



Piotr Lasek and Wojciech Wólkowski. *Conrada Steinbrechta pruskie zamki biskupie i kapitulne* [Conrad Steinbrecht's Prussian bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles]. Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2025. 270 pp., 71 ill. ISBN 978-83-66519-99-2.

Recent years have seen a series of publications devoted to fortification architecture in late medieval Prussia, during the period of the Teutonic Order's domination in that country. They are based on in-depth analyses of written sources, including those from early modern and even modern times, on architectural research using increasingly diverse and specialised technical equipment, and finally on new archaeological research involving excavations. Although, in principle, all fortified points in Prussia from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries are of interest, studies devoted to castles whose founder, builder, and later lord and user was the Teutonic Order have been dominating the field.¹

The publication under review, prepared by Piotr Lasek, historian and art historian at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk), and Wojciech Wólkowski, architect and historian of the architecture at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology (Wydział Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej), is an important con-

¹ Cf. the following book-length studies: *Zamek w Sztumie. Siedziba krzyżackich wójtów, rezydencja wielkich mistrzów i polskich starostów*, ed. Bogusz Wasik (Malbork: Muzeum Zamkowe, 2024); Sławomir Józwiak and Janusz Trupinda, *Krzyżackie zamki komturskie w Prusach. Topografia i układ przestrzenny na podstawie średniowiecznych źródeł pisanych* (Malbork: Muzeum Zamkowe, 2024, 2nd ed.); Torbus Tomasz, *Zamki konwentualne państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach*, part II, *Katalog* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2023); Wojciech Wólkowski, *Zamek w Działdowie. Dzieje budowlane i problemy konserwatorskie* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, 2021); *Castra Terrae Culmensis. Na rubieży chrześcijańskiego świata*, vol. 1–2, ed. Marcin Wiewióra (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2020); Marcel Knyzewski, *Siedziby średnich i niższych rangą urzędników krzyżackich na terenie dzisiejszej Polski. Studium archeologiczne*, Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Monografie 11 (Łódź: Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2020); Sławomir Józwiak and Janusz Trupinda, *Organizacja życia na zamku krzyżackim w Malborku w czasach wielkich mistrzów (1309–1457)* (Malbork: Muzeum Zamkowe, 2019, 3rd ed.); Christof Herrmann, *Der Hochmeisterpalast auf der Marienburg. Konzeption, Bau und Nutzung der modernsten europäischen Fürstenresidenz um 1400*, Berliner Beiträge zur Bauforschung und Denkmalpflege 17 (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2019).

tribution to studies focusing on fortified structures commissioned by other rulers of Prussia, such as the four Prussian bishoprics (Kulm, Pomesanien, Ermland, and Samland) and the four local cathedral chapters. The book is a synthesis of architectural history, outlining only the general historical context of bishops' and chapters' castles in late medieval Prussia. The authors base their work mainly on the results of historical, historical-architectural and archaeological-architectural research to date. However, it is distinguished by its approach to the subject matter in that it builds on the studies and materials left behind by the significant Prussian researcher of Prussian castles, Conrad Emanuel Steinbrecht (1849–1923). Thus, we are dealing with a study that belongs to one of the four trends in research on fortification architecture, namely the analysis of modern materials, largely visual, left behind by earlier researchers on the subject, and now forming groups of archival files or museum collections, or materials deposited in institutes or other cultural institutions. The title itself clearly indicates the framework of the entire book. It consists of various documentary materials on bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles in Prussia, which Steinbrecht had compiled during his numerous research trips around the country between 1880/1881 (his first two trips to what was then West Prussia (*Westpreußen*) and East Prussia (*Ostpreußen*), pp. 13–14, 18) and 1919 (p. 23). From 1882 onwards, he was permanently associated with Marienburg (today Malbork) as the head of the team working on the restoration of the medieval castle (*Schloßbauverwaltung Marienburg*, pp. 14, 19), which allowed him to combine his professional duties in the field of restoration management in Prussia with historical and architectural studies on a number of buildings in both Prussian provinces (pp. 14–23). This resulted in the publication a four-volume study entitled *Die Baukunst des deutschen Ritterordens in Preussen*, published in 1885, 1888, 1910 and 1920, respectively. As the authors of the reviewed book point out, Steinbrecht's fifth intended volume was supposed to cover bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles (pp. 23–24). At the time of Steinbrecht's death in 1923, it was basically ready in manuscript form. Unfortunately, this work has been lost (p. 23). Yet, the Prussian scholar had assembled a substantial collection of materials for it, including visual compilations, among them sketches, inventory drawings, architectural drawings, as well as site plans, measurement plans, and photographs. Until 1944, these materials were stored in the *Denkmalarchiv* in Marienburg, and they survived the Second World War, especially the events of winter/spring 1945, i.e. the capture of Prussia by the Red Army and the mass exodus of the German population. After the war, they were transported to the reactivated Polish state institution for historical art, namely the Central Office for the Inventory of Art Monu-

