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BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING. RESEARCH ON GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AS A BEARER OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT IN POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE LAST FIVE DECADES

In most of the European countries, the beginnings of art history as a separate academic discipline complete with its own methodology are concurrent with the early stages of professional research on medieval architecture. Over two centuries of the development of research currents, methodological approaches and various tools used in discovering the history of medieval European architecture, and the ideological content hidden therein, have yielded abundant and varied results. This has been true also in Poland, where the pioneering works of academic art history include the excellent studies by Władysław Łuszczkiewicz and Marian Sokołowski concerning the oldest works of masonry architecture to be found in the country; studies which remain an important reference point to present-day researchers.¹

The current essay pertains to only one thematic trend in Polish research on medieval, especially Gothic, architecture, that is, its broadly understood iconography, interpreted as attempts to read the works of architecture as carriers of varied ideological contents. It must be emphasised

at the very outset that Polish achievements in this field, although not extensive in terms of quantity, stem directly from the main research currents in international scholarship of the last century. Admittedly, nearly all of those studies refer to issues of, at most, Central-European significance; however, considering the choice of subjects and specific research tools applied thereto, they may be perceived as an integral and representative component of the whole research yield in that particular area. For this reason, the absence of an at least rough presentation of the circumstances in which the so-called “iconographic breakthrough” in European research on medieval art occurred in the middle of the 20th century would make an outline of Polish research into the iconography of medieval architecture unclear to readers less acquainted with the subject.

During the initial phase of scholarly interest in the works of medieval architecture, which in the pioneering countries – France, the United Kingdom and Germany – occurred in the early decades of the 19th century, the overall aim was, understandably, to recognise, describe and catalogue this exceedingly rich and varied legacy. In France, research of this type was carried out by members of antiquarian and archaeological associations, who undertook the arduous task of systematically gathering information on, describing and comparing relevant buildings, and, in effect, classifying and separating them into types and regional groups in a truly Linnaean manner.² The founding

¹ The current article was written as part of the National Science Centre research grant conducted under my supervision (OPUS 11; DEC-2016/21/B/HS2/00598). The text was translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz, to whom I express my gratitude.

All the important studies by Sokołowski and Łuszczkiewicz are cited in the catalogues of Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architecture in Poland; see: *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska do schyłku XIII wieku*, ed. by M. Walicki, vol. 2: M. PIETRUSIŃSKA, *Katalog i bibliografia zabytków*, Warsaw, 1971; Z. ŚWIECHOWSKI, *Architektura romańska w Polsce*, Warsaw, 2000; idem, *Katalog architektury romańskiej w Polsce*, Warsaw, 2009.

² T. RODZIŃSKA-CHORAŻY, *Zespoły rezydencjonalne i kościoły centralne na ziemiach polskich do połowy XII wieku*, Cracow, 2009, pp. 224–248; H. KARGE, ‘System und Entwicklung.



father and key figure of this movement, who was also the founder of the concept of regional schools of Romanesque architecture, was Arcisse de Caumont, a citizen of Bayeux, who in 1824 founded the *Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* in Caen, and ten years later a nationwide organization – the *Société française d'archéologie pour la conservation et la description des monuments historiques*.³ Since their inception, both of these associations – which, incidentally, are still in existence – have represented the “dogmatic” current in the archeology of architecture, that is, research of an almost exclusively organising and classifying character which only to a limited extent corresponded to the investigations of the “classical” art history. The greatest merit of the *Société française d'archéologie* lies in the fact that it has been continuously publishing two scholarly series of fundamental importance to the research on medieval architecture in France, namely, *Bulletin monumental* since 1834 and *Congrès archéologique de France* since 1847. Both these periodicals are published annually and both have been presenting materials from sessions dedicated to particular regions and cities; these materials do not, however, constitute a *catalogue raisonné*, since these sessions have not been organised according to a consistent topographic key. Influenced by de Caumont's endeavours, an identical *modus operandi* was adopted by the British, who in the year 1843 founded the *British Archaeological Association*, which also publishes conference transactions from annual sessions dedicated to particular cities and counties.

In Germany, in turn, the history of architecture had been included in an academic curriculum for the first time as early as 1813 – at the university of Göttingen, where the first university professorship of art history was established.⁴ In the latter half of the 19th century, efforts were undertaken to prepare systematically planned topographical inventories of all the provinces of the Reich as divided into districts (*Kreise*). Until the outbreak of the Second World War these volumes – initially prepared by various authors working individually – had covered all

the area of the country.⁵ This manner of cataloguing architectural monuments was adopted as a model in most of the states of central and northern Europe, including the newly independent Poland. In every country, this absolutely fundamental research effort was accompanied by the publication of more detailed, monographic works that focused on various issues related to the chronology and artistic origins of particular buildings or their regional groupings, often viewed in terms of their typology.

In the inter-war period, the international milieu of experts on medieval art was fully entitled to their evident satisfaction in having completed this first, fundamental, well-nigh positivistic phase of research. Yet this satisfaction was increasingly often accompanied by a deep-rooted disappointment with the purely factual nature of the investigations conducted thus far, with the research questionnaire being restricted to issues of form and construction, and with the dogmatic character of the archaeological approach.⁶ The sense of cognitive dissatisfaction and weariness, and a desire to refresh the tired aspect of art history – and the history of architecture – were felt particularly strongly by those scholars who preferred to perceive a work of art as a signal and an effect of the complex universe of ideas current in a given era; that is, those scholars who embraced the concept of “art history as a history of ideas” as presented by Max Dvořák in his studies, collected posthumously under this title (*Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*) in a volume published in 1924.⁷ Significantly, the same year saw the publication of the second edition of Joseph Sauer's fundamental compendium of the symbolism of a medieval church – both the edifice and its furnishings – in the light of medieval sources.⁸ It was a work which certainly contributed to the scholars' taking note of the meanings, especially those of an allegorical nature, encoded in the works of medieval architecture.

The true breakthrough, however, came in the 1940s and 1950s, when the development of research on iconography in visual arts resulted in the publication of pioneering studies in which architecture, too, began to be perceived as a visual, or rather a communicating art.⁹ This

Die Taxonomien der Architekturgeschichte und ihre naturwissenschaftlichen Parallelen in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Stil-Linien diagrammatischer Kunstgeschichte*, ed. by W. Cortjaens, K. Heck, Berlin and Munich, 2014, pp. 34–51.

³ See: C. FREIGANG, 'Arcisse de Caumont (1802–1873) und Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879)', in *Klassiker der Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 1, *Von Winckelmann bis Warburg*, ed. by U. Pfisterer, Munich, 2007, pp. 76–91; Arcisse de Caumont, 1801–1873. *Erudit normand et fondateur de l'archéologie française. Actes du colloque international organisé à Caen du 14 au 16 juin 2001, par la Société des antiquaires de Normandie*, ed. by V. Juhel, Caen, 2004.

⁴ See: Johann Dominicus Fiorillo. *Kunstgeschichte und die romantische Bewegung um 1800. Akten des Kolloquiums "Johann Dominicus Fiorillo und die Anfänge der Kunstgeschichte in Göttingen" am Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminar und der Kunstsammlung der Universität Göttingen vom 11.–13. November 1994*, ed. by A. Middeldorf Kosegarten, Göttingen, 1997.

⁵ A complete list of all volumes is accessible online: <<https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Kunstdenkm%C3%A4ler>> [accessed on 6 August 2019].

⁶ T. RODZIŃSKA-CHORAŻY, *Zespoły rezydencjonalne*, pp. 241–258 (as in note 2).

⁷ M. DVOŘÁK, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte. Studien zur abendländischen Kunstentwicklung*, Munich, 1924. See also: L. KALINOWSKI, *Max Dvořák i jego metoda badań nad sztuką (w stulecie urodzin)*, Warsaw, 1974.

⁸ J. SAUER, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Auffassung des Mittelalters mit Berücksichtigung von Honorius Augustodunensis Sicardus und Durandus*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1924 (first edition: 1902).

⁹ P. CROSSLEY, 'In Search of an Iconography of Medieval Architecture,' in *Symbolae Historiae Artium. Studia z historii sztuki Lechowi Kalinowskiemu dedykowane*, ed. by J. Gadomski et al.,

new direction was set by, above all, four scholars: Richard Krautheimer (1897–1994), Günter Bandmann (1917–1975), Hans Sedlmayr (1896–1984) and Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), who most suggestively showed that the ideological content of medieval edifices is encoded in a complex system of architectural forms interpreted by scholars on the level of the type and ground plan of a given structure, its style, repertoire of motifs and decorations. Paul Crossley has presented so far the best critical discussion of the principles and methodology of the pioneering works, in which these four scholars very clearly broke away from the archaeological current in earlier art history. Crossley convincingly delineated two separate research attitudes evident among the four authors, whom he described as “iconologists” and “iconographers” of medieval architecture.¹⁰

In this context, “iconology”, derived from Dvořák’s concept of *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*, signifies the investigation of architecture as an expression of the “spirit of the period”, which is in an indissoluble relationship with other fields of human thought and creativity, especially philosophy, theology, poetry and music. The iconologists looked at a work of architecture from a certain distance, with a bird’s eye view, so to speak, seeking its immanent roots in the history of ideas and demonstrating the parallels between the given work and other areas of culture. Here, Crossley included Hans Sedlmayr’s spiritualistic conception of a Gothic cathedral as a Heavenly Jerusalem, presented in 1950¹¹ – which was wholly detached from any analyses of concrete edifices in terms of the history of architecture and therefore soon, and rightly, discredited¹² – as well as the certainly more suggestive, erudite studies by Erwin Panofsky. In 1946 Panofsky presented a vast theory on the influence of the neo-Platonic philosophy of Pseudo-Dionysius on certain forms of the new choir in the church of Saint-Denis as built by Abbot Suger – a work that begins the history of Gothic architecture.¹³ In 1951 he attempted to find a direct correlation between the development of 12th- and 13th-century French architecture and the scholastic manner of conducting a philosophical argumentation.¹⁴

The theory regarding the influence of neo-Platonic philosophy on the birth of Gothic architecture, later developed by Otto von Simson in his classic study of 1956,¹⁵ for many years constituted a *sui generis* axiom in medieval

studies worldwide. Polish scholars were also familiar with it, since excerpts from Suger’s writings,¹⁶ as well as Panofsky’s texts¹⁷ and von Simson’s book,¹⁸ had been translated into Polish. Yet, although the method of iconological research found in Poland such outstanding followers as Jan Białostocki¹⁹ and Lech Kalinowski,²⁰ no Polish scholars conducted independent studies on medieval architecture in this manner. This, however, is not surprising; Polish art historians usually did not publish analyses of fundamental issues relating to the main currents and monuments of medieval architecture outside Poland, and structures found in the territories of the historical and modern-day Poland did not yield enough material (especially historical sources) to conduct iconological analyses in the manner of Panofsky’s conception.

In addition, it must be emphasised, following Paul Crossley, that this method carried an inherent risk of overinterpretation,²¹ caused by “elusiveness of meaning” (to use Ernst Gombrich’s term).²² Any method does; but in this case the danger was particularly grave. To offer vast conceptions, based on parallels with other branches of science and helping to set out “universal” explanations of phenomena found in the history of art of earlier periods, and at the same time to marginalise the importance of architectural and constructional analyses and to unreasonably narrow down the context of source inquiries – all in all, this is a classic example of how to construct a “giant on clay feet”. The studies by Sedlmayr, von Simson and, especially, Panofsky are undoubtedly outstanding works of 20th-century humanities, ones that still inspire and motivate lively discussions, but their theories had been refuted even before the 20th century drew to a close. None of this encouraged scholars to undertake wide-ranging iconological research on medieval architecture as such. The 1999 book by Roland Recht was perhaps the only new attempt of this kind;²³ yet Paul Crossley is right in criticising

Warsaw, 1986, pp. 55–65; idem, ‘Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 130, 1988, no. 1019, pp. 116–121; T. RODZIŃSKA-CHORĄŻY, *Zespoły rezydencjonalne*, pp. 250–255 (as in note 2).

¹⁰ P. CROSSLEY, ‘In Search’, pp. 57–64 (as in note 9).

¹¹ H. SEDLMAYR, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale*, Zürich, 1950.

¹² Cf. P. CROSSLEY, ‘Medieval Architecture’, p. 119 (as in note 9).

¹³ E. PANOFSKY, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, Princeton, 1946.

¹⁴ Idem, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, New York, 1951.

¹⁵ O. VON SIMSON, *The Gothic Cathedral. Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, New York, 1964.

¹⁶ *Myśliciele, kronikarze i artyści o sztuce od starożytności do 1500*, ed. by J. Białostocki, Warsaw, 1988, pp. 279–295.

¹⁷ E. PANOFSKY, *Studia z historii sztuki*, transl. and ed. by J. Białostocki, Warsaw, 1971.

¹⁸ O. VON SIMSON, *Katedra gotycka. Jej narodziny i znaczenie*, transl. by A. Palińska, Warsaw, 1989.

¹⁹ For bibliography of Jan Białostocki up to 1981 see: *Ars auro prior. Studia Ioanni Białostocki sexagenario dicata*, ed. by J. A. Chrościński et al., Warsaw, 1981, pp. 757–768.

²⁰ For bibliography of Lech Kalinowski see: *Symbolae historiae*, pp. 13–20 (as in note 9); *Magistro et amico amici discipulique. Lechowi Kalinowskiemu w osiemdziesiątce urodzin*, ed. by J. Gadowski et al., Cracow, 2002, pp. 13–20.

²¹ P. CROSSLEY, ‘In Search’, pp. 61–63 (as in note 9); idem, ‘Medieval architecture’, pp. 119–121 (as in note 9).

²² See E. GOMBRICH, ‘The Aims and Limits of Iconology’, in idem, *Symbolic Images. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, vol. 2, London, 1978, pp. 1–22.

²³ R. RECHT, *Le croire et le voir: L’art des cathédrales (XII^e-XV^e siècle)*, Paris, 1999.

its unclear thematic scope and disjointed structure, both of which indicate the absence of a well-considered vision of the central subject as expressed in the book's title.²⁴ In this context, the small but significant books by Christoph Marksches²⁵ and Martin Büchsel,²⁶ published in, respectively, the years 1995 and 1997 and comprehensively discussed by Jarosław Jarzewicz,²⁷ also merit a mention. Owing to scrupulous analyses, especially of a historical and philological nature, these two studies sounded the death knell of the great theory that neo-Platonic philosophy influenced Abbot Suger's thought and the birth of Gothic architecture in the middle of the 12th century.

