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PRE-ROMANESQUE PALATIAL CHAPEL IN POZNAŃ



The Early Mediaeval fortified settlement in Poznań, occupying one of the small sandy islands in the Warta River, was one of the most important centres of the early Piast state¹. Its distinguished position among other early Piast strongholds is marked by its location on a communication route², the extent and strength of its fortifications, the multi-divisionality and the character of its buildings, especially the presence of a ducal residence. Since the oldest written sources regarding the stronghold in Poznań do not include information on its sociotopography, the data we possess have been gathered almost exclusively as a result of archaeological research³. From the chronicle of Thietmar, the bishop of Merseburg⁴ and Gallus Anonymous⁵, we only learn that Poznań was a place where a bishop stayed, with a cathedral church of Saint Peter at his disposal, and about the military power of the fortified settlement during

1 Z. Kurnatowska, *Początki Polski*, Poznań 2002, pp. 60-82, 100, 103.

2 Z. and S. Kurnatowscy, *Znaczenie komunikacji wodnej dla społeczeństw pradziejowych i wczesnośredniowiecznych*, in: *Słowiańszczyzna w Europie średniowiecznej*, ed. by Z. Kurnatowska, Wrocław 1996, pp. 117-123.

3 *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, I, ed. by W. Hensel, Warszawa-Wrocław 1959; II, ed. by idem, Wrocław-Warszawa 1960; III, ed. by idem, Wrocław-Warszawa 1961; IV, ed. by idem and J. Żak, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1974; V, ed. by H. Kóčka-Krenz, Poznań 2005; VI, ed. by eadem, Poznań 2008.

4 *Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon*, ed. by M. Jedlicki, Poznań 1953; II, 22, pp. 73-74: *Additus est...Iordan episcopus Posnaniensis* I; VI, 65, pp. 406-407: *Eodem die Vungerus Posnaniensis cenobii pastor, consacerdos suus et suffraganeus, XXX. ordinationis suae anno obiit*.

5 *Galli Chronicon*, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (henceforth: MPH), ed. by A. Bielowski, I, Lwów 1864, p. 404: *De Poznan namque mille trecenti loricati milites cum quatuor millibus clipeatorum militum*; ibidem, p. 416: *Eo tempore Bohemi Gneznen et Poznan destruxerunt, santique corpus Adalberti abstulerunt [...] et tam diu civitates praedictae in solitudine permanserunt, quod in ecclesia sancti Adalberti martiris sanctique Petri apostoli sua ferae cubilia posuerunt*.

the reign of Boleslaus the Brave (Chrobry). Only a record in the thirteenth-century *Polish chronicle* suggests that the cathedral was not the only sacral building here – an entry mentions a Chapel of Our Lady, founded by Duchess Dobrawa⁶. It must be noted that for some time this idea was doubted, owing to the lack of earlier records in the sources or relevant physical traces of such a building⁷. The results of archaeological excavations, carried out since 1999 in Ostrów Tumski near the present Gothic Church of Our Lady by the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University were of a great importance in resolving this question. The research, planned in order to identify the early Piast ducal residence, resulted in the discovery of its remains, in the parts situated outside the church. The residence comprised two components – the ducal palatium and the palatial chapel. Although the interior of the secular part lies beneath the western part of the fifteenth-century church, it was nevertheless possible to obtain basic information regarding the residence. At the same time, almost the whole of the sacral part was recognised, as only its northern wall is covered by a fragment of the foundation of the southern wall of the Gothic church.

Contrary to earlier assumptions⁸, the pre-Romanesque palatial chapel in the Poznań stronghold is not a rotunda. Such a hypothesis was based first of all on the knowledge of the form of other early Piast palace-and-chapel complexes – on Ostrów Lednicki⁹, in Giecz¹⁰, or Przemyśl¹¹, in which the conjoined foundations showed a rectangular building was connected with a chapel in the form of rotunda. In the cases of Ostrów Lednicki and Giecz¹² the complexes

6 *Kronika polska*, ed. by L. Ćwikliński, in: MPH, III, Lwów 1878, p. 622: (*Casimirus*) [...] (*ecclesiam*), *quam Dambrouca ad honorem genetricis dei beatae Marie in castro Ostrow fundaverat, intravit et a se gladium, quo percinctus fuerat, dissoluit, ponens super altare deo et beate Marie et beatis apostolis Petro et Paulo, disponendo in animo suo iterum velle monachari, dyadema regalis imperii resignando.*

7 J. Nowacki, *Dzieje archidiecezji poznańskiej*, I: *Kościół katedralny w Poznaniu*, Poznań 1959, p. 8, note 22; J. Żak, *Badania w ogrodzie przy ul. Ostrów Tumski 10 w 1946 r.*, in: *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, I, pp. 81-129.

8 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Rezydencja pierwszych Piastów na poznańskim grodzie*, in: *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, V, pp. 59-81.

9 *U progu chrześcijaństwa w Polsce. Ostrów Lednicki*, ed. by K. Żurowska, Kraków 1993; J. Górecki, *Gród na Ostrowie Lednickim na tle wybranych ośrodków grodowych pierwszej monarchii piastowskiej*, Poznań 2002.

10 T. Krysztofiak, *Giecz – Grodziszczko, stan. 1, gm. Dominowo*, in: *Civitates principales. Wybrane ośrodki władzy w Polsce wczesnośredniowiecznej*, ed. by D. Stryniak, Gniezno 1998, pp. 45-47.

11 Z. Pianowski, M. Proksa, *Przedromańskie palatium i rotunda na Wzgórzu Zamkowym w Przemyślu*, Przemyśl 2003.

12 The ducal residence in Giecz, albeit its erection for some unknown reasons was stopped on the level of foundations, was planned as a structure of the same type as the building from Ostrów Lednicki; cf. T. Krysztofiak, *Palatium w Gieczu – archeologiczne podstawy datowania*

were planned on the east-west axis, with the chapels adjoining the eastern side of the palatium, whereas the secular part of the residence in Przemyśl, built on the roughly north-south axis was adjoined by an oriented simple rotunda, erected on the prolongation of the axis of the palatium by its southern, shorter wall. Also in later ducal residences from the territory of Poland, chapels were built on the plan of a circle¹³. This gave rise to the assumption that this type of architecture was traditions within the Piast domain. However, the palatial chapel of the fortified settlement in Poznań has a different form, and it is also structurally differently connected to the ducal house, which all in all makes it special among hitherto known forms from the territory of Poland.

