

**ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS AND MUSEUMS
IN POLAND SINCE 1918 – A THEMATIC OUTLINE***Adrianna SZCZERBA**University of Lodź, Archaeology Institute,
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The aim of this article is to draw attention to the complexity of the emergence of ancient and archeological collections and museums in Poland since 1918, without exploring the history of each partition. Polish archeology is particularly indebted to them since, as a scientific discipline, it developed during the times of lack of statehood after the partitions of Polish territories. The politics of the invaders, even though different in each partition, did not favor the development of scientific institutions in which archeology could have found support. Till 1918 only individual collections and museums established by scientific societies or other social organizations were developing on Polish grounds. State institutions collecting monuments aroused only after the First World War.

Key words: History of Polish archaeology, antiquarian collections, archaeological collections and museums.

Historical curiosity and passion for collecting constitute the basis of archeology as a science; however, it was only when people interested in the past times moved from collecting ancient items to elaborating means of using them for a rational reconstruction of ancient times that archeology began evolving into a separate discipline. It is thus fair to say that collections and museums, along with scientific societies, were the cradle of archeology. Polish archeology is particularly indebted to them since, as a scientific discipline, it developed during the times of lack of statehood after the partitions of Polish territories. The politics of the invaders, even though different in each partition, did not favor the development of scientific institutions in which archeology could have found support. In this situation, collections and museums became treasuries of knowledge of sort, and knowledge was essential for conducting research and educating future generations of archeologists. In this article, I would like to draw attention to the complexity of the emergence of ancient and archeological collections and museums in Poland since 1918, without exploring the history of each partition. The activities of collectors of Silesia and Pomerania (that in this period were not part of the Polish state) also remain outside my considerations [Jażdżewski, 1983, p. 3–6].

When examining the history of collecting and museum management in general, a reference worth making is to an inspiring essay of Krzysztof Pomian, an outstanding philosopher and historian and expert in the history of European collecting and museum activity, entitled “*Archeology, Nation, History*”. In this essay, he makes references to the three ways of thinking and methods of describing the past, namely, 1. Biblical history, general history, understood as the history of how all mankind was saved by Jesus Christ and the Church; 2. The history of Rome, general history, understood as the history of the unification of mankind by the Roman Empire; 3. Ethnic history that describes the history of particular nations taking into consideration their distinctiveness [Pomian, 2002, pp. 9–15]. Formed in the Middle Ages, these three perspectives are typical for Latin Christian tradition and are interconnected. According to K. Pomian, it is those three outlooks that determine the place and role of archeology in the European culture, and by doing so, they define the kind of archeological materials that are being collected.

From the 11th to 15th century, when the inhabitants of Latin world were united in Christianity, Biblical history was the dominating one but the common past was also ancient history. It was a common practice of chronicle authors to situate the history of their nations within this history creating so called ethnogenetic legends which functioned as traditions about pagan past [Pomian, 1968, p. 14; 2002, p. 10]. Due to the process of Christianization, the latter one was becoming more and

more remote for intellectual elite groups, and with time, also for inhabitants of rural areas. The memory of ancient defensive constructions and places of worship as well as places of settlement was gradually fading. It was similar with objects. Clay ashtrays or ancient axes made of flint, the remnants of “pagan” history, were being forgotten and were becoming difficult to understand even for the scientists. They became parts of private collections as creations of nature – “pots growing from the ground” and “lightening stones”. Several centuries of research and reflections were necessary for them to be yet again regarded as made by humans, and even longer to have their age determined.

