

# Paraphrases of Biedermeier in Polish Furniture Designs in the Early Twentieth Century and Interwar Years\*

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## **Abstract**

The article aims to describe the ways in which Biedermeier inspired Polish furniture makers in the early twentieth century and in the interwar years. Until recently, vernacularism was believed to have dominated Polish furniture designs from that time. The revival of Biedermeier has already been analysed by researchers focusing on German, Austrian, or Czech furniture designs. By presenting Polish designs (created by a number of artists, including those of the Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana [Polish Applied Arts Society]), this article seeks to contribute to a discussion on the influence of Biedermeier in Central Europe.

## **Contents**

Introduction

The influence of Biedermeier in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Germany in the early twentieth century

The reception of Biedermeier furniture and interior designs in Poland in the early twentieth century

Selected Biedermeier-inspired furniture designs in the early twentieth century in Poland

The influence of Biedermeier on Polish furniture designs in the interwar years: preliminary insights

Conclusions

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## Introduction

[1] At the beginning of the twentieth century, Polish applied arts and architecture began to seek a style that would be both steeped in tradition and reflective of the vigour and aspirations of the Polish nation. By the end of the nineteenth century, a large number of designers had already started to explore the folk art of various regions for "proto-Polish" elements. Concurrently, other artists shifted their interest to historical styles. One such style was that of Biedermeier, which they found intriguing for a variety of reasons. These new developments in applied arts were favourably received by critics, who hailed the paraphrases of Biedermeier as a means of reviving the applied arts in Poland. In 1908, the Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana (Polish Applied Arts Society, hereinafter: TPSS)<sup>1</sup> staged an exhibition of furniture and interior design in Warsaw, some of the artefacts drawing heavily on Biedermeier. According to press reports, the furnishings

*attested to one thing: efforts at breaking a horrific mould that defines the furnishings of today. Moreover, it was not Vienna's or Munich's Art Nouveau that made this happen, but... It was something else... Something both native and traditional... From the good old days when our grandmothers - young and pretty at the time - would sit by a spinet and sing the unforgettable song of Filon to ravishing uhlans...<sup>2</sup>*

[2] This article aims to present the ways in which Biedermeier inspired Polish furniture makers in the early twentieth century; it also strives to describe the paraphrases of Biedermeier in interwar furniture design. Until recently, vernacularism was believed to have dominated Polish furniture designs from that time. To date, no monograph in Polish has been published on the topic of Biedermeier's influence in the early twentieth century. That said, a number of

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<sup>1</sup> The Polish Applied Arts Society was established in 1901 in Kraków; it continued its activities until 1913. Its founders were applied art artists and lovers; its aim was to promote Polish applied art, to organize exhibitions and contests; the Society published its own periodical; it made efforts to establish cooperation between artists and businesses, public institutions and private commissioners. The Society also focused on the conservation and promotion of Polish national heritage, which they saw in the folk art of different regions and in early wooden architecture. The Society also aimed to create a national style, based not only on folk art or on early styles, but also on its distinctiveness from foreign styles and on a variety of inspirations (folk art, early styles, individual and original creations of artists).

<sup>2</sup> Eligiusz Niewiadomski, "O polskiej sztuce stosowanej i jej przyjęciu w Warszawie", in: *Witeź* 7 (1908), 363-367: 364.

researchers, including Anna Sieradzka,<sup>3</sup> Irena Huml,<sup>4</sup> or Anna Kostrzyńska-Miłosz,<sup>5</sup> have discussed the influence of Biedermeier on Polish furniture design. The revival of Biedermeier has already been analysed by researchers focusing on German, Austrian, or Czech furniture designs. By presenting Polish designs, this article is going to contribute to a discussion on the influence of Biedermeier in Central Europe.

## The influence of Biedermeier in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Germany in the early twentieth century

[3] Polish designers were not the only ones to rediscover Biedermeier for the arts in Central Europe.<sup>6</sup> Research on the art of Biedermeier found its first tangible expressions in a series of exhibitions held by Vienna's k. k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie (today's MAK), which showcased the arts (1896) and painting (1898) from the time of the Congress of Vienna and Biedermeier furniture (1901). Designs from that period garnered praise from both art theorists and critics. In 1896, Alfred Lichtwark argued that Biedermeier furniture gave rise to modern furniture making.<sup>7</sup> In an essay in *Neue Freie Presse* (1898), Adolf Loos exhorted artists to explore the traditional arts and crafts and indigenous culture of the last authentic era in Central Europe, namely the era of Biedermeier, and by doing so, to discover their formal language of expression.<sup>8</sup> Viennese architect and author Hartwig Fischel postulated Biedermeier as a model to be followed by

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<sup>3</sup> Anna Sieradzka, *Art déco w Europie i Polsce*, Warsaw 1998, 84, 140; Anna Sieradzka, "'Dworkowe' wnętrza Józefa Czajkowskiego", in: *Dwór polski w XIX wieku. Zjawisko historyczne i kulturowe*, ed. Teresa Hrankowska, Warsaw 1995, 41-49.

<sup>4</sup> Irena Huml, *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku*, Warsaw 1978, 39, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Anna Kostrzyńska-Miłosz, *Polskie meble 1918-1939, forma, funkcja, technika*, Warsaw 2005, 26, 28, 29, 31, 36, 107, 109-111.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Ottomeyer, Klaus Albrecht Schröder and Laurie Winters, eds., *Biedermeier. The Invention of Simplicity*, Ostfildern 2006; Radim Vondráček, ed., *Biedermeier. Art and Culture in the Bohemian Lands 1814-1848*, Prague 2010; William Owen Harrod, "Clarity, Proportion, Purity, and Restraint: The Biedermeier and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Modernism", in: *Centropa: A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts* 2 (2010), 106-127; Christopher Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", in: *Centropa: A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts* 2 (2010), 128-140.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Lichtwark, "Theorie und Historie" (1896), in: Alfred Lichtwark, *Palastfenster und Flügelthür*, Berlin 1901, quoted in: Vondráček, *Biedermeier. Art and Culture in the Bohemian Lands*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Adolf Loos, "Möbel", in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 2 October 1898, quoted in: Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", 133.

