

| “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

In May 1939, Ignacy Łopieński, who was already an aged artist at the time, once again proved his technical mastery in the field of graphic arts. His etched *Portrait of Marshal Józef Piłsudski* received the 2nd prize at the Military Exhibition opened at the Soldier's House in Poznań. Some time earlier, in March of that year, the artist donated an album with correspondence and press cuttings on his artistic activity to the National Museum in Warsaw. It featured a copy of “Die Graphischen Künste” with an article devoted to his graphic art, which was said to superbly convey the Polish character of the reproduced paintings.¹ The album, now sadly lost, was donated to the museum by Łopieński for a large retrospective exhibition of his works, which was planned for the autumn of 1939.² Hanna Abramowicz-Makowiecka was responsible for the conservational aspect of the exhibition, while Maria Mrozińska, then in charge of the Museum's print collection, supervised the content-related matters. Based on materials received from Łopieński and her own research, Mrozińska prepared a twenty-eight-page biography of the artist and a catalogue of his works of several dozen pages, which probably encompassed paintings and drawings as well. This conjecture is supported by a list of works received from Feliks Łopieński, the artist's brother, which enumerates the drawings and paintings in his possession.³

We can but speculate about the origin of the idea of organizing a museum jubilee exhibition of one of the most distinguished Polish graphic artists. The preparations probably began in early 1939. The presentation of Łopieński's works was to be the first exhibition of a living artist in the history of the Warsaw museum and another in a series of print exhibitions. Since 1938, the NMW had three rooms at its disposal for displaying prints and drawings within the framework of regular presentations of old and modern graphic art.⁴ The new building previously

¹ Wilhelm Schölermann, “Polnische Radierungen nach Polnischen Meistern,” *Die Graphischen Künste*, Ann 20 (1897), pp. 121–4.

² Stanisław Lorentz, “Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie w latach 1939–1954,” *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, vol. 2 (1957), p. 8; Anna Masłowska, *Kronika wystaw Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie 1962–2002*, vol. 1: 1862–1962 (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 2002), p. 97, therein a reproduction of the handwritten list of etching plates loaned by Ignacy Łopieński for the exhibition (MS, 10 June 1939).

³ Letter sent by Feliks Łopieński to Maria Mrozińska, 7 November 1940. Maria Mrozińska's archive is stored at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the National Museum in Warsaw.

⁴ One of the exhibition rooms was named after Dominik Witke-Jeżewski. It was designated for works from his vast collection.

housed an exhibition inaugurating the new premises, which presented the museum's collection of Polish graphic art (1932), and an exhibition of Italian *chiaroscuro* woodcuts from the collection of the Print Room of the University of Warsaw Library (1936).⁵ Łopieński's jubilee exhibition was to be a subsequent display devoted to prints only. Exhibitions of that kind had been organized in Warsaw since the beginning of the twentieth century, mainly in the rooms of Jan Krywult's Salon and the Zachęta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts.

Łopieński earned the honour of a monographic exhibition at the National Museum with his versatile artistic activity. He was one of the forerunners of the graphic arts in Poland and an exceptional master of graphic techniques, teaching artists interested in this field of art.

Ignacy Łopieński⁶ was born in 1865 in a famous family of Warsaw bronze artists. As a teenager he attended the School of Wojciech Gerson and Aleksander Kamiński, at the same time learning the art of modelling in clay and wax under the tutelage of his father. In 1888, thanks to a scholarship from the Zachęta Society, he went to Vienna to study sculpture, and then to École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. In 1890, unable to settle in the art capital of the time, he set out for Munich, where he joined the Polish artistic community, making friends, among others, with Olga Boznańska. He initially studied painting, which he then abandoned – despite his friends' protests – to take up graphic arts. Under the tutelage of Prof. Johann Leonhard Raab, a highly regarded reproductive engraver, painter and illustrator, Łopieński quickly came to be a recognized and award-winning reproductive graphic artist. He worked on and off in Munich until 1899, creating chiefly interpretative graphic artworks, based mainly on paintings by Munich-based artists of Polish origin: Anna Bilińska (*Self-Portrait*), Julian Fałat (*William II Hunting*) and Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski (*Wolves*). After 1894 he often visited Poland, working in Warsaw and Krakow on painting reproductions for the Society of Friends of the Fine Arts and the Zachęta Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts and on portraits of chairmen of the Krakow Agricultural Society. The most important achievements from this period are graphic interpretations of Jan Matejko's paintings: *Portrait of Jan Matejko after Self-Portrait* (1893), *Battle of Varna* (1895/1896, **fig. 1**), *Students Leaving Krakow* (1897/1898), *Sentencing Matejko to Death* (1902). He also began educational work, teaching and encouraging Polish painters – such as Józef Pankiewicz and Leon Wyczółkowski – to introduce graphic techniques in their work.⁷

⁵ See Masłowska, op. cit.

⁶ The life and work of Ignacy Łopieński was described by, i.a.: Wilhelm Zwierowicz, *Ignacy Łopieński. Szkic biograficzny* (Warsaw: Związek Polskich Artystów Grafików, [1931]); Zuzanna Pruszyńska, "Łopieński Ignacy," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 18 (Wrocław-Warsaw-Krakow-Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1973), pp. 411, 412; Jacek Strzałkowski, "Łopieński Ignacy," in *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających (zmarłych przed 1966 r.)*, vol. 5 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KRAG, 1993), pp. 177, 178, (with previous bibliography); Małgorzata Biłozór-Salwa, "Zapomniany koryfeusz sztuki graficznej. Działalność artystyczna Ignacego Łopieńskiego," in *Sława i zapomnienie. Studia z historii sztuki XVIII–XX wieku*, Dariusz Konstantynow, ed. (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej i Akademii Nauk, 2008), pp. 125–40; Piotr P. Czyż, "Szkola Łopieńskiego" – Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Graficznych, czyli warszawscy akwaforściści pierwszych dwóch dekad XX wieku," papers from the scholarly conference *Wielość w jedności. Techniki wklęsłodruku w Polsce po 1900 roku* organized by the Leon Wyczółkowski District Museum in Bydgoszcz in 2012 (in preparation for publication). While working on the article, I relied on archive materials stored at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IS PAN). I would like to thank the employees of IS PAN, in particular Prof. Dr Hab. Joanna Sosnowska and Dr Jolanta Polanowska, for their help in the research.

⁷ The period between 1895 and 1904, when Łopieński began to introduce Polish painters to the intaglio technique, requires more in-depth research. This is when the first prints by Józef Pankiewicz, Leon Wyczółkowski, Antoni Piotrowski or Zofia Stankiewicz appear. What is particularly puzzling is the very good technical command

Seeing the need to propagate the graphic arts among artists and the public, Łopieński worked together with Feliks Manggha Jasieński to organize the Society of Polish Painters-Etchers and to publish in 1903 the first artistic portfolio of prints, for which he recommended painters.⁸ In 1904, after the idea of the Krakow Society came to nothing, Łopieński left for Paris, where he joined the milieu of Polish artists. There he often visited and worked together with Boznańska, like he used to do in Munich. At that time he developed his individual graphic style, drawing – just like the Impressionists and Józef Pankiewicz – directly on metal plate, thus breaking free from the discipline of a reproductive graphic artist who diligently covers plates with hatching.

