

nowego Apolla, o cnotach herkulesowych, który byłby godzien korony Rzeczypospolitej. Wprawdzie polityczny projekt wyniesienia hetmana na tron królewski przekreśliły wojska carycy Katarzyny, które

zagwarantowały wybór Stanisława Poniatowskiego, rodzonego brata jego żony Izabeli – to architektura pałacu utrwaliła niewątpliwie pamięć po hetmanie jako wielkim miłośniku piękna.

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THE ROLE OF SCULPTURE IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF 18th C. PALACES AND GROUNDS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE PALACES IN BIAŁYSTOK AND RADZYŃ PODLASKI

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Generally, we can say that research into the architecture of palaces from the modern era concentrates mainly on describing the chronology of building processes, analyses of plans, establishing the names of architects. This means that such a history of architecture becomes a history of technical solutions and their historical determinants. Historians of architecture rarely notice sculptures, treating them rather as an ornament or an abstract decoration – simply an “addition”. Studies of the sculptures on façades and in interiors or in the surroundings of residences are left to art historians, specialists in painting and sculpture. The academic practice of dividing the research into separate areas of history of art, history of sculpture and history of architecture (not to mention further divisions) results in a failure to notice the complexity of an object of art. Already Vitruvius wrote that an architect, combining theory and practice, should master the art of writing, be a perfect draftsman, know geometry, possess historical knowledge, should also listen to philosophers and know music. The creativity of an architect is based on his ability to enter into relationships with the most important phenomena of culture. The same requirements refer to historians of architecture, especially those who deal with such extensive objects of art as the modern age palace residences in Europe.

An analysis of the decoration of the 18th c. palaces of Jan Klemens Branicki (1689-1771) in Białystok and Eustachy Potocki (1720-1768) in Radzyń Podlaski shows the ways in which sculpture functioned in the residential architecture of the epoch.¹ Though the two residences – as many in Poland – have not avoided pillage and devastation over the centuries, in both cases sculptures by the Warsaw artist Jan Chryzostom Redler have been preserved *in situ*. Based on an analysis of selected components of such a *Gesamtkunstwerk* as the two baroque residences, there can be traced in their structures the essential role played by sculptures.

Palace of Jan Klemens Branicki in Białystok

Crossing the triumphal arch of the Clock Gate of the palace one can see between the *avant cour* and *cour d'honneur* two sculptures dated 1758, showing Hercules fighting with the dragon Ladon and with the Hydra (il. 1). Among the twelve labours of Hercules the two presented here were the most often seen in European art.² The rich symbolism of the Herculean iconography was related to a ruler's virtues: fortitude, deliberation, reason and constancy. As an example we can take a medal by Heinrich Peter Groskurth made for king August II, which,

¹ The paper is based on research presented in the author's book: *Programy symboliczne i funkcje ceremonialne rezydencji magnackich. Puławy-Białystok-Radzyń Podlaski-Lubartów w latach 1730-1760*, Warszawa 2010.

² The twelve labours of Hercules were sculptured in the freeze of the Zeus temple in Olimpia, which determined their iconography in antique art. In the art of the modern age that iconography

had its source in the sculptures of Roman sarcophagi and altars; an example is the altar in the Lateran Museum known from prints *Hercules ethnicorum ex variis antiquitatum reliquiis...* edited in Berlin in 1705. See also A. Boczkowska, *Gemine Veneres. Motywy neoplatonskie w dekoracji reliefowej Kaplicy Zygmuntowskiej*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki” vol. LXVII, 2005 no.1-2, p. 119.

on the reverse, presents Hercules fighting with the Hydra, and the inscription *Adversis resistentum prudentia*. An important factor influencing the Herculean iconography in European art was the political propaganda of Louis XIV. On the medal struck to mark the Treaty of Westfalen the king can be seen as conquering the Hydra. Also, two figures of Hercules were designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini for the main façade of the Louvre, where they were to signify that anybody entering the residence should pass by courage and labour.³

The struggle between Hercules and the Hydra belonged to those scenes that most inspired the imagination of both artists and patrons. In the modern age, the antique myths were not a direct iconographical source; that role was played by the iconographical tradition related to later literature. Besides Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,⁴ we can point to such commentaries and compendiums as the famous work by Maciej Sarbiewski *Dii Gentium*, where he wrote: "All that we have said on monsters defeated by Hercules we can perfectly relate to the duties of a good ruler, that is repressing rebellions, punishment of malefactors, observing justice in the state."⁵