contemporary designers (1901).<sup>9</sup> Similar views were expressed by Hungarian-born art critic Ludwig Hevesi (1901), who argued that the functional properties and quality workmanship of the furniture from 1801–1850 could inspire early twentieth-century designers.<sup>10</sup> In 1903, Josef Folnesics, curator at the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, published a monograph on Biedermeier furniture making, which he promoted as a model for contemporary designers.<sup>11</sup> In the Art Nouveau magazine *Hohe Warte*, founded in 1904, Josef Adolf Lux postulated that a new style should be developed on traditional foundations, with Biedermeier's influence paving the way for modern furnishings: light, comfortable, functional, and independent of their surrounding interior design.<sup>12</sup>

[4] Austrian and German theorists and designers hailed Biedermeier's works for its simplicity and functional properties, which went against the grain of the eclectic styles that flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century. As such, Biedermeier furnishings became prototypical middle-class furniture. In the early nineteenth century, Biedermeier, which was depicted as a bourgeois style, held great appeal among the wealthier strata of society, who sought a style that matched their aspirations. Biedermeier was also considered to be a style typical of German-speaking countries. For this reason, its paraphrases were expressive of local pride or native identity explorations. This in turn revealed a nostalgia for a 'golden age' and the bygone era of people's grandparents. Meticulous workmanship and balanced form, which are attributed to Biedermeier, served as a link to the English movement for the revival of the crafts. At the same time, the return to Biedermeier was intended as a native counterbalance for the Arts and Crafts style, which gradually ceased to fascinate designers in the early twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hartwig Fischel, "Biedermeier als Vorbild", in: *Das Interieur* 2 (1901), 65-73, quoted in: Vondráček, *Biedermeier. Art and Culture in the Bohemian Lands*, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Hevesi, "Biedermeier und Kamp.", in: *Fremdenblatt*, 2 November 1901, quoted in: Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", 128.

<sup>11</sup> *Innenräume und Hausrat der Empire- und Biedermeierzeit in Österreich-Ungarn*, ed. Josef Folnesics, Wien 1903, quoted in: Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", 130.

<sup>12</sup> Josef Adolf Lux, "Biedermeier als Erzieher", in: *Hohe Warte* 1 (1904-1905), quoted in: Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", 129.

<sup>13</sup> On the reception of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Polish art, see: Andrzej Szczerski, *Wzorce tożsamości. Recepcja sztuki brytyjskiej w Europie Środkowej około 1900 roku*, Kraków 2002.



1 Anton Pössenbacher, drawing room, Polich Villa, Leipzig, ca. 1905 (reprod. from: *Innendekoration* 16 (1905), 297)

[5] The influence of Biedermeier on furniture designs took a variety of forms. Those artists who would customarily copy the formal characteristics of historic furniture treated Biedermeier as yet another style that had come back into fashion. Showcased at the Glaspalast exhibition in Munich in 1898, interior designs by Henry Helbig and Ernst Haiger embodied that approach.<sup>14</sup> Designed by Anton Pössenbacher and furnished with replicas from the first half of the nineteenth century, a drawing room in the Polich Villa in Leipzig emulated its Biedermeier models even more faithfully (Fig. 1).

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<sup>14</sup> Vondráček, ed., *Biedermeier. Art and Culture in the Bohemian Lands*, 18.



2 Bruno Paul, study, Herxheimer Villa, Frankfurt am Main, 1910-1911 (reprod. from: *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 29 (1911/1912), 149)

[6] A large number of artists who were active in the early twentieth century drew inspiration from the details and ornaments of Biedermeier furniture and its proportion, form, and simplicity. In so doing, they were able to create original furnishings in a modern form. Bruno Paul offered a large number of such designs in the first decade of the twentieth century. E.g., the influence of Biedermeier could be found in the Herxheimer Villa interiors in Frankfurt am Main (Fig. 2), where glazed doors in bookcase cabinets were provided with intersecting mullions, a desk simple in form was covered with a veneer decoration featuring picturesque wood grain details, and a table was mounted on a central support. Massive bergères, their armrests capped with volutes, were also redolent of Biedermeier. Creative paraphrases of Biedermeier were also offered by the following German and Austrian artists: Leopold Bauer (a room for Wilhelm Kestranek in Vienna), Otto Wagner (a billiard room, Villa Wagner I in Hütteldorf), Adolf Loos (a table at the Kärntner Bar in Vienna, 1908; an interior design for the Karma Villa in Clarens near Montreux, 1903-1906; a wardrobe for the apartment of Gustav Turnowsky in Vienna, 1900; a billiard hall at the Café Museum in Vienna, 1899), and Josef Hoffmann (a dining room to be exhibited at an MAK exhibition in 1899).<sup>15</sup>

[7] Artists from the Wiener, Dresdner and Münchener Werkstätten proved to be the most daring in their interpretations of Biedermeier. They brought out the simplicity, proportion, and structural clarity of Biedermeier furniture. The Wiener Werkstätte artists that were inspired by Biedermeier include glass (Josef Hoffmann) and ceramic designers (Michael Powolny). For furniture, one case in point is a suite of furniture designed by Koloman Moser for Mr and Mrs Hellmanns' drawing room in Vienna (1904, today kept in the Leopold

<sup>15</sup> Long, "Adolf Loos and the Biedermeier Revival in Vienna", 128-140.

Museum, Vienna; Fig. 3). Juxtaposed with upholstered seats, the openwork chair backrests could bring Biedermeier to mind. The sofa, where a soft seat was juxtaposed with openwork armrests, showed a similar inspiration. Moser used intersecting mullions in his display cabinet and writing table designs. The suite produced an aura of restraint, elegance, and balanced proportion; its decorative effect was obtained through a juxtaposition of geometrical elements with decorative surfaces and colourful fabrics.



3 Koloman Moser, a sofa from a suite of furniture in Mr and Mrs Hellmanns' drawing room, Vienna, 1904 (reprod. from: *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 16 (1905), 532)

[8] Similar Biedermeier influences could also be found in Czech designs from the early twentieth century; they were brought to Prague by students of Viennese universities. Jan Kotěra's furniture designs are a case in point. German artists also drew innovative inspirations from Biedermeier, which is best evidenced in *Typenmöbel* by Bruno Paul (Fig. 4) and *Maschinenmöbel* by Richard Riemerschmid. Paul propagated Biedermeier models among the students of an institute affiliated to Berlin's Museum of Decorative Arts. He was fascinated with the style for its robust and functional qualities and minimised use of structural and decorative components. The same set of features came to the fore in his typical furniture designs.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Harrod, "Clarity, Proportion, Purity, and Restraint: The Biedermeier and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Modernism", 106-127.



