

Between Love Letter and Newspaper

— The Polish Royal Authority and News Media in the Sixteenth and
Seventeenth Centuries —*

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I

Jan III Sobieski, the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania (1674–96), is famous for his many letters to his wife, Queen Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien (Marysieńka)¹. His best-known letter² is one that was written from Vienna in 13 September 1683 after the victory over the Turkish army, which had besieged the Austrian capital since the middle of July in that year. Sobieski wrote it in the tent of the Ottoman Grand Vizier, whose troops had been crushed by the Christian allied forces under Sobieski's command the previous day. In his letter Sobieski reported to his "fairest, most beloved Marysieńka" the details of the

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¹ For the editions of the correspondence between Maria Kazimiera and Jan Sobieski, the following abbreviations are used:

HL = *Listy Jana Sobieskiego do żony Maryi Kazimiery wraz z listami tej królewskiej rodziny i innych znakomitych osób*, ed. by Antoni Zygmunt Helcel, Kraków 1860.

ML = Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien de la Grange, *Listy do Jana Sobieskiego*, ed. by Leszek Kukulski, Warszawa 1966.

ND = Norman Davies, *Sobieski's Legacy: Polish History 1683–1983. A Lecture*, London 1985. This lecture contains an English translation of the extracts of Sobieski's letters.

SL = Jan Sobieski, *Listy do Marysieńki*, ed. by Leszek Kukulski, 2nd ed., Warszawa 1970.

The page references are given after the abbreviations.

² HL 385–387; SL 522–526. For the English translation of the extracts of this letter, see: ND 76–79.

successful battle and rich booties, the acclamations by the people of Vienna, and the strained relationship with the Emperor. In it, the king also gave his wife a special order to make gazettes from his letter: “This letter will make an excellent gazette [*najlepsza gazeta*] to send out to all the world, adding *que c’est la lettre du Roi à la Reine*”³. The queen sufficiently carried out his order. So far as we know, twenty-one versions in six languages of the gazette were made from this letter and circulated in all over Europe⁴.

It may seem strange to today’s readers that the Polish king referred to his private letter to his beloved wife as “an excellent gazette” and published it for “all the world” (i.e. “all Europe”). However their attitude to the media was not something exceptional in early-modern Poland. Our concern is to consider how the Polish royal authority made use of correspondence and the “gazette” for political purposes and how they influenced public opinion in Polish society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially during the reign of Jan III Sobieski.

II

The “gazette” in early modern Europe differs from today’s daily newspaper in some respects⁵. The earliest form of a newspaper was an irregularly published newsletter on current topics, which was called differently in each country such as *Zeitungen*, *novelle*, *avisi*, *gazette*, *nouvelles*, *newsletter*, or *nowiny*. This kind of publication was often illustrated with engravings. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, in West European countries, some newspapers begun to be issued regularly, though most of them were only weekly publications. Even after the emergence of the weekly papers, the occasional newsletters did not cease to exist and continued to have a wide circulation alongside the regular newspapers. The term “gazette” in this period included not only printed newspapers, but also handwritten newsletters⁶. The handwritten newsletters, though their circulation was small, were free from any censorship and could be issued without requiring much time nor cost to set up them in type. The handwritten “gazette”, which

³ SL 525 (ND 79).

⁴ See the list of the gazettes in: Konrad Zawadzki, *Losy listu Króla Jana III do Marii Kazimiery o zwycięstwie wiedeńskim 1683 roku*, Warszawa [1983], pp. 49–52.

⁵ See: Jan Lankau, *Prasa staropolska na tle rozwoju prasy w Europie 1513–1729*, Kraków 1960; Jan 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, pp. 43–81.

gave public information to limited and specific persons, was something between a private letter and a printed newspaper. These gazettes of every kind were not only read silently by individual persons, but also read aloud or sung on the street, copied by hand, and passed on from one to another. In this way the gazettes could communicate information to more people than the original number of their copies.

Sobieski's letter to Maria Kazimiera from Vienna was circulated in the form of the occasionally published newsletter. The Polish monarchy had made use of this kind of media for war propaganda since the beginning of the sixteenth century⁷. In 1514 Hieronymus Höltzel, a publisher in Nuremberg, issued newsletters in German, which reported the victory of the Polish army over the forces of Moscow in the battle of Orsza⁸. It was probably published under the order of the Polish monarchy, because Höltzel had been awarded the privilege of publishing about Polish affairs by Zymunt I Stary, the King of Poland, in 1512⁹. Newsletters on the Polish war with Moscow were also issued in other German cities, Italy, France, Spain and Netherlands.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Stefan Batory (1576–86) made efforts to propagate his success in war by a press campaign. When Batory made the military expedition to Gdańsk in 1577, he granted Mikołaj Szarfenberger, a publisher in Cracow, the privilege of publication in every place where the Polish army would be staying. Szarfenberger left the management of this "mobile printing house (*drukarnia latająca*)" to his apprentice Walenty Łapka. From 1577 to 1581 Łapka's printing house moved all over the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the war against Moscow advanced; it played the role of "the military press bureau"¹⁰. Batory also publicized his military successes for audience abroad. A contemporary historian Reinhold Heidenstein says that the king ordered a report be published on the war against Moscow first in Latin and after that also in Polish, German, and Magyar translations¹¹.

⁶ See: Kazimierz 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.

⁷ For the bibliographical data of the occasionally published newsletters about Polish affairs, see: Konrad Zawadzki, *Gazety ulotne polskie i Polski dotyczące XVI–XVIII wieku. Bibliografia*, vol. 1–3, Wrocław 1977, 1984, 1990.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 1, no. 4.

⁹ Jan Ptaśnik, "Wstęp" in: Id., *Cracovia impressorum XV et XVI saecrum*, Leopoli 1922, p. 169.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 313–314; Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa, "Dzieje drukarni latającej", in: Id., *Z dziejów polskiej książki w okresie Renesansu. Studia i materiały*, Wrocław 1975, p. 206.

