

How Provenance Marks from Lithuanian Incunabula are Contributing to Historical Narrative

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Abstract At present, eight different libraries in Lithuania preserve 510 incunabula in their holdings. In the 15th century, Lithuania did not have printing houses, so books had to be imported. A majority of incunabula kept in Lithuania carry inscriptions which show that these books were brought to Lithuania as early as in the 16th or 17th century. However, extant book markings may also become a way of shedding light on historical events which influenced the fate of libraries, and, vice versa, a knowledge of historical events may fill in lacunae left by provenance marks in the history of a book.

Keywords Provenance. Incunabula. Illuminators. Private libraries. Prices. Books of the 15th Century. History of Lithuania.

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1 Introduction

Eight different libraries in Lithuania preserve 510 incunabula in their holdings (see Table 1).¹ Most of them are held by the Vilnius University Library (VUL), which was founded in the 16th century by the Jesuits and, in the 20th century, incorporated the holdings of the Vilnius Public Library (1865-1919).² The incunabula under discussion first circulated around a much larger territory than that of the present Republic of Lithuania. In the 15th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) was the largest state in Europe - it covered the entirety of present Lithuania and Belarus, most of present Ukraine, and part of present Russia (Smolensk, Bryansk, Kursk) and Poland (Podlasie).

Following the signing of the union of Lublin in 1569, the GDL together with the Kingdom of Poland formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which ceased to exist in 1795 following its third partition. The political policy pursued by the Russian Empire led to the closing of many institutions, whose books were relocated to larger imperial cities. One of the latter was Vilnius, which thus received an influx of books from various closed-down libraries. Some incunabula were lost in wars and great city fires in the 17th to 19th centuries, which destroyed not only books, but also library catalogues that could have been used for the reconstruction of the content of the perished libraries.

Table 1 Institutions and number of incunabula held

Name of Institution	Number of Incunabula
Vilnius, University Library (VUL)	332
Vilnius, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (NL)	88
Vilnius, Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (WL)	64
Kaunas, University of Technology Library (KUTL)	19
Kaunas, County Public Library	3
Kaunas, Vytautas Magnus University Library (VMUL)	2
Kaunas, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis National Art Museum	1
Vilnius, Kazys Varnelis House-Museum	1

1 In addition, the personal library of Vidmantas Staniulis in Kaunas includes four incunabula. Cf. Staniulis, "Habent sua fata libelli", 199-200.

2 After the closing of Vilnius University in 1832 a major part of the Library holdings was delivered from Vilnius to other educational institutions in Imperial Russia. In 1856 the former premises of the Library housed the Museum of Antiquities (established by the Archeological Commission), which among other things had a Reading Cabinet. In 1865 the Museum of Antiquities with its Reading Cabinet was reorganised as Vilnius Public Library and Museum. Cf. <https://biblioteka.vu.lt/en/about>.

The incunabula kept in Lithuania today were recorded and described by the bibliographer Nojus Feigelmanas (1918-2002) in his catalogue *Lietuvos inkunabulai* (Incunabula of Lithuania)³ and in the article “Lietuvos inkunabulų papildymas” (Supplement to Incunabula of Lithuania), as well as by the bibliographer Juozas Tumelis in the article “Nauji Lietuvos TSR Valstybinės Respublikinės bibliotekos inkunabulai” (New incunabula in the State Library of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic). Over the last few years, incunabula research in Lithuania has become more in-depth. In 2011 the VUL incunabula collection was discussed by Vidas Račius in his article “Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos inkunabulai: rinkinio raida ir sudėtis” (Incunabula in the Vilnius University Library: The Development and Structure of the Collection).⁴ In 2014 the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (NL) published an incunabula catalogue, *Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos inkunabulai* (Incunabula of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania),⁵ while incunabula held in Kaunas libraries were described in the catalogue *XV-XVI amžių knygos Kauno bibliotekose* (15th-16th-Century Books in Kaunas Libraries).⁶ Papers on this subject by one of the Authors of the present article, Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė,⁷ are also worth mentioning.

The involvement of the main Lithuanian libraries, from early 2017, in the creation of the international database of incunabula provenance, *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (MEI), gave a stimulus to a more attentive examination of incunabula and their ownership marks and thus led to a number of important discoveries.⁸

As 15th-century Lithuania did not yet have printing houses, it is not clear how books were being imported to the country, nor do any documents which contain information on this survive. A majority of Lithuanian incunabula carry a considerable number of anonymous 15th-16th-century inscriptions, usually in Latin. Some of them contain a summary of, or comments on, the book in question; many of these inscriptions and annotations remain unidentified, and the place of their writing unknown. Especially noteworthy is one of the earliest and hardly legible inscriptions, telling us that the treatise *Commentum su-*

3 Feigelmanas, *Lietuvos inkunabulai*.

4 Račius, “Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos inkunabulai”.

5 *Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos inkunabulai: katalogas*. Compiled by Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė. Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka, 2014.

6 *XV-XVI amžių knygos Kauno bibliotekose: katalogas*. Compiled by Sigita Lūžys, Rita Urbaitytė, Irena Vitkauskienė. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2006.

7 Cf. final Bibliography.

8 The librarians who enter data into the MEI database in Lithuania are Sondra Rankelienė (VUL), Aušra Rinkūnaitė (VUL), Vidas Račius (VUL), Agnė Zemkajutė (WL), Viktorija Bargailienė (NL) and Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė (NL).

*per quarto libro Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*⁹ by the Franciscan theologian Richardus de Mediavilla (circa 1249-circa 1308) was owned by an unknown individual from Venice in 1501. Although it remains unclear how this incunabulum came to be in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, we know from a later inscription that it once belonged to a Franciscan monk, Christophorus Medige [?] from Braniewo (Poland), and subsequently to the Jesuits of Niesvizh (Belarus).

Incunabula held in Lithuania carry inscriptions confirming that these books arrived in Lithuania as early as the 16th or the 17th century.¹⁰ They were brought from the great printing centres of Western Europe, some by students returning from their European studies. In Lithuania, books were regarded as a valuable possession. Therefore, there existed a strong tradition of marking them with various signs or indications of ownership with a view to preventing theft. Important information on the history of a book, book culture, and reading habits of those times may be obtained not only from the customary inscriptions, stamps, labels and bookplates of private owners or institutions, but also from records, comments and even drawings left by anonymous readers. Even though such features are not classified as ownership marks, they still represent in their own right important evidence of the cultural communication of the period.¹¹ Among such book markings, inscriptions with prices and comments by illuminators provide the most crucial information.

The meticulous chronological recording of markings left in books throws some light on the movement of the books in time and space, as well as on the methods of communication adopted by their former owners. This article aims to analyse what various book markings extant in Lithuanian incunabula may reveal of how the books arrived to the GDL, and who their first owners and readers were. It also attempts to explain for what reasons and in what historical circumstances incunabula from various libraries were brought into the territory of present-day Lithuania.

⁹ Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, for the heirs of Octavianus Scotus, 17 Dec. 1499. 4°. ISTC im00426000; MEI 02126704 (NL R.XV:B.10).

¹⁰ Feigelmanas, "Pirmosios spausdintos knygos".

¹¹ Cf. Liškevičienė, "Knygos ženklų marginalijos".

2 16th-17th Century: The Arrival of Incunabula in the GDL and their Readers' Marks

2.1 Prices

“The main way of book dissemination in Lithuania was through the book trade. Starting from as early as the late 15th century, trade with Polish or Western European book publishing centres was conducted directly or via book merchants”.¹² Little information exists on book prices in those times. However, inscriptions found in the books themselves provide important knowledge for the value of books, the money used in different periods, and the individuals who purchased incunabula.¹³ A careful analysis of inscriptions containing prices has revealed that most of the incunabula were acquired on the territory of the GDL, some as early as the first years of the 16th century. In this article, we will single out the inscriptions unrecorded in Feigelmanas' catalogue.

In the inscriptions with prices discovered in incunabula, *groat* is the monetary unit that is mentioned most often.¹⁴ Production of GDL coins in Vilnius started in 1508, during the rule of Sigismund the Old, but only a small quantity of groats can have been minted, as these coins are rarely found.¹⁵ In 1529, an unknown individual bought a sermon collection by an Italian Franciscan, the theologian Antonius da Bitonto (circa 1385-1465), *Sermones dominicales* for 20 groats, as indicated in a note on the last leaf: *Anno Do[m]i[n]i 1529 pro isto opusculo dedi viginti gs.*¹⁶ We know that the treatise on logic by the German theologian Petrus Gerticz (ca. 1350-ca. 1421) was bought in Lithuania, since the price stated in an inscription on the title page is 50 Lithuanian groats: *Emptus 2bus 50 li gr.*¹⁷ Even though the exact date is unknown, the handwriting suggests that the treatise was purchased in the early 16th century.

It also remains unclear who bought a commentary – and when and where – on the text of the philosopher Boethius (ca. 480-524) *De con-*

¹² Petrauskienė, “Knygų plitimo keliai Lietuvoje XVI-XVIII a.”, 186.

¹³ On prices in old books see: Vladimirovas, “Knygos prekybos Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje XVIII amžiuje metmenys”; Braziūnienė “Apie marginalijas kaip knygu prekybos istorijos šaltinį”.

¹⁴ More about Lithuanian coins in Grimalauskaitė, Remecas, *Pinigai Lietuvoje*.

¹⁵ Remecas, “XVI a. monetų apyvarta dabartinės Lietuvos teritorijoje”, 60-1.

¹⁶ Antonius da Bitonto, *Sermones dominicales*. Strasbourg: Johann (Reinhard) Grüninger, 20 Feb. 1495. 8°. GW 2211; ISTC ia00891000; MEI 02019416 (VUL Ink. 110).

¹⁷ Gerticz, Petrus, *Parvulus logicae*. [Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, about 1492-95]. 4°. ISTC ig00277350; MEI 02018182 (VUL Ink. 317).

solatione philosophiae.¹⁸ The handwriting and ownership marks on the titlepage suggest that the acquisition was made at the end of the 16th century/beginning of 17th somewhere in the territory of the Commonwealth: *hunc libelum comparavi p[er] 18 gr*. The infamous treatise on witches by the theologians Henricus Institoris (1430-1505) and Jacobus Sprenger (1438-1494), *Malleus maleficarum*, was bought in 1601 by a monk named Hieronimus Loverius for 46 groats, as stated in an inscription on fol. A2 r: *Ex Libris F[rat]ris Hieronimi Louerij Ciuitēi CII... Comparatus A[nno] D[omini] 1601 grs 46*.¹⁹ Loverius, most probably a Dominican, must have given this incunabulum to the Dominican monastery of Dereczyn, in present-day Belarus, which existed during the period 1618-1832, as may be guessed from the following inscription: *Idem applicauit con[ven]tui Derecensi*. On May 7, 1644, an anonymous individual bought for 5 groats, in Gdansk, the illustrated herbal *Herbarius latinus*; the inscription on fol. [1] v reads: *Gedani 1644. 7 Maji. 5 gr*.²⁰ The variety of book prices is best understood when we compare them with the prices of other goods in the corresponding time periods: for example, during the reign of Stephen Batory (1576-1586), a *kartis* (123 litres) of wheat cost 12-16 groats, while at the time of Sigismund Vasa (1587-1632), the price varied between 35 and 95-100 groats, and in 1650 the same measure of wheat cost about 230 groats.²¹

Incunabula inscriptions also contain mentions of different monetary units, other than *groats*. There are mentions of florins (ducats) minted during the rule of Sigismund August (1520-1572), King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. In 1651, the Cracow Dominicans purchased *Sermones de eucharistiae sacramento*, a sermon collection by the theologian Albertus Magnus (ca. 1200-1280), bound together with three post-incunabula: *secessit fl. 30 a Prædi[catorum] Ord[ine] in Cracovia 1651*.²² Later, most probably at some point in the 18th century, this composite volume fell into the hands of the Kaunas Dominicans. The monk Jerzy Dąbrowski paid 15 florins for a Bible in Latin.²³

¹⁸ Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* (with commentary ascribed in the text to Thomas Aquinas). Add: *Compendiosa consolationis resumptio*. Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 2 Sept. 1500. 4°. GW 4568; ISTD ib00807000; MEI 02020045 (VUL Ink. 120).

¹⁹ Institoris, Henricus and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 17 Jan. 1496. 4°. ISTD ii00168000; MEI 02019361 (VUL Ink. 309).

²⁰ *Herbarius latinus*. Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, [14]84. 4°. GW 12268; ISTD ih00062000; MEI 02017325 (VUL Ink. 217).

²¹ Cf. Grimalauskaitė, Remecas, *Pinigai Lietuvoje*, 196-7, 219, 242.

²² Albertus Magnus. *Sermones de eucharistiae sacramento*. Cologne: [Retro Minores (Martin von Werden?)], for Heinrich Quentell, 1498. 4°. GW 770; ISTD ia00326000; MEI 02019490 (VUL Ink. 118).

²³ *Biblia Latina*. With table of Gabriel Brunus (revised). Basel: Johann Froben, 27 Oct. 1495. 8°. GW 4275; ISTD ib00598000; MEI 02019396 (VUL Ink. 111(2)).

The owner did not record the place of purchase, nor the date (inscription fol. BB³ v: *Fratrij Georgij Dąbrowski Emptus Florenis 15*). The tragedies of the Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC-65) are known to have been bought for three gold florins, even though the inscription, on fol. Cxlvi of the 1498 edition – *Constat 3 Florinos in auro* – does not state who acquired the books or when or where.²⁴

Another noteworthy inscription containing a price provides important information about early book acquisitions. When Aleksandras Rodūnionis the Elder (circa 1526-1583), an Evangelical Lutheran pastor and translator of Lithuanian hymns, went to study at Königsberg University in 1547, he bought a sermon collection by St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) published in two books in the 1490s.²⁵ He paid 24 groats for Book 1, and 20 for Book 2, as shown by the inscriptions he wrote in the volumes. Another inscription by Rodūnionis, found at the beginning of Book 2, *Alexander Radunius Lituanius sibi & suis comparavit*, shows that books in the 16th century were often acquired for shared use – *sibi et amicis, sibi et suis*.²⁶ It was in the age of the Renaissance that private libraries emerged in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and books came to be seen and understood as valuable objects.²⁷

2.2 Inscriptions by Illuminators

Incunabula, as well as manuscript books, were decorated by hand. The first letters of sentences were rubricated (executed in red), and the initials were illuminated: for this purpose the printers would leave blank spaces in the text. Although the illuminators usually remain anonymous, in the case of several Lithuanian incunabula, it has been possible to identify one of them. Markings left in the books pointed to the same individual, whose name stays unknown.

A 1487 collection of Lenten sermons by the French theologian Petrus de Palude (circa 1277-1342), *Sermones quadragesimales Thesauri novi*,²⁸ is bound together with a 1490 collection of lives of saints by the Italian preacher Jacobus de Voragine (circa 1228-1298), *Lom-*

²⁴ Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, *Tragoediae*. Comm: Gellius Bernardinus Marmita and Daniel Caietanus. Etc. Venice: Johannes Tacuinus, de Tridino, 7 Apr. 1498. Folio. ISTC is00438000. Not yet in MEI (KUTL Fs 727).

²⁵ Augustinus, Aurelius, *Sermones*. With additions by Sebastian Brant. Basel: Johann Amerbach, 1494-95. Folio. GW 2920; ISTC ia01308000; MEI 02108477 (Book 1: VUL Ink. 218), MEI 02122977 (Book 2: WL I-34).

²⁶ Pacevičius, Arvydas, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės bibliotekos*, 18.

²⁷ Ulčinaitė, *Lietuvos Renesanso ir Baroko literatūra*, 16.

²⁸ Petrus de Palude, *Sermones quadragesimales Thesauri novi*. Strasbourg: [Martin Flach (printer of Strasbourg)], 1487. Folio. ISTC ip00503500; MEI 02018157 (VUL Ink. 262).

bardica historia.²⁹ It is probable that the two books were bound in a single volume already in the 16th century – this is suggested not only by the red rubricated letters and the green and red initials drawn in the books by the illuminator, Johannes de Grodno, but also by the notes written by him, in red ink, in the margins and under the colophons. The inscriptions show that he completed the decoration of the book by Jacobus de Voragine in 1516 (inscription: *a[n]no 1516 Joh[an]n[i]s Grodno...*), and of Petrus de Palude's work in 1517, on St. Elisabeth's Day (inscription: *1517 die S. Eliz[a]beth[ae] Horodno Joh[anne]s finivit*). According to the historian Gita Drungilienė, “even if it is unclear whether the publication was his property, or merely given to him, temporarily, to decorate”, this provenance record tells us that “the book arrived in the GDL soon after it had been printed and was in use here as early as the first half of the 16th century”.³⁰ Later, probably in the mid-17th century, this composite volume ended up in the Vilnius Bernardine Monastery (inscription sign. *a² r: PP[atrum] Bernard[inorum] Vilnen[sis]*), and, after its closure in 1864, when the monastery's book collection was confiscated, in the Vilnius Public Library.

Another incunabulum illuminated by the same artist in the same style, red rubricated letters, red and green initials, often with various embellishments, although modest in comparison with the above-mentioned composite volume set, is kept in the National Library of Lithuania. Judging by a note on the title page (*Anno Xri[sti] Domi[ni] 1510 p[er] Joanne[m] Grodno pa[ratur]*),³¹ Johannes de Grodno completed the decoration of these *Sermones quadragesimales*, a sermon collection by the Italian Franciscan Robertus Caracciolus (1425-1495), in 1510.³²

Markings left in books by illuminators may reveal certain details about book finishes in the period. Two incunabula from the National Library of Lithuania are illuminated by initials drawn in a similar style and using the same Latin inscription: “Jhesus Maria”.³³

Some incunabula bear only the year recorded by the rubricator or illuminator in red ink, most probably to signify the completion of the

²⁹ Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia*. Strasbourg: [Printer of the 1483 Jordanus de Quedlinburg (Georg Husner)], 16 Aug. 1490. Folio. ISTC ij00124000; MEI 02018060 (VUL Ink. 261).

³⁰ Drungilienė, “Vieno kūrinio istorija”, 36-7.

³¹ In the incunabula catalogue of the National Library of Lithuania, the surname and the year are given incorrectly. Cf. *Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos inkunabulai*, no. 22.

³² Caracciolus, Robertus, *Sermones quadragesimales de poenitentia*. Strasbourg: [Johann (Reinhard) Grüninger], 3 Feb. 1497. 4°. GW 6079; ISTC ic00182000; MEI 02123081 (NL R.XV:B.3).