In 1908, the artist returned to Warsaw and settled there with the mission of animating an environment that would be conducive to the development of graphic art. He gathered a handful of artists around him, of whom the most talented were Franciszek Siedlecki, Feliks Jabłczyński and Zofia Stankiewicz. In 1912, together with the Warsaw circle of print admirers and promoters, they created the Society of Friends of the Graphic Arts,⁹ which managed to survive until 1918. The greatest achievement of the Society, apart from a series of lectures and lesser presentations of works of its members, was the organization of the 1st Exhibition of Modern Graphic Arts (presenting the works of Polish artists since 1860) combined with the Second Polish Henryk Grohman Competition organized in the rooms of the Warsaw Zachęta Society in February 1914. 27 artists entered the competition with 70 etchings, 18 woodcuts and 22 lithographs. The first prize in the etching category was awarded to Zofia Stankiewicz, in the woodcut category – to Władysław Skoczylas, while the works of Józef Tom and Jan Gumowski were considered the best lithographs. The war curbed the development of the Society, but not Łopieński's social and artistic activity. After Poland regained independence, he did give way to a new generation of artists who, led by Skoczylas, established the Union of Polish Graphic Artists, but he continued working without interruptions until the end of the interwar period, creating paintings, drawings and prints which gained recognition at subsequent exhibitions.

Today Łopieński is an almost forgotten artist. He is mentioned in studies concerning the history of the twentieth-century Polish graphic arts, but he is rarely treated as an independent artist. Emphasis is placed mainly on his skills as a reproductive graphic artist and teacher of graphic techniques, one of many artists practicing this type of graphic art at that time. This opinion was established already before the war. For example, in Mieczysław Treter's 1932 analysis of Polish art, we read that: "Ignacy Łopieński and Feliks Jasiński became famous for their excellent etchings. Their prints, however, were almost exclusively reproductions

of the aquatint. Łopieński rarely used this technique, but he must have encountered it during his studies in Munich. There are two known works in that technique executed in the early 1930s: *Flowers in a Vase* (fig. 2) and *Tulips*. The question of whether he also introduced the above-mentioned artists to this technique has to remain open for the time being.

⁸ Kazimierz Czarniecki, "Tekę grafik z 1903 r. i tzw. Stowarzyszenie Polskich Artystów Grafików w Krakowie," *Rocznik Muzeum Mazowieckiego w Płocku*, no. 14 (1991), pp. 49–84.

⁹ Zofia Baranowicz, "Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Graficznych," in *Polskie życie artystyczne w latach 1890–1914*, Aleksander Wojciechowski, ed. (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1967), pp. 181, 182; Wanda Maria Rudzińska, "Nowoczesna grafika polska w świetle warszawskiej Wystawy Graficznej z 1914 r.," in *Przed Wielkim Jutrem. Sztuka 1905–1918. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki. Warszawa październik 1990* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1993), pp. 325–38; Piotr P. Czyż, "Hieronim Wilder i grafika artystyczna w środowisku warszawskim pocz. XX w.," in *Kultura artystyczna Warszawy XVII–XXI w. Studia pod redakcją Zbigniewa Michalczyka, Andrzeja Pieńkosa i Michała Wardzyńskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2010), pp. 285–94.

of paintings by Matejko, Kowalski, Chełmoński or foreign artists.”¹⁰ Also Mieczysław Wallis focused on “the graphic transpositions of paintings [which] have nothing in common with soulless mechanical copies: they are subtle, fine, insightful translations from one technique to another – interpretations which could be compared to interpretations of works by Mozart, Beethoven or Chopin played by some outstanding virtuoso musician.”¹¹ A similar thought was expressed by Krystyna Czarnocka in 1956: “The most eminent exponents of our reproductive graphic art – Jasiński, Holewiński, Łopieński and Łoskoczyński – also created original prints, though only marginally [...] we must say that their creative contribution in this area was disproportionately small in relation to their technical capabilities.”¹² Czarnocka later tempered her opinion and noticed that “Łopieński was probably the only exponent of our reproductive graphic art who managed to switch completely to original works.”¹³

