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Cracow
and its Architecture
at the Turn of the Century*

Cracow did not conform to the typical pattern of city development in the 19th century. This was observed by many contemporaries, but was most aptly expressed on the threshold of the present century by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, one of the creators of the Young Poland myth, in a well-known and oft-quoted section of his book *Znasz-li ten kraj?* Turn-of-the-century Cracow was a “unique creation” indeed, though perhaps “not the most original city under the sun” and “the world’s *unicum* of all times”, as Boy-Żeleński would have it.¹

The peculiar and unique character of Cracow around 1900 resulted from a combination of various factors. Understanding the limitations, complexity and chronology of Cracow’s development in the 19th century is also a key to analysing the phenomenon of Young Poland and Cracow’s artistic development at that time.²

It is rarely remembered nowadays that Cracow was only incorporated into the Habsburg Monarchy on a permanent basis at a comparatively late stage in that Empire’s history, in 1846. This event is even more rarely associated with the disastrous event of the liquidation of the Free City of Cracow. This peculiar paradox is primarily a result of the exceptional role Cracow was able to play at the turn of the century, largely thanks to Austrian liberalism, and thus Polish thinking about the relationship between Cracow and Vienna in the 19th century was ambiguous from the very beginning.

During the period of the so-called first Austrian occupation in 1795–1809, Cracow’s long-term decline and provincialization reached its peak. Formally Cracow remained the capital of the Polish State until the end of the 18th century, but the

* The following text is a revised version of an article originally published in the volume *Stulecie Młodej Polski* [A Century of the Young Poland Movement], ed. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, Kraków 1995, pp. 199–215.

¹ T. Boy-Żeleński, “Znasz-li ten kraj?” [Do you Know this Country?] In: *Boy o Krakowie* [Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński on Cracow], Kraków 1973, pp. 3–4.

² In the following article I have made use of information contained in my earlier publications, including *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków* [How Modern Cracow Came into Being], Kraków 1990, and *Matecznik Polski. Pozaekonomiczne czynniki rozwoju Krakowa w*

main royal residence and the seat of parliament had already moved to Warsaw by the first half of the 17th century.³

The metropolitan status of Cracow – despite the provincialization and decline of the city – took on an unexpectedly new dimension in the 19th century. During the Congress of Vienna Cracow had already become an object of fierce competition between all three partitioning powers, for it was continually regarded as the symbol of Polish sovereignty. Therefore in the years 1815–1846, in the wake of a compromise between Austria, Prussia and Russia, Cracow became a notionally independent Republic (*Freistaat Krakau*). The era of Romanticism and the romantic view of history then made it possible to revive the myth of Cracow – the old capital of Poland – as a symbol of the magnificent historical past of a nation deprived of independence, a sacred place for Poles. Solemn funerals held for heroes of the Napoleonic era, count Józef Poniatowski and Tadeusz Kościuszko in 1817 and 1818 respectively, confirmed the role of Wawel as the nation's Pantheon. Cracow was perceived not only as a history book but also as a protoplast city, “the Polish Rome”, and at times “the Polish Troy”.⁴

Reactionary Austria viewed Cracow in 1846 not only as its possession, but also a dangerous hotbed of Polonism, liberalism and conspiracy. Cracow's future fate, however, was decided by fundamental changes in the situation of Cracow, reincorporated into the Austrian Monarchy, rather than by incidental political and economic repression.

Incorporation into Austria diametrically reoriented Cracow's economic system. Liquidation of the Free City in 1846 undermined the foundations of Cracow's relative economic prosperity in the 1830s and 1840s. The city, which had up to that point enjoyed freedom of trade, was incorporated into the Austrian customs area. Trade with the Kingdom of Poland as well as with neighbouring Prussia slumped. Cracow became a suburbanly located centre of a small local market for a long time, and it failed to play the role of a major communication link, or even administrative centre. As the only large city in the Austrian Monarchy Cracow did not even enjoy the status of a provincial capital. These changes created a fundamental economic crisis, and even led to the temporary depopulation of the city after 1846. The crisis was systemic in character, all the more so as Cracow became a part of Galicia, the most backward province of Cisleithania. Economically, then, Cracow had no chance of rapidly developing into a major metropolitan centre until the First World War. It was a relatively poor city, with no industry or strong urban middle class.⁵

This was also largely due to the fact that in 1846 Cracow had been transformed into a frontier fortress, as the Austrians saw it was having important

okresie autonomii galicyjskiej [The Polish Sanctuary. Non-economic Factors in Cracow's Development during the Period of Galician Autonomy], Kraków 1992.

³ Cf. J. Bieniarzówna, J. M. Malecki, *Dzieje Krakowa. 3: Kraków w latach 1796–1918* [A History of Cracow. Vol. 3. Cracow in the Years 1796–1918], Kraków 1979.

⁴ For Cracow as a 19th-century metropolis, cf. J. Purchla, “Hauptstadtproblematik: das polnische Beispiel”, in: *Hauptstadt: Historische Perspektiven eines Deutschen Themas*, ed. H. M. Körner and K. Weigand, München 1995, pp. 243–247.

⁵ For a more extensive treatment see J. Purchla, *Matecznik Polski...* [The Polish Sanctuary...], pp. 19–42.

strategic value. Lying on the border, on the orographically left bank of the Vistula, it formed a natural bridgehead of vital military importance in any potential future war with Russia. The decision to transform the newly annexed city into a military camp was no doubt supported by the events of 1846 and 1848 in Cracow itself, which for Austria symbolized the Poles' continued desire for independence. During the first period especially, the fortification of the town bore the marks of a military occupation, and the military authorities had scant regard for the city's interests. Cracow remained a great fortress and an Austrian frontier garrison until 1918. Throughout this time Cracow's development was based on a sharp discrepancy between the city (symbol of Poland and Polishness) and the fortress (symbol of foreign domination).⁶

The liberal and conspiratorial atmosphere prevailing in Cracow in the late 40s changed in the 50s as the city was changed "from what had recently been a nest of conspirators [...] into a grand aristocratic salon". However, the growing interest of the nobility in Cracow resulted primarily from the new conditions in which the Polish lands and the Polish national cause found themselves in the 1860s. The tragedy of the January Uprising, brutally suppressed by Russia on the one hand, and the turn towards liberalism and radical internal change in the Habsburg Monarchy on the other, as a result of which Galicia was granted far-reaching autonomy, added a new meaning to the symbolic role of Cracow in the life of the Poles.