³³ Bonaventura, S, *Opuscula*. Strasbourg: Martin Flach (printer of Strasbourg), 31 Oct. 1489. Folio. ISTC ib00927000; MEI 02124278 (NL R.XV:D.1); Marchesinus, Johannes, *Mammotrectus super Bibliam*. [Cologne: Conrad Winters, de Homborch], 24 Dec. 1476. Folio. GW 4647; ISTC im00235000; MEI 02124321 (NL R.XV:D.10).

work. For example, the rubricator inscribed the year 1496 on the recto of the seventh leaf: *Anno dofminji M496*, at the beginning of *Postilla super epistolas et evangelia*, a sermon collection by the French theologian Guillaume d’Auvergne (circa 1180-1249), while the date 1478 is written in red ink at the end of *Fasciculus temporum*, the concise chronological account of world events by the German Carthusian Werner Rolewinck (1425-1502).³⁴

Markings by an illuminator have also been found in a composite volume consisting of two incunabula: *Confessionale* by Archbishop St. Antoninus (1490) and *Malleus maleficarum* (ca. 1495) by the theologians Henricus Institoris (1430-1505) and Jacobus Sprenger (1438-1494).³⁵ The end of the first edition carries a barely legible note by the illuminator made in red ink and dated 1493. Even though the second edition has only two decorative elements placed in the margins in red ink, it is believed that the books were bound together at the time when the artist was decorating the first edition. This is also suggested by the binding, wooden boards covered by brown tooled leather, with the remains of two metal clasps, and by the publication year. *Malleus maleficarum* was printed without a publication year. At present, the GW catalogue gives this date: “1491-1495”.³⁶ One hypothesis why the second work was not decorated could be because of its fear-inspiring content.

Even though markings left in incunabula by rubricators or illuminators have not been comprehensively researched, notes and longer comments left by them in the margins enable us to see how they functioned as readers.

2.3 Various Marginalia

The most intriguing marginalia are those providing information not only on book culture and reading habits, but also on historical events and details of everyday life.

³⁴ Guillelmus, *Postilla super epistolas et evangelia*. [Strasbourg: Johann Prüss, about 1495]. 4°. GW 11967; ISTC ig00663000; MEI 02122974 (NL R.XV:B.4(1)). Rolewinck, Werner, *Fasciculus temporum*. [Speyer]: Peter Drach, 24 Nov. 1477. Folio. ISTC ir00257000; MEI 02123369 (WL I-25a).

³⁵ Antoninus Florentinus, *Confessionale: Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio*. Add: *Titulus de restitutionibus*. Strasbourg: Martin Flach (printer of Strasbourg), 1490. 4°. ISTC ia00825000; MEI 02124971 (NL R.XV:C.16(1)). Institoris, Henricus and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*. [Speyer: Peter Drach, about 1495]. 4°. GW 2130; ISTC ii00167300; MEI 02125007 (NL R.XV:C.16(2)).

³⁶ GW M12480. URL <http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/docs/M12480.htm>.

The fact that books were passed on from hand to hand is clear from loan inscriptions left on their pages. The treatise *Adversus omnes haereses libri XIII* published in Cologne in 1543 (NL R.XV:E.2(1)) by the theologian Alfonso de Castro (1495-1558), bound together with the incunabulum *Fasciculus temporum* by the German theologian, historian and Carthusian monk Werner Rolewinck (1425-1502),³⁷ was lent by the Vicar of Žasliai, Tomasz Popławski, (d. 1613)³⁸ to a Vilnius canon, Michał Skorulski (d. 1620),³⁹ as evidenced in an inscription on the inside upper cover: *Ego Tomasz Popławskij Parochus Zaslow A[nn]o D[omi]ni 1612 die 6a Jan[uarii] Admod[um] R[everend]o D[omi]no Michaeli Skorulskij Canonico Vilnen[sis] d[omi]no suo mutuo dedi librum Alfonso de Castro ad perlegr...du[m].* Even though Skorulski did write a note reminding himself to give the book back, as the inscription in Polish inside the rear board makes clear: *Przypomniec sobie o kronikę... Michał Skorulski CV m[anu] p[ropria]*, it is likely that he did not return it after all. The original owner, Popławski, died soon afterwards, so the book ended up in a Jesuit professed house near the Church of St. Casimir;⁴⁰ the inscription on the title page was crossed out, and, after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, fell into the hands of the Vilnius Discalced Carmelites. It should be noted that Skorulski had his own library, as is shown by his ownership inscription in *Operum* (Paris, 1588, vols. 1-5) by St. John Chrysostom (circa 350-407): *Ex libris Michaelis Skorulski Parochi Szaulen[sis] p[ro]p[ri]a manu.*⁴¹

Lithuanian words discovered in another incunabulum not only testify to the existence of readers among the Lithuanian clergy, but also provide information on the historical development of the Lithuanian language. As early inscriptions in Lithuanian are few, each of them is of importance. The already mentioned Lenten sermon collection by Petrus de Palude, *Sermones quadragesimales Thesauri novi*, bears inscriptions in Lithuanian [fig. 1]; on fol. m³ r: *3 dalis lauzimo* (breaking into 3 parts) and *miežiene duona* (barley loaf); fol. e⁴ r: *uzmirsimas pilvo* (forgetting belly); fol. m⁴ r: *seseris su brolejs kayp viras su*

³⁷ Rolewinck, Werner, *Fasciculus temporum*. Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 28 May 1484. Folio. ISTC ir00270000; MEI 02126478 (NL R.XV:E.2(2)).

³⁸ *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV-XVI a.* = *The Lithuanian Catholic Clergy (14th-16th c.)*. Compiled by Vytautas Ališauskas, Tomasz Jaszczolt, Liudas Jovaiša, Mindaugas Paknys, no. 2474.

³⁹ *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV-XVI a.* = *The Lithuanian Catholic Clergy (14th-16th c.)*, no. 1640. Prior to becoming a canon in Vilnius, he had been a priest in Šiauliai.

⁴⁰ This professed house was founded in 1604, while the library is first mentioned in 1626. Cf. *Lietuvos vienuolynai: vadovas*. URL <http://vienuolynai.mch.mii.lt/V47-54/Vilnkazimiero.htm>; also: *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy 1564-1995*, 744-5.

⁴¹ Cf. *XV-XVI amžių knygos Kauno bibliotekose*, no. 308.

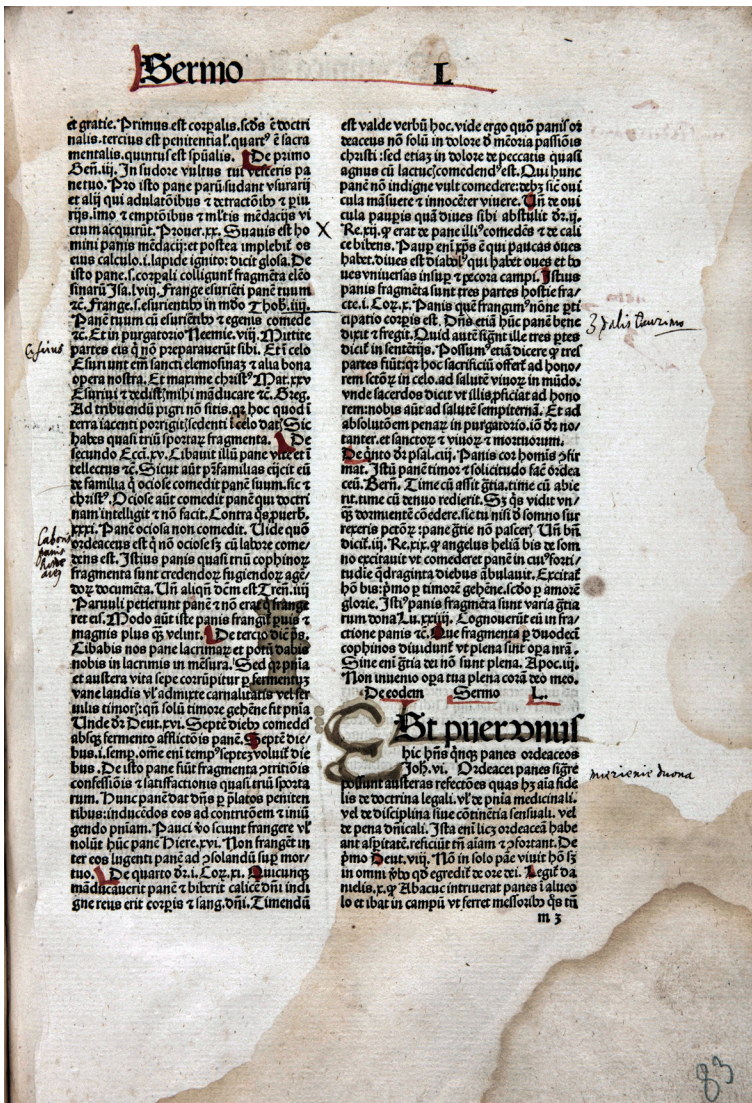


Figure 1. Inscriptions in Lithuanian. Petrus de Palude, Sermones quadragesimales Thesauri novi. 1487. Strassburg (VUL Ink. 262)

mot. (sisters with brothers like man with wom).⁴² These notes are left by an anonymous reader in the margins of the sermons on the chapter from the Gospel of John concerning the multiplication of five barley loaves (Jn 6,1-15), the Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians (Philippians 3) and other Old Testament stories.

