

Fragments of the Grunwald Monument demolished by the Germans

































- Author designed by Antoni Wiwulski
- Date of production 1910
- Place of creation Paris, foundry of J. Malesset et Cie company
- Dimensions height: head: 45 x 35 cm, length: mace: 34 cm
- ID no. MHK 3107/III/1, 3108/III
- Museum [Historical Museum of the City of Kraków](#)
- Oddział Oscar Schindler's Factory
- Subjects [city](#), [war](#), [sculpted](#), [memory](#)
- Technique [casting](#), [chiselling](#)
- Material [bronze](#)

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- Digitalisation RDW MIC, Małopolska's Virtual Museums project
- Tags [Kraków](#), [wojna](#), [pomnik](#), [okupacja](#), [II wojna światowa](#), [3D](#), [Paryż](#), [3D plus](#), [domena publiczna](#)

The head of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas (45 x 35 cm) — the head of a middle-aged man with a short neck, slightly bent down, long hair combed backwards. Around the neck a wide strap with threaded screws.

Mace (length: 34 cm) — a fragment of the hilt with the head composed of four feathers.

The Grunwald Monument was unveiled in Kraków on 15 July 1910, on the 500th anniversary of the famous battle with the Teutonic Knights. The monument was founded by Ignacy Jan Paderewski. During WW II, it was destroyed by the Germans in November 1939. The scarcely preserved details are stored in the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków.

In 1976 the Kraków sculptor, Marian Konieczny, made a reconstruction of the monument; however, he decided not to place the original preserved details on the figures he made.

Elaborated by Janusz Tadeusz Nowak (Historical Museum of the City of Kraków), © all rights reserved

“Proto-German” city of Krakau

Kraków remained under German occupation for 1961 days — 5 years, from 6 September 1939 to 18 January 1945. Traces of the German past of the city can still be found in its space: air-raid shelters under today’s Inwalidów Square, signs on townhouses and the townhouses themselves, as well as museum exhibits. Having entered Kraków on 6 September 1939, the Germans immediately began to implement their policy into practice. According to the plan, Kraków was to become a German city, the capital of the General Government, Franconia. The destruction of national monuments and state symbols was an element of the wide-ranging campaign aimed at a total Germanisation of the city space; it was also designed to show its residents who really had the power. Officially, a change of the city name into the German “Kraukau“ took place no sooner than December 1941; however, this name had already been used in documents. The change was the crowning of their master plan, a symbolical seal of the transformation of Kraków into a “proto-German“ city.

Elaborated by Kinga Kołodziejaska (Editorial team of Małopolska’s Virtual Museums),



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How the first monument in occupied Kraków fell down

The plan of the occupant was simple: Kraków was to become a German city. As the capital of the General Government, it could not “offend“ the Germans with such clear symbols of Polish culture: monuments commemorating great historical events and the heroes related with them. All the busts of Polish bards,

commemorative plaques and monuments had to disappear. The first monument to be destroyed was the Grunwald Monument, the victorious symbolism of which must have been particularly annoying for the new authorities of Kraków from the very beginning. The action of destruction was transformed into a spectacle aimed to humiliate the Kraków citizens: pupils and officials were forced to participate in this humbling event. Several days before the first Christmas Eve under Nazi occupation, the crowd forcefully gathered on the spot and observed how the legs of King Ladislaus Jagiełło's horse were sawn so as to throw down the monument, which was entangled with ropes. The devastated fragment of the Matejko Square, in the centre of which the monument had stood, was subsequently surrounded with a wooden fence. Inside the fence the work of destruction was continued until February 1940.

“18 December 1939: Two days ago I went to see the Jagiełło Monument. All that remained were the foundations, surrounded by a high, thick board fence. From inside the fence, I could hear frequent hits of crushing metal from the Grunwald Monument“.

(O. Bujwid, *Osamotnienie. Pamiętniki z lat 1932–1942 [Isolation. Diaries from 1932 to 1942]*, Kraków 1990).

After the removal of the fence, the Kraków residents saw a huge, empty gap in the square. A similar fate was soon met by other monuments and busts of symbolic value for the people of Kraków: the statues of Adam Mickiewicz, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Aleksander Fredro. Plaques commemorating the likes of Stanisław Wyspiański and Adam Asnyk were not omitted, either. The places left bare after the destruction soon became the spots where members of underground organisations put flowers or hung national flags on chosen days, usually those of historical importance to Poland. In this way, they reminded the Kraków residents, especially those not involved in opposition activities, about the symbolism of the “wounded“ parts of the city.

Elaborated by Editorial team of Małopolska's Virtual Museums,



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