




ARTICLES

Klaudia Socha

Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

klaudia.socha@uj.edu.pl

 0000-0001-7274-404X

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The Sources for the Studies on the Development of the Publishing Market and Book Prices in the 18th-century Poland

Abstract: The article focuses on the book production in the 18th century, referring to the preserved documents enabling studies on the publishing process, and the development of book prices at the final period of the noble Polish Republic. Preserved account books present management strategies of publishing companies, the cost of materials, and ways to price the work of typesetters and printers. The other source consists of insertate prints announcing publishing subscriptions, and giving accounts of subsequent editorial and printing works. These materials are extremely valuable, as there are only a very few of them preserved in Poland due to changing fortunes of the printing houses.

Keywords: early printed book – price of early printed book – early printed book marketing – early printed book production

Słowa kluczowe: książka dawna – cena książki dawnej – marketing książki dawnej – produkcja książki dawnej

This paper focuses on two types of sources that may be exploited in studies on the publishing repertoire and book prices in the 18th century in Poland. One of them consists of few preserved accounting books providing information on the production cost and retail selling price of books offered directly by manufacturers-printers. The other one includes advertising materials available e.g. in the press, which include the prices of books offered for sale by printers and middlemen-booksellers. Sometimes, advertisements contained information on the publishing process and printing cost (this pertains especially to advertisements announcing a release of a book in subscription schemes¹). Another type of advertising materials covers publishing brochures², sometimes elaborately discussing not only the content of the publication, but also the planned process of its production, as well as publisher's catalogues³ distributed by printers and booksellers, and listing titles on offer together with their current prices. An analyses of such sources may provide answers to the following questions: for how long was a given title promoted, did its price change, how far did information on a certain book reach, etc.

The prices of books prices at that time

Then, as today, the price of a book was a result of a calculation including the costs of production, materials and the maintenance of the printing house. Later in time, one also had to count in the cost of press advertisements and expenses related to the issuance of promotional materials, such as brochures. The printing houses' own costs from the 16th to the 18th century were analysed by numerous European scholars, e.g. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin⁴.

1 I. Imańska, *Subskrypcja i prenumerata w Toruniu w XVIII w.*, [in:] *Studia o bibliotekach i zbiorach polskich*. Vol. 6, ed. B. Ryszewski, Toruń 1994, pp. 61–68; K. Socha, *Osiemnastowieczna literatura społeczno-polityczna i informacyjna rozprowadzana drogą prenumeraty*, [in:] *Silva Rerum Philologicarum. Studia ofiarowane profesor Marii Strycharskiej-Brzezynie*, ed. J.S. Gruchała and H. Kurek, Kraków 2010, pp. 375–384; ead., *Książki religijne rozprowadzane drogą subskrypcji na tle repertuaru wydawniczego i zainteresowań czytelniczych XVIII wieku*, “Rocznik Bibliologiczno-Prasoznawczy” 2011, Vol. 3/14, pp. 13–32; ead., *Osiemnastowieczne prenumeraty literatury pięknej*, “Rocznik Bibliologiczno-Prasoznawczy” 2012, Vol. 4/15, Issue 1, pp. 29–44.

2 D. Hombek, *Prospekty wydawnicze w kulturze polskiej XVIII wieku*, “Wiek Oświecenia. O edytorstwie źródeł osiemnastowiecznych” 2011, Vol. 27, pp. 134–177.

3 In Europe, the publication of bibliopolic catalogues began as early as in the 15th century, which was directly connected with book fairs in Frankfurt. Later, they were also issued by individual publishers. The first one to do so in Poland was Georg Moritz Weidmann, see P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Handel książką w Warszawie w czasach saskich*, “Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej” 2001, Vol. 33–34, p. 125; see also: J. Rudnicka, *Bibliografia katalogów księgarskich wydanych w Polsce do końca wieku XVIII*, Warszawa 1975.

4 L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki*, trans. A. Kocot, M. Wodzyńska-Walicka, Warszawa 2014, pp. 176–186.

Since Gutenberg's discovery of print until the 19th century, the manner in which books were manufactured did not change much. Similar materials were used: apart from a short period when books were printed on parchment, the whole later printing production was pressed on paper crafted from rags. The printing paint consisted of soot and varnish. Its formula remained fairly unchanged over these several hundred years either. We know this from printing textbooks published in Europe from the 17th century, e.g. the work of Joseph Moxon *Mechanick exercises on the whole art of printing*, (London 1683). The first position of this sort in Polish was only published in the 19th century. But the formula of the printing paint provided in the Polish textbook by Franciszek Ząbkowski (*Teoria sztuki drukarskiej zastosowana do praktyki* [The Theory of the Art of Printing in Practice], Warsaw 1832) reproduces previous methods⁵. Through the ages, a movable type cast from the alloy of lead, tin and antimony was used for printing⁶. This mixture ratio was developed by trial and error not by Johannes Gutenberg himself, but his followers who quickly realised that the mix of lead and tin alone is too frail and wears too fast for an edition to be printed in large volumes. But the technology of casting types remained invariant for a long time. Scholars speculate about the development of a machine casting individual types. Some hold that initially types were cast in moulds of dump sand and only later was a method of preparing matrixes placed in a machine developed. The latter technique allowed precise shaping of a type face on a sort shank. This work required utmost precision, so casters were expected to be knowledgeable not only about the casting technology, but also about the basics of lettering. Therefore, it was common that casters were both craftsmen performing the physical work of casting the types and the designers of the typefaces. Studies show that in those times casters were highly aware of the human eye physiology, optical illusions taking place in the process of image perception, and geometry⁷. They were familiar with perspective and skilled in scaling characters. They also knew that a letter shape had to change depending on its size, or else it could become too complicated and thus illegible when small or too massive when large. What is more, they knew that different forces were at work in the process of pressing a type on paper and that the pressure causes a deformation of the latter and squashing of paint. This complex knowledge was handed down from masters to apprentices and journeymen, and lasted in an almost unaltered form for a few centuries. Hence, casting types was an important element of a printer's work:

5 F. Ząbkowski, *Teoria sztuki drukarskiej zastosowana do praktyki*, Warszawa 1832, pp. 172–180.

6 J. Pirożyński, *Johannes Gutenberg i początki ery druku*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 51–52.

7 H. Carter, *A View of Early Typography up to about 1600*, London 1969, pp. 93–116; T. Szántó, *Pismo i styl*, Wrocław 1986, pp. 116–117; F. Smeijers, *Counterpunch making type in the sixteenth century, designing typefaces now*, London 2011.

initially, a foundry was part of every printing house and types were casted on site according to current needs; later, casters evolved into a separate professional group and provided services for a wider range of printing houses. As we know from accounting books, sometimes printing houses employed or even brought casters from abroad to cast new font families⁸. Casters also began to manufacture types for sale, so new typefaces were available for purchase. Naturally, the cost of remoulding types and buying new material was considerable, but a printing house caring for legibility and aesthetics of its publications had to take it into account. Another major change that took place in the first period of the development of the printed book consisted in experiments with the technique of printing illustrations. Initially woodcut, that is printed by the use of relief printing, they were part of the whole process and did not require any additional activities. Their production cost included only the materials (wooden blocks) and the paint. One should also add the work of an engraver and, sometimes, of a drawer: an artist preparing a sketch that was transferred on a wooden block and cut with chisels. The process of printing illustrations took place simultaneously with the printing of text. The technique of longitudinal woodcut was applied in case of book illustrations from the 15th century on; before that, it was also used as an independent technique, as well as in block books. In the 17th century, copperplates – and other techniques using a metal plate that was mechanically treated (chalcography, mezzotint, drypoint) or etched (aquatint, etching) – gained popularity in the field of book graphics. Of course, not all of them were equally popular in print: the durability of the printing form became the critical factor. It should be mentioned that materials used for printing were fit for their purpose for a time much longer than it was previously presumed: the collection of the Jagiellonian University Museum includes 16th- and 17th-century woodcut blocks used during the golden age of Polish printing. This would be no surprise if not for the fact that these materials were transferred by succession from one printer to the next: they were sold, bequeathed, etc. They were used for printing almost until the end of the 18th century (and they were again purposefully applied for illustration printing yet at the beginning of the 19th century)⁹.

Studies on the costs of print indicate that a major percentage of a book price was the cost of paper, which in the 17th and 18th centuries could amount

8 For instance, in 1748, Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Załuski decided to renew the assets of the episcopal printing house, as well as academic printing houses, and to this end he brought a caster, Samuel Filip Glasser from Frankfurt an der Oder. The cost of casting types was substantial: in 1731, the University paid caster Janczewski 1009 złoty and 15 grosz only for supplementing defects; see: A Tomaszewski, *Giserzy czcionek w Polsce. Poczet odlewaczy czcionek działających w dawnej Polsce oraz polskich za granicą*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 52, 63.

9 K. Socha, *Typografia publikacji pochodzących z drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 1674–1819*, Kraków 2016, pp. 380–518.

to the price of the print itself or even exceed it¹⁰. This explains a very common practice among printers, who tried to print on paper of worse quality reducing the overall cost of a book. This is also substantiated by bookselling advertisements, which propose different prices for a book depending on the materials used in its production. The most commonly used paper (the worst-quality water paper, called “ordynaryjny”, that is “ordinary”) and a slightly more expensive adhesive paper. The best types, such as posting paper or Dutch paper, were available at a higher price¹¹. And so for example, according to a newspaper insert, *Dykcjonarzyk geograficzny* by Echard Laurence (1782–1783) cost “24 złoty if unbound and printed on ordinary paper, or 36 złoty if printed on thinner paper”¹². This announcement also demonstrates another rule of book selling: the cheapest books were sold in the form of unfolded sheets and with no cover (so-called: *in plano* or *in crudo*). For a larger sum, one could buy volumes that were brochured *alla rustica* (a la rustica, folded and sewn in a paper cover) or fully bound by a bookbinder. The quality of bookbinding determined the price of the book, as it is evident from some advertisements: “*Kalendarz chronologiczny Królestwa Polskiego i W.Ks.Litewskiego na rok 1781, oprawne zł 3 gr 7 i pół, dito na lepszym oprawne zł 4 gr 7 i pół, dito z fryzurami i w oprawie na materii złożonej na marginesie zł 8*”¹³ [A Chronological Calendar of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for 1781, bound for 3 złoty 7.5 grosz, *dito* on better <paper> bound for 4 złoty 7.5 grosz, *dito* with frises¹⁴ and binding, printed on material with gilt margins for 8 złoty]. A book in a decorously gilt cover (most probably gilt-edged) was twice as expensive as an unbound one. A book half bound in leather was only 15 grosz more expensive than an *in crudo* version¹⁵.

Today, the price of a book includes not only the cost of materials, printing process and publishing press maintenance, but also covers expenditures incurred due to proofreading, promotion and the author’s fee. Existing sources provide information on authors’ or editors’ fees, as well as prices for book

10 L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki...*, pp. 183–186.

11 J. Rudnicka, *Bibliografia katalogów księgarskich...*, p. 19.

12 An advertisement published in “Polak Patriota” on 15 Jan. 1785, see D. Hombek, *Książka polska w ogłoszeniach prasowych XVIII wieku. Źródła*. Vol. 6: *Czasopisma efemeryczne, gazety warszawskie 1753–1794*, Wrocław–Kraków 2016, p. 588.

13 An advertisement published in „Gazeta Warszawska” on 6 Jan. 1781, see S. Grzeszczuk, D. Hombek, *Książka polska w ogłoszeniach prasowych XVIII wieku. Źródła*, Vol. 1: „Gazeta Warszawska” 1774–1785. Part 2. Wrocław 1992, p. 7.

14 In this context it can mean shaping (milling) the edge of the cover or a frame/border/bordiere (fr. *frise*).

15 An announcement of the release of *Gramatyka niemiecka* by J. Marquart (Warszawa 1782), published in the Supplement to “Gazeta Warszawska” on 28 Aug. 1782, see S. Grzeszczuk, D. Hombek, *Książka polska...* Vol. 1. Part 2, p. 68.

advertisements: According to Józef Szczepaniec's studies, an advertisement in "Gazeta Warszawska" in 1789 cost 4 złoty for an item. A similar price was paid for common advertisements in "Korespondent Warszawski" (1792), but for extraordinary ones one had to pay as much as 12 złoty¹⁶. There is also well documented information about authors' fees that come from the end of the century¹⁷. These pertain not only to textbooks ordered for the schools of the Commission of National Education (CNE) but also to authors of other works. Thanks to CNE protocols, we know the amounts paid to authors and translators. For writing a textbook, an author could receive 1000–3000 złoty (and more) in the form of salary or award. The fee of a translator of a popular-scientific work in 1780 amounted to 50 złoty. These sums may be compared to those received by writers in other countries. According to Febvre and Martin, in the 18th century, German writers were rather well-paid. In France, such fees were much lower: Voltaire received from Prault, the publisher, 1000 livres for *L'Enfant prodigue*, Rousseau – 25 louis d'ors for the *Discourse on Inequality*, 30 for the *Letter to d'Alambert*, and 6000 for *Emile*. Buffon earned over 15,000 livres for each volume of his *Natural History*, but he bore significant costs of preparation of the illustrations for the book¹⁸.

Source materials for book price studies

Scholars analysing the publishing process have at their disposal various source materials, such as accounting books, reports and inventories. Usually, however, these documents are soundly incomplete or representative only of selected periods. It is so because due to changes that took place over the ages, most Polish printing houses have a very complicated history. Only few establishments remained for a very long time in the hands of one family. It is, nevertheless possible to track the transmission of typesetting material from one printing house to another. For instance, such was the fate of the printing house of Marek Szarfenberg, the founder of a dynasty of printers whose role in Poland was compared by European scholars to Kobergers in Germany or Plantins in the Netherlands¹⁹. Following Marek's death, his printing house was managed by his wife, Agnieszka, and later by their grandchildren: Mikołaj and Stanisław Szarfenberg (ennobled in 1554 by the Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria), who complemented their assets with printing machinery and typographic materials bought after the death Helena

16 J. Szczepaniec, *Rola drukarstwa w życiu literackim polskiego oświecenia. Zarys wybranych zagadnień*, [in:] *Problemy literatury polskiej okresu oświecenia*, ed. Z. Goliński, Wrocław 1973, p. 97.