These inscriptions might have a connection to one of the former owners of this incunabulum, Albert Płocharski, a preacher in Vilnius Cathedral, an inscription on the title page: *Alberti Płocharski Ecc[les]iae Cath[olici] Vilnen[sis] Concionatoris*, and to the period of his lifetime (1584-1624).⁴³ Płocharski might have known Lithuanian, but further research should be done on whether the inscriptions may be attributed to him. It should be noted that the margins of the book bear copious notes in Latin written by a similar hand.

Rare comments by former readers are always of special value, as they provide information about the readership of a book. The enduring and particular popularity of *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine is clear from marginal comments by anonymous readers, at times fiercely critical: *Exemplum terribile, terribilis est res* as on fol. E³ v, E⁴ v,⁴⁴ at others expressing admiration: *Pulchra Historia, pulcherrima exempla*, as on fol. F³ v, G² r.⁴⁵

Some inscriptions in incunabula show that certain owners liked counting the age of their books. The inscribed calculations provide us with the year when the book was read. An example may be seen in *Decretum*, a collection of canon law by Gratianus (12th century), an Italian Camaldolese monk and specialist in ecclesiastical law.⁴⁶ An anonymous owner in 1673 left an inscription recording his calculation, by subtraction, that the book at the time was 188 years old. An inscription with the same type of calculation can be found in a copy of a 1485 edition of the treatise *De imitatione Christi* by the German theologian Thomas a Kempis (circa 1380-1471); this book was read in 1624.⁴⁷ The

⁴² Petrus de Palude, *Sermones quadragesimales Thesauri novi*. Strasbourg: [Martin Flach (printer of Strasbourg)], 1487. Folio. ISTC ip00503500; MEI 02018157 (VUL Ink. 262).

⁴³ *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV-XVI a. = The Lithuanian Catholic Clergy (14th-16th c.)*, no. 131.

⁴⁴ Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia*. Basel: Nicolaus Kesler, 25 June 1486. Folio. ISTC ij00114000; MEI 02126637 (VUL Ink. 245).

⁴⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia*. Strasbourg: [Printer of the 1483 Jordanus de Quedlinburg (Georg Husner)], 9 Aug. 1492. Folio. ISTC ij00129000; MEI 02126633 (NL R.XV:D.4). Drungilienė, "Vieno kūrinių istorija: Jokūbo Voraginiečio *Aukso legenda* senojoje Lietuvos kultūroje", 45.

⁴⁶ Gratianus, *Decretum* (cum apparatu Bartholomaei Brixiensis). Venice: Baptista de Tortis, 8 Jan. 1485/86. Folio. GW 11369; ISTC ig00375500; MEI 02127708 (VUL Ink. 191).

⁴⁷ *Imitatio Christi*. Add: Johannes Gerson: *De meditatione cordis*. [Venice]; Peregrinus de Pasqualibus, Bononiensis and Dionysius Bertochus, 1485. 4°. ISTC ii00008000; MEI 02121973 (VUL Ink. 136).

incunabulum *Speculum exemplorum* was read by an unknown individual in 1786, which is revealed by a calculation written on the title page.⁴⁸

Marginalia unrelated to the content of incunabula disclose interesting details about everyday life at the time of writing them. A sermon collection by the Spanish Dominican Vincentius Ferrerius (1350-1419), *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis*, contains an inscription spread over different parts of the book.⁴⁹ It tells us that Agnes Suska, a relative of Stanislaw Kleczkowski, was ill on September 30, 1679. This information is repeated twice; in an inscription on fol. I v and K⁶ v: *Agnes Suska consors alis Stanislai Kleczkowskij fuit infirma [?] die 30 7br [septembris];* and on fol. K⁸ v: *A[nn]o D[omi]n[i] 1679 die ultima 7bris infirma ualde fuit.*

Books were often used by their owners as places in which to record significant thoughts or important life events. The treatise *Sententiarum variationes, seu Synonyma* by the Italian humanist Stephanus Fliscus (?-after 1462), judging from an inscription on the inside front board, could belong to Simeon Olelkovich (circa 1460-1505): *Simeon Dux slucensis*. However, a later inscription nearby by another hand is certainly intriguing: *Asinus ad liram id est Dux Simeon*.⁵⁰ The last page of *Textus sequentiae*, a book of liturgical sequences with commentary, contains a text in Old Slavic, which can be considered as a kind of *silva rerum* or family chronicle: it provides information about the births, marriages and deaths of the Lavrinovy family over the second half of the 16th century.⁵¹

In the *Liber chronicarum*, the world history from its origins to the late 15th century, written by the German humanist and historian Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), the Chełmno *stolnik* (a civil servant) Aleksander Stanisław Rykowski left a long comment on precipitation and other weather phenomena for 1690 (fol. CCXCVIII v: *25 Augusti Anno 1690 [...] Alexandr. Stan. De Ryky Rykowsky Dapifer Culmensis*).⁵² It is also obvious that he actually read the book, since his notes on the content can be seen on the margins. It should be noted that Rykowski clearly had a personal library. The evidence for this may be found

⁴⁸ *Speculum exemplorum*. Strasbourg: [Printer of the 1483 Jordanus de Quedlinburg (Georg Husner)], 4 Dec. 1495. Folio. ISTC is00655000; MEI 02124494 (NL R.XV:D.6).

⁴⁹ Ferrerius, Vincentius, S., *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis*. Cologne: [Heinrich Quentell], 1485. Folio. GW 9835; ISTC if00129000; MEI 02124279 (VUL Ink. 254).

⁵⁰ Fliscus, Stephanus, *Sententiarum variationes, seu Synonyma* [Latin and German]. [Augsburg: Johann Bämle, about 1479]. 4°. GW 10002; ISTC if00201700; MEI 02017244 (VUL Ink. 321).

⁵¹ *Textus sequentiarum, cum optimo commento*. [Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 1496]. 4°. ISTC is00459000; MEI 02020162 (VUL Ink. 124a).

⁵² Schedel, Hartmann, *Liber chronicarum*. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, for Sebald Schreyer and Sebastian Kammermeister, 12 July 1493. Folio. ISTC is00307000; not yet in MEI (NL R.XV:H.1).

on the pages of a Plantin he owned – a valuable treatise by the Italian Jesuit and heraldist, Silvestro Pietrasanta (1590-1647), *De Symbolis Heroicis* (Antverpiae, 1634, VUL III P 269), with copper engravings by the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640). Copious notes left by Rykowski in this publication point to the existence of a private book collection: “ex catalogo”, “ex museo”.⁵³

Book lists written down on the last pages of incunabula may be a testimony of the existence of personal libraries or priests’ collections of useful books. The above-mentioned *De imitatione Christi* by Thomas a Kempis carries a book list compiled by the priest Jerzy Kozakowski on November 24, 1668.⁵⁴ The last page (fol. [169] v) of a theological treatise by the French theologian, philosopher Jean de Gerson (1363-1429), *Collectorium super magnificat* serves as the last will and testament of an unknown priest of the Chelm church, written in 1600.⁵⁵ In the testament, he leaves 19 books and liturgical vestments to this church: a surplice, a chasuble and a cape (inscription: *Libri quos... vene[ra]bilis N.B. Ecc[le]siae Chelmensi // dixit 1600 // Biblia in folio... // Dictionarium in folio... // Comza, arnatt, capat czerwona N. B. C. D. jpt.*). The testament contains a book list without publication details, including a postilla (*Postilla Wuikowa polska*) by the Polish preacher Jakub Wujek (1541-1597), a Bible (*Biblia in folio*), decrees of the Council of Trent (*Canones decreta Concil Trident.*), etc.

Since old books were thought to be valuable possessions and so kept securely, various items (dried flowers, letters, bills, locks of hair) were put between their pages for safekeeping. These objects, which also frequently served as bookmarks, may now be of interest for researchers in many fields. A brass Nuremberg jetton, 20 mm in diameter, dated from the mid-16th century, was discovered between two leaves (ff. 146 and 147) of the above-mentioned *Decretum* by Gratianus.⁵⁶ Jettons were small coin-like metal discs widely used for various counting purposes from the 13th to as late as the mid-19th century throughout Europe. From 1550 to 1606, they were also minted in Vilnius. As counting jettons were mostly handled by tradesmen, jetton finds indicate the existence of

⁵³ *Vilnius universiteto bibliotekos plantenai: katalogas*. Compiled by Vidas Račius. Vilnius: Petro ofsetas, 2015 (Fontes et studia historiae Universitatis Vilmensis), no. 329.

⁵⁴ *Imitatio Christi*. Add: *Johannes Gerson: De meditatione cordis*. [Venice]: Peregrinus de Pasqualibus, Bononiensis and Dionysius Bertochus, 1485. 4°. ISTC ii00008000; MEI 02121973 (VUL Ink. 136).

⁵⁵ Gerson, Johannes, *Collectorium super Magnificat*. [Strasbourg: Printer of the 1472 Aquinas ‘Summa’], 1473. Folio. GW 10765; ISTC ig00199000; MEI 02124292 (NL R.XV:D.13).