Annexed by Austria in the latter half of the 19th century, Cracow from the outset recognized the uniqueness of its situation compared to the fate of the Russian-occupied sector of Poland, which was seized by repression and mourning after an unsuccessful uprising, and the Prussian-occupied sector of Poland, gripped at that time by progressive Germanization. The city quickly took on the role of the nation's spiritual capital, a place of integration for all Poles. Wawel Cathedral became a venue for symbolic royal funerals. The municipal district, supported by private funds throughout the Polish-speaking lands, took on the role of a surrogate state. At the turn of the century, the City of Cracow founded such institutions as the National Museum and the National Theatre. The acquisition of Wawel from the Austrian army provided Stanisław Wyspiański, the greatest turn-of-the-century Polish artist, with an opportunity to create a Neo-Romantic vision of Wawel Hill transformed into a Polish Acropolis to accommodate the central institutions of the non-existent state. In this way Cracow, to a partial extent, followed in the footsteps of its elder sisters, Prague and Budapest, which in the 19th century fulfilled, whilst still part of the Habsburg Monarchy, roles as national capitals in the modern sense of the word. In realizing this goal Cracow was helped by the historicist movement, which was the *Zeitgeist* and the legitimizing factor. The example of Cracow also shows that even lost metropolitan status can become a positive factor in generating further development.

However, this programme was also implemented as a consequence of a new political concept, adopted in the 60s by Polish conservative and land-owning circles – the so-called Austro-Polish solution. Cracow was to hold a special place in this strategy. Not only was it the only large Polish city (apart from Lwów) in which

⁶ Ibid., pp. 97-123.

national life was allowed to develop unrestrictedly after 1863, but also by force of its tradition and cultural legacy it was a unique place which was predestined to be the centre of conservative thought. Designated by the *Stańczyks* (a group of Cracow conservatives) the spiritual capital of the nation, Cracow became a historical symbol of the Poles' aspirations for independence. The success of such a solution was possible thanks to the political clout of Galician conservatives in the parliamentary system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy up till the outbreak of the First World War. Cracow's relations with Vienna and the Habsburg Monarchy also changed substantially. This change was symbolized by the triumphant visit of Franz Joseph I to Cracow. During this visit the emperor agreed to recognize Wawel – transformed by the Austrians into a citadel in 1846 – as one of his official residences. This made it possible to initiate long-term negotiations with the military authorities, as a result of which Wawel was bought from the Austrians, and their army withdrew from the one-time residence of the Polish kings.⁷

The development of Cracow at the turn of the century was beset with many contradictions. The systemic weakness of the city's economy was offset by Cracow's exceptional importance to the Poles. The function of the nation's spiritual capital was at variance with its function as a frontier fortress and provincial garrison for a foreign army. Seen from the perspective of Vienna, which was transformed into a great cosmopolitan metropolis at the turn of the century, Cracow was merely a medium sized peripheral city. Seen from a Polish state policy perspective, Cracow, poverty-stricken as it was, performed the function of the national capital of the non-existent Polish state. These and other contradictions determined the phenomenon and the unique situation of Cracow under Austrian rule.

At that time Cracow not only represented a Polish Athens, but also played a role of the Polish Piedmont. Whereas Lwów at the turn of the century primarily performed the function of the capital city of Galicia, the largest Austrian province, Cracow was primarily the main centre of integration of Polish national life. This role became even stronger after the revolution of 1905 was suppressed in the Kingdom. On the threshold of the First World War the most important political groups based their activities in Cracow. Józef Piłsudski was also active here. In August 1914 he marched out from Cracow at the head of Polish legions to fight for independence against Russia, but still on Austria's side. Four years later – on 31 October 1918 – Polish legionaries were in charge of disarming Austrian soldiers. It was in this way that the period of Austrian rule came to an end in Cracow. Austrian rule can be divided into two, if not three, clear stages – the first was repressive in nature, while the remaining two were based on liberalism and autonomy.

The early 1890s were for Cracow doubtless a turning point in the autonomous period. Two concurrent events formed a symbolic cut-off point: the opening of a new Municipal Theatre in Św. Ducha Square in October and Jan Matejko's death in November 1893.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

While Matejko was a symbol of Cracow in the second half of the 19th century, the new Theatre foretold and symbolized a new phase in the city's development, although in an aesthetic sense its architecture summarized the long lesson of 19th-century historicism rather than anticipated the nascent Art Nouveau movement. It was also no coincidence that Matejko as a representative of the receding era of intensified historicism and reverence for the past, a symbol of the declining importance of the Stańczyks, immediately took a stand against the idea of building – in place of a medieval monastery – a monumental Theatre building, which anticipated the force and modernity of capitalism approaching the city's gates (the Theatre was the first building in Cracow to have electric lighting!). Attention should also be paid to the antinomy between Matejko and his work on the one hand, and the cosmopolitanism and academic pomposity of the Theatre's architecture on the other, in which Siemiradzki's curtain was hung instead of master Jan's.

