

Introduction

The tradition of growing exotic plants in Wilanów dates back to the times of King Jan III, who in 1682 founded a wooden orangery in the southern part of his summer residence. It was used for wintering citruses (*Citrus* spp.), pomegranates (*Punica granatum*), myrtles (*Myrtus communis*), bay laurels (*Laurus nobilis*), jasmines (*Jasminum* spp.), and rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*).¹ The royal collection was cared for and gradually extended by successive owners and its development was accompanied by the construction of new facilities designed for plant cultivation. On the initiative of Elżbieta Sieniawska a new brick orangery designed by Giovanni Spazzi was built between 1720 and 1730. According to a detailed inventory of the Wilanów garden compiled shortly after Sieniawska's death, Wilanów had an impressive collection of 830 plant specimens.² Apart from the abovementioned species, there were also specimens of evergreen cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*), yucca (*Yucca gloriosa*), Italian jasmine (*Jasminum humile*), and Spanish broom (*Genista hispanica*). They were grown in large oak planters, gilt pots left by King Jan III, ceramic pots, and Delft earthenware planters.³

The next chapter in the history of the collection was opened by Maria Zofia and Aleksander August Czartoryski, who founded a new orangery in the northern part of the Wilanów residence. The new building, designed by the Saxon architect Johann Sigmund Deybel and erected between 1746 and 1748, had an impressive size: it was c. 100 m long and 15 m wide. The collection of plants also changed, and this especially concerned bay laurels and orange trees, which were displayed in wooden planters painted in diagonal white and green stripes.⁴ At the

WILANÓW COLLECTION OF EXOTIC PLANTS REVISITED – INVENTORIES OF 1856 AND 1857

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Jacek Kuśmierski
Museum of King Jan III's Palace
at Wilanów

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- 1 Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (hereinafter: AGAD), the Radziwiłł Archive from Nieśwież, Unit II, MS 60, *Manuskrypt ręką własną ks. Pawła Sapiehy Opata Paradayskiego, potem biskupa Żmudzkiego. Dziennik codzienny Anno 1694*. On King Jan III's collection of exotic plants at Wilanów: J. Kuśmierski, *King Jan III's citrus collection*, https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/king_jan_iii_s_citrus_collection.html (accessed 6 October 2021).
- 2 Princes Czartoryski Library – the National Museum in Krakow (hereinafter: BCzart.), ref. no. EW. 419, *Inwentarz Ogrodu Włoskiego Willanowskiego, 1729*; published by the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów: R. Nestorow, J. Sito, *Rezydencja i dobra wilanowskie w świetle materiałów archiwalnych z Biblioteki Czartoryskich w Krakowie (rkps 11318 i 11358)* (Warszawa, 2010, Series: *Ad Villam Novam*. Materiały do dziejów rezydencji, vol. 3), pp. 29–30
- 3 E.K. Świetlicka, 'Garden Vase', in: *Elżbieta Sieniawska. A Queen without a Crown*, eds K. Morawski, K. Pyzel (Warszawa, 2020), p. 231.
- 4 The purchase of pots painted in stripes was first mentioned on 21 August 1746, BCzart., MS 11318, Materiały z okresu Augusta A. Czartoryskiego, pałac w Wilanowie [set of

end of the eighteenth century, Wilanów's plant collection was significantly dispersed and impoverished. Some plants were taken by Princess Elżbieta Lubomirska to her palace in Łańcut and some were sold, for example to the Radziwiłł family in Nieborów. In addition, the old orangery founded by Elżbieta Sieniawska was demolished during the construction of a landscape garden in the southern part of the residence. Based on the agreement signed on 19 September 1799 in Łańcut, Princess Lubomirska handed the estate, including the garden, hothouses,⁵ orangeries, 'trees and plants'⁶ to her daughter Aleksandra, who together with her husband Stanisław Kostka Potocki continued to care for the orangery collection. Work on the rebuilding of the orangery was supervised by Chrystian Piotr Aigner and completed in 1821. As a result, the length of the building was reduced by about 1/3 and a portico supported by Corinthian columns was added on the eastern side.⁷ Stanisław Kostka Potocki, who grew orange trees in his park in Olesin,⁸ appreciated the particular importance of plants, and at Wilanów he founded a memorial metal ring for King Jan III's bay laurel tree (Wil.3381).