⁵⁶ Gratianus, *Decretum* (cum apparatu Bartholomaei Brixiensis). Venice: Georgius Arrivabenus, 12 Oct. 1493. Folio. GW 11378; ISTC ig00385000; MEI 02018731 (VUL Ink. 295).

well-developed trade in the region's in certain historical periods.⁵⁷

This particular jetton differs from other known ones dated to the mid-16th century by the absence of a legend – the jetton has an ornamental rim on both sides instead. The legend is the most informative element of a coin, since it identifies the state that minted the coin, its ruler and his or her titles. A legend may convey much information about the circumstances surrounding the issuing of the coin, the political and economic situation in the state, the political orientation and plans of the ruler.⁵⁸ It is difficult to tell who put this jetton in the incunabulum, and when. Traces left on the pages of the book suggest that it has been there for a long time.

Interestingly, a piece of gold leaf (about 6 × 1 cm) has been found in another incunabulum, a commentary on the Psalms by St. Augustine of Hippo.⁵⁹ This valuable object clearly was put there for safekeeping and then forgotten about.

Some of the early inscriptions dating mostly from the 16th-early 17th century reveal how incunabula came to the territory of Lithuania and Poland. Later book markings, dating from the second half of the 17th century, are a testimony of the usual development of book culture: incunabula could be purchased, gifted, bequeathed by testament, or could belong for several centuries to the same monastery, read by different monks who would record their names as owners or leave various comments on the pages. Eventful changes started in the late 18th century, after the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ceased to exist as a state.

⁵⁷ For more on counting jettons see: Ivanauskas, “Niurnbergo ir Prancūzijos skaičiavimo žetonai Lietuvoje”. *Muziejai ir paminklai*, 1991, 9: 44-9; Remecas, “Skaičiavimo žetonai rasti Vilniuje”. *Lietuvos archeologija*, 1999, 18: 253-61; Remecas, “Valdovų rūmų teritorija - numizmatinis lobynas”, 46-51.

⁵⁸ Sajauskas, “Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės monetų legendų studija”, 38.

⁵⁹ Augustinus, Aurelius, *Explanatio psalmodum*. Basel: Johann Amerbach [and Johann Petri de Langendorff, not after 8 Sept.] 1489. Folio. GW 2909; ISTC ia01272000; MEI 02127249 (VUL Ink. 225).

3 The 19th Century: The Fate of Books and Libraries in the Absence of the Lithuanian State

The progressive development of institutional libraries was disturbed when, after the three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772, 1793 and 1795, the territory of Lithuania became part of the Russian Empire. The libraries of religious institutions experienced the most damage. In the 19th century, the tsarist authorities, implementing the policy of Russification and Orthodoxization, abolished the majority of Catholic monasteries in the territory of Lithuania: the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Carmelites, the Bernardines, the Missionaries, the Benedictines, the Vincentians, the Piarists, and others. All these monasteries had ancient traditions and owned sizeable libraries. After the uprisings of 1831 and 1863, many monasteries were dissolved, their activities terminated. Up to the early 20th century, there existed only five legal monasteries in the territory of Lithuania;⁶⁰ the illegal ones were more numerous.

The libraries of the closed-down monasteries were handed over to education institutions, to the Orthodox clergy and monasteries, or auctioned.⁶¹ After the uprising of 1831, more than half of all the Catholic monasteries of the Russian Empire were dissolved, their most valuable books transferred to the Department for Other Faiths in St. Petersburg, to secular schools, and to the libraries of Russian public organisations and Catholic institutions.⁶² Even though the transfer of the books was supposed to follow a certain procedure, it often did not work – books kept getting lost or lists about them were incomplete or missing. As a result, it is often impossible to reconstruct the former libraries of dissolved monasteries.

When the monks were accused of taking part in the uprising of 1863, the majority of still-existing monasteries were closed. On this occasion the dissolution of the libraries went much more quickly: a great number of books were passed on to the Vilnius Public Library. Incunabula were brought to Vilnius not only from monasteries existing in the territory of present-day Lithuania, but also from all the provinces, whose territory encompassed a much larger part of the Russian Empire: present-day Latvia (the Daugavpils Jesuits), Belarus (the Hrodno Dominicans, Jesuits, Carmelites, the Niesvizh Jesuits, the Zhirovlichi Basilians), Poland (the Choroszcz Dominicans). These are only a few of the Catholic monasteries whose books were transferred to Vilnius libraries in the 19th century.

⁶⁰ Laukaitytė, *Lietuvos vienuolijos*, 17.

⁶¹ Pacevičius, *Vienuolynų bibliotekos Lietuvoje 1795-1864 metais*, 78-9.

⁶² Pacevičius, *Vienuolynų bibliotekos Lietuvoje 1795-1864 metais*, 81.

In the former GDL's territory of the Russian Empire, there also existed Greek Rite Catholics, who had entered into the Union of Brest with the Roman Catholic Church in 1596, and so recognised the authority of the Pope, but retained their own liturgy and used Church Slavonic for their rites. Since 1617, the Basilian Order, a monastic order of the Greek Catholics, was based in the GDL. Before the third partition of the Commonwealth, the order had over 95 monasteries. The Basilians were known for fostering education and founding public schools. In the fourth decade of the 19th century, tsarist authorities forcibly put the Basilian Order back under the rule of the Orthodox Church. Some monasteries were closed, others were merged with Orthodox monasteries and made entirely Orthodox with the replacement of their superiors. In 1839, the Zhirovichi Basilian Monastery was dissolved, and its seminary eventually removed to Vilnius.

Lithuanian Orthodox priest seminary (no longer Greek Catholic) in Vilnius was opened in 1845.⁶³ Some books from the Zhirovichi Monastery, among them incunabula, were passed on to the library of this seminary. An especially noteworthy edition from the holdings of this library is the *Horologium*, published in Church Slavonic.⁶⁴ After the closure of the seminary in 1940, its books were handed over to the then Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (the present Wroblewski Library), which now holds the above-mentioned edition together with two other, Latin, incunabula: *Comoediae novem* by Aristophanes (circa 444 BC-circa 388 BC) and *De Christiana religione* by Marsilius Ficinus (1433-1499).⁶⁵

It is, however, obvious that not all the books from the Zhirovichi Basilian Monastery ended up in the Lithuanian Orthodox priest seminary. For instance, the fate of the above-mentioned composite volume of two incunabula, the *Confessionale* by Antoninus Florentinus and *Malleus maleficarum* by Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, remained a mystery for over a hundred years.⁶⁶ Lost after the dissolution of the Zhirovichi monastery, the book surfaced in an antique

⁶³ *Kultūrų kryžkelė: Vilniaus Švč. Trejybės šventovė ir vienuolynas: kolektyvinė monografija*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2017, 152-3.

⁶⁴ *Horologium* [Church Slavonic] *Chasoslovets*. Cracow: Swietopolk Fiol, 1491. 4°. GW 13447; ISTC ih00484300; MEI 02126520 (WL I-9).

⁶⁵ Aristophanes, *Comoediae novem* [Greek]. Ed: Marcus Musurus, in part. With the Scholia. Venice: Aldus Manutius, Romanus, 15 July 1498. Folio. GW 2333; ISTC ia00958000; MEI 02126440 (WL I-35). Ficinus, Marsilius, *De Christiana religione* [Italian]. Pisa: Lorenzo and Angelo di Firenze, 2 June 1484. Folio. GW 9879; ISTC if00151000; MEI 02126538 (WL I-14).

⁶⁶ Antoninus Florentinus, *Confessionale: Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio*. Add: *Titulus de restitutionibus*. Strasbourg: Martin Flach (printer of Strasbourg), 1490. 4°. GW 2130; ISTC ia00825000; MEI 02124971 (NL R.XV:C.16(1)). Institoris, Henricus and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*. [Speyer: Peter Drach, about 1495]. 4°. ISTC ii00167300; MEI 02125007 (NL R.XV:C.16(2)).

bookshop in Vilnius as late as 1944. According to Feigelmanas, before 1944 this edition had belonged to Boleslavas Žinda (1904-1988), who was the manager of the St Wojciech Bookshop in Vilnius from 1925 onwards; however, the incunabulum could not have been purchased in this shop, since it was closed down in 1940.⁶⁷ The book does not contain ownership marks by Žinda, or from his antiquarian bookshop. A list of Žinda's personal books, held in the Lithuanian Central State Archives, does not include any incunabula. In his catalogue, Feigelmanas mentions that this composite volume belonged to the personal collection of the historian Edmundas Laucevičius (1906-1973). The book does not contain his ownership marks either. However, a stamp of the Lithuanian Art Museum, which is present in the volume, does suggest that Laucevičius might have been a former owner. After his death, part of his collection that had a museum value was given to this museum; the act of transfer, dated January 10, 1973, lists 453 items. According to this document, the museum received Laucevičius' library among other collectibles. In 1995, this library was passed on to the National Library of Lithuania.⁶⁸ We can only guess that it was Laucevičius who bought the incunabulum in the St Wojciech shop back in 1944. Feigelmanas must have learned this from Laucevičius himself.

In 1832, Vilnius University was closed, its library scattered, the majority of the books taken away to various cities of the Russian Empire: Kiev, Kharkov, St. Petersburg.⁶⁹ When the university reopened, its collection of incunabula was not the same as before – its core was now made up of the collection assembled by the Vilnius Public Library. A considerable part of this library's incunabula holdings consisted of the books formerly owned by monasteries, churches and private individuals, and confiscated after the uprising of 1863.⁷⁰ Only one incunabulum composite volume that had previously belonged to the Vilnius Jesuit Academy, bearing the inscriptions *Inscriptus Catalogo Societatis Iesu; Bibliotheca magnae* and the stamp *Biblioth[eca] Academ[iae] Vilnensis*, is known to have been returned from St. Petersburg in 1956 owing to the efforts of the then director of the library, Lev Vladimirov (1912-1999).⁷¹

67 Certificate for the Boleslavas Žinda holdings no. 758 URL https://www.archyvai.lt/lt/fondai/asmenu_dokumentu_fondai/lcva_f758_pazyma.html.

