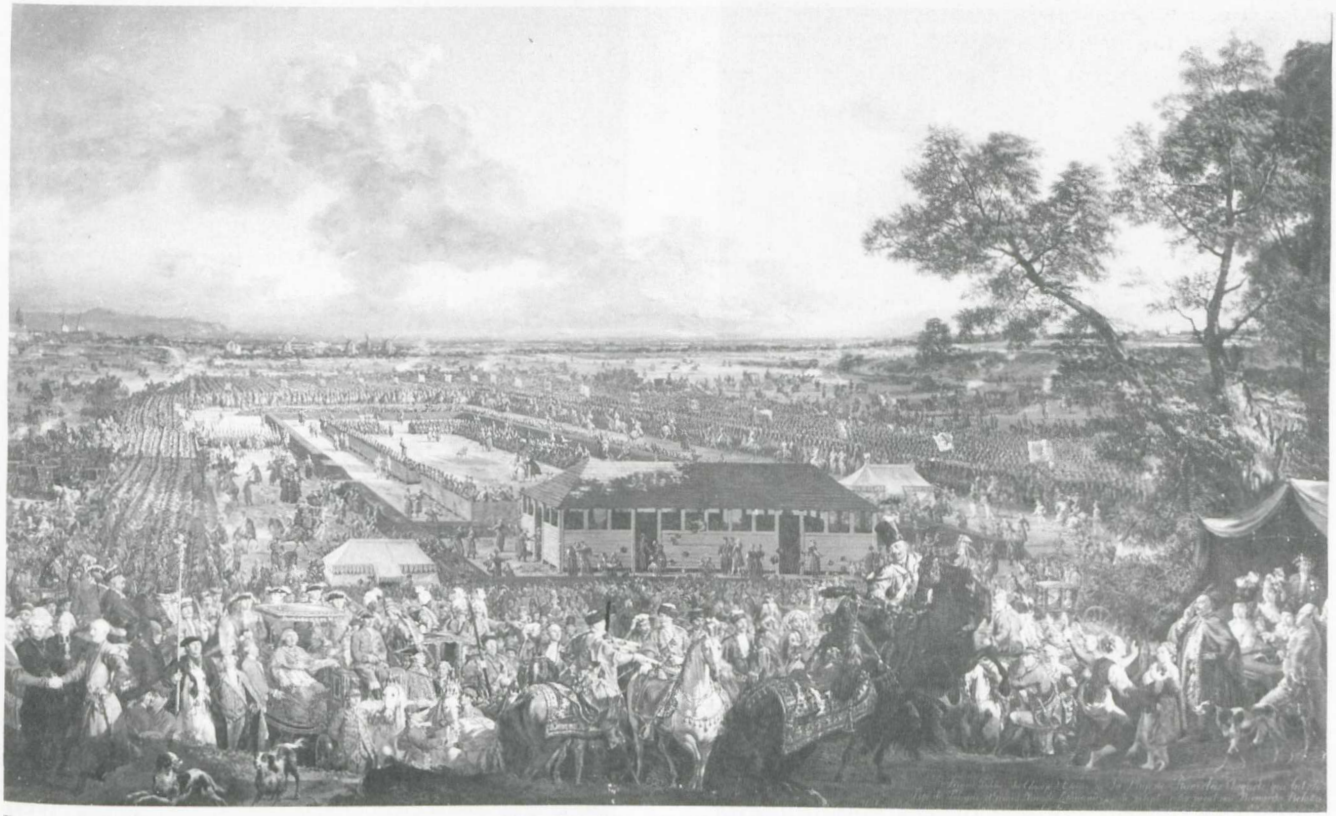
Originalveröffentlichung in: Bomford, Kate (Hrsg.): Treasures of a Polish king : Stanislaus August as patron and collector, London 1992, S. 23-36
Online-Veröffentlichung auf ART-Dok (2025), DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/artdok.00009876

Stanislaus Augustus as Patron of the Arts

Andrzej Rottermund



Bernardo Bellotto, *Election of Stanislaus Augustus*, 1778 (Royal Castle, Warsaw)

Stanislaus as Patron

The role of Stanislaus Augustus as a patron has been portrayed by scholars in various ways. He has been presented as an Apollo, an aesthete sensitive to changes in fashion but with a refined personal taste, whose failure as a statesman was balanced by his success as a patron. It has been suggested also that while employing foreign artists, he aimed to create a truly Polish art, assembling art collections for the use of the public. In fact, Stanislaus epitomised the Neo-classical patron, who through his intimate understanding of the creative process was able to establish a productive relationship with the artist.

The Polish court differed fundamentally from its European counterparts because of the curtailment of royal authority in favour of the wide-ranging powers of Parliament (the Seym), and the State's lack of executive power. The ideology of 'golden freedom' , involving a sense of the equality of those of noble birth and a dislike for central authority, made the gentry hostile to centralised power on the model of Versailles, Vienna or Madrid. The court in Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries always had to compete with the nobility though successive monarchs worked hard to strengthen their position and to raise the prestige of their court. The public persona of the King always generated respect, but the most important factor

Friedrich Anton Lohrmann after Marcello Bacciarelli, *Stanislaus Augustus after an attempt on his life*, 1788 (Royal Castle, Warsaw)

drawing the gentry *en masse* towards the Crown was the King's power of patronage within the public sphere and the court. These two elements became the object of bitter conflict between King and gentry.

