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## MEDIEVAL TILT ARMS AND ARMOUR AND TOURNAMENTS IN POLAND. THE RESEARCH OUTPUT

Our meeting devoted to the discussion of tournaments and knightly games in Poland requires at least a short presentation of Polish tilt arms and armour and the tournament literature research output.

To begin with it should be pointed out that the lot of military accessory collections, the relics of Polish tilt arms and armour included, has been a hard one and only few of them have been preserved up to our times. The partitions of Poland as well as numerous wars resulted in breaking up and destroying many private collections. Even the relics of tilt arms and armour which had been in the collections before the year 1939 disappeared in the last stage of the war<sup>1</sup>. The above presented situation must have influenced the publications devoted to this subject, including the works discussing the few specimens kept in Polish collections. It was not accidental that the authors who contributed to the work *Uzbrojenie w Polsce średniowiecznej 1350-1450 (Arms and Armour in Medieval Poland 1350-1450)*<sup>2</sup> left out the tilt arms and armour of this period, as we do not have this kind of weapon at our disposal. Moreover, if any of the arms or armour specimens presented appeared to be the element of tilt arms and armour, its identification could hardly be possible.

While presenting the relics and literature connected with concrete specimens of tilt arms and armour kept in Polish museums, one should start the discussion with the suit of tilt armour bought from a collector for the armoury of Royal Wawel Castle in Cracow in 1963<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1). The author notices that the armour's early history is unknown. It is known that the armour had belonged to Professor Włodzimierz Jaworski's collection and after his death the heirs decided to sell it. The armour was examined and published by F. Ścibałło<sup>4</sup>. The author examined the armour

in detail and compared it with many specimens kept in European armouries. As a result we have at our disposal a thorough analysis of this suit of armour made from the point of view of an arms researcher. F. Ścibałło came to the conclusion that this suit of armour, used in tournaments with blunted weapons (Stechzeug), had been made by the armourer Konrad Poler in Nurnberg in 1492-1500.

The relic is incomplete. However, only few elements are missing. It consists of a frog-mouthed helm attached to the cuirass, equipped with a lance-rest on its right side. The counterrest is missing. The inscription IBWDG is visible on the cuirass. The stomach plates with tassets for the tights are joined to the cuirass. The letters WNAN are placed on the right lower plates of the tassets and the letters HVRS on the left ones. A tail is attached to the

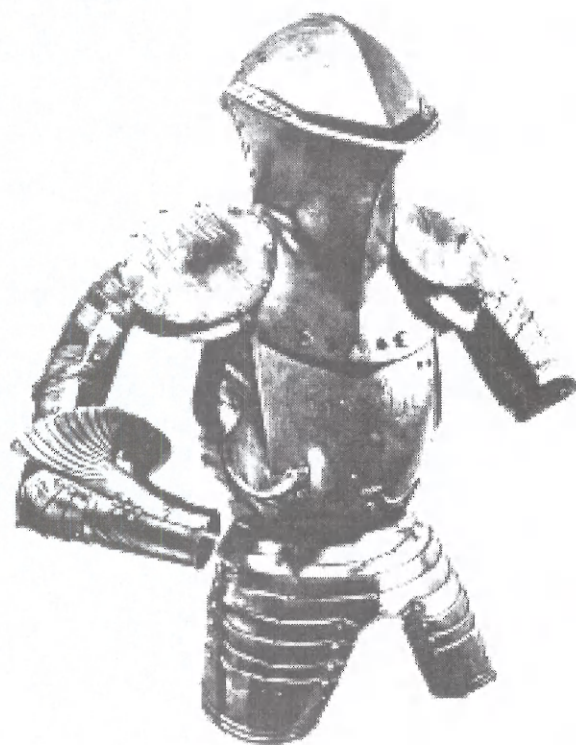


Fig. 1. Cracow. Wawel Castle. The castle armoury. Tilt armour, 15th century (according to E. Rachwał, photo by K. Karpińska).

