

The architecture of the Lublin Bernardine Monastery at the time of signing of the Act of the Union of Lublin

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Abstract: The paper describes the history of the Bernardine Monastery complex and in particular its appearance and functions. The author made an attempt to reconstruct the layout of the buildings from the time when the Act of the Union of Lublin was signed. The article describes and presents in an interdisciplinary way the changes that took place in the structure of the complex and the phases of its transformation.

Keywords: the St. Paul's Church, Bernardines, the Lublin Union, architectural research, geo-radar research.

Introduction

The Bernardines in Lublin received their first donations in 1459¹, and then the slow process of building the eighth convent in Poland began. The construction has continued almost uninterruptedly to this day. The materials from the earliest history of the convent have been destroyed as a result of the fires that had been often plaguing the monastery, but some of them simply disappeared in unspecified circumstances ("Mixt" books). Despite the very poor historical references, thanks to the research that has taken place in the last decades, it was possible to obtain a great deal of information that allows us to get to know the difficult but also very interesting history of the Lublin Bernardines.

The history of the Lublin Convent

The standard practice after the arrival of the Bernardines at the new site was gathering materials and obtaining the necessary permits to start construction. In 1461, they owned at least three plots of land located on a small hill near the town route, right at the edge of the bluff. It is not known how the buildings in which the monks settled before the establishment of the monastery looked like, but it is certain that the buildings from that period have not survived to this day, and on their remains later a church and monastery was built. No information about the founders has been saved until this day. Although we know that Jakub Quanta played an important financial role in the construction of the first buildings, the budget had to be huge and the founders more numerous. Although there is a story about a chest filled with valuables, which was meant to be used for the purposes of the construction of the complex, this information should be considered more in the category of a legend. According to the information repeated in the literature, the location privilege was issued

1 J.A. Wadowski, *Kościół Lubelskie*, Kraków, 1907, p. 514

in 1460 by Kazimierz Jagiellończyk (Casimir IV Jagiellon)². The very idea of creating such a huge complex was met with opposition of both the city's residents and councillors, which, however, did not bring any results and the building was completed despite the deterioration of the city defences. In 1469 the chapter of the Polish Bernardine Province was held in Lublin, which means that the church and, above all, the monastery buildings had to be ready and operational that days³. In 1487 the monks demolished the naves⁴ (probably of the first church), and thirteen years later the construction of a brick church⁵ was completed. "Spominki lubelskie" (medieval autobiographical annotations published in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* annals) informed that Fr. Gabriel Svyrkhot built a brick kiln between a refectory and infirmary, and soon afterwards started to brick the chancel. This information is very useful because it mentions two structures, which suggests the completion and functioning of the monastery buildings. It is not certain whether these structures were in a compact form or they were separate buildings. In both cases, however, firing bricks in a cloister or between monastery buildings was not a convenient solution for either the builders or the monks. In 1497 the monastery was "re-erected"; it was spacious and made of brick⁶ – this is the only information that was obtained about the monastery in the 15th century. Considering the 12 monks in the first years of the establishment of the Lublin convent and 30 before 1480, it can be assumed that the monastery buildings were built quickly. Based on the basements under the monastery, which are not connected with its present body, layout or material, it can be assumed that the oldest part of the building, erected by the monks as temporary structures⁷, is hidden under the ground level. Their remains were not completely demolished and can be taken as the first phase of construction, when the church was wooden or wooden-bricked.

The construction of the new church started with the erection of the chancel as a separate building. In this form it had been functioning for several years. The main nave with side aisles, was created at the same stage and according to one concept but extended in time. The church with the hall layout consisted of a four-span nave and two side aisles, and the lower chancel most probably closed with a rectangular shape⁸. The whole building had a brick façade, the windows of the aisle and the chancel were ogival. The sanctuary was crowned with a cornice made of brick fittings, above which there was a plastered strip, and above it probably a simple arcade frieze. The church was a separate building, not yet adjacent to the monastery. This period lasted a relatively long time and was completed before 1523⁹. It seems most probable that during this period the south wing was added to the east wing, but only after the aisles of the church were built. The missing part between the east wing and the chancel was filled in and the one-storey west wing was built, thus closing the monastery in a horseshoe shape, creating an internal courtyard, perhaps a cloister.

