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INTRODUCTION OF THE HISTORICAL COOKBOOK IN THE CONTEXT OF EGODOCUMENTAL RESEARCH: THE CASE OF JAN SZYTTLER

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Summary. *Jan Szyttler (1778–1850) was the most famous cookmaster of the Romanticism period within the cultural space of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Living in Vilnius during the first half of the 19th century, Szyttler authored several popular cookbooks focusing on different audiences, such as professional cooks, rural housewives, hunters, those who sought economical meal preparation, and individuals concerned with a healthy lifestyle. From the perspective of egodocumental research, the introductions to these cookbooks are particularly compelling. In these introductory sections, Szyttler elaborates on his motives for writing to specific audiences and articulates his culinary concepts tailored to meet the needs and interests of each distinct audience. These introductions not only illuminate Jan Szyttler's values and interests but also serve as a key to understanding his personality. This paper presents an egodocumental analysis of the introductory sections of Szyttler's cookbooks. The research explores several questions. How does this source contribute to the understanding of Szyttler's personality and study of the gastronomic history of his time? And to what extent can a book's introduction be considered an egodocumental source?*

Keywords: *Jan Szyttler, book introduction, egodocument, cookbook.*

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Istorinės patiekalų receptų knygos įvadas egodokumentinių tyrimų kontekste: Jano Szyttlerio atvejis

Santrauka. *Janas Szyttleris (1778–1850) buvo žymiausias romantizmo laikotarpio kuchmistras (virėjas) buvusios Lenkijos ir Lietuvos valstybės kultūrinėje erdvėje. XIX a. pirmojoje pusėje Vilniuje gyvenęs Szyttleris parašė keletą populiarių kulinariinių knygų, skirtų įvairioms auditorijoms, pavyzdžiui, profesionaliems virėjams, kaimo namų šeimininkėms, medžiotojams, tiems, kurie norėjo taupiai ruošti maistą, ir sveiko gyvenimo būdo šalininkams. Egodokumentinių tyrimų požiūriu ypač įdomios yra šių kulinarijų knygų įžangos. Janas Szyttleris išsamiai paaiškina, kodėl rašė knygą konkrečioms auditorijoms, ir išdėsto savo kulinarijos koncepcijas, pritaikytas kiekvienos auditorijos poreikiams ir interesams. Šios įžangos ne tik atskleidžia Jano Szyttlerio vertybes ir interesus, bet ir padeda suprasti jo asmenybę. Straipsnyje pateikiama egodokumentinė Szyttlerio kulinariinių knygų įvadinių skyrių analizė. Tyrime nagrinėjami keli klausimai: kaip šis šaltinis padeda suprasti Szyttlerio asmenybę ir tirti jo laikmečio gastronomijos istoriją ir kiek knygos įvadas gali būti laikomas egodokumentiniu šaltiniu?*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *Janas Szyttleris, knygos įvadas, egodokumentas, receptų knyga.*

INTRODUCTION

Jan Szyttler (1778–1850) was the most famous cookmaster of the Romanticism period within the cultural space of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Living in Vilnius during the first half of the 19th century, Szyttler authored several popular cookbooks for different audiences, including professional cooks, rural housewives, hunters, those seeking economical meal preparation, and individuals concerned with a healthy lifestyle. Despite Szyttler's popularity during his lifetime and his importance in shaping the Romanticism cuisine and the subsequent development of gastronomic culture, we have very few sources on his life. There is a famous obituary, prepared by the Count Eustachy Tyszkiewicz (lt. Eustachijus Tiškevičius), published in 1850 in *Kurier Warszawski* and *Tygodnik Petersburski*¹; Szyttler's list

1 TYSZKIEWICZ, E. [obituary of J. Szyttler]. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1850, no. 273; *Tygodnik Petersburski*, 1850, no. 74. The handwriting of the obituary is preserved at the Manuscripts Department of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (further LMAVB RS), F. 31, b. 1325, p. 1–2, 5.

