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# Poland and Artistic Culture of Western Europe

14th–20th Century

## Polish Studies - Transdisciplinary Perspectives

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## INTRODUCTION

The Polish state formally entered the West European community and adopted its culture in 966, when King Mieszko I and his subjects were christened in the Latin rite, thus finally linking the country's fate to the West. However, Poland's geographical location has been and still is, even today, defined in a number of ways; it has been described as a part of Central Europe, or East-Central Europe, or a country located between the East and the West, between Germany and Russia. Each of these definitions refers to an aspect of Poland's history, and each contains a grain of truth about its complex past, yet it seems that regarding Poland as a Central-European country would be closest to reality. This does not mean that other descriptions automatically lose their relevance. This difficulty, of assigning a permanent location to the state of Poland, is indicative of the vicissitudes of its history, and the difficulty of maintaining its territorial stability. The country lies in the centre of the North European Plain; it does not possess any natural frontiers, which makes it vulnerable to political upheavals and conquest by more powerful neighbours. In this context, the description of Poland as a country located between Germany and Russia, regarded as particularly significant by Czesław Miłosz, deserves some historical reflection (this also applies to other countries in that region). Problematic neighbours constituted a major challenge to these countries, while the necessity to fight for survival often consumed all available resources. On the other hand, having Germany as a neighbour ensured a flow of cultural values from the West to the East; that flow, from Italy, France, and other West European countries, would at times reach Poland directly, as if passing over Germany. According to many historians, the strong wave of Occidentalization which reached Polish culture in the thirteenth century led to the final victory of the orientation towards the West. However, influences from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, from the Byzantine-Slavic culture, as well as from Turkey and other countries of the Orient, also provided an important stimulus for the development of Polish culture.

In the history of Poland, its relations with Western Europe, and its 'return' to the family of European nations (which it certainly had never left), the era of the partitions forms an extremely important caesura. Even today it is regarded by many Poles as a disaster comparable only to World War II. The economic, politi-

cal, and military decline of Poland coincided with a period of rapid development, growth of power and aggressive policies of Russia and Prussia. Poland entered its twilight era only a few years after King John III Sobieski's victory over the Turks at Vienna (1683). As early as the first decades of the eighteenth century, Poland began to lose its sovereignty to Russia, which strongly influenced its internal and foreign policies. Three consecutive partitions: in 1772, 1793, and 1795, resulted in Poland disappearing from the map of Europe for the period spanning the years 1795 – 1918. Poland's last King, Stanislaus Augustus, one of the protagonists of this book, abdicated, soon to die abandoned. Attempted reforms, the proclamation of the Constitution of 3 May 1791, the first one on the continent of Europe, the Polish-Russian war and Kościuszko's Insurrection in 1794, all failed. It is probable that saving Poland was no longer possible regardless of the attempts. In fact, the proposed reforms may have hastened the partitions, since the three powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria (the latter participating in two partitions), justifiably feared the successful rebuilding of the Polish state, its economic consolidation, enlargement of the army, improvements in education and a cultural revival. Polish historian Tadeusz Korzon (1839-1918), in his historical narrative about Poland under the last King, Stanislaus Augustus, raised the question of the potential for development already present during the time of deep crisis, and introduced a concept that accurately reflected the then existing situation, describing it as 'revival in decline'.<sup>1</sup> When modern societies were being formed throughout Europe, Poland effectively did not participate in the process, missing out on the whole of the nineteenth century, so important for the history of modern Europe. The citizens of the previously multi-national Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were forced to become citizens of, respectively, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, powers which were generally hated. The reasons for Poland's decline are still the subject of analysis and public debate. Foreign historians tend to hold quite uniform views on this topic, regarding the Polish uprisings (above all, those of 1830, 1863, and 1944 - there were others) as unnecessary, and even harmful. Some, like Daniel Beauvois, are of the opinion that, no matter how pointless, insurgencies deserve respect and reflection;<sup>2</sup> others, both foreign and Polish, when analyzing the political situation in Europe, come to the conclusion that Poland's disappearance from the map of Europe was its own doing, and that it did not have a chance of regaining independence until the end of World War I. While not groundless, this seems a somewhat simplistic view. Among foreign authors, Norman Davis's recent *God's Playground. History of Poland* (two volumes) is the most extensive analysis of the subject. His books have received much attention in Poland and

1 This is the title of T. KORZON's selection of studies and essays: *Odrodzenie w upadku* [Revival in Decline], Warszawa 1975.

2 D. BEAUVOIS, *La Pologne: Histoire, société, culture*, Paris 2005 [2<sup>nd</sup> extended edition], p. 11 and pp. 227-262.

have significantly affected the way Poles perceive their history.<sup>3</sup> When “Poland’s rebirth”, awaited eagerly by six consecutive generations, finally came, the young state, glued painstakingly together from the remnants of three very different political structures under which Poles had been living, immediately faced enormous challenges and had to continue the struggle for its borders. The existence of a Polish state was unacceptable to Germany and Soviet Russia. While peace was enjoyed throughout most of Europe, Poles were fighting three Silesian uprisings and the Polish-Soviet War which broke out in 1920 and which prevented the invasion of Europe by revolutionary Russia. When, following the great economic crisis of 1929-30, Poland began to develop quickly into a modern state, the next disaster was only a few years away. In the autumn of 1939 Poland once again fell prey to aggression, this time with Hitler and Stalin closely cooperating with one another. When the decisions taken by the Great Powers after World War II led to the establishment of the Polish People’s Republic, this meant oppression by an unwanted political regime and, once more, being dominated by Russia. Poland again emerged as a country with a very different shape from that which had been won and accepted by the Poles after 1918.

