Izabela Czartoryska’s arts patronage

Izabela Czartoryska, née Flemming, one of the most influential women from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, drew attention both in her times and in modern times. Her colourful private life as well as her patriotic and cultural activities were of significant interest. Together with her husband Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, she co-founded the Puławy court, the second, next to the royal court in Warsaw, most important political and cultural centre of the Republic of Poland of that time. She was known as a collector and creator of the first Polish museum, initiator of landscape gardens, inspiration for theatrical performances, writer and patriot who took part in the political events of the turn of the century.

One of the fields of her activity was artistic patronage. However, unlike the literary, collector, educational or patriotic activities of Izabela Czartoryska, this issue has not been discussed separately. The authors of various elaborations usually only briefly mention that she was a patron of art. A relatively largest number of information on this subject can be found in the works of art historians analysing either the activities of outstanding artists of the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries,¹ or individual works.² This state of affairs raises the question of whether Izabela Czartoryska could be described as a patron

of art, and if so, what was the scope of this patronage and was it a separate activity unrelated to the broad artistic and scientific activity of her husband.

Izabela was not a scholar, she did not have a solid and broad education. She was self-taught and gained her knowledge through reading, traveling and conversing with artists and scholars. “The specific »renaissance« of the her interests – as Alina Aleksandrowicz writes – has […] the characteristics, as many other representatives of the epoch, of humanistic encyclopedicism, curiosity with many manifestations of life, sciences and arts.”

Izabela, born in 1746, was orphaned by her mother and brought up at the court of her grandmother, Eleonora Czartoryska. She did not receive any education. At the age of fifteen, she married Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, who was twelve years older. Through marriage, she entered the social and intellectual elite of Europe, which made it possible for her to establish an extensive network of contacts and gain the opportunity to constantly expand her knowledge. Above all, however, she had the opportunity to be a member of the court of Adam Kazimierz, whose life moved in two currents. The first, most noticeable one was the current of an active social life and the second, deeper one – “a serious intellectual and national movement.”

It was a modern court that was not created by a former type of clientele, but carefully selected persons, “a group of friends looking for manners and teachings, writers, poets, artists, youth, whom the Duke always eagerly gathered around himself.” The court was predominantly Polish, although there were times when most employees were foreigners, such as specialists, artists, gardeners and craftsmen, like James Savage, who had a decisive influence on the shape of the Puławy Park.

Czartoryski had close relations with the artists. Some of them were members of the household, others were employees and clients engaged in artistic activities.

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5 S. Łempicki, Opiekunowie kultury w Polsce, Lwów 1938, p. 53.
This was the case for Jan Piotr Norblin or Franciszek Dioniz Kniaźnin, who were employed as educators and teachers of Czartoryski’s children. Franciszek Karpiński and Jan Ursyn Niemcewicz were adjutants of the duke. Józef Szymanowski, Franciszek Zabłocki, Jan Paweł Woronicz and many other artists were very much attached to the court of the Czartoryski family.\(^8\) Others, such as Piotr Aigner, were connected to the Czartoryski family through patronage.

The attitude of the Czartoryski family to artists is evidenced by the salaries paid to them. They were not too high. For example, Kniaźnin, who “served in Puławy as the court poet and teacher, was valued disproportionately lower than a cook, a treasurer or a plenipotent, because he received one thousand five hundred zlotys a year.”\(^9\) The main gardener Savage received two thousand eight hundred zlotys for his work, a bonus from personal resources of the duchess, a flat with firewood and light, and one sixth of the propagated plants.\(^10\) For comparison – the cook’s salary was sixty-four thousand three hundred zlotys a year.\(^11\)

The Czartoryski court competed with Warsaw of Stanisław August Poniatowski, and the Czartoryski family brought their own original proposals and culture-formative potential which was largely influenced by Izabela, referring to “the model of the French ladies,” protectresses of the arts and sciences.\(^12\)

We do not know what were the beginnings of Izabela’s interest in art. It does not, however, seem as if she had a solid preparation in this field, which can be evidenced by her words in one of the letters sent to her son, Adam Jerzy, who was in Italy: “You are surprised – writes Izabela – that I do not order my employees to prepare paintings or statues. They are expensive, and I am not very fond of them.”\(^13\)

She did not strive for conscious and planned promotion of specific artists or certain trends in art. She usually used the help of artists already associated

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\(^10\) Z. Gołębiowska, op. cit., p. 212.


