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THE WEAPON AND THE ARTIST IN THE
VIRTUAL REALITY OF MEDIEVAL PAINTINGS

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Słowa kluczowe: ikonografia, ikonologia, metodologia, broń średniowieczna, błędne koło, wojskowość husycka, współczesna broń

A helmet or a sword shown on a medieval painting¹ can say as much about the original weapon as about the artist, who pictured it, or his client. This statement could be regarded as a cliché and in the matter of speaking – it is. However, this very useful connection is still only a potential area of common source of knowledge for the history of art and the medieval weapon studies. Those branches of Polish science can be found as well developed, but considered as a group of very narrow problems, particularly ignoring each other. History of the medieval art and medieval weapon studies usually have to rely not on new findings, but more on the comparisons of different sorts of already known evidences. It seems that we should encourage ourselves and each other to find a larger context of our research. Unfortunately, it is not possible without common terminology, which would be understandable and useful for the scientists of various specializations. We cannot build the whole terminological system. However, I would like to propose several useful terms describing different sorts of stylization that can be observed on depictions of the medieval weapon.

The most important thing in the medieval passion art is that it always contains a stylization in every meaning. The primary literally plot, „the first layer” is visualized with the „modern” medieval requisites, costumes and even – situations, which can be regarded as „the second layer”. On those two initial layers usually many following are overlayed to create narration, propaganda and of course preaching. These are things that we can name the original, intended layers. In weapon studies the scientist lights up the documental values, cuts them off and brings to a new, modern layer that probably would be totally out of the interest of the „target” of medieval “mass media”.

¹ This also refers to other visual forms of art.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

It happens that the dating of a medieval work of art is based on the appearance of a weapon or an element of wargear. However, dating of the use of a weapon is often based, among others, on the dating of iconographic evidences. This vicious circle is based on the very narrow specialization of scientific research. It shows also the lack of communication among different domains of learning. My favourite example of that problem is the post quem dating of paintings, which – in the opinion of the researcher – includes a „typical Hussite weapon”. It is a quite common representation appearing on the 15th century paintings from Silesia, because this region was once devastated by the Hussite Wars. Therefore, the time of creation of several works of art is likely to be described as „before” or „after” the conflict. If the painting shows the weapon, which is regarded as a „Hussite”, it is often an argument to state that the piece was created after the conflict. This argument, of course, relies on a proper recognition of the weapon. Unfortunately, the newest complex and scientific weapon studies regarding Hussite weapons are all publications dated from around the half of the past century. It is quite easy to imagine, how many problems may arise in this situation. I would like to present an example of such misunderstandings by describing the analyses of the works of the Master of the Brzeg’s Adorations of the Magi (Polish: Mistrz Brzeskich Pokłonów Trzech Króli) and the Master of the Wielowieś Triptych (Polish: Mistrz Tryptyku z Wielowisi) or the so-called *Legend of St. Hedwig of Silesia* (Polish: św. Jadwiga Śląska), dated ca. 1440 (*Mistyczne Średniowiecze...*).

My research on the weaponry presented in the works of the first author was described in several publications. Concluding the problem, both weapons, the pavise and the flail were used in Silesia and in the Czech country long before the Hussite Wars. The weapon pictured on the wall paintings may originate from before the Hussite Wars, so it cannot be regarded as a proof. Other important factor is that the pavise of Baltic origin², popularized by the Teutonic Knights, then the Czech Hussites (Nowakowski 1990, pp. 94–95; Nowakowski, Szymczak 1985, pp. 45–46; Denkstein 1973, p. 284), has been also recorded by Western European painters before the Hussite Wars (Wasiak 2012, pp. 304–338). We can be sure that the characteristic shield with a vertical, central fold called pavise was known to the author of the *Siege of Acre*, the miniature from the *Chroniques of St. Denis*, coming from the end of the 14th century (fig. 1) (*Royal Library*). The weapon was also known to Hu-

² The term: „pavise” was adopted for the characteristic shield with the vertical, central fold (Nowakowski 1990, pp. 94–95; Denkstein 1973, p. 284; Wasiak 2012, pp. 304–338).

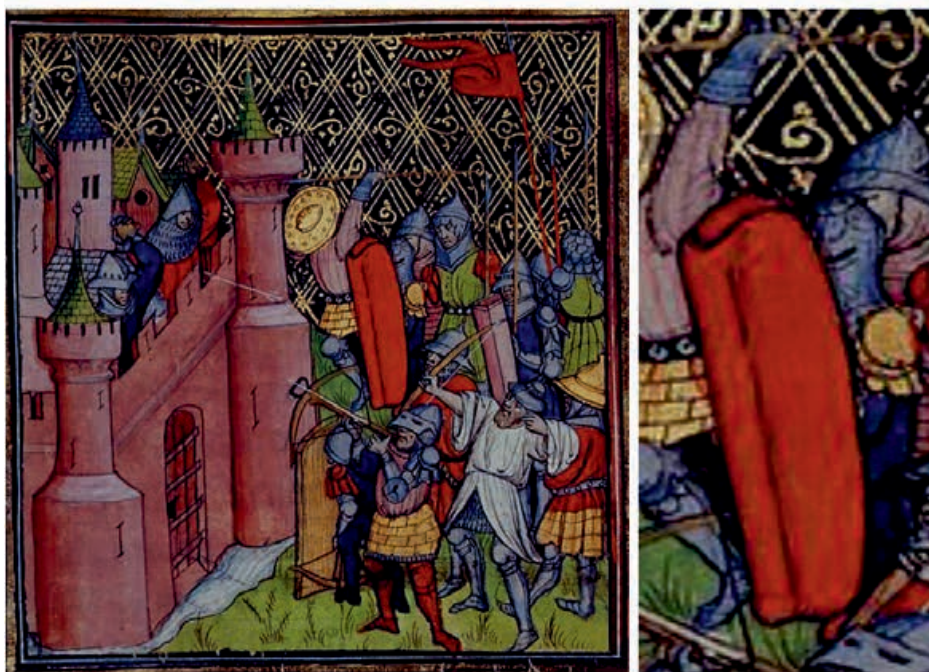


Fig. 1. The Siege of Acre, *Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, Royal Library, Royal 20 C. VII, f.24v (after *Royal Library...*)

bert van Eyck, who had shown it before the year 1421 on the painting *Three Marys at the Tomb* (fig. 2).

The Altar of the Legend of St. Hedwig of Silesia (The Triptych from Wielowieś), painted around 1440, shows among others the Mongol invasion and the battle between the aggressor Mongol army and Polish duke Henry the Pious (fig. 3). Several battle scenes present the Mongol banner depicted with a golden (or yellow) kettlehat. Jakub Kostowski described this symbol as a „typical Hussite pointed iron hat”, stating that the paintings are, therefore, of anti-Hussite propaganda (Kostowski 2001, p. 15; 2004, pp. 105–125). Both sides of the conflict are depicted – generally speaking – as the Western European armies. Mongol warriors however are distinguished by the use of bows³, curved swords and pointed helmets (also pointed kettlehats). All those elements (beside several fantasy-looking stylizations⁴) look like stereotype, typical, nomad artifacts⁵. I do not want to quarrel about the real

³ Polish soldiers are depicted as armed with crossbows instead.

⁴ They are fantasy-stylized or simply yet unknown weapons.

⁵ The European army was also stylized. Several knights are shown wearing tournament armours during the battle.



Fig. 2. The Three Marys at the Tomb, Hubert van Eyck, before 1426 (1410–1420?). Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (after *Web Gallery...*)

artist's or founder's opinion about the Hussites. However „typical Hussite pointed iron hat” (Kostowski 2004, pp. 105–125) cannot be accepted as an argument⁶. The kettlehat was a very popular war headgear in the late medieval Europe and it was in no way specific for the Hussites. There is also no evidence of using distinctive pointed kettlehats or hats specifically by those warriors. Besides, the kettlehat is painted using gold paint and we cannot be sure that it was intended to be shown as made of iron. Of course, pointed *chapel-de-ferre* was in use in the 14th and 15th centuries. We can recall the helm from Olsztynek (Wap 1994, pp. 125–126) or a very similar one, depicted on the scene of *Siege of Acra* from the *Chronicles of St. Denis* (fig. 1). Another pointed helmet of this type was depicted ca. the year 1439 on the Altar of Albrecht II Habsburg (by Master of the Albrechtsaltar, in Klosterneuburg near Vienna) (Kajzer 1976). Alas, we can recognize the user of the helmet as an archangel, who cannot be suspected (because of the founder or artist being a catholic) of pro-Hussite tendencies (fig. 4). Finally, *le coup de grâce* for the myth of the “Hussite pointed iron hat” is another battle scene showing the siege of a city painted around the year 1390 by the author of illustrations from the Wenceslaus IV Bible. The attackers wear standard armament and

⁶ It cannot be also accepted as a proper description of the helmet. In Polish terminology the kettlehat is simply called *kapalin*. Terms similar to the French *chapel-de-ferre* or German *Eisenhut* are not in use.

