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The Retable of the Main Altar from the Parish Church of Saint John the Baptist in Łekno (German: Bast), Dating from 1588¹

The wooden panel depicting the *Last Supper*, currently on display in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Koszalin, initially constituted the central part of a triptych.² Until the 1960s, the work of art served as the retable of the main altar in the church of St. John the Baptist in Łekno (formerly called Bast in German and Łękno in Polish)³. Conservation work on the surviving part of the altarpiece that took place in 2013 inspired research and analysis ranging from technological issues to the history of art in general. The research uncovered many interesting facts about the item's history, attribution and sources of inspiration.⁴ It also became the starting point for the present study

The triptych from the village near Koszalin was mentioned in several German-language works on the monuments of Western Pomerania and the territorially vast

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- 1 I would like to thank the team of art conservators from Gorek Restauro for our fruitful research cooperation during restoration works on the *Last Supper* in Łekno and dr Renata Sulewska for the valuable insight which helped the present work take its final shape.
 - 2 Maria Glišńska defines this work as a pentaptych (M. Glišńska, "Niderlandyzm w sztuce Pomorza Zachodniego w czasach nowożytnych" [Dutch influences in the art of Western Pomerania in the early modern era], in: *Niderlandyzm w sztuce polskiej. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Toruń, grudzień 1992* [Dutch influences in Polish art. Materials from the Session of the Association of Art Historians, Toruń, December 1992], Warsaw 1995, pp. 172–176). She assumes the original form of the retable to have been a triptych with hinged panels.
 - 3 The official name of the village is Łekno, yet in relevant literature it is commonly referred to as 'Łękno'.
 - 4 *Dokumentacja konserwatorska obrazu na desce „Ostatnia Wieczerza” z Łekna z katedry w Koszalinie* [Documentation from the conservation of the 'Last Supper' panel painting from Łekno held at the Koszalin Cathedral], ed. by P. Gorek, M. Gościcka, A. Żurek, K. Zalewska, Warsaw 2013. The documentation was made in three copies currently held by the curia of the Koszalin–Kołobrzeg diocese, by the Koszalin branch of the Provincial Heritage Protection Office and by the Gorek Restauro company from Warsaw that was contracted to perform the restoration. The author of the present work used the latter copy.

artistic patronage of the Dukes of Pomerania who hailed from the House of Griffins. As far as Polish sources are concerned, information on the surviving *Last Supper* and its original context started to appear in the 1980s, yet no monograph was written on the subject.

The first mention of the Łekno triptych comes from a text written in 1889 by Ludwig Böttger. The retable then featured two visible inscriptions with the dates “1588” and “Renov. anno 1736”.⁵ The author noted that the retable had originally been located beneath a portrait of Casimir VII (IX) Duke of Stettin, in whose domain the temple stood.⁶ The image hung in the church until 1867 but was removed later due to extensive damage.⁷ Information about the ducal portrait was repeated after Böttger in a 1937 work by Hellmuth Bethe.⁸ Bethe was the first to draw attention to the fact that some of the Apostles in the *Last Supper* were given the features of the Dukes of Stettin – the sons of Philip I Wolgast.⁹ Janina Kochanowska identified two of the Griffins and pointed to Barnim XII as the patron of the triptych: “The partially preserved altarpiece from Łekno near Koszalin, the former seat of the titular Protestant bishop of duke Casimir IX, founded in 1588, was an example of the fashion for crypto-portraits of the Cranach workshop spreading to Pomerania. The unknown artist who painted the central image of the *Last Supper* depicted Pomeranian princes as the holy Apostles. (...) Among the figures seated to Christ’s left one can discern the images of the donor – Barnim XII (gesticulating) and Bogislaw XIII (facing the audience)”.¹⁰ Maria Glińska agrees with Janina Kochanowska’s identification but suggests that the triptych was commissioned by Duke Casimir. She classifies the composition of the *Last Supper* scene into the type created by Dirck Bouts, stating that “the unknown painter combined Dutch motifs with the ones used by Cranach”.¹¹ Bogdana Kozińska demonstrated the connection between the triptych and the main altarpiece from the castle church in Stettin that had been completed more than a decade earlier. She defined the composition as being

5 L. Böttger, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Regierungs-Bezirks Köslin*, H. 1: *Die Kreise Köslin und Colberg-Körlin*, Stettin 1889, p. 6.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid. The author does not provide any sources for this information.

8 H. Bethe, “Die Bildnisse des pommerschen Herzoghauses”, *Baltische Studien*, Neue Folge 1937, no. 39, p. 93.

9 Ibid.

10 J. Kochanowska, “Wizerunki książąt pomorskich w ołtarzach 2 połowy XVI i początku XVII wieku z terenu Pomorza Zachodniego” [Portraits of the dukes of Pomerania in altars dating from the 2nd half of the 16th and the early 17th century, from Western Pomerania], in: *Portret: funkcja – forma – symbol. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Toruń, grudzień 1986* [A portrait: function – form – symbol. Materials from the Session of the Association of Art Historians, Toruń, December 1986], Warsaw 1990, p. 375. In the main body of the article the author identifies Barnim XII as the donor of the altarpiece, yet the caption to the photograph of the triptych (Fig. 6) includes the phrase “pentaptych founded by Casimir IX”.

11 Glińska, op. cit., pp. 172–176.

“in the Dutch type”.¹² Recounting the statements of earlier authors, Marcin Wiśłocki added that the painting also contains portraits of reformers of the church, yet did not mention them by name or identify the figures that allegedly bear their features.¹³

It is uncertain whether the triptych was originally intended for the gothic church of St. John the Baptist in Łekno or was moved there in later times. Only the central part of the retable has survived, yet the appearance of the entire altarpiece is known due to two photographs made before 1945, which are currently in the collection of the National Museum in Szczecin (Figs. 1–2).¹⁴ The photographs show a considerably dilapidated work with its wings open and closed¹⁵.



Fig. 1. *The Last Supper Triptych*, 1588, parish church in Łekno, condition before 1939, source: National Museum in Szczecin, Iconographic and Photographic Collection, signature MNS/A. Foto/3386-7

12 B. Kozińska, “Johann Baptista Perini i jego ołtarz z kaplicy zamkowej” [Johann Baptista Perini and his altar in the castle chapel], in: *Zamek książęcy w Szczecinie* [The ducal castle in Stettin], Szczecin 1992, p. 221.

13 M. Wiśłocki, “Upamiętnienie i gloryfikacja w ewangelickiej sztuce Pomorza w XVI–XVII wieku” [Commemoration and glorification in Protestant art in Pomerania in the 16th and 17th century], *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 2002, no. 27, p. 234; idem, *Sztuka protestancka na Pomorzu 1535–1684* [Protestant art in Pomerania, 1535–1684], Szczecin 2005, p. 268.

14 The National Museum in Szczecin, the collection of iconography and photography, sign. no. MNS/A.Foto/3386-7, MNS/A.Foto/ 3388-9.