In 1557 there was a fire which almost completely destroyed the buildings. Another one was in 1599, when the altars, documents and commemorative plaques of the deceased brothers burnt down. Donations for the purpose of reconstruction were large and the donors numerous. Among the main founders there are the Sobieski, Uchrowiecki, Czerny, Czartoryski, Kochanowski and others who supported the monastery financially and materially (e.g. Sobieski, Czerny founded chapels where they were buried with their families, Rudolphi Włoch, a bricklayer and his wife in 1601 handed over a tenement house worth 4,000 zlotys and a brickyard, which the

2 Kościół bernardynów, lexicon, www.tnn.pl

3 The Bernardines pompously celebrated this event with a long list of products scheduled for the chapter in the middle of the 17th century: ...wine barrel 6, vodka barrel 1, bushel of malt for beer 20, calve 16, goose 40, threescore of chickens and hens 2, piglet 10, lardon 2, half threescore of carps, threescore of tenches 1, half of stone of stockfish, bushel of rye flour for bread 10, bushels of pea 2, bushel of pearl groats 1, threescore of eggs 30, Holland cheese 8, hazelnuts, figs etc., pound of tea 1, ginger as much, mead, chery vodka 2, pot of Gdańsk vodka 2, beef 6, rams 20, threescore of capons 1, ducks 30, pork 1, wildlife what you can, threescore of pike 1, crucian 4, threescore of perch 2, threescore of herring 1, bushel of wheat flour 5, bushel of millet 2, quarter of fine goat, firkin of butter 6, threescore of cheese 2, bushel of salt 1, stone of ordinary sugar 1, half stone of coffee, quarter stone of pepper, quarter stone of almonds, quarter stone of small and big raisins, clove, nutmeg, cinnamon of each of lots 8, quarter stone of rice, lot of saffron 6, pieces of limes 20, pound of capers 3, pound of olives 8, half pot of lime juice, threescore of lemons 1, plate of honey cake 4, half stone of olive oil, pot of oil 6, half-pint of honey, pot of vinegar 3. With servants and local people one can count up to 200 men, the duration of the chapter about 2 weeks. – after K. Kantak, *Polish Bernardines*, Volume II, Lviv 1933, p. 442

4 J.A. Wadowski, *op. cit.*, p. 515

5 A. Bielowski, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, Vol III, Lviv 1878, p. 254–255

6 Although it was possible to find traces of older buildings not connected with the current layout of the monastery, due to the limited scope of research, it is not possible to determine at this stage whether they are relics of the monastery buildings from that period.

7 The exact scope, layout, size and function will only be ascertainable after archaeological and architectural research.

8 K. Janus, T. Stankiewicz, *Badania architektoniczne zespołu pobernardyńskiego przy ul. Bernardyńskiej 5 w Lublinie, Etap I*, Lublin 2014

9 *Monumenta Poloniae historica*, Vol.III, Lviv 1878, p. 254

monks later converted into a garden with a mill and a pond)¹⁰. The biggest change in the church at this stage was the addition of two towers from the front, expanding the church with another span.



Fig. 1. A fragment of an engraving of Lublin made at the beginning of the 17th century, the Bernardine Church in the foreground (the blue arrow marks the southern wing of the monastery, the red – the building “Dom pod Orłem”) and the violet – an unidentified tower, <http://diglib.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1618bd6/0001>

At that time the church was certainly plastered from the outside. The southern wing of the monastery was two-storey, without any eastern annexes in its present form, and the eastern wing was at least two-storey with the present layout of the division on the first floor. As with the rest of the church, the windows facing southwards from the sanctuary were converted from ogival to arched.

