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## CAROLINGIAN INFLUENCES ON THE WEST SLAVS' ARMS AND ARMOUR

In the Carolingian period the influences exerted on the West Slavs' arms and armour by both the eastern and the western circles are visible. The nomadic finds gradually become more and more scarce as we move away from the territories occupied by the Avars. They seem to be limited to thrown weapons and elements of the horse harness. The Carolingian influences are to be noticed in the following specimen categories: swords, sword accessories, spearheads, lanceheads, stirrups, spurs and spur accessories. Besides the Carolingian type armaments only belt fittings, folding knives, the so called razors and, on a limited area, decorative elements appear in greater numbers, other articles can hardly ever be found. In addition to original Carolingian products and their local copies, Carolingian influences can be noticed in the production of hooked spurs, especially the prick-pointed ones, and ornaments.

The relations between the West Slavs and Carolingian culture had clear-cut cultural consequences. Several models depending on numerous and complex factors can be distinguished here. The first one, in the sphere of production, is characterized by the lack of reaction to "import" and is typical for the areas situated around the Havel and in Northern Little Poland in the Early Carolingian period. The influx of imported goods is very small there and the period of their influence should also be short.

As far as the second model is concerned Carolingian "re-imports" from other areas may only be noticed. Scandinavia was the original importer for the seaside zone except Vagria. It should be stressed that the ranges of Carolingian and Scandinavian imports, as well as of Byzantine-Oriental coins are more or less equal in the seaside zone. The saturation with Carolingian elements is relatively big here. In Upper Silesia and in Little Poland the familiarity with late Carolingian goods was a result of numerous contacts with Great Moravia. The territorial range of the west-type specimens more or less corresponds to the area where Great Moravian finds appear and the zone of non-metal hatchet-like coins.

Starting of the imitative production is characteristic of the third model. Two variants may be distinguished here. In the first one local production reflects changes occurring in Western Europe. Therefore a great variety of

types, variations etc. belonging to the same category of specimens may be observed. The second variation is characterized by a small number of classification units. In the first variant the whole range of intensiveness of Carolingian influences may be noticed. Vagria, where the Carolingian influences affected all spheres of life, is the first region that must be mentioned here. Great Moravia, precisely the original Moravian and Slovakian territories, is the next one. Bohemia is not so strongly affected by the above mentioned influences, though new finds from the Carolingian circle are still being discovered during excavation works on these territories. A "re-import" from Great Moravia may also be the case here. Lower Silesia seems to be the least representative as far as the above discussed variant is concerned. Only relatively primitive imitations of the Carolingian spurs with holes made in the plate for passing the strap and stone rampart constructions have been discovered there so far. In many cases, a differentiation between the original Carolingian products and their local imitations appears to be impossible, especially if one has to do with a relatively simple article. Nonetheless, there is no conclusive evidence pointing to the imitative production of swords undertaken by the West Slavs in the discussed period.

The second variant of the discussed model has not been discovered on the territories inhabited by the West Slavs. However, its appearance has been proved in the case of the South Slavs, mainly on the territory of Croatia, and, to some extent, of the Pannonian Slavs, too. The buckle-spur type, which had already been known at the end of the 8th century, was still being imitated in the second half of the 9th century there. The production of this type of spurs was not stopped even at the end of the 9th century, when the long prick point appeared and some important far-reaching changes in the form of spurs occurred in Europe.

The reasons that determined the emergence of a given model appear to be quite complex. Nonetheless, several factors of considerable importance may be enumerated. The intensiveness and span of mutual relations and contacts, local cultural conditions, the level of development of the means of production, the mineral resources, the stage of social and political organization, public demand as well as location, namely the distance

from the borders of the Carolingian monarchy, played an important role in the formation of particular models. The role of the last factor could be reduced, to a certain extent, by the preceding ones, however, some limitations may be noticed. Carolingian influences cover a more or less meridian stripe of land only about 250 km wide. The finds do not become scarcer if one moves away from the Carolingian border. Dense concentrations of ornamental elements appear mainly in the regions where the formation of supratribal organisms took place.

The Carolingian influences concerning the production of hooked spurs cannot be fully included into any of the above mentioned models. Although a mutual dependence between the intensiveness of contacts and the Carolingian features of hooked spurs may be stated, the latter frequently appear on the territories where no Carolingian imports have been discovered so far. The above mentioned territories, namely Northern Great Poland and the district of Chełmno, may have constituted the hooked spurs production centre. Where did the Carolingian influences manifested in artistic ornaments and certain forms of hooked spurs' prick points visible in this region come from? J. Żak, fascinated by the discoveries made on the territory of Croatia, speaks in favour of southern influences. A considerable distance between Croatia and Great Poland, the lack of any contacts with the North as far as other spheres of life are concerned, as well as lack of any items decorated with artistic ornaments on the territories dividing the discussed territories, especially in Great Moravia, seem to refute this thesis. The objects decorated with the characteristic artistic ornamentation, which appear in nearer Lower Silesia (the spur with holes in the plate for passing the strap found in Kamieńsk, the province of Wałbrzych), are scarce. No hooked spurs can be found on this territory, the Tornow-Klenica zone being an exception here. This fact eliminates the possibility of any close relations between contemporary Silesia and Great Poland. An indirect influence from Scandinavia can hardly be the case, as in the Carolingian period the role of spurs was a minor one there. In addition, the articles decorated with artistic ornaments and classified as Early Carolingian finds are scarcely present on Scandinavian territories.

The spurs decorated with artistic ornaments are quite common on Frisian territories. As some close relations between the West Slavs of the Baltic zone and the Frisian region developed at that time, an indirect influence of Carolingian elements on the hooked spurs of Great Poland might be the case here.

However, all the attempts at a more precise specification of the circumstances in which the Carolingian "imports" appeared on the territories inhabited by the West Slavs seem to be untimely. Although different events such as armed conflicts, political meetings, trade relations and others which could result in the penetration of Carolingian goods into Slavonic territories are known from the written sources, it is still too early to match the finds with particular historical events. It may only be added that the bans imposed on weapon trade

appeared to be extremely ineffective, as they recur in the capitularies of successive Carolingian rulers.

In a retrospective view the effect of the Carolingian influences exerted on the West Slavs appears to be a transitory one, devoid of any considerable importance for their cultural development in the following centuries. Great Moravia is the most striking example here. Although in the 10th century the culture of a given territory seems to be related to that of the preceding period, but this is the effect of Ottonian influences that is the case here. The death of the last representative of the Carolingian dynasty at the beginning of the 10th century did not result in a decline of Carolingian culture. The Ottonian Empire took over and, in many spheres of life, carefully cultivated Carolingian traditions. It is not accidental that the new-formed West-Slavonic states borrow from Carolingian tradition via the Ottonian Empire.

*Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra*