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## Collecting in St Petersburg at the Time of the Russian Revolution. Stanisław Krosnowski and the Forming of a Polish National Heritage

### St Petersburg<sup>1</sup> as a Centre of Polish Collecting at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century St Petersburg was an important and expanding centre for artists, as well as art collectors and dealers<sup>2</sup>. Just like the city itself, this cultural milieu was cosmopolitan and multinational, comprising not only the Russian elites but also those of the various nationalities and ethnicities of the Empire. Strikingly, giving the number of Poles living in St Petersburg<sup>3</sup> – with members of the Duma, aristocrats, landlords, entrepreneurs, intelligentsia and students of various higher schools and universities – one can give only two Polish names well known in the city's artistic and collecting circles.

The first one of these is Cyprian Lachnicki (1824–1906), Director of the Muzeum Sztuk Pięknych (Museum of Fine Arts) founded in Warsaw in 1862. Lachnicki started his museum career at the Imperial Picture Gallery in 1848, where he was responsible for attributions and new acquisitions on the international art market. His interest and expertise in Old Masters paralleled his first collection, which was auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot auction house in Paris in 1867, the time of his move to Warsaw<sup>4</sup>. Less than two decades later, Jan Popławski (1860–1935), a Polish internist and neurologist born in Siberia, formed a collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings in St Petersburg<sup>5</sup>. This well-known and frequent visitor to antique shops and restorers' studios in the capital was one among the many St Petersburg physicians with a special predilection for the art of Northern schools. His collection was on display at the main Old Masters exhibitions in St Petersburg from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the 1910 exhibition of art from private collections organized by "Starye Gody", the established Russian art history journal<sup>6</sup>.

Stanisław Maciej Krosnowski (1865–1933) was a collector of a different sort. A graduate of the technical chemistry department of the Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum in Zurich (1888), he had chosen St Peters-

burg as his home and embarked on a career in the dyeing industry<sup>7</sup>. Since the early 1890s he was based at the Imperial Petersburg Institute of Technology and was the co- or sole owner of several private dyeing factories based in the city. An efficient entrepreneur and a talented chemist, he gradually developed his business<sup>8</sup> thanks to his patented dyeing processes and techniques. However, it was the outbreak of the war that gave a real boost to his career. With the interruption of international trade routes and contacts, and the creation of a huge demand for uniforms and military fabrics, Krosnowski's factories were among the main suppliers of fabric dyes to the Russian army. In addition to the existing ones, his brand-new factory, established in 1915 and employing as many as 80 people, was focused on the production of the military khaki dye during these years<sup>9</sup>.

It is of no coincidence that this unexpected boom in Krosnowski's career was the catalyst for him to begin collecting art. He himself claimed to have been buying artworks in St Petersburg as early as in 1888<sup>10</sup>, however this date is questionable. First, the year 1888 marks the beginning of Krosnowski's professional and scientific career when he was busy undertaking internships in various factories in the Polish lands under the Russian rule, and was not yet based in St Petersburg. Second, his name is neither mentioned in the Russian artistic and cultural press of the pre-war period, nor in the archive of the State Hermitage Museum and in the papers of its first director, Alexandre Benois (1870–1960), which document in detail the activity of Russian collectors. Thus, it seems that Krosnowski was not in any way actively involved in the city's vibrant cultural milieu and life at that time. Moreover, from the few provenance hints in the collection's inventory and from the few preserved provenance marks on the artworks, we can conclude that the collection was formed in the first years of the First World War. Hence, Krosnowski was not an art lover or connoisseur, but

rather an investor seeking to secure unexpected financial gains in the difficult and unstable economic reality of the times. His greatest investment in this period was the modern and prestigious six-story tenement house, designed by the Odesa architect Wilhelm Van der Gucht (1876–1943) and located in the city centre on the corner of the Zecharevskaya and Potemkinskya streets.

