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**‘THE ORIGINAL WAS FOUND AND DID NOT CHANGE
ITS OWNER’ THE FATE OF THE GNIEZNO
OLD PRINT PL 178, CONTAINING *OFFICINA FERRARIA*¹**

Abstract

The subject of this article is the fate of an old print from the resources of the Archdiocesan Archive in Gniezno, containing, among others, a unique Polish-language poem by Walenty Róźnieński entitled *Officina Ferraria* from 1612. This jointly bound print was given to the Gniezno chapter library as a testamentary gift by Rev. Anthony Dyament in 1885. The scientific and historical value of the print was discovered before World War II by the librarian and chapter archivist, Rev. Canon Leon Formanowicz, and it was scientifically analysed by Prof. Roman Pollak, who prepared its edition in 1936. The print, taken by the Germans to Poznań during the war, returned to its rightful owner after its end and was reintroduced to the inventory in 1955. That same year, Rev. Stanisław Bross, PhD, chapter vicar of the Gniezno Archdiocese during the imprisonment of Primate Stefan Wyszyński, loaned it without notifying the metropolitan chapter to Prof. Kornel Wesołowski of the Warsaw University of Technology. K. Wesołowski held the print until his death in 1977, after which his widow donated it to the National Library. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Primate’s Chapter in Gniezno tried unsuccessfully to reclaim the valuable book. Most recently, the current director of the Archdiocesan Archives in Gniezno, Rev. Michał Sołomieniuk, analysed the Gniezno print in Warsaw in 2017. In the Cathedral Library in Gniezno the book retains the signature BK Pl 178.

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An old print, containing more than a dozen publications, including a unique work on metallurgy entitled *Officina ferraria* from the early 17th century, was donated to the Gniezno Chapter Library in 1885. It reached the library as a testamentary gift by Rev. Canon Antoni Dyament.² It was first described and published in print before World War II. After the war, it was lent without the formal consent of the Metropolitan (Primate) Chapter to Prof. Kornel Wesołowski,³ and after his death it was transferred to the National Library in Warsaw. The purpose of this study is to trace the fate of this rarity from the time it was donated to the Gniezno Chapter Library in the 19th century to the present day.

In his 1929 work titled *Biblioteka Kapitulna w Gnieźnie*, rev. Leon Formanowicz⁴ drew attention to one particular volume/block, consisting of more than a dozen prints. When describing the first of them, he noted: ‘the Estreicher bibliography takes no account of this rhyming description of forges, or farm and forge life.’⁵ This unknown piece was titled *Officina ferraria abo Huta y warstat z kuzniami szlachetnego dzieła zelaznego przez Walentego Rozdzińskiego teraz nowo wydana*, and was issued in Kraków, in the Printing House of Symone Kempini, in the year 1612. In the aforementioned work on the Chapter Library, the priest-librarian described all the prints included in the block, which is particularly important today for the identification of the object. Rev. L. Formanowicz drew the attention of Old Polish literature researcher Prof. Roman Pollak⁶ from Poznań to this discovery

² Rev. Antoni Dyament (1802–1885) was a priest of the Gniezno Archdiocese who held the office of penitentiary and canon of the St George Collegiate Chapter in Gniezno, as well as secretary of the Metropolitan Chapter there. By virtue of his will, he bequeathed his small but valuable book collection to the Gniezno Chapter Library, cf. L. Formanowicz, *Katalog druków polskich XVI-go wieku Biblioteki Kapitulnej w Gnieźnie*, Poznań 1930, p. 7. At present, the name Cathedral Library is used.

³ Prof. Kornel Kazimierz Wesołowski (1903–1976) – chemist, metallographer and metallurgist; lecturer at the Wawelberg and Rotwand School in 1933–1939, lecturer at secret courses at the Higher Technical School in Warsaw in 1942–1944, lecturer again at the Wawelberg and Rotwand School in 1945–1951, professor at the Warsaw University of Technology from 1949, lecturer at the WAT in 1951–1959, cf. Encyklopedia PWN, *Wesołowski Kornel Kazimierz*, <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Wesołowski-Kornel-Kazimierz;3994958.html> (accessed on: 5.06.2021).

⁴ Rev. Leon Formanowicz (1878–1942) – canon of the metropolitan chapter in Gniezno, librarian of the chapter, bibliophile and author of several important studies of its book collection. He was martyred by the Germans in the Hartheim concentration camp near Linz, cf. J. Nowacki, *Formanowicz Leon*, in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 7, eds. K. Ajdukiewicz, W. Konopczyński, Kraków 1948–1958, pp. 64–65.

⁵ L. Formanowicz, *Biblioteka kapitulna w Gnieźnie*, Poznań 1929, p. 14.

⁶ Roman Pollak (1886–1972) – professor of Polish philology, researcher of Old Polish literature, especially of the Baroque period, lecturer at the Adam Mickiewicz University, and during the war

and made the valuable rarity available to him for scientific purposes. The Gniezno chapter librarian brought the block to Prof. R. Pollak in Poznań in December 1931, and the latter worked on it for a year and a half and returned it in 1933.⁷ The professor devoted an article⁸ to the newly discovered work and published two editions of the text before the war – a partial one in 1933⁹ and a complete one in 1936.¹⁰ The latter was already a critical edition and was reissued, in a revised version, in 1948.¹¹ In his report to the Metropolitan Chapter of Gniezno for 1933, Rev. L. Formanowicz wrote about his discovery as follows:

An Old Polish poem by Walenty Rożdzieński from 1612 titled *Officina ferraria abo huta i warstat z kuźniami szlachtetnego dzieła żelaznego*, completely forgotten, unknown even to specialists, and located in a rare volume in the chapter library, was published in reprint by the Poznań polonist Prof. Roman Pollak, Ph.D. Rożdzieński's work is a unique phenomenon in our literature for several reasons. Not because of the artistic beauty, as it excels in this context on just a few pages, not for the poetic form, because it is poor, but first and foremost because of the unusual content in old Polish literature, the charm of life not recorded elsewhere, which beats with a strong pulse from these pages and rewards the ineptitude of form with the truth of real experience and a passionate love of the subject. 'He reveals to us,' writes Prof. Pollak in an enthusiastic preface, 'a piece of Old Polish life, hitherto hidden in the depths of the mines, in the riverside steel mills, in the forest backwoods where charcoal was burned. Drenched, smeared with smoke, the figures of blacksmiths, smelters, foundry-workers, basket makers, coal miners – otherwise unknown to Old Polish literature – appear from these pages. Rożdzieński's poem is an unknown "roadway", chipped as early as three hundred and more years ago from Silesia to Poland.'¹²

