

Architectural theory in Eastern Europe during the Enlightenment

Review of:

Ignacy Potocki, *Remarks on Architecture. The Vitruvian Tradition in Enlightenment Poland*, Carolyn C. Guile ed. and transl., University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015, 155 p.

Basile Baudez

Early modern Polish architectural thought is largely absent from standard surveys of Western art and architecture. If Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski has recently studied the history of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth¹ and if Andrzej Rottermund's work on neo-classicism has been partly translated², no general study of eighteenth-century East European or Polish architecture exists in English apart from Stefan Muthesius' brief account in *Art, architecture and Design in Poland, 966-1990* (Königstein im Taunus: K. R. Langewiesche Nachfolger H. Köster Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1994). Due to a language barrier, limited or restricted access to primary and secondary sources, the situation of East-European studies began to change only in the 1990s and with time, historiography has shifted its concern from the strict research of a East-West borderland as it was defined by Oscar Halecki in 1980 in *Borderlands of western civilization: a history of East Central Europe*, to the study of multidirectional cultural transfers³. The historic notion of connected centres played an important role in understanding these phenomena, a more useful tool to think the age of Enlightenment than considering the cultural geography of Central Europe only in terms of centres and peripheries⁴. To understand Enlightenment art and architecture, analysing circulations and transfers proved to be more efficient than focusing on distinct regional boundaries. The conference organised in Warsaw in November 2013 by Letizia Tedeschi, Andrzej Rottermund and Sergej Androsov, 'Recepcja i odmiany antyku w Polsce i Rosji w okresie neoklasycyzmu' (Transmission of the Antique in Russia and Poland during the neoclassical era) was

¹ Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski, *Poland's last king and English culture: Stanisław August Poniatowski, 1732-1798*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, New York : Oxford University Press, 1998 ; *The Polish Revolution and the Catholic Church, 1788-92: A Political History*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2011

² Andrzej Rottermund and Stanisław Lorentz, *Neoclassicism in Poland*, Warsaw: Arkady, 1986; Andrzej Rottermund, *Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand a polska architektura pierwszej połowy XIX wieku*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990.

³ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Early modern ideas about artistic geography related to the Baltic region', *Scandinavian Journal of Art History*, n° 28, 2003, 263-272. Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the map of civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

⁴ If it can work with the structure of the Jesuit baroque, as it was analysed by Andrzej Baranowski, 'The Baroque geography of the Polish commonwealth: centres and peripheries', *Borders in art: revisiting Kunstgeographie*, Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius ed., Warsaw: Institute of Art, 2000, 77-86, this model loses of its efficiency for the periods after.

a sign of the renewal of East-European studies of architecture in particular. Carolyn C. Guile's edition and translation of Ignacy Potocki's manuscript *Remarks on Architecture* provides an exceptional case study of what rigorous and inventive scholarship can bring to our knowledge not only of the strategies at work in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, but also of the Enlightenment European architectural theory more generally.

Guile, associate professor of art and art history at Colgate University, is a specialist of the early-modern architecture of Central Europe and her field of expertise focuses on the art and architecture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Among other papers, she has contributed an essay on 'Winckelmann in Poland: An Eighteenth-Century Response to the *History of the Art of Antiquity*' in the December 2013 issue of the *Journal of Art Historiography*. The book here under review that she published with the Pennsylvania State University Press in 2015 provides the reader not only with the edition of an unpublished eighteenth-century manuscript treatise held in the Central Archive of Early Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych), but also with a very clear translation and an illuminating introduction (1-56) which represents the first study available for English readers of the early modern architectural treatise in the East European borderlands and early modern Polish-language architectural theory⁵. A bibliography, which strangely mixes secondary and archival sources, and a very useful index of places, locations and topics complete this scholarly work, which takes an important place in the history of architectural theory of the Enlightenment.

Architectural treatises studies, a historiographical genre

Since the end of the 1980s literature on the history of architectural treatise focused mainly on the Renaissance and Baroque, with major contributions including Jean Guillaume's edited multilingual volume, *Les traités d'architecture de la Renaissance* published by Picart in 1988, Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks edited volume, *Paper palaces: the rise of the Renaissance architectural treatise* at Yale University Press in 1998 and Alina Payne's *The Architectural treatise of the Italian Renaissance: Architectural Invention, Ornament, and Literary Culture* published in 2011 at Cambridge University Press. Modern editions of architectural treatises have recently considerably enlarged our knowledge of early-modern architectural theory: in 1997, Frédérique Lemerle reedited Roland Fréart de Chambray's translation of Palladio's *Quattro libri*⁶ and *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne* in 2005⁷ before publishing Guillaume Philandrier's *Annotationes* in 2011⁸. Two scholarly editions of Antoine

⁵ In Polish, one can refer on the question in Zygmunt Mieszkowski, *Podstawowe problemy architektury w polskich traktatach od połowy XVI do początku XIX w.*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970.

⁶ Andrea Palladio, *Les Quatre livres de l'architecture*, Frédérique Lemerle ed., Paris, 1997.

⁷ Roland Fréart de Chambray, *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne suivi de Idée de la perfection de la peinture*, Frédérique Lemerle, Milovan Stanić eds., Paris, 2005.

⁸ Guillaume Philandrier, *Les Annotationes sur l'architecture de Vitruve : Livres V à VII*, Frédérique Lemerle ed., Paris, 2011.

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Desgodets's *Édifices antiques de Rome* were released in 2008⁹. Simultaneously, Frédérique Lemerle and Yves Pauwels have developed at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours a database, *Architectura. Architecture, textes et images, XVI^e-XVII^e siècles*, devoted to books on architecture manuscripts and prints published in France, written in French or translated into French during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries¹⁰. Each treatise has been digitalized and can be consulted in image or by downloading the text transcribed in a modern form. Architectural historians have also worked extensively since the end of the 1980s on the critical fortune of these treatises.

If Vitruvian reception was synthesized by Georg Germann's *Einführung in die Geschichte der Architekturtheorie* published in 1987, an essential essay unfortunately not translated into English (a possible reason Guile does not refer to it)¹¹, an abundant literature is of course devoted to the most celebrated Italian treatises: Vignola's *Regola*¹², Serlio's *Libri*¹³, and Palladio's *Libri*¹⁴.

Architectural enlightenment theory has received almost as much attention. Since *Laugier and eighteenth-century French theory* published in 1962 by Wolfgang Hermann (an important study that Guile does not reference), Hanno-Walter Kruft devoted seven chapters of his *History of architectural theory from Vitruvius to the present* (London: Zwemmer, 1994) to the eighteenth century but without addressing any Eastern European country. In 1980, Joseph Rykwert published *The First moderns: the architects of the eighteenth century* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press). This was followed

⁹ Antoine Desgodets : *les édifices antiques de Rome, édition fac-similé du manuscrit inédit 2718 de l'Institut de France avec transcription, annotations et reproduction des planches de l'ouvrage publié en 1682*, Louis Cellauro, Gilbert Richaud eds., Rome, 2008 ; Antoine Desgodets, *Les Édifices antiques de Rome : fac-similé de l'édition de 1682*, Pierre Gros, Hélène Rousteau-Chambon eds., Paris, 2008.

¹⁰ An offspring of the digital version was published under the title *Architectures de papier: la France et l'Europe (XVI^e-XVII^e siècles)*. Frédérique Lemerle and Yves Pauwels eds., Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.

¹¹ A French translation was nevertheless published by the Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes in 1991 under the title, *Vitruve et le vitruvianisme. Introduction à l'histoire de la théorie architecturale*. On the Vitruvian reception, we can refer to Georgia Clarke, 'Vitruvian Paradigms', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, vol. 70, 2002, 319-46.

¹² Claude Mignot, 'Vignola e vignolismo in Francia nel Sei e Settecento,' in Christoph Luitpold Frommel, Maurizio Ricci, Richard J. Tuttle eds., *Vignola e i Farnese*, (conference, Piacenza, 2002), Milan, 2003, 354-374. Jean-Philippe Garric, 'Les éditions françaises du Vignole, du traité d'architecture au manuel technique,' *La Construction savante : les avatars de la littérature technique*, Jean-Philippe Garric, Valérie Nègre, Alice Thomine eds., (Paris, 2008, 169-178.

¹³ Magali Vène, *Bibliographia Serliana : catalogue des éditions imprimées des livres du traité d'architecture de Sebastiano Serlio (1537-1681)*, Paris, 2007 ; Yves Pauwels, 'La méthode de Serlio dans le 'Quarto Libro', in *La Revue de l'art*, 119, 1998, p. 33-42 ; Mario Carpo, *La maschera e il modello: teoria architettonica ed evangelismo nell'Extraordinario libro di Sebastiano Serlio (1551)*, Milan, 1993.

¹⁴ Claude Mignot, 'Palladio et l'architecture française du XVII^e siècle : une admiration critique' *Annali di architettura*, 12, 2000, p. 107-115 ; Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, 'Bullet, Oppenord, Contant d'Ivry, Pâris: quattro architetti francesi e Palladio,' *Annali di architettura*, 12, 2000, p. 123-126

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by Kevin Harrington's *Changing ideals of architecture in the Encyclopédie, 1750-1776* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1985), Werner Szambien's *Symétrie, gout caractère. Théorie et terminologie de l'architecture à l'âge classique* (Paris: Picard, 1986) and Anthony Vidler's *The Writing of the walls: architectural theory in the late enlightenment* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987). Monographs of eighteenth-century architects allowed historians to analyse their independent theoretical contribution: among them, Werner Szambien's *Jean-Louis-Nicolas Durand* (Paris: Picard, 1984), David Watkin's *Sir John Soane: enlightenment thought and the Royal Academy lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Daniel Rabreau's *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux* (Bordeaux: William Blake and Co., 2000). Along this production, David Britt started in the 1990s to make available to an English-reading audience several of the most important treatises of the Enlightenment in the Text and Documents Series of the Getty Research Institute Publications, such as Friedrich Gilly's *Essays on architecture, 1796-1799* in 1994. In this series, Robin Middleton wrote an introduction to Nicolas Le Camus de Mezières' *The Genius of architecture or the Analogy of that art with our sensations* in 1992 and to Julien David Leroy's *Ruins of the most beautiful monuments of Greece* in 2003. Antoine Picon edited Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand's *Précis of the lectures on architecture with graphic portion of the lectures on architecture* in 2000 and John Wilton-Ely Piranesi's *Observations on the Lettre of Monsieur Mariette with opinions on Architecture, and a Preface to a new treatise on the introduction and progress of the fine arts in Europe in ancient times* in 2002. The same year, for Ashgate, David Britt translated Germain Boffrand's *Book of architecture: containing the general principles of the art and the plans, elevations and sections of some of the edifices built in France and in foreign countries* with an introductory essay by Caroline van Eck. Ignacy Potocki's *Remarks on architecture* publication with Guile's introduction by Penn State follows in the footsteps of this substantial literature while significantly shifting our geographic focus.

A manuscript treatise

Potocki's treatise is a manuscript and not a printed volume. As Sara Galetti pointed out in the review of Lemerle and Powell's *Architectures de papier (Renaissance Quarterly, vol. 68, n°1, Spring 2015, 258)* the profusion of literature on architectural treatises has until now reinforced 'one of the field's most ingrained misconceptions, especially for the sixteenth century: that of the absolute predominance of printed sources over any other form of transmission of architectural knowledge'. Since Adrian Johns' *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* published in 1998, some scholars have tried to devote as much attention to the manuscript as to the printed books. Johns has indeed demonstrated for the Renaissance that the former shared many of the flexibilities of both content and layout (not to speak of authorship claims) of the later and that in many cases, manuscripts were as influential as some printed books. Guile demonstrates in her essay how much this was true for Ignacy Potocki's *Remarks on architecture (Uwagi o architekturze)*, which was written in Polish but has never been printed in any language.

Consisting of two hundred and nine clearly and neatly written pages, the text includes references to figures and illustrations that were at one point separated

from the document and remain lost. At several points Guile discusses the nature and date of the manuscript from around 1786 or possibly later, but the reader regrets the absence of material analysis of the manuscript or its photographic reproduction, at least in part, as she presumes that the writing may be by a hand other than Potocki's and that the format of the manuscript led her to think that it may have been one of several manuscript copies made for distribution.

Far from being peripheral, Potocki's treatise represents an exemplar of an emergent national tradition of architectural writing that deserves further study and the questions it raised are relevant to early modern Europe more broadly. Its publication sheds light on an essential figure of the European Enlightenment who has until now received only passing mention by Polish scholars concerned with Potocki's activities as a politician and educator.

The architect-amateur

Ignacy Potocki (1750-1809) is a fascinating figure who until now has been largely eclipsed in Western literature by his brother Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755-1821), sitter for Jacques-Louis David's famous equestrian portrait (Wilanów, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III)¹⁵ and author of an *History of the Art of the Ancients, or the Polish Winckelmann* published in 1815¹⁶ and by his cousin, Jan Potocki (1761-1815) a celebrated travel writer and author of the *Manuscript found in Saragossa*¹⁷. A highly important political figure of Polish-Lithuanian history, Ignacy Potocki is nevertheless well known for having co-authored the 3 May 1791 Constitution¹⁸. While his political allegiances are well documented¹⁹, scholarship has been more reticent about the full extent of his architectural pursuits and their connection to his interests in education. Having travelled extensively in the early 1770s to Italy and

¹⁵ Jolanta Polanowska, *Stanisław Kostka Potocki, 1755-1821. Twórczość architektura amatora, przedstawiciela neoklasycyzmu i nurtu picturesque*, Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2009. On Stanisław Kostka Potocki as a collector, see *Grand Tour. The birth of a collection of Stanisław Kostka Potocki*, exhib. catalogue, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2006.

¹⁶ *O sztuce u dawnych, czyli Winkelman polski*. See Carolyn C. Guile, 'Winckelmann in Poland: an eighteenth-century response to the *History of art and antiquity*', *Journal of Art Historiography*, n° 9, December 2013, 1-24.

¹⁷ Written in French between 1805 and 1815, it has received great attention from French scholars among them Dominique Triaire who edited with François Rosset his writings in five volumes with Peeters between 2004 and 2006. The most authoritative translation in English is by Ian MacLean published by Penguin Classics in 1996. Bartoszyńska, Katarzyna, 'From fantastic to familiar: Jan Potocki's *Manuscript found in Saragossa*', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 37, no. 4(July 15, 2015): 283-300. And on Jan Potocki himself: Taylor-Terlecka, Nina, 'Jan Potocki and his Polish milieu', *Comparative Criticism*, n°24, 2002, 55-77.

¹⁸ Samuel Fiszman ed., *Constitution and reform in eighteenth-century Poland: the Constitution of 3 May 1791*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

¹⁹ Zdzisław Janeczek, *Ignacy Potocki : Marszałek Wielki Litewski, 1750-1809*, Katowice, 1992 ; *Polityczna rola marszałka litewskiego Ignacego Potockiego w okresie Sejmu Wielkiego 1788-1792*, Katowice : Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Karola Adamieckiego, 2005.

France and from Vienna to Italy in 1783, Potocki received, like most members of his caste, direct knowledge of Western Europe. The Potocki brothers also possessed the best architectural library of the commonwealth²⁰ and left behind many architectural drawings. The five signed drawings by Ignacy and the one by his brother reproduced in the introductory essay show a proficiency in draughtsmanship less common among eighteenth-century patrons than one might imagine and place them closer to the figure of the architect-amateur.

Contrary of the American and English situation, this topic has received little interest on a European scale until now²¹. In the closing section of his treatise, Potocki defends the role of the architect-amateur by invoking Count Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's realizations in Sweden and the English patrons Lord Pembroke and Lord Burlington. Here Guile could have related the Polish situation of the architect-amateur with the Western European one and with the ideas expressed in Jacques-François Blondel's writings and own pedagogical practice at the *École des Arts* where he specifically opened a course for amateurs²². It is maybe the only thing lacking in her brilliant introduction, particularly given her quotation from Stanisław Potocki: 'Architecture is, among all of the liberal arts, the most fun and also the most useful for the children of citizens'(49).

Architecture as politics

The fact that Potocki's treatise was written in Polish, and not in French as was his cousin's novel, *Le manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse* or other works from their milieu, is key to understanding its political and cultural significance in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. Addressed to the nobility and written in a conversational style, the text presents itself as a didactic treatise for a Polish elite wishing to improve their estates. The political instability that characterized the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the second half of the eighteenth century engendered in the Polish nobility a consciousness of the need to articulate the exigencies for the reform not only of politics, but of culture itself. Potocki's aim is to raise architecture in the country to a higher standard, comparable to that of neighbouring countries, and thereby alleviate society's ills. His text should be understood as the product of a moment when the Potocki brothers (among other reformers) reacted to the potential loss of the commonwealth. Composed since 1569 of two nations – the kingdom of Poland and the great duchy of Lithuania - the commonwealth was an elective monarchy in which nobility (*szlachta* in Polish) played a role without a counterpart among contemporary European nations. Largely amputated of a third of its

²⁰ Jadwiga Rudnicka, *Biblioteka Ignacego Potockiego*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1953. Elzbieta Skierkowska, 'Księgozbiór z dziedziny sztuki Stanisława Kostki Potockiego na tle polskich bibliotek XVIII wieku', *Rocznik historii sztuki*, n°13, 1981, 171-202.

²¹ For example Adam W. Sweeting, 'A very pleasant patriarchal life: professional authors and amateur architects in the Hudson Valley, 1835-1870', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 29, n° 1, April 1995, 33-53.

²² Robert Cleary, 'Romancing the tome; or an academician's pursuit of a popular audience in 18th-century France', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 48, no. 2, June 1989, 139-149.

population by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1772, the commonwealth was eventually entirely dismembered in 1795²³. For Potocki and Polish elite reformers, architecture, a tangible cultural property, represented the outward expression of identity and allegiance to theoretical, practical and aesthetic norms at a moment when the country was desperately seeking durability. Decline could be only avoided through knowledge of the past. Potocki promoted architecture as an effective bulwark against decline, the way his friends Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski (1734-1823) and his wife Izabella née Fleming (1746-1835) in their estate in Puławy promoted the study of native history as 'a cultural defence against future incursion from without and errors from within'(25). This echoes the work of Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826) who in his *Warnings to Poland* (1790) articulated to his countrymen the pitfalls of their ignorance and fixed attitudes towards tradition²⁴.

Educational reforms in Poland

In her introductory essay, Guile strongly links the treatise with the central role of Potocki education reform in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth²⁵. The question of Polish education, far from being only an internal matter in the eighteenth century, became an international affair with the publication in 1782 of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne et sur la réforme projetée en avril 1772*²⁶. As with Russia and Prussia, French philosophers saw Poland as a land of experimentation for their propositions of educational reforms. Diderot's address to Catherine II on university education is a comparable example²⁷. Educated at the Colegio Nazarenum in Rome between 1765 and 1768 and later at the Colegio Nobilium in Warsaw, Potocki was the product of the reformed Polish Piarist tradition, which taught the love of fatherland and its improvement²⁸. Head of the Załuski Library, Poland's first public and national library, Potocki was particularly

²³ Jerzy Lukowski, *Liberty's folly: the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the eighteenth century, 1697-1795*, London: Routledge, 1991; *The Partitions of Poland: 1772, 1793, 1795*, London: Longman, 1999.

²⁴ William John Rose, 'Stanisław Staszic, 1755-1826', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 33, n° 81, June 1955, 291-303.

²⁵ Bożenna Michalik, *Korespondencja Ignacego Potockiego w sprawach edukacyjnych (1774-1809)*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978; *Działalność oświatowa Ignacego Potockiego*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1979. Kamilla Mrozowska, 'Educational reform in Poland during the Enlightenment', *Constitution and Reform in eighteenth-century Poland: the Constitution of 3 May 1791*, Samuel Fiszman ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, 113-154.

²⁶ Jean Bloch, *Rousseauism and education in eighteenth-century France*, Oxford : Voltaire Foundation, 1995.

²⁷ Denis Diderot, 'Plan d'une université pour le gouvernement de Russie', *Œuvres complètes*, Jean Assézat, Maurice Tourneux eds., Paris: Garnier, 1877, t. III, 411-414.

²⁸ On the Piarist tradition in Poland, see Jacek Taraszkiewicz, 'Z badań nad początkami działalności pijarów na ziemiach polskich 1642-1660', *Zeszyty Naukowe. Pedagogika, Historia Wychowania* 22, Lech Mokrzecki ed., Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański, 1993, 153-158 and Jerzy Lukowski, 'Political ideas among the Polish nobility in the eighteenth century (to 1788)', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 82, n° 1, January 2004, 1-26.

interested in reforming the education system and Guile analyses his treatise in light of his specific agenda²⁹. During his time in the National Commission for Education (established by Stanisław Poniąkowski in 1773 in the wake of Clement XIV's dissolution of the Jesuit order), he founded and led the Society for Elementary Textbooks (Towarzystwo Książek Elementarnych). Potocki's agenda was to start with educating the elite in order to reform the country: if 'the rich learned more diligently the art of managing their money, I assure you that idleness, poverty, and vices everywhere would turn into industry, financial self-sufficiency, effort and work'(17). The Polish situation is strikingly different from the contemporary Russian one. Catherine II and her adviser in educational matters, Ivan Betski, believed that the intervention of the State was the only way to reform society, whereas Potocki, defending the privileges of his class, considered educational reforms and architectural education as the role of the family. Betski³⁰ established foundling homes in Moscow and St Petersburg, the famous Smolny Institute for noble girls and implemented a boarding school inside the Academy of Fine Arts where he aimed to engender 'a strain of people, free from the inadequacies of society (...), who for the duration of their time in the Academy would never see or hear anything stupid which may corrupt their senses with its intoxicating poison³¹'. Only inside a closed institution could future architects learn their trade and without need of an architectural treatise such as Potocki's. The Polish aristocrat clearly devoted his treatise to his peers. Guile reminds us of the particular situation of the *szlachta*, analysed by Janusz Tazbir: its homogeneity and the common defence of its members' political privileges³². This situation makes the treatise unique in Europe for it is clearly linked with political reform and nationalism to a greater degree than examples in Italy, France or even Russia. The motivations behind Potocki's *Remarks on architecture* can only be understood in the despairing political situation in which his commonwealth found itself at time it was written.

Architectural culture in the Lithuanian-Polish commonwealth

Guile's edition of Potocki's treatise is also important given our relatively limited knowledge of the architectural culture of the Polish elite during the Enlightenment. This results in part from the great losses in primary documentation, during the

²⁹ Ambroise Jobert, *La commission d'éducation nationale en Pologne, 1773-1794 : son œuvre d'instruction publique*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1941. Danuta M. Gorecki, 'The Commission of national education and civic revival through books in eighteenth-century Poland', *The Journal of library history*, vol. 15, n°2, Spring 1980, 138-166.

³⁰ Piotr M. Maikow, *Иван Иванович Бетской, опыт его биографии*, Saint Petersburg, 1904; David Ransel, 'Ivan Betskoi and the Institutionalization of Enlightenment in Russia', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, vol. 14, n° 3, 1980, 327-38; Isabel de Madariaga, 'Catherine II and the foundation of the Russian Educational System', *Politics and Culture in eighteenth century Russia*, London: Longman, 1998, 168-191.

³¹ Rosalind P. Blakesley, 'Pride and the politics of nationality in Russia's Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, 1757-1807', *Art History*, vol. 33, Dec. 2010, 808.

³² Janusz Tazbir, 'Polish national consciousness in the sixteenth to eighteenth century', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 10, n° 3-4, 1986, 316-335.

Russian-Polish war of 1831 and the confiscations that followed and during the German occupation between 1939 and 1945. For example, among many items destroyed was a volume of drawings by architect Stanisław Zawadzki (1743-1806), a close ally of Potocki who had been trained at the Academia di San Luca in Rome³³. This period represents nevertheless a crucial moment in Poland for architectural education with advances made in particular since the 1730s by the Piarist and Jesuit orders. Jesuit professor Józef Rogaliński (1728-1802), who still deserves a better study and discussed briefly by Guile, is characteristic of the penetration of French and German architectural treatises in Poland³⁴. Several modern editions of Vitruvius' *De Architectura* appear in Stanisław Potocki's library inventory, among them the 1585 Roman and the 1649 Amsterdam editions. Vitruvius' modern manuscripts had been known in Poland since the fifteenth century, as were Serlio and Alberti's treatises within the humanist circles of the following century. Translations arrived quite late in Polish, however, if compared with the translation of Perrault's 1683 *Dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve* into English in 1692 (*An abridgment of the architecture of Vitruvius (...) first done in French by Mons^r Perrault*, London: Abel Swall & Timothy Child), in Italian in 1711 by Carlo Cataneo (*Compendio dell'architettura generale di Vitruvio opera di Mons. Perrault*, Venice: Girolamo Albrizzi) and into Spanish in 1761 by Joseph Catañeda (*Compendio de los diez libros de Arquitectura de Vitruvio escrito en francés por Claudio Perrault*, Madrid: Gabriel Ramirez). As in Russia, where Perrault was not translated until 1789, the fact that the Polish nobility was well versed in foreign languages explains why foreign treatises were not translated earlier. Scamozzi would not be translated before 1791. But perhaps more interesting and revelatory in Guile's account of Potocki, Poles preferred adapting their contents to the local situation. Baldassare Castiglione's *Cortegiano* was adapted to local customs in *The Polish Courtier* (*Dworzanin polski*, 1566) and in 1659 Vitruvius was adjusted to a Polish architectural tradition in the *Brief Study of the Construction of Manor Houses, Palaces and Castles According to the Polish Sky [or Heavens, Guile suggests] and Customs* (*Krótką nauka budownicza dworów, pałaców, zamków podług nieba i zwyczaju polskiego*), probably by Łukasz Opaliński. Reception of Vitruvius was, Guile argues, by no means uncritical, which indicates that Polish writers were active interpreters, rather than passive recipients. Conscious assessment and transformation of the ideas in these source texts were made to suit the Polish situation and its needs. This follows a French development, analysed by James McQuillan in 'From Blondel to Blondel: on the decline of the Vitruvian treatise' published in 1998³⁵. Potocki was surrounded by architects who participated in this effort to theorize a Polish architecture but in a pan-European context. The Society of Friends of Learning cofounded by Stanisław Potocki in 1800 gathered several architects, among them, Chrystian Piotr Aigner

³³ Irena Malinowska, *Stanisław Zawadzki 1743-1806*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwa Techniczne, 1953.

³⁴ Mieszkowski, *Podstawowe problemy architektury w polskich traktatach* and Kowalczyk, *Sebastiano Serlio a sztuka polska*.

³⁵ James Mc Quillan, 'From Blondel to Blondel: on the decline of the Vitruvian treatise', *Paper palaces: the rise of the Renaissance architectural treatise*, Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks eds., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, 338-357.

(1756-1841) who authored numerous architectural texts, including a dictionary of architectural terms and designed the palace grounds and follies in the estate of Puławy, own by the Czartoryski family near Ignacy Potocki's seat, Kurów³⁶. Parts of the *Remarks* - a poem by Grzegorz Piramowicz and the entire paragraph that follows it - are found in one of Aigner's texts, *Country building*, published in 1791. Guile reminds us that Potocki's text should not be seen as an anomaly in the Commonwealth. She cites, for example, Sebastian Sierakowski (1743-1824)'s *Architecture, Including Every Type of Masonry and Building (Architektura obejmująca wszelki gatunek mirowania i budowania)* published in 1812. It would be useful to know whether other manuscript texts were produced, particularly given their presumed audience in the Polish nobility. More broadly, these texts should be analysed in the context of the extraordinary bloom in architecture and arts under Stanisław Poniatowski, even if it is often criticized for an absence of general planning and its excessive expenses - as Guile illustrates with an extraordinary caricature by Norblin de la Gourelaine reproduced in her introduction. But Potocki's treatise is of more particular interest, for it shows how an elite member of the aristocracy with a complicated nationalistic relationship to the greater context of Europe conceived architectural theory.

Potocki's architectural theory

Reversing the negative criticism made by existing literature that found Potocki's treatise lacking originality because of its dependence upon other sources and its 'mosaic' form, Guile argues that this way of writing and integrating foreign references are the heart of its value. We might add that in this way Potocki follows in a long intellectual tradition of the commonplace book³⁷. The treaty is divided into a preface and six sections that discuss, in turn, typology, beauty, the benefit of the discipline of architecture, ornament, comfort and the branches of knowledge necessary to the architect. Potocki's most frequently cited and conspicuous theoretical sources are Vitruvius, Vignola, Palladio, Scamozzi, Francesco Milizia and Marc-Antoine Laugier. It is mostly the latter's opinions and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac's theory of 'primitive functionalism' that inform Potocki's thoughts. The Polish aristocrat was a correspondent to Condillac, whose writings he translated into Polish and of whom he asked in 1777 to write a *Logic* to serve as a text book in Polish schools³⁸. The author of the *Remarks* was marked by Condillac's ideas on experience as analysed by John C. O'Neil in *The Authority of experience: sensationist theory in the French Enlightenment* published by The Pennsylvania State University in 1996. But Potocki also devotes considerable space to discussing the notion of beauty, showing a familiarity with the ideas of Claude Perrault, whose 1683 *Dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve* was in the Potocki's library. Guile might have discussed

³⁶ Tadeusz Stefan Jaroszewski, *Chrystian Piotr Aigner, architekt warszawskiego klasycyzmu*, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970.

³⁷ David Allan, *Commonplace books and reading in Georgian England*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2010, esp. 35-45.

³⁸ Joseph James Chambliss, 'Condillac's natural logic', in *Educational theory as theory of conduct : from Aristotle to Dewey*, New York : SUNY Press, 1987, 117-124.

more thoroughly the treatise's ideas on positive and arbitrary beauty compared to Perrault's particularly in light of Antoine Picon's *Claude Perrault ou la curiosité d'un classique*, published in 1988. It would also have been interesting to know more about the Polish reception of Germain Boffrand's *De architectura liber*, published in 1745. After all, Boffrand was not only a crucial theorist of architectural beauty but also worked for Stanisław Leszczyński in Lorraine³⁹.

Extremely revealing of Potocki's approach to theory is how uneasy he is towards the idea of relativity of taste, and his difficulty in conciliating Perrault's ideas with Johann Joachim Winckelmann's model of art history. In a letter dated 25 November 1792, Jan Potocki alludes to a dissertation on Antiquity that Ignacy had announced to his cousin in an earlier, lost letter⁴⁰. Advocating the responsible use of authority, Potocki blames the pure imitation of ancient models, stating that no author can be followed blindly nor building serve as inflexible models, as each region should determine its own architecture. But Potocki returns to the idea that order and proportion are the base of universal beauty. The challenge for him is to reconcile the idea of universal beauty with a particular attention to sites and inhabitants. In a particularly enlightening passage, Guile evokes the connection of the Potocki brothers to Johann Gottfried von Herder's theories on differences between peoples and places and Gottfried Ernest Groddeck (1762-1825), professor in Vilnius who introduced the discipline of classical philology into Poland. Following Montesquieu's theory on the influence of climate, Potocki argues that the relation between architecture and nature is obvious. It is certainly here, in the importance given to site specificity, that Potocki comes closest to Vitruvius and Palladio.

Another example of Guile's rigorous and cautious approach to the context in which this text was written is the evocation of the possible link between Potocki's thinking and his belonging to the freemasons. Given the absence of in-depth study of the connections of freemasonry and architecture in the context of Poland⁴¹, Guile, instead of rushing into the masonic explanation of Potocki's views on architecture, simply expresses the hypothesis that the manuscript could have been written also for presentation and dissemination within the context of lodge meetings.

Potocki's treatise shapes a revealing dialogue about cultural centrality. To quote Guile 'a certain ambivalence about whether culture itself provided fortification against the loss of native traditions or was a permeable membrane enabling intellectual exchange across it, specifically permitting foreign influence to cross national cultural boundaries'(30). It is also interesting to note that Potocki nowhere tries to define a specific Polish architecture. His interest lies in the improvement of the knowledge of patrons who can erect better buildings by learning simple rules, thereby participating in the improvement of the whole society. For Potocki, deficiencies in architecture result from a lack of knowledge and a blind adherence to ancestral authority. Rarely has architecture's social and

³⁹ Michel Gallet, Jörg Garms eds., *Germain Boffrand : 1667-1754 : l'aventure d'un architecte indépendant*, Paris: Herscher, 1986.

⁴⁰ Jean Potocki, *Ceuvres V: Correspondance. Varia*, F. Rosset, D. Triaire eds., Louvain: Peeters, 2006, 32.

⁴¹ Ludwik Haas, *Wolnomularstwo w Europie środkowo-wschodniej w XVIII i XIX wieku*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1982.

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political role been so acutely stressed than in Potocki's specific situation as a member of one of the most preeminent families of a country that was about to disappear. This important book reminds us that for an elite that was despairingly fighting to save its country and its history, architectural improvement was, more than anywhere else in the eighteenth century, the weapon against cultural annihilation. At a time when architectural theory was dominated by history, Potocki writes for the present in order to save what he could of his own civilization.

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