The first graphic representation of the church comes from the work of Hogenberg/Braun published in 1617. (Fig. 1). The church had two towers (now they don't exist anymore) at the façade, there is a bell tower topped with a dome marked on a rainbow wall, the south wing was topped with a gable roof with two gables, the building “Dom pod Orłem” with a prominent chimney is also visible. The gable between the nave of the church and the southern wing of the monastery seems to be above the part of the monastery with a façade in the vicinity of the middle of the sanctuary. An unidentified building on its right side of the church is a tower. It is not certain whether the tower can be linked to the Bernardines, but it was not possible to identify any other building that could have had such a tower at that time.

Another fire took place in 1602. It was so intense, that almost all buildings on the described area burned down. Thanks to constant donations, it took only five years to recover from the rubble¹¹. In addition to direct funds for the reconstruction of the church and monastery, family chapels were also built, which helped to increase the rank of the temple and speed up the work¹². A new vault over the main nave and the chancel, decorated in the “Lublin style”, was made (it exists at present). The main nave gained the current height and roof layout, and the church was given a basilica character. In the case of the monastery, the annex adjacent to the chancel was extended to the east, but not yet to the present height. In 1633, 10 thousand zlotys was allocated for the monastery, including the restoration of the clock tower, reconstruction of dwellings for monks, refectory and the construction of a figure and fence on the northern side. During this period, there were basements under the entire monastery¹³. From the plan of K. Bekiewicz made around 1649 we learn that there were two chapels on the northern side of the church and the eastern wing of the monastery seems to be similar in height to the

10 W.K. Zielińskie, *Monografia Lublina, Tom II*, Warszawa 1887, p. 310

11 The amount of donations for the reconstruction of the church exceeded 10 thousand zlotys, at that time it was possible to buy an undeveloped plot of land within the city walls for 150 zlotys and a two-storey tenement house for 1000 zlotys.

12 The list of people buried in the church was very long. Considering the functions they performed during their life, we can safely assume that the lack of financial liquidity was not a problem for the Bernardines.

13 K. Janus, *Badania georadarowe zespołu pobernardyńskiego przy ul. Bernardyńskiej 5 w Lublinie*, Lublin 2015

chancel. In 1699 in the refectory a division of the possessions of John III Sobieski between his three sons, who were the founders of the renovation of this refectory, took place.

Political and economic events, raids, epidemics and natural disasters of the second half of the 17th century led Bernardine buildings almost to the brink of collapse. Around 1750 the monastery was meant to be rebuilt by Columbani from the foundation of Teresa and Tomasz Zamoyski. He, however, after a thorough examination, stated that the monastery was not worth renovating and made a plan for a new one, for which he obtained the approval of the general chapter¹⁴, Zamoyski and the guarantee of 30 thousand zlotys. The death of Tomasz Zamoyski thwarted these plans a bit. In 1752 the foundations of the church were strengthened thanks to the donations collected so far and it was necessary to bury part of the crypts. Numerous wooden entrances to the tombs were replaced by a flooring. In the same period the Chapel of St. Tekla was built. Although the general chapter gave permission to demolish the monastery and build a new one, we know that this intention was not fulfilled (or at least not in its entirety). Certainly, the south wing was not demolished, and probably it was renovated. Also, an annex of the bathrooms was added to the west wing, where the second storey was demolished and only the negatives of the walls and vaults as well as the polychrome on the tower wall have remained. The most important change at this stage was the adding of two annexes on the side of Bernardyńska Street and giving them their present form. It is not completely certain for what reason it was decided to create this nearly Renaissance form. During this period, the whole monastery was formed, which with minor changes has survived to this day.

