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COMMON GOAL, DIFFERENT METHODS: PROCESSING AND DIGITIZATION OF THE CIESZYN WRITTEN HERITAGE

Agnieszka LASKOWSKA, M. Sc.

The Cieszyn Historical Library, Cieszyn, Poland
agalaskowska01@gmail.com

Tomasz HAJEWSKI, Ph. D.

The State Archives in Katowice, Poland
t.hajewski@katowice.ap.gov.pl

Abstract:

Książnica Cieszyńska (Cieszyn Library) and the Cieszyn Branch of The State Archives in Katowice are among the few repositories, which contain historical documents concerning Cieszyn Silesia. Those collections and archival fonds have recently been described and digitized. The authors will discuss different methods used by both librarians and archivists in the process. The different methods, however, serve a common goal, which is protection of written heritage of the Cieszyn Silesia and its publication on the online databases.

Key words:

Cieszyn Silesia, processing, digitization, written heritage

Izvleček:

Skupni cilj in različne metode – popisovanje in digitalizacija zgodovinskih dokumentov Knjižnice Cieszyn in Oddelka Državnega arhiva Katowice v Cieszynu

Knjižnica Cieszyn in Oddelok Državnega arhiva Katowice v Cieszynu sta dve izmed redkih ustanov, ki hranijo zgodovinsko dokumentacijo šlezjskega Cieszyna. Zbirke in fondi so bili nedavno popisani in digitalizirani. Avtorja obravnavata različne metode, ki so jih v tem procesu uporabljali knjižničarji in arhivisti. Različne metode pa seveda služijo skupnemu cilju – zaščiti pisne dediščine Tešinske Šlezije in njeni objavi v spletnih bazah.

Ključne besede:

Cieszyn, obdelava, digitalizacija, pisna dediščina

Cieszyn Silesia is a Polish territory wedged between 3 states: Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. It used to be inhabited by Poles, Czechs and Germans. In the Middle Ages, it belonged to the Piast dynasty, who in 1290 created here autonomous Duchy of Cieszyn (German: Herzogtum Cieszyn). In 1327, the Cieszyn Piasts became vassals of the Bohemian King John of Luxembourg. After the death of the Duchess Elisabeth Lucretia, the last member of the Cieszyn Piast dynasty, in 1653, the Habsburg dynasty as the Bohemian kings started its rule over the Duchy. The reign lasted till 1918. After the border dispute over the territory between Poles and Czechs, the Council of Ambassadors at the Spa Conference in 1920 decided to divide the area along the river Olza between Czech Republic and Poland. This division was confirmed after the Second World War (Makowski, 2007, p. 5; Spyra, 2007, pp. 3-4).

Cieszyn Silesia differs from other Czech and Polish regions in terms of denominational identity. While Poland and Czech Republic are mostly Catholic, Cieszyn Silesia is Protestant to a great extent. The Piast dynasty introduced its subordinates to Reformation in the first half of the 16th century. They published "Church Order", which organized Cieszyn churches according to the Augsburg Confession. Counterreformation launched by Habsburgs after 1653 did not eradicate Protestantism, although Protestants could not meet and hold worship services in public. Their situation changed after the Protestant Patent of 1861 (Sosna, 2009, pp. 9-11). In the National Census 2011, 18% of inhabitants of the Cieszyn powiat declared Lutheran denomination, marking it as the powiat with the greatest percentage of Lutherans in Poland (Bieńkuńska et al., 2020, p. 128).

Due to the region's unique location and complex history, its written heritage is quite extraordinary. Amounting to 900 linear meters of archival records and almost 200 000 volumes of manuscripts and prints, it represents a plethora of European languages, nationalities, religions, and ideas. It forms not only the primary source for historical research in the region, but also stands out as the important ingredient of European cultural heritage. Among several institutions that preserve this patrimony on Polish side, one must mention the Cieszyn Historical Library and the Cieszyn Branch of the State Archives in Katowice (Hollender, 2010, pp. 3-4).¹

The latter, the Cieszyn Branch of the State Archives in Katowice, has been functioning since 1952, when it became a part of the State Archives in Katowice. The archives, then managed by Waclaw Bandura, operated in three rooms in the building of the Cieszyn Museum. Its territorial range included the powiat of Cieszyn, but soon expanded and included the powiat of Wodzisław and Jastrzębie-Zdrój as well (Machej & Matuszek, 2009, p. 15). Presently, the archives located in the building of the Cieszyn Historical Library, contains 459 archival fonds, which amount to 850.37 linear meters.² Those holdings undergo regular processing and digitization.

Processing records is a key function of the archives. After the introduction of the online database ZoSIA in Polish state archives, there arose a need to modify regulations concerning processing to make them applicable to online environment. Therefore, in 2018 Head Director of the State Archives issued an ordinance on processing of archival materials (Zarządzenie nr 8, 2018). The ordinance introduced new rules for description and preparation of inventories online. Specifically, it regulated the description of descriptive units and arrangement of online inventories, which from now on directors of the state archives would accept and sign electronically. Directors could ask peer review committees for an opinion or advise on methodological matters concerning the

¹ Other institutions include: Museum of Cieszyn Silesia, Tschammer's Library and Archives, and Cieszyn's Assembly of the Merciful Brothers' Order.

² Data retrieved on May 2nd, 2022, from ZoSIA database.

processing of a fonds³. In 2021, the staff of the archives in Katowice processed 27 fonds (36,63 linear meters) according to the new regulations (Annual report, 2021).

Processing usually paves the way for digitization of archival documents. Records that have been properly arranged and described may then be transformed into electronic form and posted online, facilitating access to them for researchers. The Government Program "Culture Plus", which the State Archives in Poland participated in between 2012 and 2017, resulted in digitization of more than 72 million of digital copies (Government Program, 2022). The program concerned mostly civil registers and records of public administration offices. In 2018, the Head Office of the State Archives introduced a new program called "Digitization strategy for the years 2018-2023". According to the annual report of the State Archives in Katowice for the year 2021, the archives digitized on its own 1199 descriptive units, which amounted to 80 816 scans. Moreover, 41 713 copies were made in cooperation with the Upper Silesian Genealogical Society "Silius Radicum" and the Foundation "Let's protect heritage" in Lublin (Annual report, 2021). The scans were posted on the Internet via the website: www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl. Some of them, especially the civil registers, are also available on the State Archives in Katowice website: www.katowice.ap.gov.pl.

One of the fonds that has been recently published online is the fonds of the Legal Office of the Polish Government's Representative by the Interallied Commission in Cieszyn. The Interallied Commission led by Count Gustav de Manneville ruled in the Cieszyn Silesia in 1920. Its task was to organize a plebiscite that would decide on the division of the region. The Polish Legal Office took care of all legal and organizational matters concerning the plebiscite on the Polish side. Therefore, the documents of the Office reflect the troubled times of the border dispute between 1919 and 1920. The fonds itself contains 16 descriptive units (0,35 linear meters) from the years 1919-1921. In the fonds one can find documents on administration of the Office, complaints on Czech misdemeanor, registers of Poles persecuted by the Czechs, along with press clippings.

Unfortunately, neither file structure nor list of records of the Legal Office survived. The archivist responsible for processing of the fonds, Mieczysław Rożkowicz, also could not ascertain how the archives in Cieszyn had acquisitioned the documents. He could only determine that the registry of the Legal Office had used registry filing system based on incoming and outgoing classification, predominant in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For those reasons, processing did not include restoration of the original order of records. The archivist started arrangement by separating excessive duplicates from the records. Then he arranged folders according to the following subjects: organizational issues, official letters to the Interallied Commission, correspondence concerning arrested Polish citizens, complaints on war crimes, personnel lists and press clippings. The materials on Czech violations were sorted alphabetically according to the places they had taken place. Finally, the documents inside folders were sorted chronologically (The Legal Office, p. 3).

When the archivist finished arranging the records physically, he then described them in a finding aid. It included a history of the collection's originating agency, information on the contents of the fonds, and analysis of the methods of arrangement. The finding aid also included folder-level listings of the materials. M. Rożkowicz

³ Peer review committees (in Polish: komisje metodyczne) used to function based on the Ordinance Nr 21 of the Head Director of the State Archives from November 3rd, 2016. The Head Director formed them in all state archives. They consisted of fellow archivists, who evaluated and approved the processed fonds. The situation changed in 2018, when the Head Director decided in the Ordinance Nr 9 that the committees would play only advisory role in processing, while directors of the archives would approve the fonds.

submitted the final version of the aid for review and on September 20th, 1990 the Peer Review Committee at the State Archives in Katowice approved it (The Legal Office, p. 2).

In recent years, the record group of The Legal Office of the Polish Government's Representative by the Interallied Commission in Cieszyn was disseminated via the Internet. In 2019, the Digitization Section of the State Archives in Katowice digitized the entire collection and sent it to the National Digital Archives for importing it to the ZoSIA database. Last year, the Cieszyn Branch of the State Archives in Katowice posted it on the website www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl, where it can serve researchers worldwide.

