

Gun-Britt Kohler

Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg (Germany)

Email: gun.b.kohler@uni-oldenburg.de

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5958-5520>

Literary Journals From the Perspective of Paratext. Considerations on Conceptualization and Database-Driven Investigation of Literary Periodicals Using the Examples of *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša*

Czasopisma literackie z perspektywy paratekstu. Rozważania na temat metodologii i badań opartych na bazach danych periodyków na przykładzie czasopism „Polymja”, „Maladnjak” i „Uzvyšša”

Літаратурныя часопісы з перспектывы паратэкста. Да канцэптуалізацыі і даследавання з дапамогай базы дзеных літаратурных перыядычных выданняў на прыкладзе „Польмя”, „Маладняка” і „Узвышша”

Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of theoretical contouring and systematic investigation of literary journal. Its aim is to develop proposals for a systematic study of the literary journal that is appropriate to literary studies and that looks at the literary periodical ‘as a whole’, linking literary approaches and methods of ‘Digital Humanities’ with one another. The study focuses on the three most important Belarusian literary journals of the 1920s, *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša*. The analysis of the positions of these journals and the groups of the same name in the literary field of their time reveals the high dissemination of party- and cultural-political interests in the sphere of literature and thus proves the necessity to focus on the journals ‘as such’ from a literary-historical perspective. The example of a database of these three literary periodicals being currently under construction shows the high heuristic benefit, which the concept of ‘paratext’ (Genette) offers for a conceptualization of the literary journal: The ‘paratext’ perspective allows appropriate mapping of the multiple internal and external reference structures that characterize literary journals. In perspective, the theoretical approach via ‘paratext’ suggested here may be applied to the structure of the database. The quantitative and qualitative analyses thus made possible will provide a more precise insight into the role of the literary journals and their authors in the Belarusian literary field and on the ‘market of symbolic goods’ of their time.

Key words: Literary journal, literary group, paratext, digital humanities, database, literary history

Abstrakt

Artykuł poświęcono problemowi systemowych badań czasopism literackich. Jego celem jest wypracowanie wieloaspektowej metodologii wykorzystującej ujęcie literaturoznawcze oraz osiągnięcia tzw. humanistyki cyfrowej. Badanie bazuje na trzech najważniejszych białoruskich czasopismach literackich z lat 20. XX w. („Polymja”, „Maladnjak” i „Uzvyšša”). Na podstawie analizy źródłowej wybranych materiałów prasowych można stwierdzić, że w badanych periodykach problematyka partyjna przeplata się z zagadnieniami kulturowo-politycznymi, co dowodzi konieczności analizy czasopism w nowym, szerszym niż dotąd, ujęciu. Na przykładzie tworzonej obecnie bazy analizowanych czasopism literackich widać korzyści wynikające z uwzględnienia w procesie konceptualizacji czasopisma literackiego tzw. paratektu (Genette). Perspektywa uwzględniająca paratekt pozwala odpowiednio odwzorować złożone wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne powiązania czasopism literackich. Zaproponowane w artykule podejście, wykorzystujące analizę ilościową i jakościową, można zastosować przy tworzeniu baz danych, przy uwzględnianiu roli czasopism literackich oraz wskazywaniu znaczenia autorów w historii literatury białoruskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: czasopismo literackie, grupa literacka, paratekt, humanistyka cyfrowa, baza danych, historia literatury

Анотацыя

Дадзены артыкул прысвечаны праблеме тэарэтычнай „кантурызацыі” і сістэматычнага даследавання літаратурнага часопіса як асобнага „тыпу тэкста”. Мэтай артыкула з’яўляецца распрацоўка асноў для такога сістэматычнага даследавання літаратурнага часопіса, якое б, разглядаючы яго як „адно цэлае”, аб’ядноўвала б пры гэтым у сабе літаратуразнаўчыя падыходы з метадамі „Digital Humanities”. Прадметам даследавання сталі тры найбольш значныя беларускія літаратурныя часопісы 1920-х гг. – *Польмя*, *Маладняк* і *Узвышша*. Аналіз пазіцый гэтых часопісаў выяўляе вялікую дысемінацыю палітычных і культурна-палітычных інтарэсаў у самой літаратурнай сферы і тым самым пацвярджае неабходнасць літаратурна-гістарычнай факсіроўкі часопісаў „як такіх”. На прыкладзе электроннай базы дадзеных гэтых трох літаратурных перыядычных выданняў (у дадзены момант яшчэ пілотнай) выяўляецца высокая з’рыстычная каштоўнасць, якую для канцэптуалізацыі літаратурнага часопіса мае канцэпт „паратэкста” (Ж. Жэнет): так, мадэль паратэкста адэкватна адлюстроўвае тую структуру шматлікіх унутраных і знешніх спасылак, якой характэрызуецца літаратурны часопіс. Перспектывным выглядае таксама адваротны перанос прапанаванага тэарэтычнага падыходу праз паратэкст на структуру базы дадзеных. Адкрытыя такім чынам новыя магчымасці для правядзення колькаснага і якаснага аналізу дазваляюць у сваю чаргу больш падрабязна вызначыць ролю часопісаў і іх аўтараў у беларускім літаратурным полі, а таксама на „рынку сімвалічных тавараў” (П. Бурдзье) гэтага часу.

Ключавыя словы: літаратурны часопіс, літаратурная групоўка, паратэкст, digital humanities, база дадзеных, гісторыя літаратуры

1. Introduction

The growing interest in journals in recent years has been accompanied by digitisation projects at libraries and archives, which have opened a new field of research with the so-called ‘periodical studies’ (see: Latham, Scholes, 2006). For the disciplines involved, such initiatives are invaluable, because the accessibility of journals is usually difficult, i.a. due to the fragility of the material and often inconsistent archiving practices (see Rahmsdorf, 2007, p. 310). In this respect, digitization alone is already an immense gain, because the simplified accessibility to the periodicals facilitates their development. Moreover, it also implies a wealth of new and broader possibilities of systematic and comparative analysis (see: Latham, Scholes, 2006, p. 517).

This applies particularly to literary periodicals considered unanimously to be of outstanding importance for the modern literary scene,¹ central to literary communication in various aspects. Gillis Dorleijn and Kees van Rees classify literary journals as professional media of material and symbolic production (Dorleijn, van Rees, 2001); Gisèle Sapiro sees them as ‘the representative instance of the principles of autonomy,’ or ‘places where criticism and judgment of like-minded individuals can be protected from external constraints’ (Sapiro, 2005, pp. 41–42); Wolfgang Hackl describes them succinctly as ‘a natural part of the literary life of a country, a region or an epoch’ (Hackl, 2013, p. 13). As early as 1966, Gerhard Seidel stressed that a ‘complete’ consideration of an epoch or current from the perspective of the history of literature cannot ignore the literary journals functioning in that given period (Seidel, 1966, p. 990).

From the literary-historical perspective, the literary journal is assigned exceptional value as it ‘gives us a view on the trends in literary history’ and/or functions as a ‘culture-historical document of the first order’ (Hackl, 2013, p. 14). Hence a clear discrepancy between this perspective and the systematic theory building or the development of methodical-analytical processes for their interpretation, especially in the context of digitization. Gustav Frank, Madleen Podewski and Stefan Scherer note the lack of ‘übergreifende[n], ebenso systematische[n] wie historische[n] Forschung zum funktionalen Stellenwert und zum medialen Eigensinn von Literatur- und Kulturzeitschriften vor allem des 20. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart²’ (Frank, Podewski, Scherer, 2010, p. 9). They attribute the ‘theoretical underdetermination’ and the methodical bulkiness of the research subject mainly to its heterogeneity (Ibid., p. 32):

Denn [Literatur- und Kulturzeitschriften] versammeln und generieren formal und inhaltlich unterschiedliche Textsorten – vom literarischen oder wissenschaftlichen Text über den Essay bis hin zur Rezension, Nachricht, Notiz und Werbung – zu einem breiten Themenspektrum, zumeist produziert von verschiedenen Autoren. Diese Textelemente sind kombiniert

¹ The literary scene in the fixed form dating back to the 18th century (Schmidt, 1989).

