

Bibliothek & Information International (BI-I)
Grant Report

**Professional Visit to
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
(Special Departments)
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1. INTRODUCTION

Since February 2013, I have been working as a Special Collections Librarian at the historical *V. A. Urechia* Library in Galați, Romania. Despite the size and diversity of our collection, which includes manuscripts, incunabula, early printed Romanian and foreign books, autographs, *ex libris*, estates, maps, photographs, and periodicals, our department has long been severely understaffed due to budgetary constraints. As a result, significant parts of our collection have not been explored to date and our engagement in research and digitization projects has been minimal at best. Until this situation improves, my colleague and I need to perform a wide array of departmental duties (acquisitions, cataloging, research, producing print materials, curating exhibits, advising readers, etc.), a situation which leaves little time for the sustained pursuit of project funding and the development of new research tools. At the same time, should additional funding become available in the future, we will be facing the unique challenge of assembling a specialist team who could successfully carry out the type of projects we would like to undertake.

My own background is in English Literature (B.A. SUNY Plattsburgh, M.A. University of Ottawa) and Book History (M.A. in progress, Leiden University). As a result, I am far more comfortable in a specialized role (doing research and working on description catalogs) than performing multiple tasks or functioning in a mostly administrative capacity. Hence, attending professional training courses to help expand my skill set has been one of my main priorities this year and will likely continue to be so in the future.

In order to gain perspective on the structure, organization, and processes of a well-established research library, I decided to apply for a *Bibliothek & Information International* (BI-I) professional visit grant. The BI-I grant allowed me to spend the week of September 23-27, 2013 at the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, where I had the chance to meet with some of the most experienced special collections professionals in the world.

When I initially contacted the Manuscript Department at the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin* to inquire about the possibility of a professional visit, I expected a polite refusal given my limited library experience and lack of fluent German. To my surprise, Prof. Everardus Overgaauw, Head of the Manuscript Department, graciously agreed to my visit and prepared a full schedule for me. Due to the short duration of my visit and the number of topics we decided to cover, my program did not follow a practicum format; instead, it consisted of information meetings with a number of researchers and librarians from the Manuscript and Incunabula departments. This report includes descriptions of the meetings I attended during my visit, along with some of my impressions and thoughts for the future.

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE *STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ* (SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS)

Established in 1661 by Frederick-William, Elector of Brandenburg, as the *Churfürstliche Bibliothek zu Cölln an der Spree* (Electoral Library), the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation) is the most important academic research library in Germany and in the German-speaking world, catering primarily to postgraduate students and academics. As a universal library, the *Staatsbibliothek's* collections include works from all fields of knowledge and in all languages. However, given the availability of extensive scientific collections at other institutions, its more recent focus has been primarily on the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Over the course of the last 350 years, the *Staatsbibliothek* has experienced both remarkable growth and severe setbacks. From the end of the 18th century until the First World War, thanks to the continuous expansion of its collections, the library grew to become one of the largest and most influential institutions of its type in the world. This flourishing development was inevitably interrupted by the successive wars in the first half of the 20th century, and, following an Allied attack on its Unter den Linden building during the Second World War, the collection was evacuated to multiple locations across Germany. At the time, it included over 3 million volumes and 7,400 incunabula. This initial collection, of which part was destroyed or lost during the war, remains divided today. Two parts of the collection, which were held in West Germany and East Germany respectively, were reunited in 1992, several years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The third part of the collection, which at the conclusion of the war found itself in Polish territory, remains in Krakow.

Since 1992, the *Staatsbibliothek* has operated out of two locations – the 1970s Potsdamer Straße building in the former West Berlin and the renovated Unter den Linden building in East Berlin. According to the official website, the *Staatsbibliothek* collection currently includes approximately 18,400 occidental manuscripts, 41,700 oriental manuscripts, 4,360 incunabula, 320,000 autographs, 67,000 music autographs, and 1,600 estates and personal archives¹, among many other types of historical documents. The manuscript collection is currently held at the Potsdamer Straße location, while the incunabula collection is held at Haus Unter den Linden.