The chapel is a small single-nave church, closed on the east with an apse (fig. 1). The lower parts of the walls of the apse are preserved up to a height of more than 50 cm, which makes it possible to assess the size of the interior as 2.5×2.5 m. The walls were 1 m thick, whereas the foundation was 10 to 20 cm wider externally. The apse was narrower than the nave by 0.5 m on north and south. The northern and southern walls of the nave were built on two wide parallel foundations, reaching up to 2 m in width, dug 0.60 m into the ground. The western wall did not have a full foundation; only its northern and southern one-metre section near the corners was built on the above mentioned foundations. Inside the nave, two annexes were formed, measuring 1×1.70 m; as a result the peripheral walls of the chapel were of the same thickness, namely 1m. This extension made a space measuring 4.5 in width and 1.70 m in length, narrowing down in the western part to the size of 1 m (length) $\times$ 2.5 m (width). Hence the nave occupied a space of 10 m^2 (fig. 2).

The interior was illuminated by windows placed in the walls of the annexes at the height of about 0.55 m from the floor. Judging from the outline of a window in the southern wall of the chapel that fell over and was preserved in this position (fig. 3), the windows were about 75 cm wide and 1.30 m high, and they had windowsills. Windows that were placed so low lead us to assume that the chapel had to be illuminated by an upper row of windows, probably also a window in the apse.

The gypsum floor, preserved in large parts in the apse, was set on a layer of tiny, natural pebbles.

On the axis of the apse, an altar was placed next to the wall. Its *stipes* was erected from smaller stone slabs bonded by gypsum mortar. It turned out that at the beginning it was a small rectangle sized 1 m (width) $\times$ 0.90 m, later rebuilt and enlarged to the size of 1 m $\times$ 1.80 m (length). Detailed observation

reliktyw, in: *Lapides viventes. Księga dedykowana prof. dr hab. Klementynie Żurowskiej*, ed. by T. Rodzińska-Choraży and A. Włodarek, Kraków 2006, pp. 286-301.

13 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Palatia wczesnopiastowskie*, in: *Średniowiecze w rozjaśnieniu*, ed. by K. Skupieński, Warszawa 2010, pp. 119-132.

of the surface of the gypsum mortar on the western face of the foundation of the primary altar suggests that it was covered by stone facing.

Some finds indicate how the walls of the chapels were decorated. Layers containing destruction material – blocks of gypsum mortar and slab stones, deposited above the relics of the chapel – produced also fragments of plaster. Specialist analyses¹⁴ revealed that the walls of the chapel were covered by three layers of cream-white coloured gypsum plaster with the addition of plant fibres, put directly on one another. All together the plaster layers were from 12 to 16 mm thick. A number of plaster fragments have traces of painting decoration. Pigments typical for wall painting were used – calcareous white, ferrous red and azure. The paint layer has the same thickness and bonding medium containing protein in all fragments, which suggests that the whole layer was made at the same time. First, the plaster was thoroughly smoothed and then covered with a thin layer of lime or made wet with the help of a thick brush. The wet plaster was painted with paint containing organic binder, possibly with the addition of vegetable adhesive. White and red colours could be obtained from local raw materials. In case of spots of blue preserved on two fragments of plaster, a natural ultramarine was used, produced from lapis lazuli, the most famous deposits of which are located in Badakhshan (Afghanistan)¹⁵. As the azure pigment acquired from lapis lazuli was very expensive, it was usually used only for painting the gown of the Virgin Mary. Unfortunately, the fragments of plaster are too small to identify the theme of the painting decoration. These could be both geometric motifs and framed figural representations (some fragments depict white and red bands).

Mosaic decoration constituted another element of the chapel ornamentation. More than 230 mosaic cubes were excavated together with fragments of plaster with their imprints, including one cube still set in a tiny piece of plaster (fig. 4). The cubes are small, about 0.5 to 1.2 cm across. The majority of them are cubes made of transparent glass, decorated with gold foil, secured by a thin layer of glaze. Only some of them were made from red, dark green or brick red-coloured glass. These elements of mosaic decoration were deposited in the cultural layers following the destruction of the complex. They were recorded in layers dated from the 11th to 13th century. Since they were generally deposited in the lower layers, it is possible to determine the age of their origin as the beginnings of the 11th century. Owing to the findings of the bedding of the mosaic, undoubtedly the glass cubes were composed into the wall decoration. We may assume with high probability that the apse of the chapel was decorated in this way, and two such cubes were found on its floor. It is difficult to

14 Analyses were carried out by Anna Michnikowska from the National Museum in Poznań and Jerzy Langer from the Chemistry Department, Adam Mickiewicz University.

15 K. Maślankiewicz, *Kamienie szlachetne*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 223-224.

estimate the surface covered by the mosaic, as we do not know if the whole wall of the apse was decorated or whether the decoration was limited only to its central part. In the literature of the subject it is assumed that in order to cover the surface of 1 m², it was necessary to use about 10.000 cubes¹⁶. These estimates are supported by metric data of the Poznań composition, as the cube preserved in the plaster, together with imprints of two other ones at its sides and a band of mortar separating them occupy the space of 3 cm, thus one cube occupied on average 1 cm². The preserved cubes constitute thus only slightly more than 2% of elements of decoration of 1 m².

Covering the walls with mosaic composition was and still is the art requiring great abilities and cooperation of a number of contractors, beginning from the artist-painter to workers setting the mosaic cubes on the basis from properly prepared and fixed mortar¹⁷. The wall mosaics in orthodox churches of Kiev Russia were made by masters brought from Byzantium, whereas it is confirmed that in the 11th-12th century glass cubes were produced for this purpose in the glass workshops of Kiev¹⁸. Such activity has not been previously recorded in the territory of Poland. What's more, archaeological excavations in other centres have yielded precious few tesserae, hence some authors express doubts concerning the possibility of decorating early Piast churches with wall mosaics¹⁹. However, finds from Poznań proved that at least this church in the stronghold was decorated like that. It is highly probable that the mosaic was created by artisans brought from Russia by Boleslaus the Brave, whose daughter was married to a Grand Prince of Kiev – Sviatopolk²⁰. We have no clues what figures were represented – whether it was God, Christ, Virgin Mary or saints²¹.

The chapel must have also been equipped with liturgical objects, but of these only a few bone reliquary mounts survive (fig. 5). All fragments are of the same thickness (1 mm), but they differ in terms of the kind of decoration covering their outer surfaces. The fragments include parts of slats, 1.6 cm wide, ornamented with a plait motif of double wavy bands, accented in the centre with a circle and dot and framed by straight lines along the edges.

16 J. Olczak, *Wystrój mozaikowy wczesnośredniowiecznej architektury murowanej w Polsce – fikcja czy rzeczywistość?*, "Archaeologia Historica Polona" XIII (2003), pp. 129-145, see p. 130.

17 M. Nowicka, *Mozaika*, in: *Kultura materialna starożytnej Grecji*, II, ed. by K. Majewski, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1977, pp. 695-727, see p. 719 ff.

