

Professor Roman Teisseyre in the Lower Silesian Geophysical Observatory

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The Lower Silesian Geophysical Observatory, situated at the Książ Castle (Fig. 1), was established in 1970. Its location was chosen by Professor Roman Teisseyre, who became acquainted with this place – the Castle and the undergrounds – much earlier: in August 1946.



Fig. 1. The Książ Castle.

In the late 1960s, while being the Scientific Director of the Institute of Geophysics, he took the decision to locate the Geophysical Observatory there, upon the seismic reconnaissance of the geological background of the Castle site.

The Observatory performs the recording and interpretation of earthquakes registered in the Polish Seismological Network – PLSN – in Poland and Spitsbergen. This applies to shocks recorded from a distance of up to 300 km from a given seismic station. The data is processed on the basis of digital records. The results are transmitted to the Seismology Department of the Institute of Geophysics in Warsaw, to European seismological centers, and the USA. Monthly bulletins are also posted on the website of the Institute of Geophysics in Warsaw.

The above text comes from the information about the Institute of Geophysics in the basement of Książ Castle. Photo of the basement is in Fig. 2.

And here are some more details of how it happened. Namely, Professor Roman Teisseyre as a teenager came with his parents to Jelenia Góra in Lower Silesia in 1946. There he learned that near Wałbrzych there was a beautiful castle worth visiting. He and his friends were able to visit the castle in August 1946, since it had been open to the public after the Red Army left it. Touring through the estate, he learned about the vaults carved into the rock, 49 m below the courtyard. He kept the impressions of that tour in his memory while being a scientist.

The Lower Silesia region, after the demolition of the Geophysical Observatory in Wrocław during World War II, had no place in which the movements of the Earth's crust could be monitored. A new station was needed to complement the Polish Seismological Network in this area. And then Professor Roman Teisseyre brought to mind the object in Książ. Geological and seismological verification was carried out by the Institute's seismologist Andrzej Zawada, a man who is better known for his successes in the Himalayas climbing. Positive results led to the decision to build the Observatory in Książ. After obtaining all official permits, the Lower Silesian Geophysical Observatory in Książ was established in 1970 and is still successfully operating.



Fig. 2. Basement in the Książ Castle.

Summer 1970. A newly built facility had guest rooms. During the summer vacation, Professor Roman Teisseyre came to Książ with his sons Krzysztof and Mikołaj and their cousin Grzegorz. And then I had the opportunity to meet Professor in person, not realizing that as a 14-year-old boy I was talking to a world-renowned scientist!

In Książ, there was no restaurant or bar where we could eat dinner. We ate all meals together in our apartment where my mother still lives today. We spent our summer days and evenings together with guests from Warsaw; I still remember how the Professor talked about his scientific travels, especially those to Japan.

We explored the surroundings of Książ Castle and Wałbrzych. The ruins of Old Książ, the Książ Gorge, the Palm House in Lubiechów, and Chełmiec Mountain were our daily trips. The castle was not open to visitors, but my parents had a key and we could stay there without restrictions. There was an active fireplace in the Powder Tower on the castle terraces, at which we also spent several evenings...

Thirty-nine years after his first visit to Książ, Professor visited us with his grandchildren Stanisław and Katarzyna. Pictured on the left is Jozef Weiss, the observatory head, and on the right is Professor Roman Teisseyre (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Professor Teisseyre with his grandchildren visits the Observatory in 2009.

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