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Mongol invasion and the destruction of Wrocław in April 1241. The problem of interpreting archaeological sources

Abstract. The aim of this article is to verify the current state of knowledge on the course of the Mongol raid on Wrocław in the spring of 1241. An attempt has been made to confront the historical tradition presented in the 15th-century chronicle by Jan Długosz with the results of archaeological research. The scope of destruction and reconstruction of wooden buildings in the 13th century was analysed on the basis of a long series of dendrochronological dates. The result of that research confirmed that the majority of houses were indeed burnt down around 1241. However, no traces of resistance and city defence have been confirmed. Therefore, the chronicler's information about the inhabitants of Wrocław burning the settlement themselves and then finding shelter on the Cathedral Island should be considered truthful.

Keywords: city of Wrocław, Mongol invasion, destruction, reconstruction, dendrochronology.

Introduction

This article seeks to identify the destruction of Wrocław as a result of the Mongol invasion of April 1241. The information from written sources is insufficient in this regard and does not offer grounds for a clear interpretation. As yet, attempts at conducting analyses and discussions based on archaeological sources have also been based solely on meagre premises. A new light on the problem of the nature and the extent of the destruction has been shed by research at Nowy Targ Square in the eastern zone of the Old Town carried out in an excavation covering 4,000 square metres.

After seizing control of Kievan Rus' in 1240, the Mongols reached Central Europe in the following year. The invasion was organised by Batu Khan – Genghis Khan's grandson and the first leader of the Golden Horde. The aim of the invasion was to take control of Hungary with Puszta – the European edge of the Great Steppe. The main invading force led by Batu himself was directed there in the spring of 1241. The

second assault moved into Poland and was supposed to cut off any aid which Polish dukes may have offered to the Hungarians. That second force was led by Orda and Baidar, who were also Genghis Khan's grandsons. Poland at that time was fractured into dukedoms ruled by squabbling members of the Piast dynasty, making any common defence more difficult to arrange. Scouting raids organised by the Mongols already in January evoked a wave of terror. Captured villages and strongholds were burned to the ground, their populations slaughtered. Locally organised resistance was ineffective. The proper invasion began in March. The knights from Lesser Poland were defeated in battle and Kraków was partially destroyed. Afterwards, the Mongols moved into Silesia, where the defence efforts were devised by duke Henry II the Pious. The duke managed to gather his local Silesian vassals, refugees from Lesser Poland, some knights of the Teutonic Order who were present in Silesia, and a regiment of armed German miners from the town of Złotoryja/Goldberg. The Bohemian king Wenceslas I was also asked for help. In order to join his forces with Bohemian reinforcements, duke Henry decided to leave his capital of Wrocław and move west, to the vicinity of Legnica. The Mongols arrived there on the 9th of April, when the Bohemian king was just one day of journey away. Without the reinforcements, the army of Henry II was defeated and the duke himself was killed (Fig. 1). Having succeeded in their mission, the Mongols went across Moravia towards Hungary; several months later, they returned to Kievan Rus after receiving news about the death of the Mongol leader Ögedei Khan (Sondymon, Cenoma 1994).

Fig. 1. Battle of Legnica in 1241, according to *Vita beatae Hedvigis* (1353) (after Tokarczuk, Karłowska-Kamzowa 1993; https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103RVM)

The course of war in Polish dukedoms is known to us, but the details are scant. The most important written source, the chronicle by Jan Długosz, was written in the 15th century (*Długosz* 1961–1985). It was definitely based on earlier sources, but its actual value is still being discussed by historians (Irgang 1991; *Bitwa legnicka* 1994 – see for further references). Jan Długosz's account is often criticised as inconsistent and ridden with errors. Moreover, we do not have a clear record of the situation in Wrocław in the spring of 1241. Długosz claims that the inhabitants were ordered by Henry II to burn down the settlement and hide on the fortified Cathedral Island. The Mongol siege was supposedly broken through a divine intervention owing to prayers of Czesław, the prior of the local Dominican Abbey (*Długosz* 1961–1985, vol. 24, VII, pp. 18–20).

Settlement structure of Wrocław in the first half of the 13th century

In 1241, Wrocław was being transformed from a polycentric local capital into a city of a new type, with a legally organised community. Its central fortified part was located on a large island on the Oder and contained the ducal residence, as well as the cathedral and the bishop's palace (Fig. 2). The smaller island known as Piasek housed the Augustinian Abbey of the Holy Virgin Mary. The settlement of Ołbin was located on the right bank of the river together with the Saint Vincent Abbey. The left bank was occupied by the old trading settlement with a main market street and west to it, a new settlement was under construction – a chartered town inhabited by colonists (Fig. 3) (Piekalski 2014, pp. 54–63). According to the accounts, of the entire settlement complex only the fortified Cathedral Island survived the invasion.

A craft and trade settlement on the left bank of the Oder. The problem of identifying the events of April 1241 in archaeological sources

The first attempt to identify the damage in Wrocław resulting from the Mongol invasion was made by Józef Kaźmierczyk, who based it on his research of Nowy Targ Square in the 1960s. In a dig covering about 100 square metres, he identified traces of fire and dated them on the basis of movable monuments. His interpretation was supported by a find of a single Asian-type arrowhead (Fig. 4) (Kaźmierczyk 1970, p. 404, Fig. 114: r; Świętosławski 1997, p. 72). His argumentation, however, was undermined by the fact that other layers examined by him bore traces of charred wooden buildings, too (Kaźmierczyk 1970, p. 418). The research carried out in the following years revealed that most of the buildings in this zone, throughout the stratigraphic system, had been burnt down. The single find of an arrowhead of the type used by Asian steppe peoples also does not seem to provide a strong argument. The subject was revisited by Cezary Buśko following his research in 2000. Although he could already apply the dendrochronological dating method, his excavations

