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THE SEAT OF THE POLISH LIBRARY IN PARIS AND ITS ALTERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to reconstruct the history of the Polish Library in Paris. The first 200 years of the Paris *hôtel particulier*, raised on the Île Saint-Louis in the mid-17th century, is poorly documented. From the purchase of the house to serve as the Library in 1853, the building has undergone several modernizations: in 1854, a reading room and a library were prepared on the building's second floor; in 1903-1904, a superstructure was added onto the outbuilding in which the Adam Mickiewicz Museum was housed; in 1909, a large public reading room was organized on the ground floor of the main body of the building. The first major alterations were conducted on the building in 1927-1929; initiated by Franciszek Pułaski, they were designed by Marian Lalewicz. At that point, all the installations were modernized, interiors redecorated, a new communication bay was added onto the main body from the side of the courtyard, the stable was altered to serve as a book storage space, a new architectural setting was introduced to the courtyard, and so too was antiqued visual identification of the rooms. In 1935-1936, new reception rooms and a lecture room on the first floor were arranged after Armand Rateau's design. The Library edifice suffered greatly during WW II, while its post-war renova-

tion has been limited to merely restoring it from those specific damages. It was only in 1999–2004 that the building was finally and thoroughly modernized: a vast number of infrastructural works were conducted, a lift was built, the book storage was rearranged into compact storage, and the former reading room on the ground floor was transformed into an auditorium. The design for that alteration was provided by the CR Architecture, Claude Costantini and Michel Regembal's Paris architectural studio.

KEYWORDS: Polish Library in Paris, Polish culture, history of Paris architecture, architecture of the Second Polish Republic

The Polish Library in Paris is one of the most prominent institutions of Polish culture outside Poland's territory. Its history as a migrants' organisation, a library, and an archival collection, as well as a museum of art, has been the subject of academic research on a number of occasions and in numerous publications. The library's very structural edifice, however, has not been of particular interest to academics.¹ This should not be surprising, since the building had neither been especially designed for the purpose of housing books, nor raised to meet the needs of storing and documenting its many collections – or even of making them available to the general public. The structure itself a quite common, though historic, 17th century Paris tenement house, which has undergone several extensions and adaptations over its history, each time conducted with an extremely restricted budget. (fig. 1). However, the very building of the Library, as a witness to history and as

1 E.g.: L. Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji. Rzut oka na 50-letnie koleje Towarzystwa Historyczno-Literackiego w Paryżu* [From the Life of Poles in France. Overview of the 50 Years of the Historical and Literary Society in Paris], 1832–1882, Paryż–Kraków 1883; F. Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu w latach 1893–1948* [Polish Library in Paris in 1893–1948], Paryż 1948; J. Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu w latach 1838–1893* [History of Polish Library in Paris in 1838–1893], Historia Jagellonica, Kraków 2013, Ibidem, ample bibliography; *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu: zarys historii i prezentacja zbiorów* [Historical and Literary Society, Polish Library in Paris: Outline of History and Collection Presentation], Eds. W. Kordaczuk, E. Kosieradzka, E. Rutkowska, Paryż–Warszawa: 2014.



FIG. 1. Polish Library in Paris, 6 rue Quai d'Orsay, Photo by M. Omilanowska, 2019

a symbolic venue for the history of Polish émigré community, deserves a more thorough study, particularly since names of important Polish and French architects were connected with various stages of the building's transformation. These include Marian Lalewicz and Armand Albert Rateau, and in the case of the last alteration, of renowned Paris architects Claude Costantini and Michel Regembal of CR Architectural studio.

Tracing the tedious efforts to improve conditions for the operations of the building is not easy, since little visual documentation of the work has been preserved; in fact, descriptions of the activities undertaken sometimes prove truly misleading, requiring attentive interpretation. Additionally, few archival records related to the renovations and alterations have been preserved. Therefore, the present paper is based also on my on-site verification and analysis of the building's architecture and of its construction, which I conducted at the Library itself in September of 2019.²

The story of the Polish Library's various seats prior to 1854 has already been scrupulously studied by Janusz Pezda, so I summarize it only briefly, here – resorting first of all to Pezda's re-

2 I would like very much to take the opportunity to thank Mr Kazimierz Piotr Zaleski and Ms Anna Czarnocka for their friendly assistance in my research.

search.³ As an institution, the Polish Library first combined several smaller book collections into one, and was founded in 1838 by Polish exiles at the initiative of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, and Karol Sienkiewicz. Initially, the small collection was temporarily placed at the seat of the Historical Department of the Literary Society at 1 Rue Matignon (8th Arrondissement, currently Avenue Matignon). The conditions being extremely poor there, steps were soon taken to rent separate spaces for the Library, yet meagre financing from the organisers permitted them to lease only a portion of the premises rented by Ludwik Radoliński at 10 Rue Duphot (1st Arrondissement, Quartier Place-Vendôme). With the collection transferred there in mid-February 1839, the library was ceremoniously launched on March 24 of that year.⁴ The collections furnishing this first institutional seat were a hotchpotch of objects offered by respective members of the Society; Lubomir Gadon wrote of them as follows: “Niemcewicz offered a clock, G-l Mycielski donated 50 francs for the presidium armchair, Kurowski arranged curtains . . . as for chairs it was decided that each member would pay 3 franc of contribution”.⁵

A high rent consumed the initial whole budget of the Polish Library in Paris, and efforts to acquire a replacement facility free of charge in one of the French Treasury buildings failed. Neither was it possible to prolong the lease contract for the premises in Rue Duphot, and in May 1839, the troublesome peregrination of the collection began. It first was moved to the premises at 10 Rue Surène (8th Arrondissement); however, the building was to be demolished, and already in November of that year it was necessary to transfer the collection to a rented apartment at 8 Rue des Saussaies (8th

3 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [History of the Polish Library in Paris]; see also: J. Pezda, *Siedziby Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu w latach 1838–1853* [Seats of the Polish Library in Paris in 1838–1863], *Rocznik Biblioteki PAU/PAN*, Vol. 49, 2004, pp. 177–194; E. Bobrowska-Jakubowska, *La Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris*, in: *L’Île Saint-Louis. Action Artistique de la Ville de Paris*, ed. Béatrice de Andia, Paris 1997, pp. 163–165.

4 Pezda, *Historia biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 51–53.

5 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 29.

Arrondissement), the annual rent for the space standing at 2,030 (contemporary) francs.⁶ Since the efforts to acquire premises free of charge from the government showed little positive prospect, in the autumn of 1843 the collection was transferred to a cheaper facility at 3 Rue des Saussaies, where in subsequent years the rented premises gradually increased through the acquisition of newly rented spaces.⁷

Director Karol Sienkiewicz did not cease trying to acquire Library's own worthy seat, yet his dreams clashed with the migrating facility's physical capacity. Still, in 1842 he was making attempts to buy a house in Rue Miromesnil (8th Arrondissement); despite some optimistic calculations, he was not granted approval by Prince Adam J. Czartoryski to carry out this transaction.⁸ Gadon recalls that Sienkiewicz was even dreaming of raising their own house:

[on] the land granted by the Government, somewhere in the area of Champs Elysée. It was to serve as a general Polish *Asylum*; it would house the Library, a Chapel, a School, a Home for Veterans, a secure place to provide shelter to our different funds of our various Societies, the Editorial Office for the periodical published at the Library, and within the courtyards of this Polish Edifice the statute of our major guardian Prince Adam J. Czartoryski would be raised.⁹

The question of the purchase of the Library's own seat resurfaced in 1850, and on 12 March 1851, Karol Sienkiewicz read out an appeal to Poles, thus initiating the collection of contributions to either purchase an existing space or to raise the Library's own building.¹⁰ Regrettably, out of the 100,000 francs planned by the end of 1852, merely 32,090 were collected, which in view of the rapidly growing Paris real estate prices did not allow organizers to purchase any

6 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp.78–81.

7 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 82–83.

8 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 81–82.

9 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 64.

10 F. Hoesick, *Paryż* [Paris], Warszawa 1923, p. 153.

suitable space, even with additional credit.¹¹ Sien-kiewicz dreamt of buying a plot, preferably close to the Pantheon on the Sainte-Genève Hill, and of constructing an appropriate edifice for a structure that would serve as the seat of what he called the National Library. His dream never materialized.

Władysław Zamoyski decided to solve the problem, most likely with Adam J. Czartoryski's approval; having found a building he liked at 6 Quai d'Orléans (4th Arrondissement) on the Île Saint-Louis, he decided to buy it, using his own resources. Within, he planned an apartment for himself and a future home for the Library. He signed the contract on 20 December, 1852.¹² This caused a deep conflict among Polish migrants, making Sienkiewicz leave the position of the Library's Director; following long debates, the conflict was solved with the purchase of the whole building from Zamoyski by the Historical Society, in compliance with the terms of a contract concluded on September 26th, 1853.

Thus, as of autumn 1853, the Polish Library finally had its own seat "in the very centre of Paris," as Lubomir Gadon described it, "though away from the nucleus of excellence, from the world of parties, and from the main camp of ordinary tourists . . . just on the very Seine, in the direct vicinity of the magnificent Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral".¹³ What Gadon did not add: the new Library was located not far from the Hôtel Lambert, at that time already property of the Czartoryskis.¹⁴

11 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 97–98.