The new Theatre thus became not only a symbol of conflict between matter and spirit, but primarily a sign that Cracow had entered its metropolitan phase of development. In 1890 there were just 70,000 inhabitants living in Cracow (not including the army garrison) who were squeezed into an area of only 5.77 km².⁸ However, from the 1880s, despite the restrictions imposed by the military authorities, 16 boroughs surrounding Cracow, of which only industrial Podgórze enjoyed municipal status, began to develop rapidly. These areas should have been considered partly urbanized by then, partly because of their spatial arrangement, but perhaps mainly because of the functions they fulfilled and the professional profile of their inhabitants. On the threshold of the 20th century, it was written that “a great number of officials, functionaries of private institutions, professors and military men, who have posts and practise their profession in Cracow, live there because of the cheap price of flats, proximity to open areas, and cheaper food in Podgórze, Dębniki, Pólwie Zwierzynieckie, Czarna Wieś, Krowodrza, in the areas of Prądnik Czerwony closest to Cracow, and in Grzegórzki. In addition to the class of people mentioned above, the neighbouring boroughs are inhabited by many industrialists who have shops and business in Cracow [...]. All the working people of the suburban boroughs are workers and wage-earners in Cracow”.⁹

By 1900 the population of these 15 boroughs (excluding the city of Podgórze) amounted to 1/3 of Cracow's inhabitants and was growing rapidly.¹⁰

Cracow's phase of urban development after 1900 coincided with a clear crystallization of capitalist relations in Galicia. The plan to create a Greater Cracow, undertaken by the mayor of Cracow, Juliusz Leo, meant not only incorporating a dozen or so external boroughs and a considerable extension of the city's administrative

⁸ J. Purchla, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków* [How Modern Cracow Came into Being], p. 122.

⁹ *Wielki Kraków. Studia do sprawy przyłączenia gmin sąsiednich do miasta Krakowa*. [Greater Cracow. Studies on Connecting Neighbouring Boroughs to the City of Cracow]. Kraków 1905, p. 16.

¹⁰ J. Purchla, “W sprawie granic aglomeracji miejskich” [The Boundaries of Urban Agglomerations], *Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 41: 1980, pp. 284–286.

area (from 5.77 km² to 46.90 km²), but above all pushing Cracow onto a path of authentic capitalist development, based on industry, trade, transportation, and financial capital.¹¹ Implementation of these undertakings in 1909–1915 meant that the idea of maintaining Cracow as a non-industrial city was finally abandoned. This acceptance of greater dynamism and modernness at the turn of the century also created the need for rapid changes in social consciousness.

Early 20th-century Cracow was thus in the process of fundamental transformation. The hitherto dominant national perspective and force of tradition now confronted the rising stars of liberalism, universalism and cosmopolitanism, which triumphed towards the end of the multinational Habsburg state. Provincialization, stagnation and regressive social relations were challenged defiantly by the openness and dynamism of large-scale capitalist urbanization. The pervasive historicist attitude was set against modernism in a European dimension.

The Young Poland movement in Cracow not only represented a local variant of the universal response to historicism around 1900, but also the city's belated entry into the capitalist and metropolitan phase of development based on the achievements of liberalism. This entailed the need to overcome the quasi-feudal, clerical and paternalistic model of Cracow of the Stańczyks, one which was held in the clutches of the Austrian fortifications. This also entailed the intensification of conflicts and contradictions, including intellectual ones, as evidenced by what I wrote some years ago: "Basically, we should speak of several Cracows during this period – we have an aristocratic and clerical Cracow, that of *Czas* and the Stańczyks; the Cracow of the enlightened intelligentsia, the Cracow of the University and Academy of Learning; the Cracow of artists, academics and the avant-garde; Jewish Cracow, with its atmosphere of vibrant shops in Kazimierz; suburban Cracow with its unique folklore and, connected with it, working-class Cracow, ever increasing in size; the Cracow of the prudish middle classes and of the first socialist deputy, the people's tribune Ignacy Daszyński, who irritated the middle classes; fortress Cracow with numerous barracks and military units in them; and the Cracow of independence activists headed by Piłsudski. All those strands – different as they are – drawn together make up a compact whole. [...] This is why it is so difficult to provide a clear yet true picture of *fin de siècle* and *belle époque* Cracow."¹²

In this situation, complex and full of discrepancies, Cracow also became the most important centre of Polish architectural thinking in 1890–1914, despite the fact that Warsaw, Łódź, Lwów and Poznań were all better off economically, and were centres of more dynamic urban development and more intensive building activity. The primacy of Cracow and the creation of a strong architectural milieu in that city were based on the efflorescence of intellectual and artistic life on Wawel Hill rather

¹¹ Cf. C. Bąk-Koczarska, *Juliusz Leo – twórca Wielkiego Krakowa* [Juliusz Leo – the Creator of Greater Cracow], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1986.

¹² J. Purchla, "Liberalizm i symbolika a powstanie nowoczesnego Krakowa" [Liberalism and Symbolism vs. Creation of Modern Cracow]. In: *Kraków na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* [Cracow at the Turn of the Century], Kraków 1983, p. 116.

than on any building boom.¹³ For architects active in Cracow, the former capital of Poland was still a laboratory for artistic experiments rather than a fast-growing metropolis. Therefore, as a rule, any major construction design was chosen by competition, which provoked creative discussions that went beyond the confines of local concerns. After a period of consolidation and building influenced by various architectural schools (Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Paris), Cracow's architectural circles in the 19th century entered a stage of creativity, forming their own specific aesthetic. This was a result of both universal tendencies transposed from abroad and of the creative use of local tradition. This aesthetic distinguished Cracow favourably from other Polish cities, endowing it with a uniquely individual character.¹⁴

Of critical importance in the development of Cracow's architectural milieu were two competitions held in 1888 and 1889 to choose the design for the new building of the Municipal Theatre. They became not only the crowning artistic event in the history of Cracovian historicism and eclecticism, but were also a clear turning point in the formation of a strong architectural milieu. Competitions held to choose the design for the Theatre were preceded by a prolonged and stormy debate over the location of the new theatre. It clearly showed the lack of thinking along town-planning lines in Cracow at that time and the lack of mature urban development ideas.¹⁵

The Municipal Theatre, built in 1890–1893 according to the design of Cracow-born Jan Zawiejski (1854–1922), was the culmination and summary of the bombastic phase of historicism. It was also an eclectic work inspired by different sources. Comprehended in this way, the Cracow Theatre synthesized the achievements of late-19th-century Viennese, Parisian and German architecture, and at the same time reflected the capabilities of local artists and their state of aesthetic awareness.¹⁶

In Cracow historicism lasted longer and assumed a special character thanks to the combination of national and symbolic themes in Cracow on the brink of the First World War.¹⁷ The lack of independence gave rise to a cult-like worship of the glorious past and increased the desire for a national style in art and architecture, thus strengthening and prolonging the duration of historicism.

