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## PREFACE

In archaeological literature, a steady growth has been observed for some time in the interest in specialized archaeological find testing. Archaeologists have come to the conclusion that further thorough studies into the past will be impossible or at least more difficult without the knowledge obtained from such tests.

Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae, fascicle XXVI, provides the reader with a selection of studies on recent ancient arms and armour production technology research. The first paper differs slightly from the following contributions. Firstly, it deals with the Roman period while the others are devoted to the weapons of the Middle Ages. Secondly, it discusses the examination of spurs, which cannot be considered part of arms and armour *sensu stricto*, but are a kind of equestrian equipment. Spurs, however, remain so closely related to the mounted warrior that including a paper devoted to them in the present publication should not create discord. I will say straight away that the tests performed led to surprising conclusions on the origin of the spurs examined and refer anyone interested in the subject to the article in question.

The three following papers, dealing with medieval offensive weapons, do not contain such spectacular analysis results. However, we are of the opinion that they will be used by other scholars in the course of future research.

The next article is devoted to the knight's coat of plates. It discusses the tests which led to its reconstruction, the ornamentation included, and suggested that the find was of local provenance.

The three last contributions refer to firearms production. The first paper constitutes an introductory publication of a metallurgical workshop dating back to the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and discovered during the archaeological excavation conducted in Visegrád, Hungary, where barrels, most probably for handguns and long guns, had been cast. This discovery requires a number of

specialized tests and the paper in question only signals its appearance.

Specialized tests were performed in the case of two large heavy iron guns held in the museum in Biecz. The results show that both the finds may have been made locally.

The last paper deals with medieval stone cannonballs on the example of finds from Bolesławiec-on-Prosna, Chojnice, Człuchów and Puck. Although local materials were used to make the projectiles, the choice of them was not purely accidental.

We do not expect this limited selection of papers devoted to ancient arms and armour production technology to mark a turning point in the discussion of the subject matter in question. However, if the present publication evokes interest among scholars – arms and armour researchers, archaeologists and historians – and demonstrates the hidden potentials of archaeological finds, we shall assume that the goals set here have been accomplished.

The fascicle you are holding in your hands has been dedicated to the late Professor Andrzej Zbierski, an archaeologist and a historian, who had worked for many years at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Łódź and Gdańsk to subsequently become the Director of the Central Maritime Museum in Gdańsk. Thanks to his master's thesis, entitled *Wczesnośredniowieczne górnictwo i hutnictwo w świetle materiałów z grodziska łączyckiego*, prepared under the supervision of Professor Konrad Jażdżewski and published in „*Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne*”, volume III, in 1955, Professor Andrzej Zbierski had become the forerunner of metal science research in Polish archaeology.

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(translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra)