From the 16th to 18th century, only ancient past was universally considered valid. Biblical history, in the face of reformation and bloody religious wars, lost the unifying effect [Pomian, 2002, p. 11]. The movement oriented towards ancient history became a significant element of culture of all the countries, while being an excellent antiquarian, i.e. ancient times expert, brought fame. More and more collections and excavation sites were emerging and the curiosity for the visible ruins and extracted artifacts became the foundation of scientific research conducted by the antiquarians of the Renaissance and Baroque, both on sites and based on historical items collections. In the middle of the 17th century, after the discovery and first examination of Herculaneum and Pompeii, which showed the Europeans what cognitive possibilities archeology holds, the cultural phenomenon called “the second renaissance of antiquity” took place [Mikocki, 1909, p. 5]. The cult of ancient times took over for four decades. The objects from ancient Greece and Rome were not only collected but also copied, whereas ancient motifs were used in decorative arts, painting, sculpture, architecture, and even fashion. Universal need for contact with ancient art was one of the elements that impacted the development of publicly available museums. Those, often funded from public money (British Museum, Louvre), interested in obtaining as many historical objects as possible, sponsored excavations in the Mediterranean area that were exceptionally widespread in the second half of the 19th century. Even though generally rather modest compared to the great European collections [Pomian, 1996; 2012], larger collections of ancient objects in Poland were created in the second half of the 18th century. The first artifacts of this kind came to our country already before that [Gąsiorowski, MCMXLVIII; Bieńkowski, 1976; Z dziejów, 1988]; however, it was only during the time of “*the second renaissance of antiquity*” that collecting ancient works of art, such as sculptures, ceramic, numismatic objects, or small artifacts became popular. Ancient art collectors were primarily aristocrats, under the leadership of the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski (1723–1798) during whose patronage ancient art had one of the most prominent positions. According to Tomasz Mikocki, a classical archeologist and a researcher of reception of antiquity in Poland, during that time, 9 large¹ and approx. 20 smaller² private collections were created [Mikocki, 1991]. The only exceptions were two collections: the Puławy collection belonged to Princess Izabela Czartoryska and the Wilanów collection, the property of Count Stanisław Kostka Potocki. They were made available to the public in 1801 and 1805, respectively. The mentioned collections had different fates. Most of them were

¹ King Stanisław August Poniatowski in Warsaw, Princess Izabela Lubomirska (1736–1816) in Łańcut, Count Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755–1821) in Wilanów, Princess Helena Radziwiłłowa (1752–1821) in Arkadia and Nieborów, Princess Izabela Czartoryska (1746–1835) in Powązki near Warsaw, in Warsaw and Puławy, Prince Stanisław Poniatowski (1755–1833) in Rome, General Ludwik Michał Pac (1780–1835) in Dowspud and Warsaw, Countess Anna Potocka (1779–1867) and Count Artur Potocki (1787–1832) in Krzeszowice [Mikocki, 1991].

² Antiques from the Branicki collection in Białystok, the collection of General Aleksander Chodkiewicz, the collection of Joachim Chreptowicz, the collection of Krzemieniec Lyceum, the collection of Knyszyn district head Tomasz Czapski, the collection of Princess Anna Jabłonowska in Siemiatycze, ancient art in the collection of Hugo Kołłątaj, ancient items belonging to General Józef Antoni Kossakowski, Bishop Ignacy Krasicki’s antiques, the collection of Jan Chrzyciel Mieroszewski, the collection of family Mikorski in Słubice near Płock, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz’s antiques, the collection of Kazimierz Poniatowski, marbles of Count Adam Poniński, the collection of Count Franciszek Potocki, the collection of family Radziwiłł in Nieśwież, the collection of Franciszek Sapieha in Dereczyn, the collection of Count Michał Sołtyk, the collection of family Tarnowski in Dzików, the collection of Chamberlain Michał Walicki [Mikocki, 1991].

scattered (stolen by the Russians after the November Uprising or sold out by the heirs) and only few³, even though incomplete, currently form a part of Polish national patrimony.

It should be stressed that the studies of antiquity did have an effect on the general approach towards ethnic past. European nations that had their part in the creation of Greco-Roman classical European culture asked themselves how their nations contributed to the culture and began discovering that they introduced non-classical values that were their national values.

The ethnogenetic legends faced questioning and the search for “*national roots*” began. Starting in the 17th century, in France, there was a growing interest in Galls, in England – in Brits, in Germany – in Celts and Germans, in Scandinavia – in Goths, and in Russia and Poland – in Sarmatians, and at the end of the 18th century – in Slavs. Ethnic ancient times gained special value as they became a tool in creating national identity, and after the French Revolution (that was a turning point in how ethnic past was perceived), a common good. In the 19th century, national awareness of societies, emerging patriotism and nationalism gave even more force to the interest in own history and heritage. This love of the past and the historicism of the entire culture of this era caused the need for preserving its remnants, i.e. inventory, collecting, conservation, and protection. In Poland, this need was intensified by the loss of national autonomy [Piwocki, 1955; Szczerba, 2012].

