

# THE UNKNOWN HALL CHURCH FROM AROUND 1300 AT BYCZYNA IN SILESIA. ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURE OF AN ALLEGED FOUNDATION OF HENRY III, DUKE OF GŁOGÓW

JAKUB ADAMSKI

## Introduction

The Parish Church of St. Nicolas at Byczyna (German *Pitschen*) in the north of Silesia, formerly catholic, now Lutheran, is a most interesting, yet till now unknown example of a hall church from around 1300. It proves that the Silesian founders, as well as builders themselves, at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were in search for a suitable, attractive form of a representative town church. It is characteristic that the first German researchers: Hans Lutsch<sup>1</sup>, reverend Hermann Koelling, the town's monographer<sup>2</sup>, or Ernst Königer, who wrote about the Upper Silesian art<sup>3</sup>, expressed no opinion on the building's chronology. In turn, Tadeusz Chrzanowski and Marian Kornecki treated it as a homogenous structure from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. This dating was accepted by few authors, who occasionally mentioned the Byczyna church in popular outlines<sup>5</sup>. Such a state of research is highly surprising, because the much older origin of the building is more than evident. Its present-day form of a basilica is a result of a transformation which took place only at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## Reconstruction of the original form of the church

From the original structure almost entirely are preserved solid perimeter walls, made of stone<sup>6</sup>,

which form a very short triple nave on a square ground plan and a square west tower, slightly narrower than the main vessel (Figs 1–4). Massive buttresses with no set-offs are also original, what proves that the nave was divided into three bays of *travée* scheme. A triangular west gable, erected with brick and split in the middle part with the walls of the tower, indicates a very pitched roof. Taking into account the angle of its surfaces, as well as the height of the choir, we may be sure that the nave had a pseudo-basilican form, with arcade walls fully hidden under the high saddleback roof.

Differently as in the case of the nave, brick was used as the material for the construction of a very spatial, three-bay choir with flat termination and oblique corner buttresses. The length of the eastern part of the church equals the length of the nave, what clearly results in disproportion of the ground plan, dominated with the imposing presbytery. The brickwork in Monk bond (two stretchers between every header), typical for the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is detectable in the lower part of the east and south wall of the choir. It proves that the present-day sanctuary contains the complete outline of the original structure, which was secondarily faced with new bricks in Flemish bond and probably slightly overbuilt. Pairs of lancet windows in the longitudinal walls of the choir constitute a unique feature of its architecture, which was noted already by Hans Lutsch<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The present paper was created in course of the execution of my individual research grant on "Silesian Gothic in its heyday. Urban religious architecture", donated by the National Science Centre (2014–2016; DEC-2013/09/D/HS2/00545). Cf.: H. Lutsch, *Verzeichnis der Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Schlesien*, vol. 3, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Landkreise des Reg.-Bezirks Liegnitz*, Breslau 1891, pp. 14–15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf.: H. Koelling, *Geschichte der Stadt Pitschen*, Breslau 1892, pp. 140–154.

<sup>3</sup> E. Königer, *Kunst in Oberschlesien*, Breslau 1938, pp. 11–12.

<sup>4</sup> *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce. Seria nowa*, vol. 7, *Województwo opolskie*, part 4, *Powiat kluczborski*, text by: M. Kornecki, A. Ciechanowiecki, Warszawa 1960, p. 12; M. Chrzanowski, M. Kornecki, *Sztuka Śląska Opolskiego*, Kraków 1974, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> B. Czechowicz, *Książęcy mecenat artystyczny na Śląsku u schyłku średniowiecza*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 242–245; *Zabytki*

*sztuki w Polsce. Śląsk*, ed. S. Brzezicki, C. Nielsen, Warszawa 2006, p. 172; J. Pilch, *Leksykon zabytków architektury Górnego Śląska*, Warszawa 2008, p. 39; H. Kozaczewska-Golasz, H. Golasz-Szołomicka, *Kościół halowy z XIV wieku na Śląsku*, Wrocław 2013, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> The nave of the church was built mostly with granite erratic blocks, which were easy to find in the plain north of Silesia, close to the border with the region of Greater Poland. It was sufficient to employ some unqualified workers in order to collect glacial erratic from the fields and to hew it roughly. In such case, building costs were substantially lower in comparison to the brickwork. In turn, the decision to erect the church choir with more expensive brick, was probably determined by the representational character of this part of the building.

