

The Sigismund Chapel (1515 – 1533). Mausoleum of King Sigismund within the Circle of Humanist Ideas of the Jagiellons' Court in Cracow¹

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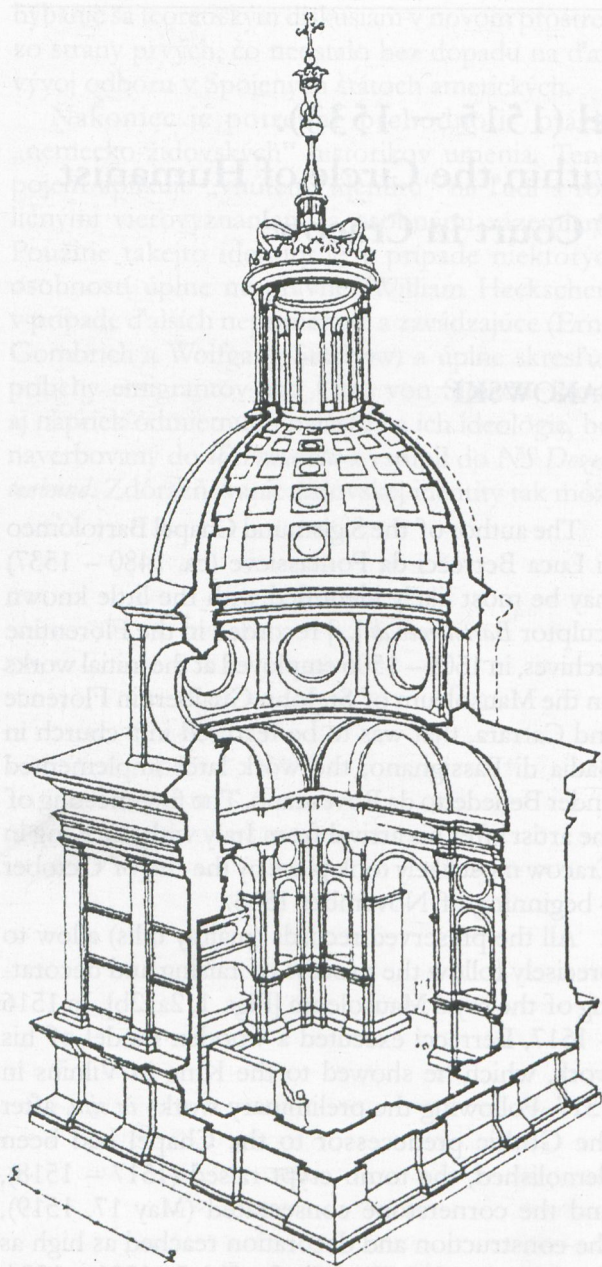
King Sigismund I (1467 – 1548), educated within the circle of Cracow humanists (Filippo Buonaccorsi, called *Callimaco Esperiente*, was one of his masters), convinced about the necessity to cultivate the virtue of magnificence (*magnificentia*) by monarchs, already when ascending the Polish throne (1507), next to the Renaissance modernization of the Royal Palace on Wawel Hill, initiated almost instantaneously, may have also been planning to raise a sumptuous mausoleum adjacent to the capital's Cathedral. At the initial stage, however, the project may have been hampered not owing to the wars against Muscovy, Moldova, and the Tartars (1507 – 1514), but first of all to the lack of an appropriately skilled artist capable of raising the edifice in the Italian *all'antica* style whose forms Sigismund had admired while living at the Hungarian court of his brother King Vladislaus (1498 – 1501), and whose principles he may have become acquainted with through reading the treatises of Alberti and Pomponio Gaurico. It was only in the course of the three-years' stay in Rome (1513 – 1515) of the Gniezno Archbishop and Primate of Poland Jan Łaski (1456 – 1531), acquainted with the Renaissance art, and participating as the King delegate in the 5th Lateran Council that the opportunity to find a suitable artist arose. All the premises prove that it was Łaski who found and brought to Cracow in 1515 the Tuscan sculptor and architect Bartolomeo Berrecci.

The author of the Sigismund Chapel Bartolomeo di Luca Berrecci da Pontassieve (ca. 1480 – 1537) may be most likely identified with the little known sculptor *Bartolomeo di* [...] recorded in the Florentine archives, in 1505 – 1506 employed at the initial works on the Mausoleum of St. John Gualbert in Florence and Carrara, that was to be featured in a church in Badia di Passignano; the work later implemented under Benedetto da Rovizzano. The first meeting of the artist after his arrival from Italy with the King in Cracow most likely took place by the end of October – beginning of November 1515.

All the preserved records (mainly bills) allow to precisely follow the process of raising and decorating of the royal Mausoleum [Figs. 1, 2a, 2b]. In 1516 – 1517, Berrecci executed a wooden model of his work, which he showed to the King in Vilnius in 1517. Following the preliminary works *in situ*, after the Gothic predecessor to the Chapel had been demolished, the tomb crypt raised (1517 – 1518), and the cornerstone consecrated (May 17, 1519), the construction and decoration reached as high as the drum in 1520 [Figs. 2b, 3a, 3b]. In 1521 – 1524, there came architectural and sculptural decoration of the interior lined with relief panels made of native greyish-green sandstone and partially dark brown-reddish marble imported from Hungary [Figs. 5a, 5b, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b]. 1524 – 1527

¹ The present paper is based on the author's book *Kaplica Zygmuntowska (1515 – 1533). Problematyka artystyczna i ideowa mauzoleum Zygmunta I*. Warszawa 2007, whose English version (*King Sigismund's Chapel (1515 – 1533). Its Form and Ideology*) is

currently being prepared for publication by the Wawel Royal Castle. It contains all the references to the ample literature on the topic.