Łopieński's original works met with varied reception. “Ignacy Łopieński [...] was a child of his time, instilled with the conviction that excellence should be limited to workmanship, while the subject matter should be disdained and not arranged into a composition – which was the fundamental artistic dogma. This is why I. Łopieński's art is lacking in rich compositions, inspiring ideas or so-called (erroneously, for that matter) literary motifs. [...] The artist settles for fragmentary observations, studies of landscape, architecture, still life and human figures. During the 50 years of his artistic work, among hundreds of works he etched on plates, there are masterpieces of fine drawing and painting craftsmanship expressed with black and white patch and sensitivity to light. The principles of impressionistic art matured to excellence in his graphic works,” observed Witold Bunikiewicz.¹⁴ Łopieński's original prints, however, are not as powerful in terms of artistic expression as etchings by Pankiewicz or Rubczak; they seem to be more conservative and less innovatory. And yet, as Franciszek Siedlecki once wrote, “Łopieński's art, based on academic tradition and technical expertise, won instant recognition of the Polish society, and as such has been one of the building blocks laid on the foundations of national culture: this is educational, solid, technically perfect art. Creative souls may reject it, but they will always refer to it for technical hints on which they can base their individual works.”¹⁵ For Łopieński himself, graphics was the “art of propagating knowledge on visual arts” and, as the most democratic of the fine arts, equal to painting, sculpture and drawing, it enabled original works to become available across the nation, which is what Adam Mickiewicz had once wished for his own works.¹⁶

In her synthesis of Polish graphic arts, Irena Jakimowicz expressed the opinion that Łopieński's art “lost a lot due to the [...] excessive variety of techniques he used and his extreme

¹⁰ Mieczysław Treter, *Rozwój sztuki polskiej 1863–1930* (Warsaw: Trzaska, Evert & Michalski, 1932), p. 63.

¹¹ Mieczysław Wallis, “Wystawa Jubileuszowa Ignacego Łopieńskiego,” *Robotnik*, Ann 36, no. 137 (1931), p. 4.

¹² Krystyna Czarnocka, “Początki nowoczesnej grafiki polskiej (lata 1890–1914),” *Sztuka i krytyka. Materiały do studiów i dyskusji z zakresu teorii i historii sztuki, krytyki artystycznej oraz badań nad sztuką*, vol. 7, no. 3–4 (1956), pp. 141, 142.

¹³ Ead., *Półtora wieku grafiki polskiej* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1962), p. 158.

¹⁴ Witold Bunikiewicz, “Laureat stolicy w dziale plastyki,” *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 321 (1936), pp. 18, 19.

¹⁵ Franciszek Siedlecki, “Wystawa Ignacego Łopieńskiego w Salonie Polskiego Tow. Artystycznego,” *Dzień Polski*, no. 87 (1931), p. 5.

¹⁶ Ignacy Łopieński, “Sztuki graficzne w stosunku do przemysłu,” *Grafika Polska. Miesięcznik Poświęcony Sztuce Graficznej*, Ann 2, nos 11–12 (1922), p. 262; id., “Akwafora – propaganda wiedzy plastycznej. Sztuka z igły, wosku, kwasu i miedzi,” *Kurier Poranny*, no. 54 (1935), p. 6.

ease of work. He painted and sculpted (mainly medals), and in the field of graphic arts he not only created etchings, at which he excelled as a reproductive graphic artist, but also used the techniques of drypoint and soft ground, he tried mezzotint, woodcut and lithography, as well as engraving.” The author pointed out that with time Łopieński’s original works came closer to nineteenth-century realism “in very superficial interpretation rather than [to] significant issues of the present.”¹⁷

