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ON THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ROUTE OF RESIDENCE OF THE RADZIWIŁŁS – CASTLE IN OŁYKA, VOLHYNIA

NA EUROPEJSKIM SZLAKU DZIEDZICTWA KULTUROWEGO RADZIWIŁŁOWSKICH REZYDENCJI – ZAMEK W OŁYCE NA WOŁYNIU

Abstract

The European cultural heritage route of residences once belonging to the Radziwiłł family, located in the territories today belonging to Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland, is demarcated by ca. fifty sites exhibiting high artistic and historical values. The ongoing research contributes to determining the value of the preserved historical sites, as well as assessing the risk they face. Development of a protection method at the level of the structure of the building, but also increasing the social and ethnic integration, will contribute to the creation of collective memory and identity of Europeans. The castle in Olyka [Ukrainian: Olyka], one of the three centres of the Radziwiłł family fee tail, is one of the most distinguished examples of residential architecture in Volhynia. It has not been scientifically documented to date, which could constitute a foundation for the development of the building restoration project. Preserved to our time in a very bad technical condition, it awaits protection of its architectural heritage.

Keywords: residential architecture, heritage protection, cultural trail, Olyka

Streszczenie

Europejski szlak dziedzictwa kulturowego rezydencji należących do rodu Radziwiłłów na obszarach obecnej Łotwy, Litwy, Białorusi, Ukrainy i Polski wyznacza około pięćdziesięciu obiektów architektonicznych o wysokich walorach artystycznych i historycznych. Prowadzone badania przyczyniają się do określenia wartości zachowanych, jak również stanu zagrożenia cennych zabytków. Wypracowanie metod ochrony na poziomie struktury dzieła, ale też zwiększających integralność społeczną i narodowościową, posłuży tworzeniu zbiorowej pamięci i tożsamości Europejczyków. Zamek w Olyce, jeden z trzech ośrodków ordynacji radziwiłłowskiej, zaliczany jest do najwybitniejszych dzieł architektury rezydencjonalnej na Wołyniu. Do dziś nie doczekał się dokumentacji naukowej, będącej podstawą do opracowania projektu restauracji obiektu. Zachowany do naszych czasów w bardzo złym stanie technicznym, oczekuje na ochronę architektonicznego dziedzictwa.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura rezydencjonalna, ochrona dziedzictwa, szlak kulturowy, Olyka

1. Introduction

The Act on Monument Protection and Preservation from 2003 provides that “a historic monument, as a testimony to a bygone era, being a work of man, should be preserved, as it is in the social interest due to the historic, artistic, or scientific value it exhibits” [9]. The year 2018, announced by the European Commission as the European Year of Cultural Heritage, should constitute a beginning of a path towards stimulation of local communities. The awakening awareness of the architectural heritage of a specific region shall entail measures associated with its protection. Family residences of the Radziwiłłs, dispersed over the territories of the today’s Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland, have survived to our times in different stages of preservation. The Author carried out a preliminary identification of residences along the European route of cultural heritage of one family in order to categorise the sites in terms of their state of preservation [10]. It is assumed that the artistic, historical, and scientific values of these sites are unquestionable as they are all listed as historic monuments. Therefore, organising a cultural route linking the residences should constitute a social interest of the countries which in the past contributed to the power of Poland and Lithuania. The Author’s research allows to determine the extent of preservation, but also the risks faced by individual sites, caused by physical factors and time. Results of the study may initiate social and ethnic integration, contributing to the awareness of common history. The goal of further research will be to develop a method of protection at the level of the structure of a particular architectural work, as well as protection improving the social awareness of the significance of residential cultural heritage of one family. Marking the local heritage of family residences on the map of Europe will allow these valuable historic sites to come into being in a broad context of global and universal values, irrespective of the state of their preservation. The castle in Ołyka, which constitutes the most valuable example of residential architecture within the former territories of the Polish Republic, has not lived to see a scientific study. The monograph of the castle in Ołyka, compiled by Stanisław Tomkowicz in 1923 on the basis of a search query and a description of the existing state as of 1913, should constitute a foundation for the development of the site restoration project. The condition of this monument requires immediate intervention on the part of the local authorities, monument preservation services, and a team of scholars engaged in the protection of architectural heritage.

