



Kazimierz Pospieszny, *Domus Malbork. Zamek krzyżacki w typie regularnym* [*Domus Malbork. Castle of the Teutonic Order of a regular type*] (Monografie Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2014, 336 pp., 283 black-and-white figures., 30 coloured figures, ISBN: 978-83-231-3084-0.

The High Castle in Marienburg (Pol. Malbork) has been continuously arousing scientific interest since the 19th century studies and publications by Ferdinand von Quast i Conrad Steinbrecht. This has been greatly stimulated by renovation and reconstruction works conducted in changing historical circumstances since early 19th century (F. Gilly, C. Steinbrecht, B. Schmid) and giving testimony to the changing conservators' attitudes and the understanding of original substance. An unfading interest in the castle and ever dynamically growing scope of modern knowledge on this monument resulted undoubtedly from the works on rebuilding the castle undertaken after 1945 (M. Kilariski). Vast contribution to the progress in the knowledge on the castle was made by an interdisciplinary conservation and research group who were active at the castle in the years 2003–2006,¹ and who conducted studies on the north wing of the High Castle. The climax of the post-war restoration was the reconstruction of castle church of Our Lady, St Ann's Chapel and a figure of the Malbork Giant – arousing great interest but also significant controversies. A symbolic crowning of the post-war scientific exploration of the castle and the efforts to conclude the reconstruction of the castle church became an opening of a permanent exhibition devoted to Marcin Kilariski in the so-called small sacristy (on November 30th 2016).

Interdisciplinary research works that accompanied the subsequent stages of rebuilding and revitalisation of the Malbork fortress contributed to a considerable advancement in the related knowledge – both in historical and art-historical aspects, which has been confirmed by consecutive monographs published since 2004 by the Castle Museum in Malbork within the cycle entitled *History – Furnishing – Restoration*. A monographic study *Domus Malbork* by Kazimierz

¹ The members of the team supervised by Prof. Maria Poksińska were scholars related to the Castle Museum in Malbork, Lodz Technical University and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń including: a historian (Janusz Trupinda), specialists in historic artists' techniques (Adam Cupa, Jarosław Rogóż, Monika Nowocińska, Bogusław Więcek, Mariusz Felczak) art historians and heritage specialists (Michał Woźniak i Bernard Jesionowski).

Pospieszny, published in 2014, focused on the issues of High Castle (the best recognised part of the fortress yet) had a chance to be a thorough summarisation and a complex interpretation of the hitherto, interdisciplinary studies – both older and recent ones, accompanying the latest stages of research and rebuilding of the castle church complex.² Unfortunately it did not happen. The monograph is based on Author's doctoral thesis defended at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in 1999 and presents only the results of his own research, including a second stage of post-doctoral research works conducted till the year 2010. And so, Pospieszny – curtly criticising the accomplishments of other scholars (reproaching them for e.g. domination of “archaeology of walls”, p. 24 and even for practicing *historical fiction*, p. 26) – concentrates on defending his own, formulated much earlier hypotheses. He does not follow the advancement of other scholars' studies: the majority of adduced works appeared not later than the 90s of the 20th century; and even worse – in references the term “recent” is being used for publications over two decades old (e.g. note 332, p. 121). The Author declares his studies to be part of castelology – but he does not define either its methodological or objective character. In his understanding castelology seems to be covering the same area as broadly understood history of art: he treats Marienburg Castle as an artwork being a rightful source in castle studies (p. 24). Such an attitude imposes a particular research perspective: one that is missing an issue of spatial and functional layout resulting from historic conditions that has primary status in discussing Prussian castles and (crucial for castelology) analysis of defence value. The work is dominated by a discussion of genetic and formal issues, typological, stylistic, comparative ones as well as by the ideological interpretation of the contents of decoration etc. What is lacking, is a complex outlook of the Marienburg fortress as a coherent architectural and functional entirety in which the interconnected castle spaces evolved and developed in the same rhythm, in conformity with the spirit of the age, following the developing needs and changing functions. Shortcomings of the workshop are being exposed where a full grasp of the studied issue would require employing methods from other disciplines (e.g. a thorough analysis of the sources). From the historical point of view the monograph by Pospieszny has been

