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Protection and popularization of archaeological heritage as an object of activity of a nongovernmental organisation supported by a university – an example of medieval ducal tower in Siedlęcín near Jelenia Góra

Abstract. The tower in Siedlęcín near Jelenia Góra is one of the best-preserved keeps in Central Europe. Since the beginning of the 21st century it has been open to visitors. In 2008 archaeological research of the tower and its surroundings was started, two years later the Association ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’ was established.

The cooperation between Jagiellonian University and the nongovernmental organisation led to the implementation of several projects to protect, and popularize the archaeological heritage. Researchers provided some of the ideas and substantive support, the NGO participated in the conceptual and implementation stages and maintained the effects of the activities (on a year-round basis).

The effects of cooperation were substantial (archaeological exhibition and reserve), organisational (heritage trails, camps for volunteers) and educational (guidebooks dedicated to the children). Activities developed in Siedlęcín during the recent years allowed creating a complete product (on a scale achievable under those conditions), which as a ‘good practice’ was implemented at another site (Wleń castle).

The activities carried out around the keep in Siedlęcín by the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University and the Association ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’ were mutually beneficial and additionally contributed to strengthening the local community and helped achieve local self-government tasks in the field of heritage protection.

Keywords: Siedlęcín, heritage trail, volunteer camp, popularization, education, archaeo-tourism, donjon, castle, public archaeology.

The tower as a medieval residence

The ducal tower in Siedlęcín near Jelenia Góra is one of the best-preserved 14th-century castles in Poland (Fig. 1). What makes it unique is not only the considerable preservation of the original elements, the early chronology, and the exceptional



Fig. 1. Ducal tower in Siedlęcín (photo by E. Bojczuk)

painting decoration featuring scenes from the Arthurian legend, but also the high level of research carried out at the castle over recent years (Nocuń 2016a; 2019).

The keep in Siedlęcín was built in the Bóbr valley, about 5 km north of Jelenia Góra. It is located near a bridge over the Bóbr river, which probably continues a tradition of a medieval river crossing. The tower was erected in the central part of the village, probably as a result of rural colonisation rather than as a local centre of ducal power. Its construction was probably connected with the establishment of a new urban centre in Jelenia Góra, which was granted city rights in the last decades of the 13th century (Adamska 2016, p. 47; 2020, p. 188). The tower, as researchers assume, served as a private residence of the duke, connected with his hunting grounds located between Siedlęcín and Jelenia Góra (Adamska 2016, pp. 52–53).

Unusually for a medieval village, Siedlęcín occupies both sides of the Bóbr River. The eastern part of Siedlęcín, with the residential tower and the parish church of St. Nicolas founded around the same time, stretches up the slopes of the Wapienna massif along a small tributary of the Bóbr River. The settlements in the western part of the village were located along the left tributary of the river, rising up the slope of one of the massifs of the Rybnica Plateau. This seems to suggest that the location of Siedlęcín village was based on a pre-existing road (route) in the place where it crossed the Bóbr river, which probably lost its importance after the location of Jelenia Góra and the establishment of a new road-system.

The tower as a tourist attraction

Until 1945, the tower and the manor house in front of it had been the centre of an estate, which for most of the modern period belonged to the von Schaffgotsch family. In the 1930s, intensive efforts were made to create a medieval museum in Siedlęcín, an initiative coordinated by Günther Grundmann, the head of the Lower Silesian heritage protection office. The change of borders after Germany's defeat in World War II thwarted these ambitious plans. Unfortunately, almost all the documentation related to this project was lost.

After the war and the incorporation of this area into Poland, the State Agricultural Farm (PGR) was established here. Although the issue was not formally regulated, the tower in Siedlęcín was open to visitors at that time. Several guidebooks have been published, including one dedicated specifically to this object.

After the fall of communism and the resulting liquidation of the State Agricultural Farm (PGR), and after a decade without an active landlord, the tower in Siedlęcín (and shortly afterwards also the historic manor house standing in front of it) was purchased by the 'Chudów Castle' Foundation. This nongovernmental organisation had earlier successfully tended to the ruins of a 16th century castle in Chudów in Upper Silesia, where, following archaeological research and preservation work, it opened a small museum in the reconstructed castle tower. One of the core elements of the museum became an archaeological exhibition presenting artefacts acquired during research of the castle (this allowed the results of archaeological research of the castle to be presented *in situ*).