<sup>7</sup> H. Lutsch, op. cit., p. 14.

A very short distance between the lancets excludes the possibility that the choir was originally covered with sexpartite vaults, while the narrowness of the windows suggests that the tracery was limited only to their *couronnements*.

### Masonry decoration of the interior

The much older origin of the church than the one previously assumed is confirmed by stone remnants of the original articulation of the choir's interior, probably preserved *in situ*, slightly above window sills (Figs 5, 6). In the north-east corner of the choir one can find a corbel crowned with a delicate cornice, intended to support a tripartite bunch of round vaulting shafts (Fig. 7). Its form is a very specific one – three separate segments look like a hunting horn and have a soft, undulating profile. They start in the corner and broaden upwards to reach the full diameter of each colonnette.

In the opposite east corner of the choir, as well as in the contact points between each bay (with the exception for the boundary of the second and third bay on the north side) one can detect polygonal microarchitectural baldachins, embedded on the same height as the aforementioned corbel (Figs 8, 9). They are set of a sequence of tiny cusped arcades, crowned with triangular gables with inserted trilobes and small turrets between them. From below, the baldachins are rib-vaulted, with the exception for the one placed in the south-east corner of the choir, which is supported with tiny human heads (Fig. 9). The original location and function of this pieces of masonry is unclear. It was Lutsch's suspicion that they were secondarily embedded in their present places<sup>8</sup>. The flat termination of the baldachins suggests that they supported vaulting shafts, while their peculiar form leads to an obvious conclusion about their original use as crowning for fully-bodied figures, placed on (lost) brackets.

Yet, it is puzzling that the baldachins are embedded on the same height as the purely architectural

corbel in the north-east corner of the choir, the only one preserved in its form. If the location of this elements of masonry is original, it leads to the conclusion that in this corner there was no figure at all. The corbel in question is too small to support a three-dimensional sculpture, while its tripartite construction indicates its connection to a bunch of vaulting shafts. Besides, it would be impossible to combine its form with baldachin-crowned niches into one harmonic composition. Therefore, it seems probable that the described remnants of masonry are preserved in their original location. Still, it is impossible to explain why the north-east corner of the choir contains an element which does not match the other ones.

The aforementioned observations are all clear signs of a unique architectural program of the Parish Church at Byczyna. It is surprising if we take into account the fact that we deal here with a very small town of a marginal importance in the history of Silesia. It was never rich nor functioned as a residence of any local dukes. And still, the shape and decoration of the building is extraordinary, what makes the researcher look for a credible explanation of this phenomenon.

### Dating of the building

Luckily, it is possible to set down the dating of the building precisely to *c.* 1300, on grounds of one small piece of masonry. Here is meant the tripartite corbel in the north-east corner of the choir, which is rooted in the Austrian architecture of the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Such type of horn-like consoles was already well known in the Franconian architecture of the last Hohenstaufen kings, what is exemplified by the corbels in the nave of St. Sebaldus Church at Nuremberg (*c.* 1230/1240–1274)<sup>9</sup> and vaulting shafts in the Chapel of the Holy Nail (*Nagelkapelle*) at the north arm of the west transept of Bamberg Cathedral (second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), (Fig. 10)<sup>10</sup>. Coming directly from Franco-

<sup>8</sup> H. Lutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 15. I suppose that the choir was rebuilt in the end of the 14th century, when the hall nave was displaced with the present-day basilica. At that time, the original articulation of the choir interior was removed and only the analysed remnants of the masonry were left *in situ*. Hermann Koelling passed the information that after the removal of internal plaster in the church, in course of the renovation of 1886, a burnt layer was discovered on the walls of the choir. He connected this discovery with the hypothetical siege of Byczyna by the Hussites in 1430; see: H. Koelling, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96. It seems

likely, but I am convinced that the choir was already rebuilt at that time.

