

## Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad – with special consideration for our threatened heritage – the endangered heritage in particular (2006-2015)

Many Polish libraries in the country and abroad have been closed after the breakthrough of the year 1989. The amount and content of the collections have been changing as well, if taken over and selected by other institutions. The process of dispersion, fragmentation, or even destruction of valuable library collections is accelerating. Thereby the resources of Polish books and libraries abroad are being decreased – those potentially useful not only for the book historians, but also for the researchers interested in Polish diasporas and emigration history, as the library collections evidence life of communities they have been collected, maintained, and used by.

Andrzej Kłossowski<sup>1</sup> mentioned these negative phenomena as one of the first. He specialised in the history of the Polish books abroad, and managed the Department of Polish Books Abroad in the National Library (Pracownia Badań nad Książką Polską za Granicą Biblioteki Narodowej)<sup>2</sup> since 1994. A year later (1995, actually in 2000) The Archives of Polish and Easter European Emigration (Archiwum Emigracji) was opened, as an independent archival and research unit on the Nicolaus Copernicus University Library (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika) in Toruń. Due to the limited volume of this paper, we only notify its activity, extremely important and having been consequently realised. The search of resources concerning history of Polish libraries and collections abroad has been also intensified<sup>3</sup>, however the works started in the period of the People's Republic of Poland<sup>4</sup>. The positive effects of these researches, focused particularly on the history of

---

<sup>1</sup> For example: A. Kłossowski, *Książka polska na obczyźnie XX wiek*, ed. by M.A. Supruniuk, J. Tondel, Toruń 2003.

<sup>2</sup> For example: A. Wagner, *Andrzej Kłossowski, badacz problematyki polskiej książki na obczyźnie*, [in:] *Kultura książki i prasy polonijnej. Dziedzictwo narodowe i światowe*, ed. M. Kalczyńska, D. Sieradzka, Z. Małecki, Katowice 2009, pp. 17-26.

<sup>3</sup> For example: L. Kowkiel, *Materiały do dziejów księgozbiorów prywatnych na Grodzieńszczyźnie w I połowie XIX wieku w archiwach, bibliotekach i muzeach Białorusi, Litwy i Polski, „Białostoczczyzna”* 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 21-32; E. Różycki, *O bibliotekach na Podolu w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku (na podstawie materiałów Rosyjskiego Państwowego Archiwum Historycznego w Sankt Petersburgu)*, „Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Historica” 2004, Vol. 21, pp. 405-411; M. Pidlypczak-Majerowicz, *Katalogi bibliotek zakonnych na Białorusi we współczesnych zbiorach rękopiśmiennych*, [in:] *Wspólnota pamięci. Studia z dziejów kultury ziem wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. J. Gwioździk, J. Malicki, Katowice 2006, pp. 215-228.

<sup>4</sup> For example: M. Lech, *Materiały do dziejów książki i czytelnictwa polskiego w bibliotekach i archiwach*

books and libraries at the Eastern Borderlands of Poland<sup>5</sup>, are proved by valuable contributions, elaborations<sup>6</sup> and monographies. These topics are close to the problems of restitution of cultural heritage<sup>7</sup>. Different types of publications were prepared, like: sources' editions<sup>8</sup>, guides<sup>9</sup>, conference proceedings<sup>10</sup>, documentary reports<sup>11</sup>, including catalogues of *Polonica* and Polish collections in Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Great Britain, Ukraine and Italy<sup>12</sup>. A few authors of these publications presented their research experiences and con-

*leninradzkich*, „Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej” 1968, No 3, pp. 25-27; A. Kłossowski, *Historia książki polskiej za granicą, Problemy badawcze*, Warszawa 1980; Idem, *Źródła do badań nad dziejami książki polskiej na obczyźnie*, „Studia o Książce” 1985, Vol. 15, pp. 87-104; E. Różycki, *Materiały źródłowe do dziejów polskiej książki w archiwach i bibliotekach Lwowa, Kijowa, Mińska i Wilna*, „Roczniki Biblioteczne” 1987, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 305-317.

<sup>5</sup> For example: M. Matwijów, *Walka o lwowskie dobra kultury w latach 1945-1948*, Wrocław 2003; J. Gwioździk, *Kultura pisma i książki w żeńskich klasztorach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej XVI-XVIII wieku*, Katowice 2015.

<sup>6</sup> For example: J. Wróblewski, *Z dziejów książki polskiej na Litwie Kowieńskiej w okresie międzywojennym*, „Roczniki Biblioteczne” 1987, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 109-149; A. Kłossowski, *Biblioteki polskie na obczyźnie*, Warszawa 1992; J. Kuszlejo, *Książka polska w Rosji na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 1993; J. Sozański, *Zarys historyczny bibliotek polskich na ziemiach lotewskich*, [in:] *Kultura polska na Łotwie*, ed. J. Sozański, R. Szklennik, Ryga 1994, pp. 45-51; A. Kłossowski, *Książka polska...*; B. Bienkowska, *Dziesięć lat z życia bibliotek polonijnych (1938-1948)*, „Z Badań nad Polskimi Księgozbiorami Historycznymi” 2002, Vol. 20, pp. 79-88; E. Różycki, *Z dziejów prywatnych księgozbiorów Polaków w Petersburgu w XIX wieku*, [in:] *Dawnych ksiąg niesyty. Tom studiów dedykowanych profesorowi Januszowi Tondelowi na siedemdziesięciolecie urodzin*, ed. I. Imańska, A. Wagner, Toruń 2016, pp. 295-315.

<sup>7</sup> For example: D. Matelski, *Grabież i restytucja polskich dóbr kultury. Od czasów nowożytnych do współczesnych*. Vol. 1-2, Kraków 2006.

<sup>8</sup> For example: Z. Strzyżewska, *Konfiskaty warszawskich zbiorów publicznych po Powstaniu Listopadowym. Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i Warszawskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Materiały i dokumenty z archiwów rosyjskich*, Warszawa 2000.

<sup>9</sup> M. Kocójowa, *Przewodnik po zbiorach rękopisów w Wilnie*, Kraków 1993; S. Pijaj, *Archiwa rodzinno-majątkowe w zbiorach państwowych we Lwowie. Informator*, Warszawa 1995; *Biblioteki polskie poza krajem w latach 1938-1948. Informator*, prepared by U. Paszkiewicz, J. Szymański, ed. B. Bienkowska, Poznań 2005; *Informator o polonikach w zbiorach rękopiśmiennych Lwowskiej Narodowej Naukowej Biblioteki Ukrainy im. Wasyla Stefanyka*. Part 1: *Zbiory Biblioteki Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich zinwentaryzowane przed 1945 r.*, prepared by M. Matwijów, E. Ostromecka. P. 2: *Zbiór Aleksandra Czolowskiego*, prepared by K. Rzemieniecki, Wrocław 2010.

