



Heritage received and multiplied: Russian art libraries as collectors and translators

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Specialized libraries in Russia, as a rule, don't have an economic and structural independence, but function as departments of other institutions: museums, theatres, educational or research institutes, universal libraries. Among the specialized art studies' libraries, having the status of self-dependent structures, two are most influential as far as the scale value and number of their collections are considered. These two are: Russian State Art Library (Moscow) and St.-Petersburg State Theatre Library. The first one is of federal subordination, the second – of municipal one.

However, irrespectively of the level of subordination, both libraries have common functions. Although the histories of their development are different, as well, as the ways of solving their practical problems or organizing their collections, the common character of their general mission always remained firm: both satisfy scholarly, artistic, informative and aesthetic demands of their users by means of those documents' and information resources, that were received, preserved and described.

Since their very first years, these collections were never reduced to purely theatrical matters. By now no thorough research on Russian drama or on theatre history can be accomplished, ignoring these collections.

Their purpose is in serving the demands in the sphere of theatre, and, wider, the sphere of visual arts as a whole. Common also is the readers' contingent. Not taking into account its official name, or its theatrical specialization, the St.-

Petersburg Theatre Library functions as a municipal public art library. Acquisition trend, which is social sciences, as well as the book stock's content goes well with the demands of any scholar.

Libraries serve artists of all art genres, students of artistic schools, specialists in humanities. What is typical of our readers, is, in certain occasions, a desire to work with an authentic document, not with its copy, with the book, and not with its electronic version, This affects both the acquisition practices and the service system.

Collections of these two libraries look like a synthesis of a library and a museum. Significant changes nowadays occur in the tasks of libraries, in demands made to the trend of acquisition, to contents of their stocks and their number, to their preservation and their description, to scientific and reference services.

St.-Petersburg State Theatre Library, one of the oldest in Russia, is inseparably linked with the history of Russian theatre. Officially, the date of August 30, 1756, when the Decree of Empress Elizaveta Petrovna on founding Russian theatre "to perform tragedies and comedies" was released, is considered its birthday.

St.-Petersburg State Theatre Library, that appeared as the repertoire library, attached to the first Russian theatre (1756) started as the collection of hand-written plays, performed by the troupe of first Russian actor Fedor Volkov.

Translators of foreign plays, as well as those, who made copies for the company members, were its first librarians. The archival data prove as the starting moment for founding the library the requirement of depositing plays of current repertoire and of serving professional St.-Petersburg companies.

By the end of the XIXth century the collection of the Library was enlarged by plays from repertoire of German, French and Italian companies acting on the Imperial stage. Along with plays, they started collecting ballet and opera librettos, programmes and posters of the productions, costumes designs, personal archives of prominent actors and directors.

This was still a book deposit, belonging to the Directorial Board of Imperial theatres, with an access for a very limited number of theatre people.

The revolution of 1917 has completely changed the traditional atmosphere of the library. It opened its doors not only for experts but for every person, eager to learn on theatrical matters. Today, among our users are not only prominent actors and directors, stage designers and theatre scholars, but also students of art schools, those, who will proceed the matter of the theatre further on, who do their research work.

The most significant collections, having historical and artistic value, are as follows:

- manuscript repertoire and censorial manuscript collection of Russian theatre (1756-1917). Including manuscripts of A. Chekhov, L. Tolstoy, A. Griboedov, A. Ostrovski, etc.;
- censorial manuscript collection of national plays in the languages of peoples of former Russian Empire (1865-1917);
- collection of French dramas of XVI-XVII centuries from prince A.Ya. Lobanov-Rostovski;
- repertoire of Petersburg French company;
- repertoire of Petersburg German company
- “epistolaria” (letters of M. Schepkin, V. Komissarzhevskaya, F. Chaliapin, E. Duse, etc.
- personal archives of prominent people of Russian stage (M. Savina, M. Fokin, etc.).
- “G.M. Polaychek’s variety museum”, including war diaries of variety actors, photos of front-line actors’ brigades, advertisements, performances’ properties (for instance, the singer Klavdia Shulzhenko’s “blue handkerchief”);
- stage design department of St.-Petersburg GTB, organized on the basis of collection of Mounting library of Imperial theatres (1868) contains illustrative material on history of stage and everyday costume, interiors, furniture, mode of life, from XVIIIth century up to present times. Of special value are authentic stage and costume designs by P.-G. Gonzago, A.A. Roller, V.A. Gartman, A.I. Charlemagne, I.A. Vsevolozhski, E.P. Ponomarev, A.N. Benois, L.S. Bakst, A. Ya. Golovin, K.A. Korovin, B.I. Anisfeld for opera, ballet and drama productions. When restoring ballet and opera classical productions, contemporary stage directors of Bolshoi and Mariinski theatres turn on to drafts of their famous predecessors.

Since 1994 the Library participates in the work of municipal expert-purchasing commission. During these years purchased and joined the stock were: manuscripts by Jakob Schtelin “Notes on theatre” and Leonti Benois “Memoirs about major theatrical events in St.-Petersburg in second half of the XIXth century”; materials from Mikhail Chekhov’s archive (letters to his disciples, his memoirs of life in Berlin and Paris); correspondence of the ballet historian Yu. Slonimski and V. Fokin; archive of actor V. Strzhelchik; letters of ballet dancer T. Karsavina; stage designs of the most prominent St.-Petersburg masters S.M.

Yunovich, T.G. Bruni, M.F. Kitaev, E.S. Kochergin, M.Ts. Azizyan, O.S. Savarenskaya, A.V. Orlov, I.G. Cherednikova and others.

The stock of manuscript and archival materials and the collection of works by stage designers go on being enlarged not only through purchasing but also thanks to our users' gifts.

The archive of a prominent theatre teacher and Stanislavski' associate Nikolai Demidov, delivered by one of his disciples, is published by the Library in four volumes. The edition has immediately become a bibliographical rarity.

Since XVIIIth century up to now the Library's collection has been replenished by collectioners' gifts: actors, directors, choreographers, theatre scholars and theatre amateurs: V.V. Bibikov, I.F. Manujlov, M.M. Fokin, S.L. Bertenson, V.V. Protopopov, A.E. Molchanov, etc. Books from these collections often have autographs, book-plates, owner's marginals, which makes them still more valuable. As, for instance, the collection of outstanding actress M.G. Savina contains books with inscriptions by I.S. Turgenev, K.R., I.A. Goncharov and other Russian writers. More than 15.000 books were presented to the Library By N.N. Khodotov, the actor of Alexandrinski theatre. They became the basis for several new sections in the Library.

Today the Library acquires editions on theatre, music, choreography, fine arts, social sciences (history, ethnography, religion), in different languages.

Since 1930-s acquisition of the stock of contemporary literature in Russian (plays and books on theatre) went on upon the principle of "a deposit copy ". It was systematically replenished. For the present time the Library has worked out a dynamic Trend of acquisition, based on thematic approach: local lore, books studies, historic editions and others, taking into account the Library's collection. The Trend of acquisition includes type aspect (printed documents, manuscripts, audiovisual, electronic) and typological one (scholarly, popular, educational, referential, bibliographical).

Following the worked out rules and continuing traditions. St.-Petersburg Theatre Library collects documents, answering demands of today users.

Such a detailed enumeration of unique materials, accumulated at the Library during 250 years of its existence, was necessary for a better understanding of the urgent task, that the Library faced: preservation and conservation of its collection. Since 2000 the Library receives from the Ministry of Culture of Russia a grant for its restoration work through the "National Program of preservation of libraries' collections". Thanks to this donation photo archive of the celebrated choreographer Mikhail Fokin was restored. Materials of this archive were exhibited at international Russian Seasons' memorial events.

Together with the development of electronic technique, new devices of stock's preservation came into being. In 2006 the Library initiated the project "Electronic reserve". Here are collected electronic copies of rare art periodicals, of authentic stage designs, archive documents and letters by theatre people, as well as valuable books in bad condition through intensive use.

The periodicals collection include more than 200 titles of Russian and foreign newspapers and magazines, including Petersburg editions of XVIIIth, XIXth and the beginning of XXth centuries, such as "Spectator", "Coryphaeus", "Drama Herald", "Fine Arts Magazine", "Pantheon", "Theatrical community", "The World of Art". Complete sets of magazines "Imperial Theatres' Annual", "Theatre and Art", "Apollo", "The Prompter", "Blue Blouze", "Theatrical community", of newspaper "Theatre review" (more than 300.000 pages in total) were digitized to DVD format. Activity of enlarging our "Electronic reserve" will be continued.

The Database "One hundred years of French fashion, 1812-1912", elaborated by staff members of the Library, as an auxiliary material for stage-designers and students, is exhibited on our Library's site.

Reserve electronic stock of authentic stage designs, includes by now 23.000 items.

The Library's plans include two projects.

First: transferring in digital form the archive of photos, among them photos of actors of the past with inscriptions and scenes from celebrated productions of the Imperial theatres.

Second: "The World of Fashion". Following the outburst of interest to the history of costume, we are going to transfer in digital form the very first French fashion magazines (the beginning of the XIX-th century), which are not only bibliographical rarities but also objects of art.

The start of new projects as well as the development of "old" ones depend, certainly, upon financial support. All these programmes are expensive, and the grants come in parts which causes the work's prolongation.

With rare and valuable documents comprising one third part of our stock we consider it our duty to continue the work of our predecessors in replenishing the collection.

Nowadays Theatre Library is not just a deposit of unique theatre collections, included into the reference book "World Theatre Collections", but an up-to-date research and information centre. The function of collecting and preserving documents and information on theatre matters remains constant and predominant.

Thanks to the Library many problems connected with a choice of repertoire, mounting productions or shooting films or TV-films, are successfully solved.

The story of Russian State Art Library is unusual. Founded in 1921 by the board of directors of State Maly theatre as a department to provide a support in theatrical education and studies it has developed into a self-sufficient and highly important librarian institution,. Thus it was base on the ideas of the professors of Maly theatre school. Its book stock, collected by such prominent people as the Director of Maly theatre, actor and stage director A.I. Sumbatov-Yuzhin, professors and academicians A.A.Grushko, V.K. Moller, K.V. Sivkov, D.N. Kardovski, N.A. Popov, was aimed at assisting directors, actors, stage designers in solving diverse literary, historical and artistic problems.

Even in the starting years, the Library was characterized by the diversity of sources of acquisition. It was based on private collections of its founders, all of them being exquisite experts in art and art editions. Scholars of world fame provided different collections: Pavel P. Pashkov – the iconographical one, N.I. Pozharski – the bibliographical. Great support was provided by People Commissar for education A.V. Lunacharski.

The library received valuable pre-revolutionary collections from the State Book Fund, Maly theatre and the Moscow Society of Dramatists and Composers, as well as special collections of lithographed plays. Later came books from Theatre department of the State Academy of Art Sciences, private collections of A.P. Lenski, S.S. Mokulski, S.S. Ignatov, Yu. I. Slonimski, N.D. Volkov, M.N. and A.P. Gazievs.

The Library's collection includes books, printed as early as the XVIth century (the earliest foreign edition dates 1519), as well as the old Russian books. Of special interest – copies of plays with marginals and autographs. There are also more than 2500 in hand-written plays including ones with inscripts. The importance of this collection for the history of culture can hardly be overestimated, since the major part of texts of Russian drama exists only as manuscripts.

Since the Library has acquired the status of a State one, its challenges as well as its potentials have significantly increased. Gradually, step by step the riches our library possesses, the services it provides to many kinds of users and various innovations have turned Moscow Theatre Library into a library on all aspects of Arts. We continue what has been the tradition initiated by the founders - to collect documents on all Arts/Nowadays acquisition at the Russian State Art Library includes a very broad specter of social sciences, dealing with theatre, drama, cinema, painting, decorative and applied arts, history and theory of literature, cultural studies, sociology of art, Russian and world history, ethnography, religion, etc.

Special mission is assigned to specialized iconographic collections of art-objects – albums, Russian and foreign engravings, post-cards, reproductions, photos and other fine arts' documents, starting as early as the XVIIIth century. Quite a number of them having a historic value. The importance of this collection lies in its museum-like character: the collection is organized according to a special methodology, different from traditional approaches used for book collections. Here book sources are analysed (classified) not following genre thematic (subject) principle, but the iconographic one.

This specialized stock includes objects, belonging to different types of art: engravings, post-cards, applied graphic arts, drawings, photo documents, collectionary albums, original drafts, reproductions. Iconographic documents of Maly theatre' collection have become the basis of this stock.

Art of engraving is presented by collections of M. Zagorski, S. Zimin, P. Grachev, N. Volkov. V.Lenski, A.Fomin. In 1927-1928 the Library has received separate *sheets' editions* from Leningrad book collection, including, Prince P.G. Oldenburg's collection of English engravings.

Also unique are portraits, engraved by E.F.Ziewert (1913) with his pencil notes on the history of engravings, as well as reprints to A.Schoonebek's book "The history of military orders and ranks" (Moscow: Oruzhejnaja Palata, 1710). These rarities were bought at second-hand booksellers.

Actually lots of items were purchased for the Library's stock at antiquarian booksellers (especially in 1960-70-s), but, following old tradition, major part of illustrative documents were gifts, as, for example, test prints of I.A. Fomin's engravings (1912), with the author's notes. Nowadays, this collection includes items of XVI-XXth centuries, among them ones, belonging to Russian, Italian, German, French, Dutch, Polish schools, Japanese and Chinese editions.

Through partnership with many second-hand and antiquarian shops and art galleries, the Library constantly enriches its collection, thus in 2007 some sheets, belonging to the primary specimens of Russian lithography, were purchased.

Primarily the Library's collection of photos started from private collections of A.A. Fomin, Pavel P. Pashkov and other members of the Library's staff, as well as some belonging to actors, stage directors and designers, who attended it regularly. Especially precious are copies with autographs. The collection of photos includes works by I.G. Djagovchenko, E. Mrozovskaya, B. Fabisovich, K.A. Fischer and many others. Significant part of the collection are theatre photos, presenting roles and life episodes of L. Sobinov, F. Chaliapin, N. Obukhova, M. Ermolova, A. Yuzhin, I. Smoktunovski, A. Pavlova, T. Karsavina, G. Ulanova, etc.

The collection of photo-productions, organized in 1920-s, also has a huge informative valuable. Among them – productions, created with a direct

collaboration of the Library. This collection includes not only widely known theatres and studios, but also ones that sank into oblivion. These materials are valuable as documentary sources.

Replenishing of these collections went different ways: the Library either purchased them from photographers, or initiated a special photo sessions at particular theatres.

Developed in 1920-s, the photo collection was significantly replenished in 1950-s by new acquisitions. It was enriched by photos of foreign actors in roles, which were given to our Library from iconographic department of Literary Museum. A rather unusual acquisition device: a museum transfers materials, not connected with the main subject of its collection.

The percent of gifts within this collection is high. The set of photos, made by a long-time attendant of the Library S. Lisevitski, which he presented in the 1960-s is an interesting information source, a life chronicle of Moscow, and other cities of Russia, the history of houses, streets, monuments.

In 1970-s the Library received another gift: a unique collection of photos, done by a well-known master M. Sherling. Among them – photos of Fedor Chaliapin in his roles, of Maxim Gorki, painters Ilya Repin, Diego Rivera, Isaak Brodski, ballet dancers T. Karsavina, G. Ulanova, etc.

In 1980 the prominent bibliographer E.S. Kulikova presented the Library with a part of photo archive, belonging to Marius Petipa's family. Same year one more gift was acquired: P.I. Tchaikovsky's photos with autographs. Theatre photographer V. Petrusova, besides her own works, has granted the Library with the ones of her husband, an outstanding war photo-journalist G. Petrusov. This is a highly valuable collection, since it contains original documentary evidence of the World War II.

