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RESTORATION OF THE MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE OF MADONNA IN THE CASTLE OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER IN MALBORK (MARIENBURG)

Słowa kluczowe: Malbork, restauracja, zakon krzyżacki, kult maryjny, mozaika
Key words: Marienburg, restaurant, Teutonic Order, veneration of Mary, mosaic

The monumental sculpture of Madonna in the eastern wing of the church in the Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork was the largest medieval sculpture in Europe. This 8-metre tall artwork became known as the Malbork Colossus¹. For many centuries, the mosaic-covered statue served as a unique symbol of the Castle, the town and the reign of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. The sculpture was perceived a symbol and a carrier of values rather than a work of art².

The military operations of 1945 inflicted serious damage on the Malbork Castle and turned St. Mary's Church to ruin for many years. The monumental sculpture of Madonna and Child was almost entirely destroyed by artillery fire. All that was left from this characteristic feature of the church were broken pieces of the figure and thousands of mosaic squares (tesserae).

The church was restored during post-war reconstruction efforts in the Castle; however, the restoration of the Madonna was postponed until inte-

¹ M. Kilarski, *Mozaikowa figura malborskiej Madonny. Fakty, legendy, interpretacje*, Malbork 1993; A. Grzybkowski, *Między formą a znaczeniem. Studia z ikonografii architektury i rzeźby gotyckiej*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 168–184. Precise measurements of the statue were carried out in 2014 based on the preserved head of the figure (1.17 m). The results were used to determine that the original statue had a total height of 7.93 m.

² M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Kolos malborski jako obraz sakralny. Geneza typu przedstawienia*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, p. 62.

rior work had been completed. The blank window in presbytery had remained empty for many years until successive restoration work commenced in 2014 in this part of the world's largest brick castle³. The project was completed in 2016, and it led to the full restoration of this monumental work of art and the most important symbol of the Castle – the embodiment of the patron of the church, the Teutonic Order and the town of Malbork.

The Virgin Mary as the patron of the Teutonic Order

Calling upon the protective intercession of the Virgin Mary was a phenomenon typical of religious borderlands in medieval Europe. In Christian iconography, the cloak of the Virgin Mary served to protect the faithful⁴. Prior to the Teutonic Order, the Cistercians were active in this region. They made the Virgin Mary their patron and placed all their monasteries in her care⁵.

The members of the Teutonic Order also linked their political and military actions with the name of the Virgin Mary, as evidenced by the construction of the Marienburg Castle in Transylvania as a seat of the local regional leader. In this way, the Order used the image of the Virgin Mary in their drive against pagans. They acted similarly from the second quarter of the 13th century in Prussia. The cult of the Virgin Mary within the Teutonic state of Prussia was also extensive⁶. There are even records of rivalry on this field between various units of church administration⁷. By way of example, the cathedral in Frombork was the first to compete for the title of the most important sanctuary in Prussia⁸. Until the first half of the 19th century, one of its recesses held a 9-metre statue of Madonna with the

³ The reconstruction effort was part of the project entitled "Conservation and construction works in the Holy Virgin Church in the Malbork Castle Museum", co-financed by the "Conservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage" programme under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for 2009–2014.

⁴ E.A. Johnson, *Kult maryjny w Kościele zachodnim*, [in:] *Duchowość chrześcijańska. Późne średniowiecze i reformacja*, ed. J. Raitt, B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff, przekł. P. Blumczyński, Kraków 2011, s. 417.

⁵ R. Kieckhefer, *Główne nurty pobożności późnego średniowiecza*, [in:] *Duchowość chrześcijańska*, s. 91.

⁶ E. Tidick, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kirchen- Patrozinien im Deutschordenslande Preussen bis 1525*, „Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands” (ZGAE), Bd. 22, 1926, s. 356 n; M. Dygo, *O kulcie maryjnym w Prusach Krzyżackich w XIX–XV wieku*, „Zapiski Historyczne” (ZH), t. LII, 1987, z. 2, s. 5–36; W. Rozynekowski, *Kult Najświętszej Maryi Panny w kaplicach krzyżackich domów zakonnych w Prusach*, „Studia Claromontana”, t. 28, 2010, s. 625–637; S. Gouguenheim, *Krzyżacy*, tł. M. Dalla Bella, S. Józwiak, Malbork 2012, s. 83–98.

