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Artistic and Architectural Heritage
of the Nobility Between Old and New Regimes

Umetnostna in arhitekturna dediščina plemstva
med starimi in novimi režimi

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The Stateless Nation's Elite

Artistic Collections of Polish Aristocracy, 1795–1918

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Abstract:

The Stateless Nation's Elite: Artistic Collections of Polish Aristocracy, 1795–1918

1.01 Original scientific article

The article aims to investigate aristocratic collecting practices in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 19th century, focusing on three points. First, we highlight the specific situation of the Polish aristocracy compared to most European countries and note the weakness of collecting culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early modern period, followed by its slow emergence at the end of the 18th century. Then, we investigate the most important phenomena of 19th-century aristocratic collecting and distinguish two major trends within it: collecting art and collecting national memorabilia. We also highlight the importance of aristocratic collections for a stateless nation. Finally, to illustrate the overview, using a specific example to underline the key issues, we discuss the collections of Princes Czartoryski. In this essay, we summarize our previous research on the collections of Polish aristocracy and provide, for the first time, a comprehensive and systematic panorama of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Aristocratic collections, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Czartoryski collection, Polish aristocracy

Izvleček:

Elita naroda brez države. Umetnostne zbirke poljskega plemstva, 1795–1918

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

V prispevku so analizirane plemiške zbirateljske prakse na območju nekdanje poljsko-litovske zveze v 19. stoletju s treh vidikov. Z upoštevanjem specifičnih okoliščin poljskega plemstva so v odnosu do evropskih trendov obravnavane šibke točke poljske zbirateljske kulture od njenih poznih začetkov konec 18. stoletja. Nadalje sta na podlagi analiz najznačilnejših pojavov in trendov plemiškega zbirateljstva v 19. stoletju izpostavljena dva ključna tipa zbirk: umetnostne zbirke in zbirke nacionalnih memorabilij. Avtorja izpostavljata pomen plemiških zbirk pri uveljavljanju naroda brez lastne države. Vidike kontekstualizirata v študiji primera kneginje Czartoryski. Prispevek temelji na dolgoletnih raziskavah o zbirateljstvu poljskega plemstva in v njem je prvič podan poglobljen in sistematiziran pregled te tematike.

Ključne besede: plemiške zbirke, plemstvo, Poljska, poljsko-litovska zveza, zbirka Czartoryski

Traditions and Conditions: The Nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Emergence of Polish Aristocracy

In 1771, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the second largest country in Europe, with an area of 733,500 square kilometres. Although plagued by political and economic crises since the beginning of the 18th century, it still tried to retain its high position among European monarchies.¹ In 1795, after the so-called Third Partition, it was ultimately divided between the neighbouring powers: Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and disappeared from the map of Europe as an independent political entity. It would reappear as the Republic of Poland only in 1918. As a result of the state collapse, the more than twelve million people inhabiting its territory became subjects of the Romanov, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern dynasties. From then on, they were governed under other legal systems and lived within a different political and social order.

The nobility (*szlachta*) comprised almost eight percent of this population, an exceptionally high percentage compared to other European countries. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the members of the *szlachta* were distinguished by their ancestry (and consequently a coat of arms), privileges, and the right to hold state offices. They also had a distinct lifestyle, code of conduct, customs, and culture, known under the collective term Sarmatism. Finally, members of this class shared a specific mentality and ideology founded on two ideas: the so-called “Golden Liberty”² and equality. As might be expected, the nobility of the Commonwealth varied considerably in terms of wealth, importance, and influence. This class encompassed the few richest, most powerful families, known as the magnates, who held the most important offices, and a mass of petty nobility with little more than a coat-of-arms and no political power. However, on the ideological level, all noblemen were equal and considered themselves one political nation. With this prevalent idea of equality, aristocratic titles were not used in the Commonwealth, except by several old Lithuanian princely families; similarly, awarding orders was not practiced until the mid-18th century. Noblemen would occasionally receive titles from the emperor, foreign monarchs, or the pope; however, such titles were disregarded and generally not recognised. This began to change in the second half of the 18th century, when the parliaments of 1764, 1768, and 1775 granted princely titles to several Polish and Lithuanian families. Aristocratic titles appeared on a larger scale at the end of the century, granted by Russian, Austrian, and Prussian rulers, and also by Napoleon Bonaparte in the early 19th century. This practice openly brought into question the principle of noble equality. Recalling the post-1795 period in her diary, Sabina Grzegorzewska, née Gostkowska wrote: “[...] our nation was thoroughly reshaped over the course of a decade. Even old Polish titles disappeared and were replaced by foreign ones: princes, counts, and barons.”³

The situation in Poland was therefore somewhat paradoxical: whilst in most European countries, the aristocracy (understood as the highest class among the nobility, distinguished by

¹ On the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in English, see Butterwick, *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy*; Butterwick, *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*.

² The idea of Golden Liberty was most expressively manifested in a number of rights and practices of symbolic importance: the principle of “nothing new without the consent of all” (*nihil novi sine omnium consensu*) adopted by the Sejm in 1505 and the resulting *liberum veto*, i.e. the right to curtail the Sejm and thereby block legislation with only one opposing vote; the *electio viritim* privilege of 1572–1573 by which every nobleman had a right to partake in electing a king; and the *pacta conventa*, contract of employment agreed with every newly elected king after 1573. See Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Queen Liberty*.

³ Grzegorzewska, *Pamiętniki*, 90.

hereditary titles of barons, counts, dukes, or princes) gradually diminished in importance after 1789 and gave way to other social groups, primarily the bourgeoisie,⁴ in Poland, its emergence and subsequent development into the elite of a stateless nation was only just beginning.

By adopting the titles, Polish noble families entered the pan-European, cosmopolitan community of aristocrats. The collective identity of this group was expressed in their lifestyle, cultural standards, customs, preferences, pastimes, the common language (French), matrimonial policy, and finally, their attitude towards art, of which collecting was an important element.⁵

Aristocratic collecting was driven by various motivations, yet one factor that was almost invariably at stake was prestige—not only personal but also the prestige of the family and social class. Similarly to the European nobility, the Polish elites found the long 19th century a time of great challenges. Old Polish court offices, i.e., largely honorary positions traditionally held by the magnates which confirmed their leading social role, were abolished, while a career in the administration of the bureaucratized partitioning states was not an attractive option to most aristocrats, as it involved de facto clerical work. The legal privileges previously belonging to the nobility disappeared one by one. Many elements of the traditional noble lifestyle were embraced by the bourgeoisie, while on the other hand, the nobility itself adopted a number of behaviours characteristic of urban culture. Consequently, the former determinants of aristocratic status gradually disappeared. What remained was the aristocratic matrimonial policy (the closely guarded tradition of endogamy) and the shrinking pool of leisure activities with considerable prestige potential. The latter included involvement with art, especially the traditionally elitist art collecting.

