

I “Armorial Tables” of Princess Tekla Róża, Née Radziwiłł. History, Maker, Artistic Connotations

The National Museum in Warsaw’s collection contains two small-sized, late baroque tables with inlay, whose history is linked with Tekla Róża, née Radziwiłł and two of her husbands – Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki and Michał Antoni Sapieha. The first object is a black-stained table¹ (fig. 1), the second one – an oak writing table with removable legs² (fig. 2). The furniture is esteemed to have high artistic value and more than that, historical mementos of the period of the Wettin House’s reign in Poland.

Tekla Róża (fig. 3), born in 1703, was daughter of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł and Anna, née Sanguszkó; her siblings were Michał Kazimierz called Rybeńko and Hieronim Florian. Her first husband, Jakub Flemming (d. 1728), was a Saxon field marshal and the major political assistant to King of Poland Augustus II the Strong. Her education and her father’s high social status allowed Tekla Róża to easily enter, as early as the time of her first marriage, the aristocratic circles of the capital city of Dresden.³ Her second husband, Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki (1680–1744), whom she married in 1730, was a flamboyant figure. He held several important positions in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: castellan and head of county (several times), Grand and Field Hetman of Lithuania, *regimentarz* (deputy commander) of Lithuanian army, Voivode of Vilnius and Grand Chancellor of Lithuania. He was repeatedly appointed Marshal of the Lithuanian Tribunal. The Prince also wrote literary works on piety as well as

¹ Table – carcass: pear, spruce; veneer: black-stained (ebonised) pear and oak; inlay: alloy of pewter and silver; dimensions: 76 × 85.8 × 51 cm; inv. no. SZMb 1326 MNW; published in: *Sztuka Zdobnicza. Dary i Nabytki 1945–1964. Katalog*, Stanisław Gebethner, ed. (Warsaw, 1964), p. 56, cat. no. 166; *Nabytki i dary 1945–1967 ze zbiorów muzeów narodowych*, exh. cat., The National Museum in Poznań, 1967 (Poznań, 1967), p. 48, cat. no. 11; *Decorum życia sarmatów w XVII i XVIII wieku. Katalog pokazu sztuki zdobniczej ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie* (Warsaw, 1980), p. 30, cat. no. 115, fig. 43; *Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Przewodnik po galeriach stałych i zbiorach studyjnych*, Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, Dorota Folga-Januszewska, eds (Warsaw, 2006), p. 397; *Pod jedną koroną. Kultura i sztuka w czasach unii polsko-saskiej*, Marta Męclewska, Barbara Grątkowska-Ratyńska, eds, exh. cat., The Royal Castle in Warsaw, 1997; *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden 1997* (Warsaw, 1997), p. 440, cat. no. XIV 43; it was briefly presented in a leaflet for the exhibition *Evropa v muzeju – muzej w Evropi / Europe in the museum – the museum in Europe*, Pokrajinski Muzej Maribor in Slovenia, 2012 and was the topic of a talk given by the authors of the text, *ibid.*, 29 November 2012; see Aleksandra J. Kasprzak, Stanisław S. Mieleszkiewicz, “Johann Her, stolarz książąt Radziwiłłów,” in *Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, Wojciech Walczak, Karol Łopatecki, eds (Białystok, 2013), p. 348, figs 2–4.

² Travelling writing table – carcass: ash; woodcarving: birch; inlay: pewter; mountings: steel, brass; dimensions: 77.1 × 90.5 × 51.5 cm; inv. no. SZMb 1908 MNW; it was published in: *Decorum życia sarmatów...*, op. cit., p. 30, cat. no. 116, figs 41, 42; Kasprzak, Mieleszkiewicz, op. cit., p. 348, figs 5–7.

³ Ilona Czamańska, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu* (Poznań, 2007), pp. 444–53.