The purpose of this historical overview is simply to remind, or to inform, the English-speaking readers about the context which frames the Poles’ historical experience, and how they think about their own country and Europe. It is easier to understand Polish fears and hopes from this perspective. The present volume on Polish culture is also part of Poland’s history. Poland has been a member of the European Union since 2004, and its accession was approved by 77 per cent of those voting in the referendum on the subject. This was not merely a political act undertaken for the sake of economic growth and the security which being part of the union would bring. For Poland, as well as for other East-Central European countries, it meant the restoration of an extremely significant historical bond. To reiterate, we had never left Western Europe; for centuries we had no doubt as to being both a country with its own tradition and character, and a member of that European community: loyal and faithful, supporting it steadfastly both in politics and as brothers-in-arms when it was possible, but also at a time when Poles, deprived of their statehood, took part in wars, uprisings and revolutions, both European and American, beginning with the American war of independence, fighting for ‘your freedom and ours’. Our identity has always been, and remains, European. All the ten chapters in this volume are concerned with that European identity, and its ties with the artistic culture of Western Europe.

3 Particularly the Polish edition: N. DAVIS, *God’s Playground. A History of Poland*, vol. I: *The Origins to 1795*. Columbia University Press, New York 1982, vol. II: *1795 to the Present*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, and idem, *Rising ’44. The Battle for Warsaw*, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., London 2003, and many others.

Examining the ties between Poland and Europe from the point of view of the geography of culture, it is immediately apparent that Poland lies on the periphery of Europe, far from the European centre: that, for several centuries, was considered to be Franco-Germany with various European additions. Among them, the most important for Poland over many centuries were Italy, but also France and Germany; to a lesser extent, Spain and Scandinavia, which in the nineteenth century became an important centre because of the works of Ibsen and Strindberg. Being culturally peripheral does not, obviously, apply only to the position of Poland, but to that of many other countries. Many years ago I tried, unsuccessfully, to organise a Polish-Scandinavian conference on the topic of the adoption of cultural influences emanating from France and Germany by Poland, Sweden, Finland and Norway (Denmark and Iceland are in a somewhat different situation in this respect), and how these influences, becoming active later than in their original centres, were modified and adapted to local conditions. My interlocutors showed a great deal of interest, but it turned out not to be strong enough to make them join the project. Reasons for this probably need to be sought in a perception of hierarchy and the spirit of rivalry in relation to the centre. Rivalries at the periphery can be just as fierce as in the centre, or between the centre and periphery. However, the book which is now being presented to the reader implements the original idea, albeit in a very limited and modified shape: it asks the question about the links between Polish artistic culture and the great cultural centres of Europe. We retain the idea of the direction of these links coming from the West or, more precisely, from the West and the South to the East. It is worth recalling another description of Poland and a number of its neighbours, penned by the Polish historian Jerzy Kłoczowski, who referred to a 'junior Europe'. That author ascribed the characteristics of being junior and peripheral to other cultural areas distant from the West European centre, among them Scandinavia.<sup>4</sup>

The authors of this volume undertook the task of demonstrating the links between Polish art, architecture, music and theatre and the great artistic centres of Western Europe, particularly where the research into such links has been very limited or totally absent. Chronologically, the research spans a period dating from the late Middle Ages until the First World War, with some references to the 1920s. The ten studies included here provide ample evidence of the vitality and richness of the relationship between Polish and Western artistic culture. Not only do they present little-known issues, but they also re-examine and re-evaluate a number of established views. Some of these studies in an expanded form will be published

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4 J. KŁOCZOWSKI, *Młodsza Europa. Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza* [*Junior Europe. East-Central Europe in the Christian Civilization of the Middle Ages*], Warszawa 1998, pp. 13 – 17 and passim.

as separate volumes. As a whole, they deal with very diverse aspects of the relations between Poland and Western Europe, I therefore describe them briefly in the chronological sequence in which they appear in this volume.

The first study, by Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, deals with the topic of '*Ars Musica*' in *Late Medieval Europe: Paris – Prague – Cracow*. The author points to the vital part played by universities in the transfer of the idea of musical education from the West to the East. The universities of Paris, Prague and Cracow were of great significance in this respect, although Cracow university, founded in 1364 and the oldest in Poland, did not see the establishment of *Facultas artium*, which included the teaching of *ars musica*, until the first decade of the fifteenth century. By that time the universities of Prague (1348), Vienna (1365), Erfurt (1392), Heidelberg (1386), Cologne (1388) and Leipzig (1409) were already well established. Institutional and personal contacts, the travels of scholars and students and the transfer of texts and music teaching programmes which followed form a complex network of relationships. The choice of these particular university centres is not accidental. In the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century Paris was undoubtedly the most powerful centre of musical culture in Europe. In turn, the university of Prague modelled itself on Paris and Oxford, but principally on Paris. The majority of Polish theoretical-musical sources is directly linked to Prague, and undoubtedly to the Czech lands, and the relationship between Cracow and Prague is particularly important and close. Significantly, there was a degree of 'phase shift' in the activity of these centres: Paris was at its most active during the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth, followed by a decline. On the other hand, Prague reached its pinnacle during the second half of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

The *ars musica* of the late medieval universities contributed towards a high degree of unification of music education in Europe. A teaching tradition which had existed for some centuries was given a formal framework in thirteenth-century Paris; it relied on the treatise on music by Boethius, and on Aristotle's writings as the methodological foundation for discourse on music theory, as well as its meta-language. In Prague and Cracow in the fifteenth century the role of the text by Boethius passed to *Musica speculativa* written in Paris by Johannes de Muris. The activities of the universities in Prague and Cracow in the field of music provided a strong impetus to the development of theoretical musical thought in Central Europe.

