Works by Ignacy Łopieński and an Album of Drawings by Alfred Schouppé, Lost in the Second World War, Return to the National Museum in Warsaw

On 8 January 2014, some drawings and prints stolen in October 1944 were returned to the National Museum in Warsaw. They included works by the Warsaw artist Ignacy Łopieński (1865–1944) and an album bound in canvas and leather of drawings by a founder of the Zachęta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Warsaw, Alfred Schouppé (1812–99). Once again, with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, lost works of art were returning to Poland.

A Holiday Is Cut Short

On 26 August 1939, Maria Mrozińska, curator of the National Museum in Warsaw print collection, received a telegram from her boss, museum Director Stanisław Lorentz, instructing her to interrupt her holiday and report for work. His summon was motivated by the need to prepare the collection for the eventuality of a German military attack on Poland.¹ Works that had been put on display a year earlier were to be taken down, and the most valuable artefacts were to be safeguarded in custom-made, edge-glued crates lined with tinplate. Mrozińska's principal task would be to select and protect the most valuable prints and drawings.² The most fragile miniatures, daguerreotypes, illuminated manuscripts and the most valuable drawings

¹ Following instructions issued late, on 2 August 1939, archival, library and museum collections were made safe mostly in the regions under greatest threat of a German attack, i.e., the north and west. Because Warsaw was declared a "safe city," it was to accommodate and protect some of the evacuated collections. Director Stanisław Lorentz, fulfilling the obligation, began to make preparations for protecting museum collections already in the spring of 1939, which included producing 230 crates. The packing of the most valuable items and taking them down into the cellars began in the last week of August. Mayor of Warsaw Stefan Starzyński supported this mission of safeguarding the cultural heritage during the defence of Warsaw by creating the Committee for Preserving Collections, chaired by Lorentz, on 20 September. During the German occupation, Lorentz went to work creating lists of cultural losses for the Underground State. Many artefacts from Warsaw's public collections (such as the Royal Castle or the Royal Łazienki Museum), as well as private ones, were stored in the museum's building. The museum was to become a warehouse for cultural works for the duration of the war. See Dariusz Matelski, *Grabież i restytucja polskich dóbr kultury od czasów nowożytnych do współczesnych* (Krakow, 2006), pp. 301–22.

² Maria Mrozińska, "Wspomnienia o Muzeum Narodowym," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 9 (1965), p. 382; ead., "Wspomnienia z czasów okupacji," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 10 (1966), pp. 519–27. All the graphic art and drawings could not, regrettably, be protected. In 1938 these collections had consisted of 24,000 Polish and foreign prints, 10,000 Polish drawings and 500 foreign drawings.

and prints and graphic plates were packed into the crates. Fearing bombardments, the staff carried the crates down to the building's cellars. In the course of the defence of Warsaw in September 1939, the museum was shelled several times, but the personnel prevented it from going up in flames. After Warsaw's surrender on 28 September, the crates were moved back to a storeroom and some were unpacked. The anniversary exhibition of Ignacy Łopieński's works being planned for the autumn had to be put off indefinitely.³

Plunder

In early October, the German authorities inspected the museum in order to assess how well its collections were being protected. Their visit was a prelude to their imminent thefts of artworks and harassment of the staff.4 The museum was renamed Museum der Stadt Warschau, and was now headed by Dr Alfred Schellenberg. Many of the staff were let go. The remaining staff secretly catalogued the objects being removed by the Germans. The most valuable European paintings were moved to Krakow already in October and December. The Germans knew their way around Polish museums, since the Gestapo's experts in this matter included Professor Dr Dagobert Frey of Wrocław (Breslau), who before the war had conducted queries in many collections and had been trusted and assisted by Warsaw museum staffs.⁵ Also "visiting" in December was Hans Posse, director of the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden, whose travels aimed to select the most valuable paintings to be displayed in Hitler's museum being planned in Linz. Western art remained the Germans' greatest interest, with a special focus on German art and archaeological artefacts from the Polish lands, which would testify to these lands' Germanness. The invaders were interested in Polish art, such as numismatics and handicrafts, mainly because of their material value. In October, the 53 most valuable works were removed from the National Museum in Warsaw, and in December 69 crates of objects. But this was only a small part of the collections gathered in the museum.

