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THE PATH TO THE PROMOTION
TO THE SENATOR'S OFFICE
OF ADAM CHMARA, LEONARD ŚWIEYKOWSKI
AND GEDEON JELEŃSKI
IN THE STANISLAVIAN TIMES
THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION*

In the 18th century the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth fell into a crisis, which finally ended with the collapse of the state in 1795 and the erasing of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the map of Europe. The question of who was responsible for its downfall is still discussed today.¹ The present considerations do not aim to resolve the controversies surrounding this issue but rather concentrate on one of the elements that lies at the basis of the thesis put forward by the Cracow School, namely the matter of political promotions, their criteria, clientelism and privatism destroying the elites of the state from within, along with all the activities – not ideas – aimed at rebuilding the strength of the Polish-Lithuanian state.² All

* This article is the result of the project NCN 2014/15/B/HS3/02277: *Adam Chmara (1720–1805) – ostatni wojewoda miński w świecie polityki czasów stanisławowskich i jego archiwum.*

¹ The main question was how much the state's elites were to blame for the fall of the Commonwealth. Cf. Grabski: *Zarys historii historiografii*, pp. 134, 136–139; Rostworowski: *Ostatni król*, p. 311; Grześkowiak-Krwawicz: *Dyskurs polityczny*; Eadem: *Regina libertas, passim.*

² On the client relationship see Augustyniak: *Dwór i klientela*, pp. 39–73, 76–93, 166–173, 269–275; Mączak: *Klientela*, pp. 112–160; Idem: *Rządzący i rządzani*, pp. 140–150; Pośpiech et al.: *Społeczna rola dworu*, pp. 215–218; Tygielski: *Klientela*, pp. 261, 267.

these elements contributed or could have contributed to building political careers, in particular among the lower or middle nobility.

The text analyzes the promotion and career paths of four senators from the Stanisławian times. It seems to provide the basis for the reflection on the approach of the Stanisławian elite to the state-citizen “relationship”. The first example of a senatorial career is Adam Chmara, the Minsk voivode, who reached the senatorial position starting from the lowest land offices.³ Still, his career is by no means an exceptional one: promotions for abilities were becoming more and more common, not to say a rule at that time. A kind of evidence, supporting and complementing this thesis and revealing the described mechanism, will be the selected elements of biographies of other senators from that period: Rafał and Gedeon Jeleński, castellans of Nowogródek,⁴ and Leonard Marcin Świeykowski, voivode of Podolia.⁵ Their common feature is that they were the first senators in their families and the development of their careers and the greatest successes – their appointment to the Senate – occurred in the Stanisławian period (1764–1795). Their paths to the senator’s offices were similar: in terms of wealth, they did not even belong to the middle nobility and their families were little known. Things were slightly different in the case of Jeleński: he already belonged to the Lithuanian middle nobility, but the mechanism of his becoming a senator seems to be similar to that of Chmara and Świeykowski. All these figures represent the eastern borderlands of the state. This is of some importance in the case of Świeykowski, who in Braclawszczyzna was supposed to support the interests of Stanisław August in the rivalry with a strong magnate opposition on an ad hoc and ongoing basis. It could explain the king’s friendliness towards Świeykowski. Stanisław August did not have to have such a motivation in the case of Lithuania, where his party definitely prevailed over the opposition. Besides, Chmara and Jeleński were never the most important among the supporters of the king in Lithuania.

The examples of the careers discussed in the present article were selected at random. The fact that the above-mentioned senators left behind relatively

³ Cf. Mościcki: *Chmara Adam*, p. 315; see the research findings of my project; Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*; Idem: *Adam Chmara*, passim.

⁴ Cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*.

⁵ Cf. Idem: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*.

rich family archives,⁶ which reveal the way of thinking of their creators, determined the choice. This is another element linking these figures. Moreover, it shows the motives behind their actions and the principles that guided their behaviour. The examples of outstanding promotions among the lower and middle nobility were quite numerous in the Stanislavian times, which suggests that it was a principle, which the literature on the subject has already mentioned, writing, sometimes in a highly simplified form, about Stanislaw August's "pieczeniarze" i.e. a group of careerists who, by fulfilling the roles entrusted to them by the King, were rewarded with certain offices, including senatorial offices, starosties or other dignitaries.⁷ The matter of guilt is not important here. The point is that these senators had their own opinions and defended them, so it was no longer the creation of petty clients, but of citizens who felt more and more responsible for the state even if, for them, it was limited to the boundaries of their little homeland i.e. the Minsk or Podolia provinces. The context of the vision of a common state was the most important thing here and at its core there were the citizen's rights to decide about the state but also a sense of duty to take responsibility for it. It justified the rights of the nobility to their privileged position in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but the content of this conviction changed in the Stanislavian times, definitely expanding to include social, economic and political issues. In each of these areas, the senators mentioned were willing to contribute more, depending on the situation. It is probably difficult to comment on the scale of this phenomenon, but the results of the February sejmiks in 1792, which approved of the Constitution

⁶ The main bodies of the Archives of the Chmara family can be found in Minsk in the: Nacyanal'ne Gistaryčne Arhiŭ Belarusi [Нацыянальнае Гістарычнае Архіў Беларусі] (further: NGAB): Fond (further: F) 1324, cf. Opis Fonda Chmara 1324 [Опись Фонда Хмара] (1508–1882), and in Kraków: Biblioteka Jagiellońska (further: BJ): Sign. 6632–6668, the Chmara's correspondence, cf. *Inwentarz Rękopisów Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 3/1; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 50–57. The Jeleńscy archive are also kept in the NGAB: F 1636, cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 8–9; Idem: *Archiwum Jeleńskich z NGAB w Mińsku*, pp. 39–447. The main part of the Archives of the Świejkowski family is held by the Kórnik Library (Biblioteka Kórnicka) under the reference numbers 1127–1282 i.e. 156 units, cf. Klimowicz: *Archiwum Świejkowskich*, p. 66; Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świejkowskiego*, pp. 19–22.

