

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE:
BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC

OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA

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Contact / Kontakt:

lendulet.unideb@gmail.com

Journal Manager / Redaktionsmanager:

Ádám Novák

Proofreaders / Korrektorat:

János Sikora

Technical Editor / Technische Redaktion:

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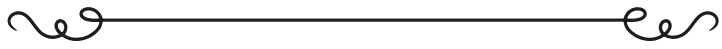
Contents / Inhalt

ARTICLES / ARTIKEL

- Gábor Barabás:** *The Turul and the White Eagles. King Andrew II of Hungary and his Polish Relatives* 9
- László Pósn:** *The Role of Gifts in the Diplomatic Relations between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order*..... 37
- Csenge Tímár:** *Contributions to the Venetian-Hungarian Alliance and Anti-Ottoman War of 1501–1503*..... 59
- László Szokola:** *The Ethnic and Social Background of the Military in Szeben (Sibiu) and Brassó (Braşov) during the Second Half of the Fifteenth and First Half of the Sixteenth Centuries* 73
- Dominik Tóth:** *The Wagenburg-warfare in the Army of King Matthias*. 93
- Bálint Vinkler:** *Further Additions to the Export of Wines from the Upper Tisza Region (Mostly Tokaj-Hegyalja) to Krakow (1586–1605)*..... 111
- Petra Košťálová:** *“Igni ferroque”. Shaping Early Modern Ukraine History Through Lens of Armenian Sources*..... 217
- Gábor Pusztai:** *Arbeitnehmer der Niederländischen Ost-Indien Kompanie (1602–1799) aus dem Königreich Ungarn*..... 237
- Róbert Kerepeszki – Roland Perényi:** *Beyond the Western Metropolis: A Research Agenda for the Spatial History of Urban Crime in Budapest throughout the “Long” Twentieth Century*..... 315

REVIEWS AND REPORTS / REZENSIONEN UND BERICHTE

- Emre Mirza Güney:** *The Relationship Between Central Europe and the Low Countries from the Middle Ages to the Present Day Conference*..... 331
- Zoltán Szolnoki:** *The III. Bálint Alajos International Conference* 335
- Adrienn Botha-Lőrincz:** *András, Sófalvi, Homoródszentmárton templomvára. Esettanulmány az erdélyi templomerődítések történetéhez (The church-fortress of Mártoniș. Case study on the history of church fortifications in Transylvania).* 339
- László Levente Kis:** *Dániel, Bihari, A Tatárjárás - Magyarország élet-halál harca (The Mongol Invasion: Hungary's Struggle for Survival)*..... 343



Articles / Artikel






LÁSZLÓ PÓSÁN, PhD, University of Debrecen

H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1.

posan.laszlo@arts.unideb.hu

 ORCID: 0000-0001-7309-0754



The Role of Gifts in the Diplomatic Relations between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order

ABSTRACT

In the diplomatic relations between Sigismund of Luxembourg and the Teutonic Order, gifts of varying kinds and value played an important role, in line with contemporary European practice. Far more records survive concerning the gifts presented by the Order to the Hungarian and King of the Romans than those sent by Sigismund to the Grand Master. The Order's gifts often conveyed symbolic political messages; by contrast, no such function can be clearly identified in Sigismund's case. In its gift-giving practices, the Order also considered the potential political influence of wives and daughters at princely courts, and accordingly extended gifts to them. Given the Order's monastic and ecclesiastical character, such a practice on Sigismund's part is hardly conceivable. Particular attention should be paid to the Grand Master's most prestigious gifts, namely trained hunting falcons, highly esteemed across Europe. These were distributed according to the rank of the recipients and the significance of political relations, with the number of birds serving as an indicator of status.

Notably, the treasury accounts of the Grand Master record only one Hungarian gift deemed worthy of specific mention: Hungarian wine. Strikingly, the sources indicate that this "gift" was in fact purchased by the Order at considerable cost. As for other items Sigismund may have sent to Prussia, these can be inferred from the practices of other European rulers, typically consisting of objects compatible with the knights' monastic lifestyle or of religious relics.

Keywords: Teutonic Order, diplomacy, Sigismund of Luxemburg, gift, fifteenth century,

Introduction

In medieval Europe, various gifts played an important role in the diplomatic relations between rulers and princes, which, as a means of symbolic communication, expressed goodwill, respect, and appreciation. They strengthened political relations and alliances, or in certain cases tried to encourage the recipients to take specific political or military steps. In addition, the gifts were intended to promote and facilitate the principal tasks of international relations in the medieval sense: conflict management, the development of trust,

and cooperation. Gifts were generally in line with the rank and social status of the recipients, but when they were intended to persuade or encourage the recipients to take a concrete and tangible action, gifts were generally over-represented compared to the customs and unwritten courtesies of the time. In diplomatic relations, gifts – which were to be reciprocated with a similar value or order of magnitude – were to be given publicly, in the context of appropriate ceremonies and rituals, so that their message and symbolic content would be known as widely as possible. In these ceremonies and ceremonial bestowals, it was never the actual monetary value of the gift that was considered to be the most important, but its specificity, uniqueness, or even its quantity, symbolic content, as well as the method and ritual of the gift-giving that expressed respect and appreciation towards the recipient.¹

In most cases, we learn about the fact of gift-giving in the Middle Ages from the various account books, but particularly unusual, spectacular and extraordinary gifts were usually also mentioned in the chronicles. For example, according to the *Annales regni Francorum*, Caliph Harun al-Rashid presented a live elephant to Emperor Charlemagne in 802 as a gift, which lived for ten years in the imperial court in Aachen.² However, this was preceded by lively diplomatic relations between the Franks and the Muslims even before the reign of Charles.³ The elephant was such an exotic gift that nobody but the emperor possessed in Christian Europe. The exotic wildlife park

¹ Davis, Natalie Zenon, *Die schenkende Gesellschaft. Zur Kultur der französischen Renaissance*. München, 2022.; Schwedler, Gerald, *Herrschertreffen des Spätmittelalters. Formen – Rituale – Wirkungen*. (Mittelalter-Forschungen, 21.) Ostfildern, 2008. 380.; Schwedler, Gerald, “Rituelle Diplomatie. Die Persönliche beziehungen Sigismunds von Luxemburg zu Benachbarten Königen und den Herrschern des Balkans”, In: Hruza, Karel – Kaar, Alexandra (eds.), *Kaiser Sigismund zur Herrschaftspraxis eines europäischen Monarchen (1368–1437)*. (Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters, Beihefte zu J. F. Böhmer, Regesta Imperii, 31.) Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2012. 411–427.; Schwedler, Gerald, “Diplomatische Geschenke unter Königen im Spätmittelalter. Freundschaft und Gabentausch zwischen politischer Praxis und der schriftlichen Norm der Fürstenspiegelliteratur”, In: Grünbart, Michael (ed.), *Geschenke erhalten die Freundschaft. Gabentausch und Netzwerkpflege im europäischen Mittelalter. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums Münster, 19–20. November 2009*. Berlin, 2011. 145–186.

² *Annales regni Francorum – Die Reichsannalen*. In: *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Erster Teil. Ed. Rau Reinhold. (Ausgewählte Quellen zur Geschichte des des Mittelalters, 5.) Darmstadt, 1955. 78.

