

O Museu-Propriedade Leon Tolstói em Yasnaya Polyana como representação da Literatura russa e mundial

The Leo Tolstoy Museum-Estate at Yasnaya Polyana as Representation of Russian and World Literature

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Resumo

A biblioteca de Leon Tolstói e o próprio museu em sua natureza interdisciplinar apresentam o interesse de Tolstói pela Literatura Russa e Mundial e por outros campos do conhecimento humano. Os edifícios, pomares, parques, bosques e campos originais foram mencionados e descritos nas obras de ficção de Tolstói, como Guerra e Paz, Anna Karenina, Infância, Manhã de um proprietário de terras russo e várias outras. Eles são como as ilustrações vivas dessas obras de Tolstói. Assim, o Museu-Propriedade Yasnaya Polyana existe como a manifestação vívida do gênio literário multifacetado de Tolstói.

Palavras-chave

Leon Tolstói. Museu-Propriedade. Biblioteca. Literatura. Programa de Patrimônio Documental da Unesco.

Abstract

Tolstoy's library and the Museum itself in all its interdisciplinary nature present Tolstoy's interest in Russian and World Literature, and in other fields of human knowledge. The original buildings, orchards, parks, woods and fields were mentioned and described in Tolstoy's works of fiction such as War and Peace, Anna Karenina, Childhood, Morning of a Russian Landowner and several others. They are like the living illustrations to these works of Tolstoy. Thus the Yasnaya Polyana Museum-estate exists as the vivid manifestation of Tolstoy's multifaceted literary genius.

Keywords

Leo Tolstoy. Museum-estate. Library. Literature. The UNESCO World Documentary Heritage Programme.

The Leo Tolstoy Museum-Estate at Yasnaya Polyana combines literature and philosophy, religion and history, cultural and social studies, folk art, education, agriculture, forestry. With its interdisciplinary polyphonic approach to its function and role, the Museum presents a unique phenomenon as a Literary Museum. The roots of this phenomenon go deep into the history of the Volkonsky-Tolstoy estate at Yasnaya Polyana and originate from the renaissance style personality of Leo Tolstoy as an artist, philosopher, religious prophet, teacher, soldier, social worker and reformer, landowner and farmer. This interdisciplinary approach gives a broad spectrum for the Museum academic research work, and Tolstoy's personal library is one of its sources as Tolstoy's manuscripts have been kept at the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow.

Since 2011, The Leo Tolstoy's personal library, which has been kept at the Tolstoy House of the Museum-Estate at Yasnaya Polyana, has been a part of the World Documentary Heritage. On May 27, 2011 the then Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova endorsed recommendations by the International Advisory Committee of the Memory of the World Committee to inscribe 45 new documents and documentary collections from all over the world on the

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Memory of the World Register, which now numbers a total of 238 items. The personal library of the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy has been included on the list of 80 of 2011 year's nominees for the Memory of the World Register List of the United Nations culture agency (UNESCO). From May 22 to May 25 an International Advisory Committee of experts was reviewing the 80 nominees in Manchester.

Beginning from 2011, we strive to coordinate our academic research and educational activities via the World Documentary Heritage, especially regarding Tolstoy's personal library which numbers over 22 000 volumes of books and magazines representing Russian and world literature. Tolstoy's personal library has been traditionally kept in his House, a place of pilgrimage not only for Russians but for the visitors from over the world. "Whether it is your first visit or one of many you are bound to be impressed by the simplicity and momentous associations of the house and everything in it. Many of the objects in the house are mentioned in the great Russian writer's famous novels" (PUZIN, 1998: 7).

