

# The kingdom of flora

Two-hundredth anniversary  
of the University's Botanical Garden



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Bitter Orange (*Citrus aurantium*).  
Print from the collection of Archbishop Zaleski (Botanical Garden UW)

## University of Warsaw and it's Botanical Garden

In 1811, thanks to Stanisław Kostka Potocki, Chairman of the Council of State, it was decided that the University of Warsaw – then in process of creation – it was to be located in the grounds of the former royal residence known as the Villa Regia or Kazimierzowski Palace, thus named after King Jan Kazimierz (1648–68). Two hundred years ago, a Botanical Garden was created on the escarpment at the rear of the Palace; it was to be a type of herb garden and at the same time serve as a laboratory for the Medical School that had been established two years earlier. Although the Botanical Garden was removed to Aleje Ujazdowskie in 1818, where it is still located today, the garden at the rear of the Kazimierzowski Palace, which was transformed first into a vegetable garden and then a small park, was in use until the 1970s. This magical corner of Warsaw played an important role both in terms of the functioning of the Medical School, which soon became one of the faculties at the University of Warsaw, and in the lives of many of those who lived on the University's grounds, including that of Fryderyk Chopin who mentions it in his letters which were written when he was a young man.

In 2008 we celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Law School, the first faculty of the University. In 1809 when the Medical School was set up, Potocki planned to purchase a large number of the art works from the legacy of the King Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764–95) for the School of Fine Arts, which became an integral part of the University's Faculty Department of Sciences and Fine Arts in 1817. The Botanical Garden which was created with the great enthusiasm, represents both academic achievements and Floralia to some extent. The ancient Roman feast of Floralia was to some degree similar to our University celebrations. We celebrate this holiday on 14 May, and therefore on the same day as another of the University's anniversaries, because the University of Warsaw was officially inaugurated on 14 May 1818.

## Floralia in Warsaw

In Rome, the ancient festival of Floralia, their 'rite of spring', was celebrated between 29 April and 2 May. In his *Fasti* Ovid gives us a lofty and beautiful poetic rendition of the festival. Lorenzo il Magnifico and Sandro Botticelli were among those enraptured by the cadence of his stanzas. It was shortly after 1480 that Botticelli painted his masterpiece, the *Primavera*, which is probably the most famous painting in the world alongside Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Recently botanists who have undertaken studies of the plants that appear in the *Primavera*, have left us in no doubt whatsoever that the hundred of flowers that Botticelli depicted in his painting are, in fact, all flowers that bloom in May, some of which are even



Flora Farnese,  
Archaeological Museum,  
Naples. Photo: Museum UW



endowed with medicinal properties. Is it possible that similar blooms, or at least some of them, delighted the students and professors in the Botanical Garden at the rear of the Kazi-

mierzowski Palace? Did sweet Spring with all her charms also stroll through the Botanical Garden's alleyways just like Botticelli's personification the beautiful maiden dressed in flowers which we all know from its thousands of reproductions?

Even if we are unable to give a clear answer to this question, we can at least confirm that the opening of the Botanical Garden was an important event and that it had a significant influence, not only on the development of medicine in Warsaw but also on the beautiful music which Chopin composed in his youth when in the first flush of love. In this very garden, which was a herb garden as well as a vegetable garden (in his letters Fryderyk writes about lettuces and carrots) one should perhaps try to find a connection with a *polonez* or the *nocturne in c-minor*.

It could perhaps be said that we came out of the forest, so that we could create gardens as a substitute. We replaced nature's wildness, the chaos and impenetrable thickets with flower beds, clumps of bushes and trees, which are connected at times by straight paths and at times by paths that meander like a stream. Beautiful gardens were created by the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans; in the Middle Ages they were cultivated by monks, but it was during the Renaissance that people began to study plants and flowers more closely. Our first Botanical Garden at the University is reminiscent of Queen Bona's gardens, and the times when the historical part of the University of Warsaw complex was known as the Villa Regia. It was Carl Linneus who first carried out an in-depth study of plants, thus bringing real academic clout to this branch of learning, and scholars at our University also helped in this undertaking. In celebrating Floralia in Warsaw we are also celebrating our two-hundredth anniversary and remembering the very secret world of both Man and Nature – the miracle of spring and the cultivation of learning.

Jerzy Miziołek  
Director of the Museum of the University of Warsaw

## The Botanical Garden of the University of Warsaw at the rear of the Kazimierzowski Palace

The first Botanical Garden in Europe was created in the sixteenth century (in 1545) as part of the University of Padua. Gardens were subsequently laid out in Leiden (1587), Oxford (1621), Groningen (1642) and Paris (1642). The majority of the gardens in Europe were created alongside Universities, and less frequently for Royal Residences or for the needs of wealthy towns and cities.



