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THE ICONOGRAPHY OF WEAPONS OF  
WESTERN SLAVS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES.  
SOME NOTES ON THE CULTURAL PATTERNS ON THE  
EXAMPLE OF THE SO-CALLED GROUP OF VYŠEHRAD CODEX

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Early medieval weaponry from the territory of Central Europe has already reached several summaries. There is a predominant conception, that the material culture, including weaponry, of West Slavs was formed by a three-step socio-political process: the arrival of Slavs in the area of Central Europe (6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries), creation of early states under the influence of the Franks (7<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries), formation of early feudal structures and division into smaller political units (11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries). The literature emphasizes the influence of Carolingian (Roman), Byzantine, Scandinavian and nomad (Avar and Magyar) traditions on arts and crafts. In the case of preserved pictorial artifacts seizing of the western models is highlighted most intensely. The main problem is whether these representations were created on the spot and somehow portrayed the local reality, or whether they were imported. In this sense coins, stamps, sculptures, art decor of doors and a few wall paintings are generally viewed as native. Origins of manor and church furnishings, such as chalices, patens or illuminated codices are usually subjected to discussion and, thereupon, are omitted as potential comparative material when analyzing weapons. Is it proper to discard them as insignificant for this matter?

To answer this question it is good to look at how similar problems are approached in case of iconographic sources from the Late Middle Ages. Mural paintings, panels and miniatures (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries), tomb sculptures and sculptural architectural details (13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries) are mostly used as sources of information for this period. This is understandable in the case of representations of people whose life was connected with the studied area,

such as rulers and knights. Scenes depicting historical events, usually battles, are supposed to – more or less faithfully – reflect the reality, indigenous above all.

In the works on late medieval unknighly weaponry, researchers often refer to sacred art (panel paintings, wall paintings, sculptures) that depicts biblical scenes, mostly the Passion. Although their cognitive potential has been subjected to criticism (Żygulski 1978; Chmielowiec 2003), these sources can be considered a response of artists to the existence of specific forms of native weapons. Yet, we can charge these works for cultural interregionalism, that utilized motifs and forms common for the circle of Latin culture (and sometimes Byzantine-Ruthenian elements), often mutually dependent and processed far from the location of the interiors which they decorated. Therefore, their significance for weapon studies does not differ from the images depicted in the early medieval sacred arts and crafts, or sacred codices of illuminations. Both in the Early and the Late Middle Ages the only link between the work and the place to which it was ordered was the person sponsoring its creation, and that person had a strong impact on its form. This is best seen in the case of late medieval tombstones and epitaphs, whose founders were still alive when the works were created, so their suggestions had to be taken into account by the contractors (Nowakowski 2003, p. 13).

The biggest differences between early and late medieval foundations of the visual arts come down to their content. In the first case they are restricted to the conventions of biblical themes and the lives of saints, and rarely imagine the founder in a direct way. Therefore, almost automatically, they are stripped of locality so typical for the late medieval religious iconography. This does not mean that such items do not exist. However, they have another, less literal character hidden in the selection of used religious motifs that are “smuggled” elements of courtly and knightly culture.

Fashion for courtliness and knighthood began to be apparent for the warring elites in the Western Europe in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries (cf. Flori 2003, pp. 79–83, 185–202; Ławrynowicz 2005, pp. 8–9, 60–62), including of course those from the Holy Roman Empire, adjacent to the West Slavs. The ideological content attributed to the weapons is well expressed by Thietmar of Merseburg in his *Chronicle*, written in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Ławrynowicz 2011, pp. 28–29). In this century, certainly at its waning, the knightly culture reached the courts of Přemyslid and Piast dynasties. Knightly topics and their related weapons are present in the two chronicles produced in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, Polish by Gallus Anonymus and Czech by Cosmas of Prague, although, because of the feudal system still underdeveloped, they were limited to the rulers and their immediate environment (Iwańczak 2007).

The contemporary courtly and knightly cultures refer to images of weapons which highlighted the symbolism of social status (weapons of warriors, including the rulers), religious symbolism (weapons as the attributes of life and martyrdom, suffering, resurrection, spiritual power) and the Christian military ethos (weapons of patron saints of knighthood) (see Ławrynowicz 2005, p. 18).

