

FROM SPY TO EDITOR – INFORMANTS OF ELŻBIETA SIENIAWSKA NÉE LUBOMIRSKA (D. 1729), WIFE OF THE CASTELLAN OF KRAKOW

Monika Łekawska

University of the National Education Commission
ul. Podchorążych 2, 30-084 Kraków
E-mail monika.lekawska@doktorant.up.krakow.pl
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8437-789X>

Summary. *Research on written newspapers of the Saxon period has been ongoing for several decades. By looking at the avis from the perspective of their editors and purveyors, we get a fuller picture of the mentality of society. Elżbieta Sieniawska, née Lubomirska (d. 1729), Wife of the Castellan of Krakow and one of the most enterprising magnates at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, collected information through her intelligence services. Had it not been for their efforts and every attempt to provide the Krakow castellan with news, it is likely that Sieniawska would have had serious problems keeping her knowledge of the country and the world up to date. Distinguishing in the article the profiles of spies, postal workers and newspaper editors, the author shows not only previously unpublished facts from the life of the information services, but above all points to the dependencies between their services.*

Key words: *Handwritten newspapers, informants, spies, Elżbieta Sieniawska, correspondence.*

Nuo šnipio iki redaktoriaus: Elżbietos Sieniawskos, gim. Lubomirskos (m. 1729 m.), Krokuvos kašteliono žmonos, informatoriai

Santrauka. Saksonijos laikotarpio rašytinių laikraščių tyrimai tęsiasi jau kelis dešimtmečius. Žvelgdami į tyrimo objektą iš jų redaktorių ir tiekėjų perspektyvos, gauname išsamesnę visuomenės mentaliteto vaizdą. Elżbieta Sieniawska, gim. Lubomirska (m. 1729 m.), Krokuvos kaštelionė ir viena iniciatyviausių XVII–XVIII a. sandūros magnačių, rinko informaciją per savo asmenines žvalgybos tarnybas. Jei ne jų pastangos ir įvairiapusis siekis pateikti Krokuvos kaštelionei naujienas, tikėtina, kad Sieniawskai būtų keblu išlikti naujienų ir apie šalį, ir apie pasaulį sraute. Autorė straipsnyje aptaria šnipų, pašto darbuotojų ir laikraščių redaktorių asmenybių biografijas, tokiu būdu ne tik atskleisdama anksčiau neskelbtus faktus iš informacinių tarnybų gyvenimo, bet ir atkreipdama dėmesį į tam tikrą tarnybų tarpusavio priklausomybę.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: rankraštiniai laikraščiai, informatoriai, šnipai, Elżbieta Sieniawska, korespondencija.

Studies on female epistolography from the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Saxon era have been conducted for decades. Source editions of correspondence sent and received by noblewomen are continually and scrupulously published, supplementing the picture of mentality of the society living in the early modern period.¹ Elżbieta Sieniawska née Lubomirska (d. 1729), wife of the Castellan of Krakow, is a historical figure that is especially valued in research on the Saxon era. She was a daughter of the Grand Crown Marshal, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski (d. 1702), and Zofia née Opalińska (d. 1675). Elżbieta Sieniawska née Lubomirska was a woman of great cunningness, intelligence, and resourcefulness. Her activity from the turn of

1 See more: POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Na marginesie ważnych spraw. Listy kobiece epoki saskiej, In JAMROŻEK, Wiesław, ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, Dorota (eds.), *Rola i miejsce kobiet w edukacji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. I, 1998, p. 89–102; *A z Warszawy nowiny te. Listy do Elżbiety Sieniawskiej z lat 1710–1720*, POPIOŁEK, Bożena (ed.), 2001. Eadem. Najniższy podnózek, sługa i więzien pański – klientalne listy proszalne czasów saskich. *Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie*, 2011, No. 16/2011, p. 163; *Korespondencja Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej, kasztelanowej krakowskiej*, POPIOŁEK, Bożena, KICIŃSKA, Urszula, SŁABY, Agnieszka (eds.), vols. I–III, 2016; PENKAŁA-JASTRZĘBSKA, Anna. Wytrawny polityk, czy interesowna magnatka? Kłopotliwy portret Elżbiety Sieniawskiej w świetle korespondencji osób jej współczesnych. In POPIOŁEK, Bożena (ed.). *Działalność Elżbiety Sieniawskiej. Polityka – gospodarka – kultura*, 2020, p. 35–52.

the eighteenth century went down in history as one of the most dynamic female initiatives in economy and culture. Despite numerous problems in her personal life and a difficult pre-partition situation in the country, she would spin intrigues, expand her wealth, and take care of constant access to information both domestic and foreign.² Sieniawska's life story and activity have been honoured with many publications, catalogues, and museum exhibitions.³ The publications presenting specific aspects from the lady magnate's life gradually reveal new research areas. One area of Sieniawska's activity – highly interesting if briefly mentioned – is a wide spectrum of her abilities to obtain information. Compilations of correspondence between the most popular editors and their benefactress are an important source of studies on Sieniawska's informants.⁴ The corpus of letters and handwritten newspapers (*awizy*) belonging to Sieniawska opens up a wide scientific horizon before researchers of the Saxon era, nevertheless, the material is only fragmentary.⁵ Quite extensive source material for studies on informants and handwritten newspapers delivered to Sieniawska is stored at the Princes Czartoryski Library, the National Archives in Krakow and the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. These institutions were the main sites of a query aiming at collecting information to the following reflections. Single mentions related to the topic were also found at the National Library in Warsaw. In this paper, the author presents spies and editors working for Elżbieta Sieniawska, whose collaboration has not been tackled more broadly in any publication. This research deals with these correspondents of Sieniawska who mainly served as her informants, relaying news both from

- 2 See POPIOŁEK, Bożena, *Królowa bez korony: studium z życia i działalności Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej ok. 1669–1729*, 1996; *Działalność Elżbiety Sieniawskiej...*; *Elżbieta Sieniawska. Królowa bez korony*, MORAWSKI, Konrad, PYZEL, Konrad (eds.), 2020.
- 3 To date, one catalogue from a museum exhibition about life and activity of Elżbieta Sieniawska has been published by the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów: *Elżbieta Sieniawska. Królowa...* The catalogue was created as an advertisement of an exhibition commemorating the 300th anniversary of a purchase of Wilanów lands by Sieniawska. The exhibition was not launched on schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4 See *A z Warszawy...*; *Korespondencja Elżbiety...*; *Kobiece kręgi korespondencyjne w XVII–XIX wieku*, POPIOŁEK, Bożena, KICIŃSKA, Urszula, SŁABY, Agnieszka (eds.), 2016; *Listy Jakuba Kazimierza Rubinkowskiego do Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej (1716–1726)*, KUCHARSKI, Adam, MALISZEWSKI, Kazimierz (eds.) 2017; POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Korespondencja kobieca jako świadectwo więzi klientalnych w epoce saskiej, In *Spółeczeństwo staropolskie*, vol. V, 2018, p. 197–207.
- 5 KRZYWY, Roman. Nad listami Elżbiety Sieniawskiej, In *Elżbieta Sieniawska. Królowa...*, p. 89.

the country and abroad. It is worth highlighting that while some of them were professional postmen or mail editors, others engaged solely in denunciation and gossip. Each piece of information seemed a highly desired commodity and for this reason, rather than taken lightly it was checked and confirmed.