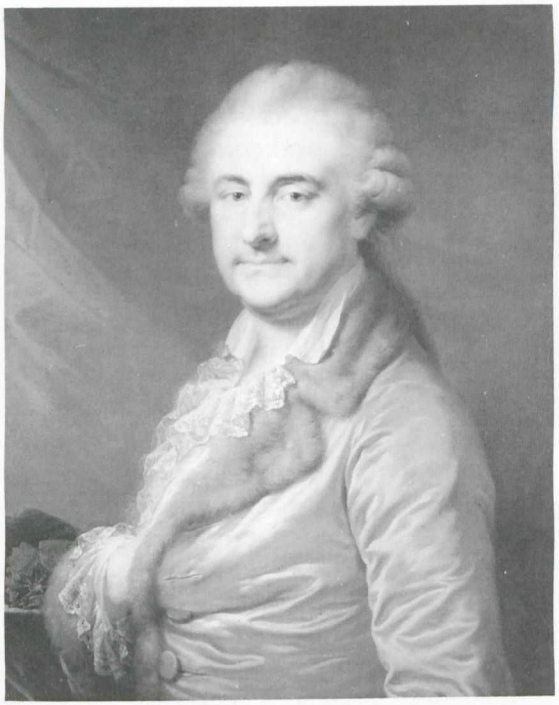
For the nobility, public offices and honours were lifetime goals, satisfying personal ambitions and generating respect. For the King this was a method of gaining support. In his memoirs Stanislaus quoted his uncle Augustus Czartoryski who urged him to base his power on the support not of the leading noble families but on those of secondary rank. During the Seym of 1772 members of the Poninski and Sulkowski families attacked the King's right to distribute honours and it was then that Stanislaus lost the right to appoint ministers, senators and army officers, retaining only the power to fill ambassadorial posts and lesser posts in the civil service. The court, although considerably weakened, continued to be feared by the majority of the gentry, almost obsessively wary of any absolutist inclinations on the part of their sovereign. Magnates with close ties to the court, and royal favourites, became unpopular and were treated warily. Courtiers influenced in their daily life by European habits and fashions, were viewed with suspicion. During the reign of Stanislaus the court's standing in the perception of many of the gentry fell even lower owing to the political situation of the country, in which it appeared the centre of a hostile foreign and internal policy.

As anti-court feeling grew, the monarch and his advisers made efforts to counter this process. The propaganda role of the court grew in times of crisis. Developing this function and raising the prestige of Warsaw as the seat of centralised royal authority became essential to the King's programme. The King took care to maintain the structure of the court as well as its architectural and artistic programme. His goal was to overshadow the magnates, disseminate his political and social ideas and create a centre of cultural life.

Stanislaus possessed an exceptional ability to establish intimate contact with artists, closing the gulf between himself and his subordinates. His relations with Bacciarelli are an example. When the artist was travelling in Italy, the King wrote to him '*How I wish I could give you wings, so that you would return more quickly.*'[1] Bacciarelli was one of the better paid officials at the court: he received a salary and funds for a carriage, an apartment, fuel, theatre tickets, and various honours and gifts. The artist was able to build for himself, on land given by the King, a beautiful summer residence near Lazienki; he also received two large estates from the King.

The King maintained equally close links with other artists in his service, whom he met each Wednesday at 'Italian breakfasts', organised exclusively for the benefit of artists and those involved with his artistic ventures. '*Yesterday the king ate breakfast with architects only and Italian painters...And then he questioned Abrysy for two hours. Presumably, these are not the first Italian breakfasts given...*' wrote an observer in 1782.[2]

Conflicts did, however, exist between the King and his artistic entourage. '*There were too many chiefs: Merlini, Moszynski and the king himself.*



Above: Giovanni Battista Lampi the Elder, *Portrait of Stanislaus Augustus in his dressing-gown*, c.1790 (National Museum, Warsaw). Below: Per Krafft the Elder, *Portrait of Stanislaus Augustus in the uniform of the Cadet Corps*, 1767–68 (National Museum, Warsaw).

Perhaps also too many artists – Merlini and Szreger were not a well chosen pair. Finally, the king himself was a soul in eternal motion, always wishing to try new things and have everything new himself at once.'[3] A letter from the King dated 4 September 1784 illustrates his close involvement in the creative process: '*Will the four statues in the Lazienki elevation be ready to be put up soon? Is the road in Ujazdow ready yet? Have Zawadski' s workers started upon the new dining hall at Lazienki? When will Plersch finally start work for me or for my sister? Has Kamsetzer completed the drawings of the Castle? Have the stones necessary to finish the steps and elevation of the Lazienki palace arrived or at least are they on the way? The two bridges west of Lazienki, has work on them started? Has the Chinese bridge east of Lazienki been covered yet? ...that's all for today, my caro Marcello. You know how much I like you and that I have liked you for the last twenty-five years. You may be sure that this will not change. Give my regards to Le Brun, Tokarski, Bing and the rest at the atelier. S. A. R.*'[4]

The King tried to impose his own artistic vision on Victor Louis, still little known in the 1760s, as well as on some of the most famous artists of the time, including Boucher, Carle Van Loo and Mengs. He viewed the pure architecture of the French revolutionaries with reserve, remaining until the end of his life a lover of the forms created by Bacciarelli. He continued to commission artists to execute schemes to his own designs, reflecting the concepts which as a young man he had learnt in the salon of Mme Geoffrin. An example was the *Apotheosis of Pope Pius VI* which the King wanted Mengs to paint and for which he prepared a detailed plan in the Baroque manner still current in official art. Mengs did not accept the commission. The King paid meticulous attention to the details of the compositions he was ordering and to their colour scheme, and expected his demands to be met. For this reason he selected artists whose talents were suited to particular projects. A typical example was the pendant to a battle canvas by Le Bourguignone. In 1769 the King commissioned Francesco Casanova, then living in Paris, to paint this picture, providing him with

Follower of Jean Marc Nattier, *Portrait of Madame Geoffrin*, c.1740 (National Museum, Warsaw; Lazienki)

a sketch of Le Bourguignone's paintings and a description of the theme of the new work, a *Skirmish between a Turk and a Hussar*: *'I would like Casanova's painting to have light falling from the right towards the left in order that it present an opposite to the one already in my possession.'*[5] He showed even greater precision in preparing the paintings for the Knights' Hall in the Royal Castle, providing not only guide lines for the composition and colour of particular paintings, but quoting appropriate historical passages, accompanied by his own comments. In this respect Stanislaus Augustus reminds us of the greatest royal patrons, the Medici and Louis XIV.

