

## TWO INCRUSTED MEDIEVAL SWORDS FROM ZBASZYN, LUBUSZ VOIVODSHIP

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### RESUMEN - ABSTRACT

Se presentan dos espadas medievales fechables entre finales del S. XII y principios del XIV, decoradas con damasquinados en plata y aleación de cobre. Una presenta un texto latino y motivos ornamentales; la otra, elementos heráldicos.

This paper presents two interesting medieval swords that can be dated between the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. Both display, engraved in the fuller, inscriptions in silver and copper inlay, one of them a latin text, the other heraldic symbols.

### PALABRAS CLAVE - KEYWORDS

Espadas medievales. Polonia. Inscripciones

Medieval swords. Poland. Inscriptions

In the area of Zbaszyn, in Lake Zbaszynskie, two interesting medieval swords were accidentally found. They are both incrustated but they significantly differ in ideological programme.

The size of sword 1 (fig. 1) is : general length 75.8 cm preserved, length of the blade 59 cm (preserved), 5.3 cm wide at the forte, length of the hilt – 15.8, height of the guard 1 cm, length of the guard 19.7 cm, height of the pommel – 4.5 cm, width of the pommel – 7.1 cm, thickness of the pommel in its upper part 2.0 cm; thickness of the pommel in its lower part 2.6 cm; thickness of the tang 0.6 cm.

The size of sword 2 (fig. 2) is: general length 108.7 cm, length of the blade 90.7 cm; width of the pommel at the top 6.0 cm; length of the hilt 17 cm; maximum width of the tang 3.3 cm; height of the guard 1.0 cm; length of the guard 17.5 cm; diameter of the pommel 5.0 cm; maximum thickness of the pommel 3.2 cm.

Sword number 1 is incomplete, badly preserved. The point of the sword is broken; the edge of the pommel is strongly jagged. The sword on one face of the pommel, in the fuller has an inscription, on the other - an ornament. Both the inscription and the ornament were made by filling in of non-ferrous metal into previously made grooves. The inscription was made with silver and the ornament with yellow metal (copper?). The non-ferrous metal both in the inscription and in the ornament has not wholly preserved. In some cases, only the

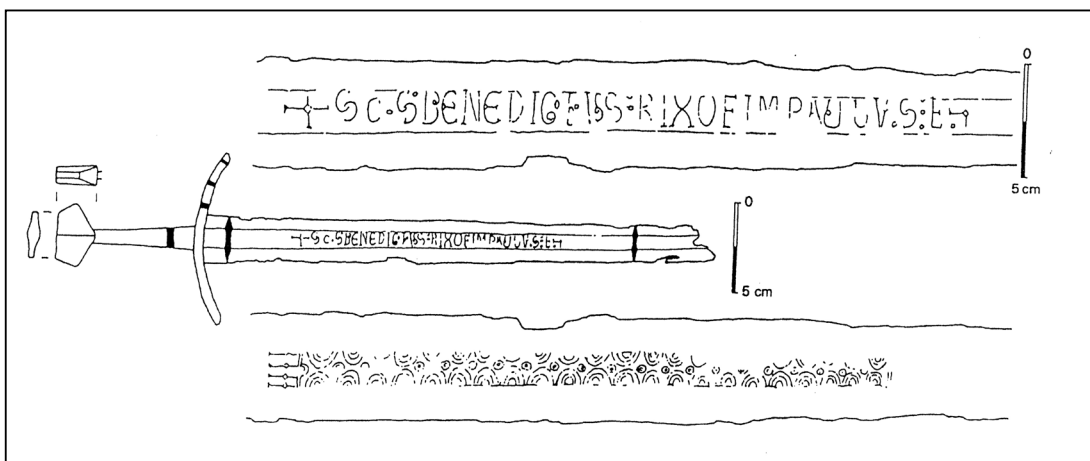


Fig. 1. The sword 1 with Lake Zbszynske.

groove remained and it renders the shape of a letter or ornament. The grooves as well as their fillings of non-ferrous metals in the inscription are broader than the grooves and the yellow metal in the ornament.

The broken blade of the sword impedes a typological analysis of the artifact. It is a one-handed sword with a long and relatively wide fuller; it has its closest analogies in type XII in R. E. Oakeshott's classification<sup>1</sup>. The swords are dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Guards bended towards to the blade were most popular in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the literature, I could not find analogies to a pommel, which appeared in case of a sword from Lake Zbaszynskie. Its untypical shape causes that it may be earliest dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Sword number 2 is a complete one. After incrustation, a negative remained and only in not numerous fragments white metal remained (silver?). On both faces of the blade, just under the forte in the fuller there is a lion standing on its hind legs with a single scut and a vegetal-geometric ornament on the coats of arms. Lower, at the beginning of the point, there is a slightly visible another fragment of the ornament,

This is a one-handed sword, with blade slightly widened at the forte and regularly narrowing towards the rounded point. The fuller begins on the tang and reaches up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the blade. The shape of the sword is the reason why it should be included among type XII according to R. E. Oakeshott. The pommel is of type H and the guard of type 1 of this classification<sup>2</sup> and in classification of A. Bruhn Hoffmeyer<sup>3</sup>, it is a hilt of type IIIb. These are swords that appeared from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They were most popular in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

From these descriptions it appears that, despite the differences in pommels shape, the swords are typologically similar and chronologically contemporaneous. They are also connected by a place of their discovery. They definitely differ in ornamental programme represented on them.

