

Arkadiusz Michalak
Ryszard Kaźmierczak
Paweł Kucypera
Jacek Niegowski

A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY BASELARD FROM LAKE OSTROWITE IN NORTHERN POLAND

Abstract:

A. Michalak, R. Kaźmierczak, P. Kucypera, J. Niegowski 2017, A fourteenth-century baselard from Lake Ostrowite in Northern Poland, *AMM XIII*:165-180

A dagger found together with the remains of its scabbard, which was recovered during the underwater archaeological excavations in Lake Ostrowite in Northern Poland is a material piece of evidence for the presence of Swiss or South German guest-knights of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. The find was discovered among the remains of a late 13th century bridge. Its form indicates that it was a baselard – a dagger of south European (Italian or Swiss) origin. The specimen shows close resemblance to examples found in Switzerland and can probably be dated to the 14th century.

Key words: baselard, State of Teutonic Order, crusades, Middle Ages, armament

The State of the Teutonic Order existed since the 13th century in the lower reaches of the Vistula River. From its very beginning it struggled with limited manpower. Its fighting force comprised mainly brethren-knights and a broad circle of local servants. Members of the Order, who served in the 13th century, were largely recruited from Saxony and Thuringia. Their numbers though were insufficient, leading to the Order basing its military activities on the presence of armed guests, who arrived to fight the heathens for a strictly limited period of time. Made up of different social classes, in the 13th century their number included Piast dukes from Poland (Gładysz 2002, 204-239, 255-271, 312-323). Visitors from the western and south-western regions of the Empire had, however, a more significant importance. In the following century, the number of crusaders from other regions of Europe was constantly increasing (Kwiatkowski 2016, 128). ‘Geste’ of the Order were recruited mainly from the various provinces of the Roman Empire, including both German-speaking (Thuringia, Westphalia, Rhineland, Swabia, Franconia, Palatinate, Netherlands, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Gelderland, Brabant, Limburg, Jülich, Kleve, Moers), and francophone regions (Lorraine, Liège, Namur, Luxembourg, Hainaut, Basel, Burgundy,

Savoy). Written records also mention guests of the Order from French (Champagne, Poitou, Normandy, Flandria, Artois, Picardy, Bretagne, Maine, Francia, Anjou, Nevers, Auvergne, Bourbon, Touraine, Blois, Berry, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Armagnac, Gascony), English, and Scottish regions. Also documented in the sources are crusaders from Silesia, Bohemia, and Moravia, as well as those from territories located more to the south, such as Austria, Styria, Tirol, Bavaria, Grisons, Aargau, Apulia, Tuscany, Campania, Castile, and Galicia. Among the coats-of-arms of the ‘Preusen-’ and ‘Litauenreisen’ participants depicted in the Netherlandish ‘Bellenville armorial’ of ca. 1355-80, one can find many emblems of knights from Latin Europe (Paravicini 1989-1995, 84, note 322; Kwiatkowski 2016, paragraph II.5). Knights arriving for service with the Order brought their own weapons.

A dagger, found during the underwater archaeological excavations conducted in Lake Ostrowite in Northern Poland, is a prime material piece of evidence for the presence of foreign guests, possibly knights coming from Switzerland or Southern Germany. Obviously we cannot exclude that this weapon was just an imported good from these lands. The area where this discovery was made had been a part of a Commandery¹ established

¹ The smallest administrative unit of the order.

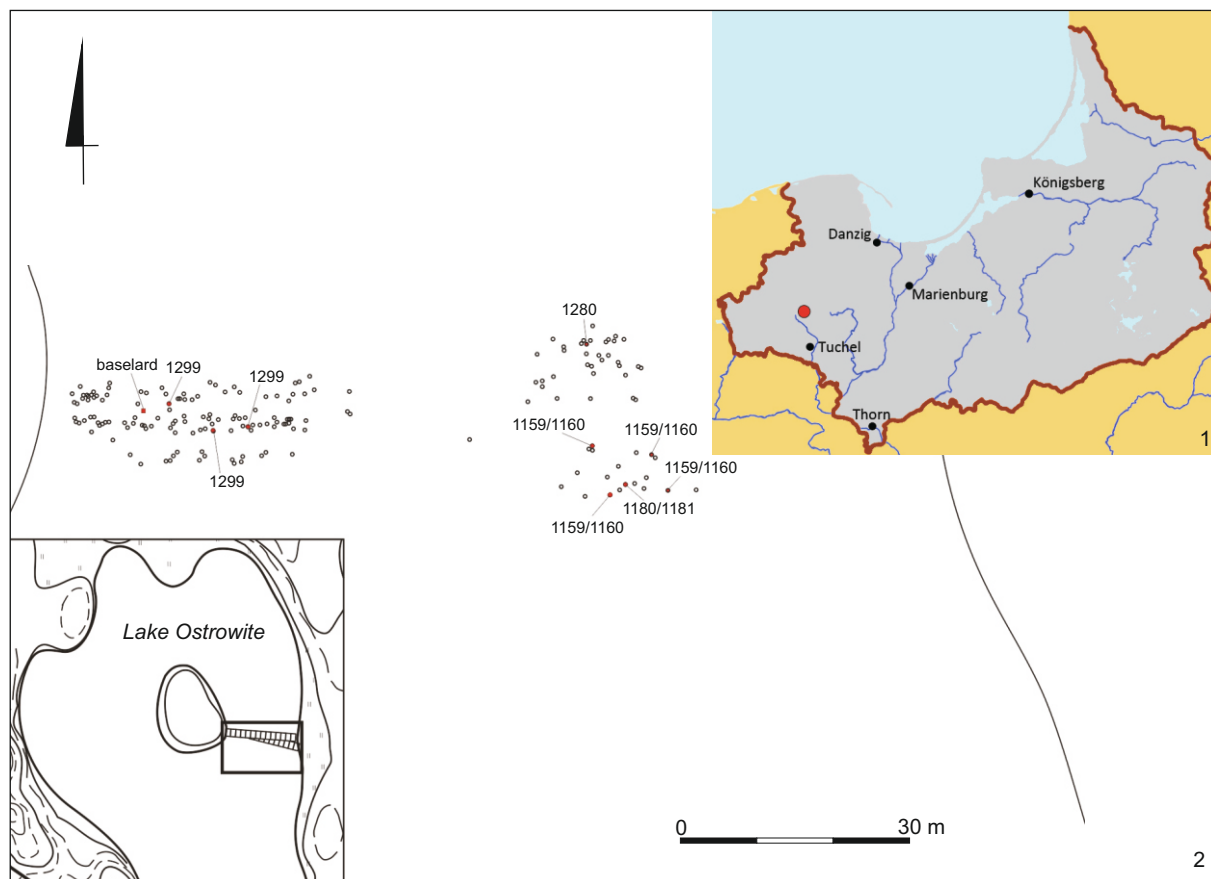


Fig. 1. Baselard find place: 1 – on the map of state of the Teutonic Order (red dot); 2 – on the planigraphy of the bridge remains (particular dates indicate the time, when the trees used for building the bridge were cut). *Elaborated by R. Kaźmierczak, A. Michalak.*

Ryc. 1. Lokalizacja miejsca znalezienia baselardu: 1 – na mapie państwa krzyżackiego (czerwona kropka); 2 – na planigrafii relikwów przeprawy mostowej (poszczególne daty oznaczają moment ścięcia drzew wykorzystanych do jego budowy). *Oprac. R. Kaźmierczak, A. Michalak.*

in Tuchola (Tuchel) in 1330 (Fig. 1:1). In 1346, the town received its municipal charter from the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Heinrich Dusemer von Arfberg. The nearby town of Chojnice (Konitz) had already been seized by the Teutonic Knights in 1309 (Frydrychowicz 1897, 11-29).