### **Building an Art Collection in St Petersburg at the Time of War**

During the first years of the war the St Petersburg art market was full of unprecedented bargains: in face of financial difficulties many aristocrats put multi-generational family collections and palace furnishings up for sale. Accordingly, over the time-span of just few years, Krosnowski was able to form an art collection consisting of over 6000 items reflecting the taste of the aristocrats and bourgeoisie of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and highlighted the incredible opportunities created by the war-time art market<sup>11</sup>. In particular, he eagerly acquired large, mainly 17<sup>th</sup>-century French tapestries; expensive St Petersburg porcelain (large gilded vases with reproductions of masterpieces from the Hermitage, figurines from the Popov factory, chinaware in the chinoiserie or Dutch style); Italian maiolica; Saxon porcelain sets; historic arms (including two full armours on wooden mannequins); historical furniture in different styles, often veneered, inlaid with tortoiseshell or expensive wood; chandeliers and decorative fireplaces; Old Master paintings, few works of Russian painters and several icons. Judging from the number and decorative nature of his purchases, it is tempting to conclude that Krosnowski formed his collection with a view to furnishing his new house and of giving the right splendour to his wealth and social standing. But this was unlikely to be the case. The existing political, social and economic order was crumbling before Krosnowski's eyes, and he was rather trying to secure as much of his wealth as possible, with a view to showing it off in the future.

But how exactly did Krosnowski form his collection? The few preserved provenance hints lead us to believe that he must have been introduced to the highest aristocratic and cultural milieu. Although Krosnowski's name is missing from the chronicles of the pre-war cultural and artistic life of St Petersburg, at the time of

war he easily found his way into the city's main collecting circles. In fact, several among the acquired artworks have a provenance from the most distinguished collections of the time, namely Paul Delarov, Countess Marie Kleinmichel and Alexandra Kurakina.

Paul Delarov (1851–1913), a lawyer in the Ministry of Communication, put together a large and generally acclaimed collection of Old Masters, sculpture and Russian paintings in the 1880s and 1890s. He was well known in the international circle of connoisseurs, praised both for the paintings which he lent to numerous exhibitions organised in St Petersburg, Paris and in other European centres; and for his books and essays on art and collecting. Nikolai Wrangel (1847–1923), the secretary of the Society for the Protection and Preservation of the Memorials of Art and Antiquity, described him as one of the greatest Russian connoisseurs of Italian and Dutch art<sup>12</sup>. Louis Réau (1881–1961), the prominent art historian and director of the Institut français de Saint-Pétersbourg, mentioned him – next to Nikolay Jusupov (1750–1831), Grigory Stroganoff (1829–1910) and Ivan Shuvalov (1727–1797) – among the main Russian collectors of the French school of painting<sup>13</sup>. Even Benois, who described his collection as large but disorderly (“what a mess of artists, schools and values!”<sup>14</sup>), recognized him as one of the principal Russian collectors. Delarov's achievement was short-lived: right after his death in 1913 his heirs decided to sell the collection. His Russian paintings were auctioned in St Petersburg, and the Old Masters were sold in May 1914 at the Hôtel Drouot<sup>15</sup>. The Parisian auction was largely publicised in the French and Russian cultural press attracting an international clientele. Krosnowski, one of the bidders (either in person, or via an intermediary), bought six paintings by French, Dutch and Flemish masters<sup>16</sup>. On the back of all of them was an inscription in red lacquer: “Collection Paul Delaroff 1914”. The relevant auction catalogue entry had also been cut out and pasted on the back of each painting.

Countess Maria Kleinmichel (1846–1931) was one of the main animators of the St Petersburg cultural life of the pre-revolutionary era. The famous oriental costume balls of 1914, staged by the scene and costume designer of the Ballets Russes, Léon Bakst (1866–1924), were the last of the great receptions organised in her villa on Kamenny Island<sup>17</sup>. During the October Revolu-

tion she was one of the few to save both her life and her belongings. According to the recollections of Prince Serge Obolensky (1890–1978), she posted a card on her door with the words: “No trespassing! Property of the Petrograd Soviet! Countess Kleinmichel has been imprisoned in Peter and Paul Fortress, and this property has been requisitioned by the People’s Government”<sup>18</sup>. Such a clever and audacious idea gave her the time to pack and organise the needed funds to flee to Paris. Presumably it was in these circumstances that Krosnowski acquired a 17<sup>th</sup>-century French tapestry illustrating the Birth of Apollo, described in the inventory of his collection as “bought from the salons of the countess Kleinmichel”<sup>19</sup>.

