
ARTYKUŁY I ROZPRAWY

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History of Polish Diarism – Selected Contexts

Abstract. In this article, I raise issues connected with the history of Polish diary writing since the Middle Ages until the early 20th century. I discuss the process and directions of establishing diary writing a separate branch of historical literature. Texts of historical nature (memoirs or diaries) were referred to by their authors as stories, notes of events, diaries or a course of life. Their origin can be traced back to medieval chronicles describing events that involved the Polish nation, in which the authors shyly included scattered and miniscule autobiographical mentions. Diary writing in Poland began to assume shape as a genre at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. There was a growing number of diaries in which the reality was described with a bias. This was a manifestation of the specific ‘zeitgeist’: the commonplace belief in the historical importance and meaning of the events witnessed or attended by the author, making them worth describing for future generations.

Owing to vivid and expressive historical accounts, the 17th century expansive growth of diary writing entered the realm of fine literature. The 18th century brought changes in the methodology of historical sciences, as reflected by the prevalence of memoirs over diaries, and the perception of a memoir as a form of autobiography. The development of diary writing at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries was associated with surmounting the limitations of the class system and the emergence of a modern nation as a socio-cultural structure. In this historical setting, plebeian diaries, authored by ordinary people, were gaining in popularity. Diaries were written by representatives of all classes and social strata, be it aristocracy, urban-based intelligentsia originating from nobility, peasants or workers.

In the first half of the 20th century, in addition to diaries written by individuals, practised for centuries, the way was paved for mass diary writing. Writing plebeian diaries was encouraged by scholars and editors of journals. At the same time, an institution of collective and competition diary writing emerged, in which the attitude to history was similar to that advocated by representatives of the *Annales* schools, namely history seen in connection with everyday life.

Keywords: diary, memoire, diary writing, history, methodology of historical sciences

Diariism forms a separate branch of historical literature as it oftentimes paints an exquisite image of an epoch or reveals the background of significant events in national history while frequently entering into the realm of fine literature, where the vividness of colours or the liveliness of the background play a far more important role than accuracy, which is essential for chroniclers¹.

This article raises questions related to the Polish diarism from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century. I discuss the process and directions in which the diarist literature evolved as a separate branch of historical writing. Texts of a historiographic character known as diaries used to be referred by their authors as stories, notes on events, memoirs, or a life's pathway. I also emphasise strong relationships between historical writing and literature, sociology and pedagogy. Thus, considering the value of diaries as a source of reference, I draw on the exceptional and highly unique book *Pedagogy of Memory*, in which the author captivates the reader by the simplicity and accuracy of the subtitle given to his work, namely "Caring for ourselves, thinking about others"².

Early days of diarism – the Middle Ages

„The earliest rudiments of diarism, that is remarks on an author's background, a brief comment by an author or his judgement, can be found, admittedly with effort, in medieval historiographic literature"³. The difficulty lies in the preponderance of chronicled descriptions of events, religious or universalist models, etc., disseminated in monastic or ecclesiastical writings. Any deviations were rare, but if they *did* occur they were heralding some minute changes in the medieval literature that would lead to describing everyday life, devoid of the burden of historical importance⁴. It is not easy to state when precisely diarism emerged. Józef Szymański maintains that its roots are in medieval accounts of journeys, which somehow diverge from the other texts written at that time⁵. *The Description of the World* authored by Marco Polo can be a model of accounts of travels⁶. The number of travel diaries increased significantly in the 16th century, as the concept of foreign tours became fashionable, especially among sons of wealthy magnates.

¹ E. Maliszewski, *Bibliografia pamiętników polskich i Polski dotyczących (Druki i rękopisy)*, Towarzystwo Miłośników Historji, Warszawa 1928, p. VII.

² D. Demetrio, *Pedagogika pamięci. W trosce o nas samych z myślą o innych*, Wyd. Akademii Humanistyczno-Ekonomicznej w Łodzi, Łódź 2009.

³ M. Kaczmarek, *O początkach pamiętnikarstwa polskiego*, „Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie” 1971, no 1, p. 30.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 31.

⁵ J. Szymański, *Nauki pomocnicze historii*, Wyd. Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012.

⁶ M. Polo, *Opisanie świata*, W.A.B., Warszawa 2010.

