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Buczek, Katarzyna

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## *From the Royal Castle to school. King Stanisław August's legacy and the Volhynian Gymnasium collections*

### *Z zamku królewskiego do szkoły. Zbiory króla Stanisława Augusta jako podstawa zbiorów Gimnazjum Wołyńskiego*

Katarzyna Buczek

e-mail: [buczek@uw.edu.pl](mailto:buczek@uw.edu.pl)

University of Warsaw. Poland

**Abstract:** The library and the cabinet collections of King of Poland Stanisław August Poniatowski reflect the trends of the Enlightenment as well as the monarch's interests. Their acquisition by one of the most important Polish schools, the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets, saved them from dismemberment and gave rise to school collections. The acquisition was possible owing to history (the Partition of Poland, and the emergence of the Vilna Educational District) and a unique man – Tadeusz Czacki.

The collections at the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets was open to the public on a daily basis. In this way, the Polish King's Stanisław August wish to have the collection available for masses came true, after his death regrettably. School collections were very valuable. Having originated from the royal collection of the last Polish King, they became a reminiscence of the national potential of a country that disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795.

This article is a part of a future book and an attempt of documenting the transition of respective collections from the royal residence in Warsaw to Kremenets. The analysis of Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian archives enables to reconstruct the history of the royal collections and to show their quality and didactic utility.

**Key words:** Collection; Education; Kremenets; School laboratory.

**Streszczenie:** Biblioteka i zbiory gabinetowe króla Polski Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego, będące nie tylko wyrazem prądów epoki Oświecenia, ale też osobistych zainteresowań właściciela, po jego abdykacji i śmierci nie uległy całkowitemu rozproszaniu, jak zdarzało się w wypadku wielu kolekcji. Ich znaczna część dała początek zbiorom szkolnym jednej z ważniejszych polskich szkół – Gimnazjum Wołyńskiego w Krzemieńcu. Stało się tak za sprawą okoliczności historycznych (rozbiór Polski, utworzenie Wileńskiego Okręgu Naukowego), ale przede wszystkim dzięki niepospolitej osobie – Tadeuszowi Czackiemu.

Kolekcje Gimnazjum Wołyńskiego miały charakter publiczny, tak więc plany polskiego króla Stanisława Augusta, aby jego zbiory nie były zamknięte, ale szeroko udostępniane społeczeństwu, ziściło się. Szkolne zbiory miały wielką wartość. Wynikała ona nie tylko z ich wartości materialnej i użyteczności dydaktycznej. Wartość istotna kryła się w ich

proweniencji. Pochodziły one przecież ze zbiorów ostatniego polskiego króla. Kryły więc w sobie ducha państwa, którego nie było na mapach od 1795 roku.

Niniejszy artykuł, będący częścią przygotowywanej książki, jest próbą ukazania drogi poszczególnych kolekcji z rezydencji króla do Krzemienia. Analiza dokumentów przechowywanych w archiwach Polski, Litwy i Ukrainy pozwala nie tylko na prześledzenie losów zbiorów, ale przede wszystkim na ukazanie ich jakościowych walorów i znaczenia dydaktycznego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Kolekcja; Edukacja; Krzemieniec; Gabinet szkolny.

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## 1. Introduction

Rarely are cabinet collections of royalties handed over to students and what once used to be reserved for few, becomes a public asset without a revolution. This is what happened to the library and the collections of the last Polish King Stanisław August Poniatowski – they formed the basis of the school library and cabinets-laboratories of the Volhynian Gymnasium (Gimnazjum Wołyńskie) in Kremenets (Krzemieniec).

