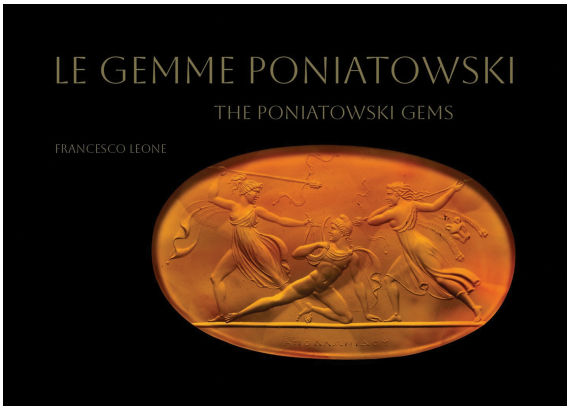
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The Poniatowski Gems

Francesco Leone

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- Tells the story of Stanislaw Poniatowski's extensive gem collection
- Elegant hardback volume, with high-quality illustrations, specifically photographed for this book
- The gems are reproduced both in the original size and enlarged threefold for better appreciation

A prince, collector, patron of the arts, and refined connoisseur of antiquity, Stanisław Poniatowski (Warsaw, 1754 – Florence, 1833) devoted much of his life to an endeavour as ambitious as it was extraordinary: to recreate, through the art of glyptics (the art of incision on gems and stones), the lost world of Greece and Rome. During the height of Neoclassicism and the Grand Tour, he assembled—between Rome and Florence—one of the most extensive and fascinating collections of engraved gems ever created, comprising over 2,600 engravings and cameos inspired by the myths and heroes of the ancient world. Long believed to be authentic works of antiquity and signed with the names of the most famous Greek and Roman engravers, the Poniatowski gems sparked an international controversy that, following the dispersal of the collection at a London auction in 1839, divided scholars and collectors. Behind what many perceived as a colossal hoax lay, in reality, a cultural project of extraordinary originality: not the creation of forgeries, but an attempt to revive the classical ideal through the talent of the greatest engravers of his time.

This bilingual volume tells the story of a legendary collection and its creator, restoring the Poniatowski collection to its rightful place among the most fascinating expressions of European artistic culture during the Neoclassical era.

Text in English and Italian.

Francesco Leone is a professor of Art History at the "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara. His research focuses on artists and artistic movements in Italy and Europe, spanning the Neoclassical period and the 19th century. For Officina Libraria, he published the acclaimed *Antonio Canova. La vita e l'opera* (2022).



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