



**Maria Sławowska-Korczak, *Zamek krzyżacki w Świeciu. Próba rekonstrukcji zamku wysokiego w średniowieczu* [*The Teutonic Order's Castle in Schwetz. An attempt at reconstructing the High Castle in the Middle Ages*], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2014, 222 pp. + 70 illustrations, ISBN: 978-83-231-3247-9.**

Among the numerous publications concerning the late medieval defensive architecture of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, a monograph on the castle in Schwetz (Pol. Świecie) by Maria Sławowska-Korczak is of particular significance. It is a very successful study which combines archaeology, architecture and history. The monograph is composed of three main chapters providing detailed analysis of the entire castle complex as a whole as well as the spatial arrangement of its main part – the house of the convent, which is sometimes referred to as the ‘High Castle’. Sławowska’s research is based on a combination of heuristic and hermeneutic approaches and its depth and scale is impressive. Her analysis combines evidence from historical sources from different periods, including the Teutonic Order’s, Polish and Prussian periods, as well as archaeological reports recording some limited excavations carried out in the area of the High Castle and archaeological inspections and supervisions of building projects in the area in the 2nd half of the 20th and early 21st century. The latter group of sources includes numerous, hitherto unpublished materials, particularly from the Pracownia Konserwacji Zabytków (Conservation of Antiquities Workshop). Finally, the author also draws from the very valuable, though not very extensive, iconographic material from the mid-17th century as well as from the turn of the 18th century. Such a diverse body of source material serves as a good basis for the complex, multi layered and comprehensive analysis which is additionally supported by valuable comparisons with results of studies of other Teutonic Order’s castles that had comparable layouts or functions. Overall, therefore, the monograph is highly informative and abounds in new knowledge.

The publication opens with a concise ‘Introduction’ (pp. 11–26) in which the author formulates the main aims of the work, namely to “attempt to reconstruct the spatial layout of the High Castle in Schwetz (Świecie) during the Teutonic Order’s period”, that is from the time of its construction, around 1335, until 1461 (pp. 11–12), and to “reconsider the established views that are uncritically accepted in the German and Polish historiography since the 19th century” (p. 13). Following the stating of the aims, the author presents the written sources used in

her analysis (including Teutonic Order's inventories, witness testimony protocols from 1320, 1339, and 1428, late medieval chronicles and early-modern registers from the Polish period, as well as book of expenses of the city of Thorn (Toruń), which details the city's expenses connected to the expedition, the siege and the maintenance of the castle conquered in 1461 (pp. 13–16). Up till now this latter source has not been used to a great degree. The author describes the iconographic material valuable for the study, notably the depiction of the castle drawn by Erik Dahlberg in 1655, and three images of the keep from the turn of the 18th century, that come from three churches in Świecie (pp. 16–19).

The introduction also provides a history of around 150 years of research concerning the history and morphology of the castle which was began by Eduard Römer, and continued by Conrad Steinbrecht, Karl Heinz Clasen, Jan Modesta Łobocki, Ireneusz Sławiński, Krystyna Kalinowska, Marian Arszyński and, more recently, by Tomasz Torbus, Sławomir Józwiak and Janusz Trupinda. The author's discussion of all these works (pp. 19–23) allows the reader to gain substantial knowledge of the current state of research on this topic. In the last part of the introduction the author discusses the different stages of archaeological excavations and architectural works conducted in the area of the convent's house in Świecie in 1959, 1969 and 2015, and provides a short description of the obtained results and acquired artefacts (pp. 23–25).