The rare volume of 1936 was described by R. Pollak as follows:

The original print of *Officina ferraria*, preserved in the block of the Gniezno Chapter Library [reference PL 178], is the first in this group among a dozen old Polish prints, mostly well preserved and known from other sources. These prints date from 1583–1628. This block entered the Gniezno book collection

the rector of the secret University of the Western Territories in Warsaw, cf. T. Witzczak, *Roman Pollak (31 lipca 1886 – 23 lutego 1972)*, „Pamiętnik Literacki”, 63 (1972) issue 3, pp. 393–402.

⁷ Archdiocesan Archives in Gniezno (hereafter: AAG), SP 317, ref. 10 (Legacy of Rev. Leon Formanowicz, correspondence 1931–1932), k. 127, 135, 383–384, ref. 11 (correspondence 1933–1934), k. 86.

⁸ Cf. R. Pollak, *Staropolski poemat o górnikach i hutnikach*, „Przegląd Współczesny”, 133 (1933) pp. 112–124.

⁹ W. Rożdzieński, *Officina ferraria abo huta y warstat z kuźniami szlachtetnego dzieła żelaznego. Poemat z roku 1612 z unikatku biblioteki kapituły gnieźnieńskiej wydał Roman Pollak*, Poznań 1933.

¹⁰ W. Rożdzieński, *Officina ferraria abo huta y warstat z kuźniami szlachtetnego dzieła żelaznego (1612). Z Unikatku Biblioteki Kapitulnej w Gnieźnie wydał, wstępem i przypisami zaopatrzył Roman Pollak*, Katowice 1936.

¹¹ *Officina ferraria abo huta i warstat z kuźniami szlachtetnego dzieła żelaznego przez Walentego Rożdzieńskiego teraz nowo wydana*, revised and supplemented edition by R. Pollak, Katowice 1948.

¹² AAG, SP 317, ref. 11, k. 322.

as a testamentary gift of Rev. A. Dyament. Rożdżeński's poem is perfectly preserved. Slightly damaged title page and last page secured by underlining. The entire print contains 46 leaves with an 18 x 14 cm format. The title page gives an idea of the different varieties of fonts used by the typographer. Six wood engravings, primitively executed and rebound, enrich the edition. Individual pages of text framed in double-framed boxes; headings at top appropriate to text content.¹³

Noteworthy, the first mention of a copy of *Officina ferraria* (most likely identical to the preserved rarity) can be found as early as in the 1691 book inventory of Jan Kazimierz Grabski, son of starost of Kcynia from Żurawia near Kcynia.¹⁴ Renarda Ociecek wrote about the importance of the work in 1965 as follows:

Rożdżeński [...] is [...] an author of particular interest in the history of Polish literature that arouses curiosity because of his ideological values [...]. Thus, from almost the first moment when the rare volume of *Officina ferraria* was discovered in 1929, to this day there has been an extraordinary interest in the writer, about whom the contemporary epoch has given us such scant knowledge, including his only work. It is evidenced, among other things, by a huge bibliography of dissertations, articles, reprints of the text and iconography, as well as a plethora of smaller and larger references and commentaries to the content of the work.¹⁵

The precious block itself was taken out of Gniezno by the Germans during World War II and deposited in a repository of Polish prints in Poznań. Along with many other books, it returned to Gniezno after the war, but waited for several more years to be rediscovered. Meanwhile, immediately after the war, the Silesian Institute in Katowice approached Prof. R. Pollak about the re-edition of W. Rożdżeński's work, the unique copy of which was considered lost.¹⁶ The professor immediately travelled to Gniezno¹⁷ and discussed the matter with the mitred prelate Stanisław Bross.¹⁸ He then learned that the print had not been found after the war.

¹³ R. Pollak, *Wstęp*, in: W. Rożdżeński, *Officina ferraria*, Katowice 1936, p. XII.

¹⁴ This inventory is in the Kórnik Library and is titled *Silva rerum variarum publico et pseudo-politicarum utilium et inutilium ordine et sine ordine conscriptarum prout in Sylva quaerendarum per me I.C.G.C.K. advectorum et conscriptarum Anno Domini 1685* (Manuscript BK 993).

¹⁵ R. Ociecek, *Główne kierunki recepcji „Officina ferraria” Walentego Rożdżeńskiego*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Katowicach. Prace Historycznoliterackie Katedry Historii Literatury Polskiej”, 3 (1965) p. 49.

¹⁶ Cf. three letters from Roman Lutman, Ph.D. to R. Pollak from 1945 and 1946 in the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań, Roman Pollak P.III-63, no. 20 (this number refers to the correspondence concerning the postwar edition of W. Rożdżeński). The archives from this team will be hereinafter referred to as: R. Pollak's Legacy. In a letter dated 17 July 1946, R. Lutman writes: 'It would be best if a copy of the Gniezno edition were to be found, as making producing films of the previous edition will not yield good results.'

¹⁷ Cf. AAG, Institutional Archives, Correspondence No 68/1959, Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski dated 20 December 1959 ('just after the second war').

