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EGYPTIAN ORANGERY
OF ANNA AND STANISŁAW MAŁACHOWSKI
IN KOŃSKIE

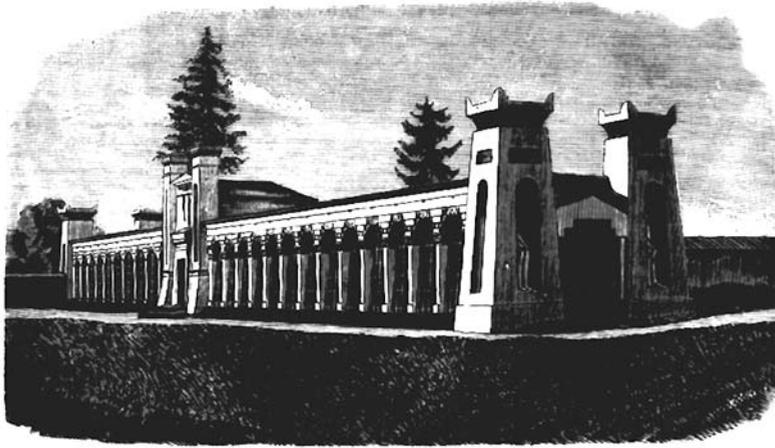
The Egyptianizing trend has influenced a number of original and very interesting works in the 19th century architecture¹. There are not many of such within the boundaries of the former Polish commonwealth and until now they have not aroused greater interest. Among them is an Egyptian temple in the Royal Baths Park „Łazienki” in Warsaw, attributed to Jakub Kubicki (ca. 1822) and an equally impressive object, however raised in a great distance from the capital, in Końskie near Opoczno².

This text is devoted to the latter building, a very important object in the European eclectic architecture trend, today however a little forgotten. Another important aspect is the preservation state of this structure, which demands basic conservatory care³. It is all the more important since during the last decades almost the entire surroundings of this object have been destroyed (by creating a residential area nearby and building various park „facilities”), and the building itself received an unfortunately designed, rectangular, style-less extension

¹ See: J. S. Curl, *Egyptomania. The Egyptian Revival: a Recurring Theme in the History of Taste*, Manchester-New York 1994 (mainly chapter VI: *The Egyptian Revival after the Napoleonic Campaigns in Egypt*, p. 118—147); F. Werner, *Ägyptenrezeption in der europäischen Architektur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Weimar 1994; J.-M. Humbert, C. Price (ed.), *Imhotep Today: Egyptianizing Architecture*, London 2003.

² Among others see: J. Lipińska, *W cieniu piramid*, Wrocław 2003, p. 224—225; see also: *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce, t. III, woj. kieleckie. Zeszyt 5, powiat konecki*, Warsaw 1958, p. 17-19.

³ Damaged rain pipes causing leak stains and dampness, broken windows, various types of mechanical damage (including the figures of Memnons) and layers of peeling paint are clearly visible. A spreading degradation of this important and very interesting building is conspicuous.



Cieplarnia w parku końcektm.

Fig. 1. Końskie, Świętokrzyskie province. Egyptian Orangery on the palace park of the Małachowski family. By S. Antoszewski, 1876 (after *Tygodnik Illustrowany* No. 18 of 29th April 1876, p. 278)

from the northern side⁴. A building that the city could have been proud of (as the entire park-palace complex of the Małachowski family) is unfortunately an obvious example of the lack of understanding and proper care for this world-class Egyptianizing masterpiece.

At the beginning of the 19th century Końskie Wielkie, a seat of the rich Małachowski family, bearing the Nałęcz coat of arms, was going through a period of prosperity. Beginning with the times of Jan Małachowski (1698-1762) the industry of iron ore exploitation and processing was started in the area (two great smelting furnaces were built in place of old bloomeries), a group of experienced craftsmen was also brought from Germany to help. Other fields of manufacture and specialised craftsmanship also flourished in Końskie and vicinity, among others manufactures producing carriages of great renown.

It was at that time that an idea of giving proper splendour to the family seat also arose. As one of modern researchers stated: „An ornament of the Małachowski family, as well as the city itself, was to be a magnate residence built in the half of the 18th century by Jan – the Grand Royal Chancellor. It was intended to be a palace-garden complex following the example of the residence of Augustus II in Pillnitz. The palace was to adjoin a French-style park. The intentions of the magnate were only partially fulfilled due to a premature death of the founder.

⁴ It was added in 1969 (designed by F. Dzierżanowski). A coffee house called “The Egyptian Girl” was located there at the time, now the place is occupied by the Municipality House of Culture with an exhibition gallery.



Fig. 2. Końskie, Egyptian Orangery. Main entrance of the southern elevation and a fragment of the colonnade. Phot. by J. Śliwa, 2006

Only the outhouses were built and a quarter circular palace square has been constructed after the chancellor's death, and it was finally completed in the beginning of the 19th century, when the previous park area was enlarged and a classical Greek temple was built there"⁵. Further changes took place at the time of the chancellor's grandson, Stanisław Małachowski (1770-1849)⁶, who after an active political life and taking part in wartime activities has settled in Końskie after 1815 and developed a passion for his estate.⁷ This is how he was described a quarter century after his death: „This Stanisław the duke Małachowski, and even more his wife Anna of the Stadnicki family⁸, a lady

⁵ J. Piwek, *Działalność gospodarcza Małachowskich w XVIII i XIX wieku*, Kielce 1999, p. 148—149.

⁶ He was a son of Mikołaj Małachowski (1730-1784), nephew to Stanisław Małachowski (1736-1809), the famous Speaker of the Great Sejm. See: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 19, 1974, p. 420—422 (E. Kozłowski, S. Przewalski). Stanisław Małachowski was among others the author of the following biographic material: *Żywot i pamiętniki Stanisława hr. Małachowskiego* [...], wydane przez L[ucjana] S[ziemieńskiego], Kraków 1853; *Pamiętniki Stanisława hr. Nałęcz Małachowskiego* [...] objaśnił i z manuskryptu wydał Wincenty hr. Łoś, Poznań 1885. Unfortunately, there are no mentions of any circumstances connected with the construction of the orangery.

⁷ Stanisław Małachowski also took active part in the insurrection of 1831. “after his amnesty he returned to Końskie and, having completely abandoned political life, he undertook a mission of spreading education in the region, building a number of schools, offering money, land and buildings for this purpose” (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, see above.)

⁸ Anna, a daughter of Franciszek Stadnicki of Dukla, her marriage to Stanisław Małachowski



Fig. 3. Końskie, Egyptian Orangery. The eastern pylon. Phot. by J. Śliwa, 2006

famous in the vicinity for her virtues and cleverness, enlarged and decorated a vast garden by building a greenhouse [that is the Egyptian Orangery] and other constructions, so that this garden in the first decades of the current century, being one of the most beautiful in the country, competed with the Arcadia of Nieborów, with Puławy and Opole”⁹

The creator of this park-palace complex was Francesco Maria Lanci (1799-1875), at that time a young Italian architect, who arrived in Końskie in 1825 following an invitation by the Małachowski family. „The first tasks were: to rebuild the existing church of St. Nicolas in the neo-Gothic style, later to build an orangery in the Egyptian style and a neo-Gothic park shrine. The most important work, however, which had never been completed due to unknown reasons, was to design a grand neo-Gothic palace”¹⁰. Lanci’s fate was from now on permanently connected to Poland, it was here that he build many neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance works (among others the castles and palaces in Zagórzany, Zator, Krzeszowice), while also adapting and rebuilding existing structures (Cra-

took place in Kraków in 1791. Anna Małachowska died in 1852, three years after her husband.

⁹ [F. M. Sobieszcański], *Końskie*, Tygodnik Ilustrowany No. 18, vol. I, of the 29th of April 1876, p. 278.

¹⁰ A. Bartzakowa, *Franciszek Maria Lanci 1799—1875*, Warsaw 1954, p. 3—4.

cow, Poznań, Warsaw)¹¹. However his first task was a truly unique work, that is the project of an orangery/greenhouse in Egyptianizing style, built in Końskie during the years 1825—1830¹². Undoubtedly Lanci relied on his knowledge of Egyptian art obtained during his studies in the Roman St. Lucas Academy, basing on publications that resulted from Napoleon's expedition to Egypt¹³.

Before we proceed to a detailed description of the only "Egyptian" work of Lanci, we need to answer a basic question – who, with an intention of building a monumental orangery, employed a fashionable, however poorly known Egyptian art trend, and why? Most probably it was a wish of the owners of the Końskie estate, that is Stanisław and Anna Małachowski, which was to be fulfilled by an architect brought to Poland. Surely artistic matters were of greater importance to Anna Małachowska, who according to the preserved tradition "was interested in high arts, drawing to her estate artists and architects, Lanci among them [...]. At the same time a French painter Hélène de St. Claire also stayed in Końskie, where she painted family portraits of the Małachowskis"¹⁴.

A different track also exists, however, that may prove quite important in this case. Stanisław Małachowski, Anna's husband, had been connected to the freemason movement for years, which except from the Biblical tradition (Hiram, the builder of the Temple of Solomon) clearly referred to Egyptian symbols, particularly from the times of count Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo, 1743—1795)¹⁵. Stanisław Małachowski in his youth set out in September 1789 to Istanbul as „a companion“ (no function), being part of Piotr Potocki's delegation¹⁶. His stay in Turkey lasted until 1791. It was in Istanbul that the 20 year old Małachowski was initiated into the „Grand Lodge of Scotland"¹⁷, he later became a member of the national lodges called „The

¹¹ See a biogram of Lanci in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 16, 1971, p. 435—437 (C. Bąk-Koczarska) as well as the monograph of A. Bartzakowa, cited above.

¹² Specialists were not able to specify the building time any further (see A. Bartzakowa, as above, p. 3—4).

¹³ Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte*, Paris, 1802 and Edme Francois Jomard (ed.), *Description de l'Égypte*, Paris, 1809—1822. See also Y. Laissus, *L'Égypte, une aventure savante: Avec Bonaparte, Kleber, Menou (1798—1801)*, Paris 1998 and T. Rogacki, *Ekspedycja egipska 1798—1801*, Zabrze 2008; R. Solé, *Les savants de Bonaparte*, Paris 1998; P. Bret, *L'Égypte au temps de l'expédition de Bonaparte 1798-1801*, Paris 1998.

¹⁴ A. Bartzakowa, *Franciszek Maria Lanci...*, p. 3, footnote 6.

¹⁵ See. E. Hornung, *Das esoterische Ägypten. Das geheime Wissen der Ägypter und sein Einfluss auf das Abendland*, Monachium 1999, mainly p. 121—132.

¹⁶ See: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, b. 19, 1974, p. 420 and J. S. Łątka, *Słownik Polaków w Imperium Osmańskim i Republice Turcji*, Cracow 2005, p. 206.

¹⁷ See: L. Hass, *Sekta farmazonii warszawskiej*, Warsaw 1980, p. 280.

Temple of Wisdom”, „Polish Brethren”, „Kazimierz the Great”, „The Temple of Themis” and „Slavonic Unity”¹⁸. He also held high functions in the Grand National Orient of Poland (among others as „sword-bearer”, „French secretary”, „speaker”)¹⁹. It seems therefore that his connection to freemasonry could have played a certain role in choosing the style of the structure, admittedly of an utilitarian nature, yet not without a certain rank in the social life of his circle. The building was also definitely the strongest accent in the project of the park-palace complex.

The orangery in Końskie was built as an elongated rectangle with the longer side measuring 54,75 m and the shorter one measuring 7,25 m (the line of symmetry run parallel to the longer sides of the structure). Due to functional demands (sun exposure) one of the longer sides of the structure was directed to the south, while the other one was directed to the north out of necessity.

The corners of the orangery were strengthened with massive towers – pylons measuring 4,75 m, which were fitted with deep niches containing monumental statues of sitting pharaohs – Memnons²⁰. Cavities on the walls of the pylons from the north and south contain lines of pseudo-hieroglyphs²¹. The pylons were crowned with cavetto cornices, characteristic for Egyptian architecture²² and „toothed” corners above²³. Between the above described tower pylons on the eastern side a sort of a classic portico is situated with a triangular pediment (that portico shielded an additional, side entrance to the orangery).

¹⁸ L. Hass, above, *passim*.

¹⁹ W. Wilkoszewski, *Rys historyczno-chronologiczny Towarzystwa Wolnego Mularstwa w Polsce* (z rękopisu wydał Tadeusz Świącicki), London 1968, annexes XI—XIII.

²⁰ They were most probably influenced by the so called Colossi of Memnon, monumental statues of Amenophis III (1379—1340 B.C.) in the Western Thebes. They are the only preserved element of his funerary temple, built by the court architect of the pharaoh, Amenophis son of Hapu. See: *Description..., Antiquités*, vol. II, pl. 22. Lanci must have also known some depictions of other Egyptian statues (the clenched fists of his „Memnons” and their rich head-dresses).

²¹ They are quite different from their Egyptian counterparts. Only a few of them can be read, among others *ḥnh, ḥpr, dj, nb, j, d, r, sw*.

²² The so called cavetto cornice, with a torus (roll) is one of the original, well known forms used in Egyptian architecture. It originates from ancient times, when wood, crane and palm leaves were used in architecture. The concave surface of the cornice is marked with vertical, colourful elements (reminiscent of palm leaves); sometimes the surface of the cornice is decorated with a frieze of uraei (also used in our orangery). The surface of the cavetto cornice, especially above entrances, is also decorated with a winged sun disc (see below, footnote 25).

²³ Known among others from the so called High Gate in Medinet Habu, See: *Description..., Ant.*, vol. II, pl. 15.

Due to high sun exposure the most significant element of the building is the glass south elevation, creating gallery of some sort. The main entrance to the orangery is situated in the gallery's middle (however not in the central point). To the left (west) ten glass arcades were built, while to the right (east) – thirteen identical constructions. The sequence of arcades, only disturbed by the entry portico, creates a regular line, the “colonnade” is joined by both pylons, a reference to the solutions known from the monumental temples in Luxor or Karnak, which adds to the “Egyptian” character of the entire object.

