Digitisation of Library Collections in the Zips Region (Slovakia)

Susanne Riedel
Friedrich Summann
Universitätsbibliothek Bielefeld

Library collections of great value are not only found in the wellknown and reputable libraries and museums of European cultural hot spots but also in places you would not think of in the first place.
A good example and even a proof of this claim is a very interesting collection of important scripts in Slovakia, more precisely in the Zips region.
This region is located in the Eastern part of Slovakia with its cultural center Kesmark (Slovak: Kesmarok), its former administrative center Leutschau (Levoca) and further cities like Poprad, Zipser Neudorf, Preschau (Presov), and others.
It has been an intercept point of different cultures, religions and peoples for hundreds of years. The German population - which we focus on in this context – started to immigrate into this area in the 12th century as a result of recruitment activities of the Hungarian kings. They built up a prospering self-governed community and experienced cultural ascendency for a long time. At that time they started to establish extremely rich literary collections reflecting the currents of thought of that time. The collections became school libraries like the one in Kesmark or church libraries like the ones in Leutschau or Zipser Neudorf. The growing libraries have been carefully fostered and quite often amended by valuable donations from wealthy citizens.
Very obviously documented is the vivid cultural and peaceful interchange which was cultivated with other countries. During the early days of collection development emphasis was placed on German-language or Latin manuscripts and early imprints.
In the ensuing centuries numerous works originating from other European cultural centers were included, in the 19th century mainly Hungarian literature, for example.

Apart from the most important school library in this context, the **Lycial Library Kesmark,** the **Collegial Library of the Zips Chapter Preschau (Presov),** another very important ecclesiastical library, the **Lycial Library Leutschau (Levoca)**, and the **Seminary Library of the Zips Chapter** and the **Library of the Zips Chapter** have been included in the digitisation project.

To give an example: The Lycial Library Kesmark has probably been founded in the 14th century and has served as a library of different school types ever since. As early as the 16th century it was already renowned cross-country and beyond for its religious tolerance and therefore had students from all over Central Europe. At that time the collection comprised of about 500 vols. and a librarian took care of it. In the course of time the collection grew remarkably by absorbing complete dismantled libraries on the one hand; on the other hand alumni supported the library by financial donations. Nowadays the library holds about 70,000 vols.

In order to advertise these collections to a general public the **Zips Libraries Catalogue** has been created. It represents the result of a joint project of three partners: the National Library of Slovakia in Martin (SR), Bielefeld University Library and the Verein zur Erforschung und Förderung interkultureller Beziehungen in der Slowakei (Association for Research on Intercultural Relations and Support in Slovakia).
Because of the geographical position of the holdings in question it seemed reasonable to create electronic access to it. Therefore 51,000 bibliographic records of the most valuable works were taken from the old, preserved catalogues and provided in MARC format. At the same time 22 works were selected for digitisation. Bielefeld University Library was asked to undertake the task of processing this data and creating a user-friendly and easy to use application which could be run on the web.

For that purpose the catalogue data were processed with technical equipment available in Bielefeld and thus transformed to a web based full text database which is capable of searching and retrieving the bibliographic information included. The database can handle search requests for usual bibliographic information such as author, title, publication year, place of publication, publisher and – in addition – even the language and the century of publication (www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/english/databases/zips/, Figure 1). If in the course of a search one of the 22 digitised works has been retrieved, a hyperlink is provided at the bottom the bibliographic record, so that the digital version can be accessed by just one click.