<sup>1</sup> Z. J a k r z e w s k a - Ś n i e ż k o, *Dwór Artusa w Gdańsku*, Poznań-Gdańsk 1972.

<sup>2</sup> *Uzbrojenie w Polsce średniowiecznej 1350-1450*, ed. A. N a d o l s k i, Łódź 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Ż y g u l s k i, *Stara Broń w polskich zbiorach*, Warsaw 1982, pp. 96-96 (90); J. S z a b l o w s k i, *Zbiory zamku królewskiego na Wawelu*, Warsaw 1990, pp. 184, 246, Fig. 119.

<sup>4</sup> F. Ś c i b a ł ł o, *Późnogotycka zbroja turniejowa w zbiorach wawelskich*, „Studia do dziejów Wawelu”, vol. 2, Cracow 1968, p. 361.





Fig. 2. Gdańsk. Arthus Hall. Tilt armour suits No. 1 and No. 2 (according to B. Engel, after Z. Fuiński, photo by K. Karpińska).

back-plate. The arm-defences are incomplete. The right one consists of the pauldron and the vambrace, while only the pauldron has been preserved in the case of the left one. The armour is also equipped with small round plates covering the armpits.

In 1979 Zbigniew Fuiński discovered and identified the remains of 3 out of the 4 late-medieval tilt armour suits which had been kept at Arthus Hall in Gdańsk till 1945<sup>5</sup>. According to many researchers dealing with the history of Arthus Hall, the suits of armour were lost when the front moved in 1945<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 2,3). Z. Fuiński is also the author of another very interesting article about the „garniture”. However, this article is not devoted to the presentation of relics from the territory of Poland. Therefore it is not included in the present paper<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Z. F u i ń s k i, *Uwagi o wawelskiej zbroi turniejowej*, „Studia do dziejów Wawelu”, vol. 5, 1991, pp. 423-438.

<sup>6</sup> J a k r z e w s k a - S n i e ż k o, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Z. F u i ń s k i, *Garnitur zbroi*, „Studia do dziejów dawnego uzbrojenia i ubioru wojskowego”, parts IX, X, 1988, pp. 115-139.

The suits of armour which disappeared from Arthus Hall in 1945 had been kept there without a break since the end of the 15th century. A few merchant brotherhoods had their seats at Arthus Hall. Copying and frequently maintaining knightly customs and tradition became their ambition, as a number of merchants came from the nobility. In 1494 St. George's brotherhood changed its seat and left the congregation. This brotherhood was most strongly connected with knightly tradition. However, the above mentioned change of the seat rules out the possibility that the armour belonged to this association. Z. Fuiński seems to be right when he links these relics with St. Raynold's brotherhood, which is known to have possessed 4 armour suits in 1557. They were hung over the brotherhood's bench at Arthus Hall.

We have at our disposal numerous mentions referring to the tourneys which took place in Gdańsk. One of the famous contests was held in 1457 to celebrate Casimir Jagiellon, King of Poland's stay in town<sup>8</sup>. Since then till the second part of the 16th century, always in May, tournaments had taken place in Gdańsk every year. They were usually organized in the square in front of Arthus Hall. Only the youth coming from the best patrician families of Gdańsk took part in the competitions<sup>9</sup>. In 1552 a tournament was held to celebrate Sigismund Augustus' visit to Gdańsk. The King himself as well as his best courtiers participated in this tournament<sup>10</sup>. As a general rule, two pairs of townsmen, dressed in knights' armour, just like the armour used by knights, would take part in knightly tourneys, which were part of games, amusements and performances. It seems very probable that the 4 armour suits kept at Arthus Hall were used in such tournaments. The suits of armour were used in mounted or duel tournaments and in jousts with blunted lances (Gestech). Each of them had a frog-mouthed helm, a one-piece breastplate, slightly flattened on the right side, to which a fixed lance-rest was attached, a stomach defence with plates and tassets, a firm iron back-plate, a full arms defence with iron gauntlets, round plates protecting the armpits, 8 round funnel-shaped plates placed on the lance, as well as the so called blind shaffrons and 4 wooden tilt shields, almost square in shape and rounded at the corners. From the above description, based on Z. Fuiński's publication, who in turn drew upon W. Hahlweg's description<sup>11</sup>, it appears that the armour had been complete till 1945. After 1945 the

