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Andrew Pettegree, Arthur der Weduwen, *Biblioteki. Krucha historia*, przełożyła [translated into Polish by] Agnieszka Nowak-Młynikowska, Sopot: Smak Słowa, 2022, 554 pp. (Andrew Pettegree, Arthur der Weduwen, *The Library. A Fragile History*, London: Profile Books, 2021, 518 pp.)

<https://doi.org/10.19195/0080-3626.67.17>

It is easy for the reader to see that this book on libraries is not a library history. It addresses the phenomenon of the fragility of libraries: their inevitability, emergence, metamorphoses, occasional disappearance, overall sustainability and resilience. And the cult which has always surrounded impressive libraries. In the Prologue, ‘Opiekunowie ruin’ (‘Curating the Ruins’) we get multiple instances of either. Then the narration is divided into six parts, organized around basic groups of developments. Thus library history is back anyway — on the wings of chronology.

Part one, titled ‘Narodziny i przetrwanie’ (‘Inception and Survival’), starts with the Library of Alexandria — or actually two libraries, modern and ancient — and reflects on the growth of written records, the need for copying them, and the emergence of library collections. We remain in the Mediterranean circle of civilisations, with two basic types of libraries: scholarly ones and the ones which later were named public. Then, we have monastic libraries, the emergence of the codex format, and the developments in production, adornment, and usage of the manuscripts.

Part two is, of course, ‘Kryzys drukarski’ (‘The Crisis of Print’), and the narrative includes the altered book production and the contributions of great collectors, like Ferdinand Columbus (Hernando Colón) and Erasmus Roterodamus, as well as the Reformation and the beginnings of (religious) censorship.

Part three, ‘Nowi kolekcjonerzy’ (‘The New Collectors’), is initially aimed at new markets, then again at outstanding private collections, and then — generously — at university libraries, which in some cases laid the foundation for the school’s enduring existence. Then we have missions and the expansion of publishing and libraries beyond Europe. From now on the story is very much on Americas, but also on peripheries of Europe, like Sweden and Poland. Asia and Africa are mentioned mostly by stressing the Islamic resistance to printing as well as the technological contribution by China. A general reader will be intrigued by the image of bookish Timbuktu (now in Mali), the capital of the world in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, and let us admit that they would benefit from the continuation of the story, but it does not follow in the text. It would probably cover the manuscripts of Timbuktu, over 300,000 of them, which not only made their historic way to the modern conservation and digitisation centre, but also were rescued from Al-Qaeda in the year 2012 (Hammer, 2017).

Part four, ‘Między biblioteką publiczną i prywatną’ (‘Between Public and Private Library’), depicts the growth of municipal libraries, with the essential religious agents, and several large-scale projects, including networks of parochial libraries in England and Scotland, the emergence of professional librarians, like Gabriel Naudé, and the complex political background in 17th-century France. Aristocratic collections received their first buildings designed as libraries, which reinforced their social role. With the inclusion of new monastic libraries, an epoch of what is celebrated today as *schöne alte Bibliotheken* started; the royal library provided ground for the state library; antiquarian trade supported great libraries, but also there were increasing numbers of libraries destroyed, wasted, or simply forgotten.

Then, as the theme of part five, ‘Beletrystyka’ (‘Fictions’), *belles-lettres* arrives to consume the minds. New forms of institutions were established, new social groups took roots, new patterns of circulation became available, also in the British colonies. The empire deserved a new type of museum, with a library as its part. Antonio Panizzi created a national library out of it, and national libraries blossomed in several countries, or at least attempts were made. Also a public library became a necessity, and this is thanks to Andrew Carnegie that they could grow as independent and prosperous institutions.

Part six, ‘Wojna o książki’ (‘The War on Books’), is dealing with both world wars, and Jewish collections serve here as an example of the books searched for, destroyed, and then recollected, showing extremities of the 20th century. Also the fate of displaced books is discussed, with Germany and Russia as the most important actors, but also with a few well-deserved mentions of Poland.

‘Postscriptum: czytelnictwo bez książek’ (‘Postscript: Reading Without Books’) appears to be a sceptical evaluation of Google Books and (perhaps) similar projects, and then exposes dangers for physical collections and the lack of common ground in the scholarly world as to how we perceive the essential features of the past, which we want to research and remake. The authors — one born in 1957, the other one in 1993 — seem uncertain as

to whether the impressive new libraries that are being built around will be book libraries, or whether they will marginalize their collections and fill their perennial mission with alternative forms of cultural dissemination.

This is a worthwhile read, and the authors made a successful effort to combine threads and motifs on a scale apparently not yet practiced. Throughout their story, libraries remain related directly to the issue of the demand for written texts. Erudition is shown to illustrate how books were produced, acquired, and organized in access institutions of diversified and fluid formats. These formats are characterized by society and culture, by wealth and power, and by technology on the top of that, but they are products of the book industry and communication customs, and only marginally — of a scientific enterprise. The authors hardly show us how libraries operated as knowledge institutions and how they filtered and qualified the contents of the textual world as they made it circulate. The only major exception is made for the vast realm of censorship.

Of course, this is primarily a social history of libraries, so we receive fascinating passages on how libraries operated by imposing on their users images of the very institutions' nature and status. And the authors do give examples of dilemmas faced by a social researcher attempting to understand this impact of libraries. What do we know, for instance, of the 'salon' style of women's reading rooms in the middle of the 19th century in public libraries of England? Were they arranged like this because middle-class women came to them and received what they were used to, or, on the contrary, because ladies from such social strata were underrepresented in libraries (p. 427), which would mean that the design deployed for the interiors was compensatory, creating a new, desired world for library users in a very similar way to the contents of the books they read? Or perhaps — might we add — such an arrangement suited the creators of the libraries and made their own dreams come true, and the female readers using the reading rooms paid attention to where they were — or not at all?

All in all, the book is rich with anecdote, but not with theory. It does not tell us of libraries as knowledge mills — perhaps the authors do not perceive them as such, or consider it a different research problem, or just do not think it of interest to the supposed readers. It is a book about leaders and their institutions, and institutions come and go, blossom or have problems, but are hardly considered as organizations, and the ways they are managed. We see it clearly when we notice how little attention was paid to library classifications and all the textual resources of the library which are derived from books, but are not directly parts of books; they surround texts contained in collections, forming an essential, readable, perhaps adorable interface by which the very items are discovered, retrieved, and appreciated. This element is not any less fragile than libraries as institutions and their property. As a result of this bias, the library spaces are mentioned when people enter, but to much lesser an extent they are looked at as places which hold collections.

Thus, several omitted issues could be listed here, to start with the growth of knowledge and the changing perception of knowledge, then the spatial layout of libraries, library architecture and great library buildings still erected well into the 21st century as if there were no digitisation... There are hardly any users seen at the libraries as their evolution in the 20th century is described; they do not enjoy freedom introduced by open stacks or, say, omnipresent copiers, do not deal with subject headings and thesauri, do not streamline

their searches with the aid of authority control, and are never disappointed when an item needed appears to be located in a remote storage. (Unfortunately, the Index is confusing *magazyn* as a storage area with a format of a serial publication, as this is the same word in Polish.) There is no doubt that such issues are met with little interest of the general public, but probably they were just for too long labelled unattractive? The general public eagerly agrees to depend on standards, coding, and linguistic tools — why not see how they emerged and grew before the computers took over?

It is great to have the authors remind you that mature libraries of the 18th century lacked working desks by the piled up bookcases, and focused on impressing the visitor with architecture and adornment, but where is then the 19th century library with well equipped reading room(s) and the closed storage area from which the books are just fetched on demand? Of course we do not link the lack of Leopoldo della Santa in this book with the fact that he is, believe it or not, not covered by Wikipedia, but the author of ‘Della costruzione e del regolamento di una pubblica universale biblioteca’ (Firenze 1816), as he is treated with due respect by most of the library science authors (Cf. Gogiel-Kuźmicka, Sidorczuk, 2014), could be more visible throughout the text. Like in the passage devoted to the British Museum on p. 320 — but it only takes turning to the illustrations insert after p. 448 to see the ‘metal shelves’ outside of the walls of the large oval reading room (picture 5), and understand the importance of this solution for library operations. By the way, we are granted no access to information on the British Museum via the index, neither is there an entry for ‘Muzeum Brytyjskie’, while there is, on p. 537, one for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). And this is the same with quite a number of names of places and regions, including Belarus (mentioned on p. 445 to inform, that this country — actually, a Soviet Union republic — saw all of its libraries destroyed during the Second World War; we must have dreamt, visiting Belarusian libraries several times and finding lots of antiquarian materials held).

The book is a little more meticulous when it comes to library catalogues, but it does not make a good balance to deservedly stress the contribution of Antonio Panizzi and completely ignore the Online Computer Library Center with its WorldCat, still keen to locate ‘the library near you’ which holds the item you have searched for. (Working in Warsaw, in many cases of scholarly books we are redirected to Berlin, ‘518 kilometres away’.) And while the authors take a careful and erudite look on acts of library destruction, and complain, that manually created finding tools have been marginalised by online tools, still not covering the whole of the collections (p. 470–471), they forget to mention, how many card catalogues were just gotten rid of as scrap paper with the progress of library automation. As if they were not once impressed with a passionate *j'accuse* by Nicholson Baker and the discussion it provoked, including the book eventually written by that author (Baker, 1994; Baker, 2001).

