

Dagmara Dąbrowska

EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MARCUS AURELIUS AS A STARTING POINT FOR THE CREATION OF THE MONUMENT OF PRINCE JÓZEF PONIATOWSKI

Abstract: Equestrian statues have been made since antiquity, and in Greece since the archaic period. The practice of erecting costly bronze and gilded statues of this type began to gain popularity in the Hellenistic period. The only Roman bronze statue to have survived almost intact is the one to Marcus Aurelius which had already been used as a model for new masterpieces since the Renaissance and reached its heyday in the nineteenth century. Józef Poniatowski died on October 1813 near Leipzig (Germany) in the Elster River. In 1814, a few months after his death, a fundraising campaign was begun to raise money to erect a monument in his honour. Despite the many ideas put forward, in 1817 Bertel Thorvaldsen was commissioned to make an equestrian statue of Prince Józef Poniatowski. In 1820, a final contract was signed with the Danish sculptor for a plaster model. The sculpture, cast in bronze, was ready in 1832, and was modelled on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius from the Capitoline Museums in Rome, both with regard to its composition and the depiction of the figure and the horse.

Keywords: equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, equestrian statue of Józef Poniatowski, Bertel Thorvaldsen, classical tradition, Warsaw

Equestrian statues have been made since antiquity, and in Greece since the archaic period. Early Greek iconography of the rider and the horse was closely linked to mythology.¹ It is also worth noting the traditions and influences from the Near East, in particular from the territories of the Achaemenid Empire, especially from present-day Anatolia.²

The earliest partially preserved example of a marble equestrian statue is the so-called *Rampin Rider*, which originally stood on the Acropolis in Athens and dates to around 550 BC.³ The practice of erecting costly bronze and gilded or silver statues for rulers, people of prominence and merit began to gain considerable popularity in the Hellenistic period.⁴ For instance, the fragments of a statue most probably erected in honour of Demetrius Poliorcetes.⁵

Equestrian statues, especially those dating from the Hellenistic period, became an inspiration for the Romans. They were already exhibited in public places from the fourth century BC. In the accounts of ancient authors, there is evidence to support that Roman equestrian statues existed as early as the second half of the fourth century BC,⁶ and were made in Rome in the following

¹ DUFFEY 1982, p. 1.

² NOVÁKOVÁ, HRNČIARIK, DAŇOVÁ 2018, pp. 438–439, 442.

³ The Acropolis Museum, Greece, inv. no. Ακρ. 590.

⁴ NOVÁKOVÁ, HRNČIARIK, DAŇOVÁ 2018, p. 443.

⁵ The Archaeological Museum of the Athenian Agora, Greece, inv. no. B 1382, B 1383, B 1384.

⁶ NOVÁKOVÁ, HRNČIARIK, DAŇOVÁ 2018, pp. 449–450.

centuries, with the monumental and impressive ones being reserved almost exclusively for emperors.⁷ The custom of erecting honorific public monuments began to gradually disappear from the end of the third century AD onwards.

The best known, and the only Roman bronze statue to have survived almost intact, is the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. The monument preserved mainly because it was believed to depict the Emperor Constantine.⁸ It is now in the Capitoline Museums in Rome⁹ and until 1981 stood in the Piazza del Campidoglio where, after its relocation, it was replaced by copie. The original location of the statue is not known. It is usually dated back to the 70s of the second century AD.¹⁰

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius became the model par excellence for later monuments – its popularity has been undiminished since the Renaissance period, one example is Donatello's fifteenth century statue of General Erasmo da Narni (Gattamelata) in the Piazza del Santo in Padua.¹¹ The statue of Marcus Aurelius itself not only represented the splendour and artistry of the Roman Empire, but also perpetuated the figure of the rider as the victor personifying *virtus*. Its extraordinary popularity is evidenced by the commencement in the nineteenth century of the mass production of small scale replicas, drawings and prints.¹²

Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius [Fig. 1] is a monumental bronze, gilded sculpture 4.24 metres high and 3.87 metres long.¹³ It was made using the lost-wax technique from several parts that were later joined together.¹⁴ It shows the emperor on horseback, seated on a leather shabrack — *ephippium* (without stirrups).¹⁵ His head is tilted slightly to the left and his gaze is directed downwards (towards the viewer). He has a characteristic oval face, a triangular beard, curly hair and his countenance is calm and emotionless. His right hand, raised to shoulder level, points downwards, with fingers slightly extended.¹⁶ The left arm is bent, with the palm of the hand facing upwards and the fingers flexed — the emperor may have been holding the reins of his horse, that have not been preserved to this day.¹⁷ Marcus Aurelius wears a tunic draped across his chest in a U-shape, tied at the waist with a wide *cingulum*.¹⁸ A *paludamentum* fastened on the right shoulder with a fibula is also visible – its folds flow down the haunches of the horse.¹⁹ On his feet are soft leather sandals — *calcei senatorii* or *patricii* — tied twice with a thong above the ankle.²⁰

The horse itself is captured in motion, the right front leg raised and bent,²¹ while the weight of the body is transferred to the rear right and front left limb. The left hind leg is extended in front of the right one and only slightly touches the base (the hooves are not shod). The body of the horse has been carefully modelled, including the smallest details of the skin, the bulging musculature,

⁷ Examples of attested monuments intended for distinguished persons are the equestrian statues of Sulla and Pompey (from Forum Romanum). Also, during the imperial period, smaller equestrian statues may have been made for people outside the emperor's family.

⁸ STEWART 2012, pp. 269–271.

⁹ Capitoline Museums in Rome, inv. no. MC3247.

¹⁰ On dating, see BERGEMANN 1990, pp. 107–108; STEWART 2012, pp. 266–268.

¹¹ MORKA 1986, p. 34.

¹² STEWART 2012, p. 273.

¹³ Height from the base of the horse's hoof to the top of the emperor's head. BERGEMANN 1990, p. 106: height of the

rider's head from the chin to the top of the head — 46 cm; length of rider's legs — left 53 cm, right 52 cm.

¹⁴ MARABELLI 1991, p. 6.

¹⁵ NICKEL 1989, pp. 17–24.

¹⁶ On the reception of gesture in art, see MEZZATESTA 1984, pp. 620–633.

¹⁷ STEWART 2012, pp. 265–266.

¹⁸ DUFFEY 1982, p. 75.

¹⁹ STEWART 2012, p. 266.

²⁰ GOLDMAN 1994, pp. 116–122.

²¹ RUSHFORTH 1919, p. 46 — according to *De mirabilibus urbis Romae*, the horse's leg was leaning on the body of the barbarian.



Fig. 1. Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, author unknown
(photos by D. Dąbrowska)

the bones, tendons and veins, especially highlighted on the head, which is turned to the left, and its muzzle is open with a discernible bridle. A partially preserved decorated harness is also visible.²² The bridle is made using a double strap with round decorative metal *phalerae* — one placed at the level of the frontal bone and two more on the zygomatic (cheek) bone.²³

History of the erection of the equestrian statue of Prince Józef Poniatowski

Józef Poniatowski²⁴ died on 19 October 1813 near Leipzig²⁵ in the current of the White Elster River. He was probably wounded, and shot while crossing the river. His body was taken to Warsaw in September 1814 and on 23 July 1817, his remains were placed in St Leonard's Crypt in the Wawel Cathedral in Cracow. Soon after his tragic death in battle, the cult of the Prince as a national hero began to develop.²⁶

As early as in 1814, a few months after the death of Prince Józef Poniatowski, a campaign was initiated to raise funds for future expenses²⁷ which included erecting a commemorative monument in his honour. On 6 January 1814, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski²⁸ wrote a letter to General Stanisław Mokronowski,²⁹ asking him to collect signatures and pledges of money from people willing to contribute to this cause.³⁰

²² STEWART 2012, p. 266.

²³ JUNKELMANN 2008, pp. 78–86.

²⁴ See SKOWRONEK 1982–1983, pp. 428–436.

²⁵ City located in Germany, in Upper Saxony.

²⁶ SKOWRONEK 1986, pp. 259–261.

²⁷ Manuscripts preserved today concerning contributions can be found in: AGAD, ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731; AGAD, 1/191/0/-/6731a; AGAD, ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731b; AGAD, ref. no. 1/217/0/-/11. Mościcki *ca.* 1922, p. 148 — partly this is a set of documents taken over from Dominik Paszkowski by the Government Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment on

18 December 1835. Also Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. nos. 1188, 1189. For a list of contributions, see Mościcki *ca.* 1922, pp. 107–116.

²⁸ See HANDELSMAN 1938, pp. 257–269.

²⁹ See ZAHORSKI 1976, pp. 595–598.

³⁰ Mościcki *ca.* 1922, p. 82; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 9–10; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 10–14.

Official permission to erect the monument in Warsaw was obtained from Tsar Alexander I in November 1815 by Prince Józef's niece Anna Tyszkiewicz.³¹ With this official approval, the first Committee for Construction of the Monument was established, headed by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, including Aleksander Linowski³² and aforementioned General Stanisław Mokronowski. From 9 March 1816, after publishing an appeal to the general public, calling for contributions, a spontaneous collection of money and objects began involving people from various social strata, which significantly increased the funds for the construction of the monument.³³ Maksymilian Jabłonowski³⁴ was to handle the collection and recording of the contributions and then deliver them to Stanisław Mokronowski, who coordinated the entire project.³⁵

The first plans regarding the form of a monument to Prince Józef Poniatowski were created by Zygmunt Vogel, Jakub Kubicki — a house for war veterans with a statue of Prince Józef on a stone horse, Chrystian Piotr Aigner — a monument in the shape of a sarcophagus,³⁶ and at the request of Anna Tyszkiewicz he prepared a project for a mausoleum in the form of a chapel with a statue of Prince Józef falling on the battlefield, which was to be made by Antonio Canova.³⁷ Chrystian Piotr Aigner was also probably the first artist in Poland to make a sketch of a monument referring in its form to the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius.³⁸ On the other hand, Paweł Maliński was commissioned in 1818 to make a plaster model of a horse — probably to get an idea of the shape of the monument.³⁹ Moreover, Aleksander Orłowski made a drawing presenting a rather romantic conception of the monument — an equestrian statue of the Prince in the uniform of a uhlán at the moment of his leap into the Elster River. The river was personified by an old man with the attributes of mythological rivers.⁴⁰

The Committee for Construction of the Monument also sought the advice of Stanisław Potocki, who was staying in Rome. In a letter dating from 10 February 1817, after consultation with Roman artists, he suggested that an equestrian statue modelled on the monument of Marcus Aurelius would be the most appropriate, and that the execution of the model should be entrusted to Christian Rauch from Berlin. He also suggested that the Prince should be attired in Polish dress. Negotiations were therefore begun with Christian Rauch and Karl Schinkel, supervised by Antoni Radziwiłł on behalf of the Committee.⁴¹ They agreed to make the monument, and the project itself was also to include a structure with columns surrounding the statue. The Committee also instructed Prince Stanisław Poniatowski and Józef Sierakowski⁴² to ask Antonio Canova to make the monument.⁴³

³¹ Anna of the Tyszkiewicz family (coat-of-arms Leliwa), primo voto Potocka, secundo voto Dunin-Wąsowiczowa. POTOCKA, STRYJEŃSKI 1898, pp. 394–395; SASS 1952, pp. 16–17.

³² See WOLTANOWSKI, ZŁOMSKA 1972, pp. 377–381.

³³ MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 84–85; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 11; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 14–15.

³⁴ See MANTEUFFLOWA 1962–1964, pp. 230–231.

³⁵ BCzart, ref. no. 5225 V Rkps., pp. 181–182; Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 213 — later, Jan Śniadecki was empowered to collect and record the contributions.

³⁶ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 15; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 16–17.

³⁷ SKOWRONEK 1986, p. 260.

³⁸ MOSSAKOWSKI 1972, pp. 61–62 — Chrystian Piotr Aigner in his project for the layout of Plac Krasińskich (Krasiński Square) in Warsaw, which he made around 1817, placed an equestrian statue on a high decorated pedestal in the central area of the square.

³⁹ MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 210.

⁴⁰ Currently in the National Museum in Warsaw: Rys. Pol.11369 MNW, Rys.Pol.2769 MNW. MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 96–99, 210–211; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 27–29.

⁴¹ MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 87–90; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 20, quotes an excerpt from a letter dated 4 March 1817 from Mokronowski to Antoni Radziwiłł. BCzart, ref. no. 5225 V Rkps., pp. 191–196, indicates that Stanisław Potocki proposed that the execution of the monument should be entrusted to Canova, not Christian Rauch.

⁴² See ANUSIK 1996–1997, pp. 270–277.

⁴³ KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 17, 20. Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189 — in the case of Canova's refusal, Sierakowski was going to ask his friends to personally request Thorvaldsen to make a model.

Despite this, on 7 March 1817 Stanisław Mokronowski wrote to Bertel Thorvaldsen asking him to make a statue of Prince Józef Poniatowski. According to the letter, the initial intention was for the model of the horse to be based on that of the statue of Marcus Aurelius, with a change of national costume, while Józef Poniatowski's posture was to resemble that in the relief of Marcus Curtius falling into an abyss.⁴⁴

On 15 May 1817 Thorvaldsen replied to Mokronowski's letter, agreeing to make a suitable model — but he preferred to depict the prince in antique dress. Nevertheless, he expressed a willingness to depict him in national attire, but for this he asked to send the necessary drawings/designs (*les desseins*). Thorvaldsen also emphasized that it was best to make the model in Rome, where he was surrounded by ancient masterpieces.⁴⁵

On 1 July 1817 Mokronowski wrote to Thorvaldsen that the horse should be oriental, of perfect proportions and that the horse from the statue of Marcus Aurelius was the only model close to the beautiful ideal of an Arabian horse, however it was a little 'too heavy'.⁴⁶ On 15 December 1817 Thorvaldsen undertook to make a plaster model of the monument of the size of the statue of Marcus Aurelius.⁴⁷ In addition, in a letter dated 29 April 1818, Mokronowski requested that the prince should have an uncovered head with Roman hair and a costume similar to the Dacians on Trajan's column.⁴⁸

On 8 July 1818, the first contract for the erection of a monument to commemorate Prince Józef Poniatowski was drawn up between the Committee — Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Aleksander Linowski, Stanisław Mokronowski — and Bertel Thorvaldsen, and Count Leon Potocki,⁴⁹ who was in Rome at the time and who was to mediate in contacts with the sculptor. According to the contract, as in the letter dated 15 December 1817, the statue of Prince Józef was to be the same height as that of statue of Marcus Aurelius (point 1 of the contract). As for the pose and dress of the prince, the decision was to be made after Thorvaldsen had sent his drawings to Warsaw.⁵⁰ However, the contract was not sent from Warsaw to Rome until 15 April 1819, together with all the signatures of the Committee members, and its delivery to the sculptor was handled by the chamberlain, Stanisław Kossakowski.⁵¹

In September 1818, Bertel Thorvaldsen travelled to Naples.⁵² In a letter dated 9 January 1819 Thorvaldsen informed Mokronowski that during the journey he had the opportunity to see a beautiful Arabian horse that could be used for Prince Józef Poniatowski. He also made sketches of it, which he planned to use when modelling the monument.⁵³ During his trip he also visited the Museo Borbonico (Bourbon Museum),⁵⁴ which houses the equestrian statues of Marcus Nonius Balbus junior and senior.⁵⁵

⁴⁴ Capitoline Museums in Rome, inv. no. 826. THMA, m5 1817, nr. 10; SASS 1952, p. 17; GRANDESSO 2015, p. 228; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 90; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 18, notes that it may have been Józef Sierakowski who originated the idea of addressing Bertel Thorvaldsen; ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 28, gives the date as 5 March which is incorrect.

⁴⁵ THIELE 1852, pp. 326–328; THMA, Thieles Excerpter, 1817, nr. 103; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 90; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 19–20; SASS 1952, p. 18.

⁴⁶ THMA, m5 1817, nr. 22; BCzart, ref. no. 5447 IV Rkps., pp. 309–311; THIELE 1852, pp. 329–333; ASKENAZY 1910, p. 326; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 31–33; SASS 1952, pp. 19–22.

⁴⁷ THMA, m28, nr. 135; THIELE 1852, pp. 336–337; THMA, Thieles Excerpter, 1817, nr. 105.

⁴⁸ THMA, m5 1818, nr. 32; THIELE 1852, pp. 389–390; SASS 1952, p. 24.

⁴⁹ See SKRĘT 1984–1985, pp. 91–94.

⁵⁰ THMA, m6 1819, nr. 26b; BCzart, ref. no. 5447 IV Rkps., pp. 309–311; THIELE 1852, pp. 419–422; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 96; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 31–33; SASS 1952, pp. 72–73; GRANDESSO 2015, p. 228.

⁵¹ THMA, m6 1819, nr. 26a; THIELE 1852, p. 419; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 33; SASS 1952, pp. 31–32; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 24.

⁵² SASS 1952, p. 93.

⁵³ THMA, m28A II, nr. 8; THIELE 1852, pp. 417–419.

⁵⁴ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 34.

⁵⁵ GRANDESSO 2015, p. 228.

A supplementary agreement was concluded on 19 October 1820 in Warsaw. Bertel Thorvaldsen signed a contract with Stanisław Mokronowski, in the presence of witnesses: Walenty Radziwiłł⁵⁶ and Józef Sierakowski, to make a model of the monument of Prince Józef Poniatowski within a year. The contract was drawn up in French, in two counterparts.⁵⁷

Aleksander Linowski, a member of the first Committee for Construction of the Monument, died on 19 October 1820.⁵⁸ On 19 October 1821 Stanisław Mokronowski passed away. Only Adam Jerzy Czartoryski remained, therefore a new Committee was formed which, like the previous one, was responsible for supervising the construction of the monument. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski was appointed chairman, and other members also included Walenty Sobolewski, Łukasz Biegański, Stanisław Grabowski, Jan Mioduski, General Stanisław Potocki, Józef Sierakowski, Franciszek Skibicki, and Henryk Zabiełło.⁵⁹

Bertel Thorvaldsen returned to Rome on 16 December 1820.⁶⁰ However, the first known plaster model of the statue was made in 1822,⁶¹ and the final one in 1826.⁶² It was sent two years later by sea from Rome to Gdańsk where the crates arrived in the autumn of 1828,⁶³ which is why they remained there for the winter; their further transportation was postponed so that when navigation reopened in the spring they could be delivered to Warsaw along the Vistula River.⁶⁴ This delay, however, caused damage to the model stored on the pier due to the overflowing of water in the springtime. The repair and reinforcement of the parts of the monument postponed further shipment and generated significant additional costs.

On 11 June 1829 the model finally arrived in Warsaw.⁶⁵ It was shown to the general public on 11 July in the courtyard next to the Ballrooms (Redutowe Rooms) of the former National Theatre building, with its entrance via building number 547 on Plac Krasińskich (Krasiński Square).⁶⁶ This manoeuvre was intended not only to satisfy the public's curiosity, but also to start collecting new funds for the casting of the statue — a collection box was set up at the entrance, along with a book for recording donations.⁶⁷ It had the intended effect, because on 8 August 1830 the casting of the bronze statue had already begun. The task was entrusted to Claude François and

⁵⁶ Prince Walenty Radziwiłł or Prince Andrzej Walenty Radziwiłł — brother of Prince Antoni Henryk Radziwiłł.

⁵⁷ THMA, m27, nr. 13; THIELE 1854, pp. 80–83; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 41–43; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 30; ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 24.

⁵⁸ WOLTANOWSKI, ZŁOMSKA 1972, p. 380.

⁵⁹ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189; MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W., pp. 77 r–v; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 216; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 46–47; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 32–33. Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189; MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W., pp. 55 r–v, 77 r–v — Stanisław Grabowski, Henryk Zabiełło, Łukasz Biegański, Karol Wojda and Dominik Paszkowski later became the only members of the Committee; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 216 — Committee meetings were also attended by Edward Rakiety, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Ludwik August Plater and others.

⁶⁰ THMA, m30 I, nr. 26.

⁶¹ Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, inv. no. A126.

⁶² Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, inv. no. A124. ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 53–54; ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 30.

⁶³ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 119–120; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 42.

⁶⁴ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188; THMA, m13 1828, nr. 143; THIELE 1854, pp. 351–352; SASS 1952, p. 51.

⁶⁵ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 120; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 42.

⁶⁶ The so-called Palace with mortgage number 547b; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 71; *Kurier Warszawski* 1829, no. 181, pp. 811–812 — it was to be exhibited in the courtyard next to Ballrooms. Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188 — model was displayed in a wooden outhouse built specifically for the occasion. Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189 — before casting, the model was kept in an outhouse in the courtyard of the tenement house (mortgage number 1790). *Przyjaciel Ludu* 1840, no. 42, p. 329 — in one of the nearby rooms of the former Theatre; KRAUSHAR 1913, p. 7 — in the Ballrooms; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 120; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 43 — in outhouse next to the Ballrooms of the Theatre.

⁶⁷ KRAUSHAR 1913, p. 7; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 120.

Emil Grégoire, father and son.⁶⁸ A contract was concluded with them on 19 February 1830.⁶⁹ The casting work was begun on 8 August 1830⁷⁰ and was completed in February 1832, and on 7 August the monument was ready.⁷¹ The chasing and chiselling was done by Jakub Tatarkiewicz, who probably also added a bridle (and other equestrian accoutrements).⁷² The shape of the eagle on the chest of prince, the placement of the scabbard for the sword and the position of the horse were also probably corrected.⁷³

Unfortunately, by order of Tsar Nicholas I dated 28 September 1834, the monument together with the model had to be removed from the Grégoires' workshop to the fortress in Modlin.⁷⁴ The order was carried out at the turn of December 1835 and January 1836. However, the matter was still in hand in February and March 1836.⁷⁵ In 1840 the monument was given to Ivan Paskevich by the tsar⁷⁶ and transported to Dęblin. In 1842 it stood on the terrace of his residence in Homiel (now in south-east Belarus). The plaster model probably remained in Modlin and was destroyed.⁷⁷ Under the terms of Article II of the Treaty of Riga⁷⁸ the equestrian statue of Prince Józef returned to Poland on 17 March 1922 and was placed in front of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.⁷⁹ In 1923 it was moved to Plac Saski (Saxon Square)⁸⁰ and placed in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The ceremonial unveiling of the monument took place on 3 May 1923.⁸¹

After the Warsaw Uprising, on 16 December 1944, the statue was blown up by the Nazis.⁸² In 1948–1951, Poul Lauritz Rasmussen (Lauritz Godtfred Rasmussen) made a new cast of the monument, based on the plaster model in the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen. It was to be a gift from the Kingdom of Denmark to the city of Warsaw. On 23 February 1952, the new statue of Prince Józef stood in the gardens of the Royal Łazienki, in front of the Old Orangery. On 19 October 1965 it was moved to its present location — to the courtyard in front of the Presidential Palace, at 46/48 Krakowskie Przedmieście in Warsaw.⁸³

The first ideas put forward by Poles concerning the form of the monument commemorating Prince Józef Poniatowski included references to Graeco-Roman art in general, and particularly to the statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome.⁸⁴ The Committee for Construction of the Monument finally decided on an equestrian statue but wished to show the prince in national dress.⁸⁵ Bertel

⁶⁸ They took over the bronzing workshop of Alexander Jan Norblin and V. Zier, after the death of John Baptist Grégoire. Originally the casting of the monument was to be done by Auguste Jean-Marie Carbonneaux, an experienced Parisian bronze maker — see Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189; THMA, m7 1821, nr. 65 and THIELE 1854, pp. 136–137.

⁶⁹ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189. Copy in Polish can be found in: MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W., pp. 55–62.

⁷⁰ MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 142.

⁷¹ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 84–86; SASS 1952, pp. 58–59.

⁷² He was also to be in charge of transporting the model to Warsaw. *Gazeta Polska* 1829, no. 72, p. 311; ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 92.

⁷³ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, p. 69; SASS 1952, p. 58.

⁷⁴ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 88–89; SASS 1952, pp. 60–61; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 148; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 51 — by order dated 10 October 1834.

⁷⁵ See: MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W., pp. 81–131 — documents in Russian and Polish, with a detailed description of the condition of the monument and the model, in the period just before its transfer to the fortress in Modlin; this information was partly published in: ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 90–91. See also MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 148–149.

⁷⁶ ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 91–92.

⁷⁷ MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 222; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 52.

⁷⁸ Signed on 18 March 1921 between Second Polish Republic, Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

⁷⁹ KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 55.

⁸⁰ Today Plac Piłsudskiego (Piłsudski Square).

⁸¹ SASS 1952, pp. 65, 68; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 62. See also: MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W., 835/c.

⁸² SASS 1952, p. 68; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 66, 71. The surviving fragments are in Freedom Park, The Warsaw Uprising Museum (no. MPW-D/3 as a deposit of The Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów — inv. no. Wil.RzA.61) and The National Museum in Warsaw (inv. no. 210027 MNW).

⁸³ SASS 1952, pp. 68–70; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 72–76.

⁸⁴ See BCzart, ref. no. 5225 V Rkps., pp. 191–196; THMA, m5 1817, nr. 10.

⁸⁵ THMA, m5 1817, nr. 10.

Thorvaldsen, who had been working on the form and composition of the statue since 1817, initially suggested that the prince should be shown on horseback *en petit gallop*, in the moment with his troops following behind.⁸⁶ In a letter of 12 February 1818, however, Stanisław Mokronowski wanted Józef Poniatowski to be depicted at the moment when he suddenly stopped his horse.⁸⁷

In the additional contract of 1820, decisions concerning the dress and form of the statue were left to Bertel Thorvaldsen.⁸⁸ One of the drawings he made, which has survived in the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, shows Poniatowski on a horse in half-halt (in preparation for the jump) — it refers to the moment of the prince's death in the Elster River [Fig. 2].⁸⁹ It is similar to the plaster model from 1822 — with the change of attire to antique dress, and the horse's rearing is not so marked and Poniatowski's head is uncovered.⁹⁰ As we learn from Peter Oluf Brøndsted's letter to Jakob Peter Mynster dated 6 April 1822, Bertel Thorvaldsen changed the concept completely, when making the sketches he wanted to focus entirely on the moment of the prince's death.⁹¹ Furthermore, Thorvaldsen's letter to Stanisław Grabowski dated May 1822, contains a description expressing his wish to make a monument referring to his death.⁹² In 1822, Bertel Thorvaldsen also proposed to the Committee to include a water feature as an element of the monument.⁹³



Fig. 2. Drawing of an equestrian statue of Józef Poniatowski, Bertel Thorvaldsen, 1818 (Thorvaldsens Museum, C259; photo H. N. Brendstrup)

⁸⁶ Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189; THIELE 1852, pp. 326–328; THMA, Thieles Excerpter, 1817, nr. 103; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 90; DOBROWOLSKI 1974, p. 118.

⁸⁷ THMA, m5 1818, nr. 1; THIELE 1852, pp. 387–388.

⁸⁸ THMA, m27, nr. 13; THIELE 1854, pp. 80–83; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, pp. 104–106; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 41–43; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, p. 30; ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 24.

⁸⁹ Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, inv. no. C259 — depiction of the prince with a sabre at his side and the Marshal's mace raised in his right hand. Poniatowski is

dressed in uniform, a burka and has a head covering. Another sketch with an identical representation of a horse and a figure has survived, but much more schematic: Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, inv. no. C258.

⁹⁰ ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 30.

⁹¹ SASS 1952, pp. 35–36.

⁹² THIELE 1854, pp. 139–140; SASS 1952, pp. 35–36.

⁹³ THMA, m8 1823, nr. 48; THIELE 1852, pp. 139–140; ŁUNIŃSKI 1923, pp. 49–50; SASS 1952, pp. 37–38; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 33, 37; GRANDesso 2015, p. 229.

Later, however, Bertel Thorvaldsen drew a sketch of a new composition for the monument to Prince Józef Poniatowski — referring to his initial idea of the form of the statue from 1817.⁹⁴ It was a departure from the romantic portrayal of the prince's death.⁹⁵ It did not show Józef Poniatowski astride a horse in half-halt, jumping into the River Elster (in either Polish or antique dress), but the prince on a horse depicted in a more stable gait, probably leading the army into battle. Thorvaldsen also made two plaster model based on this concept, presumably in 1826.⁹⁶ On 14 July 1827 he completed the main work on the final model [Fig. 3] — correcting the position of the right arms and the head.⁹⁷



Fig. 3. Plaster model of an equestrian statue of Józef Poniatowski, Bertel Thorvaldsen, end of 1826 (Thorvaldsens Museum, A123; photo J. Faurvig)

⁹⁴ SASS 1952, p. 44.

⁹⁵ KRAUSHAR 1913, pp. 12–16.

⁹⁶ Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, inv. no. A124. Current location of second model is unknown, but preserved photographs of model are in: Stadtgeschichtliche Museum Leipzig, inv. no. A/Ib/20, A/Ib/37 and A/Ib/38.

SASS 1952, p. 44; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 222 — second model was given to Wilhelm Gerhard as a gift in 1834 and transported to Leipzig. In the interwar period it was supposed to be stored in the municipal museum in Leipzig.

⁹⁷ SASS 1952, p. 46.

It is also worth mentioning that Warsaw newspapers (and not only) of the first half of the nineteenth century keenly followed the progress of work on the Poniatowski monument, discussing its form and the story behind its creation.⁹⁸

The final form of the equestrian statue of Prince Józef Poniatowski

The equestrian statue of Prince Józef [Fig. 4] was cast in bronze, as mentioned above, from a plaster model. After casting the individual parts, they were joined, and the final adjustments and chasing were completed.⁹⁹ It is approximately 4.4 metres high and weighs an estimated 3.2 tonnes.¹⁰⁰

The monument shows Prince Józef Poniatowski sitting astride a horse, without a saddle or stirrups. His head is turned slightly to the right. His countenance is devoid of emotion and signs of age, almost idealized and free of any individualism. His beard, moustache and curly hair are



Fig. 4. Equestrian statue of Józef Poniatowski,
Bertel Thorvaldsen, 1936
(National Digital Archives, *Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*
– Archiwum Ilustracji, ref. no. 3/1/0/8/669)

⁹⁸ See *Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego* 1820, no. 152, p. 2138; *Gazeta Warszawska* 1820, no. 51, pp. 2411–2412; *Gazeta Literacka* 1821, no. 10, p. 76; *Rozmaitości Literackie* 1826, fasc. 2, pp. 323–324; *Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego* 1829, no. 160, p. 1274; *Rozmaitości Warszawskie* 1829, no. 39, pp. 291–296; *Rozmaitości Warszawskie* 1829, no. 40, pp. 299–306; *Rozmaitości Warszawskie* 1829, no. 41, pp. 307–311. A wider collection can be found in: APW, ref. no. 72/201/0/4/23 and APW, ref. no. 72/201/0/4/24.

⁹⁹ ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, p. 31; KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971, pp. 48, 50.

¹⁰⁰ H. BORKOWSKI, *Projekt zabezpieczenia pomników warszawskich — część II*, Archive Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków in Warsaw, Poland, ref. no. 2193, p. 9; MOŚCICKI *ca.* 1922, p. 224 — height of the monument at the beginning of 1922: 4.55 metres (height from the base of the horse's hoof to the top of the prince's head), length: 4.85 metres (from the horse's protruding leg to the end of the tail).

also visible. The right arm is almost fully extended, raised to shoulder level, and pointing downwards. In his hand he holds a short sword. The left hand is tensed, bent at the elbow and resting on his left hip, his palm grips the reins of the horse, his thumb pointing upwards. A scabbard richly decorated with floral motifs, hanging by a strap slung over his right shoulder, clings to his left side. The prince is depicted in antique Roman attire — wearing a tunic and cuirass with an eagle engraved on his chest and a long coat falling down to the horse's haunches. An eight-pointed star is also featured on the side of his right shoulder (on both the front and back). On his feet are soft laced leather sandals tied twice with a thong above the ankle.

The horse is captured in movement, with the legs arranged diagonally. Its right front leg is raised, bent, and the hoof pointing downwards. The weight of the body is resting on the front left and rear right limbs. The hooves are not shod. The horse's head is turned slightly to the left, its gaze directed downwards and the muzzle is open (with a noticeable bit). Simple riding gear is visible. The horse's musculature and build, as well as details of the skin are emphasized, but the 'lightness' of the animal's body has been preserved.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Despite the many ideas regarding the form of the commemorative statue to Prince Józef Poniatowski, it is not surprising that the Committee for Construction of the Monument, after many discussions and consultations with others, decided that the shape of the statue should in part refer to the monument of Marcus Aurelius. Bertel Thorvaldsen tried to meet the expectations of the Poles, which can be seen, for example, in the sketches and in the planned placement of the equestrian statue in a water feature. Its final form, however, is based entirely on the composition of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, thus almost entirely abandoning the long-standing plans and arrangements. Bertel Thorvaldsen completely gave up on the Polish attire in favour of an antique costume and he also finally rejected the form of the horse in half-halt (in preparation for the jump). Due to these decisions, the statue of the prince fully reflects the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, thus becoming a neoclassical (and not romantic) example of an outstanding masterpiece, which perfectly demonstrates the workshop and artistic craftsmanship of Bertel Thorvaldsen.

Abbreviations

AGAD	The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Poland
APW	State Archive in Warsaw, Poland
BCzart	The Princes Czartoryski Library in Cracow, Poland
MWP	Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, Poland
Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS	Scientific Library of the PAAS and the PAS in Cracow, Poland
THMA	The Thorvaldsens Museum Archives in Copenhagen, Denmark

Bibliography

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| ANUSIK 1996–1997 | Z. ANUSIK, “Sierakowski Józef (1765–1831)”, [in:] <i>Polski Słownik Biograficzny</i> , vol. XXXVII, pp. 270–277. |
| ASKENAZY 1910 | S. ASKENAZY, <i>Książce Józef Poniatowski 1763–1813</i> , Warsaw. |

¹⁰¹ ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994, pp. 91–92.

- BERGEMANN 1990 J. BERGEMANN, *Römische Reiterstatuen. Ehrendenkmäler im öffentlichen Bereich* [= *Beiträge zur Erschließung hellenistischer und kaiserzeitlicher Skulptur und Architektur* 11], Munich.
- DOBROWOLSKI 1974 T. DOBROWOLSKI, *Rzeźba neoklasycyzyzna i romantyczna w Polsce. Ze studiów nad importem włoskim i świadomością estetyczną*, Warsaw.
- DUFFEY 1982 A. E. DUFFEY, *The Equestrian Statue — A Study of Its History and the Problems Associated with Its Creation*, Pretoria.
- GOLDMAN 1994 N. GOLDMAN, “Roman footwear”, [in:] *The World of Roman Costume*, ed. J. L. SEBESTA, L. BONFANTE [*Wisconsin Studies in Classics*], Madison, WI, pp. 101–129.
- GRANDESSO 2015 S. GRANDESSO, *Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844)*, Milan.
- HANDELSMAN 1938 M. HANDELSMAN, “Czartoryski Adam Jerzy (1770–1861)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. IV, pp. 257–269.
- JUNKELMANN 2008 M. JUNKELMANN, *Die Reiter Roms*, vol. III: *Zubehör, Reitweise, Bewaffnung* [= *Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt* 53], Mainz.
- KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA 1971 H. KOTKOWSKA-BAREJA, *Pomnik Poniatowskiego*, Warsaw.
- KRAUSHAR 1913 A. KRAUSHAR, *Posąg Thordwaldsenowski księcia Józefa jako echo walki klasyków z romantykami (kartka z roku 1829)*, Warsaw.
- ŁUNIŃSKI 1923 E. ŁUNIŃSKI, *O pomniku księcia Józefa i Thorvaldsenie. Z 16 ilustracjami*, Warsaw.
- MANTEUFFLOWA 1962–1964 M. MANTEUFFLOWA, “Jabłonowski Maksymilian (1785–1846)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. X, pp. 230–231.
- MARABELLI 1991 M. MARABELLI, “The monument of Marcus Aurelius: research and conservation”, [in:] *Ancient & Historic Metals: Conservation and Scientific Research*, ed. D. A. SCOTT, J. PODANY, B. B. CONSIDINE, Singapore, p. 6.
- MEZZATESTA 1984 M. P. MEZZATESTA, “Marcus Aurelius, Fray Antonio de Guevara and the ideal of the perfect prince in the sixteenth century”, *The Art Bulletin* 66.4, pp. 620–633.
- MORKA 1986 M. MORKA, *Polski nowożytny portret konny i jego europejska geneza*, Wrocław.
- MOSSAKOWSKI 1972 S. MOSSAKOWSKI, *Pałac Krasińskich*, Warsaw, pp. 61–62.
- MOŚCICKI ca. 1922 H. MOŚCICKI, *Pozgonna cześć dla księcia Józefa (pogrzeb, pomniki, pieśń i legenda) z 27 ilustracjami*, Warsaw.
- NICKEL 1989 H. NICKEL, “The Emperor’s new saddle cloth: the ephippium of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius”, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24, pp. 17–24.
- NOVÁKOVÁ, HRNČIARIK, DAŇOVÁ 2018 L. NOVÁKOVÁ, E. HRNČIARIK, M. DAŇOVÁ, “Equestrian statues in Antiquity: city, people, monuments”, *Studia Historica Nitriensia* 22.2, pp. 434–455.
- POTOCKA, STRYJEŃSKI 1898 A. POTOCKA, K. STRYJEŃSKI, *Mémoires de la comtesse de Potocka (1794–1820)*, Paris.
- RUSHFORTH 1919 G. McN. RUSHFORTH, “Magister Gregorius de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae: a new description of Rome in the twelfth century”, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 9, pp. 14–58.
- SASS 1952 E. K. SASS, “Rytterstatuen af Józef Poniatowski”, *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum*, 1952, pp. 15–70.
- SKOWRONEK 1982–1983 J. SKOWRONEK, “Poniatowski Józef Antoni (1763–1813)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXVII, pp. 428–436.
- SKOWRONEK 1986 J. SKOWRONEK, *Książę Józef Poniatowski*, Wrocław.
- SKRĘT 1984–1985 R. SKRĘT, “Potocki Leon (1799–1864)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 91–94.
- STEWART 2012 P. STEWART, “The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius”, [in:] *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius*, ed. M. VAN ACKEREN, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 264–277.

- THIELE 1852 J. M. THIELE, *Thorvaldsen i Rom. 1805–1819*, Copenhagen.
 THIELE 1854 J. M. THIELE, *Thorvaldsen i Rom. 1819–1839*, Copenhagen.
 WOLTANOWSKI, ZŁOMSKA 1972 A. WOLTANOWSKI, M. ZŁOMSKA, “Linowski Aleksander (ok. 1759–1820)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XVII, pp. 377–381.
 ZAHORSKI 1976 A. ZAHORSKI, “Mokronowski Stanisław (1761–1821)”, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXI, pp. 595–598.
 ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ (ed.) 1994 *Thorvaldsen w Polsce. Exhibition Catalogue, 17 October 1994 – 22 January 1995, Royal Castle in Warsaw*, ed. I. ZATORSKA-ANTONOWICZ, Warsaw.

Archival material

Archive Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków in Warsaw

H. Borkowski, *Projekt zabezpieczenia pomników warszawskich — część II*, ref. no. 2193, p. 9.

The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw

- AGAD, ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731 Komisja Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych (Zbieranie składek na pomnik ks. Józefa Poniatowskiego), ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731.
 AGAD, ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731a Komisja Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych (Składki na pomnik dla ś.p. J.O.X. Poniatowskiego, vol. I.), ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731a.
 AGAD, ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731b Komisja Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych (Składki na pomnik dla ś.p. J.O.X. Poniatowskiego, vol. II.), ref. no. 1/191/0/-/6731b.
 AGAD, ref. no. 1/217/0/-/11 Sąd Apelacyjny Królestwa Polskiego (składanych ofiar na pomnik Księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego od dekasteriów w województwie mazowieckim), ref. no. 1/217/0/-/11.

Polish Army Museum in Warsaw

MWP, inv. no. 3624 M. W. *Akta dotyczące się erekcji Pomnika Xięciu Józefowi Poniatowskiemu w Warszawie*, inv. no. 3624 M. W.

Scientific Library of the PAAS and the PAS in Cracow

- Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1188 Akta budowy pomnika ks. Józefa Poniatowskiego w Warszawie, ref. no. 1188.
 Sc. Lib. of PAAS and PAS, ref. no. 1189 Akta i dokumenty, dotyczące budowy pomnika ks. Józefa Poniatowskiego w Warszawie, ref. no. 1189.

State Archive in Warsaw

- APW, ref. no. 72/201/0/4/23 Zbiór Korotyńskich (Pomnik ks. Józefa Poniatowskiego – 1), ref. no. 72/201/0/4/23.
 APW, ref. no. 72/201/0/4/24 Zbiór Korotyńskich (Pomnik ks. Józefa Poniatowskiego – 2), ref. no. 72/201/0/4/24.

The Princes Czartoryski Library in Cracow

- BCzart, ref. no. 5225 V Rkps. “Pisma polityczne różne. 1824–1831”, vol. XII, ref. no. 5225 V Rkps.
 BCzart, ref. no. 5447 IV Rkps. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski. Korespondencja, ref. no. 5447 IV Rkps.

The Thorvaldsens Museum Archives in Copenhagen

- THMA, m13 1828, nr. 143
 THMA, m27, nr. 13
 THMA, m28, nr. 135
 THMA, m28A II, nr. 8
 THMA, m30 I, nr. 26
 THMA, m5 1817, nr. 10

THMA, m5 1817, nr. 22
THMA, m5 1818, nr. 1
THMA, m5 1818, nr. 32
THMA, m6 1819, nr. 26a
THMA, m6 1819, nr. 26b
THMA, m7 1821, nr. 65
THMA, m8 1823, nr. 48
THMA, Thieles Excerpter, 1817, nr. 103
THMA, Thieles Excerpter, 1817, nr. 105

Newspapers

Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego 1820, no. 152, p. 2138.
Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego 1829, no. 160, p. 1274.
Gazeta Literacka 1821, no. 10, p. 76.
Gazeta Polska 1829, no. 72, p. 311.
Gazeta Warszawska 1820, no. 51, pp. 2411–2412.
Przyjaciel Ludu 1840, no. 42, p. 329.
Rozmaitości Literackie 1826, fasc. 2, pp. 323–324.
Rozmaitości Warszawskie 1829, no. 39, pp. 291–296.
Rozmaitości Warszawskie 1829, no. 40, pp. 299–306.
Rozmaitości Warszawskie 1829, no. 41, pp. 307–311.

Dagmara Dąbrowska
University of Warsaw
Faculty of Archeology
orcid.org/0000-0002-9282-9793
d.dabrowska5@uw.edu.pl