

JANET ZMROCZEK

THE LITHUANIAN COLLECTION IN THE SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY

The Slavonic and East European Collections of the British Library (Humanities and Social Sciences) are essentially, together with post-1973 acquisitions, those inherited from the British Museum's Department of Printed Books upon the creation of the British Library in 1973.

Currently, the Slavonic and East European Department is staffed by 8 curatorial and 5 administrative staff and is responsible for selecting, acquiring, cataloguing and publicising material published in Albania, Belorussia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, the former Yugoslavia, and material in Russian from other parts of the former Soviet Union¹. We are also responsible for acquiring material in the languages of these countries published in other parts of the world. Material about the countries of Eastern and Central Europe is acquired by other parts of the Library (eg. books and serials published in the United Kingdom are received through legal deposit and material from the USA and Europe, and other parts of the world is purchased by the relevant departments).

Slavonic and East European scientific material is dealt with by two other parts of the British Library – the Science Reference and Information Service and the Document Supply Centre at Boston Spa, which is responsible for interlibrary loans and remote document supply in Britain and throughout the world. The Document Supply Centre no longer acquires Slavonic and East European monographs but takes a wide range of serials.

Editor's note about the author:

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¹ Some general background information is based on Christine Thomas's paper „Slavonic and East European Acquisitions in the British Library (Humanities and Social Sciences)” presented at the IFLA Pre-Conference „Library services in a multi-cultural environment, East and West” held in Riga from 13-16 August, 1991.

The British Library Slavonic and East European Collections are arguably the finest in Western Europe. No exact statistics are available, but they probably number some half a million items. We are unable to measure with any certainty the size of our collections due to the original concept of a universal library where there is no arrangement by language or country of publication. Although our entire catalogue is now in machine-readable form, the pre-1975 catalogue was converted by simple keyboarding rather than recataloguing according to MARC format. Consequently it is not possible to isolate records by language or country codes.

When the British Museum Library opened in 1759 little material from Central and Eastern Europe was held and this continued to be the case for the remainder of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. However, the foundation collections did include some very rare items, in many cases copies of book of which no example has survived in their country of origin. When Tsar Alexander I visited the British Museum in 1814 he expressed disappointment at the size of its collections, to which the then Principal Librarian Joseph Planta replied rather acidly,

„Please bear in mind that everything we possess has been acquired legally through gift or purchase”².

This of course was a reference to the fact that the Russian Imperial Public Library had, to a great extent, been built on collections which had been plundered or confiscated, beginning with its foundation collection of the magnificent Zaluski collection of some 300 000 volumes taken from Poland after the Third Partition in 1795.

The turning point in the collection of foreign books in the British Museum came during the office of Antonio Panizzi, a political refugee from Italy, who joined the staff in 1831 and rose to the position of Principal Librarian in 1856. He persuaded Parliament to grant more money for the purchase of foreign books and in the nineteenth century, the British Museum Library was the only institution in Great Britain and probably the only one in Western Europe which had the foresight and resources to provide its present and future readers with a means of studying comprehensively the history and culture of the countries of Eastern Europe. Credit for this must go to Thomas Watts, who, taken onto the staff in 1838 worked prodigiously until his death in 1869 on developing the collections of foreign books. Watts was said by his contemporary, Richard Garnett, to have mastered all the Slavonic and Celtic languages, as well as Hungarian and a certain amount of Chinese³. Following a Parliamentary Report of 1846 which pointed out how defective the holdings of the British Museum were in comparison to those of other great national libraries, the Museum embarked upon an ambitious and successful programme of foreign acquisitions. Watts' statement of the aim of the British Museum Library in the mid-19th century still holds good today:

² Arundel Esdaille. *The British Museum Library: a short history and survey*. London: Allen und Unwin, 1946. P. 57.

³ *Dictionary of national bibliography*. Vol XX. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. P. 984

“to bring together the useful, elegant and curious literatures of every language, to unite with the best English library in England or the world, the best Russian library out of Russia, the best German library out of Germany, the best Spanish out of Spain, and so with every language from Italian to Icelandic, from Polish to Portuguese.”⁴

Around 1840 the firm of Adolf Asher (with offices in Berlin, St Petersburg, and London) became a major supplier of foreign books and, for the next seventy years or so, in partnership with a series of dedicated and gifted polyglots and East European specialists working in the Museum, Asher helped to build up a research collection unrivalled outside the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly in the case of Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Russian material. The Lithuanian collection originated, in much the same way as the Latvian collection, as a by-product of the Library's German, Polish and Russian collecting activities in the nineteenth century. Much of our earlier Lithuanian material was probably supplied by Asher, though little work has yet been done on establishing provenance.

