

SUMMARY

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 FROM THE HISTORY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC
 DOCUMENTATION OF THE POLISH CULTURAL
 HERITAGE: THE RECORDING CAMPAIGNS
 OF ADOLF SZYSZKO-BOHUSZ
 AND STEFAN ZABOROWSKI

One of the main objectives of the Commission on Art History of the Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cracow, established in 1873, was to assemble all kind of information and iconographic materials related to the historic artefacts from the lands of the former Commonwealth of Both Nations. At the time when Professor Marian Sokołowski was the head of the Commission (1892–1911), activities of this kind significantly intensified: numerous collaborators of the Commission conducted random fieldwork research in various regions of the partitioned country and the materials they acquired (photographs in particular) were sent to Cracow.

The point of departure of the present paper were high-quality photographic prints, in the number of about three hundred, currently held in the collection of the Photolibrary at the Art History Department of the Jagiellonian University, depicting mostly historic buildings from the area of the so-called Congress Kingdom of Poland and from Lithuania. The photographs are the result of a recording campaign initiated in 1905 by Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, then a student of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg. Thanks to the financial contribution of the Commission on Art History of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, during the following five years Szyszko-Bohusz, together with a few of his fellow students and the photographer Stefan Zaborowski, visited over seventy locations, took over 1200 photographs and made several hundred drawings. Thanks to the surviving correspondence between Szyszko-Bohusz, Zaborowski and Sokołowski, it was possible to follow the exact itinerary of the recorders and establish precise dates for taking the photographs. The ample archival material also enabled a discussion of the role that photography played in the work of the architects-recorders (as an aid in executing descriptions and survey drawings) and in the research of their mentor, Marian Sokołowski (as illustrations in scholarly papers).

Special attention has been given to Stefan Zaborowski (Fig. 17), an amateur photographer from Rawa Mazowiecka, whose life and work are little known. He was a member of two public organisations in Warsaw: the Polish Society of Photography Lovers (from 1905) and the Society for the Protection of Historic Monuments (1906–1909); was vividly interested in art history and it was probably for that reason that he specialised in architectural photography. He considered this branch of photography as a 'scholarly' one, in contrast to 'genre and artistic' photography, although his own works show that a precise

distinction between these two categories is often impossible to be made (see Figs 22–24). Worthy of mention is a proposal, formulated by Zaborowski in 1910, to set up a permanent photographic studio at the Academy of Arts and Sciences that would serve scholars of various disciplines and be in charge of a collection of negatives (see Appendix). This idea, however, was never realised, which was one of the reasons for a conflict between Zaborowski and Sokołowski. As a result, the photographer severed his collaboration with the Academy.