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The Writings of Jakub Susza (Jacob Susha). A Page from the History of Uniate Literature in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th Century

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Abstract: The article presents the writings of Jakub Susza (Jacob Susha, c. 1610–1687), the Uniate bishop of Chełm 1652–1687. His most important works: the Latin biographies of Josaphat Kuntsevych (*Cursus vitae et certamen martyrii b. Iosaphat Kuncevicii...*, Rome 1665) and Meletius Smotrytsky (*Saulus et Paulus Ruthenae Unionis sanguine beati Iosaphat transformatus sive Meletius Smotriscius...*, Rome 1666) and the history of the revered icon of Our Lady of Chełm (*Phoenix redivivus albo obraz starożytny chełmski Panny i Matki Przenajświętszej*, Zamość 1646, Lvov 1653, Zamość 1694), all represent little-known literature written within the Uniate Church. Jakub Susza's intellectual development, his education in Jesuit colleges in Braniewo, Pultusk and Olomouc, and the characteristic features of his works (the consistent use of Polish and Latin as literary languages, the use of western Latin and Polish literary models) contribute to his image as an example of latinisation and occidentalisation (which at that time meant polonisation) of higher Uniate clergy in the Commonwealth, though as a bishop he took care to preserve the religious identity of the Eastern church.

Keywords: Union of Brest, Jakub Susza/Susha, Polish literature of the 17th century

In *Słowo prawosławnego biskupa lubelskiego i chełmskiego* [The word of the orthodox Bishop of Lublin and Chełm] written by Abel (Andrzej Popławski), prefacing the monograph of the Orthodox Chełm eparchy written by Andrzej Gil and published twenty years ago, the Union of Brest of 1596 was described as “the most tragic event in the history of the Orthodox Church in this area. [...] The presentation of the state of the Orthodox Church before 1596,” the hierarch added, “makes one realise what a great blow it was dealt by the Union of Brest and its aftermath.”¹ These words

¹ Abel, “Słowo prawosławnego biskupa lubelskiego i chełmskiego,” in: A. Gil, *Prawosławna eparchia chełmska do 1566 roku*, Lublin–Chełm: Prawosławna Diecezja Lubelsko-Chełmska, 1999, p. 9. All the quotations from the Polish sources have been translated by Karolina Puchała-Ladzińska, unless stated otherwise.

accurately reflect the attitude of at least some members of the Orthodox Church towards the Union of Brest and its consequences. After more than four hundred years the Union still remains the subject of disputes and controversies, which also affect the nature of academic studies whose authors frequently do not even try to conceal their siding with one or the other party to the dispute. Discussions about the Union concern many aspects – besides theological and ecclesiological issues, also visible are those of a political, ethnic and cultural nature.² Regardless of the position adopted by the participants in these debates, most of them agree about one aspect, namely the deep crisis experienced by the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (and not only there) during the 16th century.

This Church indeed was experiencing a profound crisis at that time, which was manifested by the very low intellectual level of the clergy and the widespread religious ignorance of the general Orthodox society. There was a shortage of schools at that time. Usually a son or a son-in-law inheriting the church from his father or his father-in-law learned some basic liturgical procedures from him. The general loosening of morals even included the Orthodox monks, who no longer really lived together but became vagrants. The monasteries were often inhabited by married priests or lay people. An expression of the fall of the Ruthenian Church was also the low moral level of its bishops, appointed by the ruler or other lay persons. [...] Frequently, they were married, long-serving officials, burdened with families, who received as a reward the episcopal title and income. The old custom of appointing monks who were obliged to maintain celibacy, to episcopal capitals, was gone.³

Opinions of contemporary historians are supported by the testimonies from that epoch: the voivode of Kiev, Konstanty Ostrogski declared.⁴

Laziness, depravity, apostasy, became widespread among people because there were no more teachers, no more God's prophets, no more teachings, no more sermons, and the glory of God and His Church was destroyed, hunger for the word of God ensued, and people were abandoning their faith and their order.

The Crisis of the Orthodox Church, to some extent resembling the situation of the Catholic Church before the Reformation, also affected the old Orthodox Chelm eparchy existing from the first half of the 13th century. In the 16th century, what was happening in the episcopal capital in

² See: H. Dylągowa, "Unia brzeska – pojednanie czy podział?," in: *Unia brzeska. Geneza, dzieje i konsekwencje w kulturze narodów słowiańskich*, edited by R. Luźny, F. Ziejka, A. Kępiński, Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 1994, pp. 45–53.

³ S. Litak, *Od reformacji do oświecenia. Kościół katolicki w Polsce nowożytnej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo TN KUL, 1994, pp. 66–67. See also: A. Gil, op. cit., pp. 84–89; B. Kumor, "Geneza i zawarcie unii brzeskiej," in: *Unia brzeska. Geneza, dzieje i konsekwencje...*, pp. 29–30; R. Černius, "Unia kościelna," translated by B. Kałęba, in: *Kultura Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Analizy i obrazy*, elaborated by V. Ališauskas [et al.], Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 2011, p. 805–807; M. Melnyk, *Prekumenizm i konfesjonalizm prawosławnych dążeń zjednoczeniowych w I Rzeczypospolitej (1590–1596)*, Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Katedry Aksjologicznych Podstaw Edukacji UWM, 2013, p. 67.

⁴ After: R. Černius, op. cit., p. 806.

Chełm shocked even the Orthodox community of that time. The successor of Jonasz Sosnowski, who ruled the eparchy in the years 1533-1545, was probably his son Michał. From 1566, the Chełm eparchy becomes, one may say, a hereditary property of the bourgeois Iliaszewicz (Ilyashevych) family from Krasnystaw. Its first representative was bishop Zacharias, who in the year of his appointment (1566), assigned his son-in-law Teodor (Teodozy) Łazowski as his coadjutor with the right of succession. Finally, his son Leoncjusz Pełczycki (Leontiy Pelchytskyi) became the successor of Zacharias in 1577, and after his moving to the Pinsk jurisdiction in 1585, his brother-in-law, and Zacharias's second son-in-law, Dionysius Zbirujski (Zbyruksyy) took over the office. Hardly surprising in this situation is the complaint of the Orthodox brotherhood of Lviv issued in 1592 to the Patriarch: "The Bishops of Chełm, Pinsk and Przemyśl, against the laws of the Eastern Church, live in their episcopal capitals together with their wives and children, to the outrage of common people, and they let bigamist priests perform sacred rites"⁵. The level of the higher clergy at that time could be illustrated by some incidents such as the armed attack of the bishop Jonasz Sosnowski on the residents of Busno (1544), the capture of the castle and the cathedral church in Włodzimierz (Volodymyr) by the bishop Teodozy Łazowski, who had applied to rule this eparchy (1566), or the charges of assaults and beatings brought against the bishops Leoncjusz Pełczycki and his brother-in-law Dionysius Zbirujski.⁶ Of course, the level of the lower clergy and ordinary believers was not impressive either, as evidenced by the relics of pagan customs, superstitions and magic, recorded by both contemporary and later historians. Some of them were even sanctioned by law or customs, as evidenced by, for example, a special tax on illegal marriage (illegal, according to the law of the Orthodox Church).

The response to these negative phenomena were the attempts at reform in the last decades of the 16th century. Orthodox Church brotherhoods, especially Lviv and Vilnius ones, played an important role in them, as well as the initiatives of some Ruthenian magnates, especially Konstanty Ostrogski. The Union of Brest is also treated by many historians as a response to the internal crisis of the Ruthenian Church. Whether it was the best and the most effective response, it is difficult to state. According to some historians, such as Stanisław Litak,

after the Union was concluded and strengthened, there were positive changes in many areas within the Eastern Church, characteristic of the Church's renewal in the period after the Council of Trent. The changes were modelled on the ongoing reform of the Latin Church. Synods and visits to parishes became, as in the Latin Church, a tool for the reform of the Uniate Church. Gradually, though slowly, the intellectual and moral level of the episcopate and the Uniate clergy was rising. [...] An important element of the

⁵ A. Gil, op. cit., pp. 84–85, 87–88.

⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

renewal of the Uniate Church became the monasteries of the Basilian monks, reformed by [Veliamyn] Rutsky.⁷

The processes recorded by the historian were also noticed in the Uniate Chełm diocese. They were particularly visible in the activities of bishops who, in accordance with the Eastern tradition, descended mainly from monastic clergy, but were also educated in Latin academic centers – for example in the Jesuit colleges in Braniewo, Vilnius, Olomouc, or in the Greek College in Rome. These bishops tried to raise the level of the clergy and the faithful by means of parish visits, diocesan synods or the so-called *soborczyki* – conventions of the clergy from individual protopopias (equivalent to church districts). Modelled on the Catholic colleges and seminaries, similar institutions were being created within the Uniate Church, which was not always welcomed by the Catholic side. A good example illustrating this is the Basilian gymnasium in Chełm established in 1639, attracting also Catholic youth, which caused protests from the Latin Chełm bishop and led to the foundation of a competitive Piarist college.