Six French and Italian 18<sup>th</sup>-century paintings were presumably bought by Krosnowski in similar circumstances as the Kleinmichel tapestry. In fact, the provenance of four canvases by Bernardo Bellotto, and the portraits of Madame du Barry and the Louis Diane d’Orléans can be traced to the multi-generational Kurakin collection. They were acquired from Alexandra Alekseevna Kurakina (1840–1919), lady of the state and lady-in-waiting to Maria Feodorovna (1847–1928). Importantly, all six canvases were bought at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Vice Chancellor of Russia, the famous “diamond prince”, Alexander Kurakin (1752–1818) from the inheritance of the last king of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus (1732–1798)<sup>20</sup>.

### **Polish Patriotic Collecting in Russia (1916–1918)**

The Kurakin acquisition, just as the presence of other “Polonica” (i.e. artworks, books, documents, and other historical objects with a Polish provenance a Polish subject or a connection to Poland and its history) in Krosnowski’s collection (portraits of Polish kings and paintings from the town hall in Danzig among others) could not have been a coincidence. It leads us to link his wartime collecting with the activity of the Polish branch of the Society for the Protection of Monuments of the Past (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości; SPMP) based in Warsaw. Established in 1908 with the aim of facilitating contacts between the SPMP (whose activity was focused on the registration and protection of Polish monuments (mainly provincial churches) in the lands under the Russian rule) and the Imperial Archaeological Commission (the only institution in the Russian

Empire officially in charge of monument preservation), the St Petersburg branch gained important momentum with the outbreak of the war and the evacuation of the Russian troops and administration from the Polish lands<sup>21</sup>. First, its ranks were strengthened by the involvement of important Polish scholars and artists (war refugees or captives), like Aleksander Czołowski (1865–1944), the Director of the Lviv City Archive and Museum. Second, with the consent of the Russian administration and often in collaboration with Russian institutions (e.g. the Imperial Academy of Sciences, the Hermitage), the branch was surveying and safeguarding endangered Polish monuments, collections, libraries, archives and furnishings in war zones and those evacuated from Polish lands by the Russian army<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, it was conducting a survey of St Petersburg institutions and imperial residences with the aim of identifying and registering Polish collections, archives, libraries and “Polonica” confiscated and removed by the Imperial authorities since the first partition (1772)<sup>23</sup>. The St Petersburg branch was collaborating in this task with the Komitet Polski (Polish Committee) established in Moscow in 1914 by Aleksander Lednicki (1866–1934), an important personality in the Polish milieu of this city and one of the principal attorneys in Moscow. The Polish Committee, initially subsidised by the Russian state and by Russian political and civic organisations, dealt with all kinds of issues related to Polish refugees and Poles living in Moscow. One of its departments, the Department of Historical Monuments (Departament Zabytków), established by a Polish prisoner of war, Marian Morelowski (1884–1963) – a Cracow art historian who wrote his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Max Dvořák (1874–1921) – was concerned with the safeguarding and documentation of Polish monuments in Russia. Between 1915 and 1918 the St Petersburg branch and the Polish Committee were at the head of an impressive and well-organised network of monument departments established by numerous Polish salvage organisations in the territories of the Russian Empire. Among their main task was the documentation of Polish collections and cultural and historic objects kept in various institutions and provisionary storages, safeguarding them from the risks brought about by the unstable political situation. Importantly, the future restitution of such heritage was already on

the agenda at that time: the societies having elaborated on methods of documenting items, which would include institutional, archival and visual records of the collection or object, and of its provenance and present whereabouts<sup>24</sup>.

The safeguarding and documentation activity of Polish civic societies in Russia was solicited in the short period between February 1917 and the October revolution. In fact, the Russian Provisional Government established in the aftermath of the abdication of Nicholas II (2<sup>nd</sup> March 1917), having admitted Poland's right to independence, established a committee, the Komisja Likwidacyjna do spraw Królestwa Polskiego (Liquidation Committee for the Polish Kingdom), with the aim of solving all possible issues and claims between the two states<sup>25</sup>. Polish collections, libraries, and archives were one of these issues, and the Komisja Likwidacyjna collaborated closely with the network of Polish monument protection organisations in this matter. Moreover, in this short timespan the members of the Polish societies were granted, for the first time, access to the holdings of imperial collections, museums and libraries. Thus, they were able to discover, register and even photograph important works and collections removed from Poland during the time of imperial subordination. Such documentation turned out to be crucial evidence during the post-war Polish-Soviet negotiations on the restitution of cultural property.