18 V.N. Lazarev, *Drevnerusskie mozaiki i freski XI-XV vv.*, Moskva 1973, p. 12.

19 J. Olczak, op. cit., p. 137.

20 K. Jasiński, *Rodowód pierwszych Piastów*, Poznań 2004, pp. 120-122.

21 P. Skubiszewski, *Malarstwo karolińskie i przedromańskie*, Warszawa 1973, p. 142; idem, *Sztuka Europy łacińskiej od VI do IX wieku*, Lublin 2001, p. 48; idem, *Katedra w Polsce około roku 1000, in: Polska na przełomie I i II tysiąclecia*, ed. by S. Skibiński, Poznań 2001, pp. 139-196, see pp. 157, 161.

The interiors of the bands are smooth, whereas the surface between them and the limiting lines is covered by a kind of graining. The fragments which are 1.3 cm wide were decorated with circle and dot motifs and lines running along the edges of the plates. Also in this case the interior of the circle is smooth whereas the other part is dotted. There is also a different fragment, with both edges preserved marked with multiple straight and zigzag lines, with the outline of a motif expressed by a double line and the edge of a rivet hole. It is clearly a corner of a plate with edges marked with multiple straight and zigzag lines, with a preserved band, bent at an angle. It is possible that we have here a remnant of a plate ornamented either with arrangements of zigzag, crossing bands or a figural motif. Other fragments are not covered with any decoration; one of them contains a part of a rivet hole. The form of the plates is so characteristic that their function is beyond doubt. They were part of the fittings of a wooden box – a compartment for relics.

Intact reliquaries from the Rhineland include examples decorated externally with such bone strips. As far as the type of decoration is concerned, the reliquary closest to the Poznań item is the reliquary from the Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne made of oak wood, 15.5 cm long, 9.5 cm wide and 5.5 cm high. The side walls of the reliquary were decorated with bone strips ornamented with rows of single or double circles with central dots. In the middle of the walls there is a line of red-coloured bone plates, with a row of open-work circles. The lid of the box, of gold-plated copper sheet was set with red-coloured bone plates with cut out circles and cross motifs. They are surrounded by slats covered with plaiting. The lid was fixed with forked iron fittings, which makes it possible to date this reliquary back to the end of the 11th-12th centuries²². Geometric motifs of crossing lines and multiple rhombs were used in the decoration of plates on the box from the Church of Saint Ursula in Cologne (the end of the 11th - beginning of 12th century) and on the casket from the parochial church in Callettes-lez-Blois (11th/12th century)²³. The reliquary box from Oldenburg in Wagria was ornamented with figural motifs – representations of a number of figures identified as representations of Christ Pantocrator surrounded by the Evangelists and angels. The representations of humans could have been accompanied here by representations of animals²⁴.

The small number of fragments of the covering of the Poznań casket makes it impossible to reconstruct its original appearance. It is possible that its surface

22 *Das Reich der Salier 1024-1125. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz*, Sigmaringen 1992, pp. 351-353.

23 V.H. Elbern, *Das Beinkästchen im Essener Münsterschatz*, Aachener Kunstblätter des Museumsvereins, XLIV, Aachen 1973, pp. 87-100.

24 I. Gabriel, *Christentum und Heidentum*, in: *Starigard/Oldenburg. Ein slawischer Herrschersitz des frühen Mittelalters in Ostholstein*, ed. by M. Müller-Wille, Neumünster 1991, pp. 279-297, see pp. 282-284.

was just covered with bone strips ornamented with geometric motifs, similar to the casket from the Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne, but is also possible that these strips had been the edging for plates with figural motifs. Such reliquaries, because of their small size and the character of decoration, are characteristic for the early mediaeval craftsmanship, and the preserved examples suggest that they could have been made in the second half of the 10th-11th centuries in one of the western European centres of decorative arts²⁵.

Gemstones excavated at the site were probably also connected with liturgy – one glass example (unfortunately missing) and the other one carnelian with an image of a lion (late Roman, antique)²⁶. In the Middle Ages they were used for decorating reliquaries, crosses, chalices or the covers of liturgical books. Their presence indicates that local priests had access to the objects of high quality metalwork. According to Piotr Skubiszewski²⁷, cult objects came to the Piast state first of all from Germany, as gifts for the bishop cathedral or ducal foundations. And although these works have not survived till now, information that we find in the chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, Kosmas of Prague and Gallus Anonymous makes it possible to hypothesise that local churches did not differ in terms of their equipment from the churches of Western Europe²⁸.

The palatial chapel of Poznań has a plan of a Latin cross inside, which adds a symbolic dimension to it (fig. 6). Its shape relates it to the Carolingian – Ottonian circle, albeit it is difficult to point to its exact equivalent. Examples of similar solutions include the church in Molzbichl (Carinthia), dated to the second half of the 8th century²⁹, the church in Uznach near Saint Gallen, from the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries³⁰, and especially the church in Eldagsen near Hildesheim, built before 1000, provided with two annexes in the apse³¹. The small size of the chapel suggests that it could have been erected relatively quickly. At the same time it satisfied the needs of the ducal entourage, at the beginning making it possible to fulfil Christian obligations for only a couple

25 V.H. Elbern, op. cit., p. 96.

26 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Die Gemmen von der Dominsel in Posen als Zeugnisse der Kulturkontakte des Staates der Piasten im Frühmittelalter*, in: „Die Dinge beobachten...“. *Archäologische und historische Forschungen zur frühen Geschichte Nord- und Mitteleuropas. Festschrift für Günter Mangelsdorf zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by F. Biermann, U. Müller, Th. Terberger, Rahden, Westf. 2008, pp. 189-197.

27 P. Skubiszewski, *Katedra w Polsce...*, pp. 162, 164-165.

28 Ibidem, pp. 150-151.

29 *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten. Katalog der Denkmäler bis zum Ausgang der Ottonen*, Nachtragsband, ed. by W. Jacobsen, L. Schaefer and H.R. Sennhauser with M. Exner, J. Mertens, H. Stvepker, München 1991, p. 287.

30 *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten. Katalog der Denkmäler bis zum Ausgang der Ottonen*, ed. by F. Oswald, L. Schaefer and H.R. Sennhauser, München 1966, pp. 358-359.

31 Ibidem, p. 404.

of people. Some premises indicate that the chapel performed also sepulchral functions. Such a function is indirectly suggested by the state of its preservation – the whole interior of the chapel was dug out down to the base of the foundations, resulting in collapse of the northern wall (fig. 1, 2). We may presume that in the chapel, at the foot of the altar, there was a grave under the floor, where only someone worthy of such a place of rest was buried. Graves placed on the axis of a church, in its very centre, must have been intended for people of exceptional rank. Comparative studies demonstrate that exposed places were selected for clergymen of higher rank or members of ruling families, at the same time founders of a church³². In the opinion of the author, a relevant analogy for the Poznań chapel can be the sepulchral chapel, similar in form, erected after 840 near the cathedral in Halberstadt³³. Therefore, it is possible that the founder of the chapel, duchess Dobrawa (d. in 977), was buried here – which had been recorded in the 13th century *Polish chronicle*³⁴, or Bishop Jordan, who died around 984. We must remember that at the time of their death, the cathedral churches in Poznań³⁵ and Gniezno³⁶ had not been erected yet. The remains of the dead were probably excavated and transported to a new tomb, when the palatial chapel was destroyed and not rebuilt on its old foundations. A new, larger chapel – already in Romanesque style – was erected, we may assume, slightly to the north, and it was built partly from the stone raw material from the dismantling of the pre-Romanesque structure³⁷.

However, the chapel must have fulfilled a liturgical function for a relatively long time. This is confirmed e.g. by the two phases of the altar. In its rebuilding, part of the foundation lies on the destruction layer left over on the primary floor. This suggests that the church must have been temporarily brought back into use, maybe due to the temporary inaccessibility of the cathedral church.

32 F. Oswald, *In medio Ecclesiae. Die Deutung der literarischen Zeugnisse im Lichte archäologischer Funde*, Frühmittelalterliche Studien, III, 1969, pp. 313-326; M. Schulze-Dörlamm, *Bestattungen in den Kirchen Grossmährens und Böhmens während des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*, "Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz" XL (1993 [1995]), pp. 557-621; Z. Kurnatowska, *Jeszcze raz o grobowcach poznańskich*, in: *Scriptura custos memoriae*, ed. by D. Zydorek, Poznań 2001, pp. 503-510.

33 G. Leopold, E. Schubert, *Der Dom zu Halberstadt bis zum gotischen Neubau*, Berlin 1984, pp. 36-38.

34 Cf. note 6.

35 Z. Kurnatowska, M. Kara, *Początki architektury sakralnej na grodzie poznańskim w świetle nowych ustaleń archeologicznych*, in: *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. by T. Janiak and D. Stryniak, Gniezno 2004, pp. 47-70.

36 T. Janiak, *Problematyka wczesnych faz kościoła katedralnego w Gnieźnie*, in: *Początki...*, pp. 85-130.

37 In the foundations of the Gothic Our Lady Church can be seen both pre-Romanesque slab stones and Romanesque stones, which confirms this hypothesis. The presence of a Romanesque church needs to be supported by excavations inside the church.

In this phase, two coins were lost in its apse – one, of the Hungarian ruler Andrew I (1047-1060) and the other one, of Vratislav II – from 1061 the duke, and in the years 1085-1092 – the king of Bohemia³⁸. The first one was deposited on the floor, the other one in the remains of the altar *stipes*. Taking these finds under consideration, the overhaul of the church could have been undertaken during the rule of Boleslaus the Bold (Śmiały), whose long reign fostered building actions in Greater Poland, ruined by invasion of duke Břetislav. On the other hand, the chapel was closely connected with the existence of the ducal palatium, as a place of private devotion of the duke and his nearest entourage.

The removal of the building of the palatium, suggested by the level of its dismantling, recorded in all trenches at the same heights (about 70 cm from the level of the foundation offset), was done at the same time, carried out soon after the middle of the 13th century³⁹. The results of a ground-penetrating radar survey inside the present Our Lady Church lead to a tentative conclusion that a Romanesque church occupied the space of the interior of the palatium, thus during the time it was erected, the pre-Romanesque ducal residence had already ceased to exist. Therefore, we cannot consider the functioning of the chapel in separation from the secular part of the residence.

Archaeological-architectonic investigation carried out so far near the Church of Our Lady on Ostrów Tumski in Poznań has produced information regarding the appearance of the residence in the Poznań stronghold⁴⁰. The palatium was a rectangular building on a north-south axis (slightly offset to the west). The foundations of the longer external walls of the residence measured 27.25 m, including the thickness of the walls, those of the southern wall were 11.90 m in length, whereas the foundations of the northern wall were 11.70 m long. Those small deviations, marked at the level of the foundations, were probably levelled when the above-ground part of the building was erected. Along the whole course of the main walls, narrow foundation trenches were dug, 1.50 m wide. The foundations of the shorter walls were dug out to the depth of 1.10 m, similarly to the excavated fragments of the eastern wall, whereas the foundations of the western wall were irregularly dug out into the ground, reaching in its middle part a depth of 1.40 m. Erecting foundations of the walls at various depths was frequent in Ottonian and Carolingian architecture⁴¹, similarly to

38 The coins were determined by Mateusz Sikora, a Ph.D. student in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University.

39 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Dzieje Ostrowa Tumskiego w Poznaniu przed lokacją miasta*, "Kronika Miasta Poznania", (2003) 1, pp. 7-26.

40 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Początki monumentalnej architektury świeckiej na grodzie poznańskim*, in: *Początki...*, pp. 71-84.

41 G. Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen. Von Karl dem Grossen bis Friedrich II.* (765-1240), Darmstadt 1996.

other structures of the oldest architecture in the territory of Poland⁴². In the case of the Poznań palatium the differences in the depth of the foundations are in fact small. The foundation trenches were filled with small-size rock material, gathered in the nearest vicinity, mostly granites, gneiss and quartzite, with the addition of Jotnian sandstone quartzite, syenite, porphyry, pegmatite and gabbro⁴³. This was very thoroughly done, with the rock raw material tightly arranged along the edge of the trench. In the lower parts the material was surrounded with earth, whereas in the upper parts the stone was supplemented by clods of raw clay. The upper layers of the material used for erecting foundations were bonded by gypsum mortar.

The width of the external walls of the structure reached up to 1.30 m. They were built of layers of stone slabs running across the whole width of the wall and cemented with a thick layer of mortar of pure gypsum⁴⁴. The mortar was so profusely applied that frequently part of it was oozing out from the faces of erected walls, forming a layer of gypsum near the ground. The walls were then plastered with the same gypsum mortar, both inside and outside – patches remain on some parts of the standing walls.

At the level of the top of the foundations, there was a level of deposition of the interior of the palatial structure, a small fragment of this with two levels of floors preserved was excavated near the foundation of the western wall. The first floor was made of gypsum mortar poured over a layer of rock crumbs, the second floor layer of lime mortar. Between them is a layer of burnt material, suggesting that there was a fire in the building, resulting in the need to renew the floor. Relics of the foundations of two walls dividing the interior of the palatium were also recorded; they are situated at right angles to its western wall. One of them, in the southern part of the building, was destroyed when the Gothic church was erected. It is impossible to assess its width, as it was partly covered by the later foundations. It was probably similar in width to the partition wall of the room in the northern part of palatium (1.10 m).

42 Z. Pianowski, *Sedes regni principales. Wawel i inne rezydencje piastowskie do połowy XIII wieku na tle europejskim*, Kraków 1997; J. Firlet, Z. Pianowski, *Przemiany architektury rezydencji monarszej oraz katedry na Wawelu w świetle nowych badań*, "Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki" XLIV (2000) 4, pp. 207- 237; Z. Pianowski, M. Proksa, op.cit.