to E. Tyszkiewicz²; and a few pages of Szyttler's memoirs, describing his work in the cuisine of King Stanisław August Poniatowski's court³. There are also records of his birth in Warsaw, his marriages, and the baptisms of his children at the Church of St. Johns (Church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Apostle and Evangelist) in Vilnius, as well as a reference to his place of residence in Vilnius, in the Przyalgowski house (currently, on Sirvydo Square)⁴. There is also a limited volume of scientific research on Szyttler's life and activities. In this regard, the works of the Polish scholars B. Gałązka and J. Dumanowski, as well as the book by the author of this article and A. Laužikienė, are particularly worthy of mention⁵. A similar topic to that of this article has been examined in a broader context. Book historians study the introductions and afterwords of printed books and incunabula. They are classified as 'polygraphic marginalia'⁶.

This lack of personal information encourages the search for alternative research paradigms and related historical sources. Analysis of the sources and writing a book about Szyttler drew attention to one of the most interesting parts of his cookbooks – the introductions. In these sections, Szyttler elaborates on his motives for writing the book to specific audiences and articulates culinary concepts tailored to each audience's specific needs and interests.

All this led to a hypothesis that the book's introduction can be treated as an egodocument representing the author's personality. Although the definition of an egodocument varies depending on the national and disciplinary context, in a broader sense, this is the group of "...those documents in which an ego intentionally or unintentionally discloses, or hides itself..."⁷. It usually "...refers to autobiographical writing, such as memoirs, diaries, letters and travel

2 Jan Szyttler's list to E. Tyszkiewicz. LMAVB RS, F. 18, b. 189-12, p. 4-5.

3 Jan Szyttler's memoirs. LMAVB RS, F. 31, b. 1325, p. 3-4.

4 GAŁĄZKA, Bogdan. *Niepożyteczne trudy nowomodnych kuchmistrzów: smak, techniki kulinarne i idee żywieniowe w pismach Jana Szyttlera*. Warszawa, 2024.

5 Ibid; DUMANOWSKI, Jarosław. "Niepożyteczne trudy nowomodnych kuchmistrzów": kulinarny romantyzm Jana Szyttlera. *Wiadomości Historyczne*, 2015, vol. 58, no. 3, p. 35-38; DUMANOWSKI, Jarosław. Szyttler Jan. In: *Polski słownik biograficzny*. Kraków, 2015, vol. 50, no. 206. LAUŽIKAS, Rimvydas; LAUŽIKIENĖ, Anželika. *Kuchmistras: Janas Szyttleris ir vilnietiška XIX a. virtuvė*. Vilnius, 2024.

6 PETREIKIS, Tomas. Marginalijos kaip knygos istorijos šaltinis: istoriografinis aspektas. *Knygotyra*, 2011, vol. 57, p. 67-85; RAVEN, James. Ar gali būti knygos biografija? Pranciškaus Skorino ir Eriko Pontoppidano leidinių lyginamosios įžvalgos. *Knygotyra*, 2023, vol. 80, p. 18-42.

7 DEPKAT, Volker. 2.8 Ego-documents. In: *Handbook of Autobiography / Autofiction*. Ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf. Berlin; Boston, 2019, p. 262.

accounts...⁸, and (in an expanded format) "...all forms of voluntary, involuntary, and even forced self-thematisation as in, for example, court records, tax evaluations, or petitions for mercy..."⁹. So, technically speaking, the book's introduction could be considered an egodocument.

This paper presents an egodocumental analysis of the introductory sections of Szyttler's cookbooks. The research explores several questions (RQ):

1. How does this source contribute to the understanding of Szyttler's personality and study of the gastronomic history of his time?
2. To what extent can a book's introduction be considered an egodocumental source?

As a source for this research, the introductions of the following books by Szyttler: *Kucharka oszczędna...*¹⁰, *Kuchmistrz nowy...*¹¹, *Poradnik dla myśliwych...*¹², *Spizarnia dostatecznie i przezornie urządzona ...*¹³, *Poradnik dla gospodyń, czyli nauka o ptactwie domowym...*¹⁴, *Kuchnia myśliwska...*¹⁵, *Kuchnia postna...*¹⁶ are analysed. After data collection, qualitative data were exported and analysed by using MaxQDA software. The results of the qualitative analysis were interpreted to answer the formulated research questions.