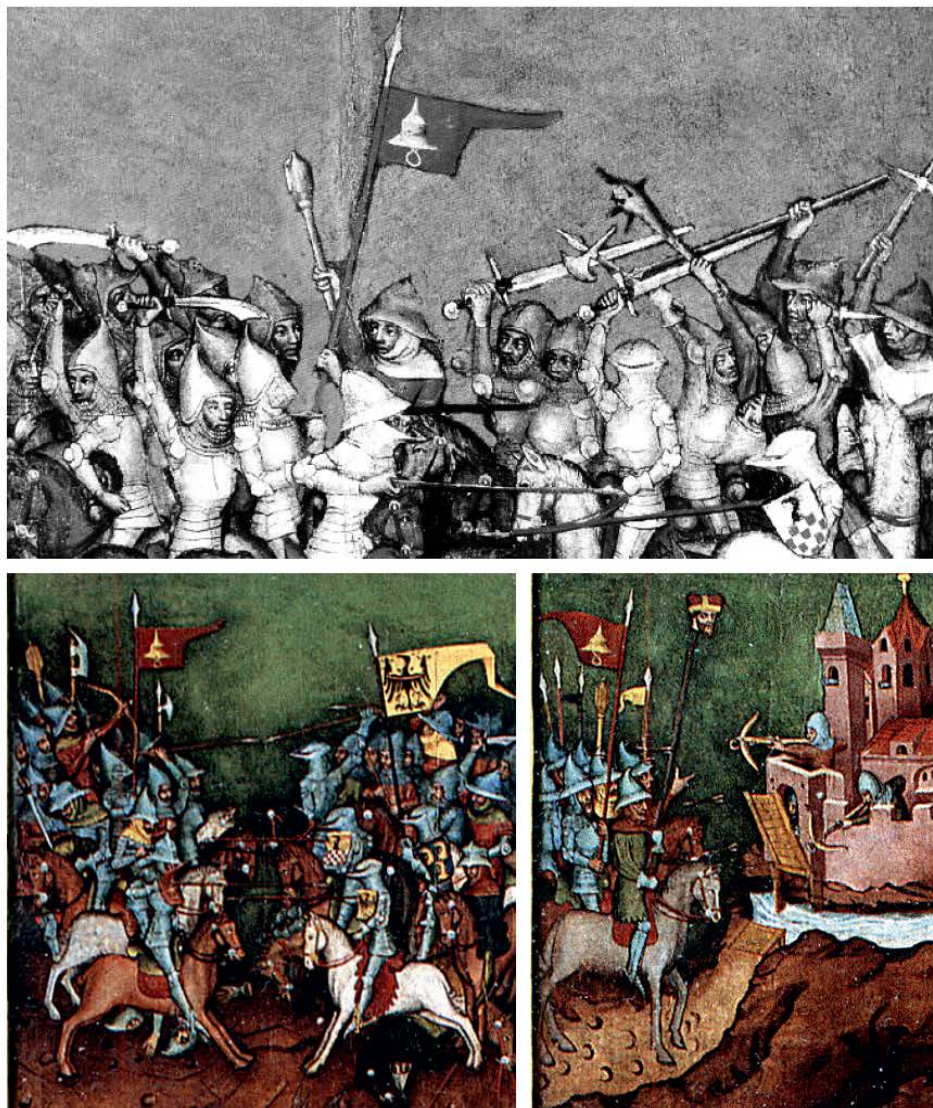


Fig. 3. Top – death of Henry the Pious at the Battle of Legnica, the Altar of the Legend About St. Hedwig of Silesia, Wrocław, the church of St. Bernard of Sieny (ca. 1440), now in National Museum, Warsaw (after Ziomecka 2004, fig. 296). Bottom – the Battle of Legnica, the The Altar of the Legend About St. Hedwig of Silesia, ca. 1440, the Master of the Wielowieś Triptych (after: *Mistyczne Średniowiecze...* fig. 34)

are depicted with pointed hats. This time, the headgear is simply associated with a Jewish hat (fig. 5) (Iwańczak 1985, p. 154, fig. 32). This sort of hat is well known thanks to the manupictorial evidences: Maciejowski Bible from ca. the half of the 13th century (fig. 6), portrait *Susskind of Trimberg* from the



Fig. 4. The Master of the Altar of Albrecht II, the Altar of the Albrecht II Habsburg, ca. 1439, Klosterenburg, Austria, identification (after: *Uzbrojenie...* 1990, fig. 112; iconographic analysis after *Artelista...*)

Codex Manesse from the beginning of the 14th century (fig. 7), *The Flight into Egypt* and *the Taking of Christ*, both from the Quadriptych with the scenes of the life of Jesus and Mary (Silesia, ca. 1370) (fig. 8), *Jesus carries His cross* from the Polyptych from Grudziądz (ca. 1390) (fig. 9). Jewish hats appear as clothes of positive as well as negative characters. Those hats are in the matter of fact ethnographic or religious identifiers. Back to the hat from the *Legend of the St. Hedwig*: it is characteristic that this symbolic hat is painted with yellow (gold?) colour, just like the majority of Jewish headgears of this

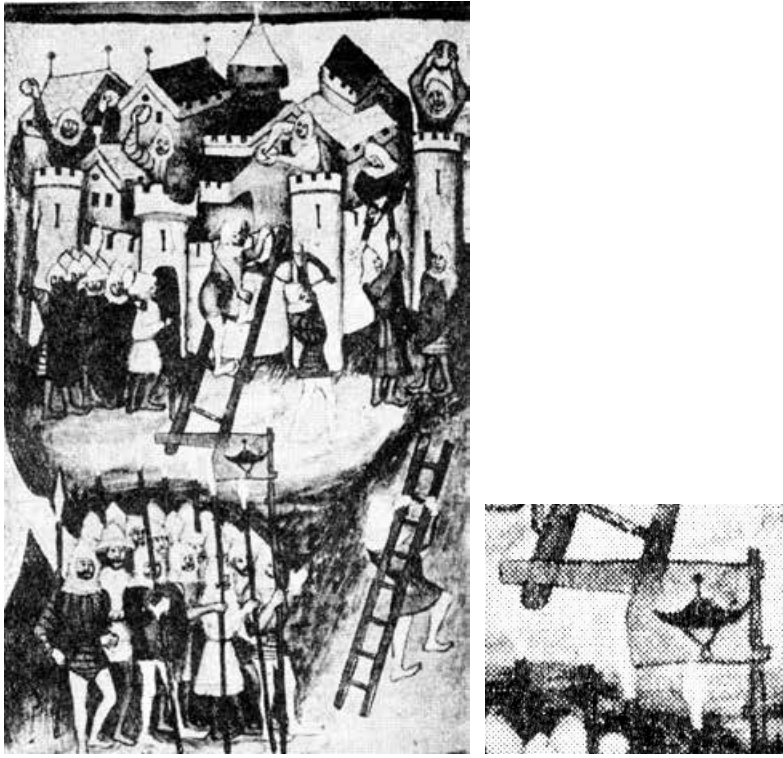


Fig. 5. The Siege, Wenceslaus Bible (after Iwańczak 1985, fig. 32)



