

Relații Interetnice în Transilvania

Militaria Mediaevalia în Europa centrală și de sud-est



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Lucrări prezentate în conferințele internaționale
Interethnic Relations in Transylvania
Sibiu, 2018-2019

Editat de / Edited by
Zeno Karl PINTER, Claudia URDUZIA și Anca NIȚOI

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CUVÂNT ÎNAINTE

Evul mediu reprezintă o perioadă ce paradoxal se bucură de atenția constantă a specialiștilor dar, în același timp, încă, reprezintă din multe puncte de vedere o perioadă cu multe pete albe. Istoria militară a reprezentat mereu o temă predilectă pentru foarte mulți din cercetătorii perioadei medievale. Chiar și istoriografiile din fostele state socialiste, puternic influențate de curentul marxist, au acordat atenție deosebită istoriei militare. Starea de beligeranță permanentă dintre lumea creștină și lumea musulmană în perioada secolelor VIII-XVII este încă o temă abordată frecvent în mediul științific. Totodată, această perioadă este la originea unor realizări artistice de excepție în literatura și pictura romantic, care au făcut cunoscute unele dintre cele mai importante realizări ale lumii medievale: castelele.

Chiar și astăzi istoria militară a evului mediu reprezintă o sursă de inspirație pentru mulți cercetători. Dacă în urmă cu cca. 50-60 de ani domeniul era dominat mai ales de cercetători de gen masculin, asistăm astăzi la o apetență tot mai mare manifestată pentru această tematică și de către femei. Tematica este departe de a putea fi considerată epuizată și în poziția de a nu mai putea furniza elemente noi de înțelegere a mecanismelor care au guvernat comunitățile medievale

În urmă cu 15 ani se năștea ideea unei conferințe dedicate analizării interacțiunii diferitelor comunități etnice din Transilvania – Relații Interetnice în Transilvania (sec. VI-XIII) – care s-a dovedit a fi o idee care a adunat aproape an de an specialiști dedicați cercetării relațiilor interetnice prin prisma arheologie, istoriei, istoriei artei sau arhitecturii. În anul 2010, ca urmare a unor discuții începute în Varna (Bulgaria) cu colegi din Bulgaria și din Polonia, s-a născut ideea ca sub umbrela conferinței Relații Interetnice în Transilvania, să fie organizată o conferință dedicată istoriei militare a perioadei migrațiilor și evului mediu timpuriu – *Medievalia Militaria in South-East Europe*. Conferința, a cărei primă ediție a fost în anul 2011, s-a bucurat mereu de o largă participare internațională și a dus la publicarea a 7 volume dedicate istoriei militare sub toate aspectele ei, demonstrând că speranța pe care o exprima Zeno Karl Pinter în Cuvântul Înainte la primul volum din seria Relații Interetnice (2005) s-a transformat în certitudine. În acest context cele 7 volume apărute între 2011-2018 reprezintă o contribuție importantă, fiind și singurele volume tematice ce abordează, în istoriografia din România, această tematică.

Volumul de față este al VIII-lea și el grupează comunicări susținute la edițiile din 2018-2019 ale conferinței **Relații Interetnice în Transilvania. Militaria Mediaevalia în Europa centrală și de sud-est**.

Temele dezvoltate în cele 14 studii din cuprinsul volumului dezbat subiecte legate de arheologia și istoria militară și a echipamentelor militare, de arheologia și istoria așezărilor, de istorie a bucătăriei și gătitului, legate de patrimoniul construit sau de istoria și arheologie ecleziastică. Deși aparent studiile reflectă o eterogenitate a temelor, asocierea lor nu face decât să ilustreze multiplele fațete prin care societatea medievală se manifesta, precum și modul în care societatea noastră, contemporană, se raportează la martorii încă prezenți ai acelei perioade.

Studiile ne poartă, nu doar pe un interval cronologic larg (secolele IV-XVIII) ci și pe un areal geografic care pornește din Transilvania (Z.K. Pinter, *O descoperire veche, într-o lumină nouă. Complexul arheologic de la Viscri / Deutsch-Weisskirch*; A. Nițoi, *Arms and Armour from the Medieval Paintings of the Church at Mălâncrav (Sibiu County)*; P. Langa, *The Sword and the Saber – Symbols of Social Position in the Votive Images of Medieval Transylvania*; D. Bacueț, H. Cociș, T. Keresztes *Ordine monastice medievale pe valea Barcăului. Despre urmele mănăstirii pauline din hotarul localității Nușfalău (jud. Sălaj)*; R. Frîncu, Simona Malearov, *Rețete culinare ale landlerilor reflectate în manuscrise și cercetări de teren*), ajunge în Bulgaria (V. Yotov, *Chafing Dishes and Ember Covers Vessels North at the Danube River (30-ies Years of 9th – Beginning of 10th Century)*; S. Popov, *Late Medieval War Hammers from Vatevi Collection (Bulgaria); Elements of the 15th – 16th C. Equipment of Horseman and Horse – Possible Witnesses of the Conflicts Between the East and West*; S. Boyanov, *Localization of the Battle of Adrianople (378), the Causes and Consequences*

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of this Military Conflict According to Ancient Authors) pentru a ajunge în regiunea Rusiei (E. Shinakov, V. Guryanov, A. Chubur, *Ownership Settlements of the Ancient Rus Epoch in the Desna Region: Natural, Economic and Ethno-demographic Aspects*). Subiectele prezentate anterior sunt completate de studii dedicate analizării apariției unor motive decorative pe săbii (D. Toichkin, Y. Toichkina, *About the Origin of Swords, Decorated with Special Christian Symbols and Inscriptions*) și de analiza procesului de restaurare a uneia dintre cele mai importante fortificații de pe linia Dunării de Jos (V. Speriatu, *Inițiativa de restaurare și valorificare a Cetății Capidava*).

În încheiere un cuvânt de prețuire trebuie adus colectivului redacțional care a făcut posibilă editarea acestui nou volum: Zeno Karl Pinter, Claudia Urduzia și Anca Nițoi.

Sibiu, septembrie 2020

Prof. univ. dr. habil. Ioan Marian Țiplic

FOREWORD*

Middle Ages is a period of time which paradoxically sees the constant attention of specialists and at the same time is still in many regards an age with many blank spots. Military history has been always a popular theme for many of the researchers studying the medieval period. Even historiographies in former socialist states, under the strong influence of the Marxist currents, have shown a special attention to military history. The permanent state of belligerence between the Christian world and the Muslim world in the period of time comprised between the 8th and the 17th centuries is still a frequent approached theme in the scientific environment. At the same time this period of time is at the origin of some exceptional artistic achievements in Romantic literature and painting, which popularised some of the most important achievements of the medieval world: castles.

Even today the military history of the Middle Ages serves as an inspiration source for many researchers. If some 50-60 years ago this domain was dominated by researchers of the male gender, one can observe today an increasing taste for such subjects among female scientists as well. The topic is far from being exhausted or in the situation of being unable to supply new elements for understanding the mechanisms which governed medieval communities.