² Among the most important works from the 1980s and 1990s belong, among others: S. Skibiński, *Kaplica na Zamku Wysokim w Malborku* (Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, seria Historia Sztuki 14), Poznań 1982; B. Jakubowska, *Złota Brama w Malborku. Apokaliptyczne bestiariusz w rzeźbie średniowiecznej*, Malbork 1989; eadem, *Malborska „Summa theologica”*, in: T. Guć-Jednaszewska, B. Jakubowska, Z. Kruszelnicki, *Studia z historii sztuki Gdańska i Pomorza* (Teki Gdańska 2), Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1992, pp. 157–243.

already received a profound polemical review.³ However, since his art-historical inquiries also demand a comment, the present text shall focus first of all on those issues, that are related to the interpretation of the structure of the castle itself and its artistic and ideological values.⁴

Monographic study *Domus Malbork* is composed of four parts and supplied with two source annexes (Survey of the Marienburg castle from the year 1565 and Report of the building inspector Conrad Steinbrecht from July 23rd 1889). It is preceded by a preface, in which the Author defines the field of study and briefly, vaguely and very selectively discusses the existing state of research.

First part of the monograph (pp. 25–112) is devoted to the search of the for so-called first castle (1274–1300). Here the Author accentuates mainly the dependence of the of Marienburg's conception from – in his opinion – parent centre in Elbing (Elbląg) ("Malbork as an a priori copy of Elbląg", p. 33). Which theory – considering very scarce knowledge on the Elbing castle – seems to be based on a weak foundation. The keynote is – devoid of source base – a conviction of a direct involvement of the Land Master of Prussia and later Great Master Konrad von Feuchtwangen in the initiative to transfer the convent from Zantyr. Pospieszny considers Elbing to be a "parent capital" for the Marienburg residence being in original concept a "branch" of Elbing.⁵ Here also returns in full force a proposition submitted by Kutzner regarding a buoyant artistic activity in Elbing and a significance of the Elbing portal as a model for the Golden Gate – based on few, poorly readable relics of its sculpted decoration and a drawn reconstruction.⁶ Pospieszny upholds – justly, as it seems – a generally accepted in the history of art dating of the Golden Gate back to late 13th century, supported by Bogna Jakubowska⁷ and confirmed by building archaeological research conducted by Bernard Jesionowski.⁸ However it should be remembered, that conclusions drawn

³ S. Józwiak, J. Trupinda, *O malborskim zamku wysokim w średniowieczu na marginesie najnowszej książki Kazimierza Pospiesznego*, *Zapiski Historyczne* 80 (2015), 2, pp. 157–178.

⁴ My more extensive critical discussion of theories advanced by K. Pospieszny is to be published in *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*. It contains more details from the domain of art-historical and heritage research.

⁵ Earlier in this way: K. Pospieszny, *Typ pruski zamku regularnego – idea cesarska?*, in: *Argumenta, articuli, quaestiones. Studia z historii sztuki średniowiecznej. Księga jubileuszowa, dedykowana Marianowi Kutznerowi*, ed. A. Błażejewska, E. Pilecka, Toruń 1999, p. 380.

⁶ M. Kutzner, *Ceglany detal architektoniczny byłego zamku krzyżackiego w Elblągu*, *Archeologia Elbigensis* 2 (1997), pp. 59–77.

⁷ Jakubowska, *Złota Brama* (as n. 2), *passim*.

⁸ The portal certainly was build in two phases – one ca. 1280 and the other after 1331. B. Jesionowski, *Kościół Najświętszej Marii Panny na zamku w Malborku – nowe odkrycia i interpretacje jego dziejów*, *Studia Zamkowe* 2 (2006), pp. 67–96, mainly pp. 82–88.

from stylistic analyses are of a relative character and tiny sculpted elements applied to the portal and its archivolt may well have been added somewhat later to a structure built ca. 1280. In the light of that one should at least report a discussion on the Golden Gate that aroused is result of publication by Marian Dygo.⁹ But this current of the latest studies on the castles décor Pospieszny overlooks.

The second part of discussed monograph, Prussian model of regular castle against the European background (pp. 113–175) is tightly bound with the first one and is of a comparative character. It is an attempt to grasp the genealogy of a regular type of castle characteristic of the Prussian defence architecture. Critical consideration in that matter are not new (see S. Skibiński¹⁰, M. Arszyński¹¹, M. Kutzner¹²; Pospieszny overlooked also a thorough analysis of the state of research conducted by S. Józwiak i J. Trupinda¹³). Prussian form of castles had been derived from diverse creative centres – from the fortresses in the Holy Land through the castles of central France, the castellum type of Normandy and England to the Bohemian castles of the Přemyslid Dynasty. Pospieszny stresses the reception of a Norman model in the South-Italian circle of Frederic II. The model role of those influences presented already M. Kutzner.¹⁴ It is also one of the most important conceptions urged by Pospieszny himself in his earlier studies.¹⁵ Emerging of that model in the North was – in his opinion – to result from deliberate actions taken in Elbing by the Great Master's emissary to Prussia, Eberhard von Sayn in 1251 (pp. 172–173). With no evidence, he assumes that South-Italian model of architecture had been modified thanks to an earlier Eberhard's visit to Marburg and not without a contribution from a building workshop brought from the March in that time (pp. 174–175) and that erecting “monastery-like” cloister resulted from an intention to sacralise the space where a practice of “paraliturgical” processions had

⁹ M. Dygo, *Złota Brama kaplicy zamkowej w Malborku a ideologia władzy Zakonu Niemieckiego w Prusach*, in: *Zakon krzyżacki a społeczeństwo państwa w Prusach*, ed. Z. H. Nowak (Roczniki TNT 86, 3), Toruń 1995, pp. 149–165. Later on this: S. Józwiak, *Uwagi nad datacją Złotej Bramy kaplicy zamkowej w Malborku*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 3 (2003), pp. 415–418.

¹⁰ S. Skibiński, *Jeszcze raz w kwestii genezy regularnego zamku krzyżackiego (komunikat)*, in: *Sztuka Prus XIII–XVIII wieku*, ed. M. Woźniak (Studia Borussico-Baltica Torunensia Historiae Artium 1), Toruń 1994, pp. 27–38.

¹¹ M. Arszyński, *Budownictwo warowne zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach (1230–1454)*, Toruń 1995, pp. 62–84.

¹² M. Kutzner, *Propaganda władzy w sztuce Zakonu Niemieckiego w Prusach*, in: *Sztuka w kręgu zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach i Inflantach*, ed. M. Woźniak (Studia Borussico-Baltica Torunensia Historiae Artium 2), Toruń 1995, pp. 17–66.

¹³ S. Józwiak, J. Trupinda, *Krzyżackie zamki komturskie w Prusach. Topografia i układ przestrzenny na podstawie średniowiecznych źródeł pisanych*, Toruń 2012, pp. 19–33.

¹⁴ Kutzner, *Propaganda władzy* (as n. 12), s. 49–52.

¹⁵ Pospieszny, *Typ pruski* (as n. 5), pp. 361–391.

been introduced (p. 175). The whole concept, devoid of both source and material evidence, seems to be a speculation.

The third part of the disquisition Great Masters' Haupthus from 1309 to mid-14th century (pp. 176–263) focuses on the 14th-century refurbishment of the castle (1309–1350), the first stage of which was – according to the scholar – related to moving the “Great Master’s convent” to Marienburg (p. 178), also called “the Venetian convent” by the Author (p. 180 – doubtless, K. Pospieszny meant the General House of the Order?). In his argument based on the carried out autopsy of historic material Pospieszny, who however ignored the facts about the dating and localisation of particular rooms in the castle¹⁶ established by the historians, presents his own chronology of the works during the refurbishment (p. 177) which were to begin with preparation of temporary rooms for the “Venetian” convent. Further works were to be structural makeovers related with changes in the defence system and the organisation of the convent’s living. The presented suggestions of relative chronology and of dating building works, based on the analysis of the forms of architectonic details (p. 185) are unfortunately totally disengaged from source foundations and historical conditions. What is striking already in the beginning, is the fact, that the Author isolates refurbishing of the High Castle from complex activities, that in the years 1310–1350¹⁷ involved also the Middle Castle. Such attitude – taking into consideration that all those works were part of a common ideological concept and actually belonged to the same building phase (which was repeatedly reported in earlier literature¹⁸) – could be regarded as an unjustified desistance. K. Pospieszny pays special attention to the castle church – its architecture, décor, liturgical organisation and ideological contents. His analyses, presented in a voluminous chapter *The morphology of castle church* (pp. 201–228) are mostly already known from earlier works¹⁹ and – what is important – have already been subject to criticism. Pospieszny however avoids academic polemics and does not actualise the literature of the church and its décor, that was recently considerably enlarged with new findings. Particularly doubtful

¹⁶ S. Józwiak, J. Trupinda, *Organizacja życia na zamku krzyżackim w Malborku w czasach wielkich mistrzów (1309–1457)*, Malbork 2007.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁹ K. Pospieszny, *Die Organisation des liturgischen Raumes des Deutschordenslands-Konventshauses in Preußen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Marienburg*, in: *Die sakrale Backsteinarchitektur des südlichen Ostseeraums – der theologische Aspekt*, hrsg. v. G. Eimer, E. Gierlich (Kunsthistorische Arbeiten der Kulturstiftung der deutschen Vertriebenen 2), Berlin 2000, pp. 101–116; idem, *Morfologia kościoła zamkowego w Malborku*, in: *Praeterita Posteritati. Studia z historii sztuki i kultury ofiarowane M. Kilarowskiemu*, ed. Mariusz Mierzwiński, Malbork 2001, pp. 383–400.

is the Authors attachment to his two older theories: about functions of the western gallery as a place of display and storage for the treasure of holy relics, that is supposed to exist in Malbork already in the first quarter of 14th century²⁰ and about a supposed lectern dividing a “bipolar” space of the conventual church into a priests’ and knights’ zones.²¹ Both those theories – what has already been proven in polemic commentaries – are unsound and full of wrong over-interpretations. Both force Pospieszny to look for specific archetypes for the castle church, among which a leading part plays St Elisabeth church in Marburg. Marienburg, described earlier as a branch of Elbing, here becomes a “branch” of Marburg (p. 214, 229) and the latter – “a Hesian parent” (p. 213). Malbork edifice in turn becomes “an ideological continuation of Marburg” (p. 230). The proposition of that supposed correlation²² has been criticised by M. Woźniak²³ already in 2006, which however Pospieszny has left with no comment. Marburg connections are not alien to the literature of the subject²⁴, but it is hard to be persuaded about *stricte* architectural or spatial and organisational inspirations with St Elisabeth church (the more so, as Pospieszny sees an analogy in the organisation of the Marburg trikonchos). Chapter III contains also detailed discussion on the technology, technique and

²⁰ See the criticism: Józwiak, Trupinda, *Organizacja życia* (as n. 18), p. 464.

²¹ Building archaeology research conducted by Bernard Jesionowski confirmed, that the preserved historic relics, interpreted by Pospieszny as the remnants of that lectern, are in fact the remnants of the responds of the vault: Jesionowski (as n. 8), pp. 88–89. Ascertainment of facts regarding the liturgy and religious life of the convents of Teutonic Knights in the light of written sources, made by M. Woźniak point out, that any division of the liturgical space was groundless. This thesis that the castle church, whose interior fulfilled similar function to the monks’ or cathedral choir, was invested with a semi-cathedral program – is convincing. A gallery would suggest a traditional location of the lectern in a cathedral church, the choir of which opened to the nave open to the laity: M. Woźniak, *Przestrzeń liturgiczna i wyposażenie kościoła Najświętszej Marii Panny na zamku w Malborku – nowe ustalenia*, in: *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku. Interdyscyplinarne badania skrzydła północnego*, ed. M. Poksińska, Malbork–Toruń–Łódź 2006, p. 79; ostatnio por. też M. Woźniak, *Wyposażenie kościoła konwentualnego na zamku w Malborku*, in: *Kościół Najświętszej Marii Panny na Zamku Wysokim w Malborku. Dzieje – wystrój – konserwacja*, ed. J. Hochleitner, M. Mierzwiński, Malbork 2016, p. 116–117.

²² K. Pospieszny, *Die Marienburg in Preußen und ihre hessische »Mutter« Marburg*, in: *Burgen kirchlicher Bauherren* (Forschungen zu Burgen und Schlössern 6), Berlin 2001, p. 99–106.

²³ Woźniak (as n. 21), s. 93.

²⁴ A possible inspiration with St Elisabeth church mentioned some time ago Jakubowska, looking for analogies for the initiative to create the Great Masters’ necropolis in St Anne’s chapel. B. Jakubowska, *Malborska Summa* (as n. 2), pp. 241–242. It is also assumed, that the sculptors’ workshop active in Malbork was of the Marburg provenance: K. H. Clasen, *Die mittelalterliche Bildhauerkunst im Deutschordensland Preußen. Die Bildwerke bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1939, p. 64; J. Raczkowski, *Monumentalne zespoły kolegium apostolskiego na terenie dawnego państwa zakonnego w Prusach*, Pelplin 2013, pp. 157–184.

workshop (pp. 322–248), also already known from the Author's earlier works²⁵, which I have already critically commented elsewhere.²⁶

The final, fourth part of the monograph (pp. 264–290) describes functioning of the castle in Middle Ages from the 14th century till the year 1457 with an attempted ideological interpretation of transformations of its architecture and décor. Here intertwine (and become confused) very diverse issues: the typology and development of fortified architecture of regular type (pp. 264–266), semantic problems – the architecture as an expression of mission and the tool of power (p. 264), as a references to the Heavenly Jerusalem (pp. 266–268) and finally – the analysis of architecture and décor of the chapter house and of the towers (pp. 268–283). For some reason the chapter house appears in this place (under the title *Instytucjonalizacja Sente Marienburg w 2. połowie XIV wieku*; the Author ignores the fact – that appeared in literature in 2006 – that Janusz Trupinda has identified this room as a refectory.²⁷ The fourth part commences with a subsection on “Maria's bolwerk” after 1410: the analysis of a bombardment of the fortress in 1410 and the erection of von Plauen's bolwerk as a new line of defence and a fortified system “unique in the European scale” (p. 289), that has been deliberately broken from the east side. So the last part of the discussion leaves the area of *Domus Malbork* and transfers to the limits of the approaches of the castle. Pospieszny uses the broken line of defence system as the key argument in favour of the theory of strengthening [?] the ideological position of the Teutonic Order (p. 293). The colossal figure of Virgin Mary – regarded by the Author as Teutonic icon [?] and palladion appears at the end of reasoning in context of a pilgrimage function of the castle and of a flourishing local cult of Virgin Mary.

Discussed above conception framed by K. Pospieszny as a whole appears incoherent and first of all – is characterised with a tendency towards unsupported over-interpretation. A selective literature, lack of references [sic!] and casual reporting of the state of research deprive it of the status of a serious academic monograph. The argumentation sometimes lack the basis – it seems to be based neither on sources nor on the interpretation of the present literature (auto-quo-

²⁵ K. Pospieszny, *Kunststeinverwendung in der Marienburg. Ein Beitrag zur Bautechnik des Backsteingebiete-Werkstätten der Hochgotik*, in: *Hoch- und spätmittelalterlicher Stuck. Material – Technik – Stil – Restaurierung*, ed. M. Hoernes, Regensburg 2002, pp. 182–192.

²⁶ Raczkowski (as n. 24), pp. 145–153; idem, *Kolos malborski. Problematyka warsztatowa i styloznawcza*, in: *Monumentalna figura Madonny na kościele NMP w Malborku. Konteksty historyczne, artystyczne i konserwatorskie*, ed. J. Hochleitner, Malbork 2016, pp. 85–89.

²⁷ J. Trupinda, *Skrzydło północne Zamku Wysokiego – dzieje, kształt architektoniczny i wyposażenie w świetle źródeł pisanych*, in: *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku* (as. n. 21), p. 35; Józwiak, Trupinda, *Organizacja życia* (as n. 16), p. 142.

tations hardly compensate for that), neither on the analysis and investigation of the material substance. The Author ignores numerous important modern studies – both contributive and general ones and without them any discussion on the interpretation of the High Castle in Marienburg remains deficient; he also left out the earlier polemics. Among more serious omissions stands out the lack of attitude towards the works published by historians – both the works referring directly to the studies on castles (S. Józwiak and J. Trupinda²⁸) and to the works that broaden the context for interpretation of the ideological message of the art of the Teutonic Order's milieu (e.g. W. Rozyrkowski²⁹, A. Mentzel-Reuters³⁰, S. Kwiatkowski³¹, K. Kwiatkowski³², S. Helms³³ and others). Pospieszny does not quote either the results of building archaeology research – essential for the issue of understanding the castle – (B. Jesionowski, A. Kašinowski³⁴), or the publication

²⁸ Józwiak, Trupinda, *Krzyżackie zamki* (as n. 13).

²⁹ W. Rozyrkowski, *Studia nad liturgią w zakonie krzyżackim w Prusach. Z badań nad religijnością w późnym średniowieczu* (Ecclesia clerusque temporibus medii aevi 2); Toruń 2012; idem, *The liturgical space in the chapels of Teutonic monasteries in Prussia – selected issues*, in: *Sacred space in the state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*, ed. J. Wenta, M. Kopiczyńska (Publikacje Centrum Mediewistycznego Wydziału Nauk Historycznych UMK 1, Seria: *Sacra Bella Septentrionalia* 2), Toruń 2013, pp. 143–152.

³⁰ A. Mentzel-Reuters, *Arma spiritualia: Bibliotheken, Bücher und Bildung im Deutschen Orden*, Wiesbaden 2003; idem, »durch mins herczen gral«. *Die »Siben Ingesigel« Tilos von Kulm als Reformschrift*, in: *Vom vielfachen Schriftsinn im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Dietrich Schmidtke*, ed. F. Löser, R. G. Päsler, Hamburg 2005, pp. 283–307; idem, »Deutschordensliteratur« *im literarischen Kontext*, in: *Mittelalterliche Kultur im Deutschordensstaat Preußen: Leben und Nachleben* (Publikacje Centrum Mediewistycznego Wydziału Nauk Historycznych UMK 1, Seria: *Sacra Bella Septentrionalia* 1), ed. J. Wenta, S. Hartmann, G. Vollmann-Profe, Toruń 2008, pp. 355–368.

³¹ S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezkańskiej u schyłku XIV wieku w pierwszych dziesięcioleciach XV wieku* (Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu, 84,1), Toruń 1990.

³² K. Kwiatkowski, *Christ ist erstanden... and Christians win! Liturgy and the sacralization of armed fight against pagans as determinants of the identity of the members of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*, in: *Sacred space in the state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*, ed. J. Wenta, M. Kopiczyńska (Publikacje Centrum Mediewistycznego Wydziału Nauk Historycznych UMK 1, Seria: *Sacra Bella Septentrionalia* 2), Toruń 2013, pp. 101–127.

³³ S. Helms, *Luther von Braunschweig. Der Deutsche Orden in Preußen zwischen Krise und Stabilisierung und das Wirken eines Fürsten in der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 67), Marburg 2009.

³⁴ A. Kašinowski, *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku. Badania architektoniczne kaplicy-kościola wraz z rekapitulacją*, Malbork–Poznań 2002; Archiwum Muzeum Zamkowego w Malborku, nr E/VI/1253; A. Kašinowski, *Źródła materialne historii budowy kaplicy NMP*, in: *Spotkania Malborskie im. Macieja Kilarzkiego* 1–3, ed. A. Dobry, Malbork 2010, pp. 39–50.

by M. Woźniak³⁵. Undertaking stylistic analyses and the analyses of issues related to the workshop, artists' techniques and technology he ignores quite advanced research in the field of the history of art, especially on the often discussed German inheritance. Specific current of narration and depriving it of references (or giving references leading "nowhere" e.g. ref. 500, p. 185) sometimes makes the whole text incomprehensible or even misleading. This is enhanced by unclear grammar forms (e.g. a constant use of past tense – both when the Author reports on historical problems, research issues or his own studies, or frequent use of passive voice. The Author frequently uses mental shortcuts (e.g. "Malbork" or "Elbląg" instead of "the Marienburg/Malbork castle", "the Elbing/Elbląg castle") and his own terminology (e.g. "encoding the architecture", "tower castle", "dwelling capsule"). Some terms are misused (e.g. "the convent palatium" to describe the convent house in Thorn (Toruń), "haberdashery" to describe small architectural details or "icon" to describe the colossal sculpture of Virgin Mary.

To sum up, the book – to a considerable extent based on a compilation of earlier, already known research of its Author – presents his own vision of function, form and dynamics of transformations of the High Castle in Marienburg. With all its omissions and deficiencies of academic skills discussed above it does not contribute much to the contemporary state of knowledge on the High Castle in Marienburg. Moreover – certain theories urged by the Author sometimes counterfeited the chronology, historic significance, original form, artistic connections and function of that monument – so important in the historical and artistic landscape of the Teutonic Order's dominion in Prussia.

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³⁵ M. Woźniak, *Wystrój i wyposażenie zamku malborskiego w świetle rachunków i inwentarzy*, *Studia Zamkowe* 2 (2006), pp. 54–66, idem, *Art and liturgy in Teutonic castle churches*, in: *Sacred space in the state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*, ed. J. Wenta, M. Kopiczyńska (Publikacje Centrum Mediewistycznego Wydziału Nauk Historycznych UMK 1, Seria: *Sacra Bella Septentrionalia* 2), Toruń 2013, pp. 153–180.