<sup>10</sup> For example: *Libri separati. Inspiracje do badań nad starodrukami polskimi w bibliotekach Rosji, Białorusi, Ukrainy i Litwy*, ed. S. Siess-Krzyszowski, W. Walecki, Kraków 2010; *Polskie i rosyjskie dziedzictwo kulturowe w zbiorach bibliotecznych - perspektywy badawcze*, „Z Badań nad Książką i Księgozbiorami Historycznymi” 2015, Vol. 9, pp. 17-119.

<sup>11</sup> For example: U. Paszkiewicz, «*Catalogus catalogorum*». *Inwentarze i katalogi bibliotek z ziem wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej od XVI wieku do 1939 roku. Spis scalony, poprawiony i uzupełniony*. Vol. 1-2, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>12</sup> For example: J. Trypućko, *Polonica vetera Upsaliensia : catalogue des imprimés polonais ou concernant la Pologne des XV<sup>e</sup>, XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles conservés à la Bibliothèque de l'Université Royale d'Uppsala*, Uppsala 1958; A. Murche-Kikut, *Unabhängige Periodika aus Polen 1976-1990. Bestandskatalog*, 2. überarb. und erw. Auflage, Bremen 1992; M. Gołuszka, M. Malicki, *Polnische Drucke und Polonica 1501-1700. Katalog der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*. Vol. 1: 1501-1600. Vol. 2: 1601-1700, München 1992-1994; J. Bzinkowska, *Katalog map Polski wydanych w atlasach angielskich w XVII i XVIII wieku ze zbiorów The Bodleian Library w Oxfordzie*, „Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej” 1996, Vol. 46, No 1-2, pp. 119-137; *Książka w środowisku lwowskich rzemieślników*. P. 1: *Katalog książek z Biblioteki Stowarzyszenia Rękodzielników «Gwiazda» we Lwowie*, prepared by M. Konopka, Kraków 2003; *Polskie książki i rękopisy w zbiorach Biblioteki Naukowej Państwowego Uniwersytetu im. M.W. Lomonosowa w Moskwie. Katalog = Польские редкие книги и рукописи в фондах Научной библиотеки МГУ им. М.В. Ломоносова : каталог*, prepared by S. Siess-Krzyszowski, И.Л. Великодная, Kraków-Moskwa 2005; J. Trypućko, *The catalogue of the books of the Jesuit College in Braniewo held in the University Library in Uppsala. Katalog księgozbioru Kolegium Jezuitów w Braniewie zachowanego w Bibliotece Uniwersyteckiej w Uppsali*. Vol. 1: *Introduction, manuscripts, incunabula*, extended and compl. by M. Spandowski, ed. M. Spandowski, S. Szyller, Warszawa-Uppsala 2007; *Polonica ze*

clusions in this book. However, no progress would be made without temporary or long-time cooperation between Polish researchers, teams or institutions, and foreign experts or entities, including libraries, archives and research institutions.

The care for cultural heritage, also that remaining abroad, lies in the interest of each state, but also has a universal dimension. It is confirmed by – among others – registration of monuments, their documentation, preservation, better promotion and usage, in digitization and research projects<sup>13</sup> as well. The register of contemporary, preserved Polish collections abroad was lacking in Poland. It seemed to be a prerequisite not only for documentation, but also as an information source about collections and objects often forgotten, unknown or not utilized by Polish researchers, even though they deserve it.

The „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad – with special consideration for our threatened heritage” Programme, realised in the years 2006-2015 under the auspices of the Department of Cultural Heritage (Departament Dziedzictwa Kulturowego, formerly: Department of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad – Departament do Spraw Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą, since 2016 the Department of Cultural Heritage Abroad and War Losses – Departament Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą i Strat Wojennych) in the Ministry of Culture and Cultural Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego), attempted to answer this need. The Programme, formally closed, requires some commentaries and summary, because basic information about its aims and scope, offered so far in two publications discussed below, are not widely known, due to their limited accessibility. There are many original research data unpublished so far.

The „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad...” Programme had research and documentary aims, not in interference with proprietary or organizational matters of the collections’ owners. Revival of interest in Polish collections abroad was also assumed, both in Poland and in the countries they are being maintained in. The Programme was to enhance understanding of a fundamental role of *Polonica* for the Polish culture, to facilitate contacts between their owners and institutions in Poland, to support common initiatives (ex. digitization), and – last but not least – to protect and promote this part of the Polish cultural heritage.

The book collections of permanent historical, cultural or bibliophilic value in Polish or Polish diasporas’ institutions were to be registered at the beginning. However, they

*zbioru zamku Skokloster. Katalog*, prepared by M. Eder, with cooperation of E.W. Berg, ed. D. Chemperek, Warszawa 2008; *Katalog starych druków Biblioteki Ordynacji Nieświejskiej Radziwiłłów. Druki polskie XVI-XVIII w.*, prepared by S. Siess-Krzyszowski, ed. S. Siess-Krzyszowski, O. Gusiewa, I. Wielikodnaja, S. Havu, [online] [http://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl/bazy\\_bibliograficzne/index.php/75/](http://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl/bazy_bibliograficzne/index.php/75/) [accessed 29.07.2009]; *Polonica czeskie doby renesansu, baroku i oświecenia w bibliotece Premonstratensów na Strahowie (Praga). Katalog*, prepared by J. Linka, ed. M. Juda, Warszawa 2011; M. Juda, E. Teodorowicz-Hellman, *Polonica w Bibliotece Katedralnej w Strängnäs = The Polonica in the Library of Strängnäs*, cooperation R. Lundgren, Stockholm 2011; *Katalog poloników biblioteki Pontificia Universita Urbantana*, prepared by P. Pludra-Żuk, M. Spandowski, Warszawa 2012; *Inwentarz rękopisów Biblioteki Żaluskich w Cesarskiej Bibliotece Publicznej*, prepared by O.N. Bleskina, N.A. Elagina, cooperation of K. Kossarzewski, S. Szyller, Warszawa 2013; *Katalog poloników w Bibliotece Uniwersitaria Alessandrina*, prepared by K. Soliński, Warszawa 2014; *Catalogue of books from the Library of Sigismund II Augustus, King of Poland, in the collection of the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg = January Uprising of 1863 against Russian rule in Poland*, ed. by M.I. Tkachenko, M. Brynda, Warsaw 2015; *Bibliotheca Bavoroviana Leopoliensis. Prints from the first half of the sixteenth century. A catalogue*, prepared by J. Gwioździk, T. Maciąg, cooperation of R. Frączek, I. Pietrzkiwicz, Katowice 2015; *Katalog poloników w Bibliotece Casanatense*, prepared by K. Soliński, Warszawa 2016.