The formation of the aristocracy was of great importance to the Polish collecting culture: most Polish art collections in the 19th century, and certainly almost all the most important ones, were created on the initiative of this social class. The different political conditions in the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian partitions did not play a significant role, with the aristocratic collections created in all three partitions showing substantial similarities.

Collecting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before 1795: Weak Traditions and Revival under the Reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski

Collecting traditions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were scarce until the second half of the 18th century for a variety of reasons. One of them was the political system of the state, especially the practice of electing kings and the resulting lack of dynastic continuity. Poland did not have any great royal collections, which elsewhere in Europe would be accumulated by members of a dynasty for generations and would serve as a model for collectors from social elites.⁶ Second, from the

⁴ Meyer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*, 79–127.

⁵ On the European aristocracy in the 19th century, see e.g., *Les noblesses européennes*; Beckett, *The Aristocracy*; Wiendorf, *Der Adel*; Doyle, *Aristocracy*; Reif, *Adel*.

⁶ Even though some of the Polish kings showed interest in collecting, there was no continuation to their endeavours. The rich treasury of the last two male rulers of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Sigismund the Old (1476–1548) and Sigismund Augustus (1520–1572), did not transform in the 16th century into a cabinet of curiosities, as happened with the treasuries of other sovereigns in Central Europe. Eventually, the items of the treasury were dispersed. In the first half of the 17th century, the same fate befell the artistic collections of Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632), who was interested in art and even produced his own amateur paintings and craftwork. Despite the fact that two of the king's sons successively sat on the Commonwealth throne, the collection did not survive. In the first half

middle of the 16th century, the importance of cities continuously declined (with a few exceptions, such as Gdańsk).⁷ Consequently, there was no wealthy patriciate with cultural ambitions or significant scholarly circles that could contribute to the emergence of a scientific collecting culture. Third, and most importantly for the present discussion, the nobility culture developed new ways to fulfil their cultural needs and gain prestige, other than collecting or general preoccupation with art. The Sarmatian ideal was embodied in rural life in a family manor, devoted to farming the land; abandoning this life could only be excused by participating in military campaigns or public life.⁸ The need for splendour was expressed and addressed by lavish hospitality, feasting, hunting, dressing, festivities, funeral rites, founding churches and monasteries, and building residences. Collecting was a rare practice throughout the early modern era. In the first half of the 19th century, Henryk Rzewuski (1791–1866) recalled the disappearing traditional noble culture with sentiment in *Pamiętki Soplicy*, in which he spoke with dislike or even some disgust about the “libraries and collections of various sort,” emphasising, not without pride: “we, the nobility, do not have those at home, we know nothing about them, and all our pleasure is to associate with people.”⁹

An ambitious art project including an element of collecting was undertaken by Stanisław August Poniatowski (1732–1798), the last king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (crowned 1764). He saw art as an important element of the monarch’s decorum and its revival as part of the general renewal of the state, which was undergoing a profound crisis.¹⁰ Despite enormous financial difficulties, the king managed to create, almost from scratch, a fairly significant gallery of paintings and assemble a collection of sculptures (mostly plaster casts of antique works), graphics, numismatics, and scientific instruments.¹¹ Political events stood in the way of his more ambitious plans. Following the partitions, Stanisław August was forced to abdicate on November 25, 1795. An excellent assembly of paintings that had been collected for the king in London since 1790 by Noël Desenfans (1745–1807) and Francis Bourgeois (1756–1811) never reached Warsaw. Ultimately, in 1811, it was donated to Dulwich College under Bourgeois’ will, and became the basis for the Dulwich Picture Gallery, which exists to this day.¹²

The activity of Stanisław August was a model for his political supporters and a challenge to his opponents, and it was mostly under his influence that a collecting community gradually developed in the last decades of the 18th century. This period marked the emergence of institutions and practices related to collecting, such as auctions, antique shops, and, later on, exhibitions. In 1775, the first memorial concerning the establishment of a museum under state protection was submitted by Michał Jerzy Mniszech (1748–1806).¹³ The issue of independent exhibition architecture was raised

of the 18th century, Poland was ruled by Augustus II and Augustus III of the Saxon dynasty, who attached great importance to art. However, they carried out their ambitious collecting projects in their native Dresden, not in Warsaw. See Grusiecki, “Connoisseurship,” 209–26.

⁷ See Sobiecka, *Obrazowanie natury*.

⁸ On the aristocratic culture in the Commonwealth, see Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka*; Świdarska-Włodarczyk, *Homo Nobilis*; Faber, *Sarmatismus*.

⁹ Rzewuski, *Pamiętki Soplicy*, 299.

¹⁰ On the role of art and collecting in the politics of Stanisław August, see Rottermund, *Zamek warszawski*; Manikowska, *Sztuka*.

¹¹ On Stanisława August’s collection, see Mańkowski, *Rzeźby zbioru Stanisława Augusta*; Kossecka, *Gabinet Rycin*; Juszcak and Małachowicz, *Galeria obrazów*; Wyka, *Ciekawym wiedzieć*.

¹² Murray, *The Dulwich Picture Gallery; Collection for a King*.

¹³ Mniszech, “Myśli względem.”

as well. Collecting was undertaken by other members of the king's family and milieu, including his younger brother, Michał Jerzy Poniatowski (1736–1794), who was the primate of Poland from 1784, and his nephew Stanisław (1754–1833).¹⁴ Finally, as Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758–1841), an astute observer of his times, recalled: "Following the example of the king, Polish nobles began to assemble."¹⁵ He referred to representatives of the Polish aristocratic families: Potocki, Lubomirski, Radziwiłł, Czartoryski, and Mniszech, who took up collecting. Having a collection became one of the attributes of an enlightened nobleman.