1. Axonometric projection of the Sigismund's Chapel. Designed by M. Kuzma.

witnessed in turn the raising and decoration of the drum and the cupola [Figs. 2a, 4a, 4b]; in 1526 – 1530, figural sculptures were executed of Hungarian marble [Figs. 2b, 3a, 3b, 9a, 9b, 12a, 12b], except for two of them to be located outside (unpreserved) and made of sandstone. The ceremonial consecra-

tion of the building took place on June 8, 1533, but it was only in 1538 that the Chapel was furnished with a sumptuous altar of gilded silver and painted panels, an exquisite work of Nurembergian artists: the sculptor Peter Flötner, the bell-founder Pancraz Labenwolff, the goldsmith Melchior Baier, and the painter Jörg Pencz [Figs. 6a, 6b].

The records provide us with sufficiently ample information on Berrecci's co-workers. At the first initial stage four Italian sculptors (*scalpellini*) from a former team of another Tuscany artist were involved (the artists in question being Francis of Florence (d. 1516) working at the Wawel from 1502) as well as eight new artists brought for the purpose from Florence, Fiesole, and Siena. A detailed analysis of the sculpture grotesque decoration of the Chapel interior (namely its parts preserved in an original form), allowed to distinguish six slightly different stylistically "hands". However, it is impossible to attribute those works to the names appearing in the bills. Tracing the genesis of the decoration form revealed the artistic formation of Berrecci and his co-workers deriving broadly speaking from Guiliano da Sangallo's workshop. From there came the cupola coffers filled with rosettes, so unique in Italy (cf. the Madonna dell'Umiltà in Pistoia, reconstruction of the Antique mausoleum – drawing at the Uffizzi, A-2193), as well as various shapes of non-orthodox pseudo-composite capitals, revealing at the same good acquaintance with the analogical works of the Antiquity. Fascination with the Antiquity typical of Sangallo is also traceable in the Cracow Chapel, e.g. in the imitation of the motifs of the decoration of the Roman Arch of Constantine (winged figures with torches, the figure of Hercules) [Figs. 5a, 11b], figural reliefs of some 2nd-century sarcophagi, or reliefs of the famous Vatican candelabra (the motif of the so-called "Foliate Boy"). It seems very likely that the Wawel sculptors, apart from scarce graphic patterns, also used in their work drawings coming from the same source that served the authors of the famous *Codex Escorialensis* (El Escorial Library, manuscript 28.II.12, k. 11v, 12v, 15v, 44v, 59r); moreover, they also were familiar with ancient sculptures' collection by Roman Della Valle family (e.g. "Satyrs" and fragments of the floral decoration *Arae Pacis Augustae*).

When speaking of the sculptors in Sangallo's circle, Berrecci and his people were strongly influenced



2a. The external view of the Sigismund's Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



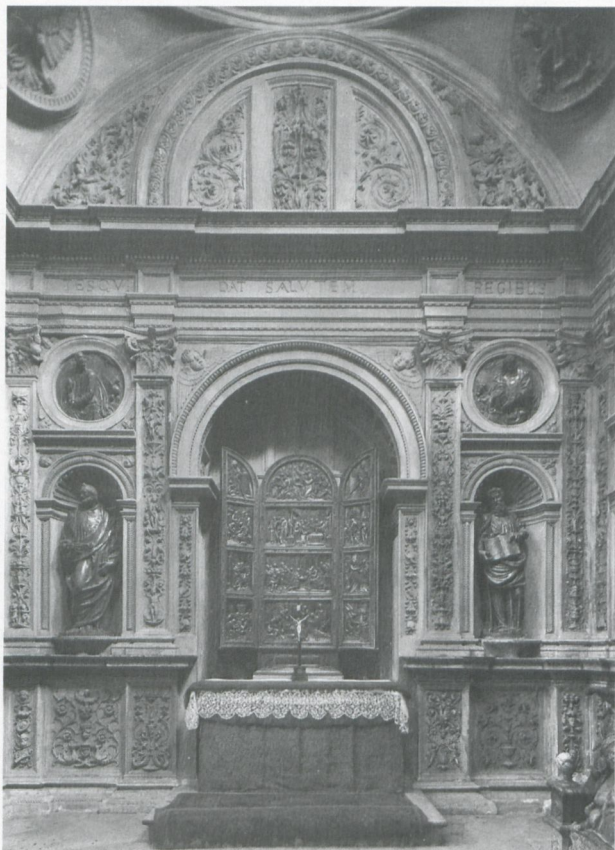
2b. The interior of the Sigismund's Chapel. Repro: BIAŁOSTOCKI, J.: The art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Bohemia, Poland. Oxford 1976.

by Andrea Sansovino and Benedetto da Rovezzano. The impact of the works of the first is revealed in some motifs such as a couple of youth with a plant runner (the tomb the Cardinal Basso Della Rovere in S. Maria del Popolo in Rome). The influence of the latter is visible both within the motifs (e.g. dolphins with heads seen from the top), as well as in the typical plasticity of the reliefs resembling the style of those in the Mausoleum of St. John Gualbert.

