

A Youth with a Sapphire. On Unsuccessful Attempts to Sell Raphael's Painting *Portrait of a Youth*

Summary

In the early 1850s, the financial situation of the Czartoryski family was not very good. The difficult situation of their estates in Galicia as well as the costs incurred in connection with the political activity of the family had compelled them to cut down on their expenses. They even considered selling the Hotel Lambert or exchanging it for some estate in France. Apparently persuaded by his advisor, Piotr Falkenhagen-Zaleski, but without the knowledge of his “financial manager” – his mother-in-law, Anna Sapieha, née Zamoyska – Adam Jerzy Czartoryski began his non-European speculative investments in railway bonds. However, this enterprise would fail to garner any profit. In an effort to rescue his difficult financial condition and cover his losses in expenditure, Duke Adam Jerzy Czartoryski decided to sell several items from his collection. The most noteworthy of those works of art, namely the painting *Portrait of a Youth* by Raphael and a magnificent sapphire, had been the veritable gems of the Czartoryski collection.

The Raphael painting, one of the masterpieces in the collection of the Czartoryski family, was purchased by Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and his brother Konstanty, and given to their mother Izabela Czartoryska, née Fleming. The painting was brought to the palace of the Czartoryski family in Puławy and would subsequently share the fortunes of the entire collection. Finally, the painting was taken to Hotel Lambert, Paris, in the 1840s. The sapphire was dispatched to London in the early spring of 1850, while the painting reached London in July 1850. The owners enlisted the assistance of S. Woodburn, the most eminent British expert on Raphael and Michelangelo, in order to sell the painting. However, following the failure of their efforts, it was sent to Berlin. On the strength of the opinion expressed by the renowned art historian G.F. Waagen, who considered the painting original and well-preserved, the owners hoped it would be acquired by the state-owned museum collection in Berlin. Nonetheless, all the efforts to sell the painting were to prove unsuccessful. The owners had also given up their intention to sell the sapphire. The painting returned to London, where the family continued their attempts to sell it, yet apparently without making much of an effort. It was most probably kept in London until July 1852. Subsequently, it returned to Paris, and would eventually come back to Krakow, Poland, in November 1882, where it was kept until its eventual loss during World War II. [MF]