Also, it is sort of unfair to focus on scientific motivation of so many library users and creators, like in the Netherlands of the 17th century, and to end the story short before the current decay of the scientific library — not as an institution, but as a physical place and space. This is because almost all scholarly journals are now online, those archival issues, which are not, are used by few people, and almost all of the contents are immediately available in the full text format, either as a part of open access movement or as covered

by institutional subscription — the user experience being identical in both cases. The awareness that the university, the consortium, or the state does pay for your reading, is rather low, is it not?

But this book makes altogether an exceptional undertaking, almost impossible. Most of literature on library history is histories of libraries; if not of individual ones, then perhaps of types of libraries, libraries in some region, some aspects of library activities, etc. There are also many research projects aimed at broader perspectives, permitting exchange of evidence between library historians (Kimball, Wisser, 2017). Nothing, however, seems to compare to this book in its ambition to show the library as a single phenomenon, but in its multiple variants, undergoing major and minor developments.

Having admitted that, we can only ask: is it scholarly enough? If it were a paper in natural science, we would probably call it a review work (as opposed to original articles, case reports, opinion papers, etc.). In addition, the authors have their own research findings to include. It is obvious that they could not contribute with their original research to every topic covered, although they also visited many places and talked to librarians, which endows the book with a personal feeling — a value in humanities, absent in natural or applied sciences. Therefore the way they tell us the story of libraries in Europe during and after the Second World War is impressive, especially when it comes to Germany, Russia and Poland. It had to be told and it is. But they could not quote all the experts, so there is a little expertise bias visible in what they have to say about Britain, France, and the Netherlands as opposed to some inadequacies which we find in their story of Eastern Europe. Plus chaos in narration every now and then.

For instance, Poland. First, the authors do not make the difference between the state of General Gouvernement and the ‘occupied territories’ outside of it. Then, they try to be brief and this we understand, but some passages in that restricted format are just superfluous or even misleading, like that on *Intelligenzaktion*, apparently influenced by Wikipedia (p. 381). Due to the compactness of the text, the otherwise distant facts are tied up too tightly. Also Załuski Library requires a solid treatment or none; it should not be suggested, as it is, that in 1944 it still held 400,000 items, of which only 10 per cent survived (p. 382). With the locations of the Warsaw collections and their names, the authors fail completely; no wonder why. But they might have mentioned the Nazi-established (or rather converted) Staatsbibliotheken in Warsaw and Cracow. By the way, the important Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin is only once (p. 388) called this name, otherwise it is just a ‘state library,’ in the both editions, English and Polish.

It looks like the actual war losses in libraries of Poland were somewhat below the data circulating for decades as common knowledge. The German rule of the libraries in General Gouvernement was more complex than we used to think before Andrzej Mężyński stood up with his evidence-based knowledge. And it is not so that his works are all available in Polish only (Cf. Mężyński, 2000; Mężyński, Łaskarzewska, 2003; Mężyński, 2010).¹ Moreover, while the World War II was indeed an unprecedented catastrophe in all the fields and aspects, it will not turn into idyll if we dare going into detail in our search for facts. To be sure, the authors have done that with dedication, but they confined

¹ Please note that Kommando Paulson is a typo — it ought to read Paulsen (pp. 386, 549).

themselves to a few well-established but not the most recent sources (Cf. Mężyński, 1994; Bieńkowska, 2001). Plus, of course, in this area there seem to be no raw data published which could go without a comment or a qualifier.

The authors correctly pay attention to the fate of Jewish books and tell us a fascinating story how an appropriate place for ‘orphaned’ books from Jewish libraries could not be agreed upon after the war. Again, however, this topic would require a separate monograph with fresh data. Much of the information on burnt Jewish books came to us from Nazi sources, in which the picture of the German destruction of the Jewish legacy was exaggerated. Professors Pettegree and der Weduwen otherwise know and demonstrate that libraries are neither vanishing easily, nor vanishing for good — this is a central issue of their work — but they are avoiding to take that lesson from the case of Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin (pp. 383–384). Yes, the absence of the collection does not imply that the ultimate loss happened. This theme would perfectly fit the book and augment its theses, especially its modern part, and we are sorry that it is almost completely missing just here, as we have now a paper with pictures of stamps from that Yeshiva, taken recently, and citations from the earlier literature, which did encourage the search! It also brings information of establishment of Yeshiva Digital Library (Nazaruk, 2022).