What astonishes in the Wawel Chapel is the impact of almost contemporary works of Raphael and Michelangelo. The fact that the authors were acquainted with the *School of Athens* (1509 – 1510) and *The Triumph of Galatea* (1511 – 1512) by the first can be found in the mythological motifs (reliefs with Triton, a sea monster, the Nereids). Meanwhile, Michelangelo's reliefs from the earliest stages of the works on the

Tomb of Julius II (1505 – 1506) both provided the Cracow artists with patterns for a number of motifs, and had an impact on the stylistic forms of certain fragments of the grotesque decoration. I mean here the sophisticated transformation of some zoomorphic elements into phytomorphic ones, paralleled with the transition from an almost full relief to a flat and delicate one nearly blending in with the background. Finally, the unprecedented application of a mathematically correct ellipse used in the vertical cross section of the Chapel's cupola may be hypothetically associated with the fact that Berrecci is said to have become acquainted with the correctly drawn ellipse of the tomb chamber in the wooden model of the Tomb of Julius II by Michelangelo (in Carrara, 1505 – 1506).

Analysis of stylistic forms, together with archival records, has allowed identifying four artists who ex-



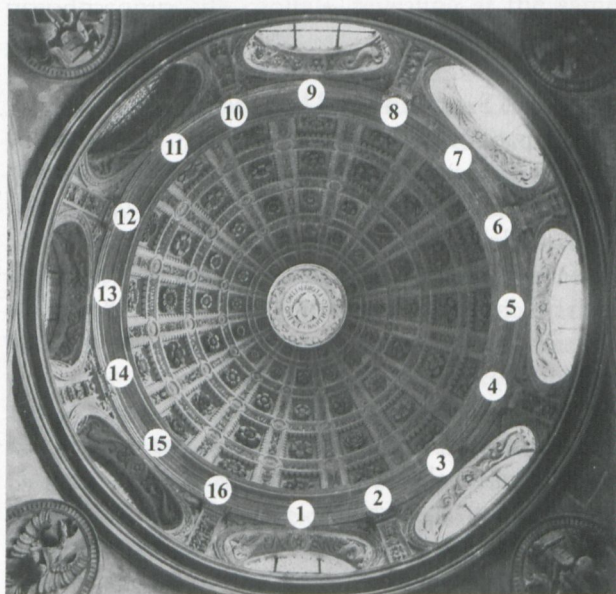
3a. The altar wall of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



4a. The interior of the lantern of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



3b. The throne wall of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



4b. The drum and the cupola of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

ecuted the figural sculptures of red marble. The tondi featuring the Evangelists and the figure of St. Peter can be attributed to the sculptor called Zoan, possibly from Venice. The most accomplished figures, those of St. Paul and St. Sigismund (the latter displaying acquaintance with Michelangelo's *David*), should be attributed to Bernardino Zanobi de Gainotis, called *Romanus*. The poorest figures, those of St. Wenceslas, St. Florian, and St. John the Baptist, were most likely sculpted by Filippo of Fiesole. Finally, the ideologically crucial tondi featuring David and Salomon, as well as the tomb statue of the founding King [Figs. 9a, 9b, 12b] are the works of Berrecci himself.

It remains unsolved whether the Marian dedication of the Chapel (of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary), taken after its Gothic predecessor, had the decisive impact on the central shape of the edifice, as the central domed form, owing to the ancient tombs studied in the Renaissance, had become a norm in the Italian sepulchral architecture of the period. It is hard to ascertain whether the authors of the work were aware of the cosmological symbolic meaning of the circle and square related to the Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic interpretations of the Vitruvius' thesis (III, 1) claiming the perfection of the proportions of a human body which can be inscribed into a circle and a square. Yet, a clear zone division of the Chapel's interior echoes some form of a cosmological approach. Up to the entablature level the dominating motifs are zoo- and phytomorphic; above, in the attic features representations associated with water [Figs. 10a, 10b, 11a], while both zones (filling the windowless and dim cube of the building mass) are associated with the first pair of elements, basic components of Nature, namely earth and water. The drum pierced with windows forcefully suggests, in turn, an association with the third element, air, whereas the rosettes of the cupola (traditionally serving as the symbol of stars) seem to refer not only to the astronomical sky, but also to the fourth element, that is fire [Fig. 4b]. Finally, the lantern illuminated with the Seraphim's head, symbolizing God, surrounded with nine angels' heads, symbolizes nine Seraphim' choirs and constitutes a symbolic representations of the above-star *empireum* [Fig. 4a]. This division of the chapel into zones becomes clear in view of the sepulchral character of the Chapel and may refer to



