

The aim of the project is to analyse and describe the manifestations of interest in prints in the Kingdom of Poland from the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century. This chronological frame coincides with the growing popularity of the new artistic medium, employed in various European centres, mostly German, Italian and Netherlandish, and precedes the origins of printmaking in Poland.

This project is motivated by the identified need for and, which has to be emphasised - a feasibility of a thorough study of the role of prints in the Kingdom of Poland before the beginning of the seventeenth century. Various manifestations of interest in prints can be traced back to the end of the fifteenth century. They were not limited to adapting graphic designs by artists working in different materials and techniques. Instead, among those manifestations, they are phenomena which could be perceived as the origins of connoisseurship and collecting, as well as instances of instrumental uses of prints for example in confessional disputes and in diplomatic actions. The consideration of the non-artistic factors, such as religious and political interests, and analysis of written sources (chiefly letters, travel journals, inventories, but also normative ecclesiastical writings) allows to expose- in some examples with remarkable accuracy- the intricate links between intentions of the patrons, artists and beholders (originally intended and subsequent), thus providing insight into the mechanism of dissemination and reception of prints and the agency in those processes of Poles, active both in Poland and across Europe. Despite the fact that during the period under investigation the Kingdom of Poland was an artistic milieu focused on the appropriation of designs invented in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, there were also instances where Polish artists and patrons played a role in developing and propagating iconographic formulae, which were then disseminated by printmakers active in established publishing houses abroad.

The initial task of the project will be to create a working tool: a bilingual online database (Polish and English), which will gather traces of reception of European prints in the Kingdom of Poland before the beginning of the seventeenth century, as well as all polonica related to the most significant European printing centres of the time. The material collected in the database will form a point of departure to all research conducted as a part of this project, but also for other related studies. The culmination of the project will be marked by a submission to an internationally renowned publisher of a manuscript in English on the reception of prints in the Kingdom of Poland prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century. More detailed accounts which will not be included in the above-mentioned synthetic monograph will in turn be published as articles, submitted to the most significant international scholarly journals, and, when justifiable, (in case of studies of purely local significance and of interest solely to Polish scholars) also to national periodicals.