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Paulina Kowalczyk-Matys ¹

Figural tile from the first half of the 16th century with a young man from Jagiellońska Street in Kraków

Abstract: Archaeological supervision conducted in 2013 on Jagiellońska, Bracka, and Św. Anny Streets in Kraków resulted in the discovery of over 250 pieces of stove tiles. Among them, of particular note is a fragmentarily preserved tile featuring the representation of a young man, found in the area of Jagiellońska Street. The surviving part of the representation comprises the head and a fragment of the torso. The tile was very carefully made, which proves the high skills of the craftsman. The head and the costume have a clear modelling, and the whole is covered with a multi-colour glaze. The young man's costume is typical of the era. It consists of a shirt, a caftan, a tie with a contrasting collar, and a beret with feathers. Multi-coloured tiles with figural representations were characteristic of the ceramic production of the first half of the 16th century. The find adds to the collection of figural tiles originating from the area of Kraków.

Keywords: figural tile, Kraków, Renaissance, stove

Archaeological supervision carried out from August 17 to November 4, 2013 under the direction of Justyna Jarosz-Romaniec was connected with the construction of a heating connection to buildings at 10 Bracka Street and 9 Św. Anny Street; the reconstruction of the municipal water supply system, sanitary sewage system, and power grid; as well as the replacement of street surfaces on Gołębia, Wiślna, Jagiellońska, and Bracka Streets in Kraków.

The collection of tiles obtained during the research numbers about 250 pieces, among which stands out a figural tile with the silhouette of a young man (Fig. 1). It was found in trench 24 at a depth of about 260 cm, in layer 235, along with three ceramic fragments from the 18th–19th centuries.

Trench 24 was established at the western frontage of Jagiellońska Street, north of the northern corner of the building of the JU Institute of Archaeology (Collegium Minus), next to the fence of the Ogród Profesorski (Professor's Garden). It was 2–2.2×4 m in size and up to 2.8 m deep (Jarosz-Romaniec 2015, 34). Layer 235 recorded at the bottom of the excavation was a layer of hard, compact clay. Its character is difficult to determine. It may be a secondary filling, as evidenced by younger ceramics (Jarosz-Romaniec 2015, 85).

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Tile in question was made from ferruginous clay with a large admixture of fine sand. It was pressed in a mould, and traces of this process are visible on the inner side, which has not been smoothed. In addition, one can notice a slight soothing (on the inside), which arose during the use of the stove. The preserved dimensions of the object are as follows: 10.6 cm high, 4.0 cm wide at the height of the head, 7.1 cm wide at the height of the shoulder, 1.0 cm thick. Prior to the application of the coatings, the tile was covered with a thin layer of an engobe. The surviving fragment features the bust of a young man with a plastically modelled head, with a carefully rendered face turned slightly to the right. His hair is long and curly, and falls down over his shoulders; the hair is covered with yellow glaze. The surface of the face is partially damaged. On his head the young man wears a dark blue (cobalt) beret with two white-yellow feathers fastened with a buckle in the shape of a stylized flower. He is wearing a white shirt with a yellow decorative ribbon near the neckline, and a coat with a blue collar. The state of preservation makes it impossible to determine whether or not a sajan (a type of jacket/caftan popular in the 16th century) is modelled as well.

Several analogies for the tile come from Kraków. The best known is a tile from Wawel (Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1960, 317, fig. 15) (Fig. 2. 3). Other examples come from Krupnicza Street (Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1960, 317, fig. 17), Grodzka Street (Mazur 2014, fig. 2. 2), Św. Tomasza Street (Dryja 2005, 59), and Filipa Street (unpublished, personal information from R. Czerniak). In addition, tiles with representations of young men have been discovered in the castle in Chudów, Dist. Gliwice (Tarasiński 2010, 127, fig. 7); Biecz, Dist. Gorlice (Ślawscy 1994, fig. 24); Będziemyśl, Dist. Ropczyce-Sędziszów – at least 19 fragments in 4 different variants (Czopek 1994, 95, 97, figs 3–6) (Fig. 2. 1); Muszyna, Dist. Nowy Sącz (Chudzińska 2012, 35) (Fig. 2.2); Sławków, Dist. Będzin (Pierzak 2002, 192, fig. XIIc); Chroberz, Dist. Pińczów – at least 5 specimens in three colour versions (Marciniak-Kajzer 2003, 300, fig. 2); Spytkowice, Dist. Wadowice – two specimens (Dąbrowska 1987, 127, figs 46–47); Lublin (Dąbrowska 1987, 127, fig. 90); Bolesławiec nad Prosną, Dist. Wieruszów (Marciniak-Kajzer 2003, 302; Żemigala 1987, 25, pl. II: g, fig. 96); and Malbork, Dist. Malbork (Pospieszna 1994, 284, fig. 8).