Acquisition of East European material has been carried out systematically throughout the twentieth century, albeit with some periods where funds were low and book acquisitions disrupted – notably during the two World Wars – but did not develop on the present-day scale until after 1945 and especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s. That period of expansion went hand-in-hand with an increased academic and public interest in the countries of Eastern Europe, especially the Soviet Union. This interest declined to some extent in the 1970s but resurged in the eighties as, across Eastern Europe, reformist and independence movements began to increase. Since this time the Library's shrinking acquisition budgets have made it very difficult to respond adequately but the policy is still, insofar as the budget allows, to attempt to acquire all material likely to be of research value in the fields of the humanities and social sciences. In the year 1993–4, some 8 000 monographs, 20 000 periodical parts and 14 000 newspaper parts were acquired by the Slavonic and East European Department. We have considered it important to attempt to acquire material which documents all sides of the turbulent political and social developments of the 1980s and 90s and as well as collecting officially sanctioned material from state-run or state-approved publishing houses, we have collected as widely as possible from underground, alternative, and emigre publishers. Hence we have important collections of Polish underground material dating from 1976 and the Solidarity era, of Czechoslovak samizdat from 1983 onwards, and a collection of Russian and Baltic “informal” publications, mostly serials from the years 1989 onwards. Holdings of this type of material from Lithuania are not strong, though we do have representative items including some early Sajudis publications.

For this and much of our material we are indebted to our exchange partners who have helped us gather material which it would have been impossible for us to find elsewhere.

⁴ From Watts' report to Panizzi in February 1861 (DH2/124: 259). P. 1–17.

Indeed it was our use of book exchange arrangements, with a wide network of libraries of all kinds (national and state libraries, academic libraries, church libraries and regional and specialist libraries) in most of the countries of Eastern Europe, as our main method of acquisition, which led to the setting up of the Slavonic and East European Branch as a discrete unit in the late 1950s. Until recently our reliance on exchanges as opposed to purchasing material from agents or booksellers was one of the major differences between ourselves and our West European counterparts. However the situation is now changing and most selectors are moving away from complete reliance on exchange partners to a "mixed economy" using private booksellers or agents for a part of their acquisitions when possible and appropriate. Organisationally this change has been recognised by the union under one head of Slavonic and East European and the West European Collections.

This is not, however, to underestimate the important role exchange arrangements still play in some areas of our work, acquisitions from the Baltic states being a case in point. Regrettably throughout its history the British Museum and then the British Library have not had specialists in the languages and cultures of the Baltic as permanent members of the staff. Consequently, exchange partners have played and continue to play an important role not only in supplying material but also selecting material on our behalf within the framework of our established collecting profile.

The lack of permanent specialists on the staff means also that on the whole, the Baltic Collections have been under-researched and under-exploited. The exception is the Estonian collections, surveyed and listed by Ms Salme Prudden in the 1970s in her *Catalogue of books and periodicals on Estonia in the British Library Reference Division* (New York & London: Garland, 1981). In the 1960s, David F. Robinson of Ohio State University published a bibliography entitled "Lithuanian books in the British Museum (1578-1937)"⁵ which lists ca 300 items in chronological order. It is a useful starting point, but contains only brief entries and appears to be far from complete. We hope, at some time in the not too distant future, to set up a project whereby Lithuanian specialists will spend some time at the British Library researching and documenting the Lithuanian collections. In the meanwhile, I will describe some of the more important features of the British Library Lithuanian Collections and their development based on tentative explorations made by my predecessors and myself. The numbers given in brackets after each item are the British Library shelfmarks.

Holdings of "Lithuanica", that is, material published in other languages, such as Polish and Latin, on Lithuanian soil or on Lithuanian subjects are substantial, however this brief description will concentrate on items in the Lithuanian language and those which chart its development.

