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AN ALLUSION TO A CATHEDRAL IN A RURAL FOUNDATION? ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PARISH CHURCH IN BROCHÓW*

The history of the medieval and early-modern architecture rarely witnessed a rural parish church – one that would not be not a pilgrimage centre – assume an intricate architectural form intended to convey a complex meaning. Yet when this happened, it indicated that the given site was of utmost importance to the local community, and above all to the wealthy founders of that church. The parish church of Saints John the Baptist and Roch in Brochów near Sochaczew, once an ancient family seat of a knightly (and later noble) Brochowski family of the Prawdzic coat of arms, is one of those unusual structures, endowed with a complex spatial programme and therefore prompting interpretations in the spheres of symbols and ideas. Picturesquely situated in the Mazovian landscape in the Bzura River wetlands, it is most widely known as the place where Frederic Chopin had been baptised. From the point of art historiography, however, the importance of this three-towered, castellated basilica arises from its belonging to a cohesive group of Mazovian churches from the middle of the 16th century, which were designed by the Italian architect Giovanni Battista Venetus and which are still medieval in their outward forms but conceal entirely Renaissance interiors.¹

So far, none of the monographic studies has satisfactorily explained the complexity of the Brochów church's structure.² However, since the 19th century the church has been a focus of scholarly interest,

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¹ On the activity of Giovanni Battista, see esp. R. Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta Wenecjanin, budowniczy i obywatel płocki*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki", 45, 1983, pp. 25–46.

² Fundamental literature: J. Łukaszewicz, *Krótki opis historyczny kościołów parochialnych, kościółków, kaplic, klasztorów, szkółek parochialnych, szpitali i innych zakładów dobroczynnych w dawnej dyecezyi poznańskiej*, vol. 3, Poznań 1863, pp. 300–301; A. Szyszko-Bohusz, *Warowne zabytki architektury kościelnej w Polsce i na Litwie. Płkanów – Brochów – Malomeżeków – Synkowicze – Supraśl – Wilno*, "Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce", 9, 1915, col. 332–342; Z. Rokowski, *Obronny kościół w Brochowie i jego odbudowa*, "Ochrona Zabytków", 1, 1930/1931, pp. 103–113; J. Chyczewski, *Kolegjata pultuska na tle kościelnego budownictwa mazowieckiego XV i XVI wieku*, Warsaw 1936, pp. 36–42; M. Lewicka, *Problematyka badań architektury renesansowej na Mazowszu*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki", 25, 1963, pp. 132–133; *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 10, *Województwo warszawskie*, fasc. 24, *Powiat sochaczewski*, opracowały I. Galicka, H. Sygietyńska, Warsaw 1973 [hereinafter: *KZSzP – Sochaczew*], pp. IV–V, 1–6; Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*, pp. 29–30; J. Łoziński, *Pomniki sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 3, *Mazowsze i Podlasie*, Warsaw 1999, pp. 395–396; *Architektura gotycka w Polsce*, ed. T. Mroczko, M. Arszyski, part 2, *Katalog zabytków*, ed. A. Włodarek, Warsaw 1995 (*Dzieje Sztuki Polskiej*, vol. 2), pp. 33–34 [note by I. Galicka]; A. Miłobędzki, *Pultuski „system architektoniczny”*, [in:] *Nobile claret opus. Studia z dziejów sztuki dedykowane Mieczysławowi Zlatowi*, ed. L. Kalinowski, S. Mossakowski, Z. Ostrowska-Kęmbłowska, Wrocław 1998, pp. 239–242; R. Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka na Mazowszu*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 191–194; J. Żmudziński, *Brochów, miejsce chrztu Fryderyka Chopina*, Cracow 2010; P. Gryglewski, *De sacra antiquitate. Odwołania do przeszłości w polskiej architekturze sakralnej XVI wieku*, Warsaw 2012, pp. 225–228; C. Herrmann, *Masowien*, [in:] *Mittelalterliche Architektur in Polen. Romanische und gotische Baukunst zwischen Oder und Weichsel*, Hrsg. D. von Winterfeld, C. Herrmann, Bd. 1, Petersberg 2015, p. 534.

with several researchers being intrigued by its many-towered, castle-like silhouette,³ by the elements of a defensive programme evident in it, and by the very size of the structure, which is surprising in a locality that has never been a town.⁴ It is not an exaggeration to say that it is an exceptional piece of architecture; and its unique character has led some scholars to form rather surprising conclusions. Writing in 1880, the authors of the *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* [A Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland] asserted that the church was built to resemble a mosque (sic!).⁵ They gave the correct date of its completion, however – 1561 – whereas Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz confidently dated it to the 17th century.⁶ Zygmunt Rokowski, in turn, was of the opinion that this “half church, half small castle” had been built in the mid-16th century but was destroyed by the Swedes in the following century and rebuilt in an entirely new form which it still holds today.⁷

Those authors who assumed that the structure of the Brochów church cannot be understood correctly without an accurate interpretation of its symbolic meaning – one that had certainly been determined by its noble founder Jan Brochowski, the *wojski (tribunus)* of Warsaw – were right, this must be emphasized at the very outset of the current analysis. The first to suggest this direction in the investigations was Izabella Galicka,⁸ later supported by Robert Kunkel, who nevertheless voiced the overly harsh opinion that the shape of the castellated church “must be reviewed in terms of a founder’s eccentricity”.⁹ More apposite are the comments of two scholars: Jerzy Żmudziński, who said that “it may turn out, as it has often happened in the history of architecture, that it [the Brochów church – J.A.] follows some exceptionally dignified prototype that is nevertheless difficult to identify at the current moment”,¹⁰ and Piotr Gryglewski, who pointed out that “one may wonder whether the church’s original shape did not arise from some not yet fully identified historical inspirations”.¹¹ The current article focuses on the latter of these points. Leaving aside the study of the sources and character of Giovanni Battista Venetus’ style and of the so-called “Pułtusk group” of Gothic/Renaissance churches associated with his workshop (including, among others, the remodelled collegiate church in Pułtusk, parish churches in Płock, Brok, Głogowiec, Chruślin, Sobota and Ciekosyn, and the no longer extant church of St. George in Warsaw),¹² I would like to examine the Brochów church from the perspective of the iconography of architecture. My task is not made any easier by the fact that no written sources that would explain the riddle of this edifice have survived; but even a conjectural reconstruction of the messages encoded in the architecture of this church may help us to understand of its extraordinary shape.

³ In its original form, the church was even more picturesque than it is now, since the southern tower was a little lower than its northern counterpart and had a slightly narrower upper section (see Fig. 12). Unfortunately, in 1915 the front line passed near the church and was greatly damaged during the German shelling. The vaults, the walls of the southern nave, the façade with the western towers and the upper section of the eastern tower were reduced to rubble. The church was rebuilt in 1924–1929 following the design by Jarosław Wojciechowski and Tymoteusz Sawicki. It was reconstructed in a manner essentially faithful to the original, but certain alterations were introduced to the façade (a new portal, a simplified gable, towers crowns in a new shape). See Rokowski, *op. cit.*; P. Dettloff, *Odbudowa i restauracja zabytków architektury w Polsce w latach 1918–1939. Teoria i praktyka*, Cracow 2006, pp. 163–165; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–36, 42.

⁴ In 1667 King John Casimir, following the request of Olbracht Adrian Lasocki (1631–1693), owner of the Brochów estate from 1661, issued a town charter based on the Law of Magdeburg. The enterprise was, however, unsuccessful; see *KZSzP – Sochaczew*, p. 1.

⁵ *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, ed. F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, vol. 1, Warsaw 1880, p. 359.

⁶ Szyszko-Bohusz, *op. cit.*, col. 332.

⁷ Rokowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–110.

⁸ I. Galicka, *Z problemów gotyckiej architektury sakralnej na Mazowszu*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 49, 1987, p. 163.

⁹ Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 58.

¹⁰ Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Żmudziński cautiously suggested that the two-towered façade of the church may have been intended to evoke the Temple of Jerusalem, whose main entrance was flanked by two pillars named Boaz and Jachin; he was, however, aware that this issue was “difficult to settle conclusively”; see *ibidem*, p. 30, 42.

¹¹ Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

¹² See Chyczewski, *op. cit.*; Lewicka, *op. cit.*; Miłobędzki, *Pułtusi „system architektoniczny”...*; Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*; *idem*, *Architektura gotycka...*, pp. 94–98.

WHAT IS ICONOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECTURE?

