

# **Vanda Sruoga collection of copies of Balys Sruoga and Vincas Kreve materials**

**Ms. Coll. 1255**

**Finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews.**

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 January 25

## Table of Contents

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Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	5
Administrative Information.....	6
Controlled Access Headings.....	6
Collection Inventory.....	8
Balys Sruoga materials.....	8
Vincas Kreve materials.....	9

## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Sruogiene, Vanda, 1899-
<b>Title</b>	Vanda Sruoga collection of copies of Balys Sruoga and Vincas Kreve materials
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1255
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1943-1945
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1919-1969
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language Note</b>	The bulk of this collection is in Lithuanian, but there are some letters in German and at least one letter in English.
<b>Abstract</b>	Vanda Sruoga (1899-1997) was a Lithuanian historian and educator and the wife of prominent Lithuanian writer Balys Sruoga. Balys Sruoga (1896-1947) was a poet, playwright, critic, and literary theorist. In 1943, he was sent to Stutthof Concentration Camp. Vanda Sruoga collected Balys Sruoga's letters from the camp, as well as additional writing he produced during this time. She typed and translated some of the letters from German into Lithuanian and added her own notes. Vanda Sruoga also collected letters she received from Vincas Kreve, another prominent Lithuanian writer.

**Cite as:**

Vanda Sruoga collection of copies of Balys Sruoga and Vincas Kreve materials, 1919-1969 (bulk:1943-1945), Ms. Coll. 1255, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

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## Biography/History

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Vanda Daugirdaite-Sruoga (1899-1997) was a Lithuanian historian and educator and the wife of poet, playwright, and literary theorist Balys Sruoga. Descended from nobility, she received a top tier education and studied in Moscow until the Russian Revolution. She later studied at the University of Berlin, but again had to abandon her studies prematurely due to political turmoil. In 1924, she married Balys Sruoga and was, at last, able to complete her history degree in 1929 at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. She later became a teacher and wrote books and articles about history. When Balys Sruoga was sent to Stutthof Concentration Camp in 1943, Vanda and their daughter Dalia moved to Germany with the idea of being closer to him and maintaining their correspondence. After the camp was liberated in 1945 and Balys was sent back to Lithuania, the dangers of Soviet occupation kept Vanda and Dalia in Germany. Balys died in Lithuania in 1947, and in 1948, Vanda completed her PhD. She and her daughter moved to the United States in 1949. In the US, Vanda taught European studies and continued to write books and articles about history and emigrant cultural life.

Balys Sruoga (1896-1947) was a Lithuanian poet, playwright, critic, and literary theorist. He studied in St. Petersburg in 1914 and later moved to Moscow, but left before graduating due to World War I and the Russian Revolution. In 1921 he enrolled at the University of Munich to continue his studies. He earned his PhD in 1924 with his doctoral thesis on Lithuanian folklore. Upon his return to Lithuania he taught courses at Vytautas Magnus University, including a theatre seminar that eventually became an established course of study. In 1939, he began teaching at Vilnius University. He published articles about literature throughout his teaching career.

In retaliation for anti-Nazi agitation in Lithuania, Sruoga and 47 other Lithuanian intellectuals were sent to Stutthof Concentration Camp in March of 1943. Sruoga knew a number of other languages, and so was put to work in the camp offices during his imprisonment. This position allowed him to falsify documents and protect friends and colleagues from the gas chambers. The camp was liberated by Soviet forces in 1945 and Sruoga returned to Lithuania, once again teaching at Vilnius University and writing articles, books, and plays. His wife and daughter had moved west during the German occupation, but Soviet-occupied Lithuania was equally dangerous and Sruoga warned them not to return. With his health ruined by his imprisonment in Stutthof, Sruoga died in 1947 before he was able to reunite with his family. Sruoga was a prolific writer from early on in his life. In his youth, he wrote articles for journals published by the liberal wing of the Lithuanian cultural movement, as well as other Lithuanian newspapers. In 1930, after he returned from his studies in Germany and had begun teaching, he started to write plays. He also wrote poetry, essays, and novels. His most well-known work is the novel *The Forest of the Gods*, which is based on his experiences in the Stutthof Concentration Camp. The novel was originally suppressed by the Soviet government, but finally published in 1957 and a movie adaptation was released in 2005.

Vincas Mickevicius (1882-1954) (also known as Vincas Kreve-Mickevicius and primarily as Vincas Kreve in the United States) was a Lithuanian writer and philologist. He enrolled at the University of Kiev in 1904, but it closed a year later and he entered the University of Lviv in order to complete his studies. In 1908, Kreve earned his doctorate in philology as well as a gold medal for his thesis from the University of Kiev and in 1913, he received a Master of Comparative Linguistics degree from the University of Kiev. In 1919, after Lithuania gained independence, he served one year as Lithuanian consul to Azerbaijan. In 1922 Kreve went to the newly founded University of Lithuania (now Vytautas Magnus University) and taught Slavic languages and literatures for twenty years. On June 24, 1940 he was appointed Prime Minister in the People's Government of Lithuania, a puppet government installed by the Soviet Union in its takeover of Lithuania. Kreve submitted his resignation on July 1, and though it was initially not accepted, he was ultimately replaced by Mėcislovas Gedvilas. When the Nazis closed the institutions of higher learning in Lithuania in 1943, Kreve went into hiding. Once Soviet forces reoccupied Lithuania in 1944, he fled to a displaced persons camp in Austria and taught at the camp's high school. In 1947, he immigrated to the United States and taught Slavic languages and literatures at the University of Pennsylvania until his retirement in 1953. He died in 1954.