³ Fletcher, Richard, *Ein Elefant für Karl den Großen. Christen und Muslime im Mittelalter*. Darmstadt, 2005. 59.; Schlicht, Alfred, *Die Araber und Europa. 2000 Jahre gemeinsamer Geschichte*. Stuttgart, 2008. 56.

of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, which followed Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine royal traditions, symbolised the same authority and power that was greater than that of anyone else. In this wildlife park, animals hitherto almost unknown in the Christian West were kept, including lions, leopards, cheetahs, camels, elephants, and monkeys.⁴ Of all the remarkable, unusual, and unique gifts, the one from the ruler of Egypt and Damascus in 1232 was undoubtedly the most surprising and extraordinary. Several chroniclers have recorded that Sultan al-Kamil sent a truly special, very expensive tent as a gift to the most powerful ruler of Christendom, Emperor Frederick II, which was worth more than 20,000 silver marks. This tent was a real planetarium with an elaborate mechanical structure, where a meticulous mechanical clock and moving mechanism on the inner surface of the dome-shaped tent showed the movement of the celestial bodies. The extraordinary gift of the Sultan, which attracted much attention and interest, pleased Frederick, and he even put it on public display in a solemn ceremony in the town of Venosa in southern Italy.⁵ In addition to the uniqueness of the planetarium tent, the value of the gift was significantly enhanced by the fact that it was perfectly suited to the personal interest and curiosity of the emperor.⁶ According to the chronicle of Ulrich von Richental, in 1417 a gift from the Polish King Władysław II Jagiełło to the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg also attracted much attention. He gave a bison to Sigismund that came from Lithuania and cost 400 Hungarian gold florins to transport to the Council of Constance.⁷ This was also reported by the Procurator General of the Teutonic Order in a letter to the Grand Master written on 9 February 1417 (*Ouch wisset, das der konig von Polen hat eynen wesant gesant her dem romisschen konige, und der*

⁴ Houben, Hubert, *Kaiser Friedrich II. (1194–1250). Herrscher, Mensch und Mythos*. Stuttgart, 2008. 130.

⁵ *Conradus de Fabaria. Continuatio casuum Sancti Galli*. Ed. Pertz, Georg Heinrich. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Sangallensium, II.) Hannover, 1829. 163–183. 178.; Lohrmann, Dietrich, “Das Himmelszelt des Sultan al-Kamil von 1232 für Kaiser Friedrich II”, = *Historische Zeitschrift* 294, 2012, 297–327. 297, 300.

⁶ On the scientific interests of Emperor Frederick II, see e.g. Abulafia, David, *Friedrich II. von Hohenstauffern. Herrscher zwischen den Kulturen*. München, 1988. 273–283.; Horst, Eberhard, *Friedrich II. der Staufer. Kaiser – Feldherr – Dichter*. München, 1990. 167–169, 183–200.; Houben, Kaiser Friedrich II, 2008. 145–148.

⁷ *Ulrich Richental. Chronik des Konstanzer Konzils 1414–1418*. Ed. Buck, Thomas Martin (Konstanzer Geschichts- und Rechtsquellen, 41.) Ostfildern, 2010. [hereinafter Richental] 84–85.

ist gestern hergebracht).⁸ Richental believed that Sigismund also appreciated the value and rarity of the animal, which is why he presented it to the King of England,⁹ however, this seems unlikely. For Sigismund of Luxemburg, who was also King of Hungary, the bison could not have been an unknown animal. It undoubtedly attracted a lot of attention in Germany and Western Europe because of its size and shape, yet, it was still hunted regularly in Hungary in the fifteenth century.¹⁰ The fact that the Procurator General of the Order considered it important to report on the gift of the Polish King was not simply a routine notification on the events and developments related to the largest ecclesiastical and secular forum in Europe at the time,¹¹ but showed that the leadership of the Teutonic Order was paying special attention to the actions, political steps and ambitions of Sigismund of Luxemburg. This distinguished attention, however, did not only emerge at the Council of Constance, but had a history of more than two decades, and was closely related with the fact that both the Teutonic Order and Sigismund had always counted on the other as a potential ally.¹² Over the course of their decades-long relationship, they maintained an intense diplomatic interaction and, in accordance with medieval practice and the chivalric courtly code of conduct, each side offered gifts to the other to show their respect and appreciation for the other and to win the other's support for their own positions and plans.

⁸ *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie, Bd. II, Peter von Wormditt (1403–1419)*. Ed. Koeppen, Hans. (Veröffentlichungen der niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung, 13.) Göttingen, 1960. Nr. 197.; *Regesta Imperii XI. Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds (1410–1437)*, Bd. 1. Ed. Böhmen, Johann Friedrich. Innsbruck, 1896. Nr. 2064a.; Homann, Mats, “Der Blick des Deutschen Ordens auf das Konstanzer Konzil. Die Briefe des Generalprokurators Peter von Wormditt und des Hochmeisters Michael Küchmeister”, In: Flachenecker, Helmut (ed.), *Der Deutsche Orden auf dem Konstanzer Konzil. Pläne – Strategien – Erwartungen*. (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, 84.) Ilmtal-Weinstraße, 2020. 55–88. 58.

⁹ Richental 85.

¹⁰ Gulyás László Szabolcs, “Levéltári bölény-vadászat. Az európai bölény (Bison bonasus) a középkori Magyar Királyságban az írott források tükrében”, = *Történeti tanulmányok* 25, 2017, 99–125. 114.; Kovács Zsolt, “A magyar bölény históriája”, = *Állatvilág* 2, 2015, 3–7. 5.; Kovács István, “Vadászatok a középkori Pilis-erdő területén”, = *Archaeologia – Altum Castrum Online* 2020. 2–9. 7.

¹¹ Engels, Odilo, “Der Reichsgedanke auf dem Konstanzer Konzil”, = *Historisches Jahrbuch* 86, 1966, 80–106. 70

¹² Pósán László, “Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend”, = *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111, 1998, 630–656. 630–631.

Following the classification by Arnd Reitemeier, there were three main types of embassies in the Middle Ages, according to their authority and rank: the actual negotiating delegation, the representative delegation, which had the right to ceremoniously sign treaties and agreements concluding the preparatory negotiations, and finally the embassy that did not conduct actual negotiations, but represented only the size, authority and power of the sending party.¹³ A typical example of the latter was the delegation that accompanied the French Princess Isabella to England in 1396.¹⁴ In all three cases, the size of the delegations reflected the power and authority of the sending party and, in the case of the envoys with actual negotiating capacity, it also showed that the delegates had both broad authority and negotiating skills. Such envoys, who were authorised to represent the sending party in full, were usually high-ranking ecclesiastical or secular dignitaries.¹⁵ In June 1415, for example, a French ambassiad negotiating a possible peace treaty with King Henry V of England crossed the Channel with five ships.¹⁶ The English monarch even invited the French ambassadors to a ceremonial feast, showing how much he appreciated them.¹⁷ In the same year, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order sent two Prussian merchants as envoys to England, for which he apologised, claiming that the Order was in a difficult situation, both militarily and financially, and therefore could not send more prestigious emissaries.¹⁸ In the Middle Ages as well, the arrival of a diplomatic delegation was preceded by a long preparatory process. At first, they tried to bring political positions closer together by exchanging letters and sending heralds, but even at this stage of the negotiations they tried to win the goodwill of the other side by sending gifts. According to the sources, there was an intensive diplomatic exchange between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order almost continuously, with couriers and envoys coming and going regularly from

¹³ Reitemeier, Arnd, *Außenpolitik im Spätmittelalter. Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Reich und England 1377–1422*. (Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London, 45.) London, 1999. 345–347.

¹⁴ Saul, Richard II., 229–230, 457.

¹⁵ Reitemeier, *Außenpolitik*, 1999. 166.

¹⁶ Uo. 154.

¹⁷ Reitemeier, Arnd, “Diplomatischer Alltag im Spätmittelalter. Gesandte in den englischen Beziehungen zu Frankreich und zur Hanse”, In: Schwinges, Rainer Christoph – Wriedt, Klaus (eds.), *Gesandtschaft- und Botenwesen im spätmittelalterlichen Europa*. (Vorträge und Forschungen, 60.) Stuttgart, 2003. 135–167. 154.