The new owner made the building available to tourists from the very beginning, making the tower an element of historical tourism or even archaeotourism¹ (at the same time carrying out the most important rescue, protection, and restoration works). Nevertheless, the keep in Siedlęcín did not receive any institutional support (apart from the administrative support from the 'Chudów Castle' Foundation). The tower had no furnishings, the only decoration being the paintings in the Great Hall on the second floor. The rescue conservation of the polychromes in 2006 was one of the first major projects carried out on the site by the owner (with financial support from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Lower Silesian Province). Also in terms of the human potential involved, the site only had a guide service (no research or museum support personnel).

The first breakthrough came with the start of cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University and the launch of interdisciplinary research on the site in 2008.

¹ Recent analysis of archaeotourism in Poland can be found in some dedicated publications (von Rohrscheidt 2010; Głowacka-Penczyńska *et al.* 2015).

The tower as a subject of research

Although historians, art and architecture historians, architects, conservators and archaeologists repeatedly commented on the history of the ducal seat in Siedlęcín, prior to 2008 only selected aspects were subject to detailed analysis, above all the medieval wall paintings which were discovered on the second floor of the tower in the last quarter of the 19th century². The preserved iconographic sources do not provide an opportunity to discuss the appearance of the tower and its facilities before the mid-18th century, when the seat in Siedlęcín was drawn by Friedrich Bernhard Werner (Nocuń 2016, pp. 12–14).

The Siedlęcín historic and archaeological site did not arouse scientific interest until the end of the 19th century. In 1888, the first article about the tower was written by Wilhelm Klose (Klose 1888), who had discovered medieval polychromes in it a year earlier, recognised in 1918 by Paul Knötel as the story of Yvein (Knötel 1918). Until recently, the most important and most detailed study of the tower in Siedlęcín was the doctoral dissertation by Rita Probst, whose findings on the chronology of the tower and the significance of the paintings were based on detailed interdisciplinary studies (Probst 1942). Probst also witnessed the extensive conservation work carried out by Günther Grundmann in the 1930s (Nocuń 2016a, p. 24). Part of this research and the renovation project were the first archaeological investigations undertaken by Fritz Geschwendt in 1937 and 1938 (Nocuń 2016, p. 24). Among the post-war works of great importance is a monograph of the 14th century paintings (Fig. 2) by Jacek Witkowski, who was the first to identify them as the story of Lancelot of the Lake, and collective studies on medieval residential and defensive architecture by Małgorzata Chorowska, who made the first more detailed spatial analysis of the tower and the function of its individual storeys and presented the results of preliminary dendrochronological research, important for the chronology of the building (Witkowski 2001; Chorowska 2003, p. 122).

The archaeological research of the site produced new findings and quite swiftly developed into an interdisciplinary research project, initiated in 2008 (the work was carried out by the Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University, initially in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Wrocław). The research covered the tower and its surroundings, and shed much light on the transformations of the tower itself and on a number of other issues, including the range of the medieval moat, fragments of the medieval defensive (perimeter) wall, and medieval and modern phases of the manor house in front of the tower. The research also unearthed a stone bridge leading to the medieval gate tower. In 2016, a monograph of the site was published, which managed to collect and summarise

² The history of interest in the tower in Siedlęcín, the research and its results were widely described a few years ago (*Wieża książęca* 2016).



Fig. 2. Ducal tower in Siedlęcín. 14th-century paintings in the Great Hall on the second floor (photo by A. Wosz)

all the important results of the research to that date (Nocuń 2016). As part of the preparations for its publication, dendrochronological expertise, unique for its scale, was carried out, which allowed for a very detailed determination of the time and dynamics of the works on the construction of the tower in the second decade of the 14th century (Fig. 3) (Konieczny 2016, pp. 341–348; Nocuń 2019, p. 235). Archaeological research, carried out as part of field training for archaeology students of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University, has been continued each season.