These were mostly artistic collections: galleries of paintings by old and contemporary European masters, and collections of Roman antiquities or their copies and imitations, exhibited in residences. Such was the profile of the collections of Princess Izabela Lubomirska (1736–1816) in Łańcut, of Wincenty Potocki (c. 1740–1823; he was given the title of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1784 but did not accept it) in Leszno near Warsaw, of Princess Helena Radziwiłłowa (1753–1821) in Nieborów, and, probably the most outstanding one, the collection of Count Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755–1821) in Wilanów near Warsaw. The latter was distinguished not only by the number of paintings, their rank, careful selection, and professional description but also by the fact that they were placed in a gallery building erected especially for this purpose. Potocki was an ambitious amateur antiquarian with a good knowledge of painting. He also wrote texts on art, including a Polish translation of the works of Johann Joachim Winckelmann.¹⁶

Collections of the Polish Aristocracy in the 19th Century: Art Collections

The trend oriented towards European painting, sculpture, and antiquities, which arose from the experiences of the late 18th century in Polish collecting, continued into the 19th century. However, it resulted in few outstanding accomplishments, unless one takes into account the collections of Polish aristocrats living abroad, such as Count Athanasius Raczyński (1788–1874) in Berlin, Count Andrzej Mniszech (1823–1905) in Paris, Count Michał Tyszkiewicz (1828–1897) in Rome and Count Karol Lanckoroński (1848–1933) in Vienna.¹⁷ Meanwhile, until the late 19th century, most collections in the territory of Poland, although sometimes large, were rather random and unsupported by thorough knowledge of the history of art or even any sincere interest in it. They consisted mainly of works of old masters and fashionable contemporary painters that were currently available on the market. Among such collections were: the painting gallery of Count Józef Kajetan Ossoliński (1764–1834) in the palace at Tłumackie Street in Warsaw, composed partly of works purchased from the dispersed collection of King Stanisław August; the painting gallery of Count Aleksander Chodkiewicz (1776–1838) in the palace at Miodowa Street in Warsaw; a collection of paintings and sculptures of Count Artur (1787–1832) and Countess Zofia (1790–1879) Potocki, exhibited in their country palace in Krzeszowice and the palace in Kraków known as "Pod Baranami," a painting collection of Count Rajmund (1791–1859) and Countess Marianna (1804–1888) Skórzewski in Czerniejewo; the painting gallery of Count August (1806–1867) and Countess Aleksandra (1818–1892) Potocki in the

¹⁴ Busiri Vici, *I Poniatowski e Roma*.

¹⁵ Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich*, 310.

¹⁶ On Stanisław Kostka Potocki, see Getka-Kenig, *Stanisław Kostka Potocki*.

¹⁷ Kaiser, *Sammler, Kenner, Kunstschriftsteller*; Mencfel, *Athanasius Raczyński*; Rosset, *Kolekcja Andrzeja Mniszcha*; Rosset, *Un aspect du patrimoine parisien*; Rosset, "By skreślić historię;" Winiewicz-Wolska, *Karol Lanckoroński*.

Wilanów Palace, which grew out of the aforementioned collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki.¹⁸ With few outstanding or authentic works of the greatest masters, the collections were dominated by secondary and tertiary paintings, also with some copies and fakes. However, they still played an important cultural and social role. Three of the collections listed above were located in cities and were either widely available (Ossolinski's gallery and August and Aleksandra Potocki's collections) or were planned to become so (Artur and Zofia Potocki's collection). In this way, they replaced non-existent public exhibition institutions. We shall elaborate on this issue later.

It was only at the end of the 19th century that a handful of large and outstanding aristocratic picture galleries were established in Poland. The most important of those belonged to Count Ignacy Korwin Milewski (1846–1926) and Count Aleksander Edward Raczyński (1847–1926). Both aristocrats showed a genuine and deep interest in art, which was reflected not only in collecting but also in conscious and consistent patronage. Raczyński was also involved in organisational work as the president of the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1895–1913. They both developed their expertise in art during study trips around Europe; Milewski was even a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich but did not complete his studies. Their collections differed from each other in many respects yet shared some common features. First, they consisted of carefully selected works and therefore had a distinctive character defined by their creators rather than fashion or chance. Milewski gathered paintings of the Polish representatives of the so-called Munich school, while Raczyński collected European salon paintings, mostly from Parisian Salon de Mars, as well as works of Polish artists.¹⁹ The second important common feature of these collections was the presence of contemporary Polish painting. It could have been partly motivated by the patriotism of the collectors but the primary reasons were undoubtedly artistic. Polish painting flourished enormously at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century; indeed, it was then that the artistic phenomenon of “Polish painting” or the “Polish school” emerged. Supporting this process through patronage of Polish artists was an important element of Milewski's and Raczyński's collecting activity. Finally, the third common feature of the two collections was that both aristocrats devoted much attention to the way their collections were presented, promoted, and displayed. Before Milewski went into exile and travelled around Europe with his collection, it was kept and shown to the public in his palace in Vilnius. The aristocrat planned to move the collection to Kraków or Lviv, where it could truly become a public institution, but their plans were thwarted. However, single works or even groups of works were presented at public exhibitions: the First Great Exhibition of Polish Art in Kraków in 1887, in Lviv in 1894, and finally at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna in 1895. Raczyński's collection remained closely linked to his country residence in Rogalin in the province of Wielkopolska. In 1910, however, it was moved to a separate building and opened to the public. A brief guide to the gallery was published in the 1930s.²⁰

¹⁸ Ryszkiewicz, *Kolekcjonerzy i miłośnicy*, 54–101; Manikowska, “Zbiór obrazów i rzeźb.”

¹⁹ Kludkiewicz, “Aristocracy and Contemporary Art.”

²⁰ *Przewodnik galerji obrazów.*

“The romantic trend in Polish museum history”: Collections of Memorabilia

Galleries of painting were just one of the trends in Polish aristocratic collecting in the 19th century. A different and popular model, which developed after 1795 and resulted in original and sometimes outstanding achievements, dominated: collecting national memorabilia, initiated in Poland by Princess Izabela Czartoryska (1746–1835) in her residence in Puławy. Although collecting historical relics was a European phenomenon at that time, its significance for a nation deprived of its state was remarkable.

Izabela Czartoryska's collecting pursuits were a direct response to the political catastrophe. Years later, the Princess wrote in her *Mémoires et petits diversés*: “In 1793 [the year in which the so-called Grodno Sejm passed the act of the Second Partition of Poland], Poland died! [...] It was then that I first thought of collecting Polish memorabilia.”²¹ Over the next thirty years, Izabela amassed a collection of thousands of items related to the history of Poland: the regalia and memorabilia of Polish monarchs, war trophies and flags, weapons and elements of armour, valuables, documents, numismatics, relics of famous Poles, etc. The collection will be described in more detail later in this essay. At this point, we simply wish to highlight that this freely accessible museum, visited by thousands of guests from all over the former Commonwealth, was a huge success. It was an excellent response to the emotional needs of Poles in the first decades of their enslavement. Puławy became an important, if not the most important, centre of Polish patriotism. Consequently, the museum directly or indirectly inspired a number of collecting initiatives in the first and also in the second half of the 19th century, and thus gave rise to a widespread phenomenon called by Zdzisław Żygulski Jr. “the romantic trend in Polish museum history.”²²

