

WOJCIECH ZABŁOCKI<sup>1</sup> , PIOTR DASZKIEWICZ<sup>1,2</sup> , DARIUSZ IWAN<sup>3</sup> 

## Ural owls in the correspondence of the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw and the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University - unknown documents illuminating the history of European zoological museums

<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5243207>

<sup>1</sup> Instytut Historii Nauki PAN, Warszawa, ul. Nowy Świat 72, 00-330 Warszawa, Polska

<sup>2</sup> UMS PatriNat (OFB-CNRS-MNHN), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, CP 41, 36 rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 75005 Paris, Francja, e-mail: piotrdas@mnhn.fr

<sup>3</sup> Muzeum i Instytut Zoologii PAN, ul. Wilcza 64, 00-679 Warszawa, Polska, e-mail: darek@miiz.waw.pl

**Abstract:** In the interwar period, the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw (PMZ) was a leading Polish natural history institution with a significant zoological collection and a team of scientists with broad international contacts. As part of their work, researchers from the PMZ often loaned specimens of various animals for their research from many other domestic and foreign institutions. The outbreak of World War II caused enormous losses in the community of Polish zoologists and abruptly interrupted any types of external cooperation. Furthermore, the scientific collections themselves were largely destroyed or robbed. In the case of the PMZ collection, the looting took place in November 1939, when a special unit of the SS Sonderkommando Paulsen transported four trucks filled with zoological specimens from Warsaw to the Haus der Natur museum in Salzburg. After the war, most of the stolen collections were recovered, which, as it turns out, included not only the specimens originally owned by the PMZ, but also objects loaned from other institutions. As the majority of the World's zoological museums do not possess detailed inventories of their specimens, this created complicated, almost unsolvable, property issues that can potentially involve several national and international facilities. One of such cases concerns the loan of Ural owl specimens (*Strix uralensis* PALLAS, 1771) required by Andrzej Dunajewski from the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University before World War II. The present paper investigates hitherto unpublished documents illuminating this case and provides context for future research on the war losses in European zoological museography.

**Key words:** State Zoological Museum, PMZ, recovery, Salzburg, Haus der Natur, Museum and Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Zoological Museum of Moscow State University, Andrzej Dunajewski, Georgi Petrovich Dementiev.

The archives of the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (MIZ PAS) preserves correspondence from years 1946-1947, containing documents important for the history of the European zoology, illustrating the rebirth of the international activity of the State Zoological Museum (PMZ<sup>1</sup>) after World War II. When considering the historical context of these letters, it should be remembered that during the German occupation, the PMZ was an important center of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa) resistance movement (ANDRZEJEWSKA *et al.* 1990). This institution was one of the most damaged zoological museums in Europe by the German occupation, and a significant part of its employees, belonging to the Polish intellectual elite, were murdered (BRZEK 1997). In November 1939, a special unit of the SS Sonderkommando Paulsen<sup>2</sup> transported four trucks filled with zoological specimens from Warsaw to the Haus der Natur museum in Salzburg<sup>3</sup>. After the war, most of the stolen collections were recovered<sup>4</sup>, which, as it turns out, included not only the specimens originally owned by the PMZ, but also objects loaned by PMZ workers from other domestic and foreign scientific institutions.

Stanisław Feliksiak (1906-1922)<sup>5</sup>, Director of the PMZ in years 1945-1953, was not only a member of the resistance movement (BRZEK 1995), but also a person who managed to save a significant part of the collection of the PMZ (DASZKIEWICZ & IWAN 2016). Furthermore as a former Polish Home Army officer, and at the same time, an outstanding zoologist, he undoubtedly decided that regardless of the policy of the post-war communist government, it was his duty to save Polish natural collections.

Andrzej Dunajewski (1908-1944), an outstanding ornithologist (Fig. 1), employee of the PMZ and an officer of the Polish Home Army, died in the Warsaw Uprising (SZCZEPSKI 1967, 1987). In the interwar period, while working on a monograph of the genus *Strix* LINNAEUS, 1758<sup>6</sup>, he borrowed a few specimens from the Museum of Moscow State University. Georgi Petrovich Dementiev (1889-1969) [in his letters he signed the name of Georges], a Russian ornithologist and professor at the University of Moscow, after returning to Moscow from Ashkhabad (Turkmenistan), where he spent the World War II, began to work on the monograph

<sup>1</sup> PMZ = Państwowe Muzeum Zoologiczne, which today is part of the collection of the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (MIZ PAS).

<sup>2</sup> About actions of SS Sonderkommando Paulsen in Poland cf: A. Mężyński, *Kommando Paulsen. Organizierter Kunstraub in Polen 1942-45*, Köln 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Władysław Rydzewski's report for the Liquidation Committee of MWRiOP of May 29, 1940 with responses to the questionnaire concerning the National Zoological Museum (Archives of MIZ PAS, document No. 1 in file No. 1/83. 2243: "Reports and plans 1940-1944").

