

INTRODUCTION

Przegląd Biblioteczny [*The Library Review*] is the oldest Polish research journal dedicated to library and information science and to modern librarianship. It was founded in 1927 as a review for the research of the Polish Librarians' Union, known since 1953 as the Polish Librarians' Association (PLA). This quarterly journal is also one of the best Polish research periodicals in library science, much appreciated by the librarians' community and professionals working for cultural heritage organisations, as well as by university teachers and students of faculties dedicated to these fields. With English-language articles by internationally acknowledged authors – both Polish and foreign – its contents have become available to readers abroad, who share their observations and comments, encouraging others to publish their work in this journal.

The Library Review is included in the ERIH PLUS European Reference Index, with its contents being indexed in the following databases: The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Pol-Index, and the Polish Bibliological Bibliography (PBB). The texts published in issues from 1927 to 2015 have been made available in full by the PLA Digital Archives (www.sbp.pl/archiwumcyfrowe) and the multi-media archive (Medioteka) of the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies of the University of Warsaw (<http://bbc.uw.edu.pl/dlibra>).

Eminent Polish librarians and experts in library science have worked with *The Library Review*, including: Stefan Demby, the first director of the National Library of Poland; Edward Kuntze, its first editor-in-chief and director of the Jagiellonian Library, who edited the *The Library Review* in the years 1927-1939 and 1945-1948; Aleksander Birkenmajer, one of the most notable figures in Polish library science during the inter-war period and founder of the library science school at the University of Warsaw after the war. Józef Grycz, director of the Kórnik Library, organizer and promoter of modern library science in Poland, became its editorial secretary. The subsequent editors-in-chief were Bohdan Horodyski (1949-1965), Zbigniew Daszkowski (1966-1968), Maria Dembowska (1969-1977), Barbara Sordylova (1978-2003), Maria Lenartowicz (2004), Barbara Sosińska-Kalata (2005-2013)¹ and, since issue no. 4 of 2013, Elżbieta B. Zybert.

"In the interwar period, *The Library Review* was published for 13 years by the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow." After the war, its publication was resumed, first as a yearbook, and since 1946 as a quarterly once again. Until

¹B. Sosińska-Kalata (2007). *Od Redakcji: Osiemdziesiąt lat "Przeglądu Bibliotecznego"*. [From the editors: *eighty years of The Library Review*]. *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, vol. 75, issue 1, pp. 5-6.

1948, the journal was printed in Cracow, but in 1949 its editorial team moved to Warsaw. In the years 1946-1953, it was the official research review of the Union of Polish Librarians and Archivists, later to be taken over by the newly established Polish Librarians' Association in 1954, which publishes it to this day. From 1972 to 2003, it was published jointly by the PLA and the Central Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences; in 2005, PLA became its sole editor once again.² Since its first issue of 2015, it has been co-edited by the Institute of Information Science and Book Studies, which as of 1 September 2016, after several organisational transformations, became the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies of the University of Warsaw.

The articles published in *The Library Review* discuss issues related to modern librarianship as well as library and information science, showing the role books, libraries and information play in our society in various aspects, as seen from theoretical and practical, multi-disciplinary and international perspectives. The contents now published in *The Library Review* are divided into several sections: *Articles*, presenting original research papers; *From Research Workshops*, with reports on current research; *Reports*, an important section discussing major domestic and international research conferences; *Critiques and Reviews*; *PLA News*, with insights into the activities of the Association and its local units; and finally, *The Chronicle*, which informs readers about the latest professional and research events.

2017 is a very important year for *The Library Review* because, as the main body of the Polish Librarians' Association, we are participating in the jubilee celebrations commemorating the 100th anniversary of this organisation, the first in Poland to bring together librarians, bibliographers and book lovers. Also this year, Poland has the honour of organising the IFLA Congress and 83rd General Conference on 19-25 August 2017, in Wrocław. This year's theme is: *Libraries. Solidarity. Society*. This will be the third IFLA conference in Poland, the previous ones having been held in 1936 and 1959. Let us remember that, in 1928 (officially), Poland was one of the first countries to join and contribute to the development of the International Library and Bibliographical Committee, known since 1929 as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. The *Library Review* has been publishing reports from the IFLA conferences for decades, which has allowed the Polish librarians' community to follow the issues discussed at subsequent meetings on a continuous basis.

As institutional members of the Poland National Committee, the National Library of Poland and the Polish Librarians' Association, through the journals they publish (*The Library Review* and *Polish Libraries* [in English]), actively contribute to disseminating information on Polish librarianship and to sharing Poland's achievements in this field with other IFLA members,

²Ibidem.

as well as discussing daily problems librarians face and taking action in order to adapt Polish librarianship to the challenges and social expectations of the 21st century.

Polish Libraries (vol. 2, 2014, pp. 6-132) features an extensive article entitled "Libraries in Poland as of 2012" (B. Budyńska, M. Jezierska, G. Lewandowicz-Nosal, G. Walczewska-Klimczak) which introduces the structure of libraries in Poland. It presents the network of public libraries, school libraries, pedagogical libraries, scientific libraries and libraries without a uniform network (specialised libraries and libraries of scientific, technical and economic information centres, as well as libraries of scientific societies).

This special issue of *The Library Review* contains articles discussing the situation of Polish librarianship, focusing on specific issues, by authors representing major Polish scientific libraries (National Library, Jagiellonian Library, University of Warsaw Library, University Library in Toruń) and academic institutions. These articles are:

– *The Polish Librarians' Association in IFLA. Origins of collaboration* (Andrzej Mężyński);

– *Library users, offerings and types of services in Poland* (Małgorzata Fedorowicz-Kruszewska, Tomasz Kruszewski, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń);

– *The role of public libraries in promoting readership in Poland* (Dorota Grabowska, University of Warsaw);

– *Polish digital libraries and repositories. Origins, operation and usage* (Bożena Bednarek-Michalska, University Library in Toruń);

– *Changing the paradigm of collecting and cataloguing in Polish scientific libraries. The impact of new information technologies* (Krystyna Sanetra, Jagiellonian Library);

– *The Warsaw School of Paper Conservation* (Bogdan F. Zerek, National Library of Poland).

– *New library buildings in Poland. The last 25 years (1990-2015)* (Ewa Kobierska-Maciuszko, University of Warsaw Library).

This overview of the problems faced by Polish librarians is additionally complemented by a special issue of *The Library Review* of 2012 to celebrate the journal's 85th anniversary. It includes the following articles:

– *The Library Review in the past and in the years 2005-2012: an introduction* (Barbara Sosińska-Kalata);

– *The library's added value* (Jacek Wojciechowski);

– *Research libraries in Poland in search of identity* (Andrzej Mężyński);

– *The potential of online library catalogues for supporting opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature* (Remigiusz Sapa);

– *The use of outsourcing in Polish higher education libraries in the light of survey research* (Artur Jazdon);

– *Old and new paths of literacy* (Jadwiga Kołodziejka);

– *On the contemporary research status of book, library and information sciences* (Krzysztof Migoń);

– *Photographs in the digital collection. Issues with the descriptive and subject cataloguing on the basis of the Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology* (Maria Miller, Małgorzata Wornbard).

In this way, the contents of both special issues – those of *The Library Review* and those of *Polish Libraries* – provide a comprehensive, although abridged, overview of what is happening in Polish librarianship today.

The IFLA congress and conference in Wrocław will be an excellent opportunity to discover the dynamically evolving libraries of this beautiful old city. Additionally, the organisers have scheduled visits to libraries outside of Wrocław, for example in Oława, Jelenia Góra, Polkowice and Bolesławiec (where visitors can see the Bolesławiec Live Museum of Pottery, with an opportunity to learn about the world-famous pottery from Bolesławiec), Opole, Katowice, Cieszyn, Bielsko-Biała and Cracow. I am firmly convinced that each of the participants will discover at least one special and inspiring library that brings the history of the book and of libraries closer to home.

I hope this volume, dedicated to Polish librarianship, contributes to spreading knowledge about Polish library science and its achievements ...and that the 83rd IFLA General Conference will be a memorable event for its participants, encouraging them to revisit our country and to get to know its libraries in other regions too.

Elżbieta Barbara Zybert (Editor-in-Chief)