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**THE HUSSITES OR THE TARTARS?
THE SECRET OF THE DEPICTIONS OF HELMETS
IN THE BATTLE SCENES OF ST HEDWIG'S ALTARPIECE
IN THE BERNARDINE CHURCH IN WROCLAW**

Abstract: St Hedwig's Altarpiece, or the so-called: „Bernardine Panels”, was created c. 1430-1440. The panels depict the Mongol (Tartar) invasion and the Battle of Legnica in 1241. All warriors are armed in accordance with Western standards of the time when this work of art came into existence. The Tartars can be recognised by their coat of arms and the stylisation of helmets and offensive weapons. The heraldic charge of their army is a pointed hat or kettle hat with a long spike. Not only this Tartar sign but also kettle hats used by the Tartars were recognised as „typical Hussite hats”, despite their different form and curved spikes. A supposed aim was to make the viewers associate the Tartar invasion with the Hussite threat. In fact, we do not know any specific hat or iron hat that can be considered as „typical of the Hussites”. Much earlier scenes of the Battle of Legnica from the manuscript *Vita beatae Hedwigis* from 1353 show the same way of stylisation of the Tartar helmets. There is no reason to assume that spiked iron hats from the Bernardine Panels are somehow connected with the Hussites. The spiked hat pictured on the banner is similar to late medieval Jewish hat. It can be recognised as a symbol of religious dissenters or peoples of the East. According to the analysis, none of the forms of kettle hats or hats shown on the Bernardine Panels can be reasonably considered „typically Hussite”, either with regard to arms or history of clothing and textiles.

Keywords: battle of Legnica, St Hedwig's Altarpiece, Tartars, Hussites, Silesia, iron hat, kettle hat, spiked iron hat, spiked hat, Jewish hat

Only two wings of the 15th century altar of St Hedwig of Silesia have survived until today. They are kept in the National Museum in Warsaw. They were brought there from the Bernardine Church in Wrocław¹, which is why they are sometimes referred to as the Bernardine Panels. The monastery church, however, is only the last known location of the altarpiece. There are different hypotheses about its previous, perhaps original location in Wrocław: the Church of the Holy Spirit² (demolished in 1597) or the Franciscan St Jacob's Church³. There are also different

ideas about the date of its creation. It is usually estimated as c. 1430-1440⁴, with some attempts at offering a more precise date, such as c. 1430⁵ or 1440⁶.

Defensive arms can be seen in three battle scenes on one of the panels, which depict the Tartar incursion into Silesia in 1241. Two of its fields are devoted to the battle itself, and one presents the siege of Legnica. An early stage of the battle can be seen on frame V (Fig. 1), the death of Henry II the Pious - on frame VI (Fig. 2), while the siege

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¹ Ziomecka 2004, 294.

² Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 101; Ziomecka 2004, 294.

³ Kostowski 1995.

⁴ Dobrowolski 1936, 85-185.

⁵ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 101; Ziomecka 1967, 106-174. This date is popular in hopological studies (Żygulski jun. 1975, 146; Nowakowski 1994, 57-58; Heś 2007, 50). However, the years 1430-1440 are also taken into consideration (Żygulski jun. 1996, 53; Grabarczyk and Ławrynowicz 2010, 235).

⁶ Ziomecka 2004, 292, 294.



Fig. 1. *Battle of Legnica*. Bernardine Panels. Frame V, c. 1430-1440. National Museum in Warsaw. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw.



Fig. 2. *Battle of Legnica*. Bernardine Panels. Frame VI, c. 1430-1440. National Museum in Warsaw. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw.



Fig. 3. *Siege of Legnica*. Bernardine Panels. Frame VII. c. 1430-1440. National Museum in Warsaw. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw.

of Legnica is depicted on frame VII (Fig. 3). The depictions of weapons have repeatedly drawn the attention of hoplologists, which is why the paintings in question are mentioned in general publications about 15th century arms⁷. The weapons presented in battle scenes are also of interest to art historians⁸. A special role in these interpretations is played by the depictions of kettle hats.

In analyses of arms, the fact that some of the depicted headgear types were assumed to be symbolically connected with the Hussites is of particular significance. A supposed aim was to make the viewers associate the Tartar invasion with the Hussite threat⁹. In his opinion-forming work on arms, an eminent Polish hoplologist and art historian Zdzisław Żygulski jun. even mentions a Hussite hat, referring to arms representations in another version of the legend of St Hedwig of Silesia. This version was created in the style of the 15th century, i.e., two centuries after the events in question. He says: „Perhaps the aim was to associate the Tartars with the Hussites, who were dangerous at the time (1430), which is also indicated by the Hussite sign/hat that this time can be seen on their standard”¹⁰.