What distinguished Stanislaus from other monarchs was the role he assigned to art and culture in his political programme. Unable to implement an independent foreign or internal policy, he hoped to create a broad education programme for his people. He wanted to prepare the nation for fundamental reform and to educate an administrative élite, developing Polish national consciousness of patriotic and civil virtues, and awakening aspirations towards a strong state.

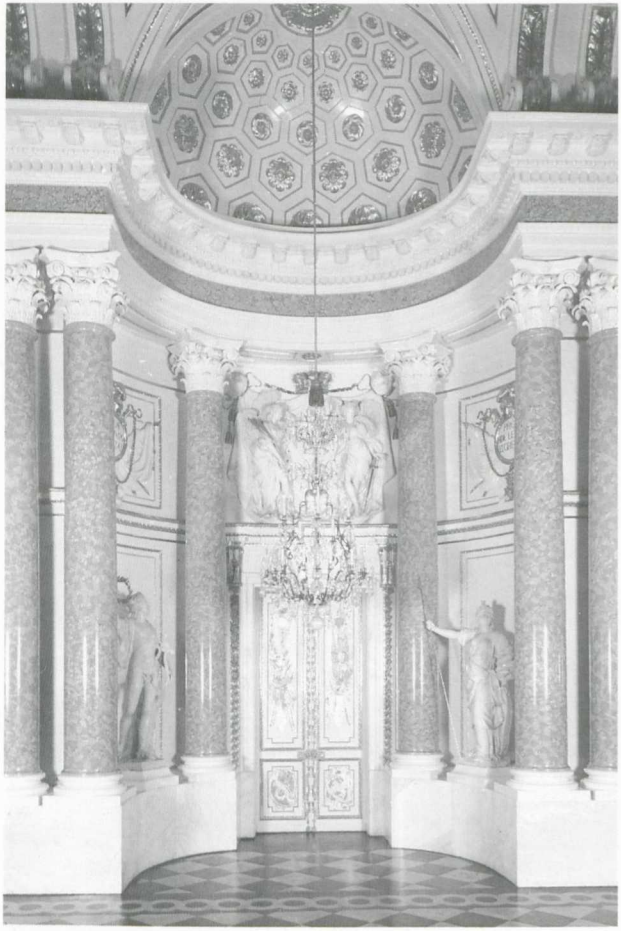
The climate of mid-18th century Poland, used to the Baroque, was not receptive to Neoclassicism. The art created under the direction of the King was, however, governed by several elements. These included Classical academic architecture; a Romantic vision of Antiquity derived from Piranesi; fascination with the rediscovery of ancient Greece and Rome; Picturesque ideas, emerging from England; ideals drawn from Laugier, such as the abandonment in art of the accidental and unnecessary; and the influence of such writers as Le Camus de Mezières. In addition to Italian, French and English ideas, the King's ties with the court of St Petersburg were also important. During his stay there Poniatowski must have been impressed by the artistic means used by the court to stress authority and to propagate political concepts. There he learnt what a monarch's residence could be, a lesson not available to the same extent elsewhere. An innate taste allowed Poniatowski to draw freely on everything he had discovered, and to create a highly individual and eclectic Neoclassicism. This found its most visible expression in the buildings designed after 1764: the Royal Castle, Ujazdow and Lazienki.

The Great Hall in the Royal Castle (1777–81) is the best example of the King's endeavours to create architectural unity. It was the heart of the residence, where court and state ceremony met, and it formed the centre of royal power. The public character of this interior allowed a forceful demonstration of the idea of authority: through the hall's size, the rich materials used and the fine works of art. The ceremonial character of such an interior required, according to Le Camus de Mezières, refined decoration and exquisite furnishings.

The King first invited Louis and Plersch to design the room. Their plans represented different artistic modes, on the one hand

Lazienki Palace, North elevation, 1788

Lazienki Palace, South elevation, 1784



Royal Castle, the Great Hall, 1777–81

religious and heroic, on the other secular and courtly. The King was searching for a form of artistic expression suitable for such various functions as an audience hall and ballroom, and a place for court gatherings and dinners, concerts and ceremonies. A decade later new designs were made by all the most prominent architects of the time: Merlini, Plersch, Szreger, Zug and Zawadski, but none of their plans satisfied the King. Merlini's proposal was used as a framework for designing the decorative programme of the interior, but it was only a starting point. The final appearance of the room, worked out over four years, differed considerably from the original design.

It was apparently Kamsetzer who gave the room its final form. This he did by introducing broader mirrors and moving the statues into niches, thus appearing, by an optical illusion, to increase the width of the room; exchanging the richly fluted columns for plain shafts, and the oval windows of the upper register for round ones. The room gained a simpler and more monumental character. Kamsetzer also changed the colouring of the interior from Merlini's original red, green and yellow stucco to a more restrained combination: golden stucco for the columns and white for the other elements.