This method of propaganda had already established itself by the end of the sixteenth century. Konrad Zawadzki investigated 284 newsletters on Polish topics (of which 88 were printed in Poland) issued during the reign of Zygmunt III Waza (1587–1632). He points out that except for few cases their contents were consistent with the internal and foreign policies of Zygmunt III, who was pro-Habsburgs and supported the Counter Reformation¹². This fact suggests that these newsletters relied for the most part on information from the Polish royal chancellery. Concerning internal politics, however, royal propaganda had only limited influences. Urszula Augustyniak, who studied the political propaganda in the reign of Zygmunt III, points out that for *szlachta* (the Polish nobility) the unofficial channel of information, which was held by the magnate (the upper strata of *szlachta*), was no less important than the official publicity put out by the royal authority¹³.

The Polish monarchy also built up the mail service system. In 1558 Zygmunt II August opened the postal service between Cracow and Venice and gave its commission to an Italian merchant Prospero Provana. Since then the Polish royal mail service had been commissioned for the most part to Italian families, such as the Taxis or the Montelupis. By the middle of the seventeenth century the network of postal service in Poland spread to Warsaw and Wilno in the east, and to Poznań, Toruń and Gdańsk in the north¹⁴.

The establishment of the mail service system, which gave the circulation of information some continuity and regularity, became the important precondition for the regular publication of newspapers. Weekly newspapers, which began to be published in Western Europe in the seventeenth century, depended on the weekly cycle of the mail service¹⁵. An announcement of the forthcoming issue in a Polish newsletter, which reported on the war against Moscow (1633), shows that there was some demand for the continual publication of newspapers also in Poland:

You ask for a newspaper from Smoleńsk,
For which you are waiting impatiently,

¹¹ Rejnold Hejdensztein, *Dzieje Polski od śmierci Zygmunta Augusta do roku 1594*, translated by M. Gliszewski, Vol. I, Petersburg 1857, p. 307.

¹² Konrad Zawadzki, *Prasa ulotna za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1997, p. 42.

¹³ Urszula Augustyniak, *Informacja i propaganda w Polsce za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1981, p. 197.

¹⁴ *400 lat poczty polskiej*, Warszawa 1958, pp. 13–31.

¹⁵ Janusz Andrzej Drob, *Obieg informacji w Europie w połowie XVII wieku w świetle drukowanych i rękopiśmiennych gazet w zbiorach watykańskich*, Lublin 1993, pp. 15–25.

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And are ready to pay a lot of money, if someone would write it.
Don't spend such money.

You had better pay only ten groszy for a printed newspaper, and read and enjoy it.
You can ask for the next issue in the publishing house, if you want to get it¹⁶.

This announcement also shows that the printed newspaper was cheaper than the written newsletter and the printing house issued newspapers continuously, though irregularly, following the progress of the war. However, in seventeenth century Poland, where the population density was low and there were few cities with more than 10,000 population, it was more difficult to publish printed newspapers regularly than in West European countries.

The first weekly newspaper printed in Polish language was *Merkuriusz Polski*¹⁷, which began publication on the occasion of opening of the *Sejm* (the Diet) in 1661. Although the royal court backed up *Merkuriusz* to propagandize its idea of the political reform, it lasted only seven months, for the *Sejm* rejected the reformative proposals of the monarchy. It was Hieronim Pinocci, a merchant of Cracow and royal secretary from Italy, who edited *Merkuriusz*. Over ten years Pinocci had collected information on foreign affairs through the newspapers and the private letters from West European countries, and on the basis of them regularly issued the handwritten newsletters. He could make good use of his experience in editing the handwritten gazette for the publication of the new printed newspaper¹⁸. It is worth noting that Pinocci issued also a weekly newspaper in Italian entitled *Continuatione del Mercurio Polacco*, which was an Italian version of *Merkuriusz*. Although *Continuatione* carried only the accounts of Polish matters, *Merkuriusz Polski* carried also articles on foreign affairs¹⁹. Even after the discontinuance of *Merkuriusz*, Pinocci continued to gather information for the royal chancellery until the beginning of the reign of Jan III Sobieski²⁰. After Pinocci's death in 1676, Cosimo Brunetti, who was also a royal secretary from Italy, took over this task. In 1683 Jan III licensed Jerzy Aleksander Priami to publish gazettes, and in 1695 the king granted him the monopolistic privilege for the publication of printed newspapers in Polish, Latin and Italian languages.

¹⁶ Adam Bar, "Zarys dziejów czsopiśmiennictwa polskiego do wybuchu powstania listopadowego", in: *Katalog wystawy czasopism polskich od w. XVI do r.1830*, Kraków 1938, p. 16.

¹⁷ *Merkuriusz Polski*, ed. by Adam Przyboś, Kraków 1960.

¹⁸ Karolina Targosz, *Hieronim Pinocci. Studium z dziejów kultury naukowej w Polsce w XVII wieku*, Warszawa, pp. 47-59.

¹⁹ Jan Sulowski, "Włoska odmiana "Merkuriusza Polskiego"", *Zeszyty prasoznawcze*, 1 (1967), pp. 65-74.

²⁰ Sobieski was elected to the Polish throne in 1674.

Priami, who had a close relation with Pinocci, was also a royal secretary from Italy²¹.

Thus we can say that the Polish monarchy had some experience in press campaign since the beginning of the sixteenth century. The mail service and the publication of gazettes in sixteenth and seventeenth century Poland depended greatly on the Italian connections in the royal court; this relationship continued until the reign of Jan III Sobieski. In the second half of the seventeenth century, though weekly printed newspapers had not yet become established in Poland, occasionally printed newspapers and regularly handwritten newsletters were in circulation as the news media on current topics.

