

STANISLAW MOSSAKOWSKI

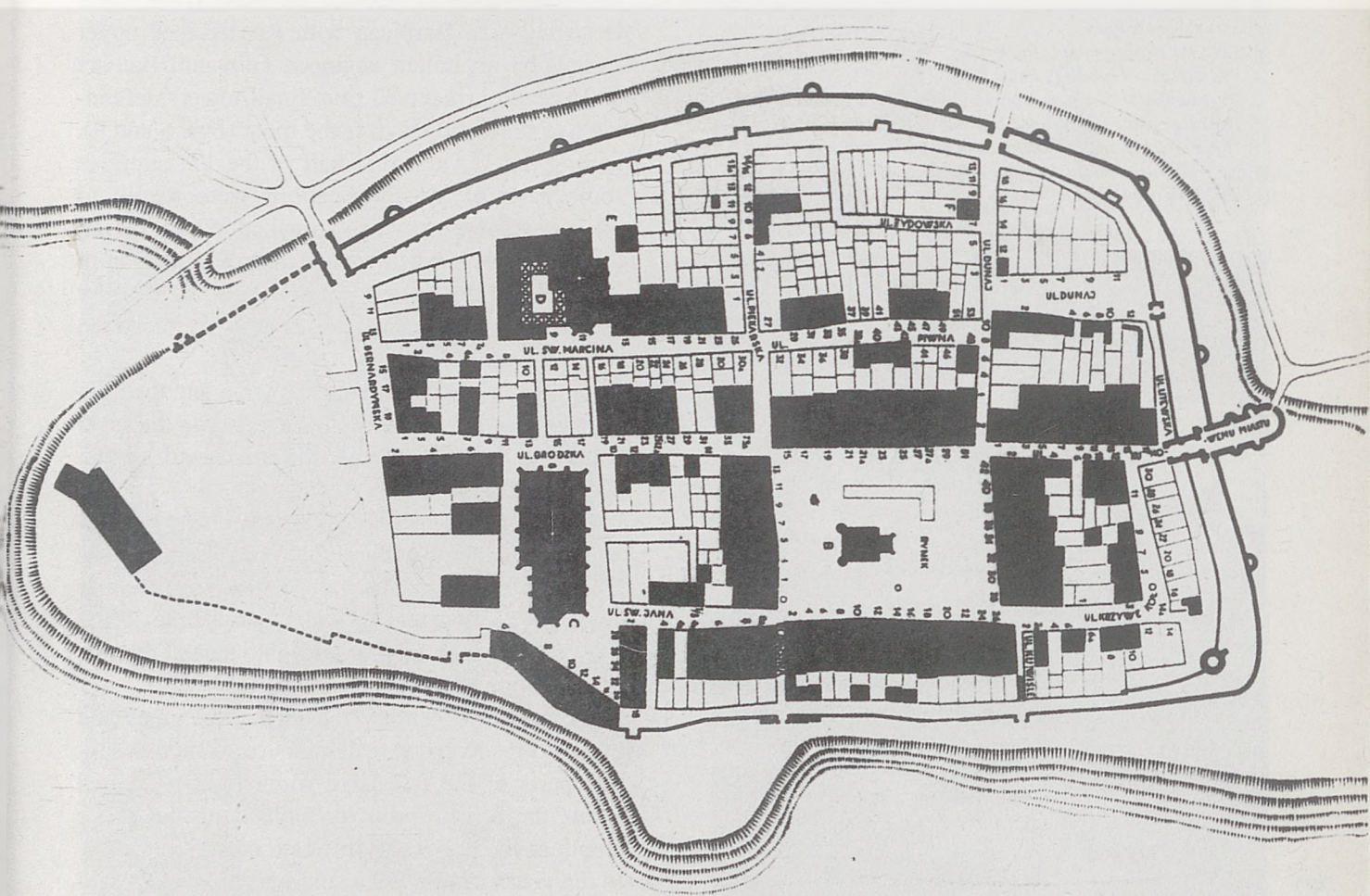
THE TOWN WALLS OF MEDIAEVAL WARSAW. HISTORY, RESTORATION, REVITALISATION

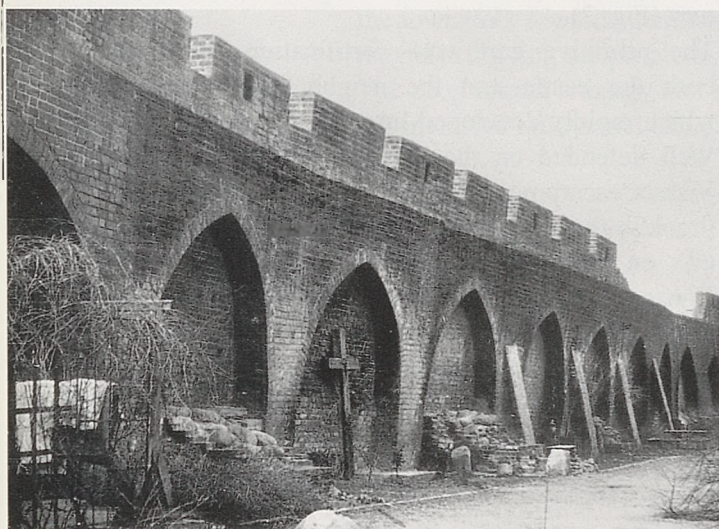
The moving of the residence of the Dukes of Mazovia in the late 13th century from the old borough at Jazdów to another site on the escarpment further up the River Vistula, next to the small fishing village named Warsaw, gave birth to the future capital of Poland. Initially raised as a simple earthwork-castle, possibly reinforced by a palisade, the new residence received in the 14th century a number of brick buildings, including the Great Tower (*donjon*) from the second quarter, and the Main House (*Curia Maior*) from the end of that century; both subsequently incorporated into the

baroque Royal Palace of Warsaw in the 17th century (Fig. 2).

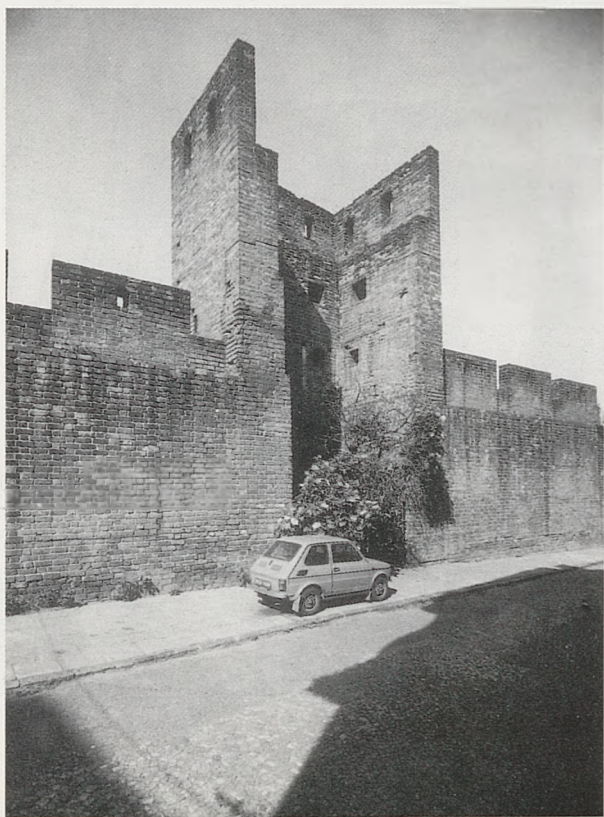
The primitive earthwork fortification enclosed both the castle and the neighbouring village, which rapidly developed into a merchants' town. Well defended on the eastern side by the high Vistula escarpment, as well as by the Kamionka brook to the south, solid defence walls were needed on the western and northern sides. Consequently, high defences of brick with watch towers were constructed (Fig. 3). The walls, reaching a height of ca. nine metres, crowned with bat-