Fig. 6. Boaz consults with the elders, Maciejowski Bible, mid of the 13th century (after *Medievaltymes...*)



Fig. 7. Susskind of Trimberg, Codex Manesse (after *Codex Manesse...*)



Fig. 8. Quadriptych with the Scenes of the Life of Jesus and Mary, ca. 1370. Left – *Taking of Christ*. Right – *The Flight to Egypt*, (after *Mistyczne Średniowiecze...*, fig. 14)



Fig. 9. Polyptych from Grudziądz, ca. 1390 (*Mistyczne Średniowiecze...*, fig. 17a)

sort mentioned above. Therefore, it would be easier and more reasonable to recognize not anti-Hussite, but anti-Semite intentions of the author or the founder of the Altar of the Legend of the St. Hedwig of Silesia.

Described problem is clearly based on „weapon myths”, which built a sort of alternative, „mythological based” weapon studies and the history of art. I hope that I can claim several of them „officially busted”. Otherwise, we can also observe the potential pros of interdisciplinary cooperation that could help to avoid the problem. The ambiguity of the medieval paintings and other evidences simply have to be analyzed by cross-comparison. The lack of common space of understanding, however, makes it rather difficult. Let’s try to formulate several basic, understandable terminological conceptions. To give an idea of perception of the meaning of iconographic evidences for weapon studies, we have to emphasis the mimetic aspect of medieval images. Do we observe a real or a symbolic/fantasy artifact? It is a basic problem for every scientist keen on weapon studies, regardless of other information. I believe that it is also essential for the scientist concentrating on the history of art. It can simply help in proper interpretation. That way, I decided to describe several aspects of a “documental value”⁷ of the image. This is also conditioned by different factors that we can call “stylization”. I believe that we can distinguish several kinds of stylizations.

⁷ This term (Polish: „wartość dokumentacyjna”) was already used by Zdzisław Żygulski Jr. (1978, p. 588).

THE STYLIZATIONS: DERISIVE, ETHNOGRAPHIC, NARRATIVE, HISTORISING, FANTASY

The term: “derisive stylization” is based on the Polish expression formed by Zdzisław Żygulski Jr. (1978) “zbroja szydercza”, which is quite difficult to translate into English. We can describe this expression as a “jeeringly stylised armour”. Actually, the idea can be observed not only according to armour. That’s why I would like to propose the term “derisive stylization”, to describe all forms of stylization that express the hideous nature of biblical negative characters, who directly attack Jesus or take part in the scenes of *Massacre of the Innocents*.

The term “ethnographic stylization” refers to scenes that show exotic clothes, artifacts. Those items are native to the culture that is alien to the painter or his client. We can easily find such stylizations in scenes of the *Adorations of the Magi*. Let me mention two examples. First and older is the mosaic from the basilica Santi Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna from the 6th century showing the Three Wise Man or the Three Kings⁸ in Persian clothing (fig. 10). The second is almost a thousand years younger, the illumination from *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke de Berry* (fig. 11). Such a stylization may be quite realistic, or it can be based on the stereotypes connected with other (usually exotic) nations. Of course, every stylization has a narrative character. The “narrative-ethnographic stylization” utilizes artifacts not necessarily connected with the depicted nation. Several elements are used only to distinguish two (or more) different nations or groups of people, and may not even refer to the reality. One of the most popular iconographic sources used in weapon studies, the Maciejowski Bible includes miniatures based on that sort of stylization. In the battle scenes, the Israelites⁹ and their enemies are portrayed mostly as warriors using Western European style of arms and armour (figs. 12–13). Israelites use helmets (distinctive only to them), kettlehelmets and triangular (heater shaped) shields. The armies of the enemy forces also use similar kettlehelmets or triangular shields, but they are the only ones who carry round shields and conic helmets with nasals. It is obvious that those distinctive weapons: helmets (the Israelites) or conical helmets and round shields (enemies of the Israelites) do not pretend to be native weapons of both sides. That’s why we cannot name this idea a pure ethnographic stylization, although both sides are distinguished by several sorts of arms

⁸ In Polish tradition and literature the Magi are usually called the Three Kings (Polish: Trzej Królowie).

⁹ In this article the term „Israelites” is used also to describe the Judeans or other Jewish nations, or simply all the protagonists (the patriarchs, prophets and so on) of the Old Testament.



Fig. 10. *The Three Kings*, basilique Santi Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, 6th century (after Bovini 1984)

used in order to imply their identification (and, actually, nationality). There is also no surprise that Israeli forces remind us of the 13th century European crusaders. Their enemies use two elements of wargear that can be regarded as a stereotype interpretation of several aspects of the medieval Near East arms. These helmets and round shields are not particularly of eastern kind. The main reason for their presence is to identify who is who (a sort of artistic friend or foe device) and the storyteller. There was no need, and of course no way, to present original weapons of the Israelites or, for instance, the Philistines or the Mandanites. Actually, on the 15th century Italian paintings there are weapons intended to connect the observer with the times of the depicted scene. Andrea Mantegna, for instance, often used antique artifacts (based probably on the ancient Roman iconography) as requisites to present Roman soldiers in the scenes of the ancient martyrdom of the saints. Hexagonal shield, Roman helmet or the initials SPQR emblazoned on Roman standards can be found on the *St. Jakobs Martyrdom* frescoes from the Overatis Chapel, Eremintani church, Padua (fig. 14) made in the years 1448–1456. The same artifacts were used on the *Crucifixion* scene from the altar of San



