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MACIEJ SZYMCZYK, RAINER SACHS, RAFAŁ EYSYMONTT, JAN BAŁCHAN, MONOGRAPH ON THE PAPER MILL IN DUSZNIKI-ZDRÓJ, DUSZNIKI-ZDRÓJ 2018, PP. 407

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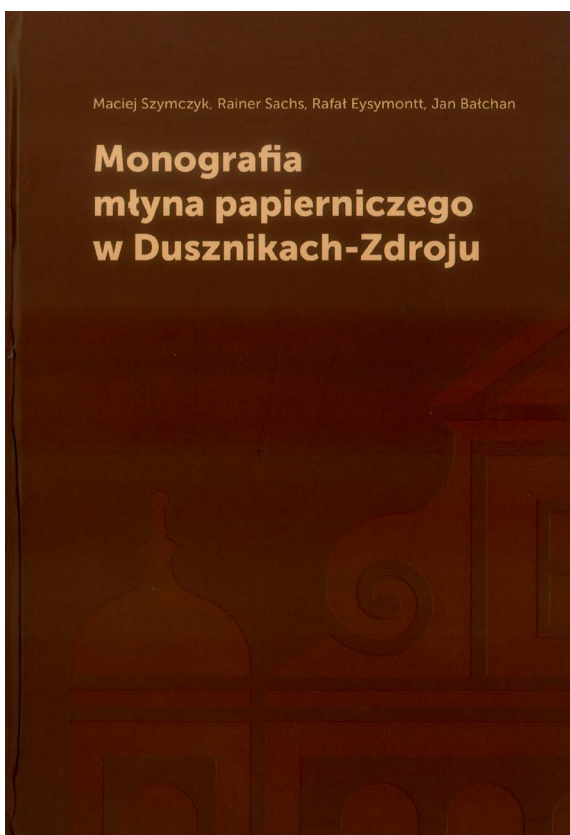
Abstract: The historic paper mill in Duszniki-Zdrój (Lower Silesia Voivodeship) was granted Poland's Historic Monument status in 2011, which confirms the complex's historic and artistic worth. Currently, attempts are made to make it enter the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List, actually together with the Czech Velke Losiny paper mill and the German one in Homburg. It should also be borne in mind that in 2018 Poland's only Museum of Papermaking located on its premises celebrated 50 years of its existence. The Museum's employees, headed by Maciej Szymczyk PhD, have recently been extremely successful as far as organization, investments, displays, and publications are concerned. As for the latter, preparations for an

extensive *Monograph on the Paper Mill in Duszniki-Zdrój* have to be pointed to; the book is an academic attempt at presenting the facility's complex history, beginning from the 16th century, as well the individuals related to it; furthermore, efforts to preserve the precious facility and its adaptation to serve museum purposes are described. The presented publication can be viewed as a successful crowning of the to-date research, providing solid grounds for the documentation to support the UNESCO List entry application. The strongly factual and richly illustrated monograph should be analyzed on various levels, one of them speaking of the effect of the coherent and consistent activities of museologists.

Keywords: paper mill in Duszniki-Zdrój, Museum of Papermaking, Kłodzko Region, history of papermaking, monograph.

In the Lower Silesia Voivodeship numerous historic facilities of exceptional historic and artistic value can be found. A modest portion of them have entered the prestigious

UNESCO World Heritage List or have become subject to preservation as Historic Monuments. Therefore, it is all the more exciting to be following the attempts to raise the



rating of the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill housing Poland's only Museum of Papermaking, and where the tradition of handmade paper is cultivated. The complex's historic and artistic worth was the reason for it being granted the status of a Historic Monument, and accounts for the efforts to make it enter the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List, actually together with the Czech Velke Losiny paper mill and the German one in Homburg. What will prove unquestionably helpful in this attempt is the publication titled *Monograph on the Paper Mill in Duszniki-Zdrój*. Maciej Szymczyk, Director of the Duszniki Museum, but also the monograph's editor and co-author, wrote in the introduction that it would provide solid grounds for the documentation to support the UNESCO List entry application, while at the same time constituting an element of the celebration of the golden Jubilee of the Museum of Papermaking established in 1968 (p. 12). These purposes do not only account for the circumstances accompanying the publication of the ample monograph, but also the extension of its documentation and illustration section, of which we will speak in due course.

