

| Johann Peter Weyer, and the First Acquisitions of the Museum of Fine Arts in Warsaw

In the year of the 150th anniversary of the National Museum in Warsaw¹ (originally called the Museum of Fine Arts), it is impossible not to remember its first acquisition, made a mere three months after the institution's founding, in August 1862, in the auction of Johann Peter Weyer's famous collection in Cologne. When one considers that the Museum's combined collections number nearly one million items today, the first forty-odd entries in the Main Inventory seem fascinating, emotionally touching even... The genesis of these collections is worth remembering also because most of the works then acquired have survived the test of time and continue to occupy an important place in the permanent galleries of European Old Masters painting.²

The Museum's delegate to the auction was its first honorary director, Senator Justynian Karnicki (1806–76), a member of the Board of Education and the Warsaw Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts. He returned home with 36 paintings he had successfully bid for and another seven bought from the antiques dealer Antoine Brasseur.

In 1962, for the National Museum in Warsaw's 100th anniversary, those of the Cologne works that had survived since their acquisition were put on show. The exhibition was accompanied by a paper published by Jan Białostocki in the *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, discussing Weyer, Karnicki's mission, and his guidelines for bidding in the Cologne auction.³ An appendix listed all 43 paintings acquired in 1862, mostly with illustrations, noting war and postwar losses as well as providing updated attributions. It is worth re-examining the figure of the Cologne collector and his private painting gallery today because new publications devoted to Weyer's collection have come out since then, notably the essays by Horst Vey and Karl Joseph Bollenbeck (1966),⁴ and by Roland Krischel (1995).⁵ Half a century after

¹ This paper was written in 2012 for the 150th anniversary of the National Museum in Warsaw. For the purpose of this volume (appearing for the 160th anniversary), items published after 2012 have been added to the notes [editor's note].

² The item recorded in inventory books under no. 1 is the only one that does not belong to Western European painting. It is a Russian or Ruthenian icon (considered Byzantine at the time of purchase). See Aleksandra Sulikowska-Belczowska's paper in this issue of the *Journal*.

³ Jan Białostocki, "The Weyer Collection and the Beginning of the Warsaw Art Museum," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, Ann. 3, no. 2 (1962), pp. 39–62.

⁴ Horst Vey, Karl Joseph Bollenbeck, "Johann Peter Weyer, seine Gemäldesammlung und seine Kunstliebe," *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch*, vol. 28 (1966), pp. 159–254.

⁵ Roland Krischel, *Johann Peter Weyer als Sammler, Stifter und Mäzen*, in *Johann Peter Weyer: Kölner Altertümer – Kommentarband*, Werner Schäffke, ed. (Cologne, 1994), pp. 41–83; id., *Die Privatgalerie des Kölner Stadtbau-*

Białostocki's aggregate analysis of the Warsaw paintings from the Weyer collection, their attributions also need to be verified.

Johann Peter Weyer (1794–1864) was one of the most famous and discerning German art collectors of the Romantic period. An architect by profession, he began his training at Franz Katz's private school of drawing and painting in Cologne. There he met the future renowned painter Carl Begas, with whom, in 1813, he enrolled in the *École des beaux-arts* in Paris. The young Begas's self-portrait with Weyer (at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne), executed in a *Freundschaftsbild der Romantik* style, suggests ties of close friendship between the two students.⁶ Upon his return from Paris in 1816, Weyer, a young master architect, was appointed assistant of Cologne's chief architect, Peter Schmitz. Six years later, he took over the position, and held it until 1844. During that time, he made outstanding contributions to the revitalization of the city, which was left impoverished and neglected after the French occupation (1794–1814). Over the course of his tenure, he carried out numerous architectural and urban-planning projects, including the construction of more than 50 roads. In designing the stellar arrangement of the streets around the church of St. Severin, he was clearly inspired by the concepts implemented in Paris, especially the Place de l'Étoile. Weyer was also a pioneer in the conservation of architectural landmarks. He restored the Overstolzenhaus, Cologne's oldest patrician house (built 1120–1225), which was acquired by the city in 1838. In the 1830s, he built his own neo-Classical residence at Rothgerberbach 1. Ten years later, he erected a stately building to contain a large art gallery, at that time counting some 600 paintings.

