The Warsaw Sforziad
Katarzyna Woźniak

INTRODUCTION

The Sforziad, or *La historia delle cose facte dallo invictissimo duca Francesco Sforza scripta in latino da Giovanni Simonetta et tradocta in lingua fiorentina da Christoforo Landino Fiorentino*, is a treasure of the National Library in Warsaw1.

History of this precious volume spans 524 years, while for over 400 it has been in Poland. Despite the fact that renowned Polish specialists and bibliophiles have been trying to reconstruct history of this volume, this task was never been fully accomplished. Many of the widely circulated facts remain very probable, but they are still hypotheses. The main reason is the complicated history of the collection to which it belonged, reflecting Poland's turbulent past in Central Europe. Numerous and grave losses of archival records have prevented the reconstruction of the complete history of this incunabulum. This paper summarizes and re-orders established facts and introduces a number of previously unknown documents.

The occasion for the present reconstruction of the history of the volume is the hypothesis that the Warsaw copy was the source of the 15th-century female portrait known as *La Bella Principessa*, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. Professor Kemp identified that the drawing, executed in a technique of *trois crayons* on vellum depicts Bianca Sforza2. Its left, uneven edge with stitching

1  BN BOZ Inc. F.1378
holes, left there after binding, clearly indicates that the portrait was part of a book\(^3\). Dr Edward Wright, *Emeritus Professor* of Art History at the University of Florida, specialist in Renaissance iconography, formulated the hypothesis that the portrait originates from one of the three existing copies of *La Sforziada*\(^4\). He pointed to the Warsaw volume as the most probable source due to the iconographic program of the illuminations by Giovanni Pietro Birago.

**ILLUMINATIONS OF GIOVANNI PIETRO BIRAGO IN COPIES OF SFORZIADA**

A number of facts concerning history of *La Sforziada* in Poland have been circulated and repeated. Namely, that the copy was brought to Poland by Bona Sforza on the occasion of her wedding with Sigismund I the Elder in 1518; that it was passed on to the library of her son, Sigismund II Augustus, and, subsequently, was included in Jan Zamoyski's book collection. As a result, over two centuries later, it became part of the Library of the Estate of Zamosc. Finally, the Sforziad entered the National Library in Warsaw.

**BONA SFORZA**

The most comprehensive study of the Warsaw Sforziad was published by the former director of the National Library, Professor Bogdan Horodyński. A careful analysis of the only miniature in the book, on page 7, enabled him to identify in 1956 the signature of the artist: *Presbiter Joannes Petrus Biragus fecit*\(^5\). Depuis quatrecent ans, se trouvait cache en Pologne le secret du nom de Giovanni Pietro Birago, le fameux miniaturiste de Sforza\(^6\).

\(^3\) M. Kemp and P. Cotte, ibidem  
\(^4\) D. Wright, II Moro, Duke of Milan, and the Sforziada by Giovanni Simonetta, 2010 www.la-bella-principessa.com  
\(^6\) B. Horodyński, op. cit., p. 251-252
The finding, consequently, helped him to identify numerous other works by the artist in different European collections. Professor Horodyski, having more data at his disposal, was also able to advance research concerning the history of this volume. He was particularly interested in the circumstances of its arrival in Poland and came to the conclusion that it must have been brought from Italy to Poland by Bona Sforza on the occasion of her wedding to Sigismund the Elder in 1518: L'exemplaire de Varsovie de la Storia fut sans aucun doute apporté en Pologne par Bona, qui en 1518 devint la femme de Sigismund⁷.

⁷ B. Horodyski, ibidem, p. 255
Professor Kawecka-Gryczowa, another renowned specialist in Polish bibliology, came to the same conclusion: **Everything suggests that the magnificent parchment copy of La Sforziada written by Givanni Simonetta (Milano 1490), containing the story of Francisco Sforza, duke of Milan, was among the most precious objects brought to Poland by the young princess of Bari**.  

This view had become established to such an extent that, although never proven and based only on deduction and circumstantial evidence, it was repeated by numerous other authors. A contra-hypothesis/ contra-theory has never been introduced. **Bona must have had various books, both brought by her from Italy and purchased in Poland, which included works addressed to her. This “great enthusiast of history” – as Professor Henryk Barycz called her – collected historical works; a manuscript of Długosz’s work was, among others, in her collection**. The claim reappears in the introduction to the catalogue of old prints from the Library of the Entailed Estate of Zamość: **What undoubtedly comes from the same source is the marvellously illuminated copy of Sforziada, printed on parchment, which used to belong to Queen Bona**.  

Interestingly, all the opinions quoted rely on the hypothesis proposed by Professor Horodyski. It is worth noticing at this point that until the middle of the 20th century *Storia* was catalogued as a manuscript, and not a printed book. The preserved list of books from the Royal Castle on Wawel Hill in Cracow does not include this work.