Anton Graff, Portrait of Stanisław Kostka Potocki, 1785,  
Palace Museum in Wilanów.

The first mention of plants that were imported and acclimated in the gardens of Warsaw dates back to the sixteenth century. The summer residence of the Mazovian Dukes was located on Krakowskie Przedmieście, in the grounds of today's University, and consisted of a manor house with a game park and a garden. After Mazovia was annexed to the Crown, the property became a particular favourite of Queen Bona. When she resided in Warsaw during the summer, she ordered Italian vegetables, which were until then unknown, such as leeks, celery and cauliflowers to be planted in the gardens on the escarpment at the foot of the manor house.

After Zygmunt III Vasa moved the capital from Cracow to Warsaw in 1596, there were three royal gardens in the city. One of these was situated near the Royal Castle, the second on Krakowskie Przedmieście adjoining Queen Bona's former summer residence and the third was located near the Ujazdów Castle. Marcin Bernhard's catalogue of plants (1652) printed in Gdańsk and thus known as the *Katalog Gdański* (Gdańsk Catalogue) contains detailed information about all three gardens. In 1920 it underwent very careful editing by Józef Rostafiński using modern nomenclature, and is available to this very day. From this catalogue it transpires that two of the three gardens (the ones located on Krakowskie Przedmieście and near the Ujazdów Castle) were distinguished by their unusually rich

collections of plants and could be called botanical gardens in every sense of the word. This fact is confirmed by information dating from 1663 in a work entitled *Viridaria varia regia et academica* by Simon Paulli, doctor to the King of Denmark. In it he included a catalogue of the plants in the gardens in Warsaw and ranked it third after the gardens in Copenhagen and Paris.

King Władysław IV built a summer residence known as the Villa Regia to replace the former manor house at Krakowskie Przedmieście. The new residence required an appropriate setting, so extensive ornamental and kitchen gardens were laid out on the escarpment at the rear. Although the gardens in Warsaw abounded with plants deriving from various corners of the world, they could not be maintained over a long period of time due to the lack, at that time, of scholarly circles in Warsaw that would have taken more professional care of the plants.

More than one hundred and fifty years were to pass before botanical gardens of a more academic nature were created in Poland. The first such garden was laid out in Warsaw in the nineteenth century on the initiative of what was then known as the School of Medicine (formally the Faculty of Learning and Medicine in Warsaw), which was founded in 1809 and was to be the foundation of the Royal University of Warsaw. From the beginning of the School of Medicine's existence, a University botanical garden was considered fundamental for the purposes of science. It is worth mentioning some of the efforts made by the authorities that lead to the eventual creation of the garden.

In January 1810, at the request of Professor Jacek Dziarkowski, the Dean of the School of Medicine, Stanisław Kostka Potocki, who was Chairman of the Chamber of Education (Izba Edukacji Publicznej or Izba Edukacyjna), i.e. the equivalent of the Ministry of Education, began trying to find a suitable location for the botanical garden. The negotiations over the site were very long and protracted. Initially the grounds of the present Saxon Gardens were selected. Specialists, however, deemed it an inappropriate place for cultivating plants due to the bad soil conditions and lack of water. On 28 December 1810 Dziarkowski made an appeal in which he stated:

*it is high time it was decided where the Botanical Garden is to be created; we shall then be able to put aside a 240 thalers each year for accommodation for the professor of natural history and the gardener Lindner, whose employment is anticipated once we succeed in bringing to fruition the creation of the botanical garden.*

On 8 April 1811 the Chamber of Education finally decided that the garden would be created behind the Cadets' barrack, in the grounds of the former royal gardens adjoining the Kazimierzowski Palace on Krakowskie Przedmieście. The Botanical Garden was located between Browarna, Gęsta and Oboźna streets. It was surrounded by a brick wall overgrown with Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus*).



The first director of the garden was Professor Jakub Fryderyk Hoffman, a natural history specialist. He had a budget of 5,000 zlotys for the maintenance of the garden. The head gardener was Karol Lindner, a highly-regarded professional who had earlier worked at the Berlin Academy, in the Imperial gardens at Schönbrunn near Vienna; he also had a recommendation from the wife of Aleksander Potocki, where he was a gardener. Laying out the garden began: seeds were imported from abroad, paths marked out, and lawns were planted. Stanisław Staszic financed the building of the greenhouses which were known as Treibhäuser. Owing to its financial difficulties, the Chamber of Education approached rich landowners asking them to donate plants for the garden. An excerpt of a letter from Stanisław Potocki to Prince Józef Poniatowski reads:

*The management of education, being aware of the dedication to civil causes of His Highness Prince Poniatowski, Minister of War, and his more special attention to the enlargement of botanical knowledge in Poland, believes that it is not idly raising its hopes by asking Him whether he would deign to donate rarer specimens of plants, providing he has two, to the Botanical garden that has recently been laid out in Warsaw, to the address of the Office of the Management of Education (20 March 1811, S. Potocki).*

Similar appeals were sent to Princess Izabela Czartoryska, the Duchess of Lorraine, and General Antoni Paweł Sułkowski, among others. In reply to these requests, the Garden received several dozen species of plants, including *Coffea Arabica*, pomegranates (*Punicata granatum*, known in early English as Apple of Grenada), myrtle (*myrtus communis*), Camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Southern magnolia (*magnolia grandiflora*), date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), yellow azalea (*Rhododendron luteum*), Maidenhair tree (*ginkgo biloba*), and *Viburnum tinus*.

On 31 January 1814, Professor Hoffman presented his plan for the garden appropriately divided into sections and he suggested that the plants should be arranged in accordance with Linneus's system. Furthermore, he suggested preparing a space with appropriate conditions for shade-loving and aquatic plants. He proposed amassing a collection of native species and therefore approached the authorities for permission to "dig up woodland trees and shrubs in the Niepořeński forest to plant in the Botanical Garden. The resolution was favourable." From his design, it transpired that the Garden would contain approximately 3,000 plants. From the data that has been preserved it cannot, however, be ascertained whether the author had in mind the number of species or the number of specimens. Hoffman also defined the garden's objectives and functions. Primarily it was intended for learning about botany, as well as introducing and popularizing useful plants; it was also to serve as a school of gardening, where future gardeners would learn their craft.



Syrian Hibiscus  
(*Hibiscus syriacus*)  
Blue variety.  
Print from the collection  
of Archbishop Zaleski  
(Botanical Garden, UW)





Laurestine (*Viburnum tinus*)

Print from the collection of Archbishop Zaleski (Botanical Garden UW).

The assumptions were very noble but putting them into effect gave rise to a multitude of financial problems and interpersonal conflicts. As a result, on 27 May 1814, the head gardener, Karol Lindner, was dismissed as he was unable to work alongside the Director. Ewald Herman Birnbaum, from Courland, was appointed in his place but it turned out he was a lazy and incompetent worker. Professor Hoffman was totally discouraged from working as the Director and handed in his resignation on 5 March 1816.

At that point, Michał Szubert returned to Poland from his botanical studies in Paris which had been financed by the Chamber of Education. Initially he was employed as a teacher of natural history at the Warsaw Lyceum, the top school for boys in the Congress Kingdom. After an inspection of the Botanical Garden by the Government Commission for Religion and Pub-

lic Education (now in the Kingdom of Poland) it was decided on 22 March 1816 to assign to Szubert the function of Director of the Garden, due to his appropriate education. Szubert set to work immediately, obtaining funds for building a new fence, earth works, the purchase of new plants for the collections and accommodation for himself close to the garden.

The list of plants drawn up by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Józef Kossakowski and Michał Szubert showed that the collections contained approximately 300 species, including what at that time were considered rare specimens: *Datura*, *Nerium oleander*, the Sacred Fig (or Bodhi tree - *Ficus religiosa*), Sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum*), and Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*).

Due to its location, further development of the garden was not feasible, so Szubert began trying to acquire new grounds for the creation of a large, modern botanical garden. Many potential locations were taken into consideration including the Frascati Gardens. After conducting talks with the Vice Roy of the Congress Kingdom, the Government Commission obtained a promise from him that a parcel of land sectioned off from the Royal Łazienki would be given to them for the needs of the garden. Thus in 1818 began the history of the creation of the Botanical Garden on Aleje Ujazdowskie, which is still there today.

After the new Botanical Garden had been laid out in 1818, the garden at the University served for some time for experimental purposes for what was then the medical school. It also had a historical connection with Frederick Chopin who spent time there with his friends and where, as he later wrote, "carrots, cabbages and other vegetables" grew. After the new Botanical Garden had been established on Aleje Ujazdowskie, in May 1826 Frederick Chopin wrote about his beloved garden adjoining the Kazimierzowski Palace:

*The Committee had ordered that my botanic garden at the rear of the Palace, although old, be beautifully put in order.*

and also:

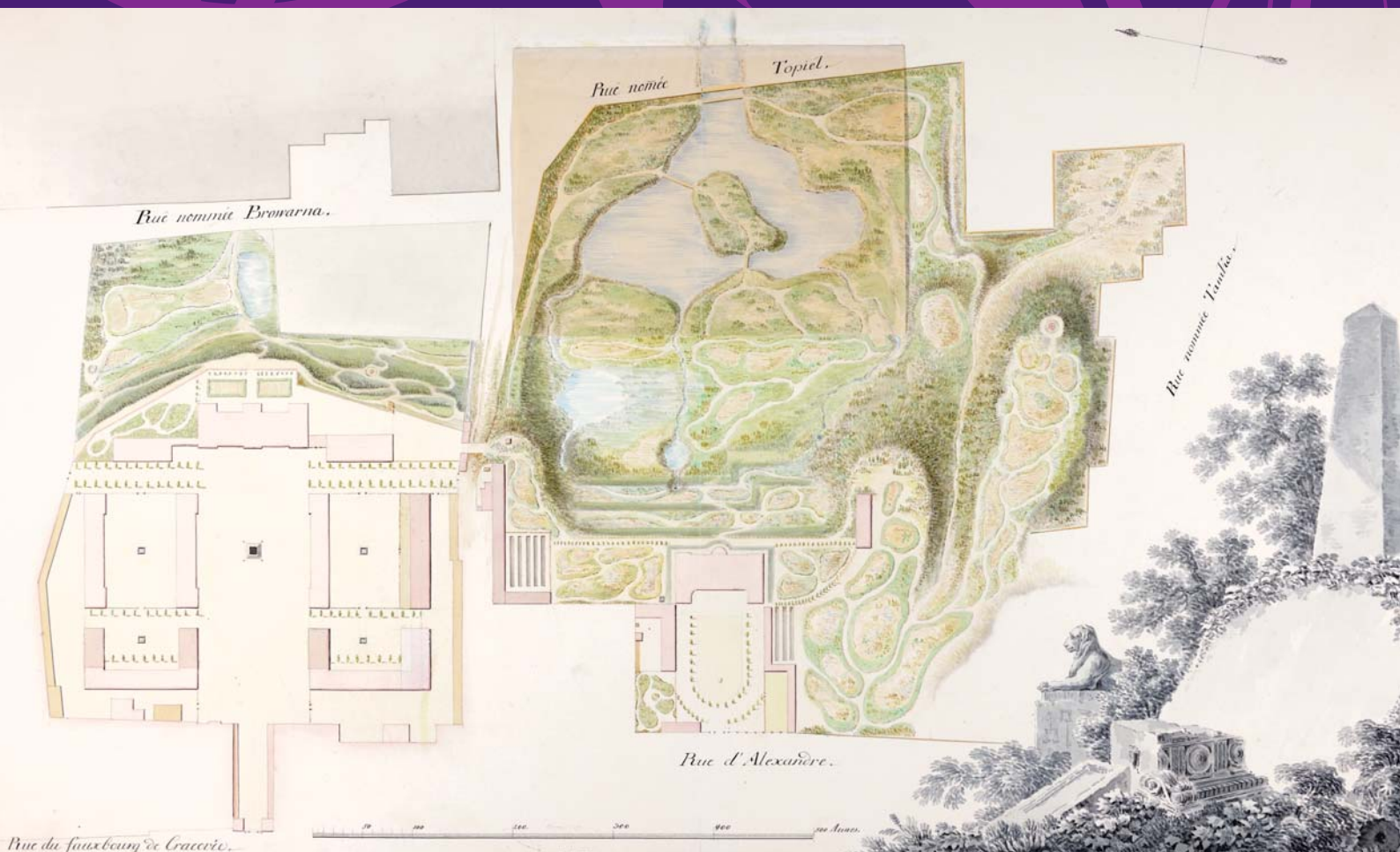
*You would be really surprised if you knew all the different varieties that grew in our botanical garden. They have made such flower beds, paths, fields, shrubs etc. that it is pleasant to enter there, especially since we have a key.*

Following the November Uprising, the garden belonged to the curator of the Warsaw Academic District and it was called a vegetable garden and it remained in this form until World War I.

The garden on Krakowskie Przemieszczenie opened a new chapter of its history in 1917 when a Pharmacognostic Garden was created on its former grounds. The new garden was filled with a collection of medicinal plants, serving the teaching purposes at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Warsaw, and later also the Faculty of Pharmacy. The garden was considered

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The design for the layout of the future university and the extension of the botanical garden of the Medical School onto the neighbouring Dynasy area, commissioned to Zygmunt Vogel by Stanisław Kostka Potocki in 1815; Print Room, University of Warsaw Library



to be one of the most beautifully located gardens of medicinal plants in Europe. Franciszek Przedpełski wrote:

*In the interwar years, the garden with its beautiful foliage and the unforgettable hues of the flowers not only enticed the students of the Humanistic, Law and Theology faculties to take short breaks in it (...), it also provided an unusually colourful background and combined with the scents of a host of different herbs, it strengthened the fortitude of the people who, even if only for a brief moment, visited the garden.*

The garden was filled with colourful medicinal plants: the Common foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), wild thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*), Mexican or Jesuit's tea (*Dysphania ambrosioides*) and Common vervain (*Verbena*) as well as many, many other herbs. The garden was totally devastated during World War II; also because of the additional building of German bunkers with machine guns in its grounds; during the Warsaw Uprising these were used for shelling the Powiśle District.

Thanks to the persistence and enormous sacrifice of the staff of the University of Warsaw at the beginning of the 1945/6 academic year, all the Universities' faculties were reopened, and the Pharmacognostic Garden returned to life together with them. In 1945 Professor Jakub Doryng took over management of the garden. Reconstruction of the plant collections began, the greenhouses and botanical workshop were rebuilt. Administratively, the garden was subordinated to the University's Faculty of Pharmacognosics, and later, until 1950, to the Medical Academy. It owned a collection of medicinal plants comprising approximately 650 species and varieties, a unit for scientific experiments which provided materials for laboratory work, a unit responsible for cultivation and a seed house. From 1957, the garden published the Index seminum and exchanged seeds with numerous botanical gardens around the world. Many known species of medicinal plants were cultivated such as: Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), leopard's bane or mountain arnica (*Arnica montana*), the castor oil plant (*Ricinus communis*), great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*), death cherries or deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), commonly known in English as belladonna, the common rue or herb-of-grace (*Ruta graveolens*) and the common vervain or common verbena (*Verbena officinalis*).

Owing to the reorganization of the Faculty of Pharmacy in 1970, the garden became an independent unit of the Faculty of Pharmacy headed by Doctor Józef Kowalski.

In 1973, the Warsaw City Authorities decided to liquidate the garden and it was transformed into an urban park.

**Hanna Werblan-Jakubiec**  
**Head of the Botanical Garden**  
**University of Warsaw**



Chinese Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*).

Print from the collection of Archbishop Zaleski (Botanical Garden UW).

## Design for the University Gardens by Zygmunt Vogel dating to 1815

In the collections of the Print Room of the University of Warsaw Library (under the reference no. T.175 no. 303) there is a manuscript of a plan dating from 1815 which has a direct connection with the history of the University. The scope of the plan covers the grounds that were officially opened a year later in 1816, namely, the University and the neighbouring area known as Dynasy, right up to Tamka street. The author of the plan was Zygmunt Vogel, who was commissioned by Stanisław Kostka Potocki. At the time the plan was drawn up,



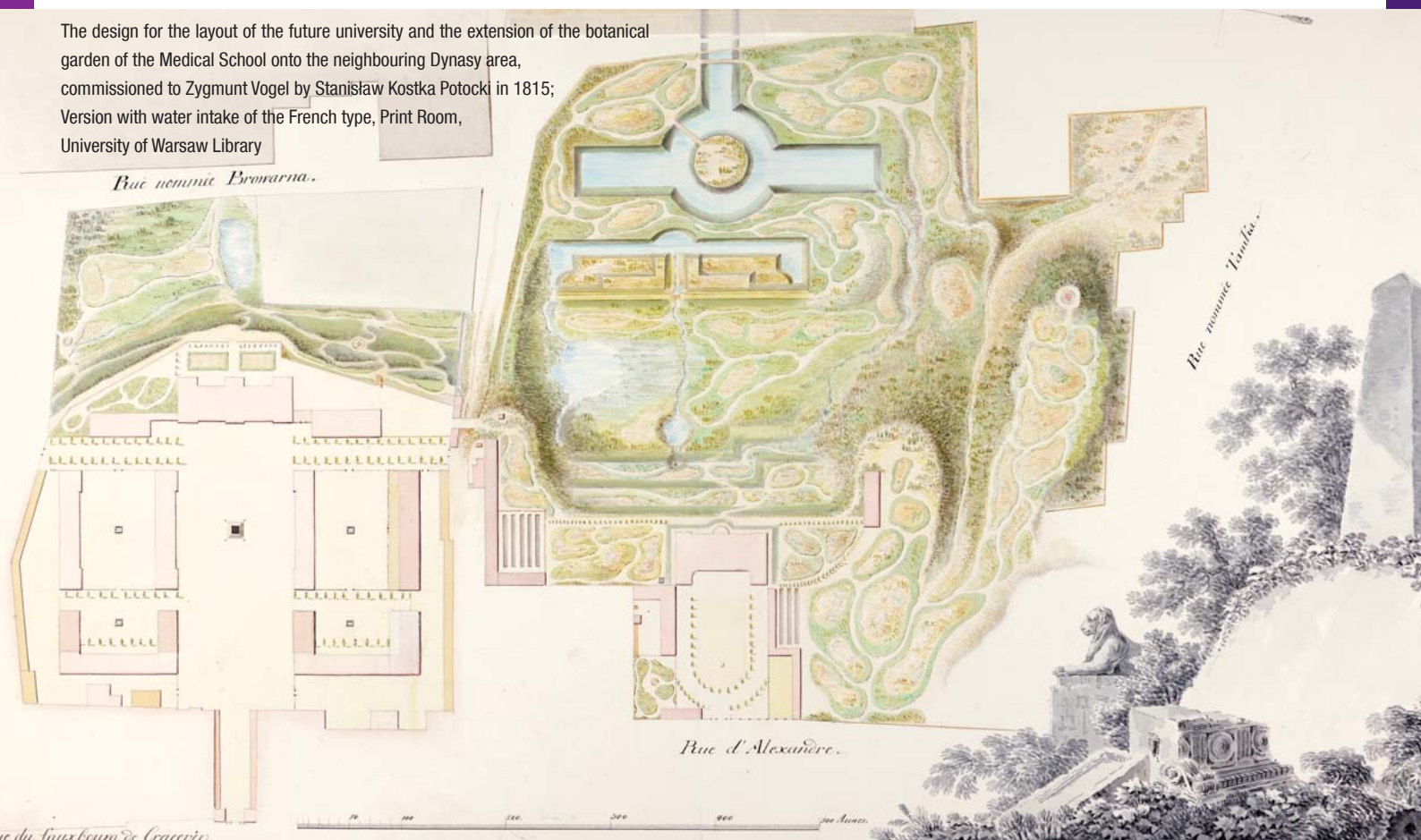
negotiations were under way with the Academic Institutions that had taken over the grounds of the Kazimierzowski Palace concerning their acquiring the Dynasy area in order to enlarge the Botanical Garden that had been created in 1811 for the purposes of the Medical School.

Zygmunt Vogel (1764–1826), was best known as a draughtsman who worked for King Stanisław August Poniatowski, and he was also the first Polish landscape painter, producing more than one thousand *vedute*, one hundred of which were of Warsaw and its environs. He also executed architectural and garden designs, and conducted surveys and made maps. At the age of

gardens as well as designs for the interiors of buildings and churches. From 1817 he taught of Perspective in the Department of Fine Arts at the Royal University of Warsaw. He designed the regulation of many gardens and he gave his opinion on works concerning the kingdom of Flora to the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning.

Zygmunt Vogel designed a complex of 6 pavilions in 4 blocks enclosed with rows of trees to be built on the grounds of the future University. The layout was undoubtedly inspired by an earlier design by the architect Hilary Szpilowski, who was responsible for the alterations to the Kazimierzowski Palace. The

The design for the layout of the future university and the extension of the botanical garden of the Medical School onto the neighbouring Dynasy area, commissioned to Zygmunt Vogel by Stanisław Kostka Potocki in 1815; Version with water intake of the French type, Print Room, University of Warsaw Library



sixteen, under the patronage of Potocki, he was accepted into the royal painting studio at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, where he worked under the watchful eye of Canaletto, copying his townscapes. In 1804 he became a teacher (and from 1812 Professor) of civil architecture and drawing at the School of Applied Artillery and Engineering. Up until 1821 he also taught drawing and painting at the Warsaw Lyceum, which from 1817 was located in the Kazimierzowski Palace. From 1808 he operated his own studio, working on the 'other side' of Krakowskie Przedmieście – in the Czapski Palace.

From 1810, Zygmunt Vogel was commissioned by the Government to produce drawings for military architecture and

original plan was for a 16 metre high statue of Copernicus in the form of an obelisk made of granite to stand in the centre, which is now occupied by the Old Library building. The statue was also designed by Hilary Szpilowski.

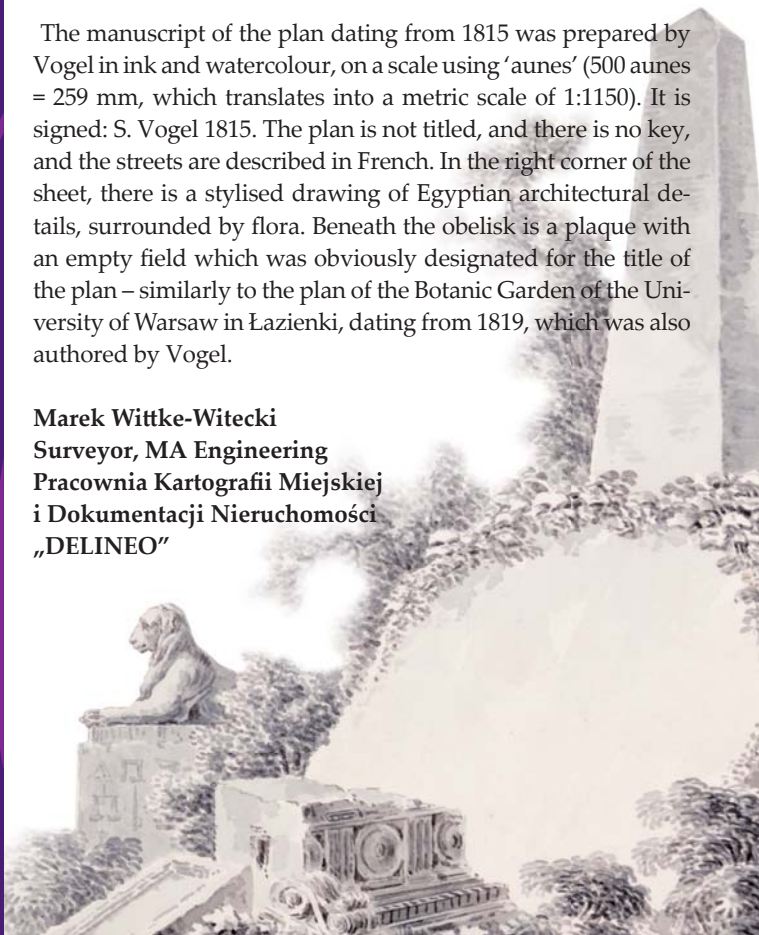
On the land of the neighbouring Dynasy area, Vogel designed two versions of a new, much larger Botanical Garden in place of the former gardens of Karolina Gozdzka and her husband Charles Henry de Nassau-Siegen that dated from the late eighteenth century. The first version is an English-type garden with a natural pool, reaching as far as ul. Topiel and then going further to the River Vistula, with an island linked by bridges and a network of paths. At that time there were three active

water sources at the base of the escarpment in the Dynasy area. The second shows the garden according to the French model, based on a system of canals in the shape of the letter "T". This was in reference to the original garden of Karolina Gozdzka (previously the wife of Janusz Władysław Sangusko), which is visible on Tirregaille's plan of Warsaw dating from 1762. The former Gozdzki de Nassau Palace on the escarpment, which then stood in ruins, was to have been rebuilt and surrounded by gardens with a representative court and entrance from the Aleksandria street (now Kopernika Street) side. According to the records dating from 1816, created by Michał Szubert, the future author of the Botanic Garden in Łazienki, the garden at the rear of the Kazimierzowski Palace already contained 243 species of plants in the hothouse and orangery, 200 permanent plants and approximately 40 species of trees and shrubs.

The matter relating to the acquisition of Dynasy, which was separated from the University grounds only by Oboźna Street, reappeared in 1816 after the flooding which destroyed the canals and the garden. The Commission of National Education was of the opinion that the botanic garden located behind the Kazimierzowski Palace had no future, due to the rather poor soil and the area of the grounds, which was too small. Unfortunately because of Szubert's negative assessment of Dynasy in 1817, the grounds of the University of Warsaw were not extended in a natural and appropriate manner along the escarpment.

The manuscript of the plan dating from 1815 was prepared by Vogel in ink and watercolour, on a scale using 'aunes' (500 aunes = 259 mm, which translates into a metric scale of 1:1150). It is signed: S. Vogel 1815. The plan is not titled, and there is no key, and the streets are described in French. In the right corner of the sheet, there is a stylised drawing of Egyptian architectural details, surrounded by flora. Beneath the obelisk is a plaque with an empty field which was obviously designated for the title of the plan – similarly to the plan of the Botanic Garden of the University of Warsaw in Łazienki, dating from 1819, which was also authored by Vogel.

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## Magnolias, heliotropes and the Japanese Beauty Berry. A few thoughts about the University's flora in spring 2011

From the very first information that can be gleaned about the garden of the Kazimierzowski Palace from Adam Jarzębski's poem "Gościniec" and the plans for planting greenery that were drawn up over several hundred years but never came to fruition, the history of the garden also tells the history of this particular place, the people who lived there and its buildings. Nature persisted, staying alive for lengths of time, but then it died away. However it always accompanied people and events that were often important to our history.



Various species and varieties of geraniums (*Pelargonium sp.*).  
 Print from the collection of Archbishop Zaleski (Botanical Garden UW).

When the first Botanical Garden was laid out on the escarpment, it consisted of a park with trees and shrubs that grew in informal groups. An oval lawn, also planted with trees and shrubs, dominated the front of the Kazimierzowski Palace, and it should be supposed that there were also flowerbeds. The whole area was traversed by a network of paths facilitating access to the buildings. The Library significantly reduced the amount of green areas and war, and subsequent human intervention, further contributed to its significant improve-



ishment. Now there is no continuity whatsoever between the green areas along the escarpment and those at its base.

Two separate parts now remain of the planned verdure, which initially stretched from Krakowskie Przedmieście to Browarna street. After the war attempts were made to try and restore the landscaping to its original splendour. This was achieved at the foot of the escarpment, where the Pharmacognostic Garden, belonging to the Medical School, was developing and serving the purposes of future medical doctors.

The layout of the green areas was drawn up in 1948 at the behest of the University by Gerard Ciołek and Roman Kobendza who at that time were the most outstanding creators of gardens in Poland. The project's fundamental outline made reference to the original concept of J.P. Jauch and Z.S. Deybel dating from the eighteenth century which anticipated the creation of three parallel terraces along the escarpment. In the upper garden, however, elements present in the plan were laid out symmetrically along the main axis. The rather small area of the land made



Various types of oleanders (*Nerium oleander*).

Print from the collection of Archbishop Zaleski (Botanical Garden UW).

it impossible to create a real garden. The project did not come to fruition in its entirety. Poplar trees were planted, just like in the rest of Warsaw. The University planted Italian and Chinese poplars. Those that grew in front of the Kazimierzowski Palace and the Auditorium Maximum were clipped and shaped to form spheres. Since these trees did not require much care and were fast growing, they were ideal for post-war planting and were treated as such in Warsaw. Lime, maples and chestnut trees were additionally planted at the rear of the Kazimierzowski Palace and in front of the former Museum building. In the 1960 and 1970s there were also many maple ash growing there, and they also lined the entrance to the University grounds.



Saucer magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangeana speciosa*),

Photo: Barbara Siedlicka

The upper terrace comprises trees and shrubs that surround the University buildings, and the lower terrace, the so-called urban greenery belt, with part of the walkway at the foot of the escarpment stretching from the Royal Castle to the Ujazdów Castle (the City Council undertook this project in the 1970s thus permanently putting paid to the assumptions underlying the University's landscaping plans). Both these places bear traces of their former glory thanks to the presence of rare trees and shrubs, paths and walls. Not so very long ago the two terraces were connected and consisted of places where one could walk, cultivate plants and also acquire plant matter (the Pharmacognostic Garden). Currently, despite the investments made by the municipal services, the land along the foot of the escarpment is neglected. It was a great loss for the university when the land at the foot of the escarpment fell into the hands of the City Council, as an important complex of university buildings is located on the land along Browarna and Dobra streets. A huge threat to the stability of the escarpment was the building of a transformation station in the 1980s behind the Faculty of Polish Studies. The station is an unsightly addition to the University's landscape.

Pre-war photographs reveal a place that was well taken care of, with enclosed lawns. At that time elms, chestnuts and maples dominated, and spruce trees were planted; in May the air was redolent with the scent of lilacs.

After the war, lime trees, maples and chestnuts were planted at the rear of the Kazimierzowski Palace and in front of the former Museum building. A few Japanese magnolia (*Magnolia Kobus*) were also planted and became the pride of the University. The planting that took place from 1970 to 2000 supplemented the





*Datura (Brugmansia aurea - Datura aurea)*  
Photo: Barbara Siedlicka

old and sick trees that had been removed, and the opportunity was also taken to enrich the park with dendrological specimens.

Currently there are more than 30 species of trees and more than 60 species of shrubs growing in the upper garden. These include two monuments of nature (an Amur corktree and a chestnut tree), several varieties of magnolia, a redwood (*Metasequoia*), a ginkgo tree, a paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*), a bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), an American tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). The most interesting shrubs include the Decaisnea p. Fargesa (*Decaisnea fargesii*), Japanese Beauty Berry (*Callicarpa japonica*) and the rhododendrons and azaleas (including the beautifully scented yellow azalea - *Rhododendron luteum*). There are also European bladdernut (*Staphylea pinnata* L.), hydrangeas and a Judas tree (*Cercis*). Towards the end of the 1990s the historical part of the University was enriched with a collection of Japanese cherries donated by Mr. Takashima Koichi, whose foundation supported the University's Japanese Department. These are visible behind the Polish Studies' building. The green areas also comprise lawns, ground cover plants and climbers. Annual bedding plants, which are changed two or three times during the growing season, also highlight the buildings' architectural beauty (particularly after the recent renovation of the façades and elevations). For years the University has been using its own variety of heliotropes and geraniums and the

daturas, of which there are three different shades, bloom in the summertime and entice flower lovers to the gardens. Tourists who frequently visit the garden laid out on the roof of the new University Library located in the Powiśle district, often finish their walk in a different atmosphere, with different kinds of plants, and in the cool air and quiet surroundings of the historical university buildings.

This place has a tradition going back to times of the royal residence known as the Villa Regia with its splendid gardens stretching from Krakowskie Przedmieście to the River Vistula, which obliges us to remember and to ensure that the trees, shrubs and flowers remain an important part of it.

On the occasion of the two-hundredth anniversary of the University's Botanical Garden we should wish that the complex of beautiful historical buildings along Krakowskie Przedmieście does not become dominated by a growing number of parked cars and is not changed into a huge car park. We should also hope that the goddess Flora will continue to delight us with the foliage of the trees and the beauty of the flowers as has been the case throughout the past two hundred years.

**Barbara Siedlicka**  
Caretaker of the University Gardens



# The kingdom of flora

Two-hundredth anniversary  
of the University's Botanical Garden



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