

# Professor O.M. Kowalewski—Mongolian studies scholar, traveller and enlightener: His biographical landmarks

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**Abstract.** In this article, materials devoted to the basic stages of the life and activity of a graduate of Vilna University (1821), Professor Osip Mikhailovich Kowalewski (1801–1878), are presented. He held the first chair of Mongolian literature in Russia and Europe and served as dean and rector of Kazan University. Prof Kowalewski made scientific trips to Siberia, Buryatia, Mongolia and China (1828–1833); collected unique books, manuscripts, and ethnographic materials of the people of Central Asia; and became the author of classical works concerning Buddhism and the history, languages, literature, religions, folklore, and ethnography of the Mongolian people.

A graduate of Vilna (Vilnius) University, Osip Mikhailovich Kovalevskiy (Осип Михайлович Ковалевский, 1801–1878) (henceforth the Polish rendering of his surname ‘Kowalewski’ is used) is one of the founders of Mongolian research in Russia and Europe, an outstanding scholar with a wide range of research, and a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Science. The name of this Russian and Polish scholar stands alongside other outstanding Russian orientalists: Christian Fren (Христиан Данилович Френ, 1782–1851), Aleksandr Kazem-Bek (Александр Касимович Казем-Бек 1802–1870), Ilya Berezin (Илья Николаевич Березин, 1818–1896), Vasiliy Bartold (Василий Владимирович Бартольд, 1869–1930), Boris Vladimirtsov (Борис Яковлевич Владимирцов, 1884–1931), and others.

The many-sided work of Kowalewski is related to the formation and development of the Russian school of Mongolian studies in the 1820s–1850s. For over 20 years, he headed the Chair of Mongolian Language Arts (the first such chair in Russia and Europe) at Kazan University and was the rector of the university. Kowalewski made a

famous research trip to Siberia, Buryatia, Mongolia and China (1828–1833), collecting a set of unique books and manuscripts of the peoples of Central Asia, as well as rich ethnographic material on these regions. He played a specific role in the education of the famous orientalists and Mongolian scholars of Russia: Dorzhi Banzarov (Доржи Банзаров, c.1822–1855), Vasilii Vasil'ev (Василий Павлович Васильев, 1818–1900), Gaslan Gombоеv (Галсан Гомбоев, 1822–1863), Władysław Kotwicz (1872–1944), Aleksey Pozdneev (Алексей Матвеевич Позднеев, 1851–1920), and others.

Being at the beginning of the new scholarly discipline, Kowalewski studied many aspects of the life of Mongolian-speaking peoples. He worked in the spheres of history, philology, religious studies, and ethnography and left fundamental works in each of these areas of research. In his works, the study of the Mongolian language was for the first time carried out at a contemporary academic and theoretical level; he was the one to suggest a uniform integral grammar framework for the Mongolian language. The chrestomathies compiled by him while studying the Mongolian language were far beyond the scope of study guides; they can be called annotated dictionaries on Buddhism, literature, and history. He was the first scholar to outline successively and in detail Buddhist metaphysics and to compile a Mongolian–Russian–French dictionary based on expansive literary and linguistic material.

The novelty of the academics research of the scholar is that he is one of the first scholars in the history of Russian and European Mongolian studies to realise and accept the necessity of the integrated study of the history and culture of the Mongolian peoples. His works still remain up-to-date because some of the linguistic and historical-cultural problems outlined in them have already received coverage and the rest are yet to receive it.

Kowalewski worked out original methods of research and education that have been used by subsequent generations of Mongolian researchers. Findings and ideas put forward by Kowalewski are used in the works of the outstanding Russian scholars Aleksey Pozdneev, Konstantin Golstunskiy (Константин Фёдорович Голстунский, 1831–1899), Andrey Rudnev (Андрей Дмитриевич Руднев, 1878–1958), and Boris Vladimirtsov. His scholarly legacy still remains a foundation for present day Mongolian researchers over a wide range of study. It was he who laid down the foundation for forming academic Mongolian studies in Russia, which received further development at the Oriental Faculty of St Petersburg University.

In this article, the main landmarks of the biography of Kowalewski are highlighted, especially the Vilnius, Kazan and Warsaw periods of his life. We also present his archival legacy, thus giving an overall evaluation of the scholarly, pedagogical, collection-related, and organisational work of this outstanding Mongolian researcher.

Professor Kowalewski is a bright and many-sided figure in the history of Russian and Polish Oriental studies. The years spent in Russia and Poland became for him a period of intensive spiritual and personal search that found its implementation in his pedagogical, scholarly and educational work. His name is related to a remarkable page in the history of Kazan University, which made an important contribution to the study of the diverse historic-cultural past and present of the Oriental peoples of the Russian Empire and countries of the East, as well as to Russian Oriental studies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the biography of Professor Kowalewski, the famous Oriental and Mongolian researcher, humanist and educator, three stages can be singled out: the Vilnius stage (1817–1824), the Kazan stage (1824–1862), and the Warsaw stage (1862–1878). The life and scholarly legacy of the Kazan University professor who became one of the founders of Russian and Polish academic Mongolian studies attracts a huge amount of interest from contemporary scholars in Russia and other countries.

Osip Mikhailovich Kovalevskiy (Pol. Józef Szczepan Kowalewski) was born at the turn of the century, at a crossroads of cultures, into a family standing on the borderline of different classes of society.

His date of birth is engraved on the tombstone of the scholar: 9 January 1801. Kowalewski's tomb is in Warsaw, in a Catholic cemetery, and the date mentioned is given according to the new chronology accepted in Poland. If this date is switched to the old chronology, it turns out that the great scholar came into the world on 28 December 1800. By the will of destiny, Kowalewski spent most of his life in a society where the old chronology was used. This is why most sources refer to the second date.

His biographers name the villages of Lewkowo and Velikaya Berestovitsa (Pol. Brzostowica Wielka, Rus. Великая Берестовица) as his place of birth; only about 40 kilometres and a state border lie between them: Lewkowo is situated in Podlaskie Province in Poland, and Velikaya Berestovitsa is in the province of Grodno of the Republic of Belarus.

Lewkowo is pointed out as the place of birth by Frolov 1958. The opinion of the followers of the different version is based on information provided in the article 'Świślocz, Some Remembrances' printed in 1879 in the Polish magazine *Kłosa* (Małcużyński 1879). Its author, who signed his name W.M., states that Kowalewski was born in Velikaya Berestovitsa. This opinion is supported by Kałużyński 1968 and Shamov 1983.

Kowalewski was born into the family of Uniate priest Mikhail Kowalewski, who originated from minor Polish noblemen (Shamov 1983, 6). Like many other representatives of the Uniate clergy, Michał Kowalewski was supposedly a man of high culture. He provided a good education to his three sons,<sup>1</sup> which was not an easy

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<sup>1</sup> Kowalewski had two brothers, Julian and Teodozy. Yulian became a famous educator. See Kotwicz 1948, 18.

thing to do with his small wealth. According to the customs of those times, children were first educated at home. In the case of Józef, this did not last long: as early as 1808 he was sent to Świsłocz grammar school,<sup>2</sup> which had been founded in 1806 and had obtained fame as one of the best schools in Poland. By the suggestion of its founder, Count Władysław Tyszkiewicz (Lith. Vladislovas Tiškevičius), this grammar school was supervised by Vilna University. Not only did professors from Vilna make up a programme for the school, but they also taught in it. Count Władysław Tyszkiewicz had taken care of everything: of the library, of a mineralogy study room, and even of the young people's leisure.

Studies lasted from September till the end of June. On the day of St Peter and Paul (29 June), a festive closing of the academic year, combined with a public demonstration of the abilities of the school's pupils, took place. The pupils were examined on various subjects, demonstrated showy chemical experiments, and read their writings aloud. Maybe Kowalewski's poems were also once read on such an occasion; thanks to his university friends, we know that during his school years he wrote some bucolic poems in classical style (Kotwicz 1948, 22).

