

Organizer

Team for researching the history of Knights Templar and Knights of St John of Jerusalem in Chwarszczany, attached to the Museum of the Mysliborz Lake District located in 74-300 Mysliborz, ul. Bohaterów Warszawy 74, Poland.

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Project sponsor

Institute of Historical and Sightseeing Research, the publisher of a quarterly magazine "Gazeta Rycerska" and a monthly one "Odkrywca".

Composition of the research team

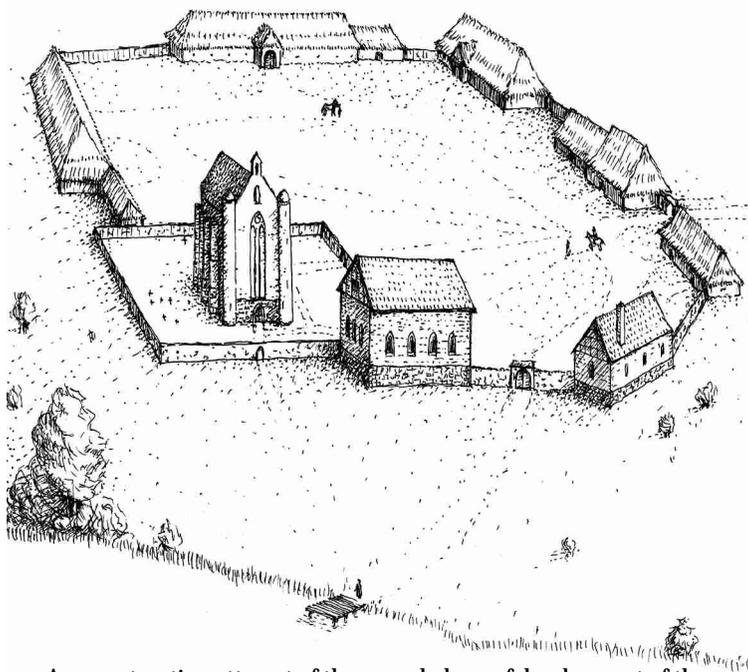
Architecture archaeologists, conservators, historians, art historians, architects, an anthropologist, a geographer, a dendrochronology specialist, a numismatist, an IT specialist and many other specialists.

Project goals:

- research on history of the chapel, which is the centre of former monastery complex (spatial arrangement, building stages chronology, functions and importance of the architecture, cemetery),
- determination of range and character of medieval commandery development,
- recognition of relicts of earlier settlement dating from prehistory (humans have lived on this site since 500 year BC to the second century after Christ),



- popularisation of the Chwarszczany chapel image and propagation of knowledge concerning history of Knights Templar and Knights of St John of Jerusalem in the Central-Eastern Europe,
- salvation of the unique series of medieval frescos (14/15 century) inside the chapel.



A reconstruction attempt of the second phase of development of the Knights Templar commandery (monastic estate) in Chwarszczany - situation after year 1280 (figure by M. Sałajski)

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Everything on the Knights Templar in Poland:

www.templariusze.org

Some important dates in the Chwarszczany commandery history

1232 - Władysław Odonicz grants Chwarszczany to the Knights Templar. In the following years a Romanesque chapel and monastic complex is built.

1262 - the Chwarszczany Knights Templar sign an agreement with Brandenburg Margraves which confirms that Knights Templar have got eleven villages in return for giving up any rights to a village located on the track Kostrzyn – Gorzów.

1280* - the Bishop of Lubusko region consecrates new Gothic church dedicated to All Saints.

1286 - Otton VI – the representative of the Brandenburg Margraves dynasty enters the Chwarszczany convent.

1291 - Bernard von Evirstein assumes the function of the province superior (preceptor) administering over Poland, Pomerania and New Margraviate. The Chwarszczany commandery becomes his headquarters.

1312 - The Pope Clemens V suppresses the Knights Templar order.

1318 - Knights of St John of Jerusalem order, according to the Cremmen Agreement, take over the Brandenburg dominions of Knights Templar.

1402 - The king Sigismund of Luxemburg pledges the New Margraviate territories with Teutonic Knights, krzyżakom.

1433-36 - The Teutonic Knights alderman Henry von Rabenstein invades several times the Chwarszczany complex and confiscates the commandery goods.

1454 - the Brandenburg Elector Frederic II purchases the New Margraviate territories from the Teutonic Knights.

1540 - the Knights of St John of Jerusalem commandery is transferred from Chwarszczany to Swidwino. The estate manor is created on the monastic complex territory.

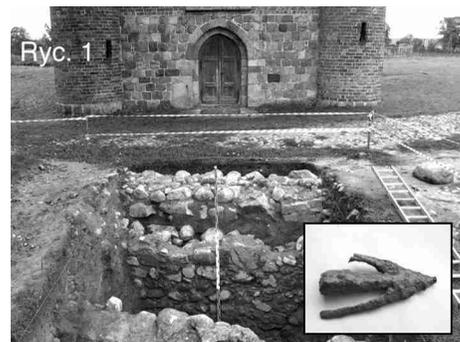
2004 - The Chwarszczany project – the archaeological and architectural researches on the commandery - starts.



*The Chwarszczany chapel was erected in two stages. The granite Romanesque church was built firstly, but as the church was too small and modest, the second church was built about year 1280, which exists up to day. It is a gothic, brick structure with a fragment of Romanesque facade built on elongated, polygonal closed plan. The whole is covered with ribbed cross vault and the chapel's body is hugged with massive buttresses and two towers on the facade. The chapel architecture reflects military character of the Knights Templar order. Inside the chapel we can see a complex of medieval frescos founded by Knights of St John of Jerusalem.