To begin with, it is necessary to recollect the essence of the research in the field of the iconography of medieval architecture, as well as its historiographic roots. The early decades of the 19th century witnessed the first phase of scholarly interest with the pre-Romanesque, Romanesque and Gothic architecture in France, England and Germany, the leaders in the field; there, the goal was to identify, describe and catalogue their rich and varied architectural heritage of the Middle Ages. By the inter-war period, the international community of specialists on medieval architecture had been expressing their satisfaction on the having closed this first, “elementary” stage of research. However, the accompanying feeling was that of a deep disappointment with the purely factual nature of these investigations, with the research area restricted to formal and constructional issues, and with the dogmatic quality of the archaeological approach.¹³

The breakthrough came in the 1940s and 1950s, when developments in the research on iconography in pictorial arts resulted in the publication of pioneering studies, in which also architecture began to be perceived as a pictorial, or rather, communicative art. This new direction was laid out chiefly by four scholars: Richard Krautheimer (1897–1994), Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), Hans Sedlmayr (1896–1984) and Günter Bandmann (1917–1975), who suggestively demonstrated that in medieval edifices, ideological programmed are encoded in a complex system of architectural forms, interpreted by scholars on the level of the analyses of the type and ground plan of the given structure, its style, the repertoire of motifs and decorations. So far, the best critical discussion of the principles and methodology of their pioneering studies – ones that had so clearly departed from the archaeological direction in the development of the history of architecture – has been presented by Paul Crossley.¹⁴ Crossley convincingly delineated two fundamental research approaches evident among these authors, whom Crossley described as “iconologists” and “iconographers” of medieval architecture. The one which did not withstand the test of time, that is the later detailed verifications, was the “iconological” approach,¹⁵ originating from the conceptions presented by Max Dvořák in his famous book *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*.¹⁶ It consisted in researching architecture as the expressions of the “spirit of the era” in its indissoluble connection with other areas of human thought and creativity, especially philosophy, theology, poetry or music. The iconologists, that is, Erwin Panofsky, Hans Sedlmayr and Otto von Simson,¹⁷ viewed a work of architecture from a distance, as if from a bird’s eye view, looking for its immanent roots in the history of ideas and pointing to its parallelism with respect to other areas of culture.¹⁸

The “iconographers” of architecture, in contrast to its “iconologists”, focused on the analysis of concrete structures in the light of their historical and functional conditions.¹⁹ The pioneer of this research current was Richard Krautheimer, whose famous 1942 essay, in which he defined the purposes, and presented model iconographic analyses of medieval buildings, became a reference point to later generations of medievalists.²⁰ Günter Bandmann’s habilitation thesis, written in 1951,²¹ played an equally important role

¹³ For the best discussion of this research current available in Polish literature, see T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Zespoły rezydencjonalne i kościoły centralne na ziemiach polskich do połowy XII wieku*, Cracow 2009, pp. 244–250 [with numerous references to further literature].

¹⁴ P. Crossley, *In Search of an Iconography of Medieval Architecture*, [in:] *Symbolae Historiae Artium. Studia z historii sztuki Lechowi Kalinowskiemu dedykowane*, ed. J. Gądomski et al., Warsaw 1986, pp. 55–65; idem, *Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography*, “The Burlington Magazine”, 130, 1988, pp. 116–121.

¹⁵ See J. Jarzewicz, *O dwóch niewielkich książkach i jednej wielkiej teorii*, “Artium Quaestiones”, 13, 2002, pp. 359–371.

¹⁶ See M. Dvořák, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte. Studien zur abendländischen Kunstentwicklung*, Munich 1924; L. Kalinowski, *Max Dvořák i jego metoda badań nad sztuką (w stulecie urodzin)*, Warsaw 1974.

¹⁷ See esp. E. Panofsky, *Architektura gotycka i scholastyka*, [in:] idem, *Studia z historii sztuki*, wybrał, opracował i opatrzył posłowiem J. Białostocki, Warsaw 1971, pp. 33–65 (in English: *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, “Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism”, 11, 1952, pp. 80–81); idem, *Suger, opat Saint-Denis*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 66–94 (in English: *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*; various editions); H. Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale*, Zürich 1950; O. von Simpson, *Katedra gotycka. Jej narodziny i znaczenie*, transl. A. Palińska, Warsaw 1989 (in English: *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*; various editions).

¹⁸ See Crossley, *In Search...*, pp. 58–62; idem, *Medieval Architecture...*, pp. 118–121; Rodzińska-Choraży, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–255.

¹⁹ Crossley, *In Search...*, pp. 56, 62–64; Rodzińska-Choraży, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–254.

²⁰ R. Krautheimer, *Introduction to an “Iconography of Medieval Architecture”*, “Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes”, 5, 1942, pp. 1–33.

²¹ G. Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, Berlin 1951.

in the process of formulating and popularising this new current in the research on ideological programmes in medieval architecture. In this very broad study, Bandmann defined the fundamental types of meanings ascribed to edifices in the past: 1) the esthetical meaning; 2) the symbolic, that is, allegorical meaning, referring directly to the repertoire of biblical motifs and to the entire legacy of Christian authors; 3) the historical meaning, linking the given structure with the time and place of its construction and the intentions of its creators. It was the third category that proved the most interesting in terms of artistic historiography, and Bandmann's greatest achievement was awakening the medievalists' interest in the "historicity" of medieval edifices, that is, in the complex symbolic messages referring to politics, religion and social life with which they were endowed by their founders and which were legible to at least a part of the original users.²² From this point of view, the architecture of the church in Brochów is worthy of particular attention.

THE HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND THE SPATIAL PROGRAMME OF THE CHURCH

Painted inscriptions on the southern wall of the chancel, plastered over at an unspecified date and discovered accidentally after the damage the building sustained in 1915, are, essentially, the only direct sources to the history of its construction. The longer one reported that the church had been founded by Jan Brochowski, *wojski* of Warsaw, the son of Jan, *stolnik* of Gostynin, and Anna of Targonie, of the Ślepowron coat of arms, who in the year 1551 had the old wooden church, once founded by the dukes of Mazovia, demolished and a new, impressive edifice built, which was properly furnished and raised to the range of a prepository church. After Jan's death, from 1554 onward, the construction was supervised by his widow, Katarzyna of Ławy of the Pomian coat of arms, daughter of Stanisław Ławski of Strzegocin, the voivode of Mazovia, who together with their sons Stanisław and Jane completed the work in 1561.²³ The second inscription was complementary to the first, as it commemorated the completion of the construction of the vault on the eve of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1561.²⁴ The church was consecrated belatedly; the suffragan bishop of Poznań Jakub Brzeźnicki consecrated it as the church of Saints John the Baptist and Roch in 1596.²⁵

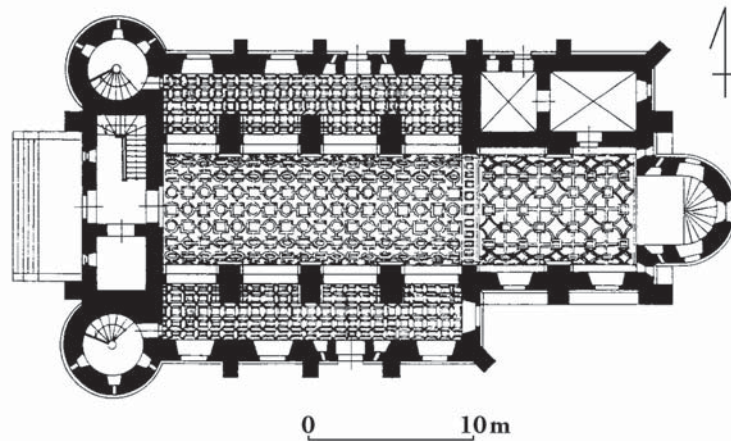
The Brochów church, built of brick in the monk bond, is a three-nave, four-bay basilica with a rectangular two-bay chancel closed with an apse, narrower than the presbytery, on the ground plan of an elongated semicircle with a circular tower above it (Fig. 1–3). Directly above the apse, the tower contains a spacious gallery with a domed vault that opens towards the church interior through a large arcade (Fig. 4). From the west, the church is preceded by a large two-floor porch flanked by two slender

²² Cf. L. Bosman, *Architektur und Zitat. Die Geschichtlichkeit von Bauten aus der Vergangenheit*, [in:] *Architektur als Zitat. Formen, Motive und Strategien der Vergegenwärtigung*, Hrsg. H. Brandl, A. Ranft, A. Waschbüsch, Regensburg 2014, pp. 12–13.

