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The eighteenth-century Dutch Republic and its inhabitants in the eyes of Teodor Anzelm Dzwonkowski

Abstract

Teodor Anzelm Dzwonkowski was an average-educated nobleman who left Poland at the end of the 18th century in search of wealth. In Amsterdam, he enlisted in the army and, with the rank of corporal in the infantry, travelled to the Dutch East Indies (1787–1793) — the account of this expedition forms the main part of his memoirs written years later.

The article shows how Dzwonkowski viewed the Netherlands, its people, and the way the Dutch East India Company (whose officials he considered to be an extension of the arm of the Republic's government) operated. His remarks concerning them are present in a small part of his diary (and, in addition, not always expressed directly), because the author's main interest was in the exotism of southern Africa and the Far East, and in the Poles he met during his travels. Dzwonkowski was impressed by the management and wealth of the United Provinces, especially by the ease of making a career, although he could hardly be called uncritical: he also saw the dark sides of the local reality, including the loosening of moral norms and corruption. Interestingly, despite his noble background, he seems to be free of state and religious bias against the people of the United Provinces. His view of the Dutch does not differ from the way they were described by British tourists visiting the Dutch Republic during the Stuart Period.

Keywords: Teodor Anzelm Dzwonkowski, United Provinces, Dutch, 18th century, sea voyage, colonial policy, diary, United East India Company.

1. Introduction

Before the 19th century, Polish-Dutch contacts were quite intensive, with a preponderance of commercial relations, but we see Poles travelling to the Low Countries for other reasons as well (Bogucka 61–75; Grzybowski 17–31; Leska-Ślęzak, *Polacy w Holandii* 83–98; Leska-Ślęzak, “Stereotypy narodowe”). Just

a handful of pages would suffice to contain a full list of memoirs detailing the stay of Polish-Lithuanian citizens in the United Provinces. All the more extensive accounts are addressed in this article, with the remaining ones in manuscript form awaiting publication (Tazbir 37–39). *Iter Ollandicum* did not enjoy much popularity, and also for the Dutch, Poland was not a very important destination, as there are even fewer accounts from them (Thijssen 251–258). We do not have a comprehensive study of Polish accounts of the Low Countries; there are only a few fragmentary works.

This article concentrates on the way Teodor Anzelm Dzwonkowski (1764–1850), the author of memoirs from a sea voyage to the Dutch East Indies (1787–1793), perceived the Republic and its inhabitants. He regarded the state and the United East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) as a single entity, and regarded the Company's officials as an extension of the Republic's authorities. In the places he visited he was interested above all in what was exotic, so that type of material obviously predominates. We will find fewer remarks about the Low Countries and the Dutch, as these were devoid of exoticism, but his writings are interesting enough to make the subject definitely worth examining, and they differ to some extent from the perspectives formulated by earlier Polish travellers. Teodor Anzelm also describes what earlier Polish travellers had not seen – namely, the ways in which the territorially small Republic was able to keep its overseas empire under heel.

Generally, I concentrated on Dzwonkowski's account, but in a few cases it proved necessary to draw on the memoirs of other Polish travellers. I am talking mainly about works by Jakub Sobieski,¹ Teodor Billewicz,² Franciszek Ksawery Bohusz,³ and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz,⁴ I will address the similarities and differences I have observed further on in my paper. In contrast, the considerations regarding Dutch colonial policy in the East Indies, as seen by a Pole, and the Company have no prior point of reference, as Dzwonkowski was a pioneer in Polish memoir writing. I also compare Dzwonkowski's account with the thoughts of British tourists visiting the Republic.

Dzwonkowski most probably wrote down his memoirs in the years 1818–1825 (Komornicki 39) and intended them for his daughter (Józefa Komornicka

¹ Jakub Sobieski (1591–1646) – father of Jan III Sobieski, king of Poland. Magnate, author of memoirs of journeys in Western Europe (1607–1613); he visited the Habsburg countries, France, England, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

² Teodor Billewicz (?–1724) – Lithuanian gentleman, author of a diary of his travels around Europe (1677–1678).

³ Franciszek Ksawery Bohusz (1746–1820) – Lithuanian theologian, author of a diaries of his travels around Europe (1777–1778 and 1781–1782).

⁴ Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758–1841) – Polish writer, playwright, publicist, historian and diarist. Author of memoirs including a journey through France, England, the Netherlands and Germany (1781–1785).

née Dzwonkowska). A specific feature of Polish memoirs was their private character (memoirs were shared only with family members and friends but not with a wider audience). The diary was not published during the author's lifetime, It did not appear in print until 1985.

Dzwonkowski's account is quite brief (the diary, covering over five years of exotic travel, runs to less than 70 pages). Dzwonkowski writes about himself in the third person (he refers to himself as "our traveller"), talks about events and people very briefly, generally avoiding commentary, and is characterized by a far-reaching sense of distance from the reality he describes. He does not try to be scientific and makes it clear that he will leave the exact descriptions of the encountered animals to scholars (55). His style is crisp and his message clear (even though his education was limited to a few grades at a Piarist-run college).