Preserved cross-shaped signs, made before, and behind an inscription on sword 1 indicate that the inscription is complete. The cross-shaped signs are made in the same technique as the inscription, also their size corresponds with the shape of the letters. Similarly, ornament on the other side of the blade is completely preserved what is testified by limitations by an ornament of other type, which appear at the beginning and remnants at the end of cyclically

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Oakeshott, *The Sword in the Age of Chivalry*, New York – Washington 1964, tabl. 6, B; 9; the same author, *Records of the Medieval Sword*, Woolbridge 1991, pp. 79, 84

<sup>2</sup> Oakeshott, *The sword...*, pp. 37-41, 95, 113.

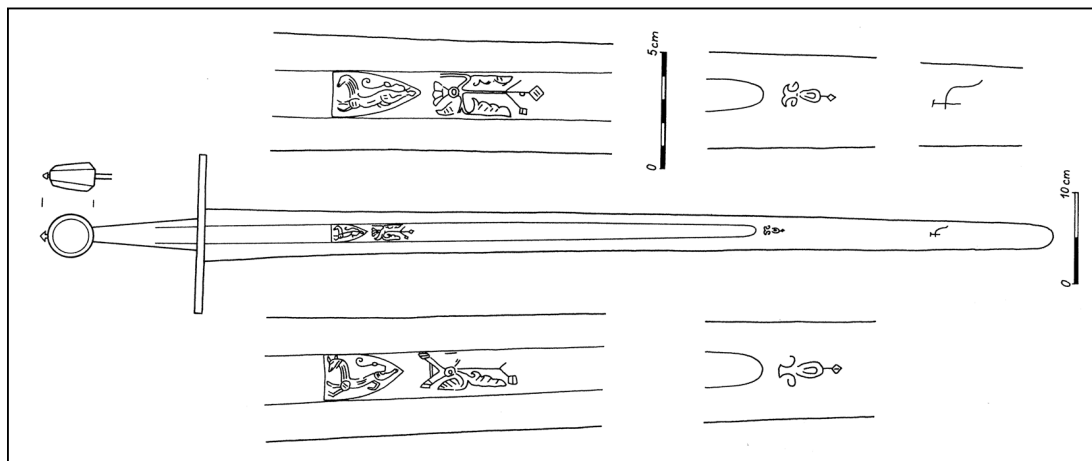


Fig. 2. The sword 2 with Lake Zbszynske.

repeated decoration. What also attracts attention is that the length of repeating ornament is almost equal with the inscription on the reverse of the blade. However, not all the letters are wholly preserved and therefore there may be doubts about their proper reading. In our opinion, the inscription is made in Roman majuscule and consists of the following letters: +Sc.S.BENEDIC.T(?)US: R(?)IXOEIMR(P?)AUL(?)V(U).S:E+ (fig. 1). What is important is that letters U, which were three times read, each time have various shapes. This letter, which appears for the third time is clearly V-shaped; also in other inscriptions on swords it is written in a shape resembling two first letters on our artifact, as for instance on a sword found in Paczkow<sup>5</sup>. However, it is not a rule because on the same sword from Paczkow as well as in whole inscriptions on other swords, the letter V appears as V. Inscription from Lake Zbaszynskie should be included into a group of inscriptions with word BENEDICTUS continuation of which is, in our opinion, an initial inscription<sup>6</sup>. In total, I know 12 swords with inscriptions in which this word appears<sup>7</sup>. However, not always continuation of the inscription is an initial inscription. In some cases, they are complete words.

The earliest inscription of this type - appears on a guard of a sword from Buxtehude (Hedendorf) near Hanover. The sword is of type D according to J. Petersen's classification<sup>8</sup> and is dated to VIII-IX centuries; the inscription is - on one side of the guard BENEDICT...

<sup>3</sup> A. Bruhn Hoffmeyer, *Middlelaldereens Tveaeggede Svaerd*, vol. II, Kobenhavn 1954, tables X-XI.

<sup>4</sup> R. Wegeli, *Inschriften auf mittelalterlichen Schwertklingen*, *Zeitschrift für Historische Waffenkunde*, Bd. III, p. 263; M. Głosek, L. Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami grupy DIC w Europie Środkowej*, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, t. XXIV, 1976, No 2, p. 231, fig. 3; the same authors, *Zu den mittelalterlichen Schwertern der Benedictus-Gruppe*, *Waffen und Kostümkunde. Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für historische Waffen- und Kostümkunde*, 1977, H. 2, p. 125, fig. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Głosek, Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami...*, p. 232, fig. 4; the same authors, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p. 126, fig. 6; M. Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie z X-XV w.*, Warsaw 1984, p. 160 (287).