Fig. 11. *Adoration of the Magi*, p. 51 (front), *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (after *Christusrex...*)



Fig. 12. Jozue battles Amalek, Maciejowski Bible, mid of the 13th century (after *Medievaltymes...*)



Fig. 13. David's knights defeat Absalom's army, Maciejowski Bible, mid of the 13th century (after *Medievaltymes...*)

Zeno in Verona (ca. 1459). In spite of the appearance of partly fantasy stylization, Roman origins of those artifacts are unquestionable (fig. 15). I would name this occurrence a clear and simple example of the “historical stylization”. Although not every historical-looking element can be considered this way. For instance, the initialism „SPQR” appears also in the scene of *Crucifixion* from the collegiate church in San Gimignano (fig. 16). The author of that 14th century painting, Barna da Siena (or the Master of the Collegiate di San Gimignano), „equipped” several horsemen with quirases with characteristic, antique *pteruges*. Some may say that we cannot be sure if it is an example of a “historical stylization” or a byzantine art inspiration. This question gives us a very good opportunity to recall that iconographic weapon studies need a very deep and professional cooperation with the history of art specialists. Nevertheless, similar *pteruges* and other features of ancient armour are really used as an undoubted “historical stylization”. For instance, another Sienese painter, Andrea di Bartolo (lived 1389–1428), used them not only in the scene of the *Crucifixion* (fig. 17), but also while painting the representations of Caesar and Pompeo (fig. 18). Both are placed in the Museo Civico in Palazzo Publico in Siena. Both, especially the second example, can also be questioned as “historical stylizations”. A likewise solution can also be observed in Poland on the well-known masterpiece of Veit Stoss (Polish: Wit Stwosz): the Altar at the St. Mary’s Church in Cracow (1486). Anachronistic elements of armour, gauntlet or visored bascinet¹⁰ were described in the mentioned Zdzisław Żygulski Jr.’s article. Those early 15th century pieces of armour were out of fashion at the end of the same century, but still had nothing in common with the Roman military equipment (fig. 19). Zdzisław Żygulski Jr. described them as a sort of a “diverse stylization”¹¹. Although we cannot describe this phenomenon as a classical “diverse stylization”, because this time it is reserved only for those, who had personally oppressed and humiliated Jesus. We can also try to interpret this simply as a representation of the eve of perception recorded by medieval “mass media”. All in all, the *Resurrection* even in the times of Veit Stoss could have been regarded as the event which had happened „a long time ago”. The use of anachronistic weapon may also simultaneously represent the time of perception as well as

¹⁰ Similar visor can be observed also on the same altar, in the scene of *The Taking of Christ* (Polish: *Pojmanie Chrystusa*), anachronistic visor is only one element of the equipment that was described by Z. Żygulski Jr. as an example of the “derisive stylization” (Żygulski 1978, p. 601).

¹¹ Not consistently, by the way. As we remember, Zdzisław Żygulski Jr. used the “derisive stylization” term to describe the tomb guardians, who are particularly not oppressive against Jesus (Żygulski 1978, pp. 598–600).



Fig. 14. Andrea Mantegna, *The Martyrdom of St. Jacob* (after Waźbiński 1989, fig. 98)



Fig. 15. *The Crucifixion*, Altar from San Zeno, Verona (1459) (after Waźbiński 1989, fig. 100)

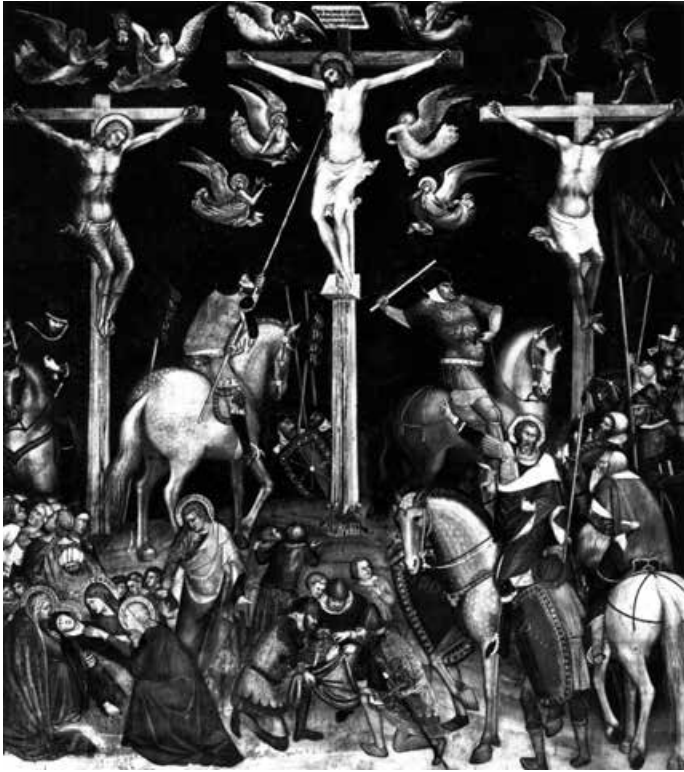


Fig. 16. Barna da Siena, *The Crucifixion*, mid of the 14th century, collegiate church San Gimignano, Tuscany (after Roettgen 1997, fig. 44)

other ideas; including not particularly diverse distance between the recipient and all those who are not clearly „good guys”.

