

*Department of Architectural Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Landscape
Faculty of Architecture
Wrocław University of Science and Technology
andrzej.legendziewicz@pwr.edu.pl
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9228-296X*

ANDRZEJ LEGENDZIEWICZ

**The creation and architectural transformations
of the parish church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Żary
from the early 13th to late 17th century**

Abstract. This article presents architectural transformations in the parish church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (originally the Blessed Virgin Mary) in Żary. The church is one of the most interesting brick churches in the borderland between Silesia and Lusatia. Unfortunately, the church has featured very little in the literature, and only its non-extant Romanesque west arm is discussed. Based on the scant written sources, and the results of architectural research and archaeological excavations, the author discusses the formation and transformation of the parish church from the 13th century to the end of the 17th century. The Romanesque chancel and choir were built in the 13th century. The Gothic reconstruction of the choir was completed in 1309 and of the western arm in 1401. The next significant construction took place in the second half of the 17th century, when the Promnitz funeral chapel was built next to the choir and galleries were built in the aisles.

Keywords: architecture, Silesia, Lusatia, Middle Ages, Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque, church.

Introduction

Żary is located in the western part of Poland, in Lower Lusatia, almost on the border with Silesia. This area was covered by Slavic settlement as early as the 8th and 9th centuries (Dulnicz 2001, pp. 7–11, 214). During archaeological research in the area of the present town, the location of several settlements functioning from the 9th to the 13th century was found (Nowiński 2005, pp. 10–16; Wolanin 2003/2004). One of them was located in the area of the present parish church (Lasota *et al.* 1973). We know from source accounts that the location of the town by Albrecht Dewin (Dziewin) probably took place in 1260 (Worbs 1826, p. 8). The town was laid out with a rectangular market square measuring 80 x 90 m and ten rectangular quarters. It absorbed the settlement to the south-east of it. The irregular layout of this area

has already been pointed out by Czesław Lasota and Jerzy Rozpędowski (1981, pp. 49–50) and Jarosław Lewczuk (2011, pp. 119–124). The extent of the location centre, surrounded by walls with two gates: Lower and Upper, covered an area of about 20 hectares. It included a castle on the northern side and, on the western side, a church and a Franciscan monastery mentioned in 1274 (Fig. 1) (Worbs 1826, p. 8).

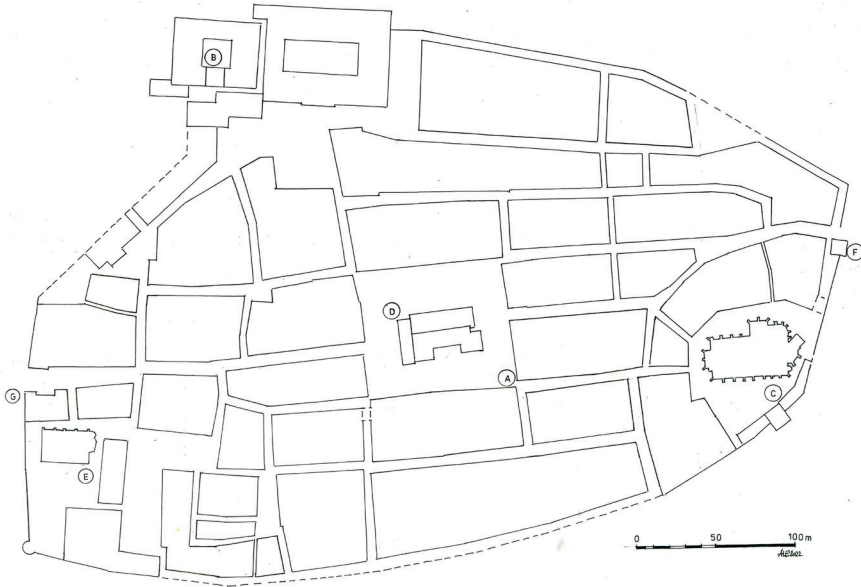


Fig. 1. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. The location town within the outline of the medieval walls. A – market square, B – castle of the Devin's family, C – parish church, D – town hall, E – Franciscan church and monastery, F – Lower Gate, G – Upper Gate (development by A. Legendziewicz)

Description of the parish church

The church consists of a four-bay, polygonally enclosed east arm and a west arm hall comprising a central nave and two aisles, each having five bays. On the northern side of the choir, in the corner between it and the west arm, there is a tower that is square at the base and octagonal above its adjoining roofs. A two-bay chapel adjoins it to the north, and a small sacristy with the remains of another (baptismal) chapel to the east. At the southern elevation of the chancel, there are: a three-bay, two-storey sacristy with a staircase and, between buttresses of its polygonal east end, the trapezoidal Baroque Promnitz family chapel. On the axis of the main entrance, on the west elevation, a rectangular porch was erected.