So when you are in the House you feel quite at home among the objects familiar to you from *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Childhood* etc. if you ever read them. Most of the visitors come to see this unique House well prepared, especially Russian visitors as Tolstoy is a part of the curriculum in elementary schools, high schools, and universities. Tolstoy is also a part of the curriculum in some departments of European and American Universities. At one time, this house was just one of the wings of the main three-storied house of Empire style with the columns at the front. Tolstoy's maternal grandfather, Prince Nikolai Volkonsky, began to build it as a grand mansion. After Prince Volkonsky's death, the building was completed by Tolstoy's father, Count Nikolai Tolstoy, who married Volkonsky's only daughter. Tolstoy was born in that house in 1828, on August 28, and spent his childhood there. In 1854, being in besieged Sevastopol, he sold it. Upon his return to Yasnaya Polyana from the Crimean war and after visiting St Petersburg in 1856, Tolstoy settled in the right wing of the old house, which had been already removed to the neighboring village. As Tolstoy's family grew, various extensions were added to the main body of the house at different times.

The House has been preserved according to the year of Tolstoy's death and is full of all kinds of precious authentic artifacts but the main treasure is Tolstoy's personal library, which presents numerous masterpieces of Russian and World Literature.

The Tolstoy library was founded by his grandfather Prince Nikolai Volkonsky, by his parents, who enlarged the library with numerous editions, but certainly the major part of the library was collected under Leo Tolstoy. In 1910, the last year of Tolstoy's life, the library numbers over 22 000 volumes of books and periodicals, there are about 5 000 books in foreign languages, among them there are 250 books of the 17th-18th centuries and there are several tens of books of the first third of the 19th century. The oldest book in the library was published in 1613 in Köln with the parallel texts in Greek and Latin, some penciled notes probably by Tolstoy's hand have been preserved on the pages of the book. The Tolstoy library contains books in Russian, French, German, English, Italian, Swedish, Japanese, Chinese, Greek, Serbian, Hebrew, Spanish, Danish, Dutch and other languages. The total amount is of 40 languages! (BIBLIOTEKA L. N. TOLSTOGO, 1999).

When Tolstoy's wife, Sophia Tolstaya, arrived at Yasnaya Polyana in 1862, after their marriage, she found only two bookcases there. Now, as it was in 1910,

there are 25 bookcases and one big coffer. So most of the books came to the library in the last 50 years of Tolstoy's life. Tolstoy's personal doctor once remarked that Tolstoy's library at Yasnaya Polyana had being collected by the whole world. It is true as in the last decades of Tolstoy's life innumerable quantities of books, journals, magazines were sent as gifts by Tolstoy's admirers, friends, followers from various countries. There are many books signed by famous writers, journalists, composers, scientists, political and religious figures - they bear the autographs of well-known Russian and foreign contemporaries of Tolstoy, such as Turgenev, Gorky, Bunin, Andreev, Marcel Prevost, John Galsworthy, Anatole France, Romain Rolland, George Kennan, Upton Sinclair, Henry George, Herbert Wells, John Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw and many others.

In the so-called *old library* among the books belonged to Prince Volkonsky, Tolstoy's parents, and even perhaps to his great grandfather Prince Sergei Volkonsky, there are books which were typical for the library of any enlightened nobleman.

In Tolstoy's library, there are various editions of books of Old and New Testaments in ancient Greek, Hebrew, French, English, German, Polish and other languages. Some books definitely appeared in the library under Tolstoy, some were brought from his trips in Europe, for instance the books on pedagogical subjects acquired in London in 1861, at that time he was working in his school at Yasnaya Polyana and later on was writing his *Primer* and *Russian Readers*. Some books were issued in literary series, the most popular one is *Collection of British Authors by Tauchnitz* published in Leipzig (about 220 volumes) (BIBLIOTEKA L. N. TOLSTOGO, 1999).

In Tolstoy's library, there are various books which were used as original sources for his numerous works. There are many books on the history of Napoleonic wars, as well as various memoirs and historical studies about that war of 1812, written by the Russian, French, German historians. There are many books on the Caucasus, which he used for his novella *Hadji-Murad*, and books on the history and philosophy of art which provided material for his treatise *What Is Art?* There are also books on Russian folklore which contained the epic poems, proverbs and sayings that Tolstoy valued so much and used in many novels and stories, for example *Power of Darkness*, *War and Peace*, *Fruits of Enlightenment*, for his books of wisdom *Circle of Reading*, *For Every Day*, *Path of Life*, for the so called folk stories.

