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Summary

[Résumé]

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SUMMARY

The Postal and Telecommunications Museum is placing in the hands of readers the Catalogue of documents for the years 1558-1826, produced as part of the edition of scientific documentation of the collections. After the catalogue of cards, it is a second publication belonging to the D-Series whose goal is to present the archives of the Museum. The term documents, designates here not only pieces on paper, whose content and form have the basic traits of official acts putting into force new legal situations, but also written material that represents facts and phenomena relative to the objective reality of manifestations of human thought. Among the sources thus conceived, we distinguish: contracts, privileges, proclamations, regulations, orders, circular letters, reports of oaths taken by senders from post offices and postilions, reports of visits of postal relays, official and private mail, papers accompanying postal relay material, postal receipts, and mail, certificates, extracts, etc. from ordinary post offices and relay offices.

The Museum's archives hold in their possession writings from the period of the Warsaw Duchy and from the Polish Realm, being certificates (Acts) drawn up by central authorities of the State administration. Certificates (Acts) of local authorities are represented here by documents of different content and points of origin, called Varia, postal business conducted by municipal and communal authorities as well as by Voivodia commissions in the Polish Realm. Moreover, they are represented by numerous circulars relating to the territory of the Galician Government created in the Polish provinces annexed by Austria.

However, it is the acts of postal institutions that make up the major part of the archives of the Museum. They are composed of:

- 1) Acts of the General Post Office of the Duchy of Warsaw, originally called the Administration of National and Polish Posts.
- 2) Those of the General Post Office of the Polish Realm.

3) Those from postal offices and relays.

All these documents constitute interesting sources for studying the history of postal communication. They take up diverse subjects, the construction and the modernisation of postal relays, the maintenance of the routes (roads) the sphere of activity of the postal offices and relays, complaints against the post office, privileges of postal franchising, etc.

The first bundle includes documents from the years 1558-1826, arranged in chronological order without any observations as to their relevance and their origins. We have assumed as a basis for the chronology the date of the establishment of one document and in the case of some copies, taking into account the importance of their content, the date of the original of a reproduced certificate (Act). The facsimile of the postal order of 1558 is the first item in the bundle. The letter from Hyacinth Młodziejowski, court treasurer, addressed in 1585 to Christophe Szydłowski, is the oldest authentic source. The regulation from the Mail Association of the Imperial City of Wrocław, drawn up in 1635, is the oldest of the few materials treating foreign postal history. The report of the oath of 1826 lent by a postal sender in Łódź is the last document in the bundle.

The present bundle includes 333 articles, each of which bears a description according to a system including the following parts:

- 1) Date and place of the establishment of a document.
- 2) Registry (Translator's note: I don't know the French word "régeste", I can't find it in my Collins/Robert bi-lingual dictionary and I don't have my Robert dictionary handy. I am guessing that it means "registry" or "registrar".)
- 3) Exterior description of a document.
- 4) Complementary data: signatures, notes, drafts, etc.
- 5) Description of cachets.
- 6) Description of seals.
- 7) Means and source of acquisition.
- 8) Cost.

We hope that this publication will familiarise readers with the archival collections of the Postal and Telecommunications Museum and that it will enhance their availability to all interested parties. Subsequent bundles and volumes including documents up to 1978 will appear successively in the future as well as other publications devoted to plans of postal houses, to proceedings of the Municipal Post of the Civic Committee of the Principal City of Warsaw and to souvenirs, reports, and memoranda that will be edited in the form of separate volumes. We will also continue working on the catalogue of cartographic materials.

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