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## NOTARIAL RECORDS AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY OF READING STUDIES IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

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The article discusses all advantages and disadvantages of notarial acts as a source of history of reading studies and functioning of books in the society. Particular attention was paid to the documents which appeared on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland after 1808. There are different kinds of documents among notarial acts, namely inventories of abandoned possessions, testaments, public sales, contracts of purchase etc. Notarial inventories with enumerated possessions, in particular home libraries, are most important. They demonstrate the image of libraries of different social group representatives. Moreover, by 1870s home libraries had been frequently listed thoroughly, indicating authors and titles, rarely place and year of publishing. Public sale acts which record the results of public sale of movable property point at secondary circulation of books. Other documents, such as testaments and contracts of purchase, reveal social function of books.

*Key words:* home libraries in XIX–XX centuries, history of reading, notarial acts, bibliographical sources, libraries and reading in Poland in XIX–XX centuries.

Studies on the institution of the notary and notarial records appeared in the first place among law historians in Poland. They focused first of all on studying the functioning of the institution itself and other aspects arising from the specificity of the discipline<sup>1</sup>. However, it was not until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that historians proper focused their attention on notarial deeds as useful sources in studies of the history of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>2</sup>. This fact was associated first of all with the taking-over of notarial records by the state archives in 1955–1957, the records having been previously kept in the state notarial offices all over Poland. We should note the fairly good condition of the preserved records and the high completeness of the sources. They would be able to fill the gap in the source materials, which originated in Poland during WWII, when a large part of other archival records was destroyed. At the end of the 1950s, historians emphasized the merits of notarial records, especially for the investigation of economic history and social relations<sup>3</sup>. They soon discovered that it would

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<sup>1</sup> Bandtkie J. W. Rzecz historyczna o notariacie czyli pisarstwie aktowym krajowem tak dawniejszem jako i nowszem // *Pamiętnik Warszawski*. – 1815. – T. 3, nr 11, 12. – S. 327–347, 413–444; Niemirowski A. *Wykład notariatu dziejowy i porównawczy*. – Warszawa, 1876; Drzewiecki H. *Zarys dziejów notariatu w Polsce*. – Warszawa, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Szymańska H., Śmiałowski J. Akta notarialne z terenu Królestwa Polskiego i ich wartość naukowa // *Archeion*. – 1959. – T. 30. – S. 43–67; Kazimierski J. Akty notarialne i ich znaczenie dla badań historycznych XIX wieku // *Studia Źródłoznawcze*. – 1959. – T. 4. – S. 109–124.

<sup>3</sup> Kołodziejczyk R. Akta notarialne warszawskie jako źródło do dziejów Warszawy // *Studia historyczne. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 70 rocznicy urodzin Prof. dr. hab. Stanisława Arnolda*. – Warszawa, 1965. – S. 193–200; Mazurkiewicz J. Znaczenie akt notarialnych dla badań nad własnością w Księstwie Warszawskim i

be possible to use these sources in studying histories of individual towns and villages<sup>4</sup>. With the extension of the questionnaire of questions asked by historians influenced by sociology and cultural anthropology, notarial records were seen as the sources which could, due to their mass character and comparability, bear testimony to the lifestyles, state of consumption, and material culture of the society<sup>5</sup>. Studies of notarial records coincided with the growing interest in these sources of historians in other countries<sup>6</sup>.

The wealth of information contained in notarial records, mainly from the former Kingdom of Poland, also attracted attention on the part of scholars occupied with the history of books and reading. First of all, research postulates, more complete comments and proposals were formulated on how to utilize the source in question for studies of the history of the book and reading<sup>7</sup>. This category of sources was also accentuated by Regina Janiak, who made a survey in the Lublin notarial records of 1810–1830<sup>8</sup>. She focused first of all on inventories and wills that contained lists of books, and instructions on where and whom to hand down home book collections or even single volumes.

The methodological reflection on the new source for bibliologists was, however, followed by very modest attempts to edit and utilize notarial records. The records were referred to selectively for the studies on the publishing movement during the period of Partitions in Poland,<sup>9</sup> and these sources were also sporadically used for the study of private book collections<sup>10</sup>. The problem of home collections was treated marginally as part of more general discussions by the social historians<sup>11</sup>.

There was some revival of studies and a new growth of interest in the institution of the notary and notarial records both in the circles of law historians and historians of diplomacy and archivists<sup>12</sup>. The sources in question were again referred to by historians of culture

Królestwie Polskim // *Annales UMCS*. – 1965 [1968]. – Sectio F, t. 20. – S. 115–126; Ichnatowicz I. *Burżuazja warszawska*. – Warszawa, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> Staszewska B. Akta notarialne jako źródło do badań nad gospodarczymi i społecznymi dziejami Warszawy // *Warszawa popowstaniowa 1864–1918*. – Warszawa, 1969. – T. 2, fasc. 2. – S. 197–232; Szczepaniak R. Akta notarialne kaliskie i ich znaczenie dla badań naukowych // *Rocznik Kaliski*. – 1976. – T. 9. – S. 249–260.