ments in Kraków (Centralne Biuro Inwentaryzacji Zabytków Sztuki), which moved to Warsaw in 1946. From 1951 on, the materials were held at the Institute of Art History (Instytut Historii Sztuki), which changed its name to the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, IS PAN) in 1959. They are still stored there today in the IS PAN Collection of Photographs and Measurement Drawings (Zbiory Fotografii i Rysunków Pomiarowych IS PAN). The inventory and publication of the IS PAN collections, which began in 2003,² was the starting point for Lasek and Wólkowski to re-analyse Steinbrecht's materials, the result of which is the reviewed book (pp. 7, 25–26), and in particular the catalogue of bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles in late medieval Prussia, which constitutes its second part.

All this information, along with a range of further details on Steinbrecht's research activities, is contained in the book's introductory first chapter ("Conrad Steinbrecht i jego badania nad zamkami biskupimi i kapitulnymi. Zarys problematyki" ["Conrad Steinbrecht and his research on bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles. An outline of the issue"], pp. 13–26). Like the "Introduction" (pp. 7–8 / 9–10), it has been translated into German on the following pages (pp. 27–32), although without the footnotes included in the Polish version and only with marginal references to the illustrative material contained in the Polish text (nine items in total). This chapter provides a concise overview of Steinbrecht's interests and research on the castles of Prussian bishops and cathedral chapters, especially Heilsberg (today Lidzbark Warmiński) and Allenstein (today Olsztyn). The authors

² Maria Szkurlat, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. I, *miejsowości A–C* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2003); Piotr Sypczuk and Maria Szkurlat, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. III/1, *miejsowości D–F* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk / Liber pro arte, 2018); Piotr Lasek and Piotr Sypczuk, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. III/2, *miejsowości G* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk / Liber pro arte, 2020); Piotr Lasek, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. IV, *miejsowości H–Kó* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2012); Piotr Lasek and Piotr Sypczuk, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. V, *miejsowości Kraków – L* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2013); Piotr Lasek and Piotr Sypczuk, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. VI, *miejsowości Ł–N* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2014); Piotr Lasek and Piotr Sypczuk, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. VII, *miejsowości O–P* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2016); Piotr Lasek and Piotr Sypczuk, *Katalog planów, pomiarów i rysunków architektonicznych w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, vol. VIII, *miejsowości R* (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2016).

note that some of the materials prepared by the Prussian researcher have been lost, although they were previously published in the works of Bernhard Schmid (p. 23).

The second chapter of Lasek's and Wólkowski's publication („Zamki biskupie i kapitulne” [“Bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles”], pp. 35–93) contains a summary overview of the current state of research on the issue of fortified architecture in the dominions/lordships of Prussian bishops and cathedral chapters (pp. 35–41). The authors devote the next three short subsections to the ecclesiastical organisation in Prussia (pp. 41–44), issues related to the first bishopric and chapters' strongholds in this country (pp. 44–45), including the beginnings of brick castles (pp. 46–48). These passages raise a number of doubts, which will be presented in detail later in this review. In the fourth subchapter (pp. 48–93), Lasek and Wólkowski successfully characterise the analysed phenomenon in the context of temporal changes and changing construction trends and architectural solutions, topographical and architectural relations of castles to settlements and town fortifications, architectural designs drawn from the Teutonic Order and other castle founders. They also conduct a series of comparative analyses of individual fortified structures that are important with regard to the discussion of their chronology. Finally, it should be noted that, like the first chapter, the second chapter (without footnotes) is translated into German (pp. 95–111), although not in its entirety, as the first two subchapters (pp. 35–44) have been omitted for reasons that are difficult to explain, yet this is neither mentioned nor justified.

The authors point out that in Prussia, in areas under the authority of bishops and cathedral chapters (within four dioceses, to which they consistently refer in terms of ecclesiastical divisions), a total of 22 brick castles were built, conditionally including the fortified cathedral in Frauenburg (today Frombork) (p. 48). It should be noted here that this number should be increased, albeit without archaeological research and only with a certain degree of probability, by two brick strongholds of the Samland bishops, namely Medenau (today Logvino)³ and Thierenberg (today Dvoriki)⁴. The castle in Guttstadt (today Dobrze Miasto) should also be taken into account, because, at the end of the fourteenth century (mentioned as the *castrum* of the bishop of Ermland, who issued documents there), it was used partly by bishops and partly by local cathedral canons.⁵ The stronghold of the Pomesanian cathedral chapter in Rosenberg (today Susz), which had a defensive tower

³ Marc Jarzebowski, *Die Residenzen der preußischen Bischöfe bis 1525*, Prussia Sacra 3 (Toruń: Verlag der Nikolaus-Kopernikus-Universität, 2007), 180, 182.

⁴ Ibid., 176, 178–179.

⁵ Ibid., 127.

and is attested in 1376 as the seat of the house commander (*huskumptur czum Rosinberge*), should also be considered.⁶ The authors devote shorter or longer descriptions (depending on the state of research and available sources) to all 22 objects, taking into account the above-mentioned issues and analysing both the plans of the castles and problems related to the architectural forms, building materials and, finally, decorations used there. Some of Lasek and Wólkowski's observations deserve special attention, as they shed new light on certain general issues concerning fortification architecture in Prussia. They point to the unrealised plans to build a fortified cathedral in Kneiphof (now part of Kaliningrad) in the 1330s (p. 47),⁷ which sheds a slightly different light on the construction of the fortified cathedral in Frauenburg. In general, the issue of fortified churches or churches with only certain fortification elements requires a systematic and comprehensive approach for Prussia, despite Christofer Herrmann's extensive study.⁸ On the other hand, the large size of the strongholds of the Pomesanian and Samland cathedral chapters in Schönberg (today Szymbark) and Neuhausen (today Guryevsk) respectively (pp. 77–78), built in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, which had a relatively simple architectural form of long castle houses adjacent to the curtain walls, brings to mind a similar trend at that time in the Teutonic Order. It involved the construction of larger castle complexes (e.g. Bütow (today Bytów), Schlochau (today Czluchów), in the latter case with an extensive outer bailey (Germ. *Vorburg*)) compared to the existing strongholds, or expanded existing strongholds, which has been interpreted (among others by Tomasz Torbus) as a form of adapting these fortified points to accommodate the increasing number of mercenary contingents appearing in Prussia at that time.⁹ It is difficult to say whether this

⁶ Mario Glauert, *Das Domkapitel von Pomesanien (1284–1527)*, Prussia Sacra 1 (Toruń: Verlag der Nikolaus-Kopernikus-Universität, 2003), 360–361; Seweryn Szczepański, "Grodzisko w parku miejskim w Suszu. Unser Hof Rosenberg?," *Skarbiec Suski* 6(1) (2012): 3–8, here 7; Rafał Solecki, "Wstępne wyniki badań archeologicznych grodziska w Suszu w 2013 roku," *Skarbiec Suski* 10(1) (2014): 3–8, here 6–7.