Subsequent owners of the palace, Aleksandra and August Potocki, also showed great interest in gardening, and in cooperation with excellent gardeners and architects they created a model horticultural farm. They paid special attention to the Wilanów garden stretching in the northern part of the estate. In the 1940s, in the area between the orangery, the conservatory for fig trees and St. Alexander's hospital, there were two hothouses called *trebhaus*, a brick glasshouse and two conservatories for pineapples.⁹ Over the next decade these buildings were modernized, and finally a pipe supplying water from the Wilanów lake was constructed. In 1852 and 1853 the orangery was a venue for charity garden exhibitions during which special arrangements of plants and

manuscripts]. For more information on the Wilanów collection of exotic plants in the eighteenth century, see J. Kuśmierski, *Wilanów citrus collection in the eighteenth century*, https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/the_wilanow_citrus_collection_in_the_eighteenth_century.html (accessed 6 October 2021).

- 5 The term comes from the German word *treibhaus* (hothouse). In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Polish records usually mention *trebhaus*, but other forms of the word were also used: *trejbhaus*, *trejphas*, *trephas*, *trabhaus*. In his works *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu* and *Świstek krytyczny*, Stanisław Kostka Potocki used the word *trepauz*, S.K. Potocki, *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu i świstek krytyczny (wybór)* (Wrocław, 1955), p. 47.
- 6 AGAD, the Wilanów Household Archive (hereinafter: AGWil.), Anteriora Ogólne, no. 162, Księga percepty i ekspensy ks. Lubomirskiej Marszałkowej Koronnej, book 37.
- 7 A. Świtek, *Rzeźba i mała architektura w ogrodach wilanowskich* (Warszawa, 2019), p. 62.
- 8 AGAD, AGWil., Anteriora, no. 288, 289, 290, 291, Rejestry rachunkowe z lat 1807–1820.
- 9 Ibid., Central Office for the General Business of Count August Potocki (hereinafter: Biuro Interesów), fonds 342, series no. 8, ref. no. 65, pp. 5–6.

valuable exotic specimens were displayed.¹⁰ At many exhibitions organized in 1881 plants from glasshouses at Wilanów offered a competition to the thriving garden centres operating at that time in Warsaw, such as the Botanical Garden, the Saxon Garden, the Royal Łazienki Gardens, Zamoyski's gardens, and the Frascati Gardens, owned by Counts Branicki, as well as garden firms, mainly those run by the Ulrich family in Warsaw, the Hoser brothers and the Bardet brothers. The collection of orangery and glasshouse plants owned by Countess Aleksandra Potocka was appreciated: it received the main award from the jurors at the Universal Garden Exhibition organized in the autumn of 1881 by the Museum of Industry and Agriculture at the Dolina Szwajcarska Park,¹¹ the gold and silver medals at the Universal Garden Exhibition organized in September 1885 at the venue of the agricultural and industrial exhibition at Pola Ujazdowskie,¹² letters of commendation from the jury of the Garden Exhibition organized in July 1886 at the Orangery of the Royal Łazienki Gardens,¹³ and medals at the Universal Garden Exhibition organized by the Warsaw Garden Society in Bagatela street in 1895.¹⁴ According to some records, the Wilanów collection included 300-year-old pomegranate trees imported by order of Queen Marie Casimire,¹⁵ as well as mulberry trees and citrus trees which once belonged to King Jan III¹⁶ (Fig. 1).

