

*Patronat artystyczny Jagiellonów*, ed. Marek Walczak and Piotr Węcowski, Cracow: Societas Vistulana, 2015, 420 pp., *Studia Jagiellonica*, vol. 1

The series *Studia Jagiellonica* debuts with a volume of collected essays on artistic patronage. Continuing rich scholarship on the Jagiellonian reign in Poland and focusing on artistic commissions of individual Jagiellons, the essays discuss the provenance, production, and function of works of art and architecture. The volume's title provides a conceptual umbrella for a variety of inquiries dedicated to both individual objects and their groups. The editors and contributors have treated the meanings of Jagiellonians and patronage as implicit; hence, readers should come with and rely upon their own understanding of who Jagiellonians were and the meaning of patronage. The Jagiellonians appear to include kings of Poland and some of their spouses — queens Anna of Cilli, Sophia of Halshany, Elisabeth of Austria, Bona Sforza and her daughter Anna Jagiellon. Few essays regard patronage as a process, the majority focus on the result — objects of art and architecture that survived or can be traced to this day even if indirectly. The understanding that Jagiellonians and patronage are self-evident notions positions the book within the realm of objects, rather than the social

history of art which inquires into a patron's means, motives, activities, and ties with masters. The three parts of the volume titled after function and medium — 'Representation of Royal Majesty', 'Architecture', and 'Painting, Sculpture, and Fine Crafts' — confirm that the essays are about things rather than people and their roles in supporting artistic production.

The regrettable omission of a conceptual link does not diminish the scholarly value of the essays, written in the Polish language and aimed at a Polish speaking audience, to whom the Jagiellonian reigns and their events are common historical knowledge. Since the essay topics offer the variables rather than constants of Jagiellonian relations to the arts, I shall look at each contribution through the lens of the Jagiellonian impact on the provenances and functions of the objects in question.

The volume opens with Marek Walczak's overview of scholarly input into the research on the multifaceted connections of individual Jagiellons to the arts, and an introduction to the essays. Extensive bibliographical references provided in the overview will be appreciated by any scholar working on courtly arts and high material culture. The first essay by Przemysław Mrozowski on kings' images within the system of royal representations considers effigies and portraits cast in various mediums, and inquires into their commission, circulation and function beyond that of simply depicting a personage. According to the author, the pattern of royal representation in Poland was set by Casimir the Great and adopted by the Jagiellonians, who supplemented it with elements particular to their time. The discussion of marital portraits, known mostly only from written evidence, includes princesses, but leaves out queens, who, strictly speaking, were not Jagiellonians by birth. The section on the altered likenesses of Sigismund the Old in two subsequent editions of the *Statutes* (1524) suggests courtly interference in representing and circulating the image of the reigning king. The overview of Jagiellonian portraiture from late fourteenth to nearly the end of the sixteenth century concludes that these depictions emphasized human nature, rather than the royal office of the sitters, thus attesting to Jagiellonian modesty in visual representations.

Mateusz Grzęda investigates other effigies, among which the decorative heads affixed to the ceiling of the Envoys' Hall in the Wawel residence are given most attention. The puzzle of the origin and function of these decorations is resolved along the lines of contemporaneous theories and fashions of astrology and physiognomy. Grzęda relates the heads to the personifications envisaged in the popular treatises of the *Table of Cebes* and *Children of the Planets*. This sound inscription of sculpted heads into the knowledge and fashion of the time could be enriched by exploring the stated link to the personality of Sigismund I, the intellectual atmosphere of his court and the University's contribution towards it.

The subject of heads is taken on by Anna Wszyńska, who focuses on the head of Sigismund I by investigating his caps. Based on an axiomatic view of importance of costume in manifesting social status, the author concentrates on headgear

represented in the king's portraits and looks for analogies and precedents in Western European portraiture. The so-called golden bonnet (*Goldhaube*), the cap dominating in the portraits of King Sigismund I, is considered an imitation of and reference to the king's appearance when it is found worn by noblemen.

The symbolic and quotidian aspect of cloth is the topic of Helena Hryszko's inquiry into the funeral robes of Queen Sophia. Based on Leonard Lep-szy's descriptions made at the opening of the queen's coffin in 1902 and data from the 2001–03 conservation of textile samples preserved in the Chapter's treasury, Hryszko confirms a contemporary Italian provenance of the material for the queen's coat, speculates upon Oriental origins for the Damask silk which covered coffin interior, and suggests that the queen was laid in state wearing a taffeta dress, whose changing colours were visually enriched with seven gilded buttons. Regrettably, this meticulous analysis of textiles offers little evidence on the queen's patronage or tastes.