The special departments, whose work revolves around these types of holdings, include the Manuscript Department, the Department of Early Printed Books, the Oriental Department, the Map Department, the Eastern Europe Department, etc. During my professional visit, I had the chance to meet with staff members from the Manuscript Department (including subdivisions) and learn more about organization, workflow, and projects carried out at the *Staatsbibliothek*.

¹ <http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/about-the-library/>

3. PROGRAM

3.1. MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

My visit began with a meeting with Prof. Overgaauw, Head of the Manuscript Department. In the course of our discussion, we covered numerous topics, from the history of the library and of its special collections to an overview of current projects (manuscript cataloging, *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*, the Digital Portrait Index, the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, Kalliope, the digitalization of the Alexander von Humboldt estate, etc.). During my subsequent meetings, I had the opportunity to learn more about some of these projects from their coordinators. We also discussed exhibitions, print catalogs, and presentation albums.

One of my first observations, which would be reinforced during further meetings, involved the comprehensive nature and national scale of some of the projects mentioned above, which was not at all surprising given the *Staatsbibliothek's* role as a research and cataloging center. The reason I was particularly interested in this aspect is because the main problem I have encountered in Romania as a librarian and researcher has been the relative lack of data centralization. Coupled with the fact that digitization is still in its infancy, this can pose serious access issues for researchers, and especially for those who are not in a position to spend extended periods of time locating and consulting material held at institutions across the country. I believe that working towards developing national platforms and comprehensive repositories should be one of our chief goals for the near-future.

At the same time, I learned that the *Staatsbibliothek* itself embraced digitization later than other institutions. While this means that large parts of its collections have not been digitized as of yet, there have also been certain advantages, such as avoiding experimentation and adopting a polished approach from the beginning. As our libraries are not in a position to carry out groundbreaking work at this time, following this example would certainly be beneficial.

My next meeting was with Mr. Lange (Manuscript Department, Reading Room), who explained the on-demand digitization service offered by the *Staatsbibliothek*. Given the sheer size of the *Staatsbibliothek* collection, systematic digitization is not currently feasible. The advantage of this service is that, in addition to fulfilling reader requests, it also allows the library to supplement its digital repository with material not covered by its current projects. While the service is available for a fee to individuals and institutions alike, there are certain limitations in place, which are dictated by the material condition of the original document. Documents which are too frail or deteriorated are not eligible for this service, although some may be consulted in person in the Manuscript Department's reading room. Digitization is carried out in the library's own laboratory, located at Haus

Unter den Linden. Understandably, the library does not outsource due to conservation concerns.

My last meeting of the day was with Dr. Giel, Head of Western Manuscripts. Dr. Giel offered an overview of projects undertaken by the Western Manuscript section, such as manuscript cataloging and Manuscripta Mediaevalia, followed by a tour of the stacks.

As a manuscript cataloging center, the *Staatsbibliothek* helps catalog the manuscript collections of several other institutions from Germany and abroad. Current projects include the creation of descriptive catalogs of the Manuscripta Theologica Latina in 8° format (*Staatsbibliothek* collection), the cataloging of Medieval manuscripts from *Universitäts- and Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf* and *Universitäts- and Landesbibliothek Bonn*, the elaboration of a census of medieval and early modern manuscripts in the Latin alphabet held at the Russian State Library in Moscow, the digitization and cataloging of Medieval and Early Modern manuscripts in German at the Beinecke Library (Yale University, USA), and the cataloging of Latin manuscripts from the *Stadtbibliothek Trier* collection.

Manuscripta Mediaevalia, which was unfortunately undergoing maintenance at the time of my visit, is the union database of Medieval manuscripts and manuscript catalogs on the internet, and, according to the library website, provides information about ca. 75,000 codices². The application was re-launched in 2010 and offers a platform for the integration of catalog and image data supplied by different providers.

The fact that the *Staatsbibliothek* functions as a research and cataloging center was of great interest to me. Given that the V. A. Urechia Library, Galați has one of the largest special collections in eastern Romania (including ca. 350 manuscripts in Church Slavonic, Ottoman Turkish, French, Italian, and Greek), the creation of a regional research center here would be beneficial – not only for the institution itself, but for other county libraries in the area as well. Equally advantageous would be the ability to attract more academics and PhD students and to provide research opportunities and partnerships.