15 The painterly layer on the frames and reverse sides of the wings had peeled off in many places.



Fig. 2. *The Last Supper Triptych*, 1588, parish church in Łekno, condition before 1939, source: National Museum in Szczecin, Iconographic and Photographic Collection, signature MNS/A. Foto/ 3388-9

The triptych used to rest on a low predella held at the ends by pairs of volute consoles arranged perpendicularly. The horizontal panel between them was fully covered with inscriptions, yet the poor state of preservation makes the texts thereof entirely illegible today. No previous transcripts are known; close-ups only reveal a fragment of the dates 1588 and 1736, as mentioned by Böttger. It is, however, impossible to ascertain whether the entire inscription dated to the 18th century or whether only the note on the work's renovation was added then.

The central part of the triptych consisted of a square panel depicting the *Last Supper*. It is the only element that can now testify to the colour scheme of the entire altarpiece. The scene in the cenacle features Christ with the Twelve Apostles seated at a round table laid with a white cloth. The characters are depicted in various poses, wearing robes in different colours; some are looking toward Jesus in the centre, others are engrossed in a conversation or turned towards the viewer. All but St. John, who is resting on Christ's chest, seem agitated and are gesticulating widely. A youth carrying a platter, visible in the background to the left, appears to

be held back by the gesture of an extended hand made by an elderly man placed at the other end of the composition. The scene plays out against the backdrop of the cenacle's interior: four Solomonic columns in yellow-beige and two more in dark green are outlined in the shadowy background (the author may have intended them to be shadows). The room has grey walls and four arched windows; a crescent moon can be seen through the one on the left.

The central panel was flanked by two rectangular wings. The verso of the left wing depicted the Crucifixion with Holy Mary and St. John the Evangelist. Christ on the cross was looking towards his mother, standing to the left. Mary, shown in a frontal view, was wiping away her tears with a handkerchief held in her left hand and placing her other hand on her chest. Saint John, standing on the other side of the cross, was depicted in side view, with his hands clasped at his hips and his head raised to gaze at the Saviour. The recto of the right wing showed the Resurrection. The figure of a standard-bearing Christ was hovering above a stone tomb surrounded by luminescent clouds. The lower section of the composition was filled with the silhouettes of four soldiers startled from their sleep.

The closed wings of the altarpiece depicted the scene of the Annunciation. The left one featured the Archangel Gabriel standing on clouds. The heavenly messenger was holding a lily in his left hand; the other hand was pointing to the rays visible in the upper left-hand corner of the panel. Gabriel was accompanied by several small angels holding his robes or floating in the sky. The right panel depicted a room in which Mary was seated at a pulpit. She was looking up at Gabriel, who had interrupted her reading. A dove symbolising the Holy Ghost was shown above her head. The background consisted of an arcaded doorway and a window with a flower vase on the sill. The coffered ceiling over the interior was decorated with rosettas. All panels in the triptych had simple frames with a vegetal ornament and a quarter-round moulding by the inner edges.

Folding the wings of the triptych revealed side buttresses with *trompe l'oeil* niches in which Adam and Eve were depicted. Adam, shown to the left, was young and muscular, covering his sex with a fig branch held in his right hand. Eve was shown extending her left hand to pick a fruit hanging above her head. Her fair, naked skin contrasted sharply with the wave of dark tresses falling to her breast and bosom.

The triptych was crowned with a vertical board, slightly taller in the centre and framed with volutes. It featured a large coat of arms of the Duchy of Pomerania, divided into nine fields and held up by two wild men and flanked with a griffin and a lion in profile.¹⁶ In the above-mentioned archival photographs from the

16 The coat of arms of the Duchy of Pomerania, established at the beginning of the 16th century by Bogislaw X, is familiar to us from many existing works, such as the foundation plaque of the southern wing of the Szczecin castle (1538, currently on the façade of the eastern wing), the tombstone of Barnim III commissioned by Barnim XI (1543, currently in the gallery of the northern wing of the Szczecin castle), and the Croy Tapestry (1554, presently in Pommersches Landesmuseum in Greifswald).

collection of the National Museum in Szczecin, the lower section of the vertical beam of a cross is visible over the pediment. It is uncertain whether it had been an element of the original altarpiece, along with the portrait of Duke Casimir, as mentioned by Böttger and removed in 1867. An analogy for such an arrangement of the donor's portrait can be found in the now lost altarpiece from Grabów (after 1551), the crowning of which featured the sculpted images of Duke Barnim XI, Luther and Luther and Melanchton.¹⁷

Janina Kochanowska mentioned that, as a result of a fire that devastated the church in 1962, only the central panel of the triptych (Fig. 3) has survived to the present day.¹⁸ The scene depicting the *Last Supper* underwent restoration work in the latter half of the 20th century.¹⁹ The work was then transferred to the Curia of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese in Koszalin and remained there until 2013, when new conservation work was done. Restorers working on the painterly layer found no traces of damage done by fire or high temperatures. The condition of the painting has been greatly improved in the process. The removal of the discoloured yellowing varnish made the colour palette brighter and more saturated. Layers of later additions were also removed, revealing details of physiognomy and folds in the robes. The date of the painting's completion – 1558 – was discovered written across the floor tiles in the lowest section of the composition, along with the signature CS (Fig. 4). Discoloured retouches were cleared away, as were patches of putty that had been applied on the original painterly layer and were hitherto visible in the form of green patches.²⁰

The forms of altarpieces most popular in Pomerania in the 2nd half of the 16th century were triptychs or pentaptychs with movable wings, modelled after the products of the Cranach workshop. These were popularised in the Duchy by the Saxon artists David Redtel and Thomas Nether.²¹ In the late 16th and early 17th century the type was replaced by more elaborate architectural altarpieces in the Mannerist style.²² The iconographic programme of the Pomeranian altarpiece from the period was rather conventional: "The retables typically depicted scenes from the *Last Supper*, usually placed on the predella and complemented with images of

17 The original form of the crowning is not known to modern scholars. See J. Kochanowska, "Wystrój podszczezińskiej rezydencji Barnima XI. Chwała rodu Gryfitów zobrazowana w sztuce" [Decoration of Barnim XI's residence near Stettin. The glory of the House of Griffins as shown in art], in: *Sztuka i historia. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Kraków, listopad 1988* [Art and history. Materials from the session of the Association of Art Historians, Cracow, November 1988], Warsaw 1992, pp. 228–232.

18 Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 375.

19 Documentation of the works performed at that time was either not prepared or did not survive. The fact that the conservation did take place in the 2nd half of the 20th century is, however, evident from the presence of epoxy resin in the material used at that time. More on the subject in: *Dokumentacja konserwatorska...*, pp. 42–46.