Archaeological and architectural researches

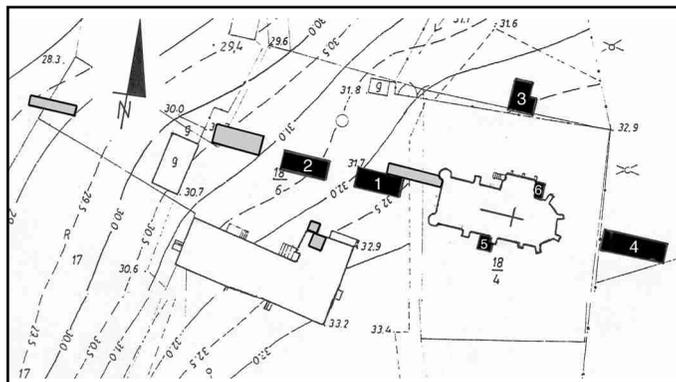
The Knights Templar raised about 10 commanderies on Polish territory. Towards the end of the thirteenth century Chwarszczany was the order's main centre in the Central-Eastern Europe – there was established the province superior's (preceptor's) headquarters.



On this site, since the spring of 2004 have been carried out archaeological and architectural researches aiming to save the chapel endangered by disastrous operation of moisture. There were set up six excavations (see Site plan). The most important discoveries were made in the excavations next to the temple walls. The results confirmed that Knights Templar had raised their second temple on the remains of an earlier small chapel and on adjacent cemetery. Relicts of medieval floor were exposed inside the temple. Outside, under the chapel foundations and around it relicts of large prehistoric settlement (garbage pits, larders, hearths, etc.) were revealed. The dating of discoveries confirms that humans have lived on this site since 500 years before Christ (!). In excavation placed 8 metres from the chapel western wall were revealed fragments of three walls made of granite stones bonded with lime mortar. The oldest wall was built in medieval period and probably was a part of monastery enclosure. Numerous fragments of clay utensils (so called earthen pots) (fig. 4) were found. The earthen pot means a clay utensil for which the distinctive feature is firing method that gives a characteristic colouring. This type of ceramics became widespread in the thirteenth century on the territories east of the Oder River thanks to Knights Templar among others. Among other finds a metal arrowhead is noteworthy (fig. 1). On the northern side of the chapel a part of the oldest monastic cemetery was found, dated to the thirteenth century (fig. 2). In the excavation at the former entrance to the chapel, from the south side, some tombs were found including a monk tomb, certainly of a Knight Templar.



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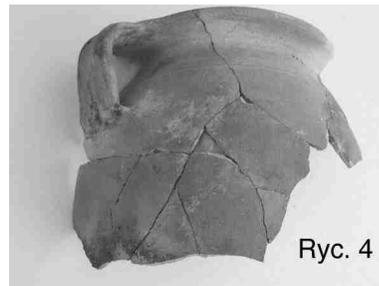


Chwarszczany. The Site plan of the research zone with marked on it archaeological excavations. Black colour means excavations made in 2004 (1 – 6), grey colour means excavations planned for 2005 season.

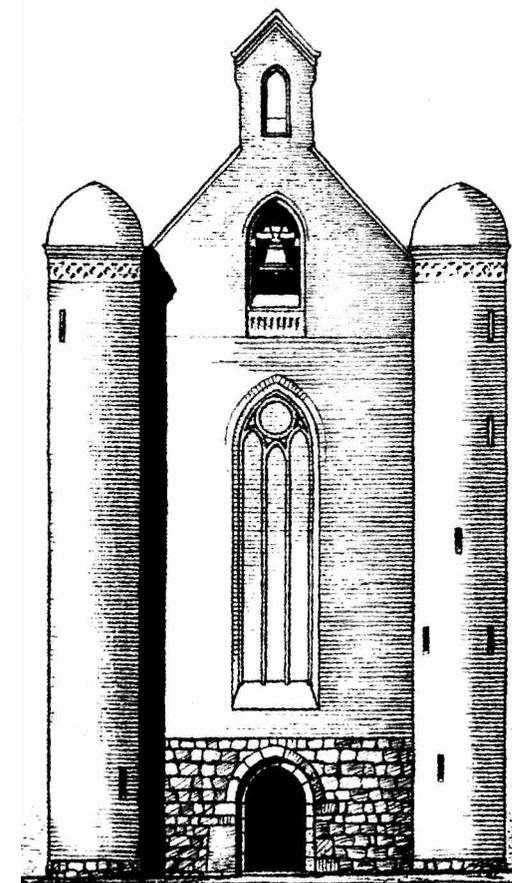


The researches did not confirm these hypotheses that Knights Templar had probably built the commandery near a Slavic village; only a small hamlet existed near this monastic complex. The Chwarszczany village was established considerably later, in modern times. The question "Why the Knights Templar chose this site for their headquarters?" has no answer so far.

The researches in 2005 season are conducted on territory west of the chapel. We plan to make five excavations (see Site plan) to discover vestiges of monastery buildings and particularly the great room – that is dwelling house. Based on previous observations we can expect that remains of dwelling house may be located in the basement of one of the near houses. The results of researches carried out in other excavations should clarify the question of spatial arrangement of the Romanesque chapel as well as function of the stonewall built several metres from the chapel wall. In the excavation on the riverbank we will search for relicts of supposed ford and harbour. These researches are connected with a problem of medieval network of tracks passing next to the commandery. The research works will have finished by middle of September.



Archaeological and architectural researches on commandery of the Knights Templar and the Knights of St John of Jerusalem



The Chwarszczany project
2005