⁷ Por. A. Radziwiński, *Kościół w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach 1243–1525. Organizacja. Uposażenie, Ustawodawstwo. Duchowieństwo. Wierni*, Malbork 2006, s. 79–95; J. Hochleitner, *Kult maryjny w diecezji pomezjańskiej*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 35–43.

⁸ Vide: E. Tidick, op. cit., s. 364 n; M. Dygo, *O kulcie*, s. 19–22.

Child⁹, which we know from the reconstruction from 1856¹⁰. As a result of this rivalry, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order first obtained for the church at the High Castle in Malbork the same indulgences as the Cathedral located in Warmia¹¹, and then the statue of the Madonna with the Child was constructed, which was additionally decorated with mosaics. The use of tesserae was completely unusual in this part of Europe.

The cult of the Virgin Mary was additionally militarised by this knights' order. The Teutonic knights went to war wielding banners depicting their patrons, including banners with the image of the Virgin Mary¹². The Teutonic Order appointed her as the suzerain in Prussia, and themselves as her vassals, which aimed to increase the prestige of their authority and justify their military activities. This cult was also reflected in art¹³.

Similar manifestations of this cult can be found within the area of the Bishopric of Pomesania, which included Malbork – the town of the Virgin Mary (Marienburg). This is evidenced, among others, by the oldest sigillography exhibits: the seal of the Pomesania Bishops¹⁴ and of the Pomesanian Chapter¹⁵. The area of today's Kwidzyn, which was the first destination of the members of the Teutonic Order, was called *Insula sance Marie*¹⁶. The image of the Virgin Mary can also be found on the oldest examples of municipal seals of Kwidzyn¹⁷ and Hawa¹⁸. The cult of the Virgin Mary in the

⁹ F. Dittrich, *Der Dom zu Frauenburg*, ZGAE, Bd. 18, 1913, s. 562.

¹⁰ Vide: F. von Quast, *Denkmale der Baukunst in Preussen*, Bd. 1: *Ermland*, Berlin 1852; T. Jurkowlaniec, *Gotycka rzeźba architektoniczna w Prusach*, Wrocław 1989, s. 148.

¹¹ S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezkańskiej u schyłku XIV i w pierwszych dziesięcioleciach XV wieku*, Toruń 1990, s. 97–98.

¹² K. Polejowski, *Madonna jako patronka zakonu w średniowieczu*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 24–26.

¹³ M. Dygo, *Mnich i erz. Ideologiczne modele postaw w Zakonie Krzyżackim w Prusach w XIV–XV wieku*, ZH, 1990, z. 4, s. 12.

¹⁴ Vide: H. Cramer, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des vormaligen Bisthums Pomesanien*, Marienwerder 1887, tab. I–III; J. Wiśniewski, *Zarys dziejów diecezji pomezkańskiej (1243–1525–1821)*, „Studia Pelplińskie”, t. 21/22, 1990–1991, s. 209–210.

¹⁵ R. Kahsnitz, *Die mittelalterlichen Siegel der Domkapitel im Deutschordensland Preussen*, ZGAE, Bd. 47, 1994, s. 46–48, il. 11–12.

¹⁶ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronicon Terre Prussiae*, [in:] *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der Preussischen Vorzeit (SRP)*, Bd.1, hrsg. Th. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, Leipzig 1861, s. 56–57; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, bearb. v. C.P. Woelky, Danzig 1885–1887, nr 111.

¹⁷ F. Vossberg, *Geschichte der Preussischen Münzen und Siegel von frühester Zeit bis zum Ende der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens*, Berlin 1843, s. 31; M. Gumowski, *Pieczęcie i herby miast pomorskich*, Toruń 1939, s. 105; idem, *Najstarsze pieczęcie miast polskich XIII i XIV w.*, Toruń 1960, s. 126; B. Mozejko, B. Śliwiński, *Heraldyka kwidzyńska*, [in:] *Kwidzyn. Dzieje miasta*, t. 1, ed. K. Mikulski, J. Liguz, Kwidzyn 2004, s. 13–31.