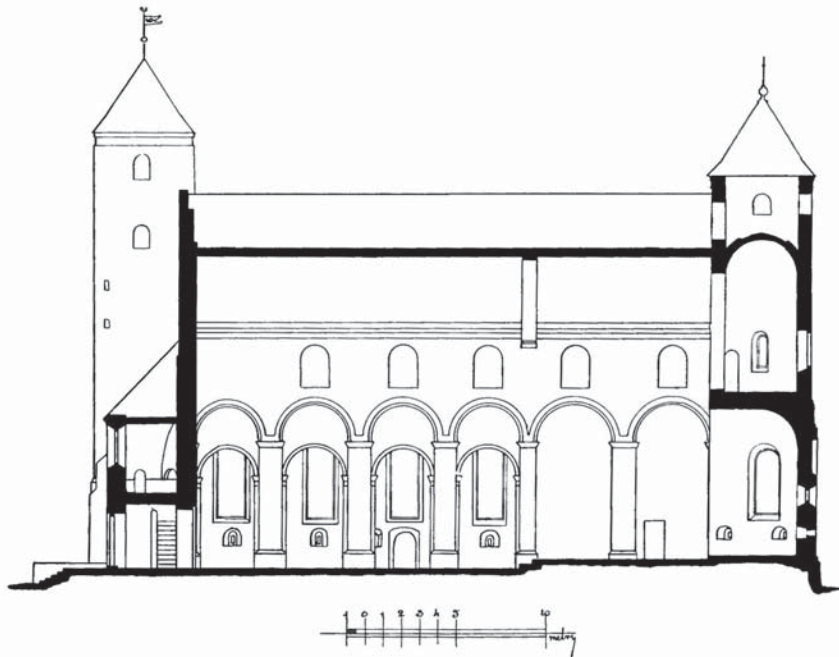
²³ "Ioannes Brochowski Tribunus Varsaviensis, Ioannis Dapiferi Gostinensis filius ex Anna de Targonie gentis Ślepowron genitus, ecclesiam olim ligneam a Ducibus Masoviae fundatam sustulit, hanc vero Basilicam ex latere cocto magnis sumptibus a fundamentis erexit, dotavit et praeposituralem fecit Anno 1551. Morte huius fundatoris interveniens Anno 1554 relicta eius consors Catharina de Ławy gentis Pomion [sic], Stanisłai Ławski de Strzegocino Pallatini Masoviae filia, hoc opus cum filiis Stanisłao et Ioanne Brochowskie perfecerunt Anno 1561" [author's reading based on the archival photograph of the damaged inscription in the condition after it was revealed in 1915, currently in the photographic archive of the Art Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences. For a different, shorter reading, probably based on visitation records, see Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 193]. This inscription was not placed there in 1561, since its last verse (largely destroyed in 1915) ended with the words: "[...] Wissogrodien[is] fieri fecit". This referred to Olbracht Adrian Lasocki, the judge of Wyszogród, owner of Brochów from 1661. The inscription was made upon his request, certainly in connection with the renovation works undertaken at that time, commemorated by the plaque, dated 1665, placed on the first southern pillar of the main nave (more on this further on). It cannot be ruled out that the 17th-century inscription repeated the text of an earlier foundation tablet that has not survived. It is also interesting that the church was called, contrary to its actual rank, a prepository one. The church visitation documents from 1603 indicate that the altar adjacent to the sacristy was linked with the office of a mansionary founded by the members of the local gentry, Piotr Rusinowski and Adam Golkowski ("In eadem ecclesia est Altare penes sacristiam, erectum et fundatum per Nobiles Petrum Rusinowsky et Adamum Golkowsky ad quod leguerunt et donaverunt summam pecuniae Centum quinquaginta Florenum Decantatur Mansionaria de Beata Maria Virgine in eadem Ecclesia"; Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Poznaniu, AV1, *Visitatio ecclesiarum parochialium archidiaconatus Varsaviensis a Laurentio Goślicki episcopo Posnaniensi a. 1603 peracta* [hereinafter: AAP – AV1], fol. 167v). This altar foundation may have been the reason why the church was called a prepository one, which in fact it was not.

²⁴ "Testudo istius eccl[es]iae completa est AD Millesimo Quingentesimo Sexagesimo primo, die vero Sabbativo in Vigilia Nativitatis G[loriosiss]imae Virginis Mariae"; quoted after Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 193.

²⁵ AAP – AV1, fol. 167v: "Hanc Ecclesia consecrata per Reverendum D[omi]num Jacobum Brzeznicky Suffraganeum Posnaniensem Tituli Sancti Joannis Baptistae et Divi Rochi [...]."

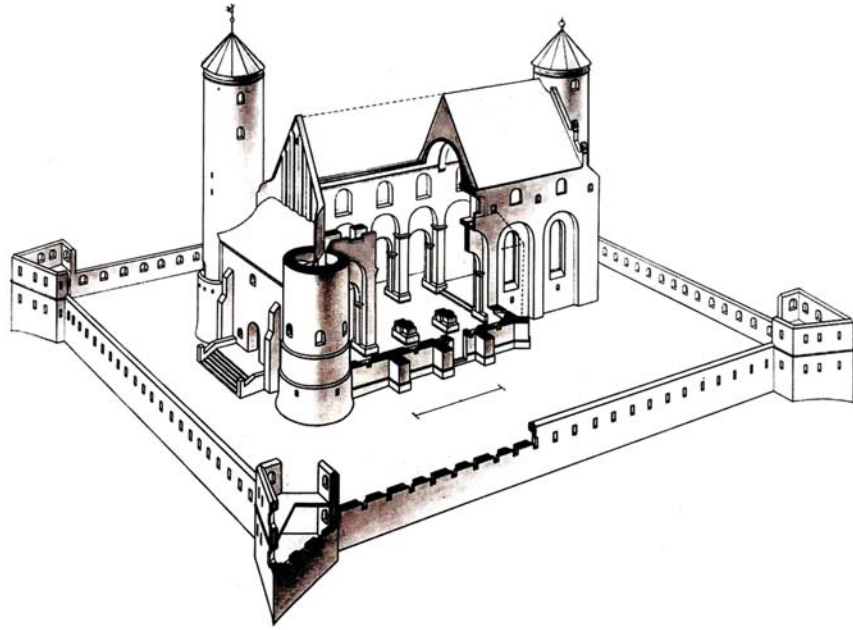


1. Brochów, parish church, ground plan. Drawing by J. Adamski
 after R. Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta Wenecjanin, budowniczy i obywatel plocki*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 45, 1983, p. 26



2. Brochów, parish church, lateral cut. After A. Szyszko-Bohusz, *Warowne zabytki architektury kościelnej w Polsce i na Litwie. Płkanów – Brochów – Małomeżejków – Synkowicze – Supraśl – Wilno*, “Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce”, 9, 1915, col. 332–342, Fig. 7

towers on the circular ground plan, containing wide staircases in their lower sections. These staircases lead to the level of a narrow passage, which runs within the walls of the clerestory of the main nave and the chancel to the gallery in the eastern tower; the passage has large openings towards the interior of the church on its entire length (Fig. 5, 6). In the nave section, the passage is supported by huge rectangular buttresses added to the aisle piers (Fig. 7); on the level of the attic, these buttresses are joined into arcades by means of elliptical arches that constitute the direct support of the passage. The constructional principle is visible to the south and east of the chancel, since there the arcades are not concealed (Fig. 8, 9). A row of protruding wall arcades, which constitute the main element in the articulation of the nave interior (Fig. 5, 6), is noticeable also in the central section of the edifice. All three naves are covered with barrel



3. Brochów, parish church, axonometric view after Oskar Sosnowski. After A. Miłobędzki, *Pultuski „system architektoniczny”*, [in:] *Nobile claret opus. Studia z dziejów sztuki dedykowane Mieczysławowi Zlatowi*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 239–242, Fig. 4



4. Brochów, parish church, interior of the nave as seen from the gallery in the eastern tower.
Photo by J. Adamski



5. Brochów, parish church, interior viewed towards the east.
Photo by J. Adamski



6. Brochów, parish church, interior of the chancel.
 Photo by J. Adamski



7. Brochów, parish church, interior of the northern aisle.
 Photo by J. Adamski

vaults with no lunettes, covered with dense coffering of ancient or Serlian provenance,²⁶ the apse is covered with an umbrella-like semi-dome. The boundary between the nave and the chancel is marked only with a protruding arch with no vertical supports.

The exterior façades are supported by massive buttresses. The windows are closed with semicircular arches; in the clerestory they alternated with small openings on the axes of piers, but those were later walled over (Fig. 10)²⁷. The suggested defensive character of the structure, attained mainly through the multi-towered silhouette, is additionally accentuated by narrow arrow-slits on the ground levels of the side naves, chancel and the apse and in the western towers. Robert Kunkel is probably right in assuming that the gables with pinnacles, which unfortunately have not been preserved in their original form, were made by an unidentified local workshop after the departure of the team of masons supervised by Giovanni

²⁶ See J. Kowalczyk, *Sebastiano Serlio a sztuka polska. O roli włoskich traktatów architektonicznych w dobie nowożytnej*, Wrocław et al. 1973, pp. 123–124; Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*, p. 30.

²⁷ Some scholars suggest that the large windows in the section of the communication passage (described in relevant literature as the “shooting” or “defensive” one) were cut only during the restoration of the church by Olbracht Adrian Lasocki in the 1660s; cf.: Rokowski, *op. cit.*, s. 109; Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*, s. 29; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, s. 29. However, there are no traces of larger alterations in the surviving original walls of the passage on the north side of the church or in the eastern bay of the southern wall of the chancel. Also, it is difficult to assume that an edifice with such a tall main nave could originally lack direct lighting; if it had, the entire upper half of the interior would have been unlit, which would make it difficult to appreciate the architectural and painted decorations of the ceiling.