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8 A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, Biblioteka ostatniego Jagiellona, p. 29  
9 A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, op. cit., p. 28-29  
10 Wstęp do katalogu Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamojskiej, p. 10  
11 AGAD, Metryka Litewska Vol. 196, p. 571-575
The alternative hypothesis regarding the provenance of the Polish copy of the Sforziad came from David Wright. According to him, Bona could not have owned the book, since the introduction to this work strongly emphasizes the political and military supremacy of Ludovico il Moro.

What is more, a few years before Bona Sforza's wedding, the city ruled by the son of Ludovico, Maximilian, had been seized again by the French – an event which constituted another blow to family pride. Taking into consideration these events, it seems likely that the book may have found its way into Poland as a wedding gift for Bona Sforza and Sigismund from the King of France. The gift was meant as a reminder of sorts that Lombardy was controlled by Francis I and that he was the only one who could make Bona's wish come true and restore the rule of her family over Milan. Francis I kept his promise and in November 1521 he put the second son of Ludovico, Francesco, on the throne. Francesco had been raised in France and was generally popular, unlike his hated elder brother Maximilian.

It is more likely that the origin of the Polish copy of Sforziad will be explained with the help of research in archives outside Poland especially those in France and Italy. This work remains to be undertaken. None of the authors mentioned above had access to international resources and extensive and comparative research on the history of all four volumes of the Sforziad in European collections: Polish, Italian, French and British.

SIGISMUND II AUGUSTUS

Attempts to confirm the hypothesis that Bona Sforza brought the Sforziad to Poland in 1518 have been, so far, unsuccessful. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the book must have been bequeathed to her only son, Sigismund Augustus.

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13 D. Wright, ibidem
While referring to the Queen, Professor Horodyski does not mention her son, the last heir of the Jagiellonian dynasty. The hypothesis makes perfect sense, given the fact that Sigismund Augustus' book collection was the biggest private collection in the *Res Publica* in the middle of the 16th century, and the King was renowned for collecting precious artifacts, including valuable jewelry and manuscripts. It is estimated that the book collection included over four thousand volumes. In 1547 the library was moved to the Royal Castle in Vilnius.

Distinguished Polish Renaissance scholars, Jan of Koźmin (since 1547), Stanisław Koszutski (between 1551-1559), and Łukasz Górnicki (since 1559), were librarians. They arranged and
The role of the latter must be further researched as he was a close friend of Zamoyski. Unfortunately, no catalogue has survived. In 1565, the collection was moved to Tykocin, the King's private estate on the territory of today's Poland, close to the present Lithuanian border, but many volumes were probably taken to Warsaw Castle.

TYKOCIN, CASTLE, CONTEMPORARY RECONSTRUCTION FROM 2005

This part of the royal book collection was looted by the Swedes during the Swedish deluge (1655-1660). However, the extant catalogue from the Royal Library of Stockholm does not enumerate the Sforziad.

The death of Sigismund on the 7th of July 1572 in Knyszyn (located in close proximity to Tykocin), left the country tormented and shaken, deprived of its king and with no central power, no regulations regarding the rules of royal elections. In this way, in tragic circumstances, the founder of magnificent art collections passed away. Sigismund's last will gives precise instructions regarding the future of his books: All our books, in whoever's hands they now may be, wherever kept and hidden (?) by Łukasz Górnicki, wherever and in whoever's possession they might later be, shall be given to the Jesuit College of Vilnius, which was established by the Vilnius bishop Waleryan; all of them apart from missals, graduals, antiphonals, agendas, viaticas and books related to prayer and church matters should be given to St. Anne's Church.

Thus, according to the King's donation, the majority of library resources were to be bequeathed to the recently established College of Jesuits in Vilnius. Unfortunately, yet again, due to the dramatic context of the King's death and, even more, to the extended period of an uncertain political situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, many elements of his last will were not executed scrupulously. Today, the Library of Vilnius University, the direct successor of the

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14 B. Horodyski, op. cit., p. 255
16 S. Grzybiński, Jan Zamoyski, p. 37
17 K. Hartleb, Dookoła biblioteki Zygmunta Augusta (i) dzieje spuścizny królewskiej [w:] Pamiętnik III. Zjazdu Historyków Polskich, Lwów 1929, p. 128-129
Jesuit library, holds only 14 volumes from the original collection\textsuperscript{18}. Most of the priceless royal legacy has been stolen and dispersed. Tadeusz Czacki, bibliophile and treasure hunter of the turn of the 19th century, described the library in the following words: \textit{The Library, handed over to Vilnius College, partly stolen, bears the sign of the King's generosity...}\textsuperscript{19}. Additionally, he authorizes Koszutski (?) to take care of his extant private papers [those in the chest], particularly the letters. However, it is also known that his sister Anna did not go out of her way to fulfill his last will\textsuperscript{20}.