<sup>6</sup> U. Schoknecht, *Ein Fund mittelalterlichen Waffen von Levetzow*, *Kreis Wismar, Jahrbuch für Bodendenkmalpflege in Mecklenburg*, 1967, p. 285, fig. 173; Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, pp. 117-128; the same authors, *Miecze z napisami...*, pp. 230-236; D.A. Drbogław, *Zagadki latinskich kleim na meczach IX-XIV vekov*, Moskva 1984, pp. 121-122.

<sup>7</sup> Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p.; the same authors, *Miecze z napisami...*, p. 232, here further literature and A. Anteins, *Im Ostbaltikum gefundene Schwerter mit damascierten Klingen*, *Waffen- und Kostümkunde. Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für historische Waffen- und Kostümkunde*, 1966, p. 117, fig. 4,6; L. Tomanterä, *Kaksi Kōulion Miekkahautaa*, *Helsingin Yliopiston Arkeologian Laitos*, no 16, 1978, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> J. Petersen, *De Norske Vikingesvaerd*, Kristiana 1919, p. 119.

and on the other - IFDNSDSN<sup>9</sup>. In the bottom part of the pommel an inscription also appears but its poor state of preservation makes it impossible to read it. Another sword with an inscription of this type comes from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was found in Elvran near Trondheim. The inscription on the sword was also made on its guard – on one side BENEDICTUD DN and on the other ?SGS...SQUIDO<sup>10</sup>. Other swords in the literature are in general unanimously dated to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> or to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In one case only, on a coronation sword of the emperor Otto IV, with a hilt dated to the years 1208-1215<sup>11</sup>, the inscription is placed on the guard and pommel whereas on the rest of the swords – on the blade.

Sword found in Paczkow (Poland) is of crucial importance for our consideration on inscriptions of the Benedictus group. On one face of the blade of this sword there is an inscription +BENE[DI]CTUS[DOM]INUS DEVSMEVS...VID..., whereas on the other ADPRELIOSETDIGITOSMEOS... . As M. Głosek and L. Kajzer stated<sup>12</sup>, it is a fragment of psalm CXLIII verse 1, and its full text is as follows: BENEDICTUE DOMINUS DEUS MEUS, QUI DOCET MANUS MEAS AD PRELIUM ET DIGITOS MEAS AD BELLUM<sup>13</sup>.

Owing to extensive fragment on the sword from Paczkow, it can be stated that the beginning of this verse also appears on the pommel of the coronation sword of emperor Otto IV (1198-1215). The inscription is BENEDICTUS DOS DES MEVS QUI DOCET MANUS<sup>14</sup>. On the guard of the sword, there is another inscription: CHRISTUS VINCIT CHRISTUS REIGNAT CHRIST. INPERAT. The beginning of psalm CXLIII verse 1 can be also visible on the pommel of a sword stored in the Historical Museum of Leipzig (Museum für Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, Altes Rathaus)<sup>15</sup>. The inscription on this sword is BENEDICTUS DEUS MEUS. Inscriptions in form BENEDICTUS DEVS, which may also be a short form of a verse of this psalm appear on coins from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and were minted by the Association of Hanseatic Towns and also Pomeranian towns such as Anklam, Wolgast, Szczecin or Stargard.

On the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie, we can only read one word BENEDICTUS that in a way connects this sword with psalm CXLIII verse 1. It cannot be definitely stated that it is a fragment of this psalm. Not only this psalm begins with the word BENEDICTUS and they appear on artifacts not only in the Middle Ages. On framing legend of gros tournois, minted since 1266 in France there is an inscription BENEDICTUM SIT NOME DNI NRI DEI IHV XPI, which is not such an exact reflection of the psalm, in this case CXII verse 2, which is Sit nomen Domini Benectum ex hoc, nunc, et usque in saeculum, but is connected with this psalm<sup>16</sup>. Another text that begins with the word Benedictus, which refers to psalm 117 verse 26 is an expression BENEDICTUM QVI VENIT IN NOMINE DOMINI that

<sup>9</sup> L. Lindenschmit, *Die Altertümer unserer heidnischen Vorzeit*, vol. IV, 1990, Table 60; Petersen, op. cit., p. 109; Antikvarisk avdeling, Tilvekst 1969, Trondheim 1074, p. 16; Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, pp. 121, 124.

<sup>10</sup> Antikvarisk..., p. 16, fig. 5; Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p. 121, 125, fig. 3.

<sup>11</sup> J. Schlosser, *Schatzkammer des Allerhöchster Kaiserhauses in Vien*, Vien 1918, p. 63, table XXVI, fig. 190-200; A. Bruhn – Hoffmeyer, op. cit., vol. I, p. 12 (no 67); M. Głosek, L. Kajzer, *gMiecze grupy DIC...*, p. 233 (no 5).

<sup>12</sup> Głosek, Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami...*, p. 227, 232; the same authors, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p. 119, 126, fig. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae editionis Sixti V Pont. M. jussu recognita et Clementis VIII auctoritate edita*, Parisiis 1895.

