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## The implication of Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska's Belarusian correspondents

*O czym świadczą białoruscy korespondenci Antoniny Obrębskiej-Jabłońskiej?*

*Пра што сведчаць беларускія карэспандэнты Антаніны Абрэмбскай-Яблонскай?*

### Abstract

After analysing the content of previously unpublished letters to Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska written by her Belarusian correspondents over the years 1955–1990 (AUW Sp 37/76, 79–81), it was possible to add to and correct existing research data in the field of literature and culture, folk culture in particular, but, more importantly, on Belarusian linguistics. Apart from various greeting and congratulations cards, the data were classified in six categories: 1. Organization and functioning of the Department of Belarusian Studies at the University of Warsaw; 2. Academic publication of papers authored by Belarusian researchers in Poland and of Polish researchers' papers in Belarus as well as joint publications; 3. Reviews and peer reviews of papers and research programmes; 4. Mutual supervision of exchange internships; 5. Book and journal exchange; 6. Miscellaneous. The collection of correspondence presented in the paper is proof of active and sincere collaboration between Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska, together with the research units she led, and her Belarusian partners, who welcomed both her academic expertise and charismatic personality. This leads to a general conclusion that genuine commitment of particular people can go a long way towards ensuring advancements in research, despite adverse political and organizational circumstances.

**Keywords:** history of science, Belarusian linguistics, Department of Belarusian Studies at the University of Warsaw, scientific collaboration between Poland and Belarus in the humanities, role of researchers' correspondence in the history of science

### Abstrakt

Na podstawie analizy niepublikowanych listów korespondentów białoruskich do Antoniny Obrębskiej-Jabłońskiej napisanych w latach 1955–1990 (AUW Sp 37/76, 79–81) dokonano uzupełnienia i sprostowania dotychczasowych oficjalnych ustaleń w zakresie badań literatury i kultury (historia nauki), zwłaszcza ludowej, i przede wszystkim białoruskiego językoznawstwa. Dane pozyskane z listów, z wyłączeniem listów z życzeniami i gratulacyjnymi, podzielono zgodnie z tematyką: 1. Organizacja Katedry Filologii Białoruskiej na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim i jej funkcjonowanie; 2. Wspólne publikacje oraz druk prac badaczy polskich na Białorusi i białoruskich w Polsce; 3. Recenzowanie i wzajemna ocena publikacji drukowanych i programów naukowych; 4. Wzajemna opieka nad stażystami; 5. Wymiana książek i czasopism; 6. Inne. Zaprezentowana korespondencja świadczy o rzetelnej, nieporozowanej współpracy Obrębskiej-Jabłońskiej i kierowanych przez nią jednostek naukowych z partnerami z Białorusi. Kompetencje naukowe i cechy osobowościowe badaczki spotkały się z życzliwym przyjęciem strony białoruskiej. Analiza wzajemnych relacji prowadzi do wniosku, że dzięki autentycznemu zaangażowaniu można osiągnąć wiele w badaniach naukowych, nawet w niezbyt sprzyjających warunkach politycznych i organizacyjnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** historia nauki, językoznawstwo białoruskie, Katedra Filologii Białoruskiej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, naukowa współpraca polsko-białoruska w zakresie humanistyki, rola korespondencji uczonych w historii nauki

### Анацыя

Аналіз зместу лістоў, напісаных беларускімі гуманітарыямі да Антаніны Абрэмбскай-Яблонскай у 1955–1990 г. (AUWSp 37/76, 79–81), даў магчымасць папоўніць, а таксама выправіць некаторыя афіцыйныя дадзеныя, важныя для гісторыі навукі ў галіне літаратуры і народнай культуры, а, перад усім, беларускага і параўнальнага мовазнаўства.

Ліставанне, акрамя святочных і віншавальных паштовак, канцэнтруецца вакол наступных тэм: 1. Арганізацыя і дзейнасць Кафедры беларускай філалогіі Варшаўскага ўніверсітэта. 2. Сумесныя навуковыя публікацыі і друкаванне артыкулаў беларускіх даследчыкаў у Польшчы, а польскіх на Беларусі. 3. Узаемнае рэцэнзаванне друкаваных прац і рэкамендацыя навуковых праграм і праектаў. 4. Апякунства над стажорамі абодвух бакоў. 5. Багаты абмен кнігамі. 6. Іншыя.

Апісанае ліставанне сведчыць аб добрасумленным супрацоўніцтве А. Абрэмбскай-Яблонскай і навуковых устаноў, якімі даследчыца кіравала, з беларускімі партнёрамі. Яе навуковыя кваліфікацыі і асабістыя рысы характару сустракаліся з добразычлівай і высокай ацэнкай беларускага боку. Можна зрабіць агульную выснову, што ва ўмовах аўтэнтчнага зацікаўлення ўдзельнікаў супрацоўніцтва можна многа дасягнуць у навуцы, нават у неспрыяльных палітычных і арганізацыйных умовах.

**Ключавыя словы:** гісторыя навукі, беларускае мовазнаўства, Кафедра беларускай філалогіі Варшаўскага ўніверсітэта, польска-беларускае супрацоўніцтва ў галіне гуманітарных навук, значэнне ліставання вучоных для гісторыі навукі

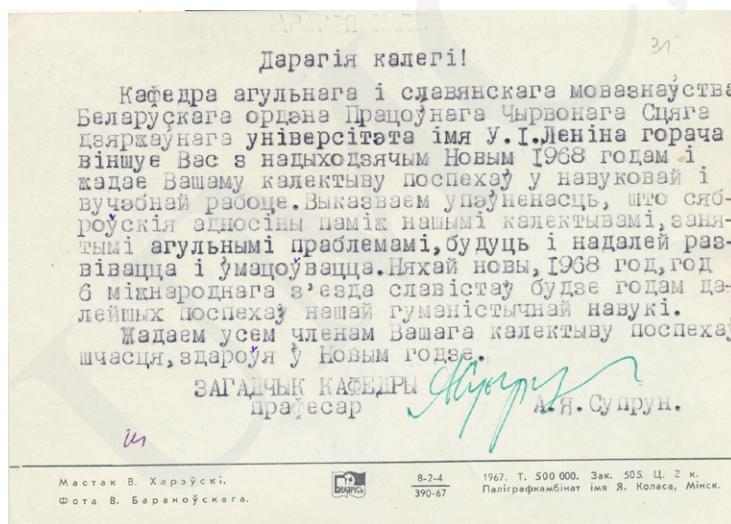
As part of the annual Belarusian-Polish conference, in 2018 the Belarusian State University (Belarusian: БДУ; BDU) and the Yakub Kolas Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus in Minsk as the organizers prepared a round table discussion devoted to the siblings Antonina and Józef Obrębski, Polish researchers who studied Belarusian linguistics, ethnology, sociology and other matters. The scientific results of these ventures were published in Minsk in the 38<sup>th</sup> issue of *Беларуськіца-Albaruthenica* edited by Iryna Bagdanovich and Maryna Svistunova (Bagdanovič, Svistunova 2018). Together with Mirosław Skarżyński, I am currently preparing Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska's fascinating correspondence with Kazimierz Nitsch (Smułkowa, Skarżyński 2018) for publication. I decided to present selected letters of Belarusian authors to Professor Obrębska-Jabłońska during the round table discussion, along with some of her replies recovered on the basis of drafts or carbon copies preserved along with those letters (Smulkova, 2018, pp. 118–136).

The present paper introduces readers to the role and importance of Professor Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska in the eyes of her Belarusian correspondents on the basis of the entire source material preserved. It may seem too personal or subjective at times, but at the same time it sheds light on additional aspects of the research efforts of both parties. In some cases, it may even provide readers with arguments which rectify certain official phrases that are in circulation.

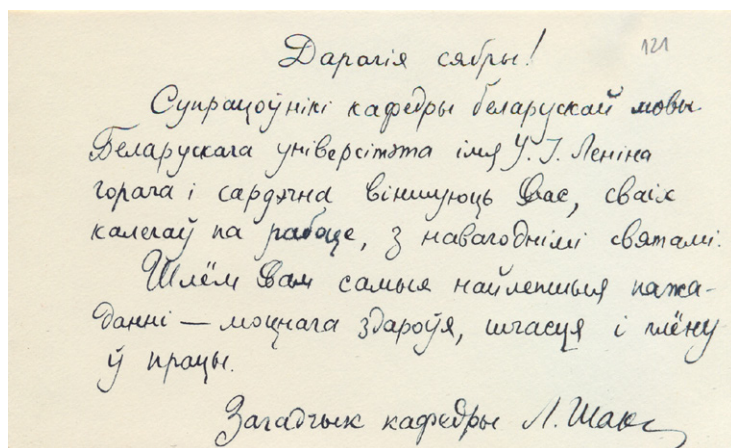
The ample correspondence Obrębska-Jabłońska received from various countries and in at least several languages is deposited in the Archive of the University of Warsaw (AUW Sp. 37/79–81). It includes letters and postcards from 18 Belarusian correspondents who exchanged from several to dozens of letters with Obrębska (with the exception of one correspondent who wrote one letter) over the years 1955–1990.

During the round table discussion, I outlined Obrębska-Jabłońska's correspondence with Mikhail Sudnik, PhD, head (1957–1983) of the Yakub Kolas Institute of Linguistics of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences, Yuzefa Matskevich, PhD hab., long-time manager of the Dialectology Sector of the Institute, Mikalai Biryła, PhD hab., Belarusian language lecturer over two years (in the academic years 1956–1957 and 1957–1958) at the Department of Belarusian Philology at the University of Warsaw (hereinafter: KFB UW), a broad-minded researcher (in the fields of onomastics, dialectology, phonetics and phonology, lexicology) from the Institute of Linguistics; with Aleksandra, the second wife of Branislaw Tarashkevich, who was staying in Moscow while working on publishing Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* translated into Belarusian (Mickevič, 1984), and with Uladzimir Dubouka, a Belarusian poet repressed in the Soviet Union. Obrębska-Jabłońska provided the last correspondent with the necessary bibliographic information regarding the possibility of Moniuszko's stay in the Belarusian milieu in St. Petersburg on 27 November 1842 (sic!). There is a single letter from the late Arsen Lis, author of a book about Tarashkevich (Lis, 1966). He thanks her for Tarashkevich's translation of *Pan Tadeusz* into Belarusian (Mickevič, 1984) published in Poland and informs her about delivering a copy to Aleksandra Tarashkevich.

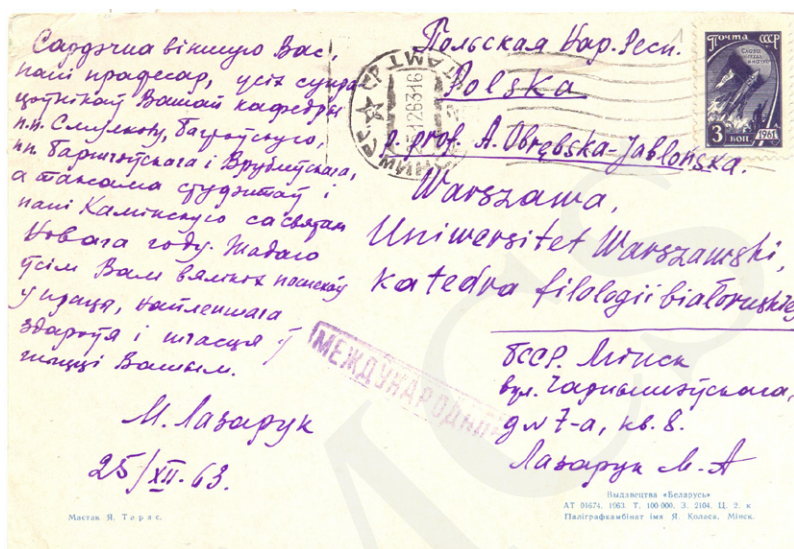
The Belarusian correspondence of Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska may be divided into several thematic groups. First of all, numerous postcards and greeting cards should be considered separately from the rest. They were sent on different occasions: New Year and Christian holidays, but also Labour Day on 1 May, and especially wishes on International Women's Day (also from women), celebrated in Belarus on 8 March. It is worth noting that they are usually personal, individualized wishes that show great respect for the addressee. One such card from Mikhail Sudnik, head of the Yakub Kolas Institute of Linguistics at the BAS, was signed by numerous employees of the Institute at the time, see scans No. 50001 (AUW Sp 37/80), 10001, 80001 (Sp 37/79).



New Year greetings from A. Ya. Suprun



New Year greetings from L. Shakun



New Year greetings from M. A. Lazaruk

It is worth noting that Professor Lazaruk, another lecturer from the beginnings of KFB UW, names all the members of the Department in his wishes, including beloved janitor Józefa Kamińska, who was like a mother to both lecturers and students.

The scientific correspondence, including more personal letters as well, may be divided into the following groups: 1. Organization and functioning of the Department of Belarusian Studies at the University of Warsaw; 2. Academic publication of papers authored by Belarusian researchers in Poland and of Polish researchers' papers in Belarus as well as joint publications; 3. Reviews and peer reviews of papers and research programmes; 4. Mutual supervision of exchange internships; 5. Book and journal exchange; 6. Miscellaneous.

## 1. Organization and Functioning of the Department of Belarusian Studies at the University of Warsaw

Obrębska-Jabłońska exchanged letters with Anna Fidrowska (Auw Sp 37/81), who had been delegated from the University of Kazan to the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Warsaw, where she taught practical and descriptive grammar of the Belarusian language in the 1954/1955 academic year. I was invited by Professor Jabłońska to join these classes and commuted from Toruń, being a student of Professor Halina Turska at Nicolaus Copernicus University at the time. The subject of my master's thesis was the impact of Belarusian dialects on Polish inflection among the inhabitants of a certain area in the eastern Białystok region. I was being prepared to work on the *Atlas of East Slavic Dialects in Poland*. This was my first contact with the Belarusian literary language. I remember the Belarusian descriptive grammar exam

I took at the end of the course. According to Fidrovskaja's letter to Obrębska-Jabłońska, it must have been on 5 February 1955, as she wrote that letter the same night:

Сегодня приезжала Смулэк специально для того, чтобы оформить экзамен по белорусскому языку. Этим занималась сегодня и с Судник<sup>1</sup> (AUW Sp 37/81).

Until I read Fidrovskaja's letters, I was not aware who she was and why it was her that was preparing young staff in Poland for research on the Belarusian language. I still have no clear answer to the second question, but she was presumably recruited for the University of Warsaw by the Polish-Soviet Institute in Warsaw, at 10 Foksal St., where the Belarusian Laboratory managed by Obrębska-Jabłońska operated. It is clear from Fidrovskaja's letters that she was working with people whom I met at the first training meetings in Warsaw and at the first dialectological camps (Żednia, Krynki) organized by Professor Jabłońska. In this respect, Fidrovskaja's letter of 18 September 1955 is very distinctive. The reader learns that she had studied in Minsk together with Professor Mikhail Ivanavich Zhyrkevich, who was head of the Department of the Belarusian Language at the BDU at the time of the letter. She was keen on the possibility of developing Belarusian studies in Poland. The letter sheds new light on the organization of the Department of Belarusian Studies at the University of Warsaw. In Minsk, she had learned that two lecturers would be sent to Warsaw from there, and she was trying to pass a set of Belarusian artistic and scientific literature as well as course programmes in Belarusian studies on to Professor Obrębska-Jabłońska. A year later (20 November 1956), Fidrovskaja writes:

З вялікай радасцю даведалася я аб арганізацыі пры Варшаўскім універсітэце Кафедры беларускай філал. Шчыра вітаю Вас, першага загадчыка кафедры і ад усяго сэрца жадаю Вам паспяховай і плённай працы ў галіне падрыхтоўкі кадраў. Прашу Вас не адмовіць перадаць маё шчырае прывітанне і пажаданні паспяховай працы таксама і ўсім працаўнікам кафедры, а таксама пажаданні паспяховай вучобы аддзялення<sup>2</sup> (AUW Sp 37/81).

In her letter of 23 November 1956, Fidrovskaja thanks Professor Jabłońska for extensive information on the organization of the Department's work and is happy about the extramural studies for teachers. At the same time, she urges Obrębska-Jabłońska to rest and take care of her health since it is indispensable for effective work. The two correspondents met in person in November 1958 at the International Congress of

<sup>1</sup> 'Today, Smulek came specially to take an exam in the Belarusian language. I dealt with it today together with Sudnik'

<sup>2</sup> 'It is with great joy that I learned about the organization of the Department of Belarusian Philology at the University of Warsaw. I sincerely welcome you, the first head of the Department, and with all my heart I wish you successful and fruitful work in the field of training. Kindly convey my sincere greetings and wishes for successful work to all of the Department's employees, as well as wishes for successful studies to the Department'

Slavists in Moscow. Subsequently, they exchanged several letters regarding the supervision of exchange internship students from the University of Kazan.

Interestingly enough, the History section on the website of the Department of Belarusian Philology at the University of Warsaw states that the Department of Belarusian Philology was founded in 1956, with no source cited. The site reads that it was only by the Rector's decision of 30 September 1977 that the Chair of Belarusian Philology was instituted, to be renamed the Department of Belarusian Studies in 2005. This information is missing one important stage in the reorganization of the University of Warsaw from 1 September 1968, and thus the history of Belarusian studies in Warsaw. The Faculty of Philology was divided into two faculties then: Foreign Philology, and Polish and Slavic Philology. Throughout the 1968/1969 academic year, classes of the Belarusian studies course were certainly still held at the Department of Belarusian Philology at the Faculty of Polish and Slavic Philology. There is no information in print concerning the University of Warsaw's lecturers teaching classes in the academic years of 1969/1970 and 1970/1971. During one of those years, all Chairs were demoted to the rank of Departments. The exact date can be found in the archives of the Faculty of Russian Studies and Applied Linguistics. This is not necessary for the purposes of this article. The head of the Chair of Belarusian Philology, Professor Obrębska-Jabłońska, retired in 1971. I assumed her duties at what was already known as the Department of Belarusian Philology (and performed them until 1975), operating within the Institute of Russian Studies. Similarly, the Chair of Ukrainian Philology was turned into a Department within the same Institute. In the 1974/1975 academic year, according to the AUW, the Faculty of Polish and Slavic Philology was divided into the Faculty of Polish Studies and the Faculty of Russian and Slavic Studies, still housing the Departments of Belarusian and Ukrainian Philology until 1977. The Rector's note of 1977 mentioned above in fact restored the Department of Belarusian Philology to the rank of a Chair, which had already existed since 1956. In an official letter of 7 August 1956, signed by Minister Stefan Żółkiewski, Obrębska-Jabłońska was designated to organize the Chair of Belarusian Philology. In a letter of 31 January 1957, the Rector of the University of Warsaw appointed her head of the Chair as of 1 February 1957 (AUW, SP 37).

The first years of the Chair's (not the Department's) operation are the subject of the correspondence between Obrębska-Jabłońska and Mikalai Biryła, discussed in the article mentioned above and printed in Minsk (Smulkova, 2018, pp. 118–136). Hopefully, the website of the current Department of Belarusian Studies of the University of Warsaw will soon be rectified.

## 2. Academic Publication of Papers Authored by Belarusian Researchers in Poland and of Polish Researchers' Papers in Belarus as Well as Joint Publications

Obrębska-Jabłońska discussed the issue of joint publications and academic publishing of papers authored by Belarusian researchers in Poland and of Polish researchers' papers in Belarus with Mikhail Ramanavich Sudnik, Mikalai Vasil'evich Biryła and Yuzefa Florianovna Matskevich. This was discussed in detail in the previous paper. At this point it should be noted that Obrębska-Jabłońska published three articles in Belarus and invited Belarusian linguists to have their papers printed in *Slavia Orientalis*, of which she was the editor. The journal includes an article she wrote together with Yuzefa Matskevich and Anna Muraszka. As a collective (Stanisław Glinka, Jan Pietruczuk, Elżbieta Smułkowa, Anna Bagrowska, Teresa Jasińska-Socha, Jadwiga Głuszkowska), we contributed data on the dialects of the eastern Białystok region to the dictionary entitled *Слоўнік беларускіх гаворак паўночна-заходняй Беларусі і яе пагранічча ў пяці тамах*, edited by Yuzefa Matskevich and published in Minsk (Mackevič, 1979–1986).

Fiodar Yankouski's letter of 6 May 1971 could add some important details to the issue of the *Concise Polish-Belarusian Dictionary* edited by A. Obrębska-Jabłońska and M. Biryła (Obrębska-Jabłońska, Biryła, 1962). The letter confirmed that 250 copies of the dictionary had arrived and announced that an identical quantity would be ordered. There are, however, no details concerning the cooperation with the publishing house. See letter scan No. 30001.jpg (Ref. Code Sp 37/79).

In a letter dated 18 December 1968, Yankouski thanks Obrębska-Jabłońska for the prints of Jabłońska's works and apologizes: што ў прысвечаным Вам томе *Slavia Orientalis* маё слова было не на ўзроўні, не выказала той пашаны і павагі, якую Вы заслужылі ў навуцы, культуры, асвеце<sup>3</sup> (AUW Sp 37/79).

In this section, we may also include a quote from the letter Obrębska-Jabłońska received from Yauhen Mikhailavich Kamarouski, a Belarusian language professor at the BDU. It showed what difficulties Belarusian scholars had to overcome at that time if they tried to have a paper published abroad through official channels. On 10 December 1969, Kamarouski submitted an article about the elements of the Belarusian language in the works of Eliza Orzeszkowa to *Slavia Orientalis*, unable to publish it in any Belarusian journal due to the lack of Polish fonts. His submission must have been approved by Obrębska-Jabłońska because he then informed her that the article had been sent by the BDU and apologized for the delay. His paper required official scientific (it was reviewed by Professor Lev Mikhailavich Shakun) and formal approval from the ministry (Sp 37/79).

<sup>3</sup> 'that in the volume *Slavia Orientalis* dedicated to you, my word was not of [high] standard, that I did not give you the proper honour and respect that you deserve in science, culture and education'

Another letter is a thank you note from 18 December 1966 sent by Alaksey Grutsa from the BAS Institute of Linguistics, grateful for the possibility of having his syntax article printed in *Slavia Orientalis* (Sp 37/80).

Мінск, 14. V. 1969г.

Гаварэная нам і прафесар!

Толькі ўсім недаўна айдымаў магільнае адаслалі у Васіе расмаргавосіме тым даўно абвешані артыкулы. Цяжка было і фотка з афармленнем розных сфер момантальна, але мне не хацелася прыватным шляхам перадаваць яго. Цяпер гэты артыкул праціснуў усе і настанці ад навуковай апрабачні (яго тады прафесар Л. М. Шапун і сударэжнікі напісана Міністэрства, і накіравана да Вас адрчылі мне Беларускае адрэжнікі ўні ведаі тэпталі.

Само сабой ўраўняе, Вы маеце найчас права спарагаць яго, калі велькі, і друківаць, любімі спосабам і ў любімі выданнях. Я шматлікі моцна ўраціў блі Вас, гаварэная нам і прафесар, калі ён аднаведзе, не Вамі молад, тэпталі навуковымі патрабаванням, надрывкаван, яго. Я разумею, што ўраціў тэпталі да Вас будзе не мал лёгка.

У далейшым я абвешаю Вам, што адрэжнікі Вамі за Вашу ласку і даналому.

Вяснімаю да Вас даследаванні рабодзінаў нашага грамадства, калі Вы не маеце іх ласку.

З высочайшым уважай і ўраўняе  
дзі. Келарэў

Р. С. Адрэжнікі да Вас урацілі перадаць  
М. Г. Жыжэвіч і Л. М. Шапун.

Ад мене урацілі даць - Намі Вадзімовіч.

Letter from Y. M. Kamarouski

### 3. Reviews and Peer Reviews of Papers and Research Programmes

The most important collective papers produced at the BSSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of Linguistics and reviewed by Obrębska-Jabłońska were discussed in my previous paper (Smulkova, 2018, pp. 118–136). The thanks she received by mail show that her

reviews helped the team of authors of the *Atlas of Belarusian Dialects* (Avanesaj, Krapiva, Mackevič, 1963a and b) receive the Lenin Prize for 1971 (Belarusian: Ленінская прэмія).

At this point, I would like to present an excerpt from a letter from Ivan Kramko, written also on behalf of his collaborators, Alena Yurevich and Alena Yanovich from the BSSR AS Institute of Linguistics. They thank Obrębska-Jabłońska for the review of the second volume of the *History of Belarusian Literary Language* (Kramko, Ūrėvič, Ānovič, 1968). The copy of the book reviewed has a handwritten inscription from the author:

Шчырай нашай прыяцельцы праф. Абрэмбскай-Яблонскай з найлепшымі пажаданнямі аўтар І. Крамко<sup>4</sup> (Scan No. 90001 (AUW Sp 37/80)).

2.11.1971

Шанюная Тані прафесар,  
ад імя маіх сяўтарак Юр'віч і Яновіч і ад сабе  
асабіста пранішу вам сардэчную падзяку за рэ-  
цэнзію на 2-ы том "Гісторыі бел. літ. мовы". Рэцэнзію  
можна параўноўваць з-аўстарыям, без якога ка-  
савамо не бачыць бы свайго твару. Прасіма з  
аўтарка ўбачыце не зусім прэсудні твар. Мы разу-  
мем, што не ўсё ў нашай кнізе добра асветлена  
Але ўсё ж прасіма, што некалькі год праца  
не пракалі марна, што некаторыя моманты  
пацутлівай гісторыі нашай літаратурнай мовы  
нам удалося паказаць больш-менш правільна.  
Шчырае вам дзякуй і за маральную  
падтрымку, і за клопат з даволікай адбіт-  
кі з часціца.  
Нахай вам бог дае выдатнае здароўе  
і поспехі!

І. Крамко

Letter from I. Kramko

<sup>4</sup> 'To our sincere friend Prof. Abremska-Yablonska with best wishes the author I. Kramko'

#### 4. Mutual Supervision of Exchange Internships

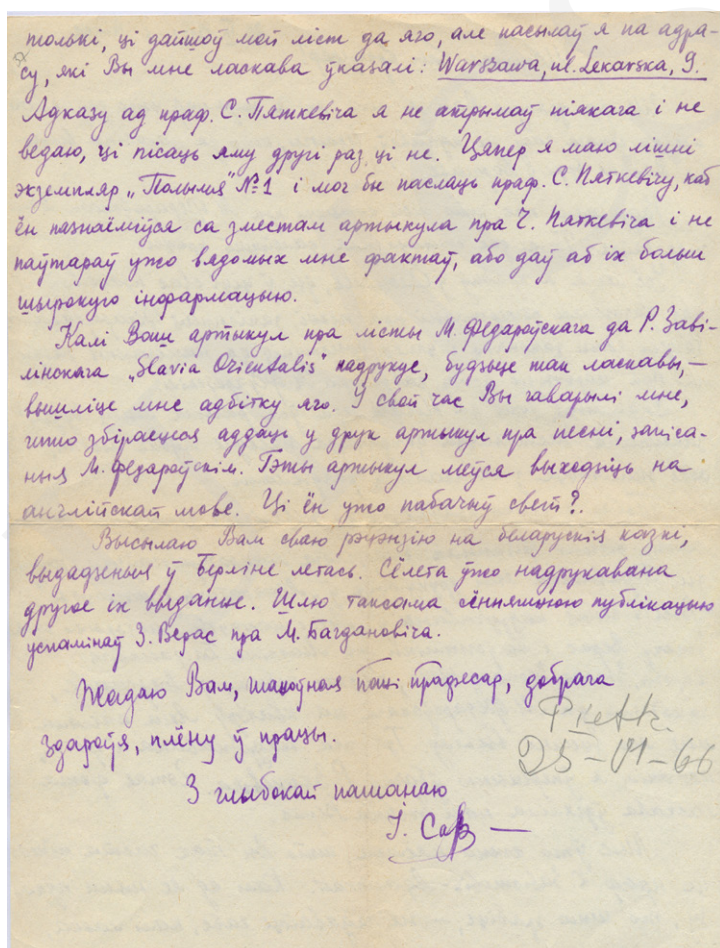
I have already elaborated on the question of Polish interns hosted in Belarus and Belarusian interns in Poland in my previous article, which was printed in Minsk. Apparently, it was discussed in the correspondence between Obrębska-Jabłońska and Dr Sudnik, Yuzefa Matskevich and Anna Fidrovskaya (Smulkova, 2018, pp. 118–136). Letters from Yanka Salamevich show examples of Obrębska-Jabłońska's scientific supervision over the Belarusian interns. Salamevich worked in Warsaw and several other research centres, continuing the legacy of Michał Federowski, whose post-war volumes of *The Belarusian People* were published, as we know, by Obrębska-Jabłońska with a group of collaborators. He wrote his first letter after returning from Warsaw on 21 December 1966. As you can see below, he was genuinely affectionate and grateful. In addition, he informs Obrębska-Jabłońska that he has submitted an article about Czesław Pietkiewicz, which he wrote in Warsaw, for publication in the journal *Polymia*.

Ужо немала часу праляцела з таго дня, як я вярнуўся да дому, але ўвесь гэты час не забываюся пра ўсіх Вас, пра кафедру. Заўсёды з глыбокай удзячнасцю буду я ўспамінаць нашы сустрэчы, размовы, абмен думкамі. Вам асабіста я прыношу сваю падзяку і нізкі сыноўскі паклон за тую душэўную цеплыню, тую вялікую ўвагу і клопаты, якія Вы праявілі ў адносінах да мяне. Без іх я зрабіў бы значна менш, чым мне ўдалося зрабіць за час мае камандзіроўкі. Таму вялікая сімпатыя і ўдзячнасць, пашана і самыя найлепшыя ўспаміны будуць у маёй душы, у маім сэрцы, калі я ўспамінаю пра Вас, мілая і добрая пані прафесар<sup>5</sup> (Ref. Code Sp 37/80).

In the University of Warsaw Archive, there are four more letters from Salamevich, from 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1971. He was deeply involved in the search for archive material related to Michał Federowski and Czesław Pietkiewicz. He informed Professor Jabłońska about his investigation efforts in the archives of Vilnius, Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Moscow, as well as about the progress of his dissertation. We may infer from the letters that Professor Obrębska-Jabłońska sent him a reply and helped him contact particular scholars in Poland. She sent him some books, including the seventh volume of *The Belarusian People*. In a letter from 10 December 1971, her former intern notified her about defending his dissertation entitled *Міхал Федароўскі – фалькларыст* on 11 May. On 12 November it was approved by the Higher Certification Commission in Moscow (Belarusian: БАК), which granted him his doctoral degree (Belarusian: кандыдат навук). His book on Federowski was to be published

<sup>5</sup> 'It's been a long time since I got home, but all this time I have not forgotten about all of you, about the Department. I will always remember with deep gratitude our meetings, conversations, exchange of views. Personally to you, I express my gratitude and send a low filial bow for the warm-heartedness, for the great attention and care that you showed me. Without it, I would have done much less than I managed to do during my stay. Therefore, great affection and gratitude, respect and the best memories will be in my soul, in my heart, when I remember you, my dear and kind Professor'

in 1972 (Salamevič, 1972). In addition to the scientific discussion between the correspondents, Salamevič sent Professor Jabłońska greeting cards at Christmas and New Year, about 20 in total, until 1988. A review of this type of cards shows that she would usually write back. Some of them bear handwritten reply dates, often in pencil (see scans 60001 and 6a0001; 70001, 7a0001 (Ref. Code Sp 37/79)).