Another trail between European and Polish culture leads to Shakespeare. Jarosław Komorowski's study examines the journeys undertaken by Poles to England in search of 'the poet's country'. They travelled, as if following Goethe's

dictum: 'Wenn den Dichtern will verstehen, muss im Dichters Lande gehen'. We do not know which of the Polish visitors to England was the first to become acquainted with Shakespeare's plays at a theatre, or to hear of him, or even to meet him personally. It might have been Stanisław Cikowski, who visited England in 1603, or Jakub Sobieski (1609), who was the first to mention London theatres; perhaps it was Janusz Radziwiłł or the poet Daniel Naborowski (1609, 1611), or perhaps Bogusław Radziwiłł (1639). Polish journeys 'towards Shakespeare' can be documented with some certainty only from the mid-eighteenth century. Interestingly, there is no doubt that the last Polish king, Stanislaus Augustus, did read Shakespeare in the original. Polish culture of that time was very much under the influence of France, and for a long time English was a little known, almost exotic language; it was the advent of Romanticism which brought a dramatic change. In 1831 Juliusz Słowacki, a romantic poet, saw *Richard III* with Edmund Kean in London. Adam Mickiewicz read Shakespeare in the original, but never visited England. Stratford-upon-Avon became a place of pilgrimage for Polish romantics who idolised the Bard. London is associated with an important episode in the artistic career of Helena Modrzejewska, known in the USA as Modjeska. In 1881 she played Juliet in Shakespeare's homeland, receiving generally favourable reviews. In time, Polish travels towards Shakespeare came to involve mainly visits to English theatres.

The study by Hanna Osiecka-Samsonowicz, titled *Polish Ceremonies in the Roman 'Teatro del Mondo' (1587-1696)* deals with topics bordering history, history of art, customs, the art of creating spectacles, and theatre. Baroque ceremonies, both secular and sacral, were an extraordinarily complex and important social-artistic phenomenon of the period, and they played a significant part in the history of seventeenth-century Rome. Not only did they create a fictional world in which the city recovered its old glory and prestige, but they were also an important tool of political propaganda and Counter-Reformation ideology, reflecting the history of the continent. Coronations and demises of European rulers and members of their families, arrivals of foreign envoys, births of heirs to the throne, victories in wars and over infidels, as well as all kinds of church feast days provided opportunities for celebrations. Towards the end of the sixteenth and during the seventeenth centuries Rome saw more than three hundred of such spectacular events, as well as numerous more modest ones. Their basic attraction were the rich occasional decorations, and expensive para-theatrical and pyrotechnical 'machines' and 'apparatuses' which provided many hours of entertainment. Both the Church and the European courts used the Eternal City – the world information centre – as an enormous theatre stage, a 'gran Teatro del Mondo', where power, riches, sophisticated taste and political aspirations could be displayed.



During the reign of of Sigismund III (1587-1632), Ladislaus IV (1632-1648), John Casimir (1648-1668), Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669-1673) and John III Sobieski (1674-1696) many important 'Polish' ceremonies took place in Rome. Most of these spectacles, very diverse in terms of content and artistic setting, still remain to be fully researched and described. The archival sources are relatively plentiful, and while the iconographic ones are less so, they still allow one to attempt a reconstruction of their scenarios. Extremely valuable information is provided by the diaries of the papal masters of ceremonies: Giovanni Paolo Mucante and Paolo Alaleone, Giacinto Gigli, Galeazzo Mareschotti and Giuseppe Cervini, as well as the handwritten *Avvisi di Roma*, numerous printed accounts and a number of other archival sources. Such 'Polish' ceremonies associated with Embassies of Obedience, elections of monarchs and births of their heirs, victories of Polish arms and exequies after rulers' deaths are presented by the author of this study not only in their artistic aspect, but also (and at times, primarily) in their political context, often throwing new light on the history of the relations between the Polish Commonwealth and the Holy See during that period. It was through the 'Roman' ceremonies, which played an important part in creating the image of Poland not only as *Antemurale Christianitas*, that Europe learned about the most important moments in Polish history. The magnificent cortege of Jerzy Ossolinski (1633), who headed the Obedience Embassy of Ladislaus IV Vasa, dazzled with gold and precious jewels. It was still remembered in Rome almost half a century later, when the legate of Jan III Sobieski, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (1680), tried to eclipse its legend. It is worth noting that the fireworks display on the capture of Smolensk in 1611 was intended to celebrate the first military success of Christian armies in the seventeenth century. This was one of the earliest spectacles of this kind organised by a foreign nation in the baroque Rome. Celebrations to honour the victory at Vienna (1683) and John III Sobieski, who sent to Pope Innocent XI the famous 'banner of the Grand Vizier' from the battlefield, were unquestionably a 'media' victory for the military prowess of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its ruler. On his death in 1696 he was honoured in Rome with truly royal *pompa funebris*.

Relations with Rome, but also with Vienna, in the seventeenth century, are discussed in Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska's study *The Music-Related Contacts of Polish Vasas' Royal Courts with Rome and Vienna*. The musical life at the courts of Sigismund III and his sons Ladislaus IV and John Casimir has continued to be the subject of research by an international group of historians of music and theatre for over a hundred years. Greatest attention has been paid to Italian musicians working in the ensembles of the 'Polish' Vasas. Works on the operas at the court of Ladislaus IV form an important aspect of this historiography. This was the first court opera theatre outside Italy where systematically, almost every



year (during the years 1635-1648), original *drammi per musica* were written and staged, the majority of them with librettos by Virgilio Puccitelli, who enjoyed the patronage of the Polish king. Unfortunately their music, which at least in part was composed by the royal chapel master Marco Scacchi, has not survived to our day. From the point of view of the reception of the Italian *musica moderna* in Central and Northern Europe, of significance is the theoretical dispute between Marco Scacchi, the chapel master of Ladislaus IV, and Paul Siefert, the organist of the Marian church in Gdańsk. This has been the subject of research for several generations of Polish, American, German, Italian and Austrian musicologists. The writing generated by the musicians' polemics has also contributed to popularising the compositions of Italian musicians working in Poland, as well as the local composers educated under their influence.