A further important aspect of the activities of the Polish organisations network dealing with monument protection in this period was the registration and safeguarding of Polish private collections in the Russian Empire, which were endangered by the moving front and by the agrarian revolution. For example, the St. Petersburg SPMP branch accepted donations on behalf of the future Polish state either for existing Polish memory institutions or for future state museums, archives, and libraries. For a moderate fee it also took the endangered objects and collections for safekeeping in SPMP storage. In addition, the Polish societies and its activists in Russia tried to inspire a particular taste for documenting and collecting all kinds of "Polonica". In St Petersburg and Moscow their members regularly reviewed the market offers in search of "Polonica" on sale and tried to secure their acquisition by the wealthy members of the Polish diaspora<sup>26</sup>. The paintings from

the dispersed collection of the last Polish King, of which many items had found their way to the imperial and Russian aristocratic collections, were regarded as an important element of Polish heritage and were particularly sought-after. Hence, it is plausible that Krosnowski was inspired by the members of the St Petersburg SPMP branch to acquire the six canvases from the Kurakin collection, and he might also have taken their advice on other acquisitions. Amongst the Polish St Petersburg diaspora of that time, one can name prominent art historians and connoisseurs like Jan Żarnowski (1890–1950), a curator of the Imperial Picture Gallery of the Hermitage.

Krosnowski had already been an important member of the Polish diaspora in St Petersburg before the outbreak of the First World War. A member of Polish charitable societies during the turbulent years of the war and of the revolution, he used his wealth to assist Polish refugees and captives<sup>27</sup>. Krosnowski joined the St Petersburg SPMP branch on the eve of the outbreak of the October Revolution, becoming one of its honorary members. In fact, he was paying for the rental of one of the organisation's largest depots in the Potemkinskaya Street in which, amongst others, his own collection was stored<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, at that time he decided to donate his whole collection to the "Polish nation", choosing the St Petersburg SPMP branch as the executor of this will. It seems that Krosnowski (a friend of Lenin, whom he met during his studies in Zurich) was well aware of the consequences of the upcoming events. The new political order, established with the outbreak of the October Revolution, brought a radical change to the legal situation of Polish citizens and Polish organisations in Russia. The Council of People's Commissars (CPC), the highest executive authority of the Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, established a new institution to deal with all Polish affairs: the Polish Commissariat (Komisariat Polski) with outspoken Polish supporters of the Revolution as its members. Among other things, the Commissariat was charged with the issue of the nationalisation of Polish private property, including artworks, libraries and collections. It is only thanks to the personal skills and connections of the St Petersburg SPMP branch and other Polish monument protection organisations, that many of the private collections secured in their depots survived not

only the ravages of the war, but also those of the revolution and of the ensuing nationalisations. According to the decree of the CPC of the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1918, historical monuments, artworks, libraries of Polish citizens were not subject to requisition, if their owners had donated them to Polish people's museums<sup>29</sup>. Importantly, the St Petersburg SPMP branch was one of the institutions entitled to receive such donations. However, while in the end the people's museums were never established, the organisation managed to secure and protect an important stock of items for future Polish memory institutions. In this period the Polish monument protection organisations were focused on the actual and legal protection of Polish collections endangered by nationalisation, looting and destruction. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October the Regency Council (the highest authority of the Polish Kingdom, a state with limited autonomy established in 1916 on the former Russian territories under German and Austro-Hungarian occupation) has declared Poland's independence. Both states – Poland and Bolshevik Russia – at the time did not maintain diplomatic relations and, during that short time-span, had engaged in a war (Polish-Bolshevik war), in which Poland fought to reestablish its pre-1772 borders and Soviet Russia to expand the revolution in the territories of Western Europe. The decree of the CPC of the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1918 did not include any restitution provisions and, with the outbreak of the war, one could not expect any concession from the Bolshevik authorities in the matter. In the new political situation – the establishment of an independent Polish state and its tense diplomatic relations with Bolshevik Russia – many among the Poles living in Russia as well as Polish captives and refugees returned or moved to Poland. Krosnowski was one of them: in 1918 he resigned from his post at the Institute of Technology, and was probably repatriated to Poland in the same year<sup>30</sup>.