As already mentioned, one of the most visible processes taking place within the Uniate Church was the gradual increase in the level of the episcopate, usually recruited from the reformed Basilian order and relatively well-educated, often in Catholic academic centres, including foreign ones. This also applies to the Uniate Chełm bishops. Most of them were educated persons, sometimes even – as in the case of Methodius Terleckyj (1628-1649) and Augustyn Aleksander Łodziata (1687-1691) – holding a doctoral degree. Some of them, like Jakub Susza, Maksymilian Ryłło (Ryło) or Porfiriusz Skarbek-Ważyński (Porfiry Skarbek-Vazhinski), left behind a significant literary legacy. In general, little known and researched, it constitutes a valuable and largely untapped source of knowledge concerning the internal relations and culture of the Eastern Church in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Among the 17th century Uniate Chełm bishops, undoubtedly the most prominent figure was the aforementioned Jakub Susza.⁸ Born around the year 1610 in Minsk, he was initially educated in Basilian schools. After joining this order in 1625 or 1626, he continued his education at the papal

⁷ S. Litak, op. cit., p. 74.

⁸ About the author A. Kossowski, *Biskup chełmski i belski unicki Jakub Susza a obraz cudowny Matki Boskiej w Chełmie*, manuscript in the library of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, reference number 1382; I. Назарко, “Яків Суша – єпископ холмський (1610–1687),” *Analecta OSBM* 1971, Vol. 13, pp. 22–83; *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*, edited by H.E. Wyczawski, Vol. 3, Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1983, pp. 232–234; R. Kozyrski, “Testament Jakuba Suszy, biskupa diecezji chełmskiej obrządku greckokatolickiego w latach 1652–1687,” *Rocznik Chełmski* 1999, No. 5, pp. 297–303; R. Kozyrski, “Susza Jakub,” in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. 46, No. 188, Warszawa–Kraków: Instytut Historii PAN, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego Societas Vistulana, 2009, pp. 79–82; A. Gil, *Chełmska diecezja unicka 1596–1810. Dzieje i organizacja*, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2005, pp. 83–94.

seminary in Braniewo, then in Pultusk and abroad – in Olomouc, where he obtained a doctoral degree in theology. He belonged to the intellectual elite of the order, it is therefore hardly surprising that he quickly advanced within the hierarchy – in 1639 he became the superior of the school and monastery of the Basilians in Chełm, and in 1649 he was appointed the administrator of the Chełm diocese. He became a fully legitimate ordinary in 1652 and held that position until his death in 1687. For many years he was an archimandrite of the monastery in Żydyczyn (Zhydychyn) in Volhynia, and in 1661 he was elected a protoarchimandrite of the order (he renounced this function five years later). He devoted his entire life to spreading and defending the idea of the Church union, which had been experiencing numerous problems from its very beginning, and in the years of the Polish-Cossack wars its very existence was threatened, as the Orthodox side of the conflict demanded its dissolution. He was the author or the co-author of new union projects aimed at convincing possibly the largest number of Orthodox Ruthenians⁹ of the idea of the union, he defended the already existing ownership condition of the Uniate Church, and in the years 1664-1666 he represented its interests in Rome. The testimony of the bishop's activity is, among others, a rich correspondence addressed to subsequent popes and various dicasteries and dignitaries of the Roman Curia. Particularly valuable for historians is also the extensive memorial from 1664 on the condition of the Uniate Church.¹⁰ In 1680 he participated in the Lublin *colloquium amicabile*, an unfortunately fruitless attempt at reconciliation of the Uniates and the Orthodox,¹¹ and in the 1680s he convened synods of the Chełm diocese as many as six times.¹²

Not only the researchers of religious relations in Poland in the 17th century, but also literary historians may be interested in the works of Jakub

⁹ See: a letter to the hetman of Zaporizhian Hetman, Ivan Wyhovski, in which he: "Fuse exponit doctrinam de vera Ecclesia, de primatu Pontificis Romani, de causis schismatis Graecorum et de promovenda unione cum Ecclesia Catholica omnium Ruthenorum," in: *Monumenta Ucrainae Historica*, edited by A. Septyckij, Vol. 3: 1650–1670, Romae: Ukraïns'kij Katolic'kij Universitet im. sv. Klimenta Papi, 1966, pp. 47–69.

