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SAINT MARTIN IN POLISH LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT HERALDRY

Summary: Saint. Martin is a very popular character in the Christian tradition. His life and deeds have had a considerable impact on successive generations of Christians, beginning with the Middle Ages and he is still present in the minds of believers. The popularity of this saint in Poland and Europe is reflected in many names of churches, parishes, chapels, altars as well as in art, names and heraldry. This paper presents selected local self-government coats of arms displaying an image of St. Martin or attributes associated with him. The full figure of St. Martin in Polish local self-government heraldry can be found on the coats of arms of five rural communes (the communes of Biskupice, Drużbice, Granowo, Mochowo and Wiśniowa), the coats of arms of two urban communes (the commune of Jawor, the town and commune of Pacanów) and the coat of arms of an urban quarter (Słocina – currently a quarter of Rzeszów, earlier – until 1954 – a commune). Only one of these, i.e. the coat of arms of the commune of Poświętne, refers to St. Martin by objects associated with him. Heraldic representations of Martin of Tours can be found, for example, in Germany, especially in Hesse, Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, Mainz, but also in Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, Finland and Ukraine.

Keywords: St. Martin of Tours, heraldry, worship of saints, commune, local self-government, Poland.

Introduction

St. Martin of Tours is one of those few saints who have exerted a great and diverse impact after their death (Starowieyski, 2012, p. 11) on the religious, social and even political life of individuals and whole countries. Martin has made Tours one of the main pilgrimage destinations in Europe, along with Jerusalem, Rome and Compostela. (Nowak, 2019, p. 251) Although hagiographic stories present the saint's life in terms of miracles with many legendary threads, one should bear in mind that he was a real person. (Malewska, 2012, p. 237) His life and work, as well as the places where he lived, were popularised in the works of Sulpicius Severus, widely read in the Middle Ages: *The Life of*

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St. Martin, Letters and Dialogues on the Life of St. Martin. His works were very popular and were regarded as credible until the 18th century. (Starowieyski, 2012, p. 27)

Currently, not only is St. Martin not a “forgotten” saint, but he is also fit to become one of the patrons of the future. (Malewska, 2012, p. 238) When remembering the bishop of Tours, Benedict XVI described him as “an icon of charity”, which St. Martin became for many generations. (Benedict XVI, 2008, pp. 58–59) Widely recognised and accepted by the reformation tradition, being among the saints of the first millennium, Martin is “a saint of undivided Christendom”, venerated by the Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and Anglican Churches. (Nowak, 2019, p. 245) According to Pope Francis, the Bishop of Tours should be regarded as a model of a saint that contemporary Europe needs. St. Martin made an evangelisation effort, almost on the borderland of the empire, on the Gaulish province, where he became not only ‘a builder of peace, striving for greater solidarity and paying greater attention to low-life people: beggars, the excluded, and those refusing to take part in fighting with weapons’¹. (Nowak, 2019, p. 245)

St. Martin is a very popular character in the Christian tradition. His life and deeds have had a considerable impact on successive generations of Christians, beginning with the Middle Ages. Widely known in the past, admired over the centuries for his charity and goodness, this extraordinary and venerated saint is still present in the minds of believers. Churches, chapels and altars have been named after him for ages. The character of St. Martin has attracted the interest of many artists, who presented his image on many paintings, tapestries, in sculptures and stained-glass windows. He has also been the main character in many literary pieces. The Bishop of Tours has been entrusted with the care of many guilds and professional associations, and prayers have been sent up for his intercession. The name of the saint is mentioned in proverbs and folk sayings even today. The image of St. Martin can be found on coins, seals and banners. The saint’s popularity is also reflected in heraldry.

Many heraldic representations of St. Martin can be found, for example, in Germany, especially in Hesse, Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, Mainz, but also in Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, Finland and Ukraine. The hope for St. Martin’s care and intercession seems to be the reason for his presence in Polish heraldry.

The aim of this study is to present the Polish local self-government coats of arms with St. Martin or attributes associated with him. Although local self-government heraldry denotes contemporary coats of arms (territorial or civic)

¹ The original language quote: The original language quote: “budowniczym pokoju, starań o większą solidarność oraz zwrócenia większej uwagi na grupy ludzi z marginesu: żebraków, osób wykluczonych, odmawiających walki z bronią u nogi”.

of all forms of local self-government units, i.e. communes, counties and voivodships, this paper focuses mainly on the coats of arms of selected Polish communes². Those coats of arms which display the whole figure of St. Martin will be discussed first. This will be done alphabetically and separately for rural and urban communes³. The considerations will be concluded with a description of a coat of arms which has St. Martin-related attributes instead of his figure in the shield. The discussion will be interestingly supplemented with a description of the coat of arms of Słocina (a quarter of Rzeszów now, a commune before 1954).