¹⁸ *Die Reccesse und andere Akten der Hansetage von 1256–1430*. Hansereccesse. I. Abt. Bd. 3, 6. Ed. Koppmann, Karl. Leipzig, 1875, 1889. [hereinafter HR I] Bd. 6. Nr. 194.

Prussia to Hungary, and vice versa.¹⁹ Essentially, these letters and lesser envoys with limited negotiating power prepared the ground for substantive negotiations, which led to agreements and the dispatch of prestigious delegations.

In accordance with the medieval practice of diplomatic relations, both the Teutonic Order and Sigismund of Luxemburg gave gifts to one another. There are far more records of the gifts the Grand Master gave to the Hungarian and Holy Roman ruler than those of Sigismund. In 1397, prior to the meeting between the King of Hungary and the King of Poland, the Teutonic Order presented Sigismund of Luxemburg with an expensive, painted, double-winged altar. The Treasury of the Order paid 121 marks to the Prussian master Johann, who made the altarpieces.²⁰ The religious gift of the Grand Master carried a clear political message: the unquestionable authority of the Catholic Church, its guiding role for all Christian sovereigns, and with it emphasized the importance of the commitment of the Teutonic Order to the Catholic faith, their devout service to the Church, their constant struggle against the enemies of Christianity, and their priority over secular political interests.²¹ The gift of the Grand Master meant that commitment to the Order (that is the Catholic faith) was more important than anything else. Despite the fact that the King of Hungary king was about to lead a crusade against the Turks, the newly converted Władysław II Jagiełło was not considered a true Christian by the Teutonic Order and they tried to dissuade the Hungarian king from abandoning his anti-Polish stance and reconcile with the Polish king. However, in order to ensure the success of the great crusade against the Turks, the Hungarian monarch sought to settle his relations with the Polish royal couple, and, for the benefit of all Christendom, also urged the Grand Master and the Teutonic Order to make peace with Władysław II Jagiełło.²² The two-winged altar made in Prussia in 1397 was therefore more than a valuable work of art, it was an indispensable object of worship, it car-

¹⁹ *Das Marienburger Treßlerbuch der Jahre 1399–1409*. Ed. Joachim, Erich. Königsberg, 1896. [hereinafter MTB] 19, 37, 67, 77, 125, 146, 205, 221, 341, 344, 355, 368, 383, 386, 387, 423, 424, 467, 470, 478, 488, 491, 531, 536, 537, 538, 541, 561, 586, 598.

²⁰ Arszynski, Marian, “Der Deutsche Orden als Bauherr und Kunstmäzen”, = *Ordines Militares Colloquia Torunensia Historica* 3, 1985, 145–162. 161.

²¹ Domasłowski, Jerzy, “Die gotische Malerei im Dienste des Deutschen Ordens”, = *Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica* 3, 1985, 169–184.; Raczkowski, Janusz, *Gotik im Ordensland. Architektur, Sculptur und Malerei*. Toruń, 2002.

²² *Codex diplomaticus Prussicus*, Bd. IV, VI. Ed. Voigt, Johannes. Königsberg, 1853, 1861. Bd. VI. Nr. 45.; *Johann von Posilge, Chronik des Landes Preussen*. In. *Scriptores rerum prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischer Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft*, Bd. III.

ried a concrete political message, and emphasized the position of the military order as expressed in letters or through envoys. It did not achieve its goal, however, as on 14 July 1397 the Hungarian and Polish kings met in person in Spišská Nová Ves and concluded a surprisingly long peace treaty for 16 years.²³ Besides the painted winged altar, the Order gave valuable objects of artistic craftsmanship to Sigismund as gifts on other occasions as well. For example, according to the *Marienburger Treßlerbuch*, a record of the revenues and expenditures of the Grand Masters' Treasury, on 12 February 1408 the Treasurer (*Treßler, thesaurarius*) paid 5.5 marks to a goldsmith named Werner to make two gold-plated drinking chalices made of buffalo horns, decorated with fine goldsmith's work, which were to be presented to the King of Hungary (*item 5½ m vor 2 wesenthorner zu vorgolden und reyne zuzumachen Werner dem goltsmede, die dem herren koninge von Ungern gesant worden*).²⁴ Needless to say, the Teutonic Order often presented other European sovereigns as well with gifts of fine metalwork and objects made of precious metals. In 1399, for example, the treasury of the Grand Master paid 4 marks to a goldsmith in Elbląg to have a waist belt made of silver plates coated with gold, because the Grand Master wanted to present it to the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas (*item 4 m. eyne goltsmede zum Elbinge, der dem meister silberynne koppe hatte obirgoldet, dil herzog Wytowdt gegeben werden*).²⁵ In 1404, the Order presented 30 heraldically painted shields to the Lithuanian Prince Švitrigaila.²⁶ In 1410, two painters from Elbląg, Johann Wilden and Johann Dreseler, together received 18.5 marks for painting 59 shields.²⁷ When the Grand Master and the King of Poland met in person in the town of Toruń, Jagiełło was present-

Eds. Hirsch, Theodor, – Toeppen, Max – Strehlke, Ernst. Leipzig, 1866. [hereinafter SRP III.] 214.

²³ Gašiorowski, Antonim, *Itinerarium Króla Władysława Jagiełły 1386–1434*. Warszawa, 1972. 40.; Hoensch, Jörg K, "König / Kaiser Sigismund, der Deutsche Orden und Polen-Litauen", = *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 46, 1997, 1–44. 9.; Schwedler, Herrschertreffen, 2008. 336, 455.

²⁴ MTB 467.; Bökönyi Sándor, "Zwei Trinkbecher aus Wisenthörnern", = *Folia Archaeologica* 12, 1960, 273–280. 275.; Woźniak, Michał, "Die Goldschmiedekunst in Preussen im Dienste des Ordens, der Kirche und der Städte", In. Wenta, Jarosław – Hartmann, Sieglinde – Vollmann-Profe, Gisela (eds.), *Mittelalterliche Kultur und Literatur im Deutschordensstaat in Preussen. Leben und Nachleben*. (Sacra Bella Septentrionalia, I.) Toruń, 2008. 125–130. 129.

²⁵ MTB 8.

²⁶ MTB 318.

²⁷ Schmid, Bernhard, "Maler und Bildhauer in Preußen zur Ordenszeit", *Altpreußische Forschungen* 2, 1925, 39–51. 47.

ed with two expensive, gold-plated, gem-encrusted drinking chalices, just as Sigismund of Luxemburg had been presented with before.²⁸ The Teutonic Order often presented foreign nobles and knights fighting under its banner with a silver or gold cup, also made by the goldsmiths of Prussian towns.²⁹

In medieval gift-giving practice, weapons, armour and various military equipment were often featured, which demonstrated to the general public the personal fighting merits, valour and chivalry of the recipient, which was a central element of courtly and chivalric values. Such gifts, even though they were expensive, were not considered special or particularly remarkable because of their everyday – one might say constant – use, but they nevertheless expressed the personal appreciation of the bestower. These gifts were among the items that could be given to any nobleman at almost any time, and were essentially objects of obligatory courtesy. According to a record dated 8 June 1399, the Grand Master sent 2 ornamented crests worth 3 marks 4 scots as a gift to the King of Hungary (*zwey gehenge zu zwen helm, die der meister konige Segemunds sandte*).³⁰ In the case of weapons, military equipment and harnesses, it was usually their decoration and material that expressed the rank and social status of the recipients. If they were intended for rulers or princes, they were essentially gifts of decorative weapons or other equipment intended for ceremonial occasions or representations. In 1415, for example, King Ferdinand I of Aragon presented Sigismund of Luxemburg, who was visiting his country, with 3 horses and with them expensive harnesses embellished with gold and precious stones, as well as a sword decorated with 2 rubies on the hilt.³¹ Even though the Teutonic Order was a monastic community, it followed the same practice when sending gifts to secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries. In 1408, for example, they presented the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas with a gold-plated armour and a gold-plated dagger.³² In 1411, the Grand Master presented the Bishop of Würzburg, who was one of the imperial ecclesiastical dignitaries, with a precious stone, an emerald.³³ Among the expenditure items in the *Treßlerbuch*, there were frequent commissions

²⁸ MTB 354.

²⁹ MTB 160.

³⁰ MTB 12.

³¹ *Alvar García de Santa María, Crónica del rey Don Juan el Segundo*. In: *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*, 2. Ed. Rosell, Cayetano. (Biblioteca de autores españoles, 86.) Madrid, 1877. 366.

³² MTB 53.

³³ *Regesta Historico-diplomatica Ordinis S. Mariae Theutonicorum 1198–1525*. Pars I: Index Tabularii Ordinis S. Mariae Theutonicorum. Regesten zum Ordensbriefarchiv. [hereinafter

from the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order to goldsmiths in Prussia to produce various objects to be given as gifts. In 1399, for example, a goldsmith named Johann made the following gifts worth nearly 100 marks: silver-plated amber carvings, including one depicting five angels (these were inserted into the boards of small wooden table-tops), silver-plated tables, and rosaries made of amber.³⁴ In 1400, a goldsmith named Hannus produced the gold rim of a chalice.³⁵ The goldsmiths of the Order often made ornate stirrups as small gifts.³⁶ Not only goldsmiths were involved in the production of diplomatic giftware in Prussia, but tailors as well. In 1402, for example, the Grand Master sent a small pouch worth 1 mark as a gift to the Lithuanian Prince Švitrigaila, which was made of expensive cloth and decorated with gold threads.³⁷

In its gift-giving practices, the Teutonic Order did not ignore the potential political influence of women when it sent gifts to the wives and daughters of certain princes and rulers. In 1402, for example, the Grand Master sent 5 marks worth of red and blue coloured baizes to Vilnius, because he was informed that the noble Lithuanian noblewomen liked to dress in clothes made of such fabrics.³⁸ According to a letter dated 16 February 1428, the Order sent wine to the Queen of Denmark.³⁹ The King and Queen of Hungary received a very special gift in the spring of 1429: the Grand Master informed Sigismund that he and his wife had been admitted to the circle of patrons (*confrater*) of the Order.⁴⁰ In addition to the honour, this also meant that regular masses would be held in the convents of the Order for the spiritual well-being of the sponsors and their families. According to the practice of the Order of the Knights, it was usually after some major donation that one was admitted to the ranks of *confraters*.⁴¹ The fact that the Teutonic Order, under the command of Nicolaus von Redewitz, took possession of castles and estates

Regesta I.] Vol. 1: 1198–1454, Vol. 3: 1511–1525. Eds. Joachim, Erich – Hubatsch, Walther. Göttingen, 1965, 1973. Vol. 1. Nr. 1545.

³⁴ MTB 38.

³⁵ MTB 67.

³⁶ MTB 81, 157.

³⁷ MTB 157.

³⁸ MTB 154.

³⁹ Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, XX. Hauptabteilung, Historisches Staatsarchiv, Deutschordensbriefarchiv [hereinafter OBA] Nr. 4903.

⁴⁰ OBA Nr. 5096, 5251.

⁴¹ Arnold, Udo, “Brüder, Schwestern, Familiaren – Wandlungen in 825 Jahren”, In: Arnold, Udo – Bernhard, Buber (eds.), *Peregrinantes peregrinantibus. 825 Jahre Deutscher Orden, 150 Jahre Ehrenritter, 50 Jahre Familiarenstatut*. (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des

along the Lower Danube, ceded to them by the monarch of Hungary, must have played a major role in the granting of the honorary title to Sigismund and his wife.⁴² In 1516, Margravine Elisabeth of Brandenburg received small puppies, lapdogs as a gifts from the Order.⁴³

Gifts from the Order often included tents that were equally useful during campaigns or longer hunts. Their value was mainly in their material, a dense woven tent canvas that did not get wet and offered protection against rain. For example, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, was presented with a tent by the Grand Master at the end of the summer of 1395.⁴⁴ However, the knights never presented Sigismund of Luxemburg with a tent. As to what the reason for this might have been, we can only speculate. Perhaps they thought that, unlike weapons and military equipment, which were more personal gifts, a military tent, used mainly during campaigns, could be interpreted as an immediate and open invitation for the recipient to go to war. Giving a present to a monarch with such content would have gone beyond the boundaries of politeness. The Duke of Burgundy, however, was not a sovereign monarch, but only the first peer of France as the youngest son of King John II, who, under Charles VI, who was unfit to rule, fought for power against his brother, Louis of Orléans.⁴⁵ There is no evidence in the Order's sources that the Grand Master gave horses, dogs or even clothes to the Hungarian monarch, although he often sent such gifts to other princes or their wives and family members.⁴⁶ In 1402, for example, he gave the Lithuanian prince Švidrigaila a horse worth 8 marks,⁴⁷ which was merely a routine gift, as the price only meant a simple mount. In May 1401, for example, the Order paid 28 marks for 4 horses, i.e. 7 marks per horse.⁴⁸ In 1406 the Grand Master also gave a horse worth

Deutschen Ordens, 80.) Ilmtal-Weinstraße, 2020. 1–20. 4.; Hunyadi Zsolt – Pósán László, *Krisztus katonái. A középkori lovagrendek*. Debrecen, 2011. 17–18.

⁴² Pósán, László, “Nicolaus von Redewitz – ein Diplomat und Informant des Deutschen Ordens am Hof von Sigismund von Luxemburg”, = *Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica* 26, 2021, 109–137. 123.

⁴³ Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 21088.

⁴⁴ Paravicini, Werner, “Beziehungspflege im Wettbewerb der Deutsche Orden im 14. Jahrhundert”, *Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica* 25, 2020, 137–154. 139.

⁴⁵ Paravicini, Werner, *Merész Károly (Életek és korok)*. Budapest, 1989. 8–11.

⁴⁶ Paravicini, *Beziehungspflege*, 2020. 145.

⁴⁷ MTB 154.

⁴⁸ MTB 117.

8 marks to a doctor named Johann.⁴⁹ The value of large war horses that were used in heavy cavalry warfare, was much higher, around 15–25 marks.⁵⁰

In the late Middle Ages, trained birds of prey, especially hunting falcons, were the most popular and particularly valuable gifts, which were most worthy of a sovereign. Falcons, buzzards, and hawks were more distinguished and honourable than any other bird. Their capture, education and training required much more patience, time and skill than the training of horses or dogs, therefore they were much more expensive.⁵¹ The Teutonic Order not only occasionally, but regularly presented falcons and hunting birds. Year after year, they sent to many secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries hunting birds and refined, elaborate cages, thick leather gloves or small hats to cover the eyes of the birds, which were required for the keeping of these animals. This gift-giving practice, which was intended to ensure the widespread recognition and appreciation of the Teutonic Order throughout Europe, may have started in the 1350s. The sporadic surviving letters of the Grand Masters, which report of such consignments, the thanking letters from the recipients, or the travel and transport vouchers issued to the falconers of the Order all suggest this. In 1354, Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode decreed that trained hunting birds, which are the most noble gifts in diplomatic relations, could only be presented by the respective Grand Master, the head of the Teutonic Order.⁵² At the same time, it can also be concluded that some officials of the Order had already been giving away birds occasionally. After 1354, falcons became an important part of the diplomatic practice of the Teutonic Order.⁵³ Gift falcons were registered in the *Treßlerbuch* from 1399 to 1409. This did not mean, however, that the Order stopped presenting hunting birds after 1409. On 2 January 1426 the Elector Palatine of the Rhine thanked the Grand Master in a letter for the falcons he had received as a gift,⁵⁴ and so did King Władysław II Jagiełło at the end of March,⁵⁵ the Archbishop of Mainz on 3 January

⁴⁹ MTB 378.