In 1812 rumours about an upcoming war with France began spreading, which was accepted by some with cautiousness and by others with hope for liberation from the tsar's oppression. Kowalewski was in the fourth form at that time and was probably holding patriotic feelings, as were many of his schoolmates.

The units of the Great Army that entered Świsłocz consisted of Saxons of General Schwartzenberg. We are inclined to think that Kowalewski, like everyone, hoorayed the liberators, but soon afterwards his feelings grew cold, for marauders stole his suitcase with all his humble fortune (Kotwicz 1948, 19; Małcużyński 1879, 237).

Kowalewski graduated from the grammar school slightly later than he was supposed to, not in 1815 as planned, but in 1816 or even 1817. Of course, he chose Vilna University as the place for his further education. He left Świsłocz with a solid foundation of knowledge, with a habit of working on his research independently, and with most pleasant memories. Many years later, while in Kazan, he wrote to one of his school teachers: 'It has been a quarter of a century since I left that blissful haven, where under the supervision of kind and caring mentors I learned to love virtue and science. It has been a quarter of a century since I ceased hearing the voices of teachers and benefactors, but it still does not cease sounding in the ears of my soul' (cit. from Kotwicz 1948, 19).

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<sup>2</sup> The question about when Kowalewski went to school is slightly muddled. An author hidden behind the initials F.H.L., claims that he went there at the age of 10 (Małcużyński 1879), and Kotwicz 1948 states that he went there in 1809. But both sources agree that in 1812 Kowalewski was in the fourth form, which gives us reason to conclude that he must have entered the first form in 1808.

As for his journey to Vilna, he would describe it later:

In 1817, proceeding for the first time to Vilna University by a Jewish cab on two wheels, halfway I met Jan Czczot, who was returning to Vilna from his mother's in Novogrudok by a small carriage together with a Tatar from those places who was famous for his honesty. As we were young, almost equal in age, we got acquainted very soon. This was the beginning of a friendly relationship to which we stayed faithful forever. During the 2-day trip, I had an opportunity to listen to a story about the current state of Novogrudok School, about the life of Vilna students, about the Faculty of Literature (where my passion for science inculcated by my Świsłocz teachers led me), and about the only way to survive in the expensive literature capital was to give private lessons, which were also difficult to get for a poor young boy without any acquaintances. At 3 miles before Vilna, I was obliged to spend Sabbath at a coaching inn, while my colleague, together with his Tatar companion, hurried to Vilna, where he was going to attend lectures and simultaneously to execute the functions of a secretary of the Radziwill<sup>33</sup> Commission. In Vilna we met in the street and afterwards at the apartment of one of our companions, this time as good pals, as friends. We became Philomates, radiant ones, members of the Society of Friends, and Philarets;<sup>3</sup> we worked and had fun together. (VUB F11–11, 3: 641)

The Vilna period in the life of Kowalewski has attracted the attention of scholars such as Kotwicz 1948, Shamov 1983 and Frolov 1958.

Kowalewski came to Vilna in 1817 and entered the Faculty of Literature and Fine Arts of Vilna University. At this faculty, lectures on various spheres of history and philology were delivered. Kowalewski was especially fond of Greek and Latin language arts classes with Professor Gottfried Ernest Groddeck and lectures on history delivered by the young people's idol, Joachim Lelewel. He got engaged in student life at once. In 1817 the Society of Philomates was founded, Kowalewski was one of the first to be accepted as a member on the recommendation of Adam Mickiewicz. Kowalewski combined his membership in the society—the aim of which was collaborative research, entertainment, and the moral development of its members—and his studies and scholarly work, presenting his translations, notices on the books he read, etc. at meetings of the society. In the first half of 1818, he presented his following works at the society:

1. 'On the benefits of the invention of the craft of typography',
2. 'On the necessity of rules for writing',
3. 'On epics',
4. 'Information on the life of Herodotus and his works',
5. 'The translation of the fifth book of Herodotus',
6. 'A critique of the state of European countries from the decline of Rome to the 11<sup>th</sup> century'.

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<sup>3</sup> Philomates ('lovers of science and research'), Philarets ('lovers of virtue'), the Union of the Radiant, and the Society of Friends are the names of organisations of young people in Vilna.

The interest in classics, which Kowalewski got from his grammar school, became his predominant interest during his university years, fostered mostly by Groddeck. This outstanding scholar belonged to a school quite progressive for its time, the so-called school of Neo-Hellenists, who believed that studying a language was not a goal in itself, but a means of learning the spirit of the nationality and the epoch. Beside Ancient Greek and Latin, he also knew Hebrew and Arabic. The hard-working and highly capable Kowalewski drew his attention at once. Being aware of the household problems of Kowalewski, Groddeck recommended him to Rector Szymon Malewski, who advised him to enter the Pedagogical Institute at Vilna University as a candidate. Entering the institute allowed one to receive a state scholarship and, as it seems, gave one the right to official housing: when Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, the curator of Vilna University, visited the institute, Kowalewski was already living there.

When he entered the institute (1819), Kowalewski's situation notably improved. He ceased giving private lessons and could now attend Groddeck's seminar, which was organised for selected, outstanding students, and he could also pay more attention to social activities. The same year he was elected secretary of the First Department of the Society of Philomates and was entrusted to organise the affiliated Union of Friends. The next year (1820) Kowalewski became a member of another organisation created by Philomates, the Union of the Radiant, and after it had to be dissolved he joined the Union of Philarets. As a member of the Union of Philarets, Kowalewski was elected leader of one of its sections, the so-called Blue Union. Both the Blue Union and First Department of the Society of Philomates were created for the scholarly and cultural self-activity of young historians and philologists. In 1819–20 the attention of its members was starting to be drawn mostly to contemporary problems. Among other issues discussed was the necessity to examine the current state of the schools in the Vilna District that were the stockpile of the Philomate movement. At the 5 May 1820 meeting of the First Department, Kowalewski presented instructions which he had worked out for gathering the necessary information about schools. In the preamble, he wrote that it was at school where 'an honest person, a zealous patriot, a conscientious servant, a good teacher, or, in other words, a member of society useful to his country in every respect, should be raised' (Shamov 1983, 11).

Kowalewski remained the secretary of the First Department in the next year, 1821, as well, and from 1 March to 15 November of the same year he also served as a chairman, but, being preoccupied with his own research work, he did not show much effort in that. In some of the observations of those years, we can notice reproachful overtones. 'Kowalewski, as you know', one of the Philomates wrote, 'is weak in anything that is not reduced to books' (cit. from Frolov 1958, 161). But what is even more visible in these observations is care for his health, which was ruined by

continuous work. ‘Osip ... is always sick because he is always among stacks of books. He cannot get out of them; you cannot even pull him out with a hook’ (ibid., 162).

Among his friends, Kowalewski gained the character of a bookworm. In 1821 he received the degree of Candidate of Philosophy, which meant graduation from the university.<sup>4</sup> One year later his first printed work, ‘Information on the life and letters of Longin’, was published in the magazine *Dziennik Wileński*. The scholarly career of Kowalewski seemed fixed. He was seen by many as the successor to Groddeck, and rumours about his upcoming trip around Western Europe travelled around. Meanwhile he prepared new publications, a prominent place among which was supposed to be occupied by a translation of Herodotus, done in the brilliant language of Polish baroque.<sup>5</sup>

Since at the same time Kowalewski began teaching at the Vilna Grammar School,<sup>6</sup> he did not have time to actively participate in the work of the Philomate organisations. By the way, they also limited their activity out of precaution: by an edict issued in 1822, the activities of secret societies in Russia were forbidden, and the young people’s activities had already attracted the attention of the police of Vilna.