In adopting these assumptions it should be stipulated that funding of these works consisted mostly of ordering them abroad or from foreign artists. Therefore, although they may indicate the aspirations of the West Slavic rulers for high courtly and knightly culture, these works may not accurately reflect local realities. Athwart, for the purpose of peculiar arms analysis, iconographic sources which originated outside of Central Europe can be used. The aim of such studies is not necessarily the identification of the arms and armour used by the Western Slavs, but the highlighting of the pattern of cultural iconography of the weapons, which the Slavs had contact with, which expressed their aspirations and was inspired by the knightly customs and courtly etiquette (cf. Piech 2001, p. 17). And only in this sense these works may be treated as basis for developing the knowledge of early medieval weaponry of Western Slavs.

A good example of these iconographic sources is the so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex<sup>1</sup>. The Codex consists of four stylistically related liturgical books, it was most likely made in the last two decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century with the intention to honour the church ceremonies in the courts of the Piast and Přemyslid dynasties. The fact that these works have appeared almost simultaneously in both mentioned courts is probably a result of rapprochement of the two dynasties in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, both through political and strong family affinities. In 1062 Swatawa, sister of Polish rulers Boleslaus the Bold and Ladislaus Herman, was wed to Vratislaus of Bohemia. In 1080 the younger brother of Boleslaus the Bold and his successor, Ladislaus Herman, married Judith, daughter of the mentioned Vratislaus and his earlier wife Adelaide of Hungary. In contrast to the pro-papal Boleslaus, Ladislaus Herman, like Vratislaus II, pursued a close-to-Germany relationship, which – in the case of the Czech ruler – led to his coronation in 1085.

The so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex includes two gospel books held in Poland, the Codex of Gniezno (Pol. – Złoty kodeks gnieźnieński or Evan-

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<sup>1</sup> The question of the origin and affinities of the books included in the so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex met a lively discussion for over a hundred years. Some authors do not believe in its iconographic consistency (*Codex...* 1988). This article embraces the most common hypotheses. Views on the origins of Vyšehrad Codex and its related books were recently summarized by A. Merhautová and P. Spunar (1986, pp. 19–36).

gelistarium gnieźnieńskie, Czech – Evangelistář hnězdenský) stored in the Library of the Chapter at Gniezno, the Codex of Płock (Pol. – Evangelistarium płockie, Czech – Evangeliář krakovský) stored in the National Museum in Kraków (Czartoryski Museum)<sup>2</sup> and a gospel book located in Prague: the Vyšehrad Codex (Pol. – Kodeks wyszehradzki, Czech – Vyšehradský Kodex or korunovační evangelistář) originally stored in the Metropolitan Library in Prague, now in the National Library in Prague, and Codex of St. Vitus Cathedral (Pol. – Evangelistarium z Katedry św. Wita, Czech – Svatovítský kodex or Evangelistář svatovítský) stored in the Chapter Library in Prague.

It is frequently assumed that all the works were ordered in one of the Bavarian scriptoria, where they were created in a short time. On one hand, these manuscripts have a common iconographic programme, on the other, none of the four works is a copy of the other. They were probably based on a single model which, in every case, was copied in whole or in part. The richest of illuminations is the Vyšehrad Codex, which presents a complete iconographic programme (series of genealogies, life, death and resurrection of Christ; this set is partly present in the manuscripts stored in Poland). It is probably closest to the unknown original.

The Vyšehrad Codex was made to honour the coronation of Vratislaus II in 1085. It is likely, that on this occasion the Cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague received a gospel presenting an apocalyptic theme (Merhautová, Třeštík, Paul 1984, pp. 86, 89). Around the same time gospel books of Gniezno and Płock were created (cf. Sawicka 1938, p. 194; Pietrusińska 1971, pp. 692, 745). There is a hypothesis that the idea of sending the Codex to Gniezno was an initiative of Vratislaus II, who wanted to normalize the relations with the local metropolis renewed by Boleslaus the Bold in 1076 after decades of decline, to which Vratislaus' father, Bretislaus of Bohemia, contributed during the invasion of Great Poland in 1039, when he plundered the Gniezno Cathedral and took the relics of St. Adalbert. The second Codex was supposedly brought to Płock – the capital of a diocese founded in 1076 – by Swatawa, where Ladislaus Herman resided (cf. Merhautová, Třeštík, Paul 1984, p. 86). Ladislaus' soliciting was probable in both cases (Walicki 1971, p. 258).