2. Analysis of historical and artistic values of the castle in Ołyka

The history of Ołyka, a little town in Volhynia, was associated with the Radziwiłłs since ca. 1513 through a marriage of Anna née Kiszka with the castellan of Trakai, Jan Radziwiłł, dubbed ‘the Bearded’. The son of this union, Mikołaj Radziwiłł dubbed ‘the Black’, Grand Marshal of Lithuania and Castellan of Vilnius, inherited the estates in Ołyka, marking the beginning of the history of this place, which lasted until 1939 [7, pp. 56–65]. In 1540 he launched the construction of a castle in the place of a former fortress, on wetlands which provided natural protection. In 1547 Mikołaj Radziwiłł ‘the Black’ received a hereditary title of a prince from

emperor Charles V, approved in 1549 by Sigismund Augustus [2, p. 366]. The probable completion of the construction of the castle in 1564 is determined on the basis of a fragment of a stone slab, found in the ruins of the castle in 1883, on which this very date appears. The relic with the inscription was built into a side wall of the staircase of the 16th-century castle [2, p. 367]. The initial seat, located within the broads of small rivers, the Miłowiczka and the Putylówka, had the character of a fortress. Roman Aftanazy compiled a description of the Ołyka castle from the 16th century on the basis of a view of the castle located on a preserved copperplate [2, p. 368]. The initial castle was located on quadrangle embankments with four corner bastions. The castle could be reached via a bridge supported by fourteen stone pillars. Inside the quadrangle around the courtyard there was diversified, chaotic development on three sides, which apart from the gate buildings and the palace featured end walls directed towards the courtyard. There were four towers on the site. Two of them were situated on the development frontage facing the bridge, and the other two were inside the bastions. The tallest four-storey tower was integrated with the building of the palace (Fig. 1). According to the inventory of the Ołyka castle from 1686, the brick building of the palace had four rooms and an apothecary on the ground floor and seven rooms on the first floor, with a grand hall dubbed 'the upper hall', and a chapel. The grand hall had seven windows and a wooden gallery for an orchestra, hence it was taller than the other rooms on this floor. Next to the palace there were wooden outbuildings, stables, and two wells [3, pp. 67–70]. In 1640 prince Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, the next head of the Ołyka fee tail, launched the extension of the castle in the Renaissance style. The castle was equipped with surrounding walls erected on a quadrangle plan with four corner bastions, in the place of the former embankments. According to Tomkowicz, the residence in Ołyka belongs to the most distinguished examples of *palazzo in Fortezza* projects in Volhynia. The Ołyka castle combined in itself equivalent defensive functions with those of a stronghold and a representational palace arranged around a large courtyard (*cour d'honneur*), surrounded by buildings featuring rich architectural forms in the façades. In 1640 prince Albrycht Radziwiłł placed a plaque over the entrance gate, featuring a Latin inscription, and a statue of the Lady of Loretto made of white alabaster right above it. There was a chapel above the gateway, and a stone sculpture of St. Michael with wings was placed on the façade facing the courtyard [3, pp. 67–70]. The 1737 inventory suggests that after the death of prince Albrycht in 1656 "the old palace" was still subjected to subsequent transformations. The embankments, "partly made of brick and partly made of soil", were reinforced. The part of the inventory devoted to the residential quarters refers to the two-storey building as "a brick palace, to which round stairs led from both sides" [3, pp. 89–99]. The next inventory from 1755 indicates that Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, dubbed 'Rybeńko', conducted construction works here in the years 1737–1755 [3, pp. 115–120]. All the four frontages arranged around the courtyard were rebuilt at the time and the entire complex was given a representational Baroque character, without any features of defensiveness. Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, following the custom of landed gentry, was particularly strongly engaged in the transformation of his residence in Ołyka. In cooperation with architects, not only in terms of the functional programme, but also of a new architectural form that was in fashion in Europe at the time, he prepared "drawings outlined with his own hand" [4, pp. 299–306]. Since 1741