- 8 Center for the Study of Egodocuments and History. 2025. Access through Internet: <<http://www.egodocument.net/egodocument/>>.
- 9 DEPKAT, Volker. 2.8 Ego-documents. In: *Handbook of Autobiography / Autofiction*. Ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf. Berlin; Boston, 2019, p. 262.
- 10 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kucharka oszczędna czyli przepisy dla gospodyń wiejskich*. Wilno, 1835, p. I-II.
- 11 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchmistrz nowy, czyli Kuchnia udzielna dla osób osłabionych, w wieku podeszłym, tudzież do zdrowia powracających: w proporcji na jedną osobę*. Wilno, 1837, p. I-VI.
- 12 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Poradnik dla myśliwych, czyli O rozmaitych sposobach zabijania lub łowienia zwierząt, z przydanemi uwagami nad obchodzeniem się z bronią utrzymywaniem koni, układaniem psów i sokołów do polowania zbieraniem i konserwowaniem trufl, urządzaniem wabiów i t.d.* Wilno, 1839, p. 1-6.
- 13 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Spizarnia dostatecznie i przezornie urządzona dla dogodnego użytku miejskich i wiejskich skrzętnych gospodyń, czyli Zbiór i sposoby utrzymania oraz zachowania rozmaitego chleba, ciast, nabiału, różnych mięs i zwierzyny, przypraw korzennych, marynat, jarzyn, soków, konfitur, cukrów, wódek, likierów, octów, kwasów, i t. d.* Wilno, 1841, p. I-II.
- 14 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Poradnik dla gospodyń, czyli Nauka o ptactwie domowym i oswojonym: zawierająca w sobie: najciekawsze sekreta...* Wilno, 1844, p. 5-10.
- 15 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia myśliwska, czyli Na łowach: dla uśmierzenia głodu, dogadzając oraz najdelikatniejszemu smakowi; z dodaniem rad i przepisów...* Wilno, 1845, p. I-IV.
- 16 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia postna, podająca najoszczędniejsze sposoby sporządzania potraw rybnych, oraz zup, chłodników, pieczonego, marynat, jarzyn, melszpeizów, ciast i t.p.* Wilno, 1848, p. V-XIV.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research of Szyttler's texts focuses on the communication reality and the semiospheric nexus theoretical approach. Communicative reality encompasses different communities (perceived as 'semiotic collectives' and represented by 'Actors') and their target audiences (perceived as 'stakeholders'), as well as their interaction in the media (in this study, in the culinary books intended for the public). Due to the diversity of these communities, their worldviews and opinions, communicative reality is a kind of 'battlefield', a space where the process of semiotically redistributing agency takes place. During this process, different communities seek to impose and establish their meanings on the objects of reality being communicated (in this study, certain gastronomy culture represented by Szyttler). This means that an object of reality (gastronomy) is not necessarily presented in communicative reality as it is, but is given the characteristics that a particular community or person (the sender of the message) wishes to give it. This shapes beliefs and attitudes, reinforces existential assumptions about what is true, reinforces norms about what should be, and promotes interpretations, emotional reactions, and evaluative thinking. However, communicative reality does not necessarily correspond to everyday practices (i.e., to what happens 'on the ground').¹⁷

The process of semiotically redistributing agency in communicative reality could be explained by applying the semiospheric nexus theoretical approach. It integrates the shared meaning systems (cf. J. Lotman's *semiosphere*) and the dynamic distribution of agency in interactions (cf. A. Gell's *art nexus*). The semiospheric nexus comprises four interconnected nodes: Actors, Stakeholders, Indexes, and Prototypes. According to the theoretical framework, Prototypes are background concepts, beliefs, figures, or entities referenced in communicative Activity. They activate semiospheric relationships among Actors and Stakeholders and can act as agents in distributing agency across the process. Prototypes are most evident in historical periods of change (such as the Enlightenment and Romanticism) in discussions of contested topics¹⁸. By participating in this semiophoric nexus, Szyttler, as the author of a gastronomy book (as an Actor), communicates the important ideas (as a Prototype) in the

17 LAUŽIKAS, Rimvydas; DALLAS, Costis. The message is the Agent: Nexus and Semiosphere in social media communication. In: *Semiotics and visual communication IV: Myths of today*. Eds. Evripides Zantides, Sonia Andreou. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2024, p. 2–29.