20 Ibid., pp. 7, 54–58.

21 Wisłocki, op. cit., p. 65.

22 Ibid., pp. 65–66.



Fig. 3. The *Last Supper* from Łekno, 1588, Koszalin cathedral, condition after the conservation in 2013, photo by Gorek Restauro



Fig. 4. The *Last Supper* from Łekno, 1588, Koszalin cathedral, detail: production date and the painter's signature, condition after conservation in 2013, photo by Gorek Restauro

the Crucifixion and Resurrection. [...] it was in line with the disputes held at the Pomeranian synods in the 1580s and 1590s, focusing on Christological issues, e.g. the *ubique* doctrine, and with the general trends in Lutheran theology, where Christology was slowly becoming the number one topic”.²³ The *Last Supper* was a very frequent choice with patrons due to its connection with the Eucharist. Apart from the retable from Grabów, the motif was used in the central field of altarpieces in the chapel of St. George in Gryfice (after 1550) and in the churches in Kołowo (1585, currently at the National Museum in Szczecin), Stare Chrapowo (1591, no longer extant), Letnino (ca. 1590–1600, partially preserved) and Suchanówko (late 16th century, no longer extant).²⁴ Inclusion of the cenacle scene on altars was advised by Martin Luther himself: “Who wishes to place panels on the altars should have the Lord’s Supper painted [thereon] with these two verses: *Our gracious and merciful Lord in remembrance of His miracle*, written around it in gold letters [...] Since the altar is there for the purpose of offering the Sacrament on it, no other painting is more suitable, and other images of God or Christ can be painted in other places”.²⁵

The combination of the *Last Supper*, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, appearing, for example, in the altarpiece from Grabowo, added confessional significance to the work. The connection between these scenes was emphasised in the definition of the Sacrament as articulated by Jacob Runge, the general superintendent in Wolgast in 1557–1595.²⁶ His theological works also discuss the issue of Christ’s body born of Mary and its presence in the Communion.²⁷ The doctrine of the Incarnation found its artistic reflection in the Annunciation and Nativity scenes depicted on retables (the altarpiece of the castle church in Szczecin, 1575–1577; the altarpiece from Suchanówko, late 16th century).²⁸ The buttresses of the retable from Łekno featured a depiction of Adam and Eve. These biblical figures were separated by the scene of the Annunciation, painted on the reverse side of the lateral panels. According to Marcin Wisłocki, this juxtaposition of motifs gave the work eschatological significance, expressing the “redemptory nature of taking communion, which grants the remission of sins”.²⁹ Depictions of Christ and Mary were also juxtaposed with those of the first parents on the altarpiece from Szadzko (1596, currently in Odargowo).³⁰

Placing texts that explained or complemented the iconographic programme of the works on altars, baptismal fonts, pulpits, epitaphs and matronaea was common

23 M. Ptaszyński, “Reprezentacja pobożności. O syntezie pomorskiej sztuki protestanckiej” [Representation of piety. On the synthesis of Protestant art in Pomerania], *Zapiski Historyczne*, 2007, no. 72, issue 4, p. 136.

24 Wisłocki, *Sztuka protestancka...*, p. 69.

25 Quoted after: G. Jurkowlaniec, *Epoka nowożytna wobec średniowiecza. Pamiątki przeszłości, cudowne wizerunki, dzieła sztuki* [Approaches to the Middle Ages in the early modern era. Mementoes of the past, miracle-working images, works of art], Wrocław 2008, p. 237.

26 Wisłocki, op. cit., pp. 70–71.

27 Ibid., p. 71.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., p. 81.

practice in Lutheran churches.³¹ Unfortunately, a part of the inscription from the predella of the Łekno triptych remains unknown.

None of the authors interested in the triptych discussed the issue of its authorship. This was probably due to its fragmentary state of preservation and to their lack of access to the work, which was kept in the diocesan curia. Successive publications only reiterated information regarding the year of the triptych's completion, as mentioned by Böttger, who saw it in the inscription on the predella. The dating has since been corroborated by a signature discovered on the painting (on one of the red floor tiles at the bottom of the *Last Supper* scene). The adjacent tile was found to bear the letters CS, which until the most recent conservation work were hidden under a layer of green putty.³² The artist's choice of placing the date and signature was very deliberate. Due to venation in the painted floor, the monogram and numbers were only visible upon close scrutiny. Hiding signatures or even entire inscriptions was extremely popular in the second half of the 16th century, also among artists working at the ducal court in Stettin. David Redtel, the maker of the Gryfino altarpiece (currently at the National Museum in Szczecin), placed the inscription with his name and the date of the triptych's completion (1580) at the bottom of the vertical beam of the cross appearing in the central scene of the Crucifixion.³³ The author of the triptych commissioned in 1568 by Barnim XI signed his work in two places: on the right wing, on the floor below the knees of Princess Anna of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, and on the collar of a dog standing among the crowd gathered on the Golgotha at the Crucifixion (this inscription is turned 90 degrees).³⁴

Studies on the attribution of paintings created in the circle of influence of the last dukes of Stettin still face many challenges. After the demise of the Griffin dynasty, works commissioned by them were scattered.³⁵ A large portion of them was lost or destroyed during the Second World War. One example here is the set of extraordinary furnishings for the castle church in Szczecin.³⁶ Many of these works are known from high-quality archival photographs, although it must be remembered that they might have been "restored" several times before the 20th century,

31 More on the subject in: Wisłocki, op. cit., passim.

32 *Dokumentacja konserwatorska...*, p. 42.

33 T. Modelska, "W sprawie odnalezionej sygnatury tzw. tryptyku Barnima XI" [On the discovery of a signature on the so-called Barnim XI triptych], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 1964, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 114.

34 Ibid., pp. 112–116.

35 J. Bądkowska, "Malarstwo na dworze książąt pomorskich w XVI i XVII wieku ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Szczecinie" [Painting from the court of the Dukes of Pomerania in the 16th and 17th century in the collection of the National Museum in Szczecin], in: *Złoty wiek Pomorza. Sztuka na dworze książąt pomorskich w XVI i XVII wieku* [The Golden Age of Pomerania. Art on the court of the Dukes of Pomerania in the 16th and 17th century], ed. R. Makąła, Szczecin 2013, p. 43.

36 For more on the set see: Ibid., pp. 43–59; T. Żuchowski, "Szczecińska Kaplica Zamkowa w 1577 roku. Próba rekonstrukcji" [Stettin Castle chapel in 1577. A conjectural reconstruction], in: *Szczecin na przestrzeni wieków. Historia – Kultura – Sztuka* [Stettin over the centuries. History – culture – art], ed. E. Włodarczyk, Szczecin 1995, pp. 207–213.

which, given the nature of such practices in the past, mostly meant repainting substantial sections of the scenes.

