

Mapping the ‘Republic of Letters’ in East Central European Correspondences*


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Abstract: The significance of the ‘Republic of Letters’ as a Pan-European and cross-national concept is often addressed in scholarship on early modern intellectual history. Focusing on an extensive digital epistolary corpus of authors of East Central European descent from c. 1600 to c. 1800, this article aims to readdress this argument by analyzing the currency of the most frequently used terms in Latin that denote a sense of scholarly community (*viz. respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus*) from a combined quantitative and qualitative approach. Based on the results of this analysis, it is argued that with respect to this geography, terms referring to the Republic of Letters were not as vital and ubiquitous as modern scholarship may perhaps lead one to believe. As the supposed increasing geographical spread and frequency of these terms are oftentimes mentioned as signs of the growing currency of their underlying concept, it is important to realize that their continental occurrence seems, in fact, limited at best and erratic at worst. Consequently, it is argued that concerning the analysis of individual authors, the methodology adopted in this study can only yield a meaningful discussion in the case of a relatively large number of occurrences, as the absence of these terms could be regarded as the default ‘standard’ in the regions under discussion—and possibly beyond.

Keywords: Republic of Letters, early modern correspondences, East Central Europe, Socinianism, socio-linguistic typology, intellectual history, Stanisław Lubieniecki

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Introduction

This paper builds on three recent articles that have studied the conceptual history of the term *respublica literaria* (commonly translated as ‘Republic of Letters’) in close detail. Part of the ERC Consolidator Project SKILLNET: ‘Sharing Knowledge In Learned and Literary Networks’, these studies have focused on large digitized epistolary corpora from early modern Europe to analyze the currency of this and similar phrases that denote a sense of scholarly community (e.g., *orbis literatus*). Despite the popularity that the underlying concept of these terms enjoys among modern-day historians, we know surprisingly little about their actual frequency, usage in context, and geographical distribution over time. The significance of the ‘Republic of Letters’ in sixteenth to eighteenth-century intellectual Europe, in other words, has often been repeated, while our view on the vitality of the term as an actor’s category, that is, one that historical actors themselves used in their daily lives, remains clouded.

The studies that have thus far been conducted to challenge historians’ modern-day assumptions about the Republic of Letters have focused on various subsets of correspondences. Dirk van Miert, for instance, wrote an article on the basis of the online database *ePistolarium*.¹ This database comprises approximately 20,000 in and outgoing letters from people who were active in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.² Although working with a multilingual corpus, Van Miert found that the vast majority of hits for ‘Republic of Letters’ (also looked for in translation of the various vernaculars) occurred in Latin, a language that only made up about a third of the total number of letters.³ His analysis of the 44 results that he found showed that the correspondents rarely explicitly reflected on the significance of this phrase. Instead, he argued, invoking a Republic of Letters was part of a “performative regulative discourse”.⁴ Put differently, the repetitive use of the phrase created patterns of behavior that became normalized before they would be more clearly regularized near the end of the seventeenth century.

In another study, Karen Hollewand and Van Miert looked at the manner in which the Republic of Letters was employed in the correspondence of the renowned classical scholars Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) and Joseph Justus

¹ Dirk van Miert, “Regulating the Exchange of Knowledge. Invoking the ‘Republic of Letters’ as a Speech Act,” in Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis (ed.), *Regulating Knowledge in an Entangled World*, London: Routledge, 2023, pp. 211–240.

² See: <http://ckcc.huylgens.knaw.nl/epistolarium/>.

³ The term occurred in 0.46% of all the Latin letters.

⁴ Dirk van Miert, “Regulating the Exchange”, p. 227.

Scaliger (1540–1609).⁵ They found that the term was used relatively more often; the 2803 letters of the two correspondences yielded a total of 221 occurrences in 186 letters (that is, 6.6% of all the letters). Their ensuing analysis compared the different ways in which the phrase was used. They argued for two main applications of the term. By invoking a common scholarly identity, it was most often used to socially anchor relationships, for instance by praising someone as a *decus reipublicae literariae* ('an ornament of the Republic of Letters'). Alternatively, the term was also used to urge one's recipient to act for the sake of the Republic of Letters, for instance by sending a copy of a desired manuscript. Interestingly, the results indicated that Scaliger's contacts invoked the Republic of Letters to emphasize common ground more often than he did in his own letters. Casaubon, on the other hand, used the term more often than Scaliger and his own correspondents. Van Miert and Hollewand convincingly argued that this pattern is in line with the reputation of both scholars. Casaubon is known to have cautiously operated in his epistolary communication. This was partly necessitated by the various political and theological dispositions of his corresponding parties. Scaliger, by contrast, was relatively blunter and felt less need to establish a firm common ground with his contacts than Casaubon.⁶

In a third paper by Hollewand, the conceptual history of the phrase *respublica literaria* and its connection with the term *res publica* were studied in the 'Corpus Epistolicum Recentioris Aevi' (CERA), an online repository of edited collections of early modern letters written in Germany and its neighboring countries.⁷ She examined a total of 7434 Latin letters that were sent and received by 31 scholars between 1501 and 1765. The phrase *respublica literaria* was found 243 times, in 3.3% of the corpus. Focusing on a smaller subset of c. 3900 letters in closer detail, Hollewand again found that it was used most often to affirm a common identity and to strengthen the bond between scholars. In a minority of cases, she encountered the more 'active' use of the term, that is, used in the context of urging someone to act for the welfare of the scholarly community (in 15.8% of the occurrences). She also marked other terms denoting the concept of a scholarly community (*viz.*, *orbis literatus*, *communio studiorum*, and *litterarium regnum*) and found that such alternatives were more frequently used by these German scholars than by Scaliger and Casaubon.

⁵ Karen Hollewand and Dirk van Miert, "Mapping the Use of the "Republic of Letters" in the Correspondences of Casaubon and of Scaliger," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 84 (2022), pp. 17–45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

⁷ Karen Hollewand, "Respublica Litteraria, Respublica, res publica: the use of the 'Republic of Letters' in the correspondences of the CERA," *forthcoming*.

She argued that this dissimilarity could partly be explained by the difference in the academic landscapes; in the German states, scholarly life was organized in a wider variety of institutions and locations, ranging from universities and academies to local societies, regional courts, and urban organizations. Thus, this relatively scattered institutional landscape may have prompted scholars to use a variety of other terms to denote their learned environment. Finally, in her conclusion, Hollewand sensibly remarked that, contrary to the general characterization of the Republic of Letters by modern historians, the early modern scholars in her study “regularly depicted the academic realm not as an autonomous, separate world but as closely connected or even as identical to the political and religious realms”.⁸

The present paper aims to contribute to the pioneering venture of charting the currency of the term *respublica literaria* (and phrases expressing a similar concept) as initiated by Van Miert and Hollewand. Their studies have convincingly shown important overlap with regard to the usages of this term in different periods (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), geographies (France, the Low Countries, and Germany), and languages (most frequently in Latin correspondences). Its numeric distribution in Latin letters, however, turned out to be rather uneven; while it occurred only in one out of c. 200 letters in a corpus of about 6560 letters,⁹ a peak, for instance, was visible with Casaubon’s correspondence, in which it appeared in almost one out of 10 in a corpus of c. 1100 letters.¹⁰ Our study shifts the geographical focus to a large body of humanist correspondences from East Central Europe. It is often assumed that this part of the continent held relatively few interregional learned communities and that “international relationships were often weak or little more than symbolic”.¹¹ This prompts the question of how vigorous the idea(l) of the Republic of Letters was in this region. The present study therefore proposes to analyze both the frequency and uses of two terms that refer to this concept of learned commonality, namely *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus*, in a representative set of letters related to the intelligentsia of early modern East Central Europe.

⁸ Hollewand, “Respublica Litteraria.”

⁹ Sc. 0.46% of the Latin letters (which make 32.8% of c. 20,000 letters) in Van Miert’s study.

¹⁰ 9.61%, see Hollewand and Van Miert, “Mapping the Use,” p. 25 (91 occurrences in 1023 Latin letters).

¹¹ Gábor Almási, *The Uses of Humanism Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), Andreas Dudith (1533–1589), and the Republic of Letters in East Central Europe*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009, pp. 97, 360. See also Hans Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren. De Europese intellectuele wereld 1500–1700*, Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2018, p. 33, on the absence of Poland in the Republic of Letters until c. 1750.

What's in a Name?

As is the case for the previous studies conducted by Van Miert and Hollewand, this article is based on the conviction that for too long, historians of early modern learning have theorized about the Republic of Letters as a 'concept' that lived in the minds of their subjects, without accounting for the actual usages of the 'term(s)' signifying them ('concept' and 'term' being understood as the Saussurean 'signified' and 'signifier' of a sign respectively).¹² This study, therefore, agrees with Reinhart Koselleck that "[h]istorians of early modern learning have not yet fully acknowledged that any assertion about continuities in the use of concepts must be supported by evidence based upon concrete, iterative usages of the vocabulary".¹³ The present article analyzes exactly the contextual practices behind two terms that both refer to the same concept of learned commonality, namely *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus*.

The fact that these two terms are synonymous, that is, refer to the same concept, is not purely an assumption on our side but is also reflected by our dataset. In a letter from the Polish intellectual Stanisław Lubieniecki to Johannes Hevelius from 25 August 1665, the author remarked on the latter's forthcoming book *Cometographia* (1668):

Believe me, everyone's thoughts, ears, and eyes are focused on it, as if a miracle of astronomic genius. They are eagerly waiting for it to be shown to them as soon as possible. You shouldn't think that I'm flattering you. After all, I not only appeal to the judgment of the entire Senate of astronomers, in which you are ruling without any opponent or rival, but also to that of the entire Republic of Letters.¹⁴

¹² Cf. Dirk Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 23–25.

¹³ Reinhart Koselleck, "A Response to Comments on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*," in Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter (eds.), *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1996, pp. 59–70, at p. 64.

¹⁴ Lubieniecki to Johannes Hevelius, 25 August 1665: "*Crede mihi omnium animi, aures oculique in illud* [sc. his forthcoming book], *velut Astronomici ingenii miraculum, directi sunt, & quamprimum illud sibi exhiberi, avidè praestolantur. Neque verò putes me palpum Tibi obtrudere. Provoico enim ad totius non tantum Senatús Astronomici, in quo sine aemulo & rivali dominaris, sed & Reipublicae literariae iudicium,*" in Stanisław Lubieniecki, *Theatrum cometicum* [henceforth: TC], vol. 1, Amsterdam: Apud Franciscum Cuyperum, 1667, p. 401. The correspondence between Lubieniecki and Hevelius has also recently been edited by Maciej Jasiński (ed.), *The Correspondence of Johannes Hevelius. The Correspondence with Stanisław Lubieniecki*, vol. 4, Turnhout: Brepols, 2021. For Lubieniecki's letter to Johannes Hevelius from 25 August 1655, see *ibid.*, pp. 291–292.