The meeting concluded with a tour of the stacks, which allowed me to observe the conservation, storage, and organization methods practiced by the *Staatsbibliothek*. The tour was meant primarily for three apprentices who were about to start their training at the library, but Dr. Giel graciously invited me to join and translated some parts for me. I also had the opportunity to learn more about the German apprenticeship system, which includes a vital practical component. One of the features which I would like to see implemented at home would be a library internship program for university students, designed to provide Humanities graduates with some hands-on experience and practical skills. While I did not have the chance to talk to the students at the time, apprenticeships are something I would like to learn more about in the future for this very reason.

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<http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/about-the-library/abteilungen/handschriften/aufgaben-profil/projekte/abendländische-handschriften/manuscripta-mediaevalia/>

My conversation with Dr. Giel, in addition to being informative in general, has also enabled me to start thinking about issues I had not considered before, such as the challenges involved in configuring the hierarchical structure of digitized documents. The problems posed by the faithful representation of complex documents would make a reappearance in a subsequent meeting as well, which I attended on the following day.

3.2. TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

The second day of my visit began with a brief tour of the vast Manuscript Reading Room. My guide, Mr. Hamm, gave me an overview of request procedures and policies. Visitors usually include academics, both from Germany and abroad, doctoral students, and various researchers. The Reading Room also has a comprehensive reference collection.

My following meeting was with Dr. Caemmerer, Head of the Ephemera section of the Manuscript Department. My prior exposure to this type of material was limited to the Early Modern English “gender war” pamphlets and to the engravings and pamphlets from our collection. However, as one of my main interests in graduate school was religious poetry written by Early Modern English female poets, I was quite familiar with the imagery present in contemporary engravings. Dr. Caemmerer showed me some remarkable examples, from some of the first printed Reformist pamphlets, to WWII propaganda pamphlets. Some of the colored Early Modern prints were not only strikingly beautiful, but also pristine in terms of conservation.

This observation led me to inquire about conservation methods practiced in this section. Single-sheet materials are usually placed in folders made of special alkaline paper, which neutralizes acidic inks and prevents them from “burning” through the paper or vellum (otherwise, as evidenced by manuscripts illuminated with very acidic inks, illustrations may fall out). Thanks to my own colleague's training in Italian libraries, our conservation and storage methods have been similar, although we have not been able to acquire alkaline paper so far.

Dr. Caemmerer also explained acquisition methods and showed me some of the materials which she was assessing at the time, pointing out that some of them were most likely reproductions.

All in all, Dr. Caemmerer's vast knowledge and infectious enthusiasm for the collection she oversees made this one of the most engaging meetings I had the chance to attend at the *Staatsbibliothek*.

Next, I was invited to observe Dr. Weber, Head of the Personal Papers and Autographs section, and Ms. Bispinck as they were preparing the Alexander von

Humboldt estate for digitization. Their task at the time involved inspecting each document to ensure it could safely undergo scanning. Items which appeared to be too fragile or which had sustained damage were set aside for restoration work. During the course of this session, an issue I mentioned above was raised again: the faithful digital representation of documents with a complex material structure. The Humboldt estate includes a fair number of collated documents. Their presentation and transcription will likely require some creative solutions, since simply displaying them as individual sheets fails to convey the fact that they were intentionally arranged and collated in a specific manner. While this meeting was rather brief in itself, it allowed me to glimpse the vastness and complexity of issues posed by digitization, which I had not considered before due to a lack of involvement in such projects.

My afternoon program began with a meeting with Dr. Haug, who serves as Head of Training and English Subject Librarian primarily. Dr. Haug talked to me about the structure and organization of the library as a whole, which was certainly interesting given the changes I would like to see enacted at home. Our current structure is not the most intuitive, unfortunately, and while I am not in a position to reform it myself, I am hoping that some improvements will be made in the near future.

Given our similar academic background and shared love for literature in English, most of the questions I ended up asking Dr. Haug had to do with his Subject Librarian duties, such as acquisition and cataloging. Acquisition, in particular, is not an easy task given the sheer number of literary and scholarly works published in English every month, in several countries. Obviously, familiarity with established writers and scholars is paramount, but so is an ability to make informed decisions regarding debut works.

