

¹ *Department of Architectural Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Landscape
Faculty of Architecture
Wrocław University of Science and Technology
e-mail: andrzej.legendziewicz@pwr.edu.pl
ORCID ID0000-0002-9228-296X*

² *The Middle Oder Archaeological Museum in Zielona Góra
Świdnica
e-mail: a.michalak@muzeum-swidnica.org
ORCID ID 0000-0002-8406-8787*

ANDRZEJ LEGENDZIEWICZ¹, ARKADIUSZ MICHALAK²

**The defensive enclosure of the small knightly castle
in Witków (Silesia, Poland)**

Abstract. The paper presents the architectural transformations of the defensive enclosure of the small castle in Witków. This complex is one of the best-preserved examples of a medieval seat of knights in Silesia. Unfortunately, the literature to date has only discussed its tower house with gothic polychromes in greater detail. Using source references, descriptions from early modern *urbaria*, and the results of architectural research and archaeological excavations, the authors discuss the emergence and transformations of the defensive enclosure. The medieval complex, including a curtain wall, a gatehouse and a gate, was established in the early-15th century. The renaissance reconstruction, including the introduction of four regularly arranged towers, is related to the castle having been taken over by Fabian von Schönäich, and the works are confirmed by the date 1557 visible on a stone windowframe. There was another significant construction campaign in the latter 17th century, probably in connection with the condition of the buildings on the site deteriorating.

Keywords: architecture, castle, defensive enclosure, Silesia, gate, gatehouse, Middle Ages.

Introduction

Located in Witków, about 10 km north of Szprotawa, the defensive complex belongs to one of the better-preserved gothic knightly seats in Silesia (Kajzer, Kołodziejcki, Salm 2001, pp. 539–540). The complex was erected in the centre of the village, close to and north-east of the parish church. It was located on an artificial mound, in an area of wetland on the right (eastern) bank of the Brzeźniczanka River (Fig. 1).