In the interwar period, despite the strong expansion of woodcut and the “school of Skoczylas,” Łopieński’s services for the development of the Polish graphic arts began to be appreciated. The artist’s works featured constantly in exhibition projects, mainly in the Warsaw Zachęta Society. His works were presented as a model for young generations due to his excellent command of the drawing technique. When Łopieński presented “around twenty drawings, some watercolours and low reliefs, and a large collection of prints, dominated by etchings and drypoints” in the rooms of the Zachęta Society in 1926, it was emphasized that: “These latest works are distinguished by conscientious finish, good command of technique and correct academic drawing.”¹⁸ The artist’s works were included among more than 300 prints displayed at a huge exhibition of modern Polish graphic works organized by the Foreign Propaganda Bureau at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, whose objective was to promote Polish art in European capitals.¹⁹ The Touring Exhibition of Polish Graphic Arts, shown in turn in 26 Polish cities starting from 1922, also included works of the Warsaw graphic artist. When in 1929 Łopieński received a gold medal at the Polish General Exhibition in Poznań, his artistic and pedagogical oeuvre was already universally known and acknowledged. This appreciation was expressed by organizing a jubilee exhibition of the artist at the premises of the Polish Artistic Association on 29 March 1931.²⁰ About 120 works of the artist (prints, drawings, watercolours, low reliefs, medals and plaques) were on display. At the time, the exhibition attracted widespread press publicity: “We could admire his rich and multi-faceted art at the jubilee exhibition, organized recently by the Union of Polish Graphic Artists – an exhibition which should have been held in a room at the Zachęta Society rather than at the modest premises of the Union in Marszałkowska street.”²¹ Less than two months later, Łopieński was decorated with the Gold Cross of Merit by Władysław Skoczylas, the then head of department in the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. The jubilee exhibition was presented for the second time in December 1931 at the National Museum in Krakow. “Krakow does not remember him,” wrote the “Głos Narodu” daily, “although he created a couple of works here in the last years of the previous century. This is why the initiative of the Association of Friends

¹⁷ Irena Jakimowicz, *Pięć wieków grafiki polskiej*, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 29 June – 30 August 1997 (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1997), pp. 85, 87.

¹⁸ W.H., “Wystawy w Zachęcie,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, no. 48 (1926), p. 830.

¹⁹ In 1922, the exhibition travelled to London, Brussels, The Hague and Amsterdam; in 1923 to Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and Helsinki; in 1924 to Tallinn and Riga; in 1925 and 1926 to Prague, Cologne, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Budapest.

²⁰ Depending on the sources, jubilee exhibitions taking place in 1931 were related to the 40th, 45th or even 50th anniversary of his artistic activity, and the dates referred to the artist’s first prints (1890) on the one hand, and to enrolling in the Drawing School of Gerson and Kamiński (1879) on the other. The celebration of the 50th anniversary planned by the National Museum in Warsaw in 1939 would then refer to the period, in which the artist decided to devote himself to the graphic arts.

²¹ J.Z., “Jubileusz Ignacego Łopieńskiego,” *Gazeta Warszawska*, Ann 157, no. 146 (1931), p. 4.

of the National Museum should be welcomed, as it gave us the opportunity to see the artistic oeuvre of the doyen of the Polish graphic art."²²

It seems that the jubilee had a positive impact on Łopieński, who created a couple of interesting graphic works at that time. He presented them at the premises of the Visual Artists Team at an exhibition arranged together with his pupils: Wilhelm Zwierowicz (prints) and Mieczysław Trautman (watercolours) in January 1932. In February, the artist received a monetary award from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment at the 3rd Exhibition of Polish Graphic Arts organized by the Union of Polish Graphic Artists at the Zachęta Society, while in December, at the annual Salon event, he was given a Merit Diploma for lifetime artistic achievement.

In 1936, Łopieński was honoured with the Capital City of Warsaw award for scholarly and artistic activity "in recognition of his lifetime artistic achievement, through which this outstanding reproducer of Polish painting masterpieces and master of etching expressed himself. He was one of the first to encourage the pursuit of graphic art, and he supported it duly with his artistic effort in a time which preceded its contemporary peak. His life and activity are connected with Warsaw."²³ Despite the honours, Łopieński did not abandon educational work and was willing to teach the etching technique to anyone. He fulfilled this ambition in the middle of 1930s, when he was active in the Club of Polish Etchers.