The fact that our institution does not have subject librarians is, in my opinion, a major organizational flaw. I understand that budgetary constraints would make it impossible to have a specialist for every single field, but having at least several subject librarians would help guide acquisitions and help prevent some of the glaring omissions which seem to occur every year. From this point of view, our Special Collections department is in a more fortunate position, as we are able to advance acquisition proposals based on material we are offered or which we locate ourselves.

Talking to Dr. Haug helped me realize that I would probably very much enjoy working as an English subject librarian, so it is an option I will be keeping in mind should our overall organization change or should other professional opportunities present themselves.

My last meeting of the day was with Ms. Lamble, a Public Relations specialist who works closely with the Director of the *Staatsbibliothek* and has been highly involved in the production of several beautiful presentation albums. Some of these albums mark important milestones for the *Staatsbibliothek*, such as 350 years of activity or the opening of the monumental new Reading Room at Haus Unter den Linden. Ms. Lamble talked to me at length about the design philosophy behind each album, about the extraordinary teamwork required by these projects, and about the ways in which challenges were

overcome. The artistry and polish of *Staatsbibliothek* publications is remarkable, and while it is unlikely we will be able to produce albums of similar quality in the near future, I am grateful for the chance to study some high-quality examples. Unfortunately, we do not have a dedicated art and design team at this point, but hopefully we will see some positive changes in the future.

3.3. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

On Wednesday, I had the opportunity to meet with librarians from the Eastern Europe Department. The department houses one of the world's largest and most impressive collections of East European literature outside the region, including over 1.2 million documents, approximately 3,800 current periodicals, and special collections documents. In addition, the department provides access to specialized electronic resources and to a virtual library – the Slavistik Portal³. The collection emphasizes the Humanities and Social Sciences and spans a vast geographical area which far exceeds the conventional boundaries of the former Eastern Bloc (from Finland to Greece and Cyprus).

My first meeting of the day was with Mr. Hamann, Head of the Eastern Europe Department, who talked to me at length about the scope of the collections, about the ongoing acquisition process and its inevitable challenges, and about some of the electronic services offered by the department. While the collection includes documents from all Eastern European countries and in a large number of languages, its main focus is on Slavik languages and cultures. I am afraid that I was not a particularly interesting interlocutor for Mr. Hamann, given that I speak a Romance language and that my professional interests include primarily English Literature and Western Book History. In addition, Romanian documents, although present in the collection, do not represent a priority area for the department.

One interesting issue which was raised during our conversation concerned some of the challenges involved in the acquisition of books from foreign countries. While the *Staatsbibliothek* works with a number of intermediaries who facilitate the purchasing of books and other documents from Eastern Europe, the process can be lengthier than desired. Leaving aside Russian laws, which are not always synched with European regulations, most other countries in Eastern Europe are either EU members or candidates; therefore, trade relations with Germany should be governed by common laws. As I have never experienced delays when ordering books in Romania, I am not sure what causes some of these problems, but I realized that perhaps there was a niche market there for businesses which could provide faster and more reliable services.

³ staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/about-the-library/abteilungen/osteuropa/

As one of my main concerns at the time was team building, I was very much interested in learning more about my German colleagues, especially as far as their professional backgrounds and academic interests were concerned. Mr. Hamann was clearly very passionate and knowledgeable about Russian culture, and I wanted to know how he had developed this interest. It was quite nice to learn that he had spent a number of years studying in Russia, just as I had studying overseas, in the United States and Canada. While our linguistic interests were very different, I believe that some of our experiences were similar and that both of us developed a deep appreciation and respect for other cultures while living and studying abroad.

My next meetings were with Ms. Lindner, who showed me the cataloging process carried out by the department and provided more details about the acquisition process, and Ms. Fesser, who gave me a tour of the Reading Room and described some of the electronic services and portals. Seeing the Romanian section was interesting in itself, as it included a fair number of books published before 1989, which I imagine might provide useful material for someone studying book publishing in Romania during the communist era. At the same time, I realized that our own efforts to supply current material to foreign libraries are rather lacking at the moment. Should I make more contacts among academic publishers in the future, I will try to suggest making regular contributions to the *Staatsbibliothek's* Romanian section.

Ms. Fesser also showed me the Slavistik portal and a few website features, such as the information request service, a searchable list of new acquisitions, and descriptions of the physical exhibitions currently on display.

This was my first time visiting a department focused on a particular geographical, cultural, and linguistic area, and I was certainly impressed by the breadth and depth of available material. My current institution is not in a position to develop a collection of this type, although expanding the Special Collections Department into a proper research institute would allow us to create mini-collections based on linguistic and geographical criteria. We have sufficient material for a small Ottoman collection, for example, which I know would be of great interest to Turkish colleagues, from whom we receive inquiries on a regular basis. There would also be material for a Slavonic, Greek, Armenian, French, Italian, German, and English collection. In addition, in terms of my personal prospects for the future, I think that I would genuinely enjoy working for an English or North-American center, regardless of whether my responsibilities involved maintaining the current collection and preparing guides and bibliographies like an English subject librarian, or maintaining and describing the special collections as I do now.

3.4. THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

The penultimate day of my visit, which I spent at the Incunabula Department (a subsection of the Manuscript Department) at Haus Unter den Linden, was one of the most involved and memorable of the entire experience. The *Staatsbibliothek* incunabula

collection, although severely diminished after the Second World War, consists of 4,360 volumes and continues to be one of the finest in the world. Prior to the war, it included 7,384 volumes, of which 3,904 are now considered lost and 3 have been located in Krakow and at the Warsaw University Library⁴.

My first meeting of the day was with Dr. Eisermann, Head of the Incunabula section. We covered numerous topics, from the history of the collection to the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (the most comprehensive catalog of incunabula in the world) and acquisition policies.

Dr. Eisermann talked at length about the scholarly work behind the *Gesamtkatalog* and showed me some of the notes compiled by scholars at the beginning of the last century, along with the printed volumes and the online version. We looked at my own library's modest collection (12 incunabula) and I was bit surprised to see that we supposedly owned a copy of *Historia Dracole Waida*, printed by Mathis Hupfuff in Strasbourg (1500). I had never seen this volume, but given that I hadn't done any in-depth work on our incunabula, I ascribed it to an embarrassing memory lapse. After returning home and checking with my colleague, however, I realized that we owned a facsimile of this edition, which former librarians must have confused for the actual incunabulum (a mistake we estimate must have occurred in the 1970s). Dr. Eisermann was kind enough to update the list of our current incunabula holdings based on information I sent after my visit.

For the next part, I was given two tours. The first one was a tour of the vast Unter den Linden building. My guide was Ms. Bergemann, who was extremely knowledgeable about the history of the building and showed me a selection of illustrations and photographs from different periods. I had the opportunity to visit some of the public sections, like the monumental new Reading Room which replaced the old dome damaged during the Second World War, as well as some “backstage” sections, including current stacks and future storage areas. The building will be undergoing renovation for another few years, but many sections have been completed and are gradually being equipped for library use.

The next tour, given by Dr. Eisermann and several staff members from the Incunabula Department, was quite special, as it involved visiting the vaults where the documents are stored. Aside from the Gutenberg Bible, the collection includes many first and rare editions, some of which may be unique in the world. As Dr. Eisermann explained, the library's acquisition policy is currently focused on breadth, i.e. obtaining incunabula produced by all printers active during the relevant period.

My following meeting was with Dr. Duntze, a researcher who specializes in early German type. Dr. Duntze demonstrated how to accurately identify the printer of an edition based on the particularities of the type using Konrad Haebler's “M” type chart and

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<http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/about-the-library/abteilungen/handschriften/recherche-und-ressourcen/in-kunabelnwiegendrucke/bestandsuebersicht/>

his *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*. It was quite an amazing demonstration which reinforced the necessity of developing similar research tools for other categories of type. After I returned home, I took part in the evaluation of roughly 80 volumes from our collection and made a point of asking the evaluator, Dr. Doru Bădără, whether similar tools have been developed for Cyrillic types or for our transitional alphabet (which combined Cyrillic and Latin characters). As far as I understand, a project of this type has been attempted, but not completed due to its enormous complexity and certain technical limitations. Hopefully, some progress will be made in the future.

