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**The seal of Otto von Kittlitz.
A rare relic of knightly sphragistics from the end of 14th century**

Among the exhibits of the State Archive in Wrocław, housing the most extensive collection of medieval documents in Poland, there is one particularly interesting parchment dated to the 13th February, 1395.¹ It documents the sale of the village of *Drysenicz* by Otto von Kittlitz to Heinrich von Reinbotindorf. Kittlitz was a descendant of a mighty Silesian-Lusatian knightly family that produced, among others, Henry, the Archbishop of Gniezno (*Gnesen*), named Kietlicz². This parchment is especially unique not because of the type of transaction it refers to — which was not at all a rarity in that period — but because it was authenticated by as many as 12 seals of the participants of the legal action, and, most importantly, by the seal of the issuer of the document (the first seal attached to the document) (ill. 1)³. This particular seal is strikingly different from the others. The coats of arms contained in all remaining 11 seals consist mainly of an escutcheon with a heraldic badge or of a escutcheon with a heraldic badge topped with a helmet and a crest, which makes them typical examples of the knightly

¹ State Archive in Wrocław (hereafter referred to as: SAW), Collection of the Schaffgotsch Family, Fach. XXXVIII, no. 8. For information on the archival fonds see Roman Stelmach, *Zbiór dokumentów Archiwum Państwowego we Wrocławiu*, Archeion, 83, 1987, pp. 151–153; *State Archive in Wrocław. Przewodnik po zasobie archiwalnym do 1945 roku*, Andrzej Dereń, Rościśław Żerelik, eds., Wrocław 1996, *passim*. The collection of documents of the Schaffgotsch family was discussed in detail by Roman Stelmach, *Archiwum majątku Schaffgotschów w Cieplicach — dokumenty* (parts I–II), *Rocznik Jeleniogórski*, 35, 2003, pp. 33–40; 36, 2004, pp. 79–106.

² For the Family von Kittlitz see i.e. Johann Sinapius, *Schlesische Curiositäten erste Vorstellung Darinnen die ansehnlichen Geschlechter des Schlesischen Adels. Mit Erzählung des Ursprungs, der Wappen, Genealogien, der qualificirtesten Cavaliere, der Stamm-Hausler und Guter beschrieben*, Bd. 2, Leipzig-Breslau 1728, pp. 348–350; Leopold von Zedlitz-Neukirch, *Neues Preussisches Adels-Lexicon oder genealogische und diplomatische Nachrichten*, Bd. 3, Leipzig 1843, pp. 111–113; Hermann Knothe, *Geschichte des oberlausitzer Adels und seiner Güter vom XIII. bis gegen Ende des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1879, pp. 293–297; Ewald Wernicke, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der Adelsfamilien in den ehemals vereinigten Kreisen Bunzlau-Löwenberg*, Vierteljahrsschrift für Heraldik, Sphragistik und Genealogie, 14, 1886, pp. 459–463; Alfred Krane, *Wappen- und Handbuch des in Schlesien (einschließlich der Oberlausitz) landgesessenen Adels*, Görlitz 1901–1904, p. 57; Walter von Boetticher, *Der Adel des Görlitzer Weichbildes um die Wende des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, Görlitz O.-L. 1927, p. 103–105; Stanisław Kozirowski, *Obce rycerstwo w Wielkopolsce w XII–XVI wieku*, Poznań 1929, pp. 46–47; Tomasz Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo na Śląsku do połowy XIV wieku*, Poznań 1996, p. 241; Roman Sękowski, *Herbarz szlachty śląskiej. Informator genealogiczno-heraldyczny*, vol. 3: H–K, Katowice 2003, pp. 357–362. Cf. Józef Umiński, *Henryk arcybiskup gnieźnieński zwany Kietliczem (1199–1219)*, Lublin 1926.

³ The extensive collection of seals of the archive in Wrocław was discussed by Marek L. Wójcik, *Zbiory sfragistyczne Archiwum Państwowego we Wrocławiu*, [in:] *Zbiory pieczęci w Polsce*, Zenon Piech, Wojciech Strzyżewski, eds., Wrocław 2009, pp. 101–120.



sphragistics of the period⁴. Otto's *sigillum* also contains a heraldic motif but its far more extended than in the case of the remaining seals and enriched by curious iconographic elements. As the social background of the seal's owner seems to be of crucial importance for us to perform an accurate interpretation of the item's origin and heraldic depiction, we shall open our study with a few details on Otto's familial relations. This is all the more important as some of the related findings of genealogists do not seem entirely credible.

Otto was the son of Henry von Kittlitz, who was active between 1345 and 1382 and held the office of a Vicestarcost of Upper Lusatia, and Jadwiga — the daughter of Botho von Eilenburg⁵. The marriage produced at least four children. Except Otto, sources mention also John and two Henrys⁶. Whereas history does not tell us much about Otto's two latter brothers, it presents John, who became engaged in priesthood, as a rather well-recognized. In the surviving sources he is consistently referred to as the cleric of the Diocese of Meissen (Miśnia). He was also the canon of Prague (1381) and Wrocław (t. 1371–1383), the parson of Görlitz (Zgorzelec), the Bishop of Lebus (Lubusz, t. 1383–1392) and finally, between 1392 and 1398 he assumed the office of the Bishop of Meissen, from which he eventually resigned on his own accord. He died after February 20th, 1408.⁷ Brilliant was also the career of Otto, the owner of the object of our study, regarded as one of the most influential figures of the Silesian-Lusatian borderland at the turn of the 15th century⁸. What needs to be emphasized is that he was one of the closest companions of John of Luxembourg, the Duke of Görlitz and the Margrave of Lusatia, the younger son of Charles IV and Elisabeth of Pomerania⁹. At John's will he assumed the office of the Starost of Lower Lusatia (t. 1389–1394),

⁴ Jan Wroniszewski, *Średniowieczne pieczęcie rycerstwa polskiego*, [in:] *Pieczęcie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. Stan i perspektywy badań*, Zenon Piech, Jan Pakulski, Jan Wroniszewski, eds., Warszawa 2006, pp. 245–246; Marek L. Wójcik, *Średniowieczne pieczęcie rycerstwa śląskiego*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 278; *idem*, *Herby, hełmy i klejnoty. Uniwersalne i swoiste treści obrazowe pieczęci rycerstwa śląskiego*, [in:] *Wokół znaków i symboli. Herby, pieczęcie i monety na Pomorzu, Śląsku i Ziemi Lubuskiej do 1945 roku*, Agnieszka Chlebowska, Agnieszka Gut, eds., Warszawa 2008, pp. 53–63.

⁵ Knothe, *Geschichte*, pp. 277, 295.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 296; Paweł Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła w Polsce w latach 965–1999*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 102.

⁸ Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 296: "Otto v. Kittlitz war seiner Zeit eine der einflussreichsten Persönlichkeiten im Lande".

⁹ Theodor Lindner, *Johann, Herzog von Görlitz*, [in:] *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 14, Leipzig 1881, p. 216.



