

INSIGNIA AND LEGACY

The Knights wore white surcoats with a black cross, granted by Innocent III in 1205. A cross pattée was sometimes used. The motto of the Order was: "Helfen, Wehren, Heilen" ("Help, Defend, Heal").

The coat of arms representing the grand master (Deutschmeisterwappen)^[34] is shown with a golden cross fleury or cross potent superimposed on the black cross, with the imperial eagle as a central inescutcheon. The golden cross fleury overlaid on the black cross becomes widely used in the 15th century. A legendary account attributes its introduction to Louis IX of France, who on 20 August 1250 granted the master of the order this cross as a variation of the Jerusalem cross, with the fleur-de-lis symbol attached to each arm. While this legendary account cannot be traced back further than the early modern period (Christoph Hartknoch, 1684) there is some evidence that the design does indeed date to the mid 13th century.^[35]

The black cross pattée was later used for military decoration and insignia by the Kingdom of Prussia and Germany as the Iron Cross and Pour le Mérite.

LEGACY

Protestant Bailiwick of Utrecht

A portion of the Order retains more of the character of the knights during the height of its power and prestige. The Baliije van Utrecht ("Bailiwick of Utrecht") of the Ridderlijke Deutsche Orde ("Chivalric German [i.e., 'Teutonic'] Order") became Protestant at the Reformation, and it remained an aristocratic society. The relationship of the Bailiwick of Utrecht to the Roman Catholic Deutscher Orden resembles that of the Protestant Bailiwick of Brandenburg to the Roman Catholic Order of Malta: each is an authentic part of its original order, though differing from and smaller than the Roman Catholic branch.^[37]

Influence on German, Polish and Lithuanian nationalism

The German historian Heinrich von Treitschke used imagery of the Teutonic Knights to promote pro-German and anti-Polish rhetoric. Many middle-class German nationalists adopted this imagery and its symbols. During the Weimar Republic, associations and organisations of this nature contributed to laying the groundwork for the formation of Nazi Germany.^[38]

Before and during World War II, Nazi propaganda and ideology made frequent use of the Teutonic Knights' imagery, as the Nazis sought to depict the Knights' actions as a forerunner of the Nazi conquests for Lebensraum. Heinrich Himmler tried to idealise the SS as a 20th-century re-incarnation of the medieval Order.^[39] Yet, despite these references to the Teutonic Order's history in Nazi propaganda, the Order itself was abolished in 1938 and its members were persecuted by the German authorities. This occurred mostly due to Hitler's and Himmler's belief that, throughout history, Roman Catholic military-religious orders had been tools of the Holy See and as such constituted a threat to the Nazi regime.^[40]

The converse was true for Polish nationalism (see: Sienkiewicz "The Knights of the Cross"), which used the Teutonic Knights as symbolic shorthand for Germans in general, conflating the two into an easily recognisable image of the hostile. Similar associations were used by Soviet propagandists, such as the Teutonic knight villains in the 1938 Sergei Eisenstein film Aleksandr Nevskii.

Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany posed for a photo in 1902 in the garb of a monk from the Teutonic Order, climbing the stairs in the reconstructed Marienburg Castle as a symbol of Imperial German policy.^[38]

34. The offices of Hochmeister (grand master, head of the order) and Deutschmeister (Magister Germaniae) were united in 1525. The title of Magister Germaniae had been introduced in 1219 as the head of the bailiwicks in the Holy Roman Empire, from 1381 also those in Italy, raised to the rank of a prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1494, but merged with the office of grand master under Walter von Cronberg in 1525, from which time the head of the order had the title of Hoch- und Deutschmeister. Bernhard Peter (2011)

35. Jump up ^ Helmut Nickel, "Über das Hochmeisterwappen des Deutschen Ordens im Heiligen Lande", *Der Herold* 4/1990, 97–108 (mgh-bibliothek.de). Marie-Luise Heckmann, "Überlegungen zu einem heraldischen Repertorium an Hand der Hochmeisterwappen des Deutschen Ordens" in: Matthias Thumser, Janusz Tandeki, Dieter Heckmann (eds.) *Edition deutschsprachiger Quellen aus dem Ostseeraum (14.-16. Jahrhundert)*, Publikationen des Deutsch-Polnischen Gesprächskreises für Quellenedition. Publikacje Niemiecko-Polskiej Grupy Dyskusyjnej do Spraw Edycji Zrodlel 1, 2001, 315–346 (online edition). "Die zeitgenössische Überlieferung verdeutlicht für dieses Wappen hingegen einen anderen Werdegang. Der Modelstein eines Schildmachers, der unter Hermann von Salza zwischen 1229 und 1266 auf der Starkenburg (Montfort) im Heiligen Land tätig war, und ein rekonstruiertes Deckengemälde in der Burgkapelle derselben Festung erlaubten der Forschung den Schluss, dass sich die Hochmeister schon im 13. Jahrhundert eines eigenen Wappens bedient hätten. Es zeigte ein auf das schwarze Ordenskreuz aufgelegtes goldenes Lilienkreuz mit dem bekannten Adlerschildchen. Die Wappensiegel des Elbinger Komturs von 1310 bzw. 1319, ein heute in Innsbruck aufbewahrter Vortrageschild des Hochmeisters Karl von Trier von etwa 1320 und das schlecht erhaltene Sekreitsiegel desselben Hochmeisters von 1323 sind ebenfalls jeweils mit aufgelegtem goldenem Lilienkreuz ausgestattet."

37. <http://www.ridderlijkeduitscheorde.nl/> (official website of the Bailiwick of Utrecht), accessed March 15, 2010.

38. ^ Jump up to: a b (Polish) Mówią wieki. "Biała legenda czarnego krzyża". Accessed 6 June 2006.

39. Jump up ^ Christiansen, p. 5

40. Jump up ^ Desmond Seward, *Mnisi Wojny*, Poznań 2005, p. 265.