⁷ Cf. on bakers their definitions and contexts e.g. *Pamiętniki Seweryna Bukara*, p. 182; Stroynowski: *Sejmowa opozycja*, pp. 17–26; Linde: *Słownik języka polskiego*, p. 94; Rostworowski: *Ostatni król*, pp. 157–159.

of 3 May, seem to confirm it.⁸ A “new” career path was also accepted at that time: its first step was, for example, to serve the citizens and the homeland in civil-military commissions. The Constitution introduced principles that were a revolution in the creation of elites, including the introduction of a wealth censorship i.e. whoever pays the appropriate amount of tax to the state, so whoever has “talents”, can become for example a deputy.⁹

Emanuel Rostworowski, Jerzy Michalski and Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz dealt with the issues raised in the text on the margins of their interests. These authors saw the issue of the mechanism of gaining supporters and drew attention to the moral and ethical condition of the Polish elite.¹⁰ One should also mention the monographs of particularly middle-class families, in which the career paths were described and placed in more general contexts concerning the sphere of the functioning of the state. However, the monographs primarily bring a great deal of comparative material.¹¹ Similarly, one may point to the importance of the biographies of famous people, which disclose examples of specific efforts to obtain different distinctions and their different motivations, which prompted them to public service.¹² However, there are no such works analyzing the entire group of senatorial elites in the Stanisławian times; they either cover individual cases of careers or studies relating to the sphere of ideology or exhibit general assessments of the condition of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The works of Stefan Ciara and Teresa Zielińska are a combination of these two methodological approaches, but they relate to earlier periods. Nevertheless, for the issue discussed here, they have a certain additional value, as they show the methods – and above all the rules – of creating the senatorial elite in the second half of the 17th century and in the Saxon times since they focus

⁸ All the sejmiks in the Crown and in Lithuania accepted the 3rd May Constitution. Cf. Szczygielski: *Referendum trzciomajowe*, pp. 394–397.

⁹ Cf. *Ustawa rządowa. Prawo uchwalone dnia 3 maja roku 1791. Seymiki. Prawo uchwalone dnia 24 marca 1791*, pp. 37–38; Rolnik: *W cieniu Wincentego Skrzetuskiego*, pp. 704, 708.

¹⁰ Cf. Rostworowski: *Ostatni król*, pp. 16, 20–21, 56–57, 82–83, 109–121; Michalski: *Rejtan i dylematy Polaków*, p. 196; Grześkowiak-Krwawicz: *Dyskurs*, pp. 295–335; Eadem, *Regina*, pp. 251–277; Kostkiewiczowa: *Refleksja o patriotyzmie* pp. 126–149.

¹¹ Cf. eg. Kupisz, Kozdrach: *Kochanowscy w XV–XVIII wieku*, pp. 304–313; Jusupovič: *Prowincjonalna elita litewska*, pp. 251–339.

¹² Cf. eg. Kościałkowski: *Antoni Tyzenhauz*, vol. pp. 58–63, 77–164; Madziar: *Książę Antoni Sulkowski*, pp. 77–100; Wróbel: *Józef Jerzy Hylzen*, pp. 220–222.

on the “magnates”.¹³ Although none of the senators discussed here may be excluded from this group, the mechanism of building their position was similar. It should be regretted that Zielińska, in presenting the “course of senators” and dignitaries’ careers”, concluded that a deeper analysis of political conditions “goes beyond the scope of the discussed topic”. However, she made some valuable comments, e.g. suggesting that in comparison to the previous period, the old rules were kept, the order was followed, and efforts were made not to violate the adopted laws and customs, while offices were treated as rewards for the “service”.¹⁴ The author also underlines that people “devoid of the support in their own strong family” were sought for positions of important, higher dignitaries, which does not contradict her claim that the system usually promoted people “with an established position”, descendants of “senatorial families for several generations”.¹⁵ For the earlier period, Ciara cites contemporaries’ opinions, which indicate that the king “in his nomination policy is guided more by a whim than the actual merits of the nominee”¹⁶; he points out, however, that even then there was a postulate to entrust senatorial offices to people “with the appropriate merit, age and distinguished abilities”.¹⁷ The research of Zielińska and Ciara shows that until the Stanisławian period there was a concentration of power of senatorial offices within an increasingly smaller number of families.¹⁸ It seems that this tendency changed during the reign of Stanisław August. There also took place a slow but systematic change in the approach to the

¹³ Zielińska: *Magnateria polska*, passim; Ciara: *Senatorowie*, passim.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 65–66, 78.

¹⁶ Ciara: *Senatorowie*, p. 11.

