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**Europejskie edytorstwo źródeł historycznych w XVII-XVIII w.: próba wstępnej
charakterystyki zjawiska**

**Publishing of historical sources in the 17th-18th centuries Europe. An initial
attempt at the description of the phenomenon**

SUMMARY

The aim of this study is general description of European publishing of historical and historical legal sources (excluding editions of ancient texts) of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was a phenomenon of grand scope, both in strict quantitative and spatial sense. Old source publications also give the opportunity to consider a variety of research problems. Explosion of publications of this type occurred between 1650-1750, and lasted until decline of ancien régime. It took place in countries beyond France, England, Reich and Italy. A large collection of editions and works on sources, forming an intricate, tightly connected structure, which functioned as a foundation of former historical knowledge, is an undervalued and poorly recognized category of sources of the history of culture – especially when we think about more daring analytical research and comparative studies, in front of which in the time of digitalization incomparably bigger opportunities unfold. This promising category, although laborious, requires using multi-levelled sequences of historical transmission and reaching beyond the horizon of issues already known, incidental, concerning the biggest editions and leading centres. The starting point for such investigation should be the strenuous and prolonged process of transmission of source texts through print, tied to the accumulation of heuristic and factographic knowledge and working skills, as well as to gradual deepening of methodological reflection, broadening of the scope and expansion of functions of modern historiography. Thus said, successive, intermediate stages of this transmission are brought to the forefront – old editions of sources, long forgotten and withdrawn from the scientific circulation. Comprehensive exploration of these editions, directed to solve problems and allowing for discussing different contexts will definitely make it possible to reveal new, unknown face of old intellectual culture.

Panorama of the European publishing of the 17th and 18th centuries, because of enormity of substance and research threads, should be limited to basic issues. The key to this retro-spection are lists of scholars and biographers of the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, Johann Christoph Gatterer, Friedrich von Martens, Adolf Asher and August Potthast – who perceived that phenomenon from the perspective of the “time of change” – birth of modern, already scholarly publishing. Review of source editions of the epoch, their thematic and chronological scope, content structure and the construction of the editorial commentary serves to reflect on the question of function, methods and forms of two currents of publishing (publishing of narrative sources and sources of acts, documents) in the pre-revolutionary times, to characterize the circle of editors, patrons and addressees of publications, as well as

main publishing centres. But first of all, it serves to present the relation between publishing of historical sources with intellectual trends of the 17th and 18th centuries and with political, religious and social problems of the time.

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