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## THE IRON KNIGHT IN LVIV: MATERIALS ON THE HISTORY OF CITY LIFE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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*The article analyzes three archival documents related to the history of Lviv during the First World War. They are part of the archival fond of the Dzie-duszycki family (fond 45), preserved in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. The documents allow for a more detailed study of the history of the unveiling of the Iron Knight sculpture in Lviv. This initiative was a form of aid to the military and civilians affected by the war events. The event took place in 1916 and was part of a statewide practice in Austro-Hungary.*

**Keywords:** Lviv, Austro-Hungary, First World War, Nailed Monuments, historical sources.

**Problem Statement.** The beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has once again made historical research relevant. History and historical context are often used by representatives of the aggressor country to justify the invasion of a sovereign state’s territory [1]. At the same time, the role of the historian in this war becomes a pressing issue [6].

However, this was also the case during other, earlier wars, particularly the First World War. Its subject matter was particularly relevant a few years ago, related to the centenary of the beginning and end of the Great War<sup>1</sup>. The Russian occupation of Galicia and Lviv, which lasted from the autumn of 1914 to the summer of 1915, has been reflected in

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<sup>1</sup> As an example, we consider the review of the Symposium that took place in Lviv in 2019 [5]. At that time, the author of the article delivered a presentation on the place of the Great War in the tourist space of modern Lviv.

numerous scientific studies and publications<sup>2</sup>. Much less attention has been devoted to the city's life after the Russian occupation, in the second half of 1915–1918<sup>3</sup>. Detailed studies of specific episodes of the city's life are even rarer.

One of such episodes was the unveiling of the Iron Knight sculpture in 1916. This event took place on one of the city's central streets and became an important indicator of the townspeople's support for the military during the Great War. It is worth noting that during the Revolution of Dignity and with the beginning of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine in 2014, the tradition of the Iron Knight was revived in Lviv. Based on the Lviv regional organization of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, the volunteer initiative "Lviv Knight: Aid to Ukrainian Soldiers" began its work. The goal of the people of Lviv was the same as it was a hundred years ago – to help the military. The difference is that the knight sculpture was replaced by the figure of Saint George, the traditional patron of Ukrainian soldiers.

Despite the importance of the Iron Knight's unveiling in 1916 and the attention to this event due to the revival of the tradition a century later, previous publications on this topic are predominantly of a popular science [3] or reference nature [9]. They detail the events of April 2, 1916 then, on Hetman Ramparts (modern-day Prospect Svobody), with the participation of officials, military personnel, and townspeople, the Iron Knight sculpture was solemnly unveiled. The sculpture itself was installed the day before. The figure, 263 cm tall, was created by sculptor Jan Nalborczyk and architect Witold Dolinsky. The ceremony was officially opened by the city commander, Major General Franz Riml. He drove in the first nail. After that, officials and guests, and later everyone who wished, could drive iron nails into the wooden sculpture for a donation to benefit the military [3; 9].

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<sup>2</sup> From the latest, refer to [8]. For a general overview of the Russian occupation of Lviv, read [4, p. 501–517]. Additionally, it is important to mention the interactive project of the Center for Urban History of Central and Eastern Europe, titled "City in the Great War", that is dedicated to highlighting the history of Lviv from 1914 to 1918 [7].

<sup>3</sup> In this book, the post-occupation period is only illuminated within the Ukrainian context of the city's life [4, p. 517–522].

The **purpose of the article** is to introduce previously unknown archival documents from the history of Lviv during First World War into scientific circulation. **Research Methods.** General historical scientific methods, archival heuristics, and archaeological methods were used in the writing of the article.

**Presentation of the Main Research Material.** However, the mentioned publications about the Iron Knight rely on contemporary press materials. Unfortunately, archival materials are not used to research this important event for the city. Archival sources that were discovered in the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, provide an opportunity to more accurately recreate the events of 1916 and establish previously unknown details. These include three documents from the Dzieduszycki family archival fond [2]: a letter from Franz Riml to Anna Dzieduszycka; an invitation to the unveiling (in two copies); and a poster addressing citizens about the unveiling of the sculpture. To preserve the chronology of events, the analysis of documents was made according to their dating.

The first document is an invitation to the unveiling ceremony of the Iron Knight sculpture [2, fol. 4] and it is addressed to an unidentified person – “Your Excellency Lady”. Based on other documents in the archival case, it can be assumed that this refers to Countess Anna Paulina Stanisława Alfonzina Dzieduszycka (1859–1917). She was the daughter of the famous Count Volodymyr Dzieduszycki. Unfortunately, her detailed biography has not yet been written. In a small biographical sketch about the Countess, most of the information concerns her much more famous husband, the Galician political figure Tadeusz Dzieduszycki (1841–1918) [11]. The invitation specifies the date of the ceremony (April 2, 1916) and the place and time (Hetman Ramparts, 11:00 AM). The document is dated March 5, 1916, meaning that invitations were being sent out less than a month before the event. Below are the signatures of the committee members – totally of eleven people led by the president of the Iron Knight Committee, Major General Franz Riml. We will mention them and other individuals when analyzing the second document.