Lake Ostrowite (Leśne) is located in the eastern part of Krajeńskie Lakeland, bordering the Tuchola Forest. Several archaeological sites of diverse chronology and function are situated around this relatively small and currently non-effluent reservoir. In the context of medieval habitation, particular attention should be given to the island situated centrally on the lake, of a total area not exceeding 10 400 m². This island bears remains of a settlement dated from the second half of the 12th to the first half of the 13th centuries (Site 1) (Janowski 2002b, 173). Remains of two bridges connecting the island with the lake's

eastern shore (Site 1a) (Chudziak et al. 2009, 99-131), and a settlement complex located on it, which included an inhumation cemetery and some occupational pits, have been dated from the late 11th to the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries (site 4)² (Sikora, Trzciński 2011, 425-449).

In 1995-1996, the remains of bridges discovered in 1994 by Jerzy Kloskowski, a curator of the Museum in Złotów, became the subject of a detailed archaeological investigation. As a result of the systematic underwater survey undertaken by Jacek Niegowski, at a depth of between 1.5 and 4 m, and at a distance of 90 m, 175 posts from two bridges were documented (Fig. 1:2). The posts concentrated in the coastal zone of the island, within the area of 10 m in wide and at the eastern shoreline, where they were arranged in two groups of a total width of approximately 22 m. The results of the dendrochronological analysis carried out on samples taken from the oak bridge posts revealed

² This numeration of sites is used in older literature, in AZP (Archaeological Record of Poland), the medieval settlement complex was assigned with no 2.

the presence of two chronologically different bridges.³ The wood for older, the so-called southern bridge, was cut down at the turn of the years 1159/1160. The bridge was repaired or rebuilt after the winter of 1180/1181. The newer crossing, the so-called northern bridge, may have been in use by 1280, and was repaired or reconstructed in 1299 (Fig. 1:2) (Ważny 2008; Chudziak et al. 2009, 106-107).

In the zone where relics of the bridges were discovered many interesting artefacts were deposited. These included fragments of early medieval pottery which can be classified to Family of Types G and J according to W. Łosiński (1972); a carpenter's frow club; two early medieval bearded axe heads with wings of Type Vc according to A. Nadolski (1954, 46); one completely preserved and one fragmented specimen of a deltoid spearhead classified as Type III according to A. Nadolski (ibid., 54); two completely preserved sickles and a fragment of a third, which are stylistically very similar to specimens found at many medieval sites; a horseshoe fragment with a 'lobate' wavy edge, which can be grouped to Type VI, Variant 4 according to J. Kaźmierczyk (1978, 97-103), which can be dated from the second half of the 13th to the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries; a bronze bowl decorated with engraved plant-geometric motifs, which can be classified as Type Va according to T. Poklewski (1961, 47-49) and dated between the first half of the 12th and the end of the 13th centuries (Janowski 2002a, 112-113); and finally the dagger, which is the subject of this study.

As preserved the dagger has an overall length of 39.9 cm and comprises a single-edged iron blade 24.9 cm long with a maximum width of 2.8 cm at the shoulder point (Figs. 2-3). It has sustained heavy damage resulting in blade loss. The thickness of the back is 0.9 cm. The tang is narrow and rectangular in cross-section (1.6 x 0.7 cm) with an overall length of 15.0 cm which tapers towards the end. At its bottom part, there is a curved guard (8.5 cm long and 2.1 cm wide) which is quadrilateral in cross section. The arms of the guard, which point towards the hilt, are thickened and are triangular in cross-section (1.5 x 1.2 cm). The quillon near the tang has a special notch for fixing the wooden grip.

At the time of loss, the dagger was placed in a leather scabbard. However, only its copper alloy fittings have survived: a scabbard mouth and a chape (Fig. 3). Residual remains of heavily mineralised organic materials were observed on the dagger during the initial conservation process, but unfortunately these could neither be identified nor preserved.

The upper fitting takes the form of four-sided collar (3.5 cm wide). It was fitted to the single-edged section of the blade and is triangular in cross-section. In terms of its decoration, the outer surface of the mouth is divided into five areas of similar widths. Describing them from the top, the first area is undecorated, whilst the second one includes a double-framed frieze with foliate decoration comprising a meandering plant tendril split into two around the middle, and frayed acanthus leaves. The remaining area inside the frame is covered with cross-hatching, which underlines the plant ornament. Located below the frieze is a broad undecorated area. On the fitting's base, there is a band of decoration with a fleuron motif of a meandering shoot with trifoliate ends. All of this is enclosed within a double frame. The final, lowest band is ornamented with tracery in a form of two lancet windows with a centrally placed openwork trefoil. Spaces between the window arches are filled with an acanthus ornament. The reverse of the mouth is decorated with an engraved depiction of a triangular finial, directed towards the hilt, and embellished on the inner edge with cuts most likely imitating crockets. At the triangular base, three circular punched holes have been placed next to each other. On the top of the pinnacle there is a thickening with a dot ornament. Above this thickening, a triangular frayed fleuron can be seen. The rear part of the inlet fitting is shaped to two plans. The upper one, directly near the outlet and at the sides of the fitting, only covers the leather scabbard and the dagger blade with a narrow strip. The lower one is higher and is of quadrilateral shape. It clearly protrudes above the former and is not connected with it. The lower plan is provided with five holes, punched from inside in a 2-1-1-1 arrangement. In both plans the metal sheet is joined by soldering.

The same technique was also used for shaping the chape. The form of the chape is of an elongated pyramid, 9.1 cm long and 1.9 cm

³ There is a peculiar legend concerning the bridge on Lake Ostrowite. One can find a story in 'The collection of folks tales of Lithuania and Western Prussia,' published in 1837, which is devoted to the leather bridge. According to this legend, first Christians settled on an island located on the lake. They built a church there, in which they prayed. They reached the solid ground using a leather bridge, placed under the water, in a way that only those initiated would know of this passage. However, the pagans saw and remembered where the safe crossing to the island was placed, and using that knowledge, they attacked its inhabitants, destroyed the church, whose bell sank in the lake (von Tettau, Temme 1837, 228).

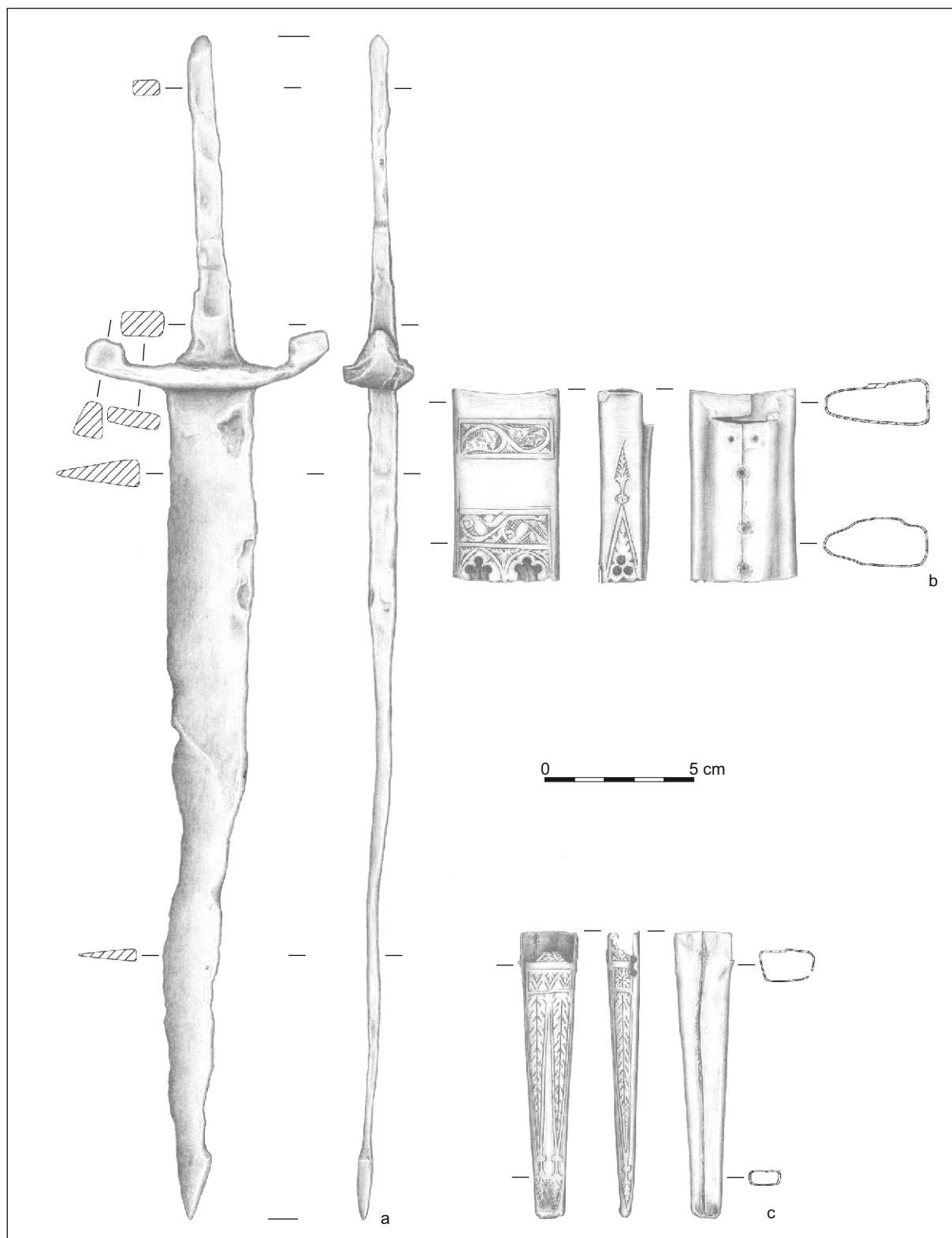


Fig. 2. Basilard (a) with scabbard mounts (b-c) found in Lake Ostrowite. *Drawing by B. Kowalewska.*

Ryc. 2. Basilard (a) z okuciami pochwy (b-c) odkryty w jeziorze Ostrowite. *Rys. B. Kowalewska.*

wide, with a thickness of 1.3 cm. The exterior is decorated with an engraving of two triangular pinnacles, similar to the ones on the sides of the

mouth, however, much more elongated. The upper part of the chape is ornamented with a double frieze composed of inserted triangles and what appears



Fig. 3. Baselard found in Lake Ostrowite. *Photo by W. Ochotny.*

Ryc. 3. Basilarz odkryty w jeziorze Ostrowite. *Fot. W. Ochotny.*

to be tracery, enclosed within a double frame. Unfortunately, the top frieze is only partially preserved. On the sides, the chape is decorated with the same pinnacle motif, above which is a partially preserved frayed rosette. On the right side of the fitting, Gothic window tracery with a centrally placed openwork trefoil has survived. The space between the arches is embellished with acanthus leaves. On the side of the chape, at the same height as the rosette and window, two holes have been punched for mounting the fitting to the scabbard. On the left side, the tracery decoration is not preserved. The dagger's weight with the fittings is 136.61 g, whereas without copper-alloy elements it weighs 104.54 g.

The damaged blade is heavily corroded, with very little of metallic core preserved. Therefore it was not possible to conduct any metallographic analysis. Shortly after it had been lifted from the lake's bottom, it underwent a basic spectral analysis.⁴ No corrosion indicators were identified, which would suggest that it had a (very typical for this period) hard edge which was forge-welded to the blade's back. This leaves two possible construction methods: either the blade was piled from three or more pieces of metal by sandwiching a steel core between soft surface panels (or *vice versa*), or it was made from one piece of mild to medium steel, which could have received some additional surface carburising to its cutting edge. Most probably, the blade was quenched afterwards, but this is merely an assumption. The chemical composition of the copper alloy fittings and solder was also determined⁵ (Fig. 4). Both copper alloy

elements were made of brass. Their composition is the same, both in terms of alloy as well as in the patterns of minor and trace elements. This indicates that they were cut from the same sheet of metal. The tin-lead solder alloy, which was somewhat carelessly applied, was also common in this period.

The hilt's shape indicates that its parallels should be sought among baselards.⁶ Despite more than some 150 years of research, daggers of this form are yet to be fully understood. In 1860, John Hewitt (1860, 254) established a link between the word 'baselard', which appears with great frequency in documents from the 14th and 15th centuries, and straight bladed daggers/short swords with hilts shaped like the capital letter I. This identification has gained general acceptance by arms and armour historians⁷ (Laking 1920, 9; Dean 1929, 23; Peterson 2001, 18), although some scholars have remained doubtful (cf. De Vita 1979, 93; 1983, 18; Zijlstra-Zweens 1987, 394; Scalini 2000, 191; Vignola 2016, 8). According to many specialists, this kind of weapon appeared in Europe in the second half of the 13th century (Schneider 1960, 104; 1980, cat. Nos. 380-383; Peterson 2001, 18), and probably emerged from quillon daggers with antennae pommels (Laking 1920, 8). The notation ('basolardi di Basola') which appears in the purchase list of the merchant Francesco Datini from 1375 may indicate that the term baselard was derived from the city of Basel in Switzerland, and most likely originated there⁸ (Blair 1984, 196-197). Some scholars (especially Italian) have questioned this hypothesis,⁹ arguing that there are significant arguments for a North

⁴ The blade was analysed by means of X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy using a handheld X-Met 3000 spectrometer in the Institute of Archaeology of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The analysis was carried out on a previously prepared (polished) surface, and revealed that the iron alloy included Fe – 99.35%, Cu – 0.03%, Mo – 0.03%, Ni – 0.12%, V – 0.04%. This method does not allow to specify the content of carbon and phosphorus, so it is not possible to conclude to any extent the quality of the material. The set of identified elements and their content is similar to other analysed bladed weapons from the turn of the early Middle Ages and turn of the Early and Late Middle Ages(?) from today's Northern Poland (Kucypera, Pudło, Rybka 2010, Table 1). This – to a limited extent – can confirm its 13th-century dating.

⁵ The non-ferrous metals were analysed by means of X-ray fluorescence in the Department of Conservation of Architectonic Elements and Details using the Olympus Innov-X Delta DS-2000 spectrometer and Laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy in the Institute of Archaeology of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń using the StellarNET Porta-LIBS 2000 analyzer. For the purpose of XRF analysis, the selected surface was polished and degreased. The LIBS method does not require prior surface preparation. The obtained results are as follows: mouth – Cu – 76.53%, Zn – 22.17%, Sn – 0.78%, Fe – 0.33%, Ni – 0.12%, Ag – 0.07%; chape – Cu – 77.67%, Zn – 20.75%, Sn – 0.98%, Fe – 0.35%, Ni – 0.11%, Ag – 0.14%; solder – Sn – 59.14%, Pb – 40.86%.

⁶ In the written sources from that period the name of this weapon appears in many variants, in Middle French: 'badelare', 'bazelaire'; Latinised: 'baselardus', 'basolardus'; in Middle High German: 'beseler', 'baseler', 'basler', 'pasler', 'baslermesser' (Steffens 2005, 20).

⁷ W. Boenheim (1890, 270) used this term to describe swords with broad, curved blades. J.B. Ward-Perkins (1967, 48-50) connected it only with daggers. H. Schneider (1960, 95), H. Seitz (1965, 208-209), and M. Głosek (1998, 38) have considered only the specimens made from one piece of metal, together with the guard and pommel, as baselards (so-called T-shaped baselards). L. Marek (2008, 27) has recently proposed to use this term to all side arms with hilts shaped like the capital letter I, which in our opinion seems valid (see also Vignola 2016, 8-10).

