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**MUSEUM OF THE SANDOMIERZ REGION: GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract:** The Museum of the Sandomierz Region was one of the more thriving tourism-and- sightseeing-related institutions of the Second Polish Republic. The paper’s aim is to show the history of its establishment and development in the first years of its operation, previously in literature shown only in very general terms, without resorting to all the sources. The first historic piece: an urn excavated close to Linów was donated for the collection by Aleksander Patkowski nicknamed ‘father of Polish regionalism’. An attempt is made to reconstruct the foundation of the Museum’s first collection. Table 1 shows the dynamics of the acquisitions in subsequent years. Apart from single donations, Museum’s heritage pieces came from amateur excavations or individual donors, and with time artefacts were provided mainly by professional archaeological research. The artefacts were considered worthy of display, that is why, in 1921, the Museum was opened in a provisional facility. In 1923, a catalogue of the archaeological collection was published. The Museum proved to be successful logistically and in terms of tourism and regionalism, this demonstrated by the turnout in the first years of its operation shown in Table 2. The problem of the lack of Museum’s permanent seat was solved through acquiring a plot of land and having its own premises raised. The story of the opening of the seat of the branch of the Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society, PTK, and of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region in 1925 is presented in the paper. It was the first in Poland building owned by PTK, and the Museum took up much of its space. The process of organizing the institution climaxed with a permanent exhibition having been opened to the public. The Museum of the Sandomierz Region was the fourteenth institution of the type run by PTK after 1918. In the 1930s, it turned into an icon of Polish tourism-and-sightseeing-related museology, while the presented reconstruction of its beginning reveals numerous facts from the history of the activity of Polish society in the independent state.

**Keywords:** Museum of the Sandomierz Region, Sandomierz, Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society (PTK), tourism-and-sightseeing-related museums, regionalism.

**Introduction**

The Museum of the Sandomierz Region was one of the more thriving tourism-and- sightseeing-related institutions of the Second Polish Republic. In the institution’s first published history outlines the questions of its establishment and development in the first years of its operation was dealt with vaguely, without fully resorting to the sources available.[[1]](#endnote-1) The concept to found a museum stemmed from the idea of tourism and sightseeing promoted by members of the Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society, PTK. Its Sandomierz branch was supposedly inspired by PTK’s museum in Kielce, as well as the Diocesan Museum in Sandomierz operating from 1902. Fr Józef Rokoszny, the creator of the latter ecclesial institution, was additionally one of the initiators of the foundation of PTK’s Sandomierz branch,[[2]](#endnote-2) which, as reported by *Gazeta Radomska,* took place on 2 May 1909. The structure of that branch included, among others, a museology section (together with a photography one) whose intention was to *amass museum specimens in the facility of any of the social institutions, or at the seminary museum* [namely the diocesan one], *respectively of the Board’s agreement with those institutions, and collect first and foremost those specimens which the diocesan museum does not possess, namely specimens of nature, prints, photographs, maps of the nearest area, etc.*[[3]](#endnote-3) The Diocesan Museum collected predominantly sacral art, liturgical utensils, and patriotic mementoes. This helped to divide tasks to be performed by respective Sandomierz museums, which actually proved effective not merely at the onset, but also throughout their over centenary coexistence. The initiator of the restitution of PTK’s Sandomierz branch in 1918 was Aleksander Patkowski, nicknamed ‘father of Polish regionalism’ owing to the regional tourism and sightseeing programme he formulated in the inter-war period.[[4]](#endnote-4) He was the one who donated the first historic object for this collection: an urn excavated near Linów.[[5]](#endnote-5)