¹³ J. Purchla, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków* [How Modern Cracow Came into Being], passim.

¹⁴ J. Purchla, "Formowanie się środowiska architektów krakowskich w drugiej połowie XIX wieku" [Formation of the Kraków Architectural Milieu in the Second Half of the 19th Century]. *Rocznik Krakowski*. Vol. 54: 1988, pp. 117–136. (Cf. also: J. Purchla: "Cracow's Architectural Circle on the Turn of the 19th Century". In: *I Biennale Architektury. Kraków 1985*. Kraków [1989], pp. 11–18.)

¹⁵ L. Lameński, "Dzieje dwóch konkursów na projekt nowego teatru w Krakowie" [The History of the Two Competitions Held to Choose a Design for a New Theatre in Cracow], in: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 24: 1979, pp. 267–297.

¹⁶ J. Purchla, *Jan Zawiejski – architekt przełomu XIX i XX wieku* [Jan Zawiejski – an Architect from the Turn of the Century], Warszawa 1986; idem, *Teatr i jego architekt* [The Theatre and Its Architect], Kraków 1993.

¹⁷ Cf. the work of Cracow's leading architects during this period: Władysław Ekielski, Jan Zawiejski and Teodor Hoffmann.

The greatest personality of Cracow's late-19th-century architecture was undoubtedly Teodor Talowski (1857–1910). Thanks to his talent and boundless imagination he created his own, original language of forms from the borderline of historicism and nascent Art Nouveau and Modernism. Talowski produced most of his designs for wealthy landowners and the clergy. In Cracow in the early period of his career in 1887–1891, he created many elegant residential buildings. His tenement houses with their unbaked brick elevations – drawing inspiration from the northern Renaissance tradition – stand out in their expressive picturesqueness and even mysteriousness. The houses' architecture is complemented by various maxims inscribed on the facades and the greenery, which played a very important role for Talowski. To achieve an effect of greater expression, Talowski was eager to apply textural contrasts and asymmetry. His early work in Cracow goes beyond the aesthetic canons of orthodox historicism, anticipating the turning point that took place in Cracow architecture around 1900.¹⁸

When around 1895 Cracow became the centre of the Polish artistic avant-garde, a new literary and artistic movement, centred around Stanisław Przybyszewski, in its attempt to break with traditional middle-class culture also broke with historicism which symbolized that culture. The young artists already regarded themselves as a generation of modernists. Architects were among them.

The introduction of new decorative motifs was the initial method used to overcome historicism and eclecticism in architecture. This was the main form adopted by Cracow's Art Nouveau. Franciszek Mączyński (1874–1947) was the most prominent exponent of Cracow's Art Nouveau in architecture. As early as 1897–1898 Mączyński designed Art Nouveau architectural detail for the classicizing building of the District Savings Bank at 1 Pijarska Street, designed by Tadeusz Stryeński and Zygmunt Hendel. The Bank's interior is arguably the first example of Art Nouveau in Cracow's architecture.¹⁹ Mączyński also used Art Nouveau forms of expression and similar detail in the Bristol Hotel facade in Warsaw, a competition design he prepared in collaboration with Tadeusz Stryeński in 1898. Despite winning first prize, their project was never realized in practice.²⁰

¹⁸ Z. Beiersdorf, "Architekt Teodor Talowski" [Architect Teodor Talowski]. In: *Sztuka 2 poł. XIX wieku* [Art in the Second Half of the 19th Century], Warszawa 1973, pp. 199–214; W. Balus, "Historyzm, analogiczność, malowniczość. Rozważania o centralnych kategoriach twórczości Teodora Talowskiego (1857–1910)" [Historicism, Analogy, Picturesqueness. Reflections on Central Categories in the Work of Teodor Talowski (1857–1910)]. In: *Folia Historiae Artium*, 24, 1988, pp. 117–138; idem, *Dom-przybytek – "nastrój dawności". O kilku kamienicach Teodora Talowskiego* [The House-Sanctuary – "the Atmosphere of Old Times". On Teodor Talowski's Several Tenement Houses], in: *Klejnoty i sekrety Krakowa* [Cracow's Jewels and Secrets], ed. R. Godula, Kraków 1994, pp. 215–236.

¹⁹ L. Lameński, "Z dziejów środowiska architektonicznego Krakowa w latach 1879–1932. Tadeusz Stryeński i jego współpracownicy" [From the History of Cracow's Architectural Circles 1879–1932. Tadeusz Stryeński and his Collaborators], in: *Architektura XIX i początku XX wieku* [The Architecture of the 19th and Early 20th Century], Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 1991, p. 30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30; E. Pustola-Kozłowska, J. Pustola, *Hotel Bristol*, Warszawa 1985.

Mączyński's pavilion of the Fine Arts Society in Szczepański Square from 1898–1901 was the first programmatic work of Cracow's Art Nouveau. Its solid shape betrays some classicizing tendencies, yet its detail is clearly inspired by the "wire" style of the Viennese Secession. Mączyński's building was inspired by the work of Otto Wagner and the architecture of Josef Olbrich's Secession Pavilion in Vienna.²¹ The reconstruction of the nearby Stary Theatre building, carried out between 1903 and 1906, assumed the most spectacular character. It was the work of Tadeusz Stryjeński (1849–1942) and Franciszek Mączyński, who at that time cooperated with each other. The latter spent almost the whole of 1902 on a study tour of Germany, France and Italy.²²

Preserving the huge windows of the first floor, characteristic of 1840s Munich architecture, Stryjeński and Mączyński transformed with great intuition the facade of the Stary Theatre in Szczepański Square into a clearly Art Nouveau work. A wide foliated frieze, characteristic of the "Munich" style and running along under a prominent cornice, became the building's main highlight. The frieze, the work of Józef Gardecki, was clearly inspired by August Endell's designs. However, the importance of the Stary Theatre's reconstruction is not confined merely to its elevations. The architects completely reconstructed the building's interior, introducing, for the first time in Poland, a ferroconcrete structure to cover the concert hall. The victory of the new art was also symbolized by a freely shaped plan and interior decoration. Although historicizing elements were preserved and added (the attic), the reconstruction of the Stary Theatre may be regarded as the most organic example of Art Nouveau architecture in Cracow. Szczepański Square became its unquestionable centre.