The Middle Ages were the time when first accounts of the history of the Polish nation appeared in Latin chronicles. Besides numerous values, such chronicles presented a certain weakness that restrained the potential development of this form of diarism, and that was their ‘record-making’ and uncritical character. Initially, diaries did not bear the name of the author, which was a consequence of the commonly held belief that man was inferior to God. This for example is evidenced by *The Polish Chronicle* attributed to an anonymous author, referred to as Gallus Anonymus⁷. This chronicler of foreign extraction, who adhered to the literary framework components, described the oldest history of Poland and her rulers in a stylistically and rhetorically rich language⁸. Another important chronicle, titled *The Chronicles of the Kings and Princes of Poland*, was written by a known author Wincenty Kadłubek⁹. He was revered for being ‘the father of Polish culture’¹⁰, as he was the first scholar and writer of Polish origin whose views and assumptions continued to influence many future generations. In his writing, he drew on the civilisation heritage of ancient times. Another significant chronicler describing ‘grand politics’ was Janko of Czarnków, who held the post of Deputy Chancellor of the Crown¹¹. His *Chronicle* (now lacking the beginning and end) is considered to be a diary or an Angevin political pamphlet due to its unique embellishment with ‘rather numerous personal remarks’¹².

Thus, medieval historiographic texts are characterised by their inclusion of certain elements of diarism, in the form of few and scattered autobiographical mentions, which were intended to testify to the reliability of chroniclers. The earliest chronicles created space for literary works bordering between a chronicle and a diary.

Further development of diarism – the Renaissance

The development of Italian or French diarism accelerated in the Renaissance. Contrarily, Polish historiography long remained subdued to the orthodox medieval principles, but the aforementioned new currents heralded major changes in our country as well, shifting the focus from the olden days to the contemporary time¹³. Diarism in Poland began to crystallise at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. „The compositional and publishing framework of old works consisted of texts written in verse and in prose. The aim was

⁷ Gall Anonim, *Kronika Polska*, Wyd. Armoryka, Sandomierz 2018; E. Maliszewski, op. cit., p. IX.

⁸ M. Kuran, *O wypowiedziach zalecających w polskich kronikach z XVI i początku XVII wieku*, in: *Wypowiedzi zalecające w księżce dawnej i współczesnej*, eds M. Jarczykowska, B. Mazurkowska, M. Marcinkowska-Malara, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2015, p. 71.

⁹ J. Stabińska, *Mistrz Wincenty*, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy „Znak”, Kraków 1973, s. 105.

¹⁰ B. Kürbis, *Wstęp*, in: *Mistrz Wincenty Kadłubek: Kronika polska*, Ossolineum, Wrocław 1996, pp. VIII–CXXXII.

¹¹ J. Sieradzki, *Sprawa Janka z Czarnkowa i jego utwór*, „Studia Źródłoznawcze” 1959, vol. 4, pp. 33–35.

¹² E. Maliszewski, op. cit., p. IX.

¹³ B. Nadolski, *Kierunki rozwojowe dziejopisarstwa staropolskiego*, Lwów 1938.

to win the favour of the audience, primarily for the work itself and indirectly for the author"¹⁴. Autobiographical digressions no longer served to merely confirm the author's personal experience or to supplement historical records but acquired an equal value¹⁵. In the literature, the subjectivity of writing intensified, leading to the simultaneous presence of the layer of memoirs and historiographic accounts. This tendency is discernible in books by Jan Długosz, Filippo Buonaccorsi, called Callimachus, or Stanisław Orzechowski. Jan Długosz created an image of the past of medieval Poland¹⁶. In his masterpiece titled *The Annals or Chronicles of the Famous Kingdom of Poland* (*Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* in Latin), Długosz reaches for certain innovative structural elements, for example one of the sources quoted in his description of the Battle of Grunwald were the battle participants and their accounts. He also mentioned how King Władysław II Jagiełło reacted to the news of the birth of his son: „Therefore, after announcing this news to him, [the king] did not leave the church, but praying and indulging in tears, he spent the day offering gratitude and pious deeds"¹⁷. Filippo Buonaccorsi (Callimachus) promoted Renaissance ideas in poetry, historiography and political writing. His Latin works included *The Life of Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki*, *The Life and Customs of Gregory of Sanok*, the Archbishop of Lwów, who provided him with shelter at his court near Lwów, and *The Life of Władysław III Warneńczyk*, with a description of the king's defeat in the Battle of Varna¹⁸. All these works contain subjective opinions and judgements. Another chronicler mentioned above, Stanisław Orzechowski, a Catholic priest, historian and a strong advocate of Golden Liberty of the nobility and the movement for the protection of this system, described the history of his time, including the reign of King Sigismund II Augustus shown as a true picture of the then contemporary events¹⁹. He did not spare descriptions of everyday life. Ignoring the ecclesiastical verdicts, he wedded Magdalena Chełmska and spent the rest of his life with her, writing in detail about both his personal life and opinions on public matters²⁰. Marian Kaczmarek summarises this state of affairs by stating: „a historian, a diarist, who spares no antagonist. Justice, truth and honesty are on the author's side; evil, lies, hypocrisy and envy are the attributes of the adversary"²¹.