<sup>4</sup> The letter of Dr Stanisław Feliksiak entitled "Rewindykacja", reference number 584/47 / R.VI. of May 24, 1947 directed to the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Warsaw. Archives of MIZ PAS.

<sup>5</sup> Stanisław Feliksiak (1906-1992): zoologist (malacologist, ornithologist), graduate of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Warsaw. From 1928 he worked at the State Zoological Museum, where he was an assistant, and from 1936 a curator in the department of mollusks. In 1938, he received a doctorate from the University of Warsaw. Participant of scientific expeditions to the Americas. During the war, from 1940 to 1944, he was employed as an assistant in the invertebrate department unit of the PMZ. At the same time, he taught in secret classes in secret classes, was a soldier of the Home Army and fought in the Warsaw Uprising. He took part in the actions of the Evacuation Committee of Cultural Property of the Capital City of Of Warsaw, saving the collections of the PMZ from burning Warsaw. After the war, he was the manager and then director of the PMZ, and also a member of the Warsaw Scientific Society. From 1953, professor of biological sciences. Founder and editor-in-chief of the publishing house *Memorabilia Zoologica* (1958-1977) and editor of the *Dictionary of Polish Biologists*, which appeared in 1987 (S. Kazubski, *Composition of the Warsaw Scientific Society: (term 1992 -1994); Posthumous memories: Stanisław Feliksiak (1906-1992)*, "Annals of the Warsaw Scientific Society" 56, 1993, pp. 35-37).

<sup>6</sup> A. Dunajewski, *Beiträge zur systematischen Stellung der Karpatischen Habichtseule*, *Annales Musei Nationalis Hungarici, Pars Zoologica* 33, 1940, pp. 98-100.



Fig. 1. Andrzej Dunajewski (1908-1944), an outstanding Polish ornithologist. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw, reproduction of photo from private collection of Paweł Kozłowski (1906-1973), ornithologist, collaborator and friend of Andrzej Dunajewski, photo was taken in Starzyce in 1928 (SZCZEPSKI 1967).

Ryc. 1. Andrzej Dunajewski (1908-1944), wybitny polski ornitolog. Archiwum MiZ PAN w Warszawie, reprodukcja zdjęcia pochodzącego z prywatnych zbiorów Pawła Kozłowskiego (1906-1973), ornitologa, współpracownika i przyjaciela Andrzeja Dunajewskiego, zdjęcie zostało wykonane w Starzycach w 1928 roku (SZCZEPSKI 1967).

entitled "Birds of Soviet Union" published together with Nikolai Alekseevich Glandkov in 1951-1954. This was probably the direct reason why the Russian scientist asked the Director of the PMZ in Warsaw for the return of the loaned Ural owl<sup>7</sup> specimens (Fig. 2). In the post-war turmoil, it was not known what happened to the borrowed specimens. Therefore, Feliksiak, to whom Dementiev addressed his request, could not answer this question. To complicate things, the correspondence between the two scientists reveals that Feliksiak was aware that Dunajewski hid selected specimens from the ornithological collection outside the PMZ.

Furthermore, the hitherto analysed documents revealed that among the specimens stolen by the Germans in November of 1939 were Ural owls that returned to Warsaw from Austria in May 1947, thanks to the Polish rescue mission (Fig. 3), and later 7 of them were returned by Feliksiak to Moscow in August 1947. The present paper attempts to verify the status of those specimens in light of available historical documents.

<sup>7</sup> *Strix uralensis* PALLAS, 1771, a large nocturnal owl belongs to the family Strigidae (the true owl).

ДИРЕКТОР  
ЗООЛОГИЧЕСКОГО МУЗЕЯ  
Московского ордена Ленина Государственного  
Университета им. М. В. Ломоносова

85  
A Monsieur  
Monsieur le Directeur  
du Panstwowe Muzeum Zoologiczne  
Warsowie, Pologne

*Letakabonp  
du 19.X.46*  
Tres honoré Monsieur,

Notre Musée a envoyé il y a plusieurs années de cela-en 1938 ou en 1939-à la prière de Mr. André Dumajewski quelques spécimens de *Strix uralensis* pour l'étude.

Ces oiseaux étaient adressés à Votre Musée et y arrivèrent à cette destination. Comme nous nous occupons à présent d'une révision nouvelle de *Strigés* de notre faune, les exemplaires en question nous sont indispensables et je Vous serai infiniment obligé pour la peine de nous les renvoyer.

Je Vous prie de croire que notre Musée est toujours prêt de reprendre ses relations scientifiques avec Votre Institution qui datent depuis longtemps et me paraissent d'un grand intérêt mutuel.

Veillez bien agréer les assurances de mes sentiments tres distingués

Directeur (par intérim)  
Professeur Dr. Georges P.  
Dementiev

*G. Dementiev*

25 Septembre 1946  
Musée Zoologique de l'Université  
6 rue de Herzen, Moscou (9-e)  
URSS

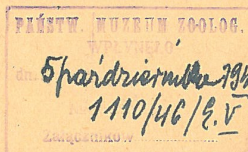


Fig. 2. The letter by Georges Dementiev to Stanislaw Feliksiak dated September 25, 1946. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw.