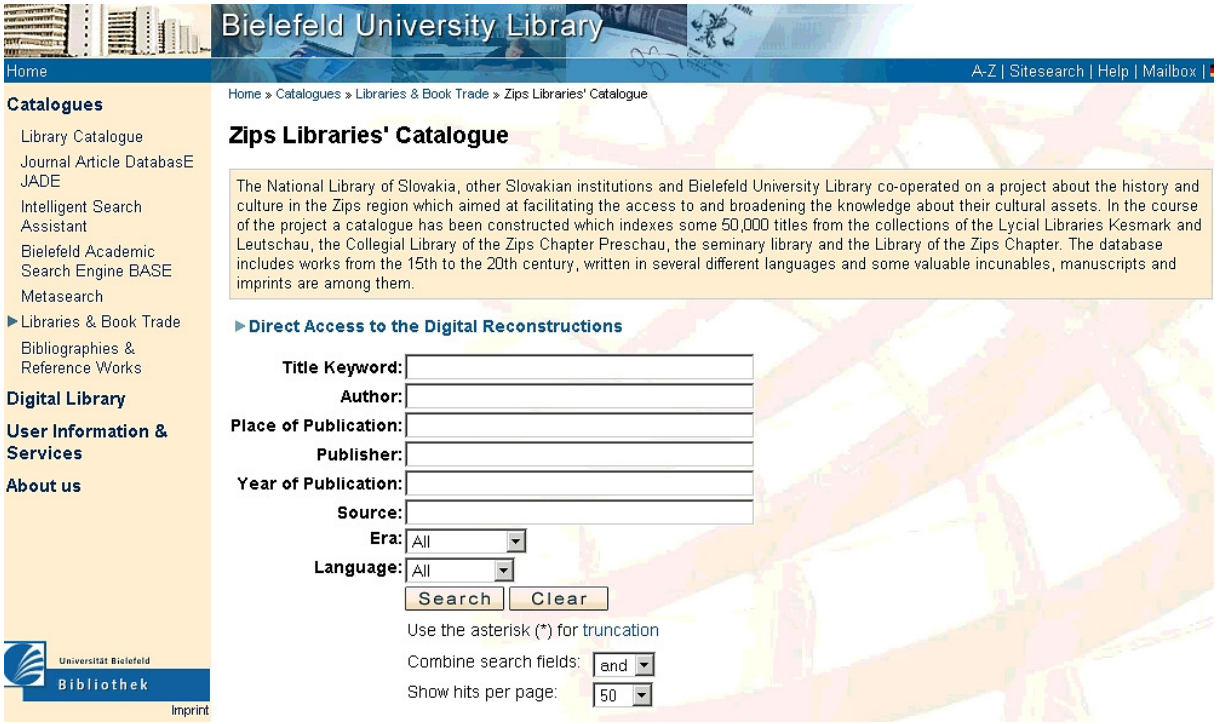


Figure 1: Start Page and Search Mask

The collections included in the database originate numerically and geographically as follows (class marks in brackets):

- Lycial Library Kesmark: 40,000 volumes (Lyc.kn.Kez)
- Lycial Library Leutschau: 451 volumes
- Collegial Library Preschau 2,670 volumes (Pr. Kol)
- Library of the Zips Chapter 6,700 volumes
- Seminary library of the Zips Chapter: 700 volumes (MS-SNV)

Out of these, 15 volumes date from the 15th century, 4500 from the 16th century and some 10,000 from the 17th century. About half of the works is published in German, Latin works amount to about 21,000 volumes and some of them are bilingual. The number of documents published in a particular language reflect in a way the political changes; the Hungarian-language titles (2500 in number) have been published between the 18th and 20th century and the Slovak-language titles (350 in number) almost exclusively in the 20th century. The early days of the library are documented by about 100 incunables and manuscripts.

When it came to digitisation, the most valuable and most interesting works have been selected. A Slovak company was commissioned to undertake the digitisation. The works

have been digitised in a high-resolution format to assure a basis for longterm archiving purposes. Reflecting and according to the current technological state-of-the-art in terms of use, the images were supplied as JPEG files. Included is the javascript based navigation environment, conveniently presented in three different languages: German, English and Slovak. This - from the technical point of view - rather simple solution consists of a clearly arranged bibliographic description and navigation arrows which allow the user to turn pages and browse through cover, board paper and body of the book.
In addition, single pages can be addressed directly through an entry field. On clicking the arrows, the respective page will be displayed in the frame on the right side. All pages are scanned in colour which is especially reasonable for the artistic illuminations and decorated initials. (Figure 2).
Full-texts are not available. The javascript based HTML user interface was provided on CD-ROM and thus can easily be used with a web browser on a local drive. The application may be installed platform-independently on a web server. Bielefeld University Library, for example, provides this application to its users on a Sun Solaris server.