The trend was reflected in particular in the collections of military memorabilia created in the first decades of the 19th century, such as the armouries of Count Wincenty Krasiński (1782–1858) in his palace in Warsaw, of Count Edward Raczyński (1786–1845) in Rogalin, and Count Tytus Działyński (1796–1861) in Kórnik. While armouries had existed in Polish noblemen's residences in the modern period, they now assumed a different character. First, while the chief purpose of the early armouries was to glorify a particular family or sometimes related families, they now glorified the whole nation, documenting its splendid and victorious past; in other words, their message was now strongly patriotic.²³ Second, the collections of weaponry were exhibited in specially prepared rooms with picturesque and meaningful decorations. Krasiński's armoury was arranged in a “Gothic chamber,” where the old items “presented a delightful view in the brilliant light.”²⁴ Edward Raczyński gave his armoury a similar Gothic tone when, around 1820, he transformed the main hall of the Rogalin palace (previously a ballroom) into exhibition space.²⁵ In both cases, the decor was meant to connote knightly courage, valour, and heroism. A different, truly unique, setting was conceived by Tytus Działyński for his collection of military items, memorabilia, and crafts: the main hall of his palace in Kórnik was given a “morisco” décor with references to the architecture of the Alhambra. This was probably intended to suggest the historical similarities between the Moors

²¹ Czartoryska, *Mémoires et petits diversés*, pp. 65–66, Ew XVII/986, Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie.

²² Żygulski, “Nurt romantyczny.”

²³ See Kłudkiewicz, “Zbrojownie w XIX wieku.”

²⁴ See Ajewski, *Zbiory artystyczne Biblioteki*, 35–109.

²⁵ See Ostrowska-Kęłbowska, “Siedziby-muzea;” Leszczyńska, “Skarbnica pamiątek wielkopolskich.”

fighting against the Spanish during the medieval Reconquista and the Poles fighting the oppression of the occupants during the partitions.²⁶

Tytus Działyński died in 1861, leaving his project unfinished. The work was continued by his son Jan (1829–1880), who inherited the palace in Kórnik, combined his father's and his own collections, and rearranged the items into a new exhibition. He introduced significant changes to the original concept by focusing on a systematic arrangement of weaponry and crafts rather than their picturesque appearance.²⁷ However, the "Moor Chamber" included also a small space filled with commemorative items, arranged in an artistic manner not unlike in Puławy. It was undoubtedly an intentional reference to the "romantic" collecting tradition: Jan Działyński deliberately introduced a "romantic," somewhat archaic, element to his otherwise innovative exhibition, as something firmly embedded in the minds of the Poles. As we shall see, the same thing was done by Izabella Działyńska née Czartoryska (1830–1899) when she established a museum in her residence in Gołuchów. In both cases, therefore, we observe a *sui generis* historicism in collecting, proving that the heroic and sentimental trend of collecting national memorabilia was still vital and attractive in the second half of the 19th century.

Aristocratic Collections on Display: Location, Accessibility, and Legal Protection

Aristocratic collections accessible to the public played an important role in 19th-century Poland, as the first public museums were opened, as in other Central European countries, relatively late.²⁸ Due to the lack of statehood, they were established on the initiative of either scientific associations (e.g., in Poznań and Kraków) or municipal authorities (Kraków and Lviv). The latter cases were related to the reform of local government in the Galician autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While the earliest such projects can be dated to the middle of the century, the first major public museums appeared in the 1870s: the Mielżyński Museum in Poznań, which opened thanks to the generosity of a local aristocrat and collector Count Seweryn Mielżyński (1804–1872), and the National Museum in Krakow, a municipal institution.

Since no art museum was founded on the initiative of the rulers or governments of the partitioning powers until the beginning of the 20th century—the first one was the Kaiser Friedrich Museum opened in Prussian Posen/Poznań in 1904²⁹—the publicly available aristocratic collections compensated for the lack of state museums and constituted an important complement to the existing public exhibitions in Poland. At the same time, as elsewhere in Europe, a process of

²⁶ See Whelan, "Kórnik;" Dolczewska and Dolczewski, "Historia zbrojowni zamkowej."

²⁷ Kludkiewicz, "Collector at the Crossroads."

²⁸ For Austria-Hungary, see Rampley, Prokopovych, and Veszprémi, *The Museum Age*, 17–50; on the aristocratic collections open to the public especially 42–48.

²⁹ The Museum in Poznan was founded on the initiative of the local government on the basis of the previously existing collection of the German Historical Society (*Historische Gesellschaft für die Provinz Posen*). The museum was financed by three sources: the Prussian state treasury (central government in Berlin), the local government of the Province of Poznan, and the authorities of the City of Poznan. It was an institution intended mainly for a German audience. There were a number of museums established by German municipal and local authorities in other cities of the Prussian partition too, for example, in Gdansk and Torun. These, however, were local and grassroots initiatives that benefited little from funding and support from the government in Berlin. Various initiatives (Polish, Lithuanian, Ruthenian, Russian) to establish museums under the Russian partition can also be identified. For the most part, however, these were of a local nature and were not supported by the Tsar and his officials.

institutionalization and musealization of aristocratic collections can be observed throughout the 19th century: they evolved from exhibitions in private residences with relatively limited access to private museums open to the public.

The collections were usually displayed and made accessible in private houses: ancestral residences in the countryside or aristocratic city mansions with separate rooms dedicated to the exhibition. This was the case of Łańcut Manor, belonging to Count and Countess Potocki,³⁰ Łohojsk Manor of Count and Countess Tyszkiewicz,³¹ Podhorce Manor, which in the 19th century belonged to the Sanguszko Princes,³² the aforementioned Kórnik Palace of the Działyński family (later Zamoycki) and Gołuchów belonging to the Czartoryskis. Sometimes aristocrats would add a gallery wing to their residence, e.g., in Miłosław belonging to Count and Countess Mielżyński, or erect a separate building connected to the palace by a passage, as in Rogalin belonging to Count and Countess Raczyński.³³ Only a few families had entirely detached buildings dedicated to the exhibitions on their palace grounds: the Czartoryskis in Puławy and the Potockis in Wilanów. Despite differences in the motivations for their creation, background, and interests of the owners, these two important initiatives can be considered the first Polish collections open to the public and, according to some researchers, the first Polish museums.³⁴

The Temple of the Sybil and the Gothic House in Puławy, opened in the early 19th century by Izabela Czartoryska née Flemming, were independent exposition pavilions. They will be discussed in more detail later in the article. Stanisław Kostka Potocki's residence in Wilanów combined several functions: the southern wing contained the apartments of the Potocki family, while the main body of the palace with royal apartments dedicated to King Jan III Sobieski constituted a place of remembrance of the king's residence, and the northern wing was a space to present a collection of European painting, sculpture, antique vases, and Chinese and Japanese art. From 1805, the latter part, together with a nearby detached building called the Gothic Gallery, functioned as "the Museum."³⁵ The Gothic Gallery had been built in 1802 near the northern wing of the palace solely for exhibition purposes. It housed mainly a collection of antique sculptures and perhaps also some works of 17th- and 18th-century European painting, and Etruscan vases. When Wilanów was redesigned by its subsequent owners in the mid-19th century, the Gothic Gallery was remade and added as a new wing to the main body of the palace.

While the collectors declared their collections open for the general public, in reality their availability was initially limited to a small circle of family, friends, and sometimes carefully selected invited guests. This was true of both Puławy and Wilanów, and also other aristocratic residences: Łańcut (the Potocki family), Podhorce (Sanguszko), Kórnik (Działyński), and Gołuchów (Czartoryski). In the second half of the 19th century, granting access to collections became more formal and regulated. From then on, collections located in country residences had fixed opening hours (usually only in the summer season), at least one scholarly supervisor, a guide for showing

³⁰ Majewska-Maszkowska, *Mecenat*.

³¹ Aftanazy, *Dzieje rezydencji*, 93–100.

³² Ostrowski and Petrus, *Podhorce*.

³³ Kłudkiewicz, *Wybór i konieczność*, 112–72.

³⁴ Żygulski, *Romantyczny nurt*.

³⁵ On the artistic collections in the Wilanów palace, see Dobrowolski, "La collection de vases grecs;" Gutowska-Guttek, "Początki muzeum w Wilanowie;" Jaskanis and Rottermund, *Grand Tour*; Fijałkowski, "Muzeum 'Polskiego Winkelmana'."

the visitors around, and related publications, usually in the form of short guidebooks, sometimes scientific catalogues. The collectors would create more or less precise sets of rules for visiting their residences or at least for admitting guests into the house during the owners' absence. For instance, visits to the castle and the collections of Princess Izabella Działyńska née Czartoryska (1830–1899) in Gołuchów were prearranged for selected guests. When the owner was absent, the curators of the collections were instructed to show them to “eminent and well-known individuals only.”³⁶ The obligation to submit a written request to view a collection located in an aristocratic home remained in force until the beginning of the 20th century.³⁷

In the second half of the 19th century, it became a custom among aristocrats to display their collections to the public in their townhouses. While travelling to country manors was often complicated, time-consuming and expensive, the city offered an influx of many more visitors. In Warsaw, a gallery of old masters was open to the public in the palace of Counts Kossakowski at Nowy Świat.³⁸ In Lviv, Count Leon Piniński (1857–1938) opened a gallery of paintings by Polish and foreign masters.³⁹ In Vilnius, the public could see the archaeological collection of Count Eustachy Tyszkiewicz (1814–1873) located in his private palace⁴⁰ and the painting collection of the aforementioned Count Ignacy Korwin Milewski.

However, in terms of the number of aristocratic residences open to the public, it was Krakow that stood out as a flourishing cultural and artistic centre of the Austrian partition and the main home of Polish aristocrats and landlords.⁴¹ Among places to visit in the city was the Wodzicki Palace with its artistic and ornithological collection, the Lubomirski Palace with collections of art and history, Moszyński's Palace with a collection of Polish paintings and militaria, the gallery of paintings of the Potockis from Krzeszowice in the Pod Baranami Palace, the Pusłowski Palace with artistic collections, and the Palace of Count Emeryk Hutten-Czapski (1828–1895) with a cabinet of numismatics.⁴²

At the end of the 19th century, some of the aristocratic collections were transformed into private museums. It was not just a matter of changing the names of the collections and introducing further regulations concerning the way they functioned. The main goal was to secure financial resources to keep the collections and guarantee their integrity and public availability for many years to come. To achieve this goal, aristocrats often made use of the family entail model, which was then undergoing a revival in some European countries, primarily in Prussia. The origins of this legal formula go back to the Middle Ages; it was popular in Europe in the Modern period, although

³⁶ Such instructions were given by Izabella Działyńska to the custodian of the collection Mikołaj Bobowski; Letter from M. Bobowski to I. Działyńska, BPP 845, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu.

³⁷ For example, the collection at Działyński's castle in Kórnik near Poznań was available mainly to the closest circle of family and friends as well as invited guests, most of whom were researchers. Other people had to send a written request to gain access to it. Jan Działyński, who owned the castle in 1861–1880, received only 19 such applications. However, their number continued to grow in the years 1880–1918, when Kórnik belonged to the Zamoyski family, the Działyńskis' relatives. The number of people applying to see the collection varied from a dozen to several hundred every year. See Naganowski, “Udostępnienie zbioru pamiątek.”

³⁸ Jaroszewski, “Kilka słów.”

³⁹ Piniński, “Obrazy szkoły angielskiej.”

⁴⁰ Aftanazy, *Materiały do dziejów*, 1: 93–100.

⁴¹ On the dominance of the nobility in the cultural, political, and economic life of Kraków, see Purchla, *Matecznik polski*.

⁴² On the collections in the aristocratic palaces in Kraków, see Beiersdorf, “Rezydencje ziemiańskie Krakowa.”

rarely used in the Republic of Poland.⁴³ The Polish version of the family entail, called *ordynacja*, ensured the indivisibility of the family estate and the prestigious title of *ordynat* for the principal heir. Its importance was explicitly stated in the report on the creation of the Princes Czartoryski family entail in Gołuchów: “By creating a family entail we guarantee that certain historical families, carrying the burden of higher responsibilities and revered as leaders by our society, will not lose their economic foundation.”⁴⁴ At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, family entails secured the existence of the major aristocratic collections and museums: the Lubomirski and Dzieduszycki Museums in Lviv as well as the Czartoryski collections.

Even on the eve of Second World War, the family entails of Polish aristocratic families established before 1918 were considered “institutions of significance to national culture.”⁴⁵ Although the institution of family entail, with its feudal origins, was considered out of date in the interwar period and removed from Polish legislation in 1939, twelve aristocratic entails remained under special legal protection due to their connection with private museums or excellent artistic and scientific collections created in the partition era.⁴⁶

By creating a family entail, aristocrats secured their property and collections, provided that the family lineage remained unbroken. If the last male representative of the family lacked a male descendant, the continuity of the surname was interrupted. In such cases, aristocrats decided to take actions that would at least preserve the memory of the family and its achievements in the field of collecting. This aim could be achieved by establishing a foundation, i.e., donating their wealth for public purposes. The name of the foundation would commemorate the family name or the family seat of the founders. Polish aristocrats took advantage of the possibility of establishing foundations after Poland regained independence.⁴⁷ One of these foundations, established in the interwar period, was the Zakłady Kórnickie Foundation, including the assets of the aforementioned Działyński family. The funds were used to maintain the castle in Kórnik with its library and collection of artworks, which were open to the public in accordance with the wishes of the founder (Władysław Zamoyski, Jan Działyński's heir).

