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## Fortified Manor House in Danabórz in the Pałuki Region: A Forgotten Residence of Medieval Nobility

### Dwór obronny w Danaborzu na Pałukach – zapomniana rezydencja możnowładcza w świetle najnowszych badań terenowych na tle porównawczym

**Keywords:** Danabórz, fortified manor house, archaeology, defensive architecture, Middle Ages, motte-and-bailey castle

**Słowa kluczowe:** Danabórz, dwór obronny, archeologia, architektura obronna, średniowiecze, motte-and-bailey castle

In 2021, an archaeological and architectural investigation was conducted in Danabórz (currently part of Bukowiec, a village in the municipality and county of Wągrowiec, Greater Poland Voivodeship).<sup>1</sup> The goal of the investigation was to comprehensively explore a defensive seat of the Pałuk-Danaborski family, located on a hill above the eastern shore of Grylewskie Lake, and perform an elementary identification of the use zones located outside of the landmark itself (Fig. 1). The investigation was preceded by an extensive archive query and non-invasive prospecting. In a broader context, the sources procured via field research within the residential and defensive complex in Danabórz, in addition to the research in Gołańcz [Olszacki, Różański 2015] (with Szubin and Łekno in the background), were to contribute to a model of the development of defensive noble residences and surrounding structures from the Late Middle Ages to the early modern period on the example of buildings founded by a single family and built in the same region, namely Pałuki [Wyrwa 1989, pp. 11–22; Różański 2018, pp. 183–189]. Here, we present only the findings from the Danabórz sur-

vey and research and analyze primarily the history of the defensive residence through the lens of written sources and the residence's spatial transformation, as identified using archaeological methods. Having laid the foundations for the reconstruction and dating of the successive construction phases of the complex, we will subject it to a comparative formal and use analysis from an arts history perspective.

The previous literature on the Danabórz defensive complex is thus modest and it can be stated without much exaggeration that we are dealing with one of the few cases of an almost completely unexplored monumental structure located in the lands of the former Kingdom of Poland, and whose location had not been doubted for years. Its description as a “forgotten castle” by L. Kajzer, the father of Polish castellology, thus appears essentially accurate, although its classification as a castle in itself should be treated as merely conventional; it is something we will return to later [Leksykon 2001, p. 151]. In 1987, Julius Kohte recorded the fact of the presence of a late Gothic brick building on a lakeside hill, erected on a stone foundation, with its ap-

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Fig. 1. Danabórz, Wągrowiec County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, view from the north; photo by A. Róžański

Ryc. 1. Danabórz, pow. wągrowiecki, woj. wielkopolskie, widok od strony północnej; fot. A. Róžański

proximate dimensions being  $9 \times 15$  m, and surrounded by a ring of ramparts [Kohte 1897, p. 140]. Czesław Sikorski [1986, pp. 110–111] considered the ruins to be remains of a residential tower, potentially close to the donjon in Gołańcz. The only fully documented stationary investigation at the site took place in 1981, when Eugeniusz Cnotliwy supervised a large project aimed at the elementary verification of fortified residences in Pałuki. At the time, a sequence of boreholes that cut along the site's north–south axis was made, and two small excavations were explored: at the top of the hill and in an area that will hereinafter be referred to as the “southern ward;” in the first, a fragment of the external, western main wall of a medieval building [Cnotliwy 1995, pp. 341–346]. In 2003, the findings of a study by Mirosława Dernoga were published, who, at around 250 m to the southeast of the mound's top, at the edge of a terrace rising above a tunnel valley, uncovered the remains of a Gothic structure that she identified, without complete certainty, as a castle [Dernoga 2003, pp. 93–106]. A catalog entry was dedicated to Danabórz by Janusz Tomala, who sees it as a mansion built in the fifteenth century [Tomala 2011, pp. 167–168]. The need for research on the complex in question was raised in 2013 by Piotr Lasek [Lasek 2013, pp. 142–143]; and this text, among others, is an attempt to respond to that postulate.

Source information about the Danabórz estate, which belonged to the Pałuka family [Bieniak 1985, pp. 85–117; Karczewska 2017, pp. 17–18], dates back to the fourteenth century, earlier the village belonged to the estate complex of the Cistercians of Łekno. The first nobleman to consistently title himself as hailing

from Danabórz was Władysław (Włodko), son of Zbylut (from the Gołaniec line of the Pałuka family), who was active in the late fourteenth century and was an ally of Władysław Opolczyk, who had given him the post of voivode of Gniewkowo (*Włodko de Domaborz palatinus gnevcoviensis*), as a part of which Władysław took part in the Kościan circuit courts in 1400 [Lites 1892, pp. 267–268]. After Władysław, Danabórz was held by his son—Andrzej—who was known as “of Danabórz” (Danaborski) from 1417 and died in 1436. In 1425, he was castellan of Kamień, while in the 1430s he became listed as voivode of Kalisz and starost of Nakło, and thus belonged to the highest official elite of Greater Poland. He had an established position in the court of Władysław Jagiełło by testifying on royal documents and accepting bequests and land grants in 1426 and 1430 for services to the king [KDW vol. 5, 449]. His son and the next lord of Danabórz was the famous Władysław (Włodko) junior Danaborski, first starost (from 1432) and then castellan of Nakielsk (from 1453), and after conquering the komtur castle of Czluchów, its tenant (in the years 1456–1463), in 1458 he was also involved in the conservation of this fortress [AGAD...472]. The younger Władysław's first wife was Witocha of Pakość, and his second (married around 1457) was Duchess Catherine, daughter of Wenceslaus II, Duke of Opava-Ratibor from the Přemyslid dynasty [Annales 294]. Władysław junior made active attempts to raise Danabórz's status to that of a town that would have the qualities of a noble family's seat. In 1444, the privilege of Trojan, judge of Kalisz, for the town of Łekno mentioned “*civitas Damaborz*,” while in 1452 there was an attempt to erect a parish church in