43 J. Skoczylas, Petrograficzne makroskopowe badania surowca skalnego fundamentów palatium na Ostrowie Tumskim w Poznaniu w 2000, 2001 i 2002 r. (typescripts in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

44 J. Skoczylas, J. Michniewicz, Analiza zapraw budowlanych pochodzących z pozostałości wczesnośredniowiecznych murów budowli na Ostrowie Tumskim (typescript in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); J. Skoczylas, J. Michniewicz, M. Michniewicz, Ekspertyza materiałoznawcza próbek zapraw budowlanych pochodzących z badań archeologicznych w wykopach XV, XVI i XVII na Ostrowie Tumskim w Poznaniu w 2002 r. (typescript in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

The palatium was entered through an annex situated next to its south-eastern corner, protruding 2.2 m in front of the building, with an entrance of the same width. In the thickness of its southern wall there were stairs leading up to the second floor, which is testified by the remains of the first step lying *in situ*. The ducal palatium could have been about 11 m high, as this is how far – measuring from the foundations of the northern wall – the remains of the collapsed wall extended. The ground floor of the building was divided into at least four rooms. Their arrangement – from the south to the north – can be reconstructed as follows: an anteroom was adjoined by a room (51 m²), preceding a central large room (102 m²) which had a representative function. Passages in the next partition walls led to two other rooms. One of them was small and corridor-like, only 90 cm wide but 5 m long (4.5 m²), maybe a treasury. The last room, adjoining the treasury from the east, occupied a space of 34 m². This room produced very interesting finds, namely two seals: a heavily used lead one, with an illegible image, and a bronze one, belonging to father Jacob of the Dominican order⁴⁵, and a lead bull of duke Boleslaus⁴⁶. The finds suggest that this room was a chancellery. One more exceptional item was excavated in this room, in a layer dated to the 11th-12th century, namely a kind of a container made of raw clay, with imprints of a signet seal ring and an image of a guarding dog⁴⁷. It was probably to protect the seal against illegitimate use while the duke was absent. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the meaning of the signet ring, which had the power of confirming documents⁴⁸. The dog, imprinted in the clay surface of the container, is depicted in the guarding position – the guard of the seal. The clay container from Poznań is a unique find. Imprints of the signet ring arranged on its whole circumference guaranteed that it would remain intact; an outsider could not open the cover without damaging any of them. The container survived only because it was incidentally thrown into fire after removing the contents and burnt. All these items suggest that documents were stored and, what's more important, issued in this room.

The metric data allow estimation of the usage space of each floor of the secular residence at about 190 m². Whereas the rooms on the ground floor probably fulfilled administrative-representational functions, the rooms on the second floor were probably the ruler's private accommodation. Dendrochronological analysis of the threshold beam of the door opening

45 A. Dębski, I. Marciniak, *Średniowieczny tłok pieczętny odkryty na stanowisku Poznań - Ostrów Tumski 9/10*, in: *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, V, pp. 161-168.

46 I. Dębska, A. Dębski, M. Sikora, *Wczesnośredniowieczna pieczęć ołowiana odkryta na poznańskim Ostrowie Tumskim*, in: *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, VI, pp. 99-110.

47 H. Kóčka-Krenz, A. Sikorski, *Seal container (?) from Ostrów Tumski*, "Archaeologia Polona" XLV (2007), pp. 105-112.

48 H. Biedermann, *Leksykon symboli*, Warszawa 2003, p. 281.

(the tree was cut down after 941)⁴⁹, led to the conclusion that the stone residence was built shortly after the middle of the 10th century. Its direct vicinity was paved with a layer of very small stone slabs covered with gypsum mortar. A large area of this surface was recorded at a short distance from the north-eastern corner of the palatium – maybe here was a kind of *pavimentum* – a place “under the open sky”, where the duke exercised some of his ruling functions.

The chapel was erected opposite the entrance annex to the palatium, the axis of which is a prolongation of the axis of the chapel. The structures had separate foundations, there is a two-metre distance between them (fig. 2, 3). What attracts attention, however, is the identical technique of constructing the foundations, set in a narrow trench of the same width and depth filled with natural rock raw material with packed earth infill. In both structures the foundation is capped by walls made of stone slabs bonded with profusely applied gypsum mortar. The walls of the palatium and of the chapel, were both covered with gypsum plaster, and their interior floors – hardened with a layer of gypsum on a layer of small stone slabs. Undoubtedly, we are witness here to the effects of a simultaneous building action, though the palatium was connected with the chapel into one complex only above ground (fig. 7). A total lack of a foundation in the western part of the chapel, the foundation that would connect with the ends of its northern and southern wall, leads to such a conclusion. Such a connection must have had the form of arches between the upper parts of the walls and the entrance annex (fig. 8). At the same time, such a construction created the frame of the doors leading outside the whole complex and a support for the gallery floor, accessible from the second floor of the palatium.

Taking into consideration the strength of the fortifications, their size and the multi-segmental character of the area enclosed as well as the type of the buildings, we may acknowledge that the stronghold in Poznań was modelled on Carolingian-Ottonian residences, called “Pfalz” in the German literature⁵⁰. Such places required appropriate furnishings for providing the ruler with all indispensable means for living, since his entourage was usually numerous and often consisted of hundreds of people⁵¹. In the second half of the 10th century, in the Poznań fortified settlement the duke had a stone palatium with a separate reception room, chancellery and treasury as well as a stone palatial chapel for private devotion at his disposal. Early Piast Poznań was a powerful *fortalicium*,

49 M. Krąpiec, Wynik analizy dendrochronologicznej i dendrologicznej prób drewna z badań archeologicznych prowadzonych na Ostrowie Tumskim w Poznaniu, Kraków 2002 (typescript in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

50 A. Gauert, *Zur Struktur und Topographie der Königspfalzen*, in: *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, II, Göttingen 1965, pp. 1-60, see p. 3 ff.

51 G. Binding, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-58.

guarding access to the state, the residence of a duke and his court, a fortified settlement fulfilling administrative, economic and sacral functions⁵². Its exceptional role in the state⁵³, including the Christianisation of the Piast domain, is emphasised by the foundation of the church by duchess Dobrawa, the first – as archaeological material indicates – and exceptional in terms of its shape.

translated by Agnieszka Tokarczuk-Róžańska

52 H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Najstarszy Poznań – wciąż odkrywany*, in: *Studia nad dawną Polską*, ed. by T. Sawicki, Gniezno 2008, pp. 35-54.

53 Z. Dalewski, *Władza, przestrzeń, ceremonial. Miejsce i uroczystość inauguracji władcy w Polsce średniowiecznej do końca XIV w.*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 38-39.

