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THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH IN THE WORKS OF MARTIN ZEILLER (1589-1661)

The present paper aims to present a profile of Martin Zeiller – a German-speaking preceptor, translator and author of descriptions of European countries and “knowledge collections” (*Wissenssammlung*). This author often put descriptions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the First Commonwealth) in his numerous works: in travel pieces, which are part of *ars apodemica* (travel advice literature), in various descriptions from the fields of geography, history, politics and society, and on the sheets of “knowledge collections”, where he recorded facts from a wide range of areas of life. Thus, another objective of this contribution is to collate information about the First Commonwealth from all of Zeiller’s works, which is a theme that has not been addressed by Polish researchers.¹ This should stimulate further studies of Martin Zeiller’s works, which were very popular in 17th century Germany (the Holy Roman Empire).

Naturally, interest in Zeiller was greater in the German-speaking countries than in Poland. The first publications about him date from the late 18th century² while his contemporary biography was published in 1989³. His works have been investigated from various perspectives: besides biographical notes in encyclopaedias and lexicons⁴, most commonly in connection with his descriptions of the Holy Roman Empire and other European countries.⁵ Worthy of mention is also research on *ars apodemica*,

¹ This paper attempts to recapitulate the results of research the author conducted for the purposes of his MA thesis written in the Institute of History at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) under the supervision of Prof. Jan Jurkiewicz.

² A. Weyermann, *Nachrichten von Gelehrten, Künstlern und andern merkwürdigen Personen aus Ulm*, Ulm 1798, pp. 555–563. The paper is annexed with a list of Zeiller’s works.

³ This biography was also annexed with a list of Zeiller’s works, arranged according to the date of publication. Its author identified 47 titles, excluding supplements to specific volumes and subsequent editions. In the present paper, the second revised edition is referenced: W. Brunner, *Martin Zeiller: 1589 - 1661; ein Gelehrtenleben*, Graz 1990.

⁴ E.g. M. von Waldenberg, *Zeiller, Martin*, in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 44, pp. 782–784 and W. Kühlmann, *Zeiller, Martin*, in: W. Killy (ed.), *Literaturlexikon. Autoren und Werke in deutscher Sprache*, vol. 12, Munich 2011, pp. 634-635.

⁵ E.g. C. Schuchhardt, *Die Zeiller-Merianischen Topographien bibliographisch beschrieben: mit 8 Abbildungen*, Hamburg 1960; D. Briesemeister, H. Wentzlaff-Eggebert, *Spanien aus deutscher Sicht: Deutsch-spanische Kulturbeziehungen gestern und heute*, Tübingen 2004; M. Merian, M. Zeil-

17th century travel accounts⁶, the history of literature and translation⁷, “knowledge collections”⁸, and information flow in the 17th century⁹; however, most of these studies addressed only selected key issues.

It was largely due to the “knowledge collections” that Zeiller received severe criticism from future researchers. Since these pieces were marked by a loose selection of topics, the lack of a systematic approach and credulity with respect to handed-down legends and stories, in the late 19th century, their author gained the reputation of a typical representative of a barren para-scientific trend.¹⁰ Contemporary researchers, by contrast, emphasise the uniqueness of the author’s works and objectives, pointing to the wealth of literature cited, the popularisation and emancipation of knowledge and a neutral method of presentation that allowed the reader to form an opinion on presented topics.¹¹ However, the opinion of W. Brunner, who considers Zeiller to be a pioneer of lexicography and a predecessor of Brockhaus¹², seems far-fetched. Such diverse views point to the need for further research on Zeiller’s works.

In Poland there is a different picture as this author’s works have not been so thoroughly analysed. Some of his pieces were cited by researchers already before World War II¹³

ler, H. Mönnich, *Die schönsten Städte Bayerns: Aus den Topographien und dem Theatrum Europaeum*, Hamburg 1964.

⁶ E.g. J. Stagl, K. Orda, Ch. Kämpfer, *Apodemiken: Eine räsonnierte Bibliographie der reisetheoretischen Literatur des 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Schöningh, Paderborn 1983.

⁷ I. Breuer, *Tragische Topographien. Zur deutschen Novellistik des 17. Jahrhunderts im europäischen Kontext (Camus, Harsdörffer, Rosset, Zeiller)*, in: Hartmut Böhme (ed.), *Topographien der Literatur: Deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 291–312; R. Schenda, *Jämmerliche Mordgeschichte. Harsdörffer, Huber, Zeiller und französische Tragica des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: D. Harmening, E. Wimmer (ed.), *Volkskultur - Geschichte - Region: Festschrift für Wolfgang Brückner zum 60. Geburtstag*, Würzburg 1992, pp. 530–551; I. M. Battafarano, *Paolo Grillando, Francois de Rosset, Martin Zeiller; Grimmelhäuser: Die Literarisierung von Hexenprozeßakten in der frühen Neuzeit*, “Simpliciana” 20 (1998), pp. 13–24; *idem*, *Von Sodomiten und Sirenen in Neapel. Barocke Erzählkunst bei Martin Zeiller und Georg Philipp Harsdörffer*, “Simpliciana” 21 (1999), pp. 125–139; W. J. Jones, *German Foreign-Word Dictionaries from 1571 to 1728*, “The Modern Language Review” 1/72 (1977), pp. 93–111 and *idem*, *Sprachhelden und Sprachverderber: Dokumente zur Erforschung des Fremdwortpurismus im Deutschen (1478-1750)*, Berlin, New York 1995.

⁸ W. Kühlmann, *Lektüre für den Bürger: Eigenart und Vermittlungsfunktion der polyhistorischen Reihenwerke Martin Zeillers (1589-1661)*, in: W. Brückner, P. Blickle, D. Breuer (ed.), *Literatur und Volk im 17. Jahrhundert: Probleme populärer Kultur in Deutschland*, Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 917–934 (vol. 2).

⁹ J. G. Stackhouse, *Early Critical Response to Milton in Germany: The “Dialogi” of Martin Zeiller*, “The Journal of English and Germanic Philology” 4/73 (1974), pp. 487–496.

