

# Karpowicz, Andrzej

---

## The Masonic Collection of the University Library of Poznań

---

Ars Regia 1/1, 174-180

---

1992

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez **Muzeum Historii Polski** w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

# ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND SUMMARIES

---

Andrzej Karpowicz (Poznań)

## THE MASONIC COLLECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN POZNAŃ

One of the fundamental tasks of the Freemason is self-improvement, and one of the main avenues leading to that goal is self-education. Hence, all the lodges had their own permanent seats, with their own libraries, and the librarian was a member of the management of the lodge. Depending on the age and the size of the lodge, the library had from 1 or 2 thousand, up to 10 thousand volumes. The German libraries, including those of the lodges active in the present western and northern parts of Poland complied with the pattern described above, as evidenced the many printed catalogues of lodge libraries, especially those compiled and published in 1910–1912. According to an estimate by the German Masonic Museum in Bayreuth, in about 1930, all the Masonic libraries in Germany together had about 200 thousand volumes.

Hitlerism fought Freemasonry from the very beginning. Therefore, immediately after seizing power in Germany, the Nazis began to liquidate the hateful movement. Lodges were closed down, or they dissolved themselves, and their property was confiscated. The libraries of the lodges were taken over by the Gestapo, and their books went to the Professional Library of the Reichsfuehrer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler. The books were partly described and many of them were stamped with the stamp of the Reichsfuehrer's Library. Some of them have stamps showing their origin. The Masonic books were probably in Berlin until 1943–44. However, the increasing bombardment of the city by the Allied Air Forces made the Management of the Professional Library of the Reichsfuehrer, I suppose, to evacuate it from the bombed region. About 80 thousand volumes were taken to Sława Śląska (its German name is Schlawa – in 1939 – 1945 Schlesiersee), a small town on the border between Lower Silesia (Dolny Śląsk) and Lubusz Country (Ziemia Lubuska) close to the pre-war frontier with Poland. What happened to the rest of the Masonic books is unknown. It is possible that they were consumed by fire in Berlin. It is also possible that they were carried away to another, unknown locality, where they were subject to destruction during military operations. The least credible

version is that all the Masonic books were taken to Sława, and only there the major part of them was lost. The supposition that the books were taken to several different places, and the collection was divided in accordance with some plan, is supported by the fact that at Sława Śląska a large number of collections of books from lodge libraries from Silesia (Śląsk) and Pomerania (Pomorze) were found. Apart from them, fragments of collections from other regions of the Reich were found, but in a much smaller number.

The fate of the collections of Masonic books in the years 1933–1945 has not been fully explained. There are no answers to many questions, and we are still lost in conjecture.

Units of the Red Army entered Sława Śląska as January became February in 1945. During the last days of April, librarians of the University Library in Poznań also reached Sława Śląska.

In 1945 Polish librarians all over the country were making every effort to save unclaimed collections of books. Their work concerned both Polish collections, taken from libraries to protect them from destruction during military operations, as well as other Polish collections, confiscated from Polish institutions or from private individuals by the invaders, removed from the western regions to the General Gouvernement, and collections of books of German institutions, left behind in the lands incorporated into Poland in 1945.

The area of activity of the University Library in Poznań was Great Poland (Wielkopolska), Lubusz Country (Ziemia Lubuska) and West Pomerania (Pomorze Zachodnie). Collections secured in those areas were carried to Poznań, classified and then returned to their legitimate Polish owners. Collections whose owners were not found, or which because of regulations being issued at that time, became State property, supplemented library collections decimated by the war.

As part of this effort, Masonic documents from Sława Śląska were taken to Poznań in the autumn of 1945 and partially, provisionally catalogued. During the removal of the collections to another building in 1954, the catalogued part was dispersed. Between 1945 and 1959 only a few dozen items were bibliographically described and included in the collection of the University Library.

In 1958 a historian, Stanisław Kubiak, Ph.D. became the Director of the Library. He addressed the professors of history at the University with the question of how to treat the Masonic books, present in the current collections of the Library. Following their advice, he made the decision to clarify the Masonic documents as a separate collection with its own list and catalogue. The collection of the Masonica of the University Library in Poznań has been existed since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1959.

Masonic documents including some rare and valuable ones are in many scientific libraries, both in Poland and in other European countries. However,

the separation of a Masonic collection is unique to the University Library in Poznań.

During the period 1959-1981 29 thousand volumes were examined. Work on these very specific Masonic documents caused much difficulty for those who had only sporadic contact with them. Therefore, in October 1981 an Independent Division of the Masonic Collections was created. Its employees were originally to deal only with the description of the collection. Gradually, as they gained more experience, they extended their duties, taking over the administration of the still undescribed collection, and serving the users (with scientific information and providing access to the books).

The oldest part of the collection are 17th-century documents of the Rosicrucians. The 18th-century documents number over 4 thousand. Since a large number of the pamphlets have been bound together, the collection has approximately 3 thousand volumes. The largest part of the collection dates from the 19th and 20th centuries (until 1933-1935). There are around 52 thousand of the so-called "new" documents, including about 12 thousand books and pamphlets, and 40 thousand annual sets of periodicals. A small, but still-being-supplemented number of post-war documents (approximately 500 volumes at the moment) covers contemporary literature on Freemasonry. Thanks to international exchange, basic scientific German and English periodicals are coming in currently. Each year a report on the new acquisitions is published.

