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## *Medieval architecture of the Dominican church in Opole (the so-called “na Górcze”) and its transformations from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*

### *Introduction*

The chartered town of Opole is located on the right bank of the Odra River, and is separated from Pasięka Island by the Młynówka River. The urban centre was founded on a slope that descends towards the east, i.e. towards the river valley. At its highest point – on the so-called “Górka” – the church of the Dominican Order of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech was erected. Its body of the church is a characteristic element of the panorama of the Old Town, whereas its western façade closes the viewing axis of the Zamkowy Bridge and St. Wojciech Street (Fig. 1).

The former Dominican church consists of a three-aisled body and a chancel, which is made on a plan of a strongly elongated rectangle (closed on three sides from the east), as can be seen in Figure 2. The southern wall of the eastern part of the chancel forms the border with a building of the University of Opole – formerly a monastery. On the northern side of the chancel, at the height of the first bay (counting from the west), there is a chapel. Above it, there is an octagonal tower topped with an onion-shaped cupola with one opening. The chancel and the chapel, to which the staircase leading to the upper levels of the tower adjoins, are buttressed. The interior of the chancel is illuminated by four windows: quadrilateral and ogival windows in the polygonal closure, and two segmental windows from the south, which are located in two bays adjacent to the rainbow arcade.

The four-span nave has a varied spatial layout – basilica-like on the south side, and pseudo-basilica on the north. Its façades are devoid of buttresses – except for one diagonal buttress in the north-western corner. The side aisles and the main nave from the west are illuminated by windows with semi-circular arches. The windows in the southern



Fig. 1. Opole, post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, view from the west (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 1. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, widok od zachodu (fot. A. Legendziewicz)

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Fig. 2. Opole, the post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, view from the east (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 2. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, widok od wschodu (fot. A. Legendziewicz)

wall of the chancel and in the central nave have a sectional shape. The main portal leading to the church was arranged on the axis of the western façade. Next to the northern façade of the main building, by the third bay from the west, a small porch was placed.

The interiors of the chancel, central nave and southern aisles are covered with barrel vaults (with lunettes), which are supported on diagonal ribs between the bays leading down to the heads of the pilasters that are made in the Corinthian order (Fig. 3). The barrel vault in the northern aisle is decorated with cross ribs that were reconstructed in 1933. They are placed in line with the edges of the lunettes, and also in the axes of the pillars between the nave and the aisles. They are based on stone corbels and cornices that crown the lesenes (Fig. 4). The chapel, which opens through an arcade to the northern aisle and chancel, has two bays: a southern one with a rib vault, and a northern one with a groin vault without ribs.

The chancel, as well as the central nave and northern aisle, are covered with a gable roof that is slightly bent at the border between the nave and the aisles. It has separated slopes over the three-sided eastern wall. A shed roof was made over the southern aisle.

### *The state of research*

The oldest document, which comes from 1254, and which mentions property grants to the church of St. Wojciech, was recognized as a forgery in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Colmar Grünhagen [1, no. 875] and Wilfred Irgang [2, no. 571]. The first unquestionable source record concerning the church comes from a deed issued on November 17, 1295 in Wrocław by Bishop Jan Romka [3, no. 2387], [4, no. 225]. It states that the church of St. Wojciech lost its parish rights, and that the house of the predicate brothers

was built in its vicinity. In addition, it contained information about the transfer of its income to the prebend of the collegiate church of St. Cross in Opole. Information about the consecration of the church, which was done between August 15 and 17, 1361 by the auxiliary bishop of Wrocław – Dzierżysław [5, pp. 71, 72], [6, pp. 89–104] – is important with regards to the dating of the construction of the church. The reconstruction of the brick church and monastery in 1399, probably after the siege of Opole by the Polish army, was financed by Prince Władysław II [5, pp. 71, 72]. Information about the renovation of the church and its rededication to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints: Wojciech, George, Dominic and Ann comes from 1430 [6, p. 90]<sup>1</sup>. Important, with regards to the discussion concerning the early modern transformations of the church, are the mentions of fires in Opole in 1682 and 1739 [4, pp. 181, 201, 207, 267, 268], [7, p. 888], during which the buildings of the Dominican convent were affected.

The first, and so far the only broader study of the architecture of the church was published by Günther Schiedlausky, Rolf Hartmann and Hilda Eberle in the catalogue of monuments of construction and art in Opole [6, pp. 89–104]. They considered the eastern part of the chancel (closed on three sides and distinguished by the thickness of the walls) to be its oldest. The next part of the building to be constructed was the western part of the chancel, which forms the nave of the church. It was probably referred to in the mention of the consecration that took part in 1361 on three consecutive days. The consecration concerned: the main altar in the chancel, the altars in the nave, and also the chapel and several other altars [5, pp. 71, 72], [6,

<sup>1</sup> The authors refer to a lost Dominican chronicle kept until 1945 in the Stadtarchiv in Wrocław.