17 Ibidem, pp. 101–102.

18 L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki...*, p. 256.

19 Ibidem, p. 308.

Unglerowa, the owner of another respected printing house. The brothers decided to divide the company, after which Mikołaj achieved much greater market success. Following his death, his son Jan tried to continue his father's work, but he got into debts and had to sell the printing house to Franciszek Cezary in 1616. The family of the latter owned the printing house for several decades; after Franciszek's death, it was first managed by his widow Barbara, then by their grandson Franciszek the younger, and finally by their great grandson Michał, who eventually sold it in 1731 for 11,000 złoty to professor Marcin Waleszyński, the vice-chancellor of the Academia, who in turn granted it to his alma mater on 17 August 1734²⁰. The Cracow Academy, later renamed the Main Crown School and again the Jagiellonian University, remained the owner of the printing house for good, so printing materials that come from the 16th century are preserved until this day in the collection of the Jagiellonian University. However, although printing houses kept the collections of types and illustrative materials (blocks for woodcuts, typographic decorations and copperplates), changes of the owners often impacted their publishing profile and led to the loss of documents that could constitute the basis of today's studies on financial operations of such companies. Of course, one can also find accounts of specific printing houses: for example, treasurer books recorded expenditures pertaining to works commissioned from the printer Walenty Łapka, who in the 1570s, run a so-called "flying printing house" that pressed prints for the royal chancellery of Stephen Báthory. The portable printing house bore not only the costs of printing, but also its maintenance and transport. The transportation of the workshop required 3 drivers and 10 horses²¹.

Documents of the Cracow Academy Printing Houses

Most of preserved documents are related to the operations of the aforementioned printing house belonging to the oldest Polish university. However, this printing house became the university's property only in the 17th century. Before that, subsequent editors and sometimes individual academics cooperated with the most famous Cracow printers, who now and then sought to acquire a monopoly for the lucrative work of publishing scientific works and other academic prints. The Academy was in close contact with respected Cracow printers, such as Jan Haller, Florian Ungler, Hieronim Wietor, Maciej Wirzbięta, and Jan Januszowski.

20 *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku, collective work*. Vol. 1: *Małopolska*, Part 2: *Wiek XVII–XVIII*. Vol. 1: *A–K*, ed. J. Pirożyński, Kraków 2000, p. 46; H. Barycz, *Z dziejów niedooczonej placówki*, [in:] *Studia z dziejów Drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 1783–1974, collective work*, ed. L. Hajdukiewicz and J. Hulewicz, Kraków 1974, p. 12; J. Dobrzyniecka, *Drukarnie Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 1674–1783*, Kraków 1975, pp. 47–82.

21 K. Korotajowa, *Przeobrażenia organizacyjne warszawskich warsztatów drukarskich w okresie staropolskim*, "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 1985, Vol. 29, Issues 1–2, p. 146.

In the 17th century, academic prints were also published by the printing houses of the Cezary family, Piotrkowczyk family and Kupisz, which was additionally beneficial for them, as they were exempt from paying contributions from books printed in their printing houses. This solution was very convenient for both parties, which is why the Academy did not strive to have its own printing house for a very long time. This state of affairs changed only in the late 17th century, when on 30 January 1674, Stanisław Teodor Piotrkowczyk, the Crown Cavalry Captain assigned a tenement in Floriańska street and the printing house operating in it together with the right to exercise all the privileges granted to the company of the Piotrkowczyk family²² to the University, crowning – so to speak – the many years' cooperation of the father and grandfather with this institution. Since that year, the publisher's address on prints pressed in this printing house was changed to *Typis Universitatis*. Another incorporated printing house was the one of the Cezary family, and yet another one was the printing house of the Episcopal-Academic Seminary managed by the foundation of the Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Załuski²³. There are no documents confirming its establishment, but the publisher's addresses provided in the prints pressed there indicate that it operated actively in the years 1749–1756. It was acquired by the Academy as a dowry (*in dotem*) of the Seminary, which was reformed according to Enlightenment standards and ever since related closely to the University, which was supposed to extend its educational care over the its alumni. This company experienced the most prosperous development in the years 1760–1767, when it employed two typesetters, two pressmen, and several boys, while its revenue oscillated around 6000–7000 złoty. For several decades, these three printing houses operated independently from each other, and not before the end of the 18th century, during the University's reform, were they combined into the Main Crown School Printing House.

The fact of possessing its own printing house had an immense impact on the University authorities' approach to the publishing process: subsequent prefects managing the printing house meticulously settled the accounts of their operations. In the JU archives, there are accounting documents providing information on the manner of remunerating the work of a typesetter or a pressman, as well as on the expenses on materials, machinery, its maintenance, etc. The lists of receivables, on the other hand, reveal the retail value of books. Regrettably, only two accounting books with revenues and expenditures of the Cezary printing house has been preserved, but fortunately they cover almost the entire period of its independent operations (from December 1734 to 1781). Accounting

22 All information about this printing house, see H. Barycz, *Z dziejów...* and J. Dobrzyniecka, *Drukarnie...*, pp. 17–45.

23 *Drukarze dawnej Polski...* Vol. 1. Part 2, pp. 50–54, 262–268; H. Barycz, *Z dziejów...*, p. 12; J. Dobrzyniecka, *Drukarnie...*, pp. 83–116.

records made after the merger of the printing houses are also partially preserved. However, conclusions concerning the manner of operating a company may best be drawn from those earliest register books that were presented by administrators and delegates controlling the printing house's performance during annual reporting meetings. One of them includes accounts for the following periods: from 5 December 1734 to 3 March 1769 and from 7 March 1769 to 21 March 1781. This last date was no accident because in that very year (on 10 January) all the academic printing houses were merged into one. Materials documenting the material condition of all the printing houses together with their inventories and lists of books in their stores also come from that period. Reports from the time following the merge of the press houses, that is from the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century are also preserved²⁴. And they are not the only documents of that sort. The Seminary Library in Warsaw holds an unpaginated book with no title or pressmark that includes the accounts of the Warsaw printing house of the Congregation of the Mission from the years 1781–1839.