15 years ago the idea of a conference dedicated to analysing the interaction between the various ethnical communities in Transylvania was born – Interethnic Relations in Transylvania (6th – 13th centuries) – which proved to be a popular idea, gathering together almost yearly specialists dedicated to interethnic relations in terms of archaeology, history, art history or architecture. In 2010, following some discussions started in Varna (Bulgaria) with colleagues from Bulgaria and Poland, came the idea of organising a conference dedicated to the military history of the Migration period and Early Middle Ages – *Medievalia Militaria in South-East Europe* – under the large umbrella of the conference *Interethnic Relations in Transylvania*. The conference which had its first edition in 2011, always enjoyed a large international participation and led to the publication of 7 volumes dedicated to military history in all its aspects, proving that the hope expressed by prof. Zeno Karl Pinter in his foreword to the first volume of the series *Interethnic Relations* (2005) is becoming a certainty. In this context the 7 volumes printed between 2011 and 2018 stand as an important contribution, being also the only thematic volumes to approach this topic in the Romanian historiography.

The volume here is the 8th and it brings together papers presented during 2018 and 2019 editions of the conference **Interethnic Relations in Transylvania. Militaria Mediaevalia in Central and South-Eastern Europe**.

The themes approached in the 14 studies of the volume deal with subjects linked to military archaeology and history and history of military equipment, settlement archaeology and history, history of kitchen and cooking, built patrimony, or ecclesiastic history and archaeology. Although the studies apparently reflect a heterogeneousness of themes, their association only illustrates the multiple facets through which the medieval society manifested itself, as well as the mode in which our contemporary society relates to the still present witnesses of those times.

The studies take us not only through a large chronological frame (4th-18th centuries) but also through a geographical areal beginning in Transylvania (Z. K. Pinter, *O descoperire veche, într-o lumină nouă. Complexul arheologic de la Viscri / Deutsch-Weisskirch*; A. Nițoi, *Arms and Armour from the Medieval Paintings of the Church at Mălâncrav (Sibiu County)*; P. Langa, *The Sword and the Saber – Symbols of Social Position in the Votive Images of Medieval Transylvania*; D. Bacueț, H. Cociș, T. Keresztes, *Ordine monastice medievale pe valea Barcăului. Despre urmele mănăstirii pauline din hotarul localității Nușfalău (jud. Sălaj)*; R. Frîncu, Simona Malearov, *Rețete culinare ale landlerilor reflectate în manuscrise și cercetări de teren*), reaches Bulgaria (V. Yotov, *Chafing Dishes and Ember Covers Vessels North at the Danube River (30-ies Years of 9th – Beginning of 10th Century)*; S.

* Translated in English by / Tradus în limba engleză de Claudia Urduzia.

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Popov, *Late Medieval War Hammers from Vatevi Collection (Bulgaria); Elements of the 15th – 16th C. Equipment of Horseman and Horse – Possible Witnesses of the Conflicts Between the East and West*; S. Boyanov, *Localization of the Battle of Adrianople (378), the Causes and Consequences of this Military Conflict According to Ancient Authors*) until finally reaching Russian areas (E. Shinakov, V. Guryanov, A. Chubur, *Ownership Settlements of the Ancient Rus Epoch in the Desna Region: Natural, Economic and Ethno-demographic Aspects*). The subjects already mentioned are complemented by studies regarding the analyses of some special decorative motifs on swords (D. Toichkin, Y. Toichkina, *About the Origin of Swords, Decorated with Special Christian Symbols and Inscriptions*) and by the analyses of the restauration process of one of the most important fortifications of the Lower Danube line (V. Speriatiu, *Inițiativa de restaurare și valorificare a Cetății Capidava*).

Before closing we must add an appreciation thought for the editorial team, who made possible the editing of this new volume: Zeno Karl Pinter, Claudia Urduzia and Anca Nițoi.

Sibiu, September 2020

Prof. univ. dr. habil. Ioan Marian Țiplic

ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF SWORDS DECORATED WITH SPECIAL CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS AND INSCRIPTIONS

Denys TOICHKIN*, Yaroslava TOICHKINA**

Abstract: Studying of the special set of religious symbols and inscriptions, provide the key for true attribution of the large group of 17th century blades with special design. The decoration of high-quality blades represented traditional Christian plot of “Unfading flower”, angels, crosses and other religious symbols, followed by Latin, Greek or Slavic prayer text. Research of historiography let authors distinguish a few base theories regarded origin of these blades, included “Greek”, “Istanbul”, “Moldavian” and “Lviv”.

Authors analyse five magnificent sabres from Ukrainian museums and a few other collections. The thorough study of decoration and inscriptions allowed identifying Istanbul Armenian craftsmen as the main manufacturers of these decorations. Further research expanded the range of the main consumers and manufacturers of studied blades: it involved not only Greek and Armenian elites of Istanbul, but also the diaspora outside the Ottoman Empire, where blades and ready-made sabres were included in the process of migration and trade activities of Istanbul's ethnical communities.

The analysis of the unique specimen from Chernihiv Historical Museum shed light on the problem of Lviv manufacture of sabres with blades, decorated in studied design. Authors concluded that Istanbul armoury tradition, apparently, went beyond the Ottoman Empire: such weapons were manufactured, mounted and decorated in many foreign centres of Armenian goldsmiths – particularly in Lviv city. Problem of the Lviv production of “Christian” sabres also needs further, more thorough study.

Studied materials also indirectly suggest, that artisan arms centres, founded by Greek Phanariots, possibly existed in Moldavia – this complicated problem requires a special study.

It should be noted, that the tradition of production of blades with Christian symbols became so famous, that its echoes was revealed in the next imitation and stylization, on the blades of the late 18th and even 19th centuries.

Keywords: Greece swords, sabres with inscriptions, Orthodox symbols on sabres, Ottoman goldsmiths, Armenian goldsmiths, Lviv manufacture of Early Modern Times.

Résumé: Les recherches sur la combinaison de symboles religieux et les inscriptions sur des lames de sabre du XVIIe siècle permettent de mieux connaître leur origine. Le décor des lames de haute qualité représente souvent un sujet traditionnel qui peut être la Vierge avec un enfant et une fleur, des anges, des croix, ou d'autres signes religieux, qui sont accompagnés par un texte de prière en latin, en grec ou dans une langue slave.

La recherche historique permet aux auteurs de formuler quelques théories essentielles sur l'origine de ces lames, y compris "grecque", "istanbulienne", "moldave", "lvivienne". Les auteurs analysent cinq sabres particuliers en provenance de musées ukrainiens et de collections privées. L'étude attentive des décorations et des inscriptions leur a permis d'identifier les artisans d'Istanbul et d'Arménie comme étant les producteurs essentiels de ces lames. Les études suivantes ont élargi le cercle des principaux fabricants et utilisateurs des lames en question: ce ne sont pas seulement des représentants des élites grecques et arméniennes d'Istanbul qui en faisaient partie, mais également la diaspora hors de l'empire Ottoman, dont les lames et les sabres finalisés faisaient partie du processus de migration et de l'activité commerciale des communautés ethniques d'Istanbul.

