

# NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLISH RESEARCHERS OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN FLORA

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**Abstract.** The paper is devoted to seven Polish naturalists who studied the South American flora in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Józef Warszewicz, Konstanty Jelski, Feliks Woytkowski, Hugo Zapałowicz, Witold Szyszło, Jan Sztolcman and Jan Kalinowski. Their achievements are described and eponyms devoted to them are presented.

**Key words:** botanical collections, Polish naturalists, history of botany, South America

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish scientists made large and small contributions to the exploration of the flora of South America. Most of them were naturalists who studied both fauna and flora. Some of them contributed significantly more to zoological than to botanical research. Most of them did not carry out independent research. They concentrated mainly on gathering scientific collections, often in very exotic and hard-to-reach areas, and sent those collections to big scientific institutes and renowned specialists from various fields of study. Usually they were commissioned to take part in specially funded expeditions. Their achievements have not yet been fully described. We present seven distinguished naturalists: Józef Warszewicz, Konstanty Jelski, Feliks Woytkowski, Hugo Zapałowicz, Witold Szyszło, Jan Sztolcman and Jan Kalinowski.

JÓZEF WARSZEWICZ (1812–1866) – plant collector, gardener, traveller. Born in Lithuania. In 1829 he began natural science studies at the Imperial University of Vilna. He was a student of Józef Jundziłł (1794–1877), by whose side he trained

as a gardener in the Vilna Botanical Garden. He took part in the November Uprising (1830–1831) and emigrated to Prussia after its defeat. For several years he worked as a gardener, in Insterburg (Gumbinnen Government District in East Prussia) and other places, and as a gardener's assistant at the Botanical Garden of Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin afterwards. At Alexander von Humboldt's orders he participated in a scientific expedition to Central and South America (Guatemala, Yucatán Peninsula, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama) between 1845 and 1850. Many of the plants sent to botanical gardens in Germany, Great Britain, Belgium and Switzerland had never been scientifically known before. Over 300 new species of orchids were described in those materials. On his second journey he went to South America (Brazil, Peru, Bolivia) between 1850 and 1853 at the behest of the Botanical Society of London. Besides extensive plant collections, he also collected ornithological, herpetological and malacological specimens. Over 30 species and two genera of plants have been named after him. In 1854 he became the chief



Józef Warszewicz

inspector of the Jagiellonian University Botanical Garden. He brought his private plant collections there, establishing the largest collection in the Garden's history (over 10,000 species). Of the ones introduced by Warszewicz, only *Cyrtopodium andersonii* is still there. In 1865 he became an active local member of the Academic Society of Kraków. He never published any scientific work.

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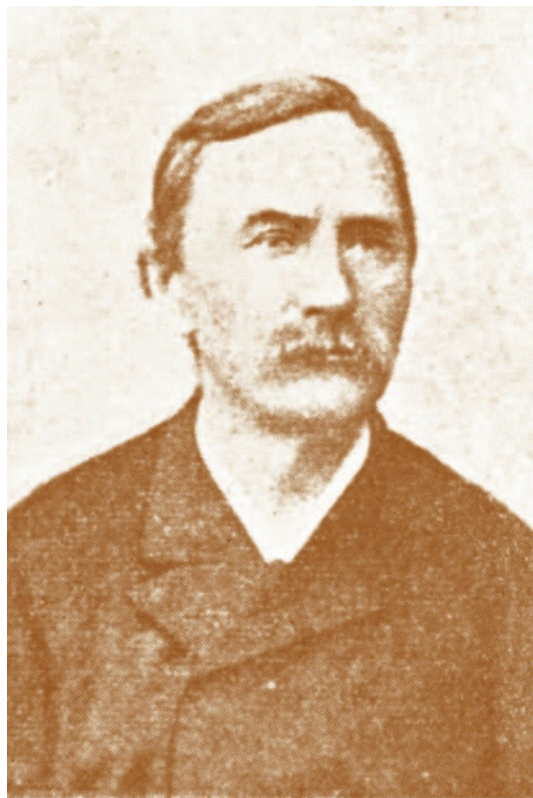
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- KONSTANTY JELSKI (1837 or 1838–1896) – naturalist, traveller. He was born in Minsk Gubernya (Russian Empire). For three years he studied medicine at Moscow University (1853–1856), and for the next four years natural sciences at Kiev University (1856–1860). He was awarded a Master of Science degree in 1862. During his studies he was in charge of the Zoological Collection at Kiev University; he also participated in a scientific expedition to Crimea. After graduation he worked as a high school teacher in Novhorod-Siverskyi (1860–1862) and in the Zoological Collection at Kiev University (1862–1863). In 1863 he left Russia and reached France through Turkey. As a pharmacist in the French Navy, in 1865 he went to French Guiana, South America, from where he sent specimens to the Zoological Collection in Warsaw. His stay in Peru between 1869 and 1874 (or 1866 and 1872) was funded by Konstanty Grzegorz Branicki, Polish patron