Stylizations in medieval paintings have usually a multithreaded character, sometimes with a lot of underplots. The final effect and its interpretation may also be unintended by the artist. It could be a result of many decisions, some of them subsequent to the composition or other artistic needs. The art is unpredictable as much as the human imagination, when interacting, both can bring many reasonable interpretations, which could be far away from those intended. All described stylizations should, therefore, serve mainly for the purpose of communication and initialize recognition of main problems that occur to be interesting for the recipient scientist. Scholars focused on weapon studies (or other artificial elements of the culture¹²), despite other

¹² There is a good expression and the scientific category in Polish archaeology: „kultura materialna” – „material culture”, which shall be named with more precision as the „artificial evidences of the culture”.



Fig. 17. Andrea di Bartolo (active 1389–1428), *The Crucifixion*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (after MMA).



Fig. 18. Andrea di Bartolo (active 1389–1428), *Cesare et Popeio*, Museo Civico, Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (after *Artist Immensions...*)

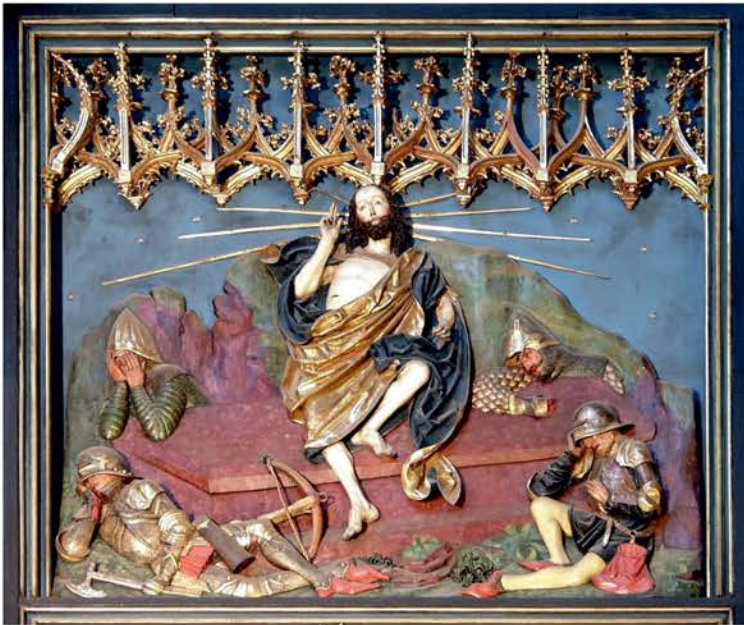


Fig. 19. Veit Stoss, *The Resurrection* (detail), the Altar of the St. Mary's Church, Cracow (after *Wikipedia...*; identification after *Wokół...* 2004)



Fig. 20. Weapons of the tomb guards, *The Resurrection* (detail), St. Andrew's church in Strzelniki (photo W. Wasiak)

problems, always have to pay attention to the “documental value” of the image. Unfortunately, the documental aspect can be hidden also in purely unrealistic scenes, filled by graphic representation of the odd fantasies. The artist can be at the same time regarded as a very good documentalist and observer, a fantasy painter or focused on the spiritual meaning of created imaginations. We observe the work executed on many, say: different levels of meanings, like modern computer graphics, which are created on different layers, then finally put together to give the ultimate effect.

I would like to underline the importance of this factor using an example quite far from the scientific orthodoxy. The analysis of images of modern warfare in the modern visual art, in my opinion, may bring surprisingly interesting thoughts about the universal aspects of shaping of the visual message. Specific convention of animated Japan cinema, mixing restrictive documentalism with unrealistic cultural symbols and pure fantasy, can be very useful in this matter. I mean the anime film concentrated on an episode from the beginning of the Afghan War (operation Enduring Freedom). The film by Kazumi Sasahara (ANW), based on popular manga comic by Motofumi Kobayashi (Kobayashi 1998–2005), bears also a quite unorthodox title. The requisites, especially weapons and other gear, were recreated with a great precision. At the same time, characters are pictured as anthropomorphic rabbits (the Americans and their allies) (fig. 21) and camels (the Afghans). This fantasy stylization does not stop even the less orientated recipient from recognizing the M14 EBR rifle, or the better known (and virtually symbolic) Kalashnikov rifle¹³. The accuracy of the depiction of weapons and accessories can be easily confirmed with originals used and documented during the first years of the Operation Enduring Freedom¹⁴. Therefore, the film in the far future could be even theoretically regarded as a very attractive iconographic evidence in future weapon studies. We can be also sure that the potential, future scientist would focus on the specific carbine used by Perkins – one of the main characters of the film. It is the highly detailed image of the very peculiar M4 carbine. The M4 uses standard NATO 5,56x45 mm ammunition¹⁵, but the weapon carried by Perkins is clearly feeded from Russian magazine dedicated to Soviet 7,62x39 mm rounds¹⁶. Other parts and accessories of the weapon are typical for the US standards. We can even recognize

¹³ Military Research by: Tomoyuki Hasegawa (CSO 1).

¹⁴ War photos are published not only by press agencies, but also on Internet portals keen on modern warfare.

¹⁵ Standard NATO cartridge.

