The Court of the Sun God Revisited:

Interiors of the Royal Villa in Wilanów in their Cultural and Political Context

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The King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jan III Sobieski, victor over the army of Ottoman Turks besieging Vienna in 1683, was an accomplished patron of art and architecture and well aware of the importance of princely display for the exercise of rule. As a European monarch, he was obliged to follow the accepted path of royal representation, embodied by court architecture. His main architectural undertaking was the creation of the *villa nova*, or Wilanów, a typical *villa suburbana* that overlooked the vast and picturesque marchlands along the banks of the Vistula river a few miles south of Warsaw (fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Wilanów, the *corps de logis* with the King's Gallery and adjacent tower.

Constructed between 1677 and 1696 as a result of three consecutive building campaigns,[1] the initial manor of 1677–80 was considerably enlarged in the 1680s and given its final shape in 1692–96 through the addition of a second storey. The key advisor to the king, who was also responsible for much of the design, was the *dilettante* architect of Italian descent, Agostino Locci.[2] At the height of Sobieski's struggles in the 1680s, the villa consisted of a main *corps de logis* with corner pavilions and was flanked by two galleries topped by towers. The ground floor was divided into symmetrically arranged apartments, one for the king and the other for the queen, connected by a vestibule located in the central axis. As was typical for contemporary court interiors, each apartment consisted of two larger rooms, i.e. an antechamber and a chamber, followed by a cabinet and a *garderobe*, the latter located in a corner pavilion facing the garden.

The elaborate decorative programme of the villa was based on mythological and allegorical imagery and served the aims of royal self-expression, propagating the vision of a new Golden Age as well as making allusions to the more immediate political aims pursued by the king. The present chapter intends to re-examine the messages embedded in the interior decoration of the villa in conjunction with its functional setting in an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the way they interacted with ceremonial space. At the same time, it will look at the intended audience as well as at the possible means of communication that allowed for the wider dissemination of these messages. The aim is an understanding of the role played by courtly display within the complex cultural and political contexts of late-seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania.

The Veiled Message

Exterior and interior decoration of the villa constituted a vast compound of images focused on the *persona* of the king and on his immediate family, in particular on the queen.[3] In the literature, it is discussed as a temple of virtue, power and beauty, an edifice symbolizing the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a monument commemorating Jan III's achievements and, finally, as a Temple to Agriculture in the sense of the villa as a humanist institution, subordinated to Apollo's power.[4]

Far from wishing to deny these conclusions, which can easily be distinguished within the decorative programme provided by the consecutive images, I intend to single out the respective narratives, and thus to reveal the links between the villa's elaborate decoration and the more immediate challenges faced by Sobieski.[5]

The royal villa in Wilanów constitutes, in fact, a unique display of the king's ambitious political agenda during a period when his real importance was under threat. The overall programme, rendered through a variety of media, involved several narratives with a special focus on the royal couple. Presented within a confined architectural space, these narratives were closely interrelated, thereby creating a complex, yet coherent setting for the courtly display. Above all, the king was presented as the defender of the kingdom and the queen as a giver of new life, both metaphorically and as mother of princely children. Since it stressed the prosperity and abundance

that resulted from their wise rule, this message was underpinned by numerous references to Agriculture, derived from mythology as well as from ancient Roman literature, in particular Virgil's widely appreciated *Georgica*. A second narrative, gradually unveiled, revealed the dynastic ambitions pursued by the royal couple, providing an immediate explanation for the allegories of rebirth and fertility.

Fig. 2 Wilanów, façade of the King's Gallery.

How was this message delivered within the ceremonial route? Approaching the main building, the visitor was confronted with a display of the king's martial glory and the queen's caring attention to the country, depicted on gallery walls facing the present-day *cour d'honneur* (fig. 2). By presenting for example a triumphal scene in Roman costume and an image of Hercules sculpted in bas-relief, the programme designed for the façade of the King's Gallery stressed his martial prowess and many victories. The corresponding façade of the Queen's Gallery instead emphasized her feminine virtues through a number of allegorical and mythological depictions, including statues of Magnanimitas and Pudicitia as well as bas-reliefs perhaps derived from Ovid's *Fasti*.[6] Differentiation based on gender had a great significance for the entire programme of the villa; it went far beyond the simple distinction between the apartments. In Wilanów it was meant to demonstrate the unity of the royal couple, with king and queen complementing each other and being equally important for the well-being of the kingdom. Such unity would eventually lead to a new Golden Age under the rule of their progeny – as was gradually revealed in the interiors.[7]