of the natural sciences. From 1873 he was the curator of the Antonio Raimondi Museum in Lima, Peru. He continued to collect specimens together with Jan Sztolcman. In 1880 he became curator of the Museum of the Physiographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences and Letters in Kraków. He worked in this position until the day he died. Specimens collected by K. Jelski were transferred to many museums, including those in Warsaw, Petersburg, Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Kraków. He did not write monographs on his collections; that was done by specialists in various groups of organisms. For example, botanical collections were developed and written up by Ignacy Szyszylowicz. After his death, his family donated a small herbarium of K. Jelski to the school of the Congregation of the Mission (The Vincentians) in Kraków. His book *Popularno-przyrodnicze opowiadania z pobytu w Gujanie francuskiej i po części w Peru* (1898), describing his stay in French Guiana for the general public, was not published until after his death. Recently a French translation this book (2007) was published.

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- FELIKS WOYTKOWSKI (1892–1966) – botanist, entomologist. He was born in Grzymałów (Skala district in Galicia). After graduating from the Adam Mickiewicz Gymnasium in Lwów (Lemberg) he studied political science and economy at universities in Ambères (Belgium) and Oxford (Great Britain). In 1920 he returned to Poland and worked in the Warsaw city hall and later in a trade company in Grudziądz. In 1928 he emigrated to Peru as a colonist. In 1934 he settled in Lima and started collecting specimens for companies from the United States, Great Britain, Peru, Switzerland and other countries. He worked periodically in the Botanical Garden in Lima. He participated in several United States-sponsored botanical expeditions to Peru. Between 1934 and 1964 he explored almost the whole territory of Peru. In 1964, financially ruined, he returned to Poland and settled in Kraków.
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- HUGO ZAPAŁOWICZ (1852–1917) – botanist. He was born in Laibach (currently Ljubljana, Slovenia). Having graduated from the high school in Przemyśl, he studied between 1871 and 1875 in the Law Faculty of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, where in 1876 he was awarded a Doctor of Law degree. After graduating, for five years he worked as a lawyer but spent much of his time studying natural science and doing botanical research on Babia Góra Mt. Between 1880 and 1905 he served in the Austrian army at the rank of a captain, holding the post of military judge in the Tyrolean Riflemen Regiment (Tiroler Jäger-Regiment). At the same time, between 1880 and 1881 he completed botanical studies at Vienna University and became acquainted with the flora of the Alps. In 1880 he became an associate of the Physiographic Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters. Between 1880 and 1891 he went on a journey around the world, travelling through France and Portugal to Argentina in its first phase. In his travels across South America he conducted geological, geographic and floristic research, mainly in Patagonia. He reached Chile through the Andes, visited Juan Fernandez Archipelago and Valdivia city. From there he headed north along the coast, through Peru and Panama, reaching San Francisco, then on to Japan and Vladivostok, and returning to Poland by sea. During those travels, Zapałowicz gathered fauna and flora collections and noted down many observations related to the Indian tribes he met. He described his whole journey in a two-volume work entitled *Jedna z podróży na około ziemi* (1899). He drew up a geological map of Patagonia and published



Hugo Zapałowicz

several scientific works concerning this region. In 1894 he was elected corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters. After retiring he lived in Zawoja between 1905 and 1908, where he was involved mainly in developing Polish tourism on the Babia Góra massif. In 1908 he moved to Lwów and devoted himself to floristic research in the Eastern Carpathians. In 1914 he was once again commissioned as a judge in the Austrian army. From 1915 he was held in captivity in Perovsk (Western Turkestan), where he died two years later.