\(^12\) A. Aleksandrowicz, op. cit., p. 13.

\(^13\) Listy księżnej Izabeli z hr. Flemmingów Czartoryskiej do starszego syna księcia Adama, gathered by S. Duchińska, Kraków 1891, p. 49.
with the Czartoryski court. The art and artists served her to achieve the intended goal – a splendid lifestyle. The art – architecture and garden art, theatre performances, literature – was supposed to lead to that goal. The implementation of the project in Powązki was supposed to create the perfect place for a peaceful life and upbringing of children in the spirit of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s pedagogy. The palace and park complex in Puławy is the result of her fascination with the past and eruption of patriotic feelings. Both projects – Powązki and Puławy – had a common denominator, which was the cult of nature evident in the creation of English landscape parks. The choice of both lifestyles and the way of their implementation were influenced by Izabela’s literary fascinations, travels and personal preferences, and above all her personality – the type of her emotionality entering into exaltation, the innate sense of taste and aesthetics, the fascination with nature and history, and finally patriotism.

A stimulus to gather more knowledge about artistic issues was also Izabela’s collector’s passion, as Ludwik Dębicki writes, along with the construction of Puławy and building up collections, she began to read books and complete the “very superficial education she received, insufficient knowledge that she gathered around the world.”

At the same time, it is worth distinguishing her patronage activity from her collector’s activity. In this article, patronage is understood as a specific type of behaviour consisting in the direct involvement of the patron in the life of the artist and the creation of a given work as well as the inclusion of this work in the general circulation of values, in a situation where the individual preferences of the patron have a wider impact of “shaping specific trends and patterns that in certain situations might become a valid cultural norm.” There is no doubt that this statement refers to the activities undertaken by Izabela Czartoryska. The works created under her influence fostered the development of two trends in Poland: sentimentalism and preromanticism. It cannot be denied that the works created within her circle, especially those concerning dissemination of knowledge about the past and strengthening patriotic attitudes, had a significant educational influence.

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16 Ibidem, p. 21.
Izabela’s first independent project was an architectural design of the park in Powązki, realized in a sentimental trend. The Czartoryski family started to lease Powązki in 1770, and Izabela decided to use it set up her village residence to complement the city residence, which was the Blue Palace in Warsaw.\textsuperscript{17} She wanted to create an ideal place for raising children in close proximity to nature and away from strangers, but also an enclave of privacy available only to family members and close friends. Prestigious considerations also played an important role.

The main initiator and author of the whole concept was undoubtedly the owner herself, drawing inspiration from similar projects realized in England and France, especially the Parisian Petit Trianon, which she saw during her visit in 1769. Zygmunt Batowski claims that Jan Piotr Norblin played an important role in shaping the concept of the residence. Both of them have contributed a lot, as is mentioned by Marek Kwiatkowski, “when it comes to giving the Powązki a proper atmosphere and establishing a content program.”\textsuperscript{18}

Norblin was closely affiliated with the Czartoryski family. Born and educated in France, he met Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski who was traveling through Europe in the 1770s. The Czartoryski family involved him in their activities during his stay in London. They employed him as a drawing teacher for their children and they brought him to Poland in the spring of 1794. Norblin still worked as a drawing teacher for the children of the Chartoryski family, for which he received a salary, he was also a court draughtsman, artistic advisor, organizer of theatre performances. He was their client, but also a friend – he even had his own hut in Powązki. As an artist, he decorated the walls of the Powązki houses with paintings “in the manner of Watteau.” He also saved Powązki from oblivion, perpetuating their views on paper at the request of his other patron, Helena Radziwiłł, née Przeździecka.\textsuperscript{19}

In order to implement such a large project as Powązki, one of the most magnificent suburban residences of Warsaw from the second half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, it was necessary to employ architects, painters, gardeners and highly qualified craftsmen. However, the most important aspect was a detailed