A revival of art-collecting traditions in Cologne in the early 19th century was, paradoxically, helped by the dire situation in which the Rhineland region, occupied since the revolution by French troops, had found itself. The occupying authorities had secularized all ecclesiastical institutions, seizing their property. Many artworks had been shipped to Paris. Churches were falling into neglect, and their furnishings, due to frequent forced sales, were becoming dispersed. The Catholic Cologne – for centuries an important centre of religious life and the seat of an archbishopric – was experiencing a historical, moral, and material catastrophe. The first person who, with great commitment, started buying up and safeguarding relics of the past was Canon Ferdinand Franz Wallraf (1748–1824). What he had collected over the years eventually became the beginning of the city museum, the Wallrafanium (later renamed as the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum). Similar patriotic feelings motivated the much younger brothers Sulpiz (1783–1854) and Melchior Boisserée (1786–1851). They accumulated a significant and cohesive painting collection, which, in turn, became the cornerstone of the present-day Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

For Johann Peter Weyer, collecting was a passion. The stability of Prussian rule in his home town allowed him to make sensible acquisitions. Weyer was guided by the idea of creating a collection that would have strong educational value. He started attending auctions in 1824 and constantly built up his collection. Even though his salary as city architect and fees from private commissions were substantial, they were not enough to permit an acquisition policy as bullish and expansive as the one he had embarked on. What made it possible was real-estate speculation and high-risk financial operations that would eventually prove fatal for him. Over the course of several decades, Weyer accumulated a large and significant collection, Cologne's second largest after the Wallrafanium. Bills from a posthumous sale of the bookseller Johann

meisters Johann Peter Weyer, in *Lust und Verlust. Kölner Sammler zwischen Tricolore und Preußenadler*, Hiltrud Kier and Frank Günter Zehnder, eds, exh. cat., Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne, 1995 (Cologne, 1995), pp. 473–82.

⁶ See Klaus Lankheit, *Das Freundschaftsbild der Romantik* (Heidelberg, 1962).

Georg Schmitz's artworks attest to the scale of his acquisitions: his spending there was worth only a third less than what Johann Anton Ramboux spent on items for the Wallrafianum.⁷ But Weyer did not compete with the city collection, quite the opposite; as early as 1829 he donated three medieval paintings to it, inaugurating the list of the Wallrafianum's donors, and envisaged, before his personal finances collapsed, merging his collection with that of the city. He was not only a high-spending collector, but also a highly discerning one. The idea was for the collection to present the different European schools, and within each the successive stages of their historical development. This type of an "academic" – and thematically wide-ranging – collection proved a right choice for Weyer as he did not have to compete with other Cologne art buyers, such as Ramboux (who specialized in early Italian painting and that was what he bought for the Wallrafianum) or the Boisserée brothers (who collected only Rhinelandish, early German, and Flemish painting). Weyer's formula was more pro-educational; he decided to make his collection public soon after opening his own gallery in the 1840s.

That gallery – one of the first private museum buildings in the whole of Germany – was a testimony to the highest professionalism of the architect, collector, and steward in one. The introductions to two catalogues of the Weyer collections (published in 1852 and 1859, respectively) include a detailed description of the venue and its luxury fittings.⁸ The main gallery space was preceded by a suite of three anterooms. In the first of those, Italian, Spanish, and Netherlandish paintings were displayed on red velour wallpaper. There was also a guest book to sign into, now lost, alas. The next antechamber, dominated by darker tones, had walls lined with green velour, with a table and chairs inviting visitors to sit down and chat. In the next space, opening behind a heavy curtain and lit from above through a glass roof, were exhibited artworks considered most valuable by the owner: *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, then attributed to Hubert van Eyck and insured for a sum of 1,500 thalers (now as Quentin Massys's work in the *Musées Royaux des beaux-arts* in Brussels), *Saint Veronica with the Sudarium* by the Master of Saint Veronica (today in the National Gallery in London), and *Persian Sybil*, believed by Weyer to have been a work of Jan Mostaert (now in the National Museum in Warsaw) and attributed to the Bruges painter Ambrosius Benson (**fig. 1**).⁹ The sumptuous view of the suite of three lobbies and main gallery caused Sulpiz Boisserée, who saw it in 1847, to make a somewhat stinging remark in his journal about "ridiculous luxury." But he also mentioned, with genuine admiration, an "unexpectedly great number of paintings, including several very good ones."¹⁰ From the third antechamber, ascending a six-step staircase, one entered the main gallery. In its architectural form, it resembled another of Weyer's designs – the so-called Moorish playroom, built in 1842 on the occasion of the launch of works aimed at completing the Cologne Cathedral (according to rediscovered original Gothic plans). Weyer's gallery was a three-aisle space twenty-five metres long and seven metres wide, with ten columns supporting the roof construction. Each column was flanked with a pair of white-lacquered chairs with red velvet upholstery, offering comfort for the visitors. The non-transparent central section of the roof

⁷ Ibid., p. 473.

