

Art Historiography on the Main Building of the University of Wrocław- A Battlefield of Ideologies

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Abstract

The main building of the University of Wrocław, with its magnificent façade facing the Odra River, is one of the most important historical monuments of the city and a major tourist attraction. It also houses a significant institution in the Polish educational landscape. Founded by Jesuits and built in early eighteenth-century Baroque style, the University is closely connected with the history of the Habsburg monarchy and its Counter-Reformation aims. For this reason, after 1945, its heritage was difficult to reconcile with the official Communist ideology and its initially anti-German sentiments. This article tackles the question of how both art historiography and the popular media, including guidebooks and the press of the People's Republic of Poland, became engaged in the task of proving the Polish roots of the University of Wrocław. To this end, we provide an overview of the shifting interpretations and attributions of the Baroque edifice from its beginnings in the eighteenth century until the second decade of the twenty-first century in order to highlight the features specific to the discourse in Socialist times.

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Introduction

[1] The main building of the University of Wrocław, with its magnificent façade facing the Odra River, is one of the most important historical monuments of the city. It houses a significant institution in the Polish educational landscape and is a major tourist attraction. Founded by Jesuits and built in early eighteenth-century Baroque style, the University is closely connected with the history of the Habsburg monarchy and its Counter-Reformation aims. For this reason, after 1945, its heritage was difficult to reconcile with the official Communist ideology and its initially anti-German

sentiments. However, its location at the centre of the city made it impossible to ignore the building, whether among scholars in art historical research or in the popular media.

[2] This article tackles the question of how both art historiography and the popular media (in the form of guidebooks and the press) in the People's Republic of Poland were engaged in proving the Polish presence in the University of Wrocław. In order to track the changes in interpretations and in the various attributions of the Baroque edifice, it is necessary to survey the scholarly discussions on the subject right from its origins in the eighteenth century. This is why our research begins with the oldest mentions of the edifice, in which ideas crucial to our understanding of later perceptions of the University building were first expressed. We shall then try to find traces of early uses of the category of "national style" that was employed so frequently during the Cold War era. Finally, in the last section, we also analyse a sample of writings on the University building published since 1989 by Polish and German authors with the aim of highlighting changes in perspective since the fall of the Iron Curtain. These post-transformation scholarly publications can be looked upon as examples of a macro-regional paradigm and as the result of a now unrestricted exchange of ideas.

The architectural history of the University and first references to it

[3] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Wrocław was inhabited mostly by Protestants, and for a long time the Jesuits were unable to establish their college there. The opportunity eventually came at a late stage in the Counter-Reformation within the Catholic Habsburg Empire, and the Leopoldina was founded in 1702 with the financial support and patronage of the Emperor Leopold I. The cornerstone of the new Baroque building complex was laid in 1728, but the scale of the undertaking was so large that the original architectural projects were never completed, and construction work went on for many years. However, the central building in late Baroque style was almost finished by the first half of the eighteenth century, and it is the artistic features of that edifice that have been the most admired aspect of the ensemble of buildings right up until the present day. The long narrow block of the University building facing the Odra River consists of a west wing and a shorter east wing, separated by the Imperial Gate. The west wing is the longest and the most complete section of the architectural complex, with its Mathematical Tower in the middle and a richly adorned portal. The east wing is connected with the University Church via the irregular-shaped south wing. In contrast to the dynamic asymmetry of the building viewed from Uniwersytecka street, the façade facing the Odra River gives a monumental and yet at the same time almost austere impression (Fig. 1).¹

¹ Günther Grundmann, *Die Universität Breslau* [Breslau University], Berlin 1944 (= *Führer zu großen Baudenkmalern* [A Guide to Great Monuments] 23), 4.



1 University of Wrocław, northern façade, photographer: Stefan Arczyński, 1950s (© Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu, Oddział Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia [Museum of Architecture in Wrocław, Construction Archive], MAT-AB-2005F)

[4] In 1741, building work was temporarily interrupted by the invasion of the city by the Prussian army and the arrival of King Friedrich II in Wrocław. It was only after the Silesian Wars (1740–1763) that the Jesuit University was re-opened, and resumed its activities with the permission of the king as the Catholic academy until the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773, when it became a state institution. A significant turning point in the University's history was its union with Viadrina University of Frankfurt an der Oder in 1811, which re-established it as a modern, forward-looking institution. One hundred years later, in 1911, it was renamed Schlesische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (Silesian Friedrich Wilhelm University). After the Second World War, when Wrocław became part of the People's Republic of Poland, the University was re-opened as Uniwersytet Wrocławski (University of Wrocław) and transformed into an important centre of Polish higher education, as which it continues to function to this day (Fig. 2).



2 University of Wrocław, southern façade, photographer: Tomasz Olszewski, 1960s (© Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu, Oddział Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia, MAt-AB-2395F)

[5] The oldest reference to the University, in Johann Christian Kundmann's (1684–1751) *Academiae Et Scholae Germaniae praecipue Ducatus Silesiae*, published in 1741, neither mentions the name of an architect nor attempts to analyse the architecture, but rather describes the then still ongoing building process. However, Kundmann does mention an architect – painter and decorator Christoph Tausch (1673–1731) – in connection with the Jesuit church and its interior.² His book provides important information on the unfinished sections of the Leopoldina complex and its original design.

[6] Fifty years later, Friedrich Albert Zimmermann (1745–1815) referred to the University buildings in his *Beschreibung der Stadt Breslau*.³ Although he praised the excellence of the complex, we can spot a shade of dislike for the Jesuits: “[...] ein fürtreffliches, ganz maßives, vier Stockwerk hohes Gebäude, aber nach der Gewohnheit dieses Ordens [...] nicht völlig ausgebaut” (“an excellent, very solid, four-storey building, but as is the habit of that order [...] not fully developed”).⁴ The author does not relate the interruption of the building work to the Silesian Wars, despite the fact that the invasion of the Prussian king and his arrival in Wrocław were the main reasons

² Johann Christian Kundmann, *Academiae Et Scholae Germaniae praecipue Ducatus Silesiae, Cum Bibliothecis, In Nummis. Oder: Die Hohen und Niedern Schulen Teutschlandes [...] in Müntzen [...]*, Breßlau 1741, 107-185; Christoph Tausch was born in Innsbruck in 1673. He became a Jesuit lay-brother when he was 22 years old. Andrea Pozzo is often mentioned as his teacher and major source of inspiration. See: Henryk Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch. Uczeń Andrei Pozza* [Christophorus Tausch. A Pupil of Andrea Pozzo], Wrocław 1991 (= *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis 1322, Historia Sztuki* 5).

³ Friedrich Albert Zimmermann, *Beschreibung der Stadt Breslau im Herzogthum Schlesien* [Description of the City of Breslau in the Duchy of Silesia], Brieg 1794 (= *Beyträge zur Beschreibung von Schlesien* [Contributions to the Description of Silesia], 11), 145.

⁴ Zimmermann, *Beschreibung der Stadt Breslau im Herzogthum Schlesien*, 145.

for the delay. Zimmermann does not mention the name of an architect in his description of the building either, but makes a reference to Christoph Tausch as the author of a few sketches for the Leopoldina in the register of the artists working in Wrocław at the end of his book.⁵ These sketches could be interpreted either as plans for the building or designs for the decoration of its interior. However, later writers used this reference to prove that Tausch was the main architect of the University.⁶

Introduction of the national identity argument in art historiography

[7] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new theory on the origins of the building began to appear. Namely, in 1803, Eligius Aloys Jung (1756–1822) briefly referred to a plan of the complex that the rector of the University Franz Wenzel had allegedly brought from Naples: “Wenzel [...] führte das Collegium, und Schulgebäude auf, wozu er den Plan aus Neapel mitgebracht hatte” (“Wenzel [...] erected the college and school building, for which purpose he had brought with him plans from Naples”).⁷ This single and unverified sentence came to play a crucial role for all authors who wanted to link the University’s architecture to Italy.

