

Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755–1821) occupies a prominent place among the luminaries of the Polish Enlightenment active in various fields of public activity. He was not only an important political activist, but also a patron of culture and science, engaged in their development also through his own creative activity. It can even be said that he is, in many respects, an emblematic figure, associated by historians with changes in the age of the Enlightenment, particularly with reforms imposed from above; a figure on a par with such outstanding personalities as King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, Stanisław Kostka's brother Ignacy Potocki, Hugo Kołłątaj or Stanisław Staszic. This essay is devoted to the history of research on the biography of Stanisław Kostka Potocki conducted so far, and it was written on the margin of the recently finished monograph on his political activity.<sup>1</sup> The paper is a considerable elaboration of passages from the preface to that book referring to the state of research on Potocki. Its goal is not to list all publications that contributed to a gradual increase of knowledge about Potocki's life and achievements, but to present the general course of development of scientific discourse on that subject.

A record of Potocki's posthumous laudation by Stanisław Staszic (Fig. 1) can be regarded as the first more extensive text in the form of a monographic presentation of his biography. Given in 1824, it was published in *Roczniki Towarzystwa Królewskiego Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk* a year later.<sup>2</sup> It was apparently not an academic statement, constituting a laudatory form of commemoration of deceased members typical of the Warsaw Royal Society of Friends of Learning (Potocki himself was the author of a few such speeches). However, this practice required relevant source material to be gathered in each case, which complemented the laudator's personal memories. Owing to this, such speeches were often pioneer elaborations of the biography of the person concerned, as in the case of the laudation by Staszic.<sup>3</sup>

## FROM STASZIC TO GROCHULSKA – RESEARCH ON THE BIOGRAPHY OF STANISŁAW KOSTKA POTOCKI

DOI: 10.36135/MPKJIII.01377329.2021.SWXXVIII.pp.41–71

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*Wilanów Studies*  
vol. XXVIII, 2021  
pp. 41–71  
Yearbook, ISSN: 0137-7329



X. Stanisław Staszic.

Fig. 1

Portrait of Stanisław Staszic,  
Mazovian Digital Library

- 1 M. Getka-Kenig, *Stanisław Kostka Potocki. Studium magnackiej kariery w dobie upadku i „wskrzeszonej” Polski* (Warszawa, 2021).
- 2 S. Staszic, ‘Pochwała Stanisława Potockiego, czytana ... dnia 7 maja 1824’, *Roczniki Towarzystwa Królewskiego Przyjaciół Nauk*, vol. 18, 1825, pp. 84–132.
- 3 Besides, the Society maintained its own archives, in which materials concerning the history of Poland were gathered. Authors of laudations could also make use of them; H. Krajewska, ‘Rola Stanisława Staszica w Towarzystwie Przyjaciół Nauk’, *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, vol. 45, 2006, pp. 109–10.



On that occasion, Staszic focused on Potocki's 'period of civic life'. He presented him primarily as a statesman grappling with 'misfortunes and national disturbances becoming the strongest experience of the firmness and virtue of a citizen'.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, Staszic almost ignored the question of ancestry and its significance for Potocki's future life (he referred to it only in a general statement: 'born in a splendid house in the Commonwealth').<sup>5</sup> In his view, the basic factor in this respect was not Potocki's family descent, but education in a Piarist school under the supervision of Stanisław Konarski. This school was supposed to enable Potocki to 'develop and educate the authorities of the heart and the authorities of the mind, particularly reason, which remains steady towards the intensification of feelings and the soaring of ideas'.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Potocki would be able to identify the reasons for the 'misfortune of his homeland' and, enriched with this knowledge, could 'explore the evil destroying the nation' and 'seek more effective advice for its rescue', in particular by 'indicating the errors and faults of immoral freedom' in the further course of his public service.<sup>7</sup>

Looking from the perspective of a dignitary of centralised and bureaucratic states such as were the Duchy of Warsaw and Congress Poland, Staszic made use of Potocki's example to criticise the 'golden freedom' of the nobility. For this purpose, he referred to Potocki's statements from his parliamentary speeches, mainly from the period of the Great Sejm. However, he omitted Potocki's long-year political engagement in the activities of the magnate opposition against the king, which actually had little in common with these subsequent views harboured by Staszic. The ideas proclaimed by Staszic only at the end of his parliamentary career in the Commonwealth are here considered to be representative also of the earlier period of his life. Staszic could proclaim these views not only due to his willingness to idealise his hero and, at the same, long-time collaborator (formally his superior). Potocki's case proved that the 'democracy of the nobility' was not attractive to an educated mind. Staszic evidently wanted to link the late nobleman's activity in the Great Sejm to his progressive education (oriented towards the reform of the state), thereby proving directly the crucial significance of the latter for the political breakthrough of 1788–1792.

