



THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#30)

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings... **In the case of today’s treasure the internal mechanism can be revealed...**

(Five minutes with... Fr. Semenenko’s watch #30)

There is something magical about mechanical watches. Even though they are not as precise when compared to modern day smartwatches. These little objects have something appealing and fascinating. Among different chronometers, certainly the podium has been kept for years by Patek Philippe. Patek’s watches are the Rolls Royces among timepieces. For example, a few years ago one of Patek’s watches sold for 23 million dollars in Geneva. Among the owners of Patek’s watches were Picasso, Walt Disney, J.P. Morgan, Albert Einstein, Pius IX, John F. Kennedy, Queen Victoria and Peter Semenenko and Jerome Kajsiewicz.

Even though this Swiss watchmaker company is well known, not too many are aware of its founder. Antoni Patek, was a Polish immigrant and a friend of our Founders. From his letters which we hold in our Archives in Rome, we see that he stayed in touch with our Fathers for many years. Moreover, he gave them two watches of his own production one of which is kept in Rome and the other in Krakow, Poland. The watch in our Archives is the one which was probably given to Fr. Peter Semenenko, C.R. From the serial number on it we can estimate that this pocket watch was made c. 1875.

The next edition of the BBT will be about the watch itself. Today I would like to show you a fragment from Fr. Semenenko’s Diary where he mentions about his encounter with Antoni Patek in 1851 in Paris. It is funny that the slogan of the advertising campaign of Patek company was: “you never actually own a Patek, Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation.” Isn’t that exactly what we have done for all these years, keeping Semenenko’s watch along with other treasures in our Archives in Rome?

Saturday, July 5, 1851 (*The Diary of Fr. Peter Semenenko, C.R.*)

“I was in Paris. I wrote a letter to Fr. Joseph in Rome, describing my first impressions from the house of Mr. Simonin and I asked him for permission to accept new candidates.

I saw Patek returning from London from an exhibition, to Geneva, home. At the exhibition, his products have gained great attention. The Queen of England and her husband visited him to see his products, the next day she sent her children to him. The same was with the French Queen who came with Prince Nemours. Antoni Patek is a very good Christian...”

*Patek, Philippe & Co
Geneve*

3 Lipca
Gzwoź. Byłem wcioreu u protopiusa i pniepromu
za niebycie u niego wioraj; i z wyms wieceu
na jutro, kiedy znouwa ma byi urony stoi' jekas
i przypomosi' biskupa z Langres. - Ofiaro-
watem mu dziektu pnieuowu Cowiańskieun

4 Lipca 1851.

Piątek Lit do pólnownika Kaminińskiego, pde-
cający Steina alby go przedstawił Branickiemu
i wyrobił ponow ^{wypowianu} natęps wynalastke

5 Lipca 1851.

Sobota Byłem w Paryżu. Lit do Ojca Jozefa
do Paryżu opisyjaj moje pierwsze wrazenia
z domu Pana Simonin; proszaj o danie
mi wladry przyjmowania postulantów.

Widziatem Patka wracajacego z Londyn
z wyprawy do Genewy do domu. Na wyprawie
jego wyrobly rykaty powszechnie mozaranie. -
Krolowa angielska z męsem nawiedziły sam-
gólnie jego wyrobly, narajutrz przystala swoje
dzieci. - Coz; Krolowa francuska z Kuz d'ieu
Nemours. - Antoni Patek, doskonały jest
Chmianin. - Cielawc jep storuud z Co-
wianstkim, kwiennu podjęt u publicznie do-
wien ze albo jest w blydzie, albo jest osuudny.
Twejerorajax lat temu w lha pmer Bazylec, u-
mytne dzieci caly zabrymat w, aby us z in-
widziat. - Cowiański nie przysł go; odeslal go
do mistna mieczu (Karola Rojczkiego).

ten przysł go wroypcie, w towany stwie kit-
ka zwoleniukow. - Odeslal go zwioreu.
Cowiański potem przyslal mu list z wiektami
Komplementami.

Byłem z A. Alexandrem u A. Ventura.
Rad był temu ze mamy nieci dom wyko-
wania. - Dal mi rshojis swój o spodbie
wykowania i ksiązkę A. Gaume: Le Ver-
rongeur des sociétés modernes, ou le Paganisme
dans l'Education, wlozona podtytuł sup reko-
pisiu pmer 3 lata bedzacego w rżsu A Gaume.
Opowiadał swoje widzenie z A. de
Lamennais. O pierwszym widzeniu z A.
dormioty dzieciukta, ale jakoby. Iny dra-
gim był tyllu jedcu swiadek, ten u ktorop
ta widzenie u m'abo miejce, A. de Noireu
proboszcz, S. Ludwika J. Autin, i otem uilet
miewie; Ojcie Ventura pmer: tez alby go
miorog arai. - Lamennais rairat gadai
Ojcu V. o swoich projektach, emadrenia potes
Czentwa, o reformach; i w itd. Pmer jaltie
trzy kwadransu, tak dugo jak Lamennais
mwiol, O. V. ciurpwoie go dukał. Je mis
bon enfant, sa jess elowa, je commence par
croire tout ce qu'on me dit, sauf a examiner
apies si ou a raison. Kiedy Lamennais