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WITOLD SZYSZŁO, VITOLD DE SZYSZLO (1881–1963) – botanist, zoologist, geographer, traveller. He was born in Warsaw. At the age of 19 he visited North Africa and the Sahara Desert. In 1902 he visited the Canary Islands and Madeira, and as a result he published a monograph on those places entitled *W krainie Hesperyd (Wyspy Kanaryjskie i Madera)* (1904). In 1904 he began a longer journey to America, during which he visited the Antilles and British Guiana. He even reached the Guianese-Brazilian border, as well as the United States. In 1908 he began a two-year journey around the world, during which he visited Cuba, Mexico, the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, as well as South and Southeast Asia. After returning to Warsaw he wrote up the materials he had gathered, and published five books: *Male Antyllie i Jamajka* (1911), with the author's portrait, *Pod zwrotnikami. Porto Rico* (1911), *Meksyk* (1912), *Dix milles kilomètres à travers le Mexique* (1913), *Wśród moczarów i jezior Florydy* (1913), and many articles. Those works show his extraordinary versatility in describing those regions (flora, fauna, geology, geography, ethnography, history, and even economy and culture). In 1913 he left

Warsaw again for South America. He travelled for two years across Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, and in 1915 he settled in Peru. Between 1915 and 1953 he went on 12 journeys to the Amazon Basin in Brazil, Bolivia and Peru. The main subjects of his research were local flora and fauna, and the results were presented in several books published in Spanish, including *Viaje de un naturalista a la selva Amazonica* (1950–1951). He published about 7000 articles. He was a professor at the University in Lima, and a member of several geographical societies. Between 1922 and 1932 he was the Polish Consul in Lima. His major work was a monograph on the Amazon, *La naturaleza en la América Ecuatorial* (1955). It presents the results of his fifty years of research on nature in those areas, and includes information on 5000 species of plants, 900 species of animals, and a wealth of other material.

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JAN SZTOLCZMAN (1854–1928) – traveller, ornithologist, environmental protection activist. He was born in Warsaw. After brief studies (5 semesters) at Warsaw University, during which he worked in the Zoological Collection, he spent the time between 1875 and 1881 in Peru at the expense of Konstanty Branicki, where he collaborated with Konstanty Jelski. Between 1882 and 1884 he travelled to South America again, this time to Ecuador. In 1887 he took the post of director of the newly established Branicki Museum in Warsaw. In the following years he went on another journey, this time to Sudan. He was the founder and editor of *Łowca Polski* journal, and founder of the Kennel Society and other organizations. He took an active part in the environmental protection movement; he was a member of the State Council for Environmental Protection (PROP). He died in Warsaw. His achievements include 37 scientific publications, mainly on the taxonomy of Neotropical birds. He also published 10 books, including *Peru. Wspomnienia z podróży* (1912).

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JAN KALINOWSKI (about 1860–1941) – explorer of the fauna of East Asia and South America. He was born in Zielonka in Mazovia (Warsaw region). He learned about nature under the guidance of naturalists associated with the Zoological Collection in Warsaw. Between 1879 and 1883 he accompanied Benedykt Dybowski (1833–1930) on his journey to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Between 1883 and 1888 he collected specimens of the fauna of eastern Siberia, Korea and Japan for the Branicki Museum in Warsaw. He spent the time between 1889 and 1902 in Peru, where he expanded the collections of fauna (continuing the explorations of K. Jelski and J. Sztolcman) for the Branicki Museum. In 1898 he travelled to Bolivia. He settled on his own farm in Cadena in the Marcapta Valley (eastern Peru) that same year. After finishing his cooperation with K. Branicki, he continued collecting for other institutions. He died in Cadena. Among the Peruvian birds collected by J. Kalinowski and described by the German ornithologist H. Berlepsch and by J. Sztolcman, there were a hundred new species and subspecies, as well as two new genera.

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### Los investigadores polacos de la flora de América del Sur del siglo XIX

El texto presenta las trazas de los investigadores polacos del siglo XIX que en diferente grado merecen el respeto en la investigación sobre la flora sudamericana. La mayoría de estos investigadores eran los científicos naturales que se dedicaban a investigar tanto la fauna, como la flora. Algunos de ellos eran más importante para la zoología que para la botánica. La mayoría de los investigadores no efectuaban investigaciones independientes. Se dedicaban a acumular colecciones científicas, muchas veces en los terrenos muy exóticos y de acceso difícil. Enviaban estas colecciones a los grandes centros de investigación y a los especialistas famosos de las diferentes ramas, que normalmente eran los contratantes de estas escapadas. La característica completa de sus realizaciones todavía espera la elaboración. Aquí describimos brevemente sus personajes y examinamos su trabajo. Acercamos también los epónimos botánicos que eternizaban su memoria y sus méritos. El registro de los epónimos es incompleto pero estos que presentamos describen indirectamente su influencia y sus méritos en el conocimiento de la flora sudamericana. Entre los personajes presentados encontramos siete beneméritos científicos naturales: Józef Warszewicz, Konstanty Jelski, Feliks Woytkowski, Hugo Zapałowicz, Witold Szyszło, Jan Sztolcman y Jan Kalinowski.