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Zbiór Schaffgotschów, Fach. XXXVIII, nr. 8

Ill. 1. The seal of Otto von Kittlitz, February 13th, 1395.
(SAW., Collection of the Schaffgotsch Family, Fach. XXXVIII no. 8)

the court marshal (t. 1391–1394) and after John's premature death, in 1396, (most probably as a result of poisoning), also the Starost of Upper Lusatia (t. 1406–1410). He died in 1418 (or soon after), and left four sons (according to the records from 1382) who were born from his marriage with Elisabeth: John, who became the parson of Nysa and Görlitz, Otto Lupold, Otto the Younger and Henry¹⁰.

From this branch of Kittlitz family also descended Anna, the wife of Timo von Colditz, who was the marshal of the court of Prague (1348), the hoffmeister (1357), the Starost of Upper Lusatia (t. 1353–1367), the bailiff of Charles IV (t. 1360–1383) and of the Starost of the Wrocław Duchy (t. 1361–1383)¹¹. As Anna was the daughter of Henry von Kittlitz¹², it would be reasonable to expect that she was Otto's sister. However, the question of Anna's consanguinity with Otto is tangled up by the document issued in Wrocław on the 21st of October 1370, where Timo, Henry's son-in-law, mentions that his brother-in-law was Ketil von Kittlitz, who was active in the Duchy of Świdnica (Schweidnitz)¹³. Local sources mention Ketil together with brothers Henry and Bodo, the heirs of landed property in numerous villages surrounding Lwówek (Löwenberg) and Wleń (Lähn), including the Ottendorf settlement¹⁴. Because at the turn of the 14th century Ottendorf belonged to the knight Wittegon von Kittlitz from the circle of Bolko,

¹⁰ Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 11, 296; von Boetticher, *Der Adel*, pp. 103–105.

¹¹ Sinapius, *Schlesische Curiositäten.*, Bd. 1, pp. 524–525; Bd. 2, p. 738; Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 145; Josef Pilnáček, *Rody starého Slezska*, vol. 3, Brno 1991, p. 713; Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 244; Ewa Wólkiewicz, "Capitaneus Silesiae". *Królewscy namiestnicy księstwa wrocławskiego i Śląska w XIV i XV wieku*, [in:] *Monarchia w średniowieczu — władza nad ludźmi, władza nad terytorium. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi*, Aneta Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, Marcin Rafał Pauk, eds., Warszawa-Kraków 2002, pp. 222, 225.

¹² *Verzeichniss Oberlausizischer Urkunden*, H. 2: *vom Jahre 1347 bis 1378*, Görlitz 1800, p. 62, excerpt of the document of Charles IV, where Henry von Kittlitz is referred to as the father-in-law of Timo von Colditz; Cf. Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 145 (Anna is mistakenly referred to as Henry's sister), 295.

¹³ SAW, Documents of the City of Wrocław (hereafter referred to as: DCW), cat. no. 21 X 1370: "her Ketil von Ketelicz vnsir liber swoger".

¹⁴ Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241.



the Duke of Świdnica, scholar Tomasz Jurek implied that the three aforementioned brothers must have been Witegon's grandchildren and the sons of Bolko, who between 1307 and 1350 was loyal to the Dukes of Świdnica¹⁵. Jurek, based on the citation from the aforementioned document of Timo von Colditz dated to 1370, also permitted the option that Henry, Ketil's brother, and Henry, who was active in Lusatia between 1345 and 1382, were in fact one and the same person¹⁶. However, it would be a genealogical anachronism to support this assumption. If we permitted the existence of only one Henry, it would make Timo — the husband of Anna, without a doubt the daughter of Henry of Lusatia — Henry's (of Lusatia) son-in-law, but not Ketil's brother-in-law. And consequently, Ketil would not have been Anna's brother but uncle. At the same time, the Henry would have been both Timo's brother-in-law and father-in-law (being both Henry of Świdnica, Ketil's brother, and Henry of Lusatia, Anna's father). Crucial in this case is the content of the document from 1370, where we find all the answers to our questions regarding the complex relations between the members of the Kittlitz family. So, if Ketil was Timo's brother-in-law, this would mean that he must have been Anna's brother, that is the son of Henry of Lusatia. Consequently, as his sons we must also view both Henry and Bodo, who are surely Ketil's brothers. No references whatsoever about either Bodo or Ketil are contained in the Lusatian sources, according to which the only sons of Henry are John, two Henrys and Otto. In this context, it seems reasonable to accept the assumption of Hermann Knothe, who claimed that Henry must have been married twice¹⁷. Jadwiga von Eilenburg, the mother of John, two Henrys and Otto, was most probably his second wife, whereas the anonymous mother of Anna, Henry, Ketil and Bodo — the first one (Table 1).

When analysing the genealogy of the Silesian family of Kittlitz, Tomasz Jurek took notice of the fact that Henry, Ketil and Bodo of Świdnica were migrants from Lusatia¹⁸. At the same time, the analysis of sources — which are unfortunately incomplete and fragmentary — encourages a cautious suggestion that it was rather their father, after being awarded a prestigious office of the Starost of Upper Lusatia, simply started a new life in a new environment. However, there is no evidence confirming the alleged fact that he was the heir to some estates in Silesia, but one can suspect that as at least part of Kittlitz's properties at the turn of the 14th century went into the hands of Henry's sons¹⁹, and this means that they were the ones to take over Henry's property on the occasion of his moving to Lusatia. Henry's migration seems all the more probable when we consider the fact that the principal estates of Lusatia, namely the settlements of Baruth and Lieberose (Lusatian Luboraz), passed into his possession not by inheritance but by purchase²⁰.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 295.

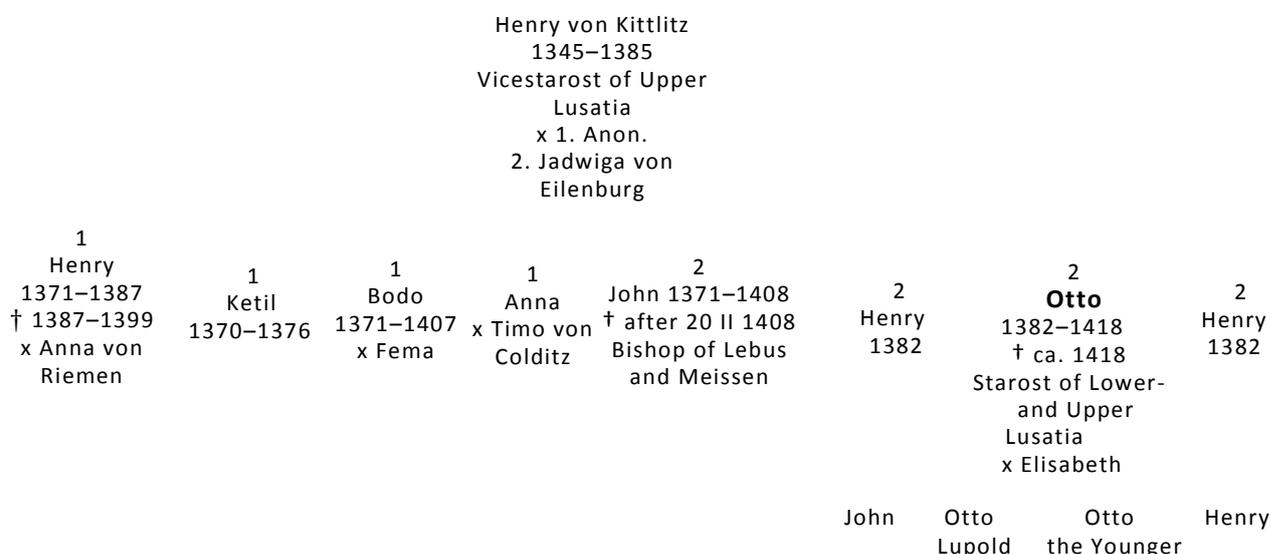
¹⁸ Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 242.