<sup>13</sup> For example Europeana, Baltica, Русский Север, Kramerius Digital Library, Memoria Slovaca, The Oxford Text Archive, The European Library – TEL, World Digital Library – WDL, Manuscriptorium, Memory of Niderlands, Gallica.

were (and are) very differentiated, according to different goals, communities they have been serving, and conditions they have been functioning in. Material status of the collections, value of particular objects and their number have always depended on the needs and possibilities, in financial or place dimensions in particular, of their owners, as well as of the generosity of Polish communities. Moreover, the abroad collections are hardly unified – they include usually library, archival, or even museum materials. Due to these circumstances, registration has been enlarged since 2007 up to all each physically existing (including closed or in liquidation) library, archival or museum of Polish collections being maintained abroad. The private collections have been excluded due to legal problems concerning protection of personal data<sup>14</sup>.

The first stage of the „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad...” Programme was closed with the *Contemporary Polish Book Collections Abroad. Information Guide*<sup>15</sup>, published by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in 2009. It consists of the information notes about 746 libraries in 65 countries, belonging to Polish organisations or institutions. It registers only a part of agencies active in the years 2006-2009<sup>16</sup>, the most comprehensive among the publications of that time, however partially outdated nowadays<sup>17</sup>. It describes collections of different types, amounts, and significance, being kept in either autonomous research and public libraries, or not-autonomous units - members of the Standing Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in Western Countries (Stała Konferencja Muzeów, Archiwów i Bibliotek Polskich na Zachodzie)<sup>18</sup>, collections of secular or church

<sup>14</sup> Assumptions for the program – see for example: J. Puchalski, *Biblioteki polskie poza Krajem. Refleksje na marginesie programu «Rejestracja zbiorów polskich za granicą ze specjalnym uwzględnieniem dziedzictwa zagrożonego» prowadzonego w Departamencie do Spraw Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*, „Przegląd Biblioteczny” 2007, No. 4, pp. 597-610.

<sup>15</sup> *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 1: *Polskie i polonijne księgozbiory instytucji*, prepared by B. Bieńkowska, E. Maruszak, J. Puchalski, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>16</sup> 284 libraries from among 1499 already registered in the years 2006-2008 had to be deleted, as closed or under liquidation, *ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Many units were reorganised or closed after 2009, including the Princess Czartoryski Library and Museum in Brussels, closed in September 2015: *Po zamknięciu Biblioteki Polskiej w Brukseli*, „eurogospodarka” September 29, 2016 - 14:49, [online] <http://www.eurogospodarka.eu/po-zamknieciu-biblioteki-polskiej-w-brukseli> [accessed 19.04.2017]. The Wanda Stachiewicz Polish Library in Montreal, active since the 70ties at the McGill University, has been experiencing local problems recently – see the declaration of the Polish Research Institute in Canada and the Polish Library, published in the Internet in April 2016: „Dear Friends! As you may have heard, some changes will soon take place at the Polish Library. McGill University, which has so generously provided us with a space for over 70 years, has recently informed us that due to structural problems, our building at 3479 Peel can no longer be used. While we are currently discussing possible solutions with the University, it is certain that the non-academic part of our collection will be moving somewhere soon. In the near future, we will be meeting with other Polish organizations from the Montreal area to find it a new permanent residence, where we will continue to serve our community of readers. In the meantime, we warmly invite you to show your support for us by continuing to visit the library, which will remain open as usual until further notice. We will keep you posted on any developments. We hope to see you at the library!”. To be found at: The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, n.d. [online] <http://www.biulpol.net/kombib.pdf> [accessed 19.04.2017]. Nowadays the Library works in a new place: „Biuletyn Polonijny” April 2017, No 261 [online] <http://www.biulpol.net/biblioteka2017.htm> [accessed 19.04.2017].

<sup>18</sup> The Conference associated 21 member institutions at the end of 2016, including: the Polish Library in Paris, the Wanda Stachiewicz Polish Library in Montreal, the Igancy Domeyko Polish Library in Buenos Aires, and the Polish Library in London, *The Standing Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in Western Countries*, 2015 [online] <http://mabpz.org/> [accessed 3.05.2017]. Current problems, mainly financial, are described in: D. Platt, *Londyńska sesja Stałej Konferencji Muzeów, Archiwów i Bibliotek Polskich na Zachodzie*, POSK Polski Ośrodek Społeczno-Kulturalny, n.d. [online] <http://www.posk.org/e5/pl/wiadomosci/stala-konferencja-muzeow-archiwow-i-bibliotek-polskich-na-zachodzie/> [accessed 19.04.2017].

institutions and organisations, including Polish institutes, museums, archives, clubs or centres, organisations, and schools<sup>19</sup>. The report on the collections and status of these libraries, as well as a support they received from Poland, was developed in 2009<sup>20</sup>.

The „Registration...” Programme team was aware of the existence of a particularly valuable Polish collections and objects in foreign libraries<sup>21</sup>, mostly in research units (national or academic libraries, research centres or institutes) and large public libraries. They were registered in the years 2011-2015, because of justified fears about their future. Moreover, *Polonica* of potential common research interest of the owners and adequate Polish institutions or communities were to be selected. They are not only an important part of the Polish cultural heritage, complementing and enlarging collections of Polish libraries and archives in Poland and abroad, but they belong to the common heritage of European states, joined by their complicated history, and finally make a compound of global cultural treasure.

While planning registration in foreign agencies, we assumed to include collections extracted from the whole libraries, for example being maintained in Polish departments, with a separate catalogue, individual space in a magazine, or specific provenances. This assumption was quickly verified by reality. It turned out during an initial inquiry, that these materials are hardly separated from a whole collection. The decision of registration of all valuable *Polonica* was made then, even if not belonging to a separate collection.