The strengths of our early Lithuanian collections are in religious publications, though one of the earliest examples of printed Lithuanian text is a nine-line poem

⁵ David F. Robinson. *Lithuanian books in the British Museum (1578-1937)* // *General linguistics*. Vol. 10. No 2 (1970).

in *Gratulationes Serenissimo Ac Potentissimo Principi Sigismundo III* published in Vilnius in 1589 (590.e.34). Amongst the treasures of the early Lithuanian collections are Bretkunas' *Postilla* published in Königsberg in 1591 (C. 37, f. 29) and purchased for the Library from a private individual in December 1872, and one of the three surviving fragments of the first Lithuanian Bible (Genesis to Joshua) translated at Oxford by Samuel Chyliński and printed, probably in 1660, in London (C. 51, b. 13). The printing was never completed. Bound in with our copy is a letter from the Polish bibliographer, Estreicher, dated 11 July 1893, congratulating the British Museum on acquiring the item earlier that year* We also hold, from one of the foundation collections of the British Museum Library, the collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), **An account of the translation of the Bible into the Lithuanian tongue, into which language the scriptures were as yet never translated...** Oxford: Hen. Hall, 1659 (1214, a. 5). In the *Account Chyliński* explains what lead him:

“willingly to begin, constantly to persevere in and happily to consummate, a work of vast labour, namely (*sic*) the TRANSLATION of the BIBLE into the LITHUANIAN TONGUE.”

Chyliński continues:

“For having long ago considered that several pious and learned men, since the year of our Lord 1387 (at which time Lithuania received the Christian faith, by means of the most religious King Jagello (*sic*) have hitherto, in vain expected, that

Kraków 11 Lipca 93

Kochany Panie!

Uprzejmie dziękuję podaną mi wiadomość o kupnie Biblii litewskiej wydania Chylińskiego. Istotnie rzadkość pierwszorzędna mająca wartość z powodu języka. Dotąd znany był egzemplarz Akademii Duchownej w Petersburgu pochodzący z Wilna. Opisuję go w mej Bibliografii tom 13ty str. 40 padając zarazem bibliografią tego przedmiotu za wskazówką nieodżałowanej pamięci Maur. Stankiewicza, który szeroko się rozwodzi o tej książce. Więc obecnie są dopiero dwa egzemplarze znane.

W tym roku skończę druk tomu 13go a w nim zawartą będzie cała litera B. Tak więc Bibliografia tworzyć się powoli ale bez odroczyńki i przerwy.

Przym Koleżeńskie pozdrowienia
Estreicher

Vertimas į lietuvių kalbą

Krokuva, 1893 m. liepos 11 d.

Mielas Pone,

Maloniai dėkoju už man pateiktą žinią apie lietuviškos Chylińskio leidimo Biblijos pirkimą. Iš esmės tai yra kalbos vertinimo atžvilgiu pirmaeilė retenybė. Iki šiol buvo žinomas Dvasinės Peterburgo Akademijos egzempliorius, kilęs iš Vilniaus. Aprašiau jį savo Bibliografijoje, 13-tajame tome, p. 40, kartu pateikdamas šio objekto bibliografiją pagal nepamirštamo atminimo Maur. Stankievičiaus, kuris plačiau rašo apie šią knygą, duomenis. Vadinasi, šiuo metu yra tik du žinomi egzemplioriai.

Šiais metais baigsiu spausdinti 13-tą tomą, o jį sudarys visa B raidė. Taigi Bibliografija kuriama pamažu, bet nepaliaujamai ir be petraukos.

Primiški kolegiskių sveikinimus
Estreicheris

somebody would have been raised up by God, to translate the Holy Scriptures into that tongue (which not only in those large territories but also in the neighbouring countries of Livonia, Curlandia, Russia, Prussia, and in the borders of Muscovy, is itself commonly used,) I thought it my duty... to furnish myself with such abilities, whereby I might be advantageous to it... My aim is not only now by this translation... to be helpful to those people, who have hitherto been destitute of books in that language for the furtherance of the practice of piety save only the Lords prayer, the Apostles creed, the Ten Commandements, some few Catechetical tracts, fragments of Gospels and Epistles and a book in quarto set out in the year 1653 [he refers here to **Kniga nobaznistes krikscioniskos**] but also for their fuller knowledge of the Christian religion..."⁶

A second edition, published in Königsberg in 1755, of the first complete Bible in Lithuanian, purchased in July 1883, is also held (**3061, b. 18**). Other important early religious works of the Reformation include what is probably a unique copy of the catechism of 1680 **Pradzia pamoksla del mazu weykialu** published in Königsberg and probably translated by Samuelis Bitneris (**C. 38, b. 47**). It contains manuscript notes in a 17th century English hand forming a brief dictionary of Lithuanian words with their English translations. Up until now no work has yet been done on establishing the authorship of these notes, but they already point to an interest in the Lithuanian language in 17th century England. The collections also include Vaisnoras' edition of **Margarita Theologica** published in Königsberg in 1600 (**3557, aaa. 9**) and an edition of 1700 of Martin Luther's **Catechismus minor, Germanico-Polonic-Lithuanico-Latinus** (**3905, b. 22**) published in Königsberg.

