

The castle in Kórnik



The Kórnik Library is situated in a castle in the town of Kórnik, 20 km south from Poznań. The Library was founded by count Tytus Działyński in the year of 1828. From the beginning it was a humanistic library. However, count Jan Działyński, Tytus' son and the following owner of the library, was also interested in mathematics, physics and astronomy. The last owner of the library general Władysław Zamoyski in 1924 made a donation of his whole property (including library) to the Polish nation.

Count Tytus Działyński, the founder of the Kórnik Library, was born in 1796 in Konarzewo - Działyński's family possession. He was educated in Berlin, Paris and Prague. His great love for books was born in 1815 when he finished school and returned to Konarzewo. Then, his father - Ksawery, told him to put in order family papers. Motivated by a plan of creating a library, showing the days of glory of the Polish state (partitioned at that time by its neighbors - Russia, Prussia and Austria), Działyński successfully commenced collecting manuscripts and old prints.

In 1817-1823 young count Działyński was traveling through European countries, which resulted in many contacts with the antique dealers. Since he wanted his collection to become the library for the further scientific research, Działyński was purchasing everything what was broadly understood as source materials concerning the history of the Polish state and nation.

After his father's death count Tytus inherited a part of the family estate along with the Kórnik castle. In 1828 he decided to adapt it for the family residence and private library. Together with his wife, Gryzelda Celestyna born Zamoyska he started rebuilding and renovating their property. Since this year the castle has become a permanent place for the book collection.

Działyński was not only a collector, but also a dedicated publisher. He became involved in this activity in 1828, however, his main achievements in this field was made in 1850s. His most significant works were the monumental editions of the history of the Lithuanian Union and trials between Poland and Teutonic Order. Tytus Działyński died in 1860 and both the library and the castle were inherited by his only son Jan Kanty Działyński.

Count Jan was born in 1829. As a continuator of the works of his father he developed library's historical collection, but he was also interested in the scientific fields such as mathematics, astronomy and physics. That is why, he bought two valuable mathematical collections - one from Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński's daughter and second from Teophil Żebrawski.

Jan Działyński published 43 works (some of them were multi-volume). The most important one was "Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski" (Diplomatic Code of Wielkopolska) - edition of medieval documents form western part of Poland. It is worth knowing that count Jan also published translations of the classical Roman works.

Political marriage to princess Izabela born Czartoryska did not bring happiness to him. The couple didn't have children. Jan died in 1880. His successor became his nephew - count Władysław Zamoyski.

Władysław Zamoyski was born in Paris in 1853. As a new owner of the castle he lived there only for five years. In 1885 he was forced to leave Kórnik, and took up his residence in Galicia region (southern Poland). There he became famous for having decided to purchase Zakopane estate. He also won the lawsuit on "Morskie Oko" (a beautiful mountain lake) and the Polish border between Galicia region and Hungary. It is worth mentioning that a person who looked after the castle and the library at that time was a plenipotentiary - Zygmunt Celichowski who along with Zamoyski bought many valuable old prints.

Zamoyski returned to Kórnik in 1920. Together with his mother Jadwiga and sister Maria, count Zamoyski established a foundation named "Zakłady Kórnickie" to endow the Polish nation with the Kórnik estate and all its collections.

The Foundation's activity was interrupted by the World War II. Fortunately, neither the castle nor the library collections were damaged. After the war the Foundation resumed its activity, but it managed to function only until 1952. At that time the government incorporated the library into the Polish Academy of Sciences. After many years Foundation was restored in 2002.

The library, from its beginning, is situated in the castle in Kórnik. It has also a division located in the Działyński's Palace in Poznań, a former city residence of the Działyński family.

More: www.bkpan.poznan.pl