<sup>14</sup> Głosek, Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami...*, p. 233; M. Głosek, *Znaki i napisy na mieczach Średniowiecznych w Polsce*, Ossolineum 1973, p. 30, 145 (28); the same author, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p. 160 (287); table XI (287), XX (3).

<sup>15</sup> Wegeli, op. cit., p. 263; Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterliche...*, p. 122, 125.

<sup>16</sup> Kiernowski, *Wielka reforma monetarna*, part I, Warszawa 1969, p. 116; the same author, *Moneta w kulturze wieków Średnich*, Warszawa 1988, p. 312.

appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century on grosz coins, so-called "pot" ones in the Netherlands.

Five swords are known with the Benedictus word which is accompanied, as continuation, by an initial inscription or incorrectly written words, often in incomplete form with the use of abbreviations, and on 2 other swords, likewise on our artifact, before the word Benedictus there are three letters which should also be treated as an initial inscription. A. N. Drboglav distinguishes inscriptions beginning with this word as a separate group of inscriptions determining them as a group<sup>17</sup>. However, inscriptions are not always placed on one face of the blade, as it is on our sword. Sometimes continuation of the inscription is made on the other side. There are some doubts whether the continuation is an initial inscription or incorrectly words or abbreviations. It especially concerns inscriptions on a sword found in Levetzov near Wismar<sup>18</sup>. On this sword on one side of the blade there is an inscription +BENEDICATINIUSDIC.I.RA. ICNIUIOMUENIE...+, and on the other +NIUSUSDIC-NIUSDIC.RADIXNIEITRAION..NE... . In the inscription, apart from the word BENEDICAT, we can also discern incorrectly written words NIUSUS- NISUS, DIGNUS RADIX. M. Głosek and L. Kajzer are of opinion that the inscription on this sword is : BENEDICAT IN IUS D(omini) CH(rist)I RADIC(is) N(ostr)I V(iv)I OM(inis,-en,-nes) VENIE(-ntis,-ns, -ntes)...<sup>19</sup>. D. A. Drboglav interprets this inscription in a bit different way seeing a bigger number of initial letters: Benedic, A(ltissime) t(er), i(n), n(omine) I(esu) s(alvatoris), d(omoni) I(esu), C(hristi) I(esu), t(er) r(edemptoris) a(nimarum) [I(es)u] C(risti), N(omine) I(es)u, I(esu) o(mnipotentis), M(arie) v(irginis) e(terne). N(omine) Ie(su)...<sup>20</sup>. Inscription on the other side of the sword may be included into other group of initial inscriptions, so-called DIC group which in the literature is worked out as D(ominus) J(esus) C(hristus)<sup>21</sup>. The group of letters DIC in case of the sword from Levetzov is also accompanied by the word Benedictus. It is the only known by me case where this agglomeration appears. On analysing of the inscription on the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie also the inscription on a sword found in Liuksiala (Kangsala – Finland)<sup>22</sup> should be considered. M. Głosek i L. Kajzer interpret that inscription on one side of the blade as: +BENEDICAT+N.ISDOCATRA AO.N....ELVMI..., whereas on the other as +N...IE...BEI.SMIE.DOC...A...CIUS.N+. Another lesson of the inscription is given by A. N. Drboglav: +BENEDIGATINTUSDOGATRA..., ...PICIUS[N]n+<sup>23</sup>. As it can be noticed, the inscription on the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie is considerably shorter than inscriptions on the swords from Levetzov and Liuksiala. However, in the inscription on our artifact agglomerations of at least 2 letters appear, which can also be seen in any of the inscriptions and also in both on the swords from Levetzov and Liuksiala. For instance, letters EI, Us and RA appear next to each other in inscriptions on these three swords. Agglomeration of letters IX appears in the inscription on the sword from Levetzov, whereas letters LU, taking into account that letter U is written as V and inversely, appear in the inscription on the sword from Liuksiala. Single letters R, O, M and U appear

<sup>17</sup> Drboglav, op. cit. pp. 56-61; see also review of this paper: M. Głosek, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 1987, File XXXV, no 2, pp. 297-313.

<sup>18</sup> Schoknecht, op. cit., 1967, pp. 284-285; Głosek, Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami...*, p.235; the same authors, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p. 123, 128, fig. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Głosek, Kajzer, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p.120.

<sup>20</sup> Drboglav, op. cit., p. 121 (2a).

<sup>21</sup> Wegeli, op. cit., pp. 261-268; Bruhn Hoffmeyer, op. cit. vol. I, p. 119; Głosek, Kajzer, *Miecze z napisami...*

<sup>22</sup> J. Leppäaho, *Späteisenzeiteilichte Waffen aus Finland. Schwertinschrift und Waffenverzierung des 9.-12. Jahrhundert*, Helsinki 1964, p. 60; Schoknecht, op. cit. p. 285, fig. 173; Głosek, Kajzer *Miecze z napisami...*, pp. 233-235; the same authors, *Zu den mittelalterlichen...*, p. 123, 128, fig. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Drboglav, op. cit., p.121 (3).

in the inscriptions on these three swords. Thus, all the letters in the inscription on the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie also appear on the swords from Levetzov and Luksiala. It can be thought that full reading and sense of the inscription on the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie is similar but not the same as on both other swords.

