

## Olesko Castle

One of the oldest in Ukraine Olesko castle is located on the top a high hill, which formed the basis for the fortification system. For the first time the castle is mentioned in 1327, when the owner was the Galicia Volyn duke Yuriy II – the son of Masovian duke Troyden and the Ruthenian princess Mariya.

During the XIV century the castle was changing its owners. At first, it belonged to the duke Lubart, then - to Alexander Koryatovych. In 1390 the Hungarian governor of Galicia duke Wladyslaw Opole passed the castle to the Galician Catholic bishops. In 1432 p. the Olesko castle was owned by Wladyslaw Jagiello but he also passed it to Ian from Siena, whose descendants became known as Olesky. They owned the castle until the beginning of the XVI century. In 1511 the ownership was divided between two daughters of Peter Oleskyi - Halyna and Jadwiga.

Gradually the fortress was transformed into the royal residence. Afterwards, the current owners added a tower, chapel, several premises, and dug the wells with a depth of 42 m. The Olesko castle overpassed a significant reconstruction at the beginning of the XVII century. Particular attention in the reconstruction of the residence was given to architectural and plastic decoration of the courtyard and living quarters. The castle courtyard was arranged with the open arcades. The entrances to the living quarters were decorated with the white stone portals of the Renaissance style.

In such a refined atmosphere was brought up daughter of Ivan Danylovych Sophia. She married to the Krakow castellan Jakob Sobieski. Two years later she gave birth to a son - the future king of Poland Jan III Sobieski. In 1682, when he was already the king of Poland, Jan Sobieski became the owner of the castle Olesko. He renovated the castle, so that the tower and roof acquired the traits of Baroque.

On January 23rd, 1838 during an earthquake, the castle was damaged and began to ruin. Not less damaged it the owners themselves at that time. Incidentally the walled-in treasure was found in one of the rooms. Since then everybody began the search of other jewels: broke the walls with frescoes, destroyed the fireplaces, took off the floor. At the end of the XIX century the Olesko castle turned to be in ruins.

For the collected funds in 1882 the castle was bought and passed into the hands of the state. There were different opinions concerning its use. It was offered to open a boarding school for the students of the teachers' seminary. The Regional Sejm considered a better option to give the building at the disposal of the monastery. There was also another option: in one part of the premises to equip a public school and in the second part - the museum by Jan Sobieski. Until 1939 the castle is used for a female agricultural school. Nowadays, the castle was renovated and took a new life of the museum-reserve and the department of the Lviv Art Gallery

### **Pidhirci castle**

In the Pidhirci is an outstanding historical and architectural monument of Ukraine from the XVII century. It is located about 50 miles east of Lviv, in Pidhirtsi, Lviv Oblast, Ukraine. Construction for the Pidhirtsi Castle began in 1635 and completed in 1640 by Vasseur de Beauplan. Built by order of the Grand Crown Polish Hetman Stanislaw Koniecpolski from the Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was then regarded as the most valuable of palace-garden complexes and was part of the Kingdom of Poland and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, during this time.

Stanislaw Koniecpolski wrote that he wanted the castle as a place for relaxation but this would not be the case. In 1648 it was attacked during the Khmelyntskyi Uprising by Ukrainian Cossacks, but since it had been built with fortress characteristics it proved unobtainable. 3 Years later they attacked the castle again and failed.

Beginning sometime in 1914 during the World War the castle was captured by Russians, who looted and without consideration precious items from Pidhirtsi. In 1915 it became the headquarters of the Fifth Austrian-Hungarian Corps. It was attacked again sometime during 1919-1921 during the Polish-Soviet War. The last Polish owner of Pidhirste was prince Roman Sanguszuko, in 1939, for fear of property loss he packed most of the valuables and took them to Romania, then Brazil.

After World War II, the Soviets opened the castle into a Tuberculosis sanitarium. In February of 1956, the castle caught on fire and was almost completely destroyed. It burnt for 3 weeks leaving \$2 million in damages and only leaving the walls.

Left in decay for some time, when Ukraine regained its independence from the Soviet Union, it was planned for Pidhirtsi to be redone into a presidential residence. This never happened so finally, it was bought by the Lviv Gallery of Painting in 1997. They wish to turn it into a museum and give it its historical look. Though as of 2013, lack of funds have the restoration process going slow. Tourist are allowed to come onto the property but entry is forbidden.

## **Zolochiv Castle**

### **Кулині Руслана**

The history of the Zolochiv Castle is very interesting and rich in historical and romantic adventures. The **Zolochiv Castle** is a masterpiece of defensive architecture. The town of Zolochiv is situated 60 km east from Lviv. The Zolochiv Castle was built in the first third of the 17th century as a defensive fortress at the place of old wooden castle. Over the centuries the castle served as a fortress, royal residence, prison and educational institution.

In the castle's courtyard there are two palaces. The biggest of them is called the Grand Palace. The second one is the Chinese Palace. There are only three Chinese Palaces in Europe and one of them tourists may admire in Zolochiv. The **Chinese palace** was renewed in 2004 and opened for tourists.

The special pride of Zolochiv Castle were... its washrooms. Yes, common toilets, which were a great rarity at the time. And those of Zolochiv were made so skillfully that they have been studied even by modern specialists!

Near the castle gates there are several 10 ton giant stones brought from another castle in the Lviv region that was destroyed in the 16th century. Several lines in an unknown language are carved into the grey background, and above those lines there are two separate woven wreaths – thorn and poppy. Between the wreaths there is a small hole.

It is said that if you have a secret wish, you should put your finger into the hole and twist it quickly. If the wish is material, twist towards the thorn wreath. If you want a romantic adventure, twist towards the blooming wreath. If the wish does not come true, then sorry! it was not the right finger. All you can do is return to Zolochiv Castle one more time and try again...