Among several notable buildings constructed nearby during this period, mention should also be made of the 1904 pavilion of the "Drobnerion" cafe and restaurant, which no longer exists today. Designed by Jan Zawiejski, it echoed the Viennese school of Otto Wagner, and perhaps one of Guimard's métro pavilions in Paris.²³

In addition to the Fine Arts Society pavilion and the Stary Theatre, a third outstanding example of Art Nouveau architecture was the old headquarters of the Technical Society located at 28 Straszewskiego Street. It was designed in 1905–1906 by Sławomir Odrzywolski (1846–1933), who originated from the Berlin environment. Its distinguishing characteristic is the consistently asymmetrical outline of the interior and facade and the clear desire of the designer to reduce decorative elements. The whole composition was based on a contrast between the noble simplicity of elevation, faced with white glazed brick, the varied asymmetric window openings, and the sculptural and mosaic decoration, which were limited to selected areas.²⁴

²¹ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej 1900–1925* [New Form in Polish Architecture 1900–1925], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1967, p. 58.

²² K. Nowacki, *Architektura krakowskich teatrów* [The Architecture of Theatres in Cracow], Kraków 1982, pp. 237–265.

²³ J. Purchla, *Jan Zawiejski...*, pp. 152–156 and 293.

²⁴ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej...* [New Form in Polish Architecture...], pp. 58–59.

In addition to the above-mentioned examples and a number of other works by leading turn-of-the-century Cracovian architects (Franciszek Mączyński, Sławomir Odrzywolski, Tadeusz Stryjeński and Jan Zawiejski), mention should also be made of the work in Cracow of the Austrian military architect, Max Hofman (1878–1917). Among his many works is the 1909–1910 reconstruction of the neo-Renaissance officers' mess. Its interior, preserved until the present day, is the standard example of the Viennese Secession style in Cracow.²⁵

The myth of Cracow as the capital of the Polish Art Nouveau may be disappointing in view of the small number of clear examples of this new style. For many Cracovian architects – especially from the generation raised in the historicist tradition – Art Nouveau was just another period costume, and often a pretext for extending the eclectic palette of decorative motifs. Hence architects in Cracow after 1900 most often adopted an eclectic combination of historical forms mixed with Art Nouveau decoration and folk motifs as well as a clear tendency towards modernity. This approach was exemplified by Jan Zawiejski, Sławomir Odrzywolski and Władysław Ekielski (1855–1927), who had worked in Cracow since the 1880s.

An important example of this attitude is the Academy of Commerce, which Zawiejski designed and built in Cracow in 1904–1906. This architectural work was categorized as “Romantic/Art Nouveau”. To make it appear Art Nouveau in style, Zawiejski made use of the classical repertoire of late-historicist structural elements, which gives the building a glimmering and dynamic feel. This apparent turn of Cracow architects towards new forms, while at the same time maintaining the historical forms and canons, is seen perfectly when we compare the elevation of the Academy of Commerce with that of the adjacent House of the Technical Society designed by Sławomir Odrzywolski during the same period.²⁶

An even more conservative attitude was adopted by Zawiejski's contemporary and colleague, Władysław Ekielski, from the Viennese school of Heinrich von Ferstel.²⁷ The extravagant design of the architect's own 1899 house located at 40 Pilsudskiego Street was intended to herald the coming century. In fact it became a monument to late-19th-century eclecticism. Composed almost exclusively of Polish Renaissance motifs, it forms a picturesque whole, deeply embedded in the tradition of historicism. In 1906–1909 the same architect built an imposing tenement at 26 Grodzka Street. Its facade was composed of modernized elements taken from Cracow's Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture as well as from folk architecture.²⁸ Ekielski's work is a good example of the fact that the majority of Cracow's turn-of-

²⁵ Z. Beiersdorf, “Kasyno oficerskie w Krakowie” [Officers' Mess in Cracow], in: *Sztuka Krakowa i Galicji w wieku XIX* [The Art of Cracow and Galicia in the 19th Century], Kraków 1991, pp. 128–132.

²⁶ J. Purchla, *Jan Zawiejski...*, p. 294.

²⁷ J. Purchla, “Architekci krakowscy na Politechnice Wiedeńskiej w XIX wieku [Cracow Architects at the Vienna Polytechnic in the 19th Century], in: *Architektura XIX i początku XX wieku* [The Architecture of the 19th and Early 20th Century], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1991, pp. 9–21.

²⁸ G. Grajewski, “Poszukiwania stylu narodowego w twórczości Władysława Ekielskiego (1855–1927)” [The Search for a National Style in the Work of Władysław Ekielski (1855–

the-century architects were more concerned with looking for a national style than with new architectural forms.

The monumental building of the Industrial School from 1907–1913, based on the design of Sławomir Odrzywolski, is regarded as the best attempt to reconcile Art Nouveau and the desire to create a national Polish style. Tadeusz Dobrowolski wrote that it represents “the essence of eclectic Cracow Art Nouveau, as it is composed of its most typical elements: brick and stone, Venetian arched windows, Gothic brick friezes in a rhombus layout, triangular side gables, the richly developed gable of the central projection, adorned with Art Nouveau and folk floral ornamentation, and a weird top with the highlanders’ sun motif”.²⁹

This movement even left its imprint in the 1906 competition winning Czynciel House located next to St. Mary’s Church on Market Square. Built in 1907–1908 by Ludwik Wojtyczko (1874–1949), the design again endeavoured to “reconcile” Art Nouveau and motifs taken from the Renaissance tradition and folk art, and, some critics have argued, from Orthodox Church art as well.³⁰

Cracow’s Art Nouveau not only should not be detached from its historical roots, but also from the fact that it was mainly executed in the context of utilitarian art. The revival of crafts and the integration of art were also the principal demands of the Young Poland movement and were most fully accomplished in Cracow. These ideas were promoted by *Architekt*, a monthly published in Cracow since 1900. Cracow’s architects were also active in the “Polish Applied Art” Society, founded in 1901, and later in the Cracow Workshop. Both groups were based on the English Arts and Crafts tradition.³¹ The most outstanding artists of the Young Poland movement, e.g. Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907) and Józef Mehoffer (1869–1946), created many splendid interior designs. It may be said that Cracow’s Art Nouveau acquired its fullest and most individual expression in these interior designs.