By language about 3/4th of the documents in the collection are in German. Additionally there are many documents in French and English. Documents in other languages are represented to a small extent. The weakest point of the collection is the almost total lack of documents of the Polish Freemasonry.

In the described collections there is a complete collection of Freemasonry, Encyclopaedias in German, and some written in French and English. More extensive general study papers number a few hundred items. A wide spectrum of issues is also presented in manuals and brochures (presenting the propaedeutics of Freemasonry), as well as numerous apologetical and polemic brochures.

The collections is rich in all basic bibliographies of Masonic literature. Supplementing them and at the same time showing the richness of the collections of the Masonic libraries are many printed catalogues of lodge libraries. Booksellers' catalogues registering documents play a similar role by Masonic publishing houses and bookshops.

Periodical publications make up 70% of the Masonica collections. Among them are 118 German magazine titles and a similar number of titles in other languages. One can find almost all the magazine titles that count here, and the presently existing gaps in those sets will be filled in

during the next few years. Beside typical magazines, among the periodicals there are 32 titles of German almanacs and calendars and similar French and English publications.

The next group of periodicals are the reports of the Johannite Lodges and the Grand Lodges, and of Masonic cultural and charity associations. Reports in German number 115 titles. A numerous collection of lists of the members of German lodges is of great source value. There are almost complete for the years 1871–1919. There are some gaps in the lists from the time of the Weimar Republic and from the period between the March Revolution 1848/49 until the unification of Germany. The most valuable pieces in this collection are the least complete lists of lodge members from the 18th century until the end of the first half of the 19th century.

18th- and 19th- century speeches and collections of speeches delivered in lodges are represented in especially large numbers. They reflect the interests of the Freemasons and are the evidence of the educational work which was going on in those workshops. Works by the most outstanding Masonic authors are also gathered here.

Panegyric speeches delivered on the occasions of different jubilees and mourning lodges prevail among biographical publications. They are of some value, as they contribute basic biographical data, not only about on the outstanding personages from the Masonic world, but also about those less known or completely unknown Masons especially in the 18th and 19th century. This information can be used in research on the social composition of the Freemasonry. Beside panegyric documents there are also scientific biographies of many Freemasons here.

An interesting group of documents are the literary works. Texts of Masonic songs and song collections prevail among them. Some of those collections are supplemented by music. Apart from that, poems and other poetic works, recited or read in lodges on the occasions of different fests and celebrations, are present in this group of documents. This group of texts is of the smallest value, but because of their large quantity it is a literary phenomenon, worthy of note. Prose is represented by 18th-century philosophical stories and novels. There are also anti-Masonic examples. There are also a few dramas with Masonic subject matter here.

The next group are documents presenting the philosophical, ethical and social issues of the Freemasonry. Some of them present the philosophy of the Freemasonry and also its opinion on individual currents in the philosophical thought. A large group of documents presents the relationship of the Freemasonry to Christianity and its different creeds. It covers both polemics against the Catholic Church and attempts to find a common philosophical basis and ways of practical collaboration with it. There are also works devoted to ethics, composed of many editions of texts of the Old Charges and comments on them, and also publications devoted to

individual aspects of that issue. The social thought of the Freemasonry can be followed in the works presenting the relation of the Order to such problems as socialism, anti-Semitism, women's issues, and to the growing threat of fascism and right-wing nationalism during the last years before World War II. In this group of documents there are also publications devoted to knowledge of the occult.

Many documents are devoted to the history of Freemasonry, presenting the "prehistory" of the movement, i.e. the history of numerous mystery societies and mystery celebrations, from ancient times to the present day. Others describe the history of the mediaeval Order of the Knights Templar, to whose legend Freemasonry strongly referred, and finally, other ones, on the history of mediaeval builders' confraternities.

Many documents present the history of the Freemasonry from its beginning until the present day, both on the scientific and popular level. A much smaller number of authors deal with the history of the Freemasonry during different periods. The largest number of them present that history, as shown in different countries, regions and cities. Publications devoted to the history of the Grand Lodges consist of both scientific papers, as well as those with the character of a reliable chronicler's work, and also contributors' notes and worthless panegyrics.

There are a few hundred Masonic constitutions and statutes in the collection. The treasure among them is the first edition of the Anderson's Constitution. A number of its reprints and later editions and adaptations have also been preserved and finally a complete set of the statutes of the German Grand Lodges (all editions) and many from other lodges. In addition, a large part of the collection is composed of statutes of individual lodges. One can also find a series of statutes of Masonic charity and cultural foundations and associations.

A small division of documents gathers publications devoted to the external work of the Freemasonry i.e. charitable, cultural and publicity activities.