Staszic laid clear emphasis on the political aspect of education in the pre-Partition period; in the case of the post-Partition period, he emphasised Potocki's contribution to its further development. He focused primarily on Potocki's activity in favour of the development of Polish

4 Staszic, 'Pochwała', p. 84.

5 Ibid., p. 85.

6 Ibid.

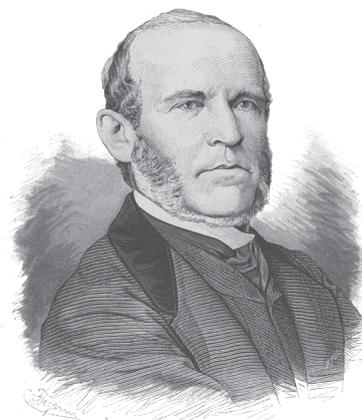
7 Ibid.

education and science in the Prussian Warsaw and then in the Duchy and the Kingdom. It is the broadest part of the laudation. Staszic thought that Potocki's service as the head of the state education system was the 'time of his most useful contribution to the homeland and sciences'.<sup>8</sup> He attributed the origination of reforms in this field as undertaken in those days to Potocki, not mentioning the collective character of education management in those days (even though he himself was a member of the management bodies presided over by Potocki: the Chamber of Education, the Directorate of Education or the Governmental Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment). At the same time, Staszic devoted relatively little space to Potocki's primary activity in the period of the Duchy: his service as president of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers.

The way in which Staszic interpreted Potocki's biography was obviously justified by the specific context of the publication. His speech was dedicated to the memory of a member and co-founder of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences. Therefore, the special emphasis laid on the importance of his educational and academic achievements cannot be surprising. By giving a broader political dimension to Potocki's merits, Staszic may have indirectly emphasised the value of the Society itself, the goal of which was to support the state educational system (the Society of the Friends of Sciences was formally outside the structures of government administration) with regard to the dissemination of knowledge.

The perception of Potocki's historical role as a primarily educational activist characterised also a biographical note by Franciszek Maksymilian Sobieszczański (Fig. 2) published in *Encyklopedia Powszechna* forty years later.<sup>9</sup> In the introductory part, Potocki was recognised as a 'statesman merited for national education' and as a speaker and minister.<sup>10</sup> Unlike Staszic, Sobieszczański made only a brief mention of Potocki's education under Konarski's supervision, although he omitted Potocki's engagement in the opposition's activities in the pre-Partition period. Moreover, his activity during that period, so important to Staszic, was reduced to only a few bare facts in Sobieszczański's text. In the latter's view, Potocki's parliamentary speeches were his greatest achievements during that period – however, not because of their substantive content, but due to the 'uncommon gift for speech' that they proved.<sup>11</sup>

Sobieszczański much more extensively covered the post-Partition period in Potocki's life, particularly his commitment to the reform of education



Franciszek Maksymilian Sobieszczański. 146

Fig. 2

B. Puc, F. Tegazzo, *Portrait of Franciszek Maksymilian Sobieszczański*, Mazovian Digital Library

8 Ibid., p. 113.

9 F.M. S[obieszczański], 'Potocki (Stanisław Kostka)', in: *Encyklopedia Powszechna*, vol. 21 (Warszawa, 1864), pp. 431–33.

10 Ibid., p. 431.

11 Ibid., p. 432.

in the Duchy of Warsaw. The author stressed that it had been not only the ‘faculty he loved most’ – he also emphasised Potocki’s personal ‘huge merits’ in this field. He recognised Potocki as ‘the first reviver of public education and the first founder of exact skills in this part of old Poland’.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, he did not refer to the collective character of educational authorities in those days at all. Because of the lapse of time, Sobieszczański wrote openly about Potocki’s dispute with the conservative circles, which were ‘powerful advocates of the old state of affairs’, against the background of his religious policy.<sup>13</sup> He called Potocki ‘an advocate of progress, envisaging the future and boldly introducing measures aimed at the removal of medieval institutions whose time passed a long time before’.<sup>14</sup> He also regarded this involvement as the reason for Potocki’s dismissal from the position of Minister of Enlightenment (Chairman of the Governmental Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment) in the Kingdom of Poland – ‘he wanted to anticipate the need for succession, but that was not the right time yet and this caused the most harm to him’.<sup>15</sup>