12 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 99–108. See also Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, pp. 71–72; A. Meżyński, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu. Rys historyczny, zbiory, dzień dzisiejszy* [Polish Library in Paris. Historical Outline, Collections, Today], 'Przegląd Biblioteczny' 1983, No. 1, pp. 13–25.

13 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 73.

14 On the cultural significance of the Île Saint-Louis, more: F. Ziejka, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu – skarbnica kultury narodowej* [Polish Library in Paris: Treasury of National Culture], in: *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu – skarbnica kultury narodowej. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Komisję Spraw Emigracji i Łączności z Polakami za Granicą. 4 listopada 2014* [Polish Library in Paris: Treasury of National Culture. Proceedings of the Conference Organised by the Commission for Emigration and Communication with Poles Abroad. 4 November 2014], ed. M. Lipińska, Kancelaria Senatu, Warszawa: 2014, pp. 36–45.

Not much is known about the house at 6 Rue Quai d'Orléans. It was one of the buildings of the Île Saint-Louis developed in the first half of the 17th century.¹⁵ The island itself had been uninhabited in the Middle Ages (used mainly for grazing cattle), and was intersected by a canal; it was intensely urbanized only in the times of Marie de' Medici, although the first concepts for such work had been laid out already under Henry IV. Parcelling out the isle's land had begun by 1614, work connected with a wide range of measures such as in-filling the canal, consolidating the embankment, building bridges, and marking out the street grid. The process was implemented by entrepreneurs Christophe Marie, Lugles Poulletier, and François Le Regrattier. By the 1660s, the isle had been already developed, connected to the banks of the Seine and the Île de la Cité with three bridges; the Parish Church of Saint Louis was raised, while the majority of the plots built up with more or less sumptuous houses and residencies. Most of the houses on the isle were raised by the architect brothers Louis and François Le Vau, and Louis Le Vau completed the above-mentioned Hôtel Lambert in Rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île in approximately 1640. The palace purchased in 1843 by Czartoryski played a key role in the life of the Great Emigration throughout the 19th century.

In to-date literature, it has been assumed that the plot at 6 Rue Quai d'Orléans was purchased in 1640 by Michel Guillaume; he subsequently resold it before 1655 to the secretary of Louis XIV, Antoine Moreau – who with his wife, Marie Courtin, raised a house on the property.¹⁶ It is true that the first owner of the parcel as of 28 August 1640 was Michel Guillaume, who purchased it from the

15 *L'Île Saint-Louis, l'île de la Cité, le quartier de l'ancienne université*, J. S. de Sacy, Y. Christ, P. Siguret, Paris 1984, pp. 35–116.

16 *L'Île Saint-Louis*, pp. 66–67; Bobrowska-Jakubowska, *La Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris*, pp. 163–165. It was experts from the Grahall group who specified and completed this piece of information, first of all helping to set a more precise dating. Grahall (Groupe de recherche art historique architecture et littérature), *Société Historique et Littéraire Polonaise, 6 quai d'Orléans IVe. Chronologie provisoire*, Paris 2000, typescript of the specialist opinion in the archive of the Polish Library in Paris (below BPP).

entrepreneurs: Marie, Le Regrattier and Poullétier. Yet two years later, the plot in Quai d'Orléans ended up in the hands of a certain "Jean Council, Sieur de l'Isle", and he launched the construction of the house in 1643, completing it in 1644.¹⁷ The Grahall experts found records testifying to the fact that Claude Dublet was employed as contractor. He was a joiner who was intensely involved in Parisian building activity at the time, cooperating with such architects as Nicolas Villedo and the Le Vau brothers. This collaboration allows us to suspect that one of them may have been responsible for the design of the house at 6 Quai d'Orléans.

A year later, in December 1645, Jean Council leased the house to Jacques de Mesmes, King's advisor and Treasurer of France; in 1657, the house was rented by François de Villemontée and Nicolas de la Barre, then in 1668 by André Baron, King's advisor.¹⁸ In May 1670, Council died. His heirs, defined in the contracts already with a differently spelled name: the Lises, Elisabeth and her husband Daniel Delondy, Pierre, Marthe, and Marguerite, sold the property to Antoine Moreau, King's advisor and secretary. Moreau has been identified in previous research as the house's investor.¹⁹ On 20 April 1679, Moreau resold the house to Marcelin Arnaud – King's advisor, General and Extraordinary War Treasurer, and Treasurer of the Provinces of Picardy, Hérault, Artois, and Flanders; however, since the latter party did *not* pay the agreed sum, the property returned to Mr. and Mrs. Moreau.²⁰

In 1699, the house was inherited by their son, Pierre-Nicolas Moreau, Sieur de d'Esclainviller, and remained the property of his family until 1779 when it was purchased by the notary Pierre-Charles Liénard; after the latter's death in 1827, the property was

17 Grahall, *Société Historique*, p. 1. Grahall experts based on the preliminary research conducted at: Archives Nationales, Minutier central des notaires de Paris, (below AN, Minutier central) XII, 72; II, 168; XII 80.

18 Grahall, *Société Historique*, p. 2, after: AN, Minutier central, XII, 82; XII 121; XCVII, 29.

19 Grahall, *Société Historique*, pp. 2–3. after: AN, Minutier central, CXV, 189.

20 Grahall, *Société Historique*, p. 3. after: AN, Minutier central, LX, 81.



FIG. 2. Adam Pérelle, La Porte St. Bernard, ca. 1660. Fragment of the drawing from the Musée Carnavalet collection

inherited by his three daughters. One of these, Caroline-Denise née Liénard was married to Jean-Baptiste-Gabriel Poisson, and she is the owner from whom one Zamoyski purchased the property in 1852.

The house at 6 Rue Quai d'Orléans constituted a so-called *hôtel particulier*, typical of Paris at the time. Despite many preserved prints from the 17th and 18th century showing the embankment of the Île Saint-Louis close to the Tournelle Bridge, it is hard to recreate the actual appearance of the sequence of the houses along the embankment. Still, both the bridge and the nearby Gate of St Bernard located on the southern bank of the Seine were of interest to contemporary artists (fig. 2).²¹ The buildings depicted within their works were treated quite loosely and decoratively, to the extent that sometimes the number of storeys or axes of respective houses were not faithfully rendered.

Regrettably, no design documentation from the 17th and 18th century has survived. Descriptions preserved from this time are

21 See e.g.: Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 233–235.

laconic and unclear, so the reconstruction of the original appearance of the house can be but vague.²² It was raised on a long plot, with its front facing the Seine; the plot was made up of a wider front rectangle, with a narrower rectangle shifted eastwards within the block, making the whole structure resemble the letter L in shape. The dwelling section was composed of the street frontage, with five-axial body and rear perpendicular wing, namely a lateral outbuilding raised along the western border of the plot, with windows onto the interior courtyard. A square stable was located in the rear of the plot, which occupied a narrower section behind a small courtyard; covered with nine-partite, groin vaulting, resting on four stone pillars, the building's living quarters were located in the first storey and in the attic. Along the eastern and northern courtyard edges, there were open arcades (of a utility character, and most likely wooden), which also served as a coach depot, or *remise*. Both the main body and the outbuilding had cellars; furthermore, vaulted cellars also stretched under the eastern section of the courtyard. The main body turned southward, and with its five-axis façade held two storeys and an "à la française" attic (also known as a mansard roof). It featured a single-bay layout with a suite of connecting rooms on each storey. The corner of the main body and the western wing housed the grand staircase, while the main entrance was located in the corner beside the courtyard; visitors could enter from the street through a gateway.

The first recorded archival alteration in the building's form was a balcony added on the first floor on the façade axis, first authorized on 13 December 1765 by then-owner Marie-Elisabeth Moreau d'Esclainvilliers.²³ The second, and much more serious alteration, must have taken place in the 1830s or 40s; the mansion's descriptions from 1779 and 1829 clearly specify that the main body and

22 I based the description on the analysis of the text of the transaction of the purchase of the house by Liénard in 1779, preserved at BPP, MS 1485, pp. 123-128, quoted after: Grahal, *Société Historique*, p. 4.

23 Grahal, *Société Historique*, p. 3. after: AN, Minutier central, Z¹⁶482, f^o128.

the wing are two-storeyed, while Zamoyski's 1852 deed was for a house of three floors.²⁴ That extension transformed the *hôtel particulier* into a tenement house (fig. 3). It added a third floor to the main body and wing, but also replaced the grand staircase with the quarter-turn stairs, which were situated on the plan of a square. A slightly smaller stair (which permitted a narrow passage behind it) was situated on the horseshoe-shaped plan (fig. 4). A small gallery now connected the end of the western wing to the dwellings on the stable's first floor, and a small, single-axis eastern outbuilding was also raised.

The interior layout was also thoroughly transformed at this time, achieving smaller rooms that formed separate apartments for lease: luxurious, spacious apartments covered the whole first, second, and ground storeys of the main body and outbuilding, while on the fourth floor, two smaller flats were created. The first-floor apartment was the grandest, and was composed of a dozen rooms, including a room for a bath and a toilet; the drawing room additionally featured a balcony with new cast-iron balustrades. (fig. 5). This apartment also had its own assigned cellars and a servants' flat over the stables. It is likely that these alterations also created the (still preserved)- marble fireplaces in the front rooms above the ground floor.

After the purchase of the tenement house by the Society from Zamoyski in 1853, a complicated arrangement of financial liabilities led to many surface divisions of the house structure. The Library had the second and the third floor at its disposal, while Władysław Zamoyski owned the rest of the building, including the ground, first, and fourth floors, as well as the outbuildings and the stable. While Zamoyski lived in the apartment on the first floor, the remaining flats were rented.

The Library's collection preserves a drawing – regrettably neither signed nor dated – most likely created soon after the property

24 Grahall, *Société Historique*, pp. 4–5. after: AN, Minutier central, CX, 819, and BPP, MS 1571.



FIG. 3. Stanislas Lépine, fragment of the painting *Pont de la Tournelle*, 1862, National Gallery of Art, Washington

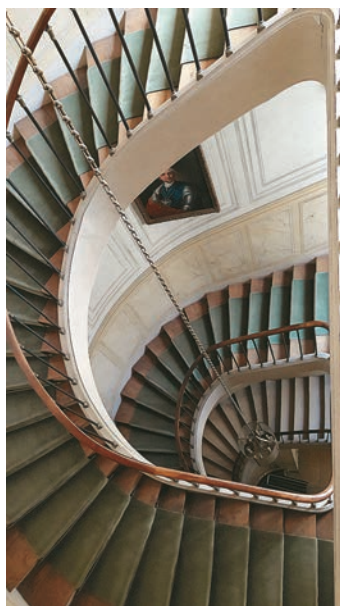


FIG. 4. The main staircase, current state.
Photo by M. Omilanowska



FIG. 5. Fragment of the façade of the Polish Library with the entrance gate and the balcony in the apartment of Władysław Zamoyski, Photo from the 2nd half of the 19th century, BPP collection

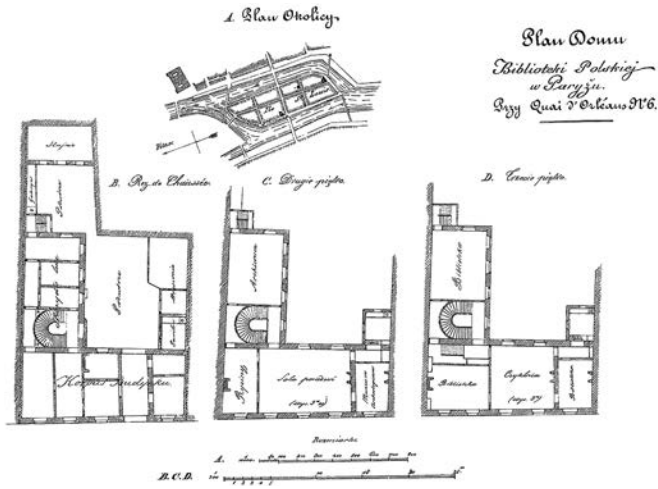


FIG. 6. Plans of the ground floor and the second and first floors at Quai d'Orléan, with layout of their functions, after 1853, BPP, Ms 1571

had been purchased. (fig. 6).²⁵ Apart from the layout, three plans were sketched: for the ground floor, as well as for the second and the third ones, which suggests that initially both floors were to be used for the Library. The second-floor plan shows an archive in the left outbuilding, while in the main body a suite of three rooms was planned, defined subsequently from the east as a print cabinet (corner room, with one window), a conference room (with three windows), and a single-windowed corner room from the west, defined as Archaeological Museum. Unfortunately, I have found no information either in relevant studies or in records suggesting that such a museum was planned; neither have I discovered any mention of an archaeological collection planned to be transferred to the Library. On the third floor, the interior arrangement in the main body was to be slightly different: the first room to the east of the Library was to have two windows; the second, a reading room, was deeper, though of the same width, and was to have daylight enter through two windows. Meanwhile, contemporary descriptions

25 *Plan Domu Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu. Przy Quai d'Orleans Nr 6* [Layout of the House of the Polish Library in Paris. At 6 Quai d'Orleans], BPP, MS 1571.

of the Library prove that the third floor was never adapted for its use, and the apartment housed there was continuously rented as dwelling premises.

The ceremonious opening of the Polish Library at its new address took place on 57 September 1854. The Library itself was housed mainly on the second floor: there, a suite of rooms was prepared in the front main body, overlooking the Seine, and homogenously furnished with wooden wall bookcases reaching almost the ceiling. The suite was made up of four spaces: in the eastern corner was a single-windowed reading room for magazines; the second of the rooms looked west, and was also single-windowed. It featured the bust of Gen. Władysław Zamoyski, placed on one of the cabinets, and the room itself was later named after him. Lit through two windows, the third room played the role of the main reading room, and also served as a conference room (later named after Adam J. Czartoryski). As decoration, this room featured Niemcewicz's portrait over the fireplace and a bust of Czartoryski (fig. 7).



FIG. 7. Reading room on the 2nd floor serving as a meeting room, named after Adam J. Czartoryski, Photo from the 1930s, BBP collection

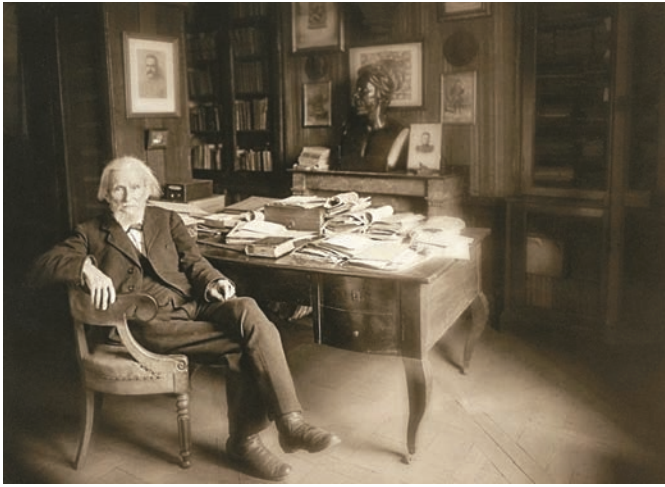


FIG. 8. Władysław Mickiewicz in the office arranged in the Wodziński Room, in the eastern corner on the second floor of the main body, photo from the early 1920s.
PAUArt HL_BPP_Phot_Mic_115.

The fourth space was a small reading room located in the eastern corner of the main body; this single-windowed space served – as the Director’s office and in time it was given the name of Maciej Wodziński (fig. 8).²⁶

Around 1858, soon after the purchase of the property, Władysław Zamoyski launched the project of its extension.²⁷ On the prolongation of the short eastern outbuilding, in the place of the former coach depot, a new right (eastern) outbuilding of the ground floor and two more floors were raised. The first floor was incorporated

26 Reconstruction of the Library layout from before the modernization conducted by Pułaski after: F. Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 75; F. Hoesick, *Paryż*, pp. 165–169 and photo documentation.

27 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 83; Grahal experts (Grahal, *Société Historique*, p. 9) date this remodeling to the period 1876 – 1893 based on the analysis of two Cadastral descriptions from 1862 and 1876, preserved at the Archive de Paris (D’P*826 [1862] and D’P*826 [1876]), but it is likely that these descriptions were only an automatic repetition of earlier ones, without on-site verification. Such late dating of the extension can be supported by the fact that Władysław Zamoyski was no longer alive (d. 1868), and by the fact that his wife had left Paris, having kept the apartment only for her brief visits. Contrariwise, Lubomir Gadon lived in Paris from the fall of the January Uprising, and as Zamoyski’s secretary, he was well informed on the house’s current state.

into Zamoyski's apartment, while the second was turned into another Library room, bearing the name of Colonel August Szulc, to commemorate the donor for whom the extension was built.²⁸ From 1864, the Szulc Room served as a print cabinet.²⁹ In the course of that modernization, the passage connecting the left outbuilding with the stable was altered, and the gallery once located there was replaced by a small, single-storey outbuilding.

On 7 November 1865, the Society concluded a settlement with Zamoyski, leasing him the whole house (with the exception of portions of the first and second floor occupied by the library); in exchange, Zamoyski incurred the costs of maintenance and repairs, and also waived his claim to 62,000 francs in favour of the Society.³⁰ More importantly, in 1866 the Society was granted the status of a public benefit institution, which began stabilizing its financial situation. At the conclusion of this decade (in 1869), the Society formally became the owner of the whole building. The Contract with Zamoyski expired in 1884; however, the first-floor apartment was rented by the General's widow Jadwiga Zamoyska née Działyński until her death in 1923. The cellars, the ground floor, the outbuildings, and the upper floors had an array of altering tenants.³¹ According to Pezda's findings, in 1877-1885, the Boucaut Company installed a gas lighting system in the Library.³²

In 1890, the Historical and Literary Society was facing a deepening financial crisis, and its leader at the time, Władysław Czaratoryski, began serious efforts to transfer the Library into the care of Cracow's Academy of Learning (AU), which was then interested in creating its own academic outpost in Paris. The negotiations and applications for necessary consents from the French and

28 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 82; Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, p. 117, footnote 29.

29 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 87.

30 Gadon, *Z życia Polaków we Francji*, p. 88. Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, pp. 118-119.

31 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, p. 121; Hoesick, *Paryż*, p. 164.

32 Pezda, *Historia Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu*, p. 146.

Austro-Hungarian authorities went on for quite some time, yet finally, on 6 April 1893, the Cracow Academy became the owner of the property, as well as guardian and administrator of the Library. Regrettably, the contract provided for the Library maintenance to be covered only with its own proceeds, which actually petrified “the institution’s deplorable material standing”.³³

Władysław Mickiewicz, Adam Mickiewicz’s son, was Secretary of the Local Committee from 1898, and subsequently served as Academy delegate deputy, then finally as the Academy delegate; he was committed to looking after the Library. His greatest contribution was an initiative he proposed in 1901, which led to the creation of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum, in honour of his father; moreover, he financed this project with funds remaining from the collection to raise Mickiewicz’s monument in Warsaw (funds originally allocated by the Committee for Raising the Monument).³⁴ The Museum in question was placed in the right outbuilding, to which a third floor was added. A large, single-space room was formed (figs. s 9-10), which could be accessed from the second floor of the outbuilding. This was the August Szulc room, with a wooden straight staircase built adjacent to the northern wall (fig. 11). With time, the spaces on the second floor of the outbuilding were also taken over by the Mickiewicz collection.³⁵ The Museum was opened to the public on 3 May 1903.

In 1908, Lubomir Gadon, a long-standing activist of the Society and member of the Local Committee, passed away, bequeathing

33 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 54.

34 I., “Muzeum A. Mickiewicza” [The A. Mickiewicz Museum], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1903, No. 20, p. 383; W. Mickiewicz, “Muzeum Mickiewiczowskie” [The Mickiewicz Museum], *Przegląd Biblioteczny* 1908, Nos. 3–4, pp. 175–188; S. Kutrzeba, *Polska Akademia Umiejętności 1872–1938* [The Polish Academy of Learning 1872–1938], Kraków: 1939, pp. 42–43; Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 65–68; E. Bobrowska-Jakubowska, *Muzeum Adama Mickiewicza w Paryżu* [Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Paris], *Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej* 1998, No. 4, pp. 18–23; T. F. de Rosset, *Polskie kolekcje i zbiory artystyczne we Francji w latach 1795–1919. Między „skarbnicą narodową” a galerią sztuki* [Polish Art Collections in France in 1795–1919. Between the ‘National Treasury’ and an Art Gallery], Toruń: 2005, pp. 191–194.

35 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 65.



FIG. 9. Adam Mickiewicz Museum on the 3rd floor of the eastern outbuilding with Władysław Mickiewicz posing, view to the north, photo ca 1908, PAUArt, HL_BPP_Phot_Mic_375



FIG. 10. Adam Mickiewicz Museum on the 3rd floor of the eastern outbuilding with Władysław Mickiewicz posing, view to the south, ca. 1908, PAUArt, HL_BPP_Phot_Mic_377



FIG. 11. Szulc Room on the 2nd floor of the eastern outbuilding and the stairs leading to the Adam Mickiewicz Museum. Photo from ca 1920, BPP collection

the Society funds that he stipulated to be for investment. It was decided that these funds would be used to furnish a new public reading room; for that purpose, the spacious and perfectly lit (through three windows overlooking the street) room on the ground floor of the main body was to be altered. The guidance for the future furnishing of the room was provided by AU's General Secretary Bolesław Ulanowski and Professor Stanisław Tomkowicz, while the design was authored by the architect Cacheux.³⁶ The new room was named after Gadon, and it housed the collection of 1,000 reference books and seats for 40 readers (figs. s 12-13).³⁷ The walls were lined with bookcases; a podium for the librarian was placed by the southern wall, while by the eastern wall a wooden gallery was placed, enabling "access to the high bookcases that reached the ceiling in this part of the reading room.

The period of World War I was even more challenging for the Library, as far as its financial standing was concerned; Władysław

36 Most likely the person in question was the architect Jules Cacheaux active in Paris at the turn of the 20th century.

37 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 60.



FIG. 12. Reading room, so-called Gadon Room. Ground floor of the main body.
Polish Library in Paris. Photo ca 1910



FIG. 13. Reading room, so-called Gadon Room. Ground floor of the main body.
Polish Library in Paris. Photo ca 1910

Mickiewicz was involved by the French authorities to help Polish exiles. In 1918, the Library interiors were home to the Polish office of the Peace Congress, and later to the “Polish Aid,” which assisted Poles in need. Polish independence led to questions about whether there was any sense in further upkeep of the Polish Library in Paris, particularly after the decision had been made to transfer the Rapperswil collections to Poland.

The situation began to change only in 1925, when the French government decided to establish the French Institute in Poland – or, more strictly speaking, to move it from St. Petersburg to Warsaw. The move endangered the entire concept of creating the Polish Institute in Paris using the Polish Library as its urban base.³⁸ The initiative came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who instructed its Scientific Council headed by Franciszek Pułaski to prepare for the project.³⁹ Director Władysław Mickiewicz was also enthusiastic about the idea.⁴⁰ The essence of this involvement was the desire to transform the Library into a modern scientific and propaganda institution, not only supporting the scientific cooperation between Poland and France, but also disseminating political propaganda. It was to serve as a centre of economic and political information about Poland.

As soon as in the first half of 1926, work on making a full catalogue of the Library resources was launched.⁴¹ The programme to reorganize the Library worked out together with representatives of the Polish Academy of Learning (PAU) was debated over by the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the autumn of 1925, and the first decisions made meant that Polish charity institutions would have to be removed from the Library building,

38 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 69–70.

39 Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (below AAN), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Fond (below MSZ), Cat. Nos. 64, 13430, 13431, 13433.

40 AAN MSZ, Cat. No. 13433, F Pułaski, *Raport... o Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu*, dated 14 July 1925, pp. 13–14.

41 AAN MSZ, Cat. No. 13431, Plenary Meeting of the Scientific Council on 19 June 1926, p. 9.

a task assigned to the Polish Embassy in Paris.⁴² It was agreed to alter the collection profile, focusing on the works dealing with contemporary Poland, which required bringing in enormous portions of contemporary literature, acquired mainly through donations.⁴³ From the very beginning, the organisers were aware of the deplorable state of the building and the necessity to thoroughly renovate the entire structure.

However, in the course of preparation for this restructuring, the institution's on 8 June 1926, its longstanding Director, Władysław Mickiewicz, passed away (on June 8th, 1926). Pułaski was appointed his successor in the function of the AU delegate; at the same time, he retained the position of the President of the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Council accepted the programme of Library's reorganisation, which reads in one of its provisions: "the house of the Polish Library should be rebuilt maintaining its historic value to meet the needs of PL; private tenants should be removed, flats for PL's supervising staff and Academy members coming to Paris should be appropriately furnished".⁴⁴ The task, however, required work from the very bottom, since the house, as Pułaski reported: "presented a lamentable state of decay and destruction . . . today allowing the Polish name to be mocked rather than aspiring to the pride for which it was created."⁴⁵ Worse still:

the fact that this building in such a state of negligence belongs to the Polish Academy and that it is home to mementoes of the Polish bard constitutes circumstance to a high degree anti-propagandistic, and are an affront to the memory of Poland's grandest patriots of the post-partition times who scarifying their wealth and working hard raised this edifice to have the Polish name respected, and not humiliated.⁴⁶

42 AAN, MSZ, Cat. No. 13430, Report of the Scientific Council in 1925, 1926, f. 56.

43 AAN MSZ, Cat. No. 13431, Principles for collecting materials for the Polish Library in Paris, pp. 25-27.

44 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 73-74.

45 AAN, MSZ, Cat. No. 13433, p. 16, F. Pułaski, Memorandum.

46 BPP, MS 7294/10, Detailed designs, p. 1.

The first inspection of the Library building was conducted from 20 to 26 September 1926 by Pułaski and by Library employees Piotr Koczorowski, Bronisława Mońkiewiczówna, and Jan Muszkowski.⁴⁷ Some years later, Pułaski recalled: “the building of the Polish Library requires an immediate renovation. The roof needs resurfacing. Gas lighting exists only in the inhabited dwellings and the reading room. The outbuildings in the second courtyard are in the worst state. Tenants secured by tenancy law occupy the first, the third, and the fourth floor”.⁴⁸ A statement was formulated that the Library edifice “might be possibly the only building in central Paris deprived of the most basic modern amenities”.⁴⁹ The first floor occupied by the Library had hardly changed from 1854, when it was furnished following the acquisition of the building, so the Director’s office was placed in the main body along with three other rooms; the fourth one, the Szulc Room, was located in the right outbuilding, and the Museum of Adam Mickiewicz was then housed on the third floor. The Library also occupied the basement and the one-storey storage space in the right outbuilding, while the reference book collection was placed in the Gadon Room on the ground floor of the main body. The bulk of the main book collection on the second floor threatened the first floor ceiling, so a primary task of this round of renovations was creating new storage space for the books. The Library at this time also had use of a small apartment on the fourth attic floor, occupied by the Academy delegate.

Pułaski was aware that the renovation had to be carried out in stages, both for financial and logistical reasons. A significant number of spaces in the building, including the luxury apartment on the main body’s first floor, had tenants who could not be asked to vacate under the tenancy law in post-World War I Paris. Therefore, Pułaski’s goal was to identify the most urgent renovations, then envisage subsequent changes to take place as resources allowed.

47 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 74–75.