¹⁸ Mitred prelate Stanisław Bross, Ph.D. (1895–1982) – priest of the Gniezno Archdiocese, before the war the chief director of the Institute of Catholic Action; during the imprisonment of Primate Stefan Wyszyński he was appointed by the communists as the administrator of the Gniezno

Investigating the fate of the old print during the office term of the Chapter Vicar Mitred Prelate Rev. S. Bross (October 1953 – October 1956) requires special attention, since the records on the subject, found in the archives, vary in detail. The first postwar clue is found in curial archives. The earliest trace of interest in the valuable book is a request from Rev. Edmund Rosiński, Ph.D., of Kruszwica to the Metropolitan Curia in Gniezno to borrow it from the 'chapter house' (presumably the Chapter Library). The letter was received on 4 September 1953, but was not included in the file until 4 February 1954, with a handwritten annotation by Rev. S. Bross: 'Received by Prof. Kornel Wesolowski / Warsaw.'¹⁹ It is not clear whether this response was given to Rev. E. Rosieński orally or in writing. It is also unclear when Rev. S. Bross placed the note. Another request to borrow the old print was received on 3 March 1954, submitted by Władysław Piasecki, director of the Library of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków. The request itself was not preserved, but was recorded in the curia's files in the following words: 'The matter of notifying Wł[adysław] Piasecki in Kraków of the fate of Roździeński's print PL 178 issued 1612 in Kraków and owned by the Gniezno Chapter Library.' Here, once again, is a handwritten note by Rev. S. Bross: 'The print was lent to Mr Prof. Wesołowski from Warsaw. / Ad acta / Gn[ieźno] 15/XII.55 / B.'²⁰ The puzzling matter is the very long procedural period (from March to December). Almost at the same time, on 5 March 1955, Stanisława Jasińska, the acting director of the Kórnik Library, requested to borrow the volume. It was to be used for Marian Pełczyński's scientific work. The request, without a response, was set aside *ad acta* on 15 June 1955 (handwritten note by Rev. S. Bross, placed on a letter from the Kórnik Library).²¹ The fourth trace concerning the work of W. Roździeński is an official letter, preserved in the original, from the director of the library of the AGH University of Science and Technology, W. Piasecki, dated 21 March 1955. It shows that W. Piasecki visited Rev. S. Bross more than a year earlier (that is, before March 1954) and learned that the print had not yet been found. The mitred prelate promised to notify W. Piasecki of the result of the search, but did not do so for a year. Here is the reason why W. Piasecki saw fit to inquire about the book once again: '[...] there was a scant news of the discovery of a unique work that had been considered lost, and my friends from Gniezno even claimed that it had been lent to Kórnik. I dare to ask for a message with which I may have more luck this time.'²² And on that letter, Rev. S. Bross noted in his handwriting: 'Received by Mr. Prof. Kornel Wesołowski / Warsaw / Ad acta Gn[ieźno] 16/I.56.' Director

Archdiocese (chapter vicar), cf. M. Damazyn, *Nie-ordynariusz gnieźnieński Stanisław Bross*, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 64 (2017) issue 3, pp. 133–156.

¹⁹ Cf. AAG, Archives of the Metropolitan Curia I (hereinafter: AKM I), ref. 2756 (Correspondence Register 1953–1954), pp. 140v–141r; AAG AKM I ref. 1671 (Archdiocesan Archive File; nonpaginated unit, curia register number: 7684/53/K).

²⁰ AAG, AKM I, ref. 1671, curia register number: 1337/54/W. The 'W' marking refers to the chapter vicar, so the matter was retained to his own competence by Rev. S. Bross, who was acting in that capacity, without being referred to the chapter.

²¹ AAG AKM I, ref. 1671, curia register number: 2081/55/W.

²² AAG AKM I, ref. 1671, curia register number: 2554/55/W.

W. Piasecki renewed the question in writing less than a month later, on 16 April 1955. That letter was also referred to by a note by Rev. S. Bross with the same content as quoted above and with the same date.²³ According to this clue, the block was found either before Rev. E. Rosieński's letter was received, i.e. before March 1953, or in 1954–1955, and was lent to Prof. Kornel Wesołowski of the Warsaw University of Technology before 15 December 1955.

The second clue is found in the legacy of Prof. R. Pollak. According to surviving correspondence, Marian Pełczyński, a former student of the professor and then employee of the Kórnik Branch Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, came across the lost volume in 1955 in the resources of the Gniezno Chapter Library.²⁴ He immediately notified Prof. R. Pollak of this discovery. In a letter to the professor dated May 1959,²⁵ he recalled:

In February 1955, on behalf of the Kórnik Library, I travelled to Gniezno, to the Chapter Library, to search for and inventory the old prints of the Greater Poland located there. Among the piles of books delivered to me at the curia, I came across an acknowledged lost unique work by W. Rożdżeński: *Officina ferraria*. Delighted by this discovery, I showed the book to the bishop present, Rev. Jan Czerniak, Ph.D., who was in the room where I was working, and stressed the importance of the discovery. I also notified the Kórnik Library and the Professor of the discovery. At that time, I also undertook efforts to microfilm Rożdżeński's work and made attempts to establish closer contacts between the Chapter Library and the Kórnik Library.

In March of that year, I was contacted by Director Władysław Piasecki of the Main Library of AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków and asked that he be allowed to reach Rożdżeński and microfilm his work for the library. In view of this, I went to Gniezno again to discuss the matter with Mitred Prelate Rev. Stanisław Bross, Ph.D., Vicar General, to whom the Chapter Library was then subordinate. Rev. Bross assured me that the print did not exist, that it had probably been taken away by the Germans during the war, and that in view of this there was no chance of finding it. When I informed him that I had recently had Rożdżeński's work in my hands, he expressed deep surprise, disbelief, and finally joy and emotion that the print had been found. Personally, I was under the impression that it was just a ploy, since Rev. Bross himself prepared the books for me and reviewed them before delivering them to me at the curia, so he must have known about the existence of the print of interest to us. Later, he also once again tried to explain to me that the print does not exist. He tried to delay the matter of microfilming, inventing more and more

²³ AAG AKM I, ref. 1671, curia register number: 3227/55/W.

²⁴ Marian Pełczyński became employed at the Kórnik Library on 1 September 1954 on a full-time basis, but was commissioned to do cataloguing work on the central catalogue of old prints of the Greater Poland Region as early as 15 July that year, cf. Kórnik Branch Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (hereafter: BK), Departmental Archives, Marian Pełczyński – personal file, p. 60: *Pismo poufne p.o. dyrektora St. Jasińskiej do Biura Kadr i Doskonalenia Kadr Naukowych PAN z 19.10.1954 r.* In 1957–1964, he was director of the library of the Agricultural Academy in Poznań.