Fig. 3. Opole, the post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, the central nave – view towards the east  
(photo by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 3. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, nawa główna w widoku ku wschodowi  
(fot. A. Legendziewicz)



Fig. 4. Opole, the post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, north aisle – view towards the east  
(photo by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 4. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, nawa północna w widoku ku wschodowi  
(fot. A. Legendziewicz)

pp. 89–104]. The time of the construction of the main and northern aisles of the present nave is probably indicated in a written record from 1399, which mentions the construction of a new brick building. The study contains information about the Gothic vaults i.e. traces of a demolished vault (visible at the attic level in the walls of the northern and south-western parts of the chancel), and also information about the reconstruction in 1933 of the groin vault (in the northern aisle, using old building material). In addition, the cited authors describe the boss stone with fragments of three ribs, a bas-relief of the head of St. John on a bowl (found during the construction of the boiler room under the western part of the chancel), and the second boss stone with fragments of eight ribs, which was found in the church's courtyard. Based on the analysis of the profile of the ribs from the second of these boss stones, as well as the ribs in the vault of the northern aisle and the southern part of the chapel, it was indicated that it could have been located in the vault above the central nave. The two-nave building was built with a chapel next to the chancel as part of one investment in around 1400. In turn, the boss stone with three ribs and the bas-relief was probably placed in the older three-support vault in either the northern aisle or the cloister.

Edmund Małachowicz, in his research concerning the architecture of the Dominican Order in Silesia, mentioned

that the convent came to Opole from Wrocław [8, pp. 131–133]. He considered the eastern bay of the chancel, which was erected in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, to be the oldest part of the church. In the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the chancel was enlarged by adding its western part, and in 1361 – the main nave was constructed. He dated the southern aisle to 1708. In turn, according to Tadeusz Chrzanowski and Marian Kornecki [9, pp. 23, 24], [10, p. 35], the first construction phase of the church included the eastern part of the chancel, which was built in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and which was characterized by having thicker walls. At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, or in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a chapel was added to the chancel. The three-nave basilica was built in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the vault in the northern aisle was probably constructed in around 1399 or in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These theses were repeated by Józef Pilch [11, p. 144].

The time of building the church “na Górcie” is also a subject of discussion among historians. Bearing in mind the knowledge of the territorial development of early medieval Opole, we shall omit the older hypotheses that indicate the origin of the church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Marta Młynarska-Kaletynowa, when considering the history of the cult of St. Wojciech in Poland, opted for the construction of the church to be in the 12<sup>th</sup> century [12, p. 145]. Anna Pobóg-Lenartowicz and Ewa Wólkiewicz, in their works





Fig. 5. Opole, post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, view from the north-west, engraving from around the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. F.B. Werner (source: [19, reference number T3-0249a])

Il. 5. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, widok od północnego zachodu, rycina z około połowy XVIII w. F.B. Wenera (źródło: [19, sygn. T3-0249a])

devoted to the Dominican convent in Opole, denied that the church dedicated to St. Wojciech was created during the intensification of his cult at the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries [13, pp. 7–22], [14, pp. 59–88]. According to Wólkiewicz, it occurred in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and was founded by Prince Władysław I and his wife Euphemia – daughter of Odonic, the Duke of Wielkopolska [14, p. 84]. A summary of the state of research referring to the history of the Opole Dominicans was published by Pobóg-Lenartowicz [15]. It is also worth noting that the time of the Dominicans arriving in Opole is also under debate, with the following being taken into account: the period from 1254 to 1273, the 1380s and 1390s, and the period between 1304 and 1307 [13, pp. 7–22].

The considerations presented below are the result of architectural research conducted by the authors during the renovation of the church's façades and the terrace in front of its western façade [16]–[18]. They were based on the analysis of construction technology, architectural details, and source references. The scope of the research enabled the perimeter walls and the walls at the attic level to be identified. The results of these works allowed the authors to verify the theses presented to date in the subject literature. Particularly valuable for tracing the baroque transformations within the western façade of the church are: the view of the monastery complex from the north-west from around 1750, which was made by Fryderyk B. Werner [19, drawing reference T3-0249a], and the inventory drawing of the western façade published in 1939 [6, pp. 89–104] (Fig. 5). Archival photographs [20], [21] document the

condition of the western façade after the neo-Romanesque reconstruction that was carried out in the years 1843–1847 [6, pp. 89–104].