Danabórz, which, due to the negative opinion of the two canons delegated to do so, ended in failure [Korytkowski 1888, p. 237]. Władysław was an ambitious and rebellious lord, who actively pursued his own policy in the arena of the Polish-Teutonic Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466), resorting to acts both criminal and contrary to the kingdom's interests, as well as being a notorious robber baron [Biskup 1967, p. 412 and others; Lasek 2017, pp. 254–256]. It can be presumed that, having support in his native borderland, independent relations with Poland's northern neighbors and purchasable mercenary banners, and on top of that a wife of royal pedigree and a substantial dowry, he could—taking advantage of the many years of wartime confusion—consider pursuing independence for his domain. According to Jan Długosz's account, in 1465 Władysław inspired 500 knights to revolt against King Casimir Jagiellon. The knights gathered in Nakło and Danabórz, and the king intended to send troops against them and besiege these places until he conquered them or the rebels surrendered: “(...) obsessurus illos in utroque, videlicet Nakel et Damoborz, presidio non prius obsidionem, nisi illis expugnatis aut deditis soluturus.” [Annales, lib. Cit., pp. 111–112]. Feeling unprepared for this development, Władysław junior humbled himself before the king's majesty on August 28 of the same year in Inowrocław and the conflict was seemingly resolved. Thankfully, the original text of Władysław's oath is known, and was the source that Długosz used and therefore is seen as more reliable [Codex, 229]. We do not learn from it about the mounted knights (“*equiti*” in Długosz's account) who had remained under the lord's command, but there are two mentions of men at arms (armed subjects?) and mercenaries (“*armorum gentes et stipendiarios*”/“*gentes sive stipendiarios*”), it also does not state their number (which allows us to assume that Długosz slightly exaggerated Władysław's military potential). From the context, we can infer that, at least at the moment of swearing the oath, these men were probably in the castle and town of Nakło (“*ad oppidum et castrum Nakel*”), and not in Danabórz—which Władysław did swear in the document not to use as a potential base of operations that would be hostile to the king. On this occasion, for the first time in the sources, there is an unambiguous mention of the existence of a defensive structure in Danabórz, called in it a *fortalicium*, clearly distinguished semantically from the twice-recorded castle in Nakło (“*ad castrum et oppidum Nakel et ad fortalicium Domaborz*”) [Codex, 229]. As can be presumed, the Nakło castellan only wanted to gain time, among other things in order to properly fortify the formerly leased (Nakło and Danabórz) and newly captured (Wągrowiec and Pakość) Pałuki locations. Finally captured and handed over to Poznań starost Piotr of Szamotuły, he was beheaded in the market square of Kalisz in May 1467.

It was the actions taken in Danabórz by the aforementioned three generations of the Pałuka family (Władysław senior, Andrzej and Władysław junior) be-

tween the second half of the fourteenth and the third quarter of the fifteenth century that were the subject of the study reported below. Evidence of the residence's operation up to around the first half of the seventeenth century is documented by historic movable material, leaving no doubt that numerous early modern written sources on the manor refer to a building of medieval origins, but no younger building remains have been found. The Duchess-widow Catherine lived in Danabórz until her death (she died after 1493). Her and Władysław junior's sons, who bore the same name Jan (the sources only differentiate them as the Elder and the Younger) were tied, primarily as starosts-tenants, with the castle in Nakło. In 1477, the elder brother was the local starost-tenant, and the brothers jointly managed their inherited estate. By 1525, the next generation of the Danaborski family, Andrzej and Krzysztof, also remained in the so-called “*niedział*” [AGAD, *Metryka Koronna* 42, pp. 29–31]. After them, through their daughters, their estates went to other families. In 1570, Gertruda, Andrzej's daughter, most likely sold Danabórz to Walenty Wargowski, to whom his rights were transferred during a meeting between the two parties in “the common room, also known as the dining room, of the manor house in Danabórz” [APP, Kcynia-księgi grodzkie 20, pp. 310, 748]. In 1601, Anna Baranowska, the widow of Maciej Wyrzyski, inherited, among other things, Danabórz together with the *curia domus*, i.e., the manor house, where she was living at the time and, according to the inheritance stipulations, was to continue to live [APP, Kcynia-księgi grodzkie 82, p. 163]. In 1607, the burgrave of Kcynia announced in the manor house (*curia*) in Danabórz a verdict of the municipal court in Poznań on the expulsion of Jan Wyrzyski from his possessions due to unpaid debts [APP, Kcynia-grodzki registers 78, pp. 323–324]. The *curia domus* was mentioned once again in the deed for the division of the Danaborski estate, written in 1617 [APP, Kcynia-księgi grodzkie 80, pp. 634–636, 668–670]. By this time Danabórz was just a meager village inhabited in 1624 by five peasant farmers [Klint 2012, pp. 112, 116]. With time, the noble residence was moved to a new place, more convenient and detached from the defensive context—to a lakeside terrace, where there is still a one-story brick mansion located between the park and the manor, in this form probably shaped in the first half of the nineteenth century when it belonged to the Szulczewski family [KEZAiB 1983].

