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“Slavic” or “Germanic Spirit”? Examples of the Ideologisation of Arcades in Research on Architecture in the 19th and 20th centuries¹

Abstract

Travelling across present-day Poland, it is only exceptionally possible to come across a specific type of historic urban and rural houses with a ground-level section open on three sides and supported on columns or posts. Yet still in the first half of the 20th century, in some areas of Europe this type of a house was commonly found, and already a century earlier it had intrigued researchers investigating among other things, its origins of development. Within the current borders of Poland, arcaded houses are found in greater concentration in territories that in the past belonged to different political organisms and thus their research was conducted with the adoption of different optics. It is noteworthy that arcades were easily subjected to various more or less conscious manipulations in order to justify their native character, sometimes understood as belonging to particular peoples, regions, nations or even races. The paper provides hypothesis that arcades are a construction element extremely liable to ideologisation. In order to illustrate this problem, the paper presents methods of interpreting the origin of arcades in former East and West Prussia, Silesia, Lesser Poland and Lublin Province in the period from almost the beginning of the 19th century, when researchers started to be interested in this element, until 1939 when Erich Kulke's book was published, which was the clearest result of arcades' ideologisation. These interpretations were divided into a few main groups, which made it possible to compare the narratives and to show how the same arguments could lead to different conclusions. Unique issues, characteristic only of particular regions, were also identified. Ultimately, an attempt was made to answer the question of what influenced the liability of arcades to ideologisation. Since the authors of the research, often architects, promoted the preservation and use of arcades referring to old

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patterns in new developments, the question was also asked whether such developments actually occurred.

Keywords: medievalism, arcade architecture, arcades, art historiography, Poland, West Prussia, Silesia, Lesser Poland, Lublin Province

In the area of contemporary Poland we can identify at least several regions, where arcade architecture played (or sometimes still plays) a significant role. What merit consideration is, on the one hand, the popularity of such construction elements in houses and its impact on the urban and rural landscape, and, on the other hand, the long tradition of its research, mostly in the areas of former East and West Prussia, Silesia, Lesser Poland and Lublin Province.

Arcades as a construction and decorative element generate a whole lot of issues and questions, still waiting for consideration and convincing answers. Some of them cover the very basics, such as the origins of this architectural element and its cradle, from which the idea of constructing houses with arcade fronts spread into vast areas across Europe. Research literature on the history of both rural and urban houses, conducted since the beginning of the 19th century, provides premises to presume that arcades were liable to various, more or less consciously conducted manipulations, mostly to justify their native character, often understood as something belonging to certain peoples, regions, nations or even races. It can be, therefore, claimed that arcades has been subjected to various ideologisations. In order to prove this claim, this paper will demonstrate how the origins of arcades were interpreted in different regions, which are now parts of Poland and earlier used to belong to other political organisms, in the period from the early 19th century, when the researchers began to show their interest in that field, until 1939 when the most vivid example of its ideologisation was created - a book by Erich Kulke. The interpretations will be divided into two main groups of topics, which will allow to trace narration vectors and to demonstrate the same arguments could have led to different conclusions and which issues were unique for particular regions. Finally, we will answer the question: what made the arcades so liable to ideologisation? As the researchers, often architects themselves, promoted preservation of arcades and their use in new investments as elements corresponding with the old patterns, an additional question appears: were such projects indeed completed?

In contemporary Polish language the term “arcade” (*Polish: podcień/podcienie*) describes a ground-level section of a building, open on three sides and supported on columns or posts and refers, primarily, to residential architecture.² In the past the term had a broader meaning, e.g. in the second volume of *Polish Language Dictionary* from 1807 it is defined simply as “a shaded place”,³ and could denote various forms

2 The definition in Polish Language Dictionary: *Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*, <https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/podcie%C5%84.html> [accessed 30 August 2021].

3 S. B. Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 2, part 2, Warszawa, 1807.

of areas shaded by a roof. Similarly broad meaning has the German term “Laube”, and its multiple uses were shown in the dictionary by the Grimm brothers.⁴ Not taking too deep dive into the linguistics, it should only be mentioned that Polish “podcienie”, Czech “podloubí”, Italian “portico” or German “Laube” are terms used in literature in various contexts and sometimes other, unusual terms were used to describe the same constructions.

In the publications presented below the terms “arcade” and “Laube” were usually used without any detailed descriptions or definitions, as their authors assumed that the word meant exactly what was being discussed in the text – i.e. entrance arcades of rural houses (usually detached ones), townhouses (creating systems of arcaded fronts), castle cloisters and wooden walkways and galleries in the urban backyards.

