

**AN INTRODUCTION: “PRZEGLĄD BIBLIOTECZNY”  
[THE LIBRARY REVIEW] IN THE PAST  
AND IN THE YEARS 2005-2012**

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KEYWORDS: “Przeгляд Biblioteczny”. Content. Structure. Authors. Thematic.

ABSTRACT: “Przeгляд Biblioteczny”. [The Library Review] is regarded as one of the most important Polish journals treating the book, the library and information. On the 85th anniversary of the establishment of this quarterly, here we discuss both its general format, whilst also providing a general thematic conspectus of the articles published in the journal between the years 2005-2012.

Of all the Polish journals dedicated to library science, “Przeгляд Biblioteczny” [The Library Review] occupies an exceptional position, as it not only the oldest journal but for years has

been regarded as one of the most important periodicals in its field. It is synonymous with the top scholars and practitioners in the field of Polish librarianship. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” has managed to retain its important position by being an all-Polish discussion forum for the key issues relating to contemporary librarianship, and book, library and information science. The elite position of the journal is confirmed by the fact that the Ministry for Science and Higher Education has assigned it the highest number of points from among all Polish scientific journals.

With 2012 marking the 85th anniversary of the establishment of “Przegląd Biblioteczny”, we have the opportunity of addressing English-speaking readers who are perhaps not familiar with the kind of articles which our journal publishes. And so in this introduction I will provide some basic historical facts about the journal, together with an overview of current activities and concepts.

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The first efforts at establishing a Polish journal devoted to the theory and practice of librarianship were undertaken by the Society of the Public Library of Warsaw, which in 1908 began publishing a quarterly under the rather longish title of “Przegląd Biblioteczny. Czasopismo ilustrowane poświęcone bibliotekoznawstwu, bibliotekarstwu i bibliografii” [The Library Review. An Illustrated Journal Dedicated to Library Science, Librarianship and Bibliography]. The editor of the journal was Stefan Demby (1862-1939), who would go on to be one of the founders, and the first director of the National Library. In the years 1908-1911 six issues of the journal were published, only for it then to be suspended due to a lack of funds. Nearly twenty years later, following Poland’s regaining of independence, Demby and other activists of the Union of Polish Librarians returned to the idea of issuing a journal for Polish library science specialists. On obtaining funds for this purpose from the Ministry of Religious Faith and Public Enlightenment in 1927, they began to publish the journal with the unabridged title of “Przegląd Biblioteczny. Wydawnictwo Związku Bibliotekarzy Polskich. Centralny organ naukowy bibliotekarstwa polskiego” [The Library Review. The Publishers of the Union of Polish Librarians. The Central Scientific Organ of Polish Librarianship].

The first chief editor of this journal was director of the Jagiellonian Library, and head of the

Union of Polish Librarians, Edward Kuntze, who would retain this post until 1948. His successor deputy was Aleksander Birkenmajer, one of the great scholars on the book of the inter-war period. After the war, he founded the school of librarianship in the University of Warsaw – today the Institute of Information and Book Studies. The post of editorial secretary was occupied by Józef Grycz, another important person in the history of Polish librarianship, who was at the time the director of the Kórnik Library. Grycz compiled unified cataloging rules for Polish libraries, and was also a forerunner of modern librarianship in Poland.

“Przegląd Biblioteczny” has been the subject of numerous research studies, which have looked to assess the history of Polish writing, (see Grycz, 1937; Dembowska, 1977; 1997; Sordylowa, 2002; Banacka & Sosińska-Kalata, 2007; Sosińska-Kalata, 2008), and this year the journal will be the subject of a monograph dedicated to its activities and program (Gruszka, 2012).

1927 is considered to be the foundation year of “Przegląd Biblioteczny”. During the inter-war period, Kraków’s Jagiellonian Library published 13 annuals of the quarterly. Whereas, after the war, “The Library Review” was revived, firstly in Kraków (in 1946) and then from 1949 in Warsaw. In the years 1946-53, the quarterly was the scientific arm of the Union of Polish Librarians and Archivists, and from the founding of the Association of Polish Librarians (Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, SBP) in 1954 to the present day it has remained Poland’s principal branch journal. In the years 1972-2003 the journal was published jointly by SBP and the Main Library of the Polish Academy of Science. Since 2004, SBP has been the sole publisher of “The Library Review”. Chronologically, the chief editors of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” have been Bohdan Horodyski (1949-1965), Zbigniew Daszkowski (1966-1968), Maria Dembowska (1969-1978), Barbara Sordylowa (1978-2003), Maria Lenartowicz (2004) and from 2005 to the present day, Barbara Sosińska-Kalata, the author of this piece.

In 1978 the Editorial Board of the journal was established, headed up initially by professor Helena Więckowska. In the subsequent years, these roles were fulfilled by professors: Zbigniew Jabłoński, Krzysztof Migoń, Barbara Bieńkowska, Barbara Sosińska-Kalata, and currently this post is held by Elżbieta B. Zybert. The board has drawn top scholars and specialists from the worlds of Polish academia and librarianship. In recent years attempts have been made to extend the Board’s membership to renowned foreign specialists. “Przegląd

"Biblioteczny" is reviewed in accordance with the double blind review rule, wherein 40 academics and branch specialists write opinions on all articles sent to the editorial offices.

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In accordance with the original concept, "Przegląd Biblioteczny" is a quarterly journal – which is a typical format for Polish scholarly periodicals. In the past, due to organizational issues, this frequency was not always easy to maintain (see Gruszka, 2012). Since 2005, the journal has been published regularly, and the volume of the subsequent compilation annuals total 550-600 pages, with a subscription print run of 650 copies.

The archived annuals of the quarterly from the years 1927-2008 have been digitalized and are available in the SBP digital archive ([http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/archiwum\\_cyfrowe](http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/archiwum_cyfrowe)) as well as the Bibliological Digital Library ([www.bbc.uw.edu.pl/libra](http://www.bbc.uw.edu.pl/libra)) run by the Institute of Information and Book Studies at the University of Warsaw. Information on the contents of current issues is to be found on the SBP site ([http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/czasopisma\\_sbp](http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/czasopisma_sbp)). The contents of "Przegląd Biblioteczny" are registered in "The Library and Information Science Abstracts", as well as in the internet Bibliography CEJSH – "The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities" (<http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/>).

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The contemporary internal organization of "Przegląd Biblioteczny" was shaped in the 1970s by Maria Dembowska, and has been subject to little change ever since. The basic structure of the journal consists of the sections: *Articles, Opinions and Viewpoints, Reports, Reviews and Reports from the World of Writing, From the Life of SBP* and *Chronicles*. Irregular features are *Research Workshops, Communiques, Information Snippets, Obituaries, and The Co-founders of Polish Librarianship*. The sections *Articles* and *Research Workshops* generally take up over half of the journal's pages.

The section *Opinions and Viewpoints* features polemical texts, which present ideas, judgments, and commentaries pertaining to the development of both contemporary Polish librarianship and the system of scholarly communications. In turn, the section *Reviews and Reports from the World of Writing*, contains authorial contributions which have been either

submitted or commissioned. Here we will find reviews of scholarly monographs on the book, libraries, and information. Two overview articles are also featured. The first, penned by Barbara Koryś, discusses the most recent publications. The second, written by Jacek Wojciechowski, provides a critical conspectus of foreign publications.

The remaining sections feature reports and chronicles. The section *The Co-founders of Polish Librarianship* appears irregularly and features commissioned interviews with the most outstanding figures of contemporary librarianship or library research in Poland.

In 2011 the section *Chronicle*, which up until 2008 had recorded various national and international events related to library activity and library research was replaced by the *Chronicle of Academic Life*. It is now published twice yearly in issue 1 and 4. In issue 1, *The Chronicle of Academic Life* encompasses all important events and research undertaken by institutes and university departments of information and library studies at Polish universities. In issue 4, part of the section comprises a record of the most important events and scholarly works undertaken in Polish research libraries.

From the outset the journal boasted a permanent supplement, which was a bibliography of academic works from the fields of the book and library studies, as well as information studies. In the years 1970-2000 this supplement was titled *Bibliografia Analityczna Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej* [The Analytical Bibliography of Librarianship and Information Science], and was compiled in the Bibliographic Institute of the National Library of Poland. In 2010 the director of the National Library brought to an end the publication of this supplement.

As with the majority of such periodicals, „Przegląd Biblioteczny” aims at publishing treatise and research articles. Over the course of the past seven years, the journal has published 140 scholarly articles, with 4 more to be added in the first quarterly of 2012 (see table 1). In most of the quarterlies, 4-5 scholarly articles are published, together with 12-15 shorter pieces, such as opinions, reviews, reports and tributes/commemorations. A larger number of short articles were published in the jubilee annual of 2007 (75), whereas the 4th issue for 2008 featured articles which honoured the memory of professor Maria Dembowska, who had passed away earlier that year, and who had been the editor of „Przegląd Biblioteczny” in the years 1969-1978.

The number of articles sent to „Przegląd Biblioteczny” in recent years has markedly grown.

Nonetheless, the size of the journal does not allow for the publication of more than 5 principle articles per issue.

Table 1. Number of texts published in “Przegląd Biblioteczny” [The Library Review] in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)

Year	Number of published texts		
	General	Number of articles	Number of remaining texts (opinions, reviews, reports, tributes/commemorations)
2005 (73)	70	15	55
2006 (74)	66	19	47
2007 (75)	82	24	58
2008 (76)	101	32	69
2009 (77)	78	17	61
2010 (78)	75	18	57
2011 (79)	63	15	48
2012 (80) – no. 1	14	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>405</b>

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From the outset, “Przegląd Biblioteczny” looked to monitor and treat the most important issues of contemporary librarianship together with providing current research in the areas of the book and library studies, and from the 1970s in information studies. Currently the thematic profile of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” features contemporary research on information and library science, which have taken on an interdisciplinary perspective and which include various aspects of the functioning of the book, the library and information in society. The central focus of the journal provides reflection on contemporary Polish and world librarianship and the directions of its development.

Articles published in this quarterly introduce analyses of various aspects specific to the library-information reality, aspiring to the identification of qualitative differences between applied practical solutions, but whilst also embracing generalized work and theoretical observations. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” publishes articles dedicated to the most significant problems and achievements of contemporary science on book, library and information.

Thanks to the political and economic transformation which has taken place in Poland over the

past two decades, Polish librarianship has seen unprecedented development, particular in terms of the implementation of technological changes. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” has provided a forum for analysis and discussions pertaining to: the computerization of library processes; the functioning of libraries in new social, economic and technological conditions. In turn, the journal has featured articles which broach topics such as: modern methods for managing libraries and developing a culture of cooperation based on ICT; standardization in library and information activity; the creation and functioning of library consortiums, the digitization and development of repositories and digital libraries; the shaping of new forms for scientific communication; the quality service for users; programs for developing information literacy; the evolution of the education paths for librarians and information specialists; and, redefining research theories pertaining to the book, libraries and information.

Table 2 presents themes typically featured within “Przegląd Biblioteczny”. 19 thematic fields are indicated as derived from the 144 articles published in the journal in the years 2005 to 2012. This breakdown of themes reveals the great diversity of issues that the journal has profiled: about half (55.55%) of all articles printed in this period relate to 6 different thematic fields, which fall under the broader umbrella of contemporary library science and scientific information, represented in proportion from approx. 12% to approx. 7%. The remaining 45% of articles cover 13 different thematic areas.

In the analyzed period the issues of the digitization of library collections and the creation of digital libraries dominated, as well as issues relating to theory and methodology of information and library accounted for 11.81% of the published articles. The divisions reflect the importance of digitalization not just in Poland but throughout the world, whilst also showing the extent to which “The Library Review” views the importance of methodological and theoretical research being carried out in Poland’s universities and specialist institutions. Two other thematic fields given pride of place in the journal are library management and library qualitative assessment (9.72%), as well as the analysis of library informational services (8.33%). A large number of articles touched upon library user studies (6.94%), as well as various library activities (research, prison, school) in Poland and the world (6.94%).

A relatively high percentage of biographical articles have arisen from the anniversary materials, which provided biographical notes on the editors of “The Library Review”, as well as materials dedicated to Maria Dembowska.

Table 2. Thematical distribution of articles published in “Przegląd Biblioteczny” [The Library Review] in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)

L.P.	Thematic field description	Articles published in The Library Review in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)	
		Number	Percentage
1	Digital libraries and the digitalization of library collections. Digital scientific Communications	17	11.81
2	Information and library science – theory, methodology, relations to other fields	17	11.81
3	Management of library and library processes. Measuring quality in libraries	14	9.72
4	Library information services. Searching in digital information resources	12	8.33
5	Studies on library use and library users	10	6.94
6	Librarianship in Poland and the World	10	6.94
7	People dedicated to the book	9	6.25
8	Librarians – profession, education, demographic issues	8	5.56
9	WWW pages of libraries and other institutions; information architecture, functions, quality	8	5.56
10	Bibliological Journals. Bibliological reference books	8	5.56
11	Information sources, bibliography, databases. internet information sources	7	4.86
12	Metadata. Cataloguing and indexing	5	3.48
13	Information literacy – library programmes and activities	5	3.48
14	Computerisation of libraries and library processes – tools, standards, effectiveness	4	2.78
15	Book institutions in Poland (IKiCz, PIK, IB)	3	2.07
16	The book market	2	1.39
17	Information activity beyond libraries. Public and economic Information systems.	2	1.39
18	Readership	1	0.69
19	Other (modern editorial technology, polonica in foreign writing).	2	1.38
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>144</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Information literacy and library and bibliographical metadata was represented in relatively low scope in the recent publications of “Przegląd Biblioteczny”, whereas in the world of literature of library and information science these topics are frequently undertaken. It is necessary, however, to note, that the majority of articles from this field were published



in the last two issues of "Przegląd Biblioteczny", so it is subject matter which is more and more intensively explored by those authors publishing within the pages of this quarterly.

The diversity of articles in "Przegląd Biblioteczny" (presented in table 2) illustrates the variety of areas which are being researched by our contributors. In accordance with the thematic profile of our Editorial Council, the only criteria for publication in the quarterly is the highest standard of scholarship pertaining to any aspect of contemporary librarianship and information and library science.

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Traditionally "Przegląd Biblioteczny" has looked to harness communication between researchers and specialists looking to incorporate new theories and methods in their practical activity. The wide circle of our contributors work either in academic or library institutions. Other contributors are primarily specialists associated with information centres and services. In recent years, we have also featured articles provided by foreign contributors and deemed to be of particular interest to Polish readers. We trust that these kinds of texts will transform our quarterly into a forum for discussion and debate about all issues concerning library and information science with an international reach.

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Presenting this special issue of "Przegląd Biblioteczny" to our readers I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Jacek Wojciechowski who first suggested publishing a selection of the most interesting "Przegląd" articles translated into English to celebrate the 85th anniversary of our journal. Seven translated articles published in the years 2005-2010 making this issue have been independently assessed and selected by the Editorial Council and ordered by the original text publication dates available in the end of each translation. All articles are preceded by corresponding updated notes on authors, lists of keywords and abstracts.

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