¹⁹ This refers to the aforementioned settlement of Ottendorf, identified with Ocice or Radoniów next to Lwówek, see Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241.

²⁰ Knothe, *Geschichte*, pp. 108, 295.



Table 1. The family of Otto von Kittlitz



Source: Knothe, *Geschichte*, pp. 295–296; von Boetticher, *Der Adel*, pp. 103–105; Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241.

After all, this does not have any significant impact on our study of the seal: while Henry — *Henricus* (Heinrich) *de Kethelic dominus (heres) in Lubras (Loubras) or herr zu Baroth* — was a frequent visitor to Silesia between 1366 and 1376²¹, and engaged, together with other local knights, in various forms of social activity, thus leaving a record of his ties with Silesia, Otto, the owner of Baruth, was not as keen a traveller as his father²². In this context, the Kittlitzs seem to constitute an example of a typical borderland family — residing both in Silesia (senior line), and in Lusatia (junior line), and contacts between them appeared to be rather casual.

The seal of Otto — circular, 26 mm in diameter, impressed in beeswax, dark brownish in colour — contains an escutcheon angled to the right, supported by two figures of bearded men shown in profile, and topped with a pot helmet adorned with a wreath and a crest. The field is parted per bend sinister. Its upper part contains an image of an auroch rampant and lower part is composed of five bends sinister²³. In the crest

²¹ *Landbuch księstw świdnickiego i jaworskiego*, vol. 1: 1366–1376, Tomasz Jurek, ed., Poznań 2004, no. 36, 50, 78, 843, 885, 1039.

²² The National Archives of Prague (hereafter referred to as: NA), The Archives of the Crown of Bohemia (hereafter referred to as: ACB) no. 1362 (the document of margraves of Meissen from October 30th, 1404): "Otten von Kittelicz hern czu Baruth".

²³ As prove the oldest examples of Silesian knightly sphragistics, the image of an auroch was a quite popular element of the seal design. Apart from being used by the Kittlitz family, it was also presented on the seals of Bart, Baruth and Wiesenburg families, see Tomasz Jurek, *Zmienność herbów rycerzy niemieckich na Śląsku*, *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, Seria Nowa, 2, 1995, p. 44. The reason for that was probably the fact that aurochs were at that time very common representatives of the local fauna. On the findings on aurochs' presence in Silesia see Piotr Wyrost, Wiesława Chrzanowska, *Ssaki średniowiecznej fauny Śląska w świetle badań archeozoologicznych*, [in:] *Dawna fauna Śląska w świetle badań archeozoologicznych*, Piotr Wyrost, ed., Wrocław 1985, pp. 79–80. Cf. Alexander M. Dzieduszycki, Ryszard Słomski, Mirosław S. Ryba, *Czy tur powróci do polskich lasów?*, Turek 2008, p. 54.



there are two daisies. Both the representation of an auroch (due to its long horns by some scholars identified as Capricorn or a goat²⁴), and the daisies in the crest can be found on the oldest surviving seals of the Kittlitz family (from 1290, 1310 and 1324) owned subsequently by Henry the Older (1289–1290), Henry the Younger (1289–1312) and John (1324–1351)²⁵. The division of the primarily uniform escutcheon and the introduction of bends is not a novelty either. An identical coat-of-arms was used by the family in Silesia in the second half of the 14th century.²⁶ In Lusatia, it first appeared on the seals of the Bishop of Lebus, John von Kittlitz, the brother of Otto, used between 1385 and 1391²⁷. What is especially unique about the seal of Otto are the figures of escutcheon supporters. Their presence adds complexity to the iconographic content, thus making it almost as elaborate in terms of composition and ideological message as ducal, ecclesiastical or municipal *sigilia*. Consequently, the seal's design has not much in common with typical examples of the Silesian and Lusatian 13th- and 14th-century knightly sfragistics, which are usually simple and rather artistically unimpressive seals depicting helmets or-coats-of arms, as well as seals with coats-of-arms extended by helmets and crests²⁸. Using the unique design represented by the seal of Otto was a very uncommon practice in that period and territory²⁹. This slightly changed only in the 15th

²⁴ Hermann Knothe, *Die ältesten Siegel des oberlausitzischen Adels*, Neues Lausitzisches Magazin, 67, 1882, p. 17 (Steinbock); Jurek, *Zmienność herbów*, p. 44 (Capricorn); *idem*, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241 (demi-goat). Presence of an identical image of a long-horned bull on the coat-of-arms of the standing-figure seal of Bolko II of Świdnica, used by Bolko throughout his tenure as the Starost of Lusatia (Zenon Piech, *Ikonografia pieczęci Piastów*, Kraków 1993, p. 243, no. 81 and phot. 75), does not leave any doubts that this is neither a Capricorn nor a goat. Indeed, the historical coat-of-arms of Lusatia depicts a red (gules) bull against an silver (argent) field, see Woldemar Lippert, *Das Landeswappen der Niederlausitz*, Niederlausitzer Mitteilungen, 25, 1937, pp. 1–50; *idem*, *Das Wappen des Markgraftums Niederlausitz vom 14.–18. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Brandenburgische Siegel und Wappen. Festschrift des Vereins für Geschichte der Mark Brandenburg zur Feier des hundertjährigen Bestehens 1837–1937*, Erich Kittel, ed., Berlin 1937, pp. 34–54. As far as medieval heraldic stylizations are concerned it is not always easy to distinguish between almost identical images of bulls, oxes, aurochs, buffaloes and bisons. For this reason, the names of these horned animals are often used interchangeably in reference to a particular coats-of-arms. For instance, according to Adam Heymowski (*Herby polskie w paryskim Armorial Bellenville*, Studia Źródłoznawcze, 22/23, 1990, p. 121, no. 36 and tabl. 11) the Kittlitz coat-of-arms presents a demi-buffalo.

²⁵ SAW, rep. 116 no. 21, 42, 53; Paul Pfothenhauer, *Die schlesischen Siegel von 1250 bis 1300 beziehentlich 1327*, Breslau 1879, pp. 28, 30, 32 and tabl. III no. 22, tabl. V no. 44, tabl. VI no. 62; Otto Posse, *Die Siegel der Adels der Wettiner Lande bis zum Jahre 1500*, Bd. 2, Dresden 1906, tabl. 5, no. 1, -3. The copy of the seal of Henry the Older was also published by Knothe, *Die ältesten Siegel*, tabl. III, no. 42; and the original version of John's seal was reproduced by Wójcik, *Średniowieczne pieczęcie*, p. 271, phot. 6. Periods of activity of the seals' owners provided in this article are based on: Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241.

