



## Confraternities of Knights in Prussia and their Art Foundations in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era

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### Summary

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In the late Middle Ages in Prussian big towns some brotherhoods of knights consociating the elites of rich burghers came into being. It can assume, it was connected to some extent with local knightly tradition created by Teutonic Order. On the other hand, some facts allow to claim that these brotherhoods had Western origins and they were the symptom of broad phenomenon of the imitation of knightly culture by burghers. In the present paper we shall take a closer look at art foundations in the domain of sculpture, painting and silver work by the brotherhoods of knights: St George and St Reinhold. Iconography in these foundations, what is obvious, focused on the emphasizing of the patrons saints of the brotherhoods. We shall see that in some work of art founded by private sponsors the hints as to the affiliations of him to brotherhood of knights can be seen, we shall see also an example of brotherhood's foundation with iconographic references to their most important members. Very well founders' acquaintance with the Central – and West European art offer and sophisticated taste are striking. High, extraordinary standard of these art foundations reflected elitism of brotherhoods of knights. Both confraternities' art foundations should have reflected their position, arouse admiration and envy. They were elements of competition with other social groups. They triggered artistic rivalry as well. The replicas having been commissioned by other confraternities, other social groups or even by other fractions of chivalric associations testify this fact.

### Bractwa rycerskie w Prusach i ich fundacje artystyczne w późnym średniowieczu i wczesnej epoce nowożytnej (Streszczenie)

**Słowa kluczowe:**  
bractwa rycerskie,  
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średniowiecze,  
epoka  
wczesnonowożytna

U schyłku średniowiecza w wielkich miastach pruskich powstało kilka bractw rycerskich zrzeszających elity bogatych mieszczan. Można przypuszczać, że miało to po części związek z lokalną tradycją rycerską stworzoną przez Krzyżaków. Jednak pewne fakty pozwalają twierdzić, że bractwa te miały również korzenie zachodnioeuropejskie i były przejawem szerszego zjawiska naśladowania kultury rycerskiej przez mieszczan. W niniejszym artykule skoncentrowano się na

dwóch najważniejszych bractwach rycerskich działających w Prusach: św. Jerzego i św. Reinholda. Omówiono miejsca w przestrzeni średniowiecznych miast pruskich, w których funkcjonowały oba stowarzyszenia, formy ich wizualnej reprezentacji; zwrócono też uwagę na ich znaczenie dla sztuki w Prusach. Wiele spośród fundacji artystycznych obu bractw to dzieła odznaczające się bardzo wysokim poziomem artystycznym. Nierzadko były to importy z czołowych ówczesnych ośrodków artystycznych. Dzieła te świadczą o wielkiej dbałości ich właścicieli o wysokojakościową wizualną reprezentację. Uderza bardzo dobra orientacja fundatorów w ówczesnej środkowo- i zachodnioeuropejskiej ofercie artystycznej i wyrafinowany gust. Niepospolity standard tych zamówień stanowił odzwierciedlenie elitarności obu rycerskich bractw. Fundacje obu bractw miały odzwierciedlać ich rangę, budzić podziw i zazdrość. Były elementem rywalizacji z innymi grupami społecznymi. Wyzwalały też rywalizację artystyczną. Świadczą o tym ich repliki zamawiane przez inne stowarzyszenia, kręgi społeczne bądź inne odłamy tego samego bractwa.