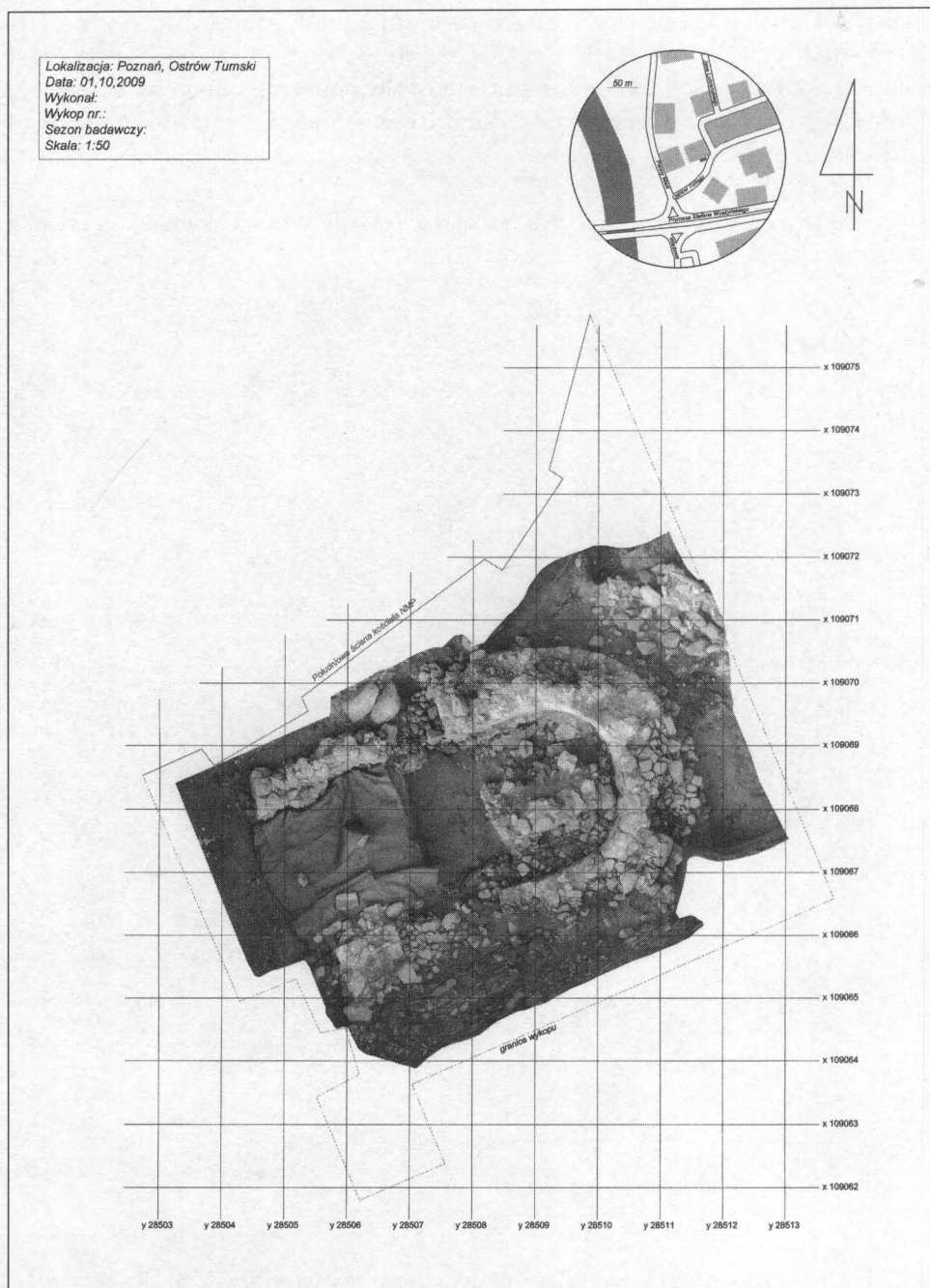


Fig. 1. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. The relics of the ducal chapel (scanned by A. Gołębniak).

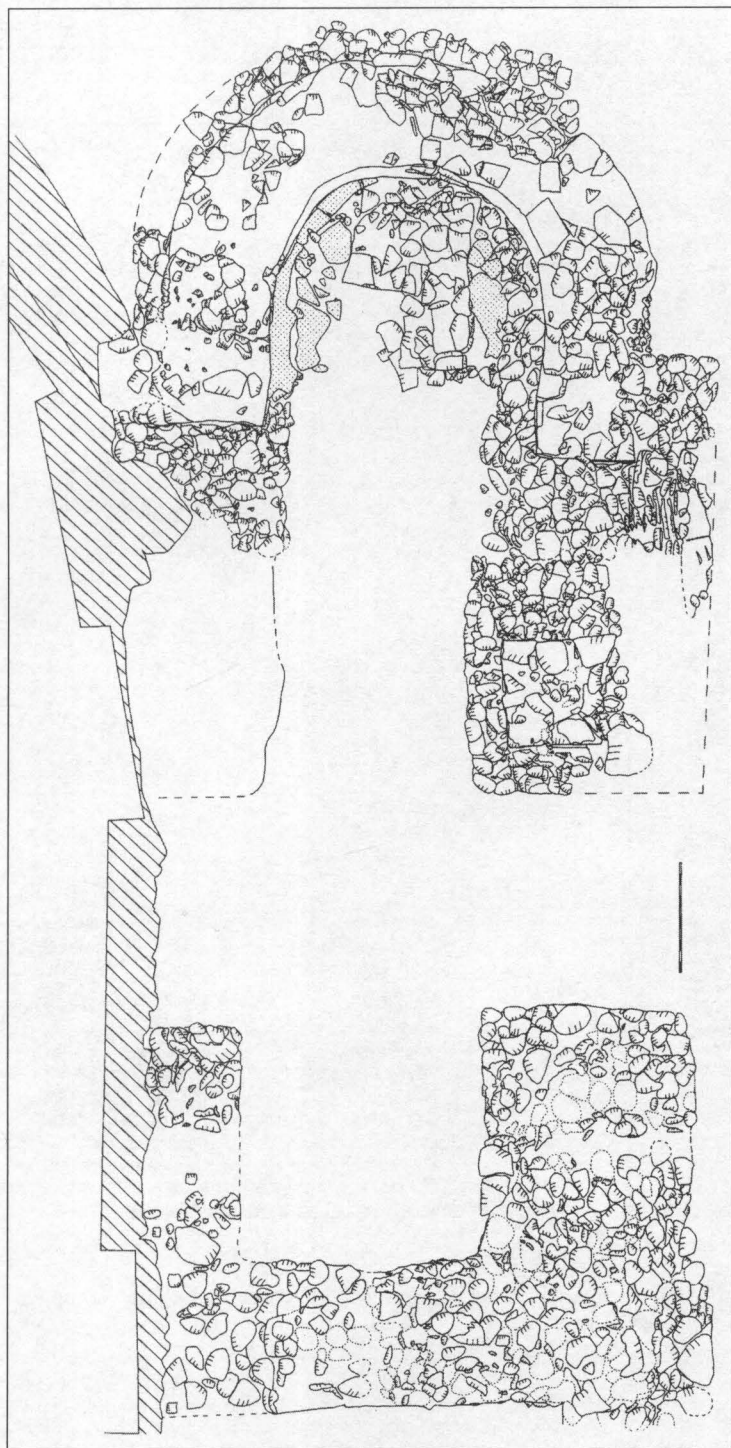


Fig. 2. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. Plan of relics of the chapel with the palatium entrance (drawn by O. Antowska-Gorączniak).

