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CASTLES IN THE TEUTONIC ORDER STATE IN PRUSSIA AS MEDIUM OF IDEOLOGY AND MANIFESTATION OF POWER

ABSTRACT

The article concentrates on an analysis of the forms of castles erected by the Teutonic Order in their conquered domain in Prussia, which were a medium of ideas and manifestation of symbols. The most significant forms were structures of the castell type. That type of fortresses, which had been built since the Antiquity, usually associated with strong centralized state authority and used as a sign of the power propaganda, was later adopted in Western Europe. The Teutonic Knights adjusted that castle type to their needs in the 1270s and 1280s as a sign of the state and the centralized idea of the knight-monks' authority. Repetitiveness and perfect geometric architectonic forms depicted the character of their rulership, modelled after the Divine Order, and their role as *milites Christi*, defenders of Christianity. Towers were another

construction element with a strong semantic charge as a sign and symbol of feudal power. The beginnings of tower-type residences date back to the 10th century Normandy, from where they spread around Europe in the following centuries. Habitable towers were also used by the Teutonic Order, who built them in 14th century as residences of some lower rank officials. Erecting a palace for the grand masters in Malbork at the end of the 14th century, they also referred to the form of donjon as a symbol of a sovereign and a ruler seat. The castle in Sztum was a result of yet another tradition – a residence situated nearby the capital as a leisure and hunting place for the overlord. That was an expression of court culture and a sign of prestige of a ruler – in this case, the grand master.

Keywords: castles, Teutonic Knights, Prussia, architecture, Middle Ages, ideology, power

Mediaeval Europe was divided into monarchies and rulerships, whose inhabitants were attributed to various levels of feudal hierarchy, in accordance with the division into the rulers, fighters, the ones who prayed and the ones who worked. The building of seats, adequate to the position and within financial means, was one of the distinguishing determinants of the elite (kings, dukes, aristocracy and knights). The structures they erected – wooden or brick castles – were not only to provide safety to patricians and knights (and inhabitants of their domains), but also to demonstrate the owners' social position in the mediaeval society. In these special conditions of mediaeval Europe, as a consequence of a transformation of the mass crusade movement that started at the end of the 11th century with the initial goal of pushing back the Muslims from the Holy Land and regaining the

territory for Christianity, the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, called the Teutonic Knights, created a state situated along the Baltic Sea coasts. In the conquered territory, they established an effectively functioning monastic state with knight-monks as its elite. To justify their activities and existence in the conquered pagan lands of Prussia, they had to work out and implement an ideology which referred to both spiritual and secular aspects of their work. Erecting castles was one of the propaganda means of upholding their ideology and manifesting their power.¹

From about 1230 onwards progress in the monk-knights' expansion was marked by erecting numerous strongholds around the country. From about half of the 13th century single wood and earth fortresses started to be transformed into brick ones. However, they were in

¹ Cf. Kutzner 1995; Kwiatkowski 2019.

the beginning simple irregularly planned structures, and even though, based on source data, we are able to indicate in them, like in wood and earth structures, the presence of basic elements necessary for leading the knights' monastic life (chapels), their uncomplicated architectural forms were dictated first of all by utilitarian and military factors.² The fact of the building and presence of a stronghold network in the occupied area was in itself a demonstration of power, and only later, after the conquest was completed and the new state and territorial power stabilized and consolidated (from the 1270s–1280s), did the Teutonic castle architecture become a clear medium of ideology expression. The process was influenced by the fact that these years were the period of settlement development, when fights and destruction had finished and the Order was able to obtain solid financial foundation and infrastructure, and create conditions to invite specialists.³ Before that, a lack of properly developed local structures had forced the Knights to use mainly supplies coming from their bailiwicks from the Reich territories and papal donations, and the financial contributions from knights and clergy for the Knights' participation in the Crusades.⁴ It should also be remembered that the Order had to share the financial means between urgent needs of the Holy Land and fights in Prussia, and its highest authorities did not focus much on Prussian problems. Needs of the remote property along the Baltic coast were of secondary interest, even during the crisis related to the great Prussian uprising (under Grand Master Heinrich von Hohenlohe). The situation changed a little in the times of Grand Master Poppo von Osterna, who upon taking office in 1252 directed all his attention and care to the Baltic properties of the Order.⁵ Therefore, the moment of erecting the first brick strongholds (Toruń, Starogród, Bałga) is not at all accidental. Yet more intensive brick architecture development in Prussia (deprived of such building traditions) was impossible at that time.⁶

From the 1270s/1280s, we can observe a quick development of monumental architecture in Prussia, and compared to the first decades of the Teutonic Order's functioning on the coasts of the Baltic Sea, a clear change is seen both in architectonic forms and the building techniques – in terms of quality as well as quantity. A decision of crucial significance made in the discussed period, influencing the later homogeneous picture of castle architecture in Prussia, was adapting the structure of a castell type, which became the most typical form of

a commander castle (convent house) in the Teutonic state (Fig. 1). We should offer a precise definition of a castell type. Until recently, the meaning of the term had not been univocal in Polish literature and not necessarily identical with the way it functions in European castelology. The definition had concerned, e.g., 'a castle or its central sector being a fortified habitable house of an office holder or a feudal lord',⁷ but also forms of defensive manors of Hungarian origin.⁸ However, in the last years, castell as a castle type, also in Poland, has attracted greater interest.⁹ European research did not always define the object clearly, either.¹⁰ The most precise definition that depicts the basic features of the structure seems to be that given by Patrick Schicht, who says that a castell is a regular, usually rectangular, secular monumental structure, whose circumferential defensive walls are accented by numerous towers or tower-like fortifications.¹¹ This list should be completed with the structure's stronghold character.

In Prussia, we can distinguish some groups/types of castells, referring more or less to the buildings' chronology and various detailed secondary features. Generally, the oldest ones, from the 1270s–1280s, were erected along the Vistula Lagoon coasts (Malbork, Brandenburg, Königsberg, Lochstedt), and the next, parallel concentration was created in Chełmno Land (Papowo Biskupie, Lipienek, Rogóžno). In the first half of the 14th century several so-called classic castells, with their complete, majestic and sophisticated forms are built (Gniew, Radzyń Chełmiński, Brodnica). From about the second quarter of the century subsequent regular castles are being erected in various parts of Prussia, which with time get more simplified forms (e.g. Człuchów, Ostróda). Ragneta was the last commandery seat of that type, erected in the very beginning of the 15th century. In ideal version, castles had a regular square or rectangular floor plan and four wings, and from the courtyard side they were connected with a brick or wooden cloister, enabling communication. The oldest ones (from the Vistula Lagoon) were not planned in the beginning as four-winged structures, and in the case of later buildings, the complete architectonic plan could end up not being fulfilled due to various reasons (e.g. in Barciany). Castells from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century did not have big towers in the corners, only small turrets placed directly on circumferential walls (e.g. Golub) or, at most, forming slight projections (Malbork, Papowo

² Arszczyński 1995a, 123–138; Wasik 2016b; 2018b; 2018d, 218–223.

³ Cf. Wasik 2016c, 116–120.

⁴ Biskup, Labuda 1988, 189.

⁵ Morton 2018, 146–154, 159–160, 170–171.

⁶ Arszczyński 1995a, 200–214.

⁷ Słownik 2006, 180.

⁸ Bogdanowski 2002, 525.

⁹ Cf. Kajzer, Olszacki 2011; Olszacki 2011.

¹⁰ Schicht 2018, 9–10.

¹¹ Schicht 2018, 10.

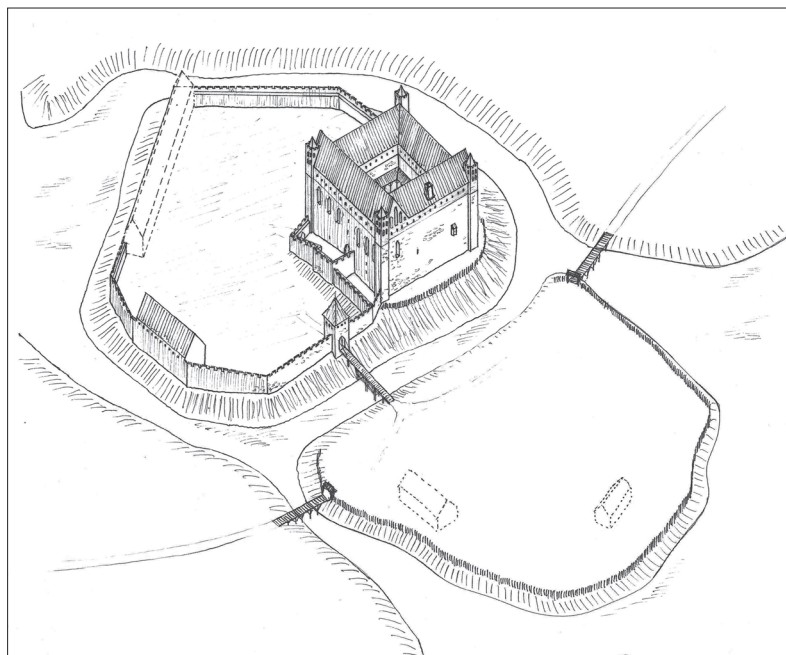


Fig. 1. Papowo Biskupie. Reconstruction of the castle's appearance in the first half of the 14th century (drawing by B. Wasik).

Biskupie). Some of these castles were also equipped with corner main towers of a *bergfried* fighting-tower type. The classic castells which followed had bigger, quadrangular corner towers, partly pushed forward, and the presence of a *bergfried* became a rule. In late castells those elements were abandoned, reducing the castell to a cubic block, composed of four wings, without any clear vertical accents.¹² One common feature was interior character and function divisions. The biggest part of a typical commander castle was placed upon cellars beneath, which served the functions of a household and supply storage. Similar functions were designed for the ground floor rooms, where kitchens, a brewery and a bakery were located. The main representative and habitable functions were served by rooms on the first floor, in particular those located in the wing rooming the chapel, and a neighbouring castle central hall – a refectory, heated with a hypocaustum system. The first floors of the other wings contained, among other facilities, the knights bedrooms (dormitories). The higher floors were occupied by storage facilities and defensive equipment.¹³

The structure described above is the complete form of a Teutonic castell, being a seat of commanders and the knight-monks, but the model was also used and

accepted around Prussia for other purposes. In a reduced form (with fewer wings and single towers) castell-type structures were erected as seats of officials of lower rank (*pflegers*, *vogts*), serving local administrative functions (e.g. the castle in Działdowo).¹⁴

Researchers have long been intrigued by the problem of the genesis and original conceptions of the Teutonic castell prototype. Generally, opinions on the subject fall into two groups: the castell type was shaped locally, in Prussia, without any external models,¹⁵ or it was influenced by an external prototype, transferred more or less directly from different places and regions. Some assumptions in the latter regard included direct Ancient Roman traditions of legion encampments,¹⁶ Middle Eastern castles,¹⁷ castles in Thuringia, Saxony,¹⁸ Spain,¹⁹ castles of Frederick II Hohenstauf from southern Italy and Sicily,²⁰ or strongholds of Bohemian King Přemysl Ottokar II.²¹ Influences of monastic architecture, Cistercian in particular, were also indicated.²² In the last decades, discussions have taken into account a possibility of interaction and combining various influences, like southern Italian castles (of the kind erected by Hohenstauf) and Norman donjons in England, emphasizing simultaneously that the final model was elaborated in the Teutonic Knights'

¹² Torbus 1998, 88–247; 2014, 93–284; cf. Wasik 2020b.

¹³ Józwiak, Trupinda 2012, 257–421.

¹⁴ Herrmann 2007, 80–81.

¹⁵ Clasen 1927, 187–194; Lindemann 1938; 1951.

¹⁶ Frycz 1978, 31–33.

¹⁷ Steinbrecht 1915, 438; cf. Arszyski 1995a, 59; 1995b, 111–112.

¹⁸ Lindemann 1938; 1951.

¹⁹ Holst 1981.

²⁰ Dehio 1905.

²¹ Durdík 1993.

²² Incl. Steinbrecht 1915, 438; Torbus 1998, 297; 2014, 349.

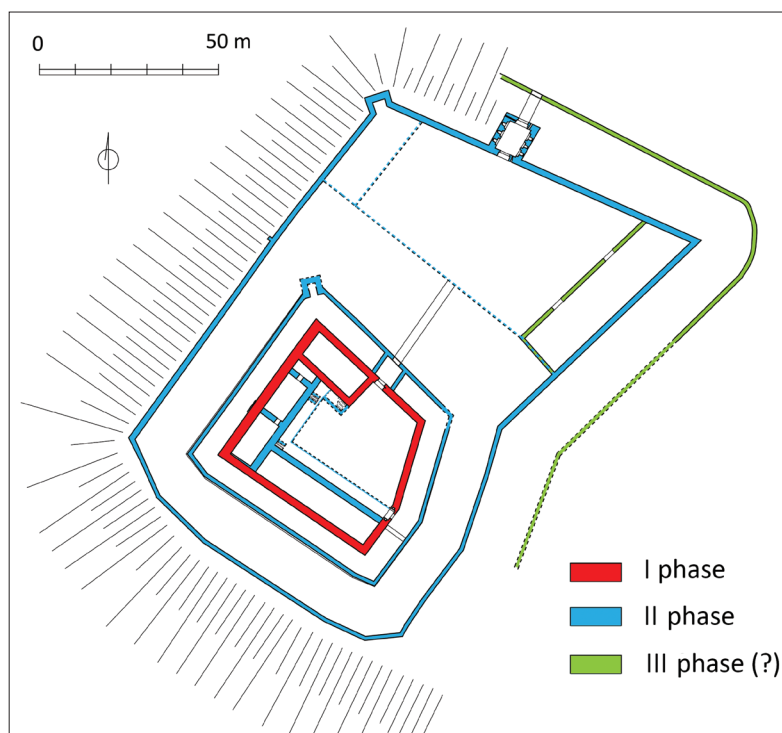


Fig. 2. Bierzłowo. The castle building phases (drawing by B. Wasik).

circles – in Prussia or in the Reich.²³ The importance of wider semantic ideas of the castell as foundations related to a program of strong central authority²⁴ was also pointed out. Other researchers associate that factor both with influences of monastic architecture and the local model created by the knights inhabiting Prussia.²⁵

According to present knowledge, the castell type appeared in Prussia quite suddenly in the 1270s–1280s. Therefore, we must reject the evolutionary conception of shaping a regular commander castle in Prussia presented by Karl Heinz Clasen.²⁶ Earlier, irregular structures had a very simple arrangement with only one brick building. Their redevelopment into two- or three-winged castles with cloistered courtyards was a later treatment, made after accepting the castell type (Fig. 2), and due to that fact, is an element of the Prussian castell project and evidence of intentional conception of adapting the castell type in Prussia.²⁷ Difficulties with estimating the precise chronology make it impossible to name the first

object or objects of that type. A group of strongholds from the Vistula Lagoon area are regarded to be the oldest regular castles.²⁸ Erecting a castle in Malbork started about 1274²⁹ or, more probably, at the end of the 1270s. In 1279 the Teutonic knights from Zantyr³⁰ moved to Malbork. Until recently the erecting of the Brandenburg (Pokarmin) Castle was thought to have commenced early, in the 1260s.³¹ New studies indicate, however, that the local commandery was created as late as 1283–1284, and that was probably the time when the brick castle was built.³² A precise dating of the castell in Königsberg is impossible at present. Some sources inform about unspecified brick elements of the castle existing in 1263. The erection of the castell itself is generally dated to between 1275 and 1312.³³ Taking into account the established chronology of the oldest castles of the Vistula Lagoon, the process of erecting commander castles in Chełmno Land³⁴ started more or less at the same time, with the oldest castles in Papowo Biskupie (Fig. 1), Lipienek and

²³ Kutzner 1995, 45; 1996, 206; Pospieszny 2004, 154–156; 2009, 77–80.

²⁴ Skibiński 1994; Arsyński 1995a, 66–69, 73; 1995b, 115–117.

²⁵ Herrmann 2007, 194–199; 2009; Torbus 1998, 296–297; 2014, 348–351.

²⁶ Clasen 1927, 13–127.

²⁷ Wasik 2016a, 245–271, 319; 2018d; 2020b, 123–125.

²⁸ Torbus 1998, 88–124.

²⁹ Pospieszny 2014, 25–33.

³⁰ Józwiak, Trupinda 2011, 53; Torbus 2014, 109–110.

³¹ Torbus 1998, 372.

³² Erecting a spacious castell structure before the establishment of a commandery would not be justified; Józwiak 2001, 61–64; Józwiak, Trupinda 2019, 107–112.

³³ Józwiak, Trupinda 2020b, 128–129; Torbus 1998, 455; 2014, 132–133.

³⁴ Torbus 1998, 124–144; 2014, 141–144.

Rogóżno. The first of those was built as the seat of a commandery established between 1279 and 1284. The brick structure did not replace any earlier wood and earth stronghold, so we can assume that the original castell was erected in that period. It was already functioning in some form in 1287.³⁵ Discussing the other two locations, we do not have at our disposal any precise source data. Erecting a brick castle in Lipienek started probably due to the commander office of Chełmno Land being moved there in 1285; the development used as the base fragments of a wood and earth stronghold destroyed in 1277, but it is difficult to state if its reconstruction started around 1285 or earlier. It seems, however, that proper living and working conditions needed to be arranged for the commander before his moving there, so we can suggest the investment began in the first half of the 1280s.³⁶ A similar period, around 1285, when the commandery was established, is estimated as the commencement of erecting the castle in Rogóżno.³⁷

There was also an opinion, put forward first and foremost by Kazimierz Pospieszny, that the castle in Elbląg was the oldest quadrangular regular commandery castle – and the model for other Teutonic castles in Prussia.³⁸ The researchers sharing that opinion indicated also that the erecting process started early – in the 1250s or 1260s – and that the castle's rich chapel furnishing patterns, made in local workshops and dating from that period (ca. 1250–1270), were imitated later, while building other castles along the Vistula Lagoon coasts.³⁹ Marian Kutzner reached that conclusion upon examining a collection of architectonic detail fragments, which, however, apart from the supposition that it comes from the castle, is deprived of any precise context. The details were deposited in the rubble filling the outhouse cellar and came probably from German archaeological works carried out in 1914 in the area of the outer bailey.⁴⁰ Apart from characteristic elements such as fragments of figures, which can be associated with a chapel, it is not possible to attribute these details to particular parts and rooms of the castle, therefore drawing any general conclusions concerning all the complex of the high castle should be treated cautiously. A very early dating of two figure fragments was based on their better technical quality compared to sculptures from the Golden Gate in Malbork, which in the researchers'

opinion must indicate that the Elbląg details are older.⁴¹ Dating those details and the whole development as far back as the mid-13th century seems improbable, taking into account the circumstances and conditions of Prussia of that time.⁴² The problems with dating the Elbląg sculptures based on their fragments were also touched upon by Anna Błażejewska,⁴³ whose analyses move their chronology to about 1270–1280. The other details, fragments of more serially produced pieces, like ribbed fittings (heads with a pear profile and trapezoids), are regarded as typical forms used in other Prussian castles of the end of the 13th and the first half of the 14th centuries.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, we must state that the castle in Elbląg, being the seat of the country masters from 1251, despite all the above doubts and unclear opinions, must have been one of the oldest ones erected in the brick technique in Prussia – dating probably from about the mid-13th century, the same time as castles in Toruń, Starogród and Balga.⁴⁵ There is no knowledge as to what form it had then. It should be remarked that analysis of the details discussed above indicates in fact their stylistic and technical characteristics and not the castle's form. During archaeological exploration in the area of the outer bailey, three stages of the wooden lower ward from the second half of 13th century were distinguished (with the wooden character of the enclosure still kept – at least partially – in the beginning of 14th century).⁴⁶ In the context of this article's subject, we must look closer again at the reliability of the opinion quoted above concerning the regular form of the high castle, because the view provokes justified doubts of some researchers.⁴⁷ The reconstruction of the high castle arrangement is based on a few wall fragments of northern, southern and southwestern structures, excavated over a vast area in the 1930s and 1980s⁴⁸ (Fig. 3). We are also able to estimate a supposed location of relics belonging to western part of the high castle, excavated in 1875.⁴⁹ The finds give a general idea of the high castle span, but do not deliver grounds for a detailed reconstruction of its plan and conclusions concerning its look. Little is unfortunately known on the object's architecture from the very poor information in written sources.⁵⁰ First and the foremost, perceiving the high castle in Elbląg as a regular structure,⁵¹ based on our knowledge on the subject, should be treated as a misuse, omitting some facts in order to adjust them to a preconceived

³⁵ Józwiak, Trupinda 2020a, 138–139; Wasik 2020d, 91.

