

The research project *Print Agents and Their Paratexts in the Protestant Printing Networks of Poland-Lithuania and Prussia (Until 1660)* aims to investigate the printing centres run by Protestants in Poland-Lithuania and Prussia between the emergence of Reformation printing in the region in the early sixteenth century and the Swedish wars in the mid-seventeenth century (c. 1660). The project team will analyse printing shop production in many locations, including Brest, Gdańsk, Königsberg, Nieśwież, Pińczów, Raków, and Toruń. These towns and the books produced therein reflect the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the region; consequently, we will include in our analyses the three main languages spoken in the region: German, Latin, and Polish.

Crucially, these shops printed primarily religious literature that was expected to either promote Protestantism or be used by those who were already Protestants. Knowledge regarding the role of printed books in shaping and supporting the Reformation is commonplace; however, to deepen our understanding of this issue, in this project, we propose new methods of exploring this well-established notion: we introduce network analysis and digital tools for data annotation.

The design of the project relies on the combination of the following key concepts, which are used to describe the research material and collect relevant data:

- (1) **publishing strategies** → a pattern emerging from the body of bibliographic data (description of the book editions)
- (2) **paratexts** → all the resources accompanying the main body of a published text within its edition, such as prefaces, dedicatory epistles, tables of contents, and indexes
- (3) **print agents** → all the people involved in book production, who left their textual or typographic traces on the book editions through editing, writing, or supplying paratexts
- (4) **networks** → abstract structures representing the relationships between the identified print agents

Using the aforementioned concepts, our main goal is to analyse the **networks** composed of various **print agents** and the books that they produced. The roles that were declaratively assigned to the books printed in these centres will be examined by systematically analysing the **paratexts**. The amassed data will elucidate the networks and emerging **publishing strategies** reconstructed from the bibliographic data and the utterances of the paratexts that we will read and annotate.

To achieve our goals, we will need to complete two major clusters of activities:

1. WE WILL BEGIN WITH THE DATA: The project design relies on the **accumulation of the data**. We will collect and process several types of data: **(a) bibliographic data** providing information about the main body of the books produced in the Protestant printing shops in Poland-Lithuania and Prussia; **(b) additional metadata about the paratexts** accompanying each edition; and **(c) full texts of chosen paratexts transcribed, encoded, and annotated** by the team, enabling us to trace all the repetitive fixed lines of thought or the clichés used in the paratextual elements of the book editions and determine their functions. In so doing, we will benefit from the existing bibliographies and online catalogues, but because we need a much more detailed level of description, it will be necessary for our team to supplement many of these data.

2. THEN, WE WILL TRANSFORM OUR DATA INTO THE NETWORK: Our data analysis will help us identify the communities composed of all the people involved in the production of Protestant books in Poland-Lithuania and Prussia. We will view the data as a network, making connections between the people (print agents, who are understood as the *nodes* of the network) who collaborated on a single edition (therefore, the fact of collaboration will constitute an *edge* within the network). This will enable us to identify patterns and unexpected collaborations and trace the communication between various printing centres.

Equipped with the aforementioned terminology and the collected data, we will be able to achieve the general objectives of the project, which are to determine how each book's producers perceived its purpose and how they presented their product to the readers. In short, what was the book's aim?