Oriental studies in Poland have a long and rich tradition stretching back for centuries. Throughout most of their history they have focused on the cultures and languages of the Near and Middle East due to Poland’s close contacts with these regions. In the past, Oriental studies developed at, and were associated with, the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, later King Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów (Lemberg, now Lviv in the Ukraine), and, especially, King Stefan Batory University in Wilno (Vilna, now Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania), and still later with Warsaw University. The latter, with the passing of time and the shifting of state borders, has evolved into the leading academic center of research on and instruction in languages and cultures of the East; it was Warsaw that introduced Far Eastern studies in Poland shortly after World War I.

The entire Polish territory west of Warsaw remained throughout all that time virtually a virgin soil, completely uninfluenced by that tradition, especially as far as living cultures and languages are concerned. Following the regaining of independence by Poland in 1918, the University of Poznań was founded in 1919 and as early as 1921 the Chair of Languages of the Ancient Orient and Sanskrit was called into existence, headed by Professor Antoni Śmieszek (1881-1943), an Egyptologist in the first place (“much better than he himself thought”, in the words of the prominent Egyptologist and archaeologist Kazimierz Michałowski), till 1933 which marked the end of its existence on the force of an administrative decision (in 1934 Professor Śmieszek became head of the Chair of Egyptology at Warsaw).

After World War II, in view of an almost complete destruction of Warsaw, Oriental studies were resumed first in Wrocław, but soon moved to Łódź (Łódź); a tiny section of Indian studies has survived till today in Wrocław, and no institution exclusively devoted to research on the Orient has survived in Łódź. It is the Department of Languages of Asia and Africa established in 1986 within the structure of the then existing Institute of Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University (formerly the University of Poznań) that should be

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1 The present Institute of Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University is not a direct
regarded as the first such institution on the vast territory of Western Poland. With the disintegration of the Institute of Linguistics in 1991, the Department of Languages of Asia and Africa continued as part of the Chair of Comparative Linguistic and Oriental Studies, in turn reorganized into the Chair of Oriental and Baltic Studies in 1994 and into the Chair of Oriental Studies in 2000. In 1987-1991, three 5-year MA courses in Oriental studies were initiated in the Department of Languages of Asia and Africa: Japanese studies (since 1987), Chinese studies (since 1988) and Arabic studies (since 1991), all without practically any academic-level specialist Oriental library resources, without adequate academic-level Oriental-language teaching materials and necessary technical equipment, and with a shortage of teachers with appropriate training for providing academic-level education. With neither tradition nor experience in modern Oriental studies, with no human and material resources, no research hinterland, no comprehension of the essence of Oriental studies on the part of the authorities, without even any will to try to comprehend it, modern Oriental studies in Poznań were doomed to start from null and the priorities had to be the creation of an appropriate staff of researchers and teachers, the quick acquisition of basic library resources, and the decisive raise of standards in teaching and in teaching results in the possibly shortest time. Needless to say, there was no academic publication to print results from Oriental research at the University, and the existence of the only journal available in Poznań, *Lingua Posnaniensis*, that could to a limited extent (results of linguistic research) serve such purposes was at that time very seriously endangered due to financial problems. Such was the background situation for the foundation of the International Institute of Ethnolinguistic and Oriental Studies (IIEOS).

IIEOS was established on April 2, 1991 as an independent private research institution which would not employ permanent staff but rather call into existence and organize teams of researchers for carrying out concrete research projects within the realms of ethnolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and Oriental studies, in the possibly widest understanding of these terms. Most probably, it was the first fully independent research institute ever to be called into existence in Poland. It was based on the diagnosis that decades of communist rule left the former “Soviet-bloc” countries in ruins with academic research being especially severely affected and that the sweeping changes which had started in Poland in 1980 soon to embrace virtually all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, however impressive, would not, at least in the near future, be sufficient to allow the liberation of scholarly undertakings from the asphyxiating corset of bureaucracy inherited from the infamous past, and on the conviction that the opportunities created by the developments that conclusively wiped out communist rule should be used to take the initiative in associating to widen
research possibilities as much as possible. In this sense, ICRAP was but a label, an intellectual stimulus.