The prevailing sentiments in Lublin at the beginning of the 19th century and the castling in Lublin monasteries caused that in 1819 the church was destined for "abolition and ruin" (judging by its poor technical condition). This intention was not fulfilled, and the renovation started only in 1827¹⁵, when the top of the facade was rebuilt, giving it a step-like character, the roof was lowered, and a number of repair and renovation works were carried out. As a result of post-insurrection repressions and the dissolution of all Lublin monasteries (1864), the complex was divided between the rectory of a newly established parish and barracks, the Charitable Society and other institutions. During this period, the vestibule in the south wing, the staircases and the monastery were rebuilt and clearly divided into independent parts. This procedure resulted in the blurring of the original layout and contributed significantly to the impoverishment of the historical value of the building. After 1890, the south wing of the cloister¹⁶ was dismantled. Frequent changes of functions and necessary adaptations significantly degraded the whole building to such an extent, that it is now impossible to distinguish and locate the basic routes or the layout of the cells. The 20th century brought further divisions and changes of functions to the building, which forced the creation of new communication routes, staircases, separation of flats, adaptation of attics, construction of stables, coach house, etc. It was possible to combine the buildings into one estate, but the attempts of the Bernardine monastery to recover the complex from the Curia were unsuccessful.

The building „Dom pod orłem” (demolished after 1990.)

The building was located on the cliff edge and consisted of two parts that resembled a nave and a sanctuary with its layout¹⁷. Unfortunately, before its demolition, no research, documentation or appropriate permits were carried out. It was assumed that poor technical condition was a sufficient argument for demolition. Its oldest representation appears on the Hogenberg's engraving from 1617, which clearly indicates that it was built in the 16th century or earlier. Based on the size of the chimney shown in the drawing from 1617¹⁸, it may be assumed that it was a residential or technical building¹⁹.

14 The Bernardines could not agree to demolition and in case of poor technical condition they had to renovate the buildings, in this case the rule was waived.

15 J. Kowalczyk, *Kościół pobernardyński w Lublinie i jego stanowisko w renesansowej architekturze Lubelszczyzny*, „Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki” 1957, vol. II, no. 1. p. 128

16 K. Janus, *Przekształcenia urbanistyczne... op. cit.* p. 104

17 It was most likely a random combination.

18 The chimney, unnaturally scaled in relation to the whole building, was preserved until the 20th century shortly before it was demolished.

19 In most monastery complexes there were monastery breweries, rarely distilleries. These were buildings in the back. This structure had no basements and the foundation of the walls at a depth of only 75 cm, which rather excludes the function of a brewery.



Fig. 2. The currently non-existing building "Dom pod Orłem", view from the side of the slope, A. Czerepiński 1972, LWKZ Archive

Before demolition, the building was two-storey (Fig. 2) and consisted of two parts of different heights, covered with different roofs. The only known basement stretched out of the building towards the monastery. In the hallway there was an inscription "IHS 1701" carved in stone. The image of the eagle on the western façade was added as early as the twentieth century²⁰. The dimensions of the main part formed a square with a side of about 10.5 m, combined with its location right next to the cliff may suggest the existence of a tower building, which was later gradually extended. The building does not in any way refer to the Bernardine buildings and the surrounding area, nor does it refer to the boundaries of the plot. Its original function is unknown, although it is possible that it was built on a plot of land that was not owned by the Bernardines, or existed there before the arrival of the monks²¹.

The fire from 1557 and 1569

In 1557 the most destructive fire in the history of the complex took place. Moving from Krakowskie Przedmieście through secular, wooden buildings adjacent to the church buildings, it destroyed the church and the whole monastery²². The description of the whole event was recorded in the city records and its fragment is presented below.

In this fire the magnificent brick church, which had been built at great expense for a long time, tastefully exhibited, and the whole monastery of the Bernardine Fathers outside the city walls, were burned to the utmost sorrow. The vaults of the church collapsed, and the numerous objects brought to the church by the people of the suburbs for preservation, were lost. All the altars and paintings, among which the crucified Lord Jesus, standing for about seventy years according to some people in the middle of the church, artistically and beautifully made, which, it was said, was unique both in Poland and German principalities, were burnt by fire. During this fire, nine people lost their lives in the monastery itself, who, having escaped to the church, were embraced by fire from everywhere and suffocated, and their souls were carried away under the rubble of the falling vaults. The most

20 J. Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, *Zespół. op. cit.* p. 63

21 The location of the building right next to the edge of the changing course of the cliff would make it possible to observe a large area of land. Given the vast gorge between Bernardyńska Street and the city walls, the height of the city walls and the elevation/mountain in place of the Bernardine complex, it would be impossible to see this area from the city walls. Could it have been a remote observation point on the city side, we will perhaps never know.