In European art, the figure of Hercules expressed a variety of meanings. In Białystok, the struggle with the Hydra represents the fight against false orators. Branicki, locating the sculptural representation of the struggle on the entrance to the *cour d'honneur* wanted to demonstrate - among other meanings - that he is able to speak beautifully, without deceiving his listeners. In Poland's 'democracy of the nobility', where speeches in Parliament, local councils and tribunals were important for exercising authority, this feature of the Herculean iconography was essential propaganda. Furthermore, the sculpture seems to present Branicki as *arbiter elegantiae* - as he thought of himself. We should also refer to the book of the Jesuit Jacobus Masen (first edition in 1650 and frequently re-edited until 1714), who in the chapter entitled *On Giants, Semigods and Certain Other Gods of Lower Rank* wrote that Hercules symbolizes the power of a brave man who can conquer

enemies or passions, also wisdom, thus representing a perfect ruler.⁶ Also, as a source of interpretation could be indicated the *Adagia* by Erasmus of Rotterdam, who also referred to the letters and *Carmina* of Horace, where fighting the Hydra was a symbol of struggle with those who were jealous - this was the case of Branicki, owner of such a beautiful palace. Last but not least was the negative propaganda he, like every great nobleman, had to face; this required appropriate activities to create a positive image, so important in the political, economic and social environment of the Commonwealth of Poland. The figures of victorious Hercules struggling against various enemies - whoever they were - were adequate symbols of a ruler, furthermore they could be understood on various levels of interpretation.

In the vestibule of the palace in Białystok, at the entrance to the representational stairs to the *piano nobile*, there is a marble statue of half naked men sharpening a knife (il. 2). It was created by J.Ch. Redler in September of 1755 after the antique sculpture called the *Arrotino* or *Il Rotatore* from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.⁷ The *Arrotino* was purchased by the Medicis in 1567 and, since 1677, apart from the period of the Napoleonic wars, has been exhibited in the Gallery.⁸ It was frequently copied, mainly to be located in residential gardens such as Versailles or Blenheim. The original was known in Europe from numerous prints, as was also the case of the Białystok sculpture.

There was no single interpretation of whom the sculpture presented: the names simply described the action of the figure. The prevailing description referred to the history of Rome and - depending on the chronicles - said the man was a slave overhearing a plot against the State. This is obviously not the case of the *Rotateur* in Białystok (named by Branicki *Rotator*). In 1686, Leonardo Agostini, comparing the *Arrotino* to an antique gem, said it presents a slave who is awaiting instructions from Apollo to begin flaying alive Marsyas, who had been defeated by the god in a musical conquest.⁹ Essential here is the Apollonian symbolism referring to Jan Klemens

³ J. Banach, *Herkules Polonus. Studium z ikonografii sztuki nowożytnej*, Warszawa 1984, p. 55-56; 80-82.

⁴ Besides Latin or French texts, various Polish translations were available, e.g. by Jakub Żebrowski (1636) or Walerian Otwinowski (1638).

⁵ *Illa omnia, quae hactenus de domitis monstris ab Hercule diximus egregie applicari possunt ad officium boni principis seditiones comprimendi, de maleficis poenas sumendi, de*

iustitia in re publica conservanda. - M. Sarbiewski, *Dii gentium. Bogowie pogan*, ed. K. Sławecka, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Poznań 1972, p. 520-521.

⁶ J. Banach, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷ T. Dziubecki, op. cit., p. 90-93

⁸ P.P. Pray Bober, R. Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture*, London 1986, p. 75

⁹ *Ibidem*.

Branicki, whom the Białystok figure is looking for, directing his head towards the stairs (not like the antique sculpture). The idea of the drastic punishment of Marsyas was easily understood in the times when, not only ordinary subjects but also members of the lesser nobility were afraid of a magnate's revenge. But this could not be the case of royal or aristocratic visitors. Therefore, another level of the symbolism of the sculpture should be read, referring to the idea of neo-Platonic liberation of beauty from earthly fetters.¹⁰

Sculptures were also located in the gardens of the Branicki palace: most of them were placed along the main alley. The inventory of 1772 lists "eight stone figures, painted white [...] between these figures stand eight sculptured vases painted white"¹¹. According to the inventory, there were also 42 sculptures and 32 vases (stamnos, krater or hydria), made of stone or wood, no names were given. The way the sculptures were arranged can be seen in the print of ca. 1750 by Michael Rentz, after a drawing by Jan Klemm (il. 3). There we can see figures alternating with vases: on the near left, we can see a sculpture of Venus, on the right of Adonis, further away pairs of vases and – hypothetically – Bacchus on the right and Diana and then Flora on the left. Other figures in the print are difficult to recognise.¹² The figures can easily be identified as copies of famous antique sculptures of Venus Medici from the Uffizi, Meleagher Pigini from the Musei Capitolini or modern sculptures from Versailles like Diana by Rene Frémin (1709) and Bacchus as personification of Autumn by Thomas Regnaudin (1680-1699). The most famous vases in European art are those from the garden of Versailles: Vase of Peace and Vase of War by Jean-Baptiste Tuby and Antoine Coysevox (1685). In the modern iconography vases symbolized – as was written by Filippo Picinelli in his famous *Mundus symbolicus* (1687) – wealth and generosity, especially in the context of the story of Philemon and Baucis as described by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*

(VIII, 611-724). They were also attributes of the goddess Fortuna and this last meaning was referred to when vases were placed on the top of palaces. The arrangement of the sculptures in Białystok followed the arrangement of figures along the *Allée Royale* in Versailles. Another inspiration had literary and historical sources: Vincenzo Scamozzi in chapter XXII of the third volume of his *De Giardini* wrote that Octavian August enjoyed beautiful gardens full of sculptures.¹³ The main avenue of the Białystok garden was directed towards the canal, terminating with a balustrade (as seen on the Rentz print), changed in 1752 by the constructing of a bridge. Then the figures seen in the print, representing "Gladiators" (lost now), were transferred to the other side of the bridge and the same year two (preserved) stone sculptures of sphinxes, also by Redler, were put in their place. One of the gladiators (both made of lead and painted white) was modelled after the *Gladiator Borghese* (Louvre), then widely known. In 1638 François Perrier published at least four prints showing the sculpture, which was also appreciated, among others, by Bernini.¹⁴ Since the end of the 17th c. many plaster copies were made, some of them were located in the Mirabell residence of the archbishop of Salzburg, in Charlottenburg in Berlin and of course in Versailles. The second sculpture in Białystok followed one of the *Dioscuri* from Piazza del Quirinale in Rome. The subject of the two sculptures could refer to the idea of bravery, being a sort of bracket closing the main axis of the residence and a *pendant* to the two groups of Hercules sculptures in the courtyards. Also, the sculptures of the sphinxes had their part in the symbolic structure of the residence (il. 4). Alojzy Osieński in his dictionary of mythology (*Iconologia*, 1808) wrote that there was a custom of locating figures of sphinxes in front of churches as a symbol of mysteries of God; another meaning symbolizes discernment and that nothing can be hidden from the Sun. Also, August II of Saxony had a sphinx seal, to indicate that the secrets of rulers should remain secret. Pic-

¹⁰ Another interpretation is presented by A. Oleńska, who places the creation of the sculpture in a historical context in "Sekretne treści" palacu w Białymstoku, in: *Artyści włoscy w Polsce XV-XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 2004, p. 641-656, and repeats her arguments in *Jan Klemens Branicki "Sarmata nowoczesny". Kreowanie wizerunku poprzez sztukę*, Warszawa 2011 (see my critique of that book in "Barok. Historia-Literatura-Sztuka" XIX/1(37) 2012, p. 230-232.

¹¹ The *Inventory* in T. Dziubecki, op. cit., p. 163-203.

¹² See A. Oleńska, *Analiza kompozycji i dekoracji ogrodu przy palacu Jana Klemensa Branickiego w Białymstoku*, in: *Ogród*

Branickich w Białymstoku. Badania-Projekty-Realizacja, Studia i Materiały: "Ogrody" 4 (10), Warszawa 1998, p. 30.

¹³ V. Scamozzi, *Dell'idea della Architectura Universale*, Venezia 1714, p. 325.

¹⁴ F. Haskell, N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900*, New Haven-London 1994, p. 325. The drawing of Venus Medici was in the collection of king Stanisław August Poniatowski, brother of Branicki's wife, Izabella, see E. Budzińska, *Pour sa majeste le Roi... Rysunki „Z Antyku” w zbiorach Gabinetu Rycin Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*. Catalogue, Warszawa 1993, p. 9.

tures of sphinxes were also understood as symbols of shrewdness and guards of a residence. In Versailles the presence of the sculptured sphinxes, according to the explications of Morelet in *Explication historique de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la maison royale de Versailles, et en celle de Monsieur à Saint-Cloud* (1681), is interpreted as a symbol of the king holding his subjects under sway.¹⁵

Palace of the Potocki Family in Radzyń Podlaski

In the residence of Eustachy and Marianna Potocki, built in the years 1740-1760 by Giacomo Fontana (1710-1773), sculptures executed by J. Ch. Redler have also been preserved, and they too have symbolic meaning (il. 5).¹⁶

The entrance to the courtyard leading through the clock gate (the main way from the town next to which the palace lies) is decorated, among sculptured heraldic cartouches, with two figures (il. 6). The one on the left presents a mature woman with uncovered shoulders, holding a plumb-line, compass and an architectural plan in her hands - a personification of *Architectura Civilis* (il. 7). On the right, there is the personification of *Architectura Militaris*, also as a mature woman in noble dress and with ornamental chain. She also holds a compass and a plan of a fortress, there are also a hoe and spade. Both are made after the popular book of personifications *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa (1593). According to Ripa the chain of the first personification should be golden with a diamond and all the artifacts held by the women, as well as their maturity, symbolize architecture as superior to other arts, because of its perfection, requiring intelligence. Ripa recalled the great idea of Vitruvius that architecture was the art crowning all others.¹⁷ The only difference between the Radzyń sculptures and the ones in *Iconologia*

is the addition of a column to the personification of Civil Architecture and of a crenellated tower to the Military one, supposedly to make the meaning of the figures clearer to the viewer standing below. Both women are looking down towards the entrance.

There is the question of why the personifications are placed in front of the entrance to a magnate's residence: after all, we are not entering the house of an architect. We have, therefore, to consider the idea of ruler-architect functioning in European culture. Its personification was king Solomon, who erected the Temple of Jerusalem.¹⁸ Selected by God and gifted by Him with wisdom and wealth, Solomon was a perfect example of a wise ruler, also as a founder, not only of sacral buildings, but also of residential ones. This iconography can be seen in art also in modern times. This idea was connected to the biblical picture of God as architect, thus erecting churches and palaces meant following the activity of God and fulfilling His will – similarly to king Solomon. Building also meant practicing the virtue of *Magnificentiae*.¹⁹ This royal virtue was related to Apollo and, according to C. Ripa, the virtue's attribute was an architectural plan.²⁰ In Versailles, for example, in the Salon of Apollo, on the ceiling there was a plafond by Charles de la Dosse showing Apollo accompanied by a personification of *Magnificentiae* (together with another virtue - *Magnanimitas*) holding an architectural plan, which symbolizes that one of its effects is building temples and palaces.²¹ In Poland a magnate-builder creating his residence in the 18th c. probably did not perceive himself in sacral categories, nevertheless the language of mythological forms and literary contexts was an important factor of a patron's activities.

It seems that Eustachy Potocki gave Fontana a free hand in designing the palace, not necessarily because he was lacking good taste (obviously pos-

¹⁵ „Pour les deux Sphinx qui sont à Versailles, il seroit à propos de les expliquer en cette maniere; ils ont le visage et le sein d'une femme qui porte un bandeau royal, et le reste du corps est d'un chien, sur lequel il y a un Amour: Ce qui tient de la femme marque la force des Rois, et le corps de chien la fidélité des Sujets, à qui il faut joindre l'amour des mesmes Sujets envers leur Souverain.” – see G. Sabatier, *Versailles ou la figure du roi*, Paris 1999, p. 78.

¹⁶ For a study of the palace architecture see K. Gombin, *Inicjatywy artystyczne Eustachego Potockiego*, Lublin 2009, p. 41-115. However, interpretations of the sculptures (although valuable) are based only on panegyric literature (p.81ff).

¹⁷ C. Ripa (p. 49) :”Dice Vitruvio nel principio dell'opera sua, che l'Architettura e scienza, cioè cognitione de varie cognitioni ornata...”.

¹⁸ On the idea of the ruler-architect in Polish art see T. Zadrożny, *Starotestamentowa geneza relacji między twórcami kaplicy Zygmuntowskiej – królem i Bereccim*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki” vol. LXVII, 2005, no. 1-2, p. 24 and 28, footnote 57.

¹⁹ See J. Lindow, *The Renaissance Palace in Florence. Magnificence and Splendour in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Aldershot 2007

²⁰ K. Scott, *The Rococo Interior. Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*, New Haven-London 1995, p. 81; N. Milovanovic, *Les Grands Appartements de versailles sous Louis XIV 2005. Catalogue des decors peints, Musee National des chateaux de Versailles et de Trianon*, Paris 2005, p. 43.

²¹ N. Milovanovic, op. cit, pp. 36 & 134-135.

sessed by his friend Jan Klemens Branicki), but because he wanted to act as king Solomon “appreciating the value of art and gain glory from the work of an artist” as wrote Alonso Tostado (1400-1455) whose commentaries on king Solomon were widely known and published (the last edition in 1728).²² Eustachy Potocki, being Speaker of the Tribunal in Lublin, could expect that like Solomon he was gifted with the virtue of *Magnificentia* in order to rule justly, admired by everybody for his wisdom, wealth and perfection of virtues, and for giving the Temple magnificent shape, as wrote St. Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologica* (Questio 134). Saint Thomas also wrote that practicing of that virtue results in performing a good government and creating “great things”, and this idea could be also found in Aristotle’s *Nicomacheian Ethics*. Another glossator of Aquinas, Giovanni Lodovico Vivaldi, a Dominican theologian of the 15th c., wrote in his *Opus regale* that the virtue of magnificence requires bearing high costs.²³ Spending vast sums of money was a way of influencing voters to ensure the attainment of political goals; one of the mediums was art and architecture. Following the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, for a magnate practicing magnificence meant erecting great buildings: architecture as the art based on principles was understood as the activity of introducing order (Greek *kosmos*), that is creation of a new *universum*.²⁴

Other sculptures essential for understanding the symbolism of the residence are two groups of figures – executed also by Redler – at the top of the two wings of the palace, as seen from the courtyard. On the left wing there is a large stone sculpture of a deer leaping up from among the trunks of trees, followed by two dogs held by putti (symmetrically on both sides) (il. 8). This is an illustration of the mythological story known from the *Metamorphoses* about Diana and Actaeon, who was transformed by the goddess into a deer and killed by his own hounds. This is a symbol and costume *all’antique* of Marianna Potocki.²⁵ The sculpture also indicated (as

no other sources survived) that the apartment of the lady was located in the left part of the *corps de logis*, as in Versailles or Wilanów, where the queen’s apartments were on the left side and the king’s on the right.

The scene depicted by the sculpture located symmetrically on the opposite (right) wing (il. 9) is more difficult to interpret. There, the key element is a figure of a horse jumping over a large feature resembling the rocaille ornament of a piece of furniture (a bed?). The composition may, for instance, be after the drawings of Rubens, following the cartoons of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Battle of Anghiari*, or after an unknown antique composition of Phaeton, like the one on the Roman sarcophagus from the 2nd c. A.D. in Uffizi. The most likely interpretation could be related to the iconography of Apollo (paired with his sister Diana, the goddess of the Moon), but then there should be four horses. We should consider a different, but still mythological, source. Pausanias in *Description of Greece* (VIII, 25, 5), when writing about the temple of Ceres Erynis (the Angry) in Onceium, explained the name by referring to the story of Neptune, who desired the goddess when she was looking for her daughter. Wanting to escape, she transformed herself into a mare, but then Neptune changed into a horse and thus possessed her. An inspiration for the compositions could be the decoration of the Salon de Vénus in Versailles. On the plafond painted by René-Antoine Houasse one can see the goddess of love, crowned with flowers by three Graces surrounded by Mars, Vulcan, Bacchus and Neptune. The main scene is accompanied by *quadri riportati* showing the marriage of Alexander and Roxane and panneaux with the scenes: *Rape of Europe*, *Rape of Amphitrite*, *Rape of Cybele* and *Rape of Coronis*.²⁶ All of them relate to a brute passion of infatuation, so it can be said that in Radzyń Podlaski the two sculptures are allegories of the passionate love of Eustachy and Marianna Potocki.

The figure of Neptune could also have another meaning: the sea god was represented in modern

²² T. Zadrożny, op. cit. p. 26.

²³ See N. Elias, *The Court Society*, New York-Oxford 1983, p. 67

²⁴ The word “microcosmos” in relation to palaces and its parks was used by M. Szafrńska, *Ogrody humanistów*, in: *Ogród. Forma-Symbol-Marzenie*, Exhibition catalogue 18 XII 1998-28 II 1999 in Zamek Królewski in Warsaw, ed. M. Szafrńska, Warszawa 1998, p. 84-85.

²⁵ A large sculpture of a deer and dogs can be seen on the top of the main gate to Anet castle (1547-1552) built for the favourite of the French king Henri II, Diana of Poitiers. The architect of the castle was Philibert Delorme (de l’Orme).

²⁶ N. Milovanovic, op. cit., p. 102.

mythological iconography as a symbol of – paradoxically – deliberation and self-possession.²⁷ Furthermore, a common idea functioned then, that *poets gave the name of Neptune to those unknown rulers who had arrived by sea to establish a new place or ruled on islands...*, which obviously could refer to Eustachy Potocki, who had acquired Radzyń Podlaski (surrounded by canals and ponds) as his wife's dowry. Neptune also acted as a guardian of walls or even a builder – thus, he could be treated as a kind of iconographical equivalent *all'antica* to king Solomon.

The symbolism of the sculpture can also comprise the virtue of *Fecunditas* (Fertility), which already in antique art was presented in a variety of ways. Persons having any relation to birth and fertility could be its symbols.²⁸ In Radzyń Podlaski that meaning easily could be understood as a virtue of Potocki's wife, mother of six children, and also could be an argument in the coming royal election, as *Fecunditas* personified the fertility of wives of emperors, as well as fertility of the country and lands.

The sculptures show the royal aspirations of the Potocki family at the time when all were awaiting the death of the old king August III of Saxony, and expecting that the next election would place a member of the family on the throne. Eustachy Potocki's sister, Katarzyna Kossakowska, insisted that he should come to an agreement in this matter with their relative, number one in the family, voivode Franciszek Salezy Potocki (1700-1772).

In the vestibule of the palace, at the bottom of the stair leading to the ball-room, there was a figure (now lost, but seen in old photographs), which after some comparative research can be identified as a copy of the antique bronze sculpture called *Spinario* (Musei Capitolini). Known as early as the 12th century, the *Spinario* stood in front of the Lateran Palace in Rome, until, after 1471, it was taken to the Palazzo dei Conservatori, where it is still kept today (with an exception of the years 1797-1816, when it was taken away to Paris). The common opinion was that it depicted a shepherd boy called Martius, who bore

a message to the Roman Senate, not considering the thorn in his foot, which he removed only after fulfilling his duty – so he became a symbol of fidelity. This characteristic probably explains the location of the statue's copy in the residence of the Potocki couple: they were known for their mutual love and care.²⁹

An analysis of the symbolism of the palace cannot omit the bas-relief in the segmental pediment of the central projection of the garden façade. It shows a young man with insect-like wings flying over a sitting nymph: they are Zephyr, god of the west wind, and Chloris, accompanied (on the pediment, in the centre and on the axis of the side pilasters) by sculptured figures of three Graces. Zephyr was sculpted in accordance with the description in C. Ripa's book, mentioned earlier. The sculpture depicts the story of Zephyr's seduction of the beautiful nymph Chloris, and her transformation into Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring, as described by Ovid in *Fasti*. The exposition of that mythological story on the side of the palace facing the garden creates scenery of eternal *fête champêtre* where the Potocki couple cultivates their passionate love.³⁰

The sculptures seen (mostly by subjects and clients) at the entrance to the palace, from the direction of the road leading from the town to the residence via the tower (on the axis of the local church), communicated first of all an official message via the multilevel symbolism of Civil and Military Architecture, as codified in the *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa. They were a manifestation of the social distance between the magnate and the rest of the society and of keeping subjects in order and, moreover, symbolized the erecting of great buildings – all that resulting from exercising the virtue of magnificence, following the example of king Salomon. These royal virtues and abilities concluded in the essential duty of a ruler: creating order – *kosmos* of the ancient Greek myths.

The two wings forming the *cour d'honneur* have large sculptured groups enriching the symbolical structure of the Potocki residence. Freely, in the atmosphere of the Rococo, the verses of *Metamor-*

²⁷ A. Ellenius, *Introduction: Visual Representations of the State propaganda and legitimation*, in: *Iconography, Propaganda and Legitimation*, ed. A. Ellenius, Oxford 1998, p. 3, "Far from the sea, Neptune could appear as a ruler over tempests of passion and as a symbol of contemplative reassuming".

²⁸ T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, pobożna, płodna, skromna, piękna... Propaganda cnót żeńskich w sztuce rzymskiej*, Wrocław 1997, p. 186.

²⁹ F. Haskell, N. Penny, op. cit., p. 308, referring to P.A. Maffei, *Racolta di Statue Antiche e Moderne ...*, Roma 1742.

³⁰ See V. Cartari, *Imagini delli Dei de gl'Antichi*, Venezia 1647 (reprint Genoa 1987, ed. Marco Bussagli and Mario Bussagli), p. 142 & p. 125.

phoses, as read by Marianna and Eustachy Potocki, were an inspiration to manifest their love. The iconography of the goddess Diana referring to Marianna, tells not only about rejecting the premature courtship of Actaeon, but also - at various levels of meanings – could refer to the old lunar symbolism of the feminine element. There was also an iconography of Diana in European art showing her as a protectress of pregnant women. The sculpture of Neptune on the opposite side of the courtyard can be read in the context of the mythological story of the god's passion, which ended with a fruitful relationship with Ceres, the goddess of fertility. That symbolism was continued on the garden façade showing the story of Zephyr, who seduced and married the nymph Chloris, while she transformed into Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring (il. 10). Thus, it could be said that the key element in the symbolical structure of the Potocki palace was the sculpture of *Spinario*, located in the vestibule: the antique messenger was the symbol of fidelity. The iconography of marriage, evoked in front of the palace, is continued in the Arcadian space of the garden, where Flora rules over the kingdom of eternal spring. The marriage of Marianna and Eustachy Potocki was widely known in its time as a great love: he named a district of Warsaw *Marienstadt*, she wrote poems for him.³¹

The palace in Radzyń Podlaski – outside radiating with the splendour of power and wisdom – then moving from the courtyard to more intimate spaces

– there can be seen symbols of emotions, passions and fertility, fidelity and love, visualized by the sculptures describing mythological stories of Ceres and Diana, *Spinario* and Flora. All these objects of art informed that this was the residence “for her”, a place where the loving couple manifested their feelings in the sophisticated and ambiguous language of symbols, so characteristic for the Rococo.³² It could be compared to the way queen Marysieńka and “her Celadon” communicated in the palace of Wilanów the secrets of their alcove using *all'antica* coded language.³³

In Radzyń Podlaski all iconographical motives were consciously represented in an ambiguous manner, enabling their reading at various levels. Their reference to the sphere of emotions in an atmosphere of light and pleasant play with guests, using mythological tradition, was significant for an age when life was not a dream anymore, but was a game and fun. On the other hand, the palace in Białystok could be understood as the residence of a new Apollo, who, possessing Herculean virtues, deserved the royal crown of the Commonwealth. Actually, in 1764 the political plan of the Grand Marshal Branicki was foiled by the army of the Empress Catherine, ensuring the election of Stanisław Poniatowski, brother of his wife Izabela. However, the architecture of the palace in Białystok has commemorated him as an eminent art lover.

Translated by the Author

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³¹ K. Gombin, op. cit, p. 23.

³² In 1759, d'Alambert wrote on the frivolous taste and waywardness of the Rococo (H. Honour, *Neoklasycyzm*, Warszawa 1972, p. 17); see also J. Białostocki, *Rokoko: ornament, styl i postawa*, in: *Refleksje i syntezy ze świata sztuki*, Warszawa

1978, p. 172-176 and M. Karpowicz, *Główne problemy sztuki polskiej lat 1740-1770*, in: eadem, *Sztuki polskiej drogi dziwne*, Bydgoszcz 1994, p. 150.

³³ M. Karpowicz, *Sekretne treści warszawskich zabytków*, Warszawa 1981, p. 120.