¹⁰ "De laboribus Unitorum, promotione, propagatione et protectione divina unionis ab initio eius usque ad haec tempora," in: *Litterae episcoporum historiam Ucrainae illustrantes, (1600–1900)*, edited by A.G. Welykyj, Vol. II: 1641–1664, Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1973, pp. 296–335. The significant role of J. Susza in the history of the Uniate Church is also proved by the well-documented work of A. Mironowicz, *Prawosławie i unia za panowania Jana Kazimierza*, Białystok: Orthdruk, 1997, in which the bishop of Chełm belongs to the most frequently mentioned characters, along with the king and Bohdan Chmielnicki.

¹¹ See: C. Żochowski, *Colloquium lubelskie między zgodną i niezgodną bracją narodu ruskiego* [...], Leopoli [1680]; M. Harasiewicz, *Annales ecclesiae ruthenae*, Leopoli 1862, p. 463; M. Bendza, *Tendencje unijne względem cerkwi prawosławnej w Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1674–1686*, Warszawa: Chrześcijańska Akademia Teologiczna, 1987, pp. 55–77.

¹² I. Skoczylas, *Sobory eparchii chełmskiej XVII wieku. Program religijny Slavia Unita w Rzeczypospolitej*, translated by A. Gil, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2008.

Susza, which place him among authors representing the still poorly-known writings created within the Uniate Church.¹³ The literary legacy of this Chełm bishop is constituted by two hagiographic works – the lives of the Uniate archbishop of Polotsk, a polemist and an ascetic writer, and above all, a martyr saint Josaphat Kuntsevych (1580–1623),¹⁴ and of Meletius Smotrytsky (around 1578–1633) – first the Orthodox Archbishop of Polotsk, and after joining the union, a titular hieropolitan archbishop and archimandrite of the Basilian monastery in Derman.¹⁵ The third (chronologically the first) work by Susza is the story of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Chełm (first edition: Zamość 1646). Also known is *Rythmus de beato Martyre Josaphat*, but it is still not known if only its translation from Polish into Latin, or maybe also the Polish version of this work, was of Susza's authorship.¹⁶ These works, although familiar to researchers of the Uniate Church and to regionalists studying the history of the Chełm region and sometimes highly rated by scholars,¹⁷ have not yet been subjected to separate historical and literary analyses.

¹³ See: T. Grabowski, *Z dziejów literatury unicko-prawosławnej w Polsce*, Poznań: s.n., 1922; L. Bieńkowski, "Kultura intelektualna w kręgu Kościoła Wschodniego w XVII i XVIII w.," in: *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, Vol. 6: *Między Wschodem i Zachodem*, Part 1: *Kultura umysłowa*, edited by J. Kłoczowski, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989, pp. 107–126; A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, "Bazylianie na Kresach – pośrednicy między kulturą oficjalną a ludową," in: *Literatura i instytucje w dawnej Polsce*, edited by H. Dziechcińska, Warszawa: Semper, 1994, pp. 58–78.

¹⁴ *Cursus vitae et certamen martyrii b. Iosaphat Kuncevicii Archiepiscopi Polocensis, Episcopi Vitepscensis et Miscislaviensis Ordinis D. Basilii Magni, Romae 1665*; further edition (curante J. Martinov SJ) Paris 1865; the work was also translated into Spanish (*Vida y martyrio del San Iosaphat Kuncewicz...*, Madrid 1684), Italian (in: I. Kulczyński, *Il diasporo prodigioso...*, Rome 1732) and German (*Der heilige Martyrer Josaphat Kuncewicz, Erzbischof von Polozk, aus dem Basilianer-Orden*, translated by J. Looshorn, Munich 1898).

¹⁵ *Saulus et Paulus Ruthenae Unionis sanguine beati Iosaphat transformatus sive Meletius Smotriscius, Archiepiscopus Hierapolitanus, Archimandrita Dermanensis Ord. S. Basilii Magni, Romae 1666* (further edition, curante J. Martinov, Brussels 1864); Ukrainian translation by Bohdan Kurylas: *Життя Мелетія Смотрицького, архієпископа Гієранільського, архимандрита Дерманського, чину св. Василя Великого*, Yorkton, Sask., 1965.