\textsuperscript{17} M. Kwiatkowski, \textit{Powązki}…, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibidem, p. 148–149.
plan determining the works that commenced in March 1771.\textsuperscript{20} Due to the lack of archives and any architectural documentation, it is difficult to determine the author of the project.\textsuperscript{21} According to Marek Kwiatkowski, it was Szymon Bogumił Zug,\textsuperscript{22} and according to Stanisław Lorentz – Efraim Szreger (Schreger), a highly appreciated architect who worked for Adam Kazimierz in the seventies of the 18th century in the modernization of the Blue Palace and his sister Izabela Lubomirska during the construction of a residence in Mokotów.\textsuperscript{23}

A large part of the vast landscape park in Powązki was covered by a pond, meadows, artificial caves, cascades and islands. In the central part, one could find luxuriously decorated thatched roof houses located on an artificially elevated hill. The largest one belonged to Izabela, and smaller to children and friends of the family. The property also included the ruins of a colonnade, triumphal arch and amphitheatre. Two inns and a farm were connected with the park.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1789, the Czartoryski family gradually moved to Puławy, and Powązki slowly lost its meaning. In 1794, the Prussians devastated it, then the land was sold and the next owner build a brewery and a tobacco factory. Before the First World War, there was a military cemetery, and in 1944 the Powązki property was burnt.\textsuperscript{25}

Izabela’s second project was an architectural design of the garden in Puławy, realized in a preromantic trend. She was the initiator and the soul of all artistic activities undertaken in Puławy, inherited by Adam Kazimierz after his father.\textsuperscript{26} The artistic concept was part of Izabela’s new plan, aimed at transforming Puławy into a centre of patriotism, in which the cult of the past encourages optimism about the future. It was an expression of her new fascinations – patriotic and historical. In Puławy, the past and the future, nature and history, Poland and Europe were supposed to intertwine to form a compact whole. The main goal was to commemorate the past to lift up the spirit of the nation. The park and architecture constituted the setting for the activity of the Puławy court and collector’s passion of Izabela. Thus, architecture and

\textsuperscript{21} M. Kwiatkowski, Powązki…, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibidem, p. 148–149. Cf. idem, Szymon Bogumił Zug…; idem, Powązki Czartoryskich…
\textsuperscript{23} S. Lorentz, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{24} M. Kwiatkowski, Powązki…, passim.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibidem, p. 154, 157.
\textsuperscript{26} T.S. Jaroszewski, op. cit., p. 106.
garden art played a major role, but other branches of art were also included in Izabela’s vision: theatre, music, literature, craftsmanship and painting. All this was to create a compact whole.\textsuperscript{27}

Not everything in Puławy is the result of Izabela’s work. She was definitely the inspiration for the garden with small garden architecture, the originator of the Greek House, Marynka Palace, Temple of Sybil, Gothic House, perhaps even the reconstruction of the Puławy Palace.

The announcement of new fascinations and a new lifestyle for the duchess was the play \textit{Mother of Spartan}, modelled on Greek tragedy, staged in the summer of 1786 in Puławy. It was an opera with a patriotic implication and Izabela played one of the parts.\textsuperscript{28} The play, even though it was not very good, was popular across the country, as it was a manifestation of Izabela’s political interests and patriotic feelings. The text was written by Kniaźnin. He often wrote texts for similar performances, as the custom of organizing amateur dramatics began in Powązki, and was continued in Puławy. The performances were usually staged only once and were intended for a small group of spectators. Apart from Kniaźnin, the texts, according to Dębicki, were written by Niemcewicz, who was a friend of the Czartoryski family.\textsuperscript{29} The Czartoryski family were also associated with Franciszek Lessel who was the author of lost music. His father created the court orchestra, and Franciszek himself gave concerts in Puławy and composed music at the request of the duchess. He was also unhappily in love with her illegitimate daughter, Cecylia Beydale.\textsuperscript{30}

The new fascinations of Izabela manifested themselves in the creation of the Puławy Park and other architectural works. Izabela focused her attention on the arrangement of the park. Her interest in garden art surfaced earlier, and was expressed in the fascination with the poem \textit{the Gardens} written by Jacques Delille. Izabela commissioned its translation to Franciszek Karpiński as soon

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item H. Waniczkówna, op. cit., p. 242.
\item G. Pauszer-Klonowska, op. cit., p. 96, 103, 129. The duchess liked acting so much that at her request Kniaźnin wrote another play, this time it was a comic opera \textit{Gypsy}, staged in the autumn of 1786 in Siedlce in the property of Hetmaness Ogińska. The music was written by Michał Ogiński.
\item L. Dębicki, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 41.
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as the poem was published (1782). Karpiński translated the text together with his pupil, Izabela’s daughter, Maria Anna (then Wirtemberska) as part of the lesson on the Polish language and literature.\textsuperscript{33} Czartoryska met the author of the poem during her stay in Paris, but personal contact developed after the translation of the work into Polish. Czartoryska and Delille corresponded with each other, and the description of the Pulawy Park, included in the second extended edition of the poem from 1801, was provided to Delille by Izabela herself. Delille’s works became more popular though the Duchess.\textsuperscript{32}

Izabela favoured the concept of a picturesque landscape garden, promoted by Delille, based on “the assumption of open space, the composition of which allows us to read the order of nature itself, not the order created by man” and providing “important elements to the aesthetic and cultural assumptions of Puławy. These were assumptions that opposed the classicism of Stanisławowski style.”\textsuperscript{33}

The park was created by gardeners that were brought for this purpose by Izabela: first Jan Jan Bogusław Rychter from Germany, then James Savage from England and Dionizy Mac Clair from Ireland (Mikler in Polish version). The most renowned gardener, Savage, was initially employed for three years, but he became permanently associated with Puławy. From 1794, he was the main gardener, he also supervised all gardens, the staff and gardening equipment.\textsuperscript{34}

The garden was expanded, rearranged and given a romantic and landscape character. Izabela filled it with a lot of stones and monuments with commemorative inscriptions devoted mostly to the family and friends of the house.\textsuperscript{35} Her thoughts and experiences related to arranging the garden were recorded in her book \textit{Myśli różne o sposobie zakładania ogrodów} published in Wrocław in 1805 by Wilhelm Bogumił Korn. The artwork for the book was made by Jan Zachariasz Frey, who from 1804 was the court painter of Puławy.\textsuperscript{36}

More architectural objects were placed in the park setting. The first is a picturesquely situated conservatory called the Greek House (1778–1791), and then a palace in the Corinthian style called the Marynka palace (1790–1794),

\textsuperscript{32} A. Aleksandrowicz, op. cit., p. 41–42.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{34} T.S. Jaroszewski, op. cit., p. 107; Z. Gołębiowska, op. cit., p. 193, 212; G. Pauszer-Klonowska, op. cit., p. 129, 201, 205.
\textsuperscript{35} T.S. Jaroszewski, op. cit., p. 107.
\textsuperscript{36} G. Pauszer-Klonowska, op. cit., p. 212.
designed for Izabela’s daughter Maria and her husband. The author of both projects was Piotr Aigner, the court architect of the Czartoryski family.

During the Kościuszko insurrection, Puławy was destroyed by the Russians. Izabela returned in the summer of 1796 and from that moment, until 1806, Puławy enjoying well-earned rest. The palace was reconstructed, although Adam Kazimierz had a decisive voice. The palace gained a new shape, and the interiors were renovated. Puławy was rebuilt by a team of architects, including Piotr Aigner, Wojciech Jaszczołd and Joachim Hempel. Norblin and his assistant, Aleksander Orłowski, an excellent painter, draftsman and graphic artist 37 recommended by Izabela, had a huge share in the works carried out in the interiors. The palace did not survive in its form to modern times, it is known from Norblin’s paintings and from memoirs.

Piotr Aigner was the most outstanding architect working in Puławy. The talented boy, the son of a master carpenter from Puławy, drew attention of Stanisław Kostka Potocki who sent him to study in Italy. Upon his return, Aigner was a military builder and professor at the School of Engineers. During the insurrection, he worked in the Weaponry Department of the War Commissariat. 38 He was employed in Puławy in the late 80s of the eighteenth century, and at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, “he finally confirmed his unrivalled position as the main architect in Puławy.” 39 “As Izabela’s general adviser in matters of architecture, Aigner, with gardener James Savage, shaped Puławy” – says Tadeusz Stefan Jaroszewski. 40 Puławy brought Aigner fame and promotion.

