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## *What did Książ castle look like around 1300?*

### *Abstract*

The article is an attempt to recreate the oldest construction phase of the Książ Castle, which, due to the ambiguity of written sources and the enormity of the castle's structural transformations, is a difficult task. The question of Książ's origins is crucial both for explaining the origins of castles in the Sudetes, as well as for Książ's role in the emerging Duchy of Świdnica-Jawor.

The research discussed in the article focused on uncovering the oldest walls of the castle in order to recognize the materials used, joints and knots. Our research was carried out in many previously inaccessible places.

As a result, it was confirmed that the main tower with the function of a bergfried with a deep starvation dungeon could have been built no earlier than in the last two decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A completely new finding, however, was the observation that at the same time the perimeter wall of the upper castle and the North Wing were erected – a two-story building with a residential function. There was a brewing cellar beneath it, and the very size of the building indicates that the castle was intended to be a permanent princely residence. Also, the construction period of the South Wing was discussed in a new chronological context. Until now, it was considered the oldest after the main tower. Thanks to the architectural studies carried out, we can now state that the Southern Wing was the last stage of development because it was located on the outside of the perimeter wall, on a steep, inaccessible slope descending to the gorge of the Pelcznica River. Its towering body, reinforced from the slope with three buttresses, had the form of a keep.

In the light of our research and the references from years 1290–1293 naming Prince Bolko I Severe as Lord of Fürstenberg Castle, it is possible to confirm the function of the upper castle of Książ as the residence of Prince Bolko I. Its monumental body became a manifesto of Bolko's power over the duchy.

**Key words:** Silesia, Książ, castle, Middle Ages, donjon, bergfried

### *Introduction*

The subject of this article is the oldest building phase of the Książ castle, the reconstruction of which is nowadays a difficult task due to the ambiguity of the written sources and the enormity of the solid transformations of this castle. The question of the origins of Książ is crucial both for explaining the beginnings of castles in the Sudety region, as well as the role of Książ in the emerging Świdnica-Jawor Principality, in more recent literature referred to as the Duchy of Fürstenberg (Boguszewicz 2010), i.e., the Duchy of "Książ". In order to solve this, it was necessary to recon-

struct the course of the defensive walls and the buildings that were erected in the castle in the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The architectural research of Książ Castle was carried out from July 2022 to July 2023 by a team of researchers from the Department of History of Architecture, Art and Technology at the Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław University of Science and Technology, consisting of Małgorzata Chorowska, Roland Mruczek, Agnieszka Gryglewska and Marek Bogdała (Chorowska et al. 2023).

An imposing structure of the Książ Castle is located in the Wałbrzych Foothills, some 80 m above the bottom of the rocky, the Pelcznica River valley, which breaks through the Foothills here to form the picturesque so-called Książ Gully. The castle was founded on an elongated rocky promontory on the right (eastern) bank of the river, at an altitude of 395 m. The foundation stretches along the east-west axis and covers the area of approximately 80 × 300 m. On the

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other side of the Pelcznica River, south of Książ, there was a second medieval military site – the castle of Stary Książ (Old Książ). The present-day Książ consists of the upper and lower castles separated by a deep dry moat carved into the rock. In the Middle Ages, however, the present upper castle was divided into two parts, also separated from each other by a dry moat. They were only joined together in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 1). The subject of this article is in fact the oldest and highest-lying part of the present upper castle within the first perimeter of the ramparts, although an understanding of the later architectural transformations of the castle, especially the construction activities of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was necessary to explain its shape and metrics.

### *State of research*

This castle, which is currently the largest in Silesia, has not yet received a scientific study that would explain its origins. In the most complete work of its kind, the author

attempted to analyse written sources from the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century, elements of the buildings and iconographic material, but concluded by indicating a very general development line of this fortress (Boguszewicz 2010, 262–266). Among publications of a scientific and popular science nature, there have been valuable items in terms of content, but they do not address the subject of medieval castle development (Dudziak, Woch 2020). In their discussions of the younger architecture, post-war authors generally relied on pre-war monographers of the castle, such as Ezechiel Zivier (1909), who had access to written sources, now mostly unpreserved. That is why there was such an urgent need for a study of the castle's earliest history based on architectural studies of the walls themselves, the materials used in them, the way the stones were laid in the face, the joints and junctions. This type of analysis has the value of basic research and provides material sources. The first work of this kind was carried out on the upper castle in the 1960s by the Wrocław branch of the Monuments Conservation Workshop (Pracownia Konserwacji

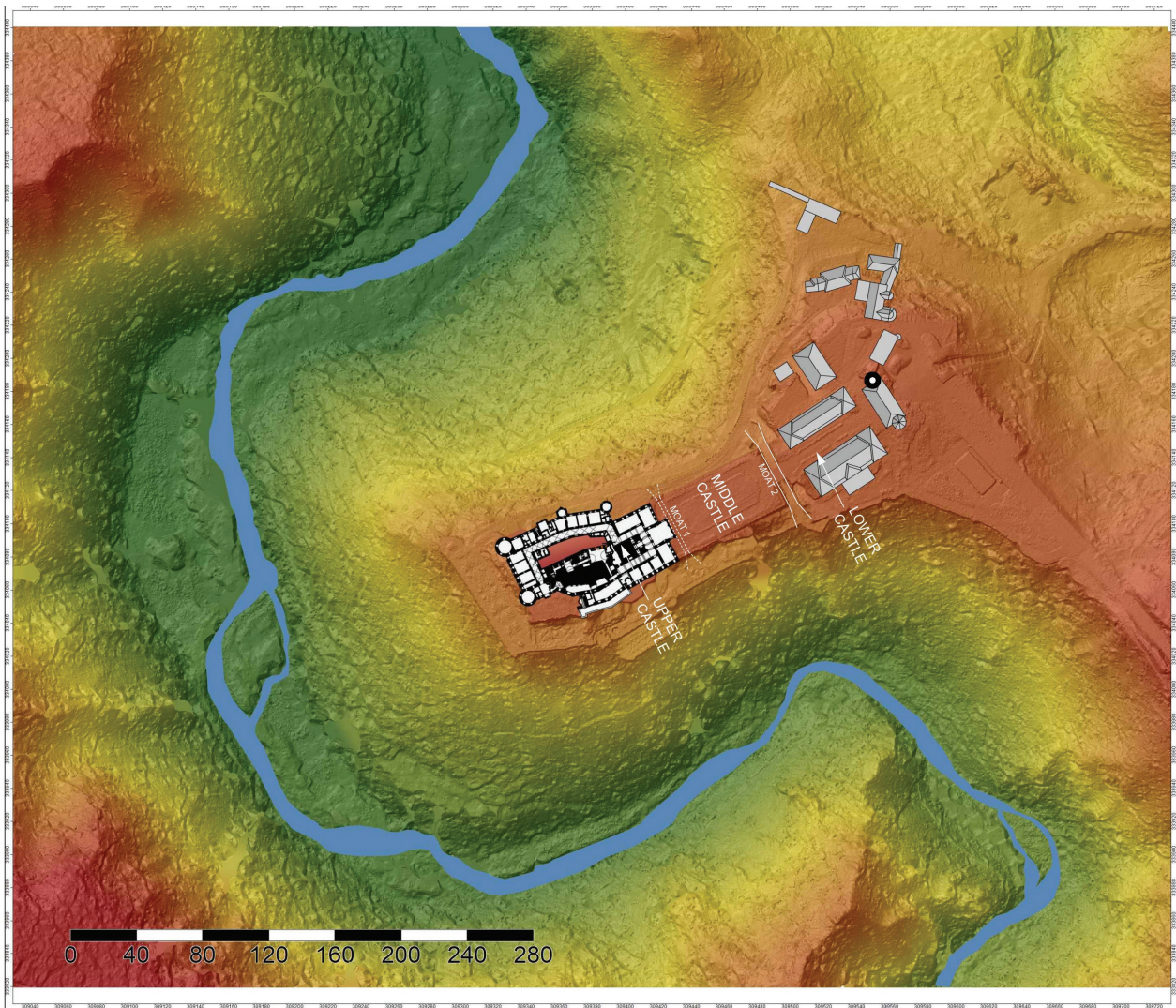


Fig. 1. Książ Castle divided into upper, middle and lower parts according to the numerical terrain model (elaborated by P. Błonieński, M. Chorowska, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 3)