²⁶ SAW, rep. 116 no. 125, 130. According to an enigmatic fragmentary tale, the owner of the seal with the inscription *S(igillum) IOHANNIS KETHELIC* was John von Kittlitz, most probably the son of John (1324–1351) or Henry (1338–1358); but the seal was also used between 1373 and 1380 by Elisabeth von Kittlitz, who inherited the Kittlitz's estates surrounding the city of Żagań (Sagan), cf. Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 241.

²⁷ Beata Marcisz-Czapla *Pieczęcie biskupów lubuskich*, Nadwarciański Rocznik Historyczno-Archiwalny, 11, 2004, pp. 86–87. This coat-of-arms was introduced to the seal of the Lusatian knight as late as in 1435, see Knothe, *Die ältesten Siegel*, p. 17 i tabl. III, no. 43.

²⁸ Wójcik, *Herby, hełmy i klejnoty*, pp. 53–63; *idem*, *Od hełmu do herbu. Przyczynek do badań nad heraldyzacją znaku rycerstwa śląskiego*, [in:] *Pieczęcie herbowe, herby na pieczęciach*, Zenon Piech, ed., (II Krakowskie Kolokwium Heraldyczne) (currently in print).

²⁹ For instance: Friedrich-Karl Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, *Sfragistische Aphorismen. 300 mittelalterliche Siegel systematisch classificirt und erläutert*, Wiesbaden 1973 (reprint of the edition of 1882), fig. 27, 125, 202; Posse, *Die Siegel*, Bd. 1, Dresden 1903, tabl. 21 no. 4–5; August Sedláček, *Atlasy*



and 16th century. In this context, numerous questions arise regarding the origin and the symbolic content of the rare iconographic representation used by Otto consistently throughout his entire life — until 1408.³⁰

Escutcheon supporters were mainly symbolic representations of angels, animals, as well as real and imaginary human figures, usually presented in couples (very rarely single) and placed on either side of an escutcheon, holding it up. Their function was to add grandeur to the coats-of-arms, and they were most frequently used by aristocratic families from Western Europe, mainly from the Netherlands, Flanders, Scotland and England³¹. The peak of their popularity (mostly among the nobility) fell mostly to the modern era, but they have been also found to adorn the 13th-century knightly seals.³² On the contrary, in Poland they were mostly used as elements of the 14th- and the 15th-century architecture and in sepulchral arts as well as on the seals of the first members of the Jagiellon dynasty, but they were not particularly favoured by the aristocracy³³. They seemed to be used most frequently by the distinguished or foreign families (*indigenats*)³⁴. According to Przemysław Mrozowski, the oldest surviving image of escutcheon supporters recorded by the Polish heraldry can be found on the seal of the Voivode of Kalisz, Mikołaj Łodziec, from 1301, showing an escutcheon angled to the right, topped with a helmet and an M-shaped coat-of-arms and supported by two animal figures identified by scholars as birds or dragons³⁵. As the image is indistinct and not entirely faithful to the original, it would be also justified to identify the figures not as animals but as ribbons, falling from under the helmet and arranged in the shape of the letter M, which surrounds the escutcheon of Mikołaj's seal from 1302.³⁶ If we assumed that these are in fact dragons and birds, it would be difficult to classify them as typical supporters, because they are not actually supporting the escutcheon, but filling the escutcheon's surface between the legend and the seal's central image comprising the

erbů a pečeti české a moravské středověké šlechty, Vladimír Růžek, ed., Praha 2003, tabl. 156 no. 3, tabl. 174 no. 7, tabl. 189 no. 11.

³⁰ NA, ACB no. 1417.

³¹ Charles Boutell, *The Handbook to English Heraldry*, London 1914, p. 237; Walter Leonhard, *Das große Buch der Wappenkunst*, München 1978, pp. 94–95; Alfred Znamierowski, Paweł Dudziński, *Wielka księga heraldyki*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 135–141; Tomáš Krejčík, Richard Psík, *Základy heraldyki*, Ostrava 2009, pp. 43–44.

³² Przemysław Mrozowski, *O sztuce i stylizacji heraldycznej w Polsce XIV–XV wieku*, Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego, Seria Nowa, 1, 1993, p. 94. As examples, we can mention here the seals of Konrad and Bertold von Freiburg und Urach from 1239, and the seal of Heinrich von Scharfeneck from 1292, where the shields are held up by two female figures, see Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, *Sphragistische Aphorismen*, fig. 27 and 202.

³³ Józef Szymański, *Nauki pomocnicze historii*, Warszawa 1983, p. 690; Andrzej Kulikowski, *Heraldyka szlachecka*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 200–201; Mrozowski, *O sztuce*, pp. 94–95; Paweł Stróżyk, *Lwy-trzymacze w herbie Gdańska — geneza motywu*, [in:] *Lwy w heraldyce i sztuce europejskiej. Międzynarodowa konferencja historyczna*, Gdańsk, 23th of October 2008, Gdańsk 2009, pp. 35–45.

³⁴ Kulikowski, *Heraldyka*, p. 201.

³⁵ Mrozowski, *O sztuce*, p. 94. The seal's reproduction is published in *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski* (hereafter referred to as: KDW), vol. 4, Poznań 1881, tabl. XXIX; cf. Franciszek Piekosiński, *Pieczenie polskie wieków średnich*, vol. 1: *Doba piastowska*, Kraków 1899, pp. 163–164, no. 258.

³⁶ Reproductions: KDW, vol. 4, tabl. no. XXXII; Piekosiński, *Pieczenie*, p. 165, no. 262 and fig. 186; see Antoni Małecki, *Studia heraldyczne*, vol. 2, Lwów 1890, pp. 187–188; Janusz Bieniak, *Heraldyka polska przed Długoszem. Uwagi problemowe*, [in:] *Sztuka i ideologia XV wieku. Materiały sympozjum Komitetu Nauk o Sztuce Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, Warszawa, December 1st–4th, 1976, Piotr Skubiszewski, ed., Warszawa 1978, p. 188.



coat-of-arms, the helmet and the crest³⁷. Based on numerous examples of knightly *sigilia* from the 14th and the 15th century, where escutcheon supporters were often replaced by floral motifs, i.e. leafy and flowery twigs³⁸, we may come to a conclusion that the role of these ribbon-like elements was mostly ornamental. Nonetheless, there surely was a symbolic aspect to it — they were to soothe the visual overload of the central part of the seal and bring balance to the entire composition. These elements, which may be classified as the earliest forms of heraldic embellishments especially characteristic to the modern era, were placed on either side of an escutcheon, but — unlike the supporters — were not making contact with it, and for this reason in heraldry they are referred to as 'the guardians'³⁹. As far as Polish knightly seals are concerned, most controversial and especially rare is the *sigillum* of Mikołaj⁴⁰. Simultaneously, the doubts so as to the symbolic content of the uncommon motif of the escutcheon supporters — when examined in the context of the Silesian-Lusatian knightly sphragistics (at least until the close of the 14th century) — do not apply to the seal of Otto von Kittlitz.