Case Study: The Collections of Princes Czartoryski

The history of collecting in the Czartoryski family begins with the aforementioned Princess Izabela Czartoryska, née Flemming and her residence in Puławy.

After returning to Puławy from a several-month exile caused by her involvement in an unsuccessful anti-Russian revolt, known as the Kościuszko Uprising, in 1796 the Princess set out to

⁴³ Sójka-Zielińska, *Fideikomisy familijne*; Zielińska, “Ordynacje w dawnej Polsce.”

⁴⁴ Sygn. BPP 845, k. 14, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu.

⁴⁵ Article 3. 2 of the Act on the Abolition of Family Entails, July 13, 1939, in *Dz. Ust.* (Journal of Laws) 1939, No. 63, item 417.

⁴⁶ The 1939 Act on the Abolition of Family Entails listed: the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Gołuchów, the Dzieduszycki Museum of Natural History in Lviv, the Lubomirski Museum as part of the Ossolineum in Lviv, the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, and collections available to visitors (although not as institutionalized as museums) belonging to Counts Krasieński in Opinogóra, Counts Zamoyski in Zamość, Princes Radziwiłł in Nieświerz, Counts of Wielkopolski Gonzaga Myszkowski in Chroberz, Counts Potocki in Łańcut, Counts Skórzewski in Czerniejewo, and Princes Radziwiłł in Ołyka.

⁴⁷ On the foundations established to maintain libraries and collections, see Kosiński, “Biblioteki fundacyjne.”



1. Zygmunt Vogel, Johann Gottlob Schumann: View of the Sybil Temple in Pulawy, etching, 1807, National Museum, Warsaw (© Muzeum Narodowe)



2. Joseph Richter:
*View of the Gothic House in
 Puławy, watercolour, gouache,
 before 1830,
 National Museum, Warsaw
 (© Muzeum Narodowe)*

create what she called a “temple of memory” in her residence.⁴⁸ In the years 1798–1801, she had a pavilion built in the palace park that would house memorabilia relating to the glorious history of Poland. Modelled on the ancient temple in Tivoli near Rome, it was called by Czartoryska the Temple of the Sibyl (fig. 1). In 1809, she erected a second museum pavilion called the Gothic House, which contained mostly European items (fig. 2). The richness of the collections was recorded in the four-volume handwritten inventory of the Temple of the Sibyl and the *Collection of Memorabilia Deposited in the Gothic House in Puławy* published in 1828.⁴⁹

Czartoryska’s collections consisted primarily of items of historical or even sentimental value, often visually inconspicuous, such as memorabilia related to events or outstanding personalities from the past, militaria, portraits of historical figures, documents, numismatics, and small works of artistic craftsmanship. While some artefacts were, unsurprisingly, of outstanding artistic value, it was not aesthetic quality that guided the collector. Indeed, the paintings that belonged or still belong to the most valuable works of art in Polish collections—Raphael’s *Portrait of a Young Man* (lost), Rembrandt’s *Landscape with the Good Samaritan*, and Leonardo da Vinci’s *Lady with an Ermine*—found their way to Puławy almost by accident.

The relics were attractively arranged and accompanied with an extensive commentary in a heroic and sentimental tone. Moreover, they were used as props in a peculiar kind of patriotic performance with almost ritual features that Czartoryska created for visitors to the museum in Puławy.⁵⁰ The aforementioned importance and success of Czartoryska’s exhibitions was due to not only the selection of items but also their presentation, which triggered their affective potential and helped the visitors to experience them in a more emotional way. The significance of Puławy was excellently

⁴⁸ On the Puławy collection, see Żygulski, “Dzieje zbiorów puławskich;” Aleksandrowicz, “Z problematyki nowego wieku;” Żygulski, *The Princess Czartoryski Museum*; Jurkowska, *Pamięć sentymentalna*; Labuda, “Ich versammelte.”

⁴⁹ Czartoryska, *Poczet pamiątek*.

⁵⁰ Jurkowska, *Pamięć sentymentalna*, 366–401; Mencfel, “The Theatre of Affectionate Hearts.”

captured by the anonymous author of an 1829 article in *The Foreign Review*, who wrote:

To those Poles who, in the trophies of the past, find hopes for the future, this temple of the Sybil is the asylum of national glory, an object of profound veneration, and of patriotic pride, which is religiously visited by pilgrims from all the provinces of the Ancient Republic.⁵¹

When in 1831 the Czartoryski property was confiscated by the tsarist authorities after the fall of the November Uprising, the Puławy collection was dispersed. However, a significant part of it was secured and in the following years gradually transported to Paris, to a mansion bought by the Czartoryski family on Île Saint-Loius. Known as Hôtel Lambert, the residence became not only the new seat of the powerful family but also the centre of political and cultural life of Polish emigration in France, and a house for the Puławy collection. It remained under the custody of Princess Izabela's son, Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861), and, after his death, her grandson Władysław Czartoryski (1828–1894).

Władysław and his younger sister Izabella wrote a new chapter in the history of the Czartoryski collection. Closely cooperating with each other, the siblings were avid collectors of books, manuscripts and, above all, works of art. They exchanged information about works appearing on the Parisian art market and participated in major auctions and art exhibitions in the French capital. They used the help of Josephine Rousset (1821–1896), a Frenchwoman associated with Hôtel Lambert, who acted as a representative of the siblings' interests on the art market, and managed the finances and expenses of young Princess Izabella. Izabella's husband, the aforementioned Jan Działyński from Kórnik, also joined the siblings in their collecting pursuits.

The brother and sister differed greatly in their artistic interests. Izabella focused on early Renaissance graphics from Northern Europe, artistic craftsmanship, and ancient art. She rarely purchased relics and artworks related to Polish history and culture. Her brother, on the other hand, paid special attention to the latter. Władysław collected Polish graphics, painting, crafts, and weapons and bought works of ancient art and numismatics.

Władysław added the purchased works to the collections inherited from his grandmother Izabela, treating his activity as a kind of continuation of the museum in Puławy. This idea was not shared by his sister, who called her grandmother's assembly a morgue (*le charnier*) when it was brought to Paris.⁵² As a result, the Puławy collection, expanded by Władysław, coexisted in Hôtel Lambert with Izabella's items displayed in separate rooms.