Finally, the following main criteria of information gathering were accepted:

- objects fulfilling at least one of the conditions were registered: in Polish language, concerning Polish issues or written by the Poles; coming from Polish scriptoria; printed in Polish or Polish diaspora’s publishing houses;
- registered are objects, fragments, or whole collections (texts, graphics, objects of art, historical objects) collected by the Poles or persons of Polish origin, as well as the foreign collectors – if concerning Poland or local Polish communities;
- registration of the collections from libraries, origins of which and a significant part of collections are Polish, however belonging currently to other states (like the Vilnius University Library);
- the inquiry was limited to library collections, excluding (with some exceptions) archives, museums, and other institutions gathering *Polonica*<sup>22</sup>;
- libraries with historical, special collections are of the most interest.

The inquiry of libraries were run according to these criteria, where *Polonica* of historical value were expected. It was completed with a literature review (including internet websites), describing particular collections or objects being kept in foreign libraries<sup>23</sup>. Secondary sources made a basis of descriptions included in the second volume of the *Information Guide*, because most of the libraries did not send back the registration questionnaires<sup>24</sup>. We were obviously aware that secondary sources are not free from mistakes or unintentional mangling in descriptions of interesting materials.

---

<sup>19</sup> For example libraries belonging to Polish state institutions.

<sup>20</sup> *Współczesne biblioteki polonijne i polskie poza krajem. Raport*, prepared by E. Maruszak, J. Puchalski, Warszawa 2010.

<sup>21</sup> As it was emphasised by the Polish librarians and book researchers active abroad, for example W. Zalewski, *Książka polska w amerykańskich bibliotekach uniwersyteckich. Historia i polityka tworzenia zbiorów*, [in:] *Bibliologia: pamięci Profesora Andrzeja Kłossowskiego*, Toruń 1998, pp. 143-157.

<sup>22</sup> By exception several archives, museums, centres, science societies and research institutes were also inquired, from the United States of America, Germany, Switzerland, Lithuania, Russia, and Belarus.

<sup>23</sup> More than 500 units, most of which were published in last 25 years.

<sup>24</sup> 901 registration questionnaires were sent, and 110 returned.

The second volume of the guide, *Contemporary Polish Book Collections Abroad. Information Guide. 2 Polonica in Foreign Libraries*<sup>25</sup>, was published at the end of 2016 by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It consists of information notes concerning *Polonica* in 470 agencies from 54 countries. 392 of these descriptions refer to materials belonging in full or partially to the cultural heritage – manuscripts, old printings, cartography, iconography, music documents, archive documents, objects of art or historical objects. They are being kept mostly by historical, universal research libraries, including national and academic libraries, science or religious organisations, municipal, foundations, or private libraries. Obviously, only a part of the *Polonica* was described. There are many more original materials to be researched. Documentation of the Programme is so rich, that general conclusions are authorised, urging for future, deepened analysis, and setting new research fields.

There are plenty of Polish collections, their fragments or individual *Polonica* in foreign collections, both dispersed and differentiated in their value. They can be found in nearly all libraries all over a world, with rich collections of historical *Polonica* in German, English, Italian and French libraries, as well as in Eastern-European and North American agencies. The collections are of different amount: from tens and several hundreds to thousands of units in German or American libraries. An amount of historical materials of Polish provenance is difficult to estimate in Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian or Lithuanian libraries, therefore the *Information Guide*'s authors often had to limit the description to phrases: the „amount of Polish collections impossible to settle without detailed inquiry”<sup>26</sup> or „huge amount of valuable Polish printings and archive documents”, mostly in libraries of Polish origin<sup>27</sup>.

The following reasons of the problems with identification and indication of the amount of Polish and *Polonica* collections should be listed: they are neither selected from the whole library, separately registered or indexed, nor even preliminary inquired. They are often awaiting for „detailed inquiry and description”<sup>28</sup>, or – less often – under elaboration<sup>29</sup>. Probably that is why the librarians did not answer questions in the registration questionnaire or they did it partially<sup>30</sup>. Sometimes they even mentioned that the institution did not possess any valuable Polish or *Polonica* collections, although the literature review suggested in contrary. It happened also in case of the most important libraries, collecting these materials due to their historical roots and traditions<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator. 2: Polonica w bibliotekach obcych*, prepared by B. Bienkowska, E. Maruszak, J. Puchalski, Warszawa 2016.

<sup>26</sup> In the National Library of Russia, *Российская государственная библиотека, РФБ*, pos. 204, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 477.

<sup>27</sup> For example in the Library of the Iwan Franko National University of Lviv – the Library of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv up to 1939, *Наукова бібліотека Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка*, pos. 320, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 774.

<sup>28</sup> For example the National Research Tomsk State University Library, *Научная библиотека Томского государственного педагогического университета*, pos. 215, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 505.

<sup>29</sup> For example „very precious collection of the Polish Pijarists' College from Podoliniec, Spiš region” in the Slovak National Library, after: *Slovenska narodna knižnica*, pos. 223, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 517.

<sup>30</sup> For example mentioning only the books written in Polish language or selected collections.

<sup>31</sup> In 2014 we received information about no Polish collections or *Polonica* of historical value from the Bibliotheca Albertina at the Leipzig University. Description of *Polonica* from its collection was prepared on the base of literature review and the Library's website, *Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Bibliotheca Albertina*, pos. 173, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator. 2*, pp. 402-404.

In such a situation, limited published materials turned out to be helpful, like inventories, catalogues<sup>32</sup>, guides<sup>33</sup>, documentation of *Polonica* exhibitions<sup>34</sup>, and others<sup>35</sup>. However, analysis of materials of these types not only requires much work and skills, but also it is a beginning of new research. It is strongly connected with a problem of how the term *Polonicum* is being understood abroad. In Poland, traditionally, it refers to the objects of Polish authors, written in Polish language, prepared in Polish scriptoria or typographic workshops, concerning Poland, or being a propriety of Polish collectors. In foreign libraries *Polonica* are often limited to Polish-language materials, while the others are placed in another collections. It hinders significantly finding such materials in huge libraries. Tomasz Nastulczyk from the Estreichers' Polish Bibliography the Research Centre for at the Jagiellonian University (Centrum Badawcze Bibliografii Polskiej Estreicherów w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim) – no longer financed by the government – states accurately:

This problem is even more complicated in Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. National states, established on the debris of multinational and multi-ethnic Republic of Poland, perceive Polish language as one (next to Latin and Russian) of the main literary languages, in which their literature has been created. Though *Polonicum* in Lithuania is only a Polish-language print, developed outside the former Great Duchy's territory. Those who study Polish books in East countries should be aware of these methodological differences. [...] Due to differences in defining the *Polonicum*, quite a few catalogue of Polish old printings, developed by foreign authors, has to be perceived as a starting point only for further inquiries<sup>36</sup>.

