

the Lithuanian National Philharmonic, Teachers' House and other valuable Old Town monuments, in 1980–1983 they even reconstructed one of the five pavilions of Janusz Radziwiłł's palace and, later, another pavilion as well as the connecting gallery. This was the first completely reconstructed segment of Janusz Radziwiłł's palace. With the start of Lithuania's national rebirth, in 1989 Moscow terminated financing of the restoration work and the Polish company left Europe. What remained was a vision of the architectural reconstruction of the Radziwiłł Palace, documentation of its restored section, visual and concrete plans for the palace's adaptation for museum and tourist purposes as well as for representational needs, information on archaeological and other research. All this as well as other historical data served as a basis for artist and architect Vytautas Gabriūnas, who in 1989 painted two watercolours depicting the completely restored palace ensemble.

In 1990, in the reconstructed part of the Radziwiłł Palace the Lithuanian Art Museum founded the Radziwiłł Palace Museum, which in its permanent exposition and exhibitions showcases foreign art, holds national art exhibitions, carries out educational activities, organises cultural events, and increases public interest in the cultural heritage of the Radziwiłł dukes. Restoration of the monument ensemble as a whole is also being discussed. Currently, a plan for total reconstruction of the Radziwiłł Palace and establishment of a Foreign Art Museum is coordinated with various State institutions, and will be funded with European Union structural assistance funds. The restored ensemble and Foreign Art Museum will suitably reflect the Radziwiłł family's aim to foster the highest level of palace and art culture.

Paulius Macijauskas

Vytautas Gabriūnas. Vilnius.
Radziwiłł Palace. 17th c.
retrospective. 1989.

COIN DEDICATED TO THE RADZIWIŁŁ PALACE (FROM THE SERIES 'LITHUANIAN PALACES AND MANORS')

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Coin designed by Vytautas Narutis and Giedrius Paulauskis

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Palace of Duke Janusz Radziwiłł – Masterpiece of Early Baroque in Vilnius

The monumental residence of Duke Janusz Radziwiłł (Lith. Jonušas Radvila; 1612–1655), built in the Early Baroque style with Renaissance features, dates back to 1635–1653. The residence was located beyond the city's defensive wall – at the corner of the modern-day Vilnius and Liejykla streets, close to Vilija Gate. The palace was constructed according to the design of Jan Ullrich, architect to the Radziwiłłs, to commemorate Janusz Radziwiłł's inauguration to the post of Vilnius Voivode in 1653 – the building represented the Duke's exceptional power and supreme aesthetic taste. The U-shaped palace was comprised of five three-level pavilions and four transitional two-level segments, surrounding on three sides a large rectangle-shaped courtyard. The western part of the courtyard, where a statue of a majestic rider was located, was encircled by a low brick wall with two symmetrical gates. The roofs of the pavilions were pyramid-shaped, crowned with gilt domes; the central pavilion – a peristyle with marble columns that had gilded capitals. The palace is featured on a medal created by German medallist Sebastian Dadler in 1653. The Versailles-like palace is depicted from its western side, with the Gediminas Tower Hill, Hill of Three Crosses and Bekesh Hill in the background. The image is characterised by a spacious horizon perspective.

The Radziwiłł Palace was the most ornate and magnificent building in Vilnius in the 17th c. – this is evidenced by the manor's inventory. The interior of the palace was decorated by German-born moulder Mykolas Krepšas and Dutch painter Abraham van Westerfeld. The palace, famed for its opulence and splendour, housed many items of great artistic value – the art collection of Duke Janusz Radziwiłł's family was made up of more than 1,000 pieces. The collection of paintings featured works by notable Flemish and Dutch artists: various portraits, battle, and holiday compositions. In 1648–1651, Abraham van Westerfeld accompanied Janusz Radziwiłł on his military raids. He created a great cycle of paintings on the conquests of his patron. In 1657, the inventory noted that there were 14 paintings in the palace. Unfortunately, during the periods of wars and upheaval, these historical and artistic treasures were removed, plundered or destroyed.

Photograph by Jan Bułhak. Fragment of the Radziwiłł Palace. 1913.



Photograph by Jan Bułhak. Medal 'Radziwiłł Palace in Vilnius'. 1930s. The round medal is encircled by a narrow border featuring the Latin inscription: DUM CAPIS OFFICIUM DUM CELSA PALATIA CONDUS IURE PALATINUM TE TUA VILNA COLIT (*As long as you have duties, build majestic palaces, Vilnius rightfully honours you as its Voivode*). In the centre of the medal – a panorama of Vilnius, with the Upper and Lower Castles. Above the hills – stylised clouds, in the centre – an eagle clutching a sword.

Drawing from architect Evaldas Zulonas' project. 1993.



In less than no time, the newly-built palace fell in ruin during the mid-17th c. war (1654–1667) as well as the Great Northern War in the early 18th c., during which enemies of the Radziwiłłs torched the palace. The slightly renovated palace rooms were later rented out as private flats. In 1804, Dominik Radziwiłł gifted the remains of the palace as well as the entire large plot of land to the newly-established Vilnius Charity Society, which later built shelters, workshops, hospitals, a school, and residential flats. Here the Society operated until 1940. After WWII the palace became a complex of various Soviet public institutions, adapted for a variety of purposes.

In the words of Vladas Drėma, one of the most notable Lithuanian art historians, the palace of Janusz Radziwiłł was built entirely unlike it was depicted in the medal by Sebastian Dadler, which was minted based on the preliminary draft by the architect. When building the palace, the project was changed. The north-west corner pavilion of the palace was built as a square-shaped Protestant chapel. Its interior space was not broken down over all three floors. Three of the chapel's walls – southern, western, and northern – had three windows each, stretching over the second and third floors and topped with semi-circular arches, separated from each other by rather wide lesenes. In the interwar period, it was home to a Jewish temple. In early 1965, the chapel was barbarically blown up by *Mosfilm's* cinematographers, who at the time were filming a war movie – they needed scenes of a collapsing house of worship. Drėma, who examined the ruins after the blast, identified that the chapel had been built from large, well-baked clay bricks. The domes were bricked particularly well: they were set in two layers diagonally, in a chevron pattern, along the wall lintels. Among the ruins he noticed moulding ornamented with small stylised plant motifs – clearly the building dated back to the first half of the 17th c.

According to the Soviet-era Vilnius Old Town restoration plans (1958, 1969), the palace complex of Janusz Radziwiłł was to be completely rebuilt. The idea of rebuilding the castle (as proposed by architect Evaldas Zulonas) was focused on developing strategic cultural tourism – Vilnius' greatest Versailles-like palace was expected to hold and exhibit collections of valuable items, thus drawing in more foreign tourists. Both in Tallinn and Riga, and eventually in Vilnius, historical monuments were reconstructed by the Polish company *Budimex* as a way to re-pay the Polish government's debt to the Soviet Union. Having restored the buildings of