A special symbolic significance was attached to the depiction on the Tartar standard (Fig. 4), which was considered to be the image of „an iron hat typical of the Hussites”¹¹. However, one gets an impression that this opinion has been rather freely interpreted over time. The „Hussite sign/hat” in question was also described in later monographs as the „Hussite iron hat”¹². Not only this Tartar sign but also kettle hats used by the Tartars, were recognised as Hussite hats, despite their different form¹³. This is confirmed by, among others, the following museum description of the altar: „What draws attention is the fact that the Tartars wear 15th century Western armours. Some of them stand out thanks to their pointed *hats*, similar to the Hussite ones. It is believed that the aim of this stylisation was to identify the Tartars with the then *enemies of the faith*, i.e., the Hussites. The Hussite Wars were fought for several years in the territory of Silesia at the end of the 1420s and at the beginning of the 1430s”¹⁴.

After the publication of the book of Zdzisław Żygulski jun. no one (with few exceptions¹⁵) has questioned the opinion connecting the depictions of kettle hats with the actual form of Hussite hats. This identification, however, is based on earlier assumptions of art historians who were

⁷ Żygulski jun. 1975, 145-146; Heś 2007, 50.

⁸ Tunk 1941, 200; Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 102-105; Kostowski 1995, Ziomecka 2004, 294.

⁹ Żygulski jun. 1975, 146; Kostowski 1991, 41; Kostowski 1995; Kostowski 2004, 112; Ziomecka 2004, 294; dMuseion 2017.

¹⁰ Żygulski jun. 1975, 146.

¹¹ Kostowski 2001, 15; Kostowski 2004, 112; Ziomecka 2004, 294.

¹² Kostowski 1991; Ziomecka 2004, 294.

¹³ dMuseion 2017.

¹⁴ dMuseion 2017.

¹⁵ Wasiak 2009, 62-64; Wasiak 2012, 211-217.



Fig. 4. Tartar banner on the Bernardine Panels. A: frame V, B: frame VI, C: frame VII. c. 1430-1440. National Museum in Warsaw. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw.

intrigued by the image of a hat or a kettle hat on the Tartar standard¹⁶. Even Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa indicated that it could be treated merely as a symbol of a different faith of the army fighting under such a standard¹⁷. She believed that Walther Tunk's opinion about the allusive nature of the symbol which should be connected with the Hussites¹⁸, was an interesting hypothesis yet difficult to confirm¹⁹. In this context, it would be difficult to treat these statements as justifying the assumption that the work in question presents kettle hats which are characteristic of the Hussites. Considering the discrepancies between different interpretations of the Polyptych and its description, it is worth carrying out a new analysis, particularly with regard to the hats and kettle hats it presents.

The Hussite military had an enormous impact on the European warfare²⁰. Thus, the possibility of getting to know the arms of the „warriors of God” better seems particularly important. All the more so because their arms are of significance to the determination of how the Hussite Wars were perceived in the art of the era.

It is very characteristic of the images on the Bernardine Panels that both armies are equipped with weapons resembling 15th century European arms²¹, with very little ethnic stylisation²². With regard to helmets, more kettle hats can be seen in the Tartar troops; however, they can also be

found in the army of Henry the Pious. The armies were depicted in a different manner with regard to this detail only in the scene showing the siege of Legnica (see Fig. 3). Seven clearly visible helmets of the invaders are iron hats, whereas three figures of the defenders wear basinets. Two field battle scenes are not entirely unambiguous in this respect. On frame V, which shows the beginning of the Battle of Legnica, there are five kettle hats for every fifteen discernible types of helmets (see Fig. 1). In the Christian army, this ratio is 4 to 16. On the sixth frame, which depicts the death of Henry the Pious, there are only three kettle hats. One of these definitely belongs to a Christian, while one or, more probably, two belong to Tartar warriors (see Fig. 2). It seems therefore that the artist pictured such helmets as similarly popular in both armies. Moreover, kettle hats are in minority among Tartar helmet types. In the scene on frame VI there are very few of them. Thus, it would be difficult to treat kettle hats as helmets that the artist ascribes to the Hussites only.