Castelli, an Italian architect, cooperated with Michał Radziwiłł 'Rybeńko' [1]. In the years 1720–1766 a German architect and designer of gardens, Johan Georg Knackfus, worked in Ołyka and Żółkiew [Ukrainian: Zhovkva] upon a commission of the head of the Ołyka fee tail. In the period 1750–1760 he supervised the reconstruction of the castle in Ołyka. At the same time Jakub Fryczyński contributed to furnishing the interiors of the castle in Ołyka with a Late-Baroque design [6, pp. 52–53, 57]. The spatial layout of the entire castle complex in Ołyka was based on embedding the monumental palace within the perimeter of 17th-century bastion fortifications, which was typical for the model of an Italian *palazzo in fortezza*. 18th-century family residences located within the perimeter of fortifications had only a symbolic character, emphasising the social position of the family. In the palace complex in Ołyka, the group of buildings was combined with curtains referring to the Italian tradition, and the spatial composition was based on an axis along which an entrance tower with a gate building was located, separated from the main body of the palace with a large courtyard. The sides of the quadrangle courtyard flank spacious outbuildings, intended for the more and more numerous court. The earlier two-storey structure of the palace, built on the former vaulted basements, was extended by one more floor, to house the 'grand' hall spanning two floors. In 1741–1745 the hall was transformed by making twelve window openings, six large ones and six smaller ones above them. The new window openings replaced the seven previous windows of the former building. The interiors were designed according to the giant Corinthian order, and large planes of the walls divided by pilasters were filled with paintings on canvas, which were painted in 1745 by the court painter of Nieśwież (Belarussian: Nyasvizh), Ksawery Dominik Heski [6, p. 79]. The interiors of the grand hall were furnished with a large fireplace, stuccowork, and wall paintings. A portrait hall, of the same length as the grand hall, was adjacent to it. Behind it there was a chapel, richly ornamented with stuccowork. The façade of the palace building facing the courtyard had two portals on the sides of the arcade driveway and a balcony on the first floor. In the early 19th century fragments of surface frescoes were still visible on the facades of the palace facing the courtyard, the portals and the balcony were still there, only to get completely devastated in this century. The external facade of the palace, composed of a seven-axis projection with a separated three-axis pseudo projection with pilasters, was in a slightly better situation. Within the frames limited by the pilasters there were tall windows from the grand hall. The edifice was covered with a prominent hipped roof covered with tiles, in the projection composition, ornamented with three oval dormers. Behind the edifice of the palace there were residential buildings in the external corners at the level of the embankments, with their longer sides facing a small courtyard [8, p. 11]. In his description of the castle from 1913, Tomkowicz mentions preserved fragments of frescoes in one of the houses, on the first floor. The other two residential houses in the corners of the fortress facing the embankments are preserved only as parts of the foundations. Tomkowicz assumed that most probably the fortifications of the castle in Ołyka were never fully made of brick and stone, which can be confirmed by the existence of fragments of earth embankments [8, pp. 11–12]. In ca. 1760 the residential complex with a palace already had all the elements of development in the side wings and the gates facing the town. The gateway facing Turczyn was not there yet, as only foundations for this structure had been laid [2, p. 373]. The side wings of the palace consisted of two floors, and

they featured a modest composition of pilasters and inter-window panels. They were covered with a gable roof. The wing with the gate buildings was integrated with the side outbuildings by means of quarter circle arcade battens, behind which there were four small courtyards: two of them beside the main body of the building are planned on an irregular hexagon, and the other two are triangular in shape. The gate architecture, monumental in character, was extended with an external, lower part of the gate, crowned with a semi-circular arch, under which there was a chapel [8, pp. 9–10]. A two-storey Baroque clock tower dominated over the internal part of the edifice erected on the plan of an elongated octagon. The gate buildings, erected on a rectangular plan, with seven-axis façades in the composition of panels and pilaster strips, were covered with hipped roofs, whereas the clock tower was crowned with a slender dome (Fig.3). During this rebuilding phase, the castle complex was provided with several dozen rooms and representational halls, and in this functional layout, with only few changes, it was preserved until 1939 [2, p. 375], (Fig.2). During the partitions, the splendour of the Olyka residence declined, and in the days of Dominik Radziwiłł, the 11th entailer of Nieśwież and Olyka, the estate was confiscated because of the prince's participation in the warfare against Russia. In 1814, thanks to the efforts of prince Adam Czartoryski, the Olyka residence returned to the hands of Antoni Radziwiłł, who hailed from the Kleck (*Belarussian: Klets*) fee tail. Ever since the beginning of the 19th century the decline of the palace, which in the years 1812–1836 housed a hospital, was progressing. The interior design of the palace rooms was destroyed then. When the hospital was liquidated, the castle was abandoned until ca. 1860, when thanks to the next Olyka entailer the residence flourished once again. By 1882 prince Ferdynand Fryderyk Radziwiłł conducted restoration and renovation works, adjusting the residence to contemporary needs. The reconstruction was implemented in stages, and at its initial stage the construction works were supervised by a Lvov-based architect, Zygmunt Gorgolewski. Some of the residential premises were renovated, the roof was replaced, and the façades were partially renovated. On the central axis, in the place of the no longer existing balcony, in 1896 an arcade was built, supported by four columns, bearing a terrace covered with a pent roof (Fig.5). The gateway and the main entrance to the castle was furnished with baroque portals [8, pp. 2–3]. In 1882 the Radziwiłłs occupied the castle once again. By 1913 the main body of the edifice, the north-eastern side wing with guest rooms, and the outbuildings were renovated. The second wing of the palace was not inhabited at the time. The gate buildings facing Turczyn housed stables, coach houses, and warehouses. The entrance gate with a tower and the fortress walls remained unrenovated [5]. During the World War I Olyka was on the frontline for three years. The castle was repeatedly burgled and devastated, and it fell into ruin once again. After 1920 the castle was reconstructed and modernised by the last entailer, prince Janusz Radziwiłł. The former glory of the palace was restored. One wing was fully renovated, whereas only a half of the other one was renovated by 1939. The water supply, electric, and heating installation was modernised inside the palace [2, p. 381]. Olyka as one of the three fee tails of the Radziwiłł family, was subject to a legally regulated principle of indivisibility and inheritance only within the family. The continuity of lasting and multiplying of the excellent cultural heritage was disturbed only by the outbreak of the World War II, when the castle in Olyka was devastated and robbed, and the loss of the estate by the Radziwiłłs constituted a beginning of a certain