The encyclopaedic entry by Sobieszczański did not give much detail regarding any aspect of Potocki’s biography. A truly extensive biographical note was published only in 1907, occasioned by the publication of a selection of his texts in the second volume of *Sto lat myśli polskiej* (Fig. 3). The chapter devoted to Potocki was written by Stanisław Krzemiński, a co-editor of the series.<sup>16</sup> Like Staszic, Krzemiński stressed the significant role of Piarist education – it was, in his view, Konarski who sowed in Potocki ‘the seed of pure citizenship that shone in him and his brother Ignacy for the rest of their lives’.<sup>17</sup> Krzemiński was the first to appreciate the importance of Potocki’s first foreign trip that took place a short time later and ‘broadened the horizon of his mind and drew him towards freethinking’.<sup>18</sup> Krzemiński did not ignore the issue of Potocki’s relationships with the circle of the Czartoryski family, but he treated them in a relatively one-dimensional fashion. Like Staszic, he interpreted, for example, his engagement in the highly controversial matter of Kajetan Sołtyk, the bishop of Kraków (whom the Permanent Council declared to have been incapacitated through insanity, an act which exposed the king’s opponents to strong criticism) in terms of an act of

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 433.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 S. Krzemiński, ‘Potocki Stanisław Kostka (1757–1821)’, in: *Wiek XIX. Sto lat myśli polskiej. Życiorysy, streszczenia, wyjątki*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 1907), pp. 174–83.

17 Ibid., p. 174.

18 Ibid., p. 175.

patriotism rather than political calculation. Krzemiński may have not known the findings made by Kazimierz Rudnicki only a year earlier.<sup>19</sup> In this context, the Dogrumowa Affair (an intrigue connected with the groundless charge of plotting an assassination of Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski levelled at the king; Czartoryski was the uncle of Stanisław Kostka Potocki's wife), described by Krzemiński in a separate paragraph, might appear to be a surprising anomaly in Potocki's civic biography depicted so positively.

Krzemiński devoted relatively much space to Potocki's participation in the Great Sejm, which is not surprising, particularly due to his famous speeches, passages from which were the object of edition in the publication of which Krzemiński's biography was a part. Krzemiński also wrote about Potocki's literary activity in the first post-Partition years. However, he admitted that 'the present-day generation may have forgotten about literature, about the "prince of speakers", as he was commonly called in Poland [...], and the latest generation will continue to remember him as an organiser of schools in the Duchy of Warsaw'.<sup>20</sup> Significantly, Krzemiński's statement concerning 'the most fruitful period in the life of Potocki' as the head of education in the Duchy was based, among others, on the praise by Staszic, as well as legal acts issued by the Chamber or the Directorate of Education (and signed by Potocki as their current president, which means they were certainly approved, though not necessarily prepared, by him).<sup>21</sup>

Unlike Potocki's previous biographers, Krzemiński highlighted one more important aspect that had not been brought up earlier, presumably for political reasons. Although, when writing about the decline of Potocki's political career, he mentioned his conflict with the Church, he also emphasised the significance of his countersignature on the decision of



Fig. 3

Kazimierz Mordasewicz,  
*Portrait of Stanisław  
Krzemiński*, Polish Army  
Museum in Warsaw

19 K. Rudnicki, *Biskup Kajetan Sołtyk 1715–1788* (Kraków, 1906), pp. 237–38.

20 Krzemiński, 'Potocki Stanisław Kostka', p. 180.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Viceroy Józef Zajączek on the introduction of preventive censorship in the Kingdom. Krzemiński perceived this act as a huge mistake. He noticed that ‘Potocki’s energy declined because of age, but, nevertheless, a man of such format should not have sanctified with his signature an attack’ on the constitution.<sup>22</sup> However, Krzemiński did not believe that this signature had the direct impact on Potocki’s dismissal from his ministerial post; he considered it in psychological terms. Krzemiński wrote straightforwardly that Potocki was ‘broken when leaving the world’, thus sharing the fate of many others who ‘broke down in a terrible whirlwind of fate at that time’ (this presumably referred to those who betrayed the ideals of freedom after 1815).<sup>23</sup> For Krzemiński, the countersignature on the viceroy’s decree was a stain on Potocki’s otherwise spotless biography, one which could be justified only by the difficult times in which he fulfilled his civic service in the last years of his life.

