Tetiana Kazantseva (enltexa@hotmail.com)

Department of Design and Architecture Fundamentals, Institute of Architecture, L'viv Polytechnic National University

Evolution of the polychromy in L'viv architecture in the period of the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the 19th century

Ewolucja polichromii w architekturze Lwowa od drugiej połowy XVII wieku do pierwszej połowy XIX wieku

Abstract

The article deals with the question of the evolution of polychromy in the L'viv architecture in the period of the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the 19th century. On the base of field and historical research, the author considers polychrome techniques, the colour palette, and the main principles and peculiarities of polychromy use on the façades and interiors of L'viv buildings of the Baroque and Classicism periods.

Keywords: evolution of polychromy in architecture, façades and interiors of the L'viv buildings of the Baroque and Classicism periods, polychromy techniques and the principles of their use

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono ewolucję polichromii w architekturze Lwowa w okresie od drugiej połowy XVII wieku do pierwszej połowy XIX wieku. Na podstawie historyczno-terenowych badań autorka analizuje technikę polichromii, palety kolorów oraz podstawowe zasady i cechy wykorzystania polichromii na elewacjach i we wnętrzach budynków lwowskich okresu baroku i klasycyzmu.

Słowa kluczowe: ewolucja polichromii w architekturze, elewacja i wnętrza budynków lwowskich okresu baroku i klasycyzmu, techniki polichromii i zasady ich wykorzystania

1. Introduction

A certain colour palette, principles, and techniques of polychromy characterize the architecture of each historical period. The city of L'viv is a perfect model for academic research of any phenomenon in the process of stylistic evolution due to large number of extant buildings, which have high architectural and artistic value. Buildings in Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles are very interesting because of their unique artefacts and enigmatic general polychromy scheme. Polychromy in architecture of the most recent periods is presented by numerous examples based on L'viv and European prototypes. In this article, we consider the polychromy of L'viv architecture in the period of the second half of the 17th to the first half of the 19th centuries as a remote period, which unites two styles – Baroque and Classicism, characterized with very different attitudes to polychromy and demonstrating the evolution of the phenomenon within the period.

Despite the wide range of issues to research, thorough studies of the polychromy peculiarities of the discussed period do not exist. In the professional literature dedicated to L'viv architecture, the elements of polychrome design of architectural and artistic details of Baroque and Classicism are considered casually, while particular attention is paid to the polychromy of L'viv sculpture [e.g. 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10]. In her works dedicated to particular historical periods, techniques and methods (of wall painting execution), the author has already discussed polychromy in L'viv architecture [e.g. 4, 5].

A short review of L'viv architectural polychromy of the previous periods

This paper is an integral part of the comprehensive research on polychromy in L'viv architecture, based on analyses of field and historical research. Briefly summarizing the polychromy of the 14th–17th centuries researched by the author, [5] we can identify that in the Gothic period brick masonry with strongly baked bricks and red mortar were used. In the Renaissance, architectural polychromy of facades with monochromatic (light ochre or red) wall and coloured (red, green, orange) white-stone details was extant. The same phenomenon can be observed in building interiors – red, blue, ochre wall background and blue, green, ochre, red, white and black sandstone and stucco details. Some elements were emphasized with gilding; wooden ceiling beams were coloured in white, blue, black and ochre. Some interiors were decorated with stone veneer using alabaster, marble and sandstone. This polychromy, which can be named as architectural due to the use of bright pure colours and an identical colour scheme was characterized by ease of perception consistent with the philosophy of the Renaissance.

Polychromy in the L'viv architecture of the Baroque period

From the second half of the 17th century, L'viv architects began to build in Baroque style, a record number of sacral buildings appeared that was unattainable either in previous or succeeding styles. Church interiors were decorated with great magnificence, which called for great financial costs and collaborations with famous artists, and naturally could not be reconstructed quickly, which provides preservation of some of them until today. The architectural tastes of the time could no longer be satisfied with Renaissance polychromic methods. If the Renaissance was marked by a loyal attitude to the previous style, shown by the

secondary use of Gothic details, so the Baroque was characterized by a certain intolerance to the previous style, a desire for complete reconstruction and at the very least a change of polychromy. This was the cause of ruination of authentic Gothic interiors of the Latin Cathedral[1] (Fig. 1), the Armenian Church, and the Renaissance interiors of the Bernardine Church[2]. The first feature that had to be changed was the bright colour palette of the Gothic and Renaissance. In the Baroque, the **principle of mixing a few colours** in aim to get a complicated colour became very important. The neighbourhood of such mixed colours gave a special complicated baroque palette. White was used only in exclusive cases, for example to mark highlights (Fig. 2). The conception of a dark Baroque palette is refuted by the results of numerous restorations of Baroque murals, for example in the Bernardine Church (Fig. 3). The architecture of the Ancient Rome, with elegant colouring of finishing materials and illusionistic murals was the prototype of the polychromy of the Italian Baroque. The L'viv baroque obviously was inspired by European examples and inherited their general complicated colouring (Fig. 4).