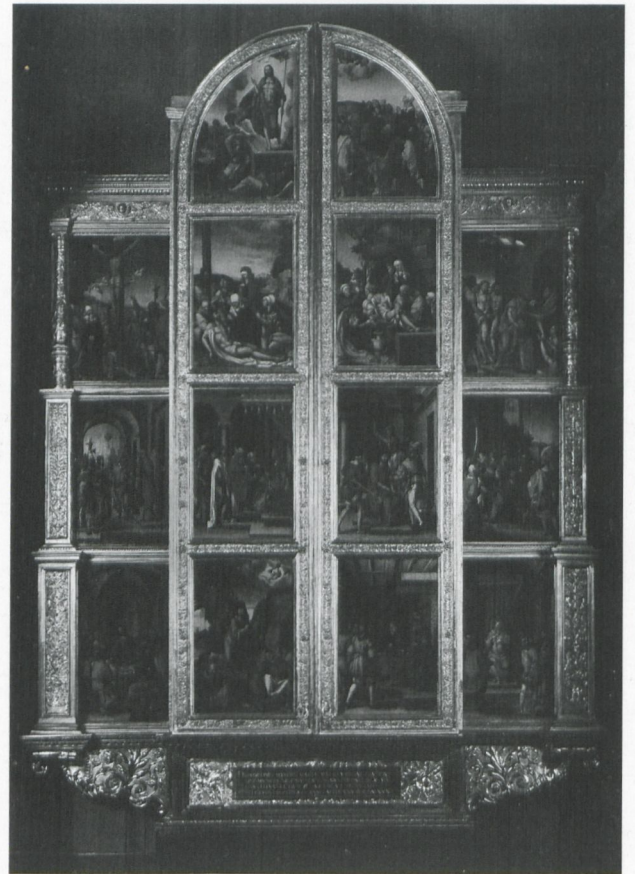
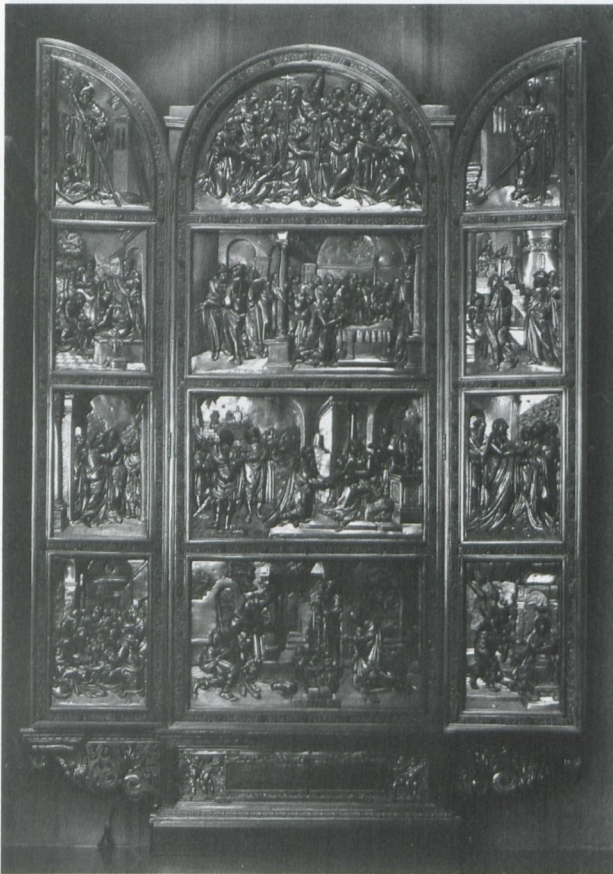
5a. The genius with the torch over the entrance. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



5b. The pair of gryphons. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

the ancient belief that the human soul wanders after death through four elements (e.g. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 724-751), which harmonizes with the supposition popular at King Sigismund I's court that the path of the dead human leads *ad astra*.

The eschatological thread in the contents of the building, expressing hope for the King's glory in the posthumous life, is continued through its decoration. Here also motifs of mythological origin were used, these including geniuses with lit up