As far as secular publishing is concerned, the development of the Lithuanian written language is charted by works such as Haack's **Vocabularium Lithuanico-Germanicum** of 1730 (**1568/3563**), Philipp Ruhig's **Betrachtung der littauischen Sprache...** of 1745 (**12675, f. 6(1)**), Paul Friedrich Ruhig's **Anfangsgrunde einer littauischen Grammatik** of 1747 (**12975, f. 6(2)**) and works by C. G. Mielcke.

One of the treasures of the collection of Lithuanian literature is Donelaitis' poem **Metai** published, along with a German translation (*Das Jahr*) by Ludwik Rhesa, in Königsberg in 1818 (**011528, g. 25**). The speedy growth of Lithuanian literature in the 19th century is, however, very inadequately represented.

Some of our more important 19th century holdings include a second edition (1843) of Rhesa's **Dainos** (**1462, b. 18**), a copy, believed to be unique, of the **Prusczkos Kalendros** of 1847 (**P P. 2424, g**), which was purchased from Adolf Asher in Berlin for a price of fifteen shillings in 1870 and is the subject of a recent article by Prof. Kaunas⁷. Items published in the later nineteenth century during the Russian ban on Lithuanian-language printing in the Roman alphabet include a large number of works published in Tilsit, including items by Valancius, one of the leading opponents of the ban; for example, his **Palangos Juze**, published with the imprint of

⁶ Chyliński S. B. An account... P. 3-4.

⁷ Kaunas D. Mažosios Lietuvos lietuviškų kalendorių pradininkas // *Metai*. 1995. Nr. 6. P. 105-111.

Zavadzki of Vilnius and dated 1863, but actually produced in Tilsit in 1873 (20011. e. 51). Items from the United States include the first history of Lithuania in the Lithuanian language, *Lietuvos istorija* by Simonas Daukantas, published posthumously in Plymouth, Pa. 1893, 1897 (9456. e. 5). Both of these works were also supplied by Asher in a shipment of 61 Lithuanian books purchased by the Library in March 1903 for a price of £54. Also represented are works which were published in spite of the ban, such as the 1865 St Petersburg edition of Donelaitis' *Lithauische Dichtungen* (11585. h. 13).

Of the complete sets in the BL collections of journals which played an important role in the national revival – *Auszra*, *Varpas* and *Ukininkas* – only one volume of *Auszra* (for 1884) (P. P. 4741. ab) survived the fire-bombing of the South-West Quadrant of the bookstacks on 10 May 1941, which resulted in the loss of ca 250 000 volumes. Older periodicals are very inadequately represented.

The collections include some important official publications from the first period of Lithuanian independence, including statistical material, diplomatic documents on the Lithuanian-Polish dispute, and an almost complete set of the official gazette *Laikiniosis vyriausybės žinios...* etc. (O.G.L. 70/2).

Imaginative literature from the first half of the 20th century is, however, very inadequately covered.

It was not until after 1945 that holdings of Lithuanian material become satisfactory. Material published in Lithuania in Lithuanian and Russian was collected widely as well as both secular and religious emigre material in Lithuanian was published, for example, in the USA and Rome.

The collection of Lithuanian material published in Great Britain and acquired under the Copyright Act ranges from the output of the post-war London emigre publishing house Nida to material reflecting earlier waves of emigration from Lithuania to Britain. It is estimated that by the 1890s and early 1900s the Lithuanian community in Scotland amounted to ca. 7 000 with a further 2 000 Lithuanians living elsewhere in the United Kingdom. For many, Scotland was only a temporary stop en-route to the United States – Lanarkshire and Ayrshire's expanding coal, iron and steel industries employed many Lithuanians who were saving money for the passage of America. The British Library has a variety of materials which reflect the political ideas and concerns of this little-known immigrant community, based at Bellshill near Glasgow, ranging from runs (not always complete) of newspapers such as *Laikas*, *Rankpelnis*, and *Iseivu Draugas* to items such as the historical journal *Naujas Laikas* published by the Lithuanian Educational Society of Scotland in 1930 (P. P. 1186 td)⁸.

Having heard about the historical development of our Lithuanian collections, you are inevitably now wondering about their use. It is fitting that I can end my lecture

⁸ For an account of Lithuanian emigration to Scotland in the nineteenth century and information about emigre publications of this era see: **Murdoch Rodgers**. *The Lithuanians: immigration to Britain // History Today*. Vol. 35. July 1985. P. 15–20.

with a supporting quotation from my illustrious predecessor Thomas Watts, who, as long ago as 1869, recognised the necessity of bringing together:

“in the English metropolis an ample provision of the vast amount of floating information...” of use “not only to the student but to the merchant and the statesman whose purpose the student may affectually (*sic*) assist when the materials are ready to hand.”⁹ As I explained earlier, the Baltic Collections have in the past been under-exploited, but as cultural, political and business links between the Baltic states and the world community develop, we will be in a unique position to offer our services to an ever-widening constituency of users, both in the UK and abroad.