<sup>5</sup> Kowecka E. Furnishings and Furniture of Warsaw Houses in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (until the 1870s) // *“Omnia res mobilia”*. *Polish Studies in Posthumous Inventories of Movable Property in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. – Warsaw, 1999. – P. 219–279.

<sup>6</sup> Daumard A. Structures sociales et classement socio-professionnel. L'apport des Archives notariales au XIX siècle // *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*. – 1963; Queniat J. L'utilisation des inventaires en histoire socio-culturelle // *Les actes notariés. Source de l'histoire sociale XVIe – XIXe siècles*. – Strasbourg, 1979. – P. 241–255; Poisson J-P. *Notaires et société. Travaux et de sociologie notariales*. – Paris, 1985.

<sup>7</sup> Lech M. Materiały do dziejów książki i czytelnictwa w okresie zaborów w archiwach polskich // *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*. – 1969. – T. 5. – S. 23–57; Lech M. J. Akta notarialne jako źródła do badań nad księgozbiorami domowymi // *Studia o Książce*. – 1979. – T. 9. – S. 187–201; Chamerska H. Akta hipoteczne i notarialne jako źródła badań nad księgozbiorami prywatnymi XIX – XX wieku (zagadnienia metodologiczne) // *Z badań nad polskimi księgozbiorami historycznymi* / red. B. Bieńkowska. – Warszawa, 1977. – Fasc. 3. – S. 5–22.

<sup>8</sup> Janiak R. Prywatne księgozbiory lubelskie w pierwszej połowie XIX w. w świetle akt notarialnych (badania sondażowe) // *Folia Bibliologica: biuletyn Biblioteki Głównej UMCS*. – Lublin, 1976. – R. 24. – S. 29–33.

<sup>9</sup> Mlekicka M. J. *Mortkowicz księgarz i wydawca*. – Wrocław, 1974; Ejsudem. *Wydawcy książek w Warszawie w okresie zaborów*. – Warszawa, 1987; Skrzypczak A. *Sennewaldowie, księgarze i wydawcy warszawscy*. – Wrocław, 1969; Tessaro-Kosim I. *Historia litografii warszawskiej*. – Warszawa, 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Skrzypczak A. Księgozbiory lekarzy warszawskich XIX wieku jako podstawa do oceny kultury naukowej środowiska // *Z badań nad polskimi księgozbiorami historycznymi* / red. B. Bieńkowska. – Warszawa, 1985. – Fasc. 7. – S. 115–158; Moczulska A. Rola książki jako przedmiotu w domach burżuazji warszawskiej w XIX wieku // *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*. – 1979. – T. 27. – S. 31–43.

<sup>11</sup> Hensel J. *Burżuazja warszawska drugiej połowy XIX w. w świetle akt notarialnych*. – Warszawa, 1979. – S. 207.

<sup>12</sup> Kuryłowicz M. Historyczne początki notariatu // *I Kongres Notariuszy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Księga pamiątkowa* / red. A. Oleszko, R. Szyka. – Poznań, 1994; Malec D. *Dzieje notariatu polskiego*. – Kraków,

and book historians, who tried, on the basis of notarial inventories, to investigate the private book collections of inhabitants of selected centers in the territory of Poland<sup>13</sup>. These modest endeavors show the role and significance of the sources utilized for the studies of history of reading in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but there are still not enough more comprehensive presentations. At the same time abroad, there are examples of well developing studies on private book collections in light of posthumous inventories, although it must be admitted that the scholars were interested in this problem first of all in relation to the times when reading and collecting books was of an elitist nature<sup>14</sup>. There was also a considerable parallel interest in studies of book collections in the 18<sup>th</sup> century regarded as the age of transformations also in the field of reading culture<sup>15</sup>.

When postulating the usage of notarial records in a more systematic way, we should assess the virtues and limitations of this source from the perspective of current needs and expectations of those studying the history of reading. If we wish to show the investigative possibilities, we should first return to problems concerning the study of sources. Not all issues can be discussed in this short paper but they can at least be signaled. I gained observations on the subject during my preliminary search query at the State Archive in Lublin, covering the records of all notaries of the city of Lublin (altogether 14 offices) active in 1810–1863 (216 archival units). This is only a part of Lublin's notarial records because the whole collection covers the period of 1810–1951 and contains 2058 archival units including repertories and indexes. The records are kept as bound books comprising successively numbered documents of a given year or half-year in a chronological order. The state of preservation of the records is generally good, only the oldest individual book blocs are worn and in need of conservation. A single volume usually contained two hundred to five hundred documents but there are also annual volumes with over nine hundred documents – ultimately, the number of entries depended on how active a notary was. The Lublin records contain all manner of documents: sale contracts, other contracts, powers of attorney, assignment deeds, inventories, auctions, wills, as well as all kinds of necessary certificates, copies of entries from other notarial offices, plans, maps, and even newspaper clippings with auction notices. The records in Lublin, like others made in the Kingdom of Poland, were written in Polish. Sometimes documents in Hebrew or German (e. g. wills) were appended, but with parallel translations into Polish.

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2007; Skupiński K. Notariat i akta notarialne jako przedmiot badań historyka // *Notariat i akta notarialne na ziemiach polskich w XIX–XX wieku* / red. S. Piątkowski, K. Skupiński. – Radom, 2004, and other articles in this volume; moreover, *Notariat na ziemiach polskich w XIX–XX wieku. Ustawodawstwo – edukacja – piśmiennictwo* / red. S. Piątkowski, K. Skupiński. – Radom, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Erber Cz. *Dzieje książki na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1795–1865*. – Kielce, 1996; Przygodzki S. Księgozbiór pastora Augusta Modla w świetle notarialnego inwentarza pośmiertnego // *W kręgu kaliskiej książki* / red. K. Walczak. – Kalisz, 1998. – S. 109–117; Dymmel A. Księgozbiór domowy notariusza lubelskiego w świetle inwentarza z 1848 roku // *Drogą historii. Studia ofiarowane prof. Józefowi Szymańskiemu w siedemdziesiąt rocznicę urodzin* / red. P. Dymmel, K. Skupiński, B. Trelińska. – Lublin, 2001. – S. 383–396; Ejustem. Księgozbiory prywatne ziemiaństwa lubelskiego w połowie XIX wieku (w świetle akt notarialnych Serafina Konwickiego) // *Z książką przez wieki* / red. A. Krawczyk. – Lublin, 2002. – S. 243–255; Ejustem. Lubelscy notariusze pierwszej połowy XIX wieku w świecie książek // *Notariat na ziemiach polskich w XIX–XX wieku...* – S. 53–61; Szumski J. Księgozbiory domowe ziemiaństwa Suwalszczyzny w świetle notarialnych “inwentarzy pozostałości” z lat 1814–1858 // *Bibliotekarz Podlaski*. – 2006. – Nr 6 [Electronic resource]. – Accessible: <http://www.wbp.bialystok.pl/bp/6/jerzy%20szumski.html>

<sup>14</sup> Chartier R. Reading Matter and Popular Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century // *A History of Reading in the West* / ed. by G. Cavallo and R. Chartier. – Cambridge, 1999. – P. 269–283.

<sup>15</sup> Queniat J. *Culture et société urbaines dans la France de l'Quest au 18e siècle*. – Paris, 1981; Roche D. *Les Republicains des lettres. Cens de la culture et Lumières au XVIIIe siècle*. – Paris, 1988; Wittman R. Was there a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century? // *A History of Reading...* – P. 284–312.

We should remember that the circumstances of when a particular source originated were associated with the introduction of the institution of the notary in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1808. Notaries as public officials were appointed to record deeds and contracts concluded between private persons in order to certify the official validity of these deeds, appropriate for public deeds, and issue abstracts and extracts or copies of these documents<sup>16</sup>. In the records made by notaries there are cases covered by good will jurisdiction<sup>17</sup>. Historians classified notarial records in many ways, treating them as historical sources. Taking into account the criterion of form and first of all the content of documents, the following were most often distinguished: prenuptial agreements, wills, inventories of stocks, auction minutes, sales contracts, contracts of lease, and assignment deeds<sup>18</sup>. We should also note the specific nature of notarial services in each of the Partition areas, as a result of which there are no notarial inventories in the records from Galicia [Austrian Partition] but they are present in the records made in the Kingdom of Poland<sup>19</sup>.

Historians of reading may be interested in different categories of documents, but because of the great number of records, even mass occurrence of them, problems begin to appear already at the stage of preliminary archival research. First, even selective source publications have not appeared yet; second, we cannot hope for higher-order archival aids. The Lublin Archive, and other archives for that matter, as the Sezam and IZA databases show, usually has book inventories, apart from very few exceptions<sup>20</sup>. The description provides information about the notary's surname, the place and years of activity, as well as the number of books made in his notarial office and the number of pages. These are important data and they certainly constitute a considerable help as the first information about the holdings, yet they do not solve the problem of identification of the content of individual units. Although this state is in accordance with the principles of archive studies that the user should receive information about a particular fond, yet from the scholar's point of view this information is too vague. Perhaps in the future, higher-order archival aids will be developed.

