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Michał Spandowski, *Catalogue of Incunabula in the National Library of Poland*, in collaboration with Sławomir Szyller, descriptions of bookbindings prepared by Maria Brynda, Warsaw: National Library of Poland, 2020, 2 vols., 695+382 pp.

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The determination of the National Library of Poland to have a collection representative of the early stages of printing has overcome a very complex history which has seen the creation, dispersal, and destruction of a number of foundational collections. The collection that the Załuski brothers intended to offer for public use in 1747 was removed to St Petersburg by Catherine II in 1794. Many volumes were lost during transportation, more were destroyed or dispersed once there, resulting in only half the number of books from the Załuski library being present in the Imperial Public Library. Following the 1921 treaty of Riga, the Polish Republic tried to obtain the restitution of the library, which counted at least 3016 incunabula, this being a Russian calculation. Some 1987 incunabula returned to Poland in 1934, among them 1294 from the institution in St Petersburg that is now known as the Russian Public Library; they joined the National Library of Poland, which was created in 1928. A pre-war inventory of incunabula does exist and has allowed for the reconstruction of the eventful history of the Polish collection. The new library also received a number of other Polish collections, sometimes on deposit, such as the Wilanów, the Poniński, and the Rapperswill libraries. More books were purchased and donated. During the war, a central catalogue of incunabula in Polish libraries commenced. German bombardments had already destroyed part of the early collections (for example, the Rapperswill library) in 1939. As the war progressed, the incunabula collection, together with other valuable early material, was moved to the cellars of the Krasiński Library in Okólnik Street, built with reinforced concrete. In 1944, following the Warsaw Uprising, the cellars were inspected by an SS officer; the German manuscripts were removed and the rest burned. Seven incunabula survived to 1945, when the National Library was reopened; today, it hosts 1034 editions in 1131 copies.

The awareness of the importance of provenance research for the understanding of the social and cultural history of a country is tangible in this catalogue. The introduction, where the history of the collection is reconstructed, also includes a list of the negative events in the life of Polish book collections: the Thirty Year War (1618–1648); the Polish-Swedish wars during the course of the 17th century; the suppressions of Joseph II from 1782 onwards, which caused a new migration of books from former Polish monasteries to Berlin and Moscow, and the dispersal of the majority left behind; the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; the Second World War and the Soviet army occupying parts of Poland in the period of 1944–1948. Recent publications, such as the cited *The Foreign Book Signs in the Rare Book Collection of the Library for Foreign Literature (Founder M. Rudomino)* (Moscow, 1999), are witness to this history. The second volume of “Incunabula in Polish Libraries,” published in 1993, includes a separate record of about 2350 editions in approximately 4500 copies lost during the War. On top of adverse political events, fires contributed to the destruction of collections, such as that at the University Library of L’viv in 1848, and that of the Dominican Library of Kraków in 1850.

So, the collection as it stands today is the result of five major types of sources: the 1944 confiscation of the libraries of the Polish nobility, such as the Zamoyski collection; the pre-war incunable collection of the University Library in L’viv, removed in 1944 by the Germans to Lower Silesia and from there moved to the Warsaw National Library after the war; incunables from former German libraries in “recovered lands,” i.e. taken over from Germany, such as the Secondary Schools in Stargard and Nysa, the municipal library in Lubań, the protestant church in Wschowa (Fraustadt), and part of the municipal library of Königsberg. Finally, there are purchases and donations, as well as fragments removed from the bindings of later editions.

In the forthcoming volume *How the Secularization of Religious Houses Transformed the Libraries of Europe, 16th–19th Centuries*, Proceedings of the Conference held in Oxford 22–24 March 2012, ed. C. Dondi, D. Raines, and R. Sharpe, Turnhout, Brepols, 2022 (Bibliologia 63), I provide a list of books from religious houses all over Europe today in the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford, and in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, extracted from the Index of Provenance of the library’s catalogue of Incunabula, Bod-inc, and from the catalogue by James Walsh. These two institutions today have books from the Augustinian Canons, the Augustinian Hermits, the Dominicans, the Hospital, and the Cathedral Library in Wrocław; the Cistercians of Pelplin, Oliwa, and Posen; a Collegiate Church in Głogow (Glogau); the Franciscans of Poznan; the Franciscan Observants of Swiecie; and the Jesuits of Brzeznicza. As there appear to be no entries in the Warsaw catalogue for these institutions, except for one incunable from Głogow (Cat. No. 111 and other Głogow books have been located in Wrocław), data from these two library collections are complementary to that of Warsaw for the history of the Polish collections. Incunabula from former Polish collections have also been traced in France, Germany, Ukraine, Lithuania, Italy, and Germany, as well as, of course, the growing presence of Polish libraries being catalogued in the database Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI).

In the same manner, part of the same wandering of books pushed around by the vagaries of history, we can find today in Warsaw incunabula from the Augustinian Her-

mits of Naples, the Benedictines of Perugia, the Camaldolese of Naples, the Dominicans of Milan, Venice, Murano (Venice), and Verona, and the Franciscans of San Francesco della Vigna of Venice (incidentally, this library has 143 incunabula, not 85, as listed in the Provenance Index of this catalogue, and they are all catalogued in MEI): the *Commentum super libro IV Sententiarum* by Richardus de Mediavilla, printed in Venice in 1477 (GW M22509; ISTC im00423000; Cat. No. 851) presents the 18th-century stamp of the convent and must have been dispersed after the Napoleonic suppressions of 1810. It was acquired by the University Library of L'viv in 1902, maybe from the same Orlandini bookseller who in 1901 sold the *Summa theologica* printed in Venice in 1477 (GW 2196; ISTC ia00868000; Cat. No. 68), owned by the Dominicans of SS Giovanni e Paolo of Venice, and later also in the University Library of L'viv. Another involuntary agent of the dispersal of Italian collections from suppressed religious institutions is Michele Cavaleri, who established an ephemeral 'museum' in Milan, which was then sold to Enrico Cernuschi, who moved the collection to Paris, from where it was widely dispersed, including the copy (Cat. No. 109) which entered the Biblioteka Wieprzewska in today's Lithuania. The evidence these records provide for the history of the dissolution and dispersal of the libraries of Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and the countries bordering Poland is invaluable.

In Cat. No. 39, the Capuchins of San Giovanni Rotondo ('...dato all'luoco de capucinj di san' giovanni') should probably be identified with the house of Ravenna, initially located in the hospital of San Giovanni Battista (two records in MEI) and closer to the successive provenance, from Imola. Just to limit my references to non-border countries with Poland, we find books from the Benedictines of Auxerre and Châlons-en-Champagne, the Cistercians of Lucelle, the Jesuits of Molsheim, the Benedictines of Kremsmünster and of Salzburg, and the Dominicans of Friesach and Graz, with whom in 1520 ended up a copy of Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*, which was printed in Venice in 1479 (GW M46498; ISTC it00215000; Cat. No. 943) and purchased there by Girolamo Savonarola. The copy in Warsaw was purchased on 14th August, according to the interpretation of the catalogue in 1479, in this way narrowing down the date of printing. As is often the case, early provenance is vital for helping us to date incunabula. Sometimes, as in this case, understanding the modern names of places and institutions from the transcriptions of the ownership notes may be challenging to a reader less familiar with early modern provenance.

Finally, I can mention books from the Franciscans of El Puente del Arzobispo (Toledo), the Jesuits of Madrid, and the University Libraries of Basel, Graz, and Utrecht.

Efforts have been made in the Index to locate other incunabula by the same owner; for example, the Franciscan Observant Gaspar of Cattaro (Kotor, Montenegro), who owned a Venetian edition of Duns Scotus' *Questiones quodlibetales* edited by Thomas Penketh (GW 9070; ISTC id00395000; Cat. No. 314), as well as an incunable which still survives today in the Franciscan Convent of Hvar in Croatia. Another Venetian edition, companion to the former (GW 9075, ISTC id00381000, Cat. No. 315), was owned by Franciscus Jacomellus de Sibenico (Šibenik, Croatia); both books were in the Observant Franciscan convent of St Bernardinus in Kotor and apparently left the area with Baron Karl Albrecht Wilhelm von Ike (1798–1864), of Latvian origin, a secret advisor in Prussia.