¹⁷ *Idem*: *Senatorowie*, p. 29. When elected to certain offices, these rules were followed, *ibid.* In this period, however, the tendency to prefer the representatives of „old senatorial and dignitarian families“ to higher offices was maintained, and „homo novis“ constituted about 29.4% of the total community, *ibidem*, p. 61. Unfortunately, the lack of complete research for the Stanisławian times does not allow for comparison. However, we already have lists of central officials for Lithuania and the Crown, (Cf. *Urządnicy centralni i nadworni Polski XIV–XVIII wieku*; *Urządnicy centralni i dostojnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVIII wieku*), but it seems that one should wait until all lists of officials of voivodships and territories of the former State of Poland are completed. In the Crown, only the Mazowieckie is missing, while in Lithuania – the Minsk, Nowogródek and Witebsk voivodships are missing. Once the list is completed, will we have full material for a statistical approach to the problem.

¹⁸ Ciara: *Senatorowie*, pp. 169–171.

duties of the citizen. This article does not resolve these issues. It is only a contribution to the research on the elites of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Although it only concentrates on four senators, it also proposes a different view on their careers, not only as a result of activities aimed at building a party by Stanisław August, which every ruler tried to do, but as a change in the way of thinking about the state, about the state, both by the king and also, at least, by some of the elites. The citizen was to serve not for reward, but selflessly.¹⁹

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF CAREERS. EDUCATION AND WEALTH STATUS

Adam Chmara, a son of the Minsk treasurer Antoni Chmara, had no hereditary estate. His father, however, provided him with a decent education and with contacts at the court of the Sapieha Family, one of the wealthiest and most influential families in Lithuania at that time, related to the Czartoryski "Familia".²⁰ It is not known what schools A. Chmara attended but it can be stated that at the age of twenty he was versatile in political literature, had a good knowledge of the law, knew Latin and German, and already had a great deal of social savvy. There appeared an expression "as polite as Chmara", which referred to his good manners and high personal culture.²¹ The beginnings of Świeykowski are similar. He is known to have been proficient in legal sciences at an early age. He did not inherit property from his parents, but, thanks to them, he only had easy access to the magnate family of Lubomirski and to Czartoryski "Familia".²² Rafał and Gedeon Jeleński also had a good level of general knowledge – the latter's education level was far above the average and he even wrote philosophical treatises himself.²³

¹⁹ Cf. Organiściak: *Wincentego Skrzetuskiego Prawo*, p. 358; Stasiak: *Patriotyzm w myśli konfederatów*, pp. 21–24.

²⁰ Cf. Rolnik: *Dwór Michała Antoniego Sapiehy*, pp. 115–124; Idem: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 59–81.

²¹ Idem: *Dwór Michała Antoniego Sapiehy*, p. 125. Cf. Aftanazy: *Dzieje rezydencji*, p. 141; Mościcki: *Chmara Adam*, p. 315.

²² Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 12, 41–42, 51–52, 65, 104, 359–360.

²³ Cf. Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, p. 26–27, 34, 40; Rabowicz: *Jeleński Gedeon*, p. 140; Idem: *Jeleński Rafał*, p. 144.

Unlike the Chmaras and the Świeykowskis, this family belonged to the group of the middle nobility but politically it maneuvered between the Sapieha and Radziwiłł families, at certain times being close to the Czartoryski "Familia".²⁴ It is difficult to say where these future senators studied as there are no source references to this. However, it can be concluded that from the beginning of their careers they functioned well in the Commonwealth. Formally, however, it is impossible to say what kind of education they had and where they acquired it. It can be assumed that they certainly had the so-called home education combined with possible attendance at Jesuit "secondary" schools, eventually gaining apprenticeship at the courts of the mighty²⁵; here only the Jeleński family seem to be beyond such formal influence.

The similarity between the beginnings of Chmara's career and the careers of the other personages described in this article is evident: all of them had the theoretical preparation for their careers, and in all the cases the courts of the mighty Sapieha, Radziwiłł, Lubomirski or Czartoryski families contributed to their public education, helped establish their position in the world of provincial (voivodship, district) politics, but also strengthened them economically.

2. RELATIONS WITH ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES

These factors certainly formed an important part of the political careers of the protagonists and in their early stages they were difficult to overestimate. However, it is very important here that these relations did not become the nucleus of strong clientelistic ties i.e. they never became passive executors of the will of their protectors. In all the cases studied here a relationship of mutual kindness, distance and independence was established between them and their promoters. They were grateful for help at the beginning of their careers, above all for the economic help, which manifested itself in the advantageous transactions of buying or renting estates, but ideologically they

²⁴ Cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, p. 99–128.

²⁵ Cf. Idem: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, p. 41–42; Idem: *Dwór Michała Antoniego Sapiehy*, pp. 115–124.

retained a certain independence.²⁶ However, what was the essential bond of client relationships, namely the common private interest, was increasingly dependent on the emergence of another factor, the common pursuit of the same goal, namely the public good, which was repeated as a kind of a motto. This way of thinking was all the time strongly connected with the private interest, but it was increasingly recognised that its success did not depend on the success of a family providing protection and helping in the careers, but on the success of the state – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was believed that its success would guarantee the success of private interests of citizens as well. It seems that it was precisely this approach to public and political reality which meant that the old clientelistic ties, though they did not disappear altogether, ceased to be as significant as they had been in the Saxon period. Such a perception of powerful, protective families was also influenced by the political situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its political dependence on Russia. It was Russia, and not any family, which could decide, for example, on the election of deputies to the Sejm.²⁷ It must be noted here that in each of the analysed cases of the senatorial careers the ties of these clientelistic relations loosened considerably during the Stanislavian times.