Preliminary archival research conducted in the records of Lublin's notaries showed that mentions about the circulation of books appear in various types of documents. Among this diversity, of special significance for the study of history of reading are posthumous inventories of estate, and I shall discuss these documents in more detail. Inventories, like other types of deeds, are scattered all over individual books, which necessitates search in the whole collection. However, inventories of property can provide many items of valuable information about the world of things in the past. The inventories of estate are traditionally used by historians of material culture and it is in this circle that attempts were made to balance the achievements and assessments of the results of studies in this area<sup>21</sup>. It was also

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<sup>16</sup> Niemirowski A. *Wykład notariatu dziejowy i porównawczy...* – S. 28–33; Drzewiecki H. *Zarys dziejów notariatu w Polsce...* – S. 57–69; Kuryłowicz M. *Z historiografii polskiego notariatu // Rejent.* – 1999. – Nr 8. – S. 66–77; Malec D. *Notariat w Departamencie Krakowskim Księstwa Warszawskiego oraz w Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej // Czasopismo Prawo-Historyczne.* – 2001. – T. 53, fasc. 2. – S. 185–202; Ejsudem. *Notariat Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej.* – Kraków, 2002. – S. 35–56 et seq.

<sup>17</sup> Kazimierski J. *Akty notarialne i ich znaczenie...* – S. 115.

<sup>18</sup> Szymańska H., Śmiałowski J. *Akta notarialne z terenu Królestwa Polskiego...* – S. 57; Hensel J. *Burżuazja warszawska drugiej połowy XIX w. ...* – S. 18–21; at present also: Kozak Sz. *Rzeszowskie akta notarialne 1871–1918. Studium historyczno-źródłoznawcze.* – Rzeszów, 2004. – S. 57–86.

<sup>19</sup> Kozak Sz. *Rzeszowskie akta notarialne 1871–1918...*

<sup>20</sup> Dziedziul A. *Akta notariuszy w zasobie Archiwum Państwowego w Przemyślu.* – Przemyśl, 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Główna D., Klonder A. *Inwentarze mienia w badaniach kultury Europy od średniowiecza po nowożytność // Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej.* – 2003. – T. 51, nr 2. – S. 157–176; Mazur E. *Wykorzystanie inwentarzy w badaniach nad kulturą XIX wieku na ziemiach polskich // Ibidem.* – S. 177–182.

observed long ago that inventories are useful in studying the history of the book and reading, although there were many fewer attempts to publish inventories of book collections or to conduct research based on those sources<sup>22</sup>. Among Polish bibliologists, already K. Głombiowski wrote about the importance of a critical examination of inventories and catalogues of book collections as an important source for the study of the history of reading. Also B. Bieńkowska, who put forward research postulates regarding the study of historical book collections, pointed out the role of the extant library catalogues, auction catalogues and library inventories, including those contained in notarial records<sup>23</sup>. At present, K. Migoń emphasizes the role and importance of library catalogues for the studies on book culture in the broad sense<sup>24</sup>. Research conducted in the fond of Lublin's notaries confirmed earlier expectations. As a result of preliminary search in the fond investigated, a total of 936 inventories made by the year 1863 were reported, of which over one third or 336 listed books and periodicals.

A critical examination of the source makes us ask questions about the circumstances of when the inventories were drawn up and about their influence on the content; the problem of subjectivism or persuasion, which also appears in official sources, is still relevant and important. These problems have already been dealt with in literature, therefore I shall confine myself to signaling this issue<sup>25</sup>. Inventories were first of all compiled for inheritance purposes at the request of inheritors, creditors or the court when inheritors were not known. As a rule, the notary described a certain state of the property, presented by the family; sometimes, we find mentions of requests to return the objects taken earlier by members of the family, remarks about lending objects, pledges etc. The trap of obviousness, of which Andrzej Pospiech wrote, can partly apply to notarial inventories as well<sup>26</sup>. An important point here is the question about how complete the inventory list is. A certain form of securing completeness was the statement by the household members concerning the retention of the complete possessions that belonged to the deceased. However, a considerable time lapse between the owner's death and the compilation of the inventory may have had an adverse effect. As a rule, inventories were drawn up within several weeks or months; there were sporadic cases of drawing up inventories again after several years, which may have certainly diminished the assets, especially in the case of movable property.

The form of the documents was regulated by law. To be valid, the document contained the date of day, place where the inventory was compiled, the surname of the notary and the surnames of those present, and of witnesses and appraisers. For the historian, this information shows the circle of social and family relationships of the owner – it may be useful for his/her full identification. With regard to the deceased, his/her name and surname, and the date and place of death were recorded, and inheritors were listed. In some cases the profession/occupation of the deceased, age and religion were given. For the sake of forma-

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<sup>22</sup> A survey of earlier studies was presented by G. Berger: *Inventare als Quelle der Sozialgeschichte des Lesens // Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*. – 1981. – Vol. 5. – S. 368–379.

