



# ARCHIWUM PROWINCJI POLSKI POŁUDNIOWEJ TOWARZYSTWA JEZUSOWEGO

ATJKr

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## ARCHIVISTS

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## OBLIGATIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR ACCESS AND CONSULTATION

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Consultation is by appointment only.

## HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION

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The archive was created in 1820, when the Jesuits, who had been expelled from Russia, came to Galicia. It was then that the Archives of the then Galician Province of the Society of Jesus began to be created. In 1918, it changed its name to the Archives of the Polish Province, in 1926 to the Archives of the Lesser Poland Province, and finally in 1975 to the Archives of the Province of Southern Poland.

## FONDS DESCRIPTION

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The archival collections of the Society of Jesus in Poland were gathered ever since the order had settled in Polish territories in 1564, but they were almost completely destroyed after the 1773 suppression. From then until 1820 the Jesuits could operate only in Belarus, under the Russian rule, and they kept their archive in Połock (now Polatsk). When in 1820 they were expelled from the Russian Empire, they moved to the Austrian Galicia and brought there only their annual catalogues, chronicles of some colleges, obituaries, part of their official correspondence, loose documents of the colleges as well as private manuscripts. Initially in Galicia they did not establish their archive as a separate institution but just carefully stored the old documents from the Belarusian period.

It was only at the end of the 19th century that an attempt was made in Kraków to accumulate and preserve the oldest manuscripts. The task was undertaken by Tomasz Wall (1855-1911), who was the curator of the Archive from 1897. From 1911 his work was continued by Józef Brząkański (1863-1926), and from 1915 by Jan Roth (1870-1944). From 1924 the Head of the Archive was Stanisław Bednarski (1896-1942), an art historian, who raised the working standards of the institution. Within it, he established a separate section holding photocopies of those documents from the Roman Archive of the Society that referred to Poland. They were chronicles of the colleges, the Society catalogues, obituaries, foundation charters as well as the most important correspondence from the 16th-18th centuries. After the Second World War, from 1946, the Archive was supervised by Jan Poplatek (1903-1955), an accomplished historian. Following his death, in 1955 the post was taken over by Bronisław Natoński (1914-1989), who, assisted by Alojzy Furczyk SJ (1903-1992), set up a section holding microfilms with reproductions of Polish and foreign manuscripts. Also, on his initiative, in 1975 the Kraków Archive received the document collections of the Society of Jesus from Kłodzko, which belonged to the Czech Province in the 18th century.

Nowadays the Archive of the South Poland Province in Kraków holds the following: manuscripts, which come mainly from Belarus, such as ordinances of the Jesuit superiors general and provincials from before 1773; personal registers; histories of the Jesuit houses in Belarus; obituaries; private and official letters by the Jesuits; school and university student books; collections of retreat lectures, sermons and prayers; and lastly poetry. When the Jesuits arrived in Galicia, they received from the Austrian authorities about fifty manuscripts, mainly from the former collections of the Jesuits in Vienna. Many loose documents from the former colleges, predominantly from the region of Lesser Poland, were acquired by the Jesuits in the 19th century from Antoni Schneider, a private collector. Several manuscripts were donated by other collectors or purchased in antiquarian bookshops.

As to the sources relating to the history of the Jesuits, the Archive holds manuscripts with their regulations, including the order rules, and copies of the ordinances of the superiors general from before 1820. These are complemented by the letters of the Polish provincials, who offered guidance on how to implement the decisions of the superior general in the colleges and other Jesuit institutions. The Archive owns a few volumes of college chronicles and obituaries. An interesting holding contains nearly twenty volumes of retreat lectures and sermons, including some dating back to the first half of the 17th century and once owned by Kasper Drużbicki, as well as school manuscripts. Estate and household matters are described in loose documents, compiled and bound in volumes; they pertain chiefly to the colleges of eastern Lesser Poland (or Red Ruthenia). The Belarusian period is documented mainly in the extant legal ownership documents and parts of chronicles. Other sources include comprehensive and synthetic studies of the history of the Jesuits under the Russian rule.

To those researchers who investigate the past of the Society of Jesus, the Kraków Archive can provide both basic, general information about the Polish and Lithuanian provinces, derived from the Roman holdings, as well as original manuscripts. These two types of data in conjunction make it possible to trace the history of the Jesuit institutions in Eastern Europe.

The contemporary resource consists of files of all the above-mentioned Provinces and materials of the Province of Southern Poland, which are constantly transferred to the Archives. These are mainly: Correspondences of generals and provincials, books of admission to the Order, Jesuit studies, ordinations, histories and diaries of colleges and residences, plans of buildings and churches, legacies of deceased Jesuits. The resource includes fragmentarily preserved archival materials from the former Jesuit archives of individual colleges and residences from before the dissolution of the Order.

## GUIDES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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Ludwik Grzebień, SJ, *Inwentarz Archiwum Prowincji Polski Południowej Towarzystwa Jezusowego w Krakowie. Rękopisy do 1820 roku*. Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie: Kraków 2017.