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The Print Collection of Jan Ponętowski in the Jagiellonian Library

In 1592 a Polish nobleman, a former student of the University of Cracow, a protonotary apostolic and abbot in the Premonstratensian monastery in Hradisko near Olomouc Jan Ponętowski (c. 1540 – 1598), bequeated his collection of books, prints, paintings, tapestries and other precious objects to his Alma Mater. A part of his collection was dispersed and now is lost. Nevertheless, over one thousand prints: bound in albums, loose or pasted into books are still to be found in the Graphic and Cartographic Collection of the Jagiellonian Library. Almost all print albums bear their original gilded leather bindings with the lavishly decorated superexlibris and remnants of light green silk ribbon ties which altogether emphasized the wealth of the owner. The print collection he assembled consists mostly of Netherlandish and Italian engravings and, undoubtedly, reflects his various interests.

It is striking that well preserved albums with plentitude of fine prints clearly did not receive adequate attention within scholarly literature and thus require further elaboration. There are only few articles giving the very general overview on Jan Ponętowski's biography and his print collection. One of the reasons that led to this situation is the paucity of archival records accessible at the time to the scholars who dedicated their research to this subject. On the other hand, wide and diverse research material disheartened them to more detailed insight into patterns of collecting and logic that stood behind this collection.

Very little facts are known about Jan Ponętowski. Jan Hajdukiewicz, a biographer of the collector, conjectured that he travelled with his older brother Jakub through Europe in service of Maximilian II and Rudolph II. It is documented that on account of his brother's loyal service Jan Ponętowski was appointed abbot in Hradisko near Olomouc in 1577. It is often assumed that he brought the monastery into debt in the wake of his numerous art acquisitions and spendthrift life. As a result, in 1587 he was dismissed from the monastery and moved to Cracow where he died in 1598. However, the story of his turbulent and

profligate years in the monastery was mostly told by premonstratensian chroniclers who had various reasons to calumniate the name of the abbot from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In fact, his successor who was elected by monks compounded the above-mentioned debt. However, some historical sources explore his relations with important figures of political and ecclesiastical structures as well as his connections with the University of Cracow and his patronage for young students, travellers, poets and probably artists. The foregoing archival records should be examined in order to reframe the biography of Jan Ponętowski, especially in the regard of his patterns of collecting. The latest print in the collection is dated 1586. Therefore we might suppose that Ponętowski was most active as the print collector when he was the abbot. Albums with prints usually are dated and have their individual titles, for instance *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* (1582), *Liber denotus Imaginum* (1586), which reveal their content. Prints within the albums are often organized and grouped by the subject. Nevertheless, in the album *Theatrum Legis Divinae* (dated 1582) one might find religious allegorical prints as well political allegories alluding to Perpetual Edict of 1577, biblical stories, three prints from Lafrery's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, one mythological, depictions of battles and maps all of Netherlandish, Italian and German origin. This album is the most diversified, but shows the complexity of the collection. The printmakers and print publishers most represented in the collection are Philips Galle, Hieronymus Cock and his widow, Hendrick Goltzius, Sadeliers and Wierix brothers, Antonio Lafréry, Luca Bertelli, Nicolas Beatrizet. A part from albums Ponętowski had monumental prints depicting ceremonies related to emperor Charles V.

In my PhD dissertation I try to put my efforts to compile the catalogue of Jan Ponętowski's print collection that still exists in the Jagiellonian Library, examine the process of its creation, its origin and character. Furthermore, the construction of individual albums and relation to one another requires detailed analyses. Moreover, the inventory of the donation for the University of Cracow, which was written by Jan Ponętowski himself, is kept in the Archive of the Jagiellonian University and allows us to describe the place of prints among other objects from the collection.