

PIOTR PASZKIEWICZ, *POD BERLEM ROMANOWÓW.
SZTUKA ROSYJSKA W WARSZAWIE 1815–1915*

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A thesis by Piotr Paszkiewicz published in 1991 remains the only complete study on the Russian art in the tsarist Warsaw¹. As the years go there hasn't been any position on the Polish market that treats about this subject in a more detailed way in over 20 years. Besides thesis of authors strongly connected with Polish Orthodox Church², there is a study about the Orthodox architecture written in the context of russification published by Paulina Cynalewska-Kuczma³ and mentioned above Piotr Paszkiewicz⁴.

The thesis has been divided in two fundamental parts and the criterion of the division is based on chronological framework which is marked by the January Uprising. It seems like a justified choice in view due to intensification of the russification in the after-uprising period. First and a very important advantage of the discussed work is a solid introduction to the subject of Russification policy of tsarism along with its architectural reflection. Warsaw's urban development is presented with regard to political motivations resulting from the will of "punishing" the city for the November Uprising⁵. Besides a description of the military infrastructure's development (barracks, citadel) the author pays attention to the legal rules from 1864 forcing institutes to place (their) signs in Russian⁶. A history of Russians and Orthodox Christians living in Warsaw along with its statistical approach ends the author's preliminary reflections.

In the chapter one, which treats about Orthodox architecture until the January Uprising next to Russian chapels and Orthodox Churches, we can find information concerning the Orthodox Church dedicated

to Holy Trinity connected with the Greek emigration dating back to the thirteenth century⁷. The complicated fate of the Greek parish that was often changing the location of their church was developed on the basis of studies of the prewar authors, the Orthodox press and documents kept in The State Archive in Warsaw⁸. It is worth noting that besides the architectural description of the Orthodox church dedicated to Holy Trinity the author presents the administrative (canonical) affiliation of Greek communities on the Rzeczpospolita grounds and after its fall in a very solid way⁹. The description of The Theotokos of Vladimir, organized in the former Roman Catholic church dedicated to Lawrence of Rome treats about the issue related to the burial of the Orthodox. Before the creation of the cemetery surrounding the discussed Orthodox church there hasn't been any independent Orthodox cemetery in Warsaw. Until then the Orthodox Christians were using separate lodgings at the Powązki cemetery and at two Evangelical Cemeteries¹⁰. The penultimate section (of a chapter) is completely dedicated to Orthodox cemeteries. The choice of name (of the Orthodox church) was linked with the day of the conquest of Warsaw by Russians, which was the day of the Theotokos of Vladimir¹¹. As the author concludes in the end of the chapter, the Orthodox churches built in the post-uprising period did not overwhelm by its size or by its Byzantine-Ruthenian elements in the architecture. This state was meant to change after the year 1863 which is presented in the following chapter.

Years 1864–1912 were the period of the largest building industry development in Warsaw. It was con-

¹ The discussed work is an extended version of a doctoral dissertation written under the guidance of prof. dr hab. Andrzej Rotermund in the The Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

² P. Przechodźniak, *Warszawa. Prawosławie i rosyjskie dziedzictwo*, Warszawa 2011; H. Sienkiewicz, *Cerkwie w krainie kościołów. Prawosławne świątynie na Mazowszu*, 2006; K. Sokoł, A. Sosna, *Cerkwie w centralnej Polsce 1815–1915*, Białystok 2011.

³ P. Cynalewska-Kuczma, *Architektura cerkiewna Królestwa Polskiego narzędziem integracji z Imperium Rosyjskim*, Poznań 2004.

⁴ P. Paszkiewicz, *W służbie Imperium Rosyjskiego 1721–1917. Funkcje i treści ideowe rosyjskiej architektury sakralnej na zachodnich rubieżach cesarstwa i poza jego granicami*, Warszawa 1999.

⁵ P. Paszkiewicz, *W służbie Imperium Rosyjskiego...*, op. cit., p. 18.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 29.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 48.

⁸ „Zbiór W. Przyborowskiego”; P. Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów...*, op. cit., p. 49.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 50.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 69.

¹¹ Ibidem.

nected not only with the Russification policy that was endeavouring to total unification of the Polish Kingdom (the Kingdom of Poland) with the rest of Russia but also with the influx of Russian people. In this period the first Orthodox church was built in the right-bank Warsaw. Among the initiators of the construction of the Orthodox church dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene on Praga we can find the last tsar's governor of the Polish Kingdom, Fiodor Berg and the well-known slavophile, duke Władimir Czerkasski. Relying largely on the secular and orthodox press the author found speeches delivered during ordaining particular Orthodox churches. Quoted fragments confirm the orthodox clergy's and civil authorities's full awareness of the propaganda and imperial role of the orthodox architecture¹². The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral remains the most extensively described object by Paszkiewicz in his work. According to the author the temple's size outshadows both others Orthodox churches built by Russians and Catholic churches by its size and luxuriance.

The language of the thesis is characteristic of its objectivity which, in combination with the use of various source materials (the Russian, Orthodox, police press, the documents from Polish and Russian archives), results in very high evaluation of the entire work. By presenting ideas behind the construction of such a magnificent temple the author mentions not only the desire of underlining the russianness of the city but also an Orthodox domination as a fundament of tsarism over other religions in the Polish Kingdom. Unlike authors linked with Orthodoxy, Piotr Paszkiewicz underlines the urbanistic and architectonic disharmony created after the construction of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on the Saxon Square¹³.

The section dedicated to occasional monuments and architecture treats mostly about mourning and commemoration of the tsar Alexander I (of Russia) and the coronation of his successor, Nicholas I. What surprises is that the author doesn't use two fundamental for the subject articles, written by Władysław Zajewski¹⁴ and Jerzy Gutkowski¹⁵. The next section is an extended version of an article published by P. Pasz-

kiewicz and H. Faryna-Paszkiewicz at the "Kronika Warszawy" (Warsaw's Chronicle)¹⁶. A presentation of the two most outstanding people buried at the Wolski cemetery would only make this few pages long chapter more attractive.

World War I was the beginning of the end of the Russian domination in Warsaw. Paszkiewicz, writing about the fate of Orthodox churches during and after the war, tries to understand the anti-Russian and anti-Orthodox sentiment in the Polish society. The author presents all of the most important conceptions for demolition, reconstruction and reassignment concerning the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. What is important is that Polish voices in favor of maintaining the temple are mentioned¹⁷.

The assumption of the thesis, as mentions the author in the conclusion, was an attempt to organize the until now random knowledge concerning the Russian Art of Warsaw. From the perspective of more than twenty years after the publication of the work discussed, Paszkiewicz's book still remains the basic study on the tsarist episode in the Warsaw's art. This work, according to the author's intention, has a great asset which is a systematization and an expansion of author's current state of research. Unfortunately, towards the promoted in modern science interdisciplinary, Paszkiewicz's work sometimes lacks a broader approach. The work has an index of surnames and proper names and 125 black and white illustrations. Placing a bibliography at the end of the book would be a great convenience, especially in the context of the author's use of little-known Russian sources in Poland¹⁸. According to the monograph's title "*the Russian art in Warsaw*", the reader can expect a discussion of not only the Russian sacred architecture but also the Russian painting, theatre and music. The thesis of Piotr Paszkiewicz constitutes a solid synthesis and an encouragement for the further research.

Translated by T. Wiśniewski

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¹² „The sacred temple now (...) certifies preferably before future generations of strenuous aspiration to consolidate here and the name and nationality of the Russian Ruthenian” (ibidem, s. 85).

¹³ Ibidem, p. 114.

¹⁴ W. Zajewski, *Koronacja i detronizacja Mikołaja I w Zamku Królewskim*, „Przegląd Humanistyczny”, 5(86), 1971, p. 15–28.

¹⁵ J. Gutkowski, *Ceremoniał koronacji Mikołaja I na króla Polski w Warszawie*, „Kronika Zamkowa”, 6 (14), 1987, p. 3–9.

¹⁶ H. Faryna-Paszkiewicz, P. Paszkiewicz, *Cmentarz prawosławny na Woli jego historia*, „Kronika Warszawy”, 1(53), 1983, p. 83–92.

¹⁷ P. Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów...*, op. cit., p. 199–200.

¹⁸ Central Government History Archive in Sankt Petersburg.