¹⁸ M. Gumowski, *Najstarsze pieczęcie*, s. 95–96; O. Hupp, *Die Wappen und Siegel der deutschen Städte, Flecken und Dörfer, Königreich Preussen*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt a/Main 1896–1898, s. 22; P. Goldyn, *Fenomen heraldyczny miast i gmin powiatu iławskiego*, „Studia Elbląskie” (SE), t. IV, 2002, s. 136.

Middle Ages is also exemplified by her patronage of 11 shrines located in villages and of 6 churches and parish chapels¹⁹. In towns, in addition to the main chapel of the Teutonic Order in Malbork and the cathedral in Kwidzyn, most likely the church in Ostróda was also dedicated to the patronage of the Virgin Mary²⁰.

The Malbork Colossus

The statue in question was a vehicle of the ideology of the rule and victory of the Teutonic Knights, and carried a propaganda message; however, in the face of the need for religious reform of the Teutonic Order, it was also one of the first personifications of Marian devotion in this region. At Malbork Castle, St. Mary's Church²¹, which boasted indulgence documents, was of particular importance. The Malbork Colossus might have already been the second image of Mary in this location. According to some records, the original figure was placed on the first church at the end of the 13th century. After the reconstruction of the church in the second quarter of the 14th century, the original window was replaced with a blind window²², and the original statue was replaced with a monument from artificial stone. This hypothesis is supported by studies on the statue's physiognomy performed by researchers²³. The converted St. Mary's Church expressed the programme of state visual propaganda²⁴.

It is probable that when funding the statue in question, the members of the Order believed that with such a powerful patron they would remain unconquerable²⁵. The enormous statue of the Madonna with the Child on the eastern elevation of St. Mary's Church was primarily an external symbol of the Teutonic Order which reached out into the public space of the town of

¹⁹ Vide: W. Rozyrkowski, *Omnes Sancti et Sanctae Dei*". *Studium nad kultem świętych w diecezjach pruskich państwa zakonu krzyżackiego*, Malbork 2006, s. 114–115 (tab. 18), 117, 143–144 (tab. 22).

²⁰ J. Wiśniewski, *Kościół i kaplice terenie byłej diecezji pomezańskiej 1243–1821 (1992)*, cz. 1, Elbląg 1999, cz. 1, s. 324; J. Hochleitner, *Kult maryjny*, s. 37.

²¹ The building was alternately referred to as a chapel or a church. As a chapel of the Teutonic Order, it was outside the jurisdiction of other parishes – E. Keyser, *Die kirchenrechtliche Stellung der Deutschordengemeinde*, „Altpreuussische Forschungen”, Bd. 2, 1925, s. 15–38.

²² B. Jesionowski, *Blenda we wschodniej elewacji pierwszego kościoła zamku konwentualnego w Malborku sprzed 1331 roku*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 113–122.

²³ A. Grzybkowski, *Geneza kolosa malborskiego*, „Ikonotheka”, t. 6, 1993, s. 81; K. Pospieszny, op. cit., s. 229.

²⁴ J. Raczkowski, *Kolosalna rzeźba Madonny z Dzieciątkiem w kontekście programu ideowego kościoła malborskiego w czasach Lutera z Brunszwiku*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 47–58.

²⁵ Vide: A. Grzybkowski, *Między formą a znaczeniem. Studia z ikonografii architektury i rzeźby gotyckiej*, Warszawa 1997, s. 168–184; J. Wiśniewski, *Symbolika i znaczenie zamku krzyżackiego w Malborku*, „Studia Elbląskie” (SE), t. 13, 2012, s. 15.