The defensive seat of the Danaborski family was located on a natural elevation (a kame) situated on the eastern shore of Grylewskie Lake, southwest of the promontory jutting into the lake (Fig. 2). This hill has an approximately circular plan, with extreme dimensions of about 55 × 65 m, with the base at an elevation of about 82.0 m a.s.l. Its top is an anthropogenic form—a ring-like embankment with external dimensions of about 22 × 26 m, with its crown at an elevation of about 92.0 m a.s.l. On the inner side, a roughly quadrilateral basin of 12 × 18 m can be observed, which contained

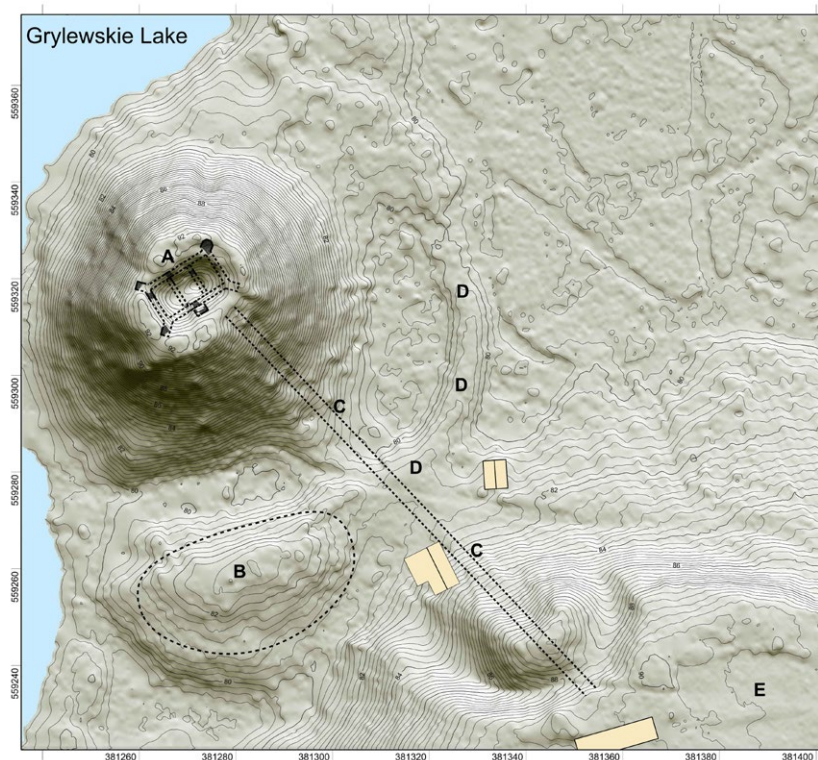


Fig. 2. Danabórz, Wągrowiec County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, contour map, a) manor house, b) southern ward, c) bridge, d) embankment, e) village/town; by P. Rajski

Ryc. 2. Danabórz, pow. wągrowiecki, woj. wielkopolskie, plan warstwicowy terenu, a) dwór, b) podgrodzie południowe, c) most, d) grobla, e) wieś/miasto; wyk. P. Rajski

the outline of a former masonry building, the remains of which did not rise above the ground surface at any point at the time the survey began. Apart from the hill, four areas can be distinguished, whose relationship to the original site already seemed obvious from the time of E. Cnotliwy's research, although their uses were not clear enough. Looking from the southwest, it is an elevated area with extreme dimensions of about  $25 \times 50$  m with a plateau at an elevation of about 82.20 m a.s.l.—we will refer to it as the “southern ward.” Farther and higher, a small “moon-shaped” form is legible, most likely created by digging the ground around the edge of the lakeside terraces, which formed a prominence with extreme dimensions of about  $10.0 \times 18$  m, reaching up to about 89.0 m a.s.l., with a dry moat about 8 m wide—we will call it the “abutment.” To the east of the main landmark there is a preserved embankment offset about 15 m from the hill, which follows its curvature. At present, it is about 6.5 m wide, reaches a contour crest of about 81.0 m a.s.l., and its length is about 50 m, but it seems highly likely that before it was leveled it reached from the west as far as the “southern ward”—it will be referred to as the “rampart” hereafter. Finally, the “eastern ward,” which is a lakeside meadow of about 1,800 m<sup>2</sup>, located with its longer axis along a northwest–southeast line, situated at the very base of the promontory, with a plateau at about 81.10 m above sea level, i.e., elevated about 1.0 m above the area further south.

During the 2021 excavations, seven trenches were dug at the site of the defensive headquarters on the hill, one trench at the “eastern ward” and one at the “rampart,” with a total area of about 100 m<sup>2</sup>. Masonry relics were identified and numerous earthen strata were isolated—their contextual analysis allowed for additional land use sequences to be determined. Interesting movable historical materials were acquired, whose analysis will be the subject of a separate study. In light of the research in question, three phases of the defensive residence can be distinguished.

**The first phase** is linked to the second half of the fourteenth century and the person of Voivode Władysław senior of Danabórz. On a postglacial kame that reached an elevation of 89.10 m a.s.l., a sandy embankment was built, with a surviving crown at between around 90.50 m a.s.l. to around 91.10 m a.s.l., which thus rose about 1.5 m above the original hummus. Judging by the layering pattern recorded on the north side, the original entrance to the defensive structure was located at this site in both annexes of Trench 2/2021, and the tradition of its operation was later transferred to the fifteenth-century structure. The interior—a courtyard, probably at the site of the masonry building erected at its site, was formed as a paved, clay layer with a depth greater than 0.8 m (reaching higher than 88.75 m a.s.l.). The remains of this building, which is of an unknown nature, and is associated with the site of the entrance (only a paved clay mound was identified in its vicinity)

are post-demolition stones with repeatedly observed traces of lime mortar, the presence of which was encountered in all excavations inside the walls of the later castle house. Trench 2/2021, on the other hand, revealed the presence of the foundation footing of the demolished building (most likely its southern wall), more than 1.0 m wide, with the footing at 88.35 m a.s.l. It thus ran more or less in line with the later southern wall of the stone house, while being slightly offset towards the interior of that building. Therefore, we can assume that in the time of Władysław senior it was an establishment with a single brick building in the gate section (probably with an overarching defensive function), set back behind the line of the rampart into the courtyard space. At the point of entry, the embankment was breached and characterized by a slope on both sides. The earthen fortifications enclosed a roughly oval plateau. In the negative of the southern wall of the oldest building and among the layer of post-demolition stones lying inside the later building, fifteenth-century historic materials were present, while in the crown of the oldest mound there were a few fourteenth-century monuments, which spells out the chronology of the site's operation.

**Phase two** was a major transformation of the fortified residence inherited by the Kalisz governor Andrzej from his father (Fig. 3.). We do not know the exact time when the construction work started, after all, *terminus ante quem* is the date of the lord's death—1436—while the most favorable conditions for the project can be seen in the years when he held the most prominent offices. The dating of ceramic materials linked to the demolition of the first-phase defensive layout, which fits with the standards of fully developed late medieval pottery, was another factor that helped determine the time of foundation. The building located in Władysław the senior's stronghold was completely demolished at the time. A house measuring approximately  $9.10 \times 16.0$  m was built on the lakeside hill. It was a three-space building, with a centrally located vestibule measuring  $4.05 \times 6.95$  m and two rooms on its sides—the eastern one having analogous dimensions to the vestibule—and a slightly smaller western one measuring  $3.85 \times 6.95$  m. The vestibule was accessed by an entrance on the south side, located above the level of 91.25 m a.s.l. The building's relatively thin main walls were about 1.17 m thick, which does not allow us to expect a building with tower-like proportions (this is also contradicted by the presence of the central vestibule), but a stone house with horizontal interior disposition. We can also consider the original absence of buttresses in the building's corners together with the low thickness of the main walls. The footing level of the stone house walls was found at between 88.70 m a.s.l. to 89.10 m a.s.l. They were erected in an analogous manner. The lowest section of the foundations consisted of a single layer of stones strewn with sand. Above there was a wall built of non-layered stones with crushed brick, bound with lime mortar and topped in sufficiently preserved south-



Fig. 3. Danabórz, Wągrowiec County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, phase two reconstruction; based on research by A. Róžański and T. Olszacki, drawn by P. Rajska

Ryc. 3. Danabórz, pow. wągrowiecki, woj. wielkopolskie, rekonstrukcja fazy 2; na podstawie badań A. Róžańskiego i T. Olszackiego, rys. P. Rajska

ern and western walls with a brick levelling layer (at an elevation of 89.55–89.80 a.s.l.). From the outside, the walls were erected in formwork, which resulted from their being dug into an older earthen mound from that side, while from the inside the stone building was built from scratch in the open space “from a free hand,” that is, without the use of a trench. This indicates that the inner side of the embankments were not filled with soil in the oldest phase as well. The stones, sourced from demolition, were laid between the walls marking the higher rooms of the stone house, thus filling the empty space under the floor of the lower story, which in this situation was not a basement but the first floor. The absence of any offsets or beam sockets, as well as the height of the walls preceding the entrance to the building built in the subsequent phase (discussed later), proves that the floor surface of the lowest story was higher than the highest preserved masonry structures in the castle. The outer earthen mound was then raised to an elevation of more than 91.50 m above sea level. Unfortunately, no cultural strata contemporary with the use of the stone house of Andrzej of Danabórz have survived, and merely the materials present in mixed strata dated to that time.

**The third phase** was an impressive extension of the edifice by the castellan of Nakło, Władysław junior, probably carried out around 1460 (Fig. 4). The initial date of the project is again uncertain, but it does not seem likely that he would have begun the extension of a then-young stone building so soon. The cut-off date is, of course, the mournful death of the Pałuka in 1467. A structure that we have dubbed the alcove tower, was built into the northeastern corner. It was a structure probably delineated on a hexagonal plan, with a diameter of around 2.20 m. It was, probably like the remaining elements of this extension, fully embedded into the embankment surrounding the stone building's walls and constructed using a tall, “flexible” foundation in the form of a “block” of wall of crushed stone interspersed with brick and covered with sand in a wide



Fig. 4. Danabórz, Wągrowiec County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, phase three reconstruction; based on research by A. Róžański and T. Olszacki, drawn by P. Rajski

Ryc. 4. Danabórz, pow. wągrowiecki, woj. wielkopolskie, rekonstrukcja fazy 3; na podstawie badań A. Róžańskiego i T. Olszackiego, rys. P. Rajski

trench. All of the elements founded at the time were standing at a higher elevation than the phase-two stone house and were placed beside it. The footing level of the alcove tower was found at 90.55 m a.s.l., while the floor of its “flexible” foundation was found at 91.10 m a.s.l., which puts the height of this part of the foundation at 0.55 m. Higher up, its walls were faced with bricks, and it can be presumed that the solid plinth reached up to the second story, and only there was a room no more than about 1 × 1.5 m. At the western corners, diagonal buttresses were added to the stone house, the southwestern one of which was 1.30 × 2–2.40 m, it was founded at 90.20 m above sea level, and its “flexible” foundation was as high as 0.9 m. The southeast corner has unfortunately not been investigated by excavation (there was probably also a diagonal buttress there). The presence of buttresses suggests a verticalization of the mass, with at least one brick floor and most likely closing the use program with a third floor made of predominantly non-permanent materials (a frame?) with a hipped shingled roof (no fragments of tiles were found during the survey). In the middle of the length of the south side of the building, the entrance was placed in a risalit. Up to its preserved crown at 91.25 m a.s.l., it was a foundation in the form of a solid “block” filled with stones, with extreme external dimensions in plan of about 1.90 × 2.50 m. It was founded at a level of about 89.85 m a.s.l., and up to a height of 90.58 m a.s.l. (i.e., at 0.73 m) it was erected from stones strewn with brick rubble, without mortar. Higher up, layered stones on lime mortar were used. The “block” supported the walls of an inner chamber. The level of its crown at the same time determines the lowest possible (and probably close to this value) level of the threshold of the entrance aperture at 91.25 m a.s.l. In the southeast corner of the risalit, a clear protrusion of stones in front of the line of the southern face was found, which can be seen as a corbel, e.g., for the support of a (drawbridge?) (Fig. 5).