In the result of complicated history of our country, *Polonica* in foreign libraries complement significantly domestic collections, contributing to our historical, cultural heritage. They also belong to cultural resources in countries where they are maintained in or were developed, and – in general – make a part of a global heritage. These thousands of collections prove „a much larger than appeared so far area of influence of a Polish book, in geographical, chronological and subject ranges”<sup>37</sup>.

This state of affairs emerged in the result of changes of state's affiliation of territories belonging to our culture, what happened quite often in history (like loss of Silesia, Prince Prussia, Livonia)<sup>38</sup>, Swedish plunders of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as confiscates, liquidations and reorganisations of public, private or church libraries (including dissolution of

<sup>32</sup> For example: *Rare Polonica in the New York Public Library : Books of the 15th-18th Centuries*, ed. M. Czapnik, New York 2001.

<sup>33</sup> For example: *A guide to Slavic collections in the United States and Canada*, ed. by A. Urbanic and B. Feinberg, Binghamton N.Y. 2004; *Guide to East European Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area*, „Slavic and East European Information Resources” 2013, Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp. 281-398.

<sup>34</sup> For example: S. Fiszman, *Polonica of the 15th and 20th Centuries in the Libraries of Indiana University in Bloomington*, Bloomington 1978.

<sup>35</sup> For example: R. Nir, *Źródła do historii Polonii*, Orchard Lake 1982; Idem, *Polskie zbiory archiwalne w Stanach Zjednoczonych*, [in:] *Ślady polskości. Polonia i emigracja w świetle badań i źródeł historycznych*, ed. D. Nałęcz, Warszawa 1999, pp. 148-190.

<sup>36</sup> T. Nastulczyk, *Polska kultura w Rosji*, „Kresy.pl”, 30.06.2008, [online] <http://www.kresy.pl/publicystyka?zobacz/polska-kultura-w-rosji> [accessed 20.10.2016]. See also: H. Mieczkowska, «*Polonicum*» – *definicja pojęcia, zakres doboru materiału, zastosowanie w bibliografii*, „Z Badań nad Książką i Księgozbiorami Historycznymi” 2015, Vol. 9, pp. 21-29.

<sup>37</sup> B. Bieñkowska, *Polonika w bibliotekach obcych. Potrzeby i możliwości badawcze*, [in:] *Dawnych ksiąg niesyty...*, p. 36.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 30.

convents<sup>39</sup> and transferring their book collections in total or partially), realised by invaders or occupants in the following centuries. The policy of Russian (tsarist, and later Soviet) authorities can be an example, consisting in dispersion of taken over Polish collection among different libraries, archives, and museums. The most valuable items went mostly to the libraries in St Petersburg (Leningrad), Moscow, Kiev, and Minsk, while the rest – to other agencies<sup>40</sup>.

The World War II had dramatic consequences for the book collections: libraries from West and Central Poland lost approx. 70% of their collections (research and special libraries – approx. 50%). In the result of the Potsdam Treaty of 1945, 90% of the book collections were left outside Poland (approx. 10% were transferred back to Poland as a part of repatriation)<sup>41</sup>, i.e. approx. 9 mln volumes. The amount of private collections, in particular manor ones, with priceless and unique historical materials, is hard to estimate. It is assumed that approx. 2 mln of volumes rest at the Eastern Borderlands of Poland, included historical special collections, „unique, impossible neither to recapture nor estimate”<sup>42</sup>. Part of them were moved upstate into the USSR<sup>43</sup>. However, even in former USSR countries Polish historical collections have been preserved, „including an output of centuries-old collectors’ efforts of our intellectual entourages”<sup>44</sup>. Also a sets of invaders’ or occupants’ offices can be perceived as specific *Polonica* sets<sup>45</sup>.

The historical events of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries brought forth political emigration of many Poles, educated, engaged in ideological, social, research or cultural activities, also the distinguished ones. They run their activities abroad, like publishing houses, bookstores, archives, libraries and museums. They were followed by economic emigrants, who established Polish cultural centres of more public character. The resources concerning history and organizers of these institutions can be found for example in foreign libraries<sup>46</sup>.

Therefore many libraries around the world maintain book collections gathered by the Poles in different times. They include mostly (but not limited to) materials concerning their lives and activities, including those describing development of emigration collections,

<sup>39</sup> *Kasaty klasztorów na obszarze dawnej Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów i na Śląsku na tle procesów sekularyzacyjnych w Europie*. Vol. 3: *Źródła. Skutki kasat XVIII i XIX w. Kasata w latach 1954-1956*, ed. M. Derwich, Wrocław 2014.

<sup>40</sup> As proved for example by *Polonica* in the Department of Rare and Old Book, the Andrei Lupan Central Scientific Library of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, *Biblioteca Științifică Centrală a Academiei de Științe a Republicii Moldova, Central Scientific Library «Andrei Lupan» Academy of Sciences of Moldova*, pos. 151, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, p. 343.

<sup>41</sup> B. Bienkowska, *II wojna światowa. Wstępny bilans strat bibliotek polskich*, „Cenne, Bezcenne, Utracone” 2012, No 3(72), pp. 10-11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> For example the Strawiński Family Library in Nakryszki (approx. 11 000 vol.), in the Moscow University Library since 1941, *Научная библиотека МГУ им. М.В. Ломоносова*, pos. 202, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, p. 471.

<sup>44</sup> B. Bienkowska, *Polonica w bibliotekach obcych...*, p. 39.

<sup>45</sup> For example books of the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee (1804-1917) from the Scientific Library of the St. Petersburg State University, *Научная библиотека им. М. Горького Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета*, pos. 213, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, p. 499.

<sup>46</sup> For example in the collection of the Immigration History Research Center in Minneapolis, *Immigration History Research Center – IHRC*, pos. 261, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 614-615; or in the Samara Regional Scientific Library, *Самарская областная универсальная научная библиотека*, pos. 208, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 486.

completing domestic ones<sup>47</sup>, or organisation of libraries in their settle places<sup>48</sup>. There are also numerous collections concerning Polish diasporas<sup>49</sup>, including Polish institutions and organisations of social, professional, insurance, cultural, political, or religious (mostly parochial) character, often transferred as separate collections to the libraries in their settle countries<sup>50</sup>. They include materials on Polish minority's printing and publishing houses, bookstores and libraries, like documents, manuscripts, bulletins, ephemera, reports, almanacs, catalogues, periodicals, press samples, or photographs. These collections offer valuable information about the world of emigration and Polish books abroad. They also prove an effective integration and a significant role of our emigration in foreign societies. Interest in the Polish diasporas' problems among foreign authors, as well as influence of Polish literature and science on foreign works, make an enormous and quite unrecognised research field. *Polonica* being kept in numerous foreign libraries obviously result from natural interest of local political, social, research, literary or religious communities in either Polish texts or Poland itself – its history, science, culture, geography, ethnography, traditions, etc. It also proves historical presence of the Polish diaspora in a given place. The Republic of Poland has been playing a significant political role, as well as being active in European intellectual life both as a creator and receiver since Middle Ages.