When we inspect other kinds of arms, we can see that nearly all warriors wear full suits of armour, in several cases covered with robes (Fig. 1-3). Parties to the conflict are mostly distinguished with the shape of skull tops and offensive weapons, which was mentioned in many earlier studies²³. Zdzisław Żygulski jun. noted that the invading army was characterised by „overly spiked helmets” and „curved falchions”²⁴. The warriors mostly wear open helmets: kettle hats and basinets. However, in the battle scenes one can also see some Christian knights with frog-mouth helmets, and visored basinets are used by both armies. Kettle hats, basinets, and visored basinets are in most cases of similar or identical types. Almost all those belonging to the Tartars²⁵

¹⁶ Tunk 1941, 200; Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 103-105. In similar scenes presenting the legend of St Hedwig, Tartar army use different symbols. In *Vita beatae Hedwigis* from 1353, the Tartar symbol was a head – the image of the ruler, while in *Hoerning Codex* from c. 1451 it was a Moor's head. Moreover, a similar stylistic rule was applied: Both sides of the conflict were depicted as wearing protective arms in the European style, and the Tartars were distinguished with more pointed helmets and certain types of offensive weapons. The Tartars use bows and curved long-bladed weapons. On the Bernardine Panels, however, such a weapon can also be seen in the hand of a warrior from the Polish duke's army.

¹⁷ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 104-105.

¹⁸ Tunk 1941, 200.

¹⁹ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 105.

²⁰ Edge and Paddock 1991, 96.

²¹ Żygulski jun. 1975, 146.

²² Wasiak 2009, 64; Wasiak 2012, 211, 218-221.

²³ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 93-105; Wawrzonowska and Kajzer 1969, 509-517.

²⁴ Żygulski jun. 1975, 146.

²⁵ For example, warriors of the Tartar army fighting with lances in both field battle scenes have kettle hats without spikes. In several cases, and particularly on the sixth field, it is difficult to determine whether the pointedness of the helmet skull imitates its original shape or is an element of ethnographic stylisation.



Fig. 5. *The Battle of Legnica, Vita beatae Hedwigis (Codex of Lubin), 1353, J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu. After <http://www.7cudow.eu/en/eksponaty/kodeks-lubinski/> (5 November 2017).*

have prolonged skulls ending with curved spikes. A similar stylisation of both armies can be found in *Hoernig's Codex* from c. 1451 and in *Vita beatae Hedwigis* dated to 1353²⁶. However, what is more significant to the interpretation of arms presented in the battle scenes on the Bernardine Panels (see Fig. 1-3) is their comparison with the scenes from *Vita beatae Hedwigis* funded by Louis I of Brzeg (Fig. 5)²⁷. Both iconographic materials distinguish between warriors armed in accordance with Western standards of the time when the discussed works of art were created. What is used, apart from the signs carried by warriors, is stylisation of helmets and offensive weapons. The fact that the battle scenes from the Bernardine Panels were created later indicates copying the method adopted in *Vita beatae Hedwigis*.

The hat or kettle hat which is the already mentioned sign on the invading army's standard also has a spike that brings to mind the way Tartar helmets were depicted. An extremely important element of the stylisation of the battle scenes on the Bernardine Panels seems to be the difference between the straight spikes from the standard and the curved spikes decorating helmets (see Fig. 4). These are the only elements of defensive arms allowing to distinguish warriors on both sides of the conflict. An exception is the scene with the siege of Legnica, where kettle hats are only worn by the Tartar army.

Kettle hats, i.e., iron hats, are considered to have been very popular headgear in Central Europe in the first half of the 15th century²⁸. It comes as no surprise that they also enjoyed a good reputation in the Hussite army. Kettle hats as military helmets took different forms, frequently refer-

ring to civilian hats²⁹. Most Tartar kettle hats shown on the Bernardine Panels have relatively narrow and clearly distinguished brims. Their skulls resemble those of many basinets worn by the Tartars. Both types of helmets worn by the invaders have distinctive spikes, which are curved towards the front. This seems to be a characteristic element which is worth discussing in the context of the historical material.

Spiked kettle hats were also used in the territory of Poland. An example of this form is the characteristic find from the Army Museum in Białystok. It is usually described as a kettle hat from Olsztynek in northern Poland³⁰. The distinctive skull of this helmet is almost identical in shape with the helmet from Elbląg³¹. Very interesting examples of kettle hats with distinct spikes are mentioned by Mathias Goll³². It is worth mentioning two of them. The first one is stored in the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen and is dated by the catalogue's author to 1450-1470³³ (Fig. 6a). The second one, also dated to 1450-1470³⁴, was sold on auction of Galerie Fischer in Lucerne³⁵ (Fig. 6b). The last helmet has a similarly flat and clearly distinguished brim, roll-like skull and a distinct, tall spike (Fig. 6b). The distinctive skull of the helmet from Copenhagen (Fig. 6a) is similar to those of two other kettle hats from Olsztynek and another one from Elbląg. These examples prove that it is necessary to conduct more in-depth studies on the issue in question, and in-

²⁶ Wawrzonowska and Kajzer 1969, 509-517.

²⁷ Wawrzonowska and Kajzer 1969; Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972.

²⁸ Nowakowski 1990, 53, 54-55; Nowakowski 1998, 74-75; Grabarczyk and Ławrynowicz 2010, 230-23.

²⁹ Wasiak 2009, 62, 63-64.

³⁰ Wap 1994; Ławrynowicz 2009; Grabarczyk and Ławrynowicz 2010, 233.

³¹ The authenticity of that helmet is sometimes considered as questionable (Marek 2014, 211).

³² Goll 2013.

³³ Goll 2013. ref. arm. 1371.

³⁴ Goll 2013. ref. arm. 4481.

³⁵ Galerie Fischer Auktionen, lot 8439, June 6, 1994.



Fig. 6. Kettle hats with spikes: a: c. 1450-1470. After Goll 2013 ref. arm. 371; b: c. 1450-1470, Lucerne. After Goll 2013, ref. arm 4481.



Fig. 7. Kettle hats with curved spikes: a: Leeds. After Goll 2013, ref. arm. 1375; b: Kunsthistorisches Museum: Hofjagd-und Rüstkammer. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of the Hofjagd-und Rüstkammer of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

indicate a potential multiplicity of kettle hat forms³⁶, which should be taken into consideration when analysing iconographic sources. Depictions of iron hats with different forms of spikes are quite common³⁷. Forms of their spikes,

³⁶ The spiked helmets seem to be not uncommon. For instance, we can mention examples from the Déri Múzeum in Debrecen in Hungary (Kalmár 1971, 267-268, Fig. 30) and the publication of W. Wildbrand (1915-1917, 269-271, Fig. 1; 3-4).

³⁷ A kettle hat with a spike appears in *Eneide* of Henrich of Valdeke dated to c. 1418 (Codex... 1419, 149v). Different forms of small spikes were depicted in *Bellifortis* of Konrad Kyeser dated to 1405 (Drobná et al. 1956, vol. II, tab. 29-30). Sometimes kettle hats are shown with spikes topped with a kind of pom-pom (Viollet-le-Duc 1875, 280).

however, differ from the curved ones on the helmets of the Tartar army. Small curved spikes are found on West European kettle hats, but they are associated with the Spanish army from the second half of the 15th century. An example of such a helmet from 1470-1500 can be seen in the Royal Armoury in Leeds³⁸ (Fig. 7:a). In this case, however, similarity to helmets from the battle scenes of St Hedwig's Altarpiece is accidental. They also differ in terms of general composition and especially the brim. What is particularly important is the fact that the distinct spike is curved towards the back. This is confirmed by, among other things,

³⁸ Inv. no. IV.500.