Vincas Kreve began writing early in his youth. At the beginning of his writing career, he wrote in Russian and Polish; but by 1902, he was writing in Lithuanian as well. Kreve's work varies greatly in form and genre; he wrote poetry, plays, and novels, historical dramas, folklore, and short stories. He also wrote for and edited scholarly and literary periodicals.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of materials collected and compiled by Vanda Sruoga. The majority of the materials in the collection relate to her husband, poet and playwright Balys Sruoga, but the collection includes materials related to writer Vincas Kreve as well.

The collection is organized into two series: Balys Sruoga materials and Vincas Kreve materials. The Balys Sruoga materials are further organized into correspondence and other writings. The correspondence subseries includes letters that Balys Sruoga wrote to his wife, to professor Vladimiras Šilkarskis, and to educator Marija Nemeiksaite from Stutthof Concentration Camp. This includes typescripts of letters that Vanda Sruoga later translated from German to Lithuanian and to which she added explanatory notes. The correspondence also includes typescripts of earlier letters to Vanda which also have added remarks and may have been translated into Lithuanian.

Other writings include two essays Balys Sruoga wrote while in Stutthof Concentration Camp, poetry, a photocopy of Sem Benelli's *Il Mantellaccio* (in Lithuanian: *Apsiautalas; keturiu veiksmu poema*) translated by Sruoga, and a short work, *Cicinskis. Upytes valdovas: Triju veiksmu septyniu paveikslu baletas*.

The Vincas Kreve materials include letters that the writer sent to Vanda Sruoga from 1944 to 1950. It also includes the article "Vincas Kreve's place in Lithuanian literature" by Vincas Maciunas, extracted from *Studi Baltici IX*, 1952.

Researchers should note that all materials in this collection are photocopies or typescripts. There is no original manuscript material.

The collection's processor does not read Lithuanian and has therefore relied heavily on extant transcriptions of names, folder titles and translation software. Transcriptions, names, and folder titles may not always be accurate and researchers may need to spend more time examining a larger selection of the

collection in order to find relevant materials.

Transcription of diacritics has occurred whenever possible. However, some diacritics in the Lithuanian language could not be transcribed and in these cases, the letters in the Roman alphabet appear without the diacritic.

Works Referenced:

Lituanus

Balys Sruoga

Baltic Online

Balys Sruoga

Stutthof Concentration Camp

Famous Kaunas People: commemorated

Vanda Daugirdaite-Sruogiene

People's Government of Lithuania

Vincas Kreve-Mickevicius

Autorius: Vincas Kreve

Vincas Kreve-Mickevicius

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 January 25

Finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews.

### Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

### Use Restrictions

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## Controlled Access Headings

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CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Stutthof (Concentration camp).

#### **FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Correspondence
- Reprographic copies
- Translations (documents)
- Typescripts
- Writings (document genre)

#### **GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)**

- Lithuania--Politics and government

#### **PERSONAL NAME(S)**

- Kreve-Mickevicius, Vincas, 1882-1954
- Sruoga, Balys, 1896-1947

#### **SUBJECT(S)**

- Authors
- Authors, Lithuanian
- Concentration camps
- Journalism
- Journalism--Lithuania
- World War, 1939-1945

## Collection Inventory

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### BALYS SRUOGA MATERIALS.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

	Box	Folder
Balio Sruogos laiškai žmonai -- correspondence typescripts with explanations, 1919-1920.	1	1
Balio Sruogos laiškai žmonai -- correspondence typescripts with explanations, 1921.	1	2
Balio Sruogos laiškai žmonai -- correspondence transcripts with explanations, 1922.	1	3
Balio Sruogos laiškai žmonai -- correspondence typescripts with explanations, 1923-1924.	1	4
Balio Sruogos laiškai žmonai -- correspondence typescripts with explanations, 1924-1939.	1	5
Photocopies of letters from Balys Sruoga to his wife, Vanda Sruoga, 1943-1945.	1	6
Balio Sruogos -- laiškai iš koncentracijos lagerio Stutthof prie Dancigo 1943.III.21-1945.I.23 -- correspondence typescripts with explanations, 1969.	1	7
Letter to prof. Vladimiras Šilkarskis, 1944.	1	8

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Letters to Marija Nemeikšaitė, 1946-1947.

1

9

**OTHER WRITING.**

Box

Folder

Photocopies of visas and poems, 1923-1929, undated.

1

10

Two essays written in Stutthof Concentration Camp -- *Die Romantik des Theaters* and *Die Wahrhaftigkeit in der Schauspielkunst*, 1944.

1

11

*Cicinskis. Upytes valdovas: triju veiksmu septynių paveikslu baletas* by Balys Sruoga in 1940 or 1941, 1965.

1

12

Sem Benelli: *Apsiautalas; Keturių veiksmų poema* -- Lithuanian translation of Sem Benelli's *Il Mantellaccio* -- photocopy, undated.

1

13

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**VINCAS KREVE MATERIALS.**

Box

Folder

Photocopies of letters from Vincas Kreve to Vanda Sruoga and extract *Vincas Kreve's place in Lithuanian literature*, 1944-1950, 1952.

1

14