## 2. Opening of the Volhynian Gymnasium and connection with the traditions of the Commission of National Education

The Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets, established in 1805 at the Russian territory, was one of the most modern Polish schools in the partitioned Poland. It was a part of the Vilna Educational District (Wileński Okręg Naukowy) until 1831 when it was shut down by the Russian authorities. The Gymnasium is still rooted in the collective awareness of Polish people as one of the most important schools in the Polish history, mainly due the important role the school played in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This awareness was even bigger after the rebirth of the school in 1920 under the command of the creator of newly resurrected Polish state, Józef Piłsudski. The Gymnasium was staffed with distinguished teachers [Franciszek Scheidt – chemistry and natural history professor, a former professor at the Cracow Academy; Wilibald Besser – natural history professor, a prominent botanist, a member of scientific associations; Alojzy Feliński – Polish literature professor, a distinguished poet, the author of «Barbara Radziwiłłówna» tragedy; Józef Pitschmann – a professor in painting and a portraitist. (Piotrowski, 2005), produced outstanding graduates [Feliks Bernatowicz – a novelist; Michał Budzyński – a poet and translator of Byron's works; Franciszek Kowalski – a translator of Moliere's works; Maurycy Gosławski - a poet; Józef Korzeniowski – a famous playwright; Tomasz Sosnowski – a sculptor popular in Europe; Piotr Falkenhagen-Zaleski – financier, salesman, a founder of department stores in

Europe, an author of discourses on finance; Karol Podczaszyński - prominent architect (Piotrowski, 2005), and attracted cultural elites, which earned the school the title of «the Volhynian Athens» or «the Volhynian Paris». It became a centre of scientific, cultural and social life; hosted such figures as Wojciech Bogusławski, the founder of the Polish National Theatre; Karol Lipiński, a Polish virtuoso violinist, known as «second Paganini»; Angelica Catalani, a famous, Italian opera singer. The concert of Maria Szymanowska, a Polish pianist and a friend of Johann Wolfgang Goethe<sup>1</sup>, was held in Kremenets. It is in Kremenets that Juliusz Słowacki, the son of the Volhynian Gymnasium's director and one of the greatest Polish poets, was born and raised.

The school integrated tradition with modernity in its organisation, methods and curriculum because that was the intention of its founders and leaders – Tadeusz Czacki and Hugo Kołłątaj. They were both representatives of the Enlightenment not only by birth (Kołłątaj was born in 1750, Czacki 15 years earlier) but also by heart. Kołłątaj participated in the work of the Commission of National Education (Komisja Edukacji Narodowej) and the Great Parliament (Sejm Wielki). Czacki was a member of the Royal Commission founded to explore mineral resources, and of the Salt Company that explored and mined salt. They both understood the role of education in the life of a man and the state and how the correlation between the quality of education and the country's economic development stimulated by mathematical and natural sciences. They did realize that school was not merely a place where teaching took place, it was a place for research and the centre of the region's cultural activity. They both held the achievements of the Commission of National Education in high esteem.

According to the Commission of National Education, school's main task was to educate students in line with the highest standards of didactics, such as the multisensory approach where teaching integrated many senses (sight, hearing, taste and smell) to enable a holistic understanding of a subject matter. This, in turn, was supposed to give students a solid knowledge and comprehension of problems as well as stimulate independent thinking. As a result, the Commission of National Education recommended that all schools, be it a church school or an institution of higher education, should demonstrate science in practice by opening laboratories, botanical gardens, and hospitals; by organising trips to craft workshops, sawmills, and mills, etc. The didactic collections, especially those documenting natural history, physics and mathematics, were supervised by teachers. The Commission's Acts obliged them to make a detailed inventory of all the collections and submit it to the rector or the prorector for approval. External

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<sup>1</sup> On the scientific and cultural life of Kremenets during the Gymnasium's functioning, see: Danilewiczowa, 2004; Rolle, 1923.

inspectors were ordered to review school «factories, libraries and museums» thoroughly during their annual school inspections (Acts, 1954, p. 607).