As was common for editions of this time, brief epitomes written in the margin of the page accompanied the letter. This part of Lubieniecki's text was summarized as: "a due testimony is given to the merits of Hevelius, with the consent of the *orbis literatus*."¹⁵ The summary, therefore, neatly demonstrates that *orbis literatus* and *respublica literaria* were seen as coreferential by the editor. Admittedly, whether these epitomes were adjoined by Lubieniecki himself or another assistant editor cannot be ascertained. For our argument, however, this information is not strictly relevant. It is obvious that whoever contemporary edited the letter thought of these two terms as synonyms.

This, to be sure, is not to say that *orbis literatus* and *respublica literaria* were the only two phrases that early modern intellectuals could use to denote the concept of a learned commonality in their writings. In fact, we know that numerous other terms were circulating, such as *litteratum commercium*, *res literaria*, *communio studiorum*, *imperium literarum*, *litterarium regnum*, and *litterarum societas*, not to mention the renditions of these terms in all the different vernaculars.¹⁶ In the dataset of this study, for instance, the expression of "learned emporium" (*litterarum emporium*) was found when browsing through the correspondence of Andreas Dudith.¹⁷ Cases in which the mere words *res publica* were arguably used to specifically refer to the community of the learned, rather than or in addition to denoting a political realm or 'the common cause' in general have come across, too. In a letter from Johannes Sambucus to the Italian humanist Fulvio Orsini, for instance, the author wrote: "I am thankful for your leisure and your devotion to your library, which you have completely dedicated to the common good".¹⁸ For this article, however, the decision was made not to systematically engage with these (sometimes ambiguous) alternatives. Instead, this study is limited to a semasiological analysis of the two aforementioned terms, taking its starting point in the word as a form (i.e., the 'signifier') to

¹⁵ Lubieniecki to Johannes Hevelius, 25 August 1665: "*Hevelianis meritis debitum testimonium datur. Consentiente orbe literato*," in TC, vol. 1, p. 401.

¹⁶ Françoise Waquet, "Qu'est-ce que la République des Lettres? Essai de sémantique historique," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 147 (1989), pp. 473–502, at p. 480; Hans Bots and Françoise Waquet, *La République des Lettres*, Paris: Béliin, 1997, pp. 15–16; Hollewand and Van Miert, "Mapping the Use," pp. 23, 40; Hollewand "Respublica Litteraria".

¹⁷ Andreas Dudithius, *Epistolae*, ed. by Lecho Szczucki and Tiburtio Szepessy, vol. 7, Budapest: Reciti, 2019, p. 509: "*Quod superest, date operam diligentem ut ex isto nobilissimo et celeberrimo litterarum quasi emporio quodam bonis artibus instructi et ditati, cum vestra et patroni vestri vestrorumque voluptate domum reversi patriae et rei publicae loco vestro utilissime servire possitis.*"

¹⁸ Johannes Sambucus to Fulvio Orsini, 1 August 1582: "Tuo ocio, tuae Bibliothecae studio in rem publicam toto dato habeo gratiam," in Johannes Sambucus, *Die Briefe des Johannes Sambucus (Zsamboky) 1554–1584. Mit einem Anhang, Die Sambucusbriefe im Kreisarchiv von Trnava, von Anton Vantuch*, ed. by Hans Gerstinger, Vienna: Böhlau, 1968, p. 266.

approach the valency of its underlying concept.¹⁹ As exemplified above, the two terms *orbis literatus* and *respublica literaria* are in particularly close cooperation. Moreover, previous research in which alternative terms were counted strongly suggests that these two phrases are by far the ones most commonly used among different variants.²⁰ Thus, from a pragmatic perspective, the inclusion of other terms such as the mere phrase *res publica* in the search through our extensive corpus would have resulted in a much longer and more contaminated list of hits—after all, most instances of *res publica* do not specifically refer to the Republic of Letters—and would likely not have yielded many more relevant results.

Sources and Method

The present study is based on an extensive corpus comprising an estimated 7900 letters from and to several East Central European humanists.²¹ Due to the elusive boundaries of such regional focus, all the letters in this study were included based on the condition that they were either written by or to a correspondent born in East Central Europe (viz. the area between Sweden, Germany, and Italy on the one hand, and Turkey and Russia on the other). For the most part, the correspondents lived and worked in this region as well, although there are some exceptions. The corpus, therefore, is anchored in East Central Europe but has links to Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, and England as well. The term 'East Central Europe' was favored over 'Eastern Europe' or 'Central Europe', as the author believes that it is historically, politically, as well as conceptually the least charged designation of the region under discussion.²² As a practical consequence of our data acquisition (outlined below), our study mainly covers the regions of Poland, Hungary, and the Bohemian lands.

¹⁹ This approach corresponds to Hollewand and Van Miert, "Mapping the Use," p. 22, although they erroneously refer to it as "onomasiological." On semasiology, cf. Dirk Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 23–25.

²⁰ Hollewand, "Respublica Litteraria", table 3: *respublica literaria* (vel sim.) occurs 243 times and *orbis literarius* 108 times, followed by *orbis eruditus*, which was counted 76 times.

²¹ There is a total of c. 5900 numbered letters, 839 manually counted letters (from Stanisław Lubieniecki, *Theatrum cometicum* ..., vols. 1 and 3 (Amstelodami, 1667–1668)), and 1150 estimated letters (from *Andrae Chrysostomi In Żaluskie Żaluski ... Epistolarum Historico-Familiarium*, vols. 1–3 (Brunsberegae, 1709–1711)). The correspondence of Lubieniecki was counted on the basis of the helpful index in Jasiński, *The Correspondence of Johannes Hevelius*, pp. 87–90. Other letters from the *Theatrum cometicum*, such as those included in the enclosures to Lubieniecki's *communicationes*, were not taken into account.

²² Cf. Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East Central Europe*, 2nd edn., Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications, 1980, pp. 9–18; Irina Livezeanu and Árpád von Klimó, "Introduction," in eidem (eds.), *The Routledge History of East Central Europe Since 1700*, London–New York: Routledge, 2017, pp. 1–26, at pp. 3–7.

It should be noted that the outlines of our regional focus came about pragmatically and do not reflect the author's view on the confines of early modern East Central Europe; as with any conventional division of the European continent, our geographical demarcation is to some degree arbitrary.²³ Despite the difficulty in defining exact outlines, however, the focus on East Central Europe as a region has long been justified by early modern historians based on the shared histories, common ruling dynasties, multi-ethnicity, German orientation, distinct urbanization processes, and religious heterogeneity of these lands, to name some of the most important commonalities.²⁴

Chronologically, the corpus includes letters ranging from the first half of the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century (from Johannes Dantiscus to Andrzej Chryzostom Załuski). To allow for digital search, only edited and mostly digitized (collections of) letters were considered for this study. These were collected through a combination of strategies. Although some large correspondences of humanists from East Central Europe have become available online, no digital repository exists that lists or provides access to edited letter collections from these regions, in contrast to, for instance, Germany, for which we have the 'Corpus Epistolicum Recentioris Aevi' (CERA). Instead, therefore, this research started with some leads provided in the bibliographic work *Conspectus bibliothecae universalis historico-literario-criticae epistolarum* by Silvester Johannes Arenhold (Hanover, 1746). This *Conspectus* provided many useful references both to individual edited letters and more comprehensive epistolary collections, sorted per country of the correspondents.

In Arenhold's overview, seventeen humanists of Polish and Hungarian descent are listed, accompanied by references to where one could find their letters in print.²⁵ In some cases, a direct search was conducted for the digitized versions of the letters that were identified in the *Conspectus* through WorldCat, Google and Google Books, and included these letters in our corpus. In other cases, however, other, more useful editions of the correspondences from the humanists listed by Arenhold were found—especially works that only appeared

²³ See, e.g., Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi (eds.), *European Regions and Boundaries. A Conceptual History*, Berghahn: Oxford, 2017.

²⁴ Maria Bogucka, "The towns of East-Central Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century", in Antoni Mączak et al. (eds.), *East-Central Europe in Transition. From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 97–108; Almási, *The Uses of Humanism*, pp. 20–23.

²⁵ Silvester Johannes Arenhold, *Conspectus bibliothecae universalis historico-literario-criticae epistolarum*, Hanover: Typis Henrici Georgii Hannigii, 1746, pp. 116–119; four of the authors listed by Arenhold have not been included; these are "Joh. Dan. Janozki" [probably Jan Daniel Andrzej Józef Janocki], Fransiscus Davidis, Petrus Paulus Vergerius, and Johannes Vremanus. For these authors, the referenced works nor other letters were found or digitally accessible.

after his overview from 1746. Additionally, the correspondences of a few humanists whose edited works were either already known to or encountered by the author during the acquisition process were also included. This combined method yielded a corpus of twenty letter collections largely clustered around eighteen scholars, which are listed in Table 1.²⁶

The correspondents found in our corpus represent the heterogeneous intelligentsia of East Central Europe, spanning the porous realms of academe, the nobility, and the clergy. It includes the Polish Roman Catholic cardinal Stanislaus Hosius (1504–1579) and other clergymen, such as the Polish bishop and Grand Chancellor Andrzej Chryzostom Załuski (1650–1711), and the bishops and diplomats Andreas Dudith (1533–1589) and Johannes Dantiscus (1485–1548) from Hungary and Poland. Also incorporated are the correspondences of the Hungarian Jesuit cardinal and statesman Péter Pázmány (1570–1637), and the Polish Calvinist reformer Jan Łaski (1499–1560). Besides these clergymen, the two Polish kings Sigismund II Augustus, (1520–1572) and Stephen Báthory (1533–1586) are included, as well as their secretary Jan Zamoyski (1542–1605), who was Grand Chancellor from 1578. The Catholic poet Szymon Szymonowic (1558–1629) was a fellow countryman and acquaintance of Zamoyski. Three letters from him have also been incorporated. Moreover, our dataset includes letters from the renowned Czech humanist, Protestant theologian, and pedagogue John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) and various other polymaths, including Stanisław Lubieniecki, (1623–1675), a Polish Socinian theologian, historian, and astronomer, as well as Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), a Hungarian councilor, philologist, and historian. Besides these famous names, a small number of letters from lesser-known figures were incorporated, including Daniel Wilhelm Moller (1642–1712), who was a Protestant scholar from Hungary, the Polish palatine Piotr Zborowski (died 1580), the seventeenth-century Hungarian unitarian Franciscus Bethlen, and Johannes Dayka Keserui (Keservinus), a Calvinist preacher at the court of Gabriel Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania. Finally, two miscellaneous collections of letters from East Central European intellectuals, edited by Joannes Dlugosh and Józef Kallenbach, were added to our set.

