



# The different meanings of a donation in the age of the birth of a public sphere in Bohemia

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## **The Different Meanings of a Donation in the Age of the Birth of a Public Sphere in Bohemia**

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In 1994, one of the most famous figures in information technology, namely Bill Gates, bought a manuscript for 30 million dollars that became the most expensive book in the world. Not to remain at such a high level of exclusivity, Bill Gates also granted the Seattle Public Library (which houses his manuscript) another 20 million dollars in order to promote the diffusion of knowledge.

This anecdote shows us very clearly that written word, books and libraries are among the cultural goods that have the ability to raise and produce prestige, even nowadays, and even in the eyes of a computer magnate. Books and libraries are potential objects of donation or patronage, because both patrons and the society in which the donation is made grant books and libraries a set of values. They incarnate knowledge, and knowledge is power<sup>1</sup>. As knowledge has always been praised in occidental cultures, the prestige of the book is reflected in its owner.

This is particularly true in the age of the Enlightenment, on which I shall focus. Faith in the power of knowledge, in its ability to lead to social progress, to a better future, was one of the most widespread ideas of the time. Knowledge was thus granted a moral purpose, and the project to enhance its accessibility was generally shared. Some sources also suggest that books are granted an especially high value in the Czech lands, where so many people were persecuted by Counter Reformation authorities because of their Czech – i.e. protestant books. The book could be considered, to a certain extent, as a symbolic object for the Czech nation.

It is for this reason that Kinský donation of books appears to be a very clear affair at first sight. Franz Joseph Kinský (1739-1805) was a noble man from an eminent aristocratic family in Bohemia, an officer in the army, and director of the military academy in Wiener

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<sup>1</sup>Frédéric BARBIER, *À propos de l'espace du livre et de la fonction symbolique des bibliothèques en Allemagne au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Remarques à propos de l'exemple franco-allemand*, in: (Michel Espagne, Michael Werner eds.) *Philologiques III. Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature nationale? Approches pour une théorie interculturelle du champ littéraire*, Paris 1994, p. 315-330.

Neustadt. He was very famous for having published pedagogical treatises, for being one of the very first members of the Prague Private Society of Sciences. He also gave the university his natural history cabinet, and founded philanthropic institutions. All of this signifies that Kinský's sincere and active belief in the power of knowledge. He opened his personal library to the public long before his death, but instead of founding a new institution or opening his own house to the public, he left his library to the care of the Public and University Library of Prague – i.e. today's National Library. Kinský also actively supported the reorganization of this library. These two aspects of Kinský's donation cannot be separated because only the success of the reorganization of the university library convinced him, after a long period of hesitation, to finally give his own library to this institution. The Public and University Library was indeed in a very crucial moment of its history. After the suppression of the Jesuit order (1773), the different Jesuit libraries of the country were to be gathered into the Clementinum College in Prague. But they actually remained without care until 1777, when Kinský set up a plan in order to unify all the Jesuit libraries into the University Library, by precisely planning its financial management. At the same time, he proposed to open his own library to the public in this new institution, and added to it the library of the Kinský family (which was not directly his own). Maria Theresa accepted the project, and appointed Kinský the director of the library, which was called the Public Royal and Imperial University library. Kinský remained director for barely two years, because he had to take part in the war for Bavarian succession (1778) and because of his function as director of the Academy of Wiener Neustadt. But even after this date, he was involved in decisions about the organization of the “new” institution.

I would like to reexamine this donation because it occurred at a specific moment in the history of the Czech lands and allows us to shed some light on some transformations that prefigured 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup>. One of the characteristics of the Enlightenment was the way the state began to be considered responsible for the education of the whole population. The

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<sup>2</sup> Josef VOLF, *Kinský jako sběratel knih* [Kinský as books' collector] in: (Joseph Volf) *O starých sběratelích knih* [About old books' collectors], Praha, 1937 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1926), p. 25-28; Zdeněk TOBOLKA, *Národní a univerzitní knihovna v Praze. Její vznik a vývoj. I, Počátky knihovny do r. 1777* [The national and university library in Prague. Its origin and development. I, Beginnings of the library until 1777], Prague 1959, p. 128-135; Ludmila KUBÁTOVÁ, *První ředitel a počátky sjednocené univerzitní knihovny 1777-1780* [The first director and the beginning of the united university library], Národní knihovna 12, 2001-2, p. 117-125.

state used all its means, in order to eliminate illiteracy and increase the level of knowledge – in a utilitarian perspective, for its own sake. On the other hand a new cultural life began to emancipate itself from the state, from church and university, often thanks to private initiative. A new public sphere was created. Scholarly discussions took place in reviews and printed books. In the 1770s, for example, a new institution came to life, a society of sciences<sup>3</sup>, acting at the level of the “country” – i.e., at the level of the forthcoming nation.