private diaries. In 1733, despite being an adherent of the Russian option, he supported the election of king Augustus III [Wettin], which was most probably encouraged by Tekla Róża. Wiśniowiecki managed to hold one of the largest land estates in Lithuania at the time, which he had assembled from inherited land, estates of his wives and royal grants. He surrounded himself with luxury; in his palaces in Karolin near Pińsk and, later, in Wiśniowiec, he received crowds of noble guests with truly regal generosity, seeking support for his political endeavours.⁴ The marriage of Tekla Róża and Michał Serwacy did not bring an adult descendant. When her husband – who was the last male representative of the Wiśniowiecki family – died, Tekla organized what turned out to be the most pompous funeral of 18th-century Poland.⁵ Her third husband, Michał Antoni Sapieha (1711–60), Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Voivode of Podlasie, was a cunning politician, balancing between the parties of [aristocratic] families of Czartoryski and Radziwiłł, skillful at leading local government campaigns. He pursued interests in theatre and literature, translated Voltaire and composed poems. The marriage of Sapieha with Tekla Róża met hostile reception from her brother Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, who had hoped to take over counties and part of the wealth after the late Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki. When Tekla died, however, Michał Antoni Sapieha reconciled with his brother-in-law and cleared the wealth he inherited from her.⁶

Tekla Róża, née Radziwiłł and Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki's ownership of the table is declared by the composition on the top consisting of coats of arms Korybut (of the Wiśniowiecki family) and Trąby [Trumpets], hung on the chest of a Radziwiłł eagle, and initials "MW" and "TR" (**fig. 4**). The second object – a travelling writing table, also decorated with inlay – belonged to Princess Tekla and Michał Antoni Sapieha. On its top, surrounded by Régence-style pattern of latticework with applied rosettes, under a princely mitre with lambrequins, coats of arms are placed: one of the Radziwiłł family (Trąby, on the eagle's chest), on the right, and one of the Sapieha family, a shield tierced per pall reversed with three coats of arms: Lis [Fox], Lilie [Lilies] and an armed arm pierced with an arrow), on the left. Depicted below is the Order of the White Eagle, awarded to Michał Antoni in 1744 (**fig. 5**).

The use of coats of arms and princely initials may be understood not only as the sign of ownership, but also an expression of dynastic pride. For the same reasons, in the major residence – the palace in Wiśniowiec, constructed in the 1730s–40s by Michał Serwacy, replacing a castle destroyed during Turkish wars – a gallery of ancestors was introduced, its decoration including heraldic bearings. During ongoing interior decoration in the years 1732–33, sculpted and gilded wall panelling with analogical motifs⁷ was installed as well as stuccowork, both of which were also employed in the decoration of Tekla's study room.⁸ The Radziwiłł eagles and princely initials also found their place on ceilings in a smaller palace built by Michał for

⁴ Czamańska, op. cit., pp. 405–36.

⁵ Ibid., p. 451; Juliusz A. Chrościcki, *Pompa funebris. Z dziejów kultury staropolskiej* (Warsaw, 1978), pp. 78, 79, 83; id., "Castris et astris. Kazania i relacje pogrzebowe jako źródła historii sztuki," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, Ann 30, no. 3 (1968), pp. 384–95.

⁶ Przemysław Romaniuk, *Sapieha Michał Antoni* in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 35 (Warsaw–Krakow, 1994), pp. 110–15.

⁷ F.M. Eysymont, "Na zamku Wiśniowieckim," *Kłosy*, vol. 25, no. 632 (1877), p. 93.

⁸ Czamańska, op. cit., p. 427; Roman Aftanazy, *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych kresach Rzeczypospolitej*, part 2: *Ziemie ruskie Korony*, vol. 5: *Województwo wołyńskie* (Wrocław, 1994), p. 533.

his wife in Czajczyńce in 1740.⁹ The black-stained table in question was one of numerous pieces of furniture with heraldic decoration that belonged to the furnishings of the palace in Wiśniowiec.¹⁰ According to Aleksander Przeździecki's account, *Opisanie rzeczy w pałacu wiśniowieckim* ['Description of things in Wiśniowiec palace'],¹¹ the "armorial tables," just like armchairs with coats of arms of the Wiśniowiecki family, were still there as late as 1841, despite the fact that by that time, palace owners had changed multiple times.

An opportunity to determine, with a decent probability, the maker of 18th-century Polish furniture is generally rare. In this case, however, there are several arguments confirming that the maker of the discussed tables was Johann Her,¹² an artisan specializing in inlay, working at the Radziwiłł family carpentry workshops in Biała Podlaska and Łachwa. Archivaly confirmed inlaid furniture made by Her belonged to the furnishings of the castles in Biała and Nieśwież (Nesvizh).