The demand for courtly and knightly cultural model originating from Vratislaus II's and Ladislaus Herman's entourages could be met by art including scenes depicting majesty of power contained in the gospels. In the case of Vratislaus this ideal is presented by the figure of St. Wenceslaus, depicted in the initial D in the Vyšehrad Codex. He is portrayed sitting on a throne,

<sup>2</sup> The Codex of Płock was originally kept in the Płock Cathedral, and later in the collection of Tadeusz Czacki in Pułtusk, hence sometimes it is called the Golden Codex of Pułtusk.





Fig. 1. Vyšehrad Codex; St. Wenceslaus (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 46r)

dressed in a royal robe with a fur hat decorated with dangling animal paws on his head<sup>3</sup>, holding a winged lance in his left hand (fig. 1). This arm refers to the Holy Lance, whose cult was very much alive in Europe at that time (Schramm 1966, pp. 505–519; 1969, pp. 70–71, 115–116; Kovács 1970; 1976, pp. 135–143; Kiersnowski 1988, pp. 209–210; Dalewski 1998, pp. 108–109; Kurasiński 2005; Ławrynowicz 2005, pp. 46–49, 60–70). St. Wenceslaus is connected with the cult of the martyr knights, because he consolidated the Christian faith in Bohemia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and was assassinated by his brother, partly as a result of a pagan reaction. In 1080, probably before the creation of the Vyšehrad Codex, Emperor Henry IV gave Vratislaus the relic spear. The German ruler had previously acquired this arm when defeating the Antiking Rudolf of Rheinfelden, to whom it served as an insignia of power instead of the Holy Lance attributed to St. Maurice. Vratislaus earned the right for the spear to be carried before him in ceremonial conducts, same as it took place at the imperial court. This symbolism merged with an earlier tradition, which treated a spear as an insignia of power, as shown on Czech coins of the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Kiersnowski 1988, p. 210). Henry IV's gift was quickly connected with the legendary spear of St. Wenceslaus, which was supposed to bring victories in battles to the Czechs, serving as a national sanctity (Dalewski 1998, p. 109).

Ladislav Herman probably found portrayals of King Herod very appealing. Apart from moral evaluation, the New Testament's ruler was the embodiment of strength and majesty (Stejskal 1992, pp. 26–30). It is best shown in the Codex of Płock in a scene where Herod is dressed in a royal robe covering a chain mail (visible on the legs), with a crown on his head, sitting on a throne, holding a sword on his lap. His right hand rests on the sword blade's *forte*, the left supporting its edge. The Lord is surrounded by his warriors (knights), the ones portrayed to his left armed with shields, the ones on his right clad in chain mails (visible on their feet) and tunics. All the warriors wear ribbed helmets adorned with trimmings and rivets. The shields are of almond shape, decorated with multicoloured ribbons. The second group holds swords in a gesture of total power ostentation typical for sword bearers – with grips in their right hands and blades pointing up, resting on their shoulders (fig. 2a). A same gesture can be noted in the depiction of *King Herod and three Magi* scene. Here Herod holds a scepter in his right hand while sitting on a throne (fig. 7).

Gestures of judicial power can also be seen in a scene portraying Pilate judging Christ, present both in the Vyšehrad Codex and the Codex of Gniez-

<sup>3</sup> This cap entered into the barbaric origin of Wenceslaus (Friedl 1966, pp. 57–59).





Fig. 2. Codex of Płock; a: King Herod (top), b: Massacre of the Innocents (bottom) (Walicki 1971, fig. 786)

no. In the first case, the Roman keeps his left hand on his sword blade's *forte*, while his right hand points towards the judged (fig. 3). Similarly in the second case, Pilate points to the accused with his right hand, but here his sword is laying on his lap (fig. 4). The majesty of the imperial officer is therefore not as strongly emphasized as in the case of Herod, although Pilate from the Codex of Gniezno is accompanied by a knight in a *spangenhelm*, who acts as a sword bearer. Also the knights assisting Pilate and Caiaphas on similar miniatures (figs. 5–6) perform functions more protective and penitentiary than representation, which is mostly indicated by them being equipped with cudgels (figs. 3, 6).