The search for the brothers and sisters of incunabula with a certain provenance, of which our library may have one, ten, a hundred, or a thousand specimens, is a natural

historical instinct. When I was cataloguing the incunabula of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the question “this is one, where are the others?” is indeed what inspired me to create the Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI) database, a digital resource where, bit by bit, we are reconstructing the collective history of our heritage institutions, and tracking, chronologically and geographically, the migrations of books into and out of libraries.

Any library is a mosaic of multiple collections, made up from a collective history, but collections such as this at the National Library of Warsaw are particularly so. That is why the purpose of library catalogues cannot be seen as complete until the valuable historical information they contain is shared also in collective repositories such as the MEI database, where we contribute together to the reconstruction and understanding of our collective history.

Editions are from Augsburg (30), Avignon (2), Bamberg (2), Basel (76), Bologna (3), Brescia (10), Cologne (79), Cremona (1), Delft (2), Deventer (4), Erfurt (3), Esslingen (2), Florence (2), Freiberg (1), Freiburg im Breisgau (2), Gdańsk (1), Gripsholm (1), Haguenau (16), Hamburg (1), Heidelberg (2), Kraków (3), Leipzig (97), Leuven (1), Lübeck (4), Lyon (11), Magdeburg (1), Mainz (17), Mantua (1), Memmingen (5), Milan (10), Naples (2), Nuremberg (120), Paris (14), Passau (2), Pavia (6), Reggio Emilia (4), Reutlingen (3), Rome (26), Rostock (1), Rouen (2), Seville (1), Speyer (15), Strasbourg (154), Treviso (5), Tübingen (3), Turin (1), Ulm (15), Urach (7), Venice (257), Verona (2), Vicenza (1), Vienna (3), Zinna (1), Zwolle (1), The Netherlands (1).

Subject-wise, theology is, as expected, prominent, but classics, humanist works, medicine, the law, and almanacks also feature, as well as specific Polish publications, such as two editions of *Statuta Regni Poloniae*, printed in Leipzig; two editions of *Statuta provincialia Gnesnensia* printed in Strasbourg; two editions of *Triod' cvetnaja* or *Triodium temporis paschalis*, in Church Slavonic, printed in Kraków; and the *Agenda sive Exsequiale sacramentorum*, printed in Gdańsk, one of only two surviving copies, the other being at the Ossolineum in Wrocław. A unique copy is the *Missale Cracoviense*, printed in Strasbourg in 1491 (GW M24855; ISTC im00658030; Cat. No. 671), which was purchased by Katherina, who describes herself as blind and poor, “cecam pauperem,” and donated it to the church of Bodzentyn, near Kielce; one wonders who wrote her note in an early 16th-century hand on the 1492 *Almanach Lipsiense*, bound as an endpaper to this volume (now Cat. No. 32).

The first volume of the catalogue includes the introduction and the catalogue entries, while the second volume is entirely dedicated to a wide range of indexes with the purpose of making the catalogue as accessible as possible. There is a list of cited literature; names (of primary and secondary authors, editors etc); anonymous titles; printing places and printers, both topographical and alphabetical; concordances of the catalogue with GW, Hain, Copinger/Reichling, IBP (incunabula in Polish Libraries), and with the library's shelfmarks. It continues with the cited literature used for provenance research, the index of provenance subdivided into people and institutions, both with essential, often extensive, biographical information of great value for the user not already familiar with these collections. There is a further index just for the names of localities appearing in provenance inscriptions, and finally, an index of subject matter. This category, which has been appearing in recent catalogues of incunabula, is of extreme value and tries to capture

different elements of interest, ranging from subjects proper (astronomica, liturgica, medicina, musicalia) to types of books (dictionaries, documents, financial accounts, fragments of manuscripts, handwritten texts, indexes), to other features of relevance (illumination; maxims; marginal annotations in Cyrillic, Czech, English, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Russian, Spanish, and, of course, Polish; rubrication; prices; curses against thieves).

The index of bookbinding is arranged alphabetically by place, with reference to the Einbanddatenbank (EBDB) when possible; a separate concordance with the EBDB; and also chronologically, ranging from 1473 to 2016. Overall, the catalogue describes in detail over 280 contemporary bindings ('Gothic binding'), over 140 bindings dating to the 16th century ('Renaissance binding'), almost 100 bindings dating to the 17/18th century, and almost 400 later bindings.

Prices, as well as places of purchase, are recorded in over 70 ownership notes, contributing substantially to the ongoing mapping of the early distribution of books, a bottom-up investigation which I and a number of other scholars have been focusing on for decades. Just one example: one of the copies of the *Fortalitiū fidei* by Alphonsus de Spina, printed in Basel [not after 10 May 1475] (GW 1575; ISTC ia00540000; Cat. No. 34c), was purchased in the same year, 1475, for 3 florins by Johannes Pudon (fl. 1475–1487), chaplain at the church of St. Nikolaus in Zerbst (near Magdeburg); and 16 Brandenburg 'grossi' were given to a Petrus Wegener, "scriptor in casa cimiterij," for the binding. This note indicates that within a year of publication, the book from Basel had reached, unbound, Northern Germany.

I only have one criticism: that there is no reference to ISTC. As the two databases, ISTC and GW, overlap in some parts but not in others, it is sensible, as well as good practice, to refer to both.

The work done by the author of this catalogue, Michał Spandowski, is remarkable. As ever in projects of this size and complexity, many contributed with their help and knowledge to such an interesting and valuable publication; they are all duly thanked in the introduction (and the unhelpful ones also mentioned), beginning with the scientific review of Falk Eisermann. Several people were also involved in its physical production: translation by Elżbieta Olechowska; consultancy on the English language by Paul Schweitzer-Martin; the editorial collaboration of Fryderyk Rozen; the binding descriptions and indexes by Maria Brynda; and the analysis of the manuscript material, bound together with the printed matter by Sławomir Szyller. I especially congratulate the graphic designers, Aleksandra Toborowicz, typesetter Katarzyna Niewczas, and printers Marcelli of Warsaw, for the choice of typefaces (Adobe Jenson Pro, Incunables) and paper (Munken Premium Cream for the covers and Arches White); the two volumes are stunning, an absolute delight to look at, to hold, and to leaf through. None of this would have been possible, I am sure, without the strong support of the hosting institution, the National Library of Poland, and of its Director, Dr. Tomasz Makowski.

With the advent of electronic cataloguing and publishing, questions have been raised about the *raison d'être* of a traditional paper catalogue of incunabula. I will briefly explain it.

First of all, incunabula have to be described thoroughly in their physical, textual, and historical elements. The results may need to be accommodated in more than one repository of data.

A collection of incunabula should be catalogued in the online library catalogue of its institution, so that information about the volumes can be related to the institution's collections of manuscripts and later printed material, to understand the overall formation of the collections.

However, a collection of incunabula must also relate to the rest of the 15th-century European production in print, and therefore be placed within the specific environment of incunabula cataloguing, one which is very international and very digitally integrated: bibliographical references in ISTC, typographical references in GW, the copy-specific (the history of each copy from the time it was printed to the time it entered the current holding institution) in Material Evidence in Incunabula, its textual content (if not already present) in TEXT-inc, its illustration in 15cILLUSTRATION now transitioning into the new '1516' database. Only by bringing data on incunabula together, from the thousands of libraries which preserve them to this day, can we advance our research on the transmission of texts, the circulation of illustration, the early distribution, ownership, and later collecting of early printed books, and as a consequence, on the formation, dispersal, and (digital) reconstruction of library collections.

Ideally, moreover, incunabula should be digitized, and the links be included in GW and ISTC, as well as in the electronic catalogue of the local institution. All the incunabula of the National Library of Poland have been digitized and are available in the digital library polona.pl, and the links shared with GW and ISTC.

Finally, the digital pages with special features (provenance inscriptions and marks, decoration, binding, marginal annotations) should be extracted, or simple pictures taken with a phone for non-digitized books, uploaded onto CERL's Provenance Digital Archive (PDA) and linked to the dedicated provenance blocks in MEI.

Electronic catalogues and databases are living organisms to be consulted and improved upon, not read like a book; they do not have introductions by expert scholars who draw conclusions on their contents. Yes, of course, an electronic publication can host that, but if you want to be sure of its long-lasting existence, you had better print it on good paper. I congratulate the National Library of Poland on a job exceptionally well done.

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