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ART AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MEMORY:
THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PRUSSIAN HOMAGE OF 1525
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EVOLUTION OF POLISH MEMORY CULTURE
UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Abstract

The article discusses the iconographic representations of the Prussian Homage of 1525 in the context of the Polish memory culture evolution from the sixteenth until the beginning of the twentieth century. It also points out moments when the events of 1525 went beyond the scope of Polish historiography and became part of a broader European discourse. Visual representations of historical events play a particularly important role in the formation of realms of memory. They constitute 'icons' or associative shortcuts that evoke images from the past in the collective consciousness. Some outstanding works of art may also acquire the characteristics of realms of memory and begin to lead an independent existence that is separate from the historical facts they depict. The discussed iconographic representations of the Prussian Homage of 1525 include, among other ones, the aquarelles from the *Kronica der Preußen* (c. 1556) by Heinrich Reden, the copperplates from Andreas Lazarus von Imhof's *Neu-eröffneter historischer Bilder-Saal* (1699) as well as the famous oil paintings titled the *Prussian Homage* by Marcello Bacciarelli (1785/1786) and by Jan Matejko (1879–1882).

Keywords: Prussian Homage, Duchy of Prussia, Kingdom of Prussia, realms of memory, iconography, Marcello Bacciarelli, Jan Matejko

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** This article is largely based on my earlier publications and has been supplemented with new research findings, see Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd Pruski (1525). Historia, pamięć i narracje o scenariuszach alternatywnych*, Warszawa 2025, especially pp. 173–227; idem, *Hołd pruski 1525 r. jako miejsce pamięci w kulturze staropolskiej*, *Czasy Nowożytnie*, t. 23: 2010, pp. 11–28 (English version: http://www.history.pth.net.pl/files/articles/Kakolewski_I_The_Prussian_Homage_of_1525_as_a_site_of_memory_in_Old-Polish_culture.pdf [accessed online 19 May 2025]). I partly presented the iconography of the 1525 homage when discussing broader issues in my essay: idem, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja – motywy krzyżackie w polskiej i niemieckiej kulturze pamięci od późnego średniowiecza do XXI wieku*, [in:] *Nigra crux mala crux. Czarna i biała legenda zakonu krzyżackiego. Katalog wystawy / Nigra crux mala crux. Die schwarze und weiße Legende des Deutschen Ordens. Ausstellungskatalog*, t. 1, red. Janusz TRUPINDA, tł. Dominik PE-TRUK, Malbork 2023, pp. 61–113.

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In the historical consciousness of Poles, the Prussian Homage of 1525 is one of the most significant events in the history of Polish-Teutonic conflicts. In the pantheon of Polish memory culture, it is second only to the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. Another significant event, the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466), has a more limited significance, being confined to Royal Prussia (Polish Prussia) in the early modern period and, today, to the areas of northern Poland surrounding Gdańsk Pomerania. Apart from ongoing debates in Polish historiography concerning the long-term consequences of the Treaty of Kraków of 8 April 1525 – symbolically sealed two days later by the homage ceremony paid by the new 'Duke in Prussia', Albrecht Hohenzollern, to King Sigismund I – the latter event, although to a lesser extent than the Battle of Grunwald, has also been reflected in art and literature. Notably, both the Battle of Grunwald and the Prussian Homage have acquired symbolic significance in the cultural memory of modern Poles: the Teutonic Knights have become a metaphor for contemporary Germans, and the Polish-Teutonic conflicts have become a metaphorical reference to contemporary Polish-German relations¹. Maria Bogucka aptly concluded: "Two attitudes emerged [in Polish society – I.K.] [...], mainly in the nineteenth century, but then continued in the twentieth century: the first – referring to the tradition of Grunwald, the concept of the ruthless struggle in connection with the "eternal", supposedly unbreakable, hostility between the two nations, and the second – initiated by the Treaty of Kraków, the concept of compromise solutions, the search for methods of peaceful coexistence, conducive to rapprochement and cultural contacts. The symbol of this second, open attitude is the Prussian Homage"².

The aim of this article is to trace how the visual arts reflected the Prussian Homage of 1525 in the context of the evolution of Polish memory until the beginning of the twentieth century. Visual representations of historical events play a particularly important role in the formation of realms of memory. They constitute 'icons' or associative shortcuts that help to evoke images from the past in the collective consciousness. Furthermore, over time, some outstanding works of art may acquire the characteristics of realms of memory. In such cases, paintings of significant historical events begin to lead an independent

¹ Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Krzyżacy: przekłęci i bohaterowie*, [in:] *Polsko-niemieckie miejsca pamięci*, t. 2: *Wspólne / Oddzielne*, red. Robert TRABA, Hans H. HAHN, we współpracy z Maciej GÓRNY, Kornelia KOŃCZAŁ, Warszawa 2015, pp. 225–248.

² 'Powstały [w polskim społeczeństwie – I.K.] [...], w XIX wieku głównie, ale następnie kontynuowane w XX wieku, dwie postawy: pierwsza – nawiązująca do tradycji Grunwaldu koncepcja bezpardonowej walki w związku z «odwieczną», jakoby nie do przełamania, wrogością obu narodów, i druga – zapoczątkowana przez traktat krakowski koncepcja rozwiązań kompromisowych, poszukiwania metod współżycia pokojowego, sprzyjającego zbliżeniu i kontaktom kulturalnym. Symbolem tej drugiej, otwartej postawy jest właśnie hołd pruski'; Maria BOGUCKA, *Hołd Pruski* (Panorama Dziejów Polski – Fakty i Mity), Warszawa 1985, p. 198.

existence, separate from the historical facts they depict and creating new myths. Thus, the history of the painting itself, or the ways in which its image is used for various political or cultural purposes, can create a realm of memory constituting a kind of associative shorthand that activates multigenerational cultural memory. Therefore, iconography, alongside historiography and literature, can provide important inspiration for public discourse on past events³.

Focusing mainly on iconographic representations of the Prussian Homage of 1525, I will attempt to outline their place in the context of historical debates⁴, as well as in relation to literary works devoted to this subject. I will also point out moments when the events of 1525, as reflected in iconography and literature, went beyond the scope of Polish cultural memory and became part of a broader European discourse.

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The homage paid in Kraków on 10 April 1525 – based on the norms of the *Sachsenspiegel* and the models of feudal homage paid by the princes of the Holy Roman Empire to the emperor⁵, was given a ceremonial and propagandistic setting as presented in the Latin letter by the Bishop of Przemyśl, Andrzej Krzycki to Antonio Puglioni, the legate of Pope Clement VII in Hungary⁶. Krzycki, who was closely associated with the royal court and its chancellery, used the detailed description of this ceremonial act to defend the controversial move by Sigismund I, a staunchly Catholic monarch, to accept homage from the former Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who favoured the Lutheran 'heresy'. Of particular significance in the description is the contrast between Sigismund, who was dressed in the quasi-priestly robes traditionally worn by Christian monarchs during their coronations, and Duke Albrecht, who, kneeling in front of King of Poland, was wearing armour associated with the chivalric ethos and the use of armed force. King's tunic, on the other hand,

³ For more on this topic, see I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja*, pp. 62–63.

⁴ A discussion of recent historical debates can be found in Edward POTKOWSKI, „Hold pruski” w opiniach historyków polskich, *Miscellanea Historico-Archivistica*, t. 23: 2016, pp. 81–91. Cf. Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Relacje polityczne między Rzeczpospolitą a Prusami Książęcymi w latach 1525–1701*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 2009, nr 2, pp. 275–279.

⁵ Stanisław GRODZISKI, *O Holdzie i hołdowaniu*, [in:] Halina BLAK, Stanisław GRODZISKI, *Hold pruski. Obraz Jana Matejki* (Skarbiec Polski), Kraków 1990, p. 59.

⁶ Andreas Cricii [...] ad Ioannem Antonium Pulleonem [...] *de negotio Prutenico epistola* [...], Cracoviae 1525. Latin edition in *Acta Tomiciana. Epistole, legationes, responsa, actiones, res geste serenissimi Principis Sigismundi Primi, Regis Poloniae, Magni Ducis Lithuaniae, Russie, Prussie, Masovie Domini*, t. 7, opr. Stanisław GÓRSKI, Poseniae 1874, p. 249. Polish translation: *Władztwo Polski w Prusiech Zakonnych i Książęcych (1454–1657)*. *Wybór źródeł*, red. Adam VETULANI, Wrocław 1953, p. 99. Cf. Jan PIROŻYŃSKI, *Z dziejów obiegu informacji w Europie XVI wieku. Nowiny z Polski w kolekcji Jana Jakuba Wicka w Zurychu z lat 1560–1587* (Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne, z. 115), Kraków 1995, p. 69.

was intended to resemble the robe that Jesus Christ wore before Herod (Luke 23:11), referencing the Christian belief that monarchical power derives from Christ as King of Kings (Revelation 19:14–16). In a dig at Albrecht in his armour, Krzycki referred to the character Thrasos, a boastful soldier from Terence's popular comedy *The Eunuch*⁷.

In an extensive list of arguments contained in the letter, Krzycki also responded to criticism from abroad, primarily from the imperial court and the Roman Curia. Referring to arguments in the spirit of Christian pacifism⁸ promoted by Erasmus of Rotterdam, Polish diplomacy sought to neutralise critical voices coming from Catholic circles abroad⁹ after the secularisation of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. Krzycki's letter is not only one of the most accurate descriptions of the homage in 1525¹⁰, but also one of the most evocative and vivid literary accounts. This may have influenced later iconographic representations of the homage of Prussia in the early modern period and beyond.

The earliest iconographic representation of the homage of 1525 originates from Royal Prussia in the first half of the sixteenth century. This can be found in the *Chronicle of the Prussians*, which was written with the consent of the Gdańsk city council between 1553 and 1556 by Heinrich Reden¹¹, who probably based his work on the second edition of the chronicle by the Gdańsk official Bartłomiej Wartzmann. Reden's chronicle recounts the history of Prussia from legendary times until 1553 and is illustrated with several dozen colourful watercolours drawn in pen and ink by an unknown artist. The illustrations

⁷ It has been adapted numerous times, including by Hans SACHS, *Eine Komödie von Terenz. Der Ritter Thrassus mit seinen Buhlen*, [s.l.] 1564; see list of Sach's comedies: Hans Sachs, http://www.4-wall.com/authors/authors_s/sachs_hans/sachs_hans.html [accessed online 2 March 2025].

⁸ *Erazm do Zygmunta I (15 maja 1527)*, [in:] ERAZM Z ROTTERDAMU, *Pisma wybrane*, red. Maria CYTOWSKA, tł. eadem, Edwin JĘDRKIEWICZ, Mieczysław MEJOR (Biblioteka Narodowa. Seria 2, nr 231), Wrocław 1992, p. 429.

⁹ Maciej PTASZYŃSKI, *Reformacja w Polsce a dziedzictwo Erazma z Rotterdamu*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 208–215.

¹⁰ For other descriptions, see Andrzej WOJTKOWSKI, *Hold pruski według relacji Maurycego Ferbera, biskupa warmińskiego*, *Zapiski Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, t. 13: 1947, pp. 95–99, 108–110; Janusz MAŁŁEK, *Hold Pruski z 1525 roku w relacji królewskiej*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 2024, nr 2, pp. 241–250, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51974/kmw-191407>.