**ANNA JAGIELLONKA**

She gave many books to courtiers \textit{[cortegiani]}, several individuals as well as church and secular institutions. Very generous gifts were bestowed upon Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, especially before Stephen Bathory's accession to the throne.

\begin{center}
\textbf{MARcin KOBER, ANNA JAGIELLONKA IN CORONATION ROBES (after 1575)}
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As a result, the library of the Zamoyski Estate – which is the direct inheritor of Zamoyski's legacy and of the Academy he established in his \textit{citta ideale} – holds the largest surviving part of the royal book collection. The library owns 164 works in 106 volumes of \textit{the collection of Monumenta}. It remains unclear in what circumstances and when exactly Jan Zamoyski came into possession of the copy of \textit{Sforziad}. It is equally uncertain why \textit{Sforziad} is the only book without the characteristic royal cover among the 94 volumes from the original collection which have been

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\textsuperscript{18} The Library keeps only 14 books from the collection of King Sigismund Augustus. Many thanks for Mrs Evelina Podrezaite from the Library of the Vilnius University for this information.
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\textsuperscript{19} A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, op. cit., p.19, quotation after T. Czacki, Obraz panowania ...
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\textsuperscript{20} Hartleb lub Grycz, op. cit., p. 129
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preserved until now. The copy must have been covered in purple velvet, as can be surmised on the basis of the *Sforziad* from the National Library in London\textsuperscript{21}.

JAN ZAMOYSKI

It is an established fact that *Storia* belonged to the library of Jan Zamoyski's Academy. On this ground a further assumption is made that it must have belonged to the chancellor Jan, doctor of law, rector of the University of Padua, the author of *De Senatu Romano* and an avid book collector.

\textsuperscript{21} Photograph taken in the British Library by Dr Pascal Cotte
The extensive and diverse collection of Zamoyski, to which Sforziada belonged, was undoubtedly one of the most magnificent in the Republic\textsuperscript{22}. Manuscripts were purposefully collected by Zamoyski and formed a major part of his collection; among them, preserved until this day, there is a magnificent duplicate of Długoś's work (BOZ 5) (...). Zamoyski also owned two volumes of Ptolemy's Cosmography (BOZ2), the work of the 15th-century Renaissance Italian school, which, according to family tradition, was presented to Zamoyski by the pope\textsuperscript{23}.

\textsuperscript{22} Catalogue of manuscripts of Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej, p. 8

\textsuperscript{23} St. Lempicki, Mecenat wielkiego kanclerza: studia o Janie Zamojskim, Warszawa 1980; The fact that Jan Zamoyski received this book as a gift from pope is not confirmed.
prestigious commission involved two other royal secretaries – Stanisław Górski and Szymon Ługowski – but they didn't help him much. Some authors suggest that perhaps in this way he came into possession of several important royal documents: He became the owner of duplicates of some documents of great importance for the functioning of the country, and got acquainted with the legislation of Res Publica while browsing the archives (...). Among them, there were excerpts from Jan Długosz's chronicles, which had not been published before (a copy of which he later had in his own library). One of the preserved royal letters calls him to return a number of important royal documents; this suggests that he had borrowed them for self-study. Nevertheless, it seems rather doubtful that Zamoyski, the future Great Chancellor of the Crown, would acquire such a precious and significant volume as the Sforziad in this manner. Especially if we consider that the Sforziad was one of many volumes of Monumenta in his possession. It is very probable that he received them all at once, perhaps as a gift from Sigismund's sister after the King's death.

Professor Buchwald-Pelc claims with no sign of uncertainty that the book must have been in Zamoyski's hands by the end of the 16th century. She does not, unfortunately, provide any evidence to support her thesis: By the end of the 16th century, Sforziada was in the collection of chancellor Zamoyski; perhaps it was acquired as part of the royal collection of Sigismund August. In the book there are no inscriptions of earlier provenance than those by Jan Zamoyski. Professor Hartleb, who devoted one of the first studies dedicated to the lost and dispersed library of the last of Jagiellons, came to the following conclusion: The circumstances in which Jan Zamoyski became the owner of these books have not been explained so far. And he continues: Probably, this took place thanks to the legal successor of the King, Anna the Jagiellon, who after his death was giving away his book collection to many individuals.

Prof. Kawecka-Grycz, who tried to explain the history of this collection with true determination and attention to every detail, was inclined to accept the hypothesis that it was Zamoyski who personally took these books from Tykocin. In order to substantiate her theory, she mentions the resources of the Library of the Estate of Zamoscin the 19th century: How many books did the chancellor take from Tykocin remains unknown to us. All authors refer to the books preserved in the BOZ in Warsaw before WWII. The catalogue contains the list of 165 works in 106 volumes and the numbers can be confirmed with the help of registrations cards I received from Professor Edward Chwalewik. Prof. Kawecka-Grycz points out that [i]he largest segment [of the collection] consists of books on history and geography (65 items). She includes in this section the volume of Sforziad catalogued under number 805. The thematic scope can be an important factor since history was one of the chancellor's main interests. It could be also important to continue research on the role which Łukasz Górnicki, the librarian of Sigismund Augustus and the author of the Polish version of Il Cortegiano (Dworzanin polski), may have played in the acquisition of Sforziad by Jan Zamoyski.