²⁵ The letter has no date, but it can be determined from R. Pollak's correspondence to Rev. W. Zientarski.

obstacles. Finally he stated that he had already promised it to Prof. Wesołowski from Warsaw, so we can also use it with Mr Piasecki further down the line, which would contradict his alleged good faith. By the way, I would like to mention that also in the summer of 1955 or 1956 (I can no longer recall the exact date, as I went to Gniezno several times) I also showed this print to Rev. Stefan Ciechanowski, the chaplain to Rev. Bross and librarian of the Chapter Library, who had undergone a short librarian preparation training in Kórnik. At the same time it turned out that Roździeński's work was in the part of the collection already developed by Rev. Ciechanowski. The book, bearing the reference PL 178a, stood on a shelf in the Chapter Library, in the polonica section, and there I saw it again at the time. At the time, it was a matter of proving to Rev. Bross that the print actually existed. I was with Rev. Ciechanowski in the Library at the time and found the book myself on the shelf.²⁶

It should be added here that Rev. S. Bross, imposed by the communist authorities as administrator of the Gniezno archdiocese during the imprisonment of Primate S. Wyszyński, governed without regard to the opinion of the Metropolitan Chapter,²⁷ to which the Chapter Library was then subordinate.

The two clues mentioned above basically confirm this sequence of events: in February 1955 M. Pełczyński found the PL 178a polonicum in Gniezno and identified it as *Officina ferraria*, in the summer of 1955 the old print was still in the Chapter Library, with it gone before 15 December 1955. Ergo: in the second half of 1955, the book was borrowed (?) by Prof. K. Wesołowski, a researcher at the Warsaw University of Technology. The lender must have been Mitred Prelate Rev. S. Bross. The behaviour of the mitred prelate toward M. Pełczyński (feigned surprise), the delay in responding to the letters in question or outright failure to respond, the absence of any written request on the part of K. Wesołowski – all this leads one to guess that the lending (?) was made secretly, in violation of normal procedures.

After the return of Primate S. Wyszyński from internment in 1956, Rev. S. Bross was removed from power and from holding important positions in the Gniezno Archdiocese. According to accounts from the oldest priests, the mitred prelate never showed any remorse before the cardinal and felt slighted for the rest of his life. This explains the fact that he did not explain himself to the church authorities about the matter of informal lending of a valuable book, and proved unable to cooperate on this issue. In the aforementioned letter, M. Pełczyński expressed the opinion that the valuable rarity could have been lent to someone just before the return of Primate S. Wyszyński without any annotation in the Chapter Library.

After the return of Primate S. Wyszyński, Prof. R. Pollak began to contact the new chapter librarian, asking for access to the print to photograph and prepare a full edition of the work.²⁸ He was then verbally informed that the block was not on

²⁶ R. Pollak Legacy, Letter from M. Pełczyński to R. Pollak.

²⁷ The name 'Primate's Chapter' began to be used during the time of Primate S. Wyszyński.

²⁸ AAG, Institutional Archives, Correspondence No. 34/1959, Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski dated 6 May 1959.

site and that there was no information about it being borrowed.²⁹ In a letter dated January 1960, Rev. W. Zientarski added: ‘The enforced absence of the Ordinary of the Diocese H.E. the Primate Cardinal from 1953 to 1956 also took a toll on the Chapter Library.’

Professor R. Pollak began to inquire in Poland whether anyone had borrowed the work of W. Rożdżeński during the office of Mitred Prelate S. Bross. He asked the director of the Main Library of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Katowice, W. Piasecki, who responded in the negative:

The Main Library of the AGH University of Science and Technology did not borrow the original of Rożdżeński from Gniezno. Yes, we took every effort to obtain it, I was in Gniezno twice in my time, I received solemn assurances from Mitred Prelate Rev. Stanislaw Bross, Ph.D., that he would give permission for the microfilming of the *Officina* having agreed with the Professor, and with Prof. Kornel Wesołowski – a metallurgist from the Warsaw University of Technology [...]. Then I heard something about the Kórnik Library, which was unverified information. Rev. Bross must know that, but according to my experience – as a rule, he did not correspond on the matter and it is difficult to communicate with him.³⁰

From the above words it appears that Director W. Piasecki was also at the home of Mitred Prelate S. Bross on the same issue.

Undaunted, Prof. R. Pollak began to seek contact with K. Wesołowski, who was a stranger to him. He succeeded in it thanks to Prof. Waclaw Olszak of the Warsaw University of Technology.³¹ Professor W. Olszak had a conversation with K. Wesołowski and reported it in writing to R. Pollak. It is clear from this account that K. Wesołowski also thought about publishing the work of W. Rożdżeński and agreed to make it available to R. Pollak on film or microfilm. W. Olszak adds: ‘However, [Wesołowski] did not want to reveal the whereabouts of the original. Although, I was assured that “the original is nothing to worry about”. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain a more concrete explanation.’³²

At the request of W. Olszak, K. Wesołowski wrote to R. Pollak. He did not explicitly state that the original *Officina* is in his possession, but when asked about the fate of the original, he replied mysteriously: ‘the original was found and did not change its owner.’³³ Nevertheless, he offered access to microfilms made by his hand with the publication of W. Rożdżeński’s work in mind. In this situation, R. Pollak immediately informed Rev. W. Zientarski about this correspondence, sent

²⁹ Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski mentioned in footnote 7 and reply from W. Zientarski dated 4 January 1960, *ibidem*.

³⁰ R. Pollak Legacy, Letter from W. Piasecki to R. Pollak dated 16 January 1960 (B-7-1/60).

³¹ Waclaw Olszak (1902–1980) – professor, Ph.D., lecturer – first at the Academy of Mining and from 1952 at the Warsaw University of Technology, where he headed the Department of Theory of Elasticity and Plasticity; from 1969 he was also rector of the Centre Internationale des Sciences Mécaniques in Udine, Italy; cf. AGH, *Olszak Waclaw*, http://historia.agh.edu.pl/wiki/Waclaw_Olszak (accessed on: 4.06.2021).

³² Cf. R. Pollak Legacy (unnumbered), Letter from W. Olszak to R. Pollak dated 16 February 1960.