Krzemiński’s biographical note of Stanisław Kostka Potocki turned out to be the most extensive text devoted to him for the subsequent fifty years. However, apart from the aforementioned book by Rudnicki, Krzemiński failed to include in his text also other publications issued a short time earlier, which presented Potocki not only as an exemplary patriot, but also as a born politician. One of the examples can be Wacława Tokarz’s book *Ostatnie lata Hugona Kollątaja*, in which Potocki was mentioned many times and for which his correspondence served as one of the foundations for the source base.<sup>24</sup> Even earlier, Aleksander Kraushar had written a text about the aforementioned Dogrumowa Affair, in which Potocki was frequently mentioned.<sup>25</sup> However, research on Potocki’s epoch continued after the publication of Krzemiński’s biographical note. Although this research did not focus on his person, it contributed much to the then-current knowledge about his activity, particularly in the post-Partition period. The works to be mentioned in this context are, for instance, *Lukasiński* by Szymon Askenazy (1908), *Wolność druku w Królestwie Kongresowym* by Natalia Gąsiorowska-Grabowska (1916), *Oświata publiczna w Księstwie Warszawskim* by Wincenty Gorzycki (1921) or *O poglądach na sztukę w czasach Stanisława Augusta* by Tadeusz Mańkowski (1929).<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the first monographic studies on various aspects of Potocki’s activity began to appear. Wincenty Gorzycki

22 Ibid., p. 183.

23 Ibid.

24 W. Tokarz, *Ostatnie lata Hugona Kollątaja (1794–1812)*, vols 1–2 (Kraków, 1905).

25 A. Kraushar, *Drobiazgi historyczne*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1891), pp. 243–318.

26 S. Askenazy, *Lukasiński*, vols 1–2 (Warszawa, 1908); N. Gąsiorowska-Grabowska, *Wolność druku w Królestwie Kongresowym 1815–1830* (Warszawa, 1916); W. Gorzycki, *Oświata publiczna w Księstwie Warszawskim i organizacja władz i funduszy* (Warszawa, 1921); T. Mańkowski, *O poglądach na sztukę w czasach Stanisława Augusta* (Lwów, 1929).

wrote a paper on his critical attitude to Romanticism, whereas Jan Nieczuja-Urbański analysed his Masonic speeches.<sup>27</sup>

However, only the second half of the twentieth century, from the 1950s onwards, saw a visible intensification of research on Potocki's biography. Paradoxically, the aristocratic Potocki became an important object of interest for researchers during the dominance of Marxism in Polish historical sciences. This resulted primarily from the preferential treatment of the epoch of the Enlightenment (as well as the Renaissance), the heritage of which was interpreted in terms of dialectically understood progress. Anyway, Potocki had been presented in literature as a free-thinker who had been in conflict with obscurants, which meant that, in spite of his social descent, he could appear to be a relevant historical hero for the 'new age'. One of the signs of this attitude was the reissue of Potocki's *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu* – a book which until then had been highly underestimated in respect of its literary value – in the editorial series of the National Library.<sup>28</sup> This issue was edited by Emil Kipa, who also prepared a preface focusing on Potocki's biography and largely extending the biography by Krzemiński with various problematic topics.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to his predecessors, Kipa focused most strongly on the period when Potocki held a ministerial office in Congress Poland. This was the context against which he presented the origin of the reissued novel, which was treated as a valuable reminder of Polish progressive thought and therefore as deserving the attention of the editors of the National Library series. Although Kipa did not forget to emphasise Potocki's contribution to the development of education, he focused primarily on his conflict with the Church. The vision of this conflict was relatively one-sided – Kipa depicted Potocki in a predominantly positive fashion, in contrast to the institution of the Church.

However, apart from the evident ideological involvement of the author, Kipa's study of the long way that Potocki had gone until the publication of *Podróż* (the narrative started from the times of his birth and Piarist education) constitutes an important stage in the history of research on his biography. First of all, Kipa managed to identify many details concerning both the publication of this book and previous satirical articles that Potocki had published under the title *Świstek krytyczny* (although in the second case he owed much to Piotr Chmielowski's findings presented in the book *Liberalizm i obskurantyzm na Litwie i Rusi* published

27 W. Gorzycki, 'Stanisław Potocki jako przeciwnik romantyzmu', *Przewodnik Naukowy i Literacki*, vol. 43, 1917, no. 3, pp. 193–203; J. Nieczuja-Urbański, 'Mowy masońskie Stanisława Potockiego (uwagi bibliograficzne i materiały)', *Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 24, 1927, no. 1–4, pp. 359–368.

28 S.K. Potocki, *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu i Świstek krytyczny (wybór)*, ed. E. Kipa (Wrocław, 1955).