The east arm was covered with a multi-slope roof that is delimited at its western end by a wall that is built in line with the chancel arch and decorated on the east side with strips of pointed-arch blind windows. The west arm has a gable roof whose western end has a stepped gable with lancets. The sacristy and chapels around the choir are covered with shed roofs, and the western porch has a gable roof with a stepped gable. The tower is crowned with a Baroque onion dome with a single opening covered with sheeting (Fig. 2: a, b, Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: a – western elevation, b – view from the east (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

The choir has a four-bay plan with stellar vaulting with diagonal ribs, and the three-nave west arm (a nave and two aisles) is a five-bay hall with arcaded walls on octagonal pillars. These are topped with vaults with a stellar decoration (Figs. 4, 5). The interior was illuminated by high, pointed-arch windows with simple three-partition tracery – the choir has two in the polygonal apse (in the south-eastern and eastern wall), and the west arm has twelve (two to the west, and five each to the north and south (Fig. 3). The chapels adjacent to the choir and the sacristy were vaulted with different arrangements of ribs: in the two chapels on the northern side, cross-net ribbing was used, and cross ribbing was used in the sacristy. The Promnitz family funeral chapel was covered with cloister vaulting, the remains of the partially destroyed Baptistry were secured with a ceiling (originally with a cross vault). A net pattern of ribs was used to decorate the vault of the western porch.



Fig. 3. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: southern elevation (photo by A. Legendziewicz)



Fig. 4. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: chancel, interior facing eastwards (photo by A. Legendziewicz)



Fig. 5. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: west arm, interior facing eastwards (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

The Gothic chapels were given a single, north-facing, pointed-arch window, and the one adjacent to the nave was given an additionally west-facing one. The Promnitz Chapel was lit with three openings, one in each wall. Light enters the interior of both storeys of the sacristy from the south through three windows on each level. The staircase has two small, slotted openings along its run. The porch is lit by windows in the west wall above the entranceways.

The interior of the tower, which is accessed through an entrance from the west arm, is filled by a wooden staircase leading to the attic level. Its interior is illuminated by windows placed at five levels in its octagonal part.

The elevation of the church's west arm is decorated with exposed brickwork (Fig. 2: a). The choir is surrounded by three-step buttresses, the lowest of which is accentuated with a cornice in line with the windowsills (Fig. 2: b). A similar arrangement of buttresses was used in the west arm. The axes of the side elevations feature pointed portals in brickwork profiled frames. Below the parapet cornice, in three south-facing and two north-facing bays, there are elliptical plaster recesses. The western elevation has three axes of windows that are separated by buttresses in line with the division between the nave and the aisles. Between the buttresses on the western elevation, a porch was built that is clasped by buttresses. It has two entrances in the ground floor and windows and blind windows arranged on four levels. It is



Fig. 6.
 Żary, Lubuskie voivodship.
 Parish church:
 western portal (photo by
 A. Legendziewicz)

topped with a stepped gable with crenellations. It precedes the main entrance, which is enclosed in a profiled stone portal with a pair of half columns with pinnacles and a banderole with the date 1401 (Fig. 6). On each side there are pointed-arch windows illuminating the aisles. The elevation of the west arm is crowned with a high, stepped gable with pointed-arch lancets on four storeys. The steps are delineated by pilaster strips and decorated with low brick pinnacles with stone caps.

The elevation of the sacristy echoes the layout used in the chancel. Here, in three bays marked by two-stepped buttresses, the windows are arranged in two levels. On the axis of the eastern bay there is a pointed-arch portal with a brick profiled framing.

The walls of the pair of chapels on the northern side were plastered and surrounded with squat, two-stepped buttresses: two at the corners and one in the axis. There are pointed-arch windows in the bays and on the western elevation. Two entrances were placed quite randomly, one from the east, and the other in the

western bay below a window opening. There is the blocked window on the east elevation. The Promnitz funeral chapel has smooth elevations with segmental windows framed with bands with sills.

Analysis of the historical sources and state of research

The oldest mentions of the church and, indirectly, the chancel are contained in an early modern chronicle written by Johann Samuel Magnus and published in 1710 in Leipzig (Magnus 1710). According to these, the construction of the temple was begun by Ulrich von Devin (Magnus 1710, p. 1). A parish priest, Baldwinus, appears in a document drafted in 1297 (Worbs 1826, p. 224). An act of July 6, 1309 tells of the consecration of the new chancel by the bishop Paweł (possibly bishop of Meissen) (Magnus 1710, p. 2). A document from 1346 tells of a parish priest and the parish's affiliation to the arch-presbytery in Budziszyn (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 181). The date 1401 was carved over the main portal, indirectly attesting to the completion of the west arm (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 207). Information on the completion of work on the vaulting in the west arm in 1430 is published by Johan Friedrich Conradi (1803, p. 12). An act drafted in 1445 mentions the construction of the chapel of St Barbara (Worbs 1826, p. 9), and another one from 1511 tells of the chapel of St Mary (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 207). Information on the foundation of the family funeral chapel by Count Ulrich von Promnitz in the years 1670–1672 is confirmed by an early modern town chronicle (Magnus 1710, p. 251). It also contains information about a fire that struck the town and the church on May 2, 1684 (Magnus 1710, pp. 264–265).