48 Ibidem, p. 75.

49 BPP, MS 7294/10, Detailed designs, p. 1.

According to Pułaski's original concept, the building's functions were ultimately to be allocated as follows: the reading room was to remain as before, located on the main body's ground floor; a concierge's flat was planned to the right of the gate; three lecture rooms and two offices were envisaged on the first floor; two Academy studios, the Adam Mickiewicz Museum, the delegate's office, a library, and also an archives specializing in the history of the post-partition emigration were all to be housed on the expansive second floor. Pułaski also emphasized that "the whole floor, and particularly the conference room will retain the décor from the times of the Historical and Literary Society".⁵⁰ The third and fourth floors were to have flats for the staff and visitors delegated by the Academy to conduct scientific projects in Paris. He planned storage for books in the back outbuilding (the former stable), and envisioned adding further storeys to it in the future. He further instructed that the small courtyard of the outbuilding should be glazed and turned into a reading room for French MPs grouped in the Polish caucus, while the courtyard was to assume a more sumptuous air: "decorated with sculptures and commemorative plaques".⁵¹ Pułaski also hoped to increase the estate's structural footprint by buying the neighbouring plot at the corner with Rue des Deux Ponts, which should be "easy and cheap" (provided there was financing available). However, as had happened so many times before, the plan was not fulfilled.

Paris architect F. Perrot was contracted in the autumn of 1926 to make a preliminary architectural assessment and to calculate the cost of the indispensable works; he estimated at 46,000 francs the cost of the adapting the ground and first floors of the stable to serve as storage space for 37,000 volumes. An additional cost would be a little over 36,000 francs for iron bookcases (a price was calculated by the Strafor Forges de Strasbourg Company). The above costs totalled slightly above 23,000 Polish zlotys, when converted from

50 BPP, MS 7294/10, Detailed designs, p. 2.

51 Ibidem.

(contemporary) francs. Another urgent need was to electrify the building, work which was estimated by the “F. Brett” Company at 17,950 francs. In total, Perrot calculated that the future refurbishing, together with the façade, staircases, and the sewage system would amount to 341,000 francs.⁵²

The Committee decided, however, that Perrot “does not seem to be a sufficient authority for the overall construction”. Instead, as a candidate they pointed to “Mr Jurgielewicz (recommended by the Ambassador ‘Alfred’ Chłapowski) and Feine (223 Bd. St. Germain, recommended by Professor ‘Emil’ Bourgeois)”.⁵³ And indeed, for the supervision of the alteration works on the rebuilding of the Library, Franciszek Pułaski *initially* had decided to employ Kiejstut Jurgielewicz Engr, while Louis Feine was not employed.⁵⁴ Finally, however, Pułaski decided to confine himself to Polish contractors, and he picked Marian Lalewicz for the job.⁵⁵

Lalewicz and his architectural activity undoubtedly deserve a monograph (though as of yet, none have been dedicated).⁵⁶ Following his studies at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, he decided to develop his career in the Empire’s capital.

52 BPP, MS 7294/10, Detailed designs, Cover letter and cost estimates F. Perrot, unnumbered.

53 BPP, MS 7294/10, Detailed designs, p. 2.

54 Louis Feine with his brother Albert ran an architectural office in Paris. His best-known Paris implemented project was René Lalique’s house at 40 cours Albert Ier.

55 M. Omilanowska, *Marian Lalewicz i jego przebudowa Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [Marian Lalewicz and His Reconstruction of the Polish Library in Paris], in: *Paragone. Pasaże sztuki. Studia ofiarowane Lechosławowi Lameńskiemu* [Paragone, Art Passages. Studies Offered to Lechosław Lameński], Eds. E. Błotnicka-Mazur, A. Dzierżyc-Horniak, M. Howorus-Czajka, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2020, pp. 135–156. Fragments of that paper were used in the present article; however many of its findings have been updated and verified.

56 E.g.: L. Niemojewski, *Wspomnienie pośmiertne: Marian Lalewicz (1876–1944)* [Tribute. Marian Lalewicz (1876–1944)], *Rocznik Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego* 1938–1945, Nos. 31–38, pp. 212–214; J. Zachwatowicz, *Lalewicz Marian*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [Polish Biographical Dictionary], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: 1971, Vol. 16, pp. 413–414; f. Dankiewicz, *Marian Lalewicz*, in: *100 lat Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej 1915–2015. Nauczyciele* [A Hundred Years of the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology 1915–2015. Teachers], Eds. J. Roguska, S. Wrona, Warszawa: 2018, pp. 341–343.

Having worked there until 1918, and having reached possibly the highest position amidst the architectural circles in the Empire's capital among all the Poles, he left Russia in the summer of 1918. Already in January 1919, he was assigned head of the State Constructions at the Ministry of Public Works in Warsaw, working on the adaptation of Warsaw palaces meant to serve as seats of the government and government agencies.

The task which brought Lalewicz together with Franciszek Pułaski was rebuilding the Staszic Palace and restoring the Neo-Classical forms it had been given by Antonio Corazzi – this following the drastic architectural Russification of the building conducted by Vladimir Pokrovski from 1892–1895, work done to meet the needs of the First Russian Boys' Gymnasium.⁵⁷ As of 1909, Pułaski was (with some interruptions) Secretary General of the Warsaw Scientific Society (TNW) – serving contemporaneously as the Marshal of the Council of State – and in November 1918, Pułaski initiated the efforts to create an edifice for the Staszic Palace. His efforts succeeded only insofar as a 21 May 1924, resolution by the Council of Ministers, but on 10 November of that year, a committee for the rebuilding of the Palace was founded. Franciszek Pułaski became deputy chairman of the executive department, while Lalewicz assumed the role of executive architect. Following the remodelling, the building was put into service only on 20 January 1926, several months before Pułaski was appointed the Library's Director.⁵⁸

The cooperation between the two gentlemen must have been a good experience, since Pułaski addressed Lalewicz to complete the project. The architect accepted the task given, yet he rarely worked on site in Paris: Instead, he directed the works in letters, sent in drawings, provided opinions on subsequent work stages, and when in doubt, he consulted personally on issues with

57 P. Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów* [Under the Rule of the Romanovs], Warszawa: 1991, pp. 95–103.

58 *Z komitetu odbudowy pałacu Staszica* [From the Committee of the Reconstruction of the Staszic Palace], *Kurier Warszawski*, 1927, No. 80, evening edition, p. 3.

Jurgielewicz, who was working on site. The scheme of work organization and division of responsibilities between Lalewicz and Jurgielewicz is outlined in a letter written by the latter to Pułaski, in which he says: “I have assumed the duties of the architect for rebuilding the edifice of the Polish Library under the following conditions: a) for architectural work I would receive the fee at 3 per cent of the construction cost, b) that I would agree the rebuilding plans with Prof. Lalewicz who was assigned artistic supervision by the Academy”.⁵⁹

Lalewicz arrived in Paris to inspect the Library for the first time in February 1927. Having arrived on the 13th, from the 15th–19th, he conducted a thorough inspection on site, “benefitting from the guidance provided on site by Dr [Jan] Muszkowski”.⁶⁰ As Pułaski later recalled, having viewed the building, “Lalewicz judges that it should be pulled down and a new one should be raised”.⁶¹ This seems little likely, since Lalewicz was aware of the historic worth of the house, while in his preserved *Memorial Concerning the Reconstruction of the Polish Library House in Paris*, there is no mention of a possible dismantling of the structure; thus, it might be justified to suppose that Pułaski’s statement was a loose, joking remark – meant to emphasize the deplorable state of the Library’s building.⁶²

Following his visit to Paris, Lalewicz sent in the above-mentioned *Memorial*, suggesting the range of possible and essential alterations – all changes in harmony with Pułaski’s original concept. Obviously, Lalewicz considered essential the need to re-fit the sewer system in the whole building, to eliminate the sewage pits, and to replace the old-fashioned, badly spread water supply installation. He did not install electricity, as the building contin-

59 BPP, MS 7249/11, letter to Franciszek Pułaski, undated. The scope of responsibilities described in the letter shows that Jurgielewicz was assigned the architectural supervision.

60 BPP, MS 7294/10, Designs and cost estimates. Marian Lalewicz, *Memoriał w sprawie przebudowy domu Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [Memorial Concerning the Reconstruction of the Polish Library House in Paris], 31 March 1927, p. 1.

61 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 77.

62 Lalewicz, *Memoriał*.

ued with only the above-mentioned gas lighting. Lalewicz was of the opinion that nothing new should be built on the premises; contrariwise, he was quite categorical about restoring a dignified appearance and functionality to the building, which would require the removal of all the unnecessary accretions and restore the appearance of “this building boasting a charm of a good architectural school of this after all typical Parisian house”.⁶³ Lalewicz suggested demolishing the attic that had been added onto the ground floor of the structure’s eastern part, and in which a low flat of little functionality had been created. He also wanted the main gate to be replaced with glazed doors, allowing a view of the courtyard. He proposed restoring the façade to its original appearance, and presented the concept of developing the courtyard which “could be added a certain aura of specificity by an appropriate working on the walls surrounding it, and in particular of the walls opposite the gate. That wall could emphasize the Polishness of the property by placing against it a statue of a Pole known worldwide (Copernicus)”.⁶⁴ He approved of the concept of remodelling the back outbuilding (the original stable), to serve as book storage. He assumed that the vaulted ground floor could bear the structure he was planning to raise, consisting of three floors, each 2.2 meters-- high and made of reinforced concrete. On the ground floor of the left outbuilding, he projected a room for “periodicals and catalogues. This would create as if a purgatory between the limbo of the book storages placed further on and the heaven of the front reading room overlooking the Seine”.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Lalewicz proposed to modernize the staircase at the northern tip of the left outbuilding, previously used as a kitchen, and to add a new staircase in the right outbuilding; together with an added lift there, the stairs would serve as an element of the main passageway. The entrance to this staircase would lead

63 Lalewicz, *Memoriał*, p. 1.

64 Ibidem, p. 2.

65 Ibidem, p. 4 (f. 2r).

from the street through a vestibule, which itself had the capacity to house a cloak room. He considered it plausible to create a lecture room, yet not on the ground floor. Rather, he envisioned this room in the interiors of the first floor, where the old Zamoyski's apartment had been located, and which was at the time rented by Mr Campanaki. Ultimately, he proposed to move the Adam Mickiewicz Museum collection to a more prominent location on the first floor. Lalewicz had a high assessment of the Library's second-storey rooms within the main body – rooms which had been furnished in the mid-19th century, and which he recommended preserving.