The other repository in Cieszyn, which holds historical records, is the Cieszyn Historical Library. The Cieszyn city council created it in 1994 as an independent institution, detaching from the City Library Historical Section. While the City Library, housed in the former German House on Głęboka Street, deals with modern book collection, the Cieszyn Historical Library contains several archival and library collections preserved in the 1930's in the Cieszyn Museum. It owns a new building (finished in 2001) on Mennicza Street, where old mint used to operate in the 17th century. Among its library holdings one can find monumental collections of Leopold Szersznik, People's Reading Room, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Tadeusz Reger and the Polish Ethnographic Society (Hollender, 2010, pp. 29, 32).

The paper will focus specifically on the last collection, namely the Library of the Polish Ethnographic Society. Created in 1901 by Reverend Józef Londzin, the Society aimed at describing Polish people and publishing works about them. Therefore, it collected various books and documents of historical value, which were to serve as research sources. The collection amounts now to 10 000 volumes and 9000 archival records in 45 packages, including manuscripts, documents, prints, literary and scientific works, along with visual materials. The collection presents all aspects of political, social, and cultural life in the Teschen Silesia from 16th to 20th century (Hollender, 2010, pp. 56-57).

However, the archives of the Society present an archival challenge. First, it is impossible to ascertain provenance of the documents, since they were created and donated by different creators, both public and private. Of all 45 packages, only few have one dominating creator. Moreover, in several cases an original document is preserved along with a duplicate. Archivists would weed the duplicates, while librarians must keep them, because library regulations prohibit destruction of archival materials in libraries (Rozporządzenie, 2012, par. 8). Finally, due to archaic finding aids, documents of the Society were not readily accessible to researchers and their description became a necessity.

Despite the fact that rules of processing manuscripts for MARC 21 format regulate processing of archival materials in the library, practically each library uses its own regulations or applies instructions used by the state archives. The collection of the Society was also not arranged according to existing regulations. In the 1960's and 1970's, the collection was catalogued only in a simplified way. The goal of this preliminary arrangement was to gain insight on the contents of the archives and provide access to them as soon as possible.

Cataloging included making paper notes on each document in every package. The paper cards contained the following information: title (or incipit), author, publisher, place of publishing, number of pages, physical traits of the document, and even ink color. In 2021 those cards underwent retro conversion: they were typed into library system OPAC. Moreover, information on each document was partly conformed to MARC 21 standards, so every record received subject heading according to the Catalogue of the Subject Headings of the National Library. Those headings now help navigating thru the collection

published online. The processing methods used by the Cieszyn Historical Library presented thus innovative character. They amalgamated both the traditional method of the 1960's and modern library standards.

Nevertheless, the documents were not grouped or arranged in any way. There exists neither subject classification, nor chronological organization in this collection. The materials are only loosely connected thematically in individual folders. A folder may contain between 50 and 100 documents. Folders are then boxed in acid-free boxes.

Grants from the program "Digital Culture" of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage financed digitization and publication on the Internet of the Archival Documents of the Polish Ethnographic Society. In 2021, the Cieszyn Historical Library obtained a grant of 75 550 Polish zlotys for digitization of 3284 records. It comprised about 32% of the entire collection. This year, thanks to a grant of 49 000 Polish zlotys, another 1300 records will be scanned. Digital copies are published on the Silesian Digital Library website (www.sbc.org.pl) in the .pdf format (*Drugi etap*, 2022).

Comparison of processing methods used by the State Archives in Katowice and the Cieszyn Historical Library generates several conclusions. Differences of both systems are clearly visible. The Library operates under the 2012 ordinance of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage concerning national library collection, while the State Archives must conform to the 1983 Act on National Archival Collection and Archives and regulations issued by the Head Director of the State Archives. Yet the Library may also introduce its own processing standards. Thus, processing in the archives has a more centralized character, which is reinforced by the existence of peer review committees. Those committees play a key role in archival processing, because they evaluate methods of description of particular record group.

Holdings of both institutions also differ structurally. While libraries frequently possess archival collections created by many creators, there prevail the fonds (records created by one organization) in the archives. Such structures of materials evidently enforce divergent ways of arranging them: archival processing usually ends at the folder level, while in the library it concerns the individual document in the folder. The library method of processing, although more time-consuming to conduct, guarantees quick identification and access to single documents in the collection.

Despite the differences, the two organizations work toward the common goal of preserving the unique written heritage of the Teschen Silesia. It includes digitization of documents and dissemination on the Internet via different websites. Particularly, in the years 2007-2010 both institutions participated in the project „Protection and conservation of the Cieszyn written heritage”, founded by the EEA (European Economic Area) Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Thanks to a grant of more than 1 600 000 Euro, holdings of the State Archives in Katowice Branch Office in Cieszyn and the Cieszyn Historical Library went through fumigation, cataloging and microfilming. The project resulted in publication of a guide through archival and library collections in Cieszyn entitled *Miasto książek: popularny przewodnik po cieszyńskich zbiorach bibliotecznych i archiwalnych*.

