

ORDINES MILITARES
COLLOQUIA TORUNENSIA HISTORICA
Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders

vol. XVI (2011)

DIE RITTERORDEN IN UMBRUCHS-
UND KRISENZEITEN

The Military Orders in Times
of Change and Crisis



Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika
Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu
Toruń 2011

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Wydanie publikacji dofinansowany przez
Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

Printed in Poland

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Toruń 2011

ISSN 0867-2008

NICOLAUS COPERNICUS UNIVERSITY PRESS

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DISTRIBUTION: ul. Reja 25, 87-100 Toruń
tel./fax (0) 56 611 42 38
e-mail: books@umk.pl
www.wydawnictwoumk.pl

First edition

Print: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press
ul. Gagarina 5, 87-100 Toruń

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Fundacje artystyczne na terenie państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach. Katalog wystawy w Muzeum Narodowym w Malborku 25 czerwca–12 września 2010 roku [Artistic foundations in the Teutonic State in Prussia: exhibition catalogue in the National Museum in Malbork 25 June–12 September 2010], ed. Barbara Pospieszna, t. I: *Katalog wystawy* [Exhibition Catalogue]; t. II: *Esaje* [Essays], Muzeum Zamkowe w Malborku, Malbork 2010, 413 and 374 pp., ISBN 978-83-60518-31-1.

In connection with the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald the staff of the National Museum in Malbork, in cooperation with several outside researchers, prepared a very informative exhibition devoted to artistic foundations in late medieval Prussia. The idea of presenting not so much the battle and the connected military issues, as much as the works of art created by the defeated Teutonic Order arouses much interest. The subject of the exhibition includes not only the moment of battle, but also the cultural context behind it from a variety of perspectives. Art reveals the cultural context thanks to its communicative universality, irrespective of detailed debates of interpretation. In the first volume there are about 350 historical images (including writing, visual arts, painting, architectural elements, bell founding, and liturgical equipment and clothing), with catalogue notes made by a total of 55 researchers. The work is divided into several parts. The first presents the foundations of the Teutonic Order, the second – the ‘foundation’ of the clergy, the third – the establishment of towns, the fourth – setting up villages. The fifth part comprises artefacts the character of which could not be defined. The formal division used in the publication may raise concerns of a formal nature (for example the understanding of the term ‘foundations of the clergy’ and its relation to the Teutonic Order in the situation where a part of the Prussian clergy were members of the Teutonic Order; the same concern applies to villages), and doubts in interpretation. Nevertheless, it does not downgrade the importance and value of the publication. This one volume contains material presenting the overwhelming majority of preserved artistic objects from late medieval Prussia (or at least their images or reproductions). The second volume, containing 13 essays from outstanding experts, concerns the building (Arszyński, Kranz-Domasławska, Herrman, Skibiński), painting (Domasławski), sculpture (Błazejewska, Woziński, Jurkowlaniec), decorative arts (Wozniak), general art (Kutzner), writing (Wenta) and music (Gancarczyk), and constitutes a valuable complement to and commentary on the source material presented.

Krzysztof Kwiatkowski (Totruń)