¹⁴ M. Kuran, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁵ M. Kaczmarek, *O początkach...*, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁶ J. Długosz, *Roczniki czyli Kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego*, vol. 11 and 12, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2004.

¹⁷ J. Długosz, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 218.

¹⁸ S.A. Sroka, *Ślawa, chwala i plotka. Władysław Warneńczyk jako król Węgier*, „Przegląd Nauk Historycznych” 2016, 2 (15), 103–126.

¹⁹ S. Orzechowski, *Annales Stanislai Orichovi Okszi: adiunximus vitam Petri Kmitae*, Drukarnia J. Szeliga, Dobromil 1611.

²⁰ J.M. Ossoliński, *Żywot i sprawy Stanisława Orzechowskiego*, nakładem i drukiem Józefa Czecha, Kraków 1851, p. 12.

²¹ M. Kaczmarek, *O początkach...*, op. cit., p. 35.

The first printed history of Poland in the Latin language, *Chronica Polonorum* (*The Polish Chronicle*)²², which drew on Jan Długosz's *Annales*, was penned by Maciej of Miechów and issued in 1519. It related political matters as well as containing information or curiosities about the history of education, medicine and private life. The *Polish Chronicle* was subjected to censorship and confiscated for political reasons.

In diaries written in former centuries, both in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and abroad, one can discern the manifestation of the so-called 'zeitgeist', that is the commonly held belief in the historical importance and meaning of the events that a diarist witnessed or participated in, and as such they were worth being written about for posterity. Over the years, this became established as a custom or duty²³.

It should be recalled that most diaries were manuscripts, circulating in an extremely small number of copies, hence they had equally small readership. According to Marian Kaczmarek, there were around 50 known diaries in the 16th century, of which 16 were accounts of peregrinations²⁴. However, there was a growing number of memoirs in which the constructed reality assumed a subjective dimension, for example the pioneering work by Mikołaj Rej of Nagłowice *The Life of an Honest Man*²⁵. The features, characters and obligations described in it display an image of Poles written in a language studded with diminutive forms, lists, repetitions, inquiries and anecdotes.

Some memoirs were classified as a diary, a chronicle of political events or a historical novel. An example is the work by Łukasz Górnicki *The History of the Polish Crown*. This is how Marian Kaczmarek characterises Górnicki's writing „[...] he does not give prominence to his person, contrary to the historiographic models of that time, and he fills the course of his narrative with some trivial daily incidents. He has the ability to show historical events through the prism of his own gaze and thus raise the reader's interest”²⁶. Selected excerpts from Łukasz Górnicki's travel accounts, chronicles, war diaries and autobiography were included by Roman Pollak in his *Anthology of Polish Diaries of the Sixteenth Century*²⁷. Results of a merger of historiographic writing with authorial, personal record can be found in the work by Maciej Strykowski *The Chronicle of the Poland Lithuania, Samogitia and all Ruthenia (1582)*. Not only did he introduce a rich set of additional literary elements, but he also placed himself as the hero of his works. „He used

²² Maciej z Miechowa, *Chronica Polonorum*, wydawca J. Łoś, Kraków 1519.

²³ H. Dziecheńska, *Miejsce przekazu pamiętnikarskiego w kulturze dawnej*, „Rocznik Towarzystwa Literackiego imienia Adama Mickiewicza” 1993, 28, p. 6.

²⁴ M. Kaczmarek, *Specyfika peregrynacji wśród staropolskich form pamiętnikarskich XVI*, in: *Munera litteraria. Księga ku czci Romana Pollaka*, Poznań 1962.

²⁵ P. Jaroszyński, *Rej (Rey) Mikołaj z Nagłowic*, in: *Encyklopedia filozofii polskiej*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, v. 2, Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2011, p. 453.

²⁶ M. Kaczmarek, *Specyfika peregrynacji...*, op. cit., p. 37.

²⁷ *Antologia pamiętników polskich XVI wieku*, Zakład Ossolińskich, ed. R. Pollak, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 1966.

ancient sources, the Old Testament, Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian and Teutonic chronicles. He drew much information from personal, insightful observations of battlefields, graves, tombstones, hillforts, castles and churches²⁸. In sum, his work contained autobiographical arguments²⁹. This marked the transformation in the status from an author-historian to an author-narrator-hero in one person. Another book that had a significant influence on the development of diarism based on historiography was the *Memoirs of a Jannisary* or the *Turkish Chronicle* written by Konstanty Michałowicz from Ostrowica, between 1496 and 1501 but published in 1912. The author included personal accounts in his book, stating "I was taken by Turks into the jannisaries"³⁰.

The author's voluble narrative, despite the informative and didactic stance of the narrator, stems from the attempt at presenting the reality. Konstanty Michałowicz sometimes employs anecdotal pictures (mostly in the fragments where he reminisces about his past), which enlivens the narrative [...]. The autobiographical remarks occur in parallel with the chronological account of historical events³¹.

Diary literature forms a separate branch of historical literature as it paints an exquisite image of an epoch or reveals the background of significant events in national history while frequently entering into the realm of fine literature, where the vividness of colours or the liveliness of the background play a far more important role than accuracy, which is essential for chroniclers. Pasek belongs so much to history as to fine literature³². *Memoirs* by Jan Chryzostom Pasek are a source of knowledge about the service of a soldier in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the life of a nobleman and landowner. They are a mature form of diarism, delivered in a vivid, humorously earthy and direct language, and referring to models of persons living in specific social environments. On the one hand, this is a colourful picture of nobility worthy of following, but on the other hand, it is a live and tragic portrait of a man full of flaws, lacking responsibility, and inclined to drunkenness and rowdiness.

The same can be said about Kitowicz, an outstanding painter of the Saxon epoch, or Duklan Ochocki, a typical representative of Poland ruled by King Stanisław August. This combination

²⁸ O. Gaisniuk, *Pospolite nazwy osobowe w „Kronice...” Macieja Strykowskiego na tle słowiańskim (studium leksykalno-słowotwórcze)*, Doctoral dissertation written at the Chair of History of the Polish Language, under the supervision of dr hab. Rafał Zarębski (main supervisor) and dr hab. Ivan Petrov (assistant supervisor), Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2017, p. 115.

²⁹ M. Strykowski, *Osostevicius sam o sobie i przygodach swoich w zwiedzaniu rozmaitych krain świata, k. 1r–5r*, cited after: M. Kuran, *O wypowiedziach zalecających w polskich kronikach z XVI i początku XVII wieku*, in: *Wypowiedzi zalecające w książce*, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁰ K. Michałowicz z Ostrowicy, *Pamiętniki Janczara, czyli Kronika turecka Konstantego z Ostrowicy napisana między r. 1496 a 1501*, ed. Jan Łoś, Kraków, Akademia Umiejętności, Skład Główny w Księgarni Spółki Wydawniczej Polskiej 1912, p. 1.

³¹ M. Kaczmarek, *Specyfika peregrynacji...*, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

³² E. Maliszewski, op. cit., p. VII.

of two elements is fundamental to the extraordinary power of attraction to this branch of literature, and it determines the popularity of diaries among readers from all historical nations³³.

Memoirs by Jan Duklan Ochocki testify to the awareness of average representatives of that time. The author, a nobleman and a participant in the partitions of Poland, offers a vivid and colourful account of his life. Thus, diaries go beyond recording customary lives of contemporaries, and instead turn into a classic example of storytelling narrative. A distinguishing feature of memoirs written in the subsequent centuries is the growing interest in the narrator, whose faith in the historical significance of the events he describes is fortified by his temporal distance from thereof.