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- 10 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1852, no. 131, pp. 681–82; 'Wystawa Roślin w Wilanowie', *Gazeta Warszawska*, 1852, no. 135, pp. 3–5; *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1853, no. 129, pp. 668–69; *ibid.*, no. 130, pp. 674–76; 'Wystawa kwiatów w Willanowie', *Gazeta Warszawska*, 1853, no. 129, pp. 5–6; K. Kucz, *Pamiętniki miasta Warszawy z roku 1853*, vol. 1 (Warszawa, 1854), pp. 240–51. For more on garden exhibitions, see J. Kuśmierski, *Wilanów Orangery collection in exhibitions over the second half of the nineteenth century*, https://www.wilanow-palac.pl/wilanow_orangery_collection_in_exhibitions_over_the_second_half_of_the_nineteenth_century.html (accessed 6 October 2021).
- 11 'Wystawa ogrodnicza', *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1881, no. 211, p. 3; 'Wystawa ogrodnicza', *ibid.*, no. 216, p. 3; J. Banzemer, 'Pierwsza ogólna wystawa ogrodnicza w Warszawie', *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1881, series 3, vol. 12, no. 303, pp. 243–45; *Ogrodnik Polski*, 1881, no. 24, pp. 573–74.
- 12 *Ogrodnik Polski*, 1885, no. 19, pp. 434–35.
- 13 Diplomas for the Wilanów collection (Wil.4216, Wil.4215, Wil.4214, Wil.4213, Wil.4212); 'Wystawa ogrodnicza', *Gazeta Warszawska*, 1886, no. 169, p. 2.
- 14 Diplomas for the Wilanów collection (Wil.4226, Wil.4221, Wil.4220, Wil.4219, Wil.4218); 'Wystawa ogrodnicza ogólna w Warszawie w 1885 r.', *Ogrodnik Polski*, 1885, no. 19, pp. 433–35. In 1895, medals were awarded to the Branicki family, the successors of the Potocki family.
- 15 'Willanów', *Przyjaciel Dzieci. Pismo poświęcone nauce i zabawie z rycinami*, vol. 1, 1861, no. 14, pp. 108–10.
- 16 H. Skimborowicz, *Willanów: album. Zbiór widoków i pamiątek oraz kopje z obrazów. Galeryi Willanowskiej*, Warszawa 1877, p. 91.

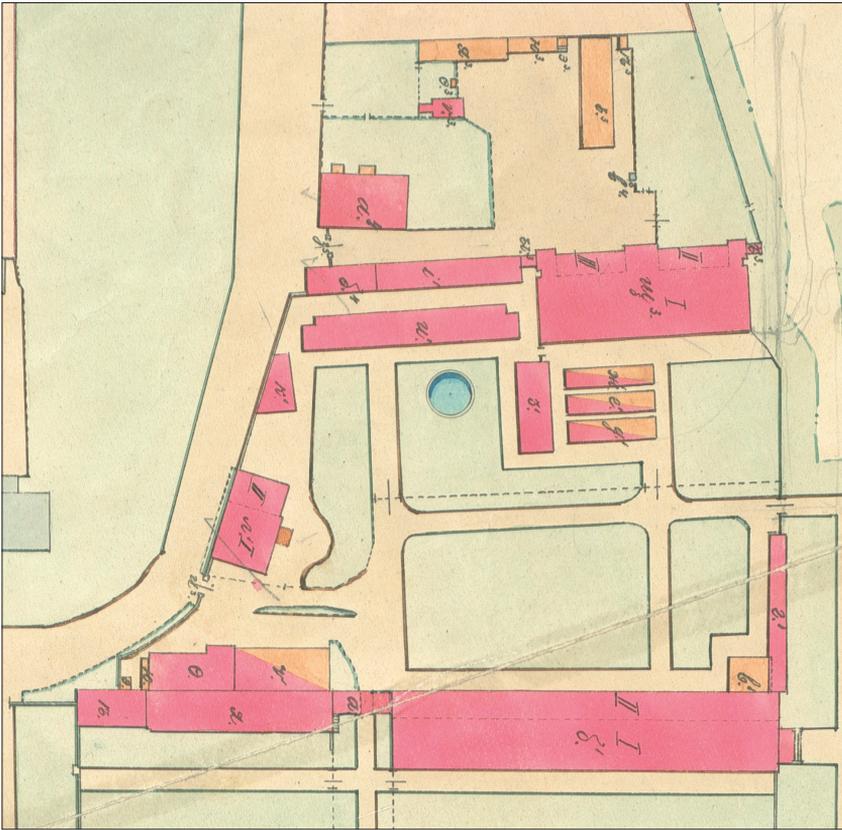


Fig. 1

Wilanów gardens on a fragment of a situational map, second half of the nineteenth century; AGAD

The outstanding collection of exotic plants owned by Aleksandra and August Potocki has never before been examined in detail and the information on the species of plants in this collection was only fragmentary. Missing information can be found in previously unknown inventories of 1856 and 1857 held in the collection of the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD). They contain lists of plants and orangery shrubs from the Wilanów garden compiled by Tytus Zbraniczki, a gardener of Natolin, and Gustav Lassé, the inspector of Wilanów gardens.¹⁷ Both documents were analysed under the project ‘Citri et Aurea’ carried out by the Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów in partnership with the Uffizi Gallery – the Boboli Gardens in Florence. The aim of the research was to identify the reasons and conditions for the preparation of these inventories and to characterize the plant species mentioned therein. This information expands the existing knowledge on

