

REV. EDWARD WALEWANDER

A PERSONAL VIEW ON “STUDIA POLONIJNE”

I. “Studia Polonijne”, a scholarly annual journal devoted to the history and contemporary issues of Polish communities living in homeland and abroad, published since 1976, is of special importance to me. As a researcher, and in the years 1990-2005 also the head of the Institute of Research on the Polish Diaspora and Polish Ministry at the Catholic University of Lublin, I have been a member of the Editorial Committee of this journal since Volume 10 – first as a member of the Editorial Board, and from Volume 14 to Volume 22 as its editor-in-chief.

In the first period, the journal published materials from scientific symposia organised by our Institute, while from Volume 14 onwards these were mostly texts written on the initiative and commission of the Editorial Office. As editor-in-chief I drew not only on my own experience of several years of working for the Polish community at the Catholic University of Lublin, but also on the numerous contacts I had made during my studies in Innsbruck in 1971-1978 with Poles living in Austria and Western Europe.

The cooperation with the scientific community of the Catholic University of Lublin proved particularly useful. I could always count on constructive input from our researchers and their readiness to discuss the profile of the journal that I had privilege to manage for several years. They were always on time with editorial reviews, which is extremely important for any editor, especially a novice. In addition, they did not interfere too much, if not necessary, with the work carried out by the editorial team. It turned out, for example, that Rev. Prof. Zygmunt Zieliński, who was appointed by Rev. Rector M.A. Krąpiec (who was the rector of the Catholic University of Lublin in the years 1970-1983) to the Polish Studies Institute Board, and was not dismissed from this function by any of the subsequent rectors, so that formally

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his appointment is still valid today, although he has been a retired employee of the Catholic University of Lublin for many years, he never claimed to participate in the works of the Institute, especially the editorial board of “*Studia Polonijne*”. I would add that even in 1983, during the so-called Saturday leave of Prof. Czesław Bloch, then Director of the Institute, when Rev. Zieliński was replacing him, he did not participate in the work on “*Studia Polonijne*” either¹.

I managed to find authors of the journal contributions in almost all Polish research centres both in Poland and abroad. Therefore, I dare say that this was work for and with the Polish community abroad. The cooperation established then or later, in many cases continues to this day.

It was very often necessary to devote a lot of time, sometimes that which was formally free, to scientific meetings. However, this had a positive effect on shaping the profile of our journal. Meetings of the Editorial Committee were held very frequently. Each volume of the journal contained a synthetic introduction to its contents, including an invitation to authors, both actual and potential, to cooperate with us.

The editor-in-chief’s unquestionable advantage was the promotion of our contributors through the awarding of the Irena and Franciszek Skowyr Scientific Prize. The laudations delivered at the time of awarding the prize were later published in “*Studia Polonijne*” and elsewhere. In 2020, my book *Człowiek i książka* [*Man and Book*] was published, containing, inter alia, the texts of the laudations delivered by me on that occasion between 1991 and 2020. One of the laureates, Rev. Prof. Roman Dzwonkowski, wrote:

Edward! You have given me a pleasant surprise with your latest original book ‘*Człowiek i książka*’. Thank you very much and congratulations on its publication. It is close to my heart because I have known the vast majority of the 84 laureates you have lauded between 1991 and 2020, including myself. But the most important thing is that this publication saves from oblivion the pleasant events and the range of friendly contacts of the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), because among the laureates there are clergy and laypersons from the Catholic University of Lublin and from other centres, Poles and friends of Poland, from Poland and from abroad. Despite the not so inconsiderable age difference between us, we belong to the generation that learned Latin. I enjoyed reading the

¹ Cf. Z. ZIELIŃSKI, *Powroty minionego czasu. Zagnieżdżone w pamięci*, ed. R. Łatka, Warszawa: IPN 2020, p. 426.

timeless Latin sentences you quote. Edward, I wish you lots of further scientific achievements and original publications. God bless! Roman Dzwonkowski SAC².

In "Studia Polonijne" we have also published many texts *pro memoria* dedicated to those of our collaborators who have already passed away to the Lord, but who deserve our grateful remembrance. When I left for Canada in 1987 to collect materials for a dictionary of Polish parishes and churches in that country, the above-mentioned Rev. Dzwonkowski warmly encouraged me to talk to priests, especially the elderly, and other interesting people belonging to the Polish community there, with a view to compiling their life stories and disseminating their life experiences. I took my colleague's suggestion seriously. This has stayed with me forever. To this day, biography in general and priestly biography in particular occupy an important place in my research. I am keen to compile biographies of priests and laypersons against the background of their origin and life fruition. I often repeat that biographies are a living contribution to the history of the community in which the people described lived and worked. The history of particular dioceses and also of particular parishes would certainly be more vivid if they contained even the most modest biographies of pastoral workers. For reality is built not so much by offices and their activities as by concrete, living people. The description of their lives and the characteristics of their person and work are the most malleable historical material.

The editors of "Studia Polonijne" took care to include useful and critical reviews, which are always a good foundation for any scholarly journal. As if this were not enough, at one point I introduced an extensive "Submitted Books" section to our journal, which at least presented these publications. Over time, more and more reviews and discussions of works on Poles in the East appeared. As journal's editor-in-chief, I always tried to have time to meet and interact with representatives of the Polish communities and researchers dealing with our compatriots abroad. Therefore, it is not surprising that in "Studia Polonijne" we also developed an important section titled "Guest Visits at the Institute". After 1989, more and more Poles from the former Soviet republics began to appear among them.