Using the image of bearded men as escutcheon-supporters — in the modern era particularly widespread in Flanders and the Netherlands⁴¹ — was not uncommon also to the heraldry of medieval Europe. Much alike to Otto's seal are two *sigilia* from almost the same period, owned by Timo von Colditz (aforementioned courtier of the Emperor Charles IV) and by Jean Jouvenal des Ursins (one of the knights of the French king Charles VI 'the Mad'). The former, used between 1367 and 1375, presents the escutcheon of the Colditz family angled to the right, parted per fess (its upper part contains a demi-lion, and its lower part — bends), topped with a bucket helmet with a crest composed of an auroch's horn and a deer antler, and supported by two bearded men facing each other (ill. 2)⁴². The latter, from 1431, presents an escutcheon angled to the right with

³⁷ Identical graphic images of the seals, contain an escutcheon angled to the right with a helmet and a crest, as well as animal figures — supporters — (real or imaginary) located in the space between the legend and the seal's central part and always depicted as holding the escutcheon in their paws or claws. In the case of the seals of the English nobility these creatures are usually lions, dragons and birds, see Boutell, *The Handbook*, pp. 214 (no. 383), 241 (no. 407), 242 (nos. 408–409).

³⁸ Pfothenauer, *Die schlesischen Siegel, passim*; Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, *Sphragistische Aphorismen, passim*; Piekosiński, *Pieczerce, passim*; Posse, *Die Siegel*, Bd. 1–5, Dresden 1903–1917, *passim*.

³⁹ Znamierowski, Dudziński, *Wielka księga*, p. 140; Krejčík, Psík, *Základy*, p. 43. Guardians, often presented as human beings, birds, lions and dragons also appeared on a number of the seals of the Czech and German knights as soon as in the 13th and the 14th century, see i.e. Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, *Sphragistische Aphorismen*, no. 119, 204, 212; Posse, *Die Siegel*, Bd. 1, tabl. 2 no. 1, tabl. 3 no. 3, tabl. 4 nr 1; Sedláček, *Atlasy*, tabl. 32 no. 1. It is worth to mention that the birds from Mikołaj's seal were identified not as supporters but as flank figures (Polish: *pobocznic*) already by Piekosiński, *Pieczerce*, pp. 163–164.

⁴⁰ The seals with supporters — except the *sigillum* of Voivode of Kalisz, Mikołaj Łódzic (1301) — we are already familiar with — are neither mentioned by Wroniszewski, (*Średniowieczne pieczerce*, pp. 245–247.) nor by Piekosiński in his century-old publication entitled *Pieczerce, passim*. However, it needs be highlighted that, the knightly seals are still not sufficiently studied by Polish scholars, cf. Strózyk, *Lwy-trzymacze*, p. 40.

⁴¹ Kulikowski, *Heraldyka*, pp. 200–201.

⁴² SAW, DCW, cat. no. 17 IX 1367 (from 1367); NA, ACB no. 1015 (from 1368); Moravian Provincial Archives in Brno, Collection A1, Estate documents 1212-1845, inv. no. 117, sign. ev.j. no. 7 (from 1375). The image of the seal from the Archive of Prague was published by Posse, *Die Siegel*, Bd. 2, tabl. 54 no. 8, and Denko Čumlivski, *Diví muži jako štítonoši na pečeti Těmy (II.) z Koldic ze 17.III.1368, Úmění. Časopis Ústavu teorie a dějín umění Československé Akademie věd*, 24, 1976, pp. 370–373, and its impression from the Archive of Wrocław was reproduced by Wójcik, *Średniowieczne pieczerce*, p. 273, phot. 7.



DmWr., 17.09.1367

II. 2. The seal of Timo von Colditz, September 17th, 1367 (SAW, DCW, cat. no. 17 IX 1367)

the hereditary emblem of des Ursins family (a fesswise stripe and a rose in chief against the bendy field), topped with a tilting helmet (named in Polish heraldry "frog-mouth" helmet) with a crest composed of plumes, supported by two bearded men (ill. 3)⁴³. Using the same iconographic pattern in various parts of Europe is a proof of its universal character. Although the representations of men differ with certain details, their ideological content is the same. For the seals' role was not only to authenticate the document and identify its owners, but — as consciously and meticulously selected iconic symbols — also to communicate a coded message on the personality, aspirations and claims of its owner, and in some cases also an allegorical message, a moral lesson and a mystical content⁴⁴.

⁴³ See www.legal2.com/sceaux/fichedetaillee.php?TypeRche=&debut=265 (accessed on: December 1st, 2009). The family was also using the surname Orsini, and the representatives of the French family des Ursins and the Italian family of Orsini shared the same coat-of-arms, cf. Louis Batiffol, *L'origine italienne des Juvenel des Ursins*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartres, 54, 1893, 1, pp. 693–717.

⁴⁴ This issue is most accurately synthesized by Michel Pastoureau, *Les sceaux et la fonction sociale des images*, Cahiers du Léopard d'Or, 5, 1996, pp. 275–303. The most extensive description of iconographic sources (including seals) in the Polish historiography is provided by Piech, *Ikonografia, passim*; *idem*, *Znak jako przedmiot badań historycznych*, [in:] *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich*, vol. 1, part. 2, Jacek Staszewski, ed., Gdańsk-Toruń 1995, pp. 245–258; *idem*, *Prawda, konwencja i treści ideowe w polskich źródłach ikonograficznych*, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, no. 1248, Prace Historyczne, no. 128, Kraków 2001, pp. 9–31; *idem*, *Źródła ikonograficzne w badaniach historyka mediewisty*, [in:] *Pytania o średniowiecze. Potrzeby i perspektywy badawcze polskiej mediewistyki*, Wojciech Fałkowski, ed., Warszawa 2001, pp. 187–201; *idem*, *Monety, pieczęcie i herby w systemie symboli władzy Jagiellonów*, Warszawa 2003, *passim*. The visual function of Silesian seals is discussed, among others, by Przemysław Wiszewski, *Średniowieczna pieczęć klasztorna jako środek przekazu informacji (XIII - 1 połowa XVI w.)*, [in:] *Pieczęć w Polsce średniowiecznej i nowożytnej. Zbiór studiów*, Piotr Dymmel, ed., Lublin 1998, pp. 11–29; *idem*, *Średniowieczne księżne śląskie wobec świata – świadectwa sfragistyczne*, [in:] *Kobieta - śmierć - mężczyzna*, Wojciech Dzieduszycki, Jacek Wrzesiński, eds., Poznań 2003, pp. 149–157; *idem*, *Między konwencją, polityką i modą. Średniowieczne śląskie pieczęcie miejskie z wizerunkami świętych*, [in:] *Formuła, archetyp, konwencja w źródle historycznym. Materiały IX Sympozjum Nauk Dających Poznawać Źródła Historyczne*, Kazimierz Dolny, 14–15 December, 2000, Artur Górak, Krzysztof Skupieński, eds.,



Ill. 3. The seal of Jean Jouvenal des Ursins, 1431. (www.legal2.com/sceaux/fichedetail-lee.php?TypeRche=&debut=265)

In the case of knights, this coded message mostly referred to their religious beliefs and customs⁴⁵.