Upon entering the *corps de logis* a visitor found himself in a large vestibule, leading to the two antechambers (fig. 3). This room may also be interpreted as the *wielka sień* (great hall), typical for the residential architecture in Poland-Lithuania, in which the host customarily received his guests.[8] Its decorative programme comprised allegories of the Four Elements as well as that of Day - Apollo - and Night represented in the ceiling painting and referring to the divine order of the universe that supports the king's rule. Despite its generic character, it may have appealed to the lower ranks of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility (*szlachta*), since we learn from a pamphlet circulating in 1685 that one of the leaders of the opposition, Krzysztof Grzymułtowski, had likened the many calamities caused by the elements to the king's fall from divine grace.[9]

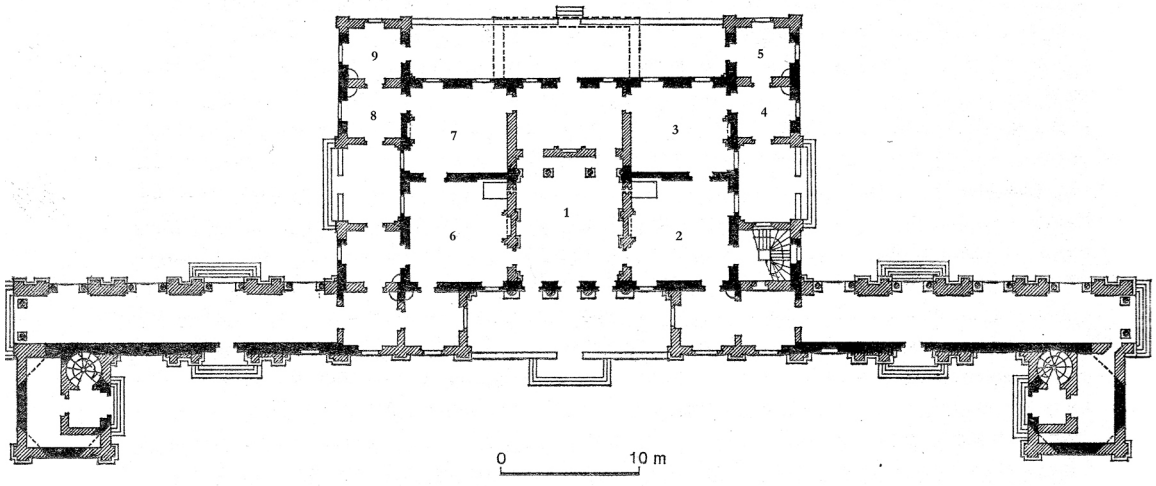

Fig. 3 Wilanów, groundplan. 1 – Vestibule, 2 – King's Antechamber, 3 – King's Chamber, 4 – King's Cabinet, 5 – King's Garderobe, 6 – Queen's Antechamber, 7 – Queen's Chamber, 8 – Queen's Cabinet, 9 – Queen's Garderobe.

The multi-layered narrative was further illustrated within the central part of the ceremonial route, i.e. in the antechambers and chambers of both apartments, as well as in the corner *garderobes* facing the garden. In each room, a ceiling painting displayed the vision of monarchy promoted by the king, in the guise of mythology.[10] These paintings delivered parallel and closely interrelated narratives with a special focus on the king and his spouse, displayed in both apartments and progressively revealed to the visitor. The message became increasingly more explicit: while in the antechambers and chambers the royal couple was represented by several *personae* from mythology, their true identity was revealed in the decoration of the *garderobe*s.

Since it is nearly impossible to examine such complex programmatic compositions in every detail, in what follows the focus shall be on the messages most relevant for the political aims pursued by the king. The ceiling in the King's Antechamber, an allegory of winter, presented the monarch in the guise of Aeolus restraining the winds. As convincingly, suggested by scholars in the past, this narrative may have symbolized the king's attempts to control the powerful yet disobedient members of the nobility.[11] According to interpreters of classical mythology, the god of winds indeed stood for reason and for the capacity to quell disorder.[12]

Fig. 4 Jerzy Eleuter Siemiginowski, *Allegory of Summer*, Wilanów, the King's Chamber, 1680s.