One can refer to medieval codexes with treaties by Polish authors<sup>51</sup>, or incunabula and numerous printings of the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries by Polish authors or printed in Poland. They can be found not only in European libraries, but also – in unexpectedly large number – in American or Australian libraries (research and public ones), including very differentiated texts, like theological, religious or moralistically literature of different confessions (mostly Catholic, but also Orthodox and Reformation, in particular Arian), history, law, politics, language (like dictionaries), astronomy and astrology, mathematics, medicine, farming and breeding (guides and manuals), in less amount - poetry and satire<sup>52</sup>. *Polonica* dated on the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be found in less number, which can be an effect of the Latin language giving way for national languages, as well as negative changes in an international position of Poland<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> For example Prof. Manfred Kridl legacy in the Butler Library, Columbia University, *Columbia University Libraries – CUL*, pos. 266, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 632.

<sup>48</sup> For example the manuscript of Jerzy Podstolski's autobiography *Patrzac wstecz, 1913-1948* dated on 1985. The author arrived to New Zealand in 1948. He was a lecturer and director of the Library School in Wellington for many years, *National Library of New Zealand*, pos. 191, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 451.

<sup>49</sup> Like North American collections of the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia, *Historical Society of Pennsylvania Library, Research Library of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies*, pos. 248, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 582.

<sup>50</sup> For example collections of the Polish Historical Institute in Australia, in the National Library of Australia in Canberra, *National Library of Australia – NLA*, pos. 5, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 91-92; the „Fronczak's Hall” in the E.H. Butler Library in Buffalo, *Zbiory w Sali Fronczaka*, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 1, pp. 399-401.

<sup>51</sup> For example writings of Marcin Polak, Peregryn of Opole, Mateusz of Kraków, Jakub of Paradyż, Mikołaj of Błonie, Wojciech of Brudzew, Jan of Głogów and Piotr Gaszowicz.

<sup>52</sup> The following names repeat most often as authors of the preserved texts: Stanisław Hozjusz, Marcin Kromer, Krzysztof Warszawicki, Wojciech Tylkowski, Jan Łaski (jr), Jan Łaski (sr), Stanisław Orzechowski, Jan Herbut, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Wawrzyniec Goślicki, Andrzej Petrycy Nidecki, Stanisław Reszka, Jan Łasicki, Mikołaj Kopernik, Jan Heweliusz, Stanisław Sarnicki, Stanisław Karnkowski, Jan Zamoyski, Abraham Bzowski, Maciej z Miechowa, Jodok Ludwik Decjusz, Reinhold Heidenstein, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Jan Dantyszek, Jan Kochanowski, Stanisław Grzępski, Adam Kochański, Stanisław Grodzicki, Jakub Przyłuski, Jakub Kazimierz Haur, Szymon Starowolski, Kazimierz Siemienowicz, Samuel Przyppkowski, Andrzej Węgierski.

<sup>53</sup> B. Bieñkowska, *Polonica w bibliotekach obcych...*, p. 40.

Polish issues were obviously discussed in foreign syntheses and reviews on a world's (and European in particular) history, geography, politics, law, and culture. A foreign reader has also been interested in monographies on political, state, and legal concerns of Polish situation, as well as religious, historical, geographical, ethnographical and custom issues. It reflects properly a history of international relations, including the role of Poland, as well as an information flow in the past<sup>54</sup>. *Polonica* of these types can be found in particular in German, Italian, French, English, Swedish, Swiss, and Dutch libraries. Numerous printing and (more often) manuscript collections of letters, journal diaries, descriptions of Polish territory and cities,

exotic experiences and confabulations, political and diplomatic reports, analysis of any aspects of the Polish reality, «News», ephemera, information and propaganda texts can be found there. One cannot help feeling that so vivid and universal interest in our Country had not only cognitive, but also quite practical reasons and goals<sup>55</sup>.

Large amount and differentiation of maps of Poland in total, and of particular regions as well, can result from the same reasons. Their collections amount sometimes to hundreds or even thousands of objects<sup>56</sup>. It should be emphasised, that editions unavailable in Polish collections or in Polish and foreign bibliographies can be found there<sup>57</sup>, rare publications or even unique specimens.

Historical issues dominate *Polonica* of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in particular political history of the first one. These are often

selected collections concerning the place of Poland in an international politics, the Poles' participation in armed struggles, and a national martyrdom. Apart from extensive literature, there are manuscript, phonographic, and photographic documentation concerning: the Polish Armed Forces in the West, the Polish government-in-exile, the Polish Underground State, the Home Army, and other armed formations, Nazi and Soviet camps, deportation of the civilians, fortunes of emigrants and fugitives. In the post-war political situation of Poland, in broad perspective, foreign libraries gathered anti-communist and oppositional texts, including either Western, emigration, or illegal domestic publications. Separated collections of «second circulation», documentation of Polish opposition (including the «Solidarity» movement), and archives of institutions fighting against communism abroad were established<sup>58</sup>.

The significance of such collections increases, as they fulfil gaps in Polish collections emerged in the period of People's Republic of Poland, mostly due to political reasons<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> For example: J. Pirożyński, *Z dziejów obiegu informacji w Europie XVI wieku : nowiny z Polski w kolekcji Jana Jakuba Wicka w Zurychu z lat 1560-1587*, Kraków 1995. The author describes the famous collection of „Wickiana” in the Zurich Central Library, *Zentralbibliothek Zurich*, pos. 292, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, p. 711.

<sup>55</sup> B. Bieńkowska, *Polonica w bibliotekach obcych...*, p. 41.

<sup>56</sup> For example 2750-3000 units, including maps of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Library of Congress in Washington, *Library of Congress*, pos. 284, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, p. 685.

<sup>57</sup> For example 1255 printings of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries not mentioned in Karol Estreicher's *Bibliografia polska* in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, *Herzog August Bibliothek*, pos. 186, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 442. The same situation concerns a part of old printings *Polonica* in the Pontifical Urban University Library, *Biblioteca della Pontificia Università Urbaniana*, pos. 334, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 800.