Many interesting documents concern Masonic rituals and symbols. They include study papers on the problems concerning the rite, analysing the development of its multi-level structure, and also describing the Masonic symbolism as well as individual symbols. Apart from study papers, there are many ritual source texts here, such as numerous catechisms, most often for the symbolic degrees, and books of rites of entire systems, as well as many initiation rites and other Masonic ceremonies. One can also find extracts for individual members of lodges' managements. Some of the most interesting in this group are 18th-century anti-Masonic texts, being the first publications including descriptions of Masonic rituals.

An interesting part of the collection are the documents of some different associations similar in their character and rites to the Freemasonry. The

most valuable group considered by many scientists beyond "price", are 17th-century documents by the Rosicrucians. There are approximately 75 titles of different publications from 1616–1628 here, among them fundamental works of this movement (including almost all the publications of the German Rosicrucians). There are also Rosicrucians' documents from the 18th century, and also valuable documents of the 18th-century Illuminates. This group of collections includes documents of associations referring to the Knights Templar, a Jewish organization called B'nai B'rith, the Druids, Schlarafia, Rotarians and other organizations.

The last division of the collection is the anti-Masonic literature from the 18th to 20th century.

Since 1969, the Masonic collection of the University Library in Poznań has been kept at its Branch in the 18-century palace at Ciężen-on-Warta. The palace, situated on the slope over the river, in a 10-hectare park, was built in 1760–1768 by Archbishop Ignacy Raczyński. The palace was built in the late baroque style, typical of the architecture of the time of King Augustus III. The most valuable artistic element of the palace is the rococo stucco work, considered the most beautiful in Great Poland (Wielkopolska), and the outside ornament in the form of trophies and the bishop's insignia. After the secularization of the Church estates, the Ciężen palace found itself in the hands of the Polish Aide-de-Camp of Alexander I, Colonel Count Wacław Gutakowski, son of the Grand Master of the Orient of Poland, Ludwik Gutakowski. On the other side, he was related by his wife Józefa, born Grudzińska, with the Grand Duke Constantine and General Dezydery Chłapowski. Wacław Gutakowski has been, the owner of Ciężen for forty years. The palace came later into the hands of other landed gentry families.

After World War II, until 1968, there was a school in the building. After Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań took it over, the building was overhauled in 1986–1991 and its original part underwent renovation, and the roof was covered with cooper. At the moment, the park is being restored to its former splendour. The "English" landscape park has already been recreated, and work has begun on the recreation of the "French" park on the slope over the river.

Most of the ground floor rooms, one room on the first, and three on the second floor, are being used as store-rooms for a while. Old documents, collections of duplicates, less-often-used magazines, and of course the Masonica, are stored here.

Most of the first floor rooms perform representative functions. There is a conference room, a salon and a reading-room with a collection of books formerly belonging to the manor. A reading-room with the Masonica belongs to this part, too.

18–19 beds in 9 rooms have been arranged for readers coming to study the collections, and for participants in symposia organized here.

The fact that the Masonic collection has been placed at Ciążeń has made it necessary to double the catalogue of the Masonica. One set of the catalogues is at the University Library in Poznań, at the Independent Division of the Masonica Collection, while the second one is at Ciążeń. A microfilm version of the catalogue (as of May 1989) has been published and distributed by Olms-Verlag from Hildesheim.

Until 1983, the presence of the Masonica collection in the Library was not being kept secret, but on the other hand it was not made public. It was only after the opening of Ciążeń, and the overhaul of the palace, that notices about the collection appeared in the press. Foreign scientists have been informed about the collection of the Masonica in the Library thanks to the establishment of collaboration with the German Masonic Museum in Bayreuth. Gradually, the term "the Poznań (or, equally, Ciążeń) Masonica" is becoming widespread, and Ciążeń is becoming a Mecca for both Polish and foreign scientists doing research on Masonica issues.

Michał Karalus (Dobrzyca)

## A PLAN FOR THE FREEMASONRY MUSEUM IN DOBRZYCA

The palace and park complex at Dobrzyca was created at the end of the 18th cent. Its owner at that time was General Augustyn Gorzeński (1742–1816), Aide-de-Camp, head of the King's Military Office, and at the same time a friend of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, member of Parliament from the Poznań region in the "Four-years' Sejm" (Parliament), member of the Society of Friends of the 3rd of May Constitution, member of the King's War-Council in 1792, collector and patron of the arts. At the end of his life, he attained the position of Senator-Voivod (Governor). He was a cousin of Tymoteusz Gorzeński, the Archbishop of Gniezno and Poznań, who also visited Dobrzyca from time to time. A Freemason, he belonged to the National Grand Orient of Poland and held the 7th degree of the Rose Cross. He was on friendly terms with the author of the Polish national anthem, among others. He greeted Napoleon in Poznań in 1806 as a member of a six-man delegation, four members of which were outstanding Polish Freemasons. After the decline of the Polish State, he devoted the last twenty years of his life entirely to Dobrzyca.

The palace and park complex at Dobrzyca was designed by Stanisław Zawadzki (1743–1806), an architect who created the palace and park complexes at Lubostroń and Śmielów in Great Poland (Wielkopolska), among others.

The Dobrzyca complex was completed in 1800, and the present shape of the palace was created in the place of a 15th century fortified castle.