Should be also mentioned the tile fragment found in Collegium Minus (located on the corner of streets: Gołębia and Jagiellońska). The tile was discovered within the modern backfill in the basement under the west wing of the building (Niemiec 2006, fig. 7). It is not a direct analogy, because it most likely depicts an angel-shielder, but belongs to a group of figural tiles covered with multi-colored glaze. The hair was covered with yellow glaze, the eyes were highlighted with blue lines. However, compared to the tile from Jagiellońska Street applying the glaze is very careless.

As can be seen from the analogies, tiles with the young man motif were the most popular in the area of present-day south-eastern Poland.

The dimensions of typical tiles ranged between 19–21 cm in width and 21–30 cm in length. The discussed tile was probably smaller. As mentioned, the preserved height of the figure is just over 10 cm. Representations on similar tiles are slightly larger, with an average height of 15–17 cm.

What distinguishes the tile from Jagiellońska Street is the use of multi-coloured coatings. Most of the finds are not coated (including the artefacts from Będziemyśl and Wawel), or have a uniform coating – for example light brown on the tile from Spytkowice (Dąbrowska 1987, fig. 47), or dark brown on the Muszyna tile (Chudzińska 2012, 35). Coatings of two colours (orange and green) were applied on a tile from Lublin (Dąbrowska 1987, fig. 90).

The tiles from Chroberz were made in at least three colour variants. On all these tiles, the faces and hands are grey-blue. The arcades are covered with a yellow-green or green glaze.

Fig. 1. Figural tile with a young man from Jagiellońska Street in Kraków

Where the background is green, the young man's costume is yellow with brown and green additions, while against a yellow background it is brown (Marciniak-Kajzer 2003, 300). Almost identical colours can be seen on the tiles from Bolesławiec (Marciniak-Kajzer 2003, 302).

Stoves built from multi-coloured tiles were in fashion in the first half of the 16th century. Colourful glazes appeared just at the beginning of the sixteenth century, under the influence of craftsmen from Hungary (Dąbrowska 1987, 204; Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1961, 337–339). Austria is believed to have been another centre of stylistic influences, especially the Salzburg region (Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1961, 339–340). From the city of Salzburg itself, a stove made of multi-coloured tiles, dated to 1501, is known from the archbishop's palace (Jiřík, Kypta 2013, fig. 14).

Multi-coloured tiles required great skills from the craftsmen. This is also confirmed by the tile from Jagiellońska Street, as there are no traces of mixing of the coating and they are precisely applied. The small size of the artefact is also evidence of precision.

Some figures depicted on these tiles have their right hand raised. The state of preservation of the tile from Jagiellońska Street does not allow the arrangement of hands to be reconstructed, although, by analogy, it should be assumed that the right hand was raised also in this case.

Related representations, mainly in terms of the depicted clothing, are tiles with images of youngsters playing bagpipes (Marciniak-Kajzer 2003, fig. 1; Mazur 2014, figs 4, 6–8).

The image of a young man sometimes is interpreted as a representation of the prophet Daniel, which was gradually losing its sacral character over time. A fragment of a tile featuring a figure of a young man and inscription "Daniel propet" is known from Bouzov in the Czech Republic (Mazur 2014, 187). M. Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa mentions that the gesture of a raised hand may have had a symbolic meaning in the guild of potters, citing a guild sign from Ilza: a wooden disc decorated on both sides. On one side there is a bust of a woman in a veil with her hands folded in prayer (it is probably an image of Mary), and on the other side the image of a man with his right hand raised and a book in his left hand (Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1961, 318).