<sup>58</sup> B. Bieńkowska, *Polonica w bibliotekach obcych...*, p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> For example: J. Puchalski, *Biblioteki w życiu naukowym PRL i poza krajem w latach 1939-1989*, [in:]

The similar situation concerns numerous, rich collections of *judaica*, and their special place in Western, in particular American libraries. Apart from the dominating sources and literature on the Holocaust, they include materials (also rare or unique) concerning history of the Jewish community living on Polish territories before the World War II<sup>60</sup>.

Collections of graphics and objects of art are also worth mentioning. Particular attention should be put on a few selected collections of the Polish artistic posters<sup>61</sup>. Original works of Polish artists can also be found, including book illustrators<sup>62</sup>.

With no doubt foreign collections develop knowledge about Polish written heritage. From the other hand, the history of Polish books cannot be presented in adequate cultural context without reference to *Polonica* in these libraries<sup>63</sup>. They have not been fully explored so far, which is confirmed by consecutive discoveries, like the autograph of *Kurs bibliografii* [The course of bibliography] by Łukasz Gołębiowski of 1831, found in 2014 in the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia<sup>64</sup>.

Library stocks with no doubt „still hide quite a few secrets and hardly anticipated troves. The world «still» was used deliberately”<sup>65</sup>. Most of the foreign libraries have not experience a fate as tragic as the Polish ones. It would seem that existence of Polish and *Polonica* collections is reassured. However, the situation has been worsening for decades. Tendencies threatening safety of the Polish collections abroad, and thus preservation of our participation in the global cultural heritage, has increased. They result from political and economic contexts, as well as from social and demographic changes of the Polish diasporas abroad.

Poland's liberation from the Soviet domination in 1989, and further disintegration of the so-called Eastern Block, resulted in a decrease of interest of Western countries in what was happening in Central and Eastern Europe, and in consequence – in the texts concerning our country. Direct and indirect support for emigration institutions of books was stopped<sup>66</sup>. Funds for purchasing, indexing and conservation have depleted in many foreign libraries, due to decreased inflow of donations. Reading has decreased, among others due

---

*Historia nauki polskiej*. Vol. X: 1944-1989. P. 2: *Instytucje*, ed. L. Zasztowt, J. Schiller-Walicka, Warszawa 2015, pp. 359-483.

<sup>60</sup> For example collections of the Archives and Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, including approx. 40 thousands of volumes of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries from Vilnius collections, *Library and Archives, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research*, pos. 268, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, pp. 636-640.

<sup>61</sup> For example 200 posters of 60-80ties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, given by Christina and Jarosław Peleński to the Iowa State University Library, *University of Iowa Libraries*, pos. 251, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 590-591.

<sup>62</sup> For example works by Artur Szyk, graphic designer, cartoonist, and illustrator, in the University of Chicago Library, *University of Chicago Library*, pos. 242, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 567.

<sup>63</sup> Mentioned (among others) by A. Kłossowski, *Historia książki polskiej za granicą...; Źródła do badań nad dziejami książki polskiej...*

<sup>64</sup> E. Maruszak, *Drugi po Joachimie Lelewełu? Komunikat*, „Z Badań nad Książką i Księgozbiorami Historycznymi” 2013-2014, Vol. 7-8, pp. 273-275.

<sup>65</sup> B. Bienkowska, *Polonika w bibliotekach obcych...*, p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> Let's recall for example support for production and distribution of Polish and foreign-language publications among the researchers and libraries in the country, as well as the Poles going to the Western countries. According to Alfred A. Reisch, the American researcher, since 1957 „dealing” of such printings was funded by a special program of the US Central Intelligence Agency. It enabled purchase of millions of publications for the readers from Eastern European countries from the federal budget in the years 1957-1991. Printings of emigration, including Polish publishing houses were mostly bought and distributed, A.A. Reisch, *Hot books in the Cold War : the CIA - funded secret Western book distribution program behind the Iron Curtain*, Budapest-New York 2013, pp. 309-346; J. Szmidi, *Biblioteki polskie we współczesnym Londynie: Polish libraries in contemporary London*, Warszawa 1998, p. 67.

to a crisis of Polish language studies in the United States of America<sup>67</sup>. The latter resulted in decrease of the role of *Polonica* in Slavonic library departments, and in research libraries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The number of librarians speaking Polish, and working abroad, decreases – those who leave the profession are superseded by persons of other nationalities. Sometimes there is no basic sources indispensable for indexing *Polonica* in foreign libraries. For example T. Nastulczyk noticed in 2008, that there was „only one complete of the Polish Bibliography of the Estreichers”<sup>68</sup> in Moscow. However, most of all, the librarians unwillingly accept additional works on *Polonica* without extra funding. Due to these circumstances the current information about the collections is lacking (not to mention their promotion), and decrease of their usage in consequence. Finally, lacking interest of the owners/institutions managing libraries in Polish collections can be noticed. Historical, cultural, or even political factors of this situation can also be considered in particular countries.

These processes are deepened by the fact, that due to natural reasons the number of the Poles living in western countries, representatives of the former political, war and post-war emigration, who perceive maintenance of national heirlooms as their patriotic mission, decreases systematically. The descendants of independence activists, breed up in a culture and language of a settle country, have a completely different awareness, and often they do not even know Polish language, neither are interested in the heritage of former generations. On the other hand, contemporary emigrants leave Poland due to economic, not political reasons. They represent different attitudes, aspirations or needs than an „old emigration”. In consequence, they do not engage in Polish organisations, which protect Polish old books, archival and historical materials.

All these circumstances are interrelated with a crisis of book and reading, thereby librarianship all over the world, a signs of which had emerged as early as in the 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>69</sup>. The Internet became a challenge for librarianship. Tim Berners-Lee proclaimed the project being a beginning of the World Wide Web system, which revolutionised life in a „global village”. To stay alive, the libraries must be perceived as crucial by their users<sup>70</sup>. They have been and still are changing radically, to adapt to the requirements of modernity, related to expansion and domination of other media. These changes include (among others) destruction of former systems and organisational structures, changes in priorities in gathering and indexing collections. Such a situation induces selection of forces, resources, and collections on the libraries. First of all, they resign from the least used collections, difficult in conservation and service (language problems), marginal - from the current priorities’ point of view. Voluminous collections of *Polonica* are perceived as such troublesome. Their collections (sometimes historical) are being hardly used, neglected, spoiled<sup>71</sup>, dispersed, or even deleted<sup>72</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> For example: M.J. Mikoś, *Zarys historii polonistyki w Ameryce Północnej*, [online] [http://www.studia-polskie.us.edu.pl/wirtualna\\_katedra/lit\\_pol\\_w\\_swiecie\\_t2/21Mikos.pdf](http://www.studia-polskie.us.edu.pl/wirtualna_katedra/lit_pol_w_swiecie_t2/21Mikos.pdf) [accessed 12.105.2012].