III

Jan Sobieski entered into correspondence with Maria Kazimiera, when he was still an unmarried captain of the royal standard-bearers (*chorągży wielki koronny*). Maria Kazimiera, who had come from France to Poland in the suite of the queen Marie-Louise (Ludwika Maria), married the voivode (*wojewoda*) of Kiev, Jan Zamoyski in 1658²². At first Maria Kazimiera and Sobieski wrote to each other in order to exchange inside information on the royal court and the political situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth²³. Sobieski became an information agent for Maria Kazimiera, who had left the queen's court after the marriage and had a thirst for the news from Warsaw. In her oldest letter to Sobieski at the beginning of November 1659, Maria Kazimiera requested him to send her "the news about Their Majesties the King and the Queen"²⁴. She hoped that their correspondence was not unilateral, but kept up on give-and-take ground: "I feel much beholden to you for your efforts to share the information with me. I'm afraid that because of my curiosity you might have much trouble and feel disgusted with me. I'll write you about what will happen in my region, because I want to give you a gift in return"²⁵. We can see the same attitude in another letter of hers to Sobieski, in which she touched on their correspondence with the

²¹ Karolina Targosz, *Jan III Sobieski mecenasem nauk i uczonych*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1991, pp. 66–72, 80–81, 89–90.

²² Michał Komarzyński, *Piękna królowa Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien-Sobieska 1641–1716*, Kraków 1995, s. 35–39.

²³ There remain Maria Kazimiera's letters to Sobieski between November 1659 and June 1664, but Sobieski's letters to Maria Kazimeira only after October 1664.

²⁴ ML 100.

²⁵ ML 103.

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queen Ludwika Maria: "Please let me know what Her Majesty will write to you. I'll write you what She will write to me"²⁶. Maria Kazimiera sent to Sobieski not only her own letters, but also the newspapers from Western Europe, which she got from her relative in France²⁷.

On the other hand, it seems that at first Sobieski did not write letters to another man's wife with eagerness. Maria Kazimiera once burst into a rage for her correspondent's lack of enthusiasm: "You are a stupid man, if you take it for granted that your correspondent will take pain to write to you, while you spend your time only in pleasure. You are greatly mistaken, if you think that someone should become your *gazette*"²⁸. It is important that she wrote her own role as a "gazette". Their correspondence started as a kind of newsletter, which reported continuously information on current topics. However they exchanged letters not on commercial basis like Pinocci, but within the patronage relationship between the royal couple, especially the queen Ludwika Maria and them²⁹. Maria Kazimiera requested Sobieski "to send me the information, because Her Majesty wants to know news", and gave him an instruction: "Please address to me letters for Her Majesty in future. They will certainly be received by Her Majesty"³⁰.

Sobieski had to send letters to the queen via Maria Kazimiera, because sending letters addressed directly to the queen involved some risk of being stolen or forged by a third person. Maria Kazimiera's letters also were not free from danger in the least: "You should not be surprised to see that they tried every possible means to get my letter. [...] I checked with my own eyes how Stawki had touched my letter, which I had sealed by myself"³¹. She warned Sobieski to seal his letters more carefully: "Please seal your letter more firmly. Anyone can open letters addressed to me. It is safer to use sealing waxes. I'll send you good sealing waxes by parcel. Please seal a confidential letter with red wax. For the other letters, please use waxes of other colors"³². She repeatedly advised him to burn her letters after reading them³³. It is thanks to Sobieski, who did not fulfill her advice, that we can read them today. Maria Kazimiera was aware that it was impossible to keep the contents of their letters strictly secret: "When next we

²⁶ ML 129.

²⁷ ML 129.

²⁸ ML 110.

²⁹ Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski 1629–1696*, 2nd ed., Warszawa 1994, pp. 76–77.

³⁰ ML 131.

³¹ ML 135.

³² ML 132.

³³ ML 102, 107, 130.

meet, I'll tell you a special thing by word of mouth. It is not only a special, but also a terrible story. Please don't tell it to anyone. You should not ask me about it in letters. I can't write about such thing. [...] They open every letter. Please be careful"³⁴.

From the summer of 1661, there was a change in the tone of their correspondence, because Sobieski had fallen in love with her. That autumn they secretly promised to love each other in the Carmelite Church in Warsaw³⁵. Falling to an illicit love affair, they began to write their letters in code in order to keep their love affairs a secret. In the correspondence they replaced some key words and person's names with other words³⁶. For example, Maria Kazimiera transcribed her own name as "Astrée", "rose" or "essence"; her husband's name 'Zamoyski' as "flute"; 'Sobieski' as "Celadon", "autumn" or "gunpowder"; and 'Ludwika Maria' into "Hamaleon", "tulip" or "Trictrac"³⁷. She also replaced the word 'letter' with "jam" or "fruit", 'love' with "orange", and 'health' with "smell". In her letters she often used several code names for the same person in order to increase the complexity: "I don't know why the *autumn* didn't send any *fruit* to its own *rose*. The *essence* is anxious whether the *smell* of *gunpowder* was spoiled or not"³⁸. Using codes, which only they could decode, must have had strengthened their bonds of love.

In April 1665, Maria Kazimiera's husband Jan Zamoyski died. After several months, Sobieski married Maria Kazimiera³⁹. We have Sobieski's letters to Marisieńka only after October 1664. In them Sobieski used the same codes as Maria Kazimeira and continued to write in code even after their marriage. He wrote to his wife intensively, when the couple were separated from each other because of Sobieski's military expeditions (1665–66, 1672, 1675–76, 1683) or Marysieńka's visits to her old home in France (1667–68, 1670–71). The letters during the expedition were numbered in order of time they were sent out. Most

³⁴ ML 118.

³⁵ Komarzyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–55. Zbigniew Wójcik says that this occurred in June 1661. Wójcik, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–83.