The next document is a poster inviting citizens to the unveiling of the Iron Knight sculpture on April 2, 1916 [2, fol. 2]. At the beginning,

it is stated that the event will take place in the presence of the infantry general, the governor of Galicia, Herman von Kolard (1857–1916). However, it was known that the governor was ill at that time and did not participate in the event [3]. He died on April 8, six days after the event in Lviv. The document stated that the Iron Knight was installed on the initiative of Emperor Franz Joseph. Therefore, the governor, as the emperor's representative, was supposed to take part in the event. The emperor himself "wanted to alleviate the suffering of widows and orphans left behind by our fallen heroes". For this purpose, the Imperial-Royal Fund for the Widows and Orphans of Austrian Soldiers was created. According to the poster's information, to support this imperial initiative, a committee was created to install a wooden knight sculpture. The Iron Knight would be formed by driving metal nails into it. The cost of one nail was 50 talers (half a crown). The proceeds would be directed exclusively to the needs of the widows and orphans of fallen soldiers. The announcement ends with a patriotic appeal: "Whoever drives at least one nail into the knight's figure helps to improve the fate of the poorest of the poor. How many women and children has the war deprived of their only support and assistance! We want to support them to protect them from misfortune and despair!"

Below are twenty-one names of the Iron Knight Committee members: Pawlina von Colard – honorary chairwoman of the committee, wife of the governor of Galicia, Hermann von Colard; Franz Riml – Major General, commander of Lviv; Count Stanisław Wiśniewski (1859–1940); Oleksandr Barvinskyi (1847–1926) – court counselor, Ukrainian conservative political figure; Adam Grabowski – headman and government commissioner of Lviv; Dr. Józef Reinlander – court counselor and head of the Lviv police; Dr. Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938) – a renowned Polish scientist-philosopher and rector of Lviv University in 1914–1917; Dr. Wilhelm Pisek – medical counselor; Vasyl Nahirnyi (1848–1921) – Ukrainian architect and public figure; Marcelli Schaff – imperial counselor; Herman Ziegelbaua – director; Lieutenant Colonel Franciszek Wagner (1880–1975), later a famous figure in the Polish military; Lieutenant Colonel Ludwik Müllbauer; Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Meister; Major Jan Rupp; Captain Ludwik Schmidt; Captain Otto Gotlieb; Legion Captain St. Krzaczycy; Legion Captain Dr. M. Wołoszyn;

Financial officer (Porucznik Rachunkowy) Dr. Józef Feingold; Financial subofficer (Podorucznik Rachunkowy) M. Schoengut. The participation of well-known Ukrainian politicians and public figures in the committee is notable. This indicates the nationwide and transnational nature of the event.

The third document is a letter from Franz Riml to Anna Dzieduszycska dated May 9, 1916 [2, fol. 1]. In it, Major General Riml, as president of the Iron Knight Committee, informs the Countess about organizing a performance at the City Theatre (now the Lviv National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre named after Solomiya Krushelnytska) to raise funds for the widows' and orphans' fund. The president informs about the creation of a women's committee to contribute to the material success of the event. Franz Riml invites the Countess to join the committee and participate in its meeting on April 12 at 5:00 PM. The meeting was to be held in the hall of the George Hotel in Lviv (now Mickiewicz Square, 1). From this letter, it is also known that the women's committee was headed by Countess Lamezanova, likely referring to Countess Irena Martina Wolyanska (1871–1929), the wife of Major General Count Robert Lamezan de Salins (1869–1930).

