THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ZBARASKI PRINCES AT THE DOMINICAN CHURCH IN KRAKÓW

The mausoleum of the Zbaraski princes at the Holy Trinity Church in Kraków features widely in Polish and foreign publications. However, no critical analysis of its formal structure has been carried out and the origin of the solutions used there has not been determined. Moreover, the designer of the building has not been named.

Based on modest records and inscriptions from the tombstones of the Zbaraski princes, as well as the little-known 17th-century drawing of the Holy Trinity Church, it is now possible to date the building. In 1628–1632, construction works commissioned by Jerzy Zbaraski were carried out by the Kraków guild of stonemasons under the direction of Andrea and Antonio Castellos, who also made the stone decor and interior furnishings. Work on the drum and the dome with a lantern probably dragged on and continued after 1632.

The formal and genetic analysis shows that the Zbaraski Chapel in Kraków belongs to the most ambitious architectural achievements of the first half of the 17th century in Poland. Its designer certainly knew the works of Giulio Romano, Francesco da Volterra, Martin Longhi and, most importantly, Ottaviano Mascarino and Carlo Maderno. Taking into account the foreign contacts and intellectual interests of the brothers Jerzy and Krzysztof Zbaraski, it cannot be ruled out that the chapel's design was an import. However, structural and decorative solutions indicate that a designer operating in Poland could have been involved. The pair of triglyphs in the frieze of beams on the chapel's facade show affinities with similar projects from the Vilnius Radziwiłł Palace and the Chapel of St. Casimir at the Vilnius Cathedral. The elliptical dome and the shells motif decorating the herm in the drum invoke themes known from the Vilnius church of St. Theresa. All three buildings are associated with Constante Tencalla, so this architect can be considered a probable designer of the Zbaraski Chapel.