³⁶ They also used code numbers. For example, SL 260–267.

³⁷ "Astrée" and "Celadon" are names of the characters in the French baroque novel *L'Astrée* by Honoré d'Urfé. On the influence of the baroque novels on the correspondence between Maria Kazimiera and Sobieski, see: Leszek Kukulski, "Jan Sobieski epistolograf", in: *Literatura, komparatystyka, folklor. Księga poświęcona Julianowi Krzyżanowskiemu*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 199–212.

³⁸ ML 153. The words in italics are codes.

³⁹ Historians disagree about the date of their marriage. Cf. Komarzyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–76; Wójcik, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–103.

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of his letters begin with such a passionate salutation as “To the only delight for my mind and soul, the most beautiful and dearest Marysieńka!”, and end with such an affectionate complimentary closing as “I hug you, the most beautiful woman in the world, and kiss you a million times”. There is a very wide diversity in the contents of his letters from the report on the war to the complaint about that the wife did not write to him as much as he⁴⁰. The most striking feature of Sobieski’s letters is the very ardent expressions of his affection for his wife. He sometimes adores his partner’s body⁴¹ and even refers to their behaviors in the bedroom⁴². In this sense their correspondence, which had started as the “gazette” for practical purposes, had changed into the sweet “fruit” (i.e. love letter) as their sexual relationship developed, though their correspondence was never deprived of the function of communicating on current public affairs. In addition to it, they made use of their letters for war propaganda during Sobieski’s military expedition to Vienna.

IV

In 15 August 1683 Jan III Sobieski and his army left Cracow for Austria. 22 August on the border of Poland he parted from Marysieńka. In the middle of September Sobieski won the battle of Vienna against the Ottoman forces. After that he fought in one place after another in Hungary pursuing the fleeing enemy. He returned in triumph to Cracow 23 December. Before then, 15 December he met again with his beloved wife at Stary Sącz near the border with Hungary⁴³.

⁴⁰ When Sobieski had heard nothing from Marysieńka staying in France, he became irritated and wrote her in the letter dated 19 November 1670: „I could know where you stayed and where you were going only from the public newspapers. I’ll send you as evidence a copy of the newspaper, which says that now you are staying in Paris. Please imagine how ashamed I am of it and how my enemies and opponents take delight in it”. SL 348.

⁴¹ He often refers to the sexual parts of his wife’s body in his letters. In these cases he used euphemisms such as “a beauty spot” or “a small spider”. See SL 47, 48, 60, 71, 86, 106.

⁴² In the letter to Marysieńka dated 25 July 1675, Sobieski says that in the military camp he learned from a captive Kalmyk how to make love in a different manner and asks her to consider whether it will be acceptable for her. This part of the letter had been eliminated both in HL and SL for the reason that it was vulgar, but Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy) quoted it in his *Marysieńka Sobieska* (1937). See: T. Żeleński (Boy), *Pisma*, vol. VII, Warszawa 1956, pp. 180–181.

⁴³ Wójcik, *op. cit.*, pp. 326–344.

During this expedition of less than four months, Sobieski sent 32 letters to his wife⁴⁴. He wrote a letter to her every three or four days on average. If Marysieńka also wrote to him in the same pace, about 60 letters might have come and gone between them. But today we know of only 30 letters from Sobieski to his wife and 2 letters from Marysieńka to her husband.

The letters were sent by messengers or by mail. The transportation by messengers was not always faster than the postal service. Maria Kazimiera complained to Sobieski about it: "My Dearest, why did you send the letter by a messenger, if he was not faster than the postman?"⁴⁵ But the mail service was not free from danger. Sobieski wrote in a letter dated 9 September 1683 that postmen had delivered mail to his camp twice a week, but "God knows whether the mail will arrive here in future, because, as the postmaster says, some men behind us have already killed two postmen on horseback and plundered them"⁴⁶. Maria Kazimiera was also worried whether the letters to her had been stolen: "I came to the conclusion that the parcel addressed to me had been plundered. [...] Under such conditions we can't expect our letters to be received, if we write them to each other. So we must consider another way to send our letters. We should have our own mail service on the route, which you consider as the best and shortest. Twenty Cossacks will be quite enough. In this way you can release me from the worst agony, which I have experienced since my birth. [...] I can't write everything to you, because I can't trust the postal service"⁴⁷.

Although Maria Kazimiera was anxious that the letters to her would be plundered, she eagerly read the letters addressed to other persons: "I could get news about you only from your letters to both commanders in chief of Lithuanian army dated 17 [September 1683], the letter of the equerry to the bishop of Kiev and Sarnowski's letter. These letters and also the letter to the nuncio refer to your meeting with the Emperor"⁴⁸. This kind of correspondence was the most important medium, through which they could get information on the progress of the war quickly. Each letter from the front was read in turn in the royal court. In her letter dated 3 October 1683 Maria Kazimiera says: "I want to know even the most trifling matters and feel ashamed for this reason. Because they know that I read your letters a hundred times, and still I also read as many letters to other

⁴⁴ We can know the whole number of his letters during the expedition from the serial number given to each letter by Sobieski.

⁴⁵ ML 246.

⁴⁶ SL 513.

⁴⁷ ML 243.

⁴⁸ ML 243.

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persons as I can get, though they wrote on the same things repeatedly"⁴⁹. Sobieski also read the letters from his wife repeatedly in the front: "I read your letter three times at least, even when I am in the most serious situation. The first time, when the letter arrives. The second time, when I lie in bed free from public affairs. The third time, when I answer a letter to you"⁵⁰. But the correspondence was not enough for him, who wanted to know the situation of European countries. He asked the queen "to send us the news from the French and Dutch gazettes"⁵¹.

Jan III Sobieski not only read newspapers at the front, but he also made an "excellent gazette" of his own letter to Marysieńka as stated above⁵². What kind of gazette was made of the letter to the queen?

