



Originalveröffentlichung in: Ostrowski, Jan K. (Hrsg.): *Land of the winged horsemen: art in Poland 1572-1764* [accompanies an exhibition organized and circulated by Art Services International, Alexandria, Va. ...]. New Haven; London 1999, S. 290-291

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FOUR LIONS FROM THE CASTRUM DOLORIS
OF FRANCISZEK SALEZY AND ANNA
POTOCKI, 1758

GILDED WOOD

EACH, C. 95 CM (37 3/8 IN.)

MUSEUM OF THE PROVINCE OF THE
BERNARDINES, LEŻAJSK

LITERATURE

Czernecki 1939, 200, 214, 228-35; Chrościcki
1974, fig. 94; *Katalog Zabytków* 1989, 72, figs.
398, 399; *Vanitas* 1996, 286.

In 1772, within a short space of time, Anna Potocka née Łaszcz and her husband, Franciszek Salezy Potocki, palatine of Kiev, died. He was one of the most powerful and richest magnates in the Polish Commonwealth and at the same time one of the last exponents of the traditional Sarmatian attitude. Their funerals at Krystynopol (where the Potockis had their main residence) assumed the character of magnificent baroque spectacles and were attended by numerous clergy of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Armenian rites as well as military detachments and crowds of the nobility. In the *castrum doloris* erected in the Bernardine church for Anna Potocka, and in a few months reconstructed for Franciszek Salezy's body to lie in state in the drawing room of his palace, temporarily converted into a chapel, the lions standing on a three-step platform carried a coffin on their heads and with their paws supported the shields with coats of arms and panegyric inscriptions. In the first case, the construction was completed by an inscribed tablet extolling Anna's virtues, and in the second by a portrait of Franciszek Salezy and wooden candlesticks. In a second *castrum doloris* of Franciszek Salezy, set up in the Bernardine church, the lions were replaced by eagles. It remains unknown whether the eagles had been used earlier, during Anna Potocka's funeral, when more than one *castrum doloris* had also been erected.



The main elements of the *castra dolori* used during the two funerals of the Potockis, the four gilded lions and the four silvered eagles (somewhat obscure references imply that originally there may have been six of each kind), have been preserved to this day. Until 1951 they survived in the Bernardine church at Krystynopol, and after the "correction of the frontier," on the strength of which this town was given up to the Soviet Union, the sculpted figures were transported to the Bernardine church at Leżajsk. In 1996 they were restored at the conservation studios of Wawel Royal Castle.

Splendid *castra dolori*, consisting of architectural, sculptured, and painted elements, were widespread in the baroque period throughout Europe (see the Ostrowski essay "Polish Art in Its Social and Religious Context," fig. 10, for a sketch of a typical *castrum doloris*). Made for the most part of nondurable material, after a single use they were generally no longer fit to be used again in daily religious cult, hence the irretrievable loss of most of them.

The choice of lions and eagles as the main motifs of the composition of a *castrum doloris* is not surprising in view of the heroic symbolism of these animals. From Roman times an eagle was associated with eschatological beliefs as a sign of the soul flying to the other world.

JKO