



— 1. Rychwał, parish church. View from the south-east. Photo: W. Miedziak

# “The memory of Middle Ages” in church architecture of Italian architects in 16th c. Poland

## Problem outline and research postulates

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It is undoubtful that the Italian Renaissance, understood as the totality of phenomena associated with the concept of the revival of antiquity, had a huge impact on European culture. Simultaneously, there is no question that the development of the “antique revival” idea on the Apennine peninsula was different than in rest of Europe, north of the Alps. These differences resulted primarily, but not exclusively, from the firm establishment and influence of medieval traditions, which to an extent, accompanied the multiple aspects of early modern human intellectual activity. The contrast between north and south of Europe was particularly visible in church architecture. Artists and art theorists of the Apennine Peninsula were generally oriented towards the reception of ancient forms (or ones considered to be antique), but were usually critical towards Gothic architecture, identified as a foreign German style (*maniera tedesca*)<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, in north-of-the-Alps Europe, late-medieval architecture was often perceived as an element shaping one’s own identity. In case of some countries, such as Germany or France, it was even associated with the “national” heritage<sup>2</sup>, which however was not in contradiction with the reception of the Italian forms *all’antica*. This reception usually proceeded twofold; either it was a direct “transfer” of Italian Renaissance patterns, or their compilation with the Gothic style.

This dualistic approach also characterized the architecture of the early modern Polish Republic. Moreover, this approach is already recorded at the initial stage of the reception of Renaissance forms in Poland: simultaneously with the reconstruction of the Wawel Castle



<sup>1</sup> See e.g. S. Brough, *The Goths and the Concept of Gothic in Germany from 1500 to 1750: Culture, Language and Architecture*, Frankfurt 1985, pp. 105–106.

<sup>2</sup> M. von Engelberg, *Renovatio ecclesiae: die “Barockisierung” mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, Petersberg 2005, pp. 92, 160–164.



<sup>3</sup> First **J. A. Schmoll** (*Stilpluralismus statt Einheitszwang: zur Kritik der Stilepochen-Kunstgeschichte*, [in:] *Argo: Festschrift für Kurt Badt zu seinem 80. Geburtstag am 3. März 1970*, Hrsg. **M. Gosebruch**, **L. Dittmann**, Köln 1970), recently **A. Grzybowski** (*Gotycka architektura murywana w Polsce*, Warszawa 2014, p. 11).

<sup>4</sup> See **H. Lorenz**, *Spätgotik und Renaissance in Mitteleuropa: Ein "Stil zwischen den Stilen"?*, [in:] *Die Länder der böhmischen Krone und ihre Nachbarn zur Zeit der Jagiellonenkönige (1471–1526)*, Kunst, Kultur, Geschichte, Hrsg. **E. Welter**, Ostfildern 2004, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. **J. S. Ackerman**, "Ars Sine Scientia Nihil Est": *Gothic Theory of Architecture at the Cathedral of Milan*, "The Art Bulletin" 1949, No. 2; **R. Bernheimer**, *Gothic Survival and Revival in Bologna*, "The Art Bulletin" 1954, No. 4.

<sup>6</sup> **G. Simoncini**, *La Memoria del Medioevo nell'architettura dei secoli XV–XVIII*, Roma 2016, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. **A. Miłobędzki**, *Pułtuski "system architektoniczny"*, [in:] *Nobile claret opus. Studia z dziejów sztuki dedykowane Mieczysławowi Złatowi*, Ed. **L. Kalinowski**, **S. Mossakowski**, **Z. Ostrowska-Kęmbłowska**, Wrocław 1998; **W. Miedziak**, *Tradycja gotycka w nowożytnej architekturze Wielkopolski (XVI–XVII w.)*, PhD thesis written under the supervision of Prof. UAM Dr. habil. **J. Kowalski**, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poznań 2019.

<sup>8</sup> **A. Stankiewicz**, *Rola tradycji w twórczości architektonicznej Krzysztofa Bonadury Starszego* [in:] *III Łódzkie Spotkanie Studentów Historii Sztuki (Łódź, 12–14.12.2014). W blasku Orientu. Dziedzictwo postindustrialne problemy, wyzwania, perspektywy. Pod natchnieniem – źródła i inspiracje. Wybrane materiały ze studencko-doktoranckiej konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Koło Naukowe Historyków Sztuki Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, Ed. **K. Stefański**, **A. Barczyk**, Łódź 2015.

portals forged by master Benedykt workshop (essentially 1524–1529), combined the features of the Renaissance and late Gothic, a second effort was conducted – construction of the Renaissance Sigismund Chapel, designed by Bartłomiej Berecci (1519–1531).

The image of the art of the 16th c., being very complex in terms of style, is the reason behind moving towards emphasizing its pluralistic character, while abandoning the evaluation of works in category of "stylistic advancement" in relation to "leading European centers"<sup>3</sup>. This also causes to generally avoid the notion of describing an epoch-specific "style", focusing rather on the aforementioned pluralism. At the same time, there are doubts as to whether the history of art, as a discipline, has developed appropriate methods of evaluating works that combine formal features of various artistic modes<sup>4</sup>.

These doubts are firmly justified, as there is no clarity about the origins of mentioned pluralistic tendencies. Recent studies distinguish additional aspect influencing the forms of contemporary architecture: the role of medieval tradition in the work of early modern architects of Italian origin. This problem, mostly reduced to the construction sites of the cathedral in Milan and the church of St. Petronio in Bologna in older literature<sup>5</sup>, has recently been addressed by an extensive Italian monograph. According to the research of Giorgio Simoncini, despite the critical attitude towards "German manner", the memory of the Middle Ages was one of the more important elements shaping the artistic awareness of the architects of the Apennine peninsula both in the 16th and 17th centuries<sup>6</sup>. This way, the contrast between the south of Europe, as one drawing from the ancient tradition, and the north, embracing the Renaissance through the prism of its own medieval tradition, become much less clear. Simultaneously, a new field of early modern architecture interpretation opens up for research.

The issue of "the memory of Middle Ages" in churches erected by Italian architects in the 16th c. Polish Republic has not yet been formulated as a separate research problem by Polish scientific literature. The topic was sometimes mentioned as a part of larger dissertations<sup>7</sup>, and recently it has been outlined by Aleksander Stankiewicz, who, however, focused essentially on the role of tradition in the work of Krzysztof Bonadura the Elder, an architect of the 17th century<sup>8</sup>.

Regarding the sacral architecture of the 16th c. Polish Republic, the important aspect of this problem lies in its scope, both personal and geographical. Medieval traditions had an important role in activities of many architects of Italian origin (Bernardinus de Gianotis, Giovanni Battista Veneziano, Giovanni Maria Bernardoni, Ambroży Włoch, Bernardo Morando), who created their works in Greater Poland, lands of Central Poland, Mazovia, the Lublin region and the lands of Crown Ruthenia.

The issue of "the memory of Middle Ages" in works of Italian architects is directly related to the wider problem of the importance



of medieval tradition in the history of European architecture in the 16th century. This topic was researched as early as in the 19th c.<sup>9</sup> and since then it has enjoyed unflagging popularity, involving well-known historians of art and architecture in the discussion<sup>10</sup>. In the 21st c., researchers become particularly interested in the impact of the medieval tradition on early modern architecture: in the last two decades a number of monographs were published, mainly in Germany, France, England and Italy<sup>11</sup>. This issue has also been gaining popularity recently in Polish science. In the recent decade, three monographs were developed, focusing on the Gothic tradition in architecture. These monographs included the architecture of the Ruthenian lands of the Polish Crown<sup>12</sup>, references to the selected works of architecture in Poland in the 16th c.<sup>13</sup> and covered the issue of Gothic tradition in Greater Poland architecture in the 16th and 17th c., more broadly described in the unpublished doctoral dissertation of the author of these thesis<sup>14</sup>. The latter work allowed to initially identify some of the works discussed here, located within the boundaries of the aforementioned Greater Poland region, as well as to get author acquainted with the current research problems and questions.

Continuing on the works of Italian architects, the most attention has been devoted to churches belonging to the so-called "Pułtusk group" arising in the areas of the Central Poland and Mazovia. In last decades an observation was made concerning the dependence of the forms of "Pułtusk group" churches on the Płock cathedral, which was being built and expanded at that time. The Płock cathedral works were conducted in two successive phases by two Italian architects: Bernardino de Gianotis and Giovanni Battista Veneziano<sup>15</sup>. The renovation of Płock cathedral was one of the greatest construction efforts in Polish Republic of 16th century. In the 1980s, basing on his own archaeological and architectural research, Robert Kunkel established that, contrary to the standpoint existing in the literature, the cathedral was not a conglomerate of Romanesque forms with Renaissance additions, but was completely rebuilt in the 16th century<sup>16</sup>. The formal side of the building, which eventually took a form close to both Romanesque and Renaissance patterns, was the subject of a dispute over the inspirations of clients and architects<sup>17</sup>.

In the first phase of the cathedral's construction (around 1532–1535), its choir was closed from the east with a short apse. Almost simultaneously, in the nearby parts of the country, several aisle temples were built, still including Gothic features (such as ogival windows, stepped buttresses, or unplastered facades), although, similarly to Płock cathedral, closed from the east with semicircular apses (Kobylniki, Kroczewo, Wawrzyszew and Bratoszewice) [Fig. 2].

Both the formal origin, apart from showing the convergence of the apse solution with the eastern part of the cathedral and the authorship of this small group of churches have not been convincingly explained so far. The more artistically significant group of objects ap-



<sup>9</sup> See e.g. **Ch. L. Eastlake**, *A History of the Gothic Revival – An Attempt to Show How the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries Has since Been Encouraged and Developed*, Cambridge 1872.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. **E. Panofsky**, *Das erste Blatt aus dem "Libro" Giorgio Vasaris. Eine Studie über die Beurteilung der Gotik in der italienischen Renaissance "mit einem Exkurs über zwei Fassadenprojekte Domenico Beccafumis"*, "Städel-Jahrbuch" Vol. 6 (1930); **N. Pevsner**, *Möglichkeiten und Aspekte des Historismus. Versuch einer Frühgeschichte und Typologie des Historismus*, [in:] *Historismus und bildende Kunst. Vorträge und Diskussion im Oktober 1963 in München und Schloss Anif*, Hrsg. **L. Grote**, München 1965.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. e.g. **J. C. Smith**, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany*, Princeton 2002; **H. Rousteau-Chambon**, *Le Gothique des Temps modernes. Architecture religieuse en milieu urbain*, Paris 2003; **M. von Engelberg**, *op. cit.*; **G. Simoncini**, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> See **T. Zaucha**, *Tradycja gotycka w architekturze sakralnej ziem ruskich Korony*, Kraków 2015.

<sup>13</sup> See **P. Gryglewski**, *De sacra antiquitate. Odwołania do przeszłości w polskiej architekturze sakralnej XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>14</sup> See **W. Miedziak**, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> See **R. M. Kunkel**, *Architektura gotycka na Mazowszu*, Warszawa 2006, p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> **Idem**, *Kościół katedralny w Płocku (sprawozdanie z terenowych prac badawczych i pomiarowych Instytutu Podstaw Rozwoju Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej)*, "Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki" 1981, Issue 3/4.

<sup>17</sup> See **idem**, *Renesansowa katedra płocka i jej twórca Bernardinus de Gianotis*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki", 1987, No. 3/4; **A. Bukowska**, *Katedra w Płocku – romańska czy renesansowa?*, [in:] "Żeby wiedzieć". *Studia dedykowane Helenie Małkiewiczównie*, Ed. **W. Walanus**, **M. Walczak**, **J. Wolańska**, Kraków 2008.



<sup>18</sup> See e.g. **H. Hipp**, *Studien zur "Nachgotik" des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland, Böhmen, Österreich und der Schweiz*, Tübingen 1979.

<sup>19</sup> See **M. Schmidt**, *Reverentia und Magnificentia. Historizität in der Architektur Süddeutschlands, Österreichs und Böhmens vom 14. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 1999.

<sup>20</sup> **J. Chyczewski**, *Kolegiata pułtуска na tle kościelnego budownictwa mazowieckiego XV i XVI wieku*, Warszawa 1936, pp. 40–47.

<sup>21</sup> **M. Lewicka**, *Problematyka badań architektury renesansowej na Mazowszu*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" 1963, No. 2, pp. 132.

<sup>22</sup> **A. Miłobędzki**, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>23</sup> **R. M. Kunkel**, *Jan Baptysta Wenecjanin, budowniczy i obywatel plocki*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" 1983, No. 1, pp. 45–46.

<sup>24</sup> **Z. Świechowski**, *Zagadnienie odrodzenia romanizmu w Polsce*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" 1960, No. 4, p. 344.

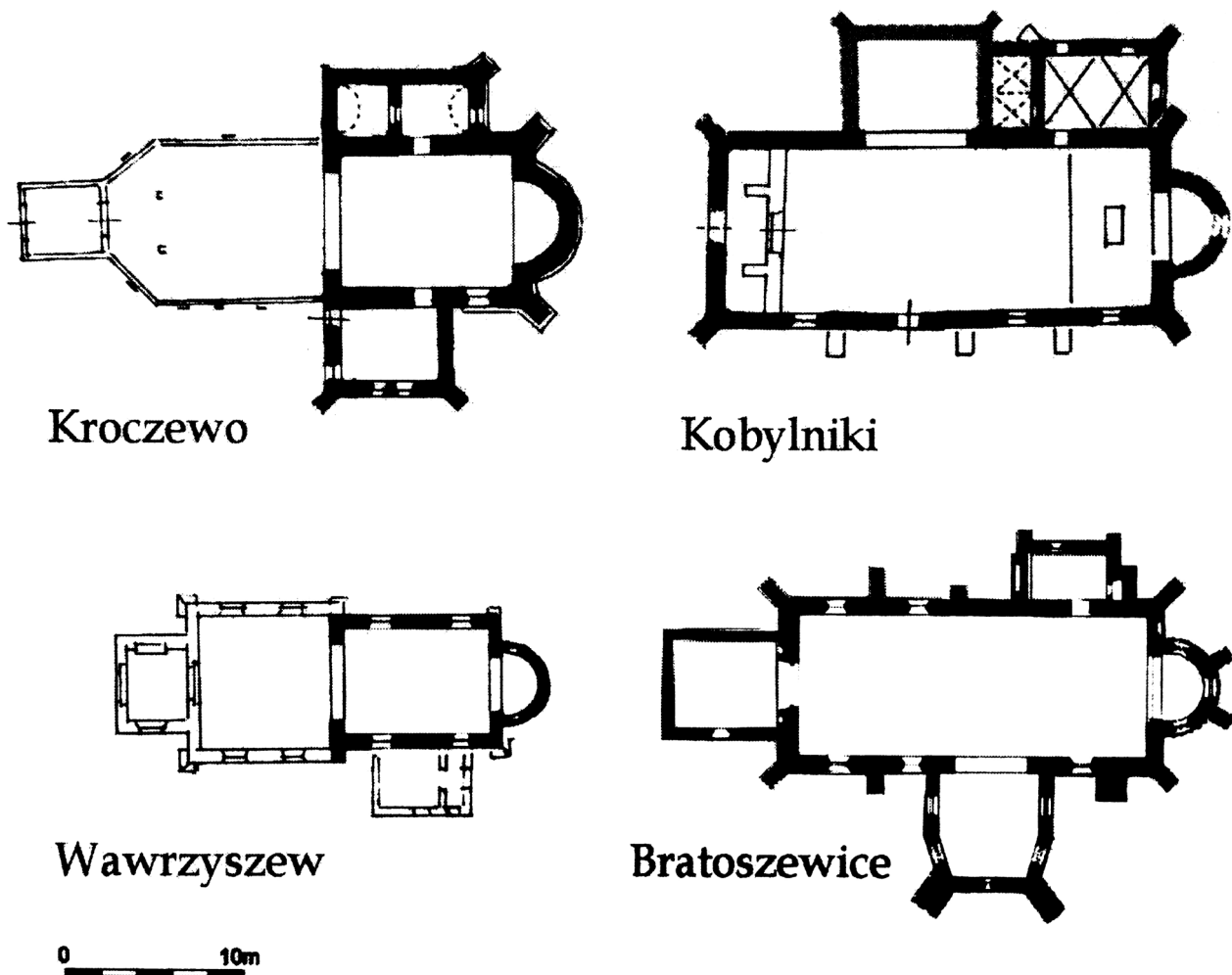
<sup>25</sup> **A. Miłobędzki**, *op. cit.*, p. 240. The question of "romanization", as a retrospective current in architecture connected with so-called northern Renaissance is already widely covered in the literature (status of research – see **K. Graf**, *Retrospektive Tendenzen in der bildenden Kunst vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert. Kritische Überlegungen aus der Perspektive des Historikers*, [in:] *Mundus in imagine. Bildersprache und Lebenswelten in Mittelalter. Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner*, Hrsg. **A. Löther [et al.]**, München 1996; **K. A. Ottenheim**, *Romanesque Renaissance – Introduction*, [in:] *Romanesque Renaissance: Carolingian, Byzantine and Romanesque Buildings (800–1200) as a Source for New All'Antica Architecture in Early Modern Europe (1400–1700)*, Ed. *idem*, Leiden 2021). The eventual impact of this current on described works of architects of the Apennine Peninsula should be considered against wider European background, basing on the newest results of studies conducted in the area of Poland (e.g. **B. Arciszewska**, *Polish Architecture "more vetusto ... murata": References to Romanesque Buildings in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before 1600*, [in:] *Romanesque Renaissance...*).

<sup>26</sup> **P. Gryglewski**, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–186.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 339–341.

peared shortly after the second phase of the cathedral's reconstruction, led by Giovanni Battista Veneziano between 1556–1563. At that time, the cathedral chancel was extended to the east and closed again with an apse. During that period, a number of single-nave churches were built, characterized by an "innovative", Renaissance interior design and separate chancel along with closed apses, similar to the elongated apse of the Płock cathedral. However, in more detailed view focusing on the external design, these churches were also deeply embedded in the late medieval tradition (Chruślin, Brok, Głogowiec, Rychwał) [Fig. 1]. Based on documents and formal analysis in the literature, they were associated with the person of Giovanni Battista Veneziano. The described group also belongs to the above-mentioned, wider collection of churches, associated with the works of Veneziano, known in the literature as the "Pułtusk group". Other churches associated with this group (churches in Pułtusk, Ciekosyn, Brochów, Warsaw and the parish church in Płock and Dobromil in Ruthenia) also draw from the Italian Renaissance architecture and the late Gothic tradition, although they are less homogeneous in terms of type.

Studies that elaborate on with problem of medieval tradition in early modern architecture, distinguish two main interpretative currents. In the first one, the analyzed objects are described as created under the influence of medieval North European tradition (including local tradition), but without any particular idea conveyed by the founder or architect<sup>18</sup>. The second one suggests that the traditional elements of these buildings are supposed to convey an idea<sup>19</sup>. The interpretations of the temples of the "Pułtusk group" are of a similarly twofold character. One of the earliest opinions, situating it in the first interpretative current, was the statement by Jerzy Chyczewski, who emphasized the influence of the local Gothic tradition on the method of building churches from aforementioned group<sup>20</sup>. Maria Lewicka<sup>21</sup>, Adam Miłobędzki<sup>22</sup> and Robert Kunkel<sup>23</sup> spoke later about churches associated with Giovanni Battista Veneziano in a similar fashion. Zygmunt Świechowski, on the other hand, was critical towards the notion of possible influences of the Romanesque tradition in the churches of the Płock architect, especially when interpreting the forms of the Płock cathedral. Świechowski rejected the possibility of Masovian churches being derived from Romanesque churches<sup>24</sup>. In turn, Miłobędzki showed a general tendency to "soften" Gothic forms in the "neo-Romanesque" fashion, which occurred in the architecture belt from Greater Poland to Lithuania. A tendency, which was to be brought to the territory of the Commonwealth by Italian builders from the Veneto and Lombardy regions<sup>25</sup>. The most important representative of the second interpretative current, describing the forms of the Płock cathedral and the "Pułtusk group", was Piotr Gryglewski. According to him, the forms of this church can be perceived as an example of the ideological renovation and restitution of old architecture<sup>26</sup>. Basing on the potential pattern of the Pułtusk group at



the Płock cathedral, Gryglewski asked, inclining towards affirmative answer, whether the imitation had not only a formal dimension, but also an ideological dimension. Or, to be more precise, whether the churches of this group were intended to refer to the Romanesque forms already present in these lands to, for example, recall distant parish traditions.

In the context of the two above-mentioned interpretations, at least a few other 16th c. Polish churches deserve attention. Gryglewski spoke, in similar manner, about the Pabianice parish church, one of the largest churches in the Polish Republic in the 16th c., erected by Ambroży Włoch in 1583–1592 [Fig. 3]. Church's forms can be traced back, which finds its confirmation in various sources, to the Płock cathedral. In this case, the author especially pointed the fact that the Pabianice church was erected on the 500th anniversary of the town's taking over by the chapter and reburial of the bodies of the donors to the Pabianice chapter in the Płock cathedral<sup>27</sup>. It's important to men-

— 2. Floor plans of the churches in Kroczewo, Kobylniki, Wawrzyszew and Bratoszewice. Ed. P. Gryglewski (*De sacra...*)





— 3. Pabianice, parish church. View from the south-east. Photo: W. Miedziak

tion though, that Gryglewski did not pay attention to a number of features of the temple revealing reminiscences of the late medieval tradition (buttresses, windows, tower, etc.), which cannot be applied to the Płock cathedral, defined in the contract as a model for this church.

A decade after completion of the Pabianice parish church, the Jesuit church in Kalisz was built – considered to be one of the first early baroque works of Italian architecture in Greater Poland<sup>28</sup>, erected in 1591–1597 and founded by Archbishop Stanisław Karnkowski [Fig. 4]. This temple is commonly attributed to the Lombardian, Giovanni Maria Bernardoni, the Jesuit architect who was the first in Northern Europe to repeat the design of the Roman Jesuit church of Il Gesu. In most recent studies, the issues of medieval tradition in the architecture of this church (three-sided closure of the chancel, buttresses, ogival windows) were usually omitted<sup>29</sup>. If they were analysed, the presence of medieval elements explained by the fact that the initial stages of construction was conducted by a local contractor who was meant to erect the outer walls of the temple, which were later supplemented with modern elements by Bernardoni; the organization of the interior space and the facade<sup>30</sup>. The issue of medieval memory in the works of Giovanni Maria Bernardoni is much deeper, as evidenced also by the form of the Jesuit church in Nesvizh (ca. 1587–1593), which cylindrical turrets, according to Tadeusz Bernatowicz, refer to the medieval tradition of churches castellation<sup>31</sup>.

The end of the 16th c. was a period of building great noble churches in Poland. One of the buildings that can be included in this "construction wave" was, apart from the above-mentioned, the collegiate church in Zamość, erected by Bernard Morando, the author of the design of the entire city from 1587<sup>32</sup>. This building, despite its innovative solutions and ideological proximity to patterns of the Italian Renaissance, has a number of features derived from the medieval tradition, including vaults or presbytery's polygonal closure<sup>33</sup>.

As stated in above, the matter of "medieval memory" in individual artist's works in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was usually noticed. It wasn't, however, associated with architect's experience, nor with the influence made by the medieval tradition of their homeland (Apennine Peninsula) on their works. Most importantly, this issue was not yet formed into a separate research problem, encompassing activities of many Italian-origin architects. The possibility for creation of new research hypotheses finds its roots in intensified, European research development effort on retrospection phenomenon<sup>34</sup>. Undertaking this research effort, important not only from the point of view of early-modern architecture in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth but also from European point of view, allows to include this research problem into the current of most recent European scientific discussions. Broadening the research scope enables recognition of analogous features, which would not be seen by focusing locally.



<sup>28</sup> E. Kręglewska-Foksowicz [et al.], *Sztuka baroku w Wielkopolsce*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" 1958, No. 1.

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. A. Stankiewicz, *Wpływ fabryki i architektury kościoła jezuitów w Kaliszu na polską architekturę sakralną I poł. wieku XVII – kilka uwag*, [in:] *Sztuka Polski Środkowej*, Vol. 6, Ed. P. Gryglewski, Łódź 2016.

<sup>30</sup> See J. Paszenda, *Budowle jezuickie w Polsce XVI-XVIII w.*, Vol. 1, Kraków 1999, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> T. Bernatowicz, *Miles Christianus et Peregrinus. Fundacje Mikołaja Radziwiłła "Sierotki" w ordynacji nieświeskiej*, Warszawa 1994, pp. 51–52.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. J. Kowalczyk, *Kolegiata w Zamościu i jej fundator kanclerz Jan Zamoyski*, "Rocznik Historii Sztuki" Vol. 5 (1965).

<sup>33</sup> See A. Soćko, *Ornamentyzacja sklepień w architekturze sakralnej Lubelszczyzny XVI i początków XVII wieku jako przykład lokalnej drogi rozwoju – od gotyku do manieryzmu*, [in:] *Ornament i dekoracja dzieła sztuki. Studia z historii sztuki*, Ed. J. Daranowska-Łukaszewska, A. Dworzak, A. Betlej, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. G. Simoncini, *op. cit.*; K. Enekel, K. Ottenheim, *The Quest for an Appropriate Past: The Creation of National Identities in Early Modern Literature, Scholarship, Architecture, and Art*, [in:] *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture*, Ed. K. A. E. Enekel, K. A. Ottenheim, Leiden–Boston 2019; Y. Pauwels, *The Roots of Philibert De l'Orme: Antiquity, Medieval Art, and Early Christian Architecture*, [in:] *The Quest...*; E. Garofalo, *Tra mito e modello. Le cattedrali normanne nell'architettura religiosa del Cinquecento in Italia meridionale*, [in:] *Romanesque Renaissance...*; I. Campbell, *The Scottish Romanesque Revival Revisited (Again)*, [in:] *Romanesque Renaissance...*





<sup>35</sup> See **W. Komorowski**, *Gotyki w architekturze Małopolski XVI wieku. Artykuł przeglądowy*, [in:] *Historyzm – tradycyjalizm – archaizacja. Studia z dziejów świadomości historycznej w średniowieczu i okresie nowożytnym*, Ed. **M. Walczak**, Kraków 2015.

<sup>36</sup> See **M. von Engelberg**, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> See **P. Krasny**, *Kościół św. Mikołaja w Szczepieszynie. Przyczynek do badań nad „długim trwaniem” późnogotyckich schematów przestrzennych w architekturze polskiej wieku XVII*, [in:] *Sztuka dawnej ziemi chełmskiej i województwa bełskiego*, Ed. **idem**, Kraków 1999; **A. Stankiewicz**, *Rola tradycji...*

<sup>38</sup> See **G. Simoncini**, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. **R. M. Kunkel**, *Mazowsze i Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie*, [in:] *Architektura gotycka w Polsce*, Ed. **T. Mroczko**, **M. Arsyński**, Vol. 1, Warszawa 1995, p. 92; recently about Enkinger: **T. Torbus**, *Mistrz Enkinger alias Carpentarius – wybitny architekt gdański na progu nowożytności czy historyczna mara*, [in:] *Gdańsk w okresie nowożytnym. Kultura, religia, polityka, społeczeństwo i stosunki międzynarodowe*, Ed. **W. Długokęcki**, **J. Sarnowsky**, Sopot 2021.

<sup>40</sup> See **J. Kowalski**, *Großpolen*, [in:] *Mittelalterliche Architektur in Polen: Romanische und gotische Baukunst zwischen Oder und Weichsel*, Vol. 1, Hrsg. **Ch. Herrmann**, **D. von Winterfeld**, Petersberg 2015, Vol. 1, p. 358.

An acute example might be an observation on geographic location of early-modern temples, erected by Italian architects, in which the medieval tradition was of great influence. These temples were erected in the central and northern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (they are not observable e.g. in the Lesser Poland<sup>35</sup>), which situation is analogous to the Empire<sup>36</sup>. Simultaneously, this analogy, in macroscale, can be related to the range of influence of the Renaissance art in south and north of Europe.

Only recently Polish literature noted the important role of medieval tradition in works of artists originating from Lombardy<sup>37</sup>, although in Italian literature the issue was already mentioned in late 16th century<sup>38</sup>. There are many indications that “the memory of Middle Ages” was also very important in other historical north-Italian regions: Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Florence. As for the early reception of Italian designs from these regions, I mean primarily the issue of the genesis of the collegiate church in Łask, one of the most significant achievements of late Gothic architecture in Poland (1517–1525) [Fig. 5]. The unusually developed, unfortunately only partially preserved, ceramic decorations on its façade are usually linked to a number of similar works from Gdańsk and Lithuania, whose authorship is attributed to builder from Gdańsk Michael Enkinger<sup>39</sup> – author of, among others, Chapel of St. Anne and the Bernardine church in Vilnius, a cantor of Gdansk in Kaunas (the so-called “House of Perkunas”), the gables of the St. Catherine church and the Holy Trinity church in Gdańsk, as well as the chapel of St. Trinity and others. Jan Skuratowicz presented an opposing opinion on the genesis of the gothic collegiate church, noticing Italian architecture elements, especially of Venetian inspiration and noting a similar way of decorating the walls in the temple of St. Peter and Paul in Venice. These characteristics, according to the author, could also be confirmed by the fact that church founder travelled on numerous diplomatic trips to Italy. Łaski’s focus on Italian Renaissance art can be found in, among others, tombstones prepared for him. The thesis of Jan Skuratowicz, although cited in the literature<sup>40</sup>, was never developed in a separate publication.

An initial review of the architecture of the Veneto region shows similarities with the churches built in Greater Poland, Central Poland and Mazovia, especially with above-mentioned the Łask collegiate church and the churches designed by Giovanni Battista Veneziano. This group also includes apsidal aisleless churches, which formally, temporally and geographically converge with the reconstruction of the Płock cathedral and allow to put forward a new hypothesis, unpublished in literature, regarding the relationship between the workshop responsible for their creation and the workshop of Bernardino Zanobi de Gianotis. The similarities between these groups of objects and the architecture of the Veneto region can be divided into two categories: indirect and direct. The example of direct similarity, which



4. Kalisz, former Jesuit church. parish church. View from the south-east. Photo: W. Miedziak





— 5. Łask, collegiate church. View from the south-east. Photo: W. Miedziak





6. On the left: Chruślin, parish church. View on the western gable. Photo: J. Kowalski; on the right: Giovanni Antonio Canal, Campo santi Giovanni e Paolo a Venezia col monumento a Bartolomeo Colleoni (1736–1740), fragment. Photo from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canaletto\\_%281697-1768%29,\\_Venezia,\\_campo\\_Santi\\_Giovanni\\_e\\_Paolo,\\_1736-1740.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canaletto_%281697-1768%29,_Venezia,_campo_Santi_Giovanni_e_Paolo,_1736-1740.jpg) (access date: 16.08.2022)

seem to lead to specific Italian works as architectural models, is the church of St. Peter and Paul in Venice, formerly Dominican [Fig. 6]. The characteristic brick and ceramic decoration on the façades of this temple, as mentioned above, was linked by Skuratowicz to the decoration of the Łask collegiate church. This is not the only example as the details of the Venetian church architecture can also be seen in the decorations of the church gables in Chruślin and Sobota, which are probably the work of Giovanni Battista Veneziano<sup>41</sup> [Fig. 6]. The architect seemed to downsize the decoration of the facade of the former Dominican religious temple. Apart from the direct references, it is worth to mention the general similarities – in both the 15th and the first half of the 16th c. Gothic in the Veneto region there were cases of temples closed with apses. These types of closures were original part of the Italian buildings (e.g. the oratory of St. Daniel in Bagnoli di Sopra from 1473) although in some cases they were added later or were older, in relation to the Gothic, part of the church (cathedral in Montagnana from 1431–1502<sup>42</sup>; Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore in Treviso after 1473<sup>43</sup>). The popularity of apse church is also demonstrated by gothic single-nave or multi-nave churches closed with small polygonal apses, such as the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Thiene (after 1470), the church of St. Stefan in Olmo di Bagnoli di Sopra or the church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Salizzole<sup>44</sup>.



<sup>41</sup> See J. Chyczewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–34.

<sup>42</sup> See G. Gandolfi, *L'Eclissi e l'Orbe Magno del Leone: l'affresco astrologico del Duomo di Montagnana come profezia anti-turca*, [in:] *Il Cielo in Terra ovvero della giusta distanza*, a cura di V. Girotto, G. Rosada, Padova 2015. p. 203.

<sup>43</sup> See F. Forlati, *Restauro di edifici danneggiati della guerra – provincia di Treviso*, "Bollettino d'Arte" 1950, No. 3, p. 267.

<sup>44</sup> See Engazzà, [in:] *Cenni storici sulle chiese parrocchiali della diocesi di Verona*, a cura Archivio Storico della Curia Diocesiana di Verona, Verona 2015, p. 40.



<sup>45</sup> See **M. Wardzyński**, *Sztuka nowożytna na Mazowszu. Zarys problematyki*, [in:] *Dzieje Mazowsza*, Vol. 2: *Lata 1527–1794*, Ed. **J. Tyszkiewicz**, Pułtusk 2015, p. 634.

<sup>46</sup> See **Z. Świechowski**, *Dwunastowieczna katedra w Płocku*, "Ochrona Zabytków" 1952, No. 3; **A. Bukowska**, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>47</sup> **R. M. Kunkel**, *Renesansowa katedra...*, p. 238.

<sup>48</sup> See **M. Porcu Gaias**, *Sassari. Storia architettonica e urbanistica dalle origini al '600*, Nuoro 1996.

<sup>49</sup> See **W. Miedziak**, *op. cit.*, pp. 324–344.

<sup>50</sup> See **E. Bąbka**, *Z działalności budowlanej Jerzego Hoffmana na terenie Sieradzkiego, Wieluńskiego i Łęczyckiego*, [in:] *Między północą a południem. Sieradzkie i wieluńskie w późnym średniowieczu i czasach nowożytnych. Materiały z sesji naukowej w Kościelnym kościele Sieradza, 4–6 grudnia 1991 r.*, Ed. **T. J. Horbacz**, **L. Kajzer**, Sieradz 1993, p. 122.

We can also indicate similar influences and similarities in other churches analyzed here. The origins of the modern Płock cathedral is associated, in literature, with Italian architecture, both ancient (Karakalli and Diocletian termes, the Basilica of Maxentius), as well as early modern (Roman churches: Santa Maria del Popolo, San Agostino, Santa Maria sopra Minerva<sup>45</sup>). Additionally, Romanesque or northern European sources of its architecture were pointed as plausible<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, the stepped gables with swallow's tails motif, used to decorate the cathedral, were of medieval, Italian origin and appeared also in other Giovanni Battista Veneziano churches. Their form is very often associated with the so-called "ghibelline" battlements<sup>47</sup>. The Pabianice parish church based on the Płock cathedral, would refer to the same sources, although it's reduced form, with simultaneous addition of numerous, traditional Gothic elements, is absent in the Płock temple. This particular phenomenon requires further research, similarly to the matter of origins of Ambroży Włoch – its architect.

As for Giovanni Maria Bernardoni works, in relation to traditional features of Jesuit temples erected by him in Kalisz and Nieśwież, the older literature did not particularly notice architects earlier works. Before Bernardoni left his home country, he undertook, along with Giovanni de Rosis, the construction of the church of St. Catherine in Sassari, Sardinia in 1579–1609 (finished after the architect's death<sup>48</sup>). Mentioned church contains a number of elements belonging to the Gothic tradition, such as pointed-arch arcades, ogee arch niches or ribbed vaults, and elements of the Romanesque tradition, such as columns decorated with geometric ornaments.

All these similarities, which confirm the resilience of medieval tradition in northern Italy architecture and point towards a possibility of genetic relations between traditional Polish and Italian architecture, provide a solid reason for further research. Similarly promising is the issue of the hitherto unexplored experience of artists, gained before their arrival in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially considering the case of Giovanni Maria Bernardoni.

In case of Italian architects works influence on later, 17th c. Polish architecture, an analysis of Giovanni Battista Veneziano works could be of significant help. The analysis may not only explain the genesis of churches erected by the artist himself, but also explain the genesis of churches, analogical in form, which were constructed between 16th and 17th c., especially in Central Poland region (e.g. churches from around 1600: Domaniewo, Kowal, Raciążek, and later in Sławsk, Grodzisko, Wieleń, Zadzim and others<sup>49</sup>) [Fig. 7]. A similar impact on knowledge development in the area of origins of the architecture of next (17th) c. may be achieved by a deep analysis of the role of tradition in works of Giovanni Maria Bernardoni. Literature already showed an influence of construction system of Kalisz Jesuit church interior on works of 17th c. architect – Jerzy Hoffman<sup>50</sup>. It was not



7. Kowal, parish church. View from the south-east. Photo: W. Miedziak





<sup>51</sup> See e.g. P. Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>52</sup> See J. C. Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> State of research – cf. e.g. M. Brandis, *La Maniera Tedesca. Eine Studie zum historischen Verständnis der Gothik im Italien der Renaissance in Geschichtsschreibung. Kunsttheorie und Baupraxis*, Weimar 2002; G. Simoncini, *op. cit.*;

<sup>54</sup> K. J. Czyżewski, M. Walczak, *Sztuka nowożytna wobec tradycji średniowiecza. Uwarunkowania – motywacje – realizacje*, [in:] *Historyzm – tradycjonalizm – archaizacja...*, p. 33.

<sup>55</sup> See R. M. Kunkel, *Renesansowa katedra...*, p. 228; P. Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 341–343.

<sup>56</sup> The emphasis on basic research stays in agreement with discipline's recent methodological demands, formulated in the following sentence: "Theories may define and allow to interpret phenomena, although the core should be studied thoroughly, brick after brick" (J. Skuratowicz, T. J. Żuchowski, *Rozważania wokół pierwszego przykazania*, "Artium Questiones" Vol. 20 [2009], p. 229).

noticed though, that similarly to Bernardoni, Hoffmann combined these solutions with Gothic characteristics, noticeable especially in the building's exterior. It is possible then, that the scope of imitation was much broader. It is also worth remembering, that Bernardoni was a Jesuit architect, which inclines towards an analysis of his works in reference to general Jesuit architecture. The issue of "the memory of Middle Ages" in Society of Jesus architecture is one of the earliest noticed research problems in area of the role of medieval tradition in early modern architecture<sup>51</sup>, important enough to be an object of monography<sup>52</sup>.

One of the aspects of architecture interpretation is the matter of gothic element in aforementioned temples. To be more precise, the question whether late-medieval tradition was a proof of continuity or conscious return to those forms. As mentioned before, European literature is unequivocal in regards to these two concepts. This question is even more important for Italian-origin architecture analysis, due to incomparably more developed discussion level on the matter of architectural modi in Apennine Peninsula, comparing to countries north of Alps<sup>53</sup>. This way, Italian artists coming to Republic of Poland could bring with them the knowledge and experience unknown earlier in this areas, such as e.g. the ability to distinguish different construction modi. It is hard to expect that they perceived late medieval architecture as anachronic or archaic, especially considering that in 16th c. Italian literature it was described as *moderno*, so modern, in comparison to "ancient" descendance of Antiquity<sup>54</sup>. It is possible that these architects compiled different methods of construction consciously – independently or on founders command. Therefore, this matter connects with the issue of founder's awareness of the possibility of choice between different stylistic modi as well as reasoning behind them, both esthetical and ideological. The fact that people and institutions founding the construction of aforementioned temples were engaged in choosing their forms can be proven by preserved contracts for the construction of the Płock cathedral and parish church in Pabianice<sup>55</sup>. It is unclear though, what was the reasoning behind those choices.

The separation of the issue of "the memory of Middle Ages" in temples constructed in Republic of Poland by Italian-origin architects and it's analysis, can be significance especially in the fields of "primary history of art"<sup>56</sup>, ideological connotations of depicted works, their place in history of Polish and European architecture, along with the artistic awareness of their architects and founders. The information contained in the latest publications in the field, allow for the formulation of a hypothesis about the special influence of the medieval tradition of the Apennine Peninsula on the work of these architects, may be of particular help here. The validity of this hypothesis is also confirmed by the preliminary research results presented above.

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**Słowa kluczowe**

tradycja gotycka, architektura XVI w., włoscy architekci, architektura kościelna, polska architektura

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**Keywords**

Gothic tradition, 16th c. architecture, Italian architects, church architecture, Polish architecture

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### Summary

#### WITOLD MIEDZIAK (The Poznan Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences) / "The memory of Middle Ages" in church architecture of Italian architects in 16th c. Poland. Problem outline and research postulates

It is undoubtful that the Italian Renaissance, understood as the totality of phenomena associated with the concept of the revival of antiquity, had a huge impact on European culture. Simultaneously, there is no question that the development of the revival idea on the Apennine Peninsula was different than in the rest of Europe, north of the Alps. These differences resulted primarily, but not exclusively, from the firm establishment and influence of medieval traditions. The contrast between north and south of Europe was particularly visible in church architecture and in the, newly emerging, artistic one. Artists and art theorists of the Apennine Peninsula were generally oriented towards the reception of ancient forms (or ones considered to be antique), but were usually critical towards Gothic architecture, identified as a foreign German style (*maniera tedesca*). On the other hand, in north-of-the-Alps Europe, late-medieval architecture was often perceived as an element shaping one's own identity. In case of some countries, such as Germany or France, it was even associated with the "national" heritage, which however was not in contradiction with the reception of the Italian forms *all'antica*. This reception usually proceeded twofold; either it was a direct "transfer" of Italian Renaissance patterns, or their compilation with the Gothic style. This dualistic approach also characterized the architecture of the early modern Polish Republic. Moreover, it is already recorded at the initial stage of the reception of Renaissance forms in Poland. The goal of this thesis is to outline the problem of "the memory of Middle Ages" in the sacral buildings of Italian architects in the 16th c. Poland, defined as the problem of the influence of medieval traditions. The attempt to answer the questions about the factors influencing the retrospective dimension of the works of these artists takes into consideration recent research results, as they allow to phrase an innovative hypothesis about the special influence that the medieval tradition of the Apennine Peninsula had on mentioned works. Moreover, the hypothesis is also encouraged by the conclusions presented in the preliminary research results.