One comment should be added regarding the representativeness of our sources. One could, after all, question whether the edited correspondences of these selected men are paradigmatic of the entirety of the letters they wrote and received during their lifetime. In other words, we should consider the

²⁶Note that the correspondence of Stephen Báthory, as referred to in Arenhold's *Conspectus*, is part of the same edition as the correspondence of Sigismundus Augustus; see Sigismundus Augustus, *Epistolae, Legationes et Responsa ...*, ed. by Jo. Burchard Menckenius, Lipsiae: Apud Jo. Fridericum Gleditsch, 1703.

significance of archival bias for the outcome of our study. Could letters featuring the phrases *respublica literaria* or *orbis literatus* have a significantly different rate of survival compared to other letters? Surely, this was never a criterium actively considered by any archivist or other possessor.²⁷ Nevertheless, one could object that indirectly and unintentionally, there may well have been a higher chance of survival for letters that contained these terms, as probably a correlation exists between the occurrence of these terms and the learned character of the letters in which they featured. One does not expect these phrases in a message on everyday affairs, but rather in letters endowed with some intellectual prestige or ‘cultural capital’, to use a well-known concept from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.²⁸ As a consequence of their embodied cultural capital, these letters conceivably more often made the cut than their relatively lowbrow siblings. This, in turn, could result in an unrepresentative frequency of the terms in our corpus. Caution, therefore, seems necessary when considering the relative frequency of our two phrases. This study, however, starts from the assumption that most if not all the letters from edited collections are letters of social, cultural, or intellectual ‘prestige’. Within this body of letters, then, those letters featuring our two terms had no other chance of survival than any other. This study, therefore, acknowledges the potential bias of our corpus, but does not regard this as a problem for the frequency analysis, as it recognizes that the significance of the outcomes chiefly pertains to the domain of ‘refined’ correspondence.

The method used in this study is frequency counts and detailed qualitative analyses of relevant occurrences. To trace every occurrence of the phrases *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* (or similar) in such a voluminous and varied corpus of correspondences turned out to be a complex endeavor. In a similar study that analyzed this phrase in a corpus drawn from the aforementioned CERA database, Karen Hollewand used regular expressions to effectively filter the terms (e.g., *re.compile('re.{0,2}p.{0,6} lit+erar.{0,5}|lit+erar.{0,5} re.{0,2} p.{0,6}', re.IGNORECASE)*).²⁹ The advanced syntax of these search formulae enabled her to quickly find all the occurrences of the phrases despite their abundance of different graphical manifestations; in light of Latin’s elaborate declension system, its (relatively) free word order, and the different orthographic and abbreviated forms in which the phrase can manifest itself, the term *respublica lit(t)eraria* occurs in myriad different ways. Unfortunately, however, this elegant approach of regular expressions did not suffice to analyze our

²⁷ Hollewand and Van Miert, “Mapping the Use,” pp. 20–21.

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital,” in Reinhard Kreckel (ed.), *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, Göttingen: Schwartz Verlag, 1983, pp. 183–198.

²⁹ Hollewand, “Respublica Litteraria.”

complete corpus of East Central European correspondences. First, for some of our documents, the quality of the optical character recognition (OCR) turned out to be too uneven to ensure that all occurrences of the keywords would be found by automatic search. Moreover, we also wanted to include the edited correspondence of the Hungarian humanist Johannes Sambucus, which was only available in printed form.

To proceed both efficiently and accurately, a combined approach was therefore adopted. Regular expressions were applied to the documents that were properly OCR'ed, while manually leafing through a smaller number of printed and poorly or non-OCR'ed letters in search of the two phrases.³⁰ For a subset of documents that were added later during the process, a simple Ctrl-f search for *lit(t)erar-* and *lit(t)erat-* was conducted. Importantly, these are search terms that (more than) overlap with the regular expressions that were used. The author then manually went through the finds yielded by the regular expressions and the Ctrl-f search to look for actual occurrences of the phrases *respublica lit(t)eraria* and *orbis lit(t)eratus* (vel sim.) and remove any irrelevant results (e.g., *copiam litterarum regiarum* or *qua de re literarium responsum*).³¹ At all times, the risk of passing over any occurrence of either phrase was thus brought to a minimum.

Findings and Uses of the Terms

The search through the c. 7900 letters of the corpus resulted in a remarkably low number of relevant results. Of the phrase *respublica literaria*, a total of 51 occurrences were found. These appeared in 45 letters, which form about 0.57% of our corpus. The phrase *orbis literatus* was encountered less frequently, namely 28 times, in 27 letters. Considering the distribution of the 51 occurrences of *respublica literaria* in detail, it is noteworthy that these can all be found in only three collections, which together are good for about 1900 letters,³² that is, just less than a quarter of the whole corpus. In fact, one individual collection, namely the one of Stanisław Lubieniecki, which comprises 839 letters, even represents a surprising number of 48 cases in 42 letters (= 5.0% of 839).

³⁰ Regular expressions used: *re.compile('re.{0,2} lit+erar.{0,5}|lit+erar.{0,5} re.{0,2}', re.IGNORECASE)* and *(r'orb.{1,2}\slit+erat.{1,2}|lit+erat.{1,2}\sorb.{1,2}', re.IGNORECASE)*.

³¹ See Joannes Dantiscus, *CORPUS of Joannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence*, ed. by Anna Skolimowska and Magdalena Turska, online, <http://dantiscus.al.uw.edu.pl/?f=showCorrespondence&action=all&level=3>, letter no. 3855: Dantiscus to Mauritius Ferber, 14 July 1536; and Andreas Chrysostomus in Załuskie Załuski, *Epistolae Historico-Familiares ...*, vol. 1, Brunsbergae, 1709, p. 30.

³² 1030 (Dudithius, 2 cases) + 839 (Lubieniecki, 48 cases) + 30 (Moller, 1 case) = 1899.

In other words, almost all cases occur in only one letter collection that constitutes little more than a ninth of the entire corpus. Interestingly, the distribution of the phrase *orbis literatus* is restricted to the same collection and is found nowhere else in our corpus.³³ This may indicate that authors who use either phrase also tend to use the other.

With regard to the use of the phrase *respublica literaria*, three main types could be observed. These types can be illustrated by looking at the only three occurrences that are *not* part of Lubieniecki's collection. One occurrence of *respublica literaria* is found in the collection of Daniel Wilhelm Moller. Originally from Pressburg (Bratislava), Moller had left his country for religious reasons and became a professor of history and metaphysics in Altdorf in 1674, where he remained until his death.³⁴ On 13 February 1680, his friend Philipp Spener (1635–1705), the chief pastor of the Lutheran Church at Frankfurt, sent him a letter, in which he profusely apologized for his long silence.³⁵ Moller had apparently complained that none of his last seven letters had been answered. Spener proved somewhat skeptical whether the number really amounted to seven, but nevertheless set forth to provide a three-page-long apology for his delay.³⁶ Then, arguably in another move to make up for his procrastination, he wrote:

May the Lord of time and eternity wish not only what is allotted to your academic Rectorship (for I do not know how much time he normally allocates to this) and what is left of the present year, but whatever amount of time he determined for your life—a number of years that I hope will be abundant for the sake of the Republic of Letters— [may he wish all of this] to be spent so that no day, not even an hour will pass without the renewed favor of his Grace ...³⁷

³³ The phrase *orbis literatus* was also found twice in the miscellaneous work of Joannes Dlugosh (ed.), *Historiae Polonicae*, vol. 2, Leipzig: Sumptibus Io. Ludov. Gleditschii & Mauritii Georgii Weidmanni, 1712, pp. ii, 752. However, as these cases are not part of any letter (the letters in this volume are on pp. 1635–1856), they were not taken into account.

³⁴ Constantin von Wurzbach (ed.), *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreich*, vol. 19, Vienna: L.C. Zamarski, 1868, pp. 16–18.

³⁵ On the relation between Moller and Spener, see also Horst Weigelt, *Geschichte des Pietismus in Bayern: Anfänge, Entwicklung, Bedeutung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001, pp. 65–66.

³⁶ *Decas tertia epistolarum ad Dan. Guil. Mollerum missarum*, Altdorf: Literis Kohlesii, 1712, sig. A12v: “*Ais, septem me a Te habere literas: accepi non paucas, quae inter chartas meas, ab aliquo tempore tot occupationum confusione disjectas, non illico invenire possum, sed omnes accepisse, si quidem tot fuere, dubito.*”

³⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v: “*Dominus temporis & aeternitatis, non solum quantum Rectoratui Tuo Academicum adhuc destinatum, (neque enim memini, quod spatium illi soleat praefigi,) est, & quantum ex hoc anno restat, sed quicquid aetati Tuae praefinivit, quem annorum numerum, Reip. in primis literariae gratia, prolixum esse optem, ita exigi velit, ut nulla abeat dies, imo nec hora, sine novo Gratiae ejus coelestis beneficio, qua & animae optime sit & corpori, prout ille optimum esse intelligit ...*”

In this case, Spener used the term Republic of Letters to express the wish that Moller's life would be long for the benefit of the scholarly community. He indicated that Moller's achievements were not only important to him as his dear friend, but were—and would continue to be—important for the state of the Republic of Letters. Implicitly, Spener's invocation of the Republic of Letters also contained a form of praise to the addressee. In the correspondence of Andreas Dudith, however, we see that this could also be accomplished more directly. At the end of a letter written in 1569, Christophe Plantin (1520–1589) wrote that he was “most devoted” to him “and all those who, like you, favor the Republic of Letters”.³⁸ Plantin's usage was not so much concerned with commenting on the state of learning at the time, but focused on applauding the great status of his addressee.

Besides the two uses to comment on the status of the Republic of Letters or praise someone's position in or services to the learned community, we can observe a third use at another place in Dudith's correspondence. In a letter composed by the mathematician and antiquarian Conrad Dasypodius (c.1529–1601) from Strasbourg in 1571, Dudith was asked to assist him in his project to edit the work of the first-century Greek mathematician Hero of Alexandria.³⁹ Dasypodius had difficulty finding some parts of the author's oeuvre and therefore turned to his correspondent for help: “if these [works] are in your library, I urgently ask you to share them with me, so that the Republic of Letters may thank you for such excellent service.”⁴⁰ Here, the term Republic of Letters was employed persuasively to prompt Dudith to concrete action and lend Dasypodius the requested manuscripts.