<sup>8</sup> D l u g o s s i J o a n n i s, *Opera Omnia*, vol. XIV, ed. A. P r z e ż d z i e c k i, Cracoviae 1887, pp. 244-246; M. B i s k u p, *Trzynastoletnia wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim 1454-1466*, Warsaw 1967, p. 485.

<sup>9</sup> M. B o g u c k a, *Życie codzienne w Gdańsku, wiek XVI-XVII*, Warsaw 1967, pp. 178-179.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179; Z. F u i ń s k i, *Uwagi o wawelskiej...*, p. 432.

<sup>11</sup> W. H a h l w e g, *Die vier gotischen Original-Stechzeuge des Arthushofes zu Danzig 1938*, No. 3, pp. 53-55.



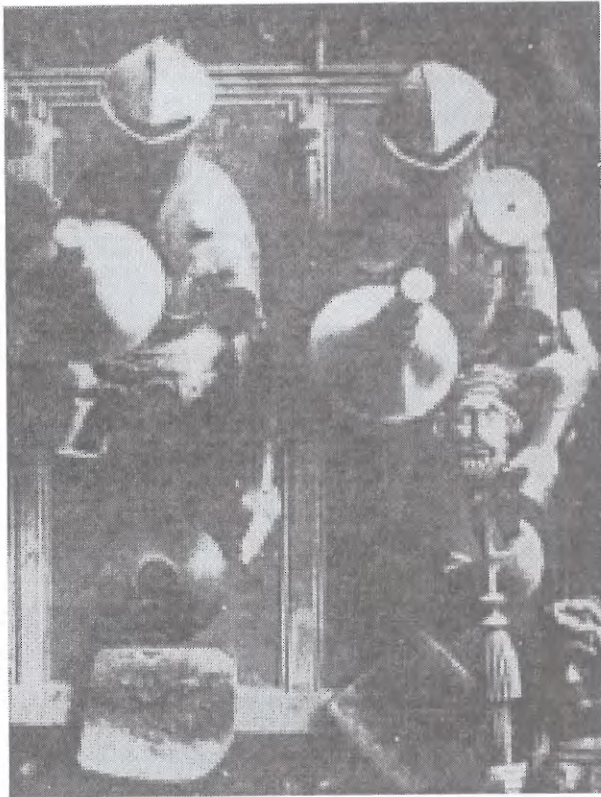


Fig. 3. Gdańsk. Arthus Hall. Tilt armour suits No. 3 and No. 4 (according to B. Engel, after Z. Fuiński, photo by K. Karpińska).

armour suits disappeared, just like many other valuable works of art from Arthus Hall in Gdańsk<sup>12</sup>.

In 1963 one of those armour suits got to the armoury of Royal Wawel Castle and was published by F. Scibałło, who, however, did not realize the fact that this was the one from Arthus Hall. Fragments of two other armour suits coming from Arthus Hall are scattered over Polish museums. The frog-mouthed helm of armour suit No. 1 (Fig. 4) and the breastplate of armour suit No. 2 (Fig. 5) are kept in the Castle Museum of Malbork, as deposits of The Polish Army Museum of Warsaw<sup>13</sup>. Those are, however, fragments of two different suits of armour. In 1979, after the Wrocław Arsenal had been restored, an exhibition was opened, where also a breastplate of „Stechzug” tilt armour was displayed. It was a deposit of The Polish Army Museum of Warsaw and it was identified as a fragment of tilt armour suit No. 3 from Arthus Hall. Therefore, as a result of Z. Fuiński's inquiry, the fragments of three armour suits from Arthus Hall were identified in Polish collections. Apart from the first one, almost complete, found at Royal Wawel Castle's armoury in Cracow, also two other suits of armour, coming from the warehouses of The Polish Army Museum

of Warsaw, were traced. Moreover, it may be hoped that the fourth one as well as the remaining elements of the tilt armour and other additional elements which had been linked with Arthus Hall in Gdańsk for ages are still on the territory of Poland. Thus, relics which may be associated with Polish knightly customs were given back their history.

According to me, however, not all of the armour elements kept in the armoury of Royal Wawel Castle belonged to armour suit No. 1 from Arthus Hall in Gdańsk. When the photograph of the latter, which was published by Z. Fuiński<sup>14</sup> after W. Hahlweg<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 6), and the photograph of the Wawel armour (Fig. 1) are compared, some differences in the constructive elements of the round plates protecting the armpits may be noticed. In W. Hahlweg's photography the plate on the left shoulder has got 8 rivets, while there are 13 rivets on the right one<sup>16</sup>. Twelve rivets can be seen on the plates of the armour suit kept in the Wawel armoury. Twelve rivets are visible on the plates of armour suit No. 3 from Arthus Hall. They may be counted in O. Grossman's photographs of this armour suit<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 7) copied by Z. Fuiński in his work. A characteristic notch, identical with that of the specimen from the Wawel armoury, can be noticed on the right plate of this suit of armour. The plates of armour suit No. 1, depicted in W. Hahlweg's photography, do not have this notch. There are 13 rivets on the plate of armour suit No. 4. The poor copy of W. Hahlweg's photogra-

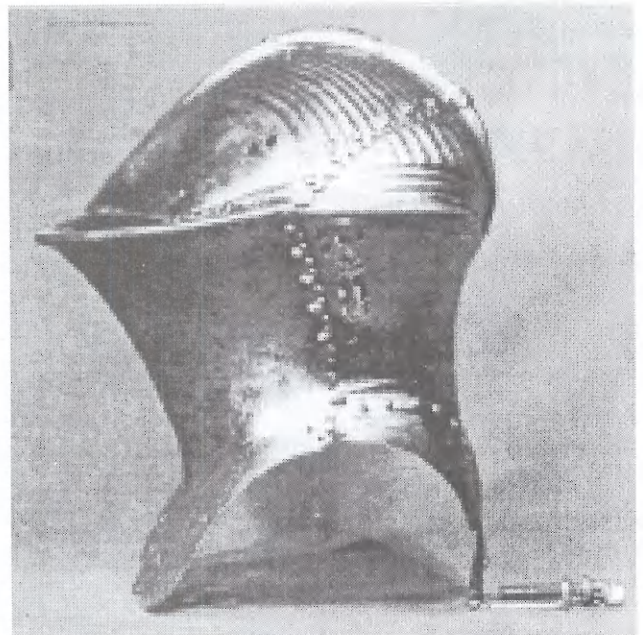


Fig. 4. Malbork. The Castle Museum. Frog-mouthed helm (according to Z. Gamski, photo by K. Karpińska).

<sup>14</sup> Z. Fuiński, *Uwagi o wawelskiej...*, p. 427, Fig. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Hahlweg, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>16</sup> Z. Fuiński, *Uwagi o wawelskiej...*, p. 433, photograph 13, p. 435, photography 16.

<sup>17</sup> O. Grossman, *Die Deutsche Soldaten Kunde*, 2, Berlin 1937, Bilderatlas, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> Jakrzeska-Śnieżko, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Z. Fuiński, *Uwagi o wawelskiej...*, p. 432, Fig. 9-11; Z. Żygułski, *op. cit.*, p. 97 (91).



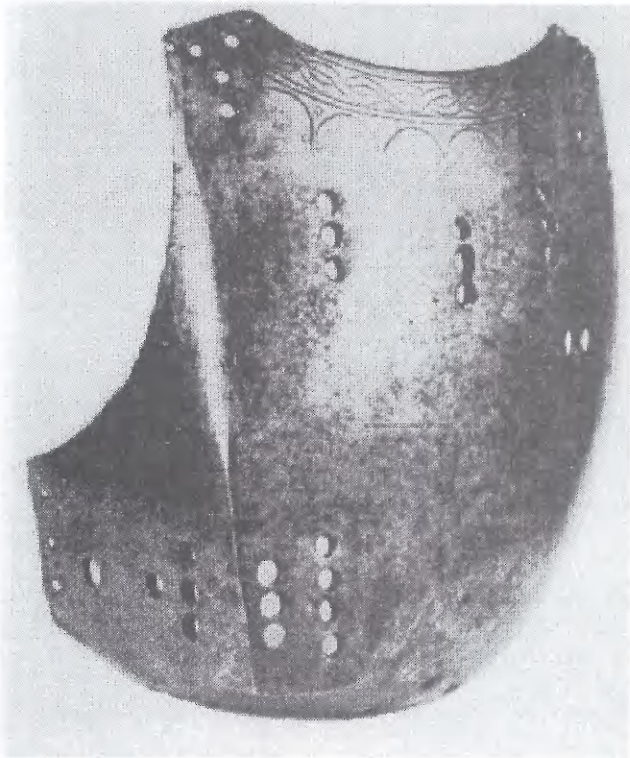


Fig. 5. Malbork. The Castle Museum. Tilt-breast (according to L. Okoński, photo by K. Karpińska).



Fig. 6. Gdańsk. Arthus Hall. Tilt armour suit No. 1 (according to W. Hahlweg, photo by K. Karpińska).

phy found in Z. Fuiński's work makes it difficult to count the rivets on the plate of armour suit No. 2. However, the possibility that there are 12 rivets there cannot be excluded. Therefore the conclusion can be drawn that the plates protecting the armpit are not part of armour suit No. 1 from Arthus Hall but of armour suit No. 3. This fact seems to support the supposition that all those suits of armour are still on the territory of Poland. They must, however, be found.

There are two other suits of tilt armour kept in The Polish Army Museum of Warsaw. None of them, however, seems to be the missing fourth one from Arthus Hall, though a close similarity in style between this specimen and the above discussed suits may be observed. Z. Żygulski, who published the suits of armour<sup>18</sup>, knew the history of the armour coming from Arthus Hall. When he published the Wawel armour and the helm presently kept in the Castle Museum of Malbork, he rightly presented their origins, but did not connect them with the armour from The Polish Army Museum of Warsaw<sup>19</sup>.

The first one is a suit of armour for the German joust dated at c. 1500 (Fig. 8). It was made in Nurnberg in the armorer Valentin Siebenbrger's workshop<sup>20</sup>. It is incomplete, but only few elements

are missing. It is a steel, wrought and polished suit of armour. It consists of a frog-mouthed helm, a breastplate with a rest and a counterrest, a back-plate, a stomach plate with a cuisse, a pair of pauldrons and a pair of vambraces. The left vambrace has got an iron gauntlet, which is missing in the right one. This suit of armour is very similar to the relics from Arthus Hall, but apparent differences can also be observed. Hence the above suit of armour does not come from Arthus Hall. The second suit of armour, used for the course with weapons with points (Rennen), also comes from a German workshop in Augsburg<sup>21</sup>. Unfortunately, more elements are missing here. It had a sallet-type helmet (which is referred to as basnet by Z. Żygulski), while the rest of the face was protected by a special covering joined to the breastplate. The cuirass with the lance-rest, the stomach plates, two tassets covering the tights, the left vambrace and the shield with a prick attached to the left side of the armour have been preserved.

The above paper has been limited to the presentation of the medieval tournament relics kept in Polish collections and the discussion of works dealing with these specimens. At the same time this short summary makes us realize how scarce the tilt armour kept in Polish museums really is. It must, however, be remembered that Poland sustained great losses as a re-

<sup>18</sup> Z. Żygulski, *op. cit.*, Warsaw 1982, pp. 132-133 (131, 132).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97 (90, 91).

