



Marcel Knyzewski. *Siedziby średnich i niższych rangą urzędników krzyżackich na terenie dzisiejszej Polski. Studium archeologiczne [The seats of medium and lower ranking Teutonic Order's officials in today's Poland. Archaeological study]. Monografie Instytutu Archeologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego. Vol. II. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2020. 320 pp. ISBN: 978-83-956650-4-2.*

The reviewed work by Marcel Knyzewski is another proof that in recent years there has been a growing interest in the subject of the Teutonic Order's *architectura militaris*. However, while in the case of elaborations on conventual castles, which are the most recognized category of constructions in the area formerly known as Prussia, one can also talk about a clear progress of archaeological, architectural and historical works. In the context of the subject considered in the book under review, the matter looks completely different. Unfortunately, the issue of the seats of lower ranking officials in the Teutonic Order has not yet been synthetically or comprehensively elaborated on. As a result, the state of our knowledge on this subject has not increased significantly. This is due to several reasons and the Author of the reviewed study mentions it in his work. The scale of these premises was generally small; therefore, their recognition was not one of the research priorities. In part, this is also due to the limited historical data we have on them which also determines the low interest in them. Thus, in most examples, we are unaware not only of their forms and spatial arrangements. In many cases, we do not even know exactly when they were created and where these seats were located. An additional problem also concerns the fact that many of the analyzed objects performed various functions over the centuries. Some of them were created as the seats for convents, which in the course of time were occupied by a *Vogt* or *Pfleger*. Others, in turn, played the role of the seats of minor officials, while in the following centuries they would become the seats for convents. Therefore, without proper recognition of the subsequent stages of construction or architectural changes, it is difficult to start a discussion on them. All of these limitations mean that, so far, no one has undertaken the task of a comprehensive summary of knowledge on this subject. Therefore, the Author's courage to face this issue should be appreciated even more. Whether or not this was fulfilled is another matter.

The reviewed publication is an extension of the doctoral dissertation defended in 2018.

The work, which is quite extensive, counts 320 pages and was published in 2020 in the *Monografie* series at the Institute of Archaeology (Instytut Archeologii) of the University of Łódź (Uniwersytet Łódzki). It consists of an “Introduction”, seven chapters and “Conclusions”. It is supplemented by the “Catalog of objects” analyzed in the publication. The publication itself is quite modest when it comes to graphics, one should not expect colorful illustrations, maps, or charts, which seem to be important in the scientific analysis of architecture. Therefore, we will not find charts in it, illustrating the geography of areas where officials’ seats were created. Further graphics depicting soils, vegetation, water, communication network maps, and so on, are also not present in the book. The Author uses only nineteenth-century sketches, which seems incomprehensible.

In the Introduction, the Author introduces us to the purpose of the work, the chronological and spatial scope and the explanation of the concept of “the seat of minor officials”. According to the Author, the aim of the work is “the attempt to systematize knowledge about the seats of medium and lower ranking Teutonic Order’s officials and present their forms against the background of the remaining medieval defense architecture from the areas of the former Teutonic Order’s state in Prussia”. At the same time he assumes that it will be simultaneously “the starting point for further research”. In the further part of the Introduction, the Author explains in detail what he means by the term ‘seats’ in the architectural sense, and tries to explain the meanings of castles, town castles, manor houses, and gords. An attempt to organize the otherwise difficult terminology used in the work should make it easier to read, especially in relation to the information presented in chapter 7. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to notice the number of problems related to this approach, which the Author had to face in further considerations throughout the book. An example of the magnitude of this problem can be seen when referring to the functions of the analyzed seats and the definition of boundaries between various objects. This becomes so ambiguous that we are far from establishing any order in this regard. Understanding the boundaries of these terms is necessary to ensure that there is no doubt as to what the character of the described buildings was. In this case, the question about another voice in the discussion is not as important as a strong and clear definition of the meaning of the terms used in the study. The question is whether this is even possible at the present stage of our knowledge. The Author did not make an independent attempt to organize such an order and therefore did not avoid terminological chaos, which will be discussed later in the review.

In chapter 1, the Author presents the state of previous research from the eighteenth century to the present day. He discusses in detail the history of interest in buildings of this type, with particular emphasis on the results of the latest research. He concludes his reflections with a review of the most important literature on the subject. The Author very carefully and meticulously analyzes these issues, thanks to which we have an insight into the state of research, which leaves no major doubts as to its unsatisfactory scope. Being an archaeologist, the Author used mainly literature including studies on preserved architecture, reports on archaeological research, which, however, concern only half of the analyzed objects. Of the 70 buildings described in the catalog, as many as 39 were not the subject of any archaeological research. The Author much more modestly reaches for the elaborations of historical sources which, for various reasons, are the basic cognitive base for in-depth studies on this subject.

In chapter 2, the Author presents an analysis of natural conditions in the territories of the Teutonic Order's state and, in this context, the location of the seats of officials. This analysis is illustrated with drawings coming mainly from studies carried out in the nineteenth century. There are no detailed geographical maps with the location of the analyzed buildings. There is also a lack of summary of these considerations. We do not know how many of the castles were "promontory", how many were located on the edges of the slopes, how many near cities or towns, and how many in the "settlement voids"; what percentage of strongholds had upland locations, and what lowland locations. We also do not know what the mutual relations between the location of the stronghold, and watercourses, types of soils, trade routes, border lines, and so on, were like, and yet they are presented in the study. All this information can be partially read from the information provided by the Author, but I did not find a comprehensive summary in the analyzed text. This is a pity, because this type of elaboration should go beyond a simple description, based mainly on historical sources, even if such an analysis had a limited scope due to the fact that the location of a significant part of the building is unknown. In this chapter you can see the terminological chaos mentioned above. One is left asking themselves what exactly is a castle, or a 'folwark' (Germ. *Vorwerk*), a manor. One also wonders with regard to the consequences of these considerations? Thus, we have references to "Puck castle", "castle" or the "manor" in Liebemühl (today Miłomłyn), the "manor" in Mühlhausen (today Młynary) and Cadinen (today Kadyny), alongside other monastic seats, castles of the Order, and ruins of castles or castle complexes. We learn that "manors" are not the main subject of this dissertation, since they are not the seats of the officials associated with territorial admin-

istration, although elsewhere the Author writes: “We do not know if all of them were the main offices of administrative officials, or maybe there were only the *fol-warks* and manors of their administrators”. So it is difficult to understand what it is precisely that the book under review is investigating: castles? courtyards? manors? or maybe strongholds and gords? We do not know if such a terminological mix is just the use of the term “castle”, interchangeably with “manor”, so as not to repeat the first one too often, or whether this differentiation has some deeper meaning. This is not entirely the fault of the Author, because this terminological chaos is primarily the result of poor, not to say, any recognition of a significant part of these buildings. On the other hand, it seems at some points in the work under review that it was enough to use the neutral term “object” or “building” to introduce a certain order (at least in this part of the book’s considerations).

Chapter 3 is a study on the formation of the Teutonic Order’s administration and settlement, and their impact on the formation of the officials’ seats. The chapter provides detailed (at times exhaustive) reflections on the administration of the Teutonic Order’s state which highlights how narrow our knowledge about not only the beginnings of the formation of this network remains. At the same time, these deficiencies are not limited only to the archaeology of these objects, but also to the history of the formation of the officials’ seats in the Teutonic Order’s state. Once again, there is a lack of an orderly supplementation of these considerations with a chronological and spatial map of their locations.