⁸ In an appendix to their paper, Horst Vey and Karl Joseph Bollenbeck reprint in extenso the two introductions and a description of the Weyer gallery from a September 1851 issue of Leipzig's *Illustrierte Zeitung*. See Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., pp. 194–99.

⁹ Inv. no. M.Ob.18 MNW. See H. Benesz, M. Kluk, *Early Netherlandish, Dutch, Flemish and Belgian Paintings 1494–1983 in the Collections of the National Museum in Warsaw and the Palace at Nieborów. Complete Illustrated Summary Catalogue*, vol. 1: *Signed and Attributed Paintings* (Warsaw, 2016), pp. 46–47, cat. no. 34.

¹⁰ Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 162.

and the walls were covered with a red-brown woollen cloth. The ceilings of the side “aisles” were glazed-in, so that the paintings on the walls enjoyed natural lighting (**fig. 2**). Today, we can admire Weyer’s foresight and expertise as a conservator. Rather than adjoining directly to the wall, the paintings were suspended from iron bars installed horizontally one above the other. This prevented an excessive condensation of moisture. The absence of a basement and the elevation of the floor level by the aforementioned six steps served the same purpose. Paintings were exhibited in a “palace” arrangement, close to each other, from top to bottom. On the front wall, visible right from the entrance, were two representations of the Holy Family: above a horizontal composition by Jordaens, below, in an extraordinarily ornate frame, a Rubens. The latter held a double significance for Weyer. Firstly, at the time it was believed that Rubens was born in Cologne (and not in Siegen), and secondly, it came from the historical collection of Eberhard Jabach (1618–95), a famous Cologne–Antwerp merchant and banker. Thus, in Weyer’s eyes, the painting was symbolically linked to Cologne’s long-standing bourgeois tradition of art collecting.¹¹ Jordaens’s *Holy Family*, in turn, symbolizes a connection between the holdings of the National Museum in Warsaw and the collection of the Cologne architect (**fig. 3**).¹²

In Johann Peter Weyer we see today not only an important architect and art conservator, a great collector, but also a precursor of museum curators, carefully documenting their collections. The 1852 catalogue includes exhaustive descriptions of the paintings. It is possible that Weyer himself wrote them, as slightly later he was involved in editing the early catalogues of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum. He also wanted his catalogues to include drawing or print-making reproductions. As early as around 1842 (when he was opening his gallery), Weyer had a number of such reproductions made by a draughtsman. Fourteen of those have been preserved to this day, but their quality did not satisfy the collector and he shelved the project. We also know that he wanted to photograph some of his holdings and publish the reproductions in the first catalogue. Daguerreotype had already been used to document historical buildings and artworks. This plan was partly realized. A total of 52 photographic prints have been preserved at the Cologne city archive, but their unsatisfying quality (the photographs being too dark and illegible) meant that the collector decided not to publish them.¹³ He then commissioned a young artist named Peter Deckers (1823–76), who specialized in copying paintings in watercolour and lithography, to produce some 300 afterdrawings (*Nachzeichnungen*) of his paintings. These, gathered in two bound albums, have been preserved to this day in the Weyer family. Published by Vey and Bollenbeck in 1966, they constitute an invaluable documentation of the collection.¹⁴ Eleven of the drawings are of paintings that today are in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw.

The Weyer collection, which was dispersed after being auctioned off, contained some 600 paintings when the owner’s finances collapsed, but despite such extensive visual documentation, only about 90 of those have been located so far. Among the artworks acquired for the Warsaw Museum of Fine Arts, 29 paintings have been preserved (the remainder are war losses). Compared with the Weyer gallery’s original holdings, this is a tiny number, but still

¹¹ Krischel, *Die Privatgalerie...*, op. cit., pp. 476–77.

¹² Inv. no. M.Ob.17 MNW. See Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 315, cat. no. 340.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 478–79.