A ten-year experience in promoting education at the Cracow Academy (Akademia Krakowska) in 1777-1786, did not only arose Hugo Kołłątaj's interest in the Academy's scientific facilities but also made him recognise the demand for equipping the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets with the most modern didactic collections. On the one hand, the Cracow Academy aimed at training highly educated staff who would support the reforms and on the other it was in charge of the Vilnius Educational District as an education and inspection body. Hugo did realise that high standards of modern staff education could be achieved only in well-equipped laboratories. This made him put a lot of effort in setting up laboratories that he financed from his private funds many a time. In 1781 he donated a piece of land he had owned at Wiślna Street for the premises of a botanical garden. When in a spa resort Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary) in 1785, «he acquired not only Karlsbad goods but also some Czech and Saxon minerals, which he donated to the cabinet of natural history» (Chamcówna, 1957, p. 25). These were most likely aragonites from the Karlsbad springs, Czech garnets, minerals and metal ores from the Erzgebirge in Saxony. He handed over his private collection brought from the studies in Italy: «conchs and sea goods».

The belief that a well-equipped school influenced the quality of education was shared by Czacki as well and motivated him to gather the finest didactic collections in 1803, that is 2 years before the official opening of the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets. Except for raising funds for the school's maintenance (see: Danowska, 2006, pp. 252-270), he took measures aimed at purchasing books and other collections after King Stanisław August who had died in 1798.

### 3. King Stanisław August collections

Stanisław August, the King of Poland in 1764-1795, as befits a monarch of his time, owned impressive collections, which derived not only from the trend of *Kunstkammer* emerged in the 16th century but from king's genuine interests. Stanisław August was not only a patron of artists but also a collector of paintings, and an enthusiast of mathematical and natural sciences. His library included many valuable prints and manuscripts, comprised over 20 thousand volumes related to all areas of art and science, and attracted many tourists from abroad to Warsaw (see: Olszewicz, 1931; Rudnicka, 1988; Szyndler, 1997; Dzięcioł, 2006). Apart from the book collection, the king owned a small, private library that held his favourite works (see: Łaskarzewska, 2001).

As many monarchs of his time, Stanisław August cherished numismatics. His numismatic cabinet under the custody of by Jan Chrzyciel Albertrandi, a historian, royal librarian, co-founder of the Polish first periodical «Monitor» and the editor of Polish first literary journal «Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne», a man interested in humanities. The royal numismatic collection was the largest in Poland and included 16 thousand objects, such as: medieval and modern coins, medals, gems or cameos. Antique objects constituted the most numerous part of the royal collection and captured the epoch's fascination with the Ancient times. Here we find five and a half thousand medals of Roman emperors, 188 made of gold, 1935 made of silver. A group of five hundred Polish medals was an important component of the collection due to its commemorative, historical and artistic value (Olszewski, 1931, p. 37; Męclewska, 2012).

The natural and geological collection, the astronomical observatory, Stanisław August's cabinet of physics were set up owing to the efforts of a well-educated and broad-minded man, August Fryderyk Moszyński, a grandson of Polish King August II the Strong (Wettin) and Anna Constantia of Brockdorff, the Countess of Cosel. He was particularly interested in natural sciences, physics and chemistry. He dropped his early fascination with alchemy in favour of scientific chemistry and did not only engage himself in expanding the royal collections but also provided expertise on natural history collections on numerous occasions.

King Stanisław August was famous for his interest in nature both in Poland and in Europe, which is why travelers visiting Poland and king's superiors presented him with minerals and natural specimens on various occasions (see: Zawartko-Laskowska, 2008). Unfortunately, not all specimens were genuine, which made the king seek expertise whenever the objects needed verification, accurate classification and authenticity confirmation. Franciszek Scheidt, a professor of the Cracow Academy, was one of king's consultants in such authenticity matters. Not only did he evaluate the objects but also delivered lectures and demonstrated chemical experiments in front of the king. It's worth mentioning that Franciszek Scheidt took over the post of a chemistry and natural history teacher at the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets in 1805. Besides Scheidt, the authenticity checks on metal ores, gold and silver ores especially, were performed by customs officers and mint workers, that is workgroups who evaluated the quality of metals and minerals professionally (Zawartko-Laskowska, 2008, p. 69).