³³ R. Pollak Legacy No 7/20, Letter from K. Wesołowski to R. Pollak dated 14 March 1960.

him a copy of the first letter from K. Wesołowski and commented on it as follows: 'The most valuable passages in it are the news that "the original was found and did not change its owner?". If so, why doesn't the owner own it?'.³⁴

Asked by R. Pollak for the microfilms, K. Wesołowski sent them to Poznań on 5 April 1960. In a letter accompanying the shipment, he described himself as a metallographer and bibliophile.³⁵ The professor shared the happy news with Rev. W. Zientarski,³⁶ Prof. Stanisław Rospond,³⁷ with whom he planned to collaborate on research articles on the poem, and with W. Piasecki, while remaining discreetly silent about the fate of the original.³⁸ Rev. W. Zientarski did not respond, for a relatively long time, to the proposal to purchase the microfilm, in view of which R. Pollak began to assume that the original had already returned to Gniezno and inquired about it in writing in early February 1961. The chapter librarian swiftly replied: 'With regret, [...] I have to report that the original print has not yet been found and returned to the owner.'³⁹ He also expressed his thanks for finding the trace. Saddened by this, R. Pollak sent a letter in March 1961 to Primate S. Wyszyński, in which he briefly described the post-war fate of the valuable print. Two important sentences were found there: 'Before [...] Rev. Dr. Zientarski took over the library, the rarity disappeared without a trace, without a receipt'; '[...] the rarity should be returned to Gniezno and there on the spot be available for scientific research'.⁴⁰ The polonist asked the Primate to make efforts to return W. Roździeński's work to Gniezno, as the monumental edition of *Officina* was slowly nearing completion and he wanted to show the original at the scientific session that was to accompany the promotion of the book. The *commercium epistularum* between the famous polonist and the clergy of Gniezno ends with this letter.

Professor R. Pollak made a successful attempt to gain access to the original, which he had not been seen since before the war. The undertaking was mediated by Prof. W. Olszak. After his conversation with K. Wesołowski, he wrote mysteriously but clearly to the polonist: 'Professor W. is willing to allow you to see the facility, but asks for absolute discretion. [...] The viewing could take place, for example, at his department, 85 Narbutta Street. He prefers the Professor to be alone.'⁴¹ The meeting took place on 22 April 1961, at the place indicated by K. Wesołowski.

³⁴ AAG, Institutional Archives, unnumbered correspondence from 1960, attached to ref. 55/1960. Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski dated 27 March 1960.

³⁵ R. Pollak Legacy No 8/20, Letter from K. Wesołowski to R. Pollak dated 5 April 1960.

³⁶ AAG, Institutional Archives, Correspondence No 55/1960, Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski dated 1 May 1960. In that letter, the professor used a telling phrase: 'My mystical endeavours and diplomatic manoeuvring led to my becoming the owner of the microfilm of Roździeński's *Officina*.'

³⁷ Stanisław Rospond (1906–1982) – professor, linguist, polonist, lecturer at the University of Wrocław; cf. R. Pollak Legacy (unnumbered), Letter from S. Rospond to R. Pollak dated 16 April 1960.

³⁸ R. Pollak Legacy (unnumbered), Letter from W. Piasecki to R. Pollak dated 1 May 1960.

³⁹ AAG, Institutional Archives, Correspondence No 12/1961, Letter from R. Pollak to Rev. W. Zientarski dated 1 February 1961 and the response of the latter dated 10 February 1961.

⁴⁰ R. Pollak Legacy No 13/20, Letter from R. Pollak to Card. S. Wyszyński dated 2 March 1961.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, No 17/20, Letter from W. Olszak to R. Pollak dated 14 March 1961.

The Old Polish researcher also obtained permission for Prof. S. Rospond to send his associate to Warsaw for collating the text with the original.⁴² K. Wesołowski only showed the Gniezno old print to selected individuals – never two at once.

With the publication of W. Roździeński's work in 1962,⁴³ correspondence about it ceased for a long time. The issue of holding the old print only came up again after the death of K. Wesołowski. In mid-April 1978, the Gniezno clergy learned from the *Dziennik Telewizyjny* news that the bibliophile's widow had donated a volume containing *Officina ferraria* to the National Library.⁴⁴ According to the minutes of the meeting of the Primate's Chapter on 1 June 1978: '[...] Rev. Canon Zientarski refers to the fact that the block, containing *Officinam ferrariam*, which in an unknown way ended up in the hands of Prof. Wesołowski years ago, was donated by his wife to the National Library. The Archdiocesan Archive has asked for the return of this block, but has not yet received any response.'⁴⁵ A year later, the minutes of the chapter's meeting recorded under the date of 22 June 1979: 'Rev. Director [W. Zientarski] reported that there are difficulties in recovering the *Officina ferraria* block.'

Rev. W. Zientarski corresponded with the National Library regarding the return of the block between 1978 and 1983. He sent his first letter on 24 April 1978.⁴⁶ Shortly thereafter (8 May 1978), he received a letter from a Warsaw resident who wrote: '[...] a week ago I was looking at it (a whole block) at an exhibition of donations to the National Library in W[arsaw]. The organizers of the exhibition informed me that this rarity was donated by the family after the late professor of the Warsaw University of Technology, Wesołowski.'⁴⁷ Upon no response from the directors of the National Library, Rev. W. Zientarski wrote a second letter to them in December 1978, in which he noted: 'The mentioned block [...] was lost from our library under circumstances that are still unexplained. Therefore, I kindly request information on how our property can be recovered.'⁴⁸ The long-awaited answer was provided in a letter dated 22 December 1978 by Rafał Kozłowski, deputy director of the National Library.⁴⁹ The letter itself is not preserved in the archive's own correspondence in Gniezno, but its contents can be inferred from

⁴² Ibidem, No 17/19, Letter from S. Rospond to R. Pollak dated 30 April 1961.

⁴³ W. Roździeński, *Officina ferraria ábo hutá i Wárstát z Kuźniami szlachetnego dzieła Zelaznego*, eds. R. Pollak, M. Radwan, S. Rospond, Ossolineum: Wrocław-Warsaw-Kraków 1962. The introduction lacks any mention of where the original is kept and who owns it.