path to ruin for the castle. In 1945 some of the castle rooms were converted into stables. After 1950 the castle was adapted and converted into a psychiatric hospital, which operates to date. In the 1970s a superficial renovation of the façades of the castle complex was conducted, which did not contribute at all to the plan of saving this monument, in consistence with the conservation philosophy.

3. State of preservation of the castle complex in Olyka

The durability of residences of magnate families was secured by the fact that they were handed down from generation to generation. It was certain then that family residences would be preserved, modernised, or reconstructed in the spirit of the architectural trend prevailing at the time. This historical continuity of generations was sometimes very brutally interrupted by warfare, Russian or Swedish annexation, Tatar invasions. Eventually, the outbreak of the World War II commenced the process of degradation of the material heritage of magnate residences, and their end was eventually brought by the communist rule. These valuable buildings were occupied by random users, who didn't care about the family heritage, which made the residences fall into ruin. The castle complex in Olyka, as a testimony of the bygone era, but also a testimony of historical events which had their effect on the final form of the complex, awaits rescue. Cultural heritage sites proposed to be entered in the World Heritage List must satisfy the criteria of authenticity and integrity. The criterion of authenticity is not limited to the original form and structure. This notion takes into account subsequent transformations, extensions, and modernisations, carried out in the past and exhibiting artistic and historical values. The residence of the Radziwiłł family in Olyka has been preserved to our times in a bad technical condition, as a castle complex satisfying all authenticity criteria. The spirit of the place resides there to this day, hidden within the decaying walls of the castle, and *Volumina Legum* reminds us that these places used to belong to Poland. Today, the castle houses a psychiatric hospital. The earth and stone embankments with preserved bastions, surrounded with an old moat, are still legible and can be easily restored, despite their bad technical condition (Fig.7 and 8). The palace complex is accessible through two gates: one leads through the embankments and the main building from the side of the town, and along the same axis, facing Turczyn, there is a gate house with a clock tower (Fig.4). The 100 x 98 m courtyard, once designed as a representational *cour d'honneur* with fountains and a stand of trees, is covered with random trees and shrubs today. There is no arcade with a loggia in the palace building as they were disassembled after 1939. There is no trace of representational portals that used to ornament entrances to the courtyard facing the collegiate (Fig.6). The palace interiors got stripped of their architectural design and of the once rich furnishings. In the corners of the bastion complex there used to be small courtyards on the plan of polygons with tunnels leading outside the embankments. Today the devastated space of these courtyards is difficult to discern. A high level of groundwater in this area causes dampness of the walls and settling of the foundations, and consequently it leads to decomposition of the structure of the buildings. On the other hand, leaking roofs complete the destruction. The castle complex in Olyka remains in the state of ruin. Degradation and decomposition of matter

progresses, and these processes result in the loss of authenticity of the palace complex with its entire historical legacy. Splintered and crumbling fragments of the bastion walls, leaking roofs of the edifice of the palace, collapsed ceilings, cracked and damp walls – this is a picture that depicts an annihilation of a centuries-long heritage. Current protective repairs carried out by the hospital staff are performed without any supervision of building and conservation services and unfortunately they are not capable of stopping the degradation of this valuable monument of architecture. Architectural heritage of the bygone centuries is slowly sinking into nothingness. The technical condition of the buildings calls for an immediate intervention of building and conservation services. For this purpose, it will be necessary to compile scientific documentation, opinions of experts on monument conservation and construction, as well as architectural studies. Developing in details each phase of transformations of the castle complex will allow to restore the today non-existent architectural design. The documentation compiled this way will constitute a foundation for developing an architectural and conservation project, aiming at the restoration of the former splendour of the residence. Regrettably, local authorities are not interested in the preservation of the cultural heritage of this magnate residence in Volhynia. A centuries-long architectural legacy of one family slowly falls into ruin.

4. Conclusion – cultural heritage protection

Since the 16th century Volhynia was becoming the seat of the most powerful magnate families in the Polish Republic. The growing power of the Radziwiłłs with the fee tail in Ołyka left one of the most exquisite cultural achievements in architecture in this area. Artistic, historical, and scientific values of the castle complex are regarded as the most distinguished examples of residential architecture. The cultural heritage deriving from the times of glory of magnate residences was gradually lost already in the 19th century, and the 20th century, marked by world wars, the turmoil of big social transformations, and dominated by the totalitarian communist rule, completed their destruction. The destructive force of the past and the present constitutes a path towards a complete ruin of the residence in Ołyka. Cultural heritage protection, guaranteed in international agreements, refers to protection in every situation, place, and time. The beginning of the 21st century, when appeals to protect cultural heritage are contained in conventions, doctrines, and philosophy of monument preservation, should stop the process of decline of magnate residences on the European cultural heritage route of the Radziwiłł family. The task of the European Commission, which announced the year 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage, appealing for “overcoming borders” and going beyond the territory of a given country or region, is aiming to create a collective memory and identity of Europeans. One of the elements that constitute this process should be active participation of social groups from a given region, which would cooperate with scholars and local authorities, contributing to the process of rescuing and protection of the architectural heritage. It is high time indeed, if we don’t want the cultural heritage of one family to be present only on the memory map.

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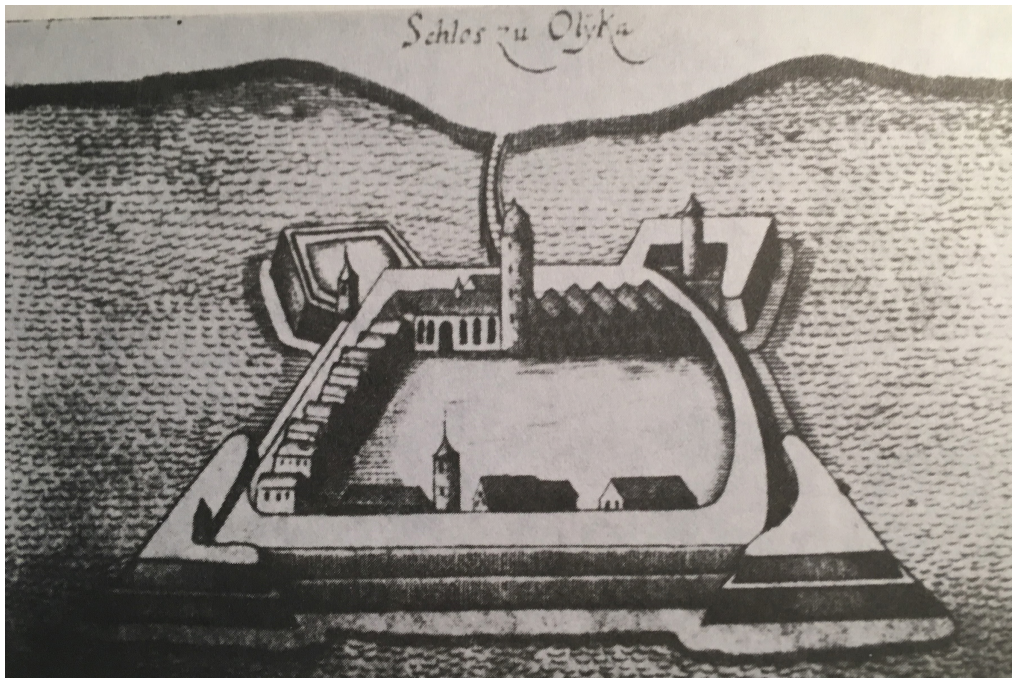


Fig. 1. Castle in Olyka according to the copperplate from the 17th century (source: [2])



Fig. 2. Olyka, view of the castle in ca. 1914 (source: [2])



Fig. 3. Castle in Olyka, entrance gate facing the courtyard, before 1938 (source: [2])



Fig. 4. Castle in Olyka, entrance gate, condition as of 2019 (photo by B. Zin)



Fig. 5. Castle in Olyka, view of the wing of the palace facing the courtyard, 1939 (source: [2])



Fig. 6. Castle in Olyka, view of the wing of the palace facing the courtyard, condition as of 2019 (photo by B. Zin)



Fig. 7. Castle in Olyka, entrance gate facing the collegiate, condition as of 2019 (photo by B. Zin)



Fig. 8. Castle in Olyka, entrance gate facing Turczyn, condition as of 2019 (photo by B. Zin)

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