¹⁶ Standard ammunition of the Warsaw Pact, in the 1970s followed by the 5,45x39 mm cartridge. 7,62 mm ammunition is, however, still very popular in many regions.



Fig. 21. *Cat Shit One: The Animated Series* (ONA) (after: ANW).



Fig. 22. KAC SR47 (after: Gourley 2004/2009).

the aiming device as the Arimpoint M2 collimator, the Picatinny mounting rail system as the Knight's Armament Company RAS, or the carbine stock as the model made by the Lewis Machine & Tool. Therefore, some may recognize the „Russian magazine” attached to the American weapon as a result of *licentia poetica*, a fantasy stylization. In the modern popular mass culture, the weapon images are often created by using different, characteristic parts of symbolic weapon models, especially using those of Kalashnikov's rifle. Maybe, in the far future, scientists will use them as fragmentary knowledge about our times, just like the scarce pieces we now analyze to build our knowledge about the medieval everyday life. Maybe even Perkins' carbine could be regarded as a „diverse” or „fantasy” stylization. It is easy to imagine a very brilliant text laughing off the documental value of the images of

weapons used by sweet, flossy, fluffy rabbits... It would be no surprise if the opposite opinion valuing the precision of the artist could be considered as „a naive faith put on iconographic evidences” (Żygulski 1978). Probably the person reading this article expects that the author didn't mean to analyze anime films and manga comic books just to end up with such a simple constatation. I suppose the reader predicted that the clone version of M4 carbine using Soviet intermediate 7,62x29 mm cartridge really existed and was in use at the beginning of the Operation Endourin Freedom. The Knight's Armament Corporation¹⁷ designed and produced a small number of KAC SR47¹⁸ (Stoner Rifle 47) dedicated to US Special Forces operating on the enemy's territory (Gourley 2004/2009) (fig. 22). There were only ten or seven pieces of this model, and the whole programme cost about one million dollars (Gourley 2004/2009). The well known ergonomy of the M4 carbine, combined with the possibility of use of ammunition and magazines taken from the enemy, seemed to be a perfect solution for special force operators at that time. The effectiveness of the final result is now often discussed, but the use of „Flossy rabbit's carbine” on the real battlefield is simply a fact. Existing, very accurate photos of the KAC SR 47, confirm the high quality of the anime visualization of that weapon. Therefore, the film can be regarded also as an iconographic evidence. This source shows also some aspects of the organization of the American warfare and simply a very interesting solution that inspired many US weapon producers and generally caused some aspects of weapon evolution¹⁹. For all the people knowing the KAC SR 47, the weapon is also a very good dating factor, placing the timeline of the action at the beginning of the Enduring Freedom Operation. There can be also no doubt that „the evidence” – the film including equally high-detailed visualization of the weapon and fantasy stylization of characters – is of Japanese origin. Therefore, even in this case, the depiction of the weapon can say as much about the original artifact as about the artist, who pictured it, or his client.

Described situation clearly shows the pros of iconographic studies. Important documentation of the artifact can be „hidden” in the unrealistic stylization, and yet, still, it can help in dating the work of art. It is quite possible that we can suspect the same situation with ancient works of art. Even well-known paintings may bring new information owing to a modern, inter-

¹⁷ Knight's Armament Company, <<http://www.knightarmco.com>>.

¹⁸ KAC SR 47 – Knight's Armament Stoner Rifle 47. In United States, „code number 47” is usually used according to the carbines or rifles that are chambered for the 7,62x39 mm cartridge.

¹⁹ Nowadays, many US producers offer M4 or M16 clones using 7,62x39 mm cartridge for the civilian customers.

disciplinary research. Constant comparisons of iconographic evidences, archaeological artifacts and other sources can be regarded as a very effective way of scientific research. However, mutual orientation in several different domains of science have to be recognized not only as an erudition, but the proper method of learning and a useful tool for the history of medieval art, archaeology, history and some other branches of learning.

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STRESZCZENIE

BROŃ O ARTYŚCIE, ARTYSTA O BRONI W WIRTUALNEJ RZECZYWISTOŚCI MAŁOWIDEŁ ŚREDNIOWIECZNYCH

Artykuł podejmuje kwestię równie cenionej, co rzadko stosowanej naukowej współpracy interdyscyplinarnej. Jej brak jest szczególnie dotkliwy w badaniach bronioznawczych korzystających w dużym stopniu ze źródeł ikonograficznych i czerpiących informacje z opracowań z zakresu historii sztuki. Jeden z ważniejszych problemów wynikających z braku kontaktu między specjalistami można określić jako koło hermeneutyczne, kiedy historyk sztuki datuje malowidło na podstawie występowania jakiegoś elementu uzbrojenia, zaś bronioznawca opiera swoje datowanie użytkowania broni na podstawie podanej przez historyka sztuki daty powstania dzieła. Problem pogłębiany jest jednak zazwyczaj dodatkowo przez brak aktualnych publikacji czytelnych dla specjalistów obu dziedzin. Datowanie dzieł sztuki na podstawie obecności pewnego typu uzbrojenia i odwrotnie wymagają bowiem dobrej orientacji w obu dziedzinach lub gruntownej współpracy interdyscyplinarnej.