In 1823 Kowalewski published two works: a translation of Longinus’ tractate *On the Sublime* that was dedicated to Gottfried Ernest Groddeck and a critical edition of the first six books of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, intended as a school book for pupils at grammar school. About this latter work, Evgeniy Frolov wrote: ‘Kowalewski presented pupils and teachers a good, elaborated school book, standing at the top academic level for that period’ (Frolov 1958, 176). We would like to add that it would be interesting to compare this early work of Kowalewski with his later *Mongolian Anthology* (Kazan, 1836–37) and see how his approach to published texts changed. For *Metamorphoses* Kowalewski received a prize of 250 rubles.

In 1823 a wave of persecution fell upon the young people’s organisations of Vilna district. It all began in May, when a pupil wrote ‘Long live the constitution!’<sup>7</sup> on a school blackboard. The inquest revealed a widely branched secret organisation.

The leading Philarets were arrested on 23 October 1823. Kowalewski was not among them. He was arrested on 16 November. On 17 November he was interrogated

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<sup>4</sup> Kotwicz 1948, 25 believed that Kowalewski graduated from the university in 1820. We follow Frolov 1958, 178 who had access to materials unknown to Kotwicz.

<sup>5</sup> This translation was never published by Kowalewski. In 1824 he took it with him to Kazan, and before departing to China handed it, together with other papers, to Feliks Kółakowski, who died soon after. The manuscripts were lost.

<sup>6</sup> It is not quite clear exactly what subject Kowalewski taught. Some claim that he taught Polish literature and others state that he taught both Polish and Latin literature. See Frolov 1958, 178–9.

<sup>7</sup> The so-called Third of May Constitution is meant, which was adopted on 3 May 1791 by the Sejm of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was cancelled after the partitioning of Poland.



for the first time.<sup>8</sup> Kowalewski, like others, was accused of belonging to a secret organisation, but another accusation was that in his apartment 'defamatory poems against the government' were read and copied. The arrested Philarets were placed in several monasteries adapted to serve as prisons. Kowalewski, together with Adam Mickiewicz and a few others, was sent to the Basilian monastery, where they had to spend Christmas.

On his birthday, 9 January 1824, Kowalewski was interrogated one more time. Since the accusation of spreading 'defamatory' poems was not confirmed, only the accusation of belonging to a secret society was valid, which lightened his destiny quite a lot. In April, with the intercession of the new rector, Waclaw Pelikan, Kowalewski and twenty-eight other prisoners were bailed out (Professor Ignacy Żegota Onacewicz went bail for Kowalewski). On 30 April the name of Kowalewski again appears in a university library record of books loaned to him; the bookworm returned to his environment (Frolov 1958, 179). In July he addressed the rector with a request to permit him to go to Lewkowo: apparently, regarding the possibility of a long separation from his relatives, Kowalewski wanted to say goodbye to them (*ibid.*, 151). He probably stayed with them until autumn. Meanwhile in St Petersburg his destiny was decided:

To determine the punishment, a special committee—which consisted of Count Arakcheev, Education Minister Shishkov, and Senator Novosiltsev—was summoned. On 14 August 1824, the sentence they proposed was ratified by Alexander I. The twenty most active Philomates and Philarets were subject to being sent away to various governorates of Russia with the right to enter government service, but without the right (until the special decision of the government) to return to their homeland and to Vilna. Three of them (Zan, Czczot and Suzin) were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in Orenburg Tower and to being settled on the Orenburg steppes.

Six people were sent to Kazan ... three of them, Wiernikowski, Kowalewski and *Kółakowski*, were supposed to occupy themselves with studying Oriental languages at a Kazan University. In his report to Grand Prince Konstantin, Novosiltsev wrote that Kowalewski, *Kółakowski* and Vernikovski (who according to his words were in government tutelage) by themselves 'before the inquest began ... declared their will to study Oriental languages, with an intention to enter government service in the Asian Department of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs'. (Shamov 1983, 29)

Władysław Kotwicz thought (though expressing his opinion very cautiously) that during the inquest Kowalewski really could have stated his desire to go to Russia to study Oriental languages, thus hoping to go to the East, which he was already interested in thanks to Groddeck's influence (Kotwicz 1948, 29). But

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<sup>8</sup> The information is quoted from Frolov 1958 and Shamov 1983, 13. Frolov mentions 6 November 1823 as the date of Kowalewski's arrest, but he also claims that on 12 November Kowalewski was still at liberty, which is why we correct 6 November to 16 November.



Kotwicz himself was also eager to ascribe a more understandable intention to Kowalewski—to get free as soon as possible (*ibid.*). Frolov noted that the idea of studying Orientalism in Russia did not belong to Kowalewski but to his judge, and he only agreed because he did not see any better way out (Frolov 1958, 180). Onacewicz, in his work devoted to the events in Vilna, emphasised that ‘the almighty senator (Novosiltsev—*J.T.*), frightened by rebellions in Italy and Spain, saw the young people of Vilna as enemies of the throne and potential rebels. That is why he aimed at sending all the antiquity researchers of Vilna to the most faraway provinces’ (cit. from Shamov 1983, 15).

The convicted Philarets were to leave by groups, in turn. The group Kowalewski got into was supposed to leave Vilna on 24 October 1824.

The night before leaving, between 23 and 24 of October, he spent together with his friends who were leaving. They chose the apartment of Philaret Tomasz-Edward Massalski as a place of meeting as it was situated close to Ostra Brama,<sup>9</sup> where the courier tilt-carts were leaving from.

The happy idea of handing his album to his friends came to Kowalewski. Mickiewicz got away with a Latin quote, but the other party guests left more extensive records, expressing in them at the same time regret about parting, friendly feelings, and... envy: ‘there you go, Józef, leaving for the mysterious, charming East...’<sup>10</sup>

After several hours, on 24 October 1824, Kowalewski was already on his way, heading for this mysterious East.

On 25 December 1824, a group of the exiled from Vilna arrived in Kazan. In his report, Mikhail Magnitskiy (Михаил Леонтьевич Магницкий), the trustee of the Kazan educational district, called them ‘political criminals’ and demanded strict supervision for them, including controlling their mail and reporting on their conduct weekly. Kowalewski and Vernikovski (Ян Непомуцен Верниковский, 1800–1877) began studying Oriental languages at the university, and Feliks Kółakowski was appointed an official at the chancery of the district ward.

During his first years at the university, Kowalewski fulfilled the duty of a warden free of charge (from 25 September 1825), and from 29 January 1827 he was entrusted the position of the assistant of the inspector of students.

The years 1824–62 in the biography of Kowalewski are related to the most productive period of his pedagogical and scholarly work, the Kazan period. It is

<sup>9</sup> The only remaining gate of old Vilna, with an overbuilt chapel in which a venerated icon of the Holy Mother is kept.

<sup>10</sup> This album had a most interesting destiny. It travelled with Kowalewski everywhere and was filled with new records (including the records of exiled Decembrists). After the death of its owner, it circulated among many people, lost some of its pages and finally vanished, maybe during World War II, maybe even later. See Kotwicz 1948; Frolov 1958; Shamov 1983).

at Kazan University where he reoriented himself from classical philology to the languages, history and cultures of the peoples of the East.

In Kazan period in the life and creative work of Kowalewski, two main spheres in the development of Oriental research can be singled out. The first one is studying Oriental languages at the university and directly studying the history and culture of Asia in a definite geographical territory of the Volga region, Siberia, Buryatia, Mongolia, and China. The second one is examining the written and material legacy of the peoples of Central Asia. These two spheres in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries would become organic and typical of Russian and worldwide Oriental studies.

At the university, Kowalewski's first teachers of Oriental languages were Ibragim Khal'fin (Ибрагим Исхакович Хальфин, 1778–1829), Franz Erdman (Франц (Федор) Иванович Эрдман, 1793–1863), and Aleksandr Kazem-Bek.

