

Ryszard Mączyński
Zakład Historii Sztuki Nowożytnej
Katedra Historii Sztuki i Kultury
Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu
[Department of History of Modern Art
Chair of History of Art and Culture
Nicolaus Copernicus University]

**Edukacja z zakresu sztuk plastycznych w warszawskich szkołach
pijarów (1740-1833)**

Fine-arts education in the Piarist schools of Warsaw (1740-1833)

SUMMARY

The topic of fine-arts education in the Piarist schools of Warsaw (Collegium Nobilium, Collegium Regium) from 1740 until 1833 has not yet been subject to adequate analysis. The studies by Kalina Bartnicka and Wojciech Kubiczek, which are of key importance for this issue, have failed to give a satisfactory account of the achievements of the Piarists, as they were based on a handful of randomly selected printed texts and thus could hardly lead to accurate conclusions. The sources relating to the Piarist schools' training in the fine arts are quite substantial and they make it possible to understand the idea that lay behind the introduction of "drawing" to the curricula of Piarist schools and the effects that it produced. It needs to be said in this context that while the Piarist schools did not aim at training artists, the classes in fine arts conducted in those the schools had a major impact on the history of art in Poland.

The view prevalent at the time saw drawing as the basis of all artistic education. Pupils in the Piarist schools would be introduced into the art of drawing stage by stage, in line with the recommendations of the handbook by Johann Daniel Preissler. Beside learning to "draw forms, or figures and perspective", i.e. artistic drawing, pupils also learnt technical and cartographic drawing. They also gained a substantial amount of "knowledge about art". On the one hand this involved such general concepts as "taste" or "style", and on the other, quite specific information on the history of the fine arts: sculpture, painting, and – above all – architecture, which was clearly privileged in the syllabus and based on treatises by Vitruvius and Vignola. The Piarist schools also had a wide range of classes that could be termed "auxiliary" with regard to the practical classes of drawing and the theoretical classes in the history of art (e.g. the study of the nature of light, shade and colour.) The education that pupils gained in the schools was facilitated by the rich collections of the Piarist libraries, as well as by excursions to the newly opened museum of art at Wilanów.

Among the teachers of "drawing" there were monks (such as the Piarist monk Marcin Eysymont, who had been trained in Rome and Paris, and who was an author of a treatise on architecture), as well as, more importantly, lay teachers, including some artists from abroad (Johann Zacharias Frey from Austria, or Joseph Richter from Saxony), but mainly from Poland (among them Józef Czackowski, Marcin Janiszewski, Aleksander Majerski, Kazimierz Okulicki, Józef Paszkiewicz, Jan Sikorski and Maciej Topolski). Although they belonged to

different generations, all those artists represented various currents in the art of Classicism. Irrespective of how we assess their artistic achievements, their professional qualifications were more than sufficient to train the youth in drawing at an elementary level.

The preserved examples of drawings corroborate the fact that pupils of the Piarist schools not only mastered the art of drawing, but were quite ready to make use of it in their adult life. While the methods of teaching *disegno* in the Piarist schools did not differ much from methods in schools of fine arts, the ultimate objective of this kind of education was stated in quite a different way. The aim was not to train artists, but to provide an extensive amount of general knowledge and to develop a sensibility useful to a connoisseur of art. Thus the actual effect of the Piarist schools' education in the fine arts is to be seen in the large numbers of art connoisseurs and art lovers, and thus in a wide circle of recipients of works of art. It is thus no accident that most of the graduates of the Piarist Collegium Nobilium later became avid art collectors (e.g. Marian Hutten Czapski, Ignacy Miączyński, Józef Antoni Plater, or Franciszek Ksawery Pusłowski), and prime among them were creators of the first publicly available art collections in Poland: Stanisław Kostka Potocki, who established the museum at Wilanów in 1805, and Józef Kajetan Ossoliński, responsible for launching the art gallery at Tłomackie in Warsaw in 1814.

Analecta – Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki
[Analecta – Studies and Materials on the History of Science]
XIII, 2004, 1-2, 25-65