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**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA  
AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Abstract**

In 2019 National Library of Latvia (NLL) will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is now very timely and wise to look at its special collections. Special collections form the core of the NLL and all the strategies for their development, the work carried out to promote these collections, research activities as well as their role in the overall state policies related to history and memory, position them as a very active part of the overall nation's heritage. Currently the NLL collection consists of more than 4.3 million items, which cover all scientific disciplines with a profile in the humanities and social sciences and all different kinds of works on Latvia. Our collection includes more than 2 million books; about 840 thousand periodicals; 624 thousand small printed items/ephemera; 236 thousand graphic publications; 221 thousand music publications; 73 thousand audio-visual items; 109 thousand microforms; 38 thousand cartographic items; 29 thousand manuscripts; 30 thousand unpublished documents; 5 thousand other documents; 10 thousand electronically published items; 93 thousand duplicate stock items. The Special Collection Department relates to the most of this and hence its daily work as well as activities carried out are of such a value and influence to the overall understanding of what is our cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** National Library of Latvia, special collections, Latvia

The National Library of Latvia (NLL) possesses all the functions characteristic of a national library. Aside from compiling the national bibliography, creating collections of various kinds of literature, storing the collections, and being the development centre of the public library system, most importantly it is the main body to acquire and keep those printed publications and documents in all the various formats which are significant for the development of Latvian statehood, science, national economy, education and culture, and ensure the utilisation thereof. This task of the NLL as established by the Law on the National Library of Latvia (adopted in 1922 and renewed in 1992) thus highlights the extended role and weight of the NLL regarding the cultural and intellectual heritage of Latvia. This has to do not only with the eloquent language and ambition of the law but much more with the history of libraries in Latvia, the formation of the NLL and the present day role of the NLL.

## HISTORY OF THE NLL AND ITS SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The NLL was founded in 1919. The corpus of NLL was first created by taking over various collections of cultural and educational institutions, and by inheriting or purchasing special collections or even whole libraries from various sources especially from Baltic German landowners. As the NLL was first housed in the building of the former Vidzeme Province Gymnasium (*Kaiserliches Gouvernements-Gymnasium in Riga*, established in 1675 as the Swedish or Royal Lyceum), it utilised the school's existing library as the basis of its collection. During the first years of its establishment, the NLL acquired worthy collections, including the Riga Seminary Library with a small part of Poland's most outstanding collection – the brothers Załuski Library (1747–1795).

The NLL was even more augmented at the end of 1930s by acquiring collections of various Baltic-German associations, among which were the collections of the Society for the Study of Baltic Antiquities (*Die Gesellschaft für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen*). So already from its establishment the NLL – then the State Library – formed itself as a research library with worthy treasures. Besides it placed the main emphasis of collection development on the acquisition of publications in Latvian and relevant to Latvia and the Baltic region.

Besides Latvia because of various historic reasons did not have a historic university library that would have served as a holistic research library. But it had one of the oldest public libraries in Europe. The first public library was founded in 1524 in the city of Riga – the Town Hall Library – during the peak of Reformation and by Riga City authorities taking over cloister and church libraries. During the interwar period both libraries co-existed and complemented each other. Unfortunately in a fire during the World War II in 1941 98% of the collection of the Riga City Library was lost. Luckily the remaining 2% consisted the most important and valuable part of the collection and hence was locked in the safe deposit. While

these 2% of the collection continued to exist as the State historical library (later the Fundamental library of the Latvian USSR Academy of Sciences), consequently, the NLL was destined and naturally took over the role to operate more widely than a traditional national library would be entitled to, including the management of special collections.

The two occupations (in 1940 Latvia was occupied by the USSR, in 1941 – by Germany and in 1944 again by USSR, this time until 1991) greatly affected the character and functions of the NLL. The Library was reorganized and an audit of the collection instigated. At the same time, books published in the earlier years of the Soviet era were brought in from the USSR in great numbers while other parts of the existing collection were brought away from public access. In 1946, the so-called *specfonds* (special collection – not to mistake with the general and contemporary use of the notion Special Collections!) was created to store “anti-Soviet” or banned publications. This included books and periodicals from 1920s and 1930s, Latvian exile press and various individual collections. In 1972 even collection and storage of Latvian exile press and publications were totally forbidden at the State Library, and until the independence only the Fundamental Library of the Latvian USSR Academy of Sciences was allowed to collect and store them. While such a blackout brought along many negative consequences, it also allowed for large parts of current treasures and valuables of our Special Collections as of today to survive because of being locked away for 50 years.

Soviet period also changed the library system – it broke the continuity of the collection being supplemented by literature issued in the West, cut off any international involvement, introduced Soviet standards and practices into every process. The overall work was organised based on functionality instead of thematic approach with main focus on content. The collections were put under censorship in various ways – access to history and western-language collections was restricted, many cultural archives and collections were destroyed or put in *specfonds*, Soviet and Russian materials overflowed the Library in place of approximately 500 000 Latvian books being removed.

Regarding the special collections, especially rare books and manuscripts, it is only thanks to selfless efforts of library staff members who personally worked on the collection preservation, development, research as well as training of new staff, that they managed to abstract these collections and ensure their integrity. In 1949 the Rarity collection was separated from the main corpus and in 1953 also the Manuscript collection. Later also the *Letonica* section, with a focus on local and regional material on Latvia, was removed from the general repository after 1956, thus ensuring better protection of the collections from destructive policies and practices.

It is interesting to note that in difference from similar collections elsewhere in 1950s and 1960s the Rare books and manuscripts collection, despite restricted finances, continued to grow significantly also during the Soviet period. It was because it was supplemented by purchasing, depositing, taking in also various archival materials

from private owners, various former cooperations and other sources thus ensuring their safekeeping. In a way deposition of these mainly human private archives in *specfonds* ensured their preservation which otherwise might have ended up being destroyed. This nurtured not only the volume of the collections but more importantly – strong research traditions and development of competent staff at especially Rare books and Manuscripts section under the authority of Aleksejs Apinis.

Crucial role in the history of the special collections in the NLL, especially regarding the rare books and manuscripts collection, over the period of the Soviet occupation is played by the bibliographer and head of the Section of Rare books and Manuscripts from 1951 to 1986 Aleksejs Apinis (1926–2004). He has not only left rich heritage regarding incredibly expanded collection in volume, and many strong students but also seeded strong traditions as well as various visionary ideas about Special collections. When working with Latvian oldest prints already in the middle of the last century he drew the rarity value of these by 1850. He also strictly established that rarity is not the only existing example but that there are no identical copies for rarities even if of the same kind, as each one of them is unique due to their other values – binding, provenance, individual marks, etc. This approach of Aleksejs Apinis also explains why the Collection of rare books and manuscripts was so much growing in 1960s and 1970s. As a result, NLL possesses 14 unique issues of first Bibles translated into Latvian by Ernst Glück in 1685–1694.

Other collections that are currently part of the Special Collections Department – music, audio-visual, arts, maps, small prints – also have their own histories. Music library was at first an independent Library of Music which was only later on incorporated in the State Library in 1959 and for a while also handled other audio-visual collections until the Section of Sound Recordings was created in 1970s. Cartographic material, graphic material, partly also various small prints were for long included in the Section of Human Sciences and afterwards until 1994 Department of Small Prints, Cartographic and Art Publications served these collections under one hat.

The democratization of the library and the dismantling of the Soviet system could only begin with the national reawakening and restoration of Latvian independence in 1991. The library was stripped of ideology, the concept of *specfonds* was liquidated, making the entire collection accessible to all. Worthless Soviet literature was written off and in its place, foreign and Latvian exile publications flowed into the new NLL. Extensive international cooperation was restored and international standards adopted. New technologies also gradually began appearing at the library. Already in 1999, the NLL commenced the digitalisation of Latvian periodicals (1822–1940), but a year later, the NLL electronic catalogue started operating.

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE NLL

The Special Collections Department as we have it today was formed in 2012. A vision of its development evolved together with the development of the new building of the National Library of Latvia (architect Gunārs Birkerts (1925–2017)). Before the NLL was housed in 7 different buildings around the whole city, library departments and sections often being distributed in various places. The new building finally brought all the library sections together under one roof in 2014 hence embracing the possibility for all departments and within them to work in better coherence and close cooperation. Furthermore regarding special collections the new building provided for the possibility to highlight certain collections in detail – by providing for large exhibition and event areas, spaces for discussion, as well as better storage environments and preservation conditions.

