

to the University by Marcin Bylica at the end of the 15th century – no problematical provenance here. In the same room are smaller astrolabes – one an early Islamic example – and nearby one of the best-known items, the Jagiellonian Globe of c. 1510, with its inscription “America novita reperta” referring to the very recent discovery of the New World.

Lovers of globes enjoyed looking at a roomful of them, while there was plenty for those interested in 19th-century physical apparatus, much of it used for University teaching, as well as some fine astronomical instruments. The general overview of the morning was consolidated during the afternoon, when staff kindly brought out instruments from their cases on request for close examination and photography. It was a perfect day by SIS standards, rich in history, with instruments galore, and the warmest of welcomes from our university hosts.



Fig.3 A large astrolabe by Martini Plebani. (Jagiellonian Univ. Collection).

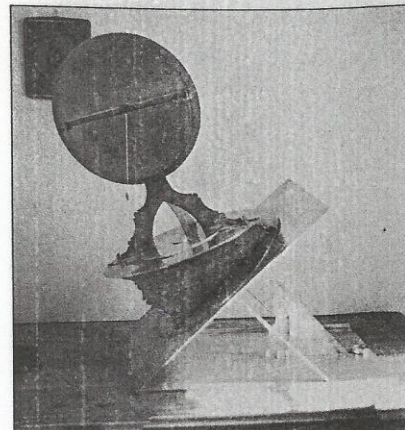


Fig.4 Torquetum. (Jagiellonian Univ. Collection).

Visit to the Czartoryski Museum

Kristen Lippincott

The Czartoryski Museum is the oldest historical museum in Poland, first founded by Isabeli Czartoryska in the private grounds of her own estate and very much in the spirit of a sort of romantic enlightenment typical of the age. The collection was originally housed in a classical folly, “The Sibyl’s Temple”, and was regularly visited by

all kinds of noble travellers throughout the 1780s and 1790s. During the period of Austrian rule in Poland, the collection was moved to its present location in

1876. The Czartoryski Museum, however, has always remained a private museum, run by a foundation still associated with the Czartoryski family. The current arrangement of the collection is modelled on the original display of the 1870s.

We were met by the very charming director of the Museum, Prof. Zygulski, who, with his impeccable English, led us through the various rooms of the Museum. We were shown a remarkable collection of Turkish armour and other

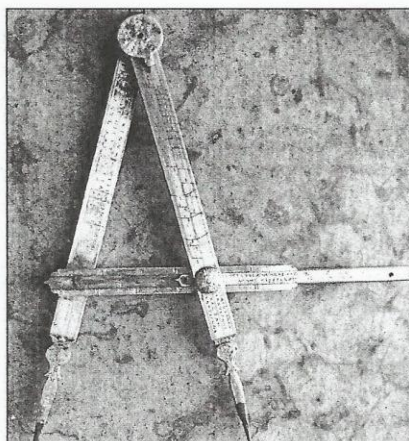


Fig.5 Beautifully decorated dividers by Christoph Schissler the Elder, 1630. (Czartoryski Museum, Cracow).



Fig.6 The Leonardo da Vinci painting at the Czartoryski Museum usually entitled ‘Lady with an Ermine’.

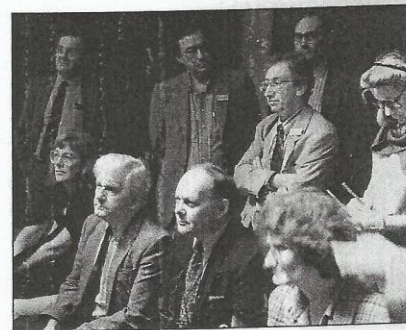


Fig.7 But members refused to be brainwashed by authority or euphony: the animal is more like a ferret!

artefacts, captured by the victorious Poles at the 1683 Siege of Vienna. In an adjacent gallery, while some of us were admiring a stunning 17th century amber crucifix set with cameos of Scenes of the Passion, made in Gdansk, the SIS members caught sight of the Museum's small collection of scientific instruments. As one spouse observed "it was amazing, like seeing a pond full of ducks, suddenly BOTTOMS-UP!" Prof. Zygulski was slightly alarmed when, after the SIS members asked if the cases might be opened, several produced their own arsenal of safe-cracking screw-drivers should he have needed any help.