After the year 1764, the senators in question no longer gained much economic support from their promoters. However, they were constantly linked by economic ties, starting from the assistance of the former's craftsmen in the petitioner's household down to joint economic ventures. Chmara dealt with floats to Królewiec, Elbląg or Gdańsk for almost the entire Minsk province and neighbouring provinces. He, among others, transported grain for the Ogiński, Czartoryski and Sapieha families.²⁸ Leonard M. Świeykowski,

²⁶ Cf. Idem: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 102–112; Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 109–112, 114–127. About the attitude of A. Chmara's. Cf. Mościcki: *Chmara Adam*, p. 315; Aftanazy: *Dzieje rezydencji*, p. 141; Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas, SA, Sign. 127, f. 404, *Przen[iesienie] Prawa darowanego*; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara, ostatni wojewoda miński i jego relacje z Sapiehami*, pp. 157–167.

²⁷ E.g. sejms 1767–1768, 1773–1775. Cf. Kraushar: *Książę Repnin*, pp. 319–322; Nosow: *Ustanowienie rossijskiego gospodstva*, p. 672; Dukwicz: *Rosja wobec sejmu*, pp. 153–178; Michalski: *Rejtan i dylematy Polaków*, pp. 176–185.

²⁸ On the repayments see NGAB, F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 31, ff. 37–37v, 55–56, F. Bielski to [A. Chmara], Hołynka 19. 04. 1770, Królewiec 10.06.1775; Lvivska Naukova Biblioteka Ukrainy im. W. Stefanyka [Львівська Наукова Бібліотека України ім. В. Стефаника] (further: LNB): F 103, dz. VIII, Sign. 643, f. 5, M. F. Czartoryski to [J.] Mejera, Warszawa

with the mediation of Stanisław Szczęśny Potocki, the later Marshal of the Targowica Confederation during the Great Sejm, conducted business with Russia, producing rusks for it and selling grain.²⁹ In the case of Jeleński such clear links cannot be seen, but issues of extending leases did arise.³⁰

3. THE SPHERE OF IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

This is another element favourable to the careers of the people stemming from non-magnate families. Here the politics of Stanisław August proved important, as he ascended the throne with the idea of reforming the state in the spirit of the programme put forward by the Czartoryski “Familia”, who generally strove to strengthen the state.³¹ It turned out that the idea of repairing the Polish-Lithuanian state, which probably also continued to spread independently, without the King’s influence, as the prompted reflection upon the weakness of the state, gained allies among middle noblemen. In 1764 Chmara and the other personages discussed in this article joined this group.³² Although they became rich later on, this was mainly the result of their ventures. Their economic success was no longer so strongly linked to the external assistance of their patrons.

Simultaneously, in the 1760s–1780s, the same desire to repair the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth emerged both in the royal camp and among a significant part of the magnate elites. Without entering into deeper divagations here, it should be noted that the noble families of their promoters were also aware of the condition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and their own weaknesses. As a result, the patrons of the future

21.01.1773; NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 27, f. 52v, F. Bielski to [A. Chmara?], Bohdaniszki 15.04.1775; ; Biblioteka m. st. Warszawy (further: BStW): Sign. akc. 1780, f. 197v, M. Chmarzyna to A. Chmara, Raków 2.06.1778; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara, e.g.* s. 29, 49, 72, 74, 156, 170, 172, 179.

²⁹ Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świejkowskiego*, pp. 323–324, 341, 489–490.

³⁰ Cf. Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 109, 117–118, 120.

³¹ Cf. Michalski: *Plan Czartoryskich naprawy Rzeczypospolitej*, pp. 12–26; Idem: *Reforma sądownictwa*, pp. 27–43

³² Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świejkowskiego*, pp. 360–365; Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 27, 37, 51, 72, 102–103, 122–124; BJ, Sign. 6211, f. 94v, *Silva rerum A. Chmary*; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 135–140.

senators seemed to favour reforms in the spirit of the Enlightenment. All of them i.e. Chmara, Świeykowski and Jeleński were, at various times, more or less connected with the “Familia”³³, but it should not be forgotten that the opposition also considered carrying out reforms in a similar spirit.³⁴ The movement aiming at repairing the state gained momentum at the time of the 1764 election, but unfortunately personal animosities and dislikes still prevailed, which Russia quickly used for its ends. Chmara, Świeykowski and Jeleński shared their opinion on the political situation, and they all accepted the path of repairing the state indicated by the new king Stanisław August. It seems that Russia was to serve as a guarantor of the internal stability of the Polish-Lithuanian state, more as a protector-ally³⁵ than an administrator (the role played by successive ambassadors of Catherine II until 1788). Hence their dislike of Russia on the one hand and their conviction of its military and political superiority on the other hand caused that they distanced themselves from the most important political undertakings supported by Russia, such as the delegation parliament (1767–1768) or the partition parliament (1773–1775).³⁶ All those future senators maintained such an attitude until the Great Sejm. They supported its reforms, the auction of troops up to 100 thousand, with a 10 grosz tax; they were in favor of abolishing the *liberum veto* and free elections but against the principle of hereditary succession to the throne. They rejoiced at the removal of Golota nobility from political rights and at the same time advocated granting political rights to the middle class. Here their thinking was consistent: the

³³ Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 355–379; Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, p. 154. About the attitude of A. Chmara see Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (further: BN): Sign. 9002/2, f. 57–57v, A. Chmara to M. Chmarzyzna, Warszawa 7.05.1764; BJ: rkps 6211, f. 95, *Silva rerum A. Chmary*.