Ryc. 2. List Georgija Dementiewa do Stanisława Feliksiaka z dnia 25 września 1946 roku. Archiwum MiIZ PAN w Warszawie.

389/46/E.VI.

rewindykacja  
zbiorów P.M.Z.

16 kwietnia 1946r.

Szef Misji Wojskowej

w B e r l i n i e .

Proszę uprzejmie o spowodowanie rewindykacji dobytku naukowego Państwowego Muzeum Zoologicznego, wywiezionego w listopadzie 1939r. przez SS niemieckie z gmachu Muzeum przy ulicy Wilczej Nr.64 w Warszawie.

" Akcję wywiezienia kierował Untersturmführer prof. von Paulsen. Na trzy samochody ciężarowe załadowano książki treści zoologicznej, przyrządy optyczne jak mikroskopy, binokulary i lupy oraz liczne zbiory, między innymi kilka egzemplarzy wypchanych żubrów.

Według notatki otrzymanej w Wydziale Bibliotek, przedstawiającej sprawozdanie t.zw. "Kommando Paulsen" dla Standartenführer Sixa, zbiory te zostały wywiezione do Salzburga /Haus der Natur/.

Jako rzeczoznawcy fachowi z Państwowego Muzeum Zoologicznego mogliby wyjechać do Salzburga na zaproszenie Misji Wojskowej dr St. Feliksiak, kierownik Muzeum i Janusz Nast, kustosz Muzeum.

W załączeniu odpis sprawozdania Paulsena.

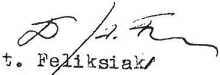
  
/Dr St. Feliksiak/

Fig. 3. The letter by Stanisław Feliksiak dated 16 April, 1946, regarding the recovery of the PMZ (the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw) collections stolen in 1939, together with the list of specimens returned in 1947. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw.

Ryc. 3. Pismo Stanisława Feliksiaka z dnia 16 kwietnia 1946, w sprawie rewindykacji zbiorów PMZ (Państwowego Muzeum Zoologicznego w Warszawie) zrabowanych w 1939 roku wraz z listą okazów zwróconych w 1947 roku. Archiwum MiZ PAN w Warszawie.

In the attached correspondence, it is worth paying attention to Dementiev's kindness and his tact. All letters are written in impeccable French, which is why he probably did not turn to the Soviet embassy and did not emphasize the colonial dependence of Warsaw on the USSR. It undoubtedly required the strength of character of a Russian scientist.

## CORRESPONDENCE BY GEORGES DEMENTIEV AND STANISŁAW FELIKSIAK

In the first letter, dated September 25, 1946 (Documents: Letter 1, Fig. 2) Georges Dementiev informs Stanisław Feliksiak that the Moscow Museum, at the request of A. Dunajewski, have sent several specimens of *Strix uralensis* to the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw (PMZ) in 1938 or 1939. Dementiev asks for their return and at the same time proposes to re-establish cooperation between museums. It is puzzling that Dementiev knows neither the exact date of the loan of the specimens, nor their number, and he does not refer to any particular loan documents. So far, such documents have not been found in the archives of the MIZ PAS.

The loan itself certainly took place, as A. Dunajewski mentions it directly in his work from 1940 on the knowledge of the systematics of the *Strix uralensis* from Carpathian region (DUNAJEWSKI 1940). The author also provides information on the morphological features of *Strix uralensis* specimens from the Nowogródek region and Russian specimens loaned by Dementiev. In the same paper, Dunajewski compares the specimens from Russia to those from the Carpathian region. This indicates that the collection of the PMZ is has to contain *Strix uralensis* from that region and possibly from Poland. It should be noticed that the Ural owl is a species with a very wide range of occurrence – from Japan and Korea, through Siberia, to the European part of Russia, Scandinavia, the Baltic countries, and also Poland where it occurs especially in Masuria, the Carpathians and south-eastern parts of the country (KAJTOCH & MUSIALEK 2003). The question remains, therefore, whether the specimens returned by Feliksiak to Dementiev were certainly the same ones that Dunajewski had lent before the war, or whether they were different from the PMZ's own collections.

Among the specimens taken by the German SS Sonderkommando Paulsen (MEŻYŃSKI 2000) from Warsaw in November 1939 to Salzburg were Ural owls, as evidenced by a letter from the director of the local natural museum Haus der Natur Eduard Paul Tratz to the head of the "Ahnenerbe" Sturmbannführer SS Wolfram Sievers, sent to 12 December 1939<sup>8</sup>, where on the list of seized birds we find: "Uraleule (11)", which translates to 11 Ural owls. After the war, these specimens were restored to Poland, which is confirmed by the list compiled by Stanisław Feliksiak on 18 May 1946 (Fig. 3), where there are 11 entries for Ural owls (7 written as *Strix uralensis*, 3 *Ulula uralensis*, 1 *Syrnium uralense* - all represent the same species).