As a result of all the above factors, the "iconological" current, even though represented by well-known and often-analysed studies, had a limited influence on the development of research on medieval architecture as a carrier of ideological content. To put it plainly, this model of research course was too difficult, burdened with too much uncertainty, and carried too much risk of overinterpretation to tangibly and practically influence the study of medieval architecture. The other current, however, which Crossley calls the "iconographic" one, soon came to dominate this area of research on medieval art. In contrast to the "iconologists", the "iconographers" of architecture focused on the study of actual works in their historical and functional specificity, looking for connections between the world of forms and the world of ideas and meanings. This was expressed mainly in the process of establishing the relations between the form and the function of an edifice, since this was most often the locus where the content was encoded. Thus understood, the method of researching iconography of medieval architecture was, according to Crossley, "fundamentally inductive rather than deductive, historical than ideological, analytic than synthetic. They [i.e. iconographers] fix their attention on the personality and ideals of the individual patron and architect; and their conclusions rest on evidence of specific documents about specific buildings."²⁸ This was also what made this approach far more popular – in Poland as well – and, in a sense, more universal, by which we should understand the applicability of this method in researching concrete structures, including those of lesser artistic quality.

The pioneer of this research current was Richard Krautheimer, whose 1942 essay *Introduction to an "Iconography of Medieval Architecture"*, which defined the tasks and

presented model iconographic analyses, became a point of reference for the following generations of historians of medieval architecture.²⁹ The most inspiring section of that essay was the one where Krautheimer focused his attention on the concept of a copy in medieval architecture. He assumed that in the eyes of the original users of a given building, this building may have constituted a *copy* of some other structure, infused with certain meanings, as long as some specific, constitutive features of that ideologically desirable model were repeated in its architecture. In Polish medieval studies of the last five decades, the most successful and convincing example of tracing a similar interdependence comes from the essays by Andrzej Grzybowski from the years 1971 and 1997.³⁰ These essays concern the octagonal church of St. Andrew in Gosławice near Konin, erected ca. 1418–1426 by Andrzej Łaskarz, the bishop of Poznań, as an "ideological copy" of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Grzybowski rightly assumed that it should rather be described as an "indirect copy", since Bishop Łaskarz was familiar with the simplified shape of the central structure with the four rectangular annexes of the early medieval chapel of St. Maurice at the cathedral of Constance, which he had certainly seen when he was a participant in the famous Council held there in the years 1415–1418.

Yet Krautheimer's conception of a "copy" also carried a risk of overinterpretation and distortion, mostly because the 1942 essay does not contain suitably detailed theoretical considerations regarding the range of meanings he ascribed to the term "copy".³¹ Hence the latter half of the 20th century abounded in studies in which the relation of the alleged "copy" to the original structure was practically reduced to the formal similarity of the two buildings, a relation not confirmed by source materials and usually not found to have been motivated by ideological reasons.

Examples of such a careless application of the term "copy" unsupported by a suitably precise analysis of architectural forms or a definition of the historical context are provided by the works of Marian Kutzner. In an article published in 1986, Kutzner described the parish church of St. James in Toruń as a copy of the church of the Virgin Mary in Lübeck, in spite of all the differences in the scale

²⁴ P. CROSSLEY, 'Believing and Seeing: The Art of Gothic Cathedrals. By Roland Recht' (book review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 151, 2009, no. 1280, pp. 771–772.

²⁵ C. MARKSCHIES, *Gibt es eine "Theologie der gotischen Kathedrale?"* "Nachmals: Suger von Saint-Denis und Sankt Dionys vom Areopag", Heidelberg, 1995.

²⁶ M. BÜCHSEL, *Geburt der Gotik. Abt Sugers Konzept für die Abteikirche Saint-Denis*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997.

²⁷ J. JARZEWICZ, 'O dwóch niewielkich książkach i jednej wielkiej teorii', *Artium Quaestiones*, 13, 2002, pp. 359–371.

²⁸ Quotation after P. CROSSLEY, 'In Search', p. 56 (as in note 9).

²⁹ R. KRAUTHEIMER, 'Introduction to an "Iconography of Medieval Architecture"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5, 1942, pp. 1–33.

³⁰ A. GRZYBKOWSKI, 'Kościoł w Gosławicach. Zagadnienie genezy', *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 16, 1971, pp. 269–310; idem, 'Kościoły w Gosławicach i Miszewie jako pośrednie kopie Anastasis', in *Jerozolima w kulturze europejskiej*, ed. by P. Paszkiewicz, T. Zadrozny, Warsaw, 1977, s. 155–168 [reprinted in idem, *Między formą a znaczeniem. Studia z ikonografii, architektury i rzeźby gotyckiej*, Warsaw, 1997, pp. 120–138].

³¹ Cf. L. BOSMAN, 'Architektur und Zitat. Die Geschichtlichkeit von Bauten aus der Vergangenheit', in *Architektur als Zitat. Formen, Motive und Strategien der Vergegenwärtigung*, ed. by H. Brandl, A. Ranft, A. Waschbüsch, Regensburg, 2014, pp. 12–13.

and formation of these two edifices;³² he also interpreted the parish church of St. Elizabeth in Wrocław as an intentional imitation of the Cistercian church in Zlatá Koruna in southern Bohemia, thus – with no basis in written sources and without any other arguments – claiming to find manifestations of a “monastic” spirituality among the Wrocław patricians.³³ Fortunately, studies published in the course of the last two decades stand in a favourable light against that background, as they have brought many balanced, if critical, analyses that verified earlier assumptions in the area of the iconography of medieval architecture; these analyses are, as a rule, based on a careful study of the written sources and insightful examination of the structures themselves. It must be stressed that the concept of a “copy” increasingly often refers only to structures that literally and intentionally repeat the forms of the original work, thus introducing a semantic differentiation between these and other, less clear formal relations between the buildings in question. In this respect, particularly inspiring were the 1998 essay by Hans Josef Böker on the episcopal chapel in Hereford, which until then had been perceived as a “copy” of the palatial chapel at Aachen,³⁴ and Matthias Untermann’s book on the medieval round structures, published a decade earlier, in which Krautheimer’s theses were subjected to well-balanced criticism.³⁵ In Poland, this work had a bearing on, among other studies, Andrzej Grzybowski’s already-mentioned analysis of the Goślawice church.

To return to the breakthrough in the research on medieval art that occurred around the middle of the 20th century: a fundamental role in formulating and popularising the new current of research on the ideological content of medieval architecture was played by Günter Bandmann’s habilitation thesis written in 1951, tersely but eloquently titled *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, which went into several editions in Germany and was translated into many languages.³⁶ In this comprehensive study, whose timeframe reaches back to, in some cases, the twilight of the prehistoric era, Bandmann distinguished the fundamental types of meaning ascribed to works of architecture: (1) the aesthetic meaning; (2) the symbolic

meaning, i.e. the allegorical meaning, referring directly to a set of motifs derived from the Bible and to the entire legacy of Christian writers; (3) the historical meaning, which links the given structure with the place and time of its construction and the intentions of its creators (undoubtedly the most interesting aspect from the point of view of modern historiography). As critically highlighted by Paul Crossley, Bandmann based his reflections exclusively on pre-Gothic architecture, mostly focusing on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire and on a few selected types of buildings. Also, regrettably, he introduced some abstract terms, such as *Kaisermetaphysik* and *Reichsmetaphysik*, which had nothing to do with the historical facts and were rejected by later scholars.³⁷ His attempt to ascribe definite and immutable symbolic meanings to various types of edifices or their parts – meanings that were allegedly clear to the original sponsors and users of the buildings, in spite of the diversity within this group – also proved highly problematic.