¹⁶ The unique print (according to the Central Catalogue of Early Printed Books in the National Library) without the place and date of publication can now be found in the collection of the National Museum in Krakow, reference number MNK. VIII-XVIII. 5644). According to the title page, it contains: *Rhythmus de B. Martyre Iosaphat ex Polonico idiomate Latino fere de verbo ad verbo translatus ab Illustrissimo ac Reverendissimo piae memoriae Iacobo Susha Episcopo Kholmensi S. R. Ecclesiae Unito*. The text provided in both Polish and Latin is followed by a free paraphrase of the Polish version of the work: *Ode sapphica historiam B. Martyris Iosaphat pretextens, ex vetere polonico, recenter latino reddita metro*.

¹⁷ The high qualifications of J. Susza as a historian and a hagiographer were evaluated by S. Skibiński, "Jakub Suzha, archeolog i historyk ziemi chełmskiej z XVII w.," *Z Otchłani Wieków* 1961, Vol. 3, pp. 270–272, and U. Borkowska, "Hagiografia polska (wiek XVI–XVIII)," in: *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, edited by M. Rehowicz, Vol. 2, part 1, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1975, p. 490.

Published in 1665, the life of Blessed Josaphat Kuntsevych is not a completely original work. The author used the documentation of the investigation carried out in 1637, but he mentioned that he added certain elements himself. He also derived a lot of information from the handwritten Polish manuscript (*Vita eius, licet typis non vulgata* – p. 52), of the life of Josaphat written by the Jesuit Stanisław Kosiński, the confessor of the saint, as well as from the book about Josaphat by Joachim Morochowski (Joakym Morokhovskij), the bishop of Volodymyr, and from the documents of the congregation *de Propaganda Fide*. He also refers to eyewitness accounts, as well as to his own recollections (e.g. in the description of miracles that took place after the investigation process in 1637). The author tried to base his narrative on reliable source materials, which may be considered another manifestation of a tendency to scholarise hagiographies, present since the end of the 16th century and usually associated with the Bollandists, which, moreover, earned him praise from sister Urszula Borkowska. On the other hand, it is easy to see that the biography of the Uniate martyr, reconstructed from documents and witnesses' accounts, follows a pattern known at least since the Middle Ages – *vita, passio, miracula* (*De vita, martyrio et miraculis B[ea]ti martyris Josaphat Kuncevicii*).

The work is composed of five chapters, the first of which is about the origin, birth, youth and secular life of the future saint (*De natalibus, pueritia et statu saeculari*). The second chapter concerns his religious life (*De statu Josaphati religioso*), the third – his episcopal ministry (*De statu archiepiscopali Josaphati*), and the fourth – the martyr's death and the events that followed it (*De martyrio et actis post martyrium*). The last part (*De cultu et miraculis B[ea]ti Josaphat*) was divided into a description of the miracles and manifestations of worship before and after the beatification process. Interestingly, the biography, which follows this particular pattern, evokes connotations with the oldest version of the life of Saint Adalbert. Similarly to this saint, Josaphat too is portrayed as the “Knight of Christ” (*pugna spiritualis* is the recurrent motif in this work) and, like the first patron saint of Poland, he embodies the features of four types of saints known from the hagiographic tradition: a monk, a bishop, a missionary and, finally, a martyr. In Susza's narrative the Orthodox inhabitants of Belarus appear sometimes as the equivalent of the rebellious inhabitants of Prague, then as the equivalent of pagan Prussians, especially when they torment the body of the murdered bishop, which they throw into the Dźwina (Daugava) river. The main goal of Josaphat, however, was not the conversion of pagans, but of the Orthodox Ruthenians, whom he wished to convince of the idea of the Union of Brest and the union with the Roman Church. In fact, he devoted his entire life to pursuing this goal, from his early years in Vilnius, when he “hated the schism” (*illustratusque caelitus, schisma odisse impendio coepit, et ecclesiae unitorum animitus adhaesit*, p. 4), and while studying he primarily sought arguments in favour of the union (*ex illis*

[scriptis] *eiusmodi arma in pervicax schisma conglobavit, quibus opinione fortius schismaticos expugnaret*, p. 8): when he was reading books, he was mainly looking for a weapon against stubborn schismatics. *Domine Deus, tolle schismata, da unionem* – this is one of his most frequently repeated supplications (p. 10), which also sums up the intention and purpose of the author of the work.