Kinský's donation “to the public” within an institution called the “Public and University Library” offers the opportunity to examine the transformation and meaning of this “public” at a key moment. Kinský's “patriotism” is a common refrain mentioned by himself, in archival sources and also in the later literature, especially by those extolling his merits. The meaning of patriotism was nevertheless far from clear during the Enlightenment, and was not determined by state borders. We can use an open conception of patriotism, defined, for example, as “a sense of responsibility toward a social community”. Thus, the definition of this community is left open as well as the possibility of referring to several communities<sup>4</sup>. To whom did Kinský actually give his books? To the university? To the Hapsburg monarchy as a state? To the Prague scholars with whom he was in touch? To the “Czech nation”?

### **A Public Donation as an Economy of Prestige**

Kinský's donation can be considered an element of the traditional representative strategy of a noble man eager to show his identification with the public<sup>5</sup>. Many donations of family or private libraries belong to this phenomenon. Books can easily bear the mark of their owners (sometimes simple manuscript ex-libris, sometimes stamped golden supralibros), which helps perpetuate the memory of their donation. An inscription placed

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<sup>3</sup> The Society of sciences in Bohemia changed several times its name in 18<sup>th</sup> century: Privatgesellschaft in Böhmen zur Aufnahme der Mathematik, der vaterländischen Geschichte, und der Naturgeschichte (from 1774), Böhmisches Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften (1784) and Königliche böhmische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften (1790).

<sup>4</sup> Rudolf VIERHAUS, ‘Patriotismus’ – *Begriff und Realität einer moralisch-politischen Haltung* in: (R. Vierhaus) Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert. Politische Verfassung, soziales Gefüge, geistige Bewegungen, Göttingen 1987 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. in Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften, München 1980), p. 96-109.

<sup>5</sup> Hélène MERLIN, *Public et littérature en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1994, p. 65-90.

near the entrance to the library or a printed booklet can be another level of public recognition of the gift.<sup>6</sup> By giving not only his own library, but also the library of the Kinský family, Franz Joseph was clearly following the path his ancestors. In the 1740s Philipp Joseph Kinský (Great Chancellor from 1700 to 1749) already intended to open the family library “to the public” through an elite academy for young noblemen, that was supposed to open in Prague under the direction of a religious institution (the Benedicts of Břevnov)<sup>7</sup>. And indeed, Philipp Joseph Kinský expected to be rewarded by neverending fame<sup>8</sup> increasing his authority, as a booklet printed in his honor explicitly declared:

Wahr ist; Ein edler mehrt den Adel durch die Bücher/  
Und strecht durch schwarze Schrift den Purpur köstlich an.<sup>9</sup>

However, thirty years later, Kinský’s donation was not only a great donation of a family collection that would fall otherwise victim to time and to moths<sup>10</sup>, it was mainly an individual donation. The dynastic tradition is scarcely mentioned in sources about Kinský. Franz Joseph Kinský was truly a learned man who paid attention to the books he bought, not a selfish old collector simply eager to win social distinction<sup>11</sup>. His library is

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. the way Hirsching is precisely reporting this point: Friedrich Karl Gottlob HIRSCHING, *Versuch einer Beschreibung sehenswürdiger Bibliotheken Teutschlands nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Städte*, Erlangen 1786-1791, 4 vol.

<sup>7</sup> Notger TOLDE, *Der Gründungsversuch einer “Academia Nobilium” in Prag durch die böhmische Benediktinerkongregation*, Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige 50, München, 1932, p. 564-594.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 573 is quoted Kinský’s letter to the Abt Benno Löbl from 5th June 1744 from Brevnov archives (today in National Archives in Prag) old sign. A III 12a: “Indessen gebührt Euer Hochwürden die Ehre, daß dieselben zu diesem so Löblich -als wichtigen- dem Publico vielen Vortheil bringenden werck den ersten Grundtsein [sic] geleget, und annebends zu Dero unsterblichen ruhm Bey der nachwelt dasjenige erwürcket, was der Heyl. Ordens Vorfahrer mit weith größeren Kösten gerne gethan haben würden, wann Sie nur auch die so angenehme Gelegenheit hierzu gehabt hätten.“

<sup>9</sup> Christian HEEGEN (librarian of the University library in Carolinum), *Die Eigenschafften eines fürtrefflichen Abgesandten... Philipp Joseph Kinský... als kais. Ambassadeur*, Prag 1728.

<sup>10</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský, Knihovna, n°56 (end 1776 or beginning 1777).

<sup>11</sup> Jean de LA BRUYÈRE, *Caractères*: „De la mode“.

very personal and well chosen<sup>12</sup> and we can say that, by opening it to the public, he actually communicated his own “reading”<sup>13</sup>.

Thus Kinský enjoyed the virtue that is accorded to knowledge. In this way, he was personally rewarded with recognition for his donation. Today his portrait is hung in the small exhibition room adjacent to the magnificent baroque hall in the Clementinum. An inscription was added to the portrait as a reminder of Kinský’s praiseworthy role in the history of the library. His donation is mentioned in the first announcement of the opening of the reorganized Public Library in 1777, in dedications scholars addressed him<sup>14</sup> and finally in his obituary, published in the Dissertation of the Society of Sciences.

Sein patriotischer Eifer gab ihm den Gedanken ein, nicht nur die Kinskische Familienbibliothek nach Prag schaffen, und sie daselbst ausstellen zu lassen; sondern vereinigte auch seine Privatbibliothek damit, um seinem Vaterlande zu nützen. Treffend und dankbar bezeuget die Unterschrift, die unter seinem Portrait da zu lesen ist: Alendis patriæ ingeniis suam et gentis kinskiæ hæreditariam Bibliothecam destinari fecit.<sup>15</sup>

### **A Donation to a State Library**

By offering his own collection of books and organizing the Public University Library, Kinský showed his concern for the level of education in Bohemia. This was a point of high importance during the reign of Maria Theresa, who enacted many reforms in this field. Thirty years later, Franz Joseph Kinský’s donation and his activities at the head of the Library can be seen as supporting this monarchy policies. In his numerous projects addressed to Maria Theresa, Franz Joseph Kinský always presented his propositions as various means for accomplishing her own policies. The aim of his suggestions was

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<sup>12</sup> Zdeněk HOJDA published a recent synthesis of students’ works about Kinský’s library: *František Josef Kinský a jeho knihovna (Bibliotheca Kinskiana minor)* in *Čtenář a jeho knihovna*, České Budějovice 2003, (Opera romanica 4) p. 339-345. Nevertheless this study seems to be based on the donation list of books and not on the later catalogues of Kinský’s books. Since that date another catalogue of Kinský’s library was found in the department of manuscripts of the Prague National Library (IX J 35), which put a new light on the collection and especially shows that well known authors Hojda quoted as “missing” were in the library but were donated at last. The only analyse of the whole library is given by Pauline DERLON, *Identités et savoirs en construction: les pratiques de l’écrit du comte Franz Joseph Kinský (1739-1805) entre Prague et Vienne*, Master Diss. EHESS, Paris, 2006, 257 p.

<sup>13</sup> Robert DAMIEN, *Bibliothèque et État. Naissance d’une raison politique dans la France du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1995, p. 72. This is the reason why he did not give all his books at once but kept some of them for his own use which were progressively added to the public collection. As a result, this private library paradoxically existed entirely only after its complete donation, as a public one: P. DERLON, *Identités et savoirs* op. cit. p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> For example by Stanislav WYDRA, *Historia Matheseos in Bohemia et Moravia cultae*, Pragae 1778, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> *Abhandlungen der königlichen böhmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften von den Jahren 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, 1809*, Prag 1811, p. 28.

dass diese Universität der Allerhöchsten Fürsorge ihrer Grossen Wolthäterinn ganz entsprechen sollte.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Kinský's donation and his entire project for Prague library, appears very much based on the state's position. The public library he eventually gave his books to is a state library. The evolution of the library's administrative status is highly significant<sup>17</sup>. It shows that the library was led directly by a central state organ – Gubernium – as one of the University Libraries of the Monarchy.<sup>18</sup> The influence of the university upon the library became more and more external, less and less institutionalized, and was finally compelled to be informal<sup>19</sup>.