The colour design of facades also become complicated as we can see in the example of the façade of the house at 28 Market Square. Research shows that in the period of the Renaissance the wall was painted light ochre with vivid polychromic details; in Baroque the façade was repainted in light olive (more than 10 layers) and the sandstone details of the window and door frames and the first floor were repainted in black (Fig. 5). This colour scheme is consistent with the attitude to façade polychromy traditional for the late Baroque. For example, according to Brzezinski's research, the facades of the Late Baroque in Wrocław were painted in complicated background colours with black details [2]. Unfortunately, we have no more evidence about the polychromy of L'viv Baroque facades[3]. On facades, one can find several murals in niches (in St. Benedict's church[4] (Fig. 6), on the Latin Cathedral's wall) with a special golden background and complicated colour palette. The façade`s background in turquoise of the Holy Spirit Church (Kopernyka St.) represented the influence of Kyiv or even Rastrelli Baroque that was rather an exception than the rule for L'viv architecture.

Another feature, which characterized the L'viv version of the Baroque was an attraction to theatricality and illusion as opposed to the tectonic visually clear colour scheme of the Renaissance. Analogically to Italian Mannerism where the tendency towards illusionistic painting appeared, the roots of the illusionistic attitude in L'viv must be sought in L'viv Renaissance architecture, such as the illusionistic painting of the City Arsenal's pillars or the wide spread illusionistic shadows on reliefs or moulding (the Bandinelli Palace). Certainly, the number of such artefacts from the 17th century was higher, but the aggressive Baroque approach to previous styles prevented it.

---

[1] Erected in 14th century, in 1761–1776 refurbished in the Baroque style; in 1765–1770s Stanisław and Marcin Stroiński, Józef Chojnicki painted the interior.

[2] Erected in 1600–1630 by Paweł Rzymianin, Andreas Bemer, Ambroży Przychylny (arch.). In 1738–1740 Benedykt Mazurkiewicz with L'viv artists R. Bartnicki, Woliński and J. Strochiński painted the interior in *al fresco* technique, than in 1746 Stanisław Stroiński painted the interior.

[3] In 1980s the institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiia" (The West Ukrainian Project Institute of Conservation) and Department of Historic Environment Protection held research of L'viv buildings polychromy. Unfortunately, the materials, which were stored in archive of Department of Historic Environment Protection, were lost.

[4] Erected in 1597–1616 by Paweł Rzymianin (arch.), restored in 1623–1627 by Jan Pokorowicz (arch.), restored in 1748 by Marcin Urbanik (arch.).

Fig. 1.   Baroque murals of complicated plot and colouring in the gothic interior of Latin Cathedral (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 2.   Limited use of white colour only on highlights, Bernardine church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 3. Dark colouring of Baroque wall painting resulting from air pollution, fragment cleaned during restoration works, Bernardine Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
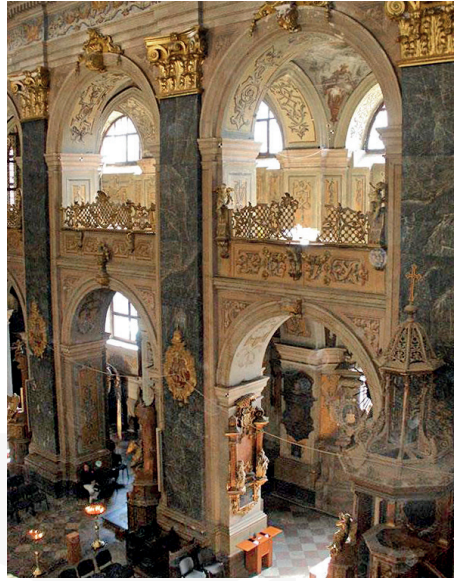
Fig. 4. Elegant colouring of Baroque church interior inspired by ancient Rome interiors, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

a)

b)

Fig. 5. Research of painting in Baroque period in 28 Market Sq.: a) black sandstone details, b) olive wall background (soundings of painting layers) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 6. Baroque painting of the niche of the gate of the ensemble of St. Benedict Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 7. Engraved drawing in wall painting, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
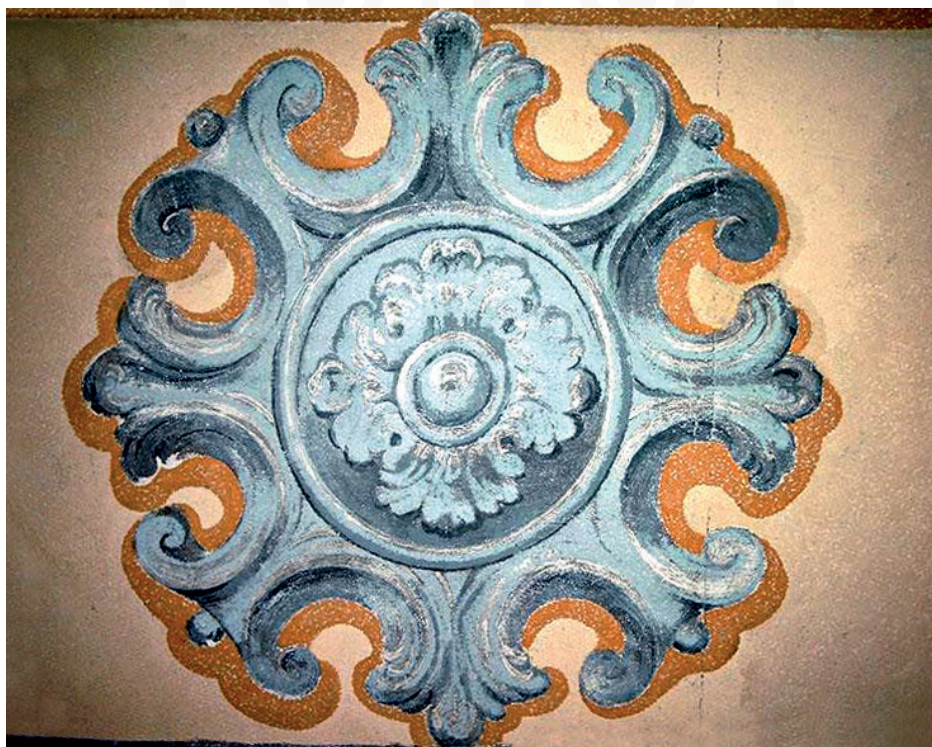

Fig. 8. Combination of cool and warm colours in depicting of detail and background, Bernardine Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

However, in the interiors of L'viv sacral buildings, the murals of the 17th–18th centuries are fully represented. The illusionistic painting (trompe l'oeil), or the imitation of architectural and sculptural details by painting, often in grisaille, became the new technique of the time. Grisailles were painted on the base of the combination of white and black with an additional shade of umber, grey and brown, which provide an illusion of stone details. These paintings were made in al fresco and al secco techniques with engraved drawing (Jesuit Church[5], Barefoot Carmelites Church[6]) (Fig. 7). Additional realism and a high artistic effect were achieved with the help of a simple method, namely the combination of warm and cool shades of colour in depicting details and their background (Bernardine Church) (Fig. 8). Depicting architecture in different views and distortions, including fantastic architectural shapes, let us attribute these murals to the fourth (fantastic or Baroque) type (according to the classification of Pompeii paintings). In European terminology, a special classification of illusionistic Baroque paintings exists, namely the "view from below" ("Di sotto in sù"), which is painted according to the author`s imagination (the method of Late Mannerism), and "quaturadra", which consist of precise perspective depicting of sculpture and architecture, combined with thematic painting (pure Baroque method). In L'viv murals, both methods were combined (Fig. 9–12). The method of anamorphosis was traditionally used to combine real and depicted architectural elements. The illusionistic painting was used to imitate fluting on the pilasters (Barefoot Carmelites Church) (Fig. 11), cantilevers of a very complicated configuration, portals, cartouches (Latin Cathedral), rococo ornaments and frames (Jesuit Church). In Bernardine Church through illusionistic portals, one can see the illusionistic landscape or half-opened doors attract to enter, which looks completely realistic and visually widens the space (according to Pompeii paintings). The frontier between illusion and reality becomes unclear, as for the example in the Jesuit Church two balconies (real and illusionistic) are located side-by-side, and the illusionistic shadow from the illusionistic balcony is a mirror copy of the real shadow from the real balcony (Fig. 12). The special topic of research is represented by illusionistic windows, painted with real windows vis-à-vis. These illusionistic windows give us information about the stained glass windows of that time [8]. Through the illusionistic window lattice, one can often see blue sky with clouds.

Sometimes the technique of illusionistic painting lost its realism, gaining illusion and uncertainty just like opening doors to another world. In this manner, the illusory sculptures on the real pilasters of the Barefoot Carmelites Church were painted.

The theatricality of architecture needs the wide involvement of spectators, with God the Creator as the most important one. Therefore, the vaults of Baroque churches (or painted in Baroque period) are illusionistic openings to the heavens – one can see angels and God the Father on the clouds in sunlight surrounded by a fantastic landscape (Fig. 14). In addition to architectural motifs in murals, ships and marine scenes appeared, which show the desire for

---

[5]   Erected in 1610–1630 by Jacopo Briano (arch.); Francis Řehoř Ignaz and Sebastian Ecksteins painted the interior in the 1740s.

[6]   First mentioned in 1634, attributed to Jan Pokorowicz (arch.); Italian painter Giuseppe Pedretti and his apprentice, Bernardin monk, Benedykt Mazurkiewicz painted the interior in the 1730s. According to the institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiia" research, those paintings can be considered to be the unique in Western Ukraine due to their execution completely in *al fresco* technique.

Fig. 9. Illusionistic mural of Baroque interior, Bernardine Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 10. Illusionistic mural of Baroque interior, Bernardine Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
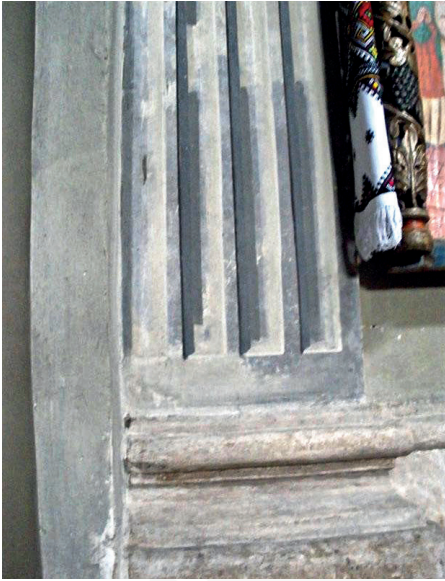
Fig. 11. Combination of illusion and reality – achromatic flutes of real pilasters of Barefoot Carmelites Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 12. Unclearness of frontier between reality and illusion – shadows of real and illusionistic balconies, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

the sea of the L'viv Baroque [7]. The colour of the sky (or vault) is always different, which creates the colouring of church interior: in the Bernardine church – golden, in the Jesuit church – green, in the Barefoot Carmelites Church – light blue.

The desire for illusions also appeared in the widespread method of imitation of finishing materials, which was revealed in a number of versions. Firstly, in the aforementioned illusionistic murals some details (portals, frames, cornices) were painted imitating marble texture (the Bernardine church). Gilding was imitated in the same way. Secondly, real architectural elements can be painted imitating marble (e.g. the pilasters in the Jesuit Church) (Fig. 15). Thirdly, the special material was made by means of a commixture of glue and pigments in different combinations (e.g. the altars in the Latin Cathedral[7], the Dominican Church[8]). This is known as faux marble (scagliola), the production of which was naturally a cheaper method, which satisfied architects` desire for the creation of unique and expressive colour effects. The conservatism of L'viv architecture caused the realism of the created colouring of faux marble, but in other European cities, we can observe unexpectedly clearly decorative colouring designs (e.g. in Vilnius).

In this multicolourness, the entirety and ensemble design of Baroque and Rococo interiors was organized by accenting architectural details (capitals, rococo decoration, keystones etc.) with gilding (Fig. 16). Such an excess of gold was appropriate in the dingy lighting of candles due to additional reflections. Gilding was put over the support base (which could be red or green), giving the elements a respectively warm and cool shade of colour (Fig. 17).

---

[7]   1765–1776, Piotr Polejowski authorship.
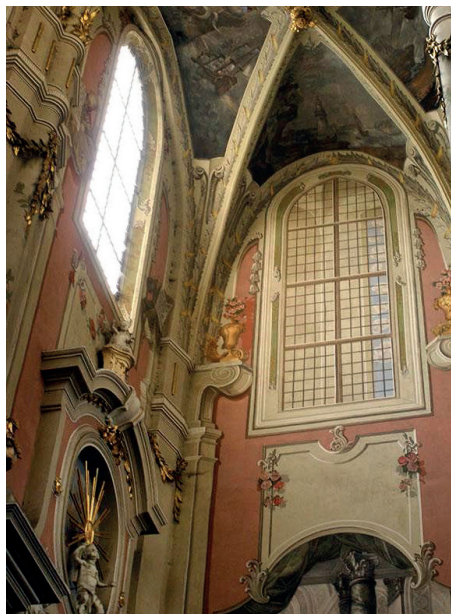
[8]   1771–1775, Piotr Polejowski authorship.

Fig. 13. Illusionistic windows in Gothic style (but with divisions of 18th century) in Latin Cathedral (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 14. Opening of heavens or fantastic landscapes on the plafond, Campian`s Chapel (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 15. Imitation of marble by painting, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 16. Emphasizing by gilding of architectural decoration in Baroque and Rococo, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 17. Traces of red support base under gilding, Jesuit Church (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 18. Pastel colouring of rococo façade, 30 Market Sq (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
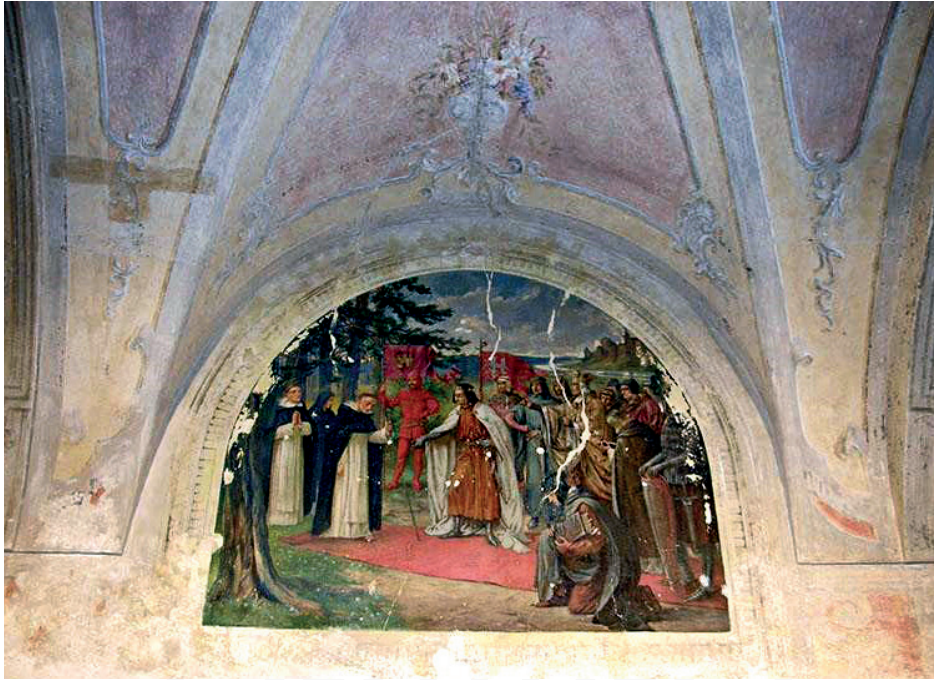
Fig. 19. Rococo paintings with murals in Dominican monastery (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 20. Polychrome façade scheme in Classicism – light yellow background, white details (Vynnychenka Str.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Polychromy in the L'viv architecture of the Rococo period

The Rococo period in L'viv was characterized by the appearance of delicate pastel colours of wall background and white or golden details, which created a light shining colouring scheme (Fig. 18, 19). Illusionistic paintings continued to be used, although without big theme compositions. Marble was also imitated, and reliefs and gilded moulding were supplemented with paintings. Some sacral interiors in L'viv are designed in this style (St. Anthony's Church[9], St. George's Church[10], the Dominican monastery, the Latin Cathedral Chapels). Also some excellent Rococo facades were preserved in L'viv, which are waiting for their field research.

Polychromy in the L'viv architecture of the Classicism period

At the turn of the 19th century, the polychromatic scheme of the Baroque had lost its attractiveness. Classicism as the hierarchical system did not perceive the complex colour palette and illusions of the Baroque, which lost its monumentality at the end of the 18th century. For the beginning of classicism, the discovery of Greek monuments, which had mainly lost their polychromy, played a significant role. The remains of polychromy were attributed to barbarian latest paintings. This conception remained until G. Semper wrote his treatise about the polychromy of the ancient world (1834). Therefore, the Classicism of the beginning of the 19th century is represented with a strict hierarchy of polychromatic means. The walls` backgrounds had to be painted in light yellow with white architectural decoration (Fig. 19). Buildings painted in this way had to create a harmonious urban ensemble similar to other cities built at the beginning of the 19th century. Nevertheless, Classicism for L'viv was the only one page in the book of the history of the city so the appearance of several houses or even streets in the Classicist style did not influence the change of city polychromy. Besides, in L'viv, the Empire Style played as important a role as Classicism but more diverse and picturesque. Facades in the Empire Style were appropriately decorated by high relief located on red (1–3 Svobody Av.[11], 21 Virmenska Str.[12], 8 Vynnychenka Str.[13] (Fig. 21)) or black background (34 Krakivska Str.[14]) (Fig. 22). The interiors of buildings of the first half of the 19th century were decorated with a wide range of polychromatic means, united in a harmonious hierarchical scheme. The most luxurious example in L'viv are the interiors of the Royal Halls[15] in the Korniakt Palace. Pilasters and socles are coated with faux marble, the floor is decorated with various parquetry patterns, different in each room, and the ceiling is entirely covered with white bas-reliefs, which are in several places imitated in grisaille technique – a reflection of Baroque illusions. Wall bas-reliefs are located on a coloured

---

[9] Erected in 1618–1765, including architects Kulczyński and Piotr Polejowski. Interior paintings were executed by Tadeusz Pelcharski.

[10] Erected in 1745–1770 by B. Meretyn, K.K. Fessinger. L. Doliński executed interior altar paintings.

[11] Erected in 1809–1822 by Fryderyk Bauman, sculptural decoration was executed by Hartman Witwer and Anton Schimser

[12] Erected in 1810, sculptural decoration was executed by Hartman Witwer.

[13] Erected in 1804–1805, sculptural decoration was executed by Hartman Witwer.

[14] Erected in 1830–1840s, sculptural decoration was executed in workshop of Anton and Johann Schimser.

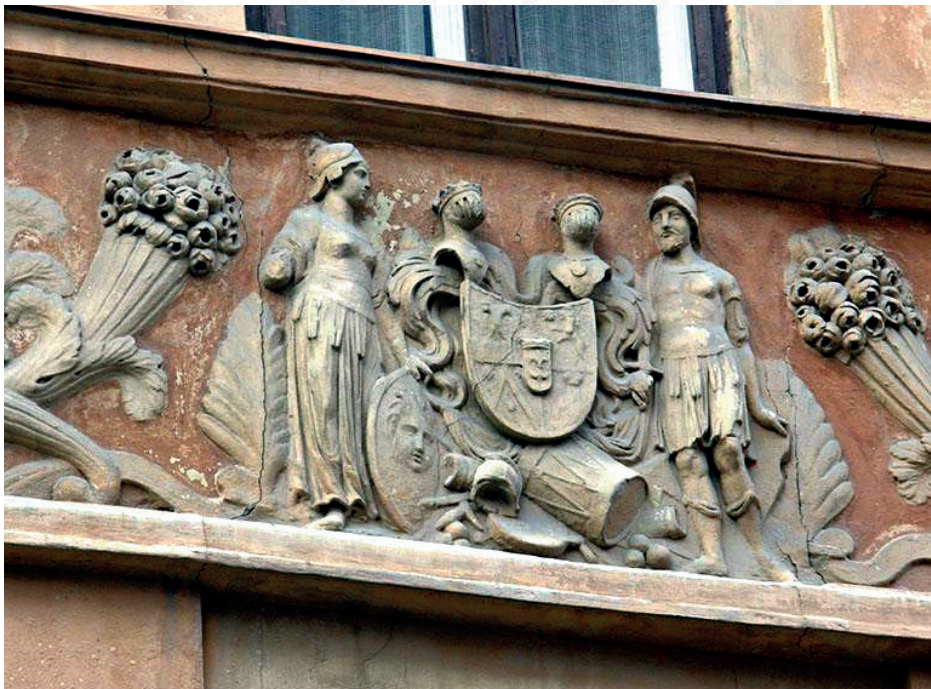[15] Reconstructed in 1793–1820s by Fryderyk Bauman.

Fig. 21. Colouring façade scheme in Empire Style – red background of bas-reliefs, light façade (8 Vynnychenka Str., 21 Virmenska Str.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 22. Colouring façade scheme in Empire Style: a) black background of bas-reliefs (26 Krakivska Str.); b) red façade background (10 Shevska Str.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
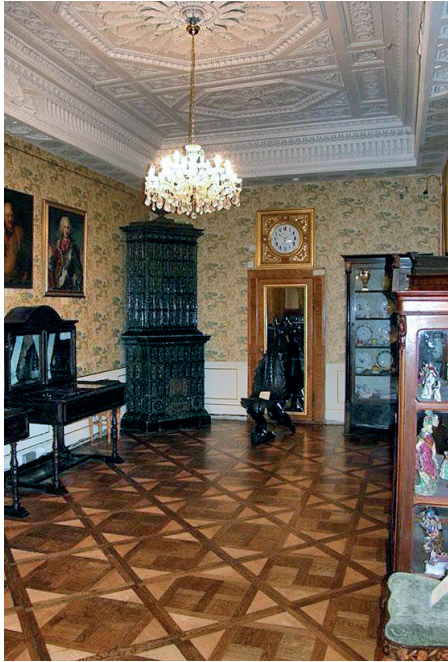
Fig. 23. Colouring interior scheme in Empire Style (6 Market Sq.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

Fig. 24. Parquetry in Classicism interior (6 Market Sq.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)
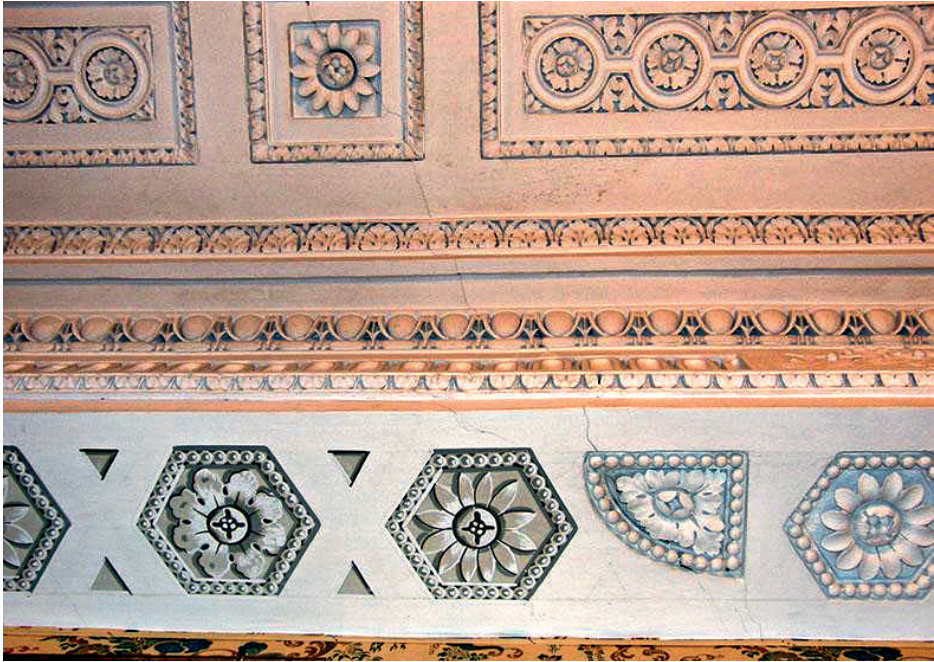
Fig. 25. Parquetry in Classicism interior (6 Market Sq.) (Photo by A. Kazantseva)

background of complicated green colour, the same design we meet in the interiors of Seniavskii`s Arsenal (Baworowski`s palace)[16] and the merely destroyed Besiadetskii's palace[17]. The richness of the interior is supplemented with luminescent materials – bronze lamps, mirrors, black fences, white majolica stoves (Figs. 23–25).

In the middle of 19th century the polychrome Renaissance and Baroque facades of L'viv buildings were not considered to be aesthetic, which caused the cleaning of the surface of the polychrome façade and its covering by grey cement plaster. Such activity led to the destruction of L'viv polychromy, and a loss of interest in colour for decades, which caused the next colour explosion at the end of the 19th century.

2. Conclusions

The polychromy of L'viv architecture of the Baroque and Classicist periods is a unique phenomenon, represented by numerous artifacts, whose principles and methods of use need research and systematization.

In the Baroque, the key ideas that influenced the polychrome design of L'viv buildings were the longing for theatricality, illusion, transmission of the difficulty of being a human being and the unclarity of the frontier between the spiritual and the material. Appropriately,

---

[16]   Anton Schimser executed sculptural decoration.
[17]   Reconstructed in 1820–1830 by Fryderyk Bauman.

it caused an appearance of complex colour palette of façades (olive background and black details) and interiors, accenting with gilding of architectural decoration in interiors, the use of illusionistic grisaille murals (imitation of architectural and sculptural details, depicting an open heaven with angels on vaults), and imitation of finishing materials (faux marble scagliola).

In L'viv architecture of the Rococo period, pastel colours of the wall with white or golden details were widespread. In Classicism, the tendency to create a polychrome hierarchy of façade walls by accenting with a yellow background and white or golden details appeared. In the Empire style, high-reliefs were emphasized by the red or black of the background. In the interiors of L'viv building of the 1st half of the 19th century polychrome, the methods of creating a harmonious cosy atmosphere using marble coating of walls, parquetry, moulding, bas-reliefs on the coloured background, bronze lamps, majolica stoves, mirrors were used.

Analysing the evolution of polychromy in L'viv architecture until the 19th century we can conclude that in the Baroque period polychromy gained its primary meaning, becoming an integral means of architectural and artistic expression, which is characterized by a number of common principles, the methods and techniques and creates a unique image of Baroque building.

The colourful decorations in L'viv architecture are unique due to the elegant range of colour (including the scagliola of the colour of natural marble), mix of all possible polychrome techniques in the decoration of one object (with the dominance of the illusionistic paintings of the Italian school of the late Renaissance period), richness and diversity of preserved examples of all styles represented in the architecture in the period of the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the 19th century.

References

[1] Biriulow Ju., *Rzeźba lwowska od połowy XVIII wieku do 1939 roku: Od zapowiedzi klasycyzmu do awangardy*, Neriton, Warszawa 2007.

[2] Brzezowski W., *Faktura i kolorystyka elewacji barokowych na Śląsku*, Politechnika Wrocławska, Architectus 2000, No. 1(7), 61–70.

[3] Cielątkowska R., Onišenko-Švec' L., *Detal architektury mieszkaniowej Lwowa XIX i XX wieku*, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Gdańskiej, Gdańsk 2006.

[4] Kazantseva T., *Evolution of the Polychromy in L'viv architecture / Polichromijos evoliucija Lvovo architektūroje*, [in:] (At)koduota istorija architektūroje (De)Coded History, [in:] Architecture International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference / Abstracts, Vilnius Academy of Arts, 2016, 60–61.

[5] Kazantseva T., *Ewolucja polichromii w architekturze Lwowa w okresie od XIV wieku do pierwszej połowy XVII wieku/Evolution of the Polychromy in L'viv Architecture of the 14th – the first half of the17th century*, Przestrzeń i Forma/Space & Form, Instytut Architektury i Planowania Przestrzennego Zachodniopomorskiego Uniwersytetu Technologicznego, 2015 (2), No. 24, 39–50.

[6] Liubchenko V., *L'viv sculpture of the 16th–17th centuries*, Scientific Idea (Naukova dumka), Kyiv 1981.

[7] Prysiazhnyi K., *Do historji koloru w architekturze. On the materials of the research of the institute "Ukrzahidproiektrestawracja"*, [in:] Theses of: "Kolor i faktura w architekturze", Wrocław, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Wrocławskiej 1998.

[8] Prysiazhnyi K., Kazantseva T., Zarechniuk O., *Windows of L'viv buildings*, Scientific Journal of L'viv National Polytechnic University "Architecture", 2013, No. 757, 364–374.

[9] Prysiazhnyi K., *The polychromy of the interior of L'viv dwelling house. The experience of restoration. Dedicated to the memory of Myroslava Maiorchuk*, [in:] Theses and paper of the 1st International Restorers Forum, L'viv, Spolom 2002, 16.

[10] Vuitsyk V., *Selected works. To the 70th birthday anniversary*, Journal of the institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiia" 2004, No. 14, L'viv.