8. Brochów, parish church, chancel from the south. Photo by J. Adamski



9. Brochów, parish church, chancel
after the 1915 damage.
Photo in the IS PAN photographic collection



10. Brochów, parish church, view from the south,
in the pre-1915 condition. Photo after A. Szyszko-Bohusz,
Warowne zabytki architektury kościelnej w Polsce i na Litwie.
Płkanów – Brochów – Małomeżeków – Synkowicze – Supraśl – Wilno,
“Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce”, 9, 1915,
col. 332–342, Fig. 3



11. Brochów, parish church complex viewed from the south east. Photo by J. Adamski



12. Brochów, parish church complex viewed from the west, in the pre-1915 condition. Photo after A. Szyszko-Bohusz, *Warowne zabytki architektury kościelnej w Polsce i na Litwie. Płkanów – Brochów – Małomeżejków – Synkowicze – Supraśl – Wilno*, “Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce”, 9, 1915, col. 332–342, Fig. 1

Battista of Venice, whose signature were lesene gables with horizontal divisions and semicircular crowns, which were quite different in their character from the Brochów gables.²⁸ It must be noted that the latter were built of bricks in the Flemish bond, whereas the Italian architect and his team consistently used the monk bond.²⁹ By the same token, it may be assumed that the cemetery wall on a regular square plan, which surrounds a large area around the church and has a defensive character (Fig. 3, 11, 12), is a slightly later addition. This wall is built in the cross bond; it has arrow-slits and corner half-towers on a ground plan typical of bastions. There are no sufficient reasons, however, to date its construction to as late as the 17th century.³⁰ As correctly stated by Jerzy Żmudziński, defensive structures around the church constitute an integral part of the architectural conception, which was certainly delineated by the founder and the designing architect at the outset of the construction works in the middle 16th century.³¹ Why this element of the complex was constructed as the last, after the construction of the church was wholly completed, is, however, quite clear.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHURCH AND THE PERSON OF ITS FOUNDER

The above description clearly indicates how very complex, and how very surprising, at least in a village parish church, is the spatial and functional programme of the edifice in question. The very fact that a large three-nave basilica with a two-tower façade – a description that evokes a stately town or collegiate church, or even a cathedral – had been built in Brochów is surprising in itself. An overwhelming majority of village churches built in this part of Europe during the later Middle Ages had only single nave and was provided with, at most, a single tower. If, however, Gothic parish churches with three naves had from time to time been built in rural centres, they were usually very small (such as, e.g., the primitively constructed late 15th-century hall churches in Central and Western Pomerania: in Sadlno near Trzebiatów, Osieki near Koszalin, Stare Sławsko near Sławno, Sarbia near Kołobrzeg and Łącko near Darłów)³², or their more impressive form resulted from their function of a pilgrimage centre (as in the case of, e.g., the hall church in Piaseczno near Gniew, in construction from 1348 onwards).³³

It would be stating the obvious to say that the imposing spatial programme and the truly monumental size of the Brochów church indicate how high were the aspirations of its founder Jan Brochowski of the Prawdzic coat of arms. Unfortunately, the surviving sources do not yield any information regarding his personality and intellectual capacity, whereas old Polish armorials report only the relevant family links.³⁴ It is, therefore, necessary to review the history of the village itself.

Brochów is one of the oldest knightly estates in Mazovia. According to genealogical sources dating from the early 17th century, certainly based on oral tradition, the ancestor of the local line of the Prawdzic family was a knight named Andreas from the family of Rhineland counts von Dinhein, who in the year 1123 came to Poland to support Boleslaus the Wrymouth in his many campaigns. Having gained fame as a warrior, he allegedly settled in Mazovia and married the daughter of Jan Prawda of Szczawin and Trąbki, the land judge of Gostynin, thus giving rise to the Prawdzic family.³⁵ This legend does not find

²⁸ Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*, pp. 29–30.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 34, 36.

³⁰ Cf.: *KZSzP – Sochaczew*, pp. 5–6. Christofer Herrmann's reasons for dating the construction of the defensive wall to as late as the 18th century are entirely unclear; Cf. Herrmann, *Masowien*, p. 534.

³¹ Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, s. 30. It must be emphasised that the conjectural dating of the defensive wall in Brochów to the middle of the 16th century is not contradicted by the bastion-like shape of the corner towers, as in Italy regular bastions on a sharp-angled ground plan began to be constructed in the late 15th century.

³² See M. Ober, *Mittelalterliche Dorfkirchen*, [in:] *Mittelalterliche Architektur...*, Bd. 2, pp. 830–831.

³³ See *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 184 [note by A. Rzempełuch]; C. Herrmann, *Deutschordensland Preußen*, [in:] *Mittelalterliche Architektur...*, Bd. 2, pp. 1007–1008.

³⁴ See *Herbarz polski Kacpra Niesieckiego S.J. powiększony dodatkami z późniejszych autorów, rękopisów, dowodów urzędowych*, ed. J.N. Bobrowicz, vol. 2, Leipzig 1839, pp. 293–294; A. Boniecki, *Herbarz polski*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1900, p. 122; S. Uruski, *Rodzina. Herbarz szlachty polskiej*, vol. 1, Warsaw 1904, pp. 389–390.

³⁵ S. Okolski, *Orbis polonus*, vol. 2, *In Quo Antiqua Sarmatarum Gentilitia & Arma Quaecunque a litera L, usque ad literam R, inclusivae, suam incipiunt & recensent denominationem, continentur & dilucidantur*, Cracoviae 1643, pp. 497–498; see also *Herbarz polski Kacpra Niesieckiego S.J. powiększony dodatkami z późniejszych autorów, rękopisów, dowodów urzędowych*, ed. J.N. Bobrowicz, vol. 7, Leipzig 1841, pp. 489–490.

any corroboration in the contemporary written sources, of course, but the substantial size of the parish (14 or 16 villages as of the 16th century) may indicate its 12th-century origins. In the latter half of the 12th century the Brochów estate was owned by the voivode of Mazovia, Żyron, and his son Olt;³⁶ afterwards, the ownership was transferred to the abbey of the Canons Regular in Czerwińsk, as recorded in 1198 and 1222.³⁷ The existence of the Brochów church, under the patronage of the Czerwińsk monastery, is confirmed by a document of the papal legate Opizo of Mezzano, drafted on 10 February 1254 in Czerwińsk.³⁸ Less than half a century later, ca. 1300, Brochów became the property of Jakub Świnka, the archbishop of Gniezno, who in return turned over this village of Piotrowo to the Czerwińsk canons.³⁹ The hierarch soon sold the estate, however; its new owner was Duke Boleslaus II of Mazovia, who in 1304 gave the village as a fief to his close and trusted collaborator, knight Jan Sówka of the Prawdzic coat of arms, the castellan of Dobrzyń.⁴⁰ This is a historically confirmed point when Brochów became the seat of the local branch of the Prawdzic family, which soon adopted the appellation Brochowski. This did not change until 1661, when Agnieszka Brochowska, the great-granddaughter of the founder of the current church, brought the estate as her dowry to Olbracht Adrian Lasocki, the land judge of Wyszogród, later castellan of Inowrocław.⁴¹

When in 1551 Jan Brochowski, the *wojski* of Warsaw, began to build a new church in his ancestral estate – a church which on the southern side was directly adjacent to the founder's manor – Brochów had been owned by the family for more than two and a half centuries. It is probable that the beginnings of the Prawdzic family presence there had been mythologised in the family tradition, as indicated by the armorial legend of its alleged ancestor Andreas von Dinhein, recorded in the 17th century. The family had reasons for pride: three of Jan Sówka's seven sons – Mikołaj (1365–1367), Stanisław (1368–1375) and Dobiesław (1375–1381) – became successive bishops of Płock.⁴² This validates the supposition that Jan Brochowski had good reasons to adorn his ancestral village with a church whose lavishness (achieved by means of both its size and the complexity of its spatial programme) was a visible sign of the family's significance and Brochów's long history as its seat.

This, however, is not enough to explain the structural complexity of this church. One of its most characteristic features, and at the same time one heavily loaded with meanings, is its castellation, that is, the fact that it had been given the features of military architecture: the walls have arrow-slits, a narrow passage runs within the top section of the wall in the main nave and the chancel, and the towers are relatively far removed from the main body of the church and are cylindrical, by which they resemble castle towers more than church ones;⁴³ finally, the entire complex was surrounded with a tall wall pierced with arrow-slits and having “bastions” in the corners. In addition, the stereometric solids of which the silhouette of the church is constructed are exceptionally simple; outside, the church has no decorations at all.

