

## The Collection of Silver Spoons (The National Museum in Krakow): Acquisitions in the 1960s–1970s

### Summary

Apart from its silverware items, the goldsmithery collection of the National Museum in Krakow contains many pieces of cutlery, especially spoons dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a result of many donations and acquisitions, it has become one of the most extensive and diverse collections in Poland. The items have been gradually gaining more coverage thanks to notes, catalogue mentions, and broader publications. A comparative analysis coupled with a preliminary synthesis was attempted by Bronisława Marekowska, who published the results of her research in *Rozprawy i Sprawozdania Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie (Dissertations and Reports of the National Museum in Krakow)* in 1954. The publication categorizes the spoons into four typological groups, with a detailed analysis of individual items contained in the Museum's collection.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the spoon collection of the Museum was significantly enlarged thanks to a number of new acquisitions. The most valuable items were a set of ten spoons with the “Korwin” coat of arms and another set of three with the “Łabędź” coat of arms. The set of the “Korwin” spoons constitutes the largest museum collection of cutlery in Poland, formally associated with Group I in the classification by Marekowska. The set of three spoons bearing the “Łabędź” coat of arms, formerly owned by the abbot Andrzej Karwicki of the Cistercian monastery at Wąchock, represents Group III.

The same typological classification also distinguishes Group IV of spoons. In 1965, the Museum obtained another noteworthy representative of this group: a spoon adorned with the “Leliwa” coat of arms, possibly owned by Krzysztof Żurowski, the chief steward (*stolnik*) of Żydaczów in the years 1757–1764.

The spoon collection of the National Museum in Krakow also obtained a number of other specimens that cannot be easily categorized according to Marekowska's groups. In 1964, the Museum purchased two spoons from a set in which each item was decorated with an Apostle figurine – in this case, of Matthew and James the Lesser.

In 1966, the collection obtained a spoon whose origin was attributed to a workshop active in Gdańsk in the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, this hypothesis was subsequently revised.

In 1968, the Museum purchased another specimen allegedly dating from the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Despite a number of elements drawing on 17<sup>th</sup>-century spoon forms, the origin of this particular item should be perhaps associated with the circles of Lviv goldsmiths active in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The presentation of the items purchased in the above-mentioned period is supplemented with the information on specimens acquired earlier but ultimately omitted in Marekowska's study for various reasons, e.g. two spoons from the collection of Stanisław Ursyn-Rusiecki, Xawery Boreyko and Marian Kempner.

The research on the Museum's spoon collection initiated by Bronisława Marekowska in the 1950s contributed significantly to the first description of this section of the goldsmithery

collection of the National Museum in Krakow, while the typological classification into four basic groups of spoons should be considered valid.

The specimens obtained in the 1960s and 1970s increased the value of the collection even more. The advantage of this particular collection is its high stature among the goldsmithery collections that can be found in various museums of Poland, which all facilitate (in a complementary manner) comparative research on the basis of the resources available. [MF]