Before 1729,⁶ traditional handwritten newspapers were a very important source of knowledge about politics, culture, economy, current affairs, and salon gossip.⁷ The dawn of handwritten newspapers dates to the end of the fifteenth century. Over the years, this medium became more and more appreciated as it was considered an opportunity for a broader information range.⁸ Blooming press agencies and editing and distribution services contributed to the growth of importance of contracts for punctual delivery of news in a specific form. This phenomenon occurred not only due to the current fashion but also, and mainly, craving for knowledge about the reality surrounding the nobility.⁹ Within the territory of Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, regular newspapers appeared later than in other parts of Europe. Essentially, this delay was caused by a low societal demand for mass-printed newspapers, since handwritten informational correspondence was extremely popular.¹⁰ Handwritten press gained its significant fame due to the absence of censorship and a related lack of any control over the content. Until the 1750s, literally anyone could edit a newspaper – well-educated nobility, townsfolk or even clergymen eagerly engaged in this activity. By the end of the seventeenth century, thirst for knowledge about the world had also caught up with Elżbieta Sieniawska, who sought to gather as much information as possible about current affairs in politics, social life, and trade. Undoubtedly, she was one of the best-informed women in Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Establishing adequate contact with informants, newsagents,

6 The year of introducing printed press to the information market.

7 KUCHARSKI, Adam. Życie prywatne magnaterii polskiej w przekazach gazet rękopiśmiennych z epoki stanisławowskiej (1764–1795). Typologia doniesień prasowych, In DUBAS-URWANOWICZ, Ewa, KUPCZEWSKA, Marta, ŁOPATECKI, Karol, URWANOWICZ, Jerzy (eds.). *Honestas et turpitude. Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku*, 2019, p. 665–666.

8 POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Między prawdą a plotką. Prasa rękopiśmienna epoki saskiej jako źródło do historii mentalności. In KOŚCIK, Elżbieta, ŻERELIK, Rościław, BADYNA, Piotr (eds.). *Sic erat in fatis. Studia i szkice historyczne dedykowane Profesorowi Bogdanowi Rokowi*, vol. II, 2012, p. 295–296.

9 See Eadem, *Wstęp. A z Warszawy...*, p. VII.

10 JAKUBENAS, Regina. Początki i sytuacja prasy w Europie i w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów. In *Senoji Lietuvos literatūra*, 2005, p. 159–162; URBAITYTĖ, Rita. Laikraštis Radvilų dvare XVIII a. pirmojoje pusėje, In *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 2006, p. 39–42.

and postmen allowed Sieniawska to keep unstable yet unrestricted access to news from many European cities and towns. She received bulletins and newspapers from her more or less trusted people. Given an inherent bias and often a narrow scope of editors' interests, the reliability of handwritten newspapers is debatable in this context. This bias and the selection of specific topics for the recipient of the news help with the identification and analysis of sources. On the other hand, they can hamper an accurate interpretation and assessment of informants' services and their capabilities.¹¹ It is worth noting that informants, especially editors of periodicals, rarely participated in the events they described. They gathered knowledge from various sources that seemed trustworthy to them. In this context, foreign newspapers played an equally vital role. Most often, these journals were imported from France, England, or Germany. Based on the best knowledge of foreign informants, they became a source of news to be relayed to equivalent services in Poland.¹² Handwritten newspapers are a specific source of studies on any period. Today, we know personal data of some of their creators. What remains problematic, though, are periodicals with no signature or initials. Adam Kucharski wrote that "usually, the identification of the creators of newspapers is possible through a comparison of the handwriting used in newspapers and letters. On the other hand, it is limited by the available correspondence."¹³ The names of informants listed below, among whom we can find both self-proclaimed spies and professional editors, function in the available literature as figures described more or less thoroughly. Nevertheless, some facts about their lives, background, education, reliability, and motivation are problematic and debatable. In this paper, the author wishes to shed light on a few less extensively researched news providers who worked for Elżbieta Sieniawska. Jan Antoni Lamprecht, Gotfried Gebhardt, Michał Thorzecki, Piotr Skene, and members of the Priami family are excellent examples of extremes in the circles of Sieniawska's information services. A preliminary comparison of their postal-journalistic patterns of action calls for a deeper analysis and will be a contribution to further research.¹⁴

11 Cf. POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Z kraju i ze świata. Krakowskie nowiny rękopiśmienne z 1729 r. jako źródło do historii mentalności społeczeństwa czasów saskich. *Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej*, 2012, vol. 15, p. 1; Also, *Między prawdą...*, p. 295–309.

12 Ibidem, p. 296.

13 KUCHARSKI, Adam. Gazetowy serwis informacyjny Elżbiety i Adama Sieniawskich. Treści i twórcy. In *Działalność Elżbiety Sieniawskiej...*, p. 259.

14 Almost a complete bibliography of flyer and serial newspapers from Elżbieta Sieniawska's times was edited by Konrad Zawadzki in his comprehensive work *Gazety ulotne polskie i polski dotyczące XVI–XVIII wieku. Bibliografia*, vol. 2: 1662–1728, 1984.

