



The Database of Latvian Calendars, 1750–1919: An Important Component of the National Bibliography

Liga Krumina MA

To cite this article: Liga Krumina MA (2002) The Database of Latvian Calendars, 1750–1919: An Important Component of the National Bibliography, *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, 3:2-3, 135-140, DOI: [10.1300/J167v03n02_13](https://doi.org/10.1300/J167v03n02_13)

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1300/J167v03n02_13



Published online: 28 May 2010.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 24



View related articles [↗](#)

The Database of Latvian Calendars, 1750-1919: An Important Component of the National Bibliography

Liga Krumina

SUMMARY. The author discusses one of the gaps in Latvian national bibliographic coverage, that of calendars (or almanacs). Bibliographies of these calendars do not exist, and a project has been started at the Latvian Academic Library in Riga to compile a complete list of publications in this category and make the information accessible via a database. The author discusses the history of Latvian calendars and how they reflect various cultural systems, national customs, social traditions, and esthetic tastes. The paper then discusses the methodology of compiling the database, bibliographic standards used, and means of accessing contents of calendars via indexing and keywords. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2002 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS. Calendars, almanacs, national bibliography, Latvian publications, Latvia, Latvian bibliography

Liga Krumina, MA, is Head, Bibliographic Research Department, Latvian Academic Library, 10 Rūbniecibas Street, Riga LV1235, Latvia (E-mail: ikrumina@lib.acadlib.lv).

[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "The Database of Latvian Calendars, 1750-1919: An Important Component of the National Bibliography." Krumina, Liga. Co-published simultaneously in *Slavic & East European Information Resources* (The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 3, No. 2/3, 2002, pp. 135-140; and: *Libraries in Open Societies: Proceedings of the Fifth International Slavic Librarians' Conference* (ed: Harold M. Leich) The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 2002, pp. 135-140. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-HAWORTH, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com].

INTRODUCTION

Collections of Latvian literature, together with collections from the other Baltic states, have an important place in East European collections. The Latvian Academic Library (LAL), one of the largest research libraries in Latvia, collects current and retrospective bibliographic information, in printed form and databases. The most significant is information on the Latvian printed cultural heritage, consisting of three parts: books (from the first Latvian book, published in 1585, to 1919), periodicals (from 1768 to 1945), and calendars (from the first Latvian calendar, published 1750, to 1919).

Bibliographies of Latvian books and periodicals have been compiled by the LAL and published between 1975 and 1998. Full bibliographic coverage of the third part of the Latvian national retrospective bibliography, calendars (ca. 750 titles published in approximately 8,000 annual sets) does not yet exist, nor do analytical studies on these calendars. Research on this topic has begun at LAL in order to offer researchers and other interested people ready access via a database to bibliographic information about calendars.

The main task of our research is to gather basic data for further investigation in various fields of knowledge (history of literature, the national economy, culture, etc.). The chief components of this bibliographic research were: first, to create a methodology for bibliographic description, analyzing the experience of other European countries in the description of calendars and in descriptive methodology of other Latvian printed materials. Secondly, we aimed to compile a bibliographic database of Latvian calendars, from the first one in 1750 through 1919, including not only the basic bibliographic data (title, publisher, printer, place and date of publication), but also the full contents of each. A third goal was to compile a system of keyword codes for subject analysis of the contents of Latvian calendars, thereby indexing the most important components and topics of the contents.

In this paper, I present the main items and conclusions regarding methodology of bibliographic description and database creation. I focus my attention on calendars as one type of Latvian printed material; on the genre of calendars and variations in their structure (periodicity, the semiotic nature and functional character of the information contained in them); and on the basic bibliographic data (using international and Latvian standards) and additional information needed in the calendar database.

CALENDARS AS A TYPE OF PRINTED MATERIAL IN LATVIA

Calendars, or almanacs, have a definite place in the multiplicity of printed materials. Calendars also have an important role in our social life—for example, book calendars, tear-off calendars, block calendars, wall calendars, etc. At the beginning of our research, one methodological question had to be resolved: what types of calendars should be described and investigated? The history of Latvian calendars began with book calendars, the first of which was published more than two centuries ago. It has been confirmed that “at the beginning of Latvian ecclesiastical literature was a catechism, just as at the beginning of secular literature, a calendar. . . . Latvian calendars occupy the place of newspapers, chronicles, collected articles in popular science and fiction.”¹

Book calendars are a type of serial publication consisting of a diary (days, months, astronomical data, festivals, etc.) with various supplements appended: popular science literature or fiction, for example. With a variety of contents and supplements, these publications stand out from other types of calendars. Book calendars, like books themselves, reflect the age and corresponding cultural system with definite social stereotypes, national customs, traditions in social life, and esthetic taste. According to data provided by the Press Statistics Department of the National Library of Latvia, in 1998 there were 190 different types of calendars at users' disposal in Latvia. Thirty of these were book calendars.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BOOK CALENDARS

Book calendars as a type of printed matter have characteristics that can be described according to (1) structure, (2) periodicity, (3) semiotic nature of their contents, and (4) functional character of their contents. In 1993 these characteristics were confirmed by the standard of the Republic of Latvia² and must be taken into account when creating the database of Latvian calendars.

For the structure of publications, the standard covers books, loose-leaf publications, and cased sets. Book calendars, as their name shows, are considered books, consisting of a bound or stitched block of printed matter of any page size. It is often difficult to distinguish between the original binding and a later or restored binding done by a library. It is also difficult sometimes to determine the origin of supplements. To resolve this issue, we must compare several copies of the same title at several libraries, thereby requiring much time.

Regarding periodicity, we have the following groups of publications listed in the standard: non-periodical publications (books, pamphlets, single- and multi-volume publications, etc.), periodical publications (journals, newspapers et al.), and continuations. Book calendars can be considered continuations. They appear as dated, annual sets with a common title. They are usually of standard page size and uniform design. Some Latvian calendars have been published for more than a hundred years; for example, the first calendar of Vidzeme (the northern part of Latvia), *Widzemes kalendars*, was issued in 1782 and continued publication until World War I, thus for more than 130 years, during which time it was quite well known. When dealing with publications issued over long periods of time, it remains to be determined how to follow changes of titles, of collaborators, and design—and how to establish links between different variant titles of one and the same calendar.

In discussing the semiotic nature of information, the Latvian standard singles out types such as textual publications, printed music, maps, picture postcards, and others. Book calendars fall in the textual publication category, since they contain almost exclusively language text and numerical text (e.g., lists of days, tables to calculate wages, and tables of units of measurements), with or without illustrations. Calendars as publications intended for popular use are usually well illustrated and attractive. Sometimes supplements to calendars contain maps, printed music, art reproductions, and so forth. The illustrative material contained in Latvian calendars could well be a topic for further research.

According to the functional character of information, as contained in the above-mentioned standard, Latvian calendars are related to many types of publications. Latvian calendars can be popular science or educational publications; reference, advertising, or fiction publications; or catalogs.

Analysis of basic information about calendars and their supplements reveals a variety of subject forms. Regarding their subjects, Latvian calendars are closely related to the calendars and almanacs of other European countries, for example, Great Britain. British bibliographical indexes and short title catalogs furnish information on the subject of British calendars. For example, a cumulative subject index has been added to the chapter “Ephemerides” of the catalog of 19th century printed books.³ Themes of these calendars include generalities, philosophy, religion, the social sciences, the natural sciences, the applied sciences, the arts, and literature. Consequently, they relate to all the main categories of the classification.

The popularity of and demand for calendars are closely related to the multiplicity of their subjects as well as their practical use. Therefore, we must resolve issues such as how to provide subject indexing for the contents, and how to analyze the value of Latvian calendars in connection with the corresponding cultural systems.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION IN THE DATABASE OF CALENDARS

At the beginning of our research, the most important tasks were to answer the questions noted above and to create a database as a basic tool for further research. We used international and Latvian standards as the basis for bibliographic description as well as the structure of the database. For Latvian calendars as book publications and continuations, we used the *International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographic Publications (ISBD(M))*⁴ and the *International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials (ISBD(S))*,⁵ as well as the corresponding Latvian standards, BA(M)⁶ and BA(S).⁷ In addition to using these bibliographic standards, we determined appropriate data fields by comparing the structure of bibliographic descriptions of Latvian books and periodicals, as well as by investigating how other European countries provide bibliographic description of calendars and almanacs.

The data fields of the basic bibliographic records in the database of Latvian calendars are: (1) title, (2) other title information, or dependent title, (3) statement of responsibility (compilers, editors of calendars), (4) place of publication, (5) name of publisher and/or distributor, (6) date of publication, (7) place of printing, (8) name of printer or printing press, (9) extent, illustration statement, and size of publication, (10) series statement, and (11) notes.

In addition, we are including data fields containing additional information, in order to reflect the wealth of contents of the calendars in the database and to index these contents, as well as to establish links between variant or changed titles of one and the same calendar. These additional data fields include: first, notes relating to the contents, including recording in full the contents of each calendar. It is therefore possible to search for any word in the title of any component part of each calendar. Secondly, we include notes on the bibliographic history of each publication. The following kinds of notes are used: change of distinctive title (“continued by . . .” and “continues . . .” notes), mergers (when the cal-

endar being described has resulted from the merger of two or more previous publications), and splits (when the calendar results in a split of a single earlier calendar into two more newer titles).

Finally, we include notes on supplements to calendars, material published in them that is not, strictly speaking "calendrical," such as popular science articles, prose fiction, poetry, and drama. To make these sorts of information useful for research, we will include many subject indexes, to be created according to the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) system.

CONCLUSION

As of mid-2000, the database structure had been created, and bibliographic records for the first 800 annual sets entered in the database. To continue our project, we must input all the remaining bibliographic data on Latvian book calendars to the database (from 1750 to 1919), add subject indexing of the contents, and analyze the value of Latvian calendars in connection with corresponding cultural and political systems that Latvia has lived under over the past several centuries.

NOTES

1. Teodors [Teodors Zeiferts]. "Atskats uz latviesu kalendarniecību: simtspiecdesimt gadu pieminai," *Druva* 1913, no. 10: 1137-1148.

2. *Izdevejprodukcija un izlaides zinas: termini un definicijas: Latvijas Republikas standarts, LRS 6-91* (Riga: LR Standartizācijas un produkcijas kvalitātes vadīšanas parvalde, 1993).

3. "Ephemerides," *Nineteenth Century Short Title Catalogue. Series I, Phase I: 1801-1815. Volume 5, Special Sections, Indexes, and First Supplement* (London: Avevo Publications, 1985), 187-197.

4. *ISBD(M), International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographic Publications* (London: IFLA Universal Bibliographic Control and International MARC Programme, British Library Bibliographic Services, 1987).

5. *ISBD(S), International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials* (London: IFLA Universal Bibliographic Control and International MARC Programme, British Library Bibliographic Services, 1988).

6. *BA(M), Bibliografiskais apraksts: monografiskie izdevumi: Latvijas standarts, LVS 195-1999* (Riga: VSIA Latvijas standarts, 1999).

7. *BA(S), Bibliografiskais apraksts: serializdevumi: Latvijas standarts, LVS 196:1999*. (Riga: VSIA Latvijas standarts, 1999).