It had been correctly emphasised in the art historical literature that all these architectural solutions would have turned useless when faced with a real siege, especially considering that the importance of artillery was growing throughout the 16th century.⁴⁴ The relatively low thickens of the church walls, the large windows opening in them, and the peace and stabilisation which Mazovia had enjoyed since its incorporation into the Crown of Poland in 1526 need to be taken into consideration as well. In practice, it does not seem possible for Jan Brochowski and the architect in his employ to have envisaged the Brochów church as being put to military use as a true stronghold, that is something more than a place refuge for

³⁶ J. Nowacki, *Archidiecezja poznańska w granicach historycznych i jej ustrój*, Poznań 1964 (*Dzieje Archidiecezji Poznańskiej*, vol. 2), p. 510.

³⁷ *Codex diplomaticus Poloniae*, vol. 1, ed. L. Ryszczewski, A. Muczkowski, Warsaw 1847, no. 15, pp. 26–27.

³⁸ *Nowy kodeks dyplomatyczny Mazowska*, vol. 2, *Dokumenty z lat 1248–1355*, ed. I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, S. Kuraś, Wrocław 1989, no. 16, pp. 16–18.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 107, pp. 102–103.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, no. 117, pp. 112–114.

⁴¹ See *Herbarz polski...*, pp. 293–294; Boniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Uruski, *op. cit.*, pp. 389–390; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–21.

⁴² T. Żebrowski, *Zarys dziejów diecezji płockiej*, Płock 1976, pp. 40–42; A. Radziwiński, *Stanisław zwany Sówką ze Szczawina h. Prawdzic*, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 42, Warsaw–Cracow 2004; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴³ It must be noted here that the circular shape of the Brochów towers may have been also associated with the cylindrical corner buttresses, a feature used in the second quarter of the 16th century on western elevations of several Mazovian churches: in Serock, Pawłów, Zakroczym, Ceglów, Piaseczno and Węgrów. Giovanni Battista of Venice used such turret-like buttresses ca. 1560 on the tower of the church in Głogowiec; see Galicka, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 162–163; Herrmann, *Masowien*, pp. 531–535.

⁴⁴ Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 58; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, p. 30, 46.

the locals in case of some upheaval.⁴⁵ Thus, the elements of a defensive program in this church should be interpreted in terms of architectural “signs” which conveyed certain meanings, such as the concepts of power, endurance, fortitude or ability to provide protection, and which highlighted the status of the family and the founder, and the venerable age of the place.

Piotr Gryglewski’s research has revealed that references to the past constitute one of the most characteristic, and at the same time widespread phenomena in the architecture of 16th-century village and small-town parish churches in central Poland, especially those associated with landowning family seats and residences of the gentry.⁴⁶ The Brochów church is an indicative example in this respect.⁴⁷ Inscriptions placed in its interior by order of Olbracht Lasocki further confirm the assumption that the sense of the ancient origins of the church was intentionally evoked. The dedication tablet in the chancel specified that the edifice replaced an older church founded by the dukes of Mazovia: “ecclesiam olim ligneam a Ducibus Masoviae fundatam [...]”. This piece of information refers to the ancient, if vague, derivation of the church and the parish. The inscription on the plaque on the first southern pier of the nave (as seen from the east) emphasised the age of the edifice – the current one in this case, the church built by Jan Brochowski – in an even more straightforward manner. It commemorates Lasocki’s input into the thorough restoration, completed in 1665, of the church professed to have been “rickety with age” (a mere hundred years after completion!): “Indignus peccator, Olbrachus Adrianus Lasocki Iudex terræ Vissogrodiensis Anno 1665 die 28 Augusti hanc suæ collationis Ecclesiam iam vetustate labentem [...] Fundamentaliter reparavit [...]”.⁴⁸ It seems that this phrase does not report the actual condition of the church before the renovation (which was most probably relatively superficial),⁴⁹ but rhetorically highlights its great age.

Izabella Galicka’s observation that Jan Brochowski, being the *wojski* of Warsaw supervised the final stages of the construction of the second ring of the defensive walls around the Old Town in Warsaw is exceedingly important in the context of the iconography of the architecture of the Brochów church.⁵⁰ A source report from 1548 states that an Italian mason named “Johannes Baptista” had built a tower in the gate “by the baths” (“in porta iuxta balneatorum”), i.e. the Barbican at the Nowomiejska (New Town) gate.⁵¹ It is considered certain that this mason is identical with Giovanni Battista Venetus, known from other sources as responsible for the extension to the Płock cathedral (1556–1563) and the remodelling of the Płock parish church (ca. 1540) and the Pułtusk collegiate church (before 1551).⁵² Although the surviving documents fail to report this, this is certainly the same constructor as the one who constructed the Brochów church from the ground up, as indicated by the distinctive features of the “Pułtusk group” edifices present therein: an elongated plan of the semicircular apse and its umbrella-like semi-dome, consistent articulation by means of huge arcades on the walls, and the “tunnel” barrel vaults decorated with dense coffering.⁵³

All this allows us to assume that Jan Brochowski commissioned the construction of “his” church from an experienced mason whom he had met a few years earlier during the construction of the Barbican in Warsaw. In this context, the construction of the Brochów church as a structure with military features, especially the shaping of its silhouette to resemble a small fortress, must be seen as a deliberate initiative of the founder, who chose this surprising method of commemorating his merits as the *wojski* of Warsaw.⁵⁴ This office, the *tribunus*, was one of the oldest in the structure of the land administration, confirmed

⁴⁵ Cf.: Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, pp. 58–60; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴⁶ See Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, *passim*. On this phenomenon in the entire medieval architecture, see esp. M. Schmidt, *Reverentia und Magnificentia. Historizität in der Architektur Süddeutschlands, Österreichs und Böhmens vom 14. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 1999; S. Albrecht, *Die Inszenierung der Vergangenheit im Mittelalter. Die Klöster von Glastonbury und Saint-Denis*, Munich–Berlin 2003; H. Horn, *Die Tradition des Ortes. Ein formbestimmendes Moment in der deutschen Sakralarchitektur des Mittelalters*, Munich–Berlin 2015; idem, *Erinnerungen, geschrieben in Stein. Spuren der Vergangenheit in der mittelalterlichen Kirchenbaukultur*, Munich–Berlin 2017.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 225–228.

⁴⁸ Author’s reading.

⁴⁹ In the current condition of the church, it is not possible to find any element of the structure that could be linked with the renovation works concluded in 1665.

⁵⁰ Galicka, *op. cit.*, s. 163.

⁵¹ E. Łopaciński, *Warszawskie poszukiwania archiwalne do dziejów sztuki*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury”, 9, 1947, p. 45; see also *Architektura gotycka...*, pp. 248–250 [note by J. Widawski].

⁵² See Kunkel, *Jan Baptysta...*; T. Żebrowski, *Trzy dokumenty o Janie Baptyście z Wenecji, mieszczaninie plockim i budowniczym kościołów na Mazowszu w połowie XVI w.*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 45, 1983, p. 46.

⁵³ This attribution was made in 1936 by Jerzy Chyczewski and it has never been questioned since. See note 2.

⁵⁴ Galicka, *op. cit.*, s. 163; Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, pp. 58–60; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 30, 46.

by written sources as early as in the 12th century. These officials, usually knights (later, members of the gentry) of venerable age, were “deputies to castellans, guardians of castles, counties and lands, defenders of the peace when the knights went away on campaigns”.⁵⁵ Their task was thus to protect the lands, towns and villages entrusted to their care. The unusual, castle-like forms of the Brochów church constitute, to a certain extent, a very early example of *architecture parlante*;⁵⁶ one which conveys its message through the very shape of the edifice, which in this case contains clear references to military architecture, and through the style of its statement, here an austere and ascetic one – a style which, in keeping with the theory of rhetoric and elocution can be described as *stilus gravis*.⁵⁷

THE GALLERY IN THE EASTERN TOWER – A QUOTATION FROM THE POZNAŃ CATHEDRAL

Perhaps the most unusual element of the spatial programme of the Brochów church is the eastern tower above its apse. It contains a spacious gallery whose arcade, filling the upper section of the eastern wall of the chancel, provides a strong and expressive accent to the church interior. So far, it has received little scholarly interest, which all the more surprising since it seems that the correct iconographic interpretation of this architectural solution is the key to understanding the form of the edifice. Only Piotr Gryglewski noted that “the most surprising feature” of the Brochów church, “one that finds no analogy in any edifice of the region, is the tower above the chancel, which repeats solutions known from Romanesque architecture”.⁵⁸ This point requires a closer analysis.