² ‘comprehensive, as well as systematic [...] and historical research on the functional value and the inflexibility of literary and cultural journals, especially from the 20th century to the present’.

und korreliert mit diversen Bildmedien, typographischen Formen und visuellen Gestaltungselementen³ (Frank, Podewski, Scherer, 2010, pp. 32–33).

This heterogeneity locates the literary journal at the intersection of various disciplines, such as literary science, media and communication science, cultural studies, newspaper and book science, library science, social sciences and the like. It may be the reason why literary journals have been generally considered as a medium rather than as an independent research subject for literary science.⁴ Sean Latham and Robert Scholes stated in 2006 that journals are too often regarded from a particular disciplinary perspective merely as ‘containers of discrete information’ rather than as ‘autonomous objects of examination’. They appealed to perceive ‘the periodical as a whole’ (Latham, Scholes, 2006, pp. 517–518).⁵

This is particularly true for Belarusian studies, where even the largest literary journals of the 1920s – *Polymia* (1922–[1931])⁶, *Maladniak* (1923–1932) and *Uzvyšša* (1927–1931) – have not been subjected to a systematic analysis yet. There are no studies that would systematically examine these periodicals ‘as a whole’. The ‘material’ represented by these journals was often used in genre-oriented studies (Gilevič, 1962; Čygryn, 1985; Čygryn, 1989, etc.) and for the analysis of the development of Belarusian literary criticism and science (in particular Mušynski, 1975; Makarëvič, 2007; Klimovič, 2011; Karp, 2016a; 2016b; 2018). Several recent minor studies analysed the poetics, in particular in the *Uzvyšša* journal (Kapusta, 2007; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; Zapartyka, 2009; Mušynski, 2011; Gurskaâ, 2016; Gurskaâ, 2018) as well as the history and activity of literary (sub)groups (Garëcki, 1928; Davidoŭski, 2001; Miatlicki, 2007; Petuchoŭ, 2011; Liŭšyc, 2013a; 2013b). Literary journals as such were generally not ignored. The fact that their specific character is neglected, especially from a comparative perspective, stands in contrast to their importance as media of material and

³ ‘It is because they [literary and cultural periodicals] collect and generate different types of text, from literary or scientific texts through essays to reviews, messages, notes and advertisements on a wide range of topics, mostly produced by various authors. These text elements are combined and correlated with various visual media, typographic forms, and visual design elements’.

⁴ In this regard, it is distinctive that *Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* offers only a single entry for the notion of ‘journal’, addressing the importance of the journal as a medium for art and literature only marginally (Koch, 2010). However, poor theoretical foundations are not a major problem for literary scholarship or literary journals. Hans Bohrmann believes rather that ‘we were unable to obtain a uniformly structured concept of a journal’ and attributes the theoretical bulkiness of the phenomenon of the journal to the heterogeneity of the phenomena subsumed under this term: ‘I doubt that it is correct from the point of view of research strategy to encompass all non-newspapers under the collective term of a journal since the phenomena comprising a single concept are extraordinarily different’ (Bohrmann, 1999, pp. 982–983).

⁵ ‘[W]e have often been too quick to see magazines merely as containers of discrete bits of information rather than autonomous objects of study’.

⁶ At the beginning of 1932, the name and status of the journal changed, hence the dividing line here for heuristic reasons.

symbolic literary production in general, as well as the media used by rival factions to fight for supremacy in the Belarusian literature.⁷ For Belarusian writers in the 1920s, they represent a form of ranking *par excellence* (see Kohler, 2016) and give structure to the entire field to a certain extent (Navumenka, 2012). Moreover, the 1920s were a time when authors not only pondered on the orientation and development of literature but also on the organisation of the field itself. In such specific constellation, periodicals were the place where individual strategies and institutional action could meet.

This paper attempts to develop proposals for a systematic analysis of literary periodicals using the example of three literary journals: *Polymia*, *Maladniak*, and *Uzvyšša*. The study has a literary-scientific character and is based on quantitative methods. The research question is how the possibilities of digitization in the sense of *distant reading* (Moretti, 2016) may be used for the formulation of literary-scientific questions in respect of a 'literary periodical' as the object of study, as well as how these questions can be effectively operationalized.

2. Literary Periodicals and Groups in the Context of the 1920s Field Fights: *Polymia* ('Polymia'), *Maladniak* ('Maladniak') and *Uzvyšša* ('Uzvyšša')⁸

The case of Belarus is special due to the literary journals being closely intertwined with groups (mostly of the same name)⁹. Their actual relationship to each other, however, has never been explained so far. The fact is that these three competing periodicals or groups form the structure of the literature of that period. In 1928, Lev Klejnborst, a literary historian, assigned distinctly different positions in the field to the three literary journals which represented different groups and generations:

И вот, ежели пресса, вообще, стремится руководить эпохой, то первые места в среде печатных органов принадлежат журналам. Это – *Польмя*, *Узвышша*, *Маладняк*.

Польмя это – орган старых, всеми признанных писателей Белоруссии. Основанный в 1922 г., он все улучшает и улучшает свою внешность, свой формат. [...] Здесь напечатано все лучшее, что написано за годы революции старым литературным поколением: Купалой, Коласом, Тишкой Гартным, Бядулей, Гурло и проч. Но в то же время журнал выводит молодых. [...] С журналом *Польмя* спорит *Узвышша*, ставящий себе – в отличие от *Пламени* – лишь литературно-критические задачи. Культура

⁷ In 1992, Janka Salamievič published, 'Versuch einer bibliographischen Übersicht'. ['An attempt at a bibliographic review'] of the *Polymia* or *Polymia révaiiucy* journal in the 1920s and 1930s (i.e. until it was temporarily closed for the period of WW2) (Salamevič, 1992).

⁸ Cursive refers to the journal, quotation marks denote the group.

⁹ This is true for the three journals analysed herein, but may not be regarded as a rule. The short-lived group 'Litaraturna-mastackaja kamuna' selected a different name for its organ (*Roskvit*) (Žybul', 2008).

мастерства – основная задача, к которой он приноровляет свой журнальный пульс. [...] Из старых деятелей литературы здесь Горецкий, Бядуля. Из молодых же – Я. Пушча, Кузьма Черный, Крапива, Глебка и др. Тон журналу дают Бядуля, Бабарека и Дубовка. *Маладняк*, редактируемый М. Чаротом, М. Зарецким и Ал. Дударом, отвечает своему названию. Это – орган «Комсомола». [...] В числе сотрудников значатся и Купала, и Колас, и Тишка Гартный. Однако, это дань уважения молодым силам. Из стариков примкнул к *Маладняку* плотно лишь Гурло.

Ежели подойти со стороны, то может показаться, что все это – идеологически однородно. Однако, ошибся бы тот, кто не усмотрел бы здесь тот разнობой, какой мы видим и в Великороссии, и на Украине¹⁰ (Klejnort, 1928, pp. 345–347).