<sup>9</sup> G. P. Fehring, A. Röss, *Die Stadt Nürnberg*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, München 1977 (*Bayerische Kunstdenkmale*, vol. 10), pp. 111–118.

<sup>10</sup> B. Nicolai, *Der Romanische Neubau des Naumburger Doms*, [in:] *Der Naumburger Meister. Bildhauer und Architekt im Europa der Kathedralen*, exh. cat., Naumburg, 29.06.–2.11.2011, ed. H. Krohm, H. Kunde, G. Siebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Petersberg 2011, vol. 1, pp. 711, 722.

nia, this motif was soon adapted in the Kingdom of Bohemia, where we find it in the Chapter House of the Cistercian Abbey at Osek, in form of a short tripartite vaulting shaft (c. 1240)<sup>11</sup>. In the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it made appearance in Austria. In a much transformed shape, it was applied in the most important masterpiece of the post-classical architecture of the late *Rayonnant* style in Middle Europe, which is the choir of the Cistercian Church at Heiligenkreuz in the Vienna Woods. It was begun at the latest in 1288 and consecrated in the presence of Duke Albert I of Habsburg in 1295<sup>12</sup>. The bunches of pear-shaped vaulting shafts are overhung on the perimeter walls slightly below the string course, which divides the dado zone. They are supported on undivided corbels, specific for their undulating profile (Fig. 11).

Exactly the same form of a rib support was used in the four-bay part of the Dominican Cloister in Wrocław, which was erected around 1300 under the east termination of the church (Fig. 12)<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, it seems probable that the shape of Byczyna corbel is a result of a direct reference to this important building. Yet, it must be noted that the latter one is set of more traditional, rounded segments, unlike the pear-shaped examples from Heiligenkreuz and Wrocław. As far as we know, this peculiar type of bracket appeared in Silesia exclusively in the Dominican Cloister. Similarly, in the Austro-bohemian artistic circle it was not being used after the very beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the starting point of the construction at Byczyna must be determined as c. 1300. Probably it took place in the last years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## Analysis of the structure of the church

When we consider the ground plan of the church, it must be said that the short, centralising nave of only three bays is rooted in the Silesian tradition. It can be compared with the naves of the oldest parish churches in Wrocław (St. Elisabeth's) and Dzierżoniów/Reichenbach, as well as, above all, those at Głubczyce/Leobschütz (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), (Fig. 13) and Racibórz/Ratibor (after 1300), which are based on a square ground plan, just like in case of the Byczyna church. However, the latter building presents a fully original conception, for the square outline of perimeter walls is absolutely regular, while the bay distribution represents a modern *travée* scheme, absent in the aforementioned churches. In turn, the ground plan of the rectangular choir can be seen as a repetition of the three-bay presbytery of the Parish Church at Grotków/Grottkau from the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, it is conspicuous that the size of the downright monumental choir at Byczyna is somewhat incongruent with the very short nave. The latter part of the church seems suitable for the needs of a small town, while the east wing with its sophisticated masonry provides a clear proof of the exceptional level of ambitions and aspirations of its investors.

Generally alien to the tradition of the urban church architecture in Silesia is the square tower in the west façade. It is certainly a part of the original structure, as evidenced by homogenous connection of its ground storey to the western walls of the aisles. Lack of towers is one of the most characteristic features of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century parish churches in

<sup>11</sup> J. Kuthan, *Česká architektura v době posledních Přemyslovců. Města – hrady – kláštery – kostely*, Vimperk 1994, pp. 261–272; D. Líbal, *Katalog gotické architektury v České republice do husitských válek*, Praha 2001, pp. 302–308.

<sup>12</sup> The first record of the construction of the choir dates back to 1288. Yet, it is unknown when it was begun. In the literature there are two distinct notions on this subject. The majority of scholars, including Markus Thome, the monographer of the Abbey, set the starting point of the construction at c. 1280, after the Habsburgs gained the rulership of the Duchy of Austria. This opinion is based above all on the stylistic analysis; cf.: M. Thome, *Kirche und Klosteranlage der Zisterzienserabtei Heiligenkreuz. Die Bauteile des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*, Petersberg 2007, pp. 241–268. In turn, Mario Schwarz was convinced that a mention of the planned, but not executed consecration in the year 1288 proves the completion of the choir by that date. As a result, he believed that its construction was

begun still during the reign of Ottokar II of Bohemia from the Přemyslid dynasty (died 1278), when Heinrich Schinweis (1262–1284) was the abbot of Heiligenkreuz; cf.: M. Schwarz, *Die Baukunst des 13. Jahrhunderts in Österreich*, Wien–Köln–Weimar 2013, pp. 349–355. Yet, the latter conception is not convincing and one should give credibility to the monographer of the Abbey, who proved that none of the architectural forms of the choir allows to date the starting point of the construction before c. 1280.

<sup>13</sup> E. Małachowicz, *Wczesnośredniowieczna architektura kościoła Dominikanów we Wrocławiu*, „Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki”, 20, 1975, brochure 1, pp. 35–43; *Architektura gotycka w Polsce*, ed. T. Mroczko, M. Arsyński, part 2, *Katalog zabytków*, ed. A. Włodarek, Warszawa 1995 (*Dzieje sztuki polskiej*, vol. 2), pp. 269, authors of the entry: S. Stulin, A. Włodarek.

the towns of Silesia. Monumental west fronts with twin towers were erected only in few buildings from the second quarter of the century – at Lwówek Śląski/Löwenberg, Złotoryja/Goldberg, Jawor/Jauer and Racibórz/Ratibor. In this aspect they were probably modelled after prestigious churches in Moravian royal towns of Głubczyce and Jihlava/Iglau, supported by Ottokar II of Bohemia<sup>14</sup>. In turn, single west towers were being built in Silesia almost exclusively in rural churches, probably as a sign of aristocratic patronage (*ius patronatus*) over them<sup>15</sup>.

In this context, it would be rather impossible for the investors from Byczyna to build a west tower as an intentional emulation of a typical element of country churches, even despite the aristocratic connections of the latter. It seems that the single square tower constitutes here a reference to two important buildings at Głogów/Glogau in north-west of Silesia, which in that aspect are singular in the urban church architecture in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Silesia. Here is meant the Collegiate Church of Virgin Mary (finished around 1250) and the Parish Church of St. Nicolas (rebuilt after 1291), (Fig. 14), both encompassing monumental west towers on a square ground plan, which must be perceived as a result of Brandenburgian and Pomeranian influence<sup>16</sup>.

### Historical background the supposed founder of the church

What is crucial here, is that the Głogów direction in case of the Byczyna church is stressed here as no coincidence and it can be corroborated with historical arguments. Even more – it shall allow us to explain the uniqueness of the architectural program of the church, about which already reverend Koelling said

that it seems exaggeratedly complicated as for such small town<sup>17</sup>. Until 1294 Byczyna was a part of one united Duchy of Wrocław, constituting with the Kluczbork/Kreuzburg district a border key of land between the region of Greater Poland and the Duchy of Opole/Oppeln<sup>18</sup>. After the barbarous imprisonment of its duke, Henry V of Wrocław (died 1296), which was caused by his cousin Henry III of Głogów (died 1309) in 1293, in the course of the fight over inheritance of the late duke of Wrocław, Henry IV Probus (died 1292), the former renounced on 6 May 1294 his rule over Byczyna, Kluczbork and other possessions. As a result, they were repossessed by his cousin from Głogów, who entitled himself as the heir to the Polish throne (*heres Regni Poloniae*)<sup>19</sup>. Byczyna remained in the Duchy of Głogów until 1312, when after a dynastic division it came to the Duchy of Oleśnica/Oels, ruled by Konrad I, son of Henry III<sup>20</sup>.