Fig. 3. Vyšehrad Codex; *Christ before Pilate* (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 41r)



Fig. 4. Codex of Gniezno; *Christ before Pilate* (Walicki 1971, fig. 771)



Fig. 5. Vyšehrad Codex; *Christ before Caiaphas* (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 41r)





Fig. 6. Codex of Gniezno; *Christ before Caiaphas* (Walicki 1971, fig. 770)

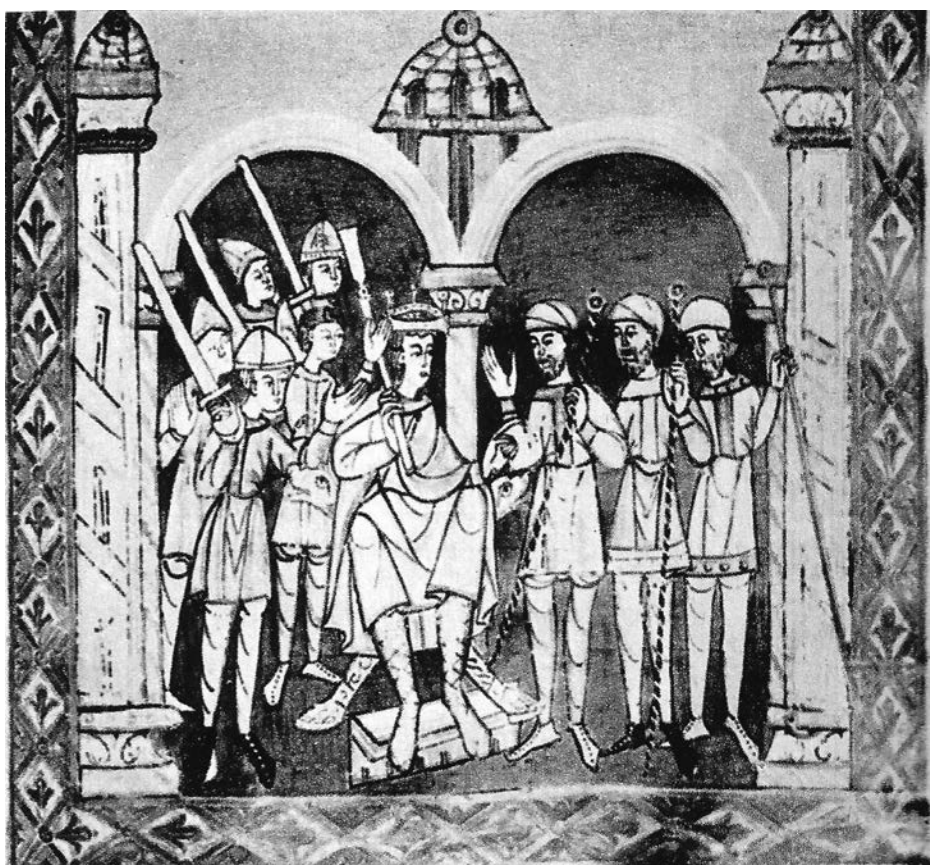


Fig. 7. Codex of Gniezno; *King Herod and Three Magi* (Walicki 1971, fig. 783)



Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the seal of Ladislaus Herman (Piekosiński 1906, fig. 362)

The sword gestures depicted in the scenes with Herod and Pilate are typical of the emerging feudal knightly culture. The theme of a king sitting on a throne and holding a sword on his knees refers to understanding of the ruler as the highest judge in the country, whose judgments are consistent with the will of God. Ladislaus Herman is represented on his seal in a similar way (fig. 8), however, in contrast to Herod, he is not holding his right hand on the blade's *forte*, but on the sword's hilt. Since the left side of the seal is not preserved, we can only imagine, that his right hand rested on the sword's edge (Piekosiński 1902, pp. 499–502; 1906, pp. 2–5, fig. 362a–b). The seal was attached to a document dated around 1087–1095 (Jasiński, 1969, pp. 49–50; Gieysztor 1971, pp. 73–75), but it is assumed that the seal itself was modeled after a denarius attributed to Boleslaus the Bold, minted during his rule, between the years 1076–1078 (Klinger 1966, pp. 95–99; Skwierczyński 1994,