The tower as a tool for promotion of science

An important milestone, especially for popularising archaeology, was the establishment of the Association ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’ in 2010. The founding members included researchers (archaeologists and archaeology students), tourism creators (tourist guides) and – last but not least – local residents (important representatives of the local community). This diversity of people involved allowed for a broad identification of needs and objectives and resulted in a number of actions described later in this text.

This part of the article deals with broadly understood promotion of archaeological research and its results and presents activities involving local society and how a group of enthusiasts was created around the monument. The presentation of activities in Siedlęcín, in chronological order, should begin with the simplest steps.

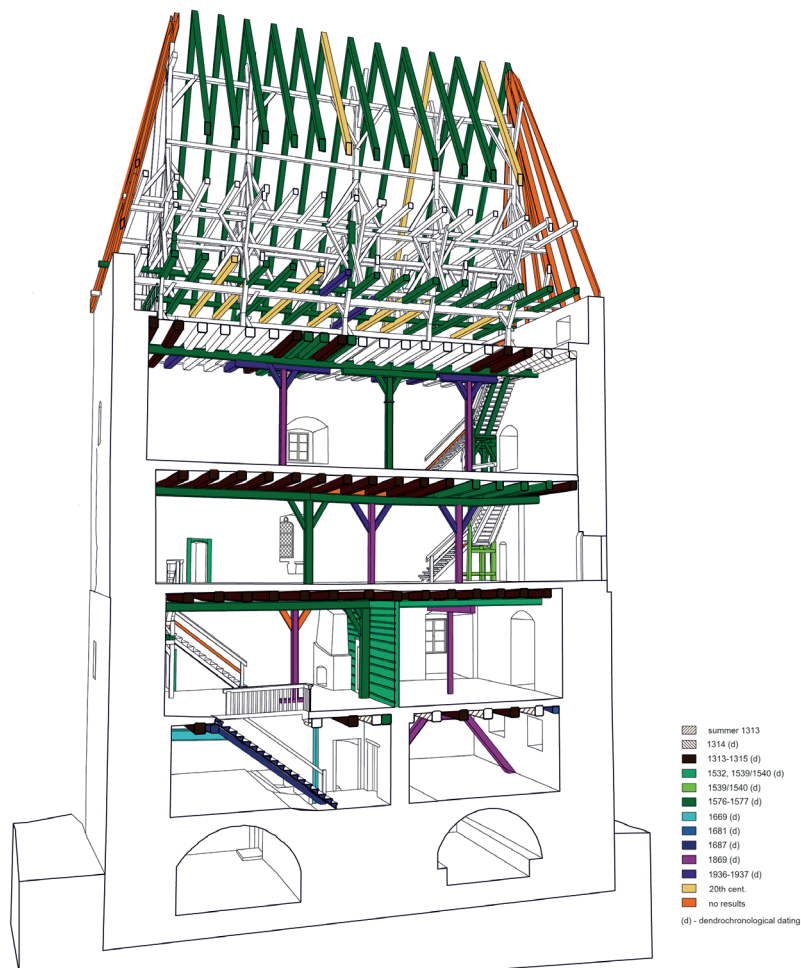


Fig. 3. Ducal tower in Siedlęcín. Cross-section with chronological stratification of wooden elements (development by A. Konieczny and P. Nocuń; drawn by P. Pałka)

Importantly, we will illustrate the often grassroots processes which opened up new opportunities, ideas and actions for the implementers.

In the early years of the archaeological research – even before the formation of the above mentioned association – meetings (‘open days’) were organised at the end of each research season, to which local residents, local authorities, tourist guides and all interested parties were invited³. Their purpose was to present the

³ ‘Open days’ and wide range of methods of archaeological education in Poland were discussed by Roksana Chowaniec (2010).

results of the research, to recall the history of the site (by presenting the results of the work of archaeologists in the context of the 700-year history of the monument) and to educate on the importance of archaeology and archaeological research. For the duration of the meetings, information plaques were prepared and placed on objects and relics of buildings discovered thanks to the research. As some of the discovered relics were left visible after the excavations, they aroused the interest of the visitors and were quite naturally included in the narration of the guides. This became the first step towards creating an archaeological reserve.