⁷ Christofer Herrmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur im Preussenland. Untersuchungen zur Frage der Kunstlandschaft und -geographie*, Studien zur Internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte 56 (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag / Olsztyn: Artes, 2007), 123, 260.

⁸ Cf. footnote 6.

⁹ Tomasz Torbus, *Die Konventsburgen im Deutschordensland Preußen*, Schriften des Bundesinstituts für ostdeutsche Kultur und Geschichte 11 (München: 1998), 181, 216; id., *Zamki konwentualne państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2014), 207–208, 243; Jan Salm, "Czluchów," in Leszek Kajzer, Stanisław Kołodziejcki, and Jan Salm, *Leksykon zamków w Polsce*, ed. Leszek Kajzer (Warszawa: Arkady, 2010), 143–144, here 144; id., "Bytów," in *ibid.*, 120–122, here 120.

conception would be appropriate in relation to the cathedral chapters' castles (in their case, it was the castles themselves, not the outer baileys, that were extensive), but it seems worth considering.

Some of Lasek's and Wólkowski's interpretations, such as the one concerning the trend, which began in the early fourteenth century, of separating castles from settlements and town fortifications (p. 49), or another concerning architectural inspiration from the conventual castle in Soldau (today Działdowo) (starting in the 1340s) for the castles of the Ermland cathedral chapter and the Ermland bishops in Allenstein, Rößel (today Reszel) and Seeburg (today Jeziorany) (pp. 76–77), are worth of further verification in the future, also taking into account the strongholds built by the Teutonic Order in Prussia.

The main framework of the reviewed book is the publication of Steinbrecht's materials. It constitutes the second part of the publication, entitled "Katalog zamków biskupich i kapitulnych badanych przez C. Steinbrechta" ["Catalogue of bishops' and chapters' castles studied by C. Steinbrecht"] (pp. 113–235). This catalogue is accompanied by a short introduction, information about the layout of the descriptions accompanying the illustrations (with one exception: drawings, sketches, and plans) and the abbreviations used in them (p. 113). The short introduction, together with additional information, has been translated into German (p. 114). The catalogue covers a total of eight castles arranged according to their ecclesiastical affiliation to individual Prussian dioceses (Kauernik (today Kurzętnik), castle of the Kulm cathedral chapter, four catalogue entries, pp. 115–119; Marienwerder (today Kwidzyn), castle of the Pomesanian cathedral chapter, nine entries, pp. 121–133; Schönberg, castle of the Pomesanian cathedral chapter, nine entries, pp. 135–143; Saalau (today Kamenskoe), castle of the Samland cathedral chapter, eight items, pp. 145–153; Braunsberg (today Braniewo), castle of the Ermland bishops, one item (letter), pp. 155–159; Heilsberg, castle of the Ermland bishops, 24 items, pp. 161–191; Allenstein, castle of the Ermland cathedral chapter, 28 items, pp. 193–218; Rößel, castle of the Ermland bishops, 13 items, pp. 219–235). The high quality of the reproductions of the published drawings should be emphasised. All descriptions of the published drawings, including the current number (uniform for all eight objects, a total of 96 items), title, writing material, dimensions, IS PAN inventory number and, in some cases, comments, have been translated into German.

Each catalogue collection concerning a given castle is preceded by a concise, usually several-page-long presentation of the stronghold, including the history of its construction and expansion, as well as its subsequent (usually early modern) reconstructions and transformations, architectural design, and functional layout.

Whenever possible, the authors have not just considered existing publications, but also unpublished materials documenting the latest architectural and archaeological-architectural research, linking all these data to Steinbrecht's published materials. In the case of the castle in Saalau, these were actually their main analytical material. The descriptions contained in the catalogue do not constitute in-depth analyses of specific issues, but rather form illustrative syntheses written by experts, which provide a good overview of both the construction history of a given castle and the research conducted on it to date. To a slightly lesser extent, Lasek and Wólkowski delve into problematic and unclear issues in their descriptions, which are subject to various, sometimes contradictory interpretations, although they do not ignore them altogether. This approach is understandable in synthetic catalogue notes.