Connection of the inscriptions from Lake Zbaszynskie, Levetzov, and Liuksiala with psalms, despite the fact that the word *Benedictus*, which also appears in the inscription from psalm on the sword from Paczkow, suggests it, is not so obvious. We did not notice proper verse among the psalms, which would begin with letters that appear on our swords. We did not find proper fragment in the *Allegory Book*. However, it seems that this is the right way of searching for solution to this inscription through texts connected with liturgy and Christian rites, not necessarily with the Bible. It can not be completely excluded that it is an inscription full reading of which was only known by the sword's owner.

Letters ScS which appear before the word *Benedictus* on the artifact from Lake Zbaszynskie have no analogies on other swords. It should be however stated that letter c is weakly visible on our artifact and it cannot be excluded that it is letter O. Agglomeration of letters SOS that appears at the beginning as well as at the end of the inscription is known from several swords found in Central Europe<sup>24</sup>. However, they are not inscriptions, which contain the word "*Benedictus*". Sometimes at the beginning of the inscription there are letters SOS and at the end – OSO. At the same time, different sizes of the letters and their different cutting suggest that the letters do not have any close connection with inscription that appears before or after them. In not numerous cases, these letters appear on swords as a separate inscription on both sides of the blade. In collections in Poland the letters SOS as an initial shortening appeared in the middle of a developed text on the sides of facing of the coronation sword's grip of the Polish kings, so-called "*Szczerbiec*"<sup>25</sup>. It is the only known by me example when these letters are placed in the middle of the inscription. Unfortunately, the inscription has not preserved and is only known from graphic documentation made in 1792<sup>26</sup>. The inscription was "*Cum quo ei Dominus S. O. S. (Salvator Omnipotens Salvator) auxiliatur adversus partes amen*". The sword is analogous with swords of king Sancho IV el Bravo and so-called Santa Casilda<sup>27</sup>. It was made for Boleslav Pobożny, duke of Great Poland and is dated to the years 1257-1279<sup>28</sup>.

In two cases in inscriptions on swords before the word *Benedictus* each time three letters appear. On a sword found in Fornham, England, dated to 1171, there are letters SES<sup>29</sup>, whereas on a sword found on the island of Saaremaa (Estonia), dated by A. Anteins to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and by D. A. Drboglav to the beginning of this century, these are letters SXS<sup>30</sup>. Considering that on the artifact from Lake Zbaszynskie there appear letters ScS; this abbreviation can be read as "s(an)c(tu)S". However, if we assume that a dot in the inscription on the sword

<sup>24</sup> Schoknecht, op. cit., p. 215; Wegeli, op. cit., p. 223; A. N. Kirpičnikov, *Drevnirusskoje oružie*, *Archeologija SSSR*, Moskva-Leningrad 1966, vol. 1, p. 165, table XXIX, 3; Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, pp. 109-112.

<sup>25</sup> J. N. Sadowski, *Miecz koronacyjny polski „Szczerbiec” zwany*, *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności*, Wyd. Historyczno-Filozoficzny, series II, vol. 5, Cracow 1894, tables I, II; A. Nadolski, *Szczerbiec – the Polish Coronation Sword*, *The Journal of the Arms and Armour Society*, vol. VI, no 6, 1969, pp. 183-184; the same author, *Jeszcze raz o Szczerbcu*, *Materiały Muzeum Wnętrz Zabytkowych w Pszczynie*, vol. VII, 1992, pp. 219-225.

<sup>26</sup> Sadowski, op. cit.; Nadolski, *Szczerbiec...*

<sup>27</sup> R. E. Oakeshott, *The sword...*, tables 9, 18; A. Bruhn de Hoffmeyer, *Arms and Armour in Spain II. A Short Survey*, Jarandilla, p. 53, fig. 8, p. 64, fig. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Nadolski, *Jeszcze raz o...*, p. 225.

<sup>29</sup> London Museum Catalogue, no 7, *Medieval Catalogue*, London 1940, p. 40; Bruhn Hoffmeyer, *Medieval Arms and Armour*, vol. I, p. 116, vol. II, p. 12 (no 6), table X, fig. d; R. E. Oakeshott, *The Archeology of Weapons*, London 1960, table 6, d, p. 205.

<sup>30</sup> Anteins, op. cit., fig. 4, 6; Drboglav, op. cit., p. 122(5), fig. with no number, group V (%5).

after the letter “c” is separating the words, we can also develop the inscription as “S(an)c(tus) S(alvator)” or S(an)c(tus). S(anctus)”. The dots in the inscription are not always placed according to a rhythm of the words and may even appear in the middle of the letter. Letters RIX after the word Benedictus can be developed as (R)ex (J)esus (X)ristus. In such a case, the beginning of the invocation would be “Sanctus. Benedictus Rex Jesus Christus...”. Such an expanding of the inscription causes that the fragment can not be quoted from the Old Testament so it can not be one of the psalms but it should be looked for in the New Testament or in texts connected with Christian rites.

As it appears from the above, the inscription on the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie belongs to the group of swords with the Benedictus inscription. Within the group, we can however distinguish inscriptions of full reading of the words and those, which before and after the word Benedictus are initial ones.

On the sword from Lake Zbaszynskie complete words - in different variants, although wrongly written, may be discerned. On reading the letters one after another from 21 to 26 we get the word PAULUS. It should be stressed that the reading of the letter P is doubtful as well as the arrangement of the letters may be accidental, the more so because after that possible name there individually appears letter E, which in this case should be treated as an initial one. At the same time, on assuming that after the word BENEDICTUS the letter R is wrongly read by us as or wrongly made by a craftsman and it is the letter F, we read the word FIOXOE (fixe, fixus). In such a case in this word there are as many as two mistakes, and addition of the letter O seems not very probable. The fourth and fifth letters from the end are weakly visible. After the word FIXOE the word IMPAVI(D)DUS can be discerned. In the inscription, however, clearly, there is not the letter D, as well as after the letter V a clear dot is visible, and it should be thought that there were three dots after the letter S. Similar dots are made after the word BENEDICTUS, undoubtedly as a sign separating two words. A designer or artisan who made the inscription was although inconsequent enough that he placed two dots also in the middle of the word as well as in the middle of the letters. Therefore, dashes that appeared in needless spaces may be results of a wish to embellish the sword by an artisan. On representing such a possibility of reading of the text on this sword, we however think that it is not very probable and, according to us, it is an initial inscription, in which each letter is the beginning of a word.

Swords with inscription Benedictus occur on considerable area but in substance they are only limited to north Europe. Our specimen from Paczkow and Lake Zbaszynskie is the southernmost. Also chronological range of the occurrence of swords with the Benedictus inscription and initial letters is quite considerable and is confined to the 9<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The artifact from Lake Zbaszynskie because of its untypical pommel which foreran new forms of this part of sword as well as because of the chronology of analogous swords of this type we are inclined to date it to the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, a fact that inscriptions and ornaments appeared on swords, what lowered the cost of production, causes that they undoubtedly belonged to rich people, who came from a narrow elite of medieval knighthood.

On the other sword found in Lake Zbaszynskie (fig. 2), there is no inscription. The fact that a heraldic shield with a lion was placed on it indicates that it is heraldic arms. An important element that limits the scope of our consideration is a position of the lion (it is standing on its hind legs) and the fact that it only has one scut, because lion which scut forks at the half of its length is often represented in heraldry, and is qualified as lion with a double scut.

It is not the only sword with lion on the heraldic shield of close or the same chronology, found on Polish – German borderland. The closest specimen is an artifact found in Santok<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> H. Seger, *Ein Prunkschwert aus der Zeit der Kreuzzüge, Schlesien Vorzeit im Bild und Schrift*, Bd. 6 1912, p. 79; *Głosek, Znaki i napisy...* p.48, tabl. XVI, 2; the same author. *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p. 162 (309), where older literature quoted.

but also a sword found in Odra near Szczecin<sup>32</sup> should be considered, or the one from an unknown town, stored in the Museum für Deutsche Geschichte in Berlin<sup>33</sup> which resembles the artifact from Santok in the way of arms placement.

Swords with arms of lion standing on its hind legs placed on the blade or pommel are found almost in the whole Europe. Arms of lion standing on its hind legs are very popular in Europe and were used by houses, towns, lands and also used as state arms. The situation does not make it easier to define the affiliation of the sword, especially in case when only one kind of arms appears and there are no heraldic colours. Our artifact from Lake Zbaszynskie has arms of lion with a single scut but the half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century is a period of formation of arms, and in its initial phase a lion standing on its hind legs, and later a lion with a double scut were used, as it happens in case of the arms of the Czech king Przemysl Ottokar II.

At the attempt of defining the circle of people to be connected with the sword the Luxembourg should be considered; they arms is lion standing on its hind legs with a single scut, although in this case, in this part of Europe they appear too late, towards the decline of dating of our sword. The lion with a single scut is also arms of the Habsburgs but also in this case it is difficult to detect the reasons of how the sword connected with this family got on the area of our interest. Also landgraves of Thuringia and Hessa used the arms of lion, and one of them, Konrad (1239-1241) was the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights. Misnia and Lusatia, which were under the rules of the Vettines, whose arms was also lion standing on its hind legs with a single scut especially draw attention. The king of Czech, Przemysl Ottokar II also should be taken into consideration in the period when he was the margrave of Moravia (1247-1253) also used the arms of lion with a single scut. The sword found in nearby Santok, because of the arms and a march of knights shown on it is just connected with this sovereign<sup>34</sup>.

Finds of numerous military accessories from the 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>35</sup> found in Lake Zbaszynskie as well as in its outflow – the river Obra testify military conflicts that took place in the area, as well as indirectly military and political alliances. Henry III, the duke of Wrocław (died 1266) allied with the margrave of Misnia and landgrave of Thuringia - Henry the Enlightened who in return for help in the fight against his brother, the duke of Silesia – Boleslav II (died 1278) promised the Land of Krosno or a strip of land between the Kwis and Bobr rivers. Boleslav II, then, allied with archbishop of Magdeburg and gave him the half of the city and the Lubusz Land<sup>36</sup>. What should be taken into consideration is another military conflict. Two wars are the most important. The first started in 1209 with the conquer of the Lubusz Land by Konrad Vettin, which was reconquered a year later by the duke of Silesia, Henry I. The other military conflict took place in 1225 when the landgrave of Thuringia, Louis conquered the main town of the Lubusz Land – Lubusz which in a short time was reconquered by the duke of Silesia, Henry II. All the events are probably connected with our military accessories. Although, it is difficult to definitely state with which events they should be connected with.

On analysing our sword from Lake Zbaszynskie, also an ornament accompanying the heraldic presentation should be taken into consideration. First of all, it should be pointed out that it is an ornament which style, the way of stretching the lines and even the shape have their analogies on other swords. An analogous ornament as on our sword that appeared just

<sup>32</sup> Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p. 150 (169) where older literature quoted.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 152 (188).

<sup>34</sup> Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p.162 (309), where older literature.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> C. Grünhagen, *Geschichte Schlesiens*, Berlin 1938, vol. I, p. 74; K. Maleczyński, *Śląska w okresie od połowy XIV w.*, [in:] *Historia Śląska*, vol. I, ed. K. Maleczyński, p. 496- 497.



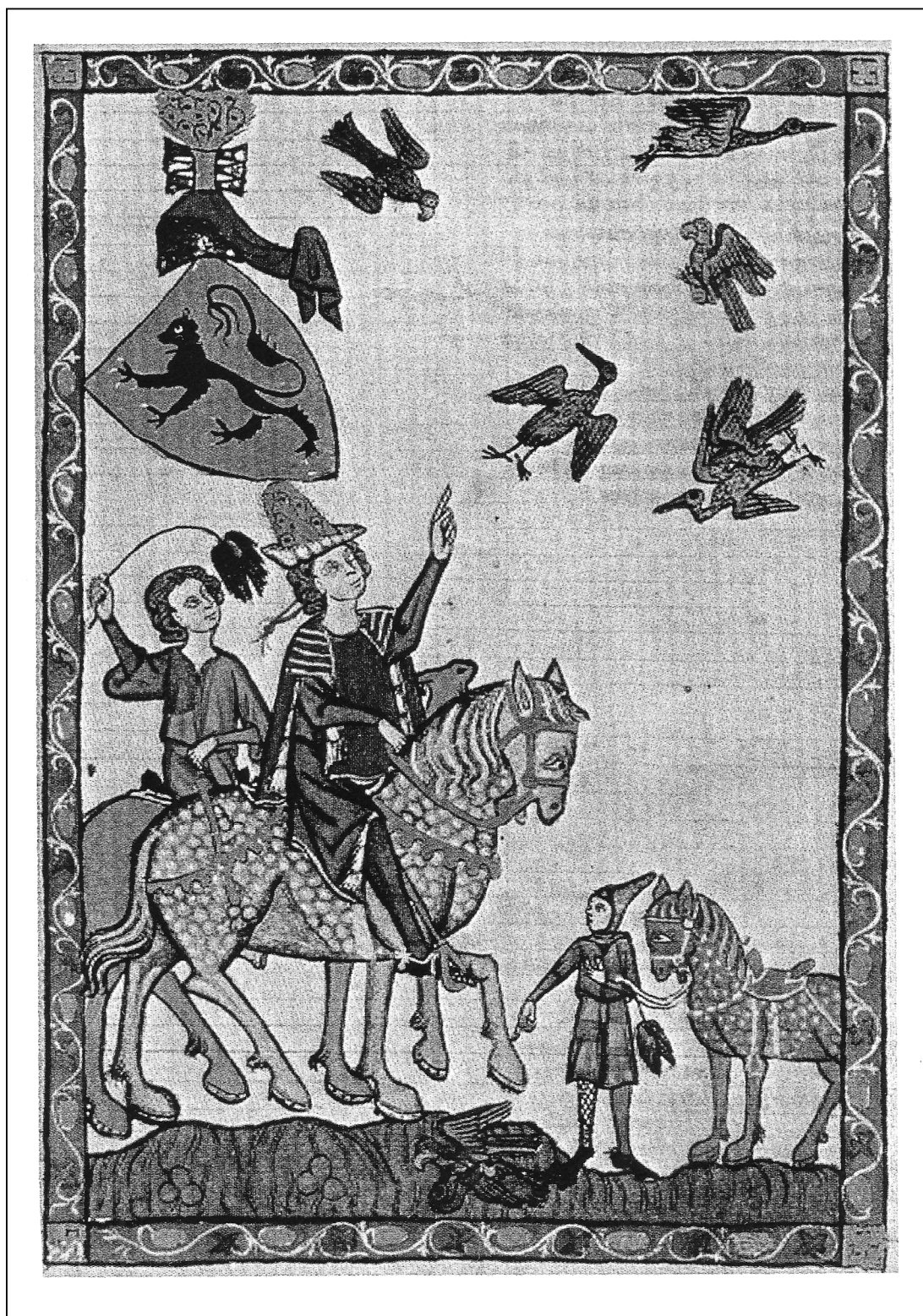


Fig. 3. Herb of the Vettines, Henry the Enlightened margrave of Misnia and landgrave of Thuringia

after the ending of the fuller appears on several swords. On the one found in Szczecin, such ornaments, placed on the ending of the DIC inscription are made. On this sword there is also arms of standing lion with single scut on one side whereas arms of an eagle on the other<sup>37</sup>. The arms however have no heraldic shields. The artifact is dated to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. On a sword of unknown place of discovery, which is stored in the National Museum in Szczecin, such an ornament also appears at the end of the inscription. It is dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century – the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. On a sword from this museum, also of unknown provenience, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a fragment of such an ornament before and after the heraldic shields<sup>39</sup> is preserved. On a sword stored in the Museum für Deutsche Geschichte in Berlin such an ornament also appears after heraldic shields, which were repated several times<sup>40</sup>. The specimen is dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As it can be seen, swords of similar composition of ornaments and arms are grouped on Polish-German borderland.

As it appears from the mentioned analogies, this ornament closes or opens the main motif of incrustation, which is made on the sword. At the same time, I have not met such a type of ornamentation that appears individually. Chronology of the artifacts on which this type of ornamentation appears closes in the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It does not mean that it can not appear earlier or later. It should be pointed out that the style of ornaments on our artifact rather excludes their later dating. Undoubtedly, the swords belonged to rich people who bore with their own coats of arms, although the use of certain coats of arms was only terms of claims resulting from the wish of possessing certain lands.

The mentioned analogies as well as events incline us to connect our artifact with events, which took place around the half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It should be reminded that the above mentioned sword from Szczecin, which has a representation of an eagle and lion without heraldic shields on it is connected with Otto IV of the Askanians house who contemporarily (1302-1305) conquered Misnia and Lusatia<sup>41</sup>.

As a result of our considerations, we rather think that the owner of the sword from Lake Zbaszyn with the herb of the Vettines was Henry the Enlightened (fig. 3) who at the same time was the margrave of Misnia and landgrave of Thuringia<sup>42</sup>, engaged in the eastern politics through the alliance with Henry the Duke of Wrocław. He could have used the arms of a lion standing on its hind legs with a single scut both because of the reign over Misnia and Thuringia.

Discovery of two richly ornamented swords in Lake Zbaszyn coming from the same period does not seem to be a normal case. It should be thought that they were lost during the battle or war campaign. In Zbaszyn on the river Obra in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century a custom house existed as well as a castellan castle. It has already been mentioned that in the river Obra a considerable number of militaries from the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries is found; they are probably results of frequent encounters between Polish Piast princes from Great Poland or Silesia and German margraves mainly from the Brandenburg Margraviate. The militaries are found in Miedzyrzecz, Lutom Mokry, Bobowick, Policko and farther in Santok<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Wegeli, pp. 265-267; Bruhn-Hoffmeyer, *Mittelalterens...*, p.22 (107): Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p.150 (169), Tabl. IX (169).

<sup>38</sup> Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, Tabl. XV (377).

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, Tabl. XV (386).

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, Tabl. XI (193).

<sup>41</sup> Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p. 78-79.

<sup>42</sup> E. Engel, *Der waschende Einfluss der Städte und die Anfänge des Hausmachtkönigtums (1250 bis zum Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts)*, [in:] *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 2, Berlin 1983, p. 255-256.

<sup>43</sup> Głosek, *Miecze Środkowoeuropejskie...*, p. 20; W. Hensel, Z. Hilczer-Kurnatowska, *Studia i materiały do osadnictwa Wielkopolski wczesnohistorycznej*, vol. VI, Wrocław-Cracow-Gdańsk-Lódź 1987, p. 35-36, Tabl. II, 3.

It is difficult to unmistakably connect the finds from Lake Zbaszynskie with a definite person or war expedition. Undoubtedly, in case of the sword with arms of a lion, the house of the Vettines - Konrad and Henry as well as the landgrave of Thuringia – Louis should be considered. In case of the sword with Benedictus inscription, the owner could have been both a knight from Silesia and Brandenburh Margraviate. It should be reminded that in the home front of these conflicts, in Lake Osieczna near Leszno another sword with inscription of group DIC and representation of a head with a crown was found and the sword is ascribed to Polish king Przemysl II<sup>44</sup>.

Recibido: 15/02/2007  
Aceptado: 23/07/2007

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<sup>44</sup> M. Głosek, L. Kajzer, The Sword found at Osieczna in Great Poland, *Gladius*, vo. 12, 1974, p. 33-42.