Craftsmanship developed under the personal patronage of the King. At the end of the 18th century several accomplished goldsmiths flourished in Warsaw, notably Jan Jerzy Bandau,

Bernardo Bellotto, *Ideal architecture with self-portrait of the artist*, c.1765 (National Museum, Warsaw)

Royal Castle, the Canaletto Room, 1776–77

Teodor Pawlowicz, Szymon Stanecki and Jan Martin, who created the outstanding gold nautilus now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The most important royal factory was the Belvedere porcelain factory near Lazienki, operating in the 1770s. The King also supported furniture workshops; these were established at the beginning of his reign and developed after 1775 when Adam Poninski brought cabinet makers from the Neuwied workshop in Westphalia to Warsaw. Factories outside Warsaw also enjoyed the King's support. These included sash workshops; the studios in Debnik which produced small marble objects in the Classical taste; and a workshop for ornamental weapons which was established in 1788 on the royal estate at Kozienice.

Several of Stanislaus Augustus' artistic projects deserve a leading place in the history of European art: notably his patronage of Victor Louis, the work of Bellotto, and the achievements of Kamsetzer, under-estimated even today.

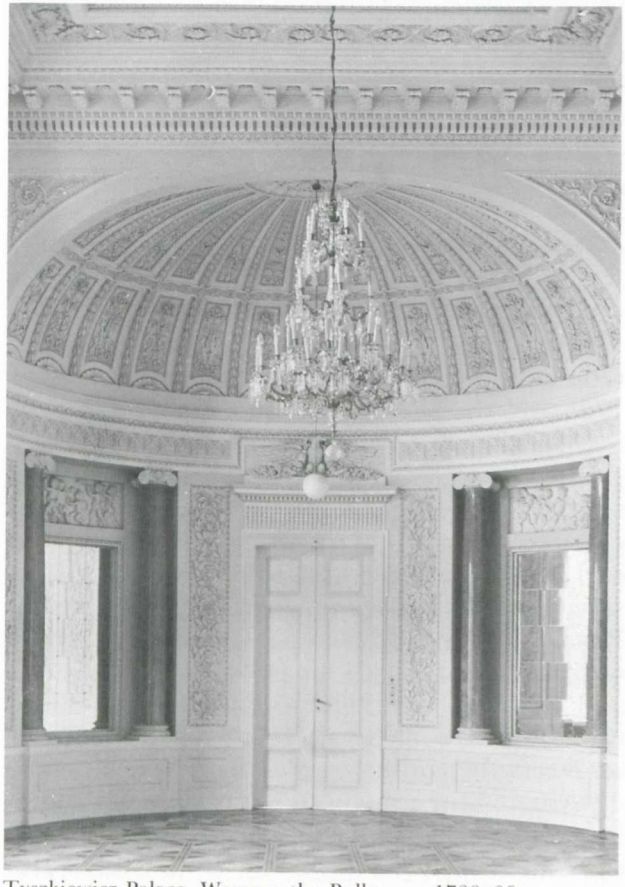
Victor Louis' unrealised plans for rebuilding the Royal Castle in Warsaw were the first Neoclassical designs for a complete functional monarch's residence on such a scale in Europe. In discussion with Stanislaus in 1765, Louis made proposals for state rooms and accommodation for the Diet within the Castle. The series of designs made for the King was, with the early works of Robert Adam, the most important early contribution to the development of official spaces in the Neoclassical manner, a process later elaborated in France.

Bernardo Bellotto, pupil and nephew of Canaletto, was on his way to St. Petersburg in 1767 when he stopped in Warsaw for a few months. He was to remain there until his death in 1780. While in Warsaw he painted several canvasses, including a series of views of the city for the King's apartments at the Castle. In Warsaw Bellotto perfected his art: his views of the city demonstrate his exceptional artistic scope, ranging from town architecture to landscapes, silhouettes and even portraits.

Charles Bechon, *Jan Chrystian Kamsetzer*, miniature, 1789 (National Museum, Warsaw)

Kamsetzer's first work, modifications of Merlini's designs for three rooms in the Royal Castle, showed his exceptional talent. But it was in the 1790s, in the ballroom of Lazienki and in his collaboration with the royal stuccoists on the interiors of the Tyszkiewicz Palace in Warsaw and the Mielzynskis' Palace in Pawlowice, that his mature style found full expression. Into these simply and rhythmically composed interiors Kamsetzer introduced as much light as possible to increase the brightness of the cream stucco and the purity of the white Carrara marble. The stucco decoration is subordinated to the architectural design and covers the walls and ceiling, a delicate arabesque and grotesque design appearing in places. Kamsetzer is the author of even the most minute details of these interiors. His work was the most perfect embodiment of the royal conception of an art uniting

Lazienki Palace, the Ballroom, 1788–93

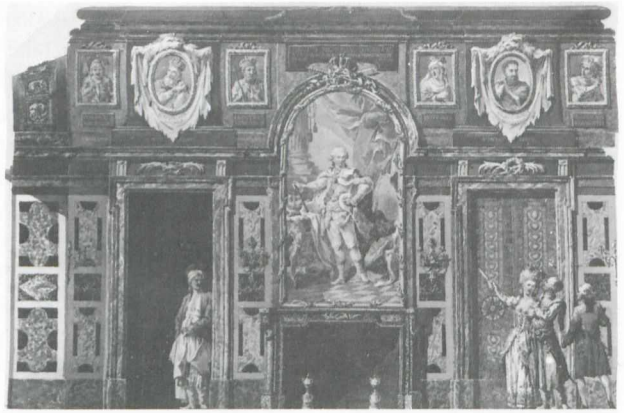


Tyszkiewicz Palace, Warsaw, the Ballroom, 1788–89

architecture, painting, sculpture and the decorative arts.