¹⁰ Cf. M. von Waldenberg, *op. cit.*

¹¹ W. Kühlmann, *Lektüre für den Bürger*, pp. 919, 925.

¹² Cf. W. Brunner, *op. cit.* p. 116.

¹³ S. Kot, *Rzeczpospolita Polska w literaturze politycznej Zachodu*, Kraków 1919 – on two occasions, the author mentions “descriptions of Poland”, probably referring to *Neue Beschreibung* (1647) and *Anderte Beschreibung* (1657), which he finds “neutral”, cf. pp. 117 and 126. Zeiller’s work is also cited by M. Łowmiańska in the description of Vilnius: cf. M. Łowmiańska, *Wilno przed najazdem moskiewskim 1655 roku*, Vilnius 1929.

and are mentioned in the present day¹⁴; however, such references form only a part of the material on the First Commonwealth in Zeiller's works, and contain only brief or erroneous¹⁵ information.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF MARTIN ZEILLER¹⁶

Martin Zeiller was born on 17 April 1589 in Ranten, a small town in Styria. His father (also Martin Zeiller) was first a priest and then a pastor, who promulgated the ideas of reformation in his parish. In the fifteenth year of his service in Ranten (1567), he married Elisabeth Dreyer. Martin Zeiller senior entered into two more marriages, first with Margareth Ungrath, and then with Apollonia (surname unknown).¹⁷ In all likelihood, shortly after his third marriage (1600), Zeiller senior and his family were expelled from Styria in the wake of the catholic revival pursued by Archduke Ferdinand II (who later became Holy Roman Emperor). Most probably, in that same year, they arrived in Ulm, which is where Martin Zeiller junior wrote his works in the following decades.

His father attached great importance to his son's education, sending him to schools in Styria, Ulm, and finally to the University of Wittenberg, where Zeiller junior studied history and law from 1608 to 1612. It was most probably then that he took the position of a court tutor (*Hofmeister*) in Linz, teaching noblemen's sons from Protestant families. That experience opened a new chapter in the life of the young Styrian, which

¹⁴ E.g. W. Zientara, *Sarmatia Europiana oder Sarmatia Asiana?: Polen in den deutschsprachigen Druckwerken des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2001 – the list of references includes two texts by Zieller: *Anderte Beschreibung* (1657) and *Fidus Achates* (1653). In the book itself there is only a short mention that Zeiller in his description “listed sources and Polish authors he knew” and cited (p. 162). Antoni Mączak expressed different opinions with regard to Zeiller's works: in the book *Życie codzienne w podróżach po Europie w XVI i XVII wieku*, Warsaw 1980 he wrote that Zeiller was “probably the most popular author of descriptions of European roads” (p. 35) but then he added that his guidebooks were “not too interesting (albeit rich in anecdotes)” (p. 36). In a later work, *Peregrynacje, wojaże, turystyka*, Warsaw 2001, while elaborating on various types of travel books in that period, Mączak said: “of greatest value are twelve guidebooks by Martin Zeiller (1580-1661), a native of Styria, who travelled probably everywhere in Europe besides Turkey and Russia (...) Maybe there are more interesting pieces but Zeiller managed to strike a good balance between practical detail, general information and anecdote and that is a feature of good and reliable tourist guides” (pp. 247-248).

¹⁵ Cf. fn. 14 – Antoni Mączak provides an incorrect date of Zeiller's birth and suggests that he had visited all of the countries he described in his “guidebooks”.

¹⁶ This section is based on W. Brunner's biography and is designed to properly address the role of Zeiller's pieces devoted to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against the background of his total literary output. For the list of all of his works cf. W. Brunner, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-137.

¹⁷ Brunner's biography provides contradictory information about Zeiller junior's mother. At one point the author writes that she was Apollonia (p. 15), and then he refers readers to the description of Ulm's town council minutes and parish books, based on which it can be assumed that Zeiller brought his entire family to this town already in 1600 (p. 36). These were the first mentions of Apollonia that only defined her role in the family and were not a biographical fact. Elsewhere in his book, Brunner explicitly says that Zeiller junior was the only child from the second marriage (p. 18).

had an impact on his later career and works. Even though the author of numerous geographical books later admitted that he was not keen on travelling, he spent a large part of his life, several decades, visiting places and writing descriptions of his travels. Within the span of nearly 20 years between the completion of his studies and the start of his literary career, Zeiller, as a private teacher and educator of noblemen's sons, travelled to a wide range of places. This way of life resulted from the widespread conviction about the benefits and even the necessity of traveling in the course of education (*Grand Tour*). While taking care of the sons of Graf von Tattenbach (1612-1621) and then the sons of Baron von Galler (1622-1629), Zeiller visited, inter alia, Prague, Strasburg, Paris, Geneva, Venice and Padua.

After this period, the 40-year-old Martin Zeiller returned to Ulm, where he married Magdalena Mehrer and began his writing career, which he continued until the end of his life. He gained his first literary experiences translating novellas and short stories from French. In all likelihood, when translating French literature and writing his first work, *Itinerarium Germaniae*, Zeiller was motivated by very mundane (financial) factors. However, it would not be fair to ignore the author's passion of promoting early modern national identity: Zeiller strove to raise Germans' awareness of their language, culture and nature. In the preface to his first book, he also wrote about the lack of relevant literature:

There is no one who, to the glory and for the benefit of their fatherland, would take on the duty of writing a guidebook not only for travellers, but also for those who used to travel but forgot a great deal as well as for those who have not travelled anywhere or cannot travel, but are willing to (and even ought to) gain basic insights into the structure and condition of their fatherland, especially by learning reasons to get a better understanding of books on history and politics.¹⁸

Zeiller aimed to popularise knowledge and through his works he wanted to reach out to the broadest possible audience; hence, he published in German and cited as much information as possible from other sources to enable his readers to reflect upon and assess a particular problem.¹⁹ His objective of popularising knowledge underlies Zeiller's all works, regardless of their genre. It provides common ground for the broad range of his writings, which include travel and geographical works: itineraries and descriptions of countries (Germany - besides his own works, Zeiller also co-authored the volumes of *Topographiae Germaniae* – as well as France, England, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Burgundy and the Netherlands), a travel handbook, a guide to European trails (*Fidus Achates*²⁰), a treaty on the Holy Roman Empire and the chronicle of Swabia. Zeiller also wrote lexicons (e.g., a lexicon of the saints) and “knowledge collections”, published in various forms: letters, dialogues, a memoirs handbook, questions and answers, stories, and collec-

¹⁸ From the preface to Martin Zeiller, *Itinerarium Germaniae Nov – Antiquae. Teutsches Rayßbuch durch Hoch und Nider Teutschland*, Strasburg 1632.

¹⁹ Wilhelm Kühlmann, *Lektüre für den Bürger*, p. 918ff.

²⁰ Martin Zeiller, *Fidus Achates oder der getreue Reißgefährt*, Ulm 1651.

tions of examples. In these works, he discussed a wide range of topics from such fields as, for example, health (the treatment of gout), fashion (similarities between male and female clothing), morality (euthanasia), society (the life of dukes), theology (“God does not leave anybody”), science (about history writers), entertainment (past and present games). He also wrote texts about love potions, unicorns, hermaphrodites, Jewish stubbornness, Jesuits in China, etc.

Martin Zeiller died in 1661 in Ulm, where he had spent the last 32 years of his life. He did not leave any children and outlived his wife by nine years. He died as a well-known and respected person; the inscription on his grave reads: *Magnus Zeiller, notus in orbe, scriptor maximus historiae* - great Zeiller, a world-famous great history writer.

THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH IN MARTIN ZEILLER’S WRITINGS

The First Commonwealth attracted Martin Zeiller’s interest due to its relations with the Holy Roman Empire, both at the time and previously. The proximity of these two countries implied political, economic and ideological contacts; hence, in the author’s view, from the German perspective, it was worthwhile knowing basic data about the neighbouring country’s history, political system and society as well as having an understanding of contemporary events. Given such a point of departure, information about the First Commonwealth was included in a variety of works published in the span of 30 years (from the first *Itinerarium Germaniae*, published in 1632, to the last volume of letters, published post mortem in 1663²¹). This makes it possible to see the growth of subject literature cited by the author as well as the selection of information. Depending on the kind of work and the time it was written, one can notice a change of focus, which is reflected, for example, by the author’s increasing interest in Cossacks and Tatars. It should be mentioned that all information about the First Commonwealth came from second-hand materials as Zeiller had never been to Poland and based his description on travel accounts written by other authors or on a wide range of works by Polish and foreign writers: descriptions, historical writings, polemics, etc. (see Appendix).

The First Commonwealth was described in Martin Zeiller’s first work, *Itinerarium Germaniae*, which was published in 1632. This stemmed from the presumption that the Polish lands used to be part of *Germaniae Magnae* and were inhabited by “the German peoples”. Zeiller wrote nostalgically in the introduction that the Germany of the past used to be three times larger than in the 17th century. Naturally, this calculation is grossly exaggerated even if we assume that Zeiller estimated the size of Germany’s lands pointing to the Vistula river as their eastern border.²² This image

²¹ Martin Zeiller, *Centuria Epistolarum Miscellaneorum. Das ist: Hundert Episteln oder Sendschreiben*, Ulm 1663.

²² *Itinerarium* (1632), p. 20.

was replicated on a map attached to the aforementioned guide *Fidus Achates*, which presents the area stretching from the Rhine to the Vistula with the caption *Germania*.²³

Itinerarium is important for yet another reason: it provides a model for further descriptions. In the introduction, Zeiller mentioned 50 points, upon which he would create his description of the Holy Roman Empire. These points were from the fields of history, geography, society, statehood and system of government. He also provided a list of authors writing about Germany. What is striking is that there are no issues concerning religion, most probably due to the ongoing Thirty Years' War and his own experiences.²⁴ Following a general description, Zeiller presented accounts from several dozen trips across Germany, describing the towns he had visited on the way. This certainly served functional purposes because the author meticulously measured distances between them.

The lands of the First Commonwealth were described on about 30 pages (the entire work contains over 700 pages). The description is a little inconsistent: the author first focused on the presentation of selected cities (Poznań, Gdańsk and Kraków) and the lands that were historically linked with both the Polish Kingdom and Germany (Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia and Livonia). Then he described the entire Commonwealth: its area, natural resources, provinces, inhabitants, kings and rulers. In a similar manner, he presented the First Commonwealth in *Itinerarii Germaniae Continuatio* (1640)²⁵, in which he additionally focused on Prussia and the Teutonic Order. However, given the subject matter of this work, these descriptions are fairly concise.

Zeiller's later works show that his knowledge about the Commonwealth had increased over the years. This is reflected by subsequent volumes of *The Epistles*²⁶, which contain information from various fields of life. In the first volume, published in 1640, Zeiller only related anecdotes connected with Poland, e.g. about a feast given by the Castellan of Kraków Land, where 1,800 portions of fish were served²⁷ as well as information about Poles' good knowledge of Latin, albeit with poor pronunciation²⁸.

²³ Zeiller was not the only author who extended the borders of Germany as far as the Vistula. This view was common at the time and was based on Ptolemy's *Geography*. Even though the Styrian writer provided a detailed description of the First Commonwealth's borders, he copied that example of "image geography", which, on the one hand, was based on ancient works and, on the other hand, was strengthened by the author's desire to glorify the previous and contemporary greatness of the Holy Roman Empire. It should, however, be added that in Zeiller's world of images, the First Commonwealth was depicted as a neighbour – someone "known" or even "close", as opposed to the Tsardom of Russia, the Turkish Empire or the Tatar state. In this context, the choice of countries that Zeiller decided to describe in separate volumes of his guides is not accidental. It stemmed not only from the shortage of or more difficult access to subject literature.

²⁴ I.e. the fact that he was expelled in his childhood, and then as an adult, when he was again forced to leave Styria in the mid-1620s.

²⁵ Martin Zeiller, *Itinerarii Germaniae Continuatio*, Strasburg 1640.

²⁶ Martin Zeiller, *Ein Hundert (-sechs Hundert) Episteln oder Sendschreiben*, Ulm, Vol. 1 – 1640, Vol. 2 – 1641, Vol. 3 – 1643, Vol. 4 – 1644, Vol. 5 – 1646, Vol. 6 – 1651.

²⁷ *Idem*, *Ein Hundert Episteln*, Ulm 1640, Epistle 30, p. 186.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, Epistle 92, p. 564.

In the second volume (1641), for example, he provided information about mead, emphasising that it was properly made in Lithuania (“and other northern states”²⁹) and individual towns in Germany. A qualitative change can be observed in volumes 3-5, which were published in 1643-1646. In Epistle 254, Zeiller related observations made by the Knight Commander of the Order of Saint John, who had travelled in Poland in the late 16th century³⁰, about civilizational underdevelopment on a macro (towns and roads) and micro scale (households and the conditions they were in)³¹. In Volume 5, Zeiller devoted several dozen pages to a description of the history and rulers of the First Commonwealth based on the information provided by Polish historians, including Kromer and Miechowita.³²

Zeiller’s growing interest in the First Commonwealth resulted in the publication of *Neue Beschreibung* (1647)³³, which can be placed along the previous descriptions of other European countries: Germany, France, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal and Hungary. This way, Zeiller created a series of works devoted to the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, its neighbours and the largest European countries. The topics that were touched upon in the 1647 volume were further elaborated and were arranged in the following order: first, general information with points matching the model of the 1632 description of Germany, supplemented with updates from recent history, followed by the alphabetical description of towns: their location, history, economic significance, buildings and inhabitants. A total of 147 towns were described, excluding Prussian towns, which Zeiller only mentioned in one sequence at the end of his work. Another edition (1652³⁴) contains a 20-page supplement featuring the Polish rulers and new information about some towns, derived from previously unknown sources (e.g. about the 1580 Kraków riot or the robbery committed by Vilnius students).

Another work by Zeiller, *Anderte Beschreibung*³⁵, which is also solely devoted to the First Commonwealth, should be regarded as a completion of the first description from 1647. The author stated that he had written it because he had accessed new literature and would like to complete the previous description. The structure of the volume is similar to the first description of the Commonwealth with a separate section containing general information (while some of the 1647 content had been reduplicated, there was a substantial proportion of new information) followed by the description of

²⁹ *Idem*, *Das Andere Hundert Episteln*, Ulm 1641, Epistle 182, p. 448.

³⁰ Cf. the contemporary edition: Augustin Frhr. zu Mörsberg und Beffort, *Reise durch die Nordischen Länder im Jahre 1592: Bericht des Augustin Freiherrn zu Mörsberg und Beffort, St. Johanniter-Ordens-Prior in Dänemark, geschrieben den 1. April 1603. Hrsg. von Carl-Heinrich Seebach*, Wachholtz, Neumünster 1980.

³¹ Martin Zeiller, *Das Dritte Hundert Episteln*, Ulm 1643, Epistle 254, p. 416ff.

³² The works of both historians are already quoted in *Itinerarium Germaniae* (1632); however, in all likelihood, it was not until the mid-1640s that he familiarised himself with them more thoroughly. Cf. *Idem*, *Das Fünfte Hundert Episteln*, Ulm 1646, Epistles 27-32, p. 175ff.

³³ *Idem*, *Neue Beschreibung deß Königreichs Polen, und Gross-Hertzogthums Lithauen*, Ulm 1647.

³⁴ *Idem*, *Neue Beschreibung deß Königreichs Polen und Gross-Hertzogthums Lithauen. Die ander Edit[ion]*, Ulm 1652

³⁵ *Idem*, *Anderte Beschreibung deß Königreichs Polen und Grosshertzogthums Litauen*, Ulm 1657.

towns, this time arranged according to the lands in which they were located. A total of 288 towns were described. Compared to the 1647 work, the author provided different information, e.g. mentions of wars (in some cases, this was the only information).

Both of these works are the most accurate descriptions of the First Commonwealth, to which the author referred in his later studies. For this reason, it is worth taking a closer look at their content. In both cases, the introduction contained information about history, geography, administration, society and system of government. In these works, Zeiller provided facts about the origin of Poles, their identity, naming habits, language and the beginnings of Polish statehood. This was followed by data concerning Poland's area, geographical location, natural resources and ethnic-administrative division with a description of individual provinces. In some cases, such information contained only a few sentences about administrative division while in others, the author provided a long description, which concerned the history of a particular land, its inhabitants, their habits and language. With regard to Silesia, Prussia and Livonia, i.e. lands with the predominant German population, Zeiller devoted a great deal of attention to elements highlighting their (more or less real) German character, both past and present. Another point of the description was society: besides listing nationalities that lived in the Commonwealth, the author discussed social divisions: into nobility and commonalty or clergy and laypeople. He focused mostly on nobility and provided information about the characteristics and habits of Poles.

Zeiller then went on to give information about the law and the system of state authority, both about its origins (starting with Lech, a legendary ruler of Poland) and its contemporary form. He presented all spheres of royal power, elaborating upon its limitations in favour of the noble class. While the author made references to the political role of nobility, he did not provide any information (besides some generalities) about the Sejm (the Commonwealth's parliament), its composition or activity. He was much more interested in the history of the Polish Kingdom and its rulers than in the contemporary organisation of the Commonwealth's political life.

Religious issues received marginal treatment. As Zeiller did not want to get into denominational disputes, he related only selected facts concerning religious life. A good case in point is the example of Protestant communities (he provided information about Protestant schools and parishes – run by Evangelicals in Toruń or Vilnius and by the Polish Brethren in Raków³⁶). In the case of the Unites (the Greek-rite

³⁶ Information about Raków in the 1647 work is very short and refers to the closure of the Racovian Academy: “Raków (*Rakaw*): a well-known little town in Poland, where the Arians had their school, which – as David Fröhlich wrote in 1643 on p. 323 - had recently been moved. They also had their own printing house there”: M. Zeiller, *Neue Beschreibung* (1647), p. 172. In the appendix to the 1652 edition, Zeiller provided more information about the Arians, relating after *Theatrum Europaeum* the story of Jonasz Szlichtyng and the decree, which excluded them – as non-Catholics – from the resolutions of the Warsaw Confederation. See M. Zeiller, *Neue Beschreibung* (1652), the Appendix, pp. 10-11. The 1657 description of Raków is also solely devoted to the expulsion of the Arians. It should be added that the act forcing the Arians into exile was not passed until 1658 and the cited information concerns the 1647 decree under which all Arian schools were to be closed down and Arian writings were banned from publication.

Catholics) and Orthodox Christians, Zeiller used the terms “griechische” and “reussische Religion”, showing thus little awareness of the subject matter. He gave a little more information about the Catholic Church; however, it was not too detailed and was presented in the discussion of non-religious topics. The same approach was adopted in the description of non-Christian groups, which Zeiller discussed only marginally and in the context of other topics. Religious issues also include information about inter-denominational conflicts, to which the author referred while describing towns. Even though in the introduction to his 1647 work he remarked that the Polish Kingdom was an oasis of peace compared to other European countries as it was not involved in any religious wars³⁷, he did make references to religious riots and unrest.

The town descriptions were the second and more extensive part of the volumes about the Commonwealth. In his description of a specific town, the author focused first on its origins: its establishment and name. He was also interested in its history and development: state affiliation, past events and development impulses: geographical conditions, natural resources and the course of trade routes. In addition, Zeiller gave information about the town’s buildings, often supplying a few of the most important examples, and sometimes providing a detailed description of the fortifications, monuments, churches, residential buildings or the town’s ambience. In some cases, he focused his description on the town’s population: its ethnic, religious and financial composition as well as mentality and character traits. Among the most frequently described events were religious and denominational conflicts. Regarding the most recent events, such as the Cossacks’ uprising or the Swedish invasion (“deluge”), the author provided a great deal of detailed information about the armed conflict, without trying, however, to provide a more holistic description. Besides that, in some cases, Zeiller related stories from the town’s life: anecdotes and funny stories from 17th century everyday life.³⁸ Because of the different amount of available information with regard to individual towns, the length of the descriptions varied significantly: in the 1647 edition of *Neue Beschreibung*, the longest description (of Kraków) was over 20 pages long whereas the shortest descriptions consisted of just a few lines.

Zeiller presented Polish towns not only in two separate volumes devoted to the First Commonwealth but also in the above-mentioned descriptions of the Holy Roman Empire, Brandenburg and Prussia³⁹ as well as in his travel advice book, *Fidus Achates*. In them, however, he employed a different kind of narrative, i.e. in the form

³⁷ *Idem*, *Neue Beschreibung*, pp. 3-4.

³⁸ “Around 1530 seven indecent merchants along with seven prostitutes wanted to present a naked dance, which they called Adam and Eve’s Dance, after they had indulged in another undignified dance. However, at the very beginning, by order of the authorities, they were apprehended. Then they were severely flogged by the public pillory and deprived of all goods. After that, the hangmen walked them outside the gate, beyond the town’s boundaries and forbade them to do such things ever again. The house where it all happened was demolished and a notice was hung [on the ruins] banning anybody to live in this place for some time”. *Idem*, *Topographia Electoratus Brandenburgici et Ducatus Pomeraniae*, Frankfurt am Main 1652, part 2, p. 20.

³⁹ Cf. the previous footnote.

of hypothetical trips.⁴⁰ Besides the aforementioned information, these works contain data about the distances between towns, and sometimes, about the best mode of traveling. In *Fidus Achates* (a total of 160 routes were presented, 13 of which ran through the towns of the Commonwealth), Zeiller confined himself to describing the appearance of towns and the most important buildings; unfortunately, in the case of Polish towns, these extracts are very short and are composed of no more than a few sentences.

While creating new descriptions of countries, Zeiller did not cease to write the “knowledge collections”, in which he provided new information about the First Commonwealth. *The Dialogues*, published in 1653 (i.e. before the second volume about the Commonwealth came out), contain a description of the relations between the estates and the king⁴¹ and a great deal of information about Tatars⁴². In his later works, Zeiller was still interested in the Commonwealth’s affairs. In *Collectanea*⁴³, which deals with the issues of religion, creation, the human condition and social order, the author often supplied examples connected with Poland and its inhabitants.

In *Miscellanea*, published in 1661, Zeiller described events from the Polish Kingdom, drawing on recent reports: for example, he mentioned the terms of the Treaty of Oliva.⁴⁴ This meant that he was greatly interested in the recent developments in the Commonwealth. In a similar vein, he created his last account about Poland, included in another volume of *The Epistles*, which was written in 1661, but was published posthumously, in 1663. In a short article, besides the presentation of the most recent events from 1661, Zeiller also provided basic information about the Polish language and included a Polish-German dictionary.⁴⁵ This last part, despite its incoherent structure, once again shows the practical nature of Zeiller’s works.

CONCLUSION

Martin Zeiller was a 17th century author of travel and geographical works and “knowledge collections”. The Styrian writer aimed to popularise knowledge in order to help his readers not only to understand the surrounding world but also to strengthen their love for their fatherland: the Holy Roman Empire. He drew upon experience gained as a tutor of noblemen’s sons and an organiser of trips around central and western Europe, which he combined with extensive studies. It was thanks to them that he

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. R. Krzywy: *Od hodoeporikonu do eposu peregrynackiego. Studium z historii form literackich*. Warsaw 2011 – Chapter 2: “Modelujące właściwości opisu podróży”.

⁴¹ Martin Zeiller, *Ein hundert Dialogi oder Gespräch*, Ulm 1653, Dialogue 63, pp. 430-433.

⁴² *Ibidem*, The Introduction and Dialogues 72 and 73. Worthy of attention is Dialogue 73, in which two fictitious Poles, Wacław and Stanisław, talk about Tatars.

⁴³ Martin Zeiller, *Collectanea oder nachdenckliche Reden, verwunderlich und seltsame Geschichten und andere sonderbare Sachen*, Ulm 1658.

⁴⁴ M. Zeiller, *Miscellanea, oder allerley zusammengetragene politische, historische und andere denckwürdige Sachen*, Ulm 1661, p. 545ff.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, *Centuria Epistolarum Miscellaneorum*, p. 335ff.

managed to include in his works so much information about the First Commonwealth and its population. Hence, the entire material concerning Polish people compiled by Zeiller comes from other (Polish) authors. In his works there are no new facts or independent opinions. Even researchers before the war pointed to the neutrality of Zeiller's picture: it resulted from the author's strategy, which consisted in familiarising readers with bare facts and giving them a chance to form their own judgements. However, these facts are plentiful and appear in numerous works of various forms, which were created over a span of 30 years. They primarily concern history, which – in Zeiller's view – served to increase knowledge and understanding of the world and to build identity.⁴⁶ It is for this reason that the subject literature of his writings included so many historical works. Regarding Polish authors, these were works by J. Długosz, M. Miechowita, S. Orzechowski, M. Kromer, S. Sarnicki, A. Gwagnin, P. Piasecki, S. Starowolski, W. Kojjałowicz or A.M. Fredro (cf. Appendix).

The specificity of Martin Zeiller's works and their popularity in the Holy Roman Empire can attract the interest of Polish researchers in at least two areas: first, research on the image of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its population as well as its evolution in 17th century Germany; second, the transfer of knowledge and information, e.g. how well German writers of that time were familiar with Polish authors.

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the biography and works of Martin Zeiller (1589-1661), a German polyhistor, who authored descriptions of European countries and "lexicons". Special attention is paid to the information he provides about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Although the author never visited Poland, his works, based on the rich body of available literature, abound in references to the past and present of the Commonwealth. While Zeiller devoted two separate volumes (1647, 1657) to the description of Polish history, geography, society and government system, information about the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania can be found across all of his works, published over a span of 30 years (1632-1663). In view of the above, the analysis of Zeiller's writings – hardly known to Polish researchers – may be an important element of studies on the image of the Commonwealth and its society in 17th century Germany. Also, it may provide insight into such issues as the transfer of knowledge and information, which is reflected, for instance, in how well German writers of that time were familiar with Polish authors.

⁴⁶ For an understanding of history at that time see Krzysztof Pomian, *Przeszłość jako przedmiot wiedzy*, Warsaw 2010.

APPENDIX

*The list of works referred to and cited by Zeiller in the description
of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**

		Author	Work	Page number of first mention
Itinerarium Germaniae (1632)	1	Albizius, [Antonius]	Christliche Potentaten Stämmenbaum	524
	2	Alstedius, [Johann] H[e- inrich]	Chronolog	533
	3	Angel[us], Andre[as]	Chron. March. Brand.	513
	4	Bertius, [Petrus]	Commentar. Rerum German.	514
	5	Boterus, Johann[es]	Von Macht und Reichthumb der Welt	534
	6	Braun, Georg	Stättbuch	512
	7	Calvisius, Sethus	Histor. Polon.	532
	8	Chytraeus, David	Chronicon Saxoniae & vicinarum aliquot Gentium	513
	9	Chytraeus, Nathan	Deliciae Variorum in Europa Itinerum.	513
	10	Cluverius, Philip	De antiqua Germania, Vindelicia, Norico & tribus ostiis Rheni	511
	11	Cureus, Joachim	Schlesische Chronic	533
	12	Cosmas	Historia Bohemiae	511
	13	Cromerus, Martinus	De Polonia	514
	14	Decius, Iodocus Ludo- vicus	De vetustatibus Polonorum	534
	15	Dlugossius, vel Dlugossus	De Episcopis Siles.	522
	16	Dresserus, Matthias	4 & 5 Isag. Hist.	515
	17	Dubravius, [Johannes]	Die Böhmsche Chronic	514
	18	Fabritius, G[eorg]	Hodoeporic. Origin. Saxon. & Marchiones Misnenses	511
	19	Forcatulus, Stephanus	In Polonia felice	534
	20	Franzose (D.T.U.Y)	Les Estats, Empires & Principautez du Monde	534
	21	Goropius		513
	22	Guagninus, Alexander	Rer. Polonicar. / Sauromatiae Europaea Descriptio	515

Itinerarium Germaniae (1632)	23	Hagek, Wenceslaus	Böhmische Chronic	532
	24	Heberer, Michael	Raißbuch, die Aegyptische Dienstbarkeit intituliert	529
	25	Heintzii, M. Samuel	De subject & libertatcivitat. Imperial	520
	26	Helmiodus, M. Adamus	Chron. Slavorum	515
	27	Heneus, Nicolaus	Silesiographia / Breslographia	520
	28	Hennenberger, Caspar	Preussische Chronic	515
	29	Herberstein, Freyherr von	Moscow. descript.	528
	30	Honorius, Philippus	De hoc interregno dissertationes	534
	31	Irenicus, Franc.	Exeg. German.	514
	32	Kranzius	Vandalia	513
	33	Krzistanowic, Stanislaus	Status Regni Poloniae descriptione	530
	34	Langius, Joh[annes]		522
	35	Lansius, [Thomas]	Consultat. Orat. Pro & contra Poloniam	534
	36	Lupacius, Procopius	Calendarium historicum	512
	37	Megiserus, Hieron[imus]	Kärndterische Chronic / Theatrum Caesar.	533
	38	Mehlen, Johann	Tracktatelein und tabellen	524
	39	Metearnus	Niederländische Historien	524
	40	Miehoviensis, Mathias	Histor. Polon.	515
	41	Neugebauer, Salomon	Historia Polonicae	527
	42	Picolomini, Sylvio Aenea		514
	43	Plautius, Casparus	Neue Schiffarthbeschreibung in die Neue Welt	532
	44	Pulkava	Böhmische Historie	511
	45	Ragusaeus, Maur[us] Urbinus	Historia Slavorum	530
	46	Romanus, Adrianus	Theatrum Urbium	529
	47	Russoni, Balth[asar]	Liffländische Historien	518
	48	Sabinus	Itiner. Ital. Hodoeporico	524
	49	Saur, [Abraham]	[Theatrum urbium]	520
	50	Schickfusius, [Jakob]	Neuermehrte Schlesische Chronic	512
	51	Soterus, Heinrichus	Suecia	518
	52	Starovolescii, Simon	Eques Polonus	531

Itinerarium Germaniae (1632)	53	Stella, Erasmus	Prußica historia (antiquitat. Boruss.)	526
	54	Thuanus, [Iacobus, Au- gustus]	Historiar.	513
	55	Warsevicius, Christo- phorus	Orat. Fun. R. Stephani	530
	56	Werdenhagen, Joh. Angel	De Rebuspubl. Hanseaticis	513
	57	Willichium, Jodocus	Commentar in Tacit	512
	58		Lib. 6 Theatrii praecipuarum totius Urbium	520
Itinerarii Germaniae Continuatio (1640)	59	Aelurius, [Georgius]	Die Glazer Chronic	318
	60	Arnisaecus, [Henning]	De Republica, seu relectionis politicae libri 2.	323
	61	Bellus, Iulius	Hermetis politici	322
	62	Besoldus, D. [Christopher]	Tract. de statu Reipubl.	318
	63	Bredenbach, Tilmannus	Historia belli Livonici	317
	64	Bruningh, Joh[annes]	Conclusiones de Homagiis subjectivis	318
	65	Burens, Andreas	Orbis Arctoi Descriptio	318
	66	Cranius, Henricus Andreas	De pace religionis dissertatio	316
	67	Dresner, Thomas	Judic. Process. Regn. Polon.	323
	68	Ens, C[aspar]	Deliciae apodemicae per Germaniam	321
	69	Fabricius, Jacob	Justa Gustaviana	314
	70	Flayder, [Friedrich Her- mann]	Orat.	322
	71	Goldast., Melch[ior]	Reichsatzungen	324
	72	Gölnitzius, [Abraham]	Itinerarium Belgico-Gallico	326
	73	Guevara	Horologii Principium	313
	74	Henenberger, Caspar	Erklärung der Preussischen Größern Landtaffel oder Wappen	307
	75	Herburtus Johann.	Statua Regni Poloniae	325
	76	Hildebrandt, Andreas	Genealogia Regum Suecorum	328
	77	Jasquier, Nicolaus	Ius municipale; glossae marginalibus	324
	78	Keckerm[ann], Bar- thol[omäus]	Meth. Hist.	328
79	Kirchner	De republ. Disput.	324	

Itinerarii Germaniae Continuatio (1640)	80	Lehman, Christoph.	Speyrische Chronic	315
	81	Lepta, Thrasybulas	De ortu, vita & gestis Georgij Ludovici a Seinsheim	316
	82	Lespine, Carolus de	Les Oeuures	323
	83	Limnaeus, Johan[nes]	De Jure publico Imperii Romano Germanici	315
	84	Litigiosus, Parthenius	Venturae de Valentiis	324
	85	Lundorpius, M. Casp.	Continuatio J. Sleidani	310
	86	Luthenburg, Bernard de	De ordinibus militaribus	315
	87	Miraeus, Aubertus	Chronicon; Origines Ordinum Equestrium	307, 315
	88	Müller, Laurentius	Septentrionarische Historien	318
	89	Münster, Sebastian	Cosmographia	308
	90	Neumeyer, Joh. Wilhelm	[opis podróży]	308
	91	Pithaeus, Petrus	1. Buch des Comtes de Champagne & Brie	324
	92	Poloni, Martini	Leges set statuta ac privilegia Regni Poloniae; Chronicon	7
	93	Radevicus [Rahewin]	De rebus gestis Friderici / Otto de S. Blasio	324
	94	Schadeus, Oseas	Sleidanus Continuatus	319
	95	Schütz, Caspar	Rerum Prussicarum Historia oder Chronicon der Lande Preussen	308
	96	Spangenberg, Cyriacus	Adelspiegel	323
	97	Swertius, Franciscus	Selectae Christiani Orbis deliciae	315
	98	Szczerbic, [Pawel]	Promt. Stat. Regni Poloniae	323
	99	Vapovius, Bernhardus		325
100	Vitraco, Jacobus de	Historia Hierosolymit.	315	
101	Wehnerus, Paulus Mat- thäus	Practicarum iuris Observationum selectarum	323	
102		Continuation M. J. Philipi Abelini	323	
103		Franckfurter Frühlingsrelation Latomi de Anno 35	328	
Das Dritte Hundert Episteln oder Sendschreiben (1643)	104	Augustinus, Freiherr zu Mörsberg und Beffort	Beschreibung der Reise	414 (list 254)

Das Vierte Hundert Episteln oder Sendschreiben (1644)	105	Frölich, David	Viator.	585 (list 382)
Das Fünfte Hundert Episteln oder Sendschreiben (1646)	106	Decius, I[odocus] Lud[ovicus]	De Sigismundi I temporibus	209 (431 list)
	107	Harsdörffer, [Georg Philip]	Disq. specim. philol. Germ.	189 (428 list)
	108	Knipschild, D.	Quest.	548 (483 list)
	109	Meursius, Johannes	Historia Danica	195 (429 list)
Neue Beschreibung des Königreichs Polen und Großherzogthums Lithauen (1647)	110	Apianus, Peter		81
	111	Bertius, P[etrus]	Explicat. Tabul. Contract.	16
	112	Boregk, Martinus	Die Böhmishe Chronic	114
	113	Cadlubens, Vincentius	Die erste polnische Historie	91
	114	Cellarius, Daniel	Speculum cosmographicum	81
	115	Dousa, Georgius	Constantinopolische Itinerarium	212
	116	Gelenius, Aegidius	De magnitudine Coloniae	145
	117	Goldastus, Melchior Halminsfeldius	De Bohemiae Regno	58
	118	Göllnitz, Abraham	Compendium Geographicum	16
	119	Heidenstein, Rein[h]old	Historia belli cum Moscho a Rege Stephano gesti	163
	120	Helduaderus, [Nicolaus]	Sylva chronologica circuli Bathici	100
	121	Henning, Salomon	Die Liffländische Chronic	163
	122	Herbergerus, Valerius	Postill	109
	123	Janssonius, Johan[nes]	Newes Atlantus	27
	124	Magnus, Olaus	De gentibus septentrionalis	191
	125	Matthias [-ae], Christianus	Systema politicum	129
	126	Micraelius, Johannes	Pommerlands gelegenheit und Einwohner	73
	127	Oderborn, Paulus	Ein Buch von Joannis Basilidis	75
	128	Romanus, Adrianus	Theatrum Urbium	63
	129	Sanson, Nicolaus	Tab. Geograph.	153
130	Schröterus, M. Sebastianus	Historica totius terrarum Orbis	6	
131		Frankfurterische Herbstrelation	109	