To the miracles attributed to the intercession of Blessed Josaphat, Jakub Susza also ascribed conversion, i.e. transition to the union's side, of its staunch opponent, and indirectly also – according to Susza – the person responsible for the death of Josaphat – Meletius Smotrytsky, the Disuniate (i. e. orthodox) archbishop of Polotsk. He devoted a separate work to his biography, entitled *Paulus et Saulus ruthenae unionis sanguine B[ea]ti Josaphat transformatus sive Meletius Smotriscius*, published in Rome in 1666. This biography followed a slightly different pattern than that of Kuntsevych. The author referred here not to the traditional hagiographic pattern (*vita, passio, miracula*), but to the famous history of Saul, who became Paul, known from the Acts of the Apostles. The central motif of Smotrytsky's biography is his metamorphosis, his transformation from the persecutor into the apostle of the union. For this reason, also the life of Smotrytsky in Susza's work is clearly divided into two parts: the first one covers the period before joining the union (*De Meletio, Saulo unionis*), and the second one – the time after joining it (*De Meletio, Paulo Unionis*). The description of Smotrytsky's life, to an even greater extent than Kuntsevych's biography, is based on the documents and accounts of witnesses (*e gravissimis verissimisque testimoniis*, as emphasised by the author, p. 9), such as, for example, letters by Veliamyn Rutsky, Aleksander Ostrogski or *Apology* by Smotrytsky himself (p. 29). They are quoted *in extenso*, making Susza's work an anthology of considerable historical value. There is no doubt, however, that for the author the most important was the propagandist and the apologetic value of the described characters and events whose dissemination was to serve the defence and popularisation of the idea of the Church union. It is worth noting that this aspect of both works of the Chelm bishop became again very significant in the 19th century with the gradual liquidation of the union in Polish territories under the Russian partition. The Jesuit Jan Martinov directly referred to this difficult situation in which the Uniate Church was at that time, publishing both works again in the 1860s.¹⁸ The first of them was also translated into Italian, Spanish and German, and the second one – into Ukrainian.

Certainly, the most important work of Jakub Susza is the story of the cult of the image of the Mother of God in the Chelm cathedral of the Greek

¹⁸ See: *Saulus et paulus...*, *Bruxellis* 1864, p. I: "Quum sanctissima ecclesiae unio, qua christiani ritus slavici unum cum catholicis corpus facti sunt, turbatissimis his temporibus in dies magis magisque concutiatur et labefactetur, visum est mihi non inutile fore, si egregia Smotriscii scripta, mirum in modum rara, iterum in lucem ederentur."

rite. He had worked on it (although probably with breaks), for about forty years, so it can be considered his *opus vitae*. Its first edition appeared in Zamość in 1646,¹⁹ the second, extended one, in Lviv in 1653.²⁰ Over the following years, the author collected new materials so that shortly before his death, in 1684, he managed to publish in Zamość the last, significantly extended edition of the work in two language versions – Polish and Latin.²¹ The Polish version of the third edition was once again published in a large collective work commemorating the coronation of the Chełm icon in 1765.²²

The work of Jakub Susza, known primarily to Polish, Russian and Ukrainian researchers of the Chełm region,²³ contrary to what is stated on the title page, is something more than just one of the many 17th-century devotional prints related to miraculous images and sanctuaries of Our Lady. It should rather be included among the “yet untapped by historians and underrated sources of knowledge about the eastern borderlands of the Polish Republic in the 17th and 18th centuries.”²⁴ It consists of three parts: the first is a story about Chełm and the Chełm region, about the Orthodox cathedral church of Chełm, about the miraculous painting of the Virgin

¹⁹ *Phoenix redivivus albo Obraz starożytny chełmski Panny i Matki Przenajświętszej sławą cudownych swoich dzieł ożyły*, Zamość 1646.

²⁰ *Phoenix iterato redivivus albo Obraz chełmski Matki Bożej...*, Lwów 1653.

²¹ *Phoenix tertiato redivivus albo Obraz starożytny chełmski Panny i Matki Przenajświętszej... po trzecie ożyły*, Zamość 1684; *Phoenix tertiato redivivus sive Imago longe vetustissima Virginis Matris Chelmensis...*, Zamość 1684.

²² *Koronacja cudownego obrazu Najświętszej Maryji Panny w chełmskiej katedrze obrządku greckiego... roku 1765 dnia 15 miesiąca września*, Berdyczów 1780, pp. 4r–Llllv.

²³ For instance: *Городъ Холмъ и его святыня – чудотворная икона Божіей Матери*, Warszawa 1882; K. Czernicki, *Chełm – przeszłość i pamiątki*, Chełm: Drukarnia Zwierciadło, 1936; K. Janczykowski, *Góra Chełmska, jej Królowa i lud*, Chełm: Rzymsko-katolicka parafia Mariacka na Górze Chełmskiej, 1946; J. Stefański, “Z dziejów kultu obrazu Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej,” *Nasza Przeszłość*, Vol. 66, 1986, pp. 159–190; J. Zięba, *Dzieje jednego obrazu. Opowieść o Cudownej Ikonie Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej*, Lublin: Polihymnia, 2005; O. Баран, “Холмський єпископ Яків Суша – дослідник минувшини Холмської землі,” in: *Kościół wschodnie w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVII wieku. Zbiór studiów*, edited by A. Gil, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2005, pp. 21–29; K. Mart, “Phoenix Jakuba Suszy źródłem do badań ikonografii Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej,” *Series Byzantina* 2004, Part 2, pp. 189–201; A. Gil, “Źródła kultu ikony Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej. Z dziejów religijności w XVII-wiecznej Rzeczypospolitej,” *Series Byzantina* 2004, Part 2, pp. 203–218; A. Gil, “Phoenix redivivus jako źródło do dziejów Chełma i ziemi chełmskiej,” *Studia Archiwalne* 2006, Vol. 2, pp. 189–197.

²⁴ S. Skibiński, op. cit., pp. 270–271. Due to the significant historical value of the work it was re-edited in 1780, as informed in the preface *To the Reader*: “The book was published a century ago by the late Jakub Susza, the bishop of Chełm, first in Latin and then in the Polish language: *Phenix [sic] tertiato redivivus*, describing the city of Chełm and the miraculous painting of the Mother of God so far kept in the cathedral. This is an interesting book, and many wise people read it, and apart from Chełm’s history, it contains a thorough description of some of Jan Kazimierz’s deeds and Chmielnicki’s war, thus many requested this book to be reprinted as a useful source for the history mentioned” (*Koronacja cudownego obrazu...*, unnumbered p. 1v).

Mary, about its cult in the past centuries, the second (“About taking this holy painting to the camp at Sokal and Berestechko”) is devoted to the role that the image of Our Lady of Chełm played during the Berestechko campaign in 1651,²⁵ and the third and the most comprehensive – “On the miracles of the Chełm’s holy image” – is a catalogue of several hundred graces and miracles attributed to the intercession of Mary revered in the Chełm icon.

Each of these parts actually constitutes a separate whole and represents different literary forms. The first part is one of the many 17th-century stories of wonderful paintings and places of worship.²⁶ Part two is an account which combines the elements of historiography and diary writings. Finally, part three continues the traditions of the medieval *miracula*, descriptions of miracles, which are an integral element of hagiographic works. What connects all the three parts is the person of the author. He is often an eyewitness to events, whether as a clergyman closely attached to the Chełm region and describing from experience its charms and peculiarities, or as a participant in the Berestechko campaign or, finally, as a faithful, himself receiving graces from Our Lady of Chełm or being somehow their indirect originator. Susza usually carried with him a piece of cypress wood from the Chełm painting, which he used as a kind of relic – usually with good results, as he assures. Thus, the work of the Chełm bishop to a large extent resembles a diary-like account, which is also reflected in its style and composition. Frequently, the author, just like the authors of diaries, moves from a third-person to the first-person narration, when, for example, describing his efforts to make the Chełm’s painting accompany the king during the expedition.²⁷ Often, like other contemporaneous authors, he pauses the story in order to quote some royal document *in extenso*²⁸ or to cite a poetic piece, which makes it resemble *silva rerum* forms, popular in old memoir writings.²⁹ Particularly interesting are poetic inserts because they say a lot about the literary culture of the Uniate writer. One can find among them quotes from *Aeneid*, both in the original version and in its translation by Andrzej Kochanowski, from Boethius, from Psalm 47 in the translation by Jan Kochanowski, or from jesuit Bernhardus Bauhusius

²⁵ See: A. Gil, “Ikona Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej pod Beresteczkiem 1651 r.,” in: *Волинська ікона: дослідження та реставрація*, Луцьк 2005, p. 87–89; W. Pawlak, “Jakub Susza – zapomniany świadek i historyk bitwy pod Beresteczkiem,” in: *Wojny, bitwy i potyczki w kulturze staropolskiej*, edited by W. Pawlak, M. Piskala, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2011, pp. 211–235.