Fig. 1 – Leo Tolstoy in his study at his home in Yasnaya Polyana. Leo Tolstoy Museum-Estate at Yasnaya Polyana.



In the foreign part of Tolstoy's library, there are about four hundred books with Tolstoy's marginal inscriptions - his penciled notes, which were the traces of his intensive study. He began reading books with a pencil in his hand in the late 1850s. We could assume that first, those notes or folded corners did not always express his impressions or thoughts. Later, his penciled notations became a real marginalia and expressed his assessment and impressions, his admiration or rejection; he used to write the whole sentences on the margins, to put question marks or his favorite expression in Latin "NB" of the highest level of his appreciation, sometimes followed by an exclamatory mark. Books and periodicals with Tolstoy's marginalia, his penciled notes, are of special significance as they may be treated like Tolstoy's manuscripts (BIBLIOTEKA L. N. TOLSTOGO, 1999).

The Tolstoy Library studies are of great significance not only for scholars, curators, but for a very broad non-specialist public. Tolstoy's library preserves that spiritual and intellectual atmosphere in which a great genius grew and developed and which was created by several generations of Tolstoy's ancestors at one particular place called Yasnaya Polyana.

Currently we have been finishing editing Volume 4 of the Annotated Catalogue of Tolstoy's library which includes over 5,000 items of magazines, journals, and newspapers of the 18th-early 20th centuries.

Yasnaya Polyana provides excellent opportunities for academic research not only in Tolstoy studies but also in museum and cultural studies.

In our appreciation, it is really significant to keep professional ties with the UNESCO programmes, the academic institutions and universities in order to continue scholarly research but on a wider international level, including all modern approaches and technologies available.

Thus The Leo Tolstoy Museum-Estate with its writer's personal library creates the foundation for the biannual International Conference at Yasnaya Polyana in comparative studies "Tolstoy and World Literature" which attracts the scholars from many countries. Scholars from Russia, Europe, UK, North America, South Asia, and South America regularly participate in it. The Conference has been held at the State Museum-Estate of L. N. Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana since 1998. Various issues and approaches in terms of Tolstoy's life and art in the context of Russian and World Literature, philosophy and religion are under discussion at the sessions of the Conference. Most of the academic papers are based on the books and periodicals of Tolstoy's library which served as sources for his works and which preserve Tolstoy's marginalia. *The Conference Proceedings Book* is regularly published. We inform our international participants about the MOW programme regarding the World Documentary Heritage.

We also have held our annual *International Seminar of the Translators of Tolstoy and other Russian Writers* since 2006 as Tolstoy's library keeps the numerous editions of Tolstoy's works translated into European and Eastern languages when he was alive. We try to gather the translators of Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana annually. The Seminar agenda is to discuss the problems of translation with reference to Tolstoy and other Russian writers as cross-cultural research and interlingual communication. Translators from numerous countries come to Yasnaya Polyana to share their experience in theory and practice of translating Tolstoy's and other Russian writers' works. Famous translators are invited for the workshops and round table discussions. Presentations of new translations of Tolstoy's works are a special feature of the Seminar. *The Seminar Proceedings Book* is regularly published. Our Seminar of 2017 was dedicated to the 25th

anniversary of the UNESCO programme Memory of the World. Professor Dr. Lothar Jordan, head of the UNESCO sub-committee on education and research, a former president of ICLM (2009-2013), was a keynote speaker at the Seminar (JORDAN, 2018: 15-17).

On the basis of Tolstoy's library, we are organizing lectures and seminars in the Tolstoy studies, cultural studies, semiotics and related areas for students, teachers, professors, and for the public in general. We are trying to disseminate our knowledge about the UNESCO MOW programme through our lecturing activities. We use the books from Tolstoy's library for our temporary exhibitions at Yasnaya Polyana, and also in other parts of Russia and abroad.

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