

From the Editors

This volume of the „Studies into the History of the Book and Book Collections” refers strictly to the idea of Barbara Bieńkowska, who had been editing thematic issues of this journal, receiving significant recognition from among the book researchers. Continuing this good tradition, we present to our Readers the special volume *The Polonica in Foreign Collections*, preceding the current issue No 11 for the year 2017. As we are going to continue this idea, I would like to invite the Authors to contribute to the future one concerning the role of a book and its institutions in development and preservation of the heritage of the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939), to be published in 2018, in the 100th anniversary of the independence regain by Poland.

We have chosen the topic of the *Polonica* in foreign collections for several reasons. The first and most important is our belief, that Polish and *Polonica* collections in foreign resources make an integral and extremely important part of the Polish written heritage. They complement and multiply significantly the *patrimonium* to be found both in Poland and abroad. The objects being maintained in foreign libraries quite often find no equivalents in domestic institutions, culled in the result of plunders and destructions, and diminished due to relocation of Polish borders. They belong simultaneously to the common heritage of the countries they have been maintained in either European ones, joined by their complicated history, or at other continents, where the emigrants from Poland settled, with North and South Americas in the lead.

The *Polonica* belong to the world cultural heritage. Their exploration and research contribute essentially not only to the history of Polish book, but of other countries’ books as well. Obviously, they enlarge the resources for studies in other disciplines. The importance of these topics has been confirmed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage financial support for this publication, within the programme „Protection of Cultural Heritage Abroad 2017”, and the Polish Guild of Gutenberg’s Knights project „National Heritage – to Preserve and to Disseminate”, chaired by Dariusz Kuźmina. Protection of historical heritage belongs to the priorities of a global and Polish cultural policy.

One can find a few statements, that the studies of that kind, registration and documentation of the *Polonica* in particular, loss their sense, as „everything has been registered so far”, or „nothing or hardly nothing has been done in this matter”. We would like to verify these extreme opinions, also because individual, team, or institutional studies on the *Polonica* in foreign collections have been finalized in recent years. Many publications, also included in this volume, have been developed as the effect of these explorations.

The librarians, book researchers, archivists, as well as scholars from other disciplines actively involved in these projects, through their registration, documentation, and research works inevitably develop our knowledge of Polish and *Polonica* collections abroad, as well as significantly contribute to protection of this heritage. Their experiences can

inspire further research of the *Polonica*. That is the reason for which we asked many people from Poland and abroad to present and discuss their knowledge and expertise in: Polish and *Polonica* collections in foreign resources; practical problems with their registration and documentation; methodology and organisation of these works; research projects concerning original resources of that kind, and – last but not least – developing book knowledge biographies, concerning people taking care of Polish books abroad.

The response to our invitation exceeded our expectations. Among dozens of the articles there are texts prepared by outstanding researchers, librarians, archivists, and other practitioners working with this type of collections on an everyday basis. We are especially happy of the works by young researchers, for whom the *Polonica* are inspiration for in-depth research explorations. The volume consists of articles concerning methodology, research trends, case studies of original resources, making a foundation for further studies, as well as the texts including essential resource and factual information. Quite often we can find texts surprisingly complementing each other or joining motifs, like the tragic history of the Żaba family from the Vilnius region after the January Uprising of 1863 against Russian rule in Poland, and their library, as presented in the articles by Wiesław Caban and Olga Guseva. There are more examples of such coincidences, all of them confirm the need for enlarged, deepened, and coordinated research or at least intensified exchange of experiences and results of the works on the *Polonica* in foreign collections, as being realised by different groups. That would effect in better knowledge of complicated ways of Polish books, their owners and users, related to the history of the state and the nation. This is just one reflection after reading the texts included in this volume.

I would like to thank in particular the reviewers, supporting the authors and the editors with their opinions and advises. Many thanks to the „external” editorial team, including Zoja Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, Małgorzata Kisilowska, Lidia Kowkiel and Michał Zając. Their assistance was very important in editing texts in foreign languages in this publication.

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