

SUMMARY

The book is the first comprehensive study of the historical campus of Warsaw University buildings located in the heart of the city, along its most prestigious street – Krakowskie Przedmieście. Its main theme is the history of over twenty historic University buildings, of which the former royal residence – the Kazimierzowski Palace, today the seat of the Rectorate, is particularly outstanding. The university area is a unique place in Warsaw. Its uniqueness results from its role in the history of Polish science, the beauty of architecture and the location in the heart of the city – on a high, steep and picturesque embankment, in the vicinity of the Vistula River. Unequaled geological and natural conditions have given the area of the University extraordinary landscape values, which makes it difficult to find a university in Europe with a similar charm to the Warsaw location. The value of this area is additionally raised by beautiful groups of trees and shrubs, between which you can look from the crown of the embankment at the park at its feet (in Frederick Chopin's time it was the Botanic Garden), the new university buildings in Browarna and Dobra streets and the wide Vistula River. The historical complex of the University, which also includes the Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, the Uruski-Czetwertyński Palace, the former St. Roch Hospital and – to some extent – the Visitationist Church, is not only one of the most beautiful places of the city, but also full of historical monuments. The Kazimierzowski Palace was first inhabited by the kings of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and since the time of the Warsaw Corps of Cadets, Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Frédéric Chopin were educated here. After housing the Corps of Cadets, founded by King Stanislaus II Augustus, and later the Warsaw Lyceum, the Palace became the seat of the University, which, despite the dramatic fates shared with Warsaw, spread knowledge and science not only throughout the city, of which it is integral part, but throughout the whole country. Numerous eminent personalities lectured or were educated at the University, including Joachim Lelewel, Zygmunt Krasiński, Józef Brudziński, Witold Gombrowicz, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Jan Białostocki, Grzegorz Białkowski, and Nobel Prize winners such as Henryk Sienkiewicz, Menachem Begin, Czesław Miłosz, Olga Tokarczuk. As the first higher education institution in Warsaw, the University became the nucleus of Warsaw Polytechnic School and Medical Academy (today the Medical University of Warsaw). Also other capital universities, including the Academy of Fine Arts, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (the former Academy of Catholic Theology) and the Chopin University of Music, owe their origins to the heritage of the Royal University of Warsaw.

The National Museum in Warsaw was also born in the buildings in Krakowskie Przedmieście street. On the University campus, in the second and third decade of the 19th century, as part of the

Faculty of Fine Arts and Sciences, the first Warsaw art school was established, which housed a wonderful collection of works of art and produced outstanding architects, painters and sculptors. Today it is impossible to imagine the National Museum in Warsaw without majestic canvases or sculptures of artists educated at the University of Warsaw, such as Antoni Brodowski, Jakub Tatarkiewicz, Józef Chełmoński, Wojciech Gerson and their colleagues and disciples. Renowned and talented architects, including Piotr Aigner, Michał Kado, Hilary Szpilowski, Antonio Corazzi, Henryk Marconi, Antoni Sulimowski, Stefan Szyller, Antoni Jabłoński-Jasieńczyk and Franciszek Eychhorn, also worked at the University. Through their projects the university's complex of buildings obtained not only a harmonious layout, but above all, a unique environment. Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755–1821), the Secretary of Education in the Duchy of Warsaw and the Congress Kingdom, also had a huge impact on the formation of this exceptional building complex.

In-depth studies on the history of the University of Warsaw have been conducted for over 100 years. Based on sources and published in 1907–1912, a three-volume book by Józef Bielinski about the first University of Warsaw, and the two subsequent collective works (edited by Stefan Kieniewicz and Andrzej Garlicki, covering the years to 1939) had their continuation in a large volume of studies entitled *Ars et education* (2003) and in a multi-volume publication *Monumenta Universitatis Varsoviensis* inaugurated in 2016 on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of founding the University. Despite these many books, a complete study of the history of all buildings in Krakowskie Przedmieście street has not been written to this day. This publication aims to fill this gap, without pretending to exhaust the topic.