Dzwonkowski keeps silent about the preparations for his departure, so we cannot establish how well informed he was on arrival. We also do not know what ideas he had about the Dutch. Andrzej Borowski detailed the Polish seventeenth-century stereotype of the Dutchman (Borowski 162–166), but unfortunately omitted the most extensive work in Polish literature on the subject, the anonymously written *Opisanie Holandrów* (*Description of the Dutch*), composed in 1667 at the latest and still unpublished (Barłowska 2020). It is impossible to assume that Dzwonkowski was familiar with this work, but it is very likely that the stereotypes were current among Poles travelling to the Republic – especially since many of them appear in Teodor Anzelm's memoirs. Space constraints do not allow quoting the poem in its entirety here, but it is noteworthy that the Dutch are described preferring order and cleanliness in urban design, house-building and canal construction, as contrasted with a lack of concern for personal hygiene, as well as obese, intellectual, freedom-loving, profit-seeking, entrepreneurial, diligent, and able to overcome the forces of nature (Barłowska 2020).

It is also possible that, during his two years serving in the Prussian army, he learned something about the Dutch and the Republic, perhaps absorbing some German ideas about the Dutch.

Besides, during his stay in Amsterdam, he was helped by the captain of the ship on which he sailed from Königsberg to the capital of the Republic. The captain's explanations, formulated from a Dutch point of view, must also have influenced Dzwonkowski's perception of the Dutch and their largest city.

In enumerating these possibilities, I do not omit the author's own personal observations – after all, it is difficult to imagine that such a practical man would pass on to his descendants an account that contradicted the testimony of his own eyes (although information from third parties may have impacted his understanding of the world).

These remarks should be supplemented with one more thing – the traveller set off on his travels with a certain amount of knowledge and then acquired new

information, but also often confronted his impressions in his written memoirs with available research (Rietbergen 262). Whether Dzwonkowski did so is unknown, but I believe that since his intention was not to publish his work (although this is not certain either), he had no reason to supplement his memoirs with material from other works. Besides, the notes on his stay in Amsterdam are quite short, and with additional sources of knowledge, he could have written much more.

So far, no monograph has been written on the subject of Teodor Anzelm or his work. Established findings come from the work of the Polish literature historian Andrzej Cieński (46–52), while a handful of novelties can be found in the publisher's introduction (Komornicki 5–44). So far, no one has been able to expand upon these findings and even among them some opinions need to be verified (e.g. the question of the addressee, the time of writing and the mutual relationship between the surviving manuscripts, the missing two years 1785–1787).

Contemporary researchers are interested in Dzwonkowski's diary because of the author's presence in the Dutch Cape Colony and in the East (Wolański 301–306; Pertek 456–493; Mieczkowski 329–345). However, besides a somewhat dated work by Józef Pertek, this is limited to a handful of sentences (Kotarski 27; Kowalski, "Poles in the Dutch Cape Colony" 83–84; Żukowski 72). More recently, Dzwonkowski's memoirs were utilised by Tomasz Ewertowski for information about the perception of the Chinese, who were numerous in the Dutch East Indies (Ewertowski 288, 304, 337).

On the other hand, the part of the diary that covers Teodor Anzelm's account of the first stage of his journey, the Netherlands, has been much less studied (Niewiara 110–114). The only aspect mentioned in Aleksandra Niewiara's dictionary-like work was his perception of the Dutch (although it was limited to memories from the Amsterdam period). The researcher left out what Dzwonkowski had to say about the scattered members of his nation who lived in the Cape Colony, India and the Dutch East Indies. She also failed to include both the diarist's reflections on the East India Company's operations and its officials (often Dutch by origin), and quite a few remarks expressed indirectly (consciously or not) in accounts relating to people and events. I believe that my article will provide a more complete view of the Dutch reality presented by Dzwonkowski. In my work on Teodor Anzelm's text, I intend to utilise methods developed by contemporary imagology that analyse "the use of ethnicity to make sense of the world" (Beller & Leerssen 2007; Leerssen 2017).

2. The Dutch: people and customs

Dzwonkowski was interested in people, places and events. He did not pay much attention to Dutch people's external appearance. In fact, regarding the people

of Amsterdam only one thing caught his eyes, spurring him to write “wszyscy wyglądają czerstwo i otyli” [everyone looks hearty and obese] (57). The verb ‘look’ suggest direct acquaintance, and this may have been the case, as other Polish travellers do not mention obesity (but it fits the stereotypical image of the Dutchman contained in *Opisanie Holandrów* [*Description of the Dutch*]). Perhaps, when writing down his memoirs years later, Dzwonkowski identified the wealth of the locals with an equally imposing appearance.

However, he is quick to notice missing teeth in the locals, which he blames on their excessive predilection for sugar. He is astonished by the way they drink tea, “cukier biorą tylko w usta” [holding sugar lumps betwixt their lips] rather than putting them in the cup (57). The negative effects for the teeth are confirmed by Schama (165). The Dutch drink very weak coffee and handle sugar in much the same way as when drinking tea). Thus, he documents the well-established position of these drinks, which arrived on Dutch tables in the previous century. Intriguingly, he does not mention cafes at all (however, other Polish travellers are also silent about them) – perhaps he did not frequent such places, unlike the more culturally sophisticated British (Van Strien 136).

