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## **The Retable of St. Catherine from Góra. A Late Medieval Work of Art and Its Later Life - Summary**

The subject of this dissertation is the polyptych of St. Catherine (1512) which originally served the function of retable at the main altar of the church of St. Catherine in Góra (formerly Guhrau) and which is currently located in the cathedral in Poznań. The aim of the monograph is to present a complete biography of this Gothic pentaptych since its creation up to 20th and 21st century.

The retable of St. Catherine lends itself exceptionally well to an analysis using the method of object biography, due to the multitude of changes in its form and function. Shortly after the altarpiece's creation, the circumstances of which described in the first chapter, the majority of the residents of Góra decided to join the Reformation movement, which led to changes in the usage of the local parish church. The shifts in the functions and furnishings of the town's main place of worship are discussed in the second chapter. This chapter also includes a description of the baroque adaptation of the retable's elements after their translocation to the Corpus Christi Church in Góra following the fire of 1759. The third chapter is dedicated to the period between 1926 and 1943 when the altarpiece first became an object of interest of the regional museums and heritage authorities in Breslau (Wrocław), which led not only to its inclusion in two temporary exhibitions but also to its reconstruction in Gothic forms. The presentation of this phase of the retable's history is completed with a discussion of such issues as the creation and professionalization of conservation authorities, the consequences of the dominance of the national paradigm in academic art history, as well as the role of the art of the Silesian-Greater Polish borderland in German and Polish art history discourse.

The next stage in the history of the altarpiece of St. Catherine began with its translocation to Poznań in 1952 and its placement at the main altar of the cathedral basilica of St. Peter and Paul in 1955. This period is discussed in the second part of the dissertation, whose first chapter is dedicated to the post-war rebuilding and regothicization of the cathedral in Poznań. The discussion of the motives behind the choice of this stylistic phase allows not only to explain the changes in the furnishings of the cathedral's interior, but also to present the ideological perception of the Gothic style in post-war Poland. The second chapter of this part of the dissertation is dedicated to the circumstances of the altarpiece's translocation to Poland, its role in the cathedral's interior, as well as its perception by the residents of Poznań and the German expellees from Góra.

The variety of changes undergone by the altarpiece necessitated the supplementary use of other methods, besides object biography. Thus, the mediality perspective alongside with contextual

analysis were employed in the discussion of the medieval phase of the retable's history. The early modern period was presented through the lens of confessionalization studies, as well as collective memory. The latter perspective was also employed in the discussion of altarpiece's fate in the 20th century, where it was supplemented by the methods of the metahistory of art.

The presentation of a complete biography of the retable of St. Catherine allowed to explain how a piece whose artistic value had been previously depreciated by researchers continued to fulfil the needs and expectations of numerous generations of users and recipients. It also provided the opportunity to show how factors influencing the fates of works of art changed over the ages. Over the first three centuries since the retable's creation, its situation was mostly impacted by confessional changes in Góra and the region. Later on, the most significant influences were tied to the activity of the nascent state institutions responsible for heritage protection. This reflected the growing activity of the nation state in the cultural sphere and the creation of national public culture. The changing fates of the retable were also affected by the changing borders of Central Europe that resulted from rivalry between competing nationalisms in the region. When compared with other studies using the method of object biography, the research results presented within this dissertation also allow to identify the opportunities and risks arising from the employment of this methodological perspective.