



MOVING THE JAGIELLONIAN LIBRARY

The plan for the transfer of the Jagiellonian Library from its old premises at Numbers 8–12 in ulica św. Anny was drawn up before the outbreak of the War. The Library's new building on aleja Mickiewicza, completed just before the War, was the most modern library facility in Europe at the time. According to the prewar schedule the move was due in 1940.

After the outbreak of the War, when the Germans closed down the Jagiellonian University, they initially intended to turn the Library's new building into a radio broadcasting studio, which would have involved pulling down every other of its eight floors. However, an architects' report prevented the conversion, which would have brought a threat to the building's stability. The Germans decided to use the premises as a library facility and installed their Staatsbibliothek in it. The prewar collections of the Jagiellonian Library were to be moved there. The transfer was to be carried out by a Polish workforce under the supervision of the library's new director, Dr. Gustav Abb, director of the Berlin University

Library. The opening ceremony for the new building was to be accompanied by a Gutenberg exhibition. In July 1940 Dr. Abb, who was also appointed general director of all the libraries in occupied Poland, obtained a permit from Berlin for

a Polish team to carry out the move of all the collections to the new building. Dr. Edward Kuntze, the prewar Director of the Jagiellonian Library, took the opportunity to have the books cleaned of years of dust accumulated on them. From 15 July to 17 August the Library's junior staff dusted almost all of the books except for the theological collection. The move started on 19 August 1940 and went on for 62 working days, until 25 October 1940. The transportation was done by Stefan Rzepa's removal company using horse-drawn carts. A total of 643,937 volumes were dispatched in 13,200 boxes, at a daily rate of about 200 boxes. 18 librarians

and 14 of the Library's storage staff, in other words all the prewar employees in Kraków at the time, were engaged in the move. They worked in four groups. Two groups under the direction of Dr. Wojciech Gielecki took down books from the



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Ogółem przewieziono 643 937 tomów w 13 200 skrzyniach. Dziennie przewożono ok. 200 skrzyń.

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shelves, which went right up to first-floor level, and packed them into numbered boxes. The other two groups, headed by Dr. Władysław Pocięcha, received consignments in the new building, checked the contents, and arranged them in the new storage facilities. Dr. Abb, the Library's new German director, sometimes came to the old building during the move, but, according to the recollections of Kazimiera Tatarowicz, never went far inside the storage area, apparently in fear of resistance men (!).

The 1940 move of the Jagiellonian Library was secretly filmed by Gustaw Schmagier, a member of its staff, and his brother-in-law Dr. Eugeniusz Latacz, an employee of the Czartoryski Museum. Dr. Latacz did not survive the War; he was involved in work to save Polish cultural heritage from the Germans and was arrested by the Gestapo in January 1943 while working in the Library. A month later he died in Auschwitz.

The film, which the two librarians risked their lives to make, shows the books being cleaned in the court of the Collegium Maius Building, packed into boxes, and taken to the removal carts. It also shows the street. In the views of ulica św. Anny, alongside Rzepa's cart waiting outside the Collegium Maius entrance, you can spot passers-by with Star of David armbands. You

can also recognise Dr. Kuntze, the Library's prewar Director (1880–1950), and Dr. Adam Bar (1895–1955), one of the senior librarians. There are some unique shots of the façade of the Nowodworski College building, the only extant photographic records of the entrance to the Deutsches Institut für Ostarbeit, which was installed there on 20 April 1940. The film-makers also took sequences of the interior and exterior architectural details in the Collegium Maius Building. They did this no doubt in anticipation that after the move the Germans would convert the Jagiellonian University's oldest building beyond recognition or perhaps even demolish it altogether, in preparation for a new German university.

Schmagier and Latacz's film survived in Gustaw Schmagier's family collections, and his widow donated it to the Jagiellonian Library. It is now in the collections of the audio-visual department in the Jagiellonian University Archives.



Transport książek wozem konnym przedsiębiorstwa przewozowego Stefana Rzepy, ulica św. Anny

Stefan Rzepa's horse-and-cart removal company transporting books from ulica św. Anny

Compiled by Bogusław Sławiński on the basis of the article by Kazimiera Tatarowicz on her wartime recollections of working as a librarian in the Jagiellonian Library, "Biblioteka Jagiellońska za okupacji. Wspomnienia bibliotekarki", *Ne cedat academia. Kartki z dziejów tajnego nauczania w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1939–1945*, eds. Maria Zaręba and Alfred Zaręba, Kraków, 1975, pp. 442–471.