²⁶ J. Nastalska, A. Witkowska, *Ku ozdobie i obronie Rzeczypospolitej. Maryjne miejsca święte w drukach staropolskich*, Lublin: Werset, 2013.

²⁷ *Phoenix tertiatu redivivus albo Obraz starożytny chełmski...*, p. 74: “Where I also insisted, *pro mea tenuitate*, first to the esteemed Senators, then to His Royal Highness, that this sacred painting be taken to the camp for protection against the enemy.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72, 75–76, 130–132.

²⁹ For more information on the *silva rerum* in old Polish memoirs see: P. Borek, *Ukraina w staropolskich dziurach i pamiętnikach. Bohaterowie, fortece, tradycja*, Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2001, pp. 29–82.

popular in the 17th century.³⁰ He was also familiar with *Wojna domowa* [The Civil War] by Samuel Twardowski, which he refers to as a historical source.³¹ Most information, however, concerning the works read by Jakub Susza and his literary ambitions is conveyed by five longer works of the Jesuit poet *minorum gentium*, Michał Krasuski, included in the volume published in Kalisz in 1669 and quoted in full by the Chełm bishop, both in the original version and in his own translation into Polish.³² Thematically closely related to the subject of the narrative, they were supposed to ennoble it and to enliven reading; perhaps they were also to portray the author as an expert in poetic art as well.

Although *Phoenix* belongs rather to applied literature, it cannot be denied certain literary values, which are primarily determined by the narrative talent and the beautiful Polish language.

Particular narrative qualities are visible in the second part of the work, devoted to the Berestechko campaign, seen from a rather peculiar perspective – that of the wonderful Chełm icon, portrayed by the author as a kind of national palladium responsible for the victory at Berestechko. Seemingly monotonous and the least interesting is the third and the most extensive part of the story regarding the miraculous painting, i.e. a catalogue of several hundred miracles. However, the description of some of them also takes the form of autonomous images, having their own charm and demonstrating well the author's artistic temperament. One should also emphasise the value of this part of the work as a treasure trove of information about the 17th-century Chełm region. The descriptions of miracles reflect the region's geography, its social system, the mentality as well as beliefs of its inhabitants. Interestingly, among the names and surnames that were immortalised by Susza, usually of simple burghers and peasants, one can also find those that are still present today among the inhabitants of Chełm.

Further work on the legacy of Jakub Susza will allow for a more in-depth and comprehensive description of the literary heritage of this author. It should be emphasised that his writings, following a clearly apologetic profile, served primarily to defend and promote the idea of the union, just as did all activities of the Chełm bishop. From the point of view of the researcher of culture and literature, they constitute an interesting example of combining the western and the eastern traditions, representing *Slavia latina (romana)* and *Slavia orthodoxa*³³, with the clear dominance of the former.

³⁰ *Phoenix tertiatu redivivus albo obraz starożytny chełmski...*, pp. 44–45, 69, 118, 119.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³² *Phoenix tertiatu redivivus albo obraz starożytny chełmski...*, pp. 79–84, 87–92, 107–112, 122–129, 133–139. See: M. Krasuski, *Regina Poloniae augustissima Virgo Mater Dei Maria in regno Polonorum beneficentia prodigiosarum imaginum tam pace quam bello celeberrima*, Kalisz 1669, part 1, pp. 8–12, 12–17, 27–29); part 6, pp. 172–174; part 8, pp. 234–237.

³³ See: R. Picchio, "Slavia orthodoxa i Slavia romana," translated by B. Badyńska-Lipowczan, in: R. Picchio, *Studia z filologii słowiańskiej i polskiej*, Kraków: Polska Akademia

The consistent use of Polish and Latin as literary languages is particularly significant here. This allows one to see Susza as one of the advocates of latinisation and occidentalisation (which at that time meant simultaneous polonisation) of the Uniate Church in Poland, even though as a bishop he “meticulously preserved the [...] Byzantine-Slavic rite and cultivated old customs.”³⁴

Translated by Karolina Puchała-Ladzińska

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³⁴ R. Kozyński, “Susza Jakub...,” p. 82; I. Skoczylas, op. cit., pp. 85–86. The same author also draws the reader’s attention to the “Latin novelties” which began to be introduced during Susza’s tenure (ibid., pp. 87–91).

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