Random and slightly chaotic as the natural history collection was, it was well-documented beyond any doubt. Minerals and rocks were most numerous - among 7703 of them (Olszewicz, 193, p. 39) we find: gold and silver nuggets; the ores of silver, tin, lead, copper (including malachite and azurite), iron (hematite, magnetite, limonite, siderite), pyrite, cinnabar; precious and semi-precious stones:

ruby, sapphire, topaz, beryl, chrysoprase, opal, quartz, amethyst, labradorite, agate, garnet, lapis lazuli, black tourmaline, jasper, amber, as well as calcite, gypsum, and alabaster; rocks: marble, limestone, porphyry, sandstone, granite, tuff, bituminous coal, and peat. The most interesting geological specimens were stalactites, stalagmites, cave pearls (pisolite) and fossils.

If compared with the geological collection, the plant collection was scarcely represented. According to Okraszewski's inventory the royal cabinet of natural history held only fern twigs, a sugarcane stem, and 3 coconuts. A «glass box with 2 mandragora plants inside» was the greatest peculiarity in the plant collection (Okraszewski, 1793, p. 103).

The animal collection consisted of conchs (about 600 sea snails shells), anthozoa, butterflies, beetles, 3 ostrich eggs, vulture's skull, stuffed birds-of-paradise, hippos teeth, narwhal's tusk, 13 stuffed edible dormice, fallow deer's antlers, 2 armour shells of South American armadillos wrongly classified as «the shells of armadil turtles»<sup>2</sup> (Okraszewski, 1793, p. 102). It was not the only object brought from America. Driven by 18th century Europe's fascination with Americas, the king expanded his collection with ethnographic objects: «a book made of wooden planks» with Indian writing on it; the accessories and clothing of a Native Indian chief: a falchion made of bones, «a cane resembling a ceremonial mace, arrows, ropes made of human hair, a «skirt tied up with bird feathers» (Okraszewski, 1793, pp. 103-104).

The following item was listed at position no. 14 in the library inventory: «An alder closet with anatomical fragments of human body parts» (Okraszewski, 1793, p. 103). Drastic as it may seem, it reflected the king's interest in modern science.

The cabinet of natural history was a place for research and experiments in many areas of science, including alchemy<sup>3</sup>. Stanisław Samuel Okraszewski, a chemist and mineralogist, was the cabinet's custodian since 1779. This broad-minded man conducted experiments in chemistry, physics and aeronautics. His interest in aeronautics made him try to produce hydrogen whose quantity would be sufficient to get a balloon floating. First two successful attempts took place in February and March 1784. The first one is worth attention because it was then that a 38-inch diameter balloon (about 94 cm) floated 300 elbows above the ground and then right below the ceiling in one of the royal rooms (Zawartko-Laskowska, 2008, p. 83). Scientists associated with the cabinet as well as those

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<sup>2</sup> These were armour shells of South American armadillos (*Dasypus*).

<sup>3</sup> Many suspicious individuals tried to obtain Stanisław August's patronage and sponsorship offering to multiply silver, produce «spiritual paints» or change lead into gold (Zawartko-Laskowska, 2008, pp. 65-69).



working in the royal mints initiated geological explorations in Poland. The fact that the first partition of Poland in 1772 moved Wieliczka and Bochnia outside the borders of Poland (to Austria) increased the scientists' interest in exploring salt. But since the king saw more potential for stimulating the Polish economy in steel milling, metal ores explorations were given a higher priority. Samuel Okraszewski himself evaluated the deposits of copper in Miedzianka i Miedziana Góra near Kielce where a mine and steelworks were open.