This comprehensive book about the history and architecture of the campus, as well as the famous people of this place uses numerous archival documents, diaries, occasional prints and unpublished notes from four centuries: they create a very good picture of the former royal *Villa Regia*, the Warsaw Corps of Cadets and the University itself – its rectors, deans, professors, students and meritorious administrative workers. Our story about this special place is often personal, resulting from the experience of the authors, their many years of contact with the University's past and their attempts to describe the phenomenon of this place. The first author, Jerzy Miziołek, was the director of the University Museum for over eight years, his field of study is ancient tradition in modern times, and it is at University, in the decoration of the buildings, where the tradition of Antiquity, Renaissance and Enlightenment is present; the second author, Jerzy Pieszczyrkow, was the University Chancellor for more than twenty years and together with his team cultivated the architectural cultural heritage of the campus and was responsible for the conservation supervision of the buildings; the third of the authors, Adam Tyszkiewicz, worked in the University Museum and was the director of the Museum of the History of Medicine at the Medical University of Warsaw; he specializes in the history of science in Warsaw, with a particular focus on the history of art and the history of medicine; he is also the author of a book on academic ceremonials of the University of Warsaw (2024).

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The University of Warsaw, established in 1808–1818 and officially founded in 1816, was located in Villa Regia, the former royal residence, later named the Kazimierzowski Palace after king Jan Kazimierz. Built in the first half of the 17th century, probably by Matteo Castelli in the Baroque style and rebuilt many times (according to Joachim D. Jauch's and Dominico Merlini's designs), it became a neo-classicist building.

It was rebuilt in the 19th century by Hilary Szpilowski and Waclaw Ritschel. The work was started in 1815 and lasted intermittently until 1828. The magnificent two-storey building has gained a completely new development of the main facade in the Palladian style, with a four-column portico in the Corinthian order added to the middle route and crowned with a tympanum. This monumental and elegant portico emphasizes the axis of the Palace and the whole project. When the Palace was rebuilt in 1825–1828, its pediment was decorated with a figurative relief by Paweł Maliński, showing Apollo among Muses. The interior of the Palace underwent numerous transformations, and during World War II burnt out completely. The building, however, preserved its facade and main walls, which allowed for its full reconstruction.

In 1815–1816, in front of the Palace, at the request of Stanisław Kostka Potocki and according to Jakub Kubicki's design, two buildings with quite modest architecture were erected, which formed a kind of *cour d'honneur*. One is known as Post-rectorate, the other one as Seminar. At the time of the Congress Kingdom, the first building was inhabited by the Rector, Wojciech A. Szweykowski, some of the University and Warsaw Lyceum professors, including Kazimierz Brodziński and the Chopin family. The layout and furnishings of the Chopin house (with an area of over 115 m²) are known thanks to the source texts and architectural measurements from the period. The flat and the building itself which survived the war, was recently fully restored and will soon house the museum of the early life of the genius composer, who lived here from 1817 to 1827. The world-known researches, such as Władysław Tatarkiewicz and Jan Białostocki are also connected to this building.

The second of Kubicki's buildings – currently occupied by the Faculty of Law and Administration – used to be the seat of the Committee of Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment. Unfortunately, it was almost completely burnt out during the war, which destroyed many valuable pre-war archival documents. The building preserved its historical walls, which allowed for its reconstruction. Professors Rafał Taubenschlag and Tadeusz Zieliński lectured and even lived here. It houses the Institute of Papyrology, where professor Anna Świderkówna worked.

In 1817, on the south side of the Kazimierzowski Palace, a building was erected, since 1821 called *Mineralogical* as it housed professor Marek Pawłowicz's collection brought from Saxony and the minerals given by tsar Alexander I (the building of the Faculty of Polish Studies is now on its site); the then appearance of this building has been preserved until our time in the measurement of Leonard Schmidtner made in 1823–1824. It was this document that allowed the reconstruction of the building in its original shape after it had been destroyed during World War II.

In 1819 the ground floor of the former royal kitchen, located to the north of the Kazimierzowski Palace, was converted into a chemical laboratory and auditorium; the first floor of the building was assigned as a flat to professor Adam Maksymilian Kitajewski, a lecturer of this subject. Due to the function of the building, it was called Chemical, and after the November Uprising, when its use changed – Curatorial. After the war, this building was renovated in the classicist style; it is a twin of the former Mineralogical building. The three buildings located at the end of the embankment – the north one (former Chemical), the Kazimierzowski Palace and the Mineralogical (the Faculty of Polish Studies) – form a harmonious complex, in line with the spirit of the times when the University was founded.

