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COLLECTING ANTIQUITIES

at the Archaeological Museum of the Royal University
in Wrocław in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

Abstract

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the museum at the University in Wrocław (formerly Breslau) was reorganised. As a result, the institution was granted a new name and a new – archaeological – profile. The changes were initiated by August Rossbach (1823–1898), professor of classical philology and archaeology, director of the museum from 1856 to 1898. Through his efforts, the university museum started to professionally specialise in Antiquity. Above all, Rossbach significantly developed the collection of copies of ancient art, which were used as research and teaching tools. Through his efforts, the collection of the Archaeological Museum grew rich with some original pieces, including the collection of Eduard Schaubert (1804–1860), terracotta figurines from Taranto, and ceramic vessels from the collection of Carlo d'Ottavio Fontana of Trieste. The museum also took care of a coin collection catalogued by a famous numismatist, Julius Friedländer (1813–1884), upon Rossbach's request. Thanks to Rossbach, in the 1870s, the museum boasted one of the largest German university collections in archaeology. At that time, the institution was an important research, educational, and cultural centre in Wrocław.

Keywords: August Rossbach, Wrocław, Breslau, museum, university, collecting antiquities, nineteenth century

INTRODUCTION

The Archaeological Museum at the Royal University in Wrocław (former Breslau) was founded in 1862 as a result of the reorganisation of the Royal Museum of Art and Antiquities, an institution established at the University in Wrocław after the secularisation of convents, monasteries, and collegiate churches in Silesia in 1810. At that time, part of the nationalised church property was incorporated into the holdings of the University in Wrocław. Thus, the *alma mater* of Silesia gained interesting research and teaching material. Holdings seized from monasteries, convents, and collegiate churches were truly diverse. The rich archive and library collections were allocated to two institutions – the Provincial Archives and the University Library. The art and archaeology collections were allocated to the Museum. They covered fine arts (painting and sculpture), artisanal handicraft, as well as coins, medals, and archaeological artefacts. Individual copies of works of art in the form of plaster casts of ancient sculptures completed the collection. The museum was located in the university library building on Sand Island (Wyspa Piasek) in Wrocław, in a building having housed the monastery of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine before the secularisation (Fig. 1).

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Museum's holdings grew in two types: on the one hand, the head of the institution, Johann Gustav Gottlieb Büsching (1783–1829), a pioneer in the study of prehistoric artefacts, collected original archaeological objects testifying to human activity in prehistoric times; on the other hand, he bought plaster casts of the most famous works of ancient art, which were to serve as teaching tools at the university. Neither Büsching nor his successors would develop the collection of paintings, so, in the middle of the nineteenth century, it became clear that the university museum with a gallery of paintings no longer fulfilled its role from a few decades before, when the exhibition was the only public gallery of paintings in Wrocław (regularly open to the public since 29 June 1815). In fact, other fine arts exhibition venues had opened. The university conducted scientific research based on archaeological artefacts from the museum's collection and developed didactics based on plaster casts (for example: in classical philology classes). Therefore, in 1853, the first step was taken to shift the museum's profile towards antiquity: 82 paintings were placed on permanent deposit in the Wrocław Picture Gallery at the State House (*Bildergalerie im Ständehaus*). Further action was taken after the university senate decided upon the institution's reorganisation, which was carried out by August Rossbach (1823–1898), professor of classical philology and

archaeology and, since 1856, director of the Royal Museum of Art and Antiquities in Wrocław (Fig. 3). Following the reorganisation, works of medieval art, artisanal handicraft items, military memorabilia, medieval and modern coins, the rest of the paintings, and the prehistoric collection described as 'Germanic-Silesian grave antiquities' were taken care of by the Society of the Museum of Silesian Antiquities (*Verein für das Museum Schlesischer Alterthümer*) in 1862. Interestingly, Rossbach rented space to the Society to house the collection of the new museum, which provided additional income to the university museum. In 1879, those objects were transferred to the collection of the newly established Museum of Silesian Antiquities (*Museum Schlesischer Alterthümer*) in perpetuity¹. In 1862, the university museum hosted archaeological artefacts from the Mediterranean Basin and plaster casts of ancient art, changing its name to the Archaeological Museum at the Royal University in Wrocław.

ANTIQUITIES FROM EDUARD SCHAUBERT'S COLLECTION

The decision to shift the university museum's profile towards antiquity was supported by an extremely academically appealing collection that had arrived at the museum a year earlier, in 1861. It was an antiquity collection of Eduard Schaubert (1804–1860), an architect living in Athens since 1830 and working for King Otto of Greece (Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2012). This collection, extremely important in the history of Wrocław collecting, was donated to the University by Schaubert's heirs after his death. Partly as a gift and partly by purchase, the Royal Museum of Art and Antiquities in Wrocław acquired the collection of antiquities gathered by Schaubert during his 20-year stay in Greece. The collection included antique architectural elements, sculpture and reliefs, artisanal handicraft, numismatic items, as well as architecture and urban planning documentation (Koepp 1890. Foerster 1908–1909, reprinted in: Papageorgiou-Venetas 2001: 179–182).

The collection reflected the typical fascinations of nineteenth-century philhellènes who – in pursuit of contact with an actual historic artefact perceived as a witness to events from the distant past – collected objects of all kinds, from

1 For more about the reorganisation of the Museum, refer to Zofia Bandurska (Bandurska 1998), Johanna Kinne (Kinne 2010: 249, 255), Urszula Bończuk-Dawidziuk (Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2020).

large-scale marble sculptures depicting popular gods (like Greek Athena or Roman Venus) to small fragments of arrowheads from the fields of Marathon. Such a typical philhellenic collection included items truly diverse in typology and material but bound by one common feature: their origin was in ancient Greece or Roman Italy. The uniqueness of Schaubert's collection lay not in its content but in its geographical location: at that time, there were no original artefacts of this type in Wrocław (Kubala 2019: 135).

Schaubert's collection was added to the museum's collection in 1861, and a list of its constituents was published by Rossbach later that year (Rossbach 1861: 38–48). A comprehensive study presenting the identification and dating of the artefacts was published by Rossbach in a revised and expanded catalogue edition from 1877 (Rossbach 1877: 114–128). It states that Schaubert's collection included: 23 architectural elements, about 55 terracotta figurines, 22 terracotta lamps, eight marble sculptures, 13 polished marble pieces, 47 bronze, lead and iron casts, 18 arrowheads, 35 black-figure vessels and 20 red-figure vessels, seven gemstones and 47 engraved base stones, 15 non-antique stones, 1,437 Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins, 10 coin casts, a certain number of seal impressions, seven miscellanea, as well as architectural drawings, maps, plans, and documents (Rossbach 1877: 114–128).

The collection was scattered during and after the Second World War, and only a portion of it has been identified to date². But even this small portion illustrates the collector's interests and expertise. For example, it is known that architectural elements interested Schaubert mainly because of their preserved polychrome, which is still visible on the pieces from his collection in the holdings of the University in Wrocław (Fig. 4). However, other objects, like some of the bronze pieces from his collection are of such high quality and rarity that they are among the most valuable state holdings in Poland today. The uniqueness of some of the artefacts in the Schaubert collection is evidenced by the fact that several of them were the subject of separate publications issued

- 2 Owing to my research carried out from 2010 to 2012, it was possible to identify many objects from Schaubert's collection in the National Museum in Warsaw and in teaching collections of the University of Wrocław. More detailed information can be found in: Bończuk-Dawidziuk, Palica 2015. In consequence of that research, the collection came to the attention of Agata Kubala, PhD, from the Institute of Art History of the University of Wrocław, who wrote a book related to it (Kubala 2019). In 2020, I successfully identified more items from Schaubert's collection in the holdings of the National Museum in Warsaw – refer to Urszula Bończuk-Dawidziuk (Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2021).