Subsequent transformations in the perception of diarism – the Enlightenment and the Positivism

The 17th century expansion of diarism contributes to the understanding of a diary as a form of creating the space for memory. In their diaries, the authors were guided by an aim to write a critique or an apologia. One can bring to light the memoirs of Stanisław Żółkiewski, Grand Hetman of the Crown, known as *The Beginning and Progress of the Muscovy War* (1612)³⁴. “There is the well-known case of Stanisław Żółkiewski, who responded to a critique of his actions in the Grand Duchy of Moscow during the Time of Troubles (the Russian *Smuta*) by publishing a memoir, in which he rectified some assumptions about the actual course of events, and hence his diary has characteristics of journalistic and political writing. “The aim to defend and praise a person also prevailed in the *Memoirs of the History of Life and Deeds of Jan III Sobieski* by Philippe Dupont, an artillery man serving under the Polish king, who wrote this diary as an expression of indignation at the publication of a diary by another French soldier, who presented the war deeds of the Polish monarch in a rather unfavourable light”³⁵.

According to Dariusz Rolnik, diarism in Poland changed after the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This does not mean that the principles for constructing such source references underwent significant change. It seems that both those who described King Stanisław August’s epoch before 1795 and those who wrote after the king’s abdication invariably took into account the prevalent ‘norms’ of conduct and evaluation, and they were these norms that were actually changing³⁶.

³³ Ibidem, p. VII.

³⁴ S. Żółkiewski, *Początek i progres wojny moskiewskiej*, nakładem Krakowskiej Spółki Wydawniczej, Kraków 1920.

³⁵ R. Krzywy, *O staropolskich pamiętnikach*, https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/o_staropolskich_pamietnikach.html, Silva Rerum, 17.05.2012, © Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie.

³⁶ D. Rolnik *Mutabilis memoria. O kreatywnej i odtwórczej roli pamiętników czasów stanisławowskich w tworzeniu „obrazów przeszłości”*, „Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym” 2015, v. 35 (4), p. 134.

In the past, most diarists were men, until first diaries authored by nuns appeared in the 17th century. An example is *The Life of Reverend Mother Teresa-a-Jesu, the Founder of Cloisters of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Lwów and Warsaw*³⁷, penned by Marianna Marchocka (1603–1652), a Carmelite nun. Those were followed in the 18th century by memoirs authored by lay women. An outstanding example is the diary entitled *The Journal my Life's Travels and Adventures*, written in Istanbul by Regina Salomea Pilsztyn³⁸. The development of women's diarism took place in the next century. This is when Sophia Tolstoy, for example, authored her memories titled *The Diary*³⁹.

In the 18th century Western Europe, „the growing importance of the signs of the past coincided with major changes in the methodology of historical sciences, leading to significant transformations in the perception of history and the role of the subject”⁴⁰. A diary was seen as “personal memories, a kind of an autobiography”⁴¹. Hence, a fashion emerged in France for writing diaries regardless of the authors' writing skills. This diary-mania was spread among ordinary people by Dumas⁴². Everything significant or insignificant, including very personal matters, was written about. Jean-Jacques Rousseau paved the way when he wrote about himself in his *Confessions*:

Having obtained my liberty, I thought everything attainable: I entered with confidence on the vast theatre of the world, which my merit was to captivate: at every step I expected to find amusements, treasures, and adventures; friends ready to serve, and mistresses eager to please me; I had but to show myself, and the whole universe would be interested in my concerns; not but I could have been content with something less⁴³.

As Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński put it in his *Introduction* to Rousseau's book (1914–1917) „*Confessions* of Rousseau is one of these pain-inflicting books where [...] we feel as if placing our hand right on the beating human heart that is sick; this emotion here is all the more poignant because this heart beat in a man who, like few others, influenced the course of thoughts, feelings and history of a great epoch in the story of humanity”⁴⁴. A distinguishing characteristic of the sentimental autobiography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau is

the author's striving to some self-creation of a narrator and a hero, who appears in the diary predominantly as a sensitive, deeply experiencing person, focused on observation of own inner

³⁷ Za: A. Pekaniec, *Czy w tej autobiografii jest kobieta? Kobięca literatura dokumentu osobistego od początku XIX wieku do wybuchu II wojny światowej*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2013, s. 28.

³⁸ R.S. Pilsztynowa z Rusieckich, *Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1957.

³⁹ Z. Tolstoj, *Pamiętnik*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1968.

⁴⁰ J. Sztachelska, *Pamiętnikarstwo. Z dziejów terminu i gatunku w XIX w.*, „Studia Podlaskie” 2013, vol. 21, pp. 152–153.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² [b.a.], *Kronika literacka*, „Biblioteka Warszawska” 1853, v. 4, p. 530.

⁴³ J.J. Rousseau, *Wyznania*, Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa, Kraków 2003, s. 50.