The first attempt to present the church was undertaken by Hans Erich Kubach and Joachim Seeger in a catalogue of monuments of the Żary district (Kubach, Seeger 1939, pp. 202–215). They focused mainly on describing the architecture of the church, citing chronicles and discussing in detail the reconstruction after the fire of 1684 that was completed ten years later. In 1966, Róża Kašinowska (1966) carried out a cursory examination of the then-disused church. She indicated the remains of a 13th-century Romanesque church preserved in the northern wall of the chancel. In addition, based on the identified fragment of a rib in the south-eastern corner of the southern aisle, she put forward a thesis about the original design having featured a taller central nave with a clerestory, but that this was abandoned in the latter 14th century in favour of a hallenkirche design. The deliberations are complemented by rich illustrations, including of the Gothic St Mary's Chapel, which was dismantled in 1965 (Kašinowska 1966, Figs. 11–13). Interdisciplinary archaeological and architectural research on the west arm was carried out by Czesław Lasota, Jerzy Rozpędowski and Brunon Miskiewicz in 1973 (Lasota *et al.* 1973). They documented a fragment of the northern wall of the choir that contained a window from the Romanesque period, and uncovered traces of perimeter walls

and the foundation of a pillar of the west arm. They associated the construction with Ulrich von Devin and placed it at the end of the first quarter of the 13th century for the church, the end of that century for the tower, and before 1309 for the present chancel. They summarised the research in an article published in 1981, placing the construction of the original church in the first half of the 13th century (Lasota, Rozpędowski 1981, pp. 49–53).

The creation, development and architecture of the parish church were taken up by Stanisław Kowalski (1976, pp. 290–291; see also Kowalski 2007; 2010, p. 148; Pilch, Kowalski 2012, pp. 368–369). Based on architectural and archaeological research findings, he concluded that the church mentioned in 1207 no longer exists, and that the Romanesque remains should be associated with the church that was built around 1230. He dated the consecration of the present chancel to 1308, and the completion of the west arm to 1401. In his opinion, the chapels and the western vestibule were built in the 15th century. He was citing information on the early modern transformations and renovations of the temple from H. E. Kubach and J. Seeger, and on the post-war reconstruction from documents gathered in archives (Kowalski 2007, pp. 44–57).

An attempt to discuss the transformation of the church was published by Hanna Kozaczewska-Golasz and Hanna Golasz-Szołomicka (Kozaczewska-Golasz, Golasz-Szołomicka 2018, pp. 387–404). They decided that the present chancel was built in 1309, and that the construction of the west arm was begun in the 14th century and abandoned after the perimeter walls had been erected to a height of about 4.1 m. The present hall was built at the beginning of the 15th century, which is indicated by the difference in the thickness of the walls above the windowsills and the adoption of pilaster strips with set-offs from this point upwards. In addition, they found that the arcades in the nave and aisles were made without half-pillars at the rood screen and were instead supported on corbels. They also concluded that the vaulting had been done in 1430. They believed that the walls of the west arm were constructed along with the octagonal part of the tower. They dated the western and northern (?) porches and the southern vestry to the 15th century.

Research purpose and methodology

Authors of previous publications have not attempted a comprehensive discussion of the form of the Romanesque church and the extent of its transformation in the 14th and 15th centuries. The concepts presented in the literature were based on partial recognition of the building and source references. During the renovation and restoration works carried out in recent years, architectural research was carried out in the interior of the west arm and chancel (Legendziewicz 2016; 2017). The identification of the original architecture of the church and the delimitation

of the phases of its development were based on the analysis of: the technology of construction, ceramic material and forms of detail; in conjunction with the archive sources (Magnus 1710; Conradi 1803; Worbs 1826; Kubach, Seeger 1939). That work constitutes the basis for the following considerations, in which the original parish church from the first half of the 13th century and the medieval and early modern transformations of the west arm and interior of the church are discussed.

Results

The Romanesque chancel was probably built in the first third of the 13th century, as its architectural forms and the 1207 source mention of its construction, the castle and city walls seems to confirm (Magnus 1710, p. 1). The east arm is delimited by walls of monk bond brickwork that can be seen in the northern wall of the present choir. The recorded remains indicate that the interior was about 12 m long. A remnant of the eastern wall in the form of toothed-out header bond brickwork was found in an eastern alcove of the third bay (from the chancel entrance). Although it is still not known how the choir was enclosed, the date of the first mention of the temple suggests that there could have been a semi-circular apse there. The east arm may have been up to about 11 m wide – it is marked by the remains of a chancel entrance arcade pillar exposed in the west arm (Figs. 7, 8).

The interior of the east arm was illuminated by rounded arch window bounded on each side by chamfered jambs of about 90 cm wide and 110 cm high to the base of the arch. Two have been located: the first, in the lower parts of the tower, is visible from the ground floor, and the second is in the wall of the former northern sacristy. Their inner edges were found exposed from the inside of the choir. At about 1.2 m to the east of the second window, a trace of a bonded pilaster strip or wall was found that is a remnant of the sacristy (?). The location of the two openings indicates that the choir was illuminated by at least four windows from the north.

The west arm, erected in stretcher-bond brickwork probably in the first half of the 13th century, was connected to the chancel by an arcade of unknown shape and width not exceeding 10 m. The walls in line with the chancel entrance contained fragments of aisles in the form of westwards-running brick perimeter walls. Based on their location, the width of the west arm of the church can be reconstructed at about 15.5 m. The length of the interior, which is 25.7 m, was determined during the research conducted in 1972 by C. Lasota and J. Rozpędowski (Lasota *et al.* 1973, p. 2; Lasota, Rozpędowski 1981, pp. 49–52). The west arm probably had four bays and two naves, which is confirmed by the pillar foundation exposed on the main axis of the church. The perimeter walls were 6.3 m high, as evidenced by the remains of a brickwork crowning cornice recorded on the northern side of the chancel entrance arcade (Figs. 7, 8).