The table made for Tekla Róża and Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki was most probably crafted between 1741 and 1744 by the carpenter workshop at the castle in Biała that was involved in renovation and reconstruction works of the residence belonging to Tekla's mother – Anna Radziwiłł, née Sanguszkó (1676–1746), spouse of the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, dowager of the late Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1669–1719). The Princess initiated many artistic pursuits and founded numerous manufactures organized after European models. These included: luxury glassware works in Naliboki and mirror glass works in Urzecze, gem cutting works in Porosiuki and Jankowicze, weaving workshops (e.g., in Cymbark), a faience factory, a broad-cloth manufactory and weaving and embroidery workshops in Biała Podlaska.¹³

A written record about Her was made at Biała in February 1741, citing "stolarz Niemiec drezdeński Nowotny"¹⁴ ['carpenter a German from Dresden Newcomer']. His carpentry skills encompassed the technique of inlay, which can be assumed since his archivaly confirmed works included a floor with parquetry and inlay of brass, pewter and mother-of-pearl executed

⁹ Czamańska, op. cit., p. 431.

¹⁰ F.M. Eysymont, "Na zamku Wiśniowieckim," *Kłasy*, vol. 26, no. 633 (1877), p. 116. The question of form and analogy to the decoration of the discussed table could be explained by *Album Wiśniowieckie* [Album of Wiśniowiec] prepared by Kajetan Sourdis, planned to contain 400 coloured drawings with short descriptions presenting views of Wiśniowiec and precise copies of important artefacts and works of art, a publication mentioned by Eysymont, op. cit., p. 122.

¹¹ Aftanazy, *Dzieje rezydencji...*, op. cit., p. 535.

¹² The tables bear no signature or mark of the maker.

¹³ See Wanda Karkucińska, *Anna z Sanguszków Radziwiłłowa (1676–1746); działalność gospodarcza i mecenat* (Warsaw, 2000), pp. 126–64; Jadwiga Chruszczyńska, "Pracownie hafciarskie i tkackie założone przez Annę z Sanguszków Radziwiłłową," in *Tkaniny artystyczne z wieków XVIII i XIX*, proceedings of the academic session at the Wawel Royal Castle, Magdalena Piwocka, ed. (Kraków, 1997), pp. 89–102; Aleksandra J. Kasprzak, "Gabinet i Galeria Zwierciadlane w pałacu w Białej Radziwiłłowskiej," in *Rzemiosło artystyczne. Materiały Sesji Oddziału Warszawskiego Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, Ryszard Bobrow, ed. (Warsaw, 1996), pp. 85–98; ead., *Szkła z hut radziwiłłowskich. Naliboki [1722–1862]. Urzecze [1737–1846]*, exh. cat., vol. 1: *Szkła ze zbiorów MNW*, The National Museum in Warsaw, 1998 (Warsaw, 1998), pp. 18–48; ead., "The Radziwiłłs of Nieśwież. A Contribution to Industrial 'Mecenate' in the First Half of the 18th Century," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, Ann. 40, nos 2–4 (1999), pp. 75–93; Wanda Karkucińska, *Radziwiłłowa z Sanguszków Anna Katarzyna* in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 30 (Wrocław, 1987), pp. 384–87.

¹⁴ Lithuanian State Historical Archive in Vilnius (LSHA), sign. 1280-1-1788 – *Regestr wydanych różnych rzeczy rzemieślnikom do roboty w Białej, 1741, 4 lutego* [Register of various items issued to artisans for their work at Biała, 1741, 4 February].

for the Mirror Cabinet in March and April 1743. Archive records relating to Her getting pewter and brass sheets in Biała or instructing terminators on the technique of inlay suggest his specialization in this type of decoration.¹⁵ The documents mention no other master artisan specializing in inlay employed at Biała. Her must have been a skillful craftsman, if he was commissioned in 1743 to realize an inlaid epitaph of Anna Radziwiłł, which was, while Anna was still alive, installed in the local reformed church.¹⁶ It is possible that students assisted him in his work on the table for the Wiśniowieckis. Among several “boys” employed in the workshop, a “Miklauz” was mentioned by name in documents.¹⁷

The other discussed piece of furniture made by Her – a travelling writing table, also embellished with pewter inlay – could be rather precisely dated to the years 1745–47. The time span is limited by the dates of Tekla Róža’s and Michał Antoni Sapieha’s wedding and of Tekla’s death. It must have been crafted at the carpenter workshop of the Nieśwież Fee Tail Estate in Łachwa founded by Tekla Róža’s brother – Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, because Her had been working there since 1745.¹⁸ When he was producing the writing table, Her completed a black-coloured corner cupboard with pewter decoration, which, after Tekla’s death, found its way to her brother Michał Kazimierz’s residence in Nieśwież.¹⁹