**Organizing the Museum**

It is extremely difficult to reconstruct the foundation of the earliest collection of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region. Apart from single donations, its heritage pieces came from amateur excavations performed by the painter Zdzisław Lenartowicz.[[6]](#endnote-6) By late 1919, the Branch’s collection had amounted to 193 specimens, and its growth dynamics is shown in Table 1. In 1920, the decision was made to reach a wider circle of potential donors, so an announcement was released that *Materials are being amassed for the future Museum of the Sandomierz Region.* Interestingly, it was the first time when the name of the institution being organized was officially used.[[7]](#endnote-7) Already on the following day, on 4 May 1920, the minutes of the PTK Sandomierz Branch Board’s session recorded the names of the first donors.[[8]](#endnote-8) On 16 May 1920, a Branch’s appeal written by the head of the museum section Stanisław Karpowicz was published in relation to setting up a museum institution claiming that it should conduct studies and identify material sources.[[9]](#endnote-9) Furthermore, archaeological research was conducted on the Branch’s initiative.[[10]](#endnote-10) The collection was assessed as worth displaying, however, appropriate premises were lacking for the purpose. The problem was solved when the facility once housing Notary Stefan Przyłęcki’s office in Gołębicka Street was rented from Aleksander Patkowski’s mother Helena Przyłęcka.[[11]](#endnote-11) The opening of the Museum took place on 5 May 1921, and apart from some officials, it was attended by 17 students and staff of the Unit of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Warsaw headed by Włodzimierz Antoniewicz. The students *took measurements, drew, and described* heritage pieces *on file cards*, which two years later yielded the publication of the *Collection of Excavations of PTK’s Museum of the Sandomierz Region in Sandomierz* by Zofia Podkowińska.[[12]](#endnote-12) The decision was also made to send two delegates from Sandomierz to attend museum courses in Warsaw.[[13]](#endnote-13) Furthermore, on 8-10 June 1922, a representative of the Sandomierz tourism and sightseeing enthusiasts, unidentified by name, took part in the Congress of Museum Curators in Bydgoszcz. When an overview of Polish museology was published in *Ziemia*, it was stated that the Museum of the Sandomierz Region was to be an institution where *it would be possible to locate the numerous remains of our culture with which the Sandomierz Region abounds.*[[14]](#endnote-14)

The Museum was formally founded with the minuted decision of the PTK Branch Board which implemented the provisions of PTK’s act of 1920. In 1921, the Museum was visited by 2,983 individuals; the number of visitors in subsequent years is shown in Table 2. The Museum was financed with membership fees, guided tours, sale of publications and postcards, paid lectures, subsidies from state institutions, and even tickets to performances staged by an amateur theatre. The Board decided to obtain a plot of land and have Museum’s new premises raised. The ceremonious opening of PTK’s new seat and the Museum of the Sandomierz Region took place on 17 May 1925.[[15]](#endnote-15) A commemorative photo taken on that day, previously unpublished, has been preserved in the legacy of a professor of the local seminary and PTK’s President Fr Andrzej Wyrzykowski.[[16]](#endnote-16) It was the first in Poland PTK’s own building (PTK had 25 branches). The Museum occupied a substantial part of its surface, namely two rooms on the ground floor (in total almost 64 sq m). *Ziemia* published a photo showing its main display room with the permanent exhibition.[[17]](#endnote-17)

On 30 September 1927, Leon Wilkoński was appointed the collection curator. Thanks to him some spectacular heritage pieces reached the Museum.[[18]](#endnote-18) Apart from the contacts with the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw, which were the continuation of the cooperation with the State Team of Conservators of Prehistoric Monuments, the Museum of the Sandomierz Region did not cooperate with any other institution. This changed after the Museum had joined the Association of Museums in Poland in 1931. Wilkoński attended the Association’s congresses in Poznan, Vilnius, and Lvov.[[19]](#endnote-19)

**Impact on the social environment**

The impact of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region on the Sandomierz community was noticeable in numerous spheres. One of the major forms was the interaction with young people through school tourism and sightseeing clubs, therefore, the decision was made to introduce free admission for students. The individuals looking after those clubs were also members of the PTK Board, just like Aleksander Patkowski who worked as a Polish teacher, curating the clubs at the boys’ gymnasium and teachers’ college.[[20]](#endnote-20) The clubs had museum sections which *made collections for the Museum of the Sandomierz Region.* Students dissected birds and mammals, they collected painted Easter eggs, historic coins and archaeological pieces, transferring them to the Museum, and systematically reporting on their work in *Orli Lot.* The gymnasium club edited one of the periodical’s issues (1925) publishing in it information on the heritage pieces given to the Museum of the Sandomierz Region.[[21]](#endnote-21) The club also visited the Diocesan Museum in Sandomierz, this testified to by entries in visitors’ books.[[22]](#endnote-22)

The PTK Branch attracted individuals who were active, who promoted the idea of tourism and sightseeing as well as regionalism through their activity. The organization attracted teachers and school headmasters and headmistresses, as well as priests (including Bishop Paweł Kubicki), landowners (Countess Tarnowska of Dzików), doctors, clerks, the latter including city authorities members. Three Sandomierz Mayors can be found among the Branch’s Board: Adam Musielski, Franciszek Mańkiewicz, and Sylwester Więckowski (during the latter’s term of office the City Council assigned free of a charge a plot for PTK’s seat and Museum to be raised; following his service as Mayor, he served as Deputy Curator of the Museum). Furthermore, Mayor Jan Wojcieszko was PTK’s member. Paid lectures and temporary exhibitions were organized, and those of the Sandomierz residents who were interested in the Museum could visit the collection outside the hours of guided tours.[[23]](#endnote-23) The fact that although located slightly away from the Sandomierz Old Town, the Museum became a place of relevance to the local community was proven by its choice as the venue to commemorate the fourth centenary of the birth of Jan Kochanowski. On 15 May 1932, a stone plaque dedicated to the poet attached to the Museum wall was unveiled by the project’s initiator, Headmistress of the State Teachers’ College Maria Bandrowska. A commemorative photo of the ceremony shows the elite of the city and county together with Dr Leon Polanowski, Sandomierz Starost.

A significant increase in the number of the public visiting Sandomierz museums in the 1930s triggered a debate on establishing another museum, the discussion recorded in *Ziemia Sandomierska,* a periodical dealing with the local government and social issues. Meant as a trademark of the city, it was to be housed in the Town Hall building, displaying deposits from different museums. A suggestion was made that only exhibits characteristic of the Sandomierz Region should be shown there, this catering for the less demanding tourists. The idea was supported by the Secretary of PTK’s Sandomierz Branch Józef Pietraszewski who claimed in his paper ‘On the Sandomierz Museum’ that this move would ease pressure on the Museum of the Sandomierz Region *serving academic purposes* and on the Diocesan Museum *whose task is to prevent ecclesiastical heritage pieces from destruction.*[[24]](#endnote-24) Nonetheless, this interesting initiative was never implemented.

The cooperation of both Sandomierz museums is testified to by an entry of Deputy Curator of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region Tomasz Szczygielski in the Diocesan Museum Visitors’ Book on the launch of the institution in the Długosz House on 27 October 1937. [[25]](#endnote-25) That event inspired the idea to host in Sandomierz the 14th Congress of Delegates of the Association of Museums in Poland on 27-28 June 1938. The Congress’s main organizer was the Diocesan Museum, however, the local PTK Branch provided some financing to the event and accommodation for the participants. The delegates visited both museums.[[26]](#endnote-26)

Frequently described in the press in the 1930s, the Museum of the Sandomierz Region turned into an icon of Polish tourism-and-sightseeing-related museology[[27]](#endnote-27). In September 1939, before the Nazi invaders came to Sandomierz the collection had been hidden. During WW II, the institution was closed to the public. After the war, the preserved exhibits together with the documentation which had survived were gathered in the Museum building, However, in the post-WW II realities it was impossible for the Museum to resume its operation. The nationalized collection amassed by PTK was taken over by a museum founded in Sandomierz by the Minister of Culture and Art who defined the main institution’s tasks as follows: amassing, studying, conserving, making available to the public through the display of heritage pieces representing nature, archaeology, ethnography, history of art, and history of the Sandomierz Region, The opening of the museum in the Sandomierz Oleśnicki tenement house took place on 17 June 1956.[[28]](#endnote-28)

**Conclusion: the museum identity of the collection**

The Museum of the Sandomierz Region was involved in intense academically-based work on tourism and sightseeing. The Castle Museum in Sandomierz is the heir of that activity. This cultivated identity is predominantly expressed in the continuity of the care taken of the collection, particularly of that containing 336 heritage pieces studied by Zofia Podkowińska in 1923, which have survived as an almost intact set. The reconstruction of the beginning of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region and of the development of the institution reveals new facts from the history of activism of Polish society in their independent state, and care taken of museum heritage pieces.

