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ARTICLES

Artur Kamczycki

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The Kabbalistic Alphabet of Libeskind: The Motif of Letter-shaped Windows in the Design of the Jewish Museum in Berlin

Scattered symbols

The edifice of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind and constructed between 1989–1999, is located on Lindenstrasse in the Kreuzberg district. The design was chosen by means of a contest organised by the German authorities; the aim was to conceive a museum that would refer both to the Holocaust and to the “2000 years of German-Jewish history” (Fig. 1). The building has been discussed in many academic publications to date, yet it still attracts unwavering interest, prompting debate among theoreticians of architecture, historians of art and philosophers alike.¹

Libeskind’s concept divided the museum space into two parts, i.e. the adapted form of the already existing baroque palace of Collegienhaus dating from the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm I (1713–1740)² and the adjacent new structure. The main (and only) entrance to the complex is situated in the baroque edifice, which is a two-story, three-wing masonry building with a courtyard. Its proportions are regular, symmetrical and harmonious, its façade a gentle mauve colour, its mansard roof a clear red. The building houses the ticket counters, the cloakroom, the museum

1 The present article was based on material not included in the author’s book *Muzeum Libeskinda w Berlinie. Żydowski kontekst architektury* [Libeskind’s museum in Berlin, The Jewish context of architecture], Poznań, 2015. The theses presented here were not mentioned in the book.

2 Due to the substantial damage it sustained during the Second World War, the edifice was reconstructed in 1963–1969 under the direction of Günter Hönow and chosen to house the Berlin Museum. Originally designed by Philipp Gerlach, the palace served as a court house. See I. Wirth, *Berlin Museum, Führer durch die Sammlungen*, Berlin, 1980; idem, “Geschichte des Berlin Museums (1964–1981)”, in: *Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, Jahrbuch 1999*, Berlin 2000, pp. 121–141; D. Bartmann, *Geschichte des Berlin Museums (1981–1995)*, in: *Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, Jahrbuch 1999*, Berlin, 2000, pp. 142–161; R. Bothe, *Berlin Museum, Kurzführer*, Berlin, 1987.



Fig. 1. The Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind, general view from above. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Guenter Schneider

shop, the conference room, the restaurant and the underground passageway (tunnel) leading to the main museum edifice located to the west (Fig. 2).³ The tunnel is one of the three passage-axes (also located underground), whose shape on the floor plan resembles three spread fingers, identified with the form of the Hebrew letter *shin* (Fig. 3). The original axis becomes the stairway reaching up to the attic, whereas the other two lead outside to the E. T. A. Hoffmann Garden (the Garden of Exile)⁴ and to the so-called Holocaust Tower.

Libeskind's "proper" design, i.e. the so-called "Jewish part" (initially referred to as an *Abteilung*, i.e. section), has a zigzag plan resembling a crawling snake, a lightning or a shattered Star of David. The interior comprises four storeys, indistinguishable from the outside. Instead of neutral museum rooms, the architect designed asymmetrical spaces. Moreover, the entire zigzag structure is dissected with a straight line, 150 metres in length and 4.5 metres in width, which creates an

3 See e.g. Daniel Libeskind: *Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department*, ed. K. Feireiss, Berlin, 1992; H. Stolzenberg, *The Jewish Museum Berlin. Can a Jewish Museum NOT be a Holocaust Memorial?*, Bloomington, 2003. See also: D. Libeskind, *Breaking Ground: An Immigrant's Journey from Poland to Ground Zero*, New York, 2004.

4 For more on the architect's sources of inspiration and the interpretation of this part of the museum, see G. Świtek, "Olimpia w Ogródzie Wygnania" [Olympia in the Garden of Exile], in: *Obraz zapośredniczony* [Mediated image], ed. M. Poprzęcka, Warsaw, 2005, pp. 75–88; G. Świtek, *Aporie architektury* [Aporia of architecture], Warsaw, 2012, pp. 102–111.

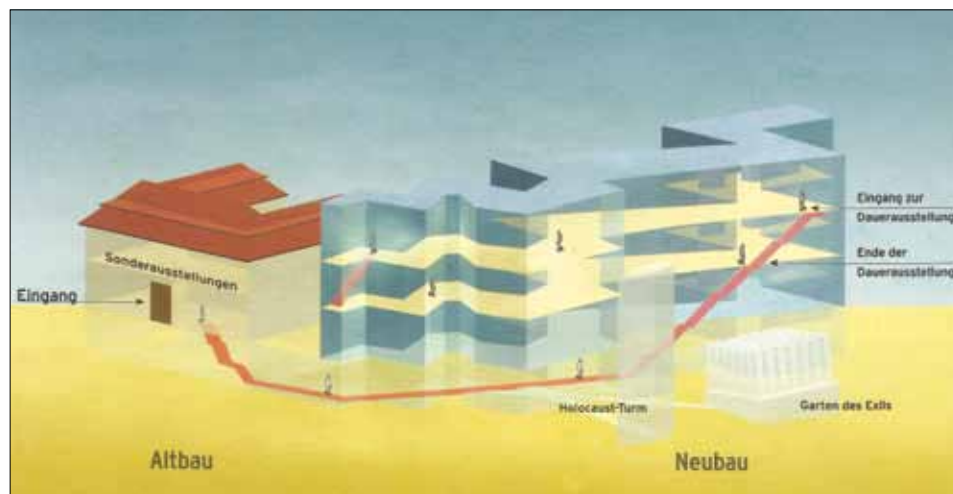


Fig. 2. Spatial cross-section. Illustration from the museum's information leaflet

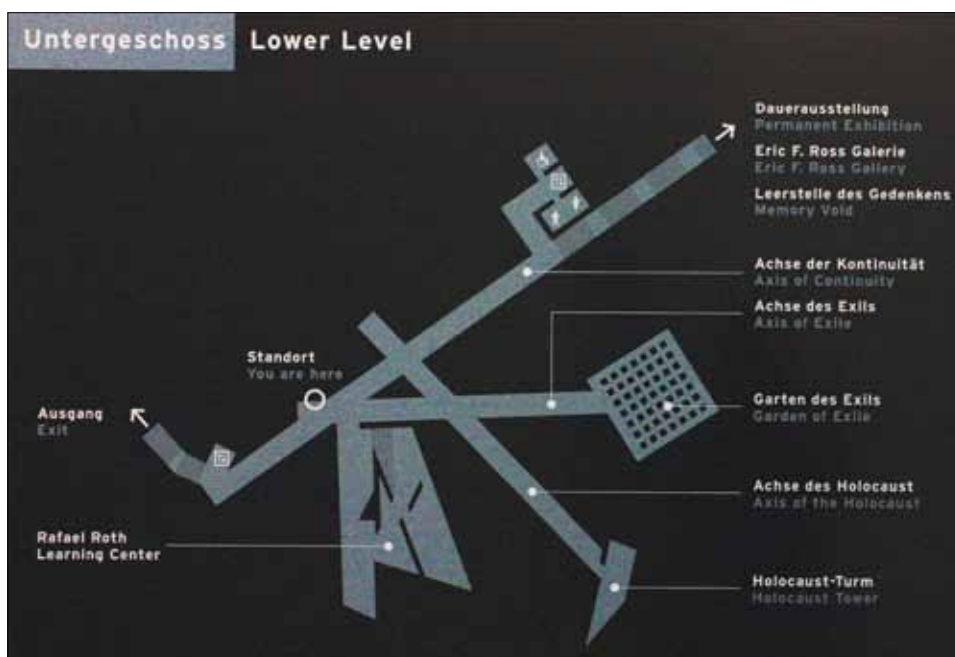


Fig. 3. The cross-section of the underground axes. Source: <https://pixelmaedchen.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/plan.jpg> [accessed 15 February 2015]

empty space (or empty spaces) spanning from the floor level to the roof, and separated from the rest of the structure.⁵ The external form of the building is a dynamic, expressive composition of irregular, angular shapes coated in gleaming zinc sheet, which appears green, blue or grey depending on the weather and the time of day. The walls, in turn, are slit with narrow, slender window openings that sometimes run diagonally in various directions, cutting through the entire elevation, several storeys high (Figs. 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17). It is the form of these characteristic irregular windows, resembling a jumble of cuts and grooves on the façade, that constitutes the main subject of the present article. In it, the shapes are regarded as letter symbols from the Hebrew alphabet.⁶

Such a determinant for the analysis of the visual form of the building leads to further interpretative conclusions. The mysterious system of symbols may be



Fig. 4. View of the eastern façade. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Jens Ziehe

5 More in: B. Schneider, D. Libeskind, *Jewish Museum of Berlin. Between the Lines*, Munich, 1999 (4th edition, Munich, 2005), pp. 48–58. See also E. Dorner, D. Libeskind, *Jüdisches Museum*, Berlin, 1999; D. Libeskind, *Trauma*, in: *Image and Remembrance. Representation and the Holocaust*, eds. S. Horstein, F. Jacobowitz, Bloomington–Indianapolis, 2003, pp. 43–58.

6 On the form of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, see e.g. R. Gromacka, “Język hebrajski” [The Hebrew language], in: *Żydzi w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura. Leksykon* [Jews in Poland. History and culture. Lexicon], ed. J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski, pp. 195–204. See also: <http://www.onjewishmatters.com/the-evolution-of-the-hebrew-letters/>; http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/History/history.html [accessed 24 September 2018].

identified with the idea of a “scattered alphabet” known from the Kabbalah, which can consequently be tied to the notion of *tikkun olam*, or the “repair of the world”. To discuss these overlying motifs, one should, however, start from a terminological systematisation and a brief clarification of the meaning of the Kabbalah, the “scattered alphabet” and the postulate of the “repair of the world”, as well as other terms used in Jewish mysticism.⁷ The aim is not to present some hermetic definition of the notion of the Kabbalah itself (as there are many), but to specify what it may be in the interpretation of architecture and how it is understood in this field, i.e. how it can function in a complex weave with architecture, alphabetical symbols and a number of mystical concepts which may sometimes be perceived in the Jewish tradition from the perspective of imagery and representation. Thus, the issue concerns the idea of reading architecture as an “image”, through the lens of the Kabbalah.

According to Gershom Scholem, a pioneer of Jewish mysticism and one of the greatest authorities on the subject, often cited by Libeskind, the Kabbalah is a kind of a speculative “system of mystical and specifically theosophical thinking”, pertaining to the so-called divine attributes, the creation of nature and the universe, the place and role of human beings in this system, their relation to the divine and an attempt at describing these themes with the help of purely visual metaphors.⁸ The last of these aspects seems particularly significant in the present context. Scholem writes of a certain “conflict between conceptual thinking and symbolic thinking, which gives the literature and history of the Kabbalah their unique character”.⁹ It is not only “the allegorical expression of a cosmology that might have been communicated in other ways”, but “symbols in the strict sense”.¹⁰ Moreover, in the history of the Kabbalah there appeared tendencies to pronounce symbols and metaphors as superior to concepts and terms, and some kabbalistic works (books), such as *Sefer Yetsirah*, *Sefer Zohar*, *Sefer HaTemunah*, or *Bahir* even “delight in images and carry them as far as possible”.¹¹ Their suggestive mythical content may only be expressed through visual metaphors, which cannot be fully melted into concepts, i.e. substituted with pure definitions. In Scholem’s view, discursive thinking is an

7 See also B. Kos, “Kabała” [Kabbalah], in: *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny. Dzieje, kultura, religia, ludzie* [The Polish Jewish dictionary. History, culture, religion, people], eds. Z. Borzysmińska, R. Żebrowski, pp. 727–731; J. Doktór, “Kabała” [Kabbalah], in: *Żydzi w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura. Leksykon* [Jews in Poland. History and culture. Lexicon], eds. J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski, pp. 225–233. Cf. D. Matt, *Kabbalah. The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*, Edison, 1995; idem, *The Essential Kabbalah*, San Francisco, 1996; M. Idel, *Absorbing Perfection: Kabbalah and Interpretation*, New York, 2002; Y. Al-Taie, *Daniel Libeskind, Metaphern jüdischer Identität im Post-Shoah Zeitalter*, Regensburg, 2008; A. Gorlin, *Kabbalah in Art and Architecture*, New York, 2013.

8 In Gershom Scholem’s understanding, the Kabbalah is literally “tradition” in which the mystical tendencies of Judaism are reflected. However, the word may also be translated as “receiving”, “accepting” or “transmission”. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, translated by R. Manheim, Frankfurt, 1965; idem, *Major trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York, 1995, pp. 1–39.

9 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 96.

10 Ibid., p. 93.

11 Ibid., p. 97

asymptotic process, in which conceptual descriptions and formulations attempt to clarify “symbolically full” and “inexhaustible” images as abbreviations for conceptual series, which they are not.¹² The mythical element cannot be placed within the realm of rational concepts, and may only be explained by using paradoxes,¹³ which causes the images to be internally logical.¹⁴ This statement pertains, for instance, to the concepts of: *tsimtsum* (the constriction of God in the process of emanation),¹⁵ *shevirat kelim* (the shattering of the vessels, i.e. the primordial forms holding God’s light),¹⁶ *shekhinah* (divine presence),¹⁷ and, most of all, the emanation of the Scripture in the mythical act of creation. The interpretation of architecture from the perspective of kabbalistic systems of imagery, therefore, faces the challenge not of regarding the alphabet as a rational system of symbols, but addressing its mystical (or visually-mystical) nature, since the “scattered alphabet” is such a visual form, also in the Kabbalah.¹⁸

In the doctrine of the *Zohar*,¹⁹ one of the most important kabbalistic books, “God spoke – this speech is a force which at the beginning of creative thought was separated from the secret of *En-Sof*”.²⁰ Further sections of the *Zohar* present this “process” as the gradation of the world of emanation, beginning from the purest, unfathomable will, followed by thought, the inner and inaudible word, audible voice and speech, i.e. physically articulated and differentiated expression.²¹ The workings and expansion of God’s mystical power, as well as the ongoing differentiation occurring within the divine itself are represented as a language process. This “dynamic” of the existence of the divine (or within the divine – its emanation), is therefore

12 Ibid., p. 96.

13 G. Scholem, *Major trends...*, pp. 35, 280.

14 See also G. Scholem, “Dziesięć ahistorycznych tez o kabale” [Ten ahistorical theses on the Kabbalah], translated (into Polish) by A. Lipszyc, *Literatura na świecie* 1997, 312, no. 7, pp. 244–256.

15 On the concept of *tsimtsum*, see e.g. R. Elior, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God. The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad Hasidism*, translated by J. M. Green, New York, 1993, chapter 16: *The Doctrine of Tzimtsum*, pp. 79–91; J. Bar-Lew, *Song of the Soul: An Introduction to Kaballa*, Jerusalem, 1994, part 3, chapter 1: *The concept of tzimtsum*, pp. 162–168.

16 See e.g. B. Kos, “Szwirat ha-kelim”, in: *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny...*, vol. 2, pp. 664–665.

17 See e.g.: G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah (Mysticism and Kabbalah)*, translated by J. Neugroschel, New York, 1997, chapter 4: *Shekhinah, the Feminine Element in Divinity*, pp. 140–196; A. Unterman, *Dictionary of Jewish Lore and Legend*, London, 1991, p.181.

18 In the kabbalistic and Chassidic tradition, before the Torah was written down, the alphabet appeared as an “a heap of unarranged letters”. See e.g. M. Halbertal, *Of Pictures and Words: Visual and Verbal Representation of God*, in: *The Divine Image. Depicting God in Jewish and Israeli Art* (catalogue of an exhibition at the Israel Museum), Jerusalem, 2006, pp. 7–13.

19 See e.g. G. Scholem, *Major trends...*, *Fifth Lecture: Zohar I. The Book and its Author*, pp. 156–204, and *Sixth Lecture: Zohar II. The Theosophic Doctrine of the Zohar*, pp. 205–243.

20 For more on the *En Sof* formula, see e.g. G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, pp. 207–220. See also T. N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God. The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names*, Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 65–74; P. Schafer, *The Hidden and Manifested God. Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism*, translated by A. Pomerance, New York, 1992, pp. 77–81, 97–103.

21 *Zohar* I, 74a and I 15a, after G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, p. 216.

also perceived as the development of the elements of speech/language, from which (and through which) “spring the primeval forms of all letters”.²² Thus, according to the *Zohar*, God “is revealed in the unity of his activity”; the specific – alphabetic – structure of His name, the tetragrammaton (JHWH) is a specific expression of his levels of manifestation.²³ According to Scholem, kabbalists wished to penetrate the mystery of the linguistic and mystical act in which “the Tetragrammaton is split and divided into other divine names”, linking the mysticism of language with anthropological mysticism. “What takes on form in God is that in which He reveals and announces Himself”, i.e. the elements of his name (e.g. the Tetragrammaton) composed of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and constituting a factual aspect of his form. As noted by Scholem, this view has been present in the history of the Kabbalah from its very beginnings; a classic work which portrays this issue in a very “visual” manner is the already mentioned *Sefer HaTemunah*, whose title means the Book of the Shape, i.e. the shape of the Hebrew letters, or the Book of the Image (the image of the divine).²⁴ The letters that are the forms of God’s creative power also make up his mystical image which appears in the world of his manifestations (the *Sefiroth*).²⁵ In other words, as stated in the *Sefer ha-Temunah*, this shape is the Hebrew alphabet, the symbolic “image” of the divine. Thus, for kabbalists, a person deep in contemplation of the alphabet fulfils the following verse of the Torah: “And the shape of God does he behold”.²⁶

In rabbinic literature, the letters of the alphabet are presented, in a sense, as an independent, self-aware/mystical “being”, which had existed before and, moreover, took part in the creation of the world. One may therefore venture the statement that Scripture was both the subject and the object of the world being created.²⁷ The midrash *Bereshit Rabba* (I, 1) comments on the tale of the Scripture boasting that it served as the tool of all creation: “The Lord made me as the beginning of His way, prior to His works of old”.²⁸ The midrash *Tanchuma, Bereshit* 1, in turn contains the following passage: “The Torah served as an artisan in all the work of creation [...]. With it, He bound up the sea lest it should go forth and overflow the world”.²⁹

22 G. Scholem, *Über einige Grundbegriffe des Judentums*, Frankfurt, 1970, p. 51.

23 G. Scholem, *On the Mystical...*, p. 51.

24 In was published in 1250 in Catalonia and in 1892 in Lvov. See G. Scholem, *On the Mystical...*, p. 49; idem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 78.

25 On the notion of the *sefirot*: B. Kos, “Sefiry” [Sephiroth], in: *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny...*, pp. 510–511; J. Bar-Lew, op. cit., part two: *The Sefirot*; M. A. Ouaknin, *Mysteries of the Kabbalah*, translated by J. Bacon, New York, 2000, part four, *The Ten Sefirot*, pp. 191–272; M. Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives*, New Haven CT, 1988, chapter 6: *Kabbalistic Theosophy*, pp. 112–155; R. Elior, *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism*, Oxford, 2008.

26 G. Scholem, *On the Mystical...*, p. 49.

27 Tadeusz Zaderecki, *Tajemnice alfabetu hebrajskiego* [The mysteries of the Hebrew alphabet], Warsaw, 1994, p. 47.

28 Ibid., p. 49.

29 Ibid.

It should, however, be noted that in the Hebrew language the term for “letter” is *ot*, which may also be translated as a “sign” and evokes the connotation with the word for “creation”.³⁰ The Book of Genesis presents the process of creation as an incessant stream of letters pouring from heavens to the earth. According to rabbi Shneur Zalman of Ladi, thought of in this way, letters bring a thing into being.³¹ In the kabbalists’ own opinion, however, the being or world (or rather universe) in the Kabbalah is not a perfect work, but one that is “deformed” from its very beginning.

The Kabbalah portrays the act of creation (identified with the emanation of God himself) as paradoxical in itself, a process of the “unfolding” of the primeval divine light, which successively assumes the appropriate hypostases, or forms, also known as the *sefirot* or vessels.³² However, as Scholem puts it, these vessels did not manage to hold God’s light, cracked and then shattered. This is the origin of the kabbalistic idea of the “shattering of vessels” (*shevirat kelim*). The already mentioned book of *Yetsirah*, in turn, argues the connection between elements of language and the act of creation. In this framework, *shevirat kelim* is identified with the idea of the shattering of the alphabet or literally the scattering of letters, their disarrangement or even deformation. This topic will be discussed in more detail in a further section of the present work; for now let us turn to the actual subject of this article, i.e. Libeskind’s architecture, and look at his designs and publications, to see references to the kabbalistic letter symbols.

The architecture of letters

Even before the Berlin museum opened, Libeskind published a collection of (rather similar) texts entitled *Between the Lines*.³³ The title evokes associations with the textual, yet the articles in the volume could be described rather as a form of the architect’s commentary on his own designs, and refer to the idea of language very laconically, as if to a kind of matrix or architectural formula.³⁴ Without engaging in a thorough analysis of these texts, which offer a rather convoluted explanation

30 B. Black Koltuv, *Amulets, Talismans, Magical Jewelry: A Way to the Unseen, Ever-Present, Almighty God*, Berwick, 2005, p. 61.

31 Ibid., p. 61.

32 G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, p. 266.

33 The texts were published, in a very similar form, as many as four times. D. Libeskind, A. P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings*, Munich–New York, 1997, pp. 34–45; D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, in: *Daniel Libeskind: Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department*, ed. K. Feireiss, Berlin, 1992, pp. 57–125; D. Libeskind, *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter*, New York, 2000, pp. 38–45. See also D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines* (Opening speech, Berlin, 1999) in: *Radix-Matrix...*, pp. 46–47.

34 A more direct reference to the idea of text is found in the title of the catalogue: *Daniel Libeskind. Architektura jako język* [Daniel Libeskind. Architecture as a Language], Ostrava, 2010. The texts it contains (by T. Goryczka and J. Nemec) do not, however, make any references to the notion of the alphabet.

for the Berlin design (or the sources of inspiration for it), we may nonetheless note the interesting visual materials accompanying them. These are the architect's own works: sketches, drawings and designs.³⁵ In one of the reprints (*Between the Lines*) first appearing in the book under the meaningful title: *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings*, Libeskind added a photograph of his concept graph-design entitled simply "The Alphabet" (Fig. 5).³⁶ The graph takes an entire page and is composed of seven vertical columns, each of which contains a series of various symbols, suggestively evoking the motifs of primordial, elementary letters. Each column has an apt title (from left to right): underground, void, internal, site, linear, window and combination, and refers to selected fragments or lines of foundations, the shapes of walls, interior or exterior space, the form of windows, etc., taken from various parts of the design. As noted above, the entire graph is a convincing matrix of something resembling a "jumbled alphabet". The same text (in *Radix-Matrix*) also features other illustrations, such as the one entitled "Names" (p. 37), which shows a photograph of a diorama of the museum placed on an acrylic glass print of a page of the *Gedenkbuch* listing the names of the Berlin Jews murdered during the Second World War, as well as a graph with calculations, the so-called "Façade coordinates" (p. 41) and the "Structural calculation plan, Façade" (p. 43), which are also based on the communicative aspect of the symbol of a letter or number, here assuming a certain visual quality. In a different version of the same text (*Between the Lines*), this time appearing in *Extension to the Berlin Museum*, Libeskind added new illustrations, which nonetheless referred to the notion of letters and the alphabet.³⁷ The first shows a redrawn fragment of the façade featuring a window shaped like two disjointed, slanting tablets (p. 58), evoking the story of Moses receiving the tablets on Mount Sinai – an association that shall be discussed below. The architect also included a reprint of a fragment of the libretto to Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* (p. 60), a model of the museum structure (pp. 32–33)³⁸, two plans (the floor plan [p. 64] and elevation [p. 68]). Significantly, both these plans featured passages of the Talmud superimposed thereon. The same passages were used by Libeskind in his design for the Danish Jewish Museum in Copenhagen, where the structure of the central text (the Talmud) is surrounded with layers of intertextual commentaries (and commentaries to commentaries). Thus, as Libeskind himself puts it, the design is "both written and read like a text within a text within a text".³⁹

35 The designs were shown e.g. at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, during the exhibition "Daniel Libeskind Fundamentum Pamięci" ("Daniel Libeskind. Foundations of Memory; 14 June 2004 – 15 August 2004). Curators: G. Świtek, C. Swickerath.

36 D. Libeskind, A. P. A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix...*, pp. 34–45 (illustration on p. 36).

37 D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, in: *Extension to...*, pp. 57–125.

38 This photograph appears in Ralph Bothe's article "The Berlin Museum and Its Extension", in: *Extension to...*, pp. 32–52.

39 After J. E. Young, "Daniel Libeskind's New Jewish Architecture", in: *Daniel Libeskind and the Contemporary Jewish Museum: New Jewish Architecture from Berlin to San Francisco*, ed. C. Wolf, New York, 2008, pp. 54–55, 59.

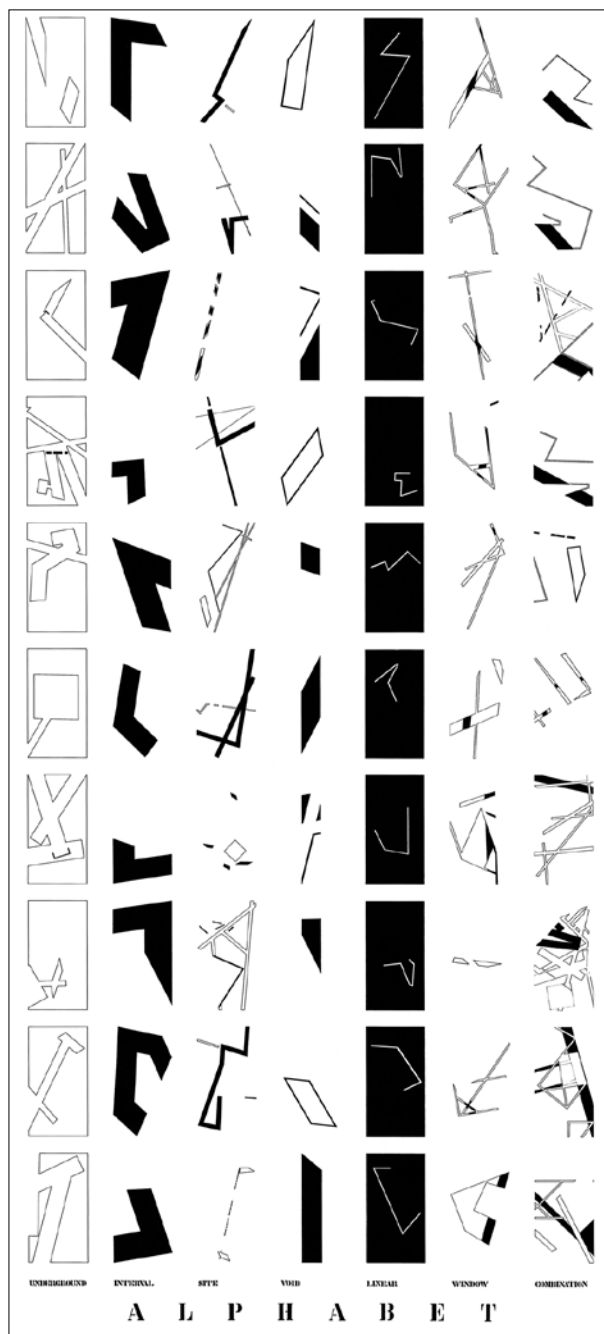


Fig. 5. Daniel Libeskind, “The Alphabet”, concept drawing. Source copyrights: Studio Libeskind New York



Fig. 6. Daniel Libeskind, “The Alef Before the Beit. Jewish Community Center and Synagogue, Duisburg”, model. Source and copyrights: Studio Libeskind New York

A similar treatment of “marking” a structure of a building with complex symbolism of the Scripture can be found in the project entitled *The Aleph before the Beit. Jewish Community Center and Synagogue. Duisburg*, where the architects fills the façade of a wooden model of the edifice (Fig. 6).⁴⁰ The floor plan has the form of the Hebrew letter *aleph*, which happens to be the most complex and symbolically significant letter of this alphabet. “The Aleph before the House [since the letter Beit also signifies ‘house’]. The Aleph represents the unity of Israel – the unity of G-d. The Aleph stands for more than a letter, more than an emblem, more than the fiery beginning from which the word Bereshit-stems [...]. The Aleph,” Libeskind continues, “is the foundation of the Tetragrammaton, Yud, Heh and Vav – the ineffable and unpronounceable Name. These letters have their seat and are given form in the One”.⁴¹ The architects also compares the shape of the *aleph* to the book in which it appears. The letter and the book represent the spiritual and cultural identity of the Jewish nation; they are the twin elements organising the urban and architectural structure, as well as the functional dimension of the Duisburg

40 D. Libeskind, *The Aleph Before the Beit. Jewish Community Centre and Synagogue, Duisburg*, in: *Radix–Matrix...* pp. 98–99. The façade of the building is focused on windows (or structured by them: it is the windows that build the façade), which bring light inside through complex patterns of Talmudic pages. In other words, the arrangement and construction of windows is to resemble the structure of the pages of the Talmud. This intention is clearly visible on the (wooden) model. The illustration appears on page 99.

41 D. Libeskind, *The Aleph Before...*, p. 98.

design. Concentration, contemplation, perception and consideration of the forms and shapes of the letters is a notion known from the Kabbalah (or its practical branch); in this case architectural references to Jewish mysticism (since the Kabbalah is an element thereof) are more than just a strategy for interpretation, but a declarative assumption made by the architect himself. The motto to the article under analysis (*The Aleph Before the Beit*) is a passage from the kabbalistic book the *Zohar*, recounting the following story: “Rabbi Elazar bar Abina said in Rabbi Aha’s name: For 26 generations the Aleph complained before G-d: I am the first of the letters yet you didn’t create Your world with me! Don’t worry, said G-d, the world and all its fullness were created for the Torah alone. Tomorrow when I come to give my Torah at Sinai the first word I say will begin with you”.⁴² The first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, *aleph* and *bet* also have their place in the new building of the Academy of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The academy is situated on the other side of Lindenstrasse, exactly opposite the Collegienhaus; the letters may be found on the roof of the “vestibule” imitating a wooden chest, tilted and partially sunk into the ground. The architect intended them to refer to the essence of the (entire) alphabet and the imperative of education, which constitutes the core of Jewish culture.⁴³ Other (Jewish) designs by Libeskind also use letters not as the sources of iconic inspiration, but rather as a specific interpretation which forms a number of meanings stemming from the symbolism of the letters. For instance, the structure of (and inspiration for) the Jewish Museum in San Francisco, whose design was made public in 2000 (and implemented in 2008), is based on different two Hebrew letters – *hei* and *yud*. The combination of these two means “alive” or “the house of life” (these letters often appeared above entrances to synagogues).⁴⁴ The next example is provided by the Maurice Wohl Centre at the campus of the Bar Ilan university in Ramat Gan (Tel Aviv), opened in 2005. The building is even referred to as “a labyrinth of letters”. The edifice designed by Libeskind resembles an open book, from which letters are flowing.⁴⁵ Reduced to their rudimentary forms, albeit clear and almost ostentatiously legible letter symbols appear not only in the corridors, in the main lecture hall, on walls and ceilings, but also on the compositionally complex façade, in a way shining through the walls and, again, evoking the concept of the scattered alphabet. Nevertheless, the first implemented design in which Libeskind

42 As the first letter of the alphabet, the *aleph* is traditionally considered to be the visual compilation of all the following letters. According to the Kabbalah, it has the structure of the body. It is structured by three elements: the head, signifying teaching, the torso, signifying community, and the supporting legs, which symbolise the education of children. After: Libeskind, *The Aleph Before...*, p. 98.

43 <https://www.dezeen.com/2012/11/21/the-academy-of-the-jewish-museum-berlin-by-daniel-libeskind/> [accessed 24 September 2018].

44 See J. E. Young, op. cit., pp. 54–55, 59; M. Schwartz, “Toward a California Judaism”, in: *Daniel Libeskind and...*, ed. C. Wolf, pp. 39–43.

45 See: <https://www10.aecafe.com/blogs/arch-showcase/2012/05/08/the-wohl-centre-in-ramat-gan-israel-by-studio-daniel-libeskind/> [accessed 24 September 2018].

used such an “alphabetical, architectural and kabbalistic” interpretation was the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

Learning the alphabet

Among the jumble of cuts and grooves on the walls of the structure, one may find not only motifs evoking the shape of Hebrew letters, but also a number of other forms, some complex and others very simple. Sometimes they are ordinary axes of varying width, transecting at various angles, at other times geometrical shapes, such as slanting rectangles, and occasionally complex patterns of lines and planes. In the assumed interpretation, all of these symbols may be regarded as representing various stages in the evolution of Hebrew writing, from the first archaic traces to the full letters of today. The modern Hebrew alphabet is called the “square script” (*ktav meruba*), yet since the Talmudic period it has also been referred to as the “Assyrian script” (*ktav ashuri*).⁴⁶ The Assyrians adopted the proto-Hebrew script around the 7th century BC, abandoning (or modifying) the cuneiform. The script was subsequently subjected to Greek influences and ultimately assumed a form resembling the modern version around the 2nd century BC in Judea. It should be noted that the system also includes forms whose origins can be traced to the cuneiform, such as the letter *yud* (which resembles a comma, a small wedge or a short stroke), or *vav* (a vertical stroke).

It is therefore possible to read the “disarray” of the letter-like vines placed by Libeskind on the smooth walls of the Berlin structure as the idea of letters scattered in chaos and deformed or, conversely, as the process of the alphabet’s creation.

Given the fact that the museum should, in principle, also refer to the Holocaust, the evoked idea of creating a new alphabet may also be understood as a metaphor for creating a new language, a new speech (or the learning of a new alphabet) after the events of the Second World War. The symbolical notion of creating the world anew, out of chaos, is a return to “ancient history”, the time after the deluge, where the world has to be revived from the debris and remains. One has to re-learn how to speak, write and communicate. Significantly, in the Kabbalah the essence of language, i.e. its mystical (or even magical) qualities is not related to the awareness of its visual evolution, but stems from the belief in the power of the symbol regardless of its current evolutionary form.⁴⁷ Moreover, it is the diversity of symbols that becomes a matter of special consideration (Fig. 7). For the kabbalist Isaac Luria (cited by Libeskind himself) even the various calligraphic styles of the Hebrew script have specific mystical meaning.⁴⁸

46 *Żydzi w Polsce. Leksykon...*, pp. 195–204.

47 The already mentioned Book of Temunah (*Sefer haTemunah*) discusses the mythical interpretations of the shapes of all twenty two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. See also G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, p. 178.

48 D. Libeskind, *The Aleph Before...*, p. 98; Scholem, *Major Trends...*, p. 256.

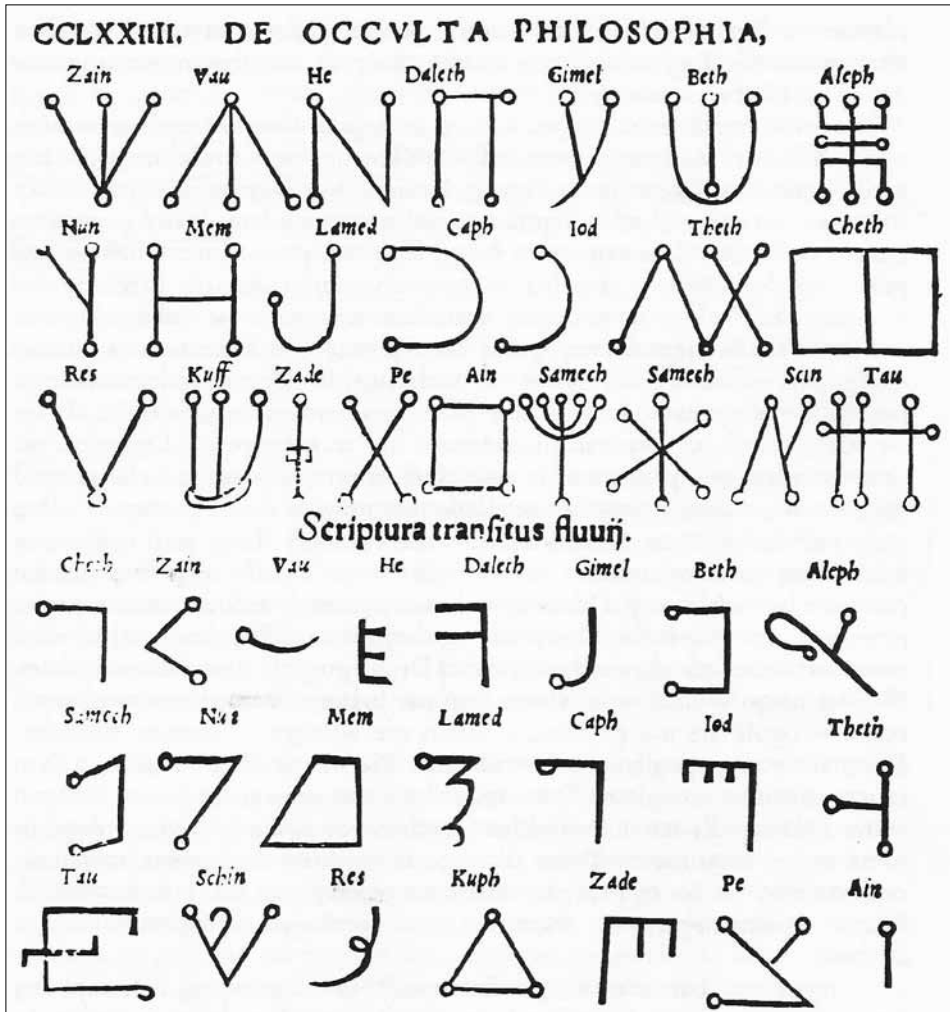


Fig. 7. Kabbalistic letters. C. Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala Denudata*, Sulzbach-Frankfurt, a/M 1677–1684. Reprinted in: L. Gorny, *La Kabbale juive et cabale chretienne*, Paris, 1977. Source: G. Scholem, *Kabala i jej symbolika*, Polish translation by R. Wojnakowski, Cracow, 1996, p. 90

The manner in which Libeskind includes letters in the design of the walls of the Berlin museum – as grooves and openings (i.e. windows) – may be associated with the way the Decalogue was written on the stone tablets. The letters of the Torah Moses received at Mount Sinai were cut by divine fire, which formed translucent symbols in stone. When, upon seeing the golden calf, Moses smashed the tablets, the letters flew up to the Heavens.⁴⁹ The chaotic arrangement of the letters on the

⁴⁹ Deut. 9:17, after G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 69.

Berlin museum and the breakneck form of many symbols also evokes the thought of this scattered alphabet, which – as letter-windows – can be read from two sides: the interior and the exterior. The symbols that appear reversed from the outside may be read correctly from the inside, and vice versa (Fig. 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17). The forms are, however, deliberately “simplified”, and the chaotically dispersed traces of letters, fragments of words or sentences resembles incomprehensible gibberish or the strained speech patterns of a stutterer.

The problem of the inexpressibility of the word and its medial aspect is included in Libeskind’s interpretation taken from the unfinished opera *Moses and Aaron* by Arnold Schönberg. In the final scene Moses does not sing, but speaks, invoking the absent word; this “can be understood as a text, since the missing word comes clear to the listeners – it is Moses’ call for the word, pronounced without singing. I tried to finish that opera by architecture”.⁵⁰ In the architect own words:

It is not only that he [Schönberg] had no inspiration, so to speak, to complete act III, but also the whole musical structure had ground to a halt, erasing the possibility of continuing in the operatic mode. [...] So I got out my records and began reading the libretto. [...] It is a dialogue between Aaron and Moses [...]. Aaron wants to communicate to the people, lead them into the Promised Land, and Moses is unable to convey the revelation of God through any image, including the musical image of Schönberg’s case.⁵¹

Libeskind, who consistently avoids being literal, in his designs and commentaries alike, does not clarify which element of the structure refers to Schönberg’s libretto or to Moses himself. The issue may only be clarified interpretatively or treated as a challenge and infer its traces in the jumble of letter-windows. However, suggestive, even persistent, associations with Moses’s tablets are evoked by two large windows visible from the courtyard, i.e. from the south-east (Fig. 12). They resemble two spread tablets, or twin doors torn from their hinges. Their form is that of large slanting rectangles, one of which reaches the edge of the building and splays onto the other wall visible beyond the sharp corner. If one perceives this fragment as a visual metaphor, it is from these window-tablets that the letters flowed (becoming scattered and deformed). These letters need to be collected and ordered again, given form or “learnt”.

The scattered alphabet is a visual metaphor repeatedly employed by contemporary Jewish architects who declaratively refer their works to kabbalistic books or use the Kabbalah as a direct source of inspiration. Some of them, such as David Rakia and Mordechai Ardon, treat the motif of the scattered alphabet rather literally, while others, such as Amon Ben-David, Michael Sgan-Cohen, Michail Grobman and Gary Goldstein, engage in a meaningful game with the alphabet, the Kabbalah

50 D. Libeskind, “Between the Lines: Jewish Museum Berlin”, in: *The Space of...* p. 26; Libeskind, *Breaking Ground...*, p. 15.

51 D. Libeskind, “Between the Lines...”, in: *Extension to...*, p. 57.



Fig. 8. Inside view of a window form. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Silke Helmerdig



Fig. 9. View of an eastern façade window (Paul Celan Hoff). Source: <http://a397.idata.over-blog.com/5/05/35/05/2012/3eme/HIDA/Daniel-libeskind-facade.jpg>

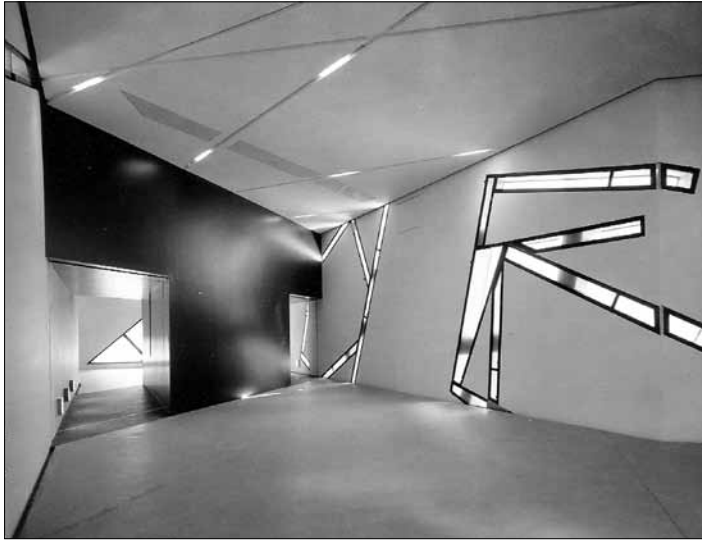


Fig. 10. View of the western façade. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Jens Ziehe



Fig. 11. Inside view of a window form. Source: B. Schneider, D. Libeskind, *Jewish Museum of Berlin. Between the Lines*, Munich, 1999 (4th edition, Daniel Libeskind: Jewish Museum Berlin, Munich, 2005), p. 44 (photo by Stefan Müller)



Fig. 12. View of the south-eastern façade. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Jens Ziehe

and the aspects of divine imagery, thereby leaving some room for interpretation.⁵² Moreover, in modern studies on the Jewish iconosphere, the theme of “scattered letters” also stimulates academic research (in fields such as the study of art or art criticism) assuming the metaphorical perspective of the Kabbalah.⁵³ In this case,

52 See e.g. S. Laderman, “The Unique Significance of the Hebrew Alphabet in the Works of Mordecai Ardon and Michael Sgan-Cohen”, *Ars Judaica. The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art*, 2009, 5, pp. 85–106; R. Dorot, “Jerusalem – ‘The Heavens Tell’ David Rakia – Paintings”, *Studia Europaea Gnesnensia* 2013, 7, pp. 285–308; M. Goldfarb Berkowitz, “Sacred Signs and Symbolism in Morris Louis: The Charred Journal Series”, 1951, in: *Complex Identities. Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, eds. M. Baigell, M. Heid, New Jersey–London, 2001, pp. 193–205; M. Baigell, *American Artists, Jewish Images*, New York, 2006; idem, *Artist and Identity in Twentieth-Century America*, Cambridge, 2001.

53 See e.g. Z. Amishai-Maisels, *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts*, New York, 1993, Introduction, pp. 7–30. See also: eadem, “Art Confronts the Holocaust”, in: *After Auschwitz. Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, (exhibition catalogue, curated and edited by M. Bohm-Duchen, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art) Sunderland,

the Kabbalah is more than some aesthetic or visual reflection found in works of art (a reference in itself), but often a tool or a bridge leading to the issue of the Holocaust in art. One of the most commonly mentioned, though not literal, examples is Renata Stein's work entitled *Gateway to Heaven (Sha'ar Hashamaim)* from 1994. It shows four horizontal lines, tapering progressively towards the top of the composition, drawn against a standing brown rectangle. Depending on the interpretation, the lines indicate the rungs of a ladder, railroad sleepers or the logs of a hearth.⁵⁴ Above them, directly beneath the arching "firmament", the artist placed scattered Hebrew letters in gold. In a direct and suggestive manner, the work evokes associations not only with symbols of the Holocaust, already entrenched in art, but also with the (kabbalistic) motif of scattered symbols which had escaped God in the primordial act of the creation of the world, and scattered in the skies. The two seemingly unrelated themes, the breaking of the vessels and the scattering of the alphabet, in relevant literature became almost synonymous, and are therefore (like an echo of a catastrophe) invoked in connection with all tragedies known from Jewish history, referred to as *churban* [Hebr. catastrophe, destruction].⁵⁵

According to Howard Wettstein, an American philosopher of language, in Judaism *churban* is a metaphor for a "cosmic jolt", echoed by the Babylonian captivity, the destruction of the first and second Temple, the expulsion of Jews from the Holy Land, and even (in the views of Gershom Scholem) the exodus from Spain and the Holocaust itself. Wettstein perceives the notion of a catastrophe whose negative repercussions continue to shake Jewish history as the core of contemporary religious identity, also referred to as *post-churban Judaism*.⁵⁶ Its perpetual aim is to provide the response and references to this (cosmic and primeval) catastrophe and its reverberations in the human world. To use a metaphor, the breaking of vessels, the scattering of letters and their incessant migration, is sometimes also referred to as "exile" (*galuth*). As Wettstein notes, Judaism is a religion inherited from the generations of rabbis of the Talmudic era and the following fifteen centuries of unending persecution, exile and *shoah* – it is a religion of *galuth*, a religion of (the awareness

1995, pp. 48–77; A. Kampf, *Chagal to Kitaj. Jewish Experience in 20th Century Art*, London, 1990, pp. 153–163; O. Soltes, *Fixing the World: Jewish American Painters in Twentieth Century*, New England, 2009.

54 See e.g. M. Baigell, "Jewish American Artists: Identity and Messianism", in: *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, ed. M. Baigell, M. Heyd, New Brunswick–New Jersey, 2001, pp. 182–192; M. Baigell, "Social Concern and 'Tikkun Olam' in Jewish American Art", *Ars Judaica. The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art*, 2012, 8, pp. 55–80; *Jewish Dimension in Modern Visual Culture*, eds. R. C. Washton Long, M. Baigel, M. Heyd, Milly, Hanover–London, 2010.

55 G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, pp. 326–330, 338; A. Lipszyc, *Ślad judaizmu w filozofii XX wieku* [The trace of Judaism in the philosophy of the 20th century], Warsaw, 2009, chapter 5: "Gershom Scholem: Niezniszczalność tradycji i nicość objawienia" [Gershom Scholem: The indestructibility of tradition and the void of the revelation], pp. 82–83 (74–84). See also: D. G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse. Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture*, Cambridge MA, 1984, pp. 41–43.

56 See also D. Rynhold, "The Problems of Evil", in: *Modern Judaism. An Oxford Guide*, ed. N. de Lange, M. Freud-Kandel, Oxford, 2005, pp. 314–324.

of) exile, be it physical, intellectual, theological or cultural.⁵⁷ Thus, to use Scholem's words, beginning from this primordial act, all being has been in exile and needs to be "led back". The "breaking of the vessels continues into all the further stages of emanation and Creation; everything is in some way broken, everything has a flaw, everything is unfinished". [...] For after the crisis nothing remains as it was. [...] Nothing remains in its proper place. Everything is somewhere else. But a being that is not in its proper place is in exile".⁵⁸

However, from the theological perspective, conceptualising *exile* in God is, in Scholem's view, rather problematic, bold or even audacious as a gnostic paradox, but has been influential as an idea and a deceptively vivid symbol.⁵⁹ Exile (and dispersion) is both the primordial catastrophic cosmic act, but also a process which pertains to God as well (at least the manifestations of his being), and therefore historical experience may be placed in the realm of religious, or even mystical experience. In other words, all the negative experiences of the Jews are presented as the echoes of the primordial catastrophe that continues to affect the human world. The work of man, in turn, consists in the continuous "uplifting of the fallen sparks". Here, a new kabbalistic metaphor appears. The sparks are the shattered fragments of letters, symbols or entire "lost" words, while the process of gathering them is, literally, an act of repairing the world (*tikkun olam*). As Scholem puts it: "The Tikkun restores the unity of God's name which was destroyed by the original defect – Luria speaks of the letters JH as being torn away from WH in the name JHWH – and every true religious act is directed towards the same aim".⁶⁰

On the one hand, the necessity for continuous (historical) restoration and the awareness of its utopian nature (the inability to reach perfection – to grasp God) has created a state of a certain religious and cultural condition, which Wettstein calls the religion of *galuth*, catastrophe. On the other hand, Judaism emphasises that even the events of the *Shoah* do not relieve a person from their responsibility to make further attempts at restitution; to the contrary, in such a situation restoration is even more desirable.⁶¹ In the Hebrew language *tikkun* may mean "perfecting", "betterment", "correction", but also "institution" or "arrangement".⁶² In order to mend the shattered world or rebuild an edifice, one needs to (metaphorically) bring forth "healing, constructive lights".⁶³

57 H. Wettstein, "Coming to Terms with Exile", in: *Diasporas and Exiles. Varieties of Jewish Identity*, ed. H. Wettstein, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 2002, p. 49 (47–59). See also: *Diaspora: Exile and the Jewish Condition*, ed. E. Levine, New York, 1983; A. Eisen, *Galut*, Bloomington, 1986.

58 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, pp. 112–113. See also P. Śpiewak, *Teologia i filozofia żydowska wobec Holocaustu* [Jewish theology and philosophy in the face of Holocaust], Gdańsk, 2013.

59 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 113. As Scholem puts it, the quest for the reason for this dispersion/exile is not only indispensable, but also impossible to complete.

60 After: G. Scholem, *Major Trends...*, p. 275.

61 According to Isaac Luria, the process of *tikkun olam* takes place partially in God, and partially in man as the peak of all creation; hence the special role of human beings in this process. See Scholem, *Major Trends...*, *Seventh Lecture: Isaac Luria and his School*, pp. 244–286.

62 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...* p. 127.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

This is the task undertaken by art and architecture that have inherited religion's theurgic power to affect the human world and connect it to the "supra-terrestrial" sphere. Art and religion come from a common source, while all creative processes, architectural endeavours included, share certain features.⁶⁴ Adopting this logic, one may assume – again following Scholem – that the doctrine of the mystical actions of an orans, a kabbalist, an artist or an architect constitutes one of the crucial points of contact between mysticism and magic, which can easily blend into one another.⁶⁵ As Scholem writes, it is obvious that the teaching on a specified intention in a religious act (Hebr. *Kawwanah*) may be regarded as a form of magic; it implies the issue of magical influence. Magic and mysticism may overlap and permeate one another, while certain forms of mysticism do not blur the difference between the Creator and the creation, thereby acting as transitional forms between magical and mystical religious awareness.⁶⁶ One may also make the (rather bold) assumption that in this case the architect is no less than a "mystic", or even a mage influencing the world through their actions, i.e. designs. Incidentally, in this case mystical aspects constitute both the source of an architect's inspiration, and the framework of the artistic awareness and directives for the work of a demiurge-artist. This artistic awareness is accompanied by belief in mystical, or even magical components of creative work (and its forms), perceived as a real factor influencing the process of creating a new (utopian) world and its shape. Here, the basic constituents are letters, which may, in the appropriate kabbalistic interpretative framework, be called the building material.

Building material/The return of the Shekhinah

A look at archival photographs documenting the museum's construction inevitably reveals an interesting phenomenon – the impression that the entire structure was built upon letters/symbols. This suggestive image is evoked by the fact that the windows of the museum do not delineate any specific horizontal planes, but run diagonally spanning the entire structure; the walls appear to be, in a way, "suspended" from these patterns. The photograph which illustrates it the most clearly shows the construction of the eastern façade, whose window resembles a slanting rectangle (Fig. 13). The cut of the window forms a certain "vacuum" enclosed by a physical wall, as if the rectangle symbol was in itself "condensed" (and at the same time transparent). On the other hand, it may be assumed that only the construction of the building results in the creation of the letter symbol. Here we may recall

64 M. Szwarc, *Sztuka a Żydzi* [The Jews versus art], Tel Aviv, 1919, 11, after: J. Malinowski, *Malarstwo i rzeźba Żydów Polskich w XIX i XX wieku* [Painting and sculpture by Polish Jewish artists in the 19th and 20th century], Warsaw, 2000, pp. 186, 206, note 26.

65 G. Scholem, *Major Trends...* pp. 340–341. Scholem also notes that even the Torah was repeatedly used for magical purposes; the divine names it contains were treated as incantations, as were magical names derived from the combinations of letters. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, pp. 37–38, 136. See also: R. Elior, *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism*, Oxford, 2008.

66 G. Scholem *Major Trends...* p. 341; idem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 190.

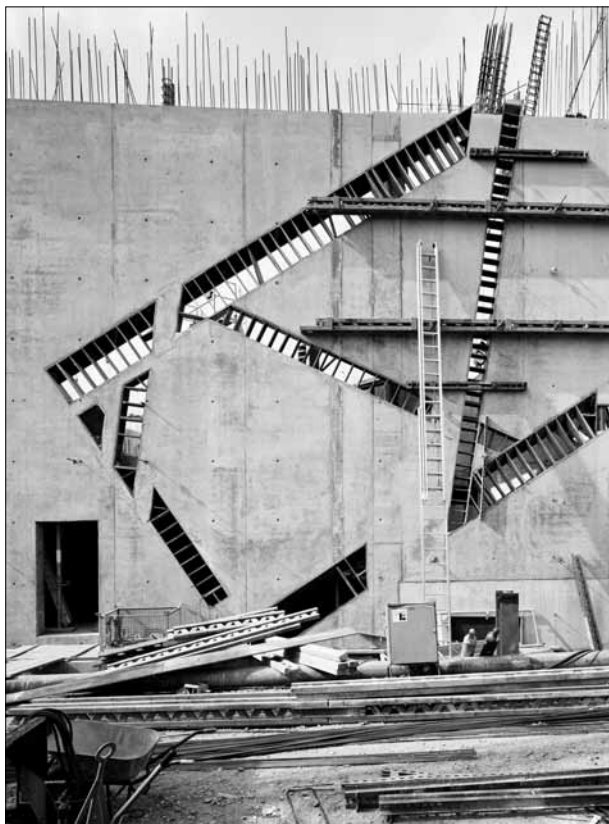


Fig. 13. Museum construction site. Photo by Silke Helmerding, 1999. Source: by kind permission of the photographer

fig. no. 5, i.e. Libeskind's graph depicting symbols and entitled "the alphabet", which the architect designated as one of the basic planes of interpreting the entire complex structure of his design. In the specific, Kabbalah-centric angle of analysis followed in the present work, this "alphabet" may be regarded as an "architectural primer", which may be further interpreted as leading to the *Sefer Yetsirah* and the verses describing the shaping of the world (or the restoration thereof). Identified with the sefirot, or the phases of divine emanation, letters are described as "structural elements" (in the structure of both the world and God, or the divine name), as well as the "stones from which the edifice of Creation was built".⁶⁷ As emphasised by Scholem, the Hebrew term used in the book to present consonants as "elementary letters" indubitably reflects the double meaning of the Greek word *stoicheia*, which may signify both "letters" and "elements".⁶⁸ It should also be noted that the Hebrew

⁶⁷ G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 167.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

term for “word” (*mila*) may be used interchangeably with the word *devar*, which can also mean “a thing”, or “an element”.⁶⁹

As mentioned above, in the Kabbalah letters constitute the appropriate tool, the building material and the matter in the divine act of creation, so described in the second chapter of the *Sefer Yetsirah*: “[...] ‘Twenty-two letter-elements: He outlined them, hewed them out, weighed them, combined them, and exchanged them [transformed them in accordance with certain laws], and through them created the soul of all creation and everything else that was ever to be created.’ And further: ‘How did He combine, weigh, and exchange them? A [which in Hebrew is a consonant] with all [other consonants] and all with A, B with all and all with B, G with all and all with G, and they all return in a circle to the beginning through two hundred thirty-one gates – the number of the pairs that can be formed from the twenty-two elements-and thus it results that everything created and every thing spoken issue from one name’”.⁷⁰ Thus, as Scholem puts it, letters are the mystical body of the divine, as God is the soul of the letters: “the Holy One, blessed be He, is in His Name and His Name is in Him, and that His Name is His Torah [...] Thy Name is in Thee and in Thee is Thy Name”. Following Scholem: “For the letters of His Name are He Himself. Even though they move away from Him, they remain firmly rooted [literally: fly away and remain with him – *ki ’otbiyotb porboth ve-’omdotb bo*]”.⁷¹ In the perception of the famous kabbalist Moses Cordovero, divine letters, which form the innermost essence of the Torah, are also configurations of divine light. They combine in various ways in the course of progressive materialisation. First of all, they compose divine names, afterwards, the appellatives and predicates describing the divine, and later still, they combine in new ways to form words that pertain to earthly events and material objects.⁷² Moreover, a commentary to the *Midrash Kohen* (dealing with cosmogony) written by Isaac the Blind contains the following passage: “In God’s right hand were engraved all the engravings [innermost forms] that were destined some day to rise from potency to act. From the emanation of all [higher] *sefirot* they were graven, scratched, and molded into the *sefirah* of Grace (*hesed*), which is also called God’s right hand, and this was done in an inward, inconceivably subtle way. This formation is called the concentrated, not yet unfolded Torah, and also the Torah of Grace. Along with all the other engravings [principally] two engravings were made in it”.⁷³

In this almost architectural labour of creation (which is ongoing, since the world has not been completed) human beings have a special role to play. According to the

69 See T. Zaderecki, op. cit., pp. 47–49; M. A. Ouaknin, op. cit., pp. 267–328.

70 See *Księga Jecirah. Klucz kabały* [Book Yetsirah. The Kabbalah Key], translated by M. Prokopowicz, Warsaw, 1994; *Sefer Jecira, czyli Księga stworzenia* [Sefer Yetsirah, or the Book of Creation], translated by W. Brojer, J. Doktor, B. Kos, Warsaw, 1995. See also: G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 168.

71 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 44.

72 Ibid., p. 71. Scholem also writes that in the Messianic Age people will be able to read the Torah in a completely different combination of letters.

73 Ibid., pp. 48–49.

Kabbalah, man was not only made of the letters of the alphabet,⁷⁴ but from the very beginning has been involved in the matter of language as the elementary material and instrument of salvation. The kabbalist tradition recounts the tale of God taking pity on Adam after his expulsion from paradise and sending the Archangel Raziel after him. The angel was to give Adam a book which would enable him not only to one day return to the Garden of Eden, but also to remember that he was made in the image of God and that he may see God's face by looking at the mirror of his creation.⁷⁵ The Book of Raziel (*Sefer Raziel*) [Raziel means "Secret of God"] belongs to the basic canon of kabbalistic magic books. It stipulates that people learn the combinations of letters that make up the names of God, which in turn have the power to interfere with the reality of this world (or at least this is the belief).

Abraham himself is another individual traditionally thought to have possessed the ability and skill to use the alphabet in a demiurgic manner. Early manuscripts of the *Book Yetsirah* bear the title of the "Alphabet of our father Abraham" ('*Othioth de-' Abraham Avinu*). Its conclusion contains the following passage: "When our Father Abraham came, he contemplated, meditated, and beheld, investigated and understood and outlined and dug and combined and formed [i.e. created], and he succeeded".⁷⁶ As Scholem writes, this "created and succeeded" refers not only to successful endeavours of speculative nature, but clearly to Abraham's work with letters, in which he precisely repeated all the verbs God used during the process of creation.⁷⁷

The biblical character which provides a more direct connection between architecture and the mythological metaphors presented above is Bezalel, who helped (and astonished) Moses by constructing the Tabernacle in the desert. Midrashes recount that Bezalel "knew the combinations of letters with which heaven and earth were made" and could replicate the act of creation *en miniature*; his building was a "complete microcosm, a miraculous copy of everything that is in heaven and on earth".⁷⁸ Following Scholem's argumentation, a similar tradition of creative power lies at the roots of another midrash referring to the Torah: "No one knows its [right] order, for the sections of the Torah are not given in the right arrangement. If they were, everyone who reads in it might create a world, raise the dead, and perform miracles. Therefore the order of the Torah was hidden and is known to God alone".⁷⁹ Thus, the Torah itself was originally a heap of unarranged letters (Hebr. *tel shel 'othiyoth bilti mesuddaroth*), and God's original intent expressed therein will only be revealed after

74 I. Kania, *Opowieści Zoharu. O Kabale i Zoharze* [Tales of the Zohar. On the Kabbalah and the Zohar], Cracow, 2005, pp. 30–31.

75 Z. Halevi, *Kabbalah: A Tradition of Hidden Knowledge*, London, 1979, p. 35.

76 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, pp. 169–170. In a footnote to this citation Scholem writes that the word for "formed" (*ve-tsar*) is a commonly used verb form and carries the meaning of "created".

77 This refers to the crucial fact of introducing monotheism, which is identified simply with "forming" the world anew.

78 After: G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, pp. 166–167.

79 *Midrash Tehillim to Psalm 3*, ed. S. Buber, 17a; after: G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 167.

the coming of the Messiah. The current combination of letters forming the words of the Torah known to us will then be annulled; the letters will arrange themselves into new words forming sentences that speak of "other things".⁸⁰ Other comments state that the Torah will stay the same, yet people will learn to read it in accordance with a different combination of letters, a different order of words and their new meanings. Thus, the same letters will be combined into words which will tell an entirely different story.

The kabbalistic context of the alphabet presented above may therefore work as the interpretative framework for Libeskind's design. Offering such an interpretation contextualised by letters may then be regarded as accepting the architect's challenge. Responding to this provocation, one should decipher at least some of the symbols encoded in the bundle of lines, "return to them" their original signification and derive further meaning. This task would, however, not only require capturing specific letters or even words, but also result in the need to write numerous detailed analyses citing various analogies, examples, comparisons and confirmations based on the Kabbalah. The present work may only single out some of the symbols, identify the shapes of the letters they contain and refer them to the notarikon, the method of discerning the meaning of words and entire phrases (sentences) from their abbreviated forms, i.e. the first consonants.⁸¹ The system is very popular in Hebrew writing. A glance at the entire structure of Libeskind's museum and photographic images of the building (for certain forms sometimes become discernible only on photographs) reveals a broad spectrum of letters, such as *bet*, *kaf*, *mem*, *nun*, *tsade*, *gimel*, *yud*, *vav*, *hei*, *het*, *tet*, *tav*, *resh*, *dalet*, *shin* and others. In the notarikon system, each of them may be read as a symbol of a specific phrase and therefore lead to interesting conclusions.

On the north-eastern façade of the building, in the location of the courtyard-garden one may find the letter *mem* (Fig. 14), which may be deciphered as *malkuth*, one of the *sefirot*, or the levels of God's emanation in the process of creating the world. The elevation as seen from Lindenstrasse, i.e. on the west side, features a jumble of symbols (Fig. 10), with the letter *kof* clearly discernible. The same letter may also be spotted on the staircase inside the building (Fig. 11). It symbolises the word *kidusha*, meaning "sacred", "holy". The motif was also used in the design of the synagogue

80 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, pp. 74–75. To illustrate the belief in the creative power of letters, Scholem quotes Azulai: "When a man utters words of the Torah, he never ceases to create spiritual potencies and new lights, which issue like medicines from ever new combinations of the elements and consonants" (after: G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 76) and Pinhas of Koretz: "Indeed it is true that the holy Torah was originally created as an incoherent jumble of letters. [...] These words, on the contrary, were not yet present, for the events of Creation that they record had not yet taken place. Thus all the letters of the Torah were indeed jumbled, and only when a certain event occurred in the world did the letters combine to form the words in which the event is related" (after G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 76).

81 There are two other methods of reading the meaning of letters, namely the masora, which is based on the symbolic interpretation of the shape of letters, and the gematria, which assigns numerical value to letters.



Fig. 14. View of a window in the northern wall. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Jens Ziehe

and the cultural centre in Mainz, authored by Manuel Herz Architects, whose façade is anchored on the word.

Looking at the façade from Lindenstrasse at a direct angle, one may also notice the motif of a deformed star of David, as well as three vertical, slightly slanting lines below two horizontal ones, visible on the section closest to the street.⁸² Together, the arrangement forms two letters *dalet*, one of them reversed, and the letter *vav* in the centre. *Dalet*, *vav* and *dalet* form the word David, as if in confirmation of the shape of the star in the background. The word *dalet* itself is the name of the letter, yet the combination of consonants d-l-t may also mean “gate”. It seems that the motif was deliberately situated near what is symbolically the front entrance.

Furthermore, the wall in the Paul Celan courtyard (from the east side) bears several letters superimposed on one another. These include: *nun*, *kaf*, *dalet*, reversed *shin* and *bet*, the latter of which is the most easily visible (Fig. 8, 9). *Bet* signifies a house, but in this case it may be a reference to a kabbalist interpretation of the first verses of the Exodus: *Bereshith* (“In the beginning”). Scholem notes that, contemplating the arrangement of symbols in the opening line of the Exodus, Isaac Luria rearranged the letters in the very first word (*Bereshith*), and arrived at the word *be-sherid* – “from the remains/leftovers”. “Leftovers of what? – asked saint Lev, and

⁸² See: <https://stephenvaradyarchittraveller.com/2016/05/06/jewish-museum-berlin/> [accessed 24 September 2018].

engaged in the investigation of the history of creation before creation, before the bereshith".⁸³

One symbol that deserves particular attention is *shin*, whose shape may be discerned in several places, the first of them being the previously mentioned arrangement of the underground axes, resembling the fingers of an open hand (Fig. 3, 7). Cut into the wall of the building, below the line of the roof on the façade facing E. T. A. Hoffmann's garden, it looks like a naturally proportioned, accurate alphabetical symbol with its characteristic form of three lines drawn upwards (Fig. 15). The same form of the letter is repeated (at least) three more times, each time facing a different geographical direction. Twice it appears upside down. It may also be discerned on both sides of the building as a "transparent" symbol. The most interesting view of this trick is found on the first floor of the museum, if one looks to the east. The *shin* there is oriented towards Jerusalem, facing the garden courtyard (Fig. 16, 17).

In the interpretation of the structure adopted in the present work, the letters *shin* carved or cut into the walls may be regarded as acronyms of the word *sh'ma* (Hebr. listen). It is the name of the short (it has only three verses) but immensely



Fig. 15. View of a section of the western façade. Author's own photograph

83 K. Gebert, *54 komentarze do Tory* [54 commentaries to the Torah], Cracow, 2004, p. 14.



Fig. 16. Inside view of a window form. Author's own photograph



Fig. 17. View of the southern façade. Source copyrights: Jüdisches Museum Berlin (c), photo: Jens Ziehe

significant Hebrew prayer (Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41), an affirmation of monotheism: Hear, oh Yisrael, the Lord our God, the Lord is One (*Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad*). In Jewish tradition, the verse of the Shema is placed in a *mezuzah* (a small box) hung at the right side of the entrance to the house. The boxes are additionally decorated with the letter *shin*, or three letters – *shin*, *dalet* and *yud* – to signify *Shaddai* (the Almighty).⁸⁴ The letter *shin* may also be seen as a reference to the word *Shekhinah* (Hebr. dwelling). In the most general of terms, *Shekhinah* is the personification and hypostasis of the “divine presence” or his “dwelling” in the world and is a concept that has functioned in Jewish tradition since antiquity.⁸⁵ The term is used only in the context of the divine dwelling, never to denote ordinary presence; it is God’s visible and hidden presence in a given place.⁸⁶ The exile of Israel meant the exile of *Shekhinah* itself, since it shares the fate of the community and envelops all of its people.⁸⁷ This motif holds predominantly mystical and symbolical significance; some Kabbalists are of the opinion that the exile of the *Shekhinah* continues until the day of the coming of the Messiah.⁸⁸ This image (*galuth*, exile) comes from the Talmud, which stipulates: “In every exile into which the children of Israel went, the *Shekhinah* was with them”. The Kabbalah, in turn, interprets it to mean that “a part of God Himself is exiled from God” (as in the exile of the soul from its source).⁸⁹

In view of these connotations of the letter *shin*, Libeskind’s choice to visually translate the symbol into shapes on the walls of his building can be understood as an architectural and theurgical act of inviting/invoking the *Shekhinah* to return, which is the core of the magical and mystical aspect of *tikkun olam* (the repair of the world).

Nevertheless, the letter visible on Libeskind’s design appears deformed in a rather peculiar manner. Instead of presenting the usual three lines spreading upwards, the architect added a fourth line running crosswise to connect two of the lateral ones. Why is the letter deformed, and why does it take such a shape? The answer, once more, is to be found in the Kabbalah. It stipulates that the world created by God with the primordial alphabet (*Sefer Yetsirah*) is not perfect, because one of the letters is deformed – its flaw led to the “contamination” of the whole “construction” (including negative aspects finding their way into the Torah). Kabbalists presumed this faulty letter to be none other than the consonant *shin*, written with

84 M. A. Ouaknin, op. cit, pp. 365–366.

85 G. Scholem, *On the Mystical...*, p. 171.

86 Ibid., pp. 171, 178–178.

87 On the withdrawal of the *Shekhinah*, see G. Scholem, *On the Mystical...*, pp. 161–164; idem, *Major Trends...*, p. 250.

88 M. Buber, *Opowieści Chasysów* [Tales of the Hasidism], translated by P. Hertz, Poznań–Warsaw, 1988, pp. 266–267. On the female aspect of the *Shekhinah*, see e.g. R. M. Gross, “Steps toward Feminine Imagery of Deity In Jewish Theology”, in: *On Being Jewish Feminist*, ed. S. Heschel, New York, 1983, pp. 234–247. See also: B. Kos, M. Krych, “Kabbala żywa” [The living Kabbalah], *Znak*, 1983, no. 339–340, pp. 305–306.

89 *Megillah* 29a, after G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 107.

three prongs, while it ought to have four. Scholem notes that kabbalists prescribed to have both forms of the letter engraved in the *tefillin*, as it ought to evoke the perfection of the alphabet that humankind would learn after the coming of the Messiah.⁹⁰ Thus, *tefillin* always feature the letter *shin* with four prongs – a form never used in ordinary writing.⁹¹ The four-lined *shin* on the walls of the building therefore serves as corroboration of the kabbalist and messianistic interpretation of the entire design, whose aim, as mentioned above, is to theurgically fulfil the postulate of the repair of the world (*tikkun olam*).

The characteristic chaotic arrangement of the window openings is not simply a means of artistic expression to illustrate the civilisational, historical and cultural “fragmentation” (Holocaust), nor does it result from doubt in the possibility for recovery. On the contrary, the design manifestly embodies the nostalgia for the mythical times of harmony, order and regularity, as well as the longing for clear structure and symbiosis. Architecture understood as a kabbalistic system of images is therefore, in this context, a postulate of metaphorical reconstruction. Furthermore, it refers to the utopian, messianistic belief in the renewal of the Covenant, the restitution of former glory and the hope for repair, *tikkun olam*. The system of scattered letters on the Berlin museum, at first glance seemingly returned to their primordial form, begs to be arranged in order, and “read” anew. Such architecture deliberately implicates the feeling of some unfinished gesture or act, and therefore, in the realm of the symbolic, motivates towards restoration (understood as a kind of reflection).

As Scholem writes, “to bring about the *tikkun* [...] is precisely the aim of redemption. In redemption everything is restored to its place by the secret magic of human acts, things are freed from their mixture and consequently, in the realms both of man and of nature, from their servitude to the demonic powers, which, once the light is removed from them, are reduced to deathly passivity”.⁹² All human activity is, therefore, work towards this repair. In a broader sense, *tikkun olam* is also perceived as the general social process encompassing historical, cultural and political issues, including art and architecture as the instruments of this interpretation.⁹³

In this case, the context of the Kabbalah is a characteristic symptom or a certain modality forming – in the aspect of its reception – a new matrix for the analytical description of architecture, as well as presenting it as a specific mechanism of influence in the broadly understood process of *tikkun olam*.

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

90 See: <http://lubavitchyeshiva.com/product/tefilin/> [accessed 24 September 2018].

91 G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah...*, p. 80.

92 Ibid., pp. 116–117.

93 See e.g. Matthews Baigell, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*, New Brunswick, New Jersey–London, 1997 (chapter 4: “Tikkun Olam”), pp. 51–58; idem, *Social Concern and ‘Tikkun Olam’...*, pp. 55–80. See also Robert S. Wistrich, “Fateful Trap: The German–Jewish Symbiosis”, in: *Tikkun* 5.2 (March–April 1990), pp. 34–38.

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Abstract

The present article attempts to analyse and interpret the structure of windows in the Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind and constructed in 1989–1999. Elongated, narrow, irregular window openings arranged at different angles like a tangle of cuts and grooves span the entire structure and resemble Hebrew letters and the kabbalistic notion of the "scattered alphabet", which functions in Jewish tradition as a visual metaphor.

The assumption of such a perspective of interpretation, based on the visual form of the building which was, in its principle, meant to partially refer to the Holocaust, leads to the hypothesis that the chosen motifs of letter-shaped windows (the scattered alphabet) is connected to the kabbalistic postulate of the "repair of the world", known in Jewish tradition as *tikkun olam*. The characteristic chaotic arrangement of the window openings is not, as it might be assumed, simply a symbol of the civilisational "fragmentation" resulting from the Holocaust. On the contrary, the design manifestly embodies the nostalgia for the mythical (and messianic) times of harmony, order and regularity, as well as the longing for clear structure and symbiosis. This manifests in the kabbalistic interpretation of the motif of letter-windows understood as a mystical (or even theurgical) element of restoration. Concentration, contemplation, perception and consideration of the forms and shapes of the letters is a notion known from the Kabbalah; in this case architectural references to Jewish

mysticism are more than just a strategy for interpretation, but a declarative assumption made by the architect himself. Libeskind's design in Berlin, therefore, involves the matter of language as the elementary material and instrument of salvation, while the context of the Kabbalah ought to be regarded as a certain symptom or a specific modality shaping new meanings manifested by the work of art that this museum undoubtedly is.

Keywords: Daniel Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Kabbalah, contemporary architecture

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A Church for the Polish People: On the Contest for the Parochial Church in the Warsaw District of Praga

Introduction

In 1886 the periodical *Przegląd Techniczny* announced a contest to design a church for the parish in the Praga district of Warsaw.¹ The chosen design, authored by Józef Pius Dziekoński, underwent numerous modifications and was subsequently realised in the years 1888–1901 (Fig. 1).² Consecrated on 29 September 1901, the church was dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr.³ In the interwar period the spires of the church were dismantled and replaced with lower, lighter ones because of the building's subsidence.⁴ Sadly, this intervention did not save it from destruction; the church was blown up during the Second World War. Its present form is the result of a complete reconstruction.⁵ Initially a parochial church only, in the year 1992 it became the cathedral of the newly created Warsaw-Praga Diocese, and has held the rank of a minor basilica since 1997.⁶

1 A. Majdowski, *Budownictwo kościelne w twórczości projektowej Józefa Piusa Dziekońskiego (1844–1927)* [Church architecture in the oeuvre of Józef Pius Dziekoński (1844–1927)], Warsaw, 1995, p. 37.

2 Ibid., p. 196.

3 “Z tygodnia na tydzień. Poświęcenie kościoła św. Floryana na Pradze” [Week to week. The consecration of the church of St. Florian in Praga], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1901, 42, no. 40, pp. 779–780. Hereinafter the full name of the church will be omitted, in accordance with the standard used in relevant historical sources.

4 A. Majdowski, “Z dziejów budowy kościoła pw. świętych Michała i Floriana” [On the history of the church of St. Michael and Florian], in: *Świątynie prawego brzegu. Kościół katolicki w dziejach prawobrzeżnej Warszawy* [Temples of Vistula's right-hand bank. The Catholic Church in the history of east-bank Warsaw], Warsaw, 2009, p. 133.

5 T. Krogulec, “Stanisław Marzeński (1904–1992) – budowniczy kościołów” [Stanisław Marzeński (1904–1992) – a constructor of churches], *Almanach Muzealny*, 2010, 6, pp. 225–227; A. Majdowski, op. cit., p. 137.

6 <http://katedra-floriana.waw.pl/historia/ustanowienie-diecezji> [accessed 30 April 2018].



Fig. 1. Józef Pius Dziekoński, the façade of the church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr in Warsaw, constructed 1888–1901, condition in 1935, photo: Henryk Podębski



Fig. 2. Józef Pius Dziekoński, the Church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr in Warsaw, view from the south, constructed 1888–1901, condition in 1913, photo: Zakład Graficzny B. Wierzbicki i S-ka

The church in Praga (Fig. 2) won substantial acclaim and fame even before its construction was completed, as is apparent from, for instance, the fact that the “centennial contest” organised by *Kurier Warszawski* labelled the edifice as the most important work of Polish architecture in the 19th century.⁷ For present-day users and scholars, however, the significance of the church may be difficult to grasp. There is a number of reasons for this perception; the most important one, perhaps, is related to the architectural form of the edifice, which is rather typical for the time period in question. As early as 1914 Leon Gościcki stated that the temple is a copy of the Votivkirche in Vienna and many other 19th-century structures, only in brick.⁸ The same opinion was repeated in more recent works, for instance by Krzysztof Stefański⁹ and Andrzej Majdowski.¹⁰ How, then, can one explain the extraordinary fame that the church of St. Florian used to enjoy? As far as the development of Polish architecture is concerned, how significant was the contest for its design? Does it deserve further study or even a note in historiographic publications?

The present article attempts to defend the view that the crucial significance of the contest in the history of Polish 19th-century architecture manifests itself mainly in essays, debates, press articles and other texts written in direct connection with the event under analysis. Referring to selected source material, I describe the circumstances in which the contest was announced, its requirements and the criteria according to which the winning design was chosen. In addition, the present analysis accentuates the crux of the conflict that resulted in the contest and the manner in which the architect himself chose to address the matters discussed in the course of the debate.

My analysis elaborates on many topics which have already become the subject of interest for other scholars. Similarly, the sources mentioned here have been cited many times previously, although, in my personal estimation, only rarely were they subjected to a more thorough and critical analysis. Providing a direct connection between the themes present in many different publications and the facts related to the contest, as well as to the theoretical discussion it generated, appears to me to constitute a valuable contribution to the systematisation and development of the study of Polish architecture in the latter half of the 19th century.

7 “Konkurs stulecia. Nasza twórczość naukowa, literacka i artystyczna w XIX wieku” [The centennial contest. Our academic, literary and artistic works in the 19th century], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1901, 81, no. 1, p. 16.

8 L. Gościcki, *Budowa świątyni: wskazówki praktyczne przy wznoszeniu i odbudowie kościołów oraz zdobieniu ich wnętrza* [Constructing a temple: practical guidelines for erecting and rebuilding churches, as well as decorating their interiors], Warsaw, 1914, p. 10.

9 K. Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna w poszukiwaniu stylu narodowego* [Polish sacred architecture in search of a national style], Łódź, 2000, p. 49.

10 A. Majdowski, *Studia z historii architektury sakralnej w Królestwie Polskim* [Studies on the history of sacred architecture in the Kingdom of Poland], Warsaw, 1993, p. 137.

The sources and the current state of research

The effort undertaken in the present article is preliminary and exploratory in nature. Given the strict spatial constraints of an academic article, it is not possible to discuss all the sources that in one way or another refer to the contest for the design of the church of St. Florian. The present work will therefore focus on a selection of texts, the choice of which merits a detailed explanation.

First, the analysis turns to an article written by the Warsaw-based art critic and journalist Karol Matuszewski¹¹ in 1881.¹² Although penned before the contest was announced, it offers an overview of theoretical problems and financial, legal and administrative difficulties all architectural projects undertaken in Warsaw in the 1880s were facing, presenting them in a more thorough manner than any other source with which I am acquainted. Many of the issues noted by Matuszewski were also discussed in other (often much earlier) publications,¹³ yet his article provides the most synthetic synopsis of the topics in my circle of interest.

The core of the present analysis comprises texts published in *Przegląd Techniczny*, which delineate the architectural contest. These are, in chronological order, the announcement of the contest,¹⁴ the report from the contest committee meeting,¹⁵ the presentation of the awarded designs,¹⁶ and finally the text declaring that the chosen and amended project would be implemented.¹⁷ These sources constitute a natural basis for all further discussion.

The key to understanding the controversy caused by the contest for the design for the church of St. Florian lies in a single line included in the list of requirements: “the building is to be ogival in style, made of brick, in the so-called Vistula-Baltic vein”.¹⁸ Particularly the term “Vistula-Baltic”, widespread at the time, motivated numerous authors to attempt to define it or to offer a critical evaluation. To outline

11 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 31–33.

12 K. Matuszewski, “O architekturze u obcych i u nas uwagi ze stanowiska estetycznego” [On foreign and domestic architecture from an aesthetic standpoint], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1881, 3, pp. 75–93, 382–405.

13 For instance, the need to develop a national jargon of architecture and the backwardness Poles displayed in that regard was noted by Sebastian Sierakowski as early as in 1812. Cf. S. Sierakowski, *Architektura obejmująca wszelkie gatunki murowania i budowania* [Architecture including all types of masonry and construction], vol. 1, Cracow, 1812, pp. 1–2.

14 “Konkurs na sporządzenie szkicu do projektu kościoła dla parafii praskiej m. Warszawy” [A contest for presenting a design sketch for a parochial church in the Praga district of Warsaw], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1886, 23, no. 9, p. 263.

15 “Sprawozdanie komisji konkursowej z osądzenia szkiców projektu budowy kościoła dla parafii praskiej m. Warszawy” [The report of the contest jury after considering the design sketches for the church in the Praga district of Warsaw], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1887, 24, no. 4, p. 93.

16 “Projekty kościoła dla parafii praskiej m. Wwy” [The designs for the parochial church in the Praga district of Warsaw], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1887, 24, no. 5, p. 125.

17 “Budowa kościoła parafialnego na przedmieściu Praga” [The construction of the parochial church in the Praga suburb], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1888, 25, no. 5, p. 115.

18 *Konkurs na sporządzenie...*, p. 263.

the conflict that arose over the required architectural forms, the present work juxtaposes two articles.¹⁹ One was written by Franciszek Ksawery Martynowski, a journalist, antiquarian, theorist of conservation and art critic active in Warsaw;²⁰ the other is by Prof. Władysław Łuszczkiewicz, a Cracow-based specialist in art history and conservation, regarded as one of the founding fathers of mediaeval studies in Poland.²¹ Significantly, both essays were written in 1887, that is, after the contest was announced but before it was concluded. Their authors made direct references to the above-mentioned phrase and employed various means to influence the architects involved in the competition and to affect the final results. An interesting addition to this topic is provided by an article by Józef Pius Dziekoński written in 1900,²² in which the architect retrospectively discusses his almost finished work and the discussion it provoked.

Neo-Gothic architecture has not been thoroughly analysed as a subject in Polish history of art for a number of reasons, the most noteworthy one being the long-lasting prejudice against 19th-century architecture stemming from, among others, the dominance of the theoretical and aesthetic paradigms of modernism.²³ As far as early studies are concerned, however, the pioneering work by Andrzej K. Olszewski, which tackles the issue of the Vistula-Baltic style, deserves a mention.²⁴

As regards more recent publications, the problems highlighted by the contest for the Praga church were discussed in detail by Krzysztof Stefański and Andrzej Majdowski. The former analyses the church of St. Florian in his comprehensive

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- 19 W. Łuszczkiewicz, "Kilka słów o naszym budownictwie w epoce ostrołukowej i jego cechach charakterystycznych" [Brief notes on domestic architecture in the ogival era and its characteristic features], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1887, 24, no. 3–6, pp. 53–54, 81–82, 115–117, 148–150; F. K. Martynowski, "O stylu wiślano-bałtyckim" [On the Vistula-Baltic style], *Wiek: gazeta polityczna, literacka i społeczna*, 1887, no. 51, p. 3.
 - 20 Cf. B. Wierzbicka, *Franciszek Ksawery Martynowski 1848–1896. Polihistor, teoretyk restauracji zabytków, krytyk sztuki* [Franciszek Ksawery Martynowski 1848–1896. A polyhistor, theorist of art conservation and art critic], Warsaw, 1998.
 - 21 Cf. T. Dobrzeński, "Władysław Łuszczkiewicz – badacz sztuki romańskiej w Polsce" [Władysław Łuszczkiewicz – a scholar of Romanesque art in Poland], in: *Mysł o sztuce. Materiały Sesji z okazji czterdziestolecia istnienia Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, Warszawa, listopad 1974 [Thoughts on art. Materials from the session organised on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Art Historians, Warsaw, November 1974], Warsaw 1976, pp. 253–271; M. Rzepińska, *Władysław Łuszczkiewicz malarz i pedagog* [Władysław Łuszczkiewicz, painter and educator], Cracow, 1983.
 - 22 J. P. Dziekoński, "Kościół parafialny świętego Floryana na Pradze pod Warszawą" [The parochial church of St. Florian in Praga near Warsaw], *Architekt*, 1900, no. 1, pp. 6–10.
 - 23 W. Bałus, *Gotyke bez Boga? W kręgu znaczeń symbolicznych architektury sakralnej XIX wieku* [Gothic without God? On the symbolic meaning of church architecture in the 19th century], Toruń, 2011, pp. 23–26.
 - 24 A. K. Olszewski, "Przegląd koncepcji stylu narodowego w teorii architektury polskiej przełomu XIX i XX w." [An overview of the concepts of a national style in the theory of architecture in Poland between the 19th and 20th century], *Sztuka i Krytyka*, 1956, 7, no. 3–4, pp. 275–372, 391–394.

work on 19th-century architecture in the territories of Poland,²⁵ as well as in a more specific study on the search for a national style in ecclesiastical architecture.²⁶

Andrzej Majdowski, in turn, is a scholar who merits a more detailed introduction in the context of the subject under analysis. He authored the only existing publication listing all edifices with a religious function designed by Józef Pius Dziekoński.²⁷ Majdowski's studies and articles on the history of ecclesiastical architecture discuss the issue of the national style and the various opinions on the Vistula-Baltic style.²⁸ The source material accumulated in his works is truly admirable and, in my estimation, merits further and more detailed study. Lastly, Majdowski is the author of the only article focused on the contest for the design of the church of St. Florian.²⁹ It concentrates on the recorded facts as related to the course of the contest and the process of the temple's construction.

A broader background for the present analysis may be provided by the most significant works on neo-Gothic architecture in Poland – studies on the oeuvre of the most prominent architects and the implementation of their ideas.³⁰ Valuable

25 K. Stefański, *Architektura XIX wieku na ziemiach polskich* [19th-century architecture in Polish territories], Warsaw, 2005, pp. 127–131.

26 K. Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna...*, pp. 46–52.

27 A. Majdowski, *Budownictwo kościelne w twórczości projektowej Józefa Piusa Dziekońskiego (1844–1927)* [Church architecture in the design oeuvre of Józef Pius Dziekoński (1844–1927)], Warsaw, 1995, pp. 37–38.

28 A. Majdowski, "Nurt narodowy w architekturze sakralnej Królestwa Polskiego od drugiej połowy XIX wieku" [The national style in sacred architecture of the Kingdom of Poland since the second half of the 19th century], *Nasza Przyszłość: studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce* [Our past. Studies on the history of the Church and the Catholic culture in Poland], vol. 64, Cracow, 1965, pp. 5–54; idem, "O poglądach na styl wiślano-bałtycki w polskiej architekturze sakralnej XIX wieku" [On the views on the Vistula-Baltic style in Polish sacred architecture in the 19th century], *Nasza Przyszłość: studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce*, vol. 78, Cracow, 1992, pp. 303–327; idem, *Studia z historii architektury...*, pp. 39–66, 125–142.

29 A. Majdowski, *Z dziejów budowy kościoła...*, pp. 125–137.

30 W. Bałus, "Architektura sakralna Teodora Talowskiego" [Church architecture by Teodor Talowski], *ZNUJ, Prace z Historii Sztuki*, 1992, no. 20, pp. 53–79; idem, "Działalność architektoniczna Jana Sasa-Zubrzyckiego w świetle jego poglądów teoretycznych" [The architectural works of Jan Sas-Zubrzycki in the light of his theoretical views], *Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji Naukowych Krakowskiego Oddziału PAN*, 1990, 32, no. 2, pp. 279–281; J. Frycz, *Neogotyki i restauracja zabytków w Polsce* [Neo-Gothic and the restoration of historical works in Poland], Warsaw, 1973; T. S. Jaroszewski, *Henryk Marconi i neogotyki* [Henryk Marconi and the neo-Gothic], Białystok, 1976; T. S. Jaroszewski, *O siedzibach neogotyckich w Polsce* [On neo-Gothic residences in Poland], Warsaw, 1981; Z. Ostrowska-Kęmbłowska, *Dzieje Kaplicy Królów Polskich czyli Złotej w katedrze poznańskiej* [The history of the chapel of the Polish kings or the Golden Chapel in the Poznań cathedral], Poznań, 1997; J. Wowczak, *Jan Sas-Zubrzycki: architekt, historyk i teoretyk architektury* [Jan Sas-Zubrzycki: architect, historian and theorist of architecture], Cracow, 2017; A. Zabłocka-Kos, *Sztuka, wiara, czucie: Alexis Langer – śląski architekt neogotyku* [Art, faith, feeling: Alexis Langer, a Silesian architect of the neo-Gothic], Wrocław, 1998; J. Żywicki, *Architektura neogotycka na Lubelszczyźnie* [Neo-Gothic architecture in the Lublin region], Lublin, 1998; idem, *Urzędnicy: architekci, budowniczowie, inżynierowie cywilni... Ludzie architektury i budow-*

context information is also found in publications regarding the category of historicism in architecture,³¹ comprehensive works on architectural contests,³² as well as anthology works on the issue of nationalism in art and art history.³³

On architecture in Poland and abroad

The idea to use mediaeval architecture as a model for future designs has a long and complex history in Poland. The contest for the design of the church of St. Florian, announced in 1886, was preceded by several decades of debate on the Gothic style, national architecture, and the manner in which it was supposed to emerge in Poland after it regained its independence. Matuszewski's article is therefore only a convenient tool which I decided to use to emphasise the issues crucial for the analysis at hand, namely, the national style, the vision of the reborn Gothic style, and the need to organise open architectural contests.

Matuszewski's essay opens with the issue of the national style, of its possible definition, the factors behind its emergence, and the possibility of developing it artificially. In Matuszewski's view,

the original simplicity of life or the multiplication of needs and expectations stemming from higher education, the mildness or harshness of climate, the principal occupations and lifestyles of the people, and moreover, the religious cult and the natural environment of the given land, which may supply people with varying building materials such as stone, marble, wood, clay and so forth – all of these circumstances influence the manner in which dwellings and public edifices are built.³⁴

It should be noted that he emphasises the complex nature of factors shaping architecture, as well as the mundane aspects of its development. In my estimation, it is the multi-aspectual attitude that sets Matuszewski apart from other authors.

nictwa w województwie lubelskim oraz guberni lubelskiej w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1815–1915 [Officials, architects, constructors, civil engineers... The people of architecture and construction in the Lublin Voivodship and the Lublin Governorate in the Kingdom of Poland in 1818–1915], Lublin, 2010.

31 W. Bałus, "Zjawisko historyzmu w architekturze wieku XIX. Próba opisu" [The phenomenon of historicism in 19th century architecture. An attempt at a description], *Dzieła i Interpretacje*, 1995, 3, pp. 69–80; *Sztuka i historia: Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki* [Art and history: Materials from the session of the Art Historian Society], ed. M. Bielska-Łach, Warsaw, 1992; Z. Tołłoczko, „Sen Architekta” czyli o historii i historyzmie architektury XIX i XX wieku [An architect's dream; on the history and historicism of architecture and], Cracow, 2015.

32 M. Rudowska, *Warszawskie konkursy architektoniczne w latach 1864–1898* [Warsaw architectural contests in 1864–1898], Warsaw, 1972.

33 *Art and Politics: The Proceedings of the Third Joint Conference of Polish and English Art Historians*, eds. F. Ames-Lewis, P. Paszkiewicz, Warsaw, 1999; *Nacjonalizm w sztuce i historii sztuki 1789–1950* [Nationalism in art and art history 1789–1950], eds. D. K. Konstantynów, R. Pasieczny, P. Paszkiewicz, Warsaw, 1998.

34 K. Matuszewski, *O architekturze u obcych...*, p. 76.

The quoted passage seems an apt illustration of the core issues in the discussion regarding the national character of Polish architecture. Other authors tended to focus on one aspect or another, for instance construction,³⁵ symbolism,³⁶ accordance with climate,³⁷ or harmony with everyday practical needs.³⁸ Matuszewski takes note of all these factors and accentuates their importance in the process of developing a national style of architecture.

This attitude also provides an answer to the question of whether a national style may be created artificially. The author compares the process to the emergence of a language. As he puts it, “none of them materialised in the head of a scholar, none exists owing to the ideas of writers, even though in this respect the influence of the latter has always been profound”.³⁹ A national style cannot therefore be developed on a purely theoretical foundation. Nevertheless, exceptional works and remarkable artists may successfully influence its development. This may be regarded as the reason for the need to organise architectural contests and for the hopes resting therein, so clearly emphasised by Matuszewski. It is such contests that may, by means of fair competition, result in the emergence of landmark works, i.e. ones that may pave the way towards further development of local architecture.

Matuszewski moves on to discuss the issue of the architectural style he sees as suitable to become the foundation for the national style of construction. He supports the proponents of the Gothic Revival, emphasising the need to make use of more modern materials, i.e. iron and glass.⁴⁰ At the same time, he offers a stern criticism of the continuous practice of copying ancient models. In his own words, “such denial of one’s own spiritual essence, such slavery of thought as is exemplified by Schinkel’s allegedly Hellenistic school, inevitably kill the creative imagination of the artists working within such narrow constraints”.⁴¹

It ought to be noted that at the time when Matuszewski’s article was written, the cityscape of Warsaw already featured significant edifices bearing deliberate resemblance to mediaeval styles, including the Gothic. Matuszewski refers, for

35 W. Łuszczkiewicz, “Czyli można konstrukcyę kościołów gotyckich krakowskich XIV wieku uważać za cechę specyjalną ostrołuku w Polsce?” [May the construction of 14th-century Gothic churches of Cracow be regarded as a characteristic feature of the ogival style in Poland?], in: *Pamiętnik I Zjazdu historyków polskich* [Proceedings of the first session of Polish historians], Cracow, 1881, pp. 53–63.

36 J. K. Sas-Zubrzycki, *Styl nadwiślański jako odcień sztuki średniowiecznej w Polsce* [The Vistula-Baltic style as a tone in mediaeval art in Poland], Cracow, 1910, pp. 23–32.

37 The issue of southern and northern climate constitutes the main topic of the polemic between Rafał Krajewski and the author known under the pen name “Ostoja”. Cf. R. Krajewski, “O architekturze narodowej” [On national architecture], *Gazeta Codzienna*, 1860, 125, pp. 1–3; Ostoja, “Kilka słów o architekturze narodowej” [Brief notes on the national architecture], *Kronika Wiadomości Krajowych i Zagranicznych*, 1860, 15, pp. 3–4.

38 A. Brykczyński, “W jakim stylu najwłaściwiej u nas kościoły budować?” [What style is the most appropriate to build our churches?], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1893, 31, no. 46, pp. 726–728.

39 K. Matuszewski, op. cit., p. 81.

40 Ibid., p. 83.

41 Ibid., p. 82.

instance, to the remodelling of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, completed in 1840,⁴² the church of St. Peter and Paul in the Koszyki area, completed in 1886,⁴³ and the edifice of the Evangelical Reformed Church at Leszno street, dating from 1880.⁴⁴

All of these buildings were bitterly criticised by Matuszewski. He described the earliest design by the Warsaw-based architect Adam Idźkowski in the following manner:

The idea of returning this ancient masterpiece of Polish church architecture to its original ogival form [...] may have been valuable, yet the architect mismanaged it in his execution. Suggestions and motifs for the plans of the temple's reconstruction [...] should have, in my opinion, been sought rather in the characteristic works of the Polish ogival style, i.e. the so-called Vistula-Baltic style, such as the churches in Cracow, Wiślica, Włocławek and other cities. However, Idźkowski, whose education lacked, of course, any archaeological component [...], chose to go a different way altogether. Without further consideration, he reached for the models of the English Gothic and clad our church in these vestments, which, though original and opulent, are unfamiliar, and turned the edifice unrecognisable; thus adorned, the church looks like a foreign marvel.⁴⁵

This passage refers to a number of issues that deserve a closer look. The criticism is directed not at the inaccurate use of Gothic forms, but at the fact that local forms were disregarded in favour of foreign ones. This view represents a significant change in how architecture was perceived in Poland. Around the year 1860 some authors still expressed doubt as to the justifiability of erecting buildings in mediaeval styles;⁴⁶ Matuszewski sees this as obvious. As Majdowski observes, this revaluation may be associated with, among others, the work of the pioneers of Polish archaeology of art, such as Władysław Łuszczkiewicz, Karol Kremmer and Józef Łepkowski, as well as with the emergence of technical periodicals (*Inżynieria i Budownictwo* from 1879, *Przegląd Techniczny* from 1875), which clearly promoted mediaeval styles at the time.⁴⁷

This is the context in which Matuszewski invokes the term "Vistula-Baltic", which was then in common use and was identified with native, Polish architecture of the Middle Ages. Majdowski traces the origins of the term to the 1860s⁴⁸ and

42 K. Stefański, *Architektura XIX wieku...*, p. 80.

43 Ibid. p. 126; construction works on the church did not begin until 1883, yet in 1881 Matuszewski was already criticising the closed nature of the contest and the fact that neo-Gothic designs by Z. Kiślański and A. Schimmelpfenig were rejected.

44 Ibid., p. 121.

45 K. Matuszewski, op. cit., p. 383.

46 Cf. R. Krajewski, op. cit., pp. 1–3.

47 A. Majdowski, *Nurt narodowy w architekturze...*, pp. 28–29.

48 In this context Majdowski invokes, for example, the church in Wielka Łąka near Toruń, in 1863 described by *Tygodnik Katolicki* as erected in the "Slavonic-Baltic style". The term, combining ethnicity and geography, was later replaced with a more memorable label "Vistula-Baltic style", which was more suggestive in conveying the idea of the cohesive nature of the Gothic architecture found between the coast of the Baltic Sea and the Carpathian Mountains. Cf. Majdowski, *O poglądach na styl...*, pp. 307–309.

notes that in the 1880s it became a substitute for “national spirit” in church architecture.⁴⁹ It should, however, be emphasised that very few authors attempt to analyse it more thoroughly; the “Vistula-Baltic style” functions as a self-explanatory term illustrated only with a small number of arbitrarily chosen examples. Matuszewski mentions some mediaeval structures of Cracow, Wiślica and Włocławek, providing no explanation as to what these edifices have in common and what distinguishes them from the architecture of other regions of Europe. The proposed vision of a “Polish” Gothic style is therefore imprecise. The ultimate form of the Vistula-Baltic style may only crystallise as a result of practical competition between architects within the framework of open architectural contests.

Matuszewski’s opinion on the church in Leszno is very similar to his views on the cathedral of St. John. Once more, his criticism focuses on the disregard for native models of Gothic architecture, although he also takes note of the inconsistencies in style, which he does not perceive as justified.⁵⁰ In Matuszewski’s essay, the unsatisfactory result of the newly completed project becomes the starting point for a broader analysis of the practical causes for the – in his view – poor quality of Warsaw architecture. Among the many existing factors, he mentions and discusses the destruction of historical buildings, the absence of research on early architecture, the changes introduced into projects behind closed doors, profiteering, cutting costs by using low-quality materials, the great number of new projects and the related similarity of decoration, loopholes in construction law, and the practice of giving licenses to individuals without sufficient qualifications.⁵¹ Matuszewski sees the recurring issue of open architectural contests as one possible path towards improving the state of affairs. He writes:

It is well-high inconceivable that, having made the decision to erect a new church and gather the necessary funds, we do not always follow the example of all the other nations of the world – that is, we do not announce a contest for the design of the structure, thereby losing the opportunity to acquire the best designs possible and to utilise the greatest artistic talent available at the given time.⁵²

Matuszewski rightly observes that organising architectural contests was a widespread practice at the time in many regions of Europe. As early as in 1849 the Viennese architects from the circle of the Akademie der Bildenden Künste were demanding that the authorities mandate the organisation of contests for the design of public edifices.⁵³

Open contests in themselves do not, however, necessarily result in the development of architecture based on truly domestic models. In this context, Matuszewski mentions the church in Leszno: “Since it was decided that the new church is to

49 A. Majdowski, *Nurt narodowy w architekturze...*, p. 32.

50 K. Matuszewski, op. cit., p. 391.

51 Ibid., pp. 397–405.

52 Ibid., p. 393.

53 M. Rudowska, op. cit., p. 19.

be built in the ogival style, would it not be more appropriate, or even necessary, to look away from models of architecture alien to this land, choosing instead the flavour which had indeed been used here for several centuries?"⁵⁴ It should be noted that he clearly suggests that future contests openly request designs in the national (i.e. Vistula-Baltic) variation of the Gothic style. This postulate was soon to be implemented in the requirements for contest entries for the design of the Praga church in 1886.

The contest announcement

The factors that influenced the architecture of Warsaw in the early 1880s are exceedingly complex. The most notable issues include the theoretical discussions around the concept of a national style, which had continued for many years, the growing interest in native Gothic architecture (in terms of historical research as much as architectural practice and art conservation), as well as the need to organise open contests for designs, increasingly often voiced in the relevant milieus. Competitions of that kind were regarded as an opportunity to create landmark works which would then set the direction of further development for other architects in the country.

These were the circumstances in which the contest for the design of the church in Praga was announced. The proposal to erect a new temple came from the prelate Ignacy Dudrewicz, who was the parson in the district.⁵⁵ The requirements for contest entries were published in *Przegląd Techniczny* in 1886.⁵⁶ Only Polish artists whose designs complied with a number of prerequisites could participate. The majority of the requirements were technical or functional in nature. The entire structure was to have a vaulted ceiling and walls plastered only on the inside. The chosen material was brick, with only a small amount of shaping brick and ashlar stone. The design was to include a sacristy and a mortuary chapel. The budget for the project amounted to 250 thousand roubles, whereas the architects submitting the best three designs were to be rewarded with 500, 300 and 200 roubles respectively. The requirements also specified the need to include detailed estimates of the cost of construction.

The designs submitted to the competition would become the property of the construction committee. Moreover, the contest jury reserved the right to refrain from awarding any design, to not implement the winning design, as well as to not entrust the execution of the project to the awarded architect. These restrictions were criticised by F. K. Martynowski, who described them as a "convenient escape

⁵⁴ K. Matuszewski, op. cit., p. 392.

⁵⁵ J. Starożyk, "Kościół św. Michała Archaniola i Floryana na Pradze pod Warszawą" [The church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Florian in Praga near Warsaw], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1898, 29, p. 569.

⁵⁶ *Konkurs na sporządzenie...*, p. 263.

clause for unfair intentions”.⁵⁷ He expressed the fear that the designs amassed by the committee may be used by an architect hired outside the contest to develop and execute a final design of the church. As he adamantly emphasised, in the case of a public contest “any shadow of the influence of personal interests must be dispersed”.⁵⁸ He also noted with obvious indignation that it would be immoral to award an architect and then eliminate him from the possibility of executing his own design (especially since the contest prizes did not cover the costs related to preparing a design). It must, however, be emphasised that ultimately none of Martynowski’s fears came true.

The requirements for the contest entries included predominantly technical, functional and legal issues. Only one passage referred to the question of the artistic aspects of the design, namely, that “the building is to be ogival in style, made of brick, in the so-called Vistula-Baltic vein”.⁵⁹ Interestingly, the passage includes the phrase “the so-called (...) vein”, which may suggest that even the organisers of the contest had no certainty as to the correct use of the term “Vistula-Baltic”. It is the adjective “ogival” that serves as the clear and unquestionable indication of the desired style. This fact may, in my opinion, be counted as one of the manifestations of the ambiguity Martynowski analysed in his article, regarding the precise meaning of the term Vistula-Baltic and the justifiability of using it as a label for a distinct style.

On the Vistula-Baltic style

In the context of the contest, the above-mentioned complications caused justified doubts. As Martynowski rightly observes, the stylistic preference chosen by the committee “is virtually unknown to the general public, whilst the majority of builders [...] avoiding study and original work is not even sure where to look for appropriate models”.⁶⁰ To ensure a satisfactory conclusion to the contest, the author undertakes to define the Vistula-Baltic style, enumerating the architectural forms characteristic for it and the mediaeval edifices on which new structures designed in this vein were to be modelled.

In the introduction to his essay, Martynowski states that “aside from the French, the German, the English Gothic and so forth, there emerged the Polish form of the ogival style, significantly different from those others [...]. It is this Gothic style that we call ‘Vistula-Baltic’, which, in turn, is clearly distinguishable from the ogival architecture that developed in Cracow”.⁶¹ In his view, the style under analysis spread “way beyond, further than Gdańsk and Würtemberg, Brandenburg

57 F. K. Martynowski, “Z powodu konkursu na kościół parafii praskiej” [Regarding the contest for a church for the Praga parish], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1886, no. 317b, p. 2.

58 Ibid.

59 *Konkurs na sporządzenie...*, p. 263.

60 F. K. Martynowski, *O stylu...*, p. 3.

61 Ibid.

and the neighbouring lands”.⁶² The broad territorial scope of the style as presented by Martynowski is truly noteworthy. The region he describes corresponds with what modern studies refer to as “brick Gothic” or *Backsteingotik*. Both the currently recognised styles and the formula of the Vistula-Baltic style were distinguished by the use of brick as the principal building material. It is most likely for this very reason that Martynowski’s description of the style does not include the architecture of 14th-century Cracow basilicas, which often featured a combination of brick and stone both for construction elements and for their facing.⁶³

It should be noted that, in contrast with the modern terms, the 19th-century label suggests a connection between this style of brick architecture and Polish tradition; it is apparent in the term itself including the word “Vistula”. The lands through which the river flows, as far as the Baltic Sea, were argued to have been the birthplace of the style. Consequently, Martynowski attempts to draw the broadest possible scope of its presence and describe it as resulting from “Polish” cultural influence.

Martynowski’s justification for the consistency of the broad territorial scope and its cultural affinity is based on two arguments. Firstly, the lands are presented as having a more or less tight connection to “Polish” dynasties. This thesis is rarely mentioned by other authors, presumably due to its questionable nature. It would also be difficult to subject it to a more thorough analysis, since Martynowski himself chooses to offer no explanation as to its inclusion.

Secondly, the author refers to the assumption regarding the Slavic roots of the inhabitants of the region in question, who allegedly cultivated their traditions in spite of the later German colonisation. It is the aesthetic sensitivity, the needs and the circumstances of these communities that influenced the specific features of this Gothic style. As Martynowski puts it,

this circumstance is a clear indication that the Vistula-Baltic Gothic is a Slavic and Polish creation, from time to time subjected to strong German and Teutonic influences. One must not forget that in the mentioned provinces the spirit and the community of Slavic Polish people was the underlying social component at the time of this style’s development.⁶⁴

This view stemmed from the historical writings of the time.⁶⁵ Its popularity may, in turn, be discussed in terms of political disputes and conflicts between scholars from different countries clashing in the field of emerging academic disciplines.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ A. Grzybkowski, *Gotycka architektura murowana w Polsce* [Stone Gothic architecture in Poland], Warsaw, 2014, pp. 129–131.

⁶⁴ F. K. Martynowski, *O stylu...*, s. 3.

⁶⁵ S. Maroński, “Słowianie Meklemburscy i walka stronnictwa niemieckiego ze słowiańskim przy wyborze biskupa dycecji szweryńskiej” [Mecklenburg Slavs and the fight between the German and the Slavic faction over the appointment of the bishop of the Schwerin diocese], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1881, 3, pp. 22–48.

In a further section of the article, Martynowski defines the features of the Vistula-Baltic style.⁶⁶ Forms he considers characteristic include the frequent appearance of “niches” (in modern terminology: blind windows) and pilasters (in modern terminology: pilaster strips or lesenes) to define the walls, accentuating arcades with moulding and the widespread use of polygonal simple pillars as a base for well-defined ribs. He notes the ubiquity of stepped gables and the rarity of “openwork”, i.e. open tracery on façades. Martynowski also presents a sizeable list of structures he deems compliant with the Vistula-Baltic style. The buildings he enumerates are found mainly in Poznań, Włocławek, Pępłin, Frombork, Toruń, Vilnius, Kowno, Lübeck, Wismar, Malbork, Bydgoszcz, Krzywino, Kobylin, Warsaw and Płock.⁶⁷

Martynowski's efforts certainly deserve proper recognition. Although the academic nomenclature has since undergone many changes, the set of features he identified does seem to generally correspond to the most popular forms of the architecture of the region under analysis. This being said, the hypotheses he presented were not supported by any thorough study. Martynowski merely systematised the views appearing in academic sources at the time, illustrating them with examples. His deliberations are hardly academic, given that he does not utilise the proper tools. The listed edifices are not stylistically analysed, no sources are consulted, at times no justification is given for the hypotheses proposed. In his text, the “Vistula-Baltic style” remains a very ambiguous term. His attempt to specify it is limited to assembling a catalogue of its formal features illustrated with a set of loosely connected mediaeval works.

The phrasing of the rules of the contest for the design of the church of St. Florian also prompted Władysław Łuszczkiewicz to speak his mind. His essay was published in four parts in *Przegląd Techniczny* (the very periodical that announced the contest, with which Łuszczkiewicz had had no earlier connection) as the competition was underway.⁶⁸ The Cracow-based scholar discussed the Vistula-Baltic style, the justifiability of using this term and the artistic value of the related architecture in highly critical terms.

Łuszczkiewicz's attitude was determined mainly by his academic interests. In contrast with Martynowski, he based his theories on (often pioneering) research on mediaeval architecture. The majority of his works are brief monographs on specific edifices, including the Basilica of Corpus Christi and the Church of St. Catherine with the Augustinian monastery in Cracow, the Cracow Cloth Hall, and monasteries in Mogiła, Wąchock and other towns.⁶⁹ Given his profound academic and didactic

⁶⁶ F. K. Martynowski, *O stylu...*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Kilka słów o naszym...*, pp. 53–54, 81–82, 115–117, 148–150.

⁶⁹ W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Kościół Bożego Ciała: jego dzieje i zabytki* [The Church of Corpus Christi: its history and artefacts], Cracow, 1898; idem, *Kościół św. Katarzyny z klasztorem OO. Augustynów* [The Church of St. Catherine with the Augustinian monastery], Cracow, 1898; idem, *Sukienice krakowskie: dzieje gmachu i jego obecnej przebudowy* [The Cracow Cloth Hall: the history of the edifice and its present restoration], Cracow, 1899; idem, *Wieś Mogiła przy Krakowie*,

oeuvre, in the second half of the 19th century Łuszczkiewicz was most likely the greatest authority in the nascent field of the history of mediaeval architecture in Poland.

Let us therefore analyse Łuszczkiewicz's principal theories, leading to his criticism of the requirements for the design of the church in Praga. As a starting point for his essay, Łuszczkiewicz defines his view on the development of mediaeval architecture, saying that "ornamentation aside [...], the main impulse for the development of construction in the Middle Ages was thus the struggle with the material, inciting people to seek more and more perfect methods, to achieve bolder and bolder forms. This is, in essence, all there is to the history of mediaeval church architecture".⁷⁰ Łuszczkiewicz isolates the struggle against the laws of physics undertaken for many centuries by mediaeval architects as the principal driving force behind the development of architecture. He therefore criticises architects who imitate Gothic forms only in the plan or ornamentation:

Is it rightful to conjure systematisations classifying epochs according to the spatial plans of churches or their ornaments, or to claim that we imitated Teutonic buildings constructed solely of brick? A much more prudent approach would be to analyse historical buildings according to their construction, since, as stated above, it was among the principal aims of mediaeval architects.⁷¹

This passage indicates that Łuszczkiewicz's study was based on the assumption of the primacy of constructional solutions over all other aspects of Gothic architecture.

The above-mentioned views are the foundation for Łuszczkiewicz's postulate that the architecture of 14th-century Cracow was superior to that of other regions of Poland. His arguments may be summarised in the following three points. Firstly, he notes the issue of construction methods, well-researched and well-described in the case of Lesser Poland. Here, the solutions to the problem of strutting the walls of the main nave in Cracow's basilica-type churches is particularly important for Łuszczkiewicz's theory.⁷² The construction method he described is presented as indicative of the autonomy of Polish architecture at the time.⁷³ Gothic structures in the north of Poland, Łuszczkiewicz argues, are still relatively unexplored. He regards that latter style as being most probably of German provenance and traces its origins to the forms of the Romanesque monasteries in Jerichow and Lehnin.⁷⁴ Thus, the conclusion he draws seems obvious. Since Polish architects do have their own, well-studied and well-described models from Cracow, repeating foreign forms is neither logical nor justified.

jej klasztor cysterski – kościółek farny i kopiec Wandy [The village of Mogiła near Cracow, its Cistercian monastery – the parish church and the Wanda Mound], Cracow, 1899; idem, *Reszty romańskiej architektury dawnego opactwa cysterskiego w Wąchocku* [The remains of the Romanesque architecture of the former Cistercian abbey in Wąchock], Cracow, 1892.

70 W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Kilka słów o naszem...*, pp. 202–203.

71 Ibid., p. 207.

72 Cf. A. Grzybkowski, op. cit., pp. 118–119.

73 W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Czyli można konstrukcję kościołów...*, pp. 53–63.

74 Idem, *Kilka słów o naszem...*, p. 53.

Łuszczkiewicz's second argument refers to the building materials. He writes that "the magnificent monuments to Prussian brick construction are striking due to the apparent mastery of brickwork and the grandeur of all finished and unaltered works [...] that invariably affects every expert".⁷⁵ It may therefore seem that Łuszczkiewicz does recognise the artistic value of brick Gothic. However, he immediately adds that these features "become irrelevant when compared to the true monuments to the Gothic style, the stone-built churches and cathedrals of the 13th and 14th century".⁷⁶ This is related to the fact that, in works representing the so-called "Cracow School", brick was used only to build up the walls. The parts which scholars found the most interesting – i.e. load-bearing elements, window jambs, details, mouldings, portals and so forth – they were made of stone. It should be noted that in the quoted passage only stone architecture is deemed worthy of being called the "true" Gothic. Brick is regarded as synonymous with economic and artistic poverty. Łuszczkiewicz goes as far as to deny brick buildings the label of "Gothic". As he puts it, "proper Gothic does not exist where no appropriate stone could be found".⁷⁷

In further sections, Łuszczkiewicz's argumentation is based around examples in which constructional solutions commonly known from stone Gothic structures were reduced in brick buildings due to substandard material. He therefore attempts to prove the superiority of one type of architecture over the other. Łuszczkiewicz's line of thought is not free from error and misinterpretation. He writes, for instance, that as a result of using brick "the marvellous practice of surrounding the church presbytery with lower side aisles and a circle of chapels [...] was discontinued".⁷⁸ This statement is, however, at variance with the form of the most emblematic structures of the analysed style. In fact, several Mecklenburg churches feature ambulatories with a so-called circumambulation of integrated chapels.⁷⁹ In this context, the church of the Virgin Mary in Lübeck provides an example which was well known in the 19th century; Łuszczkiewicz must have been aware of its existence.⁸⁰ It should also be noted that a polygonal ambulatory (although with no chapels) may also be found in the monastery in Oliwa. Cracow churches, on the other hand, do not include such architectural features. Only the Wawel cathedral has an ambulatory, albeit in a more simple, rectangular form.

Łuszczkiewicz's essay contains more inconsistencies of this kind. The obvious question to ask at this point is whether its author criticises architecture with which he is not well acquainted. Is he subconsciously trying to twist the facts to fit the

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., p. 54.

79 E.g. the Cistercian monastery in Bad Doberan, the church of the Virgin Mary in Stralsund, the church of St. Nicholas in Wismar, the collegiate church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Stargard Szczeciński and many others.

80 Dziekoński mentions the church of the Virgin Mary in Lübeck as one of the many sources of inspiration for his design. Cf. Dziekoński, *Kościół parafialny świętego Floryana...*, p. 8.

narrative he constructed? Is this a conscious choice aimed at influencing the prospective architects of the church in Praga, nudging them towards following 14th-century Cracow models? While a definitive answer is impossible to provide, it seems relatively clear that in presenting their views, both Martynowski and Łuszczkiewicz misuse arguments and cherry-pick examples of historical architecture to achieve a specific goal. Consequently, the criticism Majdowski directs at authors using the term “Vistula-Baltic style” (such as Matuszewski and Martynowski⁸¹) may be considered exaggerated, given the fact that, while discussing Łuszczkiewicz’s analysis, the same author states that “Brief notes on domestic architecture in the ogival era has first and foremost proven the ideological bankruptcy of the Vistula-Baltic style.”⁸²

The results of the contest and the implementation of the chosen design

Between 27 March and 4 April 1887 all contest entries were displayed in the Warsaw Municipal Government Hall.⁸³ The jury made their choice in two successive voting sessions. During the first one the committee took into account all the entries (25 in total), whereas only the best six designs were reviewed during the second session. In both sessions a decisive majority of votes went to the design authored by Józef Pius Dziekoński. It ultimately won 15 votes, while the runner-up received only five. The award for the second place was given to Władysław Marconi; the one for third place to Ignacy Jórski.

The contest jury consisted of 14 architects and 6 members of the Construction Committee.⁸⁴ Descriptive evaluations of all the entries, as well as a chart comparing data such as the projected size of the church, the costs of construction and so forth, were published in a special report in *Przegląd Techniczny*.⁸⁵ In most cases the committee members criticised the same aspects of the designs; the most common faults they found include flawed proportions of the form (mainly of the spires in relation to the main body), impractical arrangement of the doorways (especially side entrances and those leading to the mortuary chapel), problems with providing enough light in the interior, and excessively small details that obscured the composition or generated additional costs. Of particular interest are complaints regarding the lack of clear features of the desired style. It ought to be emphasised that, ultimately, none of the submitted entries fully met the jury’s expectations regarding the Vistula-Baltic character of the architectural form.

The final report of the jury contains very few clues as to why it was Dziekoński’s design that was chosen. The design was not remarkable in terms of scale; nor was it the cheapest. The jury criticised the side aisles for being too low, as well as the

81 A. Majdowski, *O poglądach na styl...*, pp. 313–314.

82 Ibid., p. 319.

83 *Projekty kościoła dla...*, p. 125.

84 M. Rudowska, op. cit., p. 32.

85 *Sprawozdanie komisji konkursowej...*, p. 93.

architect's decision to surround the presbytery with a simple ambulatory and to include a passage along the façade, beneath the spires, which weakened the construction. The elevations were deemed "relatively close to the Vistula-Baltic vein, if a little too slight", whereas the windows of the main nave were openly regarded as "not entirely the right style".⁸⁶

The actual reasons for the final selection are difficult to discern. Majdowski points primarily to the superiority of the functional solutions included in the awarded design.⁸⁷ A number of other factors may also have been of importance. First of all, it must be admitted that Dziekoński enjoyed a certain amount of fame at the time. Following a contest organised in 1883, in 1886–1894 he supervised the remodelling of the church of St. Alexander in Warsaw.⁸⁸ Between 1885 and 1888 he was also participating in the construction of Karol Schreiber's neo-Gothic chapel in Łódź, which he designed together with Edward Lilpop.⁸⁹ Thus, when the contest for the church of St. Florian was announced, Dziekoński was involved in two prestigious projects involving ecclesiastical architecture. He may therefore been regarded as an expert in the field. In this case, the contest for the Praga church would allow him to consolidate his professional status.

The fact that Dziekoński's design featured the characteristic ogee motif among the pinnacles of the transept gables could have also played a role. In my estimation, the jury may have considered this stylistic choice to be a clear reference to the façade of the church of St. Anne in Vilnius. It ought to be emphasised that many 19th-century scholars portrayed that church as an excellent example of native Polish Gothic.⁹⁰ This reference becomes obvious when one considers the heading (a short catchphrase name given to each of the contest entries) for Dziekoński's design. It read: "The church of St. Anne in Vilnius".⁹¹

Finally, the connections Dziekoński might have had among the clergy cannot be disregarded. The architect appears to have been very consistent in building his professional status in affiliation with the Catholic Church. In 1893 he was appointed architect of the Warsaw diocese, and became a permanent member of the consistory council.⁹² In the course of his career Dziekoński designed or remodelled (working in association with others) more than eighty Catholic churches.⁹³

86 Ibid.

87 A. Majdowski, *Z dziejów budowy kościoła...*, p. 129.

88 K. Stefański, *Architektura XIX wieku...*, p. 127.

89 Ibid., p. 137.

90 Cf. W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Kilka słów o naszym...*, p. 54; Martynowski, *O stylu...*, p. 3; A. Nieniewski, "Architekt Józef Dziekoński" [The architect Józef Dziekoński], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1908, 46, no. 1, p. 14; A. J. Nowowiejski, *Wykład Liturgii Kościoła Katolickiego* [Explication of the liturgy of the Catholic Church], Warsaw, 1893, p. 202.

91 *Sprawozdanie komisji konkursowej...*, p. 93.

92 W. Kumor, *Ustrój i organizacja Kościoła Polskiego w okresie niewoli narodowej* [The system an organisation of the Polish Church at the time of partitions], Cracow, 1980, p. 57; after: A. Majdowski, *Budownictwo kościelne...*, p. 18.

93 Ibid., pp. 193–199.

Following a session of the contest committee, the chosen design was authorised to be implemented.⁹⁴ The Ministry of Internal Affairs instructed the Warsaw municipal authorities to hand over a plot of land that used to accommodate a redoubt.⁹⁵ Construction works were financed solely from citizen donations; despite their generosity, the funds accumulated at the start of the project were insufficient. Ensuring constant funding also proved very difficult. It therefore became necessary to introduce certain modifications to the initial design. The most important changes include reducing the length of the central nave by one span and substituting the majority of ashlar stone in all façades with shaping and clinker brick.⁹⁶

In spite of financial difficulties, construction work proceeded, fuelled by monetary contributions (for instance Alexandra, the wife of August Count Potocki, donated 10,000 roubles⁹⁷), as well as the established practice of parish members funding specific furnishings or elements of sculpted decoration. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* reported that the bell was funded by Jan Kozłowski, a resident of Targówek. Piotr Kruszewski, the owner of the house at no. 176 Targowa Street, who died in 1896, bequeathed the entire revenue from the sale of this property for the construction of one church spire. Michał Podhorski, a citizen of Volhynia and resident of Praga, funded the sculpture of St. Michael the Archangel. The matching figure of St. Florian was financed by Henryk Piaseczyński, a veterinarian from Praga.⁹⁸ The stone crucifix above the entrance to the mortuary must also be mentioned in this context, as its base still bears the engraved inscription: "FUNDAVIT ANDREAS MICHAŁSKI KOLONUS IN ŻĄBKU 1886" (Fig. 3).

The cornerstone of the church was laid on 13 June 1888 by Archbishop Wincenty Teofil Popiel.⁹⁹ Brick for construction works was provided by Kazimierz Granzow's factory in Kawęczyn, while the stone elements were made of Szydłowiec sandstone.¹⁰⁰ Dziekoński himself supervised the implementation of his design. Masonry works were managed by master mason Władysław Czosnkowski, Teodor Skonieczny made the sculptures, while master carpenter Karol Bevensee handled the production and mounting of wooden elements.¹⁰¹ Prominent figures of Polish academia, culture and politics voted the church of St. Florian to be the most important work of Polish architecture in the 19th century even before the construction was completed.¹⁰² The consecration of the church took place on 29 September 1901.

The facts presented above, including the names of the donors and craftsmen involved in the construction of the church, seem of much importance. The circles of

94 *Budowa kościoła parafialnego...*, p. 115.

95 J. Starożyk, op. cit., p. 571.

96 *Budowa kościoła parafialnego...*, p. 115.

97 J. Starożyk, op. cit., p. 572.

98 Ibid., p. 571.

99 *Z tygodnia na tydzień. Poświęcenie...*, p. 779.

100 J. Starożyk, op. cit., p. 570.

101 Ibid., p. 569.

102 *Konkurs stulecia...*, p. 16.



Fig. 3. Unknown author, the cross above the entrance to the mortuary chapel in the Church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr, constructed presumably before 1901, condition in 2018, photo: Jan Nowicki

Warsaw architects, critics, historians and theoreticians of art indubitably held certain hopes and ambitions regarding the contest for the design of St. Florian's. It was also an outlet for their interest in history. Yet the significance of the church, as well as its fame, may rather be attributed to the simple message conveyed by the construction of the Praga church. Financed by local parish members, designed by Polish architect, a graduate of the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw,¹⁰³ built of brick fired in a local factory by Warsaw masons, adorned with sculptures made by a Polish artist, the church of St. Florian was naturally predisposed to become a source of national pride for the Polish people, the embodiment of all their dreams about a church.

The location of the edifice also had its implications. The massive Catholic church was erected almost directly next to the Orthodox Cathedral of Mary Magdalene. The latter, built for the Orthodox community in Praga, was to testify to Warsaw's allegiance to the Russian Empire.¹⁰⁴ The church of St. Florian could therefore be

¹⁰³ A. Majdowski, *Budownictwo kościelne...*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ P. Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów. Sztuka rosyjska w Warszawie 1815–1915* [Under the standard of the Romanoffs. Russian art in Warsaw 1815–1915], Warsaw, 1991, pp. 83–84.

seen as something of an architectural counterpoint to the structure erected by the occupiers. Thus, the project of constructing a new temple offered the local community more than an opportunity for active participation, involvement, and fostering and cultivation of interpersonal relations. The architectural forms chosen for the building also reflected the need to emphasise a certain identity: Polish, perpetual, Catholic. The location of the church only further emphasised this meaning.

A word from the architect

The last significant contribution to the discussion around the contest under analysis came from Józef Pius Dziekoński, who published a related article in 1900.¹⁰⁵ He referred to the contest requirements, the changes introduced to his design during its implementation, as well as to numerous technical issues connected with the construction (commenting, for instance, on the quality of the available materials and some matters of engineering). For the most part, however, the article constitutes Dziekoński's response to Łuszczkiewicz's arguments presented above. Thus, this text may be seen as the artist's opinion on his work, an attempt at ending a debate which had been ongoing for years.

First of all, it is apparent that Dziekoński was not indifferent to the issue of following domestic models. Although describing his church as associated with the architecture of the German lowlands, he states that "some motifs for stylish ornamentation of the façades were inspired by historical works of church architecture scattered throughout our lands",¹⁰⁶ Visual references to the church of St. Anne in Vilnius must be mentioned in this context, as well as the diamond vault over the mortuary chapel, interpreted at the time as modelled after the gallery in the Collegium Maius in Cracow.¹⁰⁷

Secondly, Dziekoński clearly shared Łuszczkiewicz's views on the superiority of stone Gothic structures over brick ones, since he cites the monograph discussed above and paraphrases its main points. He also states that "it is in such architecture that we ought to seek models for building our churches".¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Dziekoński notes that the church of St. Florian in Praga was built of a material Łuszczkiewicz deemed second-rate.

It may be assumed that Dziekoński was trying, *post factum*, to explain why building a church in the Cracow style, so favoured by Łuszczkiewicz, had been impossible. He refers mostly to the predominant use of brick for architectural details, emphasising financial concerns, as well as "lack of fondness for grandiose

105 J. P. Dziekoński, op. cit., pp. 6–10.

106 Ibid., p. 6.

107 Cf. J. Starożyk, op. cit., p. 572. The article also includes the only image of the original chapel vaults of whose existence I am aware.

108 J. P. Dziekoński, op. cit., p. 6.

architecture".¹⁰⁹ Such statements can be interpreted as regret over the changes introduced to the design during its implementation. Dziekoński's initial concept involved using a much greater amount of stone; the design happened to follow Łuszczkiewicz's postulates, so the architect was able to refer to them and shift the responsibility for the insufficiently "Polish" nature of his Gothic to problems beyond his direct control. In such circumstances, Dziekoński himself could only express his hope that the situation improves in the future: "Should the condition of transport make it possible for the northern part of the country, situated beyond the line of quarries, to have as much access to ashlar stone as Cracow does, our architecture, especially in terms of churches, will achieve much progress".¹¹⁰

In my estimation, Dziekoński truly did hold stone Gothic in higher regard than brick Gothic. It should be noted that his first neo-Gothic design, Scheiblers' Chapel in Łódź, was made of stone. It is, however, unlikely that he shared Łuszczkiewicz's views regarding the connection between specific materials and architecture's affinity to certain national traditions. Dziekoński never discussed this issue in his earlier essays.¹¹¹ It seems instead that it was Łuszczkiewicz's authority that inspired Dziekoński to attempt a dialogue with the theses put forward by the Cracow-based scholar.

Some corroboration for this theory comes from the fact that Dziekoński saw it as necessary to explain why he did not follow Łuszczkiewicz's instructions in his design for the church of St. Florian. He writes that

arranging the pillars of the nave in the Cracow manner, i.e. with a protruding side escarpment crosswise from the aisle, is not a fortunate solution, and thus there was no choice but to resort to arch buttresses known from French construction. Examples of such arches in brick structures can be found in basilicas in Lübeck and Toruń, as well as in the handsome new church of St. Michael in Wrocław.¹¹²

The choice of examples mentioned in this passage testifies to Dziekoński's (at least) basic familiarity with brick Gothic architecture. The church of St. Jacob in Toruń is one of the few brick Gothic structures in Royal Prussia that feature an external flying buttress. In Mecklenburg, where the church of St. Mary in Lübeck is located, such solutions were much more common. Thus, Dziekoński attempts to justify the use of an element typically associated with stone French Gothic in a brick structure. Parts of Dziekoński's other publications also seem to suggest a thorough knowledge of the architecture of the region. He mentions, for instance, the restoration of the Malbork castle and the ceramic frieze with an inscription on the external façade of the presbytery in the Toruń church of St. Jacob.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹¹ J. P. Dziekoński, "Budowanie kościołów z cegły palonej" [Building brick churches], *Przegląd Katolicki* 1894, 32, no. 39, pp. 614–616; idem, *Monografia kościoła parafialnego w Będkowie* [A monograph on the parochial church in Będków], Cracow, 1893.

¹¹² J. P. Dziekoński, *Kościół parafialny świętego...*, p. 6.

¹¹³ J. P. Dziekoński, *Monografia kościoła...*, p. 6.

Conclusion

The present article analysed texts published in *Przegląd Techniczny* and referring to the successive stages of the contest for the design for a parochial church in the Warsaw district of Praga, as well as essays, discussions and press articles written in connection with this event. The aim was to try to connect the themes appearing in various publications and the recorded facts related to the contest as well as the theoretical discussion it generated. In my opinion, the juxtaposition of different types of sources is the key to revealing the crucial role of the contest in the development of Polish sacred architecture and the theory thereof.

The contest for the design of the church of St. Florian combined a fascination with the Gothic style, which had been growing since the beginning of the 19th century, the ongoing research and restoration projects, as well as the concurrent debate regarding national architecture and the numerous attempts at defining and developing it. It was the first event in the history of Polish architecture in which designers were expressly instructed to create a church in the Gothic style. Moreover, following the emerging trend of interest in domestic art and the popularisation of the term “Vistula-Baltic style”, the organisers of the contest decided to specify that inspiration for the design was to be sought among existing structures located on territories that were at the time associated with Polish culture. These circumstances clearly indicate the exceptional nature of the enterprise.

The breakthrough nature of the contest is also evident from the discussion sparked by the phrase “in the so-called Vistula-Baltic vein” being included in the contest requirements. Essays by Martynowski and Łuszczkiewicz, analysed in the present article, constituted one of the few contemporary attempts at a more thorough analysis of this problematic term. The question of the Vistula-Baltic style was inherently connected to the issue of the identity of Gothic architecture in Poland and its characteristic features. For the emerging field of mediaeval studies, these matters were of utmost importance.

Lastly, an analysis of the contest for the church of St. Florian reveals the complexity of the issue of architectural work in the latter half of the 19th century. The image of architecture of the period is made up of ambiguous terms, theoretical problems, legal and political circumstances, methods of acquiring funds for construction, national sentiments, historical awareness, academic research, the emancipation of the profession of architects, new phenomena such as architectural contests, easy access to journals, and many other factors. Events such as the competition for the design of the church of St. Florian are discussed by an exceptionally broad array of sources, which make the above combination of factors more easily understandable to the modern scholar. It may therefore be argued that the contest discussed in the present analysis, as well as other similar enterprises, constitute the perfect material for future studies.

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

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Abstract

The present article discusses the architectural contest for the design of the Praga parish church in Warsaw, announced in 1886. The author aims to establish whether this event had any significant impact on the development of Polish architecture and its theoretical principles. He reviews the reasons for its importance and attempts to establish whether it constitutes suitable material for more thorough studies, the results of which would merit a prominent place in the historiography of 19th century architecture in Poland. The critical interpretation presented in this article is based primarily on texts published in *Przegląd Techniczny*, which discuss the successive stages of the contest, as well as selected press articles and essays written in direct connection to this enterprise. The author analyses texts by Karol Matuszewski, Franciszek Ksawery Martynowski, Władysław Łuszczkiewicz and Józef Pius Dziekoński, which are crucial for understanding the complex nature of the issue of the contest. The analysis leads to the conclusion that it was not the ultimate form of the church, but rather the combination of emotions, hopes, interests and controversies provoked by the announcement of the contest and the phrasing of its requirements that determined the crucial role of this event in the history of Polish architecture in the latter part of the 19th century.

Keywords: gothic revival, sacral architecture, national style, church of St. Michael and Florian in Warsaw, Józef Pius Dziekoński

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Edward Trojanowski: The Search for Style in Early 20th-century Furniture Design in Poland

Three sources of inspiration are discernible in early 20th-century Polish furniture design and especially in the output of artist-designers associated with the Polish Applied Art Association (Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana, henceforward: TPSS), namely, folk art, the historical styles, and the modernistic/geometrical current.¹ Edward Trojanowski's oeuvre in that area combines all these three tendencies and embodies the evolution of Polish approach to designing furniture; hence it may serve to illustrate the history of Polish furniture design in the early 20th century.

Trojanowski was born in the year 1873 in Koło. In the period 1892–1897 he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, for the first two years as a non-enrolled student. He attended, among others, courses in the composition of historical and battle scenes, and one in nature study. In the autumn of 1897 he left for Munich, and from there for Paris, where he studied at the Académie Julian under the supervision of Jean-Paul Laurens. In 1898 he travelled in Italy. From 1900 onwards he lived in Cracow, where he soon joined the current of artistic life; he became a member of the "Sztuka" Association of Polish Artists, from 1901 he taught at the private School of Decorative Art directed by Jan Bukowski and Włodzimierz Tetmajer. In 1905 he moved to Warsaw, where he taught applied art (1906–1920) and decorative painting (1922–1930) at the School of Fine Arts. Concurrently he was the art director of Wierzbicki Printing Press and Lithographic Studio. He exhibited his works at the Association of the Friends of Fine Arts in Cracow and the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw, as well as abroad; the display of his

1 A. Kostrzyńska-Miłosz, *Polskie meble 1918–1939. Forma – funkcja – technika* [Polish furniture 1918–1939. Form – function – technology], Warsaw, 2005, pp. 25–32. The article was written in the framework of the "The Fathers of Polish Design. Polish Applied Art Association. Interior architecture and furniture design" research project, financed by the National Science Centre (2015/17/D/HS2/01215).

works at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925 was a considerable success. He died on 22 May 1930 in Warsaw.²

Trojanowski's output is very varied. He painted cityscapes in oil (e.g. *The Planty Park in Cracow*, 1902, National Museum in Warsaw), produced lithographs (e.g. *Wawel*, 1903, National Museum in Warsaw), designed wall paintings and stained glass windows (wall paintings and the altar in the church in Małkinia, wall paintings in the chapel in Gostynin, stained glass windows in the church in Lubraniec, design for a stained glass window in the Szafraniec Chapel on Wawel Hill)³.

Together with Jerzy Warchałowski, Włodzimierz Tetmajer, Karol Tichy, Józef Czajkowski and Stanisław Goliński, Trojanowski belongs to the circle of the founders of the Polish Applied Art Association, instituted on 8 June 1901 in Cracow.⁴ Later, he was a member of the Association's Temporary Committee, and then its Subdivision, Industrial Section and Research Section.⁵ Together with Warchałowski, he edited the first nine issues of *Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Polskiej Sztuki Stosowanej. Materiały* [TPSS Publishing House. Materials]. He was also involved in the organisation of the Association's exhibitions in Cracow (1902), Warsaw (1902), the Printing Exhibition in Cracow (1904) and the later exhibition in Warsaw (1908).⁶

After the year 1901 Trojanowski focused on applied art. He was a successful graphic designer. He designed the covers for two issues of *Materiały* for the TPSS (no. 1, 6), the membership card for the year 1902/03, postcards, posters for the Printing Exhibition in Cracow (1904) and the Exhibition of Modern Fabrics and Ceramics, also in Cracow (1905), the cover for the Printing Exhibition catalogue and some of its decoration. He designed covers for books and volumes of poetry,⁷ as well as exhibition posters and commercial bills.⁸ He participated in graphic design contests; in 1905 he won the first prize at the TPSS contest for the logo for the

2 L. Skalska-Miecznik, *Polscy uczniowie Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Petersburgu w XIX i na początku XX wieku. Katalog wystawy* [Polish students of the Fine Arts Academy in St. Petersburg in the 19th and early 20th century. Exhibition catalogue], Warsaw, 1989, p. 157.

3 Association of the Friends of Fine Arts Archive, materials pertaining to Edward Trojanowski.

4 *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w Krakowie 1901–02* [Report of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow 1901–02], Cracow, 1903, p. 3.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 18; III. *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w Krakowie 1904* [3rd report of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow 1904], Cracow 1905, s. 13; VII. *sprawozdanie Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w Krakowie R.1908* [7th report of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow 1908], Cracow, 1909, p. 5.

7 Book cover designs for, e.g., J. Lemański, *Proza ironiczna* [Ironie prose], Warsaw, 1904; S. Żeromski, *Szyfowe prace* [Labours of Sisyphus], Lvov, 1905; G. Daniłowki, *Na wyspie* [On an island], Warsaw 1907; J. Lemański, *Noc i dzień* [Night and day], Warsaw, 1910.

8 Posters for, e.g., Wilhelm Lipschitz's wine shop (1904), General Bookshop in Lvov, Jan Stanisławski's posthumous exhibition in Zachęta (1907), exhibition of the "Złoty Róg" Association (1911), exhibition of the "Sztuka" Association of Polish Artists in Zachęta (1912), the *Village and Small Town* exhibition of Polish architecture (1915), *Poland in Pictures* photographic exhibition (1916).

Gebethner & Wolff publishing house.⁹ He presented his prints at the TPSS exhibition in Warsaw in 1902,¹⁰ at the *Printing Exhibition*¹¹ and the Association's exhibition in Warsaw in 1908.¹²

In addition, Trojanowski designed kilims, produced by the firms of Włodzimierz Pohlman in Lipnica, Antonina Sikorska in Czernichów and Konstancja Lipkowska in Nowy Sącz. They were shown at exhibitions in Warsaw in 1902,¹³ in Cracow in 1903¹⁴ and 1905,¹⁵ as well as at the Austrian exhibition in London in 1906.¹⁶ Trojanowski undertook to design a very broad range of artistic craft objects. In 1903 he won a design contest for a net curtain for Szlekier, Wydźga & Weyer in Warsaw.¹⁷ In 1902, at the TPSS shows in Cracow and Warsaw, he exhibited "small chest painted in folk motifs", a "screen made in the appliqué broadcloth technique" and "leather sleeves for books".¹⁸

Furniture design and interior design were among the more important areas of Trojanowski's activity. He frequently exhibited designs for furniture and interiors, as well as finished projects, at exhibitions or entered them into contests. His design for bedroom furniture was exhibited at the TPSS show in Cracow in 1902.¹⁹ Still in the same year the Warsaw public saw some more of his designs: for dining room furniture, for wicker furniture, as well as a wall decoration and a shelf for a children's room made in the Cracow workshop of Józef Zabrze.²⁰ Unfortunately the Warsaw press failed to comment on these designs; but Trojanowski's works awarded, also

9 IV. *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Polska Sztuka Stosowana w Krakowie r. 1905* [4th report of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow 1905], Cracow, 1906, p. 8.

10 *Katalog II-iej wystawy krakowskiego Towarzystwa Sztuki Stosowanej* [Catalogue of the 2nd exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow], Warsaw, 1902, pp. 41, 43.

11 *Wystawa drukarska urządzona staraniem Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w dawnym pałacu hr. Czapskich w Krakowie od 24 grudnia 1904 do 10 lutego 1905 r.* [Printing exhibition organised by the Polish Applied Art Association at the former Count Czapski Palace in Cracow from 24 Dec. 1904 to 10 Feb. 1905], Cracow, 1904, pp. 48, 49, 60.

12 *Wystawa krakowskiego Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w gmachu Towarzystwa Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie luty 1908 r.* [Exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow held at the "Zachęta" Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts edifice in Warsaw, Feb. 1908], Cracow, 1908, p. 18.

13 *Katalog II-iej wystawy krakowskiego Towarzystwa Sztuki Stosowanej...*, p. 39.

14 *Katalog VII. wystawy Towarzystwa Artystów Polskich „Sztuka” i II. wystawy Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”* [Catalogue of the 7th exhibition of the "Sztuka" Association of Polish Artists and 2nd exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association], Cracow, 1903, p. 26.

15 *Katalog nowożytnych tkanin i wyrobów ceramicznych* [Catalogue of modern fabrics and pottery], Cracow, 1905, p. 49.

16 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition London, Earls Court 1906*, London, 1906, p. 51.

17 *II. sprawozdanie Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w Krakowie 1903* [2nd report of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow 1903], Cracow, 1904, p. 9.

18 *Katalog I. wystawy Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”* [Catalogue of the 1st exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association], Cracow 1902, pp. 29, 30; *Katalog II-iej wystawy krakowskiego Towarzystwa Sztuki Stosowanej...*, p. 41.

19 *Katalog I. wystawy Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”...*, p. 29.

20 *Katalog II-iej wystawy krakowskiego Towarzystwa Sztuki Stosowanej...*, p. 37.

in 1902, at the Zachęta contest for the design of a house and furniture in a “native style” were mentioned with evident admiration. His designs for a clock, a table and a credenza won a prize of 105 roubles.²¹ When in 1903 the TPSS received a donation of 4000 crowns from a private sponsor, a part of this sum paid for the making of a pair of chairs designed by Trojanowski.²² In the same year the designer sent in some drawings, answering the TPSS petition for designs of furniture for any type of room. The TPSS bought a design for a chair, paying Trojanowski 40 crowns.²³ Also, considering that he was still feeling his way in the area of furniture design, he could not pass up the opportunity to show his works at the exhibition co-organised by the TPSS and the “Sztuka” Association of Polish Artists in 1903. The designs were for a shelf and a chair, both made in the workshop of Józef Zabrze.²⁴ He also availed himself of the subsequent opportunities to present his works: at the Exhibition of Modern Fabrics and Ceramics (1905) he presented a cupboard made in the Ligęza Brothers workshop in Cracow.²⁵ In the same year, at a small-scale exhibition of works entered into a contest held in the Czapski Palace, he displayed a desk and a bookshelf. They were presented outside the contest, because Trojanowski was a member of its jury.²⁶ Towards the end of the year he and other members of the TPSS were commissioned to design the restaurant at the Old Theatre in Cracow. Trojanowski’s task was to design the furniture and decoration for the larger dining hall on the ground floor.

Starting from the 1905/1906 academic year, Trojanowski was employed as the second professor of Applied Art at the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw.²⁷ Yet even though he moved to Warsaw, he did not sever his ties with Cracow and the TPSS. In 1908 he sent in a design for a set of bedroom furniture for a contest held by the Museum of Technology and Industry. He won the second prize; the first went to Karol Tichy for a design that entered the annals of Polish design.²⁸ In addition, he took part in the Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in a Garden Environment co-organised by the TPSS in 1912, designing a set of furniture for a bedroom in a suburban villa. His move to Warsaw brought him several commissions for pieces of furniture and for entire interiors. For Władysław Reymont, he made a set of furniture for a study; for Maria Papieska, a set of bedroom furniture. Some of these pieces were shown at the TPSS exhibition at Zachęta in 1908. Also in Warsaw, he designed interiors for the café at Grand Hotel and the Skating Rink in the Luxembourg Gallery, the curtain for the Chochlik Cabaret in the Swiss Valley park, and the furniture and decorations for the foyer in the Polish Theatre in Warsaw. In the

21 *Architekt*, 1902, no. 8, col. 95–96.

22 *II. sprawozdanie Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana” w Krakowie 1903...*, p. 8.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

24 *Katalog VII. wystawy Towarzystwa Artystów Polskich „Sztuka” i II. wystawy Towarzystwa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”...*, p. 26.

25 *Katalog nowożytnych tkanin i wyrobów ceramicznych...*, p. 50.

26 “Wystawa projektów meblowych” [Exhibition of furniture design], *Czas*, 1905, no. 60, pp. 1, 2.

27 *IV. Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Polska Sztuka Stosowana w Krakowie r. 1905...*, pp. 6, 7.

28 “Konkurs przemysłu artystycznego”, *Czas*, 1908, no. 285, p. 2.

years 1915, 1917 and 1918 he exhibited designs for pieces of furniture and finished projects at Zachęta in Warsaw.²⁹

Few of the above pieces and interiors have survived until the present day; most of them are known from early 20th-century photographs. One of his cupboards is now in the National Museum in Cracow³⁰ and a set of furniture dating from the inter-war period is in a private collection in Warsaw. Before the 2nd World War the set of furniture designed for Papieska's bedroom was in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw; it is now considered to have been lost during the war. The interior of the larger dining hall in the Old Theatre restaurant in Cracow (Fig. 4),³¹ a set of dining-room furniture which used to be privately owned (Fig. 3),³² a bookshelf and a chair, also privately owned (Fig. 1),³³ and another bookshelf (Fig. 2)³⁴ are known from photographs. Reymont's studio (Fig. 8) and Papieska's bedroom (Fig. 9),³⁵ shown at the 1908 exhibition in Warsaw, and the suburban villa bedroom shown in Cracow in 1912 (Fig. 11),³⁶ are similarly known from photographs. The foyer of the Polish Theatre (Fig. 12),³⁷ the Grand Hotel café and the Skating Rink in the Luxemburg Gallery,³⁸ all of them in Warsaw, are known from press photographs, which are rarely of good quality.

Few designs for furniture have survived. Designs for a chair and a bedroom furniture set are kept in the Print Room of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow,³⁹ the National Museum in Warsaw has a design for a chair, and a set of designs is in a private collection in Warsaw.

Pieces of furniture designed by Trojanowski are most probably still used by the heirs of the aficionados of Polish design living in the early 20th century; the current owners may no longer remember who designed these pieces. Trojanowski received a considerable number of private commissions for sets of furniture, so he modified his designs or re-used earlier ones. Photographs of the dining room in Aleksander Rothert's house in Lvov illustrate this practice (Fig. 5)⁴⁰. To meet this private commission, Trojanowski paired chairs in the same shape as those in the Old Theatre

29 Materials from the Dictionary of Polish Artists, Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw.

30 National Museum in Cracow, MNK IV-Sp-204.

31 Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts (Akademia Sztuk Pięknych, henceforward: ASP), Cracow, no. 7948, 7949.

32 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 7754, 7952, 8505, 8506.

33 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 8462.

34 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 8461.

35 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 13343/15, 13343/14; *Sztuka Stosowana*. Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Polska Sztuka Stosowana [Applied Art. Published by the Polish Applied Art Association] 1908, fasc. 9.

36 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 7869, 13345/12, Jagiellonian University Museum, no. 492, 495, 497, 590, 591, 615, 616, 623, 637, 908.

37 "Teatr Polski w Warszawie" [The Polish Theatre in Warsaw], *Architekt*, 1913, fasc. 3–4.

38 "Grand Hotel – Grand Café", *Świat*, 1911, no. 37, p. 24.

39 Print Room, ASP, Cracow, no. 7751, 7744, 7745, 8488, 8382, 8422.

40 Jagiellonian University Museum, no. 779, 780, 783.



Fig. 1. Edward Trojanowski, cupboard and chair, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow

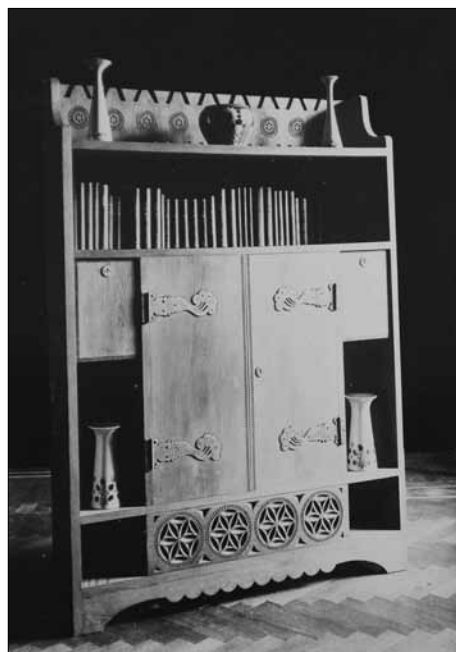


Fig. 2. Edward Trojanowski, cupboard, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow



Fig. 3. Edward Trojanowski, set of dining room furniture, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow



Fig. 4. Edward Trojanowski, interior of the larger dining hall at the Old Theatre in Cracow, photo by T. Jabłoński, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow



Fig. 5. Edward Trojanowski, dining room in Aleksander Rothert's house in Lvov, photo by A. Pawlikowski, Jagiellonian University Museum in Cracow

restaurant with a newly designed credenza and cupboard. All the pieces have simple forms decorated with folk-style detailing.

Folk art inspirations

In the course of his cooperation with the TPSS, Edward Trojanowski used his pen to write as much as to design, and advocated his views, and the principles of the TPSS, in press articles. He considered the attempts to develop a national style in Polish art to be particularly important, so that

a foreigner who wanders into Poland might discover us in our own home, living our own life, one of the strongest expressions of which is art; that he might discover us in a Polish home, a home he had not seen in France or in Germany; that he might discover a peasant who does not look like a London cabbie, sit on a different stool than he is used to sitting on at his own place, and eat from a different bowl.⁴¹

This was to be an art which originated from the spirit of the nation and which answered the nation's needs, its history and landscape. According to Trojanowski, artists could develop this art only by means of "a deep self-analysis, [...] self-discovery, [...] by creating an environment that best fits the conditions of the Polish land and our physical and spiritual needs".⁴² In addition, the national style was to become a weapon in political struggle. Trojanowski wrote that it was to be "one of our political victories, one of the strongest proofs of our vitality, one more Polish property which, if we come to love it with all our hearts, we will be able to defend with all the strength of our fists against those who might want to take it away from us".⁴³

Trojanowski ardently opposed the idea of making use of Western-European trends in art. He was very critical of the abilities which the artists wishing to learn furniture design could acquire in Vienna, Munich or Berlin, because, as he wrote, "they would bring from there a technical template for drawing Art Nouveau curlicues".⁴⁴ In his view, "Polish art [...] ought to arise and grow on its own soil".⁴⁵ He roundly criticised the Galician interior shown at the World Exposition in Paris, designed by Edgar Kováts, admonishing his compatriots that they had been "Czechs, Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians and God knows who else, but never Poles, never yourselves".⁴⁶ He petitioned artists to create original pieces, "not on the basis of patterns you have seen at Paris exhibitions or in foreign monthlies, such as *The Studio*, *Die Kunst*, *Decorative Kunst* and others"; he encouraged them to "first get acquainted with the character of the Polish land, come into harmony with it, and

41 E. Trojanowski, "Polska sztuka stosowana" [Polish Applied Art], *Nowa Reforma*, 1901, no. 249, pp. 1–2.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 E. Trojanowski, "Sztuka i lud" [Art and the folk people], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1902, no. 42, pp. 826, 827.

45 Ibid.

46 Trojanowski, *Polska sztuka stosowana*..., pp. 1–2.

only then create artworks"; only in these circumstances would their effort result in giving Poland "an individual art".⁴⁷

Trojanowski perceived folk art to be the prime source of inspiration and to lay at the heart of the postulated uniqueness of Polish art. Following John Ruskin, he pointed out that "we shall not learn to love and understand beauty among the murky, constricting walls of cities".⁴⁸ From its inception, the TPSS documented folk art and collected the works of folk artists, showing their examples at two exhibitions, in Cracow and in Warsaw, both held in 1902. The exhibition at Warsaw's Zachęta met with vocal criticism. Trojanowski, who co-organised these exhibitions, explained to the public that the aim of the whole enterprise was

to collect [...] material [that] would allow us to see whether we have any motifs, and if yes, how many of them, that would only need to be pondered upon by an artistic mind in order to be accepted by today's craftsmen, or even could be taken as they are. In this manner we wish to facilitate the work of future creators, who in the material collected by the Association would find a large number of decorative and architectural motifs.⁴⁹

This was to be a creative material for those who "would wish to detach themselves from Western art and avoid its influence; this material is to serve as a foundation for their future output"⁵⁰. The aim of the endeavour to collect and exhibit folk art was to create an atmosphere that would make it possible to revive, among others, Polish applied art (Fig. 2).

In Trojanowski's opinion, that reason why folk art was to constitute a guideline for artists was that it expressed the uniquely Polish colour and line, preserved in the works of folk artists who detested and successfully resisted outside influence.⁵¹ In the year 1915 he wrote that in folk art

until recently everything, almost down to the last loop, bore a clear mark of its origin; it expressed the purpose of the object and an appreciation of the material and its practical application [so clear] that [it] seemed to spring from a miraculous source; and all this, although outwardly awkward and rough at times, possessed a quality of stately dignity.⁵²

At the same time, however, Trojanowski wrote that it was "not the folk motifs, but the manner in which folk art was created" that he proposed "as a model that future artists should copy".⁵³ In his view, artists should be inspired by the approach of the folk creators, who are not limited by any norms and whose works are

47 E. Trojanowski, "Głos z obozu. O sztuce stosowanej" [A voice from the camp. On applied art], *Gazeta Polska*, 1902, no. 23, p. 1.

48 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud...*, pp. 826, 827.

49 Trojanowski, *Głos z obozu. O sztuce stosowanej...*, p. 1.

50 E. Trojanowski, "Pierwsza wystawa Towarzystwa „Polska sztuka stosowana”" [The first exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association], *Czas*, 1902, no. 25, p. 1, 2.

51 Ibid.

52 E. Trojanowski, *Odrodzenie rzemiosła polskiego* [The revival of Polish crafts], Warsaw, 1915, p. 5.

53 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud...*, pp. 826, 827.

characterised by sincerity. "Let us love this art for its honesty",⁵⁴ he argued, adding that folk art was filled with true emotions; in his view, it was a hymn in praise of God, it was "lament and laughter, tragedy and joy, it was elation, vengeance, rebellion, a powerful manifestation of every impulse of the soul".⁵⁵ In folk art, he found "great artistic feeling", stronger even than in professional art.⁵⁶ Thus he arrived at the conclusion that "love and dignity, simplicity and strength should be the axiom of Polish art, [since] this axiom once used to be the guiding light of the Polish soul; and through such art can this powerful, old Polish art be revived".⁵⁷

A folk artist, as Trojanowski wrote, seeks inspiration "in what surrounds [him] and most intimately engages the heart and the sight";⁵⁸ this is what gives him freedom. Trojanowski was of the opinion that "a peasant would create art instinctively; what he wishes to do is to paint or carve a shape he has seen, and, his fingers not having enough agility, he simplifies this shape, stylises it in an astoundingly beautiful and characteristic manner, because he is continuously attempting to achieve unity with the surrounding nature".⁵⁹ According to Trojanowski, a peasant always perceived himself as a part of nature, and

his soul [was] full of adoration towards the strange miracles of nature, which he alone had observed and for which he loved this land, for which he worshipped it, for which he saw in this land an unknown God to whom he prayed by means of his art. He is the only one to know this nature; but he is unaware of his brotherly bond with it.⁶⁰

From this unity with nature, wrote Trojanowski, arose folk art, which was "similar to the world surrounding [the peasant artist]; rich, bright, earnest, sincere, great and involving".⁶¹ Closeness to nature allowed folk artists to create objects and architecture, in which "the gracefulness of form vied with practicality and the knowledge of timber".⁶² By turning to folk art, artists and designers should turn to nature.

In addition, Trojanowski noted a certain supremacy of folk art. In his view, this art was created out of the need to "make life more pleasant".⁶³ The peasants, he avowed, did not make allowances for any limitations in their art, save for "filling a part of their lives with happiness",⁶⁴ whereas professional art, in contrast, was

54 Trojanowski, *Pierwsza wystawa Towarzystwa „Polska sztuka stosowana”* ..., pp. 1, 2.

55 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud* ..., pp. 826, 827.

56 Ibid.

57 Trojanowski, *Pierwsza wystawa Towarzystwa „Polska sztuka stosowana”* ..., pp. 1, 2.

58 Ibid.

59 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud* ..., pp. 826, 827.

60 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 59, E. Trojanowski, "List z Warszawy z powodu wystawy sztuki stosowanej" [A letter from Warsaw regarding the exhibition of applied art], *Słowo Polskie*, 1902.

61 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud* ..., pp. 826, 827.

62 Trojanowski, *Odrodzenie rzemiosła polskiego* ..., p. 15.

63 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud* ..., pp. 826, 827.

64 Ibid.

“more often artifice than, as with the former, the bright side of life”.⁶⁵ If the artists surrounded themselves with folk art, however, “perhaps the cataract of deceit and artificial art would fall from our eyes”.⁶⁶ In sum, Trojanowski and the TPSS wished for art “that would be a continuation of life; our aim is to return to sincerity, to light, to colour. We desire creative freedom”, Trojanowski wrote; “we desire art that would be intelligible to the Polish soul and worthy of our heartfelt love”.⁶⁷

Trojanowski repeatedly stressed that folk motifs must not be passively copied, thus robbing the folk artists of their heritage. He attempted to enlighten the public that “at the very start of its work, [TPSS] descended to the lowly peasant hut in order to seek knowledge. To learn, not to rob its residents of their harvest. To investigate the peculiar way in which folk creativity arises, and the essential need for art”.⁶⁸ Elsewhere, he wrote: “Yet we did not approach this magical peasant coffer in order to draw fistfuls of its filling and melt it in a crucible into an intelligent, or noble, artsy art. [...] We respected folk art’s simplicity and sincerity too much for that”.⁶⁹ He advised artists to

learn from [peasants] how to create, how to observe nature in this simple, unpolished, yet strangely beautiful manner; let us seek models in our nearest environment, like they do; but let us not steal their creative work from them. By joining the details we have observed into one whole, we do not create any original thing, at least not until we are able to produce a separate shape; and we proceed in this way because we are entirely unable to comprehend the spirit of this thoroughly native art.⁷⁰

Even though folk art was supposed to create an atmosphere in which Polish art would be revived and be a guiding light for artistic exploration, Trojanowski did not wish to force it upon “people who by themselves, without the aid of these collections, are able to create their own works that would appeal to the Polish soul just as well as these do”.⁷¹ He assured his readers that “artistic Poland is not the lily motifs from Zakopane, not the woollens from Łowicz and the Cracow belts. If we were to stop at what folk art brought us, we would forever keep turning in this small enchanted ring”.⁷²

Trojanowski’s furniture designs from his Cracow period evince clear folk-art inspirations. Those inspirations were acquired in more than one way; the designer drew them from folk ornamentation as much as from the forms of particular elements of folk furniture, and even from their colour schemes. He often made use of

65 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 59, E. Trojanowski, “List z Warszawy z powodu wystawy sztuki stosowanej”, *Słowo Polskie*, 1902.

66 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud...*, pp. 826, 827.

67 Ibid.

68 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 59, E. Trojanowski, “List z Warszawy z powodu wystawy sztuki stosowanej”, *Słowo Polskie*, 1902.

69 Ibid.

70 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud...*, pp. 826, 827.

71 Trojanowski, *Głos z obozu. O sztuce stosowanej...*, p. 1.

72 Trojanowski, *Pierwsza wystawa Towarzystwa „Polska sztuka stosowana”...*, pp. 1, 2.

a detail found in folk chests: a wavy apron-like element mounted under the box. Similar details are found in the cupboard now in the National Museum in Cracow, the chair and credenza from the set of dining-room furniture,⁷³ in the chairs from the Old Theatre restaurant,⁷⁴ and in the washstand, bed and wardrobe from the design for a set of bedroom furniture.⁷⁵ Also, folk carvings inspired the pediment and bottom-edge decorations of various pieces of furniture, which are shaped into rounded serrations or alternating trapezoidal teeth. Such elements are found in the bookshelves from Reymont's study,⁷⁶ in another bookshelf, made of oak wood,⁷⁷ and in the bed and wardrobe from the design for a set of bedroom furniture.⁷⁸ In his designs for credenzas, Trojanowski divided the upper cupboard's front with small-scale arcading, a solution evident in a piece from the dining room set designed for a private client⁷⁹ and the Old Theatre credenza.⁸⁰ It is possible that this form was inspired by the arcaded façades of traditional Polish timber-frame houses. The existence of similar echoes was detected in Ludwik Puszet's design for a credenza.⁸¹

Trojanowski's pieces of furniture had simple, solid forms enhanced with decorative elements based on folk art. He made use of a vast collection of folk cut-outs from various regions of Poland, which was owned by TPSS (and is currently to be found in the Ethnographic Museum in Cracow). One motif derived from the cut-outs is the lily, used as metal mounts of a bookshelf.⁸² Volutes based on cut-outs decorate the back of the chair, the doors of the washstand and the headboard of the bed designed by Trojanowski.⁸³ Łowicz cut-outs provided a starting point for the decoration of the doors to the cupboard in the National Museum in Cracow. Among the ornaments Trojanowski applied most often, and in various materials, was the motif of highly stylised symmetrical twigs, which may have been derived from the painted decorations of folk chests. He used it in the credenzas in the designs for the dining room set and the Old Theatre set, in the oak bookshelf, and in the bookshelf he designed for Reymont. Such boughs were the dominant decorative motif of the backs of the chairs designed for the Old Theatre and they are also found in the design for a chair now in the Print Room of the Academy of the Fine Arts.⁸⁴ Various star motifs were also liberally applied; they are seen in the dining room set and in three bookshelves. The structure of the pieces of furniture was softened with wavy

73 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 8506, 7952, 8505.

74 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 7949.

75 Design, ASP Print Room, no. 8488, 8382, 8422.

76 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 13343/15.

77 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 7952.

78 Design, ASP Print Room, no. 8382, 8422.

79 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 8506, 7952, 8505.

80 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 7949.

81 "Pierwsza Wystawa Tow. „Polska sztuka stosowana”" [The first exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association], *Czas*, 1903, no. 287, pp. 1–2.

82 Photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 8462.

83 Design, ASP Print Room, no. 7744, 8488, 8382.

84 Design, ASP Print Room, no. 7751.

lines, visible, for example, in the crest rails of the dining-set chairs, as well as in the chair backs and the buffet designed for the Old Theatre restaurant room. Other motifs found in Trojanowski's furniture designs include lilies, zigzags⁸⁵ and hearts.⁸⁶

Trojanowski was very audacious in his use of vibrant colour in order to either enhance the ornamentation of a piece of furniture, or to cover its entire surface; he selected upholstery fabrics and designed wall polychromes in deep tones. It may be assumed that in this he was also inspired by folk art. One of the surviving pieces of furniture that he designed and in which deep colours are used is the cupboard now in the National Museum in Cracow; its decorative motifs, inspired by folk cut-outs and folk ornamentation, are enhanced with red, blue and navy blue. Early 20th-century press materials contain reports on some other designs by Trojanowski which had polychrome surfaces. Designs he sent for the contest for furniture in a "native style", which was held by the Zachęta gallery in Warsaw in 1902, caught the attention of both the jury and art critics. *Kurier Warszawski* wrote that Trojanowski's design was the most original one of all, as "it altogether abandoned the unfortunate Zakopane style; [Trojanowski] avoided all the Baroque, Renaissance, Gothic and suchlike, began his work from point zero and achieved results that had never been conceived before. He was inspired by folk art, from which he derived ideas for his pieces of furniture, for mounts, colours and so on". The colour scheme of his furniture was complimented further on: "Trojanowski's colours are strong, energetic, but well-matched: red, green, burgundy, applied on pieces whose shapes are simple, unsophisticated yet original, especially the credenza, desk and clock".⁸⁷ At the TPSS exhibition, held in the Palace of Art in Cracow in 1903, Trojanowski presented a cupboard and a chair with a simple construction but very surprising scheme of intense and contrasting colours: the chair's upholstery was yellow, and the wooden frame violet.⁸⁸ Intense colours were used also in the 1906 design for the Old Theatre restaurant room. The wainscoting in the lower section of the walls, which went round the entire space and which was an earlier element that Trojanowski had to integrate into his design, was painted green and blue. Polychrome decoration based on stylised motifs of chime circles attached to Cracow belts match the wainscoting. Painted decorations were blue and gold against the background of white walls. Oakwood furniture was enhanced with mahogany elements (the credenza and the buffet). The colour of mahogany was matched by the dark-red fabric on the upholstery of chairs and settees; it was also used in the decoration of the buffet.⁸⁹

In his designs for interiors and furniture, Trojanowski did not follow the method of imitating folk pieces. His creative approach to folk motifs is evident when

85 Credenza, photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 8506.

86 Chair, photograph, ASP Print Room, no. 8462.

87 "Styl swojski na dwóch konkursach" [The native style at two contests], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1902, no. 199, pp. 1, 3.

88 *Pierwsza Wystawa Tow. „Polska sztuka stosowana”...*, pp. 1–2.

89 "Restauracja w Starym Teatrze w Krakowie" [The restaurant in the Old Theatre in Cracow], *Architekt*, 1907, no. 4, col. 79–82; "Ze sztuk plastycznych" [From fine arts], *Czas*, 1906, no. 7, s. 3; "Stary Teatr" [The Old Theatre], *Czas*, 1906, no. 217, pp. 1–2.

his works are compared to those by Włodzimierz Tetmajer. At the TPSS exhibition in Cracow in 1902, Tetmajer displayed “an idea for a bedroom interior furnished in the Cracow style” (with Antoni Procajłowicz as its co-author). This design was later expanded and at the exhibition in Warsaw in the same year consisted of the bedroom plus four drawings of a “chamber furnished in the Cracow style”. One of those drawings is now in the Ethnographic Museum in Cracow. The Historical Museum of the City of Cracow has an unfinished design for the chamber and a sketch of the bedroom. In his designs for interiors, Tetmajer arranged wooden settles, chests and a bed along the whitewashed walls on which he placed decorations and small pictures; the walls are crowned with a row of framed sacred images. Contemporary critics accused him of stagnating by only compiling motifs derived from folk art.⁹⁰

Trojanowski wrote that “the Polish character of a piece of furniture does not rely on affixing or carving a lily, or painting a heart”; it should lie “in the very architecture of the piece”.⁹¹ He would himself use motifs derived from folk art, but he would usually stylise them; he did not “affix” folk lilies, but tried to apply forms based on their shape in, for instance, designing metal furniture mounts. Under the influence of folk furniture design, his pieces acquired simple cubic forms enhanced with ornaments and wavy lines of wooden frames which unobtrusively suggested the “native” nature of the piece. Trojanowski’s style heralded the furniture by the Cracow Workshop team of designers: Karol Stryjeński, Wojciech Jastrzębowski, Karol Homolacs and Franciszek Mączyński. As Irena Huml observed, their pieces “were typified by [...] solid forms not devoid of ornamentation, often a geometric one [...] with village woodcarving as a clear inspiration [...] and a prevalence of hard lines, roughly hewn shapes, ornaments seemingly carved with a primitive tool” (Fig. 7).⁹²

Folk reminiscences are also clear in Trojanowski’s output dating from the inter-war period. The items he presented at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925 refer to folk art. These solid, simply shaped pieces of furniture are decorated with motifs derived, but not directly quoted, from this art. A bookcase for a private library (Fig. 6), as well as a small table and a settle exhibited in the *kilim* room, are decorated with stars, rosettes, serrations and pronounced joints. A subtle inspiration from folk furniture design is evident in the set produced in ca. 1925 for Mr. Tadeusz Antoniewicz and his wife Czesława née Strzelecka from Warsaw (Fig. 7).⁹³ The set designed for Mr and

90 M. Limanowski, “O Zakopane na I. Wystawie Tow. Polskiej Sztuki Stos. w Krakowie” [About Zakopane at the 1st exhibition of the Polish Applied Art Association in Cracow], *Przegląd Zakopiański*, 1902, no. 10, pp. 95–100.

91 Trojanowski, *Sztuka i lud...*, pp. 826, 827.

92 I. Huml, *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku* [Polish applied art of the 20th century], Warsaw, 1978, p. 61.

93 I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Antoniewicz family for granting me access to the designs and giving me an opportunity to see the pieces of furniture designed by Trojanowski.

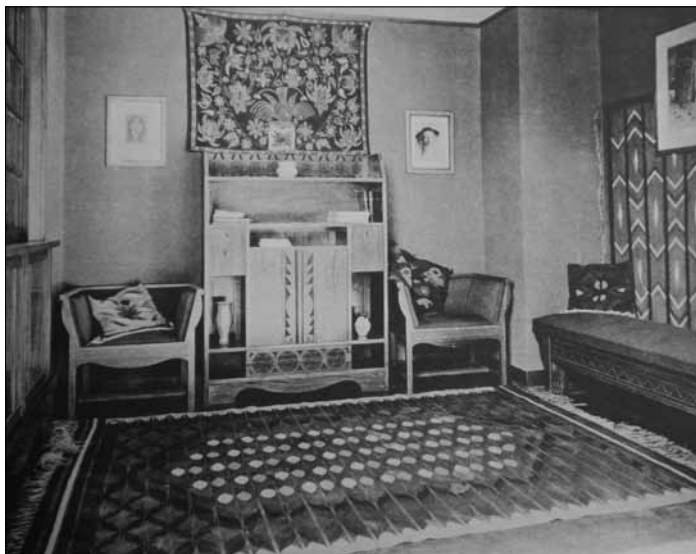


Fig. 6. Edward Trojanowski, library room at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925, reproduced in J. Warchałowski, *Polska sztuka dekoracyjna*, Warsaw, Cracow, 1928



Fig. 7. Edward Trojanowski, credenza from the set designed for Czesława and Tadeusz Antoniewicz from Warsaw, photo by A. Wójcik, private collection

Mrs Antoniewicz was intended mainly for the dining room, but its elements could also be used to furnish the sitting room, the study or children's room.⁹⁴ The heirs of Mr and Mrs Antoniewicz own designs not only for the pieces that were made (i.e. the table, armchair, credenza, small bench, bookshelf, samovar table and children's-room chair), but also for the pieces that were not made (i.e. the chess table, chair and grandfather clock). The items were made of ash wood and, with the exception of table tops and the credenza door, are not veneered. All of them have concise forms and are constructed according to the principles of symmetry and balanced proportion, with dominant arrangements of squares and rectangles; they exude an aura of solidity and stability. Their most striking feature is the noble quality of the material of which they were made; some of these pieces (i.e. the small round tables, the bookshelf) are entirely undecorated. In addition, Trojanowski made use of the decorative effect created by wood grain: the veneer on the dining-room table was laid in a chessboard pattern, in a circle on the round-topped tables, and in an envelope pattern on the credenza door. In this, he attempted to replace ornament with the decorative quality of the material itself, as also indicated by the side walls and doors of items of furniture constructed of splats set in a chevron pattern. Decorative elements make a subtle reference to folk decoration. Wavy lines and heart-shaped apertures decorate the backs of the so-called school chairs. Similar wavy lines are found on the backs of the chairs, the bench and the desk armchair; the first two are additionally decorated with simplified rosettes. The front splat of the chairs and the bench is also finished in a wavy line, as is the bottom splat of the credenza box, which is additionally decorated with volutes referring to folk chests. The volute is, in fact, used relatively extensively in this set, appearing also as a finial of the armrests of the armchair and the bench. Vertical splats of the credenza, with a line of beading through the centre and with edges decorated with a wavy line and volutes, also recall folk woodcarving.

The neo-Biedermeier style

The chairman of the TPSS, Jerzy Warchałowski, affectionately described country mansion interiors as hospitable, comfortable, spacious, full of "friendly spirits: they peek out of each corner, dwell in every piece of furniture, hover in the air... The doors are open all the way, from the front to the back". In his view, those interiors invited a weary guest to rest awhile, and bestowed serenity on a "troubled soul".⁹⁵ In the early 20th century, the architectural form of a country mansion of the landed gentry became a handy formula for suburban and countryside residences. This is confirmed by the results of several contests: for the mansion in Opinogóra (1908),

94 The set comprises an extending table, twelve chairs, a credenza, three cupboards (used also as bookcases), two different small tables with round tops, a settle, a samovar table, an armchair for the desk in the study, a closet/bookcase, three chairs designed for the children's room.

95 J. Warchałowski, "Dawniej i dzisiaj" [In the past and today], *Przegląd Techniczny*, 1911, no. 34, s. 436.

the mansion designed for an exhibition in Rome (1911), types of suburban villas (1912), the mansion in Niegowić (1913); in all of them, the awards went to designs in the traditional landed gentry mansion style. TPSS, to which Trojanowski was attached, played a part in making this architecture popular: it organised the contest for the Opinogóra mansion and published photographs and drawings of country mansions in its periodical *Materiały Towarzystwa Polska Sztuka Stosowana*. It also organised the exhibitions of timber architecture (Cracow, 1905) and architecture and interior design (Cracow, 1912).

Living spaces characteristic of country mansions inspired furniture designers and interior designers as well. Research on the furnishings of Polish country mansions has shown that they were mainly in the Biedermeier style.⁹⁶ As observed by Joanna Woch, “having taken root in country mansions of the gentry and the town homes of the intelligentsia, the Biedermeier style survived there to the end of the 19th century; new pieces of furniture were no more than an addition”.⁹⁷ In the late 19th and the early 20th century the features of Biedermeier-style furniture – comfort, functionality, balanced proportions, restraint in the use of ornamentation, and focus on the natural decorative quality of wood – came to fascinate Austrian and German designers. Polish designers also appreciated these inspirations; not as a foreign fashion, however, but as a next step in the search for a national style. To Trojanowski, mansions of the gentry constituted “fertile soil for Polish creative output that fully reflected the customs, and the jovial and affable character, of a Pole”. In his view, it is from those mansions that culture and art seeped down to the peasant houses.⁹⁸ Trojanowski explained that every artist and designer considers tradition to be an important path of creative exploration; he also stressed the importance of the turn towards applied art dating from the first half of the 19th century. “The greatest and the most distinctive artists of all periods of time did not, and do not, disdain tradition”, he wrote. “We see the English, the Germans, and finally, of late, Polish artists as well, beginning to return – especially in furniture design – to pieces dating from before 1840, that is, to the period in which the achievements of earlier art were splendidly put to use”.⁹⁹ To substantiate his theory regarding the creative role of drawing from native tradition, he cited Hermann Muthesius, asserting that “no human thought has ever been born in isolation, outside the ground tilled by the earlier spiritual toil of the humankind. Even the most audacious innovator unthinkingly takes the outcome of earlier work as his foundation. Tradition is but a process

96 E. Kowecka, “Wybrane zagadnienia organizacji życia materialnego na dworach polskich w XIX wieku” [Selected issues in the organisation of material life in Polish mansions in the 19th century], in: *Dwór polski w XIX wieku. Zjawisko historyczne i kulturowe* [The Polish mansion in the 19th century. A historical and cultural phenomenon], ed. J. Baranowski, Warsaw, 1992, p. 74.

97 J. Woch, *Biedermeier. Przewodnik dla kolekcjonerów* [Biedermeier. Collectors’ guide], Warsaw, 2007, p. 12.

98 Trojanowski, *Odrodzenie rzemiosła polskiego...*, p. 13.

99 Ibid., p. 12, citing H. Muthesius, *Sztuka stosowana i architektura* [Applied art and architecture], Cracow, 1909 (original title *Die angewandte Kunst und Architektur*).

of development".¹⁰⁰ Art critics appreciated this as a path of development laid out for Polish design. The TPSS exhibition in 1908 prompted Eligiusz Niewiadomski to write that the presented pieces of furniture and interiors (including two designed by Trojanowski) "attested to one thing: a desire to discard the revoltingly stereotypical character of today's furniture; and, more importantly, to discard it not with the help of Secession styles from Vienna or Munich, but... there was something else there... something [derived] from themselves, and also from tradition... From those pleasant times when our grandmothers, then young and lovely, sat at the spinet to sing the unforgettable song about Philo to handsome uhlans..."¹⁰¹

Trojanowski did not try to replicate Biedermeier furniture; what he attempted to do was to refer to tradition and make use of its achievements. His pieces reveal many features distinctive to furniture design of the Biedermeier period. Most pieces of his design, especially cupboards, credenzas and wardrobes, have a cohesive, balanced, geometric form. He contrasted natural hues of wood, with a light-coloured body of the piece and dark detailing, several times (e.g. the credenza from the dining room set, the set of furniture for a bedroom in a suburban villa exhibited in 1912, the design for bedroom furniture, the set for Reymont's study, the credenza and buffet for the Old Theatre restaurant room).

Designing the chairs for the Old Theatre, Trojanowski used the Greek Revival form of a Biedermeier-style chair, in the versions with and without armrests; but he enhanced it with a decoration inspired by folk art. He also used detailing based on Biedermeier style, e.g. pilasters (the Old Theatre credenza and buffet, credenza from the dining room set, wardrobe from Papińska's bedroom set) and square muntins to divide glass surfaces (e.g. the cupboard from the set for Reymont's study, the credenza from the dining room set, the Old Theatre credenza). Also the motif of the volute most probably derives from Biedermeier furniture design. This was practically Trojanowski's signature; he used the volute in both three- and two-dimensional forms (e.g. in the sets for Papińska's bedroom, Reymont's study, and a bedroom).

It may be assumed that Biedermeier furniture design influenced Trojanowski's output from ca. 1912 as well. Pieces of furniture from the first half of the 19th century were often without any ornamentation; they were not even decorated with complicated intarsia. The decorative effect was achieved mostly by the clearly visible wood grain. In designing a set of furniture for a bedroom in a suburban villa for the Cracow exhibition in 1912 and furniture for the foyer in the Polish Theatre in Warsaw, Trojanowski produced pieces with simple forms and no decorations; instead, they are covered with top-quality veneer waxed or shellacked to high gloss.

By drawing on the achievements of furniture design dating from the first half of the 19th century, Trojanowski found himself connected with the circle of artist-designers attached to the TPSS, who also attempted to produce modern furniture, but made use of the tradition of interior design associated with country mansions.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 12–13.

¹⁰¹ E. Niewiadomski, "O polskiej sztuce stosowanej i jej przyjęciu w Warszawie" [On Polish applied art and its reception in Warsaw], *Witcz*, 1908, fasc. 7, p. 364.

His designs may be compared to furniture for suburban villas shown at the Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in a Garden Environment, e.g. the dining room by Henryk Uziembło, the study by Józef Czajkowski, the sitting room by Karol Tichy, and the sets for Władysław Reymont's dining room and the Old Theatre buffet room, also by Czajkowski.

The Modernist-geometric trend

His studies on folk art and the influence of the Biedermeier caused Trojanowski to design pieces of furniture with simplified forms, achieved by a combination of a few solids, and decorated with a similarly geometric ornament. This trend is visible in his furniture-designing output dating from ca. 1908. In that year, at the TPSS exhibition at Zachęta, he presented two sets of furniture he had designed on private commission; those were Władysław Reymont's study and Maria Papińska's bedroom, (both made at Drążkiewicz's workshop in Warsaw). The set of furniture designed for the writer still manifests some traces of folk art, evident in the ornamentation of the bookcases and the table. The armchairs and the sofa, however, are dominated by purely geometric forms. Two types of armchairs, one with a high, the other with a low backrest, have cohesive, cubic shapes based on squares, rectangles and circles. The structure of the seats is guided by straight angles. Also the ornamentation has nothing to do with folk star patterns or serrations. Trojanowski made use of the potential offered by a contrast of two kinds of wood (most probably oak and mahogany)¹⁰² by applying geometric details made of dark wood on structural elements made of light-coloured wood. The cubic quality of the pieces is softened by oversized volutes which make the finials of the armrests and the of the wings. Designing the set for Reymont's study, Trojanowski experimented with geometric forms; the sofa and the armchairs are among the most innovatively designed pieces in his entire output (Fig. 8).

For Papińska, Trojanowski designed an extensive set of bedroom furniture.¹⁰³ These pieces, similarly to the ones designed for Reymont, have a cohesive, monumental form enhanced with a well-balanced geometric ornament. Again, traces of folk craft are still evident in some elements of those pieces, for instance the wavy apron-like splats under the boxes of the bed and the wardrobe. Some echoes of the Biedermeier style are also discernible; columns on the wardrobe or round glass panes in the wardrobe and the dressing table are a case in point. There are very few soft,

102 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20028, fol. 12, 13, *Wystawa „polskiej sztuki stosowanej” 5 III 1908* [Exhibition of “Polish applied art” 5 March 1908].

103 That set included not only a bed, a night table, a wardrobe, a screen, a toilet table with a mirror and a chair, but also a set of furniture for a boudoir-sitting room: a table, a sofa, small armchairs, a large armchair, a desk and corner bookshelves. This information comes from the inventory book of the National Museum in Warsaw, where these pieces were held until the 2nd World War (inv. no. 74361–74375).



Fig. 8. Edward Trojanowski, set of study furniture designed for Władysław Reymont, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow

fluid or delicate lines in those pieces; the dominating shapes are heavy, stately, in places enhanced by well-balanced arches. The armchairs are a case in point here; the seats are massive, upholstered with leather on the inside, and the only arched elements are the supports of the armrests and the curved backrests. All the pieces are unified by their ornamentation; the principal motif was the volute, used in both three- and two-dimensional forms. This motif is seen on the secretary, the mirror, the wardrobe, the armchairs, the bed and the table. In addition, Trojanowski made use of the motif of a wavy ribbon, applied in the upper part of the bed's headboard and over the mirror. The volutes are contrasted with the intarsia decoration (made by Natalia Boberówna) on the flap of the secretary, the bed's headboard and the wings of the wardrobe. Here, the ornament designed by Trojanowski is simple and geometric: a row of rectangles creating a double line, with quarter-circles made of different wood placed in the breaks, their right angles directed towards the outside; seen from afar, it may bring to mind a ribbon with little bows. The heaviness of the pieces is accentuated by chequered cuts in the lower sections of the supports (the table, the armchairs, the secretary, the bed). As in the set for the study, Trojanowski attempted to make the pieces more attractive by contrasting two kinds of wood: the sycamore and the oak. The set was in "the yellow-brown and dark grey colour combination".¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20028, for 12, 13, *Wystawa „polskiej sztuki stosowanej”* 5 III 1908.



Fig. 9. Edward Trojanowski, set of bedroom furniture designed for Maria Papieska from Warsaw, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow

Two sets of furniture exhibited by Trojanowski at Zachęta were much commented upon in the press. According to Adolf Nowaczyński, the set designed for Reymont's study was monumental, stately, "with decisive lines, quiet, mild in colouring" yet appropriate for an intellectual and a man of letters.¹⁰⁵ *Kilim* wall-hangings made by Sikorska's workshop in Czernichów (not visible in the photograph) added warmth to the interior; this is probably the reason behind the comment that it was "nice and cosy" (Fig. 9).¹⁰⁶

Nowaczyński considered the interior of Papieska's bedroom to be designed in "a serious, burgher-like, almost medieval manner".¹⁰⁷ The ornamentation aroused much interest. Reactions to the decorative volutes were mixed. *Słowo* wrote that "each of these pieces of furniture is supported by black oak columns to the sides, ending with a shell ornament; this gives them a certain very pleasing softness".¹⁰⁸ Not everyone was equally appreciative, however; Jaroszyński wrote that "the sides are made up of thick walls of black wood, with blunt and dough-like roll edges,

105 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 190, A. Nowaczyński, "Sztuka stosowana w Warszawie" [Applied art in Warsaw], *Prawda*, 8 Feb. 1908.

106 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 189, 190, "Sztuka Polska Stosowana" [Polish applied art], *Słowo*, 6 Feb. 1908.

107 Cracow, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Jerzy Warchałowski Files, signature 20029, fol. 190, A. Nowaczyński, "Sztuka stosowana w Warszawie", *Prawda*, 8 Feb. 1908.

108 "Sztuka Polska Stosowana", *Słowo*, 1908, no. 36, p. 2.

ending in chunky scrolls. These scrolls extend by half the roll above the surface of the wardrobe; and this half-a-roll is attached to the side wall as if it were meant to constitute a homogeneous whole with it. This gives a wrong and displeasing feeling, because not only is a fissure visible at the lower attachment, but also the wood grain runs differently in the roll and in the wall". Jaroszyński, citing Semper, asserted that this decoration was not appropriate for furniture and not consistent with the material of which it had been made.¹⁰⁹ The intarsia decoration was received favourably, with the comment that "colour combinations are exceptionally pleasing: sycamore wood set with matte oak that resembled leather. Built in this manner, the wardrobe, the smaller cupboard and the mirror are unusually beautiful and stately".¹¹⁰

In order to encapsulate the style of the pieces exhibited by Trojanowski at Zachęta, special attention was drawn to the simplicity of their lines and the monumental quality of their forms, which some reviewers perceived as inappropriate for men and women living at the beginning of the 20th century. Antoni Gawiński wrote that

the form [of these pieces] betrays a liking for serious, austere, rather heavy lines. The chairs, both in the study and in the bedroom, have too much of some druidic or Romanesque asceticism in them to fit the present day; they are contrived seats rather than pieces of furniture for people who are alive, sensitive and fond of comfort. [...] The entire bedroom seems to me overly austere and ascetic, almost monastic. The table, heavy but beautiful in its form, concludes the general impression.¹¹¹

Trojanowski's pieces were compared with the furniture Wyspiański had designed for Mr and Mrs Żeleński's dining room and sitting room, which were also shown at Zachęta. Kazimierz Broniewski wrote that the "practical purpose had been entirely replaced by some desire to arouse a mystic mood through the weightiness and size of the pieces of furniture [which] are put there once and forever, locked in place, as if they were some machines that ought not to be moved, so that a person should adjust himself to them, not they to him. The first impression they arouse is that of a mass, a solid, which leaves the memory empty of any play of lines or play of decorative motifs".¹¹²

Trojanowski designed the set of bedroom furniture dated to the year 1910 in a similar style as the above study and bedroom (Fig. 10).¹¹³ The design for the chair is a good example of his desire to simplify the form and to reduce the decoration and even the elements of a piece of furniture. It consists of a mere five elements. Its legs, which double as the supports of the backrest, were made of three planks; the shape of the seat is close to a semicircle, and the backrest consists of a curved splat that

109 T. Jaroszyński, "Sztuka stosowana" [Applied art], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1908, no. 47, pp. 3, 4

110 A. Gawiński, "Polska Sztuka Stosowana" [Polish applied art], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1908, no. 75, pp. 2, 3.

111 Ibid.

112 K. Broniewski, "Wystawa T-wa „Polska Sztuka Stosowana”" [Exhibition of the the Polish Applied Art Association], *Goniec Wieczorny*, 1908, no. 85, pp. 2, 3.

113 Designs for the chair, night table, chair with armrests, washstand, bed and wardrobe, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts Library, Cracow, no. 7744, 7745, 8488, 8982, 8422.

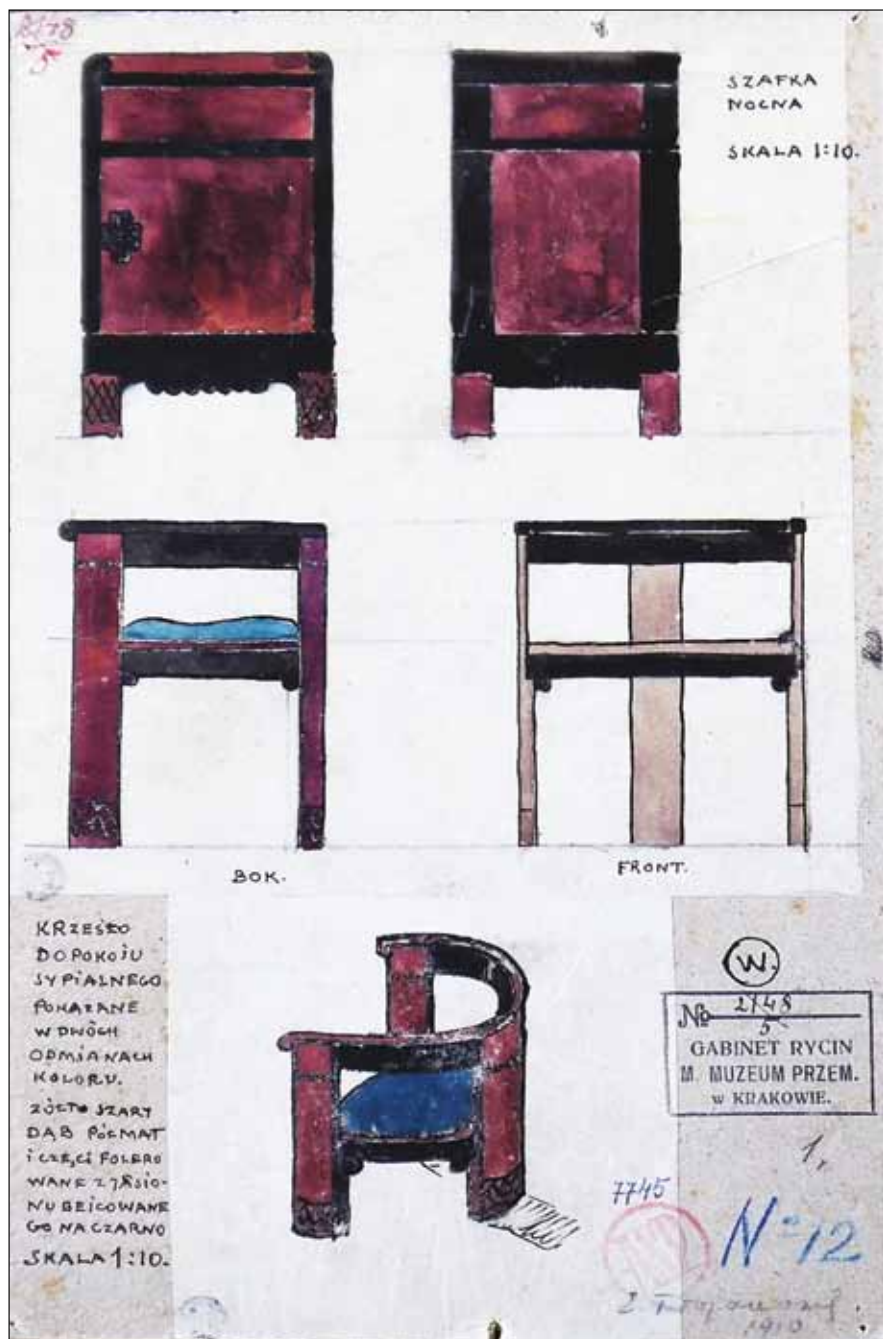


Fig. 10. Edward Trojanowski, design for a night table and armchair from the set of bedroom furniture, photo by A. Wójcik, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow

joins the three supporting planks. The descriptions on the designs indicate that the colour of the upholstery was to highlight the architectural quality of the piece, and that the vertical elements were to be made of yellow-grey semi-matte oak wood and the horizontal ones from sycamore stained black. The minimalist form of the chair was enhanced only with two types of geometric ornaments: chequered cuts in the lower sections of the supports and small volutes in the front part of the backrest and under the frame of the seat, by the supports. What the pieces from the bedroom set have in common is simple form, two colours of wood used in the decoration, and geometric decorative motifs: volutes and chequered cuts (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Edward Trojanowski, a set of bedroom furniture for a suburban villa, exhibited at the Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in a Garden Environment in Cracow in 1912, photo by A. Pawlikowski, Print Room, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow

The last phase of evolution of Trojanowski's style in furniture design is exemplified by two sets known only from photographs: one for a bedroom in a suburban villa presented at the Cracow exhibition in 1912, the other in the foyer of the Polish Theatre in Warsaw (1913). They have a typically simplified form constructed from arrangements of squares and rectangles. Their central feature are proportions, which are singularly well-balanced and evoke a sense of stability. There are almost no ornaments; those which do appear are so subtle that they are easy to overlook. In the case of the bedroom, those are the volutes that constitute the endings of the head- and foot-boards of the day-bed, the bosses and balusters in the boards

of the beds, and small volutes under the table top; in the lower part of the chairs' backrests we see a strongly reworked motif of a lily familiar from folk cut-outs. The most powerful effect, however, is wrought by the material itself: the wood grain in the veneer polished to high gloss. In addition, Trojanowski made use of the contrast between a few types and colours of veneers in order to highlight the piece's structure and point to its decorative effect. In the bedroom furniture, the lightest, grain-less wood was used to accentuate the leg bottoms; the darkest veneer draws attention to the frames and edges of tops, and the remaining surfaces are covered in light-coloured veneer with a rich pattern of the grain. The wavy lines of wood grain are additionally highlighted by the outward-curving central wings of the wardrobe and the chest of drawers.

Writing in *Kurier Warszawski*, Jaroszyński commented on Trojanowski's pieces exhibited in 1908 in Warsaw, pronouncing them close to the Western-European designs in the Secession style. He compared the set designed for Reymont's study with German and English pieces in the "heavy, rigid and not very appealing" type, which could be seen in, for instance, *Moderne Bauformen*.¹¹⁴ Trojanowski, much piqued by this review, wrote a letter to the editor, asking Jaroszyński to send him the issues of the periodical containing examples of furniture designed in a similar way to his. Jaroszyński responded that he did not accuse the designer of copying Western-European patterns, only that in his works he had discerned similar qualities: a certain rigidity and two-dimensionality.¹¹⁵ Jaroszyński appears to have been right, because comparison can be made that only highlight the innovative character of Trojanowski's designs (Fig. 12).

Items of furniture with a simplified form and making use of only the geometric ornamentation and the decorative qualities of wood grain can be associated with the circle of artists linked with the Wiener Werkstätte in the first period of its activity and with the Werkbund. They can be compared to the works of Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser or Otto Prutscher. The Viennese designers, similarly to Trojanowski, made their pieces of furniture solid and geometric, their form based on arrangements of squares and rectangles. Armchairs which Trojanowski designed for Reymont can be compared with those found in the collection of the Museum für angewandte Kunst in Vienna (MAK) – those designed by Hoffmann for a set commissioned by Hermann Wittgenstein (1905) and those from a set designed by Moser for a study, commissioned by the Waerndorfer family (1903). Arrangements of rectangles and circles used by Trojanowski as a decorative motif, for instance in the set designed for Reymont's study, can be compared to Hoffmann's abstract, geometric arrangements of squares in the decoration of the armchairs and sofas for the hall of Dr Friedrich Victor Spitzer's villa (1900–1903)¹¹⁶ and in the sitting room set published in *Das Interieur*.¹¹⁷ Also Trojanowski's penchant for achieving

114 T. Jaroszyński, "Sztuka stosowana", *Kurier Warszawski*, 1908, no. 47, pp. 3–4.

115 Listy do redakcji [Letters to the editor], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1908, no. 54, p. 15.

116 *Art et Décoration*, 1904, no. 16, pp. 64, 67.

117 *Das Interieur*, 1904, no. 6, p. 12.



Fig. 12. Edward Trojanowski, foyer of the Polish Theatre in Warsaw, reproduced in *Architekt*, 1913, fasc. 3–4

additional decorative quality by highlighting the item's structure with various types of wood can be associated with the circle of the Wiener Werkstätte designers. Similar solutions were chosen by, for instance, Hoffmann in the set for Baroness Mautner Markhof's bedroom (1902)¹¹⁸ or Moser in the small table from the set designed for Eisler von Terramare (1903), now in the MAK collection. Trojanowski attempted to accentuate the decorative qualities of a wood or veneer in the best manner possible, adding an additional emphasis with high-gloss, while at the same time he was able to dispose of ornamentation. Viennese furniture designers applied similar solutions, as evinced by, for instance, the bedroom furniture set by Otto Prutscher, published in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, in which the designer highlighted the attractive grain of ash wood and paired it with ebony.¹¹⁹

Furniture designed by Trojanowski was also reminiscent of some works by German designers associated with the Werkbund; those by Paul Troost and Adelbert

118 *Innen-Dekoration*, 1905, no. 16, pp. 180, 182.

119 *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, 1905, no. 8, pp. 547.

Niemeyer are especially pertinent. German designers, similarly to Trojanowski, ingeniously referred to furniture dating from the first half of the 19th century; their pieces are characterized by a solid form and stability. They also had the ability to make use of the decorative qualities of veneers, as exemplified by the set of bedroom furniture by Niemeyer, in which two kinds of veneer were put together to form a very successful chequered pattern.¹²⁰ A few designs for furniture sets by Troost feature simple but attractive high-gloss veneers and sparse, geometrical, rhythmically repeated ornaments (circles, squares and ovals),¹²¹ in which they are reminiscent of Trojanowski's 1912 set of bedroom furniture for a suburban villa or the pieces he designed for the Polish Theatre's foyer.

As to the Polish applied art scene, Trojanowski's works can be compared to furniture discussed by Anna Sieradzka: pieces by Stanisław Wyspiański, Karol Tichy, Wojciech Jastrzębowski or Karol Maszkowski, which reflected avant-garde tendencies.¹²² They can also be compared to pieces designed by Eugeniusz Dąbrowa-Dąbrowski for the restaurant room at the Old Theatre in Cracow with their characteristic extreme minimalism, the use of straight angles and the total absence of ornamentation. Another design close to Trojanowski's is the study in a small mansion by Józef Czajkowski, exhibited in Cracow in 1912, which shows how the influence of the Biedermeier resulted in the simplification of the form and in the emphasis on the effect of carefully selected veneers.

In his designs for furniture, Edward Trojanowski sought a style that would express the uniqueness and individuality of Polish art. Although initially he turned to folk art, he did not passively copy its decorative motifs. His study of folk craft persuaded him to simplify the forms of pieces of furniture and to experiment with the use of colour in furniture design and interior decoration. Later, his search for a national style encouraged him to seek inspiration in Biedermeier furniture design, which added elegance to his designs, as evident in the proportions of the pieces of furniture and in the use of decorative veneers or sophisticated geometric ornaments. In this manner Trojanowski, while following his own artistic path, developed forms of furniture that effortlessly bear comparison with the avant-garde designs of the Modernist geometric current, as proposed by the Wiener Werkstätte and the Werkbund, which heralded the arrival of Art Déco.

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

120 *The Studio*, 1914, p. 117.

121 *Deutsche Kunst und Decoration*, 1902–1903, no. 9, p. 286, *Deutsche Kunst und Decoration*, 1905, no. 16, p. 419, *Die Kunst*, 1902, no. 3, pp. 144, 145; *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, 1904 no. 16, p. 203.

122 A. Sieradzka, "Początki awangardy w meblarstwie polskim 1904–1914" [The beginnings of the avant-garde in Polish furniture design 1904–1914], in: *Studia z architektury nowoczesnej* [Studies in modern architecture], vol. 2, ed. J. Kucharzewska, J. Malinowski, Toruń, 2007, pp. 131–143.

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“Wystawa projektów meblowych”, *Czas*, 1905, no. 60, pp. 1, 2.

“Ze sztuk plastycznych”, *Czas*, 1906, no. 7, s. 3.

Abstract

Three sources of inspiration are discernible in early 20th-century Polish furniture design and especially in the output of artist-designers associated with the Polish Applied Art Association (TPSS), namely, folk art, the historical styles, and the modernistic/geometrical current. Edward Trojanowski's oeuvre in that area combines all these three tendencies and embodies the evolution of a Polish approach to designing furniture; hence it may serve to illustrate the history of Polish furniture design in the early 20th century. Although initially Trojanowski turned to folk art, he did not passively copy its decorative motifs. His study of folk craft persuaded him to simplify the forms of pieces of furniture and to experiment with the use of colour in furniture design and interior decoration. Later, his search for a national style encouraged him to seek inspiration in Biedermeier furniture design, which added elegance to his designs, as evident in the proportions of the pieces of furniture and in the use of decorative veneers or sophisticated geometric ornaments. In this manner Trojanowski, while following his own artistic path, developed forms of furniture that effortlessly bear comparison with the avant-garde designs of the Modernist geometric current, as proposed by the Wiener Werkstätte and the Werkbund, which heralded the arrival of Art Déco.

Keywords: design, furniture, applied art, vernacular style, biedermeier style, interior design

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Turning “Polish Boxes into German Houses”: On the Transformations of Architecture in Poland during the Second World War as Exemplified by the Changing Design of the Zajdensznir Tenement in Radom

The issue of construction projects conducted by the Germans in occupied Poland is researched with increasing frequency by both historians and historians of architecture. In the last twenty-five years, several studies on this subject, investigating this issue in reference to wartime construction in a number of Polish cities, have been published in Poland.¹ The topic has also been occasionally discussed, although

1 On German construction projects in the occupied Poland, see e.g. N. Gutschow, B. Klain, *Zagłada i utopia. Urbanistyka Warszawy w latach 1939–1945* [Obliteration and Utopia. Urban design in Poland in the years 1939–1945], Warsaw, 1995; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Faszystowska działalność mieszkaniowa na Dębcu” [Fascist residential construction at Dębiec], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2004, no. 1; J. Purchla, “Hubert Ritter i hitlerowskie wizje Krakowa” [Hubert Ritter and the Nazi visions of Cracow], *Rocznik Krakowski*, 2005; vol. 71; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Kolonía niemieckich domków drewnianych przy ul. Szydłowskiej” [The German estate of timber detached houses at Szydłowska street], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2008, no. 4; A. Nadolny, “Zamość w planach urbanistycznych w XX wieku” [Zamość in 20th-century urban planning], *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej. Architektura i Urbanistyka*, 2008, fasc. 16; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Architektoniczne dokonania III Rzeszy na terenie Poznania” [Architectural achievements of the Third Reich in Poznań], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2009, no. 2; the chapter on construction projects during the 2nd World War in: H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania. Zagadnienia reformy mieszkaniowej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku i jej wprowadzanie w Poznaniu w pierwszej połowie XX wieku* [A city to live in. The housing reform on the late 19th and early 20th century and its introduction in Poznań in the first half of the 20th century], Poznań, 2012; T. Bolanowski, *Architektura okupowanej Łodzi. Niemieckie plany przebudowy miasta* [Architecture of the occupied Łódź. German plans for remodelling the city], Łódź, 2013; P. Setkiewicz, “Niemieckie plany przebudowy Oświęcimia” [German plans for remodelling Oświęcim], *Oświęcimensis*, 2015; A. Paradowska, “‘Wyjątkowe zadania’ na ‘nowym niemieckim Wschodzie’. Nazistowska urbanistyka i architektura w Kraju Warty jako element okupacji polskich terenów podczas drugiej wojny światowej” [“Exceptional tasks” in the “New German East”. Nazi urban planning and architecture in the Warthegau as an element of the occupa-

in a broader context, in studies published abroad.² From a scholarly perspective, these research initiatives must be assessed as useful. Architecture, regardless of its origin, provides a mute but crucial testimony of its times. It permits us not only to determine the taste of the era, but also to ascertain what transformations this taste underwent as a result of both evolutionary and revolutionary changes stimulated from above – for instance ones originating from certain administrative decisions. In some cases, these changes took a particularly dramatic course and constituted a tangible reflection of the historical moment in which they occurred. When viewed from this perspective, the case of one of Radom's tenements acquires an almost symbolic significance.

The German occupation of Radom began at the very outset of the defensive war, as the Wehrmacht entered the city on 8 September 1939. Civilian administration had been organised by late October.³ In the following year, a part of Radom's city-centre was designated to become an exclusively German district.⁴ Architectural substance in this part of the centre, mostly dating from the late 19th and the early 20th century, consisted of comfortable, modern tenement houses with rented lodgings, residences occupied by Radom's most affluent citizens, and various public buildings.⁵ The city had been developing vigorously, especially since the railway line had been constructed in 1881;⁶ yet until the end of the First World War not all plots of land in this part of the centre had been filled. Construction activity in this area intensified again in the inter-war period, when the architectural substance in the city centre became more dense. It was in this period, particularly in the 1930s, that a group of relatively homogeneous modernist tenements was constructed along Moniuszki street. One of the more outstanding, and more interesting, of those

tion of Polish lands during the 2nd World War], in: *Fikcyjna rzeczywistość. Codzienność, światy przeżywane i pamięć niemieckiej okupacji w Polsce* [Fictitious reality. The everyday, the perceived worlds and the memory of the German occupation in Poland], ed. A. Wolff-Powęska, R. Traba, K. Woniak, Berlin, 2016; A. Paradowska, "Niedoszły Himmlerstadt". O niemieckich planach przebudowy Zamościa i Zamojszczyzny" ["The unachieved Himmlerstadt". On the German plans for remodelling Zamość and the Zamość region"], *Quart. Kwartalnik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, 2017, no. 1–2.

2 E.g. H. Schwendemann, W. Dietsche, B. Górczyńska-Przybyłowicz, *Hitlers Schloss. Die "Führer-residenz" in Posen*, Berlin, 2003; N. Gutschow, *Ordnungswahn. Architekten Planen im "eingedeutschen Osten" 1939–1945*, Berlin, 2001.

3 S. Piątkowski, *Radom w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945)* [Radom in the period of the war and the German occupation (1939–1945)], Lublin–Warsaw, 2018, pp. 115–124.

4 The German quarter comprised a 45-hectare section of the most central area of the city centre, inside the following streets: Żeromskiego, Focha, Kelles-Krauza, Pierackiego (currently Niedziałkowskiego), Słowackiego, 1 Maja (currently 25 Czerwca), Sienkiewicza, Mickiewicza and Traugutta; after: Jan Franecki, "Radom w okresie II wojny światowej 1939–1945" [Radom in the period of the 2nd World War 1939–1945], in: *Radom. Dzieje miasta w XIX i XX wieku* [Radom. The 19th- and 20th-century history of the city], ed. S. Witkowski, Warsaw, 1985, p. 295.

5 *Architektura i urbanistyka Radomia* [Radom's architecture and urban planning], ed. W. Kalinowski, Lublin, 1979, pp. 168–178.

6 A. Dylewski, *Historia kolei w Polsce* [The history of railways in Poland], Warsaw, 2012, p. 20.

tenements was certainly the building whose proprietors were Hersz Zajdensznir,⁷ the owner of a department store, and his wife Róża. This three-floor tenement was under construction from the summer of 1939 onward. It was located on a plot of land at the corner of Moniuszki and Sienkiewicza street,⁸ that is, in the most prestigious, southern section of Radom's city centre. The building's high-quality design, the work of the engineer Artur Haskler,⁹ was probably dictated by the high status of the district.

The house designed for Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir (Fig. 1–5) constituted an example of functionalist architecture. According to the design, it was to consist of three cubic blocks, of which the two side ones were of equal height and the central one, which served as a connecting element and was visually dominant, was slightly taller, thus highlighting the vertical composition of the building. The visually separate character of the building's three sections is additionally underscored by the fact that each of their façades was designed differently. The block located towards Sienkiewicza street (Fig. 2) was rectangular, seated on a plinth shared by all of the building's sections. From the side of the plot's edge the plinth was most probably decorated with ceramic tiling. This plinth transformed into a similarly finished, solid bar of masonry balustrades with metal railings, which protected the loggias arranged from the ground floor up to the third floor. These loggias visually separated the structural mass of the tenement from its neighbour.

The vertical composition of the building, in turn, was accentuated by a distinct overhanging eave, which protected the main entrance into the stairwell and the stretch of shop windows running over two-thirds of the ten-axis elevation. The composition of these windows, especially the fact that they were separated from one another by means of prominent pillars, was one of the solutions used in the design of the Zajdensznir tenement which ostensibly followed the principles postulated by Le Corbusier, in this case the one pertaining to visually dividing the block of the edifice from the ground by means of a pillar construction. Another example, commonly imitated in the architecture of the period, was the design of seemingly rectangular window openings; in reality, they were double openings (or, at the angles of the elevation, triple or corner ones) separated by a narrow pillar. In the design of the Zajdensznir tenement, they were additionally integrated visually by means of a narrow railing intended to protect the flower-boxes. Divisions in the geometrical pattern of plastering correspond to the rhythm of the window openings.¹⁰

The situation of the building, in a visible location at the corner of a quarter and directly opposite the imposing neo-Classical building of the County Administration

7 The State Archive in Radom (Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu, henceforward: APR), Radom Municipal Records (Akta miasta Radomia, henceforward: AmR), Technical Documentation file (Dokumentacja Techniczna, henceforward: DT), p. 3702 (29).

8 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2, 9).

9 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (architectural design).

10 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (designs for the elevations, axonometry).



Fig. 1. Artur Haskler, Axonometry of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

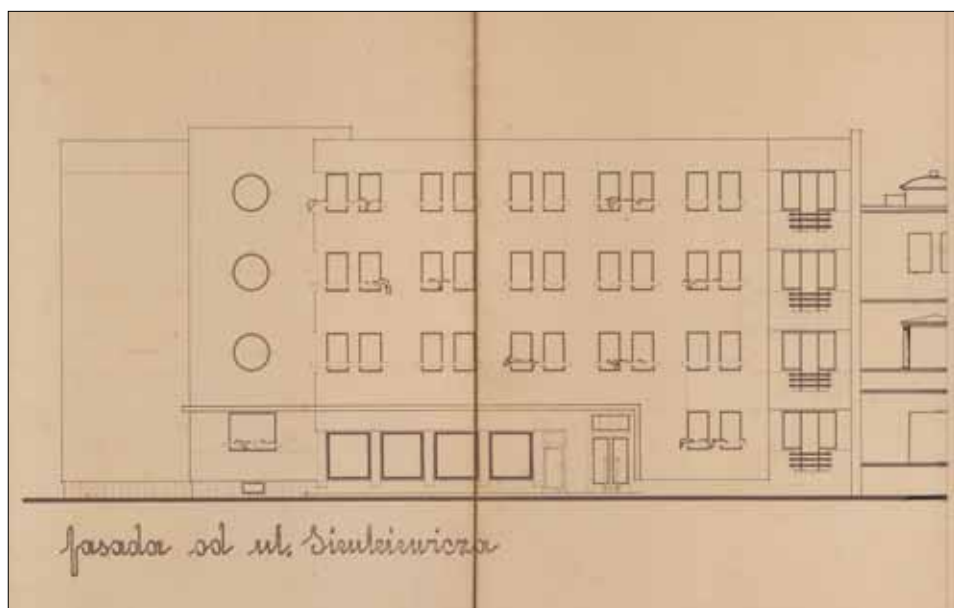


Fig. 2. Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom facing Sienkiewicza street, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

Council¹¹ (Fig. 6) which constitutes the dominating architectural element of the entire street, made it necessary to clearly highlight the corner of the new building; this was, in fact, a requirement delivered personally by the head of the technical division of the municipal authority. To achieve this, the corner was moved back from the edge of the plot to form an offset, and the resulting connecting element was designed in an "architectural manner", as postulated by the municipal authority.¹² The main emphasis was put on the vertical arrangement of this part of the building, as it was designed to resemble a tower which was slightly taller than the other two blocks of the tenement. The eave, originally featured on the wing along Sienkiewicza street, was made to stretch over the two elevations of the connecting block, thus creating a plinth with an additional platform with a facing of wider tiles and two square windows with decorative railings protecting the flower-boxes, analogous to those in the wing as discussed above.

The elevations of the three top floors on the side of Sienkiewicza and Moniuszki streets differed in design. One section of the block facing Sienkiewicza street was dominated by a row of three vertically arranged round windows, additionally decorated with an iron grille, which was designed as circular with two bars crossed at the right angles. The decoration designed for the elevation facing Moniuszki street (Fig. 3) was more elaborate. It consisted mainly of the balustrades of the loggias, which were partially filled in, tiled and finished with metal railings. The most interesting element of the decoration, however, were the concrete plaques decorated with five rows of circular double openings, which may have been based on the entrance to one of the Polish pavilions at the Paris exhibition in 1937 (Fig. 7),¹³ whose decoration was discussed in detail in specialist periodicals.¹⁴ A spire that crowned the connecting block put a final emphasis on its verticality.

The design of the elevation of the wing facing Moniuszki street differs from that of the block situated along Sienkiewicza street. For instance, its plinth is finished in two different ways. From the door of the stairwell to the connecting block, including the latter, it was uniform, whereas from the door to the edge of the plot (and with the section of the ground-floor wall to the height of the ground-floor ceiling), it was most probably intended to have a ceramic facing, transforming higher up into tiered rows of loggias. This is analogous to the design of the furthestmost section of the wing facing Sienkiewicza street, but here the ground-floor loggia was replaced with a gateway and the niches were additionally decorated with five rows of quadruple cement grilles, almost identical to the ones seen in the connecting block. The remaining surface of the ten-axis elevation of the ground floor and the upper floors was planned as uniform, repeating the design of the elevation facing Sienkiewicza

11 M. Pszczółkowski, *Architektura użyteczności publicznej II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939. Forma i styl* [Public architecture in the 2nd Republic of Poland 1918–1939. The form and the style], Łódź, 2014, pp. 148–149.

12 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (17).

13 I.e. the Service Pavilion designed by Bohdan Lachert and Józef Szanajca.

14 *Architektura i Budownictwo*, 1937, 12, no. 6, pp. 211–229.

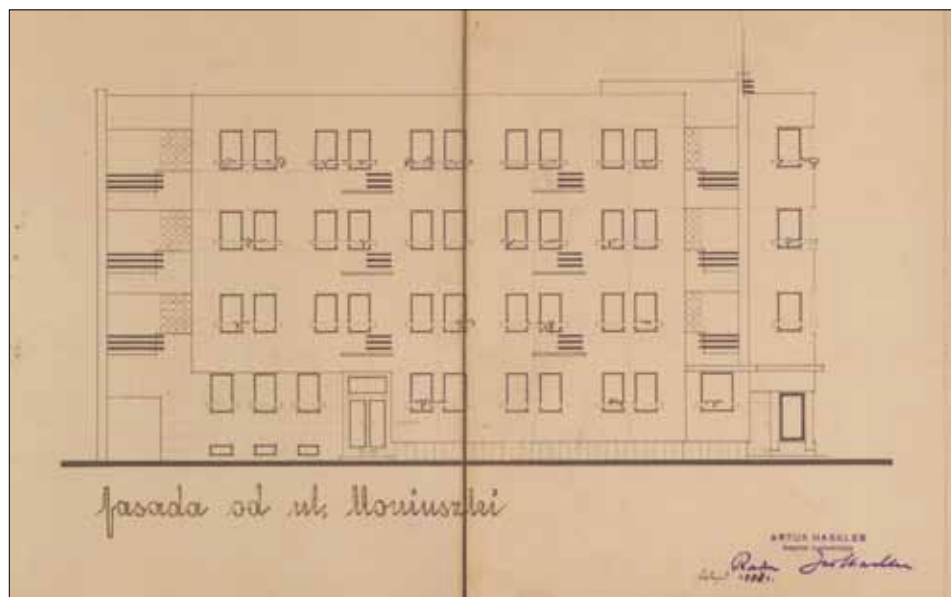


Fig. 3. Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom facing Moniuszki street, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

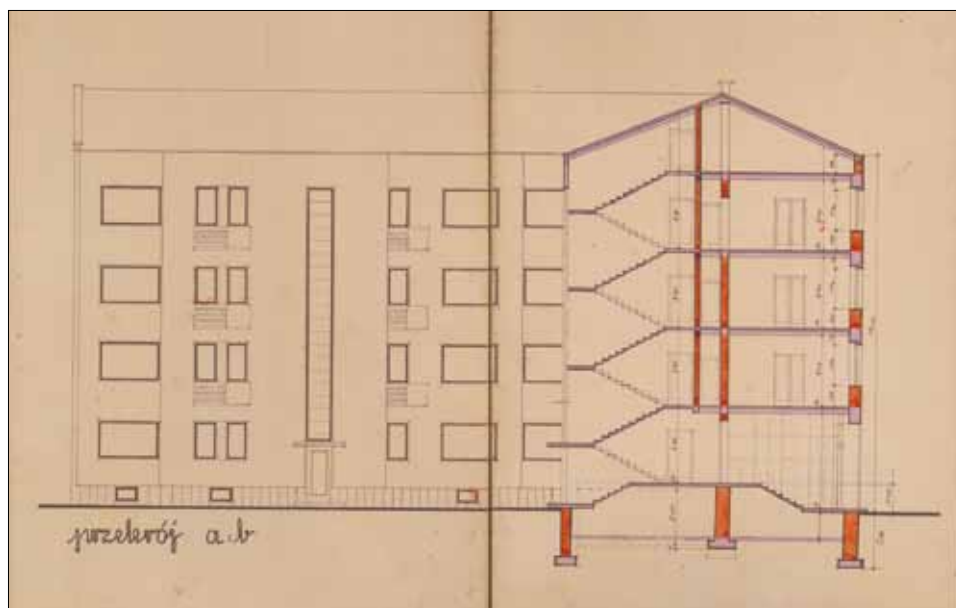


Fig. 4. Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom (the wing on the Sienkiewicza street side), 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

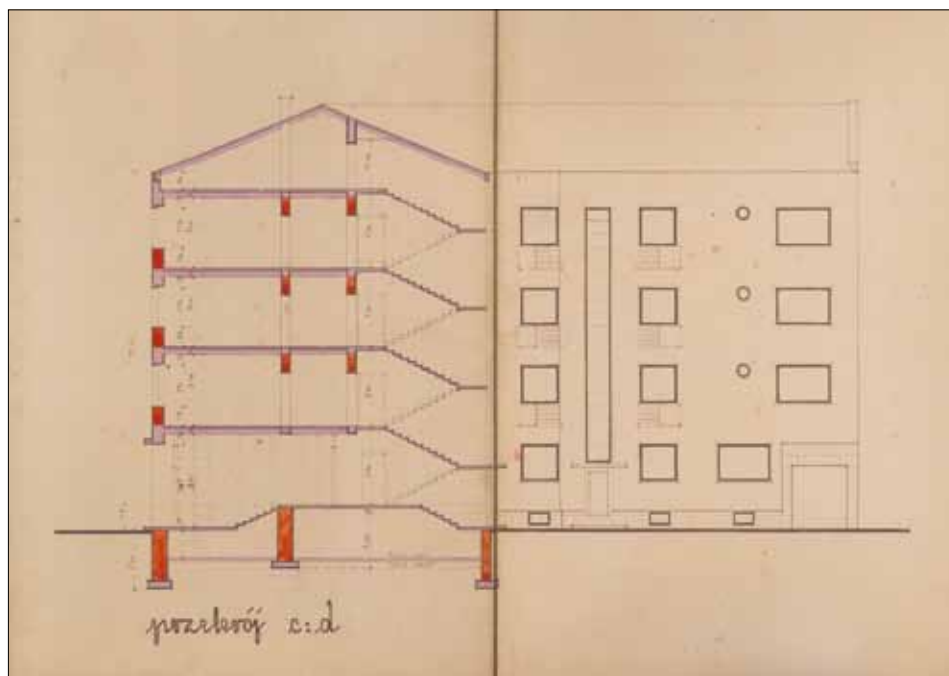


Fig. 5. Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom (the wing on the Moniuszki street side), 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

street. The only difference in the design of the two front elevations is constituted by the balconies placed on the second and fourth axis of the elevation facing Moniuszki street, whose balustrades repeat the design of the loggia balustrades.

The courtyard elevations were far more modest (Fig. 4–5). The plastering was to be smooth and, in contrast to the frontage, it was not intended to have divisions that repeated the rhythm of the window openings. The windows themselves were larger, nearly square in shape. In addition, the angles were rounded off; this, coupled with the glazing of the stairwell, which ran vertically over a few floors, made the courtyard elevations quite different in their style from the street façades. It seems that the only elements shared by both the front and the back side of the building were the balconies, designed in an identical manner to those facing Moniuszki street, and the round windows, although at the back they were smaller and did not have grilles.¹⁵

The Zajdensznir tenement, as originally designed, would have belonged to a distinct trend within Functionalist architecture, as its designer Artur Haskler was directly connected with his native city, Lvov, where he had worked as a construction

¹⁵ APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (designs for the elevations).



Fig. 6. Alfons Pinno, Building of the County Government Association in Radom, constructed 1925–1927, condition in 2018, photo by Jakub Frejtag



Fig. 7. Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca, Service section of the Polish pavilion at the International Exposition of Art and Technology held in Paris in 1937, *Katalog Oficjalny Działu Polskiego na Międzynarodowej Wystawie Sztuka i Technika 1937 w Paryżu*, Warsaw 1937

engineer.¹⁶ The absence of relevant sources makes it impossible to unequivocally determine Haskler’s connection with the Construction Department of the local Polytechnic,¹⁷ but, being a professionally active engineer, he must have been influenced by the Lvov architectural milieu. This is confirmed by the very fact that his design for the Radom tenement is stylistically linked with the residential blocks constructed in Lvov in the same period. This permits us to include the Zajdensznir tenement into the Lvov strand of Functionalism.

An analysis of examples of residential structures built in Lvov in the 1930s, collected and described in several works on interwar architecture in that city,¹⁸ indicates that the Zajdensznir house featured at least one motif characteristic for these designs, namely, the perpendicular line of round windows placed on one of the connecting façades to emphasise the verticality of the design. Moreover, it appears that the unusually shaped metal grille decorating the round window in Haskler’s design could have been directly inspired by the Lvov villa of Bruno Szymański, a design by Stefan Porębowicz built in 1936–1939 (Fig. 8).¹⁹ Although nominally arriving in Radom to construct the telecommunications network,²⁰ Haskler did not limit his activities in the city to fulfilling that contract. Concurrently with his work on the Zajdensznir residence, he designed at least one more house (currently at Niedziałkowskiego street no. 24; Fig. 9).²¹ The anonymous author of the design of the Starec-Wassner house at Traugutta street no. 32 (Fig. 10) was also most probably Haskler. This attribution is based on a number of similarities the structure shares with Zajdensznir house in terms of façade design. The most striking of those include the division of the frontage, the square windows on the ground floor,

16 *Księga adresowa Małopolski. Lwów, Stanisławów, Tarnopol. Z informatorem m. stoł. Warszawy, województwa krakowskiego, łódzkiego, pomorskiego, poznańskiego i śląskiego* [Lesser Poland address book. Lvov, Stanisławów, Tarnopol. With information on the capital city of Warsaw, and the voivodeships of: Cracow, Łódź, Pomerania, Poznań and Silesia], year 1935/1936, Cracow–Lvov, 1936, p. 150.

17 Haskler was mentioned only in the list of members of the Academic Reading Room, the Polish students scientific society in Lvov (then Lemberg) for the academic year 1903/1904. See *Sprawozdanie Czytelni Akademickiej we Lwowie za rok akademicki 1903/4* [Report of the Academic Reading Room in Lvov for the academic year 1903/4], Lvov, 1904, p. 17.

18 See R. Cielątkowska, *Architektura i urbanistyka Lwowa II Rzeczypospolitej* [Architecture and urban planning in Lvov in the 2nd Republic], Zblewo, 1998; J. Lewicki, “Architektura mieszkaniowa” [Residential architecture], in: *Lwów. Miasto, architektura, modernizm* [Lviv. City, architecture, modernism], ed. B. Cherkes, A. Szczerski, Wrocław, 2016; J. Bohdanova, „Osiedla, kamienice i mieszkania nowoczesnego Lwowa” [Housing estates, terraced houses and apartments in modern Lviv], in: *ibidem*.

19 Bohdanova, *op. cit.*

20 J. Rytłowa, “Rodzina Topińskich” [The Topiński family], in: *Polin. Polscy Sprawiedliwi* [Polin. The Polish Righteous], Jan. 2010, <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-rodzina-topińskich>, [accessed 16 November 2018].

21 A. Żuchowska, “Modernistyczny budynek w Radomiu zabytkiem” [A modernist edifice in Radom is a historical monument], in: *Mazowiecki Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków. Delegatura w Radomiu*, <https://www.mwkwz.pl/archiwum-aktualnosci-lista/1134-modernistyczny-budynek-w-radomiu-zabytkiem>, [accessed 16 November 2018].



Fig. 8. Stefan Porębowicz, Bruno Szymański's villa in Lvov, constructed in 1936–1939, condition in 2010, Wikimedia Commons, photo by Haidamac



Fig. 9. Artur Haskler, House at no. 24 Niedziałkowskiego street in Radom, constructed in 1939, condition in 2018, photo by Jakub Frejtag



Fig. 10. Attributed to Artur Haskler, Design for the front elevation of the Starec-Wassner house at no. 32 Traugutta street in Radom, ca. 1939–1940, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 4041

the design of the balconies, the ferroconcrete slabs with round openings dividing the front balconies, and the spire at the top of the avant-corps. Another important detail is the similarity in the design drawings for both these structures, featuring almost identical writing and stylistic details in drawing specific elements, e.g. the windows.²²

The situation of the architect and his employers changed radically with the outbreak of the Second World War. They were all Jews – a fact that sealed their fate. What happened to the Zajdensznir couple remains unknown. The last official document referring to Hersz Zajdensznir in the context of the house that he and his spouse had built is a summons to the technical division of the municipal council, issued in early October 1939.²³ The exact date of the confiscation of Zajdensznirs' property by the German occupying authorities cannot be ascertained on the basis of surviving archival material. The latest document pertaining to the construction of the house is an application to the Building Control Office submitted in November 1946 by Jakub Zajdensznir, most likely a relative of the owners,²⁴ who asks for an

²² APR, AmR, DT, p. 4041 (1–10).

²³ APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2).

²⁴ Regrettably, the available sources do not permit us to establish the exact relationship between Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir and Jakub Zajdensznir.

official certificate of the state of works as of September 1939,²⁵ i.e. on the eve of the confiscation. Information on the later whereabouts of Artur Haskler is much more ample.²⁶ When the German occupation of Radom began, he was still involved in the construction of the municipal telecommunications network. Naturally, the Germans saw it as an investment of strategic importance, and thus Haskler, as the main contractor, was allowed to work outside of the ghetto, in the 'Aryan' part of the city, until the project's completion. When the eastern voivodships of pre-war Poland were seized by German forces, the architect managed to bring some of his family from Lvov to Warsaw, where they were sheltered by Zofia and Jan Topiński. As the investment in Radom was nearing completion, Haskler himself also fled to the capital, where he died in September 1944.²⁷

The most interesting aspect of recommencing the works on the Zajdensznir tenement during the war is the issue of Haskler's involvement in the changes to the design, since by September 1939 construction works had been relatively far advanced.²⁸ The most probable option is that, as with the telecommunications network, the occupying authorities commissioned him to revise the design and continue to supervise the construction of the building in its new form. The only surviving sources are the updated version of the design bearing a seal with the architect's name, found in the building documentation, and a brief note by the director of the Radom district of German Postal Service East, dated October 1942, in which he informs the Stadthauptmann of Radom that Haskler had submitted the drawings enclosed with the message.²⁹ The latter document indicates that the construction was interrupted for at least two years and likely recommenced in spring 1942, i.e. after the architect had made his escape from Radom. The surviving designs made

25 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2).

26 Exceptionally useful in this respect are the eyewitness testimonies collected by the Yad Vashem and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews as part of the *Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History* project, and by the Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum, as well as the latter's databases of the civilian victims of the Warsaw Uprising.

27 Topiński Family, in: *Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center. The Righteous Among The Nations*, <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=5659930> [accessed 16 November 2018]; J. Rytłowa, *Rodzina Topińskich*, op. cit. ; M. Kudła, *Edmund Sułkowski „Dąb”* [Edmund "Dąb" Sułkowski], in: *Archiwum Historii Mówionej Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego* [Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum], <https://www.1944.pl/archiwum-historii-mowionej/edmund-sulkowski,2220.html> [accessed 16 November 2018]; *Lista Ofiar Cywilnych* [The record of civilian victims], in: *Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego*, <https://www.1944.pl/ofiary-cywilne,ord,imie,0,strona,168.html> [accessed 16 November 2018].

28 The report submitted by the construction company in answer to Jakub Zajdensznir's request confirms that until Sept. 1939 all the cellars had been completed, ground-floor walls facing Moniuszki street were covered with a ceiling, ground-floor walls facing Sienkiewicza street were constructed to the height of the ceiling on the stretch between Moniuszki street to the stairwell, and to the height of the windowsills on the stretch between to stairwell to the edge of the plot of land. In addition, a large amount of construction materials was kept onsite. After: APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (3–4).

29 APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (no pagination).

by Haskler, as well as the edifice itself, which has remained almost unchanged (Fig. 11–12), constitute good examples of the tendencies noticeable in German architecture from the year 1933 onwards. After the Nazis had seized power, there emerged a trend to remove traces of the avant-garde style through making modernist edifices, representing certain types of architecture, more conservative in form, more compliant with traditional models promoted by the *Heimatschutzarchitektur*.³⁰

After 1939, such initiatives also began to be undertaken in occupied territories, and the General Government was no exception. As regards Poland, the most famous examples of changing the architectural form of an edifice to be more traditional include the wartime refurbishment of the Feniks insurance company office in Cracow.³¹ The façade of the building was decorated in a reduced neo-Classical style, while the geometric attic was replaced with a mansard roof. The topic was also discussed in German-language press published in occupied Poland, which followed German articles³² in voicing calls to turn "Polish boxes into German houses".³³

Heimatschutzarchitektur-compliant conversion of residential buildings was also undertaken in territories that had been directly annexed to the Reich.³⁴ New buildings were also erected in that style. In Poznań, for instance, it was applied to several residential edifices constructed for the personnel of the postal and railway services.³⁵ In terms of architectural style, these buildings were almost identical to the ones built in Radom at the time, including the residential block for the staff of the German postal services, designed by Haskler.³⁶ The example is all the more interesting given the fact that it was one of the few instances of hiring the original designer to supervise the remodelling. As with the Feniks edifice in Cracow, such works were usually conducted by German architects.³⁷ The rather short list of exceptions also

30 It must be noted that not every type of architecture underwent similar remodelling, e.g. the functionality of modern architectural solutions in industrial architecture was appreciated and accepted (cf. e.g. A. Blümm, „*Entartete Baukunst?*” *Zum Umgang mit dem Neuen Bauen 1933–1945*, Munich 2013).

31 R. Ochęduszek, „Hitlerowska przebudowa gmachu Towarzystwa Ubezpieczeniowego „Feniks” w Krakowie” [The Nazi remodelling of the Feniks Insurance Association edifice in Cracow], in: *Mecenat artystyczny a oblicze miasta. Materiały LVI Ogólnopolskiej Sesji Naukowej Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Kraków 8–10 XI 2007* [Artistic patronage and the appearance of the city. Materials from the 56th National Scholarly Session of the Association of Art Historians, Cracow 8–10 Sept. 2007], ed. D. Nowacki, Cracow, 2008, pp. 303–316; J.-L. Cohen, *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War*, Montréal–Paris, 2011, p. 354.

32 See e.g. *Altonaer Nachrichten* (3 Feb. 1933). Quoted after: Blümm, op. cit., p. 191.

33 „Polnische ‚Kiste‘ wird deutsches Heim”, *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 4 Dec. 1941. Quoted after: T. Bolanowski, *Architektura okupowanej Łodzi*, op. cit., p. 46.

34 Paradowska, „Wydjątkowe zadania’ na ’nowym niemieckim Wschodzie”, op. cit.

35 Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania*, op. cit., pp. 390–392.

36 In the period of the German occupation several multi-family residential buildings were constructed in Radom, e.g. at Mickiewicza street nos. 1a, 3 and 3a, Traugutta street no. 32a, or Moniuszki street no. 7a, which share many characteristic features not only with the tenement under discussion here, but also with ones located in Poznań, at Kossaka street nos. 4, 6, 8 and 10, Ułańska street nos. 4 and 6, or Siemiradzkiego street no. 9.

37 Cohen, op. cit., p. 354.



Fig. 11. Artur Haskler, Residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, constructed in 1942–1944, condition in 1942–1944, private archive



Fig. 12. Artur Haskler, Residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, constructed in 1942–1944, condition in 2017, photo by Jakub Frejtag

includes Zamość, where Germans consulted Polish architects who had worked on the development plans of this city before 1939.³⁸ In both cases the motivation of the German employers was probably similar – to benefit from the experience of professionals who had been working with a given project before the war, and thus had the necessary background and could ensure the swift completion of the investment.

Haskler’s designs for continuing the construction of Zajdensznir house as a residence for the staff of the German postal services included an almost complete overhaul of the exterior (Fig. 13–15).³⁹ The wing facing Moniuszki street was extended to meet the line of the connecting element facing Sienkiewicza street, making the form of the building more monolithic. Only the dip in the central façade facing the edifice of the County Administration Council was carried over from the original design. The frontage of the reviewed design was very modest. Haskler prepared two slightly different variants. In both of them the ground floor of the entire structure rested on a low plinth and was visually separated from the higher floors by a simple continuous cornice spanning the entire width of the building. The structure was covered with a tall, polygonal roof with ceramic tiles. The more decorative variant (Fig. 13) included narrow window surrounds and shutters on the windows of the last floor. Stairwell entrances featured an elaborate portal crowned with a rectangular transom.

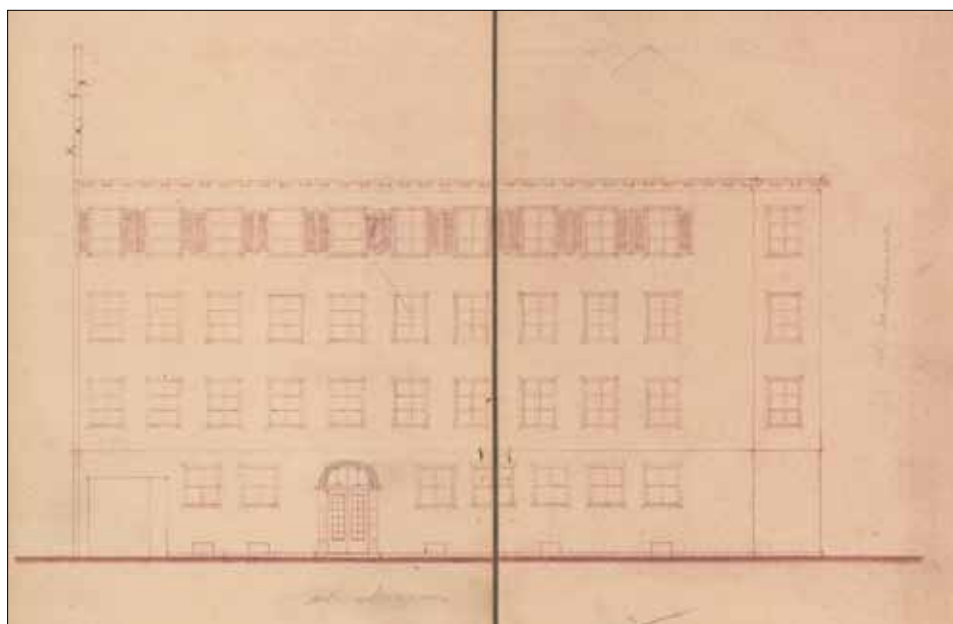


Fig. 13. Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom facing Moniuszki street, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

38 Paradowska, “*Niedoszły Himmlerstadt*”, op. cit., no. 1–2.

39 APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (architectural design).

The most decorative element of this version of the façade was the intricate top cornice, which matched the shutters and the tall roof to give the structure a conservative air, compliant with the rules of *Heimatschutzarchitektur*. The presence of the highly classical modillions beneath the cornice may, however, seem surprising, given the fact that in the architecture of Nazi Germany classicist models were usually reserved for official structures, with more domestic motifs (such as shutters, also included in this design) being used in residential buildings.⁴⁰ In this case, however, the use of the classicist form had more than one justification. Firstly, it visually complemented the immediate surroundings of the building, i.e. the style of the County Administration Council building. Secondly, it drew from the local architectural tradition. It should be noted that, for the most part, the architectural character of Radom's centre was shaped in the period of Congress Poland. A number of neo-Classical edifices was erected at the time, the most prominent of them being Sandomierski Palace. Designed by Antonio Corazzi and built in 1825–1827, the palace was intended to house the Sandomierz Voivodship Office. The building was indubitably considered an important point of reference by the occupying German authorities, who restored and enlarged it in 1940. By making it into the focal point of the planned administrative district, the occupiers acknowledged the architectural value of the palace.⁴¹

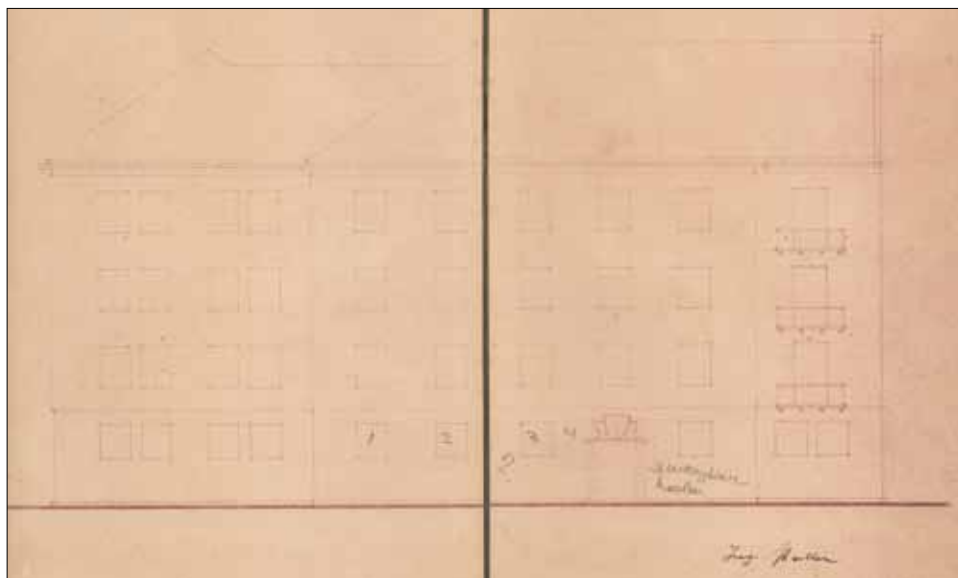


Fig. 14. Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom facing Sienkiewicza street, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

40 Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania*, op. cit., p. 348.

41 APR, Maps and Plans Collection (Zbiór map i planów), p. 133.

The second variant of Haskler's façade design (Fig. 14) was much more modest, devoid of any decoration. The top cornice was simple in cross-section, as was the continuous cornice dividing the ground floor and the higher storeys. This version featured neither the shutters, nor the window surrounds included in the first variant. The entrance portal, however, was more decorative. Similarly to the above-mentioned houses in Poznań, it was additionally adorned with a cartouche, most likely intended to feature a house mark. The only element protruding from the façade were the balconies of the outermost axis on the gable wall at Moniuszki street. The courtyard façades (Fig. 15) copied the design of the front one, the only difference being shutters on the stairwell windows. The façade that was ultimately built was based mostly on the first variant. It did not, however, feature shutters on the third-floor windows, while the form of the portal was changed, with the transom becoming semi-circular in shape.

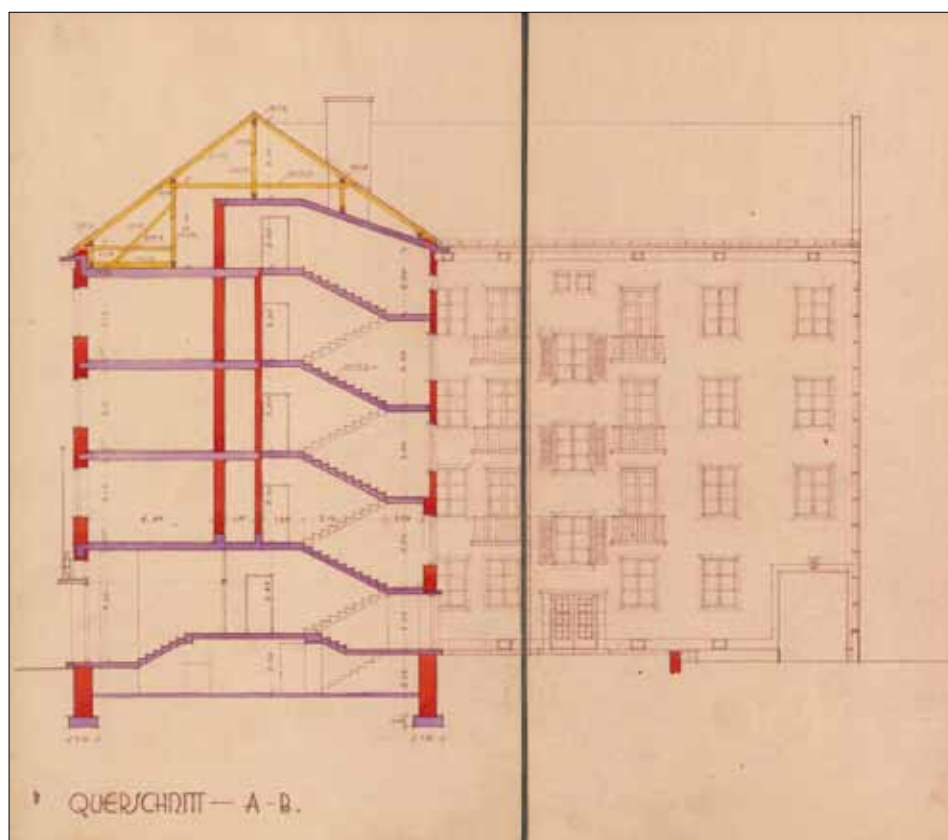


Fig. 15. Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

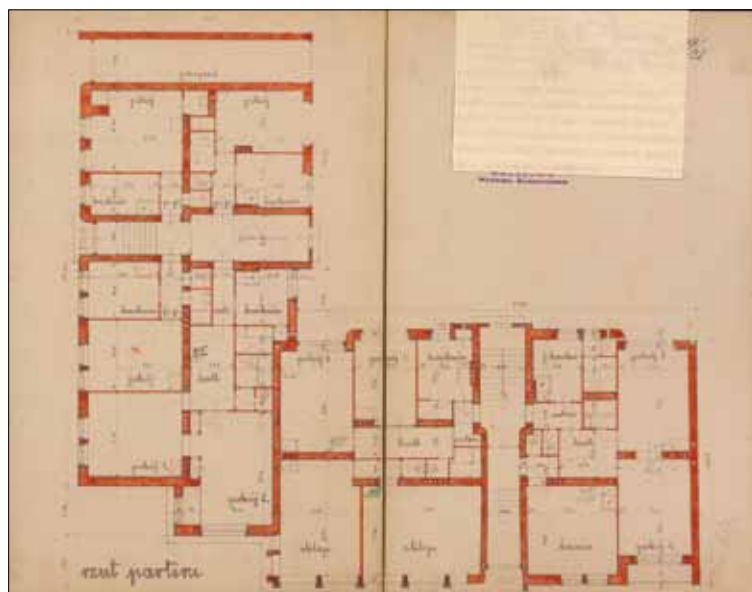


Fig. 16. Artur Haskler, Ground floor projection of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

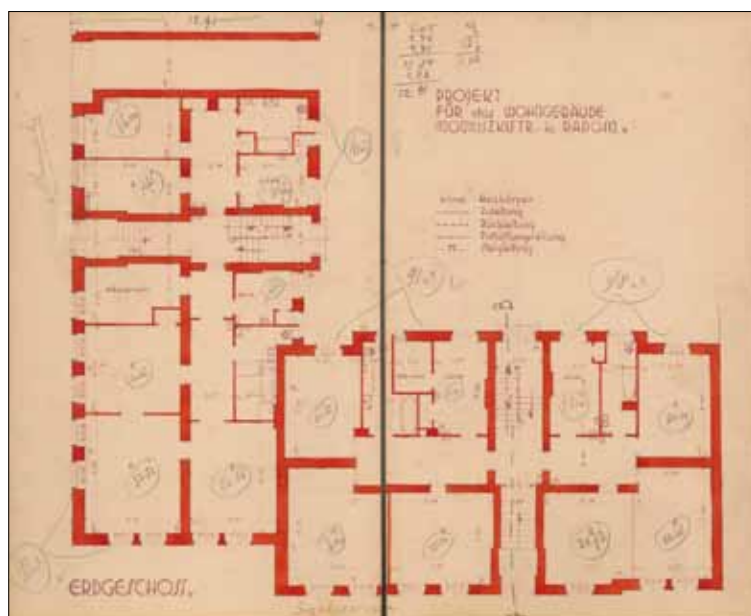


Fig. 17. Artur Haskler, Ground floor projection of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

Some alterations were also introduced to the layout of the interior.⁴² The fewest changes were made in the floor plan of the cellars, which had already been completed when the occupation started.⁴³ Circulation paths remained unchanged, as did all the supporting walls, but new ones were added in the extended wing facing Moniuszki street. The majority of partition walls present in the original design were, however, removed; the arrangement of some of them was modified. In accordance with pre-war building regulations,⁴⁴ an air raid shelter, covered with a ceiling with an appropriate bearing capacity, was constructed in the central part of the building⁴⁵.

More substantial modifications were introduced to the upper floors. The number of flats on the ground floor was reduced. The original project included three one- and two-room flats, as well as a small studio for the caretaker and two shops with small back rooms in the wing facing Sienkiewicza street. Each flat had a kitchen with a window, a bathroom and a separate toilet. The smaller apartments had a hallway, the larger, a hallway and a wider vestibule, as well as servants' rooms adjacent to the kitchen. In the revised design, the six flats of differing size, the caretaker's studio and the shops were replaced with four larger apartments. Two of them consisted of two rooms, the remaining ones having three. The larger flats also included extended to servants' rooms, yet the toilet and the bathroom were merged into a single space. In the original design, the upper floors (Fig. 18–19) were to be divided into six flats – two four-room ones in the Moniuszki street wing, and three two-room ones and one studio in the Sienkiewicza street wing. As on the ground floor, each apartment included the already mentioned additional spaces, with the exception of the studio, whose bathroom was too small to be furnished with a bathtub.

The layout of the upper stories was also adapted; the number of flats per floor was reduced to four – two with four rooms and two with three. This decision seems directly connected with the directives regarding residential standards to be implemented in planned post-war German housing, announced in the late 1940. The regulations made sure that living spaces were suitable for large families. It may be surmised that, since he was designing apartments for the Germans, Haskler had familiarised himself with relevant regulations and official directives regarding residential architecture in that country.⁴⁶ Changes in the size of apartments also affected their layout. The alterations in the Moniuszki street wing were small, whereas the floor plan of the other wing was changed radically, with each story divided into

42 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (architectural design) ; APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (architectural design).

43 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (3–4).

44 *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], no. 32, item 278, § 39–44 (*Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 29 kwietnia 1938 r. o przygotowaniu w czasie pokoju obrony przeciwlotniczej i przeciwgazowej w dziedzinach regulacji i zabudowania osiedli oraz budownictwa publicznego i prywatnego*) [Disposition of the Council of Ministers dated 29 April 1938 on the peacetime preparation of the air-raid defence and gas-attack defence with regard to regulations and structures at housing estates, public edifices and private buildings].

45 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (38–41).

46 *Erlaß des Führers zur Vorbereitung des deutschen Wohnungsbaues nach dem Kriege*, in: A. Teut, *Architektur im Dritten Reich 1933–1945*, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin, 1967, pp. 262–267.

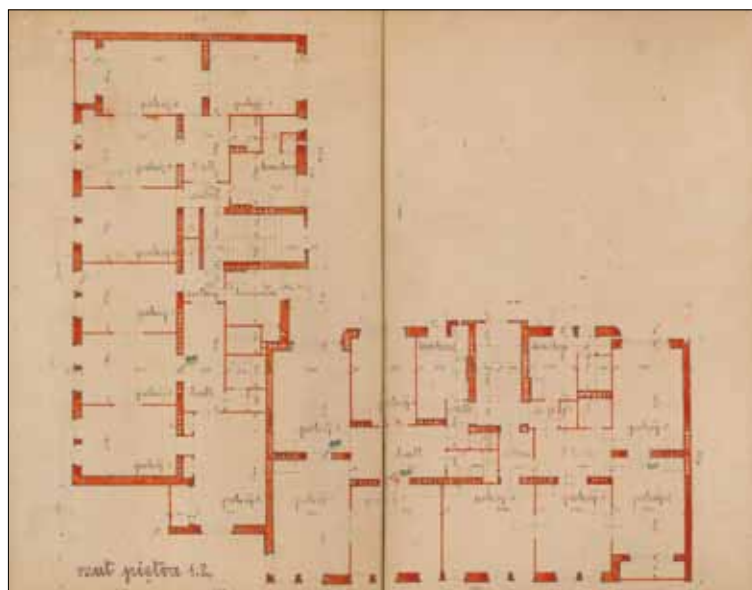


Fig. 18. Artur Haskler, Upper floors projection of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

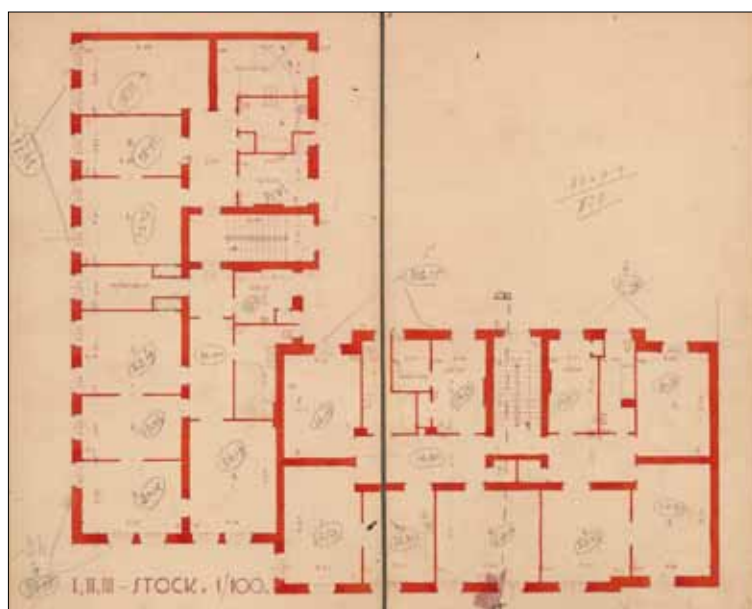


Fig. 19. Artur Haskler, Upper floors projection of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

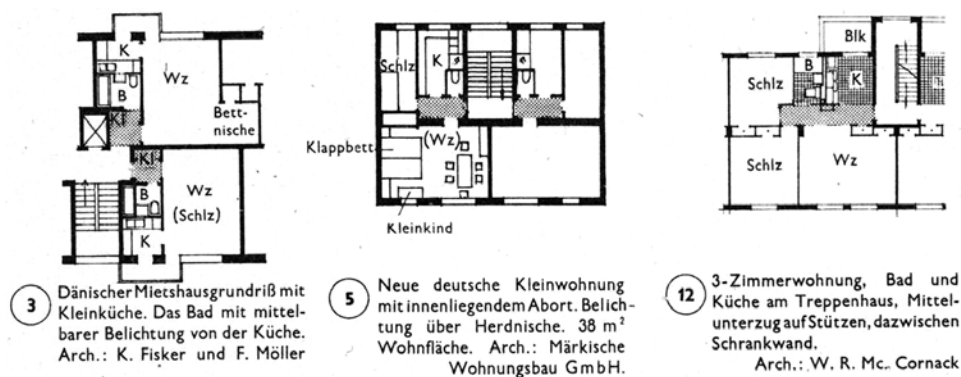


Fig. 20. Standard projections for residential quarters, Ernst Neufert, *Bauentwurfslehre*, Berlin 1940

two larger apartments. As on the ground level, the layout of the additional spaces was changed.

Comparing the layout of the implemented design with the regulations compiled in Ernst Neufert's guidebook for architectural design yields interesting conclusions.⁴⁷ One should bear in mind that the norms described by Neufert could not be directly applied in the design under analysis, mainly due to the adaptive nature of the revised design. Nevertheless, it may be argued that Haskler's design for the extended wing copies one of the layout plans included in Neufert's classification presented in the chapter on tenement houses, the one featuring a kitchen adjacent to the circulation path. The spacious hall replaced the originally planned hallways, while the toilet and bathroom were merged into a single space (Fig. 20).⁴⁸

The implemented version of Artur Haskler's design of the residential building for the staff of the German Postal Services East not only constitutes an example of modifications in the cultural landscape of occupied Poland effected through the use of forms then alien to Polish architectural practice. It also demonstrates the consistency with which the German occupiers imposed their own regulations in the conquered territories, in this case with regard to architecture. As regards the cityscape of Radom's centre, the residential buildings erected by the Germans (the one under analysis being one of them) were stylistically divergent and contrasted starkly with the remaining structures in that part of the district. For this reason, as well as due to its stylistic appurtenance to one of the trends in 20th-century totalitarian architecture and its unique history, the building may be regarded as a valuable and interesting example of the implementation of oppressive Nazi architectural policies in occupied Poland. As a clear testimony of its times, similarly to other structures built during the Second World War and the German occupation, it constitutes an important element of one of the phases in the development of the historical centre

47 E. Neufert, *Bauentwurfslehre*, Berlin, 1940.

48 Ibid., p. 141. Cf. projections nos. 3, 5 and esp. 12.

of Radom, adding to its value as an original urban structure with successive morphogenetic units discernible with remarkable clarity.⁴⁹

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

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49 Cf. e.g. W. Kalinowski, *Zarys historii budowy miast w Polsce do połowy XIX wieku* [Outline of the history of urban construction in Poland until the middle of the 19th century], Toruń, 1966; *Zabytki urbanistyki i architektury w Polsce. Odbudowa i konserwacja* [Monuments of urban planning and architecture in Poland. Rebuilding and conservation], ed. W. Zin, vol. I: *Miasta historyczne* [Historical cities], ed. W. Kalinowski, Warsaw, 1986; E. Egli, *Geschichte des Städtebaues*, vol. I–III, Zürich–Stuttgart, 1959–1965; E. Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VII: *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary*, New York, 1972.

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Abstract

The issue of construction projects conducted by the Germans in occupied Poland is researched with increasing frequency by both historians and historians of architecture. One of the reasons for this is certainly the exceptional role of the works of architecture as historical documents that constitute a tangible reflection of the historical moment in which they were constructed. When viewed from this perspective, the case of one of Radom tenements acquires an almost symbolic significance. The Functionalist building was designed by the Lvov engineer Artur Haskler for Mr Hersz Zajdensznir and his wife, Róża; its construction began shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was intended to compete one quarter of the most prestigious sections of Radom's city centre. The works were interrupted after the Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Both the architect and the owners of the tenement were Jews, which radically altered their position. The fate of Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir remains unknown. Haskler, who had been involved in the construction of the telecommunication network, which had begun in 1939 and was still unfinished, was allowed to stay outside the ghetto until the completion of the relevant works. In addition, he was ordered to alter the design of the Zajdensznir house, which was already under construction, so that it could be used as quarters for the staff of the German Postal Services East. The architect entirely changed the concept for his design. The original Functionalist form, representing a type of architecture not condoned by the Nazi authorities, was altered in keeping with the principles of *Heimatschutzarchitektur*; the building acquired a much more conservative form inspired by traditional architecture. The arrangement of the interiors was altered as well, attesting to the fact that Haskler had familiarised himself with the German norms regarding residential construction. The residence of the staff of the German Postal Services East, together with other edifices built in Radom by the Germans during the Second World War, as well as the very history of its construction, constitute a telling testimony to the history of the era. In the context of the urban design of Radom's city centre, these edifices are valuable as historical monuments and they certainly enhance it as an original urban structure with successive morphogenetic units discernible with remarkable clarity.

Keywords: architecture, General Government, Lviv (Lvov), Radom

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Rubble Warsaw, 1945–1946: Urban Landscaping and Architectural Remains

The city gives the illusion that earth does not exist.

Robert Smithson, 1968¹

Exposition

A collaboration between artists, architects and archaeologists entitled *The Cut* took place in Warsaw, during seven days of late September 2015. It was an “intentional rupture into the anthropogenic surface of the city”² conceived by the artist Aslı Çavuşoğlu and the architecture studio Centrala formed by Simone De Iacobis and Małgorzata Kuciewicz.³ In their statements about *The Cut*, both the artist and the architects expressed their interest in the phenomenon of the past that currently exists in contemporary cities stratified underneath the built environment. Such an observation, deeply indebted to modern philosophy, literature and science, proves particularly relevant in Warsaw. During the Second World War the city underwent almost complete destruction with the majority of buildings transformed into heaps of rubble. In the post-war era it was reconstructed in new political, economic and ideological conditions.

The Cut aimed to make public the hidden anthropogenic strata of Warsaw’s topography and activate the material histories stored within it. Supported by the POLIN Museum of Polish Jews, the group chose an excavation site within the area of Muranów Housing Estate, which is a place particularly loaded with meanings

1 R. Smithson, “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects”, in: *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. J. Flam, Berkley–Los Angeles–London, 1996, p. 102.

2 See: <http://centrala.net.pl/our-work/cut> [accessed 27 Nov. 2018]. I would like to thank Simone De Iacobis, Małgorzata Kuciewicz and Jerzy Elżanowski for their generous consultations and discussion which are of significant importance in the development of my work.

3 Ibid.

and history related to wartime atrocities and death. Over the course of a week, an open-format event was held at the estate with the participation of local community, professionals and scholars. During the first days, archaeologists excavated the first layers of soil and almost immediately an excess of historical material erupted from the underground. First came bricks of many kinds, sizes and colours, parts of the interiors and exteriors of buildings, then cutlery, kitchen utensils, metal door signs, and finally pins and personal objects once existing in the closest proximity to those who lived in this area before the war.⁴ All this material was imbued with the traumatic and violent history of dispossession, systematic oppression and genocide of the Jewish population of Warsaw and Poland.

The decision regarding the excavation site was informed by the history and architecture of the estate itself. Muranów is a centrally located district completed in 1948 and designed by the renowned Polish architect Bohdan Lachert. It is a unique architectural work which merges a commemorative role with the role of a residential estate and thus with everyday life. Its buildings are erected from rubble-concrete of the Warsaw Ghetto and situated on top of a rubblescape formed of bricks, daily objects and remains left in place after the Warsaw Ghetto was levelled by the German Army. The housing-estate project was since its beginning described by Lachert as having a strong commemorative value, even though this aspect of its existence was not accepted by the new communist administration and after 1949 the over-ground appearance of the estate was aligned with the doctrine of Socialist Realism.⁵ What remained was the underground sphere which *The Cut* engaged with. The action provokes historical inquiry into the modes of existence of the past that lie beyond those officially acknowledged, verbalised and established. If official monuments, as Sigmund Freud claimed in regard to London memorials, enable a society to channel its hysterias and melancholias, to forget and keep on living, than how should we regard the strata of rubble, and historical matter hidden under the soil upon which, in Warsaw, we walk every day?⁶

Architectural materialism

A general shift towards materiality has been observed in such disciplines as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, as well as history, since the late 1990's. Things, objects or matter re-emerged after the linguistic interest of post-structuralist methodologies. The "object-oriented ontologies" represented by philosophers such as Jane

4 For the account of the excavation: J. Elżanowski, "Domesticating Violence: Notes from a Socio-Spatial Incursion into Warsaw's Anthropogenic Stratum", in: *Presence/Absence/Traces: Contemporary Artists of Jewish Warsaw*, exhibition catalogue, eds. E. Chomicka, A. Pindera, Warsaw, 2015, pp. 164–180.

5 See M. Meng, "Muranów as a Ruin: Layered Memories in Postwar Warsaw", in: *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, eds. E. T. Lehrer, M. Meng, Bloomington, 2015; M. Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland*, Cambridge, 2011.

6 *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*, ed. M. Crinson, London, 2005, p. xvii.

Bennett suggested possible ways of thinking about matter and objects as agents in our social life.⁷ In history, we have witnessed a resurgence of studies which followed particular commodities or objects of daily use, constructing stories which linked domestic use-values with global markets of exchange, revealing processes of social stratification and identity formation.⁸ Interestingly, only some studies labelled as “materialist” engaged with the materialities beyond their tangible or commodity-forms. This is particularly the case of architectural history, which still persistently favours form over matter, leaving the latter to the engineering discourses and those of labourers on construction sites.⁹

The alternative approach to the architectural field is represented in the conference volume edited by Katie Lloyd Thomas suggestively entitled *Material Matters*. The volume aims to look how the current interdisciplinary interest in materiality “might open architectural discourse up to social and political questions of material practice”.¹⁰ Architecture is a discipline particularly focused on the structuring, giving form, containing – the architect is historically established as a form giver. Therefore, matter becomes abstracted, acting as a passive mass which is given a form in a process of design. From such a position, both its history and contemporary architectural practice excludes a crucial perspective on the building process as a reconfiguration of different kinds of matter in space by means of labour and technology. From this point of view, “Materials must be extracted or manufactured, they must be worked and, once *in situ*, they must be maintained. And of course materials are themselves active; it is a transaction, rather than a one-way operation, that occurs in the shaping of stuff”.¹¹ What does this materialist approach to the field imply for the architectural histories? The outcomes can be observed, for example, in a seminal book by Adrian Forty *Concrete and Culture*.¹² Focusing on concrete proved to be highly inspiring, exposing a wide range of complexities, paradoxes and struggles embedded within the core of a modern project. Concrete offered the possibility of writing about history from a range of angles – from religion to labour, while involving the broad scope of social strata.

Persisting matter

The period between the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War in Europe is a transitional moment which only recently became historicised on its own terms. Despite the amount of processes occurring in the immediate post-war period

7 J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham–London, 2010.

8 F. Trentmann, “Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices, and Politics”, *Journal of British Studies*, 2009, 48, pp. 283–307.

9 K. L. Thomas, *Material Matters: Architecture and Material Practice*, London–New York, 2006, p. 1.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

12 A. Forty, *Concrete and Culture: A Material History*, London, 2012.

on local and global scales, for a long time it remained co-opted by the history of the periods which came before and after it. Therefore, the years between 1945 and 1948 tend to be characterised by contradictory statements – by the atrocity of the law and the violent post-war crisis, as well as the “rise of an alternative universalising ideology of expertise, science, and technical knowledge”.¹³ Indeed, the second half of the 1940s should be considered in its liminality where different tendencies coexist: economical crisis combines with political transition and social struggles feed into the process of reconstruction. Willing to approach the early process of reconstruction in Warsaw with a sensibility towards the material, we immediately encounter a mass of rubble – 30 million cubic meters of debris – which covered the city in the beginning of January 1945.

This particular materiality, excessively present in post-war Warsaw, is the topic of a paper published by the architect and scholar Jerzy Elżanowski, who later became a consultant and participant of *The Cut*. His paper focuses on the history of the Muranów Housing Estate designed by Bohdan Lachert and built on, and from, the rubble of the levelled Warsaw Ghetto. Elżanowski examines the way architects from the Bureau for the Capital City Reconstruction [Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy, BOS] mapped the destruction of the city in the series of surveys conducted in 1945 and 1946 and follows the construction of the estate which was both a commemorative public monument and the first estate to be built for the workers after the emergence of the communist government. Elżanowski shows how the rubble in Warsaw was uniquely used by Lachert to create a living monument, and calls “for a re-evaluation of the relationship between the body of architecture and the human body as it challenges the reader to consider the possibility that Warsaw’s post-war rubble-concrete buildings may contain human remains”.¹⁴

Because of its historical, architectural and contemporary features, Muranów is the most prominent example of rubble architecture in Warsaw. As such, it is discussed extensively in the context of Jewish heritage in Michael Meng’s *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Post-war Germany and Poland*. However, both Elżanowski and Meng focus on an explicitly commemorative project and consider the rubble as a matter of commemoration and trauma within the city. While it is undoubtedly a promising way to approach this matter, we should reconstruct an alternative. This is offered to us by Jeffry M. Diefendorf, who devotes one chapter of his book on West Germany reconstruction to *Trümmer* (rubble).¹⁵ Diefendorf’s study focuses on the official, semi-official and illegal economies which emerged around rubble as a building material during the immediate post-war era. This account suggests an ap-

13 *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949*, ed. M. Mazower, J. Reinisch, D. Feldman, Oxford, 2011, 24.

14 Cf. J. Elżanowski, “Ruins, Rubble And Human Remains: Negotiating Culture And Violence in Post-Catastrophic Warsaw”, *Public Art Dialogue*, 2012, 2 [abstract].

15 J. M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II*, New York–Oxford, 1993, p. 18.

proach which mobilises knowledge from the areas of politics and economics, setting post-war debris in the centre of the early struggles for reconstruction.

The following work is a part of a broader PhD research which looks at rubble in order to reconstruct a complex and vast set of operations, discussions and struggles which concerned this issue in the early period of the reconstruction. This essay moves forward by learning from the approaches of Elżanowski and Diefendorf and shifting the scale of the inquiry to the whole urban area of Warsaw. When reviewing the stratification of historical material from the wartime destruction in contemporary landscape of the city, it is necessary to examine the historical process of rubble-clearing and utilisation conducted in the immediate post-war era. Here, I have chosen to focus on the earliest approaches to the problem which relate to the landscaping and vernacular procedures that emerged around rubble-clearing in Warsaw. The final part of the text points out the broader interdisciplinary aim which emerges from the material historiography of architecture.

The problem of building waste and the Warsaw Reconstruction Office

The post-war period of architectural works in Warsaw can be divided into three not mutually exclusive historical parts. Between January 1945 and December 1946, the Bureau for the Capital City Reconstruction [Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy, hereafter: BOS] was founded and it immediately started to prepare and implement rebuilding programs, which mainly focused on housing. The second stage, between January 1947 until the beginning of 1949, was the period during which the previously planned works commenced, with machinery commonly used and all the institutions fully operational. Several governmental and public administration buildings were erected at this stage. The third stage was the “six-year plan”, carried out between 1949 and 1955 and proclaimed by the president of Poland, Bolesław Bierut.¹⁶ The plan was announced just after the official introduction of the Socialist Realism in architecture and arts in general.¹⁷ In July 1945 the BOS employed some 1500 architects and urban planners, many of whom were strongly influenced by international modernism which they tried to implement in the new projects for Warsaw.

One of the main figures in the Bureau was Józef Sigalin. Sigalin’s architectural education was interrupted by the war; yet, having fled to the Soviet Union following the invasion of Warsaw, he made a career in the Red Army and thus became one of the first architects to arrive in Warsaw after the liberation. He supported the

16 B. Bierut, *Sześcioletni plan odbudowy Warszawy* [Six-Year Plan of Warsaw Reconstruction], Warsaw, 1950.

17 The doctrine of Socialist Realism was officially announced by Bolesław Bierut at the Warsaw Conference of Communist Party on 3 July 1949. The programme of Socialist Realism in architecture was proclaimed on June 21 of the same year at the Conference of Architects of the Communist Party.

newly established communist government and strongly believed in architecture's mission in the process of rebuilding the capital, as well as in constructing the country's new ideological identity. In 1986, a four-volume work by Sigalin was published under the title *Warsaw 1944–1980*.¹⁸ It is a historical account of Warsaw's development, which mainly consists of documents and clippings from Sigalin's archive. His account is distinctly teleological, mainly showing the value of architectural work at that time; however, his narration can provide us with some information on the founding circumstances of the "Rubble Commission" and the discourses concerning rubble in Warsaw.

A reading of documents from the period 1945 and 1946 may give the impression that the clearing and utilisation of the rubble proceeded quickly and easily. On 24 July the Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej [TRJN] (Provisional Government of National Unity) established several bodies related to the reconstruction – the Ministry of Reconstruction, the Building Research Institute, and Bureau for the Capital City Reconstruction (active from January 1945, albeit under a different name).¹⁹ Just five days later Sigalin reported on the first discussions on the rubble problem. At the meeting on 29 May 1945 the urban-planning section of the BOS discussed the possibilities of rubble disposal throughout the whole area of the old Vistula basin.²⁰ Rubble became a part of a larger plan of landscaping and natural environment restitution which were among the main points of the projected city design.

In the first year after the liberation, the plan was for rubble to be treated as a natural waste material, dealt with mainly by the inhabitants of Warsaw; whereas architects struggled to keep up with these works in order to make some use of the rubble. However, at the meetings on 11 July and 12 July 1945, the first ideas for the so-called rubble rationalisation and economisation emerged: "Rubble is a building material which should be economically exploited (sorted and processed)".²¹ Such statements arose at both meetings, but were followed by such excuses as "In the initial period, when the lack of equipment does not allow for properly conducted utilisation of rubble, [...] the rubble must be used as a landscaping material [...]".²² Architects were haunted by technological and financial scarcity and the amount of rubble seemed impossible to clear at that point. The problem-solving process was postponed, with the decision: "Until the introduction of a rubble disposal system, limit the removal as much as possible".²³

18 J. Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980*, Warsaw, 1986.

19 Provisional Government of National Unity, *Dekret z dnia 24 maja 1945 r. o utworzeniu Ministerstwa Odbudowy* [Decree dated 24 May 1945 on the establishment of the Bureau for the Capital City Reconstruction], (Warsaw: TRJN, 1945), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19450210123> [accessed 28 July 2017].

20 Sigalin, *Warszawa...*, p. 119.

21 Ibid., p. 120.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., p. 121.

People's Clearance

While the BOS was discussing these issues, the city began to buzz with life. The census carried out in May 1945 shows that Warsaw was inhabited by 377,900 people, and this number increased month by month to reach almost 820,000 in 1950.²⁴ People returned to their old homes, which had ceased to exist, but even greater numbers of migrants from the whole of Poland came to Warsaw to dwell in the city's remains. The state and local administration was undergoing post-war turbulence and transitions which – at least in the beginning – left people on their own in the process of settling the ruins of the city – a process characterised by barter cooperation and a barter economy, as well as thefts and violence. Making the city inhabitable was strictly related to housing, but even more importantly to the communication infrastructure. The roads, pavements and ruined houses had to be cleared from debris, rubble and wartime remains, and the bodies found all over the city needed to be buried or reburied. All these motifs are found in the oral accounts of the period which give us an insight into the down-to-earth, everyday issues in 1945 Warsaw. This is how Maria Nowicka describes the process of rubble clearing:

It was a matter [...] of bringing the city to life again, because one could neither ride nor walk through these streets littered with rubble – they were utterly cluttered. The utilisation of rubble in Warsaw was mainly facilitated by horse-drawn carts coming from suburban villages. We only had our bare hands because there was no machinery or equipment. We loaded rubble onto the carts and cleared bricks by making piles of them in order to contribute to the reconstruction of Warsaw.²⁵

Maria Nowicka was one of the thousands of women engaged in the process of rubble-clearing. A public organisation known as the Work Brigades was formed immediately after the liberation. Most of the labourers were women, old people and children – the men were still at the front or in the labour camps in Germany. The history of the Work Brigades is a dramatic one. The authorities established them in order to start a systematic process of clearing rubble. Workers joined because there was no other work to be had or because they felt an obligation towards the destroyed capital, or both. The pay was also good for the time – until the money ran out. In July 1945 around 23,000 people were employed in the Brigades, clearing, sorting and working through the rubble and ruins. If we estimate that every working person had a group of relatives or people to support, we arrive at the conclusion that around 1/3 of Warsaw eked out a living from the rubble-clearing works. As Nowicka and others mentioned, not even basic tools were available, nor machines or any other help – only bare hands, and pieces of cloth used as bags to carry the

24 B. Czerwińska-Jędrusiak, *Ludność i powierzchnia Warszawy w latach 1921–2008* [The population and area of Warsaw in the years 1921–2008], Warsaw, 2009, http://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/1_ludnosc_powierzchnia_Warszawy_1921_2008.pdf, [accessed 27 November 2018].

25 Maria Nowicka, "AHM_0672", transcript of an oral history conducted by Jarosław Pałka, *Zapomniani świadkowie XX wieku, Audiohistoria*, Warsaw, 2008, part 011.

loads to the horse-carts. In November, the brigades were dismantled because of the burden that they put on the city's budget.

New inhabitants came from all over Poland to participate in the rebuilding of the city, looking for a dwelling of their own and for possibilities to make a living. Andrzej Cylejewski provides us with a highly detailed account of scenarios related to rubble:

After our arrival my father bought a horse and a wagon, one made from solid planks, and simply hired himself out for the removal of rubble from Warsaw. On Redutowa Street, there was a big valley, with a small lake at the bottom, the same as in Moczydło park, where a hole had been previously dug for the extraction of clay. It was there that the rubble was deposited. The tram network did not work, but the tracks were fine and there were some burnt-out cars standing on them. On the chassis of these cars, boxes with open sides were added. They were used to transport rubble through Wolska Street to the clay pits. The cars were pulled by tractors of course; the rubble was dumped from the tracks on the sides, and then it was all levelled and covered with soil. There is currently a park in that place, with the trees that were planted in the 1950s. On the side walls of these trams transporting the rubble, there were three letters – BOS. [...] My father was annoyed, because while carrying the rubble he had to pass under the railway tracks which linked Gdańska Station with the other one. The officials there issued receipts stating that the carriage was moving rubble out of the city – they were needed for settlement and payment. The horses were always tired at this point. Father worked transporting rubble until there was no more need for this.²⁶

As these personal histories clearly indicate, the rubble was an everyday obstacle in the reconstruction of Warsaw. Around its existence a discursive, social and economic layer formed while those determined to dwell in Poland's capital laboured towards the restoration of the in-city mobility, communication and, simply put, their own immediate surroundings. However, the everyday social life, politics and economies of the immediate post-war era were rife with contradictions and complexities that may easily confuse the historical investigation of this period. Oral versions are therefore a valuable source of cohesive counter-narratives to those emerging from archival sources, that is, ones given by professionals and the state administration. Moving between all those strata, we can discover links and exchanges which would not be obvious in a history focused on one particular layer of the reconstruction process.

A rubblescape for Warsaw

To keep up with the inhabitants working around the city, architects were obliged to propose solutions which would subordinate the process of rubble clearance to a broad planning agenda. As previously indicated, the architectural approaches to

26 Andrzej Cylejewski, "AHM_3356", transcript of an interview conducted by Iwona Makowska, *Zapomniani świadkowie XX wieku, Audiohistoria* [The forgotten witnesses of the 20th century. Recorded history], Warsaw, 2016, part 005.

the mass of rubble during the reconstruction could be provisionally divided into architecturally “productive” or “unproductive” ones. Examination of the productive approaches – such as, for example, the production of rubble concrete and technologies of rubble prefabrication – lies beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is possible to grasp the extent of the latter approach, which focused on the intentional and unintentional processes of landscaping that were an outcome of rubble clearing within the city’s central areas. Some architects working for the BOS were most probably inspired by the vernacular flow of architectural matter and officially proposed designs which would facilitate such an unorganised process. In a document dated 27 October 1945, the “Commission for the development of demolition material utilisation techniques”, a predecessor of the “Rubble Commission”, states that the project proposed by architect Maciej Nowicki was economically feasible and could be carried out.²⁷ This short notice reveals the lack of appropriate research on the subject, although it states that the proposal was an economical method of rubble utilisation. Nowicki, an architect and engineer who at this point in time was planning his emigration to the United States,²⁸ was a renowned architect, famous for his experimentation with building materials and geometries. His project, evaluated by the commission, was possibly the first broad urban incorporation of architectural remains into the landscape of the city of Warsaw.²⁹ It appears that the drawings prepared by the architect for the project are now missing from the archive, although the description of the project still exists together with a handwritten table of contents for the proposal (Fig. 1).

Nowicki, designing for the future central trade and office districts, proposed to leave the rubble from the destroyed buildings and tear down the remaining ruins. The remains were meant to raise the ground level between the streets: Marszałkowska, Żelazna, Aleje Jerozolimskie, and the Saskia Axis. Uniquely, the project started with the idea of the economical reuse of rubble, to quickly move towards arguments from the field of modern urban planning and urban aesthetics. Nowicki criticises the “American” idea of dividing the vehicles and pedestrians by underground passages for the latter to walk safely. Instead, by using the mass of rubble left by the war, he proposes a model based on a landscape in which the traffic is divided in a smoother way, accommodating the constant flow of people in the central quarters of the city. Accordingly, in the project the pre-war street level is left for the pedestrians and shops, with the vehicles moving on rubble ramparts that can also be used as places for plants and trees. In this way, Nowicki suggests, the city could get rid of as much as 1,500,000m³ of rubble and create a unique landscape for

27 State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive (Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy, zespół Biura Odbudowy Stolicy), file no. 2492, p. 109.

28 Maciej Nowicki together with his wife Stanisława Sandecka left Warsaw for New York in the autumn of 1945. Nowicki died around midnight on 31 August/1 September 1950, in a plane crash in the Western Desert of Egypt.

29 State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive (Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy, zespół Biura Odbudowy Stolicy), file no. 2492, p. 103.

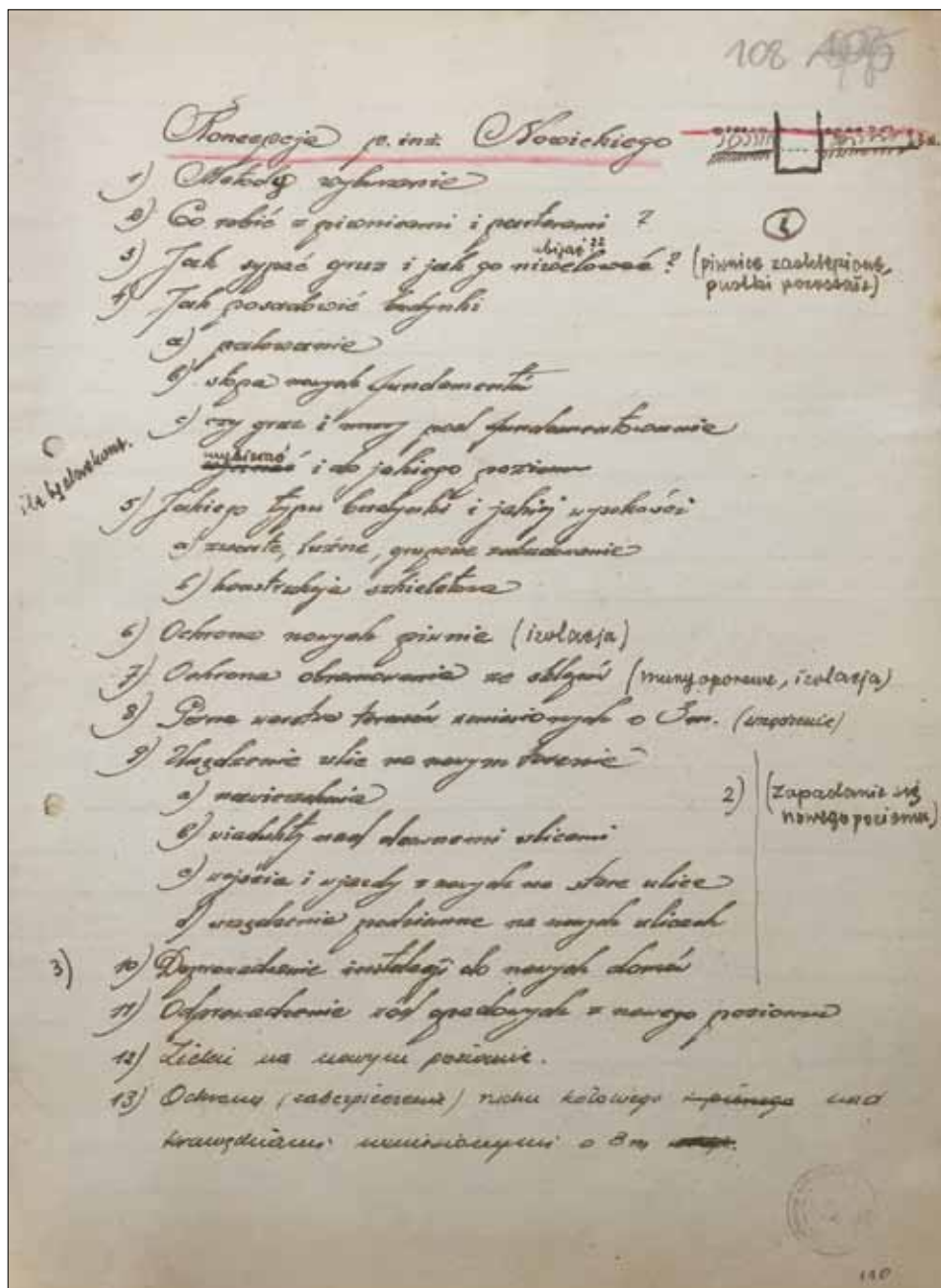


Fig. 1. Proposal for rubble landscaping by Maciej Nowicki, photo: State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive

a new city. The ramparts would more thoroughly expose the buildings to the traffic, creating a double “ground floor”; moreover, a diversified landscape would be created, accommodating both old and new buildings in the city centre.

Despite the positive preliminary opinion regarding the project, an informative document dating from 1946, authored by engineers Jerzy Nowiński and Stanisław Mazurkiewicz, provides us with an explanation for the project’s disappearance from the BOS agenda and its failure to materialise in reality. In the report entitled “Management of rubble in the area of Warsaw”, in the chapter on “Building of Elevated Areas From Demolition Rubble”, the authors criticise Nowicki’s idea (without naming the architect).³⁰ They state that the idea of building on rubble mounds seems economically reasonable, but after precise study it turns out to be the opposite – rubble clearing and removal into dumps is much more cost-effective. The crucial problems, and thus the reasons why the BOS discarded the whole idea, include the instability of a rubble foundation and the additional amount of money to be spent on the connecting infrastructure between different levels of the city. In the case of Nowicki’s proposal, productivity and the rationalisation of the building process became arguments against the implementation of the idea. However, aesthetically driven and commemorative approaches to rubble utilisation were realised in the years following Nowicki’s time at the BOS.

Irresolvable rubble

Looking at the documents from the BOS archive and listening to the oral histories, we can clearly see that the institutional influence could not accommodate the mass of rubble it was faced with. The infrastructural and administrative power of the newly established state bodies was not enough to accommodate the process to the full extent. Therefore, the process of rubble clearing was a manifold mediation, firstly led by the individual and collective initiatives of the inhabitants and later by the authorities. Simultaneously, the administration responded to the conditions by introducing an official system into informal rubble clearing. The official sites for rubble dumping and utilisation established by the BOS are indicated on the map (Fig. 2). They clearly indicate that the process of removal was vast, complex and manifold.³¹

The map shows a division between the places for dumping “non-usable rubble”, “points for building material depots and rubble utilisation”, and “barge loading points”. Through the map we are able to envisage the scope of the operation. Some of rubble was used in the landscaping of Vistula river embankments; some formed

30 State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive (Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy, zespół Biura Odbudowy Stolicy), file no. 2491, p. 12.

31 State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive (Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy, zespół Biura Odbudowy Stolicy), file no. 2574, p. 4.



Fig. 2. *BOS Map of rubble dump and utilization sites*, photo: State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, the BOS Archive

hills and mounds in peripheral points of the city, sometimes related to the sites of historical fortifications (Fort Bema, Fort Augustówka). Other loads of rubble were productively utilised and transformed into rubble bricks and concrete, mainly inside the Muranów district, as well as other early architectural developments of post-war Warsaw, such as the Koło estate (Osiedle Koło) designed by Helena and Szymon Syrkus. Finally, an important part of Warsaw's architectural remains was transported by waterway to the countryside and dumped in places as yet undiscovered.

BOS-designated dump sites are a part of the phenomenon of rubble removal, although they were far from being able to accommodate the full quantity of the existing material. Most of the landscaping was therefore done informally, and to this day rubble mounds of various shapes and sizes are found all over the capital city of Poland, created by its inhabitants for the post-war reconstitution of the city-space as their dwelling-space. The major ones, through time, earned their own place in history, like the Szczęśliwicka Mound, which is a famous ski slope inside the city, or the Mound of the Warsaw Uprising which commemorates the wartime heroic history on the one hand, and on the other constitutes one of the most important spots for downhill cycling in the capital. Almost every park in Warsaw (Fig. 3) features rubble mounds – invisible agents diversifying the landscape and introducing variations to the predominantly flat topography of Warsaw;³² they lie there silently, unacknowledged in their historical complexity and importance.

In an analysis of the landscaping of the whole city, the architectural history can be informed by knowledge gained through the natural sciences, namely geology. Geological descriptions which analyse the ground sedimentation in urban areas tend to include both information on past geological changes and those of a more recent anthropogenic nature in the ground structure. Based on the geological mapping made by the anthropogenic strata, we can identify a variety of places in Warsaw where throughout time the population-driven sedimentation occurred (Fig. 4). This clearly shows how the conditions set in the natural topographies are transformed through the processes of inhabitation forming the city landscape. Considered together, the geological mapping of anthropogenic strata and historical BOS maps (Fig. 2) of rubble dump-sites form a basis for an extensive mapping of the post-war remains beyond the sites mentioned above. Geological sources point towards the natural Vistula river embankment, which since the Middle Ages was used as a dumping site for any excess or waste material, as a potential place of several of smaller rubble deposits scattered across the whole city.³³

32 With the exception of the old Vistula river embankment, which transverses the entire city, there are no other naturally formed hills in the close proximity of the city.

33 http://geoportal.pgi.gov.pl/zrozumiec_ziemie/wycieczki/warszawa_1#002 [accessed 27 Nov. 2018].



Fig. 3. One of the first rubble mounds created by the BOS – stratification, photo by Adam Przywara, 2016.

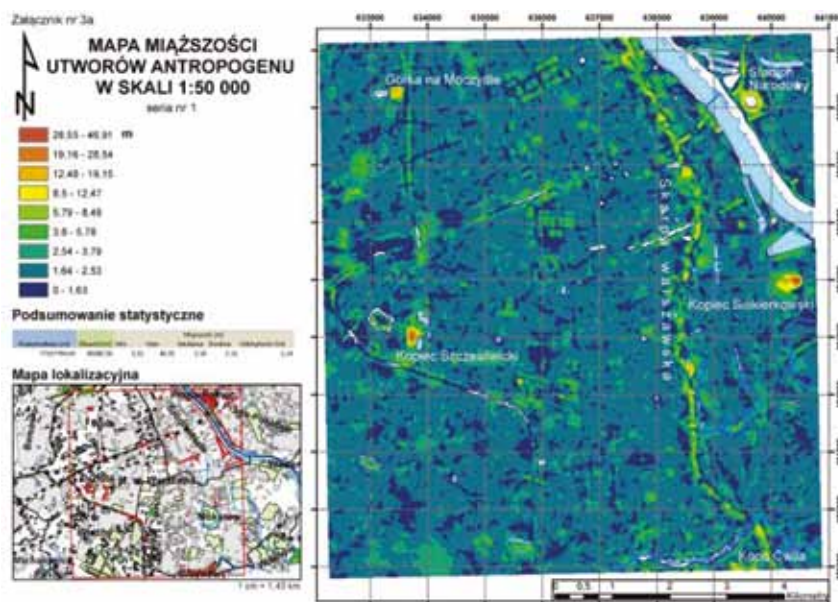


Fig. 4. Map of Thickness of Anthropogenic Strata scale 1:50 000, http://geoportal.pgi.gov.pl/zrozumiec_ziemie/wycieczki/warszawa_1#017 [accessed: 27 Nov. 2018]

Conclusion

*What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm.*³⁴

Georges Bataille

We have established methods and sources and traced the most important places in which the post-war architectural remains were deposited in Warsaw, following official and unofficial processes which subsequently formed the landscape of the city. We have demonstrated how the unrealised architectural proposal of Maciej Nowicki tried to mediate between the informal rubble utilisation of the immediate post-war period and the possible aesthetic and utilitarian values which could be potentially derived from the city centre defined by the hilly rubbelscape. Finally, by looking at the subject of rubble, we were able to engage with the transitional period between the Second World War and the Cold War from the perspective of the professional architects and the population. The oral reports of the latter group revealed the extent of the social effort and collective struggle which had to be mobilised in order to re-establish Warsaw as a habitable environment after the atrocities of war. The architects' perspective underlines the complex and manifold characteristics of the reconstruction process – as a professional group, they obtained significant resources and major political influence while at the same time they were unable to fully take control over the social process and political transitions. Within the narrative, rubble and, more broadly, architectural remains became a crux for a new set of narratives about Warsaw's past – ones that referred to commemoration as well as to historical progress, to the processes of becoming a collective and of becoming a city.

When considered in a broader interdisciplinary field, rubble exposes the social process in its complexity of relations between institutions, individuals, technologies and the material world. While doing so, through its material properties, it grants a way for breaking down some of the dualities and contradictions deeply embedded and sustained within the Modern Project. Rubble is truly "formless",³⁵ distorting language categories, professional divisions and discursive distinctions such as those between architectural forms, their symbolic historical contexts and social use. For example, rubble is natural, both as a traditional building material formed with mineral particles and as part of the geological strata of contemporary landscape. Simultaneously it is unnatural, or rather it stems from cultural, technological and economical developments from a once existing metropolis destroyed and levelled in a meticulously planned process; if we look closer on the technologies of war employed in the process, it can almost be considered to have been industrially produced. Following that reasoning – rubble is a matter of commemoration, materi-

34 G. Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–1939*, ed. and transl. A. Stoekl, Manchester, 1985, p. 31.

35 For an art historical elaboration on the concept see: R. Krauss, Y.-A. Bois, *Formless: A User's Guide*, New York, 1997.

alising both the pre-war Warsaw and the wartime atrocities it underwent in the contemporary city. At the same time, when compared with official memorials of any kind, it constitutes the opposite of commemoration – an absence, underlining a constitutive need to forget among populations who faced traumatic experiences and losses.

The introduction of such epistemological ambiguities seems necessary for the history of architecture and contemporary architectural knowledge which still tend to limit themselves to specific kinds of forms, their representations or particular actors in the historical process. Rubble has an immediate relevance, if we consider architectural discussions on the interdisciplinary frameworks constructed around the Anthropocene Thesis which, for some time, have been making inquiries into architecture's encounter with a "multi-disciplinary, multi-scalar, and multi-centred reality [...]".³⁶ The dynamics between war, capitalism and architecture and the global process of materialities are core issues in such new modes of analysis. On the other hand, in the local scale of individual and collective memories, the particularity of conditions inscribed in rubble through the operations leading to its appearance and disappearance lead us towards forgotten histories of multi-layered cooperation that re-established the city's habitability after the disaster of war.

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³⁶ *Architecture in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Design, Deep Time, Science and Philosophy*, ed. E. Turpin, Ann Arbor, 2013, p. 5.

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Abstract

This paper is a contribution to the contemporary discussions around architectural materialities and the history of the immediate post-war period in the urban areas of Europe. The opening paragraphs include references to the artistic action *The Cut* which took place in 2015, exposed the anthropogenic strata in Warsaw's landscape and acknowledged the continuous material existence of the city's history within its soil. Focusing on rubble, debris and post-war architectural waste, the author presents the theoretical approach by referring to a broad shift in the humanities towards approaches oriented towards objects and particular materialities. The subsequent historical narrative centres on the problems of rubble clearing and utilisation in the early reconstruction period of Warsaw. It shows the views and operations aimed at the removal of the mass of rubble proposed by the architects from the Bureau for the Capital City Reconstruction (BOS) and the inhabitants returning to the ruined city in 1945. Mobilising both narratives, the paper presents problems and discussions related to rubble utilisation and removal. Referring to Maciej Nowicki's unrealised design for Warsaw's city centre and contrasting it with the oral testimonies of the city's inhabitants, the article reveals the struggles and discussions that raged during that early stage of city reconstruction. Finally, through the use of various sources from geological mapping to archival materials, the paper aims to locate, describe and document the rubble landscapes located around the city of Warsaw. In the conclusion the author points out how the subject could be expanded and how rubble relates to contemporary discourses in the humanities.

Keywords: rubble, ruins, postwar reconstruction, architecture materiality, formless

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The Memory of Opulence and the Freedom of a Pauper: The Construction-material Discourse in the Polish Construction Industry in the Period of the Thaw

An endless assortment of tiles and floor terracotta in all hues with a full range of gouges, plinths and shaped elements of all types. Corset tiles, small-size floor tiles and mosaics, terrazzo slabs and poured terrazzo in all colours and variants. Linoleum, rubber, cork slabs for flooring, screed blocks or poured screed. Thermal and acoustic insulation boards made of cork, straw, sugar cane. A full assortment of ceramic hollow bricks for ceilings and for walls, clinker bricks and cladding tiles, high-quality grout in dozens of granulations and hundreds of hues. Dozens of insulation materials, rolls of waterproofed jute, rolls of asphalt roofing, asphalt adhesives and chemical substances. A full assortment of rolled iron, woven meshes, expanded metal and non-ferrous metal sheets in all gauges and patterns. Radiators of various shapes and sizes, boilers in all types, passenger elevators by various manufacturers to choose from.

Jerzy Wierzbicki, 1956¹

This emotional enumeration of construction materials available on the Polish market in the inter-war period, provided by Jerzy Wierzbicki (1906–1994), remains an eloquent testimony to the sense of a bitter loss that the middle and older generations of architects must have felt in the 1950s. The above notes – which were published in the period of the political Thaw – constituted a metonymic criticism of the conditions in which architecture was practised in the middle of that decade. Sounding like a medley from the pre-war adverts of trading companies, these phrases unmistakably questioned the trend of the day, advocating cost-cutting in terms of construction materials and general economy in the building industry. This trend had been launched as part of the ideological drive towards Socialist Realist aesthetics and until then it had never been publicly unquestioned.²

1 J. Wierzbicki, "Podnieść wykonawstwo" [To improve workmanship], *Architektura*, 1956, 10, no. 2, p. 30.

2 Cf. M. Czapelski, "Towards a Socialist Architecture: Architectural Exhibitions at the Zachęta in the Years 1950–1955", *Ikonotheka*, 2016, 26, pp. 36–37.

In a broader perspective, talking about the former wealth of deluxe construction materials and related fancy goods undermined the very foundations of the propagandistic effort to present the recently constructed edifices as admirable in the light of “the full splendour of the organisation system on a contemporary construction site, the splendour that lies in the potential of rapid or streamlined construction etc.”.³ In the Stalinist era, from 1949 to 1953, *Architektura*, the main periodical of the profession, clearly treated the issue of construction materials and technological conditions of the architects’ work as one of secondary importance.⁴ The dearth of texts that focused on the issues of construction materials and technology attested to the periodical’s Socialist Realist propriety no less than its ideological lucubrations.

Yet Wierzbicki’s words had another, more immediate context as well: the ongoing turn towards construction materials as a topic of debate was, alongside the issue of prefabrication, one of the chief topics of technological and architectural discourse of the mid-1950s.⁵

This discourse emerged soon after Stalin’s death. Economy in design and construction was far more strongly emphasised than in the preceding years as a priority, as testified by the resolutions of the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (29 October 1953) held before the 2nd Congress of the Party.⁶ The last-minute addition of an architectural section into the programme of the Polish Academy of Sciences session devoted to the issue of construction materials was an eloquent symptom of the ongoing reassessment of approaches.⁷ Freed from the ideological pressure of Socialist Realism, architects were expected to join construction engineers in implementing the new cost-cutting agenda. Reports from related debates held at that time in the Soviet Union reflect the climate of the era; for instance, during the 2nd Scientific and Technological Council of Moscow Build-

3 J. Hryniewiecki, “Materiały budowlane” [Building materials], *Architektura*, 1951, 5, pp. 184–185.

4 The issue of building materials was discussed at the scholarly session of the Polish Association of Construction Engineers and Technicians (Polski Związek Inżynierów i Techników Budownictwa, PZITB): *Materiały nadesłane na zjazd naukowy PZITB w Gdańsku 1–4 grudnia 1949 r.* [Materials sent for the scholarly session of PZITB in Gdańsk, 1–4 Dec. 1949], part 2, fasc. 1: *Walka o materiały budowlane, ich produkcję i właściwe zastosowanie. Walka o konstrukcję i formę w budownictwie* [A struggle for building materials, their production and proper use. A struggle for the structure and form in construction], Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Budownictwa no. 37, Warsaw, 1949.

5 On prefabrication: M. Czapelski, “A House from a Factory: Polish Architects and Prefabricated Residential Housing in the 1950s”, *Ikonotheke*, 2013, 24, pp. 155–184.

6 J. Skrzekot, “Przed II zjazdem partii” [Before the 2nd Council of the Party], *Architektura*, 1954, 8, no. 1, pp. 1–2.

7 A session organised by the Civil Engineering Committee of the 4th Dept. of Technical Science, Polish Academy of Sciences (Komitet Inżynierii Lądowej Wydziału IV Nauk Technicznych PAN) took place on 27–30 June 1954. H. K. [Hieronim Karpowicz?], “Kronika. Materiały budowlane (sesja problemowa Polskiej Akademii Nauk)” [The chronicle. Construction materials (problem-focused session of the Polish Academy of Sciences)], *Architektura*, 1954, 8, no. 9, pp. 231–232.

ers it was pointed out that, in addition to introducing standardised designs, it was necessary to dispose of “traditional construction [...] in favour of an entirely new building technology, until now known only from [specialist] literature, making use of many hitherto unknown materials”.⁸

This declaration reflected the establishment’s undying hope – very typical from the mid-1950s onwards – that a *sui generis* philosophers’ stone, that is, a cheap and perfect construction material, would finally be discovered, thanks to which one of the most essential promises of the new political system, namely the ultimate “reduction of the housing deficit”, was to be finally fulfilled. This had been pledged as early as in 1944, in the very first programmatic document of the new government: the Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. However, this much-awaited cheap and perfect construction material required advanced construction technologies involving the use of large pre-fabricated concrete blocks which, in turn, imposed the use of a centralised executive authority based large enterprises that could accomplish the government’s ultimate goal: to organise a universal construction effort. As a result of this venture, the general population would acquire living quarters in multi-family prefabricated blocks in housing estates.

In reality, however, the system of construction enterprises that evolved in Poland in the first decade of the People’s Republic of Poland was highly inadequate and inefficient. According to statistical data, in 1956 two-thirds of these enterprises showed a loss.⁹ Complaints against the ever-dwindling range of construction materials were a recurrent topic among architects.

The frustration engendered by this situation was one of the many factors which, taken together, darkened the atmosphere in the architectural milieu. This culminated in the famous council of architects in March 1956, where a verbal onslaught on the psychological and organisational ballast of Socialist Realism took place.¹⁰ The passage which opened this essay may be seen as a continuation of this healing process, one that was especially radical in its unmitigated eulogy of inter-war affluence.

Wierzbicki is, of course, only one of the many who gave voice to emotions that may have been catalysed in the period just before the Thaw by the discourse on

8 B. Kulesza, “Wnioski z narady budowniczych m. Moskwy dla architektów i budowniczych polskich” [Findings of the meeting of Moscow builders for Polish architects and builders], *Architektura*, 1954, 8, no. 10, pp. 233–234.

9 150 out of 225 enterprises, to be exact (66.7%). J. Chrumiński, “Przemysł w PRL – niewykorzystana szansa modernizacji” [Industry in the People’s Republic of Poland: a neglected opportunity for modernisation], in: *Modernizacja czy pozorna modernizacja. Społeczno-ekonomiczny bilans PRL 1944–1989* [Modernisation or illusory modernisation. Socio-economic assessment of the PRP 1944–1989], ed. J. Chrumiński, GAJT, Wrocław, 2010, p. 327. These results should, of course, be taken with a pinch of salt, as they partially resulted from state-imposed regulation of prices; it is, however, symptomatic that the construction industry achieved the worst results of all sectors.

10 A. Skalmowski, “‘Pierwsza szczerą naradą architektów’. Motywy, przebieg i konsekwencje Ogólnopolskiej Narady Architektów z 1956 r.” [“The first frank council of architects”. The causes, course and consequences of the National Council of Architects of 1956], *Polska* 44/45-1989, 2011, 11, pp. 181–190.

construction materials imposed by the authorities on the milieu. Another example that demonstrates the subversive potential of the authorities' cost-cutting actions intended to save the tottering edifice of the Stalinist centralised residential construction system is the issue of the so-called local- and waste-material construction.¹¹

The term itself may be viewed as a translation of the phrase *местные строительные материалы* found in the Soviet construction handbooks published in the 1930s and in the first years after the Second World War.¹² These texts informed how to use easily obtainable materials: reed, plaster, clay and rough stone, to replace those which were in short supply, such as timber or brick, in the construction of small, predominantly rural houses. The option of using similar materials was examined while the Six-Year Plan was being introduced, although the issue was abandoned in the years to come.¹³

An intensive campaign to promote the use of local and waste materials in construction began only in the second half of 1953 with the publication of a pertinent instruction by the Ministerial Department of Rural Architecture and a handbook by Franciszek Piaścik.¹⁴ But while the ministerial instruction justified the entire campaign solely in terms of the expected economic benefits nationwide, Piaścik also mentioned the character of rural architecture – its shorter amortisation period and the absence of any need for high-strength materials or advanced mechanisation of construction works. The durability of this essentially primitive architecture was accepted as the price to pay, so to speak, for a degree of freedom: Piaścik pointed out that “construction from local building materials would also refer to individual households”. In the climate of the era, still marked by a drive towards the collectivisation of rural areas, this was one of the first indications that the needs of the

11 This topic, although in a different approach, focused on the experience of provinciality in architecture, and in an abridged form, was discussed in my text “Na uboczu. ‘Miejscowe materiały budowlane’ w Polsce w latach 50. XX w.” [Away from the centre. “Local building materials” in Poland in the 1950s], in: *Regiony wyobraźni. Peryferyjność w kulturze XIX i XX wieku* [Regions of imagination. The peripheral quality in 19th- and 20th-century culture], ed. M. Lachowski, Warsaw, 2017, pp. 215–230.

12 Б. Скрамтаев, *Местные строительные материалы*, Москва–Ленинград 1933; *Справочник архитектора*, т. 8: *Конструкции гражданских зданий*, редактор-составитель Н. С. Дюрнбаум, Москва, 1946.

13 Cf. several papers given at the scholarly session of the Polish Association of Construction Engineers and Technicians in 1949, e.g. J. Chołodziński, *O renesans kamienia w nowym budownictwie Polski* [For the restitution of stone in new buildings in Poland] or M. Holsztyńska, *Wykorzystanie odpadków przemysłowych i produktów ubocznych o strukturze włóknistej w przemyśle materiałów budowlanych* [The use of industrial waste materials and production refuse materials having a fibre structure in construction-material industry], both published in: *Materiały nadesłane na zjazd naukowy PZITB w Gdańsku 1–4 grudnia 1949 r.*, op. cit.

14 *Instrukcja o stosowaniu materiałów miejscowych w budownictwie wiejskim* [Instruction on the use of local construction materials in rural areas], Warsaw, 1953; F. Piaścik, *Budownictwo wiejskie z materiałów miejscowych* [Construction from local materials in rural areas], Warsaw, 1953.

peasant community with respect to residential construction may actually be taken into consideration in official planning.¹⁵

Piaścik's text is also one of the few contemporary indications that the impact which building materials brought to bear on the architectural landscape of Polish countryside was, in fact, considered. Its author was aware that the utilisation of local materials on a mass scale, combined with economy in the use of timber and the introduction of simple prefabrication, would significantly alter the appearance of Polish villages. He was uneasy about the results of the proposed "indigent modernisation" of the provinces, as evidenced by his remarks regarding the need to preserve regional architectural forms by "maintaining appropriate proportions and traditional contours of edifices", as well as by his declaration – which was much in the spirit of early 20th-century national romanticism and smacked of wishful thinking – that "the use of local materials would emphasise the connection between architecture and the landscape".¹⁶ It must be pointed out that in 1938 Piaścik had declared that local materials played only a supplementary role in rural architecture and stated decisively that timber and brick were better.¹⁷ Thus, paradoxically, a text which constituted an element of a top-down propagandist campaign hints at a critical approach to blanket decisions regarding rural construction policies; such hints had been absent from earlier post-war publications.

The very fact that local material began to be promoted – which, in essence, meant that the authorities had officially sanctioned the citizens' independent attempts to alleviate their housing needs – to a certain extent undermined the typical Stalinist tendency to control each and every area of social endeavour. Concurrently, however, this approach showed that rural areas had a permanently marginal status in the doctrine of economic policy: peasants who were not members of production cooperatives had virtually no chance of obtaining a bank loan or an allotment of construction materials.

Actions promoting local materials, undertaken in 1953, were only an introduction to an intensive campaign that began under the 2nd Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party in the spring of 1954.¹⁸ A governmental resolution issued in April laid the ground for a new cost-cutting policy pertaining to the entire industry; the use of rough stone, cinder-and-limestone elements, lightweight concrete and clay in rural housing construction was an element of this policy.¹⁹ New guidelines for

15 F. Piaścik, *Budownictwo wiejskie*, p. 5.

16 Ibid, p. 6.

17 F. Piaścik, *Budownictwo mieszkaniowe na wsi* [Housing construction in rural areas], p. 37.

18 General principles of official policy on construction: *II Zjazd PZPR. Główne zadania gospodarcze dwóch ostatnich lat (1954–1955) Planu sześcioletniego. Referat wygłoszony dnia 13 marca 1954 r. przez towarzysza Hilarego Minca oraz Uchwała Zjazdu* [The 2nd Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party. Main tasks with regard to economy in the past two years (1954–1955) of the Six-Year Plan. Paper given on 13 March 1954 by Comrade Hilary Minc and the Resolution of the Congress], Warsaw, 1954.

19 Government Presidium Resolution no. 192 dated 10 April 1954 on economy in the use of materials in 1954 (M.P. 1954 no. A-42 item 626). Clay-based construction was reviewed in the

cooperative and individual construction, issued a month later (whose importance will be discussed further on), recommended the use of “substitute, waste and recycled materials, as well as local materials and prefabricates made thereof” (Fig. 1).²⁰

The above decisions may be considered a sign of the authorities’ far-reaching reassessment of the potential role of local materials in the reconstruction of the country. Previously, they had been treated as secondary, useful as a stop-gap measure, suitable only for rural areas, chiefly for the construction of outbuildings. Governmental resolutions raised their importance (at least declaratively) as a crucial component in the implementation of housing policies nationwide. In addition, official decisions meant that the typically Stalinist centralised course of transformations which took place in the production of construction materials was given a clearer counterbalance.



Fig. 1. A house made of log rolls, *Architektura*, 1954, no. 8, p. 274

unpublished Government Presidium Resolution no. 179 dated 10 April 1954 on increasing the scope of clay-based construction in the years 1954–1955 and assuring the proper development of this type of construction in the Five-Year Plan, instituting, among others, the Centre for Clay-Based Construction Research and Instruction in Cracow (D. Kupiec-Hyła, “Szansa dla budownictwa z gliny w warunkach rozwoju zrównoważonego budownictwa mieszkaniowego” [A chance for clay-based building in the developmental conditions of balanced housing construction], *Czasopismo Techniczne*, 2007, fasc. 3-A, p. 148).

- 20 Government Presidium Resolution no. 269 dated 8 May 1954 on housing cooperatives and the tasks of cooperatives regarding housing construction (M.P. 1954 no. 59 item 792). Government Presidium Resolution no. 270 dated 8 May 1954 on state aid for individual housing construction (M.P. 1954 no. 59 item 793).

This was because the government's forceful cost-cutting campaign occurred in the climate of ongoing de-Stalinisation: the last of the above-mentioned resolutions was proclaimed barely a month after the fundamental declaration of the Central Committee—that is, a condemnation of the opulence of Socialist Realist architecture.²¹ But the fact that in Poland the campaign promoting local materials in construction occurred in tandem with an increasing revision of Stalinism does not mean that it was thus elsewhere. In the USSR and East Germany clay and reed had been used as construction materials earlier, in conditions of wartime poverty (in fact, the *Murondins* houses, which Le Corbusier designed during the war, also made use of raw clay). Poland's nearly decade-long delay in introducing them brought the entire effort, indirectly, in for criticism for incompetence in reconstructing the war-ravaged country. In terms of the public image of the housing policies in Poland, promoting substitute construction materials was an unfortunate move, as it evoked associations with the widespread culture of substitute materials, which the entire society knew from the period of the Nazi occupation. The officially promoted provincial autarky became a clear sign that the socialist construction-material industry was permanently inefficient. As early as in August 1954 Mieczysław Mołdawa, one of the first authors to discuss local materials in *Architektura*, mentioned inefficient supply ("at many construction sites the tempo of the work is dictated by the supply of materials" – the mild tone of his criticism is typical of the early Thaw era), caused by the declining productivity in construction-material industry. Such shortages were to be remedied by a future technological breakthrough; but this still required "extensive [study] at research institutes and at experimental construction sites".²²

This, of course, signified a partial return to the idea of regionalism in the construction industry as advocated in the early post-war period by Kazimierz Dziewoński, who published the results of research he had conducted in England during the war.²³ In the case of local materials, however, this regionalism was of the most primitive kind; in effect, it meant that the investor was left to his own devices. The Polish construction-material industry was at an impasse; on the one hand, the range of products it churned out could not compete with the wealth of materials in the inter-war period (as shown by Wierzbicki's eulogy cited at the outset), while on the other hand it was still not efficient enough in using "poor-man's technologies".

Forgotten achievements from the earlier periods of history were supposed to bring salvation. In 1955, Mołdawa highlighted the need to study the architecture of

21 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union dated 4 Nov. 1955 "On the elimination of excesses in design and construction" (Постановление Центрального Комитета КПСС и Совета Министров СССР от 4 ноября 1955 года №1871 «Об устранении излишеств в проектировании и строительстве»).

22 M. Mołdawa, "Domki jednorodzinne z materiałów zastępczych i niedeficytowych" [Single-family houses from substitute and non-deficit materials], *Architektura*, 1954, 8, no. 11, p. 274.

23 K. Dziewoński, *Zasady przestrzennego kształtowania inwestycji podstawowych* [Principles of spatial formation of basic construction projects], Trzaska, Evert, Michalski, Warsaw, 1948, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Odbudowy no. 16, Główny Urząd Planowania Przestrzennego, Planowanie Przestrzenne, Studia Teoretyczne I.

the given region in order to discover the characteristics of well-known construction materials that were no longer utilised at the time, such as stone and plaster.²⁴ This does not come as a surprise; the recommendation to use local materials reflected the genuinely limited range of experiments conducted at research facilities. This is well exemplified by construction based on clay, where the necessary know-how had to be imported from East Germany.²⁵

Another characteristic aspect of the construction-material discourse of the mid 1950-s was the joining of two terms, “local and waste construction materials” in one formula. In essence, this formula put an equation mark between materials traditionally used in the given region (which in the period of national romanticism was visualised as an important element of the *genius loci*) with waste materials, the availability of which was caused simply by the government’s investment policy. All that these two types of materials had in common was that they could be obtained completely free of charge. It is quite obvious that the government intended to make them an important element of a cost-free *perpetuum mobile* supply for the construction industry. A regulation issued by the Council of Ministers in December 1955, which crowned the legislative effort of the period, gives a detailed definition which clearly indicates that, from the official point of view, these materials were equivalent: “Local raw materials and construction materials are, principally, the following: constructional dolomite, roof-tile slate, sandstone, quartzite, limestone rocks, glacial erratic stones, constructional gravel and sand, clays, tuffs, constructional peat, cinders, demolition materials, sawdust etc.”. An instruction was issued to produce standardised designs of houses “to be used in villages, housing estates and small towns” which would be adapted to these materials.²⁶

It must be pointed out that this was, in fact, an element of a broader issue of how to allay the consumers’ needs, that is, the plan to “produce commonly used articles from waste materials” recommended by another governmental regulation of the era.²⁷ Symptomatically, in comparison with earlier regulations referring to the same issue, this one gave the managers of various plants much greater freedom in determining what assortment of products would be manufactured by each facility.²⁸

24 M. Mołdawa, “Domki z materiałów zastępczych i niedeficytowych” [Houses from substitute and non-deficit materials], *Architektura*, 1955, 9, no. 3, pp. 68–70.

25 Results obtained in East Germany and Zygmunt Raciński’s solutions were used in *Tymczasowe zasady wykonywania budynków z gliny* [Temporary principles of constructing clay structures], prepared by the Institute of Housing Construction, Warsaw, 1955, copied typescript. East German results were also the main reference point for Menander Łukaszewicz, *Nowoczesne budownictwo z gliny* [Modern clay-based construction], Warsaw, 1955.

26 Council of Ministers Resolution no. 1022 dated 17 Dec. 1955 r. on the use of local materials and raw materials in construction (M.P. 1955 no. 4 item 29).

27 Council of Ministers Resolution no. 352 dated 29 May 1954 on the institution of departments manufacturing articles of everyday use from waste materials in the key state-owned production facilities.

28 Earlier, production was regulated by the Government Presidium Resolution no. 219 dated 17 March 1951 on the production of articles of everyday use made from primary-production wastes as secondary-product turnout at state industry facilities, and the institution of the

Local and waste materials were closely connected with this ersatz of economic autonomy. They allowed for the use of simple construction methods intended for small teams of untrained builders ("we made the blocks ourselves, my missus and I, and we built the house ourselves"²⁹). They concretised conceptions contained in governmental resolutions regarding cooperative housing and individual residential construction, which had been proclaimed in May 1954.³⁰ Together with the decree on residential space in cooperative housing and single-family (i.e. detached/semi-detached) houses, which excluded newly constructed single-family houses and cooperative apartments from the state governance of residential spaces, these acts overturned the essentially unfavourable official policy practised towards these forms of housing in the earlier years of Stalinism.³¹ The most eloquent symbol of the earlier, centralistic logic of the process of transforming the organisation of housing construction was the Workers' Housing Estate Company, instituted in 1948 (Zakład Osiedli Robotniczych, ZOR; in fact, it was precisely in 1954 that this institution began to be reformed in the de-centralistic spirit)³². This logic, in which multi-family housing was almost the sole priority, was now discarded.

Housing construction based on local materials seemed to correspond to the spirit of those changes. As early as in 1943 Franciszek Piaścik, in the already cited study on the organisation of the future reconstruction of rural communities, stated that a fundamental role in that process would be played by regional construction cooperatives; their task would be to organise the manufacture of construction materials from locally available substances and to construct larger complexes of new housing. They would enjoy considerable autonomy, he wrote, making use – on a voluntary rather than compulsory basis – of expert advice provided by the state construction-service agencies.³³ This concept shows that, at that time, Piaścik was

"Secondary Production Support Fund" (M.P. 1951 no. 27 item 337), which emphasised work competition.

29 Franciszek Droźniak from the village of Goszcza in the Miechów district, as quoted by Zygmunt Racięcki, *Budynki z gliny* [Clay buildings], Warsaw, 1958, p. 5.

30 Government Presidium Resolution no. 269 dated 8 May 1954 on housing cooperatives and the tasks of cooperatives regarding housing construction (M.P. 1954 no. 59 item 792). Resolution no. 270 Government Presidium Resolution dated 8 May 1954 on state aid for individual housing construction (M.P. 1954 no. 59 item 793).

31 Decree dated 25 June 1954 on residential spaces in housing cooperative buildings and single-family houses (Dz.U. 1954 no. 31 item 120). On the unfavourable attitude of Stalinist authorities to this type of housing: D. Jarosz, *Mieszkanie się należy... Studium z peerelowskich praktyk społecznych* [An apartment is due... A study of social practices in the People's Republic of Poland], Warsaw, 2010, pp. 44–45. Symptomatically, Mołdawa presented his ideas as early as in 1951 at the Central Association for Timber Industry and in 1952 to the Minister of Light Industry – with no reaction at all. Mołdawa, *Domki jednorodzinne...*, p. 278.

32 J. Cegielski, *Przełom w budownictwie mieszkaniowym. Zakład Osiedli Robotniczych 1948–1955* [A breakthrough in housing construction. The Workers' Housing Estate Company, 1948–1955], Warsaw, 1983, p. 57.

33 F. Piaścik, *Odbudowa i przebudowa wsi. Problematyka* [Reconstruction and redevelopment in rural areas. Problems], Warsaw, 1945, pp. 39, 40.

close to the circle of activists associated with the Warsaw Housing Cooperative (Michał Kostanecki, Roman Piotrowski, Wojciech Piróg and Stanisław Tołwiński were the co-authors of this programme).

The topic of cooperative housing in the provinces, based on cheap waste materials and local materials, come back into circulation in the mid-1950s. One of Mieczysław Mołdawa's articles was clearly prepared as an aid in the development of autonomous cooperative housing construction based on lightweight pre-fabricates turned out by small, mobile production plants making use of local materials, whose supply was only to a limited extent dependent on the centrally regulated resources. He envisaged "itinerant brickmakers of the 20th century", equipped with an autoclave allowing them to produce microporites and foam-silicates (types of cellular concrete)³⁴. They would not work according to a strictly determined plan, since they would organise their work themselves. Local and waste materials would assure the cooperative movement's autonomy, as they would free it from the constraints of centralised organisation. It may be said that these concepts for a bottom-up organisation of housing construction were an expression of similar ideas on how to modernise the operation methods of the socialist economy that would be proposed two years later at the workers' councils of the Thaw era.

In addition, construction based on local and waste materials was supposed to provide the designer with an interesting and varied experience. On the one hand, he would learn to work with primitive waste materials, which were softer and more responsive to processing than traditional materials, such as brick. On the other hand, Mołdawa was fascinated with the idea of an architect's active involvement in the final preparation of microporite or foam-silicate elements to be produced on-site, for instance by designing suitable profiling, the shape of which would determine the aesthetic form of the structure. Conceptual work focused more on creating a system of elements than on designing the building itself is, of course, typical of prefabricated construction (this was noted, in almost the same period, by Zygmunt Kleyff)³⁵. Here, however, in on-site conditions, in the atmosphere of greater freedom and without the bureaucratic pressure attendant on the large-series production procedures, the architect's work could more easily become an intellectually interesting and inspiring exercise in modern design.

Mołdawa's interpretation of the concept of prefabrication was entirely different from that proposed in the majority of Polish publications of the era, which promoted large-block solutions. This was a way of referring to the idea of mass prefabrication in the construction of small houses, essentially close to that practised in Scandinavia or English-speaking countries (but, in the conditions of the Far East, in the Soviet Union as well). This lightweight prefabrication gave an occasion to refer to another topic that was almost entirely absent from the Polish construction practice, namely, the construction of quickly assembled houses (assembly requiring 1–2 days) which

34 M. Mołdawa, *Domki z materiałów zastępczych i niedeficytowych*, p. 69.

35 On Kleyff, in detail, in: M. Czapelski, *Moduły i wieżowce. Polscy architekci wobec przemian w budownictwie mieszkaniowym 1956–1970* [Modules and high-rises. Polish architects in the face of transformations in the housing construction industry, 1956–1970], Warsaw, 2018.

made it possible to house in good conditions, for instance, workers employed on large construction projects. Of course, Mołdawa also considered the method applicable to detached/semi-detached housing construction, especially if prefabricates made of more durable materials, such as slag cement and slag plaster, were used.

Another example of a substitute material enthusiastically promoted in the mid-1950s specialist press and used in the lightweight prefabrication were reed boards, which constituted local and waste material at the same time. The large-scale introduction of this material was presented as an important factor in the modernisation of the Polish construction industry; in this, the press was probably following Soviet examples, since a intense campaign for importing reed and reed products as construction materials to rural areas had been undertaken in the USSR after the war.³⁶

Research on the use of reed in improved construction technologies was undertaken in Gdańsk by Włodzimierz Prochaska; reed-based construction was promoted by Seweryn Chrzanowski.³⁷ Reed was widely discussed in press when in 1954 a model of a single-family house was presented at the National Exhibition of Inventions and Technological Advances (Fig. 2)³⁸. Small, single-family reed houses were one of the main design topics when a catalogue of standard designs was prepared by the Committee of Urban Planning and Architecture (Komitet Urbanistyki i Architektury) in 1956.³⁹ The cost-cutting experiments continued with the study of bulrush and other wetland plants as raw material.⁴⁰

However, the large-scale introduction of reed boards as a construction material meant an essential change in the approach to substitute and waste materials: industrial production was more important than independent manufacture carried out by private producers. In 1954, the manufacture of timber-frame houses with reed-board cladding was undertaken in Mikołajki and Nida, initially on a small scale; a facility was established soon after in Namysłów, which had a larger production potential (even though the chronic shortage of timber limited the actual output).⁴¹

36 W. S. [Witold Szolginia?], "Stosowanie trzciny w radzieckim budownictwie wiejskim" [The use of reed in Soviet rural construction], *Architektura*, 1955, 9, no. 12, p. 373, based on *Аpxуmekмыа СССР* 1955, no. 8.

37 W. Prochaska, *Trzcinobetonowa budowa doświadczalna w Oliwie* [An experimental reed-concrete structure in Oliwa], Warsaw, 1951; W. Prochaska, *Budownictwo z zastosowaniem trzciny* [Construction with the use of reed], Gdańsk, 1954.

38 J. Wilk, "Wrażenia z Krajowej Wystawy Wynalazczości i Postępu Technicznego we Wrocławiu" [Impressions from the National Exhibition of Inventions and Technological Advances in Wrocław], *Biuletyn Instytutu Urbanistyki i Architektury* 1954, no. 6, p. 4. [J.G.W.] "Zastosowanie płyt trzcinowych w budownictwie" [Application of reed boards in construction], *Architektura*, 1954, 8, no. 12, p. 309.

39 A. Nitsch, "Z prac KUA" [The works of the Committee of Urban Planning and Architecture], *Architektura*, 1956, 10, no. 1, p. 22.

40 Z. Kotarski, *Pałka jako materiał izolacyjno-budowlany* [Bulrush as an insulation and construction material], Warsaw, 1957.

41 The Masurian Facility for Reed Prefabricates and Namysłów Facility for Reed Prefabricates were established. J. Ginett-Wojnarowiczowa, "Produkcja domków z płyt trzcinowych" [Small houses constructed from reed boards], *Architektura*, 1957, 11, no. 5, p. 162.

oskościowych. Inwentaryzacja terenów budowlanych nie była nawet zapoczątkowana. Tymczasem z początkiem roku 1945 przystąpiliśmy do prac nad planowaniem rozwoju urbanistycznego. Brak pomiarów zasadniczych i planów podstawowych zmusił do prowadzenia prac projektowych na mapach sztabowych w skali 1 : 25 000 lub 1 : 100 000, co było przesłanką, a przede wszystkim zbyt niedokładnych dla opracowania projektów technicznych inwestycji kompleksowych, ciężkich i kosztownych. Pierwszą fazą ogólnych projektów urbanistycznych W.Z.M. dobiega końca. Są to właściwie szkice generalne, które od biedy mogłyby być wykonane na posłanych planach i mapach, ponieważ chodziło tylko o grubszą orientację perspektywiczną bez ocen ściśle technicznych i ekonomicznych. Obecnie W.Z.M. wychodzi już z okresu szkiców koncepcyjnych, do których wystarczyły mapy sztabowe.

Musimy zabierać się do opracowania technicznych projektów szczegółowych i poszukiwać rozwiązań ekonomicznych, a więc prowadzić obliczenia porównawcze, ścisłe. Wykonanie poprawne tych zamierzeń natrafia na ogromne trudności właśnie z powodu braku podstawowych materiałów pomiarowych, co w rezultacie doprowadza do rozwiązań dorywczych, sporządzanych w pośpiechu pod presją okoliczności nagłych, a więc zapewne ani najlepszych, ani takich. Stwierdzić więc należy, że wobec realnych konieczności stan miejskiej dokumentacji pomiarowej oraz inwestycji komunalnych terenów budowlanych m. Warszawy jest niezadowalający dla ścisłego projektowania inwestycji nawet w obecnych granicach miasta. Tereny zaś miejskie W.Z.M. położone poza granicami administracyjnymi stolicy nie posiadają w ogóle dokumentacji pomiarowej w ścisłym tego słowa znaczeniu.

Jest rzeczą zupełnie jasną, że ryzyka realizacji potrzeb miejskich w dziedzinie pomiarów W.Z.M. będzie trudna, długotrwała i kosztowna, ale właśnie z tych względów musi być jak najprędzej powołana instytucja centralna, która by się zająła tymi wszystkimi sprawami i w miarę możliwości zaczęła je organizować. Odciążenie tego problemu do lepszych czasów doprowadzi do jeszcze większych komplikacji w przyszłości. Narasta ona stale w tempie lawinowym i już dziś powodują pewne zahamowanie działalności inwestycyjnej, w przyszłości zaś może doprowadzić do bardzo ciężkich komplikacji i strat znacznych środków. Miejskie przedsiębiorstwo pomiarowe, obsługujące obecnie bieżące potrzeby stolicy, powinno jak najprędzej uzyskać takie możliwości rozwojowe, aby było w stanie poszerzyć i pogłębić zakres swego działania. Sprawa jest bardzo paląca i każdy rok utracony powoduje duże i kosztowne komplikacje w całości gospodarki miejskiej Zespołu, a przede wszystkim w jej wielkich zadaniach inwestycyjnych.

Dotychczasowa praktyka inwestycyjna Warszawy doprowadza nas do pewnych wniosków zasadniczych w dziedzinie organizacji pomiarów miejskich. Działający stan organizacji pomiarów miejskich podraża koszty inwestycyjne, a w niedługiej przyszłości zahamuje rozwój inwestycji typu kompleksowego, co w rezultacie opóźni realizację obiektów ściśle budowlanych. Komplex podstawowych pomiarów miejskich powinien być traktowany jako inwestycja sama w sobie. Inwestycja ta powinna wyprzedzać wszystkie inne przynajmniej o kilka lat. Całość zadań pomiarowych powinna być skoncentrowana w rękach silnej instytucji.

Nadesłał W. Skoraszczyński

Zastosowanie płyt trzcinowych w budownictwie.

Płyty trzcinowe produkowane w Polsce od 1932 r. w Zbąszczyńcu w woj. pomorskim były materiałem mało znanym i mało stosowanym w budownictwie. W poszukiwaniu materiałów zastępczych zwrócono dopiero dziś uwagę na ten cenny i tani materiał, dzięki ogromnym zasobom trzciny w naszym kraju: na Pojezierzu Mazurskim i Suwalszczyźnie, na jeziorach Zachodniego Pomorza oraz w zalewach Elbląskim i Szczecińskim. Zarząd Przemysłu Wikliniarsko-Trzcinarskiego prowadzi w tych ośrodkach wytwórnię prasowanych płyt trzcinowych.



Dom mieszkalny z elementów trzcinowo-drewnianych, kryty dachówka, otynkowany zewnątrz i wewnątrz. Produkcja tych elementów na kompletny zestaw budynków jest przewidziana przez Zarząd Przemysłu Wikliniarsko-Trzcinarskiego w roku 1953. Foto F. A. Czelny.



Dom tenże typu w budowie, z uwidocznieniem ściany trzcinowo-drewnianej i więźbienia dachowego. Foto F. A. Czelny.

nowych. Znalazły one już zastosowanie w budownictwie. Ostatnio we Wrocławiu na Krajowej Wystawie Wynalazczej i Postępu Technicznego ogólnie zainteresowanie wzbudził domek ogrodowy, wykonany z elementów trzcinowo-drewnianych kryty trzcina i dom 5-izbowy, wykonany z tychże elementów, otynkowany obustronnie, kryty dachówka. Domki zostały wykonane według projektów arch. Tadeusza Michalczyńskiego z Gdańska.

Montaż domków jest łatwy i prosty. Dom o powierzchni 100 m² wymaga 4 dni na zestawienie i do 10 dni na wykończenie. „Żywy” domek ogrodowy obliczony jest na 10–15 lat — dużego na 50 lat. Koszt 8–10 elementów domku wynosi do 2000 zł, a dużego, składającego się z 35 elementów prefabrykowanego trzcinowo-drewnianego do 20 000 zł. Domek ogrodowy tego typu, kryty eternitem można obejrzeć w Pałacyku przy Warszawie.

wa w kolonii domków mieszkalnych T-wa Budowy Osiedli Podmiejskich.

Do domku ogrodowego zastosowano płyty trzcinowe i elementy trzcinowo-drewniane o wymiarach 155 × 200 cm na ściany i 4 połacie trójkątne dachowe. Na konstrukcję elementu składa się rama z desek o grubości 25 mm oraz płyta trzcinowa grubości 5 cm, umocowana na listwach. Na dom mieszkalny użyto 35 elementów o wymiarach 163 × 260 cm. Elementy te składają się z ramy drewnianej o przekroju 5 × 10 cm oraz z umontowanych w nią 2 płyt trzcinowych o grubości 5 cm. Płyty o konstrukcji trzcinowo-drewnianej mają zastosowanie na wszytych budynkach inwentarskich. 1 m² ściany kosztuje około 40 zł. Koszt płyty trzcinowej za 1 m², zależnie od grubości (od 3,5 cm do 7 cm) wynosi od 13,19 zł do 30,40 zł.

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Fig. 2. An article on the National Exhibition of Inventions and Technological Advances in Wrocław, 1954, with photographs of a house constructed of reed and timber elements, *Architektura*, 1954, no. 12, p. 309

The houses had been designed by a team supervised by an engineer named Michalczewski. The clients were mainly individual buyers, organised employment institutions to a limited extent; this indirectly confirmed that the policy of assuaging private demand with non-deficit materials was, in fact, effective. Their production continued in the following decades; even as late as the 1970s and 80s the so-called *mikołajek* ("a house from Mikołajki") was often allocated as a cheap dwelling for village and small-town teachers.⁴²

Thus, in the mid-1950 the local and waste materials became an area for testing increasingly more advanced technologies. One example is the method of constructing small detached houses prefabricated from timber wastes, developed by Tadeusz Perkitny and his team at the Institute of Timber Technology (Instytut Technologii Drewna) in the years 1957–1959. Materials developed therein: pressed wood-shavings (known as Impernit) and pressed sawn wood (Imperkol) were used in the construction of an experimental house (designed by Tomasz Mańkowski) at the Czeladź mine.⁴³ It was hoped that about a thousand houses per year could be produced using this technology, on the condition that suitably cheap waste materials (cuttings of extracted oakwood from tanneries) could be obtained.

The support for technological experiments in small-scale construction increased in the atmosphere of the Thaw, leading, in 1957, to a rather unusual presentation of houses designed by Eugeniusz Ajewski, built in Falenica in the years 1949–1956.⁴⁴ They had been constructed by a Single-Family House Construction Cooperative "Co-operative Workers' Estate" (Spółdzielcze Zrzeszenie Budowy Domów Jednorodzinnych „Spółdzielcze Osiedle Pracownicze”), an organisation active in the Stalinist era. In the conditions of the Thaw, these houses were presented as exemplifying a model solution for a cooperative campaign, now much tooted by the authorities. Concurrently, the houses, of which there were eight types, were promoted as "a true exhibition" and, moreover, an exhibition not of prototypes, but structures "designed and constructed in close cooperation with their users". They were presented as an example of technological experimentation in the area of construction-material technology. The press wrote about a succession of tests conducted in cooperation with the Institute of Construction-Material Chemistry and Technology at the Warsaw University of Technology, supervised by Prof. Włodzimierz Skalmowski. One of the tested materials was "wood-shaving/reed concrete"; the ultimate verdict, however, was that "the cheapest way of building small houses so as to avoid unpleasant

42 As mentioned in the memoirs of e.g. A. Przygięda, *O Janie Przygiędzie* [About Jan Przygięda], http://www.zsp.kalisz.pl/projekt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=130&Itemid=22 [accessed 22 Aug. 2014], W. Kruszewski, *Jak ratowałem pałac w Patrykozach* [How I was saving the palace in Patrykozy], <http://www.wiescisoskolowskie.pl/jak-ratowalem-palac-w-patrykozach-czesc-1,07A5j3te76gE6u9u8Sq53x61EeLL219lp542z8h1X96KqBOH6k.html> [accessed 22 Aug. 2014].

43 T. Mańkowski, "Domki prefabrykowane z odpadów drzewnych" [Small houses prefabricated from timber waste], *Architektura*, 1959, 13, no. 10, pp. 465–466.

44 E. Ajewski, "Domki jednorodzinne w Falenicy" [Small single-family houses in Falenica], *Architektura*, 1957, 11, no. 9, pp. 333–336. Similar houses were built in Michalin.

surprises is from whole or broken brick". It must be noted that this was one of the very rare cases when the practical applicability of waste-based construction materials was publicly questioned.

Nevertheless, construction based on clay or other locally available materials was still presented as a good option for larger sections of the society, not only for the rural population (even though the latter was still clearly perceived as the potentially largest target group). Popular handbooks and instruction books began to be published starting from 1956, including the large series *Budujemy sami* by the Arkady publishing house.⁴⁵ These texts promoted the universal use of local materials, following the precept that "bad materials [...] do not exist; all that is needed is to employ them properly, so that they correspond to the given construction project". They also emphasised that "the use of clay in construction undoubtedly arises from the needs of national economy; but we must not treat clay-based construction as a temporary measure dictated by necessity. Clay is an excellent construction material, and a very cheap one as well, because it is obtained from pits dug for foundations or cellars, or from some other place not far from the construction site. Clay-based construction fully satisfies the technological and hygienic requirements of a contemporary dwelling-house".⁴⁶

A peculiar context for these actions aimed at popularising methods of building houses correctly and cheaply, was provided in the mid-1950s by the results of research on unauthorised, "wild" housing construction conducted by the Institute of Housing Construction (Instytut Budownictwa Mieszkaniowego, IBM). Established in 1949, it continued the work of the liquidated Polish Association for Housing Reform (Polskie Towarzystwo Reformy Mieszkaniowej), but it operated within the state structures. In its activity, the Institute to a certain extent maintained the pragmatic attitude shown by some of the social activists of the inter-war period, namely, the ones who had considered a detached house with a garden to be an important model of residential construction – a model that provided a real alternative to a modernist multi-family block in both urban and rural environments.⁴⁷

45 M. Grąbczewska, *Jak samemu zbudować domek z gliny* [How to build a clay house on one's own], Warsaw, 1956 (2nd ed. 1957); L. Lipowski, "Budujemy sami" [DIY building], *Biblioteka Przyjaciółki* series, 1957, no. 2; Z. Witebski, *Miejskowe materiały budowlane* [Local building materials], Warsaw, 1957. The *Budujemy sami* [DIY building] series included, among others, the following volumes: S. Choliński, *Budynki z tworzyw cementowo-glinianych* [Buildings of cement-and-clay materials], Warsaw, 1958, Chrzanowski, *Budynki z płyt słomianych i trzcinowych* [Buildings of straw and reed boards], Warsaw, 1958, T. Hazler, *Budynki z żużłobetonu* [Buildings of slag concrete], Warsaw, 1958, (2nd ed. 1960, 3rd ed. 1969), M. Łukaszewicz, *Budynki z masy wapienno-piaskowej* [Buildings of limestone-and-sand mass], Warsaw, 1958, Z. Racięcki, *Budynki z gliny* [Buildings of clay], Warsaw, 1958, (2nd ed. 1962), Z. Wyganowski, *Budynki z kamienia* [Buildings of stone], Warsaw, 1958.

46 M. Grąbczewska, *Jak samemu...*, p. 4.

47 M. Rozbicka, *Małe mieszkanie z ogrodem w tle w teorii i praktyce popularnego budownictwa mieszkaniowego w międzywojennej Polsce* [A small apartment with a garden in the background, in the theory and practice of popular housing construction in inter-war Poland], Warsaw, 2007.

The issue of unauthorised self-financed construction, almost never mentioned in texts published in the Stalinist era,⁴⁸ entered the professional press at the time of the Thaw, signalling the emergence of a problem of considerable social significance.⁴⁹ Although the fact that temporary, makeshift buildings constructed without state permits had to be condemned, it must be noted that the architects and housing activists working in the state apparatus displayed a certain degree of human understanding.

Paradoxically, the “jerry-built houses” in Warsaw often complied with the official government postulates of using local or waste resources, since they were constructed from various easily obtainable materials. In spite of the chaos they introduced into urban planning, such houses could be seen as a monument to human ingenuity. The vast majority of them did not exceed the state-imposed limitations on the size of residential architecture.

Tadeusz Kachniarz wrote that “makeshift structures are a reflex solution in poor societies, who see them as a cheap and quick method for meeting the most pressing needs. Experience teaches us that there is no programme which could not be, or indeed was not, implemented by using a provisional solution”.⁵⁰ The most prominent expert on unsanctioned construction, Jerzy Cegielski, also emphasised the importance of the social needs and emotions it expressed: “Unsanctioned construction is a manifestation of an active stance which a certain group of citizens takes with regard to their needs – a stance full of conflicts and confrontations between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ – when, forced to rely on their own means and measures, faced with difficulties, these citizens strive towards their goals using outdated traditional methods”.⁵¹

The IBM milieu considered artisan-like construction of small houses on privately owned plots of land to be a meaningful antidote to the problems caused by the unsatisfactory nature of housing construction in Poland. A statement made by Juliusz Goryński in a survey on prefabrication must be viewed in this context:

The “unilateral” drive towards “mass industrialisation” or rather “mass prefabrication” is rooted in pessimism born of doubt in the feasibility of initiating a revival of the pro-

48 One of the few exceptions was a study by Jerzy Cegielski, *Dzikié budownictwo mieszkaniowe w Warszawie w okresie powojennym. Materiały i dokumentacja* [Unauthorised housing construction in Warsaw in the post-war period. Materials and documentation], Instytut Budownictwa Mieszkaniowego, Seria B, fasc. 12, Warsaw, 1951.

49 A. Majorek, “Zielone światło dla budownictwa indywidualnego” [A green light for individual housing construction], *Architektura*, 10, 1956, no. 12, p. 436; J. Bukowski, “Ze studiów nad nieopanowanym budownictwem pozaplanowym” [From the studies on unregulated non-planned construction], *Biuletyn Instytutu Urbanistyki i Architektury* (a supplement to *Architektura*), 1957, no. 1, pp. 2–3.

50 T. Kachniarz, “Baraki czy budownictwo uproszczone” [Huts or simplified structures], *Architektura*, 1957, 11, no. 7, p. 244.

51 J. Cegielski, *Dzikié budownictwo w Warszawie (w świetle dokumentów walki z samowolą budowlaną)* [“Wild” construction in Warsaw (in the light of documents on fighting non-planned construction)], Warsaw, 1963, p. 14.

fessional morale of construction workers, in the revival of a craft which had been lost in the previous era. [...] in my view it is inescapably necessary to abandon the technocratic direction of construction policy, to restore the prestige of human work, and to rebuild the morale of workers and other employees in the construction industry. It appears that the depreciation of the role of the human factor, and the decline in the value of craftsmanship in construction, stem from the still deeply rooted anti-humanist views of the former period of mistrust.⁵²

This fascination assumed a particularly interesting form in one of Jan Minorski's later texts on this topic, published in 1963, bearing the meaningful title of "Impromptu Architecture" ("Architektura samorzutna")⁵³ (Fig. 3). Minorski defined it as "spontaneous, resulting from vigorous action, down-to-earth, emerging without a design, 'Tachistic', so to speak".⁵⁴ The article contains many observations regarding the social makeup of the inhabitants of such structures. Its tone betrays compassion, as well as a fascination with the process of modernising design and functional solutions apparent in this architecture; such improvements were, in Minorski's view, discovered "not through imitation, but simply by deriving ideas from certain elements of the modern environment". Minorski envisioned impromptu architecture as a tendency that could not be stopped by any regulations and that would not subside until at least the year 1980. In his view, the only two ways of dealing with the issue in the foreseeable future would be to either provide every citizen with a dwelling or to ultimately eliminate the option of individual people possessing land and building materials. One cannot help thinking that Minorski's opinion was motivated by his fascination with the spontaneous processes of a community organising its life, a phenomenon made fully apparent by the analyses of social and spatial mechanisms in the cities of the Maghreb region as presented by a group of young modernist architects at a CIAM conference organised in Aix-en-Provence in 1953. Temporarily abandoning the role of a moralising expert, Minorski marvelled at and admired the evolution of unsanctioned architecture as one that maintains constant and intimate relations with the lives of its inhabitants. This non-dogmatic attitude resembles the scientific curiosity of Jane Jacobs, who summarised her views on the phenomenon of urban life in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published two years earlier (although, of course, both the size and the intellectual scope of the two works are hardly comparable).⁵⁵

Awareness of the scale of uncontrolled, unsanctioned construction indubitably made the government more willing to find effective countermeasures. The solution

52 J. Goryński, statement in the *Przegląd Budowlany* questionnaire "O polski model gospodarczy na odcinku budownictwa" [On the Polish economic model in the area of construction], *Przegląd Budowlany*, 1957, no. 4, p. 128.

53 J. Minorski, "Architektura samorzutna" [Impromptu architecture], *Architektura*, 1963, 17, no. 4, pp. 113–124.

54 Ibid., p. 114.

55 J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York, 1961.

Różne pomysły programowe i przestrzenne w architekturze samorządnej. Przykład domku wykonanego częściowo bezpośrednio po wojnie (2 × deski, 2 × worek z papierowego futra, 2 × tylni, częściowo w 1964 r. (też 12 cm, płyta miękka, spłisniona, 2 × tylni). Ciepło i sucho



Solarium. Wobec wilgotnego mieszkania ma tym większą wartość



Powyżej:
Wnętrze tego ciasnego pokoju mieszkającego rozświetla wieczorem ekran telewizora



Wnętrze domku widocznego na zdjęciu górnym. Budownicy domku wraz z małżonką na tle mebli posierżanych z „dalego świata”

Fig. 3. Passage from Jan Minorski's article "Architektura samorządna", *Architektura*, 1963, no. 4, p. 121

came in 1957, in the form of an initiative to design single-family houses (mostly as row housing) commissioned by local-government councils. The aim was to “provide organisational structure to the relentless drive towards individual construction and turn the entire initiative into a mass phenomenon”.⁵⁶ The regulation regarding state aid for self-financed housing construction projects introduced in March 1957 reasserted the government’s lingering hopes associated with saving on materials, stating that “the amount of the loan granted could depend on the type of the building and on the use of specific materials of local provenance, with a preference for local materials that are not in short supply”.⁵⁷ Additional incentive for citizens planning to build their own houses came from the resolution passed in May of the same year, which excluded single-family houses and cooperative residential housing from the state governance of residential spaces. This resolution extended the provisions of the 1954 decree that excluded houses which did not exceed an area of 110m² from state-regulated housing allocation.⁵⁸

In 1957, contests were announced in the Silesian, Bydgoszcz and Warsaw voivodships (repeated the following year in the latter) for prototype buildings constructed with the simplest methods, made from commonly available and cheap materials. This implied using locally sourced materials and waste products from industrial plants.⁵⁹ The living space in such houses was usually less than 80m². The most widely publicised solution was Tandom, described as the first fire-resistant prefabricated single-family house. Its prototype, constructed in Szczecin, was to become the basis for a series of similar houses (designed by Mieczysław Janowski, constructed by M. Masłowski) commissioned by the local government council in Szczecin. The single-story house with no basement was made of light materials – panels with ferroconcrete frames filled with slag concrete, foamed gypsum and wood-shaving concrete based on gypsum – appeared to be the most compliant with the contest requirements (Fig. 4).⁶⁰

These contests were the greatest organised effort undertaken by Gomułka’s government (1956–1970) to adapt cheap methods of mass construction, the search for which intensified in the mid-1950s, to the organisational and technical circum-

56 J. Gottfried, “Domki dla Śląska” [Small Houses for Silesia], *Architektura*, 1957, 11, no. 4, pp. 152–153; S. Putowski, “Szeregowe budownictwo mieszkalne” [Row housing], *Architektura*, 1957, 11, no. 8, pp. 305–314; M. Wahrenowa, “Szeregowe domki jednorodzinne” [Single-family row houses], *Architektura*, 1958, 12, no. 5, pp. 185–192.

57 Council of Ministers Resolution no. 81 dated 15 March 1957 on state aid for housing construction financed from the citizens’ personal funds (M.P. 1957 no. 22 item 157).

58 Resolution dated 28 May 1957 on the exclusion of single-family houses and cooperative residential housing from the state governance of residential spaces (Dz.U. 1957 no. 31 item 131).

59 *Wytyczne do założeń projektowych dla budownictwa niskiego z materiałów miejscowych* [Guidelines for the design principles for low-height structures built of local materials], Instytut Budownictwa Mieszkaniowego, Warsaw, 1957, were issued in January 1957.

60 Z. Wyganowski, “„Tandom” pierwszy prefabrykowany ogniotrwały domek jednorodzinny” [“Tandom”, the first fire-resistant prefabricated single-family house], *Inżynieria i Budownictwo*, 1958, 15, no. 3, pp. 79–83; A. M. Szymiski, *Architektura i architekci Szczecina 1945–1995* [Architecture and architects in Szczecin, 1945–1995], Szczecin, 2001, pp. 88–89.

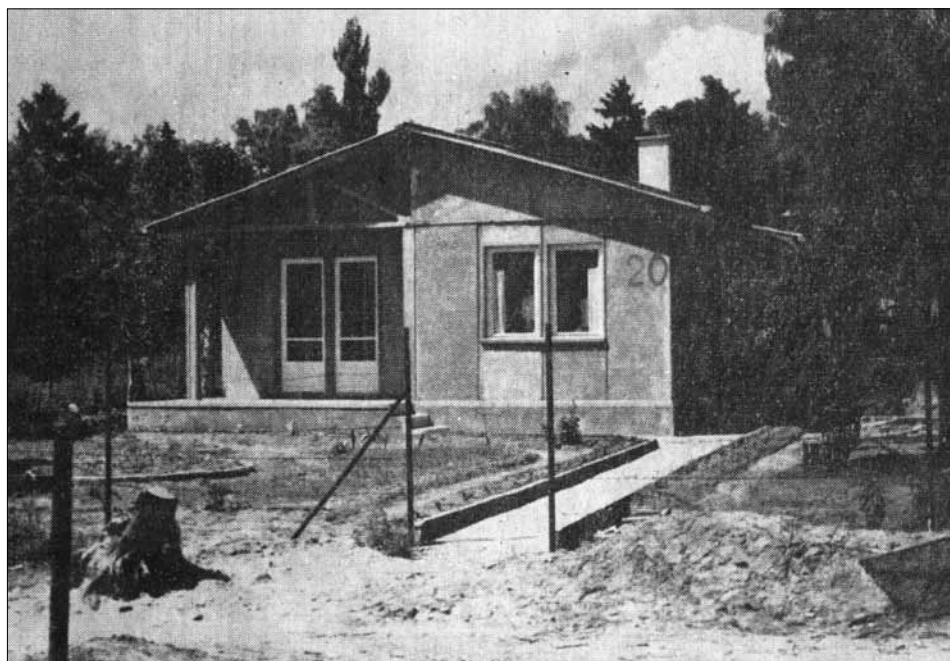


Fig. 4. A Tandom house in Szczecin, after *Miasto*, 1960, no. 10, p. 10

stances of the day. Together with the regulation authorising state loans for the construction of single-family residences, they were the first indication of state support for such housing to be visible in the state media in many years.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned contests constituted the first effort towards a satisfactory adaptation of local, substitute and waste material to the aesthetics of modernist architecture. The earlier model house designs by Mołdawa, the set of single-family houses in Falenica, and Michalczewski's complex, all made use of a gable-roof house in its modernised version, which adapted solutions known from the garden-cities of the first half of the century. The designs made for national councils, in turn, lacked the traditional suburban air, featuring predominantly flat roofs.

Low-height housing provided with state support and technological counselling was an indication that the authorities accepted, to some extent, architectural models popular in the USA and in Western Europe. Familiarity with these standards grew rapidly, although it seems symptomatic that the largest project aimed at presenting American examples of prefabricated single-family houses in the technical press was discontinued after the first instalment in the planned series.⁶¹ Local materials were to become an element in a system of lightweight prefabricates in the American style.

61 W. Iwanowski, "Budownictwo domów jednorodzinnych w Stanach Zjednoczonych AP" [Single-family housing construction in the USA], *Przegląd Budowlany*, 1957, 29, no. 4, pp. 129–138.

The article about Tandom was used as an opportunity to criticise heavy prefabrication, which had been introduced in socialist countries and in France and which was prioritised also by the decision-making organs in Poland. A comparison of the weight of one cubic metre of the Tandom design with that of the prefabricated houses of the Camus, the Gottvaldov or the Syrkus systems, was used as a reason to criticise the official residential-construction policy on the grounds of technology. Nevertheless, the design for the prefabricated single-family house did not manage to reach full accordance with the American idea of prefabrication – the notion of a do-it-yourself house – for a number of reasons, not the least of them being the (still) substantial weight of the panels, which amounted to almost 200 kilograms. It was, however, emphasised that the assembly could be completed without the help of qualified staff. Thus, the construction of such a building was more dependent on the technical equipment usually available at state-controlled construction projects.

Similar implementation-related limitations applied to the experimental cost-effective semi-detached residential house made of large-size panels of aerated concrete weighing 176kg each, presented in the Żerań district of Warsaw in 1963.⁶² The costs of its construction were reduced not through the use of local or waste materials, but due to the fact that it had no foundations and its walls were not plastered. However, the assumption that the mass production of single-family houses assembled using state-owned lightweight cranes and made of factory-produced materials from state-owned companies would solve the problem of mass construction proved too optimistic and ultimately unfeasible. The majority of low-rise residential buildings were still being erected by individual citizens using “technologically outdated, heavy and expensive” solutions.⁶³ In fact, the authors of studies promoting cheap single-family housing designs sometimes admitted in their calculations that traditional technologies were still more cost-effective compared to prefabrication.⁶⁴

The experimental designs presented above made it apparent that the governmental policy regarding the prescribed direction of development for small construction projects – a policy officially promoted since the post-Stalinist Thaw – was inherently contradictory and increasingly biased. These tendencies are even more visible in the discussion after the 1963 contest for economical single-family houses.⁶⁵ This contest effectively became the coda that closed the period of directing the public eye towards model designs of such structures (for instance, it was the last contest for single-family houses to be publicised in *Architektura* (*Architecture*) periodical in that decade). The state policy regarding loans favoured “economical, small single-family houses”, i.e. ones constructed of “local materials, with modest

62 J. Jaszuński, “Domek mieszkalny z płyt gazobetonowych” [Small residential house from aerated concrete blocks], *Architektura*, 1963, 17, no. 4, p. 125.

63 Ibid.

64 M. Jassem, “Zorganizowane oszczędne budownictwo mieszkaniowe” [Cost-effective organised housing construction], *Architektura*, 1963, 17, no. 11, p. 435.

65 A. Bołtuć, “Konkurs na oszczędne budownictwo jednorodzinne” [A contest for cost-effective single-family housing], *Architektura*, 1964, 18, no. 4, pp. 133–148.

furnishing standards, with no basement or partial basement only, and living spaces limited in area and appropriate for the size of the loan-taker's family".⁶⁶

Contest designs were to be implemented as a national standard, while the steep requirements set the cost below 1,700 zloty per 1m² and specified that the building was to have no cellar and be adjusted to areas without running water or a sewage system. Suggestions included saving on steel and wood and using cheap technological solutions that would require only a limited use of mechanical equipment in the construction process. The construction was to be possible with the user's own means ("using household methods"), with constructional and load-bearing elements produced on-site or manufactured to be stored in warehouses. The decision to implement the chosen designs would depend on "the specificity of local circumstances, such as e.g. raw materials or waste materials from industrial plants, the local landscape, etc."

Significantly, most of the twelve designs awarded prizes and distinctions did not feature local materials at all – the vast majority made use of various panels and blocks of regular or aerated concrete. Two of the entries included concrete with reed used as an admixture. The use of timber, including roll logs, and reed panels was a unique feature of one of the variants of Tadeusz Zieliński's design. The jury criticised this choice as non-compliant with the contest requirements (wood was "a material in short supply"). The design by Hieronim Rudecki and Mirosław Wiśniewski (Fig. 5) was granted a distinction solely due to "an interesting solution for constructional materials (shell elements) of fibreboard". This was also the only design in which the "limited durability of the elements" was apparent and noted by the jury. Resources and materials of local provenance were also included in the design by Marian Bucka and Jerzy Zawierucha (gypsum), as well as the one by Paweł Janczukowicz (the type of material used was not specified). In the discussion of contest results, Janczukowicz commented glumly: "As regards catalogue materials, the popularity of such solutions had little to do with inspiration, but rather with practice and experience, which taught us that these materials were not available. If a designer wishes to use aerated-concrete blocks, then let me remind him he won't get any. [...] This was the reason behind the search for creative solutions for many elements [i.e. the search for types available in production – M.C.]. [...] The contest requirements clearly specified that the preferred option was to use elements that could be produced on-site. Good luck to anyone trying to manufacture aerated-concrete blocks on a construction site".⁶⁷ In the architect's view, the feasibility of the design being carried out by two people was the basic condition for the ultimate usefulness of the contest entries.

66 Ordinance of the Minister of Communal Economy dated 15 February 1964 on the maximum sum and conditions of granting bank loans for the construction of houses from citizens' personal funds (M.P. 1964 no. 14 item 65).

67 "Ocena wyników konkursu w świetle dyskusji publicznej" [Assessment of contest results in the light of the public debate], edited by A. B., *Architektura*, 1964, 18, no. 4, p. 153.

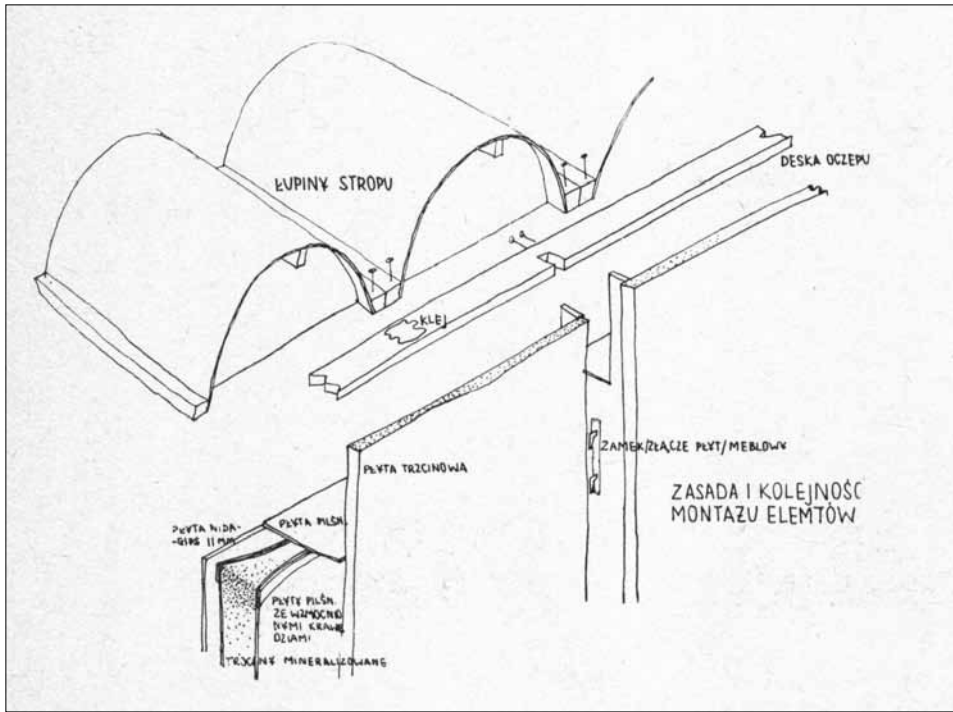


Fig. 5. Design for a house constructed of fibreboard, submitted by Hieronim Rudecki and Mirosław Wiśniewski to the SARP contest for cost-effective single-family housing, 1963, *Architektura*, 1964, no. 4, p. 146

Janczukowicz's assessment was supported by another participant in the discussion, who noted that a person with an average income had no chance of getting an apartment allocation or enlisting in a housing cooperative; a self-constructed house seemed the only solution.⁶⁸

However, as far as the contest jury was concerned, the possibility of a house being erected by two non-professionals with no external help was not a necessary requirement, as "solutions that could be produced by an intelligent person with moderate skills, and this mostly means quick fixes of plywood which one can bend and hold together with nails and slats" were noticed, but treated as "architectural curios". Since the aim of the contest was to provide "answers for today, we should be primarily interested in brick, concrete or gypsum blocks, from the catalogue, because these are commended and in widespread use".⁶⁹

The discussion that centred on the results of this contest was the final note in the public debate on the role and significance of local materials in Polish residen-

⁶⁸ The statement of Antoni Paprocki, *ibid.*

⁶⁹ The statement of Wojciech Piotrowski, *ibid.*

tial construction. In the decade that followed the first initiative of promoting local materials, they became a fixed element in the formalised jargon of acts and regulations in which the authorities expressed their demands for frugality. It is, however, clear that the idea of constructing cheap, fire-resistant houses for the poorer inhabitants of rural areas, based on economic self-sustainability and still present in the ideas for using local materials expressed around 1954, had little in common with the concepts of employing local resources articulated ten years later. As far as the Polish construction materials industry is concerned, the decade of 1961–1970 was a time of minimal growth with shrinking capital and falling employment rates. The focus on the so-called effective productivity meant less funds for the development of factories.⁷⁰ The main priority was granted to all efforts geared towards lowering production costs.

The change in official terminology is in itself significant; the word “material” was replaced with “resource”, clearly indicating its crucial role as an element in more technologically advanced industrial treatment. Simple methods of raising walls, clearly favoured earlier, started to disappear; the designs awarded in 1964 did not, for instance, make use of raw clay, instead featuring ideas to use artificially made aggregates, e.g. expanded clay, which was experimental at the time. Industrial waste products, especially slag, also rose in significance, as they were useful as admixtures to concrete.

On the one hand, these transformations testified to the technological advancement of the construction industry and the increased use of various types of concrete in private construction. On the other, they showed that the public discourse of the times was moving away from the spirit of post-Thaw criticism, when the awareness of the critical shortages on the market of construction materials became an opportunity to promote the idea of cooperative initiatives as associations of self-reliant, resourceful people able to construct their houses on the margins of the central system of brick and cement distribution. In 1964 the perception of cooperatives was already very different – not as a form of organisation aimed at voluntary collective action, but as a network of elite corporations. The discussion of the contest results included voices of bitter criticism: “To put it frankly, there are people with the connections needed to enter a housing cooperative, but for an average citizen, joining a housing cooperative has become impossible”.⁷¹

The concept of self-sufficiency in terms of resources also became obsolete; as noted above, the contest jury displayed a highly patronising attitude towards designs which included atypical, commonly available materials, clearly favouring standard industrial products. This preference was notable despite the fact that in 1964, as a decade before, individual customers had substantial difficulties acquiring allocations of construction materials.

Thus, the issue of meeting individual housing needs was drawn deeper and deeper into the grey zone of unofficial business. Instead of tackling the shortage of

⁷⁰ J. Chrumiński, *Przemysł...*, table 5, p. 358.

⁷¹ The statement of Antoni Paprocki, *Ocena wyników...*

materials by using plywood and clay, one needed to secure access to proper supplies. This view was shared by many people building their own houses, who were usually highly averse to using clay as a building material, instead willing to go to any lengths to acquire bricks.⁷²

Thus the idea of using local materials on a mass scale disappeared from architectural discourse in Poland, abandoned by the authorities and never accepted by the consumers. It had the two faces of Janus, being both the result of economic calculations made by the authorities of the Stalinist era, reluctant to grant citizens access to ordinary building materials, as well as a manifestation of the will of the common people, wishing to have their basic housing needs met.

During the Thaw, writing about local materials was in a sense tantamount to writing about the planned moral regeneration of a section of the society, that is, the citizens voluntarily associated in housing cooperatives. These remarks had a subversive, almost anarchist potential, which, though never directly expressed, could be found in the following logic: since the state is not able and not willing to supply us with the necessary building materials, we should make them ourselves – and therefore what use do we have for a state if its only contribution is to restrain construction with a set of regulations, limitations, norms, prohibitions and instruments of bureaucratic control.

Also, writing about local materials in the mid-1950s to some extent closed the chasm between the public discourse on construction and the actual state thereof. Similarly to Jerzy Wierzbicki's statement on the construction industry in interwar Poland cited at the beginning of the present article, such texts highlighted contemporary poverty, additionally hinting at the fact that construction-material shortages could be permanent.

Yet after a decade of local materials being promoted, one could hardly have any faith that these substances could mitigate the discrepancies between the still unmet needs of the population and the construction policy of the state. Private construction was entering a grey zone, not covered by any economic concepts developed by the state; the time of fashioning houses out of clay was over and the époque of cement-stealing had begun.

Yet there was wisdom in these discussions on locally obtainable construction materials, one which, in the realities of a Communist state, proved both paradoxical and enduring, as perfectly captured by the writer Tadeusz Konwicki a few years later. The following words were written in 1977, at the threshold of the crisis from which the People's Republic was not to rise ever again: "Today, my friends, every person should be self-sufficient. Each man should build his own house, plant his

72 *Formy i charakter wiejskiego budownictwa mieszkaniowego w powiatach gnieźnieńskim, pińczowskim, przeworskim, pułuskim i radzyńskim (wyniki badań terenowych I.B.M.)* [Forms and character of rural housing architecture in the communes of Gniezno, Pińczów, Przeworsk, Pułusk and Radzyń (results of field research by the Institute of Housing Construction)], ed. Z. Skałuba, Warsaw, 1958.

own potatoes and cabbages, and replace broken rain pipes or blown fixtures himself. [...] We are returning to a natural economy".⁷³

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

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73 T. Konwicki, *The Polish Complex*, transl. R. Lourie, Champaign, 1998, p. 17.

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Abstract

The issue of construction materials was one of the essential topics that determined the architectural discourse of the Thaw era. Reminiscences of designers regarding the pre-war wealth of construction materials on offer, as contrasted with current scarcity, revealed the critical and ideologically subversive potential of this topic. This was because such statements not only questioned the "excellence of the way today's construction site is organised", eloquently promoted by the Stalinist propaganda, but also highlighted the actual meaninglessness of slogans regarding technological progress and the introduction of new materials into construction practice, which had been tooted since the latter half of 1953. In reality, the central point was cost-cutting, as shown by the parallel campaign undertaken by the authorities, advocating the use of "locally obtainable and waste materials", i.e. materials that could be acquired without putting a burden on the inefficient state industry.

At the same time, however, this campaign, initiated at the threshold of the Thaw, contained some interesting ideological themes, since in return for the dearth of materials, it offered the citizens a legal prospect of conducting – individually or cooperatively, but in each case independently from governmental control – activities aimed at assuaging their housing needs; this constituted a departure from the centralised model of housing construction as promoted in the Stalinist period. Also, small-size houses made of reed boards, which began to be manufactured at that time, turned the general attention to the applicability of lightweight prefabrication – significantly different from large-size concrete block prefabrication

promoted at the time following the Soviet models – in contemporary housing construction. A growing interest in, or even fascination with, individual house-building activity of the Polish population soon became evident in the milieus of construction experts and engineers. These feelings found their expression ca. 1958 in, on the one hand, numerous handbooks promoting the notion of a do-it-yourself house, and on the other, in far-reaching analyses of the “wild”, i.e. unauthorised, housing construction in Warsaw, treated as socially detrimental activity, but also as a testimony to the citizens’ spontaneity and creativity.

However, in a long-term perspective, it was hard to believe that “local and waste materials” would reduce the chasm between the still unmet needs of the population and the construction policy of the state. In the period of Gomułka’s government, the cost-cutting measures continued to be implemented, but the aspirations and needs of the citizens who undertook to build their own houses, as well as the ambitions of architects, were growing. This is well-documented by the 1964 contest for cost-effective single-family houses, where industrially produced construction materials predominated. Private construction was thus entering a grey zone, not covered by any economic concepts developed by the state; the time of fashioning houses out of clay was over and the époque of cement-stealing had begun.

Keywords: Poland – housing, Poland – 1945-1970, housing – local-material construction, Poland – rural housing, Poland – 20th century architecture, Poland – politics and architecture

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Modernity and Compromise: The Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw and its Designer Władysław Pieńkowski*

Polish church architecture in the period of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) still awaits a synthetic representation that would be comparable to Filip Burno's monograph relating to the inter-war period.¹ Churches dating from the first two decades of PRL have aroused the least interest among scholars specialising in contemporary church architecture in Poland.² Few churches were built from 1945 to the mid- 1960s.³ Attempts were made to document new structures at the time of their construction;⁴ but the main object of scholarly interest were churches being reconstructed from ruins at that time, as well as surviving objects of historical

* "I would like to express my gratitude to Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska M.Arch. for her kindness, for the long hours we spent on invaluable conversations, and for allowing me access to her father's archive; also to Dr. Marek Czapelski for his help and discerning comments.

1 F. Burno, *Świątynie nowego państwa. Kościoły rzymskokatolickie II Rzeczypospolitej* [Temples of a new state. Roman Catholic churches in the Second Republic], Warsaw, 2012.

2 The research by Cezary Wąs constitutes an exception; e.g. C. Wąs, "Budownictwo kościołów w Polsce po II wojnie światowej. Próba syntezy uwarunkowań politycznych" [Church construction in Poland after the Second World War. Conjectural synthesis of political conditions], *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, 2005, 3, pp. 365–386. Among the newest works on the topic of church construction in the beginnings of the People's Republic of Poland is the study on the rebuilding of churches in the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień: J. Gierłasiński, *Organizacja struktur kościoła katolickiego na terenie obecnej archidiecezji szczecińsko-kamieńskiej w latach 1945–1989. Problematyka odbudowy obiektów sakralnych ze zniszczeń wojennych i powojennych* [Organisation of Catholic Church structures in the present-day Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień in the years 1945–1989. Problems of reconstructing ecclesiastical edifices after the war and post-war damage], Toruń, 2017, esp. pp. 51–72 and 147–157.

3 Cf. *Nowe kościoły w Polsce* [New churches in Poland], photographs A. A. Mroczek, text K. Kucza-Kuczyński, Warsaw, 1991, no page numbers.

4 E.g. *Kościoły Warszawy w odbudowie* [Warsaw churches rebuilt], Warsaw, 1956.

significance.⁵ In the waning years of the People's Republic Andrzej K. Olszewski,⁶ followed by Andrzej Majdowski,⁷ made attempts to develop a typology of post-war churches. An album with texts by Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński was an outstanding work of popularization.⁸ Studies documenting the difficulties encountered by the Church in constructing ecclesiastical buildings⁹ and monographic works pertaining to concrete edifices, regions or designers¹⁰ have also been published.

Due to political reasons, the designs for churches built in the period of the People's Republic of Poland rarely gained any fame at their time of construction; currently, despite the changed social circumstances, little is still known about them. The guidebook to contemporary churches¹¹ published in 2016 is but a harbinger of a change in the assessment of post-war ecclesiastical architecture in Poland.

The fate that befell Władysław Pieńkowski, the designer of the church of St. Michael the Archangel at 95 Puławska St. in Warsaw, indicates how easily even an important architect may be forgotten. After all, Tadeusz Przemysław Szafer asserted that "the evolution of Polish church architecture can be traced through the example of churches designed by Władysław Pieńkowski",¹² Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński deemed

5 E.g. *Kościół w Polsce odbudowane i wybudowane 1945–1965* [Churches in Poland, built and rebuilt 1945–1965], ed. M. Bukowski, introduction by J. Zachwatowicz, Warsaw, 1966; studies by Lech Dunin, e.g. *Podziemia kościołów starej Warszawy: archikatedra Św. Jana, kościół N.M.P. Łaskawej* [Subterranean levels of Old Warsaw churches: the Arch-cathedral of St. John, the Church of the Gracious Mother of God], Warsaw, 1957.

6 A. K. Olszewski, *Próba typologii współczesnych kościołów w Polsce* [Tentative typology of contemporary churches in Poland], in: *Sztuka i sacrum* [The art and the sacrum], ed. N. Cieślińska, Cracow, 1989, pp. 85–105.

7 A. Majdowski, "Wzorce stylistyczno-kompozycyjne przedsoborowych kościołów w Polsce 1945–1965" [Stylistic and compositional patterns of pre-Vatican Council churches in Poland 1945–1965], in: *Modernizm w Europie – modernizm w Gdyni: architektura lat międzywojennych i jej ochrona* [Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia: architecture of the inter-war period and its protection], ed. R. Hirsch et al., Gdynia, 2009, pp. 97–106; A. Majdowski, I. Jastrzębska-Puzowska, J. Gierlański, *Inwestycje sakralne i architektura powojennych kościołów w Polsce. Metodologia i zarys problematyki badawczej* [Ecclesiastical enterprises and architecture of post-war churches in Poland. Methodology and the outline of research problems], Toruń, 2009.

8 *Nowe kościoły...*, no page numbers.

9 E.g. Rev. A. Boniecki, *Budowa kościołów w diecezji przemyskiej* [Church construction in the Przemyśl diocese], Paris, 1980; R. Wróbel, *Nowe kościoły w diecezji łódzkiej 1945–1989. Uwarunkowania i klasyfikacja rzymskokatolickiej architektury sakralnej* [New churches in the Łódź diocese 1945–1989. Development conditions and classification of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical architecture], Łódź, 2005; R. Gryz, *Pozwolić czy nie? Władze PRL wobec budownictwa katolickich obiektów sakralnych w latach 1971–1980* [To permit or to prohibit? The government of the People's Republic of Poland vs. Catholic church construction in the years 1971–1980], Kielce, 2007.

10 Cf. works cited by A. Majdowski: "Piśmiennictwo do stanu badań nad architekturą sakralną w Polsce" [Written sources concerning the state of research on ecclesiastical architecture in Poland], *Nasza Przyszłość*, 2006, 106, pp. 283–293, notes 13–15.

11 I. Cichońska, K. Popera, K. Snopek, *Architektura VII Dnia* [Architecture of the Seventh Day], Wrocław, 2016.

12 T. Przemysław Szafer, *Nowa architektura polska. Diariusz lat 1971–75* [New Polish architecture. Notes for the years 1971–75], Warsaw, 1979, p. 171.

him “the most senior among architects active in [the field of] church architecture”,¹³ and according to Tadeusz Chrzanowski, Pieńkowski belonged to those who preserved the dignity of Polish architecture.¹⁴ An outline of his oeuvre was provided by Michał Janocha in his MA thesis.¹⁵

In writing the current paper, I mainly drew from unpublished materials. My fundamental sources were archive materials made available to me by the architect's family and the parish of St. Michael the Archangel. The investigation of Władysław Pieńkowski's designs, drawings for separate details, diagrams for prefabricated elements and many other sketches made it possible to discover the history of the construction of this church.

The life of Władysław Pieńkowski

Władysław Pieńkowski (Fig. 1) was born on 28 May 1907 in Hleзна in Volhynia.¹⁶ He passed the school-leaving examination (*matura*) in Warsaw in 1925. Having failed to qualify for entrance to the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw Technical University, he enrolled into the Academy of Fine Arts; it was only in the year 1927 that he began his long-desired architectural studies. As a student, he was employed at the architectural studio of Kazimierz Tołłoczko (1927–1930). In 1935, having submitted a design for a power plant, he acquired the final certification; his supervisor was Aleksander Bojemski.

Having concluded his studies, Władysław Pieńkowski worked in Bohdan Pniowski's architectural bureau for a year, subsequently moving to the Bank of Poland (from 1936 to the outbreak of the war). At the same time he turned to teaching, as in 1938 he was a lecturer at the Noakowski Female School of Architecture in Warsaw. Two of his early designs for ecclesiastical architecture were completed before the war: the churches in Radom-Borki and in Toruń-Rybaki; their head designer was Stanisław Gałęzowski (1903–1945), the son of Józef, renowned architect. As a student, Pieńkowski was a member of academic organisations which later established the academic chaplaincy at the church of St. Anne in Warsaw. His texts appeared in the *Młódzież Katolicka* monthly.

In September 1939, Pieńkowski fought against the invasion, subsequently entering the structures of the Home Army. At the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising he was in the Lublin area, so he did not participate in it. In the years 1945–1946 he

13 *Nowe kościoły...*, no page numbers.

14 T. Chrzanowski, *Władysław Pieńkowski i jego kościoły* [Władysław Pieńkowski and his churches], cutting from an unidentified newspaper, the Pieńkowski family archive.

15 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne projektu Władysława Pieńkowskiego z lat 1935–1982* [Ecclesiastical buildings designed by Władysław Pieńkowski in the years 1935–1982], unpublished typescript, UKSW Library, 1982. This study, supervised by Prof. Andrzej K. Olszewski exists in several copies, but the album of photographs illustrating the text is now lost. Owing to the vast research field, Janocha only described particular designs summarily.

16 Bibliographic information obtained from Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska.



Fig. 1. Władysław Pieńkowski, unknown photographer, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive

taught at the School of Fine Arts in Zamość and later, until 1948, he worked as a lecturer in cultural history and assistant professor at the Chair of Architectural Composition at the Faculty of Architecture of the Mining Academy in Cracow, which was headed by Prof. Juliusz Żórawski. In 1948 Pieńkowski took up employment at the Warsaw Bureau of Industrial Architecture Design, where he worked until 1957. Until 1950 its head architect was Żórawski, who had been banned from residential or monumental architecture design and found his “industrial sanctuary” there.¹⁷

At the same time, in the late 1948 and early 1949, Pieńkowski developed the initial design for the church of St. Michael the Archangel. From this time onward, his career ran in two parallel directions: after his daily work in a state-owned bureau of design, he would draw designs for churches in his home office. During that period Pieńkowski completed, *inter alia*, the churches in Świerże Górne (1947), Głowaczów (1953–1954), Orońsko (1958) and Biadoliny (1959–1960).

In those years Pieńkowski continued teaching as well. From 1958 for over a decade he taught contemporary architecture at the Catholic University of Lublin, and from 1966 to 1979 was employed at the Noakowski State School of Architecture,

¹⁷ D. Błaszczuk; *Juliusz Żórawski. Przerwane dzieło modernizmu* [Juliusz Żórawski. An interrupted work of Modernism], Warsaw, 2010, p. 48.

where he gave lectures in the history of architecture and courses in design. In the years 1958–1964 he worked at Energoprojekt, from where he was discharged when he refused to join the Polish United Workers' Party. Soon he began to build a number of churches and came to regard the construction of religious buildings as his existential mission. He used to say that other architects were quite capable of dealing with residential and industrial design.¹⁸

In 1958 Władysław Pieńkowski was nominated to the office of the architect of the Warsaw Archdiocese. Three years later he became a member of the Primate's Council for the Rebuilding of Churches (Rada Prymasowska Odbudowy Kościołów), and from 1967 he participated in the works of the Art and Architecture Commission of the Warsaw Archdiocese. Also, from 1970 he was a member of the Church Art Commission at the Episcopacy of Poland. He died on 24 November 1991.

Pieńkowski's early post-war architectural output

After the war, Władysław Pieńkowski designed three office blocks, namely the seats of the Central Bureau of Trade of the Timber Industry, Central Bureau of Industrial Architecture Study and Design (head designer: Marek Leykam¹⁹) and the Ministry of Municipal Infrastructure in Warsaw, in the so-called District of Ministries.²⁰ The most recognisable feature of these buildings are famous vertical decorative elements known as "razors".²¹

Pieńkowski's output in the field of administrative architecture design is modest and does not stand out against the background of the "architectural production" of the era. The most significant influence on his later work on church architecture proved to be his contacts dating from period of his employment at the Warsaw Bureau of Industrial Architecture Design (e.g. with Jerzy Jeliński, Konstanty Jankowski and Janina Czerwińska) and his experience gained while cooperating with the leading architects of post-war Poland, especially Leykam, on whose designs Pieńkowski based his "razor" decoration.

Pieńkowski circulated in the milieu of Warsaw architects whose designs expressed their opposition to the norms and guidelines proposed by the communist authorities. He was on friendly terms with, among others, Jan Bogusławski and worked as an assistant to Juliusz Żórawski,²² a senior of Polish modernism who later fell into disfavour. Numerous outstanding architects educated before the war were restricted to constructing industrial structures, which were free from the burden

18 Information obtained from Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska.

19 M. Leśniakowska, *Architektura w Warszawie 1945–1965* [Architecture in Warsaw 1945–1965], Warsaw, 2003, p. 50.

20 See *ibid.*, p. 24.

21 They are created by deep embrasures of window openings placed densely in a network of vertical and horizontal lines made of concrete.

22 D. Błaszczuk, *Juliusz Żórawski...*, pp. 44–49.

of politics and prescribed symbolic meaning. Pieńkowski put it this way: "I deliberately moved away from residential architecture, because I considered the norms and regulations that had been imposed on it to be harmful, scandalous, impermissible in terms of both psychology and the space necessary for living [...]"²³

The acme of Pieńkowski's work in the field of industrial architecture was the design for the Adamów power plant (1959–1960). In cooperation with engineer Konstanty Jankowski, he designed gigantic cooling blocks resting on surprisingly thin, matchstick-like supports.²⁴ Industrial design forced Pieńkowski to place his trust in the potential of prefabrication, which he later used in church architecture as well. Due to their strictly functional nature, industrial structures are designed "from the inside out"; their design relies on the logical and rational arrangement of the components of a given plant and then on "wrapping" this arrangement in architecture as neatly as possible. Pieńkowski's church designs reveal a similar approach.

Before he designed the church in Warsaw, Pieńkowski already had the construction of three churches under his belt,²⁵ namely those of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Radom-Borki (1935), the Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland in Tarnów-Mościce (1943)²⁶ and St. Jacob the Apostle in Świerże Górne (1947). The first two structures he designed in cooperation with Stanisław Gałęzowski. The leading role of the latter architect, who was older and more experienced, must be underlined here. Also, in order to demonstrate the connections between these three designs and the church in Warsaw, it is necessary to mention their fundamental elements.

The church in Radom is a three-nave basilica consisting of additively grouped solids and covered with a tall gabled roof with a ridge turret. As Janocha correctly noted, being the work of Gałęzowski, it belongs to inter-war architecture in terms of typology.²⁷

The five-nave basilica of the Virgin Mary in Tarnów-Mościce is far more monumental. In terms of proportions, the outline of the church resembles Gothic structures. The ground plan is traditional in style owing to the short transept and the apse. The flat roof is topped with a tower. The façade is also crowned with a tall, slender, monumental tower.²⁸ The side elevations are pierced with tall and narrow windows, while the façade is framed with clearly accentuated brickwork projections of the walls closing the side naves; a similar feature is seen in the Warsaw church.

23 Sylwester Szefer's interview with Władysław Pieńkowski, a recording in the Pieńkowski family archive.

24 This design strikingly resembles the solution proposed earlier by the constructors of the chimney at Carling power plant (Centrale Émile Huchet, France, Dept. Moselle), see *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 1949, 27, p. LXXIII.

25 Pieńkowski's early output in the field of church architecture is described by M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, pp. 21–45. Also helpful is the study *Kościół w Polsce...*, pp. 235–266.

26 For the history of its construction, see M. Smoła, *Mościce. Kościół i ludzie: dzieje parafii pw. Najświętszej Marii Panny Królowej Polski* [Mościce. The church and the people: the history of the parish of the Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland], Tarnów, 2011.

27 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, pp. 31–32.

28 Janocha sees this church as influenced by Socialist Realism, describing its style as "a pretentious mixture of English perpendicular style with the Palace of Culture in Warsaw": *ibid.*, p. 34.

The church in Mościce reveals an important feature of Władysław Pieńkowski's later churches, one which has already been mentioned here, namely the fact that they are designed "from the inside out". The issues of the constructional solids or façades are of secondary importance in comparison with the needs of the liturgy; hence the outward unattractiveness of the edifice. This constitutes a clear change in relation to the Radom church, where the varied, disjointed shape of the exterior contrasts with the coolness and severity of the interior.

Apart from the above, relatively large churches, in the early post-war period Pieńkowski also designed the smaller church in Świerże, one which has a conventional, neo-Romanesque form without a transept.

The details of the church in Radom are typical of the "modernised Romanesque"²⁹ style of the 1930s. In Tarnów Pieńkowski would still design revivalist details and put in a tripartite portal chiselled in stone; but the design of the Świerże church is governed by modern aesthetics.

In his early period of work on church architecture design, Pieńkowski displayed a penchant for brick as a finishing material. The church of St. Thérèse in Radom-Borki was left without exterior plastering, and the chancel arch is decorated with a mosaic, so to speak, of bricks in various shades of red. In Radom, in turn, prefabricated elements were used in the construction of the bell tower, whose lantern consists of "razors" made of reinforced concrete. The small decorative modules are also prefabricated.³⁰ In Mościce, the monumental window in the façade is made solely of standardised elements. The reinforced concrete beams comprising the ceilings of side naves had also been prefabricated. The application of this technique gives the aesthetics of the edifice a modern character.

The earliest churches co-designed by Władysław Pieńkowski are based mainly on Romanesque forms; they have a traditional ground plan and are covered with tall sloping roofs. The Tarnów one (designed 1943–1946, constructed 1948–1956³¹) is an exception, clearly different from his other churches. Concurrently, this edifice opens the second stage of Pieńkowski's output with regard to ecclesiastical architecture, in which the architect discards the idea of repeating modified forms of medieval provenance and moves towards more individualistic designs. Here, Pieńkowski introduced a row of windows below a coffered ceiling in the main nave, characteristic arches in the side naves, and prefabrication used on a broader scale; all these concepts he would later apply in the church of St. Michael in Warsaw.

Church of St. Michael the Archangel

On 8 September, 1853 a cornerstone was consecrated and laid "for a future House of God for the inhabitants of the parish of St. Alexander in Warsaw resident in

29 Ibid., p. 24.

30 Ibid., p. 27.

31 Ibid., p. 179.

the Mokotów area".³² The first church to stand on the plot at Puławska St. was designed by Ignacy Essmanowski.³³ Precisely three years after that cornerstone was laid, Antoni Melchior Fijałkowski, the metropolitan bishop of Warsaw, consecrated the first church in the Mokotów district;³⁴ it was dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin Mary.³⁵ Soon the small church began to be altered. After the year 1917, when this subdivision of the parish of St. Alexander was transformed into an independent parish under the patronage of St. Michael the Archangel,³⁶ a bell tower with three bells was built (1924,³⁷ still standing today) and the church was further expanded.³⁸

The first church was a modest edifice in a restrained Baroque Revival style.³⁹ It was a single nave structure with a transept, its eastern end closed with a semicircular apse. A prominent, protruding cornice divided the façade into two levels. The fronton was decorated with the inscription "Bogu z Jego darów" [To God, from His gifts].⁴⁰

The church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary for the first time was seriously damaged in 1939 and then hit by several bombs during the Warsaw Uprising and thus almost completely destroyed.⁴¹ After the war, until the consecration of the new church, services were held in a makeshift chapel attached to what used to be the façade of the old church.⁴²

The Primate's Council for the Rebuilding of Churches was established in April 1947; its task was to coordinate efforts aimed at building and rebuilding churches in the capital city and to fairly allocate the resources available for their construction,⁴³ which was initially only permitted on land that had belonged to the Church before the war.

The parish church of St. Michael the Archangel is the first church to be built – that is to say, constructed according to a new design, not reconstructed after war damage – in Warsaw after the Second World War. The construction works,

32 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1853, no. 235 (9 September), p. 1.

33 Ibid.

34 Rev. K. Bliźniński, *Informator parafii św. Michała w Warszawie* [Information book of the parish of St. Michael in Warsaw], Warsaw, 1935, p. 26.

35 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, p. 45. The dedication of the church was unchanged until the construction of the post-war church.

36 K. Bliźniński, *Informator...*, p. 27.

37 Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, p. 46.

38 K. Bliźniński, *Informator...*, p. 27.

39 On the pre-war church, see A. Majdowski, *Kościół p.w. Narodzenia Najświętszej Marii Panny na Mokotowie* [Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary in Mokotów], Warsaw, 1994.

40 A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii Św. Michała Archanioła w Warszawie* [History of the parish of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw], <http://digital.fides.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=720&dirds=1&tab=1>, 2007 [accessed 15 October 2017], p. 6. Despite its popular character, this study, issued for the 90th anniversary of the institution of the parish of St. Michael the Archangel, contains valuable information on the construction of the church, as well as many photographs.

41 *Kościół Warszawy...*, p. 27.

42 A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 9.

43 Cf. Gryz, *Pozwolić czy nie...*, pp. 28–29.

supervised by Władysław Pieńkowski, began in August 1950.⁴⁴ The cornerstone was laid on 8 December of the following year by Primate Wyszyński.⁴⁵ Bolesław Piasecki, the originator of the PAX Association, became the chairman of the Construction Committee, with Father Witold Martusiewicz or Father Stefan Piotrowski⁴⁶ and the writer Jerzy Zawieyski,⁴⁷ also PAX activists, as his deputies. Considering the difficulties which the Church encountered when attempting to build new churches, it may be assumed that Piasecki's involvement in the works of the Committee was crucially important to obtaining building permission.⁴⁸

According to Janocha, the design for the church of St. Michael the Archangel which Pieńkowski made in the years 1948–1949 won him “first prize in the Association of Polish Architects’ unofficial contest”.⁴⁹ This enigmatic and practically unverifiable remark is the only extant information regarding this contest.

The first design,⁵⁰ 1949 (1948?)⁵¹–1951

Pieńkowski's first drawing of the church of St. Michael is dated to the year 1949. It corresponds to the earliest design, extant in the parish archive (1950). This drawing shows a vision of a slender, monumental edifice, extremely similar to the one

44 A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 10.

45 Ibid.

46 K. Mętrak, *Budownictwo sakralne w Warszawie w czasach PRL (1945-1981)* [Ecclesiastical buildings in Warsaw during PRL (1945-1981)], unpublished typescript, MA thesis, UW Library, Warszawa, 2018, p. 68-69.

47 A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 10.

48 Cf. A. Majdowski, *Wzorce stylistyczno-kompozycyjne...*, p. 98: “In practice, the greatest efficiency in carrying out construction projects was noted in very particular milieus, especially the so-called patriotic priests, and more broadly speaking, the milieus in the orbit of the PAX Association”.

49 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, p. 46.

50 The archive of the parish of St. Michael the Archangel contains two copies of the already mentioned collection of architectural and constructional drawing for the church. One of them bears the seal of the Primate of Poland and an annotation dated 12 May 1950: “These plans of the construction of the church of St. Michael in Warsaw, as designed by Wł. Pieńkowski M.Arch., are hereby approved”, signed by Stefan Wyszyński. The other copy, apart from the approval of the Church authorities (this time signed by the chancellor of the Warsaw Curia) bearing the same date, was approved on 18 Oct. 1950 by the Central Committee of the National Council of the City of Warsaw, which was the basis for applying for building permission. A proviso was added, however, that after the foundations are finished and before the walls of the ground floor are laid, a control committee from the CCNC would inspect the site; perhaps this was when the works were halted. Also, this copy of the design bears partially obliterated seals with the letters “B.O.S.” [Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy – Capital City Reconstruction Bureau] and the words “[in ink] Appendix to the opinion [handwritten] 135/9/50”.

51 In *Dyspozycja projektu wnętrza kościoła św. Michała w Warszawie* [Disposition for the interior design of the church of St. Michael in Warsaw] (8 pages, Ms. in the Pieńkowski family archive) Pieńkowski mentions “the initial design from 1948”.

in Mościce (designed 1941, constructed 1948–1956⁵²). Also the characteristic tower topped with slim pinnacles and a spire with a crown is a near-repetition of a solution used in Mościce. A vast stained glass window made of concrete latticework occupies the central section of the façade. It is flanked by monumental figures of saints placed one above the other (six on each side), bringing to mind medieval portals, and, again like in the Mościce church, clearly accentuated, undecorated side projections closing the naves.

Other features based on the Mościce church are the general proportions of the edifice (although slightly slenderer here), the row of low side chapels, the nearly flat roofs and the row of windows allowing more light into the main nave. Pieńkowski changed the shape of window openings to rectangular, however, eliminating arched forms altogether. He decided not to add a transept or decorative frieze of vertically arranged narrow “razors” below the roof. The windows that occupy nearly the entire wall surface in side façades are an innovation in comparison to Pieńkowski’s earlier designs. This audacious idea could be implemented because the church structure was made of reinforced concrete (Fig. 2, 3).

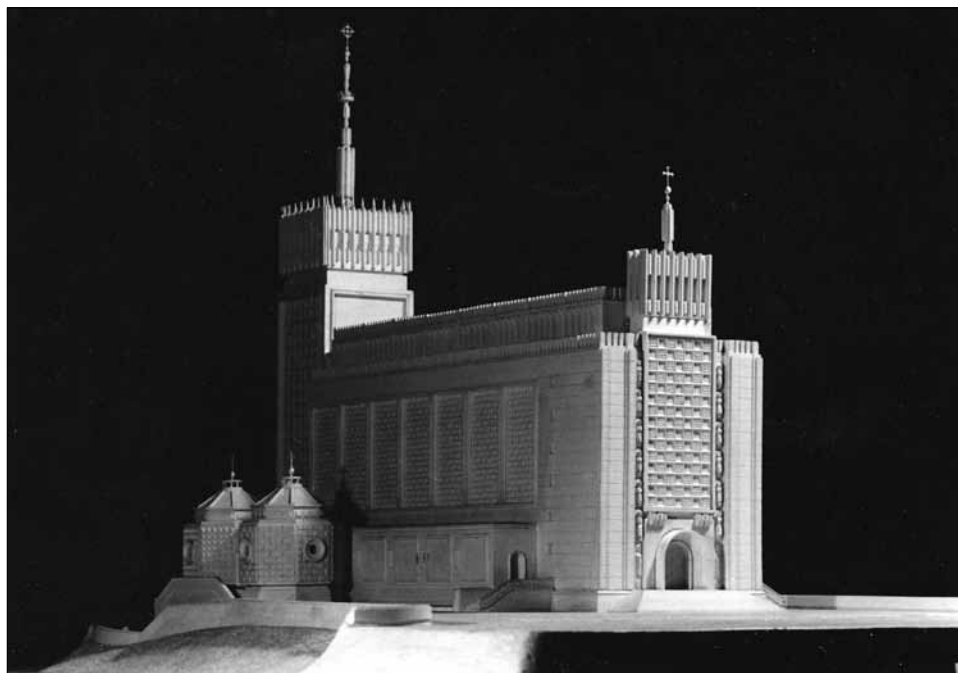


Fig. 2. Władysław Pieńkowski, model of the church, the first design, photo by A. Funkiewicz, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska’s archive

52 F. Burno, *Kościół nowego państwa...*, p. 166.

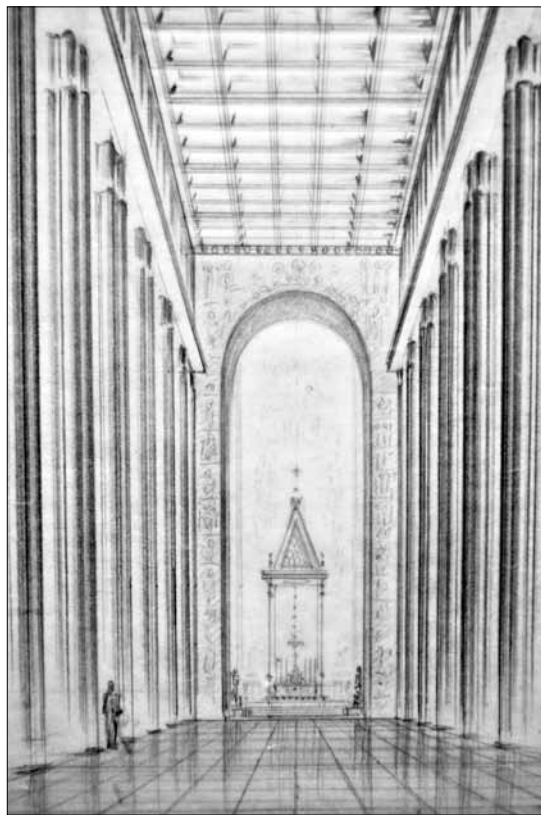


Fig. 3. Władysław Pieńkowski, concept drawing for the interior, the first design, 1951, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive

In terms of composition, the two chapels on the north side of the church are clearly detached from the general body of the church. Their octagonal ground plan, ashlar quoins and circular windows bring to mind the Renaissance tomb chapels seen in many Polish churches. It is worth noting that the designs for the north-east chapel feature an oval baptismal font placed three steps below the floor level. With this idea, Pieńkowski anticipated transformations that were to be postulated by the Second Vatican Council over fifteen years later, approaching solutions proposed by architects associated with the liturgical movement.⁵³

The architecture of the church is clearly rooted in the tradition of the inter-war period, its monumental quality being characteristic of the era. Pieńkowski attempted to simplify the façades, the body and the ground plan of the church, but he continued to employ a repertoire of forms typical of "Modernised Revivalism". He still used decorative details and architectural sculpture, and made references to historical styles. Filip Burno cites the church in Tarnów-Mościce as a late example

⁵³ See Rev. Z. Wit, "Wymogi liturgiczno-prawne wyposażenia kościoła" [Legal and liturgical requirements for church furnishings], *Ateneum Kapłańskie*, 1989, 113, pp. 236–238.

of a “pylon façade”;⁵⁴ Pieńkowski adopted this solution in his first design for the church of St. Michael as well. It seems that the characteristic lesenes in the upper sections of the towers, ridge turrets with spires surrounded with crowns, as well as the said pylons, may have been inspired by Bohdan Pniewski’s unrealised design for the Sea Basilica in Gdynia (1933).⁵⁵

The second design,⁵⁶ 1954

Whereas the design for the church as discussed above referred to the architectural idiom of the fourth decade of the 20th century, the second surviving set of Pieńkowski’s drawings calls to mind the architecture of the first three decades of that century.

In these drawings, the ground plan remained essentially unchanged, since by the year 1954 the foundations for the lower church had already been laid; this restricted the architect’s room for manoeuvre. The general shape of the church, however, underwent essential and surprising transformations. A tall gabled roof was envisioned instead of a flat one. The tower above the chancel was eliminated; a presbytery that was noticeably narrower and lower from the main section of the church, clearly visible in the silhouette of the edifice, appeared in its place. The second span of the church, looking from the east, is crowned with a slender, delicate ridge turret similar to the Radom one. The façade also underwent a significant metamorphosis, as in the new design it has a triangular pediment. Underneath there is a semicircular entrance arcade, above which a window, its shape echoing the arch around the entrance, constitutes the dominant compositional element of the façade. The window is filled with pseudo-Gothic stained glass. The design envisaged the windows of side naves as filled with false tracery structures as well (Fig. 4, 5).

The second design is influenced by earlier constructions: the churches in Radom and Głowaczów. In both of those structures, and in the Świerże Górne church,

54 F. Burno, *Kościół nowego państwa...*, p. 166; on pylon façades: *ibid.*, pp. 163–166. A façade flanked by two distinct protrusions resembling pylons; often with an additional tall bell tower.

55 Cf. M. Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski – warszawski architekt XX wieku* [Bohdan Pniewski – a 20th-century Warsaw architect], Warsaw, 2008, pp. 70–77.

56 A file containing this set of drawings is held in the archive of the parish of St. Michael the Archangel, marked “III. 56”, which refers to the issue date of the building permission; however, the seal of the Warsaw Curia under the annotation: “The current design for the construction of the church for the parish of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw was confirmed by the Archdiocesan Authority by the decree dated 13 July 1954 No. 4206” confirms that the design was made in 1954. In the parish archive, number II is borne by the replacement (cost-effective) design for the lower church from the year 1953, which does not introduce material changes in comparison with the first design. This design is signed by Władysław Pieńkowski and Tadeusz Zieliński (as authors) and Prof. Z. Mączyński and Prof. R. Gutt (as consultants). Considering the absence of any other data regarding Zieliński’s participation in the designing of the church of St. Michael, it is difficult to make any pronouncements regarding the true extent of his involvement.

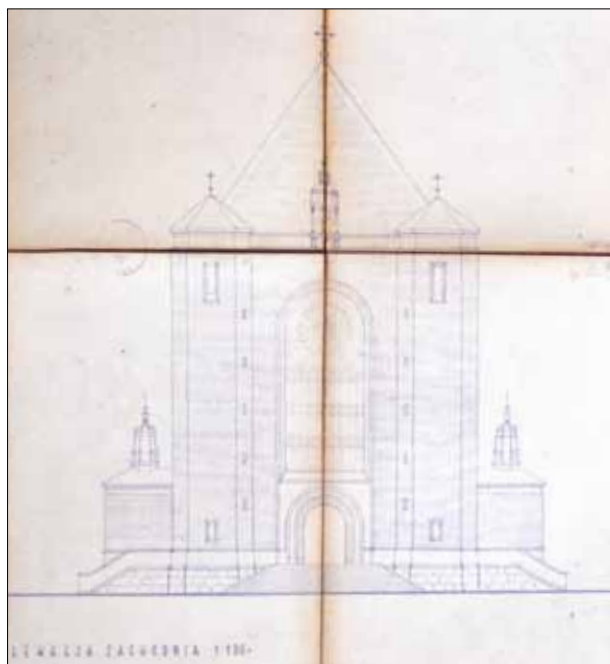


Fig. 4. Władysław Pieńkowski, western façade of the church, the second design, the parish archive

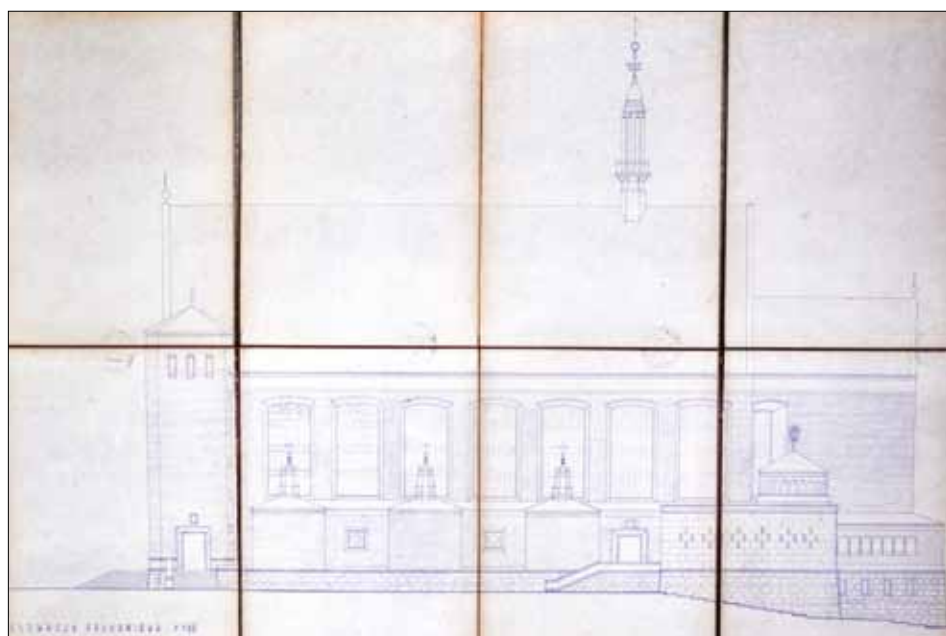


Fig. 5. Władysław Pieńkowski, southern façade of the church, the second design, the parish archive

Pieńkowski used the characteristic revivalist concept of a chancel that was lower and narrower than the nave. The monumental quality of the edifice, clearly greater than in the earlier churches, results from its slender proportions and from the significance of its projected site. Standing at the edge of the Vistula slope, the church – the only one in Mokotów at the time – was a prominent feature of the panorama of Warsaw as seen from Praga across the river. Aware of the advantages of the location, Pieńkowski thoroughly researched the church's appearance when seen from the east. Its dimensions were dictated by the sizes of the surrounding buildings; however, arranging it as a compositional element of the Vistula slope, the architect took pains to achieve a harmoniously shaped skyline (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Władysław Pieńkowski, panorama of the Vistula incline, fragment, 1953, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive; the silhouette of the church of St. Michael the Archangel, then being designed, is discernible

The fact that the two designs were produced by one and the same architect in such a short period of time may seem surprising. The second design, resembling the Gothic and Baroque style as seen in Poland, constitutes a return to traditional forms. The project was most probably influenced by the Socialist Realism current of the early 1950s. The young generation of architects, trained in the 1930s and 1940s, perceived the new principles of design as their opportunity to launch a brilliant career in their profession. Rapid changes caused by Socialist Realism accelerated the natural exchange of generations and favoured the emancipation of young creators.

It is, however, difficult to ascertain whether Władysław Pieńkowski was among those seduced by the vision of a new architectural style or whether his actions were solely pragmatic in nature. In all probability, the planning permission for a church designed in the shape typical of the 1930s (the first design) was revoked, so Pieńkowski produced a new one, this time closer in style to Socialist Realism, as promoted by the establishment. Although it would be difficult to find any Socialist contents in the second design, its form is a native one. Both the architect and his patrons probably assumed that such a church, being less distinctive and less eye-

catching, had more chance of being acceptable to the authorities than the concrete structure designed in 1949.

The final design, 1956–1961(?)

The original design for the church of St. Michael the Archangel has not been found. The parish archive contains a replacement design for the chapel of the Virgin Mary approved by the Chief Architect of Warsaw on 10 December 1959, bearing the note: “as a replacement for part of the church in relation to des. [...] dated 31 Jan. '56”.⁵⁷ The Pieńkowski family archive, however, has been found to contain the cost-effective replacement design for the western façade of the church, dated to 1961.⁵⁸ Both these documents show the church as it was ultimately constructed. On the basis of the drawings of the chapel of the Virgin Mary (which also include the southern and eastern facades of the church) it may be ascertained that Pieńkowski created the final design after the year 1954⁵⁹ and before 1959,⁶⁰ and that the current shape of the façades was determined before the year 1961. It may be suspected that a final consolidated design for the church was never made; instead, replacement designs for particular sections of the church were presented to the authorities for approval, the previously approved façades being entirely modified as a result.⁶¹

Thus, the above-mentioned sets of drawings belong to the successive essential stage of designing the church of St. Michael – the last one. They demonstrate a departure from the stylistic costume adopted in the previous version and, at least in some aspects, a return to the initial assumptions. Pieńkowski went back to the concepts of pylons, now even taller than the central section of the façade, which was wholly filled with the reinforced-concrete latticework of the window. The idea for a tower crowning the façade on the street side was abandoned, while the basilica plan, flat roofs and the tower above the chancel returned. The new concepts were the division of the monumental eastern window and, above all, the distinctive outside wall of the chapel of the Virgin Mary made of the “razor” lattice.

The large family archive also contains study drawings for the facades of the church of St. Michael. The sketch for a section of a side façade, dated to 20 March 1956, is interesting in the context of changes introduced in the design for this church. This drawing shows a concept identical to that presented in 1959; this makes it necessary to move the date when the final conception of the church façades was

57 The second design for the church, in its revivalist guise, was confirmed for this date. The design for the chapel bears no. V in the parish archive.

58 Approved by the Head Architect in 1962; bears no. VI on the cover.

59 The year the second design was produced.

60 The eastern section of the church was consecrated on 21 Nov. 1959, A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 11.

61 This hypothesis is confirmed by the unbroken sequence of numbers on the designs held in the parish archive and in the architect's archive (I–VI).

developed to March 1956, i.e. just two months after the second, revivalist project had been approved.

Pieńkowski's study for the façade with its focus on proportions and geometrical relations (1962) is particularly noteworthy (Fig. 7). The drawing shows the western façade of the church, on which Pieńkowski superimposed, in dotted line, a network of divisions showing the interdependencies between particular elements of the composition. This valuable document reveals medieval churches as his inspiration and illustrates his reflections regarding the logical composition of the façade. Of particular note is Pieńkowski's truly "gothic" conviction that a well-designed building should be describable by means of a sequence of parallel lines and circles.

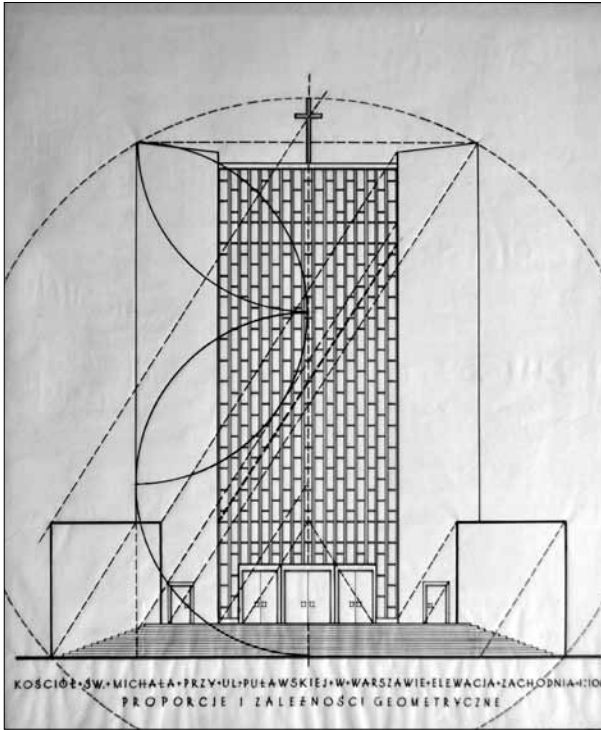


Fig. 7. Władysław Pieńkowski, a study for the proportions and geometrical relations of the façade, 1962, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive

The church of St. Michael was consecrated in 1966.⁶² Pieńkowski's drawing showing the view from the main nave towards the west wall and the north nave, in which the arrangement of elements resembles the existing one, dates from May 1964; thus, this date constitutes the *terminus ante quem* on the formation of the final conception of the interior.⁶³

⁶² A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 13.

⁶³ Apart from the changes enforced by the Second Vatican Council, e.g. the removal of the pulpit.

Before the building permission was revoked, the foundations and the lower church were ready, all made from bricks obtained from the dismantling of ruins. The interior has low vaults as its ceiling. The lower church lies below only the four eastern spans of the upper church. Work on the upper church began when construction resumed in 1957.⁶⁴ The church was built in two stages. The four eastern spans and the chancel, blessed by Primate Wyszyński on 21 November 1959,⁶⁵ were the first.

The work was finishing up over many years, with Pieńkowski's vigorous input in the furnishing of the church. Pieńkowski felt a strong attachment to his work; even in the late 1970s he was still turning in designs for altars, lamps and other elements of decor.⁶⁶

The church as it was finally constructed is a 70.5m long, 31.3m wide three-nave basilica with rows of low chapels adjacent to side naves. Under the proper church (area 3700 m²)⁶⁷ lies the lower church (area 1850m²).⁶⁸ The width of the main nave is 11.2m, and the width of the side naves is 2m. The length of the span is 6m. The main body of the church is slender in its proportions; the interior has the height of 21.50m in the main nave, 17.6m in the side naves, and only 4.3m in the chapels and in the lower church. The façade is 28.55m high.

The colour range used on the facades of the church is limited to two contrasting hues: the greyish white of prefabricated elements and the grey of rough plaster. The façade is topped with a 4-metre prefabricated cross. Its central section is dominated by a window, nearly 10m wide, made up of concrete prefabricates that create a structure filled with a mosaic of irregularly arranged modules. In the lower section of the openwork wall there is a tripartite portal with an inscription "BOGU+Z+JEGO+DARÓW" [To God, from His gifts] running above the door openings, referring to the pre-war church.

The central window is flanked with massive projections closing the side naves; they are slightly taller than the window and in their upper part they taper towards the centre. Narrow horizontal lines scored in the rough plaster, arranged irregularly but symmetrically on both sides of the façade, add some visual variety to the wall. These lines continue on the side façades of the false towers; adjacent to those are annexes closing the rows of side chapels. The side sections are nearly rectangular in

64 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, p. 46. This date, confirmed only by Janocha's study, cannot be treated as certain.

65 Ibid.; A. J. Szymański, *Historia Parafii...*, p. 11.

66 The architect's family archive contains many unrealised designs. Many alterations were introduced without consulting Pieńkowski, which resulted in his issuing a statement: "[...] I must state that what was done is, unfortunately, not in keeping with the principle of the interior composition which I have assumed, whereas, following the regulations of the Constitution on Liturgy, the person responsible for this composition is the head designer" (undated document, the Pieńkowski family archive). The burden of responsibility taken by the designer is clearly discernible in this statement, as is his bitterness resulting from his inability to execute control over the work as its author.

67 M. Janocha, *Budowle sakralne...*, p. 179.

68 Ibid.

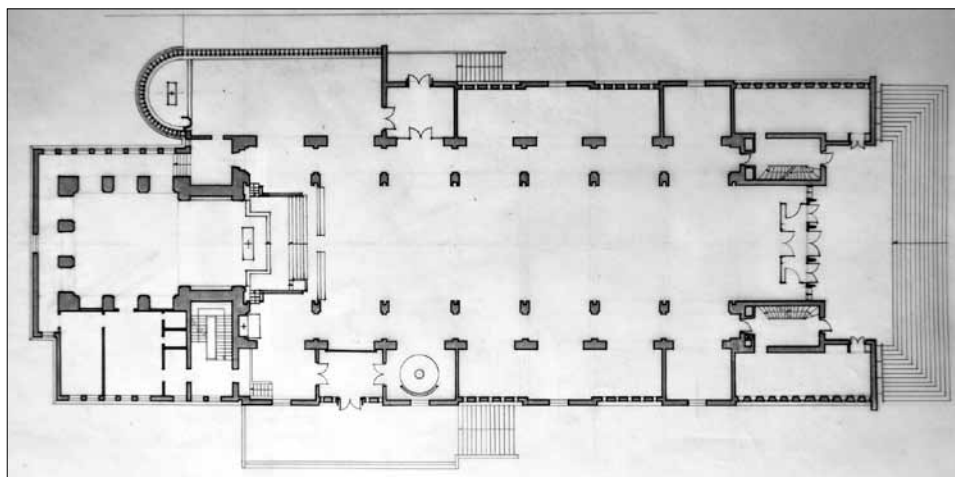


Fig. 8. Władysław Pieńkowski, ground plan of the church of St. Michael the Archangel, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive



Fig. 9. Interior of the chapel of the Virgin Mary, March 2015, photo by W. M. Głowacki

their proportions and clearly cubic, complementing the additive, revivalist character of the façade's composition.

The north and south façades are fairly similar to each other. To the west, they are closed with the already-mentioned projections of the façade. Further on,

towards the east, runs the massive body of the church, consisting of seven spans and ending with a tower. Monumental windows which give rhythm to the facades are made of openwork prefabricates in three sizes: 0.88 m, 1.25m or 1.62m in height with the uniform width of 0.88m. These prefabricates comprise a composition of five strips decorated with alternating square sections filled with eight circles surrounding a diamond and rectangular sections filled with a simplified and multiplied outline of a five-armed candelabrum. The windows are similar, but prefabricated elements are arranged differently in each window, which helped to avoid monotony. Window openings are flanked by narrow pilasters, which add dynamics to the form and break the horizontal rhythm of the design.

On the south side lies the chapel of the Virgin Mary of Częstochowa, which has the ground plan of a rectangle closed with a semicircular apse. It is 16.7m long with width close to 6.5m. Its outer wall is constructed solely of prefabricates with narrow "razor" divisions (Fig. 9).

Above the ambulatory there is a tower with the ground plan of a square with sides 11.3m long. The structure rests on reinforced-concrete corners made of prefabricates. The eastern wall is filled with a monumental stained glass window. The tower, designed as over 31m tall, finally reached only approx. 26m.

In the upper church, the element that emphasises the solids is the light that enters via the wide windows. In the main nave, the articulation is achieved by means of narrow rectangular frames of reinforced concrete, which create the division into seven spans. Above the side naves a row of rectangular windows in a brick wall brightens the interior. It visually divides the coffered ceiling from the rest of the edifice, giving it lightness. Rows of chapels are adjacent to side naves; some of those chapels are connected to create larger spaces which may serve ecclesiastical needs, e.g. creating space for confession. Arched openings lead from the chapels to the interior of the church. The upper church (Fig. 10) contrasts strongly with the lower church, which, because of its low ceilings, intimate size and the absence of windows, is close to Early Christian architecture.

The first design for the church of St. Michael is strongly dependent on the church of the Virgin Mary in Tarnów-Mościce, then under construction, as it makes use of the same repertoire of forms in a slightly modified body. Its characteristic features are revivalist sculptural details combined with a monumental scale. The second design constituted Władysław Pieńkowski's reaction to the architecture of Socialist Realism (or, more pragmatically, to the suspension of construction works) and it is characterised by a return to early 20th-century eclecticism. The final conception was reached soon after the completion of the second design. To some extent it meant a return to the original conception proposed in 1949, but the church acquired an unmistakably Modernist character. Pieńkowski abandoned the forms common in Polish pre-war architecture that he had used until that point, instead moving towards architecture that was far more severe and less decorative than the one envisaged by his first design.



Fig. 10. Interior of the church of St. Michael the Archangel, view towards the chancel, on the far side the monumental stained glass window designed by Tadeusz Wojciechowski, March 2015, photo by W. M. Głowacki

Prefabricates in the structure of the church of St. Michael the Archangel

Władysław Pieńkowski's use of prefabricates is an interesting issue. Promoted in Poland from the 1930s onward by the avant-garde circles of left-wing architects,⁶⁹ prefabrication became a necessity after the year 1949, when architectural studios became state property.⁷⁰ However, despite many texts on this topic being published in specialist journals, and despite the support of the officialdom, in Poland in 1955 this technology was still in the early stages of its development.⁷¹

In the construction of the church of St. Michael, however, prefabrication was applied on a large scale. The direct reasons for this were economic. The view that buildings made of prefabricates were of low quality is more or less generally

69 M. Czapelski, "A House from a Factory: Polish Architects and Prefabricated Residential Housing in the 1950s", *Ikonotheka*, 2013, 24, pp. 156–159.

70 Ibid., p. 164.

71 Ibid., p. 173; see *Ogólnopolska Narada Architektów* [The National Council of Architects], ed. T. Barucki, S. Pietraszek, Warsaw, 1956.

accepted.⁷² However, in contrast to residential architecture, in the case of the church of St. Michael the use of prefabricates is a key reason for the high quality of its construction. In fact, its use may be seen as a continuation of the building trade tradition, namely the so-called testing-ground production, conducted directly at the construction site,⁷³ not at an industrial plant (Fig. 11, 12).

The forms for separate elements – e.g. the ceiling coffers, window modules etc. – were made of timber and then put together according to requirements. When ready, the prefabricates were joined by frames poured from reinforced concrete. Only a few workers were involved in the production of modules. The elements were poured from concrete in which the admixture of sand was replaced with finely ground marble and the gravel with marble grit.⁷⁴ This method meant sacrificing the

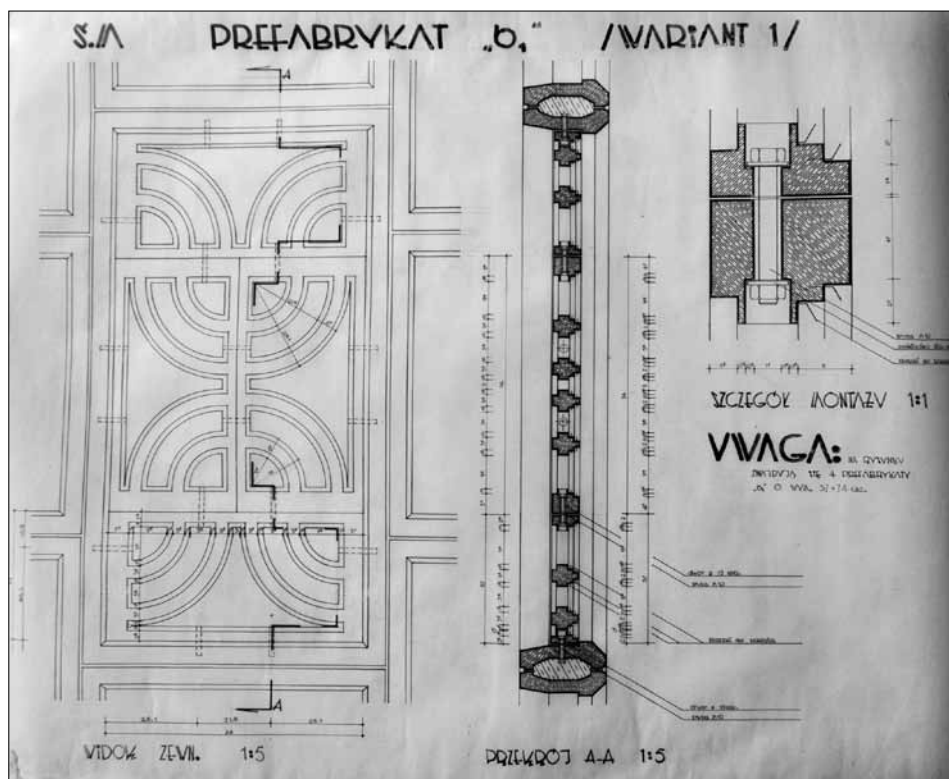


Fig. 11. Władysław Pieńkowski, design for the b1 window prefabricate, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive

72 Cf. A. Basista, *Betonowe dziedzictwo: architektura w Polsce czasów komunizmu* [The concrete legacy: architecture in Poland in the communist period], Warsaw, 2001, pp. 79–89.

73 Interview with Sylwester Szefer, recording in the Pieńkowski family archive.

74 Information on the prefabricate production technology was obtained from Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska.



Fig. 12. Prefabricated coffers of the ceiling being joined with reinforced-concrete frames during the construction of the church of St. Michael the Archangel, 1960s, unknown photographer, Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska's archive

material's resistance in order to make the resultant prefabricates light in colour; in that period white concrete was impossible to attain.

It seems that prefabrication served a twofold role in the construction of the church of St. Michael. Apart from being an eminently practical solution (its advantages being low construction costs, high quality, the option of working in winter, safety, and better acoustics in the interior), aesthetic criteria were of paramount importance. The use of prefabricates brought Pieńkowski closer to modern-day simplicity and emphasised the structure of the edifice. In residential architecture of Socialist Realism, the prefabricates were concealed; yet Pieńkowski, by creating stained glass windows from these elements, gave them the status of a work of artistic craft.

The church of St. Michael the Archangel vs. Polish church architecture in the period of the People's Republic

Few churches were built in Poland in the first post-war decade. Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński goes as far as to state that "in the years 1948–1970 it is difficult to speak

about church-building as a phenomenon, with the exception of sporadic cases of building permissions fought for successfully by desperate believers".⁷⁵ It was only in the 1970s that church architecture began to flourish.

Thus, having few local contemporary models, architects who designed churches could either enter a dialogue with the architecture of earlier eras or with the works of foreign architects, usually known from specialist journals (e.g. the periodicals *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *L'Art Sacré*⁷⁶).

Kucza-Kuczyński points to three 'symbolic churches' built in the years 1963–1970, i.e. the basilica of the Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland in Stalowa Wola (designed by Jan Bogusławski), the church in Władysławowo (designed by Szczepan Baum) and, as the third, the church of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw.⁷⁷ Whereas Baum's church introduces a revolutionary modification of the body, the two others constitute successful attempts at referring to the traditional silhouette of a church while making use of the new aesthetics.

In Stalowa Wola, the character of the interior is determined by its organic nature, by an allusion to the structure's natural emergence from the ground. The interior is dominated by tall windows with glowing stained glass. Features common to both designs are the designer's focus on the interior (more noticeable in the Warsaw church) and the axial quality of the composition, intelligibly leading towards the chancel. Pieńkowski's design is more conservative than Bogusławski's one; the latter, however, was completed only after the Second Vatican Council. Essential differences originate from aesthetic principles, not from programs of use.

In 1966 Władysław Pieńkowski assessed his Warsaw church in the following way: "At the moment, the church of St. Michael is no longer a modern church. The concept for it emerged in the years 1948–1949 [...] [and] was based on the medieval tradition of a three-nave church. But at that time it was said that it was... too modern".⁷⁸ The interior of the church of St. Michael began a new period in Pieńkowski's oeuvre, since from then on he designed interiors that were decidedly more ascetic and severe. In designing large churches (Opoczno, Włocławek, Kalisz, Toruń, Warsaw-Służew), he often returned to this spare formula, based on technical aesthetics which relied on accentuating constructional elements.

The church of St. Dominic in Warsaw, whose construction began in the 1980s, is worth recalling at this point. It is Pieńkowski's last work, his *opus magnum* that summed up his oeuvre. Despite obvious differences caused by the interval of four decades that separates the construction of the two Warsaw churches designed by Pieńkowski, similarities in the composition of the space are clearly visible. The forms of both are deeply rooted in the church architecture of medieval Europe. The similarity is further accentuated by the use of identical materials and techniques: brick, concrete, prefabricates, and relief elements in the walls.

75 *Nowe kościoły...*, no page numbers.

76 Władysław Pieńkowski was in possession of the issues of these periodicals which focused on contemporary church architecture; information obtained from Kinga Pieńkowska-Owsińska.

77 *Nowe kościoły...*, no page numbers.

78 *Słowo Powszechne*, 1966 (2), a cutting in the Pieńkowski family archive.

Pieńkowski vis-à-vis contemporary church architecture: inspirations and ideas

It is known that Pieńkowski was inspired by the designs of Gottfried Böhm and Rudolf Schwarz, the German masters of church architecture, and by those of Le Corbusier and Giovanni Michelucci.⁷⁹ His ease in using structures made of concrete, in turn, is similar to Pier Luigi Nervi. With regard to principles, he is not far from Dominikus Böhm, the father of the first of above-mentioned architects. Pieńkowski's familiarity with the oeuvre of these architects at the time he was working on church of St. Michael remains open to debate, however.

Pieńkowski is similar to Böhm Senior and Schwarz – architects of the earlier generation – in his empathy with the medieval tradition of church building, his ability to design a church interior as monumental, and his capable use of wide wall surfaces. However, he never came close to the extreme minimalism of Schwarz, who employed almost industrial aesthetics (e.g. the church of the Corpus Christi in Aachen, constructed 1928–1930).⁸⁰ The *Christkönig* church in Leverkusen, designed by Dominikus Böhm (constructed 1927–1928),⁸¹ seems especially important in the context of Pieńkowski's work. Its concave, unmistakably revivalist portal is filled with a concrete structure with divisions that clearly recall Pieńkowski's "razors" on the façade of the church of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw. The glass apse of the church of St. Engelbert in Essen (constructed 1933–1936),⁸² in turn, could have inspired Pieńkowski to design the openwork semicircular walls in the chapel of the Virgin Mary. The German architect tended to put arches both on the façades and in the interiors of churches (e.g. St. Joseph in Zabrze, constructed 1929–1931).⁸³ This may be the source for the arrangement of arches in side naves of Pieńkowski's churches (Tarnów, Głowaczów); in the Warsaw church, this arrangement was used in a reduced form.

In addition, Pieńkowski's design for the church of St. Michael is indebted to the oeuvre of Auguste Perret.⁸⁴ The geometrical, decorative arrangement of prefabricated windows seems to have been inspired by his church in Le Raincy near Paris. The notion of leaving raw materials and structures visible, as in the Warsaw church, also belongs to Perret's legacy.

It may be assumed that in the period of Pieńkowski's work on the design for the church of St. Michael (the late 1940s and the 1950s), the influence of Böhm the Younger, Nervi, Le Corbusier and Michelucci on his output was limited. The

79 In an interview with Sylwester Szefer, Pieńkowski referred to works by these four architects. In addition, his archive contains a sketch of an imaginary church interior with the southern wall resembling the famous window-pierced wall of the chapel in Ronchamp.

80 *Rudolf Schwarz and the Monumental Order of Things*, ed. A. Caruso, H. Thomas, Zurich, 2016, pp. 185–199.

81 *Dominikus Böhm 1880–1955*, ed. W. Voigt, I. Flagge, Tübingen, 2005, p. 135.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

84 Cf. J. Abram, *Auguste Perret*, Paris, 2013, pp. 185–186.

works of Gottfried Böhm, especially his pilgrimage church in Neviges, were crucial to his later creative development, when Pieńkowski turned to Brutalism and began to shape the outer walls of these churches with more freedom (e.g. Kielce, Warsaw-Służew, Włocławek). Pieńkowski assessed Giovanni Michelucci's church by the Autostrada del Sole and Le Corbusier's chapel in Ronchamp as highly conducive to religious feeling and thus most praiseworthy.⁸⁵

Pieńkowski mentioned his inspirations in his essay on the functional elements of a church interior included in the *Budowa i konserwacja kościołów* handbook.⁸⁶ Especially interesting are his references to ancient and medieval art,⁸⁷ as well as to contemporary architecture,⁸⁸ which present modern churches as a part of the "developmental cycle" of art. He cited the saying of St. Thomas Aquinas: *Conservatio est continua creatio* as reflecting his own attitude to the traditions of ecclesiastical art.⁸⁹ He also emphasised that, following the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, "no form of falsehood, counterfeit or pretence should be allowed" in a church⁹⁰.

Conclusion

The history of the designs for, and the construction of, the church of St. Michael the Archangel in Warsaw perfectly illustrates the key problems faced by ecclesiastical architecture in Poland in the first two decades after the Second World War. Władysław Pieńkowski's oeuvre evinces a clear desire to modernise the architectural idiom; but his concurrent predilection for conventional, almost anachronistic forms is nothing short of surprising.

The evolution of the design, clearly intelligible when its three stages are compared, did not proceed in a linear manner. The first concept was relatively modern in its aesthetics, even though the latter was still rooted in the 1930s; afterwards, the second phase effectively constitutes a return to historical solutions. The choice of a historical idiom may be perceived as a sign of Pieńkowski's willingness to enter into a dialogue with the then-current doctrine of Socialist Realism. The final design is, essentially, a modernised version of the first one; it may therefore be assumed that, in general, the concept for the church of St. Michael evolved in the years 1948–1949 and was subsequently modified until the late 1950s. Pieńkowski creatively internalised the tendencies of the era in which he was working on the church of St. Michael. Especially interesting is the fact that it was in the construction of this

85 Interview with Sylwester Szefer, recording in the Pieńkowski family archive.

86 W. Pieńkowski, *Elementy funkcjonalne wnętrza kościoła* [Functional elements of a church interior], in: *Budowa i konserwacja kościołów. Poradnik-vademecum* [Church construction and conservation. Handbook], Warsaw, 1981, pp. 115–138.

87 Ibid., p. 120. E.g. the Sainte Chapelle in Paris.

88 Ibid. Pieńkowski refers to Perret's churches near Paris (Le Raincy, the Montmagny chapel) and to his own church of St. Michael.

89 Ibid., p. 130.

90 Ibid.

particular church that Pieńkowski made extensive use of prefabrication, a technology much touted by the authorities,⁹¹ for the first time. From then on, it would be one of the distinctive features of his architecture. Pieńkowski's manner of using prefabricated elements differed from the architectural practice of the era, bringing him closer to the heirs of Perret, who were able to utilise the aesthetic potential of this technology. Moving in the sphere of "dissident" architecture, so to speak, he could permit himself to conduct some technological and aesthetic experiments.

Pieńkowski's desire to modernise the idiom of ecclesiastical architecture was inspired by his familiarity with foreign architectural achievements and with the contemporary theory of liturgy, and at the same time limited by the necessity to make aesthetic compromises. The architect was unable to fully realise the audacious visions he rendered in the concept sketches. The possibility of implementing modernising ideas was severely limited, the pressure resulting from the fact that, in the area of architecture, the primary goal of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of Poland was to build the largest possible number of churches that would have the largest possible capacity. Pieńkowski created the church of St. Michael in an era when the sponsor was less concerned with the theoretical, theological aspect of the work than the designer. The field of Pieńkowski's creative freedom was limited still further by the modest financial resources allocated to this enterprise, and by difficulties in obtaining construction materials. In the Warsaw church, Guardini's ideas for a modern temple⁹² could be implemented only to a limited extent. Its modern character is, however, confirmed by some aesthetic solutions, such as, for instance, the severity of detail and the architect's unwillingness to simply imitate historical architecture; in the functional aspect of the interior, the same is indicated by the baptismal font and the chapel of the Virgin Mary, intended to serve as the so-called weekly chapel. Finally, the plan of the structure,⁹³ with a two-level church and rooms intended for religious instruction located in the basement, is also innovative, even though in this case it was enforced by the political conditions of the time.

The evolution of the design for the church of St. Michael the Archangel illustrates the transformations taking place in ecclesiastical architecture in the first two decades after the Second World War. The departure from pre-war forms, which is intelligible in the final concept, confirms the architect's independence; he had evidently developed his own idea for a church structure. Pieńkowski worked in entirely different circumstances than the majority of architects active at the time, as they were employed in state-owned enterprises. In addition, the process of the design's evolution is inseparably linked with political realities of the time. It must be noted that Pieńkowski not only achieved the primary goal, which was to construct a church, but in doing so, he managed to create a work of superior quality.

91 Cf. M. Czapelski, *A House...*

92 R. Guardini, *The Essential Guardini. An Anthology of the Writings of Romano Guardini*, ed. H. R. Kuehn, Chicago, 1997.

93 Cf. M. E. Rosier-Siedlecka CR, *Odpowiedź przestrzenna na nowe założenia liturgii i duszpasterstwa. Przegląd nowych kościołów Europy zachodniej* [A spatial response to new principles of liturgy and pastoral care. Overview of new churches in Western Europe], in: *Sztuka i sacrum...*, pp. 74–80.

The design for church of St. Michael is a caesura in the output of Władysław Pieńkowski also because by the time the church was nearing completion, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council had already become a reality. It belongs to the small group of post-Thaw churches,⁹⁴ the first important construction enterprises embarked on by the Catholic Church in Poland after the Second World War. Its design constitutes one of the first attempts to introduce modern models of church architecture, inspired by the Western achievements and the contemporary liturgical thought, to be undertaken in Poland after the year 1945.⁹⁵

The conditions in which the Warsaw church was built resulted in the fact that it did not become a model for later designs. Changes in the liturgy made Pieńkowski's conception to some extent obsolete, but later on the architect developed the solutions which he would then employ during the construction of the church of St. Michael, and would use in the decades to come. The history of the design and construction of this church demonstrates the difficult beginnings of post-Thaw church architecture. The church of St. Michael stands at the outset of the career of perhaps the only architect working in the People's Republic of Poland who devoted himself solely to ecclesiastical architecture. This is because he saw his activity not as work, but rather as a sacred craft.⁹⁶

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

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94 Construction work started before the year 1956; this refers to the time the church entered into service.

95 See Rev. J. Nyga, *Architektura sakralna a ruch odnowy liturgicznej na przykładzie obiektów diecezji katowickiej* [Ecclesiastical architecture and the liturgical renewal movement as exemplified by edifices in the Katowice diocese], Katowice, 1990; C. Blanchet, P. Vérot, *Architecture et arts sacrés depuis 1945 à nos jours*, Paris, 2015, pp. 58–59. The authors juxtapose the Warsaw church of St. Michael the Archangel with three edifices in Western Europe: the *Allerheiligen* church in Basel (designed by Hermann Baur, 1947–1950), the church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Turin (1950–1955) and the church of the Holy Family in Bologna (designed by Raffaello and Rodolfo Bettazzi, 1955).

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Abstract

Despite the considerable influence he exerted on post-war church architecture in Poland, the designer Władysław Pieńkowski (1907–1991) is today an altogether forgotten figure. The current paper outlines his biography and his early oeuvre; this is because his experience in designing office blocks and industrial plants gained while working under the supervision of the most outstanding Polish architects of the mid-20th century, was to be of key importance to his later, independent designs for ecclesiastical buildings. The paper focuses on a particularly important work, one which in many ways constitutes a breakthrough in the architect's career, namely the church of St. Michael the Archangel in the Mokotów district of Warsaw.

This was the first entirely new church to be erected in the capital of Poland after the year 1945. Its construction depended on the dynamic changes in the balance of political forces. The church could be built owing to the support of the PAX Association circle, including the direct involvement of Bolesław Piasecki. In spite of their patronage, however, construction works were repeatedly halted and extended over several years, and the architectural design had to be reworked. The paper contains an analysis of three fundamental designs for the church, now held in the St. Michael the Archangel parish archive and in the architect's records preserved by his heirs. The first design dates from the period of 1948/9–1951, the subsequent one from the year 1954, and the final one from 1956–1961. The evolution of the design moved from the initial continuation of forms typical of the pre-war Modernised Revivalism, through a peculiar reference to Socialist Realism, to rigorous Modernism. The church of St. Michael the Archangel became Pieńkowski's testing ground; there, he tried out several solutions which he would consistently utilise in the subsequent years of his career, e.g. the large-scale application of prefabricated elements in both the construction and the decoration of the edifice. The construction of this church was concurrent with important events of a political (the Thaw) and religious nature (the Second Vatican Council). Tracing the history of the design for the Warsaw church and clarifying its connections with contemporaneous church architecture in Poland and in Western Europe made it possible to present the key problems faced by the Polish designers of ecclesiastical architecture in the first decades of the People's Republic of Poland.

Keywords: religious architecture, Roman Catholic Church, modernism, People's Republic of Poland, Warsaw

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Modernist Architecture in Illustrative Art for Children and Teenagers in the People's Republic of Poland

Interest in the architectural legacy of the People's Republic of Poland has grown significantly in recent years. The trend has resulted in new academic publications and texts aimed at a wider audience. Apart from works tackling the subject strictly from the perspective of the history of architecture, there are also those that situate it in the broader context of the history of architectural culture. Nevertheless, this area still awaits more focused scholarly attention.

The presence of architectural motifs in publications intended for children and younger teenagers is but one of the many issues that are yet to be thoroughly analysed. Significantly, such publications – books and periodicals alike – were often printed in large quantities, amounting to several dozen or even several hundred thousand copies. The influence of these works was therefore enormous, while their content shaped the identity of several generations of children growing up in post-war Poland.¹ Young readers could choose from hundreds of books in which architec-

1 For a long time, the issues of the persuasive, ideological or even propagandist aspect of illustrated publications for children remained outside of the scope of scholarly interests. This has begun to change, partially owing to the emergence of specialised collections of such publications, such as Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University (a part of this collection, comprising ca. one thousand Soviet children's books issued between 1917–1941 was analysed by Anika Burgess in *The Artful Propaganda of Soviet Children's Literature*, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/soviet-childrens-books-propaganda> [accessed 15 September 2018]. The milieu of scholars associated with that collection is conducting a digitalisation project entitled "Playing Soviet: Visual Language of Early Soviet Children's Books, 1917–1953" (cf: S. A. Oushakine, *The Pedagogy of Images. Depicting Communism for Children*, <https://www.aseees.org/news-events/aseees-blog-feed/pedagogy-images-depicting-communism-children> [accessed 15 September 2018]; furthermore, two academic conferences have recently been organised, both bearing the title of "The Pedagogy of Images. Depicting Communism for Children" (2015 and 2017). Unfortunately, it appears that the results have not yet been published. Earlier publications discussing similar issues include Julian Rothenstein's *Inside the Rainbow: Russian Children's Literature 1920–35. Beautiful Books, Terrible Times*, London, 2013. One of the earlier monographs of the type is Anke Schmidt's, *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur im Dritten Reich. Strategien zur Indoktrination des Judenhasses mit Texten und Bildern*, Munich, 2005, which, as

ture played a more or less significant role. Architectural motifs were also present in periodicals such as *Miś*, *Świerszczyk*, *Plomyczek* or *Plomyk*. The nature of such themes was, naturally, very varied; at times architecture – modern or historical – moved to the foreground, yet in the majority of cases the images of buildings provided nothing more than a visual backdrop for the narrated story. However, even presented as only the background, the forms of architecture chosen by the illustrators were not received indifferently by the readers, since they conveyed a certain model imagery of houses, flats and housing estates, or entire cities.

The images in question (as well as the accompanying texts, which should not be artificially isolated from visual representations) could be counted by the thousand, which is why a comprehensive overview of this topic cannot fit into the spatial constraints of a modest article. I will therefore only focus on a single theme, namely the methods in which publications for children and young readers issued in communist Poland presented, and often even propagated, modernist architecture. Due to the choice of the subject matter, the article will mainly focus on the period of the post-Stalinist Thaw when, after several years of dominance of socialist realism, artists in Poland started to reach for modern forms, both in architectural and graphic design.

much as can be judged from fragments available on the Internet, puts emphasis on the textual aspects rather than on the imagery (<https://www.grin.com/document/161307>; accessed 15 September 2018). The same is true of the publication by Lucy Raby, "Pleasure or Propaganda? The Role of Children's Publishing during 1914–1918", *The Journal of Publishing Culture*, 2017, vol. 7 (April), <http://journalpublishingculture.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/8/4/16842954/raby.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2018]. In the Polish context, an ambitious attempt at a synthetic approach to the issue of historical fiction, inherently burdened with a heavy ideological message, was presented by Gertruda Skotnicka in her book *Barwy przeszłości. O opowieściach historycznych dla dzieci i młodzieży 1939–1989* [The colours of yesteryear. On historical stories for children and teenagers in 1939–1989], Gdańsk, 2008. As far as the visual aspect is concerned, the most interesting part of the book is the one devoted to, as the title of the relevant subchapter suggests, "translating the past into visual language" (pp. 218–223). Unfortunately, the section proves thoroughly disappointing; the chosen examples seem entirely random and the author appears to have very little knowledge in the subject of illustrative arts. The relations between ideology and illustrative art for children and teenagers have become the subject of several of my own publications, e.g. J. Friedrich, "Fakty i pamięć. Obraz Grunwaldu i Krzyżaków w ilustracjach do podręczników szkolnych sprzed czterdziestu lat jako pretekst do zastanowienia się nad kilkoma sprawami" [Facts and memory. The image of the battle of Grunwald and Teutonic knights in school book illustrations from forty years ago as the starting point for the analysis of several issues], *RYMS. Kwartalnik o książkach dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 2011, no. 15, pp. 19–22; idem, "Grunwald i Krzyżacy w ilustracjach polskich czasopism dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 60. i 70. XX wieku" [Grunwald and Teutonic Knights depicted in illustrations in Polish periodicals for children and teenagers], *Porta Aurea. Rocznik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, 2011, 10, pp. 198–222; idem, "Tematyka krzyżacka i grunwaldzka w ilustracjach książek beletrystycznych dla dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce w latach 1945–1989" [The motifs of Teutonic knights and the battle of Grunwald in illustrations for belles lettres books for children and teenagers in Poland between 1945–1989], *Porta Aurea. Rocznik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, 2017, 16, pp. 162–195.

After the pivotal year of 1956, the modernist paradigm in Polish architecture was not questioned for more than a decade. The earliest voices of criticism, especially regarding the practice of housing estate building, were not heard until the 1970s. As demonstrated below, the situation was more or less vividly reflected in publications for young readers issued at the time. The article, as stated above, focuses on the period after 1956, with the closing date being 1981. The choice of these liminal dates is justified not only in the obvious connection with the political history of Poland, but also in the history of architecture: the post-Stalinist Thaw established the monopoly of modernist style in architectural design, which in Poland began to be contested in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Such a time frame is also accordant with the history of Polish illustrative arts, which was at its peak of prominence between the late 1950s and late 1970s. It should also be noted that, due to the preliminary nature of the present work, the analysis concentrates on non-serial publications, treating the material dispersed throughout periodicals as supplementary to the image emerging from book publications.²

It seems logical to open with a brief overview of the situation before the Thaw, as architectural motifs appearing in illustrative arts for children and teenagers were relatively common even in the Stalinist era. At that time, the most frequently presented objects were those significant for communist propaganda, i.e. ones connected with either industrialisation (for instance factories, shipyards, foundries, mines or dams),³ or, if less frequently, with housing architecture.⁴ The art propa-

2 The books presented below were selected from more than three thousand volumes of source material (my own collection). Naturally, not all of these publications include architectural themes, let alone examples of modernist architecture, although not all of the ones that do were included in the present article. Naturally, the number of illustrated books published in the analysed period greatly exceeds three thousand, so the pool of source material may certainly be expanded in the future. I do hope, however, that the presented selection of sources is representative enough to justify the formulation of certain generalised statements.

3 E.g. Alfred Liebfeld, *Opowiadania młodych hutników* [Stories of young steelworkers], ill. Stefan Styczyński, Warsaw, 1951, pp. 6–7, 33; Anna Lanota, *O sześćoletnim Bronku i sześćoletnim planie* [The six-year-old Bronek and the Six-Year Plan], ill. Tadeusz Jodłowski, Warsaw, 1951, p. [12]; Stanisław Aleksandrak, *Obrazki* [Images], ill. Joanna Grabska and Antoni Pucek, Warsaw, 1952, pp. 5, 13, 15; Marian Niżyński, *Soła*, ill. Bohdan Bocianowski and Zbigniew Piotrowski, Warsaw, 1952, pp. 13–15, 18–22, 28–29; Halina Koszutska, *Podróż Macia* [Maciek's travels], ill. Tadeusz Jodłowski, Warsaw, 1953 (2nd edition), p. 67; Janusz Jurjewicz, *Skarby ziemi* [Treasures of the land], ill. Janusz Jurjewicz, Warsaw, 1956, p. 7; Zbigniew Rychlicki, *Węgiel* [Coal], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1956, p. [1]; Jan Wilkowski, *Podróż po mapie* [A journey round the map], ill. Zbigniew Kaja, Warsaw, 1956, pp. 38–39, 58–59, 61. The great investments of the Stalinist era were also represented in periodicals for children; see, for example, Zbigniew Rychlicki's illustrations to the poem *Piosenka o Nowej Hucie* [A song of Nowa Huta] by Maria Terlikowska, *Świerszyk-Iskierki*, 1952/1953, no. 5, p. 69.

4 One of the better examples comes from a booklet devoted entirely to this issue: Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, *Na budowie* [On the construction site], ill. Hanna Czajkowska, Warsaw, 1952. An earlier work, published before the official introduction of socialist realism, also provides an example – it is Helena Sołtanówna's illustration for the book *Towarzysze* [Comrades] by Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, (n.p.), 1947, p. 14. The illustration depicts the construction of

gated socialist realist forms, both in the depiction of existing structures, and in the representations of synthetic visions of the city as such.⁵ As in the propaganda of the time, the pride of place in Polish publications for children and young readers in the Stalinist period was taken by images of Warsaw, such as the Mariensztat district,⁶ the reconstructed Old Town,⁷ the Marszałkowska housing district (MDM),⁸ and the underground, whose construction had not yet commenced at the time.⁹ The W-Z Route with its most characteristic section, the tunnel near St. Anne's church, was depicted exceptionally often.¹⁰ The popularity of this motif was indubitably increased by the fact that the W-Z Route constituted one of the earliest and most recognisable elements of the post-war reconstruction of Warsaw. In contrast, to the best of my knowledge, depictions of the Palace of Culture and Science were a rare sight in book publications,¹¹ which may be explained with the fact that its construction was not completed until 1955, i.e. by the very end of the Stalinist era,

a city which is clearly modernist in its design. See also, for example, Czesław Janczarski, *Przed-szkole na Kole* [The kindergarten in the Koło district], ill. Anna Kopczyńska, Warsaw, 1952, p. 5; Zdzisław Witwicki, *Warszawa* [Warsaw], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1956, p. 10.

- 5 Such imagery is vividly exemplified by Jadwiga Okońska's drawing captioned "This is a street in a city" and depicting rows of buildings of several floors, topped with cornices, with bossage at their bases, with decorative friezes and window surrounds. At the far end of the street the illustrator added a monumental edifice with a colonnaded portico. Simplified as they are, the forms may easily be associated with socialist realism (*Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 8, p. 125).
- 6 E.g. Hanna Januszewska, *To Trasa śpiewa* [It's the Route singing], ill. Ignacy Witz, Warsaw, [1950], pp. 6, 16, 17, 19; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 3; *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 3, Mieczysław's Piotrowski's illustration on p. 1 of the cover.
- 7 E.g. Krzysztof Gruszczyński, *Stare Miasto* [The Old Town], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1956; Z. Witwicki, *Warszawa*, ill. on p. 2; Barbara Baro's illustrations to Hanna Łochocka's poem *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 313; *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 35, p. 549, ill. Mieczysław Piotrowski.
- 8 E.g. Lanota, op. cit., p. 25; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 11. The motif also appeared in periodicals at the time, see, for example, Jan Marcin Szancer's illustrations to one of the poems comprising *Abecadło warszawskie* [The Warsaw alphabet] by Wanda Chotomska, *Świerszczyk*, 1956/1957, no. 4, p. 57.
- 9 E.g. Lanota, op. cit., pp. 20–23.
- 10 E.g. Januszewska, op. cit., p. 27; Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, *Elektryczne schody* [Electric stairs], ill. Józef Mroszczak, Warsaw, 1950, p. 5; Jan Brzechwa, *Kaczka dziwaczka* [The odd duck], ill. Henryk Tomaszewski, Warsaw, 1953 (3rd edition), p. 29; Koszutska, op. cit., p. 99; Maria Kownacka, *Klocek* [The block], ill. Janusz Jurjewicz, Warsaw, 1954, p. 15; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 4; Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, *Wiersze dla dzieci* [Poems for children], ill. Marek Rudnicki, Warsaw, 1957 (submitted for publication on 25 July 1956, i.e. before the pivotal October), p. 13; Barbara Baro's illustrations for Hanna Łochocka's poem, *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 313. The characteristic shape of the W-Z Route tunnel also appeared in the edition of Falski's *Elementarz* [Reading primer] issued in 1957 (cf. note 14), p. 166, as well as in later publications about Warsaw, as exemplified by, e.g., Janusz Stanny's illustrations to Stanisław Szymborski's *Poeta i źrebię* [The poet and the colt], Warsaw, 1969, pp. [12–13].
- 11 E.g. Witwicki, op. cit., p. 12.

when the process of transition from the socialist realist model to modernist ideas had already begun.¹²

The transformations that took place in the years that followed (as well as the cognitive value of the material presented here) become clearly apparent if one compares two highly influential depictions, namely illustrations for Marian Falski's *Elementarz* [Reading primer], used for several dozen years in Polish schools and familiar to all students of the day.¹³ The first of the illustrations in question, drawn by Jerzy Karolak in 1957, appeared in the post-Thaw version of the textbook.¹⁴ It accompanies a sentence to be learnt by pupils attending the first grade of primary school, which reads: "This is a house". The illustrator had to translate this simple sentence into an image, which inevitably concretised the abstract concept. The array of possibilities was vast: the house could have been small or big, a detached building or a multi-family housing estate, traditional or modern. As far as the present analysis is concerned, it is the illustrator's choice in this case that proves the most relevant. Karolak depicted a decidedly traditional building, featuring a sloping roof, a dormer with volute ornaments, and stairs leading directly from the street up to the front door framed by a classical porch with a triangular pediment (Fig. 1).¹⁵

- 12 In contrast, the Palace of Culture and Science appeared frequently in periodicals for children, which may probably be explained with the faster pace of the publishing process. See, for example, Antoni Pucek's drawing depicting construction cranes and the lower part of the Palace building (*Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1952/1953, no. 26, p. 1 of the cover), the art by Zbigniew Rycklicki, showing the almost completed structure (*Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 2, p. 1 of the cover), or the one by Walentyna Symonowicz depicting the silhouette of the Palace towering over the view of Warsaw as seen from the Vistula (*Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1954/1955 no. 20, p. 1 of the cover). See also: *Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1953/1954, no. 26, p. 402 and 1954/1955, no. 46, p. 723 (both illustrations by Krystyna Łopuszyńska); *Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1953/1954, no. 45, p. 714 (ill. Barbara Dutkowska); *Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 3, p. 36 and 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 312 (both illustrations by Barbara Baro). One of the publications acquainted Polish children with the Moscow prototypes of the Warsaw skyscraper (see: *Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 2, p. 22, ill. Józef Czerwiński). It should be noted that the Warsaw Palace of Culture and Science was frequently depicted in illustrations published after the breakthrough year 1956, both in books and in periodicals for children and teenagers.
- 13 The significance of the illustrations in the reading primer went beyond their decorative function; they also played a prominent role in the didactic process. Cf. Marian Falski, *Przewodnik metodyczny do elementarza i ćwiczeń elementarzowych* [Methodological guide to the reading primer and primer exercises], Warsaw, 1963, p. 72–73.
- 14 Marian Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1957, p. 36 (I reference the 16th edition published in 1972). The 1957 edition did not include the most glaring ideological content present in the previous versions, such as texts about model workers from Nowa Huta, the meeting of young pioneers from Poland and the USSR, or the portraits of Bierut and Rokossowski; DS, *Ukazał się reprint „Elementarza” z 1957 roku* [A reissue of the reading primer from 1957], <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/ukazal-sie-reprint-elementarza-z-1957-roku/wml9x>, published on 12 March 2003 [accessed 15 September 2018].
- 15 Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. J. Karolak, p. 8. This version also included one more depiction of a school, which was no less traditional in appearance; *ibid.* p. 133.



Fig. 1. Jerzy Karolak, illustration for *Elementarz* by Marian Falski, 1957



Fig. 2. Janusz Grabiański, illustration for *Elementarz* by Marian Falski, 1974

After more than a decade, the reading primer illustrated by Karolak was replaced with a new edition, featuring art by Janusz Grabiański. This version, first published in 1974, also included the sentence “This is a house”, yet the accompanying illustration was very different. This time the young readers were shown a modernist block of flats with distinct rectangular divisions of the façade and with colourful balconies, the entire structure covered with a expressively shaped roof of reinforced concrete (Fig. 2).¹⁶ It is a house with a different message than its predecessor from 1957.

School buildings depicted in the two editions of the *Elementarz* are equally dissimilar. In Karolak’s version, the children enter the school grounds through a gate framed with posts in the historicist style, while the school edifice itself appears rather traditional. The school in Grabiański’s illustrations, in turn, is fully modernist in appearance: it features an “undercut” lower floor and a projecting upper floor resting on slender ferroconcrete pillars, and, most prominently of all, ribbon windows spanning the entire breadth of the façade.¹⁷

The difference between the two images described above may easily be explained with the changes in architecture and social life in Poland that took place between the late 1950s and early 1970s. On the one hand (as mentioned above), modernist forms became the uncontested norm in Polish architecture; on the other, a substantial portion of the population moved to modern housing estates, while the plan to build “one thousand schools for the millennial anniversary [of Polish statehood]”, initiated in 1958, radically modernised the designs of educational institutions. Let us examine how this transformation was reflected in illustrated publications for children and teenagers.

First of all, Polish illustrators in the 1960s started to portray blocks of flats and housing estates as the living space of the young protagonists. Hanna Krajnik’s illustrations for the Polish translation of a Russian book *Iryska* by Anna Aksyonova provide a good example.¹⁸ In almost all the images, the titular character appears against the background of a housing estate, a flat or a stairwell in a block. The first illustration shows only the protagonist, with her hair in pigtails and wearing a warm winter cap; the next one presents the girl’s everyday environment – a modern housing estate with flat-roofed blocks of flats and vertical stairwells

16 Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. Janusz Grabiański, Warsaw, 1974 (I reference the 3rd edition published in 1977), p. 34. It should be emphasised that the architectural quality of the building depicted by the illustrator resembles Western-European standards rather than the ones known from the People’s Republic of Poland. This is in line with the trend visible in other illustrations by the same author, who showed Polish children a world which was much more idealised than the one they encountered in their everyday life. For instance, the cars depicted in the textbook included western models, from a Mini Morris to a Rolls-Royce (!), but not a single Syrena, Warszawa or even a Fiat 126p, which began to appear on Polish roads roughly at the time when the new edition of the primer was published.

17 Falski, *Elementarz*, ill. Grabiański, p. 8. This version includes two more depictions of school buildings, both clearly modern in form; *ibid.*, pp. 106, 154.

18 Anna Aksyonova, *Iryska* [The girl Iris], trans. Janina Lewandowska, ill. Hanna Krajnik, Warsaw, 1967.

featuring expressively displayed steps of reinforced concrete, which Iryska is climbing (Fig. 3). The image is an accurate depiction of the situation described on the following page: "She has just moved in to a new house with her parents. The house is nice, big and bright, and the courtyard that surrounds it is spacious as well. All houses in the estate look similar, only some have red stripes, and some blue stripes painted on them".¹⁹

The description hints at the problem of a certain monotony which had already been identified in modernist residential architecture (the text refers both to the Soviet and the Polish reality of the time), while also pointing to the attempts at overcoming through the introduction of different colour schemes to specific blocks. Similar problems were encountered by illustrators, who had to find ways to enliven the geometric forms of modern architecture.²⁰ Krajnik's solution was to introduce a certain painterly quality to her illustrations, presenting a limited, but sensual colour palette. She also countered the geometric forms by adding the motif of a snowman standing between trees covered in frost. Maria Uszacka, in turn, put blocks of flats against the backdrop of the moon and stars and drew potted plants inside the windows lit with electric lights (Fig. 4).²¹ A similarly idyllic vision was presented by Maria Mackiewicz, who illustrated a typical scene from the life of a housing estate, with children being called by their mothers to come up for dinner.²² The block shown in this illustration is small, even cosy-looking; it is also colourful, which was a feature which the post-Thaw propaganda presented as a significant asset of the new style of architecture. This fact was not lost on authors writing for children. One of the poems published at the time mentions "new estates and new houses, colourful like a wreath of flowers";²³ another reads: "Just nearby there is a house with a pattern of squares: / colourful squares and plants in the windows, / here hang colourful planter boxes, / there shine colourful stuccos. / The entire district, I give you my word, / is vibrant with magnificent colour!"²⁴

These assets could not be seen in the monumental buildings appearing in children's books from the 1970s, which were already, to some extent at least, expressing the alienation of the block housing estates. An early example of such a cold block

19 Ibid., p. 6. Unless stated otherwise, all passages from non-English-language sources have been translated solely for the purpose of the present article.

20 The difficulties of integrating the image of a block of flats with the traditional repertoire of motifs in illustrations for children are clearly apparent in Jan Marcin Szancer's images for *Krakowskie abecadło* [The Cracow alphabet]. When depicting older architectural styles and street life Szancer uses a dense style full of detail and colour. The illustration depicting the modernist blocks of Nowa Huta, in turn, seems rather stiff and schematic, clearly different from the others; Wanda Chotomska, *Krakowskie abecadło*, ill. Jan Marcin Szancer, Warsaw, 1962, p. [15].

21 Inga Borg, *Niezwykły dzień Agnieszki* [Agnetta's extraordinary day], trans. Teresa Chłapowska, ill. Maria Uszacka, Warsaw, 1969, p. 49.

22 Krystyna Pokorska, *Ja to powiem* [I will say this], ill. Maria Mackiewicz, Warsaw, 1969, p. 10.

23 Włodzimierz Ścisłowski, "Co we Wrocławiu dzieci zachwyca?" [What awes the children in Wrocław?], ill. Barbara Dutkowska, *Świerszczyk*, 1969, no. 20, p. 313.

24 Maria Terlikowska, "Kolorowe domy" [Colourful houses], ill. Adam Kilian, *Płomyczek*, 1960, no. 18, p. 509.



Fig. 3. Hanna Krajnik, illustration for the book *Iryska* by Anna Aksyonova, 1967



Fig. 4. Maria Uszacka, illustration for the book *Niezwykły dzień Agnieszki* by Inga Borg, 1969

of flats comes from Uszacka's illustrations to *Bardzo straszna historia* [A very scary story] by Anatoly Aleksin. The massive building was deliberately stripped of all elements that could mitigate the austerity of its form.²⁵ The protagonist was confronted with the menacing edifice; it must, however, be noted that the feelings of unease induced by the image are justified by the contents of the book itself.²⁶ Similar impressions are evoked by the residential high-rise (ca. fifty stories high) depicted by Tomasz Bogacki²⁷ and the sombre blocks from an illustration by Teresa Wilbik,²⁸ standing in an estate devoid of all greenery and resembling the inhuman visions conjured by Hilberseimer. Such disturbing imagery could have been a symptom of the criticism of the idea of modernist housing estates, growing in volume since the early 1970s, yet the handful of illustrations is not enough to serve as the basis for far-reaching conclusions, especially since their appearance was heavily influenced

25 Anatoly Aleksin, *Bardzo straszna historia, czyli powieść detektywistyczna, którą napisał Alik Detkin* [A very scary story. A detective story written by Alik Detkin], trans. Irena Piotrowska, Warsaw, 1970, p. 211.

26 Uszacka depicted the motif of a modern housing block at least once more; see Elżbieta Burakowska, *Elektroniczny detektyw* [An electronic detective], ill. Maria Uszacka, Warsaw, 1977, p. 43.

27 Magda Leja, *Chłopiec z wieżowca* [The boy from the high-rise], ill. Tomasz Bogacki, Warsaw, 1975, p. 5.

28 Wanda Chotomska, *Leonek i lew* [Leonek and the lion], ill. Teresa Wilbik, Warsaw, 1976, ill. no. 12–13.

by the texts themselves, and some of them – for instance the previously mentioned *A Very Scary Story* – definitely called for an atmosphere of uncertainty or unease.

This being said, such negative emotions are not found in publications dating from the 1960s. The optimism apparent in the texts of the time is well exemplified by a poem by Roman Pisarski published in *Płomyczek* under the telling title of *Nowe osiedle* [A new housing estate]. It mentioned “new glass houses”, “nice flats”, “bright rooms”, and life “in pleasant harmony with the neighbours”, as well as “new thoughts and hopes” of the people who would inhabit the place.²⁹ Clues as to the modernist appearance of these dwellings may already be found in the poem itself; the phrases “glass houses” and “bright rooms” make it rather clear. The imagery accompanying the poem fills the remaining gaps. The illustration, drawn by Wiesław Majchrzak, depicts buildings clearly modernist in form (Fig. 5).

Another example of the methods used to instil in young readers a positive attitude towards housing estate architecture may be found in a slightly later poem by Czesław Janczarski, entitled *Na Żoliborskich Sadach* [In the estate of Sady Żoliborskie]. It includes the following passages: “Sady Żoliborskie/ are almost like



Fig. 5. Wiesław Majchrzak, illustration for the poem *Nowe osiedle* by Roman Pisarski, 1967

29 Roman Pisarski, “Nowe osiedle” [A new housing estate], ill. Wiesław Majchrzak, *Płomyczek*, 1967, no. 18, p. 521.

a park” and “Among the lawns, the pathways / the blue of a hundred windows. / Every window wears a smile / and looks deeply in your eye. / So many hoops and skipping ropes! / All in the colours of the rainbow. / Be it the evening or the morning – / kids are running, / laughter is ringing”. Maria Sołtyk’s illustrations to this text feature children playing among the greenery and a modern block of a Warsaw housing estate (Fig. 6).³⁰

The schools attended by the young protagonists of the publications issued at the time were no less modern in form.³¹ There was even a book devoted entirely to the stages of constructing a school building.³² The rhyming text was accompanied by illustrations drawn by Czesław Wielhorski, which included an image of the



Fig. 6. Maria Sołtyk, illustration for the poem *Na Żoliborskich Sadach* by Czesław Janczarski, 1970

30 Czesław Janczarski, “Na Żoliborskich Sadach” [In the estate of Sady Żoliborskie], ill. Maria Sołtyk, *Świerszczyk*, 1970, no. 37, p. 580.

31 The modernist form of school edifices presented in Janusz Grabiański’s illustrations to the 1970s edition of the reading primer have already been discussed above. See also e.g.: Halina Gutsche, *Witaj szkoło* [Back to school], ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [12–13]; Adam Kilian’s illustrations to Czesław Janczarski’s poem *Szkoła – pomnik Tysiąclecia* [The school – a monument to the millennium], *Płomyczek*, 1963, no. 18, p. 485; Danuta Konwicka’s cover illustration for *Świerszczyk*, 1968, no. 46.

32 Stanisław Szydłowski, *Jak zostałem kłapouchem* [How I became lop-eared], ill. Czesław Wielhorski, Warsaw, 1968.

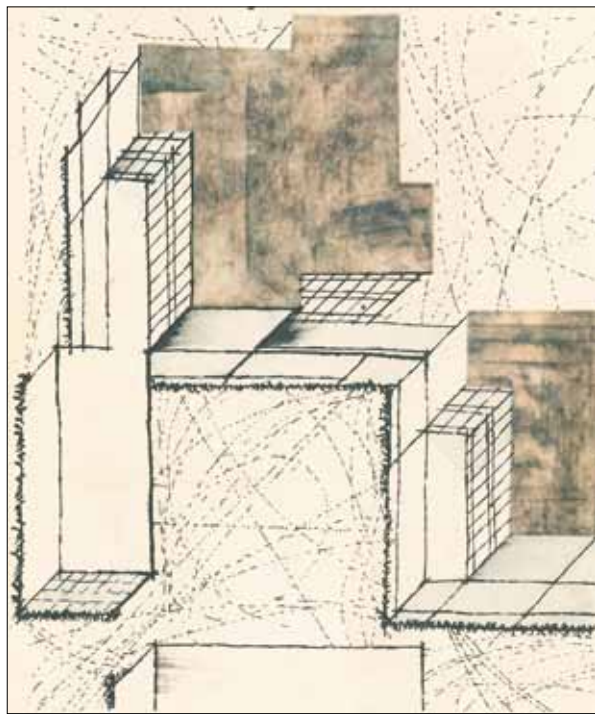


Fig. 7. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Jak zostałem kłapouchem* by Stanisław Sztybelowski, 1968

completed edifice (Fig. 7). The latter drawing proves interesting due to not only the very modern shape of the building, but also the chosen form of visual expression. The artist used an axonometrical drawing derived directly from architectural design.³³ Such a depiction is slightly surprising in an illustration for children, even though it seems justified given that the book is about architecture and was illustrated by an artist with an education in that field.

Significant elements of modernist housing estates included the playground, which the periodical *Świerszczyk* described as follows: “In front of the house there are slides, climbing frames and sandboxes. There is no need to ask mom for permission to go to the park. Children can have a lot of fun out in the yard”.³⁴ Images of playgrounds, scarce as they may be, are also found in illustrative art of the time.³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. [34]. One more depiction of the same school appears in the book, this time as an illustration of a photographed 3D model of the edifice. Ibid. p. [40].

³⁴ “Malowane domy” [Painted houses], ill. Krystyna Bieniek, *Świerszczyk*, 1963, no. 25, p. 394.

³⁵ E.g. Danuta Gellnerowa, *W mieście* [In the city], ill. Anna Stylo-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977, p. [5]; Maria Sołtyk’s cover illustration for *Świerszczyk*, 1969, no. 38. The caption for the latter image mentions a Jordan Garden Park [a type of green area common in cities at the time], yet the image presents something more akin to a large playground – in the jargon of the time both terms were often used interchangeably. A suggestive depiction of a playground may also be found in the previously mentioned book by Anna Lanota *O sześcioletnim Bronku i sześcioletnim*

A unique depiction of this motif is found on the illustration by Wanda Orlińska and Bogusław Orliński drawn in the mid-1970s and accompanying the iconic poem by Władysław Bełza starting with the verses *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały* [Who are you? A young Pole].³⁶ It shows a playground full of smiling children located at the edge of a large modernist housing estate lush with greenery, featuring many varied forms of architecture (Fig. 8), which was a rare sight in the architectural practice of the time, already largely dependent on prefabricated units and standardisation. Even more interesting than the idealisation of modernist architecture is the location the illustration is given within the book. The poem is accompanied by ca. one hundred and forty images of differing sizes, depicting various aspects of Poland's past and present.³⁷ The illustration in question is the last one in the presented set. It may therefore be surmised that it was meant to show a synthetic representation of a very young Pole who could answer the question "Where do you live?" not only with "Among my people" (as the original poem professes), but also "In a housing estate".

The illustrators did not, however, limit themselves to depicting housing estates and blocks. At times they also revealed the interiors of flats. Interestingly, these were rarely entirely modernist in style. Even Iryska, the protagonist of the previously mentioned book, finds her way into a flat which, although located in a modernist block, is furnished in a rather traditional manner:³⁸ an upholstered sofa with arm panels stands next to a huge wardrobe with a prominent crown moulding and carved ornaments. Some illustrations in books for children depict the protagonists in consistently modern interiors.³⁹ Hanna Czajkowska's work from 1961 provides a rather early example. The illustration features not only a modernist table and

planie, p. [21], published a few years earlier. Czesław Wielhorski also produced interesting images of playgrounds, published in two editions of the book *Śląski Park Kultury* [The Silesian Park of Culture], Katowice, [1959] and Katowice, 1963, each with a separate set of illustrations. Although these publications were intended for adult readers, the illustrations deserve a mention due to the subject matter and the author himself, since he is usually associated with illustrations for children.

- 36 Władysław Bełza, *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały!* [Who are you? A young Pole!], adapted by Mieczysław Siemieński, ill. Wanda Orlińska and Bogusław Orliński, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [26–27]. The edition may have been intended as a jubilee publication, since the introduction states that it was published on the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Polish People's Republic and the 150th anniversary of the poem's first appearance (which was, incidentally, untrue, as the poem was written in 1900).
- 37 In the context of the present analysis it must be mentioned that the book presents a modern housing estate as an element of the Polish reality or even the future, since it is accompanied with images such as a six-lane highway, a space rocket and a supersonic Tu-144 jet in the colours of the LOT airlines. This medley resembles the "fictional" images in Grabiański's illustrations to the reading primer (cf. note 16).
- 38 Aksyonova, op. cit., p. 13.
- 39 E.g. Ludwik Jerzy Kern, *Proszę słoniu* [Dear elephant], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1964, p. 21 (I reference the 2nd edition, published in 1967); Celina Żmihorska, *Tak czy nie* [Yes or no], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1967, p. [8]; Joanna Papużyńska, *Pims, którego nie ma* [The non-existent Pims], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1967, p. 21; Jadwiga Wernerowa, *Isia i chomik* [Isia and the hamster], ill. Bożena Truchanowska, Warsaw, 1971, p. 39.



Fig. 8. Wanda i Bogusław Orlінscy, illustration for the book *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały!* adapted from Władysław Bełza, 1974



Fig. 9. Hanna Czajkowska, illustration for the book *Zajaczek z rozbitego lusterka* by Helena Bechlerowa, 1961

chair, but also a modern regulated lamp and a curtain with an abstract pattern (Fig. 9).⁴⁰ The smooth floor is not covered with any carpets or rugs. The furnishings in Czajkowska's drawing are in line with the depiction of a modern flat included in an educational book for children entitled *Gdyby dożył pan Ambroży* [Had Mr. Ambroży lived to see], published only two years later. The publication compares various aspects of life past and present. The description in question reads as follows:

The room is different than the chambers of old. The furnishings comprise a light table covered with a transparent smooth napery of plastic foil, a soft, comfortable armchair, which may, if need be, be unfolded and converted into a bed. [...] The floor, tiled with plastic, is smooth and lustrous like a mirror. There is no crack for dust to gather in. Such a space is easy to keep clean. The light furniture may be moved at will.⁴¹

The text, which resembles similar descriptions published in reference books for adult readers,⁴² is accompanied by a relevant photograph.⁴³ Incidentally, the book about Mr. Ambroży was only one of the many educational publications of the time that included motifs referring to modern architecture. Such themes usually appeared in texts about architecture and construction as such. The pride of place here goes to books by the duo of Witold Szolginia and Romuald Klaybor, published in the early 1960s by "Nasza Księgarnia".⁴⁴ Although this valuable editorial series deserves a separate analysis as an outstanding early example of architectural education, the present article will only identify those passages that vividly illustrate the authors' ideas regarding what modern architecture should and should not be.

Interesting information may already be found in the first publication in the series, entitled *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* [What is your home like, Tomek?]. It presents four types of dwellings, namely a Roman house, a mediaeval castle, a modern flat and a house of the future. In line with the modernist paradigm, the description of a modern flat puts emphasis mainly on the kitchen and the bathroom, as well as on the means of keeping the living space clean. Let us turn to the presentation of

40 Helena Bechlerowa, *Zajączek z rozbitego lusterka* [Catching sunbeams in a broken mirror], ill. Hanna Czajkowska, Warsaw, 1961, p. [6] (I reference the 2nd edition, 1972).

41 Zbigniew Przyrowski, *Gdyby dożył pan Ambroży* [Had Mr. Ambroży lived to see], ill. Romuald Klaybor, photos by. Władysław Jabłoński, Warsaw, 1963, p. [13].

42 E.g. Jan Szymański, *Książka o mieszkaniu ładnym i wygodnym* [A book on nice and comfortable flats], Warsaw, 1962; idem, *Małe mieszkanie* [A small flat], Warsaw, 1966.

43 The book consistently uses illustrations to present the world of the past and photographs to depict the present. It should be noted that the same principle was used in the case of housing. Modernity is, naturally, represented with the image of a residential block; Przyrowski, op. cit., p. [7].

44 The series included: *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* [What is your home like, Tomek?], Warsaw, 1960; *Tajemnica rurek w ścianie* [The mystery of pipes in the walls], Warsaw, 1962; *Przyroda uczy budować* [Nature teaches how to build], Warsaw, 1962 (note: on the title page the name of the illustrator is misspelled: "Kleibor"); *Domy z fabryki* [Houses from the factory], Warsaw, 1963. The latter three books were later given a re-edition with new visuals: *Tajemnica rurek w ścianie*, ill. Janusz Ciszewski, Warsaw, 1978; *Przyroda uczy budować*, ill. Zdzisław Milach, Warsaw, 1977; *Domy z fabryki*, ill. Stefan Jackowski, Warsaw, 1980.

the modern kitchen. As with the already cited passage from *Pan Ambroży*, published several years later, the text stresses simplicity, lightness and comfort:

Tomek's mom goes to the kitchen, which is rather small, but comfortable, colourful and full of light. It's comfortable, because the furnishings are sparse: the most important of them – the gas stove. A little further away there is the refrigerator, the table and several stools now slid under the table. This is all. Several cupboards are hidden... in the wall.⁴⁵

The importance of the gas stove and the refrigerator in the modern kitchen is emphasised by the accompanying illustration. Both appliances have been highlighted by red arrows pointing towards them in the picture, in a sense drawing them out of the illustration and presenting them in a more technical aspect. This special treatment testifies to the fact that at the time of the book's publication, i.e. the year 1960, many young readers in Poland were not very familiar with such modern appliances.⁴⁶

More evidence for this claim is found in a humorous book published several years later. It tells the tale of hams, pork loins and head cheeses dreaming of "moving from the old tenement of the sideboard to the new refrigerator housing as soon as possible".⁴⁷ Apparently, an electric refrigerator was not owned by every Polish family in the late 1960s.⁴⁸

Thus, the young people reading *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* must have been all the more amazed by the description of the kitchen of the future included in the final chapter. Both the text and the visual representation of the kitchen (Fig. 10) were clearly based on the experimental project entitled "The Kitchen of Tomorrow" presented several years prior by the American company Frigidaire.⁴⁹ Modern-looking kitchens and bathrooms were a backdrop for the story-book adventures, which shows that modernity was seeping ever deeper into everyday life.⁵⁰

As far as the propaganda of modernism in architecture is concerned, the book entitled *Przyroda uczy budować* [Nature teaches how to build] proves to be the most interesting in the series by Szolginia and Klaybor. Unlike the majority of publica-

45 Szolginia, *A jak Tomku...*, p. [20].

46 Cf. Wanda Chotomska's poem about the pantry and the refrigerator, *Pan Motorek* [Mr. Generator] ill. Bohdan Butenko, *Świerszczyk*, 1960, no. 46 p. 736.

47 Wanda Chotomska, *Od rzeczy do rzeczy* [From matter to matter], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1969 (I reference the 2nd edition published in 1976), p. 37.

48 Apart from the emphasis on how significant refrigerators were as an appliance in a modern flat, the cited passage is a clear reference to the process commonly referred to as moving from "older" to "new" housing, which was underway in the 1960s.

49 For more on this kitchen, see, for example, Jonathan Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford–New York, 1997, pp. 116–117.

50 E.g. Krystyna Boglar, *Wiercipiętek* [Wiggler], ill. Mirosław Pokora, Warsaw, 1969, p. 10; Halina Gutsche, Wiera Badalska, *Kasia*, ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [24–25], [28–29]; Anna Kozerska, *Gospodarstwo Ani i Gosi* [Ania and Gosia's farm], ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1976 (I reference the 2nd edition published in 1982). See also the interesting visual puzzle, most probably drawn by Anna Hoffmannowa (the illustration is not signed), *Świerszczyk*, 1963, no. 20, p. 319.



Fig. 10. Romuald Klaybor, illustration for the book *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* by Witold Szolginia, 1960

tions of the time, it is not limited to describing a generalised vision of modernity, but presents specific examples of contemporary design which drew inspiration from structural forms known in the natural world. Thus, a book for young readers included forms referring to the experiments of Félix Candela and Richard Buckminster Fuller, as well as designs by Jørn Utzon and Eero Saarinen. The authors of the publication even made the exceedingly rare choice to identify this last architect by name. The book was, however, unique.⁵¹ Even the publications that did make an effort to introduce young readers to the world of construction and modern architecture, mostly followed a synthetic approach, explaining general principles or processes rather than specific phenomena.

The two books on prefabrication could be counted among such publications. The first of them appeared in 1963, when the trend for using prefabricated units was just beginning to take hold in Poland. It was another one in the series by Szolginia and Klaybor, bearing the title *Domy z fabryki* [Houses from the factory]. The book described the titular phenomenon in considerable detail, with a slightly older reader in mind. The second example was *Duży dom* [A big house] by Adam Jońca, published nearly twenty years later and illustrated by Bogusław Orliński. This book was, in turn, designed for very young readers; the text was brief and simple, as exemplified by the following passage: “So many new houses! They grew so fast! Such

⁵¹ The privilege of having his works presented in a separate “monographic” work was only granted to Le Corbusier, yet it was in a periodical publication. See: “Słoneczne miasta” [Sunny cities], *Płomyk*, 1965, no. 22, p. 675.

ready-made panels are a great thing [...]”.⁵² In this case the onus of explanation lay with the visual aspect of the publication (Fig. 11), the educational quality of which was further enhanced by plates designed by Orliński. Cut in an appropriate manner, the plates could serve as the basis for constructing the young reader’s own houses of “prefabricated units” made of paper.

At the time when Jońca’s book was published, modern architecture had already become an obvious framework of everyday life for a large portion of the prospective readers, especially those living in large cities. This fact was reflected in the illustrative art of the time, which frequently included images of modern metropolises. Two types of depiction were dominant. The first was a modern city as a generalisation, a place which could not be identified with any specific location. This treatment was sometimes given even to cities that were clearly named in the text itself.⁵³ The most important aspect in such depictions was the holistic vision of a metropolis, with wide streets full of cars, busses and trams, lit by neon signs and electric lamps (Fig. 12),⁵⁴ and last but not least, featuring numerous high-rise buildings (Fig. 13, 14).⁵⁵ It is the high-rise, the skyscraper, that the illustrators of the day perceived

52 Adam Jońca, *Duży dom* [A big house], ill. Bogusław Orliński, Warsaw, 1982, p. [21]. The concept of using prefabricated units was also propagated in periodicals for children, e.g. the cover art for *Świerszczyk*, 1961, no 40, ill. Bohdan Butenko; Witold Szolginia, “Domy z fabryk” [Houses from the factories], *Plomyk*, 1971 no. 5, pp. 143–145; “Warszawska Fabryka Domów” [The Warsaw factory of houses], *Plomyczek*, 1972, no. 18, pp. 546–547.

53 For examples of purely fantastic visions of Chicago and Warsaw see (respectively): Maria Szybowska, *Panie Janie niech pan wstanie* [Are you sleeping, Brother John?], ill. Barbara Świdzińska, Warsaw, 1969, pp. [16–17]; Tadeusz Kubiak, *Warszawskim statkiem* [By Warsaw Boat], ill. Tomasz Borowski, Warsaw, 1974, p. [21].

54 E.g. Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1961, p. [11]; Wacław Gołembowicz, Jadwiga Wernerowa, *Tu i tam podobnie* [Similar here and there], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki and Janusz Grabiański, Warsaw, 1964, p. 106 (the relevant illustration was drawn by Grabiański); Falski, op. cit. (ill. Grabiański), p. 68; Elżbieta Burakowska, *Stara latarnia* [The old lantern], ill. Elżbieta Murawska, Warsaw, 1974. Depictions of big-city neon lights were also a relatively frequent sight in periodicals for children: see, for example, Eugenia Różańska’s illustrations to the poem *Na spacerze* [During a walk] by Wiera Badalska, *Świerszczyk*, 1961, no. 3, pp. 40–41; Janusz Grabiański’s cover art for *Plomyczek*, 1962, no. 21 (featuring a telling caption: “At night the city looks like something from a fairytale”); Barbara Dutkowska’s illustrations for *Świerszczyk*, 1964, no. 49, pp. 780–781; Zbigniew Rychlicki’s illustration for *Miś*, 1966, no. 5, p. 5; Elżbieta Gaudasińska illustration for Hanna Łochocka’s poem *Światła Warszawy* [The lights of Warsaw], *Świerszczyk*, 1970, no. 3, p. 36.

55 Since such depictions are numerous, it is sufficient to just mention several examples: Czesław Janczarski, *Listy, listy, listy* [Letters, letters, letters], ill. Juliusz Makowski, Warsaw, 1964, pp. [8–9]; Regina Pietusko, Zbigniew Wojciechowski, *Uważaj!* [Watch out!], ill. Mateusz Gawryś, Warsaw, 1964, p. 7; Aleksander Blachowski, Przemysław Trzeciak, *Polska, Twoja Ojczyzna* [Poland, your homeland], graphic design by Mateusz Gawryś, ill. Antoni Boratyński, Mateusz Gawryś, Stanisław Kaźmierczak, Grzegorz Rosiński, Warsaw, 1969, p. 37 (the relevant illustration was drawn by Boratyński); Maria Terlikowska, *W pogoni za kwadratem* [Chasing the square], ill. Stanisław Zamecznik, Warsaw, 1970, pp. [22–23]; Ryszard Marek Groński, *Kiedy tramwaje idą spać* [When trams go to sleep], ill. Olga Siemaszko, Warsaw, 1973, p. 11; Janusz Laskowski, “Warszawski wieżowiec” [The Warsaw high-rise], ill. Maria Jastrzębska, *Świerszczyk*, 1964, no. 17, p. 260. Extraordinary evidence for the fascination with

Fig. 11. Bogusław Orliński, illustration for the book *Duży dom* by Adam Jońca, 1982

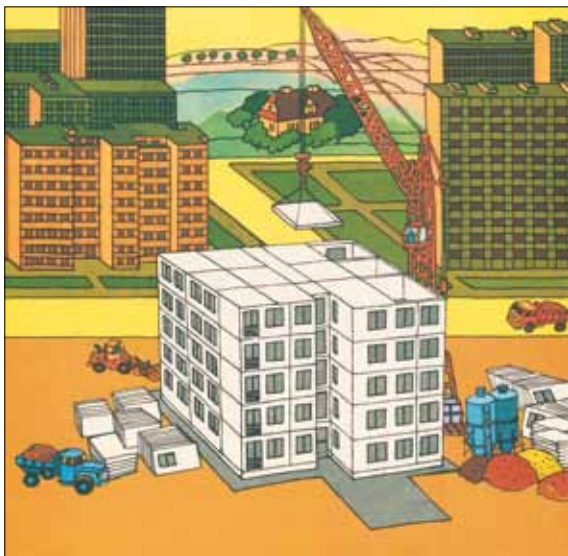
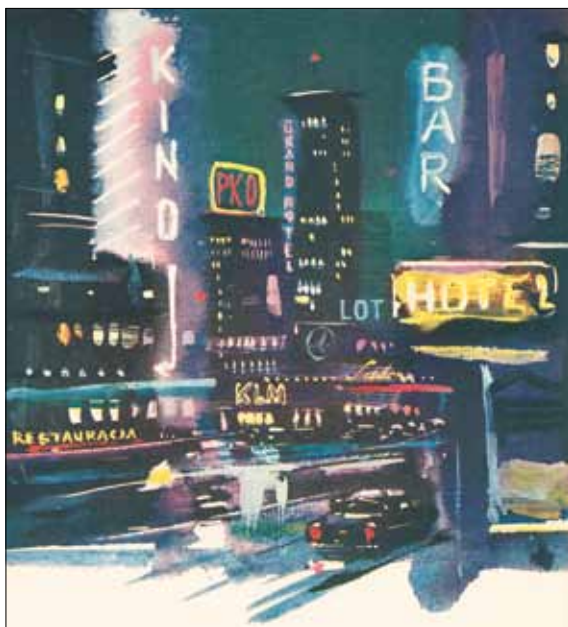


Fig. 12. Janusz Grabiański, illustration for the book *Tu i tam podobnie* by Wacław Gołębowski and Jadwiga Wernerowa, 1964



modernity observable at the time may be found on the cover of *Miś*, 1966, no. 9 (ill. Janina Krzemińska), where even the words of the 19th-century poet Maria Konopnicka: “Jadą, jadą dzieci drogą, / siostrzyczka i brat / i nadziwić się nie mogą: / jaki piękny świat!” [Children travelling along a road, / a sister and a brother / Staring out in wonder / at the beautiful world] were illustrated with an image of two children on a train passing a factory and modernist high-rises!



Fig. 13. Stanisław Zamecznik, illustration for the book *W pogoni za kwadratem* by Maria Terlikowska, 1970



Fig. 14. Antoni Boratyński, illustration for the book *Polska, Twoja Ojczyzna* by Aleksander Blachowski and Przemysław Trzeciak, 1969

as the true symbol of the modern city, and even the city of the future. This view is exemplified, for instance, in the relevant vision presented in the book entitled *W krainie jutra* [In the land of tomorrow] (Fig. 15).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Zbigniew Przyrowski, *W krainie jutra* [In the land of tomorrow], ill. Mateusz Gawryś, Warsaw, 1966, p. 33.

The second type of depictions are illustrations presenting a specific modern city. Interestingly, it is almost invariably Warsaw, or, more specifically, the section of Marszałkowska street known as the Eastern Wall.⁵⁷ The prevalence of this architectural complex in Polish illustrative art could only be matched by the ubiquity of W-Z Route depictions, observable more than ten years before. Other frequently portrayed views included the Warsaw CDT (Central Department Store), yet the scale of its popularity was much smaller (Fig. 16).⁵⁸ Graphic representations of the Eastern Wall could be found both in book publications and in periodicals (Fig. 17);⁵⁹ photographic depictions were no less common.⁶⁰

The choice of the Eastern Wall as the epitome of metropolitan environment proves especially significant in the case of the cover for the second edition of Danuta Gellnerowa's book *W mieście* [In the city], published in 1977.⁶¹ The publication differed greatly from its first edition (1961),⁶² especially in the visual aspect. The original version illustrated by Jerzy Karolak, presented a generalised city, and a medium-sized one at that. However, the new edition with Anna Styło-Ginter's illustrations presented the titular "city" very specifically as Warsaw, clearly portrayed as a modern metropolis. Admittedly, the panorama of the Old Town does feature in one image, peeking shyly from above the lush vegetation of the Vistula embankment (and the focus of the illustration clearly lies on presenting municipal greenery), as does the view of the Castle Square as seen from Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. In the dozen images that comprise the visual narrative of the book these two are the only ones referring to the history of the capital, and even they have been drawn into the life of the contemporary city: the foreground of the illustration with the Castle Square features pedestrians on a crossing, cars, busses, and

57 It should be emphasised that this statement only refers to book illustrations. Periodicals showed other Warsaw edifices and the modern architecture of other cities, yet usually in the form of photographs and not illustrations.

58 E.g. Niżyński, op. cit., p. 17; Roman Pisarski, *Gliniane koguciki* [Clay cockerels], ill. Antoni Uniechowski, Warsaw, 1962, p. [22]; Szydłowski, op. cit., p. [7].

59 E.g. Jerzy Ficowski, *Tęcza na niedzielę* [A rainbow on Sunday], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1971, p. 44; Wanda Chotomska, *Abecadło warszawskie* [The Warsaw alphabet], ill. Witold Parzydło, Piotr Zamecznik, Warsaw [1973], p. [10]; Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Anna Styło-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977, cover art and p. [10]; Hanna Łochocka, *Księżyc nad Warszawą* [The moon over Warsaw], ill. Anna Styło-Ginter, Warsaw 1983 (note: the book was submitted for print in 1981), p. [4]; Barbara Dutkowska's illustration to Hanna Łochocka's poem *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyle*, 1965, no. 37, pp. 584–585; Maria Mackiewicz's art for Wiera Badalska's poem *Kwiaty dla Warszawy* [Flowers for Warsaw], *Świerszczyle*, 1971, no. 3, p. 40; Józef Wilkoń's cover art for *Płomyzek*, 1971, no. 2.

60 E.g. "Warszawa dziś i jutro" [Warsaw today and tomorrow], *Płomyzek*, 1963, no. 1, pp. 14–15 (a photographed model); Witold Szolginia, "Szklane domy 'Ściany Wschodniej'" [The glass houses of the Eastern Wall], *Płomyzek*, 1965, pp. 558–559; *Płomyzek*, 1967, no. 2, p. 37; "Warszawa w nocy" [Warsaw by night], *Płomyzek*, 1970, no. 7, pp. 204–205; "Warszawa da się lubić" [Warsaw is likeable], *Płomyk*, 1975, no. 17/18, p. 469.

61 Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Anna Styło-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977.

62 Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1961.

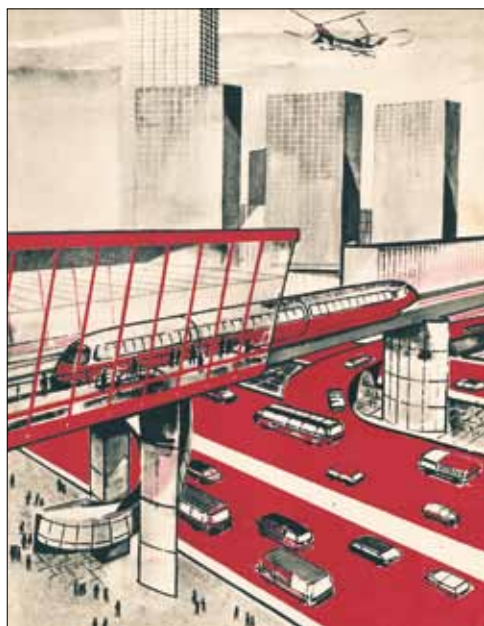


Fig. 15. Romuald Klaybor, illustration for the book *W krainie jutra* by Zbigniew Przyrowski, 1966



Fig. 16. Janusz Stanny, illustration for the book *Poeta i żrebię* by Stanisław Szydlowski, 1969



Fig. 17. Barbara Dutkowska, illustration for the poem *Warszawa* by Hanna Łochocka, 1965



Fig. 18. Anna Stylo-Ginter, illustration for the book *W mieście* by Danuta Gellnerowa, 1977

even a single Melex electric vehicle! The remaining nine images show the life of the modern city: steel bridges, high rises, the edifice of the “Relax” cinema lit with neon signs, the “Junior” Department Store, the Palace of Culture and the “Cepelia” art and handicraft centre (Fig. 18), automobile and pedestrian traffic, shopping in the “Supersam” self-service store, and passengers at the Central Railway Station.⁶³ It was an apparent triumph of modernity over the history of the city.

A similar victory was announced more than ten years prior, specifically in relation to architecture, in the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* [Houses, castles, palaces] written by Roman Pisarski and Czesław Wielhorski. It presented the history of architecture in the form of poems for the young reader. Aside from verses about the Pyramids, the Acropolis, the Wawel castle, early-modern town houses in Gdańsk or the Łazienki palace, it contained two poems which prove particularly interesting for the present analysis.

One of them is entitled *Czynszowa kamienica z drugiej połowy XIX wieku* [A tenement house from the latter half of the 19th century]. The very title is puzzling enough, as it seems more apt as a chapter in some academic publication or a non-fiction book for the general reader than as the title of a children’s rhyme. The text

⁶³ It was one of the first illustrations to depict the recently opened Central Railway Station. The station was, naturally, also advertised in publications for children and teenagers, see, for example, “Dworzec jak w baśni” [A station straight out of a fairy tale], *Płomyczek*, 1976, no. 1, pp. 35–37. The article was illustrated with Józef Kicman’s photographs.

itself is no less intriguing. Due to its highly polemical – one almost dares to say “propagandist” – nature, it ought to be presented in full.

Gipsowi siłacze dźwigają balkony,
 (balkon z ozdobami waży cztery tony).
 Zgina się pod gzymsem jakiś brodaczy stary,
 smutne kariatydy dźwigają filary.
 Mogłoby się zdawać, że runie dom cały,
 gdyby go figury podpierać nie chciały.
 – Panie architekcie, po co te figury?
 Dlaczego tak dziwnie pan ozdobił mury?
 – Taka dzisiaj moda... Poza tym nadmienię,
 że co okazałe, to robi wrażenie... –
 W oficynach za to są wężutkie schody,
 mieszkanka niewielkie, niewielkie wygody...
 Gaz tam nie dochodzi i nie ma łazienki,
 dach tam byle jaki, a mur bardzo cienki.⁶⁴

[Plaster atlases support the balconies (a balcony with its ornaments weighs 4 tonnes). Under the cornice some aged greybeard is bent in half, sad caryatids hoist the pillars up. It seems that the whole house would fall if the figures refused to support it at all. – Mr. Architect, what are those figures for? Why did you add such strange decoration to the walls? – Such are today’s fashions... Also, may I add that opulent forms make quite an impression... In the rear buildings, however, the stairs are very narrow, the flats are tiny, amenities are few... There is no gas connection and no bathroom, the roofing is poor and the walls are thin.]

The message conveyed by this unassuming poem is in line with the modernist criticism of 19th-century architecture to a truly astonishing extent. The author includes the vision of poor social and hygienic standards which modernists associated with capitalist cities (one feels as if reading some rhyming summary of the Athens Charter!), as well as an image of the aesthetic falsity, in which the apparent opulence of the façade (“plaster atlases”) is juxtaposed with the destitution behind it. Everything appears to be on the verge of a catastrophe: the bearded atlas is bent under the weight of the cornice, while the terribly heavy balcony is in danger of falling off any minute. The author expressly states that the edifice would fall if it were not for the figures straining to hold it upright. The figures themselves seem to be reaching their limit, since the poet noticed sadness in the faces of the caryatids. The gloomy vision leaves no doubt that the author was expressing the modernist, polemical view on 19th-century tenements. The substantive criticism included in the poem aside, the dark mood suggestively evoked by the verses was clearly intended to instil in young readers an emotional, strictly negative attitude towards the described phenomenon.

64 Roman Pisarski, *Domy, zamki, pałace* [Houses, castles, palaces], ill. Czesław Wielhorski, Warsaw, 1963, p. 28.

The aims were very different in the case of the latter poem relevant for the present analysis, describing a modernist block of flats in a modern housing estate. It also deserves to be presented in full.

Żelazobeton, szkło i plastik,
szerokich okien prostokąty,
numer mieszkania sto dwunasty,
blok numer piąty.
Z balkonu widać park zielony,
słysząc jak miasto z dala brzęczy,
wieczorem błysną tam neony
kolorem tęczy.
Niebo jak łąka ponad nami,
na niebie chmurek białe owce.
Ptaki wesołe nad dachami
i odrzutowce.
Mieszkanie miłe, choć nieduże:
klimatyzacja, szafa w ścianie...
W kuchni lodówka. Telewizor
tuż przy tapczanie.

[Ferroconcrete, glass and plastic, rectangles of wide windows, flat number one hundred twelve, block number five. A verdant park can be seen from the balcony, the buzz of the city audible in the distance, in the evening the neon lights will flash with the colours of the rainbow. The sky like a meadow above us, white sheep of clouds in the sky. Cheerful birds above the rooftops and jet planes. The flat is nice, if small: air conditioning, a wardrobe built in the wall... A refrigerator in the kitchen. A TV set next to the couch.]

The above poem is titled *Nasz dom* [Our home] and paints an entirely different picture than the one about the tenement house. The former created a sense of distance and coldness, whereas the latter seeks to develop a positive emotional bond. It is to this effect that the author chose to include phrases like “a verdant park”, “the colours of the rainbow”, “the sky like a meadow” and “cheerful birds”, as well as – getting to the crux of the matter – “a nice flat”. All of them evoke a feeling of carefree joy and leisure, in stark contrast to the “few amenities”, “narrow stairs” and “sad caryatids” of the other poem.

As before, the author does not stop at creating a purely emotional picture. The poem describing the block of flats also contains a number of expressions conveying certain information about the merits of modernist estate housing: its technologically advance nature (“ferroconcrete, glass and plastic”), proper lighting in the interiors (“rectangles of wide windows”), the presence of greenery (“a verdant park” – which is nearby, as it is visible from “the balcony”); noise zoning (“the buzz of the city audible in the distance”); and modern appliances (“air conditioning”, “refrigerator”, “TV set”).

Considering all these details, it seems obvious that the short poem was intended as a means of persuasion. It ought to convince its young readers that modern housing estates were a better place to live than 19th-century tenements, and that they

were, in a sense, the final step, the pinnacle of the many centuries of progress in Western architecture (a belief which was in line with the historicist vision of modernists, such as for instance Pevsner or Giedion). Significantly from the social point of view, this modern block truly appeared to be “our home”, the house of contemporary people.⁶⁵ Such a view certainly made it easier for people moving into “modern housing” to adapt to these new conditions, thus facilitating the implementation of the housing policies created by the authorities of the day.

Both of these fascinating texts are accompanied by illustrations drawn by Czesław Wielhorski. As noted above, Wielhorski was not a graphic designer, but an architect by training, which may be the reason why his presentation of the modernist housing estate (Fig. 19) is so focused on the architectural component, entirely ignoring elements present in other artistic renditions of the topic which mitigate the rather harsh impression of the geometric, austere forms of the blocks. His



Fig. 19. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* by Roman Pisarski, 1963

⁶⁵ Similar undertones may be found in Maria Sołtyk’s illustration to Tadeusz Chudy’s poem *Dom, w którym mieszkasz* [The house you live in], *Świerszczyk*, 1973, no. 30, p. 468. In this case, the text itself does not contain any references to the architectural form of the house, which could very well be a country cottage, a tenement house or a villa in the suburbs. However, the illustrator decided to visually revise the concept of the home by presenting it as a modern housing estate lush with greenery.

illustration features no greenery (the scarce trees are leafless), no potted plants on the balconies, no snowmen, no children playing outside, no vehicles on the street, not even any birds or planes in the sky, even though their presence would be justified by the narrative. Regarded outside of its context as an illustration in a children's book, Wielhorski's artwork would not look out of place in one of the architectural periodicals of the day, perhaps as a "general view" of one of the planned housing estates. The coldness and even alienation emanating from this image contrasts vividly with the text, which goes to such great lengths to present a humanised, pleasant and warm vision of modern housing estates.

The illustration of the poem about the 19th-century tenement proves no less surprising and incongruous with the text (Fig. 20). First of all, following the ideological message of Pisarski's poem, the illustrator could, and perhaps even should have depicted the courtyard of the tenement house, showcasing the dirt, lack of space and chaos of the rear buildings. Wielhorski, however, chose to present the façade, judged so harshly by the author of the poem. One may even get the impression that the illustrator took pleasure in showing the sumptuousness of the frontage, the variety and charm of its forms (which were, incidentally, rather *fin de siècle* in style), as well as its inhabitants – a girl in a light-coloured dress accompanied by a lady in



Fig. 20. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* by Roman Pisarski, 1963

a dark hat. He also found enough space on the following page to include a horse-driven carriage, a cabbie with a rakish moustache and two elegant ladies carrying parasols. The mood of the entire image differs greatly from the bleak lyrical vision it was meant to illustrate.

Wielhorski's artwork seems more focused on the visual attractiveness of the subject matter than the ideological message of the text itself, thus introducing a certain ambiguity into the illustrated discourse on modernism. The previously mentioned images of barren concrete jungles presented a decade later by Uszacka and Wilbik are equally disturbing, if for different reasons. These were, however, isolated cases which did not change the largely positive or even affirmative image of modernity emerging from the books and periodicals intended for young readers in communist Poland.

There can be no doubt that this positive representation reflected the views on modern architecture expressed in publications for adult audiences, be it professional or non-professional, especially in the few years after the pivotal year 1956. Unfortunately, the issues of modernist discourse on architecture in post-war Poland, or the social impact of modern architecture and urban planning, have not been properly analysed to date.⁶⁶ Thus, the above statement as to the favourable reception of modernist advances in architecture in post-Thaw Poland is based solely on the general impression emerging from the perusal of a more or less random sample of texts from the period rather than a systematic analysis, which would definitely exceed the spatial constraints of the present article.⁶⁷ This being said, it appears that even at this preliminary stage of research one can identify no discrepancies between the imagery

66 Significantly, in recent years such topics are more likely to be tackled by reporters than by scholars (the high standing of publications for the general reader in the discourse on the architectural heritage of the People's Republic of Poland has recently been noted by Piotr Marciniak, *Konteksty i modernizacje. Studia z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki PRL* [Contexts and modernisations. Studies on the history of architecture and urban planning in the People's Republic of Poland], Poznań, 2018, p. 13). Consequently, there are no publications that would constitute the Polish equivalent of the pioneering monograph by Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings. A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, London, 2004 (1st edition 2000). I myself dealt with a small aspect of the subject of architectural discourse in the article "Nowoczesność w polskim dyskursie architektonicznym: 1945–1949. Wstępne rozpoznanie zagadnienia" [Modernity in Polish architectural discourse: 1945–1949. Preliminary study], in: *Definiowanie modernizmu* [Defining modernism], eds. Piotr Marciniak, Gabriela Klause, (*Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej*, 15), Poznań, 2008, pp. 309–335. The social conditions of modern architecture in the People's Republic of Poland have been described, for instance by Gabriela Świtek, "Za Żelazną Bramą" [Behind the Iron Gate], in: eadem, *Aporie architektury* [The aporias of architecture], Warsaw, 2012, pp. 113–135 and by Andrzej Szczerski, "Dekada luksusu. PRL i hotele w latach 70. XX wieku" [The decade of luxury. The People's Republic of Poland and hotels in the 1970s], in: idem, *Cztery nowoczesności. Teksty o sztuce i architekturze polskiej XX wieku* [The four modernities. Texts on Polish art and architecture in the 20th century], Cracow, 2015, pp. 143–168.

67 One of the better examples of the largely positive (though with many reservations) contemporaneous evaluation of the changes observable in Polish architecture after 1956 comes from Adam Kotarbiński and his fundamental work *Rozwój urbanistyki i architektury polskiej w latach 1944–1964. Próba charakterystyki krytycznej* [The development of urban planning and archi-

presented in publications for adult readers and those for children and teenagers (the form of the latter works was naturally adjusted to fit the cognitive apparatus of the audience). At this stage it would be difficult to determine the degree to which the certain type of social engineering present in the analysed publications met the expectations of those authorising such messages (which, incidentally seems a task for sociologists or experts in pedagogy rather than for historians of art). However, given the substantial weight of social influence the publications in question brought to bear (at least potentially), I may venture the opinion that it would certainly be worthwhile to conduct a more thorough study of the atypical, rarely considered source material from the category of publications for children and teenagers. Analysed with due attention, they offer the chance to broaden our knowledge not only on the architectural culture of the People's Republic of Poland, but also on other issues related to the social and political changes that took place in Poland under the communist government.⁶⁸

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

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tecture in Poland between 1944 and 1964. A critical characterisation], Warsaw, 1967; *passim*, esp. pp. 74–83.

68 Easily recognisable fields for potential research include for instance issues revolving around the role of women in society and the processes of emancipation. In this case, both literature and illustrative arts provide ample source material, not only in the form of illustrations in publications for younger audiences, but also those in illustrated works for adult readers. Good examples may be found, for example, in cookbooks of the day. The presence of certain gender stereotypes in such publications was noted in my article "Socrealizm w kuchni. Wstępne rozeznanie problemu badawczego" [Socialist realism in the kitchen. A preliminary study], in: *W kuchni i za stołem. Dystanse i przenikanie kultur* [In the kitchen and round the table. Distance and culture permeation], ed. Tadeusz Stegner, Gdańsk, 2003, esp. p. 221.

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Abstract

Books and periodicals for children and teenagers constituted an important instrument of education and also social persuasion in the People's Republic of Poland. In such publications, illustrations played a crucial role. Printed in several dozen or even several hundred thousand copies, such publications circulated among great numbers of young readers, therefore becoming a very effective medium for disseminating certain desired views. There can be no doubt that the messages directed at the youth largely reflected the opinions held by the adult section of the society: the authors and the people ordering and authorising the publication. The numerous topics presented in a form suitable for young readers included architecture. The nature of architecture-related themes was varied indeed; at times architecture (historical or contemporary) appeared in the foreground, but most often depictions of buildings served only as a visual backdrop for the narrated story. However, even presented in the background, the forms of architecture chosen by illustrators were not received indifferently by the readers, since they conveyed a certain model imagery of houses, flats, housing estates, or entire cities.

Since such images were published by the thousand, a thorough analysis of the issue would not fit the spatial constraints of a single article. The aim of the text is, therefore, restricted to identifying the possibility for expanding the source material for studies on architectural culture; it focuses on a single theme, namely the methods in which publications for children and young readers issued in communist Poland presented, and often even propagated, modernist architecture. Due to the choice of the subject matter, the article mainly concentrates on the period of the post-Stalinist Thaw when modern forms gained a true monopoly in Polish architecture.

The tendencies observable in architectural theory and practice at the time were reflected with considerable fidelity in publications for young audiences. Popular images included the vision of a modern metropolis with heavy pedestrian and automobile traffic, full of high-rise buildings, lit by lamps and neon lights after dark. Depictions of modernist housing estates with blocks of flats, as well as modern schools or playgrounds were equally common. The message conveyed by such imagery may easily be summarised by the title of one of the children's rhymes analysed above, namely *Nasz dom* [Our home]. Both the texts and the visual depictions of the day constructed a vision in which modernist architecture became the natural habitat of contemporary people. The present article describes numerous depictions which corroborate such an interpretation of the phenomenon under analysis.

Keywords: illustrative art, children's literature, modern architecture, People's Republic of Poland, popular culture

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Above Standard: Villas Designed by Jan Dudek-Kornecki as a Contribution to the Study of the Housing Culture of Affluent Residents of Poznań in the Last Decades of the People's Republic of Poland

In the 1970s both sociologists and experts on housing culture¹ correctly noted that a tendency towards consumerism was developing in Polish society.² Shortages were permanent and the classification of Polish society as a “queue society” was immutably valid;³ however, the “small-scale stability” of the 1960s, followed by the pseudo-prosperity and ostensible affluence in the era of Edward Gierek (a period known as the “decade of luxury”⁴), resulted in a significant re-orientation

- 1 The article is an extended version of P. Korduba, “Mieszkać luksusowo. Rozważania nad kulturą mieszkalną zamożnych poznańskich ostatnich dziesięcioleci PRL-u” [To live in luxury. Reflections on the housing culture of affluent residents of Poznań in the last decades of the People's Republic of Poland], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2017, 4, pp. 223–237.
- 2 From a sociological perspective, mainly in: *Styl życia. Przemiany we współczesnej Polsce* [Life-style. Changes in contemporary Poland], ed. A. Siciński, Warsaw, 1978; I. Kurz, “Konsumpcja: „coca-cola jest to!”” [Consumerism: “Coca-cola is the thing!”], in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach* [Polish customs. The 20th century in short entries], ed. M. Szpakowska, Warsaw, 2008, pp. 145–156. In the context of residential culture, e.g. T. Kuczyńska, “Więcej fantazji niż pieniędzy” [More imagination than money], *Ty i Ja*, 1973, 4, p. 21.
- 3 M. Mazurek, *Spółczesność kolejki. O doświadczeniach niedoboru 1945–1989* [The queuing society. On the experience of shortages 1945–1989], Warsaw, 2010.
- 4 A. Szczerski, “Dekada luksusu. PRL i hotele w latach 70. XX wieku” [The decade of luxury. People's Republic of Poland and hotels in the 1970s], in: idem, *Cztery nowoczesności. Teksty o sztuce i architekturze polskiej XX wieku* [Four modernities. Texts on Polish art and architecture in the 20th century], Cracow, 2015, pp. 143–168. Essentially on this period also: A. Boćkowska, *Księżyc z Peweksu. O luksusie w PRL* [The Pewex moon. On luxury in the People's Republic of Poland], Wołowiec, 2017. Cf. P. Piotrowski, *Dekada. O syndromie lat siedemdziesiątych, kulturze artystycznej, krytyce, sztuce – wybiórczo i subiektywnie* [The decade. On the 1970s syndrome, artistic culture, criticism, art – selectively and subjectively], Poznań, 1991.

of Polish pauperism – in lifestyles as well.⁵ The emergence of a neo-bourgeois style was noted, a term that was intended to distinguish it from the style associated with the pre-war bourgeoisie (or, more correctly, petty bourgeoisie).⁶ The neo-bourgeois style was supposedly characterised by a focus on material possessions and prestige, with the latter being perceived as, partially at least, a *sui generis* possession, a place in the social hierarchy. The achievement of affluence was pronounced to be the life aim of this group's representatives, and the outward symbols of affluence (and the act of demonstrating them) were deemed to be an important element of favourable self-assessment. It was noted that these consumerist aspirations resulted from the citizens' acceptance of Western models. It was also stated that the main indicators of this style were the apartment itself, its standard and fittings, and the culture of leisure time. According to researchers, a pursuit of modernity was a characteristic feature of this consumerism, demonstrated as a fascination with the products of modern technology (furniture and utensils), an admiration for all things foreign, and a penchant for travel abroad, coupled with an aversion towards objects of everyday use produced in Poland. Moreover, it was noted that the choice of items was motivated by their decorativeness rather than their functional qualities and that the very mechanism of the neo-bourgeois style produced many models for spending free time.

In order to explain this phenomenon – one that was to a certain extent unexpected, considering the post-war political transformation and permanent shortages – it was pointed out that the inherent differences between the capitalist and socialist systems were not sufficient to diversify people's preferences and lifestyles in the social context, and that prestige brought by property and consumption, so typical of the former class society, was now becoming widespread.⁷ Analyses of other lifestyles, e.g. those evident in the peasant, worker or intelligentsia communities, revealed that the third group had in the recent years turned to an elite version of its lifestyle,⁸ characteristic of a prosperous intelligentsia, whose wealth could usually be traced back more than one generation (e.g. solicitors, medical doctors, selected scientists). Also, this group used its lifestyle, clearly and self-consciously, in order to differentiate itself from other social groups. This was done not only in terms of the

5 The category of lifestyle is here used as proposed by sociology: *Styl życia. Przemiany we współczesnej Polsce*, ed. A. Siciński, Warsaw, 1978; *Styl życia i porządek klasowy* [Lifestyle and class order], eds. M. Gdula, P. Sadura, Warsaw, 2012.

6 A. Jawłowska, E. Mokrzycki, "Style życia a przemiany struktury społecznej. Propozycja typologii historyczno-socjologicznej" [Lifestyles vs. transformations of social structure. A conjectural sociological and historical typology], in: *Styl życia. Przemiany we współczesnej Polsce*, ed. A. Siciński, Warsaw, 1978, pp. 155–160.

7 A. Jawłowska, A. Pawełczyńska, "Mechanizmy makrospołeczne a zróżnicowania stylu życia" [Macro-social mechanisms vs. lifestyle diversity], in: *ibid.*, pp. 201–202.

8 A. Pawełczyńska, E. Tarkowska, "Style życia jednostek i rodzin" [Lifestyles of individuals and families], in: *ibid.*, pp. 239–258. Described on the example of Witold Lutosławski's home in Z. Mycielski, *Dziennik 1960–1969* [Diary 1960–1969], Warsaw, 2001, pp. 566–567. Another surviving and well-documented example is Dr Stanisław Książek's villa in Tarnów, *Tarnów. 1000 lat nowoczesności* [Tarnów. A 1000 years of modernity], eds. E. Łączyńska-Widz, D. Radziszewski, Warsaw–Tarnów, 2010, pp. 267–369.

ways of spending leisure time, preferred entertainment or social contacts, but also in terms of the considerable attention paid to the housing culture. In their apartments, antique furniture was often paired with works of modern art. What is more, it was prognosticated that this elite style would, in time, become popular within society and transform itself into a style typical of the owner class, and that it would be predicated on an income derived from occupations that enjoyed universal prestige.⁹

The transformation that occurred in the late 1980s and the following decade introduced a certain disorder into these prognoses, and especially into the perception that their fulfilment was still a long way away;¹⁰ yet the above observations cannot be considered entirely off the mark. So far, however, they have not been subjected to professional – and, out of necessity, interdisciplinary – research that would produce a critical assessment of something which in the 1970s had been perceived as a social phenomenon, but which today is located in the sphere of confused memory as a past experience and, perhaps, one more phenomenon of the ambiguous era of the People's Republic of Poland.

In the face of this paucity of research, it is necessary to mention the recently published popular-history book *Księżyc z Peweksu. O luksusie PRL*.¹¹ The nature of this book clearly shows that contemporary Poles are curious as to how their country used to look like then; however, it also lays bare the condition of contemporary reflection on the exclusive character of the lifestyle models in that era. This text is not an academic study supported by comprehensive research based on quantitative criteria that would permit the author to determine which social practices were widespread; it stops on the level of perceiving and describing selected strategies within the debated issue. The current article is, to a certain extent, similar in scope, as it is limited to observations regarding a single element of the lifestyle model, i.e. the housing culture of affluent residents of Poznań in the period in question. In addition, owing to the author's professional competencies, this article focuses on residential architecture and household equipment, with less attention given to the social practices of the era. However, in this context, housing is not understood sole-

9 A. Siciński, "Hipotetyczne perspektywy przemiany stylu życia", in: *Styl życia*, op. cit., pp. 364–365.

10 Cf. e.g. *Co nam zostało z tych lat... Społeczeństwo polskie u progu zmiany systemowej* [What has survived from those years... Polish society at the threshold of systemic change], ed. M. Maroda, London, 1991; *Warunki życia i kondycja Polaków na początku zmian systemowych* [Living conditions and the situation of Poles at the beginning of systemic changes], ed. L. Beskid, Warsaw, 1992; H. Palska, *Bieda i dostatek. O nowych stylach życia w Polsce końca lat dziewięćdziesiątych* [Poverty and affluence. On new lifestyles in Poland in the late 1990s], Warsaw, 2002; O. Drenda, *Duchologia polska. Rzeczy i ludzie w latach transformacji* [Polish ghost lore. Objects and people in the period of transformation], Cracow, 2016; M. Szcześniak, *Normy widzialności. Tożsamość w czasach transformacji* [Visibility norms. Identity in the period of transformation], Warsaw, 2016; *Polskie Las Vegas i szwagier z Corelem. Architektura, moda i projektowanie wobec transformacji systemowej w Polsce* [The Polish Las Vegas and a brother-in-law with a Corel. Architecture, fashion and design in the face of the systemic transformation in Poland], ed. L. Klein, Warsaw, 2017.

11 A. Boćkowska, *Księżyc z Peweksu...*, op. cit.

ly as a space determined by given architecture plus its material equipment, but as a web of interdependencies between its users, their domestic space and the objects that filled it.¹² We are, of course, aware that the determining factor of “affluence” is not clear-cut, considering that it is now impossible to establish in economic terms; but at the same time this affluence was a *conditio sine qua non* for practising the residential model under discussion herein, and it was possible to actually ascertain at the time. Yet the current study will consider not only the criterion of affluence (in practice understood as the ability to afford a house with a certain standard of architecture and equipment), but also the criteria of the social and cultural capital.¹³ These criteria, which come into play in the lifestyle practised by a given individual, are herein understood as a network of social interdependencies and contacts, and as signs of the level of education.¹⁴

Concerning the topographic aspect, there are several reasons why Poznań may seem to be an interesting territory on which to focus these reflections. Firstly, the social memory of that era is still alive there, which makes it possible to use data derived from oral history in the current analysis. Furthermore, the material residuum of the neo-bourgeois or the elite intelligentsia lifestyle (houses, designs) is still in existence.¹⁵ Secondly, it is Poznań that had for a long time been associated (not only in popular perceptions) with the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois lifestyle, the entrepreneurial spirit, and affluence. The tangible basis for this perception is provided by, for instance, the fact that the richest family in Poland, the Kulczyks, comes from this city and has been living there for some generations; but scholarly research con-

12 A similar approach in anthropological and sociological perspective, e.g. J. Hanson, *Decoding Homes and Houses*, Cambridge, 2003; *At Home. An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, ed. I. Cieraad, New York, 2006; D. Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, Cambridge, 2008.

13 This distinction is based on the concepts of cultural capital and *habitus* in the class system relativity, P. Bourdieu, *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement*, Paris, 1979, and the possibility of applying them in the research on these issues in Poland, M. Gdula, P. Sadura, “Style życia jako rywalizujące uniwersalności” [Lifestyles as rival universalities], in: *Style życia*, op. cit., Warsaw, 2012, pp. 15–34. Owing to the specificity of political, social and economic conditions in Poland in the period in question, other conceptions of the class system, self-presentation strategies and mechanisms of consumption, which are recognised, but have been developed in relation to the Western world and its society, are hardly applicable, e.g. R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Stanford, 1959; E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York, 1959. For the above reasons, the issues of interest to us here are located in the sphere of mechanisms known from other communist countries, cf. S. Merl, “Staat und Konsum in der Zentralverwaltungswirtschaft. Russland und die ostmitteleuropäischen Länder”, in: *Europäische Konsumgeschichte. Zur Gesellschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des Konsums (18. bis 20. Jahrhundert)*, eds. H. Siegrist, H. Kaelble, J. Kocka, Frankfurt-New York, 1997, pp. 205–241, and esp. I. Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis. Die Geschichte der Konsumkultur in der DDR*, Köln–Weimar–Wien, 1999, pp. 243–255; eadem, “Luxus im Sozialismus. Eine widersinnige Fragestellung?” in: *Luxus und Konsum. Eine historische Annäherung*, eds. R. Reith, T. Meyer, Münster–New York–München, 2003, pp. 220–236.

14 M. Gdula, P. Sadura, “Wstęp”, in: *Style życia*, op. cit., p. 8.

15 Recently, and from various perspectives, to be found in *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, op. cit.

ducted there since before the war,¹⁶ as well as selected memoirs, point to the same perception.¹⁷ This does not alter the fact that this issue has not been scientifically researched and described. In addition, neither for Poznań nor, in fact, for the other regions of Poland do we have even preliminary studies regarding the social stratification in that period, which might permit us to precisely describe the elites of the era and characterise them in terms of their economic and cultural capital. Housing culture, in turn, has been described in more detail only with respect to architecture, and, in addition, only the architecture of mass residential buildings, i.e. one that set the standards rather than exceeded them.¹⁸ All this compels us to make use of sources of information that are highly diverse in terms of genre (which also means in terms of their quality), beginning with scholarly studies, press materials from the era in question and then moving on to personal accounts obtained by means of interviews. We remain aware of the shortcomings and unavoidable generalisations resulting from the currently limited state of research on the subject of our interest; nonetheless, let us attempt to provide a preliminary outline of the issue at hand in the hope that it will facilitate its further, more comprehensive study.

To have a villa

In the waning years of the People's Republic of Poland, a detached house for one family, or a villa – especially one constructed to an individually commissioned design and with equipment that exceeded the standards in various aspects – was a clear and socially distinctive status symbol to a far greater extent than it is at present.¹⁹

- 16 F. Znaniecki, *Miasto w świadomości jego obywateli: z badań Polskiego Instytutu Socjologii nad miastem Poznaniem* [The city in its citizens' awareness: from the Polish Institute of Sociology's research on the city of Poznań], Poznań, 1931; *Życie w Poznaniu 1997: mieszkańcy Poznania o swoim mieście* [Living in Poznań 1997: residents of Poznań on their city], eds. R. Cichocki, K. Podemski, Poznań, 1998; *Miasto w świadomości swoich mieszkańców* [The city in its citizen's awareness], eds. R. Cichocki, K. Podemski, Poznań, 1999; *Życie w Poznaniu: miasto – mieszkańcy – instytucje* [Living in Poznań: the city – the residents – the institutions], eds. R. Cichocki, K. Podemski, Poznań, 2002; *Wskaźnik jakości życia mieszkańców Poznania* [Quality of living index for the residents of Poznań], ed. R. Cichocki, vol. 1, Poznań, 2005; U. Kaczmarek, M. Wójcicki, *Wizerunek społeczny i medialny Poznania na tle dużych miast Polski* [The social and media image of Poznań against the background of other large cities in Poland], Poznań, 2013.
- 17 Selected: W. Czarnecki, *To był też mój Poznań* [That was my Poznań, too], Poznań, 1987. J. z Puttkamerów Żółtowska, *Dzienniki. Fragmenty wielkopolskie 1919–1933* [Diaries. Fragments from Greater Poland 1919–1933], ed. B. Wysocka, Poznań, 2003; T. i W. Tatarkiewiczowie, *Wspomnienia* [Memoirs], Poznań, 2011, p. 201; B. Zakrzewska, *Było... Wrocławsko-wielkopolska historia domowa* [It was so... A story from Wrocław and Greater Poland], Wrocław, 2016.
- 18 P. Marciniak, *Doświadczenia modernizmu. Architektura i urbanistyka Poznania w czasach PRL* [The experiences of modernism. Architecture and urban planning in Poznań in the period of the People's Republic], Poznań, 2010.
- 19 M. Arczyńska, "Polityka, prestiż i odreagowanie. Dom jednorodzinny w okresie transformacji" [Politics, prestige and abreaction. A detached house in the period of the transformation], in: *Polskie Las Vegas...*, op. cit., p. 54.

For various reasons, not only financial, such villas used to be available only to the select few – very few; but starting from the 1970s it became more possible to acquire one.²⁰ In the post-war decades the main type of architecture were mass residential buildings, mostly high-rise blocks of flats located in residential estates; the construction of detached houses intensified from the 1970s onwards. It acquired the official endorsement of state authorities, expressed, for example, at the 5th plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in 1972, which was devoted to the issues of residential housing construction.²¹ The imprimatur of the highest authorities was expressed by Edward Gierek; it embraced not only detached housing and private ownership, but also the awareness of a certain tendency: "This will manifest itself in [people's] ambitions to create better conditions for themselves, ones exceeding the general standard, by means of additional equipment [and] better, more comfortable arrangement of their homes. These ambitions conform to social interests and are eminently worthy of support".²² In Poznań, too, the 1970s were a period of development for this type of construction, with not only many single houses, but, in fact, the interesting estates in Ławica, and above all the "Za Cytadelą" and "Zodiak" estates in the Rataje district, were being developed at the time.²³ This, however, does not say much regarding the central problem of the current essay, i.e. the houses of the most affluent residents of Poznań. This problem may seem entirely impossible to research because of, for instance, the absence of registers of any kind or publicly accessible archives; in addition, those houses were built in widely scattered locations and many of them have been restructured, changed owners or simply ceased to exist. Some universal observations can, however, be made.

20 A. Basista, *Betonowe dziedzictwo. Architektura w Polsce czasów komunizmu* [The heritage of concrete. Architecture in Poland in the communist period], Warsaw-Cracow, 2001, p. 68.

21 E. Gierek, "Cel naszego perspektywicznego programu – samodzielne mieszkanie dla każdej rodziny" [The goal of our long-term programme – an independent apartment for every family], in: *Plenum KC PZPR 10–11 maja 1972 r. Podstawowe dokumenty i materiały*, [Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 10–11 May 1972. Fundamental documents and materials], Warsaw, 1972, pp. 17–32; W. Nieciuński, "Czterdzieści pięć i dziewięć lat polityki mieszkaniowej w Polsce" [Forty-five and nine years of housing policy in Poland], in: *Przeszłość i przyszłość polskiej polityki mieszkaniowej* [The past and the present of Polish housing policy], ed. L. Frąckiewicz, Warsaw, 2005, pp. 116–117. Significantly, in 1971 the entire issue of *Architektura* (no. 3) was devoted to detached housing; until then, it was unthinkable for such a periodical to do so. Four years later, in no. 11, the column "Dom" (The House) began to appear, initially presenting single designs for detached and summer houses placed on the last pages (the cover). In the course of the following years, the column steadily grew and began to include also colour photographs of existing interiors. It was extremely popular. In the letters to the editor, many readers expressed their desire to build the houses presented in the periodical; for this reason the periodical decided to publish detailed information on the legal aspects of making use of the designs shown therein, *Architektura*, 1976, 4, p. 72.

22 Gierek, op. cit., p. 25.

23 Marciniak, op. cit., pp. 179–181.

Some of the most affluent residents of Poznań wanted, as much as it was possible, to live in an old building, preferably a pre-war villa located in one of the historic, prestigious districts or areas of the city which retained their high status in the period of the People's Republic of Poland.²⁴ However, it was rarely possible for family to acquire an entire building for its sole use, since such villas had usually been divided into separate apartments. This, of course, forced a few families to coexist; neither did it guarantee as much space as desired, even though the living area in such a villa by far exceeded the area of apartments in residential blocks. In some cases one family would buy out the others, thus returning the old building to its original status of a one-family house.²⁵ Considering these shortcomings, as well as the ambiguous purpose of the old residential architecture, the majority of affluent residents decided to build their own house. This solution, although also burdened with troublesome limitations, at least guaranteed the sole ownership of the private space.

In the 1970s and later, many Poznań architects designed detached houses; however, Jan Dudek-Kornecki (1928–2019), a graduate of the Faculty of Architecture of the Gdańsk Technical University, was particularly popular and sought after by the city's wealthy, and wealthiest, residents.²⁶ In the 1970s and 1980s he was generally recognised as a fashionable designer. Among his clients were Henryk Kulczyk (a businessman, father of Jan) and Adam Smorawiński (a businessman, rally driver and pilot), as well as numerous lawyers, medical doctors, wealthy scientists, high officials and very prosperous craftsmen.²⁷ Dudek-Kornecki's clients located their houses in traditionally prestigious districts (Grunwald, Sołacz), but also in those which were only just coming into fashion (Winogrody, Smochowice). In the 1970s, the overall cost of a villa designed by Dudek-Kornecki was several times higher than the price of a Fiat 126P car, which stood at 69,000 zloty. His clients were usually in their forties when their houses were under construction.

Dudek-Kornecki's vigorous activity as a designer coincided with the period when the restrictions, in terms of both administrative decisions and available materials, were still considerable. The maximum living area of a detached house could not exceed 110m²; in 1982 an additional 40m² and 50m² were permitted for houses belonging to an independent professional or a teacher respectively.²⁸ In practice,

24 On the process of purchasing old villas by the affluent representatives of private enterprise or affluent intelligentsia in the post-war period, P. Korduba, *Sołacz. Domy i ludzie* [Sołacz. Houses and people], Poznań, 2009, pp. 121, 160–163. On this tendency, on the basis of interviews, also J. Głaz, "Swojscy, nasi, bogaci" [Familiar, ours, rich], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2017, 4, p. 218.

25 Ibid.

26 Information based on an interview with Jan Dudek-Kornecki, conducted on 11 Jan. 2017, subsequent consultations with members of his family, and materials from his private archive.

27 A list of completed projects with the names of clients is found in Jan Dudek-Kornecki private archive and includes 30 items, i.e. 29 individual detached houses and one estate of detached houses, located mainly in Poznań and its environs; unfortunately, the dates of construction are not given. According to interviews with the architect and members of his family, this list fails to include at least two more villas constructed in Poznań (1 Kujawska St., 29 Matejki St.).

28 Marciniak, op. cit., p. 178.

this regulation was often circumvented by building a “high ground floor” or “high cellar”, which had a height of 2.2m and was thus not counted within the building’s living area. As Jan Dudek-Kornecki himself admitted, his villas were thus a compromise between the architectural conception and the technological capacities. It must be noted that the architect would design not only the general shape and the spatial disposition of the house, but also some furnishings (e.g. fireplaces). A team of craftsmen (carpenters, blacksmiths etc.) with whom he cooperated on a permanent basis would create details that were difficult to obtain from industrial manufacture, as well as more individualistic commissions.

Detached houses by Dudek-Kornecki were characterised by interestingly varied forms and by the tendency to unite a range of materials, both on the façades and in the interior design (Fig. 1–2, 4–5). It is not possible to point to a single solution that dominated his designs, but he often combined a flat-roofed rectangular cuboid with a pent-roofed segment. The architect himself admitted that this solution was dictated not only by compositional plans, but by difficulties in purchasing a quantity of roof tiles sufficient to cover the entire building with a full pitched roof (Fig. 2–5). The large area of window glass in the first-floor bay was a noticeable feature of the front façade. The bay, similarly to the pent-roofed segment, was usually clad with timber. Apart from timber, Dudek-Kornecki often introduced stone or clinker brickwork into the design of ground-floor elevations; the same materials were used to accentuate selected sections of the upper floor and as facing on a fence around the property. Such facings interestingly contrasted with the white-plastered elevation. It was precisely such finishing elements that marked the design as original, confirming that it had been specially commissioned; in addition, considering the problems with acquiring such materials – problems of which everyone was well aware – and their price, their presence communicated the client’s high social and financial status. A garage, which by then was a standard feature of such villas, would be inserted into the composition discreetly, with a simple gate that smoothly blended with the timber cladding of the façade. The subtle play of solid forms, very large windows, contrasting materials, elevations with deftly constructed planes, front fences designed as related to and consistent with the façade; all this set such a villa apart from the standard detached buildings known as “cubes” or from the simplified architecture of cooperative estates of detached housing. Today, these villas still stand out against the background of their streets.

Official restrictions, which have already been mentioned, as well as Dudek-Kornecki’s own compositional solutions, made the interior spaces considerably varied as well. The villas often consisted of no less than three levels with ceilings of varying heights; for instance, just one, or even just a part of one, would reach the standard of 2.7m (Fig. 3). The architect’s repertoire of solutions included a high-ceilinged day room, which at that time was often described with the posh-sounding term *living-room*, with a mezzanine lit by a skylight. In this case, the mezzanine served as the communication corridor of the upper floor and, lined with bookshelves, it became the house’s library. Access to it was via Dudek-Kornecki’s favourite: winding stairs made of metal and faced with timber. A fireplace, often combined with a space for



Fig. 1. Jan Dudek-Kornecki, villa at 16 Grodziska St. in Poznań, after 1975, photo in the architect's private collection



Fig. 2. Jan Dudek-Kornecki, design for the Smorawiński family villa, 8 Złota St. in Poznań, mid-1970s, photo from the architect's private collection



Fig. 3. Jan Dudek-Kornecki, design for the Smorawiński family villa, cross-section, 8 Złota St. in Poznań, mid-1970s, photo from the architect's private collection



Fig. 4. Jan Dudek-Kornecki, the Smorawiński family villa, 8 Złota St. in Poznań, mid-1970s, photo from the architect's private collection



Fig. 5. Jan Dudek-Kornecki, a villa, 5B Słoneczna St. in Poznań, mid-1970s, photo from the architect's private collection

a TV set, was a regular element of the living-room. The fireplace, and often one of the walls, were clad in stone or timber, similarly to parts of the outer elevations. Also the living-room floor would be made of stone, whereas timber appeared in the form of counterfeit ceiling beams. Another solution, one which in the 1970s was only slowly gaining popularity, was a kitchen that opened into a dining area inside the living room. These two spaces would often be connected by a wooden bar; quite frequently a fish aquarium would be used as a quasi-closure between these spaces. These villas usually had a second, “no-frills” kitchen on the high ground floor or in the cellar; in some families, this supplementary kitchen was more regularly used than the “ceremonial” one on the main floor of the building. The lower floor, which had ceilings lower than the building standard, contained other rooms whose presence indicated higher-than-average affluence and social aspirations at that time. Those were a timber-clad sauna and a *piekielko*, i.e. a “little hell” – a timber-and-stone-clad room with a bar and a dance floor, intended for late-night social events held in, as Dudek-Kornecki himself put it, the “cowboy style”.

Jan Dudek-Kornecki remained an active creator throughout the construction process, promoting some solutions among his clients and thus often contributing to a change in their tastes or habits. Considering the typical disposition of residential houses at the time, which meant a division into rooms and communication corridors, his designs were truly innovative, since they included open-plan spaces arranged as described above or, in another version, on mezzanines, each with a different functional purpose (Fig. 3). In addition, the architect encouraged his clients to return to the traditional concept of the dining table surrounded by chairs, even though he did not advocate having a separate dining-room. The initial resistance among his Poznań clients quickly disappeared, considering that it resulted from their being accustomed to space limitations in post-war mass residential architecture and to multi-purpose furniture (e.g. low bench tables instead of dining tables). A folding table proved convenient not only in day-to-day family life, but also during larger social gatherings; in addition, an impressive set of a table and chairs constituted another ceremonial element that indicated the financial status of the house's residents. Such a set was not easy to buy, but the residents of Poznań found it easier than people from other cities, since it usually came from the nearby furniture factory in Swarzędz (Swarzędzkie Fabryki Mebli); those who had wide-ranging social contacts found it even easier. Even the wealthiest of Dudek-Kornecki's clients were happy to display such sets. Another solution promoted by the architect was the use of white in the interiors; this initially met with considerable opposition, especially among those of his clients who hailed from the artisan class. Jan Dudek-Kornecki's renown is confirmed by the fact that he designed several villas not only in the vicinity of Poznań, but also in other regions of Poland. As he stresses, in the 1970s and 1980s Poznań was considered to have a high housing culture; higher than elsewhere in Poland. In his opinion, the Poznań International Fair played an important role in

popularising his work among affluent Poles; they became familiar with the city and would ultimately contact him.²⁹

A villa designed and finished in this manner could certainly be classified as modern, but not as avant-garde, since its style included noticeable rustic elements that could be loosely associated with regional architecture. Detached houses built in the same style, dating from the 1970s and early 1980s, can be found in other regions of Poland as well; yet this moderate modernity with a rustic touch can be considered characteristic for the region of Greater Poland, especially considering that the entirely new idea for, and design of, the famous roadside inns known as *gościeńce*,³⁰ which were based on essentially similar formal and artistic solutions, evolved in this part of Poland. It is also worth noting that the '70s brought a country-wide increase in the construction of summer houses³¹ resulting from the growing accessibility of private car transport. The affluent residents of Poznań were no exception; and also in this case they availed themselves of Dudek-Kornecki's services, building their summer houses or weekend retreats in attractive locations around the city or a little further away, Kamińsko and Tuczno being especially popular.

In the living-room and its vicinity

At the very beginning of the 1970's Teresa Kuczyńska, a journalist and critic specialising in interior design and furnishing, announced the birth of a new, Seventies style which was allegedly typified by minimalist equipment, a reduced amount of furni-

29 One day a potential client drove the architect to a certain villa, saying that he wished to have one like it; the villa turned out to be of Dudek-Kornecki's design. The architect did not replicate his own designs, however; in addition, some clients – for instance the Smorawiński family – wishing to own a truly one-of-a-kind house, clearly stipulated that its design would not be repeated.

30 E. Cofta, W. Łęcki, B. Zgodziński, *Wielkopolskie gościeńce* [The inns of Greater Poland], Poznań 1975; T. Barucki, "Karczmy i zajazdy" [Inns and guesthouses], *Projekt*, 1977, 3, pp. 40–45; T. Tulibacki, *Hotelarz* [The hotelier], 1979, 12, pp. 9–10; W. Bryl-Roman, "Wielkopolskie gościeńce typowe – przykład standaryzacji i indywidualizacji w polskim pejzażu architektonicznym doby gierkowskiej" [The inns of Greater Poland. An example of standardisation and individualisation in the architectural landscape of Poland in the Gierek era], *Człowiek i Społeczeństwo. Projektowanie w latach 70.*, 2017, XLIII, pp. 165–189. On the issues of regionalism in architecture, K. Bieda, Z. Bielak, "Forma tradycyjna w kształtowaniu współczesnej architektury regionalnej" [Traditional form in the shaping of contemporary regional architecture], *Tęka Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury*, 1980, XIV, pp. 115–121.

31 T. Kuczyńska, "Nowe hobby – domek letni" [A new hobby – the summer house], *Ty i Ja*, 1973, 3, pp. 44–47; Z. Kamiński, "System adaptacji terenów i zabudowy wiejskiej dla celów „drugiego domu” (aspekt społeczny i przestrzenny)" [Systematic adaptation of rural land and architecture for the needs of the "second home" (social and spatial aspects)], *Tęka Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury*, 1978, XII, pp. 35–42.

ture, a lighter colour range in interiors, and a dependence on Scandinavian models.³² Soon, however, she had to revise her views and admit that the glimmerings of this new style had not come to dominate the *Zeitgeist* and that the culture of wealthy, ceremonial interiors had grown even stronger, feeding on a perceived boom.³³ In addition, the history of Polish decorative art clearly indicates that it was precisely in the 1970s that the interest in revivalist styles began to increase and various production centres began to turn out copies or versions of historical furniture which were extremely popular – but, due to their price, almost exclusively among the most affluent clientele.³⁴ The stylistic pluralism of that decade increased further as the influence of Western cultural patterns began to be more perceptible, as indicated by, for instance, the expanding scope of issues associated with apartment interior design discussed in the influential periodical *Ty i Ja* (even though these problems had already been interestingly treated there earlier). In the 1960s, its column “My flat is my hobby” presented mostly apartments filled with antique pieces or ingenuously furnished on the basis of pieces produced by state-owned factories (with the considerable input of the owners’ inventiveness); from the early 1970s onwards, the periodical began to showcase Western-European interiors and single pieces of furniture.³⁵ In the following decade, it was noted that affluent bourgeois style of interior decoration was still very much *en vogue*.³⁶ It is worth noting here that Poznań held a special position within that trend, various reasons for this fact being noted in contemporary sources:

The most important of those [reasons] being the following: furniture production is the specialty of Greater Poland; the Faculty of Interior Decoration is the pride of the local higher education system; the city is one of the most vigorous centres of both trade and art. The wealth of old material culture, which in the Poznań Land had been better entrenched than elsewhere in Poland, was also not without importance.³⁷

The role of the Poznań trade fairs is also crucial, since the residents of Poznań had a constant and regular opportunity to see even those single, unique pieces of furniture which were not available on the market; hence they could follow the trends in furniture design. Also, if they were well connected, they could buy pieces from the exhibition and were very happy to do so.³⁸ The furniture shown at such fairs as the International Furniture Triennale in the early 1980s was described as outright elitist; critics pointed out the limited functionality of these pieces and

32 T. Kuczyńska, “W stylu lat siedemdziesiątych” [In the ‘70s style], *Ty i Ja*, 1970, 3, p. 8–11.

33 T. Kuczyńska, “Więcej fantazji niż pieniędzy” [More ingenuity than money], *Ty i Ja*, 1973, no. 4, pp. 20–24.

34 I. Huml, *Polska sztuka nowoczesna XX wieku* [Polish modern art in the 20th century], Warsaw, 1978, p. 200.

35 Essays by Joanna Drac in the same periodical.

36 T. Kuczyńska, *Mieszkanie z wyobraźnią* [Imagination in an apartment], Warsaw, 1986, pp. 5–6.

37 D. Wróblewska, “Międzynarodowe Triennale Mebla” [International Furniture Triennale], *Projekt*, 1981, 2, p. 2.

38 As asserted by the artist Jan Kapela, a furniture designer, in an interview dated 5 October 2016.

pointed out that they had been intended for spacious, affluent houses, where one room or one piece of furniture did not need to combine various functions:

On the whole, this exhibition was filled with pieces of furniture which spoke (because furniture does have its own, clear language) of a luxurious, relaxed lifestyle: armchairs whose shapes and constructional solutions were intriguing, but which only the person sitting in them would (perhaps) find comfortable while the one who had to ensure cleanliness and tidiness in the apartment certainly would not; low tables clearly intended for relaxation, quite all right for putting an aperitif glass and a newspaper on, but not for eating at, spreading one's papers, doing homework, etc.³⁹

Despite these optimistic comments, which indicate that the emphasis, at least in furniture design if not always in actual production, had shifted from the area of necessity to the area of comfort and luxury, the true state of affairs with regard to interior equipment was that an average citizen still had to face permanent shortages.⁴⁰ Industrially produced furniture was not only seldom available, but also, in general, of poor quality and unsatisfactory aesthetic value. More to the point, at least in the context of the issue under analysis here, it was also devoid of any touch of singularity or an aura of luxury – those elements that permitted their owners to stand out from the society as a whole, to fulfil their aspirations or, in practice, to utilise their financial resources by buying valuable objects and pieces of furniture. This aspect, as shall be demonstrated further on, was also not without significance.

In the period in question, there existed some methods of acquiring above-standard furniture and paraphernalia, but this required not only a larger financial outlay, but also personal contacts in the supply centres. One generally known enterprise to trade in such objects was the famous Cepelia [Centrala Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego – Centre for Folk and Artistic Industry]. Although associated with folk art, in reality it mainly supplied objects designed by various artists.⁴¹ Apart from cheap pottery and straw mats, it offered many items that were unique, expensive and difficult to obtain (fabrics, furniture, jewellery). But an interior would rarely be furnished with Cepelia products in its entirety, even the most deluxe ones; sophisticated or affluent clients in particular would avoid this. The already quoted *Ty i Ja*, where the apartments of Warsaw elites were regularly discussed, featured the aforementioned Cepelia products, but only as components used to balance the decor or as a starting point for unusual adaptations (e.g. seats made from wicker baskets).⁴² Poznań was the seat of Cepelia's famous branch, the Sculpture and Artistic

39 A. Osęka, "O piękno demokratyczne" [For democratic beauty], *Projekt*, 1981, 2, p. 9.

40 More on this topic, M. Mazurek, *Spółeczeństwo kolejki*, op. cit., and in the context of furniture, B. Brzostek, "Wokół Emilii" [Around Emilia], in: *Emilia. Meble, muzeum, modernizm* [Emilia. Furniture, museum, modernism], ed. K. Szotkowska-Beylin, Cracow–Warsaw, 2016, pp. 77–90.

41 P. Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego* [The folk style for sale. The Association for the Support of Folk Industry, the Centre for Folk and Artistic Industry, the Institute of Industrial Design], Warsaw, 2013.

42 Ibid., pp. 242–244.



Fig. 6. Bogusława Kowalska, traditional furniture designed for the “Rzeźba i Stolarstwo Artystyczne” Cooperative in Poznań, an agency of the Central Bureau for Folk and Art Industry, International Furniture Triennale at the Poznań International Fair, 1980, The Cepelia Archive



Fig. 7. Traditional furniture designed by pupils for the “Rzeźba i Stolarstwo Artystyczne” Cooperative in Poznań, late 1960s, The Cepelia Archive

Furniture Cooperative [Spółdzielnia Rzeźba i Stolarstwo Artystyczne], which turned out expensive antique-style pieces or variants thereof; their author, Bogusława Kowalska, recalls that they were sought by the affluent residents of Poznań, the crème de la crème of the local intelligentsia (Fig. 6–7).⁴³

Another, perhaps even more important enterprise whose offer was interesting to the financial (and intellectual) elites, was DESA S.O.E., which monopolised the trade in works of art and antiques.⁴⁴ The very atmosphere and character of its showrooms, always located at prestigious addresses, and the items on offer, carefully selected by the assessment and pricing commissions, made it a socially exclusive place with considerable influence in terms of setting patterns of behaviour. This aspect is delightfully illustrated by the scene of buying a “portrait of an ancestor”, with Irena Kwiatkowska as the main character, from the episode entitled *Kosztowny drobiazg czyli rewizyta* [An expensive trifle, or, a return visit] (1976) of the popular TV series *Czterdziestolatek* [A forty-year-old]. In Poznań, as in other cities, DESA clients were usually affluent. Some of them were true collectors, having an impressive specialised knowledge and looking for very concrete collectibles, but the overwhelming majority was interested in amassing elements of interior design; they, too, had their own tastes and preferences that changed over the decades.⁴⁵ According to the assessment offered by Maria Radoła, the long-time head of the Poznań DESA, early-modern (17th- and 18th-century) artefacts, especially paintings and Baroque furniture, were popular in the 1970s. The 19th century began to be appreciated only towards the end of that decade and in the following one; Biedermeier furniture, well-liked by the residents of Poznań as it reflected their desire for prosperous bourgeois respectability, and the Louis Philippe style, popular with those who appreciated the decorative and ornamental aspect of their purchases, enjoyed a boom. Taste in paintings changed at that time as well, with the painters of the Young Poland movement coming into fashion. The purchase of works by Jacek Malczewski, Olga Boznańska or Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz required serious expenditure; however, in addition to these, there emerged a nearly canonical set of “living-room painters” whose works were desirable as decorations for affluent interiors: Teodor Axentowicz, Wlastimil Hoffman, Julian Fałat, Alfons Karpiński. Art Nouveau became fashionable later, and the

43 J. Kowalski, *Meble Kowalskich. Ludzie i rzeczy* [The Kowalskis' furniture. People and objects], Dębogóra, 2014, pp. 286–287. The “Ład” Artist Cooperative, incorporated into Cepelia in 1950, was associated mainly with Warsaw; it was decidedly less renowned in Poznań.

44 In sociological studies pertaining to housing culture, furniture purchased therein constituted a separate category (Antique-style furniture in the “Desa” type), cf. Z. Jarząbek, *Kultura mieszkaniowa w nowych osiedlach wielkomiejskich* [Housing culture in new housing estates of large cities], w: *Mieszkanie. Analiza socjologiczna* [The apartment. A sociological analysis], ed. E. Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, Warsaw, 1982, pp. 227–228.

45 Information based on an interview with Maria Radoła, the former head of DESA's Poznań branch, dated 16 July 2017. Mrs Radoła had been employed at DESA since 1967. M. Radoła, “Antykwariusz o antykach” [An antiquarian talks about antiques], *Dziennik Poznański*, 25 October 1991; eadem, “W antykwariacie. Było, minęło...” [In an antiquarian shop. This is how it used to be...], *ibid.*, 13 November 1991.



Fig. 8. Poster of the Domus Gallery at 11 Wielka St. in Poznań, private collection

vogue for Art Déco and objects dating from the interwar period was noted as the last. DESA was also the preferred source of artistically decorated objects of everyday use, especially silverware and porcelain tableware. Products of the Meissen manufactory were the most sought after; Rosenthal tableware was also readily bought, but was seen as utilitarian rather than decorative. This certainly resulted from its pre-war popularity among the prosperous bourgeoisie of Poznań, and hence its still considerable availability there.⁴⁶ Many affluent housewives desired the famous “Maria” service, but its place was on the table during family celebrations, not in the display vitrine. Such tableware was combined with old silverware or the more available stylised cutlery turned out by the state-owned enterprise HEFRA. Buying household objects at DESA satisfied the clients’ aesthetic needs and helped them to equip their houses with utensils not provided by contemporary production, but it also had additional value: superfluous financial resources could thus be invested in original works, whose authenticity was guaranteed by the firm, which, as underlined by Maria Radoła, enjoyed the clientele’s trust. For many extremely wealthy residents of Poznań purchases at DESA were the only way to invest very substantial sums;⁴⁷ hence the weight of silverware or the size of precious stones in the pieces of jewellery were of paramount importance to some clients.

In addition, the more affluent citizens of Poznań – and those having less typical expectations – could visit the once-famous Domus Gallery, owned by the artist Andrzej Kapela and located at 11 Wielka St. (Fig. 8).⁴⁸ Established in the early 1970s, it was an interior decoration boutique modelled on similar shops in what was then West Berlin. Its offer materially differed from industrial production. According to an advertising poster, it supplied furniture and applied art forms made from wood and metal, lamps, glass, pottery, textile art, prints and paintings, and jewellery. Its furniture, lighting and smaller elements of interior decoration was dominated by minimalist forms, natural wood and light colours; its aesthetic orientation can thus be described as Scandinavian. Many of the items on sale had been designed by the gallery owner himself or by his brother, Jan Kapela, often on the basis of seemingly useless prefabricate elements available on the market (e.g. bamboo), which constituted a starting point for creative ideas; the resulting objects were produced in small batches. The boutique did not, of course, offer overall equipment for interiors, but rather single elements in prices that varied from low to very high. In addition, the Kapela brothers designed interiors in private houses and were held in great esteem by the Poznań elites.

46 A. Warlikowska, *Wokół kultury stołu. Recepcja porcelany Rosenthala po 1989 roku w Poznaniu* [On dining culture. The reception of Rosenthal porcelain in Poznań after the year 1989], M.A. thesis, Poznań, 2018, Art History Section, Faculty of History Library, Adam Mickiewicz University.

47 Głaz, op. cit., pp. 217–218.

48 Information on the boutique based on an interview with Jan Kapela, an artist and brother of Andrzej (1943–2016), also an artist, dated 5 October 2016.

Conclusion

The above sketch reveals not the actual picture of the houses owned by affluent citizens of Poznań in the waning years of the People's Republic of Poland, or their interiors, but rather the mechanism that governed their creation. This is because a clear and integrated aesthetic style thereof seems difficult to pinpoint. Such a style is more discernible with regard to the architecture and finishing of the houses, as exemplified by Jan Dudek-Kornecki's designs. As for the above-mentioned mechanism, it involved mainly the privilege of choice. Owing to their financial resources, as well as social and professional contacts, these residents of Poznań could avail themselves of incomparably better opportunities of acquiring rare or, in fact, rationed material goods than the average citizen.⁴⁹ Unique or prototypical products of Polish mass production, custom-made pieces of furniture or elements of interior decoration, deluxe goods offered by Cepelia, DESA or PEWEX, and even purchases made in West Berlin, made possible by the relatively small distance between that city and Poznań, but also by the business contacts of the richest residents of Poznań⁵⁰ all helped to achieve what must be considered the fundamental category for describing a model house of the era, that is, a variety in interior decoration. This, however, did not necessarily equal the individual approach that was distinctive to interiors in, chiefly, Warsaw homes owned by the intellectual, not the financial elites of the era.⁵¹ It may be fairly safe to assume that the aesthetics of apartments owned by affluent residents of Poznań – and similarly positioned citizens of other cities – was governed by a certain repetitiveness. This quality resulted not so much from any limitations in this privileged choice, but from its distinctiveness, that is, the fact that some architectural solutions, pieces of furniture, antiques, works of art or pieces of mechanical equipment were fashionable and communicated their owners' inclusion into the elite, while others did not. Also, it is worth noting that the data assembled herein indicate a certain conservativeness, repetitiveness even, in making these choices, instead of an avant-garde spirit or a willingness to try out new solutions. This conformism is another obvious trait of this exclusive consumerism; what is more, this trait had already been discernible among the Poznań elite in the markedly different conditions of the interwar period.⁵²

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

49 On this mechanism in German Democratic Republic, cf. Merkel 1999, op. cit., pp. 243–255; eadem 2003, op. cit., pp. 222–224.

50 This is mentioned by Jan Dudek-Kornecki as well. Cf. also Głaz, op. cit., pp. 220–221.

51 A good overview of those is found in the books: F. Uniechowska, *Moje hobby to mieszkanie* [My apartment is my hobby], photographs by A. Pisarski, Warsaw, 1978; Kuczyńska, *Mieszkanie*, op. cit.

52 E. Syska, *Marian Swinarski (1902–1965): poznański antykwariusz i bibliofil* [Marian Swinarski (1902–1965): a Poznań antiquarian and bibliophile], Poznań, 2014, pp. 100–124; P. Korduba, A. Paradowska, *Na starym Grunwaldzie. Domy i ich mieszkańcy* [At old Grunwald. Houses and their residents], Poznań, 2012, p. 20; A. Przybylski, *Abisynia. Osiedle na poznańskim Grunwaldzie* [Abisynia. A housing estate in the Grunwald district of Poznań], Poznań, 2017, pp. 120–121; M. Michalak, H. Wróbel, “Całość imponująca rozsądkiem” – mieszczański dom

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Abstract

In the 1970s both sociologists and experts on housing culture correctly noted that a tendency towards consumerism was developing in Polish society. These tendencies were described as the neo-bourgeois lifestyle. This lifestyle was supposedly characterised by a focus on material possessions and prestige. The achievement of affluence was pronounced to be the life aim of this group, and the outward marks of affluence (and the acts of demonstrating them) to be an important element of favourable self-assessment. It was noted that these consumerist aspirations resulted from the citizens' acceptance of Western models. It was also stated that the main indicators of this style were the apartment itself, its standard and equipment, and the culture of leisure time. Poznań in the last years of the communist government in Poland seems to be a particularly fitting place to exemplify the phenomena characterised herein. It has for a long time been associated (not only in popular perceptions) with the bourgeoisie, the entrepreneurial spirit, and affluence; scholarly research points to the same fact. In those days, a detached house for one family, or a villa – especially one constructed to an individually commissioned design and with equipment that exceeded standards in various aspects – was a clear and socially distinctive signal of status to a far greater extent than it is at present. Such buildings were commissioned by members of the affluent intelligentsia, but also by numerous private entrepreneurs. Jan Dudek-Kornecki (b. 1928) was particularly

fashionable and sought after as a designer of such villas. His designs were a compromise between the aspirations of his clients, the restrictions imposed by construction law, and the availability of building and finishing materials. Nevertheless, in terms of equipment they differed significantly from contemporary residential quarters, mainly due to the presence of antiques and works of art, as well as unique pieces of contemporary furniture acquired from exhibitions at the Poznań International Fair or from the furniture factory in Swarzędz. The essay offers an analysis of the practices and strategies of deluxe living in Poland in the period before the 1989 breakthrough.

Keywords: housing culture, residential housing, interior design, furnishings, luxury, lifestyle

REVIEWS

Goerd Peschken

MARIUSZ KARPOWICZ, *ANDRZEJ*
SCHLÜTER. RZEŹBIARZ KRÓLÓW
[ANDREAS SCHLÜTER. BILDHAUER
DER KÖNIGE]

Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie,
Warszawa, 2014, 240 S. mit 247 Abb.

Im Jahre 1965, als Deutsche hierorts noch unerwünscht waren, gelangte ich als Assistent von Margarete Kühn mit einer Unesco-Delegation nach Polen. Mariusz Karpowicz, mein gleichaltriger Kollege, entführte mich aus der Delegation und fuhr mich durch das Land und zeigte mir all das, was Schlüter zugeschrieben wurde. Infolge der politischen Verhältnisse und sicherlich auch meiner Ungeschicklichkeit hat es ein ganzes Berufsleben gebraucht, bis mein Buch über Schlüters Architektur erschien und ich es Karpowicz zuschicken konnte. Er schickte mir daraufhin sein Schlüterbuch, das auch eben herausgekommen war. Ihn haben die politischen Verhältnisse sicherlich nicht behindert, und ungeschickt im Leben ist er bestimmt nicht gewesen. Ich denke, er war sich seiner Urteile nicht überall sicher und konnte sich erst angesichts seines kommenden Endes zur Veröffentlichung entschließen.

Das Hauptkapitel des Buches, „Werke“, umfasst mit 58 Seiten knapp zwei Drittel des Textes. Es betrifft die Werke in Polen. Die Berliner Werke werden nur kurz auf sechs Seiten behandelt. Von den Quellen seiner Inspiration – Antike, Bernini, Algardi „und weiteren“ – handeln die darauf folgenden 16 Seiten; ein eigenes Kapitel über Niederländer gibt es nicht. Allem vorweg gehen acht Seiten Biographisches. Im Folgenden bespreche ich die Werke in Polen.

Die Werke in Polen sind von besonderem Interesse, weil in Deutschland nur sehr wenig darüber bekannt ist. Bei der 300-Jahr-Ausstellung der Berliner Museen 2014 hat man die polnischen Jahre Schlüters ausgespart. Es gibt keine Kompetenz dafür. Allein der Amerikaner Kevin Kandt befasst sich mit diesem Thema und hat wichtige neue Erkenntnisse publiziert.

Ich folge den Werken, wie Karpowicz sie nacheinander abhandelt. Wo es keine Akten gibt, argumentiert er stilkritisch. Weder als Lehrling noch als Geselle konnte Schlüter Rechnungen ausstellen oder Verträge über Aufträge schließen. Gerade aber

die Arbeiten aus seiner Gesellenzeit müssen durch Qualität auffallen, weil er da mit eigenen Händen angefasst haben muss. Schlüter hat in Polen gelernt, und muss in Polen als Geselle gearbeitet haben, ehe er sich selbständig machen konnte. Kandt hat immer betont, dass Schlüters Vater, ebenfalls Bildhauer, nicht Mitglied der Innung gewesen ist. Schlüter muss also nicht formal Lehrling und Geselle gewesen sein. Das ändert aber nichts daran, dass er als Anfänger in der Werkstatt eines Meisters gelernt haben muss. Der Lehrmeister oder Werkstattleiter wird ihn bei größeren Aufträgen neben anderen haben arbeiten lassen. Schlüters Arbeiten aus seinen Anfängen werden mit solchen konventioneller Qualität vermischt sein.

Vorweg zu Schlüters Alter: Schlüter war Danziger Bürger. Im 18. Jahrhundert heißt es aber, er sei in Hamburg geboren. Kandt hat hervorgehoben, dass sich Schlüters Vater 1661/62 in Hamburg aufgehalten, und vermutlich auch dort geheiratet hat. Der Widerspruch zwischen seiner Hamburger Geburt und dem Bürgerrecht in Danzig ist so zu erklären: das junge Paar ist alsbald nach der Geburt nach Danzig gegangen, wo die väterliche Familie ansässig war. Ich nehme 1662 als Geburtsjahr Schlüters an.

1. Die Dekoration der Königlichen Kapelle in Danzig

König Jan Sobieski, demnächst Befreier Wiens und Sieger über die Türken, war mächtig genug, im evangelischen Danzig seine Oberhoheit durch die katholische Kapelle auf dem Grundstück der Haupt- und Ratskirche Marien darstellen zu lassen. 1678–1681 wurde die Kapelle gebaut. Als Architekten schlägt Karpowicz mit guten Gründen den königlichen Ingenieur Isidoro Affaitati sen. vor, dessen Monographie er geschrieben hat.

Karpowicz schreibt die ganze reiche Bauplastik an der Kapellenfassade Schlüter zu. Das kann wohl nicht richtig sein. Schlüter müsste dann mit sechzehn bis neunzehn diesen großen Auftrag erlangt und ausgeführt haben. Karpowicz hätte auch bemerken sollen, dass verschiedene Hände an dem Dekor der Kapellenfassade tätig gewesen sind. Dieser enthält italienisch-höfische Formen, vor allem die große Kartusche mit dem Staatswappen unter Krone und den Adler, gehalten von Engeln, ferner Kapitelle mit einkomponierten Adlern, schließlich über die Fassade verstreute Putten- und Engelsköpfchen. Andererseits sind derbe Frucht- und Laubgehänge und -kränze niederländisch-Danziger Lokalstils fast überall angebracht, massiert an der großen Kuppel und den kleinen Nebenkuppeln; auch die typischen Laubmasken fehlen nicht.

Die niederländisch-lokalen Formen finden sich später an dem für Schlüter wohlbezeugten Palais Krasiński an Stellen geringerer Bedeutung (siehe unter 18.); Schlüter wird sie dort älteren Danziger Gehilfen übertragen haben. In seinem späteren Berliner Werk kommen sie nicht mehr vor. Es ist wohl möglich, dass er als Lehrling selber solche Kränze und Laubmasken hat machen müssen. Sein Interesse galt aber immer der (italienischen) Hofkunst. Aber auch nicht alle höfisch-italieni-

schen Dekors hat Schlüter selbstgemacht. Das Staatswappen ist so verdorben, dass es außer Debatte bleiben muss. Es kam ohnehin nicht infrage, dieses wichtige Stück einem Anfänger anzuvertrauen. Aus der Nähe sind die drei Engelsköpfe über dem großen Hoftor unter der Kapelle sehr gut zu sehen. Sie werden von allen Autoritäten Schlüter zugeschrieben. Ich habe diese Stücke gesehen, ehe sie mit dem jetzigen dicken Schutzanstrich überzogen worden sind. Auf den ersten Blick hat mich jener auf dem Schlussstein in der Mitte überzeugt: das ist höchste Qualität; ich erkenne den – wie ich sagen möchte – Typ des trotzigsten kleinen Jungen, der in Schlüters spätem Werk als Putto auf den Seitenrisaliten der Villa Kamecke in Berlin stand und von denen einer erhalten ist (Bode-Museum). Einer ganz aus seiner Anfangszeit, der andere ganz vom Ende der Laufbahn Schlüters – welche schöne Symmetrie. Dagegen schienen mir die beiden in ihre Flügel zu Tondi sich einwickelnden Engelsköpfe über den Zwickeln des Torbogens von vornherein geringer, ein wenig verquollen und von an ihrem Ort unangemessener Traurigkeit. Ich erlaube mir die Vermutung, dass dies Arbeiten von Schlüters Meister sind. Dieselbe Hand wird beim Grabmal Konarskis (siehe unter 9.) in gleicher Konstellation und noch anderswo immer wieder begegnen.

2. Das Epitaph Pastorius in Frauenburg

Joachim Pastorius (Hirtenberg) war Kanoniker im Ermländischen Frauenburg, Titular- Archipresbyter der Danziger Marienkirche, Historiker, Sekretär und Vertrauensmann des Königs Jan Sobieski gewesen. Er starb 1681. Sein Epitaph ist 1683/84 ausgeführt worden, wie Karpowicz aus den Akten folgern kann.

Pastorius hatte mit seinem Testament schon den Plan für das Epitaph hinterlassen. Als Titular-Probst der Danziger Marienkirche hatte er sicherlich Beziehungen zum Bau der königlichen Kapelle. Karpowicz schlussfolgert, dass er sich den Plan von dem dort arbeitenden Schlüter habe entwerfen lassen. Dass Pastorius sich den Plan zu seinem Epitaph von dort arbeitenden Künstlern habe entwerfen lassen, leuchtet ein. Warum aber sollte er sich an den Anfänger und vermutlich jüngsten Gesellen gewandt haben?

Das Epitaph ist ohne Säulenapparat, ohne „Ordnung“, keine Ädikula, nur eine Inschrifttafel. Karpowicz nennt das antiarchitektonisch. Er führt die Komposition, in der eine Figur das Porträt des Verstorbenen zeigt, auf Bernini zurück. Diese szenische Komposition erklärt Karpowicz für die erste ihrer Art im Lande und nennt sie revolutionär.

Die Rahmung der Inschrifttafel gipfelt in einer kräftigen Schnecke, auf die ein Engelsputto, das gemalte Porträt des Verstorbenen, setzt. Diesen ponderieren auf der Gegenseite eine Sanduhr und ein Manuskript zwischen Laubwerk aus. Zuseiten der Schrifttafel erlöschende Fackeln, Lorbeerkränze, darunter Palmwedel und Bandwerk. Kein Vergleich mit dem Stillleben am Epitaph Konarskis nebenan (siehe unter 9.). Das Stillleben mit Sanduhr und Manuskript, die Schleife darüber sind nicht recht klar komponiert und ausgearbeitet, sogar gedankenlos: die noch brennende Fackel

berührt ein Stoffgehänge. Schließlich der Engelsputto hat das leicht verquollene Engelgesicht in den Zwickeln des Hofportals unter der Danziger Königlichen Kapelle. Ich sehe hier Schlüters Chef, ihn selbst aber gar nicht. Ich schlage vor, das Epitaph Pastorius aus Schlüters frühem Werk zu streichen.

3. Das Palais Unter den 4 Winden

Das Palais in der Długa, erbaut von Stanisław Kleinpoldt /Małopolski, befand sich 1677–1698 im Besitz Jan Dobrogost Krasińskis, des späteren Bauherrn des berühmten nach ihm benannten Palastes. Man hat die beiden Palais verwechselt; Karpowicz scheint derjenige gewesen zu sein, der das bemerkt hat. Krasiński ließ das Palais Unter den 4 Winden gründlich umbauen und neu dekorieren. 1682 und 1683 erscheint in den Rechnungen ein Danziger Steinarbeiter für Figuren und Kamine. Mit den Figuren identifiziert Karpowicz die Winde, die noch oder wieder auf den alten Zaunpfeilern des Vorhofgitters stehen. Schon die Aufstellung ist nicht die einstige, das Gitter nicht das alte und die Stellung der Pfeiler verändert. Das ganze Arrangement wirkt wie Mitte 18. Jahrhundert. Aus den Leibern der Pfeiler sind Spiegel herausgenommen mit Blumengehängen darin („Grottesken“). In den Friesen der Pfeiler Masken von der Danziger niederländischen Art, wie sie auch am Palast Krasiński und an den Epitaphien der Königsfamilie in Zolkiew vorkommen, wohlbezeugten Arbeiten Schlüters. Karpowicz verweist mit Recht auf die Kopfkonsolen aus dem Berliner Schlosshof, in denen diese Masken nachklingen, aber antike Vorbilder noch deutlicher durchscheinen. Wo dieser Stil am Palast Krasiński zu beobachten ist, etwa am Gartentor, sehe ich, dass Hilfskräfte aus Danzig am Werk sind, die Schlüter zu seinem Großauftrag hinzugezogen hat, nicht anders als später in Berlin. Die Figuren der Winde auf den Pfeilern sind heute Kopien. Die Originale scheinen nicht erhalten zu sein. In Fotos der Originale von 1930 fehlten schon Gliedmaßen, und einem Wind auch der Kopf. Man erkennt die beträchtliche Qualität der Arbeit. Karpowicz setzt die Winde in Parallele zu den Figuren auf dem Mittelbau der Villa Kamecke in Berlin, die ähnlich bewegt seien. Der Vergleich ist kühn – die Kamecke-Figuren tanzen eher, die Winde arbeiten gleichsam und strengen sich zu blasen an. Schlüter war 20 oder 21, als die Winde gemacht wurden; bei den Kamecke-Figuren war er 50. Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass ein Anfänger über einen solchen Auftrag hätte accordieren können. Der in den Rechnungen genannte Danziger Steinmetz kann Schlüter nicht gewesen sein. Vermutlich war Schlüter stattdessen immer noch Geselle in dessen Werkstatt.

4. Der Palast in Wilanów

In Wilanów wurden der Delegation, von der anfangs die Rede war, die Zimmer gezeigt. Aus den Decken in „Akanthus-Barock“, wie ihn italienische Stuckateure

auch in Mitteldeutschland vielmals geliefert haben, stechen zwei durch überlegene Qualität und größeren Maßstab der Figuren heraus, die Vouten des Vorsaals und die des Schlafzimmers des Königs. Karpowicz beginnt seinen Artikel damit, dass er die herkömmliche Zuschreibung dieser Vouten an Schlüter ablehnt. Er erklärt sie für italienische Arbeiten aus dem Umkreis Antonio Raggis und beruft sich dabei auf eine vorherige eigene Publikation. Ich komme in Kapitel 7 darauf zurück.

Hauptthema des Kapitel 4 sind sechs Attikafiguren, drei weibliche und drei männliche, von den Galerien der Gartenseite. Sie sind kürzlich durch Kopien ersetzt worden. Aus der Nähe im Museum gesehen haben die Originale Karpowicz begeistert. Aus der Bearbeitung für Nahsicht schließt Karpowicz, dass die Figuren nicht für die Attika gemacht waren, sondern zuerst auf einer Terrasse gestanden hätten. Er bringt antike Vorbilder, die durch Stiche zur Hand waren. Der Bacchus variiert Lanfranco, der Hermes den vatikanischen Antinous, der Mars einen Pyrrhus von Vaccaria. Von den drei Göttinnen folgt die Flora der Flora Farnese nach Perriera, Venus der römischen Kopie der Aphrodite des Praxiteles spiegelbildlich, d.h. auch da vermittelte ein Stich, und Iris variiert dasselbe Vorbild; im Grunde folgt die Flora Farnese ja auch diesem antiken Vorbild.

Wegen der Autorschaft stellt Karpowicz die Venus neben die Hoffnung vom Epitaph Konarskis (Kapitel 9). Im Verlauf der weiteren Artikel kommt eine ganze Werkgruppe von ähnlichem Ausdruck zusammen, etwas schläfrig, etwas abwesend und etwas verquollen; deren Meister suchte das Weiche. Ich sehe diese Hand schon an den Engel-Tondi vom Hoftor unter der Königlichen Kapelle, und denke, dass das Schlüters Meister war. Nennen wir ihn den Meister der Engel-Tondi. Denselben Ausdruck, fast karikierend verstärkt, hat die Flora. Zu dieser Gruppe gehören von den Göttern Bacchus und Hermes. Nicht zu dieser Gruppe gehören Mars und Iris. Übrigens korrigiert Karpowicz bei mehreren Figuren wohlbegründet die herkömmlichen Namen: Iris galt bisher für Juno und Flora für Ceres.

Für Wilanów ist endlich einmal der Name eines Bildhauers überliefert. Locci, Hofarchitekt des Königs, schreibt diesem am 7. August 1686, dass Schwaner nun anfangen könne, wie er nach Direktive Jerzys (des Hofmalers Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski) für zwei Statuen in Lemberg schon getan habe. Nämlich Bozzetti anzufertigen, wie sie aus Wilanów nach Lemberg geschickt worden waren. Am 13. November desselben Jahres schreibt Locci dem König, dass Schwaner die Basreliefs an der Corona fast fertig hätte, aber wegen drohenden Frostes einhalte. Es muss sich um die Stucke an der hohen Attika handeln. Ein drittes Mal fällt der Name Schwaner 40 Jahre später, am 3. März 1725, als sich die damalige Eigentümerin von Wilanów Elżbieta Lubomirski-Sieniawski nach den Skulpturen erkundigt, die den Palast berühmt machten. Der uralte Locci antwortet, jene auf der niedrigen Galerie am Hofe seien von dem verstorbenen Schwaner, Bildhauer des Königs; bei den Stücken habe der Stuckateur Antonis aus Amsterdam mitgearbeitet.

Karpowicz möchte die Standbilder Schlüter zuschreiben. Daher möchte er Schwaner für eine Verwechslung Loccis halte – gemeint gewesen sei Schlüter. Dem schreibt er auch noch eine Reihe Büsten von der Attika der Gartenseite zu. Ich finde es nicht nötig, den Namen oder gar die Existenz Schwaners zu eliminieren. Denn

ich finde Schlüter nicht in der Gruppe Venus-Flora-Bacchus-Hermes. Karpowicz sieht zu Recht in den genannten Werken dieselbe Hand, es ist jene des Meisters der Engeltondi. Allerdings schwanken diese Arbeiten im Ausdruck sehr, sodass man eine gewisse Unsicherheit wahrzunehmen meint. Auf diese Zuschreibungen muss ich noch zurückkommen.

Wenn man sich Schlüter noch 1686, 24jährig, als Gesellen vorstellen mag, könnte er von den hier besprochenen Standbildern allenfalls die Iris gemacht haben, die unkonventionell wie selbstverständlich ohne Pose steht und aufmerksam blickt, eine grandiose gar nicht stilisierte Frau. Der Meister könnte ihn auch mit dem Mars mit dem zeitraubenden Ringelpanzer beschäftigt haben, der wenn auch konventionell doch von sehr guter Arbeit ist. Vielleicht ist die Iris in ihrer lebendigen Unmittelbarkeit Schlüters erstes Standbild einer Frau gewesen. Sie scheint mir eine Schwester der Allegorien vom Grabmal Jakub Sobieskis in Żółkiew. Diese sind allerdings, für ihren Ort schicklich, etwas idealisiert.

5. Das Tor von Wilanów

Auf den Pfeilern des Tores zum Vorhof von Wilanów steht links ein Gewappneter; er hat Geschütze und ein Pulverfass bei sich: die Kriegskunst. Rechts steht eine Allegorie mit Palmzweig und einem Sternenglobus: die Künste des Friedens. Auf den Schäften und seitlich anlaufenden Konsolen der Pfeiler Reliefs, Armaturen. Die Allegorie rechts lehnt gegen einen Pfosten, der vorne mit Relief von wissenschaftlichem Gerät geziert ist, auf der Leibungsseite mit einem Paar Putten, die sich küssen oder rangeln, eine süße Gruppe. Der Krieger lächelt – König Jan Sobieski war ein erfolgreicher Feldherr. Die Allegorie der Künste des Friedens bleibt ernst wie abwesend; die Seite des Friedens wird fröhlich durch die Puttengruppe.

Karpowicz zeigt aus den Armaturen einen Schild mit dem Medusenhaupt und ein Vorbild dazu von Algardi, und meint, das würde die Autorschaft Schlüters belegen. Genau diesen Medusentyp hat Schlüter aber nicht – siehe seine großartigen Medusen Hinter dem Zeughaus in Berlin. Armaturen sind derart verbreitet gewesen, dass man daraus nur schwer auf einzelne Künstler wird schließen können.

Der Gewappnete ist von einer kühlen Routine, die ich mir beim jungen Schlüter nicht vorstellen kann. Die Allegorie des Friedens ist wieder eine Variante des Typus Glauben vom Meister der Engeltondi. Für Schlüter bliebe, wenn er noch zur Werkstatt dieses Meisters gehörte, das Puttenpärchen. Putten sind allerdings ebenfalls damals so allgemein gewesen, dass es intensiverer Kennerschaft bedürfte, als ich sie besitze, um darauf ein Urteil zu gründen.

6. Das Wappen des Freistaates Polen in Wilanów

Obwohl Karpowicz in Kapitel 4 ‚Der Palast in Wilanów‘ mitteilt, dass die Stuckdekorationen am Äußeren 1922–1929 undokumentierter Konservierung unterzogen worden sind, man könne darauf keine Schlüsse gründen, hat er dieses patriotische Thema doch behandelt. Der heraldische Adler und der Reiter in der Gartenfassade beziehen den Palast auf die polnische Republik. Karpowicz bildet beide ab, Pferd und Reiter nochmals im Detail.

Selbstverständlich parallelisiert er das Pferd mit jenem des Großen Kurfürsten in Berlin, den Adler mit den vielen brandenburgisch-preussischen Adlern Schlüters.

Ich denke, die viele Stuckplastik an den Außenfassaden von Wilanów müsste insgesamt betrachtet werden. Über die Antikenbezüge ist m.W. schon geforscht worden.

Aber die Fragen nach Erhaltungszustand bzw. Änderung durch Restaurierungen und nach der Autorschaft sind noch offen. Karpowicz hat das Verdienst, darauf aufmerksam gemacht zu haben. Es ist immer gut, Thesen aufzustellen, die auf Widerspruch stoßen können.

7. Die Stucke von Wilanów

In diesem Kapitel erläutert Karpowicz zuerst, dass zwischen der Arbeit des Antragens, des Modellierens in Stuck, und jener des Wegnehmens, des Herausarbeitens aus dem Stein, zwischen positiv und negativ also ein grundsätzlicher Unterschied ist und meint, Schlüter habe lieber Steinarbeit gemacht. Ich sehe da einen Anachronismus. Erst seit Aufklärung und Romantik werden die Person des Künstlers selber und immer mehr auch sein Material und seine Arbeitsweise zum Thema. Ein Barock-Bildhauer musste genauso modellieren wie am Stein arbeiten können. Schlüters Kriegerhäupter im Berliner Zeughaus und sein Großer Kurfürst sind modelliert; eine mit Sicherheit eigenhändige Steinarbeit von ihm in Berlin wüsste ich nicht zu nennen.

Trotzdem dieses Kapitel. Die Überschrift lässt erwarten dass die am Anfang von Kapitel 4 abgewiesenen Stucke genauer besprochen würden. Kapitel 7 betrifft aber das Kabinett mit den drei Fenstern im Obergeschoss des Palais. Karpowicz bildet aus der Deckenrahmung zwei Putten ab und einen Tondo mit dem Herbst. Er erläutert, dass in italienischen Stuckwerkstätten jeweils ein Ornamentist und ein Figuralist nebeneinander für das Laubwerk und die Figuren zuständig gewesen seien. Die abgebildeten Putten schreibt er Schlüter zu; das Laubwerk und die weniger gelungenen Jahreszeiten hätte der Ornamentist gemacht. Dies ist das erste Mal, dass Karpowicz mehrere Hände an einer Arbeit beteiligt sieht. Die Putti halten sich hier innerhalb dessen, was man von dem „Akanthusbarock“ kennt, wie ihn Oberitaliener in Mitteleuropa vielfach geliefert haben. Es verwundert, dass Karpowicz das nicht

sieht. Und der Tondo mit dem Herbst, ein konventionelles Faunsgesicht, ist gewiss eine gute Arbeit; speziell Schlüterisches sehe ich aber nicht.

8. Die Figur der Madonna Passawska

Die Madonna Passawska, die Passauer Madonna, an hochhoffiziellem Ort am Warschauer Schloss in der Krakauer Vorstadt, der Paradestraße stehend, ist wohl so etwas wie die Beschützerin Warschaus oder überhaupt Polens. Motivisch geht sie auf ein Gemälde des älteren Cranach zurück, die Madonna als Helferin in der Not von Pest und Scharlach. Der Tag ihrer Aufstellung traf zufällig mit dem Tag der Entsetzung des von den Türken belagerten Wien durch den polnischen König 1683 zusammen, sodass sie auch dafür ein Dankmonument wurde. Stifter ist Giuseppe Bellotti. Den Platz hat die Stadt zur Verfügung gestellt. Das Gemälde Cranachs befindet sich heute in Innsbruck. Es ist an der oberen Donau und im ganzen Tirol weithin bekannt. Eine Kopie befindet sich bei den Warschauer Camaldulensern.

Karpowicz schreibt die Madonna Passawska am Schloss Schlüter zu. Er stützt sich dabei auf die Ähnlichkeit mit den Allegorien von Glauben und Hoffnung vom Epitaph Konarskis (siehe 9) in Frauenburg – die ich für Arbeiten des Meisters der Engeltondi halte – und auf die Allegorien in Żółkiew (siehe 15), die nun allerdings mit Sicherheit Werke Schlüters sind. Die Parallele mit den Frauenburger Allegorien überzeugt, jene mit denen der Wandgräber in Żółkiew nicht. Gleich im folgenden Kapitel wird dieser Punkt ausführlicher zu besprechen sein. Die Madonna Passawska ist ein Werk des Meisters der Engeltondi, soviel scheint gewiss, und hat mit Schlüter nichts zu tun.

9. Das Grabmal Konarskis in Frauenburg

Adam Siegmund Konarski aus einer Magnatenfamilie von Pomerellen war Stiftsherr von Płock und ermländischer Probst, Freund des Bischofs. Bei Hofe hatte er den Rang eines königlichen Sekretärs. Er starb 1685, das Epitaph ist 1687 fertig gewesen.

Auf einem eigenartig flachen Sarkophag (oder ist es nur ein schwerer Sockel?) steht eine eigenartig schwere Ädikula mit der Grabschrift. In der Breite der Ädikula unter dem Sockel eine große dreieckige Konsole, auf deren unterer Spitze das Haupt eines Todesengels gerahmt von großen Akanthusranken. Akanthusranken auch unter den Seiten der Konsole. Ein Schild übergreift Dreieckskonsole und Sarkophag. Im Schild ein kleines Stillleben aus Sanduhr, Buch und drei Totenschädeln. Der Sarkophag oder Sockel endet beiderseits mit Vorkröpfungen. Auf diesen stehen Standbilder, rechts der Glaube links die Hoffnung. Die Pilaster der Ädikula sind ausgedreht, sodass die Grabschrift nach vorn zu treten scheint. Das Horizontalgebälk setzt über dem Rundbogen der Grabschrift aus. Bis über die Giebelspitze reicht

dann das Wappen Konarskis mit Krone und Hut. Auf den Giebelschenkeln links ein schlafender, rechts ein weinender Putto.

Das Epitaph ist ganz unkonventionell. Der Sockel ist zu schwer, für einen Sarkophag wiederum zu leicht. Die Glieder der Ädikula, Pilaster und Giebelgesimse, sind gegen die Regel ungefähr doppelt zu dick. Dass die Pilaster nicht auf Basen stehen, sondern aus Einrollungen entspringen, ist römisch und war für Polen neu. Ebenso die Ausdrehung der Pilaster. Die komplizierten Kröpfungen im Giebel sind erstaunlicherweise korrekt.

Die Plastik ist uneinheitlich. Es ist seltsam, dass Karpowicz das nicht gesehen hat. Um von oben anzufangen – die Putten, kleine Erwachsene, sind so konventionell-gelangweilt gemacht, dass der linke die noch brennende Fackel auf seinen Fuß setzt. Ich halte sie nicht für Arbeit Schlüters. Ein extra Abschnitt über Putten befindet sich in Kapitel 15.

Die beiden Allegorien, Glaube und Hoffnung, wirken halb verheult halb arrogant; Karpowicz sieht in ihnen Muster eines Frauen-Typus, den er zu Recht immer wieder findet: Venus und Flora aus Wilanów (Kap. 4), den Frieden vom Tor dort (Kap. 5), die Madonna Passawska (Kap. 8). Nur halten diese Figuren den Vergleich mit den Frauen von den Epitaphien in Żółkiew (Kap. 15) nicht aus, den Karpowicz zieht. Sehr nahe sind die Frauenburger Allegorien aber, den Engeln, die die Kanzel der Berliner Marienkirche halten (Abb. 228–230), zu einem Grade, dass man vermuten möchte, Schlüter habe seinen alten Meister nach Berlin geholt. Diese Engel sind selbstverständlich Jünglinge, aber androgyn genug um sie mit den Frauenburger Allegorien zu vergleichen. Für Schlüters Werk halte ich die Frauenburger Allegorien darum nicht. Der Glaube blickt mir zu beleidigt, zu pikiert. Die Köpfe von Frauenburger Hoffnung und Berliner Kanzelengel, beide mit dem Blick zum Himmel, die Karpowicz Abb. 88 und Abb. 230 bringt, hätte er nebeneinander stellen sollen. Da könnte man schwankend werden. Ähnlich ist der Friede aus Kap. 5 näher den Berliner Kanzelengeln.

Völlig ausgeschlossen wird eine Autorschaft Schlüters an den Allegorien aber durch den Todesengel zuunterst am Epitaph Abb. 83, 247. Der ist atemberaubend, hat mich sofort völlig in seinen Bann geschlagen. Dies Stück ist unübersehbar von weit höherem Rang als die übrige Grabmalplastik. Ich halte diesen Todesengel überhaupt für ein Spitzenwerk Schlüters, für ganz eigenhändig. Die grandiosen Medusen hinter dem Zeughaus in Berlin Abb. 218, die motivisch nahestehen, sind Werkstattarbeit. Schlüter konnte ja Mitarbeiter auf höchstes Niveau bringen, sodass er ein riesiges Oeuvre erreichte. Die eigenhändigen Stücke sind dann doch wieder eine Sache für sich. Später sind das vor allem die Bronzen. In Frauenburg ist er noch Geselle und Mitarbeiter und arbeitet das Stück selber aus. Auch das köstliche Stilleben im Schild über dem Todesengel wird man dem kommenden jungen Meister zurechnen. Karpowicz hat Stilleben und Todesengel noch mal als letztes Bild im Buch wiederholt; er fühlte das Besondere.

Ich versuche, ganz romantisch, aus dem Epitaph Schlüsse zu ziehen. Schlüter war zwischen 23 und 25. Die falsche viel zu schwere Ädikula zielt auf römische Gravität. Den wilden Entwurf des Sockels/Sarkophags auf der unkonventionellen

riesigen Dreieckskonsole mit dem unmotiviert aufgesetzten Schild möchte man jugendlich-unreif finden, willkürlich und mutig. Der Unternehmer, der Meister der Engeltondi, hat Schlüter den Entwurf überlassen und sich nur die beiden Allegorien vorbehalten, die als Standbilder am besten bezahlt wurden. Schlüter scheint auf dem Sprung, sich selbständig zu machen. Noch ein romantischer Schluss obendrein, vom Todesengel auf die Biographie: erste Liebe?

10. Oliva, Hauptaltar

Der Olivaer Hauptaltar ist eine Stiftung des Abtes Michał Hacki. Bevor er 1685 diese große Pfründe erhielt, war er Geheimsekretär des Königs gewesen. Für den Altar werden 1686 und 1688 als Daten genannt; die Rechnungen dieser Zeit sind verloren, wie Iwicki mitteilt, der die ganze Anlage Schlüter zugeschrieben hat. 1693 soll alles vollendet gewesen sein.

Die riesige Dekoration reicht bis ins Gewölbe hinauf. Im Erdgeschoss füllt eine halbrunde Kolonnade mit ihren 14 Säulen die Apsis ganz aus. Im oberen Geschoss halten Putten einen Vorhang auf. Über der Kolonnade Wolken; in perspektivischer Feme ein Okulusfenster. Den gotischen Netzrippen der Apsiswölbung ist ein ähnliches Netz von Zeltschnüren aus Lorbeer unterlegt. Im Zenit schwebt der Erzengel Michael, beschäftigt mit dünnen Stricken, Vorhangschnüren? Hat er den Vorhang aufgezogen? Karpowicz schreibt von der die Seelen wiegenden Waage, die Seelen zu wiegen, die ich nicht sehe. Hinter den Wolken brechen Strahlen hervor. Zuoberst in den Wolken, teilweise verdeckt, beiderseits ein anbetender Engel. Aus den Wolken gucken Engelsköpfchen, wohl anderthalb Hundert an der Zahl. Ungefähr auf Höhe des Okulus beiderseits anbetende Engelpaare. In den unteren Wolken Gruppen großer Figuren, rechts Moses, David, Henoch und Elias unter der Taube des Hl. Geistes, links die beiden Johannes, Peter und Paul um Christus. Im Okulus soll ehemals die Vorsehung abgebildet gewesen sein, also Gott Vater.

Karpowicz lehnt Iwickis Meinung, an der Kolonnade sei Tilman van Gameren beteiligt, leidenschaftlich ab - sie müsse von Schlüter sein. Die Komposition der großen Figuren unten hält er für dogmatisch falsch, meint sie wäre im 19. Jahrhundert abgeändert worden. Christus gehöre in die Mitte, sein Kopf vor den Okulus, damit das natürliche Licht nach barocker Weise eine Aureole um ihn bilde. Die Taube des Hl. Geistes müsse über ihm angebracht gewesen sein, sodass mit der Vorsehung im Okulus die Dreifaltigkeit die Mittelachse einnahm. Christus würde so über dem Mittelbogen der Kolonnade sogar als Pantokrator thronen. Im gegenwärtigen Stuck hat er allerdings unter sich die Weltkugel, sodass für den Pantokrator gesorgt ist. Die heutige Anordnung des Ganzen, auf der einen Seite das Alte Testament, auf der anderen das Neue, scheint Rücksicht auf die Protestanten zu nehmen; sie enthält nichts was Lutheranern anstößig wäre, keinen Heiligen, keine Himmelskönigin. Das evangelische Danzig lag gleich nebenan; den Evangelischen sollte der Übertritt zur Sancta Catholica möglichst leicht gemacht werden. Z.B. Pastorius (s. Kapitel

2) war Konvertit. Der Abt von Oliva war Abkömmling der lutherischen Familie Haake. Die Stuckfiguren müssten der Meinung Karpowicz' nach verschoben sein. Er argumentiert auch damit, dass manche Figuren dem Betrachter den Rücken kehren – das wäre beim Verschieben passiert. Hier übersieht er damalige Gestaltungsgewohnheiten. Es war üblich, Gruppen zu bilden, etwa eine Figur en face, eine von rechts, eine von links, eine in Rückansicht zu nehmen.

Schließlich die Autorschaft. 1686/88 war Schlüter 24 bis 26. Die Zuschreibung ist möglich – 1688–1694 beim Palais Krasiński, hat er schon eine eigene sehr leistungsfähige Werkstatt. Hier hilft Soziologie nicht mehr, bleibt nur Stilkritik. Gewiss hat, wer auch immer Meister gewesen sein mag, Hilfskräfte zu dem umfänglichen Werk zugezogen. Schlüter kann noch in fremder Werkstatt mitgearbeitet haben als junger noch unselbständiger Meister; er kann aber auch schon mit eigener Werkstatt als eben selbständiger Meister produziert haben. Der Michael ähnelt dem Valerier vom Hofgiebel des Palais Krasiński (Kapitel 17). Die Propheten und Heiligen, die Karpowicz abbildet, scheinen Schlüters würdig. Ich übersehe nicht, wie geläufig diese Charaktertypen damals in Italien gewesen sind. Vielleicht ermöglichen die Olivaer Stücke Schlüsse auf eine Studienreise oder eben auf die Herkunft aus einer italienischen Werkstatt. Andererseits ist dringender Bedarf an Zuschreibungen an Schlüter. Denn er ist, wo er dokumentiert ist, sofort auf der höchsten Höhe seiner Laufbahn und muss doch irgendwie sich hochgearbeitet haben. Ob ein so junger Meister die ganze Anlage dieses Chorschlusses entworfen haben kann? Das ist damals nicht unmöglich gewesen, man war damals früher erwachsen (und früher alt).

11. Oliva, Portal und Seitenaltäre

Das Portal wiederhole, so Karpowicz, die Struktur des Hauptaltars von S. Nicola in Tolentino von Algardi, müsse deswegen von Schlüter sein. Ich kann nicht glauben, dass von den polnischen Künstlern der Zeit kein anderer in Rom gewesen sein soll. Iwicki schreibt Schlüter die Seitenaltäre zu, die Abt Hacki fundiert hat. Karpowicz diskutiert nacheinander den Altar der Evangelisten und die Altäre Christi vor dem Sanhedrin, der Verklärung und des Erzengels Michael. Er unterscheidet verschiedene Qualitäten der Arbeit und schreibt eine ganze Anzahl Stücke Schlüter zu. Das sollten Fachleute für Skulptur diskutieren.

12. Der Epitaph des Bischofs Małachowski auf dem Wawel

Der Bischof von Krakau Jan Małachowski ist 1699 verstorben. Er hat seine Grabstätte selber 1693 zu seinem 69. Geburtstag aufstellen lassen. Die befremdlich altmodische Architektur des Epitaphs erklärt Karpowicz mit der Serie Bischofsgräber in der Kirche, an welche dieses neue sich anpassen sollte. Befremdlich ist auch die Ausführung der

Porträtbüste. Stirn- und Schläfenlocken sind geradezu penetrant ziseliert. Dies erklärt Karpowicz mit dem Material; die Büste ist Bronze und nicht Stuck oder Stein. Zu der Zuschreibung an Schlüter mögen wieder Kenner der Skulptur im Umfeld sich äußern. Wenn man sich die Gegenstücke aus Schlüters Werk in Berlin vorstellt, die Karpowicz aufruft – den Großen Kurfürsten, die Medusen – versteht man immerhin ein wenig, was er meint, ohne dass man sich dem anschließen möchte.

13. Zwei Büsten in Petersburg

Die Marmorbüsten von König Jan III. Sobieski und Königin Maria Kasimiera stehen heute im Sommergarten als Kopien. 1707 hat Peter der Große die Büsten mit anderen Kunstwerken nach Petersburg schaffen lassen. Die Büsten hätten in Wilanów die Zugänge zu den beiderseitigen Appartements unter den Türmen bekrönt; neuerdings wird Schloss Olesko genannt (Hinweis Kevin Kandt). Karpowicz bringt eine Fotografie der Büste der Königin aus der Zeit vor dem ersten Weltkrieg, vor ihrer damaligen Restaurierung. In meinem Bericht Neue Literatur über Schlüter habe ich die Büsten auf Wunsch und auf Verantwortung meiner damaligen Chefin Margarete Kühn aufgenommen. Ich kann heute nur erklären, dass ich nicht hinter der Zuschreibung stehe, die Sache möchte ich Kollegen überlassen will, die etwas davon verstehen.

14. Die Madonna mit dem Jesuskindchen bei den Sakramentinerinnen in Warschau

Die Figur ist 52 cm groß, gefasst, der rechte Unterarm fehlt. Auch die Polychromie ist beschädigt. Die Statue ist 1945 aus dem Schutt geborgen worden. Das Kind stützt sich links auf die Weltkugel, die zugleich auf der Linken der Madonna liegt. Mit der Rechten umhalst das Kind die Mutter, deren Schleier über den Arm des Kindes fällt. Jesus ist ein etwas derber kleiner Junge. Die Maria himmelt ähnlich wie manche Frauen des Meisters der Engeltondi. Karpowicz kann keine Daten nennen. In der Literatur wird die Figur nur gestreift und summarisch als Import aus Frankreich angesehen. Man hat hier wieder einmal den Eindruck, dass Karpowicz alle besseren Skulpturen aus dem späteren 17. Jahrhundert Schlüter zuschreiben möchte.

Ich tausche hier die Plätze von Kapitel 15 und 16, lasse ihnen aber ihre Nummern. Kapitel 16 ist nämlich das letzte größere Kapitel, das auf Zuschreibung beruht.

15. Die Ausschmückung der Kirche in Czerniaków

Die Benediktinerkirche in Czerniaków, heute eingemeindet zu Warschau, hat der Minister, Poet, Philosoph und Kunstmäzen Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski 1687–1692 bauen und ausstatten lassen. Architekt ist Tylman van Gameren gewesen,

damals der führende Architekt im Umkreis der Hauptstadt, ein Architekt internationalen Ranges.

Das Hauptschiff der kleinen Kirche ist ein griechisches Kreuz unter einer hohen Kuppel, der Chor ein Achteck unter einer Flachkuppel. In diesem Chor steht ein eigenartiger Altar ohne Architektur, das Retabel gebildet aus dem großen breiten Sakramentshaus, flankiert von Putten-Engelchen, und zwei großen Engeln darüber, die den Rahmen mit dem Bild des heiligen Antonius halten. Sie schweben über einigen Wolken und vor Strahlen. Ein weiteres Putten-Engelchen schwebt über dem Ganzen, eine Trompete in der Hand. Auf der Rückseite wieder zwei große Engel, nun den Rahmen eines Christusporträts haltend. Also zwei Altäre Rücken an Rücken. Zwischen den beiden quer ein Kryptengang („Confessio“) mit einer Reliquien-Beisetzung. Das Querdach dieses Ganges trägt, ohne dass man es bemerkt, die Engelgruppen. Mit dem Entwurf des unkonventionellen Altars hat sich Tylman van Gameren viel Mühe gegeben, wie eine Serie Skizzen zeigt. Karpowicz findet, dass die Engel gegen die letzte Skizze zu groß ausgeführt seien. Die Skizze zeigt aber noch nicht die endgültige Komposition mit jederseits nur zwei lebensgroßen Engeln, sondern mehrere kleinere übereinander. Karpowicz findet die Raumwirkung der kräftigeren Komposition ungünstig. Die Mönche haben das auf die Dauer auch gefunden und beiderseits kleinere Engel in konventioneller Rokoko-Anbetungshaltung an den Altartisch herangerückt, die den originalen Effekt mildern sollten, und diesen nun verderben.

Die großen Engel sind, obwohl in Bewegung, doch ganz ruhig. Die beiden vorderen wenden sich an die Gemeinde. Der eine weist auf das Bild des Bonifatius, der andere gen Himmel. An der Rückseite wendet sich der eine zum Eingang der Mönche vom Kloster her und weist auf das Porträt Christi, der andere blickt auf den Tisch, wo die Mönche die Hostie bereiten werden, und seine Geste bedeutet, man solle innehalten und still sein. Alle vier Engel sind wie erschreckt von der Gegenwart des Heiligen, voller Gewissheit und von großem geradezu protestantischem Ernst. Die Engel kommen Rembrandts mit Jakob ringendem Engel nahe. Die Komposition liefe Gefahr völlig protestantisch humorlos zu werden, wenn nicht die Putten auf ihre Weise die Großen nachmachen würden. Die Engel sind offenbar in ihrer Strenge kaum auszuhalten gewesen. Dabei ist ihr Ausdruck ein wenig weicher gemacht durch die dicke Fassung, die alle Kanten abrundet. Man merkt nichts vom Holz der Schnitzwerke.

Karpowicz hat den Altar schon in älteren Arbeiten Schlüter zugeschrieben; seine Zuschreibung wird heute allgemein akzeptiert. In den zugehörigen Papieren Tylmans findet er auch eine Skizze zu Putten und Vasen am Altar in einem Duktus, wie man ihn von Schlüters Hand kennt (ein Bildhauer skizziert anders als ein Maler – Tylman war als Maler ausgebildet). Offenbar hat Tylman die unkonventionelle Form des Altars gewagt, weil er den Bildhauer dazu hatte.

Karpowicz betrachtet noch die beiden Nebenaltäre und schreibt einen dabei beschäftigten Putto Schlüter zu. Man muss nur bedenken, dass die ganze kleine Kirche mit guter Plastik ausgestattet ist. Ganz sicher ist Schlüter nicht der einzige Bildhauer am Bau gewesen. Vermutlich ist er auch nachgeahmt worden. Übrigens

sind auch Wandfelder und Gewölbe mit Gemälden in Farbe oder Grisaille schicklich dekoriert. Nichts fehlt. Das Kirchlein ist in jedem Betracht vollkommen, ein Juwel wie sie in ganz Europa selten sind.

Der große Architekt Tylman van Gameren hat Schlüter wohl entdeckt. Er hat den jungen Bildhauer dann ans Palais Krasiński geholt. Man wird vermuten, dass er oder Lubomirski Schlüter dem König empfohlen hat.

16. Die Wandgrabmäler der Familie Sobieski in Żółkiew bei Lemberg

Die vier Grabmäler der Königsfamilie sind auf zwei Kirchen verteilt. Jans des III. Mutter und Bruder sind in der Dominikanerkirche, sein Vater Jacob und sein Onkel Stanisław Daniłowicz in der Pfarrkirche bestattet. Die Dominikanerkirche hat im 18. Jahrhundert mehrmals gebrannt, wobei die originalen Figuren verlorengegangen sind. Die beiden Grabmäler in der Pfarrkirche sind immerhin alt fotografiert; sie haben Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts Verwüstung und hilflose Reparaturen erlitten. Die Sarkophage andeutende Altarartige Sockelarchitektur, und die wie Retabel darüberstehenden Ädikulen sind 1686 von Krakauer Steinmetzen ausgeführt worden. Die Figuren sind 1693 im August aus Wilanów nach Żółkiew geliefert worden; am 15. Juni hatte der König sich in Żółkiew mit Schlüter besprochen. 1694 ist Schlüter bezahlt worden.

Die architektonischen Rahmungen sind schwarzer Marmor, die Figuren Alabaster. Jedes Grabmal zählt drei große Figuren, eine antikische Vase, Armaturen und zwei Putten. Das ist ein großer Auftrag gewesen: zwölf große Figuren, acht Putten, vier Vasen. Schlüter befindet sich bereits auf der höchsten Höhe seiner Laufbahn, ist schon ganz oben angekommen. Bei einem Auftrag dieses Ranges wird er aber noch viel selbst gemacht haben. Die Architektur der Grabmäler ist elegant und dezent und rahmt die Figuren vortrefflich. Als diese entworfen wurde, war Schlüter 24; ein Jahr vorher hatte er die regelwidrige Ädikula von Frauenburg entworfen. Die meisterlich zurückhaltenden Rahmungen in Żółkiew sollte man ihm nicht zusprechen. Seine Figuren hat man in den zur Verfügung stehenden sieben Jahren spät anzusetzen, etwa 1692. Da wäre er 30 gewesen.

Unter den sechs großen Figuren ist nur ein Mann, ein glattrasierter Gewappneter, der sich gelassen auf einen Löwen lehnt. Sein Blick ist ruhig und bestimmt: die Macht. Obwohl Allegorie, scheint er doch, unüblicher Weise, zugleich Porträt Stanisław Daniłowicz' zu sein. Die Allegorie an seiner Seite hält in der Linken ein Schwert. Sie sollte in der Rechten die Waage der Gerechtigkeit gehalten haben. Karpowicz referiert, dass sie laut älterer Literatur einen Spiegel gehalten haben solle, was mir eine Verwechslung scheint – sie hält ihr Schwert doch ganz selbstverständlich. Die große Allegorie mit offenem Busen und Engelsflügeln, die darüber schwebt, hat in der Rechten einen Bogen, in ihrer Linken hat sie einen unidentifizierbaren Rest, Pfeile. Die große antikische Vase in der Mitte ist wie versiegelt

von einer kleinen Maske Danziger Stiles, die Karpowicz mit ähnlichen vom Palast Krasiński und vom Berliner Schloss abbildet S. 190, 191, Abb. 165–173. Auf den Leib der Vase ist grob ein Chi-Rho nachträglich² angebracht, darunter Laubwerk³ - Im anderen Wandgrab lehnt die rechte Allegorie gegen einen Säulenstumpf: die Stärke. Karpowicz bemängelt, dass sie barbusig ist (bedeutet das nicht Wahrheit⁴). Ihr Gegenüber kann ich nicht identifizieren, erkenne nicht was sie in der Rechten hält. Die wieder geflügelte Allegorie darüber hat ihre Attribute verloren. Die große antikische Vase dieser Seite ist besser erhalten. Kevin Kandt hat ihr Thema aufgeschlüsselt und Schlüters Vorlage nachgewiesen. Kandts neuere Arbeit über die Grabmäler hat Karpowicz wohl nicht mehr erreicht. Die Lesung der Allegorien bleibt zweifelhaft. Die beiden Wandgräber sind mit Armaturen versehen, um die sich je zwei Putten zu schaffen machen.

Dieses erste für Schlüter urkundlich gesicherte Werk muss und kann die Grundlage für vergleichende Stilkritik hergeben. Der ernste Stanisław Daniłowicz, ein gereifter Mann, müsste in jungen Jahren den Engeln in Czerniaków geähgelt haben. Zumindest auf zwei der Engel passt das gut, den links vorn und den an der Rückseite rechts; die beiden anderen sind etwas zu androgyn. Dafür ähneln diese den schwebenden geflügelten Allegorien. Männer für den Vergleich gibt es mehrere am Palast Krasiński, s. Kapitel 17.

Mit den drei jungen Frauen, den sitzenden Allegorien in Żółkiew, wären nun die Zuschreibungen Karpowicz' in Frauenburg, Wilanów und vor dem Warschauer Schloss zusammenzuhalten, allerdings sämtlich Standbilder. Die Frauen in Żółkiew haben nichts von dem abwesenden Ausdruck und der Weichheit der Form, die der Bildhauer gesucht hat, den ich Meister der Engeltondi zu nennen vorgeschlagen habe, und den Karpowicz immer als Schlüter identifiziert. Die Allegorien von Żółkiew sind eigentlich viel zu aufmerksam behandelt für Allegorien. Keiner hat damals so schöne Allegorien gemacht, Schlüter selber später auch keine mehr. Für den königlichen Auftrag hat er offenbar selber angefasst.

In Żółkiew haben wir auch die ersten dokumentarisch gesicherten Putten Schlüters. Erogen und Putten haben seit der Renaissance wie spielende Kinder die Bildthemen gar nicht beachtet oder aus kindlichem Abstand kommentiert. Putten die bloß das Bildthema verdoppeln wird ein kundiger Meister nicht machen. Schon deswegen misstraue ich Schlaf und Tod auf dem Giebel des Grabmals Konarskis. Ein zweiter Vorbehalt besteht in der Beliebtheit und in der weiten Verbreitung des Motivs Putto. Man darf voraussetzen, dass jeder bessere Bildhauer damals seinen eigenen Typ Putto eingeübt hatte, gewöhnlich eine Variante der „Fiammingo-Kinder“, wie sie in einem zeitgenössischen Brief an den König dessen Agent Locci nennt. Der Typus war allgemein bekannt. Schlüter als Meister einer Werkstatt wird, wo er sich auf Mitarbeiter stützte, diesen ihre Art Putto gelassen haben. In der Komposition kam es auf den Putto an, nicht auf einen besonderen. Putten in Schlüters eigener Art kann man in Żółkiew erwarten, wo er sozusagen unter den Augen des Königs möglichst viel allein gemacht haben wird.

Von den Putten am Wandgrab Daniłowicz' stützt sich der rechte auf eine Keule; er hat einen Helm verkehrt aufgesetzt. Der linke befasst sich mit einer Zeltplane

oder Fahnentuch. Am Wandgrab des Jakub Sobieski spielen die Putti wieder mit einer Plane. Beide Puttengruppen sind, weil dem Betrachter näher, größer im Maßstab als die Allegorien und steigern diese perspektivisch. Die Putten sind dicke Kinder, keine hübschen kleinen Jungen wie Fiammingo sie dem Geschmack der Kardinäle entsprechend gebildet hat. An beiden Grabmälern in der Mitte ein kleiner Schild und darüber ein Helm, befremdlich in ihrem kleinen Maßstab; an den Seiten Fahnen und weitere Armatur.

Mit diesen Putten wären jene von den beiden Epitaphien in Frauenburg, und vom Altar in Czerniaków zu vergleichen. Die in Czerniaków sind schon konventioneller. Wegen Schlaf und Tod auf dem Giebel in Frauenburg und dem, der ebendort Pastorius' Bild hält, habe ich mein Misstrauen schon bekundet. Die Putten von der Decke des Kabinetts mit den drei Fenstern in Wilanów sind „nur“ guter oberitalienischer Akanthusbarock.

17. Die Dekorierung des Palastes Krasiński, und 18. Das Gartentor

Der Wojwode von Płock Jan Dobrogost (Bonaventura) Krasiński hat das Palais 1687–1699 erbauen lassen. Die frühere Datierung beruht auf Verwechslung mit dem Palais Unter den 4 Winden (Kapitel 3), wie erst Karpowicz herausgefunden hat. Architektonisch ist der Palast Krasiński ein Hauptwerk des Tylman van Gameeren. Architektonisch ist Schlüter, wie seit der Jahrhundertwende vom 19. zum 20. bekannt ist, aber nicht geradezu ausgesprochen wurde, Nachahmer Tylmans. Von 1689 bis 1693 ist Schlüter an dem Palast bezeugt. Speziell die beiden Giebelfelder werden in den Rechnungen genannt, sowie das Wappen über der Hoffassade, das Schlüter, als er 1694 nach Berlin ging, seinen Mitarbeitern Benjamin und Friedrich überlassen hat. Karpowicz schreibt Schlüter auch die Figuren auf den Giebeln zu.

Das Giebelrelief der Hof- und Empfangsseite identifiziert die Familie Krasiński mit den altrömischen Valeriem. Diesem Thema entsprechen wohl auch die bedeutenderen weiteren Teile der Bauplastik, also die Giebelfiguren und das gartenseitige Tympanon. Der Hofgiebel ist schwer beschädigt gewesen, der Gartengiebel war eingestürzt. Die Komposition des Hofgiebels hat Tylman angegeben. Die Komposition des Gartengiebels könnte von Schlüter sein. Vom Hofgiebel sind Figuren, vom Gartengiebel nur kleine Figuren-Fragmente erhalten.

Der weitere Bauschmuck aber ist von konventioneller Danziger Art. Karpowicz bildet sechs verschiedene Masken ab, Abb. 165 f., davon eine mit Widderkopf statt des Menschengesichtes. Die Masken dienen als Kapitelle der Fenstergewände und der Pfeiler des Gartentores. Weswegen Karpowicz für das Gartentor ein besonderes Kapitel einteilt, verstehe ich nicht – das Tor ist offensichtlich mit dem Palast in einem entworfen, steht auf der Mittellinie des Ganzen. Diese Masken in niederländisch-Danziger Renaissance finden sich auch an den Pfeilern des Hofgitters am Palast Unter den Winden (s. Kapitel 3); im Buch sind vier davon abgebildet (Abb.

21–24). Sie stehen dort im Fries des Kapitells, also an ähnlicher Stelle. Eine weitere Maske, nun als Laubmaske gebildet und ganz klein, zierte die Vase auf dem Grabmal Daniłowicz' (s. Kap. 15, Abb. 172). Karpowicz bildet dazu eine – übrigens erhaltene – Maskenkonsole vom Treppen/Rampenhaus des Berliner Schlosses ab, die antikisch überformt doch offenbar zu dieser Reihe gehört (Abb. 173). Diese Masken am Palast Krasiński sind selbstverständlich Arbeiten von Danzigern, die Schlüter zugezogen hat. Ich bin der Meinung, dass er die gesamte Bauplastik am Palast dirigiert hat. Der innere Ausbau des Palastes hatte im Laufe der Zeit schon mehrere Brände erlitten, als er schließlich von unseren Truppen völlig zerstört wurde.

19. bis 24. Kruzifixe

Die Liste der Werke Schlüters, der Hauptteil des Buches, endet mit sechs Kruzifixen. Keiner dieser Kruzifixe ist urkundlich als Werk Schlüters verbürgt. Karpowicz nähert sich den Werken einesteils durch Baudaten, andernteils über die Bauherrschaft. Dass einige Kruzifixe Werke Schlüters sind, ergibt Stilkritik: sie lassen sich anschließen an eines der Häupter im Hof des Berliner Zeughauses, einen der sogenannten Sterbenden Krieger. Es ist das Haupt in Karpowicz' Buch Abb. 209. Übrigens spricht Karpowicz von Wojwodei, also adligen Herren, Heerführern, da der Adel als Beruf den Krieg hatte. Die deutsche volkstümliche Bezeichnung „Sterbende Krieger“ ist missverständlich; um einfache Soldaten handelt es sich nicht.

In Węgrów (Kap. 19.) waren die Krasiński Bauherren. Als Datum der Erstellung des Altars erschließt Karpowicz die Jahre 1688–1690. Er verweist auf das Vorbild in Rom, S. Nicola da Tolentino, von Algardi. Die Verbindung Algardi-Schlüter zieht Karpowicz immer wieder. Den Altar von Węgrów samt zwei Nebenaltdären schreibt Karpowicz Schlüter im Ganzen zu, denkt immerhin auch an Hilfskräfte, und sagt selber, dass Gottvater in dem Relief in der Giebelsprengung des Hauptaltars Abb. 177 schwächer sei als der Kruzifix. Nach meinem Eindruck hat alles Übrige mit dem Kruzifix in der Machart nichts zu tun. Das Kruzifix aber steht dem oben genannten Sterbenden Krieger nahe, die Zuschreibung überzeugt. Das Kruzifix ist allerdings feiner, es wirkt erleichtert, fast arrogant gegenüber all dem überstandenen Leiden, und voller Hoheit. Karpowicz bringt zur Totale des Altarraums Abb. 174 und Abb. 178 mit der ganzen Figur noch Abb. 180 ein Porträtfoto.

Karpowicz stellt Abb. 178 a. Algardis Kruzifix in S. Maria del Popolo neben den von Węgrów. Kein guter Vergleich: der Kruzifix Algardis leidet und wirft den Kopf zurück, die Kruzifixe von Węgrów und Rawa sind gestorben, neigen das Haupt.

Den Kruzifix in Rawa Mazowiecka (Kap. 20.), der sich in der dortigen Passionistenkirche befindet, hält Karpowicz für dort sekundär; er komme aus der ehemaligen Jesuitenkirche. Er sagt, dass ein dicker Überzug die Bildhauerarbeit entstelle. Dass dieser und das Kruzifix von Węgrów Gegenstücke sind scheint klar. Der von Rawa ist aber grober, wie Karpowicz' Porträtfoto Abb. 181 erkennen lässt. Er ist bloß erschöpft, wirkt profan.

Bei den Warschauer Sakramentinerinnen (Kap. 21) begegnen Königin Maria Kazimiera als Stifterin des Klosters, und als Architekt Tylman van Gameren. Schon deswegen könnte der aus dem Schutt geborgene Torso leicht von Schlüter geschnitzt sein. Der Torso war wie üblich gefasst; die Fassung ist zerstört. Dieser Christus ist in Frieden schlafend dargestellt; Karpowicz spricht von Ausdruck unterdrückter Majestät. Mir scheint er in seiner wunderbaren Einfachheit etwas antikisch. Dieses sympathische Stück würde ich sehr gern Schlüter zuerkennen, der ja immer die Antike gewissermaßen im Hinterkopf hatte.

Der Kruzifix vom Grabmal des Bischofs Rudnicki in Frauenburg (Kap. 22) gehört nicht in die Reihe, weil er das Haupt leidend zurückwirft und die Finger einkrampft.

Den Kruzifixus von einem Seitenaltar der Warschauer Franziskanerkirche (Kap. 23) kann Karpowicz auf das Jahr zwischen April 1693 und Mai 1694 datieren. Dieser Kruzifixus hat nachträglich eine Dornenkrone aus Silber aufgesetzt und ein ebensolches Perizonium umgebunden bekommen, wodurch Vergleiche unmöglich werden. Mit gesenktem Haupt entspricht er dem Weggrower, indessen verkrampft er die Hände noch im Moment des Sterbens. Karpowicz spricht von Ähnlichkeit zu den Sterbenden Kriegern in Berlin. Außer zu dem schon genannten Haupt Abb. 209 empfinde ich Ähnlichkeit des Typus zu Ladendorf 1937 Abb. 20, möchte damit aber nicht die Zuschreibung behaupten.

Der Kruzifix in Krasne (Kap. 24) gehört zum Epitaph Joanna Maria Noskowskas, geb. Krasiński, der Schwester Dobrogosts, des großen Auftraggebers Schlüters. Der Kruzifixus ist Alabaster, nur etwa 45 cm groß und Torso, hat den rechten Arm eingebüßt. Das Epitaph ist durch den Tod der Maria Joanna auf 1654 datiert. Karpowicz findet Rahmung und Ornament Knorpelstil Danziger Art. Das Kruzifix müsse anlässlich eines überlieferten Umbaus der Familiengräber durch Dobrogost Krasiński erstellt sein, also eine Generation später. In der Haltung entspricht dieser Kruzifixus genau jenem bei den Warschauer Franziskanern (Kap. 23). Gleichwohl sieht man hier einen erschöpften alten Mann, was am Thema vorbeigeht. Der Gekreuzigte war der Überlieferung nach etwa 33.

Kruzifixe sind ein derart verbreitetes Thema, und ähneln einander so sehr, dass man eine große Zahl überblicken muss, wenn man eines einem bestimmten Bildhauer zuordnen will. Ich bin dazu nicht entfernt in der Lage. Ich finde es aber gut, dass Karpowicz den Mut hat, nach Gefühl Zuschreibungen zu behaupten. Dann kann man über die Zuschreibungen streiten. So hat das Aufgebot der sechs Kruzifixe seinen guten Sinn.

In demselben Sinn bejahe ich das ganze Buch Karpowicz'. Über Vorschläge und vielleicht voreilige Behauptungen kann man sich auseinandersetzen; über Meinungen die ängstlich verborgen gehalten werden, kann man nicht debattieren. Ohne Debatte über Zuschreibungen müsste alles, was nicht in Akten genannt wird, unbeachtet bleiben. Lehrzeit und Aufstieg Schlüters interessieren uns aber. Es muss doch erfreuen, wenn man Spuren eines so begabten jungen Mannes verfolgen kann. Ich denke mit größtem Vergnügen an den trotzigen kleinen Jungen vom Hoftor unter der Königlichen Kapelle in Danzig, ich bin für immer fasziniert von dem Todesengel vom Grabmal Konarskis, bin ergriffen von den großen Engeln in Czerniaków. Und

ich war übrigens erheitert von den Putten in Wilanów im Vorsaal und im Schlafzimmer des Königs, die Karpowicz aus Schlüters Werk ausschließt – hinreißend bleiben diese Putten auch mit anderem Etikett.

In dem großartigen Umfang von Schlüters Werk wird man nicht immer äußerste Qualität finden können. Es bleibt erstaunlich, wie er eine ganze Truppe von Gehilfen zu großer Meisterschaft hat führen können. Es ist überliefert, dass er auch einen seiner Lehrer an den großen Bau in Berlin gerufen hat; man wird annehmen, dass er noch mehr Gefährten und Vorgesetzte aus seiner Ausbildungszeit und aus seinen polnischen Meisterjahren geholt hat. Karpowicz' Vergleich z.B. der Kanzelengel von Marien in Berlin mit Frauen desselben Typs in Frauenburg oder Wilanów kann schlüssig sein und doch irreführen. Ich finde „meinen“ Meister der Engeltondi durchaus fähig, später in Schlüters Werkstatt die Berliner Kanzelengel zu machen, indem dieser sich ein wenig auf Schlüters Stil eingestellt hätte. In Polen aber, in Schlüters Lehr- und Gesellenzeit, sind Schlüters Arbeiten eigenhändig und unverwechselbar, und das scheint auch noch für den großen Auftrag des Königs in Żółkiew zu gelten. Schon am Palast Krasiński hat Schlüter eine Werkstatt, beschäftigt Danziger Hilfskräfte genauso wie dann in Berlin. Mehr oder weniger eigenhändig sind in Berlin dann nur noch die Ton-Bozzetti zu den Kriegerhäuptern im Zeughaushof, von denen einige in Gipsabgüssen erhalten sind, und die wenigen Bronzen, deren Wachsmodelle er sicherlich selber angefasst haben wird. Noch zuletzt im Unglück kann er die acht großen und zwei kleinen Dachfiguren der Villa Kamecke schwerlich selber geschlagen haben. Eigenhändige Arbeiten in Stein gab und gibt es nur aus seinen Jahren am polnischen Hof.