24 Ibidem, p. 20
25 Ibidem?, p. 20
26 Acta Tomiciana, AGAD
27 P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, op. cit., p. 19
28 K. Hartleb, op. cit.
29 A. Kawecka- Gryczowa, op.cit., p. 85
30 Ibidem, p. 86
31 Longer commentary will be added in my next article.
Two hypotheses should continue to be furthered research: that it was Anna Jagiellonka who presented the book or books to Zamojski or that he took them himself from Tykocin what seems less likely. If he had had such opportunity, most probably he would have taken as many precious volumes as he could in order to protect and preserve them. 106 volumes from almost 4000 is a small fraction. It is more reasonable to assume that it was a donation of someone mightier. The mediation could have taken place with the help of his friend, Łukasz Górnicki, who was a Polish humanist, chancellor of Sigismund August, secretary of four Polish kings. He died in Tykocin in 1603.

The same author also directs her attention to the copy of the Golden Legend by Jacob de Voragine, another volume with illuminations of Birago in the Polish collections, which was also acquired by the library in Zamość at some, also precisely unknown, point. A comparative study of both books has never been conducted, but it potentially could throw some light on their arrival in Poland. Professor Grycz underlines, however, that The history of this volume [Legenda aurea] is even less known than that of Sforziada. What is known is that Legenda aurea belonged to Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki but it remains unknown since when. It may not be accidental that both volumes illuminated by the Sforza artist were owned by two chancellors, mighty political figures – Szydłowiecki and Zamoyski. In contrast to Sforziad, the Legenda can be found on the previously mentioned list of books from the Royal Castle in Cracow dated as early as 1510. It is almost certain that this is the same copy. One can assume that Zamoyski may have wanted to acquire both of them for his own library. The possibility, less probable, of him purchasing Sforziad with the help of his foreign dealers cannot be completely excluded either.

**ACADEMY**

The library was conceived as an immanent part of the Academy of the ideal city which Jan Zamoyski established in Zamość in 1594.

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32 A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, op. cit.
Consequently, after his death in 1605 the precious book collection was handed down to the Academy. The first and frequently quoted report comes from Bonifazio Vanozzi, who visited Zamość in 1596. It is the only known report from this early period giving insight into the Zamoyski Library before it was handed over to the Academy. Vanozzi wrote down three short sentences: *He ordered that a library should be built, very well ordered and with many books, especially in Greek and Armenian. There are also many rare and interesting manuscripts. Those books were not arranged, I saw them in chests, there are plenty of them and with beautiful covers*. 

As in the case of Sigismund Augustus, the last will of the chancellor was not thoroughly

34 T. Makowski, Biblioteka Jana Zamoyskiego, kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego. Założenia projektu badawczego, p. 5
executed. It is likely that some of the books were not passed on to the Academy Library and remained in the private library in the castle of Jan’s successors. Researchers investigating this hypothesis were not able to provide any evidence. Nevertheless, this assumption seems to be correct since many books were re-included in the Academy's Library after stormy disputes regarding the rule over the Estate of Zamosc following the death of the third landowner, Jan, nicknamed “Sobiepan” (which can be literally translated as “a lord of himself” or *bon vivant*) in 1665. He was an enthusiast of lighter genres of literary production. [Knowing the interests and personalities of the founder’s two successors, the private library in the castle was not supplied with works of great value]. The decision was then made to finally execute the chancellor's will properly.

**OBLITERATED INSCRIPTION**

The earliest provenance inscription in *Sforziad* is a Latin handwritten entry found on page 3 (19th-century numbering): *Ill-mi Joannis*\(^{35}\). The following part of this inscription was at some point scrupulously obliterated. Nevertheless, its reconstruction is possible since it was preserved in other volumes from the Zamosc Academy. The words that are now illegible most likely read as follows: *Testamento Ill-mi Joannis Zamoyski Palatini Sandomiriensis legatus Bibliothecae Academiae Zamoscensis*\(^{36}\).

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\(^{35}\) Please see: Catalogue of the National Library in Warsaw

\(^{36}\) A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, op. cit., p. 86
Moreover, according to other researchers, at some point it was excluded from the Academy collection and remained in private possession of Jan’s family. It remains unknown whether there was a separate library in the castle in Zamość: The fact that the manuscript [!] belonged to the Zamosc library in the 17th century cannot be a proof that it had belonged to Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, but it seems more than probable, especially when considered that his direct descendants and successors cannot be characterized as men of extensive interests or passion for book collecting. No record remained until today about any book acquisitions from their time37.