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POVZETEK

SKUPNI CILJ IN RAZLIČNE METODE – POPISOVANJE IN DIGITALIZACIJA ZGODOVINSKIH DOKUMENTOV KNJIŽNICE CIESZYN IN ODDELKA DRŽAVNEGA ARHIVA KATOVICE V CIESZYNU

Mag. Agnieszka LASKOWSKA

Zgodovinska knjižnica Cieszyn, Poljska
agalaskowska01@gmail.com

Dr. Tomasz HAJEWSKI

Državni arhiv Katowice, Poljska
t.hajewski@katowice.ap.gov.pl

Pisna dediščina Šlezjskega mesta Cieszyn je zelo nenavadna. S skoraj 900 tekočimi metri arhivskega gradiva in skoraj 200.000 enotami rokopisov in tiskov predstavlja obilje evropskih jezikov, narodnosti, verstev in idej. Ne samo, da oblikuje primaren vir za zgodovinsko raziskovanje regije, ampak izstopa tudi kot pomemben del evropske kulturne dediščine. Na poljski in češki strani varuje to dediščino več ustanov. Prispevek se ukvarja z obdelavo in digitalizacijo arhivskih zbirk v dveh ustanovah: Zgodovinski knjižnici Cieszyn in Državnem arhivu v Katovicah, Enoti v Cieszynu.

Ena izmed monumentalnih zbirk v knjižnici je zbirka Poljskega etnografskega društva. Le-ta obsega 10.000 enot in 9.000 arhivskih zapisov v 45 škatlah, vključujoč rokopise, dokumente, tiske, literarna in znanstvena dela ter avdiovizualno gradivo. V 60. in 70. letih 20. stoletja je bila zbirka enostavno katalogizirana. Cilj preliminarne ureditve je bil pridobiti vpogled v vsebino in omogočiti dostop do nje. Katalogiziranje je vključevalo izdelavo opomb na dokumentih v vsakem paketu. Leta 2021 so bile kataloške kartice pretipkane v knjižnici sistem OPAC, informacije na vsakem dokumentu pa delno prilagojene standardom MARC 21. Zgodovinska knjižnica Cieszyn je torej uporabila inovativne metode obdelave. Te so združevale tradicionalno metodo iz 60. let 20. stoletja in sodobne knjižnične standarde. Dokumenti pa niso bili urejeni, saj v zbirki ne obstaja klasifikacija ali ureditev po kronološkem merilu. Gradivo je v škatlah le tematsko povezano. V letih 2021 in 2022 je bila zbirka delno digitalizirana in objavljena na spletu.

Eden izmed fondov Državnega arhiva Katowice, Enote v Cieszynu, ki je bil nedavno objavljen na spletu, je fond Pravnega urada predstavnika poljske vlade. Dokumenti urada prikazujejo težavne čase mejnega spora med letoma 1919 in 1920. Fond vsebuje 16 popisnih enot (0,35 tekočega metra) gradiva, nastalega v letih 1919–1921. Urejeno je glede na naslednje vsebine: organizacijske zadeve, uradni dopisi, korespondenca, povezana z zajetimi poljskimi državljani, pritožbe glede vojnih zločinov, kadrovske zadeve in časopisje. Dokumenti v škatlah so bili urejeni kronološko. Recenzijska komisija je odobrila iskalni pripomoček leta 1990. V letu 2019 je bil fond digitaliziran in objavljen na spletu.

Primerjava metod obdelave gradiva v obeh ustanovah je privedla do nekaj zaključkov. Knjižnica deluje v skladu z določbami Ministrstva za kulturo in kulturno dediščino iz leta 2012 o zbirkah narodnih knjižnic, Državni arhiv pa na podlagi določil, ki jih izdaja glavni direktor Državnega arhiva. Knjižnica lahko implementira tudi svoje lastne standarde obdelave. Na drugi strani je obdelava v arhivu vodena bolj centralizirano, zahteva tudi potrjevanje recenzijske komisije. Različne strukture gradiva torej zahtevajo različne pristope k njegovemu urejanju: arhivska obdelava se običajno konča na nivoju zadeve, knjižnična pa se ukvarja s posameznimi dokumenti v zadevi.

Ne glede na razlike stremita obe ustanovi k istemu cilju – ohraniti pisno dediščino Šlezije. To vključuje tudi digitalizacijo dokumentov in njihovo predstavitev na spletu.