22 J.A. Wadowski, *op. cit.*, p. 527

probable cause of the burning of the said church was the large number of wooden houses of noblemen and nuns (Franciscan tertiaryaries) concentrated near the church; may they not be built in the future²³.

The stage of reconstruction is quite readable both for the church and a part of the monastery. Thanks to the characteristic bricks, we know that the façade gained a new gable plastered with a cornice (Fig. 3), from which the larger fragments of the attic have survived. Most probably the whole church was plastered at that time, new vaults were made, and its dimensions, layout and probably height were not changed. The sanctuary was probably closed rectangularly and not polygonally²⁴. In the case of the monastery we know that just like the church, it suffered a lot in the fire. The reconstructed south wing was two-storey, with a steep gable roof (the gable on the side of Bernardyńska Street had a three-axis division – a blende on the axis vaulted segmentally and two small, rectangular holes on the sides (Fig. 10), below there was a cornice made of bricks laid “on the crease”. We know that the monastery, and certainly its gable, was plastered, the east wing had no existing annexes, on the ground floor there was a kitchen and a refectory and on the first floor there were cells (Fig. 5). Bernardines at that time were well equipped. There is no mention of the donations after the fire, but the renovation of the church must have been completed before 1569.



Fig. 3. The level of the attic above the southern nave of the Bernardine church, view of the cornice of the original façade, made between 1557 and 1569, photo: K. Janus, 2012.

According to the historical information, a hymn of gratitude was sung at the end of the assembly in the Bernardine church.

“For behold on June 29, 1569 Zygmunt August, having completed the session on the subject of the union of Lithuania and the Crown, chooses this church as the most important one in Lublin, and surrounded by the senate and deputies from Poland, Lithuania, Prussia, etc. and a large crowd of noblemen and people, sings the thanksgiving hymn ‘Te Deum laudamus!’”²⁵

The reason for choosing this church (out of many Lublin churches) was quite simple: its area was about 450 m² and it was able to accommodate the largest group of people, and it was probably a few years after the renovation in a “modern” style (Fig. 4).

23 J.A. Wadowski, *op. cit.*, p. 521–523

24 On the basis of the shape of existing cellars, geo-radar surveys and boreholes where no walls in the octagonal layout were found, it can be assumed that the closure was rectangular, which is not the case with other St. Bernard churches of that period, but this information will be possible to verify after the survey excavations.

25 J.A. Wadowski, *op. cit.*, p. 524

According to unconfirmed information, the monastery was inhabited by members of parliament²⁶. If so, they had rooms of a surface area of about 5 m² and a height of almost 2.5 m, illuminated by a small window without a furnace (Fig. 6)²⁷.