The allegory of Summer in the King's Chamber, featuring Apollo and Aurora – or Astrea - as well as Demeter and King Triptolemus, reveals instead the positive results of rational rule (fig. 4). The latter episode, which illustrates the invention of agriculture, played a particularly important role in the overall narrative.[13] Firstly, it referred to peace and prosperity achieved under the rule of the royal couple after the rebellious magnates were fully restrained (the theme depicted in the antechamber). The result envisaged would be a new Golden Age, understood here in the guise of agriculture. By putting agronomy at the centre of the narrative, the programme addressed above all the nobility (*szlachta*) that was devoted to country life and profited from a successful trade in the products of the earth. Sobieski is presented explicitly in a painting that once decorated the King's Garderobe and which depicts him as a Roman emperor venerated by Virtues and by a personification of Polonia.[14]

The respective depictions in the Queen's Apartment expressed, above all, the idea of new life, of rebirth and harvest. The ceiling with a representation of autumn in the Queen's Antechamber featured Vertumnus and Pomona, who were both associated with abundance that was presented here as the result of the union of the royal couple.[15] The idea of rebirth was further explored in the Queen's Chamber, by means of her depiction in the guise of mythological Flora. Although the new life bestowed upon humanity by the mythological *persona* of the queen may be interpreted in a generic sense, in this particular case it seems to have referred to a very particular occasion, namely to the birth of the royal heir. Indeed, the dynastic narrative hidden behind a mythological costume in the public part of the Queen's Apartment is finally revealed in her *garderobe*. There, the ceiling painting presents the queen as Aurora, announcing the dawn of a new era, and surrounded by her royal descendants, above all by the king's oldest son and heir, Jakub Sobieski (fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Jan Reisner(?), The Queen as Aurora with her Children, Wilanów, the Queen's Garderobe, 1680s.

Located in the most private part of the apartment, this depiction seems indeed to cap the entire decorative programme of the villa and to reveal the true meaning of the other threads of the narrative. As reported by the French ambassador, François de Bethune, the king started his dynastic initiatives immediately after his election and pursued them after the victory at Vienna in 1683.[16] Indeed, securing the succession for his son appears to be the most constant element of his political agenda.[17] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the dynastic narrative was given a prominent place within the decorative programme of the villa. Created at the height of Sobieski's ultimately unsuccessful struggle to arrange for a smooth transition of power, this programme expressed the idea of 'perennis felicitas' (eternal happiness) as the motto of the royal house, to use a formula introduced by the court during a fiercely disputed parliamentary resolution presented in 1688–1689.[18] Nonetheless, the king's dynastic plans triggered a furious backlash on the side of the opposition, supported by most foreign powers and by many among the nobility. Therefore, to present such a dynastic message openly within the public part of the apartment would have been too provocative in the existing political atmosphere. As may be expected, in its general outline, the dynastic programme found a great number of analogies in the courts of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe. What is important, though, is the way in which a standard set of dynastic images usually displayed by European princes was converted and encoded to accommodate the unique situation of an elective monarchy.[19]

Apart from the mentioned narrative programme, its implementation as well as the furnishings and decorative objects displayed within the villa served the purpose of princely self-representation.[20] The symbolic sequence of the ceremonial route was underpinned by the increasing splendour of the interior decoration. For instance, the decoration of the vaults in the antechambers was frescoed, whereas that in the chambers consisted of *stucco* reliefs (fig. 6). As attested by the accounts of visitors as well as by the surviving inventories, the relatively small interior of the villa was filled to bursting point with a variety of luxury items, including furniture, paintings and precious objects of the goldsmith's art as well as with several pieces of armour. An anonymous Frenchman visiting Wilanów in 1688 noticed the lavishness of its furnishings, thus revealing their relative importance within the entire ensemble.[21] Many of these were put on display on the occasion of visits paid by distinguished guests, such as the papal nuncio, who was received by the king in the summer of 1690.[22] Otherwise, they were probably kept in the gallery towers that were labelled as treasuries in the correspondence between the king and his architect.[23]

Fig. 6 Wilanów, The Queen's Chamber with preserved fragments of the original sculpted decoration of the vault and the ceiling painting.

The splendour of the furnishings gradually increased along with the decoration of the interiors, culminating in the Royal Chamber and thus in the principal room of the ceremonial route. In the centre, there was a lavishly decorated bed-of-state with elaborate wood-carvings and covered with a canopy. The display of numerous pieces of luxurious armour, alluding to the king's martial glory, was recorded by Giovanni Battista Faggiuoli in his diary.[24] Perhaps some of the scimitars may have been loot from the king's victory at Vienna and presented a real panoply taken from the defeated enemy.[25] A similar message may have been expressed by other luxury items, such as an elaborately carved golden tray decorated with a depiction of the battle of Vienna.[26] Other furnishings included two Florentine tables decorated with *intarsiae* of *pietre dure* as well as a small French table with a matching set of chairs.

As for the pictorial decoration, the central place at the head of the bed-of-state was given to a depiction of St. Mary.[27] Thus, the bed-of-state not only stressed the dignity of the monarch, but also served as framework for a religious painting, attesting to the king's piety and to his commitment to the Church. A number of additional paintings, mostly of religious subjects, was displayed on the walls. Even though they do not seem to have been part of the overall programmatic narrative described above, it is likely that several of these paintings nonetheless served princely self-expression. For instance, the highest-prized painting presented in the King's Chamber depicted *Moses leading the Jews out of Egypt* and may have alluded to his chosen *persona* as the saviour of his people.[28] Therefore, the diverse furnishings displayed within the main ceremonial space, as far as they alluded to the king's martial glory, to his piety and to his other virtues, may also have been intended as a complimentary commentary on the main narrative.

As I have tried to argue, the elaborate programme of the interior decoration gradually revealed to a visitor a specific message consistent with the political agenda pursued by the king in conjunction with the furnishings and with the diverse decorative objects displayed in the villa, which defined its symbolic expression of royal magnificence. The question of the intended audience of this message and of how the message was communicated, remains to be addressed. Discussing the 'material culture' of early modern courts, John Adamson observed that 'there remains an important distinction to be made between a generalized intention of conveying meanings that relate to the exercise of rule and the deliberately opinion-forming objectives of propaganda'.[29] In the unique political situation of late seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania, however, it was vital for the king to affirm his status across and beyond his dominion.[30] What is more, he had to balance diverse and sometimes contradictory ideals, while designing his residences.

The King and his Magnates

Throughout his reign, King Jan Sobieski struggled with a powerful opposition headed by the increasingly independent members of the uppermost strata of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility.[31] These magnates held the highest offices, they were affluent and well acquainted with foreign powers, in particular with the Habsburg and Hohenzollern courts, and they dominated the lesser nobility, thus effectively reducing the royal authority and rule. Among their leaders were Kazimierz Sapieha and his brother Benedykt, both influential in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Great Crown Marshall Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, another leader of the opposition, was a highly cultivated patron of the arts and of architecture and one of the most important writers of the Polish Baroque. While the king retained his status as symbol of the state, his real power diminished to the point, where it gradually became the norm that *lèse majesté* remained unpunished.[32]

The political and social position of the magnates found its reflection in architecture, since they built grandiose residences for themselves complemented by private villas, or *belvederes* as they are called in a number of sources, which in their opulence exceeded by far the traditional wooden manors of the *szlachta*. A participation in the villa culture seems to have been an impor-

tant element of the consciously formulated status of 'great men', to use a term introduced by the already mentioned Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski.[33] The construction of such ensembles and the luxury associated with them was part of a carefully performed strategy aimed at affirming the social position of their owners as individuals as well as members of a particular social stratum.

Fig. 7 Interior of the Lubomirski bathhouse pavilion in Ujazdów before 1689.

Splendid yet isolated villas and *belvederes* also played an important role in the political exchange to be performed at the highest level, as exemplified by the activities of Lubomirski. Evidence of his wide-ranging patronage is provided by the remains of a bathhouse pavilion constructed for him in the gardens of the Ujazdów estate near Warsaw, in accordance with a design provided by the accomplished Dutch architect then active in Poland-Lithuania, Tilman van Gameren (fig. 7).[34] To visiting foreigners, including distinguished diplomats, the building formed part of a truly royal ensemble. While accompanying the papal nuncio, the already mentioned Giovanni Battista Faggiuoli enjoyed the many wonders of Ujazdów, describing it as 'a noble place, suitable for a king rather than an aristocrat, more than one would expect of a great Polish lord'.[35] In this way, the owner of a luxurious architectural ensemble, an influential and immensely wealthy member of the uppermost strata of the nobility could present himself to the foreign courts – with whom he often plotted against the king – as well as to his fellow magnates and to the *szlachta* in general as equal to the monarch.[36] The political context of such architectural ensembles is further illustrated by a manuscript entitled *Kopia pewnego listu*, which was one of the numerous pamphlets published by

the opposition during the stormy *Sejm* of 1688/89. Its anonymous author purported that one of the reasons for the king's alleged enmity towards Lubomirski was his envy of the Ujazdów estate that adjoined Wilanów.[37]

In this context, the construction of a new suburban villa may be interpreted as an attempt to fend off challenges to the king's social and political position and hence to his ultimate authority. His participation in the villa culture confirmed Sobieski's position among the country's elite, while the magnificence of his residence placed him above his opponents. A French traveller who visited Wilanów before the villa was extended in the 1680s emphasised the importance of princely display. To his taste, this humble abode was entirely inappropriate for a king, reminding him rather of the country houses of the wealthy Parisian bourgeoisie.[38] Aware of such criticism, Sobieski eventually enlarged his villa and introduced a number of architectural elements that underpinned his unique position and referred to the internationally recognized models of court architecture.

Perhaps the most important indicator of the villa's royal prestige were the galleries, a unique feature in contemporaneous Poland-Lithuania.[39] As already observed by Wojciech Fijałkowski, they 'emphasized the particular significance of Wilanów as a seat of power and a symbol of state.'[40] Positioned within the private part of the apartments, they evoke the French tradition of court architecture, in which galleries located at the very end of the ceremonial route played a vital role in the layout of numerous courtly residences.[41] Probably originating in the fourteenth-century Valois residences, this tradition finds its continuation in the seventeenth century, for instance in the Palais du Luxembourg, one of the possible models for Sobieski.[42] Indeed, during his stay in Paris he admired, among other palaces, the Palais du Luxembourg and the Palais des Tuileries as well as the Louvre and the Palais Royal, where he particularly esteemed the 'painted galleries' and 'beautiful royal apartments'.[43] The Palais du Luxemburg may have served as a particularly appealing model for Sobieski, not least because of the way the strictly symmetrical layout along with the decorative programme focused on the *persona* of the queen.[44] With a gallery adjacent to each of the two symmetrically arranged apartments within the central *corps de logis*, the layout of the Wilanów villa refers to the architectural tradition going back to some of the designs published by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau.[45] It is also reminiscent of the Ter Nieuburg in Rijswijk, built in 1630–34, in accordance with a plan sent from France and derived from the layout of the Palais du Luxembourg.[46] There is also a similarity in function, since both Wilanów and Ter Nieuburg were private residences without extensive accommodation for members of the court (fig. 8).[47]

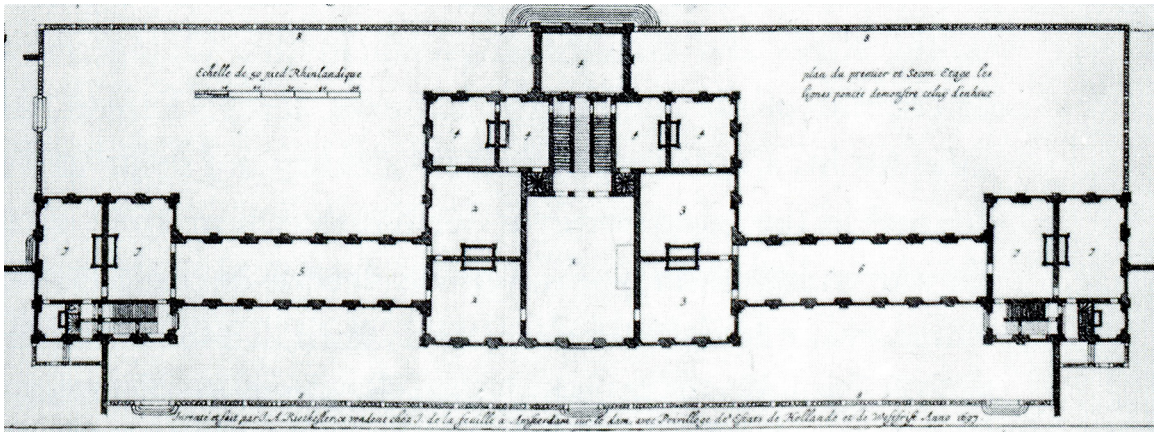

Fig. 8 Huis Ter Nieuburg in Rijswijk, 1630–1634, ground plan after an engraving by A. Rietkesseler, 1697.

Nonetheless, Wilanów is hardly a mere repetition of French models, for the king and his chief advisor looked in other directions, above all to Italy. Locci relied on diverse Roman models, such as the Capitoline buildings by Michelangelo, which he mentioned in his correspondence with the king.[48] He must have also been familiar with diverse villa ensembles in and near Rome, such as Villa Doria Pamphili.[49] The Polish king as well as a number of European rulers, such as his son-in-law Max Emanuel von Wittelsbach, thus illustrated the complicated affiliations of an independent European court, located at the crossroads of diverse political and cultural influences. In their court architecture, they referred to specific spatial arrangements to allude to their relationship with the European superpowers, in particular the house of Bourbon or the Habsburgs.[50] As an independent ruler in need of political allies elsewhere in Europe, Sobieski had to choose between several possibilities, which was not an easy thing to do, given his rather precarious position.[51]

Wilanów and the Sarmatians

It was not enough for the king, however, to distinguish himself from the magnates and to reaffirm his own position in Europe. Lavish residences generated their own political perils, since the general public in Poland-Lithuania tended to treat extravagant display with suspicion. While the country house of a noble family was portrayed as an embodiment of all virtues, villas, *belvederes* and *lustgartens* of the 'great' were often considered excessive, even a sign of corruption.[52] For instance, in a short poem titled *Belvedere* Wacław Potocki, a major Polish poet active during the reign of Sobieski, advised fellow noblemen to avoid the lavish *belvedere*s in the vicinity of Warsaw and Cracow.[53]

Throughout his reign, however, Sobieski sought the support of the members of the *szlachta*, seeing them as a political counterbalance to the predominantly hostile magnates.[54] Therefore, he did what he could to interweave his origins in the world of the Sarmatian culture with his newly acquired royal position to make them both part of his personal iconography.[55] As early as in a print that depicted his triumphal entry to Cracow during the coronation ceremony, which was executed

by his court printmaker Romeyn de Hooghe, he presented an allegory of *Agricultura Restituta*.[56] In Wilanów as well he tried to join royal display to a message likely to appeal to the *szlachta*. The part of the programmatic narrative that focused on agriculture alluded to the king's Sarmatian origins and to the respective values endorsed by him and thus regarded as having been specifically aimed at this societal group.[57]

It is, therefore, hardly surprising that motives pertaining to agriculture and associated with fertility, abundance and harvesting, such as the above-mentioned depictions of Demeter and Triptolemus or of Vertumnus and Pomona, constituted an important element of the overall programme of the newly erected villa, appearing in the key parts of the ceremonial order.[58] The image of Apollo depicted in the vestibule may be interpreted in this context as following, for instance, Vincenzo Cartari's interpretation of pagan mythology.[59] Apart from the ceiling paintings, the main rooms of the two apartments were also furnished with small wall paintings depicting various agricultural themes and inspired by Vergil's *Georgica*. The complex allegories of the Four Seasons on the ceilings in tandem with matching images of the practice of agriculture expressed ideas of prosperity, continuity and harmony and, therefore, offered a narrative illustrating the arrival of a new Golden Age. The narrative was woven into the literary tradition introduced to the Commonwealth by sixteenth-century humanist writings that drew on the widely appreciated works by Horace, Vergil and by other classical authors.[60]

The glorification of agriculture and of the rural life that would provide the appropriate seat for a new Golden Age announced in the overall programme of the Wilanów villa was not a simple repetition of the generic iconography employed elsewhere in Europe. Rather, it was a message already deeply embedded in the local cultural and political context and could be used as part of the royal propaganda. John Adamson convincingly challenged a 'propagandist' interpretation of the court's material culture, stressing its limited audience on the one hand and a different set of values predominant at Ancien Régime courts on the other.[61] However, while interior decoration of courtly residences conveyed, above all, generic meanings that related to the exercise of rule, to use Adamson's phrase, a more immediate purpose of such a decoration should not be disregarded. While it is true that princely display in the early modern period was not meant to appeal to popular opinion, in the political situation of seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania it was most important to enhance the royal reputation outside the elite. Immensely proud of their long-enjoyed liberty and political empowerment, Polish-Lithuanian *szlachta* provided a fundamental part of the political system and, at least theoretically, decided about taxes and other key issues.

Nonetheless, the question of how a visual narrative with a limited impact might possibly reach the wider public and in particular the members of the middle strata of the nobility who were not regular visitors in the villa, needs to be addressed. While there is no hard evidence, our present-day knowledge about the exchange of information in seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania allows a hypothetical reconstruction of the possible ways of dissemination of such knowledge. Important to remember in this case is the decentralization, or multi-centricity of late seven-

teenth-century Poland-Lithuania on the one hand and the importance of oral communication in the exchange of information on the other.[62]

Surviving evidence indicates that the king often received his guests in Wilanów. As reported by the Frenchmen Gaspard de Tende, he usually dined with the queen and with his distinguished visitors.[63] The diary kept by Kazimierz Sarnecki, who spent several years at the court, reveals that these guests were recruited from the senatorial class. For instance, on one occasion, Sobieski received the Voivodes of Podlasie and Chełmno, on another the Castellans of Vilnius, Kiev and Kamieniec.[64] In addition, the king apparently devoted much attention to communication, providing guided tours of Wilanów to his guests and describing the decorative programme in great detail. A revealing evidence in this regard is provided by a description of the Wilanów galleries dating from the early 1690s. According to the anonymous author, he was shown around by the king in person who explained the mythological narrative.[65] Hypothetically at least, apart from oral accounts, manuscripts of a similar content may have circulated among a wider public, very similar to the political pamphlets published to influence the opinions of the *szlachta*.[66]

Thus, even though it was impossible for the king to invite every single nobleman, he did receive favourably disposed members of the elite that would afterwards spread his message among the nobility. Research on the means of social communication in early modern Poland-Lithuania indicates that the opinions of the nobility in the provinces were shaped mainly by the magnates and other people in power.[67] Royal officers, such as castellans, were certainly among them. Familiar with the royal residence, such guests were able to spread the word among the *szlachta* in their respective provinces. Their influence must have been underpinned by the fact that many among the royal supporters recruited from the middle strata of the *szlachta*, and thus exactly from the group the king tried to influence.[68] Thus, within the predominantly oral culture, the visitors' verbal (or hand-written) accounts concerning the king and his residence would perhaps enhance his political position.

Conclusion

The royal villa constructed for King Jan Sobieski in Wilanów served to assert his position within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as well as on the European stage. The decorative programme of the interiors carried a very specific message consistent with the political agenda pursued by the monarch. It also conveyed the idea of stability and abundance, a new Golden Age that would be shared under the divinely ordained rule of the king. At the same time, it emphasized the importance of continuity and alluded to the dynastic plans of the royal court. In designing this programme, however, Sobieski had to strike a balance between diverse, sometimes contradictory ideals, and to take into account his position as an elected monarch. Unlike his European counterparts, who could freely display dynastic imagery, he had to enter into a subtle dialogue with his subjects. Therefore, a highly controversial dynastic message was delivered gradually, with the identity of the royal couple being hidden for much of the main part of the ceremonial route, only

to be revealed in their most private rooms. As I tried to argue, King Jan Sobieski attempted to appeal to members of the diverse strata of Polish-Lithuanian society, namely to the magnates and to the *szlachta*, who were both hostile towards his dynastic plans. Apart from that, he had to adhere to a royal ceremonial required of a European monarch. Thus, Sobieski had to present both a royal and an aristocratic, architectural and decorative programme, while he appealed to the wider Polish-Lithuanian nobility.

Evidently, with its limited audience and veiled meanings this courtly display was not the primary propaganda tool. Nonetheless, it allowed for something less straightforward, yet equally important: a political meta-discourse and a spectacle of magnificence that set the king firmly apart from the opposition leaders by presenting royal authority as part of a divine and universal order. This spectacle, if not the straightforward political message, would have been further disseminated by royal guests drawn from the country's elite who shaped popular opinion across the vast lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

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Illustrations

Figs. 1–3 author.

Figs. 4–6 courtesy of the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów.

Fig. 7 courtesy of RESTAURO Sp. zoo Toruń (photo Andrzej Skowroński).

Fig. 8 courtesy of Konrad Ottenheym.

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[1] On the history of Wilanów see, among others: Starzyński 1933; Czołowski 1937; Fijałkowski 1977; Fijałkowski 1997 and Arciszewska 2006.

[2] On Locci see, for example, Starzyński 1933 and Osiecka-Samsonowicz 2015.

[3] See, among others: Karpowicz 1969; Fijałkowski 1977; Wiliński 1977; Karpowicz 1986; Fijałkowski 1997 and Fijałkowski 2009.

[4] Fijałkowski 2009, p. 106.

[5] See also Arciszewska 2006.

[6] Fijałkowski 2009, p. 109.

[7] Compare with Arciszewska 2006, pp. 114–16.

[8] *Krótka nauka*, p. 59 and pp. 67–70.

[9] Czarniecka 2009, pp. 132–33.

[10] Karpowicz 1974, pp. 59–85.

[11] Fijałkowski 1997, p. 77.

[12] Ricciardus 1591, fols. 24–24v.

[13] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 64.

[14] Unfortunately, very little is known about the original furnishings of the King's Garderobe, which were thoroughly remodelled in the eighteenth century. According to a late eighteen-century description, the pla-

fond painting which had by then been already removed, formerly corresponded to the painting still surviving in situ in the Queen's Garderobe, see: Malinowska & Mieleszko 1984, p. 22 and Fijałkowski 1997, p. 88.

[15] Arciszewska 2006, p. 114 and Fijałkowski 2009, p. 115.

[16] Kriegseisen 1995, p. 88.

[17] See, for instance, Czarniecka 2009 and Skrzypietz 2011.

[18] Czarniecka 2009, pp. 212–13.

[19] See also Arciszewska 2006, p. 105.

[20] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 28.

[21] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 14.

[22] Fijałkowski 1977, pp. 24–25.

[23] Starzyński 1933, pp. 20–23.

[24] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 24.

[25] Sobieski kept most of the trophies in his ancestral seat of Żółkiew, see Żygulski 1978. The Vienna trophies were also displayed by the other commanders of the allied forces, for example by Maximilian Emmanuel in Schleissheim and by Ludwig Wilhelm in Karlsruhe.

[26] Fijałkowski 2015, p. 26.

[27] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 24.

[28] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 24.

[29] Adamson 2000, p. 34.

[30] On the diverse aspects of the king's propaganda see, for example, Czarniecka 2009 and Fijałkowski 2015.

[31] See, for instance: Czapliński 1955; Czapliński 1961; Czapliński 1966; Kersten 1974; Olszewski 1985; Wrede 1989; Augustyniak 1990; Olszewski 2002, pp. 21–35 and Opaliński 2007.

[32] See, for instance: Augustyniak 1990, pp. 103–19.

[33] Lubomirski, passim; see also Karpiński 1995; on the Lubomirski family, see Przyboś 1992.

[34] Mossakowski 2012, pp. 90–109.

[35] Mossakowski 2012, p. 100.

[36] On the royal ambitions of the Polish-Lithuanian magnates in the period following Sobieski's death see, in particular, Bernatowicz 2011.

[37] Czarniecka 2009, p. 192.

[38] Fijałkowski 1997, pp. 12–13.

[39] On the building history of galleries, see Starzyński 1933, pp. 20–23.

[40] Fijałkowski 2009, p. 112; he associates the Wilanów galleries with palaces on the Capitoline Hill.

[41] Fijałkowski 1977, p. 47; on French galleries see, in particular, Prinz 1970; Guillaume 1993; Chatenet 2002 and Guillaume 2010.

[42] Guillaume 2010. Galetti 2012.

[43] Targosz 1985, pp. 70–71.

[44] See Galetti 2012, pp. 141–51.

[45] Androuet du Cerceau 1559, pl. XXXII; on the importance of Du Cerceaus' designs for the Palais du Luxemburg see Galetti 2012, pp. 175–78.

[46] Unity 2007, p. 198.

[47] Unity 2007, p. 196.

[48] Starzyński 1933, pp. 45–46, 86.

[49] See, among others: Miłobędzki 1980, p. 401; Fijałkowski 2009, p. 106 and Woldt 2011, p. 407.

[50] Krems 2010; see also Ottenheym and Johannsen 2015, p. 16.

[51] See also Arciszewska 2006, p. 106. On the political situation of Poland-Lithuania at that time see, among others: Piwarski 1933; Piwarski 1957 and Wójcik 1960. On the king's propaganda see, among others, Fijałkowski 2015.

[52] See, for instance: Karpiński 1983, pp. 93–102; Kochan 2010 and Otwinowska 1980.

[53] Potocki 1992, pp. 209–12; see also Ślękowa 2010.

[54] See, for instance: Piwarski 1933, pp. 85–110; Czerniecka 2009 and Skrzypietz 2011.

[55] Wiliński 1977. Arciszewska 2006. Woldt 2011, p. 406.

[56] Wiliński 1977, p. 71.

[57] Woldt 2011, p. 414.

[58] See, for instance, Wiliński 1977; Karpowicz 1986, pp. 89–92 and Wiliński 1989.

[59] Wiliński 1977, pp. 74–75.

[60] Karpiński 1983, pp. 148 and 150–53.

[61] Adamson 2000, p. 34.

[62] See, for instance, Mączak 2003 and Maliszewski 2001.

[63] Tende 2013, p. 270.

[64] Sarnecki 2004, pp. 59–60.

[65] See Sokołowski 1898 and Fijałkowski 1977, p. 47.

[66] As to the former, see Fijałkowski 2014, as to the latter, see Czarniecka 2009.

[67] Maliszewski 2001, pp. 35–37. Choińska-Mika 2002, pp. 205–32. Mączak 2003, pp. 185–91.

[68] See, for instance, Augustyniak 1990, p. 232.