#### **Restitution of the Krosnowski Collection and the Failed Project of a Polish State Art Museum**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1921, after a year of negotiations, the peace treaty ending the Polish-Bolshevik war and establishing Poland's eastern borderlands was signed in Riga<sup>31</sup>. Its XI<sup>th</sup> article provided for the largest restitution of cultural goods and collections in post-war Europe<sup>32</sup>. In addition to the restitution of collections,

archives and libraries evacuated during the First World War, or removed by force from Polish territories since the first partition, the article also included the return of private Polish collections. Its 14<sup>th</sup> point, most likely stipulated with Krosnowski's collection in mind, provided the repatriation of cultural and artistic property donated or bequeathed by 25<sup>th</sup> October 1917 (the outbreak of the October Revolution) by citizens or institutions (Poles or Russians respectively) to the state or its public institutions (Poland and Soviet Russia respectively). On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1918, in Warsaw, Krosnowski confirmed his will to donate his collection to the Polish nation and to pass it into the custody of the Polish state<sup>33</sup>. This deed, as well as the documents referring to the 1917 donation and the lists of the objects which were still stored in the same depot on the corner of the Zecharevskaya and Potemkinskaya streets, served as evidence of the restitution claim. In 1921 a special commission of Polish and Soviet officials and experts, which had been established to implement the provisions of the XI<sup>th</sup> article of the peace treaty of Riga, considered the restitution of Krosnowski's collection positively<sup>34</sup>. This was one of the first restitution agreements reached by the commission. One may ask whether Krosnowski's acquaintance with Lenin could have influenced this decision, but this was probably not the case. Indeed, the return of a collection stored in one place, and which came with inventory lists, was easier than the one that included works and collections which had been part of the holdings of a former imperial memory institution or residence for years, or even decades. Moreover, Polish experts repeatedly stressed the symbolic and diplomatic dimension of the restitution of the first collection donated to the Polish nation. Nevertheless, the subsequent restitution procedure was fraught with difficulties and conflicts. The sittings of a special Polish-Soviet commission established to prepare the works for transportation had been repeatedly broken off. First, the working conditions in the provisional space, arranged in a nearby garage, were very hard. During the winter months the weather conditions were just unbearable. Similarly, the availability of the simplest packing materials was very scarce in this period and the Polish experts had to come up with inventive and provisional solutions. Second, despite the Polish-Soviet agreement, Russian experts sought



Fig. 1. The Krosnowski Collection in the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Ca. 1922, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archives)



Fig. 2. The Krosnowski Collection in the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Ca. 1922, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archives)

to prevent the restitution of many objects: all artifacts containing precious metals and stones were particularly requisitioned<sup>35</sup>. In fact, since February 1921, all Soviet institutions and privates (with the only exception of museums and libraries) were obliged to surrender all valuables to the State Valuable Depository (Gokhran) established by the Soviet authorities<sup>36</sup>. Although Krosnowski was no longer a Soviet citizen, and his collection was designated for a Polish museum, it did not escape the provisions of nationalisation. Finally, after months of discussions, a train with 17 wagons packed with 2522 objects in 507 crates left St Petersburg for Warsaw in March 1922 (fig. 1–2)<sup>37</sup>.

The collection was everything that Krosnowski was able to save from revolutionary turmoil. Having been repatriated to Poland, he was given an apartment in the complex of the Warsaw Royal Castle, the new state residence, as an honoured donor of the Polish Republic. He was never able to rebuild his career, and he probably lived from state subsidies; even the costs of his funeral in 1933 were covered by the state<sup>38</sup>. In

the deed of 1921 he and the state had committed to build and subsidise a special Krosnowski Museum. This project, however, has remained on paper and the history of the collection in the interwar period was part of the failed saga of trying to establish a modern state collection in the former royal seats in Warsaw and Cracow<sup>39</sup>. Mieczysław Treter (1883–1943), the first Director of the State Art Collections (Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki, the Polish national museum based on the works restituted from Russia) had outlined a visionary and ambitious project for the just established institution, which was supposed to combine the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (with the displays of established European art and of the Habsburg treasury), the French National Archeological Museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye and the National Museum of the Italian Risorgimento in Turin<sup>40</sup>. This ambitious project, however, was realized only in a small part. The Warsaw and Cracow royal castles and the private Łazienki residence of Stanislaus Augustus, which for decades were used as administrative (Warsaw), military (Cracow) and