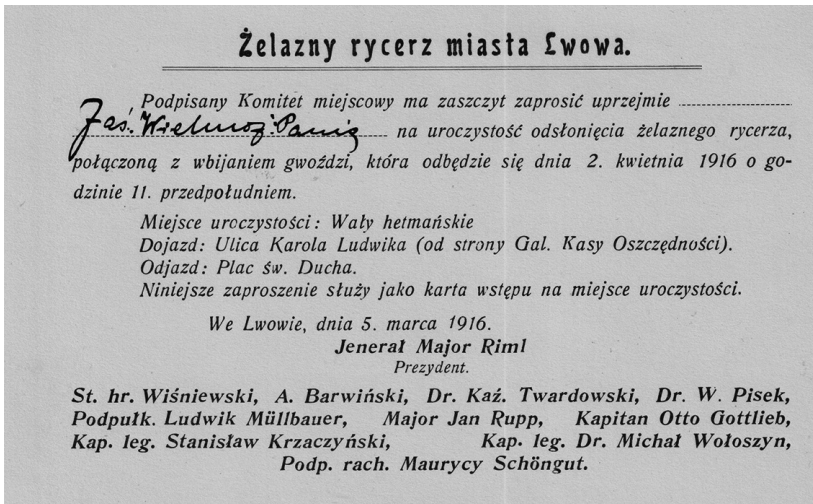
**Conclusions.** The analyzed documents above also allow us to place the discovery of the Iron Knight sculpture in Lviv within a broader context. The unveiling of the sculpture in Lviv was not a unique event for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of that time. Large nailed objects were installed throughout the state [10, p. 305]. The first such object was unveiled in Vienna on March 6, 1915. During the First World War, such monuments were installed in public places, creating an image of the war on the home front [10, p. 306]. Enemy propaganda ridiculed such sculptures, especially those installed in the German Empire, comparing them to the primitiveness of nail fetishes in the Congo [12, p. 213].

Monuments like Lviv's Iron Knight served several functions [10, p. 312–318]: the pompous unveiling of the monuments aimed to unite the population in wartime patriotism; collect donations for the needs of widows and orphans; honor Emperor Franz Joseph; and commemorate the fallen.

If we return to the archival documents analyzed in the article, all these functions are clearly traceable. Mention is made of the figure of

the emperor, at whose initiative the sculpture was installed; the purpose of installing the monument was to collect funds for widows and orphans (by the end of 1916, 151, 513 crowns were collected [9]); and there are repeated mentions of fallen Austrian soldier-heroes. It is worth emphasizing the unifying nature of this event for Lviv – a city where there was ongoing conflict between Poles and Ukrainians. Influential figures from both the Polish and Ukrainian communities participated in the unveiling of the Iron Knight. Evidence of the positive reception of this event by Ukrainians is found in the contemporary Ukrainian press [3]. Thus, it can be asserted that Lviv's Iron Knight fit well into the overall imperial context.

After the end of the Great War, the people of Lviv preserved their Iron Knight. Now, this important century-old monument is kept in the Lviv Historical Museum. However, the event of the monument's unveiling and its functioning in 1916-1918 require further research in general and the search for archival materials in particular.



*An invitation to the unveiling ceremony of the Iron Knight sculpture*

# Obywatele!

Dnia 2. kwietnia 1916 odbędzie się w obecności J. E. Pana Namiestnika, Jenerała Piechoty Hermanna v. Colarda, któremu Jego Ces. Mość poruczyła zastępstwo na tej uroczystości, odsłonięcie „Żelaznego RYCERZA Miasta Lwowa“.

Rycerz ten powstał dzięki szlachetnym zamiarom Jego Ces. Mości, naszego Najmiłościwszego Cesarza i Króla, pragnącego zaradzić niedoli wdów i sierót, pozostałych po poległych bohaterach naszych.

Nie naruszając w niczem zadań opieki państwowej, utworzył się pod protektoratem Jego Ces. i Król. Apostelskiej Mości

## C. k. Fundusz dla wdów i sierót po wojskowych austriackich,

który, odwołując się do dobroczynności publicznej, ma zbierać środki pieniężne, aby łagodzić uśmierzać smutne położenie wdów i sierót po bohaterach, poległych na polu chwały.

Celem wspierania tych zamiarów ukonstytuował się podpisany Komitet miejscowy i postanowił ustawić we Lwowie drewniany posąg rycerza, z którego przez wbijanie żelaznych gwoździ ma powstać „RYCERZ ŻELAZNY“.

Każdy gwóźdź kosztuje 50 hal.; dóchód z gwoździ wbijanych będzie obrócony wyłącznie na wdowy i sieroty po poległych żołnierzach i legionistach.

Ktokolwiek wbija w postać rycerza chociażby jeden tylko gwóźdź, przyczynia się tem samem do poprawy losu Najbiedniejszych z Biednych.

Ileżto kobiet i dzieci wojna pozbawiła żywiciela i opiekuna, jedynej podpory i pomocy! Pragniemy je wesprzeć, by ochronić je od nędzy i rozpacz!

Podpisany Komitet, ufny w patriotyzm ludności, tak często objawiany w czasach ciężkich i burzliwych, w jej ofiarności i w jej dobroczynności, zwraca się do wszystkich obywateli z prośbą, by wbijając w postać rycerza gwoździe albo też przekazując osobne datki na jego rzecz, współdziałali w tej wielkiej akcji dobroczynnej.

Komitet miejscowy:

**Pawlina v. Colard**  
Przewodnicząca honorowa.

**Hr. Stanisław Wiśniewski.**

**Franciszek Rimpl**  
Jenerał Major i komendant miasta Lwowa.

**Radca Dworu Aleksander Barwiński.**

**Adam Grabowski**

Starosta i Komisarz rządowy król. stol. miasta Lwowa.

**Dr. Józef Reinlender**  
Radca rządu i Dyrektor Policji.

**Dr. Kazimierz Twardowski**  
Rektor Uniwersytetu.

**Dr. Wilhelm Pisek**  
Radca medycyny.

**Wasył Nahirny**  
Dyrektor.

**Marceli Schaff**  
Radca cesarski.

**Herman Siegelbaua**  
Dyrektor.

**Franciszek Wagner**  
Podpułkownik.

**Ludwik Müllbauer**  
Podpułkownik.

**Aleksander Meister**  
Podpułkownik.

**Jan Rupp**  
Major.

**Ludwik Schmidl**  
Rotmistrz.

**Otto Gottlieb**  
Kapitan.

**St. Krzaczyński**  
Kapitan legionów

**Dr. M. Wołoszyn**  
Kapitan legionów.

**Dr. Józef Feingold**  
Porucznik rach.

**M. Schoengut**  
Podporucznik rach.

Poster, inviting citizens to the unveiling of the Iron Knight sculpture

Jaśnie Wielmożna Pani Hrabino !

Komitet „Żelaznego Rycerza miasta Lwowa” zamierza urządzić w dniu 19. bm. w Teatrze Miejskim przedstawienie na cel dobroczynny, przeznaczając dochód z tego przedstawienia na fundusz wdów i sierot po wojskowych.

Celem zapewnienia temu przedsięwzięciu jak największego sukcesu materialnego, powstał zamiar stworzenia Komitetu Pań, któryby miał zadanie osiągnięcie jak najwyższych cen na łoże i fotele.

W imię dobrej sprawy upraszam Jaśnie Wielmożną Panią Hrabinę o łaskawe wzięcie udziału w tym Komitecie i celem bliższego porozumienia się o łaskawe przybycie na posiedzenie, które odbędzie się w piątek dnia 12. maja o godz. 5. popołudniu w sali hotelu George'a.

Przewodnicstwo Komitetu objęła JW Pani Hrabina LAMERZANOWA, która na posiedzeniu dnia 12. udzieli szczegółowych wyjaśnień w sprawie powyższego przedsięwzięcia humanitarnego.

Dziękując jak najprzejemniej już naprzód w imieniu własnem i biednych wdów i sierot, pozostaję

z głębokim szacunkiem

oddaję

jako Prezydent Komitetu Żelaznego Rycerza.

Lwów dnia 9. maja 1916.

*A letter from Franz Riml to Anna Dzieduszycka*



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### **Залізний лицар у Львові: матеріали до історії життя міста під час Першої світової війни**

*У статті впроваджено до наукового обігу нові архівні документи до історії Львова у час Першої світової війни. Вони є частиною архівного фонду родини Дідушицьких (ф. 45), що зберігається у відділі рукописів Львівської національної наукової бібліотеки України імені В. Стефаніка та дозволяють детальніше дослідити історію відкриття скульптури Залізного Лицаря у Львові. Ця ініціатива була формою допомоги військовим і цивільним, постраждалим від воєнних подій. Мова, зокрема, про вдів і сиріт, які залишилися після смерті австрійських солдатів. Подія відбулася 1916 р. та була частиною загальнодержавної практики в Австро-Угорщині. Проаналізовано три архівні документи, написані польською мовою: лист коменданта Львова Франца Рімля до графині Анни Дідушицької з пропозицією приєднатися до Комітету жінок, що діяв як частина Комітету Залізного Лицаря; запрошення на відкриття (у двох примірниках) скульптури Залізного Лицаря; афішу зі зверненням до громадян про відкриття скульптури Залізного Лицаря.*

*Запропонований у статті аналіз документів, на відміну від попередніх досліджень, пов'язаних із відкриттям Залізного Лицаря, що мають науково-популярний і довідковий характер та опираються на матеріали преси того часу, дозволяє детальніше відтворити події 1916 р. Проаналізовані документи підтверджують, що події у Львові були інтегровані до загальноімперських практик допомоги військовим та постраждалим від воєнних дій, а також відповідають основним функціям, що виконували такі монументи як Залізний Лицар по всій Австро-Угорщині.*

**Ключові слова:** Львів, Австро-Угорщина, Перша світова війна, Монумент із цвяхів, історичні джерела.