

УДК 027.1:091“16”Радзивілл

## CULTURAL FUNCTIONS OF THE RADZIWIŁŁS’ ANCESTRAL LIBRARIES IN 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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The article briefly investigates the ways of formation and the contents of the libraries of Niasvizh and Birzhai lines of the princes Radziwiłłs’ in 17<sup>th</sup> century. It stresses a particular interest of the Radziwiłłs in religious literature (edition of Holy Scripture, polemic literature, church history), historical works, and works of ancient authors. It also emphasizes the importance of researching the cultural function of a book.

*Key words:* Radziwiłłs, early-modern history, black-letter books, cultural function of a book.

Old Polish ancestral book collections are, for the history of books researchers, very precious object of analyses. Library registers, favourite reading matter notice and finally preserved copies from collections attainment allow to many-sided study of consciousness of the particular family members, approach their literary culture and designate the book collections’ functions. Investigating books in the period of Renaissance Janusz S. Gruchała paid attention to functionalism as ‘fundamental demand’<sup>1</sup> and he proposed to shift attention into a new aspect of bibliological inquiries ‘instead of social function one should study cultural function of the book’<sup>2</sup>.

The Radziwiłłs’ libraries seem to be a good instance for indicated function treatment. They existed in two different circles in terms of religion: in the Roman Catholic (Niasvizh line) and Protestant environment (Birzhai line). The Lithuanian magnates’ collections began to develop at large in 17<sup>th</sup> century. At that time the book collections were arranged and enlarged, suitable rooms were built for them as well. Their inventories also came from that century. The Radziwiłłs pursued the policy of purchasing and gathering books in a very considered way, according to pointed priorities. Ideological regards and religious justification were undoubtedly above all the guiding principle. Preserved registers show that representatives of the evangelical and the Roman Catholic family lines in the first place collected works with theological coverage.

In the book collection belonging to Mikołaj Krzysztof Sierotka the most numerous group made works of religious contents. Roman Catholic dissertations, polemics, disputations, church rites’ regulations were amongst them<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Gruchała J. S. *Lucunda familia librorum. Humanisci renesansowi w świecie książki*. – Kraków, 2002. – P. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem. – P. 25–26.

<sup>3</sup> Bernatowicz T. *Miles christianus et peregrinus. Fundacje Mikołaja Radziwiłła “Sierotki” w ordynacji nieświeskiej*. – Warszawa, 1998. – P. 153.

It is proper to emphasize that in the Niasvizh library's inventory from 1651 made by Jan Hanowicz, Protestant prints had been noted down. They were later delivered to representatives of Birzhai line<sup>4</sup>.

Janusz Radziwiłł's list of his private collection of books reveals, that he was also the most interested in theological works. In his library he possessed writings in the field of the church history, several editions of the Bible, polemical works, song-books, and – what is specially interesting – works concerning other confessions. Inge Luksaite noticed, that the prince oriented himself in the essential theological issues in domains of Lutheranism, Catholicism and the Anglican Church<sup>5</sup>.

The Holy Scripture took the most outstanding place among the religious books. In the Radziwiłł's environment the Brest Bible was preferably read. Its reading was recommended by both Mikołaj Czarny<sup>6</sup> as well as prince Krzysztof<sup>7</sup> to their studying sons. Janusz the elder owned the Slovenian Bible<sup>8</sup> in his library, whereas in the register of his nephew's (namesake) travelling book collection we encounter the entry – 'The Polish Bible silver bound'<sup>9</sup>. The copies of this prestigious work published in 1563 were also used for utilitarian targets. They were distributed as the present of great worth, for example Mikołaj Sierotka donated the velvet bound Radziwiłł's Bible to the prince of Wirtembergia<sup>10</sup>. The famous person of peregrination did not leave the Holy Scripture all his life and destined a special place in his collection for it, when he wrote: 'let my great love would be in the castle library'<sup>11</sup>.

In his testament Piotr Kochlewski expressed similar attachment to this book, about which he asked:

'I oblige those daughters the three Polish Brest Bible to share as the most important jewel. The library and the all books written to keep faithfully – for sons'<sup>12</sup>.

