

Directions in Research of the Oldest Polish Press (1501–1729)

KEY WORDS

Polish press, history, 16th–17th century, research, ephemeral newspapers, serial newspapers handwritten newspapers, *Merkuriusz Polski*

ABSTRACT

This article contains a brief overview of the research on Polish press from the years 1501–1729, and discusses its directions and results conducted by historians and press experts after 1945. A citation analysis is widely used in the evaluation of the research output. The interest in the oldest Polish press is relatively high. A total of 55 scholars worked in the field, publishing 102 works (including 16 books), cited 524 times (including 267 times below the half-life period). Eight authors had the largest contribution: Konrad Zawadzki, Kazimierz Maliszewski, Jan Lankau, Władysław Myk, Adam Przyboś, Jan Pirożyński, Janusz A. Drob and Urszula Augustyniak. The most frequent subjects of research were ephemeral and serial newspapers, *Merkuriusz Polski* and handwritten newspapers, as well as other periodic newspapers and press from Gdańsk.

In Polish research tradition, the first stage of press development spans from the founding of *Merkuriusz Polski* (1661), up to the date of the first continuous newspaper, *Nowiny Polskie*, which was published in 1729. This was a long and hectic period, and both dates are strictly conventional, yet the symbolic beginning caused numerous problems. Not questioning the fact that *Merkuriusz* was the first Polish periodical paper, it was in fact an ephemera. Published for seven months, and both before and after its demise, many ephemeral and so-called serial newspapers already existed, as did continuous periodicals in the Gdańsk Crown.

Current knowledge on the early history of Polish press has been burdened by the shortage of source information at the brink of the 1960s, when work on the first volume of *Prasa polska w latach 1661–1864* (Polish Press in the years 1661–1864)¹ was taking place. At that point, Jerzy Łojek assumed that the issue of press prototypes is too scarcely researched

¹ *Prasa polska w latach 1661–1864*, auth. J. Łojek et. al., Warszawa 1976.

in order to be an issue of scientific discussion. As a result, the mentioned author limited himself to describing the *Merkuriusz* and *Poczta Królewska*, acknowledging the others in only a few short sentences². This seemed like a reasonable assumption, the knowledge on press primitives up to the mid-20th century was in its infant stage³. A breakthrough came with the theoretical work and documentation of Konrad Zawadzki at the beginning of the 1970s, completed by a bibliography published in 1977–1990, and supplemented with a number of studies. The initiative of the Institute of Journalism of the University of Warsaw, *Digital Library of Polish and Poland-Related News Pamphlets (Cyfrowa Biblioteka Druków Ulotnych Polskich i Polski Dotyczących [CBDU])* also played a significant role in this field, making entire works from the most well-known ephemeral and serial newspapers from the period available online⁴.

Currently, based on most recent sources and studies, the established borderline dates can in all probability be moved to the 16th century. The first press published in Polish was in the year 1501; the first paper entirely dedicated to Polish topics appeared in 1514; the first ephemeral paper in Poland can be dated to 1525, while in 1557 the first ephemeral paper written in Polish was published⁵.

Research tradition

Information on the beginnings of Polish press appeared already in the first works on the history of press and literature published at the beginning of the 19th century. Due to lack of knowledge, the first authors (Adam T. Chłędowski, Jerzy Samuel Bandtkie i Konstanty Majeranowski)⁶ limited themselves to short statements. A larger study referring to the vast background and the origin of press was written only in 1861 by Franciszek M.

² J. Łojek, *Prasa polska w latach 1661–1831*, [in:] *Prasa polska w latach 1661...*, pp. 11–15.

³ *Press primitive* according to *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie*, ed. by J. Maślanka, Kraków 1967, p. 200, is a description of occasional, one-subject and one-time prints from the 15th–18th century, preceding proper press.

⁴ *Cyfrowa Biblioteka Druków Ulotnych Polskich i Polski Dotyczących z XVI, XVII i XVIII wieku* – <http://cbdu.id.uw.edu.pl/> [2011.11.12]. Description: W. Gruszczyński, M. Ogrodniczuk, *Cyfrowa Biblioteka Druków Ulotnych Polskich i Polski dotyczących z XVI, XVII I XVIII w. w nauce i dydaktyce*, [in:] *Polskie Biblioteki Cyfrowe 2010*, Poznań 2011; M. Ogrodniczuk, W. Gruszczyński, *Digital Library of Poland-related Old Ephemeral Prints: Preserving Multilingual Cultural Heritage*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Workshop on Language Technologies for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage*, Hissar 2011, pp. 27–33, also in an online version: <http://aclweb.org/anthology-new/W/W11/W11-4105.pdf> [accessed: 21.01.2012].

⁵ K. Zawadzki, *Początki prasy polskiej. Gazety ulotne i seryjne XVI–XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 49–51.

⁶ A.T. Chłędowski, „O początkowych pismach periodycznych w języku polskim”, *Pamiętnik Lwowski* 1816, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 122–133; J.S. Bandtkie, „Wiadomość krótka o gazetach polskich”, *Rocznik Towarzystwa Naukowego Krakowskiego* 1819, Vol. 4, pp. 205–224; K. Majeranowski, „Wiadomość historyczno-krytyczna o pismach periodycznych w Polsce od najdawniejszych czasów aż do roku 1826 alfabetycznie zebrana”, *Flora Polska* Vol. 5 (1826), pp. 34–64; Vol. 6 (1826), pp. 37–61; Vol. 8 (1827), pp. 37–44.

Sobieszczański⁷. According to the then current knowledge, the author pointed to three main fields of the prehistory of Polish press: 1) undefined news published already in the 16th century, to which he dedicated almost two pages; 2) *Merkuriusz Polski* by Jan Alexander Gorczyn; 3) *Relacyje i Nowiny*, later serial newspapers, which were an in-between form of primitive and periodical press. After the demise of *Merkuriusz* – we read: “Polish-Swedish wars and unfortunate state events for long did not provide for a similar project; single issues of *Nowiny* and *Relacyje* were reprinted, which in time took on a more stable form and became constant in their circulation”⁸.

Three decades later, most of Sobieszczański’s theories were reiterated by Stanisław Czarnowski⁹, slightly developing only the problem of ephemeral newspapers, which were called ‘journalistic monuments’. The predecessors’ theses were later described in detail by scientists active at the turn of the century: Piotr Chmielowski, Wiktor Czajewski, Stefan Gorski and Grzegorz Smólski¹⁰, but their works only to a small degree expanded the current horizon of knowledge. Among works published during the period of the Second Polish Republic, the ones that stood out were the brief study by Stanisław Jarkowski from 1937 and a short outline by Adam Bar from 1938¹¹. Much of the mentioned work was used by the German scholar Ursula Hahlweg, who during the first year of the war, published the most comprehensive work on the subject – *Flugblatt und Zeitung in den Anfängen des Zeitungswesens in Polen*¹², in which she described ephemeral press, *Merkuriusz*, press of the transient stage and the first ‘piarists’ newspapers (*Nowiny Polskie* and *Kurier Polski*). The work however did not bring a breakthrough, as it was a compilation unsupported by a source query, not going beyond the work of its predecessors. It was, quite notably, written from an anti-Polish perspective.

⁷ F.M. Sobieszczański, *Czasopisma polskie*, [in:] *Encyklopedia powszechna Orgelbranda*, Vol. 6, Warszawa 1861, pp. 304–353.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 305.

⁹ S. Czarnowski, *Literatura periodyczna i jej rozwój*, Vol. 2, Kraków 1895, pp. 282–304.

¹⁰ P. Chmielowski, *Dziennikarstwo polskie*, [in:] *Wielka encyklopedia powszechna ilustrowana*, Vol. 18, Warszawa 1896, pp. 624–636; W. Czajewski, *Warszawa ilustrowana. Stara Warszawa*, Vol. 4, *Czasopiśmiennictwo*, Warszawa 1896; S. Gorski, *Dziennikarstwo polskie. Zarys historyczny*, Warszawa 1905; G. Smólski, „O polskim czasopiśmiennictwie najstarszej doby. Od jego początku do okresu stanisławowskiego, tj. do roku 1764”, *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1910, Vol. 1, pp. 534–567.

¹¹ Among others: S.T. Jarkowski, „Die polnische Presse in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart”, *Zeitungswissenschaft* 1937, No. 8, pp. 505–612; A. Bar, *Zarys dziejów czasopiśmiennictwa polskiego do wybuchu powstania listopadowego*, [in:] *Katalog wystawy czasopism polskich od w. XVI do r. 1830*, Kraków 1938, pp. 13–35.

¹² U. Hahlweg, *Flugblatt und Zeitung in den Anfängen des Zeitungswesens in Polen*, Königsberg 1940.

Post-war research

After the war, especially in the 1950s, work on Polish press primitives was done by a few scholars, who – as the analysis suggests – greatly broadened the knowledge on *Merkuriusz*, but marginally developed the problem of ephemeral and serial newspapers. The scope of these achievements is represented by a synthesis published in 1960 by Jan Lankau *Prasa staropolska na tle rozwoju prasy w Europie 1513–1729*¹³ (*Old Polish Press against the Development of Press in Europe 1513–1729*), in which alongside parts prepared very professionally (*Merkuriusz*), there were poor, if even debatable pieces. An acute reviewer of Jerzy Łojek's work claimed that it was *a collection of studies presenting both erudition and amateur methodology of its author*¹⁴. This opinion surely weighed on the fact that the subsequent editor of the synthesis from the Institute of Literary Research perceived these issues – apart from the *Merkuriusz* and *Pocztą Królewiecka* – as not yet properly researched. As a result, in all the later works of Łojek, especially in the volume *Prasa Polska w latach 1661–1864* (*Polish Press in the Years 1661–1864*), the topic of old press was reduced to a description of the two mentioned titles and general information on the remaining issues. At the same time, from the beginning of the 1970s, the case of press primitives was covered by Konrad Zawadzki alone, who laboriously and in a prolonged search query compiled bibliographic documentation. Its conclusion was a work written towards the end of his life, *Początki prasy polskiej* (*The Early Polish Press*), which appeared after his death in 2002¹⁵.

For the above stated reasons, the general research analysis on the entire history of Old-Polish press is not valid, as the discussed research field contains three areas, which developed independently of one another. Separate research should therefore examine: 1) *Merkuriusz*, 2) ephemeral and serial newspapers, 3) remaining issues, especially periodical press from the turn of the 17th and 18th century, written newspapers and the Gdańsk prints¹⁶.

¹³ J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska na tle rozwoju prasy w Europie: 1513–1729*, Kraków 1960.

¹⁴ Rev. J. Łojek, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* Vol. 1 (1962), pp. 366–369.

¹⁵ K. Zawadzki, *Początki prasy polskiej...*; J. Pirożyński, *Konrad Zawadzki jako badacz polskich i dotyczących Polski gazet ulotnych oraz gazet seryjnych z XVI–XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Konrad Zawadzki. Bibliograf, prasoznawca, warsawianista*, ed. by R. Nowoszewski, Warszawa 2003, pp. 43–46.

¹⁶ Cf. B. Kosmanowa, *Prasa polska i jej odbiorcy, cz. 1, Od gazetek rękopiśmiennych do przelomu oświeceniowego*, [in:] *Media dawne i współczesne*, ed. by B. Kosmanowa, Vol. 1, Poznań 2006, pp. 7–14.

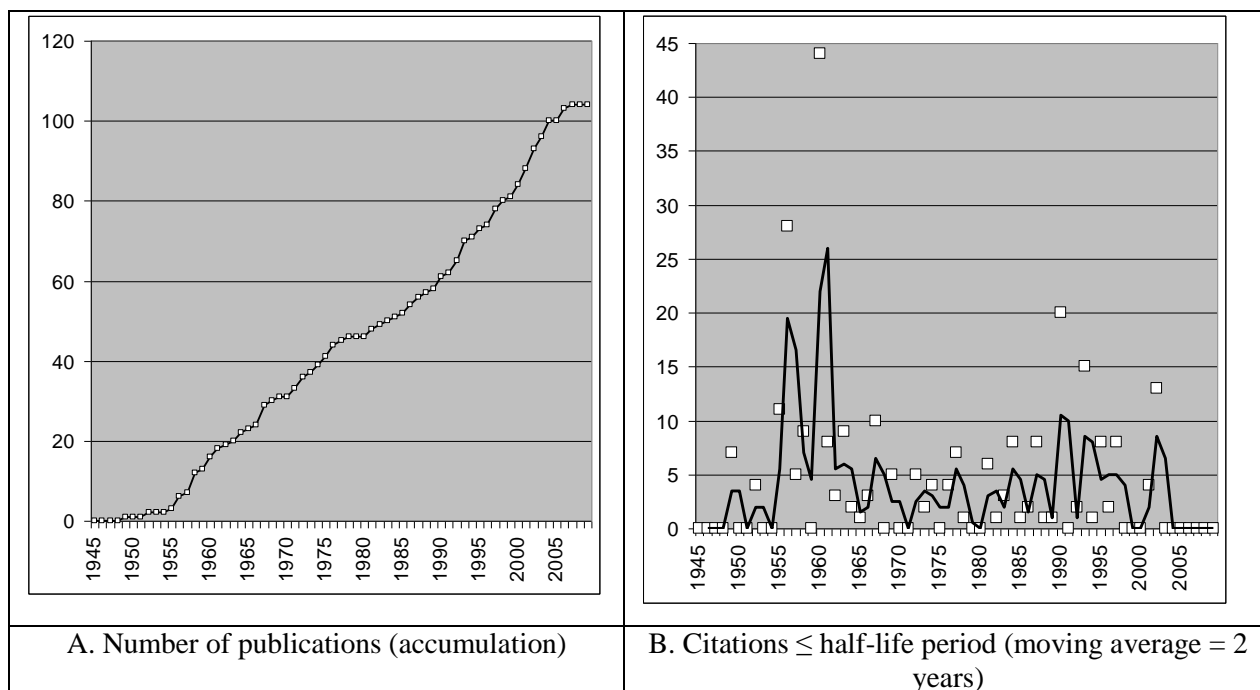


Figure 1. Research on Old-Polish Press (1501–1729) – trends

Source: Own research based on the *The Citation Index of the History of Polish Media (CIHPM)*.

Despite this polarization, post-war research on old Polish press was done relatively systematically. Detailed research¹⁷ revealed that an average of one to three publications annually appeared on the subject since 1955 (figure 1A). It should however be underlined that these were diverse works in terms of quality and their value measured in citations varied (1B). During the entire period between 1945–2009, 102 works on the analyzed subject were published (among them 16 books), which were in total cited 542 times [267 below half-life]¹⁸.

Despite a significant number of scholars involved (55 people), occasional researchers dominated, and a number of them were engaged in their research field for a longer period of time. Only a few had significant achievements to be proud of: Konrad Zawadzki (21 works) [63 citation]¹⁹, Kazimierz Maliszewski (11) [23], Jan Lankau (5) [42], Władysław Myk (16)

¹⁷ All the data used in the article comes from the author's database *Indeks Cytowań Historiografii Mediów Polskich*. For a more detailed description, go to M. Kolasa, „Retrospektywny indeks cytowań w humanistyce. Koncepcja, metoda, zastosowanie”, *Przegląd Biblioteczny* 2011, No. 4, pp. 466–486. The total number of works on the history of Polish media during the period 1945–2009, registered in *Indeks Cytowań Historiografii Mediów Polskich* was 15 041 publications. These works were quoted 46 152 times, 23 888 below the half-life period.

¹⁸ In order not to endorse older works over writings from the years 1945–2009, citations were used from works, which were not older than 14 years from their publication date, the so-called \leq half-life period. For more on the methodology: W.M. Kolasa, „Specific Character of Citations in Historiography (using the example of Polish history)”, *Scientometrics* Vol. 90 (2012), No. 3, pp. 905–923, DOI: 10.1007/s11192-011-0553-0; selected methodological issues are also developed in the article by *idem*, „Historia mediów polskich w świetle wskaźników bibliometrycznych”, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 2011, No. 3/4, pp. 8–27.

¹⁹ In later parts of the article only \leq half-life citations were used – *cf.* footnote 17.

[10] and the four authors of book monographs: Adam Przyboś (3) [9], Jan Pirożyński (3) [9], Janusz A. Drob (2) [6] and Urszula Augustyniak (1) [5]. For most of them, old press was the subject of their PhD thesis (Augustyniak, Myk)²⁰, post-doctoral degree (Drob) or was part of their science career ladder (Zawadzki, Maliszewski). The contribution of the mentioned eight scholars (62) [167] was invaluable, making up more than 2/3 of the entire work in the field (60,7 per cent of works and over 62 per cent of citations).

Although a similar number of publications was created during the researched period, the citations analysis revealed that their reception differentiated (figure 1B). Two independent research fronts could be distinguished. The first is a short, yet intensive period of impulsive research during the 1950s and 1960s [149 citations], to the greatest extent concerned with the *Merkuriusz* [64 citations]. The other was at a later time, when the work was less drastically, but consistently developed in the remaining fields [118].

Research on the *Merkuriusz Polski*

Works on the *Merkuriusz Polski* can be dated back to the beginning of the 19th century²¹. Adam T. Chłędowski was the first to use the name in a publication from 1816²², and the first larger discussion consisting of a content analysis, typographical and formal description, came from Jerzy S. Bandtkie²³. Brief information about the paper was given by most of the 19th century handbooks on the history of literature and also in first historical press syntheses, like those earlier cited works of Sobieszcański, Czarnowski, Chmielowski²⁴. With time – as a detailed reading proved – the writings were contaminated with undocumented information. For example, in Gorski's outline from 1905, we read about the supposed arrest of Gorczyn: "Gorzyn, in order to save his publishing house, moves to Warsaw in 20 May 1661, where in the current capital of the country, with the growing centralization of movement, he had hoped to gain a broader scope of action for the paper. The growing demise of vital forces in the circles of the intelligence did not help in lifting the *Merkuriusz Polski*. All the efforts to strengthen the publishing only caused greater debt for the editor, who was perused by his

²⁰ More: E. Kędra, *Polskie gazety pisane w archiwum toruńskim z lat 1671–1772* (UMK 1976, promotor J. Wojtowicz), who's dissertation remains a manuscript.

²¹ The latest state of research includes an introduction to the article: K. Przyboś, W. Magdziarz, „*Merkuriusz Polski* jako element propagandy dworu w zestawieniu z *Gazette de France*”, *Studia Historyczne* 1975, No. 2, pp. 167–169.

²² A.T. Chłędowski, *O początkowych pismach periodycznych...*, pp. 121–133.

²³ J.S. Bandtkie, *Wiadomość krótka...*, pp. 205–224.

²⁴ Cf. footnotes 7–9.

loan-holders long after he had closed the *Merkuriusz* and moved back to Kraków. Thrown in prison, he was released only thanks to mercy of one of the church brotherhoods”²⁵.

According to Renata Majewska-Grzegorzczkova “based on the above studies of Jarkowski in the anniversary article from 1936, he enthusiastically made Gorczyn the father of Polish press, who was persecuted for his enlightened aspirations. The legend was repeated in 1940 by Ursula Hahlweg²⁶ and a certain myth was created”²⁷. The state of knowledge on the *Merkuriusz* up to the year 1945 was as follows: 1) the paper was a private initiative 2) the publisher and editor was the little-known Gorczyn 3) the paper closed down due to lack of support, while Gorczyn went to prison for his debts.

His image however changed quite drastically. Right after the war, a well-known journalist from Kraków, Jan Lankau²⁸ made a few discoveries. He looked into significant documents about Gorczyn and searched in the *Teki Naruszewicza* for significant information on inspirers, such as a letter by Łukasz Opaliński to Wespazjan Lanckoroński, which revealed the secret plans of the royalty after the Treaty of Oliva. With this, all the relevant opinions about the paper were re-evaluated. According to Lankau: 1) the *Merkuriusz* was inspired by the court and the paper had a propaganda function (representing the camp for reforms in the spirit of strengthening the king’s power, and primarily served the purpose of passing the election *vivente rege*); 2) the main editor was the king’s secretary Hieronim Pinocci, while Gorczyn held only an ancillary function; 3) Gorczyn did not go to prison. Lankau first published this information in 1949 in *Prasa Polska* [7]²⁹, which initiated a period of systematic research on the *Merkuriusz*. Among the first papers on the subject were: an interpretation study by Zofia Libiszowska [11]³⁰ kept in a Marxist tone, and a source-documentary work by Renata Majewska-Grzegorzczkova [11]³¹. The last paper (created based on the MA thesis written under Aleksander Birkenmajer) collected the dispersed knowledge on the paper and contained a typographical analysis. According to Łojek, the

²⁵ S. Gorski, *Dziennikarstwo polskie...*, pp. 19–20.

²⁶ The author recalls the work by: U. Hahlweg, *Flugblatt und Zeitung...*

²⁷ R. Majewska-Grzegorzczkova, „*Merkuriusz Polski z 1661 roku i początki periodycznego piśmiennictwa polskiego*”, *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych i Społecznych* Vol. 7 (1956), pp. 7–48.

²⁸ Jan Lankau (1980–1972) – the nestor of Kraków journalists, co-organizer and secretary of science in the Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych in the years 1957–1959. He began studies in history of art on the Jagiellonian University, continued in Munich; in 1916 he received his PhD at the Jagiellonian University for the dissertation *Drzeworyty w inkunabulach polskich* – S. Dziki, „Jan Lankau (1890 Lwów – 1972 Kraków)”, *Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 2011, No. 1/2, pp. 295–297; *idem*, *Jan Emil Lankau* [nekr.], *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1972, No. 3, pp. 200–202.

²⁹ J. Lankau, „Kilka nowych szczegółów o *Merkuryszu Polskim z 1661 r.*”, *Prasa Polska* 1949, No. 4, pp. 13–14 [7].

³⁰ Z. Libiszowska, „Pierwsza gazeta polska – *Merkuriusz Polski* – i jej rola w walce o reformę ustroju w poł. XVIII w.” *Prace Polonistyczne* Ser. 12 (1955), pp. 187–205 [11].

³¹ R. Majewska-Grzegorzczkova, *Merkuriusz Polski...* [11].

paper was precise, although not revealing, as it neglected the social context, yet it was still a great step forward³².

In 1960, two book positions about the *Merkuriusz* were published: a critical edition on the paper by Adam Przyboś [10]³³ and a piece by Jan Lankau [34]³⁴, in which three vast chapters (VI–VIII) were dedicated to the paper, and have remained its most comprehensive monograph. In later years, some new statements about the *Merkuriusz* were published by Przyboś [9]³⁵, while Wojciech Rzepka [2]³⁶, using the linguistic analysis, confirmed Lankau's thesis that the basic writing in the *Merkuriusz* was by Pinocci³⁷. Slightly later, the knowledge on the writings was broadened by Jan Sulowski [4]³⁸, who described the Italian edition of the paper discovered in the Vatican Archive.

After a brief pause in the mid 1970s, new details about the *Merkuriusz*, due to the typographical analysis, were revealed by Józef Szczepaniec [1]³⁹ (he established the location where the first 20 issues of the paper were printed). The young scholars Kazimierz Przyboś and Wojciech Magdziarz wrote an interesting comparative study, in which they underlined the propaganda role of the writing, setting it alongside the *Gazette de France*⁴⁰. After a long period of silence, in 2000 the linguist Artur Rejter⁴¹ returned to the paper, and analyzed the genres of its statements.

The 19 scientific studies were in total published during the post-war period, having received 127 citations (among them 64 below half-life) – which means that research on the *Merkuriusz* engaged nearly 24 per cent of effort in this research field. Despite the substantial literature, the problem of the first Polish paper was not exhausted – many issues remained unresolved, such as its circulation or who read it, and what reaction it caused⁴².

³² J. Rev. Łojek, *Kwartalnik Prasoznawczy* 1958, No. 1/2, pp. 175–178.

³³ *Merkuriusz Polski*, ed. by A. Przyboś, Kraków 1960.

³⁴ J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska...* [34].

³⁵ A. Przyboś, „*Merkuriusz Polski na tle epoki*”, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1961, No. 1/2, pp. 7–18 [6]; *idem*, „Nie rozwiązane problemy prasy polskiej”, *Małopolskie Studia Historyczne* 1962, No. 1/2, pp. 3–14 [3].

³⁶ W.R. Rzepka, „Gorzynowa zagadka w *Merkuryszu Polskim* z r. 1661”, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1964, No. 4, s. 10–16 [2]; *idem*, „Z badań nad słownictwem *Merkurysza Polskiego* z 1661 r.”, *Językoznawca* 1964, 11/12, pp. 18–31.

³⁷ It is worth mentioning that in one of the monographs on Pinocci, his press activity was presented as marginal: K. Targosz, *Hieronim Pinocci. Studium z dziejów kultury naukowej w Polsce w XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1967 [3].

³⁸ J. Sulowski, „Włoska odmiana *Merkurysza Polskiego*”, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1967, No. 1, pp. 65–74 [4]; *idem*, „Continuazione del Mercurio Polacco”, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1976, No. 4, pp. 377–420 [2].

³⁹ J. Szczepaniec, „Udział drukarni Bertutowiców w akcji wydawniczej *Merkurysza Polskiego* z 1661 r.”, *Rocznik Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich* Vol. 9 (1974), pp. 87–106 [1].

⁴⁰ K. Przyboś, W. Magdziarz, *Merkuriusz Polski jako element propagandy...*, pp. 167–188.

⁴¹ A. Rejter, „Polifoniczność gatunkowa *Merkurysza Polskiego* z 1661 roku”, *Napis* Ser. 6 (2000), pp. 7–17.

⁴² J. Łojek, *Prasa polska...*, p. 15.

Research on the press primitive (ephemeral and serial newspapers)

Thoughts on press primitives were on an entirely different course. The history of research on ephemeral press is almost as long as on the *Merkuriusz*. Already from the beginning of the 19th century, it was mentioned by the current press historians (Feliks Bentkowski, Adam T. Chłędowski, Jan Samuel Bandtkie, Karol Szajnocha, Franciszek M. Sobieszczański)⁴³, as by the first literary historians (Michał Wiszniewski and Waclaw A. Maciejowski)⁴⁴. A special contribution was made by Wiszniewski, who was the first to create a compilation of ephemeral press, counting 67 entries. This knowledge, without great success, was later developed by followers, until the year 1895, when Stanisław Czarnowski collected the current findings, slightly complementing them (in total 76 titles)⁴⁵. A significant drawback of the works was their imprecise, even fluent definition of ‘ephemeral prints’, at that time called ‘news’, hence many works were counted as such. A model example of this discourse is a passage from Sobieszczański’s article: “From the second half of the 16th century the printed *Listy, Nowiny, Relacje, Opisy* etc. published in Kraków and camps where kings and hetmans had mobile presses, were published unmarked, depending on when the important news from the country or abroad came or happened. These short, rarely over a sheet long, descriptions of contemporary events, as everywhere, also in Poland, preceded continuous publications”⁴⁶.

Systematic research on ephemeral newspapers developed after World War II. It was started by Jerzy Adamczyk, publishing in 1956 a failed study *Początki polskiej produkcji czasopiśmienniczej* [17]⁴⁷ (*The Early Polish Press Production*), in which he compiled 115 entries. In the same spirit, the problem was developed by Jan Lankau in the mentioned monograph [34]⁴⁸. His work – however important and in many aspects revealing – turned out to be very superficial in the discussed field. The author did not use the available archive sources and wrote a work detached from a wider context, with biased literature and a bibliography limited to that of Estreicher’s *Bibliography*. Reviewers were quick to criticize the piece, especially Jerzy Łojek: “Based on the source material, collected in an incidental and unsystematic way, and the equally random literature, the author broadly discusses those facts to which the exact material happens to correspond to (despite the actual weight of the

⁴³ Cf. footnotes 6–7; discussion on the state of research: K. Zawadzki, *Początki prasy polskiej...*, pp. 13–16.

⁴⁴ M. Wiszniewski, *Historia literatury polskiej*, Vol. 8, Kraków 1851, pp. 44–54; W.A. Maciejowski, *Piśmiennictwo polskie od czasów najdawniejszych aż do roku 1830*, Vol. 2, Warszawa 1852, pp. 676–677.

⁴⁵ S. Czarnowski, *Literatura periodyczna...*, pp. 282–304.

⁴⁶ F.M. Sobieszczański, *Czasopisma polskie...*, pp. 304–305.

⁴⁷ J. Adamczyk, „Początki polskiej produkcji czasopiśmienniczej”, *Zeszyty Naukowe UW. Prasoznawstwo* No. 2 (1956), pp. 45–115; *idem*: *Biuletyn Naukowy Zakładu Badań Prasoznawczych* No. 6 (1956), pp. 1–69. Cf. critical review J. Łojek, *Kwartalnik Prasoznawczy* 1957, No. 1, pp. 178–180.

⁴⁸ Cf. footnote 34.

problem); wherever he lacks the needed factual erudition, he dismisses it with trivial comments or silence [...]. Lankau refers in his work only to the source material and studies, in which he found certain bibliographic and biographic information from the history of press. Hence, he did not use that basic source editions and fundamental studies concerning the political and social history of the Republic of Poland in the 17th century (not to mention any the large-scale archive searches). He disregarded the entire contribution of historical science [...]. The construction of his work is surprisingly diverse and random. In small sub-chapters, the author presented, with no order or thought, facts, dates, curiosities, anecdotes, vast source entries, quotes in extenso (in Polish and Latin), and finally, general opinions about the age, often framed rather poorly”⁴⁹.

Despite obvious shortcomings in technique found in the book, Lankau’s unquestioned contribution to the field of history of press was discovering the press privilege granted to Jerzy A Priam in 1695[1]⁵⁰, and work on the *Merkuriusz*. Additionally, the above criticism did not influence the reception of the book in any negative way. The work was highly and regularly cited, including 101 citations over 40 years, 34 of which were during half-life. One can guess that it was due to no other similar publications. Moreover, the usefulness of Lankau’s work did not fade even with the publication of a monograph by Zawadzki in 2002 – it still remains the most comprehensive study on the *Merkuriusz*.

After Lankau’s the failed attempt, a new impulse to research press primitives was made in 1963 by Adam Kersten, who in the extensive article published in *Kwartalnik Historyczny* [9]⁵¹ criticized the current findings and pointed to new research postulates. According to Kersten, fundamental meaning for research progress laid in establishing the criteria of an ephemeral paper and preparing an exhaustive bibliography. The postulates soon became implemented and work gained dynamics thanks to publications by Konrad Zawadzki (21 papers) [63 citations] from the mid 1960s.

Already in 1965, Zawadzki published an important article about the unknown serial newspapers from the years 1696–1705 [3]⁵². Then in the draft from 1971⁵³, he arranged the

⁴⁹ Rev. J. Łojek, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* Vol. 1 (1962), pp. 366–369; cf. also similar notes in the review by A. Jarosz, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1961, No. 4, pp. 623–637.

⁵⁰ J. Lankau, „Przywilej na drukowanie nowin wydany przez króla Jana III Jerzemu Aleksandrowi de Priami w dniu 22 VI 1695 w Warszawie”, *Prasa Współczesna i Dawna* 1958, No. 1, pp. 112–114.

⁵¹ A. Kersten, „W sprawie badań nad początkami prasy polskiej”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 1963, No. 1, pp. 69–83 [9]; these remarks were upheld by A. Jarosz, „Perspektywy badań nad staropolską prasą ulotną XVI–XVII w.”, *Sprawozdania Wydziału Nauk Społecznych PAN* 1965, No. 3, pp. 43–46 [1].

⁵² K. Zawadzki, „Nieznane gazety z lat 1696–1705 w zbiorach Biblioteki Narodowej”, *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej* Vol. 2 (1966), pp. 433–458 [3].

⁵³ *Idem*, „Stan badań nad gazetami ulotnymi”, *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej* Vol. 7 (1971), pp. 335–353.

terminology and created theoretical fundamentals. Later he presented a broad paper on the topic of 16th century [4] prints⁵⁴, which was a shortened version of his PhD thesis (University of Lodz, 1971) written during the seminar with Helena Więckowska. However, his most significant contribution was working on the monumental three-volume bibliography of Polish ephemeral and serial newspapers, which took place in the years 1977–1990 [27]⁵⁵. The first volume became the subject of his post-doctoral degree presented in 1977 at the University of Wrocław.

In its original form, the bibliography registered 1974 entries published in the years 1501–1728, among them according to the author, 645 issues published in Poland, 55 foreign titles inspired by the Polish side and 1374 others. In it, 985 papers, i.e. 49 per cent was rediscovered, as they did not figure in Estreicher's *Bibliography*. The author otherwise concluded that the collection is incomplete, holding no more than 50 per cent of the existing titles, as the remaining have not survived to this day.

Based on the findings by Zawadzki, the first Polish print was the report *Die Ordnung zu Ofen wider den Türken gemacht...* published in Nuremberg in 1501 on the Austro-Hungarian anti-Turkish alliance signed in Buda by the Papacy, Poland, Hungary, France, Spain and Venice⁵⁶. In 1514 in Leipzig, the first paper entirely devoted to Polish affairs was published⁵⁷, and in 1525 in the press of Hieronim Wietor, the first ephemeral paper in Latin, printed in Poland was published⁵⁸. In the year 1557, in an unknown press, the first ephemeral paper written in Polish *Nowiny, które się między cesarzem a papieżem przy zamku Belliano we Włoszech stały...* concerning the defeat of the French army by the Spanish in Saint-

⁵⁴ *Idem*, „Szesnastowieczne gazety ulotne polskie i Polski dotyczące. Terminologia, definicja, charakterystyka, zagadnienia edytorskie i typograficzne”, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1972, No. 1, pp. 5–37 [1]; *idem*, „Szesnastowieczne gazety ulotne polskie i Polski dotyczące. Rys historyczny”, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1972, No. 2, pp. 165–221 [3].

⁵⁵ *Idem*, *Gazety ulotne polskie i Polski dotyczące XVI–XVIII wieku*, Vol. 1–3, Warszawa 1977, 1984, 1990 [27] – accessible from 2010 on the platform Cyfrowej Biblioteki Druków Ulotnych Polskich i Polski Dotyczących z XVI, XVII i XVIII wieku [ID UW], <http://cbdu.id.uw.edu.pl/> [accessed: 7.01.2011].

⁵⁶ *Die Ordnung zu Ofen wider den Türken gemacht durch den Papst, den König von Ungarn, den König von Polen, den König von Frankreich, den König von Spanien und die Venediger*, Nürnberg 1501; K. Zawadzki, *Gazety ulotne polskie...*, Vol. 3, item 1712.

⁵⁷ *Wahrhafter Anfang und Unterricht der Schlacht von dem König von Polen mit dem Herzog von Moscovia*, Leipzig [post 14 IX 1514] – report on the victory of the Polish-Lithuanian army over Moscow in Orsza, 8 IX 1514 and the letter of king Sigismund I to the Bishop of Poznań Jan Lubrański, K. Zawadzki, *Gazety ulotne polskie...*, Vol. 3, item 1716.

⁵⁸ *Ad Joannem Antonium Pulleonem de negotio Prutenico epistola*, Kraków [post 1 V] 1525 – Letter on the negotiations on creating a common Prussian feudal principality and Prince Albert of Prussia, paying homage to Sigismund I, K. Zawadzki, *Gazety ulotne polskie...*, Vol. 1, item 9.

Quentin was published⁵⁹. This was in detail described and reprinted *in extenso* by Zawadzki in 1981[1]⁶⁰.

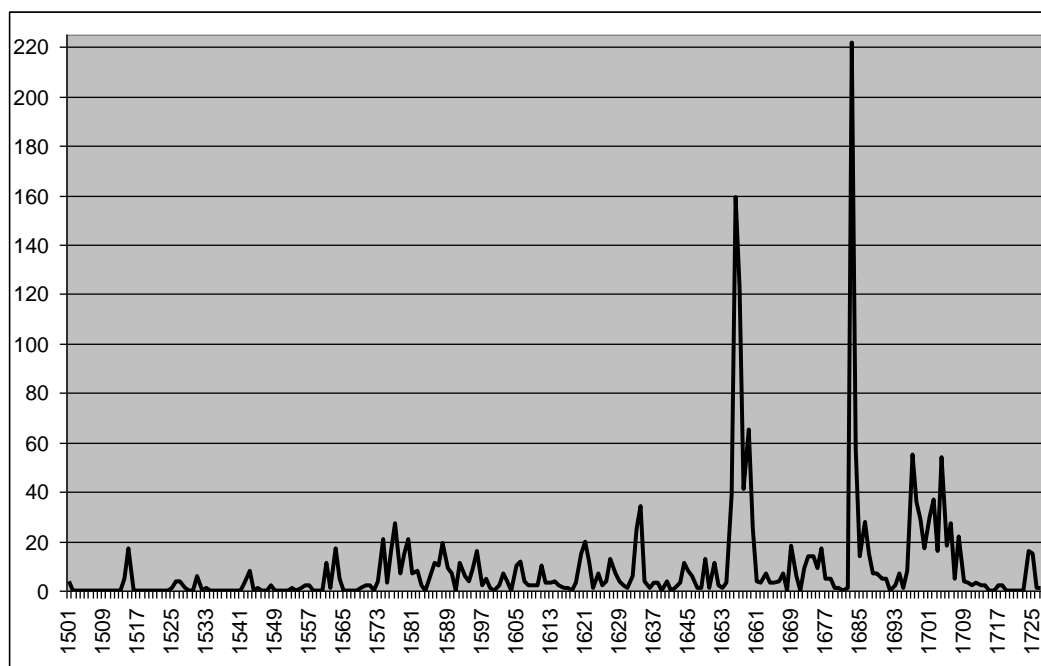


Figure 2. Ephemeral and serial newspapers 1501–1728 (Polish and Poland-related) – according to CBDU

Source: Own calculations based on the Digital Library of Polish and Poland-related News Pamphlets from the 16th to the 18th century; <http://cbdu.id.uw.edu.pl/> [accessed: 12.11.2011].

Zawadzki's bibliography, supplemented in 2010 by tens of new descriptions (2010 entries in total), became a starting point for creating the Digital Library of Polish and Poland-related News Pamphlets⁶¹, which was an initiative of Włodzimierz Gruszczyński. Based on the data there, many controversial issues can be determined, especially illustrating the dynamics and publishing geography of Polish press primitives.

Figure 2 suggests that ephemeral newspapers settled in at the time of election monarchs. During the short reign of Henry III, 25 of them were published; during the 11 years

⁵⁹ *Nowiny, które się między cesarzem a papieżem przy zamku Belliano we Włoszech stały. O nowym porażeniu Turków, o zdobyciu miasta Quintinum*, [s.l. post 28 VIII] 1557 – the report on the failure of the French army against the Spanish at Saint-Quentin and news on the battle fought between the Spanish and Pope forces near the city of Paliano; news on the victory of Emperor Ferdinand I over the Turks in Croatia, K. Zawadzki, *Gazety ulotne polskie...*, Vol. 1, item 41.

⁶⁰ K. Zawadzki, „Nowiny z 1557 r. pierwsza gazeta w języku polskim”, *Ze Skarbcza Kultury* No. 35 (1981), pp. 67–82 [1].

⁶¹ Cf. footnote 4.

of Stephen Báthory – 119 (an average of 10,8 annually)⁶² and at the period of Sigismund III Vasa – 265 papers (average 5,7 annually). At times, their number drastically increased, especially during the period of interregnum and wars, e.g. during the Deluge, 413 were published (in the peak year 1656 – 159, and 123 the following year) and at the time of the Battle of Vienna (1683) – 222. A similar increase was noted during the election *Sejm* in 1697 when 55 newspapers came out. Later, up until Poland's participation in the Northern War, there annually appeared between 20–55 newspapers.

A considerable role in the rooting of press was played by continuous serial newspapers, which were in detail described by Zawadzki [10]⁶³, and consisted of seven in total. Noticeable papers were published in Kraków by Jerzy A. Priami: *Wiadomości Cudzoziemskie Ekstraordynaryjne...* (17 issues in the years 1686–1689), then *Awizy Krakowskie* (1697–1702, 26 issues) and *Wiadomości Różne Cudzoziemskie* (1696–1705), which were published the longest – 75 issues in all. 1709 onward is the demise of ephemeral and serial newspapers, which were influenced by a increasingly difficult internal situation of the country, after instituting the Saxon army by August II.

It is worth looking into the publishing geography of Polish press primitives (table 1). Although Zawadzki mentioned 645 newspapers published in Poland, a data analysis by CBDU did not confirm this information. There were 499 newspapers published in Poland (247 with a confirmed date and 247 with an assumed one), 678 were from abroad, and 833 did not have established places of print. An analysis of the first group allows capturing the dominating position of two centers: Gdańsk – 234 newspapers (46 per cent of those found) and Kraków – 194 (38 per cent). A significantly smaller paper circulation was at the time in Warsaw – 34 (7 per cent), Elbląg – 11, Poznań – 9 and Toruń – 9, and in the remaining six cities (Leszno, Lublin, Lwów, Zamość, Słuck, Grodzisk), where 11 issues were published in total.

⁶² K. Zawadzki, *Akcja prasowa Stefana Batorego w czasie wypraw moskiewskich 1579–1581*, [in:] *Dzieje polskiej kartografii wojskowej i myśli strategicznej*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 119–125 [1].

⁶³ *Idem*, *Nieznane gazety z lat 1696–1705...*, pp. 433–458 [3]; *idem*, „*Wiadomości Cudzoziemskie Ekstraordynaryjne z Poczty Cesarskiej (1686–1689)*”, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1976, No. 4, pp. 355–376 [1]; *idem*: „*Awizy Krakowskie i Gazety z Warszawy. Dwie gazety seryjne z przełomu XVII i XVIII w.*”, *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 1986, No. 3, pp. 5–18 [2]; *idem*, „*Wiadomości Różne Cudzoziemskie 1696–1705*”, *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej* Vol. 33/34 (2001), pp. 159–176; *idem*, „*Dwie nieznane gazety sejmowe z 1696 i 1697 r.*”, *Rocznik Warszawski* [Vol.] 27 (1997), pp. 63–74 [2]; *idem*, „*Warszawa w gazetach ulotnych (od końca XVI do początków XVIII w.)*”, *Rocznik Warszawski* Vol. 23 (1993), pp. 5–38 [3]; *idem*, „*O reedycję staropolskiego czasopisma*”, *Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej* 2000, [No.] 3, pp. 45–48.

Table 1. Ephemeral and serial newspapers in the years 1501–1729 – press geography

Group	City	Known	Supposed	Total
Polish	Gdańsk	34	200	234
	Kraków	178	16	194
	Warsaw	18	16	34
	Elbląg	4	7	11
	Poznań	5	4	9
	Toruń	5	1	6
	other cities	8	3	11
	total	252	247	499
Foreign				678
Unestablished				833
Total				2010

Source: Own calculations based on the *Digital Library of Polish and Poland-Related News Pamphlets from the 16th to the 18th Century*, <http://cbdu.id.uw.edu.pl/> [accessed: 12.11.2011].

The end of his bibliographical work in 1990 encouraged Zawadzki to present an overall conclusion. Already in 1997 he published a popular monograph on writings which appeared during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa [5]⁶⁴. He discussed press issues and made a content analysis of over 200 newspapers based on a thematic code, describing as follows: the fight over the Polish and Swedish throne, wars with Turkey and the Tatars, Moscow, Swedes, the Thirty-Year War, and also presented the theme of special papers ('court' papers, religious, foreign and sensational). The work was enthusiastically received by reviewers⁶⁵, yet in time it turned out that it was nearly a helpful introduction to the core monograph of press prototypes from the 16th and 18th century. Five years later, postmortem, there appeared Zawadzki's last book – a meticulously published synthesis *Początki prasy polskiej* [11]⁶⁶ (*The Early Polish Press*), containing the entire knowledge on ephemeral and serial newspapers from their birth up to 1728. Apart from many chapters written from scratch, there were also a few parts previously published, which the author supplemented and gave a cohesive shape. The work was concluded with a chapter on source texts. The last years have proved that it gained esteem

⁶⁴ *Idem*, *Prasa ulotna za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1997 [5].

⁶⁵ Rev. J. Pirożyński, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* Vol. 42 (1998), pp. 180–182; Rev. A. Perlakowski, *Studia Historyczne* 1998, No. 4, pp. 606–608.

⁶⁶ K. Zawadzki, *Początki prasy polskiej...* [11].

in the eyes of researchers and users. Although the period of half-life from the publication date has not yet passed, the work has already been cited 11 times.

Some of the ideas started by Zawadzki were continued by other researchers. There were however few meaningful works of this kind. First was the monograph by Urszula Augustyniak [5]⁶⁷ (PhD UW, 1979) on the broadly understood (official and unofficial) information and propaganda in the times of Sigismund III. Although the issue of ephemeral press to some extent appears, the author in an interesting way presented the context of creating and exchanging information in the those times (channels, sources, inspirers, technique). Most of the remaining works were published in the 1990s and worth mentioning are those by the famous historian Jan Pirożyński (3) [9], especially the bibliographical monograph on newspapers from the collection of reverend Wick from Zurich⁶⁸ published in 1995. The author described 52 unknown Polish works from the years 1543–1587, foreign also to Zawadzki. Interesting conclusions are also in the works of Janusz Drob (2) [7], especially his post-doctoral dissertation [6]⁶⁹ (KUL 1994), in which he discussed European newspapers in the years 1648–1655 in terms of their editing, readers and content.