17 AGAD, AGWil., Central Management for the Estates and Business of August Potocki (hereinafter: Zarząd Główny Potockiego), ref. no. 61, Akta dotyczące się ogrodów w dobrach willanowskich, 1852–1867, *Spis Inwentarza żywego, Naczyń, Sprzętów, Roślin i Krzewów Oranżeryjnych w Ogrodzie Willanowskim sporządzony na dniu 1-ego Stycznia 1857 r. and Verzeichniss der Gewaechshaus pflanzen von Willanow*, pp. 234–48, 389–402.

the Wilanów gardens in many respects. On the one hand, it shows a remarkable diversity of species in one of the most interesting and richest collections of exotic plants in historic Warsaw, also evidencing a great interest in botany and different forms of garden patronage provided by the then owners of the estate, Count August Potocki and his wife Aleksandra. On the other hand, these inventories constitute an excellent example of a collection of exotic plants typical of European residential estates of the nineteenth century, which usually combined well-known species from the Old World with completely new ones, imported at that time by botanists from the North and South America, Australia and Oceania.

Materials and methods

Manuscripts were rewritten and decoded, and then analysed for historical aspects and detailed botanical information. The historical analysis focused on exploring the context of documents, i.e. the reasons for their preparation, and the identification of key persons involved in this process. Other manuscripts held at the AGAD were used for this purpose, including inventories and relevant publications. Botanical analysis focused on defining the contemporary taxonomic status of plant species listed in the said documents and the geographical origin of these plants. This information was acquired from various international botanical resources available online, such as the International Plant Names Index,¹⁸ World Flora Online,¹⁹ Plants of the World Online, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,²⁰ and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility.²¹ Varieties of camellias, roses and dahlias mentioned in the inventories were further analysed by comparison with scientific publications and historical plant catalogues.

Historical context of inventories

The inventories of plants as analysed herein were made following a change of the chief inspector for Wilanów gardens. Until the mid-1855 this position was held by Franciszek Pelda,²² who had either left service or

18 <https://www.ipni.org/> (accessed 29 January 2021).

19 <http://www.worldfloraonline.org/> (accessed 10 July 2021).

20 <http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/> (accessed 10 July 2021).

21 <https://www.gbif.org/> (accessed 10 July 2021).

22 Franciszek Pelda (b. 1820 in Prague, d. 13 January 1877 in Puławy), a gardener of Czech origin, the inspector at Wilanów gardens in 1845–1855, an employee of the Institute of Engineering, Agriculture and Forestry in Puławy in 1862–1869 and the administrator of buildings of the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry in Puławy in 1869–1875, H. Mącznik, J. Mącznik, *Puławski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 2 (Puławy, 2000), pp. 174–75; H. Radlińska, 'Garść wspomnień Antoszki', *Niepodległość*.

had been dismissed after being accused of taking away valuable exotic plants and forwarding them to the Garden Centre owned by the Hoser brothers located in Aleje Jerozolimskie in Warsaw.²³ His position was temporarily taken over by a Natolin gardener, Tytus Zbranicki, one of the best Warsaw gardeners of the nineteenth century.²⁴ It is worth mentioning that Zbranicki was not only an outstanding expert with a vast knowledge of horticulture and botany, but also the father of two gardeners: Piotr (b. 24 November 1823 in Natolin, d. 22 March 1872), working in Natolin, and Teofil Kazimierz (b. 28 February 1832 at Natolin), a gardener at Wilanów, serving the Potocki family. The temporarily appointed Tytus Zbranicki received the task of carrying out a general survey of plants, flowers, shrubs, tools, machines and planters at Wilanów garden, and submitting it to the new inspector. This task was assigned to Zbranicki based on a special order from the Central Office for the Wilanów Estate.²⁵ Zbranicki prepared a 10-page-long, exceptionally detailed document, containing a list of 440 species of glasshouse and orangery plants and a separate list of 325 species 'imported from abroad in 1856'. The list ends with a catalogue of 51 dahlia varieties, with a description of their colours and structure of flowers. The text was written in a quite eclectic language style, combining the Latin taxonomic nomenclature used in the nineteenth century with descriptions in Polish and German (Fig. 2). On 1 April 1857, the document was certified by Antoni Plater, the chancellor at the Central Office for the Wilanów Estate.

