



THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#8)

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. This theory can be explained in a very easy way: “The child who tries to open a door has to manipulate the handle (the input) so as to produce the desired movement at the latch (the output); and he has to learn how to control the one by the other without being able to see the internal mechanism that links them. In our daily lives we are confronted at every turn with systems whose internal mechanisms are not fully open to inspection, and which must be treated by the

methods appropriate to the Black Box.” (Ashby, W. Ross, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, 86).

Many of us probably don't know that in our Archives here in Rome we have more than 200 black boxes. Some of those treasures have seen the light of day in many publications, but there are still others waiting to be seen...

(Could I have a beer? #8)

Everyone recognizes the taste of beer. Many enjoy it. It has many formulas and unlimited names, but everyone has one that is their preference. Beer is one of the oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic drinks in the world.

Bogdan Janski kept detailed records in his Diary of his daily activities. We can learn from his notes not only about his spiritual joys and struggles but also about people with whom he met, the places he visited and meals he had. It is also there that we can read what he liked to drink. Namely, he drank coffee or tea usually for breakfast or in the afternoon (sometimes tea with rum in the afternoon), wine with his meals, and on occasion rum and... when it came to beer, he enjoyed that in the late evening (usually around 9 or 10 pm). Bogdan had his favourite place where he went for beer (“passage du Commerce”), but sometimes he had his beer right at home. It is difficult to say which beer he preferred. Only once did he mention that he had a beer with lemon. I guess he usually enjoyed a “regular” beer.

So today I would like to show you just one page from Janski's Diary (ACRR 8527). Bogdan writes how he finished his day (17 and 18 of July 1832). It's not only there that he writes about finishing his daily activity in a such a way. So I guess that it could be said that it was his kind of “before-bed routine” Enjoy your beer!

“For beer, and to bed” (ACCR 8527; 17 July 1832)

“For beer, and then to bed” (ACCR 8527, 18 July 1832)