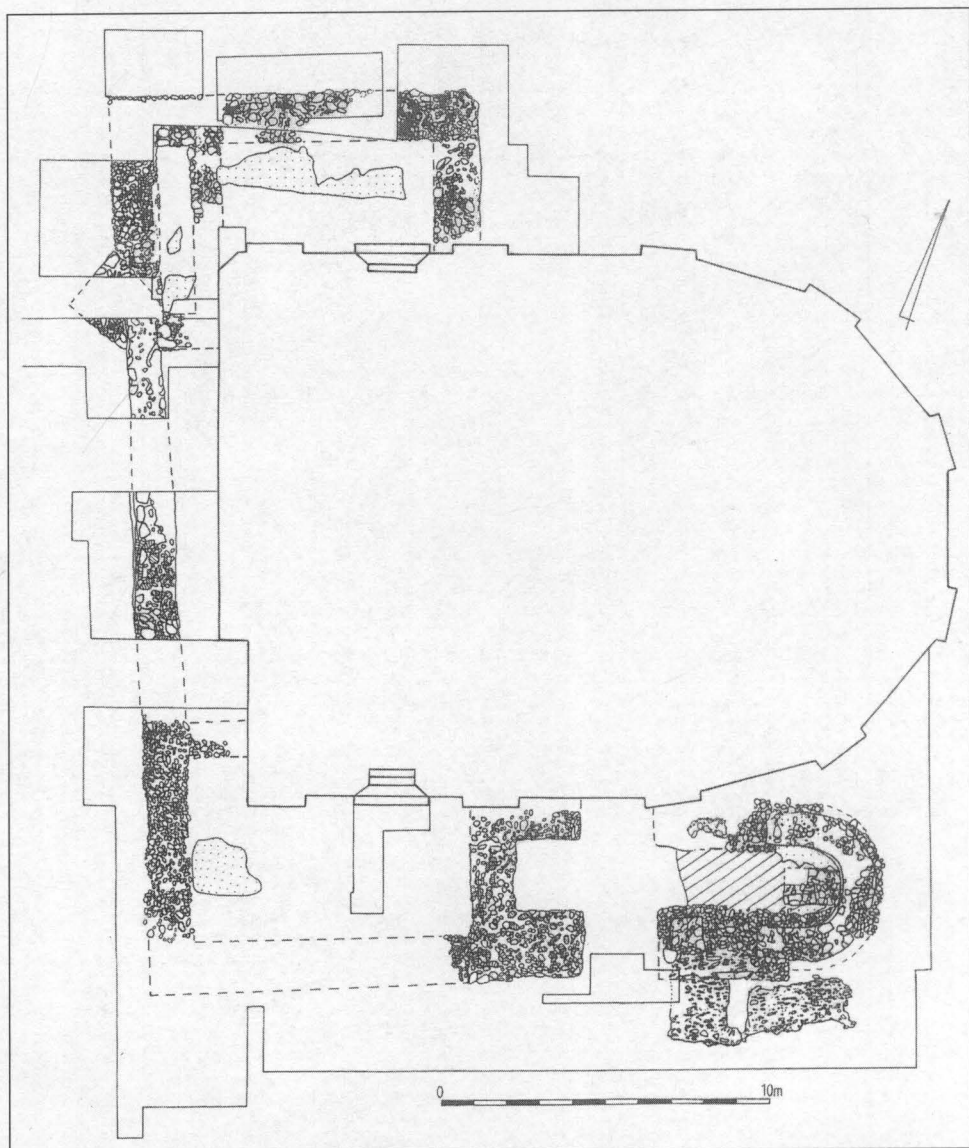


Fig. 3. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. Plan of the relics of palace-and-chapel complex (drawn by O. Antowska-Gorączniak).

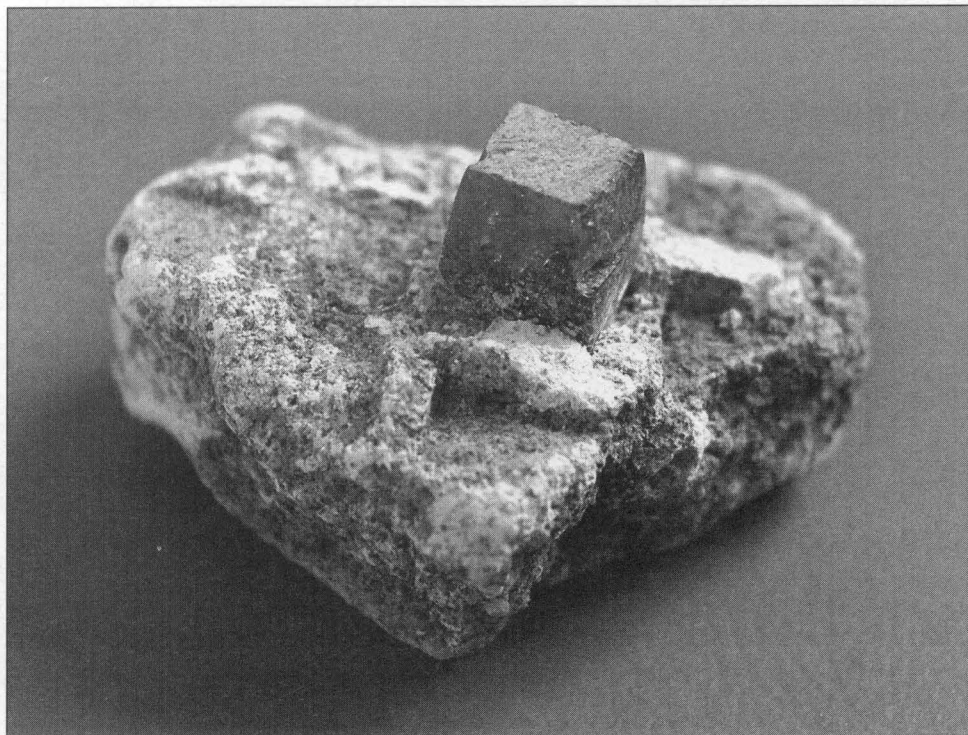


Fig. 4. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. Mosaic cube set in a piece of plaster (phot. by A. Dębski).