¹⁴ Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit. pp. 200–53. The catalogue lists 301 items with Deckers’s drawings, a bibliography of the reproduced paintings, lot numbers in the 1862 auction catalogue, and – wherever possible – the names of the winning bidders.

the largest for works from the Weyer collection preserved in one place. As Jan Białostocki wrote in an anniversary article in 1962: “[...] since the availability and social role of artworks were on top of [Weyer’s] agenda as collector, he would probably be happy knowing that his paintings have played such a pivotal role in the founding of a major gallery in distant Warsaw, where they have been admired for thousands of people every year, and for a century now.”¹⁵

Much of the credit for that goes to Justynian Karnicki who participated in the auction of Weyer’s collection in the gallery at Rothgerberbach between 25 and 30 August 1862. Making acquisitions, he followed similar guidelines as Weyer himself did in building his collection: he wanted to buy paintings representing the main schools, and to have at least one true masterpiece within each. Despite a limited budget, he was successful in this endeavour. Karnicki received extra funds from Poland when the auction was already over. Alas, even with those additional means he could not afford to bid for the crown jewel of the Weyer collection: Rubens’s *Holy Family* (acquired instead by the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum). Jan Białostocki expressed regret that Karnicki failed to buy Hans Memling’s *Virgin and Child with an Angel, Saint George and a Donor* (now at the National Gallery in London), or Massys’s previously mentioned *Virgin and Child Enthroned* (now in Brussels). Using the extra funds, Karnicki decided to buy an additional seven Dutch Old Masters paintings from the antiques dealer Antoine Brasseur. In all, he brought from Cologne to Warsaw 43 paintings and a small marble roman urn from 50–70 CE, also from Weyer’s collection but not listed in the auction catalogue.

In his 1962 paper, Jan Białostocki reviewed those acquisitions, the Museum’s first, and the assessment of their artistic value. In most cases, he wrote, Karnicki believed he was buying better works than was actually the case. Indeed, several attributions from Weyer’s catalogues have since been proved incorrect. For example, *Christ at Levi’s*, there attributed to “Heitz von Memmingen / Johann Heiss (1640–1704),” has turned out to be a copy after Paolo Veronese; *Rialto Bridge*, listed in the catalogue as an Antonio Canale, is a poor imitation of Bernardo Belotto; and the *Virgin with Child* considered Murillo’s is a copy after that master.¹⁶

But in one case it was the other way round. A *Virgin with Child* listed in Weyer’s collection as a work of Antonio di Guido Alberti da Ferrara, a lesser known painter, was rightly ascribed by Władysław Tatarkiewicz to the famous Bernardino di Betto of Siena, known as Pinturicchio. Despite its less prominent attribution, the painting must have held a special place in Weyer’s collection: as one of only eight works it was reproduced in the auction catalogue, and a lithographic portrait of the man himself, featured in a publication that commemorated the J.M. Heberle-led auction, shows him with precisely that piece in the background.¹⁷

Białostocki himself proved too harsh with regard to several of the Italian paintings, dismissing them as forgeries or late imitations. Among two early examples of this school, the *Imago Pietatis* has since been attributed to the Master of the Straus Madonna, a Florentine painter active at the turn of the 15th century, and is considered one of the highlights of the Gallery of Old Masters (fig. 4). The other painting, showing the saints John the Baptist and Francis and described as “Giotto school” in Weyer’s catalogue, has been recognized as a work

¹⁵ Białostocki, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁶ Current inv. nos. M.Ob.8 MNW, 191859 MNW, and M.Ob.32 MNW (former inv. nos. 10, 9, and 43). See *ibid.*, p. 53, nos. 17 and 21, p. 55, no. 23.

¹⁷ *Erinnerung an die Versteigerung der Gallerie J.P. Weyer, verkauft am 25. August 1862 durch J.M. Heberle (H. Lempertz) in Köln*, after: Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 168; Białostocki, op. cit., p. 41, fig. 4.

of Cosimo Roselli (1439–1507), a decent attribution.¹⁸ In 1953, most likely misled by the false view that the early Italian paintings from the Cologne auction were mainly imitations, the National Museum made a fatal mistake: a painting that must have originally formed a small diptych with the *Imago Pietatis* was transferred through the Office for Religious Denominations to the Primate's Council. That the panel, showing Christ's head, was a pair with the *Imago* is suggested by their nearly identical dimensions and the fact that in the Weyer catalogue both small-format paintings, ascribed to a follower of Agnolo Gaddi, are listed under adjacent numbers.¹⁹ It may be feared that in this way an item went astray as precious as the *Imago Pietatis* by the Master of the Straus Madonna has proved to be. It is also quite incredible that not even a single photograph of the work was taken prior to the transfer. Since no afterdrawing of it exists in the Weyer family albums, we are confronted with an utter lack of visual documentation. The same is true for three of the six Weyer-collection paintings lost during the war: Cornelis Engelbrechtsz.'s representation of one of the Three Magi, and a pair of paintings – *A Bacchante* and *Leda* – described as an imitation of Pierre-Paul Prud'hon.²⁰

Yet another 15th-century Italian painting has been upgraded since Białostocki's paper. Following meticulous conservation and studies in 1999, *Lamentation of Christ*, in 1962 published (with a question mark) as a work of Giovanni Mansueti,²¹ was re-attributed to Pasqualino Veneto (d. 1504), an assistant of Giovanni Bellini, with the possible participation of the master himself. This is the oldest painting on canvas in the National Museum's collection and it currently belongs to the exhibition canon.²² *Lamentation*, in 1962 described as an imitation after the Carracci brothers, has also inched higher, now attributed to Franco Gessi of Bologna (1588–1649),²³ and the *Landscape with a Waterfall and Fishermen*, once considered an example of the Genoese school, has been ascribed to the Paduan painter Antonio Marini (1668–1725).²⁴ Deckers's afterdrawings of the works by Pasqualino Veneto and Marini have been preserved.²⁵ The attributions of the other Italian paintings – *Architectural Fantasy* to Naples-based Francesco Nomé (1593 – c. 1640) and *The Last Supper* to Venice-based Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770) – have not changed.

German painting is represented by only three preserved works: two co-bound small images of God the Father and singing angels from the workshop of the 15th century Cologne Master of the Bonn Diptych, a 16th century portrait attributed to Hans Schöpfer the Elder (1505–69), and a panel from one of the dispersed triptychs from the church in Meßkirch (**fig. 5**),

¹⁸ Inv. no. M.Ob.2 MNW (former inv. no. 2) and M.Ob.3 MNW (former inv. no. 4). See Białostocki, op. cit., p. 47, nos. 3 and 4; the new attributions discussed in Jan Białostocki, Maria Skubiszewska, *Malarstwo francuskie, niderlandzkie, włoskie do 1600*, National Museum in Warsaw collection catalogue (Warsaw, 1979), pp. 119–21, cat. no. 88, and pp. 149–50, cat. no. 114 (Maria Skubiszewska).

¹⁹ Former inv. no. 3; see Białostocki, op. cit., p. 47, no. 2.

²⁰ Former inv. nos. 18, 41, and 42; see *ibid.*, p. 51, no. 12, p. 55, nos. 24 and 25.

²¹ Inv. no. M.Ob.5 MNW (former inv. no. 6); see *ibid.*, p. 47, no. 6 (in Weyer's collection as a Gentile Bellini). See Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 201, cat. no. 7 (with Deckers's drawing).

²² *Serenissima. Światło Wenecji. Dzieła mistrzów weneckiej XIV–XVIII wieku ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie w świetle nowych badań technologicznych, historycznych i prac konserwatorskich*, Grażyna Bastek and Grzegorz Janczarski, eds, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw; The National Museum in Poznań; 1999–2000 (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 86–97, cat. no. 4.

²³ Inv. no. M.Ob.14 MNW (former inv. no. 17); see Białostocki, op. cit., p. 53, no. 19.

²⁴ Inv. no. M.Ob.6 MNW (former inv. no. 7); see *ibid.*, p. 53, no. 20.