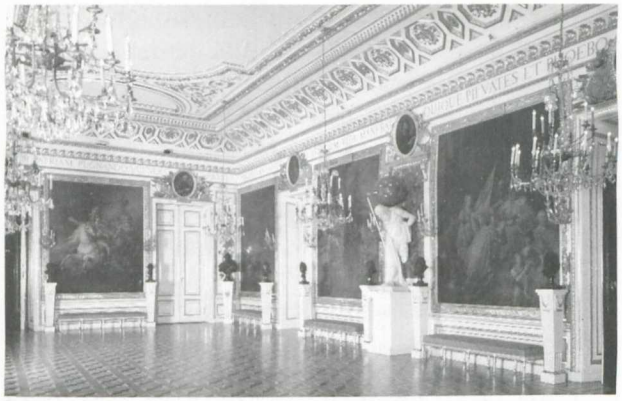
The King made sketches for the rooms and their decoration, but not because he himself had pretensions as an artist. His intention was that artists should express his ideological vision as fully as possible, within certain limits. Though the King could arrange the programme of his official residence as he wished, he had to take into account the traditional perception of the state in the minds of the majority of the gentry, and the country's relations with Russia, Austria and Prussia. The works of art created for him reflected the need to veer towards tradition or towards innovation according to the political circumstances of the moment. Tradition required adherence to Baroque forms and mythological symbolism, asociated with the established taste of the gentry. The more modern approach showed the King's personal leanings towards a formal Classical manner, an attitude strongly opposed to the traditions of Polish Sarmatism.[6] Which of these tendencies dominated depended on the period and circumstances in which a work of art was created, as well as its position within the official apartments.

The ideology behind the first proposals for rebuilding the Warsaw and Ujazdow Castles, of 1765–67, was conventional and apolitical, except for the Senate Room designed by Louis, which glorified the monarchical past of Poland. This idea was developed for the Marble Room, executed in 1768–71. The tragic events of the early 1770s directed the King towards a consideration (expressed in the King's Bedroom, Royal Castle) of providential Catholicism and of civil attitudes towards his policies. New political and social attitudes following the civil wars and the loss of national territory, as well as the need to strengthen the authority of the Crown, determined the content of the royal programme in the later 1770s, in the Old Audience Room, the Canaletto Room, and the Great Hall of the Royal Castle. The possibility of reform in the 1780s was expressed in the decorative programme of the '*new royal rooms*' at the Castle, opened in 1786. Here Stanislaus stressed qualities which he considered fundamental to the reform of the Commonwealth and the building of a new political order: patriotism and civil responsibility, with peace, national unity and a respect for state authority being of supreme importance.



Royal Castle, the Marble Room, view of the northern wall, 1770–71. Inventory drawing by Jan Chrystian Kamsetzer, 1784 (Warsaw University Library Print Room)

Of the decorative schemes and works of art found in the Royal Castle, those in the Great Hall and the ante-chambers (Marble Room, Knights' Hall, Canaletto Room) were seen by the most people. The elaborate iconography in these rooms was addressed to the entire gentry, extolling the country's past and glorifying the ruler, as well as presenting the current royal programme for governing the state. The decoration in the two audience halls, to which access was much more limited, expressed similar ideas, with a more personal approach. In the Old Audience Room and the Solomon Room at Lazienki a Masonic theme was introduced, presumably understood by a relatively small number of courtiers. In the Throne Room at the Castle and the Lazienki ballroom the clearly stated political symbolism was supplemented by subtle references which could only have been appreciated by the political set at court. Finally, the programme of the two royal studies and the King's Bedroom was directed at a small group of the King's closest advisers. The murals in the King's Study referred to Stanislaus' private experiences, while the paintings in the Cabinet



Royal Castle, the Knights' Hall, 1784–86

Royal Castle, the Old Audience Hall, 1774–77

Royal Castle, the Cabinet of European Monarchs, 1783–86

of European Monarchs and the King's Bedroom expressed his personal, political and social beliefs. The King used both the traditional language of Court allegory and a new vocabulary inspired by the Enlightenment, taking ideas from Roman literature of the late Republican and early Imperial periods (Horace, Virgil, Ovid, Lucan) and from modern European literature.

In the Senate Hall designed by Louis were two inscriptions which referred to the duties of King and Senate: one, from the first book of Horace's *Epistolae,* was placed above the throne, the other, from the ninth book of Virgil's *Aeneid,* above the main entrance. The inspiration for creating at the castle a triumphal hall (the Knights' Hall) devoted to great Poles came from the description of a similar room in the seventh book of the *Aeneid.* The quotation which ran around the room was also from the *Aeneid.* The fragment chosen by the King is taken from the sixth book, when Aeneas finds himself in the Elysian Fields, among the most prominent and virtuous men of his world. This conception is undoubtedly a reminiscence of Stanislaus' visit 30 years earlier to Stowe, where the same passage was inscribed on the Temple of British Worthies, designed around 1735 and related to the Elysian Fields spreading before it. Equally striking is the similarity between the decorative programme of the Lazienki ballroom and the *Carmen Saeculare* by Horace, while the quotation from the tenth book of Lucan's *Dialogues* determined the decorative content of the Lazienki Rotunda.

This essay has explored the importance of Stanislaus Augustus' artistic and ideological

endeavours for European culture. Though the King was forced at times to forgo artistic activities too reminiscent of the court of an absolute monarch, he managed in his palaces to surpass the houses of the magnates, and to create a centre of intellectual life. It was the King's determination to strengthen his position and the state's, which led to the introduction into official residences of works of art on the highest European level.