The image of the bearded men could have been inspired by the particularly evocative for the medieval people topos of a wild man, fuelled by folk tales (sagas, epic tales, legends), presenting a clash of two diametrically opposed worlds — the good one and the evil one, the modern one and the backward one, the ordered one and the chaotic one — always invoking a new and better order, a condition of constant progress. Most probably, its oldest literary example is the Sumerian epic of mutual rivalry and the birth of friendship between Gilgamesh (despotic master of the state of Uruk) and Enkidu (a wild and hairy beast with a physiognomy of an animal), who — after discovering human feelings in himself — becomes the guardian of human civilisation⁴⁶. Medieval people were, however, mostly inspired by biblical pericopes delivered by preachers. In the Old Testament we find, for instance, a very plastic tale of Nebuchadnezzar, who was severely punished by God for elevating himself over his Lord. According to the Book of Daniel, 'he was banished from man, he ate grass like an ox, and his body was drenched with the dew of the heavens, until his hair grew like [the feathers of] eagles and his nails like [the claws of] birds'⁴⁷. The King, pushed into the margin of civilisation, excluded from his

Lublin-Radzyń Podlaski-Siedlce 2006, pp. 263–312. As coats-of-arms present a similar range of symbolic visual content, it is especially worth to mention the study of Stefan Krzysztof Kuczyński, *Człowiek wobec świata herbów*, [in:] *Człowiek w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym*, Roman Michałowski, ed., Warszawa 1997, pp. 331–339, and Marek Cetwiński, *Czytanie herbów*, [in:] *Imago narrat. Obraz jako komunikat w społeczeństwach europejskich*, Stanisław Rosik, Przemysław Wiszewski eds., (Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, no. 2478, Historia CLXI), Wrocław 2002, pp. 329–335.

⁴⁵ Tomisław Giergiel, *Symbolika jelenia w polskiej heraldyce rycerskiej*, Sandomierz 1998, *passim*, illustrated these references on the basis of the heraldic image of a deer.

⁴⁶ Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages. A Study in Art. Sentiment and Demonology*, Cambridge 1952, p. 3. Crucial role in his transformation into human being was played by a woman, see Marek Cetwiński, Marek Derwich, *Herby, legendy, dawne mity*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 205–206.

⁴⁷ Dn 4, 30.



society, came to resemble a wild animal. The Book of Daniel further says: 'And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to the sky, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Highest One, and I praised and honoured the one who lives for the age, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom lasts from generation to generation'⁴⁸. From an eschatological perspective, the function of this text is undoubtedly moralistic, closely related to the first Commandment of the Decalogue, or the first of the Seven Deadly Sins. What is, however, most important for our study is its allegorical dimension. Having understood his mistake, Nebuchadnezzar not only becomes more human but also transforms into an indomitable defender of God's order. It is not without a reason that Esau and Jacob, the sons of Rebecca and Isaac, are so different from each other both in terms of physiognomy and lifestyle. The first one, 'forth ruddy, all over like a hairy mantle', 'was a cunning hunter, a man of the field', whereas Jacob 'was a quiet man, dwelling in tents'⁴⁹. The brothers are an embodiment of two distinct types of man — a wild one and a civilized one — tormented by an allegorical battle (characteristic for the transition between Palaeolithic and Neolithic reality) between the image of the backward humans-hunters and pickers and advanced society of farmers with settled lifestyle. Eventually, it is the older brother, Esau (whose name in Hebrew means 'shaggy')⁵⁰, yields to his younger brother and renounces his inheritance in exchange for a slice of bread and a bowl of lentil stew⁵¹.

Hairy beasts, the so-called *pilosi*, were mentioned not only by the Bible but also in scholarly papers of Church luminaries. They were described by St Augustine in his *City of God* and by St Isidore of Seville in *Etymologies*⁵². The beasts were also said to participate in the lives of the Saints. A medieval legend of St John Chrysostom, the Bishop of Constantinople, says that when the Saint was captured by hunters after having lead an ascetic life of solitude for six years, they could not tell whether they were dealing with a human being or a wild beast⁵³. The image of a wild man was quite often exploited by plastic arts, which had the power to spur the human imagination like no other medium. The image of him mounting a deer adorns the initial 'D', which opens the biblical Book of Exodus written between 1441 and 1449 in the workshop of Diebold Lauber in Germany⁵⁴, a group of wild men — the *bordure* of the miniature depicting the coronation of the Virgin Mary in the manuscript from Flanders (dated to the end of the 15th century), whose author was Ludovic Bloc⁵⁵. The motif is also present in the illuminations of Jean Fouquet from *Heures d'Etienne Chevalier*, dated to the mid-15th

⁴⁸ Dn 4, 31.

⁴⁹ Genesis 25, 25–27.

⁵⁰ Władysław Kopaliński, *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury*, Warszawa 1985, p. 267.

⁵¹ Chap. 25, 29–34.

⁵² St Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos libri XII*, b. 15, chap. 23, 1 – online edition of Sant'Agostino (Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana), see: www.augustinus.it/latino/cdd/index2.htm (accessed on: February 26th, 2010); St Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, b. VIII, chap. 11, 103–104 — electronic version, see: www.thelatinlibrary.com/isidore/8.shtml (accessed on: February 26th, 2010).

⁵³ Bernheimer, *Wild Men*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Miniature available at <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg19/0175> (accessed on: December 1st, 2009).

⁵⁵ Manuscript (MS 7) is stored in the Syracuse University Library (USA) as *Book of Hours*. Illuminations contained in the manuscript are available at <http://libwww.syr.edu/digital/collections/m/MedievalManuscripts/ms07> (accessed on: December 1st, 2009).



century, where the wild men are the supporters of escutcheons⁵⁶. Furthermore, wild men also appear in Polish manuscripts, like for example the gradual of King John I Albert, dated to 1499–1506,⁵⁷ or the gradual of Cistercians from Kamieniec (from the 13th century).⁵⁸ Finally, the *pilosi* were introduced both to sacred and secular architecture as artistic elements — gargoyles (Moulins Cathedral), cantilevers (Church of San Gregorio), keystones (Dore Abbey), holders (Stadtmuseum Erfurt), or decorative elements (Maria Laach Abbey). Further examples can be multiplied, but the temporal and geographical scope of those few aforementioned ones shows that wild men were a particularly popular decorative element in the entire medieval Europe.

