, vases, perfume bottles, emblems, etc., as well as enamelware, items made from bronze, porcelain, plastic mass, alabaster, porphyry, basalt, and wood. However, his goal was not to put together a dry and soulless catalogue,

¹⁰³ See: *ibid.*, p. 108.

but to reveal their deeper, intimate, and hidden sense as well as their symbolic dimension.¹⁰⁴

The account of mediaeval Egypt focuses on two issues: the rise of Alexandria (including its splendid library, which housed ca. 500,000 scrolls and helped develop a unique philosophy) and the birth of Islam. The section on Muslim history is relatively less original, constituting – as the author admits – a summary of Gustav Weil's *Geschichte der islamitischen Voelker* (Weil was professor of oriental languages at Heidelberg University).¹⁰⁵ Among stories about the reign and achievements of various rulers representing the Umayyads, the Abbasids and the Fatimids, a special place is held by the following caliphs: Al-Mansur, under whom Baghdad blossomed; Harun al-Rashid, immortalized in *One Thousand and One Nights*, and Al-Hakim, regarded as the embodiment of eastern despotism and fanaticism due to his order to demolish the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Chojecki further discusses Arabic art: the Quran and the beginnings of Arabic poetry, architecture (both sacred and secular, represented by the mosque and the palace, respectively), which was clearly marked by the habits and dreams of nomads (fondness for drapes moved by the wind, reminiscent of tent flaps; fountains with life-giving water; domes as opposed to flat roofs, imitating the heavens; predilection for organic ornaments drawn from nature, etc.). Finally, he pauses to discuss arabesques, which occupied an important place in the Romantic theory of art because they were considered to form the essence of Arabic art (and soul):

Arabs have put all their soul into the arabesque, a fiery soul that dazzles with religious fervour, but is also pleasant and alluring; with lines that seek and run, then finding themselves, intertwining and going separate ways again; the bright colours that shimmer with special, harmonious rhythm, a calculated chaos of details and their elaborate disorder, a calmness among unbridled liveliness, all the most fantastic forms in the world intimately combined, as if miraculously, with regular geometric forms, crazy dreams drawn with compasses and in accordance with rules – the entire family of Muhammad is contained in the arabesque, a race that is active to the highest degree and yet so languid and eager to allow the imagination to wander, although endowed with such a remarkable practical reason.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See: *ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁵ Hence (probably) the presence of Arab-German comparisons in Chojecki's work. See: G. WEIL, *Geschichte der islamitischen Voelker*, Stuttgart 1866. Muhammad, who combined deep, prophetic conviction with political talent, i.e. enthusiasm with calculation, seemed to the Polish author to be the quintessential representative of his people, who adopted the arabesque to fuse "imaginative geometry" with "algebraic madness." As a former follower of Proudhon, Chojecki argued that the Arab temperament is "the most anarchic in the world." Ch. EDMOND, *L'Égypte a l'exposition universelle*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Finally, Chojecki presents secular Arabic architecture of public use: caravansaries, castles, baths, and fountains, finding prime examples in mediaeval Cairo and Moorish Spain. The picture is made complete by descriptions of Mehmed Ali's palace (shown in Paris) and its furnishings: furniture (including wooden items incusted with mother-of-pearl), arms, copies of the Quran, dishes, Damascene steel, vases, and carved cases (collection assembled by Meymar).¹⁰⁷ The book closes with a set of statistical data on the country's area, population, administrative division, roads, Nile canals, lakes, telegraphic lines, foreign trade, transportation and navigation, education, finances, units of measurement, monetary system, calendar, and military forces. It also contains a two-part catalogue of the exhibition. The first lists objects from Egypt, divided into ten groups and ninety-five classes.¹⁰⁸ The second part lists items from the Upper Nile region, Nubia, and Sudan, grouped thematically.

Immensely curious, Norwid visited the International Exhibition in Paris several times after it opened on 1 April 1867.¹⁰⁹ He would return from these visits elated,

¹⁰⁷ Naturally, these were not all topics addressed in Chojecki's report. He also devoted a lot of space to descriptions of Egyptian tools, embroidery, and jewellery (silver filigree). He mentions the Arabic café located in the exhibition, live animals that the visitors could admire (two dromedaries and two donkeys), the large, bas-relief map of Egypt (forty-five square meters) prepared by Figari, the library with glazed bookshelves holding a collection of books in Arabic and Turkish (as many as four hundred books, including classics and literature, as well as works in areas such as theology, philosophy, morality, mathematics, law, medicine, history, travels, industry, craftsmanship, military science, administration, and mores. He drew attention to an intriguing collection of photographs from contemporary Egypt made by the Cairo photographer Désiré. Further paragraphs are devoted to various models of Egyptian writing, races inhabiting Egypt, agriculture, collections of fibres and species of trees, textiles, crops and spices, henna, honeys, natural oils, attire and shoes, animal antlers and skins, etc.

¹⁰⁸ These would include various manuscripts, encompassing autographs of the Quran as well as musical instruments, medical equipment, coins, maps, furniture and furnishings, carpets, goldsmith's and bronze products, watches, lamps, textiles (cotton, silk, linen, etc.), embroidery and haberdashery, men's and women's clothes, jewellery, arms, travel equipment and tent paraphernalia, metallurgic and mining products (a collection of rocks and minerals prepared by Figari), a collection of paleontological excavations gathered and prepared by Dr. Reil from Cairo (bones and teeth of various prehistoric animals), tinker products, collections of various species of trees from the Nile Valley, stuffed animals, agricultural products, collections of seeds, roots, and plants, as well as chemical and pharmaceutical products, drugs, dyes, skins, machines and tools used in various areas, a collection of grains, various species of fruit and vegetables, meats, confectionery, live animals, an exhibition about education, printed works and manuscripts used in madrasas, collections of photographs, etc.

¹⁰⁹ Norwid eagerly visited International Expositions (cf. his *Uwagi o ekspozycjach*; PWSz VI, 546-547). See also: E. DĄBROWICZ, 'Piękno powszechne'. *Norwid wobec wystaw światowych*, [in:] *Piękno wieku dziewiętnastego. Studia i szkice z historii literatury i estetyki*, eds. E. Nowicka, Z. Przychodniak, Poznań 2008, pp. 107-126.

fascinated and inspired with what he saw. The exhibition served as a substitute for long journeys (into Far and Near East, South America, etc.) and archaeological explorations, which he longed after but could not participate in due to lack of funds: “I call this trip a journey – how else could I call the elliptical revolution of the pendulum that crosses through all the countries in the world?” (PWsz VI, 203). Numerous mentions in letters confirm that the wonders he witnessed at the exhibition engaged his imagination for many months. The first mention of a visit to the Field of Mars appears in a letter to his cousin Michał Kleczkowski, dated 2 May (“je revenais à pied de l’Exposition où j’ai passé plusieurs heures sur pieds”; PWsz IX, 283). In June, probably after another visit, he sent Joanna Kuczyńska his report (“Podróż po Wystawie Powszechniej”; PWsz VI, 203-208), hoping that she would publish it in some Polish paper (which never happened). Further mentions of the Exposition appear in letters to Cieszkowski (written in July; PWsz IX, 298), Kuczyńska (probably in August; PWsz IX, 299), Konstancja Górska (ca. 31 August; PWsz IX, 304), Bronisław Zaleski (ca. 20 October; PWsz IX, 311), and again to Kuczyńska (“Recetnly one person from *Poznański* told me at the Exposition that...”; in October/November 1867; PWsz IX, 320). The poet must have spent entire days at the Field of Mars, passionately devoting himself to studies and strolls, soaking up the atmosphere of distant places and times. He might even have been regarded a regular since someone replied to a question about Norwid’s address by saying “at the Exposition” (PWsz IX, 304).

