

# Masonic Collection

Special Collections Department Poznan University Library

Room 166

Monday	12.00 - 14.00
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday	10.00 - 14.00
Thursday	10.00 - 18.00

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The collection Masonic books and pamphlets in Special Collection is vast and encompasses a separated collection amounting to 80,000 volumes. The collection was found at Sława Śląska (German: Schlawa, Schesiersee between 1938 - 1945) in autumn 1945 as the result of the action of reassembling and protecting of the abandoned and dispersed bookstock. The collection includes many individual collections from the libraries of various Masonic lodges, mainly from Silesia and Pomerania. It includes about one fifth of all the holdings of German Masonic lodges from before 1933. The location or place of the remaining part of the collection is not known. Having been discovered at Sława Śląska the collection was transferred to Poznań and, since 1959, has been successively processed in the Masonic Section of the Special Collection Division at Poznan University Library as a separated collection with its own catalogue and inventory. The part of the collection that has already undergone full library preparation includes 65,000 volumes. The collection is housed in the 18th century palace at Ciężęń (70 kilometres east of Poznań, just few miles off the A2 motorway Poznań - Warsaw). Rosicrucian books from the seventeenth century make the oldest part of the collection, while the

eighteenth century books include several thousands volumes, but far greater in number are the collections of the nineteenth and twentieth century books (until 1933/35). A small collection of contemporary Masonic literature amounting to about 1,200 volumes makes valuable addition to the overall collection.

The bulk of the collection is the literature written in German, followed by a considerable amount of books in French and English. Literature in other languages is scarcely represented.

The Masonic collection includes all German encyclopaedias of Freemasonry, and most of the English and French encyclopaedias. There are many monographs, Masonic manuals and polemical works of Masonic instruction supplemented with printed catalogues of Masonic libraries and catalogues with Masonic materials. Periodicals form about 70 % of the collection and include 118 German titles, 32 titles of German almanacs and calendars, periodicals written in other languages and, amounting to about 115 titles, collection of annual reports of German lodges. Also, there are extensive though incomplete registers of fellow members of German lodges.

A vast collection of speeches and addresses, especially from the 18th and 19th c. lodges and author's editions of the prominent authors forms another part of the collection. Another interesting collection is a collection of philosophical parables and Masonic novels, plays and song-books.

Another part of the holdings is the collection of prints devoted to philosophy, ethics, and social thought of Freemasonry and its approach to other Christian and non-Christian denominations as well as writings pertaining to secret, mystical or esoteric writings. The history of Freemasonry also encompasses the history of mysteries and various secret or esoteric brethren as well as brethren of operative masons from the ancient to modern times, the history of secret associations and the fraternal orders, appendant groups, and the military religious orders like the Knights of the Temple of Solomon, the history of Freemasonry throughout the centuries in different countries, the history of grand lodges and those forming the association of national lodges.

The collection includes several hundreds Constitutions and Statutes, including the first edition of the Anderson constitutions and the statutes of Masonic charity organisations as well as various scientific and cultural associations.

There are many volumes devoted to the Masonic ritual and the Masonic symbolism, catechisms and books of instruction, etc. Another important part of the holdings is the collection of prints of associations similar in character and the ritual to Freemasonry, i.e. those of the Rosicrucians, Humimates, secret associations relating to the Templars, Jewish organisation of B'nai B'rith, German druids, Rotarians and others. Eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century anti-Masonic literature of various anti-Masonic movements supplements the collection.

The catalogue of the collection is available in the Masonic Collection Section at the Poznań University Library and at Ciążeń palace alike. The microfiche catalogue of the collection (as it was in May, 1989) has been published by G. Olms Verlag (Hildesheim). The alphabetical catalogue is divided into two parts. The first includes old books (17th and 18th) published until 1800. The other includes books published after 1800, i.e. from 1801 onwards. Periodicals have not been separated from the alphabetical catalogue. The only exception is the lists of fellow members of different lodges, which are placed under the collective names: Matrikel, Mitglieder- Verzeichnis, Naamlijst, Tableau (depending on the language used) and then classified according to a place name, name of the lodge or, alternatively, classified under the heading "Reports of the institutions and collective bodies" then according to the name of the country, town and the name of a particular lodge.

The subject card-catalogue, which currently includes 20,000 cards is a systematic catalogue made up of entries grouped in classified order. Some of the sections of the catalogue, as need arises, are elaborated deeper, some others include listings grouped according to the subject headings. In the applied notation, the first numeral indicates the main section of the catalogue, the second or the following, divisions within a section.

The Masonic collection of Poznań University Library is one of the biggest of its kind in Europe. It is highly appraised and believed to be one of the three "core" collections of the literature used in the studies on the history of Freemasonry in Europe.

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