Neue Beschreibung dess Königreichs Polen und Groß- herzogthumbs Lithauen (1647)	132		Braunschweigische Chronic	130
	133		Zeitungen	157
	134		Zeitungen und darauf verfestigte Relation	170
Dodatek do 2 wydania Neue Beschreibung dess Königreichs Polen und Groß- herzogthumbs Lithauen (1652)	135	Bange, Johann	Die Thüringische Chronic	Anhang s. 15
	136	Bisaccioni, Majolinus	Historia	Anhang s. 21
	137	Meteren, Emanuel van	Meteranus novus	Anhang s. 10
	138	Olearius, M. Adamus	Orientalische Reise	Anhang s. 20
	139	Rader, Matthäus	Viridarium sanctorum	Anhang s. 14
	140		Zeitungen	Anhang s. 21
	141		5. Theil des Theatri Europaei	Anhang s. 11
	142		Frankfurtische Herbstrelation 1648	Anhang s. 13
	143		Frankfurtische Frühlingsrelation 1649	Anhang s. 18
Topographia Electoatus Brandenburgici et Ducatus Pomeraniae (1652)	144	Cramer, Daniel	Die Pommerische Chronic	15
	145	Melanchton, Phillip	Chronicon Carionis	15
	146	Peucer, Daniel		6
	147	Pontanus, Joh. Isaac	Chorographica Regni Daniae	6
	148	Schuppius, Johannes	Dissertatio de Opinione	19
Ein Hundert Dialogi (1653)	149	Broniovius, Martinus		494 (dialog 73)
	150	Crusius	Schwabische Chronic	493 (dialog 72)
	151	Dogliani, Joan[nes] Nicol[aus]	Amphiteatre Europae	490 (dialog 72)
	152	Lapide, Hippoliti de	De ratione status	430 (dialog 63)
	153	Orichovius, Stanislaus	Orat. ad Proceres, de Legibus Poloniae	430 (dialog 63)
	154	Reinkingk, Theodorus	De Regim Secul. & Eccl.	432 (dialog 63)
	155	Sluteri, Joh[annes]	Tractatlein	432 (dialog 63)
Anderte Beschreibung dess Königreichs Polen und Groß- herzogthumbs Lithauen (1657)	156	[Opaliński, Łukasz]	Polonia defensa wider J. Barclajum	I

Anderte Beschreibung dess Königreichs Polen und Groß- herzogthums Lithauen (1657)	157	Barberius, Wilhelm		215
	158	Boxhornius, Zuerius	Historia universali	3
	159	Burschky, Samuel	Tractat von einem stillem und ruhigen Gemüthe	139
	160	Continuator Thuani		157
	161	Corycynius, Andreas de Pilca	Perspectiva Politica	I
	162	Fredro, Andreas Maximilianus		I
	163	Gualdus, Gal.	Historien	62
	164	Kobierzickus, Stanislaus a		I
	165	Kojalowicius, Albertus Wiiiuck	Eine lithauische Historie	I
	166	Limmerius, Augustinus	Leipzigische Michaels Relation (1655); Leipziger Neuen Jahr Relation (1656); Michaels Marckts Relation (1656)	67, 123
	167	Olizarius, Aaron Alexander	De Politica Hominum	III
	168	Ossolinski, Georgius		I
	169	Pastorius, Joachimus	Bello scythico-cosacico	I
	170	Piasecius, Paulus	Polnische Chronic	I
	171	Schmidt, M. Tobias	Die Zwickauische Chronic	126
	172	Sebaldus, M.H.	In Breviario historico	196
	173	Sprenger, Joh. Theod	Polonia nov-Antiqua	177
	174	Sulikovius, Joan. Demetrius	Commentario rerum politicarum	I
	175	Zabierzycko, Stanislaus a		76
	176		Franckfurtische Herbstrelation (1648)	63
	177		Leipzigische Frühlingsrelation (1654)	64
	178		Cölnische getruckte Zeitungen (3.11.1656)	70
	179		Öster. Leipzig. Relation (1656)	77
180		Franckfurtische Herbstrelation (1656)	74	
181		Franckfurter Frühlingsrelation (1656)	87	
182		Die grosse Lithauische Landtafel	147	

Anderte Beschreibung dess Königreichs Polen und Groß- herzogthumbs Lithauen (1657)	183		Sechster Theil des Theatri Europaei	196
	184		Bericht aus Riga (7.11.1656)	210
Miscellanea (1661)	185	Bisaccioni, Majolino	Historia	545
	186	Brerewod, Edward	Glaubensforschung	584
	187	Sarnicius, Stanislaus	Annales Polon.	548
	188	Sprengerus, Joh[annes] Theod[or]	De jure Aedificij	559
	189		Instrumentum Pacis Sueco- Polonicum	556
	190		Diarius Europae	556
	191		Frankfurtisch und Leipzigische Relationibus	550
192		Frankfurter Frühlingsrelation (1659)	560	
Centuria Episto- larum Miscellane- arum (1663)	193	Kordecki, Augustinus	Nova Gigantomachia contra sacram Imaginem Deiparae Virginis a S. Luca depictam	338

* This list is designed to show the effects of Zeiller's searches of literature, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. It needs to be stressed that the list is provisional and it does not provide any critical analysis of the Styrian author's works. The authors' names and the titles of their works are presented in the same way as by Zeiller. Only ancient authors have been excluded (e.g. Herodotus). To emphasise the growth of the subject literature over the course of time, these works are listed in a single increasing sequence, always only with a note on the first mention in the earliest work. Such a list not only shows the number of works cited but can also provide a basis for further research on Polish issues in Zeiller's works.