It is almost sure that the birth of the architectural conception of the parish church at Byczyna, as well as most of its construction, dates back to the times of the ambitious and up-and-coming ruler, who was Henry III of Głogów. What is more, he should be perceived as a proper initiator and founder of the building, as it would be improbable to expect Byczyna burghers to erect such an exceptional structure. As it was proven by Tomasz Jurek, since 1298 Duke Henry led a consequent unification policy, thinking about conquering Cracow and winning the Polish crown<sup>21</sup>. In turn, the foregoing architectural analysis of the church led to the conclusion that the construction of the building was initiated exactly around that time, c. 1300.

It should be noted here that in a document from 1313, a rector of Byczyna is endowed with prestigious title of an archpriest (dean)<sup>22</sup>, while in a charter from 1376, issued in Avignon by bishop of Sabina,

<sup>14</sup> D. Prix, *Středověký městský kostel Panny Marie v Hlubčicích*, „Průzkumy Památek”, 10, brochure 2, 2003, pp. 54–55.

<sup>15</sup> See: M. Kutzner, *Společné uwarunkowania rozwoju śląskiej architektury w latach 1220–1330*, [in:] *Sztuka i ideologia XIII w.*, Materiały sympozjum Komitetu Nauk o Sztuce Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa, 5 i 6 IV 1971 r., ed. P. Skubiszewski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1974, pp. 205–239.

<sup>16</sup> J. Eysymontt, M. Kutzner, *Gotycka architektura kościoła św. Mikołaja w Głogowie*, „Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej”, 2, 1963, pp. 32–42; T. Kozaczewski, *Głogów średniowieczny do końca XIII wieku. Osadnictwo i architektura*, Głogów 2006, pp. 31–87, 125–129.

<sup>17</sup> Cf.: H. Koelling, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, pp. 33–42.

<sup>19</sup> H. Koelling, op. cit., pp. 42–43; T. Jurek, *Dziedzic Królestwa Polskiego. Książę głogowski Henryk (1274–1309)*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Kraków 2010, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> H. Koelling, op. cit., p. 43; T. Jurek, op. cit., p. 209–211.

<sup>21</sup> Monographic study: T. Jurek, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Silesiae*, vol. 16, *Regesten zur schlesischen Geschichte 1301–1315*, ed. C. Grünhagen, C. Wütke, Breslau 1892, no. 3346, pp. 240–241.



cardinal John of St. Martin, Byczyna is mentioned officially as a seat of a decanate<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, it seems justified to see a direct link between the elevation of the parish church to the rank of a dean's headquarters and the erection of a new building. This new dignity explains the uncommon size and decoration of the choir at Byczyna. Tomasz Jurek pointed out that the coronation plans of the Duke of Głogów were created to much extent in the Church spheres, whose dignitaries (in this case: the bishop of Poznań) offered him a fixed idea of the kingdom's revival<sup>24</sup>. In this context, a generous policy towards the Church (including foundations of sacral buildings) becomes understandable, as it was a condition *sine qua non* in the pursuit of the crown.