The first essential part of the book is composed of five chapters prepared by renowned experts: Maciej Szymczyk PhD, Rainer Sachs PhD, Warsaw University Prof. Rafał Eysymontt, and Jan Bałchan, Head of the Papermaking Department of the Duszniki Museum. Complying with an academic synthesis formula, they researched the sources and made reference to earlier studies, so the monograph can be viewed as a successful crowning of the to-date research. It allows an overall view of the complex history of the Paper Mill and of the Museum it features, as well as

reveals potential directions of new academic investigation which cannot be overestimated.

When analysing the work, let us begin with the synthetic *Introduction* (pp. 5–12) in which Maciej Szymczyk introduces the Readers to the topic of the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill and the whole project of publishing the monograph. Moreover, in an ample section he also lingers on the chronology of writings dedicated to the Mill. From the precious overview conclusions can be drawn that it has been the topic of major interest of authors since the end of the 19th century, however a substantial progress in the research has come only in the recent decades. Of major impact in this respected was the academic attitude of the Museum staff (headed by its current Director), as well as the publication of the Museum periodical 'Rocznik Muzeum Papiernictwa' launched in 2007, bringing together a team of historians and historians of art, predominantly affiliated with the Wrocław centre. Worth mentioning is the fact that the preparation of the *Monograph on the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill* forms a link in a set of coherent and consistent activities aimed at the cognition, preservation, and promotion of this unique facility. Their complementary character seems perfect enough to constitute a model to be followed.

Let us, however, return to the publication itself. As much as Szymczyk does not define its academic character, the value of the work cannot be limited only to the *popularizing the knowledge of the Duszniki Paper Mill* (p. 12) as he suggests; the monograph essentially meets academic standards, which, interestingly, does not hamper the attempt to appeal to the widest possible public in order to communicate the latest research results to them. The well-documented content has been presented in an accessible, clear, and factual manner, which cannot be undermined by certain minor inconsistencies, as for example the element of apparent exaggeration found in one of the Introduction paragraphs: *The Paper Mill survived numerous wars, and situated along the way from Prague to Wrocław, it witnessed the march of many troops that were hostile to each other. Those, however always went past with respect owed to the greatest holiness.* (p. 5) Regardless of the ways of explaining the phenomenal survival of the facility it remains a fact that, although wooden in its major part, it has been spared by destructive fires and dangerous floods.

In the first Chapter of the Monograph titled *Outline of the History of Papermaking* (pp. 13–38), M. Szymczyk has outlined the development of papermaking technology, thus speaking of the general framework in which the Duszniki Paper Mill operated, developing in the 17th and 18th centuries, following which it fell into decline in the 19th and 20th centuries. As can be found from the oldest records, the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill may have been constructed in the 16th century, which corresponds with the beginnings of this production segment in Central Europe. The Author, however, does not limit himself to technological or material issues, but also tackles cultural transformations conditioning the growing demand for paper. Worth appreciating is the gradual passage from a macro-scale narration to local questions, this allowing to present the Duszniki Paper Mill in a broader context. What remains, however, is the doubt whether before incorporating the Kłodzko County and Silesia into Prussia in 1742 the main reference background

for the Duszniki enterprise (located within the County) should not have been Bohemian territories, of which it formed part, and not Silesia, preferred by M. Szymczyk and other monograph's authors (R. Sachs and R. Eysymontt), in view of their later shared history. Obviously, the earlier bonds between Silesia and the neighbouring Kłodzko Land cannot be denied, yet did they really essentially matter for the latter's development before it was incorporated into Prussia? Interestingly, it happened to be the Prussian period and later the German one during which the region was gradually industrialized, this also having led to the disappearance of handicraft paper production. As results from the Author's ascertainment, it was the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill's owners that in the Silesian Province opposed the victorious march of industrialization the longest, however, even they decided in 1905 to introduce a machine for cardboard production, which operated until the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Szymczyk considers it the *end of the old Silesian papermaking*, which forms part the 'Silesian' orientation Szymczyk assumed. Meanwhile, the administrative subordinations of the Kłodzko County to Wrocław did not eliminate the peculiar 'Kłodzko' identity, cultivated by the local community.