⁴⁴ T. Boy-Żeleński, *Wstęp*, in: J.J. Rousseau, *Wyznania*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1978.

life and the situation in the outside world. The subjective perspective of looking at the events in which the hero participates, the emotional appraisal of the phenomena he shows and the inclination to indulge in reflection – they all turn the narrator in such a diary into an almost literary character, parallel in the construction to main characters shown in sentimental fiction. In Poland, the closest example to producing such a memoir is *A History of My Century and of the People with Whom I Lived* by Franciszek Karpiński⁴⁵.

Franciszek Karpiński wrote his memoirs in 1806–1822⁴⁶. He wrote about himself genuinely, delving into himself, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and exploring his inner being. Andrzej Cieński counts this diary among the great memoirs of that time, equal to the memoirs of Stanisław August, Jędrzej Kitowicz, Marcin Matuszewicz, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Kajetan Koźmian and a few others⁴⁷.

In Poland,

the development of diarism at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries was associated with surmounting the limitations of the class system and with the fact that a modern nation was being formed as a social and cultural structure. Thus, in those new historical circumstances, there was a growing number of diaries written by common people, diaries in which the personality of a man liberated from the bonds of the class system emerged⁴⁸.

The traditional division into upper classes and common folk was no longer an unsurmountable obstacle to peasants and workers who aspired to be emancipated and free.

According to Józef Chałasiński, an approach to this type of writing genre changed as well, from an amateur pastime of higher circles to an activity or semi-professional occupation of working people. „This proceeded in parallel with the process where work was elevated to the rank of one of most precious national values”⁴⁹. An example is the diary written by the shoemaker and writer Jan Kiliński⁵⁰. His memoirs were mentioned by Julian Ursyn-Niemcewicz: „From Caesar to the present day, so many leaders, witnesses, or even maidens have written their diaries, but I have not heard of a diary authored by a shoemaker”. Another diary written by a commoner was the one by a peasant and teacher Kazimierz Deczyński, who illustrated the harsh life of his family and other peasants living

⁴⁵ A. Cieński, entry: *Pamiętnik*, in: *Słownik literatury polskiego oświecenia*, ed. T. Kostkiewiczowa, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 1996, pp. 390–391.

⁴⁶ F. Karpiński, *Historia mego wieku i ludzi, z którymi żyłem*, ed. R. Sobol, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1987.

⁴⁷ A. Cieński, *Pamiętnikarstwo polskie XVIII wieku*, Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk – Łódź 1981, p. 145.

⁴⁸ J. Chałasiński, *Pamiętnikarstwo XIX i XX w. jako świadectwo przeobrażeń narodu polskiego*, „Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie” 1971, No. 1, p. 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ J. Kiliński, *Pamiętniki Jana Kilińskiego: szewca, a razem Pułkownika 20 Regimentu*, nakładem Księgarni J.K. Żupańskiego, czcionkami M. Marxa, Poznań 1882, [Wielkopolska Biblioteka Cyfrowa].

nearby in the early 19th century⁵¹. Some scholars and editors of journals were the driving force behind this type of diarism⁵². Thus, a distinctive property of the then contemporary nations was the combination of intellectual activity with physical work⁵³. Here is another plebeian diary written – by Kazimierz Deczyński. Jan Kiliński – a shoemaker, Kazimierz Deczyński – a peasant, a teacher.

The flourishing of diarism (memoirs prevailing over journals) in Poland stemmed from a variety of conditions. One stimulus was the need to keep up with the Western European tendencies. Another was a consequence of Poland's political and cultural situation as a country lacking independence, and the elevated position of literature. Yet another one arose from the technological progress enabling the printing of more copies of books and journals or newspapers, which made them more available to a larger circle of readers⁵⁴. „Since the 19th century onwards, publishers made efforts to uncover such texts from ‘the darkness of manuscripts’ and issue them in print, after which the books instantly caught the attention of readers and above all researchers of old literature and culture”⁵⁵. The mass publication of memoirs did not go hand in hand with their quality as references. This situation was highlighted by Jan Kazimierz Plebański, who pointed out to a possible cause, such as the modesty of research in the field of diarism as well as the relatively short history of such studies. Meanwhile, he emphasised that a diary is ‘an extremely interesting form of testimony about the past, more distant or nearer our time, where the truth arises from experience and everyday life’⁵⁶. An example of a skilful book editor was Józef Jan Kraszewski, who cherished an opinion of the best prepared and conscious publisher as well as a reviewer of historical books. But most significantly, he created his own concept of diarism. He understood a diary as a text which belonged to history as a science and to literature⁵⁷. „Texts most interesting in terms of their literary merit often employ the technique of telling a tale developed by Polish Romanticism [...]”⁵⁸. An outstanding example are the memoirs of A. Fredro *Trzy po trzy* (written before 1848; originally published in the “Gazeta Polska”, nos 69–139, with interruptions)⁵⁹. The author departed from the prin-