The central antagonists according to Klejnort would be *Polymia* (as an association of the older generation of established writers) and *Uzvyšša* (as a forum of an explicitly artistic-aesthetic tendency). *Maladniak* (as a platform of younger and politically active authors and as an organ of ‘Komsomol’) does not engage in the conflict, at least not implicitly. Klejnort’s assessment may be regarded as a snapshot of 1928. It depicts the structure of the field formed under an active influence of the Literary Commission (‘litaraturnaya komisija’) and the Print Department (‘addziel druku’) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus.¹¹ The *genesis* of this structure is, of course, different. It is presented in a chronological order below:

- 1922 (Dec) The *Polymia* journal is established, not connected to any literary group; the editors position themselves as ‘revolutionary marxists’ (*Polymia*, 1922, 1, p. 6).
- 1923 (Aug) The *Maladniak* is incorporated as an organ of the CK KSMB (Komsomol); Editors M. Kudziel’ka (Čarot) and A. Ažhirėj (Vol’ny).

¹⁰ ‘And so, if the press generally tries to lead the age, then the first places amongst what was printed belong to journals. That is *Polymia*, *Uzvyšša* and *Maladniak*. *Polymia* is the journal of the older, generally respected writers of Belarus. Established in 1922, it has consistently improved its appearance, its format. [...] Here was printed all the best that was written during the years of revolution by the older literary generation: Kupala, Kolas, Čiška Hartny, Biadulia, Hurlo and others. But at the same time the journal fostered younger writers. [...] *Uzvyšša* competed with *Polymia*, unlike the latter having only literary and critical aims. The culture of craftsmanship was its main aim, and to that end the journal adapted its pulse. [...] Amongst the older writers here were Harecki and Biadulia. The younger ones included Ja. Pušča, Kuźma Čorny, Krapiva, Hliebka and others. The tone of the journal was set by Biadulia, Babareka and Duboćka. *Maladniak*, founded by M. Čarot, M. Zarecki and Al. Dudar, corresponds to its name. It is the organ of ‘Komsomol’ [...] Amongst those who worked for it are Kupala, Kolas and Čiška Hartny. This was, however, only a sign of respect for younger forces. Amongst older writers who attached themselves very closely to *Maldniak* was only Hurlo.

Looking from the side, then it may seem that all this was ideologically uniform. It would, however, be mistaken not see here the discrepancy and disagreement that we see in Russia and Ukraine’.

¹¹ Cf. below.

- (Nov.) Foundation of the young poet organization 'Maladniak' with M. Čarot as a chairman.
- 1924–1925 Formation of branches of 'Maladniak' in various cities, coordinated by the central office of the organization.
- 1926 (May) Čorny, Krapiva, Pušča and Babarėka leave 'Maladniak', request submitted to the CK KP (b) B to found the literary organization 'Uzvyšša'.
(June) Hurlo, Voľny and Čarnušėvič leave 'Maladniak'.
(Aug) Request to found 'Uzvyšša' granted; The Literary Commission of CK KP (b) B deems it necessary to found a third organization.
(Oct) Foundation of the literary organization 'Uzvyšša'.
(Dec) Attempt at isolating a regional group from 'Maladniak' to form the 'Ahnjačviet' (not approved).
- 1927 (March) Foundation of the journal *Uzvyšša* as the organ of the group.
(April) Request to form the 'Problisk' organization; Bobryk, Zvonak, Kliaštorny, Plaŭnik, Tumilovič, Kavaľ leave 'Maladniak'.
(July) Foundation of the 'Problisk' group (later the group will return to the ranks of 'Maladniak').
(Sept) Foundation of the 'Bielaruskaja litaraturna-mastackaja kamuna' organization (chairman: Šukajla).
(Dec) Foundation of the *Roskvit* periodical as the organ of the 'BLMK' group (discontinued after two issues).
(Dec) Čarot, Zarėcki, Voľny, Dudar and others quit 'Maladniak'.
(Dec) Foundation of the 'Polymia' literature association.
- 1928 (Feb) Incorporation of 'Maladniak' (as 'BelAPP') into the 'VAPP' (Union of proletarian writers).

The numerous cases of members leaving or being removed from 'Maladniak' over the years 1926–1927 as well as the foundation of new groups and transformations of existing ones prove that the establishment of 'Uzvyšša' caused a violent revolution in the Belarusian literary field of the mid-twenties. From a historical perspective, the process of differentiation was highly dynamic and to some extent condensed¹². From the perspective of political culture, formation of all those groups could endanger the centralist organization and maim its ability to control and lead the literary forces.

The Literary Commission of the Central Committee of the Party starts to realize that the centrifugal dynamics of this differentiation cannot be contained by mere restrictions, especially in view of the complex overlapping of rival generations and poetics. Therefore, the Party settles upon a clever strategy of channelling the existing conflicts. During the session of 26.08.1926, the Commission decided as follows:

¹² Klejnort argues (Klejnbort, 1928, p. 347) that the entire movement of literary groups in Belarus of the 1920s is comparable to the 'literary groups and associations' in Russia 'which fought for the status of a canon until the late 1920s' (Grübel, 2013, p. 90).

[...] 2. Тэзісы да пытання аб утварэнні «Узвышша»: 2. (1) Літкомісія ня супярэчыць проіў апублікавання дэкларацыі, як пляцформы новай літаратурнай групы. (2) Лічыць неабходным даць крытычны разгляд гэтай пляцформы ў друку. Даручыць гэтую справу т.т. Гэсэн і Чароту. (3) Літкомісія лічыць неабходным параіць аўтарам дэкларацыі змяніць найбольш войстрые і палямічна-выражаныя выпадкі супроць «Маладняку», бо гэтыя выпадкі адразу-жа нямінула выклікаюць такі-жа войстра-палямічны адказ «Маладняку» і такім чынам, замест сталай літаратурнай працы абодзвюх груп будзе выклікана непажаданая ў сучасных умовах літаратурная «склока».

[...] 6. Аб стварэнні 3 арганізацыі з беларускіх пісьменьнікаў і паэтаў з камуністычным ядром: 6. Лічыць неабходным стварыць трэцюю арганізацыю з беларускіх пісьменьнікаў і паэтаў з камуністычным ядром (Жылуновіч, Ліманоўскі, Шыпіла, Сянкевіч). Даручыць т. Шыпіла прыступіць к практычнаму ажыццяўленьню гэтага пытання¹³ (NARB, f. 4p, inv. 1, d. 2350, p. 014–015).

As it turns out, the 'Uzvyšša' group is established mainly for the purpose of removing the elements of 'Maladniak' which are ideologically incompatible in order to ensure inner harmony and integrity (see Platonaŭ, 1999, p. 9). At the same time, the Literary Commission devises the establishment of a third group to counterbalance 'Uzvyšša'. The project is completed a year later in the form of 'Polymia'. 'Maladniak' remains therefore docile and manageable. Any other threats of discord which do not carry so much ideological gravity are either contained by prohibition ('Ahniaćviet') or settled from inside, being minor and insignificant in comparison with 'Maladniak' and/or 'Polymia' ('Problisk', 'Bielaruskaja litaraturna-mastackaja kamuna').