The article by Krzysztof J. Czyżewski on Jagiellonian endowments to Cracow's Cathedral concludes the first part of the volume. Any researcher concerned with late medieval goldsmiths will benefit a lot from the list of precious objects, those surviving and also those known only from written records. The appearances of the latter have been carefully reconstructed in writing. Jagiellonian donations are neatly related to specific occasions, thus informing about devotional appeals and the commemorative practices of individual family members. Although much more concerned with objects than donors, the essay reveals highly uneven relations between the Jagiellons and the Cathedral, or at least such a reflection is derived from available material. Within the context of the volume, the article stands out for emphasizing notable female donors, such as queens Sophia of Halshany, Elisabeth of Austria and Anna Jagiellon. This contribution also mentions Cardinal Frederick, whose overlapping ecclesiastical and royal identities resulted in numerous bequests. Exceptionally rich and abundant donations and foundations by prince and King Sigismund I stand in sharp contrast to a sole bequest made by his son Sigismund II Augustus. The article conveys the fluctuating understanding of 'good and pious deeds' as instrumental in salvation. Royal office bound the Jagiellonians to the Cathedral and shaped their relations with it; however, the research denies the existence of a consistent Jagiellonian pattern in strengthening and maintaining these ties.

The article by Piotr Pajor on the apse of the Corpus Christi Church in Poznań opens the section dedicated to architecture. Founded by Ladislaus (II) Jagello in 1406 on the site where glowing Host was found in 1399, the church stands out for its demonstration of the king's devotion to the Eucharist. A recently discovered corbel stone bearing the arms of Queen Hedwig (Jadwiga) of Anjou suggests heraldic symbolism in the church established in memory of King Ladislaus II and his first two wives. Architecture atypical of Greater Poland relates the church to Cracovian examples; however, the impact of its founder on the building's appearance remains obscure.

Moving to the topic of Jagiellonian residences, Tomasz Olszacki provides a review of available source information on the construction, repair, and usage of the no longer extant castle in Nowy Korczyn. King Ladislaus II's expenditure from the decade between 1388 and 1398 and in the years 1406–08 sheds light on the building works, while an inventory from 1585 informs on room functions and furnishings. However, the place of the castle within Jagiellonian patronage requires more elaborate clarification.

The three essays on Jagiellonian reconstructions of the Wawel residence start with Marcin Fabiański's inquiry into the motives for undertaking such extensive building works. According to the author, the reconstruction of the castle was prompted by the fire of 1500, and the need to make the scattered buildings serve the king and the kingdom functionally and visually. The building activities initiated by Alexander before his coronation in 1502 were continued by his brother and successor Sigismund I. The symbolism of the construction works is interpreted along the lines of authors from Antiquity and their Humanist readings, especially the treatise by Stanisław Zborowski, courtier from 1498 and guardian of the royal treasure from 1513, titled 'Call to Arms against Infidels'. The largely overlooked woodcut portrait of Sigismund the Old printed in the *Chronicle* of Marcin Bielski in 1554 is placed within the context of portraits of founders with their buildings in the background. Fabiański suggests that the woodcut was made after a lost painted portrait of Sigismund I, which presented and perpetuated the tradition of the king as the builder of the residence. Alternatively, Bartolomeo Berrecci's signature in the lantern of the Sigismund Chapel of the Cracow Cathedral is seen as a sign of the founder's modesty, understood following narrative prescriptions of the great deeds of rulers of Antiquity.

Tomasz Ratajczak focuses on the functional arrangement of the Wawel residence. Beginning with Alexander, the Jagiellonian rulers continued adapting the palace to the needs of the court and the state. The author looks for the functions of and connections between rooms and halls, and establishes how the state institutions and courts of reigning King Sigismund I, the junior King Sigismund II Augustus, and the royal ladies, functioned within the palace's architecture. Information about various premises in the residence comes largely from occasional texts produced for weddings, receptions and funerals, during which the rooms' functions were transformed. The essay's particular value lies in the attempt at finding evidence for quotidian use of the chambers by searching for hints scattered through account books and other circumstantial sources. As to a specifically Jagiellonian arrangement, the author highlights the existence of the court of Sigismund II Augustus, whose position of junior king required restructuring within architecture as well as courtly routines.

Tomasz Torbus sets out to discuss patronage *par excellence* and informs on the activities of five architects involved in reconstruction of the palace. A change of master builders supports the thesis of stylistic hybridity in the architecture of the Wawel residence. Regrettably, the essay being a seriously abridged version of

the author's book on the same topic does not reveal the role of these architects as royal clients and the Jagiellonian motives for commissioning them. Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzka investigates the expenditure of Sigismund II Augustus for the building works in Cracow and Niepołomice in the years 1549–51. The article argues that the recently inaugurated king spared no resources to provide utmost comfort for his wife Barbara Radziwiłł and to make the prestige of royal couple visually manifest.

The third part of the volume dedicated to painting, sculpture and fine crafts begins with the study by Małgorzata Smorąg-Różycka on the heraldic frieze recently discovered in the apse of the Cathedral of Sandomierz. The arms of Queen Anna of Cilli, second wife of King Ladislaus II, allow dating of the Byzantine wall paintings in the church to the decade between 1402/03 and 1413. Considering how the frieze might have functioned within the church interior, the author suggests the location of royal seats under the six-meter-long row of personal and territorial coats of arms.