Wyspiański himself played a very important role in the integration of art. He was one of the founders of the “Polish Applied Art” Society, which created new forms of stylization in the ornamental Art Nouveau spirit on the basis of folk art. Wyspiański designed interiors, furniture, polychromies and stained-glass windows. He helped to revive polychromy and glass painting as an art. The interior of the Medical Society House of 1904 is Wyspiański’s most accomplished execution of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* idea. The railing of the staircase, based on the chestnut leaves

1927), in: *Sztuka Krakowa i Galicji w wieku XIX* [The Art of Cracow and Galicia in the 19th Century], Kraków 1991, pp. 114–115 and 118–119.

²⁹ T. Dobrowolski, *Sztuka Młodej Polski* [The Art of Young Poland], Warszawa 1963, p. 71.

³⁰ J. Purchla, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków* [How Modern Cracow Came into Being], p. 77; A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej...* [New Form in Polish Architecture...], p. 60.

³¹ I. Huml, *Warsztaty Krakowskie* [The Cracow Workshop], Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1973; idem, *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku* [Polish Applied Art in the 20th Century], Warszawa 1978, pp. 9–64.

motif, became one of the symbols of Cracow's Art Nouveau. Wyspiański also introduced new art into historical church interiors. He helped restore the medieval Church of the Franciscans in Cracow, which contains his best stained-glass work, the monumental composition, *God the Creator*.³²

The efflorescence of Cracow's glass painting industry at the turn of the century well illustrates the importance of this artistic centre. Stanisław Żeleński's Stained-Glass Workshop became particularly noted for its high artistic standards. Thanks to its very high artistic and technical standards, the company produced works not only for the local and Austrian markets, but also for Germany, Russia, Romania and even both Americas. The high artistic standard of the workshop was ensured by cooperating artists associated with the "Polish Applied Arts" Society, including Stanisław Wyspiański, Józef Mehoffer, Karol Frycz, Jan Bukowski, Henryk Uziębło, Wojciech Jastrzębowski and Kazimierz Sichulski.³³

The most accomplished achievement of Cracow's interior architecture from the early 20th century was the meeting room of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry located at 1 Długa Street from 1905. It was designed by the painter Józef Mehoffer, Wyspiański's colleague since his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. He is noted for designing the monumental complex of stained-glass windows in Fribourg Cathedral in Switzerland, a project he began in 1906.³⁴ Mehoffer's Chamber meeting room echoed the local tradition of wooden church interiors. Borrowing motifs from folk art, the artist created a uniform, clearly Art Nouveau styled, interior.³⁵ Also strongly inspired by folk art were the Art Nouveau interiors of the Sary Theatre, designed in 1896 by a group of artists from the "Polish Applied Arts" Society. A different form was given to the interior of the "Jama Michalika" cafe at Floriańska Street, a meeting place of Young Poland artists and the site of the "Green Balloon" cabaret. Their designer, Karol Frycz, a graduate of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna, was obviously influenced by Charles Rennie Mackintosh – the father of the Art Nouveau movement in Glasgow.

Among many other outstanding interiors illustrating the high standard of Cracow's Art Nouveau, attention may also be drawn to the 1909 interior design of the Chamber of Craftsmen at 9 Św. Anny Street (Rajmund Meus, Bronisław Górski, Henryk Uziębło), the hot-air baths at 9 Św. Sebastiana Street from 1912 (Józef

³² H. Blum, *Stanisław Wyspiański*, Warszawa 1969.

³³ D. Czapczyńska, "Świeckie witraże w Krakowie. Uwagi o działalności krakowskich zakładów witrażowniczych od końca XIX wieku do roku 1939" [Secular Stained-Glass Windows in Cracow. Notes on the Work of Cracow's Glass Painting Workshops from the End of the 19th Century to 1939], *Rocznik Krakowski*, 53, 1987, pp. 142 and 143; cf. also K. Pawłowska, *Witraże w kamienicach krakowskich z przełomu wieków XIX i XX* [Stained-Glass Windows in Cracow's Tenement Buildings from the Turn of the Century], Kraków 1994.

³⁴ T. Adamowicz, *Witraże fryburskie Józefa Mehoffera* [Józef Mehoffer's Stained-Glass Windows in Freiburg], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Lódź, 1982.

³⁵ Z. Beiersdorf, J. Purchla, *Dom pod Globusem – dawna siedziba krakowskiej Izby Handlowej i Przemysłowej* [The Globe House – the Former Headquarters of the Cracow Chamber of Commerce and Industry], Kraków 1988.

Pakies and Waclaw Krzyżanowski) and the prestigious interior of the new part of the Cracow Municipal Office from 1906–1913 (Jan Rzymkowski). Art Nouveau elements also made their way into many historical church interiors during restoration work. Introduction by Sławomir Odrzywolski around 1905 of Art Nouveau finials to the partition wall of the ambulatory in Wawel Cathedral became the most spectacular example of this phenomenon.

The modernist movement began to develop alongside Art Nouveau, which enjoyed its heyday in Cracow around 1905. A decisive role here was again played by the partnership of very active architects, Tadeusz Stryjeński and Franciszek Mączyński. Alongside the Art Nouveau reconstruction of Stary Theatre, they completed several other projects in Cracow. Worthy of note among these are the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, located at 1 Długa Street and the Convent Church of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns at 40 Łobzowska Street.

