

# KRZYSZTOFORY

Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa

41



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## A Word from the Publisher

The Museum of Kraków hereby submits the latest, 41st volume of *Krzysztofor*, its academic journal, for critical evaluation by its readers. In the preface to our previous issue (2022) I pointed out that the community of our institution is currently living between two jubilees. Thus, the year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of the very first volume of our annual, while in the year 2024 we shall be celebrating the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków. This coincidence in time gives rise to a variety of reflections from which we draw multiple conclusions. These thought processes are reflected in the layout and contents of our current volume of *Krzysztofor* which contains ten treatises, two review articles, and four texts which fall in the miscellanea genre.

Thus, we begin by prudently (and courageously) applying a research perspective which has become widely recognized in the academic discourse, namely ‘a people’s history’ to our local ground. Mateusz Wyzga, a historian who boasts extensive experience in the field of researching the history of villages and their inhabitants has submitted his paper titled “Peasantry in Kraków in the Early Modern Period – from Serfdom to Citizenship” to be published in our pages.

Throughout many previous issues of our annual, the staff members of the Museum of Kraków have presented the outcomes of their research on the history of the buildings which currently house our museum branches. This time, our colleague Michał Szczerba has contributed an important paper titled “Previously Unknown Facts about Celestat and Shooting Contests in the Light of Kraków’s Mediaeval and Early Modern Municipal Accounts” which marks the next step towards our understanding of the history of Celestat (located at 16 Lubicz Street) – the seat of the Fowler Brotherhood. However, we should emphasize that the subject of this narrative is not only the material heritage, i.e. a fine specimen of neo-Gothic architecture, but also the nonmaterial phenomenon of fraternity traditions. Following the path of research on nonmaterial culture has become a substantial area of academic studies over the past few years.

Another key area of our research is associated with our collections. There are two papers in the current 41st volume of *Krzysztofor* dedicated to this subject. In her classical ar-

tefact studies paper titled “»*De eine rechte wedewe unde einsam is, de setten eren höpen up godt...*« A Couple of Remarks on the Mystery Early Modern Chalice Funded by a Certain Widow in the Collection of the Museum of Kraków” Barbara Świadek explores the subject of an early modern chalice from the collection of the Museum of Kraków (inv. No. MHK-1109/II), while Jacek Majchrowski (this time acting as a scholar, not as a public figure) publishes a text titled “Phaleristics of the Liberation of Kraków in 1918” discussing high-quality collector’s items.

In line with our journal’s profile, the history of Kraków constitutes a crucial element of our academic interests. This time, we have included three treatises dedicated to the history of our city. Grzegorz Jeżowski, Collections Curator at the museum’s branch located at 2 Pomorska Street, continues his deliberations on the subject of the end of German occupation in Kraków in a paper titled “How the Red Army Captured Kraków in January 1945,” while Magdalena Smaga presents the profile of a Kraków designer Marian Sigmund in her article titled “Marian Sigmund – Interior and Furniture Designer. A Brief Characterization of His Life and Work.” Finally, Wojciech Paduchowski has submitted for publication an extensive paper commemorating the monumental figure of Mirosław Dzielski: “Kraków Philosopher Mirosław Dzielski and the Historical Contexts of his Social Philosophy.” After much consideration, we decided to split the original text into two parts, and consequently Part 2 will feature in the upcoming volume 42.

The idea (and the need) to welcome in our annual’s pages not only scholars focusing specifically on the subject of Kraków, but also authors researching cities in general has been growing in our minds for some time. In our opinion, urbanology, an academic subdiscipline which has been developing at an exceptional rate, requires its practitioners to combine the experiences of different cities. As a city museum, we feel obliged to become a forum for this kind of academic discourse. It is for that reason that we decided to include in volume 41 a paper by Ludwika Majewska dedicated to the city of Łódź titled “»We Are Fortunate to Watch the Enemy in His Final Hours.« Public Feelings among the Residents of Łódź in the Last Months of the German Occupation.” Regardless of its own topic, this text

serves as an interesting and intentional counterpoint to Grzegorz Jeżowski's paper. Elżbieta Lang who has recently (2023) taken over the position of Director of the Department of Modern Kraków from Janusz Tadeusz Nowak submitted for publication her deliberations on the role of monuments in a city: "The Role of Monuments in a City: the Case of Kraków. A Contribution to the Discussion on the History of Kraków's Monuments." Although, as the title itself suggests, Kraków lies at the centre of the Author's work, the paper has a wider, city-forming significance.

The last treatise, titled "Companions or Guardians of Memory? A Case Study of the Museum of KL Plaszow," penned by Marta Śmietana from the young team of the Museum of KL Plaszow, has a double meaning for us. Firstly, it fulfils the mission of the Museum of Kraków which in 2016 took up the guardianship over the memorial site covering the area of what used to be the German labour and concentration camp built on the site of the former villages of Wola Duchacka and Płaszów. Secondly, on 1 January 2024 the Museum of KL Plaszow shall gain complete independence, having visibly grown into a fully-fledged institution. According to our good knowledge, already by 2024 this young Museum which has evolved from the Museum of Kraków will make a name for itself by launching its own academic annual – a prospect we wholeheartedly support!

The review section is an immanent part of any full-blooded academic periodical. In our annual we have recently focused on reviewing exhibition events, hoping to build a forum for debate on the art of museum exhibitions in *Krzysztofor* in the course of a couple of years. The current issue contains two reviews. In her text titled "»Our Past Ought to Be Our Pride.« Constructing a City's Identity at the Museum of the History of Radom" Anna Ziębińska-Witek, one of the most prominent Polish museologists, has reviewed not only an exhibition, but also a certain fascinating identity formation process acted out by the inhabitants of Radom. A slightly different perspective has been presented in a review titled "Stage Set-Exhibition *Wrocław 1945–2016*" written by Michał Grabowski, a museum staff member from our team at the Museum of Kraków and a museologist who is rising to become a prominent observer of museum-related phenomena both in Poland and abroad.

In the *Miscellanea* section Readers will find four texts. Apart from the traditional "Chronicle of Activity of the Museum of Kraków in 2022" which represents significant documentary value and has been traditionally edited by Jacek Salwiński, Deputy Director for Programme Policy at

our Museum, we should pay attention to the text written by Bożena Urbańska titled "Thesaurus Cracoviensis – Artefacts Interpretation Centre. Genesis, Problems, Anxiety. A (Non) objective Evaluation of the Project" which sums up the past five years of functioning of our open musealia storeroom. The launching of this investment in 2017 caused a lot of fear and a wave of criticism which stressed the substantial risk connected with building a museum storeroom offering open access to the public. These fears – the Author argues – have proved unsubstantiated, and the various awards granted to our Museum by ministerial and European institutions in recognition for this investment seem to confirm that while this way of storing museum holdings may not yet be considered the new standard, it is definitely the direction that fulfils society's expectations. I am not sure whether at this point I should resort to false modesty, or simply rejoice that in this field the Museum of Kraków has clearly become a trendsetter. The two remaining texts in this section also deserve recognition. Paweł Pawłowski, a visionary and (alas!) an ex-Director of the Polish Air Force Museum in Dęblin has managed to present in his brief communication titled "The Marriage to the River Vistula Ceremony in Dęblin, or How to Build Museum Narratives" a very interesting process of involving an army museum in the integration of Dęblin's residents via a made-up (let it not sound pejorative in this context) holiday of a town's marriage to the River Vistula. Combining the winged mission of this Museum with the phenomenon of the close presence of the Vistula on the level of local relations may, I believe, have the power of ferment. The next communication ("The Conservation Process of the Kraków Nativity Scene #MHK-203/Xa"), written by Rafał Bulanda has a totally different, technical character, as the author discusses the conservation process of a Kraków nativity scene from the collection of the Museum of Kraków. I am very glad that Rafał Bulanda, a brilliant conservator of our nativity scenes, has given in to our requests to express in words the artistry and effort he puts into his work. There is only one professional Kraków nativity scene conservation workshop in Poland (and in the world in general!), so grasping the essence of this unique craftsmanship is priceless.

The 41st volume of our annual closes with posthumous tributes which constitute a permanent feature in our journal. Zdzisław Noga commemorates the figure of an eminent historian of Kraków, Dr Jacek Laberschek in his text, and Elżbieta Firllet reminisces about her director of many years' standing and our Colleague Henryk Świątek. Keeping their memory alive is our obligation.

*Michał Niezabitowski,  
Editor of the annual, Director of the Museum of Kraków*