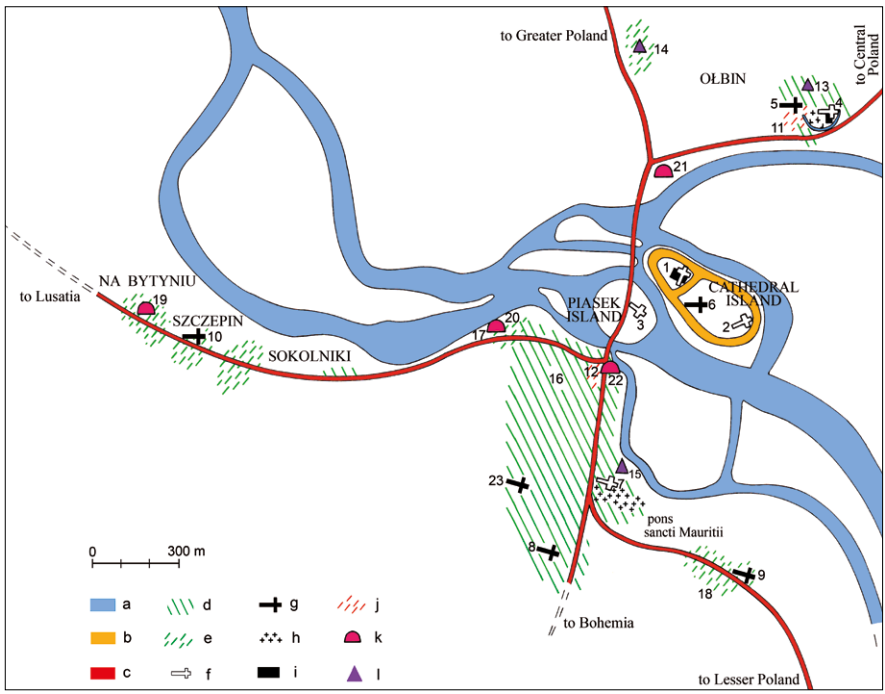

Fig. 2. Wrocław around 1241. a – Oder River; b – castle; c – reconstructed network of main roads; d – old craft and trade settlement; e – Walloon settlement; f – church; g – church with approximated location; h – cemetery; i – ducal residence; j – market; k – inn; l – approximated location of a magnate's residence; m – location of the early chartered town; n – excavations at Nowy Targ Square. 1 – Chapel of Saint Martin; 2 – Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist; 3 – Augustinian Abbey with the Church of Holy Virgin Mary; 4 – Premonstratensian Abbey with the Saint Vincent Church; 5 – Saint Martin Church; 6 – Saint Peter Church; 7 – Saint Adalbert Church; 8 – Church of Saint Mary of Egypt; 9 – Saint Maurice Church; 10 – Saint Nicholas Church; 11 – location of the annual fair *ante atrium aeclesie*; 12 – approximated location of the weekly market; 13 – residence of count palatine Piotr Włostowic; 14 – approximated location of the residence of count palatine Mikora (owned by the Lubiąż Abbey); 15 – approximated location of the curia Gerunga; 16 – craft and trade settlement; 17 – Jewish settlement; 18 – Walloon settlement; 19 – inn at Bytyń; 20 – Birvechnik Inn; 21 – inn *ad fine pontis*; 22 – inn of the Augustinian Abbey; 23 – Saint Mary Magdalene Church (drawing by N. Lenkow)

were linear with limited observation possibilities. In the course of analysing his own results and those obtained in other nearby excavations, he concluded that the damage was substantive and resulted from a direct attack by the Mongol army (Buśko 2004; 2005; Niegoda 2005a, pp. 71–74).

Excavations carried out in 2010–2012 on an area of 0.4 ha provided an opportunity to verify the thesis put forward by the predecessors. The excavation was

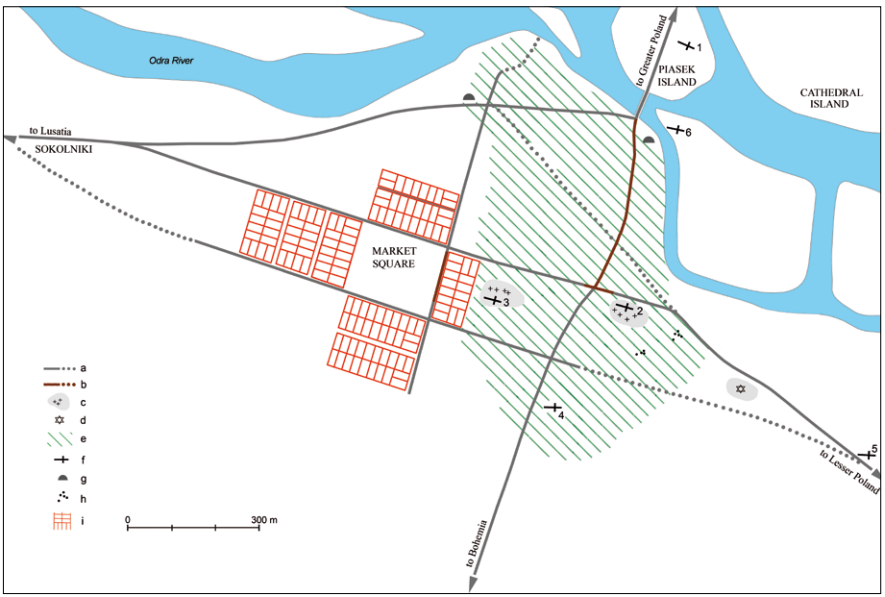

Fig. 3. Wrocław around 1250. a – reconstructed street; b – timber-paved street; c – cemetery; d – Jewish cemetery; e – old settlement; f – church; g – inn; h –well; i – early chartered town; j – excavations at Nowy Targ Square. 1 – cathedral; 2 – Saint Adalbert Church; 3 – Church of the Holy Virgin Mary; 4 – Church of Saint Mary of Egypt; 5 – Saint Maurice Church; 6 – Holy Spirit Hospital (drawing by N. Lenkow)

located in the area of the craft and trade settlement existing since the 11th century, incorporated in the 1260s into a chartered town founded under the Magdeburg Law (Fig. 5) (Marcinkiewicz *et al.* 2013; *Rytm rozwoju miasta* 2018). The thickness of well-preserved cultural layers, also with organic material, reaches 4 m there. The time period of interest in this work is documented by stratigraphic unit 16. It is a layer with an average thickness of 55 cm, which covers the entire excavation area. It was generally dated from the beginning of the 13th century until the 1260s, i.e., until the final liquidation of the residential buildings and the organisation of the Nowy Targ square. Within it, two phases of land use were distinguished, defined by us as IIIa and IIIb (Marcinkiewicz, Piekalski 2018, pp. 68–135). The vague criterion of dividing phase III into stages IIIa and IIIb makes the number of units qualified for each of them approximate. However, the applied mechanical subdivision of the layer formed over a long period of time makes it easier to trace the transformations taking place in the settlement during several decades of the 13th century. Our analysis aimed at reconstructing the plan of the settlement in the surveyed area and identifying changes that may have been caused by the Mongol invasion of 1241.