However, the permanent court architect was Joachim Hempel, who took up this position in 1785 and held it until his death in 1810. Aigner and Hempel shared responsibilities. Aigner prepared designs, and Hempel was the contractor of those designs. Aigner worked independently, without being subject to Hempel. His designs were approved directly by the Czartoryski family. 41

In 1796, Puławy, in line with Izabela’s plan, were slowly transformed into a “small homeland.” An important factor contributing to this transformation was the development of Izabela’s collector’s passion, related to national memorabilia. Czartoryska decided to construct a separate building – the Temple

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38 Ibidem, p. 233.
39 T.S. Jaroszewski, op. cit., p. 28.
40 Ibidem.
41 Ibidem.
of Sybil devoted to various memorabilia.\textsuperscript{42} Aigner was the one who proposed the construction of a building modelled on the Roman Temple of Vesta in Tivoli. He built a cork model that the Duchess later placed in her museum. This model has not been preserved to modern times.\textsuperscript{43}

In the winter of 1798, employees started to transport granite stones on sleighs and carts. The foundation stone lying ceremony took place on the day of Zofia Czartoryska’s wedding with count Stanisław Kostka Zamoyski (May 20, 1798), and Kniaźnin wrote a poem to commemorate this occasion. The construction lasted from spring to autumn of 1799. The Duchess was personally involved in the construction and it is said that she handed over bricks to her employees to speed up the work.\textsuperscript{44} Izabela systematically informed her son Adam Jerzy about construction progresses. On February 23, 1800, she wrote: “I want to finish my temple this year, so I have to save all of my money for this purpose, refusing even the slightest fancy.”\textsuperscript{45} In the summer of that year she reported: “The temple underground is finished, and the whole temple will be finished next year.”\textsuperscript{46} In 1801, she wrote with satisfaction: “The temple is finished. It is magnificent; I cannot keep my eyes off of it. Everyone admires my temple.”\textsuperscript{47}

The Temple of Sybil was one of the first buildings, not only in Europe, but also in the world, specially designed for museum purposes. From the museological point of view, its interior is exquisite.\textsuperscript{48}

The temple was located on the edge of a high embankment falling towards the Vistula River. An inscription, constituting the message of the entire concept chosen for buildings in Puławy, was placed above the entrance: “The Past of the Future.” The temple was shaped like a rotunda covered with a dome. A colonnade surrounded the top storey built of stones. Natural light was getting into the building through a dome illuminating its interior. “The temple had an almost mystical atmosphere – writes Zdzisław Żygulski – saturated with

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\textsuperscript{42} H. Waniczkówna, op. cit., p. 243, 245.
\textsuperscript{43} Z. Żygulski jun., Dwieście lat Muzeum Książąt Czartoryskich in „Czasy! Ludzie! Ich dzieła!” Teatr obrazów księżnej Izabeli Czartoryskiej. Obrazy i miniatury z Domu Gotyckiego i Świątyni Sybilli w Puławach, the concept of D. Dec, J. Wałek, Kraków 2001, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{44} L. Dębicki, op. cit., vol. I, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{45} Listy księżyny Izabeli..., p. 49–50.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibidem, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibidem, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{48} Z. Żygulski jun., op. cit., p. 27.
a bluish light flowing from the oculus, covered with amethyst glass. Visitors did not even have to move; they could look at the entire display area from one spot.”

The bottom storey made of brick embedded in the slope was the foundation of the top one. In comparison with the upper room, it was a dark crypt located underground. The Duchess intended to place a symbolic tomb made of black marble with the inscription: “Valiant Poles,” but ultimately it was decided to place a memorial obelisk of Prince Józef Poniatowski.