In 1825–28 Kowalewski, enrolled as a candidate at the pedagogical institute of Kazan University, studied the Tatar, Arabic and Persian languages. In those years, he continued studying ancient authors—he prepared translation of and commentary to Herodotus's *History* in the Polish language, to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and to others. It is unfortunate that these scholarly works, which were passed to Feliks Kółakowski for publishing, were lost in St Petersburg after the death of Kółakowski. In his first years of life in Kazan, Kowalewski began compiling a Tatar dictionary, gathered materials, and wrote on the history of the Kazan Khanate.

In relation to the preparations to open a chair of Mongolian language arts at the university, the University Council decided to send Kowalewski and Aleksandr Popov (Александр Васильевич Попов, 1808–1880) on a research trip to Irkutsk for 4 years to study the Mongolian language. This decision defined a new boundary in the academic, scholarly and educational work of Kowalewski.

In Kowalewski's notebook, his friend and colleague Kółakowski wrote a few sacred wishes to him:

Go, having confided yourself to God, give some rest to your thoughts, serve the land that became your new homeland, and preserve the friendship that strengthened in the last days. (Frolov 1958)

Setting out for a long journey on 26 May 1828, Kowalewski wrote the following on his way from Kazan to Irkutsk:

I lived in Kazan almost as in my homeland, which is why the thought of parting made me sad and filled my heart with some kind of emptiness. But at the same time, having called to mind the aim and the use of my leaving for faraway lands, I left my place of stay with joy. (IVR RAN FK, p. 60)

During his travel in Irkutsk, Transbaikal, Buryatia, Mongolia and China in 1828–33, Kowalewski studied Mongolian language and literature and the history and culture

of Mongolian-language peoples; copied and translated Mongolian texts; compiled a grammar book and dictionary of the Mongolian language; acquired Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and other manuscripts and xylographs for the university library; gathered Mongolian and Buryat folklore; travelled around Transbaikal; visited Kyakhtha and Buryat nomad camps; and got acquainted with the way of life of the peoples of eastern Asia. In that period he was also occupied by studying the basics of Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and Manchurian. This research trip played the main role in developing Kowalewski's scholarly and educational interest in the language, literature, history, ethnography, religion, and way of life of the Mongolian peoples.

In August 1828, the first teacher of the Mongolian language for the envoys of Kazan University in Irkutsk, Aleksandr Igumnov (Александр Васильевич Игумнов, 1761–1834), wrote the following to the trustee Mikhail N. Musin-Pushkin:

Having started to teach Mongolian writing to my colleagues Mr Kowalewski and Mr Popov for the first time on 24 July and now, having given only fifteen brief lessons, I have the delightful pleasure to already see and hear their surprising successes both in writing and reading Mongolian. Their quick apprehension, inexhaustible edification, and fortunate fondness for this fundamental language flatter my hope that it will not take long until we approach ... translation itself... Our travel to the Transbaikal Mongolian tribes we are postponing until our sufficient acquaintance with the Mongolian language, in order to improve it even more. (NART, fund no 977, inv. Soviet, f. 1266, pp. 25–25 backside)

During his travel, Kowalewski showed huge interest to the nature, history and culture of the peoples of Central Asia, and his travel publications present evidence of his attentiveness, talent of observation, and sensitiveness as a scholar and a person.

In Transbaikal the educational work of Kowalewski in Buryat nomad camps began. Namely, he initiated the founding of a Russian–Mongolian military school in Troitskosavsk (opened in September of 1833). Later, in 1836, mostly thanks to Kowalewski, the first Buryat boys appeared in classrooms of the Kazan First Grammar School. By his recommendation, a new supervisor for Mongolian language practice lessons was appointed in 1842, Datsan Galsan Gomboev, the getzul-lama of Kulun-Nor. The famous Buryat enlighteners and scholars Dorzhi Banzarov, Galsan Gomboev and Aleksey Bobrovnikov (Алексей Александрович Бобровников, 1821/22–1865) were the first pupils of the Mongolian studies school of Professor Kowalewski in Kazan.

In September 1829, by the order of the civil governor of Irkutsk, Kowalewski, with couriers, visited the town of Urga in Mongolia, and beginning 30 August 1830 he spent an entire year in Beijing (returning on 1 September 1831) with the 11<sup>th</sup> Russian Spiritual Mission with the aim of mastering languages and acquiring books and manuscripts for the university library.

It was during this research trip that Kowalewski began studying Buddhism and the history and cultures of the peoples of central and eastern Asia. In one of his messages forwarded to the university in 1832, he wrote:

The eastern part of Asia, a land in which many of its parts are still little-known, has for a long time been the subject of exploration of inquisitive Europeans and the source of absolutely opposite opinions. Despite the efforts of Orientalists, the geography and history, in the broad sense, are still not developed enough to join the so-called universal history, while the historical outlook presents us the pace of humankind, which slowly, but by the same ways, moves in its successes here as it does in other parts of the world. (NART, fund no 977, inv. IFF, f. 198, pp. 2 backside–3)

Before returning to the university, Kowalewski prepared the following study books: *A Brief Grammar of the Mongolian Language*, full (40,000-word) and brief (5,000-word) Mongolian–Russian dictionaries, conversation books of the Mongolian and Buryat languages, etc. and collected original materials devoted to the history of the Mongols and the history of Buddhism in India, China, Tibet and Mongolia.

In March 1833, after returning from his journey, Kowalewski began a more productive stage of academic, scholarly and administrative activity at Kazan University, which was due to the development of the Kazan Oriental studies centre, which also became the first Mongolian studies centre in Russia and Europe.

In June 1833 Kowalewski and Popov were examined by academician Isaak Jakob Schmidt (Яков Иванович Шмидт, 1779–1847) and in July 1833 were appointed adjuncts of Mongolian language at Kazan University.<sup>11</sup> On 25 July 1833, for the first time in Russia and Europe, a chair of Mongolian language, headed by Kowalewski, was established at Kazan University. Professors Kowalewski and Popov became the founders of academic Mongolian, Buryat and Kalmyk studies in Russia. On 11 September 1833 adjunct Kowalewski began educating the first students wanting to study Mongolian language at the university. The Mongolian language course was also inducted at the Kazan First Grammar School, where Popov taught.<sup>12</sup>

The Kazan period of the life and work of Kowalewski, the famous researcher of Mongolia and Buddhism, reflects the important pedagogical, academic and humanistic processes in Russian and European Oriental studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Objectivity, academic style, and humanism are the distinctive features of his legacy.

Kowalewski played an exceptional part in teaching the Mongolian language at the university and grammar school, acquiring manuscripts and writings for the library, and preparing and issuing study books. In Kazan he wrote works devoted to the languages, way of life, customs, history, ethnography, and religion of the Mongolian-

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<sup>11</sup> NART, fund no 92, inv. 1, f. 3829, pp. 7–8.

<sup>12</sup> RGIA, fund no 733, inv. 40, f. 318; NART, fund no 92, inv. 1, f. 3829.

speaking peoples of Russia and other parts of Asia. His works were notable for paying much due to the historic and cultural legacy of the peoples of Eastern Asia and for sincere sympathy for the Mongols, Buryats and Chinese. In September 1832, taishas of the Buryat-Mongols wrote to Kowalewski: 'Indeed there is no one [like you] among our nomad camps who has a similar beneficial mind and excellent inward peace' (Shastina 1965, 220).

Professor Kowalewski is the author of the famous fundamental works and study books on Mongolian studies, Buddhism, and Tibetan studies. *A Brief Grammar of the Literary Mongolian Language* (1835), *Mongolian Anthology* (vol. 1—1835, vol. 2—1837), *Buddhist Cosmology* (1837), *Mongolian–Russian–French Dictionary* (vol. 1—1844, vol. 2—1846, vol. 3—1849), the manuscript *History of the Mongols*, and other works penned by Kowalewski have become part of the golden fund of worldwide and Russian Mongolian and Buddhism studies.

The famous researcher of Mongolia and academician Schmidt wrote about the *Mongolian–Russian–French Dictionary* of the Kazan professor in 1841 in his message to the conference of the Academy of Science:

Mr Kowalewski, by publishing his dictionary, gains solid benefit in terms of further spreading written Mongolian academically, and also he gains the appreciation not only of those who have an interest in this sphere of Oriental language studies, but also of our nation, which gets honour and constant benefit from such research. (NART, fund no 92, inv. 1, f. 5210, p. 7 backside)

Books, xylographs and manuscripts of the peoples of Eastern Asia collected during Kowalewski and Popov's travel became an important resource for Russian Oriental studies at Kazan and St Petersburg universities. The famous *Catalogue of Sanskrit, Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese manuscripts in the library of Kazan Imperial University* (1834) has entered the annals of worldwide Oriental studies. For the first time in Russian academic Oriental studies of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tibetan–Mongolian dictionaries, a Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary of Buddhist terms, Manchurian–Mongolian–Tibetan–Chinese dictionaries, examples of Manchu literature (translations of various classical Chinese books, works of Catholic missionaries, etc.), and various Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese books were systemically collected together (Yakhontov 1986; Uspensky 1999).

In 1835 the university acquired Kowalewski's collection, which consisted of 1,272 items. This collection included Chinese, Manchurian, and Mongolian writings and a unique ethnographical collection (costumes of lamas, Buddhist idols, coins, pictures, etc.).<sup>13</sup>

For his pedagogical and scholarly merits, Kowalewski was appointed professor extraordinary on 7 August 1835 and professor ordinary of Mongolian language at the University on 1 August 1837.

<sup>13</sup> NART, fund no 92, inv. 1, f. 4251, pp. 6–17.

On 7 August 1835, he began teaching Latin at the university, and in 1838–39 he lectured on universal history.

On 29 December 1837, Kowalewski was elected a corresponding member of the St Petersburg Imperial Academy of Science. In 1847 he was elected an actual member of the academy, but his appointment was not confirmed by Tsar Nicholas (Николай) I. On 1 May 1839, he was appointed honorary member of the Royal Asian Society in Paris, and on 27 April 1844 he became an actual member of the Royal Danish Society of Northern Antiquarians. He was also an actual member of the Imperial Society of History and Russian Antiquities at Moscow University (beginning 15 July 1840) and Vilna Archaeographical Commission (beginning 29 March 1858).

Kowalewski played a huge part in the emergence of several Russian researchers of Mongolia and the East: Gaslan Nikituev (Галсан Никитуев, c. 1808–?), Dorzhi Banzarov, Konstantin Golstunski, Vasilii Vasil'ev, Aleksey Bobrovnikov, and others.

Vasil'ev, an outstanding researcher of China, wrote the following in his autobiography:

I owe my development, my original views in science and state administration to the Polish Professor Osip Mikhailovich Kowalewski! His words were not to bow before authorities in the search of the truth, criticize *sine ira et studio* the accomplished or narrated facts, without assuming any question as solved forever. These words left a deep impact on my soul. (Vengerov 1895, 154)

The contents of the personal library and manuscripts of Kowalewski, though not fully preserved, are in archives and libraries in Kazan, Moscow, St Petersburg, Vilnius, Irkutsk, and Warsaw (see Liubimov 1908, Petrov 1936; Rumyantsev 1947; Chimitdorzhiev 1990; Chuguevskiy 1990; NMK 2002; Valeev, Yermakova, Kulganek, et al. 2004, 288; Valeev, Kulganek 2006, 104). His pedagogical, scholarly and epistolary legacy presents a huge amount of interest for the history of Oriental studies in Russia and Europe, as well as for linguists, historians, ethnographers, and researchers of art and religion.

This expansive literary and scholarly legacy had a tragic destiny. Most of the contents of his archives and library were destroyed in Warsaw in 1863. Among the fundamental works which have been lost, the following can be singled out: *The History of the East*, *The History of Mongolian Literature*, *Travel to Mongolia and China*, *The Biography of Zonkawa—a Reformer of Buddhism in Tibet*, *A Comparative Mongolian–Turkish–Finnish Grammar*, and others. The pedagogical and scholarly legacy of the professor led to Mongolian studies becoming the leading branch of Russian Oriental studies in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Kowalewski's correspondence with Polish and Buryat friends and colleagues and with famous Russian and foreign Orientalists shows his huge role and invaluable significance in the history, research and culture of the peoples of Belarus, Lithuania,

Russia, Buryatia and Poland. He was acquainted with Decembrists (Gavriil S. Batenkov, Sergey M. Volkonskiy, Vasiliy L. Davydov, Evgeniy P. Obolenski, Sergey P. Trubetskiy, and others) and corresponded with Yan Czczot, Adam Mickiewicz, Christian Fren, Boris Dorn (Борис Андреевич Дорн), Anton A. Shifner, Vasiliy Grigor'ev (Василий Васильевич Григорьев), Nikita Vichurin (Никита Яковлевич Бичурин), Isaak Jakob Schmidt, Eugene Burnouf, Stanislas Aignan Julien, Philippe-Édouard Foucaux, and others (see Shastina 1956; Shastina 1965; 210–21; Shamov 1983).

In 1902 Yulian Talko-Gryntsevich, based on published Russian and Polish materials, wrote in his biographical essay:

Kowalewski left an indelible trace on the history of the studies of the East, and as for his scholarly works on the Mongolian language, to date he has no equal in that field, and if the Mongolian nation is destined to be reborn some day by waking up from its long sleep, then the name of our famous Orientalist will be written into its modern history. (Talko-Gryntsevich 1902, 13)

Kowalewski's Kazan academic school of Mongolian studies has received high appraisal in modern Russian historiography:

The relatively short Kazan stage in the development of academic Mongolian studies in Russia happened to be very important for the further destiny of this field of Orientalism. During the existence of the Mongolian Chair at Kazan University, the main directions in studying the history, culture, and literature of the Mongolian peoples were defined. (Baziyants, et al. 1990, 283–4.)

The works of the Chair of Mongolian Language Arts of Kazan University and the legacy of the Mongolian researcher Kowalewski signified the beginning of a new stage of development of Mongolian research in academic centres of Russia and Europe, on an equal footing with practical and academic Mongolian studies that had been formed in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kowalewski became the founder of academic Mongolian studies in Russia and Europe.

Professor Ordinary and Councillor of State Kowalewski, before being appointed rector of the university (3 May 1855), was actively involved in administrative work, occupying the positions of dean of the First Department of the Faculty of Philosophy (from 28 June 1837 to 1841 and from 23 April 1845 to 17 November 1845—*ad interim* because of Franz Erdman's retirement), dean of the Faculty of History and Philology (on 3 December he began occupying the position *ad interim* because of Karl K. Foiht's appointment as rector of Kharkiv University; he was confirmed dean on 18 December 1853 and occupied this position till 1855), director of the Kazan Second Grammar School and Colleges of the Kazan Governorate (beginning 27 April 1844), member of the Construction Committee (beginning 6 August 1844), chairman



of the committee for examining candidates for teaching, secretary (from 15 March 1834 to 1854), member of the publishing committee of academic records, head of the room of rarities, etc.<sup>14</sup>

In 1854–55, while interim rector, Kowalewski, with a feeling of great loss and bitterness, was solving the questions of the cessation of the teaching of Oriental languages and transferral of the Division of Oriental Language Arts of the university to St Petersburg University.