Fig. 2. Figural tiles: 1 – Będziemyśl (after Czopek 1994, fig. 3); 2 – Muszyna (after Chudzińska 2012, 35); 3 – Kraków, Wawel (after Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1960, fig. 16)

Fig. 3. Titian, Portrait of Jacopo Sannazaro (1514–1516).

Source: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/407190/portrait-of-jacopo-sannazaro-1458-1530>

Fig. 4. Titian, Portrait of a Man in a Red Cap (around 1510).

Source: [http://collections.frick.org/view/objects/asitem/items\\$0040:264](http://collections.frick.org/view/objects/asitem/items$0040:264)

The costume of the figures depicted on the tiles is most probably inspired by Italian fashion. A number of analogies can be found in Renaissance-era portraits. On Raffaello Santi's self-portrait with a friend (painted in 1518), one of the men is wearing a loose white shirt, with a coat with a collar made of material of a contrasting colour worn over it. A painting by Bartolomeo Veneto (a painter who lived in 1502–1555) shows a bearded man with long hair, a white shirt with a decorative neckline and a coat with a broad fur collar. Another painting attributed to the same artist portrays an elderly man with a beard, wearing a beret with a feather. His right hand is raised, and he holds an object resembling a needle in his fingers.

A series of paintings by Titian also presents men dressed in a similar style. One can mention here, for example, the portrait of Jacopo Sannazaro (1514–1516) (Fig. 3), one of the characters from "The Concert" (1510), or "Portrait of a Man in a Red Cap" (around 1510) (Fig. 4).

Let us return to the place where the tile was found. Pottery workshops are known to have functioned in the vicinity of today's Jagiellońska Street, and the street today known as Gołębia was once called Garncarska (Potters') Street. At 4 Gołębia Street, a pottery kiln was found, dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Informator Archeologiczny 1982, 237).

The district itself was first settled by a Jewish population, and became university quarters during the 15th century (Niemiec 2007, 76–78).

Multi-coloured tiles were undoubtedly luxury items. A damaged renaissance stove was discovered at 16 Gołębia Street. The tiles found there have analogies in the tile collection from

Wawel, although there is no information about figural ones (Informator Archeologiczny 1981, 201). During the sixteenth century, two palaces were erected in the area. In 1564, the mayor Erazm Czechtotka instructed Gabriel Słoński to rebuild the houses at the corner of Wiślna and Św. Anny Streets, and to create a stately residence. Earlier, in 1534, Justus Ludwig Decius bought two houses, which were rebuilt to create the "Pod Baranami" Palace (Bieniarzówna, Małecki 1984, 11).

Whether the tile in question belonged to the equipment of any of these palaces remains unclear, however, and the mentioned pottery workshop operated in the earlier century.

The artefact from Jagiellońska Street adds to the collection of tiles from the first half of the 16th century retrieved in Krakow and is a testimony to the high skills of craftsmen of the era.

Kafel figuralny z 1. połowy XVI w. z przedstawieniem młodzieńca z ulicy Jagiellońskiej w Krakowie

W trakcie nadzoru archeologicznego prowadzonego przy ulicach: Jagiellońskiej, Brackiej i św. Anny pozyskano ponad 250 fragmentów kafli. Spośród całego zbioru wart uwagi jest zachowany fragmentarycznie kafel z wizerunkiem młodzieńca. Znalaziono go w rejonie ul. Jagiellońskiej. Z postaci zachowała się głowa z fragmentem torsu. Kafel wykonany jest bardzo starannie, co świadczy o wysokich umiejętnościach twórcy. Głowa postaci i jej strój mają wyraźny modelunek. Całość pokryto wielobarwną polewą. Strój młodzieńca jest typowy dla epoki. Składa się z koszuli, kaftana, szuby z kontrastowym kołnierzem i beretu z piórami. Wizerunek młodzieńca niekiedy interpretuje się jako przedstawienie proroka Daniela, które stopniowo zatracало swój sakralny charakter. Wielobarwne kafle z figuralnymi przedstawieniami były charakterystyczne dla wytwórczości ceramicznej pierwszej połowy XVI w.

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