The realm ruled by the five sons of Philip I witnessed many artistic initiatives, yet information regarding artists commissioned by the dukes of Stettin in the final decades of the 16th century remains fragmentary. Valuable data regarding the artistic side of duke John Frederick may be discerned from the lists of persons who sat at respective tables in the residence, i.e. were sponsored by the duke. The surviving lists pertain to the years 1569, 1575 and 1579–1583.³⁷ The retainers sitting at the sixth table included master Christoffer with his apprentices David and Hans, and David Redtel with his apprentice Peter. Other interesting material is found in excerpts from lists of Stettin burghers from the years 1422–1637; German scholars working in 1911 and 1923 isolated the names of the painters appearing therein.³⁸ During John Frederick's reign, i.e. between 1560–1600, artists active in the city included Hans Dreier (mentioned in 1562), Heinrich Hesse (1564), Christoffer Schreiber from Meldorf in Dithmarschen (1570), Thomas Nether from Wittenberg (1571), David Redtel from Torgau (1576), Antonius Steinkeller (1578), Jakob Hinz from Lüneburg (1580), Heinrich Kodthe from Zelle (1590), M. David Lange from Dresden (1595), Timotheus Schreider (son of Christoffer, 1595), Matthias Nether (son of Thomas, 1596) and Michael Schulz from Stettin (1596). Only a few of these names can be linked to specific works, though the number of these is small.

David Redtel, hailing from Torgau (died 7 Nov. 1591), came to Stettin in 1571.³⁹ The only work that can undoubtedly be attributed to him (as it was signed with his full name and surname) is the altarpiece from Gryfino, made in 1580 and most likely founded by the family of Erazm Pauli, the mayor.⁴⁰ According to Maria Glińska, David Redtel, "the protoplast of a dynasty of painters who would, for a century to come, adapt the best models of Dutch painting for Pomerania, received his education in various workshops in Germany and the Netherlands, which gave him an interesting eclectic style"⁴¹

The *oeuvre* of the painter named Thomas Nether (died 2 April 1594) is only identifiable on the basis of his signature in the form of the letter T composed of twisted snakes, as well as the stylistic features linking the education of this artist with the Cranach workshop.⁴² Works attributed to Nether include the above-mentioned triptych of Barnim XI (1568, currently at the National Museum in Szczecin) and

37 Kozińska, op. cit., p. 214.

38 M. W[ehrmann], "Stettiner Maler 1431–1629", *Monatsblätter. Herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für Pommersche Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 1911, no. 25, pp. 41–43; O. Grotefend, "Das älteste Stettiner Bürgerbuch", *Monatsblätter. Herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für Pommersche Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 1923, no. 37, pp. 2–5.

39 Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, Bd. 28, Hg. H. Vollmer, Leipzig 1934, pp. 77–78.

40 Glińska, op. cit., p. 172.

41 Ibid.

42 Modelska, op. cit., pp. 36–41.

the now lost allegorical painting with the Crucifixion (1572, formerly in the castle church in Szczecin).⁴³

Bogdana Kozińska associated two important – and sadly no longer extant – works with Giovanni Battista Perini the Younger (ca. 1530–1584), a portrait painter at John Frederick's court.⁴⁴ The first of these works was the altarpiece of the main castle church in Szczecin (1575–1577). The pentaptych, whose central part depicted the Adoration of the Magi, also included scenes of the Annunciation, Nativity, Visitation, Crucifixion and Resurrection. The altarpiece was crowned with a pediment depicting God the Father surrounded by angels. The second work associated with this artist is the betrothal portrait of John Frederick (1571, Pommersches Landesmuseum in Szczecin). Maria Glińska pointed to Perini as the likely author of the painting of *Salvator Mundi* (c. 1580) from the Szczecin castle church.⁴⁵

Another artist working in the Duchy of Stettin at the end of the 16th century was Cornelius Crommena (Cornelis Krommeny) from Güstrow. Active at the court of Ulrich III of Mecklenburg from 1574, at some unspecified point in time Crommena became a part of the circle of artists sponsored by the dukes of Stettin.⁴⁶ In 1598 he painted the family tree of the Griffins, featuring images of 155 members of the house with their spouses. The canvas for this work was seven metres high.⁴⁷ Crommena is also believed to have decorated the walls in the castle chapel in Koszalin for duke Casimir IX (completed in the final years of the 16th century), yet this work burnt in the fire of 1718.⁴⁸

Painters appearing in the book of Stettin burghers also included one Christoffer Schreiber. Wehrmann lists his name with a side note that the artist is mentioned in yet another document from 1575 as a “ducal painter” and identifies him with the “master Christoff” seated at the ruler's table.⁴⁹ This painter has not yet become the subject of scholarly attention, as no work could reliably be attributed to him.⁵⁰ There is no information on his educational background, professional specialty, commissions, signatures used, or even the time of his activity or date of death. However, he indeed remains the only known painter who could have used the monogram CS. It must nevertheless be remembered that the duchy of Stettin had many (now anonymous) art workshops which did commissions for the court and

43 Teresa Modelska associated this painting and the triptych of Barnim XI with David Redtel.

44 Kozińska, op. cit., pp. 207–224. The scholar convincingly proved that there were two painters bearing the same name. Giovanni Battista Perini the Elder hailed from Florence and came to Berlin c. 1520. The younger artist, most probably his son (born ca. 1530), worked in Stettin as a portrait painter to John Frederick. In Polish-language publications, the names of both painters appear in their Italian, German and Polish versions; no additional description is used to distinguish one artist from the other.

45 Glińska, op. cit., p. 172.

46 C. Neumann, *Die Renaissancekunst am Hofe Ulrichs zu Mecklenburg*, Kiel 2009, pp. 79–93.

47 Bądkowska, op. cit., p. 53.

48 Glińska, op. cit., p. 176.

49 M. W[ehrmann], op. cit., p. 42

50 Kozińska, op. cit., p. 221.

for burghers alike. Stettin aside, centres of local artistic production existed, for example, in Kołobrzeg, Stargard and Choszczno.⁵¹ The Łekno triptych (completed in 1588) cannot therefore be indubitably attributed to Schreiber, the last mention of whom appears in 1575.

A stylistic analysis of the depiction of the *Last Supper* reveals only that the painter thereof had relatively average skills and was probably educated in one of the local Pomeranian workshops. Fully restored, the painting exposes all the shortcomings of its creator, such as ineptitude in depicting perspective, and a limited grasp of chiaroscuro and of defining facial features and folds of cloth.⁵²

Maria Glińska and Bogdana Kozińska described the composition of the Łekno *Last Supper* as Dutch in origin.⁵³ However, the author of the altarpiece clearly modelled it on the works of the Italian Mannerist artist Livio Agresti (1508–1580), dubbed Ritius or Ricciutello. Agresti was among the team of painters who worked on the fresco decoration of the Oratorio del Gonfalone in Rome between 1569–1576.⁵⁴ His *Last Supper* features a scene of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles, which is visible in the background. The creator of the Łekno triptych had never seen the original from Rome yet knew its composition from one of the illustrations by Cornelis Cort, published e.g. in 1578 and 1582 (Fig. 5).⁵⁵ It should be noted that such swift dissemination of Italian models using visual sources was nothing unusual in 16th-century Stettin. Francesco Salviati's Conversion of St. Paul, painted in 1542, was copied in relief on the tenement house of the Loitz family of Stettin bankers as early as in 1547.⁵⁶