Numerous surviving iconographic sources present the wild man as a human figure all covered in dense hair-like fur, at times with scales or leaves, mostly naked or dressed only in loincloth, bearded and long haired, often grasping a mace, cane, a knobby stick or a spear, sometimes even a shield. Since both St Augustine and St Isidore of Seville identified these hairy creatures with fauns, satyrs, syleni, deities of woods and with ghosts (*fauni, silvani, panitae, incubi, dusii*)⁵⁹ — beings of ancient Greek, Roman and Gaulish culture, and it was believed that, just like these beings, they populated wild forests (seldom deserts) and shared their features, instincts and behaviours. Consequently, they were perceived as primitive, thoughtless beings, prone to uncontrolled fury and craving to battle, with boundless sexual potency⁶⁰, which had a major impact on their representation in medieval manuscripts — they were mostly described as engaged in mutual armed conflicts (expression of downfall) or entangled in floral vines and picking flowers (harbingers of sexual fulfilment). Barbara Miodońska interprets this representation as 'a symbol of clashing, raw passion, primordial and wild world of matter', juxtaposed with the coming of the divine kingdom announced by the virgin birth of Jesus and his mystical victory over death⁶¹. In this eschatological context, a wild man is viewed as an antithesis of purity and eternal life. The interpretation of Maciej Gutowski goes a step further and — while keeping balance between the sphere of *sacrum* and *profanum* — it searches for actions that aim to ridicule the wild man, and to parody the knightly customs⁶². Here, the source of situational humour lies in traditional knightly tournaments — much criticised by the Church as the work of Satan⁶³ —

⁵⁶ The aforementioned illuminations are available on the website of the National Library of France at <http://expositions.bnf.fr/fouquet/enimages/chevalier/intro.htm> accessed on: December 1st, 2009).

⁵⁷ The Archives of the Cracow Cathedral Chapter, cat. no. 42 KP, fol. 263v; reproduction: Maciej Gutowski, *Komizm w polskiej sztuce gotyckiej*, Warszawa 1973, p. 69, ill. 18-19.

⁵⁸ Wrocław University Library (hereafter referred to as: WUL), Manuscripts division, cat. no. I F 411, fol. 53v; reproduction: Dariusz Tabor, *Iluminacje cysterskich kodeksów śląskich XIII wieku*, Kraków 2004, phot. 131.

⁵⁹ See above, footnote 52.

⁶⁰ Bernheimer, *Wild Men*, 91; Gutowski, *Komizm*, pp. 70, 72.

⁶¹ Barbara Miodońska, *Iluminacje krakowskich rękopisów z I połowy w. XXV w Archiwum Kapituły Metropolitalnej na Wawelu*, Kraków 1967, p. 86.

⁶² Gutowski, *Komizm*, pp. 68–72.

⁶³ See, i.e., Sabine Krüger, *Das kirchliche Turnierverbot im Mittelalter*, [in:] *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter. Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Yerhaltungsgeschichte des Rittertums*, Josef Fleckenstein, ed., Göttingen 1985 (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institus für Geschichte, Bd. 80), pp. 401–422; Stefan K. Kuczyński, *Turnieje rycerskie w średniowiecznej Polsce*, [in:] *Biedni i bogaci. Studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi Geremkowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 297–298; Bogdan Wojciech Brzustowicz, *Turniej rycerski w Królestwie Polskim w późnym średniowieczu i renesansie na tle europejskim*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 139–146.



between the naked or dressed only in leaves creatures excessively equipped in arms. It would be hard to believe that the knights who decided to place the image of a wild man on their seals wanted to communicate such a perverse message.

Medieval sources contain yet another record on this peculiar creature, which allows for a slightly different interpretation of its role. This thread is to a large extent absent from the Polish historiography, because it does not appear in the so far most thoroughly studied late medieval Cracovian manuscripts. A representative example of this alternative interpretation would be a remarkably beautiful miniature from the *Liber viaticus*, richly illuminated breviary of John of Środa (Neumarkt), dated between 1360 and 1364, depicting a scene of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Biblical Samson's fight with the lion and a hairy stark naked figure protecting itself with a shield and piercing a dragon with a sword⁶⁴. A corresponding, however, much less artistically elaborated message, is communicated by the scene of the battle between a wild man (whose head is topped with a flower sepal with a leaf) and a dragon, placed in the Lubiąż antiphonary dated to the end of the 13th century.⁶⁵ Medieval writers view this legendary monster, classified as an exceptionally demonic snake species, as a zoomorphic symbol of Satan⁶⁶. Therefore, the battle with this vicious creature gains a religious dimension. It symbolizes the triumph over evil, darkness, chaos and sin⁶⁷. This triumph is, in our case, attributed to the wild man, who — just like the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar — is perceived as a guardian of the Divine peace on Earth. It seems not a coincidence that it is him who must bear this burden. Following the vein of epic stories and folk tales, it is possible to view him as a creature with supernatural powers, socialized by humans, who — after leaving the forest or the desert — undergoes a fundamental transformation into an anthropomorphic archetype of a defender of human civilisation against the chaos symbolized by the demonic dragon⁶⁸. Hence, he reminds us of the aforementioned Enkidu. This interpretation was adapted and extended in the modern era by scholars of heraldry, the authors of heraldic legends, who keenly exploited the motif of a wild man as a background for presentation of the origins of coats of arms and the history of aristocratic families. In their interpretations, the forest, the original domicile of *pilosi*,

⁶⁴ Library of the National Museum in Prague, cat. no. XIII A 12, fol. 69v. The manuscript is available at www.manuscriptorum.com (accessed on: February 27th, 2010).

⁶⁵ WUL, Manuscripts division, cat. no. I F 401; reproduction from: *Krzeszów uświęcony Łaską*, Henryk Dziurla, Kazimierz Bobowski, eds., Wrocław 1997, p. 99, phot. 31.

⁶⁶ Dorothea Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 307–308; Stanisław Kobiela, *Bestiarium chrześcijańskie. Zwierzęta w symbolice i interpretacji. Starożytność i średniowiecze*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 294–298; Lucyna Rotter, *Mityczne oraz legendarne stwory i bestie*, [in:] *Symbol — znak — przesłanie. Symbolika zwierząt*, Józef Marecki, Lucyna Rotter, eds., Kraków 2009, pp. 172–173.

⁶⁷ This was the main ideological message communicated by the Piast coins and seals depicting the motif of a battle between the ruler and the dragon, see. i.e. Zbysław Michniewicz, *O wyobrażeniach smoka na pieczęciach, monetach i w heraldyce Piastów*, *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, 4, 1960, pp. 49–62; Stefan K. Kuczyński, *Pieczęcie książąt mazowieckich*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 141–145; Ryszard Kiersnowski, *Moneta w kulturze wieków średnich*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 270–276; Piech, *Ikonoграфия*, pp. 93–95; Witold Garbaczewski, *Ikonoграфия monet piastowskich 1173 — ca. 1280*, Warszawa-Lublin 2007, pp. 216–220.

⁶⁸ In a similar manner — as a kingly creation of world order — the image of the battle between the ruler and a dragon placed on coins and seals is interpreted by Tomasz Panfil, *Lingua symbolica. O pochodzeniu i znaczeniach najstarszych symboli heraldycznych w Polsce*, Lublin 2002, p. 88.



was the *limes* between order and chaos, guarded by a demigod — the mythical founder of the family⁶⁹.

Such depiction of the role of the wild man by the miniature painting, correlates with the message communicated by the figures presented on the sphragistic relics analysed in this article. Without a doubt, the figures placed on either side of the shield should be viewed as its guardians. Because the coat-of-arms is a vital symbol of the knightly identity and a proof for knights' superior social status, the supporters seem to guard also the earthly property of the feudal lords — and especially their unique culture and customs. The bearded men — as opposed to the humoristic literary representations and interpretations of battles between wild men — seem to, most of all, constitute an allusion to the custom of knightly tournament. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that the winners helmet is adorned with a laurel wreath. We could also view the supporters as individuals whose task is to present the coats of arms at the outset of tournaments⁷⁰.