1. *The plan of the Old Warsaw with its defence system (from J. Widawski).*





2. The façade of the medieval Main House (Curia Maior) of the Royal Palace (photo Is Pan).
3. The town walls (photo Is Pan).
4. The wall tower (photo Is Pan).
5. The Marshal's Tower. Drawing by Z. Vogel 1785 (photo Is Pan).
6. The outer girdle of walls and the Barbican (photo Is Pan).
7. The bridge before the Cracow Gate (photo Is Pan).
8. The White Tower Gate. Drawing by Z. Vogel 1785 (photo Is Pan).
9. The Barbican (photo Is Pan).



lements to protect the parapet walk, were reinforced by seven rectangular, open-gorge wall towers known as shell towers (Fig. 4), a single and higher round tower, called the Marshal's Tower (Fig. 5) and two gate towers: one at the southern entrance known as the Cracow Gate and a second guarding the northern entrance named the New Town Gate. The original shape of these two gates remains unknown.

With the introduction of artillery to siege warfare, from the end of the 15th century the mediaeval defence system was insufficient to protect the city, as a result of which a new outer girdle of defences was raised (Fig. 1). It consisted of an outer wall, running between nine and fourteen metres from the older ramparts and lower in height to permit simultaneous gunfire from both sets of walls. The merlons in the battlements received loopholes for guns while larger openings were made in the lower parts for the use of cannons (Fig. 6). In addition, this outer wall was reinforced by semi-cylindrical and crenellated towers surmounted by conical pinnacles (Fig. 10). Dry moats and earthworks surrounded the entire system. New outer gates were added to the original gate towers with bridges spanning the moat, one of these being uncovered recently in front of the Cracow Gate (Fig. 7).

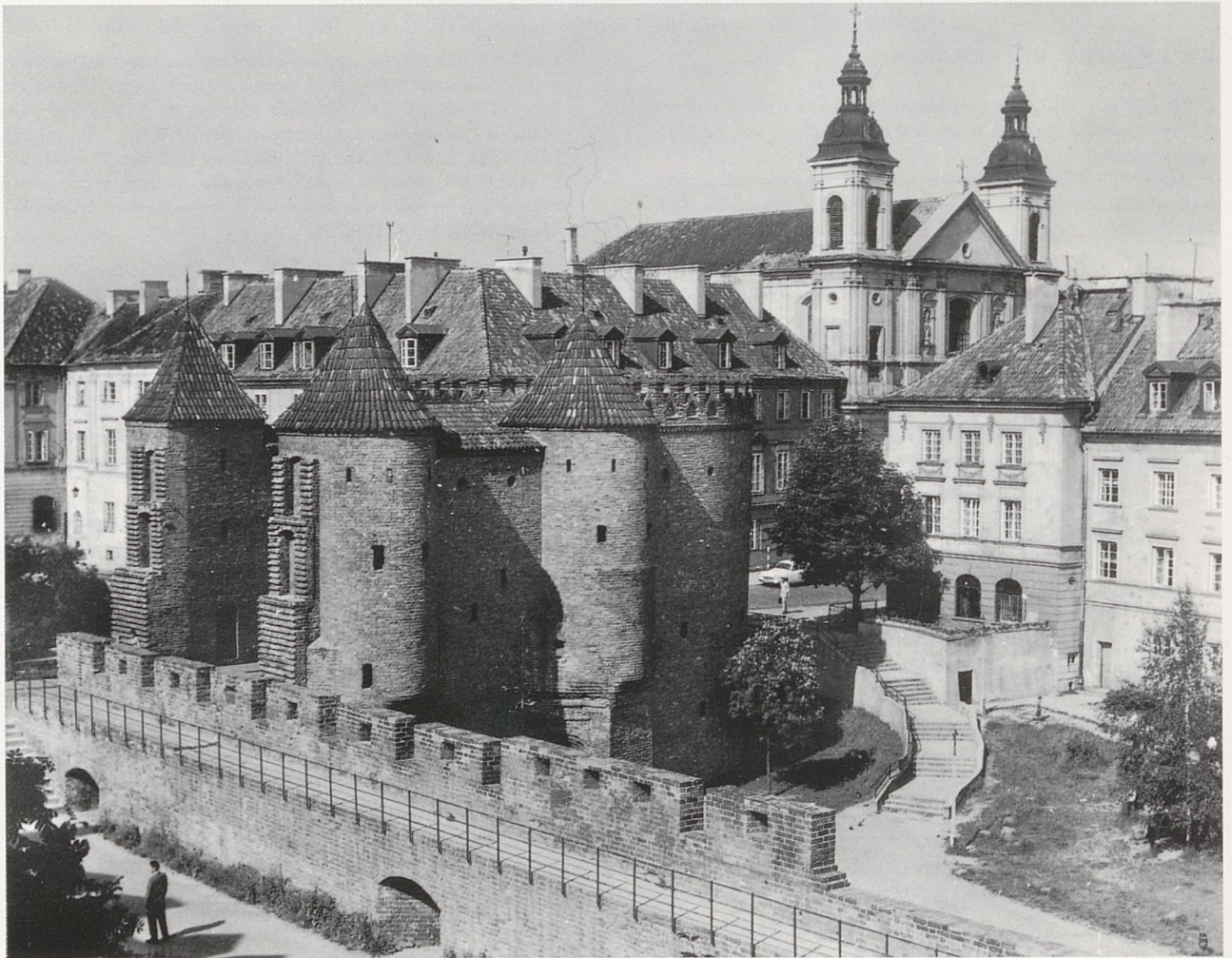
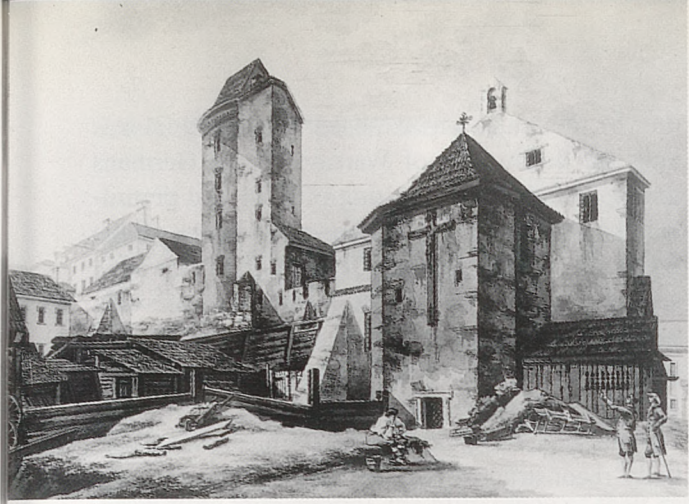
In 1548 an outer gate of a more developed shape was constructed in front of the New Town Gate. Designed as a Barbican with Renaissance upper storeys by an Italian engineer, Giovanni Battista da Venezia, it received four small towers defending two drawbridges over the moat (Figs. 6 and 9). During the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries some parts of the fortifications were rebuilt to serve new purposes. The so-called White Tower, for example, was rebuilt as a gate with Renaissance decoration (Fig. 8) while the Cracow Gate received a classical and palace-like façade in the 17th century.

With the city's subsequent expansion and the raising of a new defence system surrounding the royal residence and its suburbs, the mediaeval system became redundant.

Inside the old walls and near the towers new buildings for private owners began to be raised, such as the one put up inside the Barbican or another between the two sets of walls next to the White Tower, as well as another built into part of the former Customs Gate.

During the 19th century the mediaeval gates and most of the towers were demolished, although several parts of the defensive walls were preserved inside the private property built along the entire length of the previous fortifications.

In the years 1937-1939 a small north-western sec-





10. The tower of the outer walls in Warsaw (photo by is Pan).

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 L'ENCEINTE DE VARSOVIE A L'EPOQUE MEDIEVALE: HISTOIRE, RESTAURATION, REVITALISATION

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 Z. TOMASZEWSKI, *Obwarowania Warszawy i obrona północnego wjazdu do miasta*, in: *Szkice Staromiejskie*. Warszawa 1955, pgs. 99-119.

tion of the walls was exposed. Ironically, it was only the destruction of Warsaw by the Germans during and after the Uprising of 1944 that permitted the extensive restoration of all parts of the walls which had survived. Between the years 1953 and 1963 careful conservation of the entire area was undertaken under the supervision of the late professors Jan Zachwatowicz and his successor Jaroslaw Widacki.

Certain sections, including the Barbican, were partially reconstructed (Fig. 9), although most of the walls and towers have remained as they were uncovered. In the years 1977-1988 the bridge originally leading to the Cracow Gate was discovered and partly reconstructed (Fig. 7).

The entire area between the walls together with that of the moat and the immediate vicinity was supposed to serve as a backdrop to artistic exhibitions as well as manifestations.

Part of them is also used for commemorative purposes; for example the half-destroyed mediaeval tower into which was inserted the moving monument in memory of the youngest soldiers of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944.

J. WIDAWSKI, *Początki i rozwój murowanych obwarowań Warszawy przed epoką broni palnej*, in: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, vol. 15. 1970, pgs. 239-252; *Mury obronne*, in: *Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce. Miasto Warszawa. Stare Miasto*, ed. by J.Z. LOZINSKI, A. ROTTERMUND. Warszawa 1993, pgs. 114-124.
 I. GALICKA, *Mury obronne Warszawy (jeszcze jedna próba chronologii)*, in: *Warszawa średniowieczna (Studia Warszawskie, 13)*. Warszawa 1972, pgs. 121-134.

Le déplacement de la résidence des Ducs de Mazovia (XIII siècle) de l'ancien bourg de Jazdow à un autre site sur la plongée au-dessus du fleuve Vistula, à côté d'un petit village de pêcheurs appelé Varsovie, fut à l'origine de la future capitale de la Pologne.

A partir du terre-plein initial du château, le mur, la tour et les passages de la ville se développèrent en plusieurs fois: après l'introduction de l'artillerie dans la guerre de siège, une nouvelle enceinte de défense fut érigée (XV siècle). Des fossés secs et des terre-pleins entouraient tout le système.

Avec l'expansion suivante de la ville et la naissance d'un nouveau système de défense autour de la résidence royale et des ses faubourgs, le système médiéval devint redondant.

A l'intérieur des anciens murs et à côté des tours, on commença à édifier de nouveaux édifices pour des propriétaires privés, tel que celui placé à l'intérieur du Barbacane ou celui entre les deux murs à côté de la Tour Blanche, ou bien un autre construit dans une partie de l'ancienne Douane.

Pendant le XIX siècle les passages médiévaux et la plupart des tours furent démolis, même si plusieurs parties des murs de défenses étaient conservées à l'intérieur des propriétés privées. Entre 1937 et 1939 on exposa une petite section nord-ouest des murs. Par ironie du sort, la destruction de Varsovie après l'émeute de 1944 permit la vaste restauration de toutes les parties des murs qui avaient survécu. Quelques sections, y compris le Barbacane, furent partiellement reconstruites, même si la plupart des murs et des tours sont restés tels qu'ils étaient à leur découverte. Au cours des années 1977-1988 le pont qui originairement conduisait aux portes de Varsovie fut découvert et partiellement reconstruit.

Toute la surface entre les murs, celle du fossé et des alentours devait servir comme toile de fond pour les représentations artistiques aussi bien que pour les manifestations.

Une partie est également utilisée pour des buts commémoratifs; par exemple, la tour médiévale semi détruite dans laquelle a été inséré le touchant monument à la mémoire des plus jeunes soldats de l'Émeute de Varsovie en 1944.