An important place in the history of the university is occupied by Rector Kowalewski. On 3 January 1855, he was entrusted to execute the functions of the rector of the university because of Ivan M. Simonov's illness (before that, from 12 August to 27 November 1854, Kowalewski had already occupied the position of interim rector), and on 3 May 1855 his appointment to this position was confirmed.<sup>15</sup> According to the regulation of the Ministry of People's Education from 2 May 1857, he was left in the position of rector of the university for 5 more years. According to the message of the Minister of People's Education from 9 February 1860, Kowalewski was, by supreme order, discharged from the position of rector because of student unrest at Kazan University.<sup>16</sup>

The middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is related to the active discussion of the questions of the reform of Russian universities and radical changes in social and political life in Russia. The role of universities and their status in society and in the state, various problems of the academic and scholarly work of teachers, and vital issues of university education and training were reflected in the history of the university and in the destinies of men of science and culture of the Russian Empire.

The new happenings in university life were spotted by Dmitriy Korsakov (Дмитрий Александрович Корсаков, 1843–1919), a graduate and professor (since 1881) of Kazan University, historian, and corresponding member (since 1905) of the St Petersburg Academy of Science. In the analects of the *Волжский вестник* (Volga Messenger) in 1898, he wrote:

The destruction of cumbersome rules which were introduced in universities after European events of 1848, beginning with the cancellation of student 'states' and with the revival of most chairs, was a threshold of more weakening of former academic orders by measures beginning in 1856 and quickly following each other ... The young students of the university, who were obsessed by a passion for everything new and free (which is quite typical of young people), quite naturally surrendered first to the intellectual excitement of that period and began impetuously finding its intellectual and moral energy. (Korsakov 1904, 136–7)

<sup>14</sup> NART, fund no 977, inv. Soviet, f. 3760, pp. 176–8.

<sup>15</sup> 'Formulary register on the service of the rector of Kazan Imperial University, Actual Councilor of State Kowalewski. Compiled on 30 September 1859' (NART, fund no 977, inv. Soviet, f. 4260, pp. 59–90; *ibid.*, f. 3760, pp. 1, 176).

<sup>16</sup> NART, fund no 977, inv. Soviet, f. 4269, p. 75.

The epoch of social awakening and the new liberal ideas was demonstrated by the public speeches of the professors of the university: Ivan Babst's (Иван Кондратьевич Бабст) 'On several conditions causing an increase in the national capital' (1856), Modest Kittary's (Модест Яковлевич Киттары) 'The outline of the present state and needs of the Russian manufacture industry' (1857), Yu. Mikshevich's (Ю.А. Микшевич) 'The sale of state property as a means of satisfying the present financial demands of Russia' (1859), and other publications and events.

This interesting and complicated period in the further organisational, educational, and academic development of the university headed by Rector Kowalewski was related to the progressive socio-political and ideological events in the Russian state and society. While he was rector, Kowalewski managed to continue the best traditions established by former rectors of the university: Nikolay Lobachevskiy (Николай Иванович Лобачевский) and Ivan Simonov.

In those years the life of university society was characterised by the following new tendencies and events: the Division of Oriental Language Arts was closed and most of the prominent scholars and professors moved to other Russian universities; changes in students' social-class structure took place (63–70 per cent did not belong to the privileged classes); student circles and organisations were established; various materialistic scientific conceptions and doctrines and revolutionary-democratic and socialistic utopian ideas became popular with professors and students; by the demand of Kazan students, reactionary and weak teachers and professors were getting expelled (Wilhelm Bervi [Вильгельм (Василий) Федорович Берви], Vladimir Vedrov [Владимир Максимович Ведров], Raimond Sharbe [Шарбе Раймунд Августович], Jakob-Theodor Struve [Федор Аристович Струве]); the struggle for self-government and student rights expanded; student meetings occurred; student demonstrations for modern science and teaching increased; etc.

All these events at the university were reflected in the official work of Rector Kowalewski and in his desire to support new academic spheres and the leading professors, as well as the fair demands of the university students.

On 29 April 1878, after having moved to Warsaw, Kowalewski was made an honorary member of Kazan University. Regarding this significant event, Professor Nikolay Bulich (Николай Никитич Булич) noted:

Osip Mikhailovich served Kazan University for so long and in such various ways—as a professor, an editor of academic journals, a dean, and a rector—and his life was tightly and indissolubly connected with the organism of the university, where traces of his service are still alive, that his election as an honorary member of our University ... is not actually recognition of the academic merits of Kowalewski, which were recognised long ago by everybody, but only a reminder of his superbly glorious and useful work. (NART, file no 6486, p. 2 backside)

In scholarly literature, the Warsaw period of Kowalewski's life is usually criticised. There is a common opinion that Kowalewski did not do any Mongolian research, he was not distinguished as a university teacher, and in addition to that, betrayed the ideals of his youth at that period. Some authors try to say something in his defence as well, but as a rule they do it without being completely sure of that (Kotwicz 1948; Kałużyński 1968; Shamov 1983).

It seems to us that in terms of the complexity of Kowalewski's situation in Warsaw, the evaluation of his work there cannot be that negative. For 16 years he scrupulously worked as a university teacher. Of course it is a pity that during his stay in Warsaw he did not find enough will to return to active scholarly and social work.

Let us instead try to see in him a man who lived in a certain place and time and who had his own personal interests, family and friends. Let us try to define his Warsaw addresses, routes, and plans.

In the late 1850s and early 1860s, a revolutionary situation came about in Russia, and it was a result of the crisis in the feudal-serf system. In the Polish Kingdom, it coincided with the rise of a national liberation movement. To partially remove the growing tension, it was decided to create the so-called Main School (Szkola Główna) in Warsaw, taking the place of Warsaw University, which was liquidated in 1831.

The teachers at the school were supposed not only to be famous in the academic world, but also to have the complete trust of the authorities. There were few people like that in Poland. And then someone<sup>17</sup> remembered Kowalewski, at that time living in Kazan. His candidature satisfied all the requirements better than anyone else's: as rector of Kazan University he showed a well-appraised loyalty to authorities, he was a world-famous scholar, and in Poland, he was honoured as a former Philaret and a friend of Mickiewicz. In the light of the undeniable merits of Professor Kowalewski, it seemed insignificant that he was an Orientalist. As is known, the school did not have Oriental studies as a part of its plans. It was believed that with his expansive education he could successfully teach history.

It seems that the offer to accept the position of a teacher in Warsaw at first confused Kowalewski. He had already firmly decided to leave Kazan, but he was thinking of moving to Vilna. There he would have felt at home, there he had acquaintances, and Warsaw must have seemed a strange city, boiling with dangerous passions. Kowalewski was perfectly aware of the things that went on at that time: in his records we can find texts of patriotic songs which were sung in Catholic churches in Warsaw and the text of the Regulation of 5 August 1861, which prohibited singing these songs (VUB F11-11, 2: 7). We can also find, as a threatening reminder, the words of Tsar

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<sup>17</sup> According to Bartoszewicz 1923, it was E. Krzywicki (Крживицкий), the head of the Government Committee for Confessions and People's Education.

Nikolas (Николай) II, pronounced by him in 1836 in Warsaw: ‘J’ai fait élever ici une citadelle, et je vous déclare qu’à la moindre émeute je ferai foudroyer la ville, je détruirai Varsovie, et certes, ce n’est pas moi qui la rebâtirai’.<sup>18</sup>

In 1862 Kowalewski left for Warsaw.<sup>19</sup> The details of this journey are not known. Kowalewski was possibly accompanied by his wife and younger children, as well as an impressively large amount of luggage: he took with him his entire rich library. We should think that in Warsaw he was received by a relative of his, who had probably already secured an apartment worthy of a professor. If this is true, Kowalewski immediately settled at the place of his first known Warsaw address, in Nowy Świat Street, at the house of Andrzej Zamoyski, comfortably situated close to the Main School.<sup>20</sup>

On 31 September 1862, the Government Commission of Confessions and People’s Education appointed Kowalewski professor ordinary of the Main School and simultaneously the dean of its Faculty of History and Philology (Kotwicz 1948, 123). On 1 November he took an oath in front of the government commission and by the end of the month he was able to deliver his first lecture.<sup>21</sup> He was supposed to teach the History of the Ancient East and Greece. The amount of interest the newly opened school in Warsaw was huge,<sup>22</sup> its teachers were considered stars, and Kowalewski occupied a significant place among them. It was the printed press that mostly contributed to his popularity. After several months, Kowalewski wrote to one of his friends: ‘I need to think over the plot, and to express it on paper so as not to deceive the listeners and at the same time not to harm my exaggerated reputation. The newspapers just keep on trumpeting it through...’ (Kotwicz 1948, 124).