68 Mukienė, "Gyvas gyvųjų atmintyje", 9.

69 Račius, "Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos inkunabulai", 128.

70 Račius, "Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos inkunabulai", 128.

71 Feigelmanas, *Lietuvos inkunabulai*, no. 335. Petrarca, Francesco, *De Remediis utriusque fortunae*. [Heidelberg: Heinrich Knoblochzer?, not before 1490]. 4°. ISTC ip00408000; MEI 02017141 (VUL Ink. 304); Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *In Catilinam oratio I*. Ed: Paulus Niavis. [Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, about 1495]. 4°. GW 6782; ISTC ic00552250; MEI 02017143 (VUL Ink. 305); Philelphus, Franciscus, *Orationes cum qui-*

One of the most important owners of private book collections in the 19th century was Jonas Krizostomas Gintila (1788-1857), who possessed the largest library in Lithuania in the mid-19th century. The Samogitian bishop-designate had amassed a collection of over 20,000 books.⁷² Unfortunately, the greater part of his library, together with its catalogue that was still in existence before World War II, has been lost. At present, only three of the 15th-century books he owned are known to be extant. They, among others, were handed over to the Samogitian Cathedral Chapter in Varniai: the *Germanorum veterum principum zelus* by Lupoldus Bambergensis (ca. 1297-1363), the *Ecclēsiastica hystoria* by Eusebius Caesariensis (ca. 265-ca. 339), and the *Scholastica historia* by Petrus Comestor (ca. 1100-ca. 1179).⁷³ In the wake of the uprising of 1863, the centre of the Samogitian diocese was moved from Varniai to Kaunas by order of the tsarist authorities. The library of the cathedral chapter, likewise, came to Kaunas. In the 20th century, its books were marked by the stamp of the Chapter of Kaunas Cathedral. There is no evidence on whether any incunabula were among the books received by the other principal recipients of this private library, such as the Samogitian Priest Seminary, the Kretinga Bernardine Monastery and Gintila's relatives. The extant incunabula listed in the present article are now kept in the National Library of Lithuania.

4 The 20th Century: The Book Between War and Peace

The early 20th century in Lithuania was a kind of period of 'thaw', when the population was allowed some new rights and could establish various societies that were occupied in collecting and preserving the Lithuanian heritage. For instance, the Vilnius Society for Science and Art (Towarzystwo muzeum nauki i sztuki w Wilnie) was founded in 1907. Over the short period of its existence, until 1914, the society amassed holdings of valuable museum artefacts, rare publications

budam aliis eiusdem operibus. Add: (Pseudo-) Aristoteles: *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. Tr: Franciscus Philelphus; Plutarchus: *Apophthegmata*. Tr: Franciscus Philelphus; Galenus: *Introductorium ad medicinam principiis*. Tr: Georgius Valla. Venice: Bartholomaeus de Zanis, 28 Mar. 1491. 4°. ISTC ip00609000; MEI 02017144 (VUL Ink. 306).

⁷² Pacevičius, "Bibliofilo Jono Krizostomo Gintilos biblioteka", 196.

⁷³ Lupoldus Bambergensis, *Germanorum veterum principum zelus et fervor in christianam religionem Deique ministros*. Add: Sebastian Brant. Ed: Jacobus Wimpheling. Basel: Johann Bergmann, de Olpe, 15 May 1497. Folio. ISTC il00399000; MEI 02125591 (NL R.XV:E.9(3)); Eusebius Caesariensis, *Historia ecclesiastica*. Tr: Rufinus Aquileiensis. Add: Beda: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. Strasbourg: [Georg Husner], 14 Mar. 1500. Folio. GW 9439; ISTC ie00129000; MEI 02124910 (NL R.XV:D.5(1)); Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica*. Strasbourg: [Georg Husner], 15 July 1500. Folio. ISTC ip00466000; MEI 02125138 (NL R.XV:D.5(2)).

and archival documents, including 14 incunabula. In 1914, it merged with the most prominent of the societies that existed in the early 20th century, the Vilnius Society of the Friends of Science (Towarzystwo przyjaciół nauk w Wilnie), founded in 1907, and passed its collections on to them. The origins of the Vilnius Society of the Friends of Science⁷⁴ were associated with the Vilnius Imperial University, which had been dissolved in 1832, and with other scientific and ethnographic institutions of the 19th century. The activities of this society encompassed studies in history, archaeology, ethnography, linguistics and folklore, as well as publishing the results of these studies and collecting various objects of cultural significance. The Vilnius Society of the Friends of Science had amassed a copious library, which in 1939 contained about 80,000 books, including 33 incunabula. At the time of World War II, the society was dissolved, its books were moved to the then Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (the present Wróblewski Library) and to the National Library of Lithuania.

The most significant society for Vilnius and Lithuania was the Eustachy and Emilia Wróblewski Library, founded in 1912 by their son Tadeusz Wróblewski (1858-1925), a lawyer, bibliophile and civic leader. The society's aspiration was to establish in Vilnius a public library based on the collection of documents assembled by Wróblewski himself and his parents. World War I interfered with building the premises of the future library, so the growing collections were kept, for a long while, in Wróblewski's personal apartment. The building suitable for housing document collections was offered to the library only in 1931. The library existed under the aegis of the variously renamed Society of the Library Friends up until World War II. At that time the library had very few incunabula. The greater part of its incunabula collection was obtained in the wake of World War II, when the library was renamed as the Central Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR.

In Kaunas, a small collection of incunabula was assembled, over the interwar period, by Vytautas Magnus University. When Vilnius was occupied by the Republic of Poland in the wake of World War I, the then Lithuanian University was founded in Kaunas, the temporary capital of Lithuania. In 1932, it was given the name of Vytautas Magnus. According to Feigelmanas, its library purchased several incunabula and received some more by donation from private individuals. At the time of World War II, Vytautas Magnus University had an influx of incunabula from the libraries of dissolved institutions. In 1940, when the Kretinga Bernardine Monastery was closed, its incunabula were moved to the university library. However, Vytautas Magnus University existed only until 1950, the year when it was re-

74 Ilgiewicz, "Archywiné medžiaga apie XX a.", 248.

organised into two institutes: the Institute for Medicine and the Polytechnic. The books from the university library were divided among various institutions, and twenty incunabula kept there ended up in the Vilnius University Library in 1952.

The National Library of Lithuania, founded in 1919 as the Kaunas State Central Bookstore, also received incunabula from various sources. Before World War II, it had only 16 incunabula, which became the starting point for its collection.

During and after World War II, the larger public and academic libraries of Lithuania augmented their incunabula holdings with the arrival of the libraries of private, religious and other institutions. Some books were left behind by their emigrating owners; the fate of others was determined by the nationalisation policy pursued by the Soviet authorities after the war. It is unclear how many valuable books were lost, or fell into the hands of private collectors, or were hidden and subsequently forgotten.

The library owners who realised that they would not be able to take care of their collections during the war sought to move them to functioning libraries and in this way to save them. One such was the Vilnius community of the Evangelical Reformers. The Library of the Evangelical Reformed Synod of Vilnius, which had its origins in the 16th century, was managed by the Evangelical Reformed Consistory of Vilnius. When the latter was dissolved in January 1940, the Vilnius Evangelical Reformed parish, lacking resources to run the library, applied to the then Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic with a request that the Academy take care of the library. An act of transfer, by which books, manuscripts and other valuables,⁷⁵ including 5 incunabula,⁷⁶ were handed over to the Academy, was signed within a week after the request had been made. The Synod library was then left on its former premises – there must have been no time to move it because of the outbreak of the war. Unluckily, many of the documents were lost, stolen, or destroyed during wartime, and afterwards, the rest was moved to the repositories of the then Library of the Academy of Sciences. It should be noted that these new arrivals did not include any incunabula.⁷⁷ The only known extant incunabulum from the Synod Library came to be in the National Library of Lithuania by way of purchase in 1946. It is a *Biblia latina* [fig. 2] published in 1480 and owned by the Synod since as ear-

⁷⁵ Marcinkevičius, “Lietuvos mokslų akademijos bibliotekos istorijos dokumentai”, 93-6.

⁷⁶ Dirsytė, “XVI-XVII a. buvusios Vilniaus evangelikų reformatų sinodo bibliotekos knygos”, 39.

⁷⁷ Radvilienė, “Lietuvos evangelikų reformatų sinodo bibliotekos XVI a.”, 29-30.