Konrad Zawadzki, who investigated the gazettes based on the letter dated 13 September 1683, lists 5 Polish, 8 German, 5 Italian, 1 English, 1 Spanish and 1 Danish versions. Out of them, we shall now look more carefully into 18 versions, which have been microfilmed and are owned by National Library in Warsaw⁵³.

Every version indicates in the title that it is a letter of the Polish king to the queen, and keeps the epistolary form written in the first person except the version P V, in which the style is changed into the third person. The important point to note is that their contents are not the same as that of Sobieski's original letter. The salutation to the queen⁵⁴, the king's order to make newspapers⁵⁵, and the part in which Sobieski expressed his suspicion against the Emperor⁵⁶ in the original letter are deleted in all versions. There are also several sentences, which have been changed in the gazettes. For example, as to the scene of the acclamation for Sobieski by the people of Vienna, while in the original letter the people hesitated

⁴⁹ ML 249.

⁵⁰ SL 516–517.

⁵¹ SL 548.

⁵² Sobieski had once issued the similar instruction during the military expedition to Ukraine a year after his enthronement. See SL 452.

⁵³ The collection of National Library in Warsaw lacks 2 Italian and 1 Danish versions. See the list in the end of this article.

⁵⁴ SL 522 (ND 76): "Only solace of my heart and soul, my fairest, most beloved Marysieńka!"

⁵⁵ SL 525 (ND 79). See the quotation in this article, p. 32.

⁵⁶ SL 525 (ND 79): "The Emperor who is sailing down the Danube is now just a mile and a half away; I can see, however, that he is not too keen on seeing me, given his pomps and vanities; on the other hand, he would like to arrive in the town as soon as possible pour chanter le 'Te Deum'. I withdraw in his favour, most happy to avoid these ceremonies, which is all the reward we have so far experienced".

to cheer for fear of the officers and were restrained from the excessive acclamation by them⁵⁷, the gazettes say that some people cried out ‘Vivat’ in spite of that “I [Sobieski] asked the German officers to keep the people in calm”. The sentence, which follows in the original letter and refers to the discord between the commander of the civil army and the city council⁵⁸, was eliminated in all versions. The information in the original letter about the Emperor who “has sent a message ahead that he is only one mile away”⁵⁹ was changed into the excuse for Sobieski’s avoiding his meeting with the Emperor by the military reason⁶⁰. Two officers fallen in the battle, to whom the original letter refers only as “the two”⁶¹, are mentioned with their official ranks in the gazettes⁶². From the last paragraph of the original letter⁶³ the editors of the gazette removed the closing salutation to Sobieski’s family and instructions to the Lithuanian and Cossack armies. Instead, a sentence says that Sobieski gave horses and jewels to the Kurfürst of Bavaria and the princess of France⁶⁴. As a whole they removed the private messages in the original letter, covered up the strained relations between Sobieski and the Emperor or the German officers, and emphasized the Polish king’s generosity.

It is worth noting that there are some differences not only between the original letter and the newspapers, but also among the versions of the latter. For example, the episode of the Tartar wives in the original letter⁶⁵ is removed in the Polish versions, but appears in some versions of the other languages⁶⁶. Sobieski’s promise of meeting again with his wife⁶⁷ remains only in two German, one Italian and one Spanish versions⁶⁸. The official rank of Hieronim Lubomirski, which is mentioned as the Marshal of the Court (*marszałek nadworny*) in the original

⁵⁷ SL 524 (ND 78): “They would all have liked to cry ‘Vivat’ but it was plain that they feared their officers and superiors. One group could not resist and timorously cried out ‘Vivat’ which I saw was frowned on”.

⁵⁸ SL 524 (ND 78): “Relations, I notice, are not very good between the commander and the city council, for when they greeted me, he did not even bother to introduce them”.

⁵⁹ SL 524 (ND 78–79).

⁶⁰ All versions except E: “Although the Emperor has sent a message ahead that he is only one mile away, I have no occasion to see him, because I hurry to pursue the enemy”.

⁶¹ SL 524–525 (ND 79).

⁶² All versions: “the *starosta* of Halicz and the Secretary of Court Treasury”.

⁶³ SL 526.

⁶⁴ All versions except D I and D II.

⁶⁵ SL 523 (ND 77): “You will not be able to say to me as the Tartar women say to their husbands when they return empty-handed: ‘You are no warrior to return without booty’, because he who captures booty must be at the front”.

⁶⁶ D I, D II, D V, D VI, D VII, D VIII, I III and S.

letter⁶⁹, is changed into the Crown Marshal (*marszałek korrony*) in the Polish versions, except P V that keeps the original form here. Hence we can say that the versions in other languages are not simple translations of the Polish versions; some German, Italian and Spanish versions more closely follow the original letter than the Polish versions. Also among the versions of the same language (for example, the Polish versions), there are some differences. It is clear that the gazettes has been edited and translated by more than one person, though it is difficult to reconstruct the whole genealogy of these versions.

To a certain extent we can look in at the backstage of the publication of gazettes through the correspondence of the royal couple. Sobieski wrote in the letter dated 17 September 1683: "Please order to devise a gazette from my letter, but don't mention of what I complained in it"⁷⁰. It is certain from Maria Kazimiera's letter dated 3 October 1683 that she herself took part in the editing of the gazettes: "I ordered to make such gazette. I also ordered to add in it that you had become an heir of the Grand Vizier and that it was soldiers who had benefited from the rich treasures, which had been in the tent of the Grand Vizier. I also ordered to add the further comments that you had distributed what had been left of the booties among the lords and Kurfürsts in the army; that you had presented to the lords and the Emperor the horses, which you had brought from Poland, with splendid harnesses; and that you had also presented to the Kurfürsts and the generals the horses and the other expensive things, which you had bought from your followers"⁷¹. As we mentioned above, all versions of the gazette emphasis Sobieski's generosity, though they do not always follow the queen's orders as a whole.