Stanislaus as Collector

Throughout his reign Stanislaus Augustus laboured to create a rich collection of works of art. He wrote to August Moszynski '*My prints and medals are but entertainment in comparison to other things...but I keep in mind their practical side and I would like them to be of use to others also after my death.*'[7] It was Moszynski whom the King first entrusted with the task of organising the royal collection. The son of Jan Kanty and Fryderyka Cosel, illegitimate daughter of Augustus II, Moszynski was a talented and widely educated man. A personal friend of the King, he served as Director of the Royal Buildings until 1772. He helped Stanislaus to acquire prints, medals, antiques, intaglios, jewels and *objets de curiosité*.

Moszynski managed the King's artistic interests with skill and great commitment, and the royal collections increased rapidly. The number of prints rose to 70,000, with items bought from foreign agents, local booksellers and salesmen; engravings were also commissioned, from Christian von Mechel in Vienna among others. Difficulties in acquiring early engravings meant that the collection consisted largely of 18th century works. The King considered his collection primarily as a teaching resource, providing the royal studios with models for compositions including portraits of the famous, battle scenes, reproductions of costumes and well-known works of art. The development of the collection by subject is reflected in the more than 400 albums of engravings, divided into the following groups:

1. Antiquity (statues, reliefs, intaglios)
2. Antiquity (gods, utensils, ruins)
3. Painting (portraits)
4. Painting (military subjects)
5. Painting (works by Old Masters)
6. Painting (illustrated literary works)
7. Painting (galleries)
8. Architecture (views and gardens)
9. Costumes

Bacciarelli played an equally important part in creating the royal collection and became Director of the Royal Buildings in 1786. He prepared a plan for the collection's development, advising the King, for example, not to make his plans for a gallery of paintings common knowledge, so that art dealers would not raise their prices exorbitantly. A competent and thrifty organiser, Bacciarelli proposed allocating part of the court budget to the acquisition of works of art (two thirds for paintings and one third for drawings and prints) and organising a network of dealers in various countries by whose agency works of art could be bought. Although the King found it difficult to accept such strict financial discipline, he followed Bacciarelli's advice over the organisation of acquisitions.

The King also collected drawings and was the first Polish collector to assemble works of the various European schools from the 16th to the 18th centuries. He owned works of exceptional quality: drawings by Fragonard and Boucher, works by Rubens and Jordaens, Dutch 17th century masters including Rembrandt, and Italian Renaissance masters such as Allori and Vasari. His collection also contained an interesting set of drawings by Polish artists and foreign masters working at the court, notably Smuglewicz, Wall, Vogel and the architects in the royal service. Originally there were 4,000 drawings in the royal collection, of which 2,300 have survived in the Print Room of the Warsaw University Library.

Numismatic objects formed an important part of the King's collection, but were not catalogued during his life; there are some indirect references to them in the report of the traveller

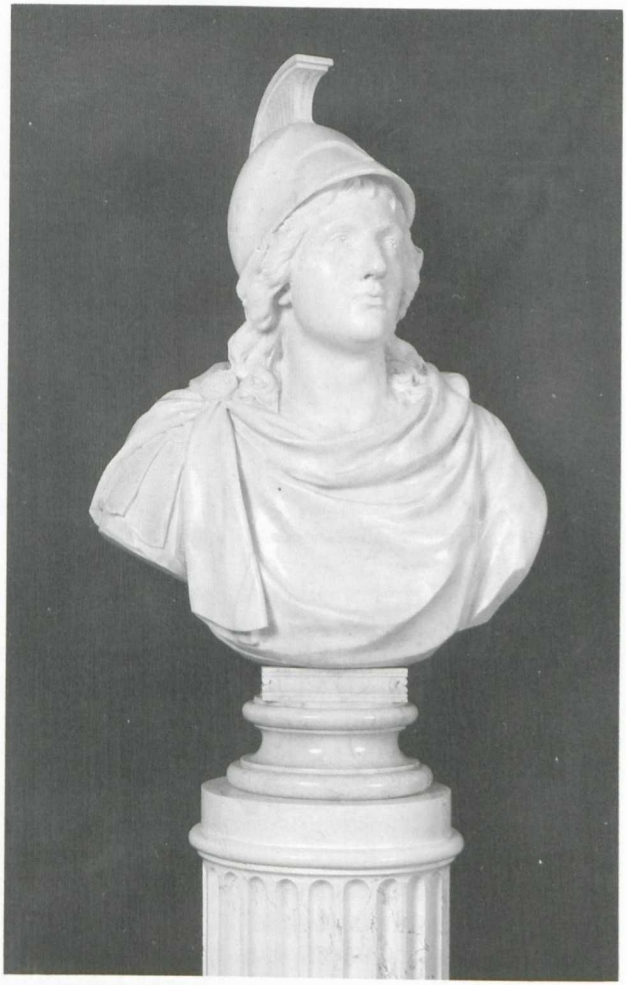
Fortia de Piles and the writings of J. B. Albertrandy, a *savant* and Chief Librarian to the King from 1790. The best documented part of this collection was a set of 16,000 items bought in 1804 from the King's heirs by Tadeusz Czacki for the famous *gymnasium* in Krzemieniec. Included in this group were 20 unique gold medals with images of the Polish kings, struck by the Warsaw mint in 1790–96. The collection of 292 intaglios also deserves mention.

These collections, with others containing physical and astronomical instruments and natural history specimens, were all established thanks to Moszynski. After his death in 1786, the growth of the collection slowed down, though cataloguing continued under Albertrandy. Under the influence of Bacciarelli, Stanislaus turned his attention to extending his picture gallery and to completing a project begun by Moszynski for a sculpture gallery.