L'analyse d'un exemplaire unique déposé au musée historique de Tchernigiv a permis de clarifier la façon de fabriquer des sabres avec des lames à Lviv. Les auteurs sont arrivés à la conclusion que sans doute la tradition de fabrication des armes à Istanbul s'est exportée hors des frontières de l'empire Ottoman: la même arme était produite, établie, décorée dans de nombreux endroits, notamment chez des orfèvres

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arméniens de Lviv. La problématique de la fabrication de sabres "chrétiens" de Lviv exige une étude complémentaire approfondie. Les matériaux étudiés indiquent que des ateliers de fabrication, fondés par des grecs d'Istanbul, pouvaient sans doute exister en Moldavie. Mais cela exige des études plus poussées pour s'en assurer. Il convient de préciser que la tradition de production de lames avec des symboles chrétiens est devenue si connue que son influence a été retrouvée dans les imitations et les stylisations ultérieures sur les lames de la fin du XVIIIe et même du XIXe siècle.

Clé mots: Grèce épées, sabres avec inscriptions, symboles orthodoxes sur sabres, orfèvres ottomans, orfèvres arméniens, fabrication à Lviv du début des temps modernes.

Introduction

In all times warriors who risked their lives on the battlefield tried to get the protection of divine forces by providing their weapons with some sacred properties. Nowadays, a large number of antique weapons with "sacred symbols" that once "protected" their owners are kept in museums and private collections. Such paraphernalia is quite different – from the small simple signs and phrases, inscribed on the blades, up to the special shapes of the blades themselves, specially designed for religious rituals. Such "sacred" symbolism sometimes turn into a real puzzle for scientists who research weapon as historical source, but, after a thorough study, it often helps to understand the origin and dating of artifact.

The special set of sacred symbols and inscriptions, studied in this article, provide us with a key for true attribution of the large group of 17th century blades with a special design. In spite of the vast historiography, the origin of their unique decor still has not been studied well, although so many different Christian symbols are known well on the sword blades since medieval period and Early Modern Times.

The unique steady set of sacred Christian symbols, included images and text. An art composition started from the shoulders of the blades and run vertical, covering forte. It represented segmented arch with a floralgeometric medallion (palmette) on the top. Above – images of two flaming candles in candlesticks with some object between: the most common flower(s) or star. Above candlesticks, blades are decorated by round frame with images of Blessed Virgin Mary with child in left hand and flower in right hand (so-called "Unfading Flower" plot) or large cross. Above the frame – the image of two angels (cherub) holding a crown. Sometime it is added with image of Holy Spirit.

Long inscription on every blade stand aside

from the main images, it is situated along the back of the sword and surrounded with two small crosses. Inscriptions represented an excerpt of Christian prayers in old Greek, Latin or even Slavic.

The image of St. George on a horse who hit dragon by spear, sometime add the main motif but placed on the left (inner) side of the blade.

The same craft technique, typical for 17th century is another reason to group all these blades, although the late copies are sometimes found. The inscriptions and contour images made of gold (wire) inlaying, raised a little bit in relief from a surface, more voluminous part – of gold-overlaying and engraving on the thin gold plates. The crown is sometimes inlaid with precious stones. The regular element of the composition is a pair of flaming candles in candlesticks made by golden and silver overlay.

The shapes of the sabers hilts quite differ but most of them dated to the 17th century. Morphology of blades looks similar – most of them are massive and have large yelman. Usually, the blades are made of the pattern-welded steel, occasionally – of the extremely valuable patterned crucible steel.

Sabers with this motif, made in extremely luxury style, were very popular among Eastern-European aristocracy of 17-18th centuries. Many of these masterpieces attributed to famous rulers of Eastern-European countries. Among them: Hetman of Ukraine Ivan Mazepa, Nikolaos Mavrogeni – regent of Vlachia and prince of Moldavia, Tsar of Muscovy Ivan V, etc.

Samples

Most of sabers with this special décor kept in Eastern and Central European museums. According to the features of decor, all sabers can be divided into two subgroups.

The *first subgroup* refers to the exactly described images followed with Greek inscription.

The excellent sample of this type kept in the collection of Chernihiv Historical Museum (*Pic. 1*), inv. No.2926.

Portraits of a Holy Mother of God and child made with gilding, but the small details – faces, dress etc. crafted with delicate engraving, that cut a thin layer of gold up to the steel. This special technique differs this sample from a few similar images on the blades, kept in State Historical Museum in Moscow (Russian Federation).

For many decades the complicated art composition on blades was studied by historians of art and weapons. Because of the Greek inscription and “Orthodox style” of images, the early researchers concluded that subject and, respectively, blades came from a Greek workshop. Thus, Vasyl Tarnovsky, Ukrainian collector, researcher and founder of the Chernihiv Historical Museum, the first known owner of «Mazepa saber», attributed it as a “Greek manufactured”¹.

From the left (out) side along the back of the blade inlaid gold inscription in old Greek (presented in modern transcription):

ΤΗΝ ΠΑΣΑΝ ΕΛΠΙΔΑ ΜΟΥ ΙΣ(Σ)Ε
ΑΝΑΤΙΘΙΜΙ Μ(Η)(Τ)ΗΡ ΤΟΥ Θ(Ε)ΟΥ
ΦΙΛΑΞΟΝ ΙΜΑΣ ΠΙ(Ο) ΤΙΝ ΣΚΕΠΙΝ ΣΟΥ

«I place all my hope in you, Mother of God, shelter me under the Protection of Yours!».

The study of this saber was conducted by one of the authors of this paper in 2013².

Another saber with similar blade decoration is kept in the Lviv Historical Museum (*Pic. 2*), inv. No. 3-3916. Museum fellows sure, that the blade has Greek origin, but the saber itself came from Moldova³ (presumably because of the specific form and decoration of the hilt). An idea about Moldova root of the blade decor is also known in early historiography⁴, so it

could strength the main idea of Moldova origin of the saber.

An excellent sample in a similar style, but later work of the early 18th century, is kept in the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw (*Pic. 3*). The hilt had a round pommel in late Ottoman style made from chalcedony and decorated with precious stones and gold inlay. The blade has the same design as mentioned before, but inscribed with another Greek text:

“King invincible. Word of God is omnipotent”⁵.

Polish researchers – Stanislaw Ledochowski and Marianna Brzusiewicz stated that this saber is of Lviv work⁶. Because of the Greek language of inscription, Andrzej Nadolski follows the most forthright speculation of “Greek” origin of saber, but expanded it to Balkan region⁷.

The décor of sabers of the *second subgroup* differ in details: the central image of the Holy Mother of God with child is sometimes replaced with a large cross in a round frame, decorated with lily flowers inside and the small cross on the top outside. This complicated symbol related to monstrance and in the same time Christian *Globus cruciger* (cross-bearing orb). The images of cherub are replaced sometime to another symbols of Blessed Virgin Mary (star or lilies⁸). Blades inscribed mostly in Latin.

A perfect sample of such saber kept in the collection of Chernihiv Historical Museum (*Pic. 4*), inv. No. И-2916. It also came from the collection of Vasyl Tarnovsky and first was published in his catalogue under a number 130⁹. Once again famous collector and researcher concluded a Greek origin of saber (because of the context of décor), even despite a Latin-language inscription.

A saber was thoroughly studied during the

Возрождения, Ч. 1: Собрание оружия, Санкт-Петербург 1908, с. 279.