Another building that was built in the Puławy Park was the Gothic House. Buildings of this type were trendy in contemporary romantic architecture, and Izabela saw similar ones during her travel across England. The house was also an expression of her fascination with gothic and knight tradition, characteristic of the Romantic age. The design and construction of the building was entrusted to Aigner, and its magnificent interior was created by Wojciech Jaszczold (architect, painter and stucco decorator) and Fryderyk Bauman, assistant and student of Aigner.

The building was embedded in the surrounding greenery. The interior, lit with colourful light coming through the medieval stained glass windows, created a mysterious atmosphere. It was the place where Izabela kept the collected monuments of foreign origin. The house walls were decorated with, among others, paintings of Leonardo and Rafael brought by Adam Jerzy from Italy and Rembrandt (bought from Norblin). The ceremonial inauguration took place in 1809.

The Puławy Park was a source of inspiration for many writers. Kniaźnin wrote many works under the inspiration of Izabela, Niemcewicz created the poem Puławy, Karpiński wrote idylls and, with her encouragement, translated the Gardens written by Delille, Woronicz was the author of the poem the Temple of Sibyl, the verses of which were engraved on the trunks of park trees.

From 1811, Izabela spent more time in Warsaw and she finally moved to Sieniawa in 1812. In the subsequent years, she circulated between Puławy and Warsaw. She was still interested in art, maintaining contact with the literary community and dealing with theatre. Puławy was destroyed during the

49 Ibidem, p. 29.
51 Z. Żygulski jun., op. cit., p. 31; T.S. Jaroszewski, op. cit., p. 106, 134.
52 Z. Żygulski jun., op. cit., p. 31; A. Aleksandrowicz, op. cit., p. 243.
November Uprising, but Izabela managed to hide collections of the museum and the library.\footnote{H. Waniczkówna, op. cit., p. 245.}

The Puławy project, according to Zdzisław Żygulski, “was a flourishing expression of aristocratic culture, aware of its goals, supported by huge financial resources, engaging enlightened, energetic and sacrificial people. […] By creating a great cultural centre in Pulawy, [the Czartoryski family – K.D.] combined museum and library collections with archival materials, brought and took care of artists, musicians, poets and masters of garden art, and organized theater performances and concerts. They were, of course, inspired by the great artistic patronage of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, whose museum dreams remained in the \textit{Musaeum Polonicum} project.”\footnote{Z. Żygulski jun., op. cit., p. 32.}

The magnate families of that time wanted to show the cultural rank of Poland on a European scale, being aware of the importance of art as means of propaganda, sometimes even more effective than politics.\footnote{B. Majewska-Maszkowska, \textit{Mecenat artystyczny Izbelli z Czartoryskich Lubomirskiej (1736–1816)}, Wrocław 1976, p. 14.} Izabela Czartoryska has considerable merits in this field. Her patronage activity was related to the scientific and cultural activity of her husband, Adam Czartoryski, but Izabela was able to isolate the field of her own independent activity related to the creation of the Powązki and Puławy projects. These in turn were a reflection of her worldview and aesthetic taste.

On the other hand, Stanisław Łempicki wrote that the Czartoryski family were the ones who “moved the beautiful tradition of our cultural guardianship from the eighteenth century to the next century […]. [Puławy – K.D.] operated in free and failing Poland, then during the Napoleonic wars, during the times of the Duchy of Warsaw and during the Congress Kingdom, creating our own type of patronage, growing out of national ideas and goals.”\footnote{S. Łempicki, op. cit., p. 55.}

\section*{Summary}
\textbf{Izabela Czartoryska’s Arts Patronage}

Izabela Czartoryska, née Flemming, one of the most influential women of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, was known as an art collector, the founder of the first Polish museum, the initiator of several landscape gardens, and an ardent patriot. Among her many interests was arts
patronage. She was the force behind two landscape architecture concepts, a sentimentalist one in Powązki and a pre-romanticist one in Puławy. Izabela Czartoryska contributed to the development of sentimentalism and Pre-Romanticism in Poland, with Puławy – devoted to patriotism and celebration of Polish history – having been particularly important for the Polish society given the demise of Polish independence.

Keywords: Izabela Czartoryska, arts patronage, Powązki, Puławy, Romanticism, patriotism

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