The negative evaluations of his work in Warsaw are usually due to the following reasons. Kowalewski came to Warsaw already a very old man, tired of work and incapable of productive research work. It is said that when he was suddenly called to the chair, he could not find enough energy in himself to delve into the subject

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<sup>18</sup> ‘I ordered you to build a citadel here, and I declare to you that in case of the slightest disturbance I shall strike the city with thunder, I shall destroy Warsaw and, certainly, it is not me who will rebuild it’ (VUB F11–11, 4: p. 502).

<sup>19</sup> Maybe Karol Kowalewski, an owner of a printing house in Warsaw doing freelance work for the Main School (Szkoła Główna), influenced his decision in some way. The surname of both of them was the same, so they might have been relatives. It is even more likely, if one takes into consideration the fact that the last years of his life Kowalewski spent in the same house, where the just mentioned printing house was.

<sup>20</sup> The building has been preserved.

<sup>21</sup> It was impossible to define the exact date. Lessons at the school began in the second half of this month.

<sup>22</sup> In December 1862, the Warsaw press announced: ‘It was anticipated that lots of young men would apply to the courses, but the number of persons with a passion for research exceeded all expectations ... Besides those who had entered as pupils, you could notice many free listeners at each lecture ... in society, in conversation, at home, in the street, almost everywhere ... the Main School is the most interesting topic’ (*Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 6, 167 [6 December 1862]).

he had to teach. This is why he narrated historic events in a most superficial way, without referring to any written sources and without sending students off to them. It is also claimed that his declining age also influenced his noticeable passion for various details and anecdotes which he always used to fill his lectures with. 'But', the same critic notes, 'when he switched to an anecdote, his quiet, monotonous voice would become enlivened' (Kotwicz 1948, 124–8).

These evaluations, published in 1900, contradict the memories of journalist Waław Szymanowski, who in 1864 described Kowalewski as a man 'still full of energy and intellectual ability, full of desire to share his knowledge with others, and always ready to resist the blows of destiny, compensating for his losses' (Szymanowski 1864, 465).

Unkind voices that reproach Kowalewski for lack of energy most likely belong to a later period, when he became older and less ambitious and when, because of being busy with administrative duties, he was not able to follow the development of scholarly research. We can also suppose that the level of his lectures was also influenced by the feeling of a growing distance between him and the younger generation. The views which he expressed in his lectures could be characterised by 'liberalism caused by an eclectic mixture of philosophical and Christian ideas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as well as cosmopolitanism related to this liberalism and embracing the whole historical narration by indifferent coldness' (Kotwicz 1948, 127). At that time in Poland—especially on the eve of 1863—there was hardly anyone who needed such a philosophy.

In early 1863, a rebellion that was later dubbed the January rebellion burst out. The authorities replied with repression, which particularly intensified when its leadership was entrusted to two notorious persons in Poland: Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland Friedrich Wilhelm Rembert von Berg (Фёдор Фёдорович фон Берг) and Governor-General of the Vilna province Mikhail Murav'ov (Михаил Николаевич Муравьёв), 'the Hangman'. On 19 September 1864, there was an attempt against Berg's life in Warsaw. From Andrzej Zamoyski's house several shots were fired at him and a bomb was thrown. The viceroy survived and the attempted assassins escaped. People who were in Zamoyski's house were arrested and the building itself was ransacked by troops. This incident was described in detail by the foreign press.

Judging by the fact that Kowalewski was not arrested, he was not at home at the time of the attempt, but the troubles did not bypass him: when he came back, he found his personal belongings thrown out into the street and piled up together with the other things. In the evening, they were set on fire, and the flames illuminated the entire street. Alarmed, Kowalewski hurried to the viceroy and insisted on stopping the robbery, but it was too late; most of the things had already been burnt (Kotwicz 1948, 128). This was the loss that Szymanowski only hinted at because of censorship. Now it is difficult to define its extent. It is known for certain that among the lost items

were eleven out of fourteen volumes of the diary which Kowalewski kept during his travel around the East, the material that he had collected about the history of Catholic missions in China, most of his correspondence, lectures on the history of the Ancient East, and translations of Oriental books on the history of Buddhism and the ancestry of Genghis Khan (Kotwicz 1948, 129; Szymanowski 1864, 483–4). The loss of the diary, which Kowalewski was just going to publish in Józef Zawadzki's publishing house in Vilna, was especially painful.

In spite of the repression, the rebellion continued; in some places military operations lasted until 1865. As a rule, they were quite occasional: the main rebel forces were constituted by partisans ensconced in the forests. In Warsaw the struggle was held between two forces—the rebel gendarmes wielding daggers ('the daggermen') and women ostentatiously wearing funeral dresses, which were prohibited by the police. But on the whole the city was quiet, and the Main School was functioning. The authorities owed this latter fact to the loyalty of its administration, including Kowalewski.

For being faithful to the Crown, Kowalewski received worthy rewards: a bronze medal 'In memory of the pacification of the Polish rebellion', a medal of St Stanislaus of the first rank, and his Philaret past was forgotten and blotted out from his official biography (Kotwicz 1948, 129, 133). From that time Kowalewski began to enjoy the full confidence of the authorities and feel the disfavour of some in Polish society. As we know, he would be accused of full surrender to the Russian occupants, almost of treason. But it is more likely that Kowalewski did not blur his reputation by any serious misdemeanour, since he first of all survived and did not fall from the hands of the 'daggermen', and second remained well thought of by his old friends. In the same year, 1865, in which he was awarded the medal 'In memory of the pacification', he was visited by Antoni Edward Odyniec (Антоний Эдвард Одынец), one of those who left touching messages in his album on the night of 23/24 October 1824. Now Odyniec wrote the following in the same album: 'I kept my word which I gave to you, my dear Józef! After 40 years, I love you as sincerely and cordially as before' (Frolov 1958, 181).

But such meetings were rare. More often Kowalewski had to encounter malevolence and during the lectures, probably, small provocative acts every time he mentioned the Greeks' struggle with oppression. Perhaps it is due to this reason that in the academic year of 1864–65, instead of lectures on Ancient East and Greece, he began lecturing on the history of China, India and Persia, which was not easy for him because of the absence of his orientalist materials burnt during the fire. This is why we should not be surprised that the lectures delivered by him that year were severely criticised.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A former student of the school writes: 'Despite Chinese literature being a special subject of his research at some moment and despite being surrounded by legends during his stay in Beijing, in

With the beginning of the 1865–66 academic year, the life of Kowalewski entered a new, more tranquil period. First of all, he left his apartment in Zamoyski's house and moved to a new one in the house of a certain Mrs Lazzarini. Karol Kowalewski's printing works was also situated in the same house.<sup>24</sup>

At the school he now delivered four lectures a week for students in the first, second, third and fourth grades. He taught the history of the Ancient East and Greece to students in the first and second grades, and the history of modern times to the rest. We do not possess any information about what his lectures on the Ancient East were like. As for Ancient Greece, we know that the lecturer considered its civilisation a link between the civilisations of the East and the West, that he emphasised the role of the Phoenicians in its establishment, and that he began the factual narration of Greek history from the Trojan War. It is known that he usually presented history quite superficially, but as his former listeners admitted, he made an exception for the history of Greece, sometimes mentioning even the results of the most recent research, including linguistic research. He divided universal history 'into two epochs: pre-Christian and Christian. In the Christian epoch, religion becomes the primary political factor that unifies mankind into three parts: Western Christians, Eastern Christians, and Muslims. Giving very superficial characteristics to the Middle Ages, at the second lecture the professor moved on to the discoveries and inventions which changed the conditions of political and spiritual life of the medieval states. He divided modern history into two epochs: from the Reformation to the French Revolution and from that revolution to the present day. He divided each of these epochs into two more periods, taking the Westphalia Treaty and Vienna Congress as the boundary points' (Kotwicz 1948, 125–7).

Called up from Kazan to teach at the Main School and appointed by the authorities as the head of one of its faculties, by the order of the same authorities Kowalewski became its destructor. In 1864 he was invited to join a committee to transform the school to a typical Russian college with the rights of a university (*ibid.*, 130). This was one of the measures taken after the January rebellion to destroy all significant traces of the former Kingdom of Poland. The work of the committee lingered until 1869. In February 1869, Kowalewski still represented the school at the jubilee of St Petersburg University (*ibid.*, 129), but as early as June of the same year there was an edict to close the school and establish the Imperial University of Warsaw instead of it.

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[his] academic course you could only occasionally find weak reminiscences of independent studies of this subject' (Kotwicz 1948, 125). We should, however, note that later the author makes various mismatches that make us doubt the accuracy of his memories.

<sup>24</sup> Kowalewski's addresses are given in the lists of reports published by the Main School. Beginning in 1865, his address—Królewska Street 1066—coincides with the address of Karol Kowalewski's printing works, where the lists were printed. The building has not been preserved.



Teachers of the former Main School who wanted to find employment at the university, but did not have a doctorate were permitted on the condition that they receive this degree in a certain period of time. Kowalewski only had the degree of candidate once conferred on him by Vilna University.

To get out of the awkward situation, curator S. Vitte made a request to St Petersburg to give Kowalewski the title of full professor of the university as an exception, without following the commonly accepted rules. For this the permission of the Tsar was required, and it followed 4 October 1869 (*ibid.*, 132).

In the mornings he went to the university and visited the library, where he made the necessary inquiries or just browsed through the printed press, and then he proceeded to his classes. Kowalewski delivered lectures on universal history, as it seems, according to the same scheme which had already been worked out at the Main School. He sometimes also conducted special courses; for example in 1870–71 he delivered presentations on the history of Greece. Just as before, he had a lot of administrative work. From 1869 to 1878, he was regularly elected dean of the Faculty of History and Philology and at the same time a university judge; he was also constantly a deputy of the rector and a member of the Council of the Curator of the Warsaw Educational District (*ibid.*, 132–3). He did not do any Oriental research. In 1876 he accepted an invitation to the Third International Congress of Orientalists in St Petersburg, but he did not go there (*ibid.*, 133).

His elder son Nikolay lived in Kazan, where he successfully studied biology, whereas his younger son Pavel studied pictorial art in European capitals and in 1876 was sent to the Russo–Turkish War to capture the military action on canvas (WEPI 1907, 375–6). Only once did we encounter mention of the professor's wife Anna and his daughter Maria: in 1869 Vasiliy Grigor'ev met them at a resort nearby Riga and mentioned that later in a letter to Kowalewski (Kotwicz 1948, 121). His brothers Julian and Teodozy, who both lived nearby Warsaw, had died by the 1870s. Kowalewski also had other, more distant relatives and some acquaintances, but their circle is yet to be defined. However, due to natural reasons this circle was of course growing narrower. That is why Kowalewski was probably pleased to meet some interest from the new generation in the person of the historian of literature Stanisław Tarnowski. He, having examined with piety the fabulous album of Kowalewski with poems of Mickiewicz and other Philarets in it, left the following record on the last page:

Half a century since Vilna times, a narrator unworthy of them, but an enthusiast for times and people, a witness and a son of worse times, happy about being able to shake hands and receive the blessing of the last witnesses of this past, with a request about memory and blessing for my teacher's and citizen's work, I am the last to leave a record in this diary. Stanisław Tarnowski, Warsaw. 21 March 1877. (Frolov 1958, 181)

Since the moment of the foundation of the university, he had received the medals of St. Anne of the first rank (1870) and of St. Vladimir of the second rank (1877), as well as the high title of privy councillor (1872) (Kotwicz 1948, 133). Besides that, in 1878 Warsaw University celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his scholarly work, counting—arbitrarily—the moment of its beginning the year of his departure to China (1828). By petition of the curator, the ministry permitted a special meeting of the University Council to be called on 25 May (6 June) to congratulate the hero of the day. As the *Warsaw Governorate News* (Варшавские губернские ведомости) announced, this celebration was ‘opened with the speech of University Rector Nikolay Blagoveshchenskiy (Николай Михайлович Благовещенский), who greeted the hero in the name of the university. Then Prof Pawiński (Адольф Иванович Павинский) read aloud the outline of Kowalewski’s biography and work, and Prof Struve greeted the veteran in his speech in the name of the Faculty of History and Philology. Finally, the rector read aloud a congratulatory telegram from the Minister of People’s Education, and the act finished with awarding the hero a diploma with the title of Honorary Member of Kazan University, by which Prof Kowalewski was honoured on the day of his jubilee’ (*Warsaw Governorate News*, 28 May (9 June), 1878, no 22).

In his biography of Kowalewski, Kotwicz notes: ‘Polish society did not react to this jubilee in any way’ (Kotwicz 1948, 135). But this is not exactly so. Of course, there were no meetings and no night parades with torches, but the Polish press again started to trumpet about Kowalewski as it did in the years when Kowalewski’s arrival was a sensation. The most detailed and interesting article was published by the already familiar magazine *Kłosa*. Rendering the details of the celebration which took place at the university, the author of the article, who went by F.H.L., reported that in fact the professor had been worthy of being called the Nestor of Polish literature for a long time, since his first printed work was published in the Polish language as early as 1822. Then followed a detailed narration of Kowalewski’s scholarly career, with particular emphasis on his Polish publications (*Kłosa*, 15/27 June, 1878: 404–5).

In old age, Kowalewski was in surprisingly good health, but more often he felt disadvantages of his age, and any unforeseen incident could become fatal. So, on 3 October 1878 Kowalewski was not elected dean for the first time, Professor Antoni Mierzyński having been preferred instead (Kotwicz 1948, 133).

Kowalewski continued to go to the university to work. On 23 October he chaired a faculty meeting.<sup>25</sup>

The life of Professor Kowalewski was interrupted on 7 November at the university library, where he had come to sit a while before lessons, as was his habit.

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<sup>25</sup> PAAD IFU f. 350.

The death of the scholar (whose jubilee was still in everybody's memory), which was particular for having struck him right at the university, became the news of the day for the printed press. The newspapers wrote that he died at noon, a couple of minutes before the lecture, and that his death was instant. *Warsaw Governorate News* even mentioned such a detail as the fact that before his death he was reading the newspaper *Русский мир* (Russian World) (*Warsaw Governorate News*, 29 October/10 November 1878, no 44).

Kowalewski was buried on 31 October/12 November at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw (*Kurjer Warszawski*, 31 November/12 December 1878, no 254).

At his tomb, a stone monument on which a Polish inscription can be seen was erected:

Tu spoczywa  
ś. p. Józef  
KOWALEWSKI,  
radca tajny i b. dziekan  
i profesor Cesarskiego  
Warszawskiego Uniwersytetu,  
znakomity orientalista,  
ur. 9 stycznia 1801 m.  
zm. 7 listopada 1878 m.

Herein lies  
late Józef  
KOWALEWSKI,  
privy councillor and former dean  
and professor of Imperial  
Warsaw University,  
famous Orientalist,  
born on 9 January 1801  
died on 7 November 1878

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