Jako przykład dość trudnych do przyjęcia wnioskowań opartych na przedstawieniach broni, można przedstawić np. datowanie Polichromii Mistrza Brzeskich Pokłonów Trzech Króli przedstawione przez Jerzego Kostowskiego. Zakwestio-

nował on czas powstania dzieł określony przez Alicję Karłowską-Kamzową i zasugerował, iż malowidła musiały powstać już po wojnach husyckich. Jednym z koronnych dowodów miały być wyobrażenia rodzajów broni (pawęż i cep) uznanych za wyłącznie husyckie. Pozostawiając całość złożonego problemu datowania dzieła sztuki specjalistom, pozwalam sobie jednak zwrócić uwagę na zbyt swobodne stosowanie argumentów bronioznawczych, zwłaszcza opartych na literaturze fachowej pochodzącej z okolic połowy ubiegłego wieku. O ile bowiem rzeczywiście i pawęż, i cepy stosowane były przez husytów, to należy pamiętać, że stosowano je także wcześniej, zaś ich podobizny pojawiają się w malarstwie europejskim także przed wojnami husyckimi.

Interpretacja malowidła tablicowego Mistrza Ołtarza Legendy św. Jadwigi również budzi pewne wątpliwości. Przedstawienia wojsk tatarskich w scenach zmagania z rycerstwem europejskim uznano za przykład propagandy antyhusyckiej, opierając się na wyobrażeniu „żelaznego kapelusza husyckiego” widniejącego na chorągwi tatarskiej. Miało to być przedstawienie typowego dla husytów, charakterystycznego rodzaju osłony głowy. Spiczaste osłony głowy wojsk tatarskich miały być przy tym także pochodzenia husyckiego. Wydaje się, że taka argumentacja nie docenia literatury bronioznawczej podkreślającej powszechną popularność kapalinów (bo tak należy określić żelazny hełm w kształcie kapelusza) jak i faktu, iż spiczaste nakrycia głowy dość jednoznacznie mogą kojarzyć się przede wszystkim z takim właśnie kształtem nakryć głowy koczowników. Same zaś kapaliny, także te o spiczastych dzwonach, stosowane w wojskach późnośredniowiecznej Europy, znane są zarówno dzięki zabytkom (np. kapalin z Olsztyńka), jak i ikonografii katolickiej, w tym przedstawiającej tego typu hełmy na głowach aniołów, co ukazuje choćby Ołtarz Albrechta II Habsburga, którego trudno jest posądzać o specjalną sympatię dla husytów.

Powyższe problemy nasuwają na myśl kolejny – zamierzenie artysty co do wierności przekazu. Czy rzeczywistość utrwalona w jego dziele jest rzetelnym, dokumentacyjnym przekazem, czy też została poddana swoistej stylizacji dla nadania odpowiedniego wyrazu? Sądzę, że jesteśmy w stanie wyróżnić kilka rodzajów stylizacji i wiążących się z nimi interpretacji.

Pierwszą z nich, dobrze znaną bronioznawcom, jest „stylizacja szydercza”, która odnosi się do postaci, najczęściej zbrojnych, wyobrażanych w szczególnie negatywnym kontekście biblijnym. Następne rodzaje stylizacji zostały zaproponowane przez autora niniejszego tekstu. „Stylizacja fantastyczna” jest bardzo zbliżona do „stylizacji szyderczej”, ale nie nosi negatywnego piętna. „Stylizacja etnograficzna” odnosi się do wyobrażeń związanych z udziałem postaci lub zjawisk egzotycznych dla autora lub zleceniodawcy dzieła. Pojęcie to można rozwinąć do „stylizacji etnograficzno-narracyjnej” lub „stylizacji fabularyzacyjnej”, gdy artysta zaznacza obcość pewnych zjawisk przy zastosowaniu sporej dozy własnej inwencji na potrzeby relacjonowanej fabuły. W „stylizacji historyzującej” pojawiają się anachronizmy, przedstawienia inspirowane antykiem bądź ikonografią bizantyjską, czyli sztuką, która powstała o wiele wcześniej. Wresz-

cie „stylizacja nieokreślona” lub inaczej „stylizacja *własna*” pozostawia po prostu miejsce na dalsze poszerzanie zasobu pojęciowego. Należy jednakże podkreślić, iż nawet ujęcia pełne fantastycznych stylizacji mogą mieć pewną wagę dokumentacyjną. Interesujące, że opisane wyżej zjawiska stylizacji można również zaobserwować we współczesnej kulturze obrazu, co pokazano na przykładzie specyficznego kina japońskiego. W ramach stylizacji na ekranie możemy jednocześnie zaobserwować animowane, antropomorficzne postaci zwierząt oraz niezwykle realistycznie przedstawioną współczesną broń wraz z oporządzeniem. W przytoczonym filmie wyobrażono bardzo rzadki typ broni, SR 47, który dla niezorientowanej osoby mógł wyglądać jak stylizacja fantastyczna, łącząca cechy broni amerykańskiej i rosyjskiej.

Przytoczone przykłady ukazują jak zaskakująco pożyteczne mogą okazywać się źródła ikonograficzne, a stała rekapitulacja wiedzy historycznej często stawia znane już świadectwa w nowym świetle. Nawet znane źródła mogą dostarczyć zaskakujących informacji dzięki nowemu kontekstowi. Zauważenie interesującego przekazu zależy zatem często od znacznej i teoretycznie nieskończonej ilości dokonanych porównań świadectw pochodzących z różnych typów źródeł. Wzajemna orientacja w zakresie prowadzonych badań może mieć wyjątkowe znaczenie zarówno dla historyków sztuki, jak i bronioznawców.