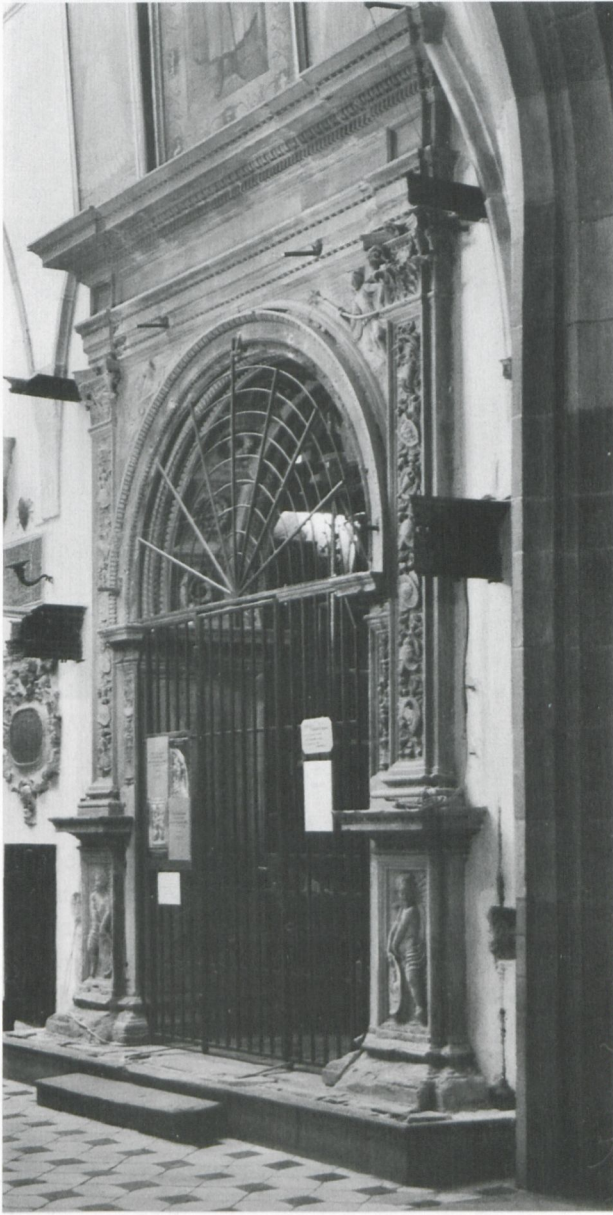


6a, b. Altar of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

torches (*Aeternitas*) [Fig. 5a], dolphins (*psychopompoi*), or sphinxes (guardians of the Roman sarcophagi tombs), obviously together with some strictly Christian topics. Among these mention should be made of the cherubs' heads on the pilasters framing the tomb (reference to the text of the exequies), figures of patron saints (protectors of the King, Cathedral, and the state), a medallion with the Virgin and Baby Jesus (traditionally a protector of the dead) [Fig. 12a], and a quote from the Apocalypse (14.13) on the wall above the sarcophagus (BEATI QVI IN DOMINO MORIVNTR), as well as the main message of the altar pentptych [Figs. 6a, 6b]. Its Marian cycle is crowned with the *Dormition of Our Lady*, whereas the Passion one is concluded with the scenes of the *Resurrection* and *Ascension*.

Equally elaborate is the thread dedicated to the monarch and his glorification, enhancing the mem-

ory of the earthly accomplishment of the deceased, pointing to his positions as a monarch, and aiming at spreading Sigismund's fame among the future generations. Similarly as in the eschatological thread, present here are frequent references to the Antiquity. The very structure of the interior wall divisions in the form of triumphal arches is very expressive [Figs. 3a, 3b, 12a]. The portal decoration from the side of the Cathedral, which next to various ancient arms (*spolia hostium*), features instruments and vessels associated with the triumphal ceremony, introduces a strong *all'antica* triumph into this thread [Fig. 7a]. The portal heralds a mausoleum of a victorious ruler, comparable to Roman emperors, which is suggested by the effigy of ancient triumph placed among the *militaria* [Fig. 7b]. Inside the Chapel, the triumphal thread is continued by laurel wreaths encircling windows, as well as panoply bunches, warriors' heads,



7a. Portal to the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

lion masks (*fortitudo*), rams' heads, and sacrificial vessels, filling the pilaster panels and the window frames. This is clearly emphasized by the medallion at the tomb's niche, bearing the inscription: D[IVUS] SIGISMVNDVS I R[EX] P[OLONIAE] MDXXII, and featuring the founder's head in scale armour (*lorica squamata*) wearing a Roman helmet decorated with ram's horns, resembling that of Alexander the Great [Fig. 8a].



7b. Fragment of the decoration of the portal. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

Tasks of a victorious ruler most traditionally included safeguarding peace to the subjects, which yielded the abundance of goods to the state. Therefore, such motifs of the *all'antica* decoration as bunches of acanthus, the cornucopia, garlands of fruit, fruit in baskets, wreathes, and bunches, as well as figures carrying offering baskets, all constitute a certain kind of *felicitatis temporum*.

The contents related to the essence of the royal power, including the monarch's responsibilities and power exercising, are in turn conveyed by means of religious, Christian, and Old Testament representations, particularly clear in the decoration of the throne wall. Over the monarch's seat a pair of gilded angels are holding a closed crown topped with a little cross to emphasize the sovereignty of



8a. Medallion at the King's tomb. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



8b. Fragment of the decoration. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

the Polish King subdued only to God [Fig. 3b]. An ideological completion of this scene is to be found in a similarly closed crown surrounding on the outside the small cupola of the lantern serving as the base for an angel holding a smaller crown and a cross [Fig. 1, 2a]. Therefore, among the inscriptions on the outside Chapel walls one can also read the quote from Psalm 115: NON NOBIS DOMINE NON NOBIS SED NOMINI TVO (supposedly to be continued with "*da gloriam*"). On the sides of the throne there are statues of St. John the Baptist and St. Sigismund; the first serving as a symbolic likeness of the monarch's anointment to the Baptism in the Jordan; the latter representing the founder's patron

and his imperial great-great-grandfather from the Luxemburg dynasty.

The monarchical contents of this wall is completed with the effigies of the Old Testament Kings: David the Psalmist and just Solomon [Figs. 9a, 9b], traditionally considered to serve as models to follow by Christian rulers, and embodying two different aspects of exercising power, symbolized by the virtues: faith (*fides, religio*) and justice (*justitia*). It was not by accident that Solomon bears face features of the Chapel's founder, since the Polish monarch was quite commonly compared to that Biblical king and he himself paralleled the raising of the sumptuously decorated and richly furnished Wawel sanctuary to