<sup>20</sup> Z. Stefańska, *Muzeum Wojska Polskiego w Warszawie, Album zbiorów wiek X-XV*, Warsaw 1960, p. 32, Z. Żygulski, *op. cit.*, p. 132 (131).

<sup>21</sup> Z. Żygulski, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133 (132).





Fig. 7. Gdańsk. Arthus Hall. Tilt armour suit No. 3 (according to O. Grossman, photo by K. Karpińska).



Fig. 8. Warsaw. The Polish Army Museum. Tilt armour, c. 1500 (according to Z. Gamski, photo by K. Karpińska).

sult of the partitions and the turmoils of wars. The fine collections belonging to the Radziwiłł family in Nieśwież, the Lubomirski family in Lvov and the Sanguszko family in Podhorce have been practically destroyed and annihilated, which is a tremendous loss to Polish culture.

In the case of literature concerning the tournaments of Medieval Poland the situation is not very good, either. The source basis is not very rich and it is limited only to narrative mentions and the accounts of tournaments which took place in Poland at that time. The accounts do not offer many details relating to the knights' attire and arms, not to mention the kind of tournament or the conditions of contests. The written sources relating to tournaments taking place on the territory belonging to our southern neighbours, the Czechs, are much richer. Hence, even in Polish literature<sup>22</sup>, more information can be found about the contests held in Bohemia than the ones organized on our territory.

<sup>22</sup> W. I w a n i c z a k, Turniej rycerski w Królestwie Czeskim — próba analizy kulturowej, *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 5, 1983, pp. 39-53; by the same author, [in:] *Tropem rycerskiej przygody. Wzorzec rycerski w piśmiennictwie czeskim XIV wieku*, Warsaw 1985.

Some interest in the tournaments and courses which had taken place in Poland was already seen in nineteenth century publications. An interesting description of the arms and armour of both the contestants is offered by K. W. Wójcicki<sup>23</sup>, though the joust took place only in 1511. J. T. Lubomirski published a vivid account of the tournament duel with axes fought between Jakub of Kobylany and an anonymous English knight in the presence of King Casimir Jagiellon<sup>24</sup>. A series of preparations for a tournament, including the reason of the challenge, is depicted in K. Szajnocha's instructive description. The work presents Jadwiga Jagiellon, Casimir Jagiellon, King of Poland's daughter, and George, Duke of Bavaria's wedding, which took place in Landshut in 1475<sup>25</sup>. Unfortunately, no detailed and systematic studies regarding the tourneys held in Poland have been carried out so far. No Polish papers were presented at the extremely interesting confe-

<sup>23</sup> K. W. W ó j c i c k i, *Turnieje i gonitwy*, [in:] *Obrazy starodawne*, Warsaw 1843, vol. II, pp. 6-8.

<sup>24</sup> J. T. L u b o m i r s k i, *Jakób z Kobylan Kasztelan Gnieźnieński, Starosta Brzeski 1407-1454*, „Biblioteka Warszawska”, 1860, vol. 2, p. 561.

<sup>25</sup> K. S z a j n o c h a, *Jadwiga Jagiellońska księżna bawarska*, [in:] *Szkice historyczne*, 1876, vol. III, p. 81.





Fig. 9. Warsaw. The Polish Army Museum. Tilt armour, c. 1500 (according to Z. Gadomski, photo by K. Karpińska).

rence in Gttingen, devoted to medieval tournaments, the ones organized in Central-European countries included<sup>26</sup>. A few contributive articles have been published<sup>27</sup>. The present issue has also been discussed as an addition to some works containing descriptions of various historical events<sup>28</sup>, general works<sup>29</sup>, monographs devoted to knightly dress,

<sup>26</sup> *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter. Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. J. Fleckenstein, „Veröffentlichungen des Max Planck Institut für Geschichte”, 80, Göttingen 1985.

