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SILVER CUP FROM JOHANN GOTTFRIED HOLL'S WORKSHOP, A VALUABLE GIFT FOR THE WILANÓW COLLECTION

A particularly valuable acquisition, bequeathed in March 1978 by Mrs Jadwiga Kilaczycka from London and her brother, Mr. Piotr Głowacki of Warsaw, on the 300th anniversary of Wilanów, is a gilded silver wine cup dating from the late 17th century (Fig. 70). This gift enlarged the modest collection of Gdańsk Baroque silverware displayed in the oldest part of the palace.

This excellently preserved vessel (height 20.6 cm, diameter at the top 14.4 cm, and diameter at the bottom 10.6 cm) is covered with rich repoussé decoration arranges in four vertical fields and composed of acanthus leaves and two bunches of fruit tied with ribbons, with, prominent among them, two medallions with busts of Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki and John III (Sobieski) modelled after medals designed by Johann Höhn the Younger.

Apart from the Latin inscriptions on the medallions which refer to the two rulers, the upper rim of the cup carries the English inscription WHEN THIS YOU SEE - REMEMBER MEE (sic!) and further on first name and surname, probably of the author of the dedication, HENDRICH GISIUS (Fig. 71). Below the medallions on both sides there is the coat-of-arms of the Scottish clan of Campbell. Two stamps on the foot of the cup indicate its producer, an excellent goldsmith, Johann Gottfried Holl, who was active in Gdańsk in the second half of the 17th century.

In the course of detailed analysis and following consultations with experts from the precious metals section in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, it was established that the coat-of-arms, dedication and signature date from the 18th century. The coat-of-arms representing a boar´s head surrounded with the wreath of the order of thistle and ducal crown is probably the emblem of John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Agryll, who lived in 1680-1743, and held various positions in many countries and towns, which means that his

official and social contacts were wide. It has never been established who Gisius was, where he came from and how he met John Campbell. It only seems that the dedication was inscribed on H. Gisius' request as a memento of friendship and that this took place between 1701 and 1743.

The circumstances in which this cup came into the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Kilaczycki, who offered it to Wilanów, are unknown. There is not proof either that, as family tradition has it, the cup was a gift of Gdańsk craftsmen for John III following the latters victory at Vienna in 1683. Had this been the case, the cup would have been emblazoned with the Sobieskis' coat-of-arms and instead of the image of Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki it would have carried a likeness of the royal spouse, Marie Casimire.

Although it undoubtedly possesses considerable museum and artistic value, the cup is by no means a unique object. Similar cups were generally used and produced in various parts of Poland and abroad. Such cups can be seen in museum collections in Berlin, Nuremberg, Kaliningrad and Cologne. Despite the numerous historic cataclysms, Polish collections also boast a number of such items. Such talented baroque Gdańsk goldsmiths as Johann Gottfried Holl, Hans Ophagen, Nataniel Schlaubitz and Peter Rode II must have produced dozens of such vessels.

It is true that the Wilanów cup is in a way one of mass-produced objects, nevertheless it is an extremely valuable gift. Because of its function it becomes one of the many such items in general use at one time. However in view of its small size it could easily fell prey to robbers, and not only in wartime. Therefore many such objects got lost. In addition this particular cup is an excallent example the high level of workmanship of Gdańsk goldsmithery in the 17th century.







71. Inscription and signature of 18th century donor of the cup (engraved on the spout of the cup)



70. Silver cup with the bust of King John III Sobieski. Manufactured by J.G. Holl at the end of 17th century