It should be noted that the catalogue covering eight brick fortified points, for which Steinbrecht left illustrative materials, concerns only about one-third of all bishops' and cathedral chapters' castles built in Prussia, and taking into account wooden-earth fortifications that were not rebuilt into brick structures, even less than a quarter. In most cases, these are structures (and were already so in Steinbrecht's time) in fairly poor condition. Ruins and remains within rebuilt and transformed (sometimes several times) architectural structures were often limited to small remains of ground floors and basement levels at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and their condition has deteriorated further to the present day. The buildings located in the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast have been virtually inaccessible to researchers of Prussia and its fortified architecture for several years. In this situation, the value of Steinbrecht's documentation and its critical edition prepared by Lasek and Wólkowski is unquestionable.

From the perspective of a historian specialising in Prussia's late medieval history and researching various aspects of political entities and ruling powers in that country, certain passages in the second chapter raise some doubts. The most significant of these concerns the authors' approach to the subject of the power of Prussian bishops and cathedral chapters, i.e. the founders and lords of the fortified points presented in the book. From the point of view of the main theme, i.e. fortification architecture, this is obviously a secondary issue, but it should be noted that a proper understanding of political and ruling relations in Prussia during the Teutonic Order period may also influence interpretations in the field of fortified architecture (and not only that). The way in which this issue is presented cannot be described as adequate. This is already evident in the title of the subchapter ("Organizacja kościelna w Prusach" ["Ecclesiastical organisation in Prussia"]),

p. 41) instead of a title referring to the structure of dominions/lordships (Germ. *Herrschaften*, *Landesherrschaften*) in the country. The authors use the terms 'estates' [Pol. 'posiadłości'] (pp. 41, 42, 43 (map)), 'properties' [Pol. 'dobra'] (p. 41), 'episcopal properties' [Pol. 'dobra biskupie'] (p. 44, also in the catalogue section, e.g. p. 161), 'cathedral properties' [Pol. 'dobra kapitulne'] (p. 44), 'landed property' [Pol. 'własność ziemska'] (p. 43), 'bishop's domain' [Pol. 'domena biskupia'] (p. 44), regarding the areas which – within the divisions made in individual dioceses between the Teutonic Order and the bishops, and then also between the bishops and the cathedral chapters – fell under the authority of the bishops and chapters, and made their dominions/lordships (*Landesherrschaften*). They write in this context, among other things, about the "financial situation of the Ermland Church," which, in their opinion, "translated into the financial capabilities of the bishops and the chapter" (pp. 43–44). Unfortunately, all these expressions are not very appropriate, and the entire description in which they are used creates a very unclear picture of the political status of bishops and cathedral chapters in Prussia as ruling entities. The point is that first the bishops and then the chapters in the areas gradually allocated to them (sometimes also subject to exchanges) were not just owners of 'landed property,' 'estates,' or 'domains,' but, like the Teutonic Order in its areas, they exercised supreme authority (Germ. *Herrschaft*, *Territorialherrschaft*) over them; in short, they were rulers exercising secular power. This authority was public in nature and covered a wide spectrum, including the construction of castles and other fortified points. In this sense, the power and authority of bishops and cathedral chapters was equivalent to that of the Teutonic Order. Bishops and chapters exercised various acts of authority; for example, they established new towns, granted land estates and distributed other land assets, exercised jurisdiction over the population living under their rule, and raised their own armies. The statement that bishops' and chapters' castles, and thus their dominions/lordships, were located "within the state of the Teutonic Order" (p. 35) is incorrect, although it is still used in various publications dealing with the history of late medieval Prussia. The understanding of Prussia in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries as a single state (of the Teutonic Order), resulting from the transfer of ideas about a territorialised and uniform state of the early modern and modern era to the late Middle Ages, is a misunderstanding. The power (state) structures of the late Middle Ages were usually heterogeneous and multi-level. For their study and analysis, German-language historiography has been using the term *Herrschaft* and even more precisely *Landesherrschaft* ('dominion'/'lordship,' often rendered in English as 'territorial lordship' or 'territorial sovereignty' – not entirely precise) instead

of *Staat* ('state') for decades. The Teutonic Order's *Landesherrschaft* was spatially most extensive in Prussia, taking the form of a compact area, and the ruler (the Order) was so powerful in relation to other rulers that – in certain aspects of exercising power – it could impose its will on them, or the bishops or cathedral chapters themselves recognised and accepted a certain degree of the Order's authority over themselves (although by no means all of them to the same extent, nor consistently in particular periods; in this aspect the membership of some bishops and the incorporation of three of cathedral chapters into the Teutonic Order was only one of the factors differentiating these power relationships). This does not mean, however, that in other aspects of their political functioning they did not maintain or defend their separateness and independence from the Order (and again, even if they functioned as members or incorporated communities within the Order).¹⁰ It was the sphere of secular power (Lat. *in temporalibus*) that formed a certain opposition to spiritual power (Lat. *in spiritualibus*). In their *Landesherrschaften* in Prussia, bishops exercised both types of power. However, while their secular power was limited to their own *Landesherrschaften*, they also exercised spiritual power in other areas, not within their *Landesherrschaften*, but within their dioceses. Thus, it was the spiritual power of bishops, not the secular one, that was based on the 'ecclesiastical organisation' in the country mentioned by the authors, especially with regard to diocesan divisions. In this sense, the ecclesiastical organisation referred to a completely different dimension of power, namely that *in spiritualibus*; thus, it had little to do with fortification architecture, which was the prerogative of secular authority (including bishops and cathedral chapters as entities exercising the secular power; in late medieval Prussia, these were only bishops and cathedral chapters, but in the areas of the Holy Roman Empire (*Reich*), this group of rulers also included some abbots and collegiate chapters). It should be noted that the authors' use of a 'diocesan key' instead of an '*Landesherrschaft* key' in the catalogue section regarding its composition in the case of objects from the diocese of Ermland leads to the three bishops' castles and one of the Ermland cathedral chapter being mixed up in terms of order.

¹⁰ These issues were best characterised by Brigitte Poschmann, *Bistümer und Deutscher Ordens in Preussen, 1243–1525. Untersuchung zur Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte des Ordenslandes* (Münster: Selbstverlag, 1962) – The authors do not refer to this fundamental study; cf. also my summary of the main points of this study (partly repeated in this review): Krzysztof Kwiatkowski, *Wojska zakonu niemieckiego w Prusach 1230–1525 (korporacja, jej pruskie władztwo, zbrojni, kultura wojny i aktywność militarna)* (in cooperation with Maria Molenda), *Dzieje Zakonu Niemieckiego* 3 (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2016), 59–62 (Ekskurs 6).

How such an inadequate understanding of power structures and the relationships between them can affect the analysis and interpretation of other phenomena, including those related to the main theme of the book, i.e. fortified architecture, is evident from the authors' opinion concerning the relationship between the construction of strongholds and the demarcation of areas under the authority of Prussian bishops, cathedral chapters, and the Teutonic Order. They state: "Only after the boundaries of chapters' and bishopric estates had been demarcated in a given area was it possible to begin colonisation, which in turn determined the possibility of building, for example, castles" (p. 41). As far as I am concerned, this opinion touches on one of the most important issues relating to the creation of the cultural landscape of late medieval Prussia, namely the mutual relations in the development of various forms of settlement in this country, and its conditions, additionally considered in the context of increasing power and the spatial expansion of dominions/lordships (Germ. *Herrschaftsausbau*). I have pointed out in my publications on the castle of the Teutonic Order in Bäslack (today Beżławki) that investments in castle construction should also be interpreted in the context of the development and transformation of settlements in the immediate vicinity of the fortified point being built, and that the vectors of these relationships and interactions were not the same in every case. Moreover, the case of this particular castle showed quite clearly that at least some strongholds were means for expanding power, building one's own dominion/lordship and defining its geographical reach (in the absence of linear boundaries marked out on the ground at that time).¹¹ In the case of Bäslack, it was the Teutonic Order, but there is no reason to believe that the Prussian bishops and cathedral chapters would have acted differently. The castles in Prussia built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, or at least some of them, served as 'markers' of the geographical extent of real authority and were a tool for establishing that real authority in a given area, and in such situations they were not built only after the linear borders of the *Landesherrschaften* had been demarcated, as suggested by Lasek and Wólkowski in the quoted passage. Of course, this does not mean that such cases did not occur: they did. In light of these comments, however, the authors' opinion cannot be taken as a rule or principle.