The elimination of Poland from the political map of Europe and the plundering of our cultural heritage triggered in numerous Polish people a need for protecting all that was related to our past (hence the pietistic cult of Polish national heritage). Those objectives were perfectly described by Izabela Czartoryska, the founder of the first Polish museum in Puławy (Sybil’s Temple – 1801, Gothic House – 1809), who became a model figure of rescuing our monuments for many generations to come: “*When Poland ceased to exist, – the Princess wrote, – for the first time it occurred to me to collect Polish relics which I bestow upon the future generations*” [Puławy, 1962, p. 6]. Historical objects and “*national relics*” accumulated in her museum were to remind people of the greatness of the past eras, inspire optimism in the visitors, and serve the future according to the maxim “*the past for the future*” placed above the portal at the Sybil’s Temple. The repressions after the collapse of the November Uprising put an end to the activities of the Princess in Puławy. Her husband, Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, as the president of the National Government, received a default death sentence and all his possessions were confiscated. Fortunately, a large part of the museum collection was salvaged and moved first to Sieniawa in Galicia and then to Hotel Lambert in Paris. At the end of the 1870s, a part of the collection ended up in Gołuchów palace (Greater Poland) and another part in Cracow where it became the foundation of the 20th century’s Czartoryski Museum [Żygulski, 1962; Malinowski, 1970, p. 17–18].

The fall of the country and subsequent collapses of various national uprisings as well as surges of oppression intensified collecting activities among Polish people in all three partitions as they were considered through the perspective of national duty. In fact, it was only then that it became a significant and widespread element of the Polish culture. In the first half of the 19th century, it was aristocracy and gentry that were the most prominent collectors. They collected works of art, antiques, military objects, archeological items, natural, ethnographic, and mineralogical collections [Ajewski, 2001, p. I–VIII]. A few years after the final partition, a new phenomenon emerged. At the family seats of aristocratic and gentry families appeared first, specially designed museum buildings or, more commonly, certain rooms of the mansions that were adapted to serve as such. The museums created within the mansions were usually combined with libraries – archives. Such particular type of a mansion-museum or mansion-library-museum could also be found in Europe; however, in Poland it had a special function. In the 19th century, in the country divided by partitions and without its own statehood, the chances of having official public scientific institutions, such as museums or libraries, funded by the oppressing governments were rather slim. Only private persons could take free action

³ The collection of Princess Izabela Czartoryska (currently The Princes Czartoryski Museum in Cracow and the Museum at the Gołuchów Castle), the collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki (Museum Palace at Wilanów), the collection of Izabela Lubomirska (National Museum in Warsaw), few objects from the collection belonging to Helena Radziwiłłowa (Museum at Nieborów and Arkadia), part of the collection belonging to General Pac (National Museum in Warsaw).

in the field of national culture in those specific circumstances. In the 19th century Poland, these actions were naturally taken by the representatives of aristocracy and gentry that no longer had political privileges but still had significant material resources at their disposal. Aware of their historical role, in their mansions, they established and managed private cultural institutions (made available to the public). Activities conducted in the area of culture and science became for them not only a substitute for political activity but most of all a manifestation of patriotism, the symbol of their generosity for the benefit of the nation. Those family mansions-museums included among others: Działyński palace in Kórnik, Raczyński palace in Rogalin, Działyński and Czartoryski palace in Gołuchów, Przedziecki library and museum in Warsaw, Krasieński library and museum in Warsaw, Zamojski library and museums in Warsaw, Pac palace in Dowspud, the castle in Nieśwież, Tarnowski palace in Dzików, Lubomirski library and museum in Lviv, Potocki palaces in Zator and Krzeszowice, Tarnowski and Branicki castle in Sucha, the castle in Podhorce, the castle in Wiśnicz, the castle in Łańcut, and Lanckoroński palace in Rozdół.