Malbork²⁶. Many researches consider it a symbol of universal values. Professor Szczęsny Skibiński considered the statue a universal image of Ecclesia²⁷, Rainer Zacharias perceived in it an imperious symbol of the spiritual leadership of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, which “opened up” the Castle to the world²⁸, Albert Boesten-Stengel saw in it the visualisation of “patrocinium”²⁹, while Anna Błażejewska gave the statue an apotropaic and magical function³⁰. In recent years, Marian Dygo’s interpretation has come to the fore, in which he sees the statue as an expression of the Queen of Heaven and the suzerain of Prussia. This patronage originated from the protection provided by the Virgin Mary over the Order, which was treated as a benefice. The Marian symbolism was to strengthen the loyalty of the subjects of the Teutonic Order³¹.

Marian Kutzner saw in the exceptionally visual effect provided by the Malbork Colossus a symbol of a “military banner”, a protector and a buckler guarding the Castle and the seat of the Order³². According to historical records, the Malbork statue played a role in weakening the Polish offensive in 1410 (as in the tale of a Polish weapon maker who lost his eyesight as a result of his attempts to destroy the figure)³³. This supernatural intervention of the Virgin Mary during the Siege of Marienburg in 1410 was then used as part of the Teutonic propaganda³⁴. This special attention

²⁶ J. Raczkowski, *Kolosalna rzeźba*, s. 47.

²⁷ Sz. Skibiński, *Kaplica na Zamku Wysokim w Malborku*, Poznań 1982, s. 126–128.

²⁸ R. Zacharias, *Marienburg. Wallfahrtsort zwischen Spiritualität und Herrschaft*, [in:] *Sztuka w kręgu zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach i Inflantach*, ed. M. Woźniak, Toruń 1995, s. 73–74. Vide: R. Zacharias, *Die St. Marien – Burgkirche. Zentralort für Spiritualität und Demonstration* [in:] *Spotkania Malborskie im. Macieja Kilarzkiego*, cz. 1–3, ed. A. Dobry, Malbork 2010, s. 71.

²⁹ A. Boesten-Stengel, *Die Marienburger Schlosskirche als Jerusalem-Imagination – zur Ikonographie der Annen-Kapelle und der Mosaik-Madonna*, [in:] *Terra Sanctae Mariae. Mittelalterliche Bildwerke der Marienverehrung im Deutschordensland Preussen*, hg. G. Eimer, E. Gierlich, M. Müller, K. Pospieszny, Bonn 2009, s. 81–82.

³⁰ A. Błażejewska, *Rzeźba w państwie krzyżackim Rzeźba w państwie krzyżackim od jego początków do Wojny Trzynastoletniej*, [in:] *Fundacje artystyczne na terenie państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach. Katalog wystawy w Muzeum Zamkowym w Malborku*, ed. B. Pospieszna, Malbork 2010, t. 2, s. 169.

³¹ M. Dygo, *O kulcie maryjnym w Prusach Krzyżackich w XIV–XV wieku*, ZH vol. 52, 1987, no. 2, pp. 5–38.

³² M. Kutzner, *Propaganda władzy w sztuce Zakonu Niemieckiego w Prusach*, [in:] *Sztuka w kręgu zakonu*, s. 59.

³³ *Johann’s von Posilge, officialis von Pomesanien, Chronik des Landes Presussen*, hrsg. v. E. Strehle, [in:] SRP, Bd III, Leipzig 1866, s. 132 n. Por. M. Dygo, *O kulcie*, s. 36; J. Trupinda, *Skrzydło północne Zamku Wysokiego – dzieje, kształt architektoniczny i wyposażenie w świetle źródeł pisanych*, [in:] *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku. Interdyscyplinarne badania skrzydła północnego*, ed. Poksińska M., Malbork–Toruń 2006, s. 32.

³⁴ M. Dygo, *O kulcie*, s. 17–19; M. Kutzner, *Propaganda władzy w sztuce Zakonu Niemieckiego w Prusach*, [in:] *Sztuka w kręgu zakonu*, s. 17–66; M. Kutzner, *Herrschaftspropaganda in der Kunst des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen*, [in:] *Echte Wehrhaftigkeit oder martialische Wirkung*, ed. G. Eimer, E. Gierlich, Köln 2000, s. 278–279; S. Józwiak, J. Trupinda, *Organizacja życia na zamku krzyżackim w Malborku w czasach wielkich mistrzów (1309–1457)*, Malbork 2011, s. 146–148.

granted to Malbork by the Virgin Mary was certain to bring pilgrims to the town³⁵.

The Malbork Madonna dates back to the time when the state formula of the Marian patronage was just maturing. Among the images of the Virgin Mary in this region there are only a few other artworks, which were created before or at the same time as the Malbork Colossus, and which were either imported here or made in local workshops³⁶. For the Malbork Madonna, a model was chosen which varied from the hieratic monumentalism of a Byzantine Hodegetria³⁷. A crowned Mary is holding a sceptre in her right hand. Her left arm is holding the Child in a hieratic pose, who is holding an apple in his hand. This image emphasizes the royal quality of the Virgin Mary, which is additionally underlined by the red and gold colour of the mosaics³⁸.

The statue was covered in mosaics some ten-odd years after its construction³⁹. The mosaics covering the surface of the figure for many centuries inspired researchers to study the impact of the colossus, especially via the characteristics of the colour scheme and its optical properties. The characteristic effect visible when light was falling directly on this section of the church was recorded in the 19th century by Johannes Voigt⁴⁰. Nearly 100 years later, Barbara Dygdała-Kłosińska also discussed a similar Byzantine impact of the statue, while Arnold Boesten-Stengel saw in the Malbork Colossus a crusaders' symbol which originated from Middle Eastern traditions⁴¹.

Luther von Braunschweig, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, took over the rule after a long struggle for power within the Order's structure, when its members began to lose their sense of mission⁴². It was at that point that a new interpretation of the Marian patronage over the Order was shaped⁴³, which was included in the plans for the conversion of the former Castle's chapel to a two-storey structure. The space inside the upper

³⁵ S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny*, s. 86–88.

³⁶ Vide: M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Grupa rzeźbiarska „Madonna tronująca z Dzieciątkiem” z kościoła w Mątowach Wielkich, ok. 1350*, [in:] *Fundacje artystyczne*, t. 1, s. 105.

³⁷ M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Kolos malborski*, s. 67.

³⁸ M. Dygo, *O kulcie*, s. 9; M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Kolos malborski*, s. 72.

³⁹ Vide: H. Knapp, *Das Schloss Marienburg in Preussen. Quellen und Materialien zur Baugeschichte nach 1456*, Lüneburg 1990, s. 17; K. Pospieszny, *Domus Malbork. Zamek krzyżacki w typie regularnym*, Toruń 2014, s. 229.

⁴⁰ J. Voigt, *Geschichte Marienburgs, der Stadt und des Haupthauses des Deutschen Ritters-Orden in Preussen*, Königsberg 1824, s. 129.

⁴¹ A. Boesten-Stengel, op. cit., s. 99.

⁴² Vide: S. Kwiatkowski, *Powstanie i rozwój krzyżackiej koncepcji przywództwa religijnego w Prusach*, [in:] *Zakon Krzyżacki a społeczeństwo państwa w Prusach*, ed. Z. H. Nowak, Toruń 1995, s. 137–148.

⁴³ M. Dygo, *O kulcie*, s. 5–36. Vide: U. Arnold, *Maria als Patronin des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter*, [in:] *Terra Sanctae Mariae*, s. 29–56.

church created as a result of this initiative had a quasi-cathedral character⁴⁴.

The Madonna in question was cast in sections (finished fragments of the statue were then mounted together). The sections of the statue were stacked on top of each other (height 44–56 cm) and bound with mortar⁴⁵. The entirety of the statue was made whole in ca. 1340 and probably some stonework was also carried out at that time⁴⁶.

The almost full-dimensional sculpture depicted a standing forward-facing Madonna holding the Child Jesus on her left arm. The surface of the figure was first decorated with gilded polychrome⁴⁷. The existing studies of the Malbork Colossus include a prevalent assumption that the statue was decorated with polychrome before the mosaics were added. This opinion was confirmed by contemporary research⁴⁸.



Ryc. 1. Cleaning of the mosaics on the statue of Madonna in 1903
– “Marienburg Baujahr“ 1903

⁴⁴ M. Woźniak, *Przestrzeń liturgiczna i wyposażenie kościoła Najświętszej Marii Panny na zamku w Malborku – nowe ustalenia*, [in:] *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku*, s. 93.

⁴⁵ M. Kilariski, *Figura Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem z kościoła zamkowego w Malborku. Studium technologiczno-konserwatorskie*, [in:] *Podług nieba i zwyczaju polskiego. Studia z historii architektury, sztuki i kultury ofiarowane Adamowi Miłobędzkiemu*, Warszawa 1988, s. 189.

⁴⁶ J. Raczkowski, *Kolos malborski. Problematyka warsztatowa i styloznawcza*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 90.

⁴⁷ This aspect was already analysed in the 19th century: A. Witt, *Marienburg. Das Haupthaus des deutsche Ritter-Ordens in dem ehemaligen und in dem gegenwärtigen Zustande*, Königsberg 1854, s. 111; R. Bergau, *Die mosaicierte Marienstatue zu Marienburg und deren Restauration*, „Altpreussische Monatschrift“ 1869, Bd. 6, s. 639.

⁴⁸ M. Poksińska, *Średniowieczny wystrój malarski i rzeźbiarski północnego skrzydła Zamku Wysokiego w Malborku*, [in:] *Zamek Wysoki w Malborku*, s. 186–187.

This type of decoration did not prove durable and suffered damage when exposed to atmospheric conditions. It also provided ineffective protection for gypsum, which is an essentially weak material. In order to protect it from damage, the surface of the statue was covered with a layer of colourful mosaics⁴⁹. As a result, a unique artwork with exceptional artistic values and a deep symbolic meaning was created. Anna Błażejewska considered the original statue as a protective shield, and after it was covered with mosaics – she compared it to brightly-decorated reliquaries⁵⁰. Also, the walls of the recess which housed the statue were decorated with mosaics. It is likely that this took place in ca. 1380. The use of the technique, which was unknown on this side of the Alps and used only in nearby Kwidzyn and Prague, was also linked to wanting to emphasize this artistic foundation.

The object survived until the end of WWII without major damage. Nonetheless, missing mosaic pieces had to be replaced across centuries, and also the fractured hand of the Virgin Mary had to be replaced at the start of the 20th century (Ryc. 1). The results of the most recent conservation works could have been seen as late as in January 1945.

Stages of reconstruction of the Malbork statue

In the 1950s, clearing of rubble began at the High Castle after the Castle complex sustained extensive damage during WWII. Excessive speed of the work performed and lack of suitable supervision could have resulted in the loss of many elements of the architectural features of the church. Only from 1957, thanks to the efforts of Maciej Kilariski, the clearing works assumed a methodical character. The works unveiled various architectural details of St. Mary's Church and St. Anne's Chapel, including sections of the statue in question, each weighing several tonnes (approx. 60% of the monument). Their analysis was the responsibility of Maciej Kilariski, who was employed in 1961 in the newly opened Malbork Castle Museum. First, he made an inventory of the preserved fragments and then he reconstructed the technique in which the statue was constructed and defined the chronology of its erection⁵¹. The statue's full sections weighed more than a tonne. At the beginning of the 1990s, some of the preserved elements were made available to tourists in the cellar under the Grand Master's Palace⁵².

Because of a specific political situation and technical difficulties, the recess in the presbytery of St. Mary's Church remained empty for a number of

⁴⁹ M. Kilariski, *Figura Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem*, s. 185.

⁵⁰ A. Błażejewska, *Rzeźba w państwie krzyżackim*, s. 171.

⁵¹ M. Kilariski, *Figura Matki Boskiej*, s. 183–194.

⁵² M. Kilariski, *Odbudowa i konserwacja zespołu zamkowego w Malborku w latach 1945–2000*, Malbork 2007, s. 131, il. 201.

years, despite the reconstruction of the church conducted in 1966–1967. For many years, Malbork Museum employees carried out stratigraphic investigations and chemical analyses of the artificial stone from which the statue was made and of the preserved layers of medieval polychromy discovered under a layer of mosaics⁵³. In addition, as required by museum exhibitions, inventory drawings were made and the preserved tesserae were used to create a motif of a gold star on a blue background (1990) and a gold bird on a red background (2015). Also, using photographic documentation, a model of the entire figure was prepared, in 1:25 scale⁵⁴.

Based on the analyses of glass corrosion and the investigations of the preserved fragments of the medieval mosaics it can be stated that the glass tesserae most susceptible to damage displayed chemical composition resembling that of a similar object from Prague⁵⁵. In the territory of the Teutonic state in Prussia and in the neighbouring areas, operated the so-called “forest glassworks”⁵⁶. However, today it is difficult to confirm if the mosaics decorating the statue were manufactured at these facilities.

In May 2007, on the initiative of the Malbork Tourist Guides Association (Koło Przewodników Malborskich), the Mater Dei Foundation was established with the aim to acquire funds for the reconstruction of the statue of the Madonna with the Child. This side of the Foundation’s activity was conducive to strengthening of the local identity of the town inhabitants⁵⁷ and directed the attention of the Museum employees to the reconstruction of the Castle’s symbol.

Based on the documentation prepared, the authorities of the Malbork Castle Museum made a decision in 2014 to reconstruct the sculpture using the preserved fragments whose condition was good enough for their reuse). It was also decided that the reconstructed figure will feature an original fragment of the statue’s head and not a gypsum cast from the beginning of the 20th century, which was markedly different from the original⁵⁸.

⁵³ M. Kilariski, *Figura Matki Boskiej*, s. 193; E. Greiner-Wronowa, *Korozja szkieł zabytkowych*, „Ceramika”, vol. 85, 2004, s. 64–67.

⁵⁴ B. Pospieszna, *Konserwacja mozaiki na malborskim posągu Marii z Dzieciątkiem w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, „Studia Zamkowe”, t. II, 2006; eadem *Z piasku i popiołu kegin Unser Libin Frouwin bilde. Sztuka mozaiki w państwie zakonnym w Prusach*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 103.

⁵⁵ Vide: E. Greiner-Wronowa, op. cit., s. 64–67. Por. B. Pospieszna, *Z piasku i popiołu*, s. 103.

⁵⁶ A. Wyrobisz, *Wytwórczość szklarska od połowy XIII do połowy XVII wieku*, [in:] *Polskie szkło do połowy XIX wieku*, ed. Z. Kamińska, Wrocław, Warszawa 1987, s. 50–51; idem, *Szkło w Polsce od XIV do XVII w.*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1968, s. 38, 48–49, 194. Por. H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Wczesnośredniowieczne szklane kostki mozaikowe z Ostrowa Tumskiego w Poznaniu*, [in:] *Przeszłość i perspektywy źródeł materialnych i pisanych*, ed. J. Olczak, Toruń 2005, s. 187–197; B. Pospieszna, *Z piasku i popiołu*, s. 109.

⁵⁷ A. Panek, *Fundacja Mater Dei*, [in:] *Monumentalna figura*, s. 9–13.

⁵⁸ P. Grosicki, op.cit., s. 128–130.

The principal aim of the reconstruction project of St. Mary's Church completed in 2016 and of the damaged monumental sculpture was the versatile use of the original material. In the design phase, a 3D inventory was made of the preserved fragments. Based on the scans obtained and using the original photographic documentation, a design for the Madonna was prepared – a bozzetto.

During the first stage of the works, all preserved fragments of the statue were collected inside one tent. This was followed with the preparation of detailed photographic documentation of the preservation state of the statue fragments and an attempt was made to position them in such a way as to reflect the original appearance of the figure. The elements were disinfected and their surface was subject to preliminary cleaning. Some petrographic samples were taken, and some sections of the original lime render on which the mosaics had been affixed were uncovered. Some residual fragments of an original paintwork (colours of red and gold) depicting the Madonna with the Child were identified under the render⁵⁹.

Elements of the smashed statue were then transported to the workshop where they were guaranteed stable conditions and an ambient temperature to allow for slow drying of all the sections. At this point, drawing documentation and 3D scans of the individual fragments were prepared. Several characteristic fragments were singled out to be subjected to investigation (e.g. X-ray examination to establish the disintegration depth of the original stone, the humidity level of the individual sections of the figure, the density as well as the bending and compressive strength of the stone).

Based on the preserved archival photographs, a gypsum model (bozzetto) of the monumental Virgin Mary was built (in scale 1:4), which was then decorated with glass tesserae. The extended surface area of the statue as well as the blind window and the niche's embrasure is approx. 90 m². Over 300 thousand mosaic pieces are estimated to cover the figure. The glass used in the restoration was between 7 and 12 mm thick, similarly to the Gothic tesserae. Over 1.5 tonnes of mosaic glass were made to order.

The reconstruction of the Malbork Colossus, using the cast technique and gypsum render, was a considerable challenge to the team which worked above the sculpted decorations of St. Mary's Church at the High Castle⁶⁰. Technological problems were linked not solely to the construction process of

⁵⁹ This process is discussed here on the basis of the as-build documentation, which forms a part of the collection of the Malbork Castle Museum: K. Kittel, M. Kozarzewski, P. Gorek, Ł. Bulewicz, M. Caban, M. Pacoszyński, M. Sęczawa, A. Żurek, *Prace konserwatorskie i restauratorskie. Figura Matki Bożej z Dzieciątkiem – Kolos Malborski*, Malbork 2016, Muzeum Zamkowego w Malborku.

⁶⁰ Before the works conducted in 2014 by a team under Marcin Kozarzewski, earlier conservation works of the statue were carried out in 1821–1823 (Carl August Gersdorf, Alessandro Gregori), 1869–1870 (August Gersdorf Junior, Antonio Salviati, Angelo Gagliardott) and in 1903 (Puhl&Wagner company) – vide: B. Pospieszna, *Z piasku i popiołu*, s. 96–103.

the statue, but the method of setting it in the scheduled location. The casting technique (making impressions) in artificial stone has been a topic of scientific discussion for many years⁶¹.

In the first place, the mosaics were applied in the niche behind the figure, and then on the statue of the Madonna. The tesserae were cut to the appropriate side. A projector was set on scaffolding in a place from which the archival photograph had been taken and then the image was projected onto the sculpture to accurately reflect the layout of the tesserae.

Instead of a conclusion

The history of the Malbork Colossus, built in the Middle Ages by the Teutonic Order, continues to be the topic of lively discussion, and in recent years also of spectacular conservation activities. The image of the Virgin Mary returned to society generates a lot of positive emotions which also translate into an important experience for tourists. The symbolism of this iconographic expression, which for centuries was permanently adapted by the local community, tells a lot about the message and charism assumed by the Teutonic Order even to contemporary observers.

The history and the message of this statue are yet to be fully understood. The large number of scientific interpretations proves that this object from the very start served to construct the propaganda image of the Teutonic Order. Nonetheless, through its universal values, the statue also became significant for the subsequent owners of the Castle (and the longest for the Polish State).

The barbarian destruction of the structure at the start of 1945 began the long-term reconstruction process of the Castle thanks to bottom-up social initiatives. For the most part, these works have now been completed. In 2014–2016, the Malbork statue was restored to its original location. These works consisted in the reconstruction of the statue from preserved fragments of the structure which was supplemented with specially prepared (according to historical technology) mosaic material.

⁶¹ Vide: T. Jurkowlaniec, *Gotycka rzeźba architektoniczna w Prusach*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1989, s. 27–28; K. Pospieszny, *Kunststeinverwendung in der Marienburg. Ein Beitrag zur Bautechnik des Backsteingebiete-Werkstätten der Hochgotik*, [in:] *Hoch- und spätmittelalterlicher Stuck. Material – Technik – Stil – Restaurierung*, hg. M. Hoernes, Regensburg 2002, s. 191; idem, *Domus Malbork*, s. 237–238; J. Raczkowski, *Monumentalne zespoły kolegium apostołskiego na terenie dawnego państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach*, Pelplin 2013, s. 133–157.