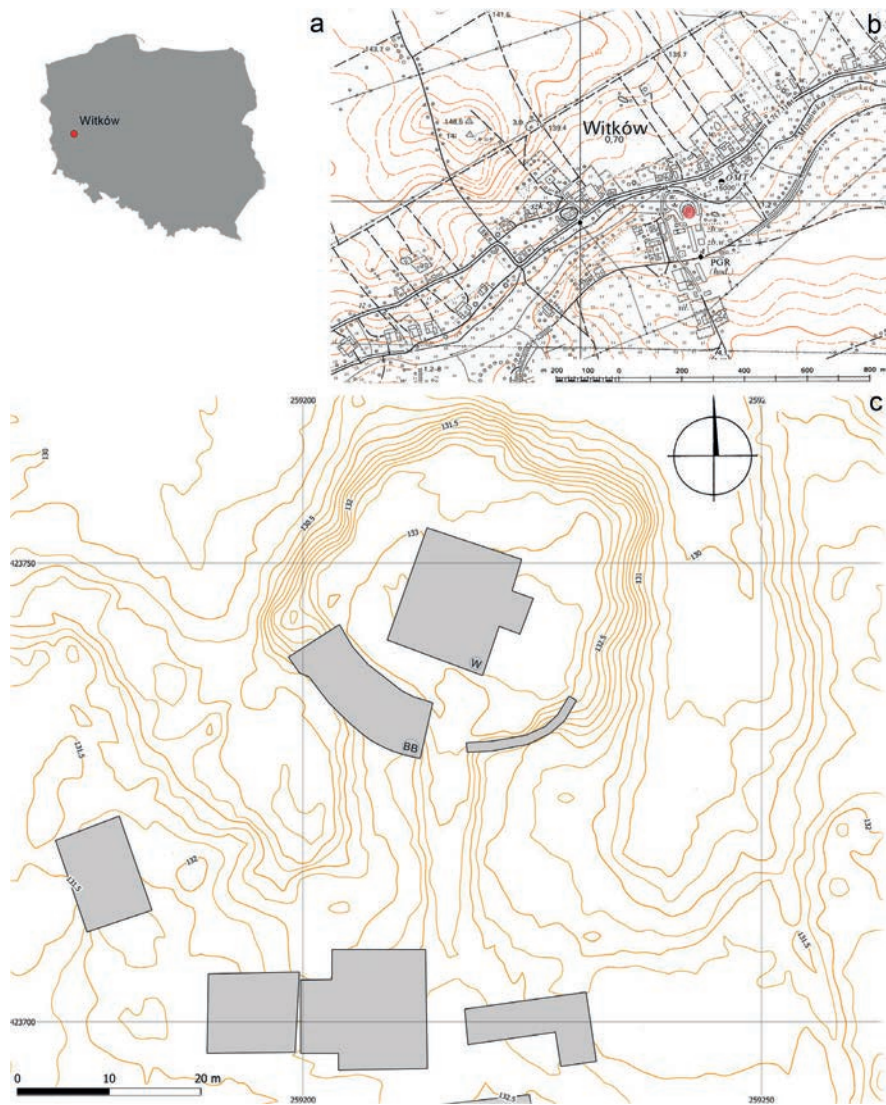


Fig. 1. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. a – location of the site in the map of Poland, b – topographic plan of Witków, c – situation-altitude plan (development by A. Michalak and H. Augustyniak)

Recent archaeological and architectural research has shed light on the complex's beginnings and its phases of transformations.

Description of the complex

The knight's castle in Witków was erected on a roughly oval plan of about 30 m across, with a centrally placed four-storey tower on a rectangular plan of about 10 m by 11 m. It is surrounded by a *plateau* on top of the mound. The border of the castle comprises the partially visible walls of a defensive perimeter with four bastions. In the south of the enclosure, there is a single-storey gatehouse with a basement built on a rectangular plan and part of a stone curtain wall that marks the location of the former gate (Figs. 2–4).

The defensive perimeter consists of four sections whose boundaries are delineated by the remains of the bastions and the gatehouse. The western section has a damaged coping/cap and is partially lacking its outer facing; it stretches from the bastion in the south-western corner and the west façade of the gatehouse to the north. From the polygonal tower, the outline of the perimeter walls can be seen as heavily corroded fragments, which in the eastern section were used as part of a building's ground floor. The perimeter walls of the bastion in the north-west corner are preserved up to the level of the wetland surrounding the mound, except for small sections of about 1 m long adjacent to the curtain wall itself. In the middle between them, there are stone stairs leading to the bastion from the plateau level (Fig. 4).

The northern section of the perimeter is preserved in a similar state to the western section. The exposed upper parts that can be seen at the edge of the mound lean slightly towards the moat. Here too, there is damage to the upper part of the wall. The wall's end constitutes the corner of the north-eastern bastion. From that bastion, the perimeter walls, which are approximately hexagonal, with traces of window openings in five walls, can be seen. From the mound side, the interior of the bastion was enclosed by a wall with a visible brick arch over a doorway leading to the ground floor. In the opposite wall, a wall step can be seen – an offset on which ceiling beams rested. The curtain wall enclosing the bastion is not visible. It was probably demolished, as evidenced by the endings of the northern and eastern sections. To the south of the bastion, adjacent to and 6 m from the southern corner, a short section of wall is visible that is a continuation of the curtain wall. It connects to an approximately 10-m-long fragment of wall of less than full height that reaches about 3.5 m above the level of the present courtyard in the south-eastern corner of the plateau. Halfway along it, there is an arrowslit with brick jambs that are bevelled on the curtain wall's interior side. At its eastern edge, fragments of the walls of the fourth bastion can be seen. The curtain wall on the section between



b

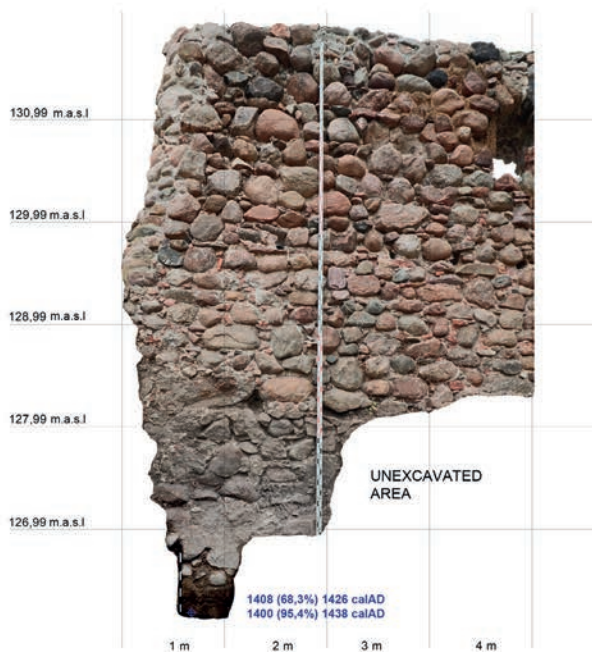


Fig. 2. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Preserved southern part of defensive walls (a) and location of wood sample for radiocarbon dating (b) (photo by A. Legendziewicz and M. Kaczmarek)