However, there is no certain evidence that any of these 11 specimens were loaned from Zoological Museum of Moscow State University. It is certain, however, that among the collections recovered from Austria, at least 7 specimens represent *Strix uralensis* originating from the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw (PMZ) collection. These specimens are currently preserved at MIZ PAS, while their history can be clearly traced by comparing the MIZ PAS catalogs, labels describing the specimens and the list of specimens recovered from

---

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Eduard Paul Tratz to Wolfram Sievers of 12 December 1939 (BA-Berlin NS21 / 91). A copy of this document was obtained from the Berlin archive in June 2013 by the German historian Gert Kerschbaumer. Then a copy of the document from Salzburg was obtained by the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Salzburg, contained in a letter from Stanisław Feliksiak to the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Warsaw of 24 May 1947 (ref. 584/47/E.VI, document from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Academy of Sciences). In the "Vogelbälge" category (bird skins) on Feliksiak's list:

– in item no. 6 from the list Vogelbälge there is a specimen: 6 *Strix uralensis* Muzeum Dzieduszyckich 375 6/38, along with a note: "Specimen: MIZ 3642, skin, 20 January 1938, Rzepichów, Nowogródek, Jarosław hr. Potocki"; the card number in the MIZ PAS bird records: 8521 (point 7); thus, a specimen collected in 1938 by Count Jarosław Potocki in Rzepichów, which was certainly not borrowed from Moscow (as well as next five items, below: 7, 9, 10, 11, 12);

– it is similar in the case of the following items, such as no. 7 from the Vogelbälge list: 7 *Ulula uralensis* 19, with the note "Specimen: MIZ 3644, skin, 20 January 1938, Rzepichów, Nowogródek, Jarosław Potocki"; card number in the MIZ PAS bird file: 8520 (point 1);

– no. 9 from the Vogelbälge list: 9 *Ulula uralensis* 18, with the note "Specimen: MIZ 3657, skin, 24 X 1898, Lisowice, Muz. Dzieduszyckich"; card number in the MIZ PAS bird file: 8520 (point 3);

– no. 10 from the Vogelbälge list: 10 *Ulula uralensis* 20, with the note "Specimen: MIZ 3656, skin, 24 October 1898, Lisowice, Muz. Dzieduszyckich"; card number in the MIZ PAS bird file: 8520 (point 2);

– no. 11 from the Vogelbälge list: 11 *Strix uralensis* 376. *Strix uralensis* with the note "Specimen: MIZ 3645, skin. 20 January 1938, Rzepichów, Nowogródek, Jarosław Potocki"; card number in the MIZ PAS bird file: 8521 (point 11) (Figs 4 and 5);

– no. 12 from the Vogelbälge list: 12 *Strix uralensis* 374; *Strix uralensis* with the note: "Specimen: MIZ 3643, skin, 20 I 1938, Rzepichów, Nowogródek, Jarosław Potocki"; card number in the MIZ PAS bird file: 8521 (point 12)". However, 4 specimens from Feliksiak's "Vogelbälge" list remain unidentified, that is:

- no. 8 *Strix uralensis*,
- no. 13 *Strix uralensis* 20810,
- no. 16 *Strix uralensis* 679/182,
- no. 18 *Syrnium uralense* 16519.

It is not known what the numbers added to specimens 13, 16 and 18 mean. It was not possible to identify them by referring to existing catalogs and collections of MIZ PAS. The fate of these four specimens is still unknown and raises the question – were they among the materials returned to the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University?

The verification of the above specimen list provided by Feliksiak does not preclude that among the collections recovered from Haus der Natur in Salzburg there were no *Strix uralensis* specimens borrowed by Dunajewski from Zoological Museum of Moscow State University. However, it confirms that before the war, the PMZ own collections included specimens of this species collected in Poland and that at least seven of them were stolen by the Germans in 1939 and later returned to Warsaw, where they remained until today. Unfortunately, there are no known similar documents describing the *Strix uralensis* specimens returned to G. Dementiev.

The number of owls transferred to Moscow, changing in the correspondence, also remains to be clarified. In a letter of 5 May 1947 (Documents: Letter 4) to the Soviet Department of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Feliksiak writes



Figs. 4A–C. *Strix uralensis* PALLAS, 1771. Specimen (no. 11 from the “Vogelbälge list”) in the collection MIZ PAS in Warsaw (MIZ 3645).

Ryc. 4A–C. *Strix uralensis* PALLAS, 1771. Okaz (no. 11 na “Vogelbälge list”) w kolekcji MiZ PAN w Warszawie (MIZ 3645).