Lalewicz proposed the work should be completed in the following stages: first, he recommended raising the storage space in the rear outbuilding; second, he would stage a temporary transfer of the Mickiewicz Museum to the left outbuilding, and a thorough renovation of the right one, with a simultaneous building of the new staircase and lift; third, he would focus on the reconstruction of the left outbuilding. He also desired central heating for the structure; however, bearing in mind the number of tenants, this phase of the project would be challenged. Fourth, he recommended the renovation of the façade, retaining its qualities, and particularly restoring the stone cladding on the lower storey; this final stage also involved possible removal of the mansard attic, providing that a new one be restored at a later date.

Already in April 1927, detailed designs were readied for Lalewicz' project, including remodelling the superstructure of the rear outbuilding, turning it into storage space, and the modernization of the kitchen staircase using a design prepared by Kiejstut Jurgielewicz; the latter sent his plans to Lalewicz in Warsaw for consultation.⁶⁶ In May of that year, a meeting was organized in Paris. Present were Lalewicz (officially delegated by the Warsaw University of Technology on PAU's request), PAU Secretary General Professor

66 BPP, MS 7294/11, Jurgielewicz's letter to Lalewicz with the design description of 26 April 1927. Copies of design drawings have been preserved in the Archives de Paris, VO¹³207.

Stanisław Kutrzeba, and PAU President Professor Jan Michał Rozwadowski.⁶⁷ They agreed on the scope of work to be conducted, and on how to finance that work.

On 14 May 1927, the *Programme of the Reconstruction of the Polish Library House . . . participated by Mr Prof. M Lalewicz, Mr Jurgielewicz and F. Pułaski* was prepared.⁶⁸ The document reiterated the assumptions phrased in Lalewicz's Memorial. A precondition with respect to the first floor was formulated: "in the event of buying the flat, it might be used as a venue for Polish permanent exhibitions on culture and art".⁶⁹ Plans were also formulated for the works proposed by Lalewicz: the demolishing of the small attics and construction of a new corridor attached to the main body from the side of the courtyard. Additionally, the following items were included:

restoring the stone look to the façade. In harmony with Prof. Lalewicz's drawings the balcony is removed, the current window shutters are replaced with iron, covered ones; exchange of the window railings. Covering up of the mansard floor with an iron rail. Iron glazed gate recessed with lateral boards for inscriptions and overlooking the inside wall of the courtyard.⁷⁰

Works were launched in mid-May; judging from the preserved reports, they progressed at a very rapid pace. In June 1927, Lalewicz's drawings for the Library façade reached Paris. Pułaski reported:

We are shortly launching this artistically beautiful serious plan proportionate to this institution's importance. However, I still have two more doubts as for the façade. The first is whether Mr Campanaki agrees to have the balcony removed, and the second, what to do with the sculpture decoration of the old gate, since there are rumours here that attempt was made to classify them as 'Moniment istorique', and

67 BPP, MS 7294/11, copy of the letter to Marian Lalewicz of 2 May 1927.

68 BPP, MS 7294/10, *Program przebudowy domu Biblioteki Polskiej zaprojektowany dn. 14 maja 1927 r. przy udziale pp. Prof. M. Lalewicza, f. Jurgielewicza i F. Pułaskiego* [Programme of the Reconstruction of the Polish Library House . . . participated by Prof. M Lalewicz, Mr Jurgielewicz and F. Pułaski].

69 Ibidem.

70 Ibidem, p. 2.

as there are always critics ready to cry out, we might have to bear this in mind. Could you, please, Professor, consider an option of placing these sculptures somewhere, e.g., in the courtyard or in the passage overdoor?⁷¹

Pułaski also informed Lalewicz that, in view of the difficulties with the termination of Mr Campanaki's contract, Pułaski was planning to create a lecture room on the left outbuilding's ground floor, and on the second floor: a reading room for the MPs, covered with a glass roof. He emphasized that "I do not want, you, Professor to complain too much about this decision of mine and to kindly work out the architecture of the interior in harmony with your ideas and the façade".⁷² In February 1928, planners realized that the historic gate could not be removed, at least not while the tenant at the time, Campanaki, refused to have the existing balcony dismantled. Lalewicz thus had to reduce the scope of his design.

Pułaski's correspondence with Lalewicz shows a picture of a very tight cooperation; Pułaski initiated various alterations resulting from the outcropping needs, Jurgielewicz drew the plans, then Lalewicz corrected and approved them. This happened in one instance with the dismantling of a wall and its replacement with a column at the entrance to the Mickiewicz Museum; the above-mentioned façade renovation had to be limited to fresh plastering only.⁷³ Jurgielewicz and Lalewicz shared the accomplishment of shaping the inner courtyard elevations, though the ambitious plan to place Copernicus's statue there could not be implemented.

The works of this stage had been completed by May 1928, and sumptuous celebrations of Mickiewicz were planned for the occasion. The consecration ceremony was held on May 20th, presided over by Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski, and the Library itself was opened to its readers on 3 May 1929; on that day, three commemorative plaques were unveiled, featuring the Library's history, its

71 BPP, MS 7294/11, Franciszek Pułaski's letter of to Marian Lalewicz of 24 June 1927.

72 Ibidem.

73 BPP, MS 7294/11, Lalewicz's letter to Pułaski of 21 February 1928.



FIG. 14. Ceremoniously decorated internal courtyard of the Library with commemorative plaques. Photo 1929, BPP collection

most prominent historical dates, and its activists of greatest merit (fig. 14).

Jurgielewicz's design and Lalewicz's artistic surveillance resulted in a modernization of the building's entire infrastructure: central heating and electrification were introduced, and a thorough roof renovation completed. Communication passageways in the building were changed. Although attempts to build a new staircase and a lift in the building's eastern section failed, a new service staircase at the end of the left outbuilding was added. The major Lalewicz alteration (from a communication perspective) was making the structure's main body wider, adding to it a three-storeyed, narrow bay, which on the ground floor had an arcaded passage from the gate passage to the entrance in the corner of the left outbuilding; this last structure opened to the courtyard with two semi-circular arcades (fig. 15), while housing on the first and second floor communication galleries; these facilitated the connection between the lateral outbuildings and rooms in the structure's main body (fig. 16). On the third floor, the gallery was glazed and, as mentioned by Pułaski, housed a new painting studio.



FIG. 15. Communication bay added to the courtyard after Marian Lalewicz's design, Photo M. Omilanowska, 2019



FIG. 16. Gallery on the 2nd floor, photo ca 1938, BPP collection



FIG. 17. Curator's room with glazed roof in the former backyard, with the book storage in the vaulted stable visible through the open windows, photo ca. 1980, BPP collection

Another important modification, though not so clearly visible to visitors, was the creation of a new book storing system. The main storage was placed in the former stable, newly extended to three storeys, complete with a reinforced-concrete superstructure. Magazines found a storage home in the basement rooms under the main body. The little courtyard in front of the stable with a glazed roof would have permitted an additional space, one planned as a reading room, but which eventually served as a curator's office (fig. 17).

The majority of spaces within the building were refurbished, assuming different functions at various times. A lecture room was prepared on the ground floor of the left outbuilding (fig. 18), while on the floor above this, a flat for Academy members was prepared.⁷⁴ Some minor modernizing was also introduced to the main reading room on the ground floor of the main body – namely in the Gado Room, where lighting was installed and the gallery with steps by



FIG. 18. Lecture room on the ground floor of the left outbuilding, photo ca 1930, BPP collection

74 F. Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 77–78.



FIG. 19. Main reading room on the ground floor of the main body after renovation 1928,
NAC, 3_1_0_10_769_3_1_225462



FIG. 20. Interior courtyard arranged by Marian Lalewicz. Photo by M. Omilanowska, 2019

the eastern wall removed (fig. 19). The ground floor of the right outbuilding was assigned to house Library offices and a telephone exchange. The first-floor apartment remained untouched, both in the main body and the right outbuilding. The old Library suite on the second floor of the main body, consisting of four rooms furnished with bookcases, served both as a conference room and a reference reading room. The Mickiewicz Museum remained on the second and third floors of the right outbuilding. Meanwhile, the third and fourth floors were kept as residential units, with a large eight-room apartment on the third floor, and smaller service flats in the attic.

The essential character of the courtyard, an arrangement clearly visible to this day, was created during this renovation (fig. 20). To the elevations on the ground floor were added pilaster pairs, marking out divisions, and spots where the main body connected with the outbuildings were covered with Tuscan half-columns. The blank northern wall was decorated with the afore-mentioned commemorative plaques, and above the middle one a copy of the Renaissance eagle in a tondo was featured; it was imported from the Wawel, where its original by Francesco Fiorentino decorates a bay in the eastern wing of the Castle courtyard (fig. 21). The court-



FIG. 21. Copy of the tondo with the eagle from the crowning of the Renaissance bay from the side of the courtyard, from the Wawel Castle, photo ca 1929, NAC, 3_1_0_11_252b_62539

yard flooring was covered with stone tiles, and flower beds were arranged surrounding the front and sides of the middle plaque, which depicted an eagle.

The renovation was conducted with modest means, and many of the planned moves could not be implemented for organizational or financial reasons; in effect, across the five-storey Library, rooms both accessible and closed to the public were located in quite random configurations. Therefore, Lalewicz introduced an interesting solution, applying painted decoration on the walls, within moulds suggesting panel divisions: each one golden at the bottom, and ash-grey at the top. This same painted decoration covered the walls of the grand staircase and corridors into the lobby for the public, while in the overdoors leading into the rooms open to the public, golden inscriptions with antiquated lettering were introduced (fig. 22). In effect, the modest financing available produced within the interior a homogenous system of visual identification, elegantly and discretely leading the public to several open, respective interiors.

The changes did not satisfy Pułaski, who in a memorandum addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed:



FIG. 22. Overdoor with the inscription informing on the location of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum. Photo by M. Omilanowska, 2019

the already launched reorganizing of the Polish Library in Paris, conducted at a so-far substantial cost (around a million and a half francs), into the POLISH INSTITUTE, with the first Library on Contemporary Poland, with a Reading Room for French MPs, should be completed. The institution characterized by scientific objectivity (officially Academy's Outpost) may render greater service than the propaganda of government agencies.⁷⁵

The next stage of the renovation entailed refurbishing the façade itself. Judging from the surviving photo documentation, it was most likely conducted in 1930, and Lalewicz's design from four years prior may have been used for this purpose.⁷⁶ Mostly conservative in its character, the renovation *did* introduce several changes (fig. 23). First of all, the 19th-century balcony on the axis of the first floor was demolished. New plastering was applied, with architectural divisions in the form of inter-storey mouldings, and the forms of a gate and window framing were preserved. Essential changes



FIG. 23. Façade of the Polish Library after the renovation conducted after Marian Lalewicz's design, photo 1931, NAC 3_1_0_10_770_1_1_225472

75 AAN, MSZ, Cat. No. 64, f. 15, F. Pułaski, Memorandum, 30 July 1928 Paris.

76 Warsaw, National Digital Archive, Photo *Renovation of the Façade of the Polish Library in Paris*, 1931, Cat. No. 1-N-770; BPP, MS 7249/11, Pułaski's letter to Lalewicz of 24 June 1927.

occurred on the ground floor: walls were covered with belt horizontal bossage, windows were added window ledge walls in the form of blind balusters, which were frequent decoration elements applied by Lalewicz. These latter were actually his trademark, which means they almost certainly are an aspect of the façade design which can be attributed to Lalewicz (particularly since we know that he authored such a design at the time of the renovation).

The completion of the renovation was possible only once the first-floor tenant had moved out, and the grand apartment, once occupied by the Zamoyskis, was made available. When work could commence, Pułaski commissioned the design for the arrangement of these rooms to the well-known French architect and decorator Armand Albert Rateau. Pułaski recalled: “at the second stage of the refurbishing, in 1935, Mr Rateau, architect of the city of Paris, rebuilt the first floor into reception and displays rooms, decorating them with the architecture of the early 19th century featuring medallions of illustrious Poles after the sculptures by David d’Anger”.⁷⁷

Rateau held an elevated artistic position in Paris during the inter-war period, winning fame for his interior decoration of the *hôtel particulier* that belonged to the famous fashion designer Jeanne Lanvin.⁷⁸ He followed varied stylistic forms: from Art Deco, through Egyptian revival and oriental, and into several historic neo-styles. Furthermore, Rateau owned a bronze and furniture manufacturing company, for which he personally designed models. It is impossible to identify today precisely what Rateau left and what he added to the rooms, but it seems that only the fireplaces were retained from the old furnishing.

As a result of the work Rateau conducted on the first floor of the main structure, two rooms inspired by the style of Louis XVI were also created: a spacious lecture room, communicating through a door with a small, single-windowed room located on the building’s

77 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 77–78.

78 F. Olivier-Vial, F. Rateau, *Armand Albert Rateau. Un baroque chez les modernes*, Paris, Éd. de l’Amateur, 1992.

eastern corner. The lecture room occupied almost the whole front bay of the main body: it was lit through four windows overlooking the Seine, and communicated with the staircase; the gallery and the fore-mentioned drawing room were added by Lalewicz. It gained harmonious decoration in the form of panelling-varnished white with walls, divided by pilasters, and with panels accentuated by darker-painted moulding (fig. s 24-25). The windows were



FIG. 24. Interior of the lecture room on the 1st floor of the main body, following Rateau's modernization, view to the west with furnished drawing room, photo after 1936, BPP collection

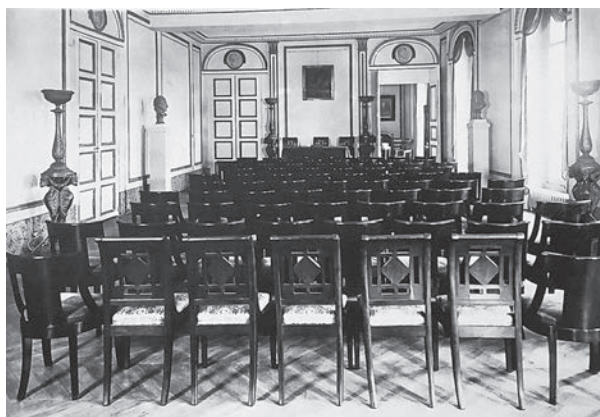


FIG. 25. Interior of the lecture room on the 1st floor of the main body after Rateau's modernisation, the view to the east with lecture furnishing, photo after 1936, BPP collection

enclosed by semi-circular frames, while above the doors (the left door in the eastern wall being blind) was placed a basket arch with a mirror, closing the western wall panels. Bas-relief tondos – after portrait medallions – were inserted into the overdoors; they featured Tadeusz Kościuszko (from the west, on the axis), Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz over the left door (from the north), and Joachim Lelewel over the right one. From the east were tondos featuring Adam Mickiewicz (over the left door) and Prince Adam J. Czartoryski (over the right).

The author of the medallions, David d'Angers (namely Jean-Pierre David, 1788–1856)–, was one of the most prolific French sculptors of the day, one who became famous for tomb sculptures and busts, but known first of all precisely his portrait medallions; in his posthumous album, 447 such medallions were reproduced – although this number is most likely not the sum total he had designed.⁷⁹ David d'Angers also portrayed Poles, and a sizeable collection of the medallions he designed were housed in the Library's Adam Mickiewicz Museum collection; they may have served as models for the room decoration (fig. s 26–27).

Pułaski described the lecture room with the following words:

[It is] a large room in the style from the late 18th century . . . Stuccoes and panelling fill the ceiling and walls. Two large mirrors. 'Terre cuite' medallions after d'Angers . . . and seven busts of excellent Poles (copies of sculptures at the Warsaw Castle). The portrait of Marshal Piłsudski by Norblin with a silver plaque enumerating the founders. In the windows and doors silk curtains woven purposefully to adjust to the Room's style. Full equipment for projected pictures. Seven sculpted lampadairs shedding light from above. A hundred and twenty velvet-upholstered mahogany chairs (gondolas) and 75 chairs. A podium with a table with five armchairs.⁸⁰

The portrait of Piłsudski (mentioned by Pułaski) was commissioned especially to commemorate the hundred year history of

79 *Les médallions de David d'Angers*, Paris 1867. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1415033/f1.item.zoom> (Accessed: 20 April 2021).

80 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 111.



FIG. 26. Medallion with Adam Mickiewicz's portrait, design David d'Angers, reproduced after: *Les médallions de David d'Angers*, Paris 1867



FIG. 27 Medallion with Adam J. Czartoryski's portrait, design David d'Angers, reproduced after: *Les médallions de David d'Angers*, Paris 1867

the Library, and was funded with money raised by Poles living in France at the time.⁸¹ The celebration committee also collected signed letters of “those people who thanks to their high state function and owing to their participation in the struggle for Poland’s

81 AAN, Consulate of the Polish Republic in Marseille, Cat. No. 294, F. Pułaski’s letter to the Council of the Polish Republic in Marseille, dated 28 August 1937, pp. 2–4.



FIG. 28. Ceremony participated by Ambassador Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Piłsudski's portrait by Stefan Norblin in the background, Photo 3 May 1939, NAC: 3_1_0_10_777_2

independence, embody the independence ideal happily fulfilled".⁸² The portrait was painted by Stefan Norblin, an outstanding portraitist and poster author whose brilliant career in the Second Polish Republic was interrupted by WW II. Norblin's vicissitudes took him via Iran to India, and there he furnished and decorated a giant residence of Maharajah Jodhpur Umaid Bhawan; later, he went to the USA where he spent the rest of his life.⁸³ The Marshal's portrait was hung in the main room on the first floor (fig. 28).

The high classicising "lampadaires" supported by threes of gryphons, coming undoubtedly from Rateau's manufactory and designed by him, have been preserved to this day. Furthermore, the wall decoration has survived, too, though in a much less contrasting colour range. Rateau also designed the interior of the corner drawing room called delegate's room maintained in the same stylistics (fig. 29). During this stage of the renovation, a new interior decoration harmonizing with the lecture room was given to the communication gallery, which had itself been added in the

⁸² Ibidem, p. 3.

⁸³ *Stefan Norblin – artysta trzech kontynentów* [Stefan Norblin: an Artist of Three Continents], ed. A. Szlązak, Stalowa Wola 2015.



FIG. 29. The 1st floor of the main body, delegate's room with the view of the display rooms in the eastern outbuilding, photo after 1936, BPP collection

rear bay of the main body by Lalewicz. The suite of two rooms on the first floor (to the right outbuilding with a drawing room) were furnished and used for display purposes.

In 1938, it became possible to introduce one more change: “upon the authorization of the Municipality of Paris, having incorporated a section of the adjacent tenement house, in the right outbuilding office rooms were raised communicating with the curator’s office, and so was a telephone exchange and the network for the whole house”.⁸⁴ This “part of the adjacent tenement house” is in fact the ground floor of the outbuilding at the property in Rue des Deux Ponts, which with its blank wall closes the Library courtyard. Having a door broken through, the ground floor of the right outbuilding could be connected to the square of the former stable, by then transformed into book storage near the above-mentioned curator’s office.

The multi-fold costs of all the Library’s work at this time exceeded the plans, amounting to 1,300,000 francs, or the sum contributed to the Library by grants from the Polish Ministry of Foreign

84 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 77-78.

Affairs, and by financing raised by PAU (that is, by grants from the city budgets of Warsaw and Poznań).

The scope of works conducted in the Polish Library building in Paris was significantly limited versus its actual needs, and the higher than anticipated cost of the work *once again* placed restrictions on its eventual breadth, as did limited available resources. However, it was possible to modernize the building, to improve its communication, to organize the number of rooms expected by the investor, and to refurbish the interior and elevation. Yet the first and foremost accomplishment of the work completed at this time was to transform the courtyard into an architectural interior that provided an excellent backdrop to many Polish ceremonies in Paris, in subsequent years.

Soon after the outbreak of World War II, the Library Board decided to deposit only a small fragment of the collection at the Paris Carnavalet Museum.⁸⁵ In the following months, a portion of print, cartographic, and manuscript collections were successfully transported to the south of France and deposited within several libraries.⁸⁶ Soon after Paris had been seized in June 1940, the Nazi occupation authorities began searching the Library buildings and plundering the coin collections; later, the entire library collection was taken to Berlin, and finally transported to an unidentified destination.⁸⁷ In August 1941, the Germans revealed that they were planning to alter the building to serve as a German school, and the alterations themselves started in spring 1942. In June of that year, the devastated (and as yet unheated) edifice was abandoned. It was only following the liberation of Paris, after possession of the building had been regained, that the installations of water supply and sewage, central heating and electricity could be restored, largely thanks to the assistance the Library received from French scientific

85 H. Łaskarzewska, *Wojenne losy części zbiorów paryskiej Biblioteki Polskiej* [War Vicissitudes of a Part of the Collection of the Polish Library in Paris], in: *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie* [Historical and Literary Society], pp. 99–172.

86 Mężyński, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, p. 20.

87 Pułaski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu*, pp. 136–137.

circles.⁸⁸ Renovation works, however, were modest, owing to the shortage of resources, and the actual work boiled down to restoring functionality to the devastated rooms, which had been stripped of furnishing. Items were welcomed back slowly, and the collection recovered gradually, enriched by new, post-war donations.

It is true that over the next decades the Library Board managed to secure the institution's independence from the Polish Communist regime, safeguarding the continuity of its operations, acquiring new precious collection pieces, and conducting cultural and academic activity, which was important not only for the Polish migrants; however, all of this work was happening amidst drastic financial shortages, which did not allow curators and managers to properly care for the building itself. Thanks to the support provided by the Barbara Piasecka-Johnson Foundation, the façade was eventually renovated, while a grant from the city of Paris permitted the renovation of the staircase. Still, by the end of the 20th century, the Library building was in a deplorable state: in one of the rooms the ceiling had collapsed, while in the majority of the rooms accessible to the public, no basic fire protection requirements were met.⁸⁹

It was only thanks to the efforts of the Zygmunt Zaleski Foundation in Amsterdam that a complex modernization of the building was possible, and this effort was finally conducted from 2000–2004. Apart from strictly refurbishing works – replacing of some ceilings, installing electricity, windows, and doors – many essential alterations were introduced into the internal building's structure: the lift planned by Lalewicz was added in the southern part of the right outbuilding; the reading room on the ground floor (former Gadon Room) was altered to create a modern auditorium; and the former lecture room on the first floor was transformed to serve reception and display functions. The mezzanine on the ground floor of the

88 *L'oeuvre internationale de secours a la bibliotheque polonaise de paris devastee par les allemands en 1940*, fasc. 1, Paris 1945, fasc 2, Paris 1946.

89 K. Zaleski, *Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu* [Polish Library in Paris], Paris undated, <http://www.przyjacielebpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/articleCPZtraductionpolonaise.pdf> (Accessed: 24 April 2021).



FIG. 30. Adam Mickiewicz Museum on the 1st floor of the left outbuilding,
Photo by M. Omilanowska, 2019

right outbuilding was removed, and the glass roof over the curator's study was replaced with metal roofing. The Library storage space was equipped with compact bookcases, thus freeing many additional rooms, which were subsequently transformed into studios or established for the purposes of the Mickiewicz Museum, which was transferred to the first floor of the left outbuilding (fig. 30). The former "delegate room" on the first floor in the western corner of the main structure was turned into the Chopin Salon.⁹⁰ Sufficient room was also found to display the art collection, e.g., by creating the Bolesław Biegas Museum, now located on the upper storey of the right outbuilding.⁹¹

90 A. Niewęglowski, *Salon Chopina* [Chopin Salon], *Cenne, Bezcenne, Utracone*, 2011, No. 2(67), pp. 14–15.

91 A. Czarnocka, *Kolekcje artystyczne Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu* [Artistic Collections of the Polish Library in Paris], in: *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu: zarys historii i prezentacja zbiorów* [The Historical and Literary Society and the Polish Library in Paris: History Outline and Collection Presentation], Eds. W. Kordaczuk, E. Kosieradzka, E. Rutkowska, Paryż–Warszawa 2014, pp. 174–177; P. Ignaczak, *Muzea w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu* [Museums in the Polish Library in Paris], *Muzealnictwo* 2016, No. 57, pp. 226–233; J. Okarma, *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie i Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu: doświadczenie wymiany międzybibliotecznej w roku 2008/2009* [The Historical and Literary Society and the Polish Library in

The remodelling design was the work of the Paris CR Architecture designers Claude Costantini and Michel Regembal,⁹² a firm very successful from 1987 to 2011, whose greatest, widely recognized achievement was the design of the Stade de France in Saint Denis near Paris. The cost of the whole project exceeded EUR 3,850,000, of which half was provided by the Amsterdam Zygmunt Zaleski Foundation, with the remaining sums supplied by a grant from the Senate, by the Polish community (roughly 30 % of the total sum), by grants from the French authorities, and by private donations.⁹³

Although the last renovation seriously intervened into the structure of the Library building, the most important interiors were saved, most significantly the decoration of the former lecture room authored by Rateau. Also, the visual identification introduced by Lalewicz was preserved, although today (after subsequent changes in the rooms' functionality), the appearance of the room may be slightly misleading to visitors.

The history of the building of the Polish Library is in a way a synecdoche of the history of this institution, operating along the line where enormous commitment, passion, and willingness to act on behalf of subsequent generations of migrants on the one hand, clashed with the limited financial capacity of political exiles on the other. The multitude of efforts which were needed to perform even the slightest renovation and modernization, a continuous curbing of ambitious plans, searching for the cheapest, yet at the same time most functional solutions, and finally renouncing any

Paris: Experience in Terms of the Interlibrary Exchange in 2008/2009], *Studia Polonijne*, 2019, No. 40, pp. 310–353, here pp. 328–329.

92 BPP, Archive, Design of the electrical installation in the building of the Polish Library, the architects: 'CR Architecture. C. Costantini et M. Regembal', 17 October 2001.

93 f. Zaleski, *Les travaux de modernisation et de restauration de la BPP*, http://www.bibliotheque-polonaise-paris-shlp.fr/index.php?id_page=217 (Accessed: 5 May 2021); Kazimierz Piotr Lubicz-Zaleski, *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie i Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu* [The Historical and Literary Society and the Polish Library in Paris], in: *Towarzystwo Historyczno-Literackie* [The Historical and Literary Society], pp. 5–14, here p. 12.

luxury while simultaneously attending with appropriate dignity and relevancy to the forms, characterized *all* the efforts undertaken in relation the building. The management of the Polish Library have continued to defend the institution's political independence from the state authorities, often at the price of incessant financial shortages, requiring the institution to depend for its functioning and situation of its edifice on the generosity of donors. May they abound in the future.

Translated by Magdalena Iwińska