

Library Services. Information Society

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek of Munich and the Access to its Collections

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Abstract

The article presents the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the second in Germany as far as its size is concerned, founded in 1558. Besides a series of local duties, this library, together with Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt-am-Main and Staatsbibliothek from Berlin, functions as German national library and it deals with digitizing the materials before 1700. Among its many departments, the manuscripts and rare books one stands out through its impressive collection of incunabula and rare editions printed after 1500.

Keywords: *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Library Departments, Digitization, Rare Books*

Everywhere around the world the book and the library are something else as compared to what they were half a century ago.

Nowadays, at the beginning of the 21-st century, the whole world has to face a new challenge: the new status of the book in itself and of the library. As experts point out the highly advanced technical innovations, such as electronic and digital processing, may be compared to Gutenberg's invention, the printing press. The new conditions have determined a new and dynamic cooperation, both at the national level and at the international one. The traditional libraries tend to become on a large scale the so-called hybrid libraries – a well-established term by now – asking new and modern

services. Special attention is directed not only towards the library collections, but also to the new and ever more complex information requirements of the users. The most pregnant need and demand are to get the information and the documents directly at the users' working place.

The most important libraries of the world have long ago taken preliminary steps in meeting the demands of the modern era, re-establishing a new managerial policy and a new collection management.

One of these libraries is the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the second in Germany, as far as its size is concerned, its personnel reaching 650 librarians. The library collections are around 8.3 millions of books and 40 000 titles of serials, 88 600 manuscripts, almost 20 000 incunabula, 130 000 printed materials from the 17-th century, 38 000 copies of non-book material. Its annual acquisitions – both from the internal and external market, as well – come to 150 000 titles of books characteristic for various fields: humanities, social and economic sciences (which are predominant) and scientific and medical publications, as well.

This shows the immensity of this library. As a matter of fact, this library and two others (Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt-am-Main and Staatsbibliothek from Berlin), functions as the German national digital library. In this capacity it deals with digitizing the manuscripts and old printed material (before 1700). Until now the investment reached 20 millions of Euro in the digitizing process only.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in cooperation with the Bavarian State Cancellery have organized in Munich – May 8-13, 2006 – the congress “Serving the information society – Libraries in the digital era” especially for library managers in Central and East Europe. There were present representatives of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, ex-communist countries for half a century with old information systems and structures, very often inadequate to the Western systems. That's why, for their reintegration in the global library system, complete renewed documentary policies and work techniques are necessary nowadays. These were the main problems discussed at this professional meeting.

Staatsbibliothek was founded by the Duke Albrecht V, in 1558, as a royal library. In 1803, the library enriched its collections with important publications (coming from the Palatine Library which was transferred from Mannheim to Munich) and with books and manuscripts achieved as a result of the secularization of the monastic properties.

Beginning with 1663, the copyright law enables the library to receive free of charge 2 copies of each publication printed in Bavaria. The library is also a national leader in the electronic and digital information field.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has local and national duties. On a local level, it offers scientific literature for all the universities and research institutes. On the national level, having an important documentary archive, the library has a vast digital program designed to help the German scientific community. All the characteristics of this library offer a global value to this institution. The library is also a part of numerous international projects and in partnerships with other libraries of the world. The foreign purchases, for example, represent 4/5 of its total current acquisitions.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has the following characteristics, being:

- a research university library;
- a regional central library of Bavaria;
- a library with a legal deposit;
- a coordinating library for all the Bavarian libraries;
- a methodological center for all the Bavarian libraries;
- an international research library.

Departments of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Such a large library as the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has an online catalog (with 4 160 000 records) and a very intense activity, made easy by various departments.

Manuscripts and Rare Books Department

The library's glory is precisely this department of manuscripts and rare books consisting of almost 86 000 rare editions printed after 1 500 and – as already mentioned above – 19 900 incunabula (the first library in the world with that many copies). The history of the incunabula in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is closely related to the Western manuscripts. Among the most well-known incunabula there is a copy of the famous Gutenberg's Bible, from 1455, a few copies of Nuremberg Chronicle (especially the personal copy of its author, Hartmann Schedel). One may find here the largest collection of manuscripts issued in German speaking countries. There have been made efforts – and still are – to develop the quality of the restoration-conservation process. It should be mentioned that, during the Second World War, although Munich was 80% destroyed, no manuscript was lost.

As a consequence of the transfer of the Royal Library from Mannheim to Munich and following the secularization of the monastic properties (at the beginning of the 19-th century), the Bavarian Royal Library came to have the most important collection of manuscripts from German-speaking territories. A rich collection of Western and Oriental

manuscripts goes back as far as the founding of the library (1558-1571), owing to some eminent humanists.

As to the modern manuscripts, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek preserves the testamentary trusts of more than 900 personalities who decided to leave their books to the library, among which Richard Strauss's who was born here, in Bayern. These collections also include around 35000 original autographs.

The library has other rare books, as well, with valuable illustrations, engravings and peculiar bindings.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has to face huge financial efforts in order to catalogue and preserve in optimum humidity and temperature conditions all this thesaurus of old documents.

24 hours a day one may retrieve the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek collections in its online catalogues. Through Interlibrary Loan (ILL), the Subito service permits their lending – free of charge – to any German library in the Bavarian library network (Bibliothekserbund Bayern). Most of the demands are made by university libraries and consists mostly of serial issues. The average period of accomplishing such a loan is one or two weeks.

The Subito service is a shared one between German and Austrian libraries. Subito permits the delivery of a requested publication to the indicated address, in time and at fixed costs.

This service is accessible to any library registered in the Subito website data base. The order is made by e-mail, fax or exchange of files (FPT). The books are delivered by mail, accompanied by all their conservation requirements. The order may be urgent, 72 or even 24 hours, at differential costs.

Music Department

The Bavarian library is one of the most important libraries holding musical documents. The first acquisitions can be traced back to the 16-th century. An important part of the printed musical collection comes from the Royal Library. Another equally important part was offered by the Bavarian Chapel, quite famous during Orlando di Lasso. Nowadays, the Musical Department holdings consist of printed and hand-written music, modern issues and classical recordings. Besides all these, the library holds German and foreign books and journals of musicology. Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft nominated Bayerische Staatsbibliothek as the main German library with the best acquisition of musical documents. This department has special designed reading and audition rooms.

Department of Maps and Images

This is another important department at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. One may find here maps printed since 1500 until nowadays, atlases, cartographic materials, maps very artistically drawn and topographic images made between the 16-th and the 19-th century, all in all around 1.2 millions of copies (units).

The photographic archive has a rich collection of portraits, a real phototheque of German personalities since the invention of photographs until today, such as Heinrich Hoffmann photographic archive that includes photographs since Weimar Republic up to immediately after the Second World War. Photos are to be borrowed at a fixed cost.

East Europe Department

One of the most important collection of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is to be found in the East Europe Department. It refers to East and Central Europe, to South-East Europe and to Russia, as well. The publications referring to the above-mentioned region are acquired through Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. The publications from Russia, Ukraina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldovia, Poland, Czech Republic, Serbia, Albania, Romania are also needed for helping the Byzantine studies. The acquisitions are mainly a result of purchasing, but the international exchange of publications is an important source, as well. That is why the department keeps a permanent cooperation with the librarians from East Europe. An extended documentary collection helps users to understand and study this part of the world.

Department of Near and Middle East and South Asia

The Oriental collection was found since the very beginnings of the library itself. It gradually became a vast collection and holds publications from a large area, from Maroc to India, Sri Lanka and Mongolia. The department has four divisions: Hebrew/Idish; Arab; Turk/Persian; South-East and Central Asia. Among the acquisitions of this department it is worth to mention a large Tibetan book collection and several editions of the Koran. There are also numerous works on Boudhism enjoying a special interest from the library users.

The current acquisitions mainly deal with East Asia with a special foccus on humanities: arts, archeology, Taoism, religious works, philosophy, printing press history, indigenous sciences, technology and medicine. The reference works from Near and Middle East and from East Asia may be studied only in reading rooms, the lending being forbidden. The publications referring to East Asia may be retrieved through the American network RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network).

The Bavarian Library Network (Bibliotheksverbund Bayern – BVB)

Regional Service

Beginning with 1999, the Bavarian Library Network is a department of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

Its main goal is to develop, supply and support software applications of the subsidiary libraries and to provide IT assistance.

In an era of ever new and modern means and high competitiveness one must focus on designing and implementing innovative and creative solutions. These refer to the library portal Gateway Bayern (based on the traditional collective catalog), the software SFX, ILL applications and the CD-ROM data base collection.

Vascoda is the portal to the university resources. It is well-known that the university research deals with high level information, based on reliable resources.

Vascoda was created and developed in the most important German libraries.

This Internet German portal for scientific information guarantees a direct and quick access to high level reliable information and full-text entries in many fields. Above all, *Vascoda* establishes a close connection between research and direct access to the full-text documents.

When looking for a certain information, one also finds almost simultaneously references on the respective issue. These references lead the user to the desired full-text entry which may be downloaded or ordered online. *Vascoda* includes so many other opportunities. Besides the central search browser, *Vascoda* offers peculiar subjects in science and technology, medicine psychology, social sciences, humanities etc. A uniform interface with that of the user permits interdisciplinary researches, as well.

Digitization and its impact on manuscripts and rare books

Beginning with 2005, Deutsche Bibliothek started on a large scale the digitizing process, based on special techniques, such as scanners and highly specialized video photographic cameras.

A part of the digitizing process is intended for secondary documents, such as microformats, photos, facsimiles. There is a permanent concern for improving the process (getting a more accurate colour, for instance). At the same time, respecting all the conservation procedure, the digitization process is performed without applying the usual glass panel. It was replaced by a lighter panel, from polyester, much more suitable and protective for the publication. In order to strictly obey all the preservation and

conservation rules, the digitization is technically coordinated by the Photographic Department.

For better preserving the digital images, the microformats archives are gradually replaced by the digitized archives. Once the digital image was placed on the Internet, there are no more copyright problems. The digitization is applied to the whole document and only seldom to parts of the document (only if specified as such – “digitization on demand”).

The digital images of a book are closely connected (owing to UNR/URL system) to the general description in the catalog. The digitized document is automatically transferred from the local OPAC to the National Collective Catalogue. One can use the content browser when searching digitized images and/or the information about the catalogues. The retrieval is made in OPAC and in the homepage of the digital collections.

The Internet access is free of charge. The same holds true with downloading and copying in other specialized databases.

We should mention among the finalized projects the digitization of the German illustrated incunabula dating from the period 1501-1517.