⁵ *Zbiory Muzeum Wojska Polskiego w Warszawie, Warszawa 1994, s. 42.*

⁶ *Ibid; Ledóchowski Stanisław. Polskie szable paradne, Warszawa 1980, s. 18.*

⁷ *Nadolski Andrzej, Polska broń. Broń biała, Wrocław 1984, s. 115, rys. 72–73.*

⁸ *Бауэр Вольфганг, Дюмотц Ирмтрауд, Головин Сергийус, Энциклопедия символов, Москва 2000, с. 206.*

⁹ *Каталог украинских древностей коллекции В. В. Тарновского, Київ 1898, с. 43.*

¹ *Каталог украинских древностей коллекции В. В. Тарновского, Киев 1898, с. 43.*

² *Тоїчкін Денис, Клинка зброя козацької старшини XVI — першої половини XIX ст.: проблеми атрибуції та класифікації, Київ 2013, с. 182-193.*

³ *Недяк Володимир, Україна – козацька держава. Люстрована історія українського козацтва у 5175 фотосвітлинах, Київ 2005, с. 641.*

⁴ *Ленц Эдвард, Императорский Эрмитаж. Указатель отделения средних веков и эпохи*

creation of a new museum catalogue of historical weapon in 1990. For the first time it was attributed as a work of the Lviv craftsmen¹⁰.

A picture and a short description of the saber were published again in 2004, in a large catalogue of Ukrainian antiquities. This time saber was identified as “Polish” weapon¹¹. Description repeated the conclusions of Vasyl Tarnovsky, especially about “Greek origin” of a blade.

From the left (out) side along the back of the blade inlaid gold inscription in Latin – quotation from Old Testament:

IVDICA DOMINE NOCENTES ME
EXPVGNA IMPVGNANTES ME

“Judge O Lord, those who harm me; overcome those who attack me”: Psalm 34:1-2.

To create this masterpiece, artisans used many special craft techniques and various elements of design. Thus, they covered hilt and scabbard with unique imitation of fish-skin, made in silver foil, using embossing craft technique. A pommel was designed as a lion head, made separately and fixed by soldering. The technique of crafting the golden wire with round nodes is also quite rare and complicated. A blade itself has massive yelman and made of the pattern-welded steel. The thorough study of this saber was made by Denys Toichkin in 2013¹².

Another saber of the 17th century was analyzed by Robert Elgood (*Pic. 5*). He described “Sabre with walrus ivory hilt, c. 1620; the pommel cap is missing... The locket and chape bear the tughra of Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703)”¹³.

There is a gold quatrefoil design set with five precious stones surrounded by Greek letters within a circle at the forte: “Jesus Christ prevail”. The scabbard is Turkish Istanbul work. Saber is attributed to Nikolaos Mavrogeni, who became regent of Vlachia in 1786 and prince of Moldavia in 1788. He was decapitated in 1790. The same inscriptions are common on Phanariot swords. The Mavrogeni

family were Venetians settled in Byzantium. After 1453 some of the family moved to the Peloponnese and Euboea, while others went to Crete¹⁴.

Blade inscribed with the same Latin text as the saber from Chernihiv Historical Museum (inv. № И-2916).

Previous studies

For the first time, blades with such specific décor were noticed by museum researchers in the late 18th century. The keeper of Armoury of Tsarskoe Selo (St. Petersburg, Russian Empire) Florian Gilles assumed, that one of these sabers with date 1445, belong to the last Byzantium Emperor – Konstantin Paleolog. Before entering the Russian Emperor Armoury, saber was in Bucharest (Romania)¹⁵.

Authors of the early catalogues of Armoury Chamber of the Moscow Kremlin related the emergence of this group of blades with conquest of Morea by Venetians (1699-1715) and spreading of influence of the “Holy League” union against Ottomans (1684)¹⁶.

Among the historians of art, Vasiliy Prokhorov was one of the first who studied the images and inscriptions thoroughly. He stated, that this Christian decor was made under the “strong Western influence” and contain “nothing Greek but inscription”. Prokhorov strength his statement with such arguments: the plot of “Unfading Flower” appeared in Greece only in the end of 17th century; a Holy Mother of God depicted without headwear; the style of halos are not common for Orthodox iconography; angels, Holy Spirit and crown depicted in the Western European manner and crown itself is also of the “Western” type¹⁷. In a same time, Prokhorov noted that iconographic materials are quite different: the most common made in Western European style, but few designed in “Oriental” and even in “Russian” style¹⁸.

The arguments of Prokhorov were rethought by famous Russian researcher, keeper of

¹⁰ Каталог коллекции холодного оружия, Чернигов 1990, с. 11–12.

¹¹ Недяк Володимир, *Україна – козацька держава...*, с. 641.

¹² Тоїчкін Денис, *Клинок зброя козацької старшини...*, с. 281-297.

¹³ Elgood Robert, *The Arms of Greece and Her Balkan Neighbors in the Ottoman Era*, New-York 2009, p. 70.

¹⁴ Elgood Robert, *Op. cit.*, p. 319, cat. 051.

¹⁵ Жилье Florian, *Царскосельский музей с собранием оружия, принадлежащего Государю Императору*, Санкт-Петербург 1860, с. 157.

¹⁶ Прохоров Василий, *О древних саблях с греческими славянскими и другими надписями*, Санкт-Петербург 1877, с. 5.

¹⁷ Прохоров Василий, *О древних саблях...*, с. 3-4.

¹⁸ Прохоров Василий. Там же, с. 6.

Emperor Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (now – State Hermitage Museum) Edward Lenz. In his study, Lenz took into account not only art details, but also historical and the manufacture features of blades. He revealed Ottoman sultan tughras on tangs and fitting of swords as well as dates that corresponded to the Turkish calendar yearbook. Lenz made a conclusion about single manufacture center for such decorated blades. He also noted that such production must be situated in “the land with Christian population that live in Muslim environment” and related it with Moldavia. According to Lenz, local craftsmen erased Muslim symbols from oriental blades and changed them to a Christian one¹⁹.

Much later blades and décor were studied by famous Russian historians of weapon – Elena Tikhomirova and Emma Astvatsaturjan.

Tikhomirova analyzed Greek inscriptions, floral ornament and Christian symbolic, and assumed the existence of a single workshop in Istanbul, that made special weapon for “Christian nations that lived in Ottoman state in that period”²⁰.

Astvatsaturjan followed Tikhomirova, and concluded an Istanbul origin of these blades. Sultan tughra and dates (particularly dates 1685 and 1692 revealed on the blades of sabers that now kept in State Historical Museum, Moscow, inv. 3151 and Armoury Chamber of Moscow Kremlin, inv. 5953), undoubtedly testifies to the Ottoman origin of the marked products²¹. Astvatsaturjan believes that floral and geometric motifs around the biblical characters on the blades are typical for the Ottoman style. She grounded her statements on analyzing of the similar Christian plots, popular in decorative arts of the Ottoman Empire since the end of the sixteenth century. She also took into account craft technique of gold inlaying and overlaying.

Until now few researchers voted for “Greek” origin of these blades, based on the Greek language of inscription²². In the same time, the

popular modern theory, launched by Polish historians, suggest, that Lviv was the main production center of such blades²³.