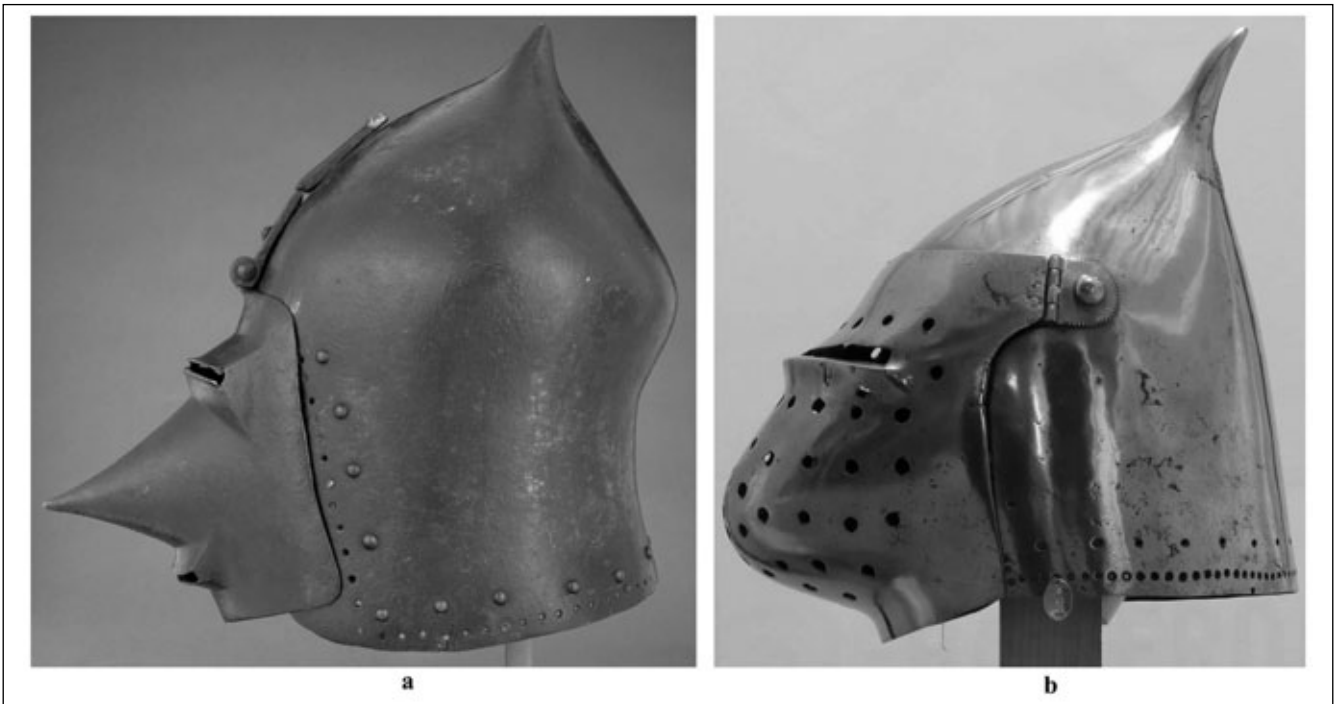


Fig. 8. Visored basinet with spikes. a: c. 1400-1420, New York, Metropolitan Museum (no. inv.: 04.3.238. After <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/25393> [20 March 2016]; b: turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. After Goll 2013, ref. arm. 1551.

an analysis of a different example of this type, which is kept in the Museum in Vienna (Fig. 7:b).

On the fields of St Hedwig's Altarpiece, the skulls of Tartar kettle hats are usually almost identical to the basinet and visored basinet shown next to them. 15th century helmets also include forms with clearly distinct or even curved spikes as well as skulls in the form of basinet. They can be found on helmets associated with the German and French military. An example of the former, dated to c. 1400-1420³⁹, can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum (inv. no. 04.3.238) (Fig. 8:a). A different spiked visored helmet from the turn of the 15th century can be found in the Musée de l'Armée in Paris (Fig. 8:b)⁴⁰. Helmets from the Silesian iconography⁴¹ whose form is similar to the skull of the visored helmet from the Museum of the History of Toruń⁴² also have straight and clearly distinct spikes. None of the above helmet types, however, can be considered as typical of the Hussites. Forms of their spikes are also very different from the ones shown on the Bernardine Panels. The latter ones are almost identical, even on different helmet types, which might suggest that they are just a form of artistic expression.

³⁹ A very similar helmet, dated to the end of the 14th century or the beginning of the 15th century, is kept in the Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg; Klučina 2004, 357.

⁴⁰ Klučina 2004, 355.

⁴¹ Głosek and Wasiak 2011, 126-154.

⁴² Głosek and Nowakowski 1980, 53-61; Głosek and Wasiak 2011, 126-154.

The idea connecting the Tartar arms from St Hedwig's Altarpiece with the Hussites most probably came from the interpretation of the image of a hat or a kettle hat as the charge of the coat of arms of the invading army⁴³. In later works, the symbol on the standard was recognised as the „Hussite iron hat”, i.e., a helmet⁴⁴.

The symbol of the Tartars on the Bernardine Panels is a helmet with a cylindrical skull and a flat wide brim. It is provided with a very distinct spike (Fig. 4). The whole brings to mind the already mentioned helmet from the auction of the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne (Fig. 6:b). Its origin and authenticity is still questionable, but it was dated by M. Goll to c. 1450-1470⁴⁵. Apart from the already mentioned distinct spike, similar depictions are quite common in medieval iconography. One of the most interesting images of such kettle hats can be found on the altarpiece of Albert II of Germany from c. 1439, where they are worn by angels and Mary. The altar scene from Klosterneuburg (Fig. 9) raises reasonable doubts as to whether such a form of kettle hat can be considered „typical of the Hussites”⁴⁶.

None of the helmets presented allegedly in order to stylise the Tartars as the Hussites resembles the sign on the standard. If a helmet typical of this army had been intentionally used, its soldiers would have undoubtedly been equipped with such helmets.

⁴³ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 112; Żygulski 1975, 146.

⁴⁴ Kostowski 1991, 41; Kostowski 1995, 321-337.

⁴⁵ Goll 2013, ref. arm 4481.

⁴⁶ Wasiak 2012, 212-214.



Fig. 9. Helmets from altar's frames of Albert II of Germany, c. 1439. Klosterneuburg, Austria. Photo W. Wasiak, courtesy of Stift Klosterneuburg.

The hat recognised by Zdzisław Żygulski jun. as the Hussite hat can be seen on the Tartar standard in all three battle scenes. Moreover, during the initial stage of the battle on frame V, it is painted on the shield of the Tartar leader or hero (see Fig. 1). This is a characteristic example of „iconography within iconography”, serving as a symbol and identification of this army. In the army of the Polish duke, the same role is played by the eagle of the Silesian Piasts, depicted on the standard and the duke's shield.