The current state of knowledge tells us that various forms of covered walkways and entrances were constructed in different historical periods all over the globe to protect people and property from unfavourable weather.⁵ Sometimes, however, particular solutions gained popularity in a given territory and became a unique, characteristic phenomenon, for example arcaded houses (or complexes thereof), which in the urban environment of Europe have their roots in medieval architecture. Their existence in cities is confirmed at least in 13th century, and the solution became incredibly popular throughout the centuries in many parts of the continent, also transpiring into the rural areas. The question of their origins and the routes along which they spread across Europe remains open.

In 1878, in Marburg a General Assembly of German Associations for History and Antiquities (*Gesamtverein der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine*), an organisation established 36 years earlier and grouping both scientists and amateurs interested in the history of German-speaking lands, took place.⁶ The assembly can be regarded as a form of cornerstone for systematic research of historical houses in the mentioned area due to then-accepted postulate for carrying out a complex inventory of historical buildings.⁷ Throughout the years, consistently conducted documentation,⁸ historical and ethnographic works yielded data which allowed for attempts of creating architectural characteristics of houses in different regions,

4 *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, digitalisierte Fassung im Wörterbuchnetz des Trier Center for Digital Humanities, Version 01/21, <https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB> [accessed 30 August 2021].

5 Compare the remarks in: K. Dumała, “Przyrynkowa zabudowa podcieniowa. Źródła inspiracji drogi przenikania wzorców, analogie”, in: *Dom w mieście średniowiecznym i nowożytnym*, ed. B. Gediga, Wrocław, 2004, p. 106.

6 *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme*, eds. M. Fahlbusch, I. Haar, A. Pinwinkler, vol. 1, Berlin–Boston, 2017, p. 1033.

7 *Ibid.*

8 An early result of such activity was a collection of graphics representing examples of wooden architecture, published in 1883 and edited by *Verbande Deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieur-Vereine* and *Gesamttvereine der Deutschen Geschichts- und Alterthums-Vereine*: H. Cuno, C. Schäfer, *Holzarchitektur vom 14-18 Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1883.

as well as singling out certain unique features and placing them in supraregional context.⁹ Those final actions are typical for the research of arcaded architecture in the eastern fringes of German settlement area (mostly East and West Prussia and Silesia). Publications from the 19th and early 20th century usually mention the topic of arcades in broader works about rural architecture of particular areas, sometimes only in footnotes, sometimes dedicating whole chapters to it. Nevertheless, the question of origins of such constructions is always present.

Arcades were also spotted in the 19th century in other regions of modern-day Poland, identified as remnants of old cultures and featured in multiple articles published in hiking magazines. For instance, in 1838 an anonymous author in "Przyjaciel Ludu" ["The Folk's Friend"] mentioned arcaded cottages in the area around Jarocin, and in 1866 the town of Krosno and its market square arcades were described in "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" ["The Illustrated Weekly"], additionally illustrated by a famous Polish history painter Jan Matejko.¹⁰ In both cases the houses were described as beautiful. Drawings by Matejko, presenting disappearing wooden architecture, including wooden arcaded houses, heavily influenced the consciousness of later researchers and were often cited as the most ornamental examples, such as houses in Wiśnicz or Muszyna.¹¹ However, more extensive and methodical research of arcaded architecture was conducted later, in the beginning of the 20th century.

As it has been already mentioned in the introduction, the researchers in particular regions reached into various themes in their attempts of drawing out the genesis of arcade architecture, often looking into the local historical and cultural (or even environmental) peculiarities. However, the same arguments were sometimes used to support completely different claims.

One of the early attempts of researching arcade architecture is the work by August von Haxtenhausen from 1839, which presents the characteristics of villages in East and West Prussia.¹² The author identifies two main types of rural residential buildings: the Prussian one, present across the entire East and West Prussia, and the Lithuanian one. One of the characteristics of the former type was supposedly its arcaded entrance (in the work called "Vorlaube"), also present in Prussian town-

9 In 1906 a two-volume work, composed of a text and a collection of images was published: *Das Bauernhaus im Deutschen Reiche und in seinen Grenzgebieten*, Dresden, 1906. For the purposes of comparative research it was also useful to recognise the structures of houses in non-German speaking areas. E.g., the works of Karl Rhamm from the Germanic-Slavic borderlands were particularly appreciated: K. Rhamm, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur germanisch-slawischen Altertums-kunde*, vol. 1: *Die Grosshufen der Nordgermanen*, Braunschweig, 1905; idem, *Urzeitliche Bauernhöfe in germanisch-slawischem Waldgebiet*, vol. 1: *Altgermanische Bauernhöfe im Übergange vom Saal zu Fletz und Stube*, Braunschweig, 1908.