³⁴ Cf. Michalski: *Reforma sądownictwa*, pp. 33, 38; Rostworowski: *Ostatni król*, pp. 116–125.

³⁵ They are averse to Russia, although they do not say so directly, but you can see it in their behaviour and in their attitude to the events that have taken place, and they are mindful of their own interests and those of their province; see Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 479, 482–490; Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 156, 165, 173, 193, 241, 253, 261–262. Idem: *Tropem politycznym*, pp. 106–116. Cf. Idem: *Między Rzeczpospolitą a Rosją*, pp. 69–90; Czuby: *Zasada „dwóch sumień”*.

³⁶ Cf. Kraushar: *Książę Repnin i Polska*, pp. 319–322; B. Nosow, *Ustanowienie rosyjskiego gospodstwa*, p. 672; Dukwicz: *Rosja wobec sejmu rozbiorowego*, pp. 153–178; Michalski: *Rejtan i dylematy Polaków*, pp. 176–185.

citizen is the one who pays taxes, and it was money, in their opinion, that decided about “nobility”, not the origin.³⁷ Yet, all the three senators – Rafał Jeleński was already dead at that time – accepted the Constitution of 3 May despite some reservations. Still, it was not the content of its provisions that they did not like, but the way the constitution was introduced. The point that was politically debatable for them was the hereditary succession to the throne, but not so much the succession itself as the fact that although the sejmiks of November 1790, i.e. citizens, noblemen, rejected the idea, the Sejm legalized it six months later.³⁸ It was for them a denial of the idea a law-governed homeland.

4. CAREER PATH

Adam Chmara, Leonard Marcin Świeykowski and Gedeon Jeleński were not very pragmatic people, though endowed with many talents. They were people who appreciated honesty and justice and were also flexible. Nevertheless, whenever the circumstances went beyond their moral norms, they withdrew. It seems that such an attitude from the beginning of their careers brought them public respect and built their authority, which turned out to be a very important factor, if not the most important one in their careers.

They started their political careers working as – at least of all in the case of the Jeleński family – estate administrators for their patrons and

³⁷ Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 29, 469, 474, 477, 546–547, 603; Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 230, 237–238. G. Jeleński, did not make any statements about it. Podobnie A. Chmara, Cf. NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 43, f. 116–116v, 130, 136, 176v, A. Chmara to [M. Chmarzyna], Warszawa 1.10, 19.11., 26.11. 28 12. 1788; NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 43, f. 176v, A. Chmara to [M. Chmarzyna], Warszawa 28.12.1788. A. Chmara was himself involved in the formation of the army and was proud of it. Cf. BJ: Sign. 6211, f. 100v, *Silva rerum A. Chmary*; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, p. 336.

³⁸ On the November Sejmiks see Kalinka: *Sejm Czteroletni*, 2, pp. 418–422; Zielińska: „*O sukcesyi tronu w Polsce*”, pp. 190–221; Butterwick: *Polska rewolucja*, pp. 660–690. On the senators' attitude to the issues under discussion cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 503–509; Idem, *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 233–234, 237–238, 276. Cf. *Instrukcja mińska*, 25.11.1790, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės seimelių instrukcijos (1788–1790)*, pp. 324–339; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 345–349.

providing legal services to them.³⁹ Each of them went through this stage. They all performed well the duties and obligations entrusted to them. It is also essential that no one accused them of partiality or dishonesty. Świeykowski was particularly persistent in conducting court proceedings. As a matter of principle, he was capable of conducting proceedings even if his opponents were people strongly associated with Stanisław August.⁴⁰ With their attitude and knowledge of the law they gained quite a widespread recognition. Świeykowski and Chmara became marshals of the Crown Tribunal and the Lithuanian Tribunal, respectively. As marshals they were very positively assessed by their fellow citizens as there were virtually no major complaints about them. Cases were resolved by law and not, as it sometimes happened, by connections.⁴¹ Rafał and Gedeon Jeleński, on the other hand, were scribes of decrees and by exercising this office they gained the respect of citizens.⁴²

Another area upon which the future senators proved their competences and skills were the regional parliaments of the nobility – the so called sejmiki. They were active at sejmiki when the situation called for it and then they were usually effective. None of them, however, was a typical sejmik politician of the period. We may even say that they did not like to attend the sejmiki, which was partly due to their character. They preferred to lead a quieter life, so whenever they could, they did not participate.⁴³ The same could be said about their participation in the Sejms. When they

³⁹ Cf., e.g., Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 41–42, 361–362. On the A. Chmara's activities cf. LNB: F 103, dz. VIII, Sign. 643, f. 10, M. F. Czartoryski to A. Chmara, Wołczyn 4.04.1752. Cf. LMAVB: F. 139, Sign. 4866, f. 21, A. Chmara to [A. M. Sapieha?], Grodno 12.07.1752; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 69, 74, 77, 81. On the merits of the Jeleński family cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 99–129.

⁴⁰ Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 195–206.