The operation of safely wrapping, packing and moving to the cellars the crates containing the most precious drawings and prints continued between 16 June and 2 August 1941 in anticipation of what turned out to be a real threat of Soviet air raids on Warsaw. In September 1942, fourteen crates marked "GR" (graphic art) were placed in the library storage room, and were only moved to the cellars as Soviet bombardments multiplied. Unfortunately, the museum building remained

- ³ Piotr P. Czyż, "The Jubilee of Ignacy Łopieński on the 50th Anniversary of His Creative Activity.' About an Exhibition that Did Not Take Place at the National Museum in Warsaw in 1939," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie. Nowa Seria / Journal of the National Museum in Warsaw. New Series*, 2(38) (2013), pp. 148–55. This publication gives a wrong date for Ignacy Łopieński's arrival at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. In fact, his name was recorded in the immatriculation register on 11 October 1888.
- ⁴ Stanisław Lorentz, "Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie w latach 1939–1954," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*," Ann 2 (1957), pp. 7–98. For works on the thefts and destruction of Polish works of art, see *Walka o dobra kultury, Warszawa 1939–1945. Księga zbiorowa*, Stanisław Lorentz, ed., vols 1 and 2 (Warsaw, 1970); Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*. *The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York, 1994), pp. 57–80; Matelski, op. cit.; Agnieszka Łuczak, "Grabieże wojenne dóbr kultury na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945," in *Grabież i niszczenie dziedzictwa kultury polskiej* (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 5–28. SS officer Kajetan Mühlmann was entrusted with the operation of "securing" works of art in Poland on 9 October 1939. His representative in Warsaw was his brother, SS Officer Josef Mühlmann.
- ⁵ For an analysis of the involvement of German scholars in plundering artworks and destroying Polish collections, see Karol Estreicher, Jr., Straty kultury polskiej pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1944 wraz z oryginalnymi dokumentami grabieży / Cultural Losses of Poland during the German Occupation 1939–1944 with original documents of the looting (Krakow, 2003), pp. 42–47.

a strategic military target, as the Luftwaffe was stationed there from 1941, and an SS unit from 1943. On 21 September 1944, during the Warsaw Uprising, a Soviet bomb seriously damaged two crates, one of which contained graphic plates. This was the worst time for the collections stored in the museum as the German troops stationed in the building increasingly pillaged and senselessly destroyed them. "During the Uprising, the Nazis would rummage through the crates, throwing out folders as they searched for hidden treasures," recalled Mrozińska.6 It was also at that time that a second lieutenant of the Wehrmacht took with him an unidentified folder of drawings. Prints that had been set aside for the Łopieński show, marked "Łopieński - exhibition," which can be seen on surviving lists, were held in crate marked "GR 7." After the defeat of the uprising, most of the crates, including the one with Łopieński's works, were transported to Fischhorn castle near Salzburg. SS Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein, Heinrich Himmler's personal representative, ordered SS Hauptsturmführer Moritz Arnhardt to bring everything that had not been stolen and damaged out of the museum. Arnhardt told the museum staff that he was acting on Hitler's orders and that his mission was to evacuate the most valuable objects to Nazi Germany. "After the defeat of the Uprising, the SS men took all collections deposited in the rooms of the National Museum, [...] hurriedly loading cultural and art works. They transported them first by car and then by train through Silesia and dropped off the unwrapped items in Fischhorn, Fegelein's den,"8 the "private" storeroom of artworks stolen from Poland. The antiquities that remained in the building and that could not be protected inside the crates were to be blown up together with the building. Luckily this did not happen, and the prints and drawings remaining in the museum's cabinets survived.

They Were Found, But Not All Were Returned

In July 1945, Polish painter and architect Bohdan Tadeusz Urbanowicz on his way back from the prisoner-of-war camp in Murnau, Bavaria, settled in Salzburg, where his job was to facilitate the return to Poland for Poles liberated from camps and forced labour. He was informed by Platoon Leader Jan Maj that abandoned Polish works of art, "Polish royal treasures, Polish paintings, furniture, books," filled Fischhorn castle, where the US Rainbow Division was stationed, and that "Austrians and DPS [were] now stealing them." It took long and complex negotiations to gain the US Army's consent for the restitution process, which would last from September 1945 to March 1946. Urbanowicz was appointed head of this mission. The work was arduous, for the majority of the museum items, book collections and archival materials

- 6 Mrozińska, Wspomnienia z czasów..., op. cit., p. 520.
- ${\bf ^7}$ Archive of the National Museum in Warsaw (henceforth: Archive NMW), Archiwum wojenne [Wartime archive], vol. 2, signature 707a.
- 8 Bohdan Tadeusz Urbanowicz, "Ścieżki i spotkania," Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Sztuk Pięknych, 3 (25) (1989), p. 74.
- ⁹ Displaced persons, abbreviated as DPs, was a term used by the Allies for individuals who had been forced by the war to leave their homeland, and wanted to return home or find another country to live in, but who were unable to do this without the assistance of third parties. Urbanowicz, "Ścieżki...," op. cit., p. 68.
- The news of the Polish collection at Fischhorn was greeted with scepticism in Poland. People did not believe that works of such great value to Polish culture could be there. In mid-August 1945, Urbanowicz sought help in Warsaw in meetings that included Karol Estreicher, Jr. He did procure a document authorizing him to launch restitution proceedings. See Bohdan Tadeusz Urbanowicz, "Dziennik Fischhornu," in *Walka o dobra kultury...*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 334–84.

were totally disorganized and often in very poor condition.¹¹ On the floor, there were piles of prints mixed up with archival materials and books. The items saved by the Poles also included some from the National Museum in Warsaw, prints and drawings taken from the museum in 1944 among them. A transport of 12 rail cars carrying 351 crates of books and prints, 65 crates of archival materials, 154 pieces of furniture and 408 paintings (36 of them from the National Museum in Warsaw) arrived in Warsaw on 23 April 1946.¹²

But not everything could be saved and returned to Poland. The local population also took part in damaging and scattering the art being kept in the castle. Some of it was found in the nearby localities of Bruck, Zell am See, Taxenbach and Kaprun.¹³ This happened because "in May, the SS men had opened up the warehouses and the castle and proceeded to steal themselves and to allow the inhabitants to take primarily food and clothing from the barracks. [...] In June 1945 an American colonel together with a certain lady of Polish ancestry expedited several crates of valuables to Paris." After the US Army issued a directive, some of the objects taken by the locals were recovered. Polish antiquities were also found in the American troops' living quarters. Someone by chance took one of the folders marked "Łopieński – exhibition," two crumpled and damaged Warsaw cityscapes and a well-preserved large album with drawings by Alfred Schouppé out of the castle. They remained in Austria until 2013.

Seventy Years Later

"The day our museum's *Journal* carried an article about Łopieński, we received a call from the M[inistry of] F[oreign] A[ffairs] with the news that his missing works had been recovered. [...] What a momentous occasion and great emotions that such transient objects made on such fragile paper not only survived but found their way to the museum in such an extraordinary way. Let me thank the minister and all his associates," said Director of the National Museum in Warsaw Dr Agnieszka Morawińska at a press conference in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This serendipity came about on the 70th anniversary of the death of this Warsaw artist, of the Warsaw Uprising and of the looting of the museum's collections. This coincidence confirms that one must continue to search for works of art that were pillaged from Polish collections during the Second World War and to attempt to reclaim them.

Reclaiming artworks is possible thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. In recent years, the work of these two institutions has led to the return of many artefacts that had been looted from collections including the National Museum in Warsaw. Among them are two works by Julian Fałat,

- "Every morning, I sit down at some little table or crate and try to identify items being brought to me, to find signatures, inventory numbers, and so we travel methodically from room to room or to the barracks," as cited in Urbanowicz, "Ścieżki...," op. cit., p. 71.
 - ¹² Urbanowicz, "Dziennik...," op. cit., pp. 378-84.
 - 13 Ibid., pp. 334-84; Inventory Department of NMW file Restytucja z Salzburga 1946.
 - ¹⁴ Urbanowicz, "Ścieżki...," op. cit., p. 73.
- 15 As cited in Jerzy S. Majewski, "Grafiki wracają do Warszawy," *Gazeta Stołeczna*, 9 January 2014, p. 3; *Zrabowane w czasie wojny cenne grafiki wróciły do Polski* [online], [retrieved: 1 February 2014] at: http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/zrabowane_w_czasie_wojny_cenne_grafiki_wrocily_do_polski.
 - 16 The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage lists objects lost as a consequence of the Second World

Hunting in Nieśwież (1891) and Before Going Hunting in Rytwiany (before 1901), Aleksander Gierymski's Jewish Woman with Oranges (1880–81) and Leon Wyczółkowski's In the Artist's Studio (1883), all recovered in 2011. In 2012, Negro Woman (1884) by Anna Bilińska and Portrait of Jan III Sobieski (last quarter of the 17th century), which before the Second World War had belonged to the State Art Collections, came back to Poland. 21

The return of the works by Łopieński and Schouppé's album was possible because of the efforts of the staff of the Office for the Restitution of Cultural Goods at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, created in 1999. ²² It was also assisted by the Polish Consulate in Vienna and by Austrian historians, led by University of Vienna Professor Bertrand Perz, who specializes in Nazi crimes and the Second World War. The drawings and prints belonged to a private owner, who agreed to return them to the National Museum in Warsaw.