already in the nineteenth century (Konitzer 1861; Foerster 1867: artefact currently in the holdings of the National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 198294); Rossbach 1889). Some of these flattering opinions were confirmed in studies after the Second World War. Let us take for example an item from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw (inventory number 198308): a holder of a standing mirror in the form of a caryatid, which was recognised as globally unique by an American researcher in 1966 (Keene Congdon 1966: 161–165, tables 43–44). Other opinions – of only historical value today due to the objects being lost – are still awaiting contemporary verification. For instance, Schaubert's collection of Greek coins, formerly highly regarded, was lost after the Second World War. It contained 1437 Greek, Roman, and Byzantine numismatic items, including 1089 Æ, 265 AR, 4 AV, 86 of unspecified material. A famous Berlin numismatist, Julius Friedländer, examined this collection and highly valued the Greek coins in the number of 1255 pieces (including 912 Æ, 262 AR, 2 AV, 86 of unspecified material) (Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2011). Friedländer pointed out that Schaubert's Greek coins were chronologically and topographically diverse and in a good state of preservation. Thus, the collection aspired to be an independent didactic tool as regards Greek numismatics. The expertise of the Wrocław collector is further evidenced by the fact that the Berlin researcher could not find any counterfeit coins in Schaubert's collection³.

OTHER ANTIQUITIES

The antiquities from Schaubert's collection were the most valuable items at the university museum and clearly dominated other museum artefacts, both artistically and historically. But original antiquities had been kept in the museum since its establishment. From the beginning, Büsching, its first director, strove to transfer archaeological artefacts found in Silesia to the collections of the museum in Wrocław. Conducting amateur research on antiquities, Johann Gottlob Worbs (1760–1833) from Przewóz, the Superintendent of Duchy of Sagan, learned about nine bronze bracelets and 20 bracelet fragments having been

3 Manuscript of the coin catalogue from 1872 entitled: *Inventare des archäologischen Museums an die Königlischen Universität zu Breslau / II. Catalog der Münzen*, Muzeum Archeologiczne Oddział Muzeum Miejskie Wrocławia [Archaeological Museum, Branch of the City Museum of Wrocław], inv. no. MA O.MMW: DzDN-AN, MA/A/364.

discovered in a field in Gozdnicza (Sagan County). Already in 1817, he led to the transfer of the greater part of the treasure (seven bracelets and 12 bracelet fragments) to the collection of the Royal Museum in Wrocław (Inv. No B. d. 2–7, 9, 45)⁴. Nowadays, those artefacts, formerly believed to be Roman, are dated to the Late Bronze Age (1200–1000 BCE) and attributed to the Urnfield culture (former Lusatian culture)⁵.

Büsching also sought to acquire specimens from royal collections in Berlin. And so, in 1822, 12 Italic vases came from Berlin to Wrocław (Kinne 2010: 52). In the same year, the Wrocław collection received from Berlin one object that was part of a treasure trove of bronze weapons and tools discovered in Alt Plestlin near Demmin in Vorpommern. It was a bronze socketed axe with a loop, currently dated to the Late Bronze Age (1100–900 BCE). Although being a prehistoric specimen, it is worth mentioning in this listing: in Büsching's time, it was not possible to fit antiquities into the relative chronology of prehistory and historical periods⁶.

1822 proved to be a year exceptionally abundant in terms of the growth of the museum collection of the University in Wrocław. In autumn, Erich Neumann, the curator of the University in Wrocław and a government counsellor (*Regierungsrat*), paid 36 thalers for Roman antiquities discovered in Świdnica and offered for sale by Major von Kanitz from Kassel (Kinne 2010: 52–53). They were absorbed by the museum's collection and described in professor Friedrich Kruse's *Budorgis* (Kruse 1819: 117–120). Finally, in December 1822, the museum received a donation of 13 antiquities found in Italy in different places (Kinne 2010: 53).

Another group of antiquities was documented in 1827. According to a preserved archival source, 16 pieces of Roman clay antiquities were delivered to the collection of the Wrocław museum on 10 March 1827. They included vessels

4 Schlesische Provinzial-Blätter, 66 (1817: 2) p. 516; Seger 1936: 127; Kinne 2010: 51.

5 One of the bracelets is preserved in the Archaeological Museum, Branch of the City Museum of Wrocław (Muzeum Archeologiczne Oddział Muzeum Miejskie Wrocławia, inventory number: B.d.45).