Information from 1668 informs us that the Academy book collection was restructured and rearranged in accordance with scholastic ideas. The following sections were distinguished: Theology, Law, Medicine, Philosophy, History, Rhetoric, Mathematics and Poetics (with Grammar). The library owes its reorganization, carried out in the years 1669-1670, to the Academy chancellor, Bazyli Rudomicz. A few years later, in 1674, Marcin Zamoyski became the fourth owner of Zamość. It was then that the loss of a considerable part of the Estate archive was noticed. It may have been yet another reason to put the entire documentation in order.

One year later, in 1675, Adrian Krobski, a professor of the University finished cataloguing the Academy library. Regestrum omnium librorum qui existant in Bibliotheca Academiae Zamoscensis. It is the first known catalogue38. It includes four thousand works meticulously listed by Krobski. Professor Bogdan Szyszka notes that, at that time, Rudomicz was the chancellor and Krobski, a University professor: When Krobski was rector, the task of cataloguing four thousand books in the library was completed39.

The Sforziad appears on that list. It is the first documented mention referring to Simonetta that has been tracked down. Additionally, it confirms that the work belonged to the Academy book collection. It is classified as one of Libri Historici, under the title Storia dell’ duca Sforsa (?)40. The work of Simonetta does not occupy any high position in the list, but is enumerated among many other history books, in the middle of the register. This reference has escaped notice until now.

After the initial rapid growth of scholarly prestige under the guidance of Jan Zamoyski, the Academy was gradually falling into decline, never to enjoy such a success again. The same applies to its printing house: After the death of the hetman and great royal chancellor Jan Zamoyski in 1605, both the academic printing house and the Academy stopped their ambitious activities41. The immediate successors of the first owner of Zamość did not pay much attention to books: Son and successor, Tomasz, voivode of Sandomierz, Jan (1627-1665) did not leave any traces of his own personality in the collection of manuscripts. Dying childless, he decided that: “My entire library, both the former collection of my late parents and my own holdings,], according to my old promise, I give and present to my Academy of Zamość”42. During the first

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37 Catalogue of manuscripts of BOZ, p. 9
38 Ms BOZ 1544
39 B. Szyszka, Akademia Zamojska, p. 23
40 A. Krobski, Catalogus omnium librorum..., BOZ ms 1544
41 Sławomir Myk, Zaopatrzenie drukarni Akademii Zamojskiej w papier, Archeion, t. LXXXVII, Warszawa 1990, p. 157
42 Testamenty Jana, Tomasza i Jana Sobiępana Zamoyskich, Opole 2007, p. 153
part of the 17th century, in the years 1627 and 1633, there were two fires in Zamosc which put the Academy in danger, but, as it was reported, they did not destroy any of the Academy library resources\(^{43}\).

**AFTER 1675**

For almost a century, between 1675 and 1766, there is no mention of *La Sforziada* in the preserved documentation. The absence of Simonetta in the records is explained as follows: *The first part of the 18th century is a time marked by the dramatic decline in teaching standards and teaching discipline as well as by the destruction of the unfinished building of the Academy and its surroundings\(^{44}\). Acta precipua contain numerous decrees in which the library is mentioned several times, but it does not provide any information about the work with the precious miniature of Birago\(^{45}\).*

With the situation worsening further in the middle of the century, significant changes in the Academy’s functioning were inevitable. The first thorough reform was initiated and executed by a Vatican emissary, Jerzy Maria Laskarys. In the years 1745-1746, having become familiar with the functioning of the University, he suggested a revitalisation plan. It was the most systematic attempt to introduce changes since the Academy had been founded almost 150 years earlier and, what is even more important, it exerted a positive impact on the Academy of Zamość. In the preserved reform act, one paragraph is devoted to the library\(^{46}\). The enormous effort did not suffice and the Academy did not return to its previous high teaching standards; it could be considered a centre of intellectual work only locally. Soon after, in 1766, the Academy was licensed by the Vatican to collect *forbidden and heretic* books\(^{47}\). In the next year the faculty of French was established and teaching of *philosophia recentiorum* was permitted. The reform also resulted in financial restructuring, which made it possible to renovate the University premises and, at the same time, to modernise the printing house. Yet, in regard to *Sforziada*, the most important change was the preparation of the new catalogue of the library holdings. Additionally, between 1768 and 1777, the archive was once again tidied up\(^{48}\). Jan K. Kochanowski, a historian working at the turn of the 20th century and the author of numerous notes on the Academy - which are unavailable today as many archival resources were destroyed during WWII – as well as of its most detailed history at that time, noticed: *The character of the Academy became more pure and sublime\(^{49}\).*

However, even these attempts did not guarantee a permanent revival or an improvement in the quality of instruction. The First Partition of Poland by Prussia, Habsburg Empire and Russia in 1772 was another blow to the Academy. In the same year the Habsburgs took over the management of the University: *The old Republic died in 1795 and there was no independent*

\(^{43}\) Ibidem, p. 35
\(^{44}\) B. Sawa, p. 10; From introduction by Lucyna Wyszyńska
\(^{45}\) *Acta Precipua*, BN BOZ 1604
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\(^{47}\)
\(^{48}\) J. K. Kochanowski, Dzieje Akademii Zamojskiej 1594-1784, p. 25
\(^{49}\) Ibidem, p. 25
Polish state for 123 years until 1918. The villages which were the chancellor’s endowment and yielded profit to finance the school were immediately seized by the Austrians.