9a, b. Medallions with the effigies of David and Salomon. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

the Jerusalem Temple being Solomon's accomplishment. This symbolical reference is suggested by the inscription on the outside of the Chapel paraphrasing Psalm 26: DOMINE DILEXISTI [sic!] DECOREM DOMVS TVE ("O Lord, You have loved [sic!] the glory of Thy house"), as well as by a signature of the artist: BARTHOLO FLORENTINO OPIFICE ("through the art of Barolomeo of Florence") placed within the rim between the head of the Seraph-God and a circle of nine little angels' heads [Fig. 4a]. This can be explained only by reference to the Old Testament texts speaking of raising the Tabernacle in the desert and the Jerusalem Temple. In both cases God inspired the builders, Moses and Solomon, and pointed to them those who were to execute the works, namely Besaleel and Hiram, the artist of origin from the distant Tyre. In view of this parallel, while raising the Wawel sanctuary, King Sigismund, just like Moses and Solomon, was becoming an instrument in God's hands, whereas Berrecci, brought from distant Italy, was just like the Biblical artists Besaleel and Hiram, the one to execute essentially the work of God and the monarch obeying Him. Therefore, the inscrip-

tion within the *empireum* zone should be most likely understood as an abbreviation of a fuller inscription of the type [DIVINO NVMINE COMMONITVS] BARTHOLO FLORENTINO OPIFICE [SIGISM-VNDVS REX CONDIDIT] ("raised by King Sigismund on God's reminder through the art of Bartolomeo of Florence"); what astonishes and deserves admiration in the inscription's wording is the exceptional modesty of the Polish monarch.

A separate explanation is required for the meaning of mythological representations woven into the grotesque decoration of the Chapel interior, as it is known that in the Renaissance mythological topics were most often resorted to in order to render moralizing and allegorical ideas, as well as to address current events and individuals. Undoubtedly, for instance, the figure of Cleopatra is to be interpreted in the moralizing spirit (as the *Venus Pudica* type), common in the era as the symbol of the virtue of valour; the same applies to the puttos fighting against excessively stylised dragons, cupids treading on bizarre monsters, and a naked couple attached to a leafy trunk and struggling against the



10a, b. *The water creatures with the nymphs.* Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

tangles of greenery, thus expressing the struggle of man against uncontrollable forces of nature, of virtue against sin, of a positive element against the negative one. A similar thing can be said about a wild water monsters capturing the nymphs that are trying to break free [Figs. 10a, 10b], and which by analogy to the ethical connotation of a similar couple presented in Raphael's *School of Athens* below the statue of Apollo, the god of brightness, harmony, and the "teacher of ethics", should be considered as an expression of the struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Those wild water creatures with enhanced genitals, analogical to the representations on the Chapel walls, are also to be found on the tomb of the Cardinal-humanist Ludovico Podocataro in S. Maria del Popolo in Rome (after 1504). They refer to the origin of the dignitary coming from Cyprus endangered by the Turks, which allows one to assume that similar

Wawel representations also contain current references. An additional encouragement to continue the analysis in this direction can be found in the scene of the struggle of a pair of satyrs with a wild bearded water creature, joined by a youth made to resemble Hercules [Figs. 11a, 11b]. Bearing in mind the fact that the "water" part of the Chapel interior decoration was executed around 1522, and inserted in the interior walls in 1524 – 1525, it is hard not to perceive them as symbolical references to the events taking place on the Baltic, namely the Prussian war with the Teutonic Order (1519 – 1521), or more likely (as we are speaking of a decoration of a Catholic sacral building) to the early opposition of King Sigismund I to the Protestantism spreading in the Pomeranian towns (King's decrees from 1520 and 1523), as well as his crushing of the Lutheran revolt in Gdańsk (1525). Let us remind here that in the court literature of the period Luther's followers

were then described as “*monstra huius turbulenti seculi nostri*”, and compared to the Hydra defeated by Hercules (Andrzej Krzycki, 1527).

As a matter of fact, the whole Wawel foundation was strongly anti-Protestant, since it was rooted in such ideas questioned by Luther as belief in purgatory and in achieving salvation thanks to the intercession of the Virgin, saint patrons, prayers of the living, and votive Holy Masses. Finally, in clear contradiction to the reformers’ postulates was the richness of the Chapel decoration and sumptuousness of its refurbishing. Thus in the situation of a multi-national Polish-Lithuanian state, faced with the additional thread of the religious antagonism, the paraphrase of the quotes of the Psalms incised in the interior walls in 1533 (Psalms 67, 138, and 144): CONFITEANTVR TIBI DOMINE OMNES GENTES QVI DAS SALVTEM REGIBVS (“*Let the peoples praise thee, O God, who gives victory to kings*”) should also be read as a call for unity in faith, in the spirit of Erasmian Irenism close to the King’s heart.