An equally tight-lipped account is given of the local culinary practice. He focuses his attentions on bread, which in his native land was the staple food. In the Low Countries, it was somewhat different – bread (especially wheat bread) was expensive (grain was imported, which increased the price considerably). He notes the presence of two types of bread: rye bread, made differently than in our country (“nie mielony, tylko z moczonego i deptanego ziarna, bardzo dobrze wypieczony w formie największej cegły” – grain is not ground but soaked and trampled, and then baked thoroughly to form what looks like a large brick) and wheat bread (made in like manner to ours except with exceptionally high-quality flour). He was also curious about the way in which it was served – both varieties were sliced and folded in two, spread with butter and sprinkled with grated cheese (57). Whether he liked it, he does not say – but the question is pertinent, because the French, for example, found Dutch bread extremely unpalatable (Zumthor 71).

Besides bread, he mentions pork and beef on the tables, often washed down with gin and brandy (imported from Hanover and the Bordeaux area). Rhineland wine and beer were also drunk, but – he believes – less frequently. The recorded memoirs of British travellers concur with Dzwonkowski’s account on this point. They generally record without surprise that they ate very similar dishes. They often give the prices of meals, as opposed to Dzwonkowski (Van Strien 92–94).

It is unsurprising that tourists wrote down their thoughts about food – travellers look at every sphere of life (including the nutritional one, in which he partakes). We can see a typical way of visualising and taming otherness by pointing to the similarity of some dishes (whose basic ingredients were in fact almost the

same), as well as to their otherness (comparison is the dominant stylistic device here). As Albert Maier wrote:

(...) in any case travel writing always organizes differences ('familiar' vs. 'unfamiliar') and highlights either the agreement or the divergence between the familiar and the alien, as the case may be ('domestication' vs. 'alienation' or 'exotification'). Thus, its imagological relevance stems both from its function as mediator (in that travel writing adds new knowledge to what is already known), and from its construction of 'otherness' derived from familiar concepts and known facts (by means of analogy, exaggeration and contrast) (446).

We do not encounter any judgment – the local food turns out to be neither better nor worse than food from back home. It is simply different.

Being a man of noble birth and a landowner, Dzwonkowski looks approvingly at the local cattle and huge horses (known in Poland as Frisian horses). He also finds time to mention the abundant catches of herring hauled in by a company established specially for the purpose (62). However, he was not told that the profitability of fishery had declined sharply compared to earlier times (Boxer 277). Instead, Bohusz (55), perhaps a more inquisitive observer, found this out (98). We must also remember, even the faltering Dutch economy must have seemed impressive to him, compared to what was happening in his own country at the time.

He is similarly sparing in his account of the personality traits typical of the Dutch (whereas he has much more to say about the Germans, numerous in Amsterdam, of whom he was not fond, to put it mildly). The whole thing is summed up literally in two sentences: "Opinia mieszkańców nie jest jednaka, wszyscy jednak bardziej do pracy i handlu niż do przemysłnych rzemioł są zdadni. Co się tycze rodowitych, są ponurzy, małomówni, lecz otwarci i szczerzy, zysku jednak patrzący" [The inhabitants are not equally gifted with skills, but all of them show more inclination to labour and trade rather than fine crafts. As for the natives, they are sullen, reticent, open and sincere, yet profit-seeking] (58).

The remark he made about Dutch people's unsuitability for more precise types of crafts is at variance with other accounts. Jakub Sobieski, who travelled in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 17th century (at the starting point of Dutch greatness), thought otherwise. In his opinion, the Dutch excelled in most crafts (23). This was confirmed by Niemcewicz, Dzwonkowski's contemporary, who approvingly commented that "przed Anglią, Francją tu się wszczął handel, rękodzieła i tyle przemysłu rodzajów" [trade, handicrafts and so many kinds of industry began here before England and France] (235). However, Dzwonkowski could have been a better observer, noting the decline of the Dutch industry, particularly evident in the years 1750–1795 (Boxer 291). The problem lies in Teodor Anzelm's characteristic terseness, as even this time he is stingy with examples and does not care to justify his opinions to the reader.

However, virtually all visitors to the Netherlands from Poland agree on one thing: the locals are extremely profit-seeking. For Amsterdam's merchants this would

naturally have been understandable praise, because merchant ethic endorsed profit-seeking, while Calvinism (especially with its doctrine of predestination) held work and wealth in near-sacred esteem as being a sign of God's approval. Dzwonkowski's Polish predecessors, all of whom were nobles, looked upon resourcefulness in trade with a distinct, classist aversion, for they thought pursuit of money was evil. Also, their Catholic faith required that they be critical of profit-seeking (Bohusz 53). Dzwonkowski does notice the widespread pursuit of wealth, although it is difficult to tell what he thought of this characteristic, because his statement is ambiguous. Indeed, the structure of the note itself "otwarci i szczerzy, zysku jednak [emphasis – TŚ] patrzący" [open and sincere, yet profit-seeking] seems to contrast openness and sincerity – decidedly positive traits – with profit-seeking, which is definitely a negative characteristic. The pursuit of money also had a negative connotation in a gentleman's mentality. It is worth remembering, however, that Dzwonkowski himself left his home country in search of money, so perhaps he did not take a dim view of those mercantile concerns. Also, the time of writing the memoirs may be relevant here. In the 19th century, the attitude of the impoverished nobles towards the once-despised tradesmen was slowly changing.

The consolidation of the Republic's wealth through trade was also noted by the British travellers identified by Van Strien (191–196), who – however – took a more emotionally engaged stance. The Anglo-Dutch rivalry was strong, so the antagonism that was natural in such a situation came into play; although, after all, there were also those who advised their compatriots to adopt certain designs from their opponent (Van Strien 196).