The Byzantine murals in the Holy Trinity Chapel in Lublin Castle are addressed by Marek Walczak in his essay on the equestrian image of King Ladislaus II. Having placed it alongside extensive comparative material, the author relates this representation as a triumphal, heavenly intercession on behalf of the king and his kingdom (especially, the victory in the Battle of Grunwald) and imagines the royal seat in the chapel as being associated with the king's painted effigy.

Marek A. Janicki attempts to elucidate the dating and provenance of Ladislaus II's tombstone in Cracow Cathedral. Having reviewed abundant scholarship on the topic and inquired meticulously into the meaning and usage of specific words in texts of fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the essay concludes that the upper plaque of the tomb with king's effigy was sculpted between 1421 and 1430, the year when it was first recorded to be kept in Collegium Maius. The side panels are of later date and were fixed together before the king's funeral. As to artistic provenance, it is suggested that the no longer extant tomb of Louis of Anjou in Szeged, Hungary, which King Ladislaus II might have seen in 1412, inspired the commissioner's choice of red Hungarian marble and the representation of the lying figure.

Arranged chronologically, the essays proceed towards the reign of Casimir Jagiellon and commissions of his mother Queen Sophia. Magdalena Łanuszka looks into the artistic context of the altarpiece of Our Lady of Sorrows. Having reviewed earlier research on the topic, the author continues searching for iconographic and stylistic sources and antecedents for the painted wings of the triptych. Among other issues she suggests that these pieces follow lost work by Rogier van der Weyden, and asks how the royal couple chose the painter. The conclusion insists that it was not the Netherlandish style — an exceptional feature of this altarpiece among contemporaneous paintings of Lesser Poland — but the reputation and popularity of a local Cracovian, alas anonymous, painter, which determined the choice.

Dobrosława Horzela discusses the two retables of the Jagiellonian commission preserved in the Chapel of the Holy Cross of the Cracow Cathedral. Placing the two pieces within the context of courtly art, the author argues for the stylistic and iconographic retrospectivism of the triptych of Our Lady of Sorrows emphasizing visual continuity with the Holy Trinity altarpiece made for the funeral chapel of Queen Sophia. Horzela suggests that the latter was carved with Viennese prototypes in mind and argues that in Cracow objects from Vienna have been regarded as manifestations of imperial might. Regrettably, the essay does not provide more information about Queen Sophia's knowledge of the Vienna court and its impact on the queen, whose choice determined the altarpiece's iconography if not its appearance. The importance of the latter is revealed by the fact that the paraments commissioned by the queen for the chapel were made to correspond iconographically and perhaps visually with the altarpiece. The article concludes that court art is above all formed by the available resources; however, these are understood as material rather than human.

Magdalena Piwocka interprets the collection of Sigismund II Augustus' tapestries as a means to express royal prestige. Looking at their artistic provenance the scholar emphasizes the uniqueness of this commission regarding their content and number. Although agents of the Brussels workshops sought buyers for predesigned tapestries, Sigismund Augustus commissioned an original cycle of the Genesis, as documents from 1547 and investigation of the tapestries testify. Later the collection was supplemented with tapestries woven to fit the interiors of Wawel castle. The article praises the originality of the commission: the tapestries were copied numerous times, but themselves copied none. Such praise echoes the Renaissance model of a connoisseur collector-patron, although motives of originality and novelty more readily resonate with modernist values.

The volume concludes with the essay by Tanita Ciesielska concerning the silver altar retable made for the Sigismund Chapel of Cracow Cathedral. Based on the investigation performed during the restoration of the piece in 2002, the author informs on complex techniques employed in the retable's production, refuting Johannes Neudörfer's information from 1542 which states that the piece was made by stamping. Importantly for the volume dedicated to artistic patronage, the author reconstructs the process of production, indicating its phases and logistics: the design, carving wooden relief for king's approval, making a copper sample again approved by the king, and the final production of a silver retable, which was taken to Cracow in 1535. This research clarifies that the Nativity scene in the epitaph of Joseph Feuerabend in the Church of St Gumbert in Ansbach was made in 1545, after the wooden relief which remained in Nuremberg after Sigismund's commission was executed and delivered to Cracow.

What are common denominators of Jagiellonian relationship to the arts? Is it possible to tackle general patterns of Jagiellonian patronage by focusing on particular cases? What is the Jagiellonian profile as patrons and how they were involved in the art scene of the time? Did they regard patronage as an attribute

of 'great men', political virtue and cultural prestige? These questions remain to be answered in further volumes of *Studia Jagiellonica*, which has begun with articles so richly varied and elegantly produced, and might also consider affirming or denying a continued cultural agenda of the extensive Jagiellonian family.

*Giedrė Mickūnaitė*

*(Vilnius)*

*(Proofreading by Yelizaveta Crofts)*