⁵⁰ MTB 107, 386, 390.

⁵¹ Eberl, Anna Lena, “Die Bedeutung der Falkenjagd für das Hofleben im Mittelalter”, = *Historia scibere* 7, 2015, 223–236. 228.

⁵² Perlbach, Max (ed.), *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*. Halle, 1890. 154.

⁵³ Knabe, Gustavgeorg, “Preußische Falken im Dienst der Politik des Deutschen Ordens”, = *Preußenland* 7, 1969, 17–21.

⁵⁴ OBA Nr. 4535.

⁵⁵ OBA Nr. 4562.

1427,⁵⁶ and the Duke of Guelders and Juliers did the same two weeks later.⁵⁷ At the end of 1427 Frederick of Saxony,⁵⁸ in January 1428 Albert, Duke of Austria,⁵⁹ and then Adolf, Duke of Juliers thanked the hunting birds they received.⁶⁰ According to the letters dated early 1429 the Teutonic Order sent falcons to the Prince Elector of Saxony,⁶¹ and the Archbishops of Mainz⁶² and Magdeburg.⁶³ In 1430 the Duke of Austria,⁶⁴ the King of Poland,⁶⁵ the Count of Katzenelnbogen,⁶⁶ and in 1431 the Count Palatine of the Rhine⁶⁷ and the Imperial Chamberlain Konrad Weinsberg (aloyal supporter of Sigismund) received birds as gifts from the Grand Master.⁶⁸ The practice of gifting falcons for diplomatic purposes was traced in written sources by Werner Paravicini until 1431,⁶⁹ but numerous documents testify that it did not cease even after that date. On 5 February 1433, for example, Albert V, Duke of Austria wrote a letter of appreciation on this subject to Marienburg (Malbork).⁷⁰ A letter dated eighty years afterwards proves that the gifting of hunting birds was still part of the diplomacy of the Order. On 15 December 1513 the Bishop of Bamberg thanked the Grand Master for the falcons.⁷¹ On 4 December 1515 Frederick III, Elector of Saxony did so.⁷² The Prince of Saxony received falcons the following year as well,⁷³ and so did the Archbishop of Cologne.⁷⁴ The Order sent hunting birds to the other two ecclesiastical electors, the Archbishops

⁵⁶ OBA Nr. 4688.

⁵⁷ OBA Nr. 4695.

⁵⁸ OBA Nr. 4857.

⁵⁹ OBA Nr. 4877.

⁶⁰ OBA Nr. 4887.

⁶¹ OBA Nr. 5029.

⁶² OBA Nr. 5030.

⁶³ OBA Nr. 5235.

⁶⁴ OBA Nr. 5266.

⁶⁵ OBA Nr. 5375.

⁶⁶ OBA Nr. 5532.

⁶⁷ OBA Nr. 5564.

⁶⁸ OBA Nr. 5566.

⁶⁹ Paravicini, *Beziehungspflege*, 2020. 147.; Militzer, *Jagd*, 1997. 325–363

⁷⁰ OBA Nr. 6346.

⁷¹ *Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 19941.*

⁷² *Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 20646.*

⁷³ *Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 21114.*

⁷⁴ *Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 21153.*

of Mainz⁷⁵ and Trier⁷⁶ in 1517. But the fact that after the secularization of the Prussian domains of the Teutonic Order in 1525, the Prussian princes also often gave falcons as gifts further confirms that the Order used this proven diplomatic tool throughout the fifteenth century.⁷⁷ The type and number of hunting birds given as a gift were always determined by the Grand Master's diplomacy based on the rank of the princes and dignitaries to be gifted, as well as the importance of the political relations of the Knights with the recipient.⁷⁸ Rarer and more expensive birds, or consignments consisting of a larger number of falcons were usually given to particularly esteemed, prestigious and powerful personages. The Grand Master usually presented 14–18 falcons to Holy Roman Emperors and Popes, 12 to the Roman King, and 6 to 10 birds to other monarchs – depending on how important they were to the foreign political interests of the Order. Dukes, margraves, landgraves, viscounts or archbishops received 4–6 falcons.⁷⁹ According to a register from 1397, the Order sent 10 falcons to the King Sigismund of Luxemburg, and 4 to a chief supporter of his, the Voivode of Transylvania, Stibor of Stiboricz, as many as were usually sent to an imperial prince.⁸⁰ In 1399, the Grand Master sent two hunting bird cages as a gift to the Hungarian king, for which the chief treasurer paid a total of 11 marks.⁸¹ In the same year, King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia, also being Holy Roman Emperor at the time, only received one cage, which cost 4 marks, i.e. it was cheaper than the cage sent to Sigismund. (*11 m. deme konige zu Ungern uf zwu kassen, item 4 m. uf eyne case ken Behemen deme Romyschen konyge*).⁸² This striking distinction was certainly linked to the fact that in the spring of 1399 the electors of the Empire turned against Wenceslaus, which led to his dethronement on 20 August 1399 and

⁷⁵ Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 21198.

⁷⁶ Regesta I. Vol. 3. Nr. 21208.

⁷⁷ Heckmann, Dieter, "Preußische Jagdfalken als Grandmesser für die Außenwirkung europäischer Höfe des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts", = *Preußenland* 37, 1999, 39–62.

⁷⁸ Heckmann, Jagdfalken, 1999. 39–62.; Militzer, Klaus, "Jagd und Deutscher Orden", In: Paravicini, Werner (ed.), *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*. (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135.) Göttingen, 1997. 325–363.

⁷⁹ Kumerloeve, Hans, "Über Beizvogelgeschenke des Deutschen Ritterordens an weltliche und geistliche Fürsten im Dienste der Ordenspolitik (14./16. Jahrhundert)", = *Veröffentlichungen des Naturwissenschaftlichen Vereins zu Osnabrück* 28, 1957, 72–80. 76–77.

⁸⁰ Borbás, Benjámín, "Falcons in Service of the Teutonic Order at the Turn of the Fourteenth–Fifteenth Century", = *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 26, 2020, 133–149. 139.

⁸¹ MTB 37.

⁸² MTB 37.

the election of Ruprecht, the Count Palatine of the Rhine as the new ruler.⁸³ In the light of these developments, the Teutonic Order could not hope for much support from Wenceslas, but after the disaster at Nicopolis, Sigismund wanted to use the armed forces of the Order to defend the southern borders of his country, and offered to donate Burzenland to the Knights if they moved to Hungary, from where they had been expelled by King Andrew II in 1225.⁸⁴ At the same time, when the Luxemburg brothers received bird cages as gifts from the Order, the Grand Master sent falcons and hounds used for falconry to the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas.⁸⁵ The person and policies of Vytautas were of considerable value to the Teutonic Order at this time, as he sought greater Lithuanian independence within the Polish–Lithuanian union, and for that he was looking for an ally in Prussia as well. In 1398, to prove his good intentions, he renounced the Lithuanian province of Samogitia (Žemaitija), wedged between the Prussian and Livonian territories of the Order.⁸⁶ In 1400, the Grand Master sent not cages but 6 falcons to the Hungarian king (but this was still less than the 10 sent in 1397).⁸⁷ In 1403 two servants of the Teutonic Order took falcons to Bohemia and Hungary, but their number was not recorded this time.⁸⁸ In 1406 Sigismund again received a cage from the Grand Master, but this alone cost as much as the two ones he had received in 1399, i.e. it must have been of a more superb workmanship and made of much more expensive material.⁸⁹ In 1408 the Grand Master's falconer took falcons to several princely and imperial courts, including Buda, and another cage worth 11 marks (*Peter felkener of falcken uszutragen als Ungern (...) 1 kase 11 m.*).⁹⁰ The following year, prior to the impending war between the Teutonic Order and Poland,⁹¹ the Grand Master again sent falcons to the ruler of Hungary.⁹²

⁸³ Pósán László, *Németország a középkorban*. Debrecen, 2003. 277.

⁸⁴ CDP Bd. VI. Nr. 49.; Pósán, Nicolaus von Redewitz, 2021. 114

⁸⁵ MTB 35.

⁸⁶ Weise, Erich (ed.), *Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen in Preußen im 15. Jahrhundert, 1398–1467*, Bd. I. Marburg, 1966. Nr. 2.

⁸⁷ MTB 77.

⁸⁸ MTB 224.

⁸⁹ MTB 383.

⁹⁰ MTB 506.

⁹¹ Kuczyński, Stefan Maria, *Wielka wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim w latach 1409–1411*. Warszawa, 1966.; Pósán László, "A Német Lovagrend és a lengyel–litván állam közötti 'nagy háború' (1409–1411)", = *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 124, 2011, 3–30.

⁹² MTB 586.

The Order's gifts were mostly delivered to Sigismund by couriers, but it also happened that the presents were handed over on the occasion of an official visit of the Teutonic embassy to Hungary. According to the *Treßlerbuch*, in 1398, the Commander of Radzyń Chełmiński was the emissary to Hungary.⁹³ The Treasury provided 20 marks for the travel expenses. In the following years, the main political relations between Sigismund and the Teutonic Order were based on the correspondence between the King and the Grand Master. The next high-ranking Teutonic envoy to Buda was a Prussian secular landowner, Gotschalk Hitfeld, who, to cover the cost of travel befitting his rank and office, received from the Treasurer-General on 6 August 1409 an allowance of 120 golden florins, worth – according to the *Treßlerbuch* – 62 Prussian marks and 2 scots.⁹⁴ After the attempts to settle the diplomatic dispute in June and July 1409 failed, Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen declared war on Poland on 9 August.⁹⁵ Thus, Gotschalk Hitfeld arrived in Hungary as an envoy who was trying to win the support of the Hungarian king as an ally and supporter of a knightly order at war. In the same year, shortly after the return of Hitfeld to Prussia, at the end of September, Grand Master Michael Kuchmeister sent another envoy to Buda, the Voigt of Samogitia. For his expenses he received nearly as much money as the previous envoy, 100 golden forints. The difference was only due to the fact that Kuchmeister was a warrior monk, so he had to follow the regulations for both his diet and accommodation during his travels.⁹⁶ It seems that not even this embassy did bring the result the Grand Master had hoped for, because at the end of October, the commander of Elbląg, Werner von Tettingen and of Toruń, Albrecht von Schwarzburg were dispatched to Sigismund of Luxemburg. The treasury of the Grand Master allocated 1,400 gold florins for the expenses of this diplomatic mission, an amount substantially larger than previous ones.⁹⁷ It is possible that the two former envoys, Gotschalk Hitfeld and Michael Kuchmeister, prepared the meeting of this more prestigious ambassador of the Order. The prestige of this mission in late autumn and, at the same time the esteem and respect shown to the sending party, the Teutonic Order,

⁹³ MTB 19.

⁹⁴ MTB 561.

⁹⁵ Nowak, Zenon Hubert, "Akt rozpoczynający 'Wielką wojnę'. List wypowiedni w mistrza Ulyka von Jungingen z 6 sierpnia 1409 roku", = *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 20, 1976, 79–85.

⁹⁶ MTB 561.

⁹⁷ MTB 561.

was expressed by the fact that, according to a letter dated 27 November 1409, Sigismund invited the commanders of Elbląg and Toruń to the baptism of his daughter.⁹⁸ Following the so-called “Great War” of 1409–1411, between 1411 and 1420, when both the Teutonic Order and the Polish–Lithuanian state relied on the Emperor and the ecumenical council to arbitrate in pending disputes, the Grand Master sent envoys of high rank with the right to negotiate with Sigismund on six occasions. The largest delegation was the one that was dispatched to Buda in May 1412, consisting of 18 people, including such illustrious figures as Archbishop Johann von Wallenrode of Riga, Marshal Michael Kűchmeister, Werner von Tettingen, Master of the Hospital and Commander of Elbląg, Master Drapier (Traperarius) Friedrich von Welden, Eberhard von Wallenfals, Commander of Toruń, and Johann Abezier, Provost of Warmia. Three of the five senior officers of the Teutonic Order after the Grand Master (Grand Commander, that is, the head of the commanderies, Treasurer General, Master of the Hospital, Marshal, and Master Drapier) were members of the delegation. These five top officials, together with the Commanders of Toruń and Danzig, and the Grand Master formed the most important political governing body of the Teutonic state, the so-called “Petty Council”.⁹⁹ Of the two heads of commanderies, the one from Toruń was also a member of the 1412 delegation to Hungary. The other five delegations to Sigismund were much smaller and consisted of fewer high-ranking officials.¹⁰⁰

In the diplomatic relations between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order, the King of Hungary also sent gifts to the Grand Master. He also used these to express his appreciation and respect for the crusaders, and convince them to support his own political plans and ambitions. However, we have far less information about what gifts the Hungarian king gave the Grand Master than vice versa. The Teutonic accounts, the *Treßlerbuch*, mostly only recorded the amount of money that was spent on the supplies of the Hungarian couriers and envoys who were dispatched to Prussia, while no account of the gifts was kept at the court of Sigismund. At the beginning of 1400, the knights paid 16 scots for the accommodation and meals of the envoy of Sigismund.¹⁰¹ In March 1405, the provision cost of a knight of the King of Hungary, who was an envoy to Malbork, was

⁹⁸ Regesta I. Vol. 1. Nr. 1175.

⁹⁹ Sarnowsky, Jürgen, *Der Deutsche Orden*. München, 2007. 56.

¹⁰⁰ Flemmig, Stephan, “Die Beziehungen des Deutschen Ordens zum Reich vom Thorner Frieden bis zum Tag von Breslau”, = *Miscellanea Historico-Archivistica* 19, 2012, 7–42. 29–30.

¹⁰¹ MTB 67.

9 vierdungs.¹⁰² On 21 June 1405 the treasury of the Grand Master paid 1 mark 8 scots to a citizen of Malbork who had given lodging and board to the envoy of Sigismund.¹⁰³ When more prestigious Hungarian embassies were sent to the court of the Grand Master, the cost of their accommodation was much higher. For example, a Hungarian mission in the autumn of 1405 cost the Order 250 marks.¹⁰⁴

Among the entries in the *Treßlerbuch*, there was only one Hungarian gift that the knights considered worthy of mention: wine. On 11 April 1407 the treasurer-general paid 16 marks to the carriers who transported the wine to Malbork the King of Hungary presented to the Grand Master.¹⁰⁵ A similar entry can be found regarding 15 April 1408.¹⁰⁶ Wine was a generally common gift in the Middle Ages, therefore, it was not outspoken in most of the cases.¹⁰⁷ However, the fact that Hungarian wine was still considered important to be mentioned in the Order's records suggests that it was a rare wine of very high quality. Medieval people were not yet able to control and manage the micro-organisms in containers and cellars, nor the fermentation process and the biochemical changes in the wine, hence wine failure was very common. Due to inadequate storage, handling and transport, the wine may have started to ferment again, become vinegary or suffer from various wine diseases. The most frequent problem was acidic aftertaste. The wine turned vinegary relatively quickly because the bacteria in it, especially the *Acetobacter aceti*, needed only oxygen to proliferate rapidly. Acetic acid is the result of the metabolism of this bacterium, and in the Middle Ages it was not yet possible to prevent the acidification of wine. The process of acidification could have been reduced at most by low storage temperature, higher alcohol content or higher storage volume (in the latter case, the wine was in contact with air over a smaller surface area compared to its mass), because all three conditions slowed down the bacterial growth. The treatment of barrels with sulphur dioxide, sulphurisation, which killed micro-organisms and prevented spoilage caused by oxidation, thus keeping the wine fresh for longer, was only introduced in the early modern period.¹⁰⁸ During the Middle Ages,

¹⁰² MTB 341.

¹⁰³ MTB 355.

¹⁰⁴ MTB 368.

¹⁰⁵ MTB 423.

¹⁰⁶ MTB 478.

¹⁰⁷ Schwendler, *Diplomatische*, 2011. 161.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, Hugh, *A bor története*. Budapest, 2005. 67–68.

the only way to transport wine over long distances without significant loss of quality was to transport wine with a relatively high alcohol content, which meant that it could be kept for longer. Based on its quality and alcohol content, the Hungarian wine presented to the Grand Master by Sigismund of Luxemburg must have been one that could be transported far from its production area (some 1,000 kilometres away) without any significant damage or deterioration in quality. In medieval Hungary, the wine produced in Syrmia was of the best quality. Sources agree that the best and most expensive wines were considered to be those from Syrmia.¹⁰⁹ Already in the 1288 Esztergom customs list, this wine was the most valuable: its customs duty was twice as high as that of other wines.¹¹⁰ In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Italian humanist Galeotto Marzio wrote of the Syrmian wine that it was “so sweet that it is difficult to find anything like it in the whole world”.¹¹¹ A poem from the beginning of the sixteenth century compared Syrmian wine to nectar.¹¹² The wine from Syrmia was sweet with a high residual sugar content, mainly fructose. (Because the glucose in grapes ferments more quickly.) This was due to the fact that, as in the later Tokaj-Hegyalja wine region, Syrmia also benefited from the natural noble rot caused by the noble mould resulting from the infection of the fungus *Botrytis cinerea*. Three basic conditions have to be fulfilled for the noble rot to occur: undamaged grapes at the time of ripening for the fungal infection, i.e. late summer, early autumn, with adequate moisture (rain, fog), which is followed by a prolonged dry and still warm period. In the Mediterranean this was out of the question, mainly due to the lack of humidity and moisture at the end of summer, but in Syrmia the proximity of the Danube and Sava rivers ensured the appropriate humidity, and its geographical location the necessary temperature and microclimate. In the Middle Ages, this natural noble rot gave the wines of Syrmia their special character.¹¹³ The sweet wine of medieval Syrmia was similar to that

¹⁰⁹ Marton Szabolcs, “A szerémi szőlők édes nedűje – középkori boraink királya”, = *Élet és tudomány* 72, 2017, 905–907. 7.

¹¹⁰ Solymosi László, “Szőlőművelés Magyarországon a középkorban. A honfoglalástól a 14. századig”, = *História* 20, 1998, 17–20.

¹¹¹ Galeotto Marzio, *Mátyás királynak kiváló, bölcs, tréfás mondásairól és tetteiről szóló könyv*. Trans. Tibor Kardos. Budapest, 1979. 38.

¹¹² Klaniczay Tibor (ed.), *Janus Pannonius. Magyarországi humanisták*. Budapest, 1982. 224.

¹¹³ Csoma Zsigmond, “Történeti-ökológiai és történeti-néprajzi gondolatok a magyarországi középkori francia-vallon szőlő- és borkultúráról”, = *Studia Caroliensia* 7, 2006, 389–400.

of today's Tokaj-Hegyalja, and the sugar content may have been even higher, because the Syrmia wine region was 3 degrees south of Tokaj and received 200 hours more sunshine per year than the Hegyalja one. Due to the higher sugar content of the grapes grown in Syrmia, the alcohol content of the wines made from them was also higher. As a result, wines from here had a longer shelf life and could be transported further than other wines. Wines produced further north had a lower alcohol content and therefore retained their quality for a shorter period. The wines from Syrmia were transported in large barrels of almost 300 litres to reduce the acidification process. (Later, in the early modern period, Tokaj wines were stored in barrels only about half the size of those from Syrmia, so that they could be transported more easily, but by then the barrels were already sulphurised.)¹¹⁴ The Hungarian wine presented by Sigismund to the Teutonic Order on several occasions was therefore certainly from Syrmia, because they were able to transport these over long distances (on carts, or on rivers) while preserving their quality. In Prussia they got to discover this wine, and as they all seem to have liked it, since later on they bought some as well. In the 1420s, Hungarian (i.e. Syrmian) wine was already among the goods of the merchants of Toruń.¹¹⁵ The records of the city of Bardejov testify that its merchants delivered Hungarian wine to the Teutonic Order twice in 1436, in two months' time (*item pro vinis propinatis dominis de Prussia; item pro vinis quae propinaverunt dominis de Prussia*).¹¹⁶

As to what else Sigismund might have given the Grand Master in the course of diplomatic relations, apart from the wine from the 'Seremna', we can perhaps deduce from the gifts that other European monarchs sent to the Teutonic Order when they sent couriers or envoys to Prussia. In the majority of cases, these were objects compatible with the monastic lifestyle of the knights or various relics linked to their religious vocation. For example, in the first third of the thirteenth century, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II gave a very special relic, a piece of the Holy Cross to Grand Master Hermann von Salza.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Bogdán, István, *Magyarországi ür-, térfogat-, súly- és darabmértékek 1874-ig*. Budapest, 1991. 182.; Komoróczy, György, *Borkivitelünk észak felé*. Kassa, 1944. 247.

¹¹⁵ Halaga, Ondrej R, "Kaufleute und Handelsgüter der Hanse im Karpatengebiet", = *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 85, 1967, 59–84. 78.

¹¹⁶ *Magyarországi városok régi számadáskönyvei*. Ed. Fejérfpataky László. Budapest, 1885. 365, 367.

¹¹⁷ *Petri de Dusburg, Chronica terrae Prussiae*. In. *Scriptores rerum prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischer Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft*. Hg. Hirsch,

Another piece was brought to Malbork in 1374 as a gift from King Charles V of France.¹¹⁸ The following year the French king sent a golden cross to the Grand Master.¹¹⁹ In 1383 his successor, Charles VI gave another relatively larger piece of the Cross to the Order (*eyn gros stucke von dem heyligin cruce*).¹²⁰ The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV presented St. Catherine relics to the Grand Master.¹²¹ According to the Order's records between 1394 and 1439 in addition to the pieces of the Cross of Christ, relics of St. Agnes, St. Euphemia, St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine and St. Anthony were brought to Malbork, most of them as gifts from secular princes and ecclesiastical dignitaries.¹²² As early as 1344 James, Bishop of Samland promised forgiveness for 40 days to all those who made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Malbork.¹²³ In 1358 this was confirmed by Pope Innocent VI, who also proclaimed 40 days of forgiveness for those who made a pilgrimage to Malbork.¹²⁴ In 1389 Pope Urban VI decreed that the Order could only show the relics kept at the seat of the Grand Master every five years to the believers, and, pilgrims did not receive only 40 days' forgiveness, but full absolution.¹²⁵ In 1400 Anna, the consort of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas also made a pilgrimage to Malbork.¹²⁶ When the mother of King Louis I of Hungary, Elizabeth visited Rome in 1344, gave liturgical textiles, expensive chasubles, and objects made by goldsmiths (gold chalices decorated with precious stones and pearls) as gifts.¹²⁷ It is certain that Sigismund of Luxemburg also sent similar gifts to the Teutonic Order.

Members of the Teutonic Order, as brethren, were forbidden to play games of chance (dice, cards) because they were associated with sin. In France, as

Theodor – Toeppen, Max – Strahlke, Ernst. Leipzig, 1861. 53.

¹¹⁸ Zacharias, Rainer, "Die Reliquienwallfahrt zur Hochmeisterresidenz Marienburg", = *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands* 50, 2002, 11–35. 18.

¹¹⁹ Paravicini, Werner, *Die Preussenreisen des europäischen Adels*, Teil 1. (Beihefte der Francia, 17/1.) Sigmaringen, 1989. 267.

¹²⁰ HR I. Bd. 3. 139.

¹²¹ Paravicini, *Preussenreisen*, 1989. 305.

¹²² MÄB 122–135

¹²³ *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, Bd. III/3. Ed. Koeppen, Hans. Marburg, 1958. Nr. 697.

¹²⁴ Voigt, Johannes, *Geschichte Marienburg, der Stadt und Haupthauses des Deutschen Ritterordens in Preußen*. Königsberg, 1824. 536–537.

¹²⁵ CDP Bd. IV. Nr. 57.

¹²⁶ SRP III. 376–379.

¹²⁷ Śnieżyńska-Stolot, Ewa, "Tanulmányok Erzsébet királynő mecénási tevékenységéről. (Liturgiai textíliák és paramentumok)", = *Ars Hungarica* 7, 1979, 23–31. 16.

early as the thirteenth century, King Louis IX issued a decree banning dice playing, drinking and prostitution, all of which he considered to be sinful activities.¹²⁸ Pier Paolo Vergerio, who studied at the University of Padua, then served as a secretary at the papal court, attended the Council of Constance as well as served Sigismund, wrote in his *De ingennis moribus et liberalibus studiis* (On noble morals and artes liberales) published in 1404 that games of chance were unworthy of noble men.¹²⁹ Chess, however, presupposed a certain level of knowledge, logical ability and intellectual level, which at the same time was linked to social status, and was therefore considered a worthy occupation for men and women alike in the chivalric and courtly society, and it was even allowed for clergymen. In Rievaulx Abbey, for example, monks were playing chess as early as the twelfth century. Chess was associated with moral values and linked to various chivalric and Christian virtues. Around 1300, a Dominican monk from Genoa, Jacobus de Cessolis, wrote a treatise on this subject entitled *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium sive super luda sacchorum*.¹³⁰ The chess pieces also symbolised the society of the time, as there were kings, queens, royal officials (the bishops), knights, and the rook or tower shape symbolised the cities.¹³¹ However, chess was a valuable, expensive game, each piece of which had to be carved out or cast in metal, making it a worthy gift at any time. In 1335, when the kings of Hungary, Bohemia and Poland met in Visegrád, Hungary, the Hungarian ruler Charles Robert gave King John of Bohemia 50 silver pots, 2 expensive belts, 2 saddles, 2 quivers, a dagger richly decorated with precious stones worth 200 marks and a magnificent chessboard with accompanying pieces.¹³² For the members of the Teutonic Order, as brethren, gambling was not only dishonourable but also forbidden, yet, at the same time they were allowed to play chess. In 1400,

¹²⁸ Jean de Joinville, *Szent Lajos élete és bölcs mondásai*. Ed. Csernus Sándor. (A középkori francia történeti irodalom remekei, 2.) Budapest, 2015. 152, 244, 325.

¹²⁹ Orosz Gábor (ed.), *Az európai középkor, reneszánsz és a 16. század neveléstörténete. Prohászka Lajos egyetemi előadásaiból*. (Pallas Debrecina, 16.) Debrecen, 2004. 118.

¹³⁰ Jönsson, Maren, “Von tugendhaften Königinnen und neugierigen Ehefrauen. Weibliche Genderentwürfe in deutsch- und schwedischsprachigen Schachzabelbüchern”, In. Ferm, Olle – Honemann, Volker (eds.), *Chess and Allegory in the Middle Ages*. Stockholm, 2005. 217–279. 224.

¹³¹ Plessow, Oliver, “Kulturelle Angleichung und Werteuniversalismus in den Schachzabelbüchern des Mittelalters”, In. Ferm, Olle – Honemann, Volker (eds.), *Chess and Allegory in the Middle Ages*. Stockholm, 2005. 57–97. 62

¹³² Thuróczy János, *Magyarok krónikája*. Eds. Benda Gyula – Bertényi Iván – Póty János. (Milleneumi magyar történelem. Források) Budapest, 2001. 170.

for example, Queen Margaret, the ruler of the Kalmar Union, which united the Scandinavian countries in a personal union, sent a chess set as a gift to the Grand Master.¹³³ Of course, money could be won or lost not only on dice or cards, but even on chess, if the players were betting, but not as much as in gambling. According to the entries in the Treßlerbuch, the Grand Master often played chess, and played for money with Western dignitaries and noblemen who almost constantly came to Prussia for longer or shorter periods, and sometimes he even lost small sums of money.¹³⁴

¹³³ CDP Bd. VI. Nr. 100.

¹³⁴ MTB 499, 507, 508, 514.

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE: BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA

Aims and Scope

The East Central Europe: Between the Baltic and the Adriatic (ECE) is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Institute of History at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen. As its title suggests, the journal focuses on the history of Central Europe, covering the region between the Baltic and Adriatic Seas. This region was for centuries a crossroads and meeting point where diverse ethnic groups, religions, traditions, and political entities interacted in unique ways. In addition to studies directly examining the history of the region, the editors welcome methodologically and/or theoretically relevant contributions for the analysis of historical processes.

The journal seeks to create an interdisciplinary platform to facilitate dialogue and disseminate new research on the region, whose findings are often limited in international scholarship due to language barriers and the influence of national narratives. To support this goal, ECE is an open-access journal, published at least once annually, available in both print and online formats.

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Ostmitteleuropa: Zwischen Ostsee und Adria (ECE) ist eine begutachtete wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift, die vom Historischen Institut der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Debrecen herausgegeben wird. Wie der Titel schon andeutet, konzentriert sich die Zeitschrift auf die Geschichte Mitteleuropas, insbesondere auf das Gebiet zwischen Ostsee und Adria. Diese Region war über Jahrhunderte ein Schnittpunkt und Begegnungsraum, in dem unterschiedliche ethnische Gruppen, Religionen, Traditionen und politische Einheiten auf einzigartige Weise interagierten. Neben Studien, die Geschichte der Region direkt untersuchen, erwarten die Herausgeber methodisch und/oder theoretisch relevante Beiträge zur Analyse historischer Prozesse.

Die Zeitschrift möchte eine interdisziplinäre Plattform schaffen, um den Dialog zu fördern und neue Forschungsergebnisse über die Region zu verbreiten, deren Ergebnisse aufgrund von Sprachbarrieren und der Prägung durch nationale Narrative international nur begrenzt bekannt sind. Zur Unterstützung dieses Ziels ist ECE eine Open-Access-Zeitschrift, die mindestens einmal jährlich erscheint und sowohl in gedruckter als auch in digitaler Form verfügbar ist.

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