The first question to ask is whether a tower above the apse, with a gallery open to the interior of the chancel, could have been a personal idea of the Italian architect, or whether the initiative to include it came from the founder. Considering the potential analogies of this feature in European architecture, the latter seems more probable. An extension above a church apse was a solution relatively frequently encountered in the entire Italy from the late 15th century onwards, but the extensions were in form of slim domes on drums which let additional light into the chancel. In Venice, the key model was the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, built by Pietro Lombardo in the years 1481–1489 (Fig. 13)⁵⁹. This model of a church, which in essence is a simplified version of the domed complex of the basilica of St Mark, was repeated in the Laguna and in the Venetian *terra ferma* until the 18th century. Among its significant examples is the slender apse with a dome added by Andrea Palladio to the medieval cathedral in Vicenza in the years 1558–1566,⁶⁰ that is concurrently with the construction of the Brochów church. It is also worth noting that this northern-Italian method of adding light to the apse by means of a dome resting on a tall drum appeared in the architecture of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania with the arrival

⁵⁵ Z. Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska ilustrowana*, vol. 4, Warsaw 1903, pp. 461–462.

⁵⁶ See e.g. A. Hauser, *Architecture parlante – stumme Baukunst. Über das Erklären von Bauwerken*, [in:] *Architektur und Sprache*, Hrsg. C. Braegger, Munich 1982, pp. 127–161; G. Świtek, *Architecture parlante. The art of speaking to the eyes and the philosophy of language*, “Ikonotheka. Prace Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego”, 23, 2012, pp. 23–45.

⁵⁷ See R. Suckale, *Peter Parler und das Problem der Stillagen*, [in:] *Die Parler und der schöne Stil 1350–1400. Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern*, Hrsg. A. Legner, Bd. 4, Köln 1980, pp. 175–183 [reprinted in: idem, *Stil und Funktion. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Kunst des Mittelalters*, Hrsg. P. Schmidt, G. Wedekind, Munich–Berlin 2008, pp. 257–286]. In this context, it is necessary to mention the issue of the so-called “Renaissance Romanesque revival”, which is alleged to have manifested itself in ecclesiastical architecture of the 16th century in Poland in the use of simple, rudimentary solids, semicircular apses, biforia or arcade friezes; See e.g. Lewicka, *op. cit.*, s. 133; Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, s. 192–239. In the context of Brochów, Adam Miłobędzki wrote of “an almost-Romanesque additive character of the cylindrical towers, the main body and the apse” of the church, and “wall arcades that have a quasi-Romanesque character”; Miłobędzki, *Pułtowski „system architektoniczny”* ..., p. 240. However, as stressed by Zygmunt Świechowski, such references to pre-Gothic architecture were not necessarily made consciously; cf. Z. Świechowski, *Zagadnienie odrodzenia romanizmu w Polsce*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 22, 1960, pp. 339–350. In the case of the Brochów church, no structural or decorative solutions ascertained there can be derived directly from pre-Gothic art. Only the simplicity of the solid, which is composed of stereometric spatial forms, can be associated with the additive quality of the oldest ecclesiastical structures in Poland. Hence, what was at stake was most probably not an evocation of “the Romanesque” (which is, after all, a construct of 19th-century historiography), but at the most a conscious reference to the forms of the oldest churches in Poland, which were constructed of simple, “building-block” solids.

⁵⁸ Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁵⁹ See R. Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice*, New York 1986; *Santa Maria dei Miracoli a Venezia. La storia, la fabbrica, i restauri*, ed. M. Piana, W. Wolters, Venice 2003.

⁶⁰ G. Mantese, *Interventi del Palladio nell'architettura sacra di Vicenza*, “Bollettino CISA”, 19, 1977, pp. 88–91; L. Puppi, *Andrea Palladio*, Milan 1999, p. 482.



13. Venice, church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, chancel. Photo by Wikipedia Commons

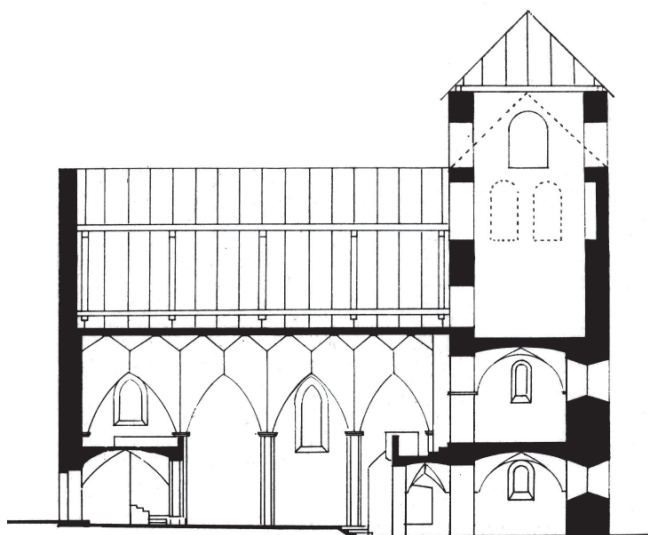
of Cristoforo Bonadura the Elder, who used this spectacular design to remodel the chancel section of the parish church in Grodzisk Wielkopolski (1635–1648).⁶¹

However, towers built on the eastern sides of churches are a solution inseparably connected with the development of medieval architecture in Western and Central Europe from the Carolingian period onwards. The issue of eastern towers in Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals in France and Germany must be left out of the current discussion, since those were always built in pairs, usually in the corners of the edifice, at the arms of the transept, or in the corners between the choir and the transversal nave; they are, therefore, not an analogy to the axial tower with a gallery that rises over the apse of the Brochów church. In turn, towers erected above the sanctuary or directly behind it are plentiful in the architecture of the German Reich from the late 12th century onwards. Among the most monumental examples is the huge square tower behind the apse of the parish church in Złotoryja, whose construction began ca. 1482.⁶² In the parish church of the Swabian town of Balingen, in turn, an octagonal bell tower of an equally impressive height was built, before 1512, above the apse of the choir and further extended in 1541.⁶³ In both cases, the reason for this non-standard setting of the main vertical feature of the edifice was the topography of the town: both towers are turned towards the market squares and clearly dominate over their architectural arrangement.

⁶¹ See A. Miłobędzki, *Architektura polska XVII wieku*, Warsaw 1980 (*Dzieje Sztuki Polskiej*, vol. 4), p. 271–273; M. Karpowicz, *Die Graubündner Künstler in Polen*, [in:] *Grubündner Baumeister und Stukkateure. Beiträge zur Erforschung ihrer Tätigkeit im mitteleuropäischen Raum*, Hrsg. M. Kühenthal, Locarno 1997, pp. 385–389.

⁶² H. Lutsch, *Verzeichnis der Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Schlesien*, Bd. 3, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Landkreise des Reg.-Bezirks Liegnitz*, Breslau 1891, p. 294; *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 275 [note by S. Stulin, A. Włodarek].

⁶³ K. Wedler, *Die Stadtkirche in Balingen (Baden-Württemberg). Evangelische Pfarrkirche U. L. Frau*, Munich 1976.



14. Matrei, church of St. Nicholas, lateral cut.
Drawing after M. Pizzinini, *Matrei in Osttirol und seine Geschichte*, Regensburg 1980, p. 15



15. Matrei, church of St. Nicholas, interior viewed towards the east. Photo by J. Adamski

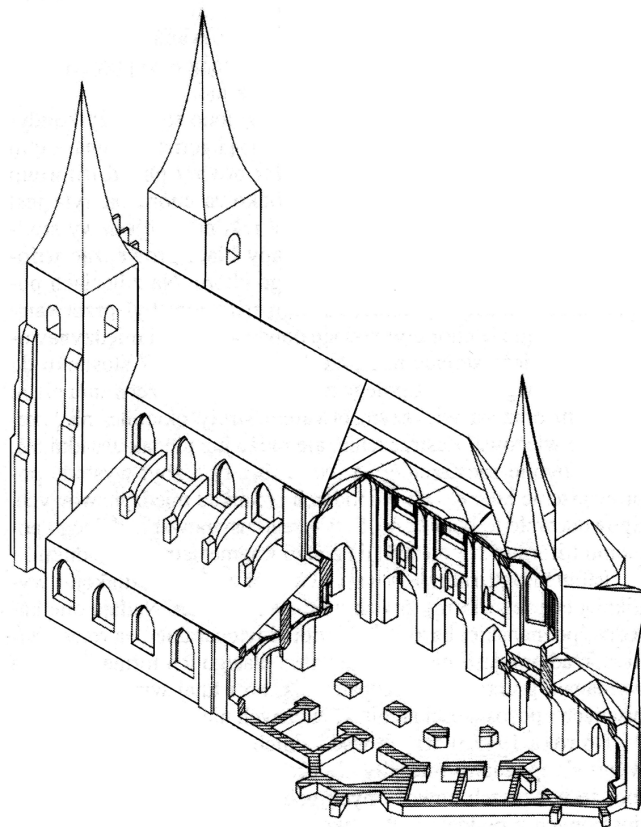
It is somewhat surprising that in the Middle Ages axial eastern towers were decidedly most often a feature of village parish churches of the south-western regions of the Empire. Until ca. 1600, a few hundred of one-nave churches were built in Upper Rhineland, Thuringia and along the Danube, in which the bell towers were situated directly on the walls of rectangular chancels.⁶⁴ Wolfgang Müller, who analysed churches of this type in the Upper Rhineland region of Ortenau, assumed that this may have resulted mainly from the need to economise: to functionally fuse the choir and the ground level of the bell tower was a cost-cutting solution.⁶⁵ It must be stressed, however, that all edifices of this type differ from the Brochów church in the fact that they do not have a visual connection between the interior of the upper level of the tower with the interior of the choir. The only example is a small church in Matrei in East Tirol, built in the late 12th century. Its square sanctuary, which constitutes a base for the bell tower, is divided into two levels that are fully open to the interior of the nave and ca. 1470 remodelled to communicate with it by means of a structure resembling a rood screen with a flight of stairs (Fig. 14, 15). The original derivation of the two-level division of the choir is indisputable, however, because both spaces (including their vaults) are wholly covered with frescoes painted in the third quarter of the 13th century.⁶⁶

Although the above examples confirm that eastern towers were very popular in the medieval church architecture of Central Europe, they do not explain the unusual solution that was used in the construction of the Brochów church. It is very probable that the decision to build a gallery in the tower above the apse of this Mazovian church was dictated by the desire to refer to the unique spatial programme of a church that was of absolutely primary importance to the Brochów one. This church was the cathedral in

⁶⁴ E. Eimer, *Die romanische Chorturmkirche in Süd- und Westdeutschland*, Tübingen 1935; idem, *Die Chorturmkirche in Württemberg*, [in:] "Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte", Neue Folge, 1935, 41, pp. 254–266; J. Hoster, *Chortürme im Rheinland*, "Colonia Sacra", 1, 1947, pp. 100–162; E. Bachmann, *Chorturm*, [in:] *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Bd. 3, 1953, col. 567–575; W. Müller, *Die Ortenau als Chorturmlandschaft. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der ältesten Dorfkirchen*, Bühl–Baden 1965; idem, *Pfälzische Chorturmkirchen*, "Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde", 34, 1967, pp. 172–187.

⁶⁵ Müller, *Die Ortenau...*, pp. 108.

⁶⁶ M. Pizzinini, *Matrei in Osttirol und seine Geschichte*, Regensburg 1980, pp. 14–23.



16. Poznań, cathedral, axonometric reconstruction of the choir in the original condition.

Photo after S. Skibiński, *Katedra poznańska*, Poznań 2001, p. 62

Poznań, which until 1797 was the mother church of the Warsaw archdeaconry (including the deaconry of Sochaczew and Brochów), which from the earliest times (probably since the reinstatement of the diocese in 1075/1076) had been an extraterritorial part of the bishopric of Poznań.⁶⁷

The cathedral in Poznań acquired a new chevet with a choir ambulatory after 1380; radiating chapels were added after 1403 on the initiative of Bishop Wojciech Jastrzębiec.⁶⁸ When seen against the background of Gothic cathedrals in Poland, the form of the Poznań edifice was extraordinary; regrettably, it was erroneously reconstructed during the post-war restoration of its previous medieval appearance: a triforium was constructed above the arcades of the choir, which originally had been discontinued on the axis and in the side bays of the polygonal termination of the sanctuary. Large openings that were originally set in those places gave onto gallery chapels situated within hexagonal towers above the bays of the ambulatory (Fig. 16–18)⁶⁹. These chapels are confirmed as functioning in the written sources. A document from 1461 describes the southern radiating chapel as the “lower” one, which suggests that the tower gallery directly above it was known as the “upper” chapel.⁷⁰ In 1512 on the initiative of Bishop Jan Lubrański it was restructured to communicate with the upper floor of the episcopal palace through a bridge-like passage (“propugnaculum de curia in ecclesiam”) that existed until as late as 1818.⁷¹ From 1622 onwards this chapel was described as the music tribune. The gallery in the axial tower (mentioned in 1465 as the “turre super choro”), with its opening situated directly above the main altar of the cathedral, was known

⁶⁷ See Nowacki, *Archidiecezja poznańska...*, pp. 35–39, 297–304, 505–550; T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie w wiekach średnich*, Poznań 2018 (*Dzieje Archidiecezji Poznańskiej*, vol. 1), pp. 214–215.

⁶⁸ S. Skibiński, *Polskie katedry gotyckie*, Poznań 1996, pp. 139–166; idem, *Katedra poznańska*, Poznań 2001, pp. 50–83.

⁶⁹ Skibiński, *Polskie katedry...*, pp. 154–155, 162–165; idem, *Katedra poznańska...*, pp. 73–79.

⁷⁰ J. Nowacki, *Kościół katedralny w Poznaniu. Studium historyczne*, Poznań 1959 (*Dzieje Archidiecezji Poznańskiej*, vol. 1), pp. 451.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 452–455.



17. Poznań, cathedral, interior of the choir.
Photo by J. Adamski



18. Poznań, cathedral, interior of the choir after the removal of the 18th-century retablo of the main altar in 1948.
Photo in the collection of the Municipal Conservator of Historical Monuments in Poznań

as the episcopal one, similarly to the tower itself (“pinnaculum episcopale ante maius altare; pinnaculum templi super maius altare”)⁷². All three gallery chapels were in liturgical use until the middle of the 18th century; in 1660 Bishop Wojciech Tolibowski consecrated new altars there.⁷³

Szczęśny Skibiński, author of the monographic study of the gothic cathedral in Poznań, rightly noted that eastern towers with galleries giving onto the interior of the cathedral’s choir, as seen in Poznań, are an extremely original solution that finds no direct analogy in European architecture⁷⁴. Since they are elevated loges for the bishop and the chapter, they participate in the very old, pan-European tradition of architecturally elevating those areas of the church which were intended for privileged persons, especially monarchs or church hierarchs, and in the later Middle Ages – for the holders of patronage rights over the given church.⁷⁵ In terms of concrete architectural solutions, however, towers with galleries as seen in the Poznań cathedral were unique and must have been noticed, and wondered at, by the contemporary believers and visitors to the church. This is indirectly confirmed by the fact that in 1575/1576 the cathedral’s chapter decreed to have the opening in the Bishop’s Tower walled over, as undesirable “rabble” frequented the gallery during services held at the main altar.⁷⁶ If this space provoked visitors to such rude behaviour, it must have been perceived as interesting.

⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 210–211, 453.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, pp. 453–454.

⁷⁴ Skibiński, *Polskie katedry...*, p. 162

⁷⁵ See H. Lickes, *Chorflankierende Oratorien und Herrschaftslogen des späteren Mittelalters*, Tübingen 1982; A. Soćko, *Układy emporowe w architekturze państwa krzyżackiego*, Warsaw 2005; T. Huitson, *Stairway to Heaven. The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces*, Oxford–Philadelphia 2014.

⁷⁶ Nowacki, *Kościół katedralny...*, pp. 210–211, 453.

It is extremely probable that the eastern tower of the Brochów church, situated directly over the sanctuary and provided with a gallery giving onto the interior of the chancel, is a intentional and premeditated quotation from the architecture of the Poznań cathedral, the mother church of the Brochów parish. The concept of an “architectural quotation”, that is, a deliberate and, as a rule, meaningful repetition of the forms of one edifice in another, with the original one usually being considered significant for some reason, is used here in the sense proposed by Hans-Joachim Kunst in his research on the Reims cathedral and the Marienkirche in Lübeck.⁷⁷ This elastic, semantically capacious concept is an important interpretive key; one that was missing in the pioneering studies by Krautheimer and Bandmann. The gallery tower of the Brochów church appears to be a textbook example of an architectural quotation. In a manner that is expressive and intelligible, and at the same time suitably simplified, it repeats the unique solution from the choir of the Poznań cathedral with its signature feature: the tower situated directly above the sanctuary of the church and the visual connection between its gallery and the main space of the chancel. The tower chapel in Brochów, similarly to the one in Poznań, is accessible through a passage running within the thickness of the wall, even though this passage is not a classical triforium; it has openings that give onto the central nave of the three-nave basilica. The Mazovian church does not have an ambulatory choir, of course, and there is only one tower in the chancel section of the building; yet the unique character of the spatial programme of the eastern part of this church, with its huge, powerfully accentuated opening of the tower gallery – one that draws the eye just as strongly as the apse with the main altar – naturally prompts an association with the equally surprising, although of course far more complex, arrangement of the choir section of the Poznań cathedral.

It seems very probable that Jan Brochowski was familiar with the cathedral of his diocese – one of the most honourable, and chronologically the oldest, churches in the kingdom. If the conjectures presented herein are correct, the *wojski* of Warsaw, wishing to highlight the ancient provenance and the traditions of his family seat, may have chanced upon the idea of quoting the characteristic feature of the venerable Poznań shrine in the architecture of his new church in Brochów. It is all the more justified to talk about a quotation here since the Brochów church is, in artistic terms, a stylistic “update”. Its exterior retains a “timeless” austerity that evokes the idea of its ancient origins and defensive nature; but the interior acquired a fashionable *all’antica* forms typical of the architectural activity of Giovanni Battista Venetus. This, however, does not diminish the legibility of the reference to the gallery tower programme of the Poznań cathedral as conjectured herein.

Regrettably, no records indicate how the gallery in the eastern tower of the Brochów church was used. It is not mentioned in the earliest surviving record of an official visitation of the church, dated 1603.⁷⁸ The absence of a masonry altar-top suggests it did not have an altar (neither did the visiting official mention one). It was not a patron’s tribune; it is located too high above the floor level for this purpose and the sanctuary, being located directly below, is not visible from it. Yet this space plays a considerable role in how the interior of the church is perceived in terms of aesthetics: the huge arcade of the gallery provides a culmination, so to speak, to the space of the chancel, leading the eyes of the congregation to the portion of the domed ceiling that can be seen from below; it is decorated with illusionistic coffers that make the dome seem deeper than it is in actuality.⁷⁹ Thus, it seems all the more probable that constructing a tower over the apse and placing a gallery within it was a planned and deliberate move on the part of the founder, intended to quote a similar, if more complex, solution in the choir of the Poznań cathedral.

It is worth noting that in the 16th-century Poland – that is in a period which witnessed an abrupt increase in the interest in their own past among the aristocracy and the gentry – new structures were

⁷⁷ H.J. Kunst, *Freiheit und Zitat in der Architektur des 13. Jahrhunderts – die Kathedrale von Reims*, [in:] *Bauwerk und Bildwerk im Hochmittelalter. Anschauliche Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte*, Hrsg. K. Clausberg et al., Gießen 1981, pp. 87–102; idem, *Die Marienkirche in Lübeck. Die Präsenz bischöflicher Architekturformen in der Bürgerkirche*, Worms 1986; H.J. Kunst, W. Schenkluhn, *Die Kathedrale in Reims. Architektur als Schauplatz politischer Bedeutungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1987. See also collected studies in: *Architektur als Zitat. Formen, Motive und Strategien der Vergegenwärtigung*, Hrsg. H. Brandl, A. Ranft, A. Waschbüsch, Regensburg 2014.

⁷⁸ AAP – AV 1, fol. 167v–168.

⁷⁹ The painted decoration on ceilings destroyed in 1915 was reconstructed in 2008–2009; Żmudziński, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

deliberately made to refer to the forms of cathedral churches.⁸⁰ This is especially true in reference to the Płock cathedral, which in the years 1532–1535 was given a new Italianate form, even though probably essentially not very far from its Romanesque predecessor.⁸¹ It became the model for parish churches in Dąbrowa Zielona (ca. 1554) and Pabianice, where a surviving contract from 1583 states directly that “the church is to be built of masonry in the shape and likeness of the Płock church at the castle hill”;⁸² also the churches in Kowal (1604–1608) and Raciążek (1597–1612) are to a certain extent modelled on it.⁸³ As rightly noted by Piotr Gryglewski, the architectural solutions used in the Płock cathedral, which were of Roman origin, may have seemed attractive, but equally important was the fact that its construction was perceived as a “*renovatio* of a kind, referring to the long-gone times of the Piast princes”.⁸⁴ The Brochów church, quoting the characteristic solution of the eastern section of the Poznań cathedral, is an interesting and as yet disregarded example of the same phenomenon.

The iconographic analysis of the parish church Brochów that has been conducted herein not only makes it possible to view the unusual architectural arrangement of this edifice in a new way, but also sheds light on the personality of its founder, an issue never referred to in the written sources. As a man of a, most probably, considerable aesthetic sensitivity and a profound interest in history, Jan Brochowski seems to have been a typical representative of the period of a cultural breakthrough. The idea of a symbolically loaded quotation from the venerable Poznań cathedral originates from a traditional, essentially medieval manner of thinking. What is innovative is the fact that the Brochów church was given the features of “speaking architecture”, which in this case conveys certain meanings through the stylistic simplicity of its exterior and the military association evoked by its form. Constructing a large temple with a lavish architectural programme in order to put an emphasis on the importance of the family and the ancient origins of the place is, in turn, an universal gesture, one that is essentially typical to all the ages of history. When we add the fact that Giovanni Battista of Venice was allowed to shape the interior of the church in a modern way – a way whose artistic roots lay in the architect’s geographically distant land of origin – it becomes clear that the Brochów church is one of the most fascinating ecclesiastical structures to have been built in Poland in the 16th century. It must also be noted as perfectly illustrating the well-known fact that in the past, outstanding works of art were produced not only in the leading artistic centres. Enterprises that were, in their own way, equally interesting and rich in meanings where undertaken in the provinces as well, especially since the need of following the dictates fashion and being constantly “up to date” was of less importance there;⁸⁵ this was an approach that often gave birth to works as unusual and culturally fascinating as the Brochów church.

⁸⁰ This was a widespread phenomenon in the Middle Ages, although what was usually repeated were concrete stylistic and constructional solutions, not the spatial programmes of cathedrals, as they were usually impossible to repeat *in toto*; See D. Kimpel, R. Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270*, Munich 1985; M. Lheure, *Le rayonnement de Notre-Dame de Paris dans ses paroisses 1170–1300*, Paris 2010.

⁸¹ See R. Kunkel, *Renesansowa katedra plocka i jej twórca Bernardinus de Gianotis*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 49, 1987, pp. 227–250; A. Bukowska, *Katedra w Płocku, romańska czy renesansowa?*, [in:] *Żeby wiedzieć. Studia dedykowane Helenie Malkiewiczównie*, ed. W. Walanus et al., Cracow 2008, pp. 15–24; Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 175–192.

⁸² “[...] kościół ma być zmurowany na kształt y podobieństwo kościoła Plockiego na zamku Tumowe [...]”. See Kunkel, *Architektura gotycka...*, p. 94; Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–239, 334–343.

⁸³ T. Chrzanowski, *Czyżby spuścizna po katedrze plockiej?*, [in:] *Nobile claret opus...*, pp. 243–252.

⁸⁴ Gryglewski, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

⁸⁵ J. Jarzewicz, *Biskupi, miasta i wsie – ich znaczenie w kulturze średniowiecznej*, [in:] *Między panem a plebanem. Wieś, miasto, władza świecka i duchowna w kulturze średniowiecznej Europy. Materiały Seminariów Mediewistycznych PTPN im. Alicji Karłowskiej-Kamzowej z lat 2009–2011*, ed. J. Kowalski, T. Ratajczak, Poznań 2013, pp. 7–19.

NAMIASTKA KATEDRY W DOBRACH RYCERSKICH? O IKONOGRAFII ARCHITEKTURY SZESNASTOWIECZNEGO KOŚCIOŁA PARAFIALNEGO W BROCHOWIE

Streszczenie

Kościół parafialny w Brochowie koło Sochaczewa, wzniesiony w latach 1551–1561 z inicjatywy wojskiego warszawskiego Jana Brochowskiego, jest jednym z najbardziej znanych dzieł włoskiego muratora Jana Baptysty Wenecjanina. W niniejszym artykule jego architektura poddana jest jednak analizie nie stylowej, lecz ikonograficznej. Brochowska budowla odznacza się niezwykle kształtem, zaskakującym jak na warunki wiejskiego kościoła parafialnego – jest to trójnawowa inkastelizowana bazylika, z dwiema okrągłymi wieżami w fasadzie zachodniej i trzecią wieżą nad apsydą prezbiterium, która mieści obszerną empore, otwierającą się do wnętrza świątyni. Wyjaśnienie tak złożonego programu przestrzennego, kojarzącego się przy tym z architekturą *militaris*, jest możliwe, gdy weźmiemy pod uwagę osobę fundatora, którego funkcją, jako wojskiego warszawskiego, było zapewnianie bezpieczeństwa i spokoju podległemu obszarowi. Wyjątkowy motyw wieży wschodniej mieszczącej empore komunikującą się z wnętrzem prezbiterium za pomocą wielkiej arkady można z kolei uznać za cytaty z gotyckiej katedry poznańskiej, gdzie taka wieża przy chórze powstała na początku XV w. Sięgnięcie po rozwiązanie kojarzące się z kształtem wielkopolskiego tumu jest zrozumiałe wobec przynależności parafii w Brochowie wraz z całym archidiaconatem warszawsko-czerskim do diecezji poznańskiej. Przedstawiona w niniejszym artykule analiza podnosi rangę brochowskiego kościoła jako jednej z najciekawszych kreacji architektury sakralnej w Polsce około połowy XVI w.