The collection was more pretty than fine. Watches and sundials (one Johann Martin dial) and an attractive German compass enamelled with a peacock. The finest item by far was an astrolabe, dated 1482, and associated with the group of German instruments stemming from the Nuremberg workshops of the late-14th and early-15th centuries. (Those seeking further details should look at the Turner/King article in the next issue of *Annals of Science*).

After watching the SIS members scrambling on their hands and knees for more than a half-hour, Prof. Zygulski asked "Doesn't anyone want to see the

Leonardo?" Gerard wasn't sure, but the rest of us trooped off to see what is undoubtedly one of the finest paintings in the world, the *Portrait of a Lady with an Ermine*, often erroneously called "La belle feronnière" and sometimes identified as Cecilia Gallerani, the mistress of Lodovico il Moro, Duke of Milan. Prof. Zygulski offered a delightful talk on the painting, recounting its history, telling us of scandals and secrets, and even quoting from Bellincioni's poem on Leonardo. Our time at the Museum was too short to appreciate fully the richness of the collection, prompting more than one of us to vow a return visit.

The Przytkowski Museum

Mike Cowham

The day started with a pleasant hour and a half's drive north from Cracow by bus. The destination was the village of Jedrzejow and its Panstwowe Museum, probably better known as the Przytkowski Museum. As we arrived in the centre of the village we were met by a large sundial above a shop with the inscription *FESTINA LENTE*. (Fig.8) This is the only outdoor dial that we saw during our entire visit to Poland.



Fig.8 An enormous vertical sundial above a shop in Jedrzejow.

We were welcomed at the Museum by Mrs. Przytkowski, who explained via an interpreter that the Museum, whose collection is mainly of sundials, was started by Dr. Felix Przytkowski, her husband's grandfather. He was the local doctor and a keen amateur astronomer. He had worked in Jedrzejow from 1905 until his death in 1952. His interests were wide, not confined to astronomy and dialling but also meteorology, photography and even gastronomy. He had a keen interest in sundials and many of those on display were made by him, mostly in wood. These were much admired by our group. These models included many types of sundial, nocturnals, and quadrants. Later he started collecting old dials and other time-measurement devices. One case contains a collection of antique sand glasses. It was in 1910 that he first exhibited his collection publicly. This house where he lived is now preserved with its furnishings and memorabilia as it would have looked in the early 20th Century. His study contains several clocks and two telescopes. One artefact in the house is a radio receiver made around 1920, which fortunately somehow missed being confiscated by the Germans during the war, and on which they would listen to the news from the BBC in London.

The main collection of sundials is housed in one large room in purpose-built display cases. Each dial has a small descriptive label in Polish – this was no barrier to our group of experts. There

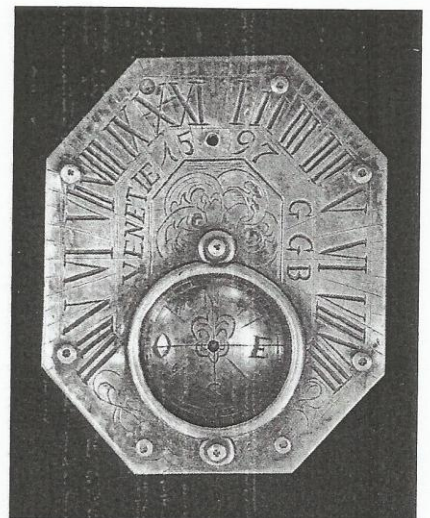


Fig.9 Horizontal dial dated 1597, Przytkowski Museum, Cracow.

were examples of all of the commoner types, all dials of each group being kept together. Particularly interesting were the considerable number of Polish and other Eastern European dials that we in the West seldom see. Several 'new' names were noted amongst them.

A few of particular interest are worth mentioning. One was a large 18th century standing ring dial, unsigned but of Russian origin. Another was an interesting French capuchin dial by DIDALE, c1750, engraved on a brass plate depicting Old Father Time. (Fig.10) One dial, mounted in the case of a