Musical contacts between the courts of the Polish Vasas and Rome were a deliberate choice by Sigismund III, son of the Protestant King of Sweden, John III, and the Catholic Princess Catherine Jagiellon. When establishing his ensemble he turned for help to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Rome. The assistance provided to Sigismund by Pope Clement VIII and his nepotic cardinals had an obvious political aim; the church hierarchs wanted to win the young monarch's support for the idea of creating a league of Catholic states against Turkey. Long-term, the Papacy envisaged re-Catholicising Sweden and converting Moscow to Catholicism.

As a result of this policy, numerous Italian musicians recruited at the Eternal City flocked to the Commonwealth of Both Nations. Among them were renowned composers, such as Annibale Stabile, Luca Marenzio, Asprillo Pacelli and Giovanni Francesco Anerio, employed as chapel masters at the court of Sigismund III and thus able to determine the style of the repertory performed by the royal ensemble. Alongside the arrivals who came directly from Italy, Italian musicians also came to Poland from Graz and Vienna; this was the result of the family links between the Habsburgs and Sigismund III and his first-born son Ladislaus: both of them married Austrian Archduchesses.

The court of the Polish Vasa also functioned as an important centre of musical education. Young singers and instrumentalists from Italy, as well as young people from all corners of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were educated by highly regarded Italian chapel masters and other experienced musicians. Continuous turnover of the members of the ensemble provided favourable conditions for extending its repertory, adding compositions which followed the latest trends in Italian music; it also meant that the musicians' tastes and skills were continuously being revised and adapted. The presence of famous Italian com-

posers drew the attention of other musical centres in Poland and neighbouring countries as early as the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; evidence of this is provided by copies of works by Luca Marenzio and Asprilio Pacelli, which were probably composed in Poland while they were members of the court of Sigismund III, yet are preserved in collections in Gdańsk, Silesia and Saxony. Interest in the music performed by the royal ensemble included the works of Marco Scacchi, whose name has already been mentioned, as well as the group of local composers whom he directed: Adam Jarzębski, Marcin Mielczewski and Bartłomiej Pękiel. Surviving sources demonstrate that there was a demand for their works, primarily from the Protestant communities; among the latter, music from the repertory of the royal ensemble was most probably also promoted by Kaspar Förster Junior. A native of Gdańsk, he was a singer in the ensemble of Ladislaus IV and John Casimir, and then *maestro di capella* of the musical ensemble of King Frederick II of Denmark. The author supposes that Förster's activities at the Danish court may have contributed to awakening an interest in Sweden and in Schleswig-Holstein not only in his own works, but also in the repertory of the ensembles of the 'Polish' Vasas, created by other composers. It is to that interest that we owe the survival of often unique transmissions of works by Förster, Pękiel, Mielczewski and Scacchi which were copied there. Other sources confirm that compositions written under the patronage of the elected Polish kings from the Vasa dynasty were also known in the seventeenth century in various German centres, in Paris, Moravia, Slovakia, Ukraine and even Russia.

In his study *Sculptors from the Court Circles of Augustus II the Strong and Augustus III, Kings of Poland and Electors of Saxony* Jakub Sito takes up a subject until now almost totally neglected by research, which concentrated on architecture, urban planning and, to a limited extent, on painting. This neglect of sculpture resulted from the fact that both kings from the Wettin dynasty were very interested in architecture and were responsible for the construction or a thorough remodelling of some ten buildings in Warsaw alone. Augustus II was motivated by the desire to create a framework for his absolutist rule, while his successor wanted his everyday life to be framed by opulent splendour. The picture of art created during the Saxon influence is incomplete and inaccurate without a discussion of the role played by sculpture. The author examined Polish archives and the German archives in Dresden, which enabled him to present a reasonably complete analysis of the sculpture of that period. A researcher in this area faces a difficult situation because of the war damage suffered by both the works of art and the archives in Warsaw and in Dresden. The sculptures which can be examined represent a random selection of those which happened to survive, while documentation and studies relating to them are usually missing.

The artists who created the defining sculptures of that epoch, who were permanently linked to Dresden, are mostly outstanding foreigners, such as Jean-Joseph Vinache and François and Pierre Coudray. The author compares their Polish works with the *oeuvre* which they left behind them in Dresden and in Saxony in general. A separate issue is the involvement of local sculptors employed in realising the Wettins' artistic ambitions in Warsaw and in Poland. Such a sculptor was the Polish woodcarver Bartłomiej Bernatowicz, but the most important part was played by the First Court Sculptor (*Der Erste Hofbildhauer*) Johann Georg Plersch, who came from Southern Germany and was educated in the Czech lands and in Rome. During the reigns of Augustus II the Strong and Augustus III sculpture, alongside satisfying the aesthetic requirements of the kings, also played a part in state-building. Following the example of the French court, sculpture both in Dresden and in Warsaw became a means of self-presentation for the authorities, embodying their splendour and omnipotence. The French example also had great influence on the selection of the sculptors themselves. The French functional and ideological model was sufficiently powerful in both capitals of the Polish-Saxon Union to influence decisions meant to be purely formal and artistic. One can trace a common artistic line and continuity of aspirations in the works of sculptors who came from Dresden to Warsaw or who sent their works there over a period of several decades. Paradoxically, however, local sculptors who served the Saxon court were Germans permanently resident in Warsaw, such as Plersch and his Central European co-workers, while those who came from Dresden were French. Another issue concerns the increasingly cosmopolitan character of art in eighteenth-century Warsaw, with sculpture being its significant component.