My day at Haus Unter den Linden ended with a tour of the digitization lab given by Ms. Rönnefahrt. While our own access to digitization equipment of this quality and sophistication is extremely limited, I had visited a similar lab in the past, during my studies at Leiden University, which included two courses at the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* in The Hague. However, this was the first time I genuinely understood the purpose and function of each piece of equipment. The scanning equipment in the Unter den Linden lab can accommodate a wide range of material, regardless of size, script/language, or conservation state. It was definitely an informative tour, and especially so for someone who has had very little involvement in digitization projects. Unfortunately, I do not believe that our institution will have access to this type of equipment in the near future unless substantial public and private funds can be procured.

3.5. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

On my last day at the *Staatsbibliothek*, I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Müller, Coordinator of the Kalliope project. With a database of 1+ million records based on the card catalogs of more than 100 libraries, archives, and research institutions, Kalliope represents the central access point for estate documents and autographs in Germany. Currently, approximately 50 institutions are currently using Kalliope's interface to record and update their data⁵.

In addition to offering a standard cataloging interface for librarians, Kalliope allows researchers to track documents associated with a particular person even when the former are part of separate collections and held at various institutions across the country. This is an essential service, as some documents may be part of obscure regional collections and therefore difficult to track down, if not difficult to access per se.

Considering Kalliope's extraordinary utility, I suggested to Mr. Müller that perhaps English and French versions could be produced and the project itself extended to include non-German institutions. The inclusion of other European collections in the Kalliope network would give researchers unprecedented access to estate documents and would allow estates which are currently in a fragmented state to be virtually “reunited.”

⁵ <http://kalliope.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>

In a Romanian context, Kalliope's usefulness would be truly exceptional, given the current lack of centralization and the fact that not every library has an online catalog available (although most, if not all, should have a digital catalog available on-site). In some cases, however, if a researcher does not already know where a certain document is held, it can be exceedingly difficult to locate this type of information (and especially so if the document or estate is held at a small regional library or a monastic library).

After my appointment with Mr. Müller, I met with Prof. Overgaauw for a final discussion regarding my visit. Prof. Overgaauw kindly offered to assist us in the future, and we discussed the possibility of my returning at a later date in order to gain some experience working with Kalliope.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of my visit to the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin* was to familiarize myself with the organization, workflow, and projects of special collection departments within a major research institution. At the same time, I was interested in learning more about the academic and professional backgrounds of various researchers and librarians, and in understanding their place within the organization.

I was very much impressed with the scale and thoroughness of projects developed and maintained by the *Staatsbibliothek*, and I believe that their relevance and utility extends far beyond the German-speaking world. As someone with very limited knowledge of German, I felt truly privileged to be introduced to these projects and research tools, some of which I may be consulting on a regular basis in the future.

Since my studies and interests have taken me mostly to English-speaking countries, I had not had much opportunity to interact with German colleagues in the past. Aside from the fact that everyone I met with during my visit spoke flawless English and appeared to be highly qualified for his or her particular role, I also discovered that several had completed university or postgraduate studies abroad and were quite invested in and knowledgeable about other cultures. It is rather disheartening to me that our chances of attracting colleagues of this caliber are currently rather limited, despite the fact that a considerable number of Romanians complete their degrees abroad and are often recognized for their academic and professional achievements. However, most choose to not return due to the limited professional opportunities and the unacceptably low salaries available to them in Romania at this time (and especially in this particular field).

As someone who works in the field of cultural heritage, I believe that re-discovering our culture, which was so brutally erased during the communist era, is absolutely critical. My generation, along with younger generations, has grown up with little sense of a true cultural identity, with a falsified history, and, most importantly, with

a deep-seated feeling of shame regarding our status and potential as a nation. While I do not support nationalism in any form, I was impressed with the genuine enjoyment and appreciation of one's culture I have witnessed in other countries, both in Europe and overseas. The fact that all of our exhibitions, which tend to focus on the history of our city, tend to meet with resounding success and interest is very encouraging, however, and it is my hope that within one or two generations, we will all start to share that optimistic outlook. I also hope that more of those who have had the opportunity to experience other cultures and points of view will choose to return and engage in teaching others and in bringing our cultural institutions in line with their European counterparts.

I would like to thank *Bibliothek & Information International* for their financial support, without which my professional visit would not have been possible. This experience has provided an amazing window into German research, librarianship, and cultural heritage preservation, and I feel both privileged and humbled for having been selected to take part in this program.