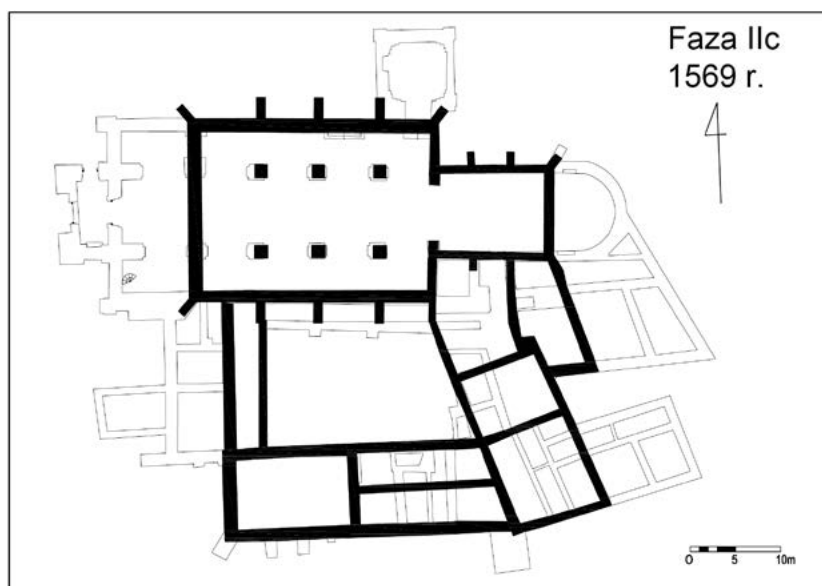


Fig. 4. An attempt to reconstruct the church and monastery from 1569, by K. Janus

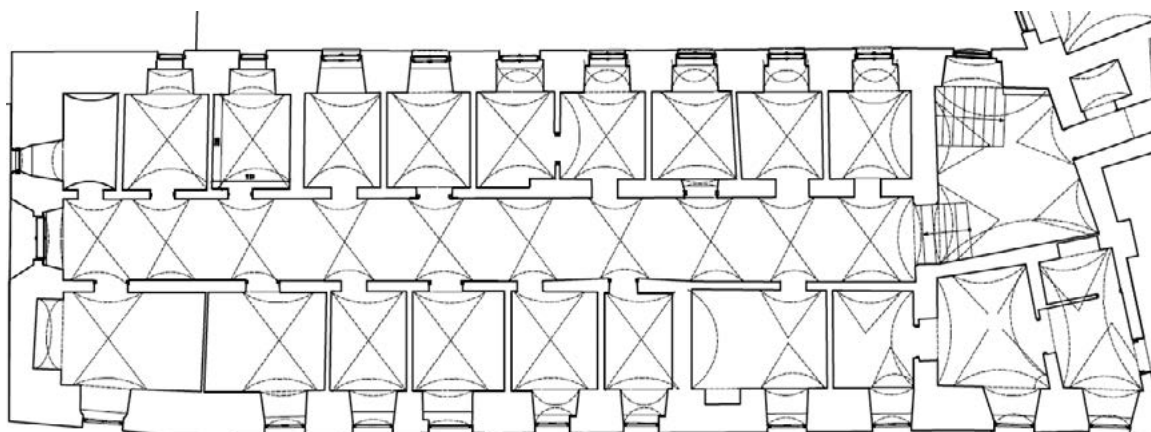


Fig. 5. An attempt to reconstruct the 1st floor of the eastern wing from 1569, by K. Janus

²⁶ The fact was that the monks handed over their cells to the other monks during the chapters and themselves were sleeping in the attics, but it was unlikely that the members of parliament would be allowed in. It seems more likely that if the deputies were residents of the monastery, they would live in guest rooms rather than in cells.

²⁷ According to the rule, the Bernardines could only have a stove in the kitchen and refectory, at the winter temperatures of the time, survival in unheated rooms would not be possible, so the brothers introduced a system of wall or floor heating with hearths at basement level.