### Research results

The oldest fragment of the perimeter walls of the chancel was found on the northern façade on the eastern side of the chapel (between the chapel and the buttress). Below the windowsill, there is a strip of a single-coloured surface of about 2.3 m high. The wall was built of bricks arranged in a regular stretcher bond pattern. The bricks had dimensions of 8.5–9.2 × 11.5–12.1 × 27–28.2 cm. The texture of the surface was formed by horizontal and vertical cross-sectional vee joints. The preserved fragment of the wall may be a relic of the circumferential wall of the chancel of the first monastic church, which was probably erected at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and which was mentioned in a document from 1295 [3, no. 2387], [4, no. 225]. Traces of brick toothing at the attic level indicate that the chancel of this church could have had a plan similar to a square with an interior size of about 7.5 × 7.5 m (Figs. 6a, 7a).

The construction of the Gothic monastic church after the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century is confirmed by information from the Dominican chronicles about the solemn consecration on three consecutive days from 15 to 17 August 1361 [5, pp. 71, 72], [6, p. 90]. The construction of the church was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the existing chancel was probably enlarged by adding an eastern, pro-

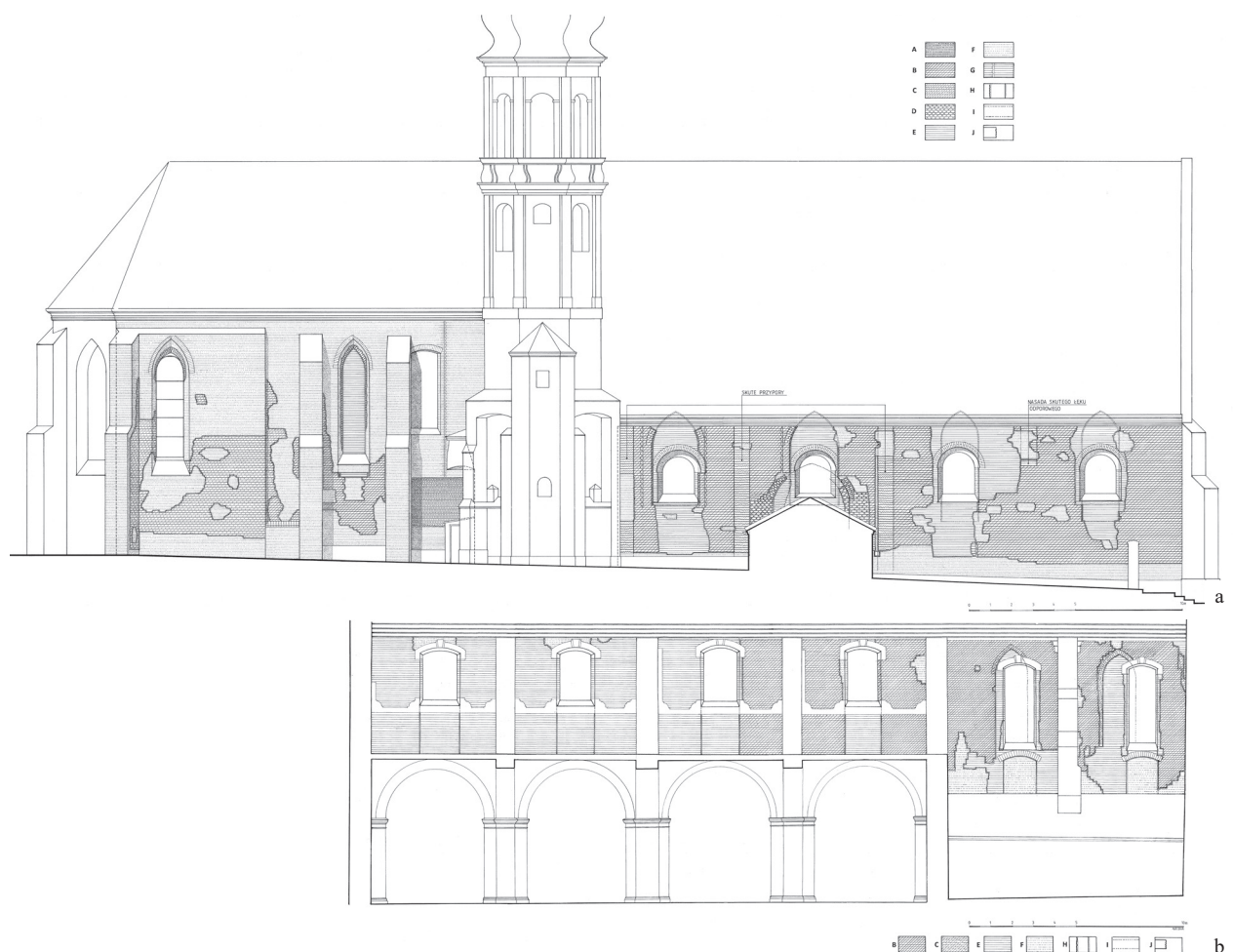


Fig. 6. Opole, post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech – chronological stratification of the walls:  
 a) the northern façade of the chancel and the nave, b) the southern façade of the chancel and the central nave above the vaults of the aisle.  
 Designations: A – late 13<sup>th</sup> century, B – around 1361, C – around 1399, D – around 1430, E – early 18<sup>th</sup> century,  
 F – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, G – brick toothing, H – wall joints, I – reconstruction lines, J – broken wall  
 (elaborated by A. Legendziewicz, C. Lasota)

Il. 6. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha – chronologiczne rozwarstwienie murów:  
 a) elewacja północna prezbiterium i korpusu, b) elewacja południowa prezbiterium i nawy głównej nad sklepieniami nawy bocznej.  