The consensus between Kinský's personal convictions and state policy was made even more significant by Kinský's position as director of the library; it may even seem as if he was a civil servant. Of course, his social status (as an aristocrat, an officer, a recognized learned man and an amateur of science) and his direct relation to Maria Theresa gave him a very special position. But when one looks at the precise agenda of his office, it is very far from a prestigious one<sup>20</sup>. Kinský actually accomplished the removal of all the Jesuit libraries. He also organized the removal of the Carolinum library to the Clementinum (i.e., from the university building to the former Jesuit college). When he resigned, he wrote to his friend Ignaz Born with his typical military tune:

Meine Bibliothekdirektionsresignation ist angenommen. Giebt nun freilich izt was anders zu thun, als mit *veni, vedi*, einige Schränke vol Gelehrsamkeit – mitunter auch etwas Unsinn – aus der Weisen Ruhe, in der sie lagen, wegfouragieren, und ins Hauptmagazin abliefern. Ob ein anderer, der keine Kommandi's hat, geschwinder oder langsamer manipuliren wird, müssen wir abwarten.<sup>21</sup>

Kinský's opinion about the public and university library as an institution was, however, very critical. Although he devoted much care and energy to the library, he hesitated for a

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<sup>16</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský osobní, n° 4 ; financial project 11.11.1777 P°1r°.

<sup>17</sup> The Hapsburg monarchy reached indeed a surprisingly high level of systematization in what we could call – abusively – a “library policy”. We can see a parallel and chronologically similar evolution in Vienna, in Tuscany and in Prague, where the 1720s and 1760s represented two turning points. Cf. Emmanuelle CHAPRON, *Utilité publique et organisation du savoir dans les bibliothèques florentines du XVIIIe siècle*, in: (Hans Erich Bödeker, Anne Saada eds.), *Bibliothek als Archiv*, Göttingen 2007, p. 209-234 ; Marie PAVLIKOVÁ, *Vznik a vývoj univerzitní knihovny* [History of the University library], in: *Dějiny univerzity Karlovy* [History of the Charles University]. II, 1622-1802, p. 203-223, 203.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Zdeněk TOBOLKA, *Národní a univerzitní knihovna*, op.cit. p. 108.

<sup>19</sup> Ludmila KUBÁTOVÁ, *Vývoj funkcí a agend v univerzitní knihovně za vedení K. R. Ungara* [The evolution of the functions and role of the university library during Ungar's direction], *Národní knihovna* 5, 1994 3-4, p. 197-218, p. 204.

<sup>20</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský, knihovna. Documents 11 to 69 are almost entirely devoted to the removal of the different collections, to the adaptation of the different halls in Clementinum.

<sup>21</sup> Franz Joseph KINSKÝ, *Fragmente einiger Briefe an Herrn von Born, meist mineralogischen Inhalt*, in: *Gesamlete Schriften. Sechster und letzter Theil*, Wiener Neustadt 1788, p. 77 (1778).

long time before leaving his own books to the Clementinum which seems to indicate that Kinský did not consider *a priori* the university to be the ideal institution for his donation. Its position was anything but fixed at both an administrative level<sup>22</sup>, and in Prague intellectual life. And indeed, Kinský never completely abandoned the supervision of the Kinský Collections. He wrote at the end of the year 1779:

“In betref meines eighenthums aber unsomehr [darf man nicht die Bücher ausleihen], da ich mich noch nicht erklärt, welchem Institut ich solches zugedacht habe – um den gemeinen Nutzen zweckmässig zubefördern.“<sup>23</sup>

The purpose of the donation was clearly to *efficiently* open his library to public, that is, according to Kinský, to readers. He was looking for an institution that would be able to achieve his project. Was the “public university library” a suitable institution?

### **The Library in the Public Sphere, or: Did Kinský Actually Give his Books to the “Reading Public”?**

The first indication of a library’s openness is usually given by its collections and its catalogues. In the Kinskýs’ donation from the 174’s, “useful books” had to be chosen and extracted from the Kinský family library in order to build a selected collection. There is a traditional point of disagreement between two conceptions of the purpose and of the access to knowledge that were theoretically treated as early as the 17th century<sup>24</sup>, a discussion that was very well known by the team in charge of the project of the Benedict Academy.<sup>25</sup> The iconography program of the planned decoration of the library significantly focused on “bad books” and their destruction.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> L. KUBÁTOVÁ, *Vývoj funkcí a agend* op. cit. p. 197. In the years 1779 and 1780, the Court Study Commission (Studien Hofkommission) repeatedly asserted that Prague Study Commission and namely his Councilor Count Vezník, was responsible for the library. Archives of the National Library, Kinský knihovna n° 65, 66. See also: Kateřina HEKRDLOVÁ, *Postavení veřejné c.k. universitní knihovny na konce 18. století* [The position of the i.r. public and university library at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], Národní knihovna 4, 1993-5, p. 348-352; Ludmila KUBÁTOVÁ, *Poznámky ke vztahu klementinské knihovny a Univerzity Karlovy* [Notes about the relations between the library in Clementinum and Charles University], Národní knihovna 9, 1998-5, p. 249-253.

<sup>23</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský Knihovna, N°66.

<sup>24</sup> Robert DAMIEN, *Bibliothèque et État*, op. cit., p. 69-106 (Chap. 4).

<sup>25</sup> For example Olivier Legipont (Kinský’s librarian, who wrote a treatise about libraries), Magnoald Ziegelbauer or Brevnov’s abbot Benno Löbel. Cf. Z. TOBOLKA, *Národní a universitní knihovna op. cit.*, p. 128, and N. TOLDE, *Der Gründungsversuch einer “Academia Nobilium”* p. 568.

<sup>26</sup> Martin MÁDL – Anke SCHLECHT – Marcela VONDRÁČKOVÁ, *Detracta larva juris naturae. Studien zu einer Skizze Wenzel Lorenz Reiners und zur Dekoration der Klosterbibliothek in Břevnov* (Opera minora historiae artium 2), Praha 2006.

On the contrary, in the 1770s the donation was “universal”. All the books had to be accessible. The universal character of the Prague Public Library was to be enhanced by Raphael Ungar, who was in charge of the library from 1781 onward. He suppressed *libri prohibiti & libri rarii* sections and started classifying all the books systematically. Because order is the condition of accessibility, this task was considered the most important by librarians of the Enlightenment eager to open their libraries.<sup>27</sup>

A second degree of openness is indicated by the publicity given to the opening of the library. We do not know, for example, how the Prunksaal of the Hofbibliothek in Vienna was accessible to the public, because it was not published in Viennese newspapers and its representative description printed in 1737 does not give any information about accessibility and the rules of the library.<sup>28</sup> It focuses on the building and seems to grant the library the exclusive function of representation.<sup>29</sup> In Prague, once the Kinský, Jesuit and Carolinum collections were settled in Clementinum, a printed announcement was published in 1777 as it had been in 1726 and 1769<sup>30</sup> and as it would be again in 1782.

Another significant indication of the openness of a library is the existence of precise, published printed rules that set regular opening hours and guarantee the users an effective access. We know the rules of the Prague university library as early as from 1726. They clearly opened the library to anyone and gave precise opening hours. In the rules published in 1769, the “University Library” appeared to be devoted to the university only to the extent that university professors were the only readers who were allowed to take borrowed books home. It was, however, open to everybody. These rules are repeated in 1777.

Even if it is officially open, a library may of course remain empty. Kinský’s books may have been lying on their shelves untouched. Prague university library, officially opened to the public in 1726, actually remained used by professors only for decades because of

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<sup>27</sup> Claire MADL, *Trois bibliothécaires des Lumières et leur participation à la constitution de bibliothèques ,bohêmes’*, Proceedings « Histoire des bibliothécaires » (Lyon, 27-29.11.2003), Lyon, ENSSIB (Centre Gabriel Naudé), 2008, 19 p. : <http://www.enssib.fr/bibliotheque-numerique/document-1458>

<sup>28</sup> Walther BUCHOWIECKI, *Der Barockbau der ehemaligen Hofbibliothek in Wien, ein Werk J.B. Fischers von Erlach*, Wien 1957, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Norbert BACHLEITNER, *Die Wiener Hof- und Nationalbibliothek*, in: (Frédéric Barbier, István Monok eds.) *Les bibliothèques centrales et la construction des identités collectives*, Leipzig 2005, p. 47-56.

