

FOUNDATIONS AND FOUNDERS  
(from the Middle Ages to the 18th c.)

On October 28 and 29, 1997 a scientific session was organized in Warsaw by the History of Culture Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Historical Sciences Committee. The session discussed all kinds of foundations set up in the territories of the Polish state and Western Europe.

The first day of the debates was devoted to medieval foundations. In a paper *The Ideological Significance of Frankish Kings' Foundations* Roman Michałowski (Warszawa) presented Charlemagne's intention to found *Urbs Caroli* in newly conquered Saxony. The plan, inspired by the foundation of Constantinople by the Emperor Constantine, did not materialize because of Charlemagne's prolonged war against the rebellious Saxons. Halina Maniowska (Warsaw) read a paper entitled *Henry the Bearded — princeps fundator* which focused on the foundations set up by Piotr Włostowic, whose generosity so enhanced his prestige that the Silesian duke, Boleslaus the Tall, and his son, Henry the Bearded, resolved to found more institutions in order to outshine Włostowic. Marek Sioń (Warsaw) discussed *The Foundation of Hospitals in the Middle Ages*, taking Wrocław as an example. He showed that the foundation of hospitals enhanced authority and prestige. Hospitals were founded by dukes and bishops, and in the 15th century, when Wrocław reached the summit of political importance, also by the Municipal Council. Sister Urszula Borkowska (Lublin) read a paper *The Jagiellons' Ecclesiastic Foundations: Research Prospects* in which, on the basis of the Crown Register, she presented the Jagiellons' activity and showed that during the Christianization of Lithuania the individual Jagiellonian kings founded new bishoprics, parishes and monasteries of the religious orders which they favoured.

The other papers concerned religious foundations in the modern era. In a paper *Patronage over Religious Orders in Poland in the Modern Era. The Founders of Monasteries* Henryk Gapski (Lublin) dealt with the foundations set up by kings, bishops, magnates, noblemen and burghers (these almost completely disappeared in the 17th and 18th centuries). Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz (Białystok) discussed *The Foundation of Churches and Monasteries in Grodno in the 18th Century*, presenting the foundations established by rulers, magnates, noblemen and the clergy. Anna Michałowska (Warsaw) read a paper *Foundations and Founders in Jewish Communities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th-18th Centuries* in which she spoke of the founders of synagogues, religious schools, cemeteries and ritual baths (Kazimierz Krakowski, Lwów, Lublin). Jan Tyszkiewicz (Warsaw) devoted his paper *Muslim Foundations* to the foundations set up by Polish and Lithuanian Tartars in the 14th-18th centuries and the support they received from magnates who had Muslim population on their estates.

On the second day, attention was focused on foundations set up by dissidents and municipal authorities. In a paper *Scholarships in Old Gdańsk*, Edmund Kotarski (Gdańsk) described the granting of scholarships by the Municipal Council, the Academic Gymnasium and private persons in Gdańsk. Andrzej Karpiński (Warsaw) in his study *Foundation of Dowries in Large Polish Towns (from the middle of the 15th century to the end of the 17th)*, presented the founders of dowries for poor girls in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań and Wilno and the scope of this activity. Jan Harasimowicz (Wrocław) read a paper *Sacral Foundations of Polish Dissident Noblemen in the 16th and 17th Centuries* in which, taking Little Poland

as an example, he presented the search for new ideological and religious solutions in the architecture of Calvinist and Antitrinitarian churches and the influence they exerted on dissident sacral building in Europe.

The participants in the discussion focused attention on the founders' motives. Religious motivation predominated, but attention was also drawn to the motives inspiring rulers, the question of prestige, charity and concern for the development of knowledge. Questions concerning definition were also raised, in particular the difference between founders and donors, between foundations and donations.

Edward Opaliński

## GDĄŃSK — ITS POSITION IN THE PAST AND IN RECENT TIMES

A session under this title was held in the White Chamber of Gdańsk's Main Town Hall from September 19th to 20th, 1997. It was organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the University of Gdańsk and the Museum of the City of Gdańsk. Before the session the Polish writer Stefan Chwin was presented with the prize of the Foundation named after Erich Brost, a German anti-Nazi born in Gdańsk who was an advocate of Polish-German reconciliation (he died in 1995).