He would no doubt meet with Chojecki in the Egyptian section (although no mention of any such meeting and conversation survives) and even have him as his guide to the exhibition.¹¹⁰ Chojecki was probably Norwid’s source of invaluable information. The old friend introduced him to a world that enchanted both of them already in Warsaw thanks to Władysław Wężyk.¹¹¹ As J.W. Gomulicki notes,

[...] perhaps the greatest impression was made on Norwid by the Egyptian section designed by Edmund Chojecki, the poet’s old friend from Warsaw and his first years in Paris. Some of the exhibits

¹¹⁰ One person who played an important role in initiating Norwid into Egyptian topics (and who provided the poet with many minor Egyptian artefacts) was Mieczysław Geniusz, whose brother-in-law worked at the construction site of the Suez Canal (eventually, Geniusz himself travelled to Egypt). For more information on Norwid’s manuscripts in the possession of M. Geniusz see: T. SMOLEŃSKI, *Egipskie norwidiana*, “Ateneum Polskie” 2 (1908), no. 1, pp. 105-115.

¹¹¹ Visitors at the Egyptian exhibition could experience unusual things. The Paris correspondent of “Dziennik Poznański” discusses, in a letter dated 3 July, events from several days before (witnessed by the French Emperor himself along with his family, as well as the viceroy of Egypt and many royal families), namely the public opening of a mummy recently excavated from a tomb. Notable guests were welcomed by Mariette and Edmund Chojecki. See: J.S., *Listy z wystawy paryskiej*, “Dziennik Poznański” 1867, no. 157, p. 2.

– later donated to Chojecki by the Egyptian government – could have played a significant role in the development of Norwid’s later tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar*. (*Metryki i objaśnienia*; PWSz VII, 552)

Due to his poverty, Norwid’s knowledge about Egypt was second-hand, drawn mostly from books. However, exhibits from the Bulak museum and other splendid collections displayed in Paris allowed him to glimpse the authentic Egypt of the pharaohs, and to taste the atmosphere exuded by thousand-year-old artefacts. The directness of that experience translated into the accuracy and suggestiveness of setting in Norwid’s drama about the Egyptian queen.

In the reportage-like “daguerreotype” sent to Kuczyńska, the poet describes the faithful copy of an Egyptian temple created for the exhibition, filled with the lively colours of its still fresh decorations:

Here is the granite gate to the ancient Egyptian temple, which I already know. Coming through it, one passes lying sphinxes, here and there accompanied by fan-like palms. Further lie the stairs to the temple, which is surrounded with sphinx columns from all sides. The entire temple is adorned with hieroglyphs, inside and outside, which we are used to seeing in bad condition, old and faded, making their sight here all the more special because the wisdom of general outline and the great so-