The works listed below are the ones which have been selected from the Lycial Library Kesmark for digitisation (www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/english/diglib/kesmark/):

- Albertus Magnus: Compendium theologicae veritatis
- Antoninus Florentinus : Confessionale : Defecerunt. Titulus de restitutionibus (1492)
- Augustinus Episcopus : Regula
- Barth, Carolus : Antiphonale benedictino monasticum schutterense conscriptum (Manuscript dated 1508)
- Eschuid, Johannes: Summa astrologiae iudicialis (1489)
- Felix Colonia, Statute der Stadt Köln (Manuscript, middle of 15th century)
- Ficinus Florentinus, Marsilius : De triplici vita (non post 1498)
- Gebetsbüchlein (7a) // Gebetsbüchlein (7b)
- Hällische Chronik – eine Chronik von der Stadt Halle [i.e. Schwäbisch-Hall], 1494 – 1545
- Horatius Flaccus, Quintus: Opera cum annotationibus Jacobi Locheri Philomusi (1498)
- Macer, Floridus: De viribus herbarum
- Maximilian I.: Contra falsas Francorum litteras pro defensione honoris serenissimi Romanorum regis (non ante 1492)
- Modus Antonim abbreviaturas (1492)
- Psalterium: psalmi, hymni et canones Sct. Missae in stylo gregoriana (Ms 1727)
- Rolewinck, Wernerus: Fasciculus te[m)por[um]: omnes antiquorum cronicas Antonimi[n]s
- Rolewinck, Wernerus: Fasciculum temporum (1474)
- Sammelwerk über Gesundheitslehre (turn of the 14th/15th century)
- Thann, Martin: Gesangbuch (Kantional) (Manuscript dated 1728)
- Thomas de Aquino: Summa totius logicae (1496)
- Trithemius, Johannes: Institutio vitae sacerdotalis (post 20.X.1494)
- Vegius, Maphaeus: Vita divi Antonimi

(As of February 2005)

~ felix colonia ~
~ statutes of the city ~
~ of cologne (205) ~

Author: Anonym
Title: Felix Colonia Statutes of the city of Cologne (205)

Information: Transcript of statutes of the city of Cologne from 1437. Ed.: Akten zur Geschichte der Verfassun und Verwaltung der Stadt Koln im 14. Und 15. Jahrhundert, 2. Band, s. 631 – 700. Porov. Reincke, H.: Kolner, Soester, Lübecker und Hamburger Recht in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen. In.: Die Stadt des Mittelalters, zweiter Band, Recht und Verfassung. Darmstadt 1972, s. 136. Edition from 1437 according to prints of Walter Stein.

Technical Information: Text written by one hand, bastarda cursiva, red rubrication. Codex of German origin. According to script, it originated in mid-15th century.

From: -

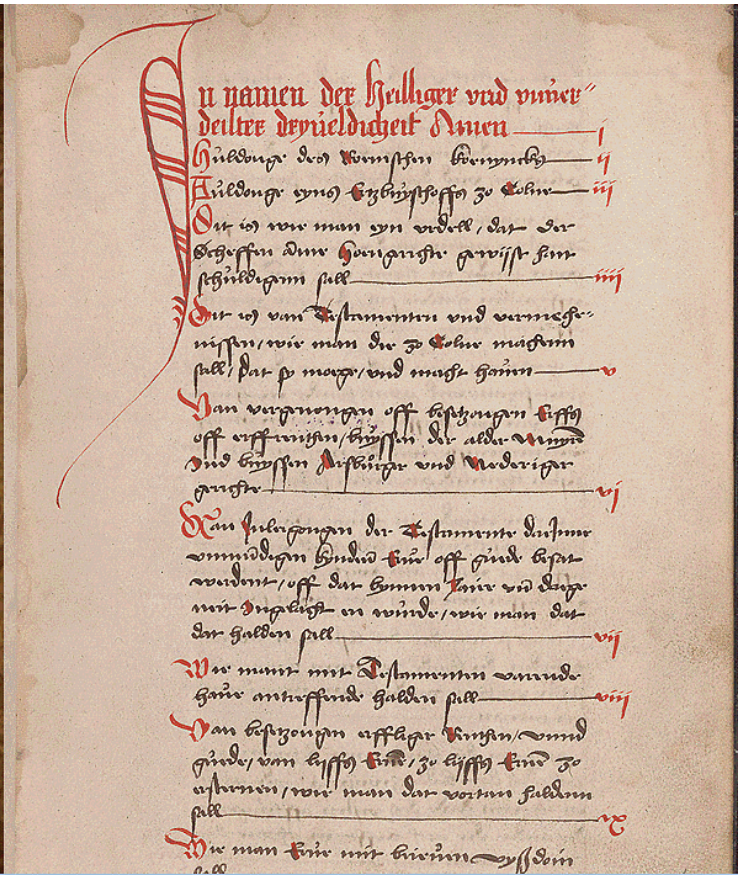
Condition: Book in dark brown leather binding with blind printing, original state.

Number of pages: 192
Size: 21 x 30 cm

Pages
1
[OK]

Cover
1
[OK]

Board paper
1
[OK]



BARTH carolus
~ antiphonale benedictino ~
~ monasticum schutterense ~
~ conscriptum ~

Author:
Anonym

Title:
Antiphonale benedictino monasticum Schutterense conscriptum … (Ms 661a)

Information:
Manuscript 1508. Accessible literature and aids could not give us a reply in what circumstances and when the work was written.

Technical Information: -

From:
Manuscript obtained by a bibliophile Theodor de Jóny who later bequeathed it to the library.

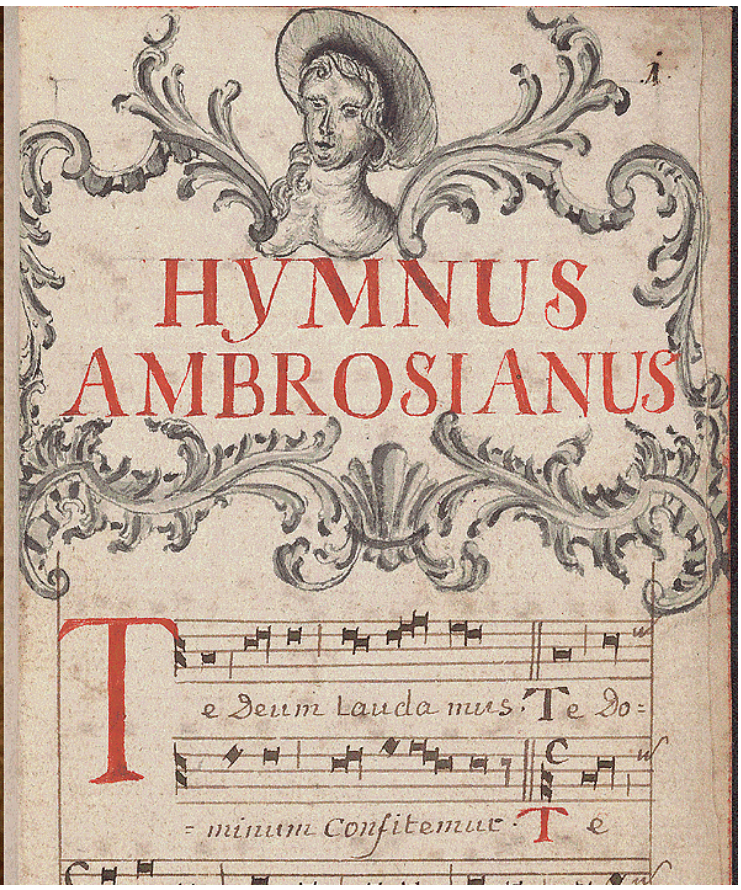
Condition:
Original state, unrestored, dark brown leather binding.