Fig. 3. The Exhibition of the Popławski Collection in the National Museum in Warsaw, 1936, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archives)

private (Łazienki) imperial seats and were inaccessible to the public, were redesigned to serve as the seats of the State Art Collections in independent Poland<sup>41</sup>. Concurrently, however, they were also intended to serve as presidential residences. Thus, the restituted objects and collections were used primarily as interior furnishings. In sum, Treter's vision for a Polish national museum was reduced to three museum-residences with an official and state function. Krosnowski's collection followed the same fate: after its return in 1922 it was inventoried and stored in the Royal Castle in Warsaw, and its items were merely used as decoration in the seats of state, in particular of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

### Conclusion: St Petersburg Collectors and the National Museum in Warsaw

In 1938 Krosnowski's collection had its short and important momentum. Thanks to an agreement between the president of the city of Warsaw, and the State Collections of Art 58 paintings from its holdings were lent to the just inaugurated seat of the civic National Museum in Warsaw<sup>42</sup>. The pictures were hung on its second floor, where the rooms of the Galleries of European Painting were named to honour the Museum's main donors: Piotr Fiorentini, Cyprian Lachnicki, and Jan Popławski<sup>43</sup>. Hence, the collection of paintings of the civic Museum, generally considered as a monument of national importance, was built mainly on the contributions of Poles living in St Petersburg at the time of the golden era of collecting. As a consequence, the cosmopolitan ambitions of Lachnicki and Popławski, mentioned at the beginning of this article, have acquired a clear national dimension. Interestingly, Popławski's collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings, next to the one formed by Krosnowski, was one of the few St Petersburg art collections to survive the revolutionary turmoil. The circumstances of its repatriation are unclear: probably it was restituted following an additional agreement between Poland and Soviet Russia. In 1935 it was acquired by the city of Warsaw for the National Museum, thus finally entering into the framework of national patrimony, and shown in an exhibition arranged by Jan Żarnowski, the painting curator of the Hermitage at the time of the Russian Revolution (fig. 3)<sup>44</sup>.

## Abbreviations

- AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych [Central Archive of Modern Records], Warsaw  
 AGAD – Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, [Central Archive of Historical Records], Warsaw  
 CGIA – Central'nyj gosudarstvennyj istoricheskij arhiv [Central State Historical Archive], St Petersburg  
 MNW – Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie [National Museum in Warsaw]  
 RGIA – Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj istoricheskij arhiv [Russian State Historical Archive], St Petersburg

## Endnotes

1. For the sake of clarity, in this text the name St Petersburg will be used as the most consistent during this time, although the city was called Petrograd from 1914 to 1924.
2. Irina Sidorenko, *Private Art Collecting in St Petersburg around 1900. A Case Study: the Yussupov Collection*, Saarbrücken 2008; Waltraud Bayer, *Iosif Rybakov. Das Profil eines bürgerlichen Sammlers im roten Rußland*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 60 no. 3, 1997, pp. 277–288.
3. Ludwik Bazyłow, *Polacy w Petersburgu* [Poles in St Petersburg], Wrocław et al. 1984; *Polski Petersburg*, <https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/>, 20.11.2022.
4. *Catalogue de la Collection de Tableaux de M. Lachnicki*, Hôtel Drouot, 15 juin 1867.
5. Jan Żarnowski, *Katalog wystawy obrazów ze zbiorów dr. Jana Popławskiego* [Exhibition catalogue of the paintings in the collection of dr. Jan Popławski], Warszawa 1936.
6. *Les anciennes écoles de peinture dans les palais et collections privées Russes, représentées à l'exposition organisée à Saint-Petersbourg en 1909 par la «Revue d'art ancien» Staryé Gody*. Texte par MM. P. P. Weiner, E. de Liphart, James Schmidt, baron N. Wrangell, A. A. Troubnikoff, Bruxelles 1910.
7. For a short biography of Krosnowski see Magdalena Grochowska and Beata Kinga Nykiel, *Krosnowski Stanisław Maciej*, in: *Polski Petersburg*.
8. See: RGIA, font 741, op. 2, no. 742, p. 260.
9. See: CGIA, font 256, op. 36.
10. See: AGAD, Zbiór Czołowskiego 9, p. 133.
11. The history of the collection is reconstructed on the basis of its post-war inventory and of the provenance marks on the artworks. MNW, Dział Inwentarzy [Inventory department]: *Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki: Dział im. Krosnowskich*.
12. Nikolai Wrangel, *Pavel Viktorovič Delarov*, in: *Staryé Gody*, March 1913, p. 63.
13. Louis Réau, *Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Hubert Robert en Russie*, in: *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1913, p. 307.
14. Alexandre Benois, *Moi vspominanya* [My Memoirs], Moskva 1980.
15. *Collection Paul Delaroff*, Hotel Drouot 27–30 Avril et 1 Mai.
16. MNW, Dział Inwentarzy: *Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki: Dział im. Krosnowskich*, nos 270, 272, 277, 952, 1181.
17. Yelena Terkel, *Léon Bakst 'Dress up Like a Flower!'*, *The Russian-English Art Magazine*, vol. 25 no. 4, 2009, <https://>