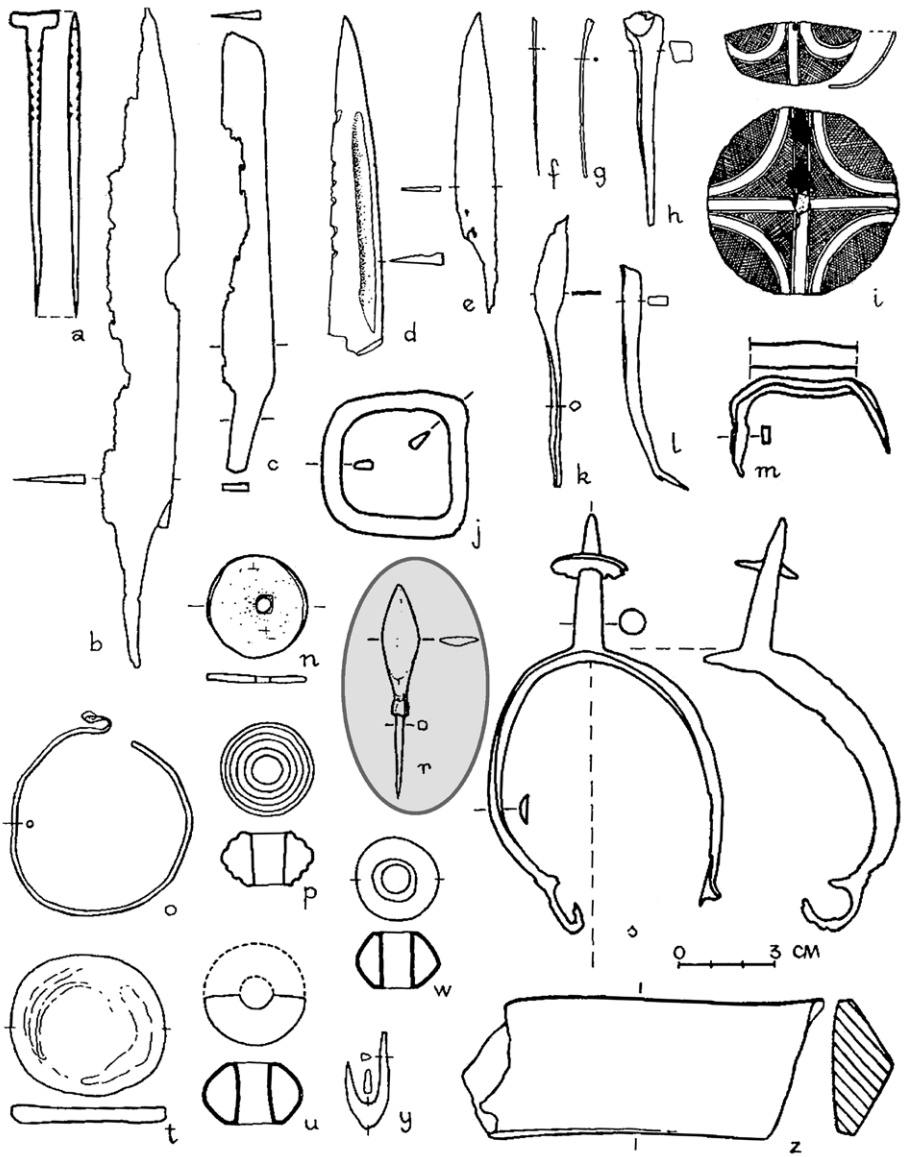

Fig. 4. Wrocław, finds from Nowy Targ Square, circa mid-13th century. The Asian-type arrowhead is marked in grey (after Kaźmierczyk 1970)

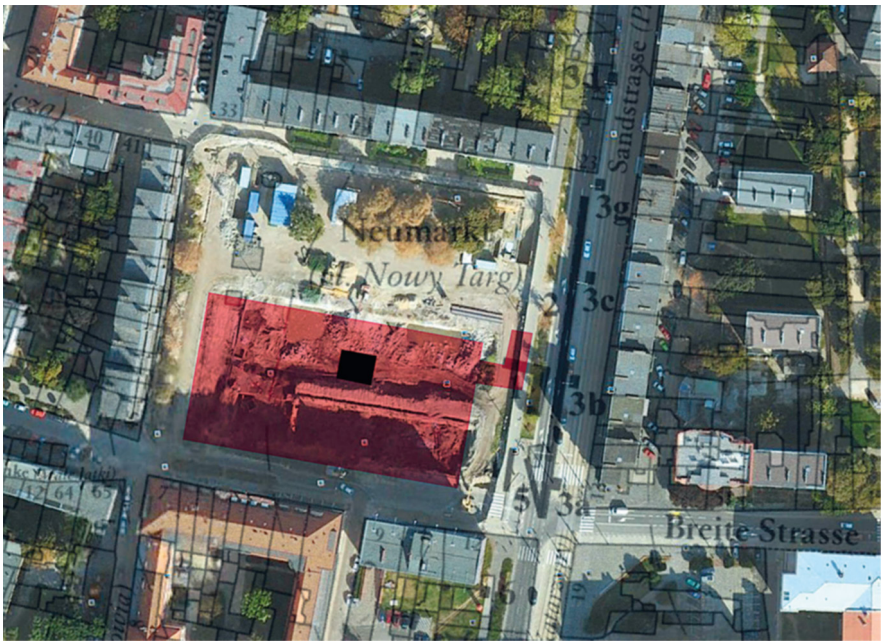

Fig. 5. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012 marked in red, older excavations by J. Kaźmierczyk and C. Buśko marked in black (after Kaźmierczyk 1970; Busko 2005; developed by N. Lenkow)

With regard to Phase IIIa, i.e. the older one within Phase III, it may be assumed that the absolute height of the ceilings of the features it included and the widely presented dating to the 1st half of the 13th century make it possible to correlate it with layer H–H1 (settlement level VI–VII) in the excavation of Kaźmierczyk (1970, pp. 398–426). It contained poorly preserved relics of buildings, destroyed by fire. This author speculates that it was oriented E–W, which is generally consistent with the situation found in the 2010–2012 excavations. He also attempts to reconstruct the occupations of the inhabitants – glassmaking and leatherworking. In the excavations carried out along Piaskowa Street in 1999–2000, our Phase III corresponds to levels III–VI (Niegoda 2005a, pp. 70–73). In the interpretation of Józef Kaźmierczyk, Cezary Buśko, and Jerzy Niegoda, it is within these levels that the destruction caused by the Mongol invasion of 1241 falls.