The main (south) entrance to the orangery is flanked by square pillar-towers²⁴, placed on a massive risalit (those elements are separated by a narrow cornice). The towers are joined in the upper part by a triangular pediment, below a rectangular field of cavetto cornice is situated, filled with a meticulously painted solar disc²⁵. In the upper part of each tower characteristic toruses and cavetto cornices have been placed, which are closed from top by low tent-like coverings. On the front surfaces of both towers, in arched cavities a number of pseudo-hieroglyphs were situated, very distant from their ancient counterparts. The main entrance to the orangery, rectangular and slightly narrowing towards the top, is situated between the above mentioned risalites. The doorframe is crowned by a cornice considerably developed towards the top, consisting of toruses and a cavetto. A vertical „block” (covered with pseudo-hieroglyphs) placed on the axis of symmetry of the entry opening, above the cornice, was a connector with the pediment decorated with a winged sun disc.

The southern elevation of the orangery, as mentioned before, is divided into regularly placed window openings, reaching the floor. Large window



Fig. 4. Końskie, Egyptian Orangery.
The sculpture of pharaoh-Memnon
in one of the niches of the east pylon.
Phot. by J. Śliwa, 2006

²⁴ Such a solution, that is the presence of towers, similarly shaped and dominating over the facade, is also present in later designs by Lanci (e.g. in the Potocki Palace in Krzeszowice).

²⁵ According to the Egyptian tradition the winged solar disc was placed above the entrance, on the concave surface of the cavetto cornice. The colours are mostly similar to the elements depicted on a colourful plate in *Description..., Ant.*, vol. I, pl. 18 (the Ptolemaic temple on the Philae Island).



Fig. 5. Końskie, Egyptian Orangery.
Egyptianizing semi-pillars and
the entablature of the southern gallery.
Phot. by J. Śliwa, 2006

spans divide massive octagonal semi-pillars placed on high rectangular bases²⁶. In the lower parts of the semi-pillars, on their frontal surfaces, there were carvings of triangular leaves of papyrus or lotus with sharp endings, themselves a reminiscence of similar elements that encircled the lower parts of Egyptian pillars with an entire wreath²⁷. The described semi-pillars were crowned with plastically modelled capitals, consisting of three bell-shaped elements and two palmettos, referring to Egyptian composite capitals from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods²⁸. Above such a capital a flat abacus is situated, and even higher – an upturned step pyramid, consisting of three elements. On such a construction the architrave beams are placed (the joints between blocks fall exactly on the axes of the

pillars) crowned with a cavetto cornice with stylised uraei²⁹. The semi-pillars from the southern gallery are joined with a sort of arcade pseudo-arches (with sharp bends), and specifically shaped masks were used as keystones, originating from the form of Egyptian Hathoric capitals³⁰.

As a result we may state that Lanci took the basic models for his „Egyptian” building not from the works of Egyptian architecture from the so called pharaonic times, but rather from buildings typical for the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (332 B.C. – 3rd cent. A.D.). A specific role, and not for the first time, was played by the temple of Hathor in Dendera, raised during the rule of

²⁶ Polygonal pillars (sometimes called protodoric) have been known in Egypt since the Old Kingdom, they are not, however, among commonly used forms.

²⁷ See among others: *Description..., Ant.*, vol. I, pl. 18.

²⁸ They enjoyed a great popularity during that period. See: *Description..., Ant.*, vol. I, pl. 18 (Philae); vol. I, pl. 75 and 76 (Esna); vol. II, pl. 37 (Deir el-Medina).

²⁹ See footnote 22.

³⁰ At first glance seemingly incomprehensible, yet it is possible to clearly see a head of Hathor with a typical headdress tied with bands and excessively modelled ears of the goddess (see Hathoric pillars in the portico of the temple in Dendera: *Description..., Ant.*, vol. IV, pl. 29—31). Above, however, a headdress resembling an Osiriatic atef crown was depicted.

Ptolemy XII Auletes in 54 B.C., with a characteristic pronaos from the times of Tiberius (14—37 A.D.)³¹. As mentioned before, that building was familiar to Lanci most probably from the publications and drawings of D.V. Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte*, 1802, and tables published in *Description de l'Égypte*, 1809—1822³².

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³¹ See: *Description..., Ant.*, vol. IV, pl. 3—34. See also J.-M. Humbert, *La redécouverte de Dendera et son interprétation dans l'art du XIXe siècle*, in: *Hommage à Jean Leclant*, vol. 4, Cairo 1994, p. 137—146.

³² The colourful tables of that work also inspired Lanci for the basic colours of the orangery in Końskie.