One could notice that of the three cases discussed so far, none originated from the pen of an East Central European correspondent. It may, indeed, be considered striking that only one author from this region was discovered who used the term Republic of Letters himself. In the first and third volumes of Lubieniecki's monumental work *Theatrum cometicum* (1666–1668), 43 of the total 48 instances stemmed from the author's own hand (see Table 2). In the same volume, all 28 occurrences of the phrase *orbis literatus* that our corpus includes were located, too (see Table 3). Who was this author and how can we account for such surprising figures?

³⁸ L. Szczucki and T. Szepessy (eds.), Andreas Dudithius, *Epistolae*, vol. 2 (Budapest, 1995), p. 90 (= letter no. 236), ll. 18–19: “*Tibi et omnibus tui similibus rei publicae litterariae faventibus addictissimus.*”

³⁹ On Dasypodius, see Günther Oestmann, *The Astronomical Clock of Strasbourg Cathedral. Function and Significance*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2020, *passim*, but especially at pp. 40–43.

⁴⁰ L. Szczucki and T. Szepessy (1995), p. 322 (= letter no. 272): “*... rogo te etiam atque etiam ut, si in tua sunt bibliotheca, eos [sc. libros; AO] nobiscum communices, quo res publica litteraria tibi pro tali beneficio gratias agat.*”

Stanisław Lubieniecki, the *Theatrum cometicum*, and the Republic of Letters

Stanisław Lubieniecki (1623–1675) was a diplomat, historian, and Socinian theologian who upheld an extensive correspondence network spanning the whole of Europe.⁴¹ He was born into a noble family in the ill-fated town of Raków (south-central Poland), a place of religious tolerance and the ‘capital’ of the Nontrinitarian Polish Brethren. In 1638, as the Counter-Reformation grew stronger, Raków was razed to the ground, including the Socinian Academy where Lubieniecki had been studying. His father then took over his education, taught him law, and brought his son with him on his work trips. This enabled the young Lubieniecki to build on a wide network of Polish aristocrats. He refined his German proficiency in Thorn for two years and, aged 23, continued on a *peregrinatio academica*. He visited the Dutch Republic and France, after which he registered for Leiden University, where he lodged with the classical philologist Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655). The next year, in 1650, he returned to his homeland. Lubieniecki became a vicar in Czarków, but as the situation of the Polish Brethren deteriorated after the end of the Thirty Years War, he fled his country. After wandering for some time, he found residence in Hamburg in 1661, but six years later, he again suffered religious persecution and fled to the nearby Danish city of Altona. In 1674, he was able to return to Hamburg, where he died the following year, allegedly poisoned by his maidservant.⁴²

In 1664, during his stay in Hamburg, Lubieniecki witnessed a large comet, followed by another one the next year (today designated as C/1664 W1 and

⁴¹ On Lubieniecki, see, amongst others, Kai Eduard Jordt-Jørgensen, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki. Zum Weg des Unitarismus von Ost nach West im 17. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1968; Janusz Tazbir, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki przywódca arińskiej emigracji*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1961; id., *Stando lubentius moriar: biografia Stanisława Lubienieckiego*, Warsaw: Iskry, 2003; Maciej Jasiński, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki i astronomia kometarna XVII stulecia*, Warsaw: Instytut Historii Nauki im. L. i A. Brikenmajerów PAN, 2017; id., “Stanisław Lubieniecki (1623–1675) jako uczestnik *res publica litteraria*,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne: Seria Literacka* 31/51 (2017), pp. 191–212; id., “Stanisław Lubieniecki and Johannes Hevelius: (Extra)ordinary ‘Men of Letters,’” *Quarterly Journal of the History of Science and Technology* 64.1 (2019), pp. 125–137; id., “Otto von Guericke’s Cometary Theory in Stanisław Lubieniecki’s Correspondence,” *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 51.2 (2020), pp. 131–151; id., “The Correspondence of Johannes Hevelius,” pp. 21–90. It has recently been claimed that Lubieniecki was a member of the Royal Society, but there seems to be no evidence for this; see Pietro Daniel Omodeo, “Asymmetries of Symbolic Capital in Seventeenth-Century Scientific Transactions: Placentinus’s Cometary Correspondence with Hevelius and Lubieniecki,” in Giulia Giannini and Mordechai Feingold (eds.), *The Institutionalization of Science in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019, pp. 52–79, at p. 55.

⁴² On the various accounts of Lubieniecki’s death, see Jordt-Jørgensen, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki*, pp. 112–116.

C/1665 F1).⁴³ These curious occasions, as well as the appearance of comets earlier that century, caused many pens throughout Europe to write about the nature and significance of these celestial phenomena.⁴⁴ Although neither an astronomer nor mathematician by profession, Lubieniecki, too, seized the opportunity to capitalize on the cometary fascination of his time.⁴⁵ He employed his wide network of acquaintances, which he had continually built during his many travels,⁴⁶ to assemble an impressive collection of informed observations, theories, and opinions from learned correspondents across the continent. He reconnected, for instance, with the astronomer Ismael Boulliau (1605–1694), whom he had earlier met in Paris, and the Dutch philologist Nicolaas Heinsius (1620–1681), the son of Daniel Heinsius, with whom he had stayed in Leiden.⁴⁷

In this continuous effort to reconnect and strengthen the bonds with his correspondents, Lubieniecki's use of the phrases *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* holds a special place. He maneuvered carefully to ask his acquaintances to share their thoughts for the sake of the learned community, as, for instance, in his letter to Wilhelm Langius (1623–1682) from June 1667. By that time, he thought, the professor of mathematics from Copenhagen may already have heard about his cometary project. Perhaps, he wrote, he had even been wondering why he had not yet been consulted on his opinions:⁴⁸

⁴³ Cf. Maïke Sach, "Glaubensflüchtling, Nachrichtenagent und Wissenschaftskommunikator. Der Sozinianer Stanislaw Lubieniecki im norddeutschen Exil," in Kęstutis Daugirdas and Christian V. Witt (eds.), *Gegeneinander glauben – miteinander forschen? Paradigmenwechsel frühneuzeitlicher Wissenschaftskulturen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022, pp. 147–175, at p. 148.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., James H. Robinson, *The Great Comet of 1680: A Study in the History of Rationalism*, Northfield, MN: Press of the Northfield News, 1916; Sara S. Genuth, *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997; Eric Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2010, pp. 109–176, in particular 148–164; Dirk van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science. The Amsterdam Athenaeum, 1632–1704*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009, pp. 264–267; Sach, "Glaubensflüchtling," p. 165.

⁴⁵ Cf. Lubieniecki to Aegidius Menagius, 19 September 1665: "... *opus, quod occasione nuperorum Cometarum, hortatu & impulsu Amicorum ac studio boni publici molior*", in TC, vol. 1, p. 859.

⁴⁶ Cf. Jordt-Jørgensen, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki*, p. 31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–93; on Lubieniecki's contact with Boulliau, see also Henk J.M. Nellen, *Ismael Boulliau (1605–1694), nieuwsjager en correspondent*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Nijmegen, 1980, pp. 388–410; *id.*, *Ismaël Boulliau (1605–1694): astronome, épistolier, nouvelliste et intermédiaire scientifique: ses rapports avec les milieux du "libertinage érudit"*, Amsterdam–Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1994, pp. 435–459.

⁴⁸ Lubieniecki to Langius, 5 June 1667 (O.S): "*Non injurià colligo Te jam aliquid de conatibus meis in argumento Cometico pertractando, occasione nuperorum ejus notae φαινόμενων à nobis visorum, fando accepisse. Neque verò mirère me nondum quidquam de hac re, pro jure amicitiae*

I wanted first to receive the observations of most of the highly regarded mathematicians in Europe and to know their opinion on the whole matter, before writing to you. Hence, on account of our friendship, you could provide me with your opinion on the observations, judgments, and different accounts and opinions of the others. If you do so, you would not only respond to my wish, but also to the reputation of your distinguished name and that of the celebrated Danish people ..., but mostly to the Republic of Letters and later posterity.⁴⁹

In more than one way, this part of Lubieniecki's letter to Langius is revealing of the methodology he followed for his project. For one, he explained that he wanted to assemble information on comets from intellectuals across Europe. He was eager to hear their observations, but also their theories and opinions. Moreover, in turn, he also aimed to provoke the reactions of other correspondents to their colleagues' thoughts. Thus, dialogue and freedom of thought seemed more important to him than presenting an autonomous work as the product of his own ingenuity.⁵⁰ His *Theatrum*, in other words, was offering a stage on which the various correspondents were invited to perform the acts. Lubieniecki's letter to Langius also shows how he used the term Republic of Letters as an integral part of his dialogic method. This was a work by the community, for the community, and the appeal to Langius to join in his project above all "to respond to the wish of the Republic of Letters" was therefore an appropriate and deliberate advocatory use of the phrase.

Set against the backdrop of the other correspondents, the strong connection between the self-made astronomer and the terms *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* becomes most obvious (see also Table 2 and 3). While his correspondents referred only five times to the *respublica literaria* and four times to the *orbis literatus*, Lubieniecki used these phrases 43 and 24 times respectively. Of course, these numbers can only be interpreted in proportion to the total of 471 and 368 letters from both groups edited in the *Theatrum cometicum*. This boils down to a percentage of 9.1% and 5.1% of the letters from Lubieniecki,

nostrae, & cultu, quo Te, Vir Doctissime, prosequor, ad Te retulisse. Nosti enim unius hominis ejusque aliis negotiis occupati, & necessariis hinc & illinc defecti, industriam mediocrem omnibus simul sufficere non posse", in TC, vol. 1, p. 936.