<sup>23</sup> Bieńkowska B. Kilka uwag i propozycji w sprawie badań księgozbiorów historycznych // *Studia o Książce*. – 1986. – T. 16. – S. 3–17; Ejsudem. Inwentarz księgozbiorów prywatnych jako źródło do badań nad dziejami czytelnictwa // *Ibidem*. – 1989. – T. 18. – S. 65–76.

<sup>24</sup> Migoń K. Dawne katalogi biblioteczne jako źródło wiedzy o kulturze książki // *Roczniki Biblioteczne*. – 2005. – R. XLIX. – S. 301–310; Pedraza Gracia M. J. Lector, lecturas, bibliotecas...: el inventario como fuente para su investigación histórica // *Annales de Documentacion*. – 1999. – No. 2. – P. 137–158. [Electronic resource]. – Accessible: <http://eprints.rclis.org/bitstream/10760/11941/1/AD09-1999.PDF> [accessed 01.05.2012].

<sup>25</sup> Dymmel A. Akta notarialne w badaniach bibliologa // *Notariat i akta notarialne na ziemiach polskich...* – S. 27–36.

<sup>26</sup> Pospiech A. *Pułapka oczywistości*. – Warszawa, 1992.

lity, the offices held by the deceased were named or more general terms were used: “citizen of Lublin”, “national citizen”, “citizen of Galician origin”, and in the case of Jewish population: “Orthodox Jew”, “Lublin resident”. Source information should be supplemented with biographical search because the data that serve the social-demographic description of the owners may partly explain what motivations were behind adding new items to book collections or account for the specific subject matter of the books collected.

In Poland, the German way of enumerating the property inventoried was adopted. Specifically designed forms grouped property items under the so-called titles, enumerating real property, money, assets, liabilities – certified and not certified, and then movable property: jewels, gold, silver, copper, furniture, bed linen, glassware, chinaware, faience ware, mirrors, dresses, clocks, harnesses, book collection, coins, farming tools and livestock, and possibly other property items. A separate column recorded the value assessed by appointed appraisers. Professionals were usually called in for that purpose, e. g. a bookseller was consulted while evaluating larger book collections. The whole was summed up by the balance of assets and liabilities or debts and obligations. Such an extensive inventory was sometimes several dozen pages long – this happened with wealthy owners, but there are also two- to three-page-long lists.

The historian of reading is mainly interested in book inventories, even those with single items. These were recorded under a separate heading titled “Books” or “Library”. Only in small inventories they were listed together with other items. Sometimes, despite a separate “title”, single books appeared additionally under the heading “Miscellaneous”, “Other items”, together with, e.g., a pair of spectacles, an iron or a vial<sup>27</sup>. These were usually prayer books and calendars, which were probably part of the owner’s everyday life. In case of several large book collections, a separate list of these was appended at the end of the inventory. This solution was of practical importance because after 1831 if one intended to sell the book, their list had to be submitted to the censorship board in Warsaw.

A separate problem was the manner of describing books in inventories. First of all the title was noted down, although not always in full wording, sometimes the author’s name was listed, the year and place of publication being sporadically recorded. The greater majority of the recorded inventories of book collections in Lublin, i. e. 313, mention the titles of the books (sometimes with the names of their authors), and only 23 lists have more laconic descriptions. There is here general information on the subject matter and language of the publication (medical, legal, Latin, and school books), or there is only information about the number of volumes and price. Such concise description was given above all with old and worn books of negligible value.

The above sources allow us to answer the important question about the subject matter structure of private book collections. If we take into consideration the available social-demographic variables serving to characterize the owners, this may enable us to show the specific interests in books among different population groups. Nevertheless, the study of the subject matter structure of book collections necessitates making bibliographic additions. At this stage of research, the mass character of the source and the accompanying problems manifest themselves once again because, if we take into consideration the book collections of the Christian population, they list a total of over 15 thousand titles of books and periodicals. For the purposes of identification and classification of individual book titles, the national bibliographies and catalogues of national libraries, some available on-line, are very

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<sup>27</sup> For example, the State Archive in Lublin (henceforth APL). Records of the Lublin notary K. Chelmicki (1844), entry no. 531.

useful. The preliminary analysis of the book collections shows that a vast majority of books comprised handbooks, belles-lettres (mainly novels), religious literature, specialist literature in various fields, and guides by authors who are now forgotten, known only to literature and science historians. Identification and classification according to the selected criteria will allow us to characterize private book collections, thus enabling us to indirectly make inferences about the intellectual culture of their owners. At present, the possibility of using computer programs greatly facilitates the editing and analyzing of sources; there are already some experiences in this area developed in e.g. demography and study of source texts<sup>28</sup>. With notarial documents, Sz. Kozak has successfully used standard Excel and Access programs that enable corresponding research, while J. de Kruif used statistic methods for data analysis<sup>29</sup>. For a long time this kind of research employed the KLEIO program, developed at University of Goettingen and especially designed for processing inventory data; at present emphasis is placed on the need to develop programs that are the result of cooperation between humanities scholars and computer scientists, designed for particular kinds of sources. However, there is always the open problem of information selection, fear of loss of the narrative, and the structure of the question questionnaire.

