

The Album Given to the Polish Writer Józef Ignacy Kraszewski in 1874 – in the Collection of the Department of Decorative Art and Material Culture, The National Museum in Krakow

Summary

The subject of this research note is the memorial album given to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–1887) by a group of writers, on the occasion of his name day on 19 March 1874. The album contains sixty-three photographs of the donators, all set in a heavy bas-relief binding of walnut wood, decorated with a copper-cast medallion with a portrait of Kraszewski, modelled by Bolesław Syrewicz (1835–1899). On each page of the album, there are two photographs surrounded by decorative motifs painted in watercolours by Ksawery Pilatti. All the photographs are in the *carte de visite* format and many of them are accompanied with the signatures of those photographed. In addition, the reverses of the photographs feature some information referring to the journals with which the subjects collaborated at the time. The album thus contains information supplementary to the photographs of the publishers, editors, and literary figures involved in several 19th-century Warsaw periodicals; most of the photographs were taken in well-known Warsaw studios.

The album bears testimony to the high esteem in which J.I. Kraszewski was held in his lifetime. Apart from its commemorative significance, it is of great value due to its clearly “monographic” character – it is an invaluable iconographic and prosopographic source that has its origin in the literary circles of Warsaw. [MF]