³⁶ Józwiak, Trupinda 2020a, 135–136; Wasik 2020d, 86.

³⁷ Józwiak 1997, 169, 247; Torbus 2014, 152–153.

³⁸ Pospieszny 2014, 35–36, 116–118.

³⁹ Kutzner 1997, 62–77.

⁴⁰ Kutzner 1997, 59–60.

⁴¹ Kutzner 1997, 62–64.

⁴² Cf. Wasik 2016c, 115–118.

⁴³ Błażejewska 2012, 102–105.

⁴⁴ Cf. Kutzner 1997, 70–71; Wasik 2016a, 160–163, in annex, 19–29.

⁴⁵ Torbus 2014, 95.

⁴⁶ Marcinkowski *et al.* 2013.

⁴⁷ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 198; Torbus 2014, 99.

⁴⁸ Nawroński 1986, 93–95, 98–103.

⁴⁹ Rynkiewicz-Domino 2012, 205.

⁵⁰ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 199–202.

⁵¹ Pospieszny 2014, 37–39; Rynkiewicz-Domino 2012, 205–206.

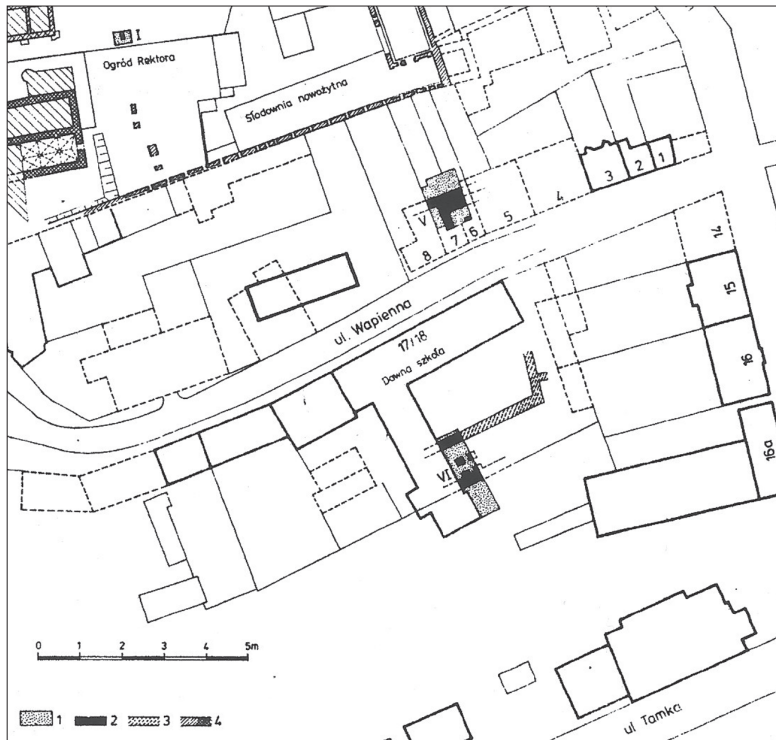


Fig. 3. Elbląg. Plan of the high castle area: 1 – archaeological excavations carried out after 1945; 2 – mediaeval walls uncovered in the excavations; 3 – presumed course of the walls uncovered in 1936–1939; 4 – existing walls or determined sections of mediaeval walls (by Nawroński 1986).

opinion – the only excavated corner of the structure has an obtuse angle, not the right angle. The divergence is bigger than was indicated by Kazimierz Pospieszny,⁵² and it was impossible to correct at a higher level, as the researcher wished. Therefore, the high castle in Elbląg was not a regular castell. At the best, it had a trapezoid floor plan, but even this hypothesis, due to single wall fragments scattered around a big space, is anything but certain. We cannot exclude, for instance, that the western corner of the northern wing was situated at the right angle to its lengthened walls, which would cause a bend of the western curtain and a pentagonal plan of the castle circumference, as it is in the case of castles in Grudziądz and Bierzgłowo (Fig. 2). We should also remark that before large-scale archaeological and architectonic research was conducted, based only on tiny fragments of excavated walls, the high castle in Toruń had also been interpreted as a four-winged structure, which turned out to be false.⁵³ There is no ground to assume a priori that the Elbląg castle had four full-sized wings, since we know only the width of the southern one. A similar situation is observed in the case of the cloister, known from the relics by the southern building and written sources – did the gallery run all around the courtyard, or was it erected by

just parts of the building?⁵⁴ The basic mistake is to treat the high castle as a homogeneous structure, because in the light of recent studies, the earliest brick commandery castles in Prussia had a very complex building history. They were completed in several phases and stages, and the final effect had not been anticipated during the original structure erection. In the beginning they were castles consisting of circumferential walls and a single brick building. The last examples of that type were still being created as late as in the 1270s–1280s. These irregular commandery castles obtained their final forms in a later period – the times when castles were being erected in Chełmno Land and along the Vistula Lagoon. But even then, despite using elements making them resemble regular structures, they had their own varied architectonic forms, consisting of two or three big wings, frequently accompanied by lower ones, serving as storage facilities. Cloisters were also built in these objects only by central buildings and not around the courtyard.⁵⁵ Similar complications can be expected also in the case of the Elbląg complex, which calls for carefulness while drawing conclusions concerning the general castle architecture based solely on the inventory of finds, without detailed knowledge of their original context. However, the general stylistic groups distinguished

⁵² In reality, the angle is 104°, not 95°, as Kazimierz Pospieszny indicated; Pospieszny 2014, 39.

⁵³ Steinbrecht 1885, 19.

⁵⁴ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 199; Nawroński 1986, 93–95.

⁵⁵ Wasik 2016a, 245–271; 2016b, 244–251; 2018b, 175–182; 2018d; 2020b, 123–125; 2020d, 55–61, 68–76.

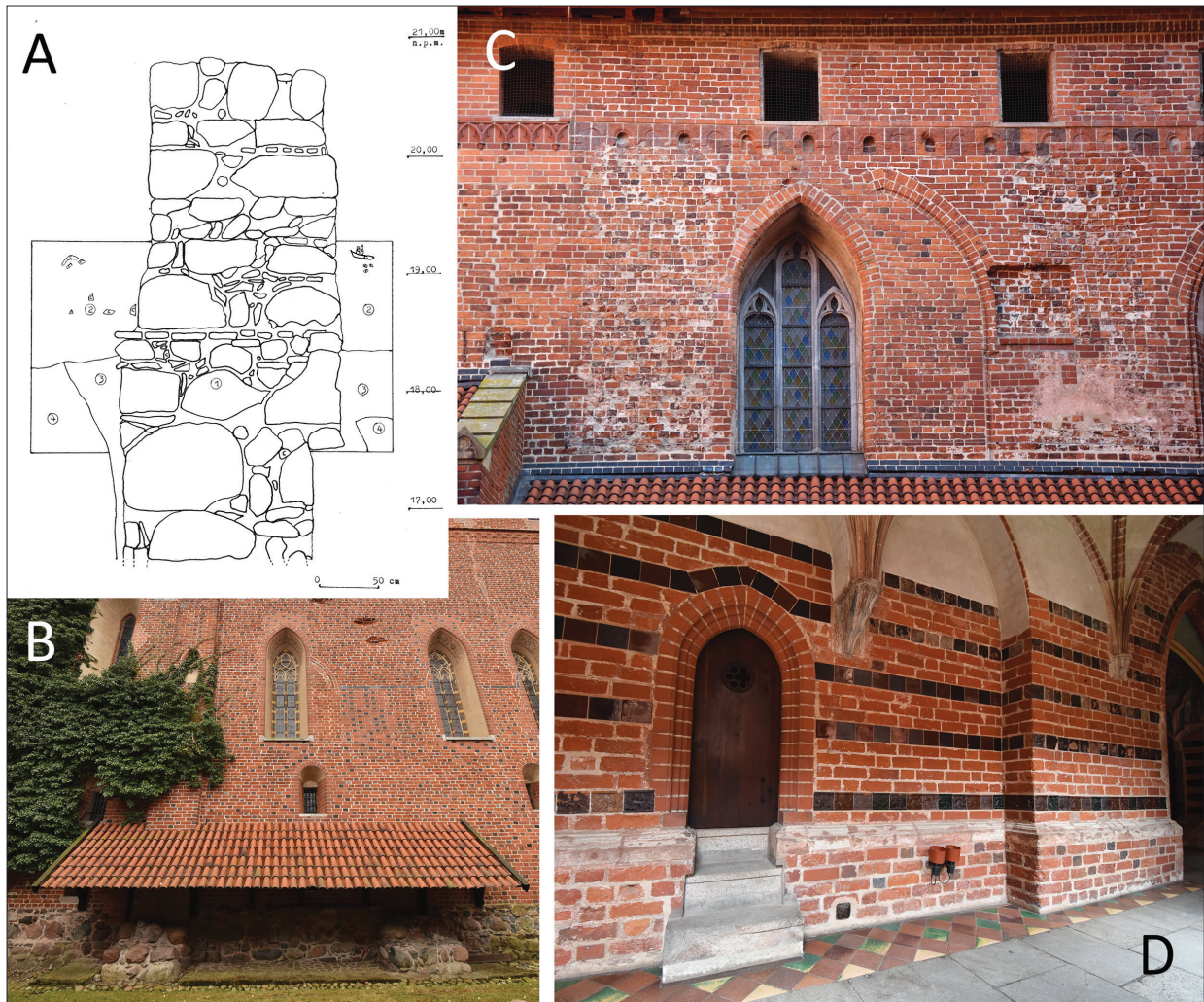


Fig. 4. Malbork. High castle: A – the foundation of the buttress at the northern facade of the castell (Sawicki 2003); B – foundations of unfinished buttresses at the northern facade of the castell; C – traces of demolished buttresses on the courtyard facade of the northern wing; D – the chapel plinth on the first floor of the cloister (photo by B. Wasik).

by Marian Kutzner, dating from the second half of the 13th century, the 13th–14th centuries and the first half of the 14th century, respectively,⁵⁶ seem to correspond with the general periods of transformations and erecting of other irregular castles. To draw more precise conclusions on this specific castle, especially given its significance among the objects of the period, gradual and well planned archaeological and architectonic research is necessary.