[8] When Alwin Schultz (1838–1909) and Hans Lutsch (1854–1922) provided the first overviews of the art and monuments of Silesia, they referred to both theories on the building’s origins (i.e. the Austrian and the Italian provenance of its plans) as probable ones (Fig. 3). There is however a slight difference in their opinions. Lutsch seems to be the first scholar to analyse the building using the category of nationality in his assessment. He assumed that even if the design of the University building was an import from Italy, it had undoubtedly gained specific German features during the building process.⁸ On the contrary, Schultz did not see the University’s architectural style as the emanation of any nation.⁹

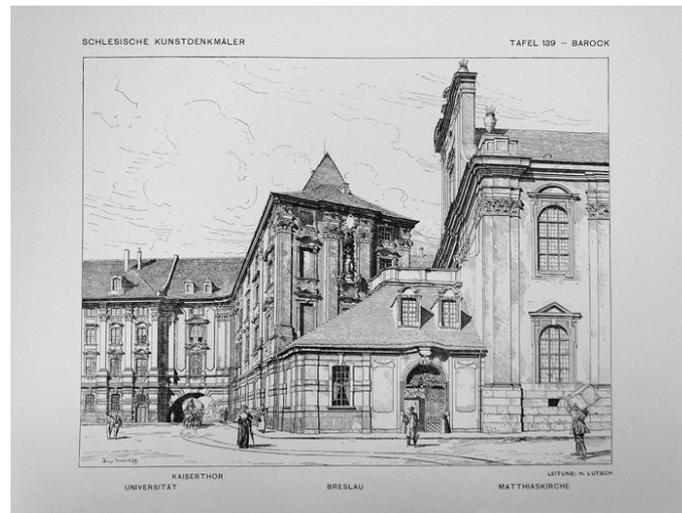
⁵ Zimmermann, *Beschreibung der Stadt Breslau im Herzogthum Schlesien*, 439.

⁶ Georg Kaspar Nagler, *Neues allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon: oder Nachrichten von dem Leben und den Werken der Maler, Bildhauer, Baumeister, Kupferstecher [...] etc.* [New General Dictionary of Artists: or Notices on the Lives and Works of Painters, Sculptors, Architects, Engravers [...] etc.], vol. 18, Munich 1848, 142; Bernhard Patzak, *Die Jesuitenbauten in Breslau und ihre Architekten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Barockstiles in Deutschland* [The Jesuit Buildings in Breslau and their Architects. A Contribution to the History of the Baroque Style in Germany], Straßburg 1918, 20-30.

⁷ Eligius Aloys Jung, *Einige Nachrichten von dem Personale der Leopolds-Universität zu Breslau in ihrem ersten Jahrhundert* [Some Notices on the Staff of Leopold University in Breslau in the First Century of its Existence], Breslau 1803, 4.

⁸ Hans Lutsch, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Breslau* [Artistic Monuments in the City of Breslau], Breslau 1886 (= *Verzeichnis der Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Schlesien* [Directory of the Artistic Monuments of the Province of Silesia] 1), 117.

⁹ Alwin Schultz, *Schlesiens Kunstleben im fünfzehnten bis achtzehnten Jahrhundert* [Silesia’s Artistic Life from the 15th up to the 18th Century], Breslau 1872, 21.



3 Sketch of the University of Wrocław with Imperial Gate and University Church (reprod. from: Hans Lutsch, *Bilderwerk schlesischer Kunstdenkmäler* [Collection of Images of Silesian Artistic Monuments], vol. 1, Breslau 1903, pl. 139)

[9] Ludwig Burgemeister (1863–1932) was later to expand on Lutsch's ideas of the German character of the Baroque art of Silesia. In his doctoral thesis, he decidedly stated that only German artists were working in Wrocław at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Burgemeister detected Southern German and Austrian influences in the architectural forms and decoration of the University building and dismissed any other possibilities, thus casting doubt on the theory that the work may have been designed by an Italian. He scrupulously analysed the University's architecture and inferred that the sophisticated and rich forms of the building's façade were too close to Rococo style to have possibly been Tausch's work. Still, he concluded, it must have been the work of a German architect. While in 1901 Burgemeister did not identify the name of the architect,¹⁰ a decade later he was to publish an article containing a new attribution. On grounds of a comparative stylistic analysis, he came to the conclusion that Christoph Hackner (1663–1741) must have been the author of the Leopoldina design:

Beim Universitätsgebäude sind nur deutsche Meister am Werke, und ihre deutsche Art im Sinne des in den österreichischen Erbländen entwickelten Barocks kommt klar zum Ausdruck. Es ist ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Stück Kultur, das sich hier an der äußersten Grenze Deutschlands entfaltet, selbstverständlich der allgemeinen Entwicklung der zeitlichen Kunst folgend, aber doch voll heimischer Eigenart.¹¹

(Only German masters worked on the University building, and their German manner in the sense of the Baroque as it developed in the Austrian Hereditary Lands is expressed

¹⁰ Ludwig Burgemeister, *Die Jesuitenkunst in Breslau. Insbesondere die Matthiaskirche und das Universitätsgebäude* [Jesuit Art in Breslau. In Particular St Matthew's Church and the University Building], Breslau 1901, 38-42.

¹¹ Ludwig Burgemeister, "Das Universitätsgebäude und die Matthiaskirche [The University Building and St Matthew's Church]", in: *Erinnerungsblätter zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum der Universität Breslau* [Commemorative Publication on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Breslau University], eds. Ludwig Burgemeister and Richard Foerster, Breslau 1911, 21-28: 26-27.

clearly. This is a piece of culture expressing itself at the furthest reaches of Germany that should not be underestimated, which, though it follows the general development of the art of the time, nevertheless constitutes a fully local individual artistic style.)

[10] This theory was strongly criticized by other art historians. The most detailed critical analysis is presented in Bernhard Patzak's book on the Jesuit buildings in Wrocław. Patzak (1873–1933) rejected Burgemeister's theory by means of discrediting his archival inquiries. To him, Christoph Tausch was the only possible author of the University's design. He tried to prove his hypothesis by comparing the buildings' architectural forms with other works by Tausch and by Tausch's former master Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709):

Die ganze Innendekoration der Aula Leopoldina ist beherrscht von einem großzügig entworfenen und durchdachten Programm, das unverkennbar den Geist der Pozzoschule atmet. Wer könnte auch hier wohl noch an den Stadtbaumeister Christoph Hackner als seinen Urheber denken? Nur Tausch, der getreue Jünger des großen Pozzo, kann als Schöpfer des Gesamtentwurfes in Frage kommen.¹²

(The entire interior decoration of the Aula Leopoldina is dominated by a generously endowed and well-thought-out program that unmistakably breathes the spirit of the Pozzo School. Who could think of the city's master builder Christoph Hackner as the author here as well? Only Tausch, faithful disciple of the great Pozzo, can be taken into consideration as the creator of the overall design.)

[11] Richard Foerster (1843–1922) created yet another image for the University building in the lectures he gave in the Aula Leopoldina and in his published texts. His case can be read as an expression of the need to justify the changes made later in the decoration of the Aula in the name of the natural flow of *Zeitgeist*.¹³ However, what is of greatest interest here are his statements on the University's architecture. His article "Der Urheber des Bauplanes für die Universität Breslau" (The Author of the Building Plan for the University of Breslau) published in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* (Journal of the Association for the History of Silesia) provides a summary of his research.¹⁴ Foerster was convinced that the plan of the University had been brought from Naples. He believed that Jung's remark was entirely reliable, on the grounds that Jung was an ex-Jesuit and a historian, and because he was "in der Lage [...], aus Quellen zu schöpfen, die uns heut nicht mehr zugänglich sind" (in a position to draw on sources that are no longer accessible to us today).¹⁵

[12] Foerster criticized both Patzak and Burgemeister, denigrating their research, comparative analysis and archival queries. Indeed his merciless polemic made Patzak

¹² Patzak, *Die Jesuitenbauten in Breslau und ihre Architekten*, 251.

¹³ Richard Foerster, *Die Aula Leopoldina der Universität Breslau. Rede zur Feier des Geburtstages Seiner Majestät des Kaisers und Königs Wilhelm II. am 27. Januar 1899* [The Aula Leopoldina of Breslau University. Speech on the Occasion of the Birthday of His Majesty Emperor and King Wilhelm II on 27 January 1899], Breslau 1899, 8.

¹⁴ Richard Foerster, "Der Urheber des Bauplanes für die Universität Breslau" [The Author of the Construction Plan for Breslau University], in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 53 (1919), No. 1, 55-83.

¹⁵ Foerster, "Der Urheber des Bauplanes für die Universität Breslau", 80.

change his mind about the authorship of the plan. He agreed with some of Foerster's statements and proposed a new attribution in his book *Die Jesuitenkirche zu Glogau und die Kirche zu Seitsch: Zwei schlesische Barockbaudenkmäler*.¹⁶ Patzak expressed his new viewpoint as a response to Foerster's criticism: "Sollte Christoph Tausch [...] wirklich nicht der Urheber der Universitätsbaupläne gewesen sein, wie Foerster will, so käme meines Erachtens nur Blasius Peintner als solcher in Betracht" (If Christoph Tausch was then really not the creator of the plans for the University, as Foerster asserts, then in my opinion, only Blasius Peintner could be seriously considered as its designer).¹⁷

[13] Although the lively discussion at the beginning of the twentieth century might appear to have been rather aggressive, all the competing theories tended to be accorded with equal respect. We have observed the first attempt to use the category of nationality in stylistic analysis (Burgemeister), but it was just one of several possible approaches. Furthermore, it was not *per se* paired together with nationalist politics. For example, Foerster gave enthusiastic speeches in praise of the emperor and yet believed in the Italian origin of the plan.¹⁸

Research from the late 1920s until the end of the Second World War

[14] In the late 1920s, publications on Silesian art began to highlight the involvement of local artists and the uniqueness of the region. This regional factor was deemed to be visible in the architectural features of the buildings in Silesia. In his book on the art of Silesia from 1927, August Grisebach (1881–1950) claimed that the whole University complex must have been designed by a single architect alone, rather than being the result of a collaboration of several people. This artist had to be a pre-eminent figure in architecture judging from the quality and the unity of the overall design.¹⁹ Furthermore, Grisebach came to the conclusion that the author must have been an indigenous artist from Silesia, or at least that he had to have been familiar with the local building types. In his article "Der Universitätsbau" (The University Building) that appeared a year later, Grisebach wrote that the designer's main achievement was fitting the building onto a limited plot and concealing the organization of its complex interior behind a homogenising façade, and yet at the same time highlighting the most important room, the Aula, via the height of its windows.²⁰ According to Grisebach, these features had been typical of the architecture of northern Europe since the Gothic epoch, and were sufficient proof that the plan for the University could not have originated in Italy. In the same article he also expressed the opinion that the Jesuits

¹⁶ Bernhard Patzak, *Die Jesuitenkirche zu Glogau und die Kirche zu Seitsch. Zwei schlesische Barockbaudenkmäler* [The Jesuit Church in Glogau and the Church in Seitsch. Two Silesian Monuments of the Baroque], Glogau 1922 (= *Beiträge zur Schlesischen Kunstgeschichte* 1), <http://obc.opole.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=3933&from=FBC> (accessed 10 July 2014).

¹⁷ Patzak, *Die Jesuitenkirche zu Glogau und die Kirche zu Seitsch*, 14.

¹⁸ Foerster, *Die Aula Leopoldina der Universität Breslau*, 8.

¹⁹ August Grisebach, *Die Kunst in Schlesien* [Art in Silesia], Berlin 1927, 114.

²⁰ August Grisebach, "Der Universitätsbau" [The University Building], in: *Die Universität zu Breslau* [The University of Breslau], eds. Friedrich Andrae and August Grisebach, Berlin 1928, 27-37: 28.

had not developed their own ecclesiastical style, nor indeed any defined type of college building, but had always adapted to the local architectural landscape instead.

[15] In the same year, a short article by Franz Landsberger (1883–1964) appeared in *Schlesische Monatshefte (The Silesian Monthly)* to mark the bicentenary of the laying of the University's cornerstone.²¹ Landsberger ruled out any Italian influence and highlighted the stylistic similarity of the University building in Wrocław to college buildings in other Silesian cities. He also admitted that the architect of the building had remained unknown. In opposition to Grisebach, he claimed that the design may have had more than one author.

[16] Hans Jung, in his study published in 1930, claimed that Christoph Hackner (1663–1741) was the main designer.²² Hackner was the most significant protestant architect in Wrocław at the time. Jung saw the result of his analysis confirmed by documents relating to the construction of the University signed by Hackner. However, the fact that he was a city's municipal builder may explain his signature on these documents, a possibility that led other scholars to doubt Jung's thesis.

[17] Kurt Bimler (1883–1951), a high-school teacher and scholar, who was later praised as the author of the "most reliable study of the history and form of Wrocław castle",²³ is also worth remembering. He conducted some research into the fortified castle that had originally existed on the site of the present University building (Fig. 4). In 1659, Leopold I handed it over to the Jesuit order. However, the castle did not meet the needs of a school building and was eventually demolished. The Jesuit complex was then built on the foundations of the medieval castle. As we will explain later, this fact was crucial to all Polish post-war publications. Bimler complained that the new owners had not respected the medieval monument, and pointed out that the plan and the form of the Gothic building had influenced the Baroque architecture:

Der Marstall und der nach der Kirche schräg vorspringende Westflügel, in ihren Grundmauern heute noch fortexistierend, beweisen die Abhängigkeit der Universitätsgestaltung von der Planung der Burg, die vermöge der gotischen Formkraft ihres architektonischen Ausdrucks noch im Sterben ihrer monumentalen, zu geistigem Waffenspiel bestimmten Nachfolgerin zu Wucht und malerischer Schönheit verhalf.²⁴

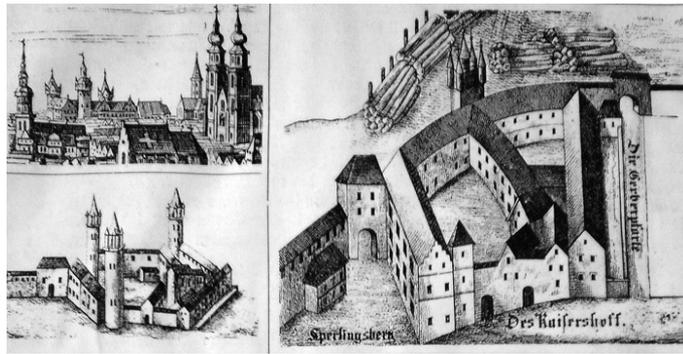
(The still existing foundation walls of the stables and the west wing, projecting diagonally to the church, prove the dependence of the University's design on the medieval castle layout. Using the Gothic formative force of its architectural expression, the castle had helped its successor, that was to serve as an intellectual weaponry, to achieve monumentality and picturesque beauty.)

²¹ Franz Landsberger, "Der erste Plan der Breslauer Universität" [The First Project for the University Building in Breslau], in: *Schlesische Monatshefte* 5 (1928), 484-486.

²² Hans Jung, *Die Entwicklung der Barockfassade in Breslau, Liegnitz und Neisse* [The Development of the Baroque Façade in Breslau, Liegnitz and Neisse], Breslau 1930, 53-60.

²³ Kurt Bimler, *Die ehemalige Kaiserburg in Breslau* [The Former Imperial Castle in Breslau] Breslau 1933 (= *Schlesische Burgen und Renaissanceschlösser* 1); Henryk Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, trans. Ewa Byczkowska, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków and Gdańsk 1976, 40; first published in Polish: Henryk Dziurla, *Uniwersytet Wrocławski*, Wrocław 1975.

²⁴ Kurt Bimler, *Die ehemalige Kaiserburg in Breslau*, 4.



4 Sketches of the Kaiserburg [Imperial Castle] in Wrocław (reprod. from: Kurt Bimler, *Die ehemalige Kaiserburg in Breslau* [The Former Imperial Castle in Breslau], Breslau 1933, 5)

[18] Like many scholars before him, Günther Grundmann (1892–1976), in his research on the architecture of the University of Wrocław, tended towards the local artistic community as being the milieu from which the author of the Leopoldina project originated. He pointed out Christoph Hackner as a possible architect – a man who, despite being a Protestant, enjoyed great success in the Habsburg Empire.²⁵

[19] Research into the architecture of the University in the inter-war period can be summed up, on the one hand, as a straightforward continuation of previous debates and efforts to identify the architect of the building, or to at least circumscribe his provenance. On the other hand, there was an increasing emphasis on the regional factor as the decisive influence on the architecture of the building. This ‘Silesian element’ was searched for in the origin of the architect, in local building types, and even in the shape of the previous building that influenced the project of the University.

Polish research after 1945

[20] Breslau’s German period ended after the Second World War and a new chapter was opened in the history of the city and its university (Fig. 5). After the post-war border shifts, that resulted in a double wave of forced migration, Wrocław had become a Polish city. The German inhabitants of Breslau were expelled from their homes, while Polish people from the eastern part of pre-war Poland endured a similar fate. Not only were the new settlers of Wrocław left to find their way around in a foreign city and to rebuild it, but they also had to imagine it in order to be able to identify with it.²⁶

²⁵ Grundmann, *Die Universität Breslau*, 14.

²⁶ Gregor Thum, *Uprooted. How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*, trans. Tom Lampert and Allison Brown, Princeton 2011; originally published in German: Gregor Thum, *Die fremde Stadt. Breslau 1945*, Berlin 2003.



5 The inauguration of the University of Wrocław in the Aula Leopoldina, 9 July 1946, photographer: Krystyna Noumanowa (© Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu, Oddział Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia, MAT-AB-2630F)

[21] For Polish researchers it was therefore crucial to prove the Polish roots of Lower Silesia, and of the city of Wrocław and its university in particular. Because of its historical value and central location in the city, the building could not be simply excluded from the “new Socialist city”, but had to be integrated into it. Accordingly, it was re-established as a state institution. Apart from appealing to the activities of Polish students at what had previously been a Prussian university and evidence of Polish resistance to Germanization policies,²⁷ art historians attempted to find traces of a Slavic cultural background in the University or – if this was not possible – to at least emphasize the impact of non-German influences on its architecture.²⁸

[22] In the mid-1940s, shortly after the war, but before the Communist government had yet come to power, the historic discourse was already being ideologized. However, aside from the openly propagandistic texts, one could also find examples that took a more neutral stance in academic publications. *Sztuka na Śląsku* (Art in Silesia) by Tadeusz Dobrowolski (1899–1984) can well serve as an example of the latter.²⁹ In his analysis of the University’s architecture, he pointed out references to Austrian and

²⁷ Alicja Zawisza, *Studenci Polacy na Uniwersytecie Wrocławskim w latach 1918–1939. Katalog zachowanych archiwaliów* [Polish Students at the University of Wrocław 1918–1939. Catalogue of the Preserved Archive Files], Wrocław 1972; Alicja Zawisza, *Gdy mowa polska znaczyła przetrwanie. Działalność kulturalno-oświatowa Polaków we Wrocławiu w latach 1918–1939. Katalog zachowanych archiwaliów* [When the Polish Language Meant Surviving. Activities of Poles in Culture and Education in Wrocław 1918–1939. Catalogue of the Preserved Archive Files], vol. 2, Wrocław 1983.

²⁸ Adam S. Labuda, “Polska historia sztuki a ‘Ziemie Odzyskane’ [Polish Art History and the ‘Regained Territories’]”, in: *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 26 (2001), 45-62: 55-57; see also: Jakub Jagiełło, “Ideologizacja i tendencyjność badań historii sztuki na terenie Dolnego Śląska” [Ideology and Bias in Art Historical Research in the Region of Lower Silesia], in: *Rerum Artis* 2 (2007), 145-157: 154-155.

²⁹ Tadeusz Dobrowolski, *Sztuka na Śląsku* [Art in Silesia], Katowice and Wrocław 1948 (= *Pamiętnik Instytutu Śląskiego* 12, Series 2), 252-267.

Czech Baroque art. Dobrowolski avoided any connections with the current political events in his interpretation of the architecture. He did not search for Polish traces and was far away from criticizing the Prussian reign in Silesia. On the contrary, Henryk Barycz (1901–1994), in his book *Uniwersytet Wrocławski w przeszłości i teraźniejszości*,³⁰ searched for examples of anti-Polish attitudes in the history of the University. It was his view that the initial idea of creating the University in the sixteenth century came from the German town council, which wanted to establish an educational institution independent of other universities, and especially of the Polish Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Barycz also presented evidence of political and cultural struggles during Prussian rule: He interpreted the reform of the University of Wrocław and its unification with Viadrina University in 1811 as an attempt to Germanize Polish university students in Silesia, stating: “In Wrocław the symptoms of national megalomania and the beginnings of racial insanity and German chauvinism started very early.”³¹

[23] But Marian Morelowski’s (1884–1963) studies provide the most evident examples of nationalization in Polish art historical research after the Second World War. His book *Rozkwit baroku na Śląsku* (The Heyday of the Baroque in Silesia) contains an entirely new vision of Silesian art. Morelowski proposed a new attribution of the University’s architectural design. He declared it to be the creation of Domenico Martinelli (1650–1719), an Italian architect who was known to have worked in Central Europe. He based his theory on Foerster’s research into the Italian origins of the plan, claiming that:

*[...] the architecture of the complex perfectly corresponds to the entirety of thoughts and methods that were characteristic of Martinelli’s oeuvre. One can see the striking resemblance to Martinelli’s works in Lanckorona and Vienna. [...] The main features of Martinelli’s style and also of the University architecture are: 1/ a return to the Roman-Italian rule of building ‘block to block’. 2/ an abandonment of the continuous pilaster articulation à la Bernini. 3/ the introduction of grand pilasters, but only at both ends and in the middle of the building, to emphasize the distinctiveness of the vertical block. 4/ the avoidance of curves in the façade. 5/ the use of simple but massive blocks. It stands in opposition to the school of such extremists as Borromini, and especially to his German followers. It shows no resemblance to distinct French ideas on composition, as imitated by Hildebrandt.*³²

[24] Morelowski denied all German and Austrian influences on the architecture of the main building of the University complex. Instead, he asserted the source of inspiration for the whole complex was Italian, in the sense that it was assumed to have been mediated directly or indirectly by Italian artists. This was a sophisticated concept created in order to render the architectural language of the building less German. The approach therefore provided support for the trope of the “German enemy” as

³⁰ Henryk Barycz, *Uniwersytet Wrocławski w przeszłości i teraźniejszości* [The University of Wrocław in Past and Present Times], Katowice 1946 (= *Biblioteka Zarania Śląskiego* 1).

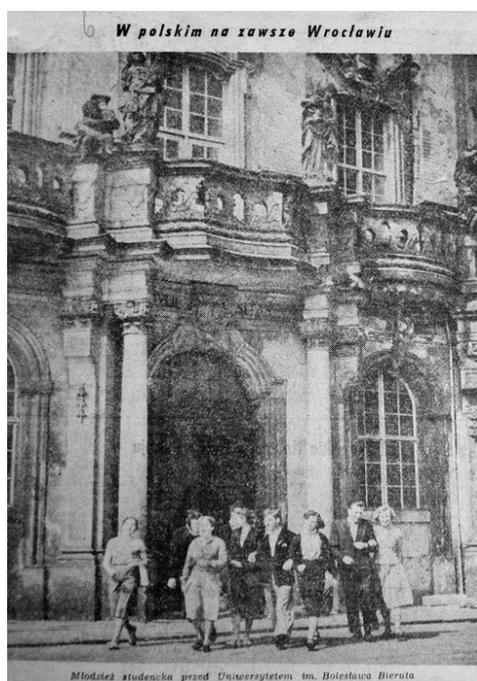
³¹ Barycz, *Uniwersytet Wrocławski w przeszłości i teraźniejszości*, 23.

³² Marian Morelowski, *Rozkwit baroku na Śląsku 1650–1750: Wystawa grafiki i rysunków* [The Heyday of the Baroque in Silesia 1650–1750: Exhibition of Graphics and Drawings], exh. cat., Wrocław 1952, 21–22; our translation.

promoted by the “national bolshevism” (Jerzy Kłoczowski) of the communist government.³³

[25] Morelowski’s theories and ideas were fully embraced by tourist guides and popular publications (Fig. 6). And besides, Morelowski himself often wrote about art and architecture in the Polish newspapers. Another myth about Wrocław to which he often referred was the story of its Piast tradition. In the article “Idąc ulicami Wrocławia” (Walking the Streets of Wrocław) in *Gazeta Robotnicza* (Worker’s Newspaper), he writes:

*Even the well-educated people are unaware of how many Polish old monuments they pass as they walk the streets of Wrocław. [...] Let us stop at the end of Kuźnicza street, in front of the University. It was completely rebuilt in 1728, but it hides within its chambers, corridors and courtyard many of the old walls of the former Piast castle, built partly by Piast Duke Henry I the Bearded and partly by his ancestors.*³⁴



6 “In forever Polish Wrocław. Students in front of the University under the patronage of Bolesław Bierut”, clipping from the newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* 127 (9 May 1955)

[26] This search for the Polish roots of Wrocław served to create a historical narrative of Wrocław as an age-old Polish city. ‘The Piast heritage’ became the most prominent

³³ Jerzy Kłoczowski, “Historia Niemców w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. Problemy badawcze” [The History of Germans in East-Central Europe], in: *Doświadczenia przeszłości: Niemcy w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w historiografii po 1945 roku / Erfahrungen der Vergangenheit. Deutsche in Ostmitteleuropa in der Historiographie nach 1945* [Experiences of the Past. Germans in East-Central Europe in the Historiography after 1945], eds. Jerzy Kłoczowski, Witold Matwiejczyk and Eduard Mühle, Marburg and Lublin 2000 (= *Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* [Conferences on East Central European Research] 9), 19-24.

³⁴ Marian Morelowski, “Idąc ulicami Wrocławia” [Walking the Streets of Wrocław], in: *Gazeta Robotnicza* 928 (14 July 1951), 192; our translation.

trope in the discourse promoting the cultural unification with the Recovered Territories. After the Second World War, the Piasts became official national heroes, and 'Piast Poland' can be seen as a foundational myth for the People's Republic of Poland. Medieval art and 'Piast' castles were perceived as visible evidence of the Polishness of Silesia and as a legitimation of the new borders.³⁵

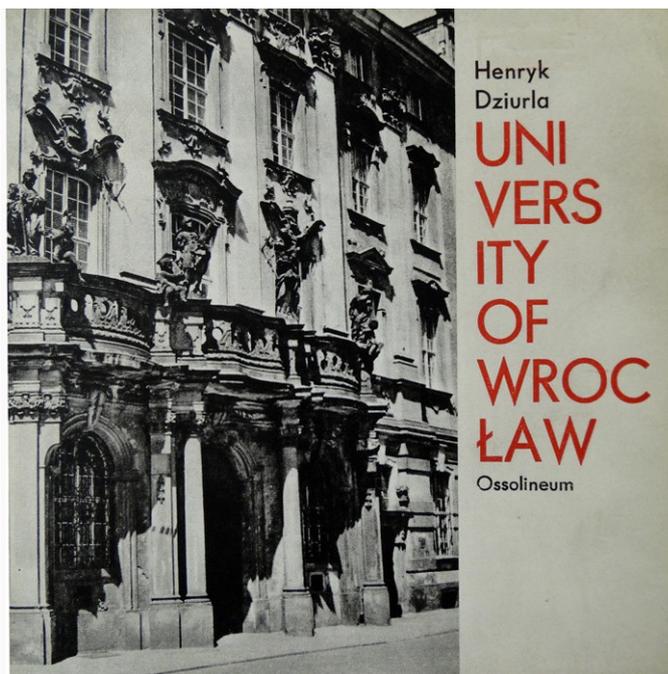
[27] The remains of the castle lying beneath the Baroque complex of the University of Wrocław were interpreted in a similar way. While in German literature it had usually been called the *Kaiserburg* (Imperial castle), in post-Second World War Polish literature it was always referred to as *Zamek piastowski* (Piast castle). Polish art historians perpetuated the myth of a university that had been built on age-old Polish foundations. Every historical description of the University began with a history of the medieval castle, which was taken as proof of the Polish rights to Wrocław. We can clearly see this in Henryk Dziurla's (1925–2012) book, considered to be the most complete monograph on the University.³⁶ It remains to this day the most popular and most often cited publication on the complex (Fig. 7). It was translated into English in 1976. Its first chapter, "Historical outline", begins with the medieval history of the castle. But even in the introduction one can find references to the Piasts:

*This gem of Silesian Baroque is closely related to the history of the Polish nation from its earliest days until now. In this very place where the castle of the Silesian Piast dynasty had once been situated Poles were developing Polish learning, culture, and science and cultivating the national spirit.*³⁷

³⁵ Labuda, "Polska historia sztuki a 'Ziemie Odzyskane'", 56; See also: Jagiełło, "Ideologizacja i tendencyjność badań historii sztuki", 150; Thum, *Uprooted*, 223; Maximilian Eiden, *Das Nachleben der schlesischen Piasten. Dynastische Tradition und moderne Erinnerungskultur vom 17. bis 20. Jahrhundert* [The Afterlife of the Silesian Piasts. Dynastic Tradition and Modern Culture of Remembrance from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century], Cologne, Weimar and Vienna 2012.

³⁶ Henryk Dziurla, *Uniwersytet Wrocławski*, Wrocław 1975.

³⁷ Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, 8.



7 Henryk Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków and Gdańsk 1976, book cover (photograph provided by the authors)

[28] Dziurla accepted Morelowski's claims as "worth considering" and "not improbable",³⁸ but he asserted that the designs created by Martinelli in the years 1700–1705 were later transformed by Christoph Tausch:

*The supposed design of Martinelli was presumably modernized after 25 years, the more so because only then did the Jesuits become the rightful owners of Sparrow Hill. Martinelli had been dead for 10 years already. It was, most probably, Tausch, who modernized the old design or worked out a new one.*³⁹

Dziurla allowed for the possibility of many designs or ideas combined into one architectural structure. He cautiously mentioned other Italian artists (the Galli da Bibiena family) who could have designed parts of the complex.⁴⁰ However, the careful analysis in the book gives way to an ideological statement:

The source of inspiration was Italian art represented either directly by the Italian artists or indirectly by Michael Rottmayr, Christoph Tausch and Johann Handke who

³⁸ Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, 48.

³⁹ Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, 48.

⁴⁰ Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, 58. It should be noted that Dziurla used the idea of 'East Central Europe', which was delineated as a specific art historical unit during that time. In the 1960s and 1970s various researchers presented their vision of the macro-region (Lajos Vayer, Jan Białostocki). The range of this trans-national territory was still discussed, and it was not free from political and ideological motivations. Later it was Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann who developed and established the idea of 'Central Europe' as a separate, yet polyphonic art historical organism. Not only did Dziurla just use the relatively new idea of the macro-region, he also combined it with the method of stylistic analysis that could be traced back to Heinrich Wölfflin. See the introduction in: Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City. The Art and Culture of Central Europe*, Chicago 1995.

were strongly influenced by Andrea Pozzo's art and in the case of Tausch also by the art of Andrea Solari from Como and Antonio Beduzzi. All these sources of inspiration, artistically modified and shaped by centers of art in Austria, Bohemia and Silesia, resulted in the emergence of new, independent values characteristic of the Baroque art of East-Central Europe. This irrational and emotional art favoring anti-classicist ideas and giving priority to impression, picturesqueness and decoration over the logic of construction developed and flourished in the Slavonic territories of Europe. The complex of the Universitas Leopoldina is the best evidence of this process.⁴¹

[29] Although Dziurla's guide is, as we have already said, the most popular publication on the University's architecture, it was not the only one in Polish art history. A year later, Konstanty Kalinowski (1935–2002) published *Architektura doby baroku na Śląsku* (Architecture of the Baroque Period in Silesia).⁴² He disagreed with both Morelowski and Dziurla and presented his own theory on the University's architectural design. He claimed that the rich decoration of the façade was one of the most typical elements of Baroque art in the entire Habsburg Monarchy and that it was impossible to point out an architect without archival evidence.⁴³ In a precise and wide-ranging analysis of all previous theories, he rejected all earlier attributions. He grounded his research on archival documents and on a detailed comparative style analysis. We can learn that Kalinowski was aware of the ideology present in the theories of the 1920s and 1930s from his contradiction of the thesis that Hackner was the author of the design:

*[...] the false interpretation of the archives and the overlooking of the obvious differences between Hackner's style and the University design can be explained only by the researchers' fascination with a theory of a purely Silesian character of the complex.*⁴⁴

In his conclusion, Kalinowski saw the decisive role of influences from Vienna and the Hildebrandt milieu. However, he too left the question of the authorship unanswered. Kalinowski's theory can be seen as an expression of the broader transformation of art historical research in Poland. According to Barbara Mikuda-Hüttel, researchers began to present Silesia as a historically multicultural environment from the 1960s. She ascribes this new perspective both to a generational change among researchers and to the changing political climate.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Dziurla, *University of Wrocław*, 95.

⁴² Konstanty Kalinowski, *Architektura doby baroku na Śląsku* [Architecture of the Baroque Period in Silesia], Warszawa 1977.

⁴³ Kalinowski, *Architektura doby baroku na Śląsku*, 278.

⁴⁴ Kalinowski, *Architektura doby baroku na Śląsku*, 279-280; our translation.

⁴⁵ Mikuda-Hüttel gives the example of a conference on Rococo in Poland that took place in Wrocław in October 1968. Silesian art and its international artistic milieu was the dominant subject of the discussions. See Barbara Mikuda-Hüttel, "Ein schwieriges Erbe? Polnische Forschungen zur schlesischen Kunst der Barockzeit seit 1945" [A Difficult Past? Polish Research into Silesian Art of the Baroque Period since 1945], in: *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* 28 (1987), 179-220. Kłoczowski associates the change in how the German cultural role was presented in academic publications with the "Pastoral Letter of the Polish Bishops to their German Brothers" sent on 18 November 1965. See: Kłoczowski, "Historia Niemców w Europie Środkowo Wschodniej", 23.

The University of Wrocław in guide books and in the press

[30] In the immediate post-war era, while Poland was still slowly recovering from the devastation of war, several publications appeared, mainly guides describing Polish Wrocław to its new inhabitants or to guests from other cities. These publishing activities must be seen in the context of the “Wystawa Ziem Odzyskanych” (Exhibition of the Recovered Territories), which took place in summer 1948 and was a culmination of all efforts made to rebuild, familiarize and give new energy to the so-called *Ziemie Odzyskane* (the Recovered Territories or, literally, Regained Lands). The explanation for the term ‘recovered’ lies in the fact that the area had in the past belonged to the medieval Piast dynasty, an explanation that was widely used by the official propaganda (Fig. 8). Despite the Piast presence in the city during the Middle Ages, later influences were more important for the city’s development, but these influences were deprecated by Polish post-war propaganda.



8 “Searching for the new Wrocław. The University under the patronage of Bolesław Bierut in Wrocław”, clipping from the newspaper *Przyjaźń* 46 (20 November 1955)

[31] Even though the descriptions of monuments in tourist guides were usually short, the authors of post-war city guides to Wrocław almost always found a place to inform the reader about Polish activity in the University’s history. In a 1948 guide book one reads:

*Despite the German character of the University, many Poles have studied there, and established a large number of Polish academic societies (e.g. Polonia 1824, the Slavic Literature Society 1836–1886), many prominent Polish scientists learnt there, including Ksawery Liske, Wincenty Zakrzewski, Jan Kasprowicz, Ignacy Chrzanowski; the Polish language was taught there by famous Polish scholars such as Wojciech Cybulski and Władysław Nehring, and 11 students of the University of Wrocław were killed in the January uprising in 1863.*⁴⁶

[32] The rise of the University’s main building from ruins was presented as a symbol of the city’s fast post-war revival and of the rebirth of Poland. The first academic year after the war started as early as 15 October 1945, a fact that was often highlighted with pride. Memories from those pioneering years and the anniversary of the University’s opening were thus a frequent topic of press articles.⁴⁷ In such pieces, much attention was paid to the renovation work, a task that also involved the need to

⁴⁶ Antoni Wrzosek, ed., *Przewodnik po Wrocławiu* [A Guide to Wrocław], Wrocław 1948, 39; our translation.

address the question of the origins of the building. Despite the fact that the authors praised the artistic value of the building, thus acknowledging its Habsburg roots, even such praise quite often contained overtones of anti-German resentment.⁴⁸

[33] In popular media, the question of the origins of the artists and style was addressed by referring either directly to Marian Morelowski or revealed indirectly through the influence of his research. In a 1957 city guide book one reads:

*[The main building of the University] is considered one of the best examples of palace architecture in what was referred to as the calm Baroque phase throughout the whole of Europe. [...] The Italian origin of this great idea and its relation with the school of the excellent Domenico Martinelli, who was active also in Bohemia, has been described and proven by professor M. Morelowski.*⁴⁹

Even in guide books published as late as the 1970s, the Italian influence continued to get a mention.⁵⁰ That fact alone proves the long-term impact of Morelowski's thesis on the interpretation of the architectural forms of the University building.

[34] It has already been mentioned that inter-war researchers on the castle, including Kurt Bimler, had perceived the Piast phase of the building as a very minor one. As one might have expected, in Polish publications from after the war this interpretation was turned on its head – even the more so as excavations and studies of the archaeological remains carried out in the 1950s provided new inspirations for art historical research.⁵¹ The Piast castle was henceforth described as an important stronghold built in late Romanesque style on the site of the later Leopoldina building. Descriptions of the University of Wrocław were almost always preceded by information about the Piast castle. Taken up very frequently in scholarly as well as in popular texts, this politically

⁴⁷ Jan Brol, "10 lat wrocławskiej Mater Studiorum" [10 Years of Wrocław's Mater Studiorum], in: *Słowo Polskie* 68 (20-21 March 1955), 3; Stanisław Kulczyński, "Pierwsze dni Wrocławskiego Uniwersytetu" [The First Days of the University of Wrocław], in: *Gazeta Robotnicza* 108 (7-8 May 1955), 4; (F.), "Uniwersytet Wrocławski..." [The University of Wrocław...], in: *Sztandar Młodych* 108 (6 May 1955), 5.

⁴⁸ (I. Z.), "List z Wrocławia. Renowacje cennych fresków w auli uniwersyteckiej" [Letter from Wrocław. Renovation of Valuable Frescoes in the Aula of the University], in: *Echo Krakowa* 110 (22 April 1951), 3.

⁴⁹ Gwidon Król, ed., *Przewodnik po zabytkach Wrocławia* [A Guide to Wrocław's Monuments], Wrocław 1957, 110; our translation.

⁵⁰ Wanda Roszkowska and Tadeusz Broniewski, *Wrocław. Przewodnik po dawnym i współczesnym mieście* [Wrocław. A Guide to the City in the Past and the Present], Wrocław 1970, 150; our translation.

⁵¹ Józef Kaźmierczyk, "Archeolodzy odsłaniają dzieje dawnego Wrocławia" [Archeologists Uncover the History of Old Wrocław], in: *Gazeta Robotnicza* 58 (8 March 1956), 6; J. Załubski, "Rewelacyjne odkrycie w murach Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego. Prof. Marian Morelowski zapoznaje przedstawiciela Expressu w jaki sposób odszukał wieżę zamku Piastów" [Sensational Discovery within the Walls of the University of Wrocław. Prof. Marian Morelowski Explains to a Journalist from the Express How He Discovered a Tower from the Piast Castle], in: *Express Poznański* 255 (2 November 1959), 1-2; (D.), "W murach uniwersytetu odkryto potężną wieżę zamku Piastów wrocławskich" [A Massive Castle Tower from Wrocław's Piast Dynasty has been Discovered within the Walls of the University], in: *Słowo Polskie Wrocław* 260 (1-2 November 1959), 1-2.

charged topos was clearly used for propaganda purposes: “In any case, these four residues, just like the portal hidden in the porch of the gymnasium church, are proofs of the high level of artistic culture at the time of the Piast court, before the German colonization.”⁵² (Fig. 9)



9 Wrocław, University Church, photographer: Krystyna Gorazdowska, 1945 (© Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu, Oddział Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia, MAT-AB-1991F)

[35] Another event used to underline the Polish historical presence in Silesia was the attempt by Alexander Jagiellon (1461–1506), King of Poland, to establish a university in Wrocław as early as 1505. The initiative itself had failed, but for the Socialist government of Poland it provided sufficient reason to create a new anniversary in the University’s calendar to replace the real foundation date. Information on the 450th anniversary of the University and its planned celebration appeared in newspapers in 1955:

*July 20 marks the 450th anniversary of the signature by Alexander Jagiellon – grandson of the victor of the Battle of Grunwald – of the foundation charter of the University in Wrocław. The resistance of the rich bourgeoisie and the categorical objection of the Pope were to result in the real academic life of the University of Wrocław beginning only 200 years later – in 1705.*⁵³

⁵² Król, *Przewodnik po zabytkach Wrocławia*, 104; our translation.

⁵³ “450. rocznica założenia Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego” [The 450th Anniversary of the Foundation of the University of Wrocław], in: *Trybuna Ludu* 199 (20 July 1955), 6; our translation; the same unauthored press release distributed by the Polish Press Agency was published in other newspapers, e.g.: *Słowo Polskie* 172 (20 July 1955), 1; *Głos Wybrzeża* 171 (20 July 1955), 2; *Gazeta Robotnicza* 173 (22 July 1955); *Słowo Ludu* 172 (22 July 1955), 1. Other articles concerning the anniversary are: Jan Reiter, “Ma już 400 lat” [It Is Now 400 Years Old], in: *Słowo Polskie* 198 (19 August 1955), 4; Andrzej Cieński, “Ileż to już lat?” [How Many Years for Now?], in: *Radio i Świat* 30 (24 July 1955), 3; Stanisław Ozimek, “Kartki z dziejów

[36] One can, however, observe a significant difference between the narrative in popular history books and in academic publications. In the People's Republic of Poland the two genres had different, and perhaps even contradictory functions, as Gregor Thum explains:

While scholarly writings were part of international academic discourse, popular historical texts were aimed at a readership limited to Poland. We can safely assume that the latter were subject to state censorship to a much greater degree, as the authorities of communist Poland kept a watchful eye on the popular press. The authorities could be less vigilant when it came to scholarly works, which reached a far smaller audience; indeed they had to be more generous if Polish historians were not to embarrass themselves internationally with untenable assertions.⁵⁴

German publications after 1945

[37] After the Second World War the history of the University of Wrocław continued to interest German scholars as well. We shall therefore also mention publications that appeared after 1945 in West Germany in order to compare the Polish research of the time with its equivalent on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

[38] The topic of the University of Wrocław was mainly explored by German researchers who had worked in Silesia before or during the war. From 1955 on, the *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* collected their work.⁵⁵ The articles published in the first volumes of the yearbook focus on the history of the Silesian University and its departments and institutes, and include studies from a variety of academic disciplines. The series represents a varied collection of Silesia-related research conducted both before and after 1945. And as such it provided a niche that allowed the German intellectual heritage of the University to live on.

[39] The problem of the origin of the University's architecture, however, does not seem to have been a major concern of German researchers. Usually, the results of the pre-war research were repeated and various theories on the authorship of the University's design and possible stylistic influences were mentioned.⁵⁶ The main source of information on the history of the University of Wrocław was a study by Günther Grundmann, art historian and Provincial Conservator of Lower Silesia until 1945. References to the contemporary political situation can be found only

wszecznicy wrocławskiej. W 450 rocznicę aktu erekcyjnego Uniwersytetu we Wrocławiu" [Cards from the History of Wrocław's University. On the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of the Foundation Act of the University of Wrocław], in: *Żołnierz Polski* 14 (July 1955), 23-24.

⁵⁴ Thum, *Uprooted*, 221.

⁵⁵ *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* [Yearbook of the Silesian Friedrich Wilhelm University in Breslau], ed. on behalf of Stiftung Kulturwerk Schlesien, 1 (1955) – 51/52 (2010/2011); in 2012, the yearbook was renamed as *Jahrbuch für schlesische Kultur und Geschichte* [Yearbook of Silesian Culture and History].

⁵⁶ Günter Elze, *Breslau – Biographie einer deutschen Stadt* [Breslau – Biography of a German City], Leer 1993, 89; Gerhard Scheuermann, *Das Breslau-Lexikon* [The Breslau-Lexicon], 2 vols., Dülmen 1994, vol. 1, 1800-1810: 1803; Hermann Aubin, "Gedenkrede auf die Universität Breslau" [Commemorative Speech on the University of Breslau], in: *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* 8 (1963), 289-305: 297-298.

occasionally among Grundmann's historical and architectural descriptions, as in his remark on the rebuilding of the University after 1945:

*Bei aller Anerkennung vom denkmalpflegerischen Standpunkt entsprach die Wiederherstellung der Universität der bewußten Absicht, aus ihr ein Zentrum polnischer Wissenschaften und damit der Polonisierung der schlesischen Geschichte zu machen [...].*⁵⁷

(With all due recognition of the preservation of the monument, the conscious intention of the restoration of the University was to turn it into a center of Polish sciences and thus [to serve the interests of] the Polonization of Silesian history).

In his book *Kunstwanderungen in Schlesien* published in 1966, Grundmann omits the medieval castle in Wrocław. On the contrary, in the very first sentence of the work he emphasizes the connection of the University's architecture with Vienna and with the historical territories of the Habsburg Monarchy. Aside from Grundmann, there seems to be no significant addition to the debate on the University's architecture from the German side.

[40] Already Grundmann's publications reveal the fundamental problem facing all post-war Silesian research in West Germany. His books were based mainly on pre-war findings and he was aware that further research would be incomplete without having access to the monuments and archives.⁵⁸ This lack of new material also explains the demand for reprinted books dating from before the war, though the reasons for their great popularity are much more complex.⁵⁹

[41] In conclusion, two parallel monologues were present on both sides of the Iron Curtain.⁶⁰ Any comparison of German and Polish publications completed before 1989 will reveal the lack of interest on either side in any exchange of contemporary research into the University's architecture.

⁵⁷ Günther Grundmann, "Breslau – Schicksal einer deutschen Stadt" [Breslau – Fate of a German City], in: *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* 8 (1963), 306-315: 313.

⁵⁸ Beate Störckuhl, "Architekturgeschichte" [History of Architecture], in: *Historische Schlesienforschung. Methoden, Themen und Perspektiven zwischen traditioneller Landesgeschichtsschreibung und moderner Kulturwissenschaft* [Historical Research on Silesia. Methods, Subjects and Perspectives between Traditional History and Modern Cultural Studies], ed. Joachim Bahlcke, Cologne 2005 (= *Neue Forschungen zur schlesischen Geschichte* [New Research into Silesian History] 11), 681-718: 704.

⁵⁹ Matthias Weber, "Zur deutschen Historiographie über Schlesien seit 1945" [On German Historiography on Silesia after 1945], in: Kłoczowski, *Doświadczenia przeszłości*, 133-146: 138.

⁶⁰ Adam S. Labuda, "Kunst und Kunsthistoriographie im deutsch-polnischen Spannungsverhältnis – eine vernachlässigte Forschungsaufgabe" [Art and Art Historiography in the Context of the Tense German-Polish Relations – a Neglected Research Duty], in: *Deutsche Geschichte und Kultur im heutigen Polen. Fragen der Gegenstandsbestimmung und Methodologie* [German History and Culture in Present-Day Poland. Questions Concerning the Object of Research and Methodology], ed. Hans-Jürgen Karp, Marburg 1997, 119-135: 120.

Publications after Socialism

[42] It is fascinating to observe how the narration changes after the year 1989. The political and societal transformation after the fall of the Iron Curtain initiated an unrestricted international exchange of thoughts and ideas. For Poland, the days of state censorship were over. Previously neglected and ideologically ‘precarious’ subjects began to be brought to light. As a result, numerous books on the role of the Catholic Church as the significant patron of art were published. In conjunction with that process, the deprecated Jesuit tradition of the University of Wrocław became a measurable factor in debates about its architecture.

[43] For instance, in his late work, Henryk Dziurla changed his view on the authorship of the University’s design. In 1991, he published his monograph on Christoph Tausch, in which he claimed that Tausch was definitely the architect of the complex.⁶¹ He based his attribution on both Patzak’s research and his own stylistic analysis of Tausch’s works. In the monograph he blames earlier researchers for having been “consumed by the obsessive fear of attributing the architectural works to Tausch” and supposes that this would have been a result of a “shared disfavour towards Jesuits”.⁶² Dziurla detects in the architecture of the University similarities to other works by Tausch and to Andrea Pozzo’s style.⁶³ Morelowski’s theory is mentioned in one sentence and totally dismissed. He agrees in part with Kalinowski’s statement about Vienna influences, pointing out that Tausch had in fact arrived in Wrocław from the capital city of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁶⁴ In a change from his earlier views, Dziurla now approves of the activities of the Jesuits and of the Catholic history of the University. However, he continues to follow the tradition of starting his description of the University with a reference to the Piast castle.⁶⁵

[44] *Jezuici we Wrocławiu* (Jesuits in Wrocław), a book by priest and historian Zdzisław Lec (b. 1951), is another example of an appreciation of the University’s Catholic tradition. The author presents the history of the University as a Jesuit academy. He also touches on the question of the building’s authorship, weighing up various theories, but refrains from giving a final answer. Instead he highlights the role of the Jesuit rector in the process of choosing the design. In conclusion, he states that whoever the architect was, the complex “is a testament to the glory of the Jesuits, who were unrivalled in the architectural field as well”.⁶⁶

[45] A comprehensive historical work on the Jesuits’ Leopoldina was written by Carsten Rabe (b. 1965). In his book *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolleg und Universität der Jesuiten in Breslau 1638–1811*,⁶⁷ the author sets out to explore the Jesuit phase of the University’s development, which he regards as the most neglected period of its history:

⁶¹ Henryk Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch. Uczeń Andrei Pozza* [Christophorus Tausch. A Pupil of Andrea Pozzo], Wrocław 1991 (= *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* 1322, *Historia Sztuki* 5).

⁶² Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch*, 57.

⁶³ Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch*, 225, 244.

⁶⁴ Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch*, 59.

⁶⁵ Dziurla, *Christophorus Tausch*, 213.

⁶⁶ Zdzisław Lec, *Jezuici we Wrocławiu (1581–1776)* [Jesuits in Wrocław (1581–1776)], Wrocław 1995 (= *Rozprawy naukowe* 8), 132–141.

Die Leopoldina hat in aller Regel in der Forschung ein Schattendasein geführt. Allgemein üblich ist, die schlesische Universitätsgeschichte mit der vereinigten Universität von 1811 beginnen zu lassen. Die schlesische, preußisch-protestantisch orientierte Geschichtsforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts hat sich fast stets der größeren und moderneren Universität ab 1811, der späteren Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau zugewandt und für die Vorgängerin nur wenige und herablassende Worte übrig gehabt.⁶⁸

(The Leopoldina has generally led a shadowy existence in research. It is common practice to speak of the history of the Silesian University as starting with the united University in 1811. The Silesian, Prussian and Protestant-oriented historical research of the 19th century has almost universally concentrated on the larger and more modern university from 1811, the later Silesian Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau, sparing only a few condescending words for its predecessor.)

[46] This is an interesting example of a critical approach to our topic, and of a tendency, common in both Polish and German research after 1989, to fill the gaps left for a variety of reasons by earlier art history. One of these reasons was a lack of interest for the church heritage, which had been excluded for a long time from scholarly research, and not just during the Communist time. Rabe quotes a former student of the Leopoldina, Hermann Hoffmann, whose memories provide an interesting testimony as to how the Jesuit past of the building had been either deliberately avoided or just simply considered unimportant in the secular reality of Wilhelmine Germany.⁶⁹

[47] The opening of the borders in 1989 can also be seen as a re-opening of an unrestricted scholarly exchange. Polish books on the University and Baroque art in Silesia eventually got to be translated and published in Germany.⁷⁰ Polish and German

⁶⁷ Carsten Rabe, *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolegium i Uniwersytet Jezuicki we Wrocławiu 1638–1811* [Alma Mater Leopoldina. The Jesuit College and University in Wrocław], trans. Lidia Wiśniewska, Wrocław 2003. Rabe's doctoral thesis in history, defended at Stuttgart University in 1997, was originally published in German: Carsten Rabe, *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolleg und Universität der Jesuiten in Breslau 1638–1811*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna 1999 (= *Neue Forschungen zur schlesischen Geschichte* 7).

⁶⁸ Rabe, *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolleg und Universität der Jesuiten in Breslau*, 7.

⁶⁹ "Ostern 1898 bis Herbst 1901 studierte ich in Breslau. Wieder war es eine alte Jesuitenuniversität, und wieder hat niemals einer der Professoren davon etwas erwähnt [...]. Und zu lesen gab es darüber nichts. So gingen wir täglich in die 'Metaphysica' oder 'Theologia speculativa' und wußten nicht, was diese Namen der Türen bedeuten. Die meisten sahen sie wohl auch gar nicht." (From Easter 1898 to Autumn 1901, I studied in Wrocław. Yet again, it was an old Jesuit university, and yet again, none of the professors ever mentioned that fact [...]. And there was nothing available to read about it. So we went daily to the 'Metaphysica' or 'Theologia speculativa' rooms and had no idea what those names of the doors meant. Most of us didn't even see them). See: Rabe, *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolleg und Universität der Jesuiten in Breslau*, 11.

⁷⁰ Konstanty Kalinowski, *Barock in Schlesien. Geschichte, Eigenart und heutige Erscheinung* [Baroque in Silesia. Its History, Uniqueness and the Present-Day Appearance], Munich 1990; Henryk Dziurla, *Universität Wrocław. Der Leopoldinische Komplex* [University of Wrocław. The Leopoldinian Complex], Wrocław 1997.

art historians could now take note of each other's results. The two parallel monologues could now finally intertwine, enabling a broader, multilateral discussion. For instance, historian Norbert Conrads in his book on Silesia used Dziurla's work for his description of the University's architecture and he assessed both the Polish and the German arguments as being equally probable.⁷¹ Meanwhile, Hellmut Lorenz took a strong position against Morelowski's theory. In his voluminous monograph on Domenico Martinelli, he denied any connection between the architecture of the main University building and Martinelli's work.⁷²

[48] More recently, Małgorzata Wyrzykowska carried out an analysis of the Austrian influences on Silesian art. While she recognised that the building's designer remains unknown, according to her assessment, the style of the complex contained references to the artistic milieu of Vienna. In her view, the University building shows some "local features", one of which she described as a "strong tendency to use verticals".⁷³ She dismisses Morelowski's theory by referring to Hellmut Lorenz.⁷⁴

[49] A few years before Wyrzykowska's book was published, Rudolf Lenz brought a new input to the debate on the identity of the University's architect.⁷⁵ In his opinion, Christoph Hackner is the most probable author of the Baroque building. Lenz based his research on archival material from the Bibliotheca Albertina in Leipzig that had not been included in the previous argumentation. Documents from the University's planning and construction phase indicate that Hackner participated significantly in the project. However, it is by no means certain that Lenz's argument can finally settle the

⁷¹ German edition: Norbert Conrads, *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Schlesien* [German History in the East of Europe: Silesia], Berlin 1994; Polish edition: Norbert Conrads, *Książęta i stany. Historia Śląska (1469-1740)* [Rulers and Ranks: The History of Silesia (1469-1740)], trans. Lidia Wiśniewska, Wrocław 2005, 186. Recently, Conrads has come back to the subject of the architecture of the main university building in his book on the reconstructed Marian Music Hall. Norbert Conrads, *Das Oratorium Marianum der Universität Breslau - ein Festsaal des Marienlobs und der Künste. Seine Geschichte bis zur Wiederherstellung der Deckenmalerei im Jahre 2014* [The Oratorium Marianum of the University of Wrocław - a Hall of Praise of the Virgin Mary and the Arts. Its History up until the Reconstruction of the Ceiling Painting in 2014], Wrocław 2014.

⁷² Hellmut Lorenz, *Domenico Martinelli und die österreichische Barockarchitektur* [Domenico Martinelli and Austrian Baroque Architecture], Vienna 1991, 272-273.

⁷³ Małgorzata Wyrzykowska, *Śląsk w orbicie Wiednia. Artystyczne związki Śląska z Arcyksięstwem Austriackim w latach 1648-1741* [Silesia in the Orbit of Vienna. Artistic Relations of Silesia with the Archduchy of Austria during the Years 1648-1741], Wrocław 2010, 133; our translations. See also: Małgorzata Wyrzykowska, "Selected Questions Concerning the Architecture of the Main Building of the University of Wrocław", in: *Jesuits and Universities. Artistic and Ideological Aspects of Baroque Colleges of the Society of Jesus — Examples from Genoa and Wrocław*, eds. Giacomo Montanari, Arkadiusz Wojtyła and Małgorzata Wyrzykowska, Wrocław 2015, 249-276.

⁷⁴ Wyrzykowska, *Śląsk w orbicie Wiednia*, 133.

⁷⁵ Rudolf Lenz, "Christoph Hackner und die Jesuitenuniversität zu Breslau. Materialien zu Planung und Bau der Universitas Leopoldina" [Christoph Hackner and the Jesuit University of Wrocław. Materials Concerning the Planning and Building of the Universitas Leopoldina], in: *Śląska Republika Uczonych/ Schlesische Gelehrtenrepublik/ Slezská Vědecká Obec*, eds. Marek Hałub and Anna Mańko-Matysiak, vol. 1, Wrocław 2004, 238-263.

debate. His case was scrutinized by Conrads who found yet another plan of the complex in the Bibliotheca Albertina in Leipzig. In his book on the Marian Music Hall, Conrads argues that the unknown design from 1727 shows the initial ideas of the plain "functional" architecture for the complex. The plans were then to be modified by Hackner.⁷⁶

[50] Publications after 1989 began for the first time to tackle the question of the reception given to Baroque architecture after the Second World War. Gregor Thum described the attitude of Poles to Wrocław's Baroque architecture as neutral.⁷⁷ On the one hand, its Habsburg origins pointed to a distant epoch, one which has not been as heavily criticised as the later Prussian phase. On the other hand, it was not easy to make a connection between the Baroque style and Polish history, as was often attempted in the case of Gothic architecture.⁷⁸ The narrative based on the old foundations of the Piast castle beneath the University signals just such an attempt to link the eighteenth-century building with the Polish history of the city. (Fig. 10)



10 The University of Wrocław, northern façade (photograph provided by the authors)

Conclusion

[51] The integration of the Schlesische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität with Catholic roots into the historic narrative of the Communist Polish Republic in its (quasi?) scientific effort to conceal Austrian and German influences in order to underline the Polish culture heritage of the region was a challenging task. Indeed one might well regard this fascinating process as one of the prominent battles in the art history of the Cold War. What is more, the questionable idea of Piast foundations as an architectural base for the Baroque University continues to appear in travel guides and to affect cultural memory right up to the present day. Art history has helped to create the myth of an age-old Polish city free from German influences by placing its emphasis on other stylistic tendencies in Wrocław architecture.

⁷⁶ Norbert Conrads, *Das Oratorium Marianum*, 12, 149.

⁷⁷ Thum, *Uprooted*, 348.

⁷⁸ Labuda, "Polska historia sztuki a 'Ziemie Odzyskane'", 56.

[52] The architect of the main building of the University of Wrocław remains unknown to this day. Although the most recent archival findings seem to be a breakthrough on the question, there is still no clear evidence that could end the discussion on the authorship. All art historians involved in the quest for the University's first architect have based their theories on stylistic analysis, which can so easily be turned around to validate any hypothesis on the design's origins. As this article demonstrates, stylistic analysis of the oft-cited 'diversity of artistic manners' apparent in the main University building, can often lead different scholars to opposite conclusions. When looking at the material from their various contemporary positions, art historians tended to see in the architecture what they wanted to see, or rather what they felt necessary to see depending on the historical and political circumstances in which they found themselves. The various attempts to describe the University's architecture using the concept of national style should be understood as a part of this process.

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Acknowledgements

Karolina Jara's input to this article was possible within the framework of the predoctoral programme "Preludium 13" from the National Science Centre in Poland (project no. 2017/25/N/HS2/01279) and was supported by the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP).

Special Issue Editors

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RIHA Journal 0211-0217.

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