The 6-week trip to Warsaw, Poland, turned out to be very successful and satisfying, so much so that I would be eager to repeat it soon, as new opportunities arise. The whole atmosphere of Warsaw was very encouraging and positive, which, no doubt, contributed in no small way to achieving my research goals. The logistical side of the exchange program was superbly handled by both universities, and the assistance for my research provided by the host university was timely and skillful. I was set up at the University of Warsaw’s hotel “Hera,” which was located not far from the university. The university library was also aware in advance of my arrival and project and helped me get off to a good start right away without any unnecessary waste of time. The 6-hour time difference between Bloomington and Warsaw did not present any significant obstacle to the seamless transition from a 20-hour journey to research.

The city of Warsaw of 2010 was a vibrant, lively, and accepting metropolis. In the opinion of many Warsaw residents I met, this was a positive transformation from the shortage-stricken, bleak Warsaw of Communist Poland, which ended in 1989. The wholesome atmosphere may reflect the nation’s ever-growing confidence in its own future. Located near the center of the city and right at the threshold of the Old Town, the biggest tourist area of the city, the University of Warsaw seemed to exemplify most vividly the new atmosphere of Warsaw. The campus was well maintained, safe, and teeming with cultural events and activities. The students and faculty were quite approachable and appeared to be informed relatively well of the outside world.

The positive results of my research trip had much to do with this propitious atmosphere of the city. But I would like to single out the particular role that the main library of the University of Warsaw and its staff played in the successful conduct of my research. I arrived at the university with two interconnected research goals. The first one was to build an annotated bibliography of landmark Polish-language reference sources in connection with my intention to reinforce the Polish section of the Slavic bibliography which currently consists of English-language titles with vernacular titles. The main library collection was a perfect fit for this purpose: it had all the titles that I wanted to examine and also enabled me to expand my repertoire of Polish reference sources. The open stacks, still an exception than a norm in the Slavic and East European countries, was an added convenience for my research. The General Reading Room (Czytalnia Ogólna), where the library administration provided me with a private research carrel, was packed with major Polish bibliographies and other reference materials which I was able to freely access. Titles from the closed stacks, mostly old publications, did not present too much trouble in terms of access either: upon request they were delivered to me within one hour. The two visits to the National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa) of Poland, which one university librarian arranged for me, led to an opportunity not only to discuss my project with other local experts but also to
expand my professional network of contacts in Poland. There I had a meeting with several librarians from the Bibliographic Institute (Instytut Bibliograficzny), the national center of Polish bibliography, regarding the current state of Polish national bibliography and the possibility of purchasing 19th-century Polish serials on microfilm for the library collection of Indiana University.

My second research project, that is, assembling a set of key sources to produce an article on the history of Polish bibliography, underwent a slight modification. While examining the Polish reference materials for the first project, I increasingly became convinced of the towering importance for the whole history of Polish bibliography of Karol Estreicher (1827-1908), frequently referred to as the “Nestor of Polish bibliography” and his opus magnum, *Bibliografia polska* (The Polish bibliography). That conviction grew firmer as I selected and closely read Karol Korpala’s *Dzieje bibliografii w Polsce* (The history of bibliography in Poland), still the definitive text on the history of Polish bibliography. Karol Estreicher was an interesting intellectual of 19th-century Poland, and his bibliography was a gargantuan, 34-volume work. So far there has not been any English-language text on him and his bibliography. The sources that I have gathered from the rich collection of the main library of the University of Warsaw have a clear focus and will be quantitatively sufficient to produce an article on the unique and enormous contributions that Karol Estreicher made to the development of Polish national bibliography.

I am very excited to report that in Warsaw I was able to examine a wide array of great Polish reference publications, the results of which will be incorporated into my syllabus for the Slavic Bibliography course. Most notably, I began to understand the importance of the great Polish bibliographer, Karol Estreicher, in the broad context of the history of Polish bibliography and the cultural and political history of 19th-century Poland, which is the topic of my article in progress for journal publication.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Indiana University Libraries for granting me a research leave to work on my project.

Sincerely,

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