Analyses of décor and inscriptions

After thorough studies and appropriate consultations²⁴ authors concluded, that not only Western European, but Copt (particularly miaphysites) and Byzantium art traditions are represented in studied decoration on the blades from Chernihiv and Lviv Historical Museums (inv. И-2926 and 3-3916 respectively) Thus, the images of the Virgin and the angels are characterized by flatness, special stylization of faces and assemblies of clothes, typical for Armenian art (*Pic. 6*).

The motif of the Byzantine spear-shaped leaf (schematized lily, a symbol of virginity and purity), which is repeated several times, from the flame of candles up to the image above the crown, also testifies to the benefit of oriental origin. Virgin holds palmette in her hand – a symbol of immortality (“Unfading flower”).

As the design of crown in “Western style” was not common in Byzantium, it was adopted in Armenian iconography²⁵.

The Turkish motifs are definitely present in the overall design of the blades: the ornament of the segmented arch finished with spear-shaped medallion near the basement of the blade, vegetal elements – flowering bush (between candles) and palmette. As these elements are classic for traditional Ottoman armory craft of the 17-19th centuries²⁶, so decoration combined Oriental traditions with Western influences. Such mix of culture traditions was natural for Istanbul as hypothetical center of manufacturing of these blades. Christian plots became popular in Ottoman decorative art in 17th century, particularly images of Blessed Virgin Mary with child and St. George. In this context, traditional elements of Ottoman ornament gained features unusual for previous periods. A medallion on the top of an arch got

¹⁹ Ленц Эдвард, *Императорский Эрмитаж...*, с. 279.

²⁰ Тихомирова Елена. *Оружейная палата. Парадное оружие XVII–XIX вв.: набор открыток*, Москва 1983, Открытка 8.

²¹ Аствацатурян Эмма, *Турецкое оружие в собрании Государственного Исторического музея*, Санкт-Петербург 2002, с. 97.

²² Недяк Володимир, *Україна – козацька держава...*, с. 641.

²³ *Zbiory Muzeum Wojska Polskiego...*, s. 42; Ledóchowksi Stanisław. *Polskie szable...*, s. 18.

²⁴ Authors consulted with Ukrainian historian of art, professor Dmytro Horbachov.

²⁵ See Grotowski Piotr, *Święci wojownicy w sztuce bizantyjskiej (843–1261). Studia nad ikonografią uzbrojenia i ubioru*. Kraków 2011, II. 85.

²⁶ Миллер Юрий, *Художественное оформление холодного оружия Турции XVII–XVIII вв., Труды Государственного Эрмитажа*, 1958, Т. 2, с. 170–171.

attributes of diadem with small cross (see *Pic. 4*) – the custom of crowning a royal crown with a cross known since times of Constantine the Great – first emperor of Byzantium²⁷. A small star between candles resembled a symbol of the Holy Mother of God as well.

In the décor of the second subgroup a plot of “Unfading flower” is replaced to a large straight cross – a symbol of Jesus Christ. The endpoints of cross have a shapes of the trefoils, corresponds to Byzantium lily style. The motif of stylized, spear-shaped lily leaves and flowers, a symbol of Virgin, surrounds the cross from every side, even the images of candles resemble it. The rich lily motif compensates the absence of “Unfading flower”, meanwhile the large cross in round frame stress the idea of Christian power (monstrance and cross-bearing orb). The center of the cross is decorated with multibeam star (possibly a kind of rosette pattern).

A cross in a round frame in such specific shapes was the main symbolic element of Byzantium decorative art and in time it completely replaced the palmette. The image of the lily that holds the idea of eternal renewal of nature, in the Christian context, is also a symbol of the Annunciation, the renewal of the world, and the coming of the Savior. It is directly related to the idea of the Tree of Life, the cross, because the cross itself is interpreted at the same time as the crossed bones of Adam (the ancestor of mankind) as a Tree with lily flowers. The idea of eternal renewal, related with to the motif of the cross, gained the meaning of the Christian Resurrection.

The Byzantine geometrical ornament united the oldest outlook symbols – circles, crosses and squares. It was formed under the influence of Sasanian decorative traditions, first on textiles. One of the most common, Christian-inspired motives in the arts and crafts has been the lily spear-shaped trefoil which ended the cross in a round frame²⁸. In 17-18th centuries such type of cross was common to the Istanbul Armenians and Greeks, who inherited the Byzantine traditions. But Armenian cross is the most specific. So-called “bloomed crosses” from khachkars in Armenia mostly have exotic endpoints with a few small lily-flowers. The

crosses made by the craftsmen of the Armenian diaspora in Persia and Ottoman Empire, typically have common trefoil endpoint in Byzantium style.

INSCRIPTIONS

The interpretation of the text on “Mazepa Saber” from Chernihiv Historical Museum (so called «Mazepa saber», inv. № И-2926) done by Eugene Chernuhin (Institute of History of Ukraine of the NASU). Chernuhin certifies that inscription is an excerpt from famous prayer to the Blessed Virgin (*Pic. 7*)²⁹.

Chernuhin advises the author, that despite the large number of abbreviations and grammatical inaccuracies, common to medieval Greek inscriptions of everyday life, there is no reason to believe that the inscription was made outside the Greek cultural environment.

The same text of prayer is also inscribed (sometimes incompletely)³⁰ on the few blades that are now kept in the State Historical Museum (Moscow, Russia Federation).

The most common inscription in Latin is the quotation from the Old Testament: «Judge O Lord, those who harm me; overcome those who attack me»: Psalm 34:1-2. This old Bible text translated to Latin by Thomas Aquinas³¹. The authors suggest that the text of the 34th psalm on the saber blades from the Armoury Chamber of Moscow Kremlin (*Pic. 8-b*) is Latin, but sometimes one can find it in Greek: in such way decorated the “Orthodox”, lavishly ornamented blades in the collection of State Historical Museum (*Pic. 8-a*).

The Saber of Nikolaos Mavrogeni stands aside from the common tradition as it combines Greek and Latin inscriptions. The Greek letters «IC.XP.NIKA» placed around the cross (made in Byzantium style, studied before) is an abbreviation that can be decrypted as “Jesus Christ prevail”. Inscription and cross together form the so-called “prosphora stamp” – an important Christian symbol and attribute.

This mix of languages, rare decoration and information about former owner, determines the value of Mavrogeni sword for scientific research.

²⁷ Кронштадтский Иоанн, *О кресте Христовом*, Москва 2007, с. 82–85.

²⁸ Буткевич Любовь, *История орнамента: учебное пособие для ВУЗов*, Москва 2008, с. 159–161.

²⁹ This is a very old prayer possibly attributed to Iohannes Damascenus (8th century A.D.).

³⁰ Тоїчкін Денис, *Клинок зброя козацької старшини...*, с. 289.

³¹ Elgood Robert, *Op. cit.*, p. 319, cat. 051.