The next jubilee was to be celebrated in the exhibition rooms of the National Museum in Warsaw. Half a century of the distinguished master's artistic activity was to be crowned by a presentation of the full spectrum of his works. More than 100 prints were gathered at the preparation stage. However, the outbreak of the war thwarted these plans. The artist, who spent the summer working in Ukraine, in an estate in Doloshovka in the Stanisławów Voivodeship (currently Ivano-Frankivsk), moved to Lviv after the war broke out. On account of his poor financial situation, he was forced to earn his living with irregular artistic work. On a postcard written to Mrozińska he wrote bitterly: "My life in Lviv consists of these modest living standards, and the end of my life resembles the beginning of my career when I studied in Munich, Paris, etc. It's quiet, cold and far from home. And so I roam from one home to another to find shelter. People are nice, helpful and they support me for free, as I have been penniless since the beginning of the war (I came here for six weeks and I was only prepared to stay here this long), otherwise I would have to beg for money in the street. I began my artistic life this way and I end it thus, it has come full circle! That's it!"²⁴

The artist did not live through the war, but he managed to return to Warsaw, where he died on 20 November 1944.

The works intended for the exhibition: "artist's proofs, selected from the entire oeuvre, framed, prepared for the exhibition,"²⁵ were considered war losses. In this case caution should be exercised about lists of war losses, which were often prepared during a short time. Years later, it turns out that works of art returning to the NMW were not placed in their appropriate

²² Arten, "Wznawiciel polskiej grafiki. Otwarcie wystawy dzieł Ignacego Łopieńskiego w Muzeum Narodowym," *Głos Narodu*, Ann 37, no. 330 (1931), p. 4.

²³ *Plastyka*, Ann 2, no. 4 (1936), p. 309.

²⁴ Postcard sent by Ignacy Łopieński to Maria Mrozińska, Lviv, 12 March 1941. Stored at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the National Museum in Warsaw.

²⁵ Maria Suchodolska, *Dział Grafiki Polskiej. Wykaz strat wojennych*, 16 December 1966, TS, p. 4. Apart from one hundred works and thirty-two plates designated for the exhibition, earlier working lists of losses prepared by Maria Mrozińska also mentioned an album containing correspondence and press cuttings related to Ignacy Łopieński.

storage locations straight away, which might have led to situations where their provenance could not be determined.²⁶

After verifying a substantial amount of data it can be assumed that most of the prints prepared for Łopieński's exhibition have survived, as the Collection of Polish Prints in NMW contains 116 different graphic compositions by that artist.²⁷ Łopieński himself donated more than 20 prints for the exhibition and a 1900 drawing by Antoni Kamieński, presenting him in the studio at an etching desk.²⁸ Both the drawing and the aforementioned prints have been preserved in the collection. The prints prepared for the exhibition were mounted in thin cardboard, the same as was once used to display prints on screens and in display cases. Things do not look so well for graphic plates. The post-war list of losses mentions 32 plates of Łopieński which were donated to the Museum for the jubilee exhibition. Currently, only six plates have been identified: *By the Stove* (1912–13),²⁹ *Portrait of Artur Grottger* (1917),³⁰ *A Highlander Scything Grass* (1930),³¹ *Artillery Exercises* (c. 1930),³² *Bay Dog* (c. 1930).³³ There are three more plates in the collection, but they are of different provenance. A list made by Łopieński himself enumerates plates which are lost today: *Head of a Turk in a Turban* (1895), *Venice. Canale Grande* (after 1900), *Portrait of Ignacy Łopieński* (1905), *Vignette with a Mask* (1912), *Foundry* (1912) and five plates showing technological processes of working on a plate. The set of plates brings to mind a supplement to the 1st Graphic Exhibition of 1914, which comprised tools and copper plates for intaglio techniques prepared by Łopieński.³⁴ Apart from the above-mentioned prints and plates, the artist donated to the museum tools, preparations and devices necessary in the work of a graphic artist.

Research on the exhibition which never happened is greatly aided by a card catalogue prepared by Mrozińska, which has not been preserved in its entirety and today contains 77 cards. The catalogue did not encompass graphic plates, only prints. Some cards included information on the destruction or existence of plates and their possible storage location (33 plates were identified as being in the author's possession, three as being probably in his possession, seven were held by private persons or institutions, 16 graphic plates were considered to have been destroyed and six – lost). The surviving plates are mainly the ones created in Warsaw, while most of the destroyed or lost plates were those from Paris.