*Strix* *Syrnium* *uralensis* (Pallas) no8521

Num. inv.	Plec	Data zbioru	Miejsce zbioru	Zbieracz	Kto oznaczył	Ilość	Kons.
1	♂	1938	Rezerwat	R. Nowicki		1x	skł. 919
2	♂	1937	"	Barbowski		1x	" 425
3	♂	1937	"	Antoniowski		1	"
4	♂	1937	"	Luxyna		1	"
5	♀	1934	Orzełowiec	Łętyt.		1	" 4174
6	♂	1874	Galisja	L. Sieduszycki		1	"
7	-	201. 1833	Wyspy p. Alajskie	M. Beldi		1x	Nr inv 3442
8	♀	1927	Rezerwat p. Świętym	Barbowski		1	" 1023
9	♂	1939	Rezerwat p. Kijowskim	Barbowski		1	"
10	♀	1938	Rezerwat p. Samark.	M. Nowicki		1	"
11	♂	1928	Rezerwat p. Kijowskim	M. Patański		1	Nr inv 3645
12			"	"		1	"

S - Salzburg - zrost 1946

Fig. 5. The card number 8521 from the catalogue of the bird collection kept at the MIZ PAS in Warsaw.  
Ryc. 5. Karta numer 8521 z katalogu kolekcji ptaków przechowywanych w MiIZ PAN w Warszawie.

31

xxxxx 8.63.48.

653/47/E.VIII. 12 czerwca 1947r.

zwrot wypożyczonych  
okazów sów.

Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych  
Departament Polityczny  
Wydział Radziecki  
w/m.

Powołując się na pismo Nr.555/7/47 z dnia 20-go maja r.b., Państwowe Muzeum Zoologiczne prosi o łaskawe przesłanie za pośrednictwem Ambasady R.P. w Moskwie skrzyni zawierającej 7 okazów sów *Strix uralensis*, wypożyczonych przed wojną do opracowania naukowego od prof. dr. Georga Dementieva, Dyrektora Muzeum Zoologicznego w Moskwie, ul. Herzena 6.

Dr. St. Feliksiak

w załączeniu  
skrzynia drewniana z okazami

Fig. 6. The letter by Stanisław Feliksiak to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Political Department, Soviet Department) dated June 12, 1947. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw.

Ryc. 6. Pismo Stanisława Feliksiaka do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (Departament Polityczny, Wydział Radziecki) z dnia 12 czerwca 1947 roku. Archiwum MiIZ PAN w Warszawie.

about 6 *Strix uralensis* found in the restored the Haus der Natur Salzburg collection. Then, in a letter to Dementiev of 19 May 1947 (Documents: Letter 5), Feliksiak did not mention their number, saying only that the items on loan were found among the collections recovered from Salzburg. In another letter to the Soviet Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 12 June 1947 (Documents: Letter 7X, Fig. 6), Feliksiak already writes about 7 pieces of owls and further correspondence indicates that so many specimens were finally handed over to Dementiev. However, bearing in mind that according to the above-mentioned Polish and German documents, 11 Ural owls were taken to Salzburg and then recovered from there, 7 of which have been identified and are still in the collection of MIZ PAS. It means that Feliksiak could return to Moscow not more than 4 specimens recovered from Salzburg, and the remaining 3 were obtained from another source.

The materials in the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University, or at least the protocol of transferring the specimens there via the Polish Embassy in Moscow, if they contained descriptions, would be helpful in resolving the doubts that arise around the issue of the return of owls (Figs 7 and 8). It would also be necessary to identify the returned specimens in the Moscow collection, which would provide information not only on the topic of the post-war recovery of the Haus der Natur Salzburg collection, but also would enrich the knowledge of systematic research conducted on this species by A. Dunajewski.

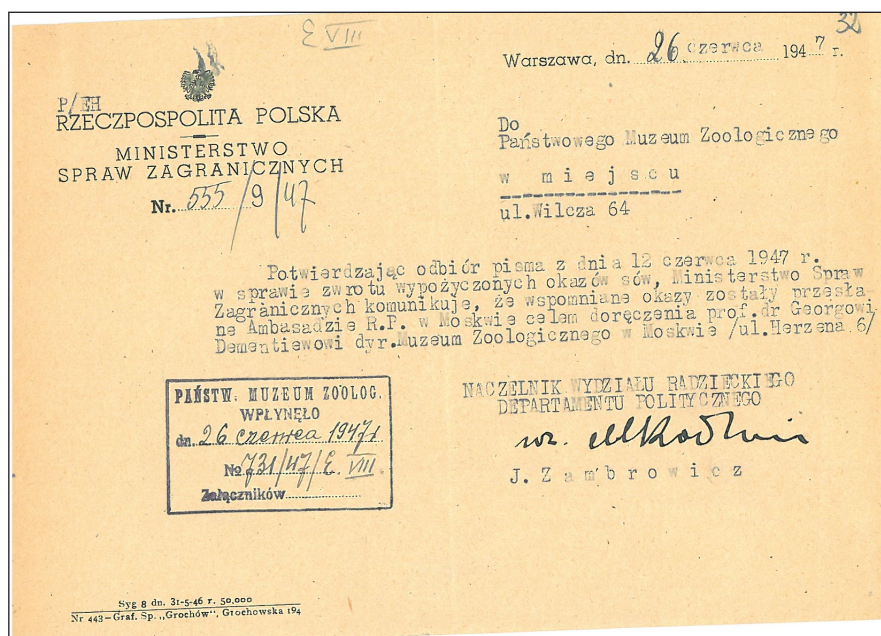


Fig. 7. The letter by J. Zambrowicz, Head of the Soviet Department (Political Department) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated June 26, 1947. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw.