In subsequent years (1818–1825), two identical classicist buildings were erected on the campus, nearer Krakowskie Przedmieście street. The south one was the seat of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Sciences. On its ground floor, in the spacious Column Hall, a large collection of antique sculpture casts, which inspired artists for decades, was located. What could be the models for this unique, three-nave hall? Undoubtedly,

its design concept was Potocki's idea. This is evidenced by his public library project from 1779, which is three-nave. The only difference between this project and the Column Hall is the placement of columns on the shorter sides in the first design. Exactly at the same time, Giuseppe Manocchi drew a sculpture gallery project with beautiful Ionian columns for Potocki. Although the columns are set against the walls and are in Ionic order, the resemblance to the Column Hall of the university building is quite obvious. The Hall belongs to the late classicism, which valued the strict Doric or Doric-Tuscan style more than the Ionian and Corinthian orders. Therefore, Potocki had been considering the idea of the Column Hall since about 1780. Where did he get the inspiration? There seems to be no doubt that his *Projets des Bâtimens pour un Musée Beaux-Arts* and the Column Hall itself – the one designed by Manocchi and the one erected at University – are derived from the spirit of Palladian architecture (cf. Chapter 10, of Palladio's Book II). The same source of inspiration can be seen in the famous Assembly Rooms in York, built after 1730 by the British architect, Lord Burlington. Apart from Palladio and Burlington, Potocki may have been inspired in his Column Hall's project by one more source. It is a substantial number of three-nave early Christian and Romanesque basilicas in Italy, especially in Rome. One of the best preserved is Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill in the Eternal City, with its beautiful columns, which were undoubtedly well-known to Potocki. Even in the times of the Congress Kingdom, the floor above the Column Hall was allocated for the zoological collection. For this reason, the building is interchangeably called the School of Fine Arts and the Zoological Cabinet. In 1935, a huge fire broke out in the building, as a result of which many valuable museum objects were destroyed.

The last building to be erected during the time of the first Warsaw University (until 1831) was the one to the left of the entrance to the courtyard, which housed, among others, the auditorium used for important university ceremonies. For many years before and after World War II, the building was used by the Medical Faculty units (first within Medical University, and since 1950 Medical Academy); currently, after a general renovation carried out in recent years, it houses the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations. Feliks Paweł Jarocki wrote in his *Chronicle*: “When the walls of the building of Fine Arts were erected [in 1820], the minister [Potocki] due to the rapidly increasing number of students at the University, who could not be accommodated in the halls of the first university building, and due to the fact that the sessions of the University had to be held in the Visitationist Church as there was no appropriate hall for them, ordered to destroy the little building adjacent to the Tyszkiewicz Palace and erect a building covered with tinsplate, similar in shape and in line with the building of Fine Arts, in which, according to the needs, a meeting room, spacious lecture halls and a Physics Room were designed; the building was called the Physics Building.”

Thus, in the middle of the third decade of the 19th century, a very interesting campus, characterized by symmetry and clarity, and one of the best in Europe, was built. Both the reconstruction of the Kazimierzowski Palace and the erection of the above-mentioned buildings were mainly the work of university architects: Hilary Szpilowski, Waclaw Ritschl, Piotr Aigner and Michał Kado. The beauty of the place – described by the writers of that time – was enlarged by the garden created next to the Kazimierzowski Palace (seen on the maps of the city from 1817–1818), which, over time, was replaced by flower beds. In a letter to a friend, Jan Białobłocki, Frédéric Chopin wrote on 15 June 1826: “If only you knew what species we have in our Botanical garden, you would be perplexed. They made such flower beds, paths, plantations, shrubs, etc. that it is nice to go in, especially that we have a key to it.” Along with a rapidly growing library, collected drawings, a collection of plaster casts, the Zoological Cabinet and thousands of plants grown in

the Botanical Garden, the new university must have made a tremendous impression. This was pointed out by a famous German scientist, naturalist and geographer, Alexander von Humboldt, during his visits to Warsaw in 1823 and 1830.

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The successive buildings, although planned by Minister Potocki in 1815, were built significantly later, when the University was closed as a result of repression after the November Uprising, in which many students and lecturers took part. The building of the Main School, currently the seat of the Faculty of Archeology, the work of Antonio Corazzi, was erected in 1841–1842. Classicism dominates in his architectural and sculptural decoration. The tympanum shows Plato and Aristotle with their disciples, which associates this work of art with the heritage of Raphael's *School of Athens*. For many years in the 19th and 20th century the building was occupied by biologists; today it is the seat of the researchers of antiquity. It is one of the few buildings at the university which were not destroyed during World War II.

Leaving for a moment the chronological narrative in this summary, it should be noted that classicism and harmony dominate the architecture of the Auditorium Maximum, built in 1936. Initially, intended mainly for lawyers, it became a place for organizing the most important academic celebrations. Since the mid-1950s, the inaugurations of the academic year have been held here annually; famous university guests have also given their lectures here. Through the postwar reconstruction the building entered the so-called “song of columns” (to use Paul Valéry's term).

The Old Library built in the neo-Renaissance style in the last decade of the 19th century does not interfere with the symmetry and style of the campus, but it obscured the beautiful facade of the Kazimierzowski Palace. Modern design solutions as well as ingenious library devices have made it one of the marks of the city. For many years, it housed “The Apotheosis of Homer,” the famous painting by Henryk Siemiradzki. The expansion of the building and its extension towards Krakowskie Przedmieście street was considered several times, however, it has remained in its original form to this day. The Old Library, as well as the Post-rectorate building and the building of the School of Fine Arts, were not destroyed during the war. The fates of the Old Library as well as of the people associated with it, are extremely interesting. It was here that Czesław Miłosz worked as a librarian throughout the war, the engineer Tadeusz Miazek designed a special protective ceiling counteracting the effects of air raids, and the famous literary historian, Waław Borowy, saved the most valuable university books.

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The book also discusses the smaller buildings of the university complex, such as so-called “Little Belvedere,” the dining hall, as well as the two gates leading to the university area, which play an auxiliary role both administratively and in the language of architecture. We devoted much space to the Tyszkiewicz-Potocki and the Uruski-Czetwertyński Palaces, and the former St. Roch Hospital, which became part of the University campus much later. Each of these buildings, facing the Royal Route, has its own, pre-university history; it was often made by extraordinary people who were part of Warsaw history: Anetka Potocka, née Tyszkiewicz, Seweryn Uruski or Seweryn Czetwertyński. In this narrative, directed mainly at the university buildings, the Church of St. Joseph of the Visitationists could not be omitted. Although built

in the Baroque era, due to its “symphony of columns” in the facade, it is an excellent part of the Warsaw University historical architecture. One of the most beautiful temples of Warsaw, miraculously saved from the conflagration of World War II, with the adjacent convent, has been the home of the Visitation Sisters for over three centuries. At the same time, it is a university place as it was a university church for a long time. It is also intertwined with the life of the young Frédéric Chopin, who as a student of the Warsaw Lyceum, and later as a university student, often played the organ here. The temple is filled with real masterpieces of fine arts – paintings and sculptures, which include the portraits of its founders – king Jan Kazimierz and his wife Ludwika Maria Gonzaga, as well as the statue of Kazimierz Brodziński. This University professor, a legendary lecturer, a secretary of the University, writer and poet welcomes us just beyond the threshold and invites us to reflect on the mystery of faith and science.

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When describing the architecture of the University buildings, we tried to introduce their founders, architects and the most important events related to a given place. We decided to write more detailed biographies of four rectors: Wojciech Anzelm Szweykowski, Józef Mianowski, Józef Brudziński, Grzegorz Białkowski, as well as Stanisław Kostka Potocki, one of the founding fathers of the University. However, it should be remembered that it is the students with their intellectual potential and life force who are the most important in this exceptional urban space. By communicating with many University places, they give a unique, social character to places and it would be difficult to imagine Krakowskie Przedmieście or Powiśle district without young people, who are the future of Polish science. With a heartfelt thought for young people who are eager to learn and who study at more than twenty faculties of the University, a statue of a Student, the so-called Sławek, by Andrzej Renes was erected on the campus. Cast in bronze in 2002, the sculpture shows the life-size student sitting on a bench in front of the Old Library in Warsaw. In the last two decades, many commemorative plaques were unveiled on the historic walls of buildings and in their interiors in honour of the most famous student of our University Frédéric Chopin and others. We have frequently celebrated the end of successful, extremely comprehensive renovations, such as this of the Auditorium Building.

We attempted to describe it all, aware of the fact that the undertaken matter was not exhausted. A separate book could be written about each of the University buildings. The place is becoming more beautiful not only in the context of respecting historical architecture, but also as a functional research and educational space. The walls of the buildings described in this publication enclose many glorious stories and fascinating lives of people who created Polish science and culture.

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