Thinking about the beginnings of a castell type in Prussia, one should pay more attention to the intriguing inconsistency and untypical solutions observed in the first stages of erecting the castle in Malbork. The castell had not been planned in the beginning as a four-winged

structure and it was completed in stages, rather standard ones for that type of castles in Prussia.⁵⁷ Though changes and corrections made during construction can be observed also in other castles, in the case of Malbork they seem to go beyond the standard practices. First of all, the main (northern) castle wing was originally supposed to be strengthened with massive buttresses, which are not met in other objects of that type (Fig. 4). While erecting foundations of the walls, the builders planned to make two buttresses on the axis of the northern castell wall. A solid foundation of one of them, with plinths extending downwards, was excavated in 2002.⁵⁸ The method was not continued above the foundations, leaving only a brick lesene

⁵⁶ Kutzner 1997, 62.

⁵⁷ Cf. Wasik 2018a.

⁵⁸ Sawicki 2003.

in place of the eastern buttress. Two buttresses from the courtyard side were built, but during further works on the wing they were dismantled, leaving a sign of them in the form of strips above the cloister, and the fact that they had been a part of the original concept is evidenced by an arcade frieze adjusted so as to make it narrower. What is surprising is that at the level of the cloister on the first floor we cannot observe any signs of dismantling the buttresses on the external face of the wall. Therefore, we can deduce that they probably had gaps in the form of an arcade (flying buttresses), forming walkways along the walls. That solution broke the rule of a solid body and compactness, characteristic of Teutonic castells. There are also other elements suggesting a lack of determination and experience of the builders. For example, examining the trench located in the gate passage,⁵⁹ at the level of the foundations, the toothing out of an undefined foundation wall, running at a different angle, was reported. On the first floor of the central wing, another team of builders had to correct a partition between the chapel and the refectory, because originally it had been designed faultily and it did not serve the required load-bearing function between the rooms of various vault levels, which was a standard arrangement in later castells. Architectonic studies detected also a change to a building team more skilled in erecting sacral structures. The builders used, among other elements, a decorative plinth and a cornice in a part of the first floor facade from the courtyard (cloister) at the chapel level (Fig. 4D), thus accentuating the presence of a castle church situated there, as if it had been a structure standing on the ground level.⁶⁰ Using that plinth and the buttresses discussed earlier has no analogues in other preserved castells. These untypical solutions, corrections, and building team changes seem to indicate that at the very beginning of the castle building process it was being performed by masters not skilled in castle erecting. What is more, the use of elements not met anywhere else seems to prove that a clear and precise pattern of a Teutonic castell did not exist at that time yet, and the constructors, having obtained from an investor general directions concerning the shape, looked for forms and solutions themselves. Based on all that knowledge, we can risk the conclusion that it was the castle in Malbork which was erected as the first castell form in Prussia. As such, it would have been a visible sign of the Teutonic power, erected at the border of a recent enemy – the Pomeranian Duchy.

However, due to inaccuracy in dating the first castells, another situation is possible. Because the chronological span between various investments could be minimal,⁶¹ and the castells of Chełmno Land are diametrically different in style from those of the Vistula Lagoon, it is possible that two parallel independent building centres operated in Prussia, with various attitudes towards the general form of a castell as outlined by investors. Consequently, teams erecting the first regular castles in Chełmno Land (Papowo Biskupie or Lipienek) at the very beginning would have created compact uniformed structures, corresponding with the Teutonic Knights' needs and the castles from the Lagoon were adjusted to 'Chełmno standards' later on, giving them cubic forms (removing buttresses in Malbork) and four wings. The proposition that the structures erected in Chełmno Land and the Vistula Lagoon were being completed in parallel as two separated centres of creating the first castells, and further, that the Chełmno model came to be chosen as the obligatory type can also be evidenced, apart from stylistic differences, by the result of analyses of the *ad quadratum* design. The same pattern of geometrical design was observed in early castells from Chełmno Land and in later regular castles (Fig. 5), while in reference to castles from the Vistula Lagoon the results are doubtful and it rather seems that another system was applied there.⁶²

The sudden appearance of new forms in various parts of the Teutonic state in Prussia, and the fact that older, sometimes incomplete irregular castles were simultaneously adjusted to them (Fig. 2), suggest that accepting a new model was the authorities' intentional decision. What was the motivation and genesis of accepting that form as a seat of the commandery? We should quote here a remark of Szczęsny Skibiński, who rightly claimed that exact formal and stylistic analyses in fact allowed the researchers to establish the origins of building teams, and not the genesis of the castell model.⁶³ They identified northern German and Cistercian builders, but the structures with which we are concerned were formally castells and not monasteries,⁶⁴ and this is not changed by the fact that they were inhabited by knight-monks and that the four-winged layout suited their lifestyle. Compact, cubic and symmetrical castells differ in their crucial elements from monastery forms (with a church and protruding enclosures), which are located around the yard but scattered and asymmetric. The other difference are the sto-

⁵⁹ Sawicki 2003.

⁶⁰ Jesionowski 2004, 22; 2006a, 74; 2006b, 72; 2016, 161–162; Kąsinowski 2010, 44.

⁶¹ Taking into account chronological spans fluctuation, the time difference between the commencement of works on the castle Malbork and the castells in Papowo Biskupie and Lipienek could have been several years, but accepting the closest dates, it

is possible that these investments started practically at the same time (about 1280).

⁶² Wasik 2016a, 49–59; 2018a, 43, 47, 49; 2020e, 539, 544, 549.

⁶³ Skibiński 1994, 29.

⁶⁴ Cf. Arszczyński 1993; Clasen 1927, 209–210; Frycz 1978, 20–21; Herrmann 2009.

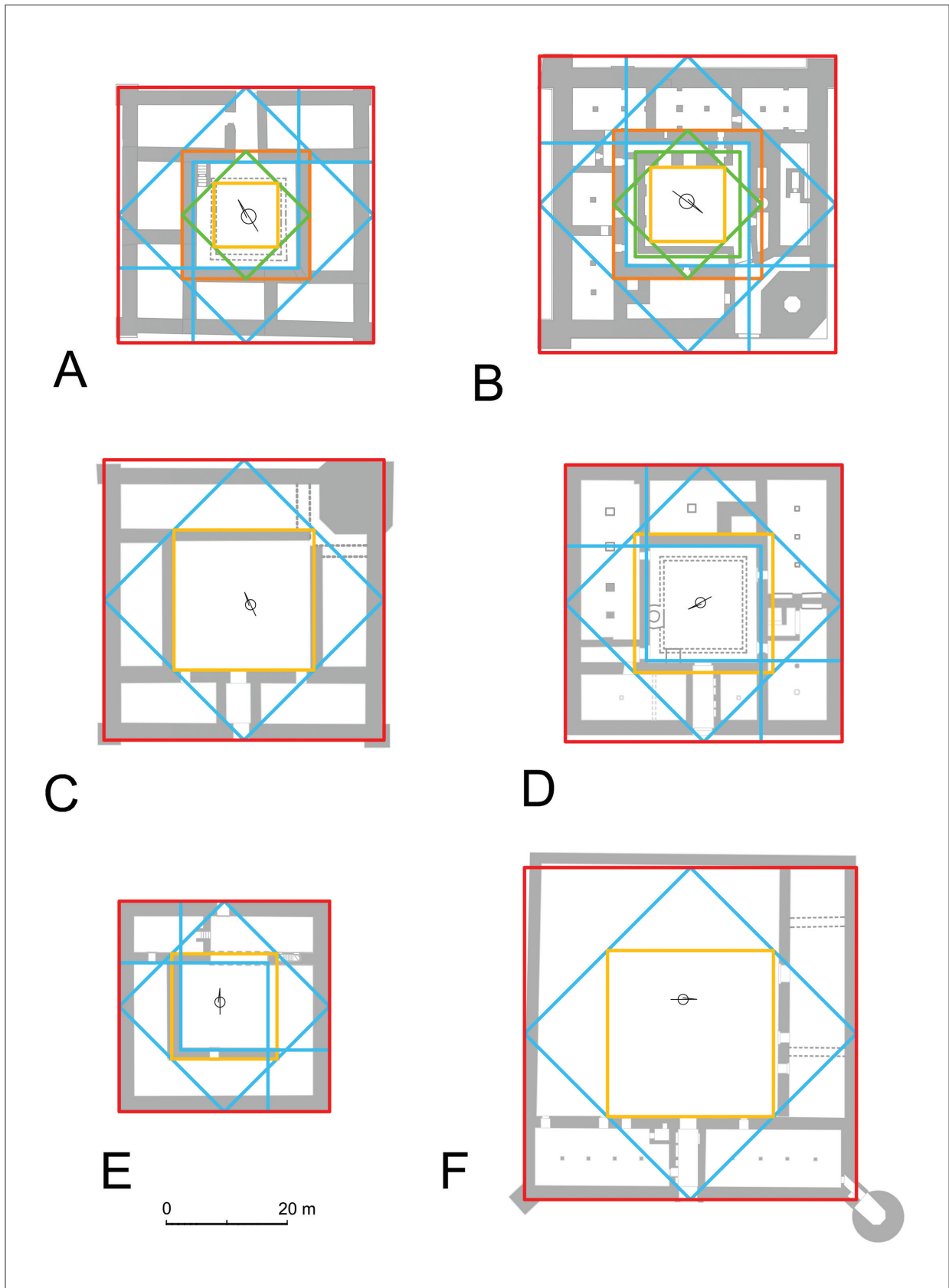


Fig. 5. Examples of *ad quadratum* designing of Teutonic castells from different periods: A – Papowo Biskupie (about 1280–1300); B – Brodnica (second quarter of the 14th century); C – Gniez (first quarter of the 14th century); D – Ostróda (mid-14th century); E – Mała Nieszawka (second half of the 14th century); F – Barciany (fourth quarter of the 14th century) (drawing by B. Wasik).