Ryc. 7. Pismo J. Zambrowicza, Naczelnika Wydziału Radzieckiego (Departament Polityczny) w Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych, z dnia 26 czerwca 1947 roku. Archiwum MiIZ PAN w Warszawie.

Musée Zoologique de l'Université  
Département d'Ornithologie  
6 rue de Herzen, Moscou (9-e)

Monsieur le Dr. St. Feliksiak,  
Directeur du Panstwowe Muzeum Zoologiczne  
(Warszawa, ul. Wilcza Nr. 647)

10/vii/47

Monsieur le Directeur,

En main Votre aimable lettre du 19 mai de l'année courante. Il est très heureux que les collections de Votre musée emmenées par les allemands furent retrouvées à Salzburg.

Votre lettre circulaire au sujet de la reprise de l'échange des publications ne fut pas reçue. La copie que Vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer est remise au Directeur de notre bibliothèque chargé de réalisation d'échanges de publications. Il Vous fera parvenir au plus court toutes nos éditions récentes.

Notre bibliothèque a reçu toutes les séries d'éditions de Votre Musée parues avant la guerre.

Je me permettrai enfin une petite rectification: je ne suis pas Directeur du Musée Zoologique de notre Université, j'étais l'année passée chargé par la faculté de cette fonction par intérim; j'occupe la position du Professeur à l'Université de Moscou. C'est le Professeur S.S. Turov qui est Directeur du Musée.

Au plaisir de Vous lire et veuillez agréer l'expression de mes sentiments distingués

*G. Dementiev*

8 VIII

PISTW. MUZEUM ZOOLOG.  
WARSZAWA  
da. 23. VII. 1947.  
No. 883/8 VII. 10.  
Warszawa

Fig. 8. The letter by Georges Dementiev to Stanislaw Feliksiak dated July 10, 1947. Archives MIZ PAS in Warsaw.  
Ryc. 8. List Georgija Dementieva do Stanisława Feliksiaka z dnia 10 lipca 1947 roku. Archiwum MiIZ PAN w Warszawie.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the curator of the bird collection at the MIZ PAS, Ms Dominika Mierzwa-Szymkowiak, for providing information on the specimens and documents related to the recovery of collections stolen in 1939, Ms Majka Główka from the MIZ PAS archive in Warsaw for her valuable help in finding materials and to Dr Marcin Jan Kamiński for his opinions and consultations.

## REFERENCES

- ANDRZEJEWSKA L., CISSOWSKA I., DĄBROWSKA-PROT E., HILLBRICHT-ILKOWSKA A. 1990. Kazimierz Tarwid (9 IX 1909-24 XII 1988). *Wiadomości Ekologiczne* 36(1/2): 67–76.
- BRZEK G. 1995. Prof. dr hab. Stanisław Feliksiak (1906–1992). *Obituary, Przegląd Zoologiczny* 39(1/2): 3–17.
- BRZEK G. 1997. Straty wśród zoologów polskich w następstwie II wojny światowej. *Analecta* 6/2(12): 173–197.
- DASZKIEWICZ P., IWAN D. 2016. Straty wojenne Państwowego Muzeum Zoologicznego – raport Stanisława Feliksiaka (1906–1992). *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 27: 431–439.
- DUNAJEWSKI A. 1940. Beiträge zur systematischen Stellung der Karpatischen Habichtseule. *Annales Musei Nationalis Hungarici. Pars Zoologica* 33: 98–100.
- KAJTOCH Ł., MUSIALEK R. 2003. Puszczyk uralski *Strix uralensis* PALL. w Polsce. *Wszechświat* 104(7-9): 132–136.
- KALYAKIN V.M., TOMKOVICH P.S. 2003. History of bird collections at the Zoological Museum of Moscow University and their Role for Russian Ornithology. *Bonner zoologische Beiträge* 51(2/3): 167–172.
- MEŻYŃSKI A. 2000. Kommando Paulsen. Organisierter Kunstraub in Polen 1942–45. Dittrich-Verlag, Köln: 178 pp.
- SHAPOSHNIKOV L.K. 1970. Professor Georgi Petrovich Demetiev (1898–1969). *Biological Conservation* 2(2): 124.
- SZCZEPSKI J.B. 1964. Pamięci Andrzeja Dunajewskiego. *Przegląd Zoologiczny* 8(1): 9–16.
- SZCZEPSKI J.B. 1987. Dunajewski Andrzej Stanisław Julian (1908–1944), pp. 140–141, In: *Słownik biologów polskich*, S. FELIKSIK (Ed.), PAN, PWN Warszawa.

