

Tiles with the Nałęcz Coat of Arms

Summary

Tiles from stoves that initially formed part of the furnishing of the Bishops' Palace in Krakow are in the holdings of the Main Building of the National Museum in Krakow, the Jan Matejko House and the Czartoryski Collection. They are among the most previous specimens of Polish Baroque tile making. As their lead design these coffer-like tiles feature the Nałęcz family crest of the Krakow bishop Piotr Gembicki, the diocese ordinary in 1642–1657.

The matrix for this type of tile was probably made in 1644. In the Krakow bishops' lands, Iłża was a nationally renowned centre of pot making. It was probably there that the Nałęcz tiles were fired. A stove built of them was first mentioned on 1 Feb. 1645 in the bishop wooden manor house in Lipowiec. The stoves in the Krakow palace were produced around 1646. Still in the 19th century, the residence was furnished with one stove featuring tiles with the Nałęcz heraldic design on them. The stove was destroyed in a fire of 18 July 1850. Single tiles from the ruins of the palace were saved by a number of people. Initially, they were in the possession of Józef Łepkowski, Władysław Łuszczkiewicz and others. Next, some of the specimens found their way to the private collections of Eustachy Marylski, Władysław Czartoryski, Jan Matejko, Zygmunt Gloger and Emeryk Hutten-Czapski. It is thanks to the collectors' generosity that the tiles, along with some other historical objects, ultimately found home in several, mostly Krakow-based, museums.