

CALL FOR PAPERS

For a conference at the *German Historical Institute*, in Warsaw

From Thursday, 31st March to Friday, 1st April 2022

“Bibliomigrancy” in German-Polish Context since World War II

Conception/organisation: Vanessa de Senarclens (senarclv@hu-berlin.de)

Robert Darnton described the history of the book as a living „communication circuit“ⁱ, involving many different actors and institutions in the process of its material production, distribution and circulation. From the author to the printer and bookbinder, from the bookseller to the reader, the book circulates through private as well as public spaces such as salons, cafés, libraries, academies where it is interpreted, discussed and adapted. In the 18th century that Darnton focuses on, these circles of communication form lively networks that often interact under the radar of state control. Books are transported throughout Europe on intricate and often forbidden routes, from Paris to Warsaw, from Dresden to London, from Geneva to Leipzig. The title of this conference – “*Bibliomigrancy*” in German-Polish Context since World War II – places books as carriers of material but also immaterial history in a context where the circle of communication is strongly marked by the memory of World War II.

Following Nazi Germany’s attack on Poland until the end of the war 1945, around 70 to 75 percent of Polish library holdings were decimated, destroyed or scattered.ⁱⁱ According to a 2015 calculation, of the 22.6 million volumes in Polish libraries before 1939, only just under a third survived.ⁱⁱⁱ However, following the establishment of the new German-Polish border along the Oder-Neisse line in August 1945, millions of books from private, church and state ownership (as those displaced volumes from the Prussian State Library collections to protect them on the countryside of East Pomerania (Hinterpommern), Silesia, Danzig and East Prussia) found their way into a new national context.^{iv} From the Polish perspective, these “left-behind” books from German libraries were considered state property and, as such, protected from further looting and destruction. Efforts were made to prevent the removal of “trophy books” to the Soviet Union. According to a Polish law of 6 May 1945, the books from former German library holdings were “abandoned” or “derelict,”^v and accordingly referred to as “secured book collections”. They are considered as a partial “compensation” for the deliberate destruction of Polish archives and libraries during the war – albeit a wholly insufficient and disproportionate one. In the Federal Republic as well as in the GDR, and perhaps even more so in reunified Germany, these books are associated with terms such as a “loss”, a “painful gap” or “disruption of estates and collections”.^{vi} Beethoven’s 8th Symphony is certainly emblematic of this rift: the manuscript of the first second and fourth movements are preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the third movement *Tempo di menuetto* in the *Biblioteka Jagiellońska* in Krakow.^{vii}

In reference to the concept of „bibliomigrancy“ proposed by B. Venkat Mani^{viii}, the conference will focus on stories of book migrations between Germany and Poland from 1939 onwards. More than capturing an event – the migration from one country to another or from one language to another –, the neologism of „migrancy“ describes a condition that is ongoing and evolving. The notion of „bibliomigrancy“ captures the journey of books in space and time as well as their changing semantisation within geographical, political, institutional and linguistic spaces. Beyond the migration of books, the conference is about the consideration they are granted in the respective institutions in which they are integrated or merely stored. We want to explore the changing status of books as well as the relationship between memory, remembrance and oblivion – an issue that remains sensitive between Poland and Germany. Since 75 years, these books from former German libraries have been at the centre of two completely different national narratives. Apart from a few initiatives by scholars, they are reduced to a political-symbolic dimension of the consequences of the war.^{ix} The ancient books are kept in university libraries (Lodz, Krakow, Wroclaw, Warsaw), but often without explanatory context, inadequately catalogued, without input of their provenance history, “Misplaced, Stored away and Forgotten”, as I could show in the case of an original Voltaire edition of the *Philosophie de l’Histoire* from 1765.^x

However these books have something in common: For both nations on either sides of the Oder-Neisse line, these are stories of loss and mourning. In her programmatic essay from 2017 entitled *Objets du désirs, désir d’objet*, revealingly translated as *Die Provenienz der Kultur. Von der Trauer des Verlusts zum universalen Menschheitserbe*, Bénédicte Savoy pleaded for an open approach to the provenance of art historical objects, as they made their ways into European collections in the 18th and 19th centuries. She showed how telling and sharing the stories of interrelationships and mutual influence can be help to overcome grief.^{xi} However, unlike the artworks that Savoy deals with, the books that interest us here are rarely found in museum showcase; they are often neglected and forgotten. Yet they are equally testimony of a common European history that goes back far beyond the year 1939.^{xii}

There is also something abstract about the almost-realised dream of an all-encompassing sublime world library in which all books are peace-making, accessible everywhere via digital media. The rediscovery of the “desire for books”, as Michael Hagner points out in an essay of the same name (*Die Lust am Buch* Berlin 2019), goes hand in hand with narratives, provenance research, storytelling and subjective appropriation.^{xiii} At this conference we want to get the books out of their political blind spots, seeing them as a living „Geschichtsding“^{xiv}, with their own biographies^{xv} and social, cultural, social and political dimensions.

Suggested Questions and Topics

- Examples of individual volumes or Polish or German collections that were torn apart from their institutional contexts or even completely destroyed during the war.
- History of the paths taken and impact of individual volumes – also as „missing”, absent, destroyed objects in Polish and German cultural memory.
- What is the position of these books in the political and diplomatic discourse both in Poland and in Germany. What were the key moments in these discussions since 1945, both between the DDR and the Polish People’s Republic and between Poland and Germany?
- What do the changing contexts do to the book object, but also what effect does such a book have in various changing social and political environments?

The conference will take place in cooperation with and on the premises of the *German Historical Institute Warsaw (DHIW)*.

Deadline for the submission of a proposal: 1st September 2021

Languages: German/ English/ Polish/

Short Bibliography:

Dorota Bartnik/ Tomasz Piestrzyński, „Zwischen Tradition und Modernität. Zur Geschichte der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz“ in: *Unbekannte Schätze. Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz*, hg. von Cora Dietl, Malgorzata Kubisiak, Łódź 2018, S. 29-46

Robert Darnton, „What is the history of books“, in: *Daedalus* 111/3: S. 65-83

Cora Dietl, „Bücherwege. Deutsche Frühdrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz“, in: *Kulturelle Kontakt- und Konfliktzonen im östlichen Europa. Abschlusskonferenz des gleichnamigen thematischen Netzwerks in Gießen*, hg. von Alina Jašina-Schäfer und Monika Wingender, Wiesbaden 2020 (Interdisziplinäre Studien zum östlichen Europa 8), S. 45–59

Cora Dietl/Malgorzata Kubisiak (Hg.): *Unbekannte Schätze. Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz*, Łódź 2018 und auch Dietl/ Kubisiak (Hg.): *Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Łódź. Katalog der Bestände. Band 1* (im Zusammenarbeit mit Jakub Gortat, Heinrich Hofmann, Tomasz Ososinski), Łódź 2020

Dominik Erdmann/Jutta Weber, „Nachlassgeschichten – Bemerkungen zu Humboldts nachgelassenen Papieren in der Berliner Staatsbibliothek und der Biblioteka Jagiellońska Krakau“ in: *HiN: Internationale Zeitschrift für Humboldt-Studien*, XVI, 31 (2015), S. 58-77

Dominik Erdmann/Monika Jaglarz, „Der Nachlass Alexander von Humboldt in der Jagiellonen-Bibliothek“, *Bibliotheca Iahellonica. Fontes et Studia* 37, Krakau 2019, Einführung, S. V-VIII

Paul Ferstl/Theresa Schmidt/Achim Hermann Hölter, “Traces of a Bibliophile Romantic Book Collection in Polish Libraries. The Dispersion of Ludwig Tieck’s Library and of the Klein Oels Manor Library” in: *Z Badań nad Książką i Księgozbiorem Historycznymi*, 4 (2020), S. 675-696

Jakub Gortat, „Drucke des 16. Jahrhundert aus der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz“, in: *Unbekannte Schätze. Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz*, hg. v. Cora Dietl, Malgorzata Kubisiak, Lodz 2018, S. 97-108

Michael Hagner, *Zur Sache des Buches* Göttingen 2015 und auch, *Die Lust am Buch*, Berlin 2019

B. Venkat Mani, *Recoding World Literature Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books*, New York 2017

Jan Pirozinski/Marzena Zacharska, *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände in Deutschland*, Band 6, Hildesheim 1999/ 2003

Jan Pirozynski/Krystyna Ruszajowa, *Die nationalsozialistische Bibliothekspolitik in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges*, in: *Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus*, hg. von P. Vodosek/M. Komorowski, Wiesbaden 1989, S. 199-232

Hans Roos, *Osteuropa-Handbuch*, Bd.2: Polen, hg. von W. Markert, Köln 1959

Bénédicte Savoy, *Die Provenienz der Kultur. Von der Trauer des Verlusts zum universalen Menschheitserbe*, Berlin 2018

Vanessa de Senarclens, „Le cheminement d'un volume de *La Philosophie de l'histoire Amsterdam 1765* dans le temps (1765-1960) et l'espace : Genève – Paris – Plathe – Łódź“, in: *Revue Voltaire*, 21 (erscheint 2021) und auch „Verlegt, verwahrt und vergessen. Die Bücher aus den ehemaligen deutschen Bibliotheken in Polen“, in: *Merkur. Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, Nr. 74, Oktober 2020, S. 77-84 (in polnischer Übersetzung auch erschienen: „Ludzie, Książki, Zdarzenia. Wywiezione, przechowane, zapomniane“, in: *ZNAK*, April 2021). Auch: „Um die Teile einer verstreuten Büchersammlung aus dem 18. Jahrhundert: Die Bibliothek Schloss Plathe und ihre Benutzer“ in: *Unbekannte Schätze. Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Lodz*, hg. von Cora Dietl, Malgorzata Kubisiak, Lodz, 2018, S. 117-135

Werner Schockow, *Bücherschicksale: Die Verlagerungsgeschichte der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek. Auslagerung-Zerstörung-Entfremdung-Rückführung*, Berlin 2003

Bartłomiej Sierzputowski, „Public international law in the context of post-German cultural property held within Poland's borders. A complicated situation or simply a resolution?“ in *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 33/4, S. 953-968

ⁱ Robert Darnton, “What is the history of books”, in: *Daedalus* 111/3, pp. 65-83, p. 67

ⁱⁱ See Hans Roos, *Osteuropa-Handbuch*, vol.2: Polen, ed. by W. Markert, Köln 1959; Polen: *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände in Deutschland*, vol. 6, ed. by Jan Pirozinski, Marzena Zacharska, Hildesheim 1999/ 2003; Werner Schockow, *Bücherschicksale: Die Verlagerungsgeschichte der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek. Auslagerung-Zerstörung-Entfremdung-Rückführung*, Berlin/ New York 2003, above all “Die Polnische Seite”, p. 108sq; W. Kowalski, M. Kuhnke, *Looted and Restituted: Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Efforts to Restitute Poland's Cultural Property Lost During World War II*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw 2015

ⁱⁱⁱ See Jan Pirozynski in: *Jahrbuch preußischer Kulturbesitz* 1992, 113/ 29, sowie Jan Pirozynski / Krystyna Ruszajowa, *Die nationalsozialistische Bibliothekspolitik in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges*, in: *Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. by P. Vodosek/M. Komorowski, Wiesbaden 1989, pp. 199-232

^{iv} See W. Schockow, *Bücherschicksale*, *ibidem*.

^v See W. Schockow, *Bücherschicksale*, *ibid*, p. 110 also B. Sierzputowski, „Public international law in the context of post-German cultural property held within Poland's borders. A complicated situation or simply a resolution?“ in: *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 33 (4), 2020, pp. 953-968

^{vi} „Die Staatsbibliothek in ihrer Verantwortlichkeit für dieses kulturellen Erbes Berlins, Preußens und Deutschlands bliebe auf Dauer in ihrer Geschichtlichkeit nachhaltig verletzt, wenn diese unersetzlichen deutschen Sammlungen und Sammlungsteile sowie die so herausragenden besonderen Kostbarkeiten nicht an ihren angestammten ursprünglichen Standort zurückkommen sollten“, in: Ralf Breslau, *Verlagert verschollen*

vernichtet...*Das Schicksal der im 2. Weltkrieg ausgelagerte Bestände der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek*, Berlin 1995, p. 11

^{vii} https://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/fileadmin/user_upload/zentrale_Seiten/ueber_uns/dokumente/verlagerte-bestaende.pdf

^{viii} See B. Venkat Mani, *Recoding World Literature Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books* New York, 2017, p. 10sq. Mani's concept of „Bibliomigrancy“ arose in the context of a reflection on the concept of world literature in the globalised age, in the physical but also virtual migration of texts, from one medium to another and from one language to another.

^{ix} We can point to two fruitful collaborations: a) Prof. Dr Cora Diel (University of Giessen) and Prof. Dr Małgorzata Kubisiak (University of Lodz) have worked together on a re-cataloguing of the German book holdings of the 16th century: and organised an exhibition in both Giessen and Lodz: see their exhibition catalogue: *Germanica des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Universitätsbibliothek Łódź / Germanika XVI-wieczne w zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, 2018. Berlin and Krakow have also worked together on Alexander von Humboldt's estate. See Dominik Erdmann/ Jutta Weber, „Nachlassgeschichten – Bemerkungen zu Humboldts nachgelassenen Papieren in der Berliner Staatsbibliothek und der Biblioteka Jagiellońska Krakau“ in: *HiN: Internationale Zeitschrift für Humboldt-Studien*, XVI, 31 (2015), pp. 58-77 also Dominik Erdmann/ Monika Jaglarz, „Der Nachlass Alexander von Humboldt in der Jagiellonen-Bibliothek“, *BIBLIOTHECA IAGELLONICA. FONTES ET STUDIA* 37, Krakau 2019, Einführung, V-VIII

^x Vanessa de Senarclens, „Verlegt, verwahrt und vergessen. Die Bücher aus den ehemaligen deutschen Bibliotheken in Polen“, in: *Merkur. Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, Nr. 74, Oktober 2020, S. 77-84

^{xi} Bénédicte Savoy, *Objets du désirs, désir d'objet* Paris 2017 or *Die Provenienz der Kultur. Von der Trauer des Verlusts zum universalen Menschheitserbe*, Berlin Matthes & Seitz, 2018

^{xii} Aleida Assmann coined the formula „solidarize“ instead of „polarise“ in another debate., see. Aleida Assmann, „Polarisieren oder solidarisieren? Ein Rückblick auf die Mbembe-Debatte“, in: *Merkur. Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, Nr. 75, Januar 2021, S. 1-19. We also own Michael Rothberg an approach that breaks down this fixed pattern of thought and enables entirely new perspectives on the practices of remembering, see Michael, Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford 2009

^{xiii} Michael Hagner, *Zur Sache des Buches* Göttingen 2015; also *Die Lust am Buch*, Berlin 2019

^{xiv} See Lisa Regazzoni: „Stoff für die Geschichte. Die Megalithen als Geschichtsdinge im Frankreich der 1720er Jahre“, in: *Objekte als Quellen der historischen Kulturwissenschaften. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Annette Caroline Cremer, Martin Mulsow, Köln/Weimar/Wien, 2017, pp. 226-227

^{xv} “In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities of inherent in its status and in the period and culture, and how are these realized?” in: Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as a process”, in *Arjun Apparurai, The Social life of things. Commodities and Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge M.A, 1986, pp.66