18 Ibid., p. 2–29.

book's introduction (as an Index), adapting it to specific communities and target audiences (as a Stakeholder), seeking to share his agency with the different Stakeholders' communities.

RESULTS. THE BOOK'S INTRODUCTION AS A SOURCE ABOUT THE PERSONALITY AND HIS TIME

The representation of Szyttler's personal views in the introductions to his gastronomy books could be divided into several topics: health and diet, the priority of simple cuisine over sophisticated cuisine, idealisation of the past, thriftiness in the kitchen, and interest in new gastronomic trends of the time. Understanding his status in the socio-cultural context Vilnius in the first half of the 19th century (not a nobleman, and not a University researcher, either), Szyttler avoided expressing his personal opinion directly. Most often, his views are expressed in more general statements, such as "it is commonly recognised..." or "scholars state...".

Upon analysing Szyttler's views on health and diet, it should be noted that this topic dominates the introductory sections of the books and their texts. Until the Enlightenment, humoral medicine and dietetics were essential factors in shaping European gastronomic culture. However, in the 18th century, new paradigms and experimental research in the natural sciences shaped new trends not only in medicine but also in the understanding of healthy lifestyles. In 1709 in Paris, Philippe Hecquet published a treatise on diets, presenting a new concept of nutrition¹⁹. In Lithuania, perhaps, the first work to argue against humoralism was Jędrzej Śniadecki's (Lt. Andrius Sniadeckis) article "O pokarmach, napojach i sposobie życia w ogólności..." (pl. *On Food, Drinks, and Lifestyle in General...*), published in *Dziennik Wileński* in 1817²⁰. Enlightenment gave way to Romanticism (including gastronomic Romanticism), which further reinforced these new, science-based ideas about the relationship between food and health. New ideas about healthy food also changed the menus. They broke down the barriers imposed by humoralism, thus opening the way for many new ingredients (such as game and wild plants) that had been rarely used in food in the past (due to their humoral properties) to enter *haute cuisine* and establish

19 HECQUET, Philippe. *Traité des dispenses du Carême*: dans lequel on découvre la fausseté des pretexts qu'on apporte pour les obtenir... Paris, 1709.

20 ŚNIADECKI, Jędrzej. *O pokarmach, napojach i sposobie życia w ogólności we względzie lekarskim*. *Dziennik Wileński*, 1817, vol. 5, no. 20, p. 21–22.

themselves. The University was a centre of Polish and Lithuanian Romanticism in Vilnius.

Szyttler maintained close relationships with the 'people at the University'. This intellectual environment influenced his ideas about interconnections between food and health. Szyttler was more interested in the practical side of things than medical theory. However, he uses scientific arguments, relying on medicine, doctors' opinions, and their books. So, perhaps, we can talk about a kind of Szyttlerian diet inspired by scientific ideas of the Enlightenment and Romanticism: "<...> It is a commonly recognized truth that food, drink, and our lifestyle in general have the greatest influence on the health and vitality of the human body until old age <...> This truth has already been proven by the best scientists, both in books devoted exclusively to medical topics and in popular works on hygiene, which are accessible and understandable to every reader..." wrote Jan Szyttler in his book²¹. He divided people into three groups according to their nutritional needs: healthy people, sick people, and people recovering from illness. When writing about food for healthy people, he recommends eating less meat and replacing it with lighter fish and vegetable dishes, because "<...> according to the general opinion of doctors, well-prepared fish and vegetable dishes are not only harmless to humans, but are even beneficial to health <...>"²². He refutes the myth that, without meat, the human mind will weaken, because if that were the case, the monastic orders that observed fasting would not have given the world so many wise and educated people. According to Szyttler, the desire to eat meat is more a matter of habit. This is because fish and vegetables are more often prepared in an unpalatable way than meat, and the easier satiety of meat has accustomed the internal organs to such food. But habits can be changed, especially since there are people who have disliked meat since birth, and those who consciously prefer fish to the best meat dishes²³.

However, we will find many meat dishes in Szyttler's books. His aim was to make these dishes easy to digest and not heavy on the stomach. According to Szyttler, among healthy people, there are also those who are naturally weak, exhausted from work (especially mental work), worn out by illness, disorderly and exhausting lifestyles, worries, as well as those who are disabled or elderly. They need to take care of their food, because they cannot eat the same way as

21 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchmistrz nowy, czyli Kuchnia udzielna dla osób osłabionych, w wieku podeszłym, tudzież do zdrowia powracających*, p. I.

22 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia postna, podająca najoszczędniejsze sposoby sporządzania potraw rybnych, oraz zup, chłodników, pieczonego, marynat, jarzyn, melszpeizów, ciast i t.p.*, p. VIII–IX.

23 Ibid., p. X–XI.

those who are in the prime of their strength without harming themselves²⁴.

Food choices are especially important for patients and those recovering from illness, because the food intended for them must not only be harmless, but also strengthen and help restore health. According to Szyttler, “<...> Medicines, even if they are the most appropriate and effective, are of no use or help, and often even have a harmful effect and worsen the suffering if the patient does not follow a proper diet <...>”²⁵. At the onset of an illness, soups and broths are sufficient for a person, as they are the best food (the book *Kuchmistrz nowy*... even has a separate section called *Healing Broths*). However, as they recover, they usually develop an appetite, which should be satisfied with caution (so that the patient does not relapse) by preparing stronger foods, such as leguminas, puddings, hot and cold shakes, marmalades, vegetable juices, various baked goods, which (on the advice of a doctor) may also contain stronger spices. All these foods should be chosen according to the season, the patient’s well-being and complexion, and the timing of vegetables or fruits, especially (once again) taking into account the doctor’s advice²⁶.

Szyttler recommended healthy eating under all circumstances. One of the aspects he discussed was Catholic fasting. Despite the fact that fasting standards had become somewhat less strict during the Enlightenment, the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth territories occupied by Russia, Austria, and Prussia were still known for their fasting, and ‘Polish fasting’ was still a well-known saying. In this area, Catholics in Lithuania and Masuria fasted most strictly. Therefore, in our region, fasting was a real challenge for most of the poorer people. When meat, dairy, and eggs were removed from the Lithuanian peasant or poor townspeople’s cuisine, there was not much left. Meanwhile, eating vegetables was not yet popular, and fish had to be bought (which most people could not afford). So, in the kitchens of these people, there were usually only grain dishes flavoured with oil. That situation was observed in the polemics over fasting in the 19th-century press. Szyttler was a Roman Catholic. Therefore, he does not criticise fasting but, instead, offers healthier food options. He also refutes claims that fasting foods are tasteless. First of all, Szyttler’s fasting does not require giving up dairy products, and as a substitute for meat, he offers

24 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchmistrz nowy, czyli Kuchnia udzielna dla osób osłabionych, w wieku podeszłym, tudzież do zdrowia powracających*, p. II.

25 Ibid., p. IV.

26 Ibid., p. VI.

delicious dishes made from fish and vegetables²⁷. Another unhealthy eating circumstance, observed by Szyttler, was hunting. In his two books, he sought to present hunting in two ways: as beneficial to the household economy and as a means of strengthening health²⁸. Szyttler's recipe book for wild game, birds, and fish shows a shift from hunting as a leisure activity to a source of food during Romanticism. Szyttler's hunting cuisine is based on health considerations. According to the chef, it is not true that hunters do not need to worry about food. He has met many who did not care and were therefore weak and had unhealthy stomachs. Therefore, the book contains a selection of "<...> the most suitable, tasty, useful, and healthy dishes <...>". Health arguments recur throughout the book. When writing about food to take along, the chef noted: "<...> until now, hunters, when going out on a hunt, usually put the following in their bags: a bottle of vodka, cheese, a piece of salty smoked meat, sausage, or salceson. Such food can often be harmful: first, it makes the hunter sluggish; second, it causes thirst, which is not always easy to quench; thirdly, even excessive quenching of thirst by eating fatty smoked meat usually becomes harmful <...>". In his book, the author offers a collection of recipes that would be much more useful for hunting. Some of them are what we would call stuffed buns or sandwiches today²⁹. The third set of unhealthy circumstances is the food of rural and poor people. Szyttler argued that the book "Kucharz dobrze usposobiny..." contains recipes intended for wealthier and more luxurious tables and is not particularly suitable for rural cuisine. Therefore, "<...> at the request of many people, I decided to compile a collection of recipes that could be easily prepared in a farmstead <...>"³⁰.

Like Śniadecki in his article on food, drinks, and lifestyle, Szyttler's approach to healthy living is not radical. It is different, typical of the early 19th century, but not too far from the old humoral dietetics and medicine. The impact of humorism is most evident in Szyttler's recipes. He relates the healthiness of ingredients to air temperature, humidity, and the season. For example,

27 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia postna, podająca najoszczędniejsze sposoby sporządzania potraw rybnych, oraz zup, chłodników, pieczonego, marynat, jarzyn, melszpeizów, ciast i t.p.*, p. X–XI.

28 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia myśliwska, czyli Na łowach*; SZYTTLER, Jan. *Poradnik dla myśliwych, czyli O rozmaitych sposobach zabijania lub łowienia zwierząt, z przydaniami uwagami nad obchodzeniem się z bronią utrzymywaniem koni, układaniem psów i sokołów do polowania zbieraniem i konserwowaniem trufli, urządzaniem wabiów i t.d.*

29 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia myśliwska, czyli Na łowach*, p. I–IV.

30 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kucharka oszczędna czyli przepisy dla gospodyń wiejskich*, p. I–II.

when talking about sago grains, he notes that they are healthy to eat during hot weather³¹, while watercress is healthy in winter.³² However, Szyttler's text contains hints that seem entirely acceptable and modern from a dietary point of view. According to the chef, fat should be removed from broth because it is unhealthy³³, fresh fish is tastier and healthier³⁴, and cooking acidic dishes in metal pots (due to the chemical reaction with metal) is harmful to health³⁵.

The other theme of Szyttler's views, related to the healthy lifestyle, is the priority of a simple cuisine over a sophisticated cuisine: "<...> at a time when all luxury, considered morally corrupt and economically ruinous, <...> publishers of cookbooks, contrary to logic, strive to multiply and invent extravagant dishes [...] against frugality and simplicity! <...>". He criticises the cooks who publish the sophisticated cookbooks contrary to needs of society: "<...> to pick a few dishes, <...> to arrange them in some order, give them a title that does not yet exist, and voilà, you have a cookbook! This is how similar publications are created, even by those who have no idea about theory or practice in the kitchen <...>". The only right path is to return to a simple, frugal lifestyle: "<...> it is not right for a wealthy citizen, who can maintain a decent table without damaging his estate, to seek artificial and elaborate means of nourishment [...] but those who, with false shame, imitate the wealth or splendor of the powerful, squander the remnants of their burdened fortune on refined feasts, should renounce their blind imitation of the magnates and return to a simple life <...>"³⁶. This theme of simplicity in the kitchen is also connected with the idealization of the past: "<...> chasing fashion <...> the old, healthy and truly nourishing, yet less expensive dishes were mostly forgotten; in their place, cloying, over-saturated, or harmful and expensive dishes were often introduced <...>". All this is reinforced by the argument that simple, old-fashioned food is also healthy: "<...> dishes prepared according to old Polish traditions, healthy, tasty, and nutritious, which can be prepared in a simpler or more economical way <...>"³⁷. This rhetoric is similar to the approach of Szyttler's contemporary, Jędrzej Kitowicz. However, unlike Kitowicz, Szyttler was a consistent follower of the

31 Ibid., p. 139.

32 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchmistrz nowy, czyli Kuchnia udzielna dla osób osłabionych, w wieku podeszłym, tudzież do zdrowia powracających*, p. 7.

33 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia myśliwska, czyli Na łowach*, p. 40.

34 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia postna, podająca najoszczędniejsze sposoby sporządzania potraw rybnych, oraz zup, chłodników, pieczonego, marynat, jarzyn, melszpeizów, ciast i t.p.*, p. 52.