¹¹ Autograph is kept at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Heinrich RHEDEN, *Kronica Der Preußen. Wie das Landt Erfunden und gebauet ist. Vom Glauben Sitten und Gebrauch der einwohner. Vonn Anfang des Ordens und seiner Regirung, und wie sie das Lanth verloreenn. Anno 1553*, Ms. boruss. fol. 176, p. 186v. See also another illustration depicting King Sigismund I and Duke Albrecht with a ribbon bearing the inscription 'Fride gemacht', *ibid.*, p. 179r. Two copies of this work are stored in the University Library of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (with the first part of the title *Cronica der Preussen*, made in Gdańsk and dated to the 1670s, which then ended up in Königsberg), Ms. 60/III and Ms. 61/III. For other copies, see Ansgar HOLTMANN, *Bild und Text in Heinrich von Redens „Preußischer Chronik“ 1553 – Bewusstsein und*

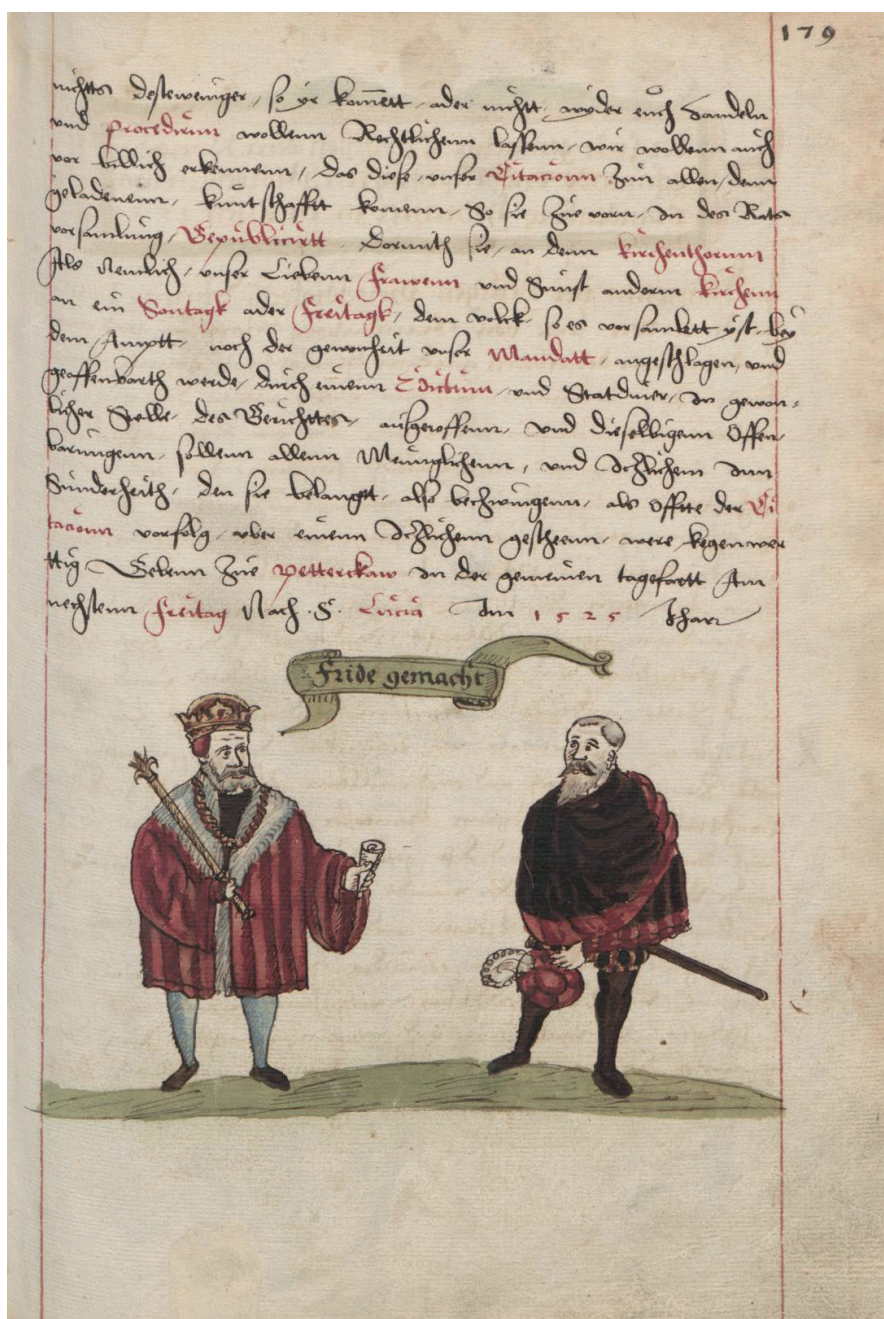


Fig. 1A. Heinrich RHEDEN, *Kronica Der Preußen*. Wie das Landt Erfunden und gebauet ist. Vom Glauben Sitten und Gebrauch der einwoner. Vonn Anfang des Ordens und seiner Regirung, und wie sie das Lanth verlorenn. Anno 1553, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. boruss. fol. 176, p. 179r

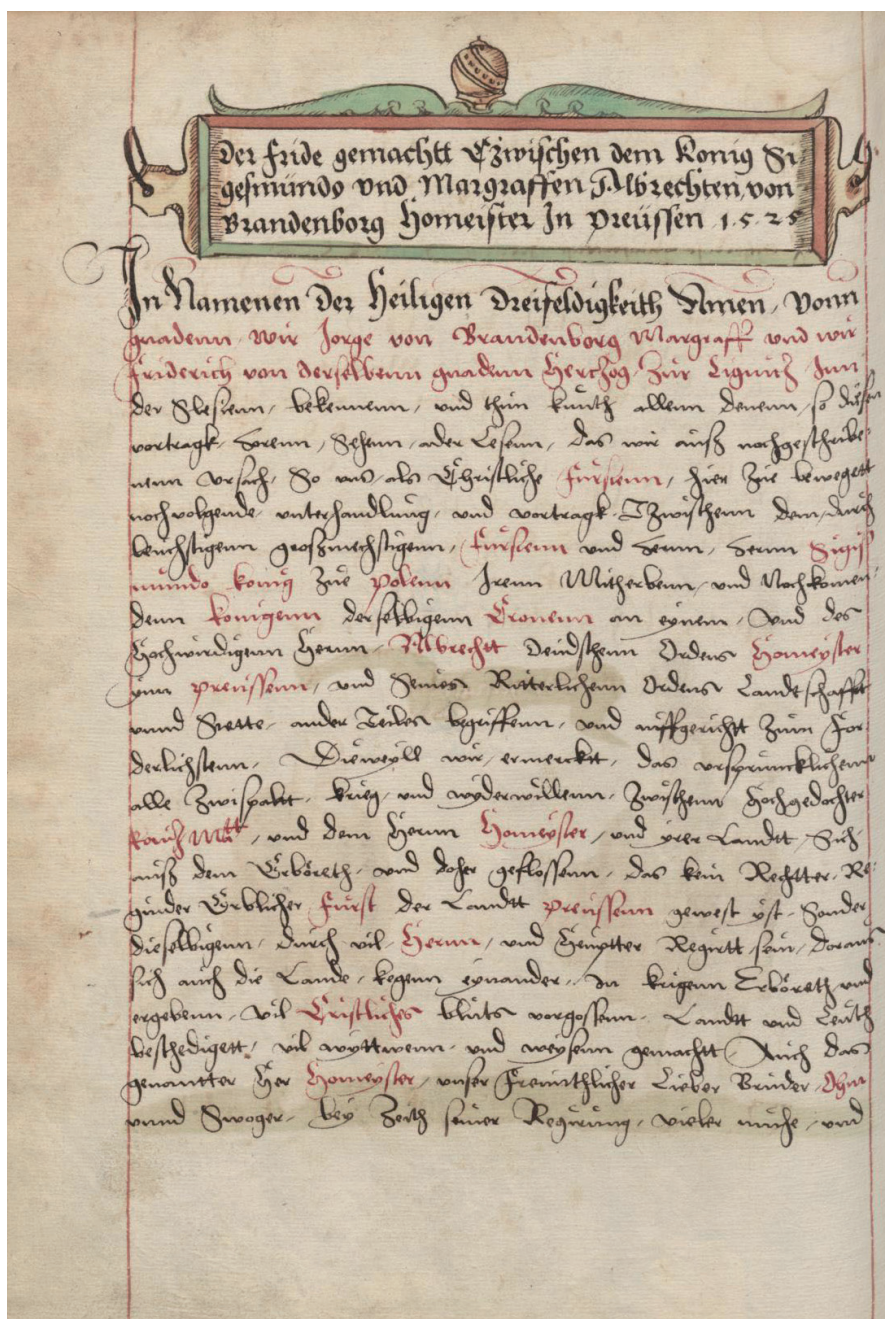


Fig. 1B. Heinrich RHEDEN, *Kronica Der Preußen*. Wie das Landt Erfunden und gebauet ist. Vom Glauben Sitten und Gebrauch der einwoner. Vonn Anfang des Ordens und seiner Regirung, und wie sie das Lanth verlorenn. Anno 1553, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. boruss. fol. 176, p. 80v



Fig. 2. Heinrich RHEDEN, *Kronica Der Preußen*. Wie das Landt Erfunden und gebauet ist. Vom Glauben Sitten und Gebrauch der einwoner. Vonn Anfang des Ordens und seiner Regirung, und wie sie das Lanth verlorenn. Anno 1553, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. boruss. fol. 176, p. 185v

depict important scenes from the history of Polish-Teutonic conflicts, such as the Battle of Grunwald and the Prussian Homage. In the latter, Albrecht Hohenzollern is seen kneeling before Sigismund I, who sits on the throne wearing his coronation robes. The viewer's attention is drawn to the open Gospel on which the new duke of Prussia is taking his oath. The central placement of the Holy Scriptures in the watercolour is not surprising given that it was created in the Lutheran environment of Gdańsk¹². Unlike in Krzycki's description, Albrecht is not holding a banner of homage at the moment of the oath. Instead, the anonymous illustrator has placed it in the right hand of Albrecht's brother, Duke Georg, who is standing behind him on behalf of the Franconian line of the Hohenzollerns, which was admitted to the succession in Ducal Prussia in the event of the extinction of the male Prussian line of the Hohenzollerns. The pennant hanging from the pole features an inaccurate depiction of the coat of arms of the Duchy of Prussia: a black eagle (without a crown on its neck) bearing the letter 'S', the initial of the Polish king and feudal lord of the Prussian dukes. Georg Hohenzollern holds a chain in his left hand that was presented to Albrecht during the ceremony by King Sigismund. This symbol of ducal power can be seen in various portraits of Albrecht, including the famous painting by Lucas Cranach the Younger from 1527, woodcut images¹³, and together with the image of Sigismund I, attached to the chain in a full-length portrait of Albrecht from the parish church in Morąg¹⁴.

Further copies of the handwritten chronicle of Reden, dated to the 1620s, transcribed for the Gdańsk patriciate, found their way to Königsberg in later

Identität in königlich Preußen zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts, [in:] *Mittelalter. Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, <https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/10159> [accessed online 2 March 2025]. On the authorship of the text and illustrations of the so-called Reden Chronicle, see the diverging opinions of Udo ARNOLD, *Studien zur preussischen Historiographie des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Bonn 1967, pp. 66–85; Danielle BUSCHINGER, *Die preußische (bzw. Danziger) Identität im königlichen Preußen, wie sich in der Preussischen Chronik des Heinrich von Reden abzeichnet* (typescript, Manuscripts and Old Prints Department, University Library, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń). See also Andrzej MYCIO, *Heinrich von Reden, Kronika Prus*, <https://www.bu.umk.pl/kronika-prus> [accessed online 2 March 2025], with a list of relevant literature.

¹² See, among others, Sławomir KOŚCIELAK, *Wolność wyznaniowa w Gdańsku w XVI–XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Protestantyzm i protestanci na Pomorzu*, red. Jan ILUK, Danuta MARIAŃSKA, Gdańsk–Koszalin 1997, p. 4.

¹³ See, among others, the woodcut portrait in Johann W. RENTSCH, *Brandenburgischer Ceder-Hein. Worinnen des Durchleuchtigsten Hauses Brandenburg Aufwachs- und Abstammung, auch Helden-Geschichte und Gros-Thaten [...] zusammengetragen und neben zirlichen Kupfer-Bildnißen vorgestellt worden*, Bayreuth 1682, between pp. 841–842.

¹⁴ By Adam Lange (?), oil on canvas, dated c. 1568, in the collection of the Museum of Warmia and Masuria in Olsztyn, inventory no. MNO-390-OMO.

years. As in the autograph, under the heading of the chapter 'How the Grand Master was made a duke and enfeoffed with the land'¹⁵ there are watercolour depictions of the act of homage. Compared to the drawing in the autograph, they differ in rather minor details¹⁶. In all versions of the manuscript, a few pages of text with a detailed, albeit not error-free, description of the act of homage are placed below the illustration. In addition to emphasising the royal 'priestly attire' ('priesterlicher Ornatt'), the description of the royal closed crown corresponds to the image in the illustrations. The chronicler emphasises its specificity, recalling that Sigismund I did not wear 'just any crown, but an imperial diadem' ('nicht eine krone, sunder ein keyserlich diadema'), which Duke of Poland Boleslaw I the Brave received during his alleged coronation from Emperor Otto I [!] during the Congress of Gniezno in the year 1000¹⁷. Similar descriptions emphasising the significance of the closed crown of the

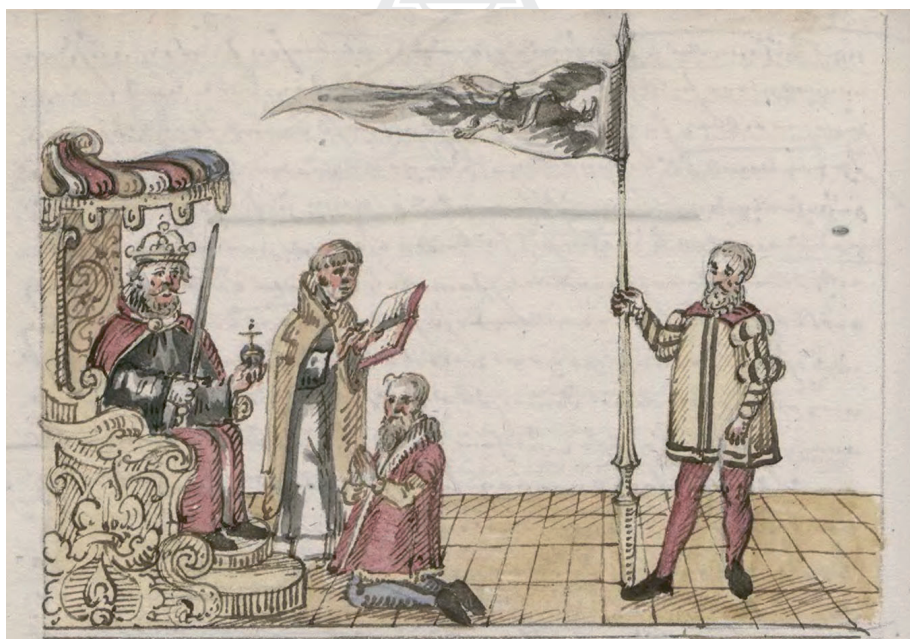


Fig. 3. Heinrich VON REDEN, *Cronica der Preussen* [...] a. 1620,
University Library of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Ms 60/III, p. 226r

¹⁵ In the Berlin autograph, on p. 185r, after the previously included copy of the Treaty of Kraków of 8 April 1525, pp. 179v–185r.

¹⁶ For example, in the watercolour from the Toruń manuscript with the ref. no. Ms. 60/III, the chain of Duke George is missing from his left hand.

¹⁷ In the Berlin autograph, pp. 186r–187v.

Polish king can also be found in other descriptions of the homage of 1525¹⁸. The invented tradition of identifying the contemporary crown of Jagiellon rulers with the diadem of Emperor Otto III placed on the head of Bolesław the Brave and interpreting this gesture as the coronation, was to emphasise the alleged continuity between the royal insignia of 1000 and 1525 and to accentuate the sovereignty of the Polish kings towards both the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy, what was especially relevant in the context of emperor's and pope's claims to supremacy over the Teutonic Order and its state in Prussia.

It is worth noting that alongside the Battle of Grunwald of 1410 and the Second Peace of Toruń of 1466, the Treaty of Kraków and Prussian Homage of 1525 became part of the narrative canon not only in the early modern Polish¹⁹ but also European historiography. This is evidenced by their inclusion in Johann Ludwig Gottfried's *Historical Chronicle or Description of the Most Remarkable History* (first edition 1634), a work reprinted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which formed the basis of Matthäus Merian's monumental publication *Theatrum Europaeum*. The fact that these 1525 events, though not visualised with illustrations, were given relatively much space here can be explained by the recognition of Albrecht Hohenzollern as one of the most important figures in the early phase of the Reformation in the Reich²⁰.

As evidenced by variously worded subchapter titles and references in the margins of printed Old Polish chronicles, the term 'Prussian Homage' itself had not yet entered culture of memory as a term exclusively denoting the 1525 act of homage. Instead, it was used more broadly to refer to subsequent tributes paid by 'Dukes in Prussia'²¹. The earliest of these, modelled on the 1525

¹⁸ Caspar SCHÜTZ, *Historia rerum Prussicarum. Das ist Warhafft vnd eigentliche Beschreibung der Lande Preußen, jrer gelegenheit, namen vnd teilunge, Von den eltesten Königen an, derselben Regierung und Heidnischer Auffopferung, Auch vom Ursprung des Deudschen Ordens [...]*, Leipzig 1599, pp. 500–501.

¹⁹ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd pruski 1525 r. jako miejsce pamięci*, passim.

²⁰ Johann L. GOTTFRIED, *Historische Chronick oder Beschreibung der merckwürdigsten Geschichte. So sich von Anfang der Welt bis auf das Jahr Christi 1619 zugetragen*, Franckfurt am Mayn 1631. I used the 1674 edition: <https://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/content/zoom/1306507> [accessed online 19 May 2025], Table XXVII contains a portrait of Duke Albrecht alongside other supporters of the Lutheran and Calvinist reforms among the figures of the princes of the Holy Roman Empire. A description of the Treaty of Kraków and the homage of 1525 on pp. 714–716; shorter descriptions of the Battle of Grunwald on pp. 644–645; and the Second Treaty of Toruń on p. 699. In his description of the Prussian homage, J. L. Gottfried relied on: Salomon NEUGEBAUER, *Historia Rerum Polonicarum. Concinnata et ad Sigismundum Tertium Poloniae Sveciaeque Regem usque Deducta Libris Decem*, Hanover 1611. Salomon Neugebauer (1611–1654), a historian from Royal Prussia and rector of the Calvinist school in Kock, associated with the Firlej family, his book was published twice in Hanover (1611 and 1618) and was intended mainly for German-speaking readers.

²¹ Kazimierz PIWARSKI, *Hołdy pruskie*, *Roczniki Historyczne*, t. 21: 1953–1954, pp. 152–173.

ceremony, was paid in 1569 at the Sejm in Lublin to Sigismund II Augustus by Albrecht Friedrich, son of Albrecht the Elder, who had died the previous year. The homage of 1569 was commemorated in Jan Kochanowski's poem entitled *The Standard or the Prussian Homage*, which was first published in 1587, after the poet's death, also included some references to the previous homage of 1525²². Thanks to political debates at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries concerning the succession of the Prussian fiefdom by the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns, the memory of this event was also revived, although in this case reference was made exclusively to the provisions of the Treaty of Kraków²³. However, the memory of the act of homage in 1525 itself was also preserved through artistic events that accompanied subsequent ceremonies, which reached foreign countries. An example of this is the last homage paid on 17 October 1641 by the young Elector Friedrich Wilhelm to King Ladislaus IV in the courtyard of the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Two days later, opera and ballet performances specially prepared for the occasion were staged, as reported several months earlier in an announcement of the homage in the Parisian *Gazette de France*. In the opera's prologue, Sigismund I and Albrecht Hohenzollern could be seen floating on a cloud above a veduta of Kraków at the bottom of the stage²⁴. The Warsaw tribute was also commemorated in Königsberg with the publication of two poems referring to past events: a German-language poem by Christoph Wilkow *vel* Wilkau (*Entrance*, 1641) and a Polish-language poem by Christoph Kalденbach (*The Homage-Paying Clio*, 1641)²⁵.

²² Mirosław KOROLKO, *Głosy źródłowe do „Proporca albo Hołdu pruskiego” Jana Kochanowskiego*, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, t. 25: 1980, pp. 165–166; Juliusz A. CHROŚCICKI, *Hołdy lenne a ceremoniał obrad sejmu*, [in:] *Theatrum ceremoniale na dworze książąt i królów polskich. Materiały konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Zamek Królewski na Wawelu i Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dniach 23–25 marca 1998*, red. Mariusz MARKIEWICZ, Ryszard SKOWRON, Kraków 1999, p. 174.

²³ See the reference to the Treaty of Kraków of 8 April 1525 as an 'old agreement' in: *Opis jakim porządkiem nadane zostało lenno Jaśnie Wielmożnemu Panu Janowi Zygmunutowi Margrabiemu i elektorowi brandenburskiemu dnia 16 listopada 1611 r.*, [in:] *Władztwo Polski w Prusiech Zakonnych i Książęcych (1454–1657). Wybór źródeł*, red. Adam VETULANI, Wrocław 1953, p. 233. Cf. *Dyskurs z strony postępku z brandenburskim elektorem o lenno ziemi pruskiej*, [in:] *ibid.*, especially pp. 205–208; *Przemówienie wysłannika szlachty pruskiej przed królem Zygmuntem III Wazą i senatem w Warszawie dnia 11 lutego 1609 r.*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁴ Jacek ŻUKOWSKI, *Ostatni hołd pruski*, <https://wilanow-palac.pl/pasaz-wiedzy/ostatni-hold-pruski> [accessed online 11 February 2025]. See also the description of the last tribute in 1641 in Albrycht S. RADZIWIŁŁ, *Pamiętnik o dziejach w Polsce*, t. 2: 1637–1646, red. i tł. Adam PRZYBOŚ, Roman ŻELEWSKI, Warszawa 1980, pp. 269–274.

²⁵ Axel E. WALTER, *Christoph Wilkau – „ein unbekannter Auctor“ aus dem Umfeld der Kürbischütte. Mit einer Edition unbekannter Gedichte Simon Dachs*, [in:] *Dichtung und Musik im Umkreis der Kürbischütte Königsberger Poeten und Komponisten des 17. Jahrhunderts*, hrsg. v. Peter TENHAEF, Axel E. WALTER (Greifswalder Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, Bd. 22), Berlin 2016, pp. 75–110; Tadeusz ORACKI, *Krzysztof Kalденbach – zapomniany miłośnik języka i kultury*

The transmission of the multi-generational memory of Polish-Teutonic conflicts played a particularly important role in Royal Prussia. These ground-breaking events were not only recorded by Prussian chroniclers, but also commemorated through artistic and propagandist works. One example is the triumphal arch built in Gdańsk for the royal couple's arrival in 1646. Made of wood and light materials, it was used for similar celebrations for several decades. The ideological content displayed on it emphasised the ties between the city and the entire Prussian province with the Polish Crown: Between the columns of the gate were portraits of the 'most glorious Kings of Poland' ('die glorwürdigsten Könige in Pohlen'), including Ladislaus Jagiełło (Jogaila) and his son, Casimir IV and grandson Sigismund I. Beneath the images were Latin sentences and inscriptions, translated into German, dedicated to the most important historical events associated with their reigns: the Battle of Grunwald, the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War in 1454 and the Prussian Homage of 1525²⁶. Of the three dates presented here, the events related to the anti-Teutonic uprising in February 1454 were of the greatest importance to the inhabitants of Gdańsk and Royal Prussia, as they led to the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War. As a result, Royal Prussia was incorporated into the Polish Crown under the Peace of Toruń in 1466. This was commemorated on a large scale in 1654 and 1754 in Gdańsk, Toruń, and Elbląg with publications, literary works, theatrical and musical performances, and special jubilee medals²⁷.

Friedrich Wilhelm's accession to sovereignty in the Duchy of Prussia in 1657, as stipulated in the Treaties of Wehlau and Bydgoszcz, contributed to the revival of memories of the 1525 events, primarily through references to the provisions of the Treaty of Kraków, rather than to the homage that marked its ceremonial culmination. In the early 1660s, the opposition in Ducal Prussia referred to the provisions of the 1525 treaty when protesting against the severance of feudal dependence on the Polish Crown²⁸. The evolving political

polskiej (przyczynek do dziejów polskiej literatury w Królewcu w XVII wieku), Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie, 1965, nr 2, pp. 185–196.

²⁶ Jacek ŻUKOWSKI, *Architektura okazjonalna na uroczystości zaślubin i koronację Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi w roku 1646*, *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, t. 73: 2011, nr 1–2, pp. 45–92, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.34475.6>.

²⁷ Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Die Kreuzritter als Metapher. Das Gedenken an den Dreizehnjährigen Krieg anlässlich der Jubiläen für die Inkorporation Königlich Preußens in das Königreich Polen / Krzyżacy jako metafora. Pamięć o wojnie 13-letniej w obchodach jubileuszy inkorporacji Prus Królewskich do Korony Polskiej*, [in:] *Die gänzliche Ergebung der Lande Preußen an Polen / Całkowite poddanie ziem pruskich na rzecz Polski* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungsgeschichte in der Frühen Neuzeit und im 19. Jahrhundert, Bd. 3), hrsg. v. idem, Berlin–Warszawa 2023, pp. 75–211.

²⁸ *Protest stanów Prus Książęcych przeciw oderwaniu Księstwa od Korony*, [in:] *Władztwo Polski w Prusiech Zakonnych i Książęcych (1454–1657). Wybór źródeł*, red. Adam VETULANI,

landscape and the shifting relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Duchy of Prussia also influenced the application of the term 'Prussian Homage', which could be used to describe the oaths of fealty that the Prussian Estates offered to successive dukes 'in Prussia' after 1663.

In *Old and New Prussia*, a 1684 work by Christoph Hartknoch, a professor at the Academic Gymnasium in Toruń who came from Ducal Prussia, a concise description of the 1525 homage was accompanied by a reference in the margin: 'The oath of the prince in Prussia.' Alongside the full text of the oath of allegiance and the description of the coat of arms of the Duchy of Prussia granted by Sigismund Jagiellon in Hartknoch's narrative, the gesture of the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order laying down his white cloak with a black cross plays a symbolic role as a harbinger of a new era in the history of Prussia: 'and thus he completely laid down his monastic habit, with the cross and coat of arms, and took up the reins of government in the secular duchy'²⁹. The chronicler devoted more space to the homage paid by Albrecht Friedrich in 1569, drawing attention to the attendance of Brandenburg electors' envoys on this occasion, who had been admitted to the succession in Ducal Prussia in 1563³⁰.

Further on, an engraving captioned 'Prussian Homage' ('Preussische Huldigung')³¹ depicted the homage paid by the Prussian Estates to Friedrich Wilhelm in the presence of Polish envoys in Königsberg on 18 October 1663. In a short commentary on this event, the author stated that, during the ceremony, the Polish delegation officially conveyed: 'absolute dominion, or what is known as sovereignty' ('absolutum dominium oder wie mans nennet Souverenität')³².

Hartknoch provided a more detailed description of the homage of the Prussian Estates to Friedrich Wilhelm as sovereign duke of Prussia in 1663 in Königsberg in his earlier Latin work *The Polish Republic Illustrated in Two*

Wrocław 1953, p. 251. On the reactions by Polish publicists, see also Andrzej KAMIEŃSKI, *Polska a Brandenburgia-Prusy w drugiej połowie XVII wieku. Dzieje polityczne*, Poznań 2002, p. 133.

²⁹ 'und damit des Ordens Kleid, Creutz und Wapen ganz abgelegt und also die Regierung dieses weltlichen Fürstenthums angetreten'; Christoph HARTKNOCH, *Alt- und Neues Preussen*, Franckfurt am Main–Leipzig 1684, p. 326.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 332–333. See also the description of the homage paid by Elector John Sigismund in 1611, with an extensive discussion of the succession in the Prussian fiefdom by the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns and a reference to the homage paid in 1525, *ibid.*, p. 345.

³¹ Ibid., insert between pp. 362–363. This is an engraving by Johann Gottfried Bartsch based on a drawing by Christoph Gercke in the lower part, containing descriptions of the locations of individual persons (including Polish legates), which are missing in the above-mentioned edition of 1684. Cf. the copy kept at the Königsberg Museum in Duisburg: https://www.bildarchiv-ostpreussen.de/cgi-bin/bildarchiv/suche/show_foto.cgi?lang=deutsch&id=106762&showmenu=1&size=normal [accessed online 2 March 2025].

³² Ch. HARTKNOCH, *Alt- und Neues Preussen*, p. 362.



Fig. 4. Christoph HARTKNOCH, *Alt- und neues Preussen*, Franckfurt am Main–Leipzig 1684, after p. 362

Books (first edition 1678). In addition to recalling the presence of Polish legates at the ceremony, the author mentions the minting of a commemorative coin on the occasion of the homage of 1663, with the image of Friedrich Wilhelm on the obverse and the Latin inscription on the reverse: 'Homage due to the Supreme Lord of Prussia, Frederick William, Prince-Elector of Brandenburg' ('Supremo Prussiae Domino Friderico Wilhelmo Principi Elect. Brandeb. homagium praest')³³. The question remains whether coins with the same image were distributed among the crowd gathered at the homage ceremony, as depicted in the lower left corner of the copperplate engraving in Hartknoch's previous work. There is no doubt, however, that from the author's perspective, it was not the homage of 1525, but that of 1663 that was referred to as the 'Prussian Homage' and treated as a turning point in the history of Prussia and a ceremonial sealing of the Wehlau-Bydgoszcz agreement. The event of 1663 had a wider resonance in Europe and was extensively recalled in *Theatrum Europaeum* in the description of the arrival of Polish royal commissioners for the homage of the Prussian Estates in Königsberg³⁴. Later, in the politics and propaganda of the Brandenburg-Prussian Hohenzollerns, the attainment of sovereignty in Ducal Prussia in 1657 was to legitimise Prince-Elector Friedrich III's coronation as King 'in Prussia' Friedrich I in Königsberg in 1701³⁵.

Plans for the Friedrich's coronation attracted public attention in the Reich and abroad. This was particularly significant given the diplomatic counterattack by the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in Mergentheim, which still claimed the territory of Teutonic Prussia and did not recognise the legality of the Treaty of Kraków or the Treaties of Wehlau and Bydgoszcz. Efforts initiated by the Order as early as 1695 at the Habsburg court to undermine the Hohenzollerns' sovereignty in Prussia gained momentum after the 1701 coronation, and were supported from the papacy and some Catholic princes of the Reich. Authors close to Friedrich I reminded of the atrocities committed by the Teutonic Order during the wars with Poland. They condemned its tyrannical rule and the dissolute lifestyle of its members. This resulted in the Order losing power and Teutonic Prussia being secularised in 1525. In this context, reminding the public in Germany and Europe about the Prussian Homage of 1525

³³ Christoph HARTKNOCH, *Respublica Polonica Duobus Libris illustrate*, Jenae 1678, p. 185. Cf. *ibid.*, for a brief reminder of the homages of 1525 and 1611.

³⁴ Martin MEYER, *Irenico-Polemographiae Continuatio II. Das ist: Der Historisch-fortgeführten Friedens- und Kriegs-Beschreibung Dritter- Oder deß Theatri Europaei Neundter Theil*, Frankfurt am Main 1672, p. 996.

³⁵ Dariusz MAKIŁŁA, *Między Welawą a Królewcem 1657–1701. Geneza Królestwa w Prusach (Königtum in Preußen). Studium historyczno-prawne* (Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu. Studia Iuridica, t. 20, z. 3), Toruń 1998, pp. 103–149.

became increasingly important³⁶. This explains why the German author Andreas Lazarus von Imhof devoted a short subchapter to this event in his work *Newly Opened Historical Picture Gallery*, which was published in Nuremberg at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and later reprinted and expanded many times. This multi-volume outline of world history was written at the request of the Austrian Archduke and future Emperor, Joseph I, and was accompanied by over nine hundred copperplate illustrations. Translated into French and Italian (with different illustrations), it became a favourite reading of the educated elite in Europe during the early Enlightenment period. Imhof refers to the Polish-Teutonic conflicts twice, in passages illustrated by an anonymous engraver. The first reference was in his description of the Battle of Grunwald in 1410³⁷, and the second was in his concise account of the events in Kraków in 1525. Imhof attributed the initiative to transform the Teutonic Order into a secular vassal duchy to King Sigismund I, who wanted to put an end to the constant wars. He also emphasised the lack of sufficient support for Albrecht as Grand Master from Emperor Charles V, and noted that the Teutonic Order had already become a Polish 'fiefdom' (*Lehen*)³⁸ in 1466. The illustration inserted into the text shows several figures, wearing costumes resembling traditional Polish noble costume (*kontusz*), who gathered in interiors resembling royal chambers. Apart from the female figure standing next to the throne (presumably Queen Bona), the figures in armour behind the wall engaged in heated discussion are particularly noteworthy. They are presumed to be relatives of Albrecht, although it is unclear whether they are from the Franconian or Brandenburg line of the Hohenzollerns. These figures may also have been intended to highlight the controversy that the Treaty of Kraków aroused in public opinion. Regardless of interpretation, the presence of this scene in the *Newly Opened Historical Picture Gallery* highlights the significance of an event that occurred over 170 years ago and still played a pivotal role in the geopolitical transformation of Europe at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – a period during which the first edition of Imhof's renowned work was published.

³⁶ Andrzej KAMIEŃSKI, *Zakon Krzyżacki wobec koronacji elektora brandenburskiego Fryderyka III na króla w Prusach*, *Roczniki Historyczne*, t. 83: 2017, p. 262, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12775/RH.2017.10>.

³⁷ For a more detailed analysis, see I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja*, p. 74.

³⁸ Andreas L. VON IMHOF, *Neu-eröffneter Historischer Bilder-Saal, Das ist: Kurtze, deutliche und unpassionirte Beschreibung Der Historiae universalis, Von Anfang der Welt biß auf unsere Zeiten [...]: in ordentliche und [...]*, Bd. 4, Nürnberg 1699, pp. 383–384.

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Dritter Periodus I. Capitel.

S. XVI. len er Polen vor seinen Lehen-Herrn nicht erkennen wollen / mit ersagter Cron sich in einen Krieg eingelassen. Weil er nun denselben auszuführen zu schwach war / indeme die Hülffe Kaysers Caroli V. der anderwärtig allzu viel zu thun hatte / auf die Albertus sich verlassen / ausblieb / und der damalige König in Polen Sigismundus viel spürte / daß / so lang Preussen in den Händen des damals noch zimlich mächtigen Teutschen Ordens bliebe / Polen derentwillen nie in Ruhe bleiben würde / so offerirte König Sigismundus den Theil / den der Teutsche Orden annoch an Preussen hatte / dem Groß-Meister Marggraf Alberto / und seinen Brüdern nach Expiration und Aussterbung seiner Linie / erblich / und als ein weltliches Herzogthum zu verlehnen / welches dieser / der ohne das schon zu dem Lutheranismus inclinirte und geneigt war / auch willig annahm /



den Ordens-Mantel und das Ordens-Creuz ablegte / das Lehen empfing / und also aus einem Groß-Meister / der erste Herzog von Preussen ward / allwo er die Evangelische Religion auch gleich einführte. Bey dem Reich und an dem Kaysers Hof war man zwar ob dieser Mutation übel zu sprechen / und ward Albertus / auf Anruffen der

Fig. 5. Andreas L. VON IMHOFF, *Neu-eröffneter historischer Bilder-Saal, Das ist: Kurtze, deutliche und unpassionirte Beschreibung Der Historiae universalis, Von Anfang der Welt biss auf unsere Zeiten [...]: in ordentliche und [...]*, Bd. 4, Nürnberg 1699, p. 384

Of the three key realms of memory associated with the history of Polish-Teutonic conflicts, the most vivid in early modern Poland was the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War in 1454. This event became a founding myth of Royal Prussia (Polish Prussia), which was an autonomous province of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the eighteenth century, the significance of this event was reinterpreted in the context of the centralising policies of the kings from the Wettin dynasty and Stanislaus II Augustus Poniatowski, who sought to limit Prussian particularism³⁹. Conversely, the memory of the victory at Grunwald in 1410 began to fade from the collective memory due to successive Polish-Lithuanian military victories in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries⁴⁰. However, changes on the international stage in the eighteenth century, caused by the rise of the Kingdom of Prussia and its aggressive policy towards the weakened Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, influenced the revised Polish interpretation of the Treaty of Kraków and the Prussian Homage of 1525, which began to be considered from the perspective of later events: the agreement on the succession of the Prussian fiefdom by the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns in 1611; the Wehlau-Bydgoszcz Treaties of 1657; and the long-term consequences of the creation of the Kingdom of Prussia in 1701.

In his *History of Polish Princes and Kings*, first published in 1767 and later reprinted and expanded many times, Teodor Waga stated that Sigismund I's 1525 policy was considered 'a mistake in politics for the future'. However, the author justified this by stating that 'establishing a related house united the interests of Prussia with those of Poland' and that the king could not have foreseen the rise of the Brandenburg's line of the Hohenzollerns⁴¹. Similar apologetic opinions, which treated the Treaty of Kraków of 1525 as a victorious culmination of long-lasting struggle against the Teutonic Order while criticising next Polish-Lithuanian rulers for allowing the creation of the Brandenburg-Prussian

³⁹ Jerzy DYGAŁA, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich u schyłku ich związku z Rzeczpospolitą w XVIII wieku. Tendencje unifikacyjne a partykularyzm* (Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu, R. 81, z. 3), Warszawa-Poznań 1984. Cf., in the context of the jubilee celebrations in 1754, I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Krzyżacy jako metafora*, pp. 190–195.

⁴⁰ On the evolution of the Grunwald Tradition in the premodern era, see Marek A. JANICKI, *Grunwald w literaturze polskiej (średniowiecze i nowożytność)*, [in:] *Na znak świętego zwycięstwa. W sześćsetną rocznicę bitwy pod Grunwaldem. Katalog wystawy, 15 lipca – 30 września 2010, Zamek Królewski na Wawelu*, t. 1: *Studia*, red. Dariusz NOWACKI, Kraków 2010, pp. 89–152; Józef J. JANICKI, *Liturgiczne obchody święta Rozesłania Apostołów upamiętnieniem zwycięstwa nad Krzyżakami*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 41–50; Marek WALCZAK, *Ikonografia bitwy pod Grunwaldem (nowożytność)*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 269–300.

⁴¹ 'błąd w polityce w dalsze czasy'; Teodor WAGA, *Historia książąt i królów polskich krótko zebrana [...]*, Poznań 1859, pp. 200–201.

state, were expressed by other authors of popular histories of Poland during the Enlightenment and the beginnings of Romanticism⁴².

It is in this context that we should interpret the first monumental representation of this theme in historical painting: Marcello Bacciarelli's *The Prussian Homage* (1785/1786). The original French title (*L'investiture de Prusse*), along with the titles of the other works in the series painted after the First Partition of Poland-Lithuania in 1772, which presented glorious events in Polish history, were given by King Stanislaus Augustus himself. He also created the concept for the decoration of the Knights' Hall of the Royal Castle, where these canvases were displayed. The inclusion of the Prussian Homage in this pantheon of national history was in line with the historical policy of the last king of Poland⁴³. Rather than depicting the victory at Grunwald or other episodes of the conflict with the Teutonic Order, the king chose to celebrate the triumph of diplomatic compromise. Jan Paweł Woronicz, a Catholic priest, poet and political activist involved in the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm (1788–1792), interpreted this as the monarch's intention. In his 1786 poem *New Rooms in the Royal Castle, Featuring Paintings of Famous Polish Deeds, Portraits and Busts of Prominent Poles*, he stressed the ambiguous message of Bacciarelli's canvas, stating: 'It is easier to defeat the Poles with an homage than with a sword' ('Że Lachom łatwiej hołdem niżli kordem sprostać'). A few lines later, the poet accused the next Hohenzollerns of breaking their feudal oath. He depicted the pensive expression on the face of Bishop Piotr Tomicki, standing by the royal throne and looking into the future: 'You, Tomicki, standing by the throne [...] what are you reading in the future?' ('Ty, Tomicki, przy tronie stojąc [...], coś w przyszłości czytasz'), expressing his faith in the possibility of overthrowing the provisions of the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the recovery of Polish Prussia, which had been seized by the Kingdom of Prussia in 1772⁴⁴.

⁴² Wit GÓRCZYŃSKI, Andrzej STĘPNIK, *Obraz stosunków polsko-krzyżackich i polsko-niemieckich w podręcznikach historii Polski doby oświecenia*, [in:] *Tradycja grunwaldzka. Praca zbiorowa*, red. Jerzy MATERNICKI (Prace Sekcji Historii Politycznej Polski Odrodzonej, t. 21), Warszawa 1989, pp. 37–76. On these topics in the context of the glorification of the Jagiellonian era, especially the reign of King Sigismund I, in Polish cultural memory during the Enlightenment, see Kazimierz BARTKIEWICZ, *Obraz dziejów ojczystych w świadomości historycznej w Polsce doby oświecenia*, Poznań 1979, pp. 119–125.

⁴³ See Marceli Bacciarelli. *Życie – twórczość – dzieła*, cz. 2, opr. Alina CHYCZEWSKA, Poznań – Warszawa 1970, no. 129, p. 79.

⁴⁴ Jan P. WORONICZ, *Na pokoje nowe w Zamku Królewskim obrazami sławniejszych czynów polskich, portretami i biustami znakomitych Polaków ozdobione*, [in:] idem, *Pisma wybrane*, opr. Małgorzata NESTERUK, Zofia REJMAN (Biblioteka Narodowa. Seria 1, nr 299), Warszawa 1993, pp. 89–90.

In keeping with the manner of the era, the characters depicted by Bacciarelli wear modernised clothing, and the similarity of some of the faces on the canvas (e.g. the page and Duke Georg Hohenzollern) is striking, as they were probably modelled on the same person⁴⁵. However, the painting's double



Fig. 6. Marcello BACCIARELLI, *Hołd pruski*, 1808,
Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum, no. ZKW/3415

⁴⁵ Alina CHYCZEWSKA, *Marcello Bacciarelli 1731–1818*, Wrocław 1973, p. 86.

message was significant. Firstly, it was a reference *à rebours* to the contemporary situation, reminding viewers that the Hohenzollerns – who in 1772 due to aggressive policy of King Fiedrich the Great annexed most of Royal Prussia with the exception of Gdańsk and Toruń – had once been forced to pay humiliating homage and recognise the sovereignty of the Polish Crown. Secondly, it was a tribute to compromise and peaceful solutions. Placed in the Knights' Hall of the Royal Castle, Bacciarelli's work may also have been intended to prepare public opinion for the shift in foreign policy that took place during the Four-Year Sejm. This policy assumed that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, effectively under Russian protection, would form an alliance with Prussia. This would break up the existing Prussian-Russian alliance and enable the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to gain independence. Initially, Stanislaus Augustus, who was seeking support for internal reforms in Russia, was not in favour of this idea. The alliance with Prussia was finally concluded in March 1790. However, Prussia, which in exchange wanted to obtain Gdańsk and Toruń from Poland, was not acting selflessly. The patriotic forces in Poland-Lithuania, seeking to carry out domestic political reforms that would also strengthen the international position of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were willing to agree to this. Ultimately, it was decided that the possible cession of both cities would be regulated by a renewed Polish-Prussian trade treaty. However, this treaty was never concluded⁴⁶. The Hohenzollerns returned to their policy of alliances with Austria and Russia, which soon resulted in Poland disappearing from the map of Europe for the next 123 years.

Over the next century and a half, the Teutonic Knights began to be cast as national heroes by Germans and anti-heroes by Poles. In the nineteenth century, the Polish 'black legend' of the Teutonic Order as sinister, aggressive and fundamentally anti-Polish force as well as prefiguration of contemporary modern 'Prussianism' and or 'Germanness' in general, finally took shape. Concurrently, a 'white legend' of the Teutonic Order emerged in Prussian-German culture of memory, in contrast to the early modern era when, as a Catholic institution, it was viewed with hostility in Protestant Prussian duchies. Already from the eighteenth century onwards, the secularisation of the Teutonic Order

⁴⁶ See, among others, Szymon ASKENAZY, *Przymierze polsko-pruskie*, Warszawa 1918; Józef DUTKIEWICZ, *Prusy a Polska w dobie Sejmu Czteroletniego. W świetle korespondencji dyplomatycznej pruskiej*, *Przegląd Historyczny*, t. 33: 1936, z. 1, pp. 59–88; Łukasz KĄDZIELA, *Narodziny Konstytucji 3 maja*, Warszawa 1991, p. 34. On the new trade treaty between Prussia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, see recently Jacek WIJACZKA, Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Handelsbeziehungen Polen-Litauens mit dem Königreich Preußen von der Ersten bis zur Zweiten Teilung (1772–1792)*, *Nordost Archiv*, Bd. 33: 2024, pp. 61–72.

in Prussia in 1525 and Albrecht's conversion to Lutheranism begun to be considered one of the founding myths of the Kingdom of Prussia⁴⁷.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as the influence of the 'Lesser Germany' concept grew and the Kingdom of Prussia played a major role in the process of German unification, the Knights of the Teutonic Order were increasingly perceived in Germany as *Kulturträger* – pioneers of Western European civilisation in supposedly backward Eastern European and Slavic areas. Meanwhile, in partitioned Poland, they were seen as the vanguard of the German 'push eastwards' (*Drang nach Osten*)⁴⁸. The modern 'black and white legend' of the Teutonic Order was certainly influenced by the cultural processes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the formation of modern nation states and the rise of nationalism, as well as the development of modern historiography and the emergence of nineteenth-century historicism in the visual arts, architecture and literature⁴⁹.

Concurrently, the victories at Grunwald in 1410 and the Prussian Homage in 1525 became symbols of alternative resolutions to the conflict with Germany: military confrontation or diplomatic compromise. In both Polish historiography and historical painting, an alternative narrative emerged, raising questions and doubts: was the Prussian Homage a political mistake? Would it not have been better to completely eliminate the Teutonic Order in Prussia and incorporate its territory into the Kingdom of Poland? If this solution had been adopted, would the partitions of Poland-Lithuania in the eighteenth century have taken place⁵⁰?

However, in the first half of the nineteenth century Polish historiography and literature offered rather balanced assessments of the homage of 1525, in line with the views expressed in *Historical Songs* (1816) by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, which became extremely popular among Poles during the period of the partitions thanks in part to the musical works it featured by renowned Polish composers⁵¹. Niemcewicz mentioned the event of 1525, adding only that King

⁴⁷ Wolfgang WIPPERMANN, *Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie. Das Bild des Deutschen Ordens in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung und Publizistik* (Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, Bd. 24; Publikationen zur Geschichte der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen, Bd. 2), Berlin 1979, pp. 107–110.

⁴⁸ Leszek BELZYŃ, *Drang nach Osten. Cywilizacja z Zachodu?*, [in:] *Polsko-niemieckie miejsca pamięci*, t. 1: *Wspólne / Oddzielne*, red. Robert TRABA, Hans H. HAHN, we współpracy z Maciejem GÓRNY, Kornelia KOŃCZAŁ, Warszawa 2015, pp. 207–224.

⁴⁹ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Krzyżacy: przekłęci i bohaterowie*, pp. 234–236.

⁵⁰ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd pruski*, pp. 192.

⁵¹ Julian U. NIEMCEWICZ, *Śpiewy historyczne. Z muzyką i rycinami*, Warszawa 1816. See also Anna MATUSIAK, *Historia w dziewiętnastowiecznym wydaniu – edytorskie losy „Śpiewów historycznych” Juliana Ursyna Niemcewicza*, *Sztuka Edycji*, t. 1: 2011, nr 1, pp. 27–36, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12775/SE.2011.004>.

Sigismund I could have not anticipated the subsequent course of events or the 'greedy' policy of future generations of the Hohenzollerns towards Poland⁵². More extensive passages were devoted to the homage of 1569 paid by the young Duke of Prussia Albrecht Friedrich⁵³. This event was illustrated by an engraving by the Saxon artist Johann Gottfried Frenzel⁵⁴. Renowned Polish historians of that time also expressed similar restrained opinions about the homage of 1525⁵⁵.



Fig. 7. Johann G. FRENZEL, *Książę Pruski oddaie Hołd Zygmuntowi Augustowi*, [in:] Julian U. NIEMCEWICZ, *Śpiewy historyczne. Z muzyką i rycinami*, Warszawa 1816, p. 204

⁵² J. U. NIEMCEWICZ, op.cit., pp. 167, 177–178.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 205, 213.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁵ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd pruski*, pp. 194–195.

A real breakthrough in shaping the Polish 'black legend' of the Teutonic Order, as well as the three key realms of memory associated with it, took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was the result of two processes: the rise of patriotic sentiment before and during the January Uprising of 1863–1864; and, more importantly, a change in the attitude of Poles towards the Germans after the unification of the Reich in 1871, under the influence of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* policy (1871–1878), which aimed to limit the influence of the Catholic Church in the German Reich and thus turned against Poles under the Prussian rule, who were predominantly Catholic.

One of the first signs of renewed interest in the Prussian Homage of 1525 in Polish art was a modest drawing published on the event's anniversary in 1865 by Aleksander Lesser, a popular Warsaw-based artist of Jewish origin who had studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden and Munich. Over the next twenty years, the drawing was reproduced in popular magazines⁵⁶. Despite a certain freedom in the composition of the scene, it is characterised by a historicising approach: Lesser tried to remain faithful to the details of the era. This representation was followed by three monumental, multi-format paintings which are considered key works of the early phase⁵⁷ of the discourse on the Teutonic Order in Polish historical painting from the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century: Marian Jaroczyński's *The Second Treaty of Toruń* (1873), Jan Matejko's *The Battle of Grunwald* (1878) and *Prussian Homage* (1882). Alongside historiography and literature, these works shaped the collective memory and historical imagination of subsequent generations of Poles with regard to key moments in the Polish-Teutonic struggle. This is particularly true of Matejko, Poland's most famous historical painter and the 'architect' of its modern cultural memory.

Marian Jaroczyński, born in Toruń under the Prussian rule and later student of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts, on his painting presented the ceremony marking the conclusion of the Second Peace of Toruń in 1466, which ended the Thirteen Years' War. The idea was probably conceived in 1866, the 400th anniversary of the treaty which, according to Polish interpretations, established Teutonic Prussia's vassal status towards the Polish Crown. However, Jaroczyński created his work in 1870–1873, during the period of German unification following the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871). It is in this context that its significance should be understood. His painting quickly gained popu-

⁵⁶ See painting reproduction in the magazine *Kłosy*, t. 39: 1884, nr 1007, pp. 256–257. Lesser was also the author of numerous drawings of knights and Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order, see <https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/artysci/55066?page=2> [accessed online 2 March 2025]. See also banners captured at Grunwald according to *Banderia Pruthenorum* by Jan Długosz: <https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/artysci/55066?page=24> [accessed online 2 March 2025].

⁵⁷ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja*, pp. 86–88.

larity, and as early as 1873 it was exhibited alongside Matejko's paintings at the General Exhibition in Vienna. It was later disseminated on mass-produced postcards. Jaroczyński employed the historical masking technique typical of nineteenth-century historicism. Two figures among the Polish and Teutonic dignitaries attract attention: the Voivode of Inowrocław, Jan of Kościelec, who bears the features of the painter himself; and the Grand Hospitaller of the Order, Henryk Reuss von Plauen, who resembles Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the architect of German unification⁵⁸.



Fig. 8. Aleksander LESSER, *Hołd pruski*, *Kłosy*, t. 39: 1884, nr 1007, p. 256/257

Jaroczyński's *The Second Treaty of Toruń* was painted several years before Jan Matejko's monumental works depicting the most significant chapters of the Polish-Teutonic conflicts. Matejko, a painter from Kraków, worked on *The Battle of Grunwald* between 1872 and 1878, immediately after the unification

⁵⁸ Anna KROPLEWSKA-GAJEWSKA, *Galeria Malarstwa i Rzeźby Polskiej od końca XVIII do początku XXI wieku w Muzeum Okręgowym w Toruniu. Katalog*, Toruń 2018, pp. 23, 69–70. See also Piotr BIRECKI, *Czy Marian Jaroczyński, twórca II Traktatu Toruńskiego, to drugi Matejko?*, [in:] *Toruń miastem pokoju. II pokój toruński*, red. Piotr OLIŃSKI, Waldemar ROZYNKOWSKI, Toruń 2016, pp. 197–216.

of Germany and during the *Kulturkampf*. It is possible that the works of both Jaroczyński and Matejko were, at least indirectly, a reaction to another project that was crucial for German cultural memory of the Teutonic Order: the nineteenth-century reconstruction of the medieval castle of the Teutonic Grand Masters in Marienburg (present-day Malbork, Poland). As an imperial residence after 1871, the castle rose to the rank of the 'Prussian Westminster'. The reconstruction of Marienburg Castle, which begun in 1816 and lasted over one hundred years, was one of the most significant historical policy projects undertaken by the Hohenzollerns during the nineteenth century⁵⁹.

Contrary to historical reality, the interior design of the reconstructed Marienburg Castle featured neo-Gothic elements, including historicist stained glass windows, frescoes and paintings depicting Teutonic Knights in fictional contexts. This was in keeping with the spirit of historicism prevailing at the time⁶⁰. Important anniversary celebrations were organised in the castle by the Prussian authorities during the reconstruction. In 1872, they celebrated the centenary of the annexation of former Polish Prussia to the Kingdom of Prussia, which resulted in the creation of the province of West Prussia. The ceremony was attended by Emperor Wilhelm I, who laid the foundation stone for a monument to Frederick the Great designed by the renowned German sculptor Rudolf Siemering, which was unveiled in 1877. This statue was perceived by Poles as depicting the main inspirer of the First Partition and the continuator of the aggressive policy towards Poland initiated by the Teutonic Knights. The statue of Frederick the Great⁶¹ was placed on top of a neo-Gothic pedestal and surrounded by figures of four Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order: Hermann von Salza, Siegfried von Feuchtwangen and Winrich von Kniprode, as well as Albrecht von Hohenzollern, the last Grand Master and the first Protestant ruler of Ducal Prussia. Albrecht von Hohenzollern was particularly prominent in Prussian Evangelical culture of remembrance, thanks in part to publications by such prominent historians as Heinrich von Treitschke who propagated

⁵⁹ See Hartmut BOOCKMANN, *Das ehemalige Deutschordensschloss Marienburg 1772–1945*, [in:] *Geschichtswissenschaft und Vereinswesen im 19. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur Geschichte historischer Forschung in Deutschland* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte, Bd. 1), Göttingen 1972, pp. 99–162. Cf. Tomasz TORBUS, *Odbudowa Malborka 1817–1944 na rezydencję cesarską a ówczesne zasady konserwatorskie*, [in:] idem, *Rekonstrukcje, dekonstrukcje, (nad)interpretacje. Studia o losach architektury środkowoeuropejskich miast i rezydencji w aspekcie politycznym (XIX–XXI wiek)*, Gdańsk 2019, pp. 39–48.

⁶⁰ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Krzyżacy: przekłeci i bohaterowie*, p. 240.

⁶¹ See the extensive description in *800 Jahre Deutscher Orden. Ausstellung des Germanischen Nationalmuseums Nürnberg in Zusammenarbeit mit der Internationalen Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens*, hrsg. v. Udo ARNOLD (Ausstellungskatalog der Germanischen Nationalmuseums), Gütersloh–München 1990, pp. 456–458.

the Borussian myth and the idea the German unification by Prussia⁶². A contemporary Polish visitor to Marienburg Castle interpreted the monument in accordance with the intentions of its creator, writing about the figures on the pedestal: 'Each of them worked on a piece of art that was crowned by Frederick, who rightfully stands on their shoulders on this monument because he relied on their work, and they went down in history'⁶³. Matejko may have seen this monument during his study visit that led him from Kraków in the Austrian Partition, where he spent most of his life, to West Prussia in 1877⁶⁴.

The main message of Matejko's monumental depiction of the Battle of Grunwald attracted the attention of his contemporaries: a vision of the triumph of Poland-Lithuania over Teutonic (i.e. Prussian and German) militarism and expansionism. This is represented by two figures depicted in contrasting ways in the foreground of the painting⁶⁵: The Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas is presented as an orant but also in a militant pose – he raises a sword and shield in a gesture that is part prayer and part battle cry. In contrast, the Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen falls from his horse under the blows of infantrymen representing the Polish people. As in his other paintings, Matejko resorted to historical masks and allusions that allowed him to relate the distant past to the contemporary world around him. One example is the face of Marquard von Salzbach, the Teutonic Commander of Brandenburg in Prussia (present-day Ushakovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russian Federation), located in the bottom right corner of the painting. After removing the beard, it resembled the face of Otto von Bismarck⁶⁶, Chancellor of the German Empire. Matejko employed

⁶² Heinrich von TREITSCHKE, *Das deutsche Ordensland Preußen*, Leipzig 1862, pp. 82–84.

⁶³ 'Każdy z nich pracował nad dziełem, które uwieńczył Fryderyk, stojący słusznie na ich barkach tu na pomniku, bo na ich robocie wsparł się i stanął w historii'; *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, t. 5, red. Filip SULIMIEŃSKI, Bronisław CHLEBOWSKI, Władysław WALEWSKI, Warszawa 1884, p. 954.

⁶⁴ Bolesław REDIGER, *Jan Matejko w Toruniu* (Biblioteczka Toruńska, nr 4), Toruń 1926, p. 7.

⁶⁵ The available literature on this most famous Polish historical painting is extremely extensive – here only two scholarly publications can be mentioned: the now classic work by Jarosław KRAWCZYK, *Matejko i historia*, Warszawa 1990; and the multi-authored volume *Jana Matejki Bitwa pod Grunwaldem. Nowe spojrzenia*, red. Sven EKDAHL, Katarzyna MURAWSKA-MUTHESIUS (Nowe Spojrzenia na Sztukę), Warszawa 2010.

⁶⁶ Tomasz TORBUS, *Deutschordens-Ideologie in der polnischen und deutschen Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Preußen in Ostmitteleuropa – Geschehensgeschichte und Verstehensgeschichte*, hrsg. v. Matthias WEBER (Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, Bd. 21), München 2003, pp. 209–257. Professor Michał Haake pointed out to me that Marquard von Salzbach's face type is the so-called lion face, one of several types used by Matejko. The beard is an important element of this face and also contributes to the movement of the entire figure. Professor Haake raised a question whether another figure, who did not participate in the battle but was included in Matejko's painting, would not be more suitable for a representation of 'Bismarck's face'. This is the Commander



Fig. 9. Jan MATEJKO, *Hold pruski*, 1879–1882, Wawel Royal Castle – State Art Collections, no. 8323

a similar technique in placing the Teutonic banner of Braunsberg (present-day Braniewo, Poland) slightly above Marquard von Salzbach's (i.e. Bismarck's) figure. The troops from Braunsberg played a marginal role in the battle, but the white-and-black motifs of the banner must have reminded viewers irresistibly of the colours of the Hohenzollern dynasty⁶⁷.

Matejko also employed political allusion in his next monumental work *Prussian Homage* completed in 1882⁶⁸. Its message was clear to contemporary Polish viewers: the contrast between the humiliated Prussian militarism embodied by Albrecht Hohenzollern, who kneels in armour before the royal throne, and the Polish pacifism personified by King Sigismund, who is depicted in his coronation and priestly robes. However, whereas *The Battle of Grunwald* is a tribute to the Polish-Lithuanian military victory over the Teutonic Knights (i.e. Prussianism), *Prussian Homage* can be interpreted in two ways: as a criticism of the diplomatic compromise that led to the Treaty of Kraków in 1525, or as a partial apology for it. This ambiguous assessment is evident in the allusiveness of the work, specifically the painter's use of historical masks⁶⁹. Matejko lent his own features to two characters in the painting. The first is the royal court jester Stańczyk, sitting on the steps of the podium and looking sadly into the future, as if contemplating the long-term consequences of the 1525 act, which culminated in Poland's partitions. A more optimistic interpretation of the compromise is offered by the second figure, who resembles the artist. This is Bartolomeo Berecci, an Italian architect who designed the Renaissance reconstruction of the royal residence at Wawel. Near his left hand on the painting's frame (which was destroyed after 1900), there is a Latin quotation from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans (8:31): 'If God is for us, who can

of Schwetz (present-day Świecie, Poland) Heinrich von Plauen (with his bushy moustache), thanks to whose actions Marienburg Castle managed to repel the Polish-Lithuanian siege in September 1410.

⁶⁷ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja*, p. 86. A similar motif can be found in the painting by the Viennese battle painter Alexander von Bensa titled *Schlacht bei Tannenberg* from 1869 (currently in the collection of the Teutonic Order in Vienna). Perhaps von Bensa's choice of this subject matter can be interpreted as an expression of Austrian criticism of the ideology of Borussianism.

⁶⁸ The most comprehensive discussion of various aspects of this work can be found in the volume *Hołd pruski. Matejko Wawelowi – Wawel Matejce*, red. Maria PODŁODOWSKA-REKLEWSKA, Kraków 2009.

⁶⁹ A more detailed analysis can be found in: Agnieszka JAŃCZYK, *Między działaniem wyobraźni a przywiązaniem do konkretnego – postacie i akcesoria w „Hołdzie pruskim”*, [in:] *Hołd pruski. Matejko Wawelowi – Wawel Matejce*, red. Maria PODŁODOWSKA-REKLEWSKA, Kraków 2009, pp. 146–222.

be against us?’⁷⁰. It is unclear whether Matejko, a devout patriot and Catholic, was inspired to depict the 1525 tribute in this manner due to the relaxation of Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* policy in the late 1870s. This is doubtful, given that the concept of the work was developed several years earlier⁷¹. Incidentally, the architect of German unification can also be seen among the figures depicted in the *Prussian Homage*. Without the beard, he resembles Georg Hohenzollern, Albrecht’s brother, who is visible in the upper background to the left of the banner with the black eagle.

Equally intriguing is the biased interpretation by Matejko’s contemporaries of the figure standing slightly below. According to the sketches of the ‘heads’ made by Matejko himself, this figure was supposed to be Duke Friedrich II of Legnica, who was related to the Jagiellonian and Hohenzollern dynasties and was one of the main negotiators on Albrecht’s behalf in 1525⁷². However, in his accompanying brochure, which included the ‘heads’, Matejko’s secretary Marian Gorzkowski identified this figure as Albrecht’s other brother, Casimir. In his opinion, Matejko’s Albrecht was supposed to represent: ‘cold prudence in politics, maturity of thought and intellectual education, as well as severity, discipline and cunning in Prussian administration; his two brothers, Casimir and Georg, on the other hand, remind us of Prussian insolence, youthful exuberance and feverish aspirations for leadership or world fame, which arise only in unbridled and often dissolute minds’⁷³. In turn, Stanisław Tarnowski – a literary historian, conservative journalist and professor at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, who was associated with Matejko – saw the figure of Casimir as embodying political Machiavellianism. Unlike the ‘highly sensual’ Georg Hohenzollern, who represented the ancestors of contemporary Prussians, Casimir was seen as evolving from ‘the Teutonic Knight, oppressor and rapist’ to the *Kulturträger*. ‘He read and memorised Machiavelli, and here he represents the spirit of foxlike cunning, without which the Prussian element

⁷⁰ See the interpretation of the painting in: Henryk SŁOCZYŃSKI, *Hołd Pruski Jana Matejki*, [in:] Maria BOGUĆKA, Klaus ZERNACK, *Sekularyzacja Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach. Hołd pruski 1525 roku*, tł. Tomasz OSOŚIŃSKI, red. Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, Warszawa 1998, pp. 101–122.

⁷¹ See Matejko’s sketch for the painting *Prussian Homage* from about 1874 (oil on wood, private collection).

⁷² This was recently pointed out by Jacek WIJACZKA, *Traktat krakowski i hołd pruski z 1525 roku* (Rozprawy i Materiały Instytutu Północnego im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego w Olsztynie, nr 273), Olsztyn 2025, pp. 261–262, whose arguments I partly follow here.

⁷³ ‘zimną rozważę w politycznym kierunku, dojrzałość myśli i oświatę pod względem umysłowym, a surowość, karność i chytrych w pruskiej administracji; dwaj bracia jego, Kazimierz i Jerzy, przypominają nam znowu pruskie zuchwalstwo, owe życie junackie lub nawet te gorączkowe dążności do przewodnictwa albo do sławy na świecie, które w wybujałych tylko, często w hulaszczycach i rozkiełzanych tworzą się umysłach!’, Marian GORZKOWSKI, *Wskazówki do nowego obrazu Jana Matejki „Hołd pruski”*, Kraków 1882, pp. 10.

would be incomplete. From this spirit once arose the author of the *Anti-Machiavelli* – Friedrich [the Great – I.K.]⁷⁴. It is worth noting that the reference to Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* was not accidental. Not only does it referred to the criticism of this work in Friedrichs the Great's essay *Anti-Machiavel* (first published 1740), which was considered a manifestation of his hypocrisy due to the policies of this ruler later in life, but it also reflected the renewed pan-European interest in Machiavelli's work during the Italian *Risorgimento* at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century⁷⁵.

For Polish viewers of the time, Matejko's work carried quite clear references to history and the present. These were succinctly expressed by the contemporary art critic Zygmunt Cieszkowski, who praised the choice of the main scene in the painting: Albrecht's homage, kneeling before King Sigismund I. 'This is the protoplast [i.e. Albrecht Hohenzollern – I.K.], the Philosopher King [i.e. Friedrich the Great who was – I.K.] the progenitor of perhaps an even more audacious triumph of humiliation: He was the audacious perpetrator not only of the First Partition of Poland, but also of the first humiliation of France in the Battle of Rossbach [in 1757 – I.K.]. He was the progenitor of the perhaps even more audacious victory at Sedan [in 1870 – I.K.] and the proper creator and indicator of Bismarck's policy. [...] [Matejko – I.K.] presented to the world, and above all France, with the image of [Albrecht Hohenzollern – I.K.] kneeling before the majesty of the Polish Crown. Is this not the most magnificent subject and the most timely idea that the present moment could suggest to a contemporary painter?'⁷⁶. It must have been received similarly by Kaiser Wilhelm I and Bismarck, too. It was as a result of their intervention that the jury's decision to award a gold medal to Matejko's *Prussian Homage*, exhibited in Berlin in 1884, was annulled. Nevertheless, praise for the work definitely prevailed in the German press. One of the critics in the pages of *Montags-Blatt* admitted that the intention of the painting was to 'stab at the feeling of German and peculiarly Prussian self-love', but, while appreciating its high artistic value

⁷⁴ 'od Krzyżaka, tępicieła i gwałciiciela [...] Macchciavella czytał i zapamiętał, a tu w obrazie reprezentuje tego ducha lisiej chytryści, bez którego żywioł pruski nie byłby pełnym, z którego kiedyś powstanie *Anti-Macchiavella*, Fryderyk'; Stanisław TARNOWSKI, *Matejko*, Kraków 1897, pp. 245. Cf. a more extensive analysis of the three Hohenzollerns ibid., pp. 242–246.

⁷⁵ Igor KĄKOLEWSKI, *Melancholia władzy. Problem tyranii w europejskiej kulturze politycznej XVI stulecia*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 212, 305, 426–438.

⁷⁶ 'Tego to protoplastę właśnie Króla-Filozofa, zuchwałego sprawcy nie tylko pierwszego podziału Polski ale i pierwszego Francji pod Rozbachem upokorzenia, protoplastę również zuchwałszego jeszcze może tryumfatora pod Sedanem, tego właściwego twórcę i inicjatora Bismarckowskiej polityki [...], [Matejko zamierzał] przedstawić światu a przede wszystkim Francji uginającego kolano przed *majestatem* Polskiej korony, czyż to nie najwspanialszy temat, nie pomysł najbardziej na czasie, jaki chwila obecna mogła współczesnemu malarzowi nasunąć?'; Zygmunt CIESZKOWSKI, *Obce głosy o Matejce*, Kraków 1885, p. 29.

and the jury's sovereign judgement, stated: 'This testifies gloriously to how alien we [i.e. Prussians and Germans – I.K.] are to petty sensibilities that are fearful of any remembrance of a past that cannot be changed and has passed'⁷⁷.

Matejko's work was also deeply intertwined with the discourse of Polish historiography concerning the consequences of the Treaty of Kraków and the homage of 1525. Shortly after completing *The Battle of Grunwald* and during work on the *Prussian Homage*, the *History of Poland in Outline* (1879) by Michał Bobrzyński, the best-known representative of the Kraków school in Polish historiography, was published. In this work, Bobrzyński criticised the declining era of Jagiellonian rule, especially the reign of Sigismund I and his 'weak and short-sighted policies', as well as the Treaty of Kraków of 1525: 'History would have forgiven Sigismund for the loss of Smolensk [to Muscovy – I.K.] and the [diplomatic – I.K.] concession made to the Habsburgs, had it known that the fruit of these concessions was the incorporation of Prussia and the final breaking of the Teutonic Order and that German supremacy whose banner the Order was raising in the very heart of Poland and Lithuania'⁷⁸. Bobrzyński further argued, looking ahead, 'Defeating Prussia was not just a matter of honour for Poland' but in view of the growing power of the Habsburgs in the south, the *raison d'état* of the Kingdom of Poland that would have received a broader access to the Baltic Sea 'connecting it with the West and its civilisation'⁷⁹. He concluded his argument by referring directly to the Prussian Homage: 'Thus, for the sake of a temporary benefit and pleasant peace, a disgraceful treaty was signed, which was in a way an admission that Poland would no longer be able to undertake and carry out any great matter'⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ '[Obraz – I.K.] malowany był z zamiarem ugodzenia w uczucie niemieckiej a osobiście pruskiej miłości własnej [...]. Wskaże to świadczy chwalenie jak dalece obcą nam [Prusom i Niemcom – I.K.] małostkowa drażliwość lękająca się wszelkiego wspomnienia o przebytej a niemożliwej do zmienienia przeszłości [...]'; *ibid.*, pp. 39. Cieszkowski also presents in his publication extensive critical voices from the French press on Matejko's work presented in Paris a year earlier. On the critical reception of the *Prussian Homage* exhibited in Vienna, Rome, Paris, Berlin, Prague and Budapest, see Małgorzata BUYKO, *Hołd pruski w podróży*, [in:] *Hołd pruski. Matejko Wawelowi – Wawel Matejce*, red. Maria PODŁODOWSKA-REKLEWSKA, Kraków 2009, pp. 48–67.

⁷⁸ 'Słaba i krótkowidząca polityka'; 'Byłaby Zygmuntowi przebaczyła historia i utratę Smoleńska, i ustępstwo zrobione Habsburgom, gdyby wiedziała, że owocem tych ustępstw było wcielenie Prus i ostateczne złamanie Zakonu i tej niemieckiej przewagi, której chorągiew Zakonu w samym wnętrzu Polski i Litwy podnosił'; Michał BOBRZYŃSKI, *Dzieje Polski w zarysie*, Warszawa 1879, p. 242.

⁷⁹ 'Pokonanie Prus nie było dla Polski jedynie sprawą honoru'; 'drogą łączącą ją z Zachodem i jego cywilizacją'; *ibid.*, pp. 249–250.

⁸⁰ 'Tak dla chwilowej korzyści i miłego spokoju podpisano hańbiący traktat, który niejako był przyznaniem, że już Polska żadnej wielkiej sprawy podjąć i przeprowadzić nie zdoła'; *ibid.*, pp. 250–251.

Stanisław Smolka, another acknowledged representative of the Kraków school in Polish historiography, in his publication *Historical Sketches* (1882) was the most direct in highlighting the relevance of Matejko's artistic visions for the present. He commented on the progression of events from the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, through the Prussian Homage in 1525, to the contemporary situation: 'Despite all this, the Order was still in existence in Prussia proper at that time, later transforming itself into a secular state and growing through marriage with Brandenburg to become the Prussian power we know today. After the partition of Poland, following [the battles of – I.K.] Königgrätz [in 1866 – I.K.] and Sedan [in 1870 – I.K.], it assumed huge dimensions, once again proving intransigent towards its former victors [...]'⁸¹.

Smolka's and Bobrzyński's 'pessimistic view' of Polish history, in line with that of the Kraków historical school, was characterised by a narrative that bridged the gap between events in the early sixteenth century and the situation in the second half of the eighteenth century, and then in the nineteenth century. This kind of cause-and-effect presentism provided a framework for historical debates on the consequences of the Prussian Homage in Polish historiography over the next century⁸². It also set the tone for the next phase of artistic discourse, which was continued by the following generation of Polish historical painters at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who referred to Teutonic themes. As in the earlier phase, the direction was determined by opposing the German conception of a cultural mission (*Kulturträgerschaft*) in Eastern Europe to the Polish vision of the German *Drang nach Osten* – aggressive expansionism at the expense of the Slavic peoples. In Polish visual art, this idea was expressed in works such as Wojciech Gerson's *Teutonic Knights in Poland*. This painting, created in 1875, was produced at the same time as Matejko's *The Battle of Grunwald*. The intensification of Germanisation tendencies in the official policy of the German Empire, coupled with the rise of nationalist sentiment at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, created a need to refer to a history of conflict rather than compromise. This also explains the boom in the so-called Grunwald Tradition in Poland, which culminated in the celebrations in Kraków to mark the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald in 1910⁸³.

⁸¹ 'A mimo to wszystko, jeszcze wówczas ostał się Zakon w właściwych Prusiech, aby później w świeckie przekształcić się państwo, w małżeństwie z Brandenburgią wyrósł w dzisiejszą pruską potęgę i po rozbiórce polski, po Sadowie i Sedanie, przybrać rozmiary olbrzymiego państwa, znowu nieprzejednanego wobec swych dawnych zwycięzców [...]' Stanisław SMOLKA, *Witold pod Grunwaldem*, [in:] idem, *Szkice historyczne. Serya pierwsza*, Warszawa 1882, p. 34.

⁸² A more detailed discussion can be found in: I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd pruski*, pp. 208–227.

⁸³ Agnieszka JAŃCZYK, *Grunwald, miecze, król Jagiełło – tradycja grunwaldzka w okresie zaborów*, [in:] *Na znak świętego zwycięstwa. W sześćsetną rocznicę bitwy pod Grunwaldem. Katalog*



Fig. 10. Wojciech Kossak, *Drapieżny lennik: Hold Pruski 1641* – a card from the portfolio *Duch Pruski*, a jubilee premium for subscribers to the magazine *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, Warszawa 1909

In this context, the subject of the Prussian Homage held less appeal for Polish artists – it could only exist as an adjunct to the rapidly evolving Grunwald Tradition. This is how the works of Wojciech Kossak should be contextualised. Somewhat paradoxically, despite his artistic and patriotic commitment to the Polish side, Kossak remained in close relations with the Berlin court and Kaiser William II himself⁸⁴. In his anti-German series from 1909, entitled *Prussian Spirit*, we find paintings on contemporary themes: an oppression of the Polish population by the Prussian authorities (*Begone! Prussian Expulsion*), and Teutonic themes (*Man Hunting – The Teutonic Knights' Apostolate*), which are similar in style to the aforementioned work by Gerson. In the series there are also paintings that refer to the history of relations between Poland and the Duchy of Prussia, such as *Predatory Vassal*, which depicts the homage paid by Friedrich Wilhelm Hohenzollern in Warsaw in 1641⁸⁵. Kossak's paintings lived to see many reproductions in album and postcard publications, as did works by Matejko and other Polish artists dealing with the subject of Polish-Teutonic conflicts, particularly popular during the wave of the 1910 celebration of the Battle of Grunwald jubilee.

The wave of celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the Grunwald victory also saw the publication of a popular novel for young people by Antonina Domańska, *The Pages of King Sigismund* (first edition 1910), which was reprinted many times later. It could not lack references to the Battle of Grunwald, although the author paid more attention to the Prussian Homage of 1525. At the end of her book Domańska summarised the most important provisions of the Treaty of Kraków, and in the scene of the homage she exposed the face of the grim Stańczyk in imitation of Matejko's iconic representation. The description is interspersed with quotations from Jan Kochanowski's poem *The Standard or the Prussian Homage*. At the end, the author expressed King Sigismund's unspoken thought to Albrecht: 'Will you keep your oath?'⁸⁶.

wystawy, 15 lipca – 30 września 2010, Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, t. 1: *Studia*, red. Dariusz Nowacki, Kraków 2010, pp. 325–350.

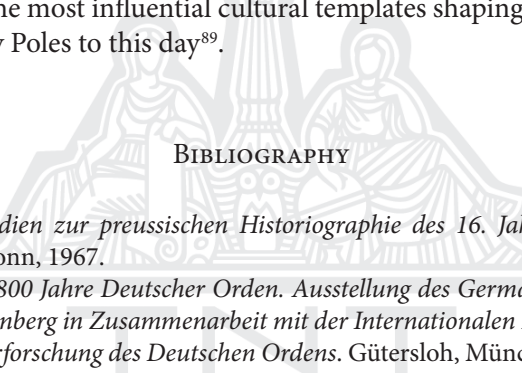
⁸⁴ See Wojciech KOSSAK, *Wspomnienia. Z 92 ilustracjami w tekście oraz 8 kolorowymi na osobnych kartach*, Kraków 1918, pp. 93–132, 269–302.

⁸⁵ *Drapieżny lennik: Hold Pruski 1641* – a card from the portfolio *Duch pruski*, a jubilee premium for subscribers to the magazine *The Illustrated Weekly*, see <https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/zbiory/130058> [accessed online 2 March 2025]. The portfolio also contained coloured illustrations depicting other paintings from this series: *Łowy na ludzi: Apostolstwo krzyżackie, Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła. Gravelotte 1870, Precz! Rugi pruskie*, see Wojciech KOSSAK, *Duch pruski*, Warszawa 1909.

⁸⁶ Antonina DOMAŃSKA, *Paziowie króla Zygmunta. Opowiadanie obyczajowe na tle dawnych wieków*, Bielsko-Biała 1993, p. 82.

* * *

Of the themes related to the history of Polish-Teutonic conflicts, the Battle of Grunwald in 1410 became one of the most prominent features of contemporary Polish memory culture in the twentieth century. The revival of the Grunwald Tradition was encouraged by the traumas of the Second World War and the post-war historical policies of the Polish People's Republic. This culminated in celebrations to mark the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald⁸⁷. Although the subject of the Prussian Homage remained present in twentieth-century Polish historical debates, dividing historians into supporters or opponents of the views expressed by Bobrzyński at the end of the previous century, it played a minor role in art and literature⁸⁸. Notable paintings include two works titled *Prussian Homage* by Tadeusz Kantor (1975) and Edward Dwurnik (2010). However, they no longer depict the events of 1525 but instead express deconstructivist tendencies in contemporary Polish painting. Both works deconstruct the historicist style of Jan Matejko, whose *The Battle of Grunwald* has become one of the most influential cultural templates shaping the imagination of contemporary Poles to this day⁸⁹.



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⁸⁷ Among the extensive literature on the subject, see Stefan DYROFF, *Grunwald w historiografii i tradycji niemieckiej i polskiej*, [in:] *Wojna, pamięć i tożsamość. O bitwach i mitach bitewnych*, red. Jan M. PISKORSKI, Warszawa 2012, pp. 130–146; Mathieu OLIVIER, *Bitwa pod Grunwaldem. (Nie)udane mity zwycięstwa*, [in:] *Polsko-niemieckie miejsca pamięci*, t. 1: *Wspólne / Oddzielne*, red. Robert TRABA, Hans H. HAHN, we współpracy z Maciej GÓRNY, Kornelia KOŃCZAL, Warszawa 2015, pp. 270–287.

⁸⁸ For more details on this Polish historical discourse in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, see I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Hołd pruski*, pp. 207–226.

⁸⁹ I. KĄKOLEWSKI, *Alegoria, szablon, aluzja i kontynuacja*, pp. 108–109.

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