

STUDIES ON THE ART OF GREAT POLAND  
DURING THE REIGN OF JOHN III SOBIESKI

In Great Poland (Wielkopolska) the late 17th century abounded in interesting architectural solutions, both in the construction of churches and mansions, in many cases with traces of links with the artistic centre of Warsaw. One of the most imposing and at the same time the earliest structures was the mansion of the Konarzewski family at Chocieszewice built in the 1670's, which in Great Poland represented the style of Tylman van Gameren. Despite an 18th century conversion, its original geometric layout, with a large room facing both sides on the second floor and four corner recesses, is still discernible. It was designed either by Tylman van Gameren or by Józef Szymon Belotti, more probably the latter who is known to have stayed in Great Poland at that time (e.g. in Rydzyna and Łąd).

Two other structures in the Tylman van Gameren style dating from the 1690's have not survived. These were the mansions in Krotoszyn and Baszkowo, known to us only from descriptions. The owners of Baszkowo were the Leszczyńskis whose contacts with John III's court are best exemplified by their residence in Rydzyna. The castle at Rydzyna (Fig. 9), built after 1682, is a fourstorey building combining various functions, as a residence and a stately home, with separate premises for economic activity and for entertainment in the eastern garden wing. The elevation of the castle, as well as the character, layout and decoration of the interiors (Fig. 10) recall similar structures in Warsaw, in particular the royal residence at Wilanów and Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski's Zazienki residence at Ujazdów. The Rydzyna Castle is regarded as the most interesting work by Józef Szymon Belotti.

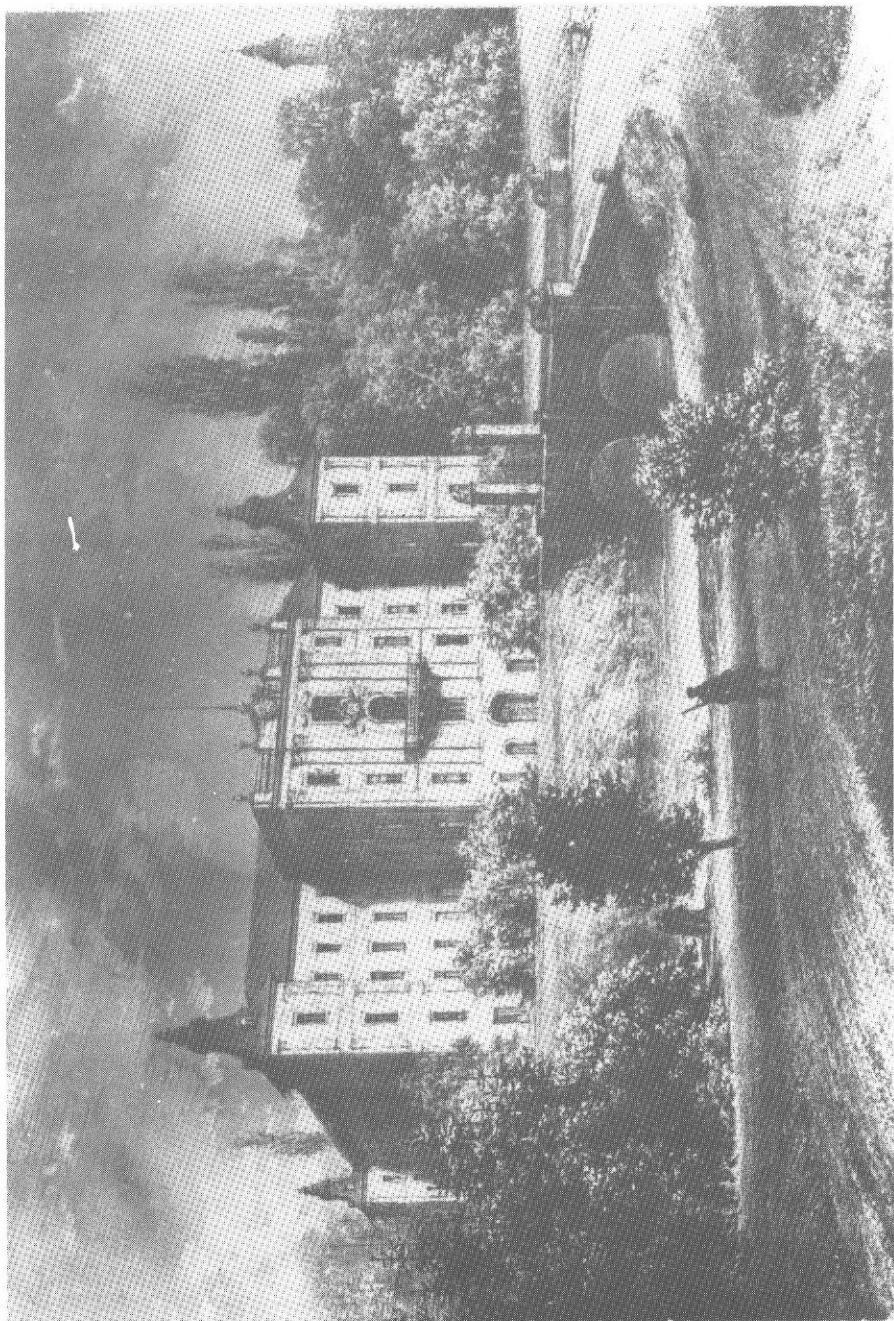
The stuccowork in the Rydzyna Castle is associated with the sepulchral monuments of Bogusław and Rafał Leszczyński and the figure of St. John of Nepomuk in the parish church in Leszno, since the decoration surrounding them seems to have been the work

of Belotti too. The remaining decoration in the parish church has a different character and recalls stuccos in the Cistercian church at Przemęt and the Philipone church at Gostyn. The decoration in the oldest part of the Gostyn church was at least partly the work of Andrzej Catenazzi.

Certain traces of the activity of the Rydzyna and Gostyń workshops can be discovered in the mansion of the Radomicki family at Konarzewo near Poznań. The projection is reminiscent of some "un-ordered" elevations of Tylman van Gameren (e.g. in Stary Otwock) and is linked with a change of concept, a departure from the mannerist design according to which the façade and side elevations were completed. The projection was built by Jan Adam Sier of Rydzyna from which, as well as from Leszno, Andrzej Radomicki brought most of the craftsmen. Some of the latter were also employed at the construction and decoration of the Jesuit church in Poznań.

There are many obscure matters as regards artists active in Great Poland, e.g. Wojciech Bianco, author of part of the stucco-work in the mansion at Konarzewo, who may be the same one mentioned by Jesuit sources together with Jan Catenazzi and the painter Dankwart. Or, as Dobrzycka maintains, the stucco artist employed by the Jesuits could have been Giovanni Battista Bianco, employed in the Carloni workshop at St. Florian in Austria and in Passau.

In the architectural projects in Great Poland certain individual features can be discerned, as is also the case with some stucco decorations in Warsaw. They are a result of the activity of north Italian workshops, that is the final result was obtained owing to slightly different influences than those that affected the artists imported by John III directly from Rome.



9. The Castle of Rydzyna from drawn by N. Orda in 19th century.



10. The Castle of Rydzyna. 'Marine Hall'. Decoration of ceiling panel (detail)