## STRESZCZENIE

### **Puszczyki uralskie w korespondencji Państwowego Muzeum Zoologicznego w Warszawie i Muzeum Zoologicznego Uniwersytetu Moskiewskiego – nieznanne, ważne dla historii europejskiej muzeografii zoologicznej, dokumenty**

Państwowe Muzeum Zoologiczne (PMZ) w Warszawie było w okresie międzywojennym wiodącą polską instytucją przyrodniczą, posiadającą znaczącą kolekcję fauny i zespół naukowców o bogatych międzynarodowych kontaktach. W ramach współpracy, przyrodnicy często wypożyczali do badań naukowych eksponaty różnych okazów, pochodzących z europejskich i światowych kolekcji zwierząt. Wybuch II wojny światowej nie tylko przerwał te kontakty, ale przede wszystkim spowodował ogromne straty w środowisku polskich zoologów, z których wielu poniosło śmierć, zaś same zbiory naukowe w znacznej mierze zostały zniszczone lub rozkradzione. W przypadku kolekcji PMZ takie grabieże nastąpiły już w listopadzie 1939 roku, kiedy specjalny oddział SS Sonderkommando Paulsen wywiózł cztery ciężarówki zbiorów fauny przyrodniczej z Warszawy do muzeum Haus der Natur w Salzburgu. Po wojnie zrewindykowano większość ukradzionych wtedy zbiorów okazów, wśród których, jak się okazuje, były nie tylko materiały własne PMZ, ale również obiekty wypożyczone z innych, krajowych i zagranicznych instytucji naukowych. Sprawa zwrotu puszczyków uralskich, które Andrzej Dunajewski miał przed wojną wypożyczyć z Moskwy, a które w czasie okupacji prawdopodobnie były wywiezione przez Niemców wśród innych zbiorów do Salzburga, jest nowym wątkiem w badaniach na temat strat wojennych w europejskiej muzeografii zoologicznej.

## DOCUMENTS

### Letter 1 (Fig. 2).

On the letterhead of the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University.

Mr Director  
of the State Zoological Museum  
Warsaw Poland

Dear Sir,

Our Museum sent many years ago, in 1938 or 1939, at the request of Mr Andrzej Dunajewski, several specimens of *Strix uralensis* for research.

These birds were sent to your Museum and they reached their destination. As we are currently working on a review of the Strigides of our fauna, these copies are essential for us and I would very much ask you to take the trouble to send them back to us.

Please believe me that our Museum is always ready to re-establish scientific cooperation with your institution, which, after all, has a long tradition and seems very important to both sides.

Please accept my regards

Director (Acting)  
Professor Dr. Georges Dementiev

September 25, 1946  
Zoological Museum of the University  
Herzen Street 6 Moscow 9  
USSR

Stamp of PMZ with the date October 5, 1946  
and registration number 1110/46/EV

### Letter 2.

xxxxxx 8.63.48.  
October 19, 1946  
1110/46 / EVII

Prof. Dr Georges Demetiev  
Director of the Zoological Museum

Moscow 9  
Herzen Street 6  
USSR

Mr Director,

In response to your letter regarding the *Strix uralensis* specimens, loaned before the war to our associate Andrzej Dunajewski, I am in a hurry to inform you that they burned down during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

At the moment, it is very difficult for us to provide you with information about the fate of these specimens because, to our knowledge, the deceased Dr A. Dunajewski, in order to protect the ornithological collections of our Museum during the occupation of our country by the Germans, hid some of them outside Warsaw, in a place where is unknown to us. In order to give you a final answer, we need to check the ornithological collections in our Museum.

As soon as we find them among the collections that have survived the fire, we will not forget to send them back to you.

Please accept my regards  
Dr St. Feliksiak  
Director of the Polish Zoological Museum

**Letter 3.**

On letterhead of the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University

Dated November 12, 1944

Handwritten letter [first typed]

Mr Dr Feliksiak  
Director of the Polish Zoological Museum

Dear Colleague,

I just received your letter of October 19, this year, and thank you very much.

Please accept condolences on the death of Mr A. Dunajewski, who died during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. He was a very energetic and talented man, I corresponded with him for many years.

I am asking you and my esteemed colleague to accept my highest respect

G. Dementiev.

Prof. Dr Georges Dementiev

**Letter 4.**

xxxxxx 8.63.48.

May 5, 1947

1110/46/EVII

Return of borrowed collections

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Soviet Department

in Warsaw

By sending attached copies of correspondence with Professor Demetiev, the director of the Zoological Museum in Moscow, regarding the zoological scientific materials borrowed before the war by the late Dr Andrzej Dunajewski, a researcher at the State Zoological Museum, I hereby announce that the specimens of *Strix uralensis* in the amounts of 6 were found in our collection from Salzburg and are at the disposal of Professor Dementiev.

The State Zoological Museum asks for an instruction regarding the transfer of the above-mentioned specimens to the interested party.

Dr St. Feliksiak

2 copies attached

**Letter 5.**

xxxxxx 8.63.48.

May 19, 1947

1385/46/EVII

Return of zoological specimen  
items borrowed before the war.

