During the years from the founding of the Vienna Secession (1897) to the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1918), the Viennese public had the opportunity to see an almost complete survey of the art of a movement known as "Young Poland." For geographical and political reasons, it was mainly the artists of the Kraków association "Sztuka" (Art) who showed their best works in Viennese exhibitions. In the past, no more than a partial evaluation of Polish exhibition activity in Vienna was made, and there has been an aspiration to carry out a comprehensive study only recently.¹ This article will attempt to characterize the art of "Young Poland" as it appeared within the context of the Viennese artistic milieu, which differed from that of Poland to a large extent.

The large number of exhibiting artists and exhibitions demands a concentration on the most important names and historical accents. These were: the 15th exhibition of the Vienna Secession in 1902 (Fig. 1), the 26th Secession exhibition in 1906, the cooperative exhibition of "Sztuka" and the "Hagenbund" in 1908 (Fig. 2), and the International Art Exhibition in Rome in 1911 (Fig. 3). The Viennese reviews written specifically for these events are useful in attempting to reconstruct a picture of Polish art of the time. The most important critics in connection with this were Franz Servaes, Ludvig Hevesi, Bertha Zuckerkandl, and Karl M. Kuzmany, with Zuckerkandl occupying a position of distinct prominence. Her interest in the new Polish art had become, undoubtedly partly because of her Galician father, a pressing concern. For the exhibition in 1902 she wrote the article, "Von neuer polnischer Kunst,"² and for the one in 1906 the article "Jung Polen."³ She also

¹ Hans Bisanz, a native of Poland who has lived in Vienna since World War II, is the Curator of Art at the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

² Bertha Zuckerkandl, "Von neuer polnischer Kunst," Die Kunst für Alle, 18, No. 12 (1903).

³ See Zeitkunst (Wien, 1901-07; Wien-Leipzig, 1908).
later wrote the book, *Polens Malkunst*, which was published in Vienna in 1915. Her principle position was positive, as was that of her colleagues mentioned above, although not quite without reservations. This fact reflects the alien quality that Polish art seems to have had in the eyes of the Viennese at that time.

The artistic trends of “Young Poland,” so often different from Viennese art around 1900, were generally a result of the political situation as well as the characteristically Western orientation of Poland. Certainly in both regions the driving force was a middle class open to new ideas, but in Vienna innovation was sought within the social sphere, as an emancipation of the individual, while the most urgent aim in Poland was to end the country’s division into three parts and regain national independence. Whereas Viennese “Art around 1900” aspired to the creation of an imaginative “Empire of Beauty,” Polish art of the same time appeared—at least during the earlier part of the period under discussion—to be more concerned with content. This difference had already existed in the preceding epoch of Historicism. It can be seen, for example, in a comparison of the Polish painter, Jan Matejko, with the Viennese Hans Makart. Matejko’s paintings were devoted to many patriotic historical subjects, while Makart chose his historical subjects from Egypt, Florence, or Venice, if at all. To the patriotic tradition in Poland was added a strong interest in West European symbolism, which, except for part of the oeuvre of Gustav Klimt, remained less interesting for Austrians. These differences make it evident that Polish art of that time was scarcely influenced by Austrian art; an artistic dependence parallel to the political one cannot be assumed.

Already in 1896, at the International Art Exhibition of the Viennese Kunstlerhaus, an object was shown which in many regards occupies a key position between Symbolism and Historicism: the painting, *Sarcophagi*, by Leon Wyczółkowski. Taking inspiration from Symbolist tendencies in the West, where there was a preference for themes belonging to the dusky border regions between life and death, the artist placed morbidity at the service of patriotic interests by restoring the presence of the faded past. With great sensitivity Franz Servaes (who also wrote about works by Malczewski, Boznańska, and Szymanowski) remarked in reference to this picture: “Pale, grey and musty is the air. . . . Cut from stone, the faces in gloomy earnest, the king and queen rest. . . . But don’t despair! A colorful, luminous day penetrates from behind through painted window panes. Its powerful light falls on the nearby sarcophagi, covering their stony rest as if with colored, awakening life. . . .”

The first Polish artists represented in exhibitions of the Vienna Secession who attracted the attention of the Viennese critics were Józef Mehoffer and