Il. 1. Zamek Książ z podziałem na człony górny, średni i dolny na numerycznym modelu terenu (oprac. P. Błonieński, M. Chorowska, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 3)

Zabytków – PKZ), but the resulting chronological stratification of the walls of the first floor and, in particular, of the former cellar under the northern wing was flawed (Pilch 2005, 381). Despite the obvious characteristics of the mortars used, they were considered to be Renaissance. In fact, the walls of the cellars in question conceal relics of at least four building phases – from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Methods

Architectural investigations of the upper castle were carried out wherever access to the medieval and modern walls was possible, especially unplastered walls. In exceptional cases, it was decided to expose the face of the walls from under the plaster and to examine the joints and junctions. The work started with a total station inventory of the cellar rooms in the northern wing, at the level of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, and a photogrammetric inventory of the two elevations (north and south) of the oldest part of the upper castle, carried out as part of a summer workshop of students of the Faculty of Architecture at Wrocław University of Science and Technology in July 2022.

The following areas of the upper castle were surveyed:

1. The main tower.
2. The perimeter of the defensive wall through the 20<sup>th</sup>-century cellars under the baroque eastern bay (storey –1)
3. The gap between the upper castle and the western bay from 1909–1923 (storey +1).
4. Former cellars under the north wing (storey +2) with façade facing the north courtyard.
5. The basement of the south wing (storey +1).
6. The alcove under the ceiling of storey 3 with relics of the former castle kitchen.

### Results

#### The main tower

The tower was built on one of the two rock outcrops that gave rise to the upper castle (Fig. 2). It was built on a roughly square plan measuring 10.5 × 11.5 m. Due to the thickness of the walls of 3.2–3.4 m and the height of the inner shaft (from the rock to the outcrop of about 11 m and above, to the next outcrop of 7 m), it can be said that it was a typical final defence tower with a hunger dungeon, the so-called *bergfried*. Above this was a vaulted chamber to enable the ducal family to survive a siege, and above this was an open or roofed defence platform for the guards. The total height of the medieval tower was over 25 m.

In the Middle Ages there was one entrance to the tower leading from the courtyard to the level of the present 4<sup>th</sup> floor<sup>1</sup>. As it was at a height of about 10 m, it must have been accessible via a ladder-like external staircase. The entrance itself, still marked on the castle plan of 1719 with

<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, it can also be accessed from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor level of the Baroque bay, which was used to enclose the tower in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

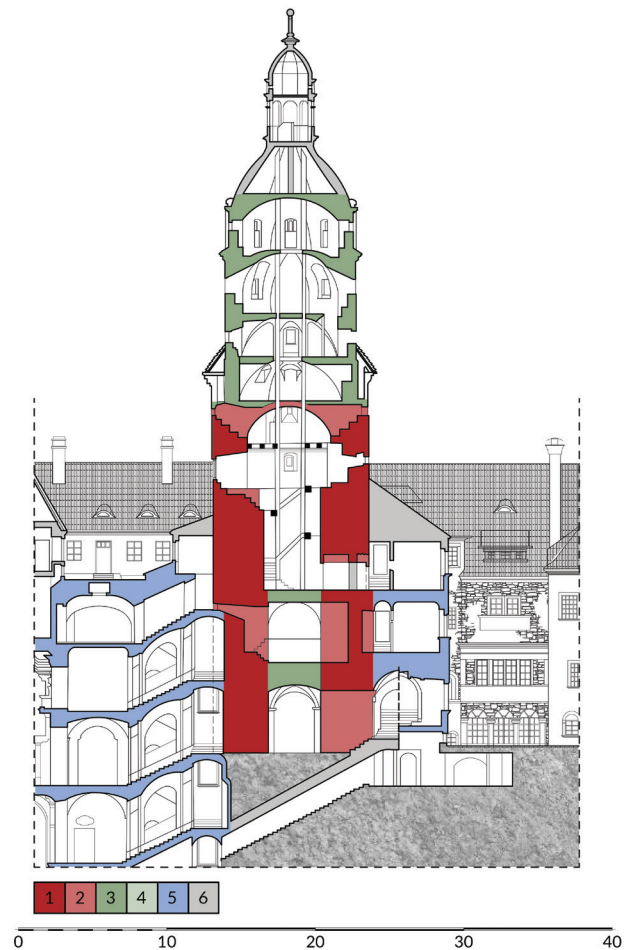


Fig. 2. Książ Castle – cross-section (E–W) through the final defence tower with chronological stratification of walls:

- 1 – preserved walls from 1280–1300,
  - 2 – reconstructed walls from 1280–1300,
  - 3 – preserved walls from 1580–1650,
  - 4 – reconstructed walls from 1580–1650, 5 – walls from 1670–1725,
  - 6 – walls from 1860–1945 (elaborated by M. Chorowska, drawing by M. Noszczyk, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 5)
- II. 2. Zamek Książ – przekrój (W–Z) przez wieżę ostatecznej obrony z rozwarstwieniem chronologicznym murów:
- 1 – zachowane mury z 1280–1300,
  - 2 – rekonstruowane mury z 1280–1300,
  - 3 – zachowane mury z 1580–1650,
  - 4 – rekonstruowane mury z 1580–1650, 5 – mury z 1670–1725,
  - 6 – mury z 1860–1945 (oprac. M. Chorowska, rys. M. Noszczyk, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 5)

its stonework and glyph, was demolished as part of the great castle reconstruction of 1909–1923, and a wide, semi-circular recess was formed in its place. The entrance led up to the level of the lower recess, into a vestibule-like room. Below this was the hunger dungeon, and above this was the duke's chamber used as a shelter during a siege. Connectivity between levels had to be provided by ladders or wooden stairs.

The chamber had an area of 16 m<sup>2</sup>, larger than the dungeon at the bottom of the tower. It was covered from above with a stone vault. It protected the inhabitants from fire, which could have penetrated from above, from the level of the terrace for defenders and guards. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century,



Fig. 3. Książ Castle – basement projection (storey –1) with chronological stratification of walls within the range of the baroque front tract: 1 – preserved wall from the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, 2 – reconstructed course of this wall, 5 – walls from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 6 – walls from 1860–1945, 7 – rock (elaborated by M. Chorowska, drawing by M. Noszczyk, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 6)

Il. 3. Zamek Książ – rzut piwnic (kondygnacja –1) z rozwarstwieniem chronologicznym murów w zasięgu barokowego traktu frontowego: 1 – zachowany mur z ostatnich dekad XIII w., 2 – rekonstruowany przebieg tego muru, 5 – mury z XVII w., 6 – mury z 1860–1945, 7 – skała (oprac. M. Chorowska, rys. M. Noszczyk, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 6)

this was the only vault in the tower<sup>2</sup>. Light reached the interior through small window openings. No relics of heating appliances were observed in the chamber; perhaps portable appliances were used.