Since 2002 the stock of theatre photographs started a new life. Practically all Moscow theatres, as well as the photographers, attached to them, have responded to the Library's appeal of replenishing this collection. Thanks to Moscow Art theatre's photographer I.A. Alexandrov the Library acquired the latest photos of the outstanding stage director and actor O.N. Efremov. By now the stock of photos contains 30 000 items.

Being also enlarged is the post-cards' collection – exciting and thematically diverse, including not only Russian, but also foreign items. This stock is fully based upon private collections, as, for instance, the collection, presented to the Library by G.V. Osipov, and consisting of 23.000 items (1974).

By now this stock includes art post-cards, caricatures, cheap popular prints, Soviet and German post-cards of the war period (1940-s).

Gradually, other significant trends of acquisition came into being. Thus, in early 2000-s special attention was turned to enlarging the collection of iconographic materials of museum importance and value.

Among them are, first of all, original works. The stock started with theatre designs from the collection of Moscow Maly theatre. Step by step it was replenished by works of stage designers, specimens of ornaments, furniture, cloths, etc. For many years Pavel P. Pashkov compiled this collection through his scholarly searches and finally presented it as his gift to the Library. Collection of this department of the Library includes drafts by N. Akimov, V. Khodasevich, T. Bruni, A. Tyshler, other artists, famous and minor.

Following the tradition of acquisition of theatre drafts is a matter of principle for librarians of RGBI. Nowadays this collection includes works by such prominent stage designers as S. Barkhin, M. Kitaev, E. Kapelyush, E. Kochergin, M. Azizyan, O. Shejntsis, N. Shnajder, etc. Recently, the collection is replenished also by works of film designers. We purchase designs at art galleries or directly from authors or their relatives.

Both our libraries, being the keepers of valuable and historically important collections, develop at present moment two predominant tasks: keeping and enlarging of their specialized stocks. Innovations, initiated in book-publishing and information sphere in the beginning of the new century, have demanded of librarians, dealing with acquisition function, the elaboration of adequately innovative mechanisms in their everyday activity. In order to follow the traditions, introduced by our predecessors, a thoroughly worked out concept on the new stage of stocks' acquisition is required. This everyday practical work is determined by a set of documents, providing continuity with general principles of acquisition. These documents were not easily and immediately ready. It took time to summarize and comprehend experience of previous epochs – and to elaborate contemporary methodologies and rules of acquisition. Further specialization of our collections and development of different types of informative services in the librarian sphere have become the decisively important factors.

A specialized library of art studies (such as S.-Petersburg State Theatre Library, or Russian State Art Library) enlarges its collection with modern editions in accordance with its strictly elaborated specific character and following general instructions. Here are the basic acquisition principles, common for both our libraries: completeness, in accordance with the demands of major groups of users; provision of continuity of collections; systematic character; diversity of sources (purchase and gifts).

However, the special character of S.-Petersburg Theatre Library as the library of municipal subordination makes it obligatory to follow the regional principle as well.

The instructive document “Profile of Acquisition”, worked out by RGBI, describes the general purpose of it: administrating and control of development of the Library’s stock as its nucleus resource. This “Profile” also formulates principles of selecting editions for the Library: effective acquisition of the up-to-date literature, based upon a systematic analysis of the users’ inquiries; scientific significance and urgency of the purchased documents; optimum number of copies for the documents, belonging to library’s leading trend, this number being defined after thorough research of users’ demands; high value of the purchased documents – scholarly, informative, cultural-historic; unique character of editions from the art of printing point of view.

Such documents provide a mechanism for the acquisition in nowadays situation, when even the Law of “a deposit copy” no longer works, when libraries found themselves in situation of economic instability, when the old financial mechanisms have been completely substituted by new ones, not yet reliable and complete.

Libraries strive to realize the following tasks: providing proportional development of all component parts of their stocks; providing systematic character and continuity of acquisition; reduction of subjective approach to the acquisition process.

For these reasons the role of the staff of the acquisition department as experts in search, and selection, documents and resources, significantly increases.

Following traditions, established by predecessors, RGBI purchases both mass editions and rare ones. Among new acquisitions, several are quite unique, as, for instance, “Album of specimens of wool cloth for the uniform of marshals and generals of the Soviet Army”, with a signature of Marshal G.K. Zhukov.

Art objects of museum-like character are purchased from their authors such as E.Maklakova’s costumes designs to the film “Peter the Great”(USA-USSR; film directors Lawrence Shiller and Martin Chomski). For these costumes she received the “Emmy” award of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (1986) and the Great prize of designers of California. E. Maklakova has worked with major film and theatre directors, cameramen and designers. Her designs are kept at Paris Cinematheque, at the museum-estate “Yasnaya Polyana”, at the Museum of the Bolshoi theatre, at the A.S. Pushkin museum and in private collections. Her personal costumes’ exhibitions were held in Moscow, Los Angeles, Köln.

Valuable are works by costumes designer L. Novi, some presented to the Library, some purchased. Among them designs to Andrey Tarkovski’s film “Andrey Rublev” (“Passions after Andrey”) – the FIPRESSI prize at Cannes festival 1969. His costumes design to S. Bondarchuk’s film “Boris Godunov” (USSR/Czechoslovakia/West Berlin) also have an artistic importance. They were

exhibited at art exhibitions at International Film Festival at Berlin (1988), Cannes Film Festival (1989), together with costumes designs to the film “Tehran-43” (USSR/France/Switzerland/Spain,1981), coproduction of “Mosfilm”, “Mediterraneo Cine”, “Pro Dis Film”).

Librarians nowadays try their best to purchase collections. Unique are collections of V.Kulikov (1930-2003), an artist and a world-scale scholar. It includes books, post-cards and magazines. Most valuable are Kulikov’s colored and black-and-white designs of uniforms, badges of rank and equipment of Soviet Armed Forces in 1918-1945. The collection includes notebooks (manuscript of a book) “Russian Army” (“L’Armée Russe”), presented to Kulikov by émigré researcher V.V. Zvegintsov. This work in eight volumes (in Russian and French) includes description and designs (about 10.000 pictures) of equipment and uniform in the Russian Army from 1700 to 1914.

Exclusive purchases happen nowadays at auctions and antiquarian shops. Like, for instance, sheets of John Boydell’s cycle “Shakespeare Gallery” (late XVIII- early XIX centuries). Or the book “Beardsley” (S.-Petersburg: Shipovnik, 1906).

What is important is not just to collect art books and objects, but also to demonstrate the development of printing mastership. An example here might be the unique reprint “Lev Bakst, 1866-1924: Artistic heritage” [An Album]. - Moscow: Slovo, 2006.

Another similar reprint – reference book “Marks of Russian and Foreign porcelain, faience and majolica” = “Marques des porcelains, faiences et majoliques Russes at étrangères”. – Moscow: F.F. Ebe Printing House, 1903.

Some rare books concerning foreign countries cultures were purchased. For instance; Rosenberg, Adolf Prell: Mit 115 Abb. Von Gemälden, Zeichn. U. Skulpturen /von Adolf Rosenberg. – Bielefeld; Leipzig: Verlag von Velhagen & Klasing, 1901.

RGBI actively works on preservation of printed relics and providing easy access to them, using possibilities, provided by the “National Program of preservation of libraries’ stocks of the Russian Federation” as well as initiating its own projects. One of them, “Providing of preservation of iconographic materials on separate sheets “ made possible practical realization of electronic copies of unique art-objects.

Other projects provide description of the Library’s stock; guarantee preservation of rare archival collections and hardly used editions: “Military uniform. Red Army in 1918-1945”; “Russian military uniform”; “Stage design virtual consulting for students” (this database comprises material on production of Russian plays of the XIXth century); “Realisation of electronic collection “Rare

books on art”. The unique collection of newspapers’ theatre cuttings has become the foundation of the project “Realisation of insurance stock of newspapers’ materials”.

Evolutionary development of our two libraries is the precedent, allowing to trace one of possible ways of forming specialized stocks, significant not for librarian matter only, but for culture in general.