29 E. Kipa, 'Wstęp', in: *ibid.*, pp. iii–cx.

in 1898<sup>30</sup>). Thus, Potocki was presented not only as a parliamentary or Masonic lodge speaker, but also as a publicist willingly engaging in press polemics. Moreover, Kipa thoroughly dealt with *Podróż* itself. In this way, he explained the circumstances of Potocki's dismissal from the double ministerial function.

A year earlier, Kipa had discussed this last matter in the original edition entitled *Materiały do dziejów organizacji Kościoła Katolickiego w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1820*.<sup>31</sup> A short time later, he published an article on Potocki's religious policy in the first issue of *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*.<sup>32</sup> Although this text had little in common with artistic issues, it fitted the subject area of the issue, which was dominated by the person of Potocki. The issue contained papers from the conference focused on Potocki's 'scientific and artistic activity' held by the Committee for Art History and Theory of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1953 (in connection with the round anniversary of Potocki's paper given at the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences, which is regarded as the first Polish text on the history of art). Apart from Kipa's paper, the issue contained studies by Juliusz Starzyński about Potocki as a historian and theoretician of art, by Zdzisław Libera about Potocki's work as a writer and literary critic, by Stanisław Lorentz about Potocki's activity in the field of architecture, by Kazimierz Michałowski about Potocki's relationship with archaeology, and by Maria Ludwika Bernhard about the book *O sztuce u dawnych, czyli Winkelman polski*.<sup>33</sup>

In these papers, Potocki was appreciated primarily as the forerunner of the Polish history of art and archaeology. According to Starzyński – the president of the Committee and the leading promoter of the turn towards Socialist Realism in Polish post-war art – the aim of studies on the activity of this aristocrat in fine arts in those times was to extract 'from the output of Potocki's political thought [...] the rational seed that bore fruit in subsequent years and the awareness of which enriches the knowledge about the ideological artistic heritage of the Polish Enlightenment that is so valuable to us'.<sup>34</sup> Earlier, only Mańkowski had written on that subject

30 P. Chmielowski, *Liberalizm i obskurantyzm na Litwie i Rusi 1815–1823* (Warszawa, 1898).

31 E. Kipa, 'Materiały do dziejów organizacji Kościoła Katolickiego w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1820. Dymisja Stanisława Potockiego', *Teki Archiwalne*, vol. 3, 1954, pp. 169–77.

32 E. Kipa, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki jako minister wyznań religijnych', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, vol. 1, 1956, pp. 442–49.

33 J. Starzyński, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki jako historyk i teoretyk sztuki', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, vol. 1, 1956, pp. 424–30; Z. Libera, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki jako pisarz i krytyk literacki', *ibid.*, pp. 433–41; S. Lorentz, 'Działalność Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w dziedzinie architektury', *ibid.*, pp. 450–97; K. Michałowski, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki jako archeolog', *ibid.*, pp. 502–09; M.L. Bernhard, "'O sztuce u dawnych, czyli Winkelman polski" Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *ibid.*, pp. 514–21.

34 Starzyński, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki', p. 424.

more extensively (though from a different methodological perspective) in the already mentioned book on artistic views in the epoch of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. The papers in *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* served as a harbinger of more extensive research on Potocki's output, at least in this aspect, which while narrow was nevertheless important, since it was innovative from the perspective of Polish art history.

In 1971, in Wilanów, another conference was held to honour Potocki, this time on the 150th anniversary of his death (Figs 4 and 5). The originator of this project was Stanisław Lorentz – the director of the National Museum in Warsaw (the Wilanów Palace was a branch of this Museum at that time) and an expert on the art of Classicism. In this case, the leitmotiv was again Potocki's activity in the field of art. A large part of papers was subsequently published in *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*. It contained texts by Teresa Zielińska about Potocki's cultural and artistic patronage in the light of his private archive preserved in the Central Archives of Historical Records, by Irena Malinowska about his 'Pamiętnik interesów' – a key source for the history of this patronage, by Wojciech Fijałkowski about Potocki's activity in Wilanów, by Irena Voisé about his collection of paintings, by Elżbieta Budzińska about his collection of drawings in the Library of the University of Warsaw, and by Witold Dobrowolski about Potocki's views on Greek vases. Among papers going beyond artistic topics, *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* published the following: by Elżbieta Skierkowska about Potocki's working methods, by Zdzisław Libera about Potocki's role in the literary life in the years 1807–1820, by Jadwiga Rudnicka about Potocki's role in cultural life in its broad sense, and by Bożena Majewska-Maszkowska and Tadeusz S. Jaroszewski about Potocki's journey to England in 1787.<sup>35</sup>