The published gazettes, however, did not satisfy the Polish king. He exploded into angry words in his letter dated 6 October 1683: "What I had wanted to keep in secret has been printed in Polish. They made extracts from my letter to you and added stupid words to it here and there. For God's sake, please order

⁶⁷ SL 525: "And we will be able to meet again in Stryj as we have promised, if God will save us. Please give orders to Mr. Wyszynski there to ready a stove and repair the building".

⁶⁸ D VII, D VIII, I III and S.

⁶⁹ SL 524 (ND 78). On this official rank there are some differences also among the other versions than Polish. D I, D II, D V, D VII, D VIII, I III and S refer to it as "the Marshal of the Court", while D III, D IV, D VI, I I and I II note it as "the Crown Marshal". There is no mention of it in E.

⁷⁰ SL 532.

⁷¹ ML 251-252.

to buy up and burn them. They have damaged my honor most heavily"⁷². We can not identify whether the five Polish versions discussed above, include the extracts, at which Sobieski got angry. It is possible that the revised editions were published after the inconvenient versions had been recalled and scrapped. At any rate Sobieski had to become nervous, because he was in rivalry with the Emperor and the German lords over the estimation of their achievements in the battle of Vienna⁷³. The gazettes on the Emperor's side spread rumors and had a low opinion of the Polish king. Sobieski, who had gotten irritated, mounted a counteroffensive by his pen: "I have finished writing a gazette in my poor French, because no one writes honestly, while newspapers write on us so unfaithfully. Please order to revise and deliver it in order to make our enemies happy"⁷⁴. Sobieski also wrote a forged letter to the courtier of the French king in order to deny the rumor against him⁷⁵, and sent money to his agent in Hague for the publication of gazettes against the newspapers of the Emperor's side⁷⁶.

The correspondence of Sobieski and Maria Kazimiera during the military expedition in 1683 suggests that this war was also a struggle for the control over the information among European countries. Correspondence and gazettes were the effective weapons in this war. The Polish monarchy made efforts to manipulate the information through them. The royal couple called even their secret "fruit" (i.e. love letter) into service for propaganda. Did Sobieski, who had won the battle by arms, also enjoy his triumph in the battle by pen?

V

How did people accept and read the newspapers about the battle of Vienna? We have some studies about the international echoes of the military expedition in 1683⁷⁷. They show that there were a considerable number of publications on this battle, which was regarded as the defensive war of the European Christianity against the Islamic invasion; many gazettes and pamphlets on it were published and circulated all over Europe. However it is difficult to measure precisely the effects of these publications on the society which had no idea of a public-opinion poll. In the following pages we can only make some suggestions on this problem.

The letter of Madame de Sévigné dated 23 October 1683 contains a postscript

⁷² SL 551.

⁷³ Jan Wimmer, *Wiedeń 1683. Dzieje kampanii i bitwy*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 352-355.

⁷⁴ SL 590.

⁷⁵ SL 542.

⁷⁶ SL 588.

written by Jean de Corbinelli, which referred to Sobieski's letter to the queen from Vienna⁷⁸. This letter of the French marquise rouses our interest in two respects. First, there is some possibility that a French gazette was made of Sobieski's letter to Marysienka, though Konrad Zawadzki could not find any French version by his investigation. Secondly, it suggests that the printed gazettes were transcribed into private letters, through which the news reached a wider circle.

The information from printed newspapers also spread through the handwritten media in Poland. Kazimierz Maliszewski, who had investigated the handwritten newsletters in the National Archive of Toruń, found that the written newsletters contained detailed descriptions of the progress of the military expedition in 1683, and there were two handwritten copies of the gazette made of Sobieski's letter to the queen. Maliszewski also points out that Fabian Zywert, the postmaster (poczmistrz) of Lwów, edited the written newsletters on current topics in the Ottoman Empire and continuously sent them to Toruń⁷⁹. Thus, there was a close relationship between the postal service and the news media, and the printing world and the handwriting world also penetrated into each other.

The gazettes and correspondence were also combined with other media. Peter Burke, who studied the politics of representation of Louis XIV, shows how the French royal authority manipulated the symbol of authority by using all sorts of media and "fabricated" the public image of Louis XIV, which was quite different from what he actually was. The French monarchy propagandized the idealized image of Louis XIV through various media such as gazettes, literary works, paintings, sculptures and performing arts⁸⁰. The Polish royal power also used various methods to propagandize the military successes of 1683. The

⁷⁷ Tadeusz Wasilewski, "Odgłosy odsieczy wiedeńskiej w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 90-1 (1983), pp. 3-19; Id., "Pierwsze echa Odsieczy Wiedeńskiej w Europie Zachodniej", *Kultura-Oświata-Nauka. Zeszyty Naukowe PAX*, 37 (1983), pp. 61-65; Władysław Myk, "Wiktoria wiedeńska i Jan III Sobieski w ówczesnej prasie europejskiej", *Akcent* (1983), nr 3, pp. 58-72; Bolesław Klimaszewski, "Der Entsatz von Wien in der europäischen Literatur des Jahres 1683", *Studia Austro-Polonica*, 3 (1983), pp. 111-135; Janusz J. Tomiak, "English public opinion and the siege and relief of Vienna in 1683", *Studia Austro-Polonica*, 3 (1983), pp. 333-358; Jerzy Śliziński, *Jan III Sobieski w literaturze narodów Europy*, Warszawa 1979, pp. 229-281, 357-371.

⁷⁸ Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, II, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris 1960, p. 941.

⁷⁹ Kazimierz Maliszewski, "Problematyka turecka w polskich gazetach pisanych w czasach panowania Jana III Sobieskiego", in: *Studia z dziejów epoki Jana III Sobieskiego*, pod red. Krystyna Matwijowskiego, Wrocław 1984, pp. 97-109.