⁸ The beginnings of the craft of cutlers in this town reach back at least the last quarter of the 13th century. During the 15th century, 55 master cutlers were recorded there (Blair 1984, 198).

⁹ First records containing this term, dated to ca. 1300, come from French (as 'badelaire') and German sources (as 'beseler'), however, they actually do not occur in any Swiss documents (Schneider 1960, 100; Blair 1984, 197; Steffens 2005, 21). According to some scholars, this term could have been used imprecisely for all daggers or short swords, no matter whether they

European (Marek 2008, 26-27) or German, specifically Solingen origin (Boccia 1996, 37-38; Rossi 2012; Vignola 2016, 9-10).

Arms and armour historians, who view baselards as being of Swiss origin, found confirmation for their argument in H. Schneider's publications (1960; 1980), where many daggers of this form were presented (Blair 1984, 195). Unfortunately, most of them are stray finds, void of well-dated archaeological contexts, which severely undermines the credibility of such conclusions. However, in 1997, a baselard was discovered in the strata of Mülönen Castle, Kt. Bern, and was archaeologically dated to the second half of the 13th century (Wild 1997, 52, 102, No. 74; Krauskopf 2005, Taf. 30:7). Nevertheless, this find does not definitively explain the origin of this kind of daggers. Subsequently, in 2008 another baselard was found in the strata of Tremona Castle in Kt. Ticino, alongside material dating from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th centuries (Martinelli 2008, 280-281). Although this region currently forms part of modern day Switzerland, it only came under Helvetic rule in 1522, whereas between the 14th and 15th centuries it belonged to Milan (Vignola 2016, 41-42). Another find from Italy may indeed indicate that early baselards are of Italian origin. A badly corroded example was unearthed during excavations in Piazza Dante in Pisa (De Marinis 1993, 721). If the chronology of the archaeological context proves correct, the baselard should be dated to the mid-13th century (Bruni, Manichelli 1993; Vignola 2016, 42-43). Iconographic sources seem to confirm the archaeological results. A fresco depicting a tournament scene from Palazzo di Comunale in San Gimignano, Tuscany, attributed to Azzo di Masetto and dated to 1288-1292, is considered the oldest iconographic representation

of a baselard (Boccia, Coelho 1975, Taf. 23, cat. No. 23; Boccia 1996, 37-38; Vignola 2016, Fig. 1). The earliest depiction on knightly effigies (1315-1335) also comes from Italy.¹⁰

Without prejudicing the final conclusions regarding the origin of the baselard, it is notable that the known specimens represent two distinct forms. The first of these comprises daggers made from one piece of metal, with broad blades and slender I-shaped hilts with riveted wooded grip scales. This style most likely originated in Italy,¹¹ as shown by both the archaeological evidence (Tremona Castle, Piza) and iconographic sources (San Gimignano).¹² The second form includes daggers with metal plates, which cover the upper and lower faces of the I-shaped hilt. This kind is generally closely associated with Switzerland, where it most likely emerged.

The dagger from Ostrowite belongs to the second group. Specimens with this kind of blade were classified by M. Lewandowski (1986, 105) as Type A. In H. Schneider's typology (1960, 96, Abb. 1), it is closest to Type i, and to Group 14 in H. Seitz's classification (1965, Abb. 128). In the latest classification of baselards by M. Vignola (2016), the Ostrowite specimen most closely resembles Type IV. In written sources, baselards of this shape were probably included within the term 'baslermesser'.

H. Schneider (1980, cat. Nos. 336, 380-385) considered the examples with broad, knife-like blades and semi-crescent iron plates on the upper and bottom part of the wooden handle (both bent towards the blade and the hilt) as the earliest form of this type of dagger. In light of his typology, they are dated to the second half of the 13th century. This assumption was confirmed by the Mülönen castle find (Krauskopf 2005, Abb. 30:7). The shape of this example clearly corresponds with that from

were equipped with the characteristic hilt or not (Ward Perkins 1967, 50; Blair 1984, 198). In other sources from that time, baselards made in Bordeaux, Zurich, or Milan also appear (Blair 1984, 198; Bressan 1996, 81). Additionally, we cannot exclude that this unambiguous connotation was a result of Basel's role as a key place for this weapon trade (Zijstra-Zweens 1987, 399).

¹⁰ The effigy of Filippo dei Desideri, Museo Civico, Bologna, Emilia-Romagna from 1315, Gherarduccio de Gherardini, Church of St. Appiano Barberino d'Elsa, Tuscany from 1331, and Thomas Buldanus, Church of St. Dominico Maggiore, Naples, Campania from 1335. Nonetheless, it seems that R. E. Oakeshott's opinion (1960, 336) is exaggerated. It is worth noting that some scholars attributed the effigy of Luis II, Landgrave of Thuringia, from Eisenach Church to 1315, however, in our opinion, there are no sufficient grounds for such a dating (Wäß 2010).

¹¹ Their import from Italy to Switzerland and the rest of Europe was considered also by H. Schneider (1960, 96). They quickly reached the areas beyond Alps. A specimen from the Frohburg castle in Kt. Aargau was dated to 1330-1340 (Meyer 1989, 44; Krauskopf 2005, 198, Taf. 30:1). Earlier specimens are the well-dated examples from Germany, such as the baselard from Tannenberg Castle in Hessen, which should be dated to the period before its burning in 1399 (Schmitt 2008, 191, cat. No. 2816, Taf. 51:3).

¹² L. G. Boccia (1996, 37-38), followed by M. Rossi (2012, 232), rightly point out a very strong resemblance of broad-bladed baselards with two fullers to Cretan-Mycenaean daggers dated to 2500 BC. As a result of Genoese and Venetian mercantile activity in the area of the Aegean Sea, it is possible that these kind of daggers penetrated into the Italian Peninsula. Recently, Marco Vignola (2016, 15-18, Fig. 3) has attempted to track down direct antecedents among Etruscan artefacts from Sardinia. Although this remains a possibility, we should be aware that it would not be the first form borrowed from ancient examples, to name only barbutes inspired by Corinthian helmets or kettle hats based on Etruscan helmets.



Fig. 4. Scabbard mounts from the baselard found in Lake Ostrowite. Photo by W. Ochotny.

Ryc. 4. Okucia pochwy basilarda z jeziora Ostrowite. Fot. W. Ochotny.

Ostrowite, what may indicate its earlier chronology. The main difference is the shape of the latter's guard, which is thickened at both ends. This hilt

form emerged as a result of the search for improved hand protection while, at the same time, allowing a close fit of the wooden grip (Schneider 1980,