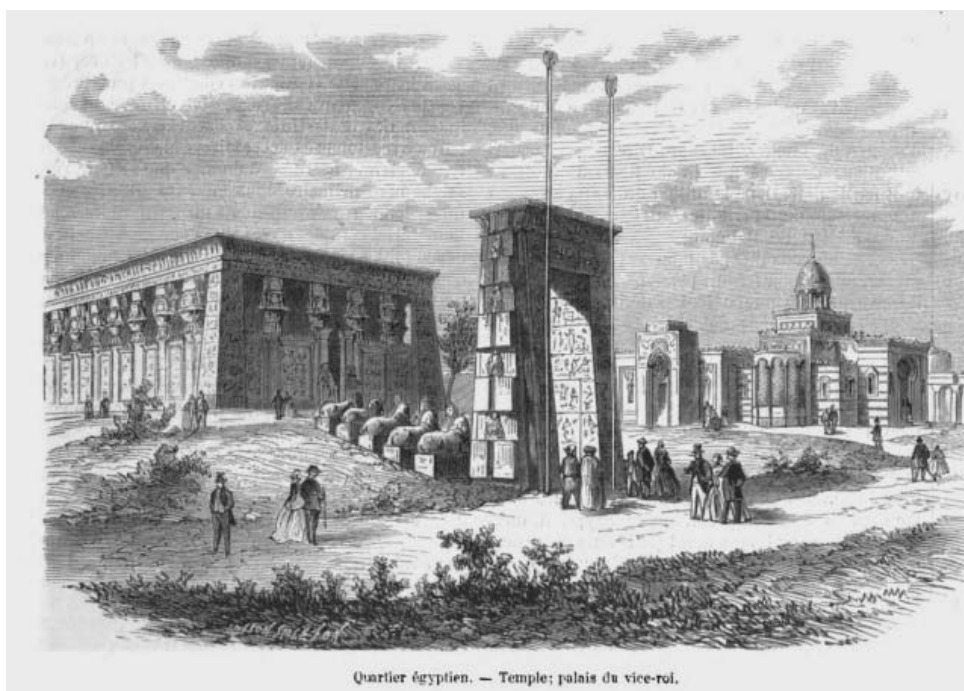


Fig. 2. Egyptian temple (with Selamlık in the distance – the palace of the viceroy of Egypt) at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1867 (“L’Illustration”, 30 March 1867, p. 200)

lemnity of the whole thing is specked so brightly and diversely that I can only imagine that three thousand years before, when the hieroglyphs were still fresh, it was only the gigantic size of the building itself that softened this garishness. Then I enter the corridor of sphinx columns and admire the four walls inside, which makes me especially glad because I am alone here. Unfortunately, in one corner I spot two palettes in the shadow, full of fresh colour, and some brushes next to them!... This means that the hieroglyphs glistening in the sun in fact do not reach back to the times of the pharaohs... I walk down the stairs into the sphinx alley and my eyes rest in the shadows of palms leaning over the sand. What could be more beautiful than the star-shaped shadows of fan-like leaves delicately moved by the wind – they brush against the sand, laying themselves on it with transparent stars, silent... Few more beautiful things have I seen today!... and still, I have seen everything today. (*Podróż po Wystawie Powszechnej*; PWSz VI, 206)

Mention of the temple erected for the International Exposition and its Egyptian original (the temple of Isis on the island of File) is also contained in Norwid's *Notatki z mitologii*¹¹²:

At the 1867 Exposition, the temple wrongly called *Temple d'Edfo* (copy from Philae [mistake in PWSz: Philoc. – R.G.-S.]: pylon [drawing] – lotus-flower capitals – mural paintings in the external corridor, dating back to the times of Moses (war waged ca. 1,500 BC between the Queen of H a t a s and the inhabitants of Punt) – inside, the oldest models of Egyptian art, some of the most exquisite. Stone statues of Chefred [italicized in PWSz, underlined in Norwid – R.G.-S.] form the background of the second pyramid, the wooden ones being the oldest. As for women's jewellery, items from the mummy of Queen Aah-Hopet, a contemporary of Joseph. (*Notatki z mitologii*; p. 18, verso).¹¹³

In the ancient section Norwid could also see the copy of a text recently discovered (or rather deciphered) by Mariette: a six-meter-long relief presenting Queen Cleopatra, from a temple wall in Dendera, an image that was then the only known picture of her.¹¹⁴ This experience must have significantly moved the imagination of the later author of *Kleopatra i Cezar*.¹¹⁵

Still, it is not only the drama that was influenced by the Paris exhibition. *The album Orbis* (I) also seems to have been greatly affected by experiences from the Egyptian section. Sketches and drawings in the album were also copies (though

¹¹² The quoted note by Norwid was thus made when the exhibition was open or just after it closed.

¹¹³ Norwid could draw information about the architecture of ancient Egypt from works such as A. Quatremère de Quincy's *De l'architecture égyptienne considérée dans son origine, ses principes et son goût, et comparée sous les mêmes rapports à l'architecture grecque* (Paris 1803).

¹¹⁴ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz*, p. 307.

¹¹⁵ See also: E. ŻWIRKOWSKA, *Tragedia kultur. Studium o tragedii historycznej C. K. Norwida „Kleopatra i Cezar”*, Lublin 1991; E. ŻWIRKOWSKA, *Jeszcze o egipskiej tragedii Cypriana Norwida*, „Studia Norwidiana” 12-13: 1994-1995, pp. 243-261; L. KAMIENIECKI, *Numizmatyczna geneza 'Kleopatry' Norwida*, „Biuletyn Numizmatyczny” 1968, no. 34, p. 651.

occasionally modified¹¹⁶) of authentic frescoes displayed in Paris (as faithful copies) and hailing from Qurna, Beni-Hassan, Karnak, and Thebes. This is confirmed by the author's annotations that indicate sources ("In Gurnah and Beni Hassan" in fig. 76; Egyptian Harpist "from a drawing in Thebes" in fig. 79; "From Egyptian frescoes in Gournah" in fig. 8, etc.; PWSz XI, 527-528) and dates in signatures (1867 in fig. 75: "C. Norwid 1867"; PWSz XI, 527¹¹⁷).



Photo 4. Bas relief from the wall of the Hathor temple in Dendera, representing Cleopatra and Caesarion, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemeusz_XV_Cezarion#/media/File:Denderah3_Cleopatra_Cesarion.jpg (accessed 20 November 2018)

What caught Norwid's attention was not just Egyptian antiquity but also exhibits from the section devoted to modern Egypt (in the *okel*), particularly the workshops of Arab craftsmen, full of busy figures with exotic, dusky faces (weavers, goldsmiths, makers of mats), as well as their tools and beautiful products. Next

¹¹⁶ For example, under drawing no. 87, which represents profiles of Egyptian women, Norwid added: "Egyptian profiles from Karnak and Thebes – with the difference that eyes are not shown in profiles" (PWSz XI, 528).

¹¹⁷ Certainly, the collection also contains earlier drawings from 1850s and 1860s, although many dates are illegible.



Drawing 1. C. Norwid, Profiles of Egyptian women (with the author's annotation: "Egyptian profiles from Karnak and Thebes – with the difference that eyes are not shown in profiles"), from the album *Orbis (I)*, fig. 87, p. 83, <https://polona.pl/item/album-orbis-i,ODM4MjMxNDc/254/#item> (accessed 20 November 2018)



Drawing 2. C. Norwid, Egyptian drawings (signed: C. Norwid 1867), from the album *Orbis (I)*, fig. 75, p. 74, <https://polona.pl/item/album-orbis-i,ODM4MjMxNDc/230/#item> (accessed 20 November 2018)

to the *okel*, behind the caravansary, there was a small stable occupied by “a royal white camel”¹¹⁸ which inspired deeper reflection in the poem regarding historiography and archaeology:

I felt in my blood the atom of a venerable-universal-homeland, which could not be erased by thousands of years! (PWsz VI, 207).



Fig. 3. An orchestra at a Tunisian café (*L'Illustration*, 27 April 1867, p. 260)

¹¹⁸ It was probably the same white camel that was described by the correspondent of “*Dziennik Poznański*”: “Egypt is better presented in the park rather than in the building. Next to a temple from the times of the pharaohs [...] there stands a building in the oriental style, covered with hieroglyphs and supported with heavy columns. It is painted with bright colours and adorned with flowers and lotuses. If one enters the middle hall on a hot day, the room filled with sunlight pouring in through the glass roof can give one a good idea of the choking African heat; the serpent-necked camel with a white mop, which stands at the entrance, supports the illusion and adds local colour.” J.S., *Listy z wystawy paryskiej*, “*Dziennik Poznański*” 1867, no. 197, p. 2.

Next to the *okel* there was also a café described by Chojecki, eagerly frequented by the Parisian public.¹¹⁹ Norwid wrote his *Podróż po Wystawie Powszechnej* in another place of this type, namely a café situated by the palace of the Tunisian Bey¹²⁰ where he drank the characteristically fatty coffee prepared in the eastern manner (brewed long from freshly ground seeds).

Norwid's contacts with Chojecki did not break after the Exposition closed. In 1869 Norwid asked Chojecki in a letter (now lost) about his engagement in the activities of the émigré Association for Scientific Help, but the latter initially responded negatively, arguing that "nothing can be done" and that he was suffering from "rheumatism in his leg" (letter from Chojecki to Norwid, dated 3 May 1869¹²¹). Still, in January 1870 he delivered, *pro publico bono*, a lecture titled "Patriotism and its manifestations in some nations" as part of the Polish Conferences held in the freemasonic Hall of the Grand Orient.¹²² It was probably Chojecki who introduced Norwid ("before the war," i.e. before 1870) to Duchess Matilda Bonaparte, sister of Prince "Plon Plon" – patron of writers and artists (among others of Théophile Gautier), who promised to buy from the poet a precious drawing by Leonardo (PWSz X, 99).

From that point on, the lives of Norwid and Chojecki followed different paths. Charles Edmond was one of the few Polish emigrants who managed to cope in exile despite obvious difficulties, and prosper:

Having settled in France, he enjoyed a decent salary as an official in the Senate (including an official apartment), thanks to which he had enough money to live a quite comfortable life. Thanks to the 1867 International Exposition, during which his engagement was handsomely rewarded by the viceroy of Egypt, he was able to build a manor in Bellevue, which the Goncourts envied so much. He had numerous guests at his table there. However, during the siege of Paris the house was plundered. It is true that the cost of repairs and loss of his position in the Senate made Charles Edmond

¹¹⁹ See also: *Exposition Universelle de Paris 1867. Okel (Okala)*. Online: https://www.world-fairs.info/expopavillondetails.php?expo_id=3&pavillon_id=3756 (accessed 20 November 2018): "A large Arab café was located in front of the *okel*, just like in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. Coffee is enjoyed everywhere in the East, but these place are frequented by those wishing to smoke a water pipe, play checkers or chess, listen to an agreeable storyteller, or find friends."

¹²⁰ The girl serving inside, "wearing headdress and a golden armlets" seemed to the poet – who would invariably regard the present "from the height of history" – "exceptionally similar to Cleopatra": "I could read an entire archaeology of profiles from her face, arms, and gestures..." (PWSz VI, 208).

¹²¹ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz*, p. 395; Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondances*.

¹²² In September of the same year, Z. Węgierska asked Norwid to pass on to Chojecki an invitation from the editor of "Gazeta Polska", Józef Sikorski (she did not know Chojecki's address). See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz*, p. 421.

and his family suffer from financial problems for several years. [...] he chose to work in the administration... it guaranteed him security and pay.¹²³

Chojecki's friendship with the controversial Prince Napoléon and his protection lasted until 1870.

Even after the fall of Napoléon, Charles Edmond returned to his post in the Senate. The reviving authorities could always count on him.¹²⁴

Norwid, on the other hand, was inevitably headed towards the poorhouse at Œuvre de Saint Casimir.

Norwid's relationship with Chojecki must have become much looser in the 1870s¹²⁵ since Mieczysław Geniusz, recalling his first meeting with the poet in 1873, wrote that "I know from him [Norwid – R.G.-S.] that he *used to be* [emphasis added – R. G.-S.] very close to Edmund Chojecki (Charles Edmond)."¹²⁶

Three years later, in 1876, Norwid was exhausted and lonely. He probably asked Chojecki in a letter (unknown to scholars) to help with obtaining funds to travel to Italy from some Polish aristocrat (perhaps Branicki).¹²⁷ Chojecki referred him directly to Branicki, arguing as follows:

After the terrible events of the siege of Paris, during which I never left the capital, as the situation settled, Polish aristocracy once again found itself on the Parisian cobbles. Among these aristocrats I had some good friends, and many former ones. None of them even asked, after returning to Paris, what became of me and whether I am alive or not. I concluded that these men, who would treat a stray dog better, deemed it entirely decent to entirely forget about me. I am not offended by this. [...] On my part, I decided to control my feelings and have broken all contacts with this Polish world. I do not know any of these noblemen anymore and do not wish to know them. I do not see any of them.¹²⁸

The quoted reply from Chojecki, dated 1 December 1876, is the last epistolary trace of his contacts with Norwid.¹²⁹ Perhaps all communication ceased when the poet ended in the poorhouse. Did Chojecki ever visit his old friend there? Perhaps

¹²³ E. DESURVIRE, *Francuska twórczość teatralna Charles'a Edmonda*, p. 78.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹²⁵ In 1871 Norwid published his proclamation in the periodical "Temps" (on 21 April), probably thanks to the backing of Chojecki (see: PWSz IX, 648).