The characteristic building of the Chamber of Commerce, accentuated by a globe-capped tower at one of its corners, is perhaps the best example of the search in Cracow for a new form and of the artistic dilemmas associated with this search, and clearly heralds the advent of Modernism. The cubist-like and asymmetrical form of the Chamber, made of unbaked brick, although influenced by the tradition of picturesque historicism, is a modernist design in the full sense of the word. These characteristics and the free application of Romanist and Gothic forms make the Cracow Chamber of Commerce and Industry a similar structure to Hendrik Petrus Berlage's Amsterdam Exchange, which was opened in 1903. The Chamber's building again concentrates two divergent themes: the cubist modernism of the structure and the Art Nouveau style of the decoration, also inspired by the local folk art tradition. In addition to the above-mentioned meeting room, designed by Józef Mehoffer, Art Nouveau ornamentation was also placed in all the prestigious interiors of the building. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is Cracow's best example of the Modernist demand that a work of art should be uniform, and combines the splendid achievements of architecture, painting, sculpture and applied art.³⁶

The Convent Church of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, built one year earlier, also reveals the desire of its designers to achieve a cubist effect. This effect was achieved thanks to strongly modernized neo-Romanist forms and the austerity of the unbaked brick. The architects employed a similar aesthetic in their 1905 design of the Discalced Carmelite Monastery in Rakowicka Street.³⁷ This tendency was continued in Cracow by Teodor Talowski's student, Roman Bandurski (d. 1949) and Ludwik Wojtyczko. They built the neighbouring brick buildings located at 21 (the "Pod Sową" House – Bandurski, 1907) and 23 Aleje Krasińskiego (Żeleński's Stained-Glass Workshop – Wojtyczko, 1906–1907), echoing in a way Henry van de Velde's work.³⁸ Another joint step in Stryjeński and Mączyński's way towards Modernism was the 1910 building of the Union Clinic at 11 Gamcarska Street. According to A. K. Olszewski,

³⁶ Z. Beiersdorf, J. Purchla, *Dom pod Globusem...* [The Globe House...], passim.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁸ T. Dobrowolski, *Sztuka Młodej Polski* [The Art of Young Poland], pp. 66–67.

it had the “character of an interim stage on the architecture’s way from decoration to pure solid shape”.³⁹

The supreme achievement of Polish Modernism was the construction by Tadeusz Stryeński in 1908–1914 of the Museum of Technology and Industry in Cracow (9 Smoleński Street), and especially its 1908 elevation. According to Adam Milobędzki, “The structural fabric of this elevation, which corresponded to the bays of a ferroconcrete skeleton, was the work of Tadeusz Stryeński. It was supplemented with folk and even historical elements, which were exposed to a puristic, sharp-edged stylization, whose expression was almost constructivist. This ‘anti-decoration’, which was present here on such a monumental scale, was the work not of an architect but of two painters: Józef Czajkowski and Wojciech Jastrzębowski. Both were among the most active promoters of ‘applied art’ and the related modernist current of Cracow architecture”.⁴⁰

At the same time Stryeński’s partner, Franciszek Mączyński, executed his 1909 design for the monumental Jesuit Church in Kopernika Street. Its architecture symbolizes the permanence of a movement based on an updated interpretation of historical forms, accompanied by a clear desire to achieve a picturesque effect.⁴¹ This was also confirmed by a 1909 competition, held by the “Polish Applied Arts” Society to choose a design for a new parish church in Limanowa. Apart from the avant-garde and fully modernistic design of the Cracovian Karol Tichy (1871–1939), most of the submitted designs, including the winning entry by an architect from Warsaw, Zdzisław Mączyński, were inclined towards a picturesque and “native” interpretation of modernized historical forms.⁴²

A peculiar yardstick of the popularity of various architectural movements on the eve of the First World War was the residential housing built in Cracow after 1910. The middle-class tenement house was still the dominant type. Designs reminiscent of Art Nouveau forms, such as Sławomir Odrzywolski’s Małachowski House (36 Piłsudskiego Street, 1907–1908) were very rare. Modernistic designs based on a much simplified version of Classicism were also an exception. These included Karol Tichy’s own house at 2 Na Groblach Square (1912) and Cybulska’s tenement house

³⁹ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej...* [New Form in Polish Architecture...], p. 71.

⁴⁰ A. Milobędzki, *Zarys dziejów architektury w Polsce* [An Outline of Architecture in Poland], Warszawa 1978, p. 304. For a discussion of the building, see also: Z. Beiersdorf, “Muzeum Techniczno-Przemysłowe w Krakowie” [The Museum of Technology and Industry in Cracow], *Rocznik Krakowski*, 57, 1991, pp. 129–164.

⁴¹ L. Kontkowski, “Jezuicki kościół Serca Jezusa w Krakowie” [The Jesuit Church of the Sacred Heart in Cracow], *Nasza Przeszłość*, 64, 1985, pp. 113–165; idem, *Jezuicki kościół Serca Jezusa w Krakowie* [The Jesuit Church of the Sacred Heart in Cracow], Kraków 1994.

⁴² J. Wroński, “Krakowski konkurs architektoniczny na projekt kościoła dla Limanowej” [Cracow’s Architectural Competition to Choose a Design for a Church in Limanowa]. in: *Sztuka Krakowa i Galicji w wieku XIX* [The Art of Cracow and Galicia in the 19th Century], Kraków 1991, pp. 137–160.

at 13 Zwierzyniecka Street, designed in 1912 by Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883–1948). Cracow's landscape was somewhat dominated by the intermediate form, which was established in the historicist tradition and had strongly modernistic forms, sometimes with post-Art Nouveau decorative details. Among the best examples of this type of architecture are Jan Zawiejski's own house at 2 Biskupia Street (1909–1910), the elegant houses designed by Teodor Hoffmann (1874–1959) at 34 (1910) and 38 (1910–1912) Szpitalna Street and at 1 Studencka Street (1911–1912), or the designs of the partnership of Józef Pakies (1858–1923) and Wacław Krzyżanowski (1881–1954) at 32 Szpitalna Street (1908–1909) and 1 Basztowa Street (1908–1910). Other architects working in Cracow at that time expressed themselves using similar forms.⁴³