Letter from Y. Salamevič

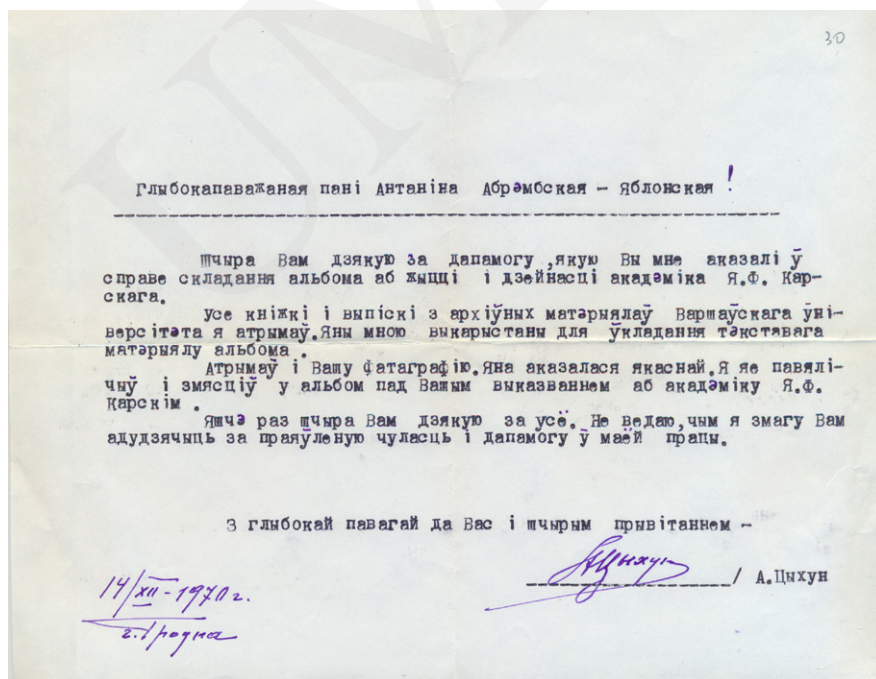
## 5. Book and Journal Exchange

Book exchanges between the correspondents occurred on a grand scale. The books Obrębska-Jabłońska sent to Belarus were not only well-known publications in the field of Belarusian studies that she had authored, co-authored or edited, such as *The Belaru-*

sian People (Federowski, 1897–1981), Tarashkyevich's translation of *Pan Tadeusz* into Belarusian (Mickevič, 1984), or the first volume of the *Atlas of East Slavic Dialects in the Białystok Region* (Glinka, Obrębska-Jabłońska, Siatkowski, 1980), but also serial works published nationwide, such as the *Old Polish Dictionary* (Urbańczyk, 1953–2002), *PTJ Bulletin* and other linguistic journals. Our academic and private libraries were greatly expanded and updated in the field of the humanities thanks to those mutual donations, especially in a situation when it was impossible to purchase such publications officially.

## 6. Miscellaneous

At this point, I would like to present a letter dated 14 December 1970 from Apanas Tsykhun, father of outstanding Belarusian linguist Henadz Apanasavich Tsykhun. He thanks Professor Jabłońska for the archival materials she sent him and for the photo for his album about Yefim Fyodaravich Karskiy (scan No. 20001 (Ref. Code Sp37 / 79)).



Letter of thanks from A. Tsykhun

It is worth emphasizing that the scientific letters exchanged between friends include many personal comments in which the correspondents talk about health, the birth of children and grandchildren, housing they have received, holidays and travels, etc. Above all, they thank each other for providing help in various situations.

Finally, I would like to conclude this paper by briefly expounding on its title, taking the previous paper into account as well (Smulkova, 2018, pp. 118–136). What are the implications of the Belarusian correspondents of Antonina Obrębska-Jabłońska?

1. First of all, the correspondence is proof of honest collaboration between the Professor and the scientific units she managed, the Laboratory of the Belarusian Department of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Department of Belarusian Philology of the University of Warsaw, and the Yakub Kolas Institute of Linguistics of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences as well as the Slavic and Belarusian Chairs of the State University of Belarus in Minsk.

2. Thanks to her work on developing post-war Belarusian research, not only in the field of linguistics, her scientific accomplishments and personal qualities, Obrębska-Jabłońska found decent and kind partners on the Belarusian side. Her students and colleagues had a great opportunity to learn from them in a friendly atmosphere, just like Belarusian interns did in Poland.

3. Thanks to the genuine commitment of particular people, scientific research can undergo substantial development, even under conditions which are not necessarily favourable in terms of politics and organization.

*Translated into English by Marek Robak-Sobolewski*

### **List of sources**

Archive of the University of Warsaw [AUW Sp 37/76, 79–81]

1. New Year greetings from A. Ya. Suprun, head of the Chair of General and Slavic Linguistics (scan No. 2010001).
2. New Year greetings from L. Shakun, head of the Chair of Belarusian Linguistics (scan No. 2050001).
3. New Year greetings from M. A. Lazaruk, (scan No. 2080001).
4. Letter of thanks from A. Tsykhun (scan No. 2020001).
5. Letter from Y. Salamevich (scan No. 207a0001).
6. Letter from I. Kramko (scan No. 2090001).
7. Letter from Y. M. Kamarouski (scan No. 2040001).

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