The process of gradually establishing real linear boundaries between dominions/lordships, and thus "closing" the delimitation of their areas, usually took a long time, and not only in Prussia. The result of these changes was the progressive

¹¹ Krzysztof Kwiatkowski, "Budownictwo warowne jako narzędzie intensyfikacji władztwa na obrzeżach kraju – casus Beżławek w późnośredniowiecznych Prusach," *Zapiski Historyczne* 86, no. 3 (2021): 81–116.

‘territorialisation’ (Germ. *Territorialisierung*) of these dominions/lordships, and only then did they become ‘territories’ (Germ. *Territorialherrschaften*;¹² in Polish literature on the subject, this issue is barely noticeable, resulting in the widespread misuse of the term ‘territory’). And even if, in the case of the dominions/lordships of the bishops of Ermland and the Ermland cathedral chapter, their demarcation from the areas of the Teutonic Order’s dominion/lordship in the region between the sources of the river Passarge (today Pasłęka) and the vicinity of Rößel was carried out in 1374–1375, as noted by the authors (p. 42; although in the catalogue section they again mistakenly mention the “final demarcation of the Ermland dominion” in 1341, p. 161), contrary to their statement about the immutability of this border until 1772 (p. 42), this does not mean that the delimitation was carried out in the field at the same time, the course of which was not later corrected and refined.¹³ The significance of castles as means of “defining” space and “closing” the delimitation of dominions/lordships in Prussia has not only not been studied, but has not even been noticed by historians. This can be considered one of the most important historical and settlement-related research postulates in relation to fortification architecture in this country. Of course, with regard to a publication focusing on architectural issues, such as the book by Lasek and Wólkowski, the above comment is not a criticism, but merely a reference to a problem worthy of further research.

Another issue in the reviewed book may be of greater importance, namely the incomplete description of the oldest strongholds of the Prussian cathedral chapters. In the case of the first bishops’ castles, the authors refer to the brick stronghold of Marienwerder and the wooden-earth castles in Braunsberg and *Schönewik* (later Fischhausen), pointing to the lack of information about the seat of the bishops of Kulm in Kulmsee (pp. 44–45).¹⁴ However, with regard to cathedral chapters, it is surprising that no mention is made of the first seat of the Pomesanian cathedral chapter in Marienwerder (although its second form, the brick structure is, of course, discussed later in the book, pp. 63–67 / 103). Similarly, the lack of reference to the problem of the origins of the Ermland cathedral chapter’s seat

¹² Cf. “classical” study by Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft. Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter* (Wien–Weisbaden: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1959, 4th ed.).

¹³ Indeed, it was, at least several times in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, cf. Kwiatkowski, “Budownictwo warowne,” 103–105 (here older publications).

¹⁴ A document from 1330 mentions the bishop’s ‘house’ (*domus*) in Kulmsee, although its architectural form is unknown, cf. Jarzebowski, *Die Residenzen*, 32.

in Frauenburg is incomprehensible. Perhaps both these seats were not fortified, but merely formed complexes of canonical manors (Lat. *curiae*) located next to each other near both cathedrals, as was the case in Kulmsee and Königsberg. An attempt to answer this question would probably require archaeological research within the cathedral complex of present-day Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) and Frombork (Frauenburg), although there is no guarantee of satisfactory results. In any case, the issue itself should be mentioned in a study such as this.