#### *Defensive wall under the baroque eastern bay*

The purpose of the prospecting of the eastern cellar rooms, located on storey –1, was to find the remains of the upper castle perimeter wall (Fig. 3). This wall was characterised by a stone construction bonded by lime mortar with an admixture of clay sand, which was the reason for its characteristic yellow-brown colour. The medieval mortar in the Książ castle differed from modern mortars by its much darker colour, the presence of large lumps of lime and its greater cohesiveness. It was therefore easily

distinguishable from 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century mortars, which had a fine texture and a light beige colour. This formed the basis of the chronological stratification of the castle walls.

In the basement room to the south-east, relics of a medieval perimeter wall were found in the wall that enclosed this room to the north. The easternmost section of this wall entered under the Baroque foundation of the front wall of the castle and turned north, giving rise to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century wall that preceded the construction of the façade *avant-corps* with the Maximilian Hall. It was therefore concluded that the castle's oldest perimeter wall did not follow to the east as far as the now visible moat separating the upper castle from the lower castle (MOAT 2), but ended in front of a natural depression in the ground, or a moat carved into the rock by which the upper castle was separated from the middle castle (MOAT 1). The minimum depth of this moat is marked by the lowest position of the south-east corner of the Baroque extension of the castle, made before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4).

The search for relics of the medieval perimeter wall carried out in the cellar room on the north-east side of the baroque

<sup>2</sup> The vaults above the I and II floors, were introduced into the space of the main dungeon in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it no longer fulfilled its original function. Both are examples of cradle and cross vaults; the upper one has clearly marked seams on the edges of the vaults.

extension was unsuccessful. Where it was expected to be present, i.e., in the south-east corner of the north basement, only the corner of the associated modern walls was discovered. Deep in the corner was a 20<sup>th</sup>-century canal, which had been cut through the older relics. The absence of the medieval foundation was very telling. It showed that the medieval perimeter must have curved westwards at about the height of the north-west corner of the main tower and that no passage was left between it and the defensive wall. The courtyard of the upper castle could only be accessed on the south side, under fire from the tower.

*Defensive wall in the gap between the upper castle and the rear (west) bay, 1909–1923*

The reason for bricking up the gap entrance was to reach the base of the western section of the defensive wall. The fissure ranged in width from about 1 m at the bottom to 2 m below the ground floor ceiling. It was divided, over a length of 14–15 m, by transverse walls into three separate, unconnected chambers (Fig. 5). The southern chamber, located just off the fan staircase leading from the present ground floor to the ground floor, was investigated. A technical inspection hole located about 2 m above the ground floor level was opened. This opening, the size of a window and sealed with a brick sectional arch, was bricked up by a workman leaving the gap with a brick and a half wall. Inside, the foundation of a medieval perimeter wall was encountered. The wall at a level 1.5 m below the ceiling above the ground floor of the west wing formed a shelf about 0.80 m wide. The wall below was an

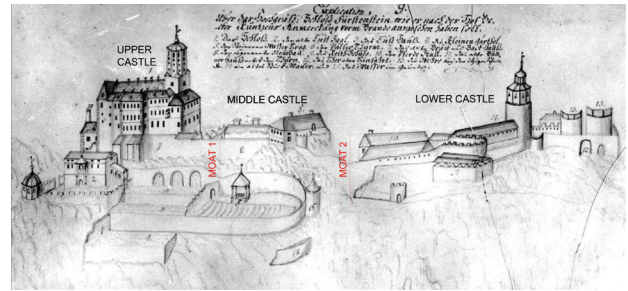


Fig. 4. Castle Książ as it stood before 1694, with the division into upper, middle and lower parts added. The defensive wall surrounding the whole establishment is the younger fortified circuit. The older wall was obscured by the buildings of the upper castle (elaborated by M. Chorowska, drawing by M. Noszczyk, based on Grundmann 1982, Fig. 208)

Il. 4. Zamek Książ według stanu sprzed 1694 r. z dodanym podziałem na człony górny, średni i dolny. Mur obronny otaczający całość założenia jest młodszym obwodem warownym. Starszy mur przesłoniła zabudowa górnego zamku (oprac. M. Chorowska, rys. M. Noszczyk, na podstawie Grundmann 1982, il. 208)

escarpment of the bedrock on which the upper castle was built. It was built of broken stone, obtained from a local deposit, in a layered pattern with lime mortar. The side walls of the chamber and the wall separating it from the corridor of the west wing were built between 1909 and 1923, partly in stone and partly in demolition brick and 20<sup>th</sup>-century machine-made brick.

Perhaps the gap left between the rock on which the upper castle rose and the added bay was due to problems with

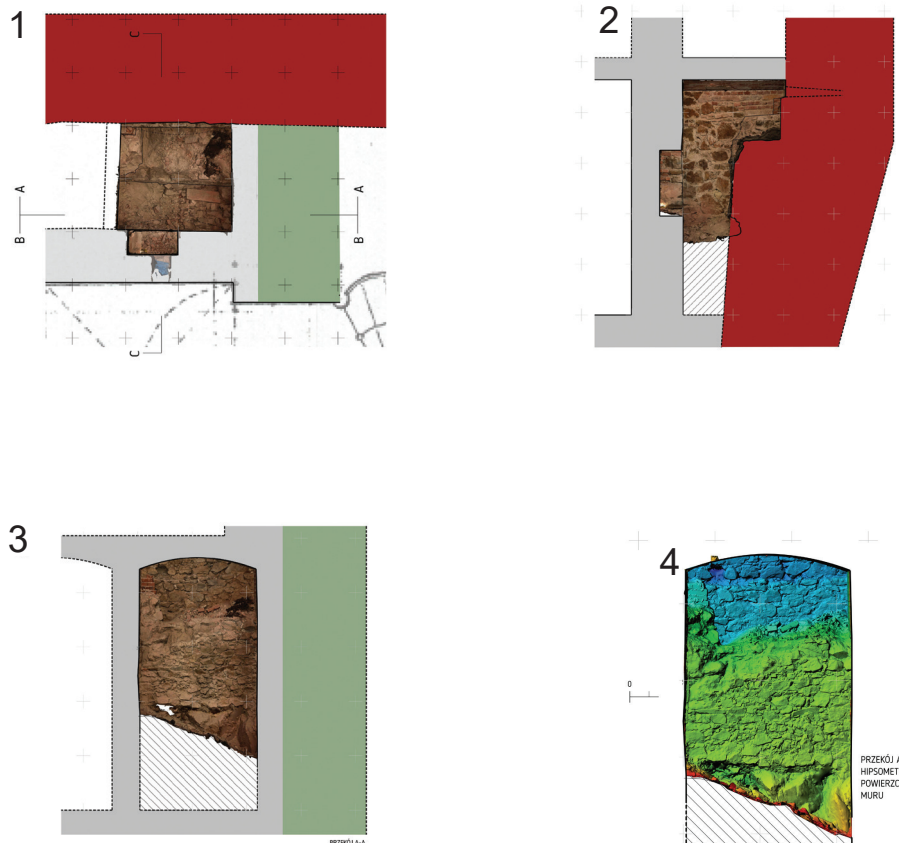


Fig. 5. Książ Castle – inventory of the closed room (“gap”) between the defence wall and the West Wing: 1 – projection of the room, 2 – cross-section C-C, 3 – cross-section A-A with view of the defence wall, 4 – hypsometry of the defence wall (scanning and elaborated by M. Bogdała, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 9–12)