Confidential secretary of the Birzhai Radziwiłłs chose the 17<sup>th</sup> century edition of the Holy Scripture, although he dedicated the copy of Gdansk Bible to the king – in the name of his protector. Brest Bible enjoyed such great respect in the evangelical family line that the prince Krzysztof himself appointed it at the beginning of his dedication in gdańska edition<sup>13</sup>. It was referred to Władysław IV as 'the dearest and above all my abundance, even above health, gift'<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Kempa T. *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka*. – Warszawa, 2000. – P. 195.

<sup>5</sup> Lukšaitė I. Prywatny księgozbiór Janusza Radziwiłła (1612–1655) w Kiejdanach // *Litwa w epoce Wazów* / pod red. W. Kriegseisena i A. Rachuby. – Warszawa, 2006. – P. 405.

<sup>6</sup> Kempa T. *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka...* – P. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Jarczykowa M. *Książka i literatura w kręgu Radziwiłłów birzańskich w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*. – Katowice, 1995. – P. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Rejestr rzeczy Książęcia Je[g]o Msci, które przy Pękalskim zostały w Frankforcie nad Odrą roku 1617 die 13 July // Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD), Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. XXVI, nr 15, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Rejestr ksiąg Ks(ie)cia Je(g)o Mci Janusza Radziwił(ł)a, które się do cudzych krajow biorą i które Ks(ia)żę J. M. Pan Hetman Ks(ie)ciu Januszowi darował. Księgi dawne Ks(ie)cia J. M. Janusza // AGAD, AR, dz. XI, ks. 37, p. 319.

<sup>10</sup> Kempa T. *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka...* – P. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Topolska M. B. *Czytelnik i książka w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w dobie Renesansu i Baroku*. – Wrocław, 1984. – P. 252.

<sup>12</sup> Śliż N. Testament Piotra Kochlewskiego sędziego ziemskiego brzeskiego z 1646 roku // *Zapiski Historyczne*. – T. LXXII. – 2007. – Z. 1. – P. 107.

<sup>13</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. V, 6956. The letter from Cracow 14<sup>th</sup> March 1633.

<sup>14</sup> Biblia święta, to jest księgi Starego i Nowego Przymierza z żydowskiego i greckiego języka na polski pilnie i wiernie przetłumaczone. Gdańsk: A. Hünefeld, 1632.

In spite of such emotional attitude to the Polish Holy Scripture translation sometimes precious copies were treated as a deposit. *Register of matters (...) in Elbląg* from 1619 amongst the list of porcelain, paintings contains information: ‘One Slovenian Bible. Different books particularly sixty and seven pieces’<sup>15</sup>. It is worth to notice that even in such kind of register the copy of Holy Scripture were treated exceptionally.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century the Radziwiłłs’ libraries apart from religious books, historical works were willingly gathered. In the book list of Niasvizh and Birzhai lines the works of historians i. a. Marcin Kromer’s, Maciej Strykowski’s, Stanisław Orzechowski’s appeared. In Kromer’s book *Compendium, albo krótkie opisanie tak książąt i królów polskich* we meet characteristic statement:

‘All historians and chroniclers urgent reading is very useful for everyone’<sup>16</sup>.

Preferably Radziwiłłs knew and financed publishing the books concerning the family history. In the dedication preceding the translation of *Niektóre psalmy Dawidowe* Salomon Rysiński referred to favourite readings of prince Krzysztof,

‘I do not doubt, that reading the issues of your Ancestry  
That led them to immortal fame  
A lot of time for that you devote at the cost of rest  
Cause you have fun and really enjoy it’<sup>17</sup>.

Apart from collecting works concerning history of Rzeczpospolita the Radziwiłłs were interested in history and geography of Western and Central Europe. Besides, they willingly gathered works in the domain of law, philosophy, military or handbooks simplifying foreign languages learning<sup>18</sup>.

So the Radziwiłłs’ book collections were frequently used, books were collected in considering and planned way. The choice of the titles depended however not only on their owners. The last ones appointed for this task their courtiers as well, especially during their peregrinations abroad. The journeys of the studying Radziwiłłs were good opportunities for increasing the collections. Mikołaj Czarny in the time of his son Sierotka’s education, ordered to buy him all the news, particularly regarding religious novelties as well as historical works and ancient authors’ editions. Choice of the books was not always accepted. When Slovenian books, which were published in Balkans had been delivered, father:

‘[...] reprimanded the son not to do such shopping any more, because no one can understand such writing in our lands’<sup>19</sup>.

Prince Krzysztof also commended the purchase of interesting titles, and even proposed to:

‘Library non numerosam, but selectam et ornatam for Janusz make’<sup>20</sup>.

Perhaps Reinhold Adami, who accompanied young Radziwiłł in the time of his studies, realized this duty. Adami became later ‘bibliothecarius ducalis’, that is the court hetman’s librarian<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. XXVI, ks. 37, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Kromer M. *Compendium, albo krótkie opisanie tak książąt i królów polskich*. – Lubcz: P. Blastus Kmita, 1625, k. C2.

<sup>17</sup> Rysiński S. Do Oświeconego Książęcia na Birzach i Dubinkach Jego Mości Pana Chryzstofa Radziwiłł[ł]a. Przedmowa // *Niektóre psalmy Dawidowe*. – Lubcz: P. Blastus Kmita, 1614.

<sup>18</sup> Kempa T. *Mikołaj Kszysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka...* – P. 195–196; Lukšaitė I. Prywatny księgozbiór Janusza Radziwiłła... – Passim.

<sup>19</sup> Kempa T. *Mikołaj Kszysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka...* – P. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Informatia według której syn moj książę Janusz Radziwiłł i słudzy [...] postępować sobie mają. Dana w Wilnie 7 września 1628 // AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. XI, ks. 37, p. 320.

Books collections in Birzhai, Kiejdany or Niasvizh were not always enough for the magnates. They used other libraries of their courtiers or priests, too. In one of his letters Baltazar Krośniewicz apologized for not being able to send 'psalms and other French songs'<sup>22</sup>. Jan Romanowski the priest, gave the prince information about the books of Bielski and Sarnicki, found in the library in Lubez. Simultaneously he informed about the lack of Strykowski's<sup>23</sup>.

The most of mentions about books searched by Krzysztof Radziwiłł concerned theological and polemic publications. That kind of works were sent to him by i. a. Marcin Broniewski, Andrzej Rej, Stanisław Buczyński<sup>24</sup>. Servants also borrowed the books needed: Jan Zygotowski the priest sent the Bible back, Andrzej Dobrzański returned the book about apostasy, while Rysiński thanked for religious book sending<sup>25</sup>.

The Radziwiłłs' libraries from Birzhai were enlarged by purchasing the book collections belonging to their courtiers and relatives. We know Rysiński's list of books, whereas there are no data concerning Winhold's book collection. Probably this library was also bought by prince Krzysztof since Elias Marmokowicz mentioned it in his letter from 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1630<sup>26</sup>.

The circulation of volumes between their owners and the courtiers shows a very important role of books in cultural life of the court in Birzhai. Disproportionate relations between the patron and his clients on the level of using the books in some degree were equaled. Trustworthy courtiers not only used the prince's collections, but often advise their protector, were looking for interesting publications for him, finally they offered him to buy their precious collections.

Libraries became not only the decorations of the residence, but they served their owners and inhabitants. The books were treated as museum exhibits in the kunstkamera established in Lubez. The fashion to originate such type of buildings came to Rzeczpospolita from Western Europe. Janusz Gruchała states:

'This fashion [...] partly replaced humanistic cult of private library (studiolo); even graphic presentations of those cabinets of curiosity delusively remind earlier paintings of "scientist in the study", but instead of books on shelves and walls natural-ethnographic exhibits are visible, with the obligatory Indian canoe and stuffed fish hanging from the ceiling'<sup>27</sup>.

We can verify these statements in relation to the Radziwiłłs' cabinet of curiosity, because next to other exhibits some bibliological objects were found there. They were taken into account in *Spisaniu rzeczy księcia jego Mci kunstkamerowych w Lubeczu dnia 20 February Anno 1647*<sup>28</sup>.

The register was focused on the physical features in description of books (for instance: 'white parchment book, [...] book in violet velvet [...] wide book [...] book in old binding [...] large book in black leather binding') as well as on indications of provenience ('from p. Przystan[owski], from p. Lubieniec[ki]'). Some descriptions show the problem of illustra-

<sup>21</sup> Wisner H. *Janusz Radziwiłł 1612–1655. Wojewoda wileński, hetman wielki litewski*. – Warszawa, 2000. – P. 236.

<sup>22</sup> The letter from Birzhai 14<sup>th</sup> December 1614 // AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. V, nr 7801.