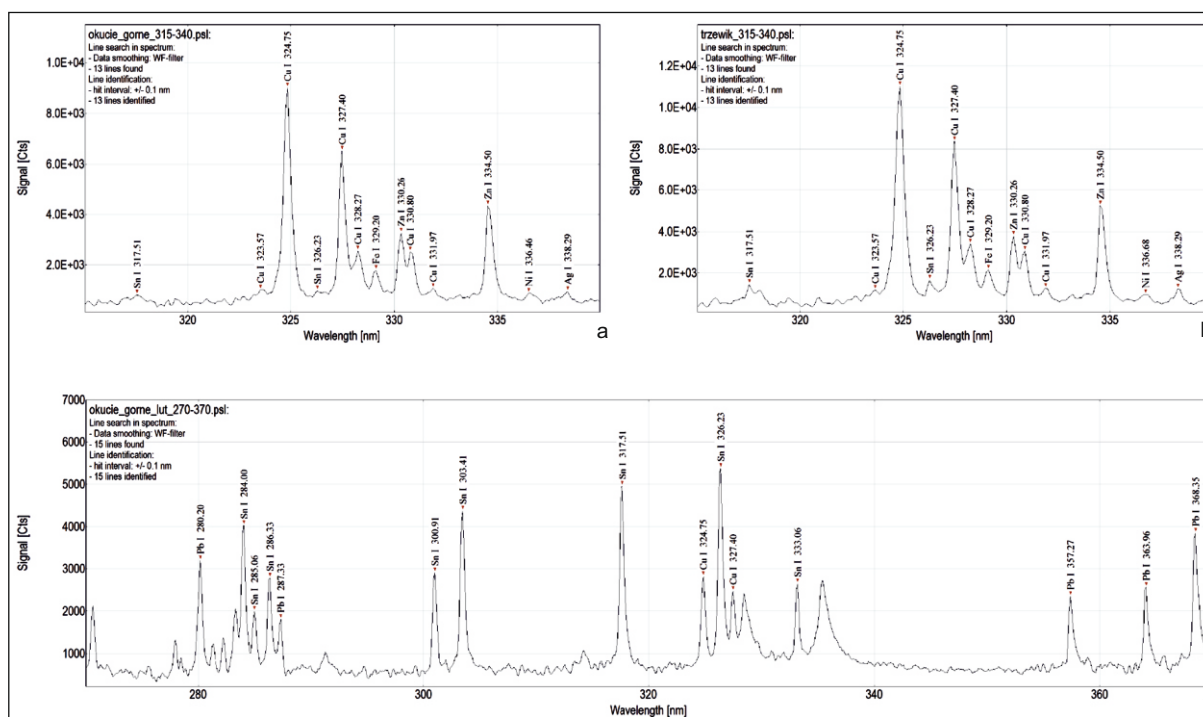


Fig. 5. Marked spectra of scabbard mounts acquired by means of LIBS spectroscopy: a – mouth; b – chape; c – joining solder. *Elaborated by P. Kucypera.*

Ryc. 5. Oznaczone widma okuć pochwy uzyskane metodą LIBS: a – gardło; b – trzewik; c – lut. *Oprac. P. Kucypera.*

cat. Nos. 349-351, 353-356). Apart from the find discussed in this article, there is only one other example of a single-edged dagger (36.5 cm long and 5.2 cm wide) equipped with a guard shaped in a similar manner. This suggests that such guards were not a common feature. An analogous baselard was found accidentally in Weiach, Kt. Zürich, in Eastern Switzerland. The end of the tang is finished with a semicircular knob (Geßler 1928, Taf. 9). H. Schneider (1980, cat. No. 347) supposed that the baselard should be dated to the end of the 13th century. Guards of this form more often appear with double-edged blades bearing two deep grooves in the centre, which run from the hilt to the half or two-thirds of the blade's length, which itself equals to ca. 30-33 cm. In Switzerland, this kind of hilt must have been very popular, since they appear on countless daggers found in this area (Geßler 1928, Taf. 9; Wegeli 1929, cat. Nos. 1130-1135; Schneider 1980, cat. Nos. 386-407). Several Swiss specimens have been completely preserved, allowing us to determine that the protrusions on the ends of their quillons were made by bending the metal inward before being closed by forge-welding (Schneider 1980, cat. No. 388). Regrettably, most of these artefacts are un-stratified; consequently, their dating does not stem from reliable, archaeological contexts. Nonetheless, they have been dated by H. Schneider to the beginning or the first half of

the 14th century. The only artefact known to the authors with such a quillon and which was found in 1970-1974 in a well-dated archaeological context is the baselard excavated in Scheidegg Castle in Kt. Basel-Landschaft. It comes from a 13th-14th-centuries stratum (Ewald, Tauber 1975, 62, F. 3; Krauskopf 2005, 199, Taf. 30:10). There are also numerous iconographical sources in which these quillons and hilts appear. In southern Europe, such depictions occur from the 1340s, whilst in northern Europe they begin to appear around a decade later (Laking 1920, 9, Fig. 743; Dean 1929, Figs. 4, 5; Ward Perkins 1967, 44-45, Fig. 9.2; Marek 2008, 27). The analysis of well-dated knightly effigies clearly indicates the remarkable popularity of baselards with this type of hilt in the southern regions of the Holy Roman Empire during the period ca. 1340-1370. One of the earliest depictions can be found on the effigy of Albrecht von Hohenlohe (†1338) in Schöntal Abbey Church, Baden-Württemberg, Germany (Fig. 6:1). His dagger has a similar quillon, however, its blade is double-edged.

Some additional data concerning the chronology of the dagger from Ostrowite can be obtained from the analysis of the scabbard's brass mounts, which are otherwise rarely preserved (Wegeli 1929, cat. No. 1035; Knorr 1971, 121, Abb. 1; Schneider 1980, cat. No. 348; Teegen 1993,



Fig. 6. Baselards from the tomb effigy of Albrecht von Hohenlohe (†1338), Schöntal Abbey Church, Baden-Württemberg, Germany (a) and from Christ before Pilate scene, most likely from altar in Wien or Klosterneuburg, by unknown artist, dated to 1335, from the collection of Bayerische Nationalmuseum (inv. 11/412) (b) (a – photo by D.H. Breiding; b – photo by L. Marek).

Ryc. 6. Basilaridy z płyty nagrobnej Albrechta von Hohenlohe (†1338), kaplica klasztorna w Schöntal, Badenia-Wirtembergia, Niemcy (a) oraz sceny Chrystus przed Piłatem, prawdopodobnie elementu, wykonanego przez nieznanego artystę, ołtarza z Wiednia lub Klosterneuburg, datowanej na 1335 r., zbiory Bawarskie Muzeum Narodowe (b) (inv. 11/412). (a – fot. D.H. Breiding; b – fot. L. Marek)

Abb. 2-3) but are often portrayed in 14th-century iconography (Fig. 6:2). These elements also appear on depictions of long baselards from English effigies, dated to the second half of the 14th century (Dillon 1888, Pl. I; Laking 1920, Figs. 744-745; Dean 1929, Figs. 4-5). It is worth noting that many 14th century elements of armament from various parts of Europe were decorated with analogous form of a fleuron motif (de la Boisseliere 2005, ill. 4, 27; Brūzis 2016, I.VI:16). It is likely that this motif was purely decorative, derived from Gothic ornamentation, and did not have an emblematic meaning. In search for a parallel to our example, we should draw our attention to the scabbard with a preserved copper-alloy mouth decorated with plant ornamentation, found in Wrocław at Więzienna Street 10 (Wachowski 1999, 183-185). The mount on this example was affixed

to the scabbard with a single rivet. Based on the decoration and stratigraphic position, it has been dated to the 14th century (Marek 2008, 25, ryc. 13:b). A similar floral design also covers the outer part of a copper-alloy dagger sheath from Kuden, Kr. Süderdithmarschen in North Germany, which is dated to the 14th century (Knorr 1971, 136, Abb. 8:2). The Gothic tracery decoration, which appears on the lower part of the mouth mount, clearly corresponds with the ornament from the scabbard chape and mouth of the so-called St. George's sword from the mid-14th century¹³ (Haedeke 1982, 13-14). A tracery motif of a slightly different form can also be found on the dagger sheath chape discovered in the 14th century stratum in Leiden (van Driel-Murray 1990, 169, Afb. 9:b/43).

Regarding form parallels to the chape, some similarities can be found in the specimen

¹³ Sword of Type XII, J.1, 2 formerly in the Collegiate Church of St. George in Cologne, since 1929 in the Schnüttgen Museum in Cologne (Haedeke 1982, 9).

uncovered during the excavation in Groitzsch, in Saxony. This example is decorated with geometric motifs and is dated to the period between 1224 and the end of the 13th century (Krauskopf 2005, 198, Taf. 30:4). Attention should be also drawn to the specimen dredged out from the Peene River near Anklam (8.3 cm long), decorated with floral and geometric motifs (Schoknecht 1980, 230, Abb. 9:c). Even though the examples mentioned before – both formal and decorative – may indicate that the scabbard was manufactured in the 14th century, it cannot be excluded that it was made later than the baselard itself. Such a possibility is evident in the documentary records which mention the replacement of old worn out scabbards with newer more fashionable ones (Cameron 2003, 3255; de Neergaard 2003, 61).