The formula of IIEOS was, from the very beginning, that of maximal openness, but the following disciplines were initially in focus of ICRAP:
- ethnolinguistics and typological linguistics,
- minority peoples and languages,
- Japanese studies, with special attention paid to Ainu, Ryukyu, and Russo-Japanese relations,
- Chinese studies, with stress on China’s minorities,
- Korean studies,
- peoples and languages of Siberia,
- research on South-East Asia, with Thai and Khmer studies in focus,
- Indian studies with particular interest in Sanskrit and Hindi, Dravidian studies, and small languages of India,
- Austronesian studies,
- Semitic studies, with special interest in Hebrew and Arabic linguistics, and in small languages and minority groups on the territories of Arab states,
- Aleut-Eskimo and Amerindian languages and cultures,
- African linguistics and ethnology.

Some 22 research projects have been so far executed worldwide within the framework of the following five large-scale research programs:
- Collected Works of Bronisław Piłsudski,
- Hokkaido and Ryukyu – two poles of the Japanese ethnosphere,
- ethnic and linguistic minority groups in various countries and regions of the world – situations, problems, prognoses, aiming at a universal typology of minority situations,
- ethnic minorities in Poland,
- ancienmost grammatical traditions.

Basic activities of IIEOS consisted in initiating or supporting research projects, co-organizing field-work expeditions, study tours, and library and/or archive quest visits, second-hand bookstore “hunting” escapades, offering access to IIEOS collections, co-organizing seminars, conferences, and exhibitions, participating in documentary film production, maintaining contacts with numerous individuals and institutions sharing the same interest and co-operating with them on a regular basis, contracting research result and publication exchange with libraries, museums, and archives, and in publishing results of IIEOS-related results. Sporadically, highly specialist consulting and expertise services are also provided.

As far as research projects and programs are concerned, IIEOS accepted its role as continuator of the international research project ICRAP aiming at the reconstruction and publication of Bronisław Piłsudski’s scholarly heritage related to the aboriginal peoples of Sakhalin, Hokkaido, and Lower Amur
Region (Priamurye) – Nivhgu (previously known as Gilyaks), Uilta (Oroks), Ulcha (Manguns, Olchas), Nanai (Golds), and above all Ainu; so far, the first two volumes of the *Collected Works of Bronisław Piłsudski* have been released, first from IIEOS in several limited preprint editions for the internal use of ICRAP-associated researchers, and then from the prestigious Mouton de Gruyter Publishers in Berlin and New York, and volume three has been sent to Mouton de Gruyter at the end of 2001. Within IIEOS, the ICRAP project has been realized in part as a sub-project of the “Hokkaido and Ryukyu” program mentioned above. Also the program covering the ethnic minorities of Poland brought about important results, and a project concerning the unique language and literature of the town of Wilamowice in southern Poland, initiated within IIEOS, resulted in an important PhD dissertation-turned-monograph by Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, ultimately released also from Mouton de Gruyter in 2003 as *The Making of a Language*. Apart from these, probably the most spectacular have been results from research on aboriginal groups of Siberia, especially Nivhgu, Orok, and Udeghe. Many projects are still continued.

Field-work expeditions involved such regions and countries as:

- Hokkaido, Japan (1992, 1996-7),
- Northern Thailand (“Hill Tribes”) (1992),
- Frisia / Friesland, Germany and Netherlands (1992),
- Gailimh and Aran Islands, Ireland (1992),
- Greece (1992),
- Lower Amur Region (many times between 1991-1999),
- Hong Kong (1993, 1996, 2002),
- Wales, Great Britain (1993),
- Central Siberia (Novosibirsk Oblast, Altaiskiy Kray, Russia) (1993, 2001),
- Seele in the Karavanken Mountains, Austria, Koper and Trieste regions in Slovenia and Italy), Friul and Sardegna in Italy, Rhaeto-Romance-language territories in Switzerland (1992),
- Bretagne, France (1992),
- Central Thailand (1992, 1996),
- Ryūkyū Islands, Japan (1996),
- Livonia in Latvia (1992),
- Crimean Peninsula (resettled Crimean Tatars), Ukraine (2000),
- Republic of Korea (2000),
- Spiš and Šariš regions of Slovakia (2001),
- Western Ukraine (2001),
- Latgalia in Latvia (2002)
- numerous expeditions and study tours to regions inhabited by ethnic
minorities in Poland (practically every year).