**Fig. 9.** Codex of St. Vitus Cathedral; a: *Last Judgment* (top), b: Vratislaus II or Spytihněv II (bottom) (Černý 2004)

p. 148; Strzyż 2006, p. 10, fig 30:1; Janowski, Kurasiński 2009, p. 75). The discussed seal appeared soon after, in the beginning of Ladislaus' reign, in 1079 at the earliest (see Piech 1993, p. 201; Ławrynowicz 2005, p. 86). The ideological essence of Ladislaus' seal and perhaps even of the denarius once





Fig. 10. Vyšehrad Codex; *Judas Betrays Jesus* (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 42r)

attributed to him<sup>4</sup> as well as of the depiction of Herod in the Codex of Płock can be seen as a manifesto of strong aspirations of the Polish ruler, seeking to elevate his ducal power to *quasi*-royalty. Successive Piast dukes' coins of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries bore depictions of a similar fashion<sup>5</sup>.

In the discussed scenes, appearances of sword bearers were mentioned. Kings hold scepters on majestic presentations in a similar way (Piech 1993, p. 50). In such a context a sword also serves as an insignia. Its ostentation represents the entire spectrum of the prerogatives of the ruler, i.e. complete military, political, administrative and judicial power (Ławrynowicz 2005, p. 94; Janowski, Kurasiński 2009, pp. 76–80). In the exercise of such power a good relationship with the church was important. In one of the illustrations in the Codex of St. Vitus Cathedral (fig. 9b) a ruler, most likely the Duke of Bohemia, Vratislaus II or Spytihněv II, is pre-

<sup>4</sup> If the connection between the discussed seals and denarius is true (Kiersnowski 1988, p. 239), it would allow to take into consideration an earlier hypothesis, which assigned the coin to Ladislaus Herman (Suchodolski 1960, pp. 252–253). This denarius could've been the first coin of this ruler, minced over a short period, created in a close connection with his seal (Andrałójć, Andrałójć 2007, p. 33).

<sup>5</sup> More on this subject, see: Janowski, Kurasiński 2009, pp. 75–76.



Fig. 11. Vyšehrad Codex; a: *Kiss of Judas* (top); b: *Peter Cuts off Malchus' Ear* (bottom) (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 40v)



Fig. 12. Codex of Gniezno; *Crucifixion* (Walicki 1971, fig. 771)





**Fig. 13.** Vyšehrad Codex; a: *Crucifixion* (top), b: *Entombment* (bottom) (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 42r)

sented handing to or receiving from the clergy some document or book (see Květ 1966; Friedl 1966, p. 91; Černý 2004, pp. 17–21). The duke is in a court dress and is holding a spear facing up, with a wide blade bereft of wings on its basis. Behind him a knight is holding a sword, thus emphasizing the full power of the king.

The topics included in the so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex, apart from their purely religious and educational overtones, rub against the knightly ideology. Presentation of the *Massacre of the Innocents* scene in the Codex of Płock (fig. 2b) is both a reference to the idea of martyrdom and the need to defend the weak, emphasized particularly in Europe in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is an important element of the coronation oaths. In terms of royal symbolism, sword and spear play a leading role here.

Because religious aspect was the one of greatest importance in the liturgical books, spear (in addition to the cross and the sponge) is a fore-





Fig. 14. Codex of Gniezno; *Guards at the Tomb* (Walicki 1971, fig. 772)

ground symbol of martyrdom, as evidenced by scenes of martyrdom and death of Christ. The knightly weapons (sword, spear, helmet and shield) are also woven into the cycle of Christ's arresting (figs. 10–11a–b), his judgment (figs. 3–6), crucifixion (figs. 12–13a), burial (figs. 13b–14) and resurrection (fig. 15). Such depictions imposed stylistic standardization of offensive weapons. The only exceptions are spears piercing the side of Christ; one example mentioned earlier has no wings. Most swords have hilts, which are depicted in a fashion similar to Type X by J. Petersen (1919), except for the weapon of St. Peter in *The Taking of Christ* scene from the Vyšehrad Codex, whose hilt is similar to Type Y, bearing the closest resemblance to a cross. Roman guards of the *Women at the Tomb* scene from the Vyšehrad Codex hold swords with similar hilts, albeit they resemble crosses somewhat less.