In the second half of the 19th century, collecting ancient objects and national relics became “democratic” and was largely related to conducted research, scientific, publishing, or literary studies. Obviously, the group of people who collected antiques lacked homogeneity. What served as scientific background for some, was simply a pleasant and useful pastime for others. Those who were involved in collecting ancient objects in the second half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Poland primarily included landowners (for example Karol Rogawski (1819–1888), Gustaw Zieliński (1809–1881), Zygmunt Gloger (1845–1910)), doctors, veterinarians (for example, Alfons Budziński (1822–1883)), lawyers, officials, and industrialists (for example, Erazm Majewski (1858–1922) who owned a private archeological museum in Warsaw). As a side activity, teachers, professors, booksellers, librarians, and archivists also collected books and numismatic objects. Those included, among others, a librarian from Warsaw and a lecturer at the Main School Józef Przyborowski (1823–1896), a librarian from Łowicz Władysław Tarczyński (1845–1918), or the owner of a collection of drawings, Hipolit Skimborowicz (1815–1880), a librarian at the University of Warsaw. Painters Aleksander Lesser (1814–1884) and Franciszek Tarczyński (1833–1900) collected military materials and ancient items that served them in the creation of their historical compositions. Eager collectors of antiques, especially in provincial centers, included priests (for example, Jeremiasz Czetwertyński in the village of Uszlew in Podlaskie or Władysław Siarkowski (1840–1902) in the Kielce province). The collections of numismatic objects, archeological objects, decorative art, and books belonging to Counts Edward Rastawiecki (1804–1879) and Aleksander Przedziecki (1814–1871) are a fine example of collections created not for the sake of having a collection itself but primarily for historical and publishing works. Various collections (including archeological) were the basis of scientific, literary, and artistic work of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–1887).

In the majority of cases, the collected exhibits in private collections were scattered with time. Some of them, usually at the wish of the owner of a given collection, became part of the collections owned by scientific societies or public museums [Kostrzewski, 1919–1921, p. 150–151; Wilder, 1905; Tomkiewicz, 1916, p. 3–15], thanks to which they had the chance of being preserved until present day.

It is worth noting that the overview of the 19th century collection were exhibitions of antiques and works of art. The first one was held in 1856 in Warsaw and it was the most significant archeological event of the 1850s in the capital city. The collectors from all the partitions participated in this exhibition. Three more exhibitions of ancient art were held in Warsaw: in 1881, 1887, and 1899. Similar cultural events were also organized on other Polish cities: in 1858 – Cracow, 1861, 1894 – Lviv, 1883 and 1885 – Radom, 1883 – Sieradz, 1891 – Radom, 1895 – Płock, 1898 – Łomża, 1890’s – Piotrków Trybunalski, 1900 – Kalisz, 1901 – Lublin, 1909 – Włocławek [Szczerba, 2011, p. 119–128].

Scientific societies that were emerging in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century had a major impact not only on the progress of archaeological research, but also on the development of museology⁴. Collecting all kinds of artifacts (including archeological) was often their statutory obligation,

⁴ Here is the list of major archaeological public collections/museums founded by scientific societies, schools or by a social effort till 1918: **The Polish Kingdom** – 1. The collection of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning (1800–1832);

whereas the objective of such activity was salvaging national heritage for the future generations as well as conducting scientific research. Due to Poland's tumultuous history, almost all the collections (especially in the Polish Kingdom and so called Western Krai⁵) endured various turns of fate as numerous societies faced restrictions, liquidations, or theft. When the founding organizations were being closed due to political reasons, the historical objects were scattered. More often, however, they were taken over by the strongest museums or social organizations located in a given area. It is also worth notifying that at the end of 19th and at the beginning of 20th century a permanent parts of local landscape were regional museums and those founded by clergy (for example the Diocesan Museum in Płock and in Sandomierz).

In the period just before World War I, according to the census of public museum collections developed by Mieczysław Treter, about one hundred various kinds of museums existed on Polish ground [Treter, 1918]. Most of them were owned by society or social organizations while museums in mostly European countries were rather state institutions (or at least donated by a state). However the occupant governments did not want to land a hand to create them on Polish lands, believing museums to be "the breeding establishments" of Polish patriotic feelings. Thus, only after regaining independence time had come to make up what – though not by our fault – was so far neglected.

The above mentioned Treter's article it is the first study devoted to Polish museums. However the most important, and to this day the only comprehensive attempt to approach the phenomenon of Polish collections proved to be Edward Chwalewik's book on title "*Zbiory Polskie*", firstly issued in 1916 (secondly in 1926, in two –volume edition). This compendium was written hastily, among the turmoil of war, when many Polish collections were destroyed or evacuated, so it situated the book in very important group of works, which were designed to determine the losses incurred by the Polish cultural heritage. At the same time the aim of this inventory – as E. Chwalewik said in the introduction to his study – "*was to give the world in this epochal moment of rebirth of our statehood yet another evidence in favor of our old and high culture*" [Chwalewik, 1926, p. VI].

