

The aim of the project is to investigate the professional activity of architects, builders and engineers of French origin in the 18th century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The project aims to identify in detail the causes and paths of their journeys to Polish and Lithuanian territories, alternative career models, the social profile of the administrators (from the royal court, through the nobility and church organizations), the process of building their political influence among the state's elite and the geography of activity. The research will be based on a carefully selected group of representatives of the construction community who came directly or indirectly from France in the above-mentioned period, were educated in French schools or were the first to speak French. As the time frame of the project, I adopted, respectively: the reign of Jan III Sobieski and the impact of his artistic initiatives (the end of the 17th and early 18th centuries) and the end of the reign of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, and the Third Partition of Poland (1795) as a moment of a significant decline in artistic patronage. The geographical area of the project covers the lands of the Crown and Lithuania in the 18th century, excluding the territory of former Crown Ruthenia (modern Ukraine), due to the lack of access to archives and historical material caused by the ongoing Russian invasion.

It is important to emphasize the study of career models for architects and builders educated in France. While the history of the knowledge, methods and tools of engineers has been the subject of much research, their careers in this field remain largely unknown and unstudied, leading to many mistakes and inaccuracies on the part of researchers. Each of the artists discussed depended on the client system, was employed at a specific court, received specific tasks and remuneration. The profession of an architect and engineer is inextricably linked with mobility, constituting the identity of engineers through trips motivated by princely demands and the search for patrons, and thus with building a professional travel habitus. The study of these aspects will be the key task of this project.