

LEVAS VLADIMIROVAS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SCIENTIFIC RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KÖNIGSBERG COLLECTIONS OF OLD BOOKS

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This paper analyses Levas Vladimirovas' article "Karaliaučiaus spaudos pradininkas Hansas Veinreichas ir pirmieji jo darbo tęsėjai (XVI–XVII a.)" from 1961 with the aim to demonstrate his pioneering significance for the study of Königsberg book and library history from its beginnings in the 16th century until today. The first part of the following paper recapitulates the decisive contribution of the Lithuanian research in the clearing up of the fate of the libraries of old Königsberg. The second part of this paper deals with Vladimirovas' study that updates a tradition of book historical research for future book science. After 1945 Vladimirovas was not only the first scientist, who has worked so intensely and objectively with the Königsberg printing during the early modern times, he was perhaps the first researcher taking a closer look at the books from the former Königsberg libraries that after 1945 had been brought by expert groups of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences at first to Kaunas, then to Vilnius.

Key words: history of books, library history, history of science, Königsberg.

INTRODUCTION

Levas Vladimirovas published his article "Karaliaučiaus spaudos pradininkas Hansas Veinreichas ir pirmieji jo darbo tęsėjai (XVI–XVII a.)", in which he reconstructed the history of the Königsberg printing and printers in the 16th and 17th century and analysed some individual prints, in 1961 in the first volume of the journal *Bibliotekininkystės ir bibliografijos klausimai*. This paper aims to examine to what extent Vladimirovas' article is related to the explorations of the fate of the Königsberg libraries and their collections after 1945, which were either destroyed or distributed to different archives and library institutions in Poland, Lithuania, Russia and other countries during the Second World War. The history of the expeditions of members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences to the destroyed Königsberg and its surroundings will be outlined in the first part, and the second part will analyse Vladimirovas' article to show what importance he has for the study of the fates of Königsberg libraries during and after the World War II. This highlights the value his

articles still have in current research. Vladimirovas also formulates the hypothesis that in Königsberg in the middle of the 16th century only one printing house existed. This hypothesis has not been further discussed by research so far, therefore his article is, more than 50 years after its publication, a current contribution to scientific discourses.

I. LITHUANIAN EXPEDITIONS IN THE RUINS OF KÖNIGSBERG LIBRARIES

Throughout the early modern times, Königsberg played an exceptional role in the history of Lithuanian culture. For over three centuries, the University of Königsberg, founded in 1544, has educated the Lutheran pastors for Prussian Lithuania, and drew many students from the Great Lithuania; since the early 18th century, the Lithuanian seminar at the university was also a centre of Lithuanistic research (Citavičiūtė 2004; generally to the history of the University Arnoldt 1746–69, Selle 1956, Лавринович 1995, Serczyk 1994). Above all, the capital of the Duchy of Prussia was a centre of Lithuanian printing in the 19th century. We are well and in detail informed about this, especially due to the researches of Domas Kaunas (Kaunas 1996; Kaunas 1992, Kaunas 1999, etc.). The facts are known and therefore I can confine myself to recall just some important printed media. The first Lithuanian book – Martynas Mažvydas' *Katekizmas* – was printed in Königsberg in 1547. When the Catechism of Mikalojus Daukša was published as the first Lithuanian book in Vilnius in 1595, already more than a dozen writings in Lithuanian had appeared in the capital of the Duchy of Prussia. The first grammar of the Lithuanian language by Daniel Klein was taken to print in Königsberg (1653/54), the first significant piece of Lithuanian literature in a strict sense, the translation of the Fables of Aesop by Johann Schultz, also appeared here in 1706, and the *Metai* of Kristijonas Donelaitis has also seen its first edition in Königsberg in 1818. Moreover, the Holy Bible was translated into Lithuanian for the first time in Königsberg by Jonas Bretkūnas. All of the foregoing persons, of course with the exception of Daukša, have in common that they had studied theology at the University of Königsberg, and were active as priests in the Lithuanian communities in the Duchy of Prussia.

It is also common to all of these works, the printed as well as the handwritten, and even to Catechism, that their copies have been in the Königsberg libraries

and archives (Walter 1999, p. 73). Since the introduction of the Re-formation in the former State of the Teutonic Order by the last Grand Master Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach in 1525, Königsberg functioned as the administrative capital of the new principality. Several libraries were established which made the city an exceptional library centre in this part of Europe (cf. Garber 2001; Walter 2005). The new Duke founded at first the Chamber and the Castle Library (with the famous Silver Library), and in 1544 the University Library (1810/28 they were merged into the Royal University library, which was called the State and University Library since 1918). The city opened its own library on the basis of the book collection of Johannes Poliander, who died in 1541. In 1623 the library of the family of Wallenrodt was founded, which soon became the most important private library in the Duchy of Prussia and was publicly available since the second half of the 17th century. This family library was united with the Royal University Library in 1909.

The Lithuanian books, mainly printed for the every day religious purposes, were not printed in great numbers; they were not wide spread over the European libraries in early modern times, and they are very rare today – the older they are, the less frequently. Mažvydas' *Katekizmas* has had a circulation of about 200–300 copies (Kaunas 1996, p. 59) – today just two complete copies have been preserved in European libraries: The copy of the Vilnius University Library was brought by Vladimirovas from Odessa to Vilnius in 1957 (Kažuro/Grigonis 2012, p. 44–45), the other copy is preserved in the Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika in Toruń, and got there after 1945 from the State and University Library of Königsberg.¹

The collections of the Königsberg libraries have been heavily damaged in the last year of World War II, the remains have been – for the most part – moved out of the city after 1945 and are distributed among about two dozen libraries and archives in Germany, Poland, Russia – and in Lithuania (cf. Walter 2004).

Between September 1945 and spring 1946 the so-called 'archeographic' expeditions of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences were working in the ruined city of Königsberg and its surrounding region (cf. Marcinkevičius 2004) – the most valuable parts of the historical collections had been evacuated in spring 1944 to castles and manor houses in the area. They were specifically deployed in the region in order to search for manuscripts and books in Lithuanian language and about Lithuania, so far as these media have not been taken away by

¹ This copy provides the basis for the photomechanical reprint in the edition Mažvydas 1993.

simultaneously working Russian search groups (Kurpakov 2004). Thousands of valuable old prints and hundreds of unique manuscripts were saved and came first to Kaunas, then to Vilnius, where they now form the cores of the historical collections of the Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka and the Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka. Polish experts worked in southern East Prussia in 1945/46, with whom the Lithuanian groups were not in any competition. The aforementioned copy of Mažvydas' *Katekizmas* was probably, reliable sources are missing so far, found in the area around Olsztyn (Lindemann-Stark/Stark 1995, p. 98).

In Western Europe nothing was known about the successes of these expeditions. Instead, it was assumed that the Königsberg library collections had been almost completely destroyed (e.g., Trunz 1973, c. 1683). These assumptions were also supported by official sources in the Soviet Union and the GDR. Information, that some parts had survived, leaked through the iron curtain only sporadically. The first article on some findings of the Lithuanian expedition was published by Povilas Pakarklis, one of the leading members of the expert groups, just four years after the war (Pakarklis 1949). But this report remained completely unknown in the West. The first certain information that reached the West was published on 8 August 1964 in the weekly journal *Literatūra ir menas*: the article "Ten, kur buvo surastas 'Metų' rankraštis" by Andrius Bulota (Bulota 1964). Bulota had also been a member of the expert group of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and reported in his short article the discovery of Donelaitis' manuscript and other valuable manuscripts near Königsberg, in the ruins of the castle of the Teutonic Knights in Lochstädt (today Pavlova in Kaliningrad Oblast). In Western Germany, where the interest in the fate of Königsberg libraries was naturally eminent, soon appeared an abridged translation, albeit in a very hidden publication.²

Bulotas' article initially had little effect, because it was almost impossible for Western scholars to undertake own explorations in the libraries of the Soviet Union. Only since the 1970's the availability of information became more and more transparent and secure. In 1970 there was the first reliable message about Königsberg book stocks in Polish libraries (Fischer 1970, p. 345), in 1971 for the first time a West German scientist saw early prints from former Königsberg libraries in the Academy Library in St. Petersburg and in the Lenin Library in Moscow (Hubatsch 1971). But nowhere else in the states of the 'Eastern Bloc' was at this time a more open dealing with the subject of Königsberg book

² *Memeler Dampfboot*, 1964, No. 21, p. 283.

and library history possible than in the then Soviet Republic of Lithuania. In 1966, after comparing the 1963 published catalogue of the manuscript collection in the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Science (Rankraščių rinkiniai 1963) with its pre-war inventory, Kurt Forstreuter³ was capable to recognize that most likely the new pieces came there from Königsberg State Archive (Forstreuter 1966). Concrete certainty about individual titles of Königsberg provenance in Lithuanian libraries was nearly a decade later obtained by Nojus Feigelmanas' catalogue of incunabula, published in 1975 (Feigelmanas 1975). Feigelmanas, a librarian at Vilnius University Library, registered quite naturally the provenance of each: he identified two incunabula from the former Prussian State Archive, and 30 from the Wallenrodt library. In 1978 it was again a Lithuanian scientist, who gave the most detailed information so far about the activities and findings of the 'archeographic' expeditions of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. The well-known cultural historian Juozas Jurginis, who had been a member of the group, reported about it in the second issue of the literary magazine *Pergalė* in his article "Karaliaučiaus lituanikos likimas" (Jurginis 1978). Through that article, which appeared in a summary in 1979 and in a complete translation in 1980 in Germany,⁴ one dark chapter of the post-war history of Königsberg libraries – and that means of the cultural heritage of the city – was finally enlightened. Since 1998, the former director of the Vilnius' Academy Library, Juozas Marcinkevičius, published in Lithuanian and German about the activities of the Lithuanian experts on the basis of the records and documents of the expeditions of 1945/46 (Marcinkevičius 1998; Marcinkevičius 2000).

II. ANALYSIS OF VLADIMIROVAS' ARTICLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

The main interest of Lithuanian research is of course not the fate of the Königsberg collections after 1945, but, naturally – as the title of Jurginis' article puts it in a nutshell – the fate of the Königsberg Lituaniatics and its written

³ Forstreuter has been archivist at the Prussian State Archive in Königsberg until 1945 and was at that time director of the "Staatliches Archivlager" (state archive repository) in Göttingen, whose stocks are now in the "Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz" in Berlin-Dahlem.

⁴ Die Suche nach Archivbeständen in litauischer Sprache (Lithuanika) in Königsberg. *Königsberger Bürgerbrief*, 1979, No. 16, p. 24–26; Das Schicksal der Königsberger Lituaniatika. Ein Bericht des sowjetlitauischen Historikers Jouzas Jurginis – übersetzt aus dem Litauischen von Alfred Franzkeit. *Heimatgruß. Jahrbuch der Deutschen aus Litauen*. 1980, p. 119–127.

testimonies. However, German Research owes the mentioned Lithuanian publications crucial evidence and impetus. A systematic scientific exploration of Königsberg library history since World War II started in Germany in 1980 with a pioneering article of Manfred Komorowski (Komorowski 1980). While German research primarily focuses on the history of the libraries, the main interest of Lithuanian research consists, as in the aforementioned publications of Domas Kaunas, of a reconstruction of the history of Lithuanian literature (in a broad sense) and of the cultural and historical preservation of the old textual witnesses for the national memory. But, of course, everywhere the historical book research is interested mainly in incunabula and early prints. This brings me to the second part of my article – the contribution of Levas Vladimirovas to the study of Königsberg book and library history. To classify his position in this specific academic discourse the previous remarks have been necessary.

In 1961, Vladimirovas published the article “Karaliaučiaus spaudos pradininkas Hansas Veinreiches ir pirmieji jo darbo tęsėjai (XVI–XVII a.)” in the first volume of *Bibliotekininkystės ir bibliografijos klausimai*. There he portrays the Königsberg printers from Hans Weinreich, who arrived 1524 from, to the end of the 17th century, the rise of the printer dynasty of Johann Reusner and his descendants. Vladimirovas formulated the motivation of his research in the last sentence of the article (I will always quote with an English translation for the international reader): “Kiekvienas šių spaustuvinių įnešė didesnę ar mažesnę indelį į lietuviškos knygos istoriją.” (Vladimirovas 1961, p. 108) (“Each of these printers made a smaller or larger contribution to the history of Lithuanian book.”) Especially if we remember that in the year after the publication the Cuban crisis was unstopably heading towards its peak, we should emphasize that Vladimirovas refers impartially and as if it were the most natural thing in the world to German book researchers from the old Königsberg. In the very first paragraph of his essay, after he has Hans Weinreich as the printer of *Mažvydas*, he takes an unequivocal stand as a researcher: Weinreich’s life and work have not yet reached the place in the historical research that it deserves – the same is true for the other Königsberg printers of the 16th and 17th century. But moreover –

“o negausiuose šių temų liečiančiuose mūsų autorių darbuose nepasinaudota tais tyrinėjimų rezultatais, kuriuos, turėdami savo dispozicijoje vietinius turtingus archyvus, seniau yra pasiekę Karaliaučiaus istorikai A. Mekelburgas, P. Švenkė, K. Lomejeris ir kt. [...]. Šio straipsnio uždavinys, panaudojant visą turimą šiuo klausimu medžiagą, supažindinti tarybinį skaitytoją

su spaudos Karaliaučiuje užuomazgos ir jos vystymosi XVI–XVII a. svarbesniais momentais, nes Karaliaučiaus spaustuvės išleido ne vieną svarbų lietuvių raštijos paminklą.” (Vladimirovas 1961, p. 99).

(“this topic comes into scarce contact with our authors who are not familiar with the results, which, having at their disposal the rich local archives, in the past have reached Königsberg historians A. Meckelburg, P. Schwenke, K. Lomeier and others [...]. This paper has set itself the goal of using all the available material on the subject to make the Soviet readers familiar with the beginnings of printing in Königsberg and its development during the 16th and 17th century, since the Königsberg printing houses gave out several important documents of Lithuania at crucial moments.”)⁵.

The only contemporary author, whom Vladimirovas calls in a footnote, is Vladas Abramavičius, who published a paper on the printers of the old Lithuanian books in 1947 (Abramavičius 1947).

Vladimirovas’ article takes up a ‘school’ of book history research, which has been developed before World War II in Königsberg and is particularly related with the name of Paul Schwenke. I reported about this ‘school’ a few years ago at a conference in Vilnius (Walter 2007). Schwenke had been the director of the State and University Library in Königsberg for six years before he was appointed to the Prussian State Library in Berlin (cf. Knoche [e.a.] 2005; Komorowski 2005). In his opening speech in the library section of the 44th Philologists Assembly in Dresden he designed the program of a new printing and book history, focused on the book in its entirety (Schwenke 1898). In 1896 he published along with his article about Hans Weinreich a “catalogue of Königsberg prints until 1527” (Schwenke 1896), which gives a hitherto never reached content of book-historical information (Vladimirovas studied this item very carefully for his own article). Schwenke’s catalogue demonstrates that book research gets along without library history, in so far as book research needs access to the individual print to analyse it on the one hand, and on the other to

⁵ Vladimirovas quotes in a footnote the following articles – except Schwenke 1896: Schwenke, Paul: Zur altpreußischen Buchdruckergeschichte. *Sammlung bibliothekswissenschaftlicher Arbeiten*, 1895, No. 8, p. 72–83; Schwenke, Paul: Zwei Lieder für den Hochmeister Albrecht von Brandenburg. Nebst Notizen zur altpreußischen Buchdruckergeschichte. *Altpreußische Monatsschrift*, 1895, No. 32, p. 153–173; furthermore: Lohmeyer, Karl: Geschichte des Buchdrucks und des Buchhandels im Herzogtum Preußen (16. und 17. Jahrhundert). *Archiv für Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, 1896, No. 18, p. 29–140, 1897, No. 19, p. 170–304; Meckelburg, Friedrich Adolf: *Geschichte der Buchdruckereien in Königsberg*. Königsberg 1840. The first-mentioned article by Schwenke and the studies of Lohmeyer and Meckelburg are still indispensable in today’s research.

contextualise each print with the local cultural environment and to define its position in the ensemble of the regional library collections.

Vladimirovas shares the perspective of such a broad approach to book and printing history. And he has, we can assume this due to his argumentation, as far as possible consulted the preserved prints – which gives an indication that he was probably in direct contact with the Königsberg prints that arrived in Vilnius from former Königsberg stocks. Just the use of the prints themselves could explain some of the very precise and detailed analyses Vladimirovas make about typographic features of each printer. So, with some good reasons we possibly can designate Vladimirovas as one of the first, if not the first book researcher of prints of Königsberg provenance in Europe, which after 1945 has been used again.⁶

Our hypothesis about Vladimirovas' use of prints from Königsberg libraries is reinforced by the following quote, which laments the fact that from the early days of Königsberg printing history only a few copies have been preserved. Vladimirovas omits concrete information, what corresponds with the official information policy in those days to avoid hints about the fate of Königsberg libraries. Pakarklis until then had been the exception (but loyal to the party line). Three years later Bulota will go further – his article had of course another aim than Vladimirovas'. Vladimirovas, however, already indicates, although only indirectly, the existence of at least some prints of Königsberg provenance, which were known to the author:

“Šiuo metu mūsų knygų saugyklose užsiliko nedaug to meto Karaliaučiaus spaustuvininkų darbų ir todėl sunku palyginti jų poligrafines savybes. Tačiau jau ir iš tos negausios medžiagos, kuri yra mūsų dispozicijoje, matyti tam tikri bendradarbiavimo ryšiai tarp trijų pirmųjų Karaliaučiaus spaustuvininkų.” (Vladimirovas 1961, p. 104).

(“Nowadays, not many of the works of Königsberg book printers of that time are available in our book repositories. Therefore, it is difficult to compare their typographic characteristics. Nevertheless, some cooperation ties between the first three Königsberg printers can be seen from the small amount of material, which is at our disposal.”).

Vladimirovas thereafter derives from this observation a very important thesis:

“Iš viso, kas aukščiau pasakytą, galima padaryti hipotetinę išvadą, kad Karaliaučiuje XVI a. viduryje veikė ne trys savarankiškos spaustuvės – Vein-

⁶ Whether this assumption can be verified through old user lists needs to be scrutinized.

reicho, Augezdeckio ir Liufto, – bet viena kunigaikščio globojama spaustu-
vė, kurioje įvairiomis sąlygomis ir teisėmis veikė įvairiu laiku trys minėti
Karaliaučiaus spaudos pradininkai.” (Vladimirovas 1961, p. 104).

(“From all that is said above, one can make a hypothetical conclusion that in
Königsberg in the middle of the 16th century there were not three indepen-
dent printing houses – Weinreich, Augezdeckis, and Lufft – but one under
the patronage of the duke, in which under various conditions and privileges
and in different time these three pioneers of letter press worked.”).

Did the historical collections in the University, the Academic and the Na-
tional Library that had been brought together before 1945, really possessed a
sufficient number of Königsberg prints from the first half of the 16th century
for such a qualified statement? Or does it not seem to be the most obvious and
appropriate explanation for an impressively precise analysis like this that the
volumes found by the ‘archeographic’ expeditions of the Lithuanian Academy
of Sciences have been at least partially examined by the author? The theory
that there was only a single book printing house in Königsberg is obviously
obtained from an analysis of covers and typographic features – only someone
who knows his sources *de visu* can argue this way.⁷

CONCLUSIONS

Vladimirovas’ thesis has so far not been taken up by research and his article
provides this as still an important impulse for further discussion. Not only be-
cause of this current thesis it is regrettable that Vladimirovas’ article is largely
unknown by the German research. It offers quite an important and valuable
introduction into the first two centuries of Königsberg printing history that
will remain to be considered by future research (and not just in Germany).
The choice of the theme and its treatment also testifies for how, even during

⁷ The prints of the 16th century, which were saved from the former Königsberg libraries in Vilnius, are now fully catalogued as part of an international research project. Nowadays the Academy and the National Library own several thousand of prints with Königsberg provenances. For the collection of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, see Bikauskienė/Blūdžiūtė 2004. It is not understandable why the National Library in Vilnius did not mention the Königsberg prints in their collections in the article Klemensas Sinkevičius [e.a.]: Vilnius 1. Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka. In: Handbuch deutscher historischer Buchbestände in Europa. Vol. 7, 2. Finnland [...], Estland [...], Lettland [...], Litauen. Red. Simoné Okaj-Braun [e.a.]. Hildesheim [e.a.] 1998, p. 185–202, which was published in an international standard work. Relevant information would have been expected in the section about the rare books, written by Juozas Tumelis.

the worst phase of the Cold War, objective research was possible, even about a town that has been deeply politicized and indoctrinated after 1945. In 1968 the Soviet administration blew up the ruins of the castle to eradicate any memories of the old Königsberg in the new Kaliningrad. It seems to be like a portent that the House of Councillors, which was built at the same place, is a ruin since its construction. Vladimirovas updated an approach to book-historical research that was developed around 1900 and developed it further toward a culturally oriented book and library research, as it is demanded today. But above all, his article probably gave the decisive impetus to report more details about the fate of Königsberg libraries since 1945. With Vladimirovas' article thus began the row of the aforementioned Lithuanian publications which provided the earliest and to date most relevant research contributions for the reconstruction of the old Königsberg library landscape that was destroyed after more than 400 years. This is another lasting result of a productive researcher's life, which began a hundred years ago in Telšiai.⁸

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LEVAS VLADIMIROVAS IR PO 1945 M. PRARASTŲ KARALIAUČIAUS BIBLIOTEKŲ MOKSLINĖS REKONSTRUKCIJOS PRADŽIA

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SANTRAUKA

Po Antrojo pasaulinio karo senieji Karaliaučiaus bibliotekų spaudiniai buvo sunaikinti arba išdalinti įvairiems Lenkijos, Lietuvos, Rusijos ir kitų šalių bibliotekų archyvams. Tuometėje Tarybų Sąjungoje konkreti informacija apie išlikusių knygų likimą buvo nutylima. Levas Vladimirovas buvo pirmasis mokslininkas, kuris po 1945 m. iš naujo prabilo šia tema. 1961 m. jis išspausdino straipsnį apie Hansą Weinreichą, pirmąjį spaustuvininką Karaliaučiuje ir jo sekėjus. Šis straipsnis yra tolesnių tyrimų atskaitos taškas, paskatinęs vėlesnių publikacijų apie šį Europos knygos ir bibliotekos istorijos skirsnį atsiradimą. Nuo Vladimirovo straipsnio pasirodymo dienos iki 1970 metų buvo išspausdinta daug publikacijų, kurios pateikė išsamios informacijos apie tuometės Karaliaučiaus bibliotekos fondus Lietuvos bibliotekose. Iš daugelio faktų, pvz., detalių gausa straipsnio analizėje, galima spręsti, kad Vladimirovui *de visu* buvo žinoma Karaliaučiaus spaudinių Vilniaus bibliotekose kilmė. Tačiau visų pirma jo straipsnį reikėtų traktuoti kaip iki šiol aktualų indėlį į 16–17 a. knygų spausdinimo istorijos tyrimus, nes Vladimirovui pavyko duoti kryptį šiuolaikiniams knygos istorijos tyrinėjimams, susijusiems ir su Paul Schwenke vardu, kurie atsižvelgia į kultūros istorijos kontekstą. Vladimirovas savo darbuose atsiribojo nuo Karaliaučiaus temos ideologizavimo ir teikė didelę reikšmę objektyvumui. Iki 1980 metų jo straipsnis Karaliaučiaus bibliotekų tyrimų tema buvo vienintelis. Vladimirovas po išsamios Karaliaučiaus bibliotekų spaudinių analizės suformulavo tezę, kad 16 a. viduryje Karaliaučiuje buvo tik viena spaustuvė. Ši tezę yra nauja, tačiau visiškai įtikinama ir turi būti patikrinta tolesnių tyrimų metu.