Together with the curator of the Collection of Polish Graphic Art, Anna Grochala, we ascertained that of the set of 28 works by Ignacy Łopieński, three had the stamps of the museum and of their pre-war donor Dominik Witke-Jeżewski. The only copy that had been purchased for the collection had a pre-war museum mark. The other pieces, donated by the artist to the museum for his anniversary exhibition, had not acquired the museum's markings before the war. All the prints were framed in cream-coloured passe-partouts, the way they were to be displayed in the planned exhibition. The four prints with the museum's marks also had inventory numbers recorded on them. The four prints with the museum's marks also had inventory numbers recorded on them.

War on: www.kolekcje.mkidn.gov.pl. The ministry also publishes a series of publications *Straty wojenne* [Wartime losses] which include registers of missing artworks.

- ¹⁷ Karina Habowska, "Skradzione, wywiezione... odzyskane," *Cenne, bezcenne, utracone*, 4 (69), October–December 2011, pp. 3–5.
- $^{18}\,$ Elżbieta Rogowska, "Żydówka z pomarańczami," Cenne, bezcenne, utracone, 3 (68), July–September 2011, pp. 3–5.
- ¹⁹ Renata Hiegersberger, "Powrót w wielkim stylu na jubileusz 150-lecia Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Cenne, bezcenne, utracone*, 1 (70), January–March 2012, pp. 4–7.
 - 20 Ead., "Piękna, skradziona, odzyskana," Cenne, bezcenne, utracone, 2 (71), April-June 2012, pp. 4-7.
 - ²¹ Monika Kuhnke, "Powrót portretu Jana III Sobieskiego," ibid., pp. 8-11.
- This office is discussed more extensively in Wojciech Kowalski, Monika Kuhnke, Zagrabione odzyskane. Działalność Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych RP w zakresie restytucji dóbr kultury utraconych przez Polskę w okresie II wojny światowej / Looted and recovered. Restitution by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland's Cultural Property Lost During World War II (Warsaw, 2011); Monika Kuhnke, "Polscy dyplomaci i polskie zabytki," Cenne, bezcenne, utracone, 4 (69), October–December 2011, pp. 15–19.
- ²³ On the collector and his graphic art collection donated to the Warsaw museum, see Piotr P. Czyż, "Dominik Witke-Jeżewski," in *Miłośnicy grafiki i ich kolekcje w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2006 (Warsaw, 2006), pp. 106–56. The collector used three black, circle stamps, two of them with the monogram "DWJ" underneath an open crown. Post-war lists of losses include 100 works by Łopieński ("exhibition of graphic works as original copies, 100 items"). See Maria Suchodolska, "Straty kultury polskiej w zakresie rysunków i grafiki polskiej," in *Straty kultury polskiej i zabytków. Informator zbiorowy*, Stanisław Lorentz, Maria Suchodolska, eds (Warsaw, 1973), TS, Archive NMW, signature 194/52, p. 113.
- ²⁴ The professional staff of each collection try to help establish the provenance of the collections and work together with the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office for the Restitution of Cultural Goods. With each item, they collect documentation to confirm that it came from the museum. Assisting them are surviving pre-war inventories, inventory cards and often photographs. This pre-war documentation gives not only basic information about authorship, materials, artistic techniques and dimensions, but also extremely important data about signatures, markings, text and physical characteristics (such as losses and other distinguishing marks). All proprietary markings on the objects, such as labels, writing and stamps, including those of the National Museum in Warsaw, are also exceptionally valuable for determining the provenance of the collections. In the case of graphic works,

The preparatory pencil drawings for the prints Self-Portrait (1905), Portrait of Franciszek Lilpop (1917) and Design for a Bookplate of Eustachy and Teresa Sapieha (1937) and the Castle Tower in Płock (before 1931) in pen and ink are the artist's most valuable pieces. Noteworthy among the prints, which are almost exclusively original, are compositions of which the museum has a single print, a soft varnish showing Rocks (c. 1905) and the etching Portrait of a Girl with a Bare Back (before 1900), Portrait of a Woman Sitting on a Stool (c. 1905), Townswoman of Wolbrom (1910) (fig. 1), the drypoint of Portrait of Franciszek Lilpop (1917/18) and Portrait of Jan Lopieński (the artist's father) and Portrait of Jan Królikowski, the first of Łopieński's etchings made in 1889. Also of great value are the states of Portrait of Leon Berenson (1905) and Sculptress. Portrait of Iza Daniłowicz-Strzelbicka (1906).