The guests who were allowed to visit the palace would describe it as a Baroque monument, decorated by French masters Eustache Lesuer and Charles Le Brun,⁵³ and a place housing art collections. The guidebooks published in Paris at that time highlight the collection of old masters "avec le charmant portrait de Raphaël gravé en tête de l'ouvrage de Passavant [...] même un paysage de Rembrandt, avec la scène du bon Samaritain en figurines".⁵⁴ While collections at the Hôtel Lambert were not accessible to the general public, they were shown to a selected group of guests and presented at Paris exhibitions. Outlining the history of his family's collections, Władysław Czartoryski wrote:

⁵¹ *Foreign Review*, 529.

⁵² Quoted after Tomasz F. de Rosset, *Polskie kolekcje*, 239.

⁵³ Cf. *Galignani's New Paris Guide*, 319; *Guide to Paris*, 50.

⁵⁴ Joanne, *Paris illustré*, 48.

3. View of the castle in Gołuchow, before 1939, Voivodship Conservation Office in Poznań (© Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków, photo: Kazimierz Ulatowski)



Here, despite the lack of proper arrangement and order, the collections were not entirely useless. They were often visited by foreigners, amateurs, artists, and scholars, they were also used by our compatriots [...] Many writers and publishers found in them examples of Polish art for art publications and other writing [...]. Not unlike our emigrants after 1831, who saw it as their duty to testify to the existence and life of Poland, these collections, being something of exiles too, fulfilled the same task as far as possible. They were shown at various exhibitions, namely at the Retrospective Exhibition in 1865⁵⁵ and in the historical section of the last Great [World's] Fair in 1878,⁵⁶ where we were given separate rooms under the special designation "Pologne". All this aroused an interest in our things, hitherto completely unknown, in the scientific and artistic world, and resulted in far-reaching publications in journals devoted to the subject matter.⁵⁷

However, the collections of the Czartoryski siblings were accessed mostly by French researchers, who studied them and prepared relevant publications.⁵⁸ Izabella was especially concerned to have scholars working on her collections. Already as a teenager taking her first steps on the difficult art market, she used the help and services of leading professional experts associated mostly with the Louvre: Léon de Laborde, Jean de Witte, Wilhelm Froehner, and Émile Molinier. Commissioned by Czartoryska, they produced scientific catalogues of her collections published under the

⁵⁵ Czartoryski mentions here the exhibition *Union des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie: Deuxième exposition; Musée rétrospectif*, which took place in Palais de l'Industrie in Paris in 1865. Items from Czartoryski's collections were placed in the so-called Polish room (*sale polonaise*). The list of items presented by the family, in Rosset, *Polskie kolekcje*, 320–32.

⁵⁶ At the 1878 *World Fair*, the Czartoryskis contributed with four separate collections: of Władysław Czartoryski, his wife Małgorzata Czartoryska d'Orléans, Izabella Działyńska née Czartoryska, and Jan Działyński. The list of items presented by the family, in Rosset, *Polskie zbiory*, 341–53. See also Rosset, "Une nation de nobles."

⁵⁷ Władysław Czartoryski, *Wspomnienia do historii zbiorów* (Odczyt pisany ręką Lubomira Gadona), 1882, sygn. 7145 IV, k. 9, Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie,

⁵⁸ Longperier, "Vases peints inédits;" Witte, *Description d'Antiquités*.

collective title *Collections du Château du Gołuchów*.⁵⁹ The title of this luxury publication referred to the new location of Działyńska's collection, specifically the castle in Gołuchów in eastern Greater Poland (near the Prussian-Russian border), which had belonged to Jan Działyński.

In the 1870s, after long thought and discussion, the Czartoryski siblings decided to move their collections from Hôtel Lambert to the territory of Poland. Władysław's collection was transported to Kraków, while Izabella's works of art were moved in the 1880s to Gołuchów. The latter was originally a Renaissance castle of the influential Polish family Leszczyński, which she renovated in the neo-Renaissance style of Francis I (fig. 3). Działyńska's collections were made available to the public in 1893, placed in special exhibition rooms in the basement and on the ground floor: the Polish Hall, the Museum Hall, the Hall of Greek Vases and the Hall of Egyptian Antiquities. The remaining rooms of the Gołuchów Castle were used as the owner's apartments and guest rooms for members of the Czartoryski family. Therefore, the castle became both the family's residence and a place for storing and sharing excellent art collections.

The presentation of Izabella's collections was modelled on the exhibition she had seen in Paris and partly linked to the "romantic trend" in Polish collecting in the first half of the 19th century. The first of the rooms available to the public was the so-called Polish Hall (fig. 4). The objects presented there were part of the owner's family legacy rather than the fruit of her own pursuits. The glass cabinets in the hall contained Polish horse tacks, antique weaponry, belts, family silver of the Czartoryskis, and portraits of rulers and other Polish personages given to Izabella after her marriage to Jan Działyński. Thus, while the room resembled an armoury, which used to be a popular room in residences of landed gentry and aristocrats, it presented a new approach to the collection of military items. Similarly to the already mentioned Kórnik owned by Izabella's husband, the exhibition was far from picturesque, instead focusing on a scientific presentation of old Polish craftsmanship.

The remaining exhibition rooms were arranged with the help of Froehner and Molinier, previously employed to study the collection when they visited Gołuchów. The Museum Hall, designed by the French architect Maurice Ouradou, housed 200 works of medieval gold smithery, faience, ceramics, Venetian glass, and above all, a fine set of the Limoges enamel, i.e., objects produced in the famous French enamelling centre in Limoges (figs. 5–6). In addition to the cabinets with valuable items, the room contained 16th-century everyday objects and Renaissance French furniture. The Museum Hall in Gołuchów was designed to look like a room in a modern residence presenting original relics from one historical period, rather than an exhibition space. The collector was inspired here by the exhibition at the Musée Cluny in Paris, which also influenced other Parisian craftsmanship collectors in the second half of the 19th century. The other rooms: the Hall of Greek Vases and the Hall of Egyptian Antiquities contained works of ancient art presented in showcases and arranged chronologically. The decor of the halls resembled other residential rooms of the castle. This systematic and somewhat sterile arrangement contrasted with the atmosphere created in the Museum Hall.

Izabella wanted Gołuchów to be her country estate, a place to store and share the collections, and a seat of the Czartoryski family. She decided to secure all these functions financially by establishing the Gołuchów family entail. The introduction to the entail statute reads:

In the castle in Gołuchów, in the Pleszew province, I placed a collection of various artworks, which I had collected over many years. It is my wish that these works of art be

⁵⁹ Froehner, *Antiquités*; Froehner, *Verres chrétiens*; Froehner and Molinier, *Collections du Château de Gołuchów*.