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 417–418; Ochmann-Staniszevska: *Marszałkowie Trybunału Koronnego*, p. 311. Filipczak: *Życie sejmikowe*, pp. 85–86; Koźmian: *Pamiętniki*, pp. 110, 336–337; on the Chmara's activities in the tribunal, cf. Mościcki: *Chmara Adam*, p. 315; A. Stankevič: *Lietuvos vyriausiojo tribunolo*, p. 456; *Opisanie aktu pogrzebowego A. Chmary*, the J. Kamiński's sermon, pp. 61–62. LNB: F 103, dz. VIII, Sign. 641, f. 23, A. Ogińska to A. Chmara, Guzów 21.02.1785; *Zbiór mów Jaśnie Wielmożnego Adama Chmary*, pp. 10–11, 12–15, 42–47, 53–60, 63–73; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, s. 286–291.

⁴² Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie*, pp. 27, 35, 100, 108–109, 124–126.

⁴³ On the G. Jeleński's attitude, cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 190, 194–195, 199–200, 225. In the case of A. Chmara we can see the withdrawal from

were still deputies, they attended assemblies, but as senators they clearly avoided them. This may be explained by their age, but we should note that economically, even after the collapse of the state, they could afford to travel to Gdańsk, Poznań or St. Petersburg, which was much farther than to Warsaw.⁴⁴

The next step on their career path was their “separation” from their promoters. Here the chronology and circumstances are different. One point, however, is common. The separation occurred in a natural way and did not generate conflicts, which Chmara, Świeykowski and Jeleński were determined to avoid. In the case of Chmara, the separation took place after the death of Sapieha,⁴⁵ while in the case of Świeykowski after a conflict over the estate of the late Lubomirski, of which he was one of the appointed administrators.⁴⁶ The situation was slightly different with Jeleński, who, as less connected and economically less dependent, manoeuvred between the Czartoryskis and the Radziwills.⁴⁷ In each of the cases in question the “separation” took place at the time when the future senators were already economically completely independent and considered to be at least wealthy citizens, while Chmara and Świeykowski were placed in a group which, in terms of wealth, was even close to the magnates. They both reached this point by starting out as non-possessors. They became wealthy through their own work and talents. The case of Jeleński was different. He did not multiply his wealth significantly during his life. He could be considered the middle nobility, which does not mean that he was less talented or diligent.

the sejmik e.g. in 1788, cf. Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 318–322 On the withdrawal of L. M. Świeykowski, Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 107, 423, 432, 435.

⁴⁴ Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 179, 202–206, 213–214, 219–221, 223–225, 227–229. G. Jeleński attended the Sejms when he had business to do. L. M. Świeykowski felt more comfortable in Kołodno yet he planned to travel to Vienna. Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 423–534. A. Chmara found himself better off in Lithuania and in business, after the first phase of the Great Sejm he no longer appeared in Warsaw, later he went to St. Petersburg; Rolnik: *Tropem politycznym*, pp. 106–116; Idem: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 342–382.

⁴⁵ Cf. Rolnik: *Dwór Michała Antoniego Sapiehy*, pp. 124–125; LM AVB, F 139, b. 4870, ff. 27–30, A. Chmara to M. K. Sapieha, Słonim, 31.01.1762; BJ, Sign. 6643, f. 22, Piotr Słucki to A. Chmara, Dereczyn, 26.01.1761.

⁴⁶ Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 367–369.

⁴⁷ Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 99–149, 167.

He paid more attention to promoting the members of his very large family,⁴⁸ which obviously increased the political significance of the Jeleński family as a whole. It was unattainable for Świeykowski, who had only two politically active sons and did not form one “party”⁴⁹ with his brothers; nor was it possible for Chmara, who had no descendants at all but only a brother, who was politically visible only in Minsk.⁵⁰ As a family, the Chmaras did not play an important political role, while the Świeykowski family, related to Szczesny Stanislaw Potocki, became one of the most important families at the time of the Targowica Confederation, led by Szczesny Stanislaw Potocki. In all the situations above, starting from at least the 1770s–1780s. Chmara, Świeykowski and Jeleński were no longer “clients”. They rather tried to conduct politics according to the principles and programme they had adopted, perhaps not strictly articulated, but according to the principle: for the good of the citizens, their little homelands, but also for the good of the state. Private matters appeared in their actions, but they could hardly be described as „self-interest”, which was the malady of the former Commonwealth. In some situations Jeleński might have behaved in this way, promoting members of his family, but he argued it was for the good of the Polish-Lithuanian state. He believed that he supported people prepared to serve the state.⁵¹

At some point but at different moments each of the senators presented above, being in the entourage of Stanislaw August’s influence, came into conflict with him. No matter how complex the reasons were, there was also an ideological aspect to the conflict. In each case, however, it was the King who, for various reasons, withdrew from the programme to reform the state. In fact, it was our senators who much more consistently supported it.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 52, 108–109, 125, 145, 179–180, 203, 209.

⁴⁹ He benefited from their help, but he pursued his own policies and promoted his older sons. Cf. Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 423–577.

⁵⁰ J. Chmara was assisted by Adam, but this can hardly be considered a family policy. Cf., e.g., the assistance in applying for offices and deputy functions, Order of St. Stanislaus; BCz.: Sign. 699, p. 245, Chmara to Stanislaw August, Mińsk 18.05.1787; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 258, 276, 308.