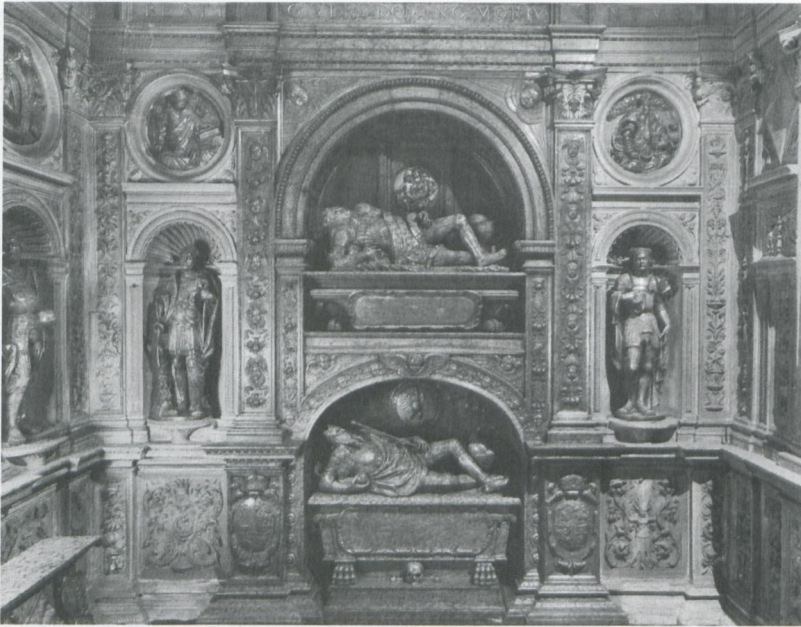
The main content’s threads of the Wawel Mausoleum, the glorifying and eschatological ones, are specifically concentrated in the ideological programme of the royal tomb. The very choice of the greyish-red marble from Hungary, resembling ancient imperial porphyry (in compliance with the Roman *lex purpurea*) cannot be accounted for only by aesthetic reasons. The composition of figure on the sarcophagus was arranged with particular care [Fig. 12b]. The fact that the monarch was shown wearing an armour (*rex armatus*) naturally harmonizes with the concept of the king as triumpher (*victor ac triumphator*) expressed in the tomb inscription. The triumph meant was naturally the *all’antica* type (in keeping with the contents of the decoration of the Chapel entrance), that is why the monarch’s armour was not covered with a coronation cloak, but a short military coat modelled on ancient commanders (*paludamentum*). The pose of the King leaning on the elbow with bent and crossed legs follows the ancient representations of water gods and resting Hercules (*Hercules cubans*), which together with other ideological references to that ancient hero allows to perceive Sigismund as a modern embodiment of the demigod (*Hercules redivivus*).

Similarly as in many above described cases, here too it may be assumed that the Polish monarch



11a, b. The struggle in water with Hercules. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

intentionally instructed the Italian artists to model his mausoleum on the artistic examples of ancient Rome. This can be judged more than merely a humanist fashion. In our opinion, this phenomenon,



12a. The tomb wall of the Chapel. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.



12b. The statue of the King Sigismund I. Photo: Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw.

so astonishing in Poland, can be accounted for by a peculiar ethnogenetic myth, which served the learned tutor of young Sigismund, the historian Jan Długosz, to strengthen the origins of the new Lithuanian-Polish dynasty. According to his theory the alleged similarities between the pagan religion of the Lithuanians and the Romans, as well as noticeable likeness of Lithuanian and Latin demonstrate that the Lithuanians are descendants of the Roman

political exiles who left Italy in 714 *ab Urbe condita*. It is thus not surprising for the mausoleum of the monarch from the Lithuanian dynasty to so strictly harmonize with the works of Roman antiquity on his inspiration.

In his tomb the *all'antica* glorification of the monarch is simultaneously combined with clear eschatological references. The King's head, leaning backwards and resting on the shoulder features half-

closed eyes. This is the means to at least formally refer to the ancient tradition of sleeping figures. In this particular case, we might also have to do with a reference to Neo-Platonic and Stoic interpretations of the ancient myths of the brotherhood of sleep and death. However, Sigismund, being a pious Catholic, had to be familiar with the belief in the resurrection of the body, all the more as its interpretation was vividly discussed at the 5th Lateran Council (1512 – 1516); its theologians (e.g. Cardinal Egidius of Viterbo) claimed that everybody who reaches salvation shall enjoy the glory of the Lord both in the soul and the body resuscitated at the Last Judgment, thus showing human superiority in perfection to angels, pure spirits. The monarch's figure must thus be interpreted first of all as an effigy of an individual in a transition state, resembling sleep, when the body devoid of the soul is awaiting its final reunification with the latter.

Despite the fact that from the very beginning it was known that the body of King Sigismund's first Hungarian wife was to be buried there, too, the decoration of the Sigismund Mausoleum does not contain

any references to Barbara Zapolya (d. 1515). It was only the birth of the heir to the throne Sigismund Augustus (1520), born by the second of the King's wives Bona Sforza, and his exceptional coronation in his father's lifetime (1530) that introduced a new dynastic undertone to the ideological programme of the Chapel. That change was expressed in the verse from Psalm 72 (v. 1) incised in the throne wall in 1533: *DEVS INVADITIVM TVVM REGI DA* (with such putative ending: "*et iustitiam tuam filio regis*"), and in the placing of the crowned busts of the father and son in the decoration of the base of the silver altar from 1535 – 1538.

The fact that Sigismund's daughter Queen Anne Jagiellon (1523 – 1596) raised her father's tomb and placed underneath another analogical one of his son and heir Sigismund Augustus, while replacing the parapet of the throne stall with her own tomb executed (1574 – 1583) by a Florentine sculptor Santi Gucci (d. 1600), disturbed the artistic harmony of the Chapel's interior [Figs. 2b, 3b, 12a], though on the other hand it truly made it the Mausoleum of the last Polish Jagiellons.