- www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/4-2009-25/leon-bakst-dress-flower, 20.11.2022.
18. Serge Obolensky, *One Man in his Time: the Memoirs of Serge Obolensky*, New York 1958, p. 153.
  19. MNW, Dział Inwentarzy: *Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki: Dział im. Krosnowskich*, no. 1428.
  20. Ibid. See also: Dorota Juszczak, Hanna Małachowicz, *Zamek Królewski w Warszawie. Malarstwo do 1900. Katalog zbiorów* [The Royal Castle in Warsaw. Paintings until 1900, catalogue of the collection], Warszawa 2007, vol. 1, p. 142.
  21. Ewa Manikowska, *Wielka Wojna i zabytki* [The Great War and the Monuments], in: *Polskie dziedzictwo kulturowe u progu niepodległości. Wokół Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości*, ed. by Ewa Manikowska and Piotr Jamski, Warszawa 2010, pp. 55–78, here p. 63.
  22. See: Aleksander Musin's and Maria Medvedeva's articles in this issue.
  23. Manikowska 2010, *Wielka Wojna*, pp. 55–81.
  24. Manikowska 2010, *Wielka Wojna*, pp. 55–81.
  25. Wiesława Toporowicz, *Rewolucja Październikowa – Polska – Polacy* [The October Revolution – Poland – the Poles], Warszawa 1988, pp. 39–42.
  26. Manikowska 2010, *Wielka Wojna*, pp. 72–73.
  27. Grochowska and Nykiel 1984, *Krosnowski Stanisław Maciej*, *op. cit.*
  28. CGIA, font 8, op. 1, no. 879, p. 1.
  29. “Dekret Rady Komisarzy Ludowych RFSRR o opiece nad zabytkami i dziełami sztuki należącymi do narodu polskiego” [Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian RFSRR on the protection of monuments and works of art belonging to the Polish nation], in: *Polsko-radzieckie stosunki kulturalne 1918–1939. Dokumenty i materiały* [Polish-Russian Cultural Relations. Documents and Materials], ed. by Wiesław Balcerek, Warszawa 1977, pp. 3–5.
  30. Grochowska and Nykiel 1984, *Krosnowski Stanisław Maciej*, *op. cit.*
  31. Jerzy Borzęcki, *The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe*, New Haven et al. 2008.
  32. Andrzej Jakubowski, *State Succession in Cultural Property*, Oxford 2015, pp. 80–83.
  33. AGAD, Zbiór Czołowskiego, 9, pp. 121–122.
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## Abstract

This article gives an insight into private collecting and the art market in St Petersburg at the time of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. In particular, it scrutinises the issue of the nationality of collecting and collectors in this vibrant cosmopolitan milieu. By focusing on the figure of the dyeing industry entrepreneur, Stanisław Krosnowski (1865–1933), it demonstrates how his wartime art acquisitions in a short time-span evolved from a mere capital investment into a national project, a cornerstone of the national heritage of the new Polish state established after 1918. This article also briefly discusses the wartime activity of Polish cultural heritage experts (scholars, librarians, museum curators, archivists) and argues that it is through their efforts that Polish private collecting within the Russian Empire has gained national importance, and that numerous private collections were saved from the ravages of war and of the revolution and repatriated to Poland in the aftermath of the Polish-Bolshevik war.

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## Title

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