6 I wish to thank Mr Krzysztof Demidziuk from the Archaeological Museum, Branch of the City Museum of Wrocław, for his help in determining details of the artefact from Alt Plestlin based on preserved archival materials: *Verzeichnis der ausserhalb Schlesiens gefundenen heidnischen Altertümer aller Art, die sich in der Sammlung der Breslauer Hochschule finden.* C., no. XXIV (Muzeum Archeologiczne Oddział Muzeum Miejskie Wrocławia, inv. no. DzDN-61).

such as jugs, urns, bowls, and cups of the *terra sigillata* type. It is known from later source accounts that Roman originals found in Italy, the Rhineland, Lüneburg, and Hungary also entered the collection during Büsching's time. Those were mainly clayware (vessels, lights) and glassware. The four Greek terracotta heads mentioned in this group are of particular interest (Rossbach 1861: 49).

Under Franz Passow, Büsching's successor, the holdings included two ancient marble sculptures: a torso of a young man and a small head of a woman. Both sculptures were donated to the museum by Toussaint von Charpentier (1779–1847), geologist and entomologist, on the occasion of his moving from Silesia to Dortmund in 1830 (Kinne 2010: 125). In the same year, professor Schultze donated ancient originals, including a Roman mosaic, to the museum (Kinne 2010: 125). More antiquities arrived at the university museum in Wrocław in the second half of the nineteenth century through the efforts of professor Rossbach. Apart from Schaubert's collection, there were two other significant collections of antiquities. One of them was a collection of 46 terracotta figurines from Taranto, which had belonged to Dressler's collection in Rome. The collection was dominated by small heads (some in an archaic style), but it also included fragments of figurines and reliefs. These high-end items were listed by Rossbach in his 1885/86 annual report. On this occasion, the ministry also donated six terracotta pieces from Myrina to the academic museum (Kinne 2010: 304). The second acquisition included 82 ceramic vessels from the collection of Carlo d'Ottavio Fontana (1774–1832) of Trieste, which were donated to the Wrocław university museum in 1888 by the Prussian ministry of culture (*Ministerium der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinalangelegenheiten*), at that time headed by Gustav Konrad Heinrich von Goßler (1838–1902) (Bończuk-Dawidziuk, Palica 2013: 534–535). Whether those vessels were Etruscan, South Italic, or Greek, is unknown. Etruscan and South Italic vessels made certainly part of Fontana's collection. For it is known that in the same year, 110 South Italic vessels from the collector's legacy inherited by his son Carlo Antonio went to the Academic Art Museum in Bonn (*Akademische Kunstmuseum zu Bonn*), and seven other vessels landed in Berlin (Zimmermann 1974: 63–64). However, Johanna Kinne states that Greek vases from his collection arrived in Wrocław (Kinne 2010: 304; 2013: 279–280).

COIN COLLECTION

The collection of antiquities at the university also included numismatic items. In addition to the aforementioned – mostly Greek – coins from Schaubert's collection, the University also held Roman (and to a lesser extent Greek) coins gathered under the name of the Old Collection (in German: *Alte Sammlung*) (Rossbach 1877: 127). When August Rossbach became the director of the museum, he found that both coin collections had never been assessed by a specialised numismatist, so – with the approval of the Prussian ministry – he sent the coins to Julius Friedländer (1813–1884), famous numismatist and director of the Coin Cabinet at the Emperor Frederick Museum in Berlin (*Münzcabinet an der Königl. Museen zu Berlin*). Friedländer elaborated on Schaubert's numismatic items in 1868, created a catalogue of the Greek coins, and scientifically revised the 'Old Collection'⁷ (Fig. 5).