The Dutch, however, are honest in their handling of money – after the end of his five-year service, he was fairly dealt with and paid (albeit with a slight delay) all his due wages. It must have been a significant amount (he returned from the expedition as an officer, so he received a much higher salary than what was assigned to the rank of corporal in which he enlisted on the frigate "Zephyr" in 1787), because a Dutch friend, on whose ship he had traveled five years earlier from Königsberg to Amsterdam, made it clear to Dzwonkowski that he would like him to be his son-in-law (which he had categorically refused when the diarist was just a poor traveller). Teodor Anzelm, however, politely declined and decided to return home.

As a matter of fact, we do not know why he decided, based on that single incident, to generalise the honesty shown to him as a Dutch national trait. British tourists warn their readers about possible fraud in money exchange shops (Van Strien 102) although they also describe severe penalties prescribed for fraudsters (Van Strien 190). Bohusz was surprised to note that the Dutch were more harsh on thieves than murderers (55), which was not the case in Poland.

He does not comment on Dutch morals, but devotes a few sentences to Dutch settlers in the Cape Colony. He sees them as Dutch, although a separate Boer

identity was already taking shape (Żukowski 35). He recalls that great balls were organized there, attended by almost the entire adult population of the province, who indulged in all manner of carnal pleasures. As he cautiously suggests, liberty was not hampered even by bonds of marriage. When he calls at Cape Town on his way back, he expands his earlier remarks with a concise description of the military parade that made the best possible impression on him. As for the more entertaining side of life that he experienced in the Cape Colony, he summarized it thus: “więcej u nich Bachus i Wenera aniżeli Mars w szacunku zostają” [they hold Bacchus and Venus in far higher esteem than they do Mars] (102). Teodor Anzelm’s judgment is consistent with the supposedly popular belief at the time that “the ten commandments do not apply south of the equator” (Balicki & Bogucka 230). The concise account is not followed by any evaluative statements – Dzwonkowski simply reports what he saw. It can be safely assumed that since he was seriously considering settling in Cape Town, the local customs must have suited him, and even if he was reluctant to relax some of his standards, he kept quiet about it.

2.1. State

Like the Dutch and their customs, the state and its extension – the East India Company – are mentioned sparingly. Of course, he is unfamiliar with any theoretical considerations on political systems – Dzwonkowski is not Sobieski, who was seeking in-depth political knowledge at the beginning of the 17th century. Teodor Anzelm is primarily interested in what drives his fate and what he believes may be of interest to the reader. Nevertheless, the almost complete omission of public issues is somewhat surprising – other authors, both Polish and foreign, have devoted much attention to the history and organisation of the Republic (Van Strien 170–190).

The Republic made a rather hasty entry into Teodor Anzelm’s sphere of interests, although the unstable situation there had continued for seven years (1780–1787). The ‘Patriot’ movement (*De Patriotten*) headed by Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol rose against the Orangeists and William V. Their demands could be summarized in the following sentence: “The basic purpose of the Revolution was to wrest control of civic and provincial life from the hands of the Stadholder’s favourites and the regent oligarchies, and transfer power to those who regarded themselves as the spokesmen and representatives of the people” (Israel 1100). The conflict opened a number of favourable opportunities for people professionally engaged in warfare, and since the Dutch “w czasie potrzeby nie żałują złota tak na werbunek, jak i na utrzymanie wojska” [in times of need do not skimp on gold for recruitment or upkeep of the troops] (53), he decided to take advantage of the situation (thus confirming that Dutch greed

oftentimes gave way to necessity, as reported by numerous accounts). But whether things happened too quickly, whether the author himself delayed his departure for too long, or whether the journey dragged beyond measure, Prussians had invaded the Republic and the *Patriottentijd* had ended by the time Dzwonkowski set foot on Dutch soil. He himself seems to sympathize with the rebels in their dislike of absolute rule, but he will without hesitation wear an orange (Orangist) bow, as advised by the captain of the ship on which he arrived from Königsberg, “in order to avoid suspicion and persecution” (55), and after some time, when money has run out, he will take up military service with *stadhouder* William V.

When Dzwonkowski joined the Dutch Navy, the country of his new employer was slowly losing importance. Although it was basking in the blaze of its former glory, and the size of the overseas empire looked impressive on the maps, the whole structure showed clear signs of decay (Balicki & Bogucka 264–271). Our author does not seem to be aware that the “age of wigs” – *de pruikentijd* (as the eighteenth century will be remembered) is only a shadow of the past, because for him everything looks prosperous, vigorous and impressive, perhaps when seen against the background of his own declining homeland, a conviction reinforced by the painstakingly recorded riches that flow into the metropolis on ships sailing under the Dutch or Company flag.

He associates the Dutch state with two basic domains: trade and credit. When he tells the reader about the reasons that led him to become a Dutch mercenary, he talks mainly about the prospect of earning money, but also curiosity about the world, the willingness to learn foreign languages, and become familiar with the secrets of the sailing trade. He will add, however, that he takes a certain amount of comfort in taking up service “w takim narodzie, którego potęga przez handel całemu światu jest dobrze znajoma; nie masz podobno w Europie tego mocarstwa, które by Holandii nie było dłużnym; wieleż dopiero w Indiach Wschodnich i Zachodnich królów i cesarzów od woli ich dependuje” [for such a nation, the power of which is well known through trade to the whole world; apparently, there is no power in Europe that is not indebted to the Netherlands; indeed, many a king and emperor in the East and West Indies depend on their good will] (59). He thus repeats the popular opinion that Dutch bankers invested massively abroad, with the result that many countries (especially Great Britain) were heavily indebted to them (Boxer 120–121). Describing Amsterdam, he states without hesitation that it is now “stolicą handlu całej ziemi nazywać się może” [the commercial capital of the whole earth] (56). Dzwonkowski senses the opportunities created by rubbing shoulders with the wealthy, and as he will show later in the story, he is able to put them to good use. He thus resorts to a popular stylistic device – hyperbole (Maier 446).

He also adds a handful of information about Dutch trade with China and Japan. He enumerates the goods that flowed from the Middle Kingdom (tea, silk, porcelain), and mentions more about Japan. He seems to talk with a certain dose

of admiration about the way in which the Dutch established economic relations with the Shogun's country and sneakily yet successfully gained a foothold in what seemed to be an inaccessible territory, building up a very profitable monopoly on trade with the Land of the Rising Sun (Boxer 105);

Japończycy (...) gdy nie mogli dłużej ścierpieć jarzma niewoli, w której ich księża utrzymywać chcieli, wyrznawszy potem wszystkich na swojej wyspie chrześcijan, żadnego okrętu tychże samych przyjmować oświadczyli się, lecz Holendrzy, chcąc z nimi handlować, przybywszy do ich kraju nie powiedzieli, że są chrześcijanami, tylko Holendrami, przez co wolny przystęp dla okrętów swojego narodu i handel zabezpieczyli. (...) Okręt ich do łądu przybywający zawsze tę ostrożność mieć powinien, aby wszystkie książki ukryć, którymi się Japończycy dotychczas jeszcze brzydzą mieniąc, że chrześcijanie w książki tylko wierzą, a nie w prawdziwego Boga.

[The Japanese (...) when they could no longer endure the yoke of bondage in which their priests wished to keep them, having slaughtered all the Christians on their island, they declared that they would accept no Christian ships, but Dutch, who wished to trade with them, having arrived in their country, did not say that they were Christians, thus availing themselves of free access to their ships and trade (...). When their ships come ashore, they should always be careful to hide all the books, which the Japanese still abhor, claiming that Christians only believe in books, and not in the true God] (102–103).

This story was a common anecdote (Balicki & Bogucka 224). He also sees Japanese copper as a secret addition to Dutch ducats (102–103).

Admiration for the way the huge colony is managed does not mean full approval of everything. Dzwonkowski does not like waste. When he learns that in order to limit the supply of nutmeg, the Dutch ordered whole crops to be cut down, he bitterly remarks: “taka jest polityka kupiecka: lepiej wyciąć, spalić lub utopić aniżeli zostawić co komu na użytek” [’tis the merchant’s policy – better to cut down, burn or sink than leave to the needy] (95).

This is a very unexpected scene, as it seems to be a meeting of two reversed stereotypes – here, a Polish nobleman (the nobility were commonly accused of being profligate) accuses the Dutch (commonly associated with far-reaching frugality) of wastefulness. Who knows whether Teodor Anzelm did not adopt some of the Dutch traits on his travels (which seems plausible, for after returning to Poland and some adventures, he settled permanently in Cracow, a city stereotypically associated with misers)?

He notices – though without comment as usual – the moral decay among state and Company officials alike. The captains, who were responsible for provisioning the ships, did not care about the quality of the purchased products, but only took care of their pouches and saved whatever they could, so the crew had to feed themselves with their own money. What’s more, Dzwonkowski suggests that it was even to the captain’s advantage to lose part of his crew, as he was receiving payment for the burial of the deceased and shared in the property and undisbursed salaries of those who died without leaving a will. He is tactfully silent about the conduct of the captain of the ship on which he served, but from the mention that

it was thanks to the victuals that the crew bought themselves that their health improved a lot, one can deduce that his pouch was also quite swollen (73). Probably for this reason, the Company ships required huge amounts of manpower, as probably did also state-owned ships (103), since from the entire original crew of the “Zephyr” (around 230 sailors and soldiers) only 48 returned (108). No other examples of corruption are cited, which of course does not mean that there were none (Balicki & Bogucka 231). Dzwonkowski saw that an ordinary captain could appropriate relatively small sums of money; of course, much larger sums of money were pocketed higher up in the hierarchy, of which he was probably unaware (Balicki & Bogucka 231; Nierstrasz 157–166).

2.2. Cities

The short stay in Amsterdam was an opportunity to describe the city. As noted by van Strien, “far more important, however, are the descriptions of the cities, without which no travel journal of this period can be called complete” (32). Interestingly, while urban buildings were of interest to every traveller, the people who lived in them did not begin to attract attention until the 17th century – and Teodor Anzelm is part of that tradition (Dziechcińska 41–68). He opens the note by giving credence to the information that the city – according to local sources – started its existence as a modest fishing village. He notes the presence of fortifications – as it was believed at the time that a town without walls is not a town (Mączak 135). He writes thus: “miasto (...) całe jest obwarowane murami i fosami dokoła, tak że latem zdaje się być od wszelkiej napaści nieprzyjaciela zabezpieczonym” [the town (...) is fortified with walls and moats all around, so that in summer it seems to be protected from all enemy attack] (56). He will also pay special attention to defensive features in reports from later stages of his journey.

For him, brick buildings are also a mark of urbanity, although he has little to say about them. In fact, there were only two matters that preoccupied him – the first was the unfamiliar way in which the buildings were founded (supported on footings of oak wood piles). There was no such need back home, so the striking difference (due to the nature of the land) seemed worthy of his attention. Apparently he does not know that much of the wood came from the from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Two Nations (*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*).

The second matter was the Amsterdam City Hall, on which he showered hyperbolic praise (“the eighth wonder of the world” – he writes). In this description, too, he follows the then-common custom of constantly converting the value of viewed items into money (Mączak 219). He estimates the cost of the (wooden) foundations alone at 11 million Polish red florins (“czerwonych złotych”). In the extensive description, he also tells about the interior and the furnishings (with

special emphasis on military memorabilia). He was clearly delighted with the carillons (quite a rarity for a Polish traveller to take note of the sound feature of the city clock). He noted thus:

Budowla jego i obszerność osobiłwsza. W dużej sali pierwszego piętra posadzka marmurowa, na której globus całej ziemi ze wszystkimi planetami i szczegółami z metalu wyrobiony. W sali rynsztunkowej wiele starożytnej broni i zbrój znajduje się, cały zaś różnymi posągami z marmuru białego wyrobionymi jest przyozdobiony, tak dalece, że rzeźby umiejętność i robota wysilonymi być zdają się, jednych tylko stron kamiennych na skrzypcach, gdzie orgiestra jest kamienna, zrobić nie zdołano. Wieża na kilka pięter z zegarem i muzyką dzwonną najdoskonalszą, wszystkie kwadranse i godziny, każdy innymi kurantami, bywają przegrywane. Dwunasta zaś wszystkie repetuje, a gdy jaka gala miasta, tedy cały dzień muzyka nie ustaje; są wprawdzie i inne muzyczne zegary, lecz nie z tylą odmian kurantów co pierwszy.

[Its form and size are exceptional. In the large hall of the first floor there is a marble floor on which stands a model of the entire universe with all the planets and details forged in metal. In the armoury hall there are many ancient weapons and suits of armour, and the whole chamber is adorned with various statues made of white marble, the sculptures exhibiting great precision and care in their workmanship. Their fine master sculptors even made musical instruments of stone, save only for the bowstrings. The tower is several storeys high, with a clock and bell music of the most perfect kind, every quarter and every hour, each with a different chime. At noon, the chimes are all played at once and at city galas the music plays as the day is long. Many are the musical clocks I have seen in my lifetime but none of such grandeur and variety of melodies] (56).

Others have written about the town hall too. Jakub Sobieski did not have that opportunity, as he came to Amsterdam in 1609, and the building was not opened until 1655, but in 1678 it was viewed by Teodor Billewicz. His description is much more extensive (because the author himself had a very solid university education), but the 17th-century wanderer points out virtually the same details as Dzwonkowski. He, too, was curious about the foundations and couldn't help but wonder about the cost – according to information circulating in the city, several dozen barrels of gold were spent on them. As was the custom of the day, he measured the building in detail and noted its dimensions (311–312). This peculiar obsession with counting did not end with the 17th century – Bohusz, Dzwonkowski's contemporary, was also interested in the dimensions of the town hall, and would talk about its interior in more detail (47).

But let us return to Dzwonkowski. Much like other authors, he describes Amsterdam's canals whose number surely surprised him. He discusses the method of travel, not omitting to mention the carefully designed system of drawbridges allowing for various types of ships to navigate the watercourse. Moreover, he notes that the water level, sometimes above ground level, is astonishing to all Poles visiting the Netherlands. He appreciates the need for constant maintenance of water facilities: “a tak gdyby się gdzie tama zepsuła i zapobieżonym nie było, tedy cały ten kraj i miasto do pewnej wysokości [woda – TŚ] zalać by mogła” [and so if a dam broke and none did aught about it, then the whole country and city could

be flooded to a certain height] (57). Clearly, Bohusz was less enthusiastic about Amsterdam's affluence, as he adds that the water in the canals stinks and the air in the city is very unhealthy (55). The image of the canals can be considered a typical Dutch motif – it is the thing that is associated with the country in the first place: “Thus tourists described what they perceived as typical of Holland: the barges, the canals, the country houses with their gardens and, of course, the high banks which protected the low-lying country against the rivers and the sea” (Van Strien 32).

This paradise on earth, however, has a drawback. While so much water surrounds it, the locals lack drinking water, which they have to fetch at a significant cost. Dzwonkowski probably mentions this not so much out of a chronicler's duty (his account is selective and does not try to describe everything), but precisely because of the paradox of the whole situation – there is plenty of water around, you even need to protect yourself from it, but there is nothing to drink. His surprise is very clear. The rainwater collected by the resourceful Dutch allows some portion of demand to be met, but usually it is too little. It is in concern for these modest water resources that he sees the reason for the exceptional care taken in cleaning the streets. The Dutch carefully remove the dust from the streets so that it does not contaminate the reservoirs, and they make use of the service of juvenile shoeshines who, though numerous, have their hands full of work. Finally, he adds that pigeon breeding is forbidden for the same reason. He writes of the practicality of the locals with evident approval. The scarcity of water is also mentioned by Bohusz (55), but no one else (perhaps a sign of a new time when attention turned to previously unnoticed, mundane features of everyday life, not as spectacular as buildings).

Of course, Dzwonkowski was neither the first nor the only Pole to admire the cleanliness. It was one of the first things that foreigners, including travellers from Poland, noticed, as reported at beginning of the 17th century by Sobieski (23) and confirmed in the 1770s by Billewicz (309), and a little over a century later (almost at the same time as Dzwonkowski) by Niemcewicz (215) and Bohusz, who will repeat the very popular anecdote about the Prussian king who, despite his rank, had to respect the toil of the landlady and change his soiled boots (Bohusz 53; Oczko 105–106). The Dutch attitude to cleanliness and reports about it (mainly English and French, and to a lesser extent Polish) have been written about quite extensively by Polish researcher Piotr Oczko (103–145). The subtitle of his work is quite tell-tale: “The History of a Certain Obsession”. Besides, the Dutch themselves were extremely proud of their cleanliness (Schama 375–383). We should bear in mind that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most European cities differed from Dutch ones. Not all streets were paved, waste was poured directly onto passers-by, and mud was everywhere. Only in that context, does the admiration for Dutch cleanliness (both literally and figuratively) become more understandable.

He also notes that “żebraków nie tylko w mieście, ale i w całym kraju nie masz” [there are no beggars in the city or in the whole country] (57). The reasons,

however, as usual, are left untold. As likely as not, however, he is repeating the opinion of his informant or a stereotype. British tourists also embraced this stereotype, although they were sometimes able to make more accurate assessments. As Van Strien writes,

The city's policy of keeping beggars from the streets was not one hundred percent successful. The Irishman Thomas Molyneux wrote to his brother: 'Though it be generally reported that there are no beggars in Holland, yet I can assure you that it is most certainly false; for I have seen them at Amsterdam, Leiden, and elsewhere, and that also very frequently; yet I must needs say, they are not so common as in London or Dublin (134).

Probably the same was the case with Teodor Anzelm: if in T. Molyneux's statement London and Dublin were replaced with Warsaw, we would have an equally plausible explanation

2.3. The overseas empire of the Dutch

Although Dzwonkowski is primarily interested in exotic places, people and their customs, he also sometimes makes comments on the Republic's colonial policy. Although he himself is not very interested in general issues, his individual observations document some elements of the policy that the Netherlands pursued with regard to its overseas possessions. Teodor Anzelm felt no need to judge them, he simply wrote down what he saw and what he found interesting.

2.3.1. Dutch Cape Colony

The first Dutch colony along the route was the Cape. He admires the prudence of the Dutch who inhabited this area, seeing it as a perfectly located base, suitable primarily for replenishing supplies and wintering (although he is wrong to say that they bought it from the French some time ago). The comprehensive description will conclude with an enthusiastic statement that "to miejsce ze wszystkich innych dla Europejczyków nie tylko jest zyskownym, ale i najzdrowszym" [this place is not only the most profitable for Europeans, but also the healthiest of all] (71). He even intended to settle there permanently, which, however, was not possible due to the Company orders (only veterans with at least seven years of service were allowed to do so). He notes the presence of slaves, exploited by local farmers (called boors), and speaks unflatteringly about agriculture (though not because of the enslavement of indigenous peoples). He notes the underdeveloped crafts, which, stifled by the Company's restrictions, practically do not function and most products are imported from the metropolis. He sees that this is the result of the Company's deliberate policies, striving for full monopoly and total dependence of the colony (Żukowski 65–66). Dzwonkowski correctly identifies the essence of colonial policy, which amounts to the economic exploitation of

overseas lands and limiting their development in favour of the metropolis (Balicki & Bogucka 219–228). Of course, Dzwonkowski is not outraged, his intention being to earn money and return home with the acquired property, he is actually indifferent to the fate of the countries under the Republic's management. He assumes that were it not for the restrictions, the Cape Colony would be fully self-sufficient.

2.3.2. Dutch East Indies

He follows with some interest the way in which the Company ruled over large and populous territories. He sees that it generally did not strive to exercise independent governance but was very eager to use the local authorities for this purpose, wielding real influence over the fate of the subjugated nations, while leaving the kings, sultans and other local overlords a semblance of power (Balicki & Bogucka 219–228). This took various forms – from bestowing the local leader with the insignia of power (Dzwonkowski 70) to a complete economic blockade, as happened in Ceylon, where the local rulers were forced to accept a new currency minted in lead and bronze and therefore practically worthless outside the island (77). On the subject of the island's inhabitants, Teodor Anzelm sarcastically remarks that, having become tired of Portuguese rule and attempts to convert the local population to Catholicism, they called the Dutch for assistance and submitted to their rule. It did them no good, however, and the power of the lords of Amsterdam turned out to be even heavier than that of the lords of Lisbon (78). Set against the Company's total dominance, the pompous designation of the local ruler as “Cesarz na Słońcu i Księżycu Całego Świata” [The High Emperor of the Sun, the Moon and the Entire Universe] he finds laughable.

Although he associates the Dutch mainly with the pragmatism of conduct and profit orientation, he notes examples to the contrary. According to our author, the only reason for keeping the colonies on the Coromandel Peninsula is the matter of prestige, because they bring next to no income (84–85). If, however, he was told that the entire Company, despite its appearance of power, was in fact seriously in a bad way, he would probably not believe it, citing the grandeur that he saw with his own eyes (Balicki & Bogucka 227).

He points out the care taken by the Dutch to keep their cartographic knowledge secret – having divided the East India into two parts, they made separate maps for one (already known to other nations) and the other, not yet fully explored. The latter are only made available to the captains of their own ships under a special oath, obliging them to keep the documents entrusted to them in complete secrecy, under promise that they would be duly returned. The operation takes place in Batavia, the heart of Dutch possessions.

Another manifestation of Dutch pragmatism was what they did on Ceram island. The local population was characterized by a high degree of cruelty, which

the Company authorities viewed approvingly and did not intend to change. Dzwonkowski identifies two reasons – this is the furthest outpost of Dutch possessions, so it is impossible to operate there with appropriate vigour, and besides, the fear of bloodthirsty natives effectively deprives the convicts exiled there in great numbers of any desire to escape or resist. The clever Dutch people are thus killing two birds with one stone, saving on supervision costs and strengthening their position in the region. A kind of admiration for this policy is evidenced by the comment, which he shares with the reader here: “i dla korzyści, jako zawsze mędrsi nad głupcami mieć mogą, [rząd – TŚ] jak najdłużej w tym fanatyzmie utrzymywać ich przedsięwzięł” [and as the wise shall forever prevail over fools, the government thought proper to ensure that they shall never leave their folly] (93). Thus, Dzwonkowski looks down on the Orient and its peoples like a typical European, and despite his own country being in an unenviable situation, he does not feel the sympathy for the oppressed locals expected in such a situation (Said 31).

Human life in the colonies was very cheap – when he talks about an accident at the anchor rope factory, which resulted in a broken rope killing some people and maiming others, he notes that the rope was mourned, not the dead workers (93). Of course, he sees great opportunities for advancement in the colonial administration (Balicki & Bogucka 229), but his enthusiasm seems to fade noticeably when he learns the secret of frequent staff rotation in Batavia, caused by the high mortality rate among Europeans due to an extremely unhealthy climate for them. At this point, he seems to have abandoned his ideas for a career in East India (96–97), especially since even the Pole he had met in Batavia, who provided its practical illustration, as he had been promoted from private to colonel within a few years, yearned to go back to his native country (99). Moreover, similar feelings were common: “zazdrościli nam prawie wszyscy Europejczyki, iż nie mogli razem z nami do ojczyzny powracać, 3600 mil do przebycia mienili za pewniejsze niż miesiąc jeden w tym tu miejscu dla siebie życia” [almost all Europeans were envious of us, because they couldn’t go back home with us, they thought travelling 3,600 miles for was preferable to staying a month in this place] (100).

Let us stop for a moment with this compatriot of Dzwonkowski’s – although the thing does not concern the depiction of the Dutch. It is very characteristic of Teodor Anzelm to first look around for Poles in whichever place he visited, as one would naturally be inclined to do, trying to find a familiar face in a world that is completely alien. This was also part of taming, or coping with, otherness.

3. Conclusion

On the closing pages of his dissertation on British tourists travelling in the Netherlands, van Strien wrote: “The 50 or 60 British tourists who produced the finished

travel journals we have studied visited the same sights as other foreigners, and generally described them in similar terms. The nationality and religion of the tourists account for only minor differences in appreciation” (233). The truth of these remarks applies in equal measure to Dzwonkowski and the other Polish travellers mentioned in this article. Of course, we remember that Teodor Anselm’s diary is very short and omits a great number of details that could be found in other accounts (including mentions of the history of the Republic, taxes, religion, works of charity, entertainment, education, women, social life, art, literature). Anselm’s memoirs are a private collection focusing on the author’s personal history, recorded to preserve the remembrance of an enterprising family member. Nevertheless, the resemblance between various works of travel literature is striking. Dzwonkowski sees the same things as others, admires exactly the same places and features and shares the same opinions.

There are, of course, some differences. As a Pole, he does not share the English dislike of the rival state, so we will find no overtones of criticism (except where he condemns wastefulness). But he also differs from Polish accounts in at least two regards – firstly, he carefully avoids religious references, and secondly, there his memoirs display no sense of superiority. His Polish predecessors from the 17th century, who generally came from the upper classes of the nobility, were proud of their country’s power and looked down on the countries they visited and their people. Teodor Anselm, who was their equal in birth but not in wealth, is free of such prejudice (at the same time he does not go to extremes, and a sense of inferiority is also alien to him).

Of course, there may be various reasons for Dzwonkowski’s otherness, such as his own intellectual capacity, but the ideas of the Enlightenment had certainly had some impact on him (although he does not invoke them himself, for he is a man of action, not a thinker). I would see their influence above all in the clear rationalism of Teodor Anselm, who appreciates the rational character of observed events while rarely investigating their root causes. The absence of religious questions can also easily be explained through the influence of the Age of Reason. On the other hand, he is silent about values important to the Enlightenment, including freedom of speech, equality before the law, love of literature and art, and salon life, but the reason for this may be the purely private purpose of the diary.

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