<sup>23</sup> Zob.: Augustyniak U. *Dwór i klientela Krzysztofa Radziwiłła (1585–1640). Mechanizmy patronatu*. – Warszawa, 2001. – P. 343.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. V, nr 9304.

<sup>27</sup> Gruchała J. S. *Iucunda familia librorum...* – P. 289–290.

<sup>28</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. XXVI, ks. 64, p. 19–20.

tions ('book, in which woman and objecting devil') or language of the work ('oldfashioned Latin book, German book, French book').

In individual cases the author and the title were given (Thesaurus Rej). Apart from unusual exhibits in the kunstcamera very practical volumes were found: books of expenses and various registers, and even 'desk for books covered with red morocco and with the door for hiding in').

Was the Radziwiłłs' museum used only as the place of gathering curiosities? Before that in Lubecz the treasury functioned where books were also kept i. a. coming from collective libraries. It is noted in register from 1633<sup>29</sup>. Those books were sealed with 'prince signet'. According to Urszula Augustyniak, Krzysztof Radziwiłł purchased the evangelical priests' book collections and the part of inventoried collective libraries. Perhaps the attempt of one 'central' Protestant library creation was the result of conviction that persecutions of fellow-religious would be intensified. The prince gave that reason in his testament:

'Because they can come such tempora litteris adversa (as it is observed now) that both schools and libraries would be limited'<sup>30</sup>.

In 1655 *Rejestr rzeczy pozostałych w zamku labaczawskim w piwnicy i skarbnicach* showed that 72 dozens books were kept there 'large and small Latin books, German, Jewish'<sup>31</sup>.

The Radziwiłłs of Protestant line did not build separate room for storing books, admittedly Krzysztof had planned to equip the residence in Birzhai in library. He expressed that in his testament, but this intention had never been realized. Books were maintained in the treasury or in particular living rooms.

The Radziwiłłs from Niasvizh possessed the separate room for the library since 17<sup>th</sup> century. They did not have to scatter the collection, they also cared for register of resources showing today their favourite reading image. Besides, books were suitably bound and marked with special superexlibris. These days it enables the researchers identification of the books of the Radziwiłłs' provenience.

The modern researches on functioning the ancestral Radziwiłłs' libraries from Niasvizh and Birzhai lines are possible, first of all, not only on the base of preserved monuments from the collection, but thanks to inventories and registers from 17<sup>th</sup> century. The lists allow – in most cases – to identify bibliographically and next to describe the cultural role of the books. Similarly correspondence of those days reveals much about works' circulation. It let estimate reading reception of the particular titles. Owing to these sources we can approach to functioning of books within the magnates' patronage.

*Translated by Małgorzata GWADERA*

<sup>29</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, ks. 45, p. 80–82.

<sup>30</sup> Augustyniak U. *Dwór i klientela Krzysztofa Radziwiłła...* – P. 340.

<sup>31</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Radziwiłłów, dz. XXVI, ks. 71.

## **КУЛЬТУРНІ ФУНКЦІЇ РОДИННИХ БІБЛІОТЕК РАДЗИВІЛЛІВ У XVII СТОЛІТТІ**

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Коротко досліджено шляхи формування та склад бібліотек несвізької та біржайської ліній князів Радзивіллів у XVII ст. Звернуто увагу на особливий інтерес Радзивіллів до релігійної тематики (видань Святого Письма, полемічної літератури, церковної історії), а також їх зацікавлення історичними працями та творами античних авторів. Наголошено на важливості дослідження культурної функції книги.

*Ключові слова:* Радзивілли, ранньомодерна бібліотека, стародруки, культурна функція книги.

## **КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ФУНКЦИИ СЕМЕЙНЫХ БИБЛИОТЕК РАДЗИВИЛЛОВ В XVII ВЕКЕ**

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Кратко исследовано пути формирования и состав библиотек несвижской и биржайской линии князей Радзивиллов в XVII в. Обращено внимание на особый интерес Радзивиллов к религиозной тематике (изданиям Святого Письма, полемической литературе, церковной истории), а также их заинтересованность историческими трудами и произведениями антических авторов. Подчеркивается важность исследования культурной функции книги.

*Ключевые слова:* Радзивиллы, раннемодерная библиотека, старопечатные книги, культурная функция книги.

Стаття надійшла до редколегії 20.03.2009

Прийнята до друку 14.05.2009