<sup>68</sup> T. Nastulczyk, *Polska kultura w Rosji...*

<sup>69</sup> For example: M. Gorman, *Our singular strengths: meditations for librarians*, Chicago 1998; Idem, *Our enduring values. Librarianship in the 21st century*, Chicago-London 2000.

<sup>70</sup> B. Sordyl, *Zarys działalności Biblioteki PAN w Warszawie i kierunki jej rozwoju*, „Przegląd Biblioteczny” 1988, Issue 2, p. 158.

<sup>71</sup> For example the Attilio Begey Archive (L’Archivio Begey) was at the very bad state at the beginning of the 21st century, kept in the Royal Library of Turin, *Biblioteca Reale*, pos. 391, [in:] *Współczesne księgozbiory polskie za granicą. Informator*. 2, pp. 913-914.

<sup>72</sup> Tamara Sochacka, director of the Albert J. Zak Memorial Library in Hamtramck, wrote in the questionnaire send to Ministry of Culture in 2007: „Liquidation of the Polish collections in American public libraries [...] is

Of course it should be emphasised, that *Polonica* are under professional care, kept safely, documented and under conservation, like other objects in many notable foreign libraries. As it was mentioned above, thanks to cooperation with experts from Poland a few of Polish and *Polonica* collections are indexed precisely. However, these positive examples cannot obscure a general tendency, noticed also during the „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad...” Programme.

In this situation continuation of this Programme is the most important and urgent task. Planned and systematic registration and documentation of *Polonica* being kept in institutions other than libraries, in particular archives and museums (they preserve collections, sets, unique and extraordinarily precious objects hardly explored so far), are indispensable. Digitalisation of the most precious objects and collections is of the same importance, as well as entering the *Polonica* into national and international databases and digital libraries. Digitalisation, along with preservation of these materials, increases the particularity of indexing, their accessibility, and in consequence offers a potential or increases actual usage, for example for research purposes. However, it should be emphasised that possibilities of electronic reproduction can prompt a disposal of the originals. It is not appropriate, at least because it concerns often original, source materials. However the information repeats about such an actual threaten, often being executed due to savings (place) or organisational (ex. necessity of hiring Polish-speaking people for indexing) reasons.

The electronic information about *Polonica* itself is not free of disadvantages. Most of all, it supports emerging and multiplication of mistakes, non-correctible or even impossible to find out without confrontation with an original.

Summarising, complete documentation of a current status of *Polonica* is of particular importance, because they are changing fast, as proved by the results of the „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad...” Programme. Enlargement, intensification, and coordination of researches on *Polonica* in foreign collections are necessary. These studies should be accompanied by methodological reflections on exploring *Polonica* being maintained abroad, including the *exteriorica* as well, together with thorough exploration of archives and any available sources potentially supplementing or developing our knowledge about the fates of books and their owners. Together with the following monographies, it will greatly facilitate looking for Polish collections and individual written objects in foreign libraries, archives, and museums. Naturally, such undertakings can find their positive result only if an awareness of the value and significance of this heritage is common both in Poland and abroad. It will facilitate development of an international cooperation, including exchange of organisational and methodological experiences, and of experts, common publication and digital projects.

It will be beneficial for all partners, because such projects contribute not only to the history of Polish books, but also to the general history of libraries, librarianship, and the culture of book in general, in other countries as well. Protection of historical heritage is one of the modern priorities of the world cultural policy.

Translated by Małgorzata Kisilowska

---

often justified not only by lack of place, but also by lack of local readers, or – last but not least – lack of funds for purchasing literature in other languages, commonly used in a given locality”.

## Summary

Political changes which have been started in the beginning of the '90 resulted negative way on the situation of Polish collections abroad. Department for the Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad [presently: Department of Cultural Heritage Abroad and Wartime Losses] of Ministry of Culture and National Heritage noticed this increasing trend and launched in 2006 the Programme „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad – with special consideration for our threatened heritage”, which was connected with previous efforts directed on creating the directory on Polish libraries abroad in the period 1938-1948 (published: 2005). The main purpose of the Programme „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad...” became collecting information on the Polish written heritage abroad, dispersed, very often not known and forgotten, and – specifically in recent years – endangered. The results of the query from the period 2006-2008 were published in 2009, whereas the results of the similar efforts from the period 2009-2015 were published in the end of 2016. The paper presents the activities mentioned above and their conclusions and is meant on the one hand to somehow summarize the Programme of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and on the other to set the directions for the future registration efforts and fields of the more detailed research.

**Key words:** The Programme „Registration of the Polish Collections Abroad – with special consideration for our threatened heritage” – Polonica – 2006-2015 – Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – Poland.

## Streszczenie

### Rejestracja zbiorów polskich za granicą ze specjalnym uwzględnieniem dziedzictwa zagrożonego (2006-2015)

Przemiany polityczne następujące od lat 90. XX w. niekorzystnie wpłynęły na sytuację zbiorów polskich za granicą. W odpowiedzi na ów nasilający się problem Departament do Spraw Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą (obecnie Departament Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą i Strat Wojennych) Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego w 2006 r. zainicjował program „Rejestracja zbiorów polskich za granicą ze specjalnym uwzględnieniem dziedzictwa zagrożonego”, który nawiązywał do prac nad informatorem o bibliotekach polonijnych w latach 1938-1948, opublikowanym w 2005 r. Program „Rejestracja zbiorów polskich...” miał na celu głównie zebranie wiadomości o polskim dziedzictwie piśmienniczym pozostającym na obczyźnie, rozproszonym, często nieznanym i zapomnianym, a w ostatnich latach szczególnie zagrożonym. Wyniki kwerendy z lat 2006-2008 opublikowane zostały w 2009 r. Natomiast wyniki prac z lat 2009-2015 ogłoszono pod koniec 2016 r. Artykuł prezentujący rezultaty wzmiankowanych działań oraz różnorakie doświadczenia i wnioski z nich płynące, stanowi niejako podsumowanie programu MKiDN. Ponadto zawarto w nim próbę wytyczenia kierunków dalszych prac rejestracyjnych i pola bardziej szczegółowych badań.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Program „Rejestracja zbiorów polskich za granicą ze specjalnym uwzględnieniem dziedzictwa zagrożonego” – polonika – 2006-2015 – Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego – Polska.