Apart from other tasks, Her, as the carpenter of the principal heirs of the Fee Tail Estate (*ordynats*) of Nieśwież, provided furnishings to the castle. We know that there used to be inlaid equipment produced by Her and his subordinate carpenters from Łachwa²⁰ in the castle, among them, a pewter-inlaid confessional from the chapel and caskets.²¹ The carpenter workshop in Łachwa under his management executed not only the various orders of the Radziwiłłs from Nieśwież, but also external ones. The workshop produced furniture both of solid wood and wood veneered and inlaid with brass and pewter, and possibly also decorated with marquetry – i.e., luxurious furniture, but also ordinary pieces. Apart from furniture, the workshop prepared construction woodwork, floors and parquets, window shutters and other

¹⁵ The National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk (NHAB), 694-2-10785 and 10739; LSHA, 459-1-872 and 2491; see also Kasprzak, Mieszkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 343–57.

¹⁶ LSHA, 459-1-2491; see also Kasprzak, Mieszkiewicz, op. cit.

¹⁷ LSHA, 459-1-2491, expenditure – November 1743 and February 1744.

¹⁸ It cannot be excluded that Her began to work for Michał Kazimierz already in early 1745 (usually, contracts for 3 years were signed) and since the contract would expire in early 1748, Prince Michał Kazimierz ordered on 14 December 1747 to Żychowicki, manager at Łachwa, to “keep, after contract [expiry], Herr the carpenter.” (Central Archive of Historical Records in Warsaw – CAHR, Radziwiłł Archive – RA, XXIX, 5 – Kopie rozporządzeń gospodarczo-prawnych, punkta Żychowickiemu z 14 Xbris 1747 [Copies of economical-legal directives, points to Żychowicki of 14 December 1747]; Stanisław Stefan Mieszkiewicz, “Łachwa – ośrodek meblarski w dominium książąt Radziwiłłów,” in *Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. 5 (Białystok, 2013), pp. 321–42.

¹⁹ “[...] szafkę czarną rogową bez nóżek po X wojewodzinie podlaskiej siostrze mojej tam będącą a cyną wybijaną odsyłał WP do mnie do Nieświeża [...]” [... black corner cupboard without legs after Princess spouse of Voivode of Podlasie my sister, stored there and inlaid with pewter, would you send to me to Nieśwież...] – CAHR, RA IV, copies of letters of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, vol. 7, letter of 30 December 1749 from Nieśwież to Major Trzcinski.

²⁰ While crafting the writing table from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, Her was assisted by carpenters employed at Łachwa at that time: Jewsiej Lusiewicz, Kościuk Pawłusiewicz, Łukasz Samusiewicz, Łukasz Basiukiewicz (Boziukiewicz), Giecug (CAHR, RA, XXV 2172, *Inwentarz Klucza Łachewskiego... roku 1743*, [Inventory of the Łachwa Estate... for the Year 1743] pp. 16–17, 20–21, 28–29).

²¹ CAHR, RA, XXV 2696/1, *Inwentarz zamku nieświeżskiego spisany przez Ignacego Wawrzeckiego i Joachima Chmarę* [Inventory of the Nieśwież castle drawn up by Ignacy Wawrzecki and Joachim Chmara] in 1764 and 1765, p. 70, 75 verso, 79, 82 verso, 87, 94, 106 verso, 104, 108, 127, 152, 155.

furnishings used in granges or gardens.²² Her and his carpenters from Łachwa also produced woodwork and articles for churches in Łachwa (Catholic and Greek-Catholic), and the major church in the duchy – the Jesuit church in Nieśwież.²³

An important issue is the question of stylistic connections and the identification of artistic inspirations that influenced the artistic form of Tekla Róża's "tables." A stylistic analysis proves that in both objects traits could be distinguished that are characteristic for Saxony and entire Central Europe of the second quarter of the 18th century.

The black colour of the princely table originates from the fashion for dichromatic, contrastive effects applied both in early Baroque architecture as well as in carpentry of earlier periods. In Renaissance and Mannerist cabinets and caskets, black ebony and light-coloured ivory and bone or silver and pewter played essential roles. Fashion for black furniture lasted long in Europe, and beginning with the late 17th century it also encompassed furniture covered with imitation of Far-Eastern black lacquer painted gold.

