

# MEDIEVAL ORGANISATION OF THE ORDER

## Universal leadership

### Generalkapitel

The Generalkapitel (general chapter) was the collection of all the priests, knights and half-brothers (German: Halbbrüder). Because of the logistical problems in assembling the members, who were spread over large distances, only deputations of the bailiwicks and commandries gathered to form the General chapter. The General chapter was designed to meet annually, but the conventions were usually limited to the election of a new Grandmaster. The decisions of the Generalkapitel had a binding effect on the Großgebietiger of the order.

### Hochmeister

Main article: Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order

The Hochmeister (Grandmaster) was the highest officer of the order. Until 1525, he was elected by the Generalkapitel. He had the rank of an ecclesiastic imperial state leader and was sovereign prince of Prussia until 1466. Despite this high formal position, practically, he only was a kind of first among equals.

### Großgebietiger

The Großgebietiger were high officers with competence on the whole order, appointed by the Hochmeister. There were five offices.

The Großkomtur (Magnus Commendator), the deputy of the Grandmaster

The Treßler, the treasurer

The Spittler (Summus Hospitalarius), responsible for all hospital affairs

The Trapier, responsible for dressing and armament

The Marschall (Summus Marescalcus), the chief of military affairs

## National leadership

### Landmeister

The order was divided in three national chapters, Prussia, Livland and the territory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The highest officer of each chapter was the Landmeister (country master). They were elected by the regional chapters. In the beginning, they were only substitutes of the Grandmaster but were able to create a power of their own so that, within their territory, the Grandmaster could not decide against their will. At the end of their rule over Prussia, the Grandmaster was only Landmeister of Prussia. There were three Landmeisters:

The Landmeister in Livland, the successor of the Herrenmeister (lords master) of the former Livonian Brothers of the Sword.

The Landmeister of Prussia, after 1309 united with the office of the Grandmaster, who was situated in Prussia from then.

The Deutschmeister, the Landsmeister of the Holy Roman Empire. When Prussia and Livland were lost, the Deutschmeister also became Grandmaster.

### **Regional leadership**

Because the properties of the order within the rule of the Deutschmeister did not form a contiguous territory, but were spread over the whole empire and parts of Europe, there was an additional regional structure, the bailiwick. Kammerballeien were governed by the Grandmaster himself. Some of these bailiwicks had the rank of imperial states

- Deutschordensballei Thuringia (Zwätzen)
- Deutschordensballei Hesse (Marburg)
- Deutschordensballei Saxonia (Lucklum)
- Brandenburg
- Deutschordensballei Westfalia (Deutschordenskommende Mülheim)
- Deutschordensballei Franconia (Ellingen)
- Kammerballei Koblenz
- Deutschordensballei Swabia-Alsace-Burgundy (Rouffach)
- Deutschordensballei at the Etsch and in the Mountains (south Tyrol) (Bozen)
- Utrecht
- Lorraine (Trier)
- Kammerballei Austria
- Deutschordensballei Alden Biesen
- Sicily
- Deutschordensballei Apulia (San Leonardo)
- Lombardy (also called Lamparten)
- Kammerballei Bohemia
- Deutschordensballei Romania (Achaia, Greece)
- Armenien-Zyperus

### **Local leadership**

#### **Komtur**

The smallest administrative unit of the order was the Kommende. It was ruled by a Komtur, who had all administrative rights and controlled the Vogteien (district of a reeve) and Zehnthöfe (tithe collectors) within his rule. In the commandry, all kinds of brothers lived together in a monastic way. Noblemen served as Knight-brothers or Priest-brothers. Other people could serve as Sariantbrothers, who were armed soldiers, and as Half-brothers, who were working in economy and healthcare.

#### **Special offices**

The Kanzler (chancellor) of the Grandmaster and the Deutschmeister. The chancellor took care of the keys and seals and was also the recording clerk of the chapter.

The Münzmeister (master of the mint) of Thorn. In 1246, the order received the right to produce its own coins - the Moneta Dominorum Prussiae – Schillingen.

The Pfundmeister (customs master) of Danzig. The Pfund was a local customs duty.

The Generalprokurator the representative of the order at the Holy See.

The Großschäffer, a trading representative with special authority.