For these reasons Bandmann’s study was unable to offer a homogeneous system of analytical concepts that could easily be transformed into a consistent method of researching medieval architecture. More importantly, however, the book aroused the medievalists’ interest in the “historicity” of buildings, that is, in the complex system of meanings pertaining to politics, religion and social life ascribed to them by their sponsors or patrons and clear to at least the best educated of their original users.³⁸ Importantly and characteristically, the “iconographers” of architecture sought to establish the connections between the architectural shape of a building and its various functions, including its propagandistic purpose. The fundamental difficulties in conducting such research lie in the usually incomplete or, in fact, vestigial relevant written sources and in the need to apply truly interdisciplinary research tools. This is because a well-argued proposal of how the original ideological message of a medieval edifice should be interpreted requires a very good orientation in political history (including ecclesiastic history), economic history, social history and the history of culture; familiarity with the history of law, heraldry, the history of liturgy and various ceremonies, and often also literature and music is indispensable as well. In addition, it would be a truism to state that this “superstructure” of historical and symbolic interpretations must be founded on an immutable “base” consisting of close familiarity with the material structure of the building, the stratification of the construction phases and their absolute dating, often determined by means of archeological methods. A researcher – especially one working on their own! – is thus faced with various threats and difficulties. Still, Bandmann’s book, which constitutes the quintessence of the “iconographic breakthrough” of the mid-20th century, very effectively encouraged subsequent generations of art historians to enter the universe

³² Cf. M. KUTZNER, ‘Lubecki styl architektury kościoła św. Jakuba w Toruniu’, in *Sztuka Torunia i ziemi chełmińskiej 1233–1815*, ed. by J. Poklewski, Warsaw, Poznań and Toruń, 1986 (*Teka Komisji Historii Sztuki*, vol. 7), pp. 55–75.

³³ Cf. idem, ‘Kościół św. Elżbiety we Wrocławiu na tle śląskiej szkoły architektonicznej XIV w.’, in *Z dziejów wielkomięskiej fary. Wrocławski kościół św. Elżbiety w świetle historii i zabytków sztuki*, ed. by M. Zlat, Wrocław, 1996, pp. 19–52.

³⁴ H. J. BÖKER, ‘The Bishop’s Chapel of Hereford Cathedral and the Question of Architectural Copies in the Middle Ages’, *Gesta*, 37, 1998, pp. 44–54.

³⁵ M. UNTERMANN, *Der Zentralbau im Mittelalter. Form – Funktion – Verbreitung*, Darmstadt, 1989.

³⁶ G. BANDMANN, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, Berlin, 1951.

³⁷ Cf. P. CROSSLEY, ‘Medieval architecture’, pp. 117–119 (as in note 9).

³⁸ Cf. L. BOSMAN, ‘Architektur und Zitat’, pp. 11–12 (as in note 31).

of hidden meanings and historical contexts of medieval architecture,³⁹ even though, as will be stated again in the conclusion to this essay, such research endeavours were not always fully successful.

The limited scope of this essay does not allow us to critically and exhaustively assess all the works by Polish authors that form a part of the intellectual current in medieval studies initiated by Richard Krautheimer and Günter Bandmann. It must be stated that this is not a very large body of texts; but, to be fair, this is mostly because the group of academics involved in researching medieval architecture has always been rather small in Poland and, when compared with other countries of Europe, there is a dearth of structures – mainly ecclesiastical ones – whose form and decoration would justify complex and sophisticated assumptions as to their original ideological contents. These rarely exceed the “standard” symbolism of a Christian temple as explicated by, for instance, the *Rationale divinorum officiorum* by Durand of Mende and are collected in the fundamental compendium by Joseph Sauer.⁴⁰

It must also be noted that this last, allegorical layer of a medieval building’s meaning was definitely the one which Polish scholars discussed the most infrequently, probably because Christian symbolism of this type was quite standard and universal in its character. Works by Rev. Stanisław Kobielus are more comprehensive in their nature;⁴¹ some scholars, however, were given to constructing far-reaching allegoric interpretations based on numerical interpretations of architectural forms. For instance, Bogusław Czechowicz looked for apostolic symbolism in the twenty-two (sic!) pillars separating

the naves of the parish church in Nysa,⁴² while Tomasz Węclawowicz pondered the religious meanings of the central pillar in the church of the Holy Cross in Cracow⁴³ and interpreted the dodecahedral rosette in the western façade of Cracow’s cathedral as “foreshadowing the eschatological meanings of the church’s interior”.⁴⁴ As a rule, such conceptions are unfounded overinterpretations that do not withstand criticism. In contrast to them, argumentation presented in the noteworthy studies by Andrzej Grzybowski is always outstandingly balanced and extremely solid. This is because Grzybowski did not yield to the temptation of ascribing symbolic meanings even to edifices having such a remarkable shape as the Gothic single-nave churches with a cross-shaped ground plan, which are fairly numerous in Poland,⁴⁵ or the funerary chapels on a round ground plan in Central Pomerania.⁴⁶ As Grzybowski put it, it was unlikely that their form pointed to anything beyond itself. This author’s reserved attitude towards the pan-symbolic interpretations of medieval church buildings, already apparent in his publications from the 1970s, is fully compliant with Crossley’s criticism of the research methods applied by the earlier “iconographers” of medieval architecture⁴⁷ and with the spirit of Robert Suckale’s studies on changes in the meaning of the Gothic rosette, in which he demonstrated that by the second half of the 13th century those windows had already lost any discernable symbolic meaning.⁴⁸

More numerous, and far more diverse, are the results of research on the historical meanings (in the sense proposed Bandmann) of medieval buildings in Poland, within the country’s former and contemporary borders. It is immediately noticeable that numerous works published

³⁹ Among best recent works concerning the “historicity” of medieval buildings the following should be noted: S. ALBRECHT, *Die Inszenierung der Vergangenheit im Mittelalter. Die Klöster von Glastonbury und Saint-Denis*, Munich and Berlin, 2003; *Romanesque and the Past. Retrospection in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe*, ed. by J. McNeill, R. Plant, Leeds, 2003; H. HORN, *Die Tradition des Ortes. Ein formbestimmendes Moment in der deutschen Sakralarchitektur des Mittelalters*, Munich and Berlin, 2015; idem, *Erinnerungen, geschrieben in Stein. Spuren der Vergangenheit in der mittelalterlichen Kirchenbaukultur*, Munich and Berlin, 2017. See also a recent survey: K. J. CZYŻEWSKI, M. WALCZAK, ‘Sztuka nowożytna wobec tradycji średniowiecza. Uwarunkowania – motywacje – realizacje’, in *Historyzm – tradycjonalizm – archaizacja. Studia z dziejów świadomości historycznej w średniowieczu i okresie nowożytnym*, ed. by M. Walczak, Cracow, 2015, pp. 11–59.

