

TOMASZ SZWACIŃSKI

AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN RESEARCH ON THE MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE ZAŁUSKI LIBRARY AND THEIR DOCUMENTATION

In the margins of The Inventory of Manuscripts from the Załuski Library in the Imperial Public Library, Warsaw, 2013, National Library of Poland, 612 pages.

The Załuski Library (known from 1774 as the Library of the Commonwealth Also Called Załuski) was one of the major achievements of Polish culture throughout its entire history. The idea dates back to 1732, becoming a public library open to everyone fifteen years later, and in 1780 it took on the features of a modern national library. It was one of the initiatives that paved the way for the “intellectual revolution in Poland” and facilitated the “building of a new Polish life” during the reign of King Stanisław August.

Upon the Third Partition of Poland and the annihilation of the Polish state by Russia, Prussia and Austria, the book collection was removed to St. Petersburg. Following the Treaty of Riga of 1921, when Soviet Russia undertook to restore the cultural heritage plundered from Poland, most of the manuscripts and a large proportion of the prints were returned to Warsaw. A huge portion of these collections were burned by the German Nazis after the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Thus, the history of the first Polish national library book collection reflects both glorious and tragic moments of the nation’s history.

The founders of the library, brothers Andrzej Stanisław and Józef Andrzej Załuski, apart from collecting books, supplemented their holdings immensely with manuscript resources whose amount (in 1795) is sometimes estimated at as many as 20,000 items. Slightly more than a half of the manuscript collection was taken away to St. Petersburg, from which – apart from a few hundred items – the majority was reclaimed back to Warsaw, later to be destroyed by the occupiers.

Naturally, the irrevocable loss of a tremendous part of the Załuski Library man-

uscript collection did not exempt researchers from investigating this collection. Apart from studies on the surviving part of the manuscripts, researchers have aimed to gather as much information as possible in order to describe the collection as a whole, at least in general terms. This has been hindered by the fact that no data is available on the manuscript catalogue of the Załuski Library covering the entire collection,¹ as the selective hand-written catalogues have been burned,² while all the printed descriptions, although valuable, fail to reflect the entire collection.³

This seemingly insuperable problem was mitigated thanks to the library aids of the Imperial Public Library (IPL), where the manuscripts of the Załuski Library had been stored for over a hundred years, and where a small part are still held up to this day. In the years 1806–1807, the collection was transferred to the Manuscript Depot of the IPL managed by Peter Dubrovsky. It was then that the first systematic lists of the codices brought from Warsaw were drawn up in Russia, under the general title *Registre des ouvrages et volumes des manuscrits livrés à Monsieur le Conseiller de Collège et chevalier Doubrowsky* [Register of works and manuscript volumes delivered to the honourable collegiate councillor and chevalier Dubrovsky].

Two researchers of the National Library of Russia (the successor to the IPL), Olga Bleskina and Natalia Elagina, undertook an edition of this valuable source for any research concerning the Załuski Library collection, in close collaboration with two researchers of the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Warsaw, Sławomir Szyller and Krzysztof Kossarzecki.

The publication opens with an introduction written jointly by the directors of the two libraries, Tomasz Makowski, PhD, and Anton Likhomanov, PhD, who underscore the good will on both sides of the project. This seems noteworthy, considering the troublesome historical experiences dividing Poles and Russians, especially since the Załuski Library is one of the more painful elements. To this day, both nations disagree in the evaluation of many past events, therefore without their good will, joint initiatives such as this seem hard to attempt.

The article by Olga Bleskina (in three languages: English, Russian and Polish, pp. 11–79) *The Revival: International Project for the Reconstruction of the Załuski*

1 P. Bańkowski, *Rękopisy rewindykowane przez Polskę z Z.S.R.R. na podstawie traktatu ryskiego i ich dotychczasowe opracowania* [Manuscripts Reclaimed by Poland from the USSR pursuant to the Treaty of Riga and the Related Studies to Date], Kraków, 1937, p. 23;

2 *Spis historycznych katalogów zwróconych stronie polskiej* [List of Historical Catalogues Restored to Poland], National Library of Russia (hereinafter referred to as NLR), Otdel Arhivnyh Dokumentov (Department of Archival Records, hereinafter referred to as DAR), F. 9, d. 30, f. 9v; P. Bańkowski, *Rękopisy...* [Manuscripts...], pp. 23–27; M. Łodyński, *Z dziejów "Biblioteki Rzeczypospolitej Załuskich zwanej" w l. 1785–94*, Warszawa, 1935, pp. 53, 59.

3 Polish researchers had at their disposal nothing but a list prepared by the Rev. B. Ussas, covering ca. 6,400 items, thus less than half of the Polish claims, *Wykaz rękopisów odebranych z Ros. Biblioteki Publicznej w Piotrogradzie za czas od 14 XI 1922 do 19 lutego 1924 włącznie, rękopisy polskie, łacińskie oraz różnojęzyczne* [List of Manuscripts Reclaimed from the Russian Public Library in Petrograd for the period from 14/11/1922 to 19/02/1924 incl.; Polish, Latin and Other Manuscripts], BN rps akc. 4722.

Library Manuscripts tells the history of the book collection from the moment it was taken from Warsaw to St. Petersburg, including the circumstances of the creation of the 47 volumes that form the *Register*.⁴ The overview describes its editorial principles, and the Author has also analysed the source material on which this edition is based.

Olga Bleskina is right to mention the dispersion of many prints and manuscripts during the evacuation of the collections from Warsaw and in the first years in St. Petersburg.⁵ Besides, the Bishop of Kiev estimated the number of manuscripts held in his book depository at 18,000.⁶ Even if this number is exaggerated, we must assume that a lion's share of the collection has been lost. The Author emphasises that "over time" duplicates (which most likely refers to prints only) were being sent to other Russian depositories (pp. 57-58). It ought to be added that the holdings (including manuscripts) were also subject to planned dispersion between the time that they reached St. Petersburg and the year 1806.⁷ Consequently, those manuscripts that had been separated from the main collection were not included in the *Register*.

Based on the estimations by Mikhail Antonovsky (the librarian in charge of the holdings brought from Warsaw in the initial period), the Author cites the number of 10,425 manuscript items (as of 1796, before pieces of the collection were transferred to other institutions as mentioned above). It is worth a mention that archival sources enable us to divide this number into separate languages. The collection included 6,470 Latin items, 1,388 German ones, 1,172 French and 1,059 Polish ones, while none of the remaining 15 languages corresponded to more than 200 items.⁸ Certainly, the margin of error in such estimations is considerable, as

4 Volume 33 contains two lists (pp. 76-77 and 258-271), so the total number of lists is 48. Some of these have a joint, sequential item numbering.

5 Let us add that T. Czacki was the one who most actively and illegally acquired manuscripts from the holdings of the Załuskis in the years directly following their removal from Warsaw, as he stayed in Russia in connection with the coronation of Paul I. The codices he obtained were subsequently transported to Poryck, and then (via Puławy) to the Czartoryski Library in Cracow: М. Антоновский, "Записка Михаила Ивановича Антоновского", *Русский Архив*, vol. 23 (1885), part. 2, p. 168; A. Knot, "Czacki Tadeusz", *PSB* [Polish Biographic Dictionary], vol. 4, Cracow, 1938, p. 145. The Cracow manuscript (BC 1287) bears typical Załuski marks.

6 P. Bańkowski, *Rękopisy...* [Manuscripts...], p. 11.

7 A draft report by M. Antovsky for A. Stroganov regarding the book collection brought from Warsaw reads: "Часть знатная сей библиотеки, а именно все медицинская книги, на всех языках, отдана по высочайшему повелению 1799 года в Медицинскую коллегию. Сколько же именно каких языков книг печатных и рукописных, всему тому прилагается валовая роспись под буквою В", М. Antonovsky to A. Stroganov, St. Petersburg 15(26)/01/1800, NLR, DAR, F. 1, d. 1797/1, f. 9v. In a later version of this text, we can find the following information: "Из количества разклассификованных книг по высочайшим повелениям, медицинская отданы в Медицинскую коллегию, а касающиеся до наук преподававших в духовных училищах ныне требуются к отдаче во Святлейший синод, назначенным от онога синодальным членам", М. Antonovsky to A. Stroganov, St. Petersburg 26/01 (16/02)/1800, *ibid.*, f. 65v.

8 Estimations by Mikhail Antonovsky regarding the manuscripts brought from Warsaw [St. Petersburg 1796], NLR, DAR, F. 1, d. 1797/1, f. 71v.

no category of multilingual items was taken into account (while in 1846 many Załuski manuscripts were classified in this particular category). Nevertheless, the *Register* generally confirms the proportions calculated previously by Antonovskiy.⁹ This is of prime importance, as out of the extant manuscripts of the Załuski Library, the German ones are certainly over-represented and the linguistic nature of the collection cannot be determined on their basis.

One more issue needs to be made clear. Olga Bleskina writes: “Additionally, the Register covers manuscripts related to the collections, though not actually owned by Załuski, such as no. 8333: Regestra Dochodu y Wydatka Pieniędzy w Bibliotece publiczney (Zaluskiego) pod dozorem Kommyssyi, roku 1783 in 4^o, sine (Pol.O.X.7), dating from 9 years after the death of the last owner” (p. 19, footnote 33). Hence, let us remember that in 1795 a national library was taken away to St. Petersburg. Its full name was the Library of the Commonwealth also Called Załuski, while “Załuski Library” is nothing but a conventional term.¹⁰ All manuscripts incorporated into the collection after 1774 (even if not so numerous) formed an integral part.

A research question which remains unaddressed in the article is whether the creation of the *Register* made it easier to use this enormous collection. In 1811, a new employee of the Manuscript Depot, Alexander Ermalov, submitted a report to the IPL Director Alexey Olenin stating that a part of the manuscripts were stored in great disorder. Neither the arrangement applied at the Załuski Library, nor the one assigned in the *Register*¹¹ were in use.

The text by Krzysztof Kossarzecki (also in three languages, pp. 81–103), *The Załuski Family and their Library*, presents the history of the first Polish national book depository and its collections after they were taken away to St. Petersburg. The Author supplements the information cited by Olga Bleskina on the circumstances under which the *Register*¹² was created, outlining its structure and the methodology for identifying items.

Krzysztof Kossarzecki makes the valuable observation that the manuscripts in the lists (corresponding to the contents of the boxes) were often divided ac-

9 Those proportions are also corroborated by a summary prepared by P. Bańkowski for most of the reclaimed manuscript items, 80% of which were Załuski Library materials. P. Bańkowski, *Rękopisy...* [Manuscripts...], p. 7.

10 K. Kossarzecki also discusses this issue (p. 99).

11 “хранящимся в депо рукописям не только не сделано еще верного и подробного каталога и листы в важнейших рукописях не перенумерованы, но частью даже и самые книги состоят в шкафах без всякого порядка, то есть несходно ни с прежнею нумерациею Залускаго, ни с тою описью, по которой оныя были приняты от покойного г-на д’Огара. Следовательно при таком положении депо манускриптов нет возможности ответствовать за целость находящихся в оном книг, коих число простирается до 11.000 томов”. Letter of A. Ermalov to A. Olenin, [St. Petersburg] 9(21)/12/1811 (report), NLR, DAR, F. 1, d. 1812/10, ff. 12-12v.

12 Let us add that the correspondence between the IPL director Alexander Stroganov and its quaesitor Peter Popov contains a number of interesting (however secondary) details on the preparation of the lists making up the *Register*, St. Petersburg, July-September 1807, NLR, DAR, F. 1, d. 1806/43, ff. 14 -20.

ording to language (p. 101), and a couple of paragraphs later he mentions that language was one of the classification criteria for manuscripts as far back as in Warsaw (p. 102). This may lead to an assumption that the *Register* may reflect to a certain extent the arrangement of manuscripts in the Daniłowicz palace in Warsaw. However, the shelf marks of the Żaluski Library quoted in the edition lead to the conclusion that this must have been rather rare. The Author himself remarks (p. 84) that the manuscripts were re-packed from autumn 1795 (supposedly by Mikhail Antonovsky).

Furthermore, following the massive cataloguing campaign at the IPL in the 1840s, the collections from the Żaluski Library became mixed with other holdings. In the period of restitution of the Polish cultural heritage from Soviet Russia, the *Register* was mentioned by Polish specialists as a tool which could possibly help to separate the Żaluski materials from the rest of the collection.¹³

The structure of the edition (pp. 111-477) is clear and very convenient for researchers. The first column provides serial numbers assigned by the editors. Columns 2, 3, 4 and 5 present the source contents. Column 2 gives the number assigned to the particular item within the respective caisse or cabinet (Cahier A-C, A-G, A-C), 3 presents the item description, 4 gives the Żaluski shelf mark (if absent in the *Register*, the editors made appropriate efforts to supplement this gap based on other sources), while 5 corresponds to the number of volumes. Further columns (column 1 aside) form part of the research information provided by the editors of the publication. 6 is the identified St. Petersburg shelf mark as of 1846, 7 gives the date when the manuscript was handed over to the Polish side in the 1920s, and 8 gives the current shelf mark in the National Library of Poland or the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, or a note that the item is still held by the NLR.

It must be concluded that the identification of the items listed in the *Register* is, apart from the edition of the text as such, the most scientifically valuable part of the work. The efforts of the Russian Authors deserve the greatest recognition.¹⁴ The contribution of the Manuscript Department of the National Library of Poland to this initiative shall also be underscored. It was made possible by the creation and ongoing supplementation of a database (in the MAK system) with the purpose of bringing together the information on the manuscript collection of the Żaluski Library.¹⁵

13 Paper by L. Bernacki presented at the 9th plenary meeting of the Mixed Special Commission on 14/09/1922, in *Dokumenty dotyczące akcji Delegacji Polskich w Komisjach Mieszanych Reewakucyjnej i Specjalnej w Moskwie* [Records of the Actions of the Polish Delegations in the Mixed Commission on Restitution and the Mixed Special Commission], vol. 8, Warszawa, 1923, pp. 165-166.

14 To complement this information, we can add that the mark "Caisse 5/58" can be found on item BN rps 3248/1 (Saint Petersburg shelf mark: Coll. Autogr. 270/23). Meanwhile, the above-mentioned shelf mark of the National Library of Poland is not quoted for item 986 of the *Register*. Also compare *Register* 2647.

15 М. Вреде, С. Шиллер, „Исследования рукописного фонда библиотеки братьев Залуских” in

The professionally prepared index is a valuable aid; its elaboration must have caused many difficulties, since the people mentioned in the item titles were often hard to identify. Furthermore, the use of the edition for research purposes has been made even more convenient with the shelf mark concordances and an index of unidentified items. Accurate illustrations are another noteworthy supplement.

To summarise, we shall emphasise that this publication opens up many new fields of research. This refers both to the nature of the Załuski Library manuscript collection and its post-1795 history (let the above observations justify this opinion). The introduction of this work to the scientific community will surely lend a new dynamic to research on this topic.

Finally, let us remember that as early as in 1980, manuscript researchers of the National Library Bogumił St. Kupść and Krystyna Muszyńska wrote:

Another typical, very characteristic feature [of the Załuski Library manuscripts], is a shelf mark composed of a specification (usually with a Roman numeral) of the affiliation of the box (Caisse) and a subsequent number, probably assigned within that particular box. These shelf marks are written with ink inside (at the beginning) of the manuscript or on a label on the back. We also encounter other types of shelf marks in the Załuski Library, for example a letter and a digit (letters from A to G only) or the “mss.” (manuscriptum) marking accompanied by a serial number. We have not tried to establish when these shelf marks were assigned and what they were supposed to mean, as we have limited our research to carefully noting them as documentation material. At the moment, we do not have enough to draw any conclusions, however, perhaps a systematic summary of all kinds of signatures which we are planning to publish in the last volume of the “reclaimed items” will turn out to be useful for research on the history and structure of holdings at the Załuski Library.¹⁶

The fact that questions posed by previous generations of researchers have been answered in this edition is the best proof of its value.

Западные Рукописи и Традиция их Изучения, Saint Petersburg, 2009, pp. 46-50.

16 B. S. Kupść, K. Muszyńska, “Wstęp” [Introduction], *Katalog Rękopisów Biblioteki Narodowej* [National Library Manuscript Catalogue], series II, volume II, Warszawa, 1980, p. 17.