

# A Colour from Lwow Connected to Polish History

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First let me give you a short chapter from Polish history.

1656 was a tragic year for Poland. The country was at war with Sweden and the Swedish army under the command of king Karl X Gustav had already conquered Warsaw and Krakow.

Jan Kazimierz, the Polish King, had since March been residing at Lwow, which as yet had not been taken by the enemy. So now Lwow became the capital.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April a ceremonial service was held in the city cathedral. In front of a painting of the Holy Virgin the king pronounced the Saint Mary to be queen of Poland, patron of the kingdom and he entrusted his people to her protection. He vowed that if he managed to beat the Swedes, that day would be held sacred forever. It is known that Jan Kazimierz won the battle at Warka a few days later. The conquered trophies were placed at the feet of the Virgin Mary in the cathedral.

What kind of painting was this?

It wasn't any great work of art., but rather a painting by an amateur, one of the burghers of Lwow, geometrician Jozef Szolc-Wolfowicz and Wojciech Domagalicz.

The Szolc-Wolfowiczs were important and respected burghers in Lwow, with many family representatives on the city council. Their ancestors Wolfgang Szolc had been raised to the nobility by emperor Rudolf II in 1595. His coat of arms is a golden ring surrounded by three acorns.

Originally the painting of Virgin Mary had hung on the church wall in the churchyard, later it was moved to the newly built chapel for the Domagalicz family. Soon the painting was believed to have miraculous powers and the citizens of Lwow went on pilgrimage to it when they were in mourning or in need of comfort. Archbishop Grochowski had the painting moved inside the cathedral, where the ceremony took place in 1656.

Why am I telling you this episode from Polish history?

In the Swedish State Trophy Collections at the Army Museum in Stockholm we have a large infantry colour (4m wide, 3.40 high). It is actually the largest colour in our collections.

The size is an indication that it was probably made during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The material is silk taffeta with intarsia and painting. The motif represents the Holy Virgin with the device TU PROCURA...non. PEREAMUS. ("Watch over us so that we do not perish"). Below the picture of Virgin Mary is Lwow's coat of arms; three green hills under a star flanked by two lions. The coat of arms that was given the city by Pope Sixtus V, in the year 1586, in recognition of the inhabitants' faith to Catholicism, This was the pope's own coat of arms.

The quarterly divided shield of the owner or donor is at the bottom of the colour. In fields two and four are the coat of arms of the Szolc-Wolfowicz family. In fields one and three there is an unknown sign and an unknown monogram. All of it is flanked by the letters I.K.W.L.P.L. (one of the L seems to be a Ł).

We asked for help from the archives and the museum of history in Lwow and have received possible solutions as to the unknown sign and monogram. It is suggested that the monogram KW could belong to Katarzyna Wolfowicz, and a sign in the field one is the owner's mark of the Haze family. It should be noted, that the Domagaliczs, Katarzyna's husband's family had a similar mark.

With this explanation one could wonder if it is a military colour or a religious colour.

The letters around the shield could according to the suggestion from Lwow be interpreted as IACOBUS WOLFOWICZ LEOPOLIENSIS PATRICIUS LONHER, but that just a hypothesis.

The crown above Virgin Mary's head seems to symbolize Mary as queen of Poland. Which would date the colour as younger than 1656. But it is to be remembered that most of the Wolfowiczs were dead by then.

An interesting thing is, that the Wolfowicz coat of arms was later painted over with a Saxon coat of arms, probably during the reign of Augustus the Strong. Was it so, that in the face of the approaching Swedish army in the Great Northern War they remembered what happened in 1656 and brought out an old colour with painting of Virgin Mary and hoped for salvation?

Unfortunately it didn't work this time, the Swedish army conquered Lwow in 1704 and the colour ended up in Swedish Trophy Collections.