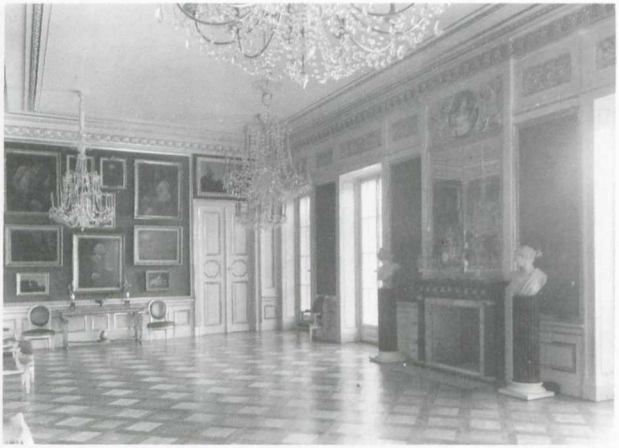
Moszynski's grandiose plan for a sculpture gallery was first proposed around 1784, and was to be housed in the Great Orangery at Lazienki. The project, commonly attributed to Moszynski in collaboration with Kamsetzer, involved a display of copies of the most famous statues of antiquity. Moszynski went to Italy in 1784 to visit the Roman collections and to see the new Capitoline and Pio-Clementino museums. He recommended to the King the statue collection of the French Academy, in the Palazzo Mancini, as a model for the museum Stanislaus planned for his projected Academy of Fine Arts. After Moszynski's death, Bacciarelli took up the project with the help of Kamsetzer, as the marble copies after the antique ordered in 1787 by Bacciarelli in Italy prove. The order included a copy of the Farnese Hercules to be done by G. Angelini, the Farnese *Flora* to be copied by C. Albacini, and various other works. The projected gallery was an attempt to create an ideal Neoclassical museum.

The royal collection did not include any great works of ancient art: the most beautiful piece was *Venus Anadyomene*, a Roman replica of the second century AD, now in the Dining Room of the White Pavilion at Lazienki. Contemporary

Lazienki, White Pavilion, Dining Room, 1775–76



Jean Antoine Houdon, *Alexander the Great*, 1784 (National Museum, Warsaw)



Lazienki Palace, the Picture Gallery, 1788–93

Lazienki Palace, the Small Gallery, 1775–76

sculpture included works by Falconet, Pigalle and Houdon. The King also commissioned from Canova a *Venus mourning Adonis*. In 1787–88 Canova made four sketches of the composition, strictly following the King's instructions, but none of these satisfied Stanislaus who eventually withdrew the order. The only traces of it are some terracotta models preserved in the Gipsoteca in Pessagno.

The contents of the royal picture gallery are described in an inventory of 1795. It lists 2,289 paintings plus several hundred miniatures, framed pastels and gouaches. After the death of the King the majority of the collection was put on sale, with only a small part going to the heirs. It has been possible to identify about 400 paintings mentioned in the catalogue of 1795. Although it is difficult to assess the collection on this fragmentary basis, the gallery can be described in general terms, on the evidence of surviving pictures and catalogue entries, as well as the reminiscences of visiting connoisseurs.

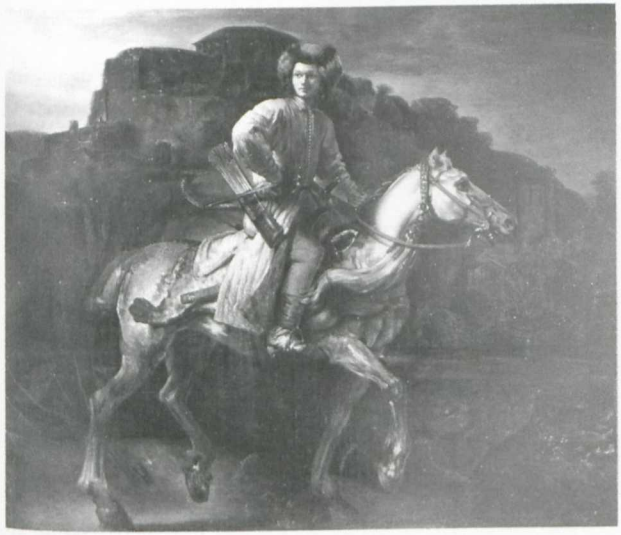
As in most European galleries of the period, the attributions of paintings entering the collection were hardly ever questioned by the buyers. Catalogue entries indicate works by Rembrandt, Rubens and Titian, and even Giorgione and Leonardo. This lack of precision makes identification of the collection a problem today.

The majority of the paintings were by artists of reasonable quality of the 17th and 18th centuries – a good example of late 18th-century taste. Only about 100 paintings were of importance: these included works by Fragonard, Watteau, Greuze and Hubert Robert, as well as portraits by Largillière, Nattier and Subleyras. The catalogue mentions such famous Flemish artists as Brouwer, Teniers, J. Breughel, Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens, but with the exception of the Jordaens none of the Flemish paintings can be identified.