Confraternities were one of the distinctive manifestations of social life in the late Middle Ages<sup>1</sup>. They were extremely durable phenomenon with universal extent. They began to appear at the beginning of the second millennium, accomplishing their highest point in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance; and their relicts exist until now. Religion left a strong imprint on their activity. Care of soul salvation belonged to the main aims of their engagement. Charitable activity and aid to confraters were very important as well. These associations acted according to the rules defined in their statutes. On the one hand, some groups of confraternities had egalitarian character because they consociated people of different social states, different professions, both men and women. On the other hand, there were confraternities in which membership depended on material census or profession; these type of confraternities fulfilled beyond religious aims also political or economic function; these association had exclusive nature and were oriented on rivalry. Confraternities had great impact on the development of many cults (Dompnier, Vismara 2008; Ehrich, Oberste 2010). It expressed itself also through works of art. Images of saint patrons of confraternities were set on altars in their chapels, secular residences and banners. Cult and representational needs caused that confraternities played very important function in whole Europe as art founders<sup>2</sup>. Confraternities appeared numerously in big towns of Prussia: in Gdańsk, Elbląg, Toruń, Braniewo and Königsberg (Czarciński 1993). In 1570, there were 34 confraternities and guilds in Elbląg; even more of that kind of associations were

<sup>1</sup> On medieval confraternities see e.g. (Le Bras 1956: 423–462 (chapter: *Les confréries chrétienne*); Remling 1980: 89–112; Remling 1986: 1–53; Johaneke (Hrsg. Von) 1993; Schneider 1994: 65–87; Frank 2002; Militzer 2002; Helbich 2009/2010: 79–117).

<sup>2</sup> On that see e.g. (Humfrey 1988: 401–423; Eisenbichler 1991; Schiferl 1995: 207–246; Militzer 1999: 35–51; Wisch, Ahl 2000; Vincent 2001: 253–276; von Mallinckrodt 2002: 119–140; Dehmer 2004: 34–40 (see: 2. 3 *Exkurs: Konfraternitäten als Kunstpatrone*); Dehmer 2005: 206–214; Eckstein 2005: 9–32).

active in Gdańsk. Among Prussian confraternities there were some that invoked chivalric traditions (Woźniński 1988: 79–89; Selzer 1996: 93 ff, 123 ff; Wenta 2005: 199–213). They had saint knights as patrons and heroes from chivalric romances were very close to them; they preserved a memory of historical events, in which knighthood played important role; they organized tournaments. Such a character was common to the confraternities of St George, St Reinhold, St Martin, partially to Three Holy Magi's confraternity and known only from Gdańsk Malbork confraternity. Genesis of these associations is complex. We can assume that, in some extent, they were connected to local chivalric tradition created by Teutonic Order, which ruled whole Prussia by 1454, and not like after this date only little, eastern part of its territory. On the other hand, some facts allow to claim that these confraternities had Western origins and they were the symptom of broad phenomenon of the imitation of the chivalric culture by burghers<sup>3</sup>.

In present paper we shall focus on two most important chivalric confraternities acted in Prussia: St George and St Reinhold. Prussian confraternities of St George emerged in the first half of 14th century (Gehrke 1895: 24; Simson 1900: 3; Hipler 1881: 608 f; Grunau 1955; Selzer 1996: 109 ff, 123 ff; Pilecka 2005: *passim*). The oldest one is known from Toruń. According to Zerneck's chronicle, confraternity in Toruń was established in 1311 by Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, the grand master of the Teutonic Order (Semrau 1930: 24)<sup>4</sup>. From the very beginning it had elite character, because, as mentioned in that record, only participants of combats against non-believers in Prussia could belong to it (Semrau 1930: 24). Confraternities of St George were established in Elbląg, Gdańsk and Braniewo too. Casus of these associations points that chivalric tradition grafted in the Teutonic Order's period was continued by rich burghers also after the fall of the Teutonic Knights. In contrary to St George's confraternities, St Reinhold's confraternity emerged only in the post Teutonic Order's period as quite new formation consociating merchants. They referenced to chivalric ethos and customs in their activities, although in fact they had nothing to do with Knighthood. The oldest confraternity of St Reinhold in Prussia was recorded in Toruń. Around 1460 it was admitted to the local Artus Court (Heuer 1917: 7). Gdańsk confraternity under Saint Reinhold's protection was mentioned for the first time in 1481 (Simson 1900: 36).

Both associations are very interesting due to relatively well recorded, both materially and archivally, art foundation activity and due to fact, that majority of work commissioned by them present very high artistic standard. We shall analyse where both confraternities functioned in the space of medieval Prussian towns; we shall look at forms of their visual representation; we shall point out their significance for art in Prussia.