<sup>27</sup> S. Kutrza, *Przyczynek do dziejów turnieju w Polsce*, „Wiadomości Numizmatyczno-Archeologiczne”, R. XIII, vol. IV, 1901. No. 3-4, pp. 382-384; A. Bronarski, *Le petit Jean Saintré. Un énigme littéraire. Contribution aux études sur Antoine de la Sale*, Florence 1922; H. Polaczko, *Najstarsze źródła heraldyki polskiej*, Lvov 1924; Z. Żygulski, *Życie na zamku średniowiecznym, kultura polska i obca*, ed. K. Hartleb, Toruń 1948, p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> S. Zajaczkowski, *Wilhelm de Machaut i jego wiadomości do dziejów Polski i Litwy w XIV w.*, „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, R. XLIII, 1929, p. 226; R. Grodecki, *Kongres krakowski w roku 1364*, Warsaw 1939; Bogucka, *op. cit.*; J. Wyrozumski, *Kazimierz Wielki*, Wrocław 1982.

<sup>29</sup> A. F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV-XV*, Warsaw 1968.

arms and armour<sup>30</sup>, as well the monographs of famous Polish knights<sup>31</sup>. Our knowledge of medieval tournaments in Poland has recently been summed up by S. K. Kuczyński<sup>32</sup>, who observes that the first trustworthy account of a Polish tournament comes from 1243. The contest was organized in Henryków by Silesian Prince Boleslas the Bold (Rogatka)<sup>33</sup>. A brief digest of our knowledge regarding Polish knights' participation in foreign tourneys has been prepared by B. Brzustowicz<sup>34</sup>. However, those are only the beginnings of studies which should be carried out in this field. They may be treated as a clue to the future systematic research on knightly tournaments in Poland.

*Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra*

<sup>30</sup> F. Piekosiński, *Rycerstwo polskie wieków średnich*, Cracow 1896; Z. Wawrzonowska, *Uzbrojenie i ubiór rycerski Piastów śląskich od XII do XIV wieku*, „Acta Archeologica Lodziensa”, No. 25, Łódź 1976; by the same author, *Okrycie konia rycerskiego w Polsce do końca XV wieku w ikonografii*, „Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, R. XL, 1978, No. 4, pp. 367-376; A. Nadolski, *Broń i strój rycerstwa polskiego w średniowieczu*, Wrocław 1979; J. Witkowski, *Cykl Lancelota z Jeziora w siedleńskiejszej wieży mieszkalnej. Próba interpretacji treści malowideł ściennych*, [in:] *Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Sprawozdanie No. 102 za 1984 rok*, Wydział Nauk o Sztuce, Poznań 1986, pp. 42-48; R. Sachs, *Narracja na średniowiecznych diademach turniejowych*, [in:] *Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Sprawozdanie No. 102 za 1984 rok*, Wydział Nauk o Sztuce, Poznań 1986, pp. 38-41.

<sup>31</sup> H. Polaczko, *Najstarsze źródła heraldyki polskiej*, „Archiwum Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie”, part II, vol. II, p. 3, Lvov 1924, pp. 22-27; by the same author, *O podróżnikach średniowiecznych z Polski i do Polski*, „Miesięcznik Heraldyczny”, R. XIV, 1937, No. 5, p. 69; S. Małachowski, *Zawisza Czarny*, Warsaw 1929; A. Klubówna, *Zawisza Czarny historii i legendzie*, Warsaw 1974; B. Zientara, *Bolesław Łysy (Rogatka)*, [in:] *Poczet książąt i królów polskich*, Warsaw 1978, p. 173.

<sup>32</sup> S. K. Kuczyński, *Turnieje rycerskie w średniowiecznej Polsce*, [in:] *Biedni i bogaci. Studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi Geremkowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Warsaw 1992, pp. 295-306.

<sup>33</sup> *Księga Henrykowska*, ed. R. Grodecki, Biblioteka Tekstów Historycznych, vol. II, Poznań-Wrocław 1949, lib. I, IV, p. 269.

<sup>34</sup> B. Brzustowicz, *Udział rycerstwa polskiego w zagranicznych turniejach w średniowieczu*, Wrocław 1993, No. 7, pp. 8-12.