Number of pages: 396
Size: 11 x 18 cm

Pages
1
[OK]

Cover
1
[OK]

Board paper
1
[OK]



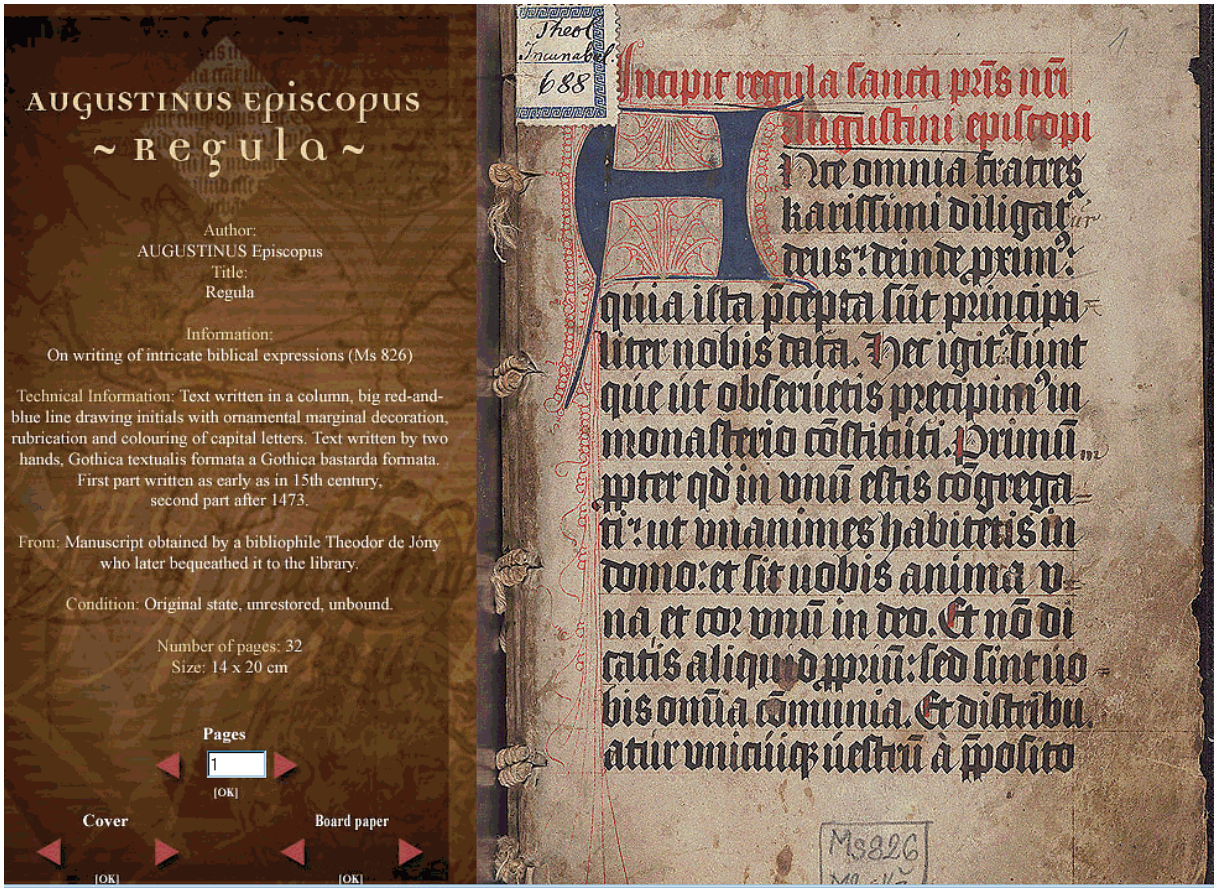


Figure 2: Examples of digital reconstructions