⁸⁰ Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, New Haven and London 1992.

victory of Vienna was not only publicized by the gazettes, but also was praised by odes and visualized by engravings and sculptures⁸¹. Celebrations of the king's victories in Gdańsk, then the biggest city in Poland, show how the Polish royal authority made full use of various media to "fabricate" its successful image.

In Gdańsk, the victory of Vienna was celebrated by firing salutes, ringing bells, playing instrumental music, singing in chorus and setting off fireworks. When the news of the victory in Parkanyj arrived there in 30 October 1683, the city government fired salutes and the bells of the city hall rang *Te Deum* every hour. Masses were held in every church in the city. Instrumental music was played at noon and at five o'clock. Celebrations continued into the next year; poets wrote odes in various languages; orators admired the king's achievements; a German gazette was made of Sobieski's letter to the queen⁸² and many pamphlets on the victory of Vienna were published. Thus the Polish monarchy showed off its military success by making full use of every kind of medium such as music, rituals in church, literary works, speeches and gazettes⁸³.

How did the people of Gdańsk react to the public image of the monarch "fabricated" by the royal authority? A Polish nobleman Jan Chryzostom Pasek, who had been in Gdańsk in 1683, described attitudes of the townspeople in his *Memoirs*⁸⁴:

All the people of the Catholic religion were and are content with this resolution of our master the King. The Lutherans and the Calvinists, however, were displeased, since they considered this war as their own and begged God for a Turkish victory. They thought this would be to their advantage; hence they sided with the oppressed Thököly and other dissenters. I was in Gdańsk at the time, and they begged God at their church gatherings to give the Turks a victory over the Emperor. Whenever they read in the newspapers [*gazety*] that things had gone favorably for Thököly, when on a raid he had killed several Germans, they celebrated the event and said thanksgiving prayers: '*Oh, Her Got! Oh, liber Got!*'

⁸¹ Juliusz Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Dwaj królowie rodacy*, Warszawa, 1980, pp. 119–147. In iconographic images Sobieski was almost deified by being overlapped on the image of the Emperor Trajan. Mariusz Karpowicz, „Jan III, Trajan i brama w Wilanowie”, in: Id., *Sekretne treści warszawskich zabitków*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 50–74.

⁸² D III.

⁸³ See: Edmund Kotarski, *Gdańska poezja okolicznościowa XVII wieku*, Gdańsk 1993, pp. 125–132.

⁸⁴ Jan Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, ed. by Władysław Czapliński, wyd. IV, Wrocław 1968, pp. 502–503. Here we quote from the English translation by Maria A. J. Swiecka: *The memoirs of Jan Chryzostom z Gostawic Pasek*. Translated, with an Introduction and Commentaries, by Maria A. J. Swiecka, New York–Warsaw 1978, p. 484.

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Pictures of Thököly on horseback, dressed in full armor, were sold. Those who were selling the printed leaflets [*awizy drukowane*] would also sing them right away. I was walking past once when one of them was singing. I hummed a little and then asked what he was singing about, since others listened to him so attentively? I was told that this was the news [*nowiny*] of Pan Thököly who happily defeated the Emperor. When the one who was singing heard my question he showed to me the script in German, saying: 'Yes, Sir, buy them, buy them!' I asked: 'How much do you want for them?' He answered: 'A penny'. I gave it to him. Many lads followed me to an inn asking for some money. There was one shrewed fellow among them and I said to him: 'Dear brother, you shall have one zloty if you wipe your bottom with this sheet!' The peasant lowered his pants with great eagerness, he thoroughly wiped his stark naked backside with those leaflets and then flung them into the Motława river. The German men and women began to grumble and murmur, and I left. The Catholics, and those who had watched the scene from the ships roared with laughter. And when I related it to the Catholic townsmen, the Dominican friars and to the Jesuits, they said: 'Fortunately no commotion was raised against your Lordship, because these Germans here worship this Thököly with almost divine respect.'

Pasek describes vividly how people accepted newspapers. Peddlers sold them singing in the street. The townspeople reacted keenly to the news in the gazettes with shouts and prayers. Thus printed gazettes penetrated into everyday life of Gdańsk and its townspeople showed deep interest in current topics. The puzzle is that Protestants, who were a majority of the population in this city⁸⁵, read the German newspapers, which took sides with Thököly allying with the Ottoman Empire; that is to say, they enthusiastically read the newspapers issued by the camp opposing to the Polish monarchy. If Pasek tells something of the truth, it is improbable that those same Protestants willingly accepted the celebrating events directed by the Polish royal authority.

Jan III Sobieski made special efforts to "fabricate" his self-image in Gdańsk since his enthronement⁸⁶. Also during the expedition to Vienna the Polish monarchy intensively propagandized its military success there. But the king could neither monopolize the news media in Gdańsk nor win the townspeople over to his own side. The case of this city tells us that it is difficult to measure the effect of propaganda on public opinion only by the amount of messages issued by

⁸⁵ The percentages of population of each denomination in Gdańsk in 1661–1700 are estimated as follows: Lutherans 82.8%, Catholics 11.4%, Calvinists 5.8%. See: Jan Baszanowski, *Przemiany demograficzne w Gdańsku w latach 1601–1846*, Gdańsk 1995, p. 171, Table 2.12. On the strained relation between Protestants townspeople and Catholic authority in Gdańsk, see: *Historia Gdańska*, T. III/1: 1655–1793, pod red. Edmunda Cieślaka, Gdańsk 1993, pp. 170–175.

⁸⁶ See: Edmund Kotarski, *Muza gdańska Janowi Sobieskiemu 1673–1696*, Wrocław 1985.

the royal authority.

<List of microfilms of the gazettes made of Sobieski's letter to Maria Kazimiera dated 13 September 1683>

GU: reference number in the catalog of Konrad Zawadzki. See note 7.