It becomes evident why Klejnborn explicitly describes the *Uzvyšša* journal as an opponent of *Polymia* in 1928, although *Uzvyšša* was founded in order to distinguish it from *Maladniak* (see *Uzvyšša*, 1927, 1, pp. 168–169). Writers remained oblivious to the fact that the literary commission authoritatively interfered with the field ('Polymia' was established under a government order), as clearly demonstrated by Maksim Harecki (Garècki, 1928). He attributes the formation of 'Problisk' and 'Bielaruskaja litaraturna-mastackaja kamuna' to the 'crisis' that triggered the parting of 'Uzvyšša'

¹³ [...] 2. Theses on the question of the founding of *Uzvyšša* 2. (1) The Literary Commission does not object to the publication of declarations as the platform of a new literary group. (2) It considers it necessary to critically review this platform in print. This task is given to comrades Hesen and Čarot. The Literary Commission considers it necessary to advise the authors of the declaration to change the sharper and most polemically fierce attacks against *Maladniak*, for these attacks would without fail immediately evoke a similarly polemically fierce reply from *Maladniak*, so that instead of stable literary work by both groups, there would be provoked a literary squabble, quite unsuitable for our conditions'.

[...] 6. On the creation of 3 organizations of Belarusian writers and poets with a Communist kernel: 6. It considers it essential to create a third organization of Belarusian writers and poets with a Communist kernel (Žylunovič, Limanoŭski, Siankievič). To entrust Šypila with the bringing of this question to practical life'.

from 'Maladniak' 1926/1927, yet the reasons for the second wave of exodus from 'Maladniak' in December 1927 elude him:

Зноў пацягнуўся ў «Маладняку» доўгі і цяжкі крызіс, прычыны якога і дагэтуль добра невядомы і ў выніку якога з «Маладняка» вышлі Александровіч, Вольны, Дудар, Зарэцкі, Чарот і ўвайшлі ў новаарганізаванае літаратурнае аб'яднаньне «Полымя» (разам з былымі нашаніўцамі). Яны нічога не напісалі аб прычынах свайго выхаду, хоць некалі так яркава пісалі аб выхадзе ўзвышшаўцаў¹⁴. (Garècki, 1928, p. 23)

Behind-the-scenes information on the origins of 'Polymia' corroborate the so-called 'Second division of 'Maladniak', which may be understood as the transfer of active and established proletarian writers from 'Maladniak' to 'Polymia' (undoubtedly requested by the authorities as well). In addition to routine Marxist literary criticism, their objective is to counterbalance from the inside the acknowledged writers of the older generation who are still tainted by nationalist convictions.¹⁵

From a theoretical perspective on the field, the period of 1926–1927 may be therefore understood as the time when the (already weak) institutional autonomy of Belarusian literature is subject to severe restrictions. It turns out that that the political organs not only observed but influenced and directed the field conflicts of the 1920s to a greater extent than it had been previously assumed (at least in respect of Belarusian literature), long before the actual and explicit 'nationalisation of literature' in the Soviet Union of the 1930s (Günther, 1984).¹⁶ At the same time, literary groups and journals are credited with superior strategic importance in this context, which not only stimulates the elusive overlap of literary journals and literary groups but also facilitates the pursuit of party interests by means of literary forms of action. Literary periodicals are thus not only forums of genuine battles for supremacy in the Belarusian literary field and market but also a way of exercising influence in respect of political culture. It seems all the more important to give a broader overview of their profile and their staff, strategies and activities, as well as their networks and institutional connections.

¹⁴ "Once again there came upon 'Maladniak a long and heavy crisis, the reasons for which are still not clearly known, and as a result of which the following left Maladniak and joined the newly formed literary organization Polymia': Aliksandrovič, Voľny, Dudar, Zarecki, Čarot, as well as the former *Naša niva* writers. They wrote nothing about the reasons for their departure, although at one time they wrote very vividly about the departure of the members of *Uzvyšša*".

¹⁵ For more information on 'Polymia' and its political line see Dudar, 2017, pp. 403–405. Facing many accusations, he presents the entire group as 'dominated by counter-revolutionary national-democratic ideology' ('контррэвалюцыйнаю нацыянал-дэмакратычнаю ідэалёгіяй была апанавана якраз большая частка актыву «Полымя»').

¹⁶ This issue is analysed in depth in an Oldenburg-Miensk research project on the autonomy of Belarusian literature: <https://uol.de/slavistik/forschung/literaturwissenschaft/drittmittelprojekt/autonomie-markt-und-ideologie/>.

3. Database of Belarusian Literary Journals

The subject of this study comprises three ‘major’ Belarusian literary journals in the years 1922 and 1932.¹⁷ The notion of a literary journal is used preliminarily, for the sake of pragmatic heuristics. Therefore, a literary journal is a journal which *explicitly* defines itself as a literary journal, i.e. ‘litaraturny časopis’ (often feminine in the 1920s: ‘litaraturnaja časopis’) or ‘časopis(‘) litaratury’. The term *journal* is employed in contrast to other contemporary periodical formats such as ‘hazieta’ (newspaper), ‘mie-siačnik’ (monthly), ‘Viešnik’ (herald), ‘zbornik’ (anthology), ‘almanach’ (almanac) or ‘dadatak da haziety’ (newspaper insert).¹⁸ *Literature* is used in respect of the subject matter of the journal. In many cases, it is expanded with another element (art, politics, society, criticism, journalism, etc.). Among many literature-related periodicals which are short-lived, not productive or unrepresentative due to a limited target group, *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša* are exceptional. They were published for five to ten years and were highly productive, with about eight issues per year on average, had a large number of cooperating authors and a vast spectrum of readers¹⁹.

3.1. Methodology: paratext between ‘close reading’ and ‘distant reading’

There are two fundamental conditions for operationalizing the problem. On the one hand, there are no professionally rendered and freely accessible digital copies of the journals. On the other hand, however, it is not clear what could be gained from such digitization apart from improved accessibility of the periodicals. Due to the print quality of journals and above all the inconsistent spelling of the 1920s, rendering accurate and complete texts by means of OCR is not feasible for the time being. It would be

¹⁷ The period analysed is determined by the formation and institutionalization of the literary field. It begins with the establishment of the Belarusian Soviet Republic in 1922 and ends with the liquidation or alignment of literary groups and journals by the decree of the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Belarus of 27 May 1932 (see Kohler, Naumenko, 2012). In the Western part of Belarus, a part of the Second Polish Republic since the Peace of Riga in 1923, there was no literary journal functioning long-term throughout the period examined, (see Kohler, 2015).

¹⁸ The literary inserts to supraregional and in some cases regional newspapers of the 1920s are a highly interesting object of study. They may give a new perspective on the research of Belarusian literary journals. Hypothetically, they could be perceived as precursors of the ‘literary magazine’ format. As to their concept, they seem to be very close to the literary journals, but they have a much smaller scope and a much higher circulation. They appear in newspaper format and are usually illustrated.

¹⁹ The *Belaruski peryodyčny druk 1917-1927* catalogue lists 87 ‘major’ (‘haloŭnyja’) periodicals and edited volumes on various topics issued in the territory of BSSR between 1917 and 1927 (BPD, 1929, p. III). Nearly a third of them (28) use the self-imposed term *literature-related sensu stricto*, with only five declaring to be a literary journal. Apart from *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša*, these are *Voľny śćiah* (1920-1922) and *Roskvit* (1927-1928). There were only nine issues of *Voľny śćiah*, whose format is in fact closer to a literary insert. *Roskvit* (the organ of ‘Belaruskaja litaraturna-mastackaja kamuna’), although a literary journal *sensu stricto*, was closed after only two issues (cf. Žybul’, 2008).

therefore hard to expect the possibility of a full-text search, which is usually of primary interest to literary scholars.