At this point, it is worth mentioning a few terms that will illuminate the research group of this article. Certainly, the term ‘informant’ comes to the fore. Although it might seem that the term itself is relatively simple to define, in the context of the following considerations it takes on a somewhat complicated character. Elżbieta Sieniawska gathered in her information circles not only servants, but also close and distant relatives, friends or administrators of estates. Their client relationships are best shown in the publication edited by Bożena Popiołek, which the author also used to outline the relationship between the information service and the benefactress.¹⁵ The enormity of the epistolographic legacy between the castellan of Krakow and her news servants has already forced many researchers of the Saxon era in Poland to define the problem and select the characters best suited to the phenomenon. In view of the above remarks, the author wishes to emphasise that it is precisely in these considerations that we are unable to use the prosopographical method. Sieniawska’s informants did not belong in any majority to the elite of society. Nor did they form a coherent picture of the research group. They had one thing in common – the practice of sending news to the castellan of Krakow. The identification of persons from Sieniawska’s circles, who in various ways were engaged in providing her with knowledge of current affairs, was based on the collection of intelligence services whose main duty towards Elżbieta Sieniawska was precisely the sending of news. It is within them that we distinguish professional editors of written newspapers, who had their own journalistic agencies, postmen and postmasters responsible for delivering the news, and spies who relied on hearsay to pass it on to the benefactress.¹⁶

The nomenclature used to distinguish the historical sources on which this article is based also perhaps needs clarification. The author distinguished between manuscript newspapers and gazetteers. A written newspaper, characteristic of the lands of the Commonwealth, was a handwritten parchment, resembling in its form longer letters, but devoid of traditional polite expressions. The titles of written newspapers retained the dating and information about the place of creation of the particular copy.¹⁷ A gazetteer was something between a newspaper and a letter. They were written by Sieniawska’s informants, who were not professionally involved in the editing of periodicals, but they did so

15 See POPIOŁEK, Bożena, *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich*, 2020.

16 *Korespondencja Elżbiety...*, p. 7–11.

17 See KUCHARSKI, Adam. *Polskie gazety rękopiśmienne XVII wieku*, Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów, 2015, (accessed 25 March 2024). Accessed through Internet: <https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/polskie_gazety_rekopismienne_xvii_wieku.html>

with such frequency that we are able to say of these advisories that they are a kind of periodical. They rarely lacked an author's signature or even an initial.

For many years, Elżbieta Sieniawska worked to establish her position in the country, at the court, and in politics. Her relationship with the queen and long-time friend, Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska (d. 1716), allowed her to initiate a continuous correspondence with Jean Antoine Lamprecht (d. 1714), more widely known as Jan Antoni,¹⁸ a Polish equivalent of his name. Most probably, Lamprecht came from France. The preserved correspondence suggests that he had a very good command of Polish. Therefore, one can deduct that he spent a relatively long time in the Commonwealth. He worked for the Sobieskis since at least 1679 – initially for King John III and later his children, Aleksander and Konstancy, and must have held a high official position at the royal court. It is believed that he was familiar with both financial matters and details of marital agreements. He also collaborated with Mikołaj Krogulecki (d. 1707), who was equally closely connected to the aforementioned female circles.¹⁹ He served Marie Casimire loyally until around 1698 when the queen left for Rome and Lamprecht fell under Sieniawska's authority, who was married to a voivode of Bełżec at the time.²⁰ Furthermore, he had known Sieniawska for years due to her close relationship with the queen.²¹ With his broad interests and close observations, Lamprecht soon became a regular supplier of handwritten newspapers for Elżbieta Sieniawska. He wrote from many cities and towns. As an administrator and informant, he travelled between the Sobieskis' and later the Sieniawskis' estates. It is worth emphasising that Lamprecht was exceptionally proficient in Latin what can be seen in his letters to French courtiers of Prince Konstancy.²² He also maintained regular contact with his wife, who appeared

18 More on the relations of Marie Casimire Sobieska and Elżbieta Sieniawska: POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Zamiana ról. Królowa Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska i Elżbieta z Lubomirskich Sieniawska, kasztelanowa krakowska. In KALINOWSKA, Anna, TYSZKA, Paweł (eds.), *Maria Kazimiera Sobieska (1641–1716). W kręgu rodziny, polityki i kultury*, 2017.

19 PIETRZAK, Jarosław. Zarządcy, słudzy i korespondenci. Mikołaj Krogulecki i Jan Antoni Lamprecht w kręgu patronatu Marii Kazimiery Sobieskiej i Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej w latach 1698–1714. In *W kręgu patronatu kobiecego...*, p. 158–161, 166.

20 Idem. Czy można służyć dwóm paniom? Mikołaj Krogulecki na dworze Marii Kazimiery d'Arquien Sobieskiej i Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej, *Res Historica*, No. 52, 2021, p. 145.

21 *Korespondencja Elżbiety ...*, p. 87.

22 *Letter of Jan Antoni Lamprecht to Pierre Heinnik on 23 July 1699*, Warsaw. Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw [hereinafter: CAHR], Radziwiłł Archives in Warsaw [hereinafter: RAW], Coll. 8175, dept. V, MS, fols. 1–3.

equally meticulous, responsible, and even correspondence sensitive.²³ Surely, he was one of the most resourceful and inventive informants working for Sieniawska. He often undertook administration initiatives and did not hesitate to present magnates with his ideas about management of their lands and estates.²⁴ Lamprecht's letters to Sieniawska were relatively extensive as they consisted of several pages filled with small and clear handwriting. He sent letters and newspapers as often as 2–3 times per month what made him a very reliable informant. But when this frequency weakened, he explained apologetically: "I do apologise this time as this is perhaps not due to my laziness but the news about Your, my Dear Lady and Benefactress, arrival."²⁵ Most likely, he gained knowledge from his own observations. This was not the only source, though, as evidenced by one of his letters where he mentioned that "not only fame but also Mr Zywert's newspapers sent by mail informed me about Your, my Dear Lady and Benefactress, arrival in Warsaw."²⁶ The informant took care of the veracity of his reports; at least such was his intention. In important and politically substantial matters, he sent to Sieniawska reports by other authors who probably witnessed the described situations from a closer perspective. Lamprecht would point out that he was aware of the importance of the validity and veracity of the sent mail: "any report shall be true."²⁷ He would enclose newspapers to this kind of letters.²⁸ Also, he must have played a role in mail delivery. In many letters, he underlined his communication manoeuvres and brought up names of postmen delivering letters to other people. Certain Cieszkowski and Włodek are mentioned among them. Lamprecht would send correspondence together with his personal letters, often including summaries of information from newspapers. He wrote to Sieniawska from Warsaw, Lviv and Żółkiew. His favourite place for seeking information seemed to be the Saxon royal court. The reason for that could be the fact that a few years before, he had spent some time in King John

23 As suggested by an extensive letter opening with "My dearest Heart...", *Letter of Lamprecht's wife to J.A. Lamprecht on 26 August 1712*, Żółkiew, CAHR, RAW dept. V, call No. 8177, MS., fols. 4-7 and a letter informing about poor health of Sieniawska's informant's wife, *Eadem ad idem 20 March 1713*, Żółkiew, CAHR, RAW, dept. V, call No. 8177 MS., fol. 8.