⁵¹ K. Deczyński, *Opis życia wieśniaka polskiego*, Wydawnictwo Jakuba Morkowicza, Warszawa 1907, [Opolska Biblioteka Cyfrowa].

⁵² Zob. K. Kersten, T. Szarota, *Wstęp*, in: *Więć polska 1939–1948. Materiały konkursowe*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 5–34.

⁵³ J. Chałasiński, op. cit., p. 10.

⁵⁴ A. Cieński, *Z dziejów pamiętników w Polsce*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole 2002.

⁵⁵ H. Dziecheńska, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵⁶ J.K. Plebański, *Wydawnictwo pamiętników. O pamiętnikach historycznych wydanych przez J.I. Kraszewskiego*, in: *Książka Jubileuszowa dla uczczenia pięćdziesięcioletniej działalności literackiej J.I. Kraszewskiego*, Wydawca Józef Unger (drukarnia), Warszawa 1880, p. 475.

⁵⁷ J. Sztachelska, op. cit., p. 156.

⁵⁸ M. Dernałowicz, entry: *Pamiętnik*, in: *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku*, eds J. Bachórz, A. Kowalikowska, Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 2002, p. 672.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 672.

principles of a fictional plot by filling his work with a soldier's tales, rich in anecdotes and digressions. This approach was supported by Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, who argued that a memoir is a kind of literary work from which a modern novel evolved in the 18th century⁶⁰. However, a memoir has also been an invaluable historical reference since the time immemorial. Hence „for literature, for poetry, for art. In general, there is a need for the materials they have thus far demanded little; for the sources documenting domestic, most intimate history of peoples”, and collecting such references „is one of the most characteristic features of this moment”, which explains „the commonplace urge to collect and to publish memoirs”⁶¹.

„The conscious need to nurture and disseminate historical knowledge, knowledge about the changing society, knowledge departing from the tradition of an unchanging society, was a novel trend that testified to the historicism of that epoch”⁶². A group of diaries uniquely representative of this current are memoirs of insurrectionists, who made attempts at evaluating the chances of the Polish uprisings and the reasons for their defeat. An example is the *Diary* of Walerian Łukasiński, written in 1866 and first issued in 1960. In it, the author described his life in parallel with the account of the activities of Patriotic Society and continued with historiosophical reflections⁶³. Diaries were authored by Poles from all the three partitioned Polish lands, and by those who were deported or went on exile, which led to the emergence of Polish diarism in different parts of Europe, Asia and America.

Each great historical upheaval entailed a wave of memories; the most abundant was the aftermath of the November Insurrection. Used in general by historians, but raising a growing interest of readers and meticulously published, often with excellent footnotes, these diaries are still awaiting a researcher [...], for the history of the Polish culture and political thought in Poland, the 19th century diaries are a primary source of information, which so far has not been adequately exploited⁶⁴.

To recapitulate this period, it is worth underlining that the development of diarism in the 19th century was influenced by two factors. One, associated with culture, was Romanticism (nation, suffering, consequences, piety, sense of historical mission) and its positive attitude to individual/personal experiences of people which they describe, especially in the social, economic or cultural context. Another factor that conditioned the wealth of Polish diaries was the weakening pressure of historical events changing the course of life of an individual person⁶⁵.

⁶⁰ K. Dunin-Wąsowicz, „Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie”, „Dzieje Najnowsze” 1974, 6, 1, p. 199.

⁶¹ M. Grabowski, *Pamiętniki domowe*, Wydawca S. Orgelbrand, Warszawa 1845, p. 6.

⁶² J. Chałasiński, op. cit., p. 9.

⁶³ M. Dernałowicz, entry: op. cit., p. 670.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 674.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 672.

Tendencies in the development of diarism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was a favourable time for the growth of political diarism. The following are examples of this trend: *Memoirs* by Ludwik Krzywicki, from 1859 to 1939⁶⁶, *Diary 1870–1914* by Stanisław Stempowski⁶⁷ and *Diaries* by Bolesław Limanowski⁶⁸, spanning the years 1835–1928. Another tendency was to indulge in moral writing, often including the writer's own family. Such memoirs were addressed to particular members of family, children or grandchildren. Manifestation of the emergence of new ethical models can be found mostly in diaries penned by women, especially so-called 'Polish mothers'. Such memoirs were devoted to various issues, including social life, which was dealt with by Paulina Wilkońska in her memoir titled *My Memories of Social Life in Warsaw*⁶⁹.

Diaries were written by representatives of all social strata and classes. Besides aristocracy and landed gentry, or urban-dwelling intelligentsia descending from nobility, memoirs were also written by peasants and rural activists. Let us mention Andrzej Cinciała, a peasant's son who grew to be a folklorist⁷⁰, „Słomka, Kuraś, Bojko, Witos, Rudnicki, Fornalska, Stryczek, the Skorupkas or Turek”⁷¹. The diary written by Jan Słomka in 1912 is particularly interesting because its author, ‘a painter’ of customs, described superstitions, old wives’ tales and dark forces nestling in an old village⁷². In the interwar years, diaries were also written by scholars and novelists, e.g. Władysław Grabski, Stefan Szuman, Zygmunt Mysłakowski, Melchior Wańkowicz, Franciszek Bujak, Maria Dąbrowska and Stefan Żeromski⁷³. Stefan Żeromski's *Journals* are distinguished by the authorial perception of life and own personality. They were written from 1882 to 1891, but published posthumously in the 1950s⁷⁴. „Owing to the author's extreme honesty, rare even in intimate diaries, and his great passion for writing, which forced the adolescent boy to note down every slightly more intense experience, these journals are an irreplaceable source of knowledge about Żeromski's life, his emotions and even fleeting experiences”⁷⁵. There are also diaries written by Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Władysław Anders, Ignacy

⁶⁶ L. Krzywicki, *Wspomnienia*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1959, v. 1–3.

⁶⁷ S. Stempowski, *Pamiętnik 1870–1914*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1953.

⁶⁸ B. Limanowski, *Pamiętniki, 1835–1870*, Towarzystwo Wyd. „Rój”, Warszawa 1937, v. 1–4.

⁶⁹ P. Wilkońska, *Moje wspomnienie o życiu towarzyskim w Warszawie*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1957.

⁷⁰ M. Dernałowicz, entry: op. cit., p. 674.

⁷¹ Od Redakcji, „Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie” 1971, No. 1, p. 3.

⁷² M. Grad, *Pamiętnikarstwo a działalność społeczna*, „Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie” 1971, no 1, p. 51.

⁷³ Od Redakcji, op. cit., p. 4.

⁷⁴ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza „Czytelnik”, Warszawa 1953–1956.

⁷⁵ E. Korzeniewska, *O „Dziennikach” Stefana Żeromskiego*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1954, No. 3 (45), p. 1.

Paderewski, Melchior Wańkowicz, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Marek Hłasko. They enjoyed great popularity because of their authors and unquestionable literary qualities.

In the first half of the 20th century, the way was paved for mass diarism, in addition to diaries written by individuals, which had existed for centuries. Plebeian diarism grew as a unique phenomenon. Writing diaries by common men was encouraged by scholars and editors of journals⁷⁶. At the same time, the concept of collective diaries or competition diaries was born, where the approach to history resembled that advocated by the members of the *Annales* school, that is in connection with everyday life. „This everyday life was above all understood as de-heroisation of history, opposing to ‘eventful’ history, but having the focus of attention on the existence of ordinary man, until then condemned to anonymity”⁷⁷.

Diaries and letters submitted to competitions have been mass sources of information, characteristic for the pre- and post-war period. They enable the reader to retrieve information about the fate of individuals, their inner attitudes, about events and various aspects of everyday life, and about social moods, which is especially important in crucial moments of history. They are therefore the subject of research pursued by historians, literary historians and historians of culture and customs alike⁷⁸.

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⁷⁶ Cf. K. Kersten, T. Szarota, *Wstęp*, op. cit., pp. 5–34.

⁷⁷ T. Szarota, *Życie codzienne – temat badawczy czy tylko popularyzacja*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej” 1966, No. 3, p. 239.

⁷⁸ H. Dziechcińska, op. cit., p. 5.

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