Among participants were, among others, Philipp Dallais of Neuchâtel, Tjeerd de Graaf of Groningen, Kōichi Inoue of Sapporo, Marina I. Ishchenko of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Vladislav M. Latyshev of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Galina D. Lok of Nogliki on Sakhalin, Elżbieta Majewicz of Warsaw, Yoshiyuki Matsubayashi of Sapporo, Kyōko Murasaki of Yokohama, Aleksandr B. Ostrovskiy of St.Petersburg, Larysa V. Ozolina of Novosibirsk, Mikhail M. Prokofyev of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Igor A. Samarin and Olga A. Shubina of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the late Mikhail D. Simonov of Novosibirsk, and Maciej Gaca, Agnieszka Joniak, Li Yong, Alfred F. Majewicz, Joanna Ostaszewska, Justyna Pawela, Włodzimierz Szkudlarczyk, and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, all from Poznań. Some expeditions were sponsored or financially supported by ICRAP.

IIEOS assets include a unique professional library with over 60,000 bibliographical units catalogued, and over 30,000 volumes on its shelves, in addition to rich photo-collections, video and audio recordings (of folklore, music, language samples, etc.), archives, etc., etc. Some specific subsets of these collections have become widely known around the world to the extent that many specialists from numerous countries paid visits to inspect and make use of them and to… photograph themselves against the background of the famous (but already non-existent) “wall of dictionaries”. Dictionaries of several hundred languages constitute one such subset, another is that of materials pertaining to the Ainu, still other are rich selections of literature related to Siberia and its peoples and languages, to minorities of China, minorities of Poland, or Bible translations. Of particular interest is the collection of publications and other materials by Bronisław Piłsudski or related to him and his legacy.

IIEOS proved instrumental in the co-organization of several important conferences, both international and Polish, like e.g. the Second and Third International Conference on Bronisław Piłsudski and His Scholarly Heritage (respectively Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, October 30-November 2, 1991, and Cracow-Zakopane, August 29-September 7, 1999), Sixth International Conference on Minority Languages (Gdańsk, July 1-5, 1996), and 58th Congress of the Polish Linguistic Society commemorating the 75th anniversary of its existence (Poznań, September 1-2, 2000), and played a role in initiating and co-organizing a number of other scholarly meetings in several countries. IIEOS participated also in the production of a number of TV documentary films, especially for Japanese (NHK) and Polish (TVP) TV companies, in the preparation of a number of exhibitions, like “Bronisław Piłsudski 1866-1918” in the Center of Japanese Art and Technology manggha in Cracow (August 30-October 10, 1999), “Reconstruction of Bronisław Piłsudski’s scholarly legacy” during the “Adam Mickiewicz University Festival” in Poznań (October 27-28, 2000), “Chopin – Poland _
Japan”, an exhibition commemorating the 80th anniversary of direct diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan held in Tokyo (Hillside Forum, November 2-11, 1999), Osaka (Osaka Amenity Park, December 4-26, 1999), Warsaw (Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature, January 20-February 25, 2000), and Cracow (Center of Japanese Art and Technology manggha, March 6-31, 2000), an exhibition honoring “the Year of Norwid” (one of most celebrated Polish poets) “Cyprian Kamil Norwid’s Promethidion” in Radom (Jacek Malczewski Museum, April 27-November, 2001), either by lending exhibits from IIEOS collections or by providing both exhibits and specialist scenarios and supervision. The following, in turn, may serve as examples of IIEOS involvement in film production, again either by providing access to IIEOS collections or archives, vital information, participating in script preparation or directly in films, or simply by lending properties:

- Dorota Latour’s 1994 documentary Dante z Wilamowic (The Dante of Wilamowice, about Florian Biesik, the only writer in Wymysojerysh and and thus the only representative of the smallest minority-language literature in Poland). APIO for Polish State Television Channel 1. 38 minutes;
- Stefan Szlachtycz’s 1999 Piłsudski B. i Majewicz A. czyli Ajnowie a sprawa polska (The Ainu and Poland – on B. Piłsudski and on research on B. Piłsudski’s scholarly heritage). TVP 2 Dział Form Dokumentalnych (Polish State Television Channel Two, Documentary Film Department). 45 minutes;

IIEOS has established firm contacts with numerous individual specialists and with institutions active in disciplines of shared interest, such as e.g. the Bronislaw Piłsudski Heritage Institute and Sakhalin Regional Museum, both in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (actually, IIEOS was one of three institutions founding the
Piłsudski Heritage Institute, the other two being the Sakhalin Regional Museum and the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Sakhalin Region [Oblast Administration], Hokkaido University Slavic Research Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of Nationalities, Bonn University Institute of Japanese Studies, various archives and institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Center of Japanese Art and Technology and the Academy of Sciences Library and Archives in Cracow, to name just a few. Regular publication exchange takes place between IIEOS and, among others, the US Library of Congress, the Diet Library in Tokyo, the National Library in Warsaw, State Academic Libraries in Tomsk, Khabarovsk, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, numerous University and Society/Association Libraries in the USA, Russia, Japan, China, etc., etc. Needless to say, such publication exchange exists between IIEOS and all its co-operators, be it individual or institutional. IIEOS also frequently donates publications and other materials to persons and institutions either upon justified request or in cases of expected interest. As a principle, IIEOS publications are not for sale.

