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## WAR LOSSES IN THE PAINTING COLLECTION AT WILANÓW

Wilanów's painting collection, which contains a considerable group of pictures by European painters and is, above all, a unique gallery of portraits of famous historical figures, has been largely preserved until today, in spite of the many historical calamities of the past two hundred years.

This article constitutes another stage in our research on the original state of the gallery, that is on a catalogue of pictures lost during the Second World War.

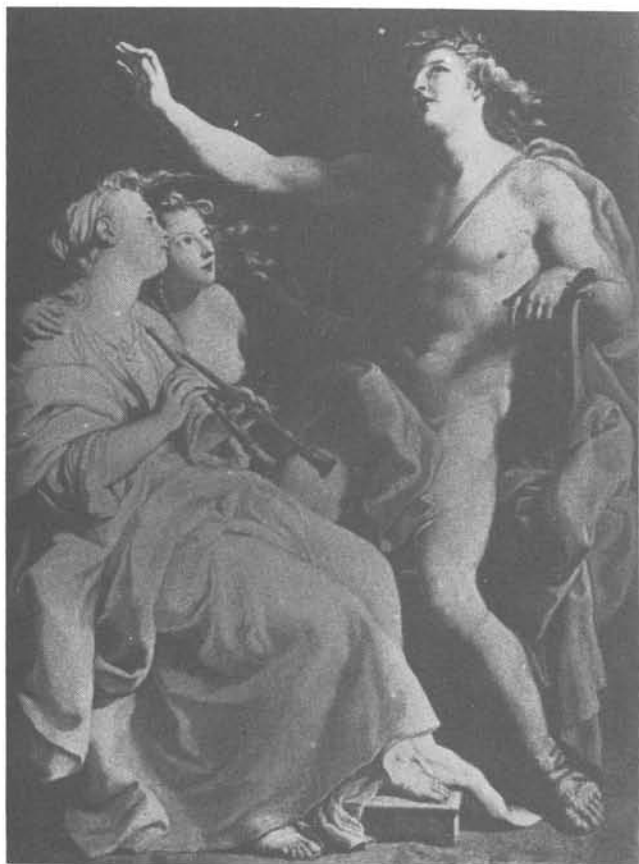
So far we have established that before the Second World War the Wilanów painting collection numbered some 1,200 pictures, including about 480 portraits of Polish historic figures. In the historical collection, losses are easy to establish since beginning in the mid-19th century the backs of the pictures had been marked with successive numbers and frequently in addition featured the Pilawa coat-of-arms of the Potocki family. Hence we know that the collection was deprived of some 350 paintings, including about 50 portraits.

The above figures concerning lost paintings, computed on the basis of painstaking comparisons of the present state of the collection with that before the war, are only approximate in view of incomplete inventories and loss of many photographs.

Thus a more accurate establishment of losses is practically impossible, just as it is impossible today to say anything about the artistic merit of the lost pictures and to determine their presumed authorship, since in various inventories some of them are attributed to different artists. However, such an attempt has been made, and it has proved that, as is the case with the surviving part of the collection, the lost pictures (Fig. 59, 60) included works by well-known and outstanding painters, for example Paris Bordone, Pompeo Batoni, Angelica Kauffmann, Pieter Nason and Dirck van Santvoort, as well as copies and imitations.

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In any case, we should consider that fact that the Wilanów gallery is one of the few surviving collections which had been started during the Enlightenment in Poland and therefore its value is not in the artistic merit of the individual paintings (though some of them, in fact many of them, are valuable originals), but rather in the fact that it had been collected consciously and in a planned manner and therefore it constitutes an expression of the Polish artistic culture of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.



59. Apollo and the two Muses. Painting by P. Batoni



60. Portrait of Augustus III king of Poland. Painting by J.M. von Heinrici