Like many other associations and guilds, confraternities of St George and St Reinhold had their private chapels in main parish churches. In Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk, St George's confraternity chapel was located in the northern arm of the transept

<sup>3</sup> On imitation of the chivalric culture by burghers see e.g. (Selzer 1996: 66 ff; Crouzet-Pavan 2008: 1748; Paravicini 2013: *passim*).

<sup>4</sup> See also (Pilecka 2005: 313, note 23).

but the exact space used by confraters was larger, because the altar stood beside the pillar in front of chapel, and to the confraternity belonged also adjacent wall (Hirsch 1843–1847: 430; Drost 1963: 133). The space belonging to confraternity distinguished not only by its size but also by its location near main altar. From original décor of the chapel preserved some elements: sculpted image of St George against wall painting which completes whole composition, the retable, to which was added triptych of the Last Judgement by Hans Memling, fragments of liturgical vestments and missal. Archival records report about silver reliquary of St George belonging to this chapel<sup>5</sup>.

The Chapel of the confraternity of St Reinhold was located in the same church, from the western side, on the extension of the northern aisle, next to the tower (Hirsch 1843–1847: 434–441; Drost 1963: 103–104). From the chapel comes for sure a retable. The chapel was maybe location of silver reliquary of St Barbara (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 56–59, il. 18–20; Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1997: 270–274, il. 10).

St George confraternity in Elbląg had its chapel in the parish church of St Nicolas. Confraternity's altar was destroyed during the fire in 1777. Visitation in 1568 reported, that with annual purse in the amount of 230 Prussian mark, the altar belonged to the richest in the whole town (Toeppen 1872: 121–122). From the altar equipment comes perhaps one of two Elbląg silver reliquaries of St George (Berlin, Kunstgewerbe Museum and Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe) (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 41 ff, il. 1–5; Lambacher 2015: Cat. 72; Richter 2015: Cat. 73). In Toruń, local confraternity of St George possessed a chapel of St Nicolas in the church of St Johns. From that church came lost silver figure of St George, which was preserved in Artus Court in Toruń by 1596 (Semrau 1920: 87 ff). Nothing is known about equipment of St George's confraternity chapel in the church of St Catherine in Braniewo. It is not certain whether St George's confraternities had patronage over hospitals dedicated to this saint. The silver reliquary of St. George had been found bricked in a wall in the hospital church of New Town in Elbląg in 1652. It is considered to be Elbląg confraternity's foundation but it seems that its provenance from this church is doubtful. We shall return to this question later.

Both confraternities had also their places in the secular space – in Artus Courts – buildings known from above mentioned Prussian towns (Selzer 1996: 93 ff; Pilecka 2005: passim). These residences served as places of meetings and pastime. Their significance, and thereby their users, was reflected in towns topography. Without exceptions, they all stood in the town centre, in immediate vicinity of the most important municipal buildings – town hall and parish church.

Originally, probably the only users of Artus Courts were confraternities of St George. Only later, at the end of Middle Ages other confraternities, including St Reinhold's, appeared in these residences. It took place not without protests by the former, exclusive user. The example from Gdańsk shows such a case. When Town Council enabled

<sup>5</sup> About original décor of St George's confraternity chapel see (Selzer 1996: 110, 113–115).

admission to the Artus Court to other confraternities in 1421, St George's confraternity demarcated in the building separate space so-called "little court", which remained exclusive – accessible only to this association (Simson 1900: 16, 19, 23; Selzer 1996: 90 ff, 108 ff). The excellent statue of St George slaying the dragon comes from the time when confraternity used this building (Tuchółka 1965: 155–165; Woźniński 1999: 296–298, il. 4, 6, 8; Jasko 2010: Cat., III.7.10, p. 266–267). In 1487 due to the hassle with Malbork confraternity, confraternity of St George abandoned the Artus Court. It moved to its independent residence completed in 1494 next to modern Coal Market. Unfortunately, from inner décor of the Court of St George lasted nothing (Jędrysik 1992: 233–250). Archival sources reports about images of St George in Artus Courts in Toruń (Heuer 1917: 10, 14, 80), Elbląg (Grunau 1955: 14) and Old Town in Königsberg (Boetticher 1897: 215).

Second confraternity, which we are interested in, also marked its presence in some Artus Courts by saint patron images. In Gdańsk, St Reinhold statue from 1533 stands on the cornice, in the corner above confraternity's bench. The saint is shown as a youth in fancy armour *al antica*, holding the shield and halberd with the head of defeated by him Moorish king Saforet on its tip (Simson 1900: 166, il.; Woźniński 2002: 84–87, il. 104). In Artus Court in Toruń there was a wall painting with St Reinhold in armour and sword with Saforet's head on the tip which was located above confraternity's bench (Heuer 1917: 15).

Both confraternities existence and activity were visible in a common space used by town inhabitants. The associations organized tournaments, shooting competitions, parades, processions (Gehrke 1895; Simson 1900: 27 ff; Chodyński, 1992a: 51–66; Chodyński, 1992b: 69 ff; Selzer 1996: 123 ff, 137 ff). Visual elements as vestments, badges, heraldic shields, banners must have accompanied those feasts but there is known little about it. Armours above St Reinhold's bench in the Artus Court in Gdańsk are the only remains (Chodyński 1992b: 80 ff); armours were displayed in Toruń Artus Court as well (Heuer 1917: 15).

Many foundations of both confraternities have very high artistic quality. Very good founders' acquaintance with the Central – and West European art offer and sophisticated taste are striking. High, extraordinary standard of these art foundations reflect elitism of chivalric confraternities.

Let us call some examples to prove it. We can find outstanding artistic qualities in the painting of the Holy Trinity from the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George in Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk (Fig. 1) (Labuda 2012: 20–66; Kemperdick 2018: 148–186). The theme presented in the Pietas Domini version, echoing Burgundian models, is rendered in an extremely solemn way, against a golden patterned curtain spread by angels. The artist resorted to strong, powerful forms with figures stunning with their materiality. Worth of mention is the advanced realism in the showing of a human body, a subtle modelling, and detail precision. Painted in ca 1420 by an artist from Robert Campin's/Master of Flémalle circle, it constitutes Gdańsk's oldest preserved import

from the Netherlands. Placed in the confraternity's Chapel on the predella featuring the Holy Trinity, depicted as the Throne of Grace, as well as St. George and Maurice (or Olaf), it served as a retable; in addition, the images of King Arthur and the Master of the Teutonic Order were painted on the panel reverse already in Gdańsk<sup>6</sup>.



Fig. 1. The Holy Trinity, ca 1420, from the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George, Gdańsk, the Church of Our Lady (Berlin, Staatliche Museen), photo: A. Woziński.

Excellent triptych of the Last Judgement by Hans Memling (De Vos 1994: Cat. 4; Nuttall 2004: 54–60; Ziembra 2011: 545 ff; Woziński 2019: 131–154), ended up in Gdańsk by accident in 1473; it was robbed by Gdańsk privateers from a ship on its way from Bruges to Florence (Mozejko 2011: 198). But not by accident it found its place in the Chapel of confraternity of St. George in Our Lady's Church. The Owners of the ship, which brought the painting to Gdańsk, were members of St. Georges' confraternity: Johann Sidinghusen, Tiedeman Valandt i Heinrich Niederhof (Selzer 1996:115; Mozejko 2011:169–170). The second reason, that decided on its inclusion to Chapel's equipment may have been exceptional artistic quality. At last iconography. Main person, beside of Christ, is Archangel Michael. He is wearing a glistening armour. He is shown as *miles christianus* executing divine sentence. His image evoked then chivalric ethos preserved by confraternity very well. Furthermore, during the Middle Ages close relationships with Archangel Michael have been attributed to St. George, what is repeatedly visible in iconography (Krefting 1937; Braunfels-Esche 1976: 119 ff).

As mentioned, the silver reliquary of Saint George (Berlin, Kunstgewerbe Museum, Fig. 2) had been found in 17th century in the hospital church dedicated to this saint

<sup>6</sup> Recently Stephan Kemperdick expressed another opinion about the Holy Trinity panel's original place (2018: 148–186).

in Elbląg. It is dated around 1475. The place of its foundation is unknown. Scholars pointed out: Netherlands, Lower Rhineland, Westphalia, Lübeck or Prussia, but without convincing proofs (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 44 ff; Lambacher 2015: Cat. 72). At any rate, it is work of art of superior quality, in many ways innovative. Beside advanced technical level, what is striking is new approach to figure: it has no traditional frontal side, it should be seen from all angles. The play between an instability and a balance, realistic study of a movement, elongated proportions, sophisticated elegance are worth noticed. The novelty is also genre and narrative elements in the piece of art. Round basis holding by three wild men is formed as a rocky ground. The bones of dragon's victims are lying on it; lizard and little dragon are crawling; a little human being with spear can be seen as well. The site is surrounded by wicker fence. Closed gate seems to invite to be open it and walk into imagined reality, that evoke legendary deeds of famous saint knight. As Kinga Szczepkowska-Naliwajek pointed rightly out, the movement of St George recalls works by the most prominent sculptor of the second half of 15th century – Netherlander Nicolas Gerhaert van Leyden, genre-narrative motives comes in turn from Burgundian tradition (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 53 f). It seems unlikely, that reliquary of such quality could be founded for such a modest temple as hospital church with so limited circle of beholders. Such foundation had to fulfil not only religious functions, but also representative one; thus, it required broader, sophisticated, socially and politically significant audience. It seems more plausible, this reliquary belonged to the equipment of mentioned above confraternity's altar in the parish Church of St Nicolas in Elbląg.



**Fig. 2.** Reliquary of St George, ca 1475, Netherlands, from the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George, Elbląg, St Nicolas Church (?) (Berlin, Kunstgewerbe Museum), photo: A. Woziński.

Gdańsk confraternity of St Reinhold chased persistently an appropriate artistic setting for its chapel in Our Lady's Church. It directed its commissions to the milieu, that guaranteed high quality and expressive, attractive artistic formula, which was extremely regarded in whole Europe. In 1491 confraternity commissioned a retable in Amsterdam. It is not preserved – archival source mentioned that on its way to Gdańsk it was robbed by privateers. Finally it went to Hamburg cathedral as a gift of two local burghers. Endeavours for it remitting to Gdańsk were unavailing (Szmydki 1986: 15; Weilandt 2010: 79).

The next attempt to achieve a work of art from the Netherlands was successful. In 1516, high quality winged retable made in Antwerp went into confraternity chapel. Its sculpted parts were made by well-known workshop of Jan de Molder and painted ones – by one of leading netherlandish painters Joos van Cleve (Szmydki 1986: 23 ff). The retable must have been appreciated, since Georg Melmann in Prussia Chronicle noted its interposing in the chapel of St Reinhold. Significant is, that this note have been written just after information about great retable by Michel of Augsburg, which was placed on the main altar in the same church, the same year<sup>7</sup>.

One assume, that the prestigious reliquary of St Barbara, 1514, was foundation of confraternity of St Reinhold. Main part is the figure of saint. She is young, beautiful, elegant, clothed in very rich array. In the socle, she is standing on, there are little figures of saints: Sigmund, Leonard, George, Paul, Adalbert, Stanislas and Reinhold. The latter could indicate, in opinion of some scholars, that reliquary was commissioned by the confraternity of his name (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 56; Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1997: 274). It is not excluded but equally one could suppose, it was St George confraternity foundation, since this saint belongs to iconographic programme of work. Its style has numerous references to Prussian sculpture but its genesis can be traced in Southern Germany<sup>8</sup>. It is not excluded, that author of silver statue was trained on that area, and for sure author of its model was.

Members of chivalric confraternities prided themselves on belongingness to them. It occurred they showed these affiliations even in private foundations. Johann Ferber, Mayor of Gdańsk in 1479–1501, founded in ca 1480 a retable, so-called Large Altar of the Ferbers, for their family chapel in Our Lady's Church (Labuda 1979: 71–79, Cat. 6; Labuda 1990: 127–128; Labuda 2015: 46–52, Cat. 6). In its genuine shape it was produced in the Lower Rhineland. The retable corpus featured a sculpted many-figure Calvary (lost during WW II.) echoing Netherlandish models. The obverse of the inner painted wings showed the Ferber family accompanied by St John the Evangelist and St John the Baptist, while the reverse depicted the Annunciation. In ca 1500, the retable was

<sup>7</sup> Melmann's passage about St Reinhold's retable quoted by Szmydki (1986: 23).

<sup>8</sup> Compare with sculptures of St Mary from Crucifixion group in Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk by Master Paul or Virgin and Child in the retable in Mingajny by his workshop. His sculptures style has a lot of counterparts in South German works of that period. Master Paul must had been trained on this region (see Wozniński 2002: 60 ff, il. 62, 86).



extended by adding fixed external wings and the predella depicting subsequent topics related to the Ferber family. Constantine the Great and his mother Helena, to whom belonged Jerusalem became the main pilgrimage destination for Christians, commemorated the pilgrimage of the founders' son, Eberhard Ferber, to the Holy Land in 1496–1498. The saints on the predella have also personal references. St John the Baptist was patron of the Ferber family, St Giles and St Sebastian were the patrons of the Shooting Confraternities, the Ferbers' belonged to, and St Reinhold hinted they were members of association of his name.

Visual hints to the Ferber family are perhaps included in the mentioned Antwerp's retable from the Chapel of St Reinhold in Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk (Szymycki, 1986: 23 ff, especially p. 46 ff, fig. 23–25). On the reverses of external wings images of St Reinhold and St John the Baptist appear, but on the predella by Man of Sorrow, thus on the prominent place, St Sebastian is shown. Juxtaposition of main persons reminds then iconography of the predella of the Large Altar of the Ferbers. References to this family are likely, because in the period when the retable went into the confraternity chapel, Mauric Ferber (*Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego* 1992: 414–416) began to fulfil the service of parish priest in this church, while his brother Eberhard (*Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, 1992: 410–411) was the Mayor of Gdańsk. However, it would be necessary to allow for possibility, that images of St John the Baptist and St Reinhold could alluded to old and new chapel's patronium (Hirsch 1843–1847: 434).

Both confraternities' art foundations should have reflected their position, arouse admiration and envy. They were elements of competition with other social groups. They triggered artistic rivalry as well. The replicas having been commissioned by other confraternities, other social groups or even by other fractions of chivalric associations testify this fact.

Soon after appearance the above mentioned Netherlandish painting of the Holy Trinity in the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George in Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk, the confraternity of Shoemakers commissioned its replica in ca 1430<sup>9</sup>. Unusually enough, it was placed in the same church as the original. The replica was by an artist using a style bearing resemblance to the works of, active in Hamburg, Master Franke. It is very similar, both in general form and details, but not identical. Landscape in the sphere, the way of rendering transparent loincloth, a modelling of body are different. Replica's author did not follow the original slavishly, he tried to introduce his own solutions. Let us point out, the replica, in contradistinction to the original, had wings. They are known after archival photo. It showed two angels with Arma Passionis (Drost 1938: Taf. 14).

Artistic quality of another element of décor of the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George in Our Lady's Church in Gdańsk – equestrian statue of the patron – is difficult

<sup>9</sup> See (Labuda 2012: 24, here previous literature about that painting). Kemperdick expressed recently diverse view about a relation between both paintings (2018: 148–186).

to appreciate at present, since the sculpture is seriously damaged (fig. 3). What stands out with respect to Gdańsk work of art, it is a paraphrase of famous statue of St George standing next to the cathedral in Prague, have been cast from bronze in 1373 by Martin and Georg of Cluj (Kolozsvár), perhaps based on a project by imperial architect and sculptor Peter Parler (Jakubek-Raczkowska 2006: 59 ff, il. 12; Woziński, 2008: 409, il. 4; Korzeniowski, 2010: Cat. III.7.9, p. 264–265). Despite damages, we recognize in Gdańsk sculpture suggestively expressed movements, both the knight and the horse. St George torso is contorted and leaned towards the dragon. He is sticking his right, straight leg out to one side in order to keep a balance and not to fall down the horse. Horse body is echoing knight's body turn; animal is jumping: it is lifting its forelegs on different height, whilst bending them at various angles. Very similar statue came from the St George's Church in Stara Kościelnica near Malbork (Jakubek-Raczkowska 2006: 59 ff, il. 13; Woziński 2008: 409, il. 5; Jakubek-Raczkowska 2010: Cat. I.5.11, 107–108). Unfortunately, it is preserved only in part. In comparison to Gdańsk sculpture, pose of St George from Stara Kościelnica is stiff, natural movement, torso turn and leg sticking out of St George from Gdańsk were missing here. It seems, the sculpture from Stara Kościelnica was simplified replica of this one from Gdańsk<sup>10</sup>. Its author followed general scheme, but he was not able to render nuances of form, which determined the dynamic of the scene and artistic attractiveness of Gdańsk prototype.



**Fig. 3.** St George slaying the dragon, ca. 1400, from the Chapel of the Confraternity of St George, Gdańsk, the Church of Our Lady, photo: A. Woziński.

<sup>10</sup> Monika Jakubek-Raczkowska (2010) claims on the contrary that sculpture from Stara Kościelnica was older than this one from Gdańsk.

The same may be said about the relationship between two reliquary of St. George: above mentioned, found in the church of this saint in Elbląg (Berlin, Kunstgewere Museum) and the second one coming from Elbląg too (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe). They are closely related. Similarity of bases with genre-narratives motives: lizards, little dragons, wicker fences, closed gates; golden containers for relics; wild mens as supports are striking. The most noticeable difference concerns a portrayal of main figure. In the reliquary discussed earlier, the saint is pictured in sophisticated but at the same time natural pose; its composition invites beholder to watch the figure from all sides. In the second reliquary a pose of knight is rigid, traditionally frontal, it misses dynamic. "Far-reaching similarities but also differences between two reliquaries seem to point out, the first one was prototype, the second one its replica a little simplified but very well done from technical and quality point of view. Similarity of engraved design on the back side of the relics' container of the second reliquary to other Prussian works, especially to reliquary in Żarnowiec, speaks in favor of Prussia as a place of its execution" (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 54, il. 16–17). On the other hand its prototype seems to be an import, maybe from the Netherlands, or a work of art by goldsmith from abroad made in Prussia ca 1480.

Origin of the younger reliquary remains obscure. Most of scholars assumed it was the foundation of St George confraternity to its Chapel in the St Nicolas' Church in Elbląg. This is not certain however. As we said above, the older and artistically superior reliquary would be more appropriate to such prestigious place as the chapel in the Old Town parish church in Elbląg, instead its replica could have served as visual sign of the existence of confraternity of St George in other places in this town. Archival sources recorded figural reliquaries of St George in Elbląg churches of Holy Magi and Corpus Christi in the mid of 16th century (Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1986: 51). It cannot be excluded, that younger reliquary could come from Artus Court or Town Hall in Elbląg.

These three works of art and their replicas show, that renaissance rules – imitatio, aemulatio and translation (Fulińska 2000) – had some precedents in artistic practice of late medieval Prussia. They prove also, that elite and influential chivalric confraternities generated these rivalry, and in the same time contributed to development of art on this area.

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