¹²⁶ *List M. Geniusza do Z. Przesmyckiego. Claix, 16 X 1902*. Signature: Rkps BN IV 6319, pp. 111-112. After: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz*, p. 552.

¹²⁷ See: Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA, *Kalendarz*, pp. 632-633.

¹²⁸ Ch. EDMOND, *Correspondances*, p. 186.

¹²⁹ Already after the death of L. Czosnowska in the summer of 1881, Norwid wrote about the fate of her children to K. Górńska: "the daughter is in an order in Sedan, while the son is an officer in the French cavalry" (PWSz X, 155).

he did so on the occasion of visiting the bankrupt Countess Laura Czosnowska (mother to his daughter, Maria Chojecka), who supposedly died in the very same Œuvre de Saint Casimir.¹³⁰ Did he try to help Norwid?¹³¹ There is no trace indicating that Charles Edmond actually remembered about his old, devoted friend, who was dying in the care of the Sisters of Charity in Ivry.

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¹³⁰ E. Desurvire speculates that Chojecki was not indifferent to the fate of a woman he once loved: “We may infer [...] that Chojecki tried to help her during her last years, although there is no evidence of this, unambiguously confirming these intuitions” (“La comtesse Laura Czosnowska,” p. 230). For more information on the inhabitants of Œuvre de Saint Casimir see: J. SZCZEPAŃSKI, *Weterani powstań narodowych w Zakładzie św. Kazimierza w Paryżu*, Warszawa 2011; M. CZAPSKA, *Miłosierdzie na miarę kłesk*, Londyn 1954; A. SYSKI, *Zakład Św. Kazimierza w Paryżu. Szkic historyczny*, Łuck 1936; E. LIJEWSKA, *Zakon rycerski czy „kolonia karna”?* *Norwid w Domu św. Kazimierza*, [in:] *Biografie romantycznych poetów*, eds. Z. Trojanowiczowa, J. Borowczyk, Poznań 2007, pp. 277-285.

¹³¹ The rejection with which Norwid met in 1876 suggests that matters were different. In 1880, Hipolit Skimborowicz, who would remember Norwid and Chojecki from Warsaw, thus wrote about their current position: “One [Chojecki] has been abroad for a long time and changed his name; he now writes only in French and has abandoned his mother tongue. The other [Norwid], living there as well, became deaf and his eyes are sick [...]” In: *Gabriela i entuzjastki*, “*Bluszcz*”, no. 18 (5 May 1880).

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S u m m a r y

The writer Edmund Chojecki (Charles Edmond) was one of Norwid’s most significant acquaintances, already in the Warsaw period, and later in Paris. Their friendship started in Warsaw in the 1840s and lasted a lifetime (or at least until the 1870s), although its preserved epistolary traces are scarce. This article focuses on Chojecki’s reports from his travels and their inspiring influence on Norwid:

Edmund's trip with Count Branicki to the Crimea (*Wspomnienia z podróży po Krymie*, Warszawa 1845), journey to the North Seas with Prince Napoleon (*Voyage dans les mers du Nord*, Paris 1857), Chojecki's sojourn in Egypt at the turn of 1851, and finally his involvement in preparing the Egyptian exhibition (as the commissioner general) at the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris (*L'Égypte à l'Exposition universelle de 1867*, Paris 1867). The most important outcome of this is Norwid's drama *Kleopatra i Cezar* and his collection of Egyptian drawings in the album *Orbis (I)*.

Keywords: Cyprian Norwid; Edmund Chojecki (Charles Edmond); travels of the Romantics, Norwid's friendships; *Kleopatra i Cezar*; 1867 World Exhibition in Paris; the Orient of the Romantics

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