One of the two Warsaw cityscapes, *View of Warsaw in the Times of King Jan Kazimierz*, also bears the mark of Dominik Witke-Jeżewski, in the bottom right corner. The second cityscape, from the Latin edition of the sixth volume of Georg Braun's *Civitatis orbis terrarum* (Cologne, 1617), has two corners missing, the upper left and the lower right, places in which before the Second World War the museum's inventory number and Witke-Jeżewski's mark would have been placed.²⁵ But the surviving narrative on the inventory card also helped to establish the provenance of this print. The collector donated it to the museum in 1918.

The endpapers of the canvas-and-leather-bound album 50 Drawings of Alfred Schouppé have collection marks of the Zachęta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts with the number 176 and the society's library label with the number 2340. Schouppé, a painter and illustrator, had been Józef Richter's pupil in Warsaw. He also studied with Tommaso Minardi when he received a scholarship from the governor of the Kingdom in c. 1837 to enrol at the Academy of Saint Luke in Rome. In the 1840s he travelled in southern Italy, mostly making sketches and painting landscapes. He spent time in Switzerland, France and the German states. Together with Wojciech Gerson and Marcin Olszyński he organized the National Exhibition of Fine Arts in 1858. Two years later he was one of the founders of the Zachęta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts.

After the Nazis dissolved Polish associations, in the autumn of 1939 the art collection from the Zachęta Society was moved to the National Museum, since the society's building was to become the Haus der deutschen Kultur. The library and the graphic art collection were only transferred in 1940. Because of its artistic and historical value, the album was likely saved in one of the crates in 1941, and after the Warsaw Uprising taken out of the museum with the other collections. Its absence was recorded in 1958 in the annex to the list of losses of the Print Room, Polish Section, compiled by Irena Jakimowicz²² and in an unpublished directory of wartime losses.²²

most valuable are stamps of museums and collectors who donated their collections to the museum. The complex processes involved in determining the provenance of museum pieces is featured in *Muzealnictwo*, 53 (2012) – see there Roman Olkowski, "O badaniu proweniencji muzealiów," *Muzealnictwo*, 53 (2012), pp. 27–37.

- The losses of the Collection of Polish Graphic Arts also include "an album of Polish landscapes of Poland published by Braun and Hogenberg, a dozen or so pieces." See Suchodolska, op. cit., p. 113.
- ²⁶ The Inventory of the Library of the Zacheta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts, position 2340 includes this album. See *Inwentarz Biblioteki Towarzystwa Zachety Sztuk Pięknych*, Inventory Department of NMW.
- The biographical information is based on Elżbieta Szczawińska, "Schouppé Alfred," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 35, no. 4/147 (Wrocław, 1979), pp. 609–11.
 - 28 Straty wojenne. Rewindykacje. Wykazy strat wojennych, Varia 1945–1957, Archive NMW, signature 840/b.
 - 29 Suchodolska, op. cit., p. 112.

The page that precedes the illustrations features the donor's dedication: "Given to the Collection of the Zacheta Society for the Encouragement | of the Fine Arts in Warsaw as a souvenir | by one of its founders, the author. | Alfred Schouppé." Next, 50 drawings in pencil washed in a subtle cream tone, resembling that used in lithographs, were bound in the album. Perhaps this procedure was intended to assist the lithographers in creating the plates, since Schouppé was working on the cycle "Polish Landscapes in Lithographs after Drawings of History or Legends," which was published in 1863 by the Zacheta Society and printed by Maksymilian Fajans's Lithographic Studio in Warsaw. The tsarist authorities, unfortunately, did not permit any more of the planned volumes in the cycle to be published.

The works included in the album stem from the "journeys on foot" which he took in the company of Gerson, Olszyński and Julian Cegliński. The assembled landscapes can be divided into three groups: views of the ruins of Polish castles (Czersk, Iłża, Chęciny, Ogrodzieniec, Smoleń, Rabsztyn, Ossolin, Tudorów, Ujazd, Ojców, Koło, Tenczyn, Melsztyn, Czorsztyn), mountain views (principally the Tatras) and picturesque views of towns, villages and woods (**fig. 2**). They were made in the 1860s and the 1890s.

All the works that returned to Poland can be found in the Department of Prints and Drawings. They can also be inspected in the presentation of recovered works in the Digital National Museum in Warsaw.³¹

Translated by Maja Łatyńska

 $^{^{30}\,}$ The ten plates in this cycle are in the collection of the Department of Prints and Drawings (inv. no. Gr.Pol.599o/ $_{\rm I}$ -10 MNW).

³¹ Prace Ignacego Łopieńskiego i Alfreda Schouppé odzyskane dzięki pomocy Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych RP [online], Digital National Museum in Warsaw, [retrieved: 1 September 2014], at: http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion/showcasedescription?dirids=151.