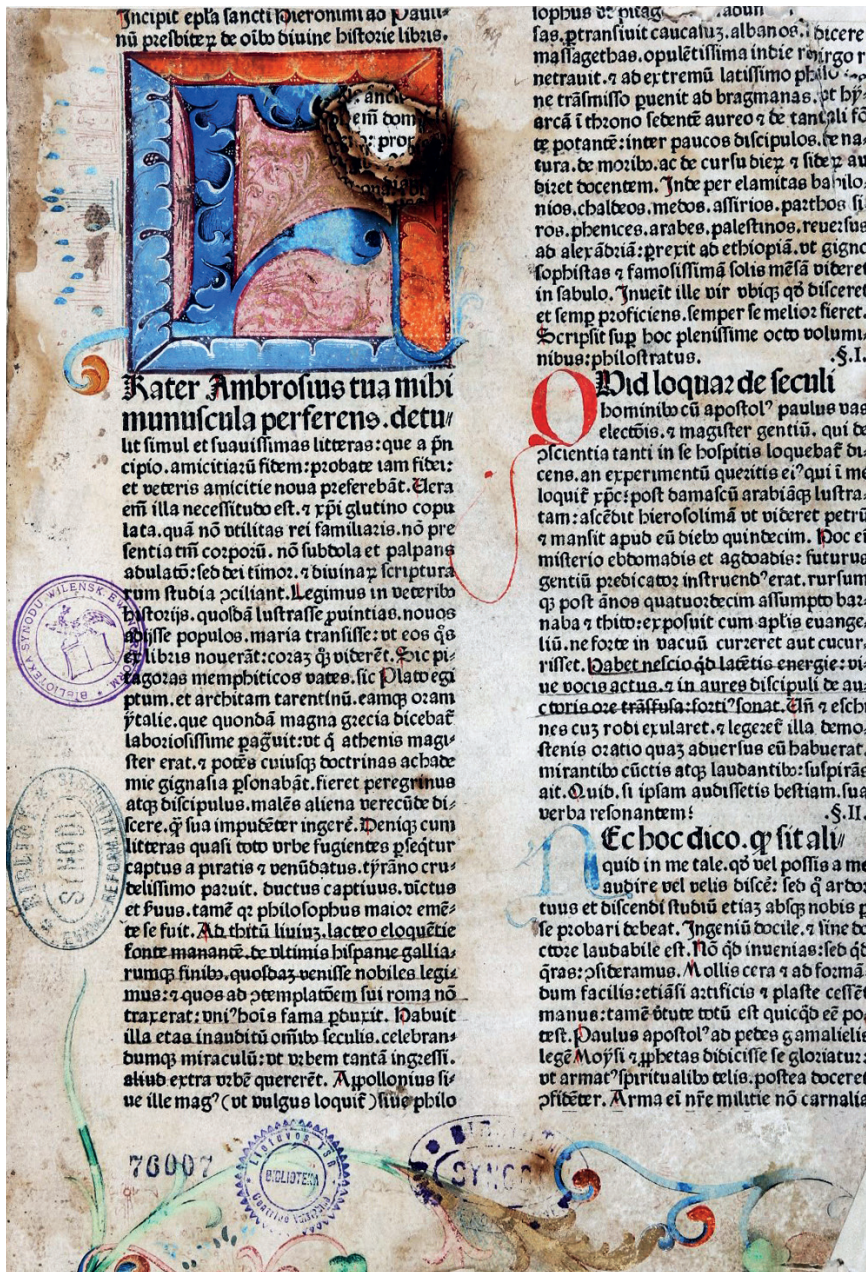


Figure 2 Biblia Latina, with additions by Menardus Monachus. 14 Apr. 1480. Nuremberg (NL R.XV.F.2)

lopus v: meag. aoun
 fas. ptransiuit caualu. albanos. dicere
 maflagetbas. opuletissima in die rorigo re
 netrauit. q. ad extremu latissimo phalo
 ne trasmissio puenit ad bragmanas. ut hy
 arca i throno sedente aureo q. de tantali fo
 te potante: inter paucos discipulos. te na
 tura. de moribo. ac de cursu diez q. sice p au
 bret docentem. Inre per elamitas habito
 nios. chaldeos. metos. assirios. partbos si
 roa. phenices. arabes. palestinos. reuezus
 ab alexadia: preit ad ethiopia. ut gigno
 sophistas q. famosissima solis mēsa videret
 in sabulo. Inueit ille vir obiqz qd disceret
 et semp proficiens. semper se melior fieret.
 Scripsit sup hoc plenissime octo volumi
 nibus: pbiloftratus. §.I.

Quid loquar de seculi
 hominibz cū apofol? paulus vas
 electōis. q. magister gentiū. qui de
 pscientia tanti in se hospitis loquebat di
 cens. an experimentū queritis ei? qui i me
 loquē xpē: post damaſcū arabiqz iustra
 tam: aſcēdit hierosolimā ut videret petrū
 q. mansit apud eū dieb. quindēcim. Hoc ei
 misterio ebbomabā et agdoabā: futurus
 gentiū predicator: instruend? erat. rursū
 q. post ānos quatuordecim assumpto bar
 naba q. thito: ex posuit cum aplos euange
 liū. ne forte in vacuū curretet aut cucur
 risset. Habet nescio qd laetis energie: vi
 ue vocis actus. q. in aures discipuli de au
 ctoria ore trasfusa: forti? sonat. Cū q. eschi
 nea cuz robi exularet. q. legeret illa demo
 stenis oratio quaz abuerius eū habuerat.
 mirantibz cūctis atqz laudantibz: suspirās
 ait. Quid. si ipsam audisset bestiam. sua
 verba resonantem! §.II.

Hoc dico. q. sit ali
 quid in me tale. qd vel possis a me
 audire vel velis discē: sed q. arbor
 tuus et discendi studiū etiaz abiqz nobis p
 se probari debeat. Ingeniū docile. q. sine do
 ctore laudabile est. Nō qd inuenias: sed qd
 qras: pſiteramus. Mollis cera q. ad formā
 dum facilis: etiāsi artificis q. plaste cesset
 manus: tamē btute totū est quicqd eē po
 test. Paulus apofol? ad petes q. amalielis
 legē Moysi q. ppetas didicisse se gloriatur:
 ut armat? spiritualibz telis. postea doceret
 pſiteret. Arma et nfe militie nō carnalia

ly as the 16th century.⁷⁸ This book somehow survived all the calamities that befell the Synod library: fires, wars, removals of the library to other cities. However, it had its share of misfortunes, as a hole burned through its first eleven leaves makes clear.

Nojus Feigelmanas in his catalogue *Lietuvos inkunabulai* takes note of incunabula that belonged to the Synod library but disappeared at the time of World War II:⁷⁹ Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and *De Trinitate, Copulata omnium tractatum Petri Hispani* (Nuremberg, 1494) by Pope Johannes XXI and *Quaestiones super Posteriora analytica Aristotelis* edited by Johannes Glogoviensis.⁸⁰ In the catalogue, he states that the Synod library was burned down by the Nazi army retreating from Lithuania. However, since it is obvious that at least part of the library has survived, it is unclear whether these incunabula were really destroyed during the war, or their present location is simply unknown.

After the end of World War II, the holdings of Lithuanian libraries were replenished by various documents from the libraries of Eastern Prussia and the Klaipėda Region. Lithuanian researchers put much effort into obtaining permission from the Soviet authorities to enter the territory of Eastern Prussia and to attempt to rescue valuable books and manuscripts left there. The first team of researchers was sent to Königsberg in September 1945, right after the end of the war, with the objective of exploring the ruins of the university, archives, libraries and other cultural and scientific institutions. The team was composed of two pairs of scientists, each from Moscow and Vilnius. The Lithuanian participants were the jurist and historian Povilas Parkarklis (1902-1955) and the linguist Jonas Kruopas (1908-1975).⁸¹ In December of the same year, a much more numerous Lithuanian team, accompanied by a truck for bringing documents back, went to this area for further investigation. A number of the books were brought to Lithuania by train. Such missions were carried out several more times. The last search group for Lithuania-related documents went to Königsberg (by that time renamed as Kaliningrad) and other lo-

78 *Biblia latina*. With additions by Menardus Monachus. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 14 Apr. 1480. Folio. GW 4243; ISTD ib00568000; MEI 02127329 (NL R.XV.F.2).

79 Feigelmanas, *Lietuvos inkunabulai*, 427, 451, 452.

80 Augustinus, Aurelius, *De civitate dei* (Comm: Thomas Waleys and Nicolaus Trivet). Basel: Johann Amerbach, 13 Feb. 1489. Folio. GW 2887; ISTD ia01243000; Augustinus, Aurelius, *De trinitate*. [Basel]: Johann Amerbach, 1489. Folio. GW 2926; ISTD ia01343000; Johannes XXI, Pont. Max. (formerly Petrus Hispanus), *Copulata tractatum Petri Hispani et parvorum logicalium etiam Syncategorematum, cum textu, secundum doctrinam Thomae Aquinatis*. [Nuremberg: Anton Koberger], 15 June 1494. 4°. ISTD ij00239000; Versoris, Johannes, *Quaestiones super Posteriora analytica Aristotelis* (cum textu). Ed: Johannes Glogoviensis. Leipzig: Wolfgang Stöckel, for Johannes Haller, 1499. 4°. ISTD iv00260000.

