Wilhelm Ernst Tentzel as a Precursor of Learned Journalism in Germany: *Monatliche Unterredungen* and *Curieuse Bibliothece*

Thomas Habel

**Early Learned Journals: The Take-Off Phase in German-Speaking Europe**

When the first issue of W.E. Tentzel's *Monatliche Unterredungen* appeared on the literary market in 1689, learned journals had already been in existence for more than two decades. Periodical journals appeared almost simultaneously as a new medium in France (*Journal des Scavans*, 1665ff.), England (*Philosophical Transactions*, 1665ff.) and Italy (*Giornale de' Letterati* [Roma], 1668ff.), seeking to adapt to the ever accelerating process of knowledge at the time. The first exponents of learned journals met this objective by reporting on new releases in the book market as well as on noteworthy developments in the world of scholarship. By doing so, they succeeded in combining the traditional components of the scholarly exchange of information—scientific publications, disputations, and scholarly correspondence on the one hand, and bibliographies and term catalogues on the other hand—in a medium that was both periodical and continual. For the first time, this offered members of the Republic of Letters an opportunity to obtain from one source, as it were, timely

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and comprehensive information about virtually all recent news in the scholarly world.

As early as 1667, only two years after the emergence of this new medium, the first response on the German market appeared when the jurist Friedrich Nitzsch from Giessen published a Latin translation of the French *Journal des Sçavans* under the telling title *Le Journal des Sçavans, hoc est Ephemerides Eruditorum* (Leipzig: Schürer and Fritzsch). Nitzsch employed the same argument that Denys de Sallo had formulated programmatically in introducing his *Journal des Sçavans*: with the help of this new organ, the reader could get a comprehensive view of important new publications without having to purchase them in advance, and could even obtain a general knowledge of literature without having to buy a single book. The initial success of Nitzsch’s project, which was published for no less than five full years, illustrated that this concept also found a response among the German scholarly public, based on the Republic of Letter’s great need for knowledge about new trends and ideas.

The first serious attempt to establish an independent journal in Germany took place in 1668, when Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz devised plans for a *Nucleus librarius semestralis*, a semi-annual publication of scholarly reports on the model of the *Journal des Sçavans*. But despite strenuous preparations, this project was never realised, as Leibniz was unable to procure either the hoped-for Imperial Privilege or financial support.

The *Miscellanea curiosa medico-physica* (Leipzig: Trescher; appearing later in different places and under different publishers), which first appeared in 1670—with express reference to the *Journal des Sçavans* and the *Philosophical Transactions*—was the first original German scholarly journal. As in the case of Nitzsch’s translated journal, the language of publication was the international Latin of scholars. In the form first of

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4 For details, see Hans Widmann, ‘Leibniz und sein Plan zu einem *Nucleus librarius*, *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 4 (1963), 621–636; Habel 2007 (note 1), 54f.
5 The first version of the continually changing descriptive title was *Miscellanea curiosa medico-physica Academicæ Naturæ Curiosiorum sive Ephemeridum medico-physicarum Germanicarum Curiosarum*. The journal published by the Academia Naturae Curiosorum, later known as the Leopoldina, appeared irregularly.
6 A German translation, limited to articles concerned with medicine (20 volumes), was issued a century later: *Der Römisch-Kaiserlichen Akademie der Naturforscher auserlesene medizinisch-chirurgisch-anatomisch-chemisch- und botanische Abhandlungen* (Nürnberg: Endter & Engelbrecht, 1755–1771).