The pewter inlay technique, employed for the decoration of the tables, though deriving from the same technological tree as Boulle marquetry, differed from the latter by its limited colour scale, devoid of intense red of the tortoiseshell and golden yellow of brass. The source of both technique variations were artistic solutions of the second half of the 16th century, most often employed in Augsburg and Nuremberg, consisting in the contrast of materials: black ebony or dark rosewood against light-toned, shiny silver or pewter. The ornate inlays of the two metals or their alloys were engraved, just like brass in Boulle marquetry. Such decorations, used as single motifs or a filling of a significant part of the decorated surface of furniture, are found in Southern-German and, but much less frequently, Saxon carpentry.²⁴

The form and decoration of Tekla Róża's "armorial tables" betray a connection with Dresden furniture making from the years 1720–40. We do not know whether the design was imposed by Princess Anna Radziwiłł (in the case of the black table) and by Michał Kazimierz or Tekla Róża herself (in the case of the writing table), or whether it was born exclusively from the experience and practice of the Saxon master²⁵ (fig. 6). Her's knowledge of Saxon carpentry solutions matched the artistic preferences of the Radziwiłłs, who were connected with the

²² E.g., NHAB, 694-2-4189, p. 1280, p. 1101, p. 794; see also Mieleszkiewicz, "Łachwa – ośrodek meblarski...", op. cit.

²³ CAHR, RA, XXIX, 7, copies of economic-legal directives, instruction of 15 August 1752; CAHR, RA, XXIX, 11, copies of economic-legal directives, ordinance of 20 March 1764; Aleksandra J. Kasprzak, "Ołtarze zwierciadlane z bocznych kaplic kościoła jezuitckiego w Nieświeżu," in *Rzemiosło artystyczne. Materiały Sesji Oddziału Warszawskiego Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, vol. 2, Ryszard Bobrow, ed. (Warsaw, 2001), pp. 227–38.

²⁴ Gisela Haase, *Dresdener Möbel des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1983), p. 24.

²⁵ Preserved documents cast light on the question of the influence of a commissioner on the artistic form of furniture, e.g., Anna Radziwiłł reminded in a letter to her son Hieronim residing at Saxon court to bring with him "various designs, of tapestries, carpentry, and other work, of altars, tables etc." ["różne abrysy, jako to tapisierskie, jako snickerskie, i do różnych robót ołtarzy, stolików etc."] – see Chruszczyńska, *Pracownie hafciarskie i tkackie...*, op. cit., based on CAHR, RA; "Her it is my will that you follow the table design we are sending you at once to make twelve tables, out of which Four as soon as possible two veneered in oak and two in walnut..." ["P: Her iest wola moja ażebyś podług modeluszu tego stolika który się posyła wraz zrobił stolików dwanaście, z których Cztery iak najprędzey dwa dębina, a dwa orzechowym drzewem furnerowanych..."] (CAHR, RA, XXIX, 7, copies of economic-legal directives of 8 March 1755); "Ordinance to Mr Zawistowski, the Governor at Łachwa, to make tables according to the design sent..." ("Ordynans p. Zawistowskiemu Ekonomowi łachewskiemu na zrobienie stolików podług modelu przysłanego...") (CAHR RA, XXIX, 11, copies of economic-legal directives, of 10 September 1763); see also Kasprzak, Mieleszkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 354–55.

House of Wettin through their high-ranking official positions and who tended to acquire from Saxony artistic inspirations, artisans and organization models for their own factories.

Some features of Her's tables grew from general European trends in furniture making of that period and express a late Baroque style. These are: moderately curved cabriole legs; the bottom outline of knees evolving via an arch into a wavy-edged frieze rail; the symmetry of legs and of the top shape and decoration; the decoration on the knees (**figs 7-8**); the decorative motif of a simplified shell, and the lack of rocaille ornament. The furniture bears individual traits as well, characteristic for the second quarter of the 18th century. These are: the outlines of the leg part underlined by profiles and S-shaped scrolls terminating in a volute in case of the table and the Régence latticework in case of the writing table. The typically Saxon edition of carpentry solutions specifically employed in the years 1720–40 present in both objects includes: hoof feet,²⁶ the frieze rail's profile (S-shaped in the upper, main part, and rounded in the bottom part merging with the legs) and in case of the writing table solely – the frieze rail in the form of a series of arches forming a “lambrequin” (**fig. 9**). Saxon inspiration can be traced in the type of ornamentation consisting of minute elements – the C-shaped scrolls, Laub- und Bandelwerk (foliage and bandwork) and acanthus leaves shaped as palmettes.