Restoration work on the *Last Supper* revealed a network of criss-crossing lines; the author etched a shallow grid of squares on the support. The side of each square was c. 6 centimetres.⁵⁷ The presence of the grid is a trace of one of the known methods of transferring the composition from paper to a painterly layer. Artists drew a grid of auxiliary lines over an illustration or a drawing and later a similar one in a larger scale on their canvas or wooden board. Illustrations with such grids frequently appear in museum collections – an example here is the composition of the Resurrection scene after Giulio Bonasone, now in the collection of the British Museum in London (c. 1561).⁵⁸

51 Glińska, op. cit., p. 176.

52 The painter changed the interior of the cenacle and did not follow the visual model.

53 See footnotes 9 and 10.

54 *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700*, Cornelis Cort, Part I, compiled by M. Sellink, ed. H. Leeftang, Rotterdam 2000, p. 184. On the Oratory's history: A. Molino, *L'Oratorio del Gonfalone*, part 1, Rome 1964; on the artist: A. Spallicci, *Livio Agresti detto il Ricciutino*, Forlì 1953.

55 *The New Hollstein Dutch...*, Cornelis Cort, Part I, pp. 184–185, fig. 55.

56 Glińska, op. cit., p. 164.

57 *Dokumentacja konserwatorska...*, p. 23.

58 Inv. no. X,1.57; http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=39038001&objectId=1445360&partId=1 [accessed 17 June 2015].



Fig. 5. Cornelis Cort, *Last Supper*, 1578, the British Museum in London, source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=161534001&objectId=1503347&partId=1 [accessed 09 June 2015]



Fig. 6. Hendrick Goltzius, *Annunciation*, ca. 1580, the British Museum in London, source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1546966&partId=1&searchText=goltzius+gabriel&page=1 [accessed 17 June 2015]

The colour palette also differs from the one used in the model from Rome. The author of the Łekno triptych referred to the mediaeval convention of painting Judas as a red-headed man in yellow robes – the colours of betrayal.⁵⁹

The Crucifixion scene was modelled after Hendrick Goltzius's print from 1585.⁶⁰ The painter only copied the figures of Christ, Mary and St. John the Evangelist, disregarding Mary Magdalene sitting by the cross. The clean-shaven face of Jesus's beloved disciple was replaced with one sporting a moustache and a short-trimmed beard. The Resurrection, in turn, was based on Cornelis Cort's print from 1569.⁶¹ Here the painter reduced the number of soldiers, thus adjusting the composition to the proportions of the altarpiece wing. The Annunciation scene on the retable wings was a reduced and transformed version of a composition by Maarten de Vos, engraved c. 1580 by Hendrick Goltzius (Fig. 6).⁶² The Pomeranian painter did not include the angelic choirs behind Gabriel and reduced the perspective of the room interior by changing its furnishings. The depiction of the First Parents on the altarpiece buttresses was most likely a compilation of two graphic models. The idea for placing Adam and Eve in trompe l'oeil niches could have been inspired by the frontispiece of Jean Delaune's cycle of images of ancient gods (1578) (Fig. 7).⁶³ The figure of the female was modelled after a print by Hendrick Goltzius, made in 1585 copying Bartholomeus Spranger's design (Fig. 8).⁶⁴ The painter introduced only one change – a strand of hair covering Eve's abdomen. The arrangement of Adam's legs is taken from the same composition, while the position of his hands and the motif of covering the loins with a fig leaf comes from the above-mentioned French print.

In the 16th century, using prints as sources of inspiration for compositions in painting and sculpture was common practice. The CS monogrammist was a typical representative of his times and saw "collection prints as a frequently used tool".⁶⁵

59 E. Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, Bd. 2, Rome–Freiburg–Basel–Vienna 1970, pp. 444–448. More on the mediaeval iconography of Judas: M. Pastoureaux, *Une histoire symbolique du Moyen Âge occidental*, Paris 2004.

60 F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700*, vol. 8: Goltzius – Heemskerck, Amsterdam 1953, p. 13.

61 *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700*, Cornelis Cort, Part II, compiled by M. Sellink, ed. H. Leeflang, Rotterdam 2000, Fig. 74, version a. See: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1427405&partId=1&searchText=cherubino+alberti&page=2 [accessed 17 June 2015].

62 Hollstein, op. cit., vol. 8: Goltzius – Heemskerck, p. 114; http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1546966&partId=1&searchText=goltzius+gabriel&page=1 [accessed 17 June 2015].

63 The entire series is in the collection of the British Museum, inv. no. 1834,0804.231-237, title page: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=95934001&objectid=1419098 [accessed 17 June 2015].

64 Hollstein, op. cit., vol. 8: Goltzius – Heemskerck, p. 107; see http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1477389&partId=1&searchText=goltzius+adam+eve&page=1 [accessed 17 June 2015].

65 B. Steinbor, "O pomocniczej roli rycin niderlandzkich" [On the auxiliary role of Dutch prints], in: *Niderlandyzm na Śląsku i w krajach ościennych* [Dutch influences in Silesia and the neigh-

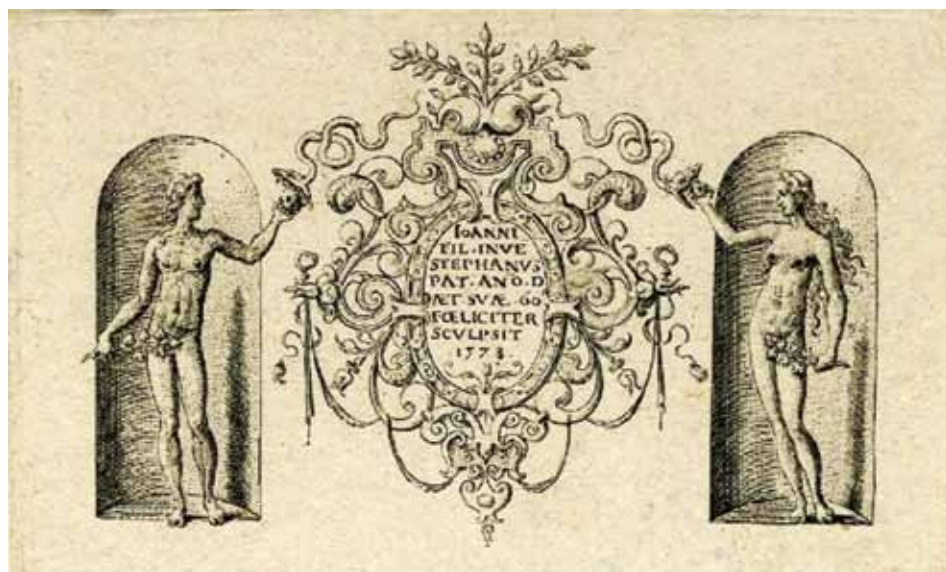


Fig. 7. Jean Delaune, *Adam and Eve*, frontispiece to a cycle of images of ancient gods, 1578, the British Museum in London, source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=95934001&objectid=1419098 [accessed 17 June 2015]

bouring regions], eds. M. Kapustka, A. Kozieł, P. Oszczanowski, Wrocław 2003, p. 54. The influence of graphic models on other visual arts has now become a prominent trend in the study of early-modern art. This issue has often been discussed by Polish academics interested in art from different regions, e.g. A. Gosieniecka, "Wzory graficzne w malarstwie pomorskim drugiej połowy XVI i początków XVII wieku" [Graphic patterns in painting in Pomerania in the 2nd half of the 16th and early 17th century], in: *Ze studiów nad sztuką XVI wieku na Śląsku i w krajach sąsiednich. Materiały z konferencji urządzonej przez Muzeum Śląskie we Wrocławiu 16 i 17 grudnia 1966 roku* [Studies on 16th-century art in Silesia and the neighbouring regions. Materials from the conference held at the Silesian Museum in Wrocław, 16 and 17 December 1966], ed. B. Steinborn, Wrocław 1968, pp. 111–132; K. Cieślak, "Pierwowzory graficzne epitafiów obrazowych w Gdańsku a problemy ich ikonografii" [Graphic models for painted epitaphs in Gdańsk and the issues of their iconography], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 1988, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 201–224; R. Sulewska, "Oddziaływanie wzorów graficznych na sztukę nowożytną w Rzeczypospolitej – jeszcze jedno spojrzenie" [The influence of graphic models on early modern art in the Commonwealth; a new approach], in: *Metodologia, metoda i terminologia grafiki i rysunku. Teoria i praktyka* [The methodology, methods and terminology of graphic art and drawing], ed. J. Talbierska, Warsaw 2014, pp. 279–292. The issue became the principal subject of the volume of papers entitled *Inspiracje grafiką europejską w sztuce polskiej. Czasy nowożytne. Materiały z konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Katedrę Ikonografii Sztuki Nowożytnej, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 6 listopada 2007* [European graphic art as inspiration in Polish art. The early modern era. Materials from the conference held at the Chair of Early Modern Art Iconography, Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw, 6 November 2007], eds. K. Moisan-Jabłońska, K. Ponińska, Warsaw 2010.

The analysis of the artist's only known work illustrates that the array of models at his disposal mainly included Dutch ones, which were very popular at the time – most of them came from the late 1570s and 1580s; some of them had even been printed only three years before the completion of the Łekno triptych.



Fig. 8. Hendrick Goltzius, *The Original Sin*, 1585, the British Museum in London, source: www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1477389&partId=1&searchText=goltzius+adam+eve&page=1 [accessed 17 June 2015]

The issue of crypto-portraits incorporated into the triptych has so far been discussed by Hellmuth Bethe, Janina Kochanowska, Maria Glińska and Marcin Wisłocki.⁶⁶ It has not, however, been thoroughly analysed, i.e. the scholars only focused on the existing depiction of the *Last Supper*, disregarding the images on the wings and buttresses of the triptych. None of the authors gives the total number of contemporaneous portraits included in the biblical scenes on the altarpiece. Janina Kochanowska identified two personages depicted on the right side of the Łekno painting as Barnim XII (gesticulating) and Bogisław XIII (facing the viewer).⁶⁷

The type of retables that included images of commissioners and reformers became known in Western Pomerania thanks to the numerous works of the Crnach workshop (such as the Dessau triptych from 1510, the triptych of George the Bearded of Meissen from 1534, the altarpiece from Schneeberg made in 1539, and the one from Weimar made in 1553).⁶⁸ The already-mentioned triptych of

⁶⁶ See footnotes: 7, 8, 9, 11.

⁶⁷ See footnote 8.

⁶⁸ Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 368.

Bar-nim XI may be considered the most representative Pomeranian example. The left wing of this work features a depiction of the duke, kneeling, and Johannes Knipster (the superintendent general of Pomerania and Wolgast) with Paulus von Rhode (the Stettin superintendent) standing behind him; the image on the right wing includes Duchess Anne of Brunswick-Lüneburg and Johannes Aepinus. In the case of this altarpiece the portraits were introduced directly: the pair of rulers is depicted as orantes and the Lutheran clergy occupies places which would be reserved for holy patrons in the Catholic church. The same convention was employed by Jacob Funck from Kołobrzeg in the epitaph painting of John Frederick and his widow Erdmuta, painted c. 1602. This portrayal of the Crucifixion, probably commissioned for the Griffins' tomb in Stettin, ultimately served as the altarpiece in the castle church in Słupsk, where the duchess settled after her husband's death.⁶⁹

The concept of presenting rulers, patrons of the works and reformers of the Church as biblical characters was also brought to Pomerania by artists from the Cranach workshop: "The idea for such depictions indubitably came from two altarpieces: the one from Wittenberg completed in 1547, depicting Luther as one of the Apostles, and the epitaph altarpiece of duke George of Anhalt from Dessau painted in 1565. The latter was much more similar to the Pomeranian work and presented all prominent Lutheran reformers in a cenacle scene".⁷⁰ The *Last Supper* seemed especially adequate for such marriages of biblical and contemporary imagery, as the number of apostles allowed the artist to include many portraits, and the symbolical presence of Christ at the table served as a declaration of faith and thus had a confessional meaning.

Another biblical scene used for such purposes was the Adoration of the Magi.⁷¹ Although the motif was rarely chosen for Lutheran churches, there had been an earlier Gothic tradition of incorporating portraits of rulers into the depiction. Known examples include the altarpiece of St. Columba by Rogier van der Weyden which featured the likeness of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1464, Alte Pinakothek in Munich),⁷² or the altarpiece from the Wawel castle depicting Our Lady of Sorrows, allegedly including a portrait of Ladislaus Jagiełło (ca. 1475).⁷³ Janina Kochanowska mentions two retables from Western Pomerania in which crypto-portraits of Griffin rulers were added to the Adoration scene. The first of them was the already-mentioned main altarpiece from the castle church in Szczecin. The pentaptych, commissioned by Duke John Frederick, included not only the portrait of the donor but also that of the already deceased Barnim XI, the first Lutheran ruler of

69 Z. Machura, *Dzieje kościoła zamkowego w Słupsku* [The history of the castle church in Słupsk], Słupsk 2006, p. 20.

70 Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 375.

71 More on the subject: J. Żukowski, "Kryptoportrety polskich władców w malarstwie sakralnym XVII i XVIII wieku" [Crypto-portraits of Polish rulers in ecclesiastical painting in the 17th and 18th century], *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 2012, no. 37, pp. 176–177.

72 E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting, its Origins and Character*, vol. 1, Cambridge, Mass. 1953, p. 286.

73 Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 374.

Pomerania, depicted as the eldest of the Magi.⁷⁴ The same role was given to the late duke by Martin Redtel in the epitaph altarpiece from Krępczewo as commissioned by the Wedel family (1607, currently in the St. Jacob Cathedral in Szczecin).⁷⁵

By analysing the physiognomy of the people depicted in the scene of the *Last Supper* from the Łekno triptych we may conclude that apart from the two personages identified by Kochanowska, three other faces appear to have individual portrait features. The first is the man wearing a green tunic and a red cloak, depicted in side view on the left side of the scene. The second is St. Peter who is turned towards Christ. The face of Judas also seems personalised. There is another known example of such a depiction – in the *Last Supper* from Wrocław (1537; now lost), Judas has the features of the sub-treasurer of the city.⁷⁶ A comparison with the model reveals, however, that the likeness of both Sts. Peter and Judas was copied from the print. The case of the man in green also raises doubts, as it bears some similarity to the one in the model; however, one more crypto-portrait may be added to the list. This was the face of St. John the Evangelist appearing in the Crucifixion scene from the lost side panel. The personage depicted there had dark hair, a very contemporaneous pointed beard and styled moustache. Interestingly, in the central image the same apostle is presented as a clean-shaven man with blond hair.

Janina Kochanowska based her comparative analysis in the search for crypto-portraits of Stettin dukes on reproductions of 18th-century copies of their portraits in the town hall in Anklam.⁷⁷

When the Łekno triptych was being painted, the five sons of Duke Philip I of Wolgast were still alive: John Frederick (born 27 August 1542, died 9 February 1600) – Duke of Wolgast and Stettin; Bogislaw XIII (born 9 August 1544, died 7 March 1606) – Duke of Wolgast and Stettin; duke in Bardo, Nowopole, Lębork, Darłowo and Bytowo; Ernst Ludwig (born 1 November 1545, died 17 June 1592) – the duke of Wolgast; Barnim X (XII) the Younger (born 15 February 1549, died 1 September 1603) – duke in Darłowo, Bytowo and Bukowo and Duke of Stettin; Casimir VII (born 22 March 1557, died 10 May 1605) – duke in Darłowo and Bytowo and Duke of Stettin.

In this study a larger number of images of the dukes was taken into consideration (between 3 and 7 for each). Important new iconographic sources include the portrait of John Frederick as attributed to Giovanni Battista Perini the Younger (now

74 Ibid., pp. 372–374. Bogdana Kozińska rejects this identification in op. cit., pp. 218–219.

75 Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 374.

76 P. Oszczanowski, „Ostatnia Wieczerza” z 1537 roku – zaginiony obraz z wrocławskiego Ratusza” [The “Last Supper” (1537): a lost painting from the Wrocław Town Hall], in: *Sztuka i dialog wyznań w XVI i XVII wieku. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Wrocław, listopad 1999* [Art and the dialogue between denominations in the 16th and 17th century. Materials from the session of the Association of Art Historians, Wrocław, November 1999], ed. J. Harasimowicz, Warsaw 2000, p. 134.

77 Kochanowska, op. cit., p. 375, footnote 25.

lost but known from a high-quality image in colour)⁷⁸ and the series of portraits from the stock exchange in Szczecin (unknown painter, 1678, currently at the National Museum in Szczecin – restored in stages). The existing iconography indicates that the painters' interpretations of facial features must have been rather flexible. Even such characteristic aspects of physiognomy as hair colour or nose shape differed from artist to artist. A comparison of the images seems to suggest that the identification of the gesticulating man on the right side of the cenacle scene was false. The Apostle, depicted in front view, appears to be more similar to John Frederick, Barnim or Ernst Ludwig. The figure on the left side of the composition resembles Bogislaw or Casimir. St. John the Evangelist from the Crucifixion scene bears the most resemblance to John Frederick. Such identification may be further corroborated by the fact that the eldest prince was named after the above-mentioned Apostle.⁷⁹ Arriving at definitive conclusions, however, may not be possible due to the rather schematic rendition of all the faces in the painting and the family resemblance between the five brothers born of the same parents.

The portrait of the gesticulating man on the right side of the scene constitutes an interesting exception, as direct inspection of the painterly layer revealed that the face was added by a different artist who was more skilled than the author of the triptych. The likeness includes wrinkles around the eyes and on the bridge of the nose. The shape of the nose, the facial hair and the hairstyle were carefully rendered. Another noteworthy element is the skin tone, which is different from that in the other faces in the scene and even on the hands of the same individual. Analyses performed by the restorers have confirmed that this portrait was not a part of the original composition. Infrared images show a long-haired bearded man, indubitably similar to the one in the model print (Fig. 9). The face was painted over with white, and a new likeness was added onto this layer (Fig. 10). The repainting was done shortly after the completion of the entire triptych.⁸⁰ This raises two key questions. Who is the man depicted? And why was his image added later? There indeed have been cases of repainting faces following a change in ownership, such as Hans Memling's *Last Judgment*, in which the face of the virtuous person on the scales held by Archangel Michael was covered with metal foil and painted over with a new likeness.⁸¹ There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the patron of the Pomeranian triptych changed.

78 H. Lemcke, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Pommern, Das Königliche Schloss in Stettin*, p. 1, 1909, Fig. following p. 22.

79 I would like to thank Samanta Popow MA for drawing my attention to the correspondence of names.

80 *Dokumentacja konserwatorska...*, p. 42.

81 I. Szmelter, "Wyniki wielokryterialnych badań Sądu Ostatecznego z Muzeum Narodowego w Gdańsku. Nowe odczytanie tryptyku jako dzieła Rogiera van der Weydena i Hansa Memlinga" [Results of multi-criteria research of the Last Judgment from the National Museum in Gdańsk. A new attribution of the triptych to Rogier van der Weyden and Hans Memling], *Muzealnictwo*, 2015, no. 55, p. 37.



Fig. 9. The *Last Supper* from Łekno, 1588, Koszalin cathedral, infrared photograph, detail, visible preparatory drawing, photo by Gorek Restauro



Fig. 10. The *Last Supper* from Łekno, 1588, Koszalin cathedral, X-ray photograph, detail, visible over-painting of an earlier portrait with lead white, photo by Gorek Restauro

A search for a similar face among the portraits of rulers and Church reformers from the 2nd half of the 16th century leads to the conclusion that the portrayed individual is Ulrich III of Mecklenburg, duke in Güstrow and Schwerin. The face of this ruler is known from numerous depictions in painting, print and sculpture. Many of these were commissioned by the duke himself. The best portraits of Ulrich III were done by the hand of Cornelis Crommena, his court painter (e.g. the left side panel of the Rühn altarpiece from 1577 and the portrait in the monastery church in Bad Doberan from 1587).⁸² The likeness of the duke also appeared in portraits and historical scenes by other artists working at the court: Peter Boeckel (the wedding portrait of Ulrich III and Anne of Pomerania attributed to the painter, 1588–1590), Martin Redtel, Hans Metzger (*Heavenly and Earthly Judgment*, 1584) and an unspecified number of painters who remain anonymous.⁸³