The second Chapter titled *The Duszniki Paper Mill and Its Owners* (pp. 39–70) introduces us into the strictly Duszniki-related issues, and speaks of the history of the local Paper Mill, or, to be precise, of the representatives of three families of the papermakers: the Kretschmers, Hellers, and the Wiehers, whose resourcefulness and knowledge were decisive for the plant's success. Their accomplishments are significantly expressed in the privileges they were given, including the coat of arms and titles of court papermakers. Giving the personal perspective to the history of the Paper Mill completes it, allows to bring forth the human element, so frequently omitted in similar studies. What has to be appreciated is not only the adoption of such a perspective, but also the efforts of the Author Rainer Sachs to apply a wide range of sources, including iconography and parish registers. The latter have allowed to define, among others, participation of respective male and female owners of the Mill in the life of the local community, this confirmed by the fact that they often feature as godparents. An extensive preliminary research and the Author's keen eye for detail have allowed to correct the list of the Duszniki entrepreneurs and present their profiles, beginning with Ambrosius Tepper barely mentioned in 1562 up to Carl II Wieher who sold the closed down Paper Mill to the Duszniki local Council in 1939, this point actually marking the beginning of a new formula for functioning of the historic complex. What can be regarded as one of the few flaws of this Chapter is a slight exaggeration when there is mention of *an event of exceptional importance in the Mill's history*, namely the visit of King Frederic the Great in 1764. The visit of the monarch unquestionably added splendour to the community, yet was it of any major consequences? Fredric II regularly travelled across the country, while the products of the Duszniki Paper Mill had much earlier attracted his interest (p. 51). Furthermore, a minor inaccuracy can be traced in the study: *the privilege to bring rags from the Upper Silesian Poviats: głogówecki, prudnicki and bielski* granted by the Prussian monarch (pp. 50–51). Not focusing on the very term of the

'powiat' used (*weichbild* vel district), let us point out that the last of them did not refer to Bielsko (Cieszyn Silesia) but Biąła (Prudnicka), incorporated by the above-mentioned King into the Prudnik Poviát.

In the subsequent Chapter called *Architecture of the Duszniki-Zdrój Paper Mill* (pp. 71–25) Rafał Eysymontt describes the facilities of the Paper Mill complex; resorting to the architectural and dendrochronological research, he presents the chronology of its construction, extensions, and alterations. The Author pays much attention to the western gable with its volute trimming as well as unique polychromes preserved in the living quarters, so characteristic of the Duszniki Paper Mill. He has accounted for the transformation of the surroundings of the historic Mill, as well as works on its restoration and adaptation for museum purposes. He has undertaken the attempt to compare the mass of the Duszniki Mill to the buildings of several other Silesian paper mills, concluding with the mention of some preserved facilities of the type in Europe, though without much visible emphasis on their architectural form. Overall, one can have the impression that the Author has defined the range of his investigation too narrowly, additionally including marginal elements. This allows a broader look on the Duszniki Paper Mill complex, though certain repetitions as well.

The purchase of the Duszniki Paper Mill by the local Council and its further history has been presented by Jan Bałchan in the Chapter titled *The Duszniki Paper Mill 1939–2006. From Manufacture to Museum* (pp. 127–66). The efforts to preserve and adapt buildings for museum purposes render the difficult reality of the 20th century, and similarly as in Chapter 2, have been personally related to the activity of definite individuals, the institution's managers and directors. The facility did owe a lot to them, since saving the 'post-German' heritage in the so-called Regained Territories, perceived as the peripheries of the Polish state, was not generally welcomed. The example of the Paper Mill thus reflects real determination of certain individuals, or more broadly of the circle of Polish papermakers who over the years supported the adaptation and financing of the precious historic facility.

The story of the long efforts is completed with yet another Chapter by Maciej Szymczyk called *The Most Recent History of the Paper Mill* (pp. 167–205). Summing up the latest activity of the Duszniki Museum (entered in the National Register of Museums only in 2013), it shows how successful the institution has been as far as organization, investment, and displays are concerned. It was not appropriate for the Director to evaluate these accomplishments, yet their very listing implies the large scale of the activities, actually resulting from a constructive cooperation of the Museum's management with the Lower Silesia Local Government that the Museum has been reporting to since 1999. Interestingly, the reviewed publication has been financed by the Marshal Office of the Lower Silesia Voivodeship.