⁴⁹ Ibid.: "*Adhaec [sic] volebam prius plurimorum in Europa Clarissimorum Mathematicorum observationes nancisci, eorumque mentem de toto hoc negotio explorare, quam ad Te scriberem, ut Tu mihi pro nostra amicitia mentem Tuam de aliorum observatis & judiciis ac differentibus rationibus sentiis que aperires. Qua ratione non tantum meis votis, sed & Clarissimi Nominis Tui, & Inclutae gentis Danicae, ut aliis praeclaris facinoribus, ita & studiis Mathematicis orbi jam olim notissimae, existimationi, tum vero cum primis Reipublicae Litterariae & serae posteritati satisfacies.*"

⁵⁰ Cf. Jordt-Jørgensen, *Stanislaw Lubieniecki*, p. 123; Omodeo, "Asymmetries of Symbolic Capital," p. 70.

and 1.4% and 1.1% for the others. Lubieniecki was therefore clearly a fervent user of both terms. The ratio between the two phrases (48/28) also confirms the relative preeminence of the phrase *respublica literaria* as suggested by the large-scale study on the CERA conducted by Hollewand.⁵¹

When we analyze the way in which Lubieniecki applied the terms, we can see that Lubieniecki used the terms most often to praise other scholars (29 and 15 times). Frequently, he directly complimented the high status of his addressees, but incidentally, he also remarked on the prominence of a third party. In the latter case, he not only referred to acquainted individuals but also to others whom he did not know personally, as well as to groups of scholars and learned institutions. He spoke, for instance, highly of the long-dead Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), whom he described as “the most eminent man of the Republic of Letters”,⁵² and whose view on comets he largely agreed with.⁵³ In a letter to the mathematics professor Johannes von Leuneschloss (1620–1699), Lubieniecki not only complimented his addressee, but also his *alma mater*, the University of Heidelberg, “which for many centuries has brought forth many men most distinguished in every kind of knowledge, who have been like pillars to the Republic of Letters”.⁵⁴ The scope could even be larger than this, as we see in another letter to Nicolaas Heinsius. Remarking on his indebtedness to his Dutch correspondents, Lubieniecki stated that he would testify in his forthcoming work “how much I value Holland as the apple of the eye of the Republic of Letters and the darling of liberty”.⁵⁵

When he complimented his correspondents, Lubieniecki often did so by explicitly addressing their contributions to the scholarly community. This subcategory is labeled as “Service to the RoL” in the tables. In these instances, the Republic of Letter’s meritocratic idea(l) as a sphere in which acknowledged intellectual genius rather than one’s birth mattered becomes

⁵¹ Hollewand, “Respublica Litteraria.”

⁵² Lubieniecki to De Rautenstein, 14 February 1665: “*Julius Caesar Scaliger, Vir in Repub. literaria Illustrissimus, Cometas non tantum nihil operari, sed nec quicquam significare, nisi certo respectu, ob rerum scilicet cohaerentiam asserit, Exerc. 79,*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 46; Lubieniecki to Kuyper, 29 September 1666: “*Equidem & Scaliger Cometam rerum signum propter cohaerentiam dici posse largitur. Ita & hic Vir in Republica literaria praestantissimus à nostris stat partibus,*” in TC, vol. 3, p. 9.

⁵³ See Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercitationum liber quintus decimus*, Paris: Ex officina typographica Michaelis Vascosani, 1557, f. 123v.

⁵⁴ Lubieniecki to Von Leuneschloss, 28 February 1665 (N.S.): “... *Almae Vestrae Academiae, quae à tot seculis tot Viros in omni eruditionis genere Praestantissimos, quique tanquam columina Reipublicae literariae fuère ...*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 621.

⁵⁵ Lubieniecki to Nicolaas Heinsius (senior) 11 July 1665 (O.S): “*Ego autem memor ero officii, ut ubicunque occasio se obtulerit, quanti ocellum Reipublicae litterariae & pupillam libertatis Bataviam aestimem, publice in illo meo opere tester,*” *ibid.*, p. 291.

most crystallized.⁵⁶ Lubieniecki profusely praised, for instance, the “merita” of Johannes Hevelius (1611–1687)⁵⁷ and Giovanni Riccioli (1598–1671),⁵⁸ two internationally acclaimed astronomers with whom he had only recently entered into correspondence. In his first letter to the latter from 1 April 1665, he reinforced the image of Riccioli’s widely recognized merits by namedropping (supposedly) assenting intellectuals such as Abraham de Grauw (1632–1683), a philosopher and mathematician from Franeker, as well as Boulliau and Hevelius. He referred to these men as his friends, even though he had known Hevelius for about three months and through their epistolary exchange only.⁵⁹ Mentioning the names of these celebrated ‘friends’, he not only praised Riccioli’s far-reaching reputation but also signaled his involvement in the Republic of Letters, as well as the mutuality of their networks (Boulliau and Riccioli knew each other as well).⁶⁰ As a consequence, Lubieniecki’s strategy also implicitly enabled him to strengthen his main request to start a letter exchange. For if one’s reputation chiefly relied on other intellectuals’ acknowledgment, he, as he made it seem to Riccioli, could be a valuable asset to solidify his renown.⁶¹

Compared to the high frequency of this laudatory use, other instances in which the phrases *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* were adopted are sparse. Rarely did Lubieniecki or one of his correspondents use either phrase to comment on the state of learning at the time. Previous studies by Hollewand

⁵⁶ Cf. Dirk van Miert, “Contested cultural citizenship of a virtual transnational community. Structural impediments for women to participate in the Republic of Letters (1400–1800)”, in R. Buikema, A. Buyse, and A.C.G.M Robben (eds.), *Cultures, Citizenship and Human Rights*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 196–214, at p. 197.

⁵⁷ Lubieniecki to Hevelius, 2 June 1665 (O.S.): “*Sed vincit ea [sc. various impediments] & è medio submovet amor in te meus, unaque cultus Nomini Tuo magnis meritis in Republica literaria clarissimo debitus*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 394; Jasiński (2021), 254. This letter is wrongly dated 1666 in TC; cf. Jasiński (2021), p. 254 n. 1.

⁵⁸ Lubieniecki to Riccioli, 1 April 1665 (N.S.): “*Accessit nuper mihi conspecta laus insignis, quam magnis meritis in Rep. literaria Tuis debitam Amplissimus Hevelius, Mathematicus Eximius & Amicus meus honorandus, Tibi plena mensurâ tribuit*”, in TC, vol. 1, p. 697; Lubieniecki to Riccioli, 19 August 1665: “*Omnes, qui Tua praeclara de Republica literaria merita norunt, nuncio tristi de periculoso Tuo morbo valdè affecti sunt, unaque mecum longam valetudinem Tibi ex animo, boni publici studio precantur, laetumque de Tuae valetudinis meliore statu nuncium praestolantur*”, *ibid.*, p. 730; Lubieniecki to Riccioli, 10 February 1666: “*Gratulor Tibi meliorem imò bonam, & à morbo, ut fieri solet, confirmatam valetudinem: quam cum auctario omnis prosperitatis Tibi, Viro de Republica literaria optime merenti, in plures annos precor. Gratulor quoque & Tibi & Republicae literariae, Te non tantum Astronomiam Reformatam, cujus mentionem aliquando in Tuis ad me literis injecerat, sed & Geographiam reformatam, cum orbe erudito communicasse, imò & in Chronologia reformanda totum occupatum esse*”, *ibid.*, p. 730.

⁵⁹ Lubieniecki to Riccioli, 1 April 1665 (N.S.), *ibid.*, p. 697.

⁶⁰ Cf. Jasiński, “Stanisław Lubieniecki jako uczeŝnik,” pp. 196–197.

⁶¹ Cf. Sach, “Glaubensflüchtling,” p. 167.

and Van Miert, for instance, have shown that matters of health and death often lead to typical remarks on the (precarious) condition of the Republic of Letters.⁶² In Lubieniecki's corpus, however, this trope was only used three times. Writing to the German Jesuit and physicist Gaspar Schott (1608–1666) in 1665, he twice mentioned his concerns about the wellness of Riccioli, whose ill health was generally noted.⁶³ In a letter to the Danzig mathematician Friedrich Büthner (1622–1701) from that same year, he similarly expressed his ardent wish that Hevelius “be kept unharmed as long as possible for the sake of the entire Republic of Letters.”⁶⁴ On other occasions, he also made more general comments on the state of the intellectual community, as he wrote, for example, to De Rautenstein that “the case pleads for itself how much uncertainty of opinion is still left for the learned world to clear up concerning the substance, origin, and causes of comets.”⁶⁵

Generally, however, one can observe that the frequency of the use to comment on the state of the world of learning is low in Lubieniecki's corpus. The same also holds for the earlier mentioned advocatory use of the terms. Only incidentally did Lubieniecki or his correspondents make explicit reference to the Republic of Letters to indicate that some sort of action needed to be undertaken. To this effect, Lubieniecki used the phrase *orbis literatus* only once and *respublica literaria* four times.⁶⁶ In the aforementioned case of Hevelius and his *Cometographia*, for instance, Lubieniecki directly informed him that he and the Republic of Letters were eagerly looking forward to the publication of the work. But he also wrote about the same forthcoming “Hevelian

⁶² Hollewand and Van Miert, “Mapping the Use,” pp. 30, 32–34; Hollewand, “Respublica Litteraria.”

⁶³ See Lubieniecki to Gaspar Schott, 5 August 1665: “*Precor ei* [sc. Riccioli; AO] *longam & rectam valetudinem, ut praeclaris excellentissimi ingenii & indefatigabilis diligentiae monumentis Rempublicam literariam amplius illustret,*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 792; id. to id., 14 November 1665: “*Doctissimum Ricciolium in numero viventium esse mihi illique ipsi, sed & orbi literato gratulor, eumque longum valere unà Tecum & cunctis bonas artes amantibus, precor,*” *ibid.*, p. 794. On Riccioli's ill health, cf. Alfredo Dinis, “Giovanni Battista Riccioli and the Science of His Time,” in Mordechai Feingold (ed.), *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003, pp. 195–224, at p. 223 n. 98.

⁶⁴ Lubieniecki to Friedrich Büthner, 14/24 February 1665: “*Meritò & nos omnes, quotquot bonarum literarum cultores & studiosi sumus, Deum, ut vobis primum, deinde & toti Reipublicae Literariae hoc decus* [sc. Hevelius; AO] *conservet quàm diutissimè, ardentibus votis precamur,*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 800.

⁶⁵ Lubieniecki to De Rautenstein, 13 May 1665: “*Quantum sententiae incertum de matèria, generatione & causis Cometarum orbi literato adhuc exhauriendum reliquum sit, res ipsa loquitur,*” *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁶ See Lubieniecki to Hevelius, 25 August 1665, *ibid.*, p. 401; id. to anonymous from Paris, 23 May 1665, *ibid.*, p. 33; id. to Büthner, 16 April 1666 (N.S.), *ibid.*, p. 807; id. to Langius, 5 June 1667 (O.S.), *ibid.*, p. 936; id. to Rudbeckius, 11 July 1665, *ibid.*, p. 348.

book desired by the prayers of the entire Republic of Letters” in another letter to someone else.⁶⁷ Overall, however, Lubieniecki and his correspondents rarely brought up the ‘need’ or ‘desire’ of the Republic of Letters to obtain something, although this was found to be a commonplace use, for example, in the corpus of Joseph Scaliger.⁶⁸

Apart from the numerical information based on the three functional categories that have been identified, it is noteworthy that our data on Lubieniecki’s use of the terms can be supplemented with a few original accounts in which the author explicitly voiced his thoughts on the nature of the Republic of Letters. On several occasions, he referred to the “laws” by which, according to him, members of the learned community had to live.⁶⁹ This happened, for instance, in a letter to De Rautenstein from July 1665:

Anyone interested in good literature (*bonae litterae*) knows by which laws we live in the Republic of Letters, and that liberty free from any danger is omnipresent, immediately and inseparably accompanied by modesty; just as in the work of Latinus Pacatus, ... arrogance accompanies the fortunate, so that, according to this author, no one could both abound in good fortune and simultaneously be free from arrogance.⁷⁰

Very similar statements about the ideal values of the learned community seem to form a pattern throughout the *Theatrum cometicum*. In various letters to Otto von Guericke Sr., Christian Busmann, Adrien Auzout and Christiaan Huygens, Lubieniecki repeatedly remarked on the importance of freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and modesty in the Republic of Letters.⁷¹ His explicit remarks could be seen as an early example of the rising institutionalization

⁶⁷ Lubieniecki to Büthner, 16 April 1666 (N.S.): “... desiderato illo totius Reipublicae literariae votis opere Heveliano ...,” *ibid.*, p. 807.

