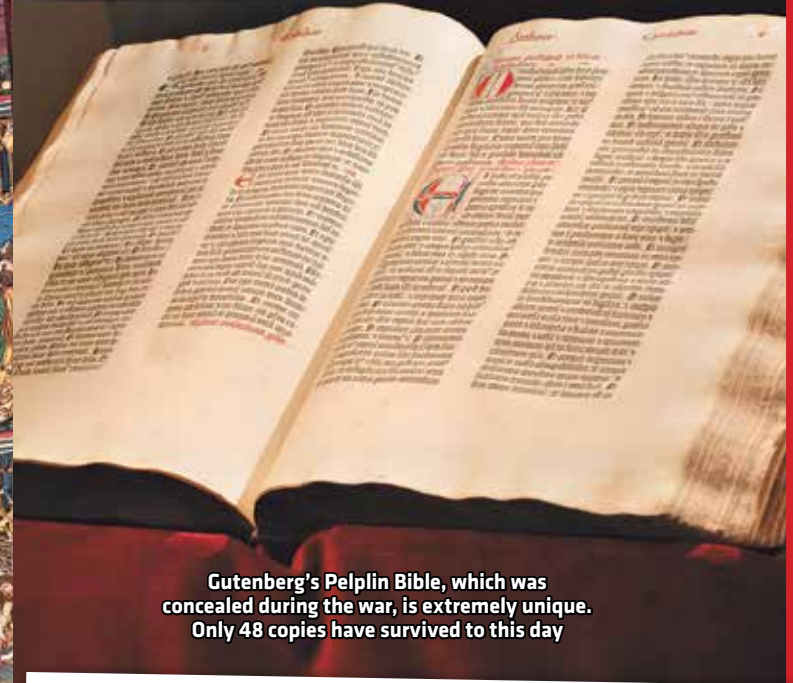


art treasures in the barn



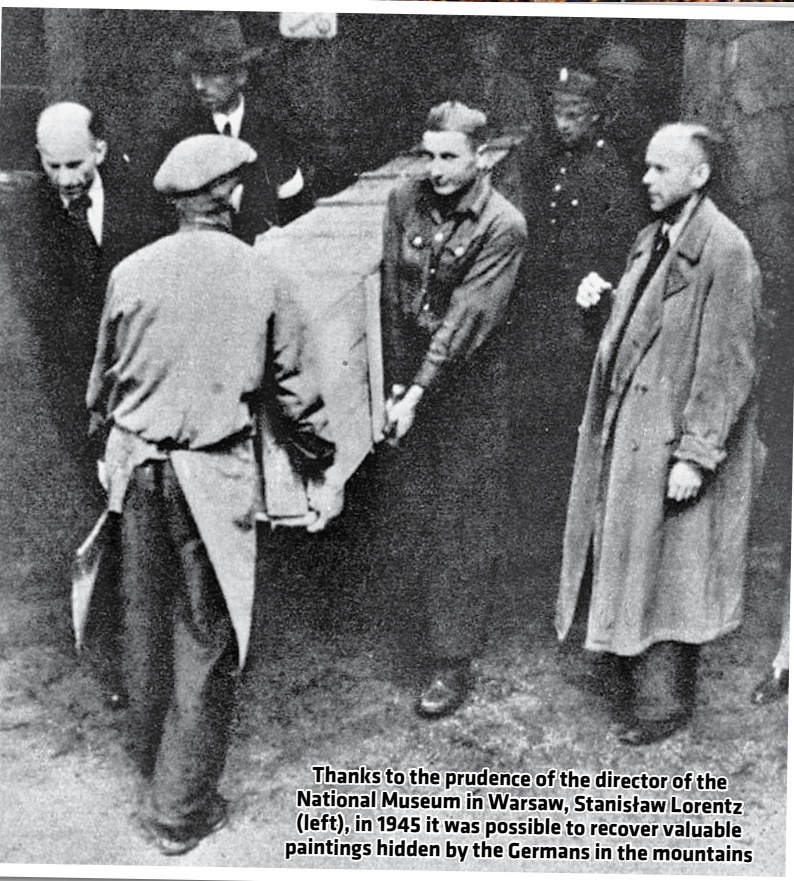
Disassembling and hiding the altar by Wit Stoss took a lot of hard work



Gutenberg's Pelplin Bible, which was concealed during the war, is extremely unique. Only 48 copies have survived to this day



King Zygmunt August's tapestries were hidden and transported from Wawel at the last minute



Thanks to the prudence of the director of the National Museum in Warsaw, Stanisław Lorentz (left), in 1945 it was possible to recover valuable paintings hidden by the Germans in the mountains

TRACES OF PICTURES

Traces of the paintings were hidden under the works of mediocre artists. Soon they replaced Van Eyck, Dürer, Botticelli, Raphael, and Rubens' paintings. This miserable trick prompted the fascists to ransack the cellars. The bricked-up hiding spots were detected by knocking in the wall, by the „empty” sound.

painting. In 1941, when the ground under the hiding place began to burn, it was decided to hide the painting in the barn. Transported on a wagon, the „Battle” survived like many other works stuck under the straw in the barns.

The war is just around the corner

The war was already in the air like a bomber when Józef Krzywdą-Polkowski, an architect, presented his self-designed and custom-made storage spaces to the Wawel Defense Committee. Those were mainly cylindrical cases and iron boxes. They were used to hide, inter alia, Chopin's manuscripts, Zygmunt August's tapestries, the coronation sword of Polish kings, and other Polish sanctities. Packing took forever and when fi-

nally everything was ready to leave Krakow, the trains were no longer running. The stations were in ruins. Only the Vistula river was active ... The treasures eventually sailed on a Galar (a river ship) to Sandomierz. Tapestries traveled the route to Zamość by ship and carts and half of Europe and the Atlantic by whatever was available. They got to Canada.

„Sir, I feel sorry for nothing like I feel sorry for porcelain,” wrote Czesław Miłosz. Porcelain, especially the one that had the honor of sitting on aristocratic tables, was difficult to transport because of how fragile it was. There were a lot of small things in Wilanów. Apart from paintings - silverware and tableware, a huge collection of furniture and above all - a library. Maria Beata Branicka, who was in charge of the evacuation, did not allow several priceless collections to be removed from the palace. They were walled up in the palace cellars so cleverly that the new walls against the background of the old ones were unrecognizable.

Priceless Bible

On the other hand, Gutenberg's Bible, which Father Antoni Liedtke, a historian of the Church and sacred art, sent from Pelplin on a rescue wandering, was not discovered. He wondered for a long time how to disguise it. But time was pressing, so in the end, he simply put it in his broken suitcase and took it in a horse-drawn carriage to Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (National Development Bank), where he deposited it until it was transported to Paris via Romania. From there, the Bible, together with Wawel tapestries, sailed on board the ship „Chorzów” to England, then „Batory” to Canada. The war destroyed hundreds of thousands of works of art. But some of them survived thanks to the prudence of the people who saved them. The remaining works were buried behind the shack, hidden under straw, bricked up in dungeons, or accumulated in crypts and barns. Some of them have not been found until today, due to the death of those who hid them.

EWA JABŁOŃSKA

After the war, they were returned to the rebuilt castle. The „Battle of Grunwald” began to be hidden on the first day of the war. The work residing in Zachęta. An object of mockery of modernists was wou-

nd on a 4 m high spool and placed in a chest. The horse-drawn platform, which transported a 1500 kg load to the Lublin Museum, miraculously survived along with the