

### **Description for the general public**

The presented research project looks at the origins and development of private defensive residences (manor houses and castles) and their bases, i.e., economical, productive and breeding areas (suburbia and farms) as well as a zone of recreation (gardens). The issue has not been hitherto explored using archaeological methods and is also poorly documented by written sources. A comprehensive study of the problem should comprise analyses of different phases of the development of the structures, the origins of which are related to one family and its activities across a limited area. We have chosen the Pałuki family, highly influential in the thirteenth-fourteenth century, and their defensive residences located at the border between Wielkopolska and Kujawy: the region of Pałuki. The project intends to analyse different formal types of such structures. Accordingly, we have chosen four complexes for detailed studies. These include a motte-and-bailey structure in Łekno; a defensive manor house with a brick residential tower in Danabórz, a manor house erected at a site of the primary wood and earth fortified settlement, and since the first half of the fifteenth century a castle in Gołańcz and the castle in Szubin. The purpose of the project is to determine the forms and the history of the structures, the circumstances behind their locations, the details of architecture and the evolution of their residential, defensive and economic structures. The ultimate aim of the project is to reconstruct their history and construct a model of the development of private defensive residences and castle estates from the Middle Ages to modern times. The research will be distinguished by the use of a multi-aspect analysis, employing different complementary methods: archaeological (excavation and non-invasive methods), architectural and geological as well as historical source studies. In order to determine a precise dating of the phenomena under investigation and to identify environmental conditions in which they occurred, we plan to employ an array of laboratory analyses, e.g., dendrochronological, C14, palynology. A topographical and environmental context of the functioning of particular manor houses and castles will be reconstructed using a series of manual drillings; we will provide their geological and geomorphological interpretation combined with the analysis of photographs from the airborne laser scanning (LiDAR). A broad interpretation of excavated artefacts will enable us to capture the transformations in the world of things accompanying human beings and to distinguish different zones within one manor or castle complex, rarely captured archaeologically, over a long period of time from the end of the 13th century until the 18th century. Not only analyses of ceramic vessels, metal artefacts, or relics of heating devices, but also of animal bone remains, often marginalised in the studies on the Middle Ages and modern periods, may yield completely new and important data. The investigations will significantly expand our knowledge about an extremely important, yet thus far largely neglected in Poland issue of the transformations of the forms and standards of everyday life, first of the feudal nobility and then gentry. They will also contribute to the understanding of a socio-spatial phenomenon, generally referred to as a defensive manor house, or castle. The project also seeks to develop an innovative model of investigating such structures, previously far too often investigated one-sidedly, without a broad base, or merely limited to an architectural analysis. A new approach to the issue, which takes into account the 'historical' complementarity of the defensive residences and their surroundings, carrying a weighty cultural, cognitive and educational values, should contribute to a better conservation protection of this unique Polish cultural heritage, unfortunately often exposed to devastation. The results of the research will be presented at conferences and in scholarly and popular articles; they will be published comprehensively in a monograph.