24 PIETRZAK, Jarosław, *Zarządcy, studzy...*, p. 169.

25 *Letter of Jan Antoni Lamprecht to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 13 May 1700*, Warsaw, Princes Czartoryski Library [hereinafter: PCL], call No. 5869, MS., fol. 21.

26 *Ibidem*.

27 *Idem to eadem on 19 August 1700*, Warsaw, PCL, call No. 5869 MS., fol. 33.

28 *Idem to eadem on 7 October 1700*, Warsaw, PCL, call No. 5969 MS., Warsaw 7 X 1700, fol. 39.

III Sobieski's close environment, where he felt quite comfortable and was very familiar with.²⁹ But not only did domestic political matters lie within the area of his interest; he lightly reported about "His Majesty French King (...), that he entered into an offensive-defensive pact, which requires confirmation."³⁰ Lamprecht easily reported on politics.³¹ In one of his letters, he described operations of Swedish troops, whereas in another he informed about the Sapiechas' manoeuvres in the Diet.³² In yet another informational letter to Sieniawska, he used a more targeted personal narration and he wrote about her father: "Rumour has it that His Dear Lord and Benefactor Grand Crown Marshal has one leg and one arm paralysed, but people of his kind can live, and this is my *curari*."³³ Sieniawska's correspondent maintained strong contact with Italian environment in Krakow.³⁴ He may have obtained foreign news from informants and merchants from the South.

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, the circle of private informants of Elżbieta Sieniawska included a certain Michał Thorzecki (Torzecki). The correct identification of one of the most cunning postmen at Sieniawska's services gets more difficult when sources do not provide obvious answers, and analyses by other researchers point not to one, but two individuals with the same surname and very similar initials. Now, we can distinguish Michał Thorzecki, priest, Warsaw agent of the Sieniawski family, and postman who, after Elżbieta Sieniawska's death, started his service under her daughter, Zofia Maria Denhoff, and her second husband and the Ruthenian Voivode, August Aleksander Czartoryski (d. 1782). The sources reveal yet another individual – a Thorzecki with no first name, a bird-catcher from Brzeżany, working for Sieniawska in 1725. He may have been related to the priest.³⁵ It must be emphasised that at the time, there was one more person with an almost identical

29 Cf. PIETRZAK, Jarosław, *Zarządcy, studzy...*

30 *Letter of Jan Antoni Lamprecht to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 17 March 1700*, Warsaw, PCL, call No. 5869 MS., fol. 33.

31 *Korespondencja Elżbiety...*, p. 87.

32 *Letter of Jan Antoni Lamprecht to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 2707 IV, MS., fols. 145, 457.

33 *Idem to eadem on 27 October 1701*, Lviv, PCL, call No. 5869 MS., Lviv 27 X 1701, fol. 46.

34 POPIOŁEK, Bożena, NOWAK, Janusz. *Wszyscy ludzie Elżbiety Sieniawskiej. Urzędnicy, oficjaliści dworscy, rzemieślnicy, kupcy i artyści kasztelanowej krakowskiej*, Kraków, 2023, p. 338–339.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 484–486.

surname, Michał Tchórzewski.³⁶ One might get the impression that spelling errors in the name and surname of the Warsaw postman were even made by his peers. Kucharski mentions that “Rubinkowski often misspelled the name of the Warsaw postmaster, Mikołaj Tchórzecki.”³⁷ But one more hybrid appears here. To correctly specify Sieniawska’s informant who appears in most documents and letters, we need to establish that in this paper the author describes the activity of Michał Thorzecki, a priest and private informant working for Elżbieta Sieniawska in 1708–1729. His handwriting was analysed. According to Jan Lankau “the newspapers that he wrote are beautifully calligraphed,” allowing for a free analysis, understanding, transliteration, identification, and attribution the authorship of these documents to Michał Thorzecki.³⁸ But Lankau refers to the described postman as Tchórzewski. These subtle yet significant differences in the surname cause chaos to which the author of this paper wishes to introduce some order. In a pattern of informing Elżbieta Sieniawska, Thorzecki played an important, if secondary, role. The correspondence by other informants suggests that he delivered mail from newsagents directly to Sieniawska.³⁹ Letters by Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski, a councillor of Toruń and Sieniawska’s postmaster, suggest that there was some kind of rivalry between him and Thorzecki, most probably over favours of specific benefactors. The Warsaw postmaster almost deliberately delayed mail what puts the reliability of his actions in a somewhat doubtful position. In this conflict, Rubinkowski’s suggestion that the goods entrusted to Michał Thorzecki, brought for Sieniawska from all over the country, were disappearing is quite puzzling, as this would imply that the Warsaw informant was stealing valuable

36 We can find the proof of its existence in a debt agreement for 1,200 zlotys issued for Michał Tchórzewski by Mikołaj Tumanowicz from 9 May 1715 in Kamieniec Podolski. In this document, Tumanowicz obliges to pay back the agreed amount to Tchórzewski in 3 instalments. The agreement also includes information about a certain Miss Joanna Tchórzewska, who should receive from Tumanowicz 5 cubits of French fabric as a final instalment. This fragment suggests that Joanna was closely related to Michał Tchórzewski’s family, AGAD, National Museum collection, call No. 0871 MS., fols. 1-5.

37 KUCHARSKI, Adam. Informacje i usługi. Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski jako korespondent i klient Elżbiety Sieniawskiej oraz Anny Katarzyny Radziwiłłowej. In *W kręgu patronatu...*, p. 188; Idem. O sobie, ludziach i świecie. Listy Jakuba Kazimierza Rubinkowskiego do Elżbiety Sieniawskiej jako egodokumenty i źródła wiadomości gazetowych (1716–1726). In *Kobiece kręgi korespondencyjne...*, p. 37.