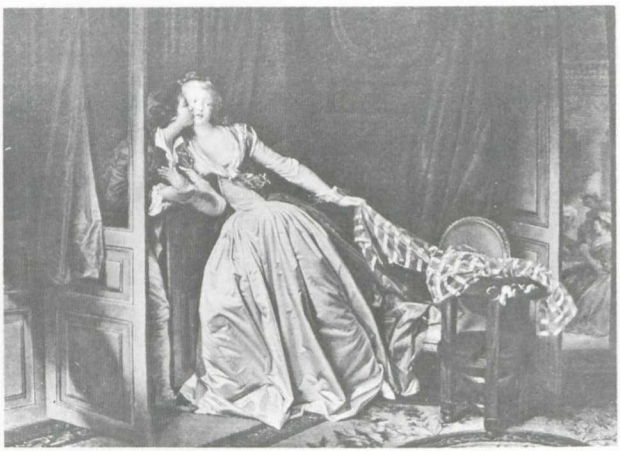
Paintings by Dutch artists formed a large part of the collection (about 500 works), in accordance with 18th-century taste. Dutch paintings were shown in the cabinets on the first floor of the Lazienki palace and in the picture gallery there. An exceptional place was occupied by a group of works attributed to Rembrandt, including the *Polish Rider*. Among the major Dutch paintings were works allegedly by Cuyp, Goltzius, Honthorst, Bol, Flinck, Steen, Metsu and A. van Ostade.

Other than works by Metsu and Kauffmann, German painting was limited to works by 18th century Dresden artists such as S. Mock and C. W. E. Dietrich, and Austrian to J. Grassi and G. B. Lampi. Though the King had a high regard for English art there was little of it in his collection: a portrait of George III by Gainsborough (now in the Royal Castle, Warsaw) and works by Hodges and West.

Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Jewish Bride*, originally in Stanislaus' collection (Lanckoronski Collection)



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Polish Rider*, originally in Stanislaus' collection, (Frick Collection, New York)



Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Stolen Kiss*, originally in Stanislaus' collection (Hermitage)

Benjamin West, *Romeo and Juliet*, originally in Stanislaus' collection (Lanckoronski Collection)

Italian paintings constituted perhaps the least interesting part of the royal collection. The selection showed an enthusiasm for High Renaissance art, especially Raphael, represented by several copies and versions. The *School of Athens* was perhaps the King's favourite: a miniature of the picture given to the King by Mme Geoffrin stood for many years on his desk, and the painting influenced many of the compositions created by court artists. Also outstanding were ten paintings attributed to Correggio, and paintings by, or attributed to, Guido Reni, Annibale Carracci, Titian and Veronese.

The gallery of Stanislaus Augustus is an

Bernardo Bellotto, *Miodowa Street*, detail with print-seller, 1777 (Royal Castle, Warsaw)

impressive tribute to the efforts of one man to create a collection with the aim of establishing a national museum (and an indication of his taste). The King treated his possessions with evident seriousness, collecting catalogues or lists of all the known galleries of Europe: in Rome, Venice, Naples, and Florence, Dresden and Düsseldorf, Vienna, Versailles and Madrid, and the Palais Royal in Paris.

In order to facilitate the acquisition of works abroad the King created a network of artistic agents, diplomats or private individuals. In England Noel Desenfans bought paintings for him, while in Paris Mme Geoffrin placed orders and made the most important acquisitions. Most of the King's agents worked in Italy: in Rome, Naples, Genoa, Venice and Modena. He employed further agents in Stockholm, Amsterdam, The Hague, Hamburg and Vienna, and made interesting acquisitions in Berlin and Dresden. In the 1770s he bought many paintings, bronzes and items of furniture in Warsaw, at a large art dealer's owned by Karol Hempeln.

After the King's death, his collections were gradually dispersed. On departure from Poland in 1795 he had taken 100 of his favourite paintings to St. Petersburg: some he had given away, others were sold on his death to pay debts. In the following years the sale of his collections continued until 1821. Many works were acquired by great Polish collectors, but part of the royal collection was preserved in Warsaw at the Royal Castle, Lazienki and the Print Room of the Warsaw University Library. This modest remnant was not spared the ravages of World War II. Today, all the works of art from the old collections of Stanislaus Augustus which before the War formed part of the state art collections, are back in their place at Lazienki, the Royal Castle, the National Museum in Warsaw and the University Print Room.

1 National Library, Warsaw, Bacciarelli archive, MS 329/1, p. 43

2 T. Ostrowski, *Poufne wiesci z Oswieconej Warsawy* (1972), pp. 41–2

3 W. Tatarkiewicz, *Lazienki warsawskie* (1972), p. 24

4 National Library, Warsaw, Bacciarelli archive, MS 3291/1, letter of 4 September 1784

5 Czartoryski Library, Cracow, MS 782, p. 151

6 Sarmatism was originally a 16th-century theory, espoused by the, in reality, multi-racial *szlachta*, or gentry, that they were descended from the Sarmatians, a war-like race from the Black Sea Steppe who had invaded Poland in the 6th century, and were therefore not of the same Slav origin as the peasantry. Eventually it grew into an all-encompassing ideology – in architectural terms it implies a fondness for the extravagant and fantastic.

7 Czartoryski Library, Cracow, MS 676

FURTHER READING

T. Jaroszewski, *Architektura doby Oswiecenia w Polsce. Nurty i odmiany* (1971)

A. Lauterbach, *Styl Stanislawa Augusta, Klasycyzm warszawski wieku XVIII* (1918)

S. Lorentz, '*Prace architekta Louisa dla Zamku Warszawskiego*', *BHS* XIII (1951), no. 4, pp. 39–74

S. Lorentz, A. Rottermund, *Neoclassicism in Poland* (1986)

T. Mankowski, *Galeria Stanislawa Augusta* (1932)

T. Mankowski, *Rzezby zbioru Stanislawa Augusta* (1948)

T. Mankowski, *Mecenat artystyczny Stanislawa Augusta* (1976)

J. Rudnicka, *Biblioteka Stanislawa Augusta na Zamku Warszawskim, Dokumenty* (1988)

A. Ryszkiewicz, '*Portrety Stanislawa Augusta*' in *Wiek Oswiecenia* II (1979), pp. 93–8

W. Tatarkiewicz, *Rzady artystyczne Stanislawa Augusta* (1919)