4. The Polish Hall in the
Gołuchów Castle, before 1939,
Voivodship Conservation
Office in Poznań
(© Wojewódzki Urząd
Ochrony Zabytków,
photo: Kazimierz Ulatowski)



5. The Museum Hall in the
Gołuchów Castle, before 1939,
Voivodship Conservation
Office in Poznań
(© Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony
Zabytków, photo: Kazimierz
Ulatowski)



6. The Museum Hall in the
Gołuchów Castle, photograph,
before 1939, Voivodship
Conservation Office in Poznań
(© Wojewódzki Urząd
Ochrony Zabytków,
photo: Kazimierz Ulatowski)





7. *The Czartoryski Museum in Kraków, postcard, ca. 1905, National Library, Warsaw (Polona public domain)*

not dispersed and that the collection be forever preserved in its entirety. I expect that the collection will be of use to the general public, arousing and increasing interest in art and the sense of beauty; the collections should be available for viewing to anyone searching for sources for scientific research and help in artistic pursuits.⁶⁰

The decision to establish the family entail was made by Izabella and her brother Władysław. In July 1884, the siblings decided to create two entails of Princes Czartoryski, in Sieniawa and Gołuchów, which would be inherited by the sons of Prince Władysław: Sieniawa—by Adam Jerzy Ludwik Czartoryski (1872–1937), and Gołuchów—by Władysław Kazimierz Czartoryski (1876–1911), after Izabella’s childless death.⁶¹ While the Gołuchów entail established in 1893 ensured the integrity and financial security of Izabella’s collections, the Sieniawa entail approved by the Austro-Hungarian authorities in 1897⁶² guaranteed the existence of the Prince Czartoryski Museum in Kraków, founded by Władysław.

Establishing the museum in Krakow, the capital city of Galicia, was a great conceptual and organisational enterprise; consequently, it was completed only after its founder’s death at the beginning of the 20th century.⁶³ The first step in the process of creating the museum was to find appropriate spaces for exhibition. In 1874, Władysław purchased a building known as *Klasztor* (Monastery; fig. 7), and soon afterwards received the so-called *Arsenal* (Arsenal) located nearby. In the following years, three more tenement houses were purchased, and, combined, creating a third museum building called the Palace. In addition to the entirely time-consuming adaptation of the buildings, it was necessary to prepare an inventory of the collection, conserve many items, and employ museum personnel: curatorial, administrative, and technical staff. Hence, in the early period

⁶⁰ “Statut ordynacji,” 47–48.

⁶¹ See Nowak, “Ordynacja sieniawska,” 135.

⁶² Ustawa z dnia 16 stycznia 1897 r. o ustanowieniu powierznictwa familijnego Książąt Czartoryskich, *Dziennik ustaw państwa dla królestw i krajów w Radzie państwa reprezentowanych*, 1897, part XIII, pp. 343–48, 7147, Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie.

⁶³ On the Museum, see Buczek, “Z przeszłości Biblioteki Muzeum;” Żygulski, “Zarys historii zbiorów Czartoryskich;” Rostworowski, “Kraków;” Guichard-Marneur, “Drafting Futures;” Płonka-Bałus and Koziara, *Muzeum*.

after transporting the items from Paris to Kraków, the collections were not regularly available to the public; the limited availability continued for several years, even after the official opening of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in 1877. The museum was a private institution, financed at first by the Prince's assets, and after his death by the Sieniawa family entail income.

The collections were supervised by professional scholars from the very beginning. The first director of the museum was Józef Łepkowski (1826–1894), an archaeologist and professor at the Jagiellonian University, followed by Marian Sokołowski (1839–1911), who in 1882 took the first chair of Art History in Poland at the Jagiellonian University; the first curator of the collections was Leon Bentkowski (1823–1889), succeeded by Bolesław Biskupski (1844–1922). This indicates that Władysław Czartoryski intended to treat the art collections, alongside the accompanying rich collection of books, not as a sentimental repository of national memorabilia in the Puławy spirit but as a modern research and teaching institution. Indeed, he called his museum a “scientific institute.”

The Princes Czartoryski Museum influenced the artistic landscape of Krakow to a great extent. It was the most important exhibiting institution in the city along with the National Museum and the Museum of Technology and Industry, which were established at the same time.⁶⁴ Importantly, while the latter two focused on developing and presenting collections of Polish art and artistic craftsmanship, the Princes Czartoryski Museum housed collections of high-class European art as well as Polish historical memorabilia from the Puławy collections.

Conclusion

Whilst Polish aristocratic collecting developed relatively late, at the end of the 18th century, with the rise of aristocracy itself, it was a key collecting phenomenon in 19th-century Poland. It involved two major trends: collections of art and collections of national memorabilia, the latter found especially in the first half of the century. The importance of this phenomena is related to the dominant position of aristocrats among collectors, their pioneering role in collecting art and historical memorabilia, and the fact that, as time went by, an increasing number of them made their collections available to the public, and finally transformed some of them into private museums. Thus, aristocratic collections played an important role in the life of a stateless nation: in the absence of state patronage, they supplemented or sometimes even replaced public institutions, significantly enriching the otherwise modest Polish museological landscape.

⁶⁴ See Prokopovych, “The City and the Museum.”

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Elita naroda brez države

Umetnostne zbirke poljskega plemstva, 1795–1918

Povzetek

Zbirateljstvo se je med poljskim plemstvom – v primerjavi s plemstvom drugod po Evropi – uveljavilo relativno pozno, v času njegovega družbenega vzpona ob koncu 18. stoletja. V 19. stoletju je postalo najpomembnejša praksa, s katero je poljsko plemstvo utemeljevalo svoj družbeni pomen. Osrednja tipa zbirk sta bila umetnostne zbirke in zbirke zgodovinsko pomembnih memorabilij, s katerimi je plemstvo poudarjalo svoj elitni položaj v družbi in utemeljevalo svojo pionirsko vlogo v lokalnem zbirateljstvu. Lastniki so se pri tem zavzemali za dostopnost zbirk javnosti, kar je postopoma privedlo do odprtja zasebnih muzejev. Na ozemlju Poljske, ki je bila pod oblastjo Prusije, habsburške monarhije in poljsko-litovske zveze, v 19. stoletju ni bilo nacionalnih oziroma državnih muzejev. Skupaj z mestnimi muzeji in znanstvenimi ustanovami so tako zasebne plemiške zbirke in muzeji pomembno obogatili poljsko kulturno in muzejsko krajino.