Chapter 4 discusses the architecture of medium and lower-ranking Teutonic Order’s officials. The chapter’s main attention focuses on the description of the bodies of the preserved buildings, followed by their transformations in the Middle Ages and modern times. An attempt was also made to reconstruct buildings not preserved in the present day. The Author analyzes the preserved historic substance very carefully, if possible, and guides us through the subsequent forms of objects that are the Teutonic Order’s officials’ seats (or, in some cases, the suspected location of a seat). The description is conducted chronologically. It seems that such a way of organizing the material has not worked out completely. The system adopted by the Author is not consistent and possible to be used properly. If the analysis begins with potentially the oldest structures, then in fact it should cover only those assumptions that are well-dated. In addition to the castles in Preußisch Holland (today Pasłęk) or Preußisch Mark (today Przezmark), we have “some” buildings in Deutsch Eylau (today Iława), as well as a small stronghold in Gilgenburg (today Dąbrówno). However, in the case of Gilgenburg, we do not know whether it is from the time of the Teutonic Order or an earlier (or later) building. Therefore, we

often do not know what they looked like and when they were actually created. So, on what basis did the Author place them in the group of buildings from the first quarter of the fourteenth century? The situation is similar in the further part of this chapter when analyzing the objects from the second quarter of the fourteenth century. The Author even asks for understanding, admitting that in some cases there is little data that allows for even correct dating. The panorama of buildings erected in the third quarter of the fourteenth century is no different. The Author himself indicates that the construction of some (e.g., Hohenstein (today Olsztynek)) may have started in the 1340s. However, at the same time – according to him – most of the construction works took place in the 1350s and 1360s. The basis upon which this statement rests remains unknown. The analysis of the objects from the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century is slightly better. Most of them have survived to this day, in various stages of preservation, and many have undergone archaeological and architectural research. However, even here, there is a discussion about the stages of the constructions and the time of their completion. Therefore, it seems that the analysis would be much clearer, or safer, if from the beginning it was conducted according to a different scheme, for example, analysis of preserved/unpreserved structures, or dated objects (thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth centuries), undated, with uncertain chronology.

Chapter 5 discusses the ways of erecting officials' seats. The Author, based on the results of the archaeological research, analyzes construction techniques, the issue of construction workshops, construction sites, etc. This chapter is well prepared, conclusions are logical and clear. It is also the only example in the whole work which incorporates the modest results of archaeological research, the usefulness of which can be verified in the analysis of the forms of the Teutonic officials' seats. The Author could discuss this usefulness in more detail, for example, with regard to the issues of construction techniques used by the builders employed by the Teutonic Order, details of wall construction, foundations or building materials used for individual complexes. It is a pity that the results of this research expand our knowledge about the form of individual complexes and stages of construction works to a much lesser extent.

Chapter 6 deals with considerations on the function of the seats of lower ranking officials. The Author successively analyzes administrative, judicial, military, economic and other functions. Also in this chapter, in addition to considerations covering well-known and recognized buildings, we also see analyses of unknown or not yet located objects. It is difficult to blame the Author for the fact that, in many cases, it is difficult or impossible to determine the function of these seats.

However, also in this chapter we come across terminological issues. So, when describing the seat of the fisheries official in Putzig (today Puck), the Author believes that it was “a house with defensive features, not a castle”, although the authors of archaeological research (Milewska, Kruppe) consider it differently. They describe it describing it as a “castle”. Similarly, it is not known what the “small castle in Giżycko” (former Germ. Lötzen) was. I do not understand why the Author discusses hunting manors and farms at the end of this chapter, if manors are not actually the subject of analysis. Is it due to the fact that these were confirmed residences of specific officials and administrators? Was it influenced by the information, given in some elaborations, that hunts for grand masters and other religious dignitaries were organized in them? I do not question the legitimacy of such an analysis in this way, but as in the case of manors and the already mentioned terminological chaos, then what were these objects: manors, hunting manors, castles, “light castles”, or *folwarks*?

The study ends with chapter 7, in which the Author attempts to compare the seats of lower ranking officials with the rest of the defensive architecture of Prussia. The Author quite meticulously describes the next categories of defensive buildings, i.e., conventual castles, bishops’ castles, or knight’s residences, known from the areas of the Teutonic Order’s state. After considering the panorama of conventual castles, bishops’ castles, etc., he explains to us the previous opinions about the seats of medium and minor ranking Teutonic Order’s officials to facilitate a smooth transition to the considerations of: “Time and form”, “Tower castles”, “Towers in castles”, “Brick manors” (which are not the subject of the reviewed work, according to the Author), “Seats, cities and towns”, and “Wooden manors”. This chapter should be of key importance for the entire study. Here, there should be a summary of the panorama of the seats of Teutonic Order’s officials. However, I have doubts whether the analysis of the form of architecture of conventual castles really brings us closer to understanding what were the seats of minor Teutonic Order’s officials? The fact that the Author writes about it in quite detail makes this chapter a kind of lecture on Teutonic architecture as such. But what for? Instead of interesting-sounding titles of subsequent subchapters, I would prefer the Author to make a time-consuming (true), meticulous (I agree), analysis of what we have available, so that this modest material examined in the reviewed book can become the foundation for further study of the issue. It should be the more so because literally just after the publication of the Author’s work, several new studies were published on castles and seats of the Order, such as Stuhm (today Sztum) and Unislaw (today Unisław), which bring interesting and new data to this issue.

In the Conclusions, the Author outlines the history of defensive construction, focusing only here on the summary of, for example, the location of the seats in the context of water reservoirs, again without including even a single map with the analysis of this information. It is unfortunate that there is also no map illustrating the location of the most important, recognized settlements from the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Such an addition would serve to, even briefly, illustrate the dynamics of the development of this category of religious buildings. The Author rightly distinguishes two main periods of erection of officials' seats: the second and final quarters of the fourteenth century. He also indicates that this process looked different in the west and east of the country, although it is difficult to prove today due to the modest source base. The Author draws attention to the importance of the military aspect in the initial period of the construction of these buildings, although it will be difficult to prove based on specific examples, because we do not have almost any, oldest examples of this type of construction in archaeological material. Therefore, we can only assume what they looked like and for what purpose they were created at the end of the thirteenth and in the first half of the fourteenth century. This process is much better recognized in relation to the later phases – especially the second half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the Author's conclusions regarding the causes of the creation of individual seats, since he did not support this with any evidence in the form of at least collective maps of the location of these objects in the context of changing borders, such as administrative ones, military ones, or the proximity of the analyzed buildings to deposits of natural resources. This could have been provided with a small amount of work. According to the Author, these buildings were certainly created in different circumstances. Therefore, in the initial phase of the formation of these seats, we observe the gradual transformation of wooden buildings into brick ones. However, it is worth remembering that such generalizations are not at all obvious, as evidenced by the recent discoveries of the headquarters of the convent in Unislaw, in which the commander resided until the beginning of the fourteenth century in a wooden-ground stronghold, and the *Pfleger* already in a brick tower house. All this was already happening at the time when the construction of the first regular conventual castle was being completed in the nearby Papau (today Papowo Biskupie), and one of the oldest brick castles in the Kulmerland was being erected in Althaus (today Starogród), just a few kilometers away. The Author's conclusions on the genesis and sources of inspiration that determined the image of this type of buildings in this part of Europe seem logical, but in relation to this category of construction, they are of secondary im-

portance, since we know little about them. The Author rightly draws attention to the diversity of forms of the officials' seats associated with their functions, construction chronology, or location and the consequences resulting from it.

The main drawback of the reviewed work is the insufficient state of research and the resulting chronological and terminological issues that appear throughout. Unfortunately, the initial categorization of this group of buildings did not solve the problem. If we want to present the results of research on the seats of Teutonic Order's officials, spatial systems and their functions, the lack of a deeper analysis of the location of these seats, references to vegetation cover, soils, water network, communication routes, makes such a task incomprehensible and practically impossible to execute. It is difficult to say that the published work exhausts the subject. Considering the limitations (the state of research, the lack of archaeological reconnaissance, etc.), it seems that we will have to wait a long time for another attempt at organization of this form of construction. However, the work of Marcel Knyżewski is certainly the archaeologist's first comprehensive view of this issue and, as such, it certainly fits into further discussion on this subject.

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