Potocki's output in fine arts and literature has become the object of relatively numerous studies. Not only monographic papers (apart from those mentioned above),<sup>36</sup> but also a few independent books on that subject

35 'Archiwum prywatne Stanisława Kostki Potockiego jako źródło informacji o jego mecenacie kulturalno-artystycznym', *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, vol. 34, 1972, no. 2, pp. 117–21; I. Malinowska, "'Pamiętnik interesów" Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *ibid.*, pp. 122–32; W. Fijałkowski, 'Działalność Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w Wilanowie', *ibid.*, pp. 133–50; I. Voisé, 'Kilka uwag o galerii Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w Wilanowie', *ibid.*, pp. 151–60; E. Budzińska, 'Tak zwana kolekcja Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w Gabinetie Rycin Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie', *ibid.*, pp. 161–67; W. Dobrowolski, 'Poglądy Stanisława Kostki Potockiego na wazy greckie w świetle opinii współczesnych', *ibid.*, pp. 168–77; E. Skierkowska, 'Warsztat pracy Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *ibid.*, pp. 178–92; Z. Libera, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki i jego rola w życiu literackim Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Kongresowego', *ibid.*, pp. 193–98; J. Rudnicka, 'Rola Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w polskim życiu kulturalnym', *ibid.*, pp. 199–210; B. Majewska-Maszkowska, T.S. Jaroszewski, 'Podróż Stanisława Kostki Potockiego do Anglii w 1787 roku w świetle jego korespondencji z żoną', *ibid.*, pp. 211–17.

36 For example: J. Rudnicka, 'Informacja o wierszach Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 55, 1964, no. 2, pp. 481–99; H. Żmijewska, 'Stanisław Kostka



Fig. 4

Scientific session on the 150th anniversary of Stanisław Kostka Potocki's death, the White Hall at the Wilanów Palace 1971



Fig. 5

Scientific session on the 150th anniversary of Stanisław Kostka Potocki's death, the White Hall at the Wilanów Palace 1971

have been published. In 1992, Janusz Ostrowski and Joachim Śliwa issued a new edition of *O sztuce u dawnych*, preceded by a long preface on that historical treatise.<sup>37</sup> In 2006, Anna Rucińska published a monograph *O wielkości narodowego dziedzictwa. W kręgu oratorstwa Stanisława Kostki Potockiego*, and in 2009, Jolanta Polanowska published the volume *Stanisław Kostka Potocki 1755–1821. Twórczość architekta amatora*.<sup>38</sup> This last book largely developed the subject that had been brought up by Lorentz. Moreover, Potocki's writings *O wymowie i stylu* and *Rozprawa o krytyce* were covered in two detailed publications by Katarzyna Karaskiewicz, supplemented with source editions.<sup>39</sup> The first of these books was published by the Wilanów Palace Museum, which has been an independent cultural institution supporting and initiating also other research projects concerning Potocki since 1995. The latter included exhibitions concerning his foreign trips (presented from the perspective of the formation of the artistic collection) and a collection of Greek vases, which resulted in the publication of scientific catalogues (Fig. 6).<sup>40</sup> In 2016, as a part of its co-operation with the Winckelmann Society in Stendal, the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów inaugurated a new editorial series 'Winckelmann – Potocki' encompassing volumes of studies concerning cultural connections of title characters and Potocki's literary heritage, as well as a German translation of

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Potocki, critique d'art écrite par un polonais', *Antemurale*, vol. 24, 1980, pp. 9–66; J. Polanowska, "'Lettre d'un étranger sur le salon de 1787" Stanisława Kostki Potockiego – tekst z pogranicza sztuki i polityki', *Ikonothea*, vol. 14, 2000, pp. 237–46; J. Wójcicki, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki i mowa ku czci poległych w roku 1809', *Napis*, vol. 9, 2003, pp. 143–71; J. Miziołek, 'Muzeum Sztuk Pięknych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i rola Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w jego utworzeniu', in: *Johann Joachim Winckelmann i/und Stanisław Kostka Potocki. Mistrzowie i uczniowie/Meister und Schüler*, vol. 1: *Nowe badania i dokumenty/Neue Forschungen und Dokumente*, eds P. Jaskanis, M. Kunze (Mainz–Warszawa, 2016), pp. 243–50.

