

Dreams about Cloud-capped Journeys — *Balon (Balloon)* by Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin

Beata Prokopczyk

Since ancient times people wanted to tame inaccessible heavens for them but the dream of flying fulfilled at the end of eighteenth century thanks to the balloon. Admittedly, the first documented attempt to fly the balloon took place in 1709¹ but the discovery has gained popularity after an experiment conducted in June 5, 1783² by two Frenchmen and brothers — Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier.

The news of the successful experiment quickly spread through France and aroused keen interest of scientists from the Academy of Sciences in Paris and the designer of a balloon filled with hydrogen — Professor Jacques Alexandre Cesar Charles³. In short time another tests on balloons began to take place which aroused strong emotions from the beginning and — no matter what time it was, ticket prices or adverse weather conditions — attracted crowds of spectators⁴. Initially, aerostats were released with an emp-

1 In the 8th of August of this year young Brazilian priest — Bartholomeu Laurencio de Gusmão — received a patent for his invention and with the consent of the king, in his presence, released a small balloon filled with hot air in the hall of Lisbon castle. Unfortunately the said attempt was unsuccessful because after the balloon rose a little fabric, of which he was made caught fire and soon the room burst into flames. See: Orłowski B., *Przygody latającej bani*, Warsaw 1972, p. 10–11.

2 As noted by Boleslaw Orłowski this date is widely recognized 'as the balloon's birthday. See Ibidem, p. 14.

3 Rostworowski E., *Historia powszechna. Wiek XVIII*, Warsaw 1980, pp. 913–914; Orłowski B., op. cit., pp. 14–15.

4 In a letter from Feliks Oraczewski to Stanislaw August Poniatowski dated on 28 August 1783 the following account of the preparations for the first show balloon in Paris was placed: 'When taking this machine from the house of Mr. Charles at 3 in the morning it was surrounded by guard both riding and walking; the whole square was surrounded by French Martial Guard... you could be

ty basket but soon it was time for flights involving animals⁵. Successful trips with live passengers on board made more seriously to think about man's fly into air. The mankind was only one step from the fulfillment of the eternal dream of flying.

The first airborne sailors — Pilatre de Rozier and François Laurent d'Arlandes — held a balloon trip on October 21, 1783⁶ and soon it was the time for another attempts⁷. Soon similar experiments began to be carried out not only in France⁸. The whole world was drowned in the balloon madness⁹.

Official news about the invention of the balloon reached Poland in early October 1783 thanks to 'Gazeta Warszawska'¹⁰ ('The Warsaw Gazette') and aroused considerable interest just like in other countries. The balloon attempts immediately gained the support of Stanisław August Poniatowski "who from the beginning has become a zealous enthusiast of the new

allowed on the square only with tickets. Even a long, torrential rain did not scare away well dressed ladies and all soaked boldly in the hope to see that view...' cit. [after:] Elsztein P., *Świat balonów*, Warsaw 1989, p. 9. See also: Orłowski B., op. cit., pp. 15, 42.

5 The first journey took place on September 19, 1783. The balloon with a basket took to the skies a rooster a duck and a sheep named Montauciel (French 'Mounting to Heaven'). Craughwell T.J., *Wielka księga wynalazków*, Warsaw 2010, p. 180. See also: Elsztein P., op. cit., pp. 5–6; Kaleta R., *Sensacje z dawnych lat*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow–Gdańsk–Łódź 1986, p. 85.

6 Orłowski B., op. cit., pp. 18–19.

7 *Wiadomości o podróżach powietrznych odprawionych aż dotąd*, „Pamiętnik Historyczno-Literacki” 1784, III, part XII, pp. 1193–1198.

8 Orłowski B., op. cit., pp. 23–24.

9 'According to B. Orłowski, Vincenzo Lunardi after his first sky-trip was 'the hero of the day and the favorite of the whole London. Hats «à la Lunardi» (a kind of beret) have become a latest fashion worn in honor of the brave aeronaut particularly eagerly by ladies', ibidem, op. cit., pp. 24–26. 'Balloons were hottest topic of the day. Small balloon toys have earned the right to appear in the salons. Many funny jokes and jests were made with their help', ibidem, p. 26. See also: Ibidem, pp. 22–24; Rostworowski E., op. cit., p. 914; Elsztein P., op. cit., p. 9.