Entries recorded in the accounting books mentioned before allow a precise study of the expenditures and revenues of the printing houses²⁵. One may also conclude about how investment decisions were made. It seems interesting how the Academic Printing House managed its profit, which – according to the findings – was supposed to be distributed among a modest group of professors²⁶, but in several cases the outpayment of the whole income was abandoned, and the money was allocated to special purposes, such as the purchase of a printing press in 1744. The books also note all the other purchases: of machinery, equipment (composing sticks, wooden and metal parts of presses, shovels, brushes), materials (very frequent entries recording paper²⁷, oil for the press, machinery repairs, threads for column sewing, leathers, horsehair, and hobnails used for making printing pads, cinnabar for the production of red paint, firewood, candles, tar and chips for burning soot, oil for the production of varnish, the production of engraved sheets for pressing prints, copper for matrices, casting new types, etc.), overhaul, the maintenance and remuneration of the employees, and additional costs, such as ham for the servants for Easter or beer customary

24 The Jagiellonian University printing house operated continuously until 2010. It survived the partitions of Poland, two world wars and Hitler's occupation. The majority of documents pertaining to the operations of this institution has been preserved in the JU Archive and Cracow city archives.

25 Books and reports from the operations of the university printing houses are preserved in the Jagiellonian University Archive (fasc. 488/III dip. No. 14745–14778). This record was analysed by J. Dobrzyńska, *Drukarnie...*, pp. 62–81. On the accounting books of the Congregation of the Mission, see J. Szczepaniec, *Rola drukarstwa...*, pp. 87–88.

26 Listed on Walezyński's anniversary.

27 Of different formats, e.g. "large", "small", "medium" and "royal" (Pl. *rygalowy*). In the same year, 1743, bills for paper amounted to 297 florins and 15 grosz.

funded on the occasion of a finished print of reprinted editions²⁸. A very precise agenda of all the works performed by typesetters and pressmen allows the estimation of the duration of publication process of specific titles. Thanks to these accounts, we know that the reedition of Hiacynt Pruszczyński's *Klejnoty stoletznego miasta Krakowa* took several years. The print began in 1742 but the printing house was in no hurry: the foreword was pressed in September 1745; around the same time, an engraved sheet was received bought for 15 złoty and designed probably to press the frontispiece, which in turn was pressed no sooner than at the beginning of the next year, which is documented by a record from 4 February stating 15 złoty in the *Expenditures* section.

On the basis of records concerning remunerations, one may also determine the standard performance of a typesetter, who set between three and seven sheets weekly. His pay was conditioned on the kind of types used: the setting of a sheet with *romana*²⁹ cost 1 złoty 15 grosz, with *paragon* – 1 złoty 20 grosz or 2 złoty, and with *tertia* – 2 złoty 10 grosz. Smaller sizes were more expensive: a sheet set using *myrtle* was paid 3 złoty, with *scholastic* 4 złoty, while with *garmond* – 6 złoty³⁰.

For the purpose of studies on book prices, the *Receivables* [Percepta] section in the accounting books seem most significant, as it shows the revenues of a printing house, not only from the lease of rooms or external orders, etc. but mainly from the sale of books. Thanks to these records we know the prices of individual titles. For instance, a very popular publication, written in the 17th century by Krzysztof Monwid Dorohostajski under the title *Hippica, to jest o koniach księgi* [Horsemanship], was reprinted several times, and sold also in the 18th century. In the 1730s, this book, decorated with illustrations: initially copperplates, later replaced with woodcuts, cost 3 florins. In wholesale, this price might have been reduced, as one customer by the name of Starzyński paid only 40 florins for 16 copies. An annotation “To Lithuania” indicates, that the purchase was probably made to supply agents or bookstores in other parts of the country. Similar larger orders were also dispatched to Lviv (19 copies of *Żywoty PJ*, 10 copies of *Fascykuły*, 50 copies of *Donaci*, which were common Latin grammar books), Częstochowa or Lublin. The first one of these titles was a widely-read book with woodcut illustrations (pressed with much older blocks, which were used for many years in subsequent editions) entitled: *Żywot Pana i Boga naszego* [Meditations on the Life of Christ], authored by Pseudo-Bonaventure and translated by Baltazar Opeć, which is frequently mentioned in the accounts,

28 J. Dobrzyńska, *Drukarnie...*, pp. 40–41.

29 Customary names of type sizes: *romana* – ca. 28 points, *paragon* – 18 points, *tertia* – 16 points, *myrtle* – 14 points, *scholastic* – 12 points, *garmond* – 10 points.

