

The year 2010 proved a turning point in the common history of the National Museum in Krakow (NMK) and the Princes Czartoryski Collection. In January that year, the Board of the Princes Czartoryski Foundation decided to close the Princes Czartoryski Museum for the time of the renovation, planned by them, of the Palace located at 19 Św. Jana St. At the same time the Board started the next, perhaps the last stage of the implementation of the strategy, devised almost ten years earlier, aimed at completely separating the Princes Czartoryski Collection from the National Museum in Krakow. In the former stages, as a result of introducing some significant changes to the statutes of the Foundation, the NMK was deprived of the right to influence both the current and future fate of the Collection, as well as the content and character of the future exhibition of objects in the Palace, after the end of the renovation works. Actually, the NMK was not informed about the scope of the renovation, either.

So, on 10 January 2010, the public had the last opportunity to visit the galleries arranged in the early 1980s by curators from the National Museum in Krakow. Moreover, the Board of the Foundation declared that the renovated galleries would not show paintings or sculptures belonging to the National Museum in Krakow, bought by this institution to complete the Princes Czartoryski Collection.

A separate, particularly alarming piece of information concerned the intention, signalled from time to time by the Board, to divide the Collection and move some of its elements outside Krakow, as well as to separate the museum collection from the library and the archives.

As a consequence of all the above, we decided to devote the next volume of the 'Papers of the NMK' to the Princes Czartoryski Collection. The history of the collection and the establishment of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow is well-known and extensively described in literature. What needs studying and writing about is, however, the more recent history of the Collection, which has constituted a Branch of the National Museum in Krakow for the last sixty years. The history of the collection since the establishment of the 'Princes Czartoryski Foundation at the National Museum in Krakow' twenty years ago should become an important part of these studies. For the beginning, this volume includes brief 'Information,' written in February 2011, when the Princes Czartoryski Palace was emptied and the collection loaned to other institutions for the time of the renovation. The 'Information' contains some data, never published before, including those referring to finances and activities undertaken by the National Museum regarding the Collection it was entrusted with – when it comes to both the exhibits and the properties. The 'Information' is mainly concerned with forty years (1950–1990), when the National Museum in Krakow in a completely independent and responsible way took care of the collection in

the difficult times of the People's Republic of Poland. In 1991, the situation changed when the newly set up Foundation was supposed, in accordance with its statutes, to take over some of these duties.

The fourth volume of the 'Papers of the NMK (New Series)' appears in the year 2011, the middle of which, to be precise July, saw a turning point in the relationship between the two institutions – the National Museum in Krakow and the Foundation. After almost ten years of the Foundation's intensive efforts aimed at separating completely from the NMK (to some extent successful), very close cooperation was unexpectedly resumed. Nevertheless, we are now at the very beginning of analysing the situation, working out legal regulations and developing a model of cooperation in the future. We take it for granted that after some time this volume of the 'Papers' will be complemented with new articles concerning our common, sixty-year history and the long-range future of one of the most valuable Polish collections, entrusted to the oldest national museum.

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