On this basis, in 1872, Rossbach compiled a catalogue of Roman coins belonging to the 'Old Collection'. Rossbach relied on the verification sent by Friedländer but also considered an inventory document drawn up in January 1846 by the previous director of the museum, Joseph Julius Athanasius Ambrosch (1839–1856), and completed in subsequent years. His two-volume document was entitled 'Entwurf eines neuen Katalogs der akademischen Münzkabinets' and constituted a compilation of artefacts mentioned in older catalogues issued by two universities that merged in 1811: the Academia Leopoldina in Wrocław (*Catalogus et Descriptio Numorum Universitatis Leopoldinae Vratislaviae*) and the University Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder (*Catalogus nummorum Universitatis Viadrinae Francofurti allatorum nec non eorum, qui abolitis casibus religiosis e quibusdam Silesiae conventibus et monasteriis collecti sunt*). Rossbach undertook to compare Ambrosch's inventory with the coins in the boxes. He then stated that the order of the coins in the boxes did not match the order in Ambrosch's inventory. Besides, as Ambrosch had already noted⁸, some coins were missing, and some had not been registered at all. Perhaps the coins not included by Ambrosch were, among other things, part of collections acquired during the secularisation period. For it is known that 259 Roman coins and 472 other coins were seized from the Augustinian monastery in Żagań and 169 coins – from the Augustinian monastery on Wyspa Piasek (Sand Island) in

⁷ Manuscript of the coin catalogue from 1872..., pp. 2–3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Wrocław (Prittwitz 1881: 282). Moreover, the Lubiąż monastery secularisation report mentions a numismatic cabinet consisting of 600–700 coins⁹. But it is not known how many of the numismatic coins nationalised from clergy collections after 1810 found their way into the royal collections, and how many of them were scheduled to be melted down into contemporary coins.

Summarising, the so-called Old Collection consisted of coins acquired as a result of the secularisation of Silesian convents and monasteries in 1810 and the merger of the collections of the Viadrina and Leopoldina Universities in 1811, as well as through individual donations and purchases.⁹ From source-documented donations of coins, we may mention two of them. The first one was made in 1823: Büsching received 54 Roman coins from Neuwied (Kinne 2010: 53). The second one was made in 1844 or 1845, when a state court assessor, Klingenberg, donated his numismatic collection to the museum, including the Roman coins 58 Æ and 5 AR (Kinne 2010: 203–208). In 1861, the ‘Old Collection’ contained 72 Greek coins and about 1500 Roman coins (Nadbyl 1861: 88); in 1872, ‘Old Collection’ contained 1191 coins, mostly Roman (1097 pieces, including 669 Æ, 363 AR, 1 AV, 64 of unspecified material¹⁰, and Greek coins (94 pieces, including 58 Æ, 36 AR¹¹). The discrepancy in the figures reported in 1861 and 1872 is probably due to Friedländer’s verification, who harshly evaluated the ‘Old Collection’ and separated from it as many as 741 coins that were either counterfeited (198) or in poor condition (543). His final judgement was resolute: ‘The Roman coins from the Old Collection are almost all worthless or in a poor state of preservation. The only pieces of value are [second-century imperial] denarii of Pescennius Niger ([Ambrosch]’ catalogue of the Old Collection, part I, p. 56, no. 448) and of Pertinax’¹². In Rossbach’s catalogue from 1877, the coins from the Old Collection were generally discussed in the subsection on the Coin Cabinet. According to the catalogue, the museum’s ‘Old Collection’ contained almost exclusively Roman coins (Rossbach 1877: 127).

As the numismatic holdings of the university museum in Wrocław have not survived to the present day, a certain idea of the collection of Roman coins from the so-called Old Collection is given by the preserved manuscript catalogue, in

9 Wrocław University Library, Department of Manuscripts, cat. number IV. F. 267, vol. 2: *Acta manualia die Uebernahme der Bibliotheken, Kunstsammlungen & Archive in den aufgehobenen Klöstern Schlesiens betreffend*, sheet 113.

10 Manuscript of the coin catalogue from 1872..., pp. 315–538.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 10–284

12 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

which the following are discussed one by one: republican coins, coins of Roman families in alphabetical order (Aquila, Cassia, Porcia, etc.), and imperial coins of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Marcus Aurelius, Julia Domna, etc.¹³.

Towards the end of the Wrocław university museum's activity period mentioned, its holdings included coinage from the collection of Richard Leonhard, who collected numismatic artefacts at Cythera and donated them to the museum on 1 August 1899. The inventory presents 21 items, including three Greek coins minted at Cythera, nine Roman coins, three Byzantine coins, and six Dalmatian coins with images of lions from Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice. In the museum, the coins from Leonhard's collection have been assigned to the so-called New Collection¹⁴.

