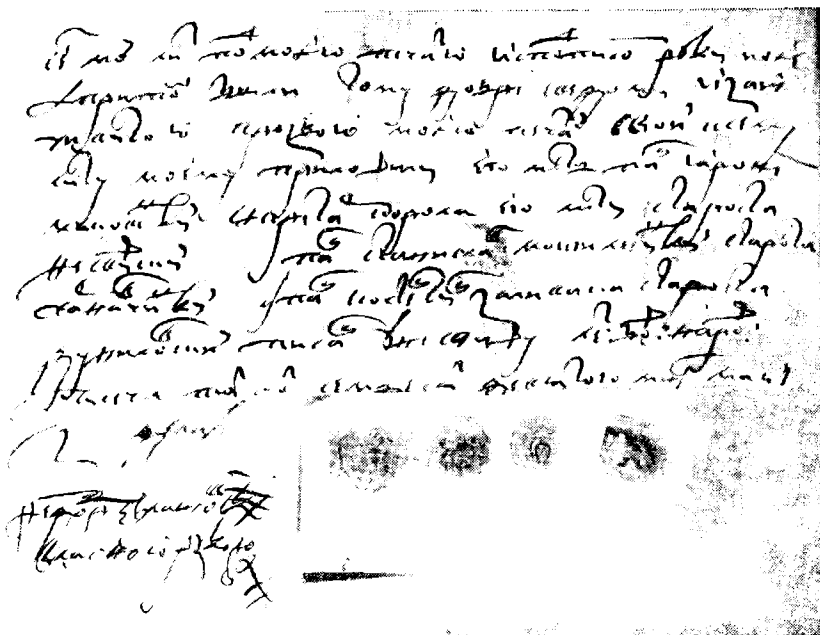


Theodore Jeŭłašeŭski and his M e m o i r s

BY

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The *Memoirs* of Theodore Jeŭłašeŭski, Junior Judge (Assessor) of Navahrudak, covering the years 1564-1604, received some well-deserved attention in *The Journal of Byelorussian Studies* a few years ago.¹ Alexander Nadson's excellent work has provided valuable material for both the general English-language public as well as for the specialist in the field of Byelorussian and Lithuanian studies. The second achievement is due to the fact that Fr. Nadson's publication made available once again the best edition of Jeŭłašeŭski's *Memoirs*, done some eighty years earlier by V. Antonovič.² This edition will have to continue as a substitute till such time as a new edition is made from the original manuscript, which was recently located in Warsaw. The manuscript is now stored in Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych in the collection of Archiwum Potockich z Radzyna.³ This document, together with several others from the Nieśwież (Niaśviž) Archive of the Princes Radziwiłł, now also a part of Archiwum Główne, contributes some new details to the biography of Jeŭłašeŭski.

The surviving original manuscript of the *Memoirs* is incomplete. Even in the published texts the main gaps are quite evident.⁴ No events between February 1593 and February 1602 are recorded. It seems curious that the author, who in his *Memoirs* does not omit the events of a single year during his adult years, should decide to omit the events of six entire years. These events would have occupied separate pages in the 19th century binding of the manuscript.⁵ Furthermore, it is possible that Jeŭłašeŭski continued his reminiscences after 2 January 1604, the last date mentioned in the text, if only for the fact that he lived at least some twelve years longer.

Theodore Jeŭłašeŭski, Junior Judge of Navahrudak, was still alive in March 1616. His name and signature appear on several documents connected with the formal division of the estate of Nicholas Christopher 'the Orphan' Radziwiłł who died in February 1616.⁶ In these documents, Jeŭłašeŭski appears next to his son Jerome, the Judge of Navahrudak. It is very unlikely that Theodore Jeŭłašeŭski of the 1616 documents is merely one of the nine sons of the previously deceased memoirist.⁷ Paleographic evidence speaks against this possibility.⁸

Other documents from the Nieśwież Archive contribute further details about the Junior Judge. Jeŭłašeŭski was closely connected with the person of Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł. Excellent relations between the Catholic magnate and the Calvinist lawyer are quite characteristic of the general atmosphere of religious tolerance prevalent in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of the sixteenth century. For a number of years Jeŭłašeŭski handled Radziwiłł's complicated legal affairs connected with the purchase of the Świerżno estate, the largest and the most profitable single acquisition made by the Prince in what is now central Byelorussia.⁹ Apparently in recognition of these services, Jeŭłašeŭski received from the Prince ten *vatoka* of land called Ostrov Berezno within this estate.¹⁰ The Junior Judge held this land for several years, and then sold it back to Prince Radziwiłł for 300 *złoty*. The document finalizing this transaction is written by Jeŭłašeŭski.¹¹ A more detailed account of Jeŭłašeŭski's further relations with Prince Radziwiłł is not possible due to lack of sources.¹² These contacts were continued. A characteristic passage in the *Memoirs* attests to this. Besides, it specifies the aim of the *Memoirs* — to provide a guide for Jeŭłašeŭski's children:

Thereafter [1572] I have served His Grace the Governor [voivode] of Troki [N.C. Radziwiłł until 26 March 1604] in many of his needs, if not always ably, yet diligently and honestly, until my old age, to wit the year of Our Lord 1603 in which I am writing all this; I leave this advice to my children, that they, whilst I am still alive — and when I am gone — should follow my example and never refuse to serve His Grace, his children and all his House.¹³

This advice was taken to heart by at least one of JeŹłaŹeŹski's sons. A letter written by Joachim JeŹłaŹeŹski to Prince Nicholas Christopher, by then the voivode of Vilna, provides ample evidence. Writing from Mantua on 14 August 1604, the younger JeŹłaŹeŹski informs the Prince about the latest events in Italy, as well as about the progress of the European voyage of RadziwiŹ's sons.¹⁴ It is clear from the text that this letter is but a small surviving part of a larger correspondence. Considering the close contacts between Theodore JeŹłaŹeŹski and Prince Nicholas Christopher, one may wonder to what extent RadziwiŹ's famous diary of his voyage to the Holy Land provided an impulse for the Junior Judge to write down his modest *Memoirs*.¹⁵

The NieŹwieŹ Archive contains yet another document which sheds some light on the author of the *Memoirs* and on his family. This is a Polish letter of Theodore JeŹłaŹeŹski to Prince Janusz RadziwiŹ, the Cup-Bearer of Lithuania.¹⁶ The letter is not written in JeŹłaŹeŹski's own hand. The Polish signature, 'Fiedor JewłaŹzewski, podsędek Nowogrodzki', cannot be compared with his other surviving autographs. There are no other reasons to doubt JeŹłaŹeŹski's authorship of this letter. In it, JeŹłaŹeŹski expresses his condolences to the Prince on the death of RadziwiŹ's wife (Sophia, Princess of Źluck, died in March 1612), and apologizes that old age and bad health prevent him from appearing before the Prince in person. Then he comes to the main object of his writing. JeŹłaŹeŹski's son Peter has been for some time in the service of Prince Janusz. He fought on his side during the rebellion against king Sigismund III. Afterwards, he married a widow of one of the Prince's servants and settled down as a tenant in the Principality of Źluck, a part of RadziwiŹ's domain. Peter JeŹłaŹeŹski then came into conflict with a certain Kozaryn, who had been doing his best to blacken his reputation and to take away his land. JeŹłaŹeŹski ends his letter in a style very reminiscent of that of certain parts of the *Memoirs*. He asks the Prince to help in his difficulties '... so that this son of mine taking refuge and cuddling up in this Principality of Your Grace may enjoy the bits from Your Grace's table...'¹⁷

Notes

1. A. Nadson, 'The *Memoirs* of Theodore JeŹłaŹeŹski, Assessor of Navahrudak (1546-1604)', *JBS*, vol. I, no. 4, pp. 268-348, London 1968.
2. 'Dnevnik novgorodskogo podsudka Fiedora JewłaŹevskogo', *Kievskaja starina*, vol. XIV, no. 11, Kiev, 1886, pp. 128-60. The other edition, or rather, a Polish translation of the *Memoirs*, *Pamiętnik Teodora JewłaŹzewskiego, Nowogrodzkiego podsędeka*, Warszawa, 1860, has been used by Polish scholars. Fragments of this translation were published not long ago in *Antologia pamiętników polskich XVI wieku*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1966, pp. 352-363. The authors of this collection did not know the Antonovič edition (*Antologia*, p. 352).
3. AGAT-Archiwum Potockich z Radzyna, sygnatura prowizoryczna 143a. The half-bound 56-page manuscript was once in Biblioteka Wilanowska, and was stored under the call-number 'Wil. Rp. 817 Fol.'. Due to the bad quality of the paper and considerable water damage, the manuscript is scarcely legible.