Authors believe that the Armenian artisans of Istanbul sometime made such religious inscriptions in Greek. The inscriptions in Armenian are often featured on the products of Armenian artisans in the Ottoman Empire, especially on tiles³². However, it can hardly be considered as mandatory, when it came to meeting the requirements of a multinational contingent of local Orthodox customers, including the Armenians themselves (they were assimilated in Byzantine period). The Greek language of Christian prayer was tightly associated with the Byzantine traditions of church worship³³.

So the Latin inscriptions were as popular as the Greek ones. However, blades with Latin text are usually devoid of the exquisite iconographic ornamentation.

Note, that after the loss of state support, the Latin in Byzantium Empire started to go out of use rapidly in the 7th century. In the Middle Ages, the knowledge of Latin became rare even among educated persons, completely yielding to the Greek³⁴. Obviously, writing of the biblical texts in Latin, in the 17th century was related to Western European influences, which have especially strengthened in Constantinople since the Fourth Crusade. After the Ottoman conquest, due to the large influx of foreigners, the population of Istanbul apparently became much more ethnically diverse and, accordingly, more multilingual than in Byzantine times. This was reflected in the inscriptions on household items, which were often made in the native languages of customers³⁵.

Who made the decoration? First conclusions

The fact of similar craft techniques, ornament style, even morphological characteristics of widely known specimens, stored in many

collection of the world, create a solid ground for statement that the studied sabers had been made in a single production environment. But who and where did they make them?

Since the 19th century many researches tried to answer this question.

The authors followed statements of Astvatsaturjan and Elgood and concluded that these blades were made and decorated in a single artisan center in Istanbul by a group of Christian craftsmen in the second half of the 17th century. Later the tradition was continued in other lands. However, we tried to take the next step and shed a light on the ethnicity of craftsmen who decorated these blades. The thorough study of ornamental design clearly shows how the Armenian and Turkish masterpieces and art techniques were combined by the artistic style of the Istanbul Armenian craftsmen, which was the result of long and deep mutual influences of different cultural traditions.

Of course, these conclusions cannot be final, considering the high level of specialization of craft guilds in Early Modern Times. It is known that in Istanbul even the artisans of such narrow specialty as a silver engraver had a separate guild³⁶ (so-called “esnaf”), not to mention jewelers, who were regularly required for decorating weapon³⁷.

Another note related to multiethnicity and monoethnicity of certain Ottoman craft guilds³⁸. Thereby, considering “Armenian manufacturing” of blades decoration, authors tend to think of it being made within specific ethno-denominational groups, but stress, foremost, the common specific of craftsmanship and artistic features of decoration.

Armenians considered “no less Byzantines than Greeks”, because they left a significant legacy in Byzantine culture. The mass settlement of the Armenians of Constantinople begins in the 4th century AD, and already in the 6th century AD they established a separate church community in the Byzantine capital. About 1461 the Constantinople Armenian

³² Кулланда Мария, *Эволюция ремесленного производства как отражение перемен в жизни Османской империи второй половины XVI–XIX в.: по материалам музейных коллекций*: Дисс. ... канд. ист. наук, Москва 2008, с. 192.

³³ Church worship of the Armenian rite has long been performed in Greek and Syrian, from the 5th c. – on the old Armenian grabber.

³⁴ Болгов Н.Н., Смирницких Т.В., *Латинский пласт культуры ранней Византии: специфика и сферы распространения* в: Мир Византии, Белгород 2007, с. 25-27.

³⁵ Кулланда Мария, *Эволюция ремесленного производства...*, с. 192.

³⁶ Гарбузова С.В. Эвлия Челеби о стамбульских ювелирах XVII в. в: *Государственный Эрмитаж. Труды отдела истории культуры и искусства Востока*, Том III, Ленинград 1940, с. 316-317.

³⁷ Кулланда Мария, *Эволюция ремесленного производства...*, с. 46.

³⁸ Кулланда Мария, *Указ. соч.*, с. 47-48.

Patriarchate was founded. The invasion of the Ottomans only exacerbated the influx of migrants, but already by the will of the sultan, who tried to counterweight the rebellious Greek population.

The Armenian ethnical community (so-called “milet”) got wide autonomy. The Patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church of Istanbul got power over Miaphysite Christians from all lands of Asia Minor and Africa, conquered by the Ottomans – Egyptians, Syrians and others. Many Christian artisans of these ethnic minorities worked in the capital.

However, Armenian Christians in the Ottoman Empire were deprived of their civil rights: unlike Muslims, they could not pursue a military and administrative career.

Only the most respected and affluent families, along with the Greeks of Istanbul's Phanar Quarter, had a special social position. But most Armenians, along with the other non-Muslim population of Istanbul and other major cities in the Ottoman Empire, were required to engage in craft or trade.

Armenians were second in number after the Greeks among the non-Turkish population of the capital. Like the Greeks, they were active in international trade and banking.

Armenians played a significant role in the craft production of the Ottoman Empire. The members of the Armenian ethnic community not only penetrated the traditional Muslim guilds (“esnaf”), but also completely monopolized certain industries of craftsmanship, first of all, jewelry. In particular, Armenians were considered the first among the artisans who worked with silver³⁹.

Many craft workshop in the major cities of Anatolia belonged to the wealthy Armenians. A large number of them, one way or another, had to work with weapons, the manufacture of which required the involvement of artisans of various specialties. Arms production was widespread throughout the Ottoman Empire with famous centers in northeast Asia Minor, Erzurum and Trabzon, and a considerable part of the artisans in that workshop were Armenians.

In the latest book on Greece weapon, Robert Elgood, based on the content of blade inscription, stated that studied in this paper

³⁹ Elgood Robert, *The Arms of Greece...*, p. 64.

religious texts were common on Phanariot swords⁴⁰. By this way Elgood outlined the range of customers and possible manufacturers of the entire group of these blades.

Now, due to the Elgood study of Mavrogeni sword, we can also confirm an old assumption of Edwart Lenz about Moldavian origin of some of the sabers.

For many years the Phanariots held high positions in the Moldavian state, and for 146 years (1703-1849) directly ruled it. Thus exotic blades came to Moldavia with their owners – a high Greek aristocracy from Phanar quarter of Istanbul. In time, traditions of Istanbul armourers could be transited to the lands of Moldavia.

Taking into account “Moldavian traces” and the previous study of decor (especially shapes of the cross), the authors have to expand the range of main consumers and manufactures of these “Ottoman & Orthodox” blades. It should include not only Greek and Armenian elites of Istanbul, but also the diaspora outside the Ottoman Empire, where blades and ready-made sabers were considered as exclusive, luxury and highly demanded goods.

The statement about Lviv origin of decorated sabers, is one of the most common in modern historiography.

The problem of Lviv manufacturing: craft technique and decoration

A large number of luxury sabers with “Christian designed” blades are kept in the largest Polish museums, and naturally draw the attention of Polish researchers.

So, once again we have to inspect the saber from the Museum of the Polish Army in Warsaw, which is also attributed by few Polish experts to Lviv. The opinions are divided – researchers (except Andrzej Nadolsky) see this product as “somewhat of Lviv”: Stanislaw Ledochowski attributed fitting, Marianna Brzuskiwicz – blade⁴¹, but no one considers it necessary to ground his statement.