COPIES OF ANCIENT ART

Since its establishment, the museum was collecting copies of ancient art in the form of plaster casts and, more rarely, metal casts. Six casts of sculptures came from the post-secularisation collection: *Apollo Belvedere*, *Laocoön* (only the father figure), *Borghese Gladiator* from Paris, two heads of Venus and one head of Antinous (Kinne 2010: 345). Basing on this modest set, Büsching, the first director of the museum, began to develop a didactic collection for teaching students in classical philology. In 1825, he ordered 40 new casts of ancient art (17 sculptures, 15 busts and heads, 6 reliefs, 2 torsos) for the collection, and a year later he also added a cast of the *Praying Boy* (Kinne 2010: 345–347). These purchases initiated a systematic collection of plaster casts at the state university in Wrocław and thus made the academic museum in Wrocław went down in history as one of the first university museums with a collection of this type in former Germany, after Göttingen (1767), Bonn (1818/1820), and Königsberg (1824). Successive directors of the museum, who were classical philologists, expanded this part of the collection, treating it as an important teaching tool.

13 Manuscript of the coin catalogue from 1872... Refer to the catalogue study in: Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2011.

14 Manuscript of the coin catalogue from 1872... At the end of the inventory book, between unpaginated pages, there is a loose sheet with a stamp 'Archäologisches Museum an d. K. Universität in Breslau' and a handwritten note stating on donating R. Leonhard's collection of coins to the museum.

In 1848, the casts of ancient art in the museum at the university amounted to 259 copies of sculptures, busts, and vessels (Kinne 2010: 213).

The real flourishing time for the plaster cast collection came in the second half of the nineteenth century under director August Rossbach, who took over as head of the museum in 1856, and held the position for 42 years until his death in 1898¹⁵. Especially in the initial period, he proved his initiative and intensity of activities. Sources say that he was introduced to the museum in 'a modest and neglected condition'¹⁶, so he immediately began to raise more funds for this institution, as well as to acquire more premises. What seemed important was the adaptation of the first floor of the library building garden wing for museum purposes, and Rossbach's furnishing of a lecture hall (known as the *Auditorium*) where he taught and where students were exposed to copies of ancient sculptures. His main task was to complete the presented material to enable tracing the history of sculpture from the archaic to the post-classical period on this basis. Thanks to the concentration of the annual source of income, financial support from the university's curator Baron Johann Eduard von Schleinitz (1798–1869), and donations by director of the Royal Museums in Berlin Ignaz von Olfers (1793–1871) (Nadbyl 1861: 88), the collection of ancient casts was multiplied by as much as a third by 1861 (Nadbyl 1861: 88).

Rossbach published two catalogues for collections of plaster casts (in 1861 and 1877). One includes 328 numbers, mostly larger and smaller statues, while the other 439 casts¹⁷ arranged in chronological order, and it is known that by the year of the professor's death, 1898, the collection had grown by about 100 more pieces. Rossbach also used the chronological order preferred for didactic purposes in the newly arranged seven-room exhibition. Two of them are devoted to the art of the archaic period, three – to classical sculpture (including the works of Phidias, Polykleitos, Scopas, Praxiteles and Lysippos), one displayed Pergamonian, Rhodian and Attic objects, and the last one – Roman artefacts¹⁸ (Fig. 2).

15 From 1868 on, he also lived in the museum, occupying a service apartment, which he paid for (initially 70, and starting from 1873 – 80 thalers per year) [according to:] Kinne 2010: 255.

16 From August Rossbach's letter to his children, Wrocław, 16 October 1878 (from private collection).

17 These numbers apply to all – not just antique – copies of works of art.

18 The sketch belongs to the holdings of Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. Repr. Kinne 2010: 274.

Rossbach's efforts for the Archaeological Museum at the University in Wrocław were so extensive that he was called the second founder of the institution. In 1861, having conducted his own comparisons, Rossbach stated that the academic museum in Wrocław was second only to Bonn among all Prussian university museums (Nadbyl 1861: 88). This judgement was confirmed in 1898 by his successor as museum director, Richard Foerster (1843–1922) (Foerster 1898). From today's perspective, we must admit that the museum was indeed an important academic institution in the second half of the nineteenth century and could boast one of the richest collections of plaster casts among German universities. For comparison, in 1877, it stored more than 400 plaster casts (not including casts of engraved gems and coins), while – in the same year – the Munich museum catalogued 302 plaster casts in its collection (Rossbach 1877; *Kurzes Verzeichnis...* 1877).