The achievements of the Cracow school and its experiments with a national style and modernism culminated in the Cracow Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in a Garden Setting organized in 1912 by the Polish Applied Arts Society. At the same time, it was an attempt to transplant the idea of the English garden-city into a Polish context. All leading Cracovian architects took part in the exhibition. The exhibition was a success not only because it summarized the achievements of the Cracow school and confirmed its primacy in Polish architecture, but, perhaps above all, because it finally set the fashion for the Polish country estate as a constructive proposal for a compromise between modernism and nativeness. The idea of the Polish country estate not only satisfied the Romantic need for national architecture and the aesthetic demands of modernism, but also got to the heart of social needs. It became a universal proposal for solving the housing problem, and at the same time reconciled new forms with national tradition.⁴⁴

The exhibition of 1912 also reflected the growing interest of Cracow circles in town-planning issues. This interest sprang, among other things, from the gradual development of Cracow into a large city. It was also related to the evacuation of the Austrian garrison from Wawel Hill in 1905 and to the partial liquidation of the internal fortification line of the Cracow fortress on the western side. This opened the way for new construction projects.

In 1904 Stanisław Wyspiański, with the help of Władysław Ekielski, began work on an exceptionally bold project they called "Acropolis", the aim of which was to transform Wawel Hill into the hub of Polish political and cultural life. This was an altogether visionary idea. It set the precedent for undertaking urban development on a large scale and was foreshadowed by a competition announced in 1908 to design a small colony of houses in Salwator. This was the first competition of its kind in Poland. It provoked a stormy debate among architects, and resulted in a model design which recalled the English garden-city concept. A year later a Greater Cracow regulation plan competition was announced. Its outcome in 1910 may be considered the beginning of modern planning in Poland. Many important principles were established during the

⁴³ J. Purchla, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków* [How Modern Cracow Came into Being], passim.

⁴⁴ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej...* [New Form in Polish Architecture...], pp. 68–70.

competition, including the urban zoning principle. The competition itself was the stage for a very creative comparison between different European urban planning schools on Polish soil. As many as nine works were submitted. The standard was considered high by the jury. In the designs entered in the competition, Krzysztof K. Pawłowski sees “elements of German school functionalism and motifs of geometric French plans, [...] echoes of Sitte’s doctrine and attempts to implement Howard’s idea of garden-cities”. But the desire to preserve the city’s unique character predominated, as is indicated by the design of the winning team: Józef Czajkowski, Władysław Ekielski, Tadeusz Stryjeński, Ludwik Wojtyczko and Kazimierz Wyczyński.⁴⁵

The competition to design the plan for Greater Cracow confirmed the supremacy of Cracow’s modern urban planning and Polish architectural thought. It also confirmed its unique role as a laboratory, in which the principles of modern Polish architecture were formed in the context of foreign influences. The “Cracow School”, formed just before the First World War, continued its work in the first years of independence, achieving its greatest successes outside Cracow.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ K. K. Pawłowski: “Początki polskiej nowoczesnej myśli urbanistycznej” [The Beginnings of Modern Polish Town-planning Thought]. In: *Sztuka około 1900* [Art Around 1900]. Warszawa 1969, pp. 67–81.

⁴⁶ The most important achievements of the Cracow school in the inter-war period included the imposing church of St. Roch in Białystok designed by Oskar Sosnowski and the pavilion of the Glass Works Union at the General Polish Exhibition in Poznań. The development of geometric decorativeness, characteristic of the Cracow school, culminated in the Polish exposition at the World Expo in Paris in 1925. The success of the Polish pavilion designed by Józef Czajkowski and groups descended from the Cracow circle architects resulted in the “Cracow school” being acknowledged as the obligatory national style.

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z wkreśleniem nowo powstałych ulic.

Rysował K. Włocławski.



Pałacowski



Wawel



Pałacowski
(Widok z ulicy)



Pomnik Ofiarom
(Widok z ulicy)

15. Map of Cracow from c. 1900



16. Cracow. Jan Zawiejski, Municipal Theatre on Św. Ducha Square, 1888–1893

17. Cracow. Teodor Talowski, houses on Retoryka Street, 1887–1890





18. Cracow. Tadeusz Stryjeński and Zygmunt Hendel, staircase on the ground floor of the District Savings Bank, 1 Pijarska Street, 1897–1899

19. Cracow. Franciszek Maczyński, pavilion of the Friends of the Fine Arts Society on Szczepański Square, 1898–1901





20. Cracow. Tadeusz Stryjeński and Franciszek Mączyński, the Sary Theatre after its reconstruction, 1903–1906



21. Cracow. Sławomir Odrzywolski, School of Industry, 5 Aleja Mickiewicza, 1907–1913

22. Cracow. Stanisław Wyspiański, staircase of the Medical Society, 4 Radziwiłłowska Street





23. Cracow. Stanisław Wyspiański,
stained-glass window *God the Creator* in the Franciscan Church, 1904



24. Cracow. Józef Mehoffer, meeting room of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry,
1 Długa Street, 1905



25. Cracow. Karol Frycz, "Jama Michalika" café,
45 Floriańska Street, 1910



26. Cracow. Tadeusz Stryjeński and Franciszek Mączyński, Chamber of Commerce and Industry,
1 Długa Street, 1904–1906



27. Cracow. Tadeusz Stryjeński and Franciszek Mączyński, chapel and nunnery of the Discalced Carmelites, 40 Łobzowska Street, 1903–1905



28. Cracow. Ludwik Wojtyczko,
 Żeleński Stained-Glass Window Workshop,
 23 Aleja Krasińskiego, 1906–1907



29. Cracow. Tadeusz Stryjeński
 and Józef Czajkowski,
 Museum of Technology and Industry,
 9 Smoleńsk Street, 1908–1914



30. Cracow. Franciszek Mączyński, Jesuit Church, 26 Kopernika Street, 1907–1912 (1921)



31. Cracow. Jan Zawiejski,
his own house "Jasny Dom",
2 Biskupia Street, 1909-1910



32. Józef Czajkowski, a theatre building at the Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors
in a Garden Setting in Oleandry in Cracow, 1912.



33. Stanisław Wyspiański and Władysław Ekielski,
Wawel Acropolis, 1904