Before the Mongol invasion, the street connecting the Oder crossing with the Saint Adalbert Church served as the axis of the craft and trade settlement. Its course is indicated by the location of the relics of six timber-framed houses partially uncovered in a linear excavation in 1999–2000 by Buśko's team, dated approximately to the 1320s (Niegoda 2005a, pp. 71–74, Figs. 7, 8; 2005b, pp. 29–39, Figs. 16–22). After a short time, this street was paved with wood. Its course proved to be permanent; with minor alterations, it exists to this day. Its significance is

evidenced by the intense density of buildings along its course, already discernible earlier in Phase II.

In Phase IIIa (Fig. 6) there were above-ground buildings of varying constructions – wattle-and-daub, timber (Fig. 7), and timber-framed (Figs. 8–9). The latter were most numerous and bigger than the others. One of them (designated as stratigraphic unit [hereafter SU] 511, 512), discovered fragmentarily, was probably situated directly adjacent to the street. The others, built up to about 40 m from it, retained their orientation along the street axis. Surfaces were found between or in the immediate vicinity of the buildings, which had been fortified by planks on joists or loosely thrown wooden elements. One such structure (SU 66, 66A) bears traits of a thoroughfare perpendicular to the reconstructed main street. It was over 2 m wide and its technical quality was improved by a drain dug underneath it (SU 66B). In the part of the trench further west, at an approximate distance of 40–60 m, a cluster of pits of varying sizes was found. These were bordered to the east by a wattle fence. In the case of three of these finds (SU 354, 356, 366), their contents show a connection with leathermaking. Five others (SU 277, 301, 346, 367, 385) are relics of kilns or hearths. The south-western part of the excavation was occupied by loosely scattered features, with poorly preserved relics of light-framed buildings and smaller pits.

We relate Phase IIIb (Fig. 10), i.e. the younger section of Phase III from the 2010–2012 excavation, on the basis of stratigraphic relationships to layer G/1–5 (settlement level VIII) in the Kaźmierczyk excavation and to level VII from the Buśko and Niegoda excavation (Kaźmierczyk 1070, pp. 427–471; Niegoda 2005a, p. 74). Józef Kaźmierczyk's excavation contained relics of an extensive log building interpreted by this author as a smithy. Its entrance was located in the eastern wall, in front of which a timber-reinforced pavement was found. In conjunction with its location, the solid construction of the pavement reinforcement in the form of a walkway led this researcher to the thesis that the uncovered fragment represented a section of a street connecting Drewniana Street (Einhorngasse) to the north and św. Wita Street (Ziegengasse) to the south. Its removal was supposed to take place after the delimitation of the Nowy Targ square. The 2010–2012 research failed to confirm this hypothesis. We now know that the walkway only reinforced the surface in front of the house.

In stage IIIb, the reconstruction of the plan of the surveyed part of the city is hampered by the dynamic development of the buildings and their rapid transformations. Its main feature is the short lifespan of individual buildings. Houses of solid construction were usually destroyed by fire and new ones were not always built at the same site. By necessity, other lightweight wooden structures had a short lifespan. Therefore, the settlement plan was subjected to constant change. This does not mean, however, that reconstructing the main features of the building plan with its infrastructure is impossible. We can say that in Phase IIIb, the organisation of