²⁵ See Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 201, cat. no. 7 (Pasqualino), p. 227, cat. no. 149 (Marini).

painted by the Master of Meßkirch, an anonymous artist inspired by the work of Albrecht Dürer. Excepting the latter panel (in the Weyer catalogue listed as a Hans Schäufelein),²⁶ the attributions of the other two have changed in the last half-century. In Białostocki's 1962 paper, the Master of the Bonn Diptych was published as the Master of the Life of the Virgin, and Hans Schöpfer as a Frankfurt painter from the beginning of the 16th century (with a question mark).²⁷ The *Mass of St. Gregory Triptych* (in Weyer's auction catalogue as a follower of van Eyck's) (**fig. 6**), in 1962 considered a work of a Rhinelandish painter from the early 1500s, is today classified as the Netherlandish school,²⁸ while Hans Brosamer's *Portrait of a Man* (as a Hans Holbein the Younger in Weyer) is a war loss. Of the latter, however, we have both a pre-war photograph and a Deckers afterdrawing.²⁹ Drawn copies of the works by the Master of the Bonn Diptych and the Master of Meßkirch have also been preserved.³⁰

Netherlandish painting is extensively represented in the Weyer legacy. Besides the *Mass of St. Gregory Triptych*, there are two other triptychs: *Lamentation of Christ* by Jean Bellegambe, a painter active at the French-Flemish borderland in Douai, and *Allegory of Immaculate Conception*, a work of an anonymous painter, probably from Bruges, from 1500–30.³¹ On top of that, the previously mentioned *Persian Sybil* by Ambrosius Benson, and a woman's portrait by an anonymous 16th-century painter, once attributed to Nicolas Neufchatel (1527 – c. 1590).³² The Weyer albums include afterdrawings of the *Allegory of Immaculate Conception* and *Persian Sybil*. Flemish Golden Age painting has only one major representative, but a superb one – the previously mentioned juvenile work by Jacob Jordaens. In this case too, a Deckers afterdrawing exists.³³ *Soldiers in a Guardhouse* by a follower of Mattheus Hellemont should be assigned to the Flemish school also.³⁴

Dutch painting forms the largest subset. Chronologically, it begins with a superb representation of *Christ with Cross and Chalice* by Cornelis van Haarlem (**fig. 7**), followed by two very interesting group portraits: by Cornelis de Man and Nicolas de Helt Stockade, and a small oval portrait of a man by Nicolas Maes.³⁵ This is accompanied by three landscapes:

²⁶ Ibid., p. 204, cat. no. 28. See Bożena Steinborn, Antoni Ziemba, *Malarstwo niemieckie do 1600. Katalog zbiorów / Deutsche Malerei bis 1600. Bestandskatalog*, The National Museum in Warsaw (Warsaw, 2000), pp. 156–59, cat. no. 37 (Bożena Steinborn).

²⁷ Inv. nos. M.Ob.10 MNW (former inv. no. 12) and M.Ob.12 MNW (former inv. no. 14), see Białostocki, op. cit., p. 51, no. 11, and p. 50, no. 7; see Steinborn, Ziemba, op. cit., pp. 152–55, cat. nos. 36a and 36b (Antoni Ziemba), and pp. 202–05, cat. no. 46 (Bożena Steinborn).

²⁸ Inv. no. M.Ob.11 MNW (former inv. no. 13). Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 13, cat. no. 788.

²⁹ Former inv. no. 16. See Białostocki, op. cit., p. 50, no. 9; Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 207, cat. no. 45. Michał Walicki's attribution in Juliusz Starzyński, Michał Walicki, *Katalog galerii malarstwa obcego*, the National Museum in Warsaw collection catalogue (Warsaw, 1938), no. 248.

³⁰ On the Master of the Bonn Diptych, see Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 210, cat. no. 61; on the Master of Meßkirch, see ibid., p. 204, cat. no. 28.

³¹ Inv. nos. M.Ob.15 MNW and M.Ob.16 MNW. See Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 45–46, cat. no. 33, and pp. 307–8, cat. no. 333 [here as the circle of Adriaen Isenbrant – editor's note].

³² Inv. no. M.Ob.19 MNW (former inv. no. 24); see Białostocki, op. cit., p. 51, no. 10. The author cites Walicki's attribution (Starzyński, Walicki, op. cit., no. 118), which he later retracted (Białostocki, Skubiszewska, op. cit., cat. no. 161). See Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 36, cat. no. 813.

³³ Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 230, cat. no. 165.

³⁴ Inv. no. M.Ob.30 MNW. See Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 276, cat. no. 297.