Mf.: reference number of microfilm of National Library in Warsaw.

- P I *Kopia listu Króla Imści do Królowey Ieymści pisanego z namiotów wezyrowskich w obozie pod Wiedniem die 13 Septembris 1683*, [Kraków 1683]. (GU1005) <Mf.41513>
- P II *Copia listu Króla Imści do Królowey Ieymści pisanego z namiotów wezyrowskich w obozie pod Wiedniem die 13 Septembris 1683 Anno*, [Kraków 1683]. (GU1006) <Mf.31854>
- P III *Copia listu Króla Imści do Królowey Ieymści pisanego z namiotów wezyrowskich w obozie pod Wiedniem die 13 Septembris 1683 Anno*, [Kraków 1683]. (GU1659) <Mf.54099>
- P IV *Copia listu Króla Imści do Królowey Imści pisanego z namiotów wezyrowskich w obozie pod Wiedniem die 13 Septembris Anno 1683*, [Kraków 1683]. (GU1007) <Mf.44711>
- P V *Relacya potrzeby która trwała godzin 14 y wiktoryey otrzymaney die 12 Septembris nad nieprzyjacielem pod Wiedniem przez woyska Naiśnieyszego y Niezwycięzonego Króla Iego Mości Polskiego Wielkiego Monarchy Iana Trzeciego zpod namiotów wezyrskich z obozu wystana, tudzież excerpta z listu tegoż Naiśnieyszego Króla Iego Mości do Królowey Iey Mości pisanego sub die 13 Septembris Anno Domini 1683* [Kraków 1683]. (GU1036) <Mf.31854>
- D I *Copia eines Schreibens, welches Jhre Mayestät der König in Pohlen an Jhro Mayestät die Königin auss dem Lager vor Wien unterm dato dess 13 September Anno 1683 hat abgehen lassen*, Breslau [1683]. (GU975) <Mf.37791>
- D II *Copia eines Schreibens, welches Jhre Mayestät der König in Pohlen an Jhro Mayestät die Königin auss dem Lager vor Wien hat abgehen lassen*, Salzburg [1683]. (GU1634) <Mf.62114>
- D III *Copia Jhro Königl. Majest. Schreiben an Jhre Königl. Majestätin geschrieben aus des Gross-Veziers Gezelt im Lager unter Wien, den 13 Septembr. 1683*, n.p. [1683]. (GU976) <Mf.19838>
- D IV *Copia Jhro Königl. Majestät in Polen Schreiben an Jhre Königl. Majestätin geschrieben aus des Gross-Veziers Gezelt im Lager unter Wien, den 13 Septembr. Anno 1683*, n.p. [1683]. (GU977) <Mf.36487>
- D V *Copey-Schreiben Jhrer Mayestät dess Pohnischen Königs an Jhro Mayestät die Königin in Pohlen auss dem Lager vor Wien, de dato 13 Septembris 1683, worinnen die*

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- Schlacht und grosse Victori wider den Türcken, wie auch die unerhörte Beuth, so ihme abgenommen worden aussführlich beschriben wird*, n.p. 1683. (GU1660) <Mf.62113>
- D VI *Copey eines Schreibens von Jhr. Königl. Majestät von Pohlen an Dero Gemahlin aus des Gross-Veziers Gezelten an dem Lager vor Wien, vom 13 Sept. 1683 wegen der Entsatzung*, n.p. [1683]. (GU1661) <Mf.A 878>
- D VII *Curieuses und recht merckwürdiges Schreiben, welches Jhro Königliche Majestät in Polen an Dero Königliche Gemahlin bey jüngster höchst-glücklichen Entsetzung der Käyselichen Residenz-Stadt Wienn, und gänzlicher Verjagung der in mehr als 150000 Mann bestandnen türkischen Armee abgehen lassen. Wegen vieler raren Umstände nunmehr zum Druck befördert*, n.p. 1683. (GU1009) <Mf.32091>
- D VIII *Curiöses Sendschreiben Jhro Königlichen Majestät in Pohlen an Dero Gemahlin von dem erhaltenen Sieg. In: Curiöse Denckwürdigkeiten des Oesterreichischen triumphirenden Adllers, Das, ist Ausführliche Beschreibung aller in währender Belagerung und Entsatz der Keiserl. Residenz-Stadt Wien vorgelauffnen Denkwürdigsten Begebenheiten...* Nürnberg 1683. (GU1662) <Mf.44643>
- I I *Lettera scricta dalla Sacra Maestà del Re di Polonia alla Regina Sua Consorte colla quale le dà parte delli piú distinti e curiosi secreti e successi accaduti nel combattimento. Scritta sotto il padiglione del Primo Visir*, Genova 1683. (GU1015) <Mf.32101>
- I II *Lettera scritta dalla Sacra Maestà del Re di Polonia alla Regina Sua Consorte con la quale le dà parte delli piú distinti e curiosi secreti e successi accaduti nel combattimento. Scritta sotto il padiglione del Primo Visir*, Lucca 1683. (GU1666) <Mf.54098>
- I III *Copia di lettera della Maestà del Re di Polonia alla Sereniss. Regina Sua Consorte scritta dal padiglione del Gran Visir sotto Vienna li 13 Settemb. 1683, Todi 1683.* (GU1687) <Mf.A 790>
- E *Letter from the King of Poland to His Queen. In which is incerted many particulars relating to the victories obtained against the Turks...Translated from the Cologne Gazette Octob. 19. 1683. Numb. 84, London 1683.* (GU1012) <Mf.62115>
- S *Relación extraordinaria del martes 23 de noviembre de 1683. Carta, que el Senor Rey de Polonia escrivìo à la Señora Reyna Su Esposa à 13 de setiembre 1683 de la tienda del Gran Visir, cerca Viena, [Madrid] 1683.* (GU1031) <Mf.A 856>