30 J. Dobrzyńska, *Drukarnie...*, p. 70.

usually in wholesale (e.g. 10, 20 or even 30 copies). One copy cost 2 florins. The price of a book depended on its volume and editorial characteristics. The prices of large liturgical books printed usually with two colours, e.g. graduals, reached 72 florins (1742), antiphonals – 40 florins (1738), a psalter could be bought for 24 florins (1742), while popular literature, such as *Historia o Poncjanie* [The Story about Pontian], was usually sold for 12 grosz³¹: 10 copies of this novel distributed on fairs cost 3 florins and 10 grosz. For the same price or even for as low as 6–10 grosz³², one might buy *Nadobna Paskwalina* [Beautiful Paskwalina] by Samuel Twardowski, a romance published for the first time in 1655 and popular also in the next century. A “catechism”, difficult to identify today, cost 6 grosz. The accounts indicate that larger numbers of copies were purchased not only by booksellers, but also by a Cracow bookbinder Dziedzicki, probably with the aim to bind and sell them for a better price.

Press advertisements as the source for book price research

Accounting books are, however, a rare source of knowledge on publishing and bookselling in Poland. But they are not the only type of materials that shed some light on these issues. The beginnings of press in Poland date back to the 17th century but regularly issued periodicals started appearing only in the 1720s. The press provided space for announcements published in newspapers by printers and publishers that provide information on the publishing repertoire and allow the study of the development of book advertisements. In the first half of the century, new publishing strategies were utilized, such as announcing subscriptions. This was connected with organizational and economic changes in printing houses. The cost of printing was heretofore borne mainly by the printer, or sometimes facultatively by the investor, e.g. the author, who thus shared the risk of his book’s market failure. Therefore, it was a common practice to seek patronage, although it rarely entailed financial support. It is worth mentioning that a newly released book did not have to become a bestseller at once, but could be sold successively for several years or even longer, occupying storage space, where it was exposed to damages caused by humidity and insects. In such case, it was frozen capital and was continuously losing its value. This is why market research concerning also readers’ participation in the publishing costs became an innovative method of avoiding publishing fiasco. The developing press enabled the publishing of advertisements announcing plans of publishing a certain title, while additional promotional materials, such as brochures, allowed prospective buyers not only to become familiar with the book’s content, but also to see a sample

31 Price from 1742.

32 The accounts record various prices: 6, 9 or 10 grosz.

print or even paper. Therefore, the printer could calculate the printing cost, determine the number of copies, calculate the price of an individual copy, and set the number of subscribers necessary to undertake the printing project. Not only did such strategy help raising funds for essential materials, but it also allowed the publisher to check the interest in a given title and whether its publishing is worth the risk at all. Press notices announcing the enrolment for a subscription are a very valuable source of information about publishing costs, as well as the number of copies in individual editions and their breakeven points. It turns out, however, that not always did printers wait with the start of the publishing process until they gathered enough prospective readers: sometimes, they decided to print even if the interest in a book was small. Because of the custom, which began in Poland at the beginning of the 18th century, that consisted in publishing in a newspaper or within the editorial frame of a publication a list of names and institutions that decided to opt in³³, we know how publishers' estimates related to the actual state of things. For example, the list of subscribers was sometimes very short, which means the publisher did not reach the breakeven point but nevertheless risked the publishing of a book. This indicates a very significant role printers played in the development of the book market. They often decided to print interesting and ambitious titles, running the risk, although they could have printed only popular or devotional literature, which enjoyed such readership that it did not need any publicity.

Publishing calculations in press announcements

One of the first initiatives of such type, co-funded by the readers, was a multi-volume collection of laws and constitutions entitled *Volumina legum* published by Józef Andrzej Załuski in cooperation with the Piarists' printing house and their leading activist, Stanisław Konarski. The edition was supposed to include all legal acts since 1340 until the beginning of the 18th century. The subscription was announced in "Kurier Polski" with a precise calculation of printing costs³⁴. The printing of one sheet was expected to cost 20 złoty, while the whole book was expected to require 1150 sheets, which adds up to 23,000 złoty altogether. The

33 See: A. Kapłon, *Czytelnictwo czasów Oświecenia stanisławowskiego w świetle list prenumeratorów*, [in:] *Problemy kultury literackiej polskiego Oświecenia*, ed. T. Kostkiewiczowa, Wrocław 1978, pp. 49–82; A. Dymmel, *Prenumeratory piśmiennictwa naukowego wydanego w Królestwie Polskim w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku*, Lublin 1992; K. Socha, *Preferencje czytelnicze w świetle odnalezionych spisów prenumeratorów*, "Wielogłos" 2008, Vol. 1 (3), pp. 148–170.