<sup>30</sup> M. PAVLÍKOVÁ, *Vznik a vývoj op. cit.* p. 203, passim.

its general disorder: there were not enough books, and no efficient classification. The situation changed significantly at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

According to Ungar's sayings<sup>31</sup> – which may be, of course, exaggerated as in his writing, Ungar was asking for more money and for a larger staff – in 1801, the Public Library was visited quite a lot: 300 visitors a day. Though impressive enough, these 300 visitors still represent an elitist and relatively narrow readership, indeed mainly students and scholars involved in Prague's new intellectual and cultural life. Did Kinský intend to support this precise community by opening his own and his family's library?

### **A Donation to a National Library?**

#### *The library as a place of knowledge for the Czech lands?*

Kinský was very much involved in the Prague scholarly milieu whose members were the potential users of the library. He was one of the first members of the Society of Sciences (whose first publication occurred two years before his first donation: in 1775) and he was in personal contact with several scholars. A historian, Franz Martin Pelcl, had, for example, the privilege of borrowing books from the Kinský family library even before he entered the university.<sup>32</sup> Prague scholars' correspondence also shows that under Ungar's direction the Public and University Library was a center of book-lending and manuscript-copying. It belonged fully to Czech scholarly networks, within the Czech lands and abroad. It was a kind of "center in a national space of books".<sup>33</sup>

By choosing the University Library to open his library, Kinský had in mind the different initiatives that had been started in Prague and that brought new institutions to life. He wrote to Maria Theresa in his "suggestions" about the funding of Prague University:

Wenn man zurückdenkt, was nur seit kurzen durch wetteifern den Privatbemühungen für das gemeine Beste zu nützliche Anstalten beigetragen worden ist...<sup>34</sup>

His donation is one of these private initiatives. As Kinský eventually decided to leave his collection to the Public and University Library at the very moment when Ungar entered

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<sup>31</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, VUK, ředitelství, Ungar, 1801 is asking for a larger staff and more money to cope with the bad equipment of the library compared to its high frequentation.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Kinský, Osobní, n° 7.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel BARIC, *L'exemple croate : de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie à la Bibliothèque universitaire de Zagreb, 1818-1913*, in: (F. Barbier I. Monok eds.) *Les bibliothèques centrales op. cit.* p. 169-182.

<sup>34</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský Osobní, n°4 f°6r.

his function (1780) and because Ungar seemed to him very reliable,<sup>35</sup> we can suppose that he agreed with the way Ungar conceived of his work and the institution he was leading. And indeed, Ungar organized the library in a scientific way in order to offer a scientific tool to his “colleagues”. The discussions about the catalogue are significant. Ungar set up a catalogue of the whole fund. He refused to start with the universal alphabetic catalogue the Gubernium wanted him to establish, but intended to introduce “[a catalogue] logical and systematic that is scientific”.<sup>36</sup> In his reasoning he showed that the readers he was working for were scholars who needed to be able to work at different levels onto the otherwise universal knowledge contained in the library.

- « Der Zweck und der Nutzen eines systematischen logischen oder wissenschaftlichen Katalogs ist :
1. Damit der Leser in einer ¼ Stunde alle die Bücher, welche die Materie, von der Er sich unterrichten will, erklären, und in der Bibliothek existiren, uebersehen können.
  2. Damit er zugleich die Bücher welche von dieser Wissenschaft ueberhaupt, dann diejenige, welche zwar nicht gerade von diesem Zweig der Wissenschaft handeln, aber doch mit ihr als Hulfswissenschaften genau verbunden sind, kennen lerne, und daraus folgere : welche Bücher, wenn Er mit Nutzen und systematisch studiren will, er [voraussuchen?], und welche Er später lesen soll.
  3. Damit Er zugleich sich in die literär Geschichte dieser Wissenschaft einarbeiten, ich will sagen : damit er wisse, wie Sie von Jahr zu Jahr bearbeitet worden, wie Sie ab- oder zugenommen, und aus welchen Quellen die spätere Autoren geschöpft, und wie Sie selbst benutzt haben, welche Editionen Er andere vorziehen sollen, entweder weil Sie Autographä non castrata, oder weil Sie in der That vermehrte und verbesserte ; oder weil Sie inbetref des Drucks ohne Fehlere, und unter des Aufsicht gelehrter Männer editiret sind, wie z. B. die Editiones Aldina-Elzeviriana-Stephani u.s.w. oder weil Sie mit den Kommentarien der gelehrtesten Männer z.b. Gravii gromovii u.s.w. versehen sind. »<sup>37</sup>

#### *A “National” Library?*

Kinský and also Ungar were deeply involved in the birth of a new intellectual life in the Czech lands. Thus, we can expect that the reorganization of the University Library was an opportunity to create a new central place of knowledge in the Czech lands. The institution of legal deposit is usually a good indicator of the level of identification a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Kinský osobní, n°7, letters to Ungar and to Valentin Zlobický (the latter is published in: Josef VINTR, Jana PLESKALOVÁ, *Der Wiener Anteil an den Anfängen der tschechischen nationalen Erneuerung. J.V. Zlobický (1743-1810) und Zeitgenossen*, Prague 2004, p. 365.

<sup>36</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, VUK, Direction, « Entwurf für die systématique Kataloge » 29 January 1783.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

library is able to encourage. It draws very clearly the territory to which it refers as well as to its strength as a central place.<sup>38</sup>

We may be surprised today to read that Kinský proposed to implement legal deposit at the level of the whole Monarchy in favor of the Prague Public Library.<sup>39</sup> Kinský was certainly concerned mainly by the lack of financial resources for the library and tried to guarantee it would be supplied with as many new books as possible. But it also means that Kinský considered as a unit, as one field of knowledge, the entire Hapsburg Monarchy. Conversely, Ungar obtained the proclamation of the obligation of legal deposit successively in 1781 and in 1782<sup>40</sup> within the Czech lands and especially for Prague, which means that his conception was much more centered on that region. In 1807, however, all the university libraries in the Monarchy were to benefit from legal deposit for the whole monarchy.

Prague's public library, however, received several opportunities to become a "national" library, i.e., a library representing knowledge at the level of the Czech lands. First of all, its legitimacy – near and under Vienna – was never questioned. After the suppression of the Jesuits, their libraries were not to be sent to Vienna, but had to be collected in Prague (the situation was different in countries that had no university). And indeed, the Public and University Library could have won legitimacy, as it was not a patrimonial library like the Hofbibliothek in Vienna. It existed before and independently from the Hapsburg dynasty. Through the prestige of Prague University, the library could have become an object of pride.

Although the library was partly financed and closely controlled by Prague's Gubernium, Kinský paid great attention to guarantee independent income for the library (he recommended that the ancient Jesuit foundations providing Jesuit libraries with funds should be devoted to the Public Library). This technical part of his project was certainly the key of its success. There existed a tradition of independence that new foundations or donations could have enhanced and perpetuated. Czech estates also contributed to the expenses of the library by supporting the regular purchase of new books.

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<sup>38</sup> N. BACHLEITNER, *Die Wiener Hof- und Nationalbibliothek* op. cit. In Vienna, in 1808, the legal deposit was intended to be extended to the Cisleithania only. But it seems it did not work well enough to allow the library to publish a solid bibliography at this level.

<sup>39</sup> Archives of the National Library, Prague, Kinský Osobní, n°4 F°7r.

<sup>40</sup> L. KUBÁTOVÁ, *Vývoj funkcí a agend* op. cit., p. 205.

Karl Raphael Ungar certainly intended to build a “national” library. Very soon, in 1781, he organized a collection of books devoted to the Czech lands in a very wide sense (books by authors who lived, were born or crossed the Czech lands, books printed in the Czech lands or related to these regions through their topics). He called this section “Bibliotheca Nationalis” or Nationalbibliothek and soon applied his “scientific” classification to this section.<sup>41</sup> He started a catalogue that can be considered as a beginning of national bibliography and even published his results.<sup>42</sup>

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We can thus consider Kinský’s donation as a private initiative using a state institution in order to reach a slowly widening public: formally and institutionally anybody; practically mainly the academic and scholarly community in the Czech lands, so that Kinský’s library became public in several ways.

Kinský’s donation (1777) of his family’s and of his own library to the newly founded Public and University Library is usually considered as a patriotic act of abnegation in favour of the public within the Czech lands. He is thus rewarded with prestige for his contribution to the diffusion of knowledge and for having chosen the Czech lands and Prague as the frame of his action. His close collaboration with “Viennese” educational policy is less mentioned today than it was at his time. Kinsky’s patriotism did not exclude one level or one meaning of the public he gave his books to in favour of another.

When Kinský made his donation, the Prague Public and University Library was in fact the only institution able to effectuate his project. The state still played the most important part. Until the creation of the National Museum, the library remained a unique institution that the opening of the new library hall of philosophy in Strahov did not usurp. The

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<sup>41</sup> Jindřich MAREK, *Sluha Skriptor a kustod c.k. Universitní knihovny* [Clerk; attendant and librarian of the IR University Library], in (Iveta Cermanová, Jindřich Marek) *Na rozhraní křesťanského a židovského světa. Příběh hebrejského cenzora a klementinského knihovníka Karla Fischera (1757-1844)* [On the border of Christian and Jewish worlds. The story of Karl Fischer, censor of Hebrew books and librarian in Klementinum 1757-1844], Praha, 2007, p. 82-97.

<sup>42</sup> Karl Raphael UNGAR, *Allgemeine böhmische Bibliothek*, Prag 1786; Týž, *Neue Beyträge zur alten Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst in Böhmen, mit einer vollständigen Uibersicht aller dazu gehörigen Daten aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, in: *Neuere Abhandlungen der k. böhmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Bd. II. Prag, 1795, p. 195-229 (reprint in Emma URBÁNKOVÁ, *Prameny k prvotiskům českého původu* [Sources about incunabula from the Czech Lands]. I/1 Praha 1984, č. LIV, s. 284-334.).

public and university library became a central institution for the Czech lands and for Prague, especially in the eyes and for the work of scholars.

Kinsky's donation nevertheless did not give rise to a movement to be followed by other noblemen or by scholars. The university did not initiate any "crystallization" of private initiatives toward its library. This movement would be initiated some 30 years later by the project of a new and independent institution: the National Museum. Ungar's creation of the section of the "national library" seems very isolated today; Kinsky's position does as well. The building of the Jesuit College, the Clementinum, did not offer, of course, any strong symbolic meaningful frame for a collective identification as a new building could have done. No large project for a "reappropriation" of the Clementinum ever appeared, even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century after the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Public University Library would wait until 1935 to be called, the "national library", and we can see this reflected in the recent discussions about the architectural project for a new building, when its national and central character had to be reasserted.

## Abstract

In the Czech lands, the end of the eighteenth century can be considered the period when a critical public was born and when cultural and intellectual life started being institutionalised at the level of the "country", i.e., at the level of the nation-to-be. Scholarly discussions took place in reviews and printed books. Institutions such as the Society of Sciences, the Gallery of Art and later the "National Museum" appeared. Intellectual life emancipated itself from the court, church and university.

The various involvements in the public sphere of Franz Joseph Kinsky (1739-1805) offer an opportunity to examine and question practices within this new publicity and the wide scale of meanings given to the word "public" in the context of its differentiation. Kinsky's donation (1777) of his family's and of his own library to the newly founded Public and University Library is well known and usually considered as a patriotic act of abnegation in favour of the Czech public. The way this donation took place is nevertheless complex and not univocal. It can be considered to be in continuity with the representation strategy of the Kinsky family (who intended to offer the family library as early as the 1740s). It can be regarded as an enlightened patriotic act in order to improve the general level of education and as a means of collaboration with the policy of Maria Theresa in this domain (Kinsky was nominated to the post of director of the Public i.e., Imperial and Royal Library). Kinsky's involvement in Prague scholarly circles, especially in the Society of Sciences, and his relations with the first librarian of the Public Library, Raphael Ungar, show that his donation was also regarded as support given to these newly

emancipated elites in the Czech lands, which actually formed the learned public attending the Clementinum library.

Kinský's image as a donor of books – very symbolic Czech cultural artefacts – benefits from various sources of prestige recognised in his time, and remained relevant throughout the nineteenth century.