Elegant design of the artefact from Lake Ostrowite may indicate that its owner came from the nobility or aspirant urban patricians (Marek, Stolarczyk 2011, 208). There is no doubt that elaborately decorated daggers with ornamentation containing a hidden allegorical message, equipped with impressive sheaths, made of precious materials, were mostly manufactured for contemporary elites (Laking 1920, 13, Figs. 753, 755; Rohde 1922, Abb. 2-3; Dean 1929, 28, Pl. III; Boccia, Coelho 1975, cat. No. 58). Simple baselards were carried by people from almost all social strata. They treated this custom as ennobling, as means to raise their status (Dean 1929, 23; Peterson 2001, 18; Marek, Stolarczyk 2011, 217). This was a fact commented upon and satirised by the patrician class (Blair 1984, 194).

The price of baselards varied greatly by virtue of the broad circle of their users and differentiation of forms. Among the purchase of weapons in Avignon in 1373, for example, 50 small daggers with sheaths made in Basel cost 2 livres and 8 sous (Brun 1951, 226). In the account book of the famous merchant of Prato in the year 1375, baselards named 'daghe di basola pichole' ('little Basel daggers') and 'choltella pichole a modo di daghe fatte a berna' ('little knives in the manner of daggers made in Basel') were priced one soldo a dozen (Blair 1984, 196). Examples recorded in 15th century English nobility's inventories are valued between 4 and 8 pence (Dillon 1888, 3).

Baselards, like other types of daggers, were worn on the right side or suspended directly in front, either from a sword belt or a girdle. Sometimes, they were suspended on the left side from a baldric slung over the right shoulder (ibid., 3; Dean 1929, 23, Figs. 2-7). In the second half of the 14th century, fully armed knights often

attached these daggers with arming chains to their breastplates, which was supposed to prevent them being lost during combat (Dean 1929, 25; Schneider 1960, 103; Nadolski 1971, 681; see Breiding, forthcoming). In the case of the Ostrowite baselard, it was most likely fastened to a belt with a simple leather loop riveted to the scabbard. This is indicated by the way in which the back part of the metal fitting was formed, and by the configuration of the holes and rivet head imprints observed there. A similar construction, even with a preserved leather loop, was noted on the sheath of a 'Hauswehr' from the 15th – early 16th centuries found in Opava in Czech Silesia (Žákovský 2013, Figs. 2-3). According to contemporary iconography, this way of carrying daggers was extremely popular among wealthy civilians, but it was also used by knights (Teegen 1993, Abb. 14; Vignola 2016, Figs. 9-12).

Finally, the question remains as to the circumstances of the baselards deposition. The most likely explanation is that it was accidentally lost on the bridge; falling into an area of water which was not easily accessible. Still, to a certain extent, we need to consider the possibility of its deliberate water deposition, as late medieval daggers were among the items found in sacrificial places (Michalak 2015, 298).

* * *

The baselard discovered in the waters of Lake Ostrowite seems to be a perfect example of a weapon belonging to the Teutonic brethren-knights or their guests, who came from Western Europe (Nowakowski 1994, 146). Both the dagger's form and its scabbard decoration, which have their parallels among artefacts from Western Europe, appear to confirm this. Indeed, it may attest to the presence of Order guests from southern Germany or Switzerland, where daggers of this kind were extremely popular. The armament of the brethren-knights in this period was usually decorated with symbols of missions and crusades undertaken by the Teutonic Knights in areas to be conquered, which makes the proposed hypothesis even more likely (Marek 2014, 114). Even though there are no written records, which mention *expressis verbis* the use of baselards in the State of the Teutonic Order, we know that some members of the General Chapter of the Order used them (Nowakowski 1980, 114-115). For example they occur on the effigy of 'Großkomtur' ('Magnus Commendator' or Grand Commander) of the Teutonic Knights Kuno von Liebenstein (†1392) from the St. Thomas Apostle Church in Nowe

Miasto Lubawskie (Nickel 1954). The presence of the State of Teutonic Order at the Vistula mouth resulted in the appearance of a highly specialised weaponry arm specimens in this area. These weapons were coming from different, sometimes very distant parts of Europe (Marek 2014, 86-87).

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to colleagues Dirk H. Breiding from the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Lech Marek, PhD, from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Wrocław, for providing good quality photographs and permission to reproduce them here.

Arkadiusz Michalak, PhD

Archaeological Museum of Middle Oder River Area
in Zielona Góra

Ryszard Kaźmierczak, PhD

Institute of Archaeology
Nicolaus Copernicus University
in Toruń

Paweł Kucypera, MA

Toruń

Jacek Niegowski, MA

Institute of Archaeology
Nicolaus Copernicus University
in Toruń

Bibliography

- Blair C.
1984 *The word "Baselard"*, Journal of the Arms and Armour Society XI/4, pp. 193-206.
- Boccia L. G.
1996 *Armi d'attacco, da difesa e da fuoco, la collezione d'armi del Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderna di Modena*, Modena.
- Boccia L. G., Coelho E. T.
1975 *Armi bianche Italiane*, Milano.
- Boeheim W.
1890 *Handbuch der Waffenkunde. Das Waffenwesen in seiner historischen Entwicklung von Beginn des Mittelalters bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig.
- de la Boisselière E. & G.
2005 *Éperonnerie et parure du cheval, de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Bruxelles.
- Breiding D. H.
forthcoming *Observations on Guard-Chains, ca. 1250 to ca. 1510*, AMM XIV.
- Bressan F.
1996 *Un pugnale del tardo medioevo presso il museo di Udine*, Quaderni Friulani di Archeologia VI, pp. 79-82.
- Brun R.
1951 *Notes sur le commerce des armes à Avignon au XIV^e siècle*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 109/2, pp. 209-231.
- Bruni S., Menichelli S.
1993 *Le stratigrafie: saggio I*, [in:] Pisa. Piazza Dante. Uno spaccato di storia pisana. La campagna di scavo 1991, ed. S. Bruni, Pontedera pp. 147-170.
- Brūzis R.
2016 *Tuvcīnas ieroči Latvijā 14.-16. gadsimtā*, Rīga.
- Cameron E.
2003 *Sheaths and scabbards*, [in:] Q. Mould, I. Carlisle, E. Cameron, *Craft, Industry and Everyday Life: Leather and leatherworking in Anglo-Scandinavian and Medieval York*, York, pp. 3354-3369.
- Chudziak W., Kaźmierczak R., Niegowski J., Ważny T.
2009 *Ze studiów nad genezą wczesnośredniowiecznych mostów na obszarze Pomorza*, Przegląd Archeologiczny 57, pp. 99-131.
- Dean B.
1929 *Catalogue of European daggers, including the Ellis, De Dino, Riggs and Reubell collections*, New York.