 Oznaczenia: A – schyłek XIII w., B – około 1361 r., C – około 1399 r., D – około 1430 r., E – początek XVIII w., F – XIX i XX w.,  
 G – strzępia, H – styki murów, I – linie rekonstrukcyjne, J – mur zerwany (oprac. A. Legendziewicz, C. Lasota)

bably polygonal, bay. It was the first to be erected, as evidenced by the preserved fragments of walls and brick toothing at the attic level. Sections of the northern and southern walls, strengthened with buttresses, were added to them. In line with the rainbow arcade, in the northern pillar, brick toothing was built to the north (Figs. 7a, b). The chancel's interior was covered with three bays of vaults: two rectangular, and one that was probably on the plan of five sides of an octagon. This arrangement of the vaults is indicated by traces of their supports found in the attic above the existing vaults. The first two bays (counting from the west) were 5.0 and 5.3 m long, with the last one being 4.0 m long. The vaults were probably decorated with a rib decoration of an unknown arrangement, the relic of which may be a vault's boss stone that was discovered during the work in 1933. The interior was illuminated by ogival windows, three of which are located in the south wall, and three in the north wall. Their arrangement is confirmed by the upper parts of the arches, which are

visible in the attic. The size of the windows in the longer bays was possible to determine on the basis of two openings that were found on the façades. From the south, there was an ogival opening in the western bay, which was 1.5 m wide (measured in the outer edge of the glyphs). It was covered with a one brick thick arch. The second opening (analogous in form) was located from the north in the eastern bay. Its height, measured from the sill to the keystone of the arch, was about 6.6 m. The windows from the north could have had different heights. A chapel was added adjacent to the western bay, which is mentioned in a document from 1361 about the consecration of the altar [5, pp. 71, 72], [6, p. 90]. The intrados of the arches were covered with thin plaster, relics of which were found in the opening on the southern side (Figs. 6a, b).

The second stage of shaping the Gothic church was the construction of a two-nave, four-bay, pseudo-basilica body. It was erected on a rectangular plan with dimensions of 28.3 × 15.5 m. Its construction began from the west by



