

The Letter and the Newsletter. The Evolution of Scientific Journals from Correspondence between Scholars (Der Brief und das Blatt. Die Entstehung wissenschaftlicher Zeitschriften aus der Gelehrtenkorrespondenz)

REGINE ZOTT

Private correspondences are documents of history, culture, language, ideas and human relations. Private correspondence means intersubjective verbal written exchange of informations on conditions of local distance of the partners and temporal distance of writing down up to reception with the aim to win individual and collective knowledge as well as emotions. Private correspondence is a medium of informal communication, is confidentially, spontaneously, triggers further gnostic reflections and emotional associations by the corresponding partners. Formal communication is organized, institutionalized, legally available; this latter form includes official documents, publications or open debates. Formal and informal communication relate to each other; the development of formal medias is prepared by informal medias, and, once existing, formal canals modify the informal medias.

Up to 17th century, the private correspondence in a meanwhile half-official wise fulfilled the function of an allround-information-media between scientists. When grow the number of scientists and their specialities, private letters could no more meet the requirements of communication between scientists. Newsletters and journals evolved as a new form of official communication. The correspondence of scientists now lost that half-official character and modified as informal communication.

The physicochemist Wilhelm Ostwald consciously used the correlations of informal and formal communication. Moreover, he regarded it as an urgent subject of scientific exploration, for using communication canals as effectively as possible.

Kontakt

r.zott@gmx.de