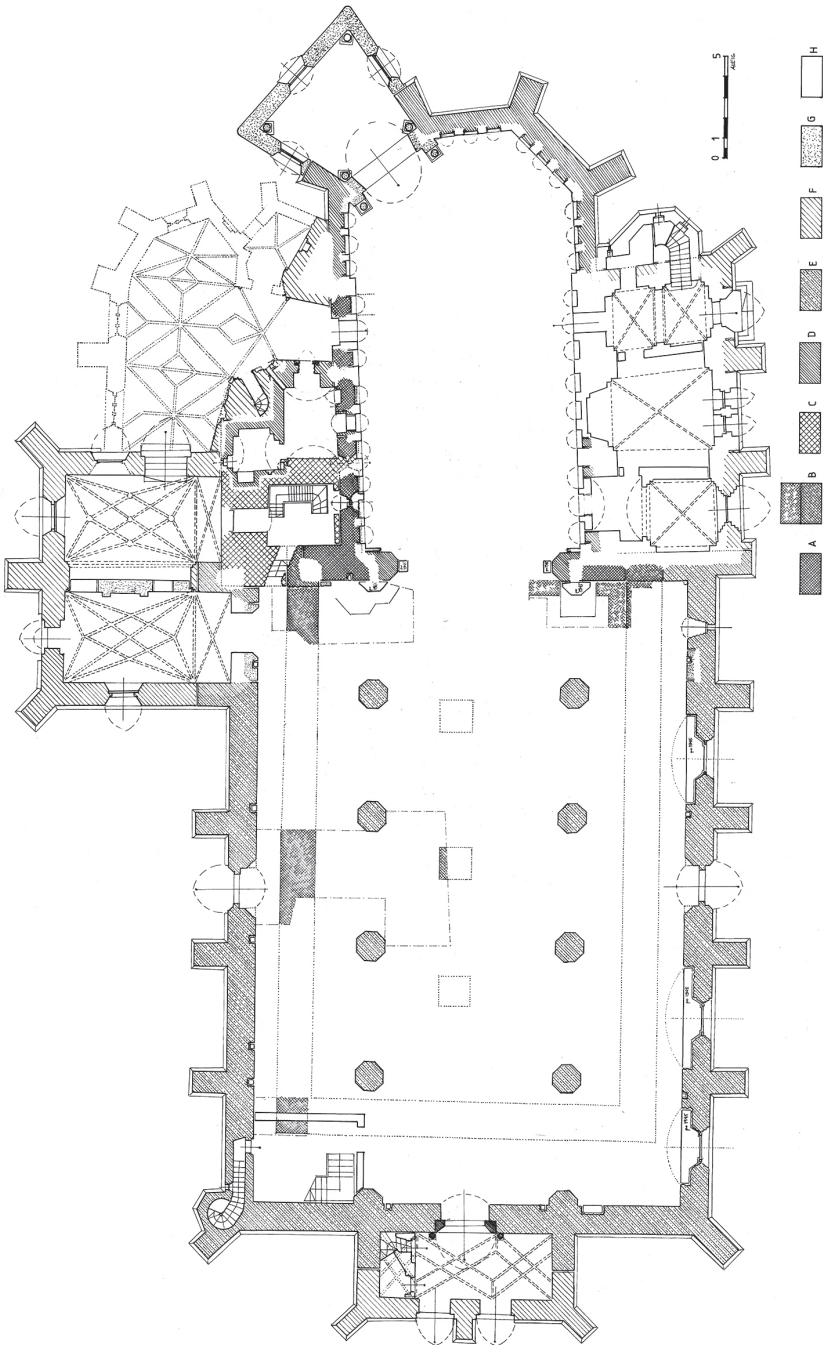


Fig. 7. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: basement plan with wall layers in chronological order. A – 1st half of 13th century, B – ca. mid-13th century, C – 2nd half of 13th century, D – before 1309, E – 2nd half of 14th century (before 1401), F – between 1445 and 1511, G – 2nd half of 17th century, H – 19th–20th century and unrecognised walls (development by A. Legendziewicz)