⁶⁸ Hollewand and Van Miert, “Mapping the Use,” pp. 35–36.

⁶⁹ In passing, this is also observed in Van Miert, “Regulating the Exchange.”

⁷⁰ Lubieniecki to De Rautenstein, 11 July 1665: “*Omnibus enim bonarum literarum studiosis notum est, quibus legibus in Republica literaria vivatur, & tutam ubique esse libertatem, cui indiscreta adsit pedisequa modestia, sicut illa apud Latinum Pacatum, ni me libro destitutum à triginta annis lecta fugiunt, felicibus superbia, ita nempe ut illo teste nulli contigerit & abundare fortunà, & indigere simul superbià,*” in TC, vol. 1, p. 125. Lubieniecki is alluding to Latinus Pacatus Drepanus, *Panegyricus Theodosio Augusto dictus*, 20.3: “*Nam cum indiscreta felicitum pedisequa sit superbia, uix cuiquam contingit et abundare fortuna et indigere arrogantia.*”

⁷¹ Lubieniecki to Von Guericke Sr., 5/15 August 1665: “... judicandi, & sua quae vel certa, vel saltem probabilia crediderit proferendi, & quantum licet, asserendi libertas ...,” “... vis humanae libertatis ...,” in TC, vol. 1, p. 459; *id.* to Busmann, 5/15 April 1666: “... quae quidem virtus [sc. modesty; AO] satis rara in ipsa quoque Repub. literaria, in qua dominari eam vel maximè oportuit ...,” *ibid.*, p. 654; *id.* to Auzout, 31 October 1665: “*Sed scio in Senatu Philosophico, (quem & ego, omnium licet minimus, pro ea quae cuique in Republica literaria competit, libertate, tùm ea quae*

of the scholarly code of conduct in the second half of the seventeenth century. Since the inception of the phrase *respublica literaria* in the early fifteenth century, some non-codified consensus on the moral codes and duties of scholars had been upheld implicitly.⁷² The ways and contexts in which the 'Republic of Letters' was invoked varied widely, but also showed a varying degree of regulative overlap that indirectly advocated the appropriate *modus vivendi* of the contemporary intellectual community, as Van Miert has recently argued.⁷³ This situation changed only in the late 1600s, when normative and descriptive reflections on the concept started to appear in dictionaries and specially dedicated treatises. Thus, the French Huguenot philosopher Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) wrote in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) about "*la liberté qui règne dans la République de Lettres*."⁷⁴ Over the course of the eighteenth century, the expressed ideals of intellectual freedom and tolerance became commonplace features whenever the authors of the Enlightenment examined the notion of the Republic of Letters.⁷⁵

For Lubieniecki, however, who worked on his *Theatrum cometicum* during the 1660s, intellectual freedom must have been neither a commonplace nor merely an academic ideal. As a German émigré, he had experienced firsthand the dire political consequences of what he identified in his correspondence as "the violation of the freedom of conscience" or "the violation of religious freedom" in Poland.⁷⁶ Moreover, his affinity with the freedom of thought and religion was not just a bitter consequence of his status as a refugee—although this condition must certainly have strengthened his efforts to advocate tolerance and modesty. These were also the key values that emanated from the Socinian doctrine he faithfully adhered to and proclaimed throughout his career. Central to the theology of the Polish Brethren was the denial of the

cuique incumbit ejusdem Reipublicae commoda juvandi, officii necessitudine, cogo) cuivis dicendi & judicandi esse libertatem," *ibid.*, p. 857; *id.* to Huygens, [30 October 1665]: "... *sola Regina bonarum mentium libertate Reipublicae literariae studiosissima ...*," *ibid.*, p. 931.

⁷² Dirk van Miert, "What was the Republic of Letters? A brief introduction to a long history (1417–2008)," *Groniek* 204/205 (2016), pp. 269–287, at p. 276.

⁷³ Van Miert, "Regulating the Exchange."

⁷⁴ Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol. 1, Rotterdam: Reinier Leers, 1697, p. 809, s.v. 'Catius'; as quoted in Waquet, "Qu'est-ce que la République," p. 484.

⁷⁵ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters. A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, Ithaca–London: Cornell University Press, 1994; Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning. Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750*, New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1995.

⁷⁶ Lubieniecki to anonymous from Mark Brandenburg, 14 April 1665: "... *libertas conscientiarum singulari & majori quam unquam antehac injustitia violata ...*," in TC, vol. 1, p. 26; *id.* to *id.*, 13 April 1665: "... *violata religionis libertate ...*," *ibid.*, p. 21. The addressee has been identified as Stefan Niemiryćz by Jasiński, *The Correspondence*, p. 89 n. 122. In the margin to both letters one can also read: "*Libertas conscientiarum violata plurima mala Poloniae attulit.*"

orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. They rejected the triad nature of God based on the premises that the Scripture had to be read *per se* rather than through the lens of dogmatic councils (such as the ones of Nicaea and Constantinople) or other forms of authoritative tradition; and second, that nothing in the Scripture could affirm anything that would go against human reason (*contra rationem*), so that whatever is true must be in accordance with reason and whatever is contradictory to it, such as the concept of the Holy Trinity, must be rejected.⁷⁷ Thus, their first synod resolved that “everyone has a right not to do things which he feels to be contrary to the Word of God,” and that therefore “all may write according to their conscience, if they do not offend anybody by it.”⁷⁸ For Lubieniecki, in short, *libertas* and *modestia* must not only have been distinctly intellectual or scholarly, but also political and religious maxims of far-reaching consequence.⁷⁹

Discussion

The above findings and uses of the terms *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* in our corpus of East Central European correspondents allow for a discussion reflecting on the significance and further implications of this analysis. What can be concluded about the (regional) currency of these phrases in the context of previous studies that have looked at different areas in Europe? Zooming in, we may also ask how the case of Lubieniecki fits in this regional and functional analysis. Finally, a related point of reflection centers around the methodological strengths and limitations that have become manifest over the course of the present as well as previous similar studies.

Arguably the most consequential outcome of this study is the remarkably low frequency of either term in our corpus. As we examined a total of c. 7900 letters, this strongly suggests that neither phrase was commonly used by East Central European correspondents during the time period that was covered, that is, between the first half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. These terms were, in other words, no actor’s categories across the whole of early modern Europe—or at least not as vital and

⁷⁷ Stanislas Kot, *Socinianism in Poland. The Social and Political Ideas of the Polish Antitrinitarians*, translated by Earl Morse Wilbur, Boston: Starr King Press, 1957.

⁷⁸ Quoted from *ibid.*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

⁷⁹ Cf. Lubieniecki to De Rautenstein, 4 March 1665: “*Quod reliquum est, cuique dictante conscientia & ratione, quod verum esse in sacris & civilibus credat, modestè pronuncianti & defendenti integram libertatem relinquo, eandemque lege aequitatis ut mutuam officii vicem ab eo exigo.*” in TC, vol. 1, pp. 49–50.

ubiquitous as modern scholarship may perhaps lead one to believe.⁸⁰ However, this is not to say that these correspondents never wrote about the learned world at all. Neither would the absence of these terms *per se* be sufficient to prove a possible lack of scholarly engagement or (feelings of) supra-regional connectivity with regard to these authors or the region that they represent. Indeed, throughout the conduct of the analysis, several other terms were encountered that denoted the concept of a learned commonality. Moreover, less definitive phrases such as *respublica* or *res literaria* could at times also have referred to the same concept, but this is (too) often dependent on personal interpretation. As a consequence of our methodological approach, these different terms have not been systematically taken into account.

Despite these interpretative limitations cautioned by the results, however, the relative absence of likely the two most often-used terms in early modern Europe to refer to the concept of a cross-border commonality of higher learning is a meaningful find. The concept might, admittedly, have effectively existed as an idea(l), even in the absence of these—or, for that matter, any—specific terms. One may, for instance, argue that a Republic of Letters also existed *avant la lettre* during the late Middle Ages, as nascent universities helped create a system of unified learning across Europe.⁸¹ Most often, however, the Republic of Letters is associated with distinctly humanist ideals and practices that arose out of the Italian Renaissance, such as the renewed interest in the *bonae litterae* and the epistolary medium as a way to communicate as a private individual and cultivate learned friendships.⁸² The oft-quoted first-known occurrence of the phrase *respublica literaria* in a letter from Francesco Barbaro (1390–1459) from 1417 illustrates to what degree the origin of this term and the history of its underlying concept are commonly connected to each other in the literature.⁸³ This connection between concept and term was also explicitly addressed by Peter Burke, when he wrote that “a new phrase usually corresponds to a new reality or at least to a new ideal.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ E.g., Bots and Waquet, *La République des Lettres*; Peter Burke, “Erasmus and the republic of letters,” *European Review* 7.1 (1999), pp. 5–17; Almási, *The Uses of Humanism*, pp. 69–97.

⁸¹ Burke, “Erasmus and the republic of letters,” p. 8.

⁸² *Ibid.*, On humanism and the practices of correspondence, see the contributions in Toon van Houdt, Jan Papy, Gilbert Tournoy, and Constant Matheeuissen (eds.), *Self-Presentation and Social Identification: The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter-Writing in Early Modern Times*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002.

⁸³ E.g., Bots and Waquet, *La République des Lettres*, pp. 11–12; Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren*, p. 13; Burke, “Erasmus and the republic of letters,” p. 8; Van Miert, “What was the Republic of Letters?,” p. 271.

⁸⁴ Burke, “Erasmus and the republic of letters,” p. 8.