The year 1776 marks the appearance of another important factual resource, that is *Catalogus librorum* by Adrian Krobski. The *Sforziada* is listed there on page 131 (the page numbering was added later). As in the previous inventory of 1675, the book is mentioned, again, in a rather insignificant position, in the middle of the list, among many other historical works.

Throughout the 18th century not much attention was paid to the condition of books in the library. The times of the four owners of Zamość: Klemens (1747-1767), Jan Jakub (d. 1790), Andrzej (1716-1792), and finally Aleksander August (d. 1800), were another period of stagnation in library matters. Admittedly, the University lived through its last years as an inheritor of a better tradition, but the precious and rich library within its walls ceased to attract any readers. The decline of the University, to which the Austrian occupiers considerably contributed, reflected the general condition of the city of Zamosc, whose cultural role ended by the end of the 18th century. Despite the more or less successful attempts at the Academy’s revival, in May 1784 the election to the Academy’s board was postponed and on the 19th of July the last meeting of the professors took place. (...) Due to the decision of the Royal Chancellor of Vienna, the Academy of Zamosc was closed down on the 1st of September 1784.

In the year 1784 the Academy was suppressed and the Royal High School was established instead. The Royal High School inherited the Academy’s library, which in 1783 was in possession of 5 thousand volumes. These figures clearly demonstrate that even in the 18th century the users had deprived the book collection of a considerable number of volumes as the library catalogue compiled in 1800 included 4,553 printed books and 456 manuscripts. According to Professor Buchwald-Pelc, the reason for these losses [she enumerates some of the more important works] could be the stormy and complicated history of the book collection of Jan in the years preceding the establishment of the Library of the Estate of Zamosc by Stanisław.

Interestingly, it has never been researched why the number of the specimens decreased. It seems natural that part of the collection was damaged over time and due to usage. From notes dating back to the 17th century, it is known that at that time the University took great care of the book collection, especially thanks to such outstanding individuals as Rudomicz or Krobski. In his diary, Bazyli Rudomicz often talks about his care for the library and describes his steps. One entry precisely reports how a professor who did not return a book to the library was punished - his salary was significantly reduced for a month.

**AROUND 1800**

50 J. K. Kochanowski, op. cit.
51 J. K. Kochanowski, op.cit., p. 26
52 Wstęp do katalogu rękopisów BOZ, p. 13
53 Ibidem
54 P. 86
55 P. 86
56 B. Sawa, op. cit., p. 11
57 Buchwald-Pelcowa, op. cit., p. 16
58 B. Rudomicz, Efemeros, czyli Dyariusz prywatny...
When the Estate was taken over by Stanisław Kostka Zamojski (1775-1856), after his elder brother's untimely death, numerous decisive, positive changes were implemented. He is said to be the actual founder of the library of the Estate of Zamosc. A successful attempt to revive the glorious traditions was undertaken at the beginning of the 19th by the owner of Zamość, Stanislaw, whose aim was to turn his town into a centre of culture and science.59

**STANISŁAW KOSTKA ZAMOJSKI (1775-1856), 12th LORD OF THE ESTATE OF ZAMOSC**

Before he managed to establish a permanent library in Warsaw, he put many efforts into trying to create one in Zamość. Apart from becoming the landowner of Zamość, Stanisław obtained the book collection of the Academy, which had been shut down by the Austrian authorities: Taking over the Estate after his brother Aleksander's death in 1800 he assumed the ownership of the collections of the Academy, suppressed by the Austrians, which were presented to the Estate.60 According to unpublished notes by A.M. Skałkowski who translated the diaries of Stanisław Zamojski from French and planned to have them published, Stanisław had given several instructions before he set off for his two-year journey abroad; they indicated that he visited museums, libraries, and bookstores, he arranged plans of rebuilding the castle in Zamosc, and made purchases for his home and apartment in Vienna.61

In 1802 he had the University buildings thoroughly renovated and modernised the printing house.62 In 1802 he ordered that the school buildings should be refurbished, starting his own printing house and expanding the curriculum of the local secondary school.63 Unfortunately,

59 B. Horodyski, Jak miało powstać Ossolineum w Zamościu, Teka Zamojska 1938, p. 34
60 B. Horodyski, ibidem
61 Katalog BOZ, p. 34 (?)
62 W. Garbiński, Rys życia Stanisława Kostki Zamoyskiego, p. 28
63 W. Garbiński, op. cit.
during these two years, 1800 and 1801, he did not add any new notes to his diary. It can be presumed that it was either he or his elder brother who initiated the work on another inventory entitled Catalogus generalis librorum existentium in Bibliotheca Academiae. It is to be regretted that the catalogue was not prepared carefully; it has been criticized by many authors as the identification of even the most important items is impossible, even though we know they almost certainly must have been stored in the library at that time. The record was compiled by the concierge Benoist, as he is named, in the form of an inventory in a calligraphically correct manner, admittedly, but extremely shortened and primitive. A later inscription in the manuscript of this catalogue, written down by another person working for the Library of the Estate, claims: Very unwise he was, this Mr. Benoit [or Benoist], Consierge de l'Academie, he knew neither Latin nor Greek. It was not his fault that he had been commissioned to compose something he had no idea about.

Sforziada is not listed there. It cannot be excluded that it may have been concealed among the many oversimplifications. It is extremely difficult to match numerous (if not the majority of) entries made by Benoit with respective volumes from the library, even the most precious ones. There is another possible explanation, which is, that Sforziad was not in Zamosc at the time of preparing this list. The scrupulously and no doubt, intentional obliteration of the inscription may suggest this. This volume could have been, temporarily, in the hands of close family. Especially those family members who collected or only studied precious books.

At the end of the 18th century, when the demand for valuable “relics of the past” was high, the famous “grave-digger” and art treasure hunter, Tadeusz Czacki, observed, among others, that the library had many visitors. Also Leon Dembowski paid a visit there, Polish statesmen, close friend of the Czartoryski family, author of diaries presenting panorama of his time. He shrewdly remarked: The Academy had a beautiful library; it held the most magnificent manuscript of "Vitae of Archbishops of Gniezno" by Jan Długosz. It is to be remembered that this copy of the work by Długosz was rediscovered and identified in the 19th century in the BOZ (Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej) in Warsaw. Another interesting fact is that this item is included in Benoit's inventory in the way that makes its identification possible. Moreover, we are provided with the first detailed description of the interior of the library in that period.

A significant reason why the former academic library had to be reorganised and rearranged was a plan to consolidate the book collections of the Ossoliński and Zamoyski aristocratic families. Józef Maksymilian was a collector of “old and new imprints”. His book holdings in Vienna consisted of almost 30 thousand volumes. At the end of his life he intended to bring them back to his home country. At first, he wanted to keep the collection in Cracow, later he decided on Zamosc. Those plans were thwarted by the conquest of the fortress of Zamosc by the army of Prince Joseph on May 20th 1809. It was the day that obliterated the most beautiful history of the

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64 BOZ 1654 Benoit, Catalogus generalis librorum existentiarum in Bibliotheca Academiae Zamoscensis 1800, pol., XVIIIw.
65 "Benoit" or "Benoist", depending on commentator
66
67 The short list of books which he borrowed remained until today.
68 L. Dembowski, Moje wspomnienia, p. 63
69
70
and, consequently, ruined any hopes for its re-establishment. Obviously, such valuable art and book collections could not be located in a politically unstable town. Following the surrender of Zamość, losses due to plundering were reported. Quoting Stanisław Kostka, Professor Horodyski writes: *When Zamość was captured, much of the equipment and many books were stolen. Two carts of books were taken from the Estate’s library*.

**WARSAW – THE LIBRARY OF THE ESTATE OF ZAMOSC**

In 1810, for the first time since Jan Zamoyski had established Zamość in 1580, Stanisław Kostka Zamoyski and his family moved to Warsaw, where they lived in the Blue Palace, newly acquired from his father-in-law, Prince Adam Czartoryski.

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71 [Academy]
72
73 B. Horodyski, op. cit.
The Warsaw period witnessed very intense archiving work and compilation of the family collections. Special attention was paid to all artifacts related to the chancellor. During that time the collection, known throughout the 19th century and onwards as the Library of the Estate of Zamość, was created. This endeavour was envisioned and initiated and by Stanisław Kostka, who attached much importance to it throughout his life. The first premises of the Library, until 1814, was the Blue Palace. Many books from that period carry a bookplate with the symbolic date of 1815, the year of the restitution of the Duchy of Warsaw. In Sforziad this bookplate is placed on the flyleaf of the front cover.

It does not necessarily mean that it was labelled exactly in that year. That might have been done later, as is the case with many other books. It is known that in the Warsaw period books were systematically renovated and rebound in the family’s own lithographic studio and bookbindery, relocated from Zamość to Warsaw: The needs of the lord’s library and chancellery in the Blue Palace as to occasional prints and forms were satisfied thanks to the lithographic studio and bookbindery, as removed from Zamosc. Very soon it turned out that the library room on the first floor of the Palace was too small to accommodate the constantly growing collections of books and valuable artwork. The owner decided to build another library: a separate building detached from the Palace, though very close to it. It was ready in 1819. There, Simonetta’s work was held, as we will see.