35 Ibid., p. 108.

36 Ibid., p. VI–VIII.

37 Ibid., p. XII–XIII.

French cuisine rather than a critic. Simplicity of cuisine also means thriftiness in the kitchen. This is particularly evident when writing about the rural cuisine. The food of rural people should be based on local, farm-grown products, with as little purchased ingredients as possible: “<...> by using fresh [vegetable] oil instead of olive oil; [fruit] syrup and honey instead of sugar, and instead of wine or lemons, the vinegar; [in this way] the cost of cooking will be reduced by almost half <...>”³⁸.

Szyttler maintained a vital interest in the new trends in gastronomic culture at the time. He could be considered the first person to mention vegetarianism in the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth³⁹. The rejection of meat-based meals was discussed in Vilnius City cultural circles on ethical grounds. For example, Józef Jasiński, who earned his doctorate at Vilnius University, in his book *Anthropologia o własnościach człowieka...* (Anthropology on Human Characteristics...), published in Vilnius in 1818, quoted Charles Louis de Montesquieu and wrote that, according to natural needs for food, there are four groups of people: gatherers, fishermen, hunters, and farmers. The first group (gatherers) is idealised as the primary, natural state of humans, arising from the natural order, encouraging us not to shed blood or kill other animals, because it allows us to understand that we can feel they are equal to us.

CONCLUSIONS

Summarising the study's results, a book's introduction can be considered an egodocument. A book's introduction represents the author's personality and is tied to the communicative reality of the time, as reflected in the press, public discussions, and scholarly and science communication books. In Szyttler's cookbooks' introductions, we find the 'necessary' features of egodocuments. There are:

1. First-person writing. Szyttler feels like a true chef of the Romanticism era – an artist who perceives his works as his personal creation: “<...> I will be delighted if this service of mine will be as well accepted as the one I had the honour of providing to the Esteemed Audience several years ago <...>”⁴⁰. However, in some texts, Szyttler adopts a more impersonal style, thus avoiding the direct expression of his own views. This can be explained by

38 Ibid., p. XIII.

39 GAŁĄZKA, Bogdan. *Niepożyteczne trudy nowomodnych kuchmistrzów*.

40 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kucharka oszczędna czyli przepisy dla gospodyń wiejskich*, p. I–II.

the specific social structure of the time. Szyttler was neither a nobleman nor a university-educated intellectual, and thus he chose a less direct way of presenting his views, for example, by using phrases such as “it is widely accepted...”.

2. Self-testimony. Szyttler represents his personal viewpoint: “<...> It is widely accepted that food and drink <...> have the most significant impact on maintaining good health <...> Convinced of this fact, based on my own experience and careful consideration of writings on similar subjects, I have made every effort to compile and publish recipes for dishes <...>”⁴¹.
3. Private [sphere] writings. Szyttler represents his personal hobby in hunting, such as a chef’s portrait in a hunting dress, or mentions like “<...> now, as a hunter, I noticed the lack of a kitchen in this type of food <...>”⁴², or “<...> having been a keen hunter since my youth, and having visited many countries <...>”⁴³.

In the context of the theoretical framework, the cookbook’s author (Jan Szyttler), participating in the semiospheric nexus as an Actor, communicates the ideas of a particular semiosphere (as a Prototype) through his book introductions (as an Index), adapting it to the specific communities and target audiences (as a Stakeholder) and seeking to share his agency with the different Stakeholders’ communities.

The ideas (Prototypes) communicated by Szyttler relate to the broad fields of European Enlightenment and Vilnius Romanticism. The formation of Vilnius Romanticism was supported by the fact that this city, occupied by the Russian Empire, had become a periphery where cultural life was relatively free, without the pressure of dominant cultural structures and ideologies typical of centres. However, despite its peripheral status, the city’s intellectual life was not poor thanks to the University that operated there. It was precisely there that Vilnius Romanticism took shape, uniting the former community of citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which had not yet been divided along ethnolinguistic lines. Scholars and artists who wrote in Polish and Lithuanian, such as Joachim Lelewel, Teodor Narbut, Simonas Daukantas, Simonas Stanevičius, Józef Jaroszewicz, Adam Mickiewicz, Kanutas Ruseckas, Julijusz Słowacki, and Józef Ignacy Kraszewski were linked by the idea of ‘romantic Lithuania’ and Vilnius University. The foundations of the identities of two modern nations –

41 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchmistrz nowy, czyli Kuchnia udzielna dla osób osłabionych, w wieku podeszłym, tudzież do zdrowia powracających*, p. IV

42 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Kuchnia myśliwska, czyli Na łowach*, p. I.