There was an astronomical observatory at the Royal Castle run by a physician, astronomer and a mathematician, Jowin Fryderyk Bystrzycki, assisted by Andrzej Gawroński. The astronomical collection was the one that had most solid scientific basis and was equipped with the most modern scientific instruments, some of which were donated by a former Jesuit, physician and astronomer, Stefan Łuskina. Others were brought from England, which was a considerable expense at that time. The following instruments of the royal observatory are worth attention: Dollond's telescope, Ramsden's and Caniver's quadrants, Shelton's and Le Paute's clocks. The observatory was a centre for research and observations, such as the observation of the lunar and solar elipse; of Saturn's rings eclipse in July 1774 made by Marcin Poczobutt, the most prominent Polish astronomer at that time; of Venus transit across the Sun on the 1st of June 1777 made by Bystrzycki. Many a time, King Stanisław August participated in these observations personally (Krassowski, 1916, p. 643; Zawartko-Laskowska, 2008, p. 108). Jowin Bystrzycki made meteorological observations along with astronomical observations for over 20 years.

#### **4. Purchase and transport collections to Kremenets**

When Czacki was appointed an inspector of the southern governorates (Podolia, Volhynia, Kiev) in the Vilna Educational District in 1803, he concentrated his efforts on acquiring Stanisław August's collections for educational purposes. As a frequent user of the royal library, he got to know the book inventory quite well [borrowed *Limites regni poloniae* by Maciej Dogiel on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1787; *Description d'Ukraine* by Beauplan le Vasseur on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1789; *Histoire des negotiations pour la paix* by Belgrade on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1787; *Histoire de l'Amerique* by W. Robertson on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1788 (Rudnicka, 1988, pp. 173-181). He tried to acquire king's book collection for his private library immediately after Stanisław August's abdication. Tadeusz Czacki wrote to Stanisław August on the 12th of February 1796: «My Grace, forgive my boldness, but I dare to ask for entrusting me with the collections Your Grace assembled with wisdom and supported with generosity» (Rudnicka, 1988, p. 245). Manuscripts and works on Polish history were most



wanted, which derived from Czacki's interests and the area of his research. He was broad-minded, almost Renaissance-minded: a salesman who financed salt explorations on the one hand, and a researcher who studied Polish law and history on the other, the author of over 60 discourses and speeches on economy and trade: On the harmful effects of trade neglect in Poland (*Refleksje nad szkodami dla kraju Polskiego wynikającymi z zaniedbania handlu*), On trade with England, Ottoman Porte and other countries (*Uwagi o handlu z Anglią, Portą Ottomańską i innymi narodami*); on history and tradition: *An Outline of Zygmunt August's reigns* (*Obraz panowania Zygmunta Augusta*), The analysis of the Polish history by Polish first two writers Marcin Gall and Wincenty Kadłubek (*Rozbiór dziejów narodu polskiego przez pierwszych dwóch pisarzy Marcina Galla i Wincentego Kadłubka*), On Jews (*O Żydach*), On Ukraine and the Cossacks (*O nazwisku Ukrainy i Kozakach*); on law: On Lithuanian and Polish laws, their spirit and origins (*O litewskich i polskich prawach, o ich duchu, źródłach*), On the origins of the laws legally binding in Poland and Lithuania (*O źródłach praw, które miały moc obowiązującą w Polsce i w Litwie*). He was a bibliophile - his private library was the largest in Poland and consisted of 15 thousand volumes, with valuable manuscripts and old prints included.

Czacki made a second attempt of acquiring the royal library when he met Stanisław August at the coronation of Paweł I in Moscow on the 16th of April 1797. His intention was to save the book collection from dismemberment and to preserve its scientific and educational potential. Despite the king's approval, the acquisition did not take place.

The purchase of the royal collections for the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets became an option in 1803, 5 years after Stanisław August's death, when the inheritor of the collections, a prince and the king's nephew, Józef Poniatowski, put it on sale hoping for speedy profit. Poniatowski's decision was not motivated by disrespect to the deceased king or ignorance of the collections' value. Prince Józef was forced to sell the collections to pay king's debts - all in all there were 300 creditors. The signing of the contract between Poniatowski and Czacki was repeatedly put off due to the conflict of interest: Czacki wanted to buy only what he considered useful for the Volhynian Gymnasium, Poniatowski wanted to sell as much as possible. The sale of medals became most «problematic», which was documented in a letter from Czacki to Hugo Kołłątaj: «we are troubled by the medals, not so expensive but redundant» (Czacki, 1844, p. 281). The contract was finally signed on the 11th of July 1803 by Wiktor de Marquez-Delpon, the sales representative of Prince Józef. The collections were sold for 15 thousand ducats<sup>4</sup>, which earned the Volhynian Gymnasium 15 580

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<sup>4</sup> In order to purchase the didactic collections after Stanisław August, Tadeusz Czacki raised funds

volumes, that is three quarters of the royal book collection (works on history and Polish culture, theology, literature, art written in Polish, Latin, French, English, Italian, and Czech); bookcases, physical and astronomical instruments, the collection of minerals and a part of the «problematic» collection of medals. Czacki tried to sell the medals to the University of Vilna immediately after the purchase but it fell through (see: Kolendo, 1969; Danowska, 2006, p. 266; Warda, 2000, pp. 46-47).

The purchase of Stanisław August's collections arose a wide interest because the resources were supposed to educate future Polish generations and to preserve the national identity until the rebirth of independent Poland. No wonder that the purchase inspired one of the greatest poets of the period, a teacher and the head of the Volhynian Gymnasium since 1819 - Alojzy Feliński. His poem «To Tadeusz Czacki» was published in 1804 and commemorated the process of acquiring funds for the purchase and transfer of the library. It expressed the poet's wish that the resources will bring Poland such great scholars as Copernicus, Buffon, Rousseau, Locke and Corneille (Feliński, 1804, p. 115-116).

Czacki was concerned about the didactic value of some collections. As a bibliophile, not a teacher, he was able to estimate the price of the books but to have their didactic value determined before signing the contract, he consulted experts from among the members of the Society of the Friends of Science – Hiacynt Krusiński and Karol Ludwik Kortum. Physical and astronomical instruments were Czacki's biggest concern because they were most severely affected by the period of unrest in Poland dated 1795-1803. The Russian army entered Warsaw right after Stanisław August's abdication and grabbed the most valuable instruments, especially those gold-plated (Rudnicka, 1988, p. 281). The Prussian army entered Poland the following year (Warsaw became a part of Prussia as a result of the Third Partition of Poland) and grabbed the rest. Bystrzycki was forced to quit his research in 1799 and given some of the equipment as a compensation for outstanding salaries. Whatever was left, was grabbed. At the beginning of the 19th century the observatory was wrecked and «empty, with stuffed owls that replaced Poczobutt and Bystrzycki» (Hebdowski, 1801, p. 49). Karol Kortum asked Prince Józef Poniatowski's representative about the condition of the instruments personally in order to estimate how much of the observatory endured the grabs and if Ramsdens' astronomical quadrants were among those instruments that did endure. He turned to Bystrzycki for a proof of acquiring those instruments that he had received in return for outstanding salaries. Czacki asked Śniadecki for the assessment of the didactic value of the

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from the local community of Volhynia. Even though people of all states contributed, Czacki decided to finance a part of the purchase from his own funds (see: Dobrzeński, 1931; Danowska, 2006, pp. 252- 262).

«leftovers»: «Dear friend, be so amiable and set your eye at the royal observatory, once so splendid, and share your mind about it» (BJ, 3102, p. 49).