- 37 S.K. Potocki, *O sztuce u dawnych, czyli Winkelman polski*, eds J.A. Ostrowski, J. Śliwa, vol. 1 (Warszawa, 1992).
- 38 A. Rucińska, *O wielkości narodowego dziedzictwa. W kręgu oratorstwa Stanisława Kostki Potockiego* (Kraków, 2006); J. Polanowska, *Stanisław Kostka Potocki 1755–1821. Twórczość architekta amatora, przedstawiciela neoklasycyzmu i nurtu picturesque* (Warszawa, 2009).
- 39 K. Karaskiewicz, *Początek języka – początek człowieczeństwa. Ewolucyjna koncepcja kultury według Stanisława Kostki Potockiego* (Warszawa, 2009); K. Karaskiewicz, „Logika dobrego smaku” – czyli sztuka prawdziwego sądzenia w *Rozprawie o krytyce Stanisława Kostki Potockiego* (Toruń, 2012).
- 40 P. Jaskanis, A. Rottermund, A. Kwiatkowska, A. Ekielska-Mardal, *Grand Tour. The Birth of a Collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki* (Warszawa, 2006); W. Dobrowolski, *Wazy greckie Stanisława Kostki Potockiego. Próba rekonstrukcji kolekcji*, English-language version: *Stanisław Kostka Potocki's Greek Vases: A Study Attempt at the Reconstruction of the Collection* (Warsaw, 2007).

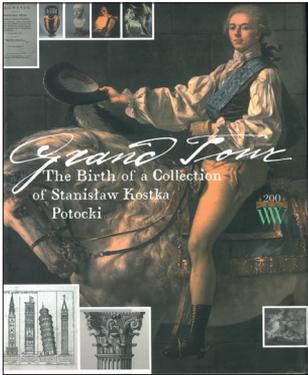


Fig. 6

*Grand Tour. The Birth of a Collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki* (Warszawa, 2006)

*O sztuce u dawnych*.<sup>41</sup> An exhibition devoted to Potocki, or, more specifically, his plan for the reconstruction of the villa of Pliny the Younger, was also held by the National Library. It resulted in a book published by its curator Jerzy Miziołek.<sup>42</sup>

At the same time, research on Potocki's political biography, for which Kipa's publications may have been a starting point, proceeded much more slowly. Kipa apparently intended to write his biography ('a broad monograph on life and work'), but his plan was prevented by his premature death in 1958.<sup>43</sup> The need for such a publication was mentioned by Bogusław Leśnodorski, a historian of political thought representing the Marxist school, in 1965. He noted that '[it] will presumably show the range of conservative elements in [his] liberalism', filling in an important gap in research on the development of Polish 'progressive' thought.<sup>44</sup> However, he never wrote such a book. The most advanced attempt at this task so far has been made by Barbara Grochulska, a researcher who initially specialised in the economic history of the epoch of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski and the Duchy of Warsaw. Potocki's extensive biographical note she published in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* in 1984 outdid the previous approaches in this respect in terms of fact collection and critical analysis. Relying, e.g., on an inquiry into Potocki's archival legacy (mainly his correspondence), Grochulska gave a relatively detailed presentation of not only successive stages of Potocki's political career, but also the development of his artistic and scientific interests.<sup>45</sup> Because of the character of this publication, Grochulska focused primarily on facts, but in the final part she also presented, in a balanced tone, a general description of Potocki's character:

From the memories of Potocki's contemporaries and his own correspondence emerges the figure of a man with strongly diversified traits; he combined the special pride of the Potocki family with great simplicity in relations with people, the libertine love of freedom with the family stability of a faithful husband and a caring father, calmness and tact with a hot temper and a tendency towards hypochondria and changeable moods, generousness shown in public life, concern about the family and philanthropic activity with the small-mindedness of a sparing host [...]. He cared much about power and over the years became accustomed to

41 *O spuściźnie literackiej Stanisława Kostki Potockiego. Studia i szkice*, eds D. Fołga-Januszewska, T. Chachulski (Warszawa, 2018).

42 J. Miziołek, *Villa Laurentina. Arcydziało epoki stanisławowskiej* (Warszawa, 2007).

43 [J. Łojek], 'Życie i działalność naukowa Emilia Kipy 1886–1958', in: E. Kipa, *Studia i szkice historyczne*, ed. J. Łojek (Wrocław, 1959), p. xvii.

44 B. Leśnodorski, *Jakobini wobec zagadnień wzrostu i wspólnoty politycznej w Księstwie Warszawskim*, in: *Studia historyczne. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 70 rocznicy urodzin prof. dra Stanisława Arnolda* (Warszawa, 1965), p. 264.

