

WOJCIECH IWAŃCZAK

## THE ROLE OF ARMS IN GALL'S AND KOSMAS' CHRONICLES

Understandably, the earliest Polish and Bohemian chronicles have long been the centre of attention on the part of historians and researchers. Besides separate analyses of each text, a number of comparisons have also been made. As records containing information on the earliest history of Poland and Bohemia are scarce, comparative studies turn out to be one of the few successful methods of drawing more precise conclusions. Gall's and Kosmas' chronicles contain numerous analogues as well as differences. Let us therefore briefly discuss the reasons why a juxtaposition of the two works, though to a limited extent, seems justified.

Written in the first half of the twelfth century, both chronicles are chronologically related. At that time, the two countries, Poland and Bohemia, were at the same stage of development, though their political situations differed in many respects. Nonetheless, the works depict two neighbouring countries sharing many common positive and negative characteristics. It may also be noted that both Gall and Kosmas represent the same cultural circle of the Latin Christian community.

It has long been known that both chronicles are an interesting source of knowledge about arms and armour as well as other military accessories, in the broad sense of the word, used in contemporary Poland and Bohemia. They contain data referring to the social aspects of wars and armed conflicts, army organization, military strategy and tactics as well as provide information invaluable for the study of arms and armour<sup>1</sup>. The hitherto

existing literature has dealt with many relevant queries. However, many fundamental questions remain unanswered<sup>2</sup>. One of the most basic problems is the state of research in respect of the material culture of the Early Middle Ages. Although substantial research has been conducted, the surviving finds do not allow of a full reconstruction of the weaponry of Polish and Bohemian forces at the time of the Piast and Premyslid dynasties. Consequently, researchers encounter problems with analysis of relevant written records and draw hypothetical conclusions, which cannot be compared with the corresponding surviving weapons and other items of military equipment.

The aim of the present paper is to examine the chronicles mentioned in the title from the perspective of studies of arms and armour. However, the issues of war 'culture', ethics, patterns of behaviour as well as established norms characteristic of armed conflicts remain central to the investigation. The function of weaponry and its cultural and social context found in the chronicles seem as interesting as its descriptions and attempts at juxtaposition of the products of the writers' imagination, affected by extremely strict norms of contemporary convention, and the so-called realities and material culture.

There is yet another quality shared by both chroniclers. Neither of them conceals his aversion

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(*Kosmas' Chronicle as a Source for the History of Military Science*), „*Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości*” VI, 1960, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. Olejnik, *Stan badań nad polską historią wojskową do końca XV wieku (Results of Research into Polish Military History to the End of the 15th Century)*, „*Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*” 2003, No. 2, pp. 7–18; a recent comprehensive outline of the results of research into medieval Polish accessories with bibliographical references in: A. Nowakowski, *Wojskowość w średniowiecznej Polsce (Military Science in Medieval Poland)*, Malbork 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, J. Dowiąt, *Kilka uwag o słownictwie Galla Anonima w związku z zagadnieniem organizacji sił zbrojnych za Bolesława Krzywoustego (Some Remarks on the Vocabulary Used by Gall the Anonymous in Connection with the Issue of the Organization of the Armed Forces in the Reign of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed)*, „*Kwartalnik Historyczny*” 66, 1959, pp. 29–49; B. Krzemińska, *Kronika Kosmasa jako źródło do dziejów wojskowości*

to the other: Kosmas does not like the Poles<sup>3</sup> and Gall makes no effort to hide his dislike for the Czech people. Thus it may be assumed that their attitudes are equally tendentious.

Both works clearly reflect central European authors' perception of the role played by arms, military equipment as well as their users, that is, warriors, mostly knights, in contemporary reality (Gall's descent seems irrelevant here as the chronicler represented the Polish state). As our discussion is centred on the Latin civilization circle, which created the ethos of the knightly 'International', an international community of knights, the classic example of knightly magic adventure literature, the "Song of the Nibelungs", needs to be quoted here. In the following scene, one of the protagonists, the ruler of the land, the husband of Kriemhild and the father of Gunter, Siegfried, arrives after a bear hunt, carrying an extremely rich set of arms and armour, the description of which appears to be very useful for our comparative study:

951

In what manner stately / unto the camp he rode!  
He bore a spear full of mickle, / great of strength and broad.  
A sword all ornamented / hung down unto his spur,  
And wrought of gold all ruddy / at side a glittering horn he wore.

952

Of richer hunting-garments / heard O ne'er tell before.  
Black was the silken tunic / that the rider wore,  
And cap of costly sable / did crown the gallant knight.  
Heigho, and how his quiver / with well-wrought hands was  
rich bedight!

953

A skin of gleaming panther / covered the quiver o'er,  
Prized for its pleasant odor. / Eke a bow he bore,  
The which to draw if ever / had wished another man,  
A lever he had needed: / such power had Siegfried alone.

954

Of fur of costly otter / his mantle was complete,  
With other skins embroidered / fro m head unto his feet.  
And 'mid the fur all shining, / full many a golden seam  
On both sides of the valiant / huntsman saw ye brightly gleam.

<sup>3</sup> B. Krzemińska, *Polska i Polacy w opinii czeskiego kronikarza Kosmasa (Poland and the Poles in the Opinion of the Czech Chronicler Kosmas)*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne” Series II, 1960, fascicle.15, pp. 84 seqq.

955

Balmung, a goodly weapon / broad, he also wore,  
That was so sharp at edges / that it ne'er forbore  
To cleave when swung on helmet: / blade it was full good.  
Stately was the huntsman / as there with merry heart he rode.

956

If that complete the story / to you I shall unfold,  
Full many a goodly arrow / did his rich quiver hold  
Whereof were gold the sockets, / and heads a hand-breadth each.  
In sooth was doomed to perish / whate'er in flight the same  
did reach<sup>4</sup>.

The description found in this slightly overlong extract from one of the most famous medieval eposes, which could be the subject of a detailed analysis itself, contains a list of objects which are also mentioned in the twelfth-century chronicles by Gall and Kosmas, the products of the post-Carolingian cultural circle. It should be noted that although Siegfried's equipment was used for hunting, it was not always possible to differentiate clearly between the clothes and gear used while hunting and the arms carried by warriors on the battlefield<sup>5</sup>.

The basic set of offensive and defensive arms and armour used by early medieval Polish and Czech warriors has frequently been discussed in the scientific literature<sup>6</sup>. It may only be noted that the sword, the spear, the battle-axe, the bow and, from the twelfth century onwards, the cross-bow, were the most common offensive weapons while the suit of armour or chain armour, the helmet and finally the shield were applied to defence. In addition, a number of less typical kinds of arms, such as knives, daggers, maces, slings, and last but not least siege towers were in use.

<sup>4</sup> Project Gutenberg, *The Niebelungenlied: Translated into Rhymed English Verse in the Metre of the Original by George Henry Needler*, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, verses 951–956.

<sup>5</sup> See: A. Samsonowicz, *Łowiectwo w Polsce Piastów i Jagiellonów (Hunting in Poland at the Time of the Piasts and the Jagiellons)*, Wrocław 1991.

<sup>6</sup> On the subject of Poland cf.: A. Nowakowski, *Wojskowość w średniowiecznej Polsce (Military Science in Medieval Poland)*, where further literature; for information on Bohemia cf.: F. Kurfürst, *Válečné dějiny československé*, Praha 1937; O. Frankenberger, *Pod orlici, lvem a kaličem*, vol. I, Prague 1938; P. Choc, *S mečem a štítem. České rané feudální vojenství*, Prague 1967; *Vojenské dějiny Československa (do roku 1526)*, vol. I, ed. Z. Procházka, Prague 1985.

The sword played a key role in military activity. It also performed ideological, sacral as well as symbolic functions<sup>7</sup>. The importance of swords was emphasized by the fact that they were given special names by their owners: Siegfried, mentioned above, had a sword called Balmung, Charlemagne had grown very attached to his weapon called Joyosa, King Arthur was very adept at using Excalibur and, even treacherous Ganelon from *The Song of Roland* possessed a sword by the name of Murglies<sup>8</sup>. It may only be noted that the same custom was subsequently followed in the case of sabres, which were also given names, as well as large cannons. At the time of the Hussite wars, heavy guns used to be referred to by names<sup>9</sup>.

Scanning through the chronicles by Gall and Kosmas, the reader is astonished by the numerous meanings attributed to the sword and the number of ideological contexts where the weapon appears. Generally speaking, the sword seems to be a multi-function weapon. It is used for rhetoric oppositions and contrasts. Gall says that heathens cannot be converted to Christianity by means of the sword of preaching and the most stubborn cannot be wiped out by means of the sword of destruction<sup>10</sup>. The sword was a truly noble weapon, used to confer knighthood, which function is also mentioned by Gall<sup>11</sup>. Also, to be killed with

a sword was considered an honour. Describing the so-called peasant rebellion of the 1030s<sup>12</sup>, the chronicler admits that some of the culprits were beheaded in a noble way, by means of swords, while others got simply stoned to death<sup>13</sup>. The commonly cited account of the death of Bolesław the Brave (Polish Chrobry) contains the following lines: 'From a distance, I can also see a sort of shiny carbuncle being born of my loins, which seizes the grip of my sword to illuminate entire Poland!'<sup>14</sup>. These words are known to foretell the reign of Bolesław III the Wry-Mouthed (Polish Krzywousty), who in the twelfth century will 'seize the grip of the sword' to rule over Poland as the worthy heir of the great monarch. The sword which appears in the above context is not only a military tool but also a symbol of power and authority. Most probably, the images of rulers, frequently clad in full armour, depicted on medieval coins and seals performed a similar function. Undoubtedly, the quality of arms was of considerable importance too, but our knowledge is very limited in this respect. However, the chronicles contain several meaning-

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*średniowieczu: znaczenie ideowe i polityczne (Conferring Knighthood on Polish Dukes in the Early Middle Ages: The Ideological and Political Meaning)*, „Kwartalnik Historyczny” 104, 1997, No. 4, pp. 15–35; D. Piwowarczyk, *Funkcje i ceremonial pasowania rycerskiego na ziemiach polskich (XI–XVIII w.) (The Functions and Ceremony of Conferring Knighthood in Polish Lands (11<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, [in:]: *Od narodzin do wieku dojrzałego. Dzieci młodzież w Polsce (From Birth to Adulthood. Children and Adolescents in Poland)*, Part. I, *Od średniowiecza do wieku XVIII (From the Middle Ages to the 18th Century)*, ed. M. Dąbrowska, A. Klonder, Warszawa 2002, pp. 192–217; on the same Ceremony in Bohemia see: W. Iwańczak, *Pasowanie rycerskie na ziemiach czeskich — ceremonia symboliczna i instrument polityki (Conferring Knighthood in Czech Lands. A Symbolic Ceremony and an Instrument of Politics)*, „Kwartalnik Historyczny” 91, 1984, No. 2, pp. 255–275.

<sup>12</sup> D. Borawska, *Kryzys monarchii wczesnopiastowskiej w latach trzydziestych XI wieku (The Crisis of the Early Piast Monarchy in the 1030s)*, Warszawa 1964.

<sup>13</sup> Galli Anonymi..., pp. 42–43: *Insuper etiam a fide catholica deviantes, quo sine voce lacrimabili dicere non valemus, adversus episcopos et sacerdotes Dei seditionem inceperunt, eorumque quosdam gladio quasi dignos peremerunt, quosdam vero quasi morte dignos viliori lapidibus obruerunt.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37: *Video etiam de longinquo de lumbis meis procedere quasi carbunculum emicantem, qui gladii mei capulo connexus, suo splendore Poloniam totam efficit relucentem.*

<sup>7</sup> The literature is extremely rich, cf.: M. Głosek, *Znaki i napisy na mieczach średniowiecznych ziem polskich (Emblems and Inscriptions on Medieval Swords from Polish Lands)*, Wrocław 1973; by the same author, *Miecze środkowoeuropejskie (Central European Swords)*, Warszawa 1984; E. Oakeshott, *Records of the Medieval Sword*, Woodbridge 1991; most recently: O. Ławrynowicz, *Treści ideowe broni rycerskiej w Polsce wieków średnich (The Ideological Content of Knightly Arms in Medieval Poland)*, Łódź 2005.

<sup>8</sup> F. Doubek, *Studien zu den Waffennamen in der Höfischen Epik*, „Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie”, 59, 1935, pp. 313–353.

<sup>9</sup> W. Iwańczak, *Broń palna w wojsku czeskim późnego średniowiecza (Firearms in the Czech Army of the Late Middle Ages)*, [in:]: *Heraldyka i okolice*, ed. A. Rachuba, S. Górzynski, H. Manikowska, Warszawa 2002, pp. 377–388.

<sup>10</sup> Galli Anonymi *Cronicae et Gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. K. Maleczyński, [in:]: *Monumenta Poloniae Historia*, Nova Series, Cracovia 1952, p. 7: *Sed nec gladio predicacionis cor eorum a perfidia potuit revocari, nec gladio iugulationis eorum penitus vipperalis progenies aboleri.*

<sup>11</sup> On conferring knighthood in Poland cf.: Z. Dalewski, *Pasowanie na rycerza książąt polskich we wcześniejszym*

ful remarks on the subject. For example, Gall says that ‘Polish swords are hard enough to fight with the emperor himself’<sup>15</sup>, which may refer to both the courage displayed by Polish knights, who will not yield to the powerful enemy, and the quality and resilience of their weapons. The sword as a means of resolving conflicts with the Holy Roman Empire is also mentioned elsewhere in the text. Bolesław III the Wry-Mouthed faces a difficult choice inflicted on him by the emperor: He can either approve of his stepbrother Zbigniew and pay tribute to the Holy Roman emperor or ‘take his courage in both hands and divide the Polish kingdom by means of a sword’<sup>16</sup>. This is the way the emperor suggests that the Polish duke should enter into an armed conflict. Let us cite yet another contexts in which the sword appears in Gall’s chronicle. When Jarosław the Wise had refused Bolesław the Brave his sister, the latter, seeking revenge, set on an expedition to Kiev and seized the city. According to the chronicle, ‘...he entered unhindered the great and rich city, took his sword out of the scabbard and struck the Golden Gate with it. When his people astonished by his deed would ask him why he had done so, Bolesław gave a witty answer, “The Golden Gate struck with my sword has yielded to me today and the sister of the most cowardly of all kings, who had refused me the right to marry her, will yield to me tonight. However, she will not share a bed with Bolesław as his wife but will become his mistress for one night. This is the way he will avenge the disrespect for his family on the part of the Rus, insult and dishonour them...”<sup>17</sup>. The motif of striking the gate of a seized city with a sword,

existing in European historiography, in this case foretells the forthcoming disgrace<sup>18</sup>.

In Kosmas’ chronicle the sword seldom performs the function of an ordinary weapon. It appears in situations calling for bold and determined action to become a tool of resolving difficult problems. For example, Bolesław called the Cruel, took the decision to erect a stronghold being a copy of ancient Roman fortifications. However, his lieges refused to do the work claiming that they preferred to be killed with a sword rather than work as slaves. Outraged, the ruler, who hated resistance, cut off the head of a random rebel with his sword. It was little wonder, the rest agreed to carry out Bolesław’s orders and begged forgiveness for what they had done. Eventually, the Roman style stronghold was constructed<sup>19</sup>. The chronicler’s attitude is unclear here. The sword becomes a tool of justice and punishment as well as a synonym of power, which must be exercised, however cruel. It is the sword that is considered the instrument for punishing sinners. According to Kosmas, Bishop Sever expressed this opinion in the 1030s, adding that that was the reason why dukes wore swords attached to their belts<sup>20</sup>. Undoubtedly, the term *sword* as well as related phraseology were used by the Church in very specific contexts. While on his deathbed Herman, Bishop of Prague, who died in 1122, admitted that he had been fighting in the name of Christ using the ‘sword of the curse’ and had made no attempt at the conversion of the ‘heathen people’, that is to say, the Jews<sup>21</sup>. The above conception of the role of the sword corresponds to the idea of the Crusades and the knightly expeditions in defence

<sup>15</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 126.

<sup>16</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 130: *Quapropter aut oportet te fratrem tuum in regni medietatem recipere, mihi que CCC marcas annuatim tributarias, vel totidem milites in expeditionem dare, vel necum, si vales, ense Polonorum regnum dividere.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 22–23: *At Boleslauus nullo sibi resistente civitatem magnam et opulentam ingrediens et evaginato gladio in auream portam percuciens, risu saris iocosus suis admirantibus, cur hoc fecisset, enodavit. Sicut, inquit, in hac hora aurea porta civitatis ab isto ense percutitur, sic in nocte sequenti soror regis ignavissimi mihi dari prohibita corrumpetur; nec tamen Boleslauo thoro maritali, sed concubinali singulari vice tantum coniungetur, quatinus hoc facto nostri generis iniuria vindicetur, et Ruthenis ad dedecus et ad ignominiam inputetur.*

<sup>18</sup> Cf.: J. Banaszkiwicz, *Bolesław i Peredślawa. Uwagi o uroczystości stanowienia władcy w związku z wejściem Chrobrego do Kijowa (Bolesław and Peredślawa. Remarks on the Ceremony of Instituting the Ruler in Connection with Bolesław the Brave’s Arrival in Kiev)*, “Kwartalnik Historyczny” 97, 1990, Nos. 3–4.

<sup>19</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretschneider, [in:] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum germanicarum*, Nova series, vol. II, Berlin 1923, pp. 40 seqq.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 87: *Severus episcopus dixit: Ista ducis deliberatio iusta sit anathemate firma. Nam ad hoc vobis ducibus mucro pendet in femore, ut manus vestras sepius lavetis peccatoris in sanguine.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 222: *...apostatricem gentem non revocavi nec in gladio anathematis pro Christo dimicavi...*

of faith organized by the Church. It may only be noted that it was then that the concept of 'Militum Christi', Christ's warriors, gained in importance<sup>22</sup>. In addition, in the epoch in question, a theory according to which there existed two kinds of sword, the lay and the clergy sword, came into being<sup>23</sup>. Both literally and figuratively, the decisive blow was always struck with the sword. When St. Adalbert died a martyr's death, Gaudentius, who 'was his physical and spiritual brother as well as his inseparable companion in every hardship and worry, suffered not physical but spiritual pain. When he saw his brother being chopped to pieces with the heavens' javelins, he felt as if a sword had pierced his own heart and all he desired was to die the same death'<sup>24</sup>.

Frequently, there was a fine line between the figurative, the symbolic and the literal. Duke Włocisław, the proud ruler of the Łączanie people, had taken the decision to conquer the whole of Bohemia. 'In order to find out how powerful his forces were, he sent a sword to all corners of his provinces announcing his will: Every man who was taller than the sword was to be punished with it if he set off for battle more slowly than it

was stated in the order'<sup>25</sup>. In the above quotation, the sword is mentioned three times and the semantic content of the term varies from context to context.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the sword performs here the function of a messenger delivering orders to assemble under arms at instant call, bringing news, spreading information. Secondly, it is the measurement standard used to specify the height of a man able to participate in battle. Finally, as I said above, the sword constitutes the instrument of punishment used to exercise the monarch's power and authority. In addition, half a page later, proud Duke Włocisław swears on the sword's hilt<sup>27</sup>. A similar juxtaposition of a real and a symbolic perspective can be found in an account written by Kosmas' before 1088. The chronicler relates that, for some unknown reason, Wratysław, the first king of Bohemia, feels offended by a young knight called Beneda and desires revenge. Consequently, the ruler summons Beneda to appear before him: 'After a conversation, part of which was deliberately invented, the king took his interlocutor by the hand and led him out of the camp as if he wanted to have a word with him. Then seeing the golden hilt and blade of the sword attached to the knight's belt, he enquired, among other things, about the value of the weapon. The knight replied, 'If you place a millstone on a helmet, I will cut them both in half together with the head and the trunk right down to the thigh with a single blow.'" Faking amazement, the king complimented Beneda on his sword and asked if he could hold it<sup>28</sup>. The trick worked, the knight handed the

<sup>22</sup> Cf.: A. Harnack, *Militia Christi. Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Tübingen 1905; C. Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens*, Stuttgart 1935; R.R. Bolgar, *Hero or Anti-Hero? The Genesis and development of the Miles Christianus*, [in:] *Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. N.T. Burns, C.J. Reagan, New York 1975, pp. 120–146; G. Althoff, *Nunc fiant Christi milites, qui dudum extiterunt raptores. Zur Entstehung von Rittertum und Ritterethos*, „Saeculum“ 32, 1981, pp. 317–333; W. Iwańczak, *Miles Christi. Z dziejów pewnej idei w Czechach przedhusyckich (Miles Christi. From the History of an Idea in Pre-Hussite Bohemia)*, „Euhemer” 1983, No. 5, pp. 39–53; „Militia Christi“ e *Crociata nei secoli XI–XIII*, Milano 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., for example, T. Dobrzeński, *Teoria dwóch mieczy w programie sądu ostatecznego (The Two Swords Theory in the Programme of the Last Judgement)*, „Rocznik Historii Sztuki” 21, 1995, pp. 21–44.

<sup>24</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 89: *Hi, uti superius retulimus, non solum carnali, verum et spirituali coniunctione frater sancti Adalberti et comes individuus in omni labore et erumna fuit et, si cum eo non corpore martirium, mentis tamen compassione tulit. Nec enim fieri poterat, ut gladius animam eius non pertransiret, cum germanum suum rompheis paganorum in frustra concidi videret et ipse pariter occidi valde optaret.*

<sup>25</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 24: *Mox tumido inflatus fastu superbie scire volens, virtus sua quante sit potencie, mittit gladium per omnes fines totius provincie hac conditione principalis sentencie, ut quicumque corporis statura precellens gladii mensuram segnius iusso egrederetur ad pugnam, procul dubio puniretur gladio.*

<sup>26</sup> Cf.: J. Flori, *L'idéologie du glaive. Préhistoire de la chevalerie*, Genève 1983.

<sup>27</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 24: *...per capulum ensis mei iuro...*

<sup>28</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 144: *Ubi post multa verba promiscue dicta et quedam convenienter ficta, accepit eum fraudulenter rex manu dextra et ducit seorsum extra castra quasi ibi secreta locuturus. Tunc videns capulum et caput ensis aureum, quo erat miles precinctus, inter talia querit ab eo, quanti valeat gladius suus. Et ille: Molam, inquit, si ponas super galeam, utramque simul et caput atque corpus usque ad femur in uno ictu hoc ense dimidiabo. Miratur rex dolo et laudat ensem atque rogat, ut eum sibi ostendat.*

weapon to the king. Disarmed, he was murdered moments later. Two motifs seem to be of interest here. Firstly, the high quality of the sword, which was unusually sharp and thus remarkably dangerous and effective in battle. Secondly, its glamorously attractive external appearance was undoubtedly a status symbol, showing the owner's position and wealth. Our discussion of the rich diversity of meanings and functions performed by the sword will not be complete without yet another quotation found in Kosmas' chronicle. Fighting with the Poles at the beginning of the twelfth century, Duke Władysław addresses the Czech knights and says, 'Do you have wooden swords attached to your belts? Do only Polish knights carry swords made of iron?'<sup>29</sup> This simple symbolic remark reminds us of the Arians, who several hundred years later in Poland, would bear wooden swords in order to emphasize their pacifist views.

Besides the sword, the spear was another most popular and efficient kind of weapon. It is thought to have been in widespread use in the Early Middle Ages. Being the predecessor of the lance, the spear was associated with rich symbolism and ideological content<sup>30</sup>. The story of Longinus, the

centurion who pierced Christ's side with a lance, and was believed to have later converted to Christianity and to have died a martyr's death<sup>31</sup>, was well known and the head of his lance is still held in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. According to Gall, Bolesław the Brave was presented with so-called Saint Mauricius' spear by Otto III. In addition, the weapon seems to have served as a means of passing on information. The chronicler records that after Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed's speech, 'all his knights raised their lances in unanimous approval.'<sup>32</sup> In practice, spear-like arms performed the function of 'first strike' weapons. Giving the account of the Polish campaign in Bohemia, Gall says that the Poles first attacked with their lances and only then reached for their swords<sup>33</sup>.

As I said above, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between weapons of war and those used for hunting. However, there seem to be several marked differences. Gall mentions the javelin only in the context of hunting. The story of young Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed who meets a wild boar may serve as an example here. The youth demonstrates supernatural courage and kills the beast with a javelin<sup>34</sup>. Moreover, this seemingly simple kind of weapon is given deeper significance. In his account of the last moments of Duke Brzetysław's life, Kosmas records, 'When he ordered that everything that was to be done for his soul was done, he said, 'Give my horn and my javelin to my little son; I am not in a position to give him any other things, which are within God's

<sup>29</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 207: *An vobis tilienses pendente in femore enses? An soli Polonienses habent ferreos enses?*

<sup>30</sup> A. Hofmeister, *Die heilige Lanze, ein Abzeichen des alten Reiches*, „Untersuchungen zur deutschen Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte“ 96, 1908; W. Wegener, *Die Lanze des heiligen Wenzel*, „Zeitschrift der Savigny — Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanische Abteilung“, 72, 1955, pp. 56 seqq; L. H. Loomis, *The Holy Relics of Charlemagne and King Aethelstan: The Lances of Longinus and St. Mauritius*, „Speculum“ 4, 1956, pp. 437–456; P. E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, vol. II, Stuttgart 1956, (chapter 22 *Die Heilige Lanze*) pp. 492 seqq; H. L. Adelson, *The Holy Lance and the Hereditary German Monarchy*, „The Art Bulletin“ 1966 No. 2, pp. 177–192; P. Paulsen, *Flügellanzen. Zum archäologischen Horizont der Wiener „santa lancea“*, „Frühmittelalterliche Studien“ 3, 1969; L. Kovács, *Die Budapester Wikingerlanze (Geschichtsabriss der Ungarischen Königslanze)*, „Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae“ 22, 1970, pp. 323–339; J. Banaszkiwicz, *Włócznia i chorągiew. O rycie otwierania bitwy w związku z cudem kampanii nakielskiej Bolesława Krzywoustego (Kadlubek, III, 14) (The Spear and the Banner. On the Rite of Opening a Battle in Connection with Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed's Miraculous Campaign of Nakło (Kadlubek, III, 14))*, „Kwartalnik Historyczny“ 94, 1987, No. 3, pp. 2–24; M. Rokosz, *Wawelska włócznia Bolesława Chrobrego. Przegląd problematyki (The Wavel Spear of Bolesław the Brave. Selected Problems)*, „Rocznik Krakowski“ 55, 1989, pp. 17–44.

<sup>31</sup> K. Burdach, *Der Gral. Forschungen über seinen Ursprung und seinen Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Stuttgart 1938.

<sup>32</sup> See: A. Nadolski, *Broń i strój rycerstwa polskiego w średniowieczu (The Weapons and Dress of the Polish Knights in the Middle Ages)*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1979, p.53.

<sup>33</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 151: *Tum vero iuventus Polonica certatim irruunt, lanceis prius bellum inferunt, quibus expletis enses exerunt.*

<sup>34</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 77: *Quadam vice puer Martin ad gentaculum in silva residens, aprum immanem transeuntem, ac densitatem silve subeuntem, vidit, quem statim de mensa surgens, assumpto venabulo subsecutus, sine comite vel cane presumptuosus invasit. Cumque fere silvestri propinquasset et iam ictum in eius gutture vibrare voluisset, ex adverso quidam miles eius occurrit, qui vibratum ictum retinuit et venabulum ei auferre voluit. Tum vero Boleslauus ira, immo audacia stimulatus, geminum duellum mirabiliter, humanum scilicet et ferinum, singulariter superavit.*

power”<sup>35</sup>. The act of passing down his arms may be identified with handing over the knight's dignity, chivalric values as well as the duties of a righteous ruler. Not surprisingly, the horn played a similar role. Its key importance was also emphasized in *The Song of Roland*<sup>36</sup>.

Examining the similarities between the arms present in the two ‘national’ chronicles by Gall and Kosmas, we come across several differences. While mentions of bows and arrows are scarce in Gall's accounts, these types of weapons frequently appear in the records by Kosmas. Regrettably, it is impossible to draw any conclusions based on those sources regarding their popularity in the Polish and Czech armies. Although bows seem to have been in relatively widespread use throughout the Middle Ages, they were somehow archaic in character<sup>37</sup>. While remembering ‘the good old days’, Kosmas says, ‘No-one knew the word ‘my’, but like monks, they were ready to share everything they possessed from the bottom of their hearts and they expressed their will with their mouths and deeds. There were no bolts on the stable doors and their doors were never shut in a poor man's face, because there were no thieves, robbers nor beggars; No crime was considered as more serious than theft or robbery. They knew no weapons but arrows, and those were used only for shooting and hunting’<sup>38</sup>. Further, the Czech chronicler quotes the words apparently uttered by the duke of the Łączanie people before a battle. The ruler urged his men to fight by saying, ‘Save your arrows, your best arms, so as not to defile them with the

blood of those cowards...’<sup>39</sup>. The above mentions suggest that bows and arrows were believed to be ancient, respectable as well as valuable weapons. They were to be used in noble combat and not against a cowardly enemy. In addition, the bow and arrows were regarded as a symbol of power and authority. *The Song of Roland* reads,

‘Right Emperour,’ says the baron Rollanz,  
‘Give me the bow you carry in your hand;  
Neer in reproach, I know, will any man  
Say that it fell and lay upon the land,...’<sup>40</sup>.

This act of handing the bow to Roland signifies that the emperor Charles passes on his power and responsibility to the knight.

Another difference can be found in Gall's and Kosmas' accounts of attacks on towns and descriptions of sieges. While the former would frequently refer to siege towers of all types, the latter practically never mentioned them in his records. Of course no conclusions regarding lack of such machines in contemporary Bohemia can be drawn, but Czech historians agree that siege towers were scarce in their country at that time<sup>41</sup>. Gall's chronicle offers numerous descriptions of sieges and siege towers, which facilitated seizing towns and strongholds<sup>42</sup>. The data we have at our disposal refers to the time of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, which results from either lack of information about earlier periods or the fact that in his reign incidents of this kind were frequent. According to the source, siege towers were wooden structures, apparently very simple in construction, as they could be erected in a very short time to meet the demand. The account of the siege of Głogów by the emperor Henry V is one of the best known

<sup>35</sup> Cosmae Pragensis..., p. 174: *Et cum disposuisset omnia, que erant disponenda pro anima: Date, inquit, filiolo meo lituum meum et iaculum, cetera non est meum sibi dare, que Deus posuit in sua potestate.*

<sup>36</sup> In the original, Roland's horn is referred to as either a „corn” or an „olifant”, which would suggest that it was made of the most precious material, ivory (F éléphant, E elephant).

<sup>37</sup> Cf.: J. Werner, *Polska broń. Łuk i kusza (Polish Arms. The Bow and the Arbalest)*, Wrocław 1984; *Vojenské dějiny...*, p. 71.

<sup>38</sup> Cosmae Pragensis..., p. 8: *Nec quisquam „meum” dicere norat, sed ad instar monastice vite, quicquid habebant, „nostrum” ore, corde et opere sonabant. Ad stabula non erant repagula, nec portam inopi claudebant, quia neque fur neque latro neque inops quisquam erat; nullum scelus apud eos furto gravius et latrocinio. Nullius gentis arma videre, tantummodo sagittas, et has propter feriendas feras, habuere.*

<sup>39</sup> Cosmae Pragensis..., p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> *The Song of Roland*, Online Medieval and Classical Library Release #12, translated by Charles Scott Moncrief, 1919, electronic edition by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), 1995, lines 766–769.

<sup>41</sup> *Vojenské dějiny...*, p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, pp. 67, 89, 114; no more recent papers dealing with this issue can be found in the Polish scientific literature. The only work containing relevant information was published nearly fifty years ago: B. Miśkiewicz, *Machiny i przyrządy oblężnicze polskiego wojska wczesnośredniowiecznego (Siege Towers and Devices of the Early Medieval Polish Army)*, “Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej” 5, 1957, Nos. 3–4, pp. 463–486.

examples found in the scientific literature. It was there that the attackers tied the hostages provided by the besieged to the siege towers with the aim of preventing the defenders from firing their weapons<sup>43</sup>. The plan fell through. Regrettably, the account has many qualities typical of medieval literary conventions and any attempts to examine it as an accurate reflection of reality are very likely turn futile<sup>44</sup>.

As far as defensive arms are concerned, the most controversial extract from Gall's chronicle regarding the use of chain mail at the time of Bolesław the Courageous ought to be quoted first. The excerpt reads, 'The Pomeranians once attacked Poland and King Bolesław, who being far away, heard about their expedition. Wishing wholeheartedly to free the country, which had fallen into enemy hands, he must have marched forward and past his gathering army too recklessly. On arriving at the river, on the bank of which the heaven army was resting, the armed knights in chain mail did not seek a bridge or ford, but threw themselves against its strong currents. Many a good man died there because of their own audacity. The rest took off their chain mail, swam across the river and won a victory, though suffering heavy losses. From that time onwards, Poland gave up wearing chain mail, thanks to which Polish knights could attack the enemy freely and swim across a river safely, being no longer burdened with iron defences'<sup>45</sup>. The above excerpt has become the subject of numerous analyses and assumptions. Various far-fetched conclusions regarding the arms and armour of the Polish army in the

Early Middle Ages have been drawn. The discussion has been conducted on two levels. Firstly, researchers have wondered whether Gall wrote the truth or fantasized. Secondly, it has been attempted to interpret the account in a rational way<sup>46</sup>. Jerzy Dowiat was of the opinion that chain mail could have been used sporadically in contemporary Poland but, generally speaking, at the time of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, armoured knights were a thing of the past and the infantry did not wear any defensive armour<sup>47</sup>. As we are not in a position to establish to what extent Gall's story is truthful and reliable, it may only be assumed that the range of the phenomenon described above was restricted to the Pomeranian campaigns, where in the woods and marshes of the region, chain mail hindered rather than facilitated the army's progress. Besides, other records suggest that Polish knights did wear chain mail in the second half of the twelfth century<sup>48</sup>.

The main part of both a mounted warrior's and infantryman's defensive equipment was the shield<sup>49</sup>. A shield was considered as indispensable in combat. As a result, a warrior gradually became linguistically identified with this defensive weapon and a commander having at his disposal a given number of soldiers was said to possess as many shields<sup>50</sup>. The symbolism of the shield deserves a separate analysis as it was on this weapon that the arms of the owner used to be placed in later periods. Following contemporary literary conventions, Gall and Kosmas recorded several interesting functions and meanings attributed to the shield. On arriving in Silesia, Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed's brother, Zbigniew, sought the protection of Count Magnus in order to avoid persecution on the part of Palatine Sieciech. The knights accompanying

<sup>43</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, pp. 135 seqq.

<sup>44</sup> For example, this opinion is expressed by A. Nadolski, [in:] *Polska technika wojskowa do 1500 roku (Polish Military Technology to the Year 1500)*, ed. A. Nadolski, Warszawa 1994, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 50: *Contigit namque Pomoranos ex subito Poloniam invasisse, regemque Boleslauum ab illis remotum partibus hoc audisse. Qui cupiens animo ferventi de manu gentilium patriam liberare, collecto nondum exercitu decrevit antecedens inconsulte nimium properare. Cumque ventum esset ad fluvium, ultra quem turme gentilium residebant, non ponti requisito vel vado loricati milites et armati sed profundo gurgiti se credebant. Pluribus itaque loricatorum ibi presumptuose submersis, loricis reliqui superstites abiecerunt, transmeatoque flumine, quamvis dampnose victoriam habuerunt. Ex eo tempore loricis Polonia dissuevit et sic expeditior hostem quisque invasit, tutiorque flumen obiectum sine pondere ferri transmeavit.*

<sup>46</sup> For example see: A. Nadolski, *Broń i strój...*, pp. 58 seqq; *Polska technika...*, pp. 69 seqq.

<sup>47</sup> J. Dowiat, *Kilka uwag...*, pp. 29–49.

<sup>48</sup> For example, A. Nowakowski, *Wojskowość w średniowiecznej...*, pp. 104 seqq.

<sup>49</sup> V. Denkstein, *Pavézy českého typu, cz. 1–3*, „Sborník Národního Muzea“ 16, 1962; 18, 1964; 19, 1965; H. Nickel, *Der mittelalterliche Reiterschild des Abendlandes*, Berlin 1958; D. Hüpper-Dröge, *Schild und Speer. Waffen und ihre Bezeichnungen im frühen Mittelalter*, Frankfurt am Main 1983.

<sup>50</sup> Cf.: W. Iwańczak, *Tropem rycerskiej przygody. Wzorzec rycerski w piśmiennictwie czeskim XIV wieku (On the Trail of Knightly Adventure. The Model Knight in Fourteenth-Century Czech Literature)*, Warszawa 1985, p. 116.



Zbigniew asked Magnus to 'take the youth (the Duke W.I.) who is among us under your shield'<sup>51</sup>. Thus the shield could have been identified with some kind of 'protective umbrella'. Moreover, this type of symbolism is still used in modern times (Alliance Shield, for example). While describing the alliance of Świętopełk, Duke of Moravia, and Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, Gall says that the former 'bonded with Bolesław with one shield'<sup>52</sup>. He also adds that both men will be 'one shield' for each other<sup>53</sup>. Gall's editor, Marian Plezia, argues that the expression *unum scutum* is derived from the Latin term *scutum* denoting the smallest medieval military unit<sup>54</sup>. This seems to be the simplest possible explanation. However, it may be assumed that the word 'shield' was interpreted in a more general way and 'sharing one shield' meant uniting military forces. Kosmas emphasizes other aspects of the role played by the shield. In his account of the emperor Henry III's expedition to Bohemia, the chronicler expresses the opinion that the raid, carried out with the aim of looting gold and silver from the country, was pure robbery. The Czechs believed that they paid due tribute to the Emperor. Henry III did not acknowledge their refusal and replied, '...those (the monarchs W.I.) who rule through laws are not ruled by laws... King Pepin did what he wanted to do; However, if you do not do as I say, I will show you how many painted shields I possess and what I am worth in war'<sup>55</sup>. Thus, there seems to be no difference between a display of shields and a performance of one's skills in combat. They are simply two sides of the same coin, a demonstration of power. Kosmas repeatedly emphasizes the disproportion between the two sides regarding the number of warriors as well as their arms and armour by referring to the number of shields. Seeing lack of enthusiasm for fighting against the Poles on the part of his men, Władysław, Duke of Bohemia, says, 'Had I only three shields, I would

not waste this day without attempting to decide the unsure fate of the war'<sup>56</sup>. Later, when the envoy sent by Duke Sobiesław to Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, Count Stefan, was attacked by a group of robbers who outnumbered his men, 'a bloody battle ensued between five warriors armed with small shields and fifty shielded attackers'<sup>57</sup>.

Both chronicles provide evidence of the fact that the weapons used in combat had some distinctive qualities. A marked difference between the arms carried by the Pomeranians and the weapons borne by Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed's army was repeatedly stressed by the annalist, who would additionally emphasize the superiority of Polish weaponry<sup>58</sup>. Nonetheless, mistakes and misunderstandings did occur in military campaigns. During Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed expedition to Bohemia, the Polish army split into small groups in order to prepare ambushes and trap the enemy. The Polish duke marched at the rear. 'Approaching on one side, through this thin forest, Bolesław saw his own men and was also noticed by them. The two groups mistook each other for the enemy; However, when they came closer and examined the weapons carefully, they recognized Polish emblems and gave up the idea of starting a fratricidal battle'<sup>59</sup>. What conclusions can be drawn from this account? On the one hand contemporary weapons were marked with (Polish) emblems, but on the other, their shape and general appearance did not vary from warrior to warrior as differences could only be seen from a short distance. Kosmas does not pay much attention to the characteristics of equipment possessed by particular armies. However, among others, a mention of long spears used by the Saxons can be

<sup>56</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 208: *Certe si tria tantummodo scuta habeam, non intermittam hodie ancipitem fortunam belli intemptatam.*

<sup>57</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, pp. 230 seqq: *Fit monstruosa pugna inter quinque ancilia, et quinquaginta fortium scuta.*

<sup>58</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 125:

*Scarbimirus ex adverso se confert in medios  
Et hortatur et confortat ad pugnandum socios.  
Tales, inquit, Pomorani, non sensistis gladios.*

<sup>59</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p.151: *Cumque Boleslauus ex obliquo suum exercitum per silvam tenuem sequeretur, videns suos et a suis visus, hostes reputavit suos, a suis etiam hostis similiter estimatus; sed propius ad invicem accedentes et arma subtilius contemplantes, signa Polonica cognoverunt et sic a pene cepto scelere desierunt.*

<sup>51</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 69: *...festina puerum, quem habemus, in clipeum defensionis recipere...*

<sup>52</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 142: *...qui (Świętopełk) cum Boleslao unum scutum coniunxerat...*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>54</sup> *Anonim tzw. Gall Kronika (Gall Anonymous. The Chronicle)*, p. 138, note 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 94: *...vos autem nisi quod volo faciatis, ostendam vobis, quot pictos habeam clipeus aut quid bello valeam.*

found in his chronicle<sup>60</sup>. Such references are common in medieval annals. For instance, in later periods, Czech warriors used to be associated with exceptionally massive lances<sup>61</sup>.

Another issue made in the texts is the diversification of weapons depending on the social status of the owners. Gall records that Bolesław the Brave had at his disposal a few thousand armoured warriors and still more shielded men. Undoubtedly, the passage provides information on contemporary social structure<sup>62</sup>. While the ruler's crew must have been composed of armoured warriors, who constituted the elite, the shielded soldiers came from lower social classes. Obviously, the arms and armour of the crew considerably differed from the weaponry of the troops raised by mass levy. Some historians are of the opinion that the arms and armour used by knight formations in contemporary Bohemia met Western European standards<sup>63</sup>. Differences between the types of weaponry used by various groups of warriors are recorded in the chronicles. According to Gall, during the Polish-Russ war at the time of Bolesław the Brave, the two armies stationed on two opposite banks of a river, getting ready for battle. While the knights were having a nap, the Russ servants and grooms started to provoke the Poles across the waters. 'As the Rus kept teasing and offending them, and eventually began to fire arrows in their direction, Boleslaw's servants gave up eating, left the remains of their meal to the dogs and birds, took the arms of the sleeping knights, swam across the river and won a victory over the Rus forces, though the latter outnumbered them heavily'<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 195: ...*Saxones...cum longis hastis*.

<sup>61</sup> That was the case at John of Luxemburg's wedding with Elizabeth Premyslid, which took place in Spire on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1310 and where numerous tournaments were held. See: *Chronicon Aulae regiae*, J. Emler ed., *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum IV*, Prague 1884, p. 152: Cf.: G. V. Šarochová, *1.9.1310 Eliška Přemyslovna a Jan Lucemburský. Sňatek z rozumu*, Prague 2002.

<sup>62</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 25.

<sup>63</sup> Cf.: *Vojenské dějiny...*, p. 73.

<sup>64</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 29: *Cumque Rutheni magis eos magisque contumeliis incitarent et sagittis etiam acrius infestarent, canibus, que tenebant avibusque commissis, cum armis militum in meridiana dormientiū fluvio transnatato Boleslavi parasitorum exercitus super tanta Ruthenorum multitudine triumphavit*.

Therefore, the arms carried by knights and the weapons used by their servants must have differed considerably. A similar piece of information is to be found in Gall's account of the fight for Bytom, which took place during the emperor Henry V's invasion of Poland. The famous emperor's knights approached the city 'wishing to display their chivalry as well as test the strength and courage of Polish people. Having opened the gates, the inhabitants of the city, brandishing their swords, went out to meet the enemy. Not afraid of the various and numerous forces, the Germans' aggressiveness and the presence of the Emperor himself, the defenders faced the attackers and resisted them bravely. The Emperor was astonished to see so many people without defensive armour fighting with their bare swords against shielded warriors and many a shielded warrior struggling with armoured knights as eagerly as if they were rushing to a feast'<sup>65</sup>. In this case, the tremendous gap between the quality of the arms and armour used by the two sides was to be bridged by the courage and determination of the attacked. Of course there occurred extreme situations where all men able to participate in combat were mobilized. According to Kosmas, that was the case with the Bohemian dukes who were at war with Leopold Babenberg, Margrave of Austria, at the end of the eleventh century. During the conflict, the latter realized that it was necessary to enlist all men, even those who normally had nothing to do with fighting. The mention reads, '...the margrave... ordered that every man — from a swineherd to an ox driver — should be ready for war, armed with a piece of iron of any kind, from a shoemaker's awl to a spike for urging oxen'<sup>66</sup>. I may only be noted that this desperate mobilization failed and the randomly gathered army suffered a defeat.

<sup>65</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, pp. 131 seq: *At contra castellani portis apertis et extractis ensibus exierunt, nec multitudinem tam diversarum gentium, nec impetum Alemannorum, nec presentiam cesaris metuentes, sed in frontibus eis audacter ac viriliter resistentes. Quo considerans imperator, vehementer est miratus homines scilicet nudos contra clipeatos, vel clipeatos contra loricatedos nudis ensibus decertare et tam alacriter ad pugnam velud ad epulas properare*.

<sup>66</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 132: *Ad hec marchio efficitur letus et a subulco usque ad bubulcum armatos omnigena specie ferri, a subula usque ad stimulum, omnes iubet paratos esse ad bellum*.

Finally, we may cite a few examples of how weapons and the function they performed were perceived not only in the context of typology and diversification but also from the perspective of axiology, morality and esthetics. To begin with, the esthetic aspect seems to have played an important part. For instance, Kosmas says that the knights had 'their waists double girded with scarlet belts'<sup>67</sup>. While describing the preparations for a battle between the emperor Henry III and the Czechs, the chronicler uses the following expressions, 'The Emperor soon ordered that armoured troops approach; The magnates desire to win first place in the battle, the lines are as magnificently bright as transparent ice and when their arms reflect the sunlight, it brightens the leaves in the woods and the mountaintops'<sup>68</sup>. Undoubtedly, the above picture is deeply rooted in medieval conventions: it is a sunny day, the weapons are shiny and the forthcoming battle is going to be an impressive event, almost a festival, where even the brightly red blood of the dead and wounded will add a touch of charm to the spectacle. This climate resembles other classic works of the epoch. In *The Song of Roland* the author says,

Ready they make hauberks Sarrazinese,  
That folded are, the greater part, in three;  
And they lace on good helms Sarragucese;  
Gird on their swords of tried steel Viennese,  
And white, blue, red, their ensignstake the breeze,  
They've left their mules behind, and their palfreys,  
Their charges mount, and canter knee by knee.  
Fair shines the sun, the day is bright and clear,  
Light bums again from all their polished gear.  
A thousand horns they sound, more proud to seem'<sup>69</sup>;

<sup>67</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 97: ...*lumbos baltheis bis cocco tinctis precinctos...*

<sup>68</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 96: *Mox secundum iussum regis ruunt loricate agmina; de primo loco pugne certant proceres, conspicue nitent acies ut lucida glacies et, ut sol refulsit eorum in arma, resplendent frondes silvarum ab eis et cacumina montium.*

<sup>69</sup> *The Song of Roland*, Online Medieval and Classical Library Release #12, translated by Charles Scott Moncrief, 1919, electronic edition by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), 1995, lines 994-1004.

Thus it may be assumed that weaponry was an object of admiration or even worship. Duke Bolesław the Pious considered arms as much more valuable than gold<sup>70</sup>. A similar situation can be found in *The Song of Roland*, where after the protagonist's death, Charlemagne slept with his weapons by his side without even undoing the helmet<sup>71</sup>. Therefore, besides coming in all shapes and sizes, arms functioned as a self-contained unity. In his account of the campaign against Moravian troops, Gall refers to 'murderous weapons'<sup>72</sup> or 'spiritual arms'<sup>73</sup> and says that the enemy army did not attempt to run away but had confidence in their arms<sup>74</sup>. Similarly, the inhabitants of Wieluń in Pomerania put their trust in their weapons when the town was besieged by Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed.<sup>75</sup> Kosmas expresses the opinion that arms brought the knights fame<sup>76</sup> and a knight could not do without a weapon<sup>77</sup>. However, there existed some ethical standards, moral rules and a code of conduct connected with arms. The Czech chronicler stresses that those who were sent to negotiate for peace were not supposed to bear arms<sup>78</sup>. Also, he realizes that not all problems could be solved by means of weapons. Therefore the analyst writes, '...it is not always through the use of arms but more often by adopting a stratagem that the steep peaks of fame can be reached...'. Kosmas seems to approve of such a way of achieving success. Moreover, to support his thesis, he quotes

<sup>70</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 57: *Cui erant maxime opes bellica instrumenta et dulcia armorum studia. Nam plus diligebat ferri rigorem quam auri fulgorem...*

<sup>71</sup> *The Song of Roland*, Online Medieval and Classical Library Release #12, translated by Charles Scott Moncrief, 1919, electronic edition by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), 1995, lines 2496-2502.

<sup>72</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 72: ...*arma nefanda...*

<sup>73</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 73: ...*armorum terror spirituum agitavit.*

<sup>74</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 92: ...*non cogitant in fuga sed in armis suam fiduciam collocare.*

<sup>75</sup> *Galli Anonymi...*, p. 117: ...*castellani...solummodo in armis confidentes...*

<sup>76</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 105: *Ecce vir fortis et inclitus armis.*

<sup>77</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 155: ...*sicut miles sine armis suo officio caret, sic dux sine militibus nec nomen ducis habet...*

<sup>78</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 206: *Ad fedus pacis...nemo venit in armis.*

Prudentius, who in his “Psychomachia” (“The Contest of the Soul”) says, ‘It does not matter whether victory is won by hook or by crook’<sup>79</sup>.

Not surprisingly, the two authors provide a large amount of information relevant to analysis of arms and armour. Like in any other epoch, at the time of Gall and Kosmas, war was one of the most

widespread means of solving conflicts. Studied in the broad context of meanings and symbolic as well as practical functions attributed to the works by both the Polish and the Czech chroniclers, the comprehensive picture of arms and armour found in the accounts seems to be dominated by the most typical qualities characteristic of the Latin culture of war and chivalry of the Early Middle Ages.

<sup>79</sup> *Cosmae Pragensis...*, p. 183: ...*Prudentius referat in Psychomachia dicens:*

*Nil differt, armis contingat palma dolisve.*

*Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra*