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SWORDS AND FALCHIONS FROM THE POLISH-SILESIAN-BRANDENBURG BORDERLAND (2ND HALF OF THE 13TH–1ST HALF OF THE 16TH CENT.). PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

The Middle Odra River territory (in Polish: Środkowe Nadodrze) was occupied in the Middle Ages and early Modern era by three great political enemies: the Kingdom of Poland, Silesian Duchies and Brandenburg. Three parties were searching allies and considering how to increase their power in this region. Changes of the borders often took place (Pieradzka 1948; Maleczyński 1960). Struggles were especially fought for the northern boundary of this region with the stronghold and the castle in Santok. The Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland was influenced by the Kingdom of Bohemia through both Silesia and Lower Lusatia, which were subdued by the Bohemians. The special character of this territory was also the result of the military orders' (Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights) possessions here (Starnawska 1992).

In this paper I want to consider a few most interesting finds, problems related to their chronology, and tendencies connected with the popularity of certain forms of swords and falchions in the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland.[1]

A considerable concentration of sword finds is visible in the Polish-Brandenburg borderland. This was connected with the presence of Polish strongholds and castles which defended access to the Kingdom of Poland (Fig. 1).

We should begin our report about swords from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland with typologically oldest swords which come up in this region – Oakeshott's Type XII. Two specimens were discovered, in Policko (XII, H, 1) and Sława (XII, X, 3). We do not actually know when this type of artefacts first appears in Europe. The only datable example is the late find in the Toledo Cathedral, in the grave of Sancho IV el Bravo, King of Castile and Leon (†1295) (Oakeshott 1991, p. 72). An analogous sword with this type of the blade was discovered in the tomb of Sancho's elder brother, Fernando de la Cerda (+1270), in the chapel of the monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos (Oakeshott 1991, p. 70). On the Polish ground, the most famous sword of this kind is the *Szczerbiec* – the coronation sword of the kings of Poland. It is connected in the scholarship with Boleslaw I of Masovia (†1248) (Nadolski 1969) or Bolesław the Pious (†1279) (Nadolski 1992). It is dated to the mid–13th cent. (for a critical reviev see: Żygulski jun. 2008; Biborski, Stępiński, Żabiński 2011). In the matter of the first appearance of Type XII swords, iconography can bring some light. According to Oakeshott, its earliest depiction is shown in the Winchester Bible (c. 1170). More certain images are known from the figure of Archangel Michael in the Bamberg Cathedral (c. 1200) and the Maciejowski Bible (c. 1250) (Oakeshott 1998, p. 39–40).

Before World War II another sword of this kind was found in the destroyed stronghold to the north of Sława. This specimen is 54.8 cm long, which implies a question about its destination as a child's sword (Fig. 2: 1). In European collections there are a few swords of small size which are often said to have been made for boys (Oakeshott 1982, p. 26; Głosek 1984, cat. 411; Woosnam-Savage 2008, note 5). Their proportions are precisely those of full-size swords, but hilts are much

[1] I assumed the territory of today's Lubuskie Voivodeship as the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland.

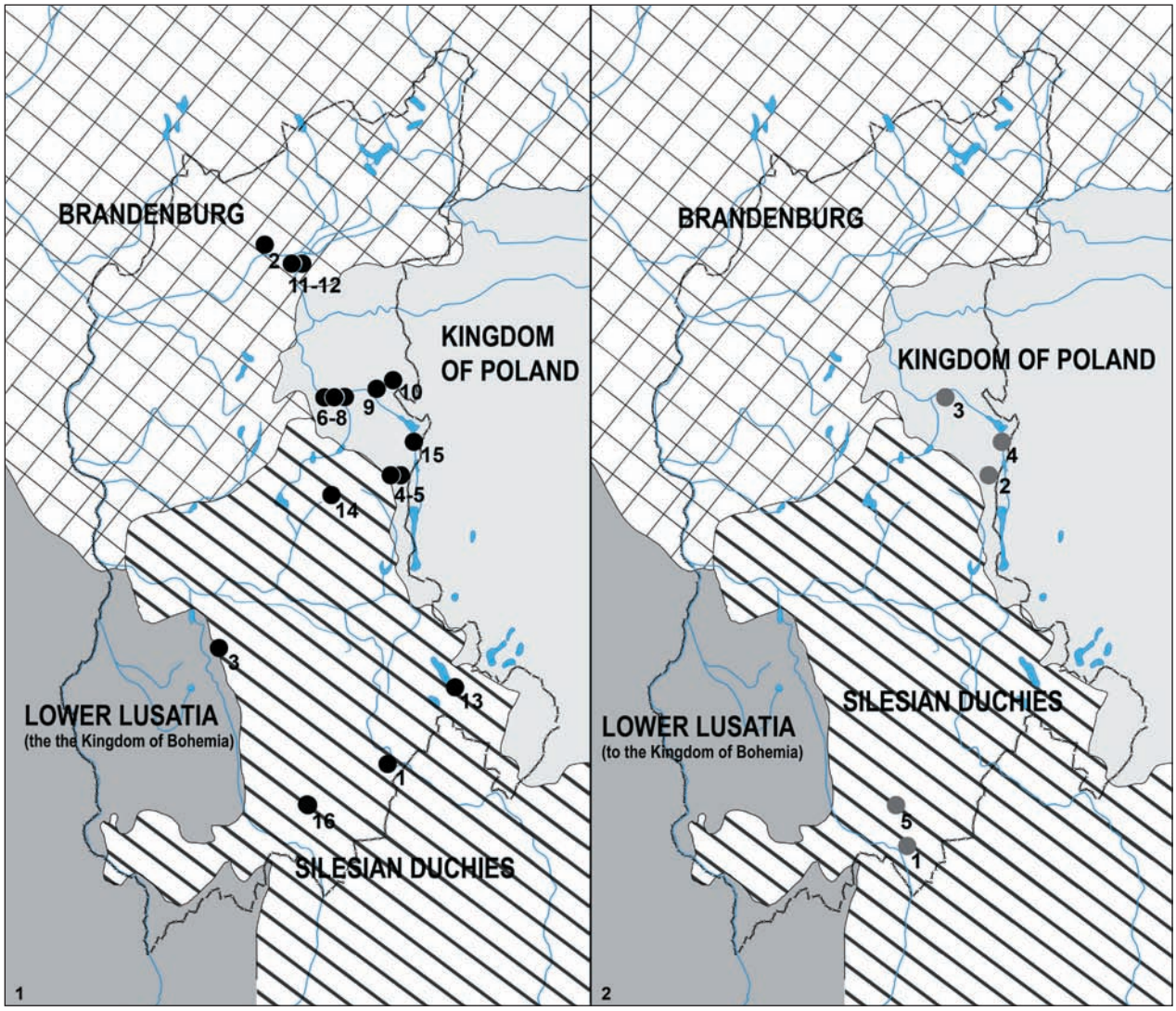

Fig. 1. Distribution of swords (1) and falchions (2) finds on the Silesian- Polish-Brandenburg borderland in the 14th cent. No 1 (Oakeshott's typology): 1 – Bytom Odrzański (I1); 2 – Gorzów Wlkp. (XIIIa, J, 2); 3 – Kosierz (XX, T [variant], 13); 4–5 – Lutol Mokry (XVIa, H, 5; XVIa, J, 2); 6–8 – Międzyrzecz (H2; I1; I1); 9 – Policko (XII, H, 1); 10 – Pszczew (G3); 11–12 – Santok (XIIIa, I; XVIa, T); 13 – Sława (XII, X, 3); 14 – Świebodzin (XIIIa/XVIa); 15 – Trzciel (H); 16 – Witków (I1). No 2 (Marek's typology): 1 – Henryków near Szprotawa (V, F); 2 – Lutol Mokry (I, A); 3 – Międzyrzecz; 4 – Trzciel (I, A); 5 – Witków (E)