In the so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex, a diverse manner of artistic depictions of armour can be noted: *spangenhelms* and conical helmets, construction details of almond-shaped shields and sword scabbards.

The symbolism of sword is particularly highlighted in the scene of *Last Judgment* in Codex of St. Vitus Cathedral (fig. 9a), where a sword comes from the mouth of Christ, symbolizing his word, indicating this weapon's temporal and spiritual power. This topic became especially important in Europe in the third quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when a dispute on the relationship of the spiritual and the secular between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV broke out (see Ławrynowicz 2005, pp. 42–44).



Fig. 15. Vyšehrad Codex; *Women at the Tomb* (Merhautová, Spunar 2006, fol. 43v)

The above examples of scenes with weapons, though seemingly modest, carried a very strong cultural impulse. One needs to realise that, apart from a few illuminations, carvings and craft items, the West Slav elites had no contact with the iconographic programme of weaponry symbolism. It is no coincidence that the motifs portraying the monarch's power, evident in the discussed works, as well as in other liturgical books were also present on the portraits of rulers placed on their coins and first seals.

The so-called Group of Vyšehrad Codex can be considered as an example of majestic demonstration of the West Slavic rulers and the weapons presented there should be interpreted only in this context. New cultural patterns from the Continental Europe, introduced, e.g., *via* the illuminated codices, brought the emphasis on courtly and knightly ceremonialism at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. From this period, the earliest mentions of accolade acts come (Dalewski 1997; Ławrynowicz 2005, pp. 77–78) and these ceremonies conferring knighthood were the focal point of a new understanding of the knightly arms' symbolism.

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## STRESZCZENIE

### IKONOGRAFIA UZBROJENIA SŁOWIAN ZACHODNICH WE WCZESNYM ŚREDNIOWIECZU. KILKA UWAG O WZORCACH KULTUROWYCH NA PRZYKŁADZIE TZW. ZESPOŁU KODEKSU WYSZEHRADZKIEGO

Wczesnośredniowieczne uzbrojenie z terenu Europy Środkowej doczekało się już licznych podsumowań. Do jego poznania wykorzystywane są niekiedy źródła ikonograficzne. Jednak kluczowym problemem jest kwestia, czy powstały one na miejscu i w pewnym stopniu wyobrażały miejscową rzeczywistość, czy też były importowane.

Zarówno we wczesnym, jak i późnym średniowieczu jedynym elementem łączącym dzieło z danym obszarem była się osoba finansująca powstanie dzieła, mająca wpływ na jego formę. W przypadku źródeł wczesnośredniowiecznych przedstawienia uzbrojenia zawężone są do konwencji motywów biblijnych i żywotów świętych i rzadko kiedy związane są z fundatorem w sposób bezpośredni. Dlatego też, niejako automatycznie, оголоcone są one z rodzimości tak typowej dla późnośredniowiecznej ikonografii sakralnej. Nie oznacza to jednak, że takich elementów nie ma. Mają one jednak inny, mniej dosłowny charakter, ukryty w doborze wykorzystywanych motywów religijnych, które „przemycaly” elementy kultury dworskiej i rycerskiej, zaczątki której obecne były na dworach Przemyslidów i Piastów już w XI w. Przedstawienia te odzwierciedlać mogą więc aspiracje władców zachodniosłowiańskich w zakresie kultury dworskiej i rycerskiej.

Dlatego już na etapie doboru źródeł ikonograficznych służących przeprowadzeniu analizy ukazanego w nich uzbrojenia można uwzględnić dzieła powstałe poza Europą Środkową. Celem badań nie musi być więc identyfikacja „uzbrojenia Słowian Zachodnich”, ale określenie wzorca kulturowego ikonografii broni, z którą Słowianie mieli styczność, który wyrażał ich aspiracje oraz inspirował obyczaj rycerski i ceremoniał dworski. I tylko w takim sensie dzieła te mogą być



źródłem do poszerzenia wiedzy o wczesnośredniowiecznym uzbrojeniu Słowian Zachodnich.