10 'In the discussed article a French correspondent was quoted in 'Gazeta Warszawska' ('The Warsaw Gazette') dated on October 8, 1783 from the following passage of 'The French Gazette': 'We have a new invention that the local authority judged as decent to provide to the public, striving vain fears, which would be able to make new things among the common people. Counting on gravity difference between so called burning air and the air of our atmosphere it was proved that a great sphere made of light material and filled with the air burning by itself should raise to the sky and should continue to fly higher and higher until both of the airs are in together in equal weight; perhaps on a very great height. The first experiment was held in Languedoc in the district of Vivarais in the city of Annoniaku by the inventors themselves — Montgolfier gentlemen. The sphere made of canvas and paper having a circumference of 105 feet and filled with burning air rose by itself to a considerable height which could not been kept. The same experiment was repeated now in Paris (on August 27 at 5 pm) in the presence of countless people. The sphere made from cloth and flexible rubber with 36 feet of circumference rose up from the square up to the clouds and instantly disappeared from sight. [...] Everyone warned themselves that whoever would see such spheres on the sky, seemingly as the eclipsed moon, it will not be terrible air monstrosities but only machines always made with material or light cloth and paper that not only nothing wrong they can do but over time they can become useful in the needs of human society'.

invention and a generous patron of the experimenters on this field.¹¹ The balloon shows in the homeland began to take place in early 1784¹² but the first man reached the skies in our country only in 1789 (it was a professional French balloonist Jean Pierre Blanchard¹³).

As in other countries including Poland the balloon madness quickly reflected in the national literature¹⁴. One of the most important works that have discussed this subject is, without a doubt, the poem by Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin entitled *Balon, czyli Wieczory puławskie. Poema w X pieśniach* (*The Balloon, or Puławian Evenings. Poema in X songs*) released in 1787. The poet weaving numerous digressions in his speech and with a dose of gentle humor describes the balloon experiment carried out in Puławy. When the newspaper with information about the new invention reached the puławian court it startled and fascinated the children of Duke and Duchess of Czartoryski. They decided to establish The Balloon Association and spend long winter evenings on building their own balloon to send Filuś the cat on an air travel.

Like in the whole Europe also in Puławy the message about balloon flights divided people into fervent supporters and opponents of the new invention. Debates and disputes about air travel of The Balloon Association described by Kniaźnin can be regarded as reflecting moods that prevailed where the news about the experiment of Montgolfier brothers reached. On the one hand, 'volatile bubbles' stimulated dreaming and allowed to believe that men will be able to take above-ground journeys like birds. On the other hand, they provoked justified fear of what was previously unattainable.

Echoes of the negative reviews on flights by aircraft are reflected primarily in *Pieśń I* (*Song I*) and in the words of Kliodora (Aleksandra Narbuttówna¹⁵) who sees the phenomenon as a manifestation of human foolishness and life threatening danger ('What do human minds are going to make up? / For new defeats they look, I hear'¹⁶). In her opinion flying to the skies is too much for human strength. She argues with recalling the stories

11 Orłowski B., op. cit., p. 30.

12 More about this in: Elsztein P., op. cit., pp. 9–11; Smoleński W., *Przezwrot umysłowy w Polsce wieku XVIII*, Warsaw 1979, pp. 151–152.

13 More about this in: Kaleta R., op. cit., pp. 92–94.

14 More about this in: *Ibidem*, pp. 88–89.

15 All names of people hidden by the names of the characters of the poem in brackets I give according to the information given by the author prior to the main content in the list entitled *Imiona osób tu wchodzących* (*The List of Names of Persons Who Enter Here*). See Kniaźnin F.D., *Balon, czyli Wieczory puławskie. Poema w X pieśniach*, [in:] *Poezje. Edycja zupełna*, v. II, Warsaw 1787, pp. 55–56.