The construction of a new splendid parish church at Byczyna, just after the town was overtaken by the duke of Głogów, must be perceived as meaningful. Even despite the fact that it is not confirmed by written sources, the identification of Henry III as the founder of the building is quite obvious. His merit for the church was meant to be apparently announced by the single west tower, unique in its form in this part of Silesia. The decision erect it should be interpreted as a wish to create a visible sign of the Głogovian rule, which was to connote the most important church buildings in the capital of the Duchy, above all – the Collegiate Church on the Cathedral Island (*Ostrów Tumski*) at Głogów. Even though the patronage rights of the Byczyna church were owned until 1408 by the bishops of Wrocław<sup>25</sup>, the Duke as the proper investor had a *carte blanche* to determine the architectural program of the building, of course providing that it was not contrary to the interests of the local Church. In fact, the shape of the building in question was probably intended by its founder as a gesture towards the Silesian clergy. A cue for such an interpretation is offered above all by the magnificent, spatial presbytery, which dominates in the silhouette of the church almost equally with the “ducal” tower.

## Interpretation of the remnants of masonry in the choir

Now, it becomes necessary to reconsider the remnants of masonry in the choir. In light of the foregoing analysis it becomes more understandable, even if still extraordinary, that a sequence of baldachin niches was introduced on the internal walls of the sanctuary. They contained probably three-dimensional statues of saints rather than apostles (for them we would expect 12 places). Of course we do not know if the supposed sculptural program had been ever executed, but it is possible to point out the closest geographic and chronologic comparison for such an internal decoration. Here are meant the nave arcades in the Olomouc/Olmütz Cathedral (c. 1290–1300)<sup>26</sup>, which was once (unsuccessfully) created by Ottokar II of Bohemia as a seat of an archbishop. The polygonal baldachins, overhung on the piers from the side of the central vessel, crown figural niches and simultaneously serve as corbels for delicate bunches of vaulting shafts. It can be supposed that the Byczyna baldachins were parts of a similar structure (Fig. 15). It is worth noting that at Olomouc the compound shafts, which are overhung on the arcades from the side of the aisles, are supported on undivided undulating corbels (Fig. 16), reminding of those at Heiligenkreuz, Wrocław and Byczyna. It seems that the builder of the latter church had a good knowledge of the forms of the prestigious cathedral at Olomouc.

Among more traditional features of the analysed choir at Byczyna we can count the application of rounded shafts, instead of more modern pear-shaped profiles. It must be explained with the stylistic preferences of Silesian architects, who did not abandon colonnette-like shafts until the end of the first tierce of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A close example of interior articulation with bunches of rounded shafts resting on corbels, close geographically and chronologically, is offered by the choir of a cottage church at Małujowice/Mollwitz near Brzeg/Brieg (c. 1300), (Fig. 17),

<sup>23</sup> J. Heyne, *Dokumentierte Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Breslau aus Urkunden, Aktenstücken, älteren Chronisten und neueren Geschichtsschreibern*, vol. 2, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Kirchen- und Diözesan-Geschichte Schlesiens von der Mitte des 14. bis zum Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts, im Entwicklungsgang der kirchengeschichtlichen Tatsachen urkundlich dargestellt*, Breslau 1864, pp. 111–114; see also: H. Koelling, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>24</sup> T. Jurek, op. cit., p. 228–229.

<sup>25</sup> H. Koelling, op. cit., p. 148; B. Czechowicz, op. cit., pp. 242–244.

<sup>26</sup> J. Kuthan, op. cit., pp. 251–255; D. Líbal, op. cit., pp. 292–293; D. Prix, *Hlava první. 796–1310*, [in:] *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české. Tematická řada. Architektura*, ed. P. Kratochvíl, Litomyšl–Praha 2009, pp. 94–96; idem, *Dlouhý presbytářkostela v Žárech. K sakrální architektuře moravsko-slezského pomezí kolem roku 1300*, Opava 2011, pp. 158–161.

which was under a chivalric patronage, and perhaps also in close ties with the local dukes<sup>27</sup>. We can also remind here about a similar, but slightly older articulation in the choir of the Franciscan Church at Lwówek Śląski/Löwenberg (1270s–1280s)<sup>28</sup>.

