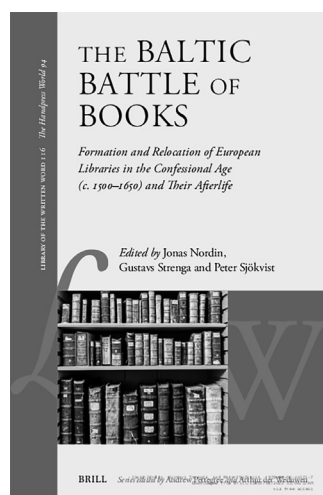


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Jonas Nordin, Gustavs Strenge, and Peter Sjökvist (eds.). *The Baltic Battle of Books. Formation and Relocation of European Libraries in the Confessional Age (c. 1500 – c. 1650) and Their Afterlife*. (Library of the Written Word – The Handpress World, Volume 116). Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2023. 350 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-44120-0



Rakstu krājums aptver 13 pētījumus, redaktoru sagatavotu ievadu un noslēdzošo eseju, kuras autors ir Jānis Krēšliņš. Izdevuma uzmanības centrā ir Ziemeļvalstu grāmatu kultūra agrajos jaunajos laikos, īpašu uzmanību pievēršot grāmatu kolekcijām, kas tika iegūtas kā kara laupījums. Rīgas Jeziūtu kolēģijai 1621. gadā konfiscētās grāmatas, kas tika aizvestas uz Upsalas Universitātes bibliotēku, bija pirmā zviedru nolaupītā bibliotēka. Lielāko 17. gadsimta daļu pakļautajās teritorijās Zviedrijas karaļa uzdevumā tika konfiscētas daudzas katoļu institūciju bibliotēkas. Tas tika darīts, gan lai atņemtu šīm institūcijām to intelektuālos "ieročus" cīņā ar protestantismu, gan lai apgādātu ar grāmatām jaundibinātās Zviedrijas universitāšu un skolu bibliotēkas. Tomēr daudzas šādi iegūtās katoļu grāmatas drīz izrādījās nepiemērotas luterāņu skolām. Šāda pārvietošana dažos gadījumos ir veicinājusi gan kādreizējo grāmatu kolekciju saglabāšanu, gan – citkārt – to iznīcināšanu. Krājumā apkopotie raksti aplūko vairākus bibliotēku izveidošanas, nolaupīšanas un atkārtotas izmantošanas gadījumus Baltijas reģionā. Grāmatas

uzmanības lokā ir arī šo bibliotēku apzināšana un (virtuāla) rekonstrukcija mūsdienās. Krājuma elektronisko versiju iespējams bez maksas lejuplādēt izdevēja tīmekļa vietnē.

This book is, in a certain sense, a continuation of the beautiful volume of the *Catalogue of the Riga Jesuit College Book Collection (1583–1621)* issued in 2021.¹ Some authors appear in both volumes (Gustavs Strenga, Andris Levāns, Laura Kreigere-Liepiņa), writing on close topics. Still, the objectives of the publications are different. While in the *Catalogue* the focus was obviously on the catalogue part, with the essays expanding the topics of the history of the collection and principles of creating the catalogue, the present volume (and the open access electronic version) sets the fate of the Riga Jesuit library in a broader context against the background of similar developments in neighbouring areas. The initiative of cataloguing Riga Jesuit College's books incited multiple activities: besides the printed and electronic catalogue and the present volume, the "Riga collection" was assembled for the first time after four hundred years in one place on the bookshelves of Uppsala University Library's magnificent book hall.

The collection of thirteen articles, mainly in the form of case studies, is complemented with introductory insights by the editors and a concluding essay by Janis Kreslins. Although the book falls into three parts of "Creating", "Relocating", and "Reconstructing" the libraries, the range of topics covered is even more nuanced. The "battles" of books around the Baltics start with the competing personalities and cities at the outset of Nordic print culture, continue with books and libraries as spiritual weapons in the hands of Jesuits, culminate in looting the libraries in the vicissitudes of the wars from the 16th through 20th centuries, and conclude with the uses and uselessness of the books in the possession of victorious invaders. The geographical setting is a half circle around southern and western Baltics with marked (and markedly connected) ends in Latvia and Sweden, and encompassing Lithuania, Poland (then Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), Czechia and Germany (Holy Roman Empire), and Denmark, with rare digressions to other parts of Europe. Three articles deal with Riga Jesuit books, six papers with the book culture and the fate of the libraries of other Jesuit or Catholic institutions, two more studies investigate the cases of dispersion and