The crypto-portrait of Ulrich III from Łekno seems to faithfully repeat the ruler's features known from the tombstone in the Güstrow cathedral which was made a year earlier by Filip Brandin. This monument was produced after the death of the duke's first wife, Elizabeth of Denmark (d. 1586). On 9 December 1588 in Wołogoszcz (German: Wolgast), Ulrich III, dubbed the German Nestor, wed Anna, the daughter of Philip I. Hence the fact that the face of the patron's brother-in-law, whichever of the brothers that might have been, was introduced into the Łekno *Last Supper* seems understandable in the light of this ceremony, which was of very great importance to the dynasty. It is worth recalling at this point that the making of furnishings for the castle church in Szczecin was occasioned by John Frederick's marriage to Duchess Erdmuta in 1577.⁸⁴ At that time the crypto-portrait of the groom as King Melchior was placed in the central scene of the main altar.⁸⁵ It is possible that the Łekno altar referred to this tradition of a "wedding altar"; it is, however, interesting that the task of re-painting the face of one of the apostles into a portrait of Ulrich III of Mecklenburg was entrusted to another artist, and not to the "chief producer" of the triptych. Perhaps the author of this portrait should be sought at the court of Ulrich III, who employed a large group of painters and sculptors.⁸⁶

The patron of the Łekno triptych could not be unequivocally determined. Most of the data point to Duke Casimir, whose portrait was to be put in the upper part of the retable and in whose domain the triptych was located. In the vicinity the duke had two residences: the main one, 10 km away, was in Koszalin (in the restructured monastery of the Cistercian Sisters), and a hunting lodge in Kazimierz Pomorski just 1.5 km away from Łekno that was built in 1592.⁸⁷ It cannot be ruled out that the foundation of an altar that conveyed a denominational message was associated with Koszalin, which had remained attached to the old faith for a relatively long

82 Neumann, op. cit., pp. 79–93.

83 Detailed information on the subject: Ibid.

84 Bądkowska, *Malarstwo na dworze książąt...*, p. 49.

85 Kozińska, *Johann Baptista Perini...*, p. 218.

86 Neumann, op. cit., pp. 79–93.

87 E. Rymar, *Rodowód książąt pomorskich*, Szczecin 2005, p. 463.

time. As put by Kuczkowski and Cholin-Gollenber: "The process of abandoning Catholicism in favour of the new religion was a long-lasting one, which did not go smoothly everywhere. The new faith began to be promoted more vigorously only after the year 1544, when the last Catholic bishop of Kamień, Erazm Manteuffel, died and his place was taken by a Lutheran, Bartłomiej Suawe (1545–1549). However, Catholic services were held in one of the Koszalin chapels even as late as in 1555. In 1552 the Koszalin Cistercian Sisters still supervised hospitals and conducted charitable work".⁸⁸ It is also possible that the triptych was, from the outset, meant to be placed in Łekno. After all, it was in the local hunting lodge that Bishop Erazm Manteuffel died on the night of 26 to 27 January 1544.⁸⁹ For this reason, the memory of the "old order" may have been more durable in Łekno than in other places and the triptych was intended to highlight the ruler's attachment to Lutheranism.

The wedding of Anna of Pomerania and Ulrich III took place in Wołogoszcz, which at that time was ruled by Ernst Ludwig; it may thus be he who is turning towards the viewer in the Łekno *Last Supper*. The duke, considered to be one of the most outstanding patrons of art among the Griffins alive in the second half of the 16th century, may have been the patron of the triptych.⁹⁰

More than one clue points to John Frederick as the donor of the altar. The duke, who very consciously created his own image, was "extremely ambitious, wilful, self-assured and fond of luxury".⁹¹ He treated the artistic endeavours he sponsored as a tool of propaganda, and upon his death left a debt of 300,000 gulden for unpaid works of art.⁹² The initials CS discovered on the triptych do not allow us to indisputably determine the author, but they point towards the duke's court artist, Christoff Schreiber.

A large number of portraits of Ulrich III of Mecklenburg has survived to our times, but the authorship of many of them is not confirmed by the sources, only ascribed.⁹³ This makes it difficult to attribute the ruler's likeness in the Łekno triptych to a concrete artist. The only certain point is that the artist who made the

88 A. Kuczkowski, G. Cholin-Gollenber, *Góra Chełmska. Źródła archeologiczne do dziejów Góry Chełmskiej koło Koszalina* [Góra Chełmska. Archaeological sources for the history of Góra Chełmska near Koszalin], Koszalin 2013, p. 50.

89 E. Ryman, "W krainie cystersów i rodu Kamyków, czyli teren gminy Będzino w wiekach średnich (do XVI wieku)" [In the land of the Cistercians and the Kamyk family, or, the Będzino commune in the Middle Ages (until the 16th century)], in: *Gmina Będzino. Z dziejów dawnych i nowych* [The Będzino commune. Long ago and in the recent history], ed. A. Chludziński, Pruszcz Gdański–Będzino 2009, pp. 73–102.

90 Z. Fafius, M. Glińska, Z. Radacki, "Mecenat książąt zachodniopomorskich w XVI i XVII w." [The patronage of the dukes of Western Pomerania in the 16th and 17th century], in: *Funkcja dzieła sztuki. Materiały sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Szczecin, listopad 1970* [The function of a work of art. Materials from the session of the Association of Art Historians, Szczecin, November 1970], Warsaw 1972, p. 174.

91 Ibid., p. 164.

92 Ibid., pp. 164–172.

93 Extensively on this topic: Neumann, op. cit., pp. 79–93.

correction in the image of the *Last Supper* knew the duke well, and most probably had depicted him many times before. A comparison with the double portrait of the duke and duchess, attributed to Peter Boeckel and painted no later than two years after the ceremony of their marriage, indicates that in the Łekno triptych the groom was shown as considerably younger than he in fact was.⁹⁴ The same seems to be the case in the duke's tombstone at Güstrow. The re-painting may have been done by Cornelis Crommena, who was commissioned by the Griffins and active in the late 16th century in Szczecin and Koszalin.⁹⁵ This attribution is suggested by the excellent quality of the portrait and the obviously long acquaintance between the painter and the sitter. Direct source evidence for this does not exist, however, and the scale of intervention in the image of the *Last Supper* does not permit us to confront the Łekno likeness with the typical ceremonial portraits of Ulrich III as produced by his court painter.

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

Abstract

The triptych from Łekno was painted in 1588 and commissioned by one of the five sons of Duke Philip I of Wolgast of the Griffin dynasty. The painter, who signed the work with the initials CS (and may perhaps be identified as Christoff Schreiber), used graphic patterns in the composition of biblical scenes and included crypto-portraits of Griffin rulers in the depictions of the Last Supper and Crucifixion. After Anna of Stettin married Ulrich III of Mecklenburg, another (also unknown) artist repainted the face of one of the apostles into a high-quality portrait of the duke of Mecklenburg.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 167.

⁹⁵ See notes 44 and 45.