

## **Jan Matejko's Sketch of the Design for the Decoration of the Municipal Council Hall in the Wielopolski Palace in the Context of Ideological Motifs Used in the Decor of the City Council Chamber in Krakow's Historical Town Hall. An Article on the Iconography of the Seats of the Krakow City Authorities**

### **Summary**

Jan Matejko is associated with several monumental painting decorations. One of his well-known works is the polychrome of Saint Mary's Church in Krakow, which was designed by the artist and executed with his participation towards the end of his life. Some time earlier he had planned to paint a wall painting in the Wawel cathedral in Krakow. The painter himself mentioned some details of his concept. He wanted the royal chapel to be decorated in a more elaborate way than the bourgeois church. Matejko planned to paint an al fresco procession of kings, saints, bishops and patrons; however, he did not carry out his idea. The third monumental design which is worthy of note only mentioned in the painter's biography by Marian Gorzkowski, has been not well-known until now. When in 1866, elected as the first mayor of independent Krakow, Józef Dietl had to convert the newly purchased Wielopolski Palace for the needs of the city authorities, he considered asking Matejko to paint the walls of the hall for holding the City Council meetings. Incidentally, the need to provide the authorities with the new seat resulted from the fact that forty years earlier the governing body of the city had decided to pull down the ruined historic town hall. The artist – as it has turned out – was going to get involved in this undertaking and he made a preliminary sketch of the design. The collection of the National Museum in Krakow contains his drawings, found only recently and put on display, which shed some light on Matejko's concept – not carried out in the end – of the painting decoration of Krakow's new town hall.

It is worth showing them against the background of the history of the former council chamber in Krakow's no longer existing town hall and in the context of the ideas expressed in its decorations over the years; there is much evidence that the artist knew a lot about the principles of decorating municipal interiors.