⁴⁰ See note 8.

⁴¹ See, among others: S. KOBIEŁUS, *Niebiańska Jerozolima. Od “sacrum” miejsca do “sacrum” modelu*, Warsaw, 1989; idem, *Bestiarium chrześcijańskie: zwierzęta w symbolice i interpretacji. Starożytność i średniowiecze*, Warsaw, 2002; idem, *Florarium christianum: symbolika roślin. Chrześcijańska starożytność i średniowiecze*, Cracow, 2006.

⁴² B. CZECHOWICZ, ‘Nyski kościół św. Jakuba jako *collegium apostolorum* i *ecclesia primitiva*’, in *Nysa. Sztuka w dawnej stolicy księstwa biskupiego*, ed. by R. Hołownia, M. Kapustka, Wrocław, 2008, pp. 87–98.

⁴³ T. WĘCŁAWOWICZ, ‘Architektura kościoła św. Krzyża w Krakowie. Historia badań i nowe pytania badawcze’, in *Studia z dziejów kościoła św. Krzyża w Krakowie*, vol. 1, ed. by Z. Kliś, Cracow, 1996, pp. 35–46; idem, ‘Nawa kościoła Św. Krzyża w Krakowie’, in *Studia z dziejów kościoła św. Krzyża w Krakowie*, vol. 2, ed. by Z. Kliś, Cracow, 1997, pp. 197–205; idem, ‘Architektura kościoła św. Krzyża w wiekach średnich. Rezultaty prac badawczych z lat 1995–1997’, in *Studia z dziejów kościoła św. Krzyża w Krakowie*, vol. 3, ed. by Z. Kliś, Cracow, 1999, pp. 55–82.

⁴⁴ T. WĘCŁAWOWICZ, *Krakowski kościół katedralny w wiekach średnich. Funkcje i możliwości interpretacji*, Cracow, 2005, p. 129.

⁴⁵ See: A. GRZYBOWSKI, ‘Centralne gotyckie jednonawowe kościoły krzyżowe w Polsce’, in idem, *Między formą*, pp. 7–38 (as in note 30).

⁴⁶ Idem, ‘Kaplice cmentarne w Darłowie, Koszalinie i Słupsku’, in *Między formą*, pp. 91–119 (as in note 30).

⁴⁷ See note 9.

⁴⁸ R. SUCKALE, ‘Thesen zum Bedeutungswandel der gotischen Fensterrose’, in *Bauwerk und Bildwerk im Hochmittelalter. Anschauliche Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. by K. Clausberg et al., Gießen, 1981, pp. 259–294.

by successive generations of historians of medieval art often pertained to the same key buildings or their regional clusters; this, however, is not very surprising, considering that these are, above all, the Gothic cathedrals and the few most important collegiate churches and parish churches, including those founded by King Casimir the Great, and the castles of the Teutonic Knights in former Prussia.

One of the first post-war studies to offer an extensive analysis of the alleged ideological meanings of a particular structure was the unpublished doctoral thesis by Marian Kutzner on the architecture of the collegiate church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław, defended in the year 1965 at the University of Poznań under the supervision of Gwidon Chmarzyński.⁴⁹ Kutzner returned to this topic in two articles, published in 2008 and 2009, in which he repeated his old convictions concerning the commemorative character of the choir of that church, purportedly intended by Henry IV Probus, and the strongly propagandistic meanings allegedly imparted to the hall nave by Bishop Nanker.⁵⁰ Because of its extraordinary history and shape, the Wrocław collegiate church was destined to become a subject of “iconographic” research; yet in his excellent article published in 1988 Andrzej Grzybowski showed how many overinterpretations and errors resulting from inattentive reading of the sources are to be found in Kutzner’s analyses.⁵¹ The research on its “twin” collegiate chapel, founded by the bishop of Wrocław, Tomasz II, at the castle in Racibórz constitutes a similar case. The architecture and the ideological content of the Racibórz chapel were discussed by Kutzner in a 1988 article,⁵² whose numerous errors were corrected by Grzybowski in his 1990 book on the castle chapels built by the Silesian Piasts⁵³ and

in a monographic article published four years later.⁵⁴ The unusually shaped oratories of medieval ducal castles in Silesia, especially in Wrocław and Legnica, were interpreted in terms of their contents also by other scholars, Jerzy Rozpędowski and Edmund Małachowicz,⁵⁵ who subsequently entered into a lively polemic with Andrzej Grzybowski. In this case, the research situation was especially difficult, because no contemporary written sources pertaining to most of these chapels have survived and their material remnants are known mostly from archaeological research on their architecture. This, in turn, encouraged the scholars to offer more or less reliable reconstructions of their forms; in the absence of written sources, these offer a very unconvincing basis for considerations regarding the ideological content of these structures and the intentions of their founders.

A situation where the interpretation of the symbolic or ideological content of a given building’s architecture is based on a purely hypothetical reconstruction of its original shape is particularly dangerous and methodologically dubious. Yet in the decades following the “iconographic breakthrough” in the mid-20th century this direction of research was treated with much enthusiasm; attempts of this kind were made in Poland as well. An example here is Szczęsny Skibiński’s doctoral dissertation on the original church of the Franciscan Friars in Cracow, written in 1971 under the supervision of Gwidon Chmarzyński and published six years later.⁵⁶ Skibiński’s considerations regarding the commemorative–funerary character of the cross-shaped church were based on a reconstruction of its original state as presented by Jan Zachwatowicz, who situated the tower – known from 15th-century sources – over the crossing. However, later research by Cracow historians of art and archeologists, especially Andrzej Włodarek, Tomasz Węclawowicz, Marcin Szyma, Waldemar Niewalda and Halina Rojkowska,⁵⁷ demonstrated that this tower, probably shaped as a small bell turret, must have been located in the corner between the arms of the building; in

⁴⁹ M. KUTZNER, *Gotycka architektura kościoła św. Krzyża we Wrocławiu*, Ph.D. diss., Wrocław, 1965 [unpublished manuscript in the Library of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań].

⁵⁰ Idem, ‘Zur Geschichte und Legende der Kapitelkirche zu Hl. Kreuz (Kreuzkirche) in Breslau’, in *Prag und die grossen Kulturzentren Europas in der Zeit der Luxemburger (1310–1437). Prague and Great Cultural Centres of Europe in the Luxembourgish Era (1310–1437)*, ed. by M. Jarošová, J. Kuthan, S. Scholz, Prague, 2008, pp. 543–559; idem, ‘Dzieje i legenda kościoła kolegiackiego św. Krzyża we Wrocławiu – władza i polityka’, in *Sztuka w kręgu władzy. Materiały LVII Ogólnopolskiej Sesji Naukowej Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, poświęconej pamięci Profesora Szczęsnego Dettloffa (1878–1961) w 130. rocznicę urodzin, Toruń, 13–15 listopada 2008*, ed. by E. Pilecka, K. Kluczewajd, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 35–52.

⁵¹ See: A. GRZYBOWSKI, ‘Die Kreuzkirche in Breslau – Stiftung und Funktion’, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 51, 1988, no. 4, pp. 461–478 [reprinted in: idem, *Między formą* (as in note 30)].

⁵² M. KUTZNER, ‘Trzynastowieczna kaplica zamku w Raciborzu. Architektoniczny pomnik wydarzenia politycznego’, *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 17, 1988, pp. 43–54.

⁵³ A. GRZYBOWSKI, *Średniowieczne kaplice zamkowe Piastów śląskich (XII–XIV wiek)*, Warsaw, 1990.

⁵⁴ Idem, ‘Kaplica zamkowa w Raciborzu’, *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 39, 1994, no. 4, pp. 243–265.

⁵⁵ See, among others: E. MAŁACHOWICZ, *Wrocławski zamek książęcy i kolegiata św. Krzyża na Ostrowie*, Wrocław, 1993; idem, *Książęce rezydencje, fundacje i mauzolea w lewobrzeżnym Wrocławiu*, Wrocław, 1994; J. ROZPĘDOWSKI, *Zamek w Legnicy*, in *Legnica*, ed. by A. Czacharowski (*Atlas historyczny miast polskich*, vol. 4/9) Wrocław, 2009, pp. 33–41.

⁵⁶ S. SKIBIŃSKI, *Pierwotny kościół Franciszkanów w Krakowie*, Poznań, 1977.

⁵⁷ All the relevant publications on the subject are summarized in a recent article: M. SZYMA, ‘In ecclesia sancti Francisci in chori medio. Wprowadzenie do badań nad miejscem chóru liturgicznego w kościołach średniowiecznego Krakowa’, in *Średniowieczna architektura sakralna w Polsce w świetle najnowszych badań. Materiały z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego w Gnieźnie 13–15 listopada 2014 roku*, ed. by T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, Gniezno, 2014, pp. 265–282.

fact, the very idea that the church was originally laid out on a cross-shaped ground plan was seriously questioned. Thus, Szczęsny Skibiński's analysis lost its material basis. Still, this scholar demonstrated great erudition and deep familiarity with the buildings he analysed; hence his two subsequent books, on the chapel at the High Castle in Malbork, published in 1981,⁵⁸ and on the gothic cathedrals in Poland, published in 1996, contain many valuable insights concerning the historical and symbolic meanings of these structures – insights which today can still be considered convincing.

It must be stressed that attempts at discovering alleged ideological content of medieval edifices are almost by definition largely subjective with respect to the reliability of research results; this, as has already been mentioned, is because those results are impossible to verify on the basis of contemporary written sources. To put it plainly, the available arguments are usually not strong and incontrovertible enough to convince all readers to accept the proposed conception, even when the reconstruction of the original form does not arouse doubts. It is, therefore, obvious that deliberations concerning such a subtle topic as the meanings encoded by the founders in historical works of architecture largely depend on the initial research conditions, that is, on the entire state of knowledge considered to be valid at a given point in time. For example, research on the ideological contents of the architectural form and heraldic decoration of the quasi-double-nave churches in Lesser Poland founded by King Casimir the Great, conducted in the 1960s and 1970s by art historians, especially by Jerzy Gadomski and Paul Crossley, referred to the then-valid assumptions of historians who underscored the importance of the idea of the *Coronae Regni Poloniae* in Casimir's state ideology.⁵⁹ This assumption was disproved by the historians Sławomir Gawlas and Janusz Kurtyka in the last years of the 20th century. Heraldic research by Stefan Krzysztof Kuczyński and Zenon Piech was by then also very far advanced. These factors allowed Marek Walczak to put forward a new, much more balanced (and therefore seemingly less spectacular) interpretation of the intentions and ideological contents of the structures founded by King Casimir.⁶⁰

In the past five decades, art produced during the reign of the last kings of the Piast dynasty, Ladislaus the Short (reg.

1320–1333) and his son Casimir the Great (reg. 1333–1370), played a special role in Polish studies within the current of medievalist research under discussion herein. In this context, research conducted by Paul Crossley, then a young art historian from Cambridge University, who has already been mentioned here several times, played an inspiring role in the entire later historiography of this topic. His dissertation on the ecclesiastical architecture in Lesser Poland in the reign of Casimir the Great, defended in 1973, was published in Cracow only as late as 1985;⁶¹ however, his analysis of the ideological content of the architecture of the Gothic cathedral at Wawel Castle, and the meanings encoded in the choir of the town's main parish Church of St Mary's and its sculptural decoration, immediately met with a generally positive response from the Polish academic milieu.⁶² Crossley's publications have remained a fundamental reference point ever since – all the more considering that his profound erudition, and his way of looking at Lesser Poland in the light of all of late-medieval Europe, led him to results that were unattainable, at least in that period, to the majority of Polish authors.

The scholar most profoundly influenced by Crossley's conceptions was Tomasz Węclawowicz. From the very beginning of his research career, he was interested in the symbolic and ideological interpretations of the main works of Gothic architecture in Cracow. In several studies, he developed a theory regarding the quasi-private character of the choir of St Mary's Church, which – as, allegedly, a personal foundation of Mikołaj Wierzynek – was supposed to have sculptural decoration with a programme referring to the founder's unfulfilled vow to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.⁶³ This theory met with severe but fair criticism from Marek Walczak.⁶⁴ However, numerous audacious hypotheses presented by Tomasz Węclawowicz in 2005 in his book on the functions and possible interpretations of the Cracow cathedral in the Middle Ages initially did not meet with any

⁵⁸ S. SKIBIŃSKI, *Kaplica na Zamku Wysokim w Malborku*, Poznań, 1981; idem, *Polskie katedry gotyckie*, Poznań, 1996.

⁵⁹ J. GADOMSKI, 'Funkcja kościołów fundacji Kazimierza Wielkiego w świetle heraldycznej rzeźby architektonicznej', in *Funkcja dzieła sztuki. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Szczecin, listopad 1970*, ed. by E. Studniarkowa, Warsaw, 1972, pp. 103–116; P. CROSSLEY, *Gothic Architecture in the Reign of Casimir the Great. Church Architecture in Lesser Poland 1320–1380*, Cracow, 1985, pp. 157–259.

⁶⁰ M. WALCZAK, *Rzeźba architektoniczna w Małopolsce za czasów Kazimierza Wielkiego*, Cracow, 2006 (*Ars vetus et nova*, 20), pp. 348–405 [with all the relevant literature].

⁶¹ P. CROSSLEY, *Gothic Architecture*, *passim* (as in note 59).

⁶² See: A. GRZYBKOWSKI, 'Małopolskie kościoły XIV wieku', *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 31, 1986, no. 2, pp. 201–218; T. WĘCŁAWOWICZ, 'Paul Crossley, *Gothic Architecture in the Reign of Casimir the Great. Church Architecture in Lesser Poland 1320–1380*, Kraków 1985' (book review), *Folia Historiae Artium*, 23, 1987, pp. 165–174.

⁶³ T. WĘCŁAWOWICZ, 'Zagadnienie funkcji wsporników figuralnych pod gzymsem wieńczącym prezbiterium kościoła Mariackiego w Krakowie', *Folia Historiae Artium*, 21, 1985, pp. 56–64; idem, 'Dekoracja figuralna prezbiterium kościoła Mariackiego w Krakowie a zagadnienie mecenatu Mikołaja Wierzyńka Starszego', *Rocznik Krakowski*, 56, 1990, pp. 233–235; idem, 'Mikołaja Wierzyńka żal za grzechy na kościele Mariackim przedstawiony', in *Klejnoty i sekrety Krakowa. Teksty z antropologii miasta*, ed. by R. Godula, Cracow, 1994, pp. 153–169.

⁶⁴ M. WALCZAK, *Rzeźba architektoniczna*, pp. 175–236 (as in note 60).

serious scholarly debate.⁶⁵ Węclawowicz did try to place his analysis on a theoretical basis by including a very brief chapter on the possibilities of reading medieval architecture as a text of culture, but his iconographic interpretations of the Cracow cathedral are mostly groundless, lacking basis either in the architecture of the church itself or in the known source materials. It is only recently that Piotr Pajor has entered into a serious debate with both Crossley's and Węclawowicz's hypotheses, taking under consideration the constantly changing state of historical knowledge.⁶⁶ This allows us to hope that the Cracow cathedral, one of the most important churches of medieval Poland, will finally receive a new, balanced interpretation that will consider all the convincing findings made in the area discussed herein and presented in specialist literature since the first comprehensive monograph of the cathedral, by Tadeusz Wojciechowski, appeared in 1900.⁶⁷

Since the end of the last century, Polish research on the ideological content of medieval architecture has been standing at a crossroads, so to speak, reflecting in that respect the state of medieval studies worldwide. On the one hand, few scholars undertake to present broadly conceived conceptions which, by creating a *sui generis* system of cultural references, would attempt to unequivocally explain the hidden meanings of medieval edifices and, especially, their concrete types or stylistic groups. Yet considering the criticism levelled at the great theories of Panofsky and von Simson this is not surprising. On the other hand, it is evident that research on particular buildings is increasingly more precise and reliable. Here, critical opinions voiced by those scholars who noticed the weak points in Krautheimer's and Bandmann's methods of argumentation were beneficial. A breakthrough in this respect occurred around the year 1980 in West Germany. Studying the architecture of Reims cathedral, Hans-Joachim Kunst from Marburg University formulated the theory of an architectural quotation, which he later developed in cooperation with Wolfgang Schenkluhn.⁶⁸ The elastic and semantically capacious

concept of an architectural quotation – that is, a deliberate repetition, usually imbued with certain meaning, of forms of one edifice for some reason considered important in another – was precisely the research tool that was missing in the pioneering studies by Krautheimer and Bandmann. Robert Suckale, in turn, working in Munich, Bamberg and finally Berlin, in his famous book on French architecture in the years 1140–1270 admirably showed how a detailed study of the historical context, and especially of the socio-political and economic conditions of the time, makes it possible to better understand why particular architectural forms were selected for a given building;⁶⁹ in this manner, the building regains its original message in the eyes of contemporary users. Also, Suckale put forward, in 1993, the famous formulation that “the questions of style are not solely questions of form, but are questions of a historical nature”;⁷⁰ consequently, a properly contextualised research of the artistic form of the given work may result in a more thorough recognition of the tangible historical message that it once contained.

It is evident that any cognitive method can lead the researcher astray if it is used incorrectly and without due care. However, the approach to researching medieval architecture as laid out by Kunst and Suckale appears to be the most appropriate today, and its research results the most reliable. In Poland, this is best exemplified by the publications of a generation of experts in medieval art history who began their academic careers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jarosław Jarzewicz foremost among them. His studies are characterised by considerable prudence in formulating conclusions, and at the same time they often present well-documented reflections on the original ideological content of medieval structures in Poland.⁷¹ Importantly, Jarzewicz's doctoral

⁶⁵ Cf. T. WĘCŁAWOWICZ, *Krakowski kościół, passim* (as in note 44).

⁶⁶ P. PAJOR, ‘Topografia sakralna katedry krakowskiej w XIV wieku a kult św. Stanisława’, in *Średniowieczna architektura*, pp. 283–299 (as in note 57); idem, ‘Dwa chóry katedry krakowskiej niezrealizowane w pierwszym dwudziestolecu XIV wieku’, *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 77, 2015, no. 2, pp. 197–221; idem, ‘T. Węclawowicz, *Coc-tolater nobilitavit. O ceglanych murach kościołów średniowiecznego Krakowa*, Cracow, 2013 (book review), *Folia Historiae Artium, Seria Nowa*, 13, 2015, pp. 176–186.

⁶⁷ See: T. WOJCIECHOWSKI, *Kościół katedralny w Krakowie*, Cracow, 1900. A new monograph on the gothic architecture of the cathedral is currently under preparation: J. ADAMSKI, P. PAJOR, *Gotycka katedra w Krakowie i architektura europejska około roku 1300*, Cracow [due to appear in 2021].

⁶⁸ See: H.-J. KUNST, ‘Freiheit und Zitat in der Architektur des 13. Jahrhunderts – die Kathedrale von Reims’, in *Bauwerk und Bildwerk*,

pp. 87–102 (as in note 48); idem, *Die Marienkirche in Lübeck. Die Präsenz bischöflicher Architekturformen in der Bürgerkirche*, Worms, 1986; H.-J. KUNST, W. SCHENKLHUN, *Die Kathedrale in Reims. Architektur als Schauplatz politischer Bedeutungen*, Frankfurt am Main, 1987. See also studies collected in: *Architektur als Zitat* (as in note 31).

⁶⁹ D. KIMPEL, R. SUCKALE, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270*, Munich, 1985.

⁷⁰ R. SUCKALE, *Die Hofkunst Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern*, München, 1993, p. 13.

⁷¹ Among others: J. JARZEWICZ, ‘Architekt chóru kościoła franciszkanów w Szczecinie’, in *Sztuka Średniowiecza na Pomorzu. II seminarium naukowe Oddziału Szczecińskiego Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Szczecin, październik 1989*, ed. by M. Glińska, J. Kochanowska, K. Kroman, Szczecin, 1989, pp. 49–63; idem, ‘*De constructione ecclesiae*. O artystycznych i społecznych uwarunkowaniach budowy kościoła św. Jakuba w Nysie’, *Artium Quaestiones*, 8, 1997, pp. 27–59; idem, ‘Stargard i Mediolan, czyli co architektura może powiedzieć o horyzontach kulturalnych mieszczaństwa nadbałtyckiego w późnym średniowieczu’, in *Świat średniowiecza. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi*, ed.

dissertation on the Gothic architecture of the Neumark (the New March or East Brandenburg), published after much delay in 2000,⁷² constitutes the first study in the Polish specialist literature to lucidly and successfully apply the methods introduced by Kunst and Suckale in researching works that had not attracted much interest from earlier scholars. Especially worth noting is the convincing interpretation of the ideological content of the Knights Templar chapel in Chwarszczany, in which Jarzewicz discovered allusions to the shape of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In 2004, Marek Walczak reached a similar conclusion in his excellent analysis of the spherical spire that crowns the tower of the church of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechów, which also ideologically refers to the architecture of Jerusalem.⁷³ In addition, in his research on Gothic architecture and its sculptural decoration in Lesser Poland, Walczak was first to take note of an interest in history evident in the court circles and the Cracow cathedral milieu in the 14th century;⁷⁴ this discovery opened up new perspectives for further inquiry.⁷⁵ Similarly to Jarosław Jarzewicz, Marek Walczak shows great erudition and restraint in formulating opinions on the original ideological content of the works he analyses. Fortunately, this balanced approach is now customary among the medievalists of the younger generation, who are well aware of both the opportunities and the pitfalls related to the study of this aspect of medieval architecture. Works by Jacek

Kowalski,⁷⁶ Tomasz Torbus,⁷⁷ Marcin Szyma,⁷⁸ Adam Soćko⁷⁹ and Tomasz Ratajczak⁸⁰ are good examples of this trend.

Concluding this review, it is worth noting once again what dangers await a too-hasty scholar when trying to discern the intentions of the medieval patrons and to ascertain what meanings they wished to impart on the edifices they sponsored. The first of these is an insufficient examination of the material structure of the building and its original form. In the case of constructions of which only vestiges remain, every attempt at an iconographic interpretation of its architecture must be accompanied by a number of reservations pointing to the uncertain character of such findings. This is linked with the greatest danger, namely, the relatively frequent tendency to make overinterpretations. It is true that weighing conclusions based on hypotheses that are not always supported by written sources is a part of the daily research routine of every medievalist. However, constructing multi-level conceptions on the basis of sequences of conjectures with a doubtful foundation in "solid" substantiating material (i.e. the material structure of the edifice or archival testimonies) often compromises a scholar's most important attribute, reliability, and drains the air of probability from his assumptions. This point is, of course, valid for all the disciplines of contemporary medieval studies; but in the case of the study of ideological content of medieval architecture, it must be stated categorically and repeatedly. It must be stressed once again that work in this field requires a truly interdisciplinary apparatus, which today is rarely attainable for a scholar working alone. Every art historian wishing to investigate the original ideological content of medieval churches or castles must be aware of the complexity of factors that motivated the founders' initiatives. This pertains to the issues of conception, which had the entire universe of contemporary culture behind them, as much as to the manner of organising, conducting and financing construction work and then putting the finished building to use. Therefore the final

A. Bartoszewicz et al., Warsaw, 2010, pp. 185–199; idem, '...*Navigare innovare et conformare...*' czyli o odnowieniu i koordynacji korpusu nawowego kościoła NMP w Stargardzie z jego częściami wcześniejszymi', in *Terra Transoderana: sztuka Pomorza Nadodrzańskiego i dawnej Nowej Marchii w średniowieczu. Materiały z seminarium naukowego poświęconego jubileuszowi 50-lecia pracy w muzealnictwie szczecińskim Zofii Krzymuskiej-Fafius 7-8 czerwca 2002*, ed. by M. Glińska, K. Kroman, R. Mąkała, Szczecin, 2004, pp. 77–88; idem, 'Jaszczurka w katedrze w Naumburgu – po co i dlaczego? Między kaprysem a autoprezentacją artysty', in *Claritas et consonantia. Funkcje, formy i znaczenia w sztuce średniowiecza. Księga poświęcona pamięci Kingi Szczepkowskiej-Naliwajek w dziesiątą rocznicę śmierci*, ed. by M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, J. Raczkowski, Toruń–Warsaw, 2017, pp. 175–193.

⁷² J. JARZEWICZ, *Gotycka architektura Nowej Marchii. Budownictwo sakralne w okresie Askańczyków i Wittelsbachów*, Poznań, 2000.

⁷³ M. WALCZAK, 'Epizod z dziejów barokizacji kościoła bożogrobców w Miechowie', in *Barok i barokizacja. Materiały sesji oddziału krakowskiego Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Kraków 3–4 XII 2004*, ed. K. Brzezina, J. Wolańska, Cracow, 2007 (*Ars vetus et nova*, 28), pp. 75–91.

⁷⁴ Idem, 'Dlaczego król Kazimierz Wielki zachował od zniszczenia wawelską rotundę najświętszej Marii Panny?' in *Lapides viventes. Zaginiony Kraków wieków średnich. Księga dedykowana profesor Klementynie Żurowskiej*, ed. by J. Gadomski et al., Cracow, 2005, pp. 93–114.

⁷⁵ See studies collected in a recent volume edited by Marek Walczak: *Historyzm – tradycjonalizm* (as in note 39).

⁷⁶ J. KOWALSKI, *Rymowane zamki. Tematy architektoniczne w literaturze starofrancuskiej drugiej połowy XII w.*, Warsaw, 2001; idem, *Gotyk wielkopolski. Architektura sakralna XIII–XVI wieku*, Poznań, 2010.

⁷⁷ T. TORBUS, *Die Konventsburgen im Deutschordensland Preussen*, Munich, 1998 (published in Polish as *Zamki konwentualne Państwa Krzyżackiego w Prusach*, Gdańsk, 2014); idem, *Das Königsschloss in Krakau und die Residenzarchitektur unter den Jagiellonen in Polen und Litauen (1499–1548)*, Ostfildern, 2014 (*Studia Jagiellonica Lipsiensia*, 18).

⁷⁸ M. SZYMA, *Kościół i klasztor Dominikanów w Krakowie. Architektura zespołu klasztorowego do lat dwudziestych XIV wieku*, Cracow, 2004 (*Ars vetus et nova*, 15).

⁷⁹ A. SOĆKO, *Układy emporowe w architekturze państwa krzyżackiego*, Warsaw, 2005.

⁸⁰ T. RATAJCZAK, *Mistrz Benedykt – królewski architekt Zygmunta I*, Cracow, 2011 (*Ars vetus et nova*, 34).

postulate of this essay is that research competencies must be continually broadened – especially by creating truly functional research teams with an interdisciplinary profile – or that, at least, wide-ranging consultations must be conducted. This programme, in connection with self-restraint and caution in formulating hypotheses and conclusions, is a necessary condition for stepping onto the fascinating path of discovering the hidden meanings of medieval buildings.

SUMMARY

Jakub Adamski
 BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING.
 RESEARCH ON GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE
 AS A BEARER OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT
 IN POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY
 OF THE LAST FIVE DECADES

The current essay pertains to a particular thematic trend in Polish research on medieval, especially Gothic, architecture, that is, its broadly understood iconography, interpreted as attempts to read the works of architecture as carriers of varied ideological contents. It must be emphasised that Polish achievements in this field, although not extensive in terms of quantity, stem directly from the main research currents in international scholarship of the last century. Admittedly, nearly all of those studies refer to issues of, at most, Central-European significance; however, considering the choice of subjects and specific research tools applied thereto, they may be perceived as an integral and representative component of the whole research yield in that particular area. Quite numerous and diverse are the results of research on the historical meanings (in the sense proposed Günther Bandmann) of medieval buildings in Poland, within the country's former and contemporary borders. It is noticeable that numerous works published by successive generations of historians of medieval art often pertained to the same key buildings or their regional clusters; this, however, is not very surprising, considering that these are, above all, the Gothic cathedrals and the few most important collegiate churches and parish churches, including those founded by King Casimir the Great, and the castles of the Teutonic Knights in former Prussia. The final postulate of this essay is that research competencies of art and architectural historians of the Middle Ages must be continually broadened – especially by creating truly functional research teams with an interdisciplinary profile – or that, at least, wide-ranging consultations must be conducted. This programme, in connection with self-restraint and caution in formulating hypotheses and conclusions, is a necessary condition for stepping onto the fascinating path of discovering the hidden meanings of medieval buildings.