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5. State Archives in Kielce, Sandomierz Branch, Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society, Sandomierz Branch, Minutes from PTK Board’s sessions (below: APK o/S, Protokoły), p. 32; Castle Museum in Sandomierz (below: MZS), Archaeological Department, ACNO MS-334/a. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. K. Ryszewska, ‘Udział Polskiego Towarzystwa Krajoznawczego w badaniach i gromadzeniu zabytków archeologicznych na ziemiach międzyrzecza Wisły i Pilicy do 1939 r.’, *Między Wisłą a Pilicą*, 6 (2007), (p. 153); eadem, ‘Badania archeologiczne Zdzisława Lenartowicza w międzyrzeczu Wisły i Pilicy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku’, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, 1 (6, 2017), (p. 41). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. ‘Oddział Sandomierski Polskiego Tow. Krajoznawczego’, *Ziemia Sandomierska*, 1 (1920), (p. 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. APK o/S, Protokoły, p. 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. S.K. [S. Karpowicz], ‘Muzeum „Ziemi Sandomierskiej”’, *Ziemia Sandomierska*, 2 (1920), (p. 7). The appeal’s content quoted by K. Ryszewska, *Historia badań archeologicznych na obszarze województwa kieleckiego w czasach II Rzeczypospolitej*, part 1: *1918-1928*, Kielce 2021, p. 23. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
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11. APK o/S, Protokoły, pp. 70, 75, 94. The building no longer existing can be seen in Janusz Kwiatkowski’s photo: MZS, Historical Departmet, ACNO MZS/H/JK/201801030027. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Z. Podkowińska, ‘Zbiór wykopalisk Muzeum Ziemi Sandomierskiej Polskiego Towarzystwa Krajoznawczego w Sandomierzu’, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, 1 (8, 1923), 29-48 and the offprint made by PTK’s Sandomierz Branch. J. Lewakowska-Antoniewicz, ‘Kronika Zakładu Archeologii Przedhistorycznej i Wczesnodziejowej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (1920-1945)’, *Roczniki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, 4 (1963), (p. 133). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
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14. A. Janowski, ‘Zjazd kustoszów muzealnych w Bydgoszczy’, *Ziemia*, 7 (1922), 226-230. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. APK o/S, Protokoły, p. 137. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Diocesan Library in Sandomierz, Fr Andrzej Wyrzykowski’s legacy, Photographs, no ACNO, A collective photo of the participants of the inauguration of PTK’s seat and of the Museum of the Sandomierz Region. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. ‘Polskie Towarzystwo Krajoznawcze’, *Ziemia*, 6-8 (1925), (p.156)), Fig. 104. Postcard with this frame bearing the stamp of the photo studio of Franciszek Mańkiewicz in Sandomierz: MZS, Historical Department, ACNO MOS/H/2972. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. L. Wilkoński, ‘Grób ciałopalny z okresu wczesnorzymskiego z Krakówki pod Sandomierzem’, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, 15 (1938), 106-125. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
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22. Diocesan Museum in Sandomierz (below: MDS), Archives, Visitors’ Books, 1923-1924. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. *Sprawozdanie oddziału sandomierskiego Polskiego Tow. Krajoznawczego za rok 1921*, Sandomierz 1922, p. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. xyz, ‘O komasację muzeów Sandomierza’, *Ziemia Sandomierska*, 2 (1933); J. Pietraszewski, ‘O muzeum Sandomierskie’, *Ziemia Sandomierska*, 5 (1933), (p. 1). See A. Massalski, ‘Pietraszewski Józef (1885-1965)’, in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 26, Wrocław 1981, pp. 169-170. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. MDS, Archives, Visitors’ Book, 1937. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
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