The collected sources contain property inventories of different groups of the nineteenth-century society. There are numerous inventories belonging to Lublin's landed gentry and the intelligentsia: doctors, pharmacists, surveyors, officials, lawyers, teachers, and also traders, city citizens, stallholders, or there are even single instances of the inventory of property belonging to domestic servants. Practically in each of these groups we can find book owners, although the scale of this phenomenon varies. The book collections of Lublin's landed gentry are quite conspicuous – one third of the inventories collected, then there are inventories of movables and immovables of Lublin's citizens and residents (over half of the inventories), including property inventories of officials of different levels, judges, notaries, doctors, pharmacists, traders and city citizens. 33 inventories contain the registers of book collections belonging to the priests from nearby parishes; book lists also appear in the property inventories of residents of other towns. Book owners undoubtedly represent a community that participated in reading culture, which is especially significant in studies of the history of reading. In the first half of the 19th century, the reading culture in the territory of Poland was elitist because literacy itself was not widespread, and for example in Russia in 1878 the percentage of illiterates was over 79 %<sup>30</sup>.

Taking into account the nationality criterion in the sources collected, we can distinguish 53 inventories of book collections owned by the Jewish population, and if we classify the owners by gender, we have 61 inventories of objects belonging to women, in six cases the owners are both spouses, the remaining number of inventories describing objects owned by men. The book owners were people of different ages. Admittedly, the notary did not give the birthdate, but, in accordance with the then practice, he recorded the age of the owner: this is, however, a very important clue for us. The book collections of very old people, which often contained publications from the time of the owner's greater activity in life,

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<sup>28</sup> Wałkowski M. A. Zastosowanie komputerów w źródłoznawstwie historycznym // *Przełomy historii. XVI Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich (Wrocław, 15–16 IX 1998)*. Pamiętniki. – Toruń, 2001. – T. 3, cz. 1. – S. 217–233; Prinke R. T. *Fontes ex machina. Komputerowa analiza źródeł historycznych*. – Poznań, 2000; *Metody komputerowe w badaniach i nauczaniu historii* / red. A. Narojczyk, B. Ryszewski. – Olsztyn, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Cochran W. G. *Sampling techniques*. – New York, 1977; Everitt B. S. *Cluster analysis*. – Third ed. – London, 1993.

<sup>30</sup> Paja A. Normy lektury kobiet w XIX w. Rekonesans // *Ludzie i książki. Studia historyczne* / red. J. Kostecki. – Warszawa, 2006. – S. 90.

looked different from the collections owned by younger people. The analysis of the size of the collections shows that Lublin inhabitants tried, admittedly seldom, to create larger book collections and they may perhaps be treated as certain manifestations of bibliophilia.

As I have said, the Lublin inventories allow us to learn what the book collections of the landed gentry looked like in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>31</sup>. The owners of book collections were inter alia local landowners, who were covered by the jurisdiction of the provincial notary offices in the Lublin region: first of all those inhabiting the poviats (then districts) of Lublin, Kraśnik, Lubartów, Kazimierz, and those living in more remote areas: poviats of Hrubieszów, Zamość, and Tarnogród. The book collections in question were of different sizes. For reasons unknown only one book was listed as the property of the landowner of Łubki in the Kazimierz district, Franciszek Witkowski, probably because of the valuable leather and silver binding<sup>32</sup>. The book collections of the landed gentry usually numbered from twenty to a hundred titles, but there were, although sporadically, larger collections consisting of several hundred volumes.

A special group of book owners were the clergymen: mainly the parish priests of the parishes near Lublin, and moreover, two Lublin bishops: Wincenty Pieńkowski and Mateusz Wojakowski. These collections, usually large, contained not only religious books but also books in other fields, including belles lettres.

Among the owners of book collections the circles of Lublin's intelligentsia and bourgeoisie stand out, one third of the inventories dating from 1810–1830, and the remainder from the next three decades. The book owners were first of all lawyers and officials, then doctors, technicians, and teachers: they collected professional literature but also books in many different fields. Books were also owned by pharmacists, military officers, male and female, citizens of the city, traders, artisans, and a butler of gentry descent.

A separate group of owners of book collections, due to their nationality and specific culture, were Jews: traders, entrepreneurs, "profiteers". Until 1830 the Jewish population constituted almost half of the inhabitants of Lublin, and after the November Uprising – over 50 %<sup>33</sup>. They often employed the services of the provincial and district notary offices, validating contracts, sales, loans, and pledges. Among numerous documents drawn up by Lublin notaries for members of this population there are also posthumous inventories. 53 inventories list books, which constitutes over 28% of the collected property inventories belonging to Lublin inhabitants. In 1810–1830 thirteen inventories were compiled, and 40 inventories date back to 1831–1863. Lublin notaries were also employed by Jews from smaller towns in the region: Łęczna, Głusk, Lubartów, Bełżyce, Turobin and from Kraśnik. The Jewish book owners were among the wealthier members of Jewish population. They were first of all traders and door-to-door salesmen, a tavern owner, a butcher shop owner and individual craftsmen. As in other cases, the book collections were of different sizes depending on the owner's reading needs and his financial capacity. Two books were left by a master cobbler, Josif Szuchmann, and the butcher shop owner Abraham Herszkowicz; the owner of a wooden house in Lublin's Podzamcze district left "the ten commandments on parchment". The Jewish population had several libraries numbering over a hundred titles 100 each, owned by well-

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<sup>31</sup> Dymmel A. Księgozbiory prywatne ziemiaństwa lubelskiego w połowie XIX wieku (w świetle akt notarialnych Serafina Konwickiego) // *Z książki przez wieki* / red. A. Krawczyk. – Lublin 2002. – S. 243–255.

<sup>32</sup> APL, Records of the Lublin notary I. Rzeszotarski (1850), record no. 99.

<sup>33</sup> Śladkowski W. W epoce zaborów // *Lublin, dzieje miasta*. – Lublin, 2000. – T. II: XIX i XX wiek. – S. 33, 59; Mikulec B. Aktywność gospodarcza ludności żydowskiej Lublina w latach 1815–1864 // *Żydzi w Lublinie. Materiały do dziejów społeczności żydowskiej Lublina* / red. T. Radzik. – Lublin, 1995. – S. 69.



to-do traders, inter alia by Wolf Blumeneweig and his son, by Nechemiasz Krasucki, or Benjamin Rosset of Wieniawa [a village near Lublin]. In the case of these inventories, there are difficulties with identifying the titles of books, which were transcribed phonetically. A preliminary analysis allows us to find that religious books prevailed in Jewish collections: the commonly called “Jewish prayers” or “prayers for praying”, editions of the Talmud and Torah scrolls, often in an ornate silver binding, collections of prayers for men and women, Talmudic commentaries, midrashim, prophecy books, and books containing religious principles. The religious profile of the Jewish book collections remained unchanged for half a century. An exceptional case was the Napoleonic Code and the Journal of Laws [*Dziennik Praw*] recorded in the inventory of the translator with the Lublin Tribunal, Dawid Friedlanders.

A separate issue is the book collections owned by women because we can assume that with private book collections the gender of the owner had an influence on the subject matter of the books collected. The book owners were first of all women from the landowning class, and those of the intelligentsia circles: wives of lawyers, officials, and members of Lublin’s bourgeoisie. The collections owned by women were as a rule small, numbering several titles, less often 20–25 volumes. Among those few books there were first of all ones devoted to religion, mainly prayer books, there were also single cases of foreign language dictionaries and school books. The subject matter of the books owned by women clearly changed over the half century. While religious books prevailed earlier, in the inter-uprising period [i. e. 1831–1863] the repertoire of texts was more diversified, e.g. Anna Schönfeld, nee Werner, the wife of a textile merchant, had inter alia a copy of *Historia literatury polskiej* [History of Polish Literature] by Wójcicki (Warsaw, 1846), and single historical studies in German<sup>34</sup>. With time, fashion journals appeared, as well as books of the Sunday Library series with fashionable novels, books about women’s duties, dictionary, historical books, poetry, French books, and sheet music. Changes in the subject matter of the book collections investigated are a testimony to different functions of the book: apart from the sphere of religious practices, it tended to be present more and more often in the sphere of entertainment. For understandable reasons, professional books were very rare in women’s book collections although in individual cases we can find publications associated with the husband’s profession/occupation, usually inherited and kept by the widows. These comparatively small collections may bear testimony to some interest in the book among women, but it is difficult to assess the scale of this phenomenon on the basis of the sources in question. We can presume that women used the household collections and it is only due to legal relations that men were the owners of fashionable love stories, fashion journals and books on the principles of upbringing children.