³⁵ Cornelis van Haarlem, inv. no. M.Ob.20 MNW (former inv. no. 25); Cornelis de Man, inv. no. M.Ob.22 MNW (former inv. no. 27); Nicolaes van Helt Stockade, inv. no. M.Ob.26 MNW; Nicolaes Maes, inv. no. M.Ob.24

native by Herman Saftleven the Younger and Cornelis Gerritsz. Decker, and an Italianate one by Abraham Jansz. Begeyn.³⁶ All belong to the gallery canon, none of them has changed attribution since 1962, and there are Deckers afterdrawings in the Weyer albums for the Cornelis van Haarlem, Cornelis de Man, and the Decker and Saftleven landscapes.³⁷ In the Vey and Bollenbeck catalogue, among Deckers' drawings, there is yet another Dutch painting from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, *Vertumnus and Pomona*, listed in the 1852 Weyer catalogue as a Rembrandt, today attributed to Abraham van Dijck. This painting was bought by Barthold Suermondt rather than by Karnicki, and only after changing ownership several times it entered the National Museum's collection in 1946 as "reclaimed" (fig. 8).³⁸ This prank of history can be considered a small compensation for the war losses; of the seven paintings bought by Karnicki at Brasseur's, three went missing during the war.³⁹ Among the preserved ones is a precious *Jacob's Dream* by Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout, signed and dated for 1642, two genre scenes – by Jacob Toorenvliet and by a follower of Quiringh van Brekelenkam – and an alleged portrait of Abraham van der Hulst by an anonymous Dutch painter.⁴⁰

Of the original 43 works brought by Justynian Karnicki from Cologne, 34 have been preserved at the National Museum in Warsaw, most of which are displayed in the Gallery of Old Masters. This fact best illustrates the significance and artistic quality of the first acquisitions in the history of our institution. With their cross-section of national schools and variety of painting genres, this group of paintings essentially reflecting the nature of the original Cologne collection, stands as its substitute. Thus the end of one collection became the beginning of another. It should be stressed emphatically that the first acquisitions turned out to have been a highly valuable starting point for the future collection of the great National Museum in Warsaw. The 43 entries opening the inventory of the Museum of Fine Arts, copied in 1916 into the main inventory of the NMW, not only touch the heart and mind, but also designate a highly consistent collection of old European painting that any gallery in the world would be proud of.

Translated by Marcin Wawrzyńczak

MNW – see (respectively) eadem, vol. 1, p. 149, cat. no. 155; pp. 370–71, cat. no. 402; pp. 278–79, cat. no. 300; pp. 366–67, cat. no. 397.

³⁶ Herman Saftleven, inv. no. M.Ob.21 MNW; Cornelis Gerritsz. Decker, inv. no. M.Ob.25 MNW; Abraham Jansz. Begeyn, inv. no. M.Ob.23 MNW – see (respectively) eadem, vol. 1, p. 544, cat. no. 596; pp. 168–69, cat. no. 173; pp. 42–43, cat. no. 30.

³⁷ See Vey, Bollenbeck, op. cit., p. 233, cat. no. 183, p. 240, cat. no. 224, p. 239, cat. no. 219, and p. 242, cat. no. 236.

³⁸ Inv no. M.Ob.561 MNW; see Benesz, Kluk, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 368, cat. no. 399 (as Nicolaes Maes?); *Różne spojrzenia. Malarstwo holenderskie i flamandzkie z Kolekcji Ergo Hestii / Different Perspectives. Dutch and Flemish Painting from the Ergo Hestia Collection*, Aleksandra Janiszewska, ed., exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2021 (Warsaw, 2021), pp. 178–79. The painting went through auctions in Cologne (1879) and Valenciennes (1898), then was probably held in the J. von Manteuffel collection in Berlin.

³⁹ Jacques d'Artois (?) (former inv. no. 22), Adriaen van der Cabel (?) (former inv. no. 35), Jan van der Wils (former inv. no. 38). See Białostocki, op. cit., p. 59, nos. 37 (with a photo) and 40, and p. 62, no. 43 (the latter two without preserved photos).

⁴⁰ Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, inv. no. M.Ob.28 MNW; Jacob Toorenvliet, inv. no. M.Ob.27 MNW; follower of Quiringh Gerritsz. van Brekelenkam, inv. no. M.Ob.29 MNW (former inv. no. 36); Dutch painter, inv. no. M.Ob.2397 (former inv. no. 37). See (respectively) H. Benesz, M. Kluk, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 203, cat. no. 218; pp. 616–17, cat. no. 682; pp. 98–99, cat. no. 100; vol. 2, p. 119, cat. no. 916.