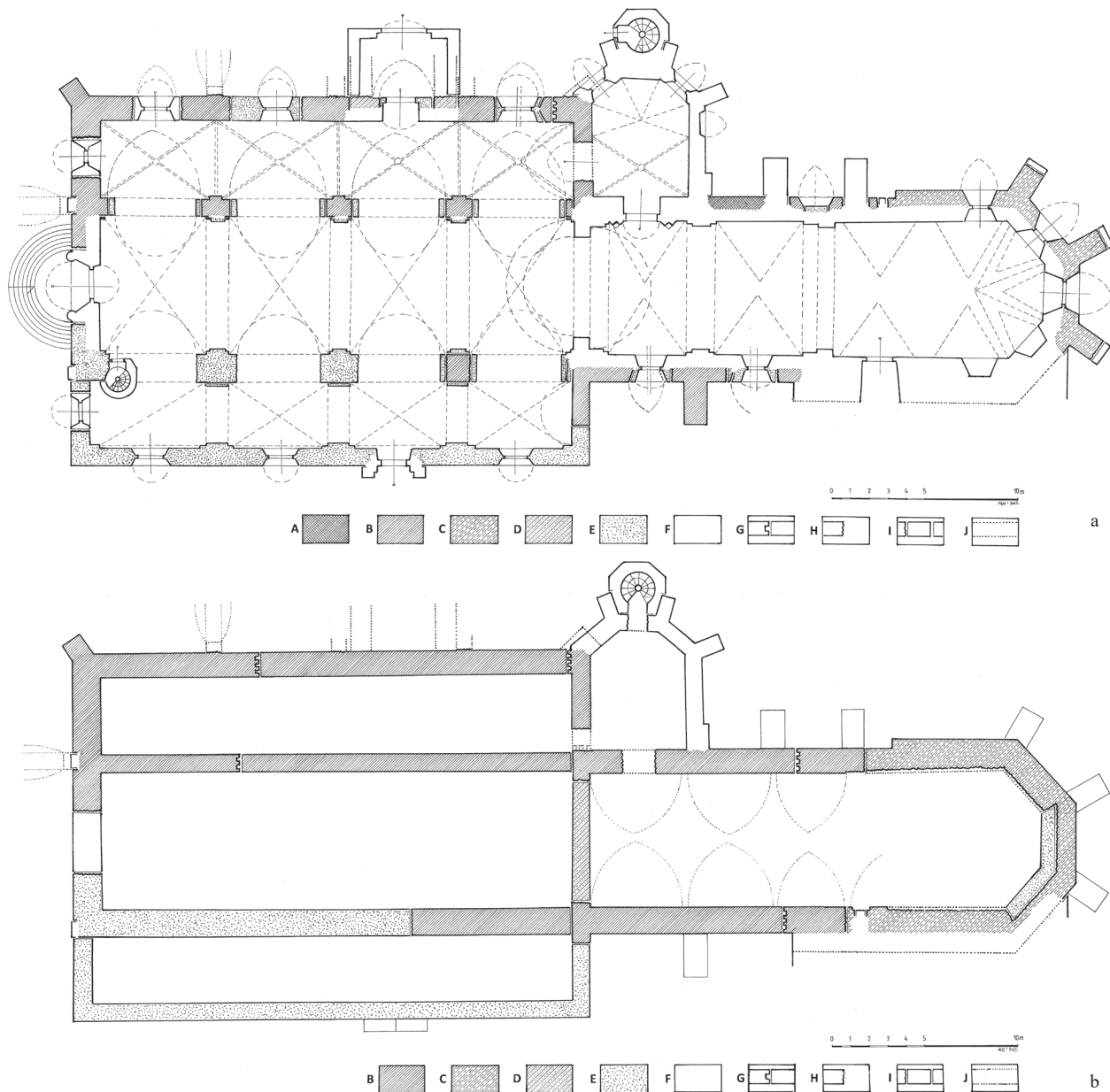


Fig. 7. Opole, post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, the projection of the church with the chronological stratification of the walls: a) at the level of the windows, b) above the vaults.

Designations: A – late 13<sup>th</sup> century, B – around 1361, C – around 1399, D – around 1430, E – early 18<sup>th</sup> century, F – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, G – brick toothing, H – wall joints, I – reconstruction lines, J – broken wall

(elaborated by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 7. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha,

rzut kościoła z chronologicznym rozwarstwieniem murów: a) na poziomie okien, b) nad sklepieniami.

Oznaczenia: A – schyłek XIII w., B – około 1361 r., C – około 1399 r., D – około 1430 r., E – początek XVIII w., F – XIX i XX w., G – strzępia, H – styki murów, I – linie rekonstrukcyjne, J – mur zerwany (oprac. A. Legendziewicz)

building the western wall and sections of the northern and inter- nave walls at the height of the first bay. They were finished with brick toothing that was protruding towards the east. The sections of the walls between the toothing were added tightly to the pillars of the rainbow arcade.

The asymmetric two-aisle western façade was enclosed with corner buttresses and a buttress arch in line with the arcades between the aisles. The existence of the arch is indicated by brick toothing in the form of layers of bricks (juxtaposed with headers coming out of the face

of the wall, alternately with recessed stretchers). They protruded from the wall directly above the cornice that crowned the aisle. The articulation of the western façade was determined by the windows of the main nave and the northern aisle. In the case of the first window, the found fragments of its jambs allow for its reconstruction. The ogival opening was covered with a one brick thick arch. The width of the window (measured in the outer edges of the glyphs) was equal to 2.5 m, and the height to the keystone was 6.4 m. The windowsill was placed about

6.3 m above the level of the current terrace in front of the entrance. The second opening, which illuminated the northern aisle, was 1.8 m wide. Its arch was 1/2 a brick thick. A layer of thin whitewashed plaster with fine-grained sand was found in its intrados. The glyphs of both openings were built with the use of mouldings that were formed before firing (Figs. 7a, b).

The rhythm of the southern façade of the nave was probably determined by four windows located in the axes of the bays. The location of the two eastern windows is known, fragments of which are preserved in the attic above the southern aisle. The remaining openings, with the western fragment of the façade of the nave, were probably destroyed during the fire in 1682 [5, p. 181, 267], [7, p. 888]. The preserved two edges of the window in the first bay from the east indicate that the width of the opening on the façade was equal to 1.7 m. The glyphs were built using similar fittings as the ones on the western façade. The shape and height of the windows remain unknown, with the arches and windowsills being destroyed during the Baroque reconstruction. The western edge of the nave was supported by a diagonal buttress, fragments of which were found below the level of the present terrace. Lesenes were made along the wall between the windows. The location of the first rainbow arcade, marking the eastern bay of the nave, is known (Fig. 6b).

The northern aisle was supported by two diagonal buttresses, two perpendicular buttresses, and an arch in line with the first pillar (from the west). Relics of 75 cm thick perpendicular buttresses, and the bases of the arch, were found on the wall surface after the removal of the cement plaster. Four ogival windows were built in the axes of the bays: two 2.3 m wide (from the east), and two 1.8 m wide (from the west). The identified edges of the window openings, together with the one brick thick ogival arches and slanted glyphs, were made of brick fittings that were formed before firing. The two narrower western windows were made in the place of technical openings, and they had brick toothing on their sides. The upper parts of the arches were dismantled, and the present roof was installed<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 6a).

The longer façades of the central nave were crowned with a ceramic cornice made of brick fittings: concave headers and single cant bricks. The cornice is preserved along almost the entire length of the northern wall in the attic part above the nave. The traces of wooden constructions that are visible below it indicate that the northern aisle was originally covered with a shed roof with a lower pitch than at present. Its base was a ceramic cornice of a currently unknown profile – its forged relic was found on the façade three layers of bricks above the arch of the nave's window.

The texture and colours of the Gothic façade were made of bricks measuring 7.7–9 × 10.8–12.0 × 24.5–25.7 cm, which were arranged in a regular two-colour stretcher



Fig. 8. Opole, post-Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech, northern aisle, detail of the upper part of the pillar and the tas-de-charge of the inter-nave arcades (photo by A. Legendziewicz)

Il. 8. Opole, kościół poddominikański pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha, nawa północna, detal górnej partii filara i spływu arkad międzynawowych (fot. A. Legendziewicz)

bond pattern. The surface consisted of stretchers (in a red to vermilion colour) and headers (in dark brown to black colour), some of which with enamel effusion. Vertical joints were formed as flat in a vee shape, and horizontal joints as flat in a struck shape.

The 7.4 m wide nave probably had a ceiling. Relics of plaster coatings, which are preserved in the attic above the baroque vaults, suggest that the interior was plastered and whitewashed immediately after its construction. The narrower and lower northern aisle (4.3 m wide) received a rib vault, the geometry of which was probably consistent with the one reconstructed in 1933 [6, p. 92]. The individual bays might have been separated by rib arches placed on either the imposts in the perimeter walls or the lesenes (with profiled edges) in the inter-nave pillars. The brick ribs of the vault decoration were based on corbels. Ogival arches with a thickness of 1.5 brick were placed between the pillars (Figs. 4, 8).

The next phase of the transformation of the church's architecture probably took place in around 1399. According to the Dominican chronicles, the founder of the reconstruction of the temple and the monastery was Władysław II Opolczyk [5, pp. 71, 72]. The probable reason for starting the work could be the destruction or damage of the monastery buildings during the siege of Opole by the Polish army led by King Władysław Jagiełło in the summer of 1396 [22, p. 72], [23, p. 237]<sup>3</sup>. The scope of reconstruction included the enlargement of the chancel towards the east, and also probably the construction of a brick monastery wing in place of the wooden one. The chancel was extended in around 1399 to the east by about 11.5 m. The existing polygonal closure was demolished in the

<sup>2</sup> The reconstruction of the Gothic window, which is exhibited in the western bay of the northern aisle, has an arch embedded below the original window.

<sup>3</sup> The location in the south-eastern corner of the city, right next to the walls, may also have contributed to the destruction of the convent buildings

place of the inclination of the southern and northern façades. The new chancel was designed on a rectangular plan with a closure in the form of five sides of an octagon (Figs. 7a, b).

The walls of this part were built wider (about 1.8 m wide) than the previous ones. They were supported by three buttresses in the corners of the polygon. The interior was probably covered with a new vault that most likely had five bays. Traces of it can be found in the western, northern and southern walls. From the west, the vault was based on a newly built wall located in line with the rainbow arcade. Within the range of the northern and southern walls of the older part of the chancel, the vault was embedded in cut-out supports in the form of grooves of various widths and depths. In the southern wall of the younger part of the chancel, the outline of one fragment of a brick web of the vault can be seen. The arrangement of the ribs remains unknown. The interior was illuminated by at least nine ogival windows, out of which two from the north and two from the south were within the chancel that was consecrated in 1361. The window on the south side, in the second bay from the west, was moved to the west. Its jambs were built with cut bricks, and the intrados was covered with whitewashed lime plaster. The change in the location of the opening was probably dictated by the location of the building (to the east), which was adjacent to the walls of the chancel. It was most likely the monastery wing that was mentioned in the Dominican chronicles [5, pp. 71, 72] (Figs. 6b, 7a).

Another five windows were placed in the added part of the building. Three of them were introduced in a polygonal closure, and one on the eastern edges of the southern and northern façades. The preserved edges of the last of them indicate that they were about 1.8 m wide and covered with a one brick thick arch. The openings were decorated with stone traceries with jambs that had a double-cavity profile. Next to the southern glyph of the window of the eastern wall of the three-sided closure, above the windowsill, a fragment of a stone mullion was found. The surface of the added closure of the chancel was made of bricks measuring  $7.8\text{--}9.0 \times 12.0\text{--}13.0 \times 25\text{--}26.5$  cm, which were arranged in a regular stretcher bond pattern. Unfortunately, no preserved joints were found within the range of the wall surface.

The church was probably renovated in the Gothic period, which may be indicated by the mention that describes the rededication of the church in 1430 [6, p. 90]. It was probably during these works that an outbuilding was added to the northern façade of the nave. It was located next to the second (counting from the east) bay of the aisle. Traces of a cut vault preserved above the roof of the present porch indicate that the interior was covered with a one brick thick vault. Below it, a fragment of a one brick thick arch was found, which was most likely an ogival arcade or a doorway. Both structures were made of bricks with dimensions of  $7.6\text{--}8.4 \times 12.1\text{--}13.0 \times 27.0\text{--}27.5$  cm (Figs. 6a, 7a).

The church and the monastery buildings burned down during the fire of Opole on June 5, 1682 [4, pp. 181, 267], [6, p. 888]. As a result of the fire, the vaults and the south-western corner of the central nave were destroyed.

In the first stage of the reconstruction, which was probably carried out in the years 1701–1708 [6, p. 90], the southern wall of the central nave (within two bays, and half of the third bay – counting from the west) was built. Three new window openings (1.7 m wide) and one preserved Gothic window in the eastern bay were covered with segmental arches. The edges of their jambs enter the vault above the aisle. The new part of the wall was erected using new bricks, and also those taken from the demolition of medieval buildings. The bricks had dimensions of  $6.5\text{--}7.2 \times 13.4\text{--}14.0 \times 27.0\text{--}29.0$  cm, and were arranged in an irregular bond pattern – in some places in an English bond pattern. The wall within the attic above the aisle was not plastered (Figs. 6b, 7a).

The layout of the window openings in the chancel was also changed. The new ones were arranged in axes in two levels – one above the other – and pierced almost in the place of the Gothic ones. The upper one (4.10 m high), with straight jambs, was covered with half brick thick segmental arches. The lower opening had a similar shape, and its height was at least 1.7 m. The width of both openings, measured between the edges of the jambs, was equal to 1.5 m.

The height of the window openings in the nave indicates that originally there was a plan to rebuild the two-nave body. The lack of plaster coatings suggests, however, that the works may not have been completed.

The fire in 1739 [5, pp. 201, 207, 268], [7, p. 888] resulted in further damage to the monastery buildings. The view of the monastery complex with a baroque façade, known from Werner's drawing, proves that its reconstruction was completed before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century [19, ref. Fig. T1-0249a]. The body of the church, which is visible in the drawing, has a three-nave layout. The southern aisle, built during the reconstruction of the church, was designed as a four-bay structure. During its construction, semi-circular arcades were pierced in the ground floor of the southern façade of the nave. In the axes of the pillars, lesenes were placed, and on them a barrel vault with lunettes was supported. From the south, semi-circular windows with stepped jambs were installed in each of the bays (Fig. 5).

The Baroque decor of the western façade can be seen in engravings made by Werner. The nave, crowned with a cornice, was separated from the side aisles by pilasters. On the axis, there was a portal framed by columns placed on pedestals, which was topped with a broken pediment. Above the entrance, there was a high window covered with an arch, with the oculus being placed above it. The gable rising above the cornice was framed by pilasters supported by volutes. They formed the basis of a semi-circular tympanum with a cross. In the façade of each of the aisles, there were two openings – one above the other. Examination of the western wall of the northern aisle shows that the lower opening had a segmental shape. The construction works were carried out using bricks burnt in colours ranging from red to cherry ( $6.2\text{--}7.0 \times 11.0\text{--}12.5 \times 26.0\text{--}27.3$  cm), which were arranged in the English bond pattern.

On October 30, 1810, the secularization decree was promulgated. On its basis, the Opole Dominican convent left the monastery buildings on November 24, 1810 [24, pp. 19–22].



## Conclusions

The multi-stage research of the Dominican church, the so-called “na Górcie” in Opole, enabled the transformations of its architecture to be outlined from probably the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the existing structure of the church, it was not possible to find the remains of the first municipal parish church from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but relics of the chancel’s wall – of probably a monastic church mentioned in 1295 – were found. In addition, it was possible to discuss the layout and architecture of the church, which was consecrated in August 1361. This church consisted of a three-bay chancel and a four-bay two-aisle asymmetrical body. The theses regarding the current eastern closure of the chancel, which was probably built in around 1399, were verified. The research results also allowed for the determination of the scope and chronology of the transformations of the church in the Baroque period, which were carried out after

the fires in 1682 and 1739. The scope of the latter works seems particularly interesting due to the abandoned and uncompleted concept of an asymmetric, two-nave body with high windows on the southern side.

The research results presented above shed new light on the form of the building of the Gothic monastic church from around 1361, as well as on the chronology and scope of its transformations. They also prove that analyses that are based only on literature and the general view of a building, which are conducted by a researcher without an architecture workshop, lead to superficial findings that are often significantly different from reality. The research results presented above, along with the publications concerning convent churches in Wrocław [25, pp. 11–50] or Lewin Brzeski [26, pp. 5–16], are also an important voice in the discussion regarding the shaping and evolution of the architecture of Dominican churches in Silesia.

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### ***Abstract***

#### ***Medieval architecture of the Dominican church in Opole (the so-called “na Górze”) and its transformations from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century***

The article concerns the transformations of the architecture of the Dominican church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Wojciech (the so-called “na Górze”) in Opole. The paper presents the results of original architectural research conducted from 2008 to 2017. Previous analyses regarding the construction and transformation of the church “na Górze” are based on the findings of pre-war researchers, which relied on a general inspection of the plastered building. The discussed architectural research enabled the scope of the original monastic church, and its expansion from around 1361, to be distinguished. This also applies to the enlargement of the chancel and its adaptation, as well as to the construction of a two-nave, four-bay nave. The chancel of this church was enlarged in around 1399 by adding a polygonal eastern closure, and the church itself was probably renovated and enlarged in around 1430 by the construction of an outbuilding adjacent to the nave. The presented research results significantly change the previously published description concerning the construction and transformation of the architecture of the Dominican church in Opole.

**Key words:** Silesia, architecture, Middle Ages, church, Dominicans, Opole

### ***Streszczenie***

#### ***Średniowieczna architektura kościoła dominikańskiego w Opolu (tzw. na Górze) i jej przekształcenia od schyłku XIII w. do początku XVIII w.***

Tematem artykułu są przekształcenia architektury kościoła dominikańskiego pw. Matki Boskiej Bolesnej i św. Wojciecha (tzw. na Górze) w Opolu. W pracy przedstawiono rezultaty autorskich badań architektonicznych prowadzonych między 2009 a 2017 r. Dotychczasowe analizy powstania i przekształceń kościoła na Górze opierają się na ustaleniach badaczy przedwojennych bazujących na ogólnym oglądzie otynkowanej budowli. Omówione badania architektoniczne umożliwiły wydzielenie zasięgu pierwotnego kościoła zakonnego oraz jego rozbudowy około 1361 r. obejmującej powiększenie prezbiterium i dostosowanie go do funkcji chóru zakonnego, a także wzniesienie dwunawowego, czteroprzęsłowego korpusu. Prezbiterium tej świątyni powiększono o wieloboczne wschodnie zamknięcie około 1399 r., a kościół odnowiono i powiększono o przybudówkę przy korpusie zapewne około 1430 r. Nowożytnie przekształcenia bryły kościoła związane są ze wzniesieniem nawy południowej oraz przebudową korpusu i szczytu zachodniego po dwóch pożarach w 1682 i 1739 r. Zaprezentowane wyniki badań znacząco zmieniają dotychczas publikowany obraz powstania i przekształceń architektury kościoła dominikańskiego w Opolu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Śląsk, architektura, średniowiecze, kościół, dominikanie, Opole