too small for an average adult's hand[2] (Oakeshott 1982, p. 26). There is also a number of known examples of children possessing swords in written sources. These would appear to be of a practical, as well as symbolic nature. Henry V, King of England, owned a sword by the age of nine in 1397. King Henry VI was nine years old when he received eight swords about 1430, *'some greater and some smaller, for to learn the king to play in his tender age* (Woosnam-Savage 2008, p. 89).

It seems that the artefact from Sława is rather a war sword. It probably represented Oakeshott's Type XII sword, which after having been broken was shortened and re-sharpened. Elements from an older sword were probably used in the construction of the hilt. The sword had a mushroom-shaped pommel which corresponded to Petersen's Type X. Similar procedure was applied for Type XII blades from the Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum in Zurich and the Helsinki University (Oakeshott 1991, p. 67). Kurt Langenheim (1936) dated the sword from Sława to the 2nd half of the 14th cent. The shape of both the blade and the crossguard indicates that it could be forged in the 13th cent., but the extremely short blade suggests very long using. It is probable that this specimen is very similar to the group of so-called *Riding Swords*, designed for close combat (Oakeshott 1982, p. 26, 28). This kind of sword, mainly Oakeshott's Type XVI, with 60 cm

[2] The length of the 14th c. grip coverings excavated in Leiden in the Netherlands, varies from 11 to 24.5 cm (van Driel-Murray 1990, pp. 173, 175).

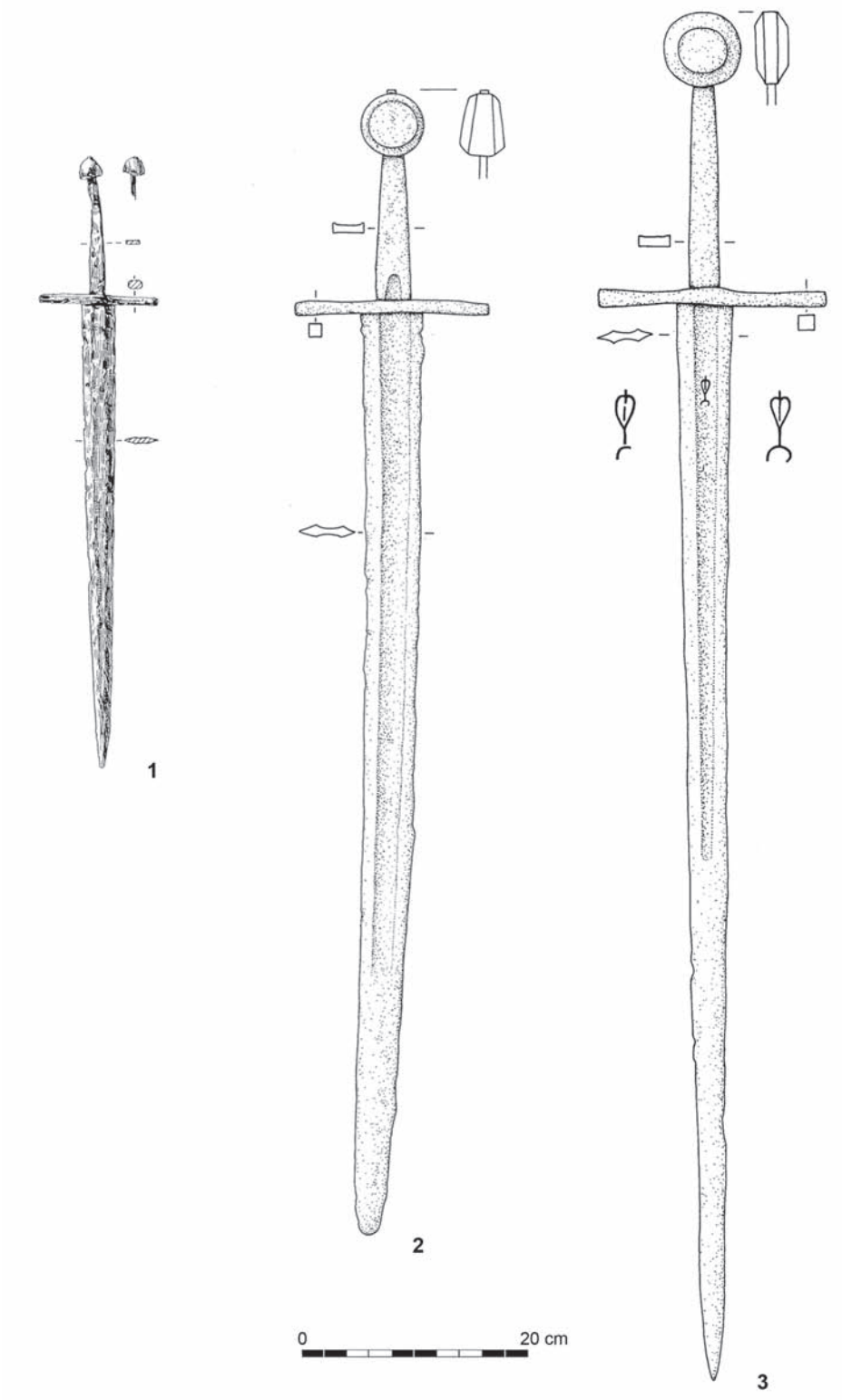

Fig. 2. Swords from Sława (1), Policko (2) and Lutol Mokry (3) (1 after Seger 1912; 2–3 drawing by J. Kędelska

long blades, was extremely popular in the period between 1320 and 1360. In the light of iconography from Germany, England, France, Spain and Italy, dated to c. 1300, it seems that *Riding Swords* were mainly used by civilians for self-defense (Oakeshott 1982, p. 28). On the other hand, the appearance of swords of this group was related to a change in infantry tactics in the second half of the 14th c., where short stabbing swords were much more useful in battle practice. There are several depictions in the art which confirm their war