The newly appointed inspector was Gustav Lassé,²⁶ a gardener arrived from Dresden, with whom Countess Aleksandra Potocka signed

Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom polskich walk wyzwolenicznych w dobie popowstaniowej, vol. 14, 1936, pp. 57–66; F. Erlicki, *Rys historyczny instytucji rolniczo-leśnych w Królestwie Polskiem* (Warszawa, 1877), pp. 154–65.

- 23 AGAD, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, *Protokół śledczy wykazujący przeniesienie się w służbie Pana Peldy Ogrodnika w Willanowie*, pp. 169–86.
- 24 Tytus Zbranicki (b. 1794 in Dukla, d. 10 August 1870 at Wilanów), a gardener working in Natolin and Wilanów in 1815–1875, National Archives in Warsaw, Department in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, 0173/0 Akta stanu cywilnego gminy Brwinów powiat Pruszków, 6/1820; E. Jankowski, 'Podtrzymajcie więc!', *Ogrodnik Polski. Dwutygodnik poświęcony wszystkim gałęziom ogrodnictwa*, vol. 2, 1882, no. 9, p. 194; P. Hoser, 'Uwagi i rozważania', *ibid.*, no. 21, p. 486.
- 25 ADAG, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, Rozporządzenie Zarządu Głównego Dóbr Wilanów no. 116 from 18 July 1856, pp. 187–88.
- 26 Gustav Lassé, a gardener from Dresden who worked for the Marshall Office of the Royal Supreme Court of Saxony (*Königlich-Sächsischen Oberhofmarschallamt*), was the inspector of Wilanów gardens in 1855–1865, AGAD, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, Akta dotyczące się ogrodów w dobrach willanowskich, 1852–1867, pp. 155–161; AGAD, AGWil., Akta Procesowe Potockich, ref. no. 245, Aleksandra [Augustowa] Potocka przeciwko Lasse Gustawowi, inspektorowi ogrodów wilanowskich. Nieporozumienia o zwolnienie ze służby.

a contract starting on 1 December 1855.²⁷ The contract stated that as part of the responsibilities of the garden inspector, Lassé would be in charge of the park grounds, hothouses, orangery, flower gardens and nurseries in Wilanów and Gucin.²⁸ The inventory prepared by Tytus Zbranicki reached the new garden inspector in August 1856, which is confirmed by Lassé's signature on the document and the letter from the steward of the Wilanów estate, Jan Taraszkiewicz: 'Upon the arrival of Mr Laßé to commence his duties, Mr Zbranicki, who was a temporary gardener after Pelda, submitted to Mr Laßé some of the most important plants and shrubs, pots and tools listed in the old inventory, and the receipt thereof by Mr Laßé was confirmed on the previous inventory'.²⁹ Further on, Taraszkiewicz wrote that Tytus Zbranicki was supposed to hand in the remaining 'smaller plants', but the plan had changed because of spring works, when all specimens were moved out to the garden and were impossible to inventory correctly. Therefore, 'Mr Laßé declared that after his return from abroad and preparing the whole orangery for winter, he will create a detailed and structured list of all plants and will also include new specimens purchased and brought from abroad during his work in the garden'.³⁰ This probably refers to plants that Lassé personally imported from Dresden in May 1856, packed in 15 boxes.³¹

At the beginning of the following year Gustav Lassé indeed prepared his own inventory, which is proven by the document bearing his handwritten annotation in pencil: 'Inventory of the Wilanów Garden prepared by Mr Lassé' and by an annotation by Jan Taraszkiewicz dated 23 April 1857: 'Following the order of the Central Estate Office of 28 December 1856, no. 988, I hereby submit this Inventory of the Wilanów Garden prepared on the site; please note that one copy is held by the gardener on the site, and another copy is in the files at my office'.³² The contents of this 15-page document is almost identical to the inventory compiled by Tytus Zbranicki, but is much better structured. It also contains several

27 *Contract zwischen Frau Gräfin Alexandra Potocka, und der Garten-Inspector Herr G. Lasse aus Dresden*, Wilanów, 1 December 1855, AGAD, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, Akta dotyczące się ogrodów w dobrach willanowskich, 1852–1867, pp. 160–61.