⁴⁴ AAG, Institutional Archives, Correspondence No 222/1983, Letter from Rev. W. Zientarski to P. Buchwald-Pelc dated 5 December 1983.

⁴⁵ AAG, Files of the Metropolitan Chapter (hereinafter: A Cap), B 48, k. 270v.

⁴⁶ AAG, Institutional Archives, correspondence No 135/1978, a copy of the letter (ref. 122/1978) has not survived, but we learn of its existence from a response of 6 June 1978 to a letter from an individual, Jan Lis of Warsaw.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, correspondence No 229/1978, Letter from W. Zientarski to the directors of the National Library dated 18 December 1978.

⁴⁹ The letter bore the reference number Z. D. III-159/1978.

Rev. W. Zientarski's 'reply to the reply' of December 1980:⁵⁰ 'The passage in the letter expressing surprise that we have made efforts to recover PL 178 cannot be taken seriously. It is rather surprising that an institution of such stature as the National Library, accepting a unique print with a well-known owner, did not raise any objections to the legitimacy of Prof. Wesołowski's possession of the said block, especially since the provenance marks clearly indicate where the block came from. So I ask again that you allow us to take back our property as soon as possible.' Once again, R. Kozłowski's letter of 1978 is mentioned by the first director of the archive in a letter to Associate Professor Paulina Buchwald-Pelc of the Department of Old Prints of the National Library in 1983: 'evidence was requested that this book was our property at the time of the donation.'⁵¹ From the same letter we learn that the Archdiocesan Archives had already sent copies of letters from R. Pollak, M. Pełczyński and K. Wesołowski.

Why did Canon W. Zientarski delay so long in sending another letter to the National Library? Light on this is shed by, among other documents, a letter he sent on 31 January 1979⁵² to Prof. Tadeusz Dziekoński.⁵³ The director turned to this particular researcher because he was a colleague of Prof. K. Wesołowski in the mid-1950s and had been in Gniezno with him. The answer most likely never came. Perhaps Rev. W. Zientarski decided to write to R. Kozłowski after receiving news of Prof. T. Dziekoński's death, which occurred on 25 October 1980.

After the above-mentioned exchange of letters with the National Library, the matter was probably put on hold, i.e. the Library directors stopped corresponding about the Gniezno block PL 178. This is evidenced by letters exchanged in 1985 with the aforementioned J. Lis, to whose repeated question about the fate of the uniqueness Rev. W. Zientarski replied: 'The National Library did not even deign to ask whether Prof. K. Wesołowski's widow is the rightful owner of this donation [...]. For several years, the Archdiocesan Archives has been seeking to regain its ownership; To no avail, so far, as the National Library behaves as if it has taken over no one's property, expressing surprise that anyone can claim it.' This letter also contains a valuable conjecture about the disappearance of the book from Gniezno: 'It was probably recklessly lent to Prof. Kornel Wesołowski.'⁵⁴

What remains incomprehensible in this story is that Rev. W. Zientarski was not given access to a file from the curial archives, called 'Teczka Archiwum Archi-

⁵⁰ AAG, Institutional Archives, correspondence No 229/1980, Letter from Rev. W. Zientarski to R. Kozłowski dated 5 December 1980.

⁵¹ Ibidem, correspondence No 222/1983, Letter from Rev. W. Zientarski to P. Buchwald-Pelc, 5 December 1983.

⁵² Ibidem, correspondence No 20/1979, Letter from Rev. W. Zientarski to T. Dziekoński, 31 January 1979.

⁵³ Tadeusz Dziekoński (1910–1980) – Professor, Ph.D. (dr hab.), researcher of the history of mining and metallurgy, cf. T. Mikoś, *Profesor Tadeusz Dziekoński jako badacz górniczo-hutniczych dziejów*, http://history-of-mining.pwr.wroc.pl/old/attachments/article/10/23Mikos-Profesor_Tadeusz_Dziekoński.pdf.

⁵⁴ AAG, Institutional Archives, correspondence No 209/1985, Letter from Rev. W. Zientarski to J. Lis, 25 July 1985.

diecezjalnego' (Archdiocesan Archive File) from 1949–1955. It contains as many as three of the above-mentioned remarks by Rev. S. Bross about the transfer of the valuable book to Prof. K. Wesołowski, which he once explicitly referred to as a lending and twice as collecting. However, nowhere did he write about the sale or donation of this rarity to K. Wesołowski.

Identification of an old print containing *Officina ferraria*

On 4 May 2017, Rev. Michał Sołomieniuk, Ph.D., director of the Gniezno Archdiocesan Archives, travelled to Warsaw and conducted identification of a volume with the signature SD XVI. Qu 6937-6950. The examination of the artefact was performed with the assistance of four employees of the National Library, including an armed guard. The Gniezno resident could not turn the pages of the book himself (this was done by an employee of the Warsaw Library) or touch it. The examination confirmed that:

1. The volume is a block of 14 different publications, which Rev. L. Formanowicz labelled as adligates from 'a' to 'o' (omitting 'j' and 'ł').

2. The front endpaper bears a pink label with the printed phrase 'Z daru testam. // X. A. Dyamenta' and a double frame. The books being part of the donation have the same pink label with identical text.

3. The spine bears a label with the two-part 'PL 178' imprint – such labels can be seen on the entire set of 16th-century polonica from the collection of the Gniezno Cathedral Library.

4. The volume measures 180 x 140 mm.

5. The volume contains the following information, inscribed in pencil on the inside of the back cover: '1977 D 88 // Akc. 11-24/77 // Dar p. Barbary Wesołowskiej z Warszawy'.

Rev. L. Formanowicz left behind two descriptions of the valuable block: all the adligats were briefly described in the *Biblioteka Kapitulna w Gnieźnie* publication,⁵⁵ as opposed to only the 16th-century prints in the catalogue of polonica (more extensively than in the earlier publication). In the table below, in the middle column, I provided a description of 16th-century prints from the catalogue of polonica and 17th-century prints from *Biblioteka Kapitulna*, while on the right I included an abbreviated catalogue description according to the National Library catalogue.

⁵⁵ Formanowicz, *Biblioteka*, pp. 14–15.