A motif which is astonishingly old fashioned at Byczyna is the use of lancet windows, which remind more of a late-Romanesque architecture from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In this context it is characteristic that the polygonal baldachins on the choir walls are not similar to those from Olomouc. What is more, they are surprisingly archaistic in their composition and details. Providing that we had no other information about the rest of the church, they could be dated back to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. Less slender gables and the peculiar motif of miniature turrets between them, indicate the evidently distant origin of this type of microarchitectural baldachin, rooted in the French high-gothic architecture from c. 1200.

This sort of statue crowning, drawing inspiration from the 12<sup>th</sup>-century models, made appearance in the transept porches of the Chartres Cathedral (1194–1220), and hence were adopted in the following prestigious buildings in the Northern France, above all at Reims Cathedral (from 1211 on)<sup>29</sup>. It was a merit of the masons educated on the scaffoldings of the latter building that this form of a baldachin was transferred to the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, especially to Bamberg and Naumburg<sup>30</sup>. The geographically closest examples of this type of masonry, equipped with gables and turrets, are

to be found in the choir of the Meissen Cathedral (c. 1255–1260), (Fig. 18). French in origin, they were executed by the workshop of Naumburg Master<sup>31</sup>, some fifty year before the analysed church was constructed.

Being well aware of the hypothetical character of the following passage, I would like to link the extraordinary program of the sculptural decoration in the interior of the Byczyna choir to the Collegiate Church at Głogów, which was already mentioned in the context of a single west tower, so untypical in Silesia. It must be noted here that the sanctuary of the Głogów church was adorned with full-bodied statues of its benefactors, that is of Duke Konrad I and his wife Salomea, parents of Henry III. They were probably commissioned in the 1290s by the Głogów chapter, probably in order to win the favour of the mighty son of the commemorated couple. Even though only the monument of the Duchess survives (its counterpart – *Bildsäule* of the Duke, as described in 1831 – was destroyed in the same year), all previous researchers were convinced that the concept and execution of the Głogów statues would be impossible without the exemplar of the Naumburg west choir with its astonishing figures of founders and benefactors of the local Church<sup>32</sup>.

We do not know exactly how the statues of the ducal couple were displayed in the sanctuary of the Collegiate Church at Głogów. Yet, it is almost sure that they were placed on consoles and crowned with microarchitectural baldachins, analogically as in

<sup>27</sup> J. Eysymontt, *Kościół i klasztor Franciszkanów we Lwówku*, „Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej”, 11, 1977, pp. 7–17; R. Czerner, C. Lasota, *Rozwój architektury kościoła Franciszkanów w Lwówku Śląskim*, „Prace Naukowe Instytutu Historii Architektury, Sztuki i Techniki Politechniki Wrocławskiej. Studia i Materiały”, 9, 1988, pp. 75–97.

<sup>28</sup> See above all: D. Kimpel, R. Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1140–1270*, München 1985.

<sup>29</sup> See, among other: T. Kozaczewski, *Wiejskie kościoły parafialne XIII wieku na Śląsku (miejsowości H–O)*, Wrocław 1994, pp. 20–21 [here too much early dating to c. 1260]; see also: *Architektura gotycka...*, pp. 157, authors of the entry: S. Stulin, A. Włodarek. Romuald Kaczmarek was right to correct that dating to c. 1300; cf.: R. Kaczmarek, *Sztuki plastyczne. Rzeźba i rzemiosło artystyczne (od ok. 1280 do ok. 1320)*, [in:] *Polska około roku 1300. Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*, ed. W. Fałkowski, Warszawa 2003, pp. 203–205. Such dating is corroborated with the tracery pattern of the east window, which is set of three polylobes, each in form of three knitted trilobes. Such a composition of the *Couronnement* could not have been applied in Silesia before the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>30</sup> Recently: P. Kurmann, *Mikroarchitektur im 13. Jahrhundert. Zur Frage nach Architekturmodellen zur Zeit der Hochgotik*, [in:] *Mikroarchitektur im Mittelalter. Ein gattungsübergreifendes Phänomen zwischen Realität und Imagination*, ed. C. Kratzke, U. Albrecht, Leipzig 2008, pp. 83–97; B. Röder, *Kleinarchitekturen als Schlüssel zum Verständnis gebauter Architektur. Der Marienbaldachin des Bamberger Domes, die Baldachine am Nordquerhaus der Reimser Kathedrale und die Bamberger Westtürme*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 99–118; *idem*, *Zwischen Tradition, Phantasie und Abbild. Die Baldachine des Naumburger Westchors und die Architektur und Kleinplastik ihrer Zeit*, [in:] *Der Naumburger Meister...*, vol. 1, pp. 91–103.