Il. 5. Zamek Książ – inwentaryzacja zamkniętego pomieszczenia („szczeliny”) między murem obronnym a skrzydłem zachodnim: 1 – rzut pomieszczenia, 2 – przekrój C-C, 3 – przekrój A-A z widokiem na mur obronny, 4 – hipsometria muru obronnego (skan. i oprac. M. Bogdała, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 9–12)

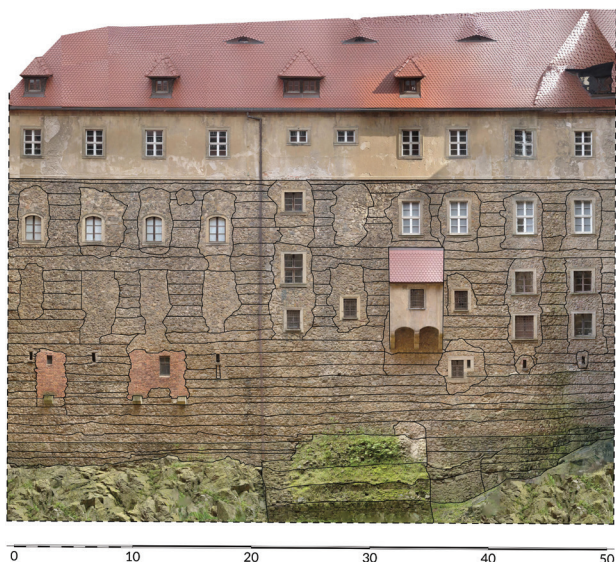


Fig. 6. Książ Castle. Photogrammetry of the elevation of the north house in the upper castle, as seen from the north courtyard.

The elevation is marked with levelling layers, which show the extent to which the medieval parts of the perimeter wall have been preserved (elaborated by M. Bogdała, M. Noszczyk, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 14)

Il. 6. Zamek Książ. Fotogrametria elewacji domu północnego na górnym zamku, widziana od strony dziedzińca północnego. Na elewacji zaznaczono warstwy wyrównawcze, które pokazują zakres zachowania średniowiecznych partii muru obwodowego (oprac. M. Bogdała, M. Noszczyk, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 14)

its surface, sloping down and forming irregular shelves and kinks. It is possible that the presence of the gap was the result of the external field stairs that were left in place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to provide communication between the upper castle and the terraces established on the west side of the castle. This stair, estimated to be 1.5–2.0 m wide, connected the upper level of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century castle kitchen (at mezzanine level between the present floors 2 and 3) and the medieval cellar under the north wing. Both the kitchen and the staircase can be seen in many engravings showing the castle from the west.

#### *Former cellars under the north wing*

Research into the cellars under the northern wing offered the best chance of explaining the medieval building history of the castle. In the 1960s, these cellars were identified as Renaissance, which disturbed the proper view of the origins of Książ for many years, as it focused researchers' attention exclusively on the south wing with its trefoil windows in the arcades. The thesis of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century origins of the north wing seemed to be in line with the meaning of the references to the oldest documented building work carried out on the castle between 1548 and 1555, which was linked to it, and with elevations in the "Renaissance style" (Zivier 1909, 12).

Meanwhile, an analysis of the cellars under the northern wing and the northern section of the defensive wall shows that these investments were carried out at a similar time.

This is evidenced by the way in which the three cellar window openings were built, of which only the splayed lintels and, in one case, a fragment of the splayed reveal has survived. They were certainly primary and not secondarily pierced, which means that they were planned and executed already during the construction of the perimeter wall. The gable wall enclosing this wing to the east at basement level is medieval, constructed of stone and attached to the rampart<sup>3</sup>. The stone outer face of this wall shows consistently applied levelling layers extending upwards to the level of the ceiling above the present 3<sup>rd</sup> storey, the original 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the north wing. Obviously, this wall is punctuated by the Renaissance and Baroque window openings. The lack of medieval windows, apart from the cellar windows<sup>4</sup>, is to be explained by the fact that this was the exterior elevation of the castle (Fig. 6) exposed to military action and, in addition, the north elevation, so the large openings were probably on the courtyard side. The small medieval windows may have disappeared when they were replaced by younger and larger ones. Experience suggests that such actions were the norm. A noticeable modern intervention in the structure of the north wing's façade was an oriel window with a window and the date "1580", as well as three windows in fascia stone frames with identical profiles to the oriel window. Two of them, located to the east of the bay window, illuminated the four-arched staircase built into the north wing at the time. With regard to the lack of traces of the medieval toilet oriels, which are generally found on the northern elevations of the residential wings, it can be hypothesised that, as in the castle in Jawor, they were replaced by more convenient latrine towers. The photogrammetric image of this elevation shows, more or less in the middle, the remains of some kind of masonry stone structure, which would have corresponded in dimensions to these types of towers. This structure must have been demolished before the reconstruction of the north wing in 1580.

On the subject of the castle cellars under the north wing, it should be recalled that they filled in the hollow between the two rock culminations, the east and west. The western culmination is still preserved very high today. At its highest point, it reaches to the level of the ceiling above the mezzanine floor, between the contemporary 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> storeys. Translating this into the realities of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century, we can say that it protruded by about 2.0 m above the level of the courtyard at that time<sup>5</sup>. The north wing was

<sup>3</sup> In the case of the stone walls, the jointing at the corners was carried out by means of so-called stirrups extending from the previously masoned wall every 1.0–2.0 m. No such stirrups were observed on the section of the corner of the north wing available for study, but the mortar joints in the defensive wall and the gable wall of the north house were similar to each other and unstained with soil. Earth staining would have to have occurred if the construction of the defensive wall and cellars had been staggered over a longer period of time.

<sup>4</sup> Thick stone sills were inserted into the cellar windows in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, probably as part of the 1909–1923 reconstruction. During the Nazi reconstruction of 1943, combined with the demolition of the cradle vault of the main eastern cellar, the window recesses and reveals disappeared.