The acquired financing has allowed to produce a high-quality publication with a hard cover and coated paper. The impressive carefully selected set of 157 illustrations: reproductions of archival postcards, photographs, drawings, prints, paintings, documents, maps, measurements, contemporary plans, and attempts at the reconstruction of the Paper Mill's mass at its subsequent development stages,

perfectly harmonize with the publication's content, enriching it, and rendering the varied history of the Duszniki facility. Finding an insert containing four sheets of handmade paper featuring watermarks from the Museum's moulding room will prove a peculiar bonus to interested readers.

The afore-presented Chapters do not close up the described volume completed with extensive, though quite heterogeneous *Annexes* (pp. 209–97). They provide the following: list of the Paper Mill's owners and Museum Managers/Directors (Annex 1); list of the members of the Museum Council/ Papermaking Museum Council (Annex 5); list of Papermaking Museum's honorary curators and friends (Annex 6); turnout at the Papermaking Museum in 1968–2018 (Annex 4); list of Museum's exhibitions (Annex 7); its publications (Annex 8); timeline of Museum's major accomplishments over the last two decades (Annex 9); and the list of its staff as of 2018 together with their photo (Annex 10). This very section also contains detailed catalogues of filigrees of the Duszniki Paper Mill and Museum moulding room (pp. 211–58, Annexes 2–3) prepared by Marcin Wyszynski, coupled with watermarks' tracings by Teresa Windyka and Marcin Lemejda. However, in view of the academic character and volume of both catalogues it would be more beneficial to have had them incorporated in the factual section of the Monograph.

The subsequent section: *Documents, Testimonies, Recollections* (pp.301–25) provides certain sources. It contains some dozen texts related to the Duszniki Paper Mill, these (in their majority) accompanied by a short comment. The oldest description dates back to the late 18th century, though the majority of sources were produced in the 20th century. The materials which were originally in German have been published in their Polish translation, this obviously facilitating their perception to the Polish readers. The presented selection of sources allows to view the historic facility from different perspectives, and boosts interest in its history. However, there seem to be no decisive criteria for the inclusion or omission of certain source records, like e.g. the coat-of-arms document of Gregor and Georg Kretschmer of 1607.

The publication closes with a brief Resumé as well as the timeline of the Paper Mill and the Museum of Papermaking in Polish, English, German, Czech, French, and Russian (pp.

329–80) by Maciej Szymczyk, who has summed up the results of research into both facilities. It is the editorial team composed of the Museum staff: Marta Nowicka, Krzysztof Jankowski, Beata Dębowska, Marcin Wyszynski, and Director Maciej Szymczyk, the project's leader, who all take the credit for the success of the publication, completed with the *Bibliography* (pp. 381–95) and the Index of geographical and individuals' names (pp. 396–407).

The presented monograph sets high standards for research into pre-industrial heritage, providing solid academic footing for the aspiration to make the Duszniki_Zdrój Paper Mill enter the UNESCO World Heritage List. It also constitutes an attractive offer to all the lovers of the region's history, interested in its cultural heritage. Ample and richly illustrated, the pre-sented work sums up the to-date research on the topic, and encourages new research projects. It seems that the future calls for exposing the Paper Mill's Bohemian references (after all, the Mill initially operated within Bohemian territories), and to search through source materials there. There is no mention of the results of preliminary research in the archives of Poland's southern neighbour; similarly, little is said of the research conducted in German archival institutions. Furthermore, it would be recommendable to search through the local press, including the Duszniki newspaper 'Echo des Heuscheuer-und Mense-Gebirges. Reinerzer Stadt-Blatt' (in the Third Reich transformed into 'N-S Echo. Nationalsozial. Kampfblatt der Grafschaft Glatz und des Großkreises Frankenstein-Münsterberg'), or German tourist publications which would allow to evaluate the facility's pre-WW II 'brand'.

To comply with reviewer's responsibility, some minor editing defaults should be pointed out; these, in fact, most likely testifying to the fast pace of the works on the publication. Among them mention should be made of the inconsistent approach to bibliographic information on the used literature, occasional spelling mistakes in German titles, or inconsistency when it comes to Polonizing geographic and individuals' names. Nonetheless, these flaws do not diminish the unquestionable impact of the Monograph. All we can do now is to wish for it to encourage further investigation into the past of the historic Mill, and to support the application for it to enter the UNESCO list.

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