2. The collection of the Lyceum of Krzemieniec (1805–1831); **3.** The Mazovian Museum in Płock (since 1912) established by The Płock Scientific Society (1815–1830; reactivated in 1907); **4.** The Office of Archaeology of the Warsaw University (1816–1831); **5.** The J. Chojnowski, E. Majewski and M. Bershon Museum at the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1860–1939); **6.** The Museum of Industry and Agriculture in Warsaw (1975–1939; archaeological finds from private collections of the following archaeologists were in the possession of this institution: K. Jagmin, A. Pawińskiego, ks. F. Siarkowski, L. Dudrewicza, J. Przyborowskiego, W. Gerson, Z. Wolski, I. Gasiorowski, Z. Glover, J. Zawisza (only a few exhibits), Żeromskiego (collection of the Neolithic objects from Nałęczów), W. Olechnowicz (part of the excavated monuments in the Lublin region), S. Czarnowskiego (from Prądnik valley), L. Krzywickiego (Lithuania), M. Wawrzeńckiego. Collections were destroyed along with the building of the museum in 1939); **7.** The collection of the Main School (1862–1869; then transferred to the Imperial Warsaw University 1869–1915); **8.** Museums of Sightseeing established by the Polish Sightseeing Society (in Warsaw, Kielce, Kalisz, Piotrków, Ojców and Suwałki (1908), Łomża and Włocławek (1909), Łowicz and Miechów (1910), Olkusz and Sosnowiec (1911), Lublin (1914)); **9.** The Museum of Erazm Majewski at the Warsaw Scientific Society. **Galica** – **1.** The Museum of Archaeology in Cracow (since 1850) established by the Cracow Scientific Society (1816–1872; then the Polish Academy of Learning); **2.** The Office of Archaeology established in 1866 by Józef Łepkowski at the Jagiellonian University; **3.** The Museum of the Princes Czartoryski (since 1878); **4.** The National Museum in Cracow (since 1879); **5.** The Museum of Emeryk Hutten Czapski in Cracow; **6.** The Ossolineum and the Museum of the Princes Lubomirski in Lviv; **7.** The Dzieduszycki Museum in Lviv; **8.** The National Museum in Lviv; **9.** The Stauropedia Museum. **The Grand Duchy of Posen** – **1.** The Museum of Polish and Slavic Antiquities (since 1883 the Mielżyński Museum) founded in 1857 by the Poznań Society of Friends of Learning; **2.** The Museum of the Toruń Scientific Society; **3.** The Museum of the Society of Historical Noteć District in Bydgoszcz. **The Russian Seizure** – **1.** The Vilnius Archaeological Commission and Museum of Antiquities (1855–1865); **2.** The collection of the Society of Friends of Antiquities and Folklore in Vilnius (1899–1906); **3.** The Museum of the Society of Friends of Science in Vilnius (1906–1939); **4.** Collections of the Society of the Museum of Science and Art in Vilnius (1907–1914); **5.** The Museum in Grodno (since 1910).

⁵ Western Krai is an unofficial name of the westernmost parts of the Imperial Russia, excluding the territory of Congress Poland. The term embodies lands annexed by the Russian Empire during subsequent partitions of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the 18th century, in 1772, 1793 and 1795. This area is known in Poland as *Ziemie Zabrane* (Taken Lands, Stolen Lands) but most often they are referred to in Polish historiography and in common talk as part of *Zabór Rosyjski* (literally *Russian Seizure*).

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АНТИКВАРНІ Й АРХЕОЛОГІЧНІ КОЛЕКЦІЇ ТА МУЗЕЇ У ПОЛЬЩІ З 1918 Р. – ТЕМАТИЧНИЙ НАРИС

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Метою статті є показати складність розуміння процесу формування антикварних й археологічних колекцій та музеїв у Польщі після 1918 р. без висвітлення детальної історії кожної збірки. Польська археологія особливо завдячує їм, оскільки як наукова дисципліна сформувалась у період браку державності, після поділу Польщі. Політика загарбників, нехай і відмінна у різних частинах країни, не сприяла розвитку наукових інституцій, у яких археологи знайшли б підтримку. До 1918 р. на польських землях існували лише приватні колекції та музеї, засновані науковими товариствами чи іншими громадськими організаціями. Державні інституції, які займалися збором археологічних пам'яток, з'явилися вже після Першої світової війни.

Ключові слова: історія польської археології, антикварна колекція, археологічні колекція, музей, міжвоєнний період.