43 SZYTTLER, Jan. *Poradnik dla gospodyń, czyli Nauka o ptastwie domowém i oswojoném*, p. 7.

Polish and Lithuanian – were formed in the context of Vilnius Romanticism, which was realised through national revivals at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Szyttler was a practising cook, and not a scientist. However, the ideas of Vilnius Romanticism had a significant impact on his work. Science-based dietetics shaped Szyttler's approach to healthy nutrition; people's admiration for the romantic Lithuanian nature encouraged him to experiment with wild game, birds, fish, and wild plants as ingredients in his cooking; French ideas of the 'noble savage' inspired him in the simple, nature-oriented food of rural people; Enlightenment-based social responsibility engaged the chef to serve to the all social strata of society, and stories of a glorious history stimulated to seek inspiration in the cuisine of the past. His books on hunting and the hunting cuisine, successful attempts to incorporate simple rural dishes into *haute cuisine*, and books of recipes and farming advice for rural people were a true expression of Romanticism ideas (as Prototypes).

Szyttler was the first person in the area of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to write books not intended for professional chefs. He expanded the audience for cookbooks (Stakeholders) to include housewives, hunters, people who fasted, and rural residents. Seeking to share the agency was successful. Szyttler's cookbooks were extremely popular at that time. In 1837, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski wrote jealously in his poem "*Letter to J. K.*": "<...> Oh, Józef, don't cry / Szyttler sold thousands of his famous cookbooks / And who doesn't know Szyttler, who doesn't have his books at home? / Only who will cook food for their souls <...>"⁴⁴. Other feedback was less jealous, but full of admiration. A review of Szyttler's books from 1835 states that, in many wealthy homes and monastic communities, God's gifts are not prepared properly. All tables are laden with fatty foods and richly spiced dishes. After eating such food, there is a natural desire to drink strong alcoholic beverages. The consequences are clear: clouding of the mind and suffering from all kinds of diseases. However, the ability to prepare proper, fortifying, light, and healthy food revives virtue and morality. Therefore, a good cook is the first doctor in the home, and the most helpful book is one that teaches you how to cook healthy and delicious meals. The author of the review beautifully contrasts the old Baroque food tradition (as unhealthy) with the new cuisine of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, linking the human being, his living environment, health, and behaviour into a single system. Here, Szyttler (one who encourages people to eat healthy food) is presented as

44 KRASZEWSKI, Józef Ignacy. List do J. K. In: KRASZEWSKI, Józef Ignacy. *Poezye*. Warszawa: S. Orgelbrand, 1843, t. I, p. 8.

a kind of Orpheus from ancient mythology, one who taught people to behave morally because proper food lays the foundation for moral behaviour⁴⁵.

Considering a cookbook introduction as an egodocument broadens the scope of research into the history of gastronomy. From that perspective, egodocuments are interesting because of their subjective references to food, drink, table culture, and other elements of gastronomic culture, which allow us to understand how this culture functioned in a specific sociocultural environment and to analyse the subjective attitudes of the people in that environment (admiration, disgust, acceptance or rejection of gastronomic phenomena). These documents are also interesting for research into the biographies of historical figures and for communication (e.g., answering questions about what a specific historical figure ate/liked/disliked). Ego documents can also be helpful for studies of the publication, distribution, and acquisition of gastronomic literature, as well as the economic aspects of gastronomic culture. This approach to research provides an opportunity to better understand Jan Szyttler's personality and its relationship to the profession of a chef and the context of the entire period.

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⁴⁵ Kucharz dobrze usposobiony... *Wizerunki i roztrząsania naukowe*. Wilno, 1835, vol. 7, p. 162–167.

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