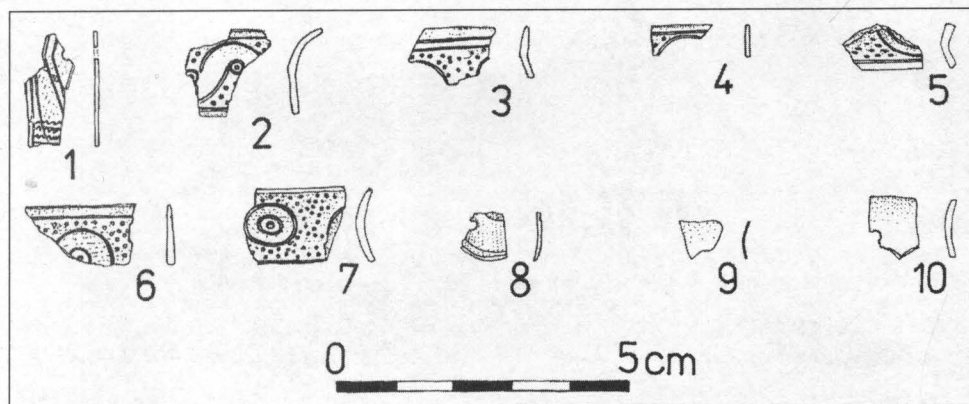


Fig. 5. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. Fragments of bone reliquary mount (drawn by O. Antowska-Gorączniak).

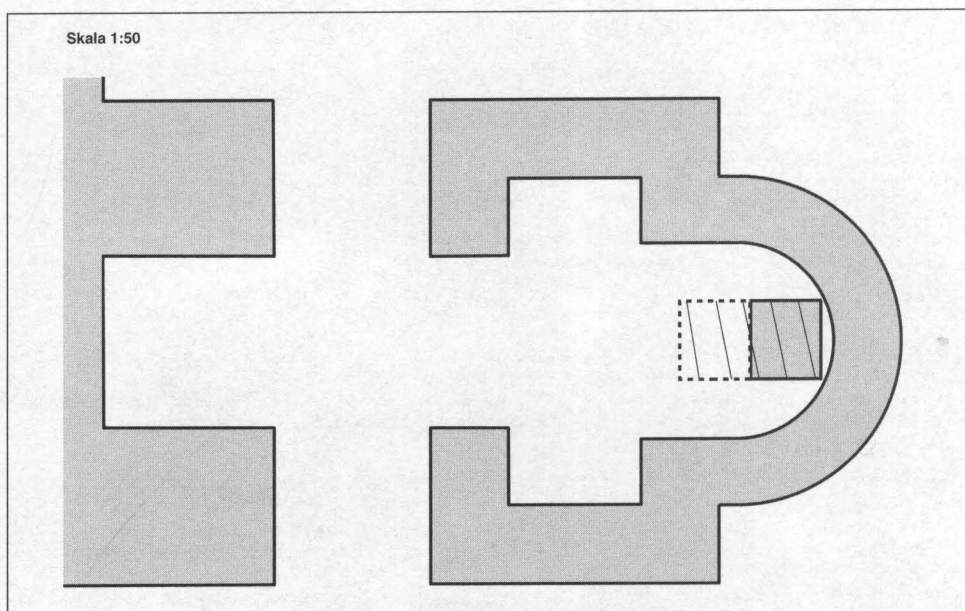


Fig. 6. Poznań - Ostrów Tumski. Outline of ducal chapel, walls together with two-phases' stipes.

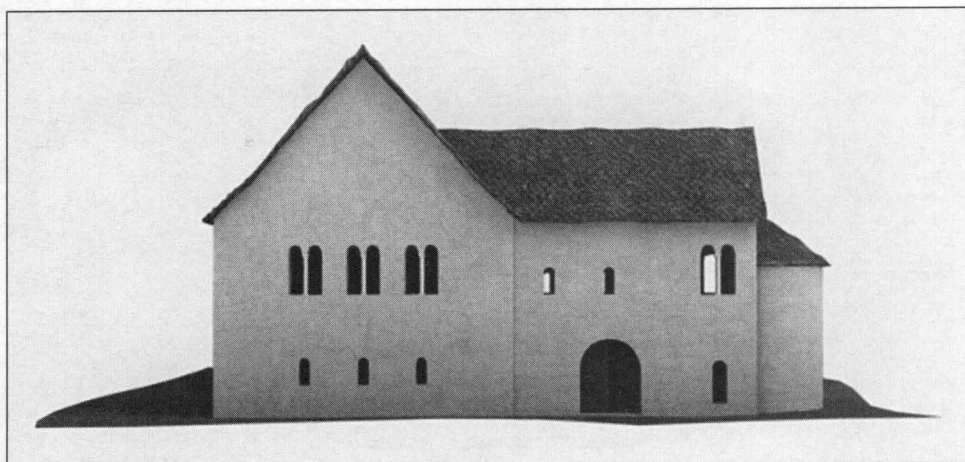


Fig. 7. Poznań-Ostrów Tumski. Reconstruction of ducal residence viewed from the south (drawn by A. Gołębniak).

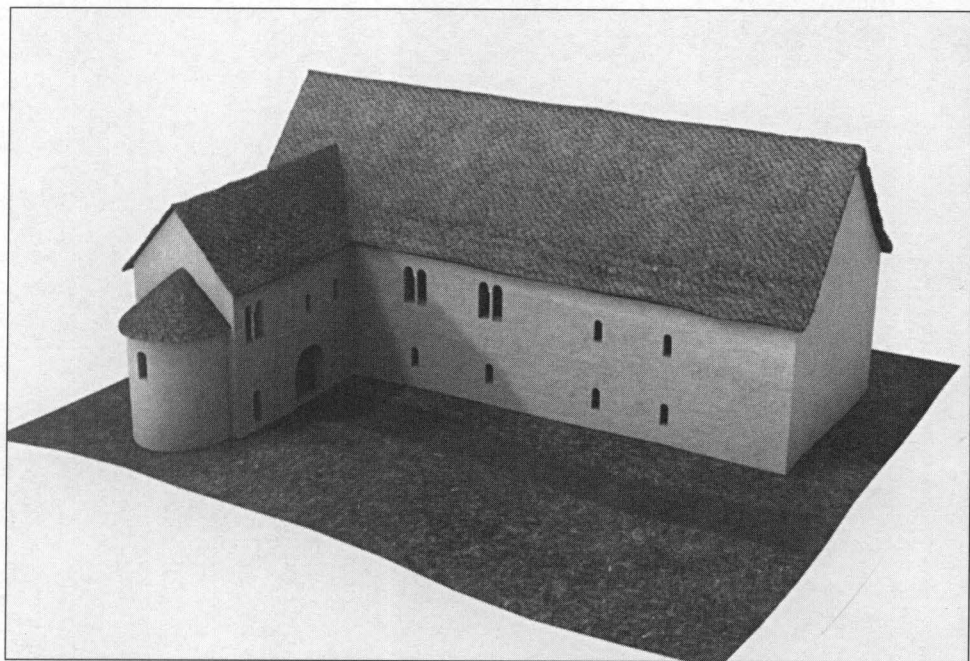


Fig. 8. Poznań-Ostrów Tumski. Reconstruction of ducal residence viewed from the north-east (drawn by A. Golembnik).

