

## INTRODUCTION

The National Museum in Cracow, created in 1879, received both its first Statute and the first director, Władysław Łuszczkiewicz, in 1883. Beginning from that year, the reports on the Museum's activity were published annually. Initially, those were small brochures, entitled "Reports of the Management of the National Museum in Cracow", containing shortened reports on the Museum's activities, mainly in acquiring new works, together with financial reports. Since 1894 they included also a project of the budget for the following year.

In 1900, when Władysław Łuszczkiewicz died, the post of the Museum's director was taken over, for almost fifty years, by Feliks Kopera. The annual publications started to be called "Reports of the Directors of the National Museum in Cracow"; they were issued in an enlarged format and enriched with illustrations. They were also more detailed than their predecessors and systematically arranged. They brought information about all changes that had occurred in the Museum buildings and in their administration; they reported on the cataloguing and conservation of the collections, as well as on new acquisitions; they also listed the exhibitions prepared by the Museum and its publications. The information about the number of visitors in the Museum's branches also appeared there, together with precise financial reports.

From 1905 on the "Reports" comprised also a list of scholarly papers published by the Museum's staff, "in order to show to what extent the clerical personnel participates in the academic movement"\* . However, the Museum did not acquire as yet its own permanent publication, in which it could have gathered studies concerning the collections and their scholarly interpretation. For some

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\* "Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie za rok 1904", Kraków 1905.

time (since 1895) papers on museum objects had their guest-publications in "The Numismatic and Archaeological News".

"Reports of the Directors of the National Museum in Cracow" were issued regularly till 1916. Then a break in their publication followed, due "at first to the war, and later for reasons beyond the control of the Museum's Management", as written by Feliks Kopera in the last volume published before World War II, that is in the report from the year 1938 and partly 1939.

After an over twelve-year-long period, covering World War II and the subsequent reconstruction of the Museum's structure in a new political system, the publication of the reports was resumed during Tadeusz Dobrowolski's directorship, to be continued under Adam Bochnak, Jerzy Banach and Tadeusz Chruścicki.

The first volume of the post-war reports (from the year 1951, published in 1952) brought a principal change: since then the Museum's periodical carried the title "Reports and Papers of the National Museum in Cracow" (later changed to "Papers and Reports..."). It also started to play the role of a scholarly publication of the Museum. From now on the Museum's employees gained columns for publishing the results of their research carried on particular objects from the Museum's collections and on the collections as such.

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The last volume of "Papers and Reports", which appeared in 1980, contained the reports up till the year 1976. Such a considerable break in the edition of the Museum's proceedings, initially meant as annals, prompted the present Management to change the principle of publishing them.

Thus, we launch a New Series of "Selected Papers" and a New Series of "Reports of the National Museum in Cracow" as two separate editions, which will probably appear in different rhythm. We intend to keep a continuous numeration of volumes in the New Series, preserving their former shape and referring graphically to reports issued by our predecessors.

Nowadays, when the National Museum in Cracow consists of eleven branches and a few permanent galleries, and when the number of objects in our possession, as well as the Museum's staff have multiplied, the reports on the activity of such an institution can no longer be a couple-of-pages-long brochure. Moreover, the subject of proceedings additionally covers various new kinds of the museum employees' occupations, to mention only the computerization of the collections and related activities.

That is why, in our efforts to meet the obligation to publish the results of the Museum's activities and achievements, we have deemed it right to separate



the report part from the scholarly part of our proceedings. The decision to separate these two has been motivated not only by the above-mentioned practical and technical considerations, but also by the fact that the two parts are addressed to different readers.

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In the nearest future two overdue volumes of “Reports” will appear, both issued already within the New Series: Volume I to cover the years 1977–1995 and Volume II – the years 1996–1997. Then, we would like to accept the principle of publishing annual reports on the Museum’s activities.

The first volume from the New Series of “Selected Papers” contains a fundamental analysis of *Portrait of a Youth* by Raphael written by Janusz Wałek, devoted to the most precious work from the Czartoryski Collections, lost during the last war and not recovered up till now. The Czartoryski Collections, owing to the creation of the Princes Czartoryski Foundation in 1991, still remain under the management and custody of the National Museum.

The next work, Anna Zeńczak’s paper about the set of stained-glass windows designed by Józef Mehoffer for the funeral chapel of the Grauer family in Opava (Moravia), has acquired a special meaning now that the Museum, since 1995, has been enriched with a new biographical branch – The Józef Mehoffer House.

One of richer museum collections, comprising textiles, has provided Beata Biedrońska-Słotowa with a subject for her paper. The discussion is even more topical now that we have opened to the public, within the Gallery of Decorative Art, the richest in Poland permanent exhibition of textiles.

Zdzisław Żygulski jr has prepared for print the manuscript, handed over to the Museum, with the memoirs of Eugeniusz Tor, vice-director of the Industrial Museum, who tells the story of rescuing Jan Matejko’s painting *The Prussian Homage*, endangered by destruction during World War II.

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On the occasion of reviving, after a several-year-long break, the publication of the Museum’s scholarly periodical, let us quote a fragment of the Statute of the National Museum in Cracow (1995): “The Museum is a national cultural institution, both s c h o l a r l y and educational in character. The aim of the Museum’s activity is an [...] academic study [of cultural heritage] and its application in further research”.

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