

| The Orders of St. John and Their Ties with Polish Territories¹

The reviewed publication has come into being as an offspring of the exhibition *Wokół maltańskiego krzyża* [Around the Maltese Cross] organized at the Royal Castle in Warsaw by the Historical Museum of the City of Warsaw (presently: the Museum of Warsaw) in collaboration with the Embassy of the Order of Saint John in Poland (October 2012 – January 2013). The book is introduced by the forewords by Fra' Matthew Festing, the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, by Andrzej Rottermund, the director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw and by the volume's editors, Przemysław Deles and Przemysław Mrozowski.

Reflections on the history of the Order of Saint John and their ties to the Polish territory open with Emanuel Buttigieg's dissertation *The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta – a General History of the Order of Malta* (pp. 15–43). Early in the introduction, the author justly exposes the erroneous name given to the Hospitallers of Saint John – the catchy and suggestive “monks of war,” which he determines as incoherent, though somehow mirroring the phenomenon of the half-monastic and half chivalrous-military congregation. Next, he signalizes briefly the history of the Order of Saint John. Buttigieg has in this case resigned from traditional chronology of the Order's history which underlines significant events like the loss of Rhodes (1522), the acquisition of Malta (1530) or the Great Siege of Malta of 1565. According to the author, the main landmark in the history of the Knights Hospitaller was the conclusion of the first, main stage of the construction of the new capital of the monastic state – Valletta. Cultural – and not political – history must have guided the author when he distinguishes the next period of the function and organization of the Order in Malta (1580–1741). In this context, the threshold of 1741 when the Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca, fascinated with enlightened absolutism, took over the reign, is not accidental. The period determined in this manner, characterized with the crisis of the Maltese monastic state, finishes with the Knights Hospitaller moving to Rome (1741–1834), while the crucial political turning point that was the seizure of Malta by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, is omitted. The final part of the text is devoted to the peacekeeping and charitable activities of Knights Hospitaller since the 19th century until contemporary times.

The next dissertation, authored by Robert Cassar, Liam Gauci and Emmanuel Margo Conti: *Heritage Malta Art Collections and Memories of Poland Conserved in Malta* (pp. 45–86) discusses the collections of Heritage Malta, a national institution formed in 2012 replacing the

¹ *The Orders of St. John and Their Ties with Polish Territories*, translation of texts by Andreas von Klewitz, Barbara Ostrowska, Marcin Turski; Przemysław Deles, Przemysław Mrozowski, eds (Warsaw, 2014), p. 362, ill. See also the Polish edition: *Joannici i ich związki z ziemiami polskimi*, Przemysław Deles, Przemysław Mrozowski, eds (Warsaw, 2014), 362 pages, ill.

Museums Department. The presented works of art and examples of artisanal handicraft are related to the three main branches of the Order's activity: the care of the sick, and religious and military activity. Examples of weapons and armour from the Armoury at the Grand Master's Palace dating to the 16th–17th century, including the elements of the armour of Jean Parisot de La Valette and the high-quality plate armour of Alof de Wignacourt of c. 1610, deserve particular attention. The authors also recall the fact that in 1969 the Armoury's holdings were inventoried by two renowned Polish experts on arms and armour – Aleksander Czerwiński and Zdzisław Żygulski, jr. The monastic mintage in Malta is discussed on the basis of four rare numismatic coins from the period of the 16th–18th century. Next, selected examples of 17th–18th century furniture are presented, as well as impressive Sicilian maiolica ware used in hospitals and pharmacies (16th–18th century) and ship equipment from the Malta Maritime Museum in Birgu. A separate part is dedicated to easel painting (from the collections of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta) and mural painting, with special emphasis on the frescoes from the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta, depicting the Siege of Malta in 1565.

The discussion of sculptural works commences with the impressive Mannerist figure of Neptune attributed to Leone Leoni and situated in the yard of the Grand Master's Palace. The bronze bust of the Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca of the mid-18th century and a marble fountain, most probably by Romano Carapecchia, chief architect of the Order in Malta (1st quarter of the 18th century) complement the image of the sophisticated artistic aspirations of the Order. The last cited instance of art patronage of the Maltese monks is goldsmithery, represented by silverware and silver utensils of the 17th–18th century. In a final brief passage, several facts are mentioned which testify to the Maltese-Polish relationships in the post-medieval era, like the large-format portrait of King Władysław IV in the coronation suit, painted by an unknown painter in c. 1640.

A similar thematic scope appears in Fra' John Edward Critien's *The Sovereign Military Order of Malta Art Collections and Memories of Poland Conserved by the Order* (pp. 87–111), the difference being that the paper covers works of art and documents donated to the Hospitallers by aristocrats tied in various ways with the Order. Among the donors there have also been Poles, which is exemplified by objects related to the Czapski family. The part of the rich collection presented by the author and currently housed at the Order's headquarters in Rome encompasses works of art and crafts and archives dating from the 14th to the 20th century. As declared in the title, which promises a presentation of objects related to Poland, among other works we will find the portrait of Cardinal Mieczysław Ledóchowski by Silverio Capparoni of c. 1896 or the genealogical-heraldic charts of Polish members of the Order of Malta in the class of Honour and Devotion from the years 1874–1929.

The part of the book devoted to the activity of the Order of Saint John in Poland commences with Maria Starnawska's essay *The Hospitallers in Medieval Poland* (pp. 113–48). After a short exposition of the perception of the crusader's ideology in 12th-century Poland, a discussion follows concerning the successive stages of activity of the Order of Saint John on Polish territory. A remark could be made here that the name Tyniec nad Ślężą [Tyniec upon Ślęża] was imprecisely cited, since in reality, Ślęża is a mountain, whereas the river upon which Tyniec is situated bears the name of Ślęza (Ger. Lohe). Certain problems can arise around the use of the name Stary Solec (Ger. Altzülz) in the following part of the chapter, being a proper post-medieval name of a village which nevertheless currently functions under its medieval name – Solec. The following paragraphs of the essay narrate the intensive development of the branches of the Order in Silesia in the 13th and 14th centuries involving accurate characteristics of regional specificity of the clericalized urban commandries of the Order as well as further

history of the Order's commandries outside Silesia in the 14th century and the situation after the interception of the Knights Templar's estates. Perhaps it might be mentioned here that among the three cited Silesians who were elected grand priors of the Order for Bohemia and Moravia, Silesian origin is doubtful in the case of Michael of Tyniec. The final passages of the essay discuss: the evolutionary paths of the Brandenburgian branch of the Order of Saint John towards a secular chivalrous brotherhood, the aristocratic commanders of Poznań and the Order's pastoral service in towns.

Reflections upon further history of the Order of Saint John in Poland are continued by Jerzy Baranowski in his text *The Order of Malta in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (pp. 149–72). The 16th century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was not an easy period for the Order as only one commandry functioned at that time within Polish boundaries – the one in Poznań (Ger. Posen). Furthermore, the Poznań commanders had to resist pressure from those in royal power that laid claim to make crucial decisions about the commandry – a tension illustrated by the investiture controversy between the Order's authorities and King Zygmunt August (Sigismund II Augustus). The author allocated place to the profiles of two commanders of Poznań: Szczęsny Wojanowski and the most famous Polish Knight of Malta, Bartłomiej Nowodworski. Separate threads concern the genesis of a new commandry in Stwołowicze established by Mikołaj Krzysztof "Sierotka" Radziwiłł as well as the formation of the Ostrogski Estate. It is hard to estimate whether the cited information on the existence of a commandry in Krakow is a "trace of an unrealized intention" or only a mere clerical error of the remote Maltese office, later reproduced in papers of the papal nunciature in Warsaw.

The problem of the commandries in Stwołowicze and in the Ostrogski Estate was unveiled by author Jolanta Louchin in the subsequent essay, *Commandery at Stwołowicze and the Knights of Malta in Poland in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (pp. 173–97). The analysis of source data from the Archive of the Order of Saint John in Valletta concerning the activity of Zygmunt Karol Radziwiłł and his successors in the commandry in Stwołowicze and Poznań deserves particular attention. The complicated history of the Order's struggle and diplomatic pursuit aiming at resuming the Ostrogski Estate in the 18th century, which finally resulted in the establishment of specific forms being family commandries, is investigated in a separate passage.

The final portion concluding the history of the Hospitallers of Saint John in Poland is provided by Tadeusz Wojciech Lange's essay *At the Threshold of the 19th Century* (pp. 199–223). The title is somewhat misleading, since the text relates the history of the Order of Malta in Polish territory since the formation of the Grand Priory of Russia in 1797 until the most recent times. The last 200 years have been a period of trial and fundamental change for the Order which also touched the Polish Knights of Malta. The situation changed in 1920 when the Polish Association of the Knights of Malta was established which still exists today. The successive part of the essay is devoted to the Association's activity and development in the pre-war period, during German occupation, in exile and in post-communist Poland, when the first post-war assembly of the Association gathered in 1992.

The most dramatic fragment of the latest history of the Polish Knights of Malta has become the topic of Anna Kotańska's essay *"To Serve to Homeland by Serving the Sick and Wounded Soldiers" – The Hospital of the Maltese Order in Warsaw* (pp. 225–50). Kotańska narrates the history of the hospital organized by the Association in early September 1939 in the former Mniszech family's palace in Warsaw. Included is a vast report of the hospital's activity during the September Campaign as a military hospital for the prisoners of war, later under the management of the Polish Red Cross and finally during the Warsaw Uprising.

The final two essays are devoted to the Brandenburgian Hospitallers whose estates were situated in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg yet also within Polish boundaries: in Western and Central Pomerania and in New March (Ger. Neumark). The first paper, written by Andreas von Klewitz, *The Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Knightly Order of Saint John of the Hospital of Jerusalem – the Protestant Branch the Knights Hospitaller* (pp. 251–76) recounts the history of the Brandenburgian branch of the Order beginning with the Cremmen (1318) and Heimbach (1381) agreements – which were seminal in the organization of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg – until contemporary times. The first section of the dissertation briefly sketches the genesis of the Bailiwick, its first governors and the development of the estate through the 18th century. A side note, hailing Gebhard von Bortfelde, whose career only began after the office of the grand preceptor was assumed by Albrecht von Schwarzburg, the “founder of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg” may stir controversy. Perhaps calling him the “first governor of the Brandenburgian branch of the Order,” whose roots date back to the times of Paolo de Modena, called to the office of the grand preceptor for the territory of Saxony, Brandenburg, Thuringen and Slavia in 1319, might prove more accurate. Subsequent passages of the article discuss the Bailiwick in the times of Reformation as well as the genesis of an original formation which was a Protestant structure within a Roman Catholic order, as well as the history of the Brandenburgian Knights of Saint John since the Thirty Years’ War until the secularization in the years 1810–11. The author devoted a special place to the figure of Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, the bailiff in the years 1652–79, who had revived the Bailiwick back from wartime damage, erected a new palace and hospital in Słońsk (Ger. Sonnenburg) and contributed to the economical growth of the structure he governed.²

Next follows the fascinating history of the Brandenburgian Order of Saint John when after the actual dissolution of the Bailiwick, King Frederick William III founded the Royal Prussian Order of Saint John (1812), while his successor resuscitated the structure in 1852 as a public benefit organization. The history of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg closes with a presentation of its activity since World War I through the years of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi period, World War II until post-war times both in Germany and in Poland.

The reflections on the Brandenburgian Knights of Saint John are completed by Błażej Śliwiński’s essay *The Legacy of the Order of the St. John of Jerusalem in Brandenburg and Its Patronage of the Arts* (pp. 277–304), commencing with the abstract of the history of the bailiff’s headquarters in Słońsk (Ger. Sonnenburg) from the 14th through the 20th century. Another work of architecture of the Order of Saint John is the fortress mentioned as early as 1299 on an isthmus between the lakes Trześcińskie and Łagowskie, where the present 14th-century castle is situated. It cannot be excluded, though, that the original headquarters of the von Klepzig, overtaken by the Order in the mid-14th century, had been located on the nearby Sokola Góra [‘Hawk Mountain’], where an old rampart can be found, while the Order erected a new fortress on the isthmus between the lakes.³ The question could only be cleared in the course of archaeological works. The other fortresses of the Order are the castles in Swobnica, Pęzino and Stare Drawsko. A special section is dedicated to sacral foundations of the Order of Saint

² For more on this figure, see *Joannici i ich mistrz Jan Maurycy von Naussau-Siegen (1604–1679)*, Edward Jaworski et al., eds (Gorzów Wielkopolski, 2006).

³ Maciej Przybył, *Hus Łagow. Z dziejów komandorii joannitów w Łagowie*, in *Cognitioni gestorum. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza dedykowane Profesorowi Jerzemu Strzelczykowi*, Dariusz A. Sikorski, Andrzej M. Wyrwa, eds (Poznań–Warsaw, 2006), pp. 396–99.

John, with particular emphasis on the temple in Słońsk (Sonnenburg) and its furnishings. Yet the passages about other, less famous – but not less valuable – artistic foundations like the church in Lubów near Ośno Lubuskie or the pentaptych from the parish church in Sulęcín – are immensely interesting. The paper concludes with an account of the post-war history of the castle and church in Słońsk (Ger. Sonnenburg) and the fascinating and oftentimes surprising history of their furnishings.

A crucial element of the reviewed publication is the high-quality of the selection of illustrations. Photographs of objects from various collections and archives, often inaccessible at museum exhibitions and therefore unknown to a wider public are particularly worthy of attention. These included, undoubtedly, photographs of works from the collections of Heritage Malta, from the Order's headquarters in Rome as well as from museum collections across Poland which have been only selectively displayed at the exhibition "Around the Maltese Cross." It should be underlined that the captions to illustrations are elaborate enough to significantly complement the contents of the essays.

As a result, a truly successful publication has been issued, which combines accessibly written texts, with sufficiently detailed information, and rich illustrations thus far unknown in Poland. This aspect is significant in a book in which, as compared to previous publications of the Order's history in Poland, more place has been dedicated to the cultural activity of the Order, its art patronage and legacy. The parallel issue of the English language version of the book appears equally notable, since it will facilitate acquiring knowledge of the activity of the Order of Saint John in Polish territory and the history of the Polish Knights of Malta to an even broader group of readers.

Translated by Karolina Koriat