1 Strenga, Gustavs, Levāns, Andris, Berga, Renāte, and Kreigere-Liepiņa, Laura (eds.) (2021). *Catalogue of the Riga Jesuit College Book Collection (1583–1621): History and Reconstruction of the Collection = Rīgas jezuītu kolēģijas grāmatu krājuma (1583–1621) katalogs: Krājuma vēsture un rekonstrukcija*. Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka.

relocation of other kinds of libraries, and two articles examine creating early modern Scandinavian book culture.

Laine Tabora studies the most exceptional and unique part of the Riga Jesuit collection: fourteen liturgical manuscripts originally from the Cistercian nunnery of Riga. While early modern Jesuit book collections have been preserved both from surrounding and more distant areas, a series of medieval liturgical manuscripts for mostly private use from a female convent is a rare remnant at these latitudes and the only surviving considerable corpus of liturgical books from medieval Livonia. Unlike the rest of the purposefully developed Jesuit library of chiefly newer books, this small series of manuscripts constitutes a bit of local spiritual heritage preserved as an act of devotion. The manuscripts have attracted surprisingly little attention from earlier historians of liturgy and musicologists, so Tabora's study offers basically the first deep-going insights into the liturgical observances, musical practices, and private devotion of the Cistercian nuns of Riga. Tabora successfully points out the individual aspects of particular manuscripts presumably used by individual nuns. Occasionally, the author may overstate the role of the nuns' personal choice, attitude, or decision to include particular musical parts in the manuscripts (pp. 31–32). Instead, the community's needs, or missing specific melodies in other liturgical books, may have played a bigger part. Including the invitatory psalm *Venite* in five surviving books of hours from Riga (pp. 29–31) clearly hints to its exceptionally prominent position in the convent's liturgical tradition, not to the nuns' individual choices. The identification of distinctly local traits of the ritual practices is the most valuable result of this paper.

Andris Levāns and **Gustavs Strenga** examine in a joint article the formation and transformation of monastic book collections of Riga. They stress the local nature of the Cistercian nunnery's codices and manuscript production either by the nuns themselves or in close connection with the convent. The surviving portions of Franciscan and Dominican libraries chiefly contain printed books. The authors propose a tempting (but hard-to-prove) conjecture that two magnificent 13th-century manuscripts, likely produced in France, were donated to the Franciscan friary by archbishop Friedrich von Pernstein of Riga, a renowned bibliophile mainly residing in Avignon, during one of his rare visits to his diocese.

Mattias Lundberg and, to a certain extent, **Wolfgang Undorf** examine in their articles the impact of ambitious ecclesiastical personalities on early printing in the Baltic area. Lundberg convincingly shows that late-15th century printed missals and breviaries of single dioceses were produced in the competition of adjacent bishoprics in two Northern European regions: first, in the dioceses of Northern Germany and Denmark, and soon after that, the same pattern recurred

in Sweden. The print runs that often exceeded the needs of particular dioceses and, in some cases, lavish designs were used to impose ecclesiastical authority and augment the prestige of the bishops among their peers. Undorf argues that geographical setting and religious developments provided the main framework for the trends in the evolving late-15th and 16th-century Danish and Swedish book market. Undorf outlines the story of early Scandinavian print culture from a peripheral part of the pan-European market of foreign-produced Latin books to a booming vernacular market of mainly common religious books that hints at a remarkable increase in lay literacy and readership. Pre-Reformation books from all over Europe were supplied to Scandinavia by geographically close Northern German merchants, primarily from Lübeck. The first books specifically produced for the Scandinavian market were again commissioned from Northern German printers or the first local printers invited from the same area. Only exceptional personalities (like Christiern Pedersen and Hans Urne) were able to break these patterns. After the Reformation and in the period of intensified confessionalisation, the demand for vernacular printing was long met by one or two monopolised printing shops in both countries. Elite, foreign-language literature was now imported from more distant Central European, mainly Protestant printing centres. But by the late 16th century, the market of popular religious books had evolved to the extent that it became profitable to print vernacular Swedish and Danish editions abroad, again in Lübeck and Rostock, in large numbers.

Hanna Mazheika gives a survey of the British Jesuits' contribution to the print culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, mainly Vilnius, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. A considerable number of British recusants either taught or studied at Vilnius Academy and were accordingly involved in various areas of academic publishing. **Kathleen M. Comerford** looks at European Jesuit libraries from an American perspective. The author has accumulated a considerable amount of data about the contents of dispersed Jesuit libraries for her European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project. Relying on the inventories of the libraries and extant books with Jesuit provenances, Comerford performs a primarily statistical study of Jesuit libraries by investigating the distribution of subjects, the religious affiliations of the authors of texts, and the presence of vernacular languages. The studied region, North, Central, and Eastern Europe (as stated in the article's title), encompasses mainly the Holy Roman Empire with Bohemia, and the Low Countries. As it could be expected, major disparities appear between the distributions of the subjects in the inventories and among the extant books: the most used books about practical issues of theology and humanities have survived much less than the average. The author especially points out that books in or on non-European languages and cultures were

virtually unavailable in the studied libraries despite the global missionary focus of the Jesuits. Even the local vernaculars were usually poorly represented.

Five articles mainly or partly explore the fates of relocated Catholic libraries in Sweden. **Jonas Nordin** in a way continues Wolfgang Undorf's story of Swedish book culture to the 17th century. Alongside the development of book production and the birth of censorship, the focus is now on the acculturation efforts of early modern Sweden to complement the military power with cultural "armament" by amassing precious book collections from subjected territories. Looting of the libraries lasted for most of the 17th century and was performed in places as far apart as Riga and Mainz. Looting was usually precisely targeted at Catholic institutions, thus depriving them of their intellectual weapons in the controversy with Protestantism. Public and increasingly elite libraries profited from the action, and by the end of the century, pillaged books comprised a considerable part of many Swedish libraries. Nordin also discusses the legal justification for acquiring war booty.

Two studies examine the destinies of particular displaced libraries. **Lenka Veselá's** article is one of the first attempts to cast light on the process of selective confiscation in the 1640s and the subsequent "new life" of the books of Olomouc's ecclesiastical libraries. Unlike many other Swedish lootings, the huge book booty from Olomouc is difficult to track down due to the absence of original inventories and the destruction of most of the books in the fire at the Royal Palace in Stockholm in 1697. **Laura Kreigere-Liepiņa** gives an overview of the formation and composition of the Riga Jesuit College's library, its subsequent transfer to Uppsala as a Swedish war booty, and the process of identifying the surviving items for the recently published catalogue. Particular attention is paid to Lutheran books in the Jesuit library and the material with special significance for Latvian culture or local history.

Two more papers study the reception and use of the looted books in their new destinations. **Peter Sjökvist** introduces the earliest 17th-century catalogue of Uppsala University Library to distinguish which books from the Riga Jesuit library were considered useful and which ones were regarded virtually useless in their new Lutheran environment in Uppsala. At the library replenished with several looted Catholic libraries, the books thus acquired were soon divided into two groups: those meant for the active use by the faculties and the others destined for the storage area. The author proceeds to cover all subject areas, demonstrating that most of the Catholic literature was kept in storage rooms and *all* Lutheran books in the library for actual use, as were also the books on humanities and science. **Elin Andersson** returns to the best-preserved portion of the Olomouc war booty – the one donated to Strängnäs Cathedral by Queen Christina of Sweden (along with more books from other Central European libraries). Initially

considered a magnificent ornament to the cathedral, it was soon realised that it did not serve to teach the would-be Lutheran priests in the adjacent Gymnasium. Contemptuously described as mostly useless, it fell into neglect and disarray for centuries.

Anders Toftgaard supplements the picture with Danish 16th to early 18th-century “battles of books”. These started from the relocation or deliberate destruction of monastic libraries after the Reformation, continued with the introduction of censure, and culminated in dispersals of the private libraries that fell victim to plunderings during the wars and may have subsequently travelled to and fro several times. **Fryderyk Rozen** brings us to the relocation of the libraries in the Baltic area during the Second World War. The holdings of Königsberg’s libraries either perished or were dispersed in Poland, Germany, and Russia. Rozen identifies, catalogues, and briefly analyses the portion of the book collection of Johannes Poliander (1487–1541) preserved in the National Library of Poland. The bequest of more than 800 books by one of the leading figures of Königsberg’s Reformation, Poliander, laid the foundation for Königsberg Public Library. Christian Krollmann identified 240 of them in the library in the 1920s. Describing in detail 19 extant volumes in the National Library of Poland, Rozen does not address whether there is any hope to find more of Poliander’s books in other libraries. Assembling virtually Königsberg’s early modern private and institutional libraries, including both surviving and presumably perished collections, could be a task for future research, as shown by other inspiring examples in this volume.

The composition of the volume is well-balanced and coherent, centred around the idea of formation, relocation, and reuse of libraries. Many of the book collections (Riga nunnery, Riga Jesuits, Olomouc, Uppsala UL, Strängnäs, some private collections) recur in multiple articles that may enter into a dialogue, with authors occasionally expressing slightly diverging views on their subjects. Focussing on the Baltic area helps to create a comprehensive approach to crucial aspects of the early modern book culture of the region.

Occasionally, the book by a number of authors with mostly non-English language backgrounds would have deserved more careful copy editing. Inconsistencies in verb forms, article use, and punctuation sporadically occur. Also, spelling errors of the co-authors’ names or a non-word (“helpslaces”) may catch the eye. The phrase “Sammelbände-containing booklet” (p. 273) does not make sense; the multiple “choirs” of Strängnäs Cathedral (p. 244 ff.) should probably be understood as side chapels.

A pervasive topic recurring in several articles of this collection, from the introduction until the concluding essay, is the status of relocated book

collections both in the past and present. Once uncovered in present-day libraries, the remains of former institutional and individual book collections almost automatically become the means of creating identities and memories. Similar mechanisms were not unknown in early modern times either, as shown by the manuscripts of Riga Cistercian nunnery retained by the Jesuits apparently as a heritage preserving the cultural memory. Since many displaced collections have moved once or more during their history, often to distant countries, they can be used for creating memories in different areas. One of the protagonists of this volume, Riga Jesuit College Library, offers an example of particularly complicated historical circumstances of formation and dissolution. It was a Catholic library of primarily Latin books in a German-dominated Lutheran city on Latvian (formerly Livonian) soil that was then part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, ultimately transferred to Sweden, to meet there soon other looted Catholic libraries from Poland, Czechia, and Germany. The short-lived colonial library found its haven of peace in the possession of another ephemeral superpower, not less ambitious than the previous one but more lucky to preserve its cultural gains, albeit partly in a frozen state. Thus, it is connected to the intellectual history and identity formation of all these past and present-day nations.

That may raise the question of whom should such collections actually belong to. According to the traditional position, the cultural heritage in public collections remains where it is, regardless of how it has been acquired. The same position is stressed on Uppsala University Library's website and hinted at in the present volume. It can be argued that transfer to safer areas and institutions may have often saved the collections from destruction in their original locations. Levāns and Strenga state that “[t]he relocation of the Jesuit books from Riga to Uppsala can also be seen as a re-evaluation of the Cistercian manuscripts conducted by their new owners, a step that probably saved them from being recycled into binding material” by the Jesuits themselves (pp. 56, 60). Such arguments may seem to be further confirmed by the present situation in Europe where looting cultural heritage by invaders is still a “normality”. Yet the destruction, damage, or dispersal may have also succeeded in new locations, as exemplified in the present volume by the fires in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Turku, and Strängnäs, by floods and thefts and once so common duplicates sales. In contemporary postcolonial museological discourse, arguments like possible perishing in original locations are abandoned, and ownership questions are seriously pondered on particular occasions. Anders Toftgaard observes in this volume that virtual reconstructions and “repatriations” of dispersed collections, so enthusiastically welcomed by the scholarly community, have failed to replace the emotional significance of material objects, and occasionally, physical “repatriations” of artefacts have

occurred in recent years also in the Baltic area (p. 240). While writing this review, the news appeared in the mainstream media about returning human remains from scientific and library collections in the United States and Sweden to France and Finland. Scholarly book collections are probably not so sensitive material for the wider public, but one should admit that even if the argument is settled for now and for researchers, we can never know by whom and in which way it can be revived in the future.

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