The study by Katarzyna Mikocka-Rachubowa, *Rome and Sculpture in Poland in the Reign of King Stanislaus Augustus (1764-1795)* deals with the subject of sculpture during a somewhat later period. Poland's last king was an outstanding connoisseur of fine arts, theatre and literature. His interest in sculpture manifested itself both in wide-ranging collectorship and in initiatives aimed at raising the state's artistic culture by creating an important sculpture centre in the capital. During his reign the term 'sculpture in Poland' in the majority of cases referred to works purchased abroad, in France and Italy, and to works of foreign artists active in Poland. The most important point of reference for the king's artistic ambitions was Rome. It was there that Stanislaus Augustus bought sculptures to adorn the Royal Castle and Łazienki (the Royal Baths), it was there that he recruited artists to his court in Warsaw, and drew inspiration for his projects.

Intending to open an academy of fine arts in Warsaw, the king modelled it on the French Academy in Rome, particularly highly regarded by the European art

academies which were being newly created at that time. Inspired by its teaching programme and its collections, he himself began to collect treatises on perspective and on anatomy, drawings, engravings, and above all plaster-of-Paris copies and casts of the most admired ancient and contemporary sculptures. The idea of an academy was never realised, but sculpture and painting studios were created at the Royal Castle in Warsaw which took on the function of fine art academies, using the collection of copies and casts of the most famous sculpture as a teaching aid. The collection was regarded by researchers as one of the most complete of its kind in Europe at that time. Sculptors employed at the court of Stanislaus Augustus were almost exclusively either Italians or individuals who arrived from Italy. The king offered them protection and patronage, creating a nationally significant centre for sculpture. André Le Brun (1737-1811), born in Paris but a graduate of the French Academy in Rome, came to Warsaw from Rome in 1768 and for nearly 30 years held the post of „first sculptor” at the Warsaw court of Stanislaus Augustus. Le Brun was the creator of many sculptures destined to decorate royal residences, as well as heading a workshop employing several artists. The royal court in Warsaw also employed natives of Rome, the court sculptors Giacomo Monaldi (1733 – 1798), who arrived in Poland with Le Brun and who lived in Warsaw until his death, and Tommaso Righi (1722-1802), a person of some significance in the artistic community of Rome, who arrived in Poland aged nearly 60 and eventually died there. The works of these artists represented the style of mature and late Roman baroque. The collection of King Stanislaus Augustus included the works of all the important sculptors active in Rome at that time, such as Carlo Albacini (1734-1813), Giuseppe Angelini (1738-1811), Lorenzo (1733-1794) and Domenico (1767-1797) Cardelli, Antonio D’Este (1754-1837), Francesco Righetti (1749-1819), Vincenzo Pacetti (1746-1820), Agostino Penna (1728-1800), Giovanni Pierantoni (d. 1817), Bartolomeo Cavaceppi (1716-1799), Giovanni Volpato (1735-1803) and Angelo Pucinelli. To some of them Stanislaus Augustus awarded the title ‘scultore della corte di Polonia’ or ‘scultore del Re di Polonia’, although they had never visited Poland. Even Antonio Canova produced works for the Polish king, the first European monarch to become interested in his art. After the king’s abdication and death, and the disappearance of Poland from the political map of Europe in 1795, the collection was gradually dispersed. What has survived is the catalogue and other archival material, held also at the Archivio di Stato di Roma; these show just what a vast number of Roman sculptures had been purchased by the royal court in Poland. Numerous works of art, including Roman sculpture, also found their way to other Polish collections, purchased in large numbers by aristocrats and landowners during their *Grand Tour*, undertaken particularly frequently in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with a visit to Rome as its major stage.

Very different issues, also of significance, are raised in the study by Małgorzata Omilanowska, *Polish Architects Studying in Berlin in the Nineteenth Century*, which takes us to nineteenth-century Germany and the field of architecture. As pointed out by the author, there is a particular difficulty relating to this research, in that the subject is very extensive and difficult to present in precise terms. While the mutual links and influence of Germany in Poland begin in the early Middle Ages, it is only in the nineteenth century that the influence of Berlin becomes dominant. At that time Berlin held an important position in Europe in many areas, including architecture, and its influence on the architecture of Polish lands in the nineteenth century presents a complex problem. To begin with, it is necessary to separate the influence exerted on the Prussian part of the partitioned Poland from that exerted on the Austrian and Russian parts. In a sense, the influence of Berlin in the Prussian area is a natural result of the fact that the great majority of architects in the Grand Duchy of Poznań were educated in Berlin; it is thus almost inevitable that the cultural landscape of the region, and the cities of Wielkopolska and Kuyavia, was dominated by 'Berlinische' architecture in the nineteenth century. The situation was different in the parts ruled by Austria and Russia. Both in Galicia and in the Kingdom of Poland the influence of Berlin, while significant, was on a relatively small scale. For geopolitical reasons, Cracow and Lvov looked to Vienna, while for Warsaw the point of reference was St Petersburg. After the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw was closed and the building regulations became stricter it was no longer possible to graduate in architecture in the Kingdom of Poland. Tsar Nicholas I first limited the curriculum, reducing it to purely practical subjects, and then closed the school in 1864 as part of the repressive measures after the fall of the January Uprising. To become an architect one had to study in St Petersburg or, slightly less far, in Riga.

A strong architectural centre makes its impact either directly, through the presence of an architect from that centre in a specific area, or indirectly, by imported designs, the effect of journals published at the centre, the exhibitions that the centre organises, and finally its prestige and the myths which develop around it. Berlin fulfilled that role to perfection. It was one of the fastest-developing urban centres in Europe, with a powerful community of locally educated, highly qualified and well organised architects. The city could boast of a long tradition of education in the Academy of Fine Arts, reaching back to 1696 and strengthened in 1799 by the creation of the Bauakademie. That institution primarily produced administrators for the construction industry, who played a decisive role in shaping the architecture of the whole state sector, and to whom the legal system entrusted enormous influence on design and other areas of construction. Berlin became almost unrivalled as a centre for teaching architecture in Germany, with the only real competition being provided by Munich. It was not until the end of the nineteenth

century that a few other centres developed sufficiently to take up the challenge of competing with Berlin.

The Berlin schools, the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der Künste) and the Building Academy (Bauakademie), transformed into a University of Technology (Technische Hochschule Charlottenburg) in 1879, employed many outstanding architects, often educated at the schools where they went on to teach. Graduates of the Berlin schools established contacts through belonging to professional organisations, associations and corporations, and maintained links with their alma mater for a long time after completing their studies. Polish graduates of the Berlin academies, some of them prominent, others less well known, have, through their buildings, made their mark on the history of architecture in all the Polish cities within the Prussian partition, as well as in Warsaw and Lvov. The most important ones include such names as Roger Sławski, Stefan Ballenstaedt, Stefan Cybichowski, Tadeusz Obmiński, Juliusz Hochberger and Zygmunt Gorgolewski.

Tomasz Grygiel continues the theme of the history of architecture, taking up the subject of the influence of Munich – another great centre of architectural and construction studies. As he demonstrates in his article, *Munich Inspiration in the Architectural Landscape of Warsaw in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (until 1914)*, Munich played an important role in shaping the modern architectonic landscape of Warsaw. This is the first time that this subject has been tackled so comprehensively. The beginnings of interesting contacts between Warsaw and Munich date back to the eighteenth century. After 1771, a prominent architect working in Munich, François Cuvilliés the Younger, designed a *Monument for the city of Warsaw*, with the king of Poland in mind. The design was never implemented, but this was the first step towards collaboration between the two cities, and the nineteenth century saw the development of lively contacts between them. Leonard Schmidtner, architect and lithographer educated at the Munich Academy, who stayed in Warsaw during the years 1823–1825, produced an enormous survey inventory titled *A Collection of the More Successful Buildings of the Municipal City of Warsaw, Partially Taken from Nature, and Partially Drawn after the Existing Plans, Drawn and Lithographed by an Academic of Building of Munich* (Warszawa 1823, fascicles I, II, 1824, fascicle III). This inventory, of high artistic value, recorded nearly a hundred important buildings, mainly from the neoclassicist period. Schmidtner's plan of Warsaw, *Plan de Varsovie* (1825), is of similar documentary value, showing in its framing 57 of Warsaw's most magnificent buildings. After returning to Bavaria in 1825 the architect published his work under the title *Sammlung der Vorzüglichsten Gebäude in Warschau*. It found favour in the eyes of the King of Bavaria, Maximilian I, who awarded the artist a medal of merit for services to art and science.

The author traces the earliest influences of Munich architecture in nineteenth-century Warsaw to Łazienki Majewskiego at Bednarska Street 2/4 (1832-1835), designed by Alfons Kropiwnicki. Among the natives of Munich working in Warsaw a significant figure is Georg Völck, an architect and watercolourist, who settled there permanently in 1844. An outstanding example of his work was the house of Baron Stanisław Lesser at Miodowa 21 (1850-1851), originally the residence of the Diplomatic Mission of the Kingdom of Bavaria. The shape of this house demonstrates features of a peculiar style, rarely encountered outside Munich and known as the Maximilian style (*Maximilianstil*). It is to be found almost exclusively in buildings along Munich's famous and prestigious Maximilianstrasse. The façade of the building (no longer standing) at Miodowa Street represented the peak of the Maximilian style, which attempted the difficult synthesis of Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance styles. What was previously unknown is that the truly Munichois character of the Lesser house was recognised by Warsaw critics, including Wojciech Gerson.

The example of the Lesser House does not exhaust the list of buildings in Warsaw influenced by the style from Munich. Another one is to be found in the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Leszno (1866-80) designed by Adolf Adam Loewe, the construction of which involved the builder Edward Kreutzburg. This building is quite evidently reminiscent of the Catholic Marienhilf-Kirche in der Au (1832-39), erected in Munich's Marienhilf-Platz by Joseph D. Ohlmüller, with the contribution of Georg F. Ziebland. A link with the Munich tradition can also be detected in the building of the Orthodox synagogue in Warsaw (1892-1902), called the Nożyk Synagogue. It is supposed to have been built by Kazimierz Loewe, son of Adolf Adam, who studied for some time at the Munich Academy, as did his father. A possible inspiration for it, which he may have borne in mind, is the All Saints Church at the Wittelsbach residence complex in Munich built by Leo von Klenze in 1826-27.

The influence of Munich architecture on Warsaw intensified around the year 1914, with many sources of inspiration. Gustaw Trzcński became interested in the variant of Munich architecture with a slightly classicist tendency which developed in the early twentieth century. This interest found its expression in the Jeger house, designed by him and erected around 1914 at Wilcza 9a. Henryk Stifelmann followed the example of Munich in his monumental Michał Bergson Educational Home erected in Jagiellońska Street in Warsaw's Praga district (1913-14). The edifice is clearly reminiscent of the works of Theodor Fischer, particularly his Volks- und Gewerbeschule at 4 Elisabethplatz in Munich (1901-02); however, on rare occasions the elements of detail assimilate motifs from the Jewish tradition. Although the Jewish Boarding House erected



by Stifelman at 7 Namiestnikowska Street (currently Sierakowskiego Street), was in fact built in 1924-26, it also showed kinship with the work of architects active in Munich in earlier years, such as Karl Hocheder, Gabriel von Seidl, and Hans Grässer.

We return to the question of the history of theatre in Poland with a study of the reception of Ibsen and Strindberg in Polish theatre, discussed by Lech Sokół in his paper titled *Awareness Expanded. Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg in Poland (1874-1918). Reception and Revision*. The author re-examines a number of myths which have grown in Poland around the reception of these two giants of European drama. That reception by theatre professionals, critics, audiences and readers was full of enthusiasm, but still unsatisfactory and superficial.

As we know, research into reception reveals more about the culture which does the receiving than about the writer or the culture being received. In this respect, the reception of the works of Ibsen and Strindberg was quite distinctive. Following an established European tradition, Scandinavian literature made its way into the wider world via Germany. This was also the case here, but the German imprint on their works was so strong in Poland that the author describes their reception, metaphorically expressing his personal views, as 'Ibsen and Strindberg as German playwrights in Poland'. For many years their plays were known only in translation from German.

The period examined by the author was of particular importance in the reception of Ibsen and Strindberg in Poland. It begins in 1874, the year when Ibsen's name appears for the first time in a book published in Poland where one can also find more detailed information about him. The book was Adolf Strodtmann's *Das geistige Leben in Dänemark*, translated from German, which had been published in Berlin a year earlier. Ibsen's plays were not staged in Poland until 1882, while Strindberg's works found their way to Poland in 1885. This delay does not seem excessive for a periphery, but it is very significant when compared to the situation in the centre. In fact, in this case the German centre was substantially ahead of the French one, even though it was the success of Ibsen and Strindberg in the French theatre which ensured their entry into the European canon. The reception of the works of the two authors took place primarily through the theatres, but also through academic, publishing and cultural centres in the widest sense of the word: Berlin, Munich and Vienna, as well as other cities in the German-speaking territories. The image of Ibsen and Strindberg in Poland was shaped not only by the theatre productions, but in a great measure also by the German-language theatre criticism. At times it even supplied the metaphors used in Poland to describe the works of these dramatists. Naturally, traditional cultural links between Poland and France played a very significant part, but, on this occasion, it was not the leading role.

Research into the reception of Ibsen and Strindberg is decidedly of a high standard; an important part in this achievement has been played primarily by three authors: Jan Michalik, who in 1974 published a volume on Polish criticism of Ibsen during the period 1874-1906, Andrzej Nils Uggla, who discussed the reception of Strindberg in *Strindberg och den polska teatern 1890-1970. En studie i reception* (Uppsala 1977, in Swedish), and the late Father Marian Lewko who discussed both authors in his monumental volume *Obecność Skandynawów w polskiej kulturze teatralnej w latach 1876-1918* [The Presence of Scandinavians in Polish Theatre Culture during the Years 1876-1918] (Lublin 1996, pp. 848). The role of these books in the research into the reception of Ibsen and Strindberg in Polish theatre was invaluable. The task undertaken by Lech Sokół was to question the clear-cut, unproblematic image of the presence of the works of Ibsen and Strindberg in Poland. Even as early as the volume by Jan Michalik evidence can be found of the author's significant doubts as to the truth of the general conviction that the consciousness of Poles had been totally 'Ibsenised' – a conviction reinforced in interviews, reminiscences and diaries of theatre-goers and critics recalling their youth spent with Ibsen or Strindberg. To put it briefly, the reception of the great Scandinavians did not lead, in the period 1874-1918, to creating in the Polish theatre a native version of their European (in this case, German) reception. Very few original works of criticism were written, in spite of the fact that the most illustrious critics of that time spoke on the subject of Ibsen and Strindberg. The enormous enthusiasm of the theatre-going public passed without leaving any significant trace. Academic criticism and university teaching were simply not there to support either of the dramatists. A university event of great importance, which might have changed the reception of Ibsen's work, did not come until the anniversary address by Zygmunt Łempicki (1886-1943 KL Auschwitz), an outstanding Germanist and philosopher, who in 1928 at the Jagiellonian University delivered a famous paper in honour of Ibsen, which was later published. This happened too late, and did not bring the expected results.

Only the theatre did not let Ibsen and Strindberg down. It provided their plays with the best actors and directors of the period, with excellent results. Such performers of Ibsenian and Strindbergian parts as Stanisława Wysocka and Karol Adwentowicz raised Polish theatre to the highest standard. After watching a production of Ibsen in the Stanislavsky Theatre Wysocka wrote that Ibsen's plays are performed better in Cracow. That was true. Initially, the Stanislavsky had problems with staging Ibsen's plays, and it was only the great success of Meyerhold's production of *The Doll's House* which pointed Russian and European theatre in a new direction. Another modern approach to staging Ibsen's, as well as Strindberg's, plays came from Max Reinhardt. Under the influence of Ibsen's dramas and their innovative staging, the aesthetic awareness of actors, directors, stage

designers and audiences was greatly expanded, both in Europe and in Poland. The introduction of Ibsen's and Strindberg's plays brought a decisive change to drama and to Polish theatre.

The last study in our book is Anna Wierzbicka's *Polish Artistic Colony in Paris (1900-1918) in the Texts by the Art Critic and Art Dealer Adolf Basler*. It is a coincidence that a study involving Paris closes the book, but it is a fortunate coincidence with a symbolic meaning. France, and Paris, have played an exceptional role in Poland's history and culture, but many of the most important, as well as some quite important, issues have already been the subject of substantial or at least reasonably extensive research. However, in this case we are dealing with a little-known theme. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Paris was the magnet for artists from all the partitioned Polish lands, seeking that which was also the object of desire of artists from other countries: freedom of artistic expression; opportunity to study art free from clichés and conservatism; opportunity to develop their talent which they were unable to find back home; abundance of art collections and artistic life; a favourable attitude of critics and art dealers, openness towards foreigners and a public interest in their works, characteristic of that time, and, finally, openness toward the most diverse avant-garde trends. Poland, being deprived of statehood and political independence, relied on tradition as one of the fundamental national images. The conception of a nation was rooted above all in Hippolyte Taine's ideas (or those close to them), of a 'tribal temperament', which was to bestow specific characteristics on the art of individual nations. In a country where interest continued to concentrate on paintings reflecting popular anecdotes and history, artists who wanted to follow Cézanne and paint an ordinary still life could not expect either understanding or good will from the critics, who, moreover, did not support the idea of young artists going abroad. In essence, travelling to Paris offered an artist the only opportunity for development and for making one's mark in art. During the years 1900-1914 Paris saw a gathering of two or even three generations of painters and sculptors representing diverse artistic trends. Among them were some of the greatest artists, as well as those who were unknown and later became known, or those known in their day but forgotten today.

Critics who stayed in Paris for longer or shorter periods maintained close contacts with the painters and sculptors living there. They sent home reports which frequently were the only source of information about cultural events in Paris and in France. One such critic was Adolf Basler (1876-1951), an excellent art critic and dealer born in Tarnów, who came to Paris around the year 1898. He had connections with the family of Henryk Gierszyński, who lived in Ouarville near Chartres. It was probably there that Basler met the philosopher Mieczysław Gold-

berg, under whose influence he turned to art criticism. On the other hand, Basler's friendship with the son of Henryk Gierszyński, Stanisław, influenced his interest in the socialist movement associated with the Cracovian journal *Naprzód*. As part of his activities in that area Basler often travelled to Cracow and to Lvov during the years 1900-1912. From 1900 onwards he intermittently studied at the Sorbonne. During that period he also began writing for Polish and French magazines. His early articles appeared in *La Revue Blanche*, *La Plume*, *L'Art Decoratif*, as well *Sztuka* and *Hasło* published in Paris. However, Basler's most important articles from the period before the First World War were sent to Poland. Written in the years 1907-1913, his reports and reviews from the salons of Paris, where he was a regular visitor, were decidedly superior to those of other reporters and critics. We find them in the supplement to Warsaw's *Nowa Gazeta – Literatura i Sztuka*, but also in the Warsaw journal *Sfinks*, in *Museion* and *Krytyka* in Cracow, and in *Sztuka* in Lvov. Like Guillaume Apollinaire, with whom he was acquainted, until 1918 Adolf Basler was a promoter and defender of the avant-garde, and like the majority of French critics who supported 'independent' art, he was against the official salons and the art produced by the academicians. Aware of the lack of knowledge among the Polish public, he tried to describe and interpret new artistic trends: Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, or Orphism. He introduced into the language of Polish criticism new, previously unknown or little-known terms, which appear in his texts alongside such concepts as modern art, avant-garde or modernism. Basler's articles acquainted readers not only with new representatives of contemporary art and with their work, such as Matisse, Picasso, Derain, Delauney or Metzinger, but also with the critics, particularly Apollinaire, fragments of whose texts on art he would often publish in Poland. He also quoted artists, the majority of whom he knew personally, but would also refer to monographs, for example on Cézanne or Rousseau Le Douanier. Basler's texts would include such aspects as an analysis of the methods of Cubist painting and factual descriptions of the new trends, which makes them a valuable source of information. Regarded as the first Polish apologist of Cubism, he contributed in a large measure to popularising the knowledge about this artistic trend. In Basler's early texts, Paul Cézanne is given a prominent position as an unquestionable precursor of new art. In his correspondence, Basler devotes much space to the works of Matisse, whose work he warmly supported, as did Golberg and Apollinaire. In 1908 we also find in Basler's correspondence references to Derain and Picasso.

Analysing new phenomena in twentieth-century art, Basler described and promoted the works of Polish artists working in France, such as Kisling, Nadelman, Merkel and Zawadowski, and many others. He was one of the first to write favourably about the colony of Polish artists in Paris, who during the years 1900-1914 were making their début on the French and international art stage. Basler's reviews

allow us to trace the development of individual painters and sculptors working in France, read about their work and discover the more mature phases of their art. Basler also tries to identify the features of various trends and tendencies of the new art in the works of the artists he is concerned with. He reveals himself as an insightful critic, able to describe and characterise precisely a given work or artist. His descriptions and judgments very often turn out to be valid and valuable even today.

In the inter-war period, Paris slowly began to lose its status as the leading centre of modern art. Its dominant position was being taken over by other centres, such as Zurich, the birthplace of Dadaism, or Weimar and Dessau which produced Bauhaus. Starting from the mid-1930s the role of the leading art centre was taken over by New York which kept that position until 1945. However, during the years 1900-14 France was the artistic heart of Europe and the Western World. Polish artists and art critics, above all Basler, made a significant and permanent contribution to the art of that period.

The studies collected in this volume describe Poland's relations with the culture of Western Europe spanning almost seven centuries. The topics chosen are important yet little known, and virtually unknown to West European readers, except for a few historians and critics of art, music, and theatre specialising in particular periods of their development. It can easily be seen that our studies show no overall continuity. This should not be surprising: the intention was to present a collection of studies and not a consistent historical narrative. However, I am confident that, despite this lack of continuity, the reader will come away with a suggestion of a coherent overall impression of the relations between Western Europe and Poland. Polish culture appears much more as a recipient of Western culture than the reverse. Yet this does not mean that Polish culture had nothing to offer. There are complex reasons why Poland's cultural influence did not reach far, but it also often served as a bridge between the West and other peripheries, as documented in some of the present studies. The pathway led from Poland further on: to the East, South-East, and to the North. The process of transferring culture was sometimes capricious and more complex than one could have expected. What matters most is that it never stopped. This is how the multifaceted unity of European culture was created; and it is this unity which, in spite of all the differences, accounts for the common European identity. The spiritual unity of Western Europe, together with its peripheries, the unity of Europe as such, cannot be denied.

Translated by Zofia Weaver