Medals were packed and transferred in the first place, before the official contract was signed, which was recorded in a letter written by Czacki to Jan Śniadecki on the 2nd of July 1803 (BJ, 3102, p. 41v). Those that were not included in the first transfer in 1803, arrived in 1808 and were collected by Czacki's sale representative. Part of the book collection, the remains of the observatory and of the physical cabinet reached Kremenets in 1805. Their transfer was supervised by Czacki personally. He made his own «inventory of the instruments packed in Warsaw, June the 12th, 1803». Six boxes held minor equipment, the seventh box was coated with hay, and held: «an iron and a wooden pedestal of Kanniuët's quadrant, water meter rod, wooden semi-axis with gradians» (NBU, F I 6418, p. 107-108). Two other boxes held «the biggest globes», 5 paper and 3 bronze globes; and a yet another box held Copernicus sphere (NBU, F I 6418, p. 108). This cargo crossed the Bug River, was loaded to wagons and escorted to Kremenets in a huge convoy.

The transfer of the other collections turned out to be a bit problematic and was put off in time. In 1808 the collection of medals was still in Warsaw in the hands of Albertrandi who had been its curator until the king's death. The delay was caused by Albertrandi's claim for the return of his private books from the royal library and the payment of 1000 ducats as a compensation for his outstanding salaries (Rudnicka, 1988, p. 282), which was guaranteed by the contract he signed with Tadeusz Czacki. With no salary paid since the king's abdication, Albertrandi could not recover the debt from king's inheritors because Stanisław August had not put him at the list of his creditors. Despite the debt, Albertrandi continued as the collection's curator, financed and published a catalogue of medals in 1799. Czacki's sales representative settled the outstanding salaries along with interests in 1808 and asked Albertrandi for the handover of the collection. In a letter written on the 8th of April 1808 Czacki promised that the medals would be unpacked only if Albertrandi agreed to do it himself: «I hope that Your Grace will pay us a visit next year and do us the honour of arranging the medals yourself». He also sought Albertrandi's help in acquiring the collection of natural history (Rudnicka, 1988, p. 290). Albertrandi did not make it to unpack the medals because he died a few months later on the 10th of August 1808. Luckily, he did make it to initiate the acquisition and transfer of the natural history collection to Volhynia before he died.

The cabinet of natural history was under the custody of Stanisław Okraszewski who performed his function diligently even after his salaries were stopped in 1795. He offered the king an exchange of the debt for selected natural history

objects and promised to make them available to the public if a need arose. Okraszewski continued his research in the cabinet until its official acquisition by Czacki in 1808, which was documented by his sales representative Ignacy Massalski on the 2nd of July 1808: «I collected 14 cases and boxes filled with natural history, mineralogy, anatomy from the palace of His Majesty Stanisław August, on behalf of His Grace Tadeusz Czacki» (Rudnicka, 1988, p. 191). By «palace» Massalski meant the king's summer residence, Łazienki Palace, where the natural history collection was stored. Czacki's another trusted sales representative, Łukasz Gołębiowski, was responsible for the acquisition and transfer of the library and royal collection since mid-1803 when inspectorial duties would keep Czacki in Volhynia. Gołębiowski performed various functions at Czacki's mansion in Poryck after the Third Partition of Poland in 1795 when Poland ceased to exist: a librarian, lawyer and accountant, always diligent and reliable (Szwankowski, 1959, p. 251).

Stanisław August's collections were reaching the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets gradually and became the most valuable part of all didactic collections not only because of their economic value but primarily because of the nonmaterial one – the collections proved Polish potential. This belief was expressed by one of school inspectors Jan Nepomucen Wyleżyński on the 8th of July, 1819 in his letter to the school director: «this school's wealth is a national wealth» (CPAHU, F 710 op. 2 d. 65, p. 23). Both students and teachers were aware of this «wealth» all along the school's functioning until 1832.

In order to meet the demands of modern didactics, Tadeusz Czacki put a lot of effort in expanding the school collection by various means. Donations were one of them. The school leaders themselves handed over their private collections: Czacki – 1000 conchs, Hugo Kołłątaj – 30 valuable minerals (labradorites). The cabinet of mineralogy was supported most generously, among others by: Prince Józef Poniatowski who donated 236 mineral specimens after his uncle, Primate Michał Poniatowski; minister Gołubow handed over 846 minerals; merchant Sitnikow – «788 pieces of valuable Siberian stones, and precious metals»; Earl Walicki – «263 polished jewels»; the Russian Academy of Sciences in Petersburg – 319 minerals, to mention just a few (see: Rolle, 1923, p. 252; Danilewiczowa, 2004, pp. 47-48; Szmyt, 2009, p. 197). Despite some deficits, the cabinet contained a set of resources sufficient to deliver a complete course in mineralogy (BN, 7790 II, pp. 146-148).

The cabinet of zoology was supported by external contributors, such as Prince Franciszek Sapieha who donated stuffed, inland animals and the aforementioned Earl Walicki who handed over an impressive conch collection (Danilewiczowa 2004, p. 51). A collection of 1058 insects donated by a professor

of natural history and chemistry in Kremenets, Franciszek Scheid, turned out to be the most valuable gift to the cabinet of zoology and was being expanded gradually by Professor Wilibald Besser and Antoni Andrzejowski. The cabinet of physics was equipped by Stanisław Zamoyski with «a model of the Earth's yearly revolution around the Sun operated by a kob». Optical instruments, including 2 microscopes, donated by Michał Czacki and Ludwik Kropiński were as much valuable. Apart from supporting the cabinet of mineralogy, the Marshal of Volhynian nobility, Józef Drzewiecki, set up the cabinet of art and donated «dozens of original drawings made by Italian artists» but their authenticity was questioned in 1812. The cabinet's inventory grew again when Karol Jabłonowski donated chalcographies and samples of Ancient drawings (Danilewiczowa, 2004, pp. 47-50).

Expeditions and field research were a yet another means of acquiring specimens to the geological, natural and new fossil collection. These collections expanded mainly owing to the activity of one man, Antoni Andrzejowski, a professor of natural history, the author of memoirs, a prominent figure of Volhynia (Grębecka, 2004). His expeditions to Volhynia, Podolia, and the delta of the Dniepr River enriched the royal collection with many objects, all of which were reported to the University of Vilna. For example, the report from 1822 included numerous minerals, insect specimen, and «an almost intact skeleton of an prehistoric elephant» (BUW, F2-KC5, p. 137). In 1823 Andrzejowski published the Botanical Outline of lands visited in 1814, 1816, 1818, 1822 from the Boh and Dniester to the Zbrucz River and the Black Sea (Rys botaniczny krain zwiedzanych w podróżach pomiędzy Bohem i Dniestrem od Zbruczy aż do Morza Czarnego odbytych w latach 1814, 1816, 1818 i 1822) in 1823 in Vilna. A signed copy of the work was donated to the school library by Andrzejowski and is now situated in the National Library of Ukraine in Kiev.

The assets of the school collections were also acquired by purchase or exchange with other educational institutions. Scientific devices were sometimes made by the school professors and students themselves: eg. drawing templates made by Józef Pitschmann or physical and mathematical instruments made by the students of the Gymnasium's School of Mechanics (pneumatic and electric machine, geometric table, telescopic sight, magnetic needle (Lewicki, 1823).

## 5. Conclusions

The library at the Volhynian Gymnasium in Kremenets was open to the public on a daily basis (Szmyt, 2009, p. 193), the cabinets could be accessed on such occasions as Sunday lectures and open door initiatives organized by the

students at the end of the academic year. In this way, the king's wish to have the collection available for masses came true, after his death regrettably.

Beyond all doubt the library was the pearl of all Volhynian Gimnasium's facilities. Other collections added up to this value, not only because of their material worth and didactic utility but mostly because of their origin. Having originated from the royal collection of the last Polish king, they became a reminiscence of the national potential of a country that disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795.

Translated: Anna Iwanyniuk

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### *Elaborations*

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