Origin of coats of arms and their symbolism

Coats of arms as iconic signs are a unique type of semaphores, which make it possible to convey a special and precise meaning. (Wójcik, 2010) The history of coats of arms goes back to the tradition of signs carried during battles. (Dudziński, 2007, p. 9) Existing for centuries, heraldry, according to Stefan Krzysztof Kuczyński, has developed its own language based on symbols, which means that the contents are conveyed according to strict heraldic rules. (Kuczyński, 1973, pp. 29–43) For centuries, they were regarded as a specific type of sign which facilitated identification because they showed affiliation with a family or a community.

Coats of arms appeared in Europe in the 12th century and sometime later in Poland. They reached Silesia through Bohemia in the 13th century and their use in the other parts of Poland started later – in the 14th century. (Bebłowski – Radziwiłłowicz, 2000, pp. 10–11) Although the Western models were a reference point in creating coats of arms in Poland, it appears that the impact of the native heritage was never ceased. (Sobkowicz, 2016, p. 254)

According to the traditionally accepted categorisation of heraldry, it can be divided into coats of arms used by nobility, ecclesial and those used by local self-governments. (Bebłowski – Radziwiłłowicz, 2000, p. 9; Szymański, 1972, pp. 326–345) Gradual expansion of the range of individuals and institutions using coats of arms began in the early 14th century. When analysing the origin

² The three-level administrative (territorial) division of Poland was introduced on 1. January 1999. According to it, the Polish territory was divided into voivodeships, then into poviats (including gminas which have the status of cities with poviat rights) and gminas. This division replaced the two-level administrative division into voivodeships and gminas, which had been in force since 1975. As of 1. January 2022, the administrative division of Poland comprises: 16 voivodeships; 314 poviats and 66 cities with poviat rights; 2477 gminas (including 302 urban gminas, 662 urban-rural gminas and 1513 rural gminas).

³ Types of municipalities and urban and rural areas in public statistics are distinguished on the basis of the territorial division of the country using the identifiers of the National Official Register of Territorial Division of the Country.

of coats of arms, one should bear in mind that originally, such signs were created to identify the lay feudal elite. They were then used by knights and later, they were gradually adopted by the clergy and bourgeoisie and finally by state offices and institutions. (Piechocka-Kłós, 2016, p. 118) The relevant coats of arms were borne by kings, dukes, knights, bourgeoisie as well as by provinces and lands. (Dudziński, 2007, p. 9) It was a kind of a sign of “affiliation” and membership.

Although the tradition is relatively distant⁴, the development of local self-government heraldry did not take place until the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Communal heraldry has been relatively recent, its beginnings date back to 1990. (Gołdyn, 2005, p. 77) This seems to have been stimulated by the administrative reform implemented after Poland was divided into communes, counties and voivodships. The new legal regulations made it possible for communal authorities to return to the historical signs used in the past (if such existed) or to create new ones, as well as to use and propagate coats of arms as signs of local community identity. (Bebłowski – Radziwiłłowicz, 2000, p. 6)

Currently, the legal order regarding municipal coats of arms is regulated by various legal acts. These include *The Act on local self-government of 8 March 1990*⁵, *The Act of badges and uniforms of 21 December 1978*⁶ and regulations: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers on plaques and official seals of 7 December 1955*⁷. Owing to them, every local self-government can pass a relevant resolution to decide on its own symbols. Nevertheless, each coat of arms, fulfilling the legal and representation functions of local self-governments, regardless of its level, has to be designed with respect for the rules of “heraldic law” and an opinion of the Heraldic Committee⁸ has to be ultimately issued (Adameczewski, 2014, p. 86) to avoid lawlessness and, in consequence, introducing random symbols to the coats of arms. (Sobkowicz, 2016, p. 254; Gołdyn, 2005, p. 78)

⁴ Voivodships, while creating their coats of arms, made use of historical symbols of a given region, for example, of a ruling dynasty, preserved in centuries-old tradition. The history of Polish coats of arms dates back to the times of the partition of Poland. Thus, they often contain eagles and lions, as relics of the extinct princely lines of the Piast dynasty, as the prince’s coat of arms was automatically transferred to the land he ruled. (Dudziński, 1997, p. 13). Bearing in mind the origin and development of municipal heraldry in Poland, following the example of most heraldists, the seal of a given town, the oldest of which date back as far as to the 13th century, should often be regarded as the prototype of the coat of arms. From the 16th century, the images on seals, subjected to the process of heraldry, started to become official municipal coats of arms. More or less from the same period come the documents confirming granting coats of arms to towns in Poland (Gołdyn, 2008, p. 16).