81 Marcinkevičius, "Lituanikos paieškos Rytų Prūsijoje ir Klaipėdos", 187.

cations in Eastern Prussia in the summer of 1947.⁸²

The main objective of these missions was to save archival materials and publications important for Lithuanian studies. The rescued documents included manuscripts and other documents by Lithuanian men of letters who worked in Prussia; transcripts of crusaders' chronicles; old printed books and decrees issued by the former Prussian authorities; various scientific books; treatises on Lithuania Minor, and other valuable books, including some truly rare incunabula. The Wroblewski Library has in its holdings a unique edition, *Regulae cancellariae* by Pope Alexander IV [fig. 3],⁸³ formerly owned by the famous Wallenrodt Library in Königsberg,⁸⁴ which purchased this book on August 9, 1729. This is shown by a manuscript inscription on the front end leaf: *J. C. W. 1729. J. 9. Aug. 9 St. 7 Gr.*

Owing to the expeditions to Eastern Prussia, previously separated parts of the collected edition of sermons of Augustine of Hippo, *Sermones* (Basel, 1494-1495), were finally brought to the same city, even if to different libraries. In the 16th century this book belonged to the already-mentioned Aleksandras Rodūnionis. However, in the 18th century, this copy came into the hands of two owners. The first five parts of the sermon collection belonged in sequence to the Varniai Jesuit Tomas Tadas Platušis (1703-1764), the Pašiaušė Jesuit College, the Tytuvėnai Bernardines and eventually to Vilnius University Library. The last two parts remained in Königsberg, ending up in the Wallenrodt Library; after World War II they were brought to Vilnius and are currently held in the Wroblewski Library. The different routes each part of the book has travelled are revealed by extant inscriptions left by former owners.⁸⁵

Amidst post-war chaos, some books, which were intended for the holdings of one library, would appear in another library or in the hands of private individuals. For example, the National Library purchased *Stultifera navis* by Sebastian Brant (1458-1521) in 1959 in a

⁸² Marcinkevičius, "Lituanikos paieškos Rytų Prūsijoje ir Klaipėdos", 189.

⁸³ Alexander VI, Pont. Max., *Regulae cancellariae*, 8 Aug. 1495. [Rome: Stephan Planck, not before 8 Aug. 1495]. 4°. GW 918; ISTC ia00379250; MEI 02125526 (WL I-12j).

⁸⁴ The Wallenrodt Library was founded in the 17th century through the efforts of the ducal Chancellor of Prussia, Martin von Wallenrodt (1570-1632). In 1675, it was incorporated into the University of Königsberg and became a special branch of the university and of the state library, and in 1721, handed over to the State on the condition that the Wallenrodt family would be the curators of the library. In 1909, it was incorporated into the library of the University of Königsberg. At the time, part of its books were given to Königsberg Cathedral. The Wallenrodt Library existed up until World War II, in the course of which a great number of its books were destroyed in bombing raids, while the rest were dispersed throughout the world in 1945. *Mažosios Lietuvos enciklopedija*, 801.

⁸⁵ For more information cf. Feigelmanas, "Pirmosios spausdintos knygos", 40; Vaitkevičiūtė, "Kas skaitė pirmąsias spausdintas knygas Lietuvoje", 67.

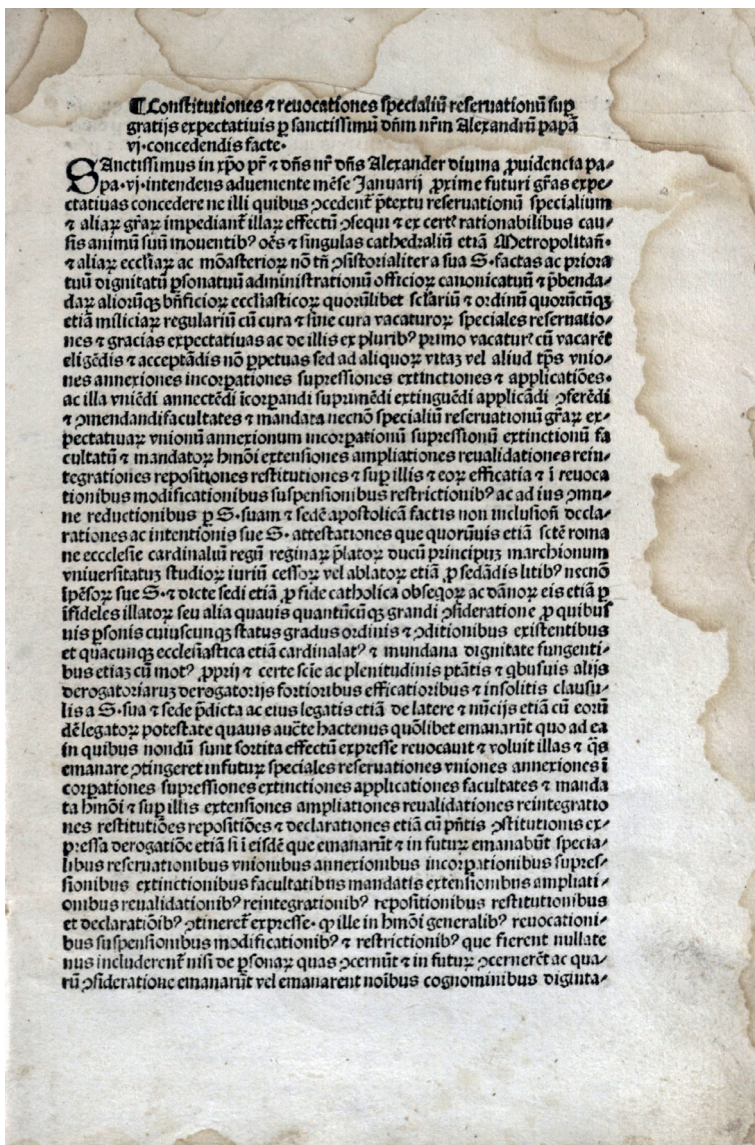


Figure 3 Alexander IV, Pont. Max., *Regulae cancellariae*. 8 Aug. 1495 [Rome, not before 8 Aug. 1495]. (WL I-12j)

Vilnius antiquarian bookshop.⁸⁶ It is open to guesswork how this book ended up in the bookshop, who had appropriated it and why they later decided to sell it.

Another institution that had incunabula was the Book Palace. This institution for state bibliography and printing statistics, book science and book publishing was founded in the wake of World War II on the premises of the former Carmelite monastery at the Church of St. George the Martyr. Since 1797, this building had housed the Priest Seminary of the Vilnius Diocese. In 1945, it was relocated to Białystok (present-day Poland). The former church was fitted with several floors of bookshelves, and became a repository for displaced books dispersed throughout Lithuania. It housed the books that came from the Seminary of the Vilnius Diocese as well as from the libraries of noble estates, villages, museums and dissolved religious communities. In his catalogue, Feigelmanas mentioned 12 incunabula kept in the Book Palace; even more have subsequently been identified. In 1992, this institution was merged with the National Library of Lithuania and became its Centre for Bibliography and Book Science. The incunabula kept here were transferred to the Rare Book and Manuscript Department of the National Library of Lithuania.

A separate group of incunabula is represented by those previously held in Lithuania, but now either found abroad or lost. Feigelmanas mentions 221 such books.⁸⁷ Some of them fell into the hands of other owners and ended up abroad after the state borders were moved, other disappeared in the course of various wars and other calamities from the 17th to 20th century, sometimes during the very endeavours to save them, as happened with those incunabula from the Vilnius Public Library that, in the effort to protect them from the dangers incurred by World War I, were removed to Russia, where they vanished. New evidence would undoubtedly expand the list of such books and could even be of assistance in rediscovering some of them, but this should be the subject of a separate study.

⁸⁶ Braziūnienė, *Inkunabulų paveldas Lietuvoje ir pasaulyje*, 43. Brant, Sebastian, *Das Narrenschiff* [Latin] *Stultifera navis*. Tr: Jacobus Locher Philomusus. Etc. Basel: Johann Bergmann, de Olpe, 1 Mar. 1497. 4°. GW 5054; ISTC ib01086000; not yet in MEI (NL R.XV:C.10).

⁸⁷ Feigelmanas, *Lietuvos inkunabulai*, 420-74.

5 Conclusions

With regard to incunabula currently kept in Lithuania, the researchers must not only interpret markings left on their pages by former owners, but also keep in mind political events that strongly influenced the fate of the books. The work with the MEI database has prompted a closer look at the provenance of library books, their marginalia, and the various objects forgotten between their pages. Purchase inscriptions found in incunabula may reveal the date of purchase, a variety of prices, sometimes the place of purchase and even the identity of the buyers themselves. The inscriptions that require the most effort on the part of researchers are those by anonymous owners. Due to illegible handwriting, such inscriptions sometimes remain undeciphered, but they nevertheless enable us to see the relationship of the reader with the book, and show us that the volume was not only a text to be studied, but also a space where important thoughts, comments, and details of everyday life could be recorded.

From the 17th to the 19th century, because of the wars and various occupations that befell the country, some books were lost, others removed to other countries, while others were gathered together into several large libraries after their former owners had lost their collections. Due to the redrawing of state boundaries, some books remained within the present territory of Lithuania while others were now located outside the country's frontiers. However, it must be admitted that the surviving incunabula are too few in number to allow a comprehensive study on the routes of the book trade to be undertaken. When only one or a handful of books previously owned by an individual are extant, it is difficult to draw conclusions about how an entire library could have been moved; there is always a probability that the route an individual incunabulum has taken might have been entirely accidental. In order to provide detailed information on the incunabula in Lithuania, the scope of this research should be expanded to include post-incunabula and even all books from the 16th century, which might contain unidentified incunabula. Further research will correct our understanding of the fates undergone by copies of incunabulum editions, which are in this case an inseparable part of the story of the Lithuanian state.

Translated by Ana Vencloviene

Abbreviations

GDL = Grand Duchy of Lithuania

GW = Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke

KUTL = Kaunas University of Technology Library

NL = Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

VUL = Vilnius University Library

WL = Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences

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