

# Marian Sokołowski: patriotism and the genesis of scientific art history in Poland<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Marian Sokołowski, born in 1839, was the first occupant of the chair of art history at the University of Cracow, 1882, a position to which he was appointed in 1882 four years after he was awarded his habilitation.<sup>2</sup> From his early studies of the medieval ruins of Ostrów Lednicki and his work on the painter Hans Suess of Kulmbach onwards, he created a model of art historical scholarship – which he described as ‘the presentation of art history as cultural history’ – that played a central role in the establishment of art history as a scientific discipline in Cracow.<sup>3</sup>

It is sometimes hard to grasp the range of Sokołowski’s activity. Appointed private docent at the Jagiellonian University from 1878, he continued teaching until his death in 1911, creating a ‘scientific apparatus’ for the teaching of art history. This apparatus even included the form of the building that housed it, for Sokołowski was responsible for the internal layout and organisation of the *collegium novum* of the Jagiellonian University, where art history was taught.<sup>4</sup> Sokołowski also served as director of the Princes Czartoryski Museum and was responsible for its enlargement, the arrangement of its collection, and the initiation of a scientific inventory.<sup>5</sup> In addition, he was an active member of the National Museum Committee in Cracow and was one of those who determined its initial form. He was also a member, and

<sup>1</sup> The article is an extended version of the text ‘Included – ex-cluded. Building a monument of Art History in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century’, in *The History of Art History in Central-Eastern and Southern-Eastern Europe*, vol. 1, ed. by Jerzy Malinowski, Toruń: Society of Modern Art and Tako Publishing House, 2012, 101–110. It is a result of my doctoral dissertation prepared at Jagiellonian University in 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Biographical sources can be found in the Archive of Jagiellonian University (henceforth JAG): (e.g. *Teki osobowe pracowników w latach 1850–1939* [Personal files], AUJ, S II 619: Wykaz służby Dra Mariana Sokołowskiego, Profesora Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego; *Część papierów po M. Sokołowskim ze spuścizny M. Rogawskiego*, Cracow, BJ, add.. 584/05 in Jagiellonian Library. The biography was published by L. Kalinowski.

<sup>3</sup> Marian Sokołowski, ‘Ruiny na Ostrowie jeziora w Lednicy. Studium nad budownictwem w przedchrześcijańskich i pierwszych chrześcijańskich wiekach w Polsce’, *Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności*, 3, 1876, 117–277; Sokołowski, ‘Hans Sues von Kulmbach jego obrazy w Krakowie i jego mistrz Jacopo dei Barbari. Przyczynek do historii malarstwa w epoce przejścia ze średnich wieków w renesans i Hans stosunki artystyczne Krakowa z Norymbergą w XVI wieku’, *Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania historii sztuki w Polsce w Akademii Umiejętności*, vol. 2, 1884, 53–117. The Summary published in German as Sokołowski, Marian, Dr. [sic], ‘Die Italienischen Kuenstler der Renaissance in Krakau’, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 8, 1885, 411–423.

<sup>4</sup> See JAG, Collegium Novum File, no. S II 1027. This is a card with Marian Sokołowski’s desiderata, where he lists all his demands (including the wall colour, the furniture, the shape of the columns for the plaster casts and the design of the chests for the collection of drawings and photographs).

<sup>5</sup> M. Sokołowski, letter to Prince Władysław Czartoryski, where he arouse the necessity of ‘wissenschaftlich’ catalogue.

eventually chairman of, the art historical commission of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the chairman of the Circle of Conservators of Western Galicia. In addition to these, his main fields of activity, he was actively engaged with contemporary artistic movements in Cracow through exhibition and conservation work.<sup>6</sup>

Most importantly, perhaps, as the author of many scholarly publications as well as popular reviews and public lectures, Sokołowski defined the paradigm in which art historians in Cracow worked. Robert Nelson has argued that 'what is often forgotten [are] the deepest structures' and 'the taxonomy into which we fitted [...] our research [...] because 'we worked contentedly within a paradigm, seldom questioning its borders'.<sup>7</sup> It is precisely these 'forgotten structures' and 'borders' of art history in Cracow that Sokołowski was instrumental in setting up. It is for this reason that he is such a significant historical figure, all the more so given that they endured for a long time. Yet for many years in Poland, the studies and achievements of Sokołowski were put on the archival shelf. Although known as the father of Polish Art History, his vast oeuvre was forgotten. As Matthew Rampley has noted, there is a correspondence between his interests and those of Rudolf von Eitelberger, and there are other parallels, too.<sup>8</sup> Rampley notes that Eitelberger was for a long time eclipsed in the historical record by Riegl, whose work displayed apparently greater affinities to the concerns of contemporary art history. In Poland a similar phenomenon could be noticed whereby Sokołowski was a marginal figure. In the 1980s and 1990s the most popular question in the history of art history was whether the beginnings of Polish art history could be connected to the Vienna School of art history. This attitude was due to the overwhelming conviction that art history only became an academic discipline following the emergence of a concern with categories of formal analysis and the history of style.<sup>9</sup> This reflects a broader phenomenon; as Johannes Rössler has observed, a tradition has grown up that has traced the existence of art history back to the epistemic breakthrough of the years around 1900, but which has forgotten the significance of those who created its rudimentary identity in the previous century.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Most of those exhibitions was deeply rooted in Polish patriotic aspirations, what shows a deep involvement of contemporary art history in efforts for recreating Polish nationality. For example the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory of Jan III Sobieski in the Battle of Vienna was celebrated with a great exhibition (published by Sokołowski as 'Wystawa zabytków z czasów Jana III w Sukiennicach krakowskich', *Czas*, nos 240, 259–261, 266, 277, 288, 1883) or the exhibition displaying works of art of the period of life of Jan Kochanowski (Polish renaissance poet who with all consistency used Polish language).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Nelson, 'Living on the Byzantine Borders of Western Art', *Gesta*, vol. 35, 1996, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Rampley, 'The Idea of a Scientific Discipline: Rudolf von Eitelberger and the Emergence of Art History in Vienna, 1847–1885', *Art History*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2011, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Małkiewicz, 'Polska historia sztuki wobec metody ikonologicznej', in *Magistro et Amico. Amici Discipulique. Lechowi Kalinowskiemu w 80-lecie Urodzin*, ed. by Jerzy Gadomski, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2002, 334–335.

<sup>10</sup> Johannes Rössler, 'Kunstgeschichte als Realpolitik. Anton Springer und die ideengeschichtlichen Komponenten der Institutionalisierung', in: *Die Etablierung und Entwicklung des Faches Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland, Polen und Mitteleuropa (anlässlich des 125-jähriges Gründungs-jubiläums des ersten Lehrstuls für Kunstgeschichte in Polen)*, ed. by W. Batus, J. Wolańska, Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2010, 85.

The approach that defined Riegl's model as 'modern' was accompanied by a deprecation of earlier models, and researchers in Poland, determined to demonstrate the 'modernity' of their discipline and its connection to 'pure science', were anxious to connect the early phases of Polish art history with Riegl.<sup>11</sup> Art historians from earlier in the nineteenth century of the period were accordingly dismissed as empty positivists. Indeed, one prominent commentator has described early Polish art history solely as a kind of nationalistic conservatism.<sup>12</sup> With regard to Sokołowski, however, this approach is hardly productive; he developed his own eclectic, but coherent model of research.

This article examines the optimal model of the discipline as Sokołowski envisaged it, and analyses specific examples of his work that illustrate and are the result of his adherence to a chosen paradigm. In this respect one should recognise some of the recurrent epistemic categories in Sokołowski's art historiography. In support of his declaration that he was going to 'lecture on art history as a cultural history',<sup>13</sup> he chose Carl Schnaase's survey of the history of art as 'his model of presentation'.<sup>14</sup> Above all, however, he shared with his European contemporaries the strong conviction that the newly-born discipline should be as 'scientific' as possible, in order to gain it a place in a system of sciences that had, until then, been understood in terms of the natural and physical sciences. Yet his attempt to understand the empirical study of art as 'pure science', and to explain changes in the realm of art in the context of cultural history, was not without its risks. As this article indicates, there were some tensions in this vision.

Despite their problems, Sokołowski's declarations should be treated with all possible seriousness; they allow us to untie the complicated knot of his vision of art history which combines detailed study of artefacts with a coherent and systematic explanation of the historical change of forms in terms of cultural history. We should remember above all, that before Riegl formulated the idea of the *Kunstwollen*, cultural history was the main way in which this kind of systematic explanation was expressed, and we have to point to all of its historical and philosophical presuppositions.

<sup>11</sup> This academic 'fashion' was prominent in the work of Lech Kalinowski and Adam Małkiewicz on the beginnings of art history in Cracow. Kalinowski was the first to have recalled the heritage of Marian Sokołowski on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sokołowski's appointment; see: Kalinowski, 'Marian Sokołowski', in *Stulecie katedry historii sztuki UJ* (= *Zeszyty Naukowe UJ: Prace z Historii Sztuki*, vol. 19, 1990, 11–35 and: *Folia Historiae Artium*, vol. 1; *Ludzie, którzy umiłowali Kraków. Założyciele Towarzystwa Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa*, ed. by Wiesław Bieńkowski, Cracow: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1997, 175–183. See, too, Adam Małkiewicz, 'Historia sztuki na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1882–2007', in *Historia sztuki na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1882–2007*, Cracow: Instytut Historii Sztuki UJ, 2007, 3–22; above all: Małkiewicz, 'Historia sztuki w Polsce a «wiedeńska szkoła historii sztuki»', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, vol. 16, 1996, 331–336.

<sup>12</sup> Elżbieta Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, 'Polska historia sztuki, jej konserwatyzm i próby przewyciężenia', *Kultura Współczesna*, 4, 2000, 58–76.

<sup>13</sup> Maryan Sokołowski, *Program do nauczania historii sztuki w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim* [Curriculum of the course of Art History] folio in *Teki akt habilitacyjnych* [Habilitation acts]; AUJ (ms WF II 121) hereafter as Sokołowski, *Program*, f.1

<sup>14</sup> Sokołowski, *Program*.

### **Kunstgeschichte als Wissenschaft: its meaning for Sokołowski**

Sokołowski did not leave any substantial explicit theoretical statements of method behind. Yet it is possible to reconstruct the paradigm that governed his work at its 'deepest level' – its basic systemic presuppositions – by pointing to certain constant features of his writings, such as the repeated use of specific metaphors, or even changes in the rhetorical values in individual texts, and by bringing axiological issues into consideration. Moreover, Sokołowski did offer brief outlines of some of his theoretical assumptions, and we can reconstruct these further by drawing on archival data, which we can treat as a 'silent discourse',<sup>15</sup> following the approach of Hubert Locher, who has emphasised the importance of the analysis of art history's modes of presentation.<sup>16</sup>

Sokołowski's most 'theoretical' texts are those linked to occasions when he called for institutional reform in relation to, for example, the teaching curriculum or his suggestions for reform in the Commission for the Study of Art History in Poland (Komisya do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce). The key texts are:

- A 'Programme' prepared in 1878, when Sokołowski first became docent in art history and archaeology, complemented by the endorsement of Sokołowski's dissertation by Józef Szujski;
- His obituary of Rudolf von Eitelberger;
- The speech made during the First Historical Congress of 1880 on 'The Conditions of Architectural Monuments';
- The introduction to the first issue of *Teka Grona Konserwatorów Galicji Zachodniej* (Papers of the Conservators' Circle of Western Galicia) and a speech on the reform of the Commission for Art History of the Academy of Science.<sup>17</sup>

One of the basic ways in which Sokołowski described his work was in terms of the strong opposition between 'science' and 'speculation' – which he referred to as 'a chaotic dream'.<sup>18</sup> This was a general feature of art history in Cracow.<sup>19</sup> It is significant

<sup>15</sup> Hubert Locher, 'The role of the museum in the formation of the art historical discourse', *Ars*, vol. 38, 2005, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Dan Karlholm's study of German art history adopts a similar approach; he examines the modes of presentation and the role of consciously choosing specific fields of research as important factors in determining the paradigm. See Dan Karlholm, *Art of Illusion. The Representation of Art History in Nineteenth-century Germany and Beyond*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> I. e. : Sokołowski, *Program* The commendation by Szujski is in the same folio; his Obituary of Rudolf von Eitelberger : M. Sokołowski, 'Rudolf Eitelberger. Wspomnienie pośmiertne', *Przegląd Polski*, vol. 19, no.4, 1885, 372–376; the Speech made during the First Historical Congress of 1880 on 'The conditions of the architectural monuments': 'O warunkach wydawniczych pomników architektury w Polsce', in: *Pamiętnik pierwszego zjazdu historyków im. Jana Długosza, Cracow 1881*, 102–116; the introduction to the first issue of *Teka Grona Konserwatorów Galicji Zachodniej* (Papers of the Conservators' Circle of Western Galicia)) and his speech on the reform of The Commission for Art History of the Academy of Science *Teka grona konserwatorów Galicji zachodniej. Przedmowa*, vol. 1, 1900, VII–XV and *Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 3, 1888: 'Sprawozdania z posiedzeń'.

<sup>18</sup> Sokołowski, 'Ruiny na Ostrowie Jeziora w Lednicy, Studium na budownictwem w przedchrześcijańskich i pierwszych chrześcijańskich wiekach w Polsce', *Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności*, 3, 1876, 117–277. Hereafter as M. Sokołowski, 'Ruiny'.

that Sokołowski always used the German term 'Wissenschaft' even in correspondence with the art patron and scholar Count Karol Lanckoroński which was mostly written in Polish and in French.<sup>20</sup> This was a kind of *signum temporis*; at the time of Sokołowski's doctoral exam, the vocabulary of the discipline in Poland had not yet been established. In his endorsement of Sokołowski's dissertation on Ostrów Lednicki, the historian Józef Szujski noted that Sokołowski's style was 'quite pompous and strong' but that this was the result of his 'effort to create a language for art that would make it possible to render all shades of its creations'.<sup>21</sup>

Sokołowski's devotion to the idea of the 'scientific' character of the newly created discipline is visible in his outspoken rejection of 'any philosophy'. Thus he criticised the philosopher Józef Kremer for 'preparing just a few works with a solely Hegelian aesthetic character'.<sup>22</sup> At the same time – in fact even in the same sentence of his 'Programme' – Sokołowski rejected the achievements of earlier authors, especially those of Stanisław Kostka Potocki. Kostka's use of 'pompous rhetoric' in his *On the Art of the Ancients, or, the Polish Winckelmann* of 1815 had, Sokołowski argued 'weakened the significance of the work of the father of an art history and an archeology'. Sokołowski's notion of a 'scientific' discipline eventually turned out to be impossible to realise; as a 'faithful pupil' of Schnaase, he would later use a quasi-Hegelian philosophy as the ultimate basis of historical explanation.<sup>23</sup>

Why then were Sokołowski's attitudes subsequently forgotten as 'un-scientific'? One might argue that this was a result of, what Locher has described as the 'legendary origins' of the discipline that was established mainly by Moriz Thausing in his famous inaugural lecture on art history in which he proclaimed that 'The best art history I can imagine is one where the word "beautiful" never appears' and that 'Art history has nothing to do with deduction or with speculation in general; what it aims to bring to light are not aesthetic judgements but historical facts, which can then serve as the material for inductive research'.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, when we look at the range of Sokołowski's activity, we can say it was not 'scientific' at all. His main efforts were concentrated on the creation of a modern culture and on the 're-building' of Polish culture. Although Sokołowski did not explicitly state it in these terms, Polish commentators have drawn attention to the fact that he regarded research into Polish art as a patriotic duty.<sup>25</sup> This has been the source of numerous misunderstandings concerning Polish art history in its early phases.

<sup>19</sup> This is a point Stefan Muthesius makes in his contribution to this volume, 'The Cracow School of Modern Art History: The Creation of a Method and an Institution 1850-1880'. I do not use the term 'Cracow school', however, because I have strong doubts if the term 'school' in its sociological meaning is here appropriate.

<sup>20</sup> See: the correspondence in Cracow, Archiwum Nauki PAU i PAN [Archive of Science of Academy; hereafter: AS], no. K III-150, *Spuścizna Karoliny Lanckorońskiej* [Karolina Lanckorońska's legacy].

<sup>21</sup> Józef Szujski, Endorsement of M. Sokołowski PhD dissertation, MS in *Habilitation acts*, AUJ, WF II 121.

<sup>22</sup> M. Sokołowski, *Program*, f.

<sup>23</sup> K. Moxey, *Art History's Hegelian Unconscious: Naturalism as Nationalism in the Study of Early Netherlandish Painting*, in: *The Subject of Art History. Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, Cambridge 1998, 25–51ff.

<sup>24</sup> Moriz Thausing, 'Die Stellung der Kunstgeschichte als Wissenschaft', in Thausing, *Wiener Kunstbriefe*. Leipzig: Seemann, 1884, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Starting with the article of Sokołowski's pupil, Stanisław Turczyński (*Maryan Sokołowski 1839–1911. Wspomnienie pośmiertne i bibliograficzny spis prac*, Cracow 1912).

Above all, it has given rise to the consensus that a 'national complex' shaped the early study of art, which consequently lacked any meta-reflection on the principles of the discipline and its methods. The most forceful criticism has focused on this putatively nationalistic evaluation of art and its unexamined use of the normative concepts of 'nation' and 'national'.<sup>26</sup> It is notable, however, that Sokołowski rejected nationalistic attitudes toward the German heritage of Cracow and criticised earlier studies of the Altar of St Catherine by Hans Suess, for example, as the work of 'patriotic enthusiasts'.<sup>27</sup>

It would be incorrect to counter this view by arguing that Sokołowski was not a patriot. He expressed patriotic feelings and an impulse to undertake research into national art which were shaped by the political situation in the former Poland in general and Cracow in particular.<sup>28</sup> But they also reflected his broader approach to the discipline, and in this regard it is instructive to compare Sokołowski with Heinrich Wölfflin. The formal analyses of the latter, free of any cultural and historical involvements, serve as a model of pure and strict research, but as Martin Warnke has emphasised, this was because Wölfflin decided on a complete withdrawal from any involvement in the present even though, while teaching in Berlin, he was perfectly aware of the political factors of contemporary art.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Sokołowski's approach to art history was shaped by a deep involvement in the political and cultural frame of the former Poland.

### Seeing from above

As a Polish nobleman and an educated man, Sokołowski was a product of cultural changes in Europe as a whole. It is important, therefore, to touch on some biographical details, emphasising both his wider European experience as well as his specifically Polish background (in particular, the political context of the lack of Polish sovereignty after 1795 and the place of Cracow in the Austro-Hungarian Empire).

Born in 1836 in the Russian-ruled part of the former Poland, Sokołowski's future was linked to three cities: Paris, Vienna and Cracow. In Cracow, at the age of 33, he started his brilliant academic career, but, in fact, he had arrived as a mature scholar and above all, one with great certainty about his own political opinions; these were strongly anti-Russian and marked by an orientalising view of Russia, which can

<sup>26</sup> See Elżbieta Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> '... nie brakło zresztą i patriotycznych entuzjastów, którzy od wielu lat w postaciach naszych kompozycji widzieli wyraźne polskie typy, w strojach ich nasze własne stroje XVI w i Norymberczyka Hansa Suesa uważali za rodowitego Polaka; Ktoś nawet, aby ten pomysł na przyszłość utrwalić i zabezpieczyć, położył na odwrotnej stronie jednego z obrazów nowożytny napis: Johannes Polonus fecit' ta „pia fraus”, dowodząca większego sangwiznizmu niż znawstwa i sumiennosci nie zasługiwałyaby na wzmiankę, gdyby nie była ciekawym świadectwem stanu krytyki u nas przed pięćdziesięcią lat' (Sokołowski, *Hans Suess*, 54).

<sup>28</sup> There is another myth about Sokołowski's attitude to Cracow. In letter to Adam Asnyk he called the town 'being filled of ashes'; he was not ready to collect all medieval stones like his colleague J. Łepkowski (see: *Korespondencja J. Łepkowskiego*; Archiwum Państwowe (The State Archive) in Cracow and he was even ready to destroy a part of Cracow defensive walls to get more space for developing Princes Czartoryski Collection.

<sup>29</sup> M. Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', *Representations*, 27, 1989, 172–187.

be detected in the presuppositions of his model of art history. After graduating from high school, he studied law in Paris; this may seem quite irrelevant to the subject of art history, but many art historians of his generation started out as lawyers. For example, Louis Courajod, the first art historian to look specifically for racial/national factors as determinants of style (which would be one of the most important factors in the explanation of formal changes for Sokołowski, too) studied law in Paris at the same time.<sup>30</sup>

Sokołowski also formed his political opinions in Paris. While in Paris he took part in the celebrations of the anniversary of the November Uprising – an unsuccessful Polish revolt against Russian rule in 1830 – and became a member of the ‘Czytelnia Polska’, a cultural centre of Polish aristocracy at the exile in the circle of Prince Czartoryski. In Paris he also met the poet Cyprian Norwid (1821–83), whose patriotic views of the Polish nation would influence Sokołowski’s thinking for a considerable time.

In 1863 Sokołowski interrupted his legal studies and took part in the January Uprising in Poland, once more, in opposition to Russian rule. Indeed, he even served as representative of Polish temporary government in Lviv during the uprising. The disastrous defeat of this venture was to bring about a permanent change in Sokołowski’s attitudes; his friendship with the ‘romantic’ Norwid weakened and he committed himself decisively to the conservative party. In this regard it is significant to note that later on he would write that science (Wissenschaft) had appeared ‘after the end of the era of poetry’, by which he meant Polish romanticism with its Messianic visions of liberation and or images of ‘gloria victis’ for the heroic fighters. This mentality was exemplified in the paintings of Piotr Michałowski (1800–55), for example, who was deeply committed to political romanticism and introduced studies of work and peasants as common heroes into Polish painting.

Because of his political involvements Sokołowski was forced to move to Vienna in 1868 where, as an Austro-Hungarian subject, he was protected from being extradited to Russia. During this period he became a political journalist, trying to find his place in life; he was also engaged in business, probably as a commercial agent for the Polish aristocracy, and he travelled extensively in Ottoman Turkey and Asia. In his letters to the novelist Józef Kraszewski he declared himself to be anti-Russian and anti-Asiatic, commenting that ‘we [Poles] are leading the way to Europe by freedom; they [Russians] are leading the way to Asia by their despotism’<sup>31</sup>. Such opinions were typical of the European intelligentsia and were shaped by the orientalism of the Enlightenment period and strengthened by the influential philosophy of Hegel and his pupil, Burckhardt, who wrote of the Byzantine Empire that: ‘At its summit was despotism, infinitely strengthened by the union of churchly and secular dominion; in the place of morality it imposed orthodoxy; in the place of unbridled and demoralized expression of the natural instincts, hypocrisy and pretence; in the face of

<sup>30</sup> We can notice a parallel in biographies of both scientists above all. In the same year they gained institutional posts; while Sokołowski gained a chair, Courajod had started his lectures at *Ecole du Louvre* (See Lech Kalinowski, ‘Przedmowa’, in: *Stulecie katedry historii sztuki UJ*, 5–7.

<sup>31</sup> ‘My prowadzimy przez wolność do Europy a Moskwa przez despotyzm do Azji’; The Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, ms 6532 IV: *Korespondencja J. I. Kraszewskiego z l. 1863–1886, f 332–356: Sokołowski Marian, listy z l. 1864–1886, k.361* (Letter dated on 25 IX 1865); after his return from the Near East.

despotism greed masquerading as poverty developed, and deep cunning; in religious art and literature there was an incredible stubbornness in the constant repetition of obsolete motifs'.<sup>32</sup> Sokołowski's personal experience as belonging to a nation without a state (and Russia had been central to the disappearance of Poland) led to his repeated rejection of what he regarded as 'eastern' art, which he regarded saw as dead and lifeless, describing it as a 'branch without vital sap'.<sup>33</sup> This prejudice would play a crucial role in Sokołowski's chosen research field and will be analysed further below.

It has already been noted that there has been a considerable degree of interest in the significance of Vienna for the development of Polish art history. Yet Sokołowski initially travelled to Vienna for commercial reasons; seeking some form of economic stability in his life, he tried to become an agent for Polish companies during the World Fair in Vienna in 1873, and it was at this time, too, that he visited Cracow and noticed the dynamic development of scientific institutions. After the failure of his commercial venture in Vienna, he decided to study history at the University, probably once he had decided that he would eventually move to Cracow. Adam Małkiewicz has highlighted the importance of Theodor von Sickel for Sokołowski's education.<sup>34</sup> It was Sickel who rejected the dichotomy of form and content when interpreting sources, and postulated the need for empirical study of their material form in order to date them properly.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, both Eitelberger and Thausing belonged to the 'circle of Sickel' and it would seem that Sickel was therefore a crucial link between Sokołowski and the Viennese art historians. The archival sources in Cracow that indicate that Sokołowski was a pupil of Eitelberger and Thausing cannot be ignored, inasmuch as they appeared in official documents concerning Sokołowski's academic post. Indeed, he described himself as their pupil, and this emphasises his deep attachment to his time in Vienna, but a number of institutions contributed to his development.<sup>36</sup> Eitelberger was lecturing in the newly opened building of the Museum for Art and Industry (Kaiserliches Königliches Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie), Thausing delivered lectures between 1865–68 on general history and cultural history at the Academy of fine Arts, and art history was still taught in the Institute for Austrian Historical Research (Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung) which was set up to propagate the idea of the Habsburg empire as an organic union of nations loyal to the emperor and dynastic rule.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, Berkeley : University of California Press, firstly published 1853.

<sup>33</sup> 'Jak gałąź pozbawiona żywotnych soków'; Sokołowski, 'Malarstwo ruskie', in *Wystawa Archeologiczna Polsko-Ruska urządzona we Lwowie w roku 1885*, ed. by Ludwik Wierzbicki, Lviv: E. Trzemeski, 1886, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Małkiewicz, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> For the proper analysis of T. Sickel method see: Michael Gubser, *Time's visible surface. Alois Riegl and the Discourse on History and Temporality in Fin-de-Siecle Vienna*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006, 78.

<sup>36</sup> In personal file in AUJ we can find Sokołowski's curriculum vitae written with his own hand: *Teki osobowe pracowników w latach 1850–1939* [Personal files], JAG, S II, 619: Wykaz służby Dra Mariana Sokołowskiego, Profesora Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

<sup>37</sup> K. Johns, 'Moriz Thausing and the road', 1.

For all his patriotic-positivistic feelings, Sokołowski felt an affinity to this imperial vision. He later enjoyed a friendly relationship with Eitelberger, which he commented on in the obituary he wrote of him, and in which, notably, he acknowledged that 'the Cracow School of Fine Arts owed to [Eitelberger] its organisation and the university its chair in art history'.<sup>38</sup> Sokołowski was thus seeking to take a path that would later be taken by his counterparts in Prague or Zagreb, working as far as possible within the framework imposed by the Empire. This may be why, once he moved to Cracow, he joined the circle of Paweł Popiel (1807–92), a conservative journalist, politician and lawyer but also, crucially, one of the two conservators for Galicia of the Central Commission for the Investigation and Conservation of Architectural Monuments. Cracow-based conservators such as Popiel had a similar political vision of Poland's future as Sokołowski; disappointed with 'the era of poetry', they embraced the positivist ideology of the late nineteenth century that equated progress with economic and social modernisation rather than with the restoration of political sovereignty.

Sokołowski's teaching and scholarship were shaped by local circumstances, but he was also the 'product' of wider European intellectual currents. Being well travelled, he was fully aware of the earliest surveys of art history by authors such as Schnaase, Franz Kugler, Anton Springer and Wilhelm Lübke.<sup>39</sup> As Dan Karlholm has pointed out, these texts also served as guide-books for travellers; Springer's *Handbook of Art History* was even subtitled: 'For artists and students and as a guide when travelling' ('*Zum Gebrauche für Künstler und Studierende und als Führer auf der Reise*').<sup>40</sup> Sokołowski shared the experience of his entire generation, when train travel made it possible to visit a far wider range of galleries and museums, and when the guide book became a constant travel companion. Surveys of art history were thus a kind of guide for art lovers and they turned Sokołowski into an art historian; as he admitted, when constructing the art history curriculum, he 'had based all his knowledge on these authors and he intended to pass it on to his students'.<sup>41</sup> Thus, he referred to all of the surveys mentioned above, and the scientific apparatus of study included a *Bilderbogen*, which provided illustrative material for Kugler's survey.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Sokołowski was in agreement with Springer, Schnaase, Kugler and Lübke over the basic mechanisms and founding concepts of history, and for this reason we can see his approach as being closer to the tradition of general art history widespread in Germany rather than to the Viennese concern with the study of style and 'modern' formal analysis. One might go further and add that Sokołowski combined Springer's 'object focused' approach with Schnaase's quasi-Hegelian concern with larger cultural and historical contexts.

<sup>38</sup> Sokołowski, 'Rudolf Eitelberger. Wspomnienie pośmiertne', *Przegląd Polski*, 19, 1885, 372.

<sup>39</sup> *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner Seubert, 1841–42; C. Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, vol. 1–8, Düsseldorf, 1843–1879; Anton Springer, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, vols 1–5, Stuttgart: Ebner Seubert, 1855.

<sup>40</sup> As Dan Karlholm also emphasised the commercial success of surveys was an effect of deep change in editorial practice. Books became cheaper and were available for everyone (Karlholm, *Art of Illusion*, 149).

<sup>41</sup> M. Sokołowski, *Program*, f. VII–VIII.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Dan Karlholm, *Art of Illusion*.

One might describe his approach by means of the metaphor of 'seeing from above'. This was in constant use in the initial phases of art history, but it was a common feature of European thinking in general. Seeing from above allows one to grasp something panoramically in one moment. As Roland Barthes has since noted, 'The panorama for example – what one sees from the Eiffel Tower – is an object at once intellectual and rapturous: it liberates the body even as it gives the illusion of comprehending the field of vision'.<sup>43</sup> This 'illusion' was typical of general art history (*allgemeine Kunstgeschichte*), while later phases of the discipline concentrated on 'anatomy'.

An 'optical' comparison is useful here. '*Anschauung, Anschuung* – it must be his favourite word' wrote Sokołowski's student Feliks Kopera when attending Wölfflin's seminars in Basel.<sup>44</sup> The notion of '*Anschauung*' has a wide range of meanings, but the most widespread are 'contemplation' and 'intuition', and they perfectly describe the practice of Wölfflin as it appeared to Kopera. Wölfflin was for him 'an anatomist of comparative zoology'; artefacts were subjects for 'vivisection' [sic!] or 'surgical procedure'.<sup>45</sup> Kopera also drew comparisons with Wölfflin's collection of photographs in his house, noticing that he only had highly detailed photographs of works and that these were the subject of his study.<sup>46</sup>

Sokołowski's favourite terms, in contrast, were 'context', 'chain', and the series created on the basis of both: formal (but typological and not morphological) resemblance, with the explanatory rule taken from cultural studies and specific historiosophy. 'Oh, It hurts me so much, that you, Professor see HIS school more than yours [in my writing], treating things as you taught me: beginning with style and ending with the broadest layout',<sup>47</sup> wrote Kopera after Sokołowski's critical judgment of his work. Using this approach he was engaged in a general art history defined as the 'attempt to position art on a vast developmental scale'.<sup>48</sup> It was to bring the study of art closer to biological science than to the domain of aesthetic speculation, while positioning the artefact in an atlas of quasi-biological objects.

This was a *sine qua non* of art history's existence as a science. The organizing principle was morphological resemblance, just as in the atlas of post-Darwinian biology. In this context it is notable that Sokołowski consistently used the word 'specimen' to describe objects of art collected by the university. The goal of general art history was to position each individual artefact in the 'universal chain' of artistic development. Leaving aside certain differences between Kugler, Schnaase, and Lübke, who form a kind of reference library for Sokołowski's teaching,<sup>49</sup> the inner principle remained the same; they were all concerned with constructing a unified domain for art (the presupposition of art's existence was basic for the paradigm), or a

<sup>43</sup> Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. R. Howard, New York: Noonday Press, 1977, 101.

<sup>44</sup> Feliks Kopera, Letter to Sokołowski, 30 January 1897, in Sokołowski, Correspondence, fond np. 98/4 [n.p.], 'Letters from Feliks Kopera to Marian Sokołowski'. I would like to thank D. Błońska from National Museum in Cracow Archive for delivering me a digital transcription of Kopera's letters.

<sup>45</sup> Kopera, Letter to Sokołowski, 7 February 1897.

<sup>46</sup> Kopera visited Wölfflin's home few times.

<sup>47</sup> Kopera, Letter to Sokołowski, 4 March 1897.

<sup>48</sup> M. Schwarzer, 'Origins of Art History Survey Text', *Art Journal*, 1995, 24.

<sup>49</sup> AUJ in Cracow, Habilitations file (in Alphabetical order), fond. no. WF 121, Sokołowski, 'Program'.

kind of map or garden planted with selected specimens. As Karlholm has pointed out, 'Kugler referred to his book as a map, imagining the world of art as a kind of natural terrain, to be covered, surveyed and, most importantly, fertilized by art historians'.<sup>50</sup>

Kugler described his practice as a kind of depersonalized 'scissors-and-paste job'<sup>51</sup> or a process of choosing bricks to construct a building.<sup>52</sup> We can be certain that 'the panorama it created was far more subjective and authoritative than that description would suggest'.<sup>53</sup> Sokołowski described his activity as 'painting a picture of art', especially Polish art, as a part of European heritage.<sup>54</sup>

In his programmatic statement on art historical method, delivered at the first Polish Historians Meeting in 1880, Sokołowski clarified the significance of the 'filiation and development' of forms for his scientific model, and on these grounds he rejected a purely aesthetic evaluation.<sup>55</sup> While he expressed himself capable of aesthetic admiration, this was admissible only as a subjective impression and not as the basis of a scientific approach; hence, he was fascinated by the frescoes and mosaics in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev, but as a scholar he had to reject them as a product of 'worst' branch of civilisation.<sup>56</sup>

For Sokołowski, as for his German predecessors, works of art were to be treated as biological or natural objects and this was the only way in which art history could be practiced as a science. This led to the postulate that they should all be put into a chain or a collective class: 'the smallest ones, when we put them in the correct place, gain their significance and become interesting [...] just like the links of a chain and its transitional states'.<sup>57</sup> He used this approach in his analyses of craft objects such as belts, which he treated as links of equal importance in the chain of development.<sup>58</sup> Hence, while Sokołowski was concerned with the larger scale general course of art history, he worked from the inductive analysis of individual objects.

It is important to note, too, that because, on this understanding, the task of art history was to create a complete panorama of artistic development – 'to fill the gaps between hills',<sup>59</sup> as Schnaase put it – it was possible, even necessary, to include purportedly degenerate epochs, such as the Baroque, for consideration. In this respect

<sup>50</sup> F. Kugler, *Handbuch*, vol. 1, X; D. Karlholm, 'Reading the virtual museum of General Art History', *Art History*, 24.4, 2001, 555. The reasons to cultivate it have extra-academic character and they also serve only the present.

<sup>51</sup> Udo Kultermann *The History of Art History*, New York: Abaris, 1993, 89.

<sup>52</sup> Kultermann, *The History*, 93.

<sup>53</sup> Kultermann, *The History*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> See for example letter of J. Bołoz-Antoniewicz, another Polish art historian, from Lvov who wrote that only Sokołowski had a 'complete picture' of art. (letter dated on 5 May 1900 in AUJ, fond 98-1).

<sup>55</sup> Sokołowski, 'Warunki wydawnicze', 104.

<sup>56</sup> Sokołowski, *Bizantyńska i ruska średniowieczna kultura*, in: Sokołowski, *Studia i szkice*, Cracow: Spółka Wydawnicza Polska, 1899, 433

<sup>57</sup> Sokołowski, 'Warunki wydawnicze', 105.

<sup>58</sup> Sokołowski, 'Pasy metalowe tak zwane lwowskie albo przeworskie (Steined belts, so called Lvov's or Przeworsk's ones), *Sprawozdania Komisji do badania historii sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 6, 1900, 1–9

<sup>59</sup> C. Schnaase, *Briefe...*, cited after Eric Fernie, 'Cultural History', in *Art History and its Methods. A Critical Anthology*, ed. Fernie, London and New York: Phaidon, 2003, 418.

Sokołowski, like Cornelius Gurlitt, initiated the study of Baroque.<sup>60</sup> One final rule of the paradigm governing Sokołowski's approach was that 'whatever is present on the large scale is also present in the small scale',<sup>61</sup> and hence the 'lesser' practices of craft were equally important as expressions of style.

It is worthwhile considering what objects and images were being compared in this project of reconstructing the universal chain of forms, for Sokołowski did not differentiate between the media-of the various artefacts he investigated.

Chromolithographs, plaster casts, drawings, photographs and even verbal description were all regarded as equally useful. This provides additional reason to exercise caution, and not to exaggerate his connections to the Vienna School. This also explain Kopera's complaint, for example, over the lack of an 'apparatus' to undertake 'systematic work'.<sup>62</sup> When Wölfflin gave Kopera free entrance to Basel's museums, he noted: 'he wants to make me look at works of art and study them, and not undertake systematic work'.<sup>63</sup>

For Sokołowski artistic media acted as a kind of 'translation' of an artefact to its rational / verbal core which was most easily read from its outline. For example, he proposed an analysis of the 'outlines of the plaster casts' collected in the Cabinet of Art History at Jagiellonian University; in fact, they were put side by side with original works of art made from different materials.<sup>64</sup> It is of no small significance that Sokołowski taught his students to draw; drawing in fact functioned as an epistemic tool which helped with translation. The idea of *disegno* or concept was uppermost, a common feature in art history of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and this was also typical of the graphic art historical atlases that accompanied the survey texts.<sup>65</sup>

The idea of 'science' led Sokołowski to a specific kind of empiricism, but it must be strongly emphasised that he did not argue for the need to have direct contact with the work of art. While he defined the scientific approach as research 'with your own eyes' he postulated study with the prosthesis of 'translations', a way of thinking that was typical for some biologists. Like his contemporary, the bacteriologist Robert Koch (1843–1910), who valued the picture of an organism higher than the organism itself, it was the translation of a work of art that was the guarantee of the scientific approach, while direct contact with the work of art was the domain of a quasi-sacral experience.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Sokołowski's description of works of art as 'specimens' and his identification of the most typical characteristic elements of an artwork are reminiscent of the typological tables of biological atlases. In this regard it is perhaps no

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Małkiewicz, *Adam Bochnak i Józef Lepiarczyk a tradycja badań nad barokiem w środowisku historyków sztuki*, in: *Sztuka baroku*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Klubu Inteligencji Katolickiej, 1991, 9–20.

<sup>61</sup> Present for example in Sokołowski's 'Pierwsza Wielka Wystawa Sztuki Polskiej', *Czas*, 237, 1887, 1–2.

<sup>62</sup> Kopera, *Letters*, 13 December 1896.

<sup>63</sup> Kopera, *Letters*, 13 December 1896. Interestingly, when Kopera visited the Louvre shortly afterwards he wrote to his former teacher that he was starting to understand what direct contact with an artistic masterpiece meant.

<sup>64</sup> Sokołowski, A note in acts of Collegium Novi, AUJ, fond S II 1027: *Collegium Novum*.

<sup>65</sup> It was a typical attitude for early phases of the discipline, developed mainly by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. See Susanne Müller-Bechtel, 'Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1819–1897) Ein Blick in die Skizzenbücher Kenner und Vertreter der Stilgeschichte', in *Die Etablierung und Entwicklung*, 211–226.

<sup>66</sup> See Heinrich Dilly, 'Lichtbildprojection – Prothese der Kunstbetrachtung', in: *Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung*, Giessen: Anabas, 1975, 153–173.

coincidence that in his study of Hans Suess von Kulmbach, for example, Sokołowski used the depiction of human body in Middle-Ages and Renaissance as the main indicator of epochal change.

This analogy with contemporary scientific practice can be seen in its most explicit form in his architectural studies, where, again, induction was the methodological foundation of research and where, as in the biological sciences, the whole (i.e. the building in its entirety) could be found in its smallest parts.<sup>67</sup> It appears, too, that Sokołowski was fascinated by the paleontological work of Georges Cuvier; the appeal is clear, for modelling art history on Cuvier's approach further highlighted its 'scientific' character, and Sokołowski described architectural objects in terms of the idea of the 'skeleton' (kościokład) and was devoted to the idea of inductive reconstruction of missing parts of the buildings.<sup>68</sup>

Sokołowski used the notion of 'deep autopsy' to describe the analysis of the artwork but he also relied on iconographic study and reference to larger cultural contexts when formulating answers to what he regarded as basic art historical questions about the work of art such as 'when was it made?', 'how was it executed?', 'what does it mean and express?' and 'why does it have this particular form?' For Sokołowski the answers to these questions could only be found through the correct positioning of the work in the chain of art history and in the determination of the rules governing formal artistic change. It is notable here that in keeping with his view of the work of art as a specimen, Sokołowski referred to the work as a 'symptom of [the collective] imagination' and to the artist as a kind of transmitter of the general laws ruling the culture and society.<sup>69</sup> The form of art thus depended on the larger cultural characteristics of the society that produced it, a view that one might see as the legacy of Schnaase. Sokołowski's approach might also be compared with the iconographic studies of Anton Springer, who, like Sokołowski, referred to the 'deep method' of analysis of an artwork which included the study of its cultural context.<sup>70</sup> For Springer this involved the investigation of legends, apocrypha and all possible sources allowing to 'point motifs deciding of ways of compositional organisation and ways of presentation'.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, as Springer noted, 'an artist chooses the mode of representation in connection with a contemporary context',<sup>72</sup> and this reappeared in Sokołowski's idea of the 'symptom of the imagination' (objaw wyobraźni); understood as a bridge between the artwork and its culture as a whole.

<sup>67</sup> E. g. M. Sokołowski, 'O dekoracji wewnętrznej drewnianych kościołów: Kobylin i Libusza', *Przyjaciel sztuki kościelnej*, 3, 1884, 35.

<sup>68</sup> For example: M. Sokołowski, 'Do dziejów architektury cerkiewnej na Rusi Czerwonej', *Sprawozdania*, 7, 1906, 534.

<sup>69</sup> For example: painting of a Middle-Ages is dark and crowded for Sokołowski because of predominant atmosphere of the punishment symbolised by a presence of pillory in the city. The spatial relations also suit the relations in town and families while medieval art is modelled on people living close to each other and the Renaissance brings the loosening of social bonds.

<sup>70</sup> Anton Springer, 'Ikonographische Studien', *Mitteilungen der k. k. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale*, vol. 5, 1860, 29–33, 67–74 and 309–21.

<sup>71</sup> Regine Prange, *Die Geburt der Kunstgeschichte: Philosophische Ästhetik und Empirische Wissenschaft*, Cologne: Deubner Verlag für Kunst, 2004, 149.

<sup>72</sup> Springer, *Ikonographische Studien...*, 32 ['der Künstler bei der Komposition seines Werkes auf das Verständnis seitens Betrachtenden rechnete. die Quellen, aus welche der Künstler die motive der Darstellung schöpfe, fallen mit jenen zusammen, welchen die Bildung der Zeitgenossen entsprang'].

This raises the final issue: the function and status of archival sources. For a long time this phase of art history in Poland was regarded as pure positivism, a phase that consisted merely of 'collecting old papers'.<sup>73</sup> Sokołowski had a similar attitude, for he viewed archival sources simply as a source for scientific verification. The artwork was to remain the first and most important source and it was its typological features that defined its place in the chain. As he noted in his analysis of the Saint John and Saint Catherine altarpieces of Hans Suess: 'let us not allow dates to determine everything. We based our dating on the analysis of forms'.<sup>74</sup> Yet in contrast to Wölfflin who, according to Kopera, stated that the archival source 'is incidental [Nebensache] ... the artwork and the interpretation of it is the most important thing', Sokołowski regarded archival material as complementary to the artwork.<sup>75</sup> What distinguishes Sokołowski's approach from more advanced formal analysis is his typological treatment of forms, which involved comparison of the most general features such as spatial relations or the attitude toward human body, or what he referred to as the 'skeleton' or 'osteological part' of a work of art, which consisted of drawing, in the case of paintings, or the method of construction as far as architecture was concerned.<sup>76</sup>

### **The cultural explanation of change. National identity and the role of structure and differentiation**

So far I have pointed to various concepts and categories present in Sokołowski's writing. These included the idea of science, connected with a kind of empirical study and the idea of the 'chain' of formal changes. It is also important to consider his broader understanding of the nature and purpose of historical explanation, however, in order to gain a sense of the role he attributed to art history outside of the academy and, in particular, its contribution to the creation of the idea of national sovereignty.

Sokołowski always included Polish art as part of the canon of western European art; the study of art history was, for him, an 'affair of pan-European civilization'.<sup>77</sup> There was nevertheless a specific kind of patriotism in Sokołowski's statements. When he wrote that that 'we and only we' could complete 'a monumental inventory of the European past' he was articulating his desire for Polish art history to gain its position within the European mainstream.<sup>78</sup> He treated Polish architecture and works of art as 'boundary markers' of European culture.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, however, he was equally concerned with articulating the specificity of Polish art and with devising a method for differentiating it from the rest of European art.

<sup>73</sup> As Jan Bołoz Antoniewicz wanted. This attitude especially in Miłobędzka, 'Polska historia sztuki'.

<sup>74</sup> Sokołowski, 'Hans Suess', 71.

<sup>75</sup> Kopera, Letters, 13 December 1896.

<sup>76</sup> Sokołowski, 'Wystawa obrazów dawnych mistrzów w Sukiennicach Krakowskich', *Czas*, 78, 79, 82, 85, 89 and 92, 1882, 1–2. Sokołowski explicitly calls a drawing 'the osteology' of painting ('Eugeniusz Delacroix i znaczenie kolorytu w malarstwie. Fragment z większej całości', *Czas*, 44, 1882, 1–2).

<sup>77</sup> Sokołowski, 'Hans Suess'.

<sup>78</sup> Sokołowski, 'Hans Suess'.

<sup>79</sup> Sokołowski, 'Hans Suess'.

As noted earlier, Sokołowski considered his practice to be a patriotic duty, but this statement cannot be understood in a vulgar way as implying a nationalist desire for cultural repossession or the creation of facts to suit a national agenda. He was far more subtle and his approach was shaped by the broader research paradigm he had adopted. Thus, while he may well have been concerned with situating Polish art in the 'European Garden', understood as a chain of affiliated and self-explanatory changing forms and transitional phases, he still had to devise a method for answering the basic question: 'Why does this specimen have this particular form?' On the one hand he relied on the assumption of the complete autonomy of art as one of the 'symptoms of the imagination'. On the other, he sought to explain changing form with reference to 'philosophical, national, psychological' or even 'racial' factors.<sup>80</sup> As he writes in his programme for an art history curriculum: 'Schnaase's monumental work is a kind of model in the matter of general assessments and detailed analyses of proportion. [It is] the model I am going to use', and many of Sokołowski's historical analyses were clearly influenced by Schnaase.<sup>81</sup>

General art histories, such as that of Schnaase, need a ruling principle governing the chain of particular objects; the model of explanation in those projects was that of cultural history. Sokołowski wrote: 'I am going to base my lectures on the history of civilization; it means showing art's history against the background of the history of civilization, deriving its organic and natural development from cultural conditions'.<sup>82</sup> In this paradigm morphological changes in art are a natural consequence of changing cultural and 'psychological and racial' traits.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, the first step in the analysis of an artwork from a particular territory or time is to investigate the 'mental, moral and even economic factors that constitute the nature of life of this nation or period'.<sup>84</sup>

This interpretative model, which tries to identify the laws of cultural development, needed a philosophical basis. In the case of general art histories it was always Hegelian philosophy. There are traces of Hegelianism in Sokołowski's main works, both in terms of his broad philosophical outlook but also in terms of direct quotations. For example, when writing about Ruthenian art he explicitly drew on Hegel (describing him as 'a thinker'), setting Ruthenian art in the context of a larger vision of the historical process whereby Western civilization gained power over a dead culture (i.e. Ruthenian) as a result of the laws of development and its spread of influence.<sup>85</sup>

Schnaase defined his work as presenting 'the onward advance of history [which] could be seen most purely and clearly in the development from generation to generation'<sup>86</sup> of a linked series of formal problems and solutions in the visual arts.

<sup>80</sup> Sokołowski, 'Program,' Sokołowski, *Warunki*, 106.

<sup>81</sup> Sokołowski, 'Program'.

<sup>82</sup> Sokołowski, 'Program', f. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Sokołowski, 'Przedstawienie Trójcy o trzech twarzach na jednej głowie w cerkiewkach wiejskich na Rusi' (The Depiction of The Trinity with three Faces in Ruthenian country orthodox churches), *Sprawozdania, Komisji do badania historii sztuki w Polsce*, 1, 1879, 43–50.

<sup>84</sup> Sokołowski, 'Program', f. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Sokołowski, *Studia i szkice*, 450.

<sup>86</sup> Carl Schnaase, *Briefe*, cited after: M. Evilley, 'Contemporary Art: Postmodern Transformation of Art', in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. by M. Kelly, New York: Oxford University Press 1998, 2, 438.

Sokołowski's adoption of Schnaase took an interesting turn in that he used formal distinctions between objects as a means of grounding Polish identity and determining the specific qualities of Polish civilization. In this respect he employed another metaphor, that of the seed that takes on different forms in different circumstances, while coming from the same source.<sup>87</sup> For Sokołowski, the sources of artistic creation were racial, psychological, moral and economic factors that were typical of particular moments in the history of Polish culture. The conclusions were the following: if it is possible to detect formal differences between objects taken from European heritage and a similar group taken from Poland, this is because Poles have a different cultural structure and this idea was intended to underpin the Polish claim to a separate identity and autonomy. What motivated this was Sokołowski's concern to shield everything Polish from what he described as the 'flood of Germanism'.<sup>88</sup>

The other aspect of this analysis was that he excluded objects that had no discernable features in common with the European mainstream and ruled them out of the developmental chain. Examples included Russian and Asian art and, in general, objects that he labelled 'eastern'. If, following Mitchell Schwarzer, we note that the birth of scientific art history was 'part of a greater struggle to create modern German identity', some interesting comparisons can be made between art history in Germany and in partitioned Poland.<sup>89</sup> A central aspect of the creation of art history in German universities and museums was its use as a means of distinguishing between German and other European identities, as well as setting up an opposition between European and non-European art. In an analogous way, Sokołowski envisaged a similar goal for art history: to restore the Polish nation and prove Poland's place in Europe. He created a coherent model of art historical study that he believed allowed him, on the one hand, to establish the place of Polish art within European art as a whole whilst, on the other hand, providing a means to underpin its autonomy.

## Conclusion

Sokołowski developed a complex model of art history, which was built out of the personal experiences he shared with his generation and the art historical surveys that dominated the early phase of art history, as well as the model of historical explanation developed by Carl Schnaase and, through him, Hegelian philosophy. This clearly challenges the traditional tendency to dismiss the earlier history of art as merely the positivistic collection of materials. Sokołowski brought art history to life in Cracow in the specific political circumstances of divided Poland, enabled him to

<sup>87</sup> Sokołowski, 'Bizantyńska i ruska średniowieczna kultura' (Byzantine and Ruthenian Medieval Culture), *Przegląd Polski*, 22, 1888, 73–120; Sokołowski, 'Dwa gotycyzmy wileński i krakowski w architekturze i złotnictwie i źródła ich znamion charakterystycznych' (The two 'Gothics': that of Cracow and that of Vilnius in Architecture and Jewellery and the Origins of their Features), *Sprawozdania Komisji do badania historii sztuki w Polsce*, 8.1, 1907, 1–40.

<sup>88</sup> Sokołowski, 'Studia do historii sztuki w Polsce. Podróż W. Łuszczkiewicza i M. Sokołowskiego do Wielkopolski', *Czas*, no. 244, 1874, 1–2.

<sup>89</sup> See for example Mitchell Schwarzer, 'Origins of the Art History Survey Text', *Art Journal*, 54.3, 1995, 24–29.

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achieve his main goal: to prove the autonomy of Polish culture, which would be an eventual argument for re-establishing the state.

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