⁵ See: Journal of Laws 1990 No. 16, item 95, as amended.

⁶ See: Journal of Laws 1978, No. 31 item 130, as amended.

⁷ See: Journal of Laws 1955, No. 47 item 316, as amended.

⁸ The Heraldic Commission (established in 1999) is a consultative and advisory body to the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration in matters related to heraldry (the science of coats of arms) and vexillology (the science of vexillery, i.e. flags, banners, banners, etc.). Its activities concern the proper use of state and local self-government symbols.

Currently, there are many symbols used in the coats of arms of both rural and urban communes. When creating coats of arms, heraldists are inspired by flora and fauna, geographic conditions and the natural position of the area, architectural, sacral and lay motifs, important historical events and even ethnographic motifs. Religious symbols, often found in the shield, can also be mentioned here. This group is dominated by images of the Virgin Mary, saints, bishops, crosses, etc. The saints on local self-government coats of arms are usually patrons of the local parish churches. Some authors of a new, customised coat of arms were inspired by old municipal, court or parish seals. The saints found in municipal coats of arms include the apostles (e.g. Peter, Paul, Andrew, James), martyrs (e.g. Florian, Lawrence, John of Nepomuk) and other saints (e.g. George, Catherine, Michael). (Gołdyn, 2005, pp. 79–84) A well-deserved place in the Polish heraldry, among other saints, is also occupied by St. Martin.

Religious symbols in heraldry are a relatively frequent motif, not only in Poland, but worldwide. According to some scholars, religious symbols in a broad sense of the term come second in terms of frequency of occurrence. (Gołdyn, 2008) Images of saints or attributes associated with them are the most frequent religious symbols on the shield.

Life, cult and patronage

Who was the man, who was so popular in Christian Europe in the Middle Ages? St. Martin lived in the 4th century (born in 316 or 317, died in 397). It is not known whether he was of Roman or barbarian origin. (Starowieyski, 2012, pp.19–20) He may have had Celtic or Slavic roots. (Malewska, 2012, pp. 238–239) He was pronounced a saint as one of the first outside the group of martyrs. The Catholic Church remembers St. Martin on 11 November. (Niewęglowski, 2006, p. 181) The founder of the first monasteries in the Western Church, a monk, a Roman legionnaire in his youth, he was born in Sabaria in the province of Pannonia in what is now Hungary as a son of a Roman soldier in a pagan family. The name Martinus clearly suggests that he was to be sacrificed to the god Mars and serve in the army according to the family tradition. He was educated in Pavia. St. Martin's father was a tribune, so Martin, as a soldier's son, was subject to conscription. According to Marek Starowieyski, he was 15 years old when he served in a select guard (*alaescholares*), which usually included barbarians. (Starowieyski, 2012, pp. 19–20)

St. Martin's encounter with Christianity took place before he started his military service, because he was already a catechumen at the time. (Hoever,

1999, p. 255) It probably happened in Pavia. According to the account of Sulpicius Severus, when Martin was serving in Gaul, where Constantius' legions were stationed, he met a poor man, shaking from cold, on a winter morning in 338, and he covered the man with half of his soldier's coat. (*Life of St. Martin* 3) It is possible that during his stay in Gaul, the later bishop of Tours was in touch with Hillary, bishop of Poitiers, (*Life of St. Martin* 5) who should be regarded as the most eminent representative of the Church in Gaul. Martin was baptised a year later, when he was 26 years old, in 339. (Daniluk, 2006, 1232) At the time, he started planning to quit the military service. According to the custom of the time, Christians were forbidden to do military service as it implied bloodletting. St. Martin was released from duty in 356 by Julian the Apostate. (*Life of St. Martin* 4) and he was appointed bishop of Tours in 371.

St. Martin represented a type of bishop-monk, keeping his modest, even ascetic, lifestyle. This must have been disapproved by some of the Gaulish bishops, especially those coming from nobility, who were surprised to see a clergyman so different from themselves. One of them was Defensor of Angers. St. Martin soon had a group of followers. His activities were approved enthusiastically by Paulin of Nola, Sulpicius Severus and Arborius. (Starowieyski, 2012, p. 23; Malewska, 2012, p. 242) Martin was a bishop until his death. He died on 8 November 397 in Candés on the Loire during a pastoral journey, and he was buried in Tours three days later.

His veneration in the Western church started soon after his death. Crowds of pilgrims started visiting his grave as early as the 5th century. Perpetuus erected a vast basilica over the saint's grave in place of an old wooden one built by Brice. It was consecrated in 470. (Starowieyski, 2012, p. 31) The worship of the saint started spreading in France, and it diffused rapidly all over Christian Europe, beginning with the mid-6th century. St. Martin practically became the patron of France (Daniluk, 2006, 1232–1233) and the Merovingian dynasty from the moment King Clovis I declared him as the lord and guardian of Franconian kings and Franconian people. (Nowak, 2019, p. 249) Successive kings of France submitted to his protection for the next thousand years. Moreover, St. Martin is a patron of many dioceses, including the Amiens diocese in France, Mainz and Rottenburg-Stuttgart in Germany and Eisenstadt in Austria, as well as lands, i.e. Burgenland in Austria and the Swiss canton of Schwyz. (Nowak, 2019, p. 249) He is also a patron of many Polish towns and cities, i.e. Poznań, Jarocin, Bydgoszcz, Jawor, Opatów and Kętrzyn.

The popularity of this saint in Poland and Europe is reflected in many names of churches, parishes, chapels, altars, as well as in art, names and heraldry. There are over 5,750 churches with St. Martin as the patron in Europe alone, mainly in France (about 4 thousand), Italy (700), Spain (over 500), Hungary

(350) and Poland (nearly 200). (Nowak, 2019, p. 249) These show that the worship of St. Martin has been spreading for centuries.

It should also be mentioned that according to folk religiosity, St. Martin is a patron of children, tanners, hoteliers, riders, cavalry, blacksmiths, tailors, millers, shepherds, weavers, prisoners, vineyard owners and beggars. He is also a patron of the Swiss Guard, knights, soldiers, travellers and refugees. (Fros – Sowa, 2007, p. 50) His attributes include a jug, a goose, a horse, a book, a church model, two dogs or a beggar at his feet and a coat cut in half. (Nowak, 2019, p. 250)

St. Martin is shown in iconography as a bishop or, much more often, as a knight, less frequently as a legionnaire, sitting on a horse, accompanied by a beggar, to whom he gives half of his coat. (Pastwa, 2006c, 1235–1237) An image of the saint in a “life scene”, when, in an act of charity and kindness, he helps someone in need, is a frequent motif in European heraldry. In shields of local self-government coats of arms in Poland, he is usually presented as in the Western iconography as a knight. He is shown less frequently in accordance with the Eastern tradition in episcopal robes and with a pastoral staff.

Coats of arms with St. Martin

According to tradition, placing a patron saint on a coat of arms guarantees that the whole community will be favoured with grace and protection and ensures auspiciousness and safety to all the residents under the patron’s care. (Piechocka-Kłos, 2016, p. 120)

The full figure of St. Martin in Polish local self-government heraldry can be found in the coats of arms of five rural communes (the communes of Biskupice, Drużbice, Granowo, Mochowo, Wiśniowa), the coats of arms of two urban communes (the commune of Jawor, the town and commune of Pacanów) and the coat of arms of an urban quarter (Słocina – currently a quarter of Rzeszów, earlier – until 1954 – a village and a commune). Only one of these, i.e. the coat of arms of the commune of Poświętne, refers to St. Martin by attributes associated with him. In this case, the coat of arms does not display an image of the saint, but only his coat and sword.

The coat of arms of the commune of Biskupice (a rural commune situated in the Małopolskie Voivodship, county of Wieliczka) displays an image of St. Martin in the central part of the shield against the blue background. The coat of arms was approved by the Commune Council in 2003. The saint is sitting on a white horse. The horse’s right foreleg is raised. St. Martin is dressed as a Roman legionnaire, with no beard or a moustache. His head is turned slightly

left. He is cutting his red coat, which he is holding in his left hand, lifting it slightly, with a sword. A yellow halo surrounds the saint's head in a Roman helmet. There is a semi-naked beggar at the saint's feet. His right arm is raised and he is propping himself up with his left one. Moreover, there are white, crossed keys in the top right (heraldically) corner of the shield and a white cross in the top left corner. The keys symbolise St. Peter (the patron of the St. Peter and St. Paul parish in Bodzanów), and the cross symbolises the Finding of the Holy Cross parish in Łazany. The colours of the coat of arms comply with the rules of heraldry: red – the saint's coat and sandals, the horse's harness, the beggar's modest clothing; yellow – the halo; white – the horse, the armour and the helmet, the cross and the keys; blue – the shield's background⁹. That St. Martin's image is placed on the coat of arms of the commune of Biskupice must have been inspired by his patronage of the local church and parish. St. Martin was first made the patron of the church in Biskupice in the 12th or in the early 13th century.

An image of St. Martin is also displayed on the shield of the coat of arms of the Commune of Drużbice (a rural commune in the Łódzkie Voivodship, county of Bełchatów.) The coat of arms displays the full figure of a bishop with a white beard, moustache and hair. The bishop, standing on the right of the field, considered to be St. Martin, performs the blessing gesture with the right arm, bent and raised, whereas he is holding the Bible against his chest with the left one. He is also holding a pastoral staff, propped on the ground, on the left in the elbow bend. The bishop is clad in a long, white (silver) robe, tied in the waist, and a red coat with yellow trimming. His head is in a mitre surrounded by a yellow halo. There is a goose with its head raised towards the bishop in the background in the lower left part of the field. It can be regarded as an attribute identifying the figure. In the top left part of the field there is a string of straw, like in the Nałęcz coat of arms (although many heraldists identify the object as a shawl), as a reference to the former owners of Drużbice and the hereditary lay patrons of the parish¹⁰. Historical research confirms that St. Martin was the original patron of the local parish church, currently the St. Roch church.

Another commune with a heraldic image of St. Martin is the commune of Granowo (a rural commune in the Wielkopolskie Voivodship, county of Grodzisk.) The appearance of the coat of arms is regulated by the Resolution of the Council of Commune of 2002. The coat of arms of the commune of Granowo is

⁹ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. XII/96, 03 of the Council of the Commune of Biskupice of 3 December 2003 on establishing the coat of arms, the flag and the seal of the Commune of Biskupice.*

¹⁰ The coat of arms description according to appendix 1a to *Resolution No. XVII/128/2008 of the Council of Commune of Drużbice of 23 June 2008.*

a tripartite shield. It is bipartite per fess and its upper part is bipartite per pale. The figure of St. Martin is shown against the upper, blue-yellow part. The saint is sitting on a white horse in a yellow harness, dressed in episcopal robes. He is wearing a red-yellow (gold) robe and a yellow-white (golden-silver) mitre. The bishop is depicted with black hair, beard and moustache, also in the same colour. Both the rider with the raised arm and the horse with the raised foreleg are moving to the heraldic left (sinister). Moreover, against the background of the bottom (green) part, there are two crossed yellow (golden) ears of cereal¹¹. The figure of the saint is a reference to the parish and church of Granowo. The local St. Martin parish church was first mentioned in historical sources in the late 13th century.

The coat of arms of the commune of Mochowo (a rural commune in the Mazowieckie Voivodship, county of Sierpc) shows the patron of the local church and parish (St. Martin) as a young black-haired man without a beard or a moustache in a scene in which he gives part of his coat to a poor man. The figure of the saint is shown in the red field of the shield. As a rider, St. Martin is wearing silver armour and a golden coat, and he is sitting on a silver horse. His head is surrounded by a golden halo. He is cutting his golden coat, which he is holding in his left hand, lifting it slightly, with a sword held in his right hand.

There is a naked man with raised hands sitting at the bottom of the shield¹².

St. Martin is also present in the coat of arms of the commune of Wiśniowa (a rural commune in the Małopolskie Voivodship, county of Myślenice.) His figure, sitting on a white (silver) horse, in white armour, is at the centre of the blue shield. Turned to the heraldic right (dexter), the horse has his right foreleg raised. St. Martin, turned right, is shown without a beard or moustache, with his head *en face*, surrounded by a golden halo. The figure of St. Martin is cutting his red coat held in the raised left hand with the silver sword with the yellow (golden) hilt. At the bottom of the shield, under the horse, there is a semi-naked beggar, kneeling on the ground and wearing only a loincloth, with raised arms. The horse's harness, with the saddle and the beggar's clothes, are golden. Two eight-ray comets with the tails turned towards each other, situated on both sides of the shield head, are also golden. The figure of St. Martin in the coat of arms on the commune of Wiśniowa refers to the patron of the medieval parish in the commune. The two comets refer to the astronomical observatory (the first one in Poland¹³)

¹¹ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. II/5/2002 of the Council of the Commune of Granowo of 10 December 2002 on the Statute of the Commune of Granowo*.

¹² Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. 264/XXXVII/2017 of the Council of the Commune of Mochowo of 14 July 2017 on the Statute of the Commune of Mochowo*.

¹³ This is where the first two Polish comets were discovered: Orkisz 1925 C (1925) and Koho-Kozik-Lis (1936).

existing during the inter-war period on Lubomir Mountain, used by astronomers of the Jagiellonian University¹⁴.

An image of the Saint of Tours is also displayed on the coat of arms of the commune of Jawor (an urban commune in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship, county of Jawor). St. Martin is the patron of the town and of the local church and parish. The shield displays an image of St. Martin in a golden halo, sitting on a white horse, cutting off part of a red coat, along with a semi-naked beggar, with a red loincloth and raised arms. The field of the shield is blue¹⁵. The image of St. Martin as a seal on the municipal documents of Jawor appeared for the first time in the early 14th century.

By a decision of the Council of the Commune of Pacanów, the coat of arms displaying an image of St. Martin is one of the symbols of the town and commune (a town situated in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, county of Busko). The coat of arms displays a figure of St. Martin sitting on a white horse, in grey armour on a green field. The saint is cutting up his coat with a sword held in his right hand. The horse, with the raised right foreleg, walks towards the heraldic right, St. Martin turns sideways. There is a semi-naked beggar, sitting on the ground next to the horse, turned left, with raised arms. Both the saint's coat and the beggar's mantle are red. The horse's harness and the saddle, as well as the halo around St. Martin's head, are golden¹⁶. The figure of the saint refers to the basilica in Pacanów, under his patronage. The cult of St. Martin in Pacanów goes back to the early 12th century. This is confirmed by the founding act of the St. Martin church in Pacanów, issued by Bishop Maur between 1110 and 1117. (Góra, 2016)

The coat of arms of the commune of Poświętne (a rural commune in the Podlaskie Voivodship, county of Białystok) is the only one referring to St. Martin not by his image on the shield, but by objects associated with him. Therefore, the commune coat of arms displays a golden emblem of the Korab coat of arms at the bottom part of the shield, with a golden, silver-lined coat of St. Martin in the upper part. The coat is cut up in two parts with a sword to the right (dexter)¹⁷. St. Martin's coat refers to the history of the oldest parish in Poświętne (formerly Wielkogrzeby), of which St. Martin of Tours was the first

¹⁴ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. XXII/152/05 of the Council of the Commune of Wiśniowa of 31 March 2005 on establishing the coat of arms, the flag and the seal of the Commune of Wiśniowa*.

¹⁵ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. II/14/2018 of the Council of the Town of Jawor of 5 December 2018 on the Statute of the Commune of Jawor*.

¹⁶ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. VI/36/2019 of the Council of the Town of Pacanów of 11 February 2019 on the Statute of the Town and Commune of Pacanów*.

¹⁷ Description of the coat of arms according to *Resolution No. XXVIII/190/14 of the Council of the Commune of Poświętne of 29 April 2014 on establishing the coat of arms, the flag, the banner, the table flag and the seal of the Commune of Poświętne and the rules of their use*.

patron. Currently, there is neither a parish nor a church under his patronage in Poświętne.

Finally, a presentation of Polish local self-government coats of arms with an image of St. Martin or his attributes should include the coat of arms of Słocina (currently a quarter of Rzeszów, a town with county rights in the Podkarpackie Voivodship). The coat of arms of Słocina (Rzeszów) shows an image of St. Martin clad in episcopal robes, standing on the lower arch of a stylised letter S, which symbolises the name of the former village of Słocina. The shield is light green, with a contrasting white alba and a chasuble, which is grey with blue shades, with a red lining. The saint has a golden mitre on his head. There is a goose standing at Martin's feet. Along with the book which he is holding in his right hand, it is one of his attributes. St. Martin is holding a pastoral staff in his left hand. The crown at the top is a reminder that Słocina used to be a royal village¹⁸. Placing the saint's image in the coat of arms is evidence of his popularity in Słocina, which dates back to the 17th century, when the residents believed that he had helped them to survive the plague of cholera. Currently, there is the St. Roch and St. Martin church in the eastern quarter of Rzeszów.

Conclusion

In conclusion of these considerations on the presence of St. Martin in Polish local self-government heraldry, one should stress his great popularity in Poland. Local self-governments whose coats of arms display an image of St. Martin are situated in different places in Poland. Coats of arms with his image can be found in communes in the Dolnośląskie (Jawor), Łódzkie (Drużbice), Małopolskie (Biskupice, Wiśniowa), Mazowieckie (Mochowo), Podkarpackie (Poświętne, Słocina), Świętokrzyskie (Pacanów) and Wielkopolskie (Granowo) voivodships. Altogether, there are seven communes – mainly rural (5) and less frequently urban (2) – with an image of St. Martin on their coats of arms. There is also an image of the saint on the coat of arms of Słocina. Eight of them display the whole figure of the saint (Biskupice, Drużbice, Granowo, Mochowo, Wiśniowa, Jawor, Pacanów, Słocina). Objects associated with him are displayed on the shield of one (Poświętne). An image of St. Martin sitting on a horse is shown on six coats of arms (Biskupice, Granowo, Mochowo, Wiśniowa, Jawor, Pacanów). On five, he is accompanied by a beggar to whom he is giving half of his coat (Biskupice, Mochowo, Wiśniowa, Jawor, Pacanów). He is wearing armour in four (Mochowo, Wiśniowa, Jawor, Pacanów), he is dressed as a Roman

¹⁸ Description of the coat of arms after Elżbieta Hałoń. (Hałoń, 2020)

legionnaire in one (Biskupice), and he is wearing episcopal robes in three coats of arms (Družbice, Granowo, Słocina). This study may not exhaust the subject as the number of local self-government units whose coats of arms display an image of St. Martin or his attributes may change as a consequence of some administrative changes.

Nearly all the coats of arms listed above and described in detail are those used officially by Polish communal local self-governments. A considerable number of them were adopted by resolutions in the first years of the 21st century. The decision to choose St. Martin and place his image on the shield was usually based on historical studies of old municipal, court or parish seals. In their absence, patrons of parishes or other saints were used as sources of inspiration.

Nowadays, we still need authority figures and credible guides, but there are few of them in the contemporary world. Saints can be such figures as they still attract the interest of ordinary people and their presence in heraldry allows us to remember them.

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Święty Marcin w polskiej heraldyce samorządowej

Streszczenie: W tradycji chrześcijańskiej św. Marcin jest popularną postacią. Jego życie i działalność wywarły znaczny wpływ na kolejne pokolenia chrześcijan począwszy od średniowiecza. Współcześnie nadal jest obecny w świadomości wiernych. Popularność Świętego w Polsce i Europie znajduje odzwierciedlenie w licznych wezwaniach kościołów, parafii, kaplic, ołtarzy oraz w sztuce, imiennictwie i heraldyce. W artykule scharakteryzowano i omówiono wybrane polskie herby samorządowe, które na swoich tarczach herbowych ukazują postać św. Marcina lub atrybuty z nim utożsamiane. W polskiej heraldyce samorządowej pełna postać św. Marcina widnieje m.in. na pięciu herbach gmin wiejskich (gminy: Biskupice, Drużbice, Granowo, Mochowo, Wiśniowa), dwóch herbach gmin miejskich (gmina Jawor, miasto i gmina Pacanów) oraz jednym herbie dzielnicy (Ślęcina – obecna dzielnica Rzeszowa, do 1954 r. gmina). Tylko jeden z omówionych, tj. herb gminy Poświętne, odwołuje się do św. Marcina poprzez utożsamianie z nim przedmioty. Herbowe wyobrażenie św. Marcina z Tours spotykamy m.in. w Niemczech, zwłaszcza w Hesji, Bawarii, Nadrenii-Palatynacie, Moguncji, ale również w Czechach, Austrii, Słowacji, Finlandii i na Ukrainie.

Słowa kluczowe: św. Marcin z Tours, heraldyka, kult świętych, gmina, samorząd, Polska.

