

FOREWORD

We are glad that *State of Research on the Multicultural Heritage of the Old Polish Commonwealth* (*Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*) has already become the term denoting a certain publishing and conference tradition. The initiative connected with the discussion and presentation of the results of research on Commonwealth heritage dates back to the year 2009, when *The European Cultural Heritage Research Institute* organized the first scientific convention in Białystok devoted to this issue. Four years ago, we did not expect it would meet with such great interest. Over 50 participants from a few dozen Polish and more than ten foreign institutions (among others, from Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, France, Russia and Sweden) took part in the convention in 2009. The interest and positive response of the environment were so great that upon many suggestions of the academic circles, we decided to organize another meeting of the kind. The 2nd Convention, with nearly 100 speakers, took place on 14–16 November 2012.

The scientific and promotional effect of the 1st Convention was a two-volume book published in 2010 in Białystok with the title identical to that of the conference. The third volume was published in 2012 and referred to the broadly understood issues of cultural heritage of Latgale (Polish Livonia). All the published research works were also digitalized and included in the *Digital Repository of Polonica* (www.repcyfr.pl).

A meeting in Warsaw in November 2012 resulted in a three-volume book (volumes IV–VI), which concentrates on the heritage of the former Commonwealth, currently located beyond the borders of Poland. We intended to collect the results of research carried out in various scientific disciplines. Regarding chronology, it is not restricted to the period of the Nobles' Commonwealth only; it also refers both to the medieval times and to the period when Poland

did not exist on the world map. This Volume V of the publication includes articles concerning history of art, conservation of monuments and relics, cataloguing and history. It constitutes a supplement to Volume IV.

Presenting you with this volume, we would like to give sincere thanks to Mr Jacek Miler, Director of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and Ms Dorota Janiszewska-Jakubiak, Vice-Director of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, for their support in the organization of our cyclical scientific conferences and substantive help. The Ministry of Culture coordinates numerous research, recognition, conservation and cataloguing works and supports the digitalization of the Commonwealth heritage dispersed out of the Republic of Poland. That is why cooperation with this Department is important so as to collect and summarize those numerous activities promoting the Polish (multicultural) heritage of the old Commonwealth.

We would also like to thank the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for financial support without which the books would not be published in the present form. We thank the project partners: the National Library of Poland for making the Palace of the Commonwealth available free of charge for the needs of our Conference, the Cultural Heritage Foundation for assistance in the organization of the enterprise, and the Faculty of History and Sociology of University of Białystok for logistic support and involvement.

First of all, we want to thank the Authors of this publication for their effort and time invested in the preparation of the articles and personal participation in the 2nd *State of Research on the Multicultural Heritage of the Old Polish Commonwealth* Convention. We warmly invite all the interested ones to participate in the next, third convention, which is to take place in 2015 (all the details will be announced through the website www.repcyfr.pl).

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