<sup>31</sup> Recently: M. Hörsch, *Die Meissner Skulptur des Naumburger Meisters*, [in:] *Der Naumburger Meister...*, vol. 2, pp. 1301–1312.

<sup>32</sup> J. Kęłowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich w dobie średniowiecza*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1971, pp. 34–44; J. Jarzewicz, *Die Nachfolge der Naumburger Bildwerke in der polnischen Kunst des 13. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Der Naumburger Meister...*, vol. 2, pp. 1450–1451; B. Guldán-Klamecka, *Statue der Herzogin Salome von Glogau*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 1468–1469, with brief description of older literature.

the Meissen Cathedral (Fig. 18)<sup>33</sup>. Understandably enough, we do not speak here of the identity of the workshops. Yet, the closeness of the Głogów sculptures to the work of the Naumburg Master lets one suspect, that the alleged baldachins in the Collegiate Church were modelled after those from Saxon cathedrals. If so, they were of a “second-hand” French origin. In turn, the analysed parts of masonry in the choir in question can be perceived as a subsidiary argument for the existence of such microarchitectural crowning over the statues of Konrad I and Salomea. It seems most probable that those from Byczyna reflect the form of the baldachins, which once existed at Głogów. This is the explanation of the question why do they look much older as they really are – they are indirectly modelled after prestigious, mid-13<sup>th</sup> century examples from Naumburg and/or Meissen.

### Conclusion

The Parish Church at Byczyna is certainly one of the most exceptional architectural creations from around 1300 in Silesia. Its builders proved their knowledge of the most important buildings in Austria and Moravia, above all of the Olomouc Cathedral, which at that time reached the final stage of its construction. The short hall (or precisely pseudo-basilican) nave follows the main trend of the parish churches in Silesia from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In turn, the single west tower, erected probably according to the wish of its ducal founder, reminded of the Collegiate Church at Głogów, in the same way as the unique decoration of the choir. The size and opulent articulation of the eastern part of the analysed building stressed the dignity of the church as a seat of an archpriest.

Taking into account the fact that Henry III died in 1309, we must count with the possibility that the nave, and especially the tower, were finished after that date. The Duke’s death meant probably for the Byczyna burghers that they had to overtake the funding of all construction works, as it seems improbable that the owner of the patronage rights, the bishop of Wrocław, felt no responsibility for that matter. At that time he was already occupied with the construction of the nave of his cathedral. In

fact, we do not know if the church at Byczyna was ever completed according to the original conception, with full vaulting of the interior. The decision to fully rebuild it into a basilica, made at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, suggests a negative answer. The following reconstruction of the choir, together with the removal of the internal articulation, is a sad loss. In light of the preserved remnants and the foregoing analysis, the parish church at Byczyna presents itself as a unique structure in the Silesian architecture of around 1300, closely bond with the political history of the region.

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<sup>33</sup> As it was suspected recently by: B. Guldán-Klamečka, op. cit., p. 1469.



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Jakub Adamski, PhD  
Institute of the History of Art  
University of Warsaw