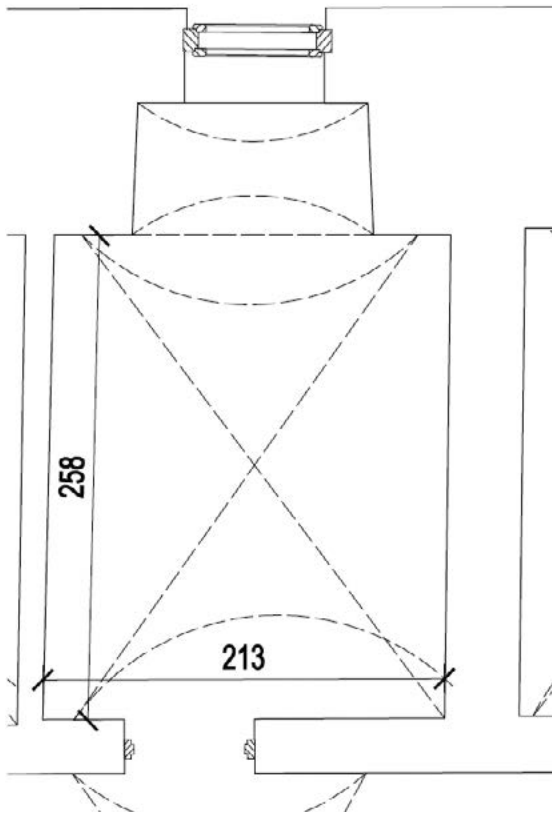


Fig. 6. Dimensions of a single cell – reconstruction attempt from 1569, by K. Janus

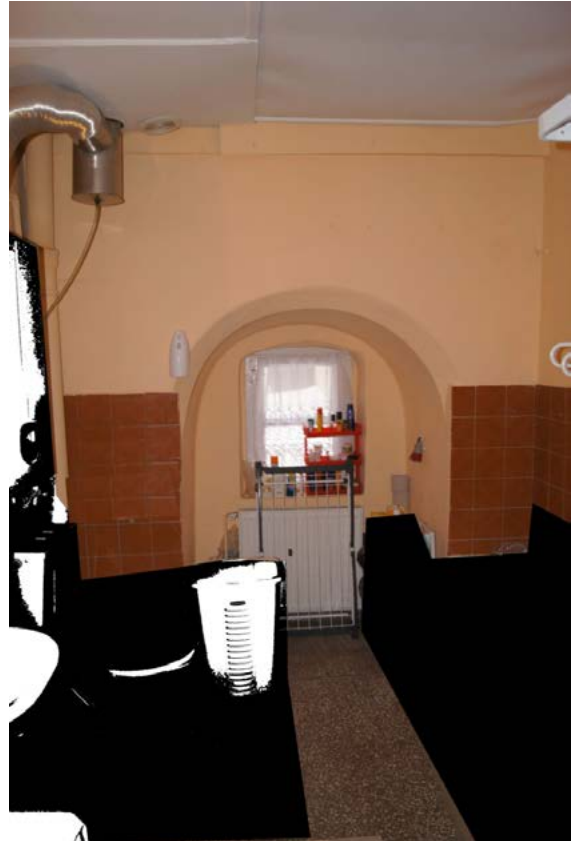


Fig. 7. Estimated appearance of the cell, photo: K. Janus, 2010.



Fig. 8. An attempt to reconstruct the appearance of the complex from 1569, by K. Janus



Fig. 9. Contemporary model of the building, by K. Janus



Fig. 10. The attic above the eastern annex of the monastery – a visible gable forming the gable wall of the monastery in 1569, photo by: K. Janus, 2012.

Conclusions

Over the centuries, going through the fires, war turmoils, changes in the political systems, dissolutions, reconstructions, rebuilding, divisions, dispersion and changes of the owners, the buildings have preserved an extraordinary amount of historical substance. Under many layers it exists in a better or worse shape. Thanks to the Bernardine rules, despite their poor technical condition, the buildings were renovated and extended, and not, as in the case of many others, simply demolished and replaced. The rank and size of the church, which for years was considered a sanctuary and a place of pilgrimage, led to the celebration which culmination was chanting of Te Deum laudamus hymn at the end of the assembly and conclusion of the union between Poland and Lithuania.

The changes that took place in the 19th and 20th century caused a significant blurring of the original features of the monastery, the division of the interior, the communication routes, etc. Nowadays, there are flats, rooms used for the parish, foundations or offices. Although the structure of the buildings has preserved an extraordinary amount of historical substance existing at the time of the signing of the Act of the Union of Lublin, it is completely illegible due to numerous transformations, alterations and renovations that took place over the last 350 years.

Unfortunately, there is little historical information preserved until today about the beginnings of the Bernardines in Lublin or about the architecture of the buildings. Research works that have taken place in the last few years have broadened this knowledge, but they are insufficient and require further elaboration, which will provide a better way to protect the buildings or restore the most important style characteristics.

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