Žigmundovská kaplnka (1515 – 1533). Mauzóleum kráľa Žigmunda v rámci okruhu humanistických myšlienok jagellovského dvora v Krakove

Resumé

Kráľ Žigmund I. (1467 – 1548), vzdelaný v kruhu krakovských humanistov (Filippo Buonaccorsi, prezývaný *Callimachus Experiens*, bol jedným z jeho učiteľov) a presvedčený o povinnosti kráľov pestovať cnosť veľkoleposti (*magnificentia*), sa už pri nastúpení na poľský trón (1507) mohol popri renesančnej modernizácii kráľovského paláca na Waweli, začatej takmer okamžite, zaoberať myšlienkou vybudovať pri katedrále prepychové mauzóleum. No už počiatočná fáza projektu bola zbrzdená. Príčinou tu neboli ani tak prebiehajúce vojny s Moskvou, Moldavskom a Tatármi (1507 – 1514), ako skôr nedostatok zručných umelcov, schopných vybudovať dielo v talianskom štýle *all'antica*, ktorého formy Žigmund obdivoval počas pobytu na uhorskom dvore svojho brata, kráľa Vladislava (1498 – 1501), a s princípmi ktorého sa mohol zoznámiť prostredníctvom traktátov od L. B. Albertiho a Pomponia Gaurica. Šancu nájsť vhodného umelca priniesol však až trojročný rímsky pobyt (1513 – 1515) hniezdenského arcibiskupa a prímasa Poľska, Jana Łaskiho (1456 – 1531), oboznámeného s renesančným umením, ktorý sa ako kráľovský delegát zúčastnil 5. lateránskeho koncilu. Všetky indície smerujú k tomu, že to bol práve on, kto v roku 1515 objavil toskánskeho sochára a architekta Bartolomea Berrecciho a priviedol ho do Krakova.

Tvorcu Žigmundovskej kaplnky, Bartolomea di Luca Berrecci da Pontassieve (asi 1480 – 1537), možno s najväčšou pravdepodobnosťou stotožniť s málo známym sochárom *Bartolomeo-m di* [...], zaznamenaným vo florentských archívoch. Tento umelec sa mal v rokoch 1505 – 1506 zúčastniť prípravných prác na mauzóleu sv. Jána Gualberta vo Florencii a Carrare, črty ktorého sa neskôr objavili na kostole v Badia di Passignano, dokončenom pod vedením Benedetta da Rovezzano. Prvé stretnutie kráľa s umelcom po jeho príchode do Krakova sa pravdepodobne uskutočnilo niekedy koncom októbra, alebo začiatkom novembra 1515.

Všetky dochované záznamy (hlavne účty) nám umožňujú presne sledovať proces výstavby a výzdoby kráľovského mauzólea [Obr. 1, 2a, 2b]. V rokoch 1516 – 1517 Berrecci vytvoril drevený model stavby, ktorý v roku 1517 kráľovi predstavil vo Vilniuse. Po zbúraní gotickej predchodkyne budúcej kaplnky a príprave staveniska tu najprv vyrástla krypta (1517 – 1518), 17. mája 1519 bol posvätený základný kameň a v roku 1520 dosiahli konštrukčné a dekoratívne práce výšku nasadenia bubna kupoly [Obr. 2b, 3a, 3b]. V rokoch 1521 – 1524 bol architektonicky a sochársky dozdobený interiér, ktorý tak získal obloženie reliéfnymi panelmi z domáceho šedozeleného vápenca a čiastočne z hnedočerveného mramoru, importovaného z Uhorska [Obr. 5a, 5b, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b]. Roky 1524 – 1527 priniesli vybudovanie a dekorovanie bubna a kupoly [Obr. 2a, 4a, 4b], roky 1526 – 1530 potom vytvorenie figurálnych sóch z uhorského mramoru [Obr. 2b, 3a, 3b, 9a, 9b, 12a, 12b], s výnimkou dvoch (nedochovaných), ktoré mali byť umiestnené na vonkajšej strane a boli vytvorené z pieskovca. Aj keď slávnostná vysviacka novostavby prebehla 8. júna 1533, prepychový oltár s maľovanými a vyrezávanými panelmi s postriebrením bol do kaplnky inštalovaný až v roku 1538. Toto výnimočné dielo vytvorili norimberskí umelci: rezbár Peter Flötner, zvonár Pancraz Labenwolff, zlatník Melchior Baier a maliar Jörg Pencz [Obr. 6a, 6b].

Hlavné obsahové súvislosti wawelského mauzólea, glorifikujúce a eschatologické, sú sústredené v ideovom programe kráľovskej hrobky s ústrednou sochou kráľa, vytvorenou samotným Berreccim. Výber uhorského hnedočerveného mramoru, podobného starovekému cisárskemu porfýru (v zhode s rímskym *lex purpurea*), nemožno pripisovať iba estetickým dôvodom. Postava kráľa na sarkofágu bola komponovaná s osobitnou starostlivosťou [Obr. 12b]. Skutočnosť, že monarcha bol zobrazený v brnení (*rex armatus*) je v súlade s konceptom

triumfujúceho kráľa (*victor ac triumphator*), vyjadrenom v hrobovom nápise. Triumf je tu prirodzene typu *all'antica*, a tak kráľ nebol prikrýty korunovačným plášťom, ale iba krátkym vojenským plášťom podľa vzoru starovekých veliteľov (*palludamentum*). Postoj ležiaceho kráľa opierajúceho sa o laket' a s pokrče-

nými a prekríženými nohami nadväzuje na staroveké zobrazenia vodných bohov a oddychujúceho Herkula (*Hercules cubans*), čo spolu s ďalšími ideovými odkazmi k starovekému hrdinovi dovoľuje vnímať Žigmunda ako novodobé stelesnenie poloboha (*Hercules redivivus*).

Výber a preklad M. Hrdina