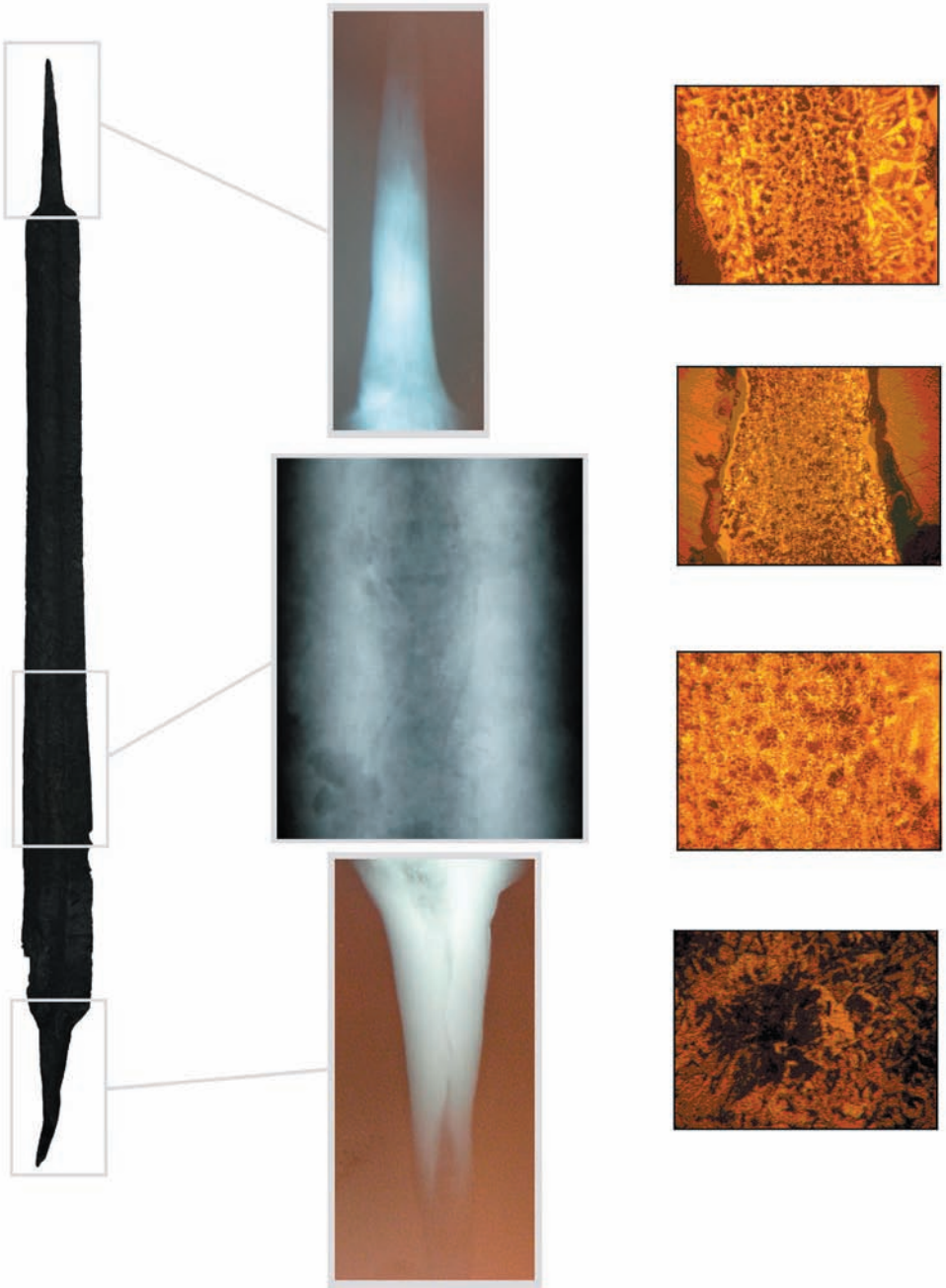

Fig. 3. Sword from Świebodzin: X-ray photos and microphotographs of metal's structure (after Michalak 2011)

destination (Oakeshott 1982, pp. 28–29). The sword from Sława could also be, as L. Marek (2008, p. 70) assumed, a special weapon intended for fencing with the buckler.

Another Oakeshott's Type XII sword was probably depicted on the altar from Mycielin (Biernacka 1969, p. 84). What is extremely curious is that this triptych is dated to 1520, and the sword is of an archaic form, probably of Type XII, G, 5. The entire depiction of the sword seems to be coherent in style, and this sword can be dated to c. 1320–1350 in the light of analogous artefacts (Oakeshott 1991, p. 88). A parallel observation can be made in the late medieval depictions from Silesia, where blades with anachronistic pommels were depicted (Marek 2008, fig. 81).

Among the swords, which were very popular based on their universality, including the region in question, there are swords of Type XIIIa. 2 or 3 swords of this kind were found there (Santok, Gorzów, Świebodzin?) (Fig. 2: 2). We can assume a huge popularity of this kind of blades in the 2nd half of the 13th and the 14th cent. (Oakeshott 1998, p. 42). Swords of this type from the Alexandrian armoury are inscribed with *Nashki* dates from the

period of 1400–1408 (Alexander 1985, p. 108–109). The most famous sword of this type (XIIIa, J) from Santok near Gorzów was described in the scholarship for several times (Seger 1912; Bohm 1924; Bruhn-Hoffmeyer 1954, p. 65; Głosek, Nadolski 1970, p. 49 (54); Głosek 1973, pp. 147 (36); 1984, p. 162 (309); Volkmann 2006; 2008, pp. 448–449; Michalak 2011). It was found accidentally during peat digging. A special issue about this sword is the ornamentation of the blade. On the one side of the blade four knights in armour and a heraldic shield with a cross potent in the centre were portrayed. On the other side of the blade a heraldic shield with a crowned lion was depicted (Seger 1912). In the light of the ornamentation analysis the sword was recognized as belonging to Ottokar II of Bohemia. It was probably given to the Bohemian King by Teutonic Knights in remembrance of taking part in the Baltic crusades in 1255 and 1267 (Bohm 1924; Knap 2009). Due to clear logical gaps in this assumption, it should be however treated with caution.

The other Type XIII sword, found near Gorzów Wielkopolski, has a Type J pommel and the tang is hammered down on a round bronze washer. These kinds of washers appear in the swords from the 2nd half of the 13th cent. (Marek 2008, p. 71) and are very common in the artefacts from the 14th to the 15th cent. (Bača, Krupa 1991, p. 19, fig. 2.2; Kuśnierz 2010, fig. 4:3). The sword is dated to the end of the 13th – beginning of the 14th cent (Głosek, Nadolski 1970, p. 36 [15]; Głosek 1973, p. 138 [9]; Głosek 1984, cat. 246).

Another sword of this type was discovered during archaeological excavations in Świebodzin. The sword, after having been broken, was re-forged into a drawknife - a tool used for barking up and shaving the surface of wood. X-ray examination revealed a mark of the Passau wolf on the blade. The sword was made from medium carbon steel and it was of rather high quality (Fig. 3). It was most likely produced after the 2nd half of the 14th cent. After having been broken it was used as a drawknife until the 1st half of the 15th cent. (Michalak, Wawrzyniak 2009). Broken swords' re-forging is testified to both in Europe (Sezimovo Usti, Boringholm) and Poland (Szarlej) (Michalak, Wawrzyniak 2009, p. 206; Głosek 1984, p. 32, cat. 318, Plate XXVIII: 5).

Among the swords, which were also very popular with regard to their universality in the area in question, there are swords of Type XVIa. We can say that Type XVIa blades were extremely popular in this region. We know at least four swords of this type, which had different kinds of hilts. Type XVIa is considered to be an evolutionary form of Type XIIIa. It seems therefore justified to establish its chronology to the entire 14th and the early 15th cent. (Oakeshott 1998, pp. 63–65; Głosek 1984, p. 29; cf. Aleksić 2007, p. 89). Sword makers marks, including a Passau wolf, are visible on the sword's blade from Lutol Mokry. X-ray examination of the sword from Lutol Mokry revealed remains of an inscription on one side of the blade.

Circular pommels, used e.g. with the sword from Lutol (Fig. 2: 3), must have been very popular in this region. There are six swords with this kind of pommels (Type H – 2; I – 3; J – 1). Other wheel-shaped pommels of Type H were found during archaeological excavations at the motte-type stronghold in Trzciel and the castle in Międzyrzecz (Fig. 4:2). One-handed and hand-and-a-half swords with analogous pommels indicate that it can be dated to the end of the 14th-begining of the 15th cent. (Biborski, Żabiński 2006, fig. 6; Žakovsky 2008, fig. 1: 3–4) and the mid–13th cent. (Głosek, Makiewicz 1997, fig. 1). These kinds of artefacts are also often depicted in the art. Apart from the specimen from the Kalisz altar, a wheel-shaped pommel with a centrally marked circle, which might represent Types H, I, J, J1 and K, was pictured in the *Antiphonary from Żagań* (c. 1446) (Marek 2008, p. 73, fig. 145:a).

Apart from wheel-shaped pommels, octagonal forms must have also been very popular. At least 5 of this kind were found in this region, including 1 from Bytom Odrzański which was cast of bronze and others made of iron. R.E. Oakeshott (1998, p. 103) thought that pommels of this type had been most popular in the period from c. 1360 to c. 1440–1450. This was based on English and West European tombstones from this period. The bronze sword pommel from Bytom (Type I_1) was discovered during archaeological excavations at the castellan stronghold in the unmistakable context of the 13th century (Moździoch 1993, p. 278, fig. 10:a; 2002, p. 155). This kind of artefacts was found together with swords in the River Pregoła, Frombork, Ligota Piękna, Löcknitz and Pyskowice (Michalak 2007, p. 218–219; Zdaniewicz 2012). Those artefacts were dated from the 12th to the 14th century. Another pommel of this type was found during archaeological excavations at a small castle in Witków and the town of Międzyrzecz (Fig. 4: 3). The outer layer of the pommel was made of iron and filled with lead to achieve bigger weight. On the bottom and the upper part of the pommel remains of the tang are visible. The chronology of this artefact, based on the analysis of pottery, was established to the 2nd half of the 14th cent. (Michalak 2007, pp. 219–220). Another octagonal pommel (Oakeshott's I1, Aleksić's I1b), with a centrally placed hollow, was discovered during archaeological excavations at the Międzyrzecz

Fig. 4. Octagonal and wheel-shaped sword pommels from Pszczew (1), Trzciel (2) and Witków (3) (Photo by A. Michalak)

castle. Analogous specimens allow us to date it to the 2nd half of the 14th – 1st half of the 15th cent. (Głosek 1973, cat. 38, Plate XXVII: 2; 1984, cat. 90, Plate XXXI: 5; Pierzak 2002, Plate XV: f; Kazakevičius 2005, pp. 115–116, fig. 2; Aleksić 2007, cat. 263, 266, Plate 6: 3–4; Pinter 2007, Plate 37: a; Marek 2008, fig. 86: b; Glinianowicz, Kotowicz 2012, fig. 3, 5: 1). We should also mention a very rare Głosek's Type G3 pommel, found at the motte-kind stronghold in Pszczew (Michalak 2004a, p. 42, fig. 6) (Fig. 4: 1). This, based on analogous specimens from the Czech Republic, can be dated to the 1st half of the 15th cent. (Głosek 1984, p. 35).

In the collection of the Archaeological Museum of the Middle Oder River Area in Zielona Góra there is another interesting sword. It is probably of Type XVII, T1/T2 (Fig. 5: 1). Swords of Type XVII, with pommels of type T2, were discovered in the graves of Friedrich von Tarant and Friedrich von Greiffenstein in Konigsfelden, who were killed in the Battle at Sempach in 1386 (Geßler 1914; Seitz 1965, pp. 156–158). Such swords are dated in South Germany, Austria and Switzerland to the period between 1350 and 1410 (Oakeshott 1987; Aleksić 2007, p. 68; Pause 2010, p. 123). The Sempach family of swords had a different side shape of pommels than the sword from the collection of Museum in Zielona Góra and because of that it should not be included in this group (Oakeshott 1987, fig. 3), as it was proposed earlier (Michalak 2007, p. 205). However it seems that the proposed chronology of this family of swords may be appropriate also for the discussed specimen. During X-ray examination of the sword a blacksmith's mark was discovered on its tang. It is identified as

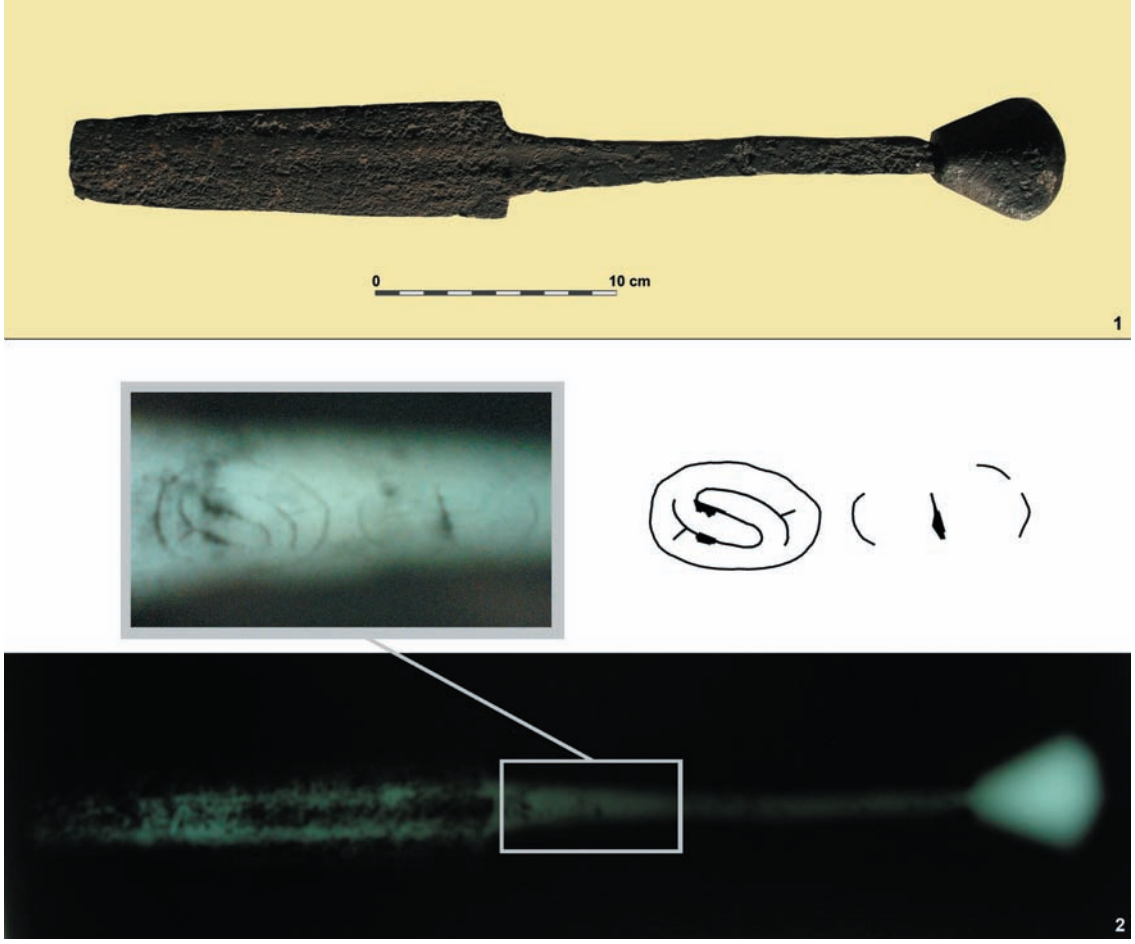

Fig. 5. Sword from the collection of the Archaeological Museum of the Oder River Area in Zielona Góra (1) with X-ray photo (2) (after Michalak 2007)

a German swords maker's mark (Michalak 2007, pp. 221–222) (Fig. 5: 2). Metallographic examination of the blade revealed that it had been forged from a single piece of semi-hard unevenly carburized steel (0.2–0.6% C). Sorbitic microstructure allows us to think that the heat treatment of the blade hardened only the outer layer. Its lack in the cross-section can be connected with a considerable destruction of the blade's outer layer, caused by corrosion. The sword pommel was probably made from a single piece of iron with increased phosphorus content, only locally carburized to 0.1–0.2% C (Biborski, Stępiński 2010).

Another Type XVII sword was probably depicted on the Polyptych from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice in the Collegiate Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in Kalisz (c. 1510) (Walicki 1932; Świechowski 1949) (Fig. 6:1). A very similar sword can be found on the Triptych from Dębno Podhalańskie, dated to c. 1500 (Głosek 2003, fig. 65).

A two-handed sword was found accidentally in Kosierz near Krosno Odrzańskie. It is probably of Type XX, T (variant), 13. The crosspiece was made from a twisted bar and it has ball-shaped terminals (Fig. 7: 1). On both sides of the blade there are boldly struck smith's marks, filled with copper alloy. These are almost identical with those on the sword from the National Museum in Wroclaw. In the light of the hilt analysis, it seems probable that this sword can be dated to the end of the 15th–begining of the 16th century. Analogous crossguards are known from several swords in European collections, such as the sword from the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw, which is dated to the 2nd half of the 15th – beginning of the 16th cent. (Michalak 2007, p. 223).

The pommel from the sword found in Kosierz, which is a variant of Oakeshott's Type T, indicates such a chronology. Analogous pommels are known from the sword excavated from the grave of Svante Nilsson Sture in the Vasteras Cathedral, Sweden, which is dated to c. 1490–1500 (Seitz 1959) (Fig. 7: 2) and from the

Fig. 6. Depictions of wheel-shaped pommels from Poliptychs from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice: 1 - Assumption of Holy Mary Collegiate Church in Kalisz, c. 1510 and Oakeshott's type R pommel; 2 - from Assumption of Holy Mary Collegiate Church in Nowogród Bobrzański, c. 1500. (Photo by A. Michalak)

Polyptych of the Master of Passion from Góra Śląska in the Archcathedral Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul in Poznań, dated to c. 1512 (Marek 2008, fig. 115: c).

In the light of iconographical evidence from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland, a great popularity of Oakeshott's Type T pommels (in classical forms and various variants) up to the beginnings of the 16th cent. is visible (Fig. 8). Pear-shaped pommels with diagonal grooves also appear among the examples known from iconographical evidence (Fig. 8: 1). This kind of pommels, which M. Głosek (1984, pp. 35–36) classified as Type T6, is dated to the 2nd half of the 15th and the 16th cent. A similar type of pommel was described by A. V. B. Norman (1980, pp. 245–246) as Type 16. According to him, these were most popular between c. 1470 and 1585. Similar examples from Silesia and the Czech Republic are dated to the 1st quarter of the 16th cent. (Marek 2008, fig. 101–102; Žákovský 2011, fig. 4, 6).

Apart from clear German and Bohemian influence in the material from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland, there are some elements that are very rare among findings from this part of Europe. Most cross-guards depicted in the iconography from this region are straight (Oakeshott's Style 1, 2, 3, 5) (Fig. 8: 1, 3), but there are also clearly S-curved specimens. They are, however, different from Oakeshott's Style 12, because they are vertically bent. This kind of guards can be seen e.g. on the Polyptych from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice, the Collegiate Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in Kalisz, dated to c. 1510 (Walicki 1932; Świechowski 1949) (Fig. 6: 1). A completely different example of a cross-guard with triple foil terminals was depicted on the

effigy of Wacław Żaganski, which is dated to c. 1488 (Czechowicz 2003, p. 162) (Fig. 9). The closest analogies are known from Scottish claymores from the 16th cent. (Mann 1944, Pl. XX: a; Halpin 1986, pp. 201, 205, fig. 23). Similar crossguards are also depicted in Scottish tomb-slabs. The earliest is the one from Kirkapol, dated to 1495 (Halpin 1986, p. 205).

Another interesting example was depicted on the altar from St. Catherine Church in Gościszowice (c. 1505). There is a clear vertical ridge on the circular shape pommel (Biernacka 1969, fig. 20) (Fig. 10:2). It is probably a Type U pommel. Oakeshott compared its elegant shape with 19th century clock keys (Oakeshott 1998, p. 107). Among finds from Europe with this kind of pommels worth mentioning are the specimens from the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum in Zurich, the Museum in Dubrovnik, the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich, the Waffensammlung in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Geßler 1928, Plate 3:3–4, 4:2; Bruhn-Hoffmeyer 1954, pp. 68, 88, 194, Plate XXII:b, XXXII:d; Seitz 1965, Plate VI; Boccia, Coelho 1975, fig. 278–280; Aleksić 2007, pp. 69–70, fig. 22). The sword with such a pommel was depicted on the tomb effigy of Bishop Johann von Grumbach from 1475 (Oakeshott 1998, fig. 85). It was also encountered on the portrait of St. Knut on the Altar diptych painted by Hugo van der Goes for the Trinity College Church around 1478/1479 (Oakeshott 1998, p. 107). According to Oakeshott, original finds and iconography indicate that this kind of pommels was very popular throughout the whole of the last three-quarters of the 15th cent. There is also the sword of August Duke-Elector of Saxony (dated to c. 1566), with the Type U pommel (Seitz 1965, fig. 197).

A sword with the V-type pommel can be seen on another work of the Master of Altars from Gościszowice (Fig. 10:1). It is the Polyptych from St. Lawrence Church in Babimost (c. 1499) (Wiliński 1948). The shape of the pommel is similar to the lily flower, which was probably related to the Holy Virgin as an emblem of immortality, the Church and the faithful soul (Zieliński 1959, pp. 485, 515). There are several swords with such pommels in European collections, for example in the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum in Zurich, the Wallace Collection in London, Musee de Cluny (Geßler 1928, Plate 3:1; Oakeshott 1991, p. 175; 1998, p. 107, Plate

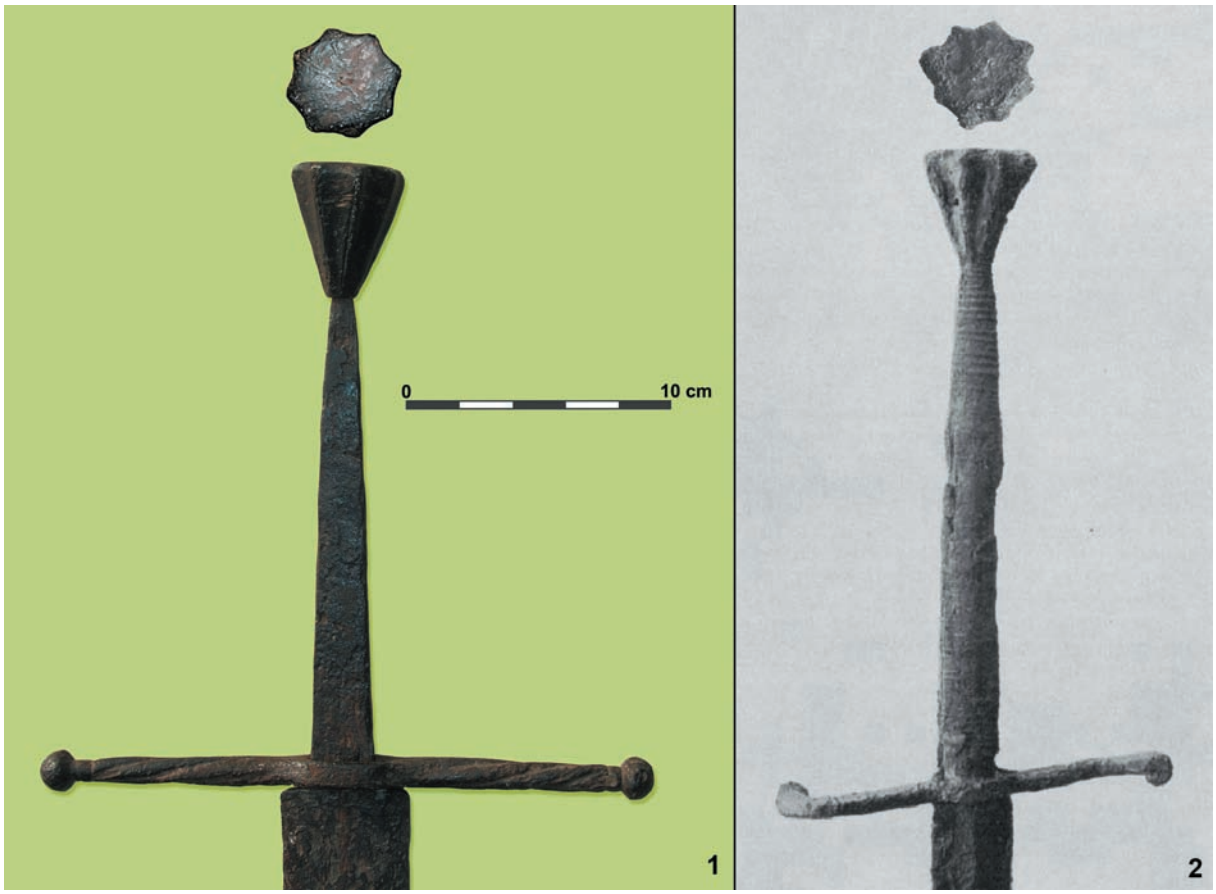

Fig. 7. Sword from Kosierz (1) and specimen with analogous pommel from Svante Nilsson Sture grave in Västeräs Cathedral (2), c. 1500. (1 - photo by A. Michalak, 2 - after Seitz 1959)

Fig. 8. Depictions Oakeshott's type T pommels from Poliptychs from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice: 1 - St. Catherine Church in Gościszowice, c. 1505; 2 - St. Bartholomew Church in Konin Żagański, beginning of the 16th cent.; 3 - St. Mary Magdalene Church in Nowe Miasteczko, c. 1471 (Photo by A. Michalak)

36A, fig. 87–88). Worth mentioning is also the sword of Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan (Boccia, Coelho 1975, fig. 168). The type is less uncommon in the art. We should mention a German effigy of Ulrich von Hohenrechburg (†1458) from Dongsdorff in Wurttemberg and English alabaster effigies of William Phillipp, Lord Berdolph (†1441) in the Dennington Church, Suffolk (Oakeshott 1998, fig. 86). A few other Flemish and German paintings show this pommel type, so Oakeshott (1998, p. 108) suggested that it was a North-Western European rather than an Italian type. This can be confirmed by the depictions of this type of artifacts from Italy, which are dated until the end of the 15th cent. (Boccia, Coelho 1975, fig. 169).

We should also mention depictions of Type R pommels on several works of Master of Altars from Gościszowice, which are dated to the end of the 15th-beginning of the 16th cent. (Fig. 6: 2). All specimens of

this kind had decorative washers on the upper and bottom parts of the pommel and a horizontal ridge across. Spherical pommels of Type R, without characteristic ornamentation, were also popular at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the early Modern period (Aleksić 2007, p. 67).

Two-handed swords depicted on at least two works made in the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice had pear-shaped pommels (Biernacka 1969, fig. 21) (Fig. 11). Analogous specimens which come from the Basel and the Zurich armouries were published by E. A. Geßler (1911, Plate VI:1–3; 1928, Plate 7:6–7). They were dated to the end of the 15th-beginning of the 16th cent. A very similar sword from a private collection is dated by Clement Bosson (1982, p. 56, fig. 4) to the end of the 15th cent. Tilman Wanke (2009, Plate III:23) determined its chronology to c. 1530. The context, however, in which those swords were depicted on the illustration, indicates that these could be executioner swords.

7 falchions and their parts are known from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland (Fig. 1:2). They represent 4 different types of blades distinguished by Lech Marek (2008). One form of the blade was not included in Marek's classification. Additional data about

Fig. 9. Brass effigy of prince Wacław Żagański from the collection of the National museum in Wrocław, c. 1480–1488 (after Czechowicz 2003)

Fig. 10. Depictions Oakeshott's type V (1) and U (2) pommels from Poliptychs from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice: 1 – St. Laurence Church in Babimost, c. 1499; 2 – St. Cathrine Church in Gościszowice, c. 1505 (Photo by A. Michalak)

popularity of various forms of falchions are also known from iconography.

Large knife-type falchions with blades narrowing towards the point and tangs which were wider at the cap-pommel must have been very popular in this region. Fine examples were found during dredging of the River Obra at Lutol Mokry, near Międzyrzecz and at the motte stronghold in Trzciel. There is also one specimen in the collection of the Lubuskie Military Museum in Drzonów. They can be dated to the 15th cent. (Michalak 2004, cat. 2–3, fig. 4:6; 2005). Metallographic examination of the falchion from Trzciel proved that it had been quenched after forging, in order to harden the blade (Biborski, Stępiński 2010). This kind of treatment was also revealed in metallographic studies of falchions from the Czech Republic (Hošek 2006, fig. 38; Michalak 2011a, fig. 4).

A falchion of this kind is also depicted on the medieval stone cross in Bytom Odrzański (Fig. 12: 1). It can be dated to the 15th – beginning of the 16th century. Lech Marek (2008, p. 49) includes this kind of artefact in his Type I. In Silesia they are dated from the 1st half of the 15th to the 1st half of the 16th cent. This type was also very common in the Czech Republic (Bača, Krupa 1991, s. 19, fig. 4; Žakovský 2008a, fig. 2: c–f), Brandenburg (Huth 1975, Plate 140; 4) and Polish lands as well (Gajda 1986, cat. 3, 5; Głosek 2003, p. 39).

We also know depictions of artefacts with broad blades with less acute points from the region in question. This type of falchion, with a cap type pommel and a curved crossguard with ball-shaped finials, is depicted on the medieval stone cross in Bytom Odrzański (Fig. 12:2). Analogous guards are known from iconography, such as the Mother of God Pentaptych, St. Severinus and St. Dorothea from Lubin, which is dated to c. 1523 (Marek 2008, fig. 78). Hence it seems to be more probable that the falchion from the cross in Bytom Odrzański can be dated to the beginning of the 16th century. Another depiction of this type of falchion is known from the manuscript *Sermones de sanctis* from the monastic library in Żagań (c. 1434) (Marek 2006, fig. 2: c). According to L. Marek's classification (2008, p. 49–55) it represents Type II, which is common in Silesia in the 15th and the beginning of the 16th cent.

In the 2nd half of the 15th cent. falchions with curved blades intended for cutting become more popular. This tendency is visible in Silesia and the Polish lands (Marek 2008, pp. 59–60; Głosek 2003, pp. 38–39). Trapezoid or bill-shaped pommels were used to prevent falchions from dropping out of the hand during the combat. Falchions of this type are known from the

Fig. 11. Two-handed swords from the Penaptych from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice, St. Nicolas Church in Mycielin (1), c. 1520 and Triptych from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice, St. Nicolas Church in Jelenin (2), c. 1500 (Photo by A. Michalak)

Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland only from iconography. There are depictions of specimens with long and short blades which narrow towards the point (Fig. 13). In all the cases crossguards are considerably bent, not like in Oakeshott's Type 12, but vertically (Fig. 13: 1). These artefacts appear in the first decades of the 16th cent. as elements of both swords, falchions and rapiers (Głosek 2003, fig. 65; Marek 2008, p. 75). In most cases Type D pommels were used for this kind of falchions. They appear on two Polyptychs from St. Laurence Church in Babimost (c. 1499) and Assumption of Holy Virgin Collegiate Church in Kalisz (c. 1510) (fig. 13:2). This kind of pommels is dated to the 15th cent. in Silesia, the Czech Republic and Poland (Marek 2008, pp. 62–63; Žakovsky 2008a, fig. 8: c-e, h; Głosek 2002; 2003, fig. 32). On the same depictions made by the Master of Altars from Gościszowice pommels of Type E were also often used with falchions of blade Type III (Fig. 13: 2). In Silesia, the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland it was mainly used in the 15th cent. (Marek 2008, pp. 63–64; Žakovsky 2008a, fig. 8: a-b, f-g, j; Bohlmann 1936, fig. 9: c; Głosek 2003, Fig, 28b; Teske 2003). Examples from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland indicate that they were also used at the beginning of the 16th century. In the depictions of Type D and E pommels a small, centrally placed circle is visible (Fig. 13). It was probably connected with the decoration of a single, centrally placed rosette or star, which is visible on several artefacts from European collections.

An excellent example of such a pommel decoration appears on a trapezoid-shaped specimen which was excavated during archaeological works at the Witków castle near Żagań. It can be archeologically dated to the 1st half of the 15th cent. The pommel is decorated with a six-pointed star. The only analogous artefacts with this kind of embellishment are known from the Landeszeughaus in Graz and the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin. The six-pointed star symbol is probably connected with the Holy Virgin cult (devotion), which was common among the chivalry (Marek, Michalak 2008; see also Michalak, Wawrzyniak 2011, pp. 162–163). A star or rosette was also a very popular decoration motif of later hunting side arms. Due to this fact P. Žakovský (2012, p. 695) considered medieval falchions decorated with inserted stars and rosettes as hunting knives.

Another form of falchion was found in Henryków near Szprotawa. Its blade is very broad with a slightly protuberant foil (Fig. 14: 1). On the one side of the blade two falchion maker's stamps in form of a seven petals flower are visible. Its protuberant and beak-shaped pommel consists of three parts which are soldered with copper. The light construction of the head and the tang's bending (as seen in the X-ray photos) made this element of the structure more solid. Apart from the pommel, the key to chronology of the Henryków near Szprotawa falchion is a straight quillon with one-sided ring and trumpet-like terminals (see: Kovács 1994). According to L. Marek's classification (2008, pp. 61–62), this type of falchion can be classified as blade Type V and pommel Type Fl. A specimen with an analogous blade was found in the town of Pezinok in Slovakia (Habáň 2006, p. 358). Other analogies come from several museum collections in northern Poland. These are dated to the end of 15th – beginning of the 16th cent. (Gajda 1986, cat. 15–17). We can rather suppose that the falchion from Henryków near Szprotawa was made in the 1st quarter of the 16th cent. This assumption is based on the best analogy to this falchion, which comes from the tombstone of Zygmunt von Keltsch (†1531) from St. Peter and Paul Church in Strzegom. It is dated to before 1531 (Marek, Mucha 2006, fig. 3; Marek 2008, p. 62, fig. 74). Another example of a falchion with a Type V blade is a depiction from the Triptych from the workshop of the Master of Altars from Gościszowice. It can be seen in St. Michael Church in Popęszyce (14: 2). The blade is more narrowing towards the point. It is dated to c. 1500. As with the falchions from Hen-

Fig. 12. Depiction of falchions with blades of Marek's type I (1) and II (2). Stone crosses from the St. Hieronymus Church in Bytom Odrzański. 15th cent. (Photo by S. Kałagate)

Fig. 13. Depictions of falchions with curved blades with pommels of Marek's type D (1) and E (2) from Poliptychs from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice: 1 - St. Laurence Church in Babimost, c. 1499; 2 - Assumption of Holy Mary Collegiate Church in Kalisz, c. 1510. (Photo by A. Michalak)

ryków and from Zygmunt von Keltsch's tombstone, the pommel is of Type F.

In the materials from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland there are also specimens which do not appear in Silesia. These were not included in Lech Marek's classification. First of all, it is worth mentioning a falchion with a short blade which widens towards the point. It is kept in the collection of the Lubuskie Military Museum in Drzonów (Michalak 2004, cat. 4) (Fig. 15: 1). Another artefact of this kind was portrayed in St. Bartholomew's hand on the predella from Gołaszyn, which can be dated to 1496. Analogous specimens are in the collection of the National Museum in Szczecin (inv. 12999), the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the Royal Armoury in Dresden. The artefact from Szczecin is broadly dated to the late medieval period (Gajda 1986, cat. 7, Plate 1:7). The owner of the specimen from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. HJRK_D_198) was probably Rudolf of Wartensee (c. 1350). This assumption was based on the analysis of the coat of arms from the falchion's sheath (Gamber 1961, pp. 18–20, fig. 8). The other analogous artefact, also preserved with its sheath, was in the collection of the Royal Armoury in Dresden (Mörtzsch 1915–1917, fig. 4) (Fig. 15:2). Both analogous specimens were interpreted as a hunting knives and falchions from Drzonów and Gołaszyn should most likely be regarded in the same way.

It does not mean that they were used only during hunt. Due to the universality of form, these

kind of falchions were probably exploited also during travels and daily life. Examples of this are also known from medieval iconography, such as the Crucifixion of Christ by Meister des Wiener Schottenaltars from the Schottenkirche in Vienna. It is dated to c. 1470–1480 (Simon 2002).

During excavations at the Międzyrzecz castle a part of a falchion – a small guard from the end of 14th cent.– was found. It has a particular shape which has not been known in scholarship yet. It is of heart form with two small projections at the bottom. Among known examples there are first of all circular and oval forms with sometimes slightly curved sides (Michalak 2004, fig. 1–2). The most various sorts came from the Czech Republic, where small guards in the form of a quill a mushroom and a ball were found (Žakovský 2008a, fig. 1, 4–5; 2008b, p. 65; 2011, fig. 14–15). Most common are 15th-century oval-shaped, radial grooved artefacts, with two centrally placed holes (Krajíc 2003, pp. 175–176; 2003a, Plate 139: 2001, 2071, 3019, 5807, 7415; Marek 2008, p. 50). These specimens are unanimously connected with the shell, which was a pilgrim attribute related to St. James (Michna 1997, pp. 257–268; Marek 2008, p. 50, fig. 47). Small guards of more developed shapes with semi circular two projections in the upper part and trapezoid forms with projections in both upper and bottom part are also known from Silesia and Switzerland. These are also dated to the 15th cent. (Marek 2008, fig. 49: b–c, 52:a). Analogous heart-shape artefacts, which are

Fig. 14. Falchion from Henryków near Szprotawa (2) with the depiction of this kind of falchion from Triptych from the Workshop of Master of Altars from Gościszowice, c. 1500, St. Michael Church in Popęszyce (1). (Photo by A. Michalak)

Fig. 15. Falchion from the collection of the Lubuskie Military Museum in Drzonów (1) with parallel specimen from the Royal Armoury in Dresden (2) (1 – Photo by A. Michalak, 2 – after Mörtzsch 1915–1917, fig. 4).

Fig. 16. Depiction of rain-guard from Henry IV the Faithful tombstone (+1342). (Photo by A. Michalak)

known from both Moravia[3] and Switzerland, can be archeologically dated to the 14th–15th cent. (Wegeli 1929, kat.1009).

At the end we should spend some words on the elements which protect sword and falchion blades, i.e. sheaths and rain-guards. The earliest depiction of a rain-guard from this region comes from Henryk IV the Faithfull's (†1342) tombstone, dated to the 14th cent. (Wawrzonowska 1976, p. 105) (Fig.16). It is, however, visible in iconography till the 16th cent. This kind of specimens from the Silesian-Polish-Brandenburg borderland had mainly curved bottom edge (Fig. 6: 2, 9, 13, 14: 1). The first appearance of rain-guards in Europe is dated to the 13th cent., which is proved by the sword from the British Museum's collection (c. 1250) (Oakeshott 1998, p. 133). There are also original rain-guard finds from archaeological excavations in Turku (Harjula 2005, p. 67), Constance (Schnack 1994, p. 39, Plate 41:1153, 2076, 3423, 3228, 3300), Leiden (van Driel-Murray 1990, p. 196, fig. 14) and probably Kołobrzeg (Wywrot-Wyszkowska 1997, p. 198, Plate 11:4; 1998, p. 244, Plate 30:6). These are dated to the 14th c., but they are of trapezoid or rectangular shape. This kind of shape are visible on the Altars from Gościszowice (Fig. 8:1, 10:2) and Babimost.

Almost every sheath depicted in iconography had U or V-shaped chapes at its end. There are only 3 sheaths (from Gościszowice's, Babimost's and Kościan's altars) without this element. Trough-like chapes appear in Europe from 12th–13th cent. throughout the whole 14th cent. (Kotowicz, Chlewicki 2010). Three artefacts of this kind were found during excavations at the Międzyrzecz's Royal Castle. In the 15th cent. chapes became more decorative and developed in form (Žákovský 2006, pp. 53–55). There is a variety of forms, connected with sword and falchion point shapes: trapezoid, rhomboid, semi-crescent with often wonderfully engraved edges and central parts, sometimes in the form of Gothic tracery. Apart from chapes, we can also clearly notice boldly decorated mounts in the middle and at the throat of the sheath (Fig. 6:1, 8:2). In the case of three altar depictions (from Gościszowice, Konin Żagański and Kalisz) we can suspect scabbards of cuir bouilli with a floral pattern (Fig. 6:1, 8:1), which is known from original artefacts (e.g. Gamber 1961, fig. 40) and was sometimes pictured on late medieval icons (Jara, Glinianowicz, Kotowicz 2011, fig. 7:3).

In the light of this analysis, tendencies in the Polish-Silesian-Brandenburg borderland's arms seem to not differ from the rest of Europe. Iconography

[3] For this information I wish to thank Petr Žakovský from Brno.

studies proved that weapon depictions from this region could be reliable sources for sword and falchion forms or construction analysis. A considerable popularity of universal types of swords (XIIIa and XVIa), with octagonal or wheel-shaped pommels, is visible. Similar tendencies were noted in Polish and Silesian materials. In the case of falchions, clear Silesian and Bohemian influences can be noticed. Polish and West European influences were rather less important.

translated by G. Żabiński and A. Michalak

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