First periodical newspapers (from before 1729)

A separate research field were the few, apart from the *Merkuriusz*, periodical newspapers of the period. According to *Bibliografia* by Łojek, 8 papers of this kind were published before 1729, and the most known were: *Poczta Królewiecka* (1718–1720) by Jan Dawid Cenkier, the monthly *Mercurius Polonicus* (1698) by Priam, the weekly *Das Gelahrte Preussen* (1722–1724) published in Toruń and the Wrocław paper *Bresslauer Mercurius aus dem Königreich Pohlen* (1697–1699). The most popular among historians was the weekly by Cenkier, discovered and described by Wojciech Kętrzyński in 1880⁷⁰, which was the subject of serious source studies by Jerzy Łojek and Janusz Małek (5) [12]⁷¹.

⁶⁷ U. Augustyniak, *Informacja i propaganda w Polsce za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1981 [5].

⁶⁸ J. Pirożyński, *Z dziejów obiegu informacji w Europie XVI wieku. Nowiny z Polski w kolekcji Jana Jakuba Wicka w Zurychu z lat 1560–1587*, Kraków 1995 [8].

⁶⁹ J.A. Drob, *Obieg informacji w Europie w połowie XVII wieku: w świetle drukowanych i rękopiśmiennych gazet w zbiorach watykańskich*, Lublin 1993 [6].

⁷⁰ W. Kętrzyński, „Gazeta polska z początku XVIII wieku”, *Przewodnik Naukowy i Literacki* Vol. 8 (1880), pp. 184–192.

⁷¹ J. Łojek, „Poczta Królewiecka Jana Dawida Cenkiera”, *Kwartalnik Prasoznawczy* 1957, No. 3, pp. 71–86 [5]; J. Małek, „Poczta Królewiecka, Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie 1958, No. 4, pp. 325–353; *idem*, „Z dziejów polskiego czasopiśmiennictwa w Prusach w XVIII wieku. Gazeta Poczta Królewiecka w latach 1718–1720. Nowe ustalenia oraz projekt edycji i stan jej zaawansowania”, *Mragowskie Studia Humanistyczne* Vol. 6/7 (2004/2005), pp. 116–124; *idem*, „Jerzy Byszczel (Buschel, Bisselius) z Torunia – redaktor Poczty Królewieckiej w latach 1718–1720”, *Wiek Oświecenia* [Vol.] 19 (2003), pp. 125–138.

Knowledge on the remaining ones is much more modest (4) [7]. In general, they have been described only by Lankau in his monograph, distinguishing the Priam's monthly, to which he dedicated the entire chapter⁷². The weekly published in Toruń was researched by Maria Dunajówna [3]⁷³, and the Wrocław publication by Barbara Górską[2]⁷⁴. It is worth mentioning that the bibliography by Łojek had gaps in these terms, especially in reference to Royal Prussia and Gdańsk. An expert in Toruń press Stanisław Salamonowicz mentions a newspapers, e.g. the nowhere registered *Meletemata Thorunensia* (1726–1731) and *Preussischer Todes-Tempe* (1728–1730)⁷⁵, and these are probably not the only ones left out.

Gdańsk press of the 17th century

An even greater influence on the state of press knowledge had Łojek's decision on leaving out newspapers from Gdańsk⁷⁶. According to the latest knowledge, between 1618–1719, at different time periods, 15 regular, non-ephemeral periodicals in German were published there. Lankau considered this problem already in 1960, based on the assumptions by Maria Pelczarowa and Hans Karl Gspann⁷⁷, yet this was only basic information.

A change came in 1967, when the German scholar Karl Heinz Kranhold, in Münster, published a comprehensive, richly documented monograph *Frühgeschichte der Danziger Presse*⁷⁸, in which he discussed the Gdańsk press from the years 1619–1696. In the work, he in detail presented significant publishing events, and a typographic and content-information analysis of the Gdańsk periodicals published as follows by Anders Hünefeld (1618–1643) and the Rhet and Reiniger Family publishing house (1630–1697). The book was based on impressive source material, which provided a number of chronological findings and corrections, especially resolving the problem discussed in Polish and German historiography of the so-called *Nowiny Polskie (Polnischen Novellen)*, allegedly published in Gdańsk

⁷² J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska...*, pp. 181–222.

⁷³ M. Dunajówna, *Pierwsze toruńskie czasopismo naukowe w XVIII w. „Das Gelahrte Preussen”*, [in:] *Księga pamiątkowa 400-lecia Toruńskiego Gimnazjum Akademickiego*, Vol. 1, Toruń 1972, pp. 241–272 [3].

⁷⁴ B. Górską, „*Bresslauer Mercurius aus dem Königreich Pohlen 1697–1699*”, *Ze Skarbcza Kultury* Vol. 23 (1972), pp. 253–269 [2].

⁷⁵ S. Salmonowicz, „Toruńskie czasopisma naukowe w XVIII w.”, *Rocznik Toruński*, No. 11 (1976), pp. 215–227.

⁷⁶ J. Łojek, „Statystyka prasy polskiej okresu 1661–1831”, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1965, No. 1, p. 9; S. Salmonowicz, „Uwagi polemiczne o dziejach prasy polskiej w dobie przedrozbiorowej”, *Zapiski Historyczne* 1977, No. 3, pp. 107–111.

⁷⁷ J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska...*, pp. 91–98; M. Pelczarowa, „Z dziejów oficyn drukarskich w Gdańsku”, *Rocznik Gdański* No. 14 (1955), pp. 158–160; K.-H. Gspann, „Die Anfänge der periodischen Presse in Danzig”, *Zeitschrift des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins* H. 64 (1923), pp. 43–72.

⁷⁸ K.H. Kranhold, *Frühgeschichte der Danziger Presse*, Münster (Westf.) 1967. For Polish reviews see: J. Kasprzyk, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1971, No. 1, pp. 99–100; H. Rietz, *Zapiski Historyczne* Vol. 35 (1970), No. 2, pp. 122–124.

between 1656–1657, before the *Merkuriusz*⁷⁹. The author dedicated the entire 5th chapter to this issue and provided evidence that it was most likely a string of ephemeral newspapers. Kranhold's work, despite obvious advantages, did not resonate among Polish scholars and was rarely used outside narrow fields of specialization [10 full citations, including 2 below half-life].

Apart from the treaty by Kazimierz Kubik on calendars [1]⁸⁰ and the draft by Ewa Ogonowska [1]⁸¹ on the writings of Gorfryd Lengnich *Polnische Bibliothec* (1718–1719), no larger study on Gdańsk press from that period was done for many years⁸². Only in 1999, in the monograph *Prasa gdańska na przestrzeni wieków (Gdańsk Press over Centuries)* did Małgorzata Chojnacka present a short historical outline of the former Gdańsk press, the state of research in this field and a working set of titles [3]⁸³.

The issue of written newspapers

The most poorly researched are so-called written newspapers of the period. As a complex issue, the main problem is of a methodological nature and can be narrowed down to the still unanswered question: can written newspapers, handwritten duplicated information, intended for a narrow group of readers, be considered as press? In former historiography – from Tymoteusz Lipiński to the works of Jan Lankau and Zdenek Šimeček⁸⁴ – a thesis eagerly referred to was that written newspapers were the direct predecessors of printed newspapers. No one however conducted any detailed research, mainly due to the scattering of sources and lack of bibliography. A wider discussion initiated *Katalog gazet pisanych z XVIII wieku w zbiorach Biblioteki Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich* published in 1969⁸⁵. Authors of the introduction to the catalog presented a broad outline of this issue and pointed to its Polish nature: “In Western Europe, written newspapers evolved into a mass medium of information exchange in the 16th and 17th century. Due to the increase in meaning and development of

⁷⁹ J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska...*, pp. 94–98. The author extensively reports on the discussion. In 1963 A. Kersten addressed the issue in his work *W sprawie badań...*, pp. 74–77.