The catalogue also lists 12 design drawings for prints, while ten graphic compositions were considered to have been created directly on the plate, without a design drawing (this

²⁶ Information on the losses is verified on an on-going basis. In 2011, an album of prints with views of Gdańsk by Mathaeus Deisch (ref. A.780) was identified in the collection of the National Library as donated to the National Museum in Warsaw by Dominik Witke-Jeżewski in 1918 (inv. no. 26012 MNW).

²⁷ On account of employing various titles for the same works, the size of Łopieński's graphic oeuvre may not be confirmed with full certainty. It may be assumed that there were c. one hundred and thirty published graphic works.

²⁸ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.536 MNW.

²⁹ Inv. no. Gr.Pol.20958 MNW.

³⁰ Inv. no. Gr.Pol.20959 MNW.

³¹ Inv. no. Gr.Pol.20960 MNW.

³² Inv. no. Gr.Pol.20961 MNW.

³³ Inv. no. Gr.Pol.20962 MNW.

³⁴ *Pamiętka z Wystawy Graficznej i Konkursu II-go imienia Henryka Grohmannna*, exh. cat., Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych, February 1914 (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych, 1914), p. 53.

applies mainly to the Paris works). Currently, the NMW collection contains 23 drawings by Łopieński, of which 15 can be linked to specific prints. These are: *William II Hunting* after Julian Fałat (1893),³⁵ *Portrait of a Lady Sitting on a Chair* (1905),³⁶ studies for *Konstanty Potocki on His Deathbed* (1909),³⁷ two studies for a print after Maurycy Gottlieb's painting *Shylock and Jessica* (1913),³⁸ *Female Etcher* (c. 1913),³⁹ *Old Town Square* (1917, **fig. 3**),⁴⁰ *Design of a Music Competition Diploma* (1917),⁴¹ *Bydgoszcz Venice* (1922),⁴² *Portrait of Stanisław Staszic* (1926),⁴³ *Portrait of President Ignacy Mościcki* (1929),⁴⁴ *A Highlander at Haying* (1930),⁴⁵ *Dziekania Street in Warsaw* (1930),⁴⁶ *Still Life with Chrysanthemums and a Buddha Figurine* (1931, **fig. 4**),⁴⁷ *Gdynia Harbour* (1932)⁴⁸ and *Portrait of Józef Piłsudski* (1938).⁴⁹ The remaining drawings are academic studies from 1890, as well as landscape drawings and still lifes.

However, the card catalogue cannot serve as conclusive evidence in the research on the artistic legacy of Łopieński, as it contains inaccuracies and records which stand in contradiction to other documents.

Among Łopieński's works from the Paris period and those created after his return to Poland, there are some examples of good compositions as well as interesting technical and formal solutions (*Lady in an Armchair*, *Still Life with a Skull*). A unique and dark atmosphere emanates from the deeply etched, drypoint-supplemented *Portrait of the Sculptor Iza Daniłowicz-Strzelbicka* (**fig. 5**), created in Paris in 1906, in which a sculpted form wrapped with a cloth as if with a shawl, is "lurking" behind the artist's back. The mezzotint *Foundry*, created in Warsaw in 1912, is also surprising: due to the light and shadow effects on the one hand, and its contemporary subject matter on the other – showing the arduous labour of a foundry worker in the noble and painterly graphic technique, which had been growing in popularity since the end of the seventeenth century. The drypoints: *Blonde* from 1905, *Haystacks* from 1907 and *Forest Edge*, created before 1914 (**fig. 6**), demonstrate the fine skill of operating a graphic needle, which the author used successfully to create graphically balanced compositions.