- De Marinis G.
1993 *Basilarda*, [in:] *Pisa Piazza Dante. Uno spaccato di storia pisana. La campagna di scavo 1991*, ed. S. Bruni, Pontedera, p. 721.
- De Vita C.
1979 *Baselard*, [in:] *Enciclopedia ragionata delle armi*, ed. C. Blair, Milano, p. 93.
1983 *Dizionari terminologici. Armi bianche dal medioevo all'età moderna*, Firenze.
- Dillon H.
1888 *On some of the Smaller Weapons of the Middle Ages*, *The reliquary and illustrated archæologist* 1 (1887), pp. 1-6.
- van Driel-Murray C.
1990 *Zwaardscheden en andere vondsten uit 14de eeuw uit de Marktenroute te Leiden*, *Bodemonderzoek in Leiden* 11/12 (1988/1989), pp. 153-202.
- Ewald J., Tauber J.
1975 *Die Burgruine Scheidegg bei Gelterkinden. Berichte über die Forschungen 1970-1974*, *Schweizer Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters* 2, Olten–Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Frydrychowicz R.
1879 *Geschichte der Stadt, der Komthurei und Starostei Tüchel*, Berlin.
- Geßler E. A.
1928 *Schweizerisches Landesmuseum Führer durch die Waffensammlung. Ein Abriß der schweizerischen Waffenkunde*, Aarau.
- Gładysz M.
2002 *Zapomniani krzyżowcy. Polska wobec ruchu krucjatowego w XII-XIII wieku*, Warszawa.
- Głosek M.
1998 *Broń biała*, [in:] *Uzbrojenie w Polsce średniowiecznej 1450-1500*, ed. A. Nowakowski, Toruń, pp. 23-40.
- Haedeke H.-U.
1982 *Das Schwert des heiligen Georg*, [in:] *Blankwaffen, armes blanches, armi bianche, edged weapons: Festschrift Hugo Schneider zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, eds. K. Stuber, H. Wetter, Zürich, pp. 9-16.
- Hewitt J.
1860 *Ancient Arms and Armour*, vol. II, London.
- Janowski A.
2002a *Wczesnośredniowieczna misa brązowa z ornamentem roślinnym z Ostrowitego w woj. pomorskim*, *Archaeologia Historica Polona* 12, pp. 107-122.
2002b *Wczesnośredniowieczna ceramika naczyniowa z Ostrowitego, woj. pomorskie (stanowisko 1)*, [in:] *Studia nad osadnictwem średniowiecznym ziemi chełmińskiej*, vol. 4, ed. W. Chudziak, Toruń, pp. 173-232.
- Kaźmierczyk J.
1978 *Podkowy na Śląsku w X-XIV wieku. Studia z dziejów kultury materialnej*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk.
- Knorr H. A.
1971 *Messer und Dolch*, *Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Potsdam* 6, Berlin, pp. 121-143.
- Krauskopf Ch.
2005 *Tric-Trac, Trense, Treichel. Untersuchungen zur Sachkultur des Adels im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Braubach.
- Kucypera P., Pudło P., Rybka K.
2010 *Miecz ze zbiorów zamku w Golubiu-Dobrzyniu*, [in:] *Religia ludów Morza Bałtyckiego. Stosunki polsko-duńskie w dziejach*, eds. M. Bogacki, M. Franz, Z. Pilarczyk, Poznań, pp. 507-516.
- Kwiatkowski K.
2016 *Wojska Zakonu niemieckiego w Prusach 1230-1525. Korporacja, jej pruskie władztwo, zbrojni, kultura wojny i aktywność militarna*, Toruń.
- Laking G. F.
1920 *A record of European Armour and Arms through seven centuries*, vol. III, London.
- Lewandowski M.
1986 *Puginały średniowieczne z ziem polskich*, [in:] *Mediaevalia Archaeologica*, ed. A. Nadolski, *Acta Archaeologica Lodziensia* 31, Łódź, pp. 101-119.
- Łosiński W.
1972 *Początki wczesnośredniowiecznego osadnictwa grodowego w dorzeczu Dolnej Parsęty (VII-X/XI w.)*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk.
- Marek L.
2008 *Broń biała na Śląsku XIV-XVI wiek*, *Wrocławia Antiqua* 10, Wrocław.
2014 *Europejski styl. Militaria z Elbląga i okolic*, *Studia Archeologiczne* XLVII, Wrocław.
- Marek L., Stolarczyk T.
2011 *Dwa nowo odkryte puginały z terenu Śląska – oznaki statusu społecznego czy dowody późnośredniowiecznego egalitaryzmu*, [in:] *Cum Arma Per Aeva. Uzbrojenie indywidualne na przestrzeni dziejów*, eds. P. Kucypera, P. Pudło, Toruń, pp. 201-221.

- Martinelli A.
2008 *I reperti metallici*, [in:] *Tremona Castello. Dal V millennio a.C. al XIII sec. d.C.*, ed. A. Martinelli, Firenze, pp. 272-311.
- Meyer W.
1989 *Die Frohbürg. Ausgrabungen 1973-1977*, Schweizer Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters 16, Olten-Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Michalak A.
2015 *Broń w wodnej toni. Uwagi o akwaticznych znaleziskach broni późnośredniowiecznej, na marginesie odkryć z Lutola Mokrego*, [in:] *Woda – żywioł ujarzmiony i nieujarzmiony. Materiały z konferencji w Janowcu w 2012 r.*, eds. A. Jaszewska, A. Michalak, Zielona Góra, pp. 289-314.
- Nadolski A.
1954 *Studia nad uzbrojeniem polskim w X, XI i XII w.*, Łódź.
1971 *Sztylet średniowieczny, znaleziony w m. Orzeszyn, pow. Grójec*, Archeologia Polski 16/1-2, pp. 679-682.
- Nickel H.
1954 *Die Grabplatte des Grosskomturs Kuno von Liebenstein zu Neumarkt in Westpreussen*, [in:] *Festschrift Edwin Redslob zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. G. Rohde et al., Berlin, pp. 254-291.
- de Neergaard M.
2003 *The use of knives, shears, scissors and scabbards*, [in:] J. Cowgill, M. Neergaard, N. Griffith, *Knives and scabbards*, Medieval finds from excavations in London 1, Woodbridge, pp. 51-61.
- Nowakowski A.
1994 *Arms and Armour in the Medieval Teutonic Orders State of Prussia*, Łódź.
- Oakeshott R. E.
1960 *The Archaeology of Weapons*, London.
- Paravicini W.
1989-1995 *Die Preussenreisen des europäischen Adels*, vol. I-II, Sigmaringen.
- Peterson H. L.
2001 *Daggers and Fighting Knives of the Western World*, New York.
- Poklewski T.
1961 *Misy brązowe z XI, XII i XIII wieku*, Łódź.
- Rohde A.
1922 *Ein Dolchmesser des 14. Jahrhunderts im Hamburgischen Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*, ZfHWK 9 (1921-1922), pp. 155-156.
- Rossi M.
2012 *Il baselardo, arme italica o transalpina? Studi e ricerche di ologia medievale*, [in:] *Studi offerti dal Centro Europeo di Studi Normanni a Mario Trosio*, ed. G. Mastrominico, Ariano Irpino, pp. 231-258.
- Scalini M.
2000 *Armi e ferri lavorati*, [in:] *Raccolte Comunali di Assisi. Monete, gettoni, medaglie, sigilli, misure e armi*, ed. M. Matteini Chiari, Perugia, pp. 189-197.
- Schmitt A.
2008 *Burg Tannenberg bei Seeheim-Jugenheim, Lkr. Darmstadt-Dieburg. Eine spätmittelalterliche Ganerbenburg im Licht der archäologischen Funde*, Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie 151, Bonn.
- Schneider H.
1960 *Untersuchungen an mittelalterlichen Dolchen aus dem Gebiete der Schweiz*, Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte 20, pp. 91-105.
1980 *Waffen im Schweizerischen Landesmuseum. Griffwaffen I*, Zürich.
- Schoknecht U.
1980 *Mecklenburgische Nierendolche und andere mittelalterliche Funde*, Bodendenkmalpflege in Mecklenburg 1979, pp. 209-231.
- Seitz H.
1965 *Blankwaffen I. Geschichte und Typenentwicklung im europäischen Kulturbereich Von der prähistorischen Zeit bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Braunschweig.
- Sikora J., Trzcinski Ł.
2011 *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzysko szkieletowe w Ostrowitem, gm. Chojnice (2008-2009)*, [in:] *XVII Sesja Pomorzoznawcza*, vol. 1: *Od epoki kamienia do wczesnego średniowiecza*, eds. M. Fudziński, H. Paner, Gdańsk, pp. 425-449.
- Steffens R.
2005 *Das "Mainzer Friedgebott" in der Redaktion von 1335 (1352). Neuedition*, Mainzer Zeitschrift 100, pp. 17-37.
- Teegen W.-R.
1993 *Ein Nierendolch aus Hameln, Ldk. Hameln-Pyrmont*, Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters 21, pp. 87-106.

- von Tettau W. J. A., Temme J. D. H.
1837 *Die Volkssagen Ostpreussens, Lithauens und Westpreussens*, Berlin.
- Vignola M.
2016 *Riflessioni sulla basilarda. Analisi tipologiche e spunti ricostruttivi*, Rimini.
- Wachowski K.
1999 *Militaria*, [in:] *Ze studiów nad życiem codziennym w średniowiecznym mieście. Parcele przy ulicy więziennej 10-11 we Wrocławiu*, eds. J. Piekalski, K. Wachowski, *Wratislavia Antiqua* 1, pp. 183-186.
- Ward-Perkins J. B.
1967 *London Museum Medieval Catalogue*, London.
- Ważny T.
2008 *Analiza dendrochronologiczna drewna z Ostrowitego*, Toruń (typescript in the Archive of Institute of Archaeology of Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń).
- Wäß H.
2006 *Grabplatte für Landgraf Ludwig II., den Eisernen*, [in:] *Form und Wahrnehmung mitteldeutscher Gedächtnisskulptur im 14. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zu mittelalterlichen Grabmonumenten, Epitaphen und Kuriosa in Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen, Nord-Hessen, Ost-Westfalen und Südniedersachsen*, Band 2: *Katalog ausgewählter Objekte vom Hohen Mittelalter bis zum Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, pp. 531-542.
- Wegeli R.
1929 *Inventar der Waffensammlung des Bernischen Historischen Museums in Bern*, vol. 2: *Schwerter und Dolche*, Bern.
- Wild W.
1997 *Reichenbach. Burg und Letzi Mülener. Die Rettungsgrabungen von 1941 und 1990-1996*, Bern.
- Zijlstra-Zweens H. M.
1987 *The Sword of De Voorst: a Baselard?*, *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 37, pp. 391-402.
- Žákovský P.
2013 *“...s tesákem aby žádný v městečku do krčmy nechodil, pakli bude choditi, jdi na své právo”, aneb nález tesáku v pochvě z Opavy*, *Časopis Slezského zemského muzea, série B, Vědy historické* 62/2-3, pp. 319-338.

Arkadiusz Michalak
Ryszard Kaźmierczak
Paweł Kucypera
Jacek Niegowski

XIV-WIECZNY BASILARD Z JEZIORA OSTROWITE W PÓŁNOCNEJ POLSCE

Streszczenie

Funkcjonujące od XIII w. na obszarze nad dolną Wisłą państwo zakonne na początku swego istnienia posiadało niezwykle ograniczone zasoby ludzkie, co spowodowało oparcie działalności militarnej zakonu na zbrojnych przybyszach – gościach zakonnych, przybywających do walki z niewiernymi na ściśle określony czas. Zakonni „Geste” rekrutowali się z różnych regionów Rzeszy Niemieckiej.

Wydaje się, że materialnym śladem pobytu gości zakonnych lub rycerzy pochodzących prawdopodobnie ze Szwajcarii bądź południowych Niemiec jest pugińal wydobyty wraz z relikami pochwy w trakcie archeologicznych badań podwodnych prowadzonych w jeziorze Ostrowite w północnej Polsce (ryc. 1:1). Odkryto go wraz z innymi zabytkami w reliktach mostu wybudowanego pod koniec XIII w. (ryc. 1:2).

Zbytek (ryc. 2-3) o zachowanej długości całkowitej 39,9 cm ma jednosieczną żelazną głownię.

Zaopatrzone go w wąski trzpień, zwężający się ku końcowi. U nasady trzpienia umieszczono łukowato wygięty (łódkowaty) jelec. Jego ramiona skierowane są w stronę rękojeści, a końcówki wyraźnie pogrubione i trójkątne w przekroju. Tuż przy trzpieniu, w jelcu, znajduje się specjalnie dopasowane wycięcie do osadzenia drewnianej rękojeści.

W momencie zagubienia pugińal bez wątpienia spoczywał w pochwie, z której zachowały się jedynie jej okucia mosiężne: wylot – zwany gardłem lub szyjką – oraz dolne, czyli trzewik (ryc. 4).

Górne okucie ma formę szerokiej czworobocznej obejm. Zostało ewidentnie dopasowane do jednosiecznego profilu głowni i ma trójkątny przekrój. Zewnętrzna płaszczyzna gardła w zakresie dekoracji podzielona jest na pięć zbliżonej szerokości stref. Poszczególne zdobione są wątkiem meandrującej wici roślinnej o dwóch parach silnie postrzępionych liści

akantu oraz motywem maswerkowym w postaci dwóch ostrołukowych okien gotyckich z umieszczonym centralnie w każdym z nich ażurowym trójlisciem. Boczna płaszczyzna szyjki zdobiona jest rytym wizerunkiem trójkątnego pinakla, skierowanego szczytem w kierunku rękojeści. U podstawy trójkąta wybito obok siebie trzy koliste otwory. Fiałę wieńczy u góry trójkątny, strzępiasty kwiaton. Tylną część okucia wlotu ukształtowano w dwóch płaszczyznach: górną, tuż przy wylocie i po bokach okucia, obejmuje wąskim paskiem jedynie skórzaną pochwę i głównie pugińału, dolną, wyższą, o formie czworoboku, wyraźnie wystająca ponad nią i z nią niepołączona, zaopatrzona jest w pięć wybitych od zewnątrz otworów w układzie 2-1-1-1. W obu płaszczyznach blachę złączono lutowaniem.

Taką technikę zastosowano również przy formowaniu trzewika. Ma on postać wydłużonego ostrosłupa, wysokiego na 9,1 cm. Od zewnątrz jest on dekorowany wizerunkiem dwóch trójkątnych pinakli, zaś w górnej części okucia podwójnym, obwiedzionym ramką fryzem złożonym z wsuwanych trójkątów i prawdopodobnie motywem maswerkowym. Boczne płaszczyzny trzewika również zdobione są analogicznym wizerunkiem fiali, powyżej której występuje strzępiasta rozeta oraz zachowany jedynie częściowo na prawej stronie trzewika motyw maswerkowy

o formie ostrołukowego okna gotyckiego z umieszczonym centralnie ażurowym trójlisciem; przestrzenie między łukami zdobione są akantem. Na tym boku trzewika, na wysokości rozety i okna, wybito dwa koliste otwory służące prawdopodobnie do zamocowania go do skórzanej pochwy. Na lewej stronie motyw maswerkowy jest niezachowany. Waga pugińału wraz z okuciami wynosi 136,61 g, bez mosiężnych elementów – 104,54 g.

Forma pugińału wskazuje, że mamy do czynienia z basilardem, rodzajem pugińału o południowo-europejskiej (włoskiej lub szwajcarskiej) genezie. Wskazują na to zarówno niedawno ujawnione dowody archeologiczne, pewnie datowane na 2. połowę i koniec XIII w., jak i źródła ikonograficzne. Wydobyty egzemplarz wykazuje bliskie analogie do zabytków odkrytych na terenie Szwajcarii. Wydaje się, że na podstawie formy oraz kunsztownej dekoracji okuć pochwy można go ogólnie datować na XIV w.

Basilard odkryty w wodach jeziora Ostrowite stanowi doskonały dowód przynależności uzbrojenia rycerzy zakonnych i ich gości do zachodnioeuropejskiej sztuki wojennej. Obecność państwa krzyżackiego u ujścia Wisły skutkowałą pojawieniem się na tym obszarze wyspecjalizowanych egzemplarzy broni wywodzącej się z różnych, czasem bardzo odległych rejonów Europy.