⁸⁰ K. Kubik, „Kalendarze gdańskie w XVI–XVII wieku”, *Rocznik Gdański* Vol. 2 (1972), pp. 107–155 [1].

⁸¹ E. Ogonowska, „*Polnische Bibliothec* – pierwsze czasopismo historyczne na ziemiach polskich”, *Libri Gedanenses* No. 4/5 (1970), pp. 139–154 [1].

⁸² This does not concern Gdańsk ephemeral press, since it was in detail covered by K. Zawadzki in his numerous publications.

⁸³ *Prasa gdańska na przestrzeni wieków*, ed. by M. Andrzejewski, Gdańsk 1999, pp. 12–22, 38–40 and a list of titles pp. 180–181 [3] (12 titles from the 17th cent. and 35 from the 18th cent.).

⁸⁴ T. Lipiński, O gazetach pisanych w Polsce i niektóre z nich wyjątki, *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1845, Vol. 4, pp. 184–196; J. Lankau, *Prasa staropolska...*, pp. 53–68; Z. Šimeček, „Tygodniki pisane w Czechach i Polsce w XVI w.”, *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1961, No. 4, pp. 45–56 [2].

⁸⁵ A. Bułówna, *Katalog gazet pisanych z XVIII wieku w zbiorach Biblioteki Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich*, Wrocław 1969, pp. 3–58: *Gazeta pisana, stan badań i postulaty* (auth. of introd. A. Bułówna and J. Szczepaniec).

printed press in the 18th century, originating in the former century, written newspapers were first restricted in development and then entirely pushed out of circulation. In Poland, this was slightly different. In the 16th and 17th century, they were understandably very popular, but their most impressive development took place in the 18th century, especially in the years 1730–1792. The printed newspapers of the period not only didn't manage to diminish the liveliness of the written press in the country, but quite the opposite – they caused an unprecedented increase in the dynamics of their development, an expression of the social need, aroused and satisfied in the broadest sense⁸⁶.

The idea of linking handwritten newspapers with the history of press was strongly objected to by Jerzy Łojek, who stated in his review: “The social function of so-called written newspapers entirely differentiates them from all occurrences within the broadly understood press and other mass media. Written newspapers were added to the scope of historical research of press largely due to formal reasons: their titling. If there happened to be a term to describe them like: »letters cum communicatione of latest news” or something similar – no serious researcher would have thought of classifying written newspapers according to the rules of historical periodicals. They would have been cataloged according to the rules of describing and categorizing of correspondence archive. However, due to unfortunate terminology, so-called written newspapers have been included in the field of interest of press history, which causes many misunderstandings in terms of the research methodology of this discipline⁸⁷.

According to the above view, the subject of written newspapers in the works of Łojek, and what follows, also in the first volume of *Prasa polska w latach 1661–1864*, is actually not present at all.

This did not however mean that the issue was settled, let alone research concluded. Although written newspapers flourished in Poland after 1730, some issues from the brink of the 17th and 18th century were already accounted for in the beginning of 1980s (20 works) [26 citations]. Apart from the catalogues by Armela Bułówna and Józef Szczepaniec, the second documentation work – the unpublished PhD of Edward Kędra *Polskie gazety pisane w archiwum toruńskim z lat 1671–1772*⁸⁸ also had significant meaning for further research. The largest interpretation heritage of written newspapers belongs to Kazimierz Maliszewski (11) [23], who in 1979 on UMK defended his PhD on the activities of Jakub K. Rubinkowski, a

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Rev. J. Łojek, *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 1970, No. 4, pp. 595–600.

⁸⁸ More: E. Kędra, *Polskie gazety pisane...*

postmaster and erudite, who ran *sui generis* a press agency of written newspapers [3]⁸⁹. Among Maliszewski's main works is a methodological text [4]⁹⁰ written with Jerzy Wojtowicz and a monograph on the role of written press in the culture of 17th–18th century nobility [8]⁹¹ (post-doctorate UMK 1991). In later years, the author published many drafts⁹² developing the mentioned issues, which were published in a book edition in 2001 [4]⁹³, and a monograph on stereotypes sustained in written press *W kręgu staropolskich wyobrażeń o świecie* (Lublin 2006)⁹⁴.



A review of research trends on the oldest Polish press requires some conclusions. Without doubt, the most noteworthy issues reflected the scope of interest of historians and received in-depth studies, synthetic works and documentation. This however does not concern all the discussed issues, but mostly to those best explored – *Mercuriusz* and ephemeral and serial newspapers.

For obvious reasons, the *Mercuriusz* holds a special place, with 19 works [cited 127 times] dedicated to it. Despite this substantial contribution, the road to its full discovery still remains far.

Relatively substantial attention of researchers focuses on the issue of ephemeral and serial newspapers (48 works) [cited 115 times]. It is worth underlining that the merit in this field belongs to Konrad Zawadzki, who created almost half of the contribution (21 works) [63 citations], most notably, the solid documentation basics. Progress in this field is therefore the largest, however, the knowledge functions in a narrow, journalistic circulation and is rarely used by political or cultural historians. Hope for change of the situation might be in the *The Digital Library of Polish and Polish-related News Pamphlets*, which provides a full-text archive of all ephemeral and serial newspapers of the period.

⁸⁹ K. Maliszewski, „Agencja informacyjna Jakuba Kazimierza Rubinkowskiego. Ze studiów nad dziejami komunikacji społecznej w XVIII w.”, *Zapiski Historyczne* 1983, No. 3, pp. 49–69 [3].

⁹⁰ *Idem*, J. Wojtowicz, „O podjęcie badań nad tak zwanymi gazetami pisanymi z wieków XVII i XVIII”, *Studia Źródłoznawcze* Vol. 30 (1987), pp. 159–168 [4]; *idem*, *Briefzeitungen als Quelle der historischen Forschung*, [in:] *Zeitschriften und Zeitungen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, Berlin 1986, pp. 91–96.

⁹¹ K. Maliszewski, *Obraz świata i Rzeczypospolitej w polskich gazetach rękopiśmiennych z okresu późnego baroku. Studium z dziejów kształtowania się i rozpowszechniania sarmackich stereotypów wiedzy i informacji o Theatrum mundi*, Toruń 1990 [8].

⁹² E.g. *idem*, „Mieszczkańskie formy i metody komunikacji społecznej w wielkich miastach Prus Królewskich w XVII–XVIII wieku”, *Zapiski Historyczne* 1992, No. 4, pp. 39–62 [2].

⁹³ *Idem*, *Komunikacja społeczna w kulturze staropolskiej. Studia z dziejów kształtowania się form i treści społecznego przekazu w Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej*, Toruń 2001 [4].

⁹⁴ *Idem*, *W kręgu staropolskich wyobrażeń o świecie*, Lublin 2006.

The attention of researchers also focuses on the case of ephemeral and serial newspapers. Other issues however leave much to be desired. This concerns primarily the oldest periodical publications. Both the problem of 17th century Gdańsk press (the findings of Karl Heinz Kranhold) and the Toruń publications from the 18th century (works by Stanisław Salmonowicz) require thorough work and adaptation to Polish standards from German historiography. A different problem altogether is the existence of the above mentioned issue in academic discussions. Most of the available studies suggest that despite huge progress, which took place thanks to Zawadzki, Lankau's simplified vision still dominates in textbooks. Thus, to the enumerated requests, there should be added the postulate to popularize the current knowledge on an academic level.

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