X-post: An Introduction to the Department of Manuscripts at Vasyl Stefanyk Lviv National Scientific Library

Discussion published by Patrice Dabrowski on Thursday, November 14, 2019

Those scholars interested in working in the former Ossolineum in Lviv or accessing its online materials may find this to be of interest.

X-post from H-Ukraine:

An Introduction to the Department of Manuscripts at Vasyl Stefanyk Lviv National Scientific Library

by Amber N. Nickell

An Introduction to the Department of Manuscripts at Vasyl Stefanyk Lviv National Scientific Library

by Danylo Kravets, Scientific Fellow, Vasyl Stefanyk Lviv National Scientific Library

The Department of Manuscripts is housed in the main building of the Vasyl Stefanyk Lviv National Scientific Library of Ukraine. The address is Stefanyka St. 2, Lviv, 79000. The main reading room of the department is located on the first floor of the library and is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm (except the last working day of a month, when the library is closed). You may contact the department staff via telephone at +032 236-80-28 or e-mail at manuscrlsl.lviv.ua. The library's website has a page dedicated to the Department of Manuscripts, found here (Ukrainian language).

A library card is required to enter the main library. To obtain a library card, you need to bring your ID (Passport) and the library card fee of 40 UAH. Additionally, in order to view the department's archival documents and rare manuscripts, you will need to provide an official letter of support from your host institution or academic affiliation (university, institute, governmental office, city council, etc.). The letter must include your position at the host institution, a description of this position, and a brief overview of your research topic. You will also have to fill out an application with the reading room staff. Library catalogs, on-line materials, and texts from the department's bookshelves can be accessed without a letter of support.

Generally, the reading room is staffed by two employees, the librarian and an archivist. Myroslava Diadiuk is the Head of the Department of Manuscripts. Ukrainian language inquiries and requests can be addressed to her via e-mail at myroslavadiaadiuk@gmail.com. English language inquiries and requests should be addressed to the scientific fellows Iaroslav Senyk (yarolviv@gmail.com) and Danylo Kravets (Davydiw@gmail.com). Staff at the archives can speak Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and...
The Department of Manuscripts houses more than three hundred archival collections, composed of 143,526 items. These include rare books, manuscripts, documents, diplomas, photos, etc. The core of the department's collections consists of the publications and collections of well-known Ukrainian and Polish organizations that operated in the region prior to 1939. These include the Central Archive of the Order of Saint Basil the Great, the collections of the Shevchenko Scientific Society and the Greek-Catholic Theological Academy, and the "Ossolineum" Institute collections, among others. The personal papers of several distinguished Ukrainian and Polish scientists, public activists, and writers are also among the collection. The department also houses a large cache of Polish archives and collections, many of which have been digitized and made available on-line here. The department's collections are not fully cataloged on the website. However, you can e-mail the department for more information on materials that might be pertinent for your ongoing research project.

Generally, the department archivist will bring your materials to you within ten to fifteen minutes of your request, but it will take more time when the reading room is crowded (four of eleven available seats are usually occupied daily). According to official rules, visitors are not allowed to request more than five items per day or have more than five folders (books) on a table at once, but usually, the staff is liberal and "tolerates" more than five requests per day. There are also some restricted materials in personal archives that have not been organized by the department's scientific fellows yet. Generally, these are more recent acquisitions (in the last 30-40 years). In special circumstances, the head of the department can grant permission to look through these restricted documents.

You may reproduce materials (scan or photograph); however, this is quite costly. The cost is 70 UAH for each page of a manuscript (or any other document) to scan or photograph using your own device. A double-sided page is considered two pages.

In general, the department staff is exceptionally kind, pleasant, and always available to help. After the initial paperwork is completed, materials of interest are quickly provided, and there are always available seats in the reading room, where, of course, you have wi-fi, can charge your devices, and ask for some extra light or borrow a magnifying glass.