<sup>5</sup> The same situation is encountered at Grodno Castle, where the high cliff, at the end of the castle opposite the entrance, reaches the level of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

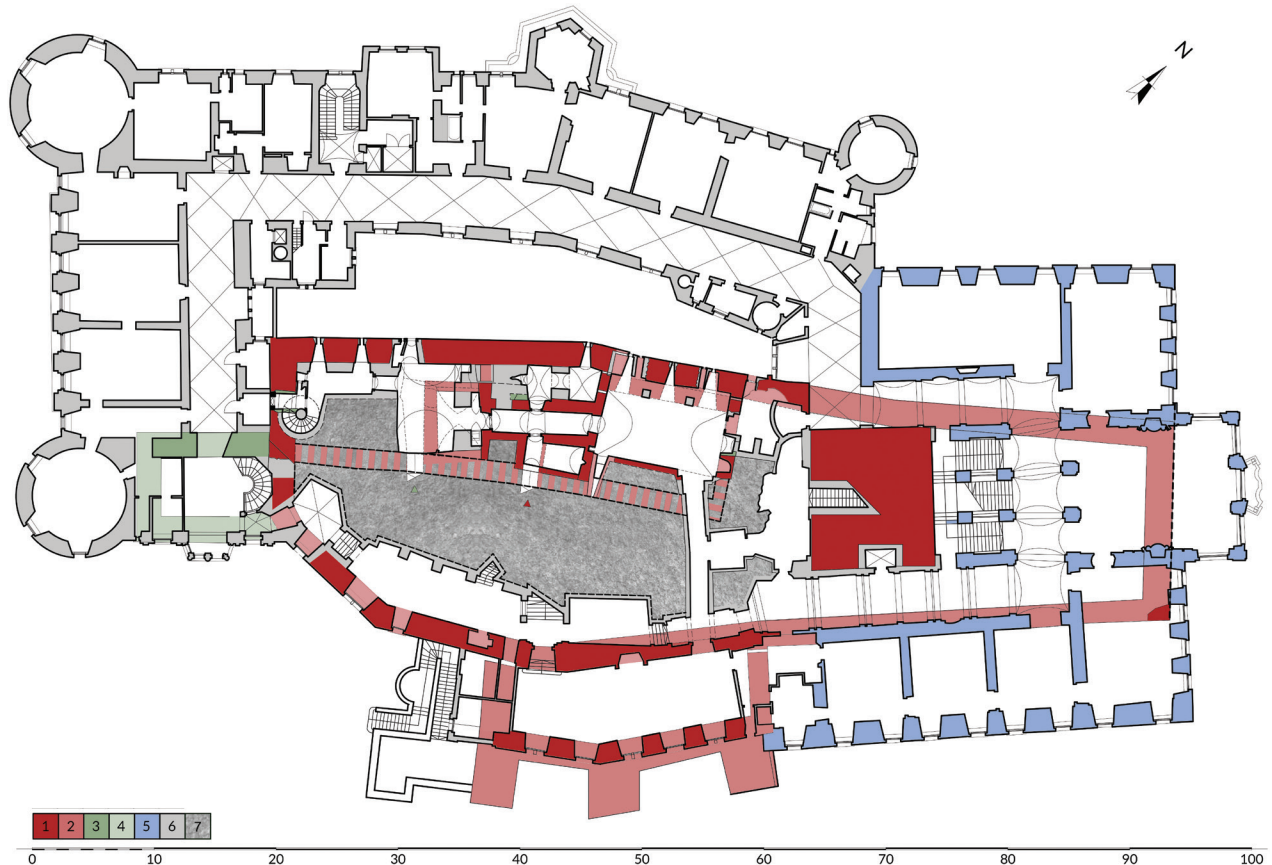


Fig. 7. Książ Castle. Chronological stratification of the walls of the upper castle at the level of the former cellars (present 1<sup>st</sup> floor):  
 1 – preserved walls from 1280–1300, 2 – reconstructed walls from 1280–1300, 3 – preserved walls from 1580–1650,  
 4 – reconstructed walls from 1580–1650, 5 – walls from 1670–1725, 6 – walls from 1860–1945, 7 – rock  
 (elaborated by M. Chorowska, drawing by M. Noszczyk, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 15)

Il. 7. Zamek Książ. Rozwarstwienie chronologiczne murów górnego zamku na poziomie dawnych piwnic (obecne I piętro):  
 1 – zachowane mury z 1280–1300, 2 – rekonstruowane mury z 1280–1300, 3 – zachowane mury z 1580–1650,  
 4 – rekonstruowane mury z 1580–1650, 5 – mury z 1670–1725, 6 – mury z 1860–1945, 7 – skała  
 (oprac. M. Chorowska, rys. M. Noszczyk, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 15)

about 25 m long at basement and ground floor level and hit the rock, and as much as 36 m at the level of the then floor, as it “climbed” the rock and leaned against the western section of the defensive wall. On the north-eastern side, however, an undeveloped space was left between it and the main tower.

The cellars consisted of two barrel vaulted chambers and a corridor connecting them – a ramp for transporting beer barrels (Fig. 7). Their brewing function is indicated by the presence of a small portal at the entrance to the western chamber, demolished in 1909–1923. One of its reveals was undercut and splayed at a certain height to facilitate the transport of beer barrels. From the area of nearby Świdnica, dozens of such portals are known to have been preserved in the cellars and ground floors of burgher houses in the Old Town. The connotation of these forms with brewing is indisputable (Chorowska, Lasota 2013, 68, 69, Fig. 23, XIII). The upper section of the ramp overlooked the castle courtyard about half-way up the wing. The cellar chambers were vaulted with a barrel vault, as was the inner corridor connecting them. Nowadays, only the barrel vault in the central part of it is preserved. The barrel vault in the eastern chamber was

demolished in 1943, when the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the castle was adapted as Hitler’s quarters.

The western chamber was completely demolished during the reconstruction of 1909–1923 and, were it not for the archival inventory of the cellars<sup>6</sup>, showing the plan from before the last reconstruction, it would be very difficult to decipher its original layout. The remains of the basement vault are barely outlined on the rock wall that bounded it to the south, and remnants of vaulting can be seen in the gaps on either side of the transport corridor. The present, collectively vaulted western chamber was hewn out of the rock and shaped after the medieval castle cellars in the reconstruction of 1909–1923. It is very likely that in the Middle Ages there was only a passage (porch) running right past the defensive wall, as the recesses of another two medieval windows or embrasures are preserved in it<sup>7</sup>. In addition to enlarging the cellar chamber and moving it towards the west, which could only have been done af-

<sup>6</sup> Although this plan bears the date 1943, it is conspicuously added to the sheet along with other annotations, a different type of lettering than the primary inscriptions.

<sup>7</sup> With the sills also replaced.

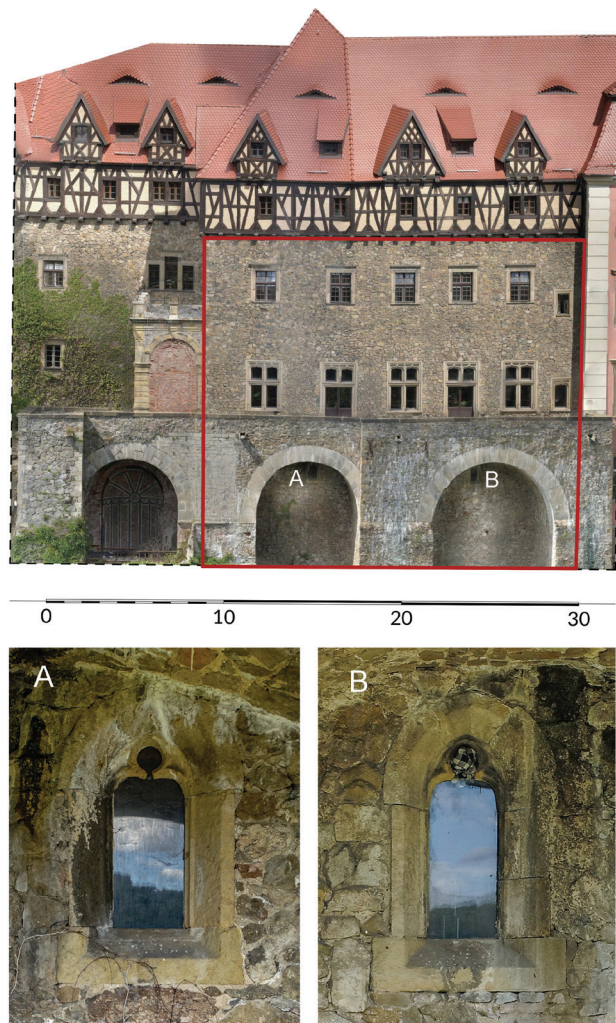


Fig. 8. Książ Castle. Photogrammetry of the elevation of the south house/donjon in the upper plan of the castle, view from the south. The three massive buttresses stabilising the building were connected by an arcade in 1866.

The letters A and B indicate the position of the three-winged windows under the arcades (photo and elaborated by M. Bogdała, 2022, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 17, 18)

Il. 8. Zamek Książ. Fotogrametria elewacji domu/donżonu południowego na górnym zamku, widziana od południa. Trzy potężne przypory stabilizujące budynek zostały połączone arkadami w 1866 r.

Litery A i B wskazują położenie trójlistnych okienek pod arkadami (oprac. i fot. M. Bogdała, 2022, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 17, 18)

ter the rock there had been pinned down, the communication in the north-west corner of the castle was also rebuilt, namely connected<sup>8</sup> to the winding staircase built between 1909 and 1923.

<sup>8</sup> The connection between the cellars under the north wing and the kitchen and courtyards on the west side of the castle must have been in place at least since the new external castle kitchen was built, i.e., from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. It is not shown on the 1943 plan, probably because it was no longer needed after the dismantling of the external chateau kitchen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The kitchen was moved to the ground floor of the north wing, in place of the present Conrad Hall. Also not shown on the plan is the spiral staircase connecting the basement level (the current +1 storey with the mezzanine floor in the western section – the current +2 storey), and this staircase dates from the 1909–1923 reconstruction.

### *The cellars of the south wing*

It was a three-storey building situated on the southern rock slope, on the outer side of the upper castle wall (Fig. 8). From the beginning, it was supported by three massive buttresses built of broken stone, which were added on around 1866<sup>9</sup> and connected by two semicircular arcades. According to Zivier, the narrow south wing was built after 1509, when Książ became the pledge property of the Hoberg family (Zivier 1909, 8). Józef Pilch (2005, 381) dated the south wing at the level of the Crooked Hall (the present 2<sup>nd</sup> storey of the castle) to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This metric is confirmed by two small, trefoil window openings, which can be seen below the arcades joining the buttresses of the terrace at this hall. These windows illuminated the lower storey of the wing, which, due to its location below the level of the castle's lower courtyard, should be called the cellar. They have long attracted the attention of researchers with their form characteristic of the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or the first decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>. This would indicate a link between the south wing and the investment activities of the Dukes Bolko I or Bernard. However, while supporting this early dating, attention should be drawn to the specific relationship between the building and the defensive wall of the upper castle, clearly indicating that it was added to the perimeter wall from the outside (sic!). This was contrary to the accepted principles of defence, as it did not ensure the safety of the inhabitants. The building could not have been contemporaneous with either the main tower of the castle, the perimeter wall itself or the north wing attached to it, but was younger than them. Perhaps the secret of its location lay in the thinness of the upper plateau enclosed by the fortified perimeter, which had to accommodate the north building and even a minimal courtyard. The latter took on a lenticular form over time and the name of the Black Courtyard.

### *The outer castle kitchen*

Its remains are hidden in the wing from 1909–1923, added to the upper castle on the west side. They are located just below the level of the ceiling above the present 3<sup>rd</sup> storey (former ground floor) and appear in the form of a 156 cm thick section of brick wall, added at right angles to the castle wall (Fig. 9). In the wall there is a semicircular vaulted opening. The height of the bricks used (6.5–7 cm) and the character of the mortar – quite hard, fine-grained, light beige in colour – indicate that this wall was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The metrics and location of the wall correspond well with the building of the external castle kitchen, present in the iconography of Książ since the time of its oldest preserved representation, i.e., since 1694. They also show a passage through the castle's perimeter wall, which we found vis-à-vis the castle kitchen. A plan of the castle dated 1719 further shows that the kitchen hearth was located in the western, low-lying part of the kitchen, while

<sup>9</sup> Such a date is inscribed on the cusp of one of the arcades.

<sup>10</sup> Due to windows analogous in form in such dendrochronologically dated buildings as the castle in Bolków (1289/1290) and the residential tower in Siedlęcín (1314).



the part by the perimeter wall was located at a higher level. Many depictions also show a stairway annex leading from the level of the upper kitchen to the western terraces located at the foot of the castle. The aforementioned semi-circularly vaulted opening may have been a passage from the kitchen to the stair annex. Descending to the terraces, one passed the entrance leading to the basement level under the north wing, which served as a larder. This entrance, 1 m wide and framed by a simple sandstone surround with a brick segmental relieving arch, was bricked up between 1909 and 1923. The one we discovered on the +2 storey provides further evidence of the dating of the kitchen and its functional relationship to the basement larder.

### Castle construction phases in the Middle Ages

The architectural survey of Książ castle carried out in the years 2022–2023, despite its fragmentary nature, allowed a solid reconstruction of the oldest buildings in the upper castle, shedding light on the relative chronology of the growth of these buildings and allowing an attempt to place them in time – in the last two decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *Phase 1 (last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century)*

The oldest masonry building in the upper castle was the tower of the final defence, the so-called *bergfried*. Regarding its metric, one can only comment on the basis of comparative studies with analogous assumptions from Central and Eastern Europe, especially from the Thuringian, Hessian and Saxon regions. Taking into account the quadrilateral plan and the vertical disposition with a deep shaft of the hunger dungeon, it would fall at the earliest in the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Mruczek 2018, 116, 117), i.e., during the reign of the Duke of Silesia Henry IV Probus (1270–1290) or the Duke of Świdnica Bolko I (1291–1301)<sup>11</sup>. On the basis of architectural research, it is not possible to state clearly whether the defensive walls and the basement north wing were erected together with the tower, or whether it was located within the timber and earth ramparts with which the natural defences of the narrow rocky promontory were strengthened, as later reconstructions broke the stratigraphic continuity of these elements with the tower.

Thus, either at the same time as the tower, or a little later, two connected structures were built – the perimeter wall of the upper castle and the house – a two-storey residential building, fused “with its back” to this wall. From our observations to date, it is not clear what material was used to build the wall of the house on the courtyard side<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> The first confirmed mention of Książ – Vorstinburg – dates from 1288 (Codex Diplomaticus... 1886, 107). In 1291–1293, Duke Bolko I the Strict moved his seat from Lwówek to Książ, which is confirmed by the seal with the inscription *Bolko dei gratia dux Slesien et dominus de Wrstenberc* (Schlesisches Urkundenbuch 1997, no. 91, 94) and the mention *Herzog Boleslaus von Fürstenberg, der Bruder Heinrichs V* (Codex Diplomaticus... 1886, 133).

<sup>12</sup> On the second-floor level, there are museum rooms there and there is no opportunity for research. The gable wall of the house was probably made of stone.



II. 9. Książ Castle in view from the north-west, intaglio by Huber according to a drawing by Theodor Blätterbauer (published by Carl Flemming, 1885–1888; source: from the collection of P. Siemko)

II. 9. Zamek Książ w widoku z północnego zachodu, staloryt Hubera według rysunku Theodora Blätterbauera (wyd. Carl Flemming, 1885–1888; źródło: ze zbiorów P. Siemko)

It cannot be ruled out that the above-ground part of the house had a mixed construction of masonry and timber, stone, wood and clay. It should be noted that the basic functional and spatial programme of the *bergfried* castle consisting of the ramparts, the tower and the dwelling house was completed at this stage. There was a stone cellar under the house, and the sheer extent of the building is an indication that the castle may have been a ducal seat rather than a solitary mountain stronghold manned by a ducal castellan. In the light of the references from 1290–1293 naming Duke Bolko I as lord of Fürstenberg Castle, the upper limit of this phase of castle development seems to have been determined. However, the attribution of the castle to Henry IV Probus, who in the late 1270s showed great interest in the settlement areas in the Świebodzice area, cannot still be ruled out (Boguszewicz 2010, 116).

The ramparts enclosed an enclosure similar in plan to a strongly elongated polygon measuring 20 × 70 m. It was stretched along an east-west axis, with two thirds of its length occupied by a trough-shaped plateau sloping slightly towards the east, and the remaining third of its length occupied by a slope with a steeper slope, eventually turning into a moat. The tower was erected at the break of the slope of the plateau. From here it guarded the only passage from the lower, economic eastern part to the higher western part, centred around the main courtyard.

#### *Phase 2 (4<sup>th</sup> decade of the 13<sup>th</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century)*

The southern wing was erected at the next stage of the development, and its location – a steep, inaccessible slope descending towards the gorges of the Pełcznica River, on the outer side of the peripheral wall – must have determined the defensive, tower-like character of this building. Its lofty bulk, reinforced from the side of the slope

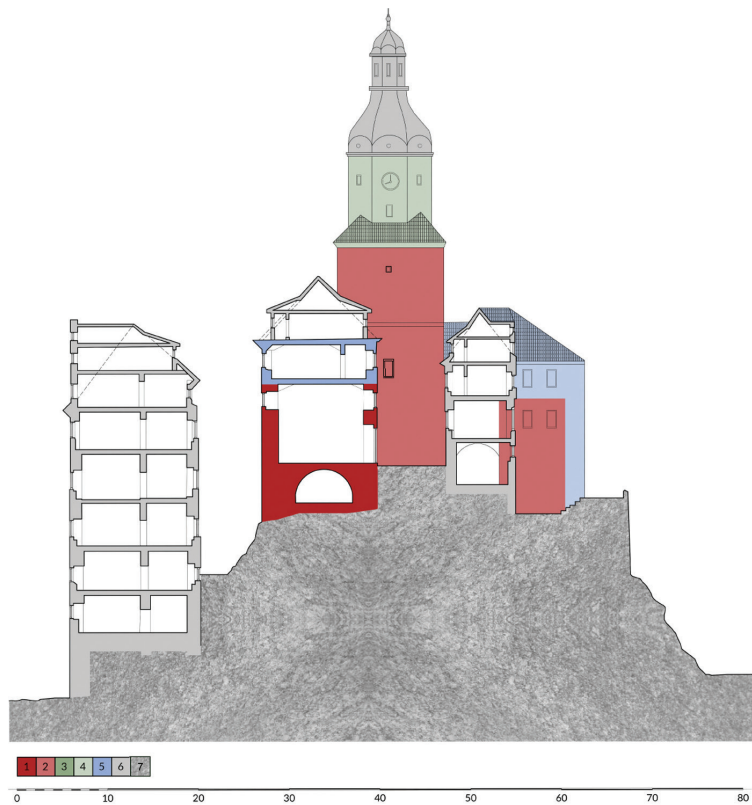


Fig. 10. Książ Castle. Cross-section through the upper castle and building plans at the former ground floor level (now a mezzanine between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors):

I – main tower,  
 II – north wing,  
 III – south wing.  
 The colour markings under the cross-section show the phases of the build-up:  
 1 – preserved walls from 1280–1300,  
 2 – reconstructed walls from 1280–1300,  
 3 – preserved walls from 1580–1650,  
 4 – extent of development from 1580–1650,  
 5 – extent of development from 1670–1725,  
 6 – extent of development from 1860–1945,  
 7 – rock  
 (elaborated by M. Chorowska, drawn M. Noszczyk, source: Chorowska et al. 2023, 22)

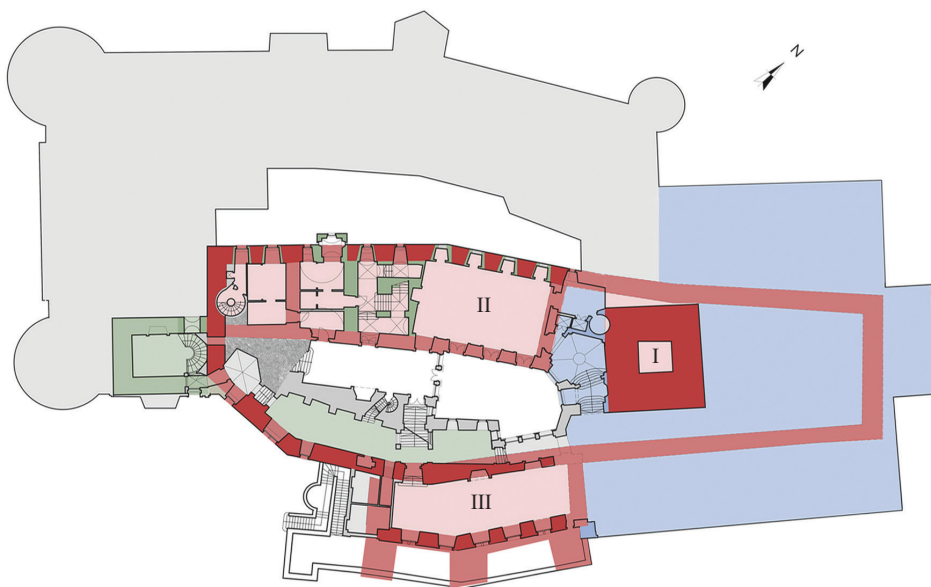


Fig. 11. Zamek Książ. Przekrój przez górny zamek i rzuty budynków na poziomie dawnego parteru (obecnie półpiętro między 2. i 3. kondygnacją):  
 I – wieża główna,  
 II – skrzydło północne,  
 III – skrzydło południowe.  
 Kolory pokazują fazy zabudowy:  
 1 – zachowane mury z 1280–1300,  
 2 – rekonstruowane mury z 1280–1300,  
 3 – zachowane mury z 1580–1650,  
 4 – zabudowa z 1580–1650,  
 5 – zabudowa z 1670–1725,  
 6 – zabudowa z 1860–1945,  
 7 – skała  
 (oprac. M. Chorowska, rys. M. Noszczyk, źródło: Chorowska et al. 2023, 22)

with three strong buttresses, took the form of a donjon, i.e., a majestic residential and defence tower. The time of construction, dated by the form of the trefoil windows (1289/1290–1314), very probably points to the attribution to the “Duke of Silesia, Lord of Książ”, Bolko I, who in the years 1293–1301 enjoyed his greatest political successes.

#### Phase 3 (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries)

On the rocky ridge to the north of the main castle were built the middle and lower bailey included in the lower perimeter of the defensive walls reinforced with towers and separated from each other by a moat<sup>2</sup>. In the lower castle, the presence of another cylindrical defensive tow-

er of the *bergfried* type should be noted. Its lowest room was covered with a stone dome, which indicates the possibility of a very early metric date for this building, not excluding the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Mruczek 2018, 116, 117)<sup>13</sup>. Certainly, Książ was already a formidable for-

<sup>13</sup> And attributed to Duke Henry the Bearded, who located villages in the vicinity of Szczawno and was therefore interested in the presence of a centre of ducal power in the area. This could be confirmed by future archaeological research carried out in the area of the lower castle in Książ or in the Old Książ, but so far this has not been confirmed (Boguszewicz 2010, 116). However, there are known cases, such as Chojnik, where the chronologically older tower was located on the lower castle site rather than on the highest rocky uplift.

gress in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by the fact that King Matthias Corvinus survived the siege of the castle in 1475. The lower castle, however, has not been the subject of current research. Within the recognised areas of the upper castle, no significant building transformations have been recorded, at most the reconstructions necessary after the war episodes in which the 15<sup>th</sup> century abounded.

### Summary

In the light of the architectural research carried out on the upper castle, it is possible to reconstruct with a fair degree of probability the lump structure of Książ from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, it was an impressive structure, which on the small area of a narrow rock ridge accommodated a huge free-standing *bergfried*, defensive walls, a high and long dwelling house walled in to the northern section of the peripheral wall and a monumental tower palace – donjon, erected for lack of space on the external side of the walls and supported by three strong buttresses (Fig. 11). The rich architectural programme of Książ surpassed many of the capital's strongholds, such as Jawor, Świdnica, Opole, Głogów, giving way at best to the main residence of the Piast dynasty in Wrocław. Even if the founding idea of one of the Dukes of Wrocław named Henry was behind the origins of Książ, which cannot be ruled out, it served as the permanent residence of Bolko I the Strict in the last decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. After the erection of the donjon on the southern slope of the Pełcznica gorge, its monumental mass became an architectural manifesto of Bolko's power over the principality, which, so far being the poorest part of Silesia, became under his rule the most important political entity in the region. It was perfectly visible from the nearby Old Książ, a fortress located on the other side of the Pełcznica gorge. The latter was dated to the Great Moravian period (mid-9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century), after which the extinct fortress was renovated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At one end of the fortress a stone-walled castle was built, and at the widening other end – extensive bailey walls and moats (Boguszewicz 2010, 116, 117). In the ruins of Old Książ, however, the presence of medieval walls of similar extent to those confirmed in Książ proper, in the upper castle, has not been established. Perhaps in accordance with the pronunciation of the old name of Książ *Vorstinburg* and according to the suggestions of former researchers, a populous proto-urban centre – *burgum* – functioned there at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which, however, after the death of Bolko I could not withstand the competition with nearby Świebodzice and collapsed.

The location of the south wing outside the castle's defensive wall was contrary to the basic principles of fortress construction in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Silesia, the first



Fig. 11. Książ Castle visualised circa 1300.

View from the south-east

(elaborated by P. Lipczyńska acc. to M. Chorowska, source: Zamki i dwory obronne Śląska [2025])

Il. 11. Zamek Książ na wizualizacji stanu około 1300 r.

Widok od strony południowo-wschodniej

(oprac. P. Lipczyńska według M. Chorowskiej, źródło: Zamki i dwory obronne Śląska [2025])

examples of this type of action were thought to have begun in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Examples from Silesia include the so-called Dom Kobiet (Women's House) in Bolków castle from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, or the tower palace in the Gryf castle, added from the outside to the defensive wall of the upper part of the fortress around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A slightly different case would be the residential donjon at Malbork Castle, built as part of the Palace of the Grand Masters between 1380 and 1385 (Hermann 2023, 63). The main motive for going beyond the outline of the Middle Castle was, it seems, the need for representation and prestige of the building, which, on the Nogat river side, gained a monumental expression with a machicolated porch and corner towers. It is safe to say that, similarly, the case of Książ was unique and must have resulted from some special considerations. It corresponded with the titulary of Duke Bolko I and his successors, referring to themselves as *dominus de Fürstenberg* even when the titular Książ remained outside their area of rule (Boguszewicz 2010, 262, 263).

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## Streszczenie

### Jak wyglądał zamek Książ około roku 1300?

Tematem artykułu jest najstarsza faza budowlana zamku Książ, która z powodu niejednoznaczności źródeł pisanych i ogromu przekształceń brylowych tego obiektu jest trudna do jednoznacznego określenia. Autorzy artykułu, na podstawie wyników badań przeprowadzonych w latach 2022 i 2023, pokusili się o próbę odtworzenia początków budowli.

Omówione w artykule badania polegały na dotarciu do najstarszych murów zamku w celu obserwacji użytych materiałów, sposobu ułożenia kamieni, zapraw murarskich, styków i węzłów. Przeprowadzono je w wielu niedostępnych dotąd miejscach: we wnętrzu wieży głównej, na poziomie fundamentowania murów obronnych górnego zamku, w piwnicach pod skrzydłami: północnym i południowym, w szczelinie między górnym zamkiem a XX-wiecznym skrzydłem zachodnim.

W wyniku przeprowadzonych prac potwierdzono, że wieża główna o funkcji bergfriedu z głębokim lochem głodowym mogła powstać najwcześniej w dwóch ostatnich dekadach XIII w. Całkowitą nowością była natomiast konstatacja, że równocześnie z nią lub nieco później wzniesiono mur obwodowy górnego zamku i skrzydło północne – piętrowy budynek o funkcji mieszkalnej, zrosnięty „plecami” z tym murem. Pod nim znajdowała się piwnica piwowarska. Sama rozległość budowli jest przesłanką, że zamek miał stanowić stałą siedzibę książęcą, a nie samotną warownię obsadzoną przez kasztelana. Także czas budowy skrzydła południowego omówiono w nowym kontekście chronologicznym. Jak dotąd uznawane było ono za najstarsze po wieży głównej. Obecnie dzięki przeprowadzonym badaniom architektonicznym można stwierdzić, że było ostatnim etapem rozwoju wczesnej zabudowy zamku, ponieważ z powodu szczupłości dziedziczyca usytuowano je po zewnętrznej stronie muru obwodowego, na stromym, niedostępnym zboczu opadającym ku przełomom rzeki Pelcznicy. Jego wyniosła bryła wzmocniona od strony zbocza trzema przyporami miała postać donżonu, czyli obszernej wieży rezydencjalno-obronnej.

W świetle przeprowadzonych badań oraz wzmianek z lat 1290–1293 tytułujących księcia Bolka I Surowego panem na zamku Fürstenberg można potwierdzić funkcję górnego zamku Książ jako rezydencji księcia Bolka I. Monumentalna bryła stała się manifestem władzy Bolka nad księstwem, które będąc dotąd najbiedniejszą częścią Śląska, stało się pod jego rządami najważniejszym tworem politycznym w regionie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Śląsk, Książ, zamek, średniowiecze, donżon, bergfried