⁵¹ Cf. Rolnik: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 29, 52, 125, 153, 180, 183, 196, 203, 209, 216, 271, 274.

⁵² Cf. Ibidem, pp. 101–103, 224–225, 237–238; Idem: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 372–376, 420, 466, 475, 509–510, 512. A. Chmara’s conflict with the King concerned

There is no doubt that they all owed their elevation to the senatorial office to the king; yet, they were by no means opportunistic but rather ideological in their defence of the reform programme that had attracted them to the royal politics. Moreover, they were consistent in it. Świeykowski is known to have been rejected by the King in 1776, although the nature of this conflict is not precisely known. It might have been the matter of defending the rights of Lubomirski, the political loser, who was eventually deprived of his rights to the estate, the administrator of which was the later Voivode of Podolia. He resigned from this function as he saw the unethical behaviour of the other administrators.⁵³ There was another dispute with the King during the Targowica Confederation, when Świeykowski considered the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May to constitute an attack on civil liberties. According to him, the King was attracted by despotism and acted against the will of the nation, as the nation had voted against the principle of the hereditary succession to the throne at the November Sejmik.⁵⁴ Świeykowski did not live to see the fall of the state, even though he warned the Targowica confederates of it.⁵⁵ Also a moment of ambiguity appears in the case of Jeleński. Here, however, the issue concerned the problem of rewarding merit. The Castellán of Novogródek, despite the fact that he distanced himself from the Constitution of 3 May, remained loyal to Stanisław August, but clearly from a certain moment he started to look after his family interests, predicting the fall of the state.⁵⁶ The most ideological dispute arose between Stanisław August and Chmara. While the rejection of Chmara from the parliamentary function in 1776 is considered to have been an accident resulting from miscommunication⁵⁷, the fundamental issues arose at the election for the

the election of the starost of Minsk in 1787. Cf. Idem: *Adam Chmara*, pp. 300–309. Later, A. Chmara's relations with the King improved, he supported the May Act, although he was also on the list of those who favoured Moscow. Cf. NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 38, f. 82, copy, A. Chmara do Stanisław August, n.p. 8.05.1792; Szczygielski: *Referendum trzecioma-jowe*, pp. 340–341; Smoleński: *Ostatni rok*, p. 308.

⁵³ Rolnik: *Leonarda Marcina Świeykowskiego*, pp. 367–376.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, pp. 505–510, 513–517.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, pp. 567–568, 574–575.

⁵⁶ Cf. Idem: *Województwo mińskie i Jeleńscy*, pp. 238–239, 241, 256–258, 261–263.

⁵⁷ Cf. BJ: Sign. 6666, ff. 362v, 363–363v, 364, J. N. Chęcki to A. Chmara, [Warszawa] 29.07.1776, 5, 12.08.1776.; BN: Sign. 9002/3, f. 119, A. Chmara to M. Chmarzyna, Szczorsy 23.06.1776; BStW: Sign. akc. 1780, f. 99, M. Chmarzyna to A. Chmara, Choroszewicze 1.09.1776.

starosty of Minsk in 1787. It is not the intention of the author of this paper to decide who was right. The fact is that Chmara's ambition was to control the entire Mińsk Voivodship. He was already voivode at that time and also wanted to be the head of the Mińsk Voivodship. However, Stanisław August had another candidate, Michał Hieronim Brzostowski, but the problem was that he was not associated with Mińsk at all. Chmara resigned from seeking that office but he put forward a "Mińsk" citizen as a candidate, who, however, was rejected.

Later, the Voivode of Minsk never showed openly his dislike towards the King; after all, he distanced himself from the current political events. He was the only of the senators in question to attend the Great Sejm of 1788–1792, but only at its beginning. He supported the Great Sejm's reforms, but it should be noted that he did not comment on the Constitution of 3 May though he did appear at the February Sejms of 1792, which approved of the Act and the reforms. At the Minsk Sejmik he supported the Constitution and the reforms, though.⁵⁸

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the attitudes and behaviour of selected senators of the state leads to certain reflections and cautious generalisations. It so happened that all these senators were born more or less at the same time, in the 1720s, except Jeleński, who was born slightly earlier – in 1712. Nevertheless, they all belonged to the generation shaped in the Saxon times, which is generally considered to have been one of the worst periods in the history of the Commonwealth. Their examples seem to suggest that one should not make unequivocally negative judgements about those times. It was in those times that the senators began their careers. Although they developed their careers in the Stanislavian times, it should be noted that at least two of them, i.e. Chmara and Świeykowski, started their careers as complete *nouveaux riches* and entered the Stanislavian years as politicians already

⁵⁸ Cf. NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 43, f. 25, [?] to A. Chmara, *Niechorowszczyzna?* 12.02.1792; NGAB: F 1324, op. 1, Sign. 30, ff. 44–45, Report on the election meeting of judges – 20.02.[1792]. W. Szczygielski, *Referendum trzeciomajowe*, pp. 340–341; Rolnik: *Adam Chmara*, s. 315–400.