The NLL moved in its new building in 2014, according to the very design the Special Collections Department occupying three floors on level 4, 5 and 6 and thus both being physically all together as well as even architecturally in the heart, centre of the NLL. Department is organised in the following sections categorising the special collections in the following way: Centre for Letonica and Baltic collections – focusing on works on Latvia and Baltic history, Latvian language, culture, economy, geography, including rare books and manuscripts, cartographic material, small prints; Section for Sheet Music and Music Literature – possessing the most comprehensive collection of Latvian sheet music printed in Latvia and abroad, literature on Latvian music and also manuscripts of composers; Section for Audio-visual Resources; Section for Graphic Documents which includes items also on architecture, applied arts, visual arts, etc. Besides there are still approximately 100 000 items stored in the repository in Silakrogs outside the main building of the NLL which still need to be catalogued and incorporated in the main corpus of Special Collections.

When moving to the new building the vision of the Special Collections Department was to include in its functions not only the cataloguing and processing but also highlight the preservation, research as well as awareness raising. Hence the Section of researchers under the Centre for Letonica and Baltic collections was strengthened, the Collection Preservation Centre was incorporated in the Special Collections Department and a new section – permanent exhibition “Latvian books” – was created directly as part of the Special Collections Department.

Along with the move to the new premises and extending the competencies of the NLL, the previous Restoration Centre of the NLL was also reorganized and renamed as the Collection Preservation Centre – with the aim to broaden its scope of operation. While the basic functions of the centre remain the same – restoration and conservation of the collection, and binding of the library materials, with the reorganisation its main focus is to work within the special collections as part of Departments philosophy.

The Special Collections Department designed to bring under one roof the core resources, knowledge, expertise, skills, instruments hence promotes the very special heritage we possess at the NLL.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE NLL

Heritage as a discipline was conceptualised and created in 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, similarly to the library sciences, library and information sciences, and book sciences. While actually looking at the same direction these two disciplines have been rarely put together. As a result, both disciplines have developed their own practices and even different terminology to describe things alike. While one is considered to deal more with non-moveable heritage and its aesthetic values and the other – with text (on heritage) and its cataloguing; both disciplines may benefit from each other. On the other hand – such a distance has allowed for practices – in our case – in libraries that could be also named heritage practices, to remain more authentic, less-standardised to ready-made heritage products and independent. Current growing attention towards special collections invites these two disciplines to interact more actively both in practice as well as academically.

Just to mention one example of how heritage discipline and library science can dialogue, it is worth to refer to one of the founding fathers of modern heritage movement, Alois Riegl (1858–1905), who talked about various layers of values of cultural heritage that defines their preservation [and awareness raising] strategies. Traditionally Special Collections would use the same arguments for highlighting their treasures – based on the age and time, rarity, artistic, awkwardness, wholeness, provenance and other values.

The NLL Special Collection Department too possesses diversity of values. It includes around 58 thousand items of Letonica and the Baltic Centre, around 57 thousand items of Rare Book and Manuscript Section, approximately 227 thousand units of sheet music and music literature, about 70 thousand items of audio-visual material. The core of the Library's rarities consists of printed matter (from incunabula to books in foreign languages issued up to 1830 and up to 1850 in Latvian) as well as other publications with particularly rare features.

The oldest known print in Latvian dates from 1525 it being a brochure on canon laws for evangelical church (*Luther M. Eyne Christliche vormanung von eusserlichem Gottis dienste vnde eyntacht an die yn lieffland. – Wittemberg, 1525*), and mentioned as part of multiple editions of Lutheran books being confiscated from a merchant in 1525 in Lübeck, and presumably burnt. To date, we have not found any preserved copies of this. The oldest preserved text in print in Latvian is the so called *Paternoster* of Johann Hasentoter (he had come to Riga in 1547). The text was obviously a copy of a text created before 1550 from an already existing text in Latvian in gothic type (this is indicated by common mistakes recognisable in this testimo-

ny), and afterwards published as an example of Latvian language in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmopgraphia* published in Basel in 1550. Original copy of this can be found in various European libraries.

The oldest existing book in Latvian is to be found at the Uppsala University Library. It is the Catholic catechism of Petrus Canisius printed in Vilnius in 1585 - *Catechismus catholicorum. Iscige pammacischen, no them Papreksche Galwe gablems Christites macibes. Prexskan them nemacigems vnd iounems bernems. Cour Kungam Petrum Canisium thaes Schwetes rakstes Doctor*. The oldest print in Latvian in the collection of NLL is a church handbook from 1586/87 - *Enchidrion der kleine catechismus oder christliche zucht für die gemeinen pfarherr und prediger, auch hausveter etc. durch D. Martin Luther. Nun aber aus dem deudschen in's undeudsche gebracht und von wort zu wort, wie es von D. M. Luthero gesetzt, gefasset worden. (Herausgeg. von Adalbert Bezzenberger) Gedruckt zu Königsperg bei George Osterbergern 1586*.

The books in foreign languages - ancient prints in Polish, German and Latin (in total in 16 languages including Finnish and Hungarian), printed in Latvia prior to 1830, are important for the research of Latvia's culture history. Furthermore, the rarity collection also features book collections from 15-16<sup>th</sup> century by typographers such as Aldus Manutius, Giunta, Plantin, Elsevier, the Royal Printing House of Paris and other companies. The collection of manuscripts currently holds more than 400 unique collections and personal archives - published and unpublished writings, manuscripts of literary works, letters, photos, etc.

The NLL collection is also regularly supplemented by donations thus providing for narratives of individuals not only histories of collections. One of the largest donations is the unique Baltic Central Library collection created by Baltic German collector Otto Bongs (1918-2006) after the Second World War, which comprises rare books, manuscripts, photographs and cartographic material. Similar treasure is the Peter Böttger (1936) collection with 10 000 Dutch prints from 16-18<sup>th</sup> century.

Outstanding is also the collection of Art Exhibition Catalogues which is one of the most extensive and versatile both as to its size (approximately 11 thousand units), the time span (from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day) and its geographical scope. Next to that the seven thousand units large Poster Collection is the most sizeable and comprehensive not only in Latvia, but worthy also on the global scale. It contains posters starting from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The collection gives an opportunity to follow the main trends in the development of poster art over more than 100 years.

The Department of Cartography holds the first maps published in Latvian in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Baltic German pastor Rudolf Schulz (1807-1866) "Atlas with Seveteen Landmaps" published in 1861, and works of the first Latvian cartographer Matiss Siliņš (1861-1942).

The only value that I would like to introduce particularly at the end of this list of superlatives, is the value of intent and intellectual impact. While almost any individual item of Special Collections will have some kind of superlative or unique characteristic, it is only in context and our ability to put them in the context that they acquire intellectual value and weight. This puts us in the Special Collections in a very responsible role. Because what makes a national library a heritage institution is not only the fact that we store these values of rarity, artistic, wholeness, provenance or any other virtue; but what we do with these treasures and how we realise their creative capacities and to kindle this intellectual heritage at our hand.

## HERITAGE WORK AT THE NLL

All the activities carried out to research, describe, present, bring out our collections are part of the overall heritage work. More and more the modern librarianship is linked with an active involvement in heritage work. If we look at the cultural heritage from the contemporary perspective heritage is more and more seen as a process and choices of what we do with this heritage rather than mere ownership or safeguarding. The activities carried out by the Special Collections Department of the NLL can serve as an illustration of how a national library can take more active role in heritage interpretation work, research, public history, memory work. In order to describe the work carried out at libraries the notion of outreach is often used. In the discipline of heritage, it can be equalised to the notion of heritage interpretation because all the activities that fall into the outreach actually are aimed at presenting and increasing the awareness, understanding and use of the library collections.

One of the highlights of the heritage work carried out by the NLL is the permanent exhibition "Book in Latvia" which the Book Museum of the NLL opened in 2016. NLL is one of the few libraries to have their own permanent platform to interactively discuss, present, research and learn about the history of books in Latvia. However, a permanent exhibition on history of Latvian books and publishing in NLL was first created already in 1964 by Aleksejs Apinis in the building of NLL in Jēkaba street. In difference from the current one, it focused exclusively on the history of Latvian book and the relationship between a book and its reader in Latvia. It served for almost 50 years and was closed only in 2013 as the NLL packed to leave its old premises.

The permanent exhibition "Book in Latvia" features over 100 original books, from the Middle Ages to the present day. It includes a fragment of a 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, the first ever books printed in Latvian and the first books printed in Riga from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The place of honour has been accorded to Johann Ernst Glück's translation of the Bible – the first large-scale (2 487 pages) collection of texts in written Latvian. Another highlight is the world first edition of philosopher Immanuel Kant's famous work *The Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der rein-*



*en Vernunft*) which was printed in Riga in 1781. The exhibition includes books that helped to create and reinforce the Latvian nation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as editions that served the Soviet and Nazi regimes. Exhibited are also books reproduced by hand by readers and notes on margins left by the Latvian poet Imants Ziedonis (1933 – 2013) and artist Boriss Bērziņš (1930–2002). The permanent exhibition is complemented on a regular basis by various exhibitions, learning projects, education activities on more specific relevant aspects, like printing, reading habits, libraries and their developments, various book types or bindings, etc.

The other aspect of the heritage work has been – making it discoverable and accessible to a wide audience by digitisation, improved cataloguing, advanced finding aids. We are privileged to live in the century of all digital features and possibilities. No time in history the special collections have been so available as now. We now possess online databases that allow cross-searches; extensive annotations and metadata available online; possibilities to zoom and explore in detail digitised versions of old maps; deciphering of manuscripts by building the machine intelligence; involvement of other institutions and crowdsourcing; digital humanities, digital data text mining; lingua corps, etc. The NLL now has digitised up to 5 million pages and up to 90% of its periodical collection that is now fully accessible, cross-searchable and open for text mining and research online on our Periodicals Digital Library [www.periodika.lv](http://www.periodika.lv).

NLL continues the digitisation of its collection. From 2017–2021, the NLL is implementing a European Regional Development Fund and nationally co-funded project in the field of Latvia's digital cultural heritage. The main objective of the project is to ensure the wide availability of Latvian cultural heritage in the digital environment. Together with other partners from the National Archives of Latvia, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia, and the Cultural Information System Centre, as the result the project will provide for digitised 3 075 000 pages of text, 117 000 descriptions of various images and valuable cultural artefacts, including maps, photographs, surveys of cultural monuments and descriptions of objects, 223 000 minutes of audio, 245 000 minutes of video footage, 37 500 minutes of cinema footage, 70 000 museum objects, as well as a small amount of 3D digitization of cultural monuments (10 units), records of cultural events (50 units) and intangible cultural heritage (15 units). Simultaneously with the digitization process, the project will further develop the Digital Object Management and Conservation System, create one Content Management and one Content Dissemination Centre, publish several Open Datasets, including Related Open Datasets, and develop the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage of an Integrated Centralized Open System Information Platform.

While digitisation is a valuable work as such, the actual contextualisation work is the added value that the NLL can provide. Development of thematic digital collections with contextualise, organise and select certain material and their collections has been a success of the NLL. Currently we have developed sixteen openly acces-

sible digital collections and many are on their way. All the collections follow the same framework but differ from the depth of descriptive information they contain. Digital collections provide for the possibility to bring together material including that from different institutions that otherwise would be difficult to access at once.

One of the biggest success has been our digital collection devoted to the two most know Latvian poets Rainis (1865–1929) and Aspazija (1865–1943) – <http://runa.lnb.lv>. Another example is the digital collection ‘G.F. Stender’s literary heritage’ – <http://stenders.lndb.lv>. It includes books, articles and preserved manuscripts, published within the lifetime of the pioneer of Latvian secular literature Gothard Friedrich Stender (1714–1796). Original materials are kept in various libraries in Latvia and abroad, as well as in other repositories of memory institutions and here in this digital platform they are brought all together, thus reducing inconveniences, caused by dissipation of materials and to provide assistance in studies and research of unique sources. The most recent examples are the digital collection of Latvian Handwritings of the Moravian Brethren – <http://braludraudze.lndb.lv>. Or the digital collection for Latvian Culture canon (<http://www.kulturaskanons.lv>) that ensures access to different kinds of digitised material on various Latvian cultural highlights in one place – photos, maps, manuscripts, sheet music, books, notes, recordings, videos, periodicals etc. Material is mainly from the digitised material of the NLL and thus promotes the use and understanding of the diverse material contained in Special Collections.

However, while we are reaching out for larger public, we have learnt that Special Collections are to maintain their service focused on specific audiences using targeted activities instead of addressing anonymous general public. For specific audiences’ tangible experiences of Special collections are equally important as digital possibilities – mainly they are in the form of exhibitions, public lectures or interactive events. One of the main pre-conditions that we have defined for these events is that they all shall include materials from various kinds of special collections and not dwell only on one kind, cooperate also outside the NLL, as well as communicate in a diversity of ways responding to various audiences. One excellent example of this principle in action is a recent project “Exhibition Book 1514” which was implemented between in 2013–2015. The idea of the exhibition was to look back on book publishing and diverse spectrum of European life that unfolds through a book as it was 500 years before the year of 2014, when Latvia was leading the presidency of the European Council, namely in 1514. It was decided that the exhibition would focus on original works in various languages and also include various genres: printed books, manuscripts, works of art and other objects from 1514, and that they would come from 18 memory institutions around Europe, including Austrian National Library, Bavarian State Library, University Library of Strasbourg and Royal Library of Denmark. Exhibition was opened by the president of Latvia and president of Austria. Exhibition was supplemented with a series of academic lectures, excursions, various activities. In total it was attended by some 100 000 people. Yet as every temporary exhibition as an event is over at some point, we put an emphasis on preparing and creating the

catalogues so the most important aspect of the exhibition – its content is documented and continues to last.

One of the main tasks of the Special Collections Department at the NLL is to conduct research and carry out necessary measures so as to make the collections more accessible, searchable and user-friendly. Hence publications form another important aspect of our work in the field of heritage. Currently the focus of the NLL is on high quality academic publications on our own collection and high quality editions that complement our events. For example, following the publication of 1999 on “Old Prints in Latvian Language. 1525–1855”, in 2013 the next “Catalogue of Foreign Language Ancient Prints in Latvia. 1588–1830” was prepared and published. It presents editions from Latvian publishing houses that were printed abroad, and orders from foreign publishers that were printed here. The print production for the considered period, is mostly of local character. The chronological framework of the catalogue is determined by the first print that has survived to our time, printed in 1588 by Nicolaus Mollyn (1550(?)-1625), a typographer in Riga who had moved here from the Christophe Plantin typography in Antwerp, and 1830.

As the last heritage activity worth to mention would be how we create the physical and emotional sense of heritage. Already the design the new building of the NLL contained the idea of the Nation’s Bookshelf. It is a bookshelf that extends from the mezzanine level up to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor as an open shelf which is to be filled with books that are individually donated to the NLL. Each donated book has its own history and inscription that tells the story why this specific book has been devoted to this bookshelf. This bookshelf functions both as a symbol of our mutual endeavour in building this Castle of Knowledge (the library) but furthermore it works as a common reminiscence of home libraries which people often don’t have at home any more. Likewise, around the whole building we have arranged islands of private libraries that serve as think tanks and laboratories of ideas of the way the owners of these libraries lived, wrote their works, got inspiration from, thought, created their masterpieces. In the NLL Special Collections one can experience such a devoted private library corners of the architect Gunārs Birkerts and of the theatre and cinema critique Normunds Naumanis (1962–2014).

## CONCLUSION

Increasingly the tendency around the world is that special collections at libraries are valued more and seen as the backbone of the national libraries. To serve this increasing demand for the national library to take up a more active leadership role among heritage institutions, at the NLL we are purposefully developing our teams and staff. The Section of Research at the NLL is growing and cutting through all special collections, more and more staff is trained for various roles in the Special Collections Department and we are increasingly promoting librarians to be researchers, educators, advisors. In the future we see our Special Collections Depart-

ment working even better and more in unity so to highlight the holistic character of heritage and that various types of materials complement each other.

Over time heritage related work of Special Collections Department will only evolve. Aside from the above mentioned aspects it will also the digital heritage that we will have to specialise on. The NLL is already is one of the first ones to harvest born digital heritage. And the NLL is the contact point for World Digital Library, Europeana, UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, Latvian Culture Canon, Encyclopaedia of Latvia, etc. This is not to say that libraries will take over the work of or compete other heritage institutions. On the contrary – all heritage institutions (archives, museums, various bodies for heritage, research, cultural institutions) will have to work more actively and more in unison in the field of heritage from now on. Special Collections and their work in the field of intellectual heritage provide for a good example that such a cooperation is possible and how it can work.