Furthermore, the authors' suggestion that the seat of the Ermland cathedral chapter was (Alt) Wartenberg (today Barczewko), destroyed in 1354, or *Bertingen* (p. 45 / 96), which has not yet been clearly located, is misguided. Similarly problematic is their statement about the seat of the Ermland canons in Melsack (p. 54 / 100). In reality (Alt) Wartenburg, probably built mainly as a wooden-earth structure in 1325, was a fortified point of the Ermland bishops,¹⁵ and the next two strongholds could have been, at the end of the thirteenth century and in the middle of the fourteenth century, only the seats of cathedral chapter officials managing the chapter's authority, while its seat was still in Frauenburg. Perhaps this wording is the result of the unfortunate style of this book fragment, but this is its meaning. Lasek's and Wólkowski's very use of the term 'seat' (Germ. *Sitz*) (pp. 44, 45 / 95, 54 / 100) to describe several fortified points in relation to a single cathedral chapter is also either problematic or goes too far, as it may suggest that each chapter had several permanent residences, whereas these ecclesiastical bodies generally lived and performed their functions in close connection with cathedrals (i.e. in one seat), sometimes erecting new strongholds for individual canons (e.g. Schönberg) in the fourteenth century, but not for the entire chapter.

It seems that insufficient attention has been paid to the issue of construction works undertaken by the bishops of Ermland and the local cathedral chapter, aimed at adapting certain strongholds for the wider use of firearms, both small arms and artillery (pp. 169, 197, 219, 222). In this context, it should be noted that several publications by Hanna Domańska dealing with this issue have not been cited.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., 124.

¹⁶ Hanna Domańska, "Zamek biskupów warmińskich w Reszlu," *Rocznik Olsztyński* 8 (1968): 105–125; ead., "Proces modernizacji średniowiecznych zamków z terenu państwa krzyżackiego w XV–XVIII wieku," *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości* 17, no. 2 (1971): 3–36; ead., "Z badań nad problemem przystosowania zamków Pomorza Wschodniego do broni palnej w latach 1390–1520," *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 21, no. 4 (1976): 323–335.

From a editorial point of view, the German translation of some of the book's content is a welcome addition. However, some of the solutions used in this area may raise certain doubts and, from the perspective of a German-speaking reader, leave something to be desired. In both chapters of the first part of the book, the German versions of the text should have retained the footnote numbers, the content of which can be found in the Polish-language sections. This would be almost identical to the references to visual materials left in the German texts, whereas the latter, quite sensibly from the point of view of book production costs, are reproduced only in the Polish text. On the other hand, the descriptions of the visual materials in the Polish text are rather unnecessarily given in both the Polish and German versions. Thus, the German-language descriptions of the same materials appear twice. It is regrettable that, in the catalogue section, the German-language versions are limited only to translations of the descriptions of the reproduced catalogue materials, while the above-mentioned synthetic descriptions of the eight bishops' and chapter's castles are not translated.

Lasek's and Wólkowski's publication is supplemented by a bibliography (pp. 237–246) and a list of 71 illustrations with inventory numbers from the IS PAN collections (pp. 247–251). This list has also been translated into German (pp. 253–257). The use of the book is facilitated by indexes of persons (pp. 259–261) and places (pp. 266–267), also given in the German version (pp. 263–265 and 268–269). A concordance of place names (p. 270) at the end of the book provides orientation in previous German and contemporary Polish and Russian nomenclature.

Regardless of certain critical remarks concerning both content and editorial issues, the high quality of Lasek's and Wólkowski's publication should be emphasised. Such a publication has long been needed in the community of researchers of late medieval Prussia, and it is to be hoped that it will serve as a further incentive for interdisciplinary research projects on individual fortified structures (where such research is possible), which will result in in-depth recognition of the sites themselves, as well as the entire issue of fortified architecture in Prussia during the late Middle Ages / Teutonic Knights period.

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