Thus, a new theme appeared in the Institute's activities – "Poles in the East", which, however, did not dominate the pages of "Studia Polonijne". Instead, research on Poles in the East was the subject of numerous collective works. These mainly concerned the presence of Poles in Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Azerbaijan,

² E. WALEWANDER, *Książd Roman Dzwonkowski SAC (1930-2020). Kustosz pamięci Polaków na „niełudzkiej ziemi”*, „Collectanea Theologica” 91(2021), no 3, p. 203.

Armenia, Georgia or even in the Crimea. Apart from this, we published a series of successive volumes: *Poles in Estonia [Russia, Moldova ...] Talk about Themselves*. It was a difficult and – as it turned out – very absorbing subject. Since, as it has been stated above, the issue of “Poles in the East” did not dominate the journal, I have taken the liberty of including this separate, albeit only general, mention of this area of our activity.

A meticulous observer of our work, Dr John Grondelski, an American, gave such a testimony on the subject:

Rev. Prof. Walewander has done an indispensable work, which is difficult to overestimate, in documenting the history of Poles in the former Soviet republics. This is particularly important, but also particularly difficult work. The majority of people who migrate, whether by choice or force, belong to the so-called ‘grey masses’ – people who usually do not have any special conditions and urgency to sit down and write their history. They devote most of their time and strength to the struggle for survival. To write down the history of these people is not a matter of reading books and collating quotations. Rather, it is a task similar to the arduous work of a gold prospector who, standing in cold water, is sifting long and patiently through the sand by hand, searching among the multitude of common pebbles for that pure and true lump³.

The journal was published regularly. The publication of the next volume was a celebration for the entire staff of the Institute for the Polish Diaspora, as it certainly contributed to the promotion of issues close to their hearts.

II. “*Studia Polonijne*” have always been one of a dozen or so periodicals published in Poland, devoted to this subject. They mainly reported on different activities undertaken for the Polish diaspora, including its history. The trend seen in works for the Polish community was not entirely correct at the time, as there was a fairly widespread conviction that the task of the Polish communities was to maintain their Polishness abroad as a way of self-identifying themselves as Poles while living abroad – not seasonally, but as permanent settlers. Of course, the themes covered in “*Studia Polonijne*” would certainly have been influenced by the publication of works produced among the Polish community. However, this was, or perhaps still is, almost unfeasible, as the hands of their representatives, who in their everyday life have to deal with problems other than scientific inquiries, are not so eager to

³ E. Walewander, *Kronika Nagrody Naukowej im. Ireny i Franciszka Skowyrów za rok 2002* [Chronicle of the Irena and Franciszek Skowyr Scientific Award for 2002], “*Studia Polonijne*,” 24(2003), p. 236.

grab the pen. Even professors already prominent in American science, such as Professor Edward Rożek from Boulder, Colorado, preferred to be engaged with Polish history rather than with the history of the Polish diaspora. Priests were a certain exception, but not those born in America – rather those from the current emigration. However, acquiring them as authors was also difficult and hence rather incidental.

It is also maybe worth adding here something that is not welcome in Poland, although it remains worthy of attention. The Polish diaspora – and I am referring here mainly to the American diaspora – encompasses in fact those Poles who have already recognised the USA as their new homeland. The successive generations following the newcomers from the 19th and 20th centuries moved away, even linguistically, from the traditions of the old country. Poles arriving in the USA as a result of World War II slowly assimilated into American society, although it was them who preserved the Polish tradition which was maintained among the first arrivals from Poland, at least in the first, and sometimes also in the second generation, mainly thanks to the Church. These circumstances were decisive for the acceptance overseas of research and all types of work related to the Church. Nurturing this subject at the Institute and – by extension – in "Studia Polonijne" was accepted among the Polish diaspora. However, it was more difficult to cultivate social history, and especially political and economic history. These were areas that belonged exclusively to the historiography of the country of settlement.

It is worth remembering these things now, on the occasion of the jubilee, when analysing the content of "Studia Polonijne" from its very beginning. It is difficult for me to say how this matter looks like presently, as I have not been working at the Institute for many years, and I am familiar with the content of the texts published in the journal not from the conceptual point of view, but only as any reader.

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Summary

This article presents the recollections of Rev. Edward Walewander, an employee and director of the Institute of Research on the Polish Diaspora and Polish Ministry at the Catholic University of Lublin in the years 1990-2005, as well as a long-time editor of the journal "Studia Polonijne". The author presents a brief history of the journal and characterises the development of its scientific profile over the years. The text offers a special summary of almost 50 years of publishing activity of the Institute, and now the Research Centre on the Polish Diaspora and the Polish Ministry at the Catholic University of Lublin.

Keywords: Studia Polonijne; research on the Polish diaspora; Research Centre on the Polish Diaspora and Polish Ministry at the Catholic University of Lublin; scientific journal.

„STUDIA POLONIJNE” W MOJEJ OPTYCE

Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje wspomnienia ks. Edwarda Walewandra, pracownika i dyrektora Instytutu Badań nad Polonią i Duszpasterstwem Polonijnym Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego w latach 1990-2005 oraz wieloletniego redaktora rocznika „Studia Polonijne”. Przedstawiona została tu krótka historia czasopisma i charakterystyka jego naukowego profilu na przestrzeni lat. Tekst stanowi swoiste podsumowanie prawie 50 lat działalności wydawniczej Instytutu, a obecnie Ośrodka Badań nad Polonią i Duszpasterstwem Polonijnym KUL.

Słowa kluczowe: Studia Polonijne; badania nad Polonią; Ośrodek Badań nad Polonią i Duszpasterstwem Polonijnym KUL; rocznik naukowy.