Both tables – portable due to their light construction – belong to the category of auxiliary furniture, also called occasional furniture, which would perform diverse functions depending on current needs. Such type of furniture, fashionable since the second quarter of the 18th century, was constructed in multiple carpentry centres, while they cherished particular popularity in Saxony, especially in Dresden. Small-sized tables with removable top plates used as trays, so-called table-trays, were produced since 1750, i.e., a little later than the discussed table was crafted. Despite traits shared with that group of accessories, the Wiśniowieckis's table, because of the heraldic-genealogic character of decoration, played a representative function on a daily basis, being used as a larger console.

The Sapiehas's writing table was a travelling accessory. It could be folded and was adapted for transportation through its simple construction, compact volume, and endurance. The functionality of such equipment was guaranteed, among other solutions, by joints that allowed to quickly fold and unfold the table for use, as well as to disassemble and reassemble it in case of transportation. In the carcass of some furniture there used to be spaces reserved for storage of dismembered parts. Many of them were equipped with dustsheets or simple transporting cases. Screw joints made it possible to remove legs from the writing table.

Both pieces of furniture were most probably gifts of Tekla Róża to her successive husbands, since the reconstructed provenance of the pieces suggests that they were left with the families of Wiśniowiecki and Sapieha.

The history of the table was reconstructed on the basis of two labels from the bottom of the top plate, of which one was only preserved in fragments (**fig. 10**).²⁷ After the death of Michał Serwacy in 1744, the table became lifelong property of Tekla Róża. Following her death in 1749, with Wiśniowiecki's wealth partitioned, it was passed on to the Ogińskis through Genowefa (1728–92), granddaughter of Michał Serwacy. Then, the family of Brzostowski came into possession of the table when Genowefa married Adam (1732–92). When Aniela Maria, née

²⁶ This element was known in other European carpentry centres of that period, while it was distinctive for Saxony.

²⁷ We would like to thank Aleksandra J. Kasprzak from the Ceramics and Glassware Collection of the NMW for her invaluable assistance in tracing the complicated history of the two objects.

Brzostowska (1816–1903), married Edmund Krasicki (1808–94), it found its place in the castle in Lesko in the region of Podkarpacie. Purchased from Ksawery Krasicki by Julian Gozdawa-Godlewski from Zurich, it was donated in 1960 to the National Museum in Warsaw.

The writing table remained, after Tekla Róża's death, in possession of Michał Antoni Sapieha, and when he died in 1760, it was passed on to his niece Anna (1728–1800). Following her marriage with Jan Kajetan Jabłonowski (1699–1764), it was taken over by his family. Four generations later, via the marriage of Zofia Joanna Jabłonowska (1853–1915) with Stanisław Gadomski (b. ca. 1830), the table came into possession of the Gadomski family, and as property of his sister Julia (b. ca. 1820) and her husband Adam Eliaż Kostro-Pułaski (1806–82), it became a belonging of the Pułaski family. It was finally purchased to the holdings of the National Museum in Warsaw in 1935 from Franciszek Pułaski.

The great value of the table and writing table in regard to art history and Polish history derives from their artistic quality, skilful execution, documented provenance and the possibility of precise dating which is particularly rare in the case of 18th-century furniture from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. The "armorial tables" of Princess Tekla Róża are the oldest preserved works by Johann Her and the only currently known secular works by that artist and his carpenters. They complement our knowledge on furniture made for aristocratic commissioners from the period of the reign of king Augustus III in Poland. Tekla Róża's table and writing table follow the tradition of furnishing nobility's residences with furniture marked with dynastic bearings. The National Museum in Warsaw has several other examples of such furniture in its holdings.²⁸

Translated by Karolina Koriat

²⁸ Commode of the family of Świrscy-Niemyscy, inv. no. SZMb 1945 MNW; chair with Prus coat of arms, inv. no. SZMb 1845 MNW; armchairs of the Krasieński family, inv. nos SZMb 2715 MNW and SZMb 2176 MNW; writing table with Dryja coat of arms, inv. no. SZMb 2002 MNW; cupboard of the Wielopolski family, inv. no. 129216 MNW; writing table with Rola coat of arms, inv. no. NB 574 MNW.