It is not, however, a coincidence that the seals of Timo von Colditz and Otto von Kittlitz show a considerable degree of similarity in terms of symbolic content and general iconographic design. After all, these two knights were one of the most influential people in the circles of rulers from the Luxemburg dynasty. Timo's career flourished by the Emperor Charles IV, and Otto's by King John, the younger brother of Wacław IV. Both of them were active participants of their kings' lifestyles, abounding not only in numerous responsibilities connected with holding public offices but also typical forms of entertainment, including knightly tournaments, which were popular from the reign of John 'the Blind'⁷¹. Otto von Kittlitz was the hero of at least one such event. In 1389, he participated in a courtly *spectaculum* organized in Görlitz by his protector Duke John of Görlitz⁷². Whereas the key to the interpretation of the uncommon situation depicted on Timo's seal (which was an example of a very innovative approach as for the then Bohemian territory)⁷³ lies in contemporary customs of the Bohemian court to imitate

⁶⁹ Marek Cetwiński, *Las w polskiej legendzie heraldycznej*, *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, Seria Nowa, 2, 1995, pp. 27–40; *idem*, *Las i zamek w polskich legendach heraldycznych*, [in:] *Wokół archeologii słów i ich funkcjonowania. Księga Jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Andrzejowi Bańkowskiemu*, Stanisław Podobiński, Maria Lesz-Duk, eds., Częstochowa 2001, pp. 753–755; Włodzimierz Cichocki, *Wątki leśne w polskiej heraldyce rycerskiej*, [in:] *Las w kulturze polskiej*, Wojciech Łysiak, ed., Poznań 2002, pp. 151–159.

⁷⁰ I have already suggested such interpretation, see Wójcik, *Herby, hełmy i klejnoty*, pp. 65–66.

⁷¹ Wojciech Iwańczak, *Turniej rycerski w Królestwie Czeskim — próba analizy kulturowej*, *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 27, 1983, 5, pp. 39–53; Josef Macek, *Das Turnier im mittelalterlichen Böhmen*, [in:] *Das ritterliche Turnier*, pp. 371–389; Brzustowicz, *Turniej*, pp. 80–81. Much valuable information on the courtly customs and culture in the Bohemian Crown during the reign of Luxembourg dynasty is contained in the following publications: *Die Parler und der schöne Stil 1350–1400. Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern*, Anton Legner, ed., Bd. 1–3, Köln 1978; *King John of Luxembourg (1296–1346) and the Art of His Era. Proceedings of the International Conference, Prague, September 16–20, 1996*, Klara Benešová, ed., Prague 1998; Jaroslav Čechura, *České země v letech 1310–1378. Lucemburkové na českém trůně I*, Praha 1999; *idem*, *České země v letech 1378–1437. Lucemburkové na českém trůně II*, Praha 2000; Jörg Konrad Hoensch, *Die Luxemburger. Eine spätmittelalterliche Dynastie gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung 1308–1437*, Stuttgart 2000 (and Czech edition: *idem*, *Lucemburkové. Pozdně středověka dynastie celoevropského významu 1308–1437*, Praha 2003).

⁷² Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 296.

⁷³ The representation of the wild man can be also found on the Czech seals from between 1392 and 1416, see Sedláček, *Atlasy*, tabl. 156 no. 3, tabl. 189 no. 11.



the Western European knightly fashion⁷⁴; as far as the *sigillum* of Otto is concerned, we are probably dealing with the act of a direct borrowing of the motif. It seems to be proven by the strong similarities between both seals, which developed – perhaps — as a result of familial connections between the feudal lords. As we have established earlier in this article, Timo and Otto were brothers-in-law. And so, the new coat-of-arms of the Kittlitz family may have been developed based on Otto's relations with Timo. Originally, they identified themselves with the image of auroch, but in the second half of the 14th century — that is soon after the marriage of Timo von Colditz with Anna Kittlitz, Henry's daughter and Otto's step sister, about 1355⁷⁵ — a new coat-of-arms was introduced, depicting an escutcheon parted per bend sinister, with black auroch rampant against a golden (Or) field in its upper part, and red and silver (gules and argent) bends in its lower part⁷⁶. The coat-of-arms of the von Colditz family depicts the escutcheon parted per fess, with black (sable) lion rampant against a golden (Or) field in upper part and red (gules) and silver (argent) bends in its lower part⁷⁷. Therefore, if our supposition is right, which is highly probable due to the similarity of form, content and tinctures, we should not have slightest doubts so as to the fact that it was the Kittlitz family who took over the coat-of-arms of the Colditz family and not the other way round. The seals of the latter ones with an image of a lion and bends, had been recorded in an unchanged form starting from the 13th century.⁷⁸

The seal of Otto von Kittlitz, which mirrors the iconographic scheme of the *sigillum* of Timo von Colditz, is a brilliant example of the interpenetration of customs, especially as far as the creation of coats-of-arms and iconographic communication is concerned. By promoting knightly tournaments, a very popular form of entertainment in the court of the Luxembourgs, it also highlights the universal character of medieval social customs — the tokens of civilizational development of the feudal lords guarded by hairy demigods with superhuman powers. The only known to me such an early example of using the image of wild men as shield supporters by the knights from the Silesia-Lusatia borderland proves the hypothesis that the local knightly sphragistics did not in fact diverge from its Western European counterpart, and hence may be regarded as a trendsetter of heraldic-sphragistic fashion in this part of the continent.

Translated by Katarzyna Hussar

⁷⁴ Čumlivski, *Diví muži*, pp. 371–372.

⁷⁵ Knothe, *Geschichte*, p. 295.

⁷⁶ See above, footnotes 25-26. The updated version of the coat-of-arms appears in the *Armorial Bellenville*, created in the second half of the 14th century in Paris (most probably soon after 1377) — Heymowski, *Herby*, p. 121 no. 36 and tabl. 11. Cf. Leonard Dorst, *Schlesisches Wappenbuch oder die Wappen des Adels im Souverainen Herzogthum Schlesien, der Grafschaft Glatz und der Oberlausitz*, Bd. 1, Görlitz 1842, tabl. 64; Krane, *Wappen- und Handbuch*, tabl. 56.

⁷⁷ J. Siebmacher 's *grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch*, Bd. 6, Abt. 8: *Der abgestorbene Adel der preussischen Provinz Schlesien*, Th. 2, Conrad Blažek, ed., Nürnberg 1890, p. 20 and tabl. 13; Vladimír Růžek, *Česká znaková galérie na hradě Laufu u Norimberka z roku 1361. (Příspěvek ke skladbě kralovského dvora Karla IV)*, Sborník archivních prací, 38, 1988, p. 198; Sękowski, *Herbarz*, vol. 1: A-C, Katowice 2002, p. 392.

⁷⁸ Posse, *Die Siegel*, Bd. 2, tabl. 32 nos. 11–13, tabl. 53 nos. 1-11, tabl. 54 nos. 1-19, tabl. 55 nos. 1–10 (a total of 43 seals from the years 1248–1485).