34 An advertisement published in "Kurier Polski" on 2 Jan. 1732. Full content S. Grzeszczuk, D. Hombek, *Książka polska w ogłoszeniach prasowych XVIII wieku. Źródła*. Vol. 4: *Od „Nowin Polskich” do „Wiadomości Warszawskich” 1729–1773*. Part 1: *Od „Nowin Polskich” do „Kuriera Warszawskiego” 1729–1764*, Kraków 2000, pp. 29–31; see also: K. Korotajowa, *Przeobrażenia organizacyjne...*, pp. 155–161; P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Handel książką...*, p. 132.

edition was planned to count 1500 copies, each of 1150 sheets, which together amounted to 1,725,000 sheets, that is 345 paper reels (1 reel = 5000 sheets), which was to be imported from Gdańsk for 43,700 zloty. Rounding off, the cost of printing 1500 copies would have been 70,000 zloty. The organizers decided that 1000 subscribers paying 70 zloty each will be enough to begin the printing. The surplus profit from the sale of the remaining 500 copies would have allowed the printing house to cover its own operating costs (type recasting, paper and ink for corrections, printing paint, presses, candles, firewood, and employers) and provided capital for further volumes. The calculation also included the remuneration of the printing house workers: a typesetter was to receive 4 zloty per sheet, while a pressman – 6 zloty per sheet pressed for the edition of 1500 copies. It was planned to employ 5 proof-readers. The enrolment for the subscription was conducted in all major cities: Kraków, Poznań, Lwów, Wilno, Grodno, Toruń, Gdańsk, Elbląg and Warszawa. It should be emphasized that this cycle of announcements is a unique source of information on book prices. Usually calculations provided in advertisements were not that precise and the social response to them was not always known. In the case of *Volumina legum*, the publishers decided to utilise yet another publicity stunt and published in the press the names of people subscribing the work. Hence we know that the subscriber list that was expected soon to count 1000 people, consisted of only 680 names almost a year later. It seems rather significant that, giving up on the profit and undertaking serious financial risk, the publisher decided to print and was ready to sell the first volume of 150 sheets six month later. The volume was unbound but was also available in French binding for an additional thaler. The later editions of subsequent volumes constitute a story of a continuous struggle for money, which was meticulously recorded in the press. However, even such overt actions did not escape criticism. The opponents of Piarists and Konarski publicly accused the printing house of abuses, subjecting the cost estimate to a penetrative but not very reliable analysis. Such polemics also present the image of the Polish publishing market and the impact that not-always-fair competition had on book prices.

Studies of the accounting books of the Congregation of the Mission printing house reveal a precise settlement of the printing of some journals (e.g. Świtkowski's "Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny") and books. Thanks to such analyses, we can determine the possible profit from the sale of a widely-read title. In the case of the mentioned journal, the printing house made over 50 zloty from each issue. Sometimes, books brought the author or the publisher 3000 to 5000 zloty of net profit.

Information provided in advertisements and accounting books concerning the planned volume of an edition are of great importance. Scholars usually assume an estimated volume, sometimes using sources that confirm their conjectures, and sometimes basing only on the number of preserved copies. For that reason,

conclusions following the studies conducted by J. Szczepaniec³⁵ are particularly interesting because he compared circulation rates of individual titles that were confirmed in sources with their prices. This sheds a broader light on the publishing output in Poland. Szczepaniec referred to press announcements, as well as archival records and correspondence. Hence we know, that “Kurier Polski”³⁶ newspaper appeared in a circulation of 500 copies, while “Gazeta Warszawska” in 1789 was published in a circulation of 1500 copies. This indicates a significant increase in press readership in the 1750s. Other journals from that time were distributed in a circulation of 1000 (“Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny” and “Wybór Wiadomości Gospodarskich”³⁷) or 1500 copies (“Dziennik Handlowy”³⁸). Circulation rates depended on the subject and target of a given work. The highest ones were reached by textbooks ordered by the Commission of National Education and amounted even to 5000–6000 copies. Textbooks were also frequently reprinted, which shows the significance of this sector of the publishing market. Other types of writings were issued in much lower circulation rates. A scientific book’s price oscillated around 1000–2000 copies, belles lettres between 1000–3000 copies (ephemeral poetry from several hundred to several thousand copies), official prints 500–3000 copies (official prints in the form of posters from Kościuszko’s times: 1000–5000 copies), parliamentary and senatorial speeches, the Four-Year Sejm publicism from 500 to several thousand copies. The highest circulation rates concerned religious works, whose records reached 10,000 copies, but most output of such type was between 1000–2000 copies. It should be mentioned that the performance of Polish printing houses in the 18th century did not deviate significantly from European standards. Febvre and Martin state that in that century the majority of books was published in less than 2000 copies, although naturally there were bestsellers, which were sold in much greater numbers (e.g. Voltaire’s works: *Essay on the Manners* – 7000 copies, a Berlin edition of *The Age of Louis XIV* – 3000 copies³⁹). Most often, however, printers were very cautious with their actions and published a book first in a small circulation, only later reprinting a larger number of copies⁴⁰.

35 J. Szczepaniec, *Rola drukarstwa...*, pp. 86–106.

36 It is difficult to establish which period is at question because “Kurier Polski” appeared initially in the years 1729–1733 and later this version of the title returned in the years 1737–1760.

37 Published by Piotr Świtkowski, a monthly “Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny”, Warszawa 1782–1792; “Wybór Wiadomości Gospodarskich”, Warszawa 1786–1788. Szczepaniec gives similar estimates of the circulation of “Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne”.

38 Published by Tadeusz Podlecki in the years 1786–1794. Since 1791, the circulation equalled 1000 copies.

39 Voltaire was quite a popular writer in Poland. In 1795, there was a subscription announced for *The Age of Louis XIV*. The preserved list of subscribers features 189 persons, see K. Socha, *Preferencje czytelnicze...*, p. 163.

40 L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki...*, pp. 332–333.

The number of copies printed in one edition also influenced the price of the book, although the latter depended on the volume of the print and the quality of materials as well. Press announcements usually stipulated the suggested prices of books. Sometimes, they encouraged to subscribe because a prepaid book was to be cheaper than one in regular sale. Such was the case of “Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny”. A subscribed issue cost 2 złoty, while the later market price was 2 złoty 15 grosz. Similarly, *Dykcjonarz historyczny* [A Historical Dictionary] published by Piotr Dufour had the subscription price of 65 złoty, while after the issuance of all 7 volumes it cost 100 złoty⁴¹. Indeed, subsequent advertisements indicate that the price of a work increased with the release of every subsequent volume. As mentioned before, subscription was a frequently used publishing solution allowing the publisher to gather funds for printing. An analysis of the announcements indicates that subscriptions usually concerned multi-volume works that required large printing expenditures. It happened that the interest in a title was so small that the publisher resigned from its realisation. Such was the case in 1744, when Bishop J.A. Załuski wished to publish a collection of documents on the history of Church in Poland. The commencement of the printing was conditioned on gathering 100 subscribers, but the interest did not exceed 30–40 person and the project failed⁴².

The price of books in the Enlightenment

Bookselling catalogues and press announcements enable the determination of the ranges of prices concerning different types of writings. J. Szczepaniec observed that the increase in the circulation rates during the Enlightenment resulted in the decline in book prices. At the end of the 18th century, dramas (4–8 sheets) cost 2–3 złoty, on average. The price of a novel depended on its volume and began from 2 złoty 15 gr (*Goworek* by Franciszek Salezy Jezierski), 4 zł (*Mikołaja Doświadczynskiego przypadki*, *Pan Podstoli* by Krasicki), reaching even 10 zł (*Leszek Biały* by Michał Dymitr Krajewski). A translation of *Don Kichot* published in six *in octavo* volumes by Dufour cost 30 złoty for an ordinary-paper version, and 36 złoty for an adhesive paper version. Poetry books could usually be bought for 1–4 złoty, while multi-volume editions reached the price of 8–10 złoty, depending on the quality of paper. Multi-volume dictionaries, encyclopaedia and books of heraldry were most expensive.

41 An advertisement published in “Gazeta Warszawska” on 15 Aug. 1783. Full content, D. Hombek, *Książka polska...* Vol. 6, p. 113. Two years later, an advertisement stated that the book costs four red złoty if subscribed and that the price will rise with each published volume, reaching the final value of 120 złoty. An advertisement published in “Polak Patriota” on 15 Jan. 1785. Full content, D. Hombek, *Książka polska...* Vol. 6, p. 588.

42 K. Socha, *Książki religijne...*, pp. 27–28.

A two-volume *Zbiór potrzebniejszych wiadomości* [A Collection of Rather Essential Information] by Krasicki was sold for 54 złoty, a heraldry book by Eawaryst Andrzej Kuropatnicki entitled *Wiadomość o klejnocie szlacheckim* [A Story of the Aristocratic Gem] for 10 złoty⁴³, and *Dykcjonarz służący do poznania historii naturalnej* [Natural History] by Leclerc published by Grebl in Cracow – for 24 złoty. On the other hand, popular literature, calendars and religious writings were sold at lower prices⁴⁴, which was connected with their high circulation rates. However, this type of prints was rarely advertised in press, probably due to the high cost of such advertisements. Nevertheless, this did not impact their readership, which indicates that they were available for sale and customers interested in such literature knew their fixed outlets. Much higher prices were reached by foreign books because they included also transportation costs. Michał Gröll sold a twenty-five-volume *Encyclopaedia* by d'Alambert and Diderot published in Paris from January 1770 for 112 red złoty, that is – or 2016 Polish złoty⁴⁵.

The analysis of the 18th-century book prices demonstrates that the mechanisms which influenced the Polish book market were not much different from those in other European countries. The prices were conditioned upon numerous factors, such as production costs, advertisements, and company's maintenance. The readers' interest, on the other hand, translated into circulation rates, which was also reflected by the price of a book. The investigation of accounting books allows studying changes in the management of printing houses, comparing their revenues and expenditures, determining whether they were profitable, and what profits or losses they generated. These accounts also provide information on the changing remunerations of printing house employees and the costs of printing materials. Marketing materials, in turn, such as catalogues, announcements and bibliopolic brochures, enable the study of publishing advertisement development, strategies of financing an edition, as well as analyses of the book market, and even – thanks to the printed lists of subscribers – readers' interests.

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