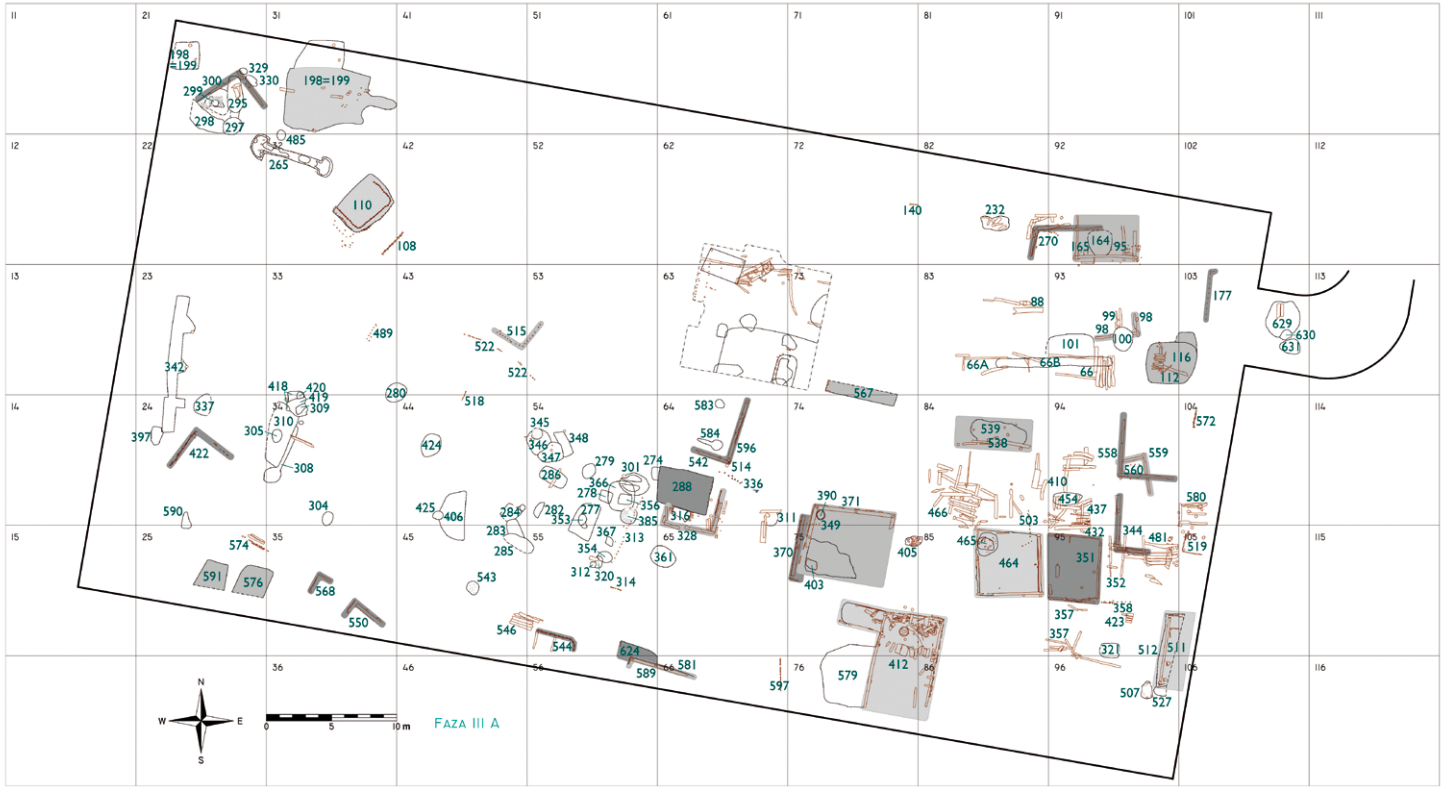

Fig. 6. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012. Phase III a (until 1241) (http://wratislavia.archeo.uni.wroc.pl/index.php?sw=231; developed by M. Mackiewicz and J. Piekalski)

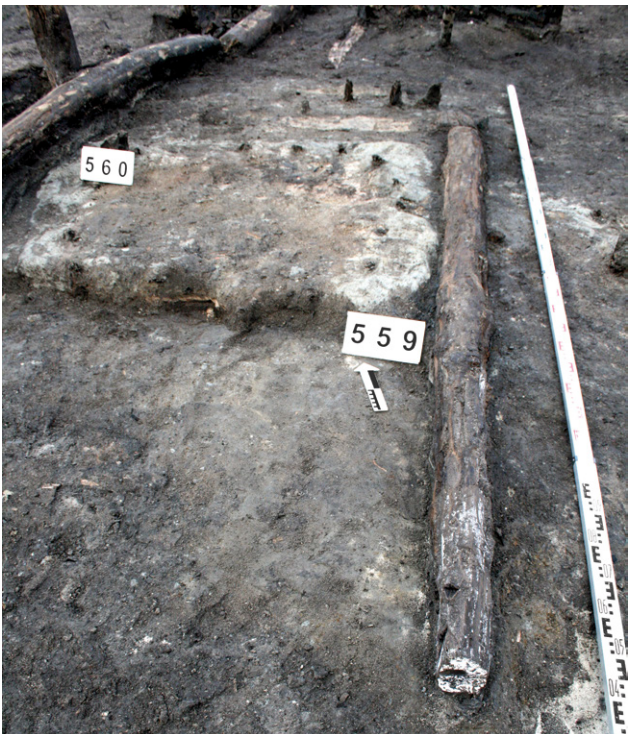

Fig. 7.
Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 559, log building (photo by J. Nastaszyc)

Fig. 8. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 390, timber-framed building with drainage (photo by P. Duma)

Fig. 9. Wrocław, Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 542, timber-framed house (photo by M. Mackiewicz)

the space of the surveyed part of the town was generally related to that inherent to the previous phase. The main traffic axis linking the Oder crossing with Saint Adalbert Church in Phase IIIb remained under the present Piaskowa Street. The course of this route is known from the 1999–2000 survey, and we know that at that time, it was again paved with planks laid transversely to its axis (Niegoda 2005a, p. 74). The zone to the west of the main street reached the highest density of development in its entire surveyed area to date. In close proximity to the street was a hall building (SU 50) of post-and-beam construction with buttress transoms, with an area in excess of 130 m^2 and a large hearth and kiln. It was situated with its gable to the edge of the street, following the pattern of towns in north-western Europe (e.g., Lippert 1992; Piekalski 2004, pp. 87–134). Apart from this structure, smaller houses of varying construction were erected – post-and-beam with transoms (SU 233, 234), probably inter-post (240), log (532, 533) and wattle (476). Although their state of preservation is not good in all cases, it can be concluded that the walls of the houses were oriented according to the course of the street, i.e., along the N–S axis, lending regularity to the whole space. The line of buildings subordinate to the main street is ca. 35 m wide. The distances between the buildings vary though, making it impossible to draw conclusions on the boundaries of the housing plots. Moving further west, the density of buildings is similar and, in some areas, even higher. However, its orientation is different. The walls of the buildings have been reoriented to a new street. It starts from the main road (later Piaskowa Street) and approx. 30 m further turns north-west. Along and transverse to the course of the street, a few beams have survived, likely remains of the demolished paving. Their state of preservation, however, provides no solid grounds for the existence of such a reinforcement. Its course is indicated more reliably by the accompanying buildings. At its southern and then south-western edge, there are buildings of varying structures. Going from the east, we find houses still assigned to the main street – they serve residential purposes and involve kilns or hearths (SU 325, 326 and 462, 463), followed by a two-storey timber-framed building with a food store in the sunken ground floor (SU 332; Fig. 11).

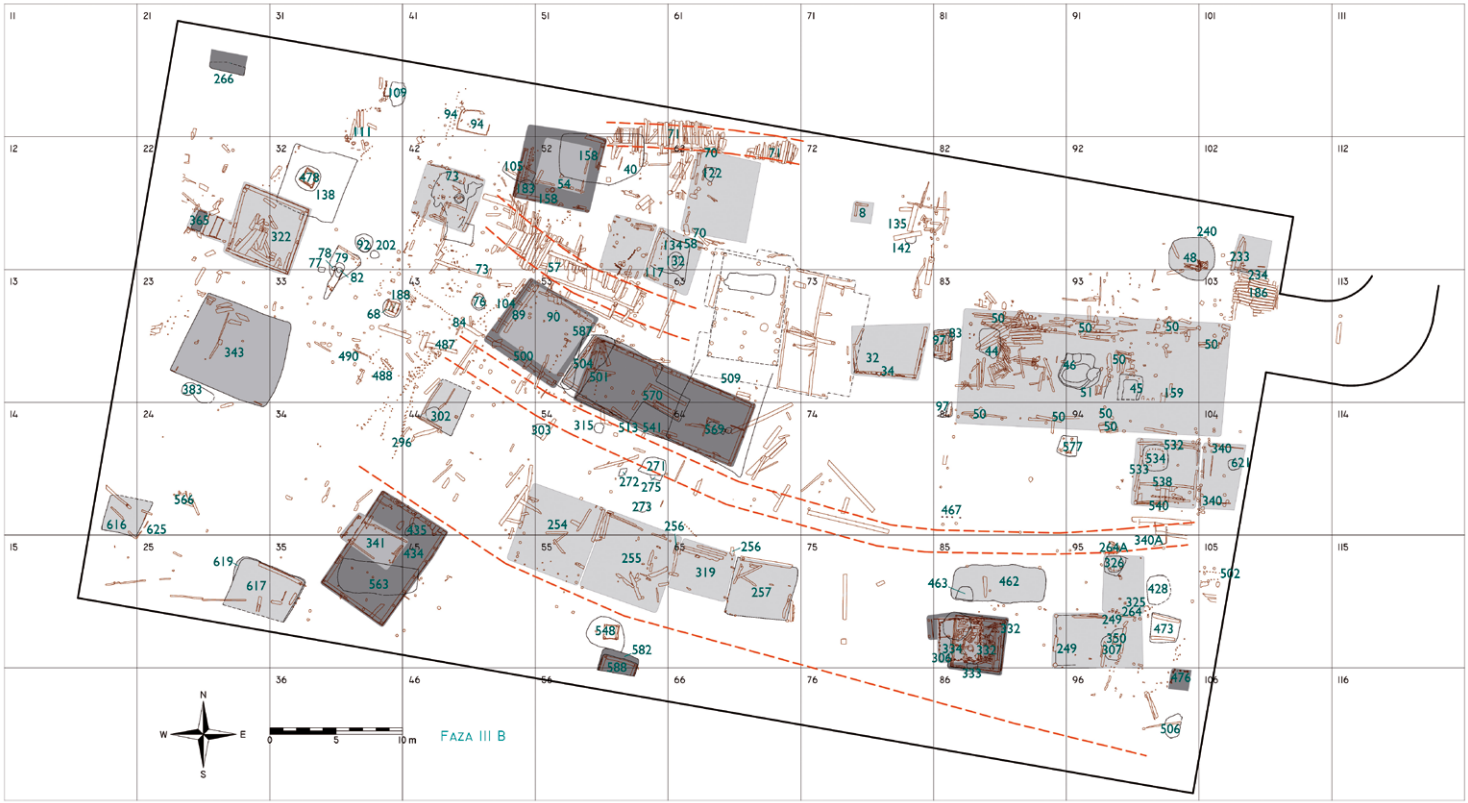

Fig. 10. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012. Phase IIIb – after 1241 (http://wratislavia.archeo.uni.wroc.pl/index.php?sw=231; developed by M. Mackiewicz and J. Piekalski)

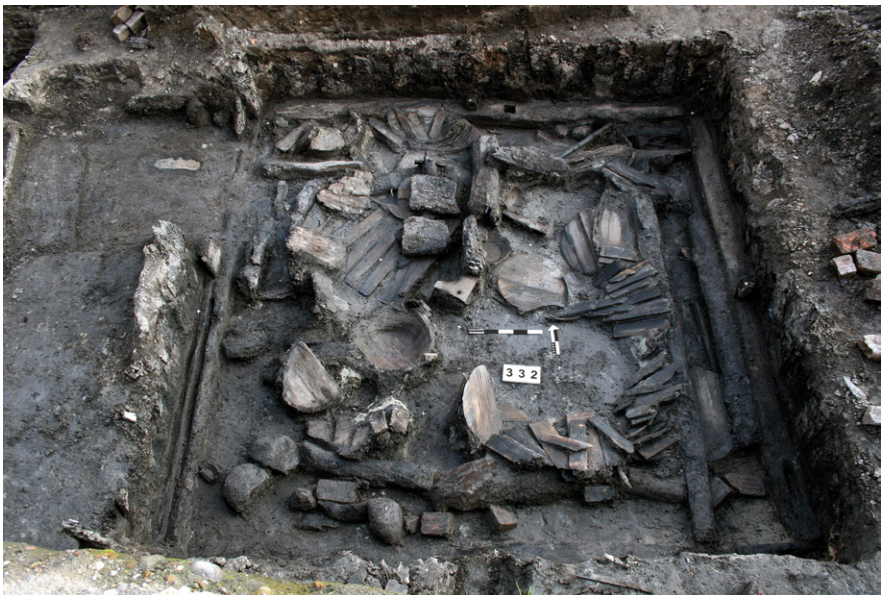

Fig. 11. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 332 – interior of a timber-framed house (photo by P. Duma)

Further, there was a 10-metre gap, followed by a sequence of compact structures consisting of four row buildings (SU 254, 255, 256, 257; Fig. 12). Further, after an approximately 5-metre gap, there was a timber-framed (?) house with a corner hearth and, after another gap, a spacious house with a partially sunken interior. On the opposite, north and north-west sides of the new street, a vacant space remained. It was developed only at a distance of about 50 m from the main road (Piaskowa Street). Another house abutted it (SU 104, 500), and further on, there was an area for infrastructure (cold storage, smokehouse). The last house to the north-west was a solid, two-storey timber-frame building with a sunken interior (SU 322).

Another street, its surface paved with timber, ran 18–22 m to the north of the above-described street. It was identified in the northern edge of the excavation at a length of 14 m, its direction close to the E–W axis, i.e., perpendicular to the main road (Fig. 13). We know that a building marked as js. 70 stood at its southern edge, but further identification of its vicinity is not possible due to the layers being destroyed in the course of excavations later on.

Some areas next to the buildings also received a wooden surface. In addition to the above-mentioned walkway adjacent to the log house discovered in Kaźmierczyk's excavation to the east, attention is drawn to another timber-covered square surrounded by compact buildings. It was found in ares 42, 52, 53, 63, that is, at a distance of about 55 m from Piaskowa Street. Its length in the NW–SE

Fig. 12. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 541 – timber-framed house (photo by P. Duma)

Fig. 13. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 71 – wooden street surface (photo by M. Mackiewicz)

line exceeded 14 m and its width in the NE–SW line varied between 4.2 and 5.0 m. To the east, the square was bounded by the aforementioned building from Kaźmierczyk's excavation and a log house marked as SU 117, 132, 134 in ares 52, 62, 53, 63. To the north-west, it was adjoined by a timber-framed building with a corner hearth (SU 158, 183), and to the west by a building of mixed construction but provided with a hearth and clay floor, marked as SU 73. The south-eastern boundary was formed by the rear walls of the houses standing in the new street discussed earlier. There was also free access to this inner square from this side. The form of the whole structure seems to follow the building complexes described for the early phases of the Nowy Targ settlement. Only the construction of the buildings and the reinforcement of the central square surrounded by the buildings has changed.

In addition to the buildings, some of which were undoubtedly used for residential purposes, the uncovered structures – commonly but imprecisely referred to as pits – served various economic functions. We are sceptical about the interpretation that they were used as rubbish pits, as waste of all kinds accumulated not only in them, but also in the deposited cultural layer. In some cases, the state of preservation of features and their contents allows one to determine their function. In ares 32, 33, north of the new street, in the free space between the buildings there were a smokehouse (SU 80, 81, 82) and a wooden cooler (SU 68, 69, 188; Figs. 14–15) sunken to over 2 m deep, situated at a distance of 3.5 m from each other. There were also new facilities used in this zone of the town for the first time, namely, wells. One of them (SU 519 on aur 105), located on the main street and provided with a canopy, may have been public. The other one (SU 577) was found in the vicinity (in the courtyard?) of a hall house (SU 50), the third (SU 548; Fig. 16) was created behind a row of buildings forming a compact section of the southern frontage of the new street, and the fourth in a complex of buildings deep within the settlement (SU 478 in are 32; Fig. 17).

The artisanal occupations of the inhabitants are evidenced mainly by movable artefacts discovered in buildings, other sunken features, and in the cultural layer. These served as the basis for the interpretation put forward by Kaźmierczyk (1970, pp. 470–471), who perceived relics found in the area he surveyed to be associated with blacksmithing, glassmaking, and tanning. The quality of these artefacts led him to conclude that the inhabitants were very wealthy. The materials from the 2010–2012 excavations largely confirm these findings. The range of interpretation possibilities here is extensive, for the unearthed production waste and semi-finished products can be linked to many branches of manufacturing. By the southern wall of the house SU 322 an accumulation of loose chainmail links was found, suggesting production or repair of protective armour.

In an attempt to clarify the timing of Phase III sites, it should be noted that defining its lower caesura, separating it from Phase II sites, is not an easy task. The

Fig. 14. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic units 28–29 – cooler cover (photo by M. Mackiewicz)

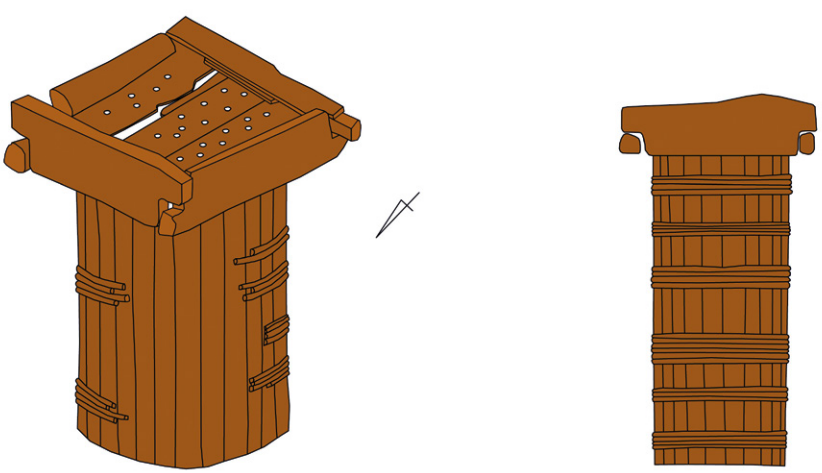

Fig. 15. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic units 68–69 – graphic reconstruction of a cooler (developed by M. Mackiewicz)

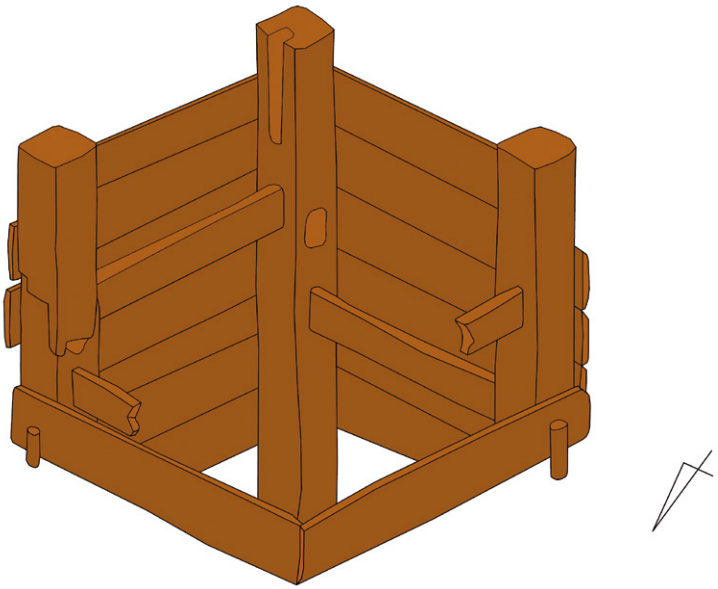

Fig. 16. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 548 – well (photo by M. Mackiewicz)

Fig. 17. Wrocław. Nowy Targ. Excavations from 2010–2012, stratigraphic unit 478 – interior of a well (developed by M. Mackiewicz)

stratigraphic separation of the layers defined as SU 72 and the following SU 16 was not obvious throughout the excavation. The texture and structure of the two units were strongly similar or almost identical in some zones of the excavation. In doing so, it is evident that the movable monuments from the older layer were transferred during the digging of the pits and construction of the houses into the newly created structures. The use of unpaved streets, especially in wet seasons, and the uneven sinking of the ground over the older pits, in turn, caused the infiltration of younger monuments into the older layer. We determined the end of Phase II to be approximately the beginning of the 13th century, which simultaneously opens up the time of Phase III. The stratigraphic marker of the end of this phase is the simultaneous liquidation of the entire development and the covering of its remains with a levelling layer of sand (SU 11). A clear picture of this phenomenon in the stratigraphic system was already highlighted by Kaźmierczyk. He dated the demolition of the buildings to the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 13th century (Kaźmierczyk 1970, pp. 427, 471).

A yet another issue lies in the chronological separation of stages IIIa and IIIb. In an attempt to correlate this caesura with the results of previous research, one would have to assume that the end of the older one is linked to the Mongol invasion in the spring of 1241, and the beginning of the younger one to the rebuilding of the city after the Mongol invasion. However, the problem is that the suggestions made by Kaźmierczyk and later by Buśko and Niegoda (Buśko 2005, p. 186; Niegoda 2005a, p. 71–74) about the possibility of identifying traces of this event in the stratification of Nowy Targ are not unequivocally confirmed. According to Kaźmierczyk (1970, p. 418), it would have been a conflagration that ended the existence of settlement level VI. However, the research from 2010–2012 revealed that most of the buildings in the Nowy Targ Square zone, throughout the stratigraphic sequence revealed there, were destroyed by fire. Dendrochronological analyses report that this applies to buildings constructed using trees felled both before and after the invasion. As we indicated above, the mechanical criterion of an altitude of 116.40 m a.s.l. was used to delimit the lower stratigraphic boundary of Phase IIIb. No traces of a single great conflagration were found, which would make it possible to clearly separate the layers and buildings destroyed in 1241 from those created as a result of the rebuilding of the city. The possibility of inference is offered, however, by an analysis of the series of dendrological dates obtained. These were one of the important elements in determining the chronology within Phase III. At the same time, we remained aware of the limitations that this method carries when analysing multi-layered sites, and mediaeval towns in particular, with their specific timber management. The timber uncovered during excavations in towns usually comes from the lowest levels of buildings, their foundations, the construction of wells or latrines, and the reinforcement of street and square surfaces. Previous observations made in Wrocław indicate that it was there that wood from demolitions, i.e., from trees felled even several decades

earlier, was most often used (Konczewski, Piekalski 2011). Such a characteristic of mediaeval timber management significantly hinders the use of dendrochronology for dating archaeological artefacts. From a single structure, several dates with large discrepancies are usually obtained (Krąpiec, Piekalski 2019).

Thus, a series of 74 dates was obtained for Phase III, the oldest of which was determined to be 1152 and the youngest to be after 1260. Phase IIIa has 19 dates, including two from the cultural layer and from 12 sites concluding between 1152 and after 1234. This series includes wood samples from buildings destroyed by fire. We can identify the time of their construction as 1214 (–6/+9 for SU 370), after 1225 (for SU 371, 390, 403), 1227 (–6/+9 for SU 412, 579), after 1217 (for SU 511, 512), after 1192 (for SU 514, 542, 584) and after 1234 (for SU 596). It is therefore not impossible that they were all burnt down as a result of the war of 1241, although definitive certainty on this point will not be obtained.

Stage IIIb yielded 55 dated timber samples from 22 structures. The oldest of these was identified as coming from a tree felled after 1193, and the youngest after 1260. Several samples were taken from well-preserved structures each. This allows us to know that building material from trees felled at different times may have been used in the construction of a single structure, e.g. the timber-framed house identified as SU 83, 97 was constructed from elements dated after 1193, after 1226 and after 1246 (–2/+9). Taking into account the dating of the youngest samples, it was assumed that subsequent houses of this phase were built from trees felled in the following years: after 1238 (SU 31, 32, 33, 34, 36), after 1246 (SU 83, 97), after 1247 (SU 158, 183), after 1260 (SU 233, 234), in 1225 (SU 255), in 1214 (SU 256, 319), in 1252 (SU 322), in 1249 (SU 332, 334), in 1242 (–6/+9) (SU 434, 435, 563), in 1225 (SU 490), in 1234 (SU 504, 509, 513, 541, 569, 570), in 1210 (–5/+9) (SU 532–534, in 1237 (SU 582, 588), in 1242 (SU 587), in 1252 (SU 616, 625), in 1243 (SU 617, 619). Some of the buildings constructed from timber harvested before 1241 bore no signs of fire damage. It is therefore possible that they survived the Mongol invasion in April of that year and also functioned in stage IIIb. On the other hand, we do not exclude the possibility that they were built of old timber already after the invasion. Let us also note that houses built from timber felled after 1241 succumbed to fire just as often as before that date. The war damage therefore did not leave a clear trace. On the other hand, we can successfully conclude that the archaeological material confirms in Phase IIIb, and therefore probably after the events of 1241, the unprecedented dynamism of the development of the site, together with new infrastructural elements.

Traces of fires in other parts of the city have also been identified, but the possibilities of linking them to the Mongol invasion are insufficient. The main problem is that it is impossible to obtain precise dating results. From the oldest buildings in the Market Square of the chartered town, we know of two timber-framed buildings completely destroyed by fire. Their relics, however, offered no possibility of an effective dendrochronological analysis (Chorowska *et al.* 2012; Piekalski 2014,

pp. 82–83). Likewise, it is difficult to provide precise dating for the traces of the conflagration in the parish church of Saint Elizabeth. Only its late Romanesque chancel was built before the invasion. The naves were erected in the early Gothic after the invasion (Lasota, Rozpędowski 1980; Lasota, Piekalski 1997).

Conclusions

The conducted analysis suggests a high chance for the information provided by Jan Długosz in his mid-15th century chronicle to be true. More than 200 years after the Mongol invasion of the Polish dukedoms, including Silesia and Wrocław, the chronicler reported that the buildings of the city were destroyed by the inhabitants themselves who then took refuge in the stronghold on Ostrów Tumski (Cathedral Island) (*Długosz* 1961–1985, vol. 24, VII, pp. 18–20). Knowing the course of the war, we can assume that the Mongols were not interested in conquering the stronghold in Wrocław. This is because any time delay could have made it possible to unite the Silesian and Bohemian armies, thus greatly complicating the plans of the aggressors.

In the densely built-up craft and trade settlement on the left bank of the Oder, indeed no traces of battle were discovered. Only one arrowhead was found in layers dating to the time of the war, which can be linked to the presence of Mongol warriors. In the meantime, we know that the reflex bow was their primary weapon, determining battle tactics. The wooden buildings of the settlement, however, bear traces of destruction by fire, which can be identified with a high degree of probability with the events of April 1241. The dendrochronological method has shown considerable usefulness in this case.

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