The decoration of the blade is exactly in line with the tradition of “Christian” Constantinople blades, but the image of Virgin

⁴⁰ Elgood Robert, *Op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁴¹ *Zbiory Muzeum Wojska Polskiego...*, s. 42; Ledóchowski Stanisław. *Polskie szable paradne*, s. 18.

made in different style, that looked more typical for 18th century. Further study of this miniature could provide researchers with crucial information about developing and spread of manufacturing tradition of “Christian” blades outside Constantinople.

The guard is also of interest. It is decorated with a cross in a round frame filled with floral-geometric patterns corresponding to previously studied item in this article. The delicate jewelry of the guard, overall style and craft technique may indicate Armenian or Greek work.

Attributing of Nikolaos Mavrogeni saber, Robert Elgood noted, that it “belongs to a known group attributed to Lwow”⁴². Unfortunately, the researcher did not specify what is this statement about – blade, hilt or scabbard. Possibly it was borrowed from the Polish historiography. Anyway, the tughra of Mustafa II on the locket and chape suggest that craftsmen from Ottoman empire participated in the manufacturing of this saber.

The thorough study of the unique design of a saber from Chernihiv Historical Museum (inv. № И-2916) shed light on a problem of Lviv manufacturing (*Pic. 9*).

Metal fitting of saber, decorated with complicated engraved floral-geometric ornament, made in the mixed Ottoman and European styles.

The left (out) side of scabbards is decorated with so-called islimi pattern: exquisite curls with tiny flowers and twisted leaves. Although this design follows the rich Ottoman ornamentation of the late 17th century, it is distinguished by some peculiarity.

The back side of metal scabbard mouth, chape and guard decorated with floral pattern of the large acanthus leaves. This symmetrical baroque ornament tightly covers the space, competing in density with islimi pattern on the other side of sheath. On the plates of handle and between them the metal stripes are fixed. They decorated with floral ornament of vines with ripe bunches, that logically continued previous acanthus motif.

Attachment for sword belt rings is made in the shapes of lily.

Generally, the pastoral motifs of the guard

correspond with the European Baroque tradition of the late 17th century.

Important role in the decoration of fitting play the motifs of knot and plait. Thus, the metal pad, fixed on the outside of the guard, ornamented with a motif of a quadrilateral knot, surrounded by flowers pattern – untypical element for the Ottoman, but common in European decorative art. Along the upper part of the locket, there is a plait leaves pattern engraved.

A pommel cup is finished with lion face made by chasing and engraving.

The lion head pommel on the long-bladed weapons appeared in Europe not only due to the antique traditions, revived by Renaissance art, but also because of the culture interact with oriental countries: it is believed that the zoomorphic hilts came from the Northern India region⁴³. In the 17th century the lion-head hilt was an extremely rare type in the lands of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth⁴⁴. The craft technique and style of this decorative element on the Chernihiv specimen also stands apart from the common tradition of the cast pommels – the head of the lion is made as a mascarons. It’s so close to the architect style of Lviv – “a city of Lion”, where baroque-style lion mascarons on the facades of buildings were as popular as the cast lion faces on the canons of local production!

Another interesting fact was revealed while studying the fitting of two luxury sabers, kept in the collection of the Armoury Chamber of Moscow Kremlin. These masterpieces belong to a small group of elite ceremonial weapon of the Moscow tsars, made by the best masters of the Armoury Chamber in the 17th century and characterized by high technological level and rich artistic decoration that has no analogues in other museum collections⁴⁵. An important element of these masterpieces is the cover for grips and scabbards, made from silver foil with

⁴³ Thompson Jon, Canby Sheila, *Hunt for Paradise. Court Arts of Safavid Iran 1501–1576*, Milan, 2003, p. 236–237; Paul Jaiwant, *Arms and Armour: Traditional Weapons of India*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 84; Носов Константин. *Традиционное оружие Индии*, Москва, 2011, с. 189.

⁴⁴ One of such rare specimen of the early 17th century is kept in the Royal Armoury Museum (Livruskammer) in Stockholm, Sweden, inv. 17143 (1872:b).

⁴⁵ Комаров Игорь, Яблонская Елена, *Парадное оружие русских государей XVI–XVII веков*, Москва 2006, с. 31.

⁴² Elgood Robert, Op. cit., p. 70.

a pattern of a fish skin. The jade girdles are inlaid with golden wire with round nodes. In these manufacture details, Moscow royal weapons are almost identical to the studied Chernihiv exhibit. The distinctions relate to the different matrices used for embossing the fish skin patterns in silver.

It is nothing unpredictable in using the same artisan techniques even in distant geographical regions, but particular uniqueness and remarkably similar style, turn it into an unusual phenomenon.

It should be also taking into account another interesting fact that suggest the direct cooperation of the Moscow artisans with Lviv craftsmen, while producing of exclusive ceremonial weapon set for Moscow tsar. The Russian researchers from Armoury Chamber of Moscow Kremlin state, that one saber of this unique series was made by Illya Prosvit, artisan from the city of Lviv⁴⁶. Now this statement got additional, though indirect, confirmation. After all, in the jewelry armory of Moscow and Lviv, it is possible to trace the evidence of a common exclusive craft tradition, which was probably formed due to the craftsmen cooperation.

In the historiography it is a common opinion, that the oldest non-ferrous metal imitations of a fish skin on a weapon came to the Western European markets in the early 18th century⁴⁷ (shagreen-based imitations dated to the last quarter of the 18th century). It seems that Lviv and Moscow stood at the origins of this artisan tradition in Central and Eastern Europe, not least thanks to Armenian craftsmen who have consistently implemented the latest trends of oriental craftsmanship in their products, spreading them across European markets. It should be reminded that in the hands of the Armenian artisans often concentrated not only the armory and pure jewelry, but also the production of leather goods (such was in Kamianets-Podilsky and many other cities, nowadays Ukrainian).

The decoration of the blade of unique saber from Chernihiv, retains all the characteristics of the work of Armenian artisans both Istanbul and Lviv. But the decoration of the fitting represents a style of the Lviv Armenian

craftsmen. This specimen is a great confirmation of statement of another famous Ukrainian historian of art, Pavlo Zholtovsky, who many times emphasized that Lviv Armenian jewelers not just used of oriental ornaments, but combined them in original way with motifs, created on local ground⁴⁸.

As exclusive and extremely complicated work, the sabers with “Christian” blades required high-level artisans to make them. Such an expensive masterpiece was available only in the largest armaments and jewelry craft centers, not only in the Ottoman Empire, but in the cities of Central and Eastern Europe as well, where many well-known Armenian and Greek artisans worked. Lviv and Kamianets took a senior place in a small list of such centers of Eastern Europe.

Since the 14th century Lviv became one of the largest Armenian colonies in Europe and the largest in Eastern Europe – in 1364 the eparchial center of all Armenians of Russia and Wallachia was founded here.

The first mention of the Armenian goldsmiths of Lviv is known from the beginning of the 15th century⁴⁹.

For a long time, they, as “Orthodox”, had to work outside the craft guilds. Only in the second half of the 17th century, after the transition to the Uniate religious denomination and with the active support of Polish King Jan III Sobieski, the Armenians practically monopolized jewelry manufacture in Lviv. About 30 Armenian goldsmiths worked in this period in Lviv, this number was more than half of the total city goldsmiths⁵⁰.