It is difficult to say whether the Tartar sign was intended as a kettle hat or a hat (an element of ordinary clothing). Its form is exceptionally distinct (Fig. 4). The cylindrical skull of the hat has a pointed top resembling a reverse funnel, separated from the base with a horizontal, sharp edge of the fold. The characteristic spike on the top does not refer to slightly curved spikes decorating the skulls of nomadic helmets. The brim is also very distinct, with a folded belt used to secure the headgear under the chin.

The form of the hat on the Tartar standard resembles medieval depictions of Jewish hats⁴⁷, with the exception that they did not have bobbles or balls on the end of their spikes. Silesian sources, and particularly the lists of weaponry stored in the town of Głogów, mention a helmet called the Jewish hat (*judenhutt*). However, the meaning of the term is not clear as it can refer to the surface finishing (painting or covering with fabric) or the shape resembling an element of Jewish clothing⁴⁸.

In the 15th century iconography, a hat or different headgear used as a heraldic symbol on a standard is not very unusual. The sign in question is similar to the already mentioned Jewish hats. The most prominent difference is the lack of balls on the tops of their spikes. Jewish hats can be found in iconography as headgear, and also as a heraldic symbol⁴⁹ frequently presented on standards. One could list their numerous representations in passion scenes. A very



Fig. 10. Jewish hat on a banner. *Crucifixion* by Thomas of Kolozsvár. C. 1427. After Takács 2006, 581.

similar depiction can be seen on *Crucifixion* by Thomas of Kolozsvár, created c. 1427 for the Benedictine abbey in the village of Hronský Beňadik⁵⁰ in present-day Slovakia (Fig. 10). The form of the hat is very similar to the sign on the Tartar standards from the Bernardine Panels. Both banners show yellow⁵¹ charges on the red field. A red Jewish hat on a green background is depicted in a painting from Kempten in the Bavarian part of Swabia, dated to c. 1460-1470 (Fig. 11)⁵². It has a fastening belt arranged in the same way as the one being the sign on the Bernardine Panels.

⁵⁰ Now in Keresztény Múzeum (Christian Museum) in Esztergom, Hungary.

⁵¹ We cannot call them gold. They may show the yellow colour often associated with the religious dissenters.

⁵² Strange 1957, 210. A very similar convention was followed in the case of *The Passion* from Munderkingen, dated to c. 1473,

⁴⁷ Lipton 1999, 15-19; Wasiak 2012, 212-217.

⁴⁸ Goliński 1990, 14; Heś 2006, 34.

⁴⁹ Wasiak 2012, 212-217.



Fig. 11. Jewish hat on a banner. *Crucifixion* from Kempten. C. 1460-1470. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, deposit of Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen inv. No. GM 879. After: Objektkatalog der Sammlungen des Germanischen Nationalmuseums: <http://objektkatalog.gnm.de/objekt/Gm879> (12 Nov. 2017).



Fig. 12. Jewish hat on the banner of the Jewish army. *Siege of town*. St. Venceslaus Bible. C. 1390, After Iwańczak 1985, Fig. 32.

The mentioned examples show headgear, and not military helmets⁵³. A depiction from the Bible of Wenceslaus IV from c. 1390⁵⁴ is a similar case. There, such a sign in black, with a fastening belt, is shown on the yellow standard of the Israelites besieging a city (Fig. 12). However, none of the armed Israelites has a helmet that would be even slightly similar in form. Thus, this is another symbol which is an element of clothing and not armour. This also proves that a standard with a Jewish hat may be a symbol of an army which was positively perceived in the Middle Ages⁵⁵.

Very similar imagery, confusingly similar to the Israelites' standard, can also be used in a completely different context. In the scene showing the legend of St Ursula on the murals from St Valentine's Church in Termeno in South Tyrol, dated to c. 1410-1420, a yellow standard with a black hat is presented as a symbol of the Hun army (Fig. 13). In this case, the hat has a curved spike resembling the top of the textile headgear worn by the barbarians. One can

also see eye slits in the brim and a vestigial nose guard. Such a solution was used in the helmet of one of the angels from the altarpiece of Albert II of Germany from c. 1439 (see Fig. 9). The hat on the Hun standard in the mural in Termeno, similarly to the Tartar headgear on the Bernardine Panels, has a fastening belt or cord. In the scene of St Ursula's martyrdom, however, it closely resembles the cord of cardinal's hats. Most probably, the Hun sign freely combines the characteristics of a helmet and civilian headgear, only referring to known symbols enriched by the artist's invention. It can be assumed that it was not important to the artist whether he depicted a kettle hat or a hat. Other forms than those resembling a hat served similar purposes. Pointed headgear as a symbol of peoples from the East can also be found in Bern Cathedral on a stained glass window from c. 1447 depicting the battle on the Euphrates (Fig. 14)⁵⁶.

The use of headgear, and particularly a hat, as a heraldic symbol seems to be a well-established stylistic method, especially with regard to eastern peoples. The representation of the Hun army from Termeno (see Fig. 13) indicates

currently kept in the Ulmer Museum in Ulm. In the Resurrection scene, a Jewish hat can be seen on the seal on Christ's tomb.

⁵³ Wasiak 2012, 212-213, 217.

⁵⁴ Iwańczak 1985, Fig. 32.

⁵⁵ Wasiak 2012, 214-216.

⁵⁶ Mojon 1960, 260, Fig. 263b, 262-264.



Fig. 13. Hat as a symbol of the Hun army. Legend of St. Ursula, c. 1410-1420. St. Valentine's Church, Tramin, Italy. After S. Spada Pintarelli and M. E. Smith 1997.

a possibility of applying rather free stylisation of this emblem, combining the characteristics of a helmet and clothing. Thus, the fact that one of such forms is present on the Altar of St Hedwig's Legend as a sign of the Tartars does not seem very surprising.

To sum up, it has to be emphasised that none of the forms of kettle hats or hats shown on the Bernardine Panels can be reasonably considered „typically Hussite”, with regard to either arms or history of clothing and textiles. As we have demonstrated above, kettle hats are not the dominant type of helmets in the Tartar army, except for the scene of the siege of Legnica. The form of stylised helmets differs from the form of the hat serving as the Tartar sign whose image seems to be intentionally different from the arms used in the battle. Both categories of



Fig. 14. Pointed headgear as a symbol of peoples from the East. Battle on the Euphrates, c1447. Stained glass window in Bern Cathedral. After http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Katedralo_de_Berno (8 June 2017).



Fig. 15. Allegory of Infidelity, c. 1305, The Seven Vices, The Scrovegni Chapel (*Cappella degli Scrovegni*), Padua. After https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto_di_Bondone_-_No._49_The_Seven_Vices_-_Infidelity_-_WGA09276.jpg (8 June 2017).

depictions should be thus assessed separately, based on different criteria.

Nearly all Tartar kettle hats have slightly curved spikes, thus imitating the style known from *Vita beatae Hedwigis* from 1353. The same stylisation was applied to other types of helmets worn by warriors of this army. There is no reason to assume that this is somehow connected with the Hussites. This category of images should be thus excluded from deliberations about the anti-Hussite motivation of the author.

Similar doubts are raised by the mysterious hat depicted on the Tartar standard. There is no reason to treat it as a form characteristic of the Hussites. Thus, despite the previous opinions which were mentioned above, neither the kettle hats nor the „hat sign” depicted on the discussed work of art can be treated as characteristic of only their army. A kettle hat form that could be recognised as typically Hussite has not been credibly defined yet.

The pointed hat form, as suggested by Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa⁵⁷, can refer to both strangeness of the invaders and perhaps their heretical or infidel character. Only in this way – theoretically, indirectly, through associations with infidels – could it allude to the Hussite Wars. However, it has to be emphasised that this potentially anti-Hussite propaganda message of the work is not conveyed by any reference to a specific type of kettle hats used by the Hussites⁵⁸. The term „Hussite hat”⁵⁹ used with regard to the Tartar army’s sign should not be considered related to hopology or costume studies. The alleged Hussite character of the sign can only result from an association with a rather universal symbol of infidels. Karłowska-Kamzowa cites an example of allegorical stylisation of the figure shown in *Infidelity* from the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, dated to c. 1305⁶⁰. Giotto’s *Infidelitas* wears a hat which is considered similar by this scholar. In fact, the morphological similarity seems very general (Fig. 15). What both examples of headgear have mostly in common is the fact that they are decorated with protruding, oblong elements. In the case of *Infidelitas* it is a crest.

At the present stage of research it can be assumed that the sign depicted on the Tartar standards on the Bernardine Panels serves as a substitute coat of arms to be associated with eastern peoples and cultural strangeness. Recognising its form as typical of the Hussites or even as an intentional image of a specific type of an iron hat⁶¹ is only a result of

a misunderstanding. The mention of a universal symbol of infidels, in this case being perhaps an allusion to the threat of the heretic Hussites, gave rise to the myth of iconographic documentation of the alleged Hussite-style kettle hat. As one can see, Polish literature did not mention it, and the Tartar sign was treated more as artistic stylisation which was only present in art. This is of no great significance to the speculations about the anti-Hussite propaganda function of the battle scenes on the Bernardine Panels. This idea still remains a guess which is based on the artistic stylisation in question.

Finally, it is worth emphasising an importance of precision in using hopological terms. The above discussion gives a perfect opportunity to raise this issue. The notion „Hussite hat” meant „a hat that maybe in this case symbolises the heretic Hussites”. Unfortunately, this figure of speech was literally interpreted as a scientific, hopological term meaning: „a specific type of hat or iron hat, typical of the Hussites”. This „non-existing, phantom type of helmet” was also treated as a proof of the anti-Hussite message of the work of art in question. It can be assumed that the way of discussing or quoting interpretative speculations or also require a more careful approach in subsequent scientific publications. Any analysis of historical events brings to mind many accidental associations that can lead to the advancement of „phantom theories”. There is even a specific hat that went down in the history of the Hussite military. However, it was not a Hussite hat but a cardinal’s hat lost by the papal legate Julian Cesarini in the Battle of Domažalice in 1431. Similarly to other cardinal’s insignia, it was exhibited by the Hussites as a war trophy after the battle⁶². Connecting this trophy with the Tartar’s „coat of arms” from the Bernardine Panels can be treated as an interesting academic challenge. However, we would have to consider the curious context in which this work of art was created. Its programme would have to either be based on poor knowledge of the events or result from an attempt to conceal an event that was rather embarrassing to the crusader army. Another similar theory could suggest a biting comment on one of the most important church dignitaries, which would be, for a change, a manifestation of pro-Hussite propaganda. All these interesting assumptions are far-reaching and only serve as examples of possible interpretations. Curiously enough, they are still more justified than recognising any of the helmets or hats on the Bernardine Panels as Hussite.

⁵⁷ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 103-105.

⁵⁸ Wasiak 2012, 211-217.

⁵⁹ Żygulski jun. 1975, 146.

⁶⁰ Karłowska-Kamzowa 1972, 105.

⁶¹ Kostowski 1991, 41; Kostowski 1995, 321-337; Kostowski 2001, 15, 16-17; Kostowski 2004; Ziomecka 2004, 294.

⁶² Bylina 2015, 54-57.

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Streszczenie

Husyci czy Tatarzy?

Tajemnica przedstawień hełmów w scenach batalistycznych ołtarza św. Jadwigi śląskiej z kościoła bernardynów we Wrocławiu

Do naszych czasów zachowały się jedynie dwa skrzydła ołtarza, zwanego „tablicami bernardyńskimi”, datowanego na lata ok. 1430-1440. Uzbrojenie ochronne pojawia się na jednym z nich, w trzech scenach batalistycznych ukazujących zmagania wojsk Henryka II Pobożnego z tatarskimi najeźdźcami, tj. dwie fazy bitwy pod Legnicą w 1241 r. oraz oblężenie miasta. W pracach z zakresu bronioznawstwa oraz historii sztuki szczególną rolę odegrało uznanie przedstawienia kapelusza na chorągwi tatarskiej za symbolizujące, aktualne w czasach powstania dzieła, zagrożenie husyckie. Opinia ta podlegała na przestrzeni czasu dość swobodnej interpretacji. Za „typowo husycki” traktowano nie tylko kapelusz lub hełm ukazany jako tatarski herb, ale także różniące się od niego hełmy, jako stanowiące uzbrojenie Tatarów. Obie formy łączy jedynie stylizacja polegająca na wyposażeniu dzwonów w sterczyny. W przypadku hełmów używanych w walce są to sterczyny zagięte są ku przodowi, w przypadku wizerunku na chorągwi – proste.

Uwaga o uniwersalnym symbolu niewiernych, w tym wypadku być może aluzyjnym wobec zagrożenia ze strony hereetyckich husytów, dała początek mitowi o ikonograficznej dokumentacji rzekomego kapalinu w typie husyckim. W istocie, nigdy nie potwierdzono istnienia właściwej dla husytów odmiany tego niezwykle popularnego w Europie rodzaju hełmu. Forma osłon głów Tatarów wydaje się zaś wynikiem artystycznej stylizacji, opartej na schemacie zastosowanym w analogicznych scenach z pochodzącego z ok. 1353 r. *Kodeksu lubińskiego*.

Przedstawienia szpiczastych nakryć głowy, także jako elementów znaków wojskowych, nie są rzadkością w zachowanych dziełach sztuki późnośredniowiecznej. Na obecnym etapie badań można uznać, że znak Tatarów z „tablicy

bernardyńskiej” pełni rolę herbu zastępczego, mającego kojarzyć się z ludami Wschodu i obcością kulturową. Określenie jego formy jako konkretnego typu hełmu lub odzieży właściwych dla husytów jest jedynie wynikiem nieporozumienia. Ewentualne przypuszczenia na temat skojarzeń z zagrożeniem wojnami husyckimi na Śląsku wynikać mogą jedynie z dość odległego skojarzenia innowierczego charakteru obu armii. Natomiast żadnego, nawet aluzyjnego związku z tym zagadnieniem nie mają osłony głów używane przez Tatarów.