

Ph.D. Dissertation

The image of early art in the Kingdom of Poland in Russian antiquity publications in 1850–1915

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Summary

The subject of this dissertation are publications on old Polish art in the Kingdom of Poland, published in Russian, and prepared by or with the participation of the Russians. This includes guides to the region and studies devoted strictly to the art and history of the region.

The thesis covers the period from 1850 – the date of the first publication in Russian devoted to Polish art, to 1915 when the last guide to Polish lands was published in Russian before Poland regained independence.

The main goal of this dissertation is to identify areas in Polish art that the Russians were particularly interested in. The work poses the question whether the Russians noticed a certain difference in the creativity of their neighbouring nation or whether they wanted to see only Russian influence to justify their presence in Polish land. The second postulate is to define what Russian publications have contributed to the knowledge of Polish old art and to evaluate their substantive level. The aim of this work is also to determine whether and how the studied texts fit into the process of shaping the history of art as a science. The last goal is to bring Russian studies on Polish art and history to the awareness of contemporary researchers.

Methods developed by literary researchers were used in the work on the texts: hermeneutics, text interpretation and comparative analysis. Selected publications were analyzed from the formal point of view, from the editorial point of view, and assessed against the background of studies on similar topics published in Western Europe and Poland.

Russian publications, their rhetoric and ideological overtones were interpreted and set in the context of Pan-Slavism, Occidentalism and imperialism in 19th-century Russia, and in the context of philosophical theories popular at that time.

The first chapter presents the variety of publications on Polish art published in Russian during the period in question. It includes tourist guides, historical scientific works, sociological, ethnographic and historical essays, albums and publishing series, as well as articles about individual monuments printed in the press.

The second chapter discusses issues related to the art of the book: the editorial side of selected publications and the artwork. The conducted analysis showed that most of the illustrated Russian publications on Polish art used graphic and photographic works by Polish artists, indirectly promoting these branches of art among Russian readers. The publications that are the subject of this dissertation have been compared with publications on similar topics in Western Europe and central Russia.

The third chapter introduces the methods of presenting the content in individual publications, and the selection of monuments. Objects of art that were most popular among Russians, objects that were included in the canon of obligatory monuments and objects marked by propaganda were indicated.

In the fourth chapter, the texts are analyzed in terms of language. The problem of style in art was considered: correct recognition of the style of objects, linking it with the function of buildings, nomenclature of trends in art. The terminology used in the field of art and architecture, its development and presence in Russian literature popularizing Polish art were also analyzed.

The fifth chapter deals with the issue of the originality of Russian texts, which were juxtaposed with works by Polish authors from the same period. The conducted analysis showed various types of dependence of Russian studies on Polish texts and allowed to select author's publications containing independent opinions.

Chapter sixth analyzes the dependence of the meaning of Russian studies on socio-political concepts such as pan-Slavism, and the idea of Moscow - the Third Rome. These ideas influenced the propaganda message of some publications. The influence of the concept of Apollonian and Dionysian beauty on the perception of Polish art by Russian authors was also examined.

The seventh chapter is devoted to the authors of the publications in question, their preparation for the perception of monuments, their attitude to Polish art and historical sources.

The conducted analysis confirmed the diversity of publications and the attitudes of their authors. They indicated areas of Polish art particularly interesting to Russians, objects marked by propaganda, and ways of using Polish art for the cultural unification of the Kingdom of Poland with the rest of the Russian Empire.

Many of the publications covered by this study have now acquired a source character: they discuss non-existent objects destroyed by warfare, political decisions, changing fashions and the passage of time. Conscious use of Russian publications, taking into account all imperial accretions and the prejudices of the authors, will significantly increase the bibliographic resources on Polish monuments. The exclusion of a part of the legacy remaining after the partitions leads to an incomplete picture of the past.

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