recognised in their environment. In this respect, Jeleński's path to the career was less tough. They were all educated, although it is not known where they received their education; they were familiar with the law; they spoke Latin and, what is important, they were interested in the world, had rich book collections and used them. They had their own ideas about the political and social reality around them and expressed them in writing. As far as social issues were concerned, they followed the spirit of the Enlightenment and advocated – according to various criteria – a broadening of the definition of the concept of a citizen. For them – along with Jeleński who was less explicit here – peasants were the economic basis of the whole state and should be taken care of. Similarly, townspeople and the economic development of towns were in the focus of their concern. Moreover, they also considered the issue of education to be important. These examples show that the image of society and its elites in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was more complex. The model of a political career and the model of a politician in the Commonwealth of the times of Stanisław August was not entirely and explicitly negative: it was not always based on connections, blood ties or clientelistic ties. The senators featured in this article were educated and pro-state minded people for whom a political programme was essential to shape their careers. Educated in the Saxon times, they reached the peak of their careers in the Stanisławian era. They were always committed to the letter of the law and always maintained respect and friendship for the families who supported their careers and for Stanisław August as the head of the state and a politician striving to repair the state. All the senators in question, however entangled in clientelistic relations, found it easy to break free of the connections, becoming all worthy companions of Stanisław August. Ideologically, they were close to him, and were interested in reforming the structures of the state along with the social order. It was this ideology and the undoubted talents of these senators that were decisive for their outstanding political careers, which seems to be characteristic of the times of the Stanisławian period, and also pinpoints the significant changes occurring in the consciousness of the elite.

Translated Agnieszka Chabros

DROGI AWANSU SENATORSKIEGO ADAMA CHMARY, LEONARDA
ŚWIEYKOWSKIEGO I GEDEONA JELEŃSKIEGO W CZASACH
STANISŁAWOWSKICH

PRZYCZYNEK DO DYSKUSJI

STRESZCZENIE

Tekst ukazuje zmiany zachodzące w sposobach awansowania do godności senatorskich w Rzeczypospolitej czasów stanisławowskich (1764–1795) oraz przyjmowanych przy tym kryteriach. Prezentuje przy tym sposób myślenia elit o Rzeczypospolitej i pojęciu obywatelstwa. Wskazane przykłady karier sugerują (mimo pewnych wątpliwości), że na karierę mogły liczyć osoby, które okazywały zainteresowanie dobrem kraju i województwa, a zarazem ideologicznie popierały program naprawy Rzeczypospolitej króla Stanisława Augusta. Kryteriami awansu stawały się zdolności, talenty konkretnych osób, a nie klientelna służba bądź przynależność do znamienitej rodziny. Była to droga do budowy nowoczesnego społeczeństwa, w którym o karierze decydują charakter i zdolności, a nie „błękitna” krew lub układy klientelne.

DIE WEGE DES SENATORISCHEN AUFSTIEGS VON ADAM CHMARA,
LEONARD ŚWIEYKOWSKI UND GEDEON JELEŃSKI IN DER ZEIT
VON KÖNIG STANISŁAW II. AUGUST

BEITRAG ZUR DISKUSSION

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag zeigt die Veränderungen in den Regeln der Beförderung zur Senatorenwürde in der Rzeczypospolita der „Stanislauszeit“ (1764–1795) und die dabei angewandten Kriterien. Er zeigt auch, wie die Eliten die Rzeczypospolita und das Konzept der Staatsbürgerschaft verstanden. Die Beispiele der Karrieren deuten, dass (trotz aller Zweifel) nur derjenige eine Karriere machen konnte, dem das Wohl des Landes und der Woiwodschaft am Herzen lag und der gleichzeitig ideologisch mit König Stanisław Augusts Programm zur Wiederherstellung des Landes übereinstimmte. Zum entscheidenden Kriterium für den Aufstieg wurden die Fähigkeiten und Talente bestimmter Personen und nicht die Klientelpolitik oder die Zugehörigkeit zu einer prominenten Familie. Das war ein Weg, eine moderne Gesellschaft aufzubauen, in der Charakter und Fähigkeiten und nicht „blaues“ Blut oder klientelistische Beziehungen über die Karriere entscheiden sollten.

THE PATH TO THE PROMOTION TO THE SENATOR'S OFFICE OF ADAM
CHMARA, LEONARD ŚWIEYKOWSKI AND GEDEON JELEŃSKI IN THE
STANISLAVIAN TIMES

THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION

ABSTRACT

The text shows the changes occurring in the way of promotion to the senatorial dignity in the Commonwealth of Stanislavian times (1764–1795) and the criteria adopted in this process. It shows the thinking of the elites about the state or about the concept of “citizenship” in it. These examples of careers suggest, despite any doubts, that a political career should be developed by those who showed interest in the good of the country and the voivodship as well as those who, at the same time, ideologically supported King Stanisław August's programme concerning the repair of the state. The criteria for promotion became the skills and talents of particular individuals and not client service or membership in a prominent family. These were difficult alliances, but at their core there lay concern for the state, where the King's and the citizens' thoughts converged. It was a way to build a modern society, where character and ability, rather than “blue” blood or clientelistic relations, would determine a career.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE / SCHLAGWORTE / KEYWORDS

- król Stanisław II August (1732–1798); drogi karier; Adam Chmara; Gedeon Jeleński; Leonard Marcin Świeykowski
- König Stanisław II. August (1732–1798); Karrierewege; Adam Chmara; Gedeon Jeleński; Leonard Marcin Świeykowski
- King Stanisław II August (1732–1798); career paths; Adam Chmara; Gedeon Jeleński; Leonard Marcin Świeykowski

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