4 Bruno Paul, Typenmöbel, ca. 1909 (reprod. from: *Die Kunst* 12 (1909), 91)

## The reception of Biedermeier furniture and interior designs in Poland in the early twentieth century

[9] Complemented with other style furnishings, Biedermeier furniture survived in Polish living spaces well into the twentieth century. With its longevity, Biedermeier in early twentieth-century Polish interiors produced a staple association of both the family home and sentimental quaintness. One critic described the furniture designed by Józef Czajkowski for Mr and Mrs Dziewulskis' entrance hall (showcased in 1908 at Warsaw's "Zachęta" Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts) as a throwback to the reign of Louis Philippe I: "It does have a certain homely charm; steeped in the tradition of former generations, it produces a series of extremely familiar reminiscences."<sup>17</sup>

[10] The perception of Biedermeier in Poland was that of the last stylistic period capable of offering original formal and decorative solutions rather than mere imitations of previous styles. As such, Biedermeier was hailed by grandchildren as the ultimate achievement of their grandparents, and a negation of the eclectic styles from the times of their parents. In his analysis of the furniture designed by Czajkowski, a contemporary critic wrote:

*At first glance, one finds it extremely appealing that the artist was able to continue the tradition of the last period in the history of Polish artisanal handicraft, the tradition of the 1830s and 1840s, which brought to our country manors and city interiors the empire style [...] that is nonetheless simplified and adjusted to the humble needs of "eines Biedermeiers".<sup>18</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> Tadeusz Jaroszyński, "Polska Sztuka Stosowana", in: *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1 (1908), 546-562: 561.

<sup>18</sup> "Stary Teatr", in: *Czas* 217 (1906), 1-2: 1.



[11] In Poland, Biedermeier was not merely a middle-class style; the same type of furnishings made their way to the manor houses of the Polish nobility and the homes of the wealthier bourgeoisie. As demonstrated by studies on Polish interior furnishings, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Biedermeier furniture dominated the interiors of manor houses, i.e., the traditional homes of the Polish nobility. That style prevailed among the nobility until the end of the nineteenth century. Not until the last quarter of the century did they begin to adopt upholstered historical-style furniture.<sup>19</sup> Biedermeier furniture 'travelled' with the bourgeoisie as they relocated to the country, and with the nobility as they moved to the city. Elżbieta Kowecka argues:

*Biedermeier furnishings were so inextricably merged with Polish nineteenth-century interiors that we are now inclined to treat them as something quintessentially familiar, a style emerging from the Polish soil.*<sup>20</sup>

Biedermeier furniture became so deeply intertwined with the Polish manor house, the home of the nobility-derived Polish intelligentsia, and the middle-class country residence, that its early twentieth-century paraphrases became the ideal type of furnishings for manor house-style interiors.

[12] The manor house style was deemed suitable for country residences and the suburban villas integrated with their setting (Fig. 5). The Polish manor house engendered a number of myths, which made the manor house style acceptable in the eyes of different target groups. For more modernist-minded architects, the Polish manor was an equivalent of the English house, which Hermann Muthesius promoted in Central Europe. At the same time, the manor house style was linked to Ebenezer Howard's concept of the garden city. For more traditionally minded, it marked the revival of the Old Polish manor, a structure believed to have a 'proto-Polish' pedigree. It also produced positive connotations among lower strata of society, who were exposed to nineteenth-century theories whereby the manor house derived its form from the peasant cottage.<sup>21</sup> In the early days of the twentieth century, manor house interiors were associated with hospitality, comfort, and roominess. Jerzy Warchałowski, theorist and co-founder of the TPSS (Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana), the Polish Applied Arts Society, wrote thus: "[they] are full of friendly ghosts that peek out from every nook and cranny, that live in

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<sup>19</sup> Elżbieta Kowecka, "Wybrane zagadnienia organizacji życia materialnego na dworach polskich w XIX wieku", in: *Dwór polski w XIX wieku. Zjawisko historyczne i kulturowe*, ed. Jerzy Baranowski, Warsaw 1992, 73, 74.

<sup>20</sup> Elżbieta Kowecka, *W salonie i w kuchni*, Warsaw 1984, 74.

<sup>21</sup> See: Marta Leśniakowska, *"Polski dwór", wzorce architektoniczne, mit, symbol*, Warsaw 1992.

each and every furnishing, and hover in the air... The doors are open on both sides."<sup>22</sup> Manor house interiors were a promise of repose to weary wanderers and a relief to troubled spirits. The manor house style was propagated by architectural design competitions in the early twentieth century. In 1908, the TPSS opened a competition for the design of the Krasieński family manor house at Opinogóra. One fact is particularly intriguing for furniture making: the terms of the competition stipulated that a large collection of early nineteenth-century furniture must be incorporated into the winning design of the building.<sup>23</sup> This served as a cue to the architects, who would most likely follow the manor house style as an easy fit with Biedermeier furniture. Józef Gałęzowski and Józef Czajkowski<sup>24</sup>, who both used forms typical of Polish manor houses, came first and second in the competition, respectively.



5 Józef Czajkowski, country house, designed for the exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting", 1912, Kraków (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[13] Inspired by Biedermeier, designers could create a link between tradition and modernity. In the early days of the twentieth century, designers regarded

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<sup>22</sup> Jerzy Warchałowski, "Dawniej i dzisiaj", in: *Przegląd Techniczny* 34 (1911), 436-438: 436.

<sup>23</sup> "Konkurs na dwór wiejski", in: *Architekt* 1 (1908) 13.

<sup>24</sup> On the designs of Czajkowski's furniture, see: Irena Huml, "Józef Czajkowski", in: *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających (zmarłych przed 1966 r.). Malarze, rzeźbiarze, graficy*, eds. Jolanta Maurin-Białostocka et al., Warsaw 1971, vol. 1, 386-389; Irena Huml, *Warsztaty Krakowskie*, Warsaw 1973; Sieradzka, "'Dworkowe' wnętrza Józefa Czajkowskiego", 41-49.

tradition as an important pathway for their artistic explorations. The furniture designer Edward Trojanowski wrote thus:

*The greatest and most unique artists of all time were never contemptuous of tradition [...]. We have seen the English and Germans, and recently Polish artists, too, return in their furniture making to specimens from before 1840, that is, to the period when the legacy of ancient art was put to exquisite use.*<sup>25</sup>

He would later go on to argue that

*no human thought would ever emerge beyond the foundations developed by the spiritual labour of humanity. The boldest of innovators invariably and unwittingly rely on the achievements of preceding generations. Tradition is but a process of constant development...*<sup>26</sup>

In order to support his claim on the creative role of native tradition, he quoted some of the opinions expressed by Hermann Muthesius, whose *Applied Arts and Architecture* was translated into Polish in 1909.<sup>27</sup>

[14] Biedermeier furniture fascinated Austrian, German, and Czech designers with its universal and functional qualities, refined simplicity, balanced proportion, moderate ornamentation, and its use of the decorative properties of wood. It served as an inspiration for modern designs and a creative use of furniture-making traditions. Polish designers, critics, and theorists would have likely recognised Biedermeier for its innovative qualities. However, their primary focus was on Biedermeier as a traditional, manor house, and national form of expression.

## Selected Biedermeier-inspired furniture designs in the early twentieth century in Poland

[15] The influence of Biedermeier on early twentieth-century furniture designs can be found both in top-end customised designs and suites of furniture offered by mass producers. Two such producers were Fabryka Mebli Stylowych Szczerbiński i Spółka and Załęski i Spółka, both based in Warsaw, which began to offer Biedermeier-style furniture from 1908 (Fig. 6). The defining characteristics of their furniture were: simple form, minimal ornaments, Biedermeier-derived details, and high-gloss refined wood veneers. The two manufacturers did not specialise in Biedermeier-style furniture; they also offered "English-style", "modern", "Danzig-style", "Empire

<sup>25</sup> Edward Trojanowski, *Odrodzenie rzemiosła polskiego*, Warsaw 1915, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Trojanowski, *Odrodzenie rzemiosła polskiego*, 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Hermann Muthesius, *Sztuka stosowane i architektura*, transl. Jerzy Warchałowski, Kraków 1909.

modern", and "Louis-the-Fourteenth-style" furniture.<sup>28</sup> Concurrently, from ca. 1905, TPSS-affiliated Polish designers would create Biedermeier-inspired suites of furniture on private and official commissions. Below, I am going to present several such furniture and interior designs, together with their executions. I will focus only on the most representative samples. Additionally, Biedermeier-inspired furniture designs by Kraków-based Karol Maszkowski,<sup>29</sup> Stefan Filipkiewicz, and Stanisław Kamocki<sup>30</sup> must be mentioned.



6 A suite of furniture manufactured by Warsaw-based Fabryka Mebli Stylowych, formerly the Szczerbiński Factory, 1908 (reprod. from: *Świat* 21 (1908), 26)

[16] The first Biedermeier-inspired interior-design project to be executed in Kraków was that of the restaurant halls at the Stary Theatre, completed by the TPSS-affiliated artists from 1905–1906. The hall was provided with furnishings designed by Edward Trojanowski (Fig. 7).<sup>31</sup> Biedermeier characteristics could be found in a sideboard, a buffet, and chairs. The sideboard design featured pillars and mullions separating glazed surfaces and a juxtaposition of two wood colours (oak and mahogany). The buffet was very much in line with the sideboard. The chairs were modelled on Biedermeier chairs, also known as Hamburg chairs, which were provided with openwork

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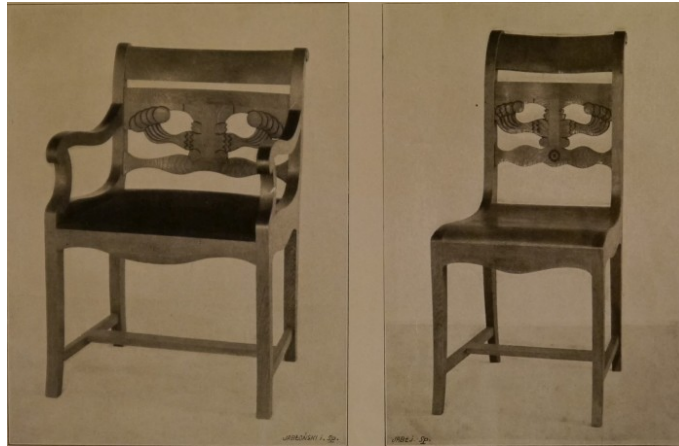
<sup>28</sup> Based on advertisements in the *Świat* [The World] periodical.

<sup>29</sup> The armchair and the chair designed by Karol Maszkowski are owned by the National Museum in Kraków.

<sup>30</sup> *Katalog XIII. Wystawy Towarzystwa Artystów Polskich Sztuka*, exh. cat., Kraków 1909.

<sup>31</sup> On the designs of Trojanowski's furniture, see: Agata Wójcik, "Edward Trojanowski: the Search for Style in Early 20th-Century Furniture Design in Poland", in: *Ikonotheka* 28 (2018) 67-95; DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0013.3344.

and backward-curving backrests and forward-curving armrests; the only feature that Trojanowski decided to dispose of was that of the sabre-curving legs (replaced with straight legs). These Biedermeier-inspired structures were decorated with folk ornaments.



7 Edward Trojanowski, an armchair and a chair for the Grand Restaurant hall, Stary Theatre, Kraków, 1905/06 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[17] The furnishings Czajkowski designed for the buffet hall featured even more Biedermeier-derived characteristics (Fig. 8). In ca. 1908, the same suite of furniture was executed for the dining room of the Nobel Prize-winning author Władysław Reymont.<sup>32</sup> Each and every furnishing showed characteristics that are redolent of Biedermeier. The sideboard, display cabinet, and cupboards featured little pillars covered in French polish in navy blue, while furniture was made of contrasting light ash wood. Glazed cupboard doors were provided with intersecting mullions, while chairs emulated the shape of the Hamburg chair. The artist followed the custom of the Biedermeier period in that he brought out decorative wood grain details, which were particularly visible in the sideboard doors. Covering the seats, striped fabric also derived from Biedermeier. Czajkowski combined their quintessentially Biedermeier characteristics with minute details of folk origin. The buffet hall was provided with polychrome decoration, which harmonised greatly with the furniture. Czajkowski converted the hall into a gazebo, some of the walls painted green, others featuring latticework with oval apertures. The upper reaches of the latticework and the space above it were covered with the images of rambling wild vines, painted in autumnal colours and

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<sup>32</sup> The furnishings of the buffet hall in The Stary Theatre have not survived; however, a part of Władysław Reymont's dining furniture set (a sideboard, two cupboards, a table, a display cabinet) is preserved in The Literature Museum in Warsaw.

interspersed with peacocks.<sup>33</sup> The hall may have produced the impression of a rustic pergola filled with quaint furniture. Showcased at Warsaw's "Zachęta" Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, Reymont's dining room interior produced a similar response among visitors. It was described as "beaming with a smile, inviting and happy to have guests inside, cheerful, merry, honest, and simple".<sup>34</sup>



8 Józef Czajkowski, a sideboard for the buffet hall, Stary Theatre, Kraków, 1905/06 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[18] Commissioned by the Municipal Office of Kraków, the Stary Theatre restaurant furnishings marked the beginning of a collaboration between TPSS-affiliated artists and the city authorities. In 1906, the former were commissioned to provide an interior design for the private apartment of Kraków's Mayor, Juliusz Leo.<sup>35</sup> The influence of Biedermeier is visible in the entrance hall design provided by Józef Czajkowski (Fig. 9). The hall was furnished with the following items: a mirror with a console table, a sofa, armchairs, and a table. The furniture was made of polished walnut wood and provided with golden and navy blue accents. Each and every item was

<sup>33</sup> "Stary Teatr", in: *Czas* 217 (1906) 1-2: 1; "Restauracja w Starym Teatrze w Krakowie", in: *Architekt* 4 (1907), 79-82: 80.

<sup>34</sup> Lucyna Kotarbińska, "Wystawa Sztuki Stosowanej w Krakowie", in: *Kurier Literacki*, 10 February 1908, in: Jerzy Warchałowski Archives, The Academy of Fine Arts Library, Kraków, no. 20029, 197.

<sup>35</sup> The commission was to design the complete apartment, but actually only the hall and the dining room were executed. See: *V. Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa "Polska Sztuka Stosowana" w Krakowie w r. 1906*, Kraków 1907, 4.

marked by its refined simplicity. Contemporaries wrote that the interior produced an aura of calm, gravity, and comfort.<sup>36</sup> Both these features, namely, the qualities of the material and the design, and the impression that the interior made on its visitors are characteristics that Czajkowski's designs share with Biedermeier. The influence of Biedermeier was particularly visible in his table and console designs. The table was mounted on a central pillar surrounded by eight arched supports. The console was supported by four columns, and it featured a mirrored back panel. Such compositions were commonly used in furniture of the Biedermeier era. Czajkowski combined Biedermeier's influence with only a few folk motifs.



9 Józef Czajkowski, furniture for the entrance hall of the private apartment of the Mayor of Kraków, 1906, in: exhibition of the Polish Applied Arts Society at the "Zachęta", the gallery of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, Warsaw, 1908 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[19] In ca. 1911, the TPSS received yet another commission from the Municipal Office of Kraków. The artists were offered to provide interior designs for the office rooms of the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, and the Municipal Office

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<sup>36</sup> "Wystawa polskiej sztuki stosowanej", 5 March 1908, in: Jerzy Warchałowski Archives, The Academy of Fine Arts Library, Kraków, no. 20028, pp. 12, 13; Kotarbińska, "Wystawa Sztuki Stosowanej w Krakowie", in: *Kurier Literacki*, 10 February 1908, in: Jerzy Warchałowski Archives, The Academy of Fine Arts Library, Kraków, no. 20029, 197.

Director; they were also commissioned to create the council chamber and anterooms. While office rooms were designed by Eugeniusz Dąbrowa-Dąbrowski, Karol Frycz, and Henryk Uziembło, the state room designs were provided by Czajkowski. The designs turned out to be too costly for execution. Eventually, the Mayor's office design was entrusted to Jan Bukowski, also affiliated to the TPSS.<sup>37</sup> Heavily inspired by Biedermeier, the council chamber was designed by Czajkowski. The interior is unique in that it shows the effort to employ a style commonly used for private spaces rather than town-hall interiors. Czajkowski drew heavily on early nineteenth-century furniture making and the colours of interiors from that time. In his design, the lower parts of the walls were to be covered with wainscoting (divided into rectangles with black edges). Council benches were to be decorated in a similar manner. The gallery also derived from the Biedermeier furniture-making tradition, its black columns featuring a gilded base and capital, and the railing provided with black balusters and a clock incorporated in it. Czajkowski planned to paint the walls dark green and the gallery cream.<sup>38</sup>

[20] In 1912, in collaboration with the Delegation of Polish Architects, the TPSS organised the exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting" in Kraków. One of the items developed for the exhibition was a suburban manor house, which was provided with furnishings designed by Karol Tichy, Józef Czajkowski, Henryk Uziembło, Edward Trojanowski, Karol Frycz, Jan Bukowski, and Edmund Bartłomiejczyk. The influence of Biedermeier can be found in the drawing room (Fig. 10), dining room (Fig. 11), master's study (Fig. 12), and bedroom interiors.

[21] The drawing room was provided with a suite of furniture designed by Karol Tichy (Fig. 10).<sup>39</sup> The suite comprised six chairs, six armchairs, a sofa, a table, a console table, two smaller console tables, and a tremo with a

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<sup>37</sup> X. *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa "Polska Sztuka Stosowana" w Krakowie w r. 1911*, Kraków 1912, 7.

<sup>38</sup> <https://desa.pl/pl/galleries/4/object/8168/jozef-czajkowski-projekt-dekoracyi-scian-i-umeblowania-rady-miejskiej-w-starym-magistracie-1911-r> (accessed April 5, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> On the designs of Tichy's furniture, see: Jerzy Korzeniowski, "Karol Tichy: (zarys monograficzny)", in: *Zeszyty naukowe Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie* 3 (1988), 29-34; Izydor Grzeluk, "Polskie meble. Konkurs na sypialnię", in: *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 3-4 (1999), 411-420; Karolina Wolska, "Karol Tichy, twórca Spółdzielni 'Ład', w poszukiwaniu 'polskiego stylu narodowego' w wyposażeniu wnętrz", in: *Sztuka i dyplomacja. Związki sztuki i polskiej dyplomacji w okresie nowożytnym*, eds. Monika Kuhnke and Artur Badach, Warsaw 2013, 185-191; Karolina Wolska, "Inspiracje i wzorce w projektach meblarskich Karola Tichego", in: *O rzeczach pięknych. Rzemiosło artystyczne na przestrzeni wieków*, eds. Agnieszka Bender and Małgorzata Wrześniak, Lublin 2015, 199-205.



jardinière.<sup>40</sup> The shape and structure of the chairs and armchairs showed a number of influences from Austrian Biedermeier. The artist drew inspiration from a Viennese chair type known as the fan chair. The chair had a thickly upholstered seat, simple and tapering front legs, and curving and tapering hind legs. Slightly rigid in form, the item was nonetheless softened by a fanciful backrest. Tichy decided to use a volute, one of the most popular decorative motifs in Vienna. Volutes were used as ornaments in the backrest of the sofa, which greatly harmonised with the chairs. Tichy also drew upon Biedermeier in that he added a monumental and geometrical form to the design, which was softened with a volute-capped backrest, triangles on the apron, and comfortable, upholstered armrests. Provided with a round top, Tichy's table was similar to numerous Biedermeier tables. The central table was surrounded by smaller console tables, which can also be traced back to Biedermeier, where smaller side tables were often paired with larger tables. The console tables were provided with mirrored back panels, which multiplied their legs and cross bars, and produced an amplified and illusionistic effect. Arguably, the use of mirrors may also be derived from Biedermeier furniture designs. Biedermeier display cabinets featured mirrored back panels, which visually augmented their space and illuminated the bric-a-brac on display.



10 Karol Tichy, a drawing room in a manor house, exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting", Kraków, 1912 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[22] The distribution of furniture in the drawing room may be read as a reference to Biedermeier interior arrangements, which provided for little 'islands', where guests could socialise in smaller groups. Tichy's design

<sup>40</sup> Part of the furniture set for the living room (two armchairs, four chairs, a table, a sofa, a console table) is preserved in the Archdiocesan Museum in Kraków.

provided for the following islands: the table and chairs, the sofa, console tables and chairs, the fireplace with a bench and surrounding armchairs. Tichy's furniture was provided with a rosewood veneer, its upholstery covered with tawny green fabric and the walls painted silver. The walls of the room featured a little pattern: a simplified flower-bud motif with two leaves, while the ceiling was painted white. The choice of colours, both for the walls and upholstery, was also in line with interior arrangements dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century. With clear references to Biedermeier, Tichy used his suburban manor design to recreate the atmosphere of a nineteenth-century traditional Polish manor house interior. The drawing room was intended to be the very epicentre of the home, with social and family life revolving around the table and fireplace—both traditional and modern furnishings at the fore.

[23] The manor house in the 1912 exhibition was provided with a suite of dining room furniture by Henryk Uziembło (Fig. 11).<sup>41</sup> The suite comprised a table, six chairs, a sideboard, a display cabinet, and a coffee table.<sup>42</sup> The furniture was made of pine wood and decorated with a walnut veneer. The furnishings were given a static, majestic and dignified form. The design was dominated by straight lines that were softened with subtle ornaments, medallions, and a few arches. Wood in several different colours added vigour to the furnishings, with their bulk consisting of bright colours and details such as columns and leather upholstery in darker shades. Uziembło brought out brighter elements against the backdrop of stained wood: volutes at the armrests in the chairs and marquetry medallions in the sideboard doors. Uziembło's design shared the following characteristics with Biedermeier furniture: its form, the juxtaposition of wood colours, and the range of details. The artist used a recurring motif of dark columns and pillars, which served as supports for the table and coffee tables and front ornaments for the sideboard and display cabinet. Volutes, which were a popular motif in Biedermeier painting, recurred in the dining room, as the caps of the armrests in the chairs, and in the sideboard, display cabinet, and coffee table. The intertwined arched mullions in the doors of the sideboard and the display cabinet, and the mirrored back panels of the sideboard are also references to

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<sup>41</sup> On the designs of Uziembło's furniture, see: Kazimierz Nowacki, "Wnętrza Henryka Uziembły", in: *Zeszyty naukowe Muzeum Historycznego m. Krakowa "Krzysztofora"* 4 (1977), 39-53; Kazimierz Nowacki, "Secesyjne sale i budynki kino-teatralne w Krakowie", in: *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 3-4 (1973), 331-334; Kazimierz Nowacki, *Architektura krakowskich teatrów. Dzieje teatru w Krakowie*, Kraków 1982.

<sup>42</sup> A furniture set for a living room (a sideboard, a display cabinet, a table, a coffee table, six chairs) designed by Henryk Uziembło for the 1912 exhibition is housed in the Historical Museum of Kraków.

Biedermeier. Classicist ornaments, such as palmette and egg-and-dart patterns, were softened with folk motifs.



11 Henryk Uziembło, a dining room in a manor house, exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting", Kraków, 1912 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

The coats of arms on the sideboard and the display cabinet were there to show that both the furniture and the dining room firmly belonged in the realm of nobility. Uziembło employed the coat of arms of his family (Sulima) and that of his wife's, Princess Konstancja Kazimiera Podhorska. Apart from the Biedermeier-inspired furniture, other complementing elements added to the traditional manor house atmosphere of the dining room. As was the custom in the early nineteenth century, small-size paintings were hung just above the furniture. Placed on the floor near the sideboards, slender and soaring vases may have been a reference to Biedermeier facet-cut glass from Silesia. The words above the door added to the homeliness of the dining room: "Kurdesz, kurdesz nad kurdeszami" ("A *kurdesz*, a *kurdesz* above all *kurdeszes*"). This passage from a drinking song thus became the motto of the dining room.<sup>43</sup>

[24] A master's room, which combined a library and a study, was located on the ground floor of the 1912 show house. The furniture was designed by Józef Czajkowski (Fig. 12). The suite comprised various types of bookcase cabinets, their upper sections either glazed or not, a sofa, tables, a desk, a chest of drawers, mirrors above the chest of drawers and fireplace, and two types of armchairs. The furnishings were defined by simple lines, austere shapes, and

<sup>43</sup> "Kurdesz, kurdesz nad kurdeszami" is a line from a late eighteenth-century feast song, most probably written by Franciszek Bohomolec SJ. The word is of a Turkish origin, meaning a good friend, a feast companion.

monumental qualities, which brings Biedermeier-inspired furniture to mind. Each and every furnishing by Czajkowski was cubic in shape, which produced a rhythmical series of rectangles. In their form, the cabinets, the wing-backed armchair, and the chest of drawers were very much like those of the Biedermeier era. One recurring Biedermeier motif was that of columns, which gave a uniform effect to the suite; they flanked the doors of bookcase cabinets, the desk, and drawers in the chest. They also served as table legs or armrest supports in the sofa and armchairs. As was the custom in the early nineteenth century, the designer abandoned decorative ornaments, which he replaced with a juxtaposition of wood colours, brighter wood veneer standing out against the backdrop of darker edges and the columns. Carefully selected and arranged in radial patterns, wood veneer made the suite all the more elegant. Austere in form, the furniture was softened with folk elements scattered across the room, including stylised twig motifs in the curtains.



12 Józef Czajkowski, a master's room in a manor house, exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting", Kraków, 1912 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[25] When Poland regained its independence in 1918, some of the Polish designers, especially those who were similar in style to the Warsztaty Krakowskie (Kraków Workshops, 1913–1926) found Biedermeier useful as a style for designing interiors in a country going through a rapid post-war restoration process. The style combined two desirable qualities: it was modern and traditional. Functional and simple, it also brought the Polish manor house to mind. Czajkowski followed the spirit of Biedermeier in his series of interior designs, which he showcased in an exhibition held at Kraków's Palace of the Arts in 1918. The furnishings were created from 1915–1918 in the Kraków Workshops studios at the Museum of Engineering and

Industry and in private carpentry studios across Kraków. They were later showcased in Warsaw and Poznań.

[26] In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Jerzy Warchałowski described Czajkowski's furniture as refined yet functional, of balanced proportions, defined by elegant lines, scarce ornaments, and harmonised colours. He argued that the exhibits could easily furnish both a country manor and a town house. Warchałowski depicted them as "filling a familiar warmth that springs from the tradition of the Polish manor house".<sup>44</sup> The reviewers of the exhibition pointed out similar characteristics. Jerzy Remer wrote that Czajkowski's designs were defined by simple form, functional qualities, and correct proportions. He also hailed the artist for his ability to harness the decorative properties of wood, its colour and wood grain details. He also noticed subtle references to the furnishings from other Polish manors.<sup>45</sup>

[27] Czajkowski showcased nine interiors: three dining rooms, three bedrooms, two drawing rooms (Fig. 13), and a study. The furniture was complemented with tapestries, vessels, and paintings (created by the Kraków Workshops). At least several suites of furniture showed qualities typical of early nineteenth-century furnishings. That said, other suites combined a simple form with decorative folk carvings or drew upon Baroque furniture. All of the furnishings were defined by their stylish simplicity, and the study was heavily inspired by Biedermeier. A desk with side drawers and a top unit full of drawers and pigeonholes, a round table, a sofa with an upholstered seat and backrest, and a glazed bookcase with mullions—all showed the qualities typical of Biedermeier furniture. Czajkowski abandoned almost all of the ornaments; he only retained arched lines and volutes, with which he capped the armrests in the chairs. He brought out the decorative properties of wood by offering intriguing wood veneer patterns and giving a high-gloss polish to the furniture.

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<sup>44</sup> Jerzy Warchałowski, *Wnętrza i meble. Projektował Józef Czajkowski*, Kraków 1920, 3-8.

<sup>45</sup> Jerzy Remer, "Wystawa mebli", in: *Czas* 172 (1918), 1, 2.



13 Józef Czajkowski, drawing room, showcased at the Palace of the Arts, Kraków, 1918 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

The drawing room was provided with a suite of walnut furniture (Fig. 13).<sup>46</sup> The suite was similar to those of Biedermeier in that it comprised a sofa, armchairs, chairs, and a table; it was also complemented with a chest of drawers and a wardrobe with glazed mullion windows. As was the case with the study, Czajkowski used volute-capped armrests, arched lines in the backrests of the sofa and armchairs, and wood veneer decorations (see the chest of drawers in the photograph). A bedroom suite of ash wood furniture also showed the influence of Biedermeier. In the design, Czajkowski abandoned arched lines and volutes in favour of refined simplicity, bringing out the beauty of wood and the picturesque wood grain details in the wood veneer decorations that he applied to the bed, chest of drawers, wardrobe, and vanity table. He also borrowed certain typically Biedermeier solutions: he placed a fine fabric canopy above the bed and mounted a psyche mirror on the vanity table.

### The influence of Biedermeier on Polish furniture designs in the interwar years: preliminary insights

[28] Biedermeier was almost completely ignored in the theoretical debate on the national style that continued throughout the interwar years in Poland.

<sup>46</sup> The furniture sets for the drawing room and the study used to decorate the office of the director of the Museum of Municipal Engineering in Kraków; at present, they are owned by the Faculty of Industrial Forms at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (preserved items from the living room set include a table, armchairs, and a sofa; preserved items from the study set include a sofa, a table, chairs, an armchair, and a sideboard).

Initially, Polish furniture makers drew heavily on the Polish and folk-inspired version of Art Deco. Avant-garde tendencies, deriving either from De Stijl or Bauhaus, became more pronounced in the late 1920s. Biedermeier remained a marginal yet present source of inspiration.

[29] Manufacturers continued to offer Biedermeier furniture. For the middle class with conservative preferences, the style was redolent of tradition, manor house interiors, and wealthy dwellings. As such, it was the perfect match for their study, dining room, drawing room, and even bedroom. Biedermeier furniture was on offer from Fabryka Mebli Stylowych Zdzisław Szczerbiński i Sp-ka [Stylish Furniture Factory Zdzisław Szczerbiński] in Warsaw.<sup>47</sup> Designed by Czesław Wallis and Kazimierz Kaczorowski and heavily inspired by Biedermeier, suites of furniture were showcased in *Wzory Mebli Zabytkowych i Nowoczesnych* [Historical and Modern Furniture Designs], a magazine issued from 1927–1932 by the Museum of Engineering and Industry in Kraków.<sup>48</sup> Just like *Rzeczy Piękne* [Beautiful Things], which, too, was issued in Kraków (1918–1919, 1925–1932), the magazine also published photographs of Biedermeier furniture. Biedermeier furnishings were also featured in the photographs of the furniture exhibitions that showcased manufactures from carpentry studios, e.g. held in 1930 in Kraków and 1937 in Vilnius.<sup>49</sup>

[30] Moreover, Biedermeier-inspired furnishings, which were defined by elegance and refined simplicity and redolent of Polish nobility and their manor houses, turned out to be the perfect match for state rooms at public institutions. That said, they were more fitting to office and drawing rooms rather than council chambers. Heavily stylised furniture, almost Biedermeier replicas, particularly suited public buildings erected in the first half of the twentieth century, where it could be combined with original furnishings. The interiors of the Polish Ministry of Justice in Warsaw are a case in point.<sup>50</sup> As a matter of fact, the influence of Biedermeier was visible not only in the

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<sup>47</sup> Anna Feliks, "Nowoczesne i stylowe wnętrza użyteczności publicznej wyposażone meblami z Fabryki Mebli Stylowych Zdzisława Szczerbińskiego i Sp-ki", in: *Polskie art déco*, ed. Zbigniew Chlewiński, Płock 2011, 66.

<sup>48</sup> *Wzory Mebli Zabytkowych i Nowoczesnych* 1, 2, 4 (1927).

<sup>49</sup> National Digital Archives, <https://www.nac.gov.pl/en/> (accessed 17 December 2019), no. SM0\_1-G-2325-19, SM0\_1-G-2343.

<sup>50</sup> Anna Kostrzyńska-Miłosz, "Styl narodowy i nacjonalizm w polskich wnętrzach pierwszej połowy XX wieku", in: *Nacjonalizm w sztuce i historii sztuki 1789–1950*, eds. Dariusz Konstantynów, Robert Pasieczny and Piotr Paszkiewicz, Warsaw 1998, 193.

interiors of top level institutions, but also in smaller towns and their offices, e.g. an office room at the District Assembly building in Skierniewice.<sup>51</sup>



14 Józef Czajkowski, study, Polish Pavilion at the "International Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Arts", Paris, 1925 (photograph: Gabinet Rycin [Prints Section], Main Library, Academy of Fine Arts, Kraków)

[31] That said, the majority of Biedermeier-inspired state room interiors were free interpretations of the style. Although their designers would make subtle yet literal references to it, their main focus was on a simplified form and refined wood veneer decorations. A study designed by Józef Czajkowski was one of the items showcased by Poland at the Paris Expo in 1925 (Fig. 14). Representative of Art Deco, its interior is nonetheless heavily inspired by Biedermeier. Expressive and geometrical in form, the furniture catches the eye not so much with its ornaments but with its beautiful wood grain details. Czajkowski harnessed a number of solutions deriving from the furniture designs of the first half of the nineteenth century: glazed bookcase doors were provided with mullions, mirrors with console tables were inserted in between the windows, and a table and jardinières were mounted on one central polygonal support.

[32] Several Polish embassies and consulates were also provided with Biedermeier-inspired furnishings. Designed by Tichy, a drawing room suite of furniture is a case in point; it was first made for the exhibition "Architecture and Interior Design in a Garden Setting" in 1912. In 1929, on commission from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the design was replicated by Zdzisław Szczerbiński's furniture factory in Warsaw. The furniture was

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<sup>51</sup> National Digital Archives, <https://www.nac.gov.pl/en/> (accessed 17 December 2019), no. SM0\_1-A-3109-4.



provided to the Polish Embassy in Stockholm. Although a dozen years or so had passed, its elegant simplicity, stylish detail, and refined materials were still relevant to their time: the suite successfully complemented the embassy's drawing room interior.<sup>52</sup> The influence of Biedermeier was also visible in the furnishings of the Polish Embassy in Berlin (designed by Czesław Knothe in 1935) or the Polish Consulate in Königsberg (ca. 1931).<sup>53</sup> Biedermeier-inspired furnishings were provided to a great number of institutions, including the Silesian Assembly (drawing room furnishings designed by Ludwik Wojtyczko from 1924–1929)<sup>54</sup> or Warsaw's Aeroklub (a suite of furniture designed by Mieczysław Kotarbiński).<sup>55</sup>

[33] Artists from the "Ład" (a word suggestive of two ideas: order and appeal) Artists' Cooperative<sup>56</sup> are known to have greatly altered the original Biedermeier form.<sup>57</sup> Their designs share the following characteristics with Biedermeier furniture: a clear structure, refined materials, simplicity, geometrical form, wood veneer decorations. The trend was fully apparent in "Interior Design", the cooperative's jubilee exhibition held in 1936 at the Institute for the Propagation of Art. Designs by Czesław Knothe, Marian Sigmund, and Maria Czermińska-Sawicka are a case in point;<sup>58</sup> and so is Jan Bogusławski's design of a lady's room showcased at the exhibition "Interior Design – Dwelling Interiors" held at the Institute for the Propagation of Art in 1937.

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<sup>52</sup> Wolska, "Karol Tichy, twórca Spółdzielni 'Ład'", 185-191.

<sup>53</sup> Feliks, "Nowoczesne i stylowe wnętrza użyteczności publicznej wyposażone meblami z Fabryki Mebli Stylowych Zdzisława Szczerbińskiego i Sp-ki", 82-92.

<sup>54</sup> Michał Wiśniewski, *Ludwik Wojtyczko. Krakowski architekt i konserwator zabytków pierwszej połowy XIX wieku*, Kraków 2003, 100.

<sup>55</sup> National Digital Archives, <https://www.nac.gov.pl/en/> (accessed 17 December 2019), no. SM0\_1-S-1181-2.

<sup>56</sup> The "Ład" Artists' Cooperative (1926–1997) was established in Warsaw by a group of artists connected with the Warsaw School of Fine Arts. The workshops of the cooperative employed the best craftsmen manufacturing furniture, textiles, ceramics, and metalwork. The items created by the "Ład" Artists' Cooperative were presented at numerous exhibitions as well as in their brand store in Warsaw. After World War II, the cooperative resumed their activities; in 1950, it was incorporated into the Head Office for Folk and Artistic Industries.

<sup>57</sup> On the furniture production of the "Ład" Artists' Cooperative, see: Maria Dłutek, "Meblarstwo członków Spółdzielni 'Ład' do 1945 roku", in: *Spółdzielnia Artystów Ład 1926-1996*, eds. Anna Frąckiewicz and Irena Huml, Warsaw 1998, 76-93.

<sup>58</sup> National Digital Archives, <https://www.nac.gov.pl/en/> (accessed 17 December 2019), no. SM0\_1-K-6196-1, SM0\_1-K-6196-2, SM0\_1-K-6196-4.

## Conclusions

[34] In the early twentieth century, in search of a style that would be reflective of both Polish tradition and modernity, Polish designers began to explore Biedermeier. In so doing, they followed their Austrian, German or Czech colleagues, who were fascinated by it. Biedermeier was depicted as a native style: redolent of an idealised and mythologised world of Polish manor houses and country life, expressive of tradition, and representative of the golden era of artisanal handicraft. In their return to Biedermeier, designers sought to discover a new formal language of expression, as they believed the future should be built on traditional foundations: Biedermeier was hailed for its simplicity and functional properties, the truth of the material, and quality workmanship—in other words, those features that would later define twentieth-century design. With its traditional overtones and modern form, Biedermeier furniture continued to inspire Polish designers in the interwar years, albeit indirectly.

## About the Author

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