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History of the crypt in the Eastern wing of the post-Cistercian monastery in Krzeszów

Abstract

The article presents the results of architectural research concerning the identified underground spaces of the Krzeszów monastic complex.

The subject of the research is the crypt located in the northern part of the eastern wing of the former Cistercian monastic complex, which has not yet been sufficiently explored. The developed crypt in the eastern wing of the monastery holds the greatest significance for understanding the history of the monastery's construction. Based on the traces found in the crypt, several stages and phases were identified, spanning from the 14th to the 21st century. The first of these refers to the time when a medieval chapter house and sacristy were constructed at the ground level of the crypt. During the construction of the new church, the eastern part of the crypt, which has been preserved, was built with a circular staircase (around 1730). Over the next few years, structural, functional, and communication changes were introduced in these underground spaces. The last of these (around 1738) involved the creation of the western part of the current crypt and its connection to the transept crypt. The construction of this additional space was necessary to integrate it with the neighboring interiors, creating a unified complex accessible from the outside.

Keywords: Cistercians, monastery, crypt, architectural survey, Krzeszów

Introduction

The monastery in Krzeszów, erected during the Middle Ages and subsequently modified in the Baroque style, constitutes a noteworthy component of the extant monastic complex. This phenomenon can be attributed to the architectural design of the church, which comprises both above-ground structures and subterranean crypts. A recent programme of architectural research, undertaken in the aforementioned spaces, has been expanded to encompass the crypts situated beneath the transept of the church. This initiative has yielded a comprehensive overview of the construction phases of these crypts. In the crypt of the eastern wing (Fig. 1a, b), in contrast to any other interior in Krzeszów, numerous transformations from the Middle Ages to the 21st century were

identified. The site is situated beneath the present sacristy and the adjacent corridor on the western side. The traces found there relate only to a minor extent to the medieval period, but they proved to be important for identifying the stages and phases of construction in this place. The preponderance of the information obtained was from the Baroque period, during which a significant number of previously unknown transformations took place. This phenomenon was not only related to changes within the monastery itself, but above all to the construction of a new, imposing monastery church.

Current state of research

The majority of studies written on the Krzeszów Abbey focus on the history of the construction of the monastery church, including its exterior and interior decorative elements. The crypt of the eastern wing of the monastery is a subject on which there is very little literature, given that it was inaccessible for a considerable length of time. The layout of the crypt was published in 1984 in connec-

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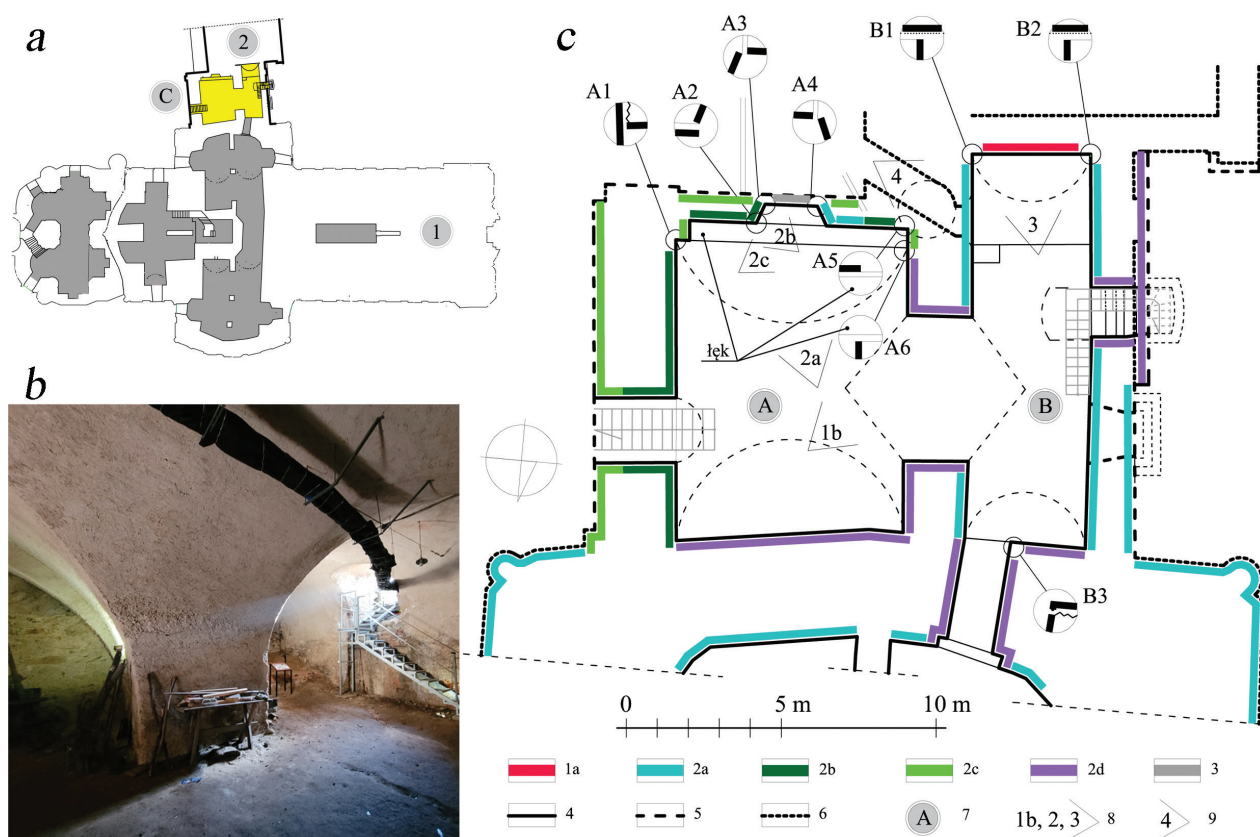


Fig. 1. Monastery crypt: a) location (1 – church with crypts, 2 – fragment of the eastern wing of the monastery, c – crypt under investigation – yellow), b) interior view towards the south-west, c) chronological stratification with marked nodes and photographed locations.