IIEOS’s own publication program, for reasons that are obvious, is given priority in spite of very limited possibilities due to the lack of appropriate facilities and any external financial support; the results of this program so far achieved by far surpassed even the most optimistic expectations: the number of titles released by end May 2004 is 76, and although some of them are brochures of a little over (or even less than) 10 pages, there are among them also impressive volumes with pages counted in hundreds, as e.g. the preprint editions of the *Collected Works of Bronisław Piłsudski* (766, 848, 1,035 and 937 pages), the three-volume *Udeghe Language Dictionary* (1,343 pages), or the facsimile edition of Bronisław Piłsudski’s *Materials for the Study of the Nivhgu (Gilyak) Language and Folklore* (390 pages). Most of IIEOS preprints have been or are to be subsequently published in academic journals, conference proceedings, Festschriften, etc.

IIEOS closest co-operation has always been with the Adam Mickiewicz University Chair of Oriental Studies and its predecessors (cf. above). In the first very difficult years of existence of Oriental studies at Adam Mickiewicz, the entire education process as well as research, MA and PhD seminars included, must have been based on private resources of senior staff members, and in this respect the IIEOS collections proved indispensable; in fact, they constituted the only *raison d'être* of especially, but not only, Far Eastern research, until a basic Oriental library was successfully accumulated several years later with the help of foreign foundations and institutions (and here also IIEOS contacts turned out to be invaluable). This co-operation proved beneficial for both sides and many initiatives and undertakings were coordinated and executed under both labels; such were the above mentioned expeditions (e.g. the <Naxiland '96> to the ethnic minorities of Yunnan, results of which have been presented in Gaca & Majewicz 1999), conferences or publications. IIEOS proved also very efficient
and instrumental in creating the journal *Linguistic and Oriental Studies from Poznań* (LOSP) and its *Monograph Supplement* series (the first volumes of both series were prepared in IIEOS and with IIEOS financial support from materials originally sent in abundance for publication in *Lingua Posnaniensis* which was much delayed and its very existence seriously endangered: with no prospects for printing the materials were given back to the Editorial Board in an act of apparent despair; it is possible that the quick decision to initiate a new journal helped to save the renowned *Lingua*). Annual “Oriental Party”, celebrating the end of winter semester at the University and gathering staff members of the Chair on the premises of IIEOS, has in the course of years become a cherished tradition and important socializing factor crucial for strengthening team consolidation; at the same time it is a real Oriental *cuisine* festival.

Results so far achieved within the framework and/or under the label of, and in cooperation with, IIEOS, both these mentioned above as well as these listed below as IIEOS publications, beyond any doubt demonstrate that calling the Institute into existence was worth the trouble, even if it were to cease its activities tomorrow. But one more reason for the establishment of IIEOS was creating reasonably sound prospects for saving the IIEOS collections and other legacy as some whole for generations to come, for preventing this legacy from disintegration and dispersion. In this respect, the question of the future of IIEOS still remains open.

**References and selected bibliography**


PIJUAM.


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On February 8, 2003, one floor of IIEOS burnt down in a sudden extensive fire and a considerable part of collections on the remaining two floors suffered serious damage due to fire extinguishing procedures. Altogether, some 22,000 volumes of books and approximately 85% of archives perished. Nevertheless, with its over 30,000 books still on the shelves, IIEOS will strive to survive and continue its publishing and research activities. Collections related to Bronislaw Piłsudski, the Ainu, Japan, China, dictionaries and linguistic library have hardly been affected. Every support will doubtlessly be welcomed. The number of a special bank account created for this purpose by a group of Adam Mickiewicz University Professors is as follows:

Raiffeisen Bank
PL72 1750 0012 0000 0000 0233 3015 (BIC: RCBWPLPW).

Cf. also material entitled
POST-FIRE RECONSTRUCTION OF IIEOS COLLECTIONS