10 "Ułamek o architekturze", *Przyjaciel Ludu*, 1838, 4, vol. 2, no. 49, pp. 386–387; "Okolica Krosna. Z notat podróżnych Józefa Łepkowskiego", *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1866, XIII, no. 329, pp. 17–18.

11 For instance: S. Szyller, *Czy mamy polską architekturę?*, Warszawa, 1916, p. 44; L. Puszet, *Studia nad polskim budownictwem drewnianem*, part 1: *Chata*, Kraków, 1903, p. 63; K. Mokłowski, *Sztuka ludowa w Polsce*, Lwów, 1903, p. 270; C. Thullie, "Podcienia i arkadowane dziedzińce w za-bytkowej architekturze Polski", *Teka Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury*, 1971, vol. V, pp. 119–131.

12 A. von Haxthausen, *Die ländliche Verfassung in den Provinzen Ost- und Westpreußen*, Königsberg, 1839.

houses. The author sees this element as “something southern-oriental” and links its origins with the arrival of German knights in the discussed area,¹³ probably earlier observed during the Crusades. Despite the fact that such architecture is present “here and there” all across Germany, the author considered it to be common and widespread only in Prussia.

Bernhard Schmid – a provincial conservation officer in West Prussia – also claimed in 1904 that arcades (Vorlaube) were uniquely characteristic for the rural architecture of the region.¹⁴ The state of research on the origins of such forms was not advanced enough for him. Schmid only claimed that the presence of arcaded houses on the right side of the Vistula is limited to the Prussian core, dominated almost entirely by the German culture brought there by the Teutonic Order. Perhaps the forms of rural houses were influenced by the local urban landscapes, as most of the towns in the Order’s territory featured arcades running around the central market square. Schmid also pointed at the fact that arcades have existed in towns founded on the Kulm law (Gniew, Olsztyn) since the medieval period. There is no doubt that they should be linked with German cultural sources, which were later borrowed by rural architecture.¹⁵

Schmid, in the catalogue of antiquities of the County of Marienburg, noticed that arcades in their basic understanding (Vorlauben) are usually such simple and obvious architectural forms that they have existed since the ancient times in all possible territories, from southern Greece to Scandinavia, in temples, townhouses and rural cottages.¹⁶ Therefore the use of an arcade in architecture is nothing uncommon, but its form used in rural arcaded houses is uniquely Prussian. According to Schmid such forms might have arrived from the south, via Silesia, Bohemia and Tyrol, although examples from Bern and Münster show that arcaded houses were built virtually everywhere. A new thread in the issue of origins of such architecture in Schmid’s work is the inspiration taken from the Teutonic Order castles and their cloisters.

As it can be seen, the researchers of East and West Prussia tried to solve the riddle of the origins of arcades in local history and noticed the possible influence of Teutonic Order castle cloister architecture, whose provenance might be “oriental”. It should be mentioned that due to known examples of medieval arcaded townhouses, their precedence before their rural counterparts was widely accepted. This comes with surprisingly low awareness (or intentional ignorance) of the existence of arcaded houses in other German territories, perhaps resulting from the fact that the research was limited only to rural areas of a given region. The phrase “here and there” used by Haxthausen encompasses, for instance, an impressive number of towns with arcaded houses in Bavaria. An interesting addition to the theories

13 Ibid., p. 69.

14 B. Schmid, “Westpreußische Holzbauten”, *Mitteilungen des Westpreußischen Geschichts-Vereins*, 1904, 3, p. 26.

15 Ibid., p. 149.

16 B. Schmid, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Marienburg*, vol. 1: *Die Städte Neuteich und Tiegenhof und die ländlichen Ortschaften*, Danzig, 1919, p. LXXIX.

presented by the researchers of East and West Prussia was the hypothesis presented by Stefan Szyller according to whom “the masonry architecture was influenced by the Polish wooden arcades” and the “gothic cloister in the Marienburg castle” was provided as an example proving his hypothesis.¹⁷ As Szyller wrote, “there would be no Marienburg cloister in its current form if there were no arcades in Polish towns and villages among which the castle stands”. The architect tried to remind in that way about the Polish character of the Prussian territory and used similar reasoning to explain the origins of arcades in the case of the town of Marienburg and the stoops in Gdańsk.

A unique direction in the research of Prussian arcaded houses was the theory of Dutch influence, presented by ethnographer Karl Rhamm in his extensive work on Germano-Slavic antiquities. Rhamm claimed that arcaded houses in East Prussia are not of Slavic, but rather of Dutch origin,¹⁸ as the settlers in the area stretching from Kuyavia to the Brandenburg March were called “the Dutch” (Olanders in Polish). This is connected to the memories of Dutch migrations reaching far into the east of Europe.

Among original theories, which do not appear in a broader discourse, but are rather connected with the characteristics of particular regions, there is one regarding arcaded houses as a characteristic motif of Jewish architecture, as multiple examples of well-preserved arcades survived in provincial towns dominated by Jewish communities prove. Such hypothesis is mentioned by Szyller, who tried to refute it in 1916, claiming that the Jews settled in the areas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the already existing houses, which then remained unchanged in later periods, as the local community did not care for the exteriors and comfort and therefore the houses “survived in their ancient shapes”.¹⁹

A rather obvious path in the research of arcade architecture led to Italy. Italian arcaded houses were surely well known, as were the arcade constructions in the courtyards of Italian palaces.²⁰ Interestingly, this thread is present in the analysed literature mainly in the context of refuting the theory of Italian influence.

Kurt Plümecke, an architect active in Silesia, had particular merit in making the topic of Silesian arcades more widely known. In 1927 he published a dissertation titled “Schlesische Laubenhäuser” prepared at the Technical University of Dresden (Sächsischen Technischen Hochschule zu Dresden), which at that time was the first monograph about the arcades in Silesia.²¹ It seems that the author, who himself came from the Silesian town of Nysa, did not visit the places he mentions in his work and did not conduct a proper source query – his primary cited source (the catalogue of historical buildings by Hans Lutsch) and chronological discrepan-

17 Szyller, op. cit., p. 182.

18 Rhamm, *Ethnographische Beiträge...*, p. 191.

19 Szyller, op. cit., pp. 50–51.

20 K. Plümecke, *Schlesische Laubenhäuser*, Nimptsch, 1927, p. 8 gave as examples mainly arcade complexes from northern Italy, e.g. Trent or Riva del Garda.

21 Ibid.

cies decrease the value of his argumentation. This did not, however, stop him from doubting the accuracy of the opinion about the Italian provenance of arcades, which seemed to be very prevalent at his time. He then presented three arguments against it. Firstly, the Italian arcades were not direct descendants of the ancient Roman porticos, as their construction differed as the ancient porticos were not integral parts of houses. Secondly, if it is possible to prove the existence of arcades in Silesia already in the Middle Ages, then they cannot be a result of any Italian influence, which reached this area with the Renaissance currents. Thirdly, the Italian language uses the term “portico”, but also “loggia”, which according to Plümecke came from the east-Germanic “Loube”. Perhaps then the arcades of northern Italy were shaped by the Eastern Germanic tribes, which settled there during the Migration Period. In that way Plümecke tried to make the Germanic peoples the original creators of arcaded houses.

In 1914 Jan Sas Zubrzycki published the work on the “Sigismundian style” (i.e. referring to the art created during the reigns of the last two Polish kings from the Jagiellonian dynasty: Sigismund I the Old and Sigismund II August), in which he provided an extensive study on arcades which supposedly did not come to Poland from the south, but have existed here since time immemorial²² and were handed down through generations as something “bound to Slavic blood”.²³ Therefore, the Italian architects who worked at the Renaissance reconstruction of the Wawel Castle were inspired by the local architecture and used the services of local sculptors who were still using mediaeval patterns. The same author wrote similarly about the absurdity of attributing Polish arcades in the city of Zamość to Italian inspiration, as such structures had been used in Poland long before.

As it can be seen, for both Plümecke and Zubrzycki we can talk about Italian inspirations only from the Renaissance onwards, and only to a limited extent. Any arcades existing in the discussed areas prior to that period made them reject that track. The former of the two wanted to derive the whole idea of arcaded houses from the Germanic culture, using, let us not deny it, rather poor arguments. The latter only pointed at the older tradition of constructing arcaded buildings in Poland, bound with the Slavic culture. The Italian architects who arrived here with their arcades and cloisters found themselves well received by the locals who were already acquainted with such forms.

Some of the authors who analysed architecture and layout of rural houses in various areas could not resist the impression that there was a series of similarities between them, which often led to misinterpretations. Some of the most interesting examples of such reasoning are the attempts to link rural architecture with ancient Greece.

Heinrich Hacker, referring to the conclusions made by August Meitzen, lists in 1883 four main types of West Prussian houses, among them the nordic (nordische)

²² J. S. Zubrzycki, *Styl zyguntowski jako odcień sztuki odrodzenia w Polsce*, Kraków, 1914, p. 83.

²³ Ibid.

house.²⁴ Its main characteristic was the “Vorhalle” located at one of the gable walls with the main entrance. Such open structure, supported by posts, existed in primitive form in Scandinavia and its more developed variants could be found in West Prussia, Poznań (by which he most probably meant the Province of Poznań) and Poland. The researcher also pointed at the similarity between the simplest, “nordic” form and the ancient Greek temples.²⁵ The Eastern Germanic tribes (*Ostgermanen*) originally lived at the Danube and on the Black Sea coast, neighbouring the Greeks, which resulted in certain similarities in customs and culture. The author summarises by saying that whereas the Franconian house belonged to the western Germanic tribes, the nordic one should be considered as the most ancient and most popular among the eastern Vandal tribes. It appeared not only in the areas mentioned above, but was common in the territory stretching from the borders with the western Germans, the Danish isles and the border between Mecklenburg and Pomerania, up to the Oder and the Lusatian Neisse, along the Sudetes and into Pannonia. Hacker finished his text with a call for further research of already-disappearing country cottages, whose origins go back to the times of Greek temples and which, in the end, became “good old houses”.²⁶

Kazimierz Mokłowski in his work *Sztuka Ludowa w Polsce (Folk Art in Poland)* from 1903 presents a number of similarities, or even examples of identical houses constructed by various Germanic, Slavic, Greek and Roman peoples.²⁷ The similarities are apparent, for instance, in the use of arcades. The author claimed that the European climate used to be far harsher, even in modern-day Italy or Greece, which explains the need of constructing an additional buffer space between the proper living quarters and the outside world, which provided some protection from the elements. Mokłowski wanted, however, to show parallel solutions being created in various areas and wished to protect the reader from the observational mistakes made by his German counterparts, such as Henning or Meitzen, who absurdly wanted to bind the house layout with a specific human race. On the other hand, he agreed with Hoerns that in similar or identical conditions humans create similar works of art, architecture or even social structures. Mokłowski also called Henning’s claims of Poles being descendants of the Vandals or Gepids due to similarities between the Mazovian and Norwegian cottages an example of “unwise Prussian greed”. He summarises it by saying that a natural consequence of such thinking would be claiming that Greeks and Romans were descended from the Germans, as some of the Greek and Roman temples show some resemblance to the Norwegian ones.²⁸

24 H. Hacker, “Ueber Westpreussische Wohnhäuser in nordischem Typus”, *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für den Reg.-Bezirk Marienwerder*, 1883, 7, p. 28.

25 Connections between east Germanic and ancient Greek houses were also described a year earlier by R. Henning, *Das deutsche Haus in seiner historischen Entwicklung*, in: *Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker*, XLVII, eds. B. ten Brink, E. Martin, W. Scherer, Strassburg–London, 1882, p. 173.

26 Ibid., p. 39.

27 Mokłowski, op. cit.

28 Ibid., p. 258.

Mokłowski would probably be stunned by reading the book by Kulke, in which maybe not the Greek themselves are descended from the Germans, but their culture surely is.²⁹ The last of the mentioned researchers came to a conclusion that the abundance of arcaded houses in East Prussia (Ostpreußen) means that the eastern German territory (Ostdeutschland) should be considered the cradle of such form. The Slavs later borrowed it as an adjacent culture, as did the Greeks due to the migrations of the Germanic tribes south and south-east, only changing the construction material into stone - thus such forms as megaron or buildings with antae were born. Other arguments further fuelled Kulke's idea of the “northern” genesis of Greek buildings, for instance the fact of using hearths inside buildings, which according to the author made no sense in warm, southern climate. Similarly, gable roofs were considered by him as a typically nordic feature. Arcades, as east-Germanic legacy, were also brought by the Ostrogoths to northern Italy and by the Visigoths to Spain. In Kulke's work all forms of roof-covered elements, e.g. arcade galleries, grew from the idea of nordic arcades.

As it can be seen, an increasing interest in historical houses in various regions of Europe allowed for their comparison and attempts of drawing from such comparisons genetic conclusions. Claiming that Prussian arcaded houses were descendants of forms born out of Greco-Germanic cultural exchange seems in this context clearly abusive. A change in rhetorics can be observed in Kulke's work, who reverses the directions of cultural influences and makes the Greeks the recipients of purely Germanic achievements. Such attitude is tightly connected with Kulke's activity in the structures of the Third Reich. In March 1938, i.e. roughly a year before finishing his work on the arcaded houses,³⁰ Kulke presented the foundations of “Mittelstelle deutscher Bauernhof” work,³¹ an organisation he was a leader of and which had five main goals. Firstly, the unit was supposed to analyse the history of development of German homesteads from the nordic perspective, not the southern-Roman one. Secondly, it was crucial to analyse whole farmsteads (Bauernhof), not just the residential buildings as it was done in earlier research. Thirdly, it was necessary to broaden the scope of research by the Germanic and German colonisation and the history of German settlement. The fourth area was dedicated to the protection of historical objects, which included treating old farmsteads as equally valuable as monasteries, castles or churches. The final point on the list was clearing the rural architecture of all foreign elements and promoting traditional building techniques. In this context Kulke's work on arcaded houses can be considered a model example,

29 E. Kulke, *Die Laube als ostgermanisches Baumerkmal : unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bauernhöfe an der unteren Oder*, München, 1939.

30 Kulke did not abandon the topic of arcades after having written the described work, as he used his another work, *Die Laube als ostgermanischen Baudenkmal*, to achieve his habilitation at the Technischen Hochschule in Gdańsk, see C. Selheim, “Erich Kulke (1908–1997): Wandervogel, Volkskundler, Siedlungsplaner und VJL-Vorsitzender”, in: *Ludwigstein. Annäherungen an die Geschichte der Burg*, eds. E. Conze, S. Rappe-Weber, Göttingen, 2015, p. 260.

31 Coordination Centre for German Farmstead. *Ibid.*, pp. 263–264, also: K. Freckmann, “Hausforschung im Dritten Reich”, *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 1982, 78, p. 174.

a benchmark of research discourse promoted by Mittelstelle deutscher Bauernhof. The work was also compliant with the official policy of NSDAP.

From the very beginning, a need to reject the idea of the Slavic origin of arcades and to look for their roots in the Germanic culture was apparent in the German literature on arcaded houses. Their original territories were later (the author never specified when) taken over by the Slavs, who recognised the advantages of Germanic houses and made them their own, also absorbing the arcades. During the eastern colonisation in the Middle Ages, the Germans once again came in touch with such a solution, and the cultural exchange enriched the form of the arcaded house even more. The colonists who settled in towns also saw the advantages of rural arcaded houses and transplanted the idea into their urban environment.

In 1929, Walter von Krause-Rokitnitz decisively rejected the ideas about the Italian, oriental (crusade-related) or Slavic origins of arcades. Referring mostly to the concepts of Rhamm and Plümecke, he claimed that arcaded houses were of undoubtedly German provenance, regardless of the technicalities, and explained their seldom appearance in western and southern Germany by the fact that such architecture spread eastwards and that after a thousand years more of its examples survived in the east.

A Silesian-Bohemian (schlesisch-böhmische) arcaded house is, according to Fritz Wiedermann, an original offshoot of constructions with nordic-Germanic roots (nordisch-germanische) and is typical for the areas of German colonisation, in which the colonists “reclaimed” old, Germanic architectural traditions used to lay dormant in regions occupied by the Slavs and later re-Germanised.³² Wiedermann’s argumentation contains certain clearly irrational threads, such as his vision of ancient Germanic instincts carried by the colonists and visible through their knowledge of wooden architecture. Wiedermann also saw a link between the arcaded architecture and the Germanic “Vorlaube” in the Lusatian-type houses found in the Kaczawskie Mountains. He was certain that urban houses were always and everywhere derivative from their rural counterparts. While discussing the Tyrolean arcaded houses, he also mentioned the racial aspect and made a clear distinction between the nordic-Germanic constructions and the loggias from the Venetian area of artistic influence. He finally remarked about ongoing research, which would perhaps prove how also the Venetian constructions stemmed from the original German arcade.

Increasingly stronger bond between the architectural forms, especially rural ones, and racial issues became particularly apparent at the end of the 1920s. In his book *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse* from 1929, Walther Darré tried to use arcades as a proof that the *Romanesque* style in architecture was only

32 F. Wiedermann, “Das schlesisch-böhmische Laubenhaus”, *Schlesisches Jahrbuch für deutsche Kulturarbeit im gesamtschlesischen Raume*, 1931, 4, pp. 67–73. He also presented the same thesis in: “Die schlesischen Laubenhäuser als Zeugen nordischer Baugesinnung”, *Volk und Rasse*, 1931, II, pp. 115–120.

a transfer of the so-called *Laubenbogengänge* (i.e. arcaded walkways) from Germanic wooden houses into stone forms.³³

Kulke, in his search for the beginnings of the use of arcades (Laube) in residential buildings, went as far as prehistory, understood by him as “pre-Germanic” times. In southern Germany he tried to see arcades in archaeological finds from the periods bordering the Stone and Bronze Age, discovered in peat bogs of Federsee. In the north he looked at the constructions left by the cultures of megalithic tombs (*Großsteingräberkultur*), e.g. Lührsberg near Dohnsen and in the Jutland area of the Corded Ware Culture, as well as the house of the dead from Haldorf near Melsungen. In the Brandenburg March he referred to the finds of stone-age post-supported houses from the counties of Ruppín and Lebus. Particularly surprising for Kulke was an arcaded sheepfold located in the vicinity of a house of the dead found in Baven (county Celle), which, according to him, had almost identical construction. Kulke wanted to see an unbroken tradition in building techniques, dating back to neolithic times. Despite having no hard proof for such statements, he also claimed that there is no evidence for the lack of such continuity.

Kulke considered the arcaded house discovered in the county of Dislakén and dated for the last century BC as “the first Germanic house of the central Rheinland” in the western area of the Germanic culture.³⁴ According to the researcher, in that territory, untouched by the civilisations of the south, survived a pattern of arcaded architecture which dates back to neolithic times. Also the East Germanic tribes (Ostgermanen), living between the Oder and the Vistula, favoured rectangular, elongated houses with a single or multiple rooms, although Kulke knew of no examples with arcades from the oldest phase. Only the later finds from the Silesian county of Freystadt (after 1945: Koźuchów), as well as the Pomeranian village of Weißhof (after 1945: Bystrzec, a no-longer existing village in the borough of Kwidzyn) showed houses featuring “Vorlaube” or “Vorhalle”. Those examples, among others, supposedly proved that arcaded houses in East Prussia were originally local constructions and only required “final shaping” done by the returning German settlers, resulting in great popularity of such forms.

The Polish researchers had no need, or perhaps no sufficient arguments, to prove that arcades in other parts of Europe had their roots in Slavic forms. Szyller, in a way which was typical for the Polish researchers, tried to prove that local arcaded architecture was born independently from other cultures and nations, for instance presenting Cracow as an urban centre functioning long before its foundation on the Magdeburg law and the arrival of colonists from the West with their new construction ideas and technology. Such argumentation is, however, free of chauvinism, which Ludwik Puszé (among others) tried to defend himself from. By referring to certain hypothesis of German researchers, he clearly rejected the

33 W. Darré, *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse*, München, 1929. The book has been re-issued multiple times.

34 Kulke, op. cit., p. 23.

argumentation, in which everything can be explained by one culture influencing the other.³⁵ He claimed that physical contacts were not necessary for similar forms of buildings to appear in different areas, as those could have been as well the result of similar environmental conditions, such as the abundance of coniferous trees determining the appearance of log constructions. He criticised the German researchers for them deeming the Slavs incapable of creating their own culture and borrowing everything from the West. Puszet clearly opposed the historical approach of the Germans with logical and environmental arguments. He claimed that arcades were something purely local in Polish architecture and dating back to at least 11th century if one assumes that *soboty* around churches evolved from old pagan temples, such as one on Cape Arkona. He pointed, however, that he does not consider arcades to be a uniquely Polish feature, despite their significant role in local architecture.

The authors of *W obronie piękności kraju* (*In Defence of the Country's Beauty*), admiring the arcaded townhouses, formulated a simple interpretation of the arcade's origin, which was seen as an organic development of decorative beams protruded from the fronts of pagan Slavic temples towards later ornamental arcades in towns, country mansions and wooden Catholic and Orthodox churches surrounded by wooden galleries known as *soboty*.³⁶ The uniqueness of arcaded buildings was recognised in their specific construction elements and the local form of supporting posts.³⁷

Moreover, Polish arcades were primarily connected with wooden architecture. Szyller wrote that brick arcaded houses were built in Poland undoubtedly due to foreign influence and "never became widespread", as they made the ground floors too dark and were ill-suited to the local climate.

The literature cited in the article is symptomatic for the increased interest in the rural areas in the 19th century, as researchers attempted to find the sources of national culture in villages. An important element of that process was analysing country cottages, in which the researchers tried to identify both regional and nationwide motifs. In this context, the interest in arcaded houses was quite prominent. However, quite frequent ignorance of urban arcaded houses led to distortions of the general image, in particular to determining the range, within which such architecture could be found.

The position of German and Polish researchers of country houses evolved from shy proposals of tracking back arcaded architecture to its best recognised and explored territories, such as Greece or Italy, as well as searching for its sources in the local characteristics of certain areas (e.g. the role of knightly orders in Prussia or the Jewish communities in small Polish towns) towards rejecting the theory of external genesis of arcades. This process is well illustrated by the opinions presented by Schmid, who in 1919 wrote in a neutral way about the omnipresence and universality of arcades as a construction element, with certain features unique to particular areas. Already twenty years later he claimed that there were no Slavs in the areas

35 Puszet, op. cit.

36 E. Łuskińska, H. Kunzek, *W obronie piękności kraju*, Kraków, 1910, p. 42.

37 Ibid., p. 48.

which feature arcade architecture, as can be seen in the example of Silesia, which originally was a Slavic land ruled by the Piast dynasty and lacks such architecture.³⁸

On the wave of rejection of external influence on Prussian, Silesian or Polish architecture, any possible inspiration taken from Greek, Italian, Slavic or Germanic arcades was ignored. To support that, the historical, or even prehistoric chronology of arcades was expanded. In order to reject the Italian influence it was enough to trace the arcade origins back to medieval or pre-Renaissance times. The role of German colonists was rejected by showing how Cracow functioned as a settlement long before its Magdeburg law founding. In order to prove pre-medieval origins of arcades, the researchers looked for analogies with Greek houses and temples, cited descriptions of pagan Slavic shrines, and even tried to show evidence for the existence of arcaded architecture in the late Stone Age. It should be stated that the Polish researchers mentioned above tried to prove that arcade architecture was developed by the Slavic nations independently, whereas their German counterparts attempted to prove the German provenance theory and its cultural impact bound with migration.

In both cases building national identity was at stake, and arcaded architecture was supposed to be a manifestation of the Slavic or Germanic spirit. Consequently, preserving the existing arcaded houses was promoted, as was clearing the villages and towns of foreign elements and using arcades in new constructions. Zubrzycki was deeply worried about the designs of the new university building in Lviv, which had no reference to Polish arcades.³⁹ He also wanted arcades to be present in the same city at Mariacki, Bernardyński and Halicki squares, as well as along Hetmańska street. In his publications he said that it was their duty to bring the idea of Polish arcades back to life. Ewa Łuskińska and Henryk Kunzek called for ceasing complaints about the lack of compositional inspirations and patterns in local buildings – according to them a modern detached house can be reborn from a baroque mansion and old town square arcades and “enchant us with its beauty”. The question which Szyller asks in the title of his work – “Do we have Polish architecture?” – is answered: yes, and one of its key elements is the arcade. It should, however, be clearly stated: the two greatest supporters of the role of arcades in Polish culture – Zubrzycki and Szyller, both professional architects – failed to implement arcade as an element of modern landscape. Perhaps the only successful project in that field was the perforation of the outbuilding in the Brühl Palace in Warsaw by Szyller, later coldly reviewed by Lauterbach.⁴⁰ Three designs of an arcaded cottage were submitted to the competition “Reconstruction of Polish village”,⁴¹ one of them by Karol Siciński who for many years was connected with the reconstruction of the town of Kazimierz Dolny.

38 B. Schmid, *Das Bauernhaus der nördlichen Grenzmark*, Schneidemühl, 1938, p. 19.

39 Zubrzycki, op. cit., p. 87.

40 A. Lauterbach, “Restauracja gmachów monumentalnych”, *Kronika Warszawy*, 1925, 1, p. 7.

41 *Odbudowa wsi polskiej. Projekty zagród włościańskich wyróżnione na konkursie ogłoszonym przez C. K. O. za pośrednictwem Koła Architektów w Warszawie*, Warszawa, 1915.

Kulke pointed at the advantages of bringing back arcades into the contemporary rural landscape and presented numerous modern examples. Arcades were supposed to be used in rural buildings (houses, forest infrastructure, stables, granaries, etc.), workshops, inns and petrol stations, village community centres and national-socialist formations, as well as other purposes, e.g. for Wehrmacht, urban buildings, monuments, etc.

Multitude of interpretations and certain ease in weaving arcades into national-ist narration seem to result from their genesis which is particularly difficult to pin down. Widespread use of arcades and their numerous local variants made many communities claim them as their own unique feature. This was further reinforced by circulated opinion on their picturesqueness and positive influence on the rural and urban landscape. A whole range of architectural solutions used for protection against bad weather and unclear definitions resulted in treating all sorts of constructions as arcades. All of these factors led to great difficulties in analysing the history of arcades in the 19th and early 20th century and allowed, paradoxically, for frequent abuse of the term to achieve personal goals.

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