Having described the research in hill area, it is time to move on to a brief analysis of past and recent explorations, which have covered areas beyond this landmark. In the area dubbed “eastern ward,” Trench 3/2021 (about 110 m in a straight line northeast of the brick manor) uncovered remains of a brickmaking furnace measuring about 2.10 × 4.50 m, located along a north–south axis. Its walls were built of burnt clay and were about 0.40–0.50 m thick, inside it was a chamber measuring about 1.20 × 3.50 m, with access from the longer eastern side with a clear width of about 0.80 m. The chronology of the furnace can be traced to the fifteenth century, and although it has not been possible to determine it more precisely, there is no doubt that it produced bricks for the construction of the stone house by Andrzej of Danabórz, or its extension carried out by his son. In addition, numerous anomalies unverified by excavation and scattered in this region were found, which is evidence of this area’s intense use. The arched embankment of the “rampart” was examined by cutting through it laterally with an excavation. It was determined that the original width of its base was about 4.50 m, the width of its crown was probably close to about 2.50 m, and it rose about 2.0 m above the adjacent terrain on the outer (eastern) side, having a more pronounced steep slope on that side as well. On both sides (and more strongly to the east), a landslide of the former crown of the “rampart” was observed in the stratigraphy. Its bottom consisted of mixed loose sands, and above this, of sands stabilized with very poorly preserved, weak wooden structures. Equally hypothetical may be its dating to the fifteenth century resulting from just two small fragments of ceramic vessels. The absence of stabilizing piles on the embankment, as well as the remains of wooden structures at its top (roads, a palisade) further complicates interpretation, but also, combined with the apparent simplicity of the means used, suggests a quick, ad hoc, but possibly unfinished project. Of the possible interpretations, the most likely is to see the embankment as a primitive defensive rampart, shielding the hill from the southeast and intended to extend between the “southern ward” (potentially with its own ramparts) and the lake shore. Here we can refer to the information provided by Długosz, who mentioned that the anticipated points of resistance by Władysław junior in confrontation with the king were to be “*de novo incastellandis*.” Perhaps we are dealing with an unfinished line of earthen ramparts built in the short time between the magistrate’s accord with the king in late August 1466 and his unexpected death in May a year later? If so, the simplicity of the means, justified by the pace of construction, may be behind the specialized knowledge of fortification that Włodek himself, or the mercenaries who were supporting him, may have possessed in the arena of the Thirteen Years’ War [Lasek 2017, pp. 233–262]. Unfortunately, the way the land was used during the survey prevented exploration of both the “southern ward” and the “abutment” so one can only guess at the relationship of the first area to the

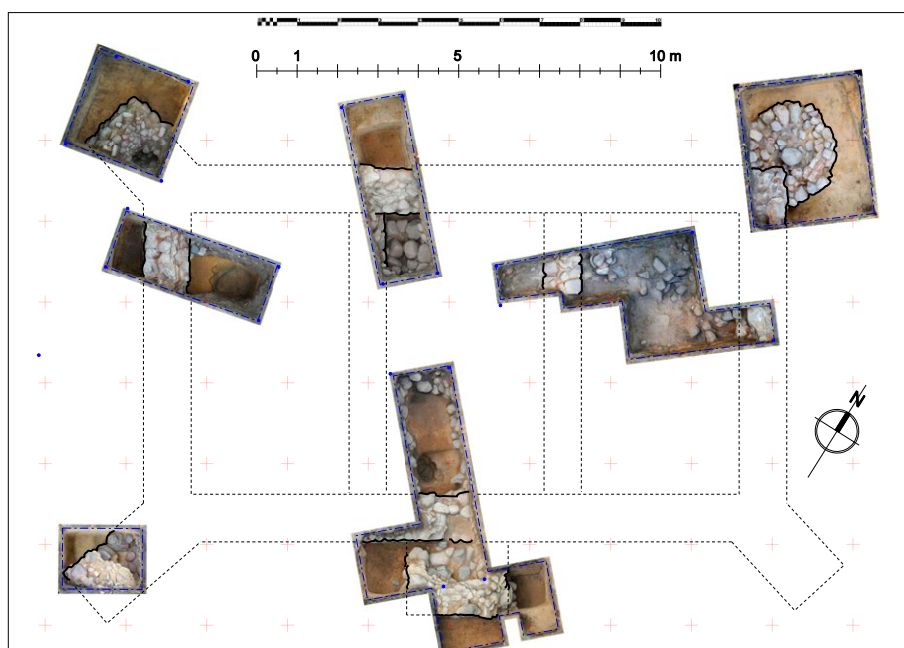


Fig. 5. Danabórz, Wągrowiec County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, ground floor plan with photoscans; based on research by A. Różański and T. Olszacki, drawn by P. Rajski

Ryc. 5. Danabórz, pow. wągrowiecki, woj. wielkopolskie, rzut przyziemia wraz z fotoskanami wykopów; na podstawie badań A. Różańskiego i T. Olszackiego, rys. P. Rajski

immediate residential and economic structures of the residence [Cnotliwy 1995, pp.343, 345–346], and the second with the fortified bridge abutment; suggestively, its transverse axis, leading from the plateau through half the length of the concave, northwest side, is directed almost opposite the main entrance to the building on the hill.