38 LANKAU, Jan. *Prasa staropolska na tle rozwoju prasy w Europie 1513–1729*, Kraków 1960, p. 201.

39 PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., Nos. 11570, 11572.

commodities.⁴⁰ Also, he must have sent valuable and meticulously recorded parliamentary journals to Sieniawska.⁴¹ A certain factual aspect that can be subjected to doubt are the articles of the Treaty of Vienna of 1719. Thorzecki wrote them in Latin and reported that the king of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth supposedly declared his support for the allies.⁴²

Thorzecki also cooperated with Gottfried Gebhardt, who was presented in the correspondence to Sieniawska as a man scrupulous in reporting on information flow. He was very punctual as to mail delivery what he underlined: “I addressed Your letters punctually where they belonged, and I am sending them back from where I am standing.”⁴³ In 1711–1726, he worked for Elżbieta Sieniawska as a postman and an informant but also her client.⁴⁴ He provided his employers with newspapers that he created himself based on public press. The correspondence suggests that he may have sent periodicals and/or their copies.⁴⁵ His German-sounding name suggests his Western background, however, his fluency in Polish creates a certain cognitive dissonance. We know of German letters of his authorship, but they date to a later period, the 1730s.⁴⁶ The analysis of headings and signatures suggests that Gottfried Gebhardt’s informational area covered Eastern parts of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially Lublin, Babin, Bełżec and Zamość. One can conclude that his permanent residence was somewhere in today’s Lublin Voivodeship. It is worth mentioning that Sieniawska was not a sole Gebhardt’s employer. The circle of his benefactors included one of the most influential Polish magnates of the eighteenth century: Jan Klemens Branicki (d. 1771), the Castellan of Krakow, Józef Wandalin Mniszech (d. 1747), the Grand Crown Marshal, and a few members of the Czartoryski and Radziwiłł families. Gebhardt’s services for Mrs Castellan of Krakow were a mere prelude to his subsequent job as an informant. They started collaborating in c. 1711. Given the fact that not all handwritten newspapers have been preserved, a bit broader time span should

40 KUCHARSKI, Adam. *O sobie, ludziach...*, p. 37–38.

41 *Letter of Thorzecki to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 2739 MS., p. 1–6.

42 KUCHARSKI, Adam. *Gazetowy serwis informacyjny...*, p. 273.

43 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 26 January 1721*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fols. 257–258.

44 POPIOŁEK, Bożena, NOWAK, Janusz, op. cit., p. 238–239.

45 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Anna Katarzyna Radziwiłłowa*, CAHR, RAW, dept. V, call No. 4043, fols. 14, 21.

46 *Idem to Deshommes on 23 March 1738*, Lublin, CAHR, RAW, dept. V, call No. 4043, fols. 6–9.

be taken into consideration. Most of the correspondence between Gottfried Gebhardt and Elżbieta Sieniawska include informational letters referring to the postman's delivery schedules, reports on his work, occasional passing on news, and – what was important for any client – reminding his benefactress of his presence. Apart from periodicals and handwritten personal news, Gebhardt also sent mail from Ruthenia, Opatów and Warsaw post offices, among others.⁴⁷ He sent letters with enclosed, usually local, newspapers: “From where I am now, I am sending You back, my Dear Lady and Benefactress, and enclosing a local newspaper.”⁴⁸ The informant's correspondence suggests that Sieniawska, Gebhardt's benefactress, had clear expectations as to sending and receiving mail. *Ordinations*⁴⁹ and their references appear in almost each letter. At the end of 1717, Gebhardt sent a short letter where he wrote about a general of Russian dragoons: “(...) on Your, my Dear Lady and Benefactress, order that many letters should be sent, thus I am addressing to show that I gladly and eagerly serve You, my Gracious Lady and Benefactress. I am reporting that yesterday, General Lieutenant Schlippenbach stood here in the suburbs. He is planning to stay here just for a few days and later make his way to White Ruthenia, towards Chełm and Łuck.”⁵⁰ Another time, he wrote in a postscript: “(...) yesterday, at Fathers Reformers there was a service for His Dear Lord Mr Voivode of Lublin's soul, whose burial has been postponed until his son's arrival. Moscow is marching five miles away but is very discrete.”⁵¹ The subject of newspapers written by Gebhardt often touched social contexts. He informed Sieniawska about a disease in the city, focusing on the speed of its spreading and a high fatality rate, suggesting its severity: “I have this news about Lublin, that in these two houses (...) two people died this week on Thursday. A man who stole wood from the infected house also got sick, and he lives past the Bernardines.” He added: “May God put an end here.”⁵² Sieniawska's informant from Lublin would not

47 *Tak prędko Poczta Ruska przybyła, tego momentu wszystkie listy należące do J.O. WMM Pani i Dobrodziejki przez tegoż umyślnego na odwrot przesyłam, opisując i godzinę, w którą wysyłam* – a fragment from Gebhardt's letter to Sieniawska, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., No. 11507, s.l, n.d., [probably 1717], fol. 17.

48 *Idem to eadem on 27 April 1721*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 293.

49 Online Dictionary of Polish Language (*Słownik Języka Polskiego*) lists two definitions of “ordinance”: (1) an order; (2) a service or work shift (accessed 5 July 2023). Access through Internet: <<https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/ordynans;2569914>>.

50 *Letter of Gottfried Gebhardt to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 19 December 1717*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 21.

51 *Idem to eadem on 12 March 1719*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 103.

52 *Idem to eadem on 14 January 1720*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fols. 153–155.

forget about holiday wishes – Easter, Christmas, and New Year.⁵³ Gebhardt had his own way of passing political news tainted with gossip. He described dietines and tribunals, listing people who contributed to disturbances during sessions, giving the names of envoys whose actions were good to know about.⁵⁴ One of the most interesting items of news coming straight from the Saxon royal court was sent at the beginning of 1721: “The Saxon press reports that a great happiness of his Majesty the King has turned into sadness, as on the 22nd *elapsi* at night, the royal grandson died.”⁵⁵ In another letter, he wrote to Sieniawska: “The Holy Father died on 19th March, but we are still waiting for the confirmation.”⁵⁶ Gebhardt’s caution in handling the news is noteworthy. Ultimately, the provided information was true, however, owing to his uncertainty, he believed it was good to wait for the final confirmation of the Church leader’s death. Had he spread such a significant piece of news without any factual basis, he would have had to face the risk of losing trust and credibility. Rumours and gossip were not uncommon in the early modern era. Passing on fictional yet interesting titbits was quite frequent. Distinguishing the truth from fiction was not hard for educated and worldly newspaper recipients. The rest of society was condemned to a distorted view of the reality, often full of imaginative details.⁵⁷ Correspondence and services for benefactress Sieniawska were primarily connected with certain privileges and a prearranged compensation. In his letter from March 1719, Gebhardt highlighted passing on a postal ordinance to Mr Skene and quickly added: “I am humbly supplicating for a Persian belt with tiny

53 See PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., Nos. 11509, 11516, 11518, 11522, 15517, 15518, 15537, 11571, 1161.