45 B. Grochulska, 'Potocki Stanisław Kostka (1755–1821)', in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 28, 1984, pp. 158–70.

prominent positions, but not to the point of striving for them at any cost. His personality was determined above all by the attitude of an aesthete.<sup>46</sup>

This biographical note was not Grochulska's only text about Potocki. She also wrote two essays about him: one about his ministerial fall and the other about his participation in the Great Sejm, as well as a problem note in the lexicon *Pisarze polskiego oświecenia*. Following the biographical note in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Grochulska published all of these texts in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.<sup>47</sup> From that time on, Potocki's political biography became the object of interest for many researchers dealing with his life and work on the margin of other studies, to mention, for example, papers by Adam Winiarz about education in the Duchy of Warsaw and Congress Poland and by Waldemar Gliński about the religious policy of the Governmental Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in Potocki's times, as well as a monumental volume by Anna Barańska about relationships between the state and the Church in the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>48</sup> So far, this last work presented the circumstances of Potocki's dismissal in the most comprehensive manner.<sup>49</sup>

In general, research on the life and activity of Stanisław Kostka Potocki has a relatively long history, although it became more intense only in the twentieth century, particularly after the Second World War. The broader interest in the heritage of the Enlightenment in the history of art, literature and politics played an important part in this respect. Quite apart from various contributory works, all attempts to take a general monographic look at this personage have been reduced to more or less elaborate biographical notes in encyclopaedias and lexicons. On the one hand, they are of great importance, because they put in order our knowledge about Potocki's life by presenting individual events in a longer time frame.

46 Ibid., p. 168.

47 B. Grochulska, 'Dramat liberała', in: *Losy Polaków w XIX–XX w. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Stefanowi Kieniewiczowi w osiemdziesiątą rocznicę Jego urodzin*, eds B. Grochulska, J. Skowronek et al. (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 137–49; B. Grochulska, 'Sejm Czteroletni w życiu Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *Wiek Oświecenia*, vol. 9, 1993, pp. 127–37; B. Grochulska, 'Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755–1821)', in: *Pisarze polskiego oświecenia*, vol. 3, eds T. Kostkiewiczowa, Z. Goliński (Warszawa, 1996), pp. 140–72.

48 A. Winiarz, *Szkolnictwo Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1807–1831)* (Lublin, 2002); W. Gliński, *Komisja Rządowa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego wobec wspólnot religijnych w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1820* (Warszawa, 2002); A. Barańska, *Między Warszawą, Petersburgiem i Rzymem. Kościół a państwo w dobie Królestwa Polskiego* (Lublin, 2008).

49 However, see also: W.M. Grabski, 'Uwagi o dymisji ministra Stanisława Kostki Potockiego w 1820 r.', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Series 1, Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne*, no. 58, 1968, pp. 39–59; M. Deszczyńska, 'Biskup Wojciech Skarszewski a dymisja Stanisława Kostki Potockiego', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, vol. 106, 1999, no. 1, pp. 45–56.

However, they cannot fully replace a truly monographic discourse that would not only provide a large number of facts (while correcting and supplementing the previous findings), but would also, maybe primarily, submit that life to profound interpretation and contextualisation.

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- p. 57 Potrait of Stanisław Staszic, *Przyjaciel Ludu, czyli Tygodnik Potrzebnych i Pożytecznych Wiadomości*, vol. 4, 1837, no. 33; Mazovian Digital Library, public domain, [https://www.europeana.eu/pl/item/0940415/\\_nn5Vfrs](https://www.europeana.eu/pl/item/0940415/_nn5Vfrs)
- p. 59 B. Puc, F. Tegazzo, Portrait of Franciszek Maksymilian Sobieszczański, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, vol. 5, Series 3, 1878, no. 128, p. 353; Mazovian Digital Library, public domain, <http://mbc.cyfrowemazowsze.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=58745&from=publication>
- p. 61 Kazimierz Mordasewicz, Portrait of Stanisław Krzemiński; Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, public domain
- p. 66 Scientific session on the 150th anniversary of Stanisław Kostka Potocki's death, the White Hall at the Wilanów Palace, 1971; photo by Zofia Błażejewska, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów
- p. 66 Scientific session on the 150th anniversary of Stanisław Kostka Potocki's death, the White Hall at the Wilanów Palace, 1971; photo by Zofia Błażejewska, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów
- p. 68 *Grand Tour. The Birth of a Collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki*, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów (Warszawa, 2006)

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The study was conducted as part of individual research.