Fig. 3. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Gatehouse (a) showing remains of defensive wall (b; location of sample for radiocarbon dating marked in blue) and adjacent gate tower (c) (photo by A. Legendziewicz and A. Michalak)



Fig. 4. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Remains of eastern (a–c) and western (d–f) enclosure of defensive walls and hexagonal towers (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

the north-eastern bastion and the wall fragment with the arrowslit has retained its face intact from the base of the mound to the courtyard level (Fig. 4).

The Witków castle according to the written sources

The available sources and the current state of research indicate that Witków began to function as a knight's seat in the mid-14th century. Its founders were probably members of the von Nechern family (Steller 1941, p. 3). After 1419, it passed to the von Warnsdorf family (Chorowska 2003, p. 149). After the death of the last member of the Warnsdorf line in Witków in 1548, Duke Maurycy Saski annexed these properties as a vacant fiefdom. A year later, in connection with the exchange of the Duchy of Żagań for the Saski properties, the ownership of Witków passed to Emperor Ferdinand I himself, who nonetheless quickly sold the properties to his general, Fabian von Schonäich (Nowakowski 2008, p. 556). The latter, in turn, donated the property to his first wife, Euphemia Seydlitz, and later to his nephew, Georg. In 1590, through marriage, the burgrave von Dohn became the owner of Witków, followed, upon his death, by his daughter (married to members of the von Schulenburg and von Tschirnhaus families). In 1659, the Witków estate was taken over by Count von Redern, and in 1687 by Count von Proskau (Steller 1941, pp. 3–4). Due to the enormous debts incurred by the estate, he was forced to sell it to the town of Szprotawa in 1730. Initially, the tower was inhabited by the estate's managers, and then by farm workers beginning in the 19th century. After 1945, the abandoned complex was devastated and, finally, became a ruin.

Research on the Castle in the 20th century

The first documented interest in the tower dates to the early 20th century, when the first, greatly incomplete architectural inventories were made (Fig. 5) (Nowakowski 2008, p. 564). Architectural research on the complex was carried out in 1960 by Zbigniew Radacki, who also devoted some attention to the preserved and then-legible sections of the defensive curtain walls, the gatehouse and the gate, dating their construction to before 1500 AD (Radacki 1961, pp. 14–16). Later studies were mainly based on the results of that work (Chorowska 2003, pp. 148–149; Nowakowski 2008, pp. 556–564; 2017, pp. 459–461; Kowalski 2010). The first archaeological research, which was carried out in 1978 and then continued in 1983–1986 (Dąbrowski 1979; Sachs 1983a; 1983b; 1984; 1987), focused mainly on the vicinity of the tower itself. The results have still not yet been fully elaborated and published (Michalak 2010), although individual items from that research indicating the high material status of the site's inhabitants have steadily been published (Szczurek 1985; Kałagate



Fig. 5. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Photograph from the south of the castle in 1913. Foreground: remains of south part of defensive wall and eastern wall (from the archives of Provincial Conservator of Monuments in Zielona Góra)

1994; Lewczuk, Paszkiewicz 1998; Makowiecki 1998; Malinowski 1998; Dziedzic 2007; Gruszka, Michalak 2007, p. 196, Fig. 5: 5; Marek, Michalak 2008; Michalak 2007; 2010; 2019a; Nowakowski 2008, pp. 555–565; 2017, pp. 459–461; Kałagate, Michalak 2021, pp. 595–602). In the years 2017–2020, at the request of the castle's new owners, archaeological and architectural works were carried out that involved uncovering the damaged coping of the perimeter walls, as well as the gate and adjacent building in the Witków complex (Legendziewicz 2017; 2019a; Lewczuk 2018; Michalak 2019b; 2021).

*Results of architectural and archaeological research on the enclosure
in 2017–2020 (Figs. 6–8)*

The defensive brick enclosure established from the gate, from the adjacent building and from the curtain wall surrounding the complex to the west, north and east was erected in a single multi-stage construction campaign. Construction work on the enclosure probably began in the early 15th century, as confirmed by the ¹⁴C datings of samples cut out of beams in the framework on which the wall foundations were erected. A sample from the southern section of the preserved defensive curtain wall right next to the exposed remains of the gate to the east was dated to 1408 AD (68.3% probability), 1426 cal AD, while a sample obtained from the foundation of the gatehouse (built with a defensive curtain wall) was dated to 1409 (68.3% probability), 1435 cal AD (Fig. 6, Fig. 8: a, c).

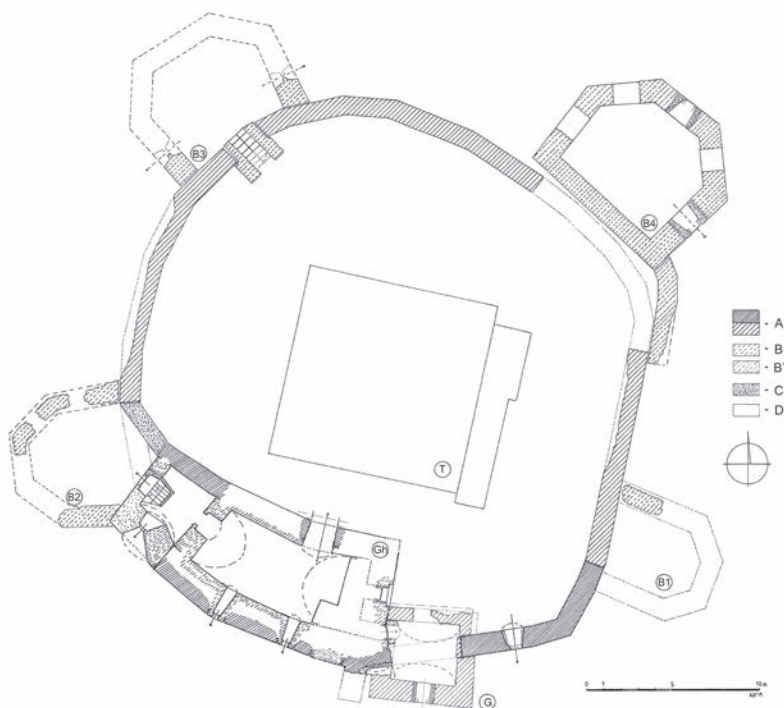


Fig. 6. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Defensive enclosure with towers, walls, inventory with chronological stratification. A – Gothic, 1st half of the 15th century; B – Renaissance, *circa* middle of the 16th century (1557?); B' – Renaissance, 2nd half of the 16th century (after the 1557?); C – Baroque, 2nd half of the 17th century; D – 19th and 20th century and unrecognized walls, dotted lines show reconstructed walls; G – gateway; GH – gatehouse; T – Tower; B1–B4 – Bastions (hexagonal towers) 1–4 (drawn by A. Legendziewicz)

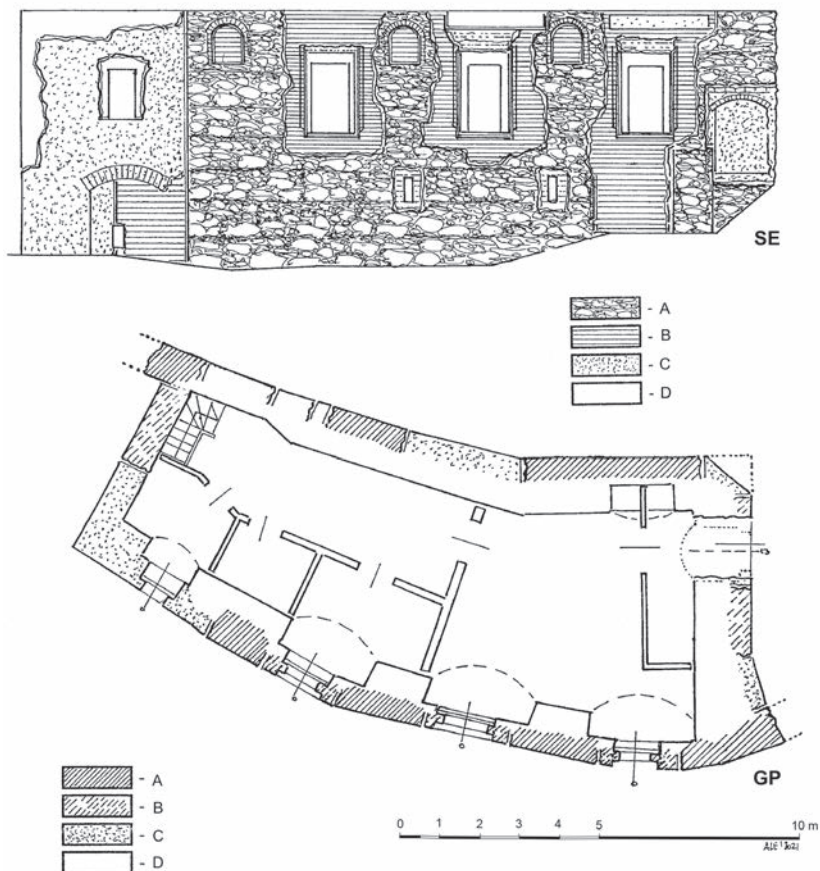


Fig. 7. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Gatehouse, south elevation (SE) and ground plan (GP), inventory with chronological stratification. A – Gothic, 1st half of the 15th century; B – Renaissance, *circa* middle of the 16th century (1557?); C – Baroque, 2nd half of the 17th century; D – 19th and 20th century and unrecognized walls; dotted lines show reconstructed walls (drawn by A. Legendziewicz)

The oldest parts of the perimeter are the southern section of the curtain wall and fragments of the building adjacent to the now destroyed gateway. They are preserved in its southern and northern elevations, and on the moat side constitute a strip of the ground floor and fragments of pillars that had been between windows. Meanwhile, from the courtyard side, to the north side, they include three sections of the wall without openings. They form the outline of a small building parallel to the perimeter line. It was erected on a roughly trapezoidal plan with dimensions of about 6.5 m × 11.5 m. Its eastern enclosure was created



Fig. 8. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Remains of gate tower (a) and its western (b) and eastern walls (c) (photo by B. Gruszka and A. Michalak)

by a wall at the opening of the gate passage. On the southern façade, in a belt beneath the eaves of the present roof, within the section delimited by the pillars between the windows, three arrowslits were found. They begin 5 m above the present-day adjacent ground (about 3 m above the courtyard). Their openings are about 80 cm wide and about 100 cm high. They are probably the remnants of a defensive porch/gallery that comprised a defensive level in the building adjacent to the gate (Figs. 3, 7).

The defensive perimeter wall was probably made of sections of about 11 to 12 m long. This is indicated by small steps in the thicknesses and heights of leveling layers visible in the south-eastern corner of the perimeter, and the outline of

toothings-out recorded in the outer face. Their arrangement confirms the thesis that the curtain wall was built eastwards from the gate opening and then northwards, and westwards and then northwards from the building next to it. The perimeter was probably enclosed near the western corner of the north-eastern, mid-16th-century renaissance bastion. This is indicated by a fault – a crack in the curtain wall at its weakest point – precisely along the toothings-out created when the two opposing sections were being built up to meet one another (Fig. 6).

The spacing between the slotted arrowslits (of which one has been documented) in the preserved part of the curtain wall in the south-eastern corner of the perimeter is not yet known. The documented arrowslit was fitted about 120 cm above the present area of the courtyard, and its jambs were made of brick, now only partially preserved.

Presumably, soon after the perimeter was completed, the gate was reinforced and the gatehouse with the ground floor passage was built. Its construction involved first pulling down an approximately 20-m-long section of the curtain wall with the passageway of the first entrance. The new gate was set on a roughly square plan of 5.1 m x 5.1 m. Its outline projected out from the defensive perimeter by about 1.2 m to the west and 2.2 m to the east. It contained a 3-m-wide passage that narrowed in the southern wall to a 2-m-wide passage opening, currently of unknown shape. It was probably closed by a double-leaf gate. There was a room under the passage that probably held the drawbridge counterweight (Fig. 6, Fig. 8: a, c)¹. The form of the upper storey mentioned in the sources, which probably contained living quarters, remains unknown (Steller 1941, pp. 3–4).

On the west side of the gate, traces of a partially destroyed buttress were found that was added to the perimeter in the Gothic period. Its poor state of preservation makes it impossible to clearly define its function (Fig. 8: b)².

The cultural items related to this phase include nearly 100 potsherds fired in a reducing atmosphere and classed as steel grey (group A according to Jerzy Kruppé). They were found only in the floor layers just above the wooden framework on which the perimeter wall was erected near the gate. The other excavations did not disturb the medieval layers (Lewczuk 2018). The material is too fragmentary for entire vessel forms to be reconstructed. Some of the potsherds were decorated with horizontal, delicately marked grooves, while a few specimens displayed horizontal engraved lines (Fig. 9: d). There is also a fragment decorated with a knurl (Fig. 9: a), which has analogies in previously reported ceramics from Witków (Kałagate 1994, Fig. 2: 1). Using functional criteria, pieces of pots, jugs and bowls can be distinguished among

¹ We have an example of such a solution in the gate to the Upper Castle in Opole (Legendziewicz 2019b, p. 33–34).

² The buttress may have been added to reinforce the curtain wall or as part of a dyke that was part of the castle gate's system of defences.



Fig. 9. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Archaeological materials from the 15th-century phase: a–f – earthenware pottery, g–l – ceramic ribs from the vault (development by A. Michalak)

the obtained fragments. Among the pots, a form with a semicircular, thickened edge and a clear notch for a lid stands out (Fig. 9: d). In Poland, this type is dated from the 14th to 15th centuries. In Witków, fragments of this type have been found before (Kałagate 1994, p. 163, Fig. 2: 1). In general, these materials include numerous vessels equipped with a lipped edge (Fig. 9: b, e), as previously found in late-medieval materials from research on the tower in Witków (Kałagate 1994, Fig. 2).

A dozen or so items of construction ceramics can also be associated with this phase, including ceramic fittings – double-concave vaulting ribs – from the decoration of the ostentatious dome of the tower's ground floor (Fig. 9: g–j). In addition, the excavation yielded fragments of ridge tiles and monk-and-nun tiles from the roofing of the tower or gatehouse (Fig. 9: k, l). They were found loose in the excavation near the west side of the gate, where they had probably been thrown during renovation works around the mid-16th century.

The renaissance changes to the gate along with the adjacent building and defensive enclosure were probably completed around the middle of the 16th century, as apparently confirmed by the date 1557 preserved on one of the stone window frames (Gumiński, Olszewski 1963, p. 314)³. The architectural detail used in the gatehouse window and door frames and the form of the towers added to the perimeter also support this chronology.

The gate probably had the architecturally rich design described in Georg Steller's account⁴. Unfortunately, its remains were not found during the research conducted here. Changes to the interior were recorded in the basement under the passage. It has a barrel vault running north–south. The canopy was built of bricks and erratics. The passage opening that connects it to the gatehouse was also narrowed. Unfortunately, the remains of the support for the vaulting provide no clear clue as to its shape.

Within the range of the medieval building adjacent to the gate to the west, a basement with a slightly pointed arch roof was built running east–west and supported on the offset of the stepped footings. Two slotted windows pierce the outer wall. At the western elevation, a staircase was added with an entrance from the courtyard. The entrance down to the basement was from the east – the gate – side almost on the midline of the elevation. At its northern edge, there is a portal leading

³ These works can be associated with the person of Fabian von Schönäich, who purchased Witków in ad 1552 (Nowakowski 2008, p. 556).

⁴ The 1664 inventory of property mentions '[...] a small room in the gatehouse above the passage, which Lord von Räder had previously renovated and adapted as he occasionally stayed there for the night while hunting. This room, like the large vaulted hall and the room on the first floor of the tower, was locked/closed'. An inventory from 1683 mentions that the castle 'has four bastions, and in them decorated rooms, two of which are now completely ruined, while only the other two are merely serviceable. In one there is a kitchen, in the other there is a living quarters with one room that has three windows in poor condition and a reasonably acceptable stove. The paved hallway is starting to leak due to a large hole in the foundation, which may lead to the complete ruin of the building, so urgent renovation works are necessary. This bastion has a beautiful room that is in a very bad condition. Above the vaulted gate there is a small room with two small windows and a small stove' (Steller 1941). According to Stendel, who was writing about the tower in 1936, 'In the first half of the 19th century there was still a drawbridge that, in times of danger (threat), was raised to the gatehouse on heavy iron chains. Later, the bridge was destroyed and now only a causeway to the watchtower (guardhouse) marks its location. While the bridge was being demolished, the gatehouse that had been flanked by beautiful sandstone columns was also destroyed' (Stendel 1936).

into the ground floor, the remains of which are preserved as a niche/recess. The opening has a rectangular frame with a floral decoration. The interior was probably ostentatious – a painted decoration with a floral tendril motif was found on the door lintel (Fig. 5: c, Figs. 6, 7).

The work on the building's southern façade at the gate included introducing three rectangular window openings. They measured approximately 1.3 m × 2.0 m and are enclosed in stone frames with profiled windowsills, of which a fragment from the middle window is preserved *in situ*, while the rest, together with the frames, were reconstructed during conservation works in 2020. Its edge was about 3.5 m above the present adjacent ground. Above the windows, frieze panels were fitted, one of which is preserved, while there is a painted inscription above the easternmost one and the lower edge of another above the middle one (Fig. 3: a, Fig. 8).

The defensive enclosure was reinforced with four polygonal bastions. Their locations are marked by fragments of walls added to the perimeter in the south-east, north-east, north-west and south-west corners. Those on the northern side are in the best condition. On the other hand, the two bastions on the southern side are preserved partially or only as an embankments (Figs. 4, 6).

The most information was obtained from the investigation of the north-eastern bastion, which is the only one to have a wall on its courtyard side. Probably a collapse of the perimeter's curtain wall due to subsidence was caused by damage. The bastion was built with two storeys, on a roughly rectangular plan of outer dimensions of 9.5 m × 8.5 m, with the corners cut on the longer side. In the opposite wall, on the courtyard side, an entrance topped with a segmental arch half a brick thick lead into the bastion. The upper part of the arch was exposed in excavations. The lower storey, now backfilled, probably had one arrowslit in each wall. Their form remains unknown, but they were probably slotted, with chamfered jambs providing a wide angle of fire. The existence of an upper storey is indicated by the wall offset on the inside, probably serving for ceiling beams (Fig. 4).

Another three bastions were abutted to the existing medieval curtain wall with entrances as described above. The location of the door openings to the two on the south side remains unknown. However, it is marked in the form of stair treads in the north-west bastion. In the gothic wall, a wider opening was pierced that was narrowed by brick jambs to about 120 cm width. The steps are made of large erratic stones fitted together. The state of preservation of the bastion walls allows its plan layout to be reconstructed; it was roughly quadrilateral with two cut corners, up to 10 m wide and no more than 8 m wide. In the 1.8-m-long sections adjacent to the gothic curtain wall, fragments of the chamfers of brick slotted openings were recorded. For the construction of the perimeter walls and the jambs of the openings, the same material as in the bastion described above was used, suggesting they were carried out in a single construction campaign (Fig. 6).

The two bastions on the southern side, as already mentioned, remain only as traces. Of the western one, a fragment of a side wall can be seen that was added into the outline of the gatehouse during its baroque reconstruction, and the opposite one at the junction with the gothic wall with a heavily corroded internal face. The outline of the building can be seen only along the route of the wall that lacks a facing and is preserved at the level of the adjacent ground. The wall's course on the courtyard side remains unknown; it was demolished during the baroque reconstruction of the building adjacent to the gate (Fig. 6).

The evidence of the transformation and use of the complex at this stage comes from the cultural items found during archaeological research. The vast majority of it comprises very fragmentary pieces of brick and cream-yellow (though mostly unglazed) ceramics. The main decorative feature on these vessels is the motif of horizontal grooves. The considerable fragmentation of these potsherds seriously limits the ability to reconstruct whole objects. They appear to include fragments of pots, jugs, mugs, pans, bowls and cups. One characteristic item is a fragment of a straight-sided cup (Fig. 10: a). These were also found in previously analysed materials from Witków (Kałagate 1994, p. 173). Of the fragments of brick-coloured vessels, attention is particularly drawn to a fragment of a cylindrical cup decorated across its entire surface with single, square stamps with a convex tip in the centre and descending step-wise; coated on the outside with an orange slip with an admixture of brick (Fig. 10: e). Other fragments of this vessel were most likely discovered during earlier research in Witków. They most probably come from dishes imitating products of the Falke group – luxury stoneware made in Lusatia (Kałagate, Michalak 2021, pp. 583–585, Fig. 5). A fragment of an earthenware jug decorated with circumferential grooves may also be associated with this phase, and is most probably from a workshop in Waldenburg (Fig. 10: c). Products related to this factory reached the area of what is today western Poland in large quantities in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period (Romanowicz 2011, pp. 113–114).

We should also mention an ornate floor tile of glazed ferric clay (Fig. 10: f). A T-shaped buckle probably also dates to the 16th century (Fig. 10: g) It was found in the roof layers of the gate. Based on ethnographic analogues, it can be judged to be a saddle girth buckle (Egan 2004, pp. 59–61).

After the construction of the north-eastern bastion, but still in the Renaissance period, a fragment of the gothic curtain wall adjacent to it to the south was destroyed. To complete the perimeter, a section of the wall of about 6 m length was abutted to the existing buildings. The construction works employed erratics that were probably obtained from the destroyed gothic wall. The repair was carried using techniques analogous to those used on the bastions; it was erected in layers of 50–60 cm high, but at different levels than in the adjacent bastion.



Fig. 10. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Archaeological materials from the 16th-century phase: a, b – earthenware pottery; c, d – stoneware; e – imitation of Falke stoneware; f – glazed ceramic floor tile; g – T-shaped buckle from horse harness; h – ceramic roof tile (development by A. Michalak)

The baroque transformations to the defensive enclosure may have been conducted in the second half of the 17th century⁵. The scope of work included reconstructing the gate and enlarging the adjacent building, as well as changing the shape of some window openings.

We know little about the scope of changes to the gate. A niche (recess) covered with a sail-shaped vaulting was carved into its western wall. Seen end-on, its profile

⁵ The construction works may have been conducted by count von Redern, who took over Witków in 1659, or count von Proskau, who became its owner in 1687 (Steller 1941, pp. 3–4).

was probably that of a segmental arch. The internal faces of the walls were levelled with layers of half bricks. In the basement under the passage, the vaulting was repaired, and the upper part was supplemented with a one-brick-thick dome. The chamber was lit by a window carved into the southern wall. The entrance was kept in the west wall from the basement level of the gatehouse.

The changes to the western part of it were more important, with the renaissance staircase being enlarged and rebuilt. On an extension to the building's southern wall, a triangular pillar was built upon which a one-brick-thick segmental arch was erected, and the walls of the ground floor were erected. About 1.5 m of the oblique renaissance wall was pulled down, leaving its eastern part where it joins the gothic building. Two windows were carved out in the basement – partly in the renaissance wall. The opening on the first floor is a segmental arch, just like the new entrance in the northern corner of the eastern wall. The facing of the building in the corner at the gate opening was also levelled, and part of the northern façade was rebuilt (Fig. 3: a, Fig. 8).

The changes to the defensive enclosure were only detectable in the north-eastern bastion. The jambs of the renaissance window openings in its peripheral walls were cut out, and new ones were introduced. The gap between them was 50 cm and they had windowsills made of brick roll locks. Unfortunately, the lintel arches were destroyed in the 19th century, but they were probably similar in shape to the baroque basement window preserved in the crack in the southern façade of the gatehouse.

The acquired movable cultural objects (mainly ceramics) that can be associated with this phase of the castle's use was largely found in backfill layers, so it tells us little. As well as thin-walled brick-red and cream-yellow vessels (Fig. 11: b) glazed inside and out, fragments of basin tiles were also discovered. Most of the ceramic stove tiles are unglazed. Most can be dated to the 17th century (Fig. 11: a). Of the identified items, a spur with a U-shaped heel band that is almost flat seen side-on and is equipped with a star-shaped rowel and rounded chap guards (Fig. 11: c). Based on analogies, it can probably be attributed to the 17th-century (Beneš *et al.* 1995, Fig. 6: 2). Large amounts of lime mortar, sometimes painted, and building ceramics (including bricks and plain tiles; Fig. 11: e, f) were also recorded in the excavation at the gate.

Summary

The partially preserved defensive enclosure of the knightly castle in Witków is an interesting and unique example of medieval defensive and residential architecture in Silesia and Poland. In light of the research, the enclosure and gate were probably built in the first half of the 15th century. The gothic curtain wall was reinforced around the middle of the 16th century by the addition of four bastions, of which the



Fig. 11. Castle in Witków (site 6), Szprotawa commune, Lubuskie voivodship. Archaeological materials from the 17th-century phase: a, b, d – earthenware pottery; c – iron spur; e – ceramic roof tile; f – brick; g – whetstone (development by A. Michalak)

two on the north side are best preserved. It is possible that the castle reconstruction took place after the death of the last member of the Warnsdorf line of Witków and after the castle was taken over by the imperial general Fabian von Schönäich in 1552. It perhaps took place in 1557, as may be indicated by that date having been carved on one of the stone frames on the gatehouse. The lower north-eastern storey was probably reconstructed in the Baroque period by the introduction of window openings. This may have been part of the construction works related to the takeover of the Witków property by count von Redern in 1659 or by count von Proskau in 1687. The curtain wall of the medieval defensive enclosure was probably gradually demolished in the 19th century, as evidenced by archival iconography (Fig. 5).

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