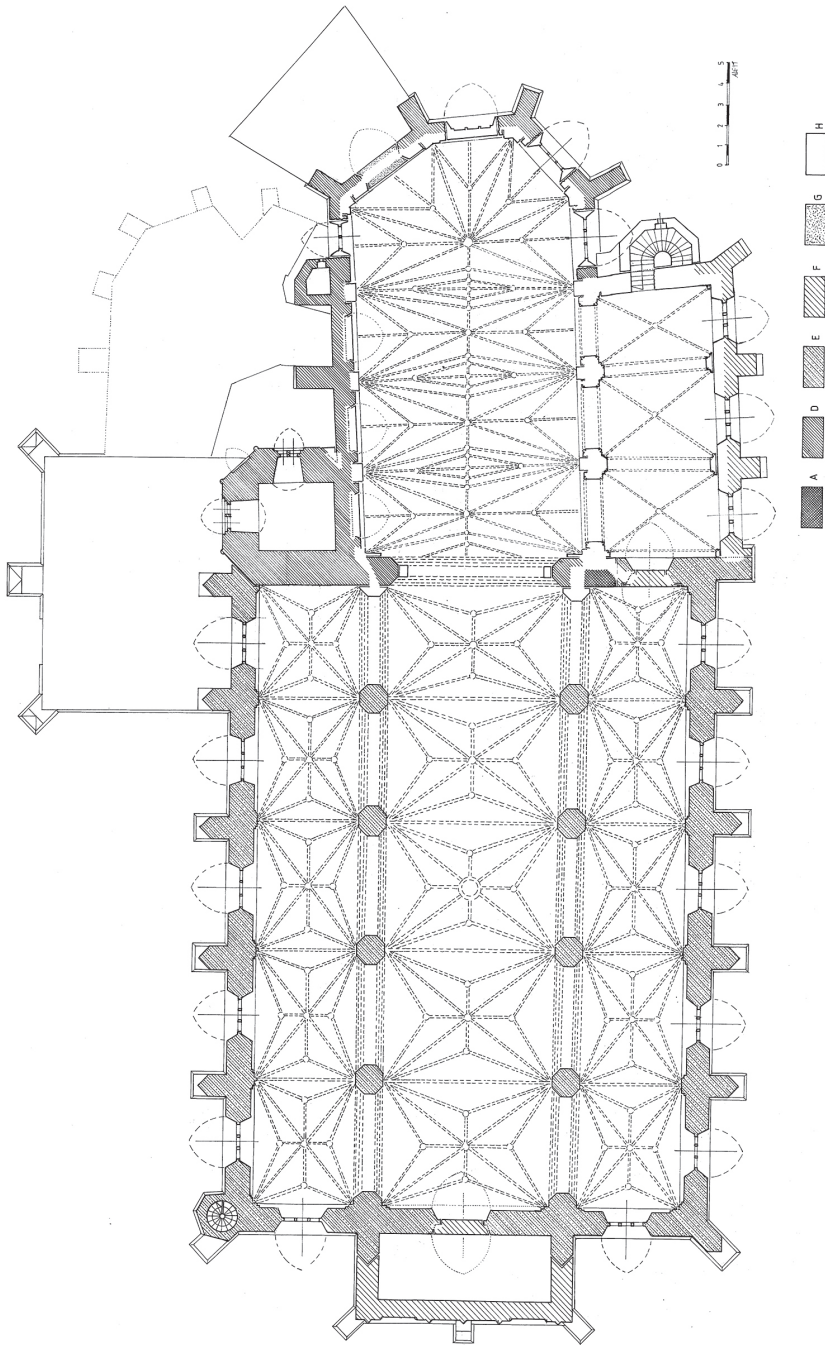


Fig. 8. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: view at window level with wall layers in chronological order. A – 1st half of 13th century, D – before 1309, E – 2nd half of 14th century (before 1401), F – between 1445 and 1511, G – 2nd half of 17th century, H – 19th–20th century and unrecognised walls (development by A. Legendziewicz)

The last stage in shaping the outline of the first church was the construction of the tower, probably at the end of the 13th century. It was located in a corner between the choir and the nave, on the northern side of the chancel entrance arcade. Its construction exploited the existing northern wall of the choir, which was widened northwards as part of the construction, adding a wall with a segmental arch near the semi-circular western window. A Romanesque chancel entrance pillar and a corner of the west arm were used as the western wall, and the other two were erected on new foundations. There is an entrance in the northern wall. The tower probably rose slightly above the eaves of the nave wall – its preserved stone bonds reach a height of about 8.5 m above the present ground level. It probably had at least two storeys, the upper of which had a lighting alcove with a semi-circular arch measuring 30 x 70 cm, and a windowsill at about 4.2 m above the present floor.

The Gothic chancel was probably consecrated in 1309 according to historical sources (Magnus 1710, p. 2). At that time, a four-bay choir was created that was enclosed from the east by a polygon (five sides of an octagon) whose external dimensions were about 23 m by 13.5 m, with a small sacristy adjacent to it near the tower. The interior was illuminated by five windows in the polygonal enclosure and three south-facing windows in what is now the sacristy. These features in the southern elevation are indicated by the location of a pointed-arch window in the eastern wall of the southern aisle and the buttress sheathings that are visible in the attic. The window jambs are made of ceramic mouldings that were shaped before firing and applied in the following order: torus, cavetto and a second torus around the opening. We do not know the forms of the window traceries, all of the preserved ones come from the period of the neo-Gothic reconstruction in 1895–1896 (Figs. 7, 8).

The elevations were enclosed with three-step buttresses, the lowest step of which was determined by the level of the windowsill eaves, while the intermediate ones were established at the height of the head of the window arches. Above them, a plastered frieze panel is placed that is the basis of a crowning cornice that is partially preserved within two bays near the tower. On the north side, in the buttress in the corner of the Romanesque choir, there is a staircase leading to the attic. The entrance to it was at ground level. In the interior, on the north wall, due to the construction of the sacristy and the existence of the tower from the end of the 13th century, at least three alcoves were probably created, of which the one in the middle bay was recorded. It is a pointed arch of about 2.2 m wide, with openings probably shaped to echo the windows with mouldings. In the ground floor of the northern wall of the polygonal bay, there is a pointed-arch arcade with a lancet that also has a pointed-arch shape. The trace of a similar arcade support was also captured on the south side, in the second bay from the chancel entrance. Such an architectural decoration was probably made in the basement of all the newly erected walls of the choir. The interior was covered with vaulting with a currently unknown rib pattern. They were placed in the supports created while the perimeter walls were being

erected. This solution is visible in the attic as the remains of a demolished vaulting. The inner face of the choir walls was covered with white and cream-coloured limestone plasterwork (Fig. 2: b).

By the tower, in the northern wall of the chancel where the two bays are now, a complex, single-storey sacristy was erected that comprised at least two rooms: a larger rectangular one with a segmental arcade in the ground floor, and a smaller one on the eastern side. The first, covered with a semi-circular cradle along the east-west axis, was accessible directly from the choir, with an entrance pierced in the Romanesque wall, about 70 cm east of the second window from the chancel arch. The passage, about 85 cm wide, was covered with a segmental vaulting of half a brick thick. The western wall of the sacristy – which is an annex of the tower – was placed in a recess about 50 cm deep carved in its eastern wall. Above it, there is a segmental arch of one brick thick. In the north-eastern corner of the larger room there is a slotted window, which on the elevation was probably fitted in a small recess with a segmental arch. Its opening was topped with a lintel made of two concave ceramic cornices arranged in a rowlock. In the southern wall, a recess covered with a pointed arch was carved. At the corner of the tower there was a square room (a dungeon?) with a cloister vaulting that was illuminated by a small, slotted, north-facing window. There were recesses in its west wall (carved in the ground floor of the tower) and in the east wall, the former of which had wooden shelves. Another segmental-arch recess of half a brick thick was introduced in the corner of the elevation of what looks like a dungeon (Fig. 2: b).

Concurrently with the construction of the choir, the tower was raised by about 4.2 m, separating the square shaft from the octagon with a brick cornice, the trace of which remains as a strip of bricks laid in a rowlock. Above it, in each of four walls – the eastern wall and the three north-facing walls – a pointed-arch recess was built containing a bifora with its opening divided by a pillar. The octagon corners are finished with pilasters of circular brick mouldings.

Going by the date carved on the western portal, the present Gothic west arm was probably completed in 1401, building over and then dismantling the original one that had been built around the mid-13th century. A three-nave, five-bay hall was erected on a near-rectangular plan of outer dimensions 32.5 m by 24.5 m. The elevations are surrounded with three-step buttresses placed in line with the pillars of the nave. Between them, high, pointed-arch windows with a sill were introduced whose drip edges were in line with the lowest cornice on the buttresses. In the ground floor, on the centre-line of the southern and northern elevations, there are pointed-arch portals with ceramic frames. The part under the crowning cornice was decorated with a frieze panel that is interrupted by the caps of the buttresses (Figs. 6–8).

The western elevation was similarly composed, including the corners with diagonally projecting buttresses and two perpendicular ones in line with the

inter-nave arcades. At the west end of the aisles, windows similar to those in the side walls were fitted, while the window main, central one was emphasised by being larger. The elevation was topped with two strips of frieze panels and a cornice, which formed the basis of a high, stepped, four-storey gable, each step of which was marked with a drip cornice. Each successive level of the stepped gable features pointed-arch lancets, numbering seven, five, three and one in ascending order. It is not known how the caps and cornice edges of the steps were decorated. The present low pinnacles were made during the works in 1895–1896 (Fig. 2: a).

On the ground floor, on the centre-line of the nave, in a recess shaped with mouldings that probably matched the drip cornice, a pointed-arch stone portal was created. It is framed with a deeply profiled strip flanked by a pair of small, engaged columns with slender pinnacles and featuring fleurons. The outer edge of the archivolt was decorated with stone crockets and topped with a fleuron.

The west arm was divided into a nave and two aisles by octagonal pillars, on which the wall with pointed-arch, stepped arcades rested. The interior elevation of the outer walls originally differed slightly in layout than today. The wall surfaces were regularly broken by pilaster strips in line with the pillars separating the bays, with ancillary columns that probably had round capitals and square bases. Their base was a ceramic cornice, the remains of which can be seen as a set-off in line with the windowsills. In the eastern wall of the southern aisle, the brickwork of a pointed-arch window opening was identified whose upper part is recorded in the attic above the vaults of the southern sacristy.

Probably even before 1430, the nave was covered with vaulting and a new decoration was introduced in the chancel. In the east arm, a star-shaped vaulting arrangement was used, with ribbing along the longitudinal ridge of the barrels and with rhombuses spanning the bays. The ribbing was made of mouldings shaped into a double-concave profile before firing. It is not known how they were embedded, nor how they were supported in the perimeter walls; the present pilaster strips and arcade framing were introduced during the neo-Gothic restoration in 1895–1896. During the work on the vaults, the shape of the pointed-arch recesses in the northern wall was probably adjusted. Their rise was lowered to form a segmental arch of half a brick thick supported on the impost of the pointed arch. The upper part is walled up in a stretcher bond that was pointed with plaster to make it flush to the wall surface (Figs. 8, 9).

The vaults in the west arm were established in the abutments created when the outer walls and arcaded walls above the pillars were being erected. The springers of the stellar ribbing whose diagonal ribs create oblong fields in the nave and square fields in the aisles were supported on corbels that were probably round. It was made of the same ceramic mouldings as in the choir. The walls of the west arm were erected in a regular stretcher bond that in places used bricks heavily fired in a reducing atmosphere for the decorative effect of their darker colour and partial



Fig. 9.
Żary, Lubuskie voivodship.
Parish church: a vault of the
main nave (photo by
A. Legendziewicz)

glazing. The elevation's horizontal and vertical pointing was carefully shaped with a triangular groove that met the surface. The interior of the west arm had flat paintwork whose surface was uncontaminated by signs of long-term exposure to the atmosphere, which indicates that the walls were plastered immediately after erection (Fig. 5).

The next parts of the tower were realised in two stages. The first produced the octagonal shaft of about 5 m tall that reaches up the height of the cornice crowning the elevation of the west arm. There are slit windows in the north and east walls and at the corners there are ceramic roll ancillary columns. In the second stage, which was built at the same time as the gable over the chancel arch, the tower was raised by another 8 m. The layout of the elevation was left with the introduction of roll ancillary columns in the corners and, on the centre lines of the cardinal directions, two pointed-arch windows, of which the lower, shorter ones were about 2.5 m tall to the arch tip and the upper, slightly taller ones had openings of more than 3.5 m tall. Above, probably under the crowning cornice, there was a frieze panel of four brick courses on each of the walls of the raised octagon.

Work to build the chapel of St Barbara, the southern sacristy, the western vestibule and the St Mary's Chapel began after the construction of the present Gothic west arm. Source references to the consecration of the two chapels define only the timeframe within which the above-mentioned elements of the west arm of the church were built. The first of the chapels (St Barbara)¹, was built around probably 1445 on the northern side of the tower, at the easternmost bay of the west arm (Magnus 1710, p. 9). It was built on a rectangular plan with two bays with a buttress on the centre line of the chancel arch and with a support embedded in a buttress of the west arm. In the two bays, net vaulting was made with a similar pattern of ribs with circular keystones at their intersections. The parts of the vaults stretched between the buttresses of the nave were finished with cross ribbing. The interior was lit by four pointed-arch windows, one each to the east and west and two to the north. There is also a pointed-arch entrance in the western bay under the window. The west arm was covered with a shed roof supported on a polygonal storey of the tower. The corners and the centre of the northern elevation were enclosed with two-step buttresses, the lower of which formed part of the contour of the shallow *avant-corps* of the west window (Fig. 7).

On the southern side of the choir, probably in the first half of the 15th century, a new, two-storey sacristy was introduced, possibly with a library on the first floor. Its floor plan was roughly rectangular with three bays in line with the bays of the choir. The rhythm of the elevation is marked by three buttresses, two projecting at right angles and one diagonally. Each has two set-offs, the lower of which has a cornice at the level of the chancel windowsill. Another narrow porch was erected

¹ The eastern bay of the chapel of St Barbara was converted into the Chapel of Eternal Adoration.

at the west arm wall, repeating the system of set-offs from the south elevation of the west arm. Of the window openings in the ground floor, we know the location of the westernmost one, which has a pointed arch. It has a stepped reveal made of bevelled mouldings, and the interior of the opening is finished with concave mouldings. The composition of the remaining bays remains unknown, but only the central one has a pointed-arch recess with straight edges. On the first floor, identical pointed openings were made with chamfered jambs: three to the south and probably one to the east. The elevation of the sacristy was topped with a frieze panel below the level of the frieze panel on the choir. The roof on the south side had three gables of currently unknown form that are evidenced by the traces of slopes recorded in the attic.

On the axis of the west façade, between the buttresses in the line of the arcades dividing the nave from the aisle, a rectangular vestibule was added with three buttresses to the west (two projecting diagonally and one perpendicular to the elevation), probably at the turn of the 16th century. The interior was covered with a net vault with circular keystones (Fig. 2: a, Fig. 7).

The western elevation has three zones separated by projecting cornices, and its centre line was emphasised by a perpendicularly projecting buttress. In the ground floor, which is marked by a brick cornice in line with the aisle windowsills, there is an entrance consisting of two pointed-arch portals framed by mouldings with a torus and a cavetto. The part of the wall between the cornices has a symmetrical decoration set on two levels. The lower level consists of three elements: two windows with gently pointed arches and chamfered reveals, and, on the southern side of the vestibule, one small recess that has a segmental cross-section with a cavetto moulding. The upper level consists of four pointed-arch recesses with edges of cavetto masonry mouldings. The gable end wall is demarcated by a cornice halfway up the aisle windows, and was divided into at least two floors that were separated by five pilaster strips. These pilasters were made of bricks rotated by 45 degrees to create a surface pattern of triangular recesses. In the lower floor, in the outer fields of the gable end wall, there are two pointed-arch recesses with jambs made of cavetto mouldings. In the upper floor, in the two middle fields, there another two semi-circular recesses with similar edges. The contour of the summit remains unknown; the present one comes from the period of the neo-Gothic restoration carried out in 1895–1896. On the side elevations on the second level, one pointed-arch recess with profiled edges was built (Fig. 2: a).

On the northern side of the choir, in the space between the chapel of St Barbara, the tower, the first Gothic sacristy and the buttress with the staircase, in around 1511, the St Mary's (Baptismal) chapel was built (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 207)².

² It cannot be ruled out that St Mary's Chapel was built in the place of an older one with an octagonal floor plan. During research in 1972, a keystone with the outline of eight ribs was found in the rubble

Judging by the random arrangement of the blocks placed here, it had an irregular floor plan. The single-bay eastern part had a four-sided enclosure, and the two-bay west arm was roughly trapezoidal in plan, tapering westwards. The north-facing wall was demarcated in line with the eastern window of the chapel of St Barbara. The interior is covered with a rib vaulting with additional barrels in the rises. Light entered the interior through three windows placed between buttresses (Figs. 7, 10).



Fig. 10. Żary, Lubuskie voivodship. Parish church: a – vault of St Barbara's chapel, b – vault of the western porch (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

The chapel is connected to the chancel by a passage pierced in the bay between the first Gothic sacristy and the buttress with the staircase. However, the connection with the chapel of St Barbara was made by a pointed-arch opening with a set-off brick reveal built on the south side of the blocked eastern window. Also, the entrance to the Gothic sacristy that was pierced in its eastern wall was given a pointed arch. In the corner of the sacristy wall, a spiral staircase leading to the attic of the chapel (?) was introduced, and, at the buttress with the stairs to the attic of the church, a small annex with a cross vault was built (Fig. 7).

Its walls are preserved in fragments by the sacristy (as is the lower part of the spiral stairs) and in the area of the slope with the staircase to the chancel attic

where they constitute the southern wall of the chapel. Of the framing of the chancel entrance, a frame with brick ancillary columns and masks in their finials has been preserved, along with the imposts of two arcades of the passage and the western bay of the chapel. The walls of the former annex show the smooth capital of the ancillary column of its vault and the eastern closure of the chancel entrance arcade. The former passage between the chapels is the current entrance to the eastern bay of the chapel of St Barbara (Fig. 7).

The Baroque transformations of the church were carried out in two periods. Works on the north side of the chancel, including the introduction of a crypt under the chapel of St Barbara, can be generally dated to the second half of the 17th century, and the erection of the Promnitz chapel to the years 1670–1672 (Magnus 1710, p. 251), and the transformations in the west arm and the introduction of the gallery to between the fire in 1684 and the completion of works ten years later (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 208).

The crypt under the chapel of St Barbara was probably built around the middle of the 17th century. The existing flooring of the eastern bay of the Gothic chapel from the line of the vaulting arch between the fields of the vaulting was demolished and lowered by about 1.5 m. There is a cross vaulting supported on the perimeter foundation walls. Above it, a new level was introduced that was delimited to the west (on the side where it meets the western bay of the chapel) by a brick balustrade. Below and in line with the balustrade, the entrance to the crypt was enclosed in a brick framing with a volute-shaped pediment. On both sides of it, there are segmental-arch recesses. The opening between the bays from the south was narrowed by about 1 m.

The Promnitz family funeral chapel was founded by Count Ulrich, and source references record that it was built in the years 1670–1672 (Magnus 1710, p. 251). At the north-eastern wall of the polygonal closure, a trapezoidal building was erected in line with the spacing of the Gothic buttresses. There are segmental-arch windows in the outer walls. The elevations were modestly decorated with plasterwork rustication in the corners, a profiled crowning cornice and bands around the window openings. The west arm was covered with a shed roof supported on the chancel wall. The interior was given monastery vaulting supported on the crowning cornice. In the corners, composite columns with twisted shafts were introduced. A pair of similar columns with pilasters framed the segmental-arch entrance arcade. A broken pediment was based on them, with a cartouche of the Promnitz family coat of arms surrounded by a rocaille with an inscription field (Figs. 7, 11).

On the other hand, the transformations within the nave were related to the introduction of two-storey galleries into the aisles during the reconstruction of the church after the fire in 1684 (Worbs 1826, p. 164). The reconstruction of the temple was led by master bricklayer Kacper Müller from Bolesławiec and bricklayer Stefan Spinetto from Żagań (Kubach, Seeger 1939, p. 208). Vertical furrows with



Fig. 11.
 Żary, Lubuskie voivodship.
 Parish church: portal
 of the Promnitz family
 funeral chapel (photo by
 A. Legendziewicz)

dimensions of about 25 x 25 cm were carved in the outer walls in order to embed wooden pillars for the structure supporting the balcony. In addition, in the corners, stairways were fitted at the walls and their landings were anchored in the walls. In the ground floor part of the southern elevation, recesses covered with segmental-arch openings of two half bricks thick were cut, into which elliptical windows illuminating the ground floor part were fitted. In the easternmost bay of the aisle, a narrow, slit window was pierced, and on the northern side the door opening to the Gothic chapels was rebuilt. In addition, internal jambs were cut into the north and south Gothic entrance openings.

The walls of this phase were made in fairly weak, white sand-lime mortar and reclaimed Gothic brick. In the cut window openings, the wall was filled using a mixture of mortar and fragments of roofing tiles. The last significant task related to the renovation of the church interior after the fire was the blocking up of the recesses in the northern wall of the choir.

Summary

The architectural research allowed the main phases of transformations of the parish church to be identified. The origins of the church date to the first half of the 13th century, when a brick chancel with a four-bay, two-nave west arm was built. It therefore seems plausible to argue that a brick church existed in the pre-local settlement. Probably at the end of the century, the lower part of the tower was built in stone. The construction of the present choir was completed before 1309, from when we have information that the new choir was consecrated by Paweł, the supposed bishop of Meissen. The present vaulted, three-nave west arm was probably built in the first third of the 15th century. The chapels (of St Barbara and St Mary) adjacent to it to the north, the southern sacristy, and the vestibule on the axis of the western elevation were probably built between 1445 and 1511. The transformations in the Baroque period can be divided into several stages: in the second half of the 17th century, crypts were introduced under the Gothic chapels on the northern side of the choir, and in the years 1670–1672, a funeral chapel was founded by Count Ulrich von Promnitz. The last stage is related to a fire that broke out in 1684, in response to which two-storey galleries were built within the aisles. All works by master Kacper Müller of Bolesławiec and brickmason Stefan Spinetto of Żagań were completed ten years later in 1694.

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