JANET ZMROCZEK

LIETUVIŠKA SPAUDA BRITŲ BIBLIOTEKOS SLAVŲ IR RYTŲ EUROPOS LEIDINIŲ FONDE

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje aptarta Britų bibliotekos (iki 1973 m. Britų muziejaus bibliotekos) lietuviškojo fondo raida. Šis fondas sudaro dabartinio Slavų ir Rytų Europos leidinių skyriaus dalį.

Lietuviškasis fondas atsirado panašiai kaip latviškasis, t. y. kaip bibliotekos vokiškųjų, lenkiškųjų ir rusiškųjų spaudinių komplektavimo XIX a. šalinis produktas, nors Britų muziejaus pagrindiniuose fonduose, sukauptuose nuo XVIII a., yra kai kurių lietuviškosios pakraipos leidinių. XX a. lietuviškos medžiagos komplektavimas tampa sistemingesnis, nuo 1945 m. jis labai priklauso nuo mainų su Lietuvos bibliotekomis.

Bibliotekai nepavyko nusamdyti Lietuvos žinovo, todėl šių fondų istorija iki dabar nėra pakankamai ištyrinėta. Straipsnio tikslas – pateikti bendrą vaizdą ir informuoti tyrinėtojus apie turimos medžiagos vertę. Jame aptariama lietuviška medžiaga, o ne lituanika plačiaja prasme.

Ankstyvasis lietuviškasis fondas vertingas religiniais spaudiniais. Jame yra „Postilė“, išleista Karaliaučiuje 1591 m., ir vienas iš trijų išlikusių pirmosios lietuviškos Biblijos fragmentų. Šią Bibliją Oksforde išvertė Samuelis Chilinskis. Ji tikriausiai išspausdinta 1660 m. Kartu su šiuo egzemplioriumi įrištas K. Estreicherio laiškas, kuriame šis sveikina Britų muziejų, 1893 m. įsigijusį šį leidinį. Pasaulietinių rinkinių fonde randami svarbūs XVIII a. lietuvių kalbos žodynai ir gramatikos, 1818 m. Karaliaučiuje leistų Donelaičio „Metų“ egzempliorius (kaip manoma, unikalūs), „Prusiškosios kalendros ant meto 1847“.

XIX a. lietuviškos spaudos draudimo laikotarpį reprezentuoja nemažas Tiltės spaudinių rinkinys. Tarp leidinių iš Jungtinių Valstijų yra pirmoji Lietuvos istorija lietuvių kalba, parašyta Simono Daukanto. Deja, iš pagrindinių nacionalinio atgimimo žurnalų „Ausra“, „Varpas“ ir „Ūkininkas“ pilnų komplektų po šiaurės vakarų kvartalo saugyklos bombardavimo išliko tik vienas „Ausros“ tomas. Tuo metu buvo prarasta iš viso 250 000 tomų. Po 1945 m. stengiamasi apimti visą lietuviškąją leidybą. Lietuvoje lietuvių ir rusų kalbomis pasirodžiusi medžiaga išsamiai komplektuojama taip pat kaip pasaulietiniai ir religiniai emigrantų leidiniai, pavyzdžiui, iš JAV ir Romos.

Lietuviška medžiaga, pasirodžiusi Didžiojoje Britanijoje ir įsigyta pagal Autorių teisių įstatymą, yra įvairi: nuo pokario metais veikusios leidyklos „Nida“ produkcijos iki medžiagos apie ankstesnes emigracijos bangas iš Lietuvos į Britaniją (pvz., šio amžiaus pradžios mažai žinomos lietuvių bendruomenės, buvusios Beshlehe prie Glazgo, periodiniai leidiniai).

Nors praėjusio lietuviški fondai buvo mažai naudojami, plečiantis kultūros, politikos, verslo ryšiams tarp Baltijos valstybių ir pasaulio bendrijos, Britų biblioteka, remdamasi jau sukauptais fondais ir esama komplektavimo politika, galės pasiūlyti unikalias paslaugas gausėjantiems vartotojams Jungtinėje Karalystėje ir už jos.

⁹ From Watts to the Trustees of the British Museum Estimates to 31 March 1869 (DH2/8: 22 Oct. 1866).