And the narrative devoted to this area lacks something even bigger. The stress is put on the post-Second World War search for a ‘world Jewish library,’ which would receive collections of the destroyed libraries and from places in which there were no more Jewish communities. The authors mention Copenhagen and Amsterdam as the cities competing to accommodate the library, the efforts from UNESCO to arrive at some conclusion, and rejection of those schemes in countries like Czechoslovakia, where it immediately became clear that the real audience for those books may emerge only in Palestine. But they fail to tell us how many books the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1925) eventually received, and how its library grew until the National Library emerged from it in 2008, and reopened in a new building in 2023. Neither do they consider it important that Jews collected books not only for their own libraries in Europe, and never mention Józef Chazanowicz (Joseph Chazanovitz), a physician from Grodna, who worked in Białystok, collected books by Jewish authors, regardless of the language, and in the year 1896 started sending them to the B’nai Brith library of Jerusalem, which became the nucleus of the university, and then the national library. In a similar manner, they ignore initiatives beyond Europe, including the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst (Massachusetts), where almost one million abandoned, orphaned, unused, or just discarded books from many countries were collected, digitised etc. by Aaron Lansky (Lansky, 2020).

To sum up, we are delighted by this book, but — opposite to at least one enthusiast in Poland (Szary-Matuszkowiak, 2022) — have mixed feelings about it. But we also try to understand that a global history of the library, which would cross all the geographic and cultural barriers and borders, and provide an adequate balance between library as teams, structures, ‘contents’ and tools, has not long been attempted, and now it is. It is good that we have it in Polish — the only language other than English in which it seems to have been published (as for August 2023). Perhaps some Polish author will join the future efforts in research and writing.

Let us conclude then with a look at the quality of the translation. Yes, Polish is the version that we have actually read and liked. It has to be observed, that both the translator and the editor managed to avoid terminological errors, frequent in translations of books on books made by non-‘bibliologists.’ The only exception is *duplikat* (Eng. duplicate) where it should read *dublet* (p. 238). Also, we cannot accept non-Polish names of places, like Göttingen instead of *Getynga* (p. 182), Münster instead of *Monastyr* (p. 245),² Regensburg instead of *Ratyzbona* (p. 271, 550), and Ghent or Gent instead of *Gandawa* (p. 463, 561). Also, there is a funny mistake on p. 392: ‘utworzenie radzieckiej strefy okupacyjnej na terenie komunistycznych Niemiec Wschodnich (Niemieckiej Republiki Demokratycznej — NRD),’ while in the English edition, p. 344, we read without a surprise about ‘[t]he creation of a Soviet zone of occupation in what became Communist East Germany (the DDR).’

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² This name, like many other names of places, including Lublin, is missing in the index. All of the chapter between pp. 240 through 247 is poorly indexed in the English edition as well, probably because the text here is dense and unprecedentedly abounds in proper names.

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Jerzy Jarowiecki, *Prasa we Lwowie w latach 1918–1945*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe i Edukacyjne SBP; Zielona Góra: Pro Libris — Wydawnictwo WiMBP im. Cypriana Norwida 2022 (Seria Historyczna II), 337 ss., 10 nlb.

<https://doi.org/10.19195/0080-3626.67.18>

W 2022 roku nakładem Wydawnictwa Naukowego i Edukacyjnego Stowarzyszenia Bibliotekarzy Polskich oraz Pro Libris — Wydawnictwa WiMBP im. Cypriana Norwida w Zielonej Górze ukazała się kolejna książka prasoznawcy Jerzego Jarowieckiego¹, zatytułowana *Prasa we Lwowie w latach 1918–1945*. Jest ona kontynuacją problematyki podjętej w monografii *Prasa we Lwowie w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej (1867–1918)*. Przedstawiona publikacja składa się z dwóch części: „Ośrodek wydawniczo-prasowy we Lwowie w okresie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)” i „Działalność wydawniczo-prasowa we Lwowie w latach 1939–1945”.

Podstawą do ustalenia tytułów prasy polskiej we Lwowie były materiały zgromadzone przez samego autora oraz opracowane przez wcześniejszych badaczy (m.in. Zenona Kmiecika, Stanisława Antoniewskiego, Irenę Turowską-Barową, Aleksandrę Garlicką), zasoby katalogów (Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej, Biblioteki Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności,

¹ J. Jarowiecki jest autorem wielu opracowań dotyczących prasy Lwowa, m.in.: *Dzieje prasy polskiej we Lwowie do 1945 roku*, Kraków-Wrocław 2008; *Prasa lwowska w latach 1864–1918: bibliografia*, Kraków 2002; *Prasa we Lwowie w okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, „Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej” 1993, nr 4, s. 41–56; *Polska i ukraińska prasa pedagogiczna w Galicji w okresie autonomii w latach 1867–1918*, [w:] *Krakiw — Lwiw: knihy, czasopysy, biblioteky XIX–XX st.*, Lwiw 2011, t. X, s. 206–225; *Czasopisma pedagogiczne we Lwowie w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej*, [w:] *Spoleczeństwo, kultura, inteligencja: studia historyczne ofiarowane prof. Irenie Homoli-Skapskiej*, red. E. Osman, G. Nieć, Kraków 2009, s. 385–406.