The first phase of the Danabórz defensive settlement, the establishment of which we link to the second half of the fourteenth century, is not sufficiently clear; nevertheless, we know that on the natural hill there appeared at that time an immense oval ring of earthen embankment interrupted from the south by an entrance, to which was attached a building—most likely a tower—built at least in the lower part from stones cemented with lime mortar, and above perhaps from impermanent materials, with walls more than 1 m thick. Its form of use is unknown. It can be presumed that it was primarily a defensive building that, together with ramparts, co-created a refugium and a symbolic manifestation of the power of the Pałuka family of Danabórz. It is quite possible that it coexisted with the residential and ancillary complex of the manor located at the foot of the hill (in the “southern ward”). Together, they would have co-created the *curia cum fortalicio* complex, which is present in written sources but has so far been subjected to insufficient archaeological verification, and is considered by some researchers to be a model of a knightly residential and defensive complex in late medieval Greater Poland [Grygiel 2001, pp. 204–218; Marciniak-Kajzer 2011, pp. 288 et seq; Lasek 2013, pp. 254–262], which would formally and functionally correspond to the Western European

*motte-and-bailey* layout. Leaving this significant issue to be discussed on another occasion, let us separate it from it the issue of the *fortalitium* itself, which is the main focus of our field research. Relating them to the private Polish castles of the fourteenth century, rightly associated mainly with royal foundations (especially those of Casimir III the Great) and the more than a few brick residences of the noble elite [Kajzer 1993, p. 127 et seq.] to the group of potential analogies here include, most importantly, foundations with an oval ring of perimeter walls surrounding them on the model of traditional castle ramparts and a four-sided masonry tower inserted within their perimeter (in the middle of the courtyard or near the perimeter) [Lasek 2013, pp. 125–138; 2019, pp. 77–80, 84–85]. This is how first phase of the Szumsko castle in Rembów look like (first half of the fourteenth century), or the neighboring Poraj residence in Kurozwęki, which was established around 1400 [Leksykon, pp. 423–424, 256–257]. Unlike in Lesser Poland in the north, including the Pałuki region, there was mostly a lack of rocks other than hard-to-work erratic boulders, which, with the significant cost of brick production, limited the inventiveness of the lords and further narrowed the already narrow circle of founders of “full-scale” castles. To ensure security, a fortress had to be erected feasibly high and surrounded by a rampart, which, if it was to prove sufficient, had to be suitably sturdy, and thus wide at the base, which again constrained the courtyard space. There could have been—as there probably was in Danabórz—a tower building, but there was no more room for the clustering of mixed-use buildings within the ramparts, and thus for the possibility of evolving a similar forti-

fication into a castle understood as a perimeter-closed, complex organism, used for more than purely defensive tasks, but also being more than a fortified lordly house. This circumstance had left its mark on the subsequent history of the complex discussed here.

In the second phase, the demolition of the old edifice identified with the tower takes place, while—in the situation of the limitations just discussed—the entire basin between the ramparts was filled by a stone house erected by Andrzej of Danabórz with one, or two stories, of which the potential higher one would probably be built mostly of more impermanent materials. The tripartition indicates the implementation of the typical scheme of a late medieval feudal lord's house, with a hallway, a room and a chamber [Kajzer 2010, pp. 46–49]. The building, therefore, was far inferior in size to the smallest houses in castles, and much closer in scale to the brick lordly houses that were, in their original phase, the main structures of defensive manors. Among the numerous examples are, dating most likely from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the residential building of castellan Mikołaj Nieparcki's *fortalicium* in Nieparta (8.8 × 19.7 m) in southwestern Greater Poland, the house built in the second half of the fifteenth century by the Odrowąż family in Szydłowiec in the Sandomierz region (about 7 × 16 m, also three-spaced, but evidently having more than Danabórz masonry floors), or the smaller than considered masonry residence of the Doliwits in Nowe Miasto on the Warta River (7 × 10 m) from the early 16th century [Grygiel, Jurek 1996, pp. 166–234]. Although the research in Danabórz alone does not confirm this, referring it to the latest findings from neighboring Gołańcz already lends credence to the assumption that during the time of Voivod Andrzej, a significant transformation of the ensemble may have taken place, as a result of which the former refugial space—as the most exposed and secure—was designated as the site of a prestigious residence, thus a spatial (but also, as can be seen in written sources: semantic) of the manor and the *fortalicium*; at the same time, the ancillary facilities were clearly separated from this zone by remaining outside the hill and continuing to function within the southern and eastern “wards” [Olszacki, Różański 2015, pp. 27–31]. It cannot be ruled out that the creation of the “abutment” to the southeast of the hill, that is, most likely the place from where the imposing bridge leading directly to the townhouse was delineated, bypassing the area at the foot of the hill, which strengthened the defense of the residence, but also emphasized its independence.