Łopieński was appreciated for his portraits, which he created at all stages of his artistic activity. He could superbly capture the individual psychological features of the model, regardless of whether he created a print after a painting (*Self-Portrait of Anna Bilińska*, *Self-Portrait of Jan*

³⁵ Inv. no. 183394 MNW.

³⁶ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14192 MNW.

³⁷ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160015 MNW.

³⁸ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14188 MNW.

³⁹ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160012 MNW.

⁴⁰ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14189 MNW.

⁴¹ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160067 MNW.

⁴² Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14191 MNW.

⁴³ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160014 MNW.

⁴⁴ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.159687 MNW.

⁴⁵ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160013 MNW.

⁴⁶ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14190 MNW.

⁴⁷ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.160068 MNW.

⁴⁸ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.14193 MNW.

⁴⁹ Inv. no. Rys.Pol.1042 MNW.

Matejko), a photograph (*Portrait of Paweł Popiel, Portrait of Józef Piłsudski*) or from nature (*Self-Portrait* – **fig. 7**, *Portrait of Mela Muter, Portrait of Leon Berenson, Portrait of Stanisław Noakowski*). He should also be appreciated as a graphic designer, author of bookplates, diplomas and occasional prints, which he created both on the basis of other people's models (*Bookplate of the National Museum in Krakow* after a design by Jan Bukowski, *Bookplate of Józef Weyssenhoff* after the *Bookplate of Ignacy Łoś* etched by Kajetan Wincenty Kielisiński, *Diploma of the Warsaw Branch of the Imperial Society for Game Reproduction and Correct Hunting* after a design by Franciszek Ejsmond, an engraving *Officer's Commission* created after a drawing by Wojciech Jastrzębowski) or his own compositions, such as the etched *Poster of the March 1917 Musical Competition* and *Diploma of the Association of Rowing Societies for the Polish Championship* (**fig. 8**).

Although the NMW is in the possession of almost the entire graphic oeuvre of Łopieński, a second attempt at preparing a monographic exhibition of the artist's works has not been made. From the modern perspective, it would be possible to present his works in a broader context than it was attempted over 70 years ago.

The odium which reproductive graphic art had to bear for many years is now a thing of the past. Graphic artists who interpreted paintings often demonstrated great artistry and technique, which could be the object of envy of many an artist creating original prints. The nineteenth century was a breakthrough period for a substantial number of them, as some of those "reproductive" etchers developed artistic self-awareness and began to create original works, just like their contemporary *peintre-graveur* colleagues. This was also true for Poles creating abroad, and Łopieński served as a link between generations and artistic approaches in the Polish graphic arts. Today his works can be presented against a broader background. Appropriate context could be provided by starting with the works of Henryk Redlich (1838–84), an artist who failed to revive etching in Poland despite many efforts, international awards and a sense of mission, going through the artistic legacy of Feliks Stanisław Jasiński (1862–1901), whose graphic works were admired by Burne-Jones himself, and concluding with artists who practised interpretative graphic arts – which is a more apt term for this kind of work – only sporadically, such as Józef Pankiewicz (1866–1940). All of them created original prints as well, but their works were very different from each other: Redlich's etchings had the form of realistic landscapes, similar to prints of Conrad Grefe, Jasiński's woodcuts resembled Nabis art, while Pankiewicz's drypoints and etchings were a continuation of French Impressionism.

Reproductive graphic art can also be considered in the context of painters who duplicate their original paintings using graphic techniques. Let us consider Wyczółkowski's aquatints, which were created after his own paintings and successfully interpreted the pictorial qualities in a monochromatic technique – are they reproductions or examples of fully autonomous graphic art? Similar questions can be asked about the works of Zofia Stankiewicz.

The graphic oeuvre of the above-mentioned artists is extremely well represented in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. Why, then, not make an attempt at adopting a new viewpoint on the generations of artists who fought against the stereotype of an artisan printmaker? Jasiński's Nabis-influenced woodcuts juxtaposed with impressionistic etchings by Łopieński represent the independent paths they took to develop individual artistic expression. The museum has never housed such an exhibition as the one which did not take place in 1939.