54 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 5 May 1720*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fols. 197–198.

55 He wrote about Fryderyk August: *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 2 February 1721*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 262.

56 He wrote about Pope Klemens XI, *Idem to eadem*, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fols. 287–288.

57 POPIOŁEK, Bożena. *Między prawdą...*, p. 297–298, 305; Eadem, *Kobiety świat w czasach Augusta II. Studia nad mentalnością kobiet z kręgów szlacheckich*, Kraków 2003, p. 304; Eadem. *Warszawskie nowiny Jadwigi Rafałowiczówny. Listy do Henryka Denhoffa i Elżbiety Sieniawskiej z przełomu XVII i XVIII wieku*. In *Epistolografia w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. I, Kraków 2011, p. 228–229; MALISZEWSKI, Kazimierz, *Obraz świata i Rzeczypospolitej w polskich gazetach rękopiśmiennych z okresu późnego baroku. Studium z dziejów kształtowania się i rozprzestrzeniania sarmackich stereotypów wiedzy i informacji o „theatrum mundi”*, Toruń, 1990; TYGIELSKI, Wojciech, *Epistolografia staropolska jako źródło do badania mechanizmów politycznych*, 1988, vol. 33, p. 63–78.

flowers and silver.”⁵⁸ Generally, informants were compensated according to an agreement, often verbal. The most extensive body of evidence of monetary benefits from services for Sieniawska can be found between the lines in the correspondence. In March 1718, Gebhardt expressed his gratitude in the following words: “I humbly thank You for 200 Polish zlotys of my compensation, which I received from Mr Grabowski himself, who was in Lublin at the time.”⁵⁹ Gebhardt referred to his payment as *kolęda*⁶⁰ (literally meaning “carol”), which was a commonly used term.⁶¹ The payment, obtained both from Sieniawska and Prince Czartoryski, seemed fixed. Depending on the situation, he received either 158 tynfs or 200 zlotys.⁶² Informational letters to Branicki, even though written almost thirty years after Gebhardt’s collaboration with Mrs Castellan of Krakow, concerned exactly the same matters – reporting on postal services.⁶³ Gebhardt corresponded more vividly with Anna Katarzyna Radziwiłł née Sanguszko (1676–1746). Just like to Sieniawska, he wrote about postal services, reported on current local news, and always remembered about holiday greetings. As of now, the dates of Gottfried Gebhardt’s birth and death are not known. What is known, though, is the fact that he must have expanded his postal activities significantly after his benefactress’s death. The latest known letter addressed to the informant was sent in February 1760 by a postmaster from Zamość, d’Ogilvie. The matter concerned sending mail for the Grand Crown Hetman, Jan Klemens Branicki.⁶⁴ For several decades, he collaborated with a few significant people from postal circles (he mentions Dessalessowa,⁶⁵

58 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 12 March 1719*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 105.

59 *Idem to eadem on 27 March 1719*, Lublin, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 49.

60 *Idem to eadem on 21 January 1725*, Lublin, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 641.

61 About *kolęda* meaning “remuneration” we can also read in “*Expensa Pieniędzy*” [Money Expenses] from 1758: *For kolęda for household people.*, PCL, call No. 2906 MS., microfilm No. 12289; *Kwity, rachunki, inwentarze i in. papiery majątkowe oraz sądowe Augusta Czartoryskiego w latach 1740–1781*, PCL, fol. 41; call No. 6006 vol. 9, fol. 25.

62 *Kwity, rachunki, inwentarze i in. papiery majątkowe oraz sądowe Augusta Czartoryskiego w latach 1740–1781*, PCL, call No. 2906 MS., microfilm No. 12289, fol. 53.

63 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt to Jan Klemens Branicki on 25 December 1753*, Lublin, CAHR, Archiwum Roskie [hereinafter: AR], call No. 6.53 MS., fols. 1–3.

64 *Letter of d’Ogilvie to Gotfried Gebhardt on 10 February 1760*, CAHR, AR, call No. 30.83 MS., fol. 1.

65 *Letter of Gotfried Gebhardt do Elżbieta Sieniawska on 16 May 1717*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 9.

Tchórzewski,⁶⁶ and Skene⁶⁷ a couple of times), who were just as ambitiously mediating or transcribing handwritten newspapers, also for Elżbieta Sieniawska.

Among postmasters working for Sieniawska, Piotr Skene (d. 1733?)⁶⁸ deserves more attention. He left over 500 handwritten newspapers. Apart from standard postal services for Sieniawska, Skene worked as a merchant. He purchased valuables and extraordinary commodities for her. His letter from 20th April suggests that he also executed debts from particular people.⁶⁹ Compared to other informants, his payment was much higher – approximately 400 zlotys per annum and an additional bonus of 10 zlotys for each extra mail delivery. His earnings varied depending on the recipient of news. At the beginning of 1727, he wrote: “Monsieur Lada paid me seven red zlotys to close the annual postal account in January.”⁷⁰ While he provided his services mainly from Zamość, Skene operated quite extensively – he collected correspondence from Warsaw, Lublin, Jarosław, Lviv, and then delivered it to the current residence of his benefactress. The scope of his services suggests that he maintained regular contact with almost each of the abovementioned informants, and their duties differed only slightly. However, it is important to note that Skene gradually expanded his own postal system, hiring and directing postilions along mail routes. Due to the structure and form of the postal pattern he used, this information, including issues related to postillions’ operational problems, also appeared in his letters to Sieniawska.⁷¹ He called her Duchess, which certainly distinguishes his correspondence from others’. Skene’s newspapers are characterised by clear, calligraphic, and sometimes fanciful handwriting. They include short yet concise and coherent news, limited only to the most important current observations of the informant. Given the frequency of his mail, one may presume that Skene was not bothered with the pressure of its amount. He sent his private observations together with the latest mail, parcels, newspapers and calendars. But when he had nothing to send to Sieniawska, he provided her only

66 *Idem to eadem on 20 March 1718*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 45.

67 *Idem to eadem on 10 April 1718*, Lublin, PCL, call No. 5814 III MS., fol. 53.

68 Skene’s first name had been presented as an initial but an inquiry at AGAD showed that the informant’s name was actually Piotr, and this is how he is referred to as in this paper.

69 List P. Angotowi do rąk oddałem i respons odsyłam, ale zegarka nie dał. *Letter of Piotr Skene to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 5949 MS., fol. 9.

70 *Letter of Piotr Skene to Monsieur Lada on 14 April 1727*, Zamość, CAHR, RAW, dept. V, call No. 14435 MS., fol. 8.

71 POPIOŁEK, Bożena, NOWAK, Janusz, op. cit., p. 448–449.

with his letter and a note saying: “I have no letters to You, my Dear Lady,” which was his way of maintaining their contact.⁷² Basically, he informed Sieniawska about everything he managed to read, hear, or see. One day, he wrote that “Mrs Voivode of Smoleńsk is now here [in Zamość – M.Ł.] on her way to Krasnystaw,” and after a few days he continued: “Miss daughter of the Voivode of Bełżec got engaged to the son of the Voivode of Kiev.”⁷³ But he also wrote about subjects closer to Sieniawska: “There is no news from Lviv or the border, only that Mr Benefactor, having stayed for two days in Busko at Mr Standard Bearer’s [of the Crown – M.Ł.], thanks to God’s mercy, has arrived in Brzeżany.”⁷⁴ He also reported on less pleasant, shocking even, matters. Among such terrifying news we can find reports on local assaults. In one of his letters, Skene complained that “last week in Krasznik, Mrs Graff Mauritea was mugged.”⁷⁵ In the same letter, Skene reported that “Mr Dessales passed away last Saturday.”⁷⁶ That information was important for Sieniawska herself and the postal environment of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth since Dessales served as a postmaster for Sieniawska.⁷⁷ Skene occasionally sent letters full of news from the world; he reported on problems of Wallachian landlords and relocation of Turkish emperor’s residence to Adrianople.⁷⁸ Being a good and exemplary postmaster, he did not forget about occasional wishes for Sieniawska, sending his greetings along with a reasonable postal report.⁷⁹

Elżbieta Sieniawska eagerly used services of professional editors of handwritten and printed newspapers, getting close to specific, recognised, and professional journalists of the turn of the eighteenth century. She had great collaboration with Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski (d. 1749), as evidenced by hundreds of preserved informational letters and handwritten newspapers. A royal postmaster, councillor, and burgrave of Toruń, born in Nowy Targ, apart from his postal activities, also actively and publicly participated in the life of

72 *Letter of Piotr Skene to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 5949 MS., fol. 5.

73 PCL, call No. 5949 MS., Nos. 38703, 38704.

74 *Letter of Piotr Skene to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 28 August 1716*, Zamość, PCL, call No. 5949 MS., No. 38705, fol. 95.

75 *Idem to eadem on 10 February 1716*, Zamość, PCL, call No. 5949 MS., fol. 36.

76 *Ibidem*.

77 POPIOŁEK, Bożena, NOWAK, Janusz, op. cit., p. 202–203.

78 *Letter of Piotr Skene to Elżbieta Sieniawska on 3 May 1717*, Zamość, PCL, call No. 5949 MS., fol. 171.

79 PCL, call No. 5949 MS., Nos. 38712, 38713.

Nicolaus Copernicus's hometown. His independent news agency and a wide network of contacts including noble and influential people elevated him onto a pedestal of editors of handwritten newspapers.⁸⁰ Informational letters enclosed to newspapers stored in archives are an exceptionally important source for studying the era.⁸¹

Sieniawska received extraordinarily well-organised informational mail from Jadwiga Rafałowiczówna (d. 1720), a pious informant from Warsaw, who had lived at the Visitation Sisters Convent.⁸² The death of her patrons in the early eighteenth century prompted her to join the Warsaw order. She sent informational letters to Sieniawska, meticulously reporting on the news from the capital. Her service for Sieniawska included collaboration with already mentioned priest Thorzecki, who received mail from her and passed it on to specified people. Rafałowiczówna kept Sieniawska up to date as to who and for what purpose visited the Warsaw Visitation Sisters Convent, which news in foreign newspapers was worth paying attention to, and what was currently happening at the royal court.⁸³

One of the most active editors of periodicals and informational letters sent to Sieniawska was Sebastian Fabian Rybczyński, with a background as a Decree Scribe of the Crown.⁸⁴ Bożena Popiołek points out that “little can be said about the life of S.F. Rybczyński beyond that what we can find in his correspondence.” It is important to note that his enthusiasm for editing handwritten newspapers during the Saxon period was appreciated by noble addressees of periodicals. His work in a circle close to King Augustus II and his court gave him broad access to information and environment that was eagerly written and read about. Focusing mainly on events from all over Europe, Rybczyński regularly sent handwritten newspapers not only to Sieniawska but also to Tomasz Zamoyski, Jan Klemens Branicki, and Konstancja and Stanisław Antoni Szczuka. The classic form of informational letters characteristic of Rybczyński was designed to

80 See MALISZEWSKI, Kazimierz. Agencja informacyjna Jakuba Kazimierza Rubinkowskiego (ze studiów nad dziejami komunikacji społecznej w XVIII w.), *Zapiski Historyczne*, 1983, vol. 48, book 3, p. 49–69.

81 See PCL, call No. 5933 III MS., call No. 2707 MS. (MF 172), call No. 2739 MS. (MF 175), call No. 12969 I.

82 See *A z Warszawy*....

83 POPIOŁEK, Bożena, NOWAK, Janusz. op. cit., p. 424–425.

84 See POPIOŁEK, Bożena. *Gazety rękopiśmienne epoki baroku – gdzie prawda miesza się z plotką* [accessed on 6 August 2023]. Access through Internet: <https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/gazety_rekopismienne_epoki_baroku_gdzie_prawda_miesza_sie_z_plotka.html>.

resemble a journal and distinguished his mail from that of other informants working for Sieniawska.⁸⁵

Among the most serious newspaper editors supplying Sieniawska with periodicals was Jerzy Aleksander Priami (d. 1699). He was a newspaper publisher from Krakow and had a great understanding of events both within the country and around the world. *Polish Biographical Dictionary* states that Priami was a son of a wealthy merchant, Gerard Priami, with numerous contacts and significant influence. Meticulously recorded details about Jerzy Aleksander's life reflect his family's status. In his records we can find the date of his baptism and his godparents' names.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, little is known about his higher education. Owing to extensive travel in his childhood, Priami was proficient in foreign languages, which made him an informant with broad horizons. Also, he became a character in baroque satires. The content of the newspapers he sent suggests that we deal with the 1690s, when he wrote about various matters, including domestic politics and economy.⁸⁷ He published newspapers in Polish, Italian, and Latin. Just like Lamprecht, Priami initially resided at the Sobieskis' court, serving as a royal secretary. He acquired nobility status before 1683.⁸⁸ He operated efficiently and vigorously, commencing his editorial career by publishing weekly newspapers *Wiadomości Różne Cudzoziemskie* (Miscellaneous Foreign News) and *Wiadomości Cudzoziemskie Ekstraordynaryjne z Poczty Cesarskiej* (Extraordinary Foreign News from Imperial Mail) in both handwritten and printed form. Moreover, he is believed to have been the editor of a literary-political monthly magazine *Mercurius Polonicus*.⁸⁹ Thanks to the privileges granted by King John III Sobieski and later Augustus II, Jerzy Aleksander Priami was exempted from all postal fees. His ambitions to monopolise the press industry and his effectiveness in fighting off his competition can be seen in a decision of the Krakow City Council, which prohibited other local editors from publish-

85 *Korespondencja Elżbiety...*, p. 14–17.

86 A document issued by John III Sobieski, in which the King orders the Krakow Magistrate to give back money borrowed from Priami. National Archives in Krakow, Collection of Paper Documents, call No. 723.

87 See the analysis of Waclaw Potocki's poetry: KUKULSKI, Leszek. Nowe egzotyki. *Pamiętnik Literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej*, No. 48/1, 1957, p. 131–135.

88 *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, ROSTWOROWSKI, Emanuel (ed.), T. XXVIII/3, book 118, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1985, p. 460–462.

89 LEWANDOWSKI, Piotr, *Z historii prasy polskiej. Wiadomości różne cudzoziemskie jako przykład rozwoju gazet seryjnych w Polsce na przełomie XVII i XVIII wieku*, 2015, p. 37–42.

ing informational newspapers.⁹⁰ His newspapers were among the most popular sources of information at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the position he had managed to establish for himself was the result of his shrewdness and consistency. It is not unlikely that even Elżbieta Sieniawska read Priami's work. He reported to her on current events, the Saxon royal court, politics, as well as his work schedule, anticipating that "the future mail shall provide more information."⁹¹ Priami diligently provided Sieniawska with information services, expecting fair compensation in return. While Mrs Castellan of Krakow gladly received letters and newspapers, both printed and handwritten, she was reluctant to pay for them. This was no exception, as the correspondence of nearly every esteemed editor suggests.⁹² According to Piotr Lewandowski and his research, profits from newspaper sales constituted a significant part of Priami's income.⁹³ It is also worth adding that Jan Lankau's observations about Priami's correspondence with Elżbieta Sieniawska seem inaccurate. Lankau claims that their correspondence began at the end of 1702.⁹⁴ Indeed, at the beginning of the century, a Priami wrote to Sieniawska, it was not Jerzy Aleksander, though. The famous Krakow newspaper editor cannot have written any letters to Sieniawska at that time, since all available data show that he had passed away three years earlier.⁹⁵ The initials used in the informational letters point to a different person who may have been related to the famous editor. The mysterious M.A. Priami must have stayed in contact with Sieniawska from the early eighteenth century onwards. Their correspondence began in 1704, however, we read in this letter: "As always, I have been willing to fulfil any ordinance from You, my Dear Lady, and now, I am sending whatever news I have without delay."⁹⁶ The postman at Sieniawska's service sent her newspapers, both hand-

90 *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, op. cit., p. 460–462.

91 PCL, MS., 5924, No. 32427.

92 *Gazette by Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 5933 MS., No. 34522; J. Lankau, op. cit., p. 199, P. Lewandowski, op. cit., p. 56–59.

93 Waclaw Potocki's satire suggests that the cost of one issue was 2 grosze. POTOCKI, Waclaw, *Do goliwąsów, ale nie do wszystkich*, cit. per KUKULSKI, Leszek. *Nowe egzotyki...*, p. 134.

94 LANKAU, Jan, op. cit., p. 198.

95 In his studies, Piotr Lewandowski is doubtful as to the history of Polish press, however, eventually he admits that the year of death of the Krakow editor, 1699, is not unsubstantiated, LEWANDOWSKI, Piotr, op. cit., p. 44, 188.

96 *Letter of M.A. Priami to Elżbieta Sieniawska*, PCL, call No. 5924 MS., No. 32428, fol. 387.

written and printed.⁹⁷ The informant provided his benefactress also with the news from Vienna. In one of his letters, Priami complained that “there is no news from Vienna, the newspaper makes no mention whether Prince Elector of Bavaria should declare his allegiance to the Emperor as announced, because the Vienna newspaper would immediately mention that, but it has yet to be confirmed.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, he reported on the presumed death of the queen of Prussia, imperial contributions in Silesia, and Prince Rakoczy’s journey to Hungary.⁹⁹ Sieniawska must have paid M.A. Priami but the exact amount is unknown. One of Priami’s letters shows his straightforward reminder that he was still waiting for the requested payment from the addressee.¹⁰⁰ The duration of their cooperation is unknown. The correspondence collected at the Princes Czartoryski Library abruptly ends in 1705.

Despite the discrepancies in timing and geography, all the described figures are connected by the fact that each of them sent news to Elżbieta Sieniawska. Regardless of the form and delivery of information, both domestic and foreign, all the informants served Sieniawska, sending her letters full of gossip, postal reports, and handwritten newspapers. Just as the title of this paper says, it is worth highlighting that within her informational circles, Sieniawska assembled not only merchants and spies but also recognised newspaper editors of the Saxon period. Despite a varied quality of the received news, Sieniawska eagerly took advantage of every opportunity to acquire knowledge. Considering the issues concerning the identification of particular informants and their newspapers, we can point out the surnames, first names and personal data of those at Sieniawska’s information services. Ongoing research on this group of people imparts colour to the *theatrum mundi* of the early modern era and provides us with a broader picture of the world.

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1. **Princes Czartoryski Library:** signatures No. 2707, 2739, 2906, 5814 III, 5869, 5924, 5933, 5949, 6006, 12289, 12969 I.
2. **CAHR:** signatures No. 6.53, 30.83, 0871, 4043, 14435.

97 Idem to eadem, PCL, call No. 5924 MS., fol. 397.

98 Idem to eadem, PCL, call No. 5924 MS., fol. 389.

99 Idem to eadem, PCL, call No. 5924 MS., Nos. 32429, 32430.

100 Idem to eadem, PCL, call No. 5924 MS., fol. 394.

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