In the comparative analysis, we will discuss phase three at the greatest length. The brick residence then acquired a new form, and thus a symbolic meaning, although even within it, it did not go beyond the scheme of a stately fortified house, which, together with its medieval and early modern nomenclature (*fortalitium*, *curia*, *curia domus*, *manor*), contributes to the layout's classification as a fortified manor, not a castle [Pietrzak 2003, pp. 13–14, 18–22]. Remaining within the earlier

outline of the main walls, the structure was supported by diagonal buttresses, it was probably vertically extended by two stories, and its use program and artistic image were enhanced by two interesting elements: an axial risalit in the front facade and an alcove turret in the northeast corner. Thus, remodeling and extension shaped a building in Danabórz that we can consider a fortified tower house (German: *Festes Haus*) [Lasek 2013, pp. 161–168]. It was admittedly limited to a small number of stories, but due to its prominence on the hill—quoting the words of L. Kajzer referring to the castle in Raciąż—it was “a house designed to play (visually and ideatively) the role of a donjon” [Kajzer 1990, p. 146]. However, Władysław junior did not limit himself to manifesting his ambitions with the form of a lofty edifice, but expanded the program of the manor house with the aforementioned additional elements, undoubtedly an expression of the will to make its architecture refined [Olszacki 2012, pp. 251–252]. Among those mentioned, special attention should be paid to the risalits located on the axis, connected with the main entrance to the stone house, which in the surviving or reconstructed cases housed chapels on the upper level, accented on this floor with their polygonal closure (evidence of castles in Namysłów and Uniejów). Perhaps, despite the modest size of the Danabórz risalit: 1.90 × 2.50 m the higher part of it should be reconstructed in a similar way, seeing a small private oratory in the apse, perhaps to enlarge the mass with walls supported by cantilevers [Olszacki 2012, pp. 250–252; 2023, pp. 28–29]. In such a situation, there would be a superimposition of meanings and their mutual reinforcement: the tower, a sign of God and the strength of the feudal lord faithful to Him [Kowalski 2001, p. 243] would have an apotropeion inscribed in its front facade, granting the residence supernatural protection. The presence of a risalit with a main entrance, probably framed by a Gothic portal, and a potential oratory on the first floor should be considered in the context of a polygonal alcove turret. It has its parallels in Late Gothic defensive seats: the awe-inspiring donjon at Pińczów Castle (second quarter of the fifteenth century) and the castle in Dębno (dated 1470/1480), which was probably created under its influence, where towers supported the corners of the eastern house [Miłobędzki 1997, pp. 93–105; Lasek 2013, pp. 169–171]. It is impossible to omit in this context the mighty tower house in Bąkowa Góra near Przedborze, probably from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, named in 1489 “*fortalitium seu turris*,” a Latin name that would also perfectly fit the Danabórz residence [Kajzer 2003, pp. 337–354; Lasek 2013, pp. 161–168]. In all of those mentioned, the spaces of the corner towers were probably related to the extension of the formal or residential program. In all of them, they were also brought out only on the upper floor from the “foot” of solid masonry, and in Pińczów and Bąkowa Góra they coexisted within one structure on one floor with interiors in centrally located risalits—perhaps with a chapel use; these features are considered

to potentially coincide with the Danabórz solution. The second story of the Danabórz tower, on the model of the one mentioned from Pińczów, probably housed two rooms, including a larger ceremonial public hall—believed to occupy a space equal to the vestibule and the eastern room in the lower story, connected with the oratory and room in the turret, which we can identify as the “common room also called a dining room” mentioned in 1570. The same interior probably served as the location for the reading of the court verdict by the Margrave of Kcynia in 1607, which can again indirectly serve as evidence of the presence of the sphere of the sacred, in the face of which the legal action was performed. The lower (three-space) story, suggesting the best-preserved analogies such as the princely tower in Lower Silesia’s Siedlęcín or the donjon in Gołańcz, can be reconstructed as a storage interior (especially in the absence of a basement) and perhaps defensive, while the highest—the third—should be seen as residential functions, with the use of frame wall partitions [Nocuń 2016, pp. 75–134; Olszacki, Róžański 2015, pp. 133–134].

The “message” which was the form of the seat of the Nakło castellan should be read primarily in a regional context [Mrozowski 2023, pp. 91–110]. On the one hand, its form resulted from a desire to match the standards of the brick tower residences of fellow family members: the Pałuki family, an elite rooted in this land since the Early Middle Ages. This standard was a free-standing donjon in nearby Gołańcz, located just 8 km in a straight line northeast of Danabórz (a five-story tower erected on a plan of 10.90 × 16.70 m), whose foundation is linked to the nepotistic project of Bishop Maciej of Włocławek [Olszacki, Róžański 2015, pp. 91–123, 133–153], and an even grander, though unfortunately preserved only in relics, *turris* in Szubin (on a square plan with a side of about 17.50 m), incorporated into a string of regular defensive walls, founded probably by the starost of Cracow and Angevin “regent” Sędziwoj of Szubin [Lasek 2013, pp. 140–142]. It is difficult to say to what extent Władysław junior identified the tower houses—created on the initiative of the Pałuki who were the rulers of the Włocławek diocese (Maciej of Gołańcz and his successor Zbylut of Wąsosza) in ecclesial estates (in Włocławek, Raciążek and Ciechocin)—with family foundations, and this, however, cannot be ruled out [Kajzer, Olszacki 2012, pp. 187–190; Lasek 2013, pp. 118–125]. In all the cases mentioned, the scale of the projects far exceeded the capabilities of the lord of Danabórz, which is evident in their proportions. However, Władysław, probably aware of this, tried to offset these disproportions with a certain illusion of grandeur by placing his manor on a still impressive hill, which placed the ridge of the roof of his residence well over 20 m above the area directly adjacent to the hill and more still in relation to the surface of the lake. Deciding not to lower the level of the land and thus enlarge the plateau, combined with the necessity of demolishing his father’s stone house and the costly construction of an entirely