Given these difficulties, a pilot database was modelled at the University of Oldenburg to address the need, at least to a certain extent. Its material basis includes the tables of contents of the journals, supplemented by what has been provisionally referred to as 'metadata'. This database forms the heuristic basis for the theoretical, methodological and object-related considerations.

'Metadata' in the sense of structured data containing information about a complete document, prototypically corresponds to the 'library map'. Development and preparation of the map is often the starting point for literature-historical research projects in the context of *distant reading* (see Moretti, 2009; Jockers, 2013, pp. 35–36). These 'catalog metadata' (Jockers, 2013, p. 35) are not useful in the case of journals as the classical catalogue entry generally covers the metadata of the journal as such, but not (or only conditionally) the data of its individual issues (see Mühlberger, 2001, p. 328). Metadata of a journal or journal number must therefore be generated on the basis of a handwritten copy (as in the case of Belarusian literary journals) and/or a full text (*ibid*). Due to its periodical character, the journal in its entirety can only be recorded in a database through a complete set of metadata pertaining to every single issue.²⁰

The 'metadata' of particular issues of *Polymia*, *Maladnjak* and *Uzvyšša* are usually derived from the outer and (less frequently) inner cover pages, first two pages and the last page of the text. They provide a wealth of information, such as the title and subtitle, the motto of the journal if any, year and issue, the month if provided, publisher and location, editorial staff, printing house, order number, censorship number, number of copies and retail price.²¹ Such structure provides information about the entire journal in a diachronic perspective, in particular as to its objectives (title, subtitle and motto, editorial staff) and its regularity (year, issue, month, order number and censorship number, if applicable). However, it also indicates several market-relevant aspects (number of copies and price), which are not only interesting with regard to the given journal but also when comparing the journals with each other.

Maladniak maintains its integrity as to its programme throughout the entire period it was published. It was namely a 'literary-artistic and socio-political journal' ('літаратурна-мастацкая і грамадзка-політычная часопісь'). Its status changed several times: until 1927 it was the organ of the Central Committee from the LKSMB (Komsomol), from then it was the organ of the Central Office of the Belarusian Association 'Maladniak', and from the end of 1928, it was the organ of the BelAPP. For the last three issues of the journal, published in 1932, it was the organ of the Organ-

²⁰ For more information on the automatized metadata generation, see Mühlberger, 2001, p. 337.

²¹ Moreover, the outer and inner cover pages of *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša* often contain additional information, which should be considered separately as to their systematic classification. This includes primarily self-promotion and advertising for other magazines or periodicals, as well as a list of permanent employees. Other factors are visual aspects such as the cover design and material-haptic aspects in a broader sense (paper quality, etc.).

izing Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers of the BSSR. The editorial board of *Maladniak* was constantly changing. Given its varying subtitle, *Polymia* addressed an extensive range of topics. For a brief period, it was also a journal on economics. However, literature was always a paramount topic. From 1929, *Polymia* also identified as a journal of ‘criticism’. In 1932, it changed its title to *Polymia revaljucyi*, replacing *Maladniak* as the organ of the Organizing Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers of the BSSR. Surprisingly, *Polymia* is never referred to officially as an organ of the homonymous grouping founded in 1928, although the connection is explicitly formulated in the group’s statutes (‘выдае свой часопіс пад назвай *Польмя*’ (*Polymia*, 1928, 1, p. 222)). Issue 1928, 2 contains a photograph of the group (*Polymia*, 1928, 2, p. 1). The editorial staff changes frequently in this periodical, too. Finally, *Uzvyšša*, the ‘Journal of Literature, Art and Criticism’ (‘часопісь літаратуры, мастацтва і крытыкі’), adheres to its programme throughout the entire period of its existence but removes the reference to the grouping from the subtitle during the last year of its existence. *Uzvyšša* is the only journal whose editorial board was never disclosed (at least not in the context of ‘metadata’).

These fragmentary and preliminary observations may already suggest that a structured systematic and comparative collation of the ‘metadata’ of the journals can provide valuable insights into their status in the literary field as well as their strategies.

The table of contents of a literary journal *prima facie* may seem to include little more information than the names of the authors, titles of articles, genres and classification, if necessary, as well as page numbers to help the reader to orientate themselves within the issue. In practice, however, the table of contents of a literary journal goes far beyond the pure function of orientation.²² Bourdieu argues it can be understood as an ‘exhibition of the symbolic capital of the enterprise’, as a ‘political-religious establishment of position’, or ‘a *reference point* within the classificatory struggles [...] present in every field’ (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 431–432, emphasis according to the original). As a whole, the table of contents (and even more if all tables of contents in all the issues of the periodical are considered) may present information about the actual strategies and practices of the journal more explicitly than programme statements and manifestos.

²² Such general information regarding Belarusian periodicals and literary periodicals was collected in the 1929 catalogue entitled *Belaruskі peryodyčny druk 1917-1927*. It was arranged into categories according to major sections, disciplines and authors (*BPD*, 1929). The section ‘Theory and history of literature. Criticism. Belles-lettres’ (‘Тэорыя і гісторыя літаратуры. Крытыка. Прыгожае пісьменства’) was divided into five subsections to which the literary publications in the journals were assigned. These are namely 1) ‘General matters. Literary theory’ (‘Агульныя пытаньні. Тэорыя літаратуры’); 2) ‘Foreign literatures’ (‘Іншакраёвыя літаратуры’); 3) ‘Belarusian literature. Critical sketches’ (‘Беларуская літаратура. Крытычныя нарысы’); 4) ‘Belles-lettres’ (‘Прыгожае пісьменства’) and 5) ‘Translations into the Belarusian language’ (‘Пераклады на беларускую мову’) (*BPD*, 1929, pp. 104-131). Other contributions were related to such subjects as politics, economics, education, art, linguistics, history, agriculture, geography, etc. Compared to the actual table of contents, however, there are limited possibilities of evaluating such a catalogue.

The data held in the table of contents in their raw form (authors, titles, genres, sections, page numbers, etc.) may imply the hierarchy of authors and genres, conceptual-potential (and ideological) positions, networks, etc. The material aspects revealed therein can provide answers to numerous questions: How extensive is the 'symbolic capital' of a journal? How does the hierarchy of authors change within the journal? What is the fluctuation of authors between journals? How wide is the genre spectrum, which genres are dominant? How is the concept of the journal changing? How can the developments of the journals be related to each other? And so on.

In order to answer such questions on the basis of quantitative analyses (possible with the use of a database) in a systematic and diachronic manner, it is necessary to arrange the data according to a particular structure. This can only be achieved if all the parameters of the 'metadata' and the table of contents are related to each other in a reasonable way. It requires a theoretically founded conceptualization of the 'metadata' and 'table of contents' entities. This may be possible by means of Gérard Genette's concept of 'paratext' (Genette, 1989).

With the concept of paratext, Genette 'reviewed and conceptualized' the 'threshold' (as in the French original title of his 1987 study: 'Seuils') of the book, i.e. an 'indeterminate zone' between inside and outside, which has 'no firm boundary inward (towards the text) or outward (towards the discourse regarding the text)' (Genette, 1989, p. 10). He distinguished between the paratext as a generic term, the 'peritext', i.e. established 'within the same volume' (further subdivided into 'authorial' and 'publishing' paratext, 'early' and 'late paratext' etc.), and 'epitext', that is, 'located outside the text at least initially' (Ibid., p. 12ff.).

The attempt to transfer Genette's concept of the paratext from the context of a book to a literary journal immediately calls for certain adaptation. At the same time, however, it clearly indicates the high heuristic value of such transference for the conceptualization of a literary journal, hence its comprehensible and systematizable specifics. It can be seen that Genette's distinction between 'authorial' and 'publishing' para- or peritext in relation to journals needs to be complemented with an 'editorial' para- or peritext. More importantly, this shows that the table of contents of a literary journal should be conceptualized differently than in the case of a book. Genette systematically defines the table of contents as the 'place for introducing the subtitles' (Genette, 2001, p. 301) or as 'a kind of detailed index' (Ibid., p. 302). On top of that, he comments laconically:

Das Inhaltsverzeichnis ist im Prinzip gleichfalls nichts anderes als ein Instrument zur Wiederholung des Titelapparats – oder zur Ankündigung, wenn [es] am Beginn steht [...]. [Es] ist jedoch nicht immer eine getreue Aufstellung des Titelapparats. [Es] kann ihn durch Reduktion verraten [...]; oder durch Erweiterung, indem Kapitel Titel enthalten, die *in situ*

keine aufweisen; oder durch lässige Variation [...]; oder vor allem auch, indem man durch eine Reihe von Incipits die Illusion einer Titelreihe schafft²³ (Genette, 2001, pp. 302–303).

A superficial consideration is sufficient to show that the table of contents in a literary journal in no way serves merely as a ‘place of inserting subtitles’ or as an ‘instrument for reiterating the title’, because its entries do not just refer to the position of the individual text within the ‘complete text’ of the journal number but also beyond it (for example, to the work of an author outside the journal, e.g. by means of its review). Conversely, the heuristic use of the paratext concept reveals a central feature of the literary journal, which is of crucial importance for the proper structuring of a database, and that is the fact that the paratext of the literary journal refers to different levels and spaces.

From the perspective of the paratext, the literary journal may be read as an aggregate of heterogeneous ‘internal texts’ constituting a multidimensional referential context. An in-depth theoretical examination of the concept of the paratext and confronting it with a ‘close reading’ of the paratext of the Belarusian literary journals can systematically model this referential context and its functions according to a theory of the literary journal. As to perspective, such a model captures the phenomenon of literary journal on the following axes:

- a) on the vertical axis between the journal as ‘a whole’, its individual issue and the individual text contained therein;
- b) on the temporal axis of the progression of individual issues of a journal;
- c) on the axis of the depth of communication of the journals with each other and with other actors and institutions of the literary and the competition field.

This may be illustrated with the following example. The title page (i.e. the outer front cover) of the first issue of *Uzvyšša* refers to the entire journal and the specific issue with the title of the journal (axis a) but also to the literature group behind the journal, i.e. on a specific position in the literature field (axis c). The year and, more importantly, the numbering of the issues, on the other hand, refer to the particular issue, but implicitly also to the subsequent issues (axis b). With the table of contents (axis a) positioned on the inner cover page, *Uzvyšša* makes an implicit distinction from *Polymia* and *Maladniak*, which always locate the table of contents at the end of each issue (axis c).²⁴ The inner title page (p. 1) reiterates the information presented on the cover, yet in a different arrange-

²³ ‘In principle, the table of contents is nothing more than an instrument for reiterating the title or announcing it, when placed at the beginning [...]. However, the itemisation of the titles is not always a faithful one. [It] can be betrayed by being reduced [...]; or extended, if chapters contain titles when there are none in situ; or modified out of negligence [...]; or, above all, by creating the illusion of a series by means of multiple incipits’.

²⁴ By positioning the second half of the subtitle, ‘Belarusian literary-artistic group “Uzvyšša” (беларускае літаратурна-мастацкае згуртаванне “Узвышша”)’ at the bottom of the picture, the journal implicitly indicates the function of the grouping as publisher of the journal. In fact, no other publisher is specified.

ment and supplemented with the information on the location, i.e. 'Miensk'. This places the journal in the literary and political centre of the country (axis c). The reverse side of the inside title page is, as usual, almost empty and only contains the details of the printing house and the order number, the number of copies and the censorship number at the bottom. All this information directly concerns the given issue of the journal (axes a and b) but also refers to the field of literature and competition for power (i.e. the Haloŭlit censorship authority, the State Printing House, and finally to the fact that *Uzvyšša* is printed in the same run as *Polymia* and *Maladniak* (axis c). The information regarding the editors and publishers provided at the bottom of the last page of the text (p. 172) relates primarily to the actual issue at hand but also to the entire journal (axes a and b). It is striking that *Uzvyšša*, unlike *Polymia* and *Maladniak*, does not disclose the names of its editorial board. As the front cover already suggests, the grouping itself acts as editor (axis c). On the inner back cover, there is a full-page advertisement of *Polymia* placed (an 'epitext' to the *Polymia* journal in its entirety or for the year 1927, axis c). The outer back cover contains the price for a single issue, which is twice as expensive as *Maladniak* (60 copecks) at 1.25 roubles and slightly cheaper than *Polymia* (1.50 roubles)²⁵ (axes a, b and c). There is also a full-page ad for *Uzvyšša*, which refers to all three axes as well.

The contents of the first issue of *Uzvyšša* on the front inner cover indicate the names of authors, titles, genre names and page numbers. This information refers directly 'to the content of the journal', i.e. the individual texts, which in turn constitute the 'total text' of the journal issue according to Genette's definition (and in this sense, the titles can be understood as 'subtitles'). However, this table of contents also reveals itself from the perspective of the paratext as a multiple reference system: The authors' names do not only refer to the inside of the journal issue but also outside of it, both to the real author and his position in the literary field, as well as to his work outside the journal, and sometimes in other literary periodicals (e.g. Źmitrok Biadulia under the pseudonym Jasakar and Jazep Pušča, whose work was published in the second number issue of *Polymia*, and Maksim Lužanin in the second issue of *Maladniak*, which both were issued at about the same time).²⁶ Genre names refer not only to the individual text but also to genre traditions in Belarus and beyond, whereas the titles of items of literary criticism, art-literary or art-historical essays refer as 'epitexts' to the names or works of other authors or artists (Kupala, Bahdanovič, Chopin). The unspecified sections 'Knihapiš' and 'Chronika' as well as the announcements of the 'Uzvyšša' group again refer to the literary field. The table of contents as a whole in turn constitutes an implicit hierarchy based on the arrangement of the authors or the texts and the genres, at least in relation to the primary literature.

²⁵ In respect of the number of pages, *Uzvyšša* and *Polymia* are of the same price in 1927 with a similar number of copies (about 0,7 copecks per page). *Maladniak* is cheaper (0,5 copecks per page).

²⁶ The synchronization of the publication sequence of the individual editions of the various journals, which is important for the plausibility of authors switching between the journals, can be reconstructed by means of the censorship numbers, not in an absolutely reliable manner, but still as an approximation.

As the comparison shows, the first issue of *Uzvyšša* is a simple table of contents. Later and other tables include references to earlier or later issues (e.g. in connection with longer texts that are published in fragments in several issues), and thus also references to ‘superordinate complete texts’ (a novel or a poem published in excerpts), as well as references to specific hypostases of a text (translation) or an author (reviewer, translator, literary historian, etc., as well as a reviewed author, etc.).

These multiple, multi-dimensional and heterogeneous references can be identified and systemized by means of the (extended) concept of the paratext and then transferred into a database structure that would allow for a variety of quantitative analyses. These analyses can be used to answer questions (e.g. regarding the development of the particular journal throughout the period when it was published, interactions between the journals, etc.), which could not be answered without the help of quantitative methods. In this respect, the proposed methodology shifts between ‘close reading’ and ‘distant reading’.

3.2. Database

The corpus of the prototype of the Oldenburg database, developed for heuristic purposes, currently contains the tables of contents of *Polymia*, *Maladniak* and *Uzvyšša*.²⁷ The parameters of the cover pages are not yet recorded in the pilot version of the database except for title and subtitle, issue and year. The period considered in the prototype (1922–1932) encompasses a total of 190 issues distributed among the years and journals as follows:

	<i>Polymia</i>	<i>Maladniak</i>	<i>Uzvyšša</i>	
1922	1	–	–	1
1923	4	1	–	5
1924	4	3	–	7
1925	8	4	–	12
1926	8	9	–	17
1927	8	9	6	23
1928	10	12	6	28
1929	10	10	9	29
1930	9	10	8	27
1931	10	11	10	31
1932	(4) ²⁸	6	–	10
	76	75	39	190

Table 1: Data analysed in the Oldenburg database prototype (issue/journal/year)

²⁷ The tables of contents of the prototype developed as a web application for the XML database eXist-DB are coded as XML files according to the guidelines of the Textencoding Initiative (TEI). Ingo Börner (ACDH, Vienna) is responsible for the technical development and support of the database.

²⁸ From 1932, *Polymia* is published under the title *Polymia revaljucyi*. The four issues published in 1932 are included in the corpus in order to a) understand the changes in the conception of the journal (hypothetically, the name change can be understood as a result of development), and b)

The corpus contains 3679 entries (i.e. all entries of all tables of contents). Out of this number, *Polymia* comprises 1,547 issues, *Maladniak* – 1501, and *Uzvyšša* – 631. *Polymia* and *Maladniak* both contain an average of 20 tables of contents entries per issue, *Uzvyšša* slightly fewer – 16. The overall size of the body encompasses 29,221 pages, with *Polymia* as the most voluminous (192 pages per issue on average). *Maladniak* has the smallest volume (about 122 pages per issue), whereas *Uzvyšša* lies in between with an average of 139 pages. The average page size of an article is thus lower in *Maladniak* (about 6 pages) than in the other two periodicals (about 9 pages each).

	from	to	issues	entries	Ø/no.	pages	Ø/no.
<i>Polymia</i>	1922	193 ²⁹	76	1547	20	14601	192
<i>Maladniak</i>	1923	193 ³⁰	75	1501	20	9187	122
<i>Uzvyšša</i>	1927	193 ³¹	39	631	16	5433	139
			190	3679		29221	

Table 2: Number of entries and pages in particular journals

Currently, the corpus contains a total of 334 identified (Belarusian and non-Belarusian) authors, i.e. name variants and pseudonyms are combined and linked with official records (GND, VIAF, Wikidata) (if available).³² 253 author records refer to authors who have not yet been identified. These are mostly unresolved initials or cryptonyms.

	<i>Polymia</i>	<i>Maladniak</i>	<i>Uzvyšša</i>	
Authors	290	362	137	587
	49%	62%	23%	100%
identified % of the total number (334)	214	220	91	334
	64%	66%	27%	100%
identified % of the journal's authors	73%	60%	66%	

Table 3: Number of authors per journal

Slightly fewer than half the entries, namely 1,523 of all entries (43%), contain genre names included in the corpus and labelled appropriately. This percentage is also broadly applicable to the journals themselves. In each of the journals, the proportion of

allow for a comparison with *Maladniak*. The database is to encompass the time frame of the 1920s and 30s (e.g. *Kalošsiev* (Villnia 1935–1939)).

²⁹ From 1932/1 continued as *Polymia révaljucy*; see. Anm. 22.

³⁰ After 1932/8 included.

³¹ After 1931/11–12 included.

³² For the purpose of identifying the authors, the following sources were used: the biobibliographic dictionary *Belaruskija pis'menniki* (Mal'dzis, 1992–1995), Salamevič's *Slovník belaruskich pseŭdanimaŭ* (Salamievič, 1983), the index of *Historyja belaruskaj litaratury XX stahoddzja* (Gnilamědaŭ et al., 2002) and *Svodnyj elektronnyj katalog bibliotek Belarusi* (<http://unicat.nlb.by/opac/index.html>). Furthermore, it involved numerous enquiries in Internet sources.

genre entries to the total number of entries in the journal varies between 41–42%. In all three journals, genre names within lyric poetry are the most common (relatively rare in *Uzvyšša* – 51%), whereas drama genres are the rarest. In *Uzvyšša*, prose has a comparatively high share (at least 34%), at least in terms of genre names. *Uzvyšša* may therefore be distinguished from *Polymia* and *Maladniak* through its relative appreciation of prose compared to poetry and the explicit consideration of satirical writings, in particular in contrast to *Polymia*.³³

	<i>Polymia</i>	<i>Maladniak</i>	<i>Uzvyšša</i>	total
Entries	1547 42%	1501 40%	631 17%	3679 100%
Genre	652	612	259	1523
% of total	43%	39%	17%	43%
% of own entries	42%	41%	41%	
<i>Lyric poetry</i>	405 62%	404 66%	132 51%	941 62%
<i>Poems</i>	47 7%	22 4%	20 8%	89 6%
<i>Prose</i>	173 27%	159 26%	88 34%	420 28%
<i>Dramatic art</i>	20 3%	9 1%	5 2%	34 2%
<i>Fable/satire/ parody</i>	– –	8 1%	10 4%	18 1%

Table 4: Distribution of literary genres in journals

The concept of the table of contents differs between the journals and sometimes within a single periodical in diachrony. In all of them, with a few exceptions,³⁴ primary literary texts are bundled at the beginning of each issue, usually followed by journalistic, literary-scientific, literary-historical and/or -critical articles. The proportions of primary literary and journalistic sections within a journal or issue vary. The ratio of literary-oriented articles to other disciplines in the journalistic section fluctuates as well. Explicit section or subsections are very rare.³⁵

³³ The satirical line of *Uzvyšša* (visible previously in *Maladniak*) is certainly owed to Kandrat Krapiva; it is in fact significantly more pronounced within the journal than is recognizable by the explicit classifications; many of the satirical texts disappear in other genres or their genre is not specified.

³⁴ One such exception, for example, is *Polymia*, 1925, 1. This issue was dedicated to the first anniversary of Lenin's death in January 1924, and thus it begins with a journalistic section on Lenin. The literary primary texts which honour him are rearranged, so that they are followed by articles on journalistic and literary history (cf. *ibid.*).

³⁵ *Maladniak*, for example, had an internal rubric 'Satyra' in the course of 1925 within its primary literary section ('Litaraturna-mastacki addziel'), but it was not continued or was encompassed

All three periodicals have a column entitled 'Chronika'. In *Polymia*, it is fixed and increasingly differentiated; in *Maladniak*, it appears frequently; in *Uzvyšša*, however, only sporadically. It informs the reader about cultural life and literary events. In *Polymia*, the chronicle goes far beyond the borders of the BSSR and reports on cultural events in the Soviet Union (especially in Russia and Ukraine), in the 'West' (Germany, France, the Czech Republic, etc.) and in West Belarus in respective subsections. The chronicle in *Maladniak*, referred to as 'Litaraturnyja naviny' or by similar terms, is more limited to information concerning members of the group itself or cooperating organizations (e.g. the IBK – Institute of Belarusian Culture). During the first two years, *Uzvyšša* keeps a fairly consistent chronicle, reporting both on its own affairs and on 'world-literary' events. Later, the chronicle will be replaced by 'Kul'tura movy', a unique feature of *Uzvyšša*.

An important element of all three literary periodicals are literary critical sections with reviews of literary, scientific, and journalistic new releases. These are mostly referred to 'Knihapiś', sometimes 'Biblijahrafija', but often not explicitly designated at all.

It is not easy to adequately record all these parameters, i.e. the authors, genres, sections, chronicles and reviews in a technical database due to their inconsistency. For instance, the identification of authors (see note 26) does not only require extensive research, so that all the name variants and pseudonyms associated with an author can be manually merged. It is also problematic to properly recognise the function of a personal name in each case where it occurs, as it might be the author *sensu stricto* as the author of a literary text, or as the author of a journalistic text, as a reviewer, translator, or as the 'object' of a literary-scientific article, a reviewed or translated text, and finally as an editor. There are (at least) eight different functions to be assigned to a personal name in order to allow for filtering the data during the analysis.³⁶

The genre distinction is challenging as well. The first difficulty is that fewer than a half of all texts in the tables of contents are provided with explicit genre names (see Table 4). An implicit assignment of genres (e.g. on the basis of the section) is not possible. In order to make meaningful statements about the distribution of the genres (distinguishing between artistic texts and factual texts), missing genre names must be added. This is, of course, only at the most general level, i.e. at the level of the literary form. For this purpose, as well as for structuring the genre specifications which already exist in the tables of contents, it is necessary to develop a genre system which would correspond to the object of study. For the purpose of the database prototype, the following preliminary attempt at this division was proposed:

within a part of primary literary publications, without being specifically designated as 'satire'. In 1926, the 'Čužaziemnaja litaratura' ('Foreign Literature') section is temporarily divided into subsection (*Maladniak*, 1926, 3; 1926, 4; 1926, 5). The issue no. 7 of the year 1929 is unique as we may find an internal rubric 'Parodyi' therein (*Maladniak*, 1929, 7).

³⁶ Those various functions are unfortunately not introduced in the prototype of the database.

Picture 1: Provisional genre system³⁷

The right-hand column of this classification shows the more problematic cases. From a literary-scientific perspective, parody and satire but also fable are not considered genres in the narrower sense. It is therefore only conditionally acceptable to classify these texts as genres. The terms ‘article’ and ‘review’ should be included in a literary form of ‘non-fictional text’, ideally with disciplinary specification so that literature-related factual texts can be identified. The term ‘Narys’ (sketch) is ambivalent because it applies to fiction or semi-fiction as well as to non-fictional texts. Therefore, it may not be assigned to only one of the literary forms. A narrative poem (‘paema’) has now been assigned the status of a literary form because it is generally considered as an ‘epic’ genre between poetry and prose.

Another problem associated with the quantitative evaluation of genres and authors is the inconsistent presentation of lyric genres. Several poems by one and the same author within a single issue are listed either individually in the table of contents, with titles and genre specifications or under the collective name ‘Vieršy’ (‘Poems’). The practice of using a superordinate collective notion referring to several individual texts is in inverse proportion to situations where one or more ‘individual titles’ include an element referring to a higher-level work (‘excerpt from’ (‘урывак з ...’); ‘continued’ (‘працяг’) or similar).

The issue of scarce explicit sections (see note 29) and the pseudo-sections ‘Knihapis’ and ‘Chronika’ is not yet clear.³⁸ They, too, refer to a group of texts and can

³⁷ This system is based exclusively on the genre terms used in the journals. Experimental genre names (‘quasi-roem’ (‘нібы паэма’), ‘fact-roem’ (‘паэма фактаў’), ‘roem-stage production’ (‘паэма-інсцэніроўка’), ‘sketch’ (‘эскіс’), ‘contours’ (‘контур’), ‘cinema narrative’ (‘кіна-аповесьць’), ‘impressions’ (‘імпрэсіі’), etc. were assigned to the respective basic genre.

³⁸ The inconsistent division into sections is slightly problematic. The tables of contents usually present either the pseudo-rubric ‘Knihapis’ and ‘Chronika’ explicitly, but do not include the titles

therefore be interpreted as a 'collective title'. However, unlike in the case of poetry mentioned above, these 'collection titles' are located on an intermediary level between the 'complete text' of the entire journal issue and an individual text.

4. Summary and Outlook

The considerations presented herein are incomplete and by no means adequately systematized. However, they do give the idea how complex it is to render the Belarusian literary journals of the 1920s (and the 1930s in future) accessible in the form of a database, as well as how useful it can prove. From a traditional literary-scholarly perspective, the approach suggested here may be greeted with scepticism and apprehension, as it involves considering literary journals 'from the outside' to begin with, without any regard for the texts published in them. But this is not aimed at abolishing or replacing the genuine literary-scholarly textual analysis. The objective of this method is to supplement it in a meaningful way. The 1920s and 1930s in Belarus were a time when political interests penetrated the literary environment, authors joined forces in literary groups in an intense albeit risky movement, literature was dynamically developing, and – last but not least – the coexistence of competing conceptions of literature and an intense struggle for 'canonical power' to professionalization of that field. In the context, the text- or author-centred literary analysis called for a correlate which could switch the focus onto institutional issues in the broader sense of the term. The turn to the literary journal in its 'entirety' may be regarded as this correlate. It makes it possible to reveal strategies, networks and relationships that have not been recognized so far.

An adequately modelled database can be used to describe writers' fluctuations between the journals, which are of importance with respect to the competing groupings. In particular, it will help to analyse writer networks in order to see in more detail how 'hermetic' the journals (in relation to the groups) actually are. The identification of changing hierarchies of authors will shed light on how the change within a journal changes the position of an author, and how other writers within a journal advance through 'vacated positions'. In addition, quantifiable statements can be made about the proportion of 'recognized' and later canonized authors in certain journals, as well as the share of journals which had an impact on the authors' careers. The author details can be used to analyse the data by generation or gender, as well as for studies of 'role pluralism' among authors who, for example, published primary texts but were also active as literary critics, translators or editors and thus exhibit a far-reaching competent legitimacy.

found therein. In some cases, however, the articles are named, but then without an explicit mention of the section or a collective title. The data should therefore be adequately prepared, based not solely on the tables of contents. This requires systematic additions from the journal text itself.

Genre mapping can be used to accurately determine the profile of individual journals as well as to study the change in that profile over time. This may lead to more precise statements as to whether or to what extent the distinct positions attributed to the periodicals at the time they operated correlate with their real literary production. The comparison of various genre names allows us to draw conclusions about the role of journals in the differentiation of the Belarusian genre system, which could add the findings of studies such as those of Čygryn (1985, 1989).

Finally, the consideration of the ‘external’ paratext, i.e. numbers of copies, prices, advertising, censorship numbers, as well as the artistic design of the periodicals, provides information about the role of journals in the ‘market of symbolic goods’ (Bourdieu, 2001).

The conceptualization of the literary journal as a paratext or from the paratextual perspective is particularly suitable due to multiple temporal and ‘spatial’ reference structures implied by the paratext of the literary journal (i.e. everything within the framework of the literary journal as an ‘aggregate’ of text). It goes ‘inside the text’ but also beyond that, into the synchrony and the diachrony, not only to grasp the specifics of the literary journal but also to substantially correspond to what the structure of a database model must represent. The Belarusian literary journals of the 1920s and 30s are therefore a promising heuristic object from a theoretical perspective, precisely *because* they are virtually non-standardized and manifest numerous systematic inconsistencies. From this perspective, further research in this direction would be fruitful and valuable.

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