Table 1. Comparative summary of the description of *Officina ferraria* according to two sources

No.	Description according to Rev. L. Formanowicz	Abbreviated description according to the National Library catalogue (reference numbers in parentheses)
1. (adl. a)	Roździeński, Walenty Officina Ferraria, ábo Hutá y Wárstat z Kuźniámi szlachetnego dzieła Żelaznego. Kraków, Szymon Kempini, 1612 ⁵⁶ .	(SD XVI. Qu 6937) Roździeński, Walenty (ca 1570-ca 1642), Officina ferraria abo Huta y warstat z kuzniami szlachetnego dzieła żelaznego przez Walentego Rozdzińskiego teraz nowo wydana W Krakowie : w Drukarni Symone Kempiniego, 1612. 4°
2. (adl. b)	Reces sejmu warszawskiego. [B. m. i dr.] 1583. 4° Prow.: Klocek z exlibrisem Z daru testam. X. A. Dyamenta ⁵⁷	(SD XVI. Qu 6938) Recess seymu warszawskiego albo Dialog o seymie warszawskim... [S.l. : s.n.], 1583. 4°
3. (adl. c)	Izdbiński, Joannes, Krótkie opisanie zjazdu kolskiego. [Poznań, Jan Wolrab, po 10 VIII 1590]. 4° ⁵⁸	(SD XVI. Qu 6939) Krotkie opisanie zjazdu kolskiego vrodzonego Iana Izdbinskiego z Ruszca, marszałka na te[n] czas ziem wielgopolskich pod Kolem na dzień s. Wawrzyńca roku [...] 1590. 4°
4. (adl. d)	Rada Pańska. Tłum. pols. z tłum. włos. Jakóba Górskiego. Kraków, Druk. Łazarzowa, [po 3.I.] 1597. 4° ⁵⁹	(SD XVI. Qu 6940) Furió y Ceriol, Fadrique (1532-1592). Rada panska to iest Iakich osob pan kazdy wybierac sobie ma do rady swoiey przez Friderika Fvrivsza Ceriołę po hiszpańsku napisana a przez [...] Iakvba Gorskiego [...] z włoskiego na polskie przełożona [...]. W Krakowie : w Drukarni Łazarzowej, [post 3 I] 1597. 4°

⁵⁶ In the so-called initial copy of L. Formanowicz's catalogue of polonica (i.e., the main tool for AAG librarians to work on the resource), a pencil note was made on p. 112: 'PL 178 includes, among others, Roździeński's *Officina ferraria* (missing since the 1950s – annotated in the storage).'

⁵⁷ Formanowicz, *Katalog druków polskich*, No 315.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, No 188. According to L. Formanowicz, Karol Estreicher knows of only one copy, from Kórnik.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, No 105.

5. (adl. e)	[Januszowski Jan:] Poprawa niektórych obyczajów Polskich potocznych. Kraków, Franciszek Cezary, 1628.	(SD XVI. Qu 6941) Starowolski, Szymon (1588-1656). Poprawa niektórych obyczajów polskich potocznych [...] przez iednego Szlachcica staropolskiego [...] napisana y trzeci raz przedrukowana [...]. W Krakowie : w Drukarni Franciszka Cezarego, 1628.
6. (adl. f)	Palczowski Paweł: Kolęda Moskiewska. Kraków, Mikołaj Szarffenberger, 1609.	(SD XVI. Qu 6942) Palczowski, Paweł (ca 1570-1609?). TYTUŁ: Wyprawa wojenna Króla Jego Mości do Moskwy. TYTUŁ: Kolęda moskiewska to iest Woyny moskiewskiej przyczyny slvszne [...] krotko opisane przez Pawła Palczowskiego [...]. W Krakowie : Mikołaiia Szarffenbergera [i.e. Jan Szarfenberger], 1609. 4°
7. (adl. g)	Zbylitowski, Andreas Witanie króla nowego Zygmunta III. Kraków, Druk. Łazarzowa, 1587. 4 ^{o60}	(SD XVI. Qu 6943) Zbylitowski, Andrzej (ca 1565-ca 1608). Witanie króla nowego Zygmvnta Trzeciego [...] od zacnego senatu y rycerstwa slawney Korony Polskiej napisane przez Andrzeia Zbylitowskiego, Z. Z. W Krakowie : z druk. Laz., 1587. 4°
8. (adl. h)	Poselstwo do króla Zygmunta III od Rad i Stanów W. X. Litewskiego. Kraków, Mikołaj Szarffenberger, 1588. 4 ^{o61}	(SD XVI. Qu 6944) Hlebowicz, Jan (?-1590). Poselstwo do krola [...] polskiego Zygmunta Trzeciego od rad y wszecz stanow W. X. Litewskiego [...] / [Jan Hlebowicz]. W Krakowie: w Drukarni Mikołaiia Szarffenbergiera, 1588. 4°

⁶⁰ Ibidem, No 425.

⁶¹ Ibidem, No 281.