new building in which a use program comparable to the aforementioned works could be accommodated, he resorted to yet another “trick.” To the degree that data incompleteness allows, we can risk making the statement that the Danabórz manor attempted to relate formally to the most fashionable late Gothic models of this type of residence, implementing, in a reduced variant, both a use and visual/artistic program worthy of the princely ties of the ambitious castellan and his ruling aspirations. Secondly, however, and perhaps most importantly, the defensive manor in Danabórz was a “message” addressed to those fellow countrymen and knightly neighbors in the region who, like the Pałuki in Łekno and Kołybki, or the Grzymalites from Smogulec, had to content themselves with having wooden manors and towers on mounds [Cnotliwy 1995, pp. 324–340, 369–371; Krzepkowski, Moeglich, Kostyrko 2016, pp. 60–65]. It was also addressed to the hundreds of those for whom even such forms of residential and defense construction exceeded needs and funds, and who, such as, presumably, the lords of Grylewo, looked with envy and respect at the other side of the lake. For all of them, a lord sitting in a walled donjon with a princess-wife at his side, additionally holding the largest castle in Krajno (in Nakło) and the adjacent part of Pomerania (in Czluchów) seized from the State of the Teutonic Order, as a starost-tenant, rose to the rank of a “natural” patron.

While the residence itself was completed according to plan, two other archaeologically gripping projects were symbolically interrupted with the castellan’s decapitation. The first, less significant, is the embankment surrounding the hill that completes the defensive program. The second, much more important, is the cessation of the construction of a Gothic brick church (for this is how, without a doubt, the relics identified and not very fortunately introduced into science by M. Dernoga should be interpreted), which was to become the parish church of a town that ultimately never formed.<sup>2</sup> The seemingly peculiar form of the polygonally enclosed church itself, with buttresses clearly drawn into the interior, while on the outside they seem to have been shortened to the form of lesenes, a protrusion in the western wall indicating probably not so much the presence of a tower, but the derivation of the axis of the planned pillars and the support for the gallery, does not seem to be accidental. With all reservations, the closest model for it can be sought in Poznań’s Collegiate Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Ostrów Tumski, or, as Jacek Kowalski accurately identifies it, a “manorial mutation” of “Brunsberg” architecture [Kowalski 2010, pp. 179–192]. Włodek’s choice would have been parallel to the earlier foundations of the powerful Górka family of the Łódzia coat of arms in their ancestral town of Kórnik, where “having built (...) a castle and granted the town municipal rights, they decided to erect a large parish church here, with a shape reminiscent of the ‘palace-like’ Poznań collegiate church” [Kowalski 2010, pp. 192–194]. It must be acknowledged with appreciation that among the

currently available potential patterns of religious building foundations in Greater Poland, the choice of this particular one would have been the most suggestive pendant for the image created right beside the tower residence. As we can see, the field investigation of the defensive manor in Danabórz is a fascinating introduction to further studies, whose possible trajectories have been merely outlined here. See from a perspective

well-illuminated by written sources, the evolution of the architecture of the family seat and its relationships with its surroundings, accounting for the changes in the structures that co-formed the center of the lordly property (and the “world of things” not considered in this text), appears to contribute to and update previous monographic perspectives of this subject, and supports their creative and critic continuation.

<sup>1</sup> NCN OPUS 11 UMO-2016/21/B/HS3/03119: *Castrum et curia. Studia nad rozwojem prywatnych siedzib obronnych oraz ich zapleczy od średniowiecza do nowożytności na przykładzie włości rodu Pałuków i ich następców.*

<sup>2</sup> It does not appear that the bishop's refusal to consecrate Danabórz's parish in 1452, known from written sources, caused the work on erecting a monumental brick church to stop. Rather, we can assume that the rejection concerned some previous, makeshift foundation, pretentiously located near the slowly developing town.

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## Abstract

This article presents the results of an architectural and archaeological survey from 2021 in Danabórz (Pałuki near Wągrowiec), which covered a forgotten defensive residence of the Pałuk-Pałuka-Danaborski family. The manor operated between the late fourteenth and the early seventeenth century, and underwent three main phases. On a hill, Władysław senior erected a rampart with a masonry tower building. His son Andrzej, the Voivode of Kalisz, dismantled the tower and built a three-space stone house with a vestibule and chambers. The most ambitious extension was carried out ca. 1460 by Nakło Castellan Władysław junior, who gave the residence the form of a fortified tower house with a risalit and bower, clearly underscoring its prestige and formal function. Also uncovered were a brickmaking furnace, the remains of ramparts and traces of unfinished fortifications. The Danabórz manor, described in sources as a fortalicium and a curia, combined residential, defensive and symbolic functions, manifesting the Pałuk-Pałuka family's ambitions. The manor ultimately declined in the seventeenth century and its history has been reconstructed anew.

## Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje wyniki badań archeologiczno-architektonicznych z 2021 r. w Danaborzu (Pałuki, k. Wągrowca), które objęły zapomnianą siedzibę obronną rodu Pałuków-Danaborskich. Dwór funkcjonował od końca XIV do pocz. XVII w., przechodząc trzy główne fazy. Władysław-senior wzniósł na wyniesieniu obronny wał z murowaną budowlą wieżową. Jego syn Andrzej, wojewoda kaliski, rozebrał wieżę i wystawił trójprzestrzenną kamienicę z sienią i izbami. Najbardziej ambitną rozbudowę ok. 1460 r. przeprowadził kasztelan nakielski Władysław-junior, nadając rezydencji formę wieżowego domu obronnego z ryzalitem i alkierzem, wyraźnie podkreślając jej prestiż i funkcję reprezentacyjną. Badania odsłoniły także piec do wypалу cegły, relikty wałów i ślady nieukończonych obwarowań. Dwór w Danaborzu, określany w źródłach jako fortalicjum i curia, łączył funkcje mieszkalne, obronne i symboliczne, stanowiąc manifestację ambicji Pałuków. Ostatecznie podupadł w XVII w., a jego historia została dziś na nowo zrekonstruowana.