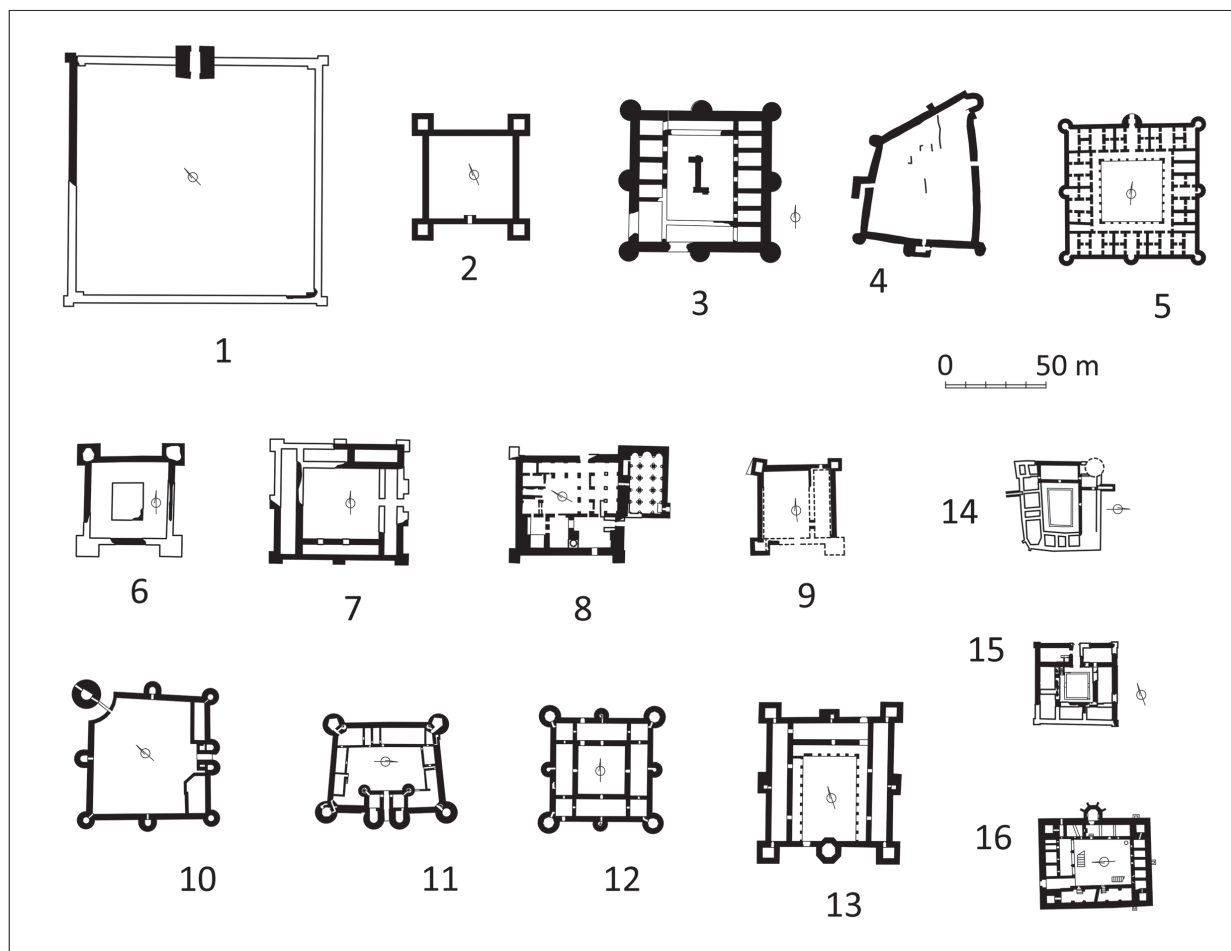


Fig. 6. Examples of castells from different periods, cultures and regions: 1 – Zawiyet Umm el Rakhm (Egypt, 19th Dynasty); 2 – Zarai (Roman Empire, Tunisia, 6th century); 3 – Farashband (Sasanid Iran, 5th century?); 4 – Marakoul (Sudan, 6th–7th century); 5 – Usais (Umayyad Caliphate, Syria, about 705–715); 6 – Blanchegardle (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 7 – Baldwins Castle (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 8 – Bethgibelin (Israel, late Antiquity – 1134–1136); 9 – Castellum Regis (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 10 – Dourdan (France, before 1222); 11 – Harlech (Wales, 1283–1290); 12 – Catania (Italy, after 1239); 13 – Augusta (Italy, after 1232); 14 – Písek (Bohemia, mid-13th century); 15 – Papowo Biskupie (Poland, about 1280–1300); 16 – Diósgyőr (Hungary, about 1360) (drawing and additions by B. Wasik, sources: 1–3, 5–7, 10–13: Schicht 2018; 4: Łopaciuk *et al.* 2014; 14: Durdík 1994; 15: Wasik 2016a; 16: Olszacki 2011).

reys' functions. In Teutonic castles, unlike in monasteries, the central residential and representational rooms typical of those structures, including the central reception hall (in Teutonic castles – a refectory), are situated on the first floor. The presence of spacious chapels is not reason enough to attribute to the castles the architectonic features of a monastery, because such temples were also standard in, e.g., castles of Bohemian kings.⁶⁵ Admittedly, the Middle East saw the continuation of a tradition of building castells from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages, but in Western Europe the tradition of erecting this type

of strongholds collapsed together with the decline of the Western Roman Empire.⁶⁶ Western European knights had contact with structures of that type in the Middle East during the first crusades, not only using the old existing ones, but erecting new castells in the 12th century, e.g. in the Ascalon area⁶⁷ (Fig. 6). Quadrangular castles with quadrangular corner towers and peripheral enclosures were utilized by the knights orders, but they were not the only types used by them and frequently those objects had not been erected by them (like Bethgibelin used by the Knights Hospitaller). The Teutonic Knights

⁶⁵ Cf. Durdík, Bolina 2001, 18–29, 52–62; Záruba 2014, 79–180.

⁶⁶ Schicht 2018, 532–544, 595–598.

⁶⁷ Kennedy 2015, 55–57, 63–65; Schicht 2018, 546.

were also donated this type of a stronghold in 1220 (*Castellum Regis*). Alas, after the Crusaders' defeat at the end of the 12th century and the loss of the majority of territories, the regular castell type was given up, due to the development of the military art and siege techniques. In the 13th century castells were generally replaced by the new, irregularly planned hilltop castles with elaborate fortification systems. The Teutonic Knights also left *Castellum Regis*, moving to Monfort, representing a different stronghold type.⁶⁸ The model of a regular castle, therefore, could not have been transferred directly from the Holy Land to Prussia, where colonization opened with a period of constructing wood and earth strongholds and irregular structures, and castells only appeared a few decades later. There is no doubt, however, that contacts from the 12th century initiated erecting the first castells in Western Europe – in the beginning in the domains of the Normans and Plantagenets and in Spain.⁶⁹ We can observe a certain regularity through the centuries – castells were erected by strong centralized territorial authorities. Apart from military values, these repeated forms manifested power with their monumental and theatrical character. In Europe, from about 1200 and during all the 13th century, castells were built in the properties of monarchs who wished to fulfil centralistic programmes: King Philip Augustus in France, Frederick II Hohenstauf – first in the Rhineland and later in Sicily and the south of Italy – King Přemysl Ottokar II in Bohemia, and Edward I in Wales, Scotland and Ireland⁷⁰ (Fig. 6). That semantics differentiated castells from the seats of aristocrats and knights predominant until then, namely, donjons, which as domiciles of particular aristocratic houses referred to a higher individualism, but at the same time were smaller and cheaper to build. Against the background of 13th century Europe, we can probably see the reasons for accepting a castell model by the Teutonic Order in Prussia. That form perfectly suited the Corporation's needs in building a centralized rulership. Teutonic castles are characterized by a consequence in using a repeatable form with a greater geometrical symmetry and mutual compatibility than in other discussed building types (Fig. 7). This depicted perfectly the monolithic character of the Order being a compact elite of the country, and also projected a sense of order. A number of similar monumental castells scattered around the state of Teutonic Prussia were a clear sign of the state idea and the centrally governed domain of knight-monks. It was

a unique state and unique governing elite – both secular and spiritual, *milites Christi*, whose destiny was to defend the believers and fight against the enemies of Christianity. They built in Prussia the ideal Divine Order, symbolized by their ideal castles. Apart from this earthly meaning, in the Order propaganda the castells gained also an additional one – with their geometrical symmetry and harmony, they depicted the celestial realm. Monolithic and majestic in form, strengthened with fortified elements like wall walks, crenellation at the tops of towers and huge *bergfrieds*,⁷¹ the Teutonic castles were perceived not only as seats of the landlords but also as strongholds of Christ's knights, defending Christianity from the infernal powers. The symbolism and semantics of a castell, worked out in the 1270s–1280s, was so strongly related to self-perception, ideology and power demonstration as well as to the role of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia that castles of that type were erected for about 130 years.⁷² We must not omit the question of Teutonic castles' defensive value, with the presence of protruding corner towers, enabling flank defence. At the end of the 12th century, developments in siege techniques in the Middle East caused a gradual replacement, based probably on Armenian builders' experience, of quadrangular towers with round ones, more resistant to bombardment and tunnelling into, and reducing the size of the blind spot. That type of towers also became a feature of so-called French castells of Philip Augustus, was accepted by English kings and built in the Rhineland.⁷³ Bohemia and the neighbouring lands shaped their own Central European type castells (castles of Přemysl Ottokar II), which, according to older traditions, were still equipped with quadrangular towers, but, contrary to, e.g., southern Italian castles, those were not significantly projected from the walls and therefore did not meet the requirements of flank defence.⁷⁴ This was probably a result of the fact that the siege technique in Central Europe was not developed as much as in the Middle East and Western Europe. Deficiencies in effective flank defence characterize also Teutonic castells. In Prussia, corner towers are even more reduced (Figs 1, 7), so much so that in the oldest castells they had only forms of delicately accentuated, *avant-corps* corner turrets, sometimes so small that they had no interior at all (Papowo Biskupie, Malbork), or in some cases put up simply on tops of circumferential wall corners (Golub). Only in later castells (Gniew, Radzyń Chełmiński) did a little bigger corner towers appear, but from about the

⁶⁸ Boas 2006, 116–122, 125–126; Kennedy 2015, 84, 169–171.

⁶⁹ Schicht 2018, 546, 551, 599.

⁷⁰ Schicht 2018, 552–573, 599–602.

⁷¹ This was the intention behind the form of towers in Brodnica and probably in Gdańsk (Torbus 2014, 197–198, 230).

⁷² Kutzner 1995, 44–64; Kwiatkowski 2012, 85–87, 103–104; 2019, 68–76; Pospieszny 2009, 80; Skibiński 1994, 32–35.

⁷³ Durdík 1994, 9–14; Kennedy 2015, 151–153; Schicht 2018, 551, 599.

⁷⁴ Durdík 1994, 140–141.

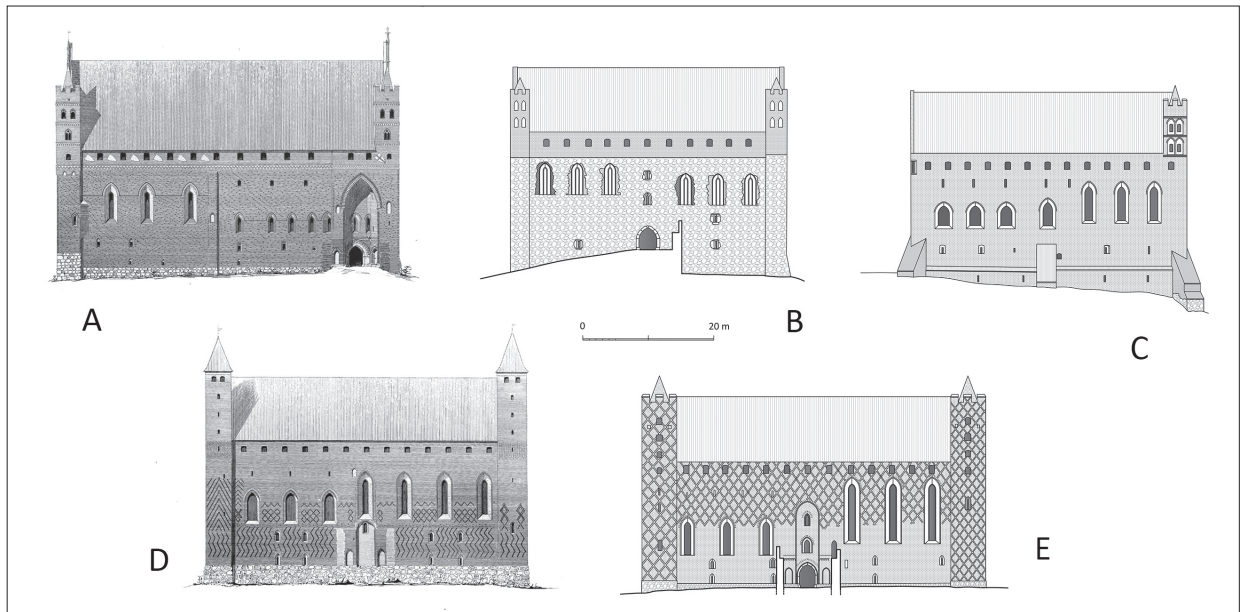


Fig. 7. Facades of the main wings of the Teutonic Knights' castles: A – Malbork (after Steinbrecht 1888); B – Papowo Biskupie; C – Golub; D – Gniew; E – Radzyń Chełmiński (drawing by B. Wasik).

half of the 14th century they were in fact abandoned completely, de facto reducing the castells to peripheral four-winged buildings (Ostróda, Ragneta). This is further evidence of the ideological significance of the castell model, whereby its defensive character is more symbolic than real. It should be pointed out, however, that castells in Prussia were being erected after the conquest and heavy fighting had finished – at a time of rulership flourishing. They were first of all representative seats and symbols of power and administration. Giving up the latest defensive solutions did not result from a lack of possibilities or technical ignorance of the Order, as evidenced by the example of the more defensive Świecie Castle, or the quick modernization of fortifications from the end of the 14th century, when the threat of a more intense war became real again.⁷⁵

Thinking about the motivation behind adopting a castell model in Prussia, we must remember that it took place in the period of the decline of the last Crusaders' enclaves in the Holy Land. These events had impact on the significant growth of the Order's Prussian properties.⁷⁶ Simultaneously, when influence of the members of the Order's Prussian branch increased, the role of the grand master during the elections of the country masters diminished. Aspirations of Prussian Teutonic dignitaries increased, as well, and they concerned not only subser-

vient territories, but also the whole corporation,⁷⁷ which eventually led to moving the seat of the highest Order authority from Venice to Malbork. The process did not occur without obstacles, though. Grand Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, who arrived in Prussia in 1309, remained in fact in the shadows of local dignitaries, while his successor Karl von Trier was in conflict with them and ultimately left Prussia. As a result, Malbork became a permanent seat of grand masters as late as from 1324.⁷⁸ All that background and the fact that the castell model was introduced only in the Order's Prussian domains can indicate that the flourishing of castle-building in Prussia after about 1280 should be discussed in the context of the growing importance and aspirations of the emancipating Prussian branch of the Order but not of the Order as a whole. It can suggest that the choice of the castell type as a means of self-determination and ideology manifestation was made in the circle of the local Prussian master.

Direct inspiration for adapting a castell model could have come from Bohemia, since the organization units of the Order's Prussian branch were united in the 13th century with those in Bohemia and in effect there was a long tradition of Bohemian-Prussian contact.⁷⁹ Teutonic castell structures share with Central European models, e.g., the above-mentioned limited possibilities of flank defence, much more developed in other castles

⁷⁵ Torbus 2000, 64–68.

⁷⁶ Arsyński 2010, 14; Skibiński 1994, 34.

⁷⁷ Józwiak 2001, 30, 34, 38–39, 85.

⁷⁸ Józwiak 2001, 86; Józwiak, Trupinda 2011, 157–159.

⁷⁹ Jan 2013, 105–112; Józwiak 2001, 22–23.

of that type.⁸⁰ Recent research has also shown similarity in the organizing of circulation spaces in Bohemian and Teutonic castles, based on cloisters with access to particular rooms on the floor. In southern Italy, the castles' walkways system was solved differently and communication between rooms ran directly – a cloister was of secondary meaning and was not always present in the structures. Vertical circulation (through the cloister and not rooms of the ground floors and corner towers) was identical in Teutonic and Bohemian castles, but different than in ones erected by Hohenstauf. The latter, contrary to Bohemian and Teutonic structures, had no clearly separated chapels.⁸¹ But despite all these similarities with Central European castles, the Teutonic structures are much more homogeneous, ideal in their geometry and compact, so it is probably a local creative adaptation in the spirit of the castell tradition infused with Central European solutions.

The Teutonic architecture's influence on the beholder was achieved by its form, worked out by adept teams of builders, because erecting these monumental structures required highly qualified specialists and advanced brick manufacturing technology. The brickmaking mastery was manifested in transforming the techniques from monk to Gothic bond at the turn of the 13th century, but also applying full brick walls instead of ones constructed of a core made of rubble encased in mortar. The huge investments and wide range of building works were a sign of the Order's wealth and power. A repeatable construction schedule was worked out. Castells as a rule were usually constructed in a new location, which was favourable for matching their regular forms (with some exceptions, as confirmed by recent research in Lipienek, but also when encountering difficult conditions, like the presence of older earthen fortifications, but even then the builders strove to implement standard techniques). When castles were being erected on hilltops, the constructors paid exceptional attention to keeping the plan geometrical (Golub, Rogóźno). The perfectly geometrical and repeatable proportions were obtained by using the *ad quadratum* method (Fig. 5). Enormous earthworks were also undertaken to make big embankments to raise a building over the area, boosting not only its defensive value but also the architectonic effect.⁸²

Four-winged castells became characteristic bearers of the authority semantics in Prussia to such an extent that in the 14th century they were adopted also by the

Church dignitaries. Interestingly, however, while the Teutonic Order emphasized the role of the Corporation as unshakeable *milites Christi*, demonstrated by monolithic powerful castles with clearly readable military accents in the form of huge *bergfrieds*, the auto-presentation of the Church hierarchy, being de facto the feudal power in diocese domains, used similar symbolic forms, but focused more on the residences' manorial character. When the structures were equipped with central towers, as the castles in Kwidzyn or in Lidzbark Warmiński, they were of more symbolic than military/defensive character. In Lidzbark and Wąbrzeźno we can also observe placing representative stairs and ceremonial passage leading to the first floor with representative halls and residential rooms. Castells of the Church notables are characterized by greater individuality, but due to the poorer financial condition of their founders, comparing them to the castells of the Order is inadequate, because worse builders had to be employed and difficulties were often faced in completing the buildings in originally planned forms.⁸³

The culture of mediaeval Europe registered also other built structures bearing symbolic meanings, namely, the tower, which predated the castell. The tower became a *pars pro toto* of a castle and a symbol of the feudal lord, his social position and authority. There were, of course, various kinds of towers, which can be divided into: strictly defensive structures (*bergfrieds*) and residential towers (*donjons*).⁸⁴ *Bergfrieds* as a symbol of authority and the sovereign appeared as well in later castell plans, which led to an overlapping of the semantics of both forms (a high tower stood centrally in the seat of Philip Augustus in Île de la Cité in Paris, in the castle of Frederick II Hoentauf in Augusta⁸⁵ (Fig. 6: 13), and in many Teutonic castells).⁸⁶ A dwelling tower, on the other hand, became the simplest form of a castle. One building concentrated residential, representative and defensive elements, so it was economically attractive, functional and by its vertical character was a perfect manifestation of a feudal lord's position. The habitable and representative functions were more important than defensive purposes.⁸⁷ The beginnings of *donjons* (first wooden and then stone ones) go back to 10th century France, although the dating of the early mottes is not precise. Wooden towers erected on hills, and soon stone *donjons*, spread around France, England, Sicily and the south of Italy due to the Normans activities. The development of that type of buildings took place in the 11th–12th centuries. Around the Reich, first dwelling

⁸⁰ Cf. Durdík 1993.

⁸¹ Hobl 2020; in print.

⁸² More in: Wasik 2016a, 2018a, 2020d, 80–81.

⁸³ Wasik 2020e, 549–554.

⁸⁴ Jakimowicz 1979, 44, 59–61; Kajzer 2002, 47–49; Kajzer, Olszacki, 2012, 167.

⁸⁵ Schicht 2018, 554, 561.

⁸⁶ Torbus 2014, 353–354.

⁸⁷ Jaszczek 1996, 4; Jakimowicz 1979, 44; Lasek 2009, 171.



Fig. 8. Byblos (Lebanon). An example of a 12th century donjon in the Latin State in Outremer (photo by B. Wasik).

towers appeared as early as in the 10th–11th centuries, but their dynamic growth was registered in the mid-13th century, together with the weakening of the Emperor's position.⁸⁸ The same type of a feudal residence was introduced and transformed by European Crusaders also in the Holy Land, where it became a common form of a knight residence and a fortress (Fig. 8). Habitable towers were also erected by knight orders and they served as watchtowers along the pilgrimage routes, but also as centres of land property administration (e.g. Chastel Blanc / Safita of the Knights Templars). One example of a Teutonic tower of this kind is situated in Kirbat al-Manhata. It probably served the function of controlling and protecting a local quarry during construction works in the nearby castle in Montfort, and after completing that investment, it was dismantled.⁸⁹ The Teutonic Knights also used a tower-type residence in some seats in Germany and Bohemia, including Koblenz, Beuggen and Bradlo⁹⁰ (Fig. 9A). The last castle, built in the end of 13th or in the 14th century, resembles early brick castles from Prussia in its spatial arrangement. Another example is the original building of the castle in Pokrzywno from the 1270s–1280s – its short projection and limited surface let us suppose that the construction had originally been planned as a vertical one⁹¹ (Fig. 9B). The fact that during their conquest of Prussia the Knights built also wooden towers is evidenced by the information concerning the castle in Bierzłowo,

in which in the 1260s the defenders were hiding from the Prussian tribes.⁹² On the other hand, bigger castles were better for commandery seats, and the castles described above were preferred in that capacity.

Starting in the 1320s–1330s, the Teutonic state saw a change in the types of administrative structures being created. The new units (*vogt*, *pfleger*) were subjected directly to the grand masters and supported the central treasury. Therefore they became more desired than commanderies, established before that time.⁹³ The castles being the new centres were seats of officials and not of convents, and one of small castle patterns was just a tower seat. It was a perfect residence for a single official and towers of this type were established throughout Europe due to their association with feudal power. Generally, these objects can be divided into two categories – simple dwelling towers and tower houses.⁹⁴ An example of the former is the *pfleger*'s seat in Elk. First certain information concerning the brick building comes from 1398 (it was completed in 1406).⁹⁵ The structure was a central element of a wood and earth castle situated on an island and it was erected on the plan of a short rectangle sized 16.5 × 12 m, equipped with cellars and four overground storeys⁹⁶ – all with wooden ceilings. Archaeological explorations have given grounds to conclude that it had an additional half-timbered upper floor. The functional division was typical of that type of buildings – the ground

⁸⁸ Kajzer, Olszacki 2012, 167–169; Lasek 2013, 27–32, 263–272.

⁸⁹ Boas 2006, 108–112; Kennedy 2015, 58–63, 101–107; Stanzl 2012, 376.

⁹⁰ Durdík 2000, 79; Liessem 2004, 104–110.

⁹¹ Wasik 2016b, 247, 252.

⁹² Piotr z Dusburga 2004, 135.

⁹³ Józwiak 2001, 137–138.

⁹⁴ Piotr Lasek tried recently to systematize the unprecise terminology functioning in the Polish literature (Lasek 2011; 2013, 279).

⁹⁵ Herman 2015a, 13–15; 2015b, 25–29; Wilde 1988, 127.

⁹⁶ We are not certain if all four were brick structures from the very beginning. The research author does not exclude that initially only two storeys were made of brick, although the first option seems to be more convincing (Herman 2015a, 34–35).

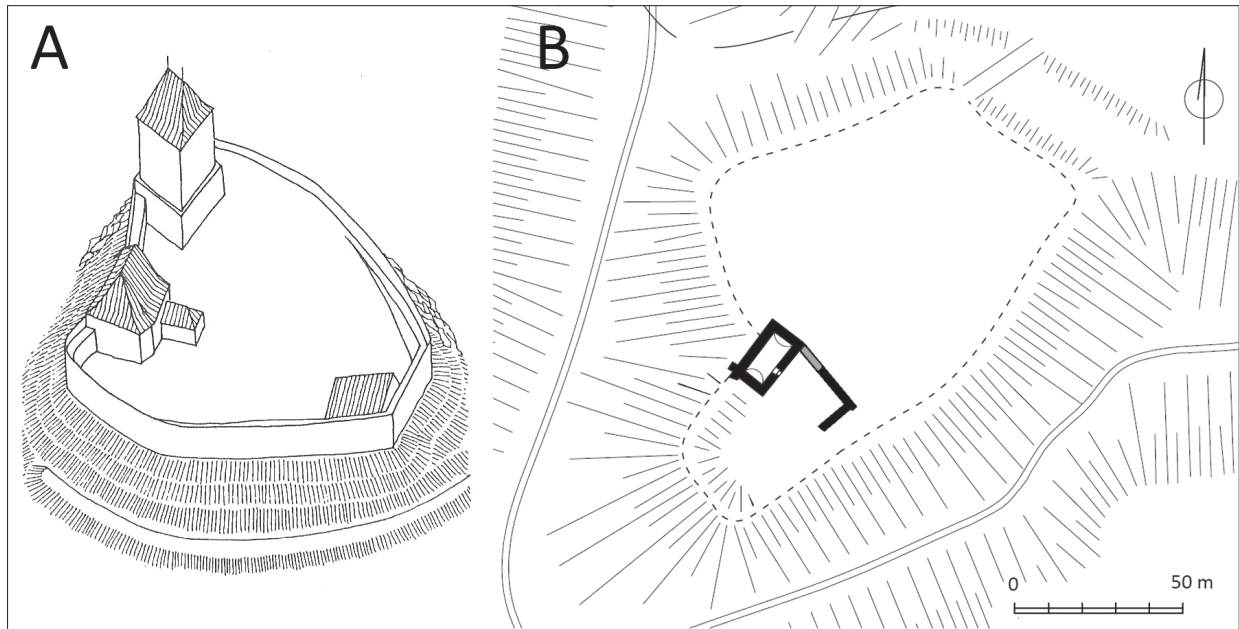


Fig. 9. Bradlo: A – reconstruction of the appearance of the late 13th century Teutonic castle in Bohemia (Durdík 2004) and Pokrzywno; B – Teutonic castle in Chelmno Land in the first stage in the late 13th century (Wasik 2016a).

floor served as the household domain (including kitchens), the first floor roomed a representative hall. The entrance was placed at the height of the first floor, accessible via stairs located in the thickness of the north-eastern wall.⁹⁷ Apart from brick towers, there were also structures made of wood and timber frame, resembling those from the seat of *pflegers* in Pień – a building from the beginning of 14th century.⁹⁸

The other group of tower seats refers to more massive objects – tower houses (*Festes Haus* or *Hohen Haus*).⁹⁹ The castles in Unisław (*pfleger's* seat) and Sątoczno (originally a commandery but from 1347 – a seat of the forests official) can be regarded as the oldest objects of that type appearing in Prussia. The building of both can be dated to around the second quarter to half of the 14th century, corresponding to the period when this type of objects were constructed in German and Bohemian lands (e.g. Dražice, Litovice).¹⁰⁰ The tower house in Sątoczno was erected on a hilltop with a rectangular plan (sized 26.3 × 16.1 m, with the western wall slightly diverged). Its poor state of preservation does not allow us to reconstruct internal divisions accurately.¹⁰¹ The central

element of the castle in Unisław, recently unearthed, was, on the contrary, a spacious building with floor plan size of about 16 × 30 m, occupying the whole southwestern part of the plot. In the explored section, the researchers did not identify any cellars, and similarly to Sątoczno, the internal divisions are not identified. The building's proportions indicate a tower house construction, but moderate wall thickness (1.7 m) in relation to its volume make us suppose that only the ground floor, which served standard domestic functions, and the first floor, being the residence of the *pfleger* and rooming a reception hall, were executed in brickwork. The upper storeys (warehouse and defensive area) may have been constructed in timber framing.¹⁰² Other examples of that type are later and were probably erected during the fourth quarter of 14th and the beginning of 15th century (Giżycko, Nowy Jasiniec,¹⁰³ Bezląwki and Puck). The tower houses in Nowy Jasiniec and Giżycko (Fig. 10) are massive structures with thick walls (2–2.6 m), with a plan of a short rectangle (22.6 × 12.8 m and 22 × 14.5 m, respectively). The Giżycko building is three storeys high, the one in Nowy Jasiniec also had a (half-timbered) fourth storey as

⁹⁷ Herman 2015a, 31–38, 71; 2015b, 33–39; Wilde 1988, 129.

⁹⁸ Poliński 2013, 20–24, 170–177.

⁹⁹ Lasek 2011, 38–39.

¹⁰⁰ Lasek 2011, 39; 2013, 164–165.

¹⁰¹ Andrzejewski, Kajzer 2005, 201–202.

¹⁰² Wasik 2018c, 54–56; 2020d, 46–48.

¹⁰³ Some researchers claim that the bottom stone part of the tower house in Nowy Jasiniec had been erected by Pomeranian dukes even before 1309 (Nawrocki 1966, 29–30). However, this seems very improbable and the sole fact that this part of the structure was made of stone cannot be a convincing argument, because that building technique was also applied elsewhere in Teutonic Prussia.

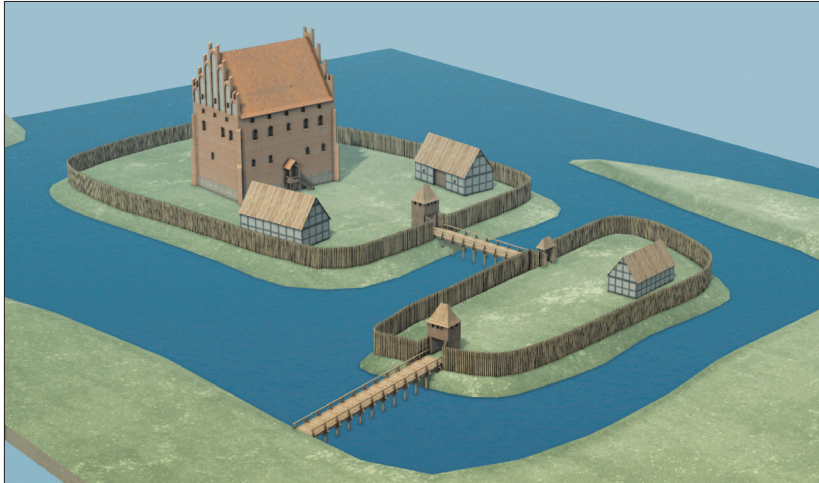


Fig. 10. Giżycko. Reconstruction of the appearance of the castle at the end of the 14th century (digital reconstruction by P. Moszczyński, concept by B. Wasik).

a result of a 16th century redevelopment, although it can be supposed that the new structure replaced the old mediaeval one.¹⁰⁴ The older cellars located under the palace in Jegławki, as presented in popular science literature, let us suppose that a tower house with similar proportions and size was also located there.¹⁰⁵ An analysis made by Grzegorz Białuński would have us reject that interpretation, though, and identify those cellars rather with an early modern manor, although that question certainly requires further research.¹⁰⁶ The tower houses in Beżławki and Puck, in turn, had more elongated floor plans (25.6 × 11.8 m and 22.5 × 10.5 m, respectively). The building in Beżławki originally had as many as four or five storeys,¹⁰⁷ while the one in Puck was probably a three-storey house. It was mentioned as a tower in an early modern description.¹⁰⁸ The quoted buildings usually had more or less expanded wood and earth embankments and baileys.

Chronologically later Teutonic tower houses were being erected simultaneously with rapid development of this type of structures in the Polish Crown (mainly founded by patricians and knights, e.g. in Bydlin, Gołańcz, Szubin).¹⁰⁹ Reviewing castles of that period, we find an interesting example of the castle in Sadłowo, in Dobrzyń Land, which has a particular formal resemblance to tower houses of Teutonic officials discussed earlier, and was probably constructed by a Prussian building team.¹¹⁰ The fact confirms the universal character of that structure type as a seat of a feudal.

The semantics of the tower as a symbol of a sovereign and of feudal authority was also used by grand masters when expanding the palace in the state residence in Malbork. It is a very successful combination of a donjon and a palace, devised during building works performed in the last decades of 14th century.¹¹¹ Its protruding and perfectly elaborated western tower house was a clear symbol of power of the grand master, who was in fact the ruler of Prussia (Fig. 11). Choosing that form of the seat as a power manifestation was not at all accidental. The 14th century brought the development of court life in Europe and the revival of donjons as rulers' residences. They were built by the most eminent personalities of that period – the Pope in Avignon, the Emperor in Karlstein, the King of France in Vincennes (Fig. 12). Between the 80s and 90s of that century the residential royal Danish Tower in the Wawel Castle was also erected.¹¹²

The 14th century development of chivalrous and court culture was associated with an affirmation of joy and optimism, with their rituals and grand ceremonial way of life, but also with a simultaneous crisis of ancient values. The Church had sacralized the old male-military values of knighthood, the embodiment of which were the Crusades, but condemned the wish of earthly joys. Now the pleasures of warfare, hunting, admiring nature and courtship had won. Combined with theatricality and power affirmation they are depicted in rulers' investments, as in the case of Karlstein of Charles IV, the Holy Roman Emperor.¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ Herrmann 2007, 577; Lasek 2013, 189; Kajzer *et al.* 2001, 175; Nawrocki 1966, 30.

¹⁰⁵ Jackiewicz-Garniec, Garniec 2006, 164–165.

¹⁰⁶ Białuński 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Brillowski 2013, 124–128; Wólkowski 2013, 111–112.

¹⁰⁸ Kruppé, Milewska 2014, 38–45, 59–60.

¹⁰⁹ Lasek 2013, 151–168, 275–276.

¹¹⁰ Kajzer, Pietrzak 2004, 263.

¹¹¹ Herrmann 2019, 69–325; Jarzewicz 2006, 164–165; Józwiak, Trupinda 2011, 205–209; Torbus 2014, 327–332.

¹¹² Kajzer, Olszacki 2012, 180–183, 192–194.

¹¹³ DUBY 1983, 207–210, 251–259.



Fig. 11. Malbork. The Grand Masters Palace from the west (photo by B. Wasik).

Element of that theatricality and chivalrous ritual of life appeared also in creating new military orders, e.g. the Order of the Blue Garter, founded by Edward III of England in reference to the Knights of the Round Table. The form taken from religious brotherhoods was to serve secular rituals and the order members were to represent and propagate the new etiquette.¹¹⁴ Symptoms of court culture and theatricality can be also observed in the Teutonic Order state in Prussia, for instance in holding the cyclical 'Lithuanian cruises' for the European knighthood.¹¹⁵ Another example is the siege of the castle in Złotoria in 1409, when the Teutonic Knights invited women and girls from Toruń, transforming the capturing of the stronghold into a performance.¹¹⁶ The court culture was also expressed in the growing importance of comfort in residences, which can be observed in Prussian



Fig. 12. Vincennes. Hunting scene with the castle in the background (*Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tr%C3%AAs_Riches_Heures_du_Duc_de_Berry, accessed: 10.12.2021).

architecture, in both the castles of the Church hierarchs and the residences of the grand masters.¹¹⁷ Following these patterns, and reacting to the simultaneous decline of the monastic rule,¹¹⁸ the Order started building separate houses for commanders and dignitaries, placed in the baileys of the castles.¹¹⁹

The other sign of the courtly way of life of the 14th century elites was that many European rulers erected residences situated outside capitals. Meant to offer escape from the noisy urban life into nature, the residences were frequently surrounded by gardens or nearby woods, and featured menageries with exotic animals, but also local fauna, for hunting. We can list a number of such residences, including Visegrád of Louis I of Hungary, French Vincennes of Charles V the Wise (Fig. 12) or in the Polish Crown – Łobzów and Niepołomice of Casimir III the Great.¹²⁰ Not to be outdone by lay monarchs, in the 1370s, the grand master of the Teutonic Order decided to erect his own residence in Sztum (Fig. 13), situated not far from Malbork. Thanks to research of the recent years, we

¹¹⁴ DUBY 1983, 250–251.

¹¹⁵ Kwiatkowski 2016, 129.

¹¹⁶ Długosz 2009, 38.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Szweda 2019.

¹¹⁸ Biskup, Labuda 1986, 380.

¹¹⁹ Józwiak, Trupinda 2012, 110–248; Torbus 2014, 284; Wasik 2020a, 237–240.

¹²⁰ DUBY 1983, 259, 266–270; Olszacki 2010, 721–722, 727–729.

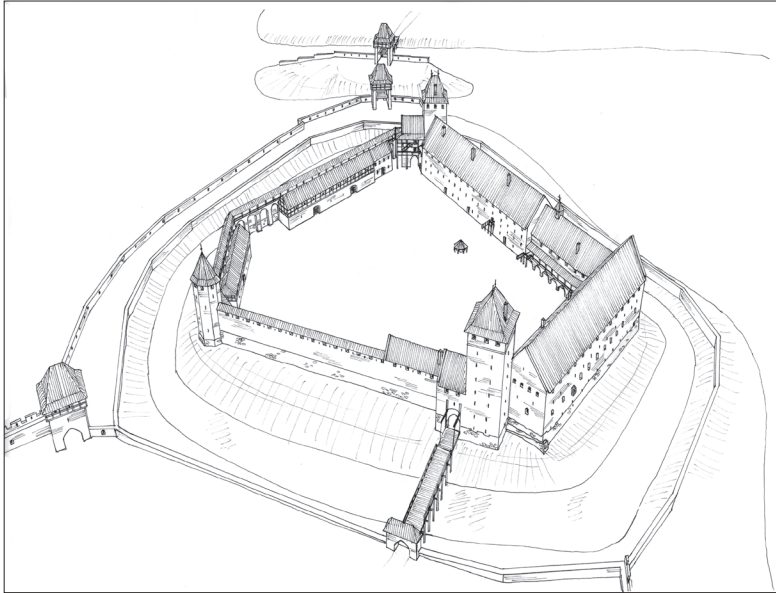


Fig. 13. Sztum. Reconstruction of the appearance of the castle around 1420 based on research from 2019–2021 (drawing by B. Wasik).

have more knowledge on the object.¹²¹ It was a one-segment structure with an irregular plan, situated between two lakes. Apart from a central house being a seat of the *vogt* and residential buildings, it included the residence of the grand master. Two big gates led to the castle from the west and east, which was senseless from the defensive point of view, but served representative purposes. The residence's architecture referred to the old symbolism of the tower (like in, e.g., Vincennes), placing three tall towers along the circumferential wall, only one of which had any real defensive values (the military significance of the other two was limited, since they had thin walls and included dwelling rooms). The general function of these towers at the end of 14th century was only representative: manifesting authority, because from the military point of view, they were already anachronistic. Sources inform us that from the 1390s on the grand masters visited the castle in Sztum very often and in various seasons of the year. It must have been a comfortable and safe location, as one of the Teutonic officials encouraged the grand master to take shelter there during an epidemic.¹²² The castle was erected nearby forest complexes, and although monastic rules prohibited hunting, the Knights did not obey them. Being the land owners, they controlled all rights concerning hunting in Prussia, and with time (in the 14th–15th centuries) the prohibition was limited, and some exceptions introduced. Source evidence confirming participation in hunting of the Order dignitaries has been preserved from the times of Grand Master Dietrich

von Altenburg (1335–1341) and Sztum is pointed out as one of the places being a hunting base. It is known that in 1408 the Sztum area hosted Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen, who hunted there. Moreover, from at least 1401 to 1420, when it was moved to Malbork, a menagerie functioned at the Sztum Castle, providing the game for hunting for grand masters and their guests. Stag and moose were generally kept, and the game was specially brought, e.g., from the Czluchów commandery. We also have information about keeping exotic animals, like monkeys.¹²³

Observing the Teutonic state in Prussia between the 14th and 15th centuries, we are able to register co-occurrence of various forms of castles, with older and newer semantics, serving the manifestation of ideology and of the ruler's status. The last commandery castles were still being built (Ragneta), directed in particular to knights migrating here from the West, to demonstrate the local order, an efficiently functioning, well-organized centralized state, ruled by the united Corporation of the military order, protecting the Christian oecumene and fighting against infernal powers. At the same time, many official's seats got tower forms, emphasizing the secular prerogatives of the Teutonic administration, and the grand masters, following the trends of 14th century European culture, built a grand palace in their Malbork seat and a residence in the nearby Sztum, where they could lead comfortable court life and host eminent visitors, in keeping with their power as rulers of Prussia.

¹²¹ Wasik 2020a; 2020c.

¹²² Józwiak, Trupinda 2017, 35, 38; Neitmann 1990, 67–68.

¹²³ Militzer 1997, 326–343, 352–357.

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