



RenEU
NEW RENAISSANCE
IN EUROPE

Renaissance Route in Małopolska Itinerary

Promoted by:



Małopolska
KRAKÓW Region

Co-funded by:



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RENAISSANCE ROUTE IN MAŁOPOLSKA

INTRODUCTION

The itinerary of the Renaissance Route in Małopolska, created by the Villa Decius Association in partnership with the Małopolska Region, presents the cultural heritage and history of the European Renaissance in Poland. Shown in this unique context, the chosen sites demonstrate the potential of the city of Kraków and its role in the development of European regions. The proposed route illustrates the spread of the new style in architecture and the influence of a strong centre on the peripheral areas of the kingdom. Poland has been a tolerant country, which is especially true of the Kraków metropolis. To present the material and immaterial heritage of the Renaissance, the itinerary is based on the life and activity of Iustus Ludovicus Decius, Secretary to the Polish King Sigismund I, who arrived in Kraków from Wissembourg (in his time, in Germany) and soon became one of the most influential people in the city. The stately home he built for himself served as a venue for meetings where ideas were exchanged in philosophical debates. Thanks to its *genius loci* and the spirit of *humanitas*, the place has retained memories of the heyday of culture and understanding between nations and continues to foster the ideas of the Renaissance in the United Europe.

The Itinerary of the Renaissance Route in Małopolska shows the historical and cultural aspects of the European Renaissance in Poland. The Renaissance made its visual and ideological mark on the Kraków metropolis, playing a major role in the development of the architecture, commerce, craft, culture, and science of the royal capital city. The marriage of King Sigismund to the Italian Bona Sforza resulted in the introduction, together with the future queen and her court, of Italian artists and architects arriving with a new concept of urban development, the culture and atmosphere of the Mediterranean, and a new perception of the world and quality of life. A humanist culture developed in the milieu of the royal court, the bishop's entourage and cathedral chapter, and the Kraków Academy (today: the Jagiellonian University) and found a reflection in the works of architecture, visual arts, literature, garden design, and also in fashion and lifestyle. Being the central hub, the royal court made a vast impression on the introduction and general dissemination of the new culture, beginning in the mid-16th century.

In the itinerary, the material and immaterial heritage of the Renaissance is illustrated in the work and achievements of numerous Italians: Callimachus, Filippo Buonaccorsi (known as Callimachus, member of the Sodalitas Litteraria Vistulana – ‘the literary society by the Vistula’, being a centre for the exchange of ideas), Italian architects – Francesco Fiorentino (the first Italian Renaissance artist working in Poland, designer of the Renaissance reconstruction of Wawel Castle and the tombstone of King John Albert in Wawel Cathedral), Bartolomeo Berrecci (Sigismund Chapel), and Santi Gucci Fiorentino (Mirów

Castle in Książ Wielki, the manorial residence of the Branicki family, residences of the nobility in the centre of Kraków) – and Queen Bona Sforza herself (impact on language, music, fashion, and cuisine).

The dialogue of ideas and cultures thriving in Renaissance Poland also involved Polish humanists: Stanisław of Skarbimierz (today: Skalbierz), the first to describe formally the concept of wars for a just cause (*De bellis iustis*, 1411); Paweł Włodkowic (Latin: Paulus Vladimiri), author of the first concept of tolerance (*Tractatus de potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium*, i.w. Treatise on the Power of the Pope and the Emperor Respecting Infidels, 1414-1418), Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus) proposer of the heliocentric theory; and Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski who was the first to develop the concept of the equal rights of citizens (*De Republica Emendanda*, 1543).

The proposed route illustrates the spread of the new style in architecture and influence of a strong centre on the peripheral areas of the kingdom. It is manifested in the architectural works, which gradually spread from the Royal Castle on the Wawel Hill, to reach first the complex of mansions and official residences at the foot of the hill in Kanonicza Street and further around the Main Market Square and on the outskirts of the city like the Villa Decius. Renaissance architecture and art also developed in other towns and cities in Małopolska, notably in Tarnów, whose City Hall was remodelled at the time.

To present the material and immaterial heritage of the Renaissance, the itinerary follows the life and activities of Iustus Ludovicius Decius, Secretary to the Polish King Sigismund I, an extremely fascinating figure of the epoch and a founder of a beautiful Villa in the outskirts of Kraków. Not unlike other talented and educated people furthering internal matters of state with reverence, Decius held an eminent position within its structures and became one of the first authors of economic treatises of Poland and Europe. The story of his life offers a unique insight into the internal and external relations of the state and development of Poland in the early 16th century.

The capital of Poland attracted ever more Westerners. Here, under the reign of the Kings of Poland, they accumulated wealth and gained high positions in society. Beginning in the latter half of the 15th century, many foreigners arrived in Kraków from Germany, Alsace, and especially from the city of Wissembourg and its vicinity (Reinfort, Bethmans, Jan Boner), either for commercial purposes or to obtain education at the Kraków Academy. Some families settled in Kraków for good, and their representatives assumed public posts (e.g. the Szylings, Vettters and Decjuszes, and in later times, also Artzts, Rapps, and

Wolsprons). This path, exploiting the potential of the developing city, was also selected by Iustus Decius.

The Villa Decius itself, a symbol of Polish Renaissance and a witness to historical developments, artistic meetings and philosophical debates was chosen to represent the Polish section of the RenEU: New Renaissance in Europe project. Nowadays, the historical villa and park complex is managed by the Villa Decius Association, whose activities are inspired by the humanistic spirit of its patron and aim to create an international forum for dialogue of cultures and the promotion of European humanist heritage. Thanks to its *genius loci* and the spirit of *humanitas*, Villa Decius carries memories of the heyday of culture and understanding between nations, and fosters the ideas of Renaissance in the United Europe.

A network of Renaissance buildings in the Małopolska Region

The Renaissance Route in Małopolska consists of venues managed by different institutions, mostly museums, churches, and cultural and educational institutions. The itinerary includes Wawel Royal Castle, the Sigismund Chapel in Wawel Cathedral, a complex of mansions located in the centre of Kraków, and sites located on the peripheries of the Małopolska Region. Only Bodzentyn, a village boasting the Renaissance high altar moved from Wawel Cathedral, lies beyond the contemporary administrative borders of Małopolska.

Starting the journey on the periphery of Kraków, at Villa Decius, the locations have been grouped into three routes:

- northern - Zielonki (Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary), Giebułtów (St Giles' Church), Modlnica (Church of St Adalbert and Our Lady of Sorrows), Pieskowa Skala Castle (a branch of Wawel Royal Castle – State Art Collection), Mirów Castle in Książ Wielki (public schools), Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów (Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre) and Bodzentyn (Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr)
- southern - Sucha Beskidzka Castle (Museum of Sucha Beskidzka), Church of Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the Renaissance part of the former monastery)
- eastern – the Cistercian Abbey in Mogiła (Kraków, with frescoes by Stanisław Samostrzelnik), Branicki Manor (Museum of Archaeology in Kraków), Royal Castle in Niepołomice, Church of Ten Thousand Martyrs in Niepołomice (Branicki Family Chapel), City Hall in Tarnów (Regional Museum in Tarnów), Cathedral in Tarnów (tombstones), Manor House in Jeżów (art school), and the Manor House in Szymbark (Museum of the Karwacjan and Gładysz Family Manor Houses in Gorlice).

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1. KRAKÓW. WAWEL ROYAL CASTLE

Wawel Royal Castle is the most important historical and cultural site in Poland. For centuries, it was the residence of the kings of Poland and the symbol of Polish statehood; now the castle is one of the country's premier art museums. In this way, the Renaissance Route in Małopolska begins at a site that defined the canon of Renaissance architecture and culture in this part of Europe for good.

The beginnings of the Italian Renaissance in Wawel date back to the first years of the 16th century. Around 1504, the ruling King Alexander the Jagiellonian (1501-1506) embarked on a remodelling of his Gothic residence to give it a contemporary guise. From 1507 onwards, Sigismund the Old (1506-1548) continued his brother's work.

The period from 1502 to 1516, was the time when Francis, a Florentine stonemason and sculptor, was active. Francis of Florence (Francesco Fiorentino) brought his workshop to Kraków with him. They were builders and stonemasons from northern Hungary representing the Renaissance art of Central Europe. Further works carried out in Wawel from 1517 to approx. 1540 were supervised by another Florentine, Bartolommeo Berrecci. Sculptors and wood-carvers Sebastian Tauerbach and Master Jan called Schnitzer worked on the interior decorations and made the decorative wooden ceilings. Painters, mostly German, decorated the walls with friezes running below the ceilings, painted portraits of royalty and built altars. Plenty of Renaissance works of art were also imported from abroad, e.g. from Nuremberg.

The marriage of Sigismund I to Princess Bona Sforza in 1518 facilitated close artistic and cultural contacts with Italy. The last king of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Sigismund II Augustus (1548-1572) enriched the castle interiors with a magnificent collection of tapestries woven in Brussels. During the 'golden' period of Polish culture, Wawel became an important centre of humanism in Europe.

The arcaded courtyard

The courtyard, surrounded by its colonnade, is the result of the construction of a new royal residence started by Alexander the Jagiellonian and completed around 1540. The work on the Royal Castle (1517–1536) was initially undertaken by Francis of Florence, but later the construction continued under the supervision of Bartolommeo Berrecci following the



Krakow Wawel © P. Mazur

Krakow. Wawel Royal Castle Arcaded courtyard
photo. © archives VD



guiding principles of his compatriot's design. This latter Italian added a gate building (1533–1535), whose portal makes allusions to a triumphal arch.

The castle consists of four wings, the southern one being just a galleried curtain, combining residential with state functions. It is embellished by a three-storey-high colonnaded courtyard. The two lower stories feature regular arcades, and the third, the highest situated under the extending eaves of the roof, is given slender proportions acquired thanks to the doubling of the column height. This design is an excellent example of a multi-story arcaded courtyard built outside Italy. It follows the Renaissance idea of unity of composition with refined and light proportions allowing the design to achieve an unusual, elegant character.

The rhythm and regularity of the whole were retained, while much of the original, damaged stonework was either reworked or exchanged during the restoration works. Experts note that there have been significant changes in the Renaissance decor of the courtyard. For example the original colours disappeared from elements of the architecture: the column shafts, today in the colour of natural stone, were royal purple in the 16th century, and their capitals were most probably gilded. Continuing along the gallery were decorative frescoed friezes, a section of which depicting busts of Roman emperors has been preserved in the eastern and southern wings. Full of colour, the courtyard was a proper setting for the life of the royal court, magnificent celebrations, spectacles, and knightly tournaments.

Its current state is the result of restoration work which was intended to restore the appearance of the royal residence to that of its heyday.

The royal chambers

The castle contains regal state rooms in its eastern and northern wings. Most of them have been restored to the decor of the days of Sigismund the Old and Sigismund August. The largest of the rooms, the Senators Hall, was originally designed for the sessions of the Senate, major ceremonies at court, balls, and plays and spectacles. In 1518 it provided the setting for a royal wedding, that of Sigismund I and Bona Sforza, for the first time. Its walls are decorated with huge figurative tapestries on subjects taken from the Bible, which belonged to the collection of King Sigismund August.



Krakow Wawel detail © P. Mazur

The Audience Hall was designed for the sessions of the Sejm (Lower House of the Parliament) in which the king participated. In the first half of the 20th century the chamber had its coffered ceiling reconstructed, and 30 heads sculpted in 1540 by the workshop of Sebastian Tauerbach and Master Jan called Schnitzer were returned. The original ceiling housed 194 sculpted heads, but it was destroyed early in the 19th century. The contemporary arrangement of heads is random. The preserved specimens support the claim that the sculptures represented people contemporary to the artists: not specific individuals but rather human types: burghers, courtiers, soldiers, as well as literary and mythological figures, which may be connected to the Renaissance thinking about portrait being strongly set in individualism. The Renaissance decoration of the hall, apart from the tapestries, consists of a wall frieze presenting The History of Human Life, an illustration of the antique Tabula Cebetis, and portraits of King Sigismund the Old and his daughter, Anna the Jagiellonian.

The Tournament Hall is adorned by a wall frieze painted in the 1530s by Hans Dürer (Albrecht's brother) and Antoni of Wrocław. Renaissance paintings by Italian artists are exhibited here; of particular note are portraits of members of the Medici family painted by Alessandro Allori and Giorgio Vasari. A Siena table from the Palazzo Palmieri is worth mentioning from among the Renaissance furniture.

The Wawel collection of tapestries

The most precious element of the exhibition in the Renaissance chambers, and the only one to be preserved from the original furnishing, is the collection of tapestries woven in Brussels to a commission of Sigismund II August. Made to the design of Dutch artists, they represent the highest artistic standard. They are woven from cotton, silk, silver, and gold threads, with the fineness of the weave ranging from 7 to 8 threads per centimetre). The collection made for the Polish king from around 1550 to 1560 includes 138 preserved pieces (although originally there could have been around 170). It consists of a number of series on varied themes, of different sizes and formats, made in various workshops.

The biblical series is composed of 19 huge tapestries presenting scenes from the Old Testament. The designs for the tapestries were made by Michael Coxcie (1499-1592), a Dutch painter and the main representative of painting based on the achievements of the mature Italian Renaissance. The borders filled with ornamentation, known as Dutch grotesque, which

Krakow Wawel Arcaded courtyard © P. Mazur



frame the central field of every tapestry were designed by an unknown artist from the circle of Cornelis Floris de Vriendt (1514-1575) and Cornelis Vos (1506/10-1556). The series of landscape and animal tapestries, known also as verdures with animals, consists of 44 representations of the fauna against landscape backgrounds, and is a reflection of the interest of Renaissance people in nature and the world around them. The series of tapestries with coats of arms of Poland and Lithuania, and the monogram of Sigismund II August - SA consists of a number of types of heraldic representations displayed against Dutch grotesque.

Commentary: The Migration of People and Ideas

A consequence of Italian architects and sculptors working with Francesco Fiorentino and Bartolommeo Berrecci - artists who produced major works in the city and employed an array of collaborators in Kraków - was the arrival of Italian Renaissance art in Poland. Initially it was combined with a powerful, local tradition of the late Gothic, which is visible in the construction of the Royal Castle, both in the design of the palace for King Alexander in the northern section of what later became the western wing (1504-1507), and in the final developments initiated by Sigismund the Old. Examples include the works of Francesco Fiorentino: a decorative stone bay window in the western wing (1516), and the monumental concept of connecting the Gothic-Renaissance palaces with a three-storey-high Renaissance gallery, which developed the Florentine motif of an arcaded courtyard.

A visible change occurred parallel to the development of those projects continued by Berrecci: the fundamental features of the period are the presence of the Italian Renaissance in pure form, not connected to late Gothic architecture and stonework. With time, the realm of recipients of this elitist art was expanding, so that it went beyond the royal court, the realm of the Bishop and the cathedral chapter, and eminent lords, extending as far as the higher strata of the Kraków bourgeoisie.

Impressive in both the scale and artistic abundance, the arcaded courtyard of the castle is the most Italian and most Renaissance part of the Wawel complex. The architecture of Wawel became the role model for the construction and redevelopment of new royal and magnate residences in the 16th-century, e.g. in Pieskowa Skala and Niepołomice.

Krakow. Wawel Royal Castle © P. Mazur



2. KRAKÓW. THE ROYAL ARCHCATHEDRAL BASILICA OF ST STANISLAUS AND ST WENCESLAUS

The Renaissance first appeared in the Cathedral in the framing of the tomb of King John Albert (Jan Olbracht, d. 1501), the work of Francesco Fiorentino. Yet the true watershed was the construction of the Sigismund Chapel by a team of Italian artists working to the design of Bartolommeo Berrecci. The chapel became the point of reference for the builders of subsequent Renaissance and mannerist mausoleums in Małopolska, including the chapels of bishops Piotr Tomicki, Samuel Maciejowski, Andrzej Zebrzydowski, and Filip Padniewski that were erected by the cathedral and replaced earlier Gothic ones. Some mediaeval altars, including also the high altar, made way for new, Renaissance ones. The 16th century was also the time when many tombs, particularly royal and episcopal, and epitaphs, were installed. The Renaissance and mannerist furnishing of the cathedral was the work of eminent artists, mostly hailing from Italy, who had settled in Kraków. These included Bartolommeo Berrecci, Giovanni Cini, Giovanni Maria Padovano, Jan Michałowicz from Urzędów, and Santi Gucci. Deserving special attention are magnificent imports from Nuremberg in the fields of casting (tombstones, grates), goldsmithery (an array of items in the Sigismund Chapel), and painting (altar panels in the Sigismund Chapel). They are the works of Peter and Hans Vischer, Peter Flötner and Melchior Baier, and Georg Pencz, respectively.

The tomb of King John Albert

The tomb of King John Albert, the first Renaissance work in Poland (Francesco Fiorentino, 1502-1503) stands in the chapels dedicated as the Chapel of Corpus Christi and St Andrew the Apostle. The tomb in the form of a coffer made of red marble and bearing late Gothic features is attributed to late Gothic sculptors: Stanisław Stwosz or Jorg Huber. Its architectural framing makes reference to the Florentine type of arcaded niche tombs, whose model example is the monument to Leonardo Bruni, a work of Bernardo Rosselino (after 1444), standing in Santa Croce Church in Florence.

The Sigismund Chapel

Visible proof of the artistic patronage of Sigismund I the Old is provided by his family's memorial chapel adjacent to the cathedral, known as the Sigismund Chapel (1517-1533). It is a work of Bartolommeo Berrecci,



Wawel Cathedral © archives VD

who arrived in Kraków together with an eight-person-strong Italian team of builders and sculptors, the most eminent being Nicolò Castiglione, Giovanni Cini from Siena, Bernardino Zanobi de Gianotis – known as Romanus, and Filippo da Fiesole). The effigy of Sigismund the Old is lying in repose on the sarcophagus in the so-called Sansovinesque pose, that is semi-recumbent with his head resting on his arm, was placed in the niche of a triumphal arch all' antica, being the principal part of the composition of an internal wall of the chapel.

The Sigismund Bell

The bell funded by Sigismund I the Old and named after him hangs in the Sigismund Tower, extended especially for that purpose, situated in the northern section of the cathedral. It was cast from captured canons in a Kraków workshop of the Nuremberg caster, Hans Behem, in 1520. Visible on the outer surface of the bell are figures of saints: St Bishop Stanislaus on one side, and St Sigismund, king of Burgundy in full plate armour and robe, with the insignia of royal power on the other. The decoration also features the coats of arms of Poland and Lithuania. The bell is signed with the full name of Behem in Latin and in German, and its design included also his house mark and the year of manufacture of his work. The bell rang for the first time on 13 July 1521 on the Feast of St Margaret.

Commentary: The Migration of Ideas

The tomb of John Albert by Francesco Fiorentino, the Renaissance work in Poland, is an example of symbiosis of the Renaissance niche derived from the work of Bernardo Rossellino and the late Gothic figure of the king and chapel architecture.

The construction of the royal chapel was a true breakthrough in the development of modern art. It was designed and constructed as the first work of fully Renaissance architecture and sculpture in Poland, inspired by Neoplatonic philosophy and the work of leading artists of the mature Italian Renaissance, notably Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Italian artists, mostly from Florence and Venice, applied solutions that were innovative in Poland: domed chapels (Sigismund, Tomicki) and architectural tombs, figural sculpture and ornamentation hailing from Antiquity (including grotesque). Also iconographic programmes received new forms. Although it is the Sigismund Chapel - a work of Bartolommeo Berrecci - that is the most important, the architectural solutions used in it and this type of tomb became the object of numerous copies and a model for a series of Renaissance and mannerist episcopal mausoleums to Piotr Tomicki, Samuel Maciejowski, Andrzej Zebrzydowski, and Filip Padniewski erected in the cathedral to replace earlier Gothic chapels. Wawel's

Chapel of Bishop Piotr Tomicki, where Berrecci initiated a more modest type of memorial structure (missing the drum at the base of the dome and with more restrained decoration), was imitated just as frequently. Equally extraordinary were the nearly identical tombs of bishops Piotr Tomicki (1532-1535) and Piotr Gamrat (1545-1547, a work of Padovano), the latter modelled on the former and implementing the model of the antique aedicula, as well as, among the earlier ones, that of Bishop Jan Konarski (1521) which combines a traditional pulpit type with 'modern' Italian ornamentation.

Commentary: Reason and Imagination

The 15th-century European humanism and fascination with the culture and art of antiquity which inspired artistic circles in Italy brought about a growing interest in the human as a unique individual striving to emphasise his human fame and achievements, an eagerness to reinforce transient appearance and, generally, memory extending beyond death. This resulted in the development of modern visual decorations of tombs both in Italy and in countries lying north of the Alps. The tomb was to carry a message designed in a specific way. A model work of sepulchral visual art refers in its programme to three fundamental elements (layers), sometimes intrinsically interconnected. The so-called retrospective layer presents the commemorated human, informing us who he was in his lifetime, what he achieved and what he looked like.

In the layer referred to as *transitus*, it speaks of death being the transition from earthly life to eternity. And in the last, known as *prospective*, it presents the image of what awaits the deceased in the eternal life (as expected by the bereft). Everything is portrayed in the language of art, in line with the current style, temperament and education of the artist, preferences of the commissioner, etc. The artistic composition was complemented with plaques bearing inscriptions. The most 'prestigious' tombstones in Kraków were those brought from Nuremberg where they were mass produced by the multi-generation Vischer workshop, and stones made from red Hungarian marble and white limestone on the spot by Italian masters Francesco Fiorentino, Bartolommeo Berrecci and Giovanni Cini from Siena, Giovanni Maria Padovano, and others.

Wawel Cathedral Sigismund Chapel © P. Mazur



3. KRAKÓW. COMPLEX OF RENAISSANCE MANSIONS IN KANONICZA STREET AND IN THE HISTORICAL CITY CENTRE

Kanonicza, a street that lies in the old city, follows an irregular course, and continues from Senacka Street to Podzamcze Street, on the northern side of Wawel Hill. Attention is drawn to unique mansions with beautiful stone portals and other elements of Renaissance architecture.

Kanonicza Street:

- Palace of Bishop Samuel Maciejowski (ul. Kanonicza 1)

This mansion was built in 1531-1532 by Canon Samuel Maciejowski to replace a former wooden structure. Constructed on a square plan of with arrow slits in the walls, it is a storeyed building, with a hallway along the axis, and an arcaded gallery in the quadrangle, where an arcade, which is the work of Bartolommeo Berrecci or his disciples, was discovered.

- Mansion 'Under the Angels' (ul. Kanonicza 2)

The house was built in the second half of the 16th century from the connection of two Gothic townhouses; its main decoration is a high crenellated parapet wall.

- House no. 3 (ul Kanonicza 3)

This mediaeval townhouse was thoroughly refurbished in the 1530s. The stonework of the windows in the façade dates back to the period.

- Mansion 'Under the Three Crowns' (ul. Kanonicza 7)

This Gothic residential building was redeveloped from 1504 to 1523 to the commission of Canon Jan Karnkowski. The Gothic-Renaissance windows on the first floor of the façade, attracting the eye with their elegant mullions and straight cornices, date back to that period, and so does the portal (with a reconstructed gate) bearing features of both Gothic and Renaissance. Visible over it is the inscription – Dominus audiator meus et protector meus (the Lord hears me and protects me). In the last quarter of the 16th century, an arcaded gallery was built in the courtyard, and probably the second wooden storey was added, to be transformed into a masonry one in the 17th century.

- The Chapter House (ul. Kanonicza 13)

The house was modernised in the first half of the 16th century. At the time the Renaissance-Gothic windows and architectural detail were added to the façade.

- Szreniawa Chapter House (ul. Kanonicza 15)

Gothic-Renaissance windows were applied in the first half of the 16th century while refurbishing an older building.



Kanonicza street - detail © archives VD

- House 'Under the Butterfly' (ul. Kanonicza 16)

In the mid-16th century, the mansion belonged to a bishop and humanist, Marcin Kromer, who funded the Renaissance portal with a Latin inscription. The painting decoration in one of the rooms presenting, among others, Four Fathers of the Church, dates back to the 1520s.

- Palace of Bishop Erasmus Ciołek (ul. Kanonicza 17)

The mansion emerged in 1505 from the joining of two houses, following the design of Bishop Erazm Ciołek, who in this way created a so-called curia ampla, i.e. The Broad Court (wielki dwór), considered the most impressive in Kanonicza Street in the 16th century. Leading to the mansion is a Renaissance gate with a cartouche bearing a crowned eagle intertwined with the letter S, the initial of King Sigismund the Old. Today, the mansion houses a branch of the National Museum in Kraków.

- Palace of Florian Mokwski (ul. Kanonicza 18)

The house was reconstructed in 1560-1563, most probably with the participation of Jan Michałowicz from Urzędów, to whom the portal is ascribed.

- House no. 19 (ul. Kanonicza 19)

The house was reconstructed in 1537-1540 to make a majestic residence in Renaissance style with a two-storeyed arcaded courtyard.

- Deanery (ul. Kanonicza 21)

Beautifully preserved, the Renaissance residence of the Deans of the Kraków Chapter was built in 1582-1588. Its Italian architect, Santi Gucci, followed here the traditional scheme of a Renaissance chapterhouse residence with an arcaded courtyard. The façade of the Deanery is decorated with sgraffito and features an impressive and extremely precious mannerist portal with the inscription on the frieze reading *Procul este profani*. Also worthy of special attention is the arcaded courtyard, decorated with Ionic columns placed on the ground floor, and quadrangular pillars on the upper floor. The residence has retained plenty of elements of the original stonework: Renaissance portals, heraldic escutcheons, and window frames.

- House of Długosz (ul. Kanonicza 25)

During a reconstruction in the 16th century, the external walls of the house were buttressed for reinforcement, and Renaissance elements were added; in their number, there are the cornices over the windows, and the portal of the entrance gate from Kanonicza Street which bears a Latin inscription, and is dated to the second half of the century.



Kanonicza street © P. Mazur

The Old Town:

Many historical townhouses have been preserved in the old town, some of which are connected to the Kraków Salt Mines, i.e. the salt mines and salt works in Wieliczka and Bochnia. In various periods, at least twelve of the mansions standing by the Main Market Square of Kraków were homes to dignitaries managing the salt business (żupnik) and officers in the mine (karbariusz, one of them was Iustus Ludovicius Decius).

- Bonerowska Mansion (Main Market Square / Rynek Główny 9)

The house belonged to Seweryn Boner, Supervisor of the Kraków Mines, married to Zofia née Betman. In the 16th century it was remodelled in Renaissance style and crowned with a huge nine-metre-high parapet wall (the current one is a reconstruction).

- Mansion 'Under the Golden Carp' (Main Market Square / Rynek Główny 10)

This well-heeled house, which had a special position among those owned by the mine establishment, was purchased by the Wieliczka Salt Mine in 1699.

- Decius Mansion (ul. św. Jana 3)

The former townhouse of Iustus Ludovicius Decius, where the dignitary used to stay while performing his daily duties as secretary to the king.

- Kmitów Mansion (ul. Floriańska 13)

Renaissance ceilings, a column from 1508, and a Gothic-Renaissance fireplace from the 16th century are preserved inside the house.

- The Pod Różą Hotel (ul. Floriańska 14)

The house is entered through a 16th-century Renaissance portal, the work of Santi Gucci, flanked with two columns supporting the entablature in an allusion to a triumphal arch and to the gate building of Wawel Castle, designed by Berrecci. The frieze of the portal has retained a Latin motto.

Kanonicza street © K. Tojanowska



Commentary: The Migration of Ideas

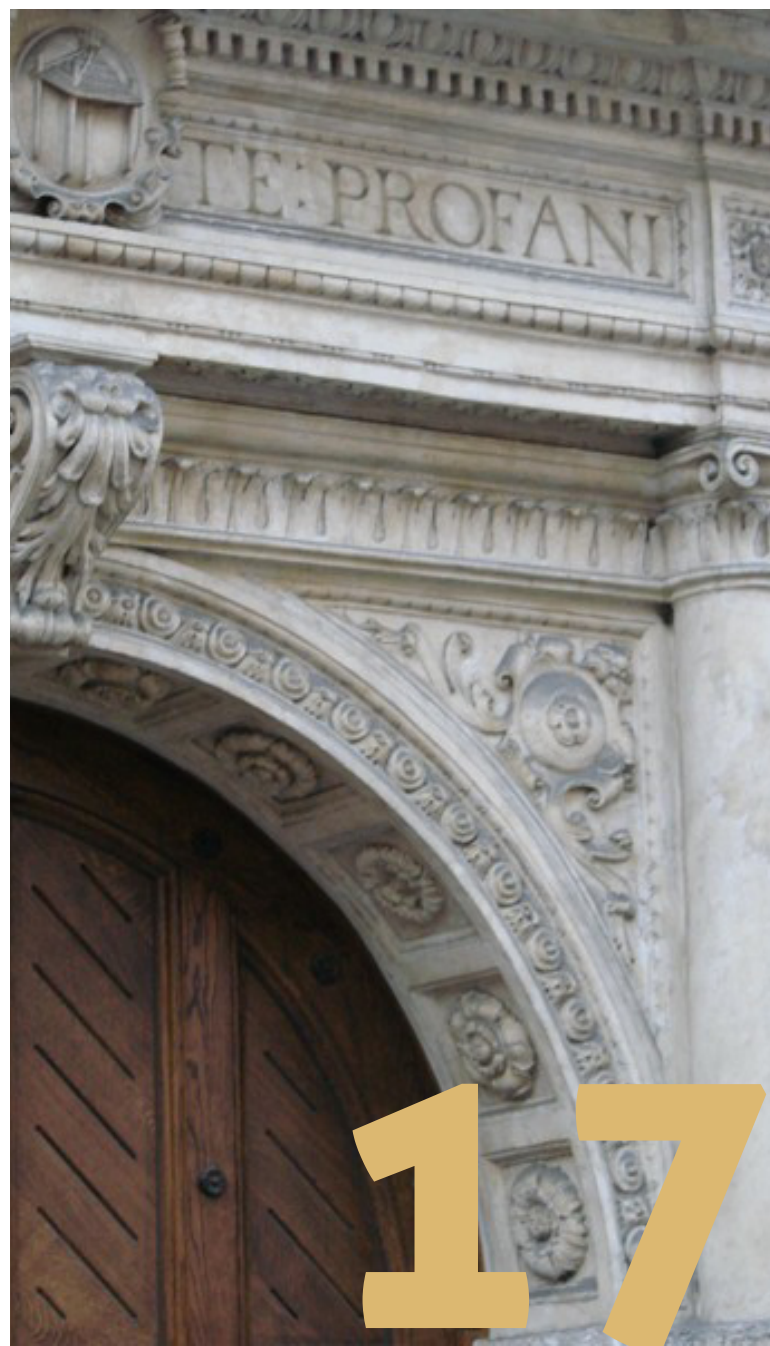
Thanks to the connections between the royal court and the milieu of the cathedral chapter, the works of Francesco Fiorentino and his collaborators are also present in the residences of the chapterhouse in Kanonicza street. The Gothic architecture and form merged with Renaissance details (the portal) and late Gothic details (the two-aisled hallway) in the mansion of Bishop Erazm Ciołek (at no. 17), completed in 1505. Similar relations were present in the home of Canon Jan Karnkowski (1504; at no. 7).

Francesco's workshop also turned out elements of the chapterhouse at no. 15 (around 1520-1524), including the portal, whose Gothic form makes reference to Renaissance messages and the principles of composition.

Berrecci's workshop outlived its master's death (1537), and developed independent activity reaching - with the aid of royal, episcopal, and aristocratic patronage – even beyond Małopolska (e.g. Płock, Vilnius).

The architectural and construction company that Giovanni Cini of Siena, Bernardino de Gianotis, and Filippo of Fiesole set up after having completed work on the Sigismund Chapel was particularly active. In Kraków, they worked on commissions of the canons of the Cathedral Chapter in the architectural complex on Kanonicza Street, where they built (from 1531 to 1534) the first fully Renaissance city residence for the future bishop Samuel Maciejowski (at no. 1). This was built on a triaxial single bay plane and repeated the late-Gothic solution melded with Renaissance forms (including the parapet wall) and an arcaded loggia with columns in the courtyard, offering a reduction of the Wawel model. The solution was applied again around the same time (in 1535) in the same street, in house no. 18, in whose courtyard the loggia has been preserved.

Kanonicza street detail 2 © archives VD



4. KRAKÓW. VILLA DECIUS

Renaissance residence and park of the Villa Decius

The villa of Iustus Ludovicius Decius (Polish: Justus Ludwik Decjusz) built in Wola Chełmska (today's Wola Justowska, named after the name of the dignitary) in the 1530s is one of the most famous and beautiful examples of residential architecture in Poland. Built on the initiative of the secretary to King Sigismund I, it was modelled on the suburban villas around Florence and Rome fashionable in the Europe of the time as they provided a place for leisure, meetings, and philosophical disputes. It is a work (1533/34-ca 1535) of the construction company set up by Giovanni Cini of Siena, Bernardino de Gianotis, and Filippo of Fiesole after completion of the works on the Sigismund Chapel. In its original shape it had one storey, with the interiors laid out on three axes, and was connected to a parterre garden which was considered a marvel by the court poet Klemens Janicki. Located on the eastern slope of the hill, its main façade faces Kraków.

The residence was surrounded by gardens and a park. It is assumed that the garden design was composed of two parts: a larger parterre garden, and another garden of the giardino secreto type. The adjacent forested hills were a compositional complement to the complex. The whole three-storey-high arcaded loggia present between the two alcove towers is today a product of a redevelopment performed under Stanisław Lubomirski in the first quarter of the 17th century.

Currently, the residence and park complex consists of the Villa Decius building and two subsidiary buildings: Łaski House from the 1630s and Erasmus House built early in the 21st century, with the Decius Park surrounding them. Since 1996, the main building has been the seat of the Villa Decius Association.

The history of the architectural transformations of Villa Decius.

The three-storey-high building was built around 1530-1535 on a rectangular plan. The ground floor and the undercroft have retained the original tripartite division, with the hallway providing the central axis. The connection of the northern and central bays on the first floor made it possible to set up the so-called 'grand hall': the palatium. Most probably due to a design change during the construction work, the level of the cellar floor was lowered which resulted in the exposing of the foundations made of white stone blocks in the cellars. The above ground sections of the walls and ceilings were made of brick. The hallway and the side bays of the ceilings received barrel vaulting. The side bays of the ground floor also had their ceilings, as did the hallway between them – this last a ceiling resting on beams as at-

tested by the sockets for beams present in the coving of the current ceiling of the hallway. In the west, a small, centrally situated extension provided an antechamber to the main hallway, and perhaps also had a loggia connected to the grand hall of the first floor. The eastern front wall had four windows at the level of the ground floor and another four on the first; the northern wall had three, and the southern probably only two. Two cellar windows from that period at ground floor level have been preserved. They are both visible from the terrace and have stone frames and openings for a grating to be set in at an angle. This type of window can be found in the Renaissance architecture of Kanonicza Street in Kraków. The windows of the ground and first floors are set along an axis, which is a testimony to the modern character of the architectural solution applied. Six simple stone portals are preserved in what today is the cellar and which used to be the undercroft. Only one of these, positioned in the central bay whose threshold is set high above the level of the current cellar floor, has retained its original position. It leads to the Western extension, preserved only at cellar level. The remaining portals have been reset, possibly only lowered due to the transformation and lowering of the level of the cellar floor. A stone window jamb, exposed from under the render, has rich Renaissance profiling and sockets for the setting of a grate. This gives an idea of the decorative Renaissance framing of the windows on the ground and first floor levels of the residence.

A fundamental and certainly innovative element of Decius's 16-century design was the implementation of the full programme of a Renaissance villa and the application of pioneering architectonic solutions which provides proof of the Italian Renaissance contributing an era in Polish history.

Iustus Ludovicus Decius *Diplomat*

Iustus Ludovicus Decius, a Latinised form of the original name, Jost Ludwig Dietz, which Dietz used in Poland, was an Alsatian by birth. He was born around 1485 to the family of the Mayor of Wissemburg. Having arrived in Kraków in 1508 or 1509, Decius began working together with his compatriot, Jakub Boner, the royal banker and Administrator of the Kraków Salt Mine, fulfilling the functions of secretary, accountant, and trusted deputy in matters of trade, and from 1515 - also manager of the salt mines in Wieliczka and Bochnia. Decius quickly became a skilful diplomat, sophisticated financier, and royal dignitary of high position. Commissioned by his superior, he went on numerous foreign missions. As his duties included the preparation of the royal wedding to Princess Bona, he set forth for Venice in 1517 where he bought the engagement ring for

Krakow. Villa Decius © J. Leśniak



King Sigismund I and a store of lavishly decorated fabric to embellish the nuptial ceremonies. His efforts were appreciated by influential figures in the royal court, and thanks to the support of Bishop Piotr Tomicki, Decius was nominated secretary to King Sigismund the Old in May 1520.

Thanks to his array of talents, the literary and historical treatises he wrote, and a penchant for science, Decius enjoyed the respect and friendship of the most eminent humanists in Europe. During his numerous travels, he had the opportunity to meet the greatest minds of his time and became personally acquainted with Martin Luther and Erasmus of Rotterdam, as proved by the lavish correspondence they conducted. Worth special attention is his close friendship with Erasmus, who dedicated his work devoted to the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer (*Praecatio Dominica*, 1523) to Decius. This is what Erasmus wrote to Decius in a letter from Freiburg: Jost, dearest, I've long been in debt to you, and that in all respects, and you, doing to me continuous favours, make my sense of gratitude rise with every day. What gives me greatest pleasure is the fact that you are informing me about all the developments in Poland in such great detail. Moreover, Decius also remained in close contact with the Habsburg court.

Writer and economist

He began activity in the field of literature with a description of the preparation for the wedding of King Sigismund I to the Italian Princess Bona, which he contained in his *Wedding Diary of Sigismund and Bona* (Polish: *Diariusz zaślubin Zygmunta i Bony*, Latin: *Diarii et earum, quae memoratu digna in splendidissimis*). In addition to this, the literary output of Iustus Ludovicus Decius contains a publication of his collected historical works (1521) containing the history of the Jagiellonian dynasty (*De Jagellorum familia*) and a treatment of the latest developments in it (*De Sigismundi regis temporibus*). The description of the victory of Duke Konstanty Ostrogski at Olszanica in 1527 and his other texts testify very well to Decius's literary culture and skills.

Decius has also rendered great services as an economist, making a highly significant contribution to the introduction of monetary reform in Poland. He put together the principles he proposed, and which were to improve the condition of the economy, in the *Treaty on Coinage* (Latin title: *De monete cussione ratio*, 1525). At the same time, the same question was tackled by Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolas Copernicus), who most probably was the author of a letter To Just Decius, a Citizen of Kraków, on Mending the Coin. Yet it was Decius's proposal that was approved by the Parlia-



Krakow. Villa Decius © P. Mazur

ment (Diet) in Piotrków, and it was he (together with the Treasurer of the Crown, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki) who was entrusted with the implementation of the decisions of the Diet. Moreover, Decius was nominated by the king as Administrator of the royal mints in Kraków and Toruń, and later also in Królewiec (Königsberg, today Kaliningrad).

The number of talents and interests that Decius – a ‘versatile man’ typical of the Renaissance – certainly exhibited also included charity and community work: which included the supervision of the revamping of the tower of St Mary’s in Kraków. He was a Kraków alderman (member of the city council), and Supervisor of the St Roch Hospital (in ul. Szpitalna in Kraków, no longer extant), and Headman of Piotrków.

Man of the Renaissance

In 1528, Iustus Decius purchased the village of Wola Chełmska and part of Przegorzały in the environs of Kraków in order to build there a suburban villa modelled on the estates fashionable around Florence and Rome, providing space for recreation, meetings, and philosophical disputations. For its construction, he employed three Italian architects: Giovanni Cini of Siena, Bernardino de Gianotis from Rome, and Filippo of Fiesole. Situated picturesquely on the eastern slope of Sowiniec hill and surrounded by a spacious Renaissance garden, the residence was completed in 1535 and soon provided a place for meetings, exchange of ideas, and creative confrontation of beliefs between representatives of various cultures and nationalities

A true man of the Renaissance, Decius played a number of roles: he was a royal dignitary, a perfect diplomat, and the administrator of the largest trade empire in contemporary Poland, the Salt Mines of Wieliczka and Bochnia, and also the owner of a number of mines, including lead and silver mines in Olkusz. A man of literary talent, he was also the publisher and author of precious economic treatises. His personality disclosed a man of great heart, gifted with infinite imagination, liked in Kraków and beyond the Polish borders. He knew how to gain the favours of both Kraków aldermen and the Hapsburg court, and became an adviser to the King of Poland and the manager of the mints. Despite so many merits and achievements, we know neither the place of his burial nor that of any other member of the Kraków line of his family. His heritage includes his home – today known as Willa Decjusza na Woli Justowskiej, the district of Kraków that has derived its name from his. The Villa is a monument to a great man, which today not only teems with life but also commemorates and publicises that interesting and still undiscovered figure throughout Europe. As a poet, Andrzej Trzecieski Jr, noted: However many memo-



Krakow. Villa Decius © P. Mazur

rials Decius the Father has left, and [however] worthy he is to be praised for ever and ever, it must be considered no lesser deed of his, Dear Guest, that he established this refuge, so favoured by the Muses (...).

Villa Decius Today.

In 1996, the Decius Villa was restored to its former splendour by an effort of the Municipality of Kraków. The Villa Decius Association, managing the villa and its park, continues with the humanist spirit of its patron and finds its objective in the development of a forum for the dialogue of cultures. In this way, it promotes pluralism and tolerance in public life, devoting special attention to the rights and cultures of national and ethnic minorities. To this end all the programmes of the Association are based on the idea of meetings between representatives of various fields of science and culture, nations, and areas of interest, as well as the idea of intellectual exchange and the pursuit of incentives to creative work.

St. Mary's Church: the epitaph of the daughter of Iustus Ludovicius Decius

The epitaph devoted to Anna Decjuszówna, the daughter of Iustus Ludovicius Decius, and to Andrzej Rottermund can be found in the Kraków Church of St Mary. It presents marble architectural decoration in the form of a cornice supported on pilasters terminating in Ionic capitals, with vegetal decoration. The line of the cornice is broken by a cartouche with the coat of arms of the Rottermunds (divided party per fess, with an anchor in the upper and carp in the lower field). The centrally situated figure presents a person praying before Christ crucified. It is one of the few material items related to the presence of Decius in Kraków.

St. Mary's Church: the tombstones of Seweryn Boner and Zofia Boner

Seweryn Boner, banker to King Sigismund the Old and a nephew of Jan Boner (one of the closest collaborators of Decius), was buried in the family chapel of St John the Baptist at Saint Mary's. The bronze tombstones of Seweryn (1538) and Zofia (after 1532) Boner, cast by the Hans Vischer workshop in Nuremberg, that are found in the chapel are believed to be among the best works of early Renaissance sculpture in Poland.

Krakow Mariacki Church - The epitaph plate of Justus Decius' daughter. © P. Mazur



Commentary: Migration of Ideas

Iustus Ludovicus Decius and the Italian Renaissance architects introduced a type of construction that had previously been unknown in the capital of Poland: a suburban villa surrounded by a garden. Thanks to new constructional solutions (barrel and lunette vaulting) and detail (parapet walls, arcaded loggias with columns, ornaments borrowed from antiquity, portals modelled on triumphal arches, six-field window framing, akin to Gothic composition) they contributed to the transformation of architectural types derived from mediaeval traditions: e.g. a residence with a courtyard, a townhouse.

Motifs drawn from treatises by Sebastiano Serlio were becoming more widespread in outstanding buildings, the best example of such treatment is the thorough remodelling of the original Villa Decius ordered (before 1632) by Stanisław Lubomirski, and inspired by the design of the Villa di Poggioreale (a symmetrical plan with the hallway on the axis, and a façade with a loggia framed by towers – extensions). Moreover, the composition of the loggia points to its connection with the workshop serving the Lubomirski family in Wiśnicz.

The discovery and interpretation of relics of a four-flight staircase from the period situated in the southern alcove connects the villa in Wola Justowska even more closely to selected works by Sebastiano Serlio where such solutions are present. Marks associated with the attachment of the old ceiling and a system of window and door openings connected to it were found in the walls of the alcove.



Krakow. Villa Decius 4 © P. Mazur

Commentary: The Centre and Periphery

By the mid-16th century, the Renaissance turned from an elitist Italian 'fashion' present solely at the Royal Court into a phenomenon common throughout Kraków. This was true both of the commissioners (the patronage of the ecclesiastical authorities and wealthy bourgeoisie) and the artists and builders. Its dissemination and greater variety were accompanied by a drop in the quality of the architecture being developed. The most splendid projects from the first half of the 16th century were treated as models, yet their forms were already being styled in the spirit of mannerism. The dominant Florentine tradition used to be enriched with elements from northern Italy and even the Netherlands. The workshop of Berrecci closed down its operations, yet there were an increasing number of constructors-sculptors emerging and they were growing to a number that became much greater than that at the beginning of the century. With Italian forms becoming popular, the stylistic differences between individual workshops were no longer directly dependent on the nationality of the architects.

5. ZIELONKI. CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The church was built in the first half of the 16th century as a late Gothic structure with Renaissance elements. The chancel was built by a Kraków mason Jakub Żur and stonemason Kasper Simon (1533). The nave was completed by Masons Jan Kapinos and Jan Bocheńczyk (1538). The massive entrance to the church's sacristy has been preserved, noted for its thick walls and heavy forged doors. The oldest element of its furnishing is a Renaissance stone tabernacle installed in the chancel to the left of the main altar. This is the work of Kasper Simon (1533) and is fashioned into a portal closed inside an arch. The Renaissance furnishing of the chancel also includes the stalls which feature characteristic 'eared' framing and panel decorations.



Zielonki. Church © T. Korczyński

6. GIEBUŁTÓW. CHURCH OF ST GILES

Late Renaissance in character, the church was founded by Kasper Giebułtowski in 1600-1604. The complex of murals in the nave and on the wall behind the musical choir, complemented by a number of Renaissance tombs, has great historic value. The multi-coloured wall paintings date back to 1660, and the portal leading into the nave bears traits of Mannerism.



Giebultow. St. Giles' Church - interior © T. Korczyński



Giebultow ST. Giles Church © T. Korczyński



Giebultow. St. Giles' Church - polychrome detail
© T. Korczyński



Giebultow. St. Giles' Church - polychrome detail
© T. Korczyński



Giebultow. St. Giles' Church © T. Korczyński

7. MODLNICA. CHURCH OF ST ADALBERT AND OUR LADY OF SORROWS

This is the only wooden structure among those presented on the Renaissance Route in Małopolska. It was built in 1553 using beams interlocking on the corners, vertically boarded and with skirting. All the roofs are covered with wooden shingles apart from the sacristy which is covered with metal sheets. The original construction was built on the plan of a cross. In 1622, the northern arm and sacristy were transformed into a late Renaissance stone funeral chamber of the Kucharski family, with an epitaph for Stanisław Kucharski presenting the deceased in the characteristic form of a bust.

The murals in the church date back to various periods; the oldest ones date back to 1562 and present scenes from the life of Christ that can be divided into two separate series of images. The first, painted in the chancel, presents the genealogy of Christ as described in the Gospel of St Matthew. The composition presents the ancestors of the Saviour depicted in an arcaded frieze running under the ceiling and divided by columns into panels. The other presents the life and passion of Christ. The balustrade of the musical choir is decorated with a composition presenting the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from the Gospel of Saint Luke. The wooden ceiling of the chancel was covered with a mural in a coffered pattern with rosettes and acanthus leaves, characteristic of the Renaissance.

Renaissance marble ciborium from Wawel Cathedral

The most important element of furnishing in the church is the finely decorated marble ciborium from the 16th century in the shape of a temple with four characteristic columns supporting a canopy forming a dome. The ciborium, the work of Giovanni Maria Padovano, was originally in Wawel Cathedral from where it was transferred to the church in Modlnica. Other bas-relief elements of the cathedral altar for the Holy Sacrament have also been preserved and can be found in the Bishop Tomicki Chapel in Wawel and in the National Museum in Kraków (in the Mansion of Bishop Erazm Ciołek).



Modlnica. Church - marble pyx from Wawel Cathedral
© T. Korczyński

Commentary: The Migration of People and Ideas

The art of the Italian Renaissance, both Florentine and later north Italian, arrived in Kraków and Małopolska thanks to Italian artists and their powerful and learned patrons who constructed buildings, tombs, and altars. Its ideology was based on the Renaissance humanism spreading there since the mid-15th century. Its charms have long attracted people living in the royal capital city of Poland, which was a true melting pot of nationalities and cultures. Italians, Poles, Germans, and Dutchmen with Italian names, sometimes styled into an antique format (for example Iustus Decius), contributed to the transformation of the artistic and cultural panorama of the kingdom and the city. With time, Renaissance art was disseminated widely, which proved possible thanks originally to its connection with a local late mediaeval artistic tradition, and later with the Northern Renaissance and mannerism (German and Dutch). This type of link is well expressed in Małopolska churches: the one in Zielonki which combines the late-Gothic type with Renaissance details, the one in Modlnica through the transformations in wooden architecture and Renaissance paintings, and the one in Giebułtów where late Renaissance and mannerism are manifested.



Modlnica. Church - interior © T. Korczyński



Modlnica. Church © T. Korczyński

8. SUŁOSZOWA. PIESKOWA SKAŁA CASTLE

The castle in Pieskowa Skała was a defensive structure, and as such is located on a rock outcrop looking towards the west. From 1542 onwards it belonged to Hieronim Szafraniec, who, in the first half of the 16th century started its reconstruction, probably with the participation of an Italian architect, Niccolò Castiglione and Gabriel Słoiński from Kraków. It can be surmised that the secretary to King Sigismund I the Old, Hieronim Szafraniec, having witnessed the transformation of the royal residence in Wawel, introduced certain Renaissance elements into the interiors in Pieskowa Skała. In 1557, the castle was inherited by Stanisław Szafraniec who refurbished the Gothic castle in Renaissance style. The following transformations took place in 1640 and were the work of Michał Zebrzydowski, who strengthened the system of fortifications and changed the silhouette of the building. From the east, he built two powerful bastions connected to the central entrance gate by means of a curtain wall. In this way the castle obtained another courtyard (the so-called external). The defence system was introduced and reinforced with another moat before the curtain wall presented a modern type of reinforcement, the so-called bastion fortress, developed in Italy in the mid-16th century.

Renaissance architecture of the Pieskowa Skała Castle.

A single entrance leads into the castle on the eastern side. This passes through a gate in the curtain wall connecting two bastions. On entering the spacious courtyard, you notice the three-storey-high building of the castle with an avant-corps containing a two-floor Renaissance loggia on the left. The following gate leads into the internal arcaded courtyard whose architecture is composed of a Renaissance arcaded gallery on the level of the first and second floors. The arcades, with stone pillars of square cross-section and crowned with Tuscan capitals, support semi-circular stone archivolts and bestow a north Italian spirit to the architecture of the place. Twenty-four Renaissance gargoyles are the main decoration of the courtyard. These take the form of stylised human and animal heads and are presented in the triangles between the archivolts, together with cartouches bearing the Słoiński (Stanisław Szafraniec's) and Rawicz (his wife née Dębieńska's) coats of arms. The sculptures are of a high artistic level and were produced in two workshops in Silesia. The gargoyles between the arcades are very varied and are portrayed naturalistically, if not mockingly.

The chambers are accessed directly from the gallery through doors framed with stone portals. A panoramic loggia, added from the eastern side to



Pieskowa Skała Castle © archives VD

command a broad and picturesque view, is adjacent to the huge corner chambers of the first and second floors. The remnants of murals discovered in the arcaded gallery, on the walls of the loggia, and inside the rooms suggest that all the interiors had lavish and colourful wall decorations. Thanks to the restoration works, the individual rooms in the castle have been returned to their original dimensions from the time of Renaissance. The internal garden, situated in the southern bastion, complements the Renaissance design and makes reference to 16th-century plans. Today the castle is a museum, a branch of the Wawel Royal Castle-State Art Collection.

Commentary: The Centre and Periphery

Italian cultural and artistic standards were transmitted to countries lying north of the Alps. Poland of the 16th century was among them. The art practised here by the Italian artists provided a point of reference for cultural pioneers from the highest social strata: court, ecclesiastical, and magnate elites, and the realm of the bourgeois patriciate. Later, this was more generally accepted and began to participate in the creation of a cultural and artistic tradition, obviously of a peripheral nature in relation to any centres of the Italian Renaissance and also in relation to the leading centres of the Renaissance in Poland such as Wawel.

Commentary: The Migration of Ideas

Both the external loggia and the arcaded courtyard make this building one of the most important elements of Renaissance heritage, both in Małopolska and in the entire country. The sculpted decoration in the form of gargoyles is proof of the impact of the art of northern Europe on the Renaissance in Poland. It was a time when, in addition to the Italian impact on the determination of local visual culture, trends coming from



Pieskowa Skala Castle © P. Mazur

the Netherlands made an ever stronger mark. The change could be seen most particularly wherever a new climate developed favourable to new and revolutionary notions in matters of faith. At the time, Stanisław Szafrańiec was one of the most ardent representatives of religious dissenters, which was well exemplified by his sojourn in Germany where he accompanied Albrecht Prince of Prussia.

Another proof of the Renaissance sense of designing residential quarters, which, unlike Gothic interiors, were bright and lit with additional sunlight, are the interiors of the castle chambers with large windows and wide window jambs.

Commentary: Shaping the Landscape

An element that makes Pieskowa Skała Castle stand out among Renaissance projects is the panoramic loggia. The broad and exceedingly picturesque view that the castle commands to south-east, with the famous rock known as Maczuga (The Mace) in the foreground, and the entire valley of the Prądnik river, strongly favoured the establishment of a loggia in this location. The origin of a loggia with a viewpoint must be sought in Italian Renaissance villas. This form of architecture expresses, among other things, the new attitude of man to the nature surrounding him during the period of humanism.



Pieskowa Skała Castle © archives VD

9. KSIĄŻ WIELKI. MIRÓW CASTLE IN KSIĄŻ WIELKI

Mirów Castle in Książ Wielki was built by the Bishop of Kraków Piotr Myszkowski and his nephew Piotr, owners of Książ Wielki, in 1585-1595. Myszkowski commissioned the royal architect, Santi Gucci, an outstanding mannerist artist from Florence, to construct his residence. The design was modelled on the Italian palazzos from the early 16th century, and the composition rigorously followed axes and maintained symmetry.

The castle is built of Pińczów stone on the plan of a rectangle elongated along a north-south axis. Its central part features two avant-corps (from the front and from the garden side), with smaller ones by the side walls.

The cellars and the ground floor carry Renaissance lunette vaulting. The external walls of the ground and first floors are covered with faceted rustication, while those of the second remain plain. Renaissance cornices and window frames have been preserved over the first floor windows.

Two symmetrical pavilions were built at the same time as the castle. They were erected on avant-corps along the line of the outside defence wall.

From the side of the castle, the pavilions have extended porticoes and rich architectural decoration. One of them played the role of the castle chapel, and the other of the library. A garden-park with traditional tree stands was laid out around the residence, and a system of fishponds was set up at the foot of the hill.

The Wielopolscy, owners of Książ Wielki in the 18th and 19th centuries, introduced significant changes both inside and outside the castle. The Renaissance uppermost section of the building was removed, and the central avant-corps was heightened by the addition of another (third) storey.

Today, the building is home to the Wincenty Witos Complex of Schools in Książ Wielki.



Mirow Castle in Ksiaz Wielki © K. Schubert



Mirow Castle in Ksiaz Wielki
© K. Schubert



Mirow Castle in Ksiaz Wielki
© K. Schubert

10. MIECHÓW. BASILICA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

The Monastery of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów was the location in Poland where the devotion to the Holy Sepulchre first developed. Beginning from 1530, a new four-wing Gothic-Renaissance monastery was built next to the mediaeval one. This is when the gallery and the central domed Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre were built. The construction team, operating also in other Polish cities (Kraków, Kraśnik, Kodeń), combined the characteristic traits of late Gothic masonry with elements of the new art being introduced at that time in Małopolska by Italian architects and builders. The symbolic Holy Sepulchre has been preserved inside the chapel, and impressive decoration presenting caissons with coats of arms, figures of saints, and other representations were discovered inside the dome.

Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre

The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre was built within the closed walls of the monastery. It is entered from the gallery through a stone Renaissance portal. The chapel was built on the plan of a square and covered with a lanterned dome. The transition from the square section of the walls into the round dome features corner squinches: an architectural feature that distinguishes the chapel structurally from the ones using the predominant form of arches and pendentives. The Sepulchre of the Lord standing inside assumed the form of a square stone building of a fairly small size, with two storeys divided by pilasters and covered in a full-bodied decoration. The entire construction is currently covered with a wooden baroque superstructure developed late in the 17th century and brought to Miechów from Kraków in 18th/19th century. The entrance to the burial chamber is situated in the front section, on the left-hand side. The chapel provides a powerful backdrop to the liturgies of Paschal Triduum.

Centuries have passed and the historic chapel has regained its original decoration: the Renaissance murals discovered in 2008, with figural, heraldic (coats of arms comprising those of Sigismund the Old, Queen Bona, and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre) and vegetable motifs, and imitation caissons with rosettes in the dome. It is highly probable that the colourful murals were painted by a Kraków artist Stanisław Samostrzelnik or members of his workshop, as suggested by the historical circumstances, style of painting, refinement of the form, and mastery of execution.



Miechow Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre
© archives VD

Commentary: Identity and Diversity

The chapel in Miechów is the ideological replica of the Rotunda known as Anastasis and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem that it houses, as it selectively copies its crucial elements: the central layout and the dome. Moreover, the internal dimensions of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów are very close or identical to the Jerusalem original. From the point of view of the architectural type, it was modelled on a contemporary burial chapel, that of the Bishop of Kraków Piotr Tomicki, built in Wawel by Berrecci. Nevertheless, this was the work of local stonemasons. Moreover, it plays a different function as a site where liturgy is celebrated at Easter time, and as the destination of pilgrimages going to Miechów – the Polish Jerusalem.



Miechow - polychrome © archives VD

Miechow Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre - detail
© archives VD



11. BODZENTYN. CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND ST STANISLAUS BISHOP AND MARTYR

The expansion of the Renaissance route in Małopolska towards Bodzentyn (today in Kielce County, Świętokrzyskie Region) is historically justified and makes it possible to include a site that in the Renaissance was both connected to its metropolitan hub – the city of Kraków – and formed part of the artistic developments in the Land of Kraków. This adds a supra-regional dimension to this cultural route.

Renaissance altar from Wawel Cathedral

A new high altar was built for Wawel Cathedral in 1545-1550. Its founder was King Sigismund the Old, who died in 1548 so that the work was concluded in the reign of Sigismund Augustus.

The altar was Italian Renaissance in form: it was built as a huge alla serliana triumphal arch. Its central space contains the scene of the Crucifixion painted on board, and holds figures of the patron saints of the Kraków church in the side niches, while its tympanum is decorated with angels.

The retable was designed by an Italian architect, possibly Giovanni Cini of Siena active in Kraków, and the painting was brought from Venice and is a work of Pietro degli Ingannati, who signed it as Petrus Venetus. The woodwork and sculptures were made to the above-mentioned design by local sculptors, and it was also painted and gilded by Kraków artists.

In 1647, a new lavish baroque altar was installed in Wawel Cathedral.

The Renaissance retable was disassembled and taken to the collegiate church in Kielce, where it was set up in the apse of the chancel. The Kraków altar was sent from there to Bodzentyn following the construction of a new chancel 80 years later. There it stands to this day as the main high altar in the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr.

Commentary: The Centre and Periphery

First class Renaissance works of art have retained their value, even though tastes and preferences changed in the baroque. When new altars, furnishings, paintings, figures, and liturgical vestments and vessels were commissioned by grand and wealthy churches in the 17th and 18th centuries, the older chattels – Gothic and Renaissance – were sent to the provinces. This happened with the main altar (1546-1550) and ciborium from Wawel Cathedral. The altar was initially removed to Kielce, and several years later to Bodzentyn, in turn, the ciborium was divided, and its most important part was deposited in the church in Modlnica.



Bodzentyn - Main Altar from Wawel Cathedral -
© P. Pencakowski

12. SUCHA BESKIDZKA. CASTLE IN SUCHA BESKIDZKA

The first owner of the castle in Sucha Beskidzka was Gaspar Castiglione, who assumed the name of Kasper Suski in Poland. He was a goldsmith from Florence who purchased the village of Sucha from Stanisław Słupski, and embarked on the construction of a defensive manor house of wood and stone (1554-1580), which became the core of today's structure. The manor was subsequently taken over by Piotr Komorowski who extended it into an impressive magnate residence in the Renaissance style (1608-1614), modelled on Wawel Royal Castle.

The three-wing structure with four corner towers and an irregular rectangular courtyard is accessed from the east. The structure was built from broken local stone. Its southern and western wings are decorated from the side of the courtyard with a two-storey-high gallery, with arcades on the ground floor supported on pillars, and those of the first-floor by Tuscan columns. Komorowski installed a chapel in the clock tower, and had it devoted to his patron, St Peter the Apostle. The stonework of the chapel is probably the work of a Flemish master, Paweł Baudarth, as suggested by the framing of windows characteristic of the artist.

Today, the castle is home to a range of institutions including the Municipal Museum of Sucha Beskidzka, Zamek / Castle Municipal Culture Centre, and the Higher School of Tourism and Ecology in Sucha Beskidzka.



Castle in Sucha Beskidzka © B. Woźniak

The Renaissance part of the former monastery of Canons Regular by the Church of Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The church and monastery belong to the complex, founded by Piotr Komorowski, the owner of the Castle in Sucha, who built the first church here (1613-1614), the monastery (1624), and the complex of seven chapels (1630) in gratitude for the miraculous healing of his sight. He subsequently invited the Canons Regular of Lateran from the Corpus Christi Church in Kazimierz (today, a district of Kraków).

The body of the church and the Renaissance section of the building of the former monastery, which today operates as the vicarage, have been preserved. The two historic buildings are connected by an arcade, with a passage from the monastery to the musical choir inside the church. Its external wall is decorated with two Renaissance majolica tiles. One presents the Crucifixion of Christ, and the other – the founder's Korczak coat of arms with initials P K H L I O (Piotr Komorowski, hrabia liptowski i orawski / Piotr Komorowski, the Count of Liptów and Orawa). The

tiles are most probably a product of one of the workshops in Kazimierz. The single-nave church is entered through the ancient southern door, and the upper section of the external wall of the chancel is decorated with a Renaissance frieze.

Originally, the church complex was surrounded with seven chapels, of which only three have been preserved. The largest houses the burial crypts of the later owners of Sucha.

Commentary: Shaping the Landscape

The architectural investments of the Polish monarchs, aristocracy, and clergy of Renaissance times introduced new formal elements into the built landscape of Poland, and transformed it with time. Each of them also altered the landscape of the area where it was located. The silhouettes of the buildings became hallmarks and strong accents in the natural environment, which was linked with the humanist ideals on whose power they were built. This was the case in the case of the royal castles in Kraków (Wawel) and Niepołomice, and Villa Decius in Wola Justowska, and the castles and fortified strongholds of nobility and magnates in Szymbark and Sucha, in the last of these, the founder, Piotr Komorowski, also erected the monastery of Canons Regular.



Castle in Sucha Beskidzka - loggia © P. Mazur



Sucha Beskidzka Renaissance part of the old church © P. Mazur

13. KRAKÓW - MOGIŁA. SANCTUARY OF THE HOLY CROSS AND THE CISTERCIAN ABBEY

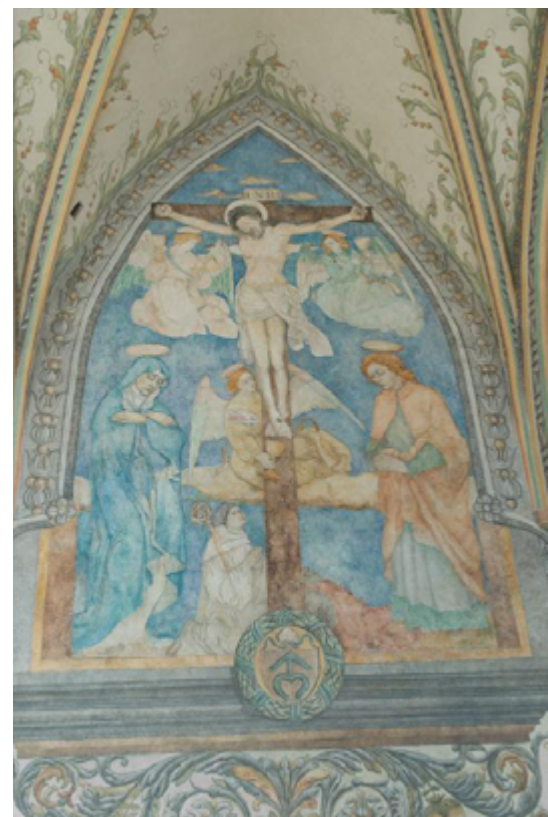
Polychromes by Stanisław Samostrzelnik

The church was built in Mogiła near Kraków (today within the administrative limits of the city). According to the rules of the Cistercian Order, it was designed in the plan of a Latin cross, and built of brick and stone in Romanesque-Gothic style. Originally, the walls of the church were crude and were not covered in plaster. In the days of Abbott Erazm Ciołek (Suffragan Bishop of Kraków), the church interior received its plaster, and Friar Stanisław Samostrzelnik (a local Cistercian monk) decorated its walls. He painted the scene of the Annunciation in the chancel, and the Crucifixion in the southern arm of the transept, decorating also the church, the gallery, and library with his works. His 16th-century fresco decorations today belong to the extremely precious heritage of Renaissance art. The murals from 1538-1541 date back to the last stage of the painter's activity, and they clearly feature the transformation of the ornamental motifs that he developed. They are especially clearly visible in the eastern galleries where characteristic vegetal motifs, notably acanthus leaves and vines, are present. Samostrzelnik's paintings were renovated in 2008.

Stanisław Samostrzelnik

Stanisław Samostrzelnik was most probably born around 1480, and died in 1541. He hailed from a Kraków bourgeois family. His family name is semantically connected to the makers of bows and crossbows. He entered the Cistercian monastery in Mogiła.

Samostrzelnik had already become active as a painter in 1506. He practised easel, book miniature, and wall painting, and worked for the royal court from the mid-1520s. At the time, he illuminated the Prayer Book of King Sigismund I (1524, today in the British Museum) and The Prayer Book of Queen Bona (1527–28), and diplomas for the royal chancery. Those who commissioned him also included Bishop Piotr Tomicki, and it is highly probable that the portrait of the cleric in pontifical robes hanging in the gallery of the Franciscan monastery in Kraków is another work of the talented Cistercian. In 1525, he was given a quite extraordinary commission: together with Jan the painter, he decorated a banner of white damask, which Albrecht Hohenzollern laid as a token of subservience before Sigismund I during the ceremony of Prussian Homage in the Main Market Square of Kraków on 10 April.



Krakow - Mogila Samostrzelnik's polychromes

© P. Mazur

Commentary: Reason and Imagination

Stanisław Samostrzelnik was the first outstanding Renaissance painter in Poland. His art derives from the late Gothic tradition of Kraków, yet with time, it was enriched with Renaissance elements inspired by other works and milieux (the painter never visited Italy). His style is elegant, refined, and can certainly be referred to as courtly. He worked in the days when the most magnificent and impressive structures and sculptures were the work of Italian architects and sculptors, yet no Italian painters could be found in contemporary Poland. Owing to his eminent talent, Samostrzelnik received commissions from monarchs and bishops, magnates and the wealthiest monastic orders. However, as he undertook too many tasks, he was forced to resort to assistance. He worked on the wall paintings in Mogiła and Miechów (the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre) falling back on his workshop, of which he became the artistic manager.



Krakow Mogiła Samostrzelnik Polychromes detail
© K. Trojanowska



Krakow - Mogiła
Samostrzelnik's polychromes
© P. Mazur

14. KRAKÓW - BRANICE. BRANICKI VILLA - LAMUS

Built by the Branicki family as a villa next to their main residence, it acquired its current shape around 1603. The construction works were conducted by the workshop of Santi Gucci: the royal architect and sculptor, designer of the complexes in Książ Wielki and in Łobzów, and a handful of Kraków residences.

This building on the plan of a rectangle approximately 12 m × 10 m, has three cellar bays with barrel vaulting. Polish style brickwork is visible in the walls of the ground floor. The floor has retained an entry hall with a stairway to the upper floor, and a large room with lunette vaulting. A similar bipartite division is present on the upper floor under a ceiling resting on larch beams. The roof is obscured by a parapet wall with blind niches and a characteristic toothed crenellation. The walls are decorated by sgraffito rustication, imitating a stone wall and typical of the Renaissance. The chiselcraft of the masters gathered around Santi Gucci is manifested in the late Renaissance decor of the room on the upper floor, especially the sculpted fireplace from Pińczów limestone (1603) decorated with animal herms, cornices, and cartouches bearing coats of arms.

Due to its later use the building is referred to as the lamus – a separate building used for storing things, sometimes quite bulky, that may come in handy. It is situated on the premises of a park and residence complex which today houses a branch of the Museum of Archaeology in Kraków.



Krakow - Branice detail © P. Mazur



Krakow - Branice © P. Mazur



Krakow – Branice. The Granary © M. Horodyski

15. NIEPOŁOMICE. ROYAL CASTLE IN NIEPOŁOMICE

The first castle was built as a hunting lodge for King Casimir the Great in the mid-14th century, and it survived in its original form until the 16th. The first modernisation began under King Sigismund the Old (after 1506). A four-wing building with one line of rooms on the eastern and western sides, and two – on the south and north dates back to that time. Inside, the entire building was given a wooden gallery. The northern wing of the castle was designed for residential purposes, and the southern one was used for official functions. At that time, the castle was one of the shelters used by the royal court during the bout of epidemics in Kraków in 1527.

After the damage from the fire of 1550, King Sigismund Augustus continued the work of his father. In 1551-1568, the reconstruction was designed and later supervised by Tomasz Grzymała who enrolled Polish and Italian craftsmen to cooperate in the work. The architecture of the royal castle is based on a design theory by Francesco di Giorgio Martini (d. 1502).

The three-storey-high wings with spacious staircases in the corners and the originally wooden galleries built in the second half of the 16th century follow a regular arrangement. The wooden gallery was replaced by a stone one in the 17th century, and early in the 19th century the building was reduced in height by the removal of the upper floor.

Thanks to the influence of Queen Bona, the castle was given a garden of modern design. It was her initiative to establish an Italian garden directly by the southern wing.

Today the castle houses, among other facilities, the Museum of Niepołomice.



Royal Castle in Niepołomice © P. Mazur

Commentary: The Migration of Ideas

The theoretical concepts of Italian architects from Renaissance times spread throughout Europe, but they reached Poland mediated by masons from Italy, who built castles, mansions, lodges, villas, churches, and chapels in the country. Good examples are the residential palaces and castles in Niepołomice and Książ Wielki (Mirów Castle) and other buildings designed by Santi Gucci.



Royal Castle in Niepolomice © T. Korczyński

Royal Castle in Niepolomice © P. Mazur



16. NIEPOŁOMICE. CHURCH OF TEN THOUSAND MARTYRS

In the 16th century, this church received a Renaissance Chapel from the Branicki Family. In 1596, the Starost of Niepołomice, Jan Branicki, became the founder of the great memorial chapel for his parents, Katarzyna (d. 1588) and Grzegorz (d. 1595) which lies adjacent to and on the southern side of the church. The chapel and the monument are the work of the royal court architect, Santi Gucci. A gate that is today found in the wall surrounding the church also comes from the chapel, as it originally served as a portal to it.

The Branicki Chapel is of unimposing size, adapted to that of the church. It is roofed with a lanterned dome resting on pendentives, and the interior is lit by round windows. Situated opposite the entrance is the figural funerary memorial of the two Branickis, chiselled in grey stone and red marble. The composition includes a tripartite plinth, on which rests a colonnade with three arcades. The sculptor placed three figures in the arcades: the kneeling Branicki and his wife in the side niches with resurrected Christ in the centre. This is one of the earliest representations of nearly complete statues of kneeling figures in Polish tomb sculpture. The decorative motifs applied – a skull with crossbones, winged heads of cherubs, rolled cartouches, rounded protrusions, and symmetrically composed vertical ornaments of leaves and flowers on the pilasters are typical of Santi Gucci and are present also in his other works.



Niepołomice. Church of Ten Thousand Martyrs - Chapel © T. Korczyński

Commentary: Innovation and Stagnation, The Centre and Periphery

In the beginning of the era of the Italian Renaissance in Poland, Bartolomeo Berrecci from Florence developed two variants of the model central domed chapel. The one used for the design of the Sigismund Chapel was more complex, and the one applied in the Bishop Tomicki Chapel (both in the Kraków Cathedral) was simpler. The two became models for later structures, but the simpler chapel, without a drum, was replicated more frequently, an additional factor being its lower costs of construction. The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów was modelled on the latter in the 1530s and so was the mortuary chapel of the Branickis in Niepołomice towards the end of the century. Kraków – in the 16th century, the royal capital city of Poland – radiated its culture and art out over the province. As the model designs of Berrecci were popular for over a hundred years, their application can be perceived as an indication of a certain stagnation.



Niepolomice. Church of Ten Thousand Martyrs - detail
© T. Korczyński



Niepolomice. Church of Ten Thousand Martyrs -
Branicki Family Chapel, the sculptures
© T. Korczyński



Niepolomice. Church of Ten Thousand
Martyrs - detail © T. Korczyński

17. TARNÓW. THE TOWN HALL

Tarnów, sometimes referred to as the ‘pearl of the Renaissance’, was one of the most beautiful cities in Poland in the 16th century. A cathedral, an impressive Town Hall, houses of the burgers with interesting architecture and lavish murals on the external walls made an impressive mark. In the Renaissance, the city was the property of an excellent politician and military leader, Grand Commander of the Crown, Jan Tarnowski.

Situated in the centre of the market square, the Town Hall is, apart from the Cathedral, the oldest and the most remarkable of the city’s historic structures. Although its beginnings reach to at least the mid-15th century, its form and décor mean that it is considered as belonging to the architecture of the Renaissance. It received its current form in the reconstruction and extension of 1567-1594 which impressed the brunt of Italian architecture on the town hall.

A compact building of brick, the town hall is crowned with a tall, bare-brick parapet wall, modelled on that of the Kraków Cloth Hall and decorated with a crenellation composed of 14 stone gargoyles and pinnacles. The tower of the town hall, which dominates the entire city, is of square cross-section in its bottommost, older section. It is cylindrical above this, and topped with a guards balcony covered with an octagonal roof. The first floor consists of two huge halls: the House of Commons and the House of the Council, reached by impressive stairs in a Renaissance staircase. Today, the town hall is used for exhibitions of the Regional Museum in Tarnów.

Commentary: The Nation-State

Being the seats of the city authorities and symbols of the cities’ independence, town halls have for centuries been the pride of both owners and residents. They were given lavish form. In the 16th century, the Gothic town halls of many Polish cities were modernised and for that purpose the architectural solutions of the new period – Renaissance – were introduced. The work was often entrusted to Italian bricklayers and masons. Thus it was in Kraków, Kazimierz (today, a district of Kraków), Biecz (the tower has been preserved), and Tarnów. Furthermore, modernisation also extended to the buildings of cloth halls, city gates, synagogues, palaces, and individual townhouses.



Tarnow Town hall detail
© K. Trojanowska

Tarnow. Town hall © archives VD



Tarnow. Town hall 3 © M. Horodyski



18. TARNÓW. COMPLEX OF RENAISSANCE TOWN-HOUSES IN THE OLD TOWN

Mikołajowski House (plac Katedralny 6)

One of the oldest and best preserved townhouses in Tarnów with original Renaissance stonework around the windows and stucco decoration characteristic of the period. The house is part of a compact urban development. It stands over its cellars on the north-western corner of the square. In 1527, its owners, Barbara and Jan Mikołajowski, entrusted the property to the vicars of the collegiate church. Today Dom Mikołajowski belongs to the Diocesan Museum.

Florencki House (ul. Żydowska 20)

Literally 'Florentine House', the Dom Florencki in ul. Żydowska 20 is a Renaissance masonry structure, built over cellars and with a utility attic, built on an irregular plan. It is covered with a gable roof with ceramic tiles. The upper section of the façade overhangs on wood brackets connected with arches. The house was probably built in the 16th century by combining two earlier ones set up by the defence wall. In the 17th century it became the property of Jewish owners, who settled in large numbers in this part of the city. Today, the building is home to the Tarnów office of the Polish Tourism Association (PTTK).

Houses in the Market Square, Rynek 19, 20, and 21)

The three most conspicuous houses in the Market Square were built in the 16th century as single-storey buildings, with ground floor arcades, which were surmounted by parapet walls. The interiors of nos 20 and 21 were connected in 1780. They are currently the headquarters of the Regional Museum in Tarnów.

Commentary: Identity and Diversity

Renaissance was the time when the bourgeoisie flourished in the cities of Poland. This finds a reflection in city architecture: both public – town halls, cloth halls, stalls, and sacred buildings - and private – city residences and townhouses. They are characterised by high artistic merit, care for the aesthetics and the mostly sgraffito, painted, and stone decoration. Renaissance synagogues were erected by Jews living in Polish cities. Today, all these structures are testimony to the golden age of Polish culture and art.



Tarnow Mikołajowski House
© archives VD



Tarnow - Mikołajowski House
© P. Mazur

Tarnow Old Town © P. Mazur



19. TARNÓW. CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Renaissance tombstones

The Cathedral and the nave

In its present form, the Gothic Cathedral in Tarnów is a uniform structure built of brick, with stonework decorating the windows and entrances. It is built on an elongated plan oriented to the east, three-aisled, with an extended chancel enclosed in an apse, and a tower added to the west. Leading into the cathedral are four doors, with one through a Gothic-Renaissance stone portal, modelled on a print by Albrecht Dürer (after 1511), being worthy of the closest attention.

What certainly deserves attention among the abundant Renaissance tomb sculpture decoration of the cathedral is a masterpiece on a European scale, to be found in the southern aisle. This is the memorial to Barbara Tarnowska née Tęczyńska (d. 1521), the first wife of Grand Commander Jan Tarnowski. The tomb was made by an Italian artist who arrived in Kraków from Padua a few years earlier: Giovanni Maria il Mosca, known in Poland as Padovano. It is an example of a tomb based on the aedicula motif, suspended on a wall. It features noble proportions and subtlety of architectural line. The high, square niche contains the tomb with the inscription and the sarcophagus placed on top of it with a complete statue of the deceased lying on it in a sophisticated pose. The memorial (erected after 1536) is made of sandstone with the use of red marble. The figure of the deceased Barbara draws our special attention, as it is believed to be 'the most beautiful Renaissance figural sculpture in Poland' if not 'one of the most beautiful figures of women in Renaissance sculpture anywhere in Europe'.

The southern nave also contains the memorial tomb of Father Marcin Łyczko (d. 1578), probably a work of Wojciech Kuszyc, a local collaborator of Padovano.

The Chancel

The chancel of the Cathedral is embellished by four tomb effigies: works of art of major significance for the cultural history of the Polish Renaissance and mannerism. The oldest of them commemorates Barbara of Rożnów (d. 1517), mother of Jan Tarnowski. The general design is Renaissance, and makes reference to Florentine monuments with a niche in the wall, in which the figure of the deceased reposes. Yet the architectural detail and ornamentation betray a lack of understanding of their origin. The sculpture on the tomb was made of sandstone (around 1520), and its author remains unknown. It is a very rare and precious testimony of the only superficial assimilation of Renaissance models by local artists in Poland.



Tombston - Barbara z Tęczyńskich
Tarnowska © M. Horodyski

On the other hand, the fine two-tier monument of the Tarnowskis is extremely impressive. It was built by Giovanni Maria Padovano for the Grand Commander Jan Tarnowski (d. 1561), and reworked after the death of Jan Krzysztof (d. 1567). The architectural parts of the 13-metre-tall and 6.6-metre-wide effigy were made of sandstone. The columns, plaques and primarily the two complete statues of both of the Tarnowskis as well as the sarcophagi are made of red Hungarian marble, while the plates with battle scenes and the cherub heads and lions' paws on which the sarcophagi rest, are made of alabaster. The design and composition of the monument is based on models drawn from the architectural treatises by Sebastiano Serlio. Both tiers contain rectangular niches for the figures of the deceased who are presented in the so-called Sansovinesque poses. The only religious motif is the figure of Resurrected Christ surmounting the composition. The battle scenes illustrate the battles won by the Grand Commander.

The next monument, of Zofia Tarnowska, Princess Ostrogska (d. 1570), wife of the Grand Commander of the Crown, Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski, was made in marble to the design of Giovanni Maria Padovano, probably by Wojciech Kuszyc or by an Italian sculptor, Hieronimo Canavesi. The monument of the Ostrogski family, devoted to Prince Janusz Ostrogski (d. 1620) and his first wife Zuzanna (d. 1596) was made from 1612 to 1620 in black and red marbles and alabaster. It stands 12.9 m high, and 7.9 m wide. The architecture of the monument is Renaissance, yet it is filled with mannerist detail. Authorship is ascribed to Jan Pfister from Wrocław or the Dutch Wilhelm van den Block.



Tombstone Tarnowskich
© archives VD

Commentary: Reason and Imagination

In the 16th century, Tarnów belonged to the Grand Commander of the Crown, Jan Tarnowski, who expanded the castle on Góra św. Marcina into a Renaissance residence surrounded with modern bastion fortifications. Its chambers housed a library, treasury, and a collection of family memorabilia and souvenirs. Visitors to the castle included Jan Kochanowski, Mikołaj Rej, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Marcin Kromer, Giovanni Maria Padovano, and other great humanists of the time. Following the lifestyle popularised in the Renaissance based on the ambition to emphasise fame and achievements and, in particular, to be remembered after one's death, and also to lie in the footsteps of royal and church dignitaries, lords of extensive estates like the Tarnowskis and the later owners of the city, the Princes Ostrogski, they commissioned Italian artists to erect magnificent tombs as a testament to their position and power.

20. WILCZYSKA. JEŻÓW MANOR HOUSE

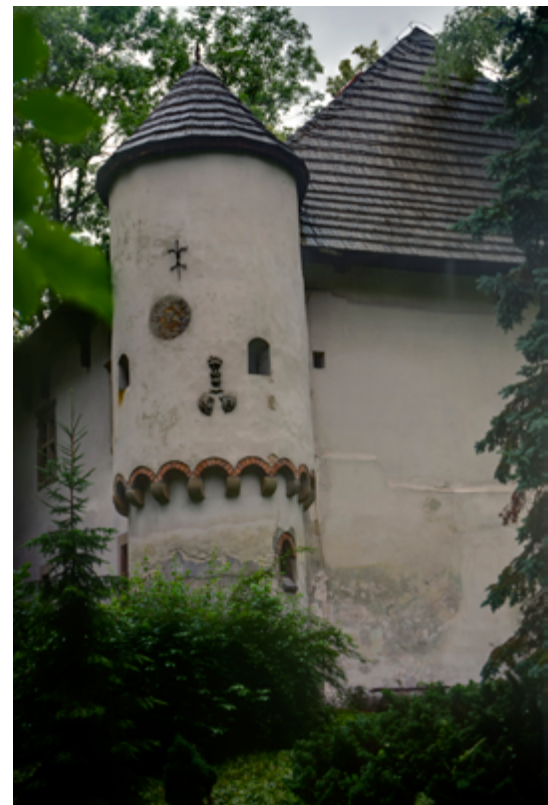
The Jeżów Manor House is one of the best preserved defensive Renaissance manor houses in Poland. The storeyed building built of stone on a near-square external plan (16.5×15 m) was built in two stages.

The original rectangular structure is dated to before 1525 and comprises the southern section of today's manor house. Its construction was probably initiated by the Jeżowskis of the Strzemię clan, or their followers, the Turscy of the Gryf clan. The thickness of walls in this section of the manor reaches 175 cm. It stood two or three storeys high with two rooms on each floor. In the south-eastern corner, the manor house sported a tower which, much like the attic, played a defensive role.

The second stage was conducted by the success of the owner, Adam Strasz (Susz?) of the Ogończyk clan. The northern extension was added at this time to the older, southern section, and the entire structure was partially lowered. The thickness of the walls of the northern part is smaller as it does not exceed 120 cm. After reconstruction, the Manor house had four rooms in both lower floors (lower ground floor and ground floor), while a huge hall for formal functions was arranged on the first floor over the new, northern part. The completion of the second stage of the construction is dated to 1544.

The building has no cellars, and was set on oak piles sunk into very wet ground. Remnants of moats and earthenworks, attesting to the defensive character of the site, can be found in the park surrounding it. This character is further corroborated by other defensive features that have been preserved, notably the very thick walls, small windows on the lower floor, and the loopholes in the tower.

The most attractive elements that have been preserved from the furnishing and decoration are the murals of the spacious Castle Hall on the first floor presenting a panorama of Jeżów and Wilczyska, and sailing and hunting scenes (1544). Stone portals and fireplaces have also been preserved, as have sections of the stucco decoration of the first-floor rooms. The wall painting in the Court Chapel with images of the saints, situated on the ground floor, is somewhat later as it is dated to the end of the 17th century. Following renovation the manor house has regained its Renaissance appearance, and currently it operates as the Centre for Creative Work of the Graphic Arts Schools in Tarnów.



Jeżow © archives VD

Commentary: Innovation and Stagnation

Beginning in the 1520s, the Reformation – first Lutheran, and then Calvinist (mostly in Małopolska) – made advances in Poland. One of the headquarters of the Calvinist communities was Villa Decius (from 1552, when it was already the property of the son of Iustus Decius, Jost Ludwik Junior). In 1562, a radical community of Polish Brethren, known as the Arians, span off from the Evangelical Church. For over 100 years, from Adam Strasz on, the owners of Jeżów belonged to the Polish Brethren and used the Jeżów Manor House as one of the centres of the religious community. Polish Brethren eagerly settled in the province, away from the centres of state and Episcopal power which strongly opposed them.



Jeżow © archives VD

Jeżow © archives VD



21. SZYMBARK. CASTELLUM: RENAISSANCE FORTIFIED MANOR HOUSE IN SZYMBARK

This defensive manor house, a former seat of the Gładysz knightly family of the Gryf clan, is a very precious monument of Renaissance architecture in Poland, and a leading example of the Polish castellum: fortified manor house. Characteristic features of such architecture include a rectangular plan with a simple layout of the rooms, without an internal courtyard, and with characteristic extensions with clearly defensive functions in the four corners, usually with overhanging bay windows.

The building combines the functions of a noble family residence and a fortress, while its architectural form makes reference to sites known from southern and south central Europe. The most often quoted link is that between this fortified manor and 15-century Italian villas and the form of Italian quattro torre castles: fortresses with four defensive towers, popular in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries.

The house was probably built in two stages (though no exact dates are known): in the first, from the first half of the 16th century to 1585-1590, the body of the building was constructed, while the second stage involved finishing works and the making of the decorative elements, notably an arcaded parapet wall, sgraffito decoration with an ornament composed of fantastic masks and geometric and vegetal motifs, and also stonework around the doors and windows (1590-1600).

As far as its architecture goes, the fortified manor is unique. It was set on the high bank of the Ropa River, where it was built of the local broken stone and brick on a rectangular plan, 20 × 13 m. The defence system is visible in the four rectangular residential towers on the corners, which, supported on stone consoles, protrude beyond the face of the walls at first floor level, and with a line of shooting holes - rectangular and loopholes – running around the building at the level of the attic.

Following the restoration works (completed in 2010), the manor house was returned to its 16th century character. Original elements of its internal decoration survive to this day, notably the stone framing of the door, fragments of fireplaces and the wall paintings in two alcoves.

The building functions as a conference and exhibition venue and, together with adjacent buildings, the court wing and a wooden burgher mansion, it forms a branch of the Museum of Karwacjan and Gładysz Family Manor Houses in Gorlice.



Manor House in Szymbark interior - polychromes
© K. Trojanowska

Commentary: Innovation and Stagnation

Various architectural models and styles that originated in Western countries, especially in Italy, were accepted in Central Europe. With time, they became part of the local architectural tradition, to which successive generations of developers and constructors made reference. The ‘classical’ form was gradually blurred and the buildings received lavish decoration, often distant from the model solutions applied in the countries in which the model originated. It was thus in the Renaissance with domed chapels, city mansions, villas, and fortified manor houses.

The building in Szymbark is a good illustration of the process. The Renaissance fortified manor house received a parapet wall whose forms are distant from its Italian originals. It is a work of local constructors, who only had experience of local architecture, and not of the works of masters from Florence, Venice, Padua, and Rome



Manors House in Szymbark interior © P. Mazur



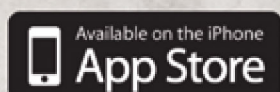
Manors House in Szymbark © P. Mazur



Manors House in Szymbark
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