16 All quoted fragments in the article come from the last edition of the poem contained in a manuscript of the poet. See *Poezje Franciszka Dionizego Kniaźnina ręką własną pisane*, v. 1–2, Collegium Columbinum, Cracow 2006 (*Biblioteka Tradycji*, no. 57), pp. 87–106.

of famous mythological characters, who attempted flights — about Icarus, Bellefron, Perseus — putting an emphasis on their tragic fate or unclear story of life. The girl does not understand why people take the risk and thus bring troubles to themselves. If their lives are already difficult enough and complex (‘Why to explore prohibited countries / where they threaten us with lightning and thunder?’). Flying is also associated by her with a butterfly — the enlightenment symbol of a man fickle and unstable in affection¹⁷. Therefore, flying is seen even in terms of disparagement for a man. In addition, Klodora does not approve a new invention since she considers flying attempts as a proceeding against human nature (‘Let it have any, for what is born: / bird let swings, and the man let go’). The same argument puts forward Pstrusia the cat in *Pieśń VII (Song VII)* who wants to persuade his beloved Filuś the cat the idea of becoming the first flying cat in Puławy.

Among the characters of this poem the well-wishers of air travel are certainly Iris (Konstancja Narbuttówna), Polifrena (Madame Petit, governess of Czartoryski Princes) and the poet himself who also belonged to the Balloon Association. The first of these people see the balloon as a miracle and a work of art in itself. A fly is to her just a beautiful experience (‘comical art don’t want to abandon, / yet it is beautiful to fly with Zephyrs’). The utterance of Iris convinces the others and makes ‘many people to dare on this journey’. Książnin, who is listening to Iris, also wants to fly in an air balloon:

I we mnie samym równa chęć urośnie,
Lubią poeci wiatr skrzydłami dzielić,
By zręczniejsz sięgać planety i gwiazdy,
Życzylbym sobie tej powietrznej jazdy.

On the other hand, Polifrena looks at the discussed issue more rationally. She does not dream in vain but draws attention to the fact that the flight into air is one of many treasures that nature conceals before man and argues that fear cannot stop people from discovering new opportunities. Heroine does not share the doubts of his companions about the dangers posed by ballooning. She explains that the first man who fell into the water sank and yet people did not abandon attempts to tame this element and now they carry out unhindered sea voyages. According to Polifrena it should be the same with the mastery of the air navigation (‘So when water can be used / for what we would not use the air?’). Her argument about the new invention finally convinces towards it other members of the Balloon Association.

¹⁷ Kopaliński W., *Słownik symboli*, Warsaw 2012, p. 235.

The clash of positive and negative views on ballooning is shown also in *Pieśń IX (Song IX)* in which the poet brings to life the mythical deity commenting human affairs — the Roman goddess of news Fama and Greek god of winds Aeolus. Excited goddess is pleased to announce the imminent event in Pulawy and people's waiting for the mercy of the god of winds. Fama believes that the balloon attempt will be the culmination of the hard work of human hands. Surprised Aeolus does not share her opinion. He delivers tirade soaked in anger filled with bitter remarks about the human race. For him, as for Kliodora, expeditions into air are acts which are incompatible with the nature and destiny of people and betrayal of the will of 'the Lord of all nature'¹⁸. Aeolus cannot understand why insolent people overcome barriers (erected in accordance with the laws of nature) and regardless of danger, risk of death and losses and damage they want to control water and air which are inaccessible and dangerous elements¹⁹.

In the next songs of the poem tension and excitement about the new invention and the possibilities that open up in front of people are palpable. The characters, as all enthusiasts of balloon flights in that time, indulge in dreams of traveling to the sky from time to time. *Pieśń IV (Song IV)* for instance notes the aircraft flight is woven into the story of the Bible — Ariston (Józef Orłowski) on the occasion of his argument about the Eden says that the prophets Enoch (Henoch) and Elizej probably got into the land of eternal bliss by the use of a balloon. Then states that 'maybe there are many people / one and the other among delight awaits'. Also in *Pieśń VIII (Song VIII)* appears reference to the story of the Old Testament — travel by balloon is compared to the dove flight from the ark of Noah which returning with 'the green wand' announced the end of the flood. Similarly, expedition in airship is to be a symbol of gaining the skies by the man and hope for the world.

At the beginning of the discussed song dreamy Książnin describes also his own journey in the footsteps of the poetic muse that leads him to the sky abyss:

18 'When in the eighteenth century the first casualties of aerostatomania started to happen the opponents of balloon flights actually started to recall these arguments. One of the first people who were killed during the air journey were Pilatre de Rozier and physicist Pierre Romain. As Roman Kaleta writes: 'Enemies of the invention received the news of the death with a painful irony. They said it was God's punishment for men being arrogant in their wisdom dared to violate the natural course of things.' (Ibidem, op. cit., p. 90).

19 Similar views which is a reflection of the eighteenth-century response to the first balloon flights were claimed by Roman ex-Jezuit Raimondo Cunich in a poem published in the Supplement to 'The Warsaw Gazette' No. 44 of 2 June 1784: 'in the foresight a man died on the ground, he wanted to die in water / to die in the air is now in vogue; / Quite of us were killed in one place, and we are yet / we composed in haste the second, and third'.

Bując wysoko, wznij i wyżej słońca
Ani się nadto w tym locie utrudzić;
Rzucać zapalę tam-ówdzie bez końca,
A tymi przecię słuchacza nie znudzić;
Zhasać targaniem skrzydlatego gońca
I coraz żywszy w nim zapęd obudzić —
Twojać to sztuka, o Muzo szczęśliwa!
Lecę za tobą, gdzie powietrze wzywa.

In *Pieśń VII (Song VII)* the poet once again allows to be took over by balloon madness and wants to make the first step to fame and rise to the sky ('Fly now [...] we were ready / I first on that my heart has prepared'). Nevertheless, Sofronim (Ignacy Ciepłiński) brings him to the ground quickly. It is true that he himself would like to be a passenger of the balloon 'to see the whole circle of the earth under his feet' but he is aware of the danger. In his argumentation he emphasizes that one should not get carried away and need to keep sense as people who are embraced by aero-mania forget. He tells on that occasion about irrational behaviors that could be observed during the French balloon attempts²⁰.

The issue of perceptions of aerial journey by the people of Enlightenment is also discussed in *Pieśń VI (Song VI)* when the poet meticulously describes paintings decorating the walls of the balloon. Generally, these are scenes reflecting eighteenth-century fascination with aerostats. Each verse is built on the same principle. They begin with defining the situation, generally the point at which individual characters embark on board of the aircraft or already fly in it. *Kniaźnin* shows many moments of the air trip changing passengers, realities and landscapes and each of the discussed expeditions preserved on paintings are of different purpose. Despite the fact that all parts of the description refers to the same mode of transport, it is not monotonous. Individual parts of *Pieśń VI (Song VI)* ends with properly selected cry of passengers.

In one of the first verses of the song the eyes of the reader rest upon Genius (the personification of science aiming at exploring the secrets of nature for the good of humanity) which as an emblem of taming the sky cries during the trip: 'Already I can fly!'. In addition, leaning on the shoulders of

20 Sofronim mentions for example that a man when he was forbidden to hold an air trip 'has already been shoot himself in the head'. This is a reference to an incident that took place before the second balloon attempt with humans scheduled for December 1, 1783 in France. When at the last moment the king Louis XVI forbade future airmen to set out on this, in his opinion, too dangerous and risky journey one of them — Professor Jacques Alexandre César Charles threatened to shoot himself if he will not obtain approval from the monarch to take part in the flight. See Orłowski B., op. cit., p. 20.

Newton and Copernicus Philosophy²¹ enters the aircraft because she wants to make people in their ‘not to cease in their deeds’. On another picture first balloonist, the Frenchman Jean Pilar de Rozier, moving away from the earth, oblivious to the reactions of the representatives of other nations who are afraid, ridicule or admire daredevil’s deeds or look at him with pity. Even the opponent of soaring in the air who tries to prevent them is impressed when he rises up involuntarily ([...] going up, spreading his hands / crying in admiration: ‘I am on the balloon too!’). On the next painting was presented personified Courage who desire to become famous, not afraid of difficulties, dangers and death and travels despite bad weather. Książnin draws beautiful description of gloomy sky through which penetrates the traveler in passage of the poem:

Tu wichry w srogiej powstają nawale,
Mgła koło Bani wiesz się i kurzy.
Tłuką się z dołu po przepaściach fale,
Z góry okropnie lyska się i chmurzy.
Odwaga, w ślepym lecąca zapale,
Sunie się śródkiem okolicznej burzy.

The description of the storm observed by passengers of the aerostat also appears in another part of *Pieśń VII (Song VII)* — where talking about flying balloon to ‘break up the clouds and storms dispersion’²². People mimicking birds travel also to warm countries in search of iridescent colors of spring. Sleek tomcat, typical womanizer and playboy of the Enlightenment period floating in a balloon with three real butterflies and thus takes their basic vital capacity and characteristics conformed to them not only figuratively but also literally. On the other hand, Hope in the aerostat ascends higher and higher dreaming of reaching bright rays of the sun illuminating her and the conquest of space. In this way Książnin emphasizes once again that the first air travel was a breakthrough discovery for a man who possessed the ability to fly indirectly which was previously reserved for insects, birds, mythical creatures and angels. On the another picture with a grain of salt Zephyr is portrayed as if dissatisfied with the discovery of people which means the loss of exclusivity for him to fly and Flora pounding him on his back with lilies who thanks to the balloon can ensure faithfulness of her husband.

Iris (the author of decorations on walls of the balloon) on one of the paintings shows a beautiful almost idyllic scene — the sky appears as a space

21 See the poet’s explanations for *Pieśń VI: Książnin F.D., Balon, czyli Wieczory puławskie. Poema w X pieśniach*, [in:] *Poezje. Edycja zupełna*, v. II, Warsaw 1787, p. 113.

22 Ibidem.

in which under the same conditions exist birds, insects and people on the aircrafts:

Tu nowy obraz na błękitnej stronie:
Pszczola z motylem, ptak mija się z ptakiem.
Ludzie w powietrznym wędrują balonem,
Każdy za inszym udając się smakiem.

Książnin placed also in his poem two extensive descriptions of the balloon travel. The first one we find already in *Pieśń II (Song II)* which main theme is a dream of Glikon (Prince Konstantyn Czartoryski), which is probably the result of strong emotions related to the project currently taking place at the court in Puławy (as emphasized by the poet: ‘The fact is dreaming of what we do during the day’). In the arms of Morpheus Glikon is transferred to the air deck and although he does not know how he got there, he enjoys being at high altitude where he has an unrestricted view on many different things at the same time:

Rozliczny widok ze wszech stron szeroki!
Wszystko i miasta, lasy, rzeki, skały
Z niską tam kędyś pokorą witaly.

Admired landscapes from the heights raises a number of associations. The balloon trip brings to an afterthought and different conclusions on the basis of the observed situation and explore the possibility of using the new invention. However, there is no time to think because landscapes are changing so fast that every now and then something else grabs the attention of the novice aviator. The boy flies towards the southern border of our country and when he passes the Tatra Mountains²³ sad reverie connected to the fate of the oppressed homeland embraces him. Soon he sees around two travelers possibly from Nuremberg who smuggle goods in a balloon in an effort to avoid paying the duty.

After some time in his view there are an additional two aircrafts flying against each other at a breakneck speed. This is the point where the fear against the element will visit again for a moment at the heart of Glikon. When passing too close balloons almost do not fall over. In one of them a young man rushes to Istanbul to abduct his beloved Alzyra from a harem. Glikon, who flies after him, witnesses the welcome scene of lovers in the privacy of the garden and then he sees them getting together to the balloon basket and setting off on a romantic journey.

23 The Poet used in the text a synonymous name of the highest mountain range in Poland — Kępa.

At the bottom beautiful landscapes and scenes from the life of the observed people are constantly changing and the curious boy cannot get over with how many interesting things you can see at the same time. From the beginning to the end the balloon journey is a very interesting, dedicated and extraordinary adventure for him:

Nasz Glikon na to dziwi się i cieszy,
Scen tyle łapiąc chciwymi oczyma.
Z wyspy na wyspę coraz dalej spieszy,
Gdzie jego banię duch lekki poddyma.
Wpóśród bawidel azyjackiej rzeszy,
Ciekawość swoją ponad morzem trzyma,
Lub miłe czyniąc z wiatrami zawody,
Lub na rozkoszne patrząc przygody.

When crossing Europe the hero passes islands and seas until he reaches the city of Messina in which he is witnessing a dramatic event — at the time when he is there an earthquake starts and takes a lot of lives causing total destruction of surrounding towns²⁴:

Kiedy nad morskim buja sobie szumem,
Smutny go widok zrazi przy Mesynie.
Srogie żywioły poburzą się tłumem:
Ziemia nieszczęsnej grozi tam krainie.
Alić ją strząśnie. Za okropnym rumem,
Tyle miast razem, tyle ludzi ginie!

The poet in the relevant section of the poem places a hidden message for opponents of soaring journeys: the earth is not safer than the air. Moved Usher quickly realizes that he survived only because he was in the balloon ('He felt pity for them and thanked God, / that He saved him with air from the ground').

In the end the hero flies over Gibraltar where he observes a sea battle in which the British troops under the command of George Elliott finally defeat the French fleet²⁵. Glikon looks at the fiery glow on the sea and eagerly follows the course of events, however, he has mixed feelings because on the one hand, he admires the commander of the British. On the other hand, burning ships scare him ('he worshiped in awe Elijott's prowess, / but in a fire scare him the fleet').

Prince Konstanty clearly looks ahead in his dream — at the time of his journey the balloon is already a very popular, widely available means of

24 Here we are talking about the earthquake that took place in Messina on February 5, 1783.

25 Assault of the British described in *Balloon* aimed at the defense of Gibraltar against the allied forces of the French, and the Spanish held on September 13, 1782.

transport. Furthermore, the invention must be substantially improved and tested as the dreamy boy during his travels pilgrimages such large parts of Europe.

In description analyzed above *Kniaźnin* showed various applicability of balloon and beautiful experience which provides that means of transport but did not ignore danger and fear connected with it. Anxiety is revealed in the last stanza of *Pieśń II (Song II)* when Glikon leans to grab the cap taken by the wind and falls out of the air ship. Fortunately it is only a dream — a young man wakes up ‘in fear and trouble’ but it is alive and well.

After the completion of work there comes the time for a real balloon flight in Pulawy. On the bank of the Vistula gather crowds of people who want to witness the extraordinary spectacle. Some of them even climb nearby trees to get a better view of the air sphere which leaps upward and is held in place by ropes and *Filuś* the cat who is being carried towards it among the applause and cheers. *Kniaźnin* do not ignore fear which accompanies the balloon fliers even in such exalted moments and also describes the feelings of the aircraft aviator who although has a courage like a soldier on the battlefield at first he is shaking at the thought of what awaits him in a moment. The poet does not stop at this finding and stresses that in the fight with another person you can be prepared and in a battle with the elements you cannot. It seems that this type of thoughts worming in the minds of most spectators (‘In this attitude, when he demanded to go, people pitied him when seen on the sphere’). These reflections are a reflection of the atmosphere not only on that show but probably all of the eighteenth century balloon shows.

Finally, the cords are cut off the balloon which caused widespread enthusiasm and turmoil rising into the sky and ‘*Filuś* the cat with winds creditably plays.’ The event takes on a very lofty character. It is not a naive fun, but a step towards modernity and the capture of the sky causing a lot of excitement. *Filenor* (Ludwik d’Auvigny), one of the builders of the air ship, says goodbye to the aviator with sign of the cross as the ancient custom ‘to all [...] cases ward off’.

Overjoyed cat-traveler admires beautiful scenery. His attention is attracted by three cities located near Pulawy: *Golańb*, *Kazimierz Dolny* (with beautiful, but sad ruins which are a sign of ‘past glory’) and ‘nice *Janowiec*’. *Filuś* the cat, however, soon stops to enjoy lovely views for his eyes — suddenly around the balloon starts off a fight between its guardians: *Zephyr* and *Fawoni* and violent winds who threaten the air journey:

Zatrzął się Balon, mgła zasępi słońce,
Filuś drzeć począł; my na to struchleli.

Zefir z Fawonim — skrzydlaci obrońce —
Z odwiecem silnym naprzeciw stanęli.
Ale cóż poczną w odporze nierównym
Łagodni bracia przeciwko gwałtownym?

At the end the balloon goes up in flames and after a while crashes on dry ash thus ending the life of a brave airman.

While discussing the implementation of the theme of journey in the poem *Balloon* we should mention the language since Książnin often reaches for original, poetic statements and structures resulting in beautiful, artistic, unique descriptions. The poet not only writes about flying or traveling — he uses a number of other words treated them as occasional synonyms. The characters for instance: rise, move lively, up fly up, speed, rush from place to place, sway, pull up, fly away, take a flight on the sphere etc. There are also much more powerful, poetic expressions such as: ‘the will to bring together with the birds’ or ‘raised Frenchman tears to eyes.’ Książnin creates a lot of flying periphrases using the combination of wind — ‘luxuriate and winds to sweep’, ‘divide wind with wings’, ‘making nice competition with winds’, ‘in the noble [...] trip / manfully meet with four winds’ or ‘with the winds creditably play’; the air — ‘in the air to fly’, ‘I wish that air travel’, ‘hazardous air flips’, ‘elevates him travel with air’, ‘people wander in an air balloon’, ‘to fly on sphere in the air’; and sky, height and the amount of clouds — ‘shoot from the ground to the sky’, ‘amounted Glikon to the clouds’, ‘they soared on the sky-sphere’, ‘it kidnaps him upper with itself’, ‘I dare to get to the heavens’, ‘swing high and higher to the sun’, ‘balloon [...] soar from the earth under the blue heavens’, ‘break through [...] to the heavenly gate’, ‘and balloon will be released before the face of the sun’.

Situations, thoughts and disputes related to air journeys described in *Balloon* are a reflection of the balloon madness that seized people at the end of the eighteenth century. Książnin in the discussed poem portrayed the prevailing mood in Europe and depicted the reactions to the news of a new invention. On the one hand, for many people it was the possibility of meeting the eternal dream of flying, but on the other — aroused great concern and anxiety. However, balloon flights have been undoubtedly a breakthrough on the road to a long-awaited conquest of the skies because, as noted by Emanuel Rostworowski ‘although aeronautics in the eighteenth century did not go beyond the scope of the risky sport it became a symbol of man’s mastery over the forces of nature’²⁶.

26 E. Rostworowski, op. cit., p. 914.

Bibliography

Craughwell T.J., *Wielka księga wynalazków*, Warsaw 2010.

Elszstein P., *Świat balonów*, Warsaw 1989.

„Gazeta Warszawska”, no. 81 from 8th October 1783.

Kaleta R., *Sensacje z dawnych lat*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow–Gdańsk–Lodz 1986.

Kniaźnin F.D., *Poezje. Edycja zupełna*, v. II, Warsaw 1787.

Kopaliński W., *Słownik symboli*, Warsaw 2012.

Orłowski B., *Przygody latającej bani*, Warsaw 1972.

Poezje Franciszka Dionizego Książnina ręką własną pisane, v. 1–2, Collegium Columbinum, Cracow 2006 (Biblioteka Tradycji, no. 57).

Rostworowski E., *Historia powszechna. Wiek XVIII*, Warsaw 1980.

Smoleński W., *Przezwrot umysłowy w Polsce wieku XVIII*, Warsaw 1979.

Wiadomości o podróżach powietrznych odprawionych aż dotąd, „Pamiętnik Historyczno-Literacki” 1784, year III, part XII, pp. 1193–1198.