The ability to decorate weapons and horse harnesses given the Armenian goldsmiths all-European recognition. Their products were in high demand among the wealthiest gentry and the first nobles of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and far beyond this country.

The Armenian products were defined by a unique openwork ornament, and jewelry technique, first of all, by an extremely diversified craftsmanship of inlaying.

⁴⁸ Жолтовський Павло, *Художній метал. Історичний нарис*, Київ 1972, с. 80-81.

⁴⁹ Зуб Дарія, *Нариси з історії золотарства Галичини*, Львів 2003, с. 211, 303.

⁵⁰ Зуб Дарія, *Вказ. пр.*, с. 312–314; Григорян В., *Історія армянських колоній України і Польщі (армяне в Подоліи)*, Єреван 1980, с. 203.

⁴⁶ Комаров Игорь, Яблонская Елена, *Указ. соч.*, с. 25.

⁴⁷ Aylward J., *The Smallsword in England*, London 1945, p. 57.

In general, the artistic style of Lviv craftsmen was formed under the influence of various national and professional traditions, which were brought by Armenians, Ruthenians, Germans, Poles, Hungarians artisans. However, the oriental motifs introduced to Lviv by Armenian craftsmen⁵¹.

The names of the famous goldsmiths were saved in historical documents. Sefer Armenus Valachicus a well-known armorer and jeweler worked in Lviv in the first half of the 17th century. His exclusive products were extremely expensive: according to his prices, only one saber was inlaid with over 400 precious stones of different sizes, not to mention silver and gold⁵². The three swords and one saddle of his work totally worth 2124 zloty (1627).

The development of exclusive armaments was aided by the enormous scope of international trade conducted by the Armenian communities of Lviv and Kamianets cities.

In the 17th century Kamianets city was linked with Kafa in Crimea by an important trading route that reached Yaroslav through Sataniv, Kremenets, Lutsk, Sokal and Belz. A path passed through Kamianets, connecting Lviv with Istanbul, forming one of the most important trading routes of Podillya region⁵³.

By royal orders, Armenian merchants brought from the East a variety of goods, mentioned as “Armenian” in the customs documents of the 17th century⁵⁴. These are, first of all, luxury goods – carpets, gold sewing, even thoroughbred horses, and, of course, rich decorated weapons and ammunition⁵⁵. The trade played a key role in supplying materials and billets needed for the manufacture of weapons⁵⁶. Thus, part of the gemstones, contained in the products of the mentioned Sefer, was purchased in Istanbul, whose

market was replenished from the Southeast. The close relations between the craftsmen of Lviv and Istanbul are evidenced by the many surviving historical documents⁵⁷. So in manufacturing and decoration of weapons, the Armenian from Lviv kept up with their Istanbul tribesmen.

Final conclusions

For nowadays are known a few hypotheses regarding the origin and centers of production of the unique series of bladed weapons of the 17th-18th century, decorated with traditional Christians plots and inscriptions. The authors concluded that the blades were made by the Armenian and possibly Greek craftsmen of Istanbul for the Armenian and Greek aristocracy, and other respected customers of the Orthodox community of the Ottoman Empire (“millet-i Rûm”).

Apparently, the Istanbul armory tradition went beyond the Ottoman Empire: such weapons were manufactured, mounted and decorated in many foreign centers of Armenian goldsmiths – particularly in Lviv city.

The studied materials indirectly suggest that artisan arms workshops, founded by Greek Phanariots, possibly existed in Moldavia – this complicated problem requires a special study.

The problem of Lviv production of “Christian” sabers also needs further, more thorough development; just the first steps towards the source justification were made in this article.

It should be noted that the tradition of production of blades with Christian symbols became so famous, that it echoes in the next imitation and stylization, revealed on the blades of the late 18th and even 19th centuries⁵⁸. An old Istanbul decoration style of the blades was adopted in the Russian Empire, but the inscriptions were changed to Slavic. Thus, Prokhorov quite rightly noted the heterogeneity of the studied sources and the large number of “fakes”, which in fact was just a late imitation of the original Christian subjects on weapons⁵⁹. An important role here was played by late blades with Slavic inscription, decorated in the same style.

⁵¹ Зуб Дарія, Вказ. пр., с. 303.

⁵² Łoziński Władysław, *Złotnictwo lwowskie w dawnych wiekach: 1384-1640*, Lwow 1889, s. 83.

⁵³ Григорян В., *История армянских колоний...*, с. 68.

⁵⁴ Доронович М. Армяне в Подолии и первая церковь их в городе Каменце, ныне градская церковь православная во имя святителя Николая, в *Труды Комитета для историко-статистического описания Подольской епархии*, Вып. II, Каменец-Подольск 1878-1879, с. 186.

⁵⁵ Łoziński Władysław, *Złotnictwo lwowskie w dawnych wiekach: 1384-1640*, Lwow 1889, s. 276.

⁵⁶ Mańkowski Tadeusz, *Orient w polskiej kulturze artystycznej*, Wrocław-Kraków 1959, s. 138.

⁵⁷ Зуб Дарія, *Нариси з історії золотарства...*, с. 283.

⁵⁸ See: Janiak Ryszard, *Pasja zbierania. Kolekcja Ryszarda Z. Janiaka: Katalog wystawy*, Warszawa 2007, s. 87, 249–250.

⁵⁹ Прохоров Василий. *О древних саблях...*, с. 6–7.

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Pic. 1



Pic. 2



Pic. 3



Pic. 4



Pic. 5



Pic. 6 A



Pic. 6 B



Pic. 6 C



Pic. 7

† АИАСИМКОТЪСАИКСИТАСМЕТАНЕМХСИМЪСОТЪАЕМЪИМЪАЕМЪ

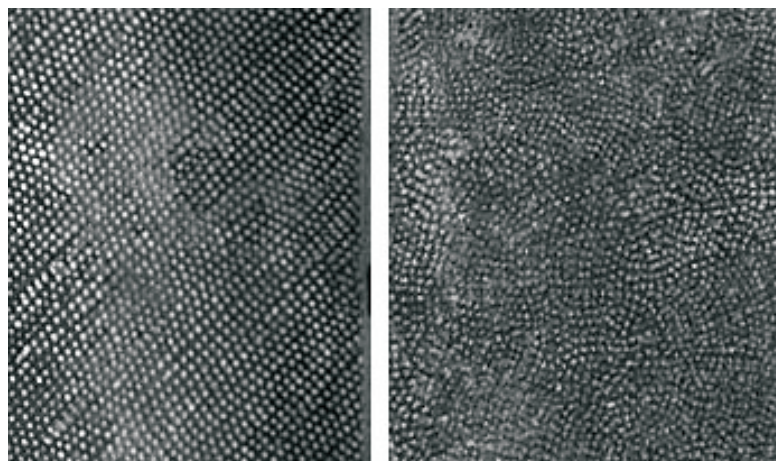
Pic. 8 A

† ИДИКАДОМНЕ·НОСЕНТЕ·S·ME· ЕХРВГНА·ИМРВСНАНТЕ·S·ME

Pic. 8 B



Pic. 9



Pic. 10