The found absence of the two phrases in this study is especially meaningful in so far as we agree with Burke's statement. Previous studies have shown that the term *respublica literaria* gradually became manifest in different parts of Europe (although the actual currency of the term is often overrated).⁸⁵ As its increasing geographical spread and frequency are frequently interpreted as signs of the growing currency of the underlying concept,⁸⁶ it is important to realize that its continental occurrence seems, in fact, limited at best and erratic at worst.

Concerning the authors of East Central European descent, one provisional explanation could be that they were generally not as well connected to the intellectual discourse that was upheld among other Europeans. However, as we become more aware of the scarcity of the term in early modern correspondences in general, we should be hesitant to resort to such a grandiose hypothesis based on the outcomes of this study. The findings of the above analysis show how the in- or exclusion of the letters of one single author could dramatically influence the picture. This phenomenon can be observed more widely in the most recent literature on the Republic of Letters. It reminds us, for instance, of the earlier mentioned case of the Casaubon correspondence, in which almost one out of every ten letters turned out to contain a reference to the *respublica literaria*.⁸⁷ Thus, a relatively small number of individual authors may represent the lion's share of the verbal references to the transnational intellectual community in a given corpus.

The correspondence of Stanisław Lubieniecki supports the assumption that some authors held a much stronger preference for adopting these terms in their daily discourse compared to their colleagues. Moreover, Lubieniecki's case also confirms previous studies' argument that the analysis of the use of these phrases in their respective contexts can be a fruitful lever for studying the social position and character traits of an author.⁸⁸ Both their high number of occurrences and the rhetorical embedding—often, for instance, as part of an elaborate panegyric move to flatter an addressee or stress his awareness of and involvement in the intellectual sphere—can be seen as illustrative of the author's *modus operandi* as a historical actor.

The patterns found in the analysis above reflect, I argue, at least four factors that deeply influenced Lubieniecki's life and work. First, his precarious position as a religious exile compelled him to strengthen his epistolary ties in order

⁸⁵ Van Miert, "Regulating the Exchange of Knowledge"; Hollewand, "Respublica Litteraria."

⁸⁶ This especially holds for Bots and Waquet, *La République des Lettres*.

⁸⁷ See also note 10.

⁸⁸ Hollewand and Van Miert, "Mapping the Use," p. 41; Hollewand, "Respublica Litteraria"; Van Miert, "Regulating the Exchange."

to remain in touch as an intellectual, divorced as he was from the physical community of the Polish Brethren, which had largely been scattered. Hence, a transnational or stateless commonwealth of learning proved not only an enticing but also a much-needed concept for him to realize and uphold in his correspondence. Secondly, as he earned part of his income as a political informant and intermediary on behalf of the Kings of Sweden, Denmark, and France from the 1650s onward, the idea of a Republic of Letters, governed by the rule of tolerance and the duty to communicate, directly benefited his profession as an information broker. Related to this is also the fact that despite his astronomical interests, Lubieniecki was neither an astronomer nor mathematician as he embarked on his side-project of the *Theatrum cometicum*. Obviously, this created a problem. Nevertheless, he managed to successfully compile this three-volume work, as he “most clearly recognized the collective dimension of knowledge production fostered through open confrontation and exchange,” to quote from a recent article by Pietro Daniel Omodeo.⁸⁹ In other words, Lubieniecki both propagated and capitalized on the idea that the advancement of science and scientists relied fundamentally on the joint effort of the community. Acting as the pivot of his large, self-created network of scholars, he managed to generate an abundant flow of (cross-)communication by keeping the concept of the Republic of Letters and its bestowed merits strong in the minds of his correspondents. Hence, he succeeded in writing a hefty book on comets while hardly conducting any astronomical observations himself.⁹⁰

A fourth and final factor that is arguably reflected in Lubieniecki's attraction to the Republic of Letters as a phrase and concept, is found in his earlier-mentioned faithful adherence to Socinianism. Based on the principles of religious and intellectual freedom, open dialogue, and modesty, this religious movement practically advocated most of the core values that were ascribed to the Republic of Letters in the dictionaries and treatises from the second half of the seventeenth century onward. Indeed, this marked overlap of values may also raise the question as to what extent Lubieniecki really conceived of the Republic of Letters as a separate dominion subsisting on its own terms. Modern-day historians commonly treat the Republic of Letters as an *état particulier*, a “different kind of society” with its own distinct “citizens”.⁹¹ This conception has only recently been challenged by Anna Borowski, Hollewand, and Van Miert, among others,

⁸⁹ Omodeo, “Asymmetries of Symbolic Capital,” p. 78.

⁹⁰ On Lubieniecki's own observations, see Jasiński, *The Correspondence of Johannes Hevelius*, pp. 68–71.

⁹¹ See respectively Bots and Waquet, *La République des Lettres*, pp. 18–21; Anthony Grafton, “A Sketch Map of a Lost Continent: The Republic of Letters,” *Republics of Letters* 1.1 (2008), p. 5, <https://arcade.stanford.edu/rofl/sketch-map-lost-continent-republic-letters>; Van Miert, “Contested cultural citizenship.”

who have argued that the scholarly community did not stand separate from the political and religious influences of state and church—neither in the minds of early modern intellectuals nor in reality.⁹² Surveying Lubieniecki's statements on the nature of the Republic of Letters in the context of his letters, it becomes evident that for him, too, this concept was deeply connected with the general reality in, and ideologies according to which, he lived—professional, political, religious, and ethical at once. For him, the terms *respublica literaria* and *orbis literatus* functioned as tools to implement his philosophy of life.

The analysis of the use of these phrases in their respective contexts has therefore proven a useful method on the level of the individual author. However, as the people whose correspondences were analyzed in this study seriously differ from each other with regard to the frequency of employment of the terms, it is difficult to draw any general conclusions on the collective of the authors from this corpus based on such distorted numbers. An even larger diachronic and typological survey of European correspondences is necessary to find out whether references to the *respublica literaria*, *orbis literatus*, or similar phrases form distinct regionally distributed patterns on the map, or rather result from the pens of a select number of Lubieniecki's, Casaubons, and Scaligers. Regions that may be thought of in particular include other often-supposed 'peripheries' of the Republic of Letters, such as Spain and the Nordic countries. Such a map could finally help us to contextualize, both literally and metaphorically, the 'silence' of East Central European correspondents found in this study, either confirming their relative isolation from other regions concerning the currency of these terms, or challenging the ruling assumption that these phrases were widely used throughout the continent.

It is a trope to say that the ongoing digitization of historical sources, such as early modern correspondences (traditionally hidden in hard-to-access editions, anthologies, and manuscripts), provides a good reason for optimism for future inquiry. While this certainly holds for the kind of research represented by this study, the reality is often that scans—if they exist—are blurred and web pages unavailable for one's institution. In addition, research frequently stalls as texts cannot be freely downloaded or automatically searched, formats prove to be incompatible, and relevant data are wrongly filed or scattered over dozens of arcane websites and isolated databases of poor maintenance.⁹³ These are issues

⁹² Anna Borowski, "Republic of Letters," in Dana Jalobeanu and C.T. Wolfe (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences* (Springer: Cham, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20791-9_627-1; Hollewand and Van Miert, "Mapping the Use," pp. 27–29; Hollewand, "Respublica Litteraria."

⁹³ Cf. Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital: Or How Academic History Writing Lost the Plot," *Cultural and Social History* 10.1, pp. 9–23.

that will likely continue to exist for longer, requiring a substantial effort to collect, read, and analyze reliable and clean epistolary data on a large scale.

Over the last decade or so, a number of initiatives have aimed to amass and interpret considerable amounts of early modern epistolary data, such as The Huygens 'ePistolarium' (2009–2013), the Stanford 'Mapping the Republic of Letters' project (2012–2017), and the COST Action 'Reassembling the Republic of Letters' (2014–2019).⁹⁴ Moreover, many new research projects have recently centered on creating digital editions of the correspondences of individuals, including the Leibniz-Edition (Akademie-Ausgabe), Pierre Bayle (Antony McKenna), Belle van Zuylen (Suzan van Dijk), and Linnaeus (Swedish Linnaeus Society – Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences).⁹⁵ Each of these projects provides invaluable new jigsaw pieces, which, however, still need to be manually collected and put on the map of Europe (and beyond). This is and remains a laborious puzzle that will continually develop over time.

Conclusion

Between the first half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, correspondents of East Central European descent seem to have seldomly referred to the Republic of Letters. Neither the term *respublica literaria* nor *orbis literatus* was commonly in use. An exhaustive analysis of a corpus comprising about 7900 letters turned out to include 48 occurrences of the former, and 28 of the latter phrase. These cumulative results, however, carry only limited meaning and could be seen as misleading. Removing the correspondence of the most fervent user of both terms (viz. Stanisław Lubieniecki) from our results, a mere number of three instances of the term *respublica literaria* remain—none of which actually originated from the pen of an East Central European author.

Therefore, an important conclusion of this research is that these phrases were not widely in use among intellectuals across the whole of Europe. Moreover, the remarkable distribution of occurrences among the authors of the corpus gives reason to suggest that only a small number of correspondents took advantage of these terms, while many others did not bother to use them. The present study argues that the specific case of Lubieniecki's correspondence shows us how a variety of sometimes deeply personal motives may be reflected by an author's attachment to these phrases and explains this attachment at the same time. These motives were often not strictly intellectually oriented,

⁹⁴ For the project pages, see: <https://ckcc.huygens.knaw.nl/epistolarium/>; <http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/>; <https://www.republicofletters.net/>.

⁹⁵ See <https://leibnizedition.de/>; [http://bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr/?lang=fr](http://bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr/?lang=fr;); <https://charriere.huygens.knaw.nl/edition/>; <http://www.linnaeus.se/en/correspondence/>.

but also professionally, politically, religiously, and ethically informed. Thus, we may not only question the currency of the Republic of Letters as a phrase throughout Europe but also the extent to which its underlying concept was conceived of as a separate sphere of influence by contemporary authors.

The quantifying and functional methodology underlying this research has therefore proven useful both to approach the habits of individual authors and to question the vitality of our two terms on a regional scale. However, in light of the lack of these terms at large—at least in the case of authors from East Central Europe—we should be wary of our interpretation of single authors who seldom or never used them. It would, after all, be safe to say that a very low number of occurrences in a given correspondence could be regarded as the default ‘standard’ for these regions. This also means that we cannot always “predict patterns about people’s precarious social positions or character traights [sic]” only by looking at the occurrences of the terms that refer to the Republic of Letters in the correspondence of an author, as has recently been suggested.⁹⁶ While there is certainly a meaningful discussion to be held in the presence of a relatively large number of instances, the same does not seem to hold in the case of absence. The latter only suggests the overvaluation of these terms by modern-day scholarship.

Table 1. Bibliographic and numeric overview of the letter collections of the corpus

Edition	Number of letters taken from edition
[Petrus Bertius, ed.,] <i>Illustrium et clarorum virorum epistolae selectiores superiore seculo scriptae vel a Belgis vel ad Belgas ...</i> , Lugduni Batavorum: Apud Lodovicum Elzevirium, 1617 [USTC: 1028193]. Letters from Petrus Sborovius on pp. 587–590, 590–591. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Illustrium_et_clarorum_virorum_epistolae/GJFXAAAACAAJ .	2
<i>Jana Amosa Komenského korrespondence</i> , ed. by Adolf Patera, V Praze: nákladem České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění, 1892. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://books.google.nl/books?id=IbZNAQAAMAAJ .	238
Joannes Dantiscus, <i>CORPUS of Joannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence</i> , ed. by Anna Skolimowska and Magdalena Turska, online, http://dantiscus.al.uw.edu.pl/?f=showCorrespondence&action=all&level=3 .	780

⁹⁶ Hollewand and Van Miert, “Mapping the Use,” p. 41.

Edition	Number of letters taken from edition
<p>Joannes Dlugosh (ed.), <i>Historiae Polonicae</i>, vol. 2, Lipsiae: Sump-tibus Io. Ludov. Gleditschii & Mauritii Georgii Weidmanni, 1712. Anthology of letters on pp. 1635–1856. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Cracoviensis_historiae_Polonicae_libri_X/axdFAAAAcAAJ.</p>	209
<p>Georgius Dousa, <i>De itinere suo constantinopolitano epistola</i>, Lugduni Batavorum: Apud Christophorum Raphelengium, 1599 [USTC: 424400]. Letters from Simon Simonides are on pp. 131–134. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://books.google.nl/books?id=_BBpAAAAcAAJ.</p>	2
<p>Andreas Dudithius, <i>Epistolae</i>, ed. by L. Szcucki and T. Szepessy, 7 vols., Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992–2019. Editions available in the digital library of the National Széchényi Library; vol. 1: https://mek.oszk.hu/20300/20374/pdf/20374_1.pdf; vol. 2: https://mek.oszk.hu/20300/20374/pdf/20374_2.pdf; vol. 4: https://mek.oszk.hu/20300/20374/pdf/20374_4.pdf; vol. 5: https://mek.oszk.hu/20300/20374/pdf/20374_5.pdf; vol. 7: https://mek.oszk.hu/20300/20374/pdf/20374_7.pdf. Access to volumes no. 3 and 6 could not be found online. These volumes have therefore been excluded from the study.</p>	1030
<p>Stanislaus Hosius, <i>Opera omnia in duos divisa tomos ...</i>, ed. by Stanislaus Rescius, vol. 2, Coloniae: Apud Maternum Cholinum, 1584 [USTC: 626323]. Letters to and from Hosius are on pp. 145–453. The first volume of this edition does not contain letters. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://books.google.nl/books?id=u19nAAAAcAAJ.</p>	277
<p>Józef Kallenbach (ed.), <i>Index lectionum quae in universitate Friburgensi ... habebuntur ...</i>, Friburgi Helvetiorum: Typis Consociationis Sancti Pauli, 1891. Contains an anthology of 30 letters. Edition available in digitized form in the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/indexlectionumqu00kall.</p>	30
<p>Johannes à Lasco, <i>Opera tam edita quam inedita</i>, ed. with an introduction by A. Kuyper, vol. 2, Amstelodami–Hagae-comitum, 1866. Letters to and from Lasco are on pp. 145–453. The first volume of this edition does not contain letters. Editions available in digitized form in Google Books; vol. 1: https://books.google.nl/books?id=SMsCAAAQAAJ; vol. 2: https://books.google.nl/books?id=jssCAAAQAAJ.</p>	136

Edition	Number of letters taken from edition
<p>Stanisław Lubieniecki, <i>Theatrum cometicum ...</i>, vol. 1, Amstelodami: Apud Franciscum Cuperum, 1668. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.nl/books/edition/Theatrum_cometicum_duabus_partibus_const/WeRjAAAAcAAJ.</p> <p>Id., <i>Theatri cometici exitus ...</i>, vol. 3, Amstelodami: Apud Franciscum Cuperum, 1667. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.nl/books/edition/Stanslai_de_Lubienietz_Lubieniecii_Roli/r15fAAAAcAAJ.</p>	<p>839 (the majority of which are in vol. 1); see also footnote 21.</p>
<p><i>Farrago epistolarum ad Dan. Guil. Mollerum in decades distributa</i>, 3 vols., Altdorfii: Typis Kohlesianis, 1710–1712. Editions available in digitized form through the University Library of the Ludwig Maximilian University; vol. 1: https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/12239/1/8Doell.14735_1.pdf; vol. 2: https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/12240/1/8Doell.14735_2.pdf; vol. 3: https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/12241/1/8Doell.14735_3.pdf.</p>	<p>30 (= 3x10)</p>
<p>Petrus Pázmány, <i>Epistolae collectae</i>, ed. by Franciscus Hanuy, 2 vols., Budapestini: Typis Regiae Scientiarum Universitatis, 1910–1911. Editions available in digitized form through the Pázmány Péter Elektronikus Könyvtár (PPEK; ‘Pázmány Péter Electronic Library’); vol. 1: http://www.ppek.hu/konyvek/Pazmany_Peter_Osszegujtott_Levelei_I_kotet_Facsimile.pdf; vol. 2: http://www.ppek.hu/konyvek/Pazmany_Peter_Osszegujtott_Levelei_II_kotet_Facsimile.pdf.</p>	<p>1161</p>
<p><i>Philosophicae consolationes, et meditationes in adversis ...</i>, Francofurti: Apud Andream Wechelum, 1577 [USTC: 683953]. Letters from Johannes Sambucus are on pp. 122–126. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://books.google.nl/books?id=aEGkVSx8EksC.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><i>Martini Ruari nec non aliorum illustrium, spectabilium, doctorumque virorum ... ad ipsum vel ejus causa scriptarum epistolarum selectarum centuria</i>, vol. 2, Amstelodami: Apud Davidem Ruarum, 1681. Letters from Fransiscus Bethlen are on pp. 420, 430–31, 433–34. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Martini_Ruari_nec_non_H_Grotii_M_Mersenn/dL8TAAAAQAAJ.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p><i>Die Briefe des Johannes Sambucus, (Zsamboky) 1554–1584</i>, ed. by Hans Gerstinger, Wien, 1968. Not digitally available.</p>	<p>165</p>

Edition	Number of letters taken from edition
Sigismundus Augustus, <i>Epistolae, legationes et responsa ...</i> , ed. by Jo. Burchard Menckenius, Lipsiae: Apud Jo. Fridericum Gleditsch, 1703. Letters to and from Sigismundus end on p. 534 (286 letters). Then follow some letters from Stephanus Bathori. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Sigismundi_Augusti_Poloniarum_Regis_Epis/B2NnAAAAcAAJ .	326
Simon Simonides, <i>Opera omnia quae reperiri potuerunt ...</i> , ed. by Angelo Maria Durini, Varsaviae: In typographia Mitzleriana, 1772. Letter from Simonides on p. 253. Edition available in digitized form in Google Books: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Simonis_Simonidae_Bendonski_Leopolitani/N-WLUCbVdjEC .	1
Fridericus Sylburgius (ed.), <i>Catalogus codicum Graecorum M.SS. ... & Henrici Altingii ... historia ecclesiastica Palatina ... addita sunt alia antehac non edita virorum illustrium opuscula & epistolae ...</i> , Francofurtii ad Moenum: Apud Johannem Maximilianum à Sande, 1701). Letter from Johannes Deika (or Dayka) Keservinus in part 2, pp. 227–238. Edition available in digitized form through the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek: https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/image/144396719X/82/ .	1
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<i>Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego, kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego</i> , ed. by Kazimierz Lepszy et al., 4 vols., Warszawa: Druk. Piotra Laskauera i S–ki, 1904–1948. Editions available in digitized form in the Internet Archive; vol. 1: https://archive.org/details/archiwumjanazam01unkngoog ; vol. 2: https://archive.org/details/archiwumjanazamo02krakuoft ; vol. 3: https://archive.org/details/archiwumjanazamo03krakuoft ; vol. 4: https://archive.org/details/archiwumjanazamo04krakuoft .	c. 1500
Total number of letters	c. 7900

Table 2. The use and frequency of the phrase “Republic of Letters” in the correspondence of Stanislaus Lubieniecki

Type of use ‘RoL’	Uses	% of total	By correspondent	By Lubieniecki
Praise	32	66.7%	3	29
Title of honor	2	4.2%	0	2
Praising one’s correspondent	13	27.1%	0	13
<i>Service to the RoL</i>	(7)	(14.6%)	(0)	(7)
Praising a third party	14	29.3%	2	12
<i>Service to the RoL</i>	(3)	(6.3%)	(1)	(2)
Self-praise	3	6.3%	1	2
State of the RoL	10	20.8%	0	10
<i>Negative</i>	(4)	8.3%	(0)	(4)
Prayer to keep safe	2	4.2%	0	2
Fear of loss	0	-	0	0
Mourning	0	-	0	0
General complaint	1	2.1%	0	1
Himself and the RoL	1	2.1%	0	1
<i>Positive</i>	6	12.5%	(0)	(6)
General comments	6	12.5%	0	6
In interest of the RoL			0	0
Call to action	6	12.5%	2	4
RoL must have something	2		0	2
General duty to benefit RoL	4	8.3%	2	2
Total	48	100%	5	43

Table 3. The use and frequency of the phrase “orbis literatus” in the correspondence of Stanislaus Lubieniecki

Type of use 'RoL'	Uses	% of total	By correspondent	By Lubieniecki
Praise	18	64.3%	3	15
Title of honor	0	-	0	0
Praising one's correspondent	8	28.6%	1	7
<i>Service to the RoL</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(10.7%)</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
Praising a third party	9	32.1%	2	7
<i>Service to the RoL</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(7.1%)</i>	<i>(0)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
Self-praise	1	3.6%	0	1
State of the RoL	9	32.1%	1	8
<i>Negative</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
Prayer to keep safe	1	3.6%	0	1
Fear of loss	0	-	0	0
Mourning	0	-	0	0
General complaint	0	-	0	0
Himself and the RoL	4	14.3%	1	3
<i>Positive</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
General comments	4	14.3%	0	4
In interest of the RoL	0	-	0	0
Call to action	1	3.6%	0	1
RoL must have something	1	3.6%	0	1
General duty to benefit RoL	0	-	0	0
Total	28	100%	4	24

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