Dobrym przykładem omawianych źródeł ikonograficznych jest tzw. zespół Kodeksu wyszehradzkiego. Składa się on z czterech spokrewnionych ze sobą stylistycznie ksiąg liturgicznych powstałych najprawdopodobniej w dwóch ostatnich dekadach XI w. Są to ewangelistaria, dwa przechowywane w Polsce: *Evangelistarium gnieźnieńskie* i *Evangelistarium płockie* oraz dwa w Czechach: *Kodeks wyszehradzki* i *Evangelistarium z katedry św. Wita*.

Kodeks wyszehradzki powstał najprawdopodobniej w związku z koronacją Wratysława II w 1085 r. Zapewne przy okazji tej uroczystości katedra św. Wita otrzymała *evangelistarium*, które porusza tematykę apokaliptyczną. Mniej więcej w tym samym czasie powstały i dotarły do Polski *Evangelistaria gnieźnieńskie* i *płockie*, co było wynikiem ówczesnych silnych związków rodzinnych i politycznych Przemyślidów i Piastów.

Zapotrzebowanie na dworski i rycerski wzorzec kulturowy otoczenie Wratysława II i Władysława Hermana zaspokoić mogło zawartymi w wymienianych kodeksach scenami ukazującymi majestat władzy poprzez gesty czynione przy użyciu włóczni (fig. 1, 9b) i miecza (fig. 2–7, por. fig. 8).

Wątki zawarte w tzw. zespole Kodeksu wyszehradzkiego, poza swym czysto religijnym i dydaktycznym wydźwiękiem, ocierały się o ideologię rycerską, której ważnymi elementami było odwoływanie się do idei męczeństwa oraz obrony słabych. Miecz i włócznia pełnią tu pierwszoplanową rolę.

Ponieważ w księgach liturgicznych najistotniejszy był aspekt religijny, włócznia stanowi pierwszoplanowy symbol męczeństwa, śmierci i zmartwychwstania. Broń rycerska (miecz, włócznia, hełm i tarcza) wpleciona została także w cykl pasyjny (fig. 10–15). Oceniając uzbrojenie występujące w tych przedstawieniach, narzuca się standaryzacja stylistyczna broni zaczepnej oraz maniera w zróżnicowanym ukazywaniu uzbrojenia ochronnego: hełmów, detali konstrukcyjnych tarcz i pochew mieczowych.

Szczególnie wymownie znaczenie miecza przedstawione zostało w scenie sądu ostatecznego w *Evangelistarium z katedry św. Wita* (fig. 9a), w której z ust Chrystusa wychodzi miecz symbolizujący jego słowo, a więc jego władzę doczesną i duchową.

Powyższe przykłady scen z uzbrojeniem, chociaż pozornie skromne, niosły ze sobą bardzo silny impuls kulturowy. Należy bowiem zdawać sobie sprawę z faktu, że poza nielicznymi iluminacjami, płaskorzeźbami czy elementami rzemiosła artystycznego, elity zachodniosłowiańskie nie miały styczności z ikonograficznym programem symboliki broni. Nie jest przypadkiem, że motywy ukazywania władzy monarszej, widoczne w omawianych dziełach jak i w innych księgach liturgicznych, obecne też były na wizerunkach władców na monetach i pierwszych pieczęciach.

Tzw. zespół Kodeksu wyszehradzkiego traktowany może być jako źródło do poznania aspiracji w zakresie manifestowania majestatu przez zachodnio-

słowiańskich władców i raczej tylko w takim kontekście należy interpretować zawarte w nim przedstawienia uzbrojenia. Nowe wzorce kulturowe płynące z Zachodu także za sprawą iluminowanych kodeksów wzmacniały nacisk, jaki zaczęto w końcu XI w. przykładać do obyczaju rycerskiego i ceremoniału dworskiego. I właśnie z tego czasu pochodzą najwcześniejsze wzmianki o aktach pasowania na rycerza stanowiącego centralny punkt nowego, rycerskiego pojmowania symboliki broni.