Prof. Dr Georges Dementiev

Director of the Zoological Museum

Moscow /9/

Herzena Street 6

USSR

Mr Professor,

In the continuation of my letter of October 19, 1946, I am in a hurry to inform you that the *Strix uralensis* specimens belonging to your Museum were found among the ornithological collections of our Museum, recovered in Salzburg.

We have just turned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs /department of the USSR/ through which the specimens in question will be sent to you.

It is with great joy that we are ready to re-establish the cooperation with your Institution, interrupted by the war.

In August last year, we sent a message about the resumption of the exchange of publications. Since we have not received any response to him, I allow myself to send him back to the Lord.

It is very important for us to have all the valuable publications issued by your Institution:

1/ Trudy Naucno-Issledovatel'skogo Instituta Zoologii, Volume I-IV.

2/ Bjuleteń Naucno-Issled. The Zoology Institute To I-III/1936/.

3/ Sbornik Trudov, Volume I-IV/1937/.

We will be very grateful to you if you send us the missing volumes.

As far as the publications of our Museum are concerned, they have just appeared /Annales, Fragmenta, Acta Orn./ and they will be sent to you soon. If you wish both, we can fill in all the gaps in the publications of our Museum in your collection.

Please accept my regards

St. Feliksiak

1 annex

## Letter 6.

Warsaw, May 20, 1947

WP/MM

The Republic of Poland

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 555/7/1947

State Zoological Museum

Stamp of P.M.Z. with a note

It arrived on May 27, 1947

N° 590/471 EVIII

Handwritten note



Had been done on 12 June 47  
by letter No. 653/471 EVIII

By acknowledging receipt of the letter of 5/V. 1947 No. 482/47/E.VIII on the return of borrowed collections, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces that 6 specimens of the *Strix uralensis* owls can be handed over to the Director of the Zoological Museum in Moscow, Professor Dementiev through the Embassy of Poland in Moscow.

For this purpose, the State Zoological Museum may deliver the said specimens in appropriate packaging to the Soviet Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Head of the Soviet Department  
Political Department  
J. Zambrowicz

**Letter 7 (Fig. 6).**

xxxxxx 8.63.48.  
June 12, 1947

653/47/EVII

Return of borrowed items  
specimens of owls

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Political Department  
Soviet Department

Referring to the letter No. 555/7/47 of May 20, the State Zoological Museum kindly asks for a message through the Embassy of the Poland in Moscow, a box containing 7 specimens of owls *Strix uralensis*, borrowed before the war for scientific study from prof. Dr Georg Dementiev, Director of the Zoological Museum in Moscow, Herzen street 6.

Dr St. Feliksiak

attached find the wooden chest with specimens

**Letter 8 (Fig. 7).**

Warsaw, June 26, 1947

P/EH  
The Republic of Poland  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
No. 555/9/1947

State Zoological Museum  
Wilcza street 64

Confirming the receipt of the letter of June 12, 1947 regarding the return of the borrowed owl specimens, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces that the said specimens were sent to the Polish Embassy in Moscow for delivery to prof. Georg Dementiew, Ph.D. Zoological Museum in Moscow /Herzen street 6/

Stamp of P.M.Z. with a note  
It was received on June 26, 1947  
N° 731/47/EVIII

Head of the Soviet Department  
Political Department  
J. Zambrowicz

**Letter 9 (Fig. 8).**

Stamp of the Zoological Museum of the University  
Faculty of Ornithology  
6 Herzen Street, Moscow (9)

MrDr St. Feliksiak  
Director of the State Zoological Museum  
Warsaw  
Wilcza street 64

10/VII/1947

Mr Director,

I have your kind letter of May 19 this year. It is very fortunate that the collections of your Museum, taken away by the Germans, were found in Salzburg.

Your letter, the circular letter, on the renewal of the journal exchange has not reached us. A copy of it, which you wanted to send us, was handed over to the director of our library, responsible for the exchange of magazines. He will send you our recent publications as soon as possible.

Our library has received all the publishing series of your Museum that appeared before the war.

Let me make a small correction: I am not the director of the Zoological Museum of our Museum, last year the Department appointed me as acting director. I am a professor at the University of Moscow. Professor S.S. Turov is the director of the Museum.

It is with pleasure that I read you and I ask you to accept my respects

G. Dementiev

Stamp of P.M.Z. with a note  
23/VII/1947 received  
N° 883/Evnr 10

**Letter 10.**

On the letterhead of the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University  
1/VIII/1947

MrDr St. Feliksiak  
Director of the State Zoological Museum  
Warsaw, Wilcza street 64

Mr Director,

I confirm receipt of the 7 specimens of *Strix uralensis* from our collection that you have sent us.

With thanks, please accept my respects

Director of the Zoological Museum  
(Professor Dr. S.S. Turov)

Stamp of P.M.Z. with a note  
It was received on August 14, 1947  
N° 962/47/EVIII

*Accepted: 2 June 2021; published: 24 August 2021*

*Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>*