SUMMARY

The history of the Archaeological Museum at the Royal University in Wrocław in the second half of the nineteenth century shows the process of profiling the collections of this institution towards Antiquity and the subsequent expansion of the collections in two main directions: original objects (archaeological artefacts) and copies of works of art, artisanal handicraft, coins, and engraved gems (plaster and metal casts). The preserved collection catalogues and archives, as well as reports on the museum's activities published in the university yearbooks, give a relatively coherent picture of the policy of shaping the collections of the university museum in Wrocław in the second half of the nineteenth century when it was headed by August Rossbach, professor of classical philology. Definitely, he was a key figure in the reorganisation of the museum and shifting its profile towards Mediterranean Antiquity.

Once August Rossbach came from Tübingen to Wrocław, his professional career progressed successfully. He was a popular lecturer, he conducted research and published his papers. In addition to his activities for the academic community, he also contributed to the cultural life of the city. He was a co-founder and organiser, and then the first and long-time chairman, of *Verein für Geschichte der bildenden Künste*. This Society was founded in 1862 for mutual support and exchange of knowledge about the fine arts; its members were art-

ists, experts, and amateurs. Meetings combined with lectures and discussions were held every two weeks in the auditorium of the museum on Wyspa Piasek island (Foerster 1898). Thus, the Archaeological Museum at the University in Wrocław was at the centre of educational and cultural life in Wrocław. It was blooming. Neither earlier nor later had a comparable splendour been recorded.

Shortly after Büsching established the museum, the holdings were heterogeneous and random, as the collection core consisted of artefacts acquired through the secularisation of Silesian convents and monasteries. In the following years, professors of classical philology multiplied the holdings with plaster casts of ancient art, but it was August Rossbach who began buying items on a large scale. This was due to the fact that Rossbach's financial means differed from those of his predecessors. As a result of the museum reorganisation, he shifted its profile towards archaeology, and at the same time, by renting space to a new museum in Wrocław, he gained funds for the purchase of new artefacts for the university museum under his management. This modern management approach was possible, among other things, because Rossbach was an active promoter of science and culture in Wrocław. He chaired several prominent societies and created a periodic meeting place in the museum on Wyspa Piasek island for many members of the societies in which he was active. His participation in the scientific, educational, and cultural life of the city gave him an understanding of the prevailing relations and an appropriate response to the needs of the public. He strengthened the status of the institution under his leadership by significantly expanding the exhibition space, multiplying the collections, and making them accessible to researchers, artists and students, well as to a wider audience. In the absence of a Wrocław institution competing in this field with the Archaeological Museum, his actions led to success. In the 1870s, the museum boasted one of the largest German university collections in archaeology. At that time, the institution was an important research, educational, and cultural centre in Wrocław. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when new museums began to appear in the cultural landscape of the city of Wrocław, the Archaeological Museum gave way to their leading position among the city's museum institutions. It survived until 1945, also due to the collection profiling by Rossbach, which made it possible to find a permanent audience of students, researchers, and artists¹⁹.

19 For information on the post-war history of the collection, refer to Agata Kubala and Urszula Bończuk-Dawidziuk (Kubala, Bończuk-Dawidziuk 2018: 9–18).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the antiquities mentioned herein can only be found – with very few exceptions – mainly in archival materials. It is extremely difficult to present the exact shape of the collection due to the dispersion of the Wrocław Archaeological Museum's holdings during the Second World War. At that time, the original objects were hidden throughout the Lower Silesia region. After the War, some of them were taken to Warsaw and incorporated into the collection of the National Museum, others were lost. The plaster casts left in Wrocław were mostly destroyed during the bombardment of Festung Breslau at Easter 1945. Several dozens of them were excavated from the ruins of the museum building by Kazimierz Majewski (1903–1981), a professor of classical archaeology who came from Lviv. Those casts were included in the teaching aid materials of the Polish university being established in post-war Wrocław. At present, they are displayed on permanent exhibition in the Museum of the University of Wrocław.

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Collecting Antiquities...



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

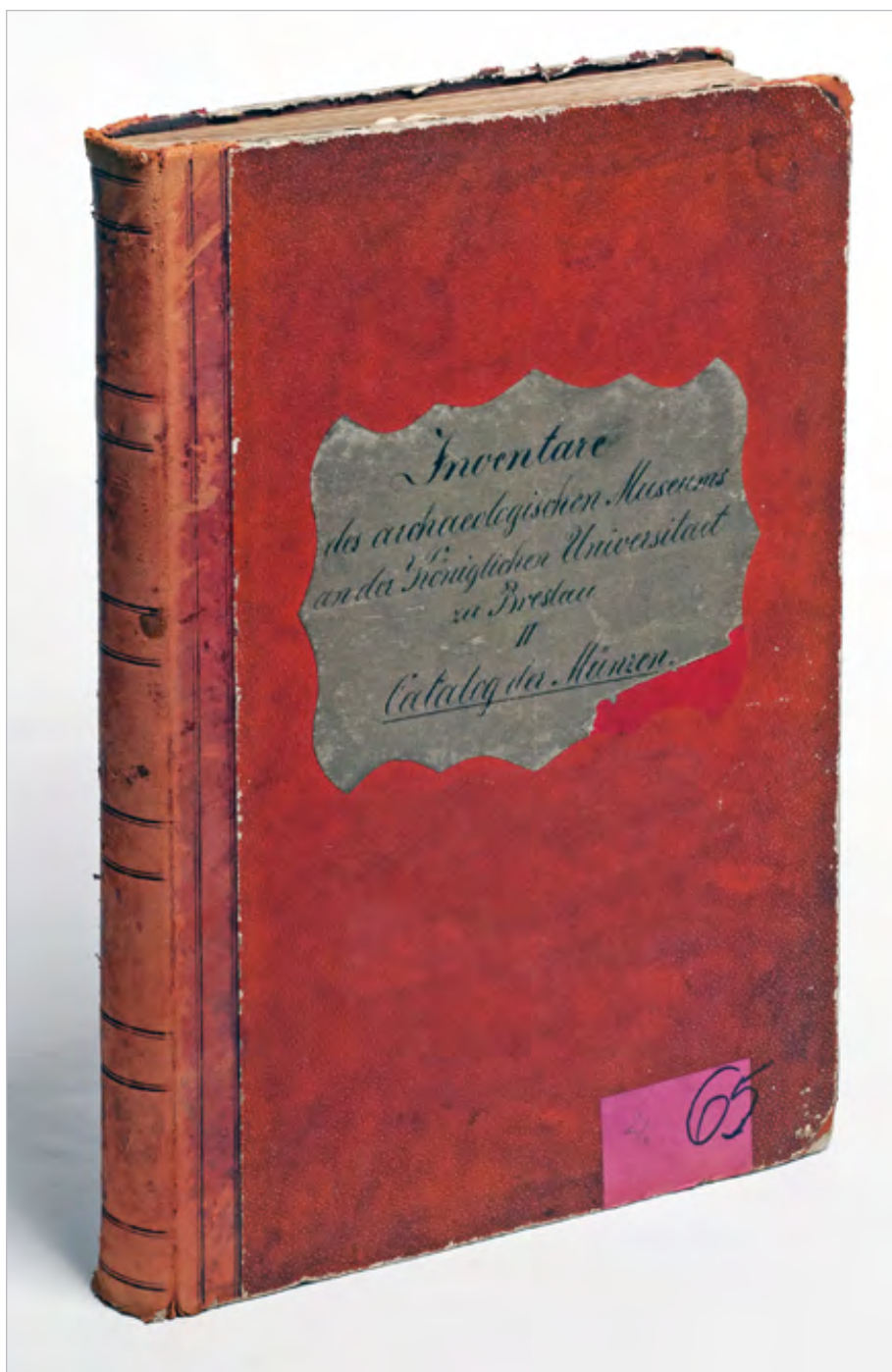


Fig. 5