The first chapter ('A genesis of the commandery and the construction of the castle in Schwetz', pp. 27–53) is purely historical in nature. It concerns the creation of a separate Teutonic Order's administrative area, a commandery, centred on the castle in Świecie, after the Order's conquest of the Southern part of Eastern Pomerania in 1309. The author discusses previous hypotheses concerning the chronology of the creation of the Schwetz commandery, which, due to the lack of unequivocal evidence in the source material, is unclear, and concludes that it was most likely created in the late 1320s. (pp. 27–35). In the second section of the chapter, the author considers the issue of the chronology of the construction of the castle the Teutonic Order's castle in Schwetz and its spatial relation to the stronghold of the Pomeranian Dukes, which predated it. Seized by the Teutonic Order in 1309, Sławska-Korczak refers to this fortification as: 'the second Pomeranian stronghold', and dates its construction to 1245, though its exact location and the topographical conditions at the time remain unclear (pp. 36–39). Sławska-Korczak supports the thesis that there was no continuation between the second Pomeranian stronghold and the castle built by the Teutonic Order but rather that the new, Teutonic Order's castle was built in a new location, near the older stronghold. This view gains support from the fact that none of the three seasons of archaeological excavations provided any evidence of habitation in the

area of the high castle dating from the early medieval period (in this context before 1250). The author accepts the possibility that the Pomeranian stronghold might have been located in the area later occupied by the Lower Castle of the Teutonic Order's convent (pp. 40–41). She also refers to the current literature of the subject and dates the construction of the Teutonic Order's High Castle between 1335 and 1350 (pp. 41–44).

Chapter one is further supplemented by considerations concerning the functioning of the town of Schwetz (Świecie) in the later medieval period. The town had been founded by the Order in 1338. Originally, it was located on a slope by the Vistula river, north of the castle, but was later to the valley west of the convent, between the Vistula and the Vda rivers (pp. 46–50). Spławska-Korczak rightly points out that this relocation increased the defensive potential of the castle compound because, in its new location the town, which after 1375 was also gradually encircled by a wall, protected the only place from which the castle could be reached by land (p. 46). The final section of the chapter deals with a brief description of the history of the castle after it was conquered by the Prussian Confederation in 1461, till the modern period. The castle sustained significant damage during the sack by the armies of the King of Sweden during the so called, Second Northern War in 1655 (pp. 50–53).

The second chapter of the monograph, entitled 'The topography and spatial layout of the castle', is devoted to the issues of the localization and spatial planning of the entire castle compound (pp. 54–80). First, the author considers the fortification elements which extent beyond the outline of the High Castle and attempts to provide some analysis of the structures forming the Lower Castle. The author discusses, therefore, both of the moats: one separating the Higher and Lower castle and the other, located between the Lower castle and the area of the castle's foreground (pp. 55–56), as well as other elements such as: the wooden drawbridge over the first moat, which had been repaired numerous times in the later Middle Ages and in the early modern period (pp. 56–58) and the area of the so called 'parcham' or 'zwinger', which in Teutonic Order's architecture refers to the space between the walls of the High Castle (convent) and a lower outer wall surrounding it (pp. 63–67). The existence of the parcham wall made of stones and bricks was archaeologically confirmed in Świecie in 1969 (pp. 58–62) and its analysis in the text includes consideration of its corners where there were additional, protruding walls which might have supported square corner towers that were 4 to 5 m. wide (pp 62–63). Spławska-Korczak points out that the area of the *parcham* had both military and non-military functions. It served as additional obstacle defending the High Castle and as a place to station archers and artillery (in later periods), but it also served for example as the location of the convent's

graveyard, the tailor's workshop serving the convent and even as a place to stroll. Sławska-Korczak also emphasizes that the *parcham* (which was usually between 9.5–10.5 m. wide) did not have to necessarily be a flat area. In the southern part of the *parcham*, the ground level near the *parcham*'s outer wall was 3 meters lower than the ground near the walls of the High Castle. Alongside this outer wall there was a flat path, 2.5 m. wide, which was probably used when archers manned the wall. The western part of the *parcham* was flat and probably, this was also the case for the northern part of the *parcham* where the cemetery might have been located. Sławska-Korczak also suggests that the *parcham* area might have been divided by additional walls constructed perpendicularly to its outer wall. The existence of such crosswise walls in the south-western corner of the *parcham* area is indicated by the 1655 depiction of the Świecie castle by Erik Dahlberg.

Sławska-Korczak rejects the old hypotheses according to which an infirmary and bathhouse in Świecie, which are both mentioned in documents from 1408, were located within the High Castle. Instead, she suggests that both of these structures probably formed part of the Lower Castle (pp. 68–69). She also argues that the *gemach* (building) of the castle's commander, mentioned for the first time in 1415, was also located in the Lower Castle. This structure housed the private quarters of Schwetz's commanders, located on the first floor, probably together with a private chapel, as well as quarters of lay servants of the Order known as *diener* (ground floor) and an undercroft with commander's cellars (pp. 69–71). According to Sławska-Korczak, the armoury and gun-powder storage room were also located in the commander's *gemach* though earlier scholars believed that these structures were located in the High Castle (p. 70). In the southern section of the Lower Castle the stables were housed (p. 69).

In the second subsection, focusing on the layout of the Teutonic Order's convent, the High Castle, in Schwetz, Sławska-Korczak addresses two, closely linked questions; first what were the architectural models that influenced the layout of the High Castle in Schwetz and second, whether the High Castle consisted of two or four wings. Concerning the first of these issues, she points out that the layout of the Teutonic Order's convent in Schwetz is unusual because it includes four cylindrical, corner towers which protrude from the main line of convent's walls and thus, could protect it with flanking fire (p. 71). For the most part she agrees with the interpretations of Steinbrecht and Schmidt, according to which the castle was modelled on French or Rheinland castles. She also follows Clasen, who argued that the castle was a rare example of an 'intermediate' style which made use of morphological and stylistic models from between the older 'rich' style; from second quarter of the 14th century and the 'reductionist' style typical of the last decades of the 14th century (pp. 71–73). Sławska-Korczak also accepts the theory of Tor-

bus, according to whom enforcing the defensive systems of the Schwetz castle was due to the need to construct fortifications which could withstand prolonged and more complex sieges conducted by Polish rulers (p. 74).

The following discussion of the layout of the High Castle touches upon the issue of 'reductionism', discussed by Clasen. On the basis of iconographical material, archaeological and architectural research, Szałowska-Korczak argues convincingly, that the High Castle in Schwetz consisted only of two full wings (the northern and eastern wings). However, her conclusions differ from the ones offered by previous scholars supporting the view that the convent had just two wings, because she points out that the other two sides of the convent were not left completely empty. They were also occupied by buildings attached to the outer walls of the High Castle – structures that were lower than the two wings of the convent but equally well built (their height was partially increased in the post-medieval period). Curiously, even though Szałowska-Korczak rejects Clasen's hypotheses (supported also by Kalinowska) that the convent in Świecie had just two wings due to lack of funds, she does not attempt to explain why two sides of the High Castle (southern and western one, where the gate was located) were executed in such a 'reductionist' manner and did not form part of the main convent structures (pp. 73–80). Thus, the argument that this was due to the lack of funds remains plausible though a second possible explanation is that the reduced form of the convent was caused by the fact that it had few brethren and required fewer servants.

The last, third section of the monograph, entitled: 'Forms and functions of the wings and towers of the castle' (pp. 81–202) is the longest and includes a detailed analysis of the architectural morphology and functional role of the wings and towers of the High Castle. The first discussed architectural element is the north-western tower, which the author refers to as the 'main tower'. Szałowska-Korczak emphasizes that the tower was probably constructed in two, separate phases, which, however, were not stretched far from each other in time, as has been suggested by some scholars (p. 84). She also presents, in a lot of detail, the nine levels of the tower, and where possible describes the functions of the rooms on different levels. She also criticizes the hypothesis that the tower's crenellation and machicolations are based on a French model. She also criticises the 15th century chronology of its construction, and supports the interpretation that the tower was based on a Rhineland model in the mid-14th century (pp. 100–106). She also emphasizes the role the tower played in communication, particularly with the town of Kulm (Chełmno) which could be seen from its top, though she remains cautious towards the theory, present in the literature, that the tower was used to send signals to Teutonic Order's castles in Graudenz (Grudziądz) and Althaus (Starogród) (p. 107). As for the tower's supposed role as a place of refuge during sieges, which

has been confirmed by written source material, it ought to be noted that in the light Szałowska-Korczak's detailed analysis, it appears likely that the tower's defence had to be based upon a rather small garrison, numbering up to 20 militants.

In the next section of chapter 3, the author analyses the morphology and layout of the north wing of the convent, which was the most prestigious section of the entire complex. It had three floors (and a loft), and was composed of chambers aligned along one line. The cellar, which can perhaps be identified with the *covenskeller* (convent's cellar), mentioned in the written sources, was probably left undivided (p. 112). Its role remains unclear however, though archaeological studies confirmed that a heating furnace of a hypocaust type was located there. According to the author, the ground floor, which served a number of household functions, was probably divided into two rooms – perhaps an armoury and a cloakroom or food storage (pp. 116–120).

The first floor of the northern wing housed the castle church and the author notes the presence of extensive polychrome frescoes, of which only remains have been found (pp. 126–127). In the west section of the first floor, Szałowska-Korczak places the refectory (which was also richly decorated with frescoes) and emphasizes that it served many functions which included the meeting place of the weekly chapters of the convent (pp. 130–136). The loft of the north wing included a roofed, defensive gallery. The loft over the refectory was used as a multi-story storage, perhaps a granary. The north wing was covered by a square hip roof (pp. 137–141). The tower which adjoined the wing from the north-east side was the smallest of the four towers of the High Castle. According to the author there was a prison cell in its cellar, a sacristy on the level of the church, and another prison cell (for the members of the convent) above the sacristy. The tower was probably covered with a conical roof (pp. 146–151).

The other wing of the convent was the eastern wing, which, like the north wing, consisted of three storeys or floors (plus the loft), which again had rooms arranged in a linear manner. The eastern wing (which now survives only to the ground level), also had a cellar. The north section might have been the location of the brewery (pp. 155, 157). The functions of the rest of the cellar are unknown. According to Szałowska-Korczak, a bakery was located in the north section of the eastern wing, on the ground floor. In the south part of the ground floor a malt house may have been located (p. 161). On the first floor, which was divided into two chambers, the dormitory was located. Most likely it was directly adjacent to the south-eastern tower (pp. 163–164). The function of the other chamber remains undefined. The loft of the west wing served as a storage for grain and was covered with a square hip roof. Within the width of its outer wall, a defensive gallery was located (pp. 164–165). The south-west tower is preserved only to a limited degree.

The main damage came probably during the Second Northern War (1655–1660). Because of its poor preservation it is possible to provide only a hypothetical model of the arrangement of the tower's tiers. However, archaeological surveys have allowed to determine where the cellar (composed of one chamber and two channels) was located. The cellar was probably permanently filled with water and served as a well (pp. 167–169, 171). The number of the tower's storeys above the ground remains unknown, but with some degree of caution, it can be assumed to have been two. Iconographic material suggests that in the 17th century, and perhaps earlier than that, this tower was crowned by a conical, tiled, roof (pp. 170–171).

An important achievement of Szałwska-Korczak's work was identifying, on the basis of recent archaeological studies, the presence of walled structures in the southern part of the High Castle. There is no doubt about the construction of these structures, though the existence of a cellar has not been fully confirmed yet (there was no cellar in the eastern section of this wing) (pp. 173–174). Based on inventories from the 16th century Szałwska-Korczak argues that the ground floor of this building housed the kitchens occupying one, extensive chamber (pp. 174–176). Architectural studies suggest that the south wing also had a first floor. Based on visitation registers from 1565, the author assumes that this first floor was in fact a garret, which served domestic uses. It is not clear what the architectural form of the upper levels of this wing was in the Teutonic Order's period. It seems likely, however, that it could have been similar to the 16th century garret covered by a square hip roof or gable roof (pp. 176–178).

Szałwska-Korczak argues convincingly that in the eastern section of the southern wing, there was a passage leading to a latrine tower, or 'dansker', which was located in the *parcham* area between the walls, on the bank of the Vistula river. She remains sceptical, however, whether 'dansker' latrine towers could also serve a mixture of observatory and defensive functions (pp. 178–181). She also claims that along the southern wall of the High Castle, there was an open, defensive gallery and this gallery was crenellated in the 16th century (p. 181). She also rejects the commonly held view that the south-western tower (which has not been studied archeologically as of yet) was constructed on a square base (p. 181). She suggests that the tower had a cellar and two storeys, the upper of which was connected to the galleries of the southern and western walls of the High Castle. She assumes that the tower was covered in a similar way that the other towers of the castle complex were (pp. 183–184) and claims that due to its location it had observational and defensive functions (p. 186).

The archaeological studies carried out in the west wing of the High Castle allowed to verify earlier theories regarding its morphology. On this basis Szałwska-Korczak demonstrates that it was of a full length, which means that the

space between the south-western tower and the north-western tower was fully built over, at least to the level of the ground floor (p. 186). There were most probably cellars located below the entire length of the wing (pp. 187–189). The author also argues that on the ground floor, two chambers were located, one of which probably served as living quarters for members of the convent. She also claims that this is where the entrance to the castle was located. She believes the gate was narrower than has previously been assumed (pp. 189–195). On the first floor the west wing was divided from the north wing by the entryway onto the battlements. South of it was the higher level of the gatehouse, which consisted of one chamber. Sławska-Korczak does not take a stand on the layout and function of the first floor rooms of the western wing, south of the gate. However, she does not exclude the possibility that this was where the *gemach* (the building) of the commander was located before the end of the 14th century. It may have also houses the sleeping chambers of other officials of the Order, or of the servants of the convent (pp. 195–197). Sławska-Korczak also claims that the gallery on the west wing was similar to that in the south wing, but she avoids the issue of the type of roofing present in the west wing.

The last element of the High Castle analysed by the author is the courtyard. On the first floor it had a gallery serving communication purposes which was about 1.5 meters wide. It was set on columns and attached to the internal elevation of the wings. It also had a wooden threshold. Archaeological studies from 2005 (pp. 199–200) have clearly indicated that this internal gallery was constructed only around the north and western wings of the High Castle. In the centre of the courtyard a well was located. It was discovered during the 2005 excavations. The extant wooden framing of the well was constructed after 1536 (which was indicated by dendrochronological analysis) though, in light of the written sources, it is likely that a well existed there already in the 15th century – there is a reference to the construction of a new well in 1484 (pp. 200–202).

The last section of the book is the ‘Conclusion’ (pp. 203–207) which was translated into German and presented as a ‘Summary’ (*Zusammenfassung*, pp. 220–222). The only problem with the chapter, or rather with the German summary, is that it can be seen as overly brief, and the conclusions are not fully complementary to the conclusions from each chapter. The last section of the publication is complemented by the lists of sources and literature (pp. 208–214), as well as a list of the 70 images included in the monograph (pp. 215–219).

Overall, the analyses carried out in the monograph are highly justified. Throughout the publication Sławska-Korczak remains careful in formulating her opinions and does not engage in overly fanciful interpretations and avoids overly categorical conclusions. These traits are rarely seen amongst archaeologists. A big



problem of the publication, however, is the lack of precise architectural measurements which are currently a standard method in archaeological and architectural studies (usually carried out by laser scanning). Because of this, the monograph is full of contradictory information regarding the size and length of various architectural elements (p. 83). Because she lacked modern measurements and images based of these measurements, as well as plans of the layout of the castle, Szałwska-Korczak had to depend on earlier sketches, particularly those made by Steinbrecht, which are insufficient for modern analysis. The overly general plans and sketches make following and interpreting complicated architectural descriptions difficult. Good example of this is the description of the vertical communication path which lead from the castle church to the gallery along the outer wall of the loft of the northern wing (p. 35). The highly general image based on an older plan by Sławiński (p. 121, fig. 35) is no help here as it concerns the church, rather than the staircase leading to the loft, and furthermore, it is located in another part of the monograph. The language of the publication is also highly hermetical at times, especially in the context of the architectural sections of the analysis. This makes the text less clear and intelligible. To conclude: the monograph is a successful study of the Schwetz castle complex, and Szałwska-Korczak largely exhausts the potential for interpretation of the existing source material. Only after new material is acquired through archaeological study, will there be room for further interpretation.

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