4. A. Nadson has already noted that a part of the introduction to the *Memoirs* is probably missing ('The *Memoirs*', p. 335 note, 1). He also suspects that large part in the middle of the text is missing ('The *Memoirs*', p. 346, note 71).
5. The description of the events of the year 1596 ends on page 44 of the manuscript, and that of the year 1602 begins on the next leaf, on page 45. An inaccurate bookbinder could be blamed for the loss. It should also be noted that pages 19 and 20 of the manuscript are bound in reverse order.
6. AGAD-Archiwum Radziwiłłowskie (AR) dział XI, koperta 88 nr. 504, 516. AGAD-AR dział XV, teka 10, plik 9, nr. (8), (9). All four of these documents are dated 7 March 1616.
7. In his *Memoirs*, Jeŭłašeŭski mentions the names of five out of his nine sons: Jerome (b. 1578?), John (b. 1579), Joachim (b. 1581), Lawrence (b. 1584), and Martin (b. 1585). We learn the name of a sixth son, Peter, from Jeŭłašeŭski's Polish letter cited below. It is possible that one of the remaining three sons was named Theodore (Fiedor). K. V. Charlampovič mentions an F. Jeŭłašeŭski as having a quarrel with Uniate monks in Navahrudak on 30 May 1616, (*Zapadnorusskija pravoslavnija školy*, Kazan', 1898, p. 501). This may be a reference to the senior Jeŭłašeŭski.
8. Earlier autographs of Theodore Jeŭłašeŭski may also be found on documents in the Nieśwież Archive. For example, two from 1603: AGAD-AR dział VIII, nr. 283, st. 111, and AGAD-AR dział XXIII, teka 97 ('Akta Dziedziczne'), nr. 29.
9. A. Nadson 'The *Memoirs*', pp. 289, 297. Svierzno was acquired by Prince Nicholas Christopher in the years 1571-1582. In 1588 it consisted of one town, Svierzno, and fifteen villages. Together with the lands of tenant noblemen, it included some 815 *wałoka* of land (AGAD-AR dział VIII nr. 566 Subscript 1). In 1587, this estate brought in 744.35 kopa in cash income, as compared with 614.53 kopa from Mir and 355.58 from Nieśwież, the other two large estates in central Byelorussia (AGAD-AR dział XI, koperta 84, nr. 362).
10. The deed of gift signed by the Prince was issued in Cracow on 6 March 1574 (AGAD-AR dział XXIII, teka 96, plik 'Ostrów Berezno'). From this document we learn that the first name of Jeŭłašeŭski's father was Nicholas (Mikołaj). He must have assumed the name Macarius (as in A. Boniecki, *Herbarz Polski*, IX, p. 29 and A. Nadson, 'The *Memoirs*', p. 335, note 1), at the time of his monastic profession.
11. Nieśwież, 6 May 1579 — AGAD-AR dział XXIII teka 96, plik 'Ostrów Berezno'. It is interesting to note that the author of this document signs his name 'Jeŭłašoŭski' and not 'Jeŭłašeŭski'. Both forms appear interchangeably in later documents.
12. Many of these possible sources were lost already in Jeŭłašeŭski's lifetime. For example, many of the documents relating to the purchase of the Svierzno estate were destroyed in 1577 during a fire in Kleck, Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł's residence in those days (AGAD-AR dział XI, koperta 65, nr. 360).
13. A. Nadson 'The *Memoirs*', pp. 289, 291.
14. AGAD-AR dział V, teka 130, nr. 6069. The letter is in Polish with a strong admixture of Latin.
15. Hand-written copies of 'Peregrynacja do Ziemi Świętej' were circulating as early as 1592. Stanisław Alexandrowicz, 'Peregrynacja do Ziemi Świętej księcia Radziwiłła Sierotki. Czas powstania rękopisu', *Ars Historica. Praca z dziejów Powszechnych i Polski*, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Seria historia nr. 71, Poznań, 1976, p. 589.
16. Skubiatowszczyzna, April(?) 1612 — AGAD-AR dział V, teka 130, nr. 6067.
17. *Ibid.*, '... że ten syn moy garnąc się i przitulając w timże xięstwie WXM odrobin stołu WXM używać mogli...'

Deed of sale of 10 valoka of land at Ostrov Berezno to Prince Radziwiłł for 300 Polish zlotys, signed by Theodore Jeūłašeŭski and dated 6 May 1579.

[The image shows a page of handwritten text in a cursive script, likely Latin or Polish, which is extremely faded and difficult to decipher. The text appears to be a legal document, consistent with the caption above. The handwriting is dense and fills most of the page, with some dark ink blotches and bleed-through visible.]