28 *Ibid.*: 'Vom 1 Dezember 1855 an wird der Herr G. Laßé für sämtliche Park-Anlagen, Treib und Orangerie Häuser, Blumengärten und Baumschulen von Willanow und Gucin definitiv als Garten-Inspector von der Frau Gräfin angestellt'.

29 AGAD, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, Jan Taraszkiewicz's letter to the Central Office of Wilanów Estate, Wilanów, 13 August 1856, p. 192.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 193–94.

31 AGAD, AGWil., Kasa Generalna i Domowa Potockich, ref. no. 274, Conto Dworu Tom IIgi od 1o stycznia do końca Czerwca 1856 r., p. 47.

32 AGAD, AGWil., Zarząd Główny Potockiego, ref. no. 61, Akta dotyczące się ogrodów w dobrach wilanowskich 1852–1867, Jan Taraszkiewicz's note to the Central Office of Wilanów Estate, Wilanów, 23 April 1857, p. 233.

The image shows two pages of a handwritten botanical inventory. The pages are numbered 233 and 235 at the top. The handwriting is in Latin and includes various botanical names and numbers. The left page is headed 'Wojciech Zbraniczy' and the right page is headed 'Gustav Lassé'. The lists contain names of plants and their quantities, such as 'Aristolochia', 'Celastrus', 'Clematis', etc.

Fig. 2

Pages with a list of plants from the inventory by Tytus Zbraniczy, 1857; AGAD, AGWil., Potocki Family Central Estate Office

plants that were not listed previously, which provides very precise information on the range of species and the number of exotic plants in the Wilanów collection at the beginning of 1857.

Botanical analysis of the inventory

The inventories prepared by Tytus Zbraniczy and Gustav Lassé are almost identical in terms of the number of taxa and the number of specimens. Species were grouped into glasshouse (hothouse) plants, orangery plants and those grown in the ground, which differentiation was directly associated with the climate these plants required. Growing exotic plants in Wilanów was quite a challenge for gardeners because an adequate temperature had to be maintained in the glasshouses and orangery so the plants could survive cold winters. It was also important to create the right level of humidity and space for their proper growth. The analysed inventories include 771 species and varieties. However, Tytus Zbraniczy recorded a total of 7259 specimens, while Gustav Lassé recorded 17 fewer. The differences in the groups of plants were also minor, from one to two species and varieties, and from 35 to 52 specimens. Because

no clear trend can be observed, it is difficult to establish a cause for these differences: it could be a change in the collection or a mistake during the survey made by one of the garden inspectors. After the comparison of historical plant names with the modern nomenclature, a total of 763 plant species and varieties were identified.³³

In both inventories, plants were also grouped depending on the method of cultivation or species. The first group were specimens of orangery trees grown in large and small wooden planters. Among them Zbranicki and Lassé listed bitter oranges (*Citrus × aurantium*), bitter oranges of the Crespo variety,³⁴ pomelos (*Citrus maxima*), mandarin oranges (*Citrus reticulata*) locally called paradise apples, citrons (*Citrus medica*), bay laurels (*Laurus nobilis*), and pomegranates (*Punica granatum*). Most of the trees were marked with a number, and this was reported in separate tables. Interestingly, some numbers are repeated. In the inventory by Tytus Zbranicki we find: 1560 (oranges nos. 38 and 39), 1564 (orange no. 40 and paradise apple no. 1), 1579 (oranges nos. 51 and 52) and 1590 (oranges nos. 62 and 63). Gustav Lassé in his inventory repeated the numbers of oranges: 1560, 1579 and 1590, but specimens with numbers 1543 and 1552 are missing, while for bay laurels and pomegranates he reported one specimen more than Zbranicki.

In their inventories, Zbranicki and Lassé also provided detailed lists of varieties for selected species. Among them there were 16 varieties of evergreen azalea (*Rhododendron indicum*), 203 varieties of Japanese camellia (*Camellia japonica*), 11 varieties of heaths (*Erica* sp.), 14 varieties of fuchsia (*Fuchsia* sp.), 10 varieties of pelargonium (*Pelargonium* sp.), and 14 varieties of rose (*Rosa* sp.). Tytus Zbranicki also prepared a very interesting list of 51 varieties of dahlia (*Dahlia hybr.*). Descriptions of flowers and height of plants ranging from 75 cm up to 180 cm indicate that the collection owned by the Potocki family included pompon, single-flowered (English), peony-flowered, large full-flowered, as well as small-flowered and cactus dahlias. Specific names of varieties were provided in some instances, i.e. 'Baudin', 'Fire Ball', 'Leonore', 'Phidias', and 'Queen Virgin'.

Considering the number of specimens, the most abundant glasshouse species in both inventories are pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) – 220; hot water plant (*Achimenes* sp.) – 150; garden heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*) – 50; gloxinia (*Gloxinia* sp.) – 50; coral berry (*Ardisia crenata*) – 50; and common gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*) – 45. Among specimens brought from Dresden in 1856 there is a marked number of Japanese camellia (*Camellia japonica*) – 428 plants reported by Tytus

³³ See Annex 3.

³⁴ Species with uncertain taxonomic status.

Zbranicki and 436 plants reported by Gustav Lassé, and heaths (*Erica* sp.) – 187 plants. In the group of orangery plants the most abundant are the Sims azalea (*Rhododendron simsii*) – 422; pelargonium (*Pelargonium* sp.) – 329 plants reported by Tytus Zbranicki and 319 plants reported by Gustav Lassé; pyramidal and horizontal varieties of Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) – 295; bigleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) – 286; and Pontian rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) – 267. Most plants in the Potocki collection were those producing exotic fruit for the palace kitchen, and those with ornamental flowers or leaves creating a spectacular range of shapes, colours and fragrances. Nevertheless, there were also real botanical curiosities, like *Stanhopea wardii*, an orchid species native to the tropical regions of America, or *Banksia attenuata* with characteristic candle-shaped florets, from Western Australia.

A certain trend in the choice of plants is suggested by the native climate zone of these plants and their geographical origin. Plants listed in inventories represent three major climate and vegetation zones: tropical (15.0%), subtropical (15.3%) and temperate (7.0%). Additionally, almost half of the specimens are native to two zones: tropical and subtropical (20.9%), or subtropical and temperate (24.3%). A small fraction of plants are native to more than one climate zone (3.9%). No climate zone has been assigned to plants of unknown taxonomic status or to cultivars (13.6%). Considering the abundance of specimens, most species originated from North and South America (24.0%) and Asia (23.4%). There was also a large share of taxa naturally growing on more than one continent (20.9%) and cultivars (12.1%). Moreover, the collection included plant species from Africa (10.5%), Australia and Oceania (7.1%), and Europe (0.5%). The place of origin has not been established for species with uncertain taxonomic status (1.5%). These records show that the collection owned by the Potocki family was fairly balanced for the proportions of well-known exotic plants from the Old World with completely new ones imported by plant hunters from tropical and subtropical regions on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and Oceania. The clearly collectible character of flora gathered in Wilanów hothouses and orangery is implied by the number of specimens of each plant species. More than half of all species are represented by only one or two specimens (55.1%). Only one in three species was represented by three to ten specimens (31.5%), and every tenth by up to 100 specimens (11.5%). The remaining part of the collection, i.e. plants with more than 101 specimens (1.9%), concern popular species of the time, such as rhododendrons, pelargoniums, heaths, evergreen cypresses, hydrangeas, Japanese camellias and fuchsias.

Interestingly, neither of inventories mentions the spectacular Amazon water lily (*Victoria amazonica*) which was supposed to be in the Wilanów collection at this time. According to the historical records, this unique aquatic

plant had an impressive size: leaves more than 2 m in diameter and flowers reaching nearly 45 cm in diameter.³⁵ An aquarium was built for this plant on the grounds of the garden, between the Gardener's House and the former hospital of St. Alexander. It was a specially designed hothouse accommodating a round pond 7 m in diameter, which was filled with warm water and covered in winter with a removable roof structure.³⁶

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Editorial note

The text presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 is a copy from the source record. The copy is cited in the original language with the exception of Polish, which has been translated into English for the Readers' information.

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JACEK KUŚMIERSKI

M.Sc. Eng. in landscape architecture, specialist for historic gardens at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-Poland) and the Association of Landscape Architecture – Poland, and collaborator of the European Route of Historic Gardens (ERHG). His research interests include cultural history of gardens, conservation of historic green areas and garden museology.

Contact: jkusmierski@muzeum-wilanow.pl

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