Markings: 1a – 1st half of the 14th century, 2a–2d – approx. 1730–approx. 1738, 3 – 19th–21st century,

4 – visible course of basement walls, 5 – invisible course of walls below ground level, 6 – ground floor walls, 7 – parts of cellars, 8 – photographs at cellar level, 9 – photograph at ground floor level, A1–A6, B1–B3 – research nodes¹ (own work)

Il. 1. Krypta klasztorna: a) lokalizacja (1 – kościół z kryptami, 2 – fragment wschodniego skrzydła klasztoru, c – badana krypta – kolor żółty), b) widok wnętrza w kierunku południowo-zachodnim, c) rozwarstwienie chronologiczne z zaznaczeniem węzłów i miejsc fotografowanych.

Oznaczenia: 1a – 1. poł. XIV w., 2a–2d – ok. 1730–ok. 1738, 3 – XIX–XXI w., 4 – widoczny przebieg ścian piwnic,

5 – niewidoczny przebieg ścian poniżej poziomu terenu, 6 – ściany parteru, 7 – części piwnic, 8 – fotografie na poziomie piwnic, 9 – fotografia na poziomie parteru, A1–A6, B1–B3 – węzły badawcze (oprac. własne)

tion with the inventory of the entire church². Prior to the designation of the site as a visitor attraction in 2018 and the initiation of the research project entitled “The Abbey in Krzeszów. Architecture and natural and landscape context” (2023)³, the architecture of the site was not a subject that could be investigated. The study of all the research results, published two years later, included an article containing preliminary findings on the history of the crypt (Piwek, Kwasek, Dembicki in print). The results of the study demonstrated the presence of functional connections, predominantly in relation to the subterranean transept of the church. Furthermore, the study yielded insights into the temporal framework of the construction, and the decorative

elements employed during the architectural development. It was determined that the crypt beneath the monastery is not homogeneous. The easternmost part of the structure, located beneath the sacristy, is believed to date back to approximately 1730, while the western part, connected to the former by a wide passage, is estimated to have been constructed around 1738. A more detailed analysis of the crypt revealed further information about the history of its construction. It was not possible to provide full confirmation of this information during the excavations. Consequently, some of the data presented is still pending confirmation through further research.

The historical context of the crypt is enriched by the information provided regarding the monastery (Dziurła 1974, 17–21, 29–38; Kutzner 1997, 138–139; Łużyńska 1998, 110–111, 113–116, 118–120, 128–129; Łużyńska 2002, 161). Its history encompasses several significant developments, including those that occurred in the Middle Ages (partially preserved), the Baroque period (during which the sacristy was constructed, and the east wing underwent substantial reconstruction, along with the addition of the south wing and the space between it and the east wing), and the 19th century (the demolition of the eastern wing) (Dziurła

¹ The marked stages of construction do not include changes in the interiors of individual walls. In order to present the sequence of construction steps in wall openings and window openings, the markings refer only to the actions taken.

² The inventory was conducted by a team comprising S. Wojdon, A. Żydowski, E. Ratajczak and J. Michalak. The documentation is stored in the collections of the field branch of the National Heritage Institute in Wrocław, dating from 1984.

³ It was organized by the Faculty of Architecture of the Wrocław University of Technology under the supervision of Prof. Ewa Łużyńska.

1962). With regard to the eastern wing of the monastery, it has been established that the part connected with the sacristy was constructed in conjunction with the extant church, while the rest of it, including the medieval interior, was rebuilt and extended between 1662 and 1666 (Dziurla 1962, 15, 73).

The present article draws upon the findings of architectural research conducted at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, which have proved to be of great utility. The probable layout of the medieval monastery was described by Ewa Łużyniecka (1995, 143–149). In 2011, the same author presented a hypothetical division of the monastery into individual interiors (2011, 450). Furthermore, she interpreted the findings in the eastern wing, on its western façade and inside the former refectory, as well as changes in the architecture. In addition, she identified several medieval interiors, including a vestibule, a rectangular staircase, a fraternity room, and what appeared to be fragments of a chapter house. In a subsequent publication, in cooperation with Monika Dąbkowska (Łużyniecka, Dąbkowska 2018, 344, 351), she distinguished several stages in the construction of the eastern wing (in order from the north): the sacristy with a corridor – circa 1730, rooms with a refectory – 14th century to the 4th quarter of the 18th century, and the southern part of the former wing (connecting to the southern wing). This publication also comprises descriptions of conservation work that was carried out in the cloister buildings in the aftermath of World War II. The work carried out in the monastery between 1969 and 1984 was previously presented by Wojciech Kapałczyński (Kapałczyński 1997, 369–370).

Two engravings from the iconographic material relating to, among other things, the eastern wing of the monastery (and thus partly to the crypt) proved to be significant. The first illustration is a depiction of the abbey as drawn by Michael L. Willmann in 1678. This illustration employs an axonometric projection technique to showcase the state of the abbey following its initial Baroque modifications. Adjacent to the three-story wing, cloisters remain visible, extending to the south nave of the church. The second engraving is a plan for the reconstruction of the monastery by J.G. Feller from around 1770. The current sacristy, situated next to the transept, features a circular staircase on its south wall. The corridor adjacent to the sacristy does not have a cloister on the west side, as observed in other buildings of the cloister.

Research findings

Methodology

The research was conducted using qualitative methods. A comprehensive architectural inventory of the subterranean environment was conducted, and a thorough analysis of the relevant sources was undertaken. Excavations were conducted wherever feasible, yielding significant insights into the structural alterations that had occurred within the crypt.

Results of research on the monastery crypt

In the interests of clarity and concision, the description of the crypt has been distilled to encompass the elements that proved most instrumental in deciphering the history of

its construction⁴. These have been combined with an explanation of its original purpose, determined on the basis of visual inspection and architectural research. The results obtained, which were confirmed through excavations, were marked on the plan with the addition of a symbol (Fig. 1c: A1–6, B1–3).

The vaulted monastery crypt, which comprises four lunettes, is divided into two sections: the eastern part A, which is larger, and the western part B, which is smaller. These spaces are connected by a wide passageway, and the smaller one is additionally connected to the crypt under the transept. The usable level is defined as hardened ground, located at a depth of 4.36 metres below ground level at the western entrance to the crypt⁵. The southern walls of both sections of the crypt provide the most substantial body of information.

Part A of the crypt

The stone and brick south wall in part A of the crypt features a recess in the middle (Figs. 1c, 2a), the rear wall of which is composed of bricks measuring 14.5–15.0 × 6.3 cm. The height of 10 layers of bricks (and joints) laid with their headers is 80.5 cm. The side walls are inscribed with a glyph, and the upper structure comprises a segmental arch that is integrated into the wall, resulting in the visibility of only one side (the wall arch). Since the background of the recess is not connected to its side walls (Fig. 1c: A3, A4), it can be hypothesised that it should be considered as a brick-ing up of a previously existing wide passage. Two distinct categories of material can be identified in the eastern wall of the recess: a layer of bricks (with a width of approximately 15–20 cm) and rows of stones situated behind it (see Figure 2b). This phenomenon can be attributed to the construction of the wall in two distinct phases. The stone segment can be regarded as a remnant of an earlier stage, while the brick element represents a subsequent addition. The western wall of the recess contains worked stone blocks, indicating the remains of an older, narrower passage (Fig. 2c).

Adjacent to the wall under examination is another arch, measuring approximately 60 cm in width and 65 cm in depth. However, its course is not parallel to that of the wall arch, a discrepancy that is probably attributable to the different times of their construction. This arch is undoubtedly later than the wall arch. The subject begins approximately 40 cm in front of the eastern wall and is aligned flush with the opposing wall. As demonstrated in Figure 1c: A1, the junction between the eastern wall of the crypt and the protruding arch is of particular interest. Analysis indicates that this junction is likely secondary to the visible face of the wall. This hypothesis can be substantiated by the almost vertical attachment of the arch to the eastern wall, which results in a width of only approximately 40 cm at ground level. Conversely, the alignment of the arch with the western wall suggests that

⁴ The contemporary condition of the northern crypt has been delineated in exhaustive detail in the *Monografia Zespołu Krzeszowickiego* (in print), consequently, a proportion of the data has been excluded from this article.

⁵ Within the article, the reference level (±0.00) was adopted for all levels described.



Fig. 2. South wall of part A of the crypt with two arches (wall and added) and a bricked-up exit to the monastery grounds, 2023:
a) general view, b) eastern glyph, c) western glyph (photo by A. Piwek)

Il. 2. Ściana południowa części A krypty z dwoma łękami (ściennym i dostawionym) oraz zamurowanym wyjściem na teren przyklasztorny, 2023:
a) widok ogólny, b) glif wschodni, c) glif zachodni (fot. A. Piwek)

it is embedded within it (Fig. 1c: A5, A6). The aforementioned statement suggests that the western wall is composed of two layers; the younger part is situated on the interior side of part A of the crypt. The thickening of the wall was a result of the repair of the vault and the reconstruction of the above-ground part of the monastery wing.

The surfaces of the remaining walls do not demonstrate any indications of reconstruction. The northern wall, as indicated by its course, repeats the form given to the southern wall of the transept of the present church. Consequently, it can be deduced that the structure in discussion could only have been erected subsequent to the construction of the church. It is reasonable to hypothesise that the thickness of the structure is slightly thickened just like the north wall in

part B of the crypt, where an excavation could be (Fig. 1c: B3). In the eastern wall, metal steps constructed in the 21st century have been inserted into a slanted opening, thereby providing access to ground level. From the interior of the crypt, the upper parts of its walls have preserved faces, while the rest show traces of chiseling. Furthermore, the bottom surface of the opening contains irregularly shaped faults resembling steps. The structure is surmounted by a lunette, which is a fragment of the barrel vault of part A of the crypt. The findings suggest that there was a high window in this location, which was subsequently deepened to its current form, thereby allowing access from the crypt. Externally, the opening still retains the form of a historic window with stonework, similar to the nearby windows illuminating the transept crypt.

Part B of the crypt



Fig. 3. South wall of part B of the crypt containing plasterwork from the medieval period and three different floor levels, 2023
(photo by A. Piwek)

Il. 3. Ściana południowa części B krypty zawierająca tynki z okresu średniowiecza oraz trzy różne poziomy posadzek, 2023 (fot. A. Piwek)

The upper half of the south wall surface consists of white-washed lime plaster, while the lower half (built of stones and a few bricks) consists of roughcast with fragments of plaster (Fig. 3). This distinction can be attributed to the differing purposes of the two types of use. The lower part of the structure was originally part of the wall foundation, and was later incorporated into the usable interior of the basement. In contrast, the upper part was part of the wall that formed the usable ground floor room from the beginning, extending northwards (towards the church). The plaster in the upper part exhibits several layers of whitewash, suggesting that the interior, which has not been preserved, was in use for a considerable duration. Furthermore, three levels are still visible on their surfaces – traces of previously laid floors. The lowest of these (–1.97 m), corresponding to the inception of the eastern wing's construction, traverses approximately halfway up the observable portion of the wall, the second is situated approximately 50 cm above it, and the

third (marked with a pencil) is positioned around 70 cm. An examination of the 290-centimetre segment of the wall revealed that the ground along this section slopes at a considerable angle. The structure's perimeter is delineated by a transverse wall measuring 46 cm in height, constructed from five layers of bricks with dimensions 29,0–29,3–29,5 × 15,0 × 7,0 cm, laid alternately in a row of headers and a row of stretchers. Between the wall and the eastern wall of the room, there is a masonry structure measuring 88 cm in width, 58 cm in depth, and 18.5 cm in height (considered a step). This structure consists of four layers of similar bricks, with the second and fourth layers (counting from the top) being half the height of the other layers. The ground level is much more leveled from the low wall with the step. It is evident that the low partition serves to protect the south wall and its foundations from losing stability. Such concerns must have arisen because, with the deepening of the northern part adjacent to the wall (the final phase of changes made during the Baroque period), previously invisible parts (medieval foundations) were exposed. It was therefore imperative to expose only the minimum of the building structure when creating the underground passages under the corridor, even at the cost of excluding part of the newly built basement from current use. Moreover, the construction of the wall impeded the ground from slipping into the area designated for the newly created passageway between the crypts. The construction of the wall (and the steps) is related to the construction of part B of the crypt.

In the western wall of this part of the crypt, there is a passage leading to the current ground level. Access to the premises is facilitated by a metal stairs, which were installed in the 21st century. A flight of stairs and a landing, leveled to the bottom edge of the opening (–2.37 m), are attached to the inner wall. Furthermore, the stairs traverse the thickness of the wall, with multiple steps extending beyond its exterior, into a stone well. Historically, the opening functioned as a window, providing illumination to the interior of the crypt. From the outside, its edge was encircled by stonework, akin to other windows in the monastery. In order to facilitate access to the interior of the crypt, the opening in the wall was slightly enlarged by chiseling due to the 21st-century purpose of the former window. In the eastern part of the north wall, a passage to the transept crypt is located. In its western frame, an excavation (Fig. 1c: B3) revealed two types of material: the top layer, approx. 15–20 cm thick, made of bricks measuring 14.5–15.0 × 6.0 cm (the height of 10 layers of bricks with mortar is 71.5 cm), and a row of stones located behind it. It should be assumed that the first mentioned was created later – after the passage was carved out.

Interpretations

The construction traces found in the examined crypt allow for the determination of the stages and phases of its creation, as well as the purpose of the changes made. In the context of the monastery's history and the evolution of the church, these elements can be traced back to the period in which the work was undertaken. Due to the fact that the interior walls were covered in cement during the construction

phase, not all of the results obtained from the excavations could be confirmed. Consequently, some of the results are awaiting verification in further research. In consideration of the extant findings pertaining to the northern part of the east wing, it can be concluded that its construction was executed in multiple stages.

Stage 1

The first stage pertains to the spaces outside the current crypt (Fig. 4). To the north of the southern wall of part B of the crypt, there was a room enclosed by the continuations of the extant longitudinal walls of the eastern wing of the monastery. According to Willmann's drawing from around 1678, depicting a Gothic Cistercian church with the first Baroque modifications, the southern part of the transept may have been situated in a location analogous to that occupied by a comparable part constructed during the Baroque period. It is reasonable to hypothesise that a sacristy was located adjacent to the transept, in which case its southern wall would also have formed the boundary of the interior, which has not been preserved. The aforementioned conditions, in conjunction with the sequence of functions in the eastern wing, suggest the possibility that the interiors above the examined crypt may have served as a sacristy and a chapter house.

The first interior remains unidentified. Some details have already been established regarding the second one. The lowest floor level identified, at –1.97 m, is likely to be associated with it (Figs. 3, 4), suggesting that its initial construction may have commenced at approximately 2/3 of the current crypt's height. The chapter house on the south side ended at the location of the current south wall of section B of the crypt. A cloister adjoined its west wall.

The date of construction of these parts of the monastery remains uncertain. It probably dates back to the first half of the 14th century. The construction of the eastern wing was to be completed in 1454 (Łużyńska 2002, 161). As evidenced by the preserved traces, the floor level of the chapter house was raised twice (stage 1, phases b and c). The first time this happened was around 1427, immediately after the devastation of the monastery and church by the Hussites (1420–1426), thereby enabling the interior to be utilised provisionally. The second alteration must have occurred prior to 1454, when repairs to all the damage caused earlier were completed in the monastery (Kutzner 1997, 134) and the final adjustments could be made.

Stage 2

This stage is distinguished by a series of reconstructions of the crypt. The period under discussion may be divided into four phases, spanning from approximately 1730 to approximately 1738. They refer to the reconstruction of the monastery, which was also substantially influenced by changes made within the church. The first transformations of the crypt of the eastern wing are associated with the construction of the church, or at very least its transept.

The first phase (2a–c. 1730) entailed the demolition of the northern segment of the east wing, thereby creating additional space for the construction of the Baroque transept

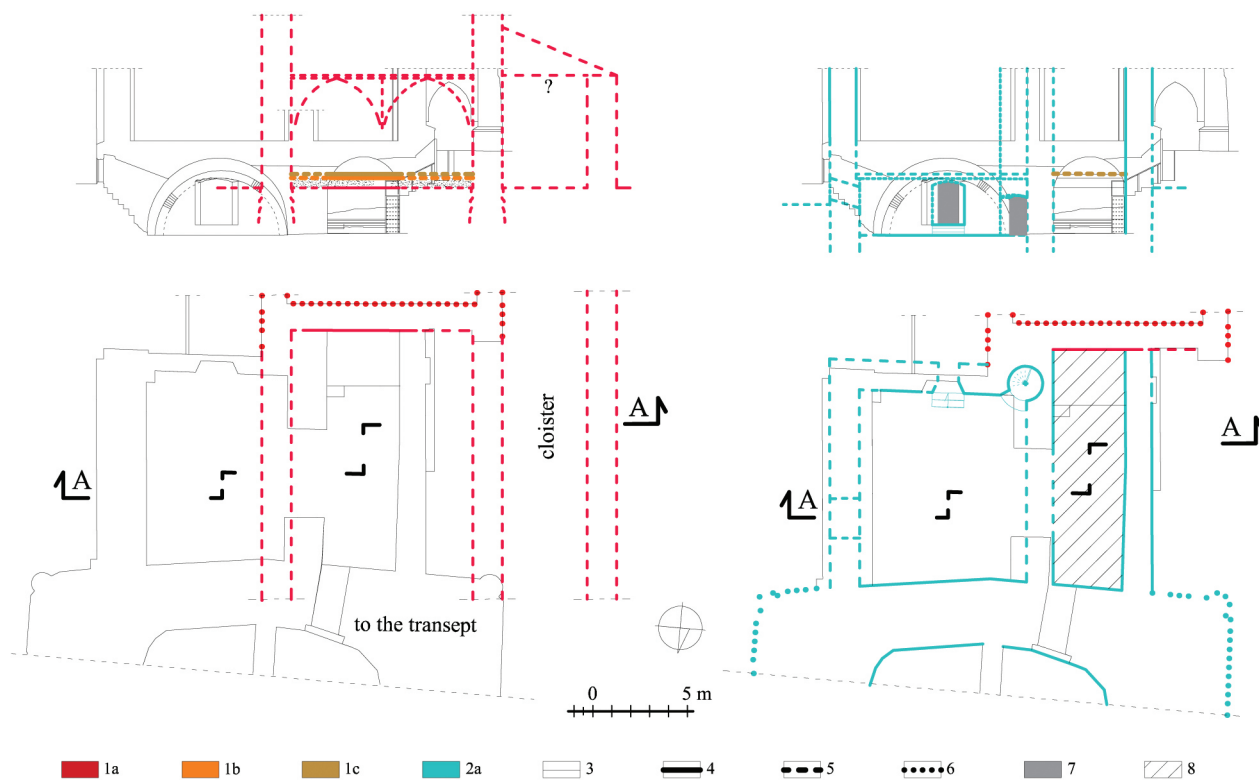


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the plan and cross-section through the northern part of the eastern wing of stages 1 and 2 of phase a.
 Legend: 1a – 1st half of the 14th century, 1b – approx. 1427, 1c – ca. 1454, 2a – ca. 1730, 3 – current state, 4 – visible course of basement walls, 5 – invisible course of walls below ground level, 6 – ground floor walls, 7 – passageway, 8 – part without basement
 (elaborated by A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

Il. 4. Rekonstrukcja planu i przekroju poprzecznego przez część północną skrzydła wschodniego etapów 1 i 2 fazy a.

Oznaczenia: 1a – 1. poł. XIV w., 1b – ok. 1427 r., 1c – ok. 1454 r., 2a – ok. 1730 r., 3 – stan obecny, 4 – widoczny przebieg ścian piwnic, 5 – niewidoczny przebieg ścian poniżej poziomu terenu, 6 – ściany parteru, 7 – przejście, 8 – część niepodpiwniczona (oprac. A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

of the church, whose form differed significantly from the medieval layout⁶. Between the newly constructed transept and the preserved part of the east wing, only two interiors were planned on the ground floor. While maintaining proportionality with the width of the sacristy and the passageway, they were displaced in an eastward direction (Fig. 4). The first of these was constrained by a newly constructed section of the south wall. The construction of a subterranean level beneath the sacristy was planned. The structure was overhung by a ceiling, and it was hypothesised that it was illuminated from the east by a single window. Access to the crypt was provided by a narrow passage in the south wall and a round staircase built into the south-west corner, which also functioned as a connection to the individual floors of the monastery. The dimensions and positioning of the corner pass-through are known, inter among other things, from the monastery plan drawn by J.G. Feller circa 1770. The location has been specifically identified on the basis of preserved traces in the floor of the corridor on the ground floor (connecting the interior of the eastern wing with the pavilion added from the east) and is visible in the distortion of its wall (Figs. 1c, 5). A space that was both inaccessible and

partially filled was created between the western wall of the basement and the foundations of the corridor wall.

The second phase (2b) involved the introduction of further significant changes (Fig. 6). These were a consequence of the construction of a new Baroque church. The commencement of construction work on the church necessitated the temporary closure of the presbytery crypt. The function of the crypt was temporarily assumed by the basement under the sacristy (now part A of the crypt). The interior was adapted by widening the existing entrance towards the east. The resultant cavities in the wall face were filled with bricks on this side. The construction work on the wide passageway may have instilled apprehensions regarding structural integrity. In order to circumvent this issue, a substantial arch was constructed within the designated wall, with the central portion subsequently becoming the element closing the wide passageway from above (Figs. 2, 5). The construction works entailed the removal of access to the circular staircase in the basement. One of the beneficial outcomes – unless it was another reason for the bricking up – was the separation of the residential and burial functions. The interior was vaulted with a longitudinal barrel vault, and illuminated by a small window in the eastern wall. The brick covering thickened the existing eastern wall. This was also used to reinforce it, which, as subsequent modifications demonstrated, was not the final construction measure of this nature, presum-

⁶ The northern part of the cloister was demolished, with its function being transferred to the corridor without a basement, which was being constructed at that time.



Fig. 5. Outline of the semicircular staircase (also marked by the curvature of the south wall) in the passageway of the eastern wing of the monastery leading to the added pavilion, 2023 (photo by M. Kwasek)

Il. 5. Zarys półkolistej klatki schodowej (zaznaczonej także krzywizną ściany południowej) w przejściu wschodniego skrzydła klasztornej wiodącym do dostawionego pawilonu, 2023 (fot. M. Kwasek)

ably due to its suboptimal location. Comparable work was not required on the western wall, as it was an internal wall and did not exhibit such structural issues. Furthermore, it had been partially filled in. The above work was probably completed around 1731.

In phase three (2c), the southern wall of the basement underwent a process of thinning on the outer surface, while an internal arch was introduced to ensure stability (Fig. 7). In the upper levels, this approach enabled the construction of an additional section of wall on the arch, thereby increasing its thickness beyond that of the basement levels. This resulted in the wall achieving the requisite thickness, equivalent to that of the earlier phases. It is indisputable that this measure was implemented for structural reasons. This phase of the construction of the monastery crypt was completed around 1735.

Phase four (2d) witnessed substantial transformations, primarily attributable to the obstruction of the pre-existing passageway from the presbytery crypt to the transept, thus necessitating the improvisation of an alternative means of communication (Piwek, Kwasek, Dembicki, in print). The most effective solution was determined to be the creation of an access passage through the southern wall of the transept crypt, utilising the previously constructed exit in base-

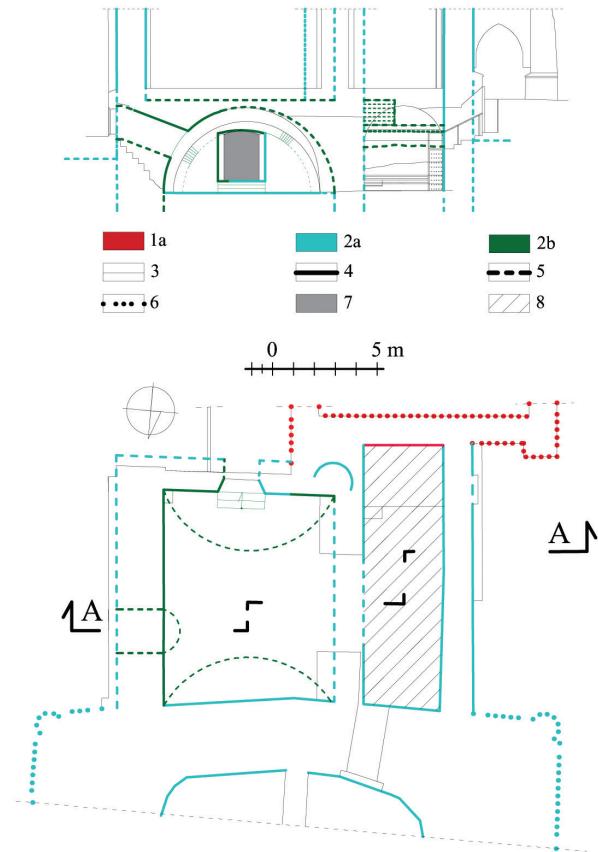


Fig. 6. Reconstruction of the plan and cross-section through the monastery crypt of stage 2 of phase b. Markings: 1a – 1st half of the 14th century, 2a – approx. 1730, 2b – approx. 1731, 3 – current state, 4 – visible course of basement walls, 5 – invisible course of walls below ground level, 6 – ground floor walls, 7 – passageway, 8 – part without basement (elaborated by A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

Il. 6. Rekonstrukcja planu i przekroju poprzecznego przez kryptę klasztorną etapu 2 fazy b.

Oznaczenia: 1a – 1. poł. XIV w., 2a – ok. 1730 r., 2b – ok. 1731 r., 3 – stan obecny, 4 – widoczny przebieg ścian piwnic, 5 – niewidoczny przebieg ścian poniżej poziomu terenu, 6 – ściany parteru, 7 – przejście, 8 – część niepodpiwniczona (oprac. A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

ment A to the external area of the monastery (Fig. 8). Of the two passages of this crypt that reach the transverse wall of the transept, only the western one was suitable for creating a passage, as it was the only one from which it was possible to freely access every underground part. However, the implementation of this plan necessitated the construction of a basement beneath the corridor. The soil was removed in such a manner that a passageway could be created⁷, which was established in the narrowest part, i.e., as close as possible to the axis of the convex transept. Consequently, the construction efforts were primarily concentrated on the northern sector of the basement, while the southern sector was only partially cleared and secured with a low wall. In addition, a section of the eastern wall of part B of the crypt had

⁷ Therefore, the level of the newly created interior by the transept wall was aligned with that of basement A, while the level by the south wall, due to its unusability, was approximately 80 cm higher.

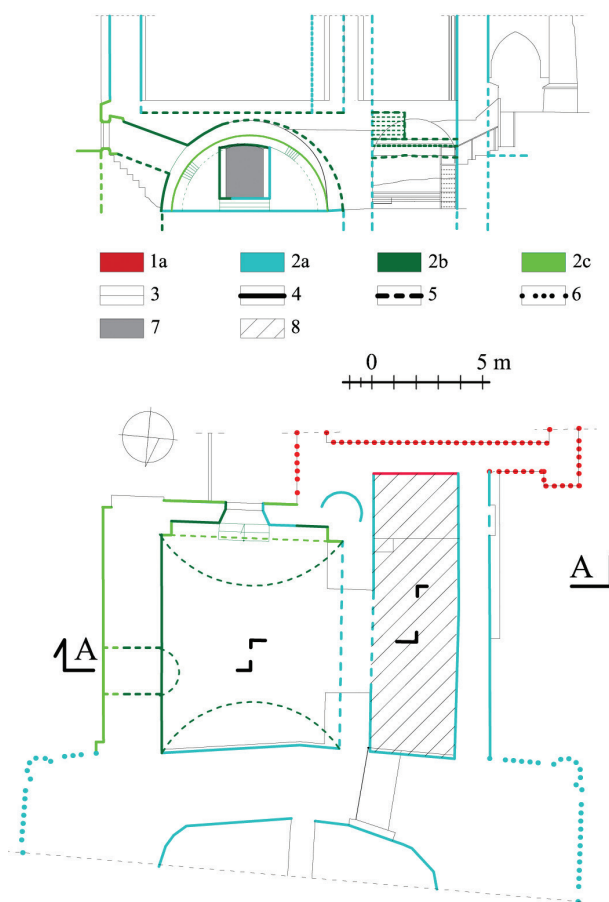


Fig. 7. Reconstruction of the plan and cross-section through the monastery crypt of stage 2 of phase c.

Markings: 1a – 1st half of the 14th century, 2a – approx. 1730, 2b – approx. 1731, 2c – approx. 1735, 3 – current state, 4 – visible course of basement walls, 5 – invisible course of walls below ground level, 6 – ground floor walls, 7 – passageway, 8 – part without basement (elaborated by A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

Il. 7. Rekonstrukcja planu i przekroju poprzecznego przez krytę klasztorną etapu 2 fazy c.

Oznaczenia: 1a – 1. poł. XIV w., 2a – ok. 1730 r., 2b – ok. 1731 r., 2c – ok. 1735 r., 3 – stan obecny, 4 – widoczny przebieg ścian piwnic, 5 – niewidoczny przebieg ścian poniżej poziomu terenu, 6 – ściany parteru, 7 – przejście, 8 – część niepodpiwniczona (oprac. A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

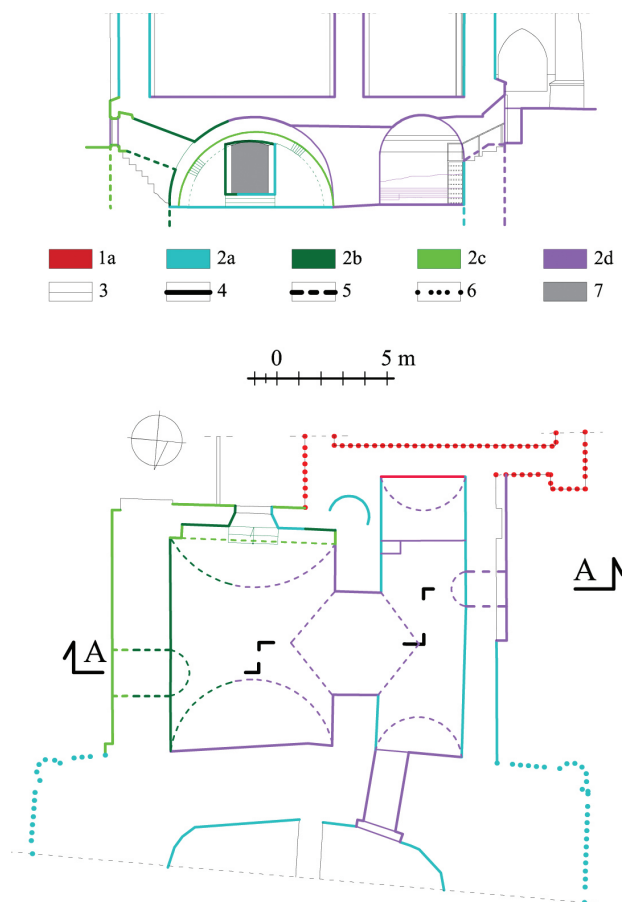


Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the plan and cross-section through the monastery crypt of stage 2 of phase d.

Markings: 1a – 1st half of the 14th century, 2a – approx. 1730, 2b – approx. 1731, 2c – ca. 1735, 2d – ca. 1738, 3 – current state, 4 – visible course of basement walls, 5 – invisible course of walls below ground level, 6 – ground floor walls, 7 – passageway (elaborated by A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

Il. 8. Rekonstrukcja planu i przekroju poprzecznego przez krytę klasztorną etapu 2 fazy d.

Oznaczenia: 1a – 1. poł. XIV w., 2a – ok. 1730 r., 2b – ok. 1731 r., 2c – ok. 1735 r., 2d – ok. 1738 r., 3 – stan obecny, 4 – widoczny przebieg ścian piwnic, 5 – niewidoczny przebieg ścian poniżej poziomu terenu, 6 – ściany parteru, 7 – przejście (oprac. A. Piwek, M. Kwasek)

to be removed. Consequently, the newly created space was integrated with the pre-existing spaces (under the sacristy and transept) to form a unified complex. However, this undertaking necessitated the demolition of a section of the barrel vault that extended to this wall in part A of the crypt.

The repair of the ceiling was utilised to increase the thickness of the wall by approximately 90 cm. Such a significant increase in the cross-section of the wall separating the two basements seems to have had a more important meaning. At ground floor level, the construction of a wall shifted to the east was now possible, thus widening the corridor at the expense of the sacristy. In the basement, the northern walls of the two-part crypt, which were under construction at the time, were given further additions. However, due to their transverse course, they were only about 15–20 cm thick (in part B of the crypt this is certain – Fig. 1c: B3). The western wall located beneath the corridor was presumably fortified

in a similar method from the exterior. The second part of the crypt was also vaulted, and the space was illuminated by a window that had been cut into the western wall. The external stone frame was located in the thickened part of the wall. The construction of a new entrance to the transept crypt, involving structural modification to parts A and B of the existing crypt, occurred circa 1738.

Stage 3

It is associated with changes that proved necessary as a result of historical events. The first of these may have been the dissolution of the monastery by the King of Prussia in 1810. The transition of the abbey church to a parochial church resulted in the crypt's obsolescence, a development that likely influenced the decision to construct a brick wall enclosing its entrance within the south wall of section A of

the monastery crypt. Following the arrival of the Benedictines in Krzeszów in 1919, the entrance to the transept crypt was most likely restored through the utilisation of a window opening in the eastern wall, which was part of the same section of the former monastery underground. Without altering its perimeter, the portion of the wall situated beneath the window was dismantled, thereby creating steps. The most recent alterations, which included the installation of metal staircases, were undertaken in 2018, coinciding with the decision to open the transept crypt to visitors.

Summary

The research revealed medieval remains in the northern part of the eastern wing, which are likely to belong to the chapter house. The initial Baroque transformations were precipitated by functional metamorphoses within the monastery wing and the erection of a new church. The oldest section of the crypt was the chamber situated beneath the extant sacristy. Following the reconstruction of the presbytery and transept crypts, it became necessary to enlarge the crypt under investigation with a new room located below the previously unbasemented corridor. This provided access to the reconstructed transept crypt. Structural considerations were a contributing factor in the reconstruction and thickening of the walls, with the aim of installing vaults in the eastern room of the crypt (A). Several modifications were also implemented in the 21st century within the confines of the monastery wing, with the primary objectives of enhancing visitor accessibility and bolstering the security measures in place.

Concerns have been raised regarding the dating of the construction of the sacristy and the crypt beneath it. These concerns have prompted a re-examination of a version of the construction slightly different from the one presented. The initial Baroque transformations of the Krzeszów complex were executed prior to 1678, concurrent with the execution of the modifications depicted in Willmann's illustration.

The implementation of these changes permitted the construction of the sacristy and the reconstruction of the crypt in question at that time, i.e., much earlier than presented in this article – before the construction of the transept of the present church. The argument in favour of this proposal appears to be the aesthetically and architecturally unjustified location of the axis of the monastery wing windows at the point where they intersect with the church (the first row of monastery windows from the north). Furthermore, its proximity to the transept is such that its wall partially obscures the window band, which is an unusual occurrence in Baroque design.

In this version, the alterations to the presented history pertain to the second stage, which would be subject to a significantly extended duration. The initial two phases of this stage would occur during the period of medieval church existence. Initially, the construction of a new sacristy may have been undertaken in front of the eastern wing of the medieval monastery (circa 1678). In the subterranean level of the structure, there was a cellar that functioned as a storage space for items associated with the monastery garden. Subsequent transformations would lead to the creation of a crypt with a widened entrance and the installation of vaults (between approximately 1680 and approximately 1728). It is conceivable that it could temporarily assume the role of the burial function, even prior to the construction of the crypts of the Baroque church. Consequently, the demolition of the cloister would have been necessary. During the construction of the transept of the new church, the only changes made to the crypts were the reconstruction and thickening of the eastern and southern walls of crypt A (around 1730). The western side of the crypt was enlarged at some point around 1738.

Undoubtedly, the presented research will require continuation and further interpretation. It should determine to what extent the second version is realistic.

Translated by
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Streszczenie

Dzieje krypty w skrzydle wschodnim klasztoru pocysterskiego w Krzeszowie

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań architektonicznych dotyczących rozpoznanych podziemi krzeszowskiego zespołu zakonnego.

Przedmiotem badań jest krypta znajdująca się w północnej części skrzydła wschodniego należącego do dawnego cysterskiego założenia klasztorowego, który dotąd nie został dostatecznie rozpoznany. Krypta ta ma spośród wszystkich największe znaczenie dla poznania historii budowy klasztoru. Na podstawie znajdujących się w niej śladów ustalono kilka etapów i faz obejmujących okres między XIV a XXI w. Pierwszy etap odnosi się do czasu, kiedy w miejscu krypty wzniesiono na poziomie parteru pomieszczenia, które mogły być średniowiecznymi kapitułarzem oraz zakrystią. W czasie budowy nowego kościoła wymurowano część wschodnią zachowanej dotąd krypty z okrągłą klatką schodową (ok. 1730 r.). W ciągu kilku następnych lat wprowadzano w niej zmiany budowlane, funkcjonalne i komunikacyjne. Ostatnia z nich (ok. 1738 r.) łączyła się z powstaniem zachodniej części obecnej krypty i powiązaniem jej z kryptą transeptową. Jej budowa była konieczna, aby stworzyć w podziemiach jeden zespół dostępny z zewnątrz.

Słowa kluczowe: cystersi, klasztor, badania architektoniczne, krypta, Krzeszów