The session was attended by Polish, German and American scholars. The papers and discussion were divided into four chronological-thematic groups: I. Gdańsk in the postwar period — Poland's bridge to the united Europe. II. The genesis, development and decline of Gdańsk's greatness (from the middle of the 14th to the end of the 18th century). III. The period between the existence of the first and the second Free City of Gdańsk. IV. Gdańsk — a subject or object of international politics in 1920–1939. The opening paper in Group I, R. Wapiński's (Gdańsk) interesting study entitled *Gdańsk in Polish Political Mythology — the Emergence of Social Consciousness*, showed the Poles' image of Gdańsk in the past and how in the 20th century, Gdańsk, as the cradle of Solidarity, became a symbol and a part of Poland's "sacred history", alongside such cities as Warsaw and Lwów. M. Koschnick (Bremen) presented *Gdańsk's co-operation with Bremen*, a co-operation which has been an important element in Poland's opening to the democratic West. In a paper *Gdańsk in Polish Democratic Transformations in the 1980s*, J. Holzer (Warsaw) comprehensively examined the reasons for the phenomenal activity of shipyard workers in 1970 and 1980. I. Geiss (Bremen) presented Gdańsk during the "Solidarity winter" in 1980/81. In the opinion of this West German historian this was an historical and political experience. I. Geiss analyzed the factors of Gdańsk's social movement on the basis of the most important sociological theories of social development which have been given differing interpretations by German historians. The papers in Group II went back to the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era. In a paper *From the Borderland to the Centre — Gdańsk between the Teutonic Knights' Order and Poland in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, U. Arnold (Bonn) showed Gdańsk's growing importance in European economy and politics at the end of the Middle Ages. M. Bogucka (Warsaw) read a paper entitled *Gdańsk as a Metropolis at the Threshold of the Modern Era* in which she characterized Gdańsk's imposing development in the 16th–18th centuries which turned the city into a great centre of trade, production, finances and culture; Gdańsk's development was based on the multiethnic and multicultural character of the city. E. Cieślak (Gdańsk) in a paper *Gdańsk and the Crisis and Fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* discussed the role played by Gdańsk in the political strifes during the Saxon period and the city's place in

the Commonwealth's economy in the 18th century. The subjects of Group III were discussed in W. Zająewski's (Gdańsk) *The Great Powers' Rivalry for Gdańsk during the Napoleonic period*, S. Hartmann's (Berlin) *Gdańsk between the Congress of Vienna and the Establishment of the Empire, 1815–1871*, and W. Kessler's (Bremen) *Gdańsk during the Wilhelminian Period*. The speakers presented the political meanders of Gdańsk's history and the changes in its economic and social structures. The papers in Group IV focused on the years 1920–1939, a very important period for Gdańsk's history and in particular for its place in the diplomatic strifes of that time. In a paper *USA and the Question of the Free City of Gdańsk*, E.M. Clark (Kansas, USA) discussed the United States' policy with regard to the question of Gdańsk after World War I, in particular the establishment of the Free City and its functioning. A. Cienciala (Kansas, USA) read an extensive paper entitled *Gdańsk in British policy in 1933–1938*; on the basis of an extensive archival research she analyzed the attitude of British diplomacy to the changes occurring in Gdańsk before the outbreak of World War II and the use of the Gdańsk card by the politicians of the Third Reich. Her study was supplemented by the paper read by M. Andrzejewski (Gdańsk), *The Policy of Disinterestedness Pursued by the League Powers and the Hitlerisation of the Free City of Gdańsk*. M. Andrzejewski presented the Western powers' indifference and practical acquiescence in the subordination of Gdańsk to the Nazis, although this subordination violated international agreements. This problem was also discussed in L. Oberdorfer's (Greifswald) paper *Management of the Crisis by an Overburdened Power. Great Britain and the Question of Gdańsk on the Eve of World War II*, which depicted the mechanisms of British policy and developments behind the scenes.

The session, which had such a broad chronological and thematic range (the papers were followed by a comprehensive discussion), showed how diversified Gdańsk's past was. The city's situation in a place where economic, political and cultural regions meet, its multiethnic structure and involvement in key problems of Polish–German relations are the reasons why it is both difficult and attractive to examine its history. It was pointed out in the papers and during the discussion that until recently Polish and German historians and publicists had held violent disputes over the history of Gdańsk, which they interpreted differently. It was the aim of the conference to open a dialogue and arrive at interpretations which would show the European character of the city and its historic supranational role in north–Eastern Europe. Much attention was paid to Gdańsk's place in the diplomatic bargaining and international politics on the eve of World War II and to the extraordinary role played by the city in the process of great political and social changes in the 1980s and 1990s (the establishment of Solidarity, the bloodless revolution in Poland, the collapse of the socialist state's system and, in consequence, the unification of Germany).

Maria Bogucka

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