The tragedy of the Polish November Uprising of 1830 left its mark on the collections of Stanisław Zamoyski. The extensive art holdings were almost entirely lost. The owner passed on the Estate to his son and left Poland for good; he moved to Russia and later to Vienna, where he died in 1856. In 1836 a librarian Józef Richter prepared a very detailed description of the library. Simonetta’s work can be found listed there among other manuscripts.

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75 For more information please see: K. Ajewski, Zbiory artystyczne i galeria muzealna Ordynacji Zamojskiej w Warszawie, Kozłówka 1997
77 BOŻ 1567 Ignacy Loyola Rychter, Obraz ogólny biblioteki, 1836
In the second half of the 19th century, the constantly growing book collection required more room. The new building, designed by architect Julian Ankiewicz, was completed in 1868. Thanks to the effort of Tomasz Franciszek, the 14th heir of Zamosc, the library was opened to the general public. The precious manuscripts were now stored in the treasury. In the 19th century the library became one of the leading Polish institutions of this type.

THE LIBRARY OF THE ESTATE OF ZAMOSC IN WARSAW (next to the Blue Palace)
Building redesigned in Neo-Renaissance style by Julian Ankiewicz

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The tragedy of World War II left its stigma on the collections of the Estate. As early as September 8th, the library was captured by the invading army and in the course of military operations, the archive, dating back to the 1830s, was set on fire. Numerous valuable documents concerning history of the library and the Zamość Estate, almost all the archive (!), including, thousands of prints, a valuable cartographic collection and the majority of etchings were irreversibly lost. Therefore many documents which would certainly help to reconstruct every detail of Sforziada’s history are not extant any more. Some books and documents, including Sforziada, were saved, as they were transferred to the basements by the librarians who risked their lives.

Towards the end of 1939, in December, German officers insisted on “borrowing” the most valuable books under the pretext they were going to be exhibited in Cracow. Among them there were: Gesta Principium Polonorum, Tyniec Sacramentarium, and Codex Suprasliensis. The Sforziada was not on the list. The National Library of Warsaw has a German inventory of manuscripts and prints from the BOZ collection of 1941 under the title: Verzeichnis der am 15.

78 BN BOZ 2013, p. 217
79
Dezember 1941 in der Staatsbibliothek Warschau, Akt. II aufbewahrten Handschriften und Drücke der Zamoyski-Bibliothek\[80\] [84]. Simonetta’s work is not included.

When the 1944 Warsaw Uprising broke out, the last heir of Zamosc, Jan Zamojski, received a permission to leave the city, which enabled him to evacuate almost two thousand books from Warsaw, including almost the entire royal collection\[81\]. Shortly after the war, in 1946, the last heir of Zamosc, during his first visit in the ruined capital city, donated his collections, including Sforziada, to the National Library in Warsaw, directed by Prof. Bogdan Horodyski. The Sforziad has been kept there until today.

![KRASINSKI PALACE IN WARSAW (1939)](image)

KRASINSKI PALACE IN WARSAW (1939)
KRASINSKI PALACE, CONTEMPORARY VIEW

SUMMARY

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80 *By pamięć przetrwała.... Rozmowa z senatorem Janem Zamoyskim, XVI ordynatem Zamoyskim [in:] Wokół Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamojskiej, BN Warszawa p. 30
81
Sforziada was without any doubt a part of collection of the Library of the Zamość Academy which was founded by Jan Zamoyski. It was not possible to confirm ultimately, if this copy of Sforziada was brought to Poland by Bona Sforza and whether it belonged to King Sigismund Augustus’ book collection. On the other hand, the current research has revealed that the first mention comes from the inventory of the library of the Academy from 1675; the next one is from 1766. The list prepared by Benoit in 1800 does not apparently include Storia. In the 19th century the work of Simonetta can be found among the manuscripts of the Library of the Estate of Zamość in Warsaw. After the Second World War it joined the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, where it has remained until today.

The preserved documentation which would enable to reconstruct history of La Sforziada is very fragmentary. Lecture of the entire existing literature, very scrupulous research of existing records and much broader, interdisciplinary approach, enabled to shed some new light on a number of facts previously not analyzed by scholars. On this 500 year panorama it was possible to set the time of rebinding for the first years of the 19th century when the Estate of Zamosc was taken over by Stanislaw Kostka Zamojski after a longer period of stagnation. He undertook several actions aiming at reforming the entire Estate. The reform of the Academy of Zamosc, to which library’s work of Simonetta belonged, was important part of this programme and was symbolic for the historical revival of the family tradition centered around his founder, Jan Zamojski. My next paper will be devoted entirely to the time, circumstances and, first and foremost, individuals involved in rebinding.

What is more, during my more than two years research in Poland, I have found an archival record that may refer to the portrait of La Bella Principessa. This possibility requires further intense investigation. Nevertheless, history of the Warsaw copy of La Sforziada provides reasonable explanation why the portrait of La Bella Principessa could not have been recognized for a long time as the work of Leonardo da Vinci and why it did not emerge on the Western European art scene for a few hundred years.

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