The distribution of particular groups among book owners was uneven: during the inter-uprising period, book inventories belonging to officials and members of Jewish population appeared comparatively more often, which, however, does not reflect changes in the interest in books but the specific nature of the sources. Significant changes in the spread of the book took place later, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In conclusion, we should also mention other documents kept in the notarial registers. They also included the records of auction if the objects were put up for public sale under the hammer. Formalities required that public sale should be publicly announced. The minutes of auction recorded the list of the objects sold, listing the fees and price obtained at the auction and the name of the buyer. Auctions were announced often but in 1831–1863 books

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<sup>34</sup> APL. Records of the Lublin notary J. Majewski (1862), record no. 31.

were sold less frequently in this way because it was necessary to obtain the consent of the censorship board. Although the auction records list the titles known from the inventories, they provide additional information about the prices and the secondary circulation of the book. The knowledge about the circulation of the book can be supplemented to some extent from the mentions in the wills. However, books were rarely the object of a separate death arrangement although there were entries about, for example, bequeathing a book collection to a monastery or for the benefit of a chosen hospital.

In light of the foregoing discussion the notarial records are an interesting source for the study of history of reading, a special role being played, as I have repeatedly stated, by the inventories on account of their content. A complete analysis of the sources collected will most certainly allow us to describe in detail the state of private book collections in Lublin and the Lublin region, thus partly answering the question about the reading culture of inhabitants of the city and its region in the first half of the 19th century.

To sum up, we can say that the Lublin notarial records, and, more broadly, records from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland provide numerous valuable items of information about reading culture. It is here that we find evidence of the social circulation of the book in the past, and first of all, the knowledge about book consumption by various social categories of users. It is practically impossible to obtain information on this subject through other sources.

The proposals for further studies embrace the following postulates. First of all, it is necessary to conduct preliminary research with a view to collecting the extant lists of book collections contained in the fonds of notarial records from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. Because of the mass character of the source, it appears that it would be realistic to conduct partial surveys covering the record holdings from individual towns and within a specified chronological span. The survey should focus on the selected types of documents, first of all inventories, auction records and wills. The next stage of investigation would be to make a database comprising catalogues of book collections and information about the owner and the content of a collection according to a precisely prepared questionnaire. The next postulates include the need to edit the sources collected, which would form the basis for further studies on the history of reading in Polish territories.

## **НОТАРІАЛЬНІ АКТИ ЯК ДЖЕРЕЛО ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ ІСТОРІЇ ЧИТАННЯ У ХІХ–ХХ ст.**

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Розглянуто переваги та недоліки нотаріальних актів як джерела до вивчення історії читання та функціонування книги в суспільстві. Особливу увагу звернуто на документи, які з'явилися на території Польського королівства після 1808 р. Серед нотаріальних актів є різні типи документів: інвентарі залишеного майна, заповіти, акти ліcitaцій, угоди купівлі-продажу тощо. Особливо важливими є нотаріальні інвентарі, де перераховане майно, зокрема й домашні бібліотеки. Вони показують, як ви-

глядали книгозбірні представників різних соціальних груп, тим більше, що, особливо до 1870-х рр., домашні бібліотеки часто описували дуже ретельно, зазначаючи авторів та назви книг, рідше – рік та місце видання. Акти ліcitaцій, які фіксували результати публічного продажу рухомого майна, показують вторинний обіг книг. Інші документи, передовсім заповіти та угоди купівлі-продажу, показують суспільну функцію книг.

*Ключові слова:* домашні бібліотеки XIX–XX ст., історія читання, нотаріальні акти, книгознавчі джерела, бібліотеки та читання у Польщі XIX–XX ст.

## **НОТАРИАЛЬНЫЕ АКТЫ КАК ИСТОЧНИК ПО ИЗУЧЕНИЮ ИСТОРИИ ЧТЕНИЯ В XIX–XX вв.**

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Рассмотрены преимущества и недостатки нотариальных актов как источника по изучению истории чтения и функционирования книги в обществе. Особое внимание обращается на документы, появившиеся на территории Польского королевства после 1808 г. Среди нотариальных актов есть разные типы документов: инвентари брошенного имущества, завещания, акты лиcitaций, договоры купли-продажи и т. д. Особенно важны нотариальные инвентари, где перечисляется имущество, в частности и домашние библиотеки. Они показывают, как выглядели книжные собрания представителей разных социальных групп, тем более, что, особенно до 1870-х гг., домашние библиотеки часто описывали очень подробно, указывая авторов и названия книг, реже – год и место издания. Акты лиcitaций, фиксировавшие результаты публичной продажи движимого имущества, показывают вторичный оборот книг. Другие документы, в первую очередь завещания и договоры купли-продажи, показывают общественную функцию книг.

*Ключевые слова:* домашние библиотеки XIX–XX вв., история чтения, нотариальные акты, книговедческие источники, библиотеки и чтение в Польше XIX–XX вв.

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