The tower as an archaeological museum and reserve

The artefacts retrieved over successive seasons of excavations formed the basis of an exhibition, created as a joint project of the Jagiellonian University and Wrocław University. The archaeological exhibition was set up in the western room of the tower's ground floor, with the finds grouped thematically in four display cases (e.g. medieval and modern windows and doors, heating systems and table accessories). These were accompanied by educational boards and – later – educational films⁴ and digital reconstructions presenting the transformation of the tower and its surroundings from the 14th century to the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Hypothetical reconstruction of the ducal tower in Siedlęcín and its surroundings in the late Middle Ages (development by P. Rajski)

⁴ Films (produced by Wojciech Pudło) are also available on the official website of the Jagiellonian University Without Borders: <https://open.uj.edu.pl/course/view.php?id=35>.

To spread knowledge about the exhibition, every few years a training for tourist guides takes place in the tower, during which – apart from discussing the history of the construction and reconstruction of the keep and its surroundings as well as the results of research – the archaeological artefacts presented in the showcases are analysed in detail.

The archaeological exhibition on the ground floor is not the only place where visitors can get acquainted with archaeological heritage – the works in the interiors of the building uncovered a fragment of a medieval defensive wall as well as walls and architectural elements from different stages of construction and extension of the manor house. Before making these interiors available to tourists, members of the Association ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’, with the support of archaeologists from Kraków, prepared boards allowing for better understanding of the discovered relics. In this way, a rudimentary archaeological reserve was created. It continues with the remains of a stone bridge and walls in front of the manor house (in the open air) (Fig. 5). An architectural project is currently underway to consolidate these zones into a professional archaeological reserve⁵ (the association plans to complete this project by 2024).

The tower as a starting point of heritage trails

One of the more development-oriented projects carried out in Siedlęcín started as a one-off idea, which eventually morphed into the ‘heritage trails’ project. From the perspective of nearly a decade since its initiation, it can be described as a set of educational trails popularising cultural heritage – with particular emphasis on archaeological heritage – in the vicinity of the keep in Siedlęcín.

Although the main target audience were tourists visiting Siedlęcín and the idea was to encourage them to stay longer in the area and discover its heritage, from the very beginning much importance was also attached to raising the awareness among the local community of the need to protect monuments and stimulating the sense responsibility for the local heritage (including archaeological), much of it is even not officially recognised. It was assumed that active participation in heritage walks would also be a form of activation of local residents (as well as NGOs) and an encouragement to further activities in caring for and being responsible for local cultural heritage⁶.

⁵ Archaeological reserves have long history in Poland. More about their history and both formal and functional evolution was presented by different authors (cf. Piwocki 1961; Rajewski 1964; Konopka 1986; Pawleta 2016).

⁶ However, the level of involvement of the local community in activities at Siedlęcín does not meet the criteria of full implementation of community archaeology (cf. Tully 2007).



Fig. 5. Siedlęcín. Chronological stratification of a tower, manor house, and objects discovered in the course of archaeological research with marked archaeological reserve (development by P. Nocuń)

The Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín' was responsible for the organisation and implementation of the project from the very beginning. Its partners were local authorities and local cultural institutions – on commune (Jeżów Sudecki, Wleń) and district (Jelenia Góra) level. The heritage walks were realised in cooperation with tourist guides from the Association 'Guild of Sudety Guides', for whom the involvement of the Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University allowed to consider these walks as an element of self-education used for further promotion of archaeological heritage among tourists visiting the region.

As part of the heritage trails project, three inaugural walks along trails created under separate initiatives were carried out in 2016. These were The Trail of the

Bóbr River Towers (I), The Trail of Old Silver and Gold Mining (II) and The Trail of the Mysterious Stoveman (III). This created a basic pattern of activity, in which there was always an opening event promoted in the local media – the first walk along a newly established trail. For the purposes of such a tour an educational folder was prepared, describing the trail and discussing important elements of the local cultural heritage (Fig. 6). Such a folder was then made available to tourists coming to visit the tower, and often distributed in the regional network of tourist information points and accommodation facilities as well. The material was shared with schools in the area to enrich their local trips programmes.

In 2017, two more walks along new heritage trails were realised: The Trail of Forgotten Castles of Jelenia Góra (IV) and The Trail to Zamczysko Castle in Borowy Jar (V) (Fig. 7). In the following years animated walks along the already existing paths were organised several times – this was also a stimulus for updates to promotional publications.

Each of the thematic walks had its leitmotif, emphasized during the walk and giving a unique character to each of the paths – historical city gate towers and the remains of medieval watchtowers along the Bóbr River (I); medieval mining stones, traces of former quarries and the remains of a castle in Płoszczyna (II); castles and other archaeological sites where medieval and modern tiles were discovered, from



Fig. 6. Poster promoting the inauguration walk along the Heritage Trail of Old Silver and Gold Mining (trail II) and a folder informing about the route of this trail (development by P. Nocuń and J. Gajda)



Fig. 7. Inaugural walk of the Heritage Trail to Zamczysko Castle in Borowy Jar (trail V) run by volunteers (photo by M. Kowalska)

which stoves were built (III); remains of medieval castles surrounding Jelenia Góra (IV); relics of a little-known medieval castle within the administrative borders of Siedlęcín (V)⁷. The starting and/or finishing point of the walks was always the tower in Siedlęcín, where accompanying events – archaeological workshops, lectures, and concerts – were also held.

The implementation of the trails was financed from various sources – from the funds of the City of Jelenia Góra (I, IV), the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland – ‘Volunteering for Heritage’/‘Together for Heritage’ programmes (II, V) and the Polish History Museum in ‘Patriotism of Tomorrow’ programme (III). This variety of sources stems from using grant programmes available at the time, in which it was possible to fit the idea of heritage trails. It is worth mentioning here that in some cases projects had to include preceding workshops and camps for volunteers.

Substantive support at every stage of planning and implementation of all the above activities was provided by the staff of the Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University.

⁷ All leaflets can be downloaded from the website of the Association ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’ (<https://wieszasedlecin.pl/heritage-trails/>).

The tower as a location of volunteer camps

The annual archaeological camps organised for students from Kraków since 2010 have become a testing ground for supporting activities of the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín' Tower. The first step was to co-organise camps for volunteers who helped with the archaeological research but also took part in parallel maintenance and arranging work in and around the tower.

The impetus to professionalise the organisation of volunteer camps came from the REMPART network. This French union of organisations was founded in 1966 and now brings together more than 180 local associations that protect and promote heritage – not only archaeological – throughout France⁸. Most of these associations organise volunteer camps or training courses, during which conservation projects are conducted and training in the use of ancient crafts is provided. The task of the REMPART headquarters is to run workshops and training courses aimed at professionalising the organisation of such projects. The participation of representatives from the association allowed this model – naturally adapted to local realities – to be implemented in Poland. This certainly contributed to the success of the Siedlęcín-based NGO in competitions organised by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland (NID). The volunteer camps organised under the 'Volunteering for Heritage'/'Together for Heritage' programmes succeeded in combining theoretical workshops for volunteers with practical activities and helped create some of the previously mentioned 'heritage trails' and a special tourist guide dedicated to children⁹.

In pursuit of the assumed objectives, various educational methods involving different age groups were used. a) practical (learning by doing) – co-organisation of accompanying events, participation in workshops (e.g. stove tile making), demonstrations and simulations – exhibitions as well as models and visualisations of the discussed objects (3D reconstructions of monuments); b) valorisation (learning by experiencing) – participation in thematic walks along the existing heritage routes (including walking them), active participation in animated field games and concerts; c) assimilation (learning by absorbing) – thematic guided tours around the tower, lectures and talks in the heritage site, disseminating and popularising knowledge about the monument, talks and discussions on the protection of local heritage by local communities taking place both at the well-known registered monuments and during walks along heritage trails. Activities in Siedlęcín correspond very well with other sites in Poland, where similar projects were implemented (Radziwiłko 2020).

⁸ It is worth mentioning that similar initiatives – but in smaller number and scale – were carried out also by Polish archaeological museums already in the 1960s and 1970s (Domańska 1968; Pokuta 1981).

⁹ One of the camps was presented in a chapter of a monograph published by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland (Gitkiewicz 2017).



Fig. 8. Preparing the children's guide to the tower in Siedlęcín during the volunteer camp (photo by J. Haftka)

Each time, the project was supervised by archaeologists from the Jagiellonian University, who were in some cases supported by historians from the University of Wrocław and architecture researchers from the Wrocław University of Science and Technology¹⁰.

It is worth mentioning here one more popularization activity, which was the preparation and publication of an innovative guide to the Siedlęcín tower for the youngest tourists (Fig. 8).

The tower as a site of the best practice

Siedlęcín is situated in the Bóbr River valley where many other important medieval monuments are located. The tourist potential is enormous, especially given that the Bóbr Valley north of Jelenia Góra is within the range of a half a day or a day trip for tourists coming to rest in the Giant Mountains (Karkonosze) or Izera Mountains and choosing big tourist centres such as Karpacz and Szklarska Poręba.

¹⁰ Sincere thanks go to Prof. Dagmara Adamska from the Historical Institute of Wrocław University and Dr Maria Legut-Pintal from the Faculty of Architecture at the Wrocław University of Science and Technology.

The activities of the association in Siedlęcín consisting in gradual extension of the offer for tourists and placing emphasis on archaeological heritage has aroused the interest of local authorities. While the scope of the proposed cooperation varied, it is worth noting that in both cases described below the starting point were the previously created 'heritage trails'.

The trail marked out in 2016 from the keep in Siedlęcín to the so-called transitional castle in Płoszczyna (trail II) increased interest in this element of archaeological heritage and expanded knowledge about the history of the village itself – including its beginnings related to gold mining (Boguszewicz 2010, pp. 246–247; Legut-Pintal 2017, pp. 67–68; Rajski, Stolarczyk nd.). In 2019, the Jeżów Sudecki commune (on whose territory Siedlęcín is located) launched a tourist trail, which was marked in black by the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK) and included in the national network of official walking trails.

The inauguration of the trail from Siedlęcín to Płoszczyna was accompanied with a medieval fair. On the invitation of both the commune authorities and the association, a scholar of the Institute of Archaeology gave a guided tour of the tower in Siedlęcín and the castle in Płoszczyna. At the end of the trail, archaeologists presented non-invasive research methods and the Euroregional Modelling Centre in Jeżów Sudecki presented a model of the Płoszczyna castle. There were demonstrations of knights and old crafts. In this way the castle, which is the destination of one of the heritage trails, received information boards and a new resting place which functions today as a picnic site for the village inhabitants and tourists. By this action the local community was involved in the care of their heritage.

The scope of cooperation with local self-government was definitely greater in the neighbouring commune of Wleń. After several years of renovation of the ruins of a castle, whose origins date back to the second half of the 12th century (Chorowska 2017, p. 96; Chorowska, Bartz 2020, pp. 243–244), which makes it one of the oldest castles in Poland, the municipality of Wleń, which owns the monument, decided to open it to the public. In 2016, the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín' realized one of the longest 'heritage trails' so far – from the castle in Wleń to the tower in Siedlęcín (trail III). It was in the form of an animated walk centred around the figure of a stove making master (the inspiration was the discovery of identical stove tiles with hunting scenes both in Wleń and Siedlęcín). In addition to visits to both monuments, concerts (including one in St Jadwiga's church at the foot of the castle) and tile-making workshops were organised. In 2017, the association, with the support of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University, organised a workshop during which the participants searched through a heap of old stone rubble, in which several previously unknown details from medieval and modern renovations and extensions of the castle were found. This gave rise to the idea of an offer which the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín' (together with the Association 'Guild of Sudety Guides') submitted to the competition announced by

the municipality of Wleń in 2018. As a result, the association became co-guardian of the castle in Wleń, which has since been made available to tourists on a regular basis. Much of the activities at the castle were linked to the promotion of archaeology. Thanks to two volunteer camps (realised with the financial support of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland from the funds of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage), a complete inventory of architectural details was made and a concept and design for the first stage of *lapidarium* at the castle was created (Fig. 9), along with the first ‘heritage trail’ in Wleń – The Trail to the St. Hedwig’s Balcony (VI) – and a guidebook for children (like previously in Siedlęcín)¹¹. Finally, it is worth stressing that the tower in Siedlęcín and the Wleń castle, situated several kilometres from each other, have been connected in one tourist project called ‘Ducal residences of the Bóbr Valley’, all ideas and activities of which are consulted with scholars from the Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University.

The activities of the ‘Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín’ Association have received international recognition. The association was recommended by both the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland and REMPART for cooperation with the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO), which is a union of organisations involved in the protection and popularisation of heritage all over the world (the largest of these being the National Trusts in the United Kingdom, whose model approach to monuments is a benchmark for such actions).



Fig. 9. Inventarization of architectural details during a camp for volunteers at Wleń castle (photo by M. Legut-Pintal)

¹¹ Guidebooks for children exist also in digital versions. Siedlęcín: https://wiesziedlecin.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/przewodnik_Siedlecin-1.pdf Wleń: https://wiesziedlecin.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/przewodniczek_wlen_najmlodsi.pdf.

As INTO members should be the owners of monuments, the Polish member is the 'Chudów Castle' Foundation (the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcin' has been included indirectly – as a co-guardian and animator of the monument). In 2022, membership in INTO was raised by one level – the Ducal Tower in Siedlęcin became a site included in the INTO-Places programme. The participating organisations offer free access to their sites to all members of all organisations associated in the programme – in this way, members of the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcin' gained free access to over a thousand cultural (including archaeological) and natural heritage sites around the world. Again, the combination of the potential of an NGO working for the benefit of the site and the local community with the professional support of the university was highlighted.

Conclusions

Summing up, it is worth noting several important aspects of the activities carried out around the Siedlęcin keep by the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University, which researched the site, and its co-guardian – the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcin'. This cooperation between the NGO and university was not, however, pre-planned from the outset – it emerged from the researchers' desire to disseminate the results of their work, and the willingness of the site guardians to raise their qualifications and the quality of their actions.

In Siedlęcin the science studies and an academic-style communication are combined with a more and more professional use of its results, creating the core of the activities in and around the tower. The participation of visitors and some new tools given to the local community make the project both more accessible and sustainable, what is so important in the public archaeology¹².

The first step included actions undertaken by the scholars researching the site and aimed at promotion – both of the research itself and its results. Among those most interested were members of the association, who received additional training in presenting the effects and the need for archaeological research. This was the first milestone – the moment when cooperation was established.

The platform of exchange of experience among NGOs was a medium which allowed for another breakthrough – the organisation of the first volunteer camp. The volunteers, parallel to the archaeological research of the Jagiellonian University, carried out site maintenance and popularisation activities. The experience gained and the establishment of cooperation with foreign partners resulted in more

¹² Discussion on this topic, together with key concepts of public archaeology and a wide range of cases, was recently presented in a multi-author monograph published by the University College London (*Key concepts* 2017).

professional organisation and the recognition of the high level of substantive preparation by foreign partners (the effect of regular consultations with scholars).

Subsequent activities in and around the tower were entirely the association's initiatives and attempted to respond to the needs identified in the local heritage sphere. Of particular importance here are the 'heritage trails', which regularly attract many local residents. The role of the archaeologists from the Jagiellonian University was limited to consultation, and this model started to be copied elsewhere. This led to the greatest success of the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín', which was 'going beyond' Siedlęcín: first in a project launched by the Jeżów Sudecki commune to develop guidelines and carry out activities animating and popularising archaeology in Płoszczyna, and then by taking over co-management of the ruins of Wleń castle – property of the commune of Wleń.

Finally, it should be emphasised that the benefits of cooperation are mutual. The association's permanent presence at the site allows for year-round activities at the historic site, presentation of the keep at various forums, networking and implementation of solutions developed in Siedlęcín. At every stage, whether preparation or implementation, the NGO from Siedlęcín has the opportunity to be consulted and supported by the specialists from the university, who become partners – both for local authorities and local communities – in the discussion on understanding heritage and the need to identify and protect it. The work of researchers from the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University and the projects of the Association 'Ducal Tower in Siedlęcín' are complementary. Such cooperation of a nongovernmental organization with scientific institutions in Lower Silesia (SW Poland) seems to be a phenomenon that has been noticed and has a big chance to be implemented on other sites.

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