9. (adl. i)	[Solikowski Jan Dymitr:] Wizerunek ytrapioney rzeczypospolitey, i Naprawa Piotra Grzegorzkowica. Z ksiąg Stanisława Orzechowskiego wzięta. [Przy tem] Herkules słowieński Kaspra Miaskowskiego. Dobromil, 1612.	(SD XVI. Qu 6945) Solikowski, Jan Dymitr (1539-1603). Wizervnek vtrapionei Rzeczypospolitei i naprawa Piotra Grzegorzkowica z ksiąg Stanisława Orzechowskiego wzięta. Przy tym Hercvles słowieński Kaspra Miaskowskiego. Tenze D.D. W Dobromilu : [Jan Szelięa], 1612. 4°
10. (adl. k)	Starowski Szymon: Pobudka Abo Ráda ná zniesienie Tatarow Perekopskich. Kraków, Maciej Jędrzejowczyk, 1618.	(SD XVI. Qu 6946) Starowski, Szymon (1588-1656). Pobvodka abo Rada na zniesienie Tatarow Perekopskich Szymona Starowskiego [...]. W Krakowie : w Drukarniey Macieia Iędrzeiowczyka, 1618. 4°
11. (adl. l)	Palcowski Krzysztof: O Kozakach, iesli ich znieść czy nie. Kraków, Maciej Jędrzejowczyk, 1618.	(SD XVI. Qu 6947) Palcowski, Krzysztof (ca 1568-1627). O Kozakach, iesli ich znieśc czy nie, discvrs Krzysztofa Palczowskiego [...]. W Krakowie : w Drukarniey Macieia Iędrzeiowczyka, [post 1 II] 1618.
12. (adl. m)	Perspectiwa na vpatrzenie sposobow woiovania kraiov nieprzyiaciol krzyza swietego y nawatlenia snadnego, tyrnanstwa pogańskiego. Poznań, Jan Wolrab, 1622.	(SD XVI. Qu 6948) Perspectiwa na vpatrzenie sposobow woiovania kraiov nieprzyiaciol Krzyza Swietego y nawatlenia snadnego tyrnanstwa poganskiego z opisaniem porządkow ich woyskowych [...], do tego przydane iest Wyrażenie prawdziwe położenia krain przednieyszych w panstwie tureckim leżących [...] z pisma wielu [...] autorow [...] zebrane. W Poznaniu : w Drukarni Iana Wolraba, [post 20 VII] 1622. 4°
13. (adl. n)	Obrona rozsadv o niedopvszczeniiv bvdowania haeretyckiego zbory w Poznaniiv na respons przeciwko temu wydany. Poznań, Jan Wolrab, 1616.	(SD XVI. Qu 6949) Hap, Kasper (1563-1619). Obrona rozsadvk o niedopvszczeniiv bvdowania haeretyckiego zbory w Poznaniiv na respons przeciwko temu wydany. [Poznań : Jan Wolrab], 1616. 4°

14. (adl. o)	Gostkowski Wojciech: Sposób i jakim góry złote, srebrne, w przeznaczonym Krolestwie Polskim zapsowane naprawić. 1622. B. m. i d.	(SD XVI. Qu 6950) Gostkowski, Wojciech. Sposob, i jakim gory złote, srebrne w [...] krolestwie polskim zapsowane naprawic, stanom koronnym oboyga narodow [...] do vważania podany [...] przez Woyciecha Gostkowskiego wydany. [S.l. : s.n., post 28 II] 1622. 4°
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Source: own research

The above comparison confirms that the block described by Rev. L. Formanowicz and the volume in the National Library's collection are the same item.

Conclusion

The National Library has among its old prints a block with the reference SD XVI. Qu 6937-6950, which was assigned to a Gniezno polonicum with the ref. PL 178. The print includes, among other things, a unique work titled *Officina ferraria*. The library acquired the object in question in 1977 as a donation from B. Wesołowska of Warsaw, widow of Prof. K. Wesołowski. The professor came into possession of the valuable book through informally recorded lending (?) of it to him by Mitred Prelate Rev. S. Bross, administrator of the Gniezno Archdiocese imposed by the Stalinist authorities. This presumably took place in the second half of 1955. After the return of the Blessed Primate S. Wyszyński from internment, Rev. S. Bross was deposed and deprived of his canonical dignity, which is why he showed no willingness to cooperate, including in the matter of the return of *Officina*. Professor K. Wesołowski made this work available to Professor R. Pollak in the 1960s in an almost clandestine manner and avoided answering the question of whether he was the legal owner of the book. This shows that he held the print without the owner's permission. The Archdiocese of Gniezno, through Rev. W. Zientarski, made efforts, in 1978–1983, to recover its property, sending to the National Library, among other things, copies of letters from R. Pollak, M. Pełczyński and K. Wesołowski. These letters undoubtedly demonstrate that Prof. K. Wesołowski was not the legal owner of the print. In 2017, the director of the Gniezno Archdiocesan Archives, Rev. M. Sołomieniuk, Ph.D., undertook an analysis of the book at the National Library's headquarters and confirmed that it was a print from the stock of the Cathedral Library in Poland's first capital. In Gniezno, the print is invariably referred to as BK Pl 178, while it is now in the National Library in Warsaw.

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„ORYGINAŁ ZOSTAŁ ODNALEZIONY I NIE ZMIENIŁ WŁAŚCICIELA”. LOSY GNIEŹNIŃSKIEGO STARODRUKU PL 178, ZAWIERAJĄCEGO OFFICINA FERRARIA

Abstrakt

Przedmiotem artykułu są losy starodruku z zasobu Archiwum Archidiecezjalnego w Gnieźnie, zawierającego m.in. unikat polskojęzycznego poematu Walentego Roździeńskiego pt. *Officina ferraria* z 1612 roku. Ten druk współoprawny został подарowany gnieźnieńskiej bibliotece kapitulnej jako dar testamentalny ks. Antoniego Dyamenta w 1885 roku. Wartość naukową i historyczną druku odkrył przed II wojną światową bibliotekarz i archiwista kapitulny ks. kan. Leon Formanowicz, a zbadał go naukowo prof. Roman Pollak, który w 1936 roku przygotował jego edycję. Druk, w czasie wojny zabrany przez Niemców do Poznania, wrócił do prawowitego właściciela po wojnie i został ponownie zinwentaryzowany w 1955 roku. W tym też roku ks. dr Stanisław Bross, wikariusz kapitulny archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej w czasie uwięzienia prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego, wypożyczył go bez powiadomienia kapituły metropolitalnej prof. Kornelowi Wesołowskiemu z Politechniki Warszawskiej. K. Wesołowski przetrzymywał druk do śmierci w 1977 roku, po czym wdowa po nim podarowała go Bibliotece Narodowej. Na przełomie lat 70. i 80. XX wieku kapituła prymasowska w Gnieźnie bezskutecznie starała się o zwrot cennej książki. Ostatnio, w 2017 roku, badał gnieźnieński druk w Warszawie obecny dyrektor Archiwum Archidiecezjalnego w Gnieźnie ks. Michał Sołomieniuk. W Bibliotece Katedralnej w Gnieźnie książka wciąż ma sygnaturę BK Pl 178.

Słowa kluczowe: *Officina ferraria*; Walenty Roździeński; ks. Leon Formanowicz; prof. Roman Pollak; ks. Stanisław Bross; Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie; Biblioteka Katedralna w Gnieźnie; Biblioteka Kapitulna w Gnieźnie; Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie