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Medieval fabrics with eastern provenience in Polish collections

The fabrics existing in Poland in the Middle Ages and originating from leading weaving centres in the countries of the East, make up an interesting and valuable collection.

Nearly all the textiles currently kept in the church and state museums — with the exception for those retrieved from the coffin of Queen Jadwiga (Hedwig) — come from the church treasuries. They were imported, first of all, in order to make paraments, but they could also be used for the decors of chapels. These materials, rich in patterns and original in character, woven in specialist workshops from a silk thread with significant amount of gold, were a sign of prestige and taste of ecclesiastical and secular elites alike.

Luxurious commodities from the Middle East workshops reached Poland as objects of trade, via an inland route from Constantinople to Kyiv and Lviv¹ and then were transported further north, to Kobryn, Brest, Toruń, Gdańsk, and even Scandinavia.² The goods from Central Asia and the

1 Detailed information based on the documents, cf. D. Jacoby, *Oriental Silk at the Time of the Mongols: Patterns of Trade and Distribution in the West*, in: *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe*, eds. J. Fircks, r. Schorta, Abbege—Stiftung 2016, p. 105.

2 D. Jacoby, *Oriental Silk at the Time of the Mongols*, p. 107.

Middle East, including mostly silk fabrics, which were the most desired product in Europe from the 10th century onwards, travelled also along another transit route, called *via tartarica* from Caffa to Lviv and Volodymyr-Volynskiy, and further on also to Toruń and Gdańsk or to Kraków and Regensburg. As the sources report, precious patterned silk fabrics interwoven with gold, known as *pavoloki*,³ were brought along similar routes from Byzantium to Poland via Ruthenia. The data concerning these objects make up a significant contribution to the studies of eastern fabrics in Poland. The sources, however, provide very scarce descriptions of these fabrics, yet still sufficient for the determination of their core properties. The textiles from the East reached Poland also via maritime routes through Venice to the Baltic ports, mostly to Gdańsk.⁴ It is quite likely that sometimes these materials were commissioned from the East in order to obtain good quality products made on an appropriate artistic level. Finally, they were brought as diplomatic gifts on the occasion of state level visits and presented in a atmosphere of a large splendour.

All the fabrics which survived until today in the Polish collections—although making up a small group, in comparison with scarce resources of other European collections—still constitute a representative group of Eastern fabrics from the period between the second quarter of the 14th century and the beginning of the 16th century preserved till today.

In the sources published so far, they are associated with many places of production: with the Egyptian workshops operating in the period of the Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo, Damascus, Alexandria and Cyprus; with Mongolian workshops functioning during the Ilkhanate rule on the territories of northern Persia, in Kashan, Samarkand; with Byzantine workshops in Constantinople, and from the mid-15th century—in Turkey, in Istanbul and Bursa, and with workshops in China.

The grave problems with the qualification of these fabrics are the result of their similarities, both in formal and technical aspects. Moreover, these resemblances concern not only the eastern fabrics, associated

3 B. Rybakov, *Torgovlya i torgovye puti*, in: *Istoriya kultury drevney Rusi*, vol. 1, ed. by N. Voronin, Moskwa 1948, pp. 315–316, 326–327, 343–344; K. Jażdżewski, *Stosunki polsko-ruskie we wczesnym średniowieczu w świetle archeologii*, “Pamiętnik Słowiański” 4 (1954) No. 2, pp. 340–360; S. Alexandrowicz, *Stosunki handlowe polsko-ruskie do roku 1240*, Poznań 1958, pp. 21–66 (*Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*, 3).

4 D. Jacoby, *Oriental Silk at the Time of the Mongols*, pp. 105–107.

with the workshops operating in the above-mentioned countries, but the scope of similitudes reaches also the fabrics made in Italian workshops of the same period. As a result of intensive contacts between these countries, both individual motifs making up fabric patterns as well as entire compositions were transferred from one country to another. It also happened that whole workshops producing those fabrics were moved to another place, together with their equipment and raw materials. In this way, the patterns of the European and Arabic art mixed with each other so much that distinguishing the textiles made in the workshops of the East or West in the 15th century poses a great challenge, frequently discussed both in eastern and western sources. For example, a great development of the weaving workshops took place in Alexandria, in 1250–1382 (Bahri Mamluk), and then, in the period that followed (1382–1517), many of these workshops were closed. The number of the workshops operating in 1380 in Alexandria, reaching from 12,000 to 14,000 in 1434, was reduced to merely 8,000. The reason for this situation was a significant competition from Italian workshops where, already before the year 1400, silk weaving was reformed by means of introducing technical improvements allowing to make thinner and less expensive materials than those produced by Egyptian workshops. That is why, Italian silks flooded the kingdom of Mamluks.⁵ An example here can be the robe of Pope Benedict XI kept in the museum of Perugia, described in an inventory note stating: *planeta de panno tartarico albo deaurato de opera curioso minuto por totum*. The fabrics from which the attire was made, however, are Italian, only with some elements that can be connected with eastern workshops.⁶

The fabrics assigned to the eastern workshops in Polish collections can be divided, in accordance with the above criteria, into a few groups.

The first group, perhaps the most uniform in stylistic and technical terms consists of the fabrics attributed to the workshops of Cyprus and Cairo, operating during the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517), especially in 1250–1382, when Cairo became a cultural and artistic capital. This group may comprise the fragments of fabrics from Queen Jadwiga's grave

5 L. Monnas, *The Impact of Oriental Silks on Italian Silk Weaving in the Fourteenth Century*, in: *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations Art and Culture between Europe and Asia*, Berlin 2010, pp. 65–90.

6 M. L. Rosatti, "De opera curioso minute". *The Vestments of Benedict XI in Perugia and the Fourteenth Century Perceptions of "Panni Tartarici"*, in: *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe*, Abbege-Stiftung 2016, pp. 173–183.

kept in the treasury of the Archcathedral Basilica of St Stanislaus and St Wenceslaus on Wawel Hill.⁷ Adam Bochnak described the preserved fragments decorated with the motifs of palmettes in a few stylisations, and, based on the analogies published by Otto von Falke and Lessing, he hypothetically attributed one of them to an Egyptian workshop operating in the 14th and 15th centuries,⁸ whilst others — to Italy or Spain.⁹ The Museum of Kraków Archdiocese houses a chasuble from the church in Bolechowice near Kraków, described as made from the textiles coming from a Cyprian or Cairene workshop.¹⁰ The decoration of the fabric on the flanks of the chasuble (fig. 1) presents the fruit of pomegranate decorated with the Arabic script: *izz li mawlana al.-malik* (Glory to Lord Almighty), with small motifs with an inscription *al-Ashraf* placed in a network pattern, most probably referring to the Circassian Mamluk sultan, who, in 1427, apprehended the last king of Cyprus, Janus Lusignan. It must also be mentioned that a fragment of a similar fabric is kept at the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹¹ What seems to be of some interest here is that the same Museum has also the fabric from the collection of priest F. Bock, with an identical pattern yet made with a damask technique and not with lampas weave (ground weave),¹² similarly was the fragments of the damasks kept at the Textile Museum in Lyon and at the Musée national du Moyen Âge in Paris.

7 A. Bochnak, *Groby królowej Jadwigi i królewicza Kazimierza Jagiellończyka w katedrze Wawelskiej*, Kraków 1968, p. 157, fig. 8–11 (Studia do Dziejów Wawelu, 3).

8 A. Bochnak, *Groby królowej Jadwigi*, p. 157, fig. 8; *Wawel 1000–2000, Wystawa Jubileuszowa: Kultura artystyczna dworu królewskiego i katedry. Katedra Krakowska – biskupia, królewska, narodowa*, ed. by M. Piwocka, D. Nowacki, Kraków 2000, fig. 20.

9 A. Bochnak, *Groby królowej Jadwigi*, fig. 9–11.

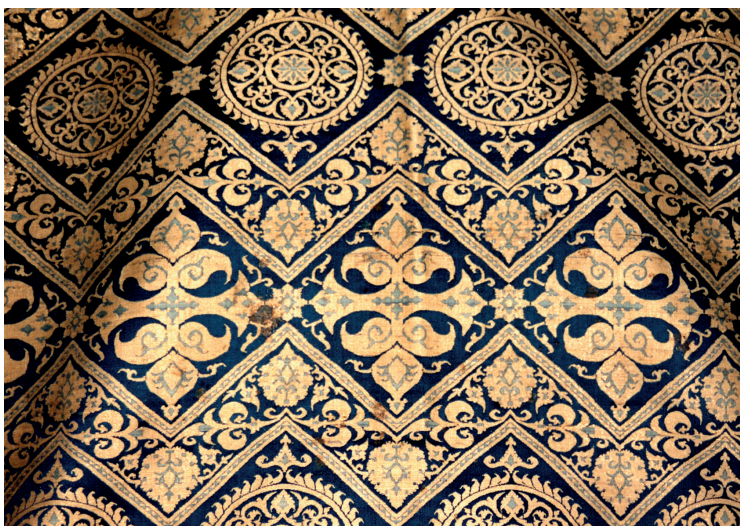
10 B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Early 15th Century Byzantine and Mamluk Textiles from Wawel Cathedral*, Cracow, „Bulletin du CIETA” (1994) no. 72, pp. 13–19; B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Bliskowschodnie tkaniny liturgiczne i ich rola w katedrze na Wawelu w czasach biskupa Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego*, in: *Sztuka około 1400. Materiały sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, listopad 1995, vol. 2, ed. by T. Hrankowska, Poznań–Warszawa 1996, pp. 249–262.

11 Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 753–1904.

12 Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 8614–1863. Illustration and data about the object are also displayed at the website of the Victoria & Albert Museum: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O264758/woven-silk/>



1. Part of a chasuble; Museum of Kraków Archdiocese, Cyprus or Cairo, I half of the XVth century (photo from author's collection)



2. Part of an antependium, treasury of the Archcathedral Basilica of St Stanislaus and St Wenceslaus on Wawel Hill, Cyprus or Cairo, beginning of the XVth century (photo from author's collection)

3. Part of a dalmatic;
St Mary's Church
in Gdańsk, National Museum
in Gdańsk,
(MNG 278),
Egipt, end
of XIVth century
(photo by Monika Stachurska)



This group contains also an antependium kept the treasury of the Archcathedral Basilica of St Stanislaus and St Wenceslaus on Wawel Hill made from a glamorous fabric and attributed to the Mamluk workshops operating in Cyprus or in Cairo (fig. 2)¹³ This antependium is reportedly a gift from cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki for the main altar of the Wawel Cathedral.¹⁴ The fragments of textiles with similar stylistic and technical properties make up a part of the dalmatic kept in the National Museum in Gdańsk and belonging to the paraments of St Mary's Church in Gdańsk (MNG 278, fig. 3).¹⁵ The dalmatic was sewn from three pieces of fabric. According to Mannowski, they were made in Spain in the 15th century.¹⁶ According to the recent publications, these textiles come from diverse centres. The damask on the front and the sleeves of the dalmatic comes most likely from a workshop operating in Venice around 1400.¹⁷ The fabric on the back of the dalmatic, with rhombus pattern is attributed to Spanish¹⁸ or Mamluk workshops in Egypt, operating at the end of the 16th century.¹⁹ The fragments of an identical fabric preserved in the collections of Cleveland Museum of Art (Egypt or Syria, 15th century) and the Art Institute of Chicago (Egypt, Mamluk sultanate—late 14th century) are described in a similar way.

13 B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Early 15th Century Byzantine*, pp. 13–19; B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Bliskowschodnie tkaniny liturgiczne*, p. 259, fig 7.

14 *Wawel 1000–2000, Wystawa Jubileuszowa*, cat. No. I/29, fig. 34–35.

15 This fabric was studied as part of the grant: “Interdisciplinary study of a complex of 192 liturgical paraments from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, currently kept at the National Museum in Gdańsk, with special consideration for the technological and technical studies. The grant was financed from the resources of the NCN National Science Centre (Nr 2013/09/B/HS2/01197) in short form: “Gdańsk's treasure of the medieval parament art” carried out by the Chair of Historic Textiles Conservation and Restoration of the Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw and the National Museum in Gdańsk.

16 W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, vol. 2, Berlin 1930–1933, cat. 52, table 70.

17 This is also a description of an identical fragment kept at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin (Gew. 547).

18 S. Durian-Ress, *Meisterwerke mittelalterlicher Textilkunst aus dem Bayerischen Nationalmuseum*, Zurich 1986, Cat. No. 48 ref. No. T 63.

19 P. L. Baker, *Islamic Textiles*, London 1995, fig on p. 74, p. 75.

As it has already been mentioned here, the fabrics from the Middle East workshops reached Poland in diverse ways. One of them could be diplomatic gifts. In this context, a reference should be made to the visit of the King of Cyprus, Peter I Lusignan in 1364 at the court of King Casimir the Great and their joint participation in the famous feast organised by Mikołaj Wierzynek. This was evidently an occasion for presenting rich silk textiles. Also, in 1432, in the Wiślica castle, king Ladislaus Jagiełło received a large group of envoys from Cyprus with abundant gifts from the king of Cyprus Janus from Lusignan (1398—1432)—the records mention also textiles²⁰ as elements of these gifts. It must be added that king Janus from Lusignan was forced to pay tribute to the Mamluk sultan. This tribute was paid in camlets, i.e., luxurious fabrics made of camel or goat hair and produced in Famagusta.²¹

The second group of fabrics consists of a chasuble with a stole kept at the Museum of Kraków Archdiocese, sewn from a fabric with bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki's (1389—1455) coat of arms, made most probably still in a Byzantine workshop in Constantinople or Bursa before 1449 as this was the year when the bishop received the cardinal's hat (fig. 4).²² The commissioned fabric was supposedly designated for the decoration of the Wawel cathedral. This assumption, however, might be changed in the light of the new findings made during the works within the following grant: *Working out an interdisciplinary database documenting silk fabrics from the Church resources in Kraków in 15th—17th centuries based on stock taking and data digitalisation* [Wykonanie interdyscyplinarnej bazy danych dokumentującej jedwabne tkaniny z zasobów kościelnych Krakowa z czasów od XV—XVII w. w oparciu o inwentaryzację i digitalizację danych].²³ In the Pauline Monastery “on the Rock” (na Skałce) in Kraków, a chasuble with the flanks made of the same fabric with

20 Ł. Burkiewicz, *Polityka egipskiego sultanatu Mameluków wobec łacińskiego królestwa Cypru w XV wieku*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Towarzystwa Doktorantów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego — Nauki Społeczne” (2011) No. 2 (1/2011), p. 16.

21 Ł. Burkiewicz, *Polityka egipskiego sultanatu Mameluków*, p. 10.

22 T. Chrzanowski, M. Kornecki, *Sztuka ziemi krakowskiej*, Kraków 1982, p. 189, fig. 109; M. Walczak, *Działalność fundacyjna biskupa krakowskiego kardynała Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego*, „Folia Historiae Artium” 28 (1992), pp. 57—58; B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Early 15th Century Byzantine*, pp. 13—19, fig. 2—4; B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Blisko-wschodnie tkaniny liturgiczne*, pp. 248—254, fig. 1—3.

23 The studies carried out by the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.



4. Part of a chasuble; Museum of Kraków Archdiocese, Constantinople or Bursa, before 1449 (photo from author's collection)



5. Part of a chasuble; kościół oo. Paulinów na Skałce, Constantinople or Bursa, before 1449 (photo taken during the realization of the grant)

6. Part of a chasuble;
St Mary's Church
in Gdańsk, National Museum
in Gdańsk,
(MNG 238),
northern Persia,
approx. half
of XIVth century
(photo by Monika Stachurska)



7. Part of a dalmatic,
St Mary's Church
in Gdańsk, National Museum
in Gdańsk,
(MNG 276),
northern Persia,
approx. half
of XIVth century
(photo by Monika Stachurska)



bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki's coat of arms was discovered (fig. 5). The fact that the chasuble is kept in the Pauline monastery and that the Pauline monastery Pińczów was founded by bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki, may suggest that the fabric with the coats of arms was ordered to be sent to Pińczów. The chasuble from Bolechowice has also a stole made of a very similar fabric decorated solely with the motifs of isosceles crosses placed in fields flanked with a motif of pomegranate. In spite of large similarities to the fabric with the bishop's coat of arms, some significant differences are also observed. Apart from the lack of the coat of arms, the pattern of the stola fabric repeats some elements of the pattern on the bishop's fabric, yet in a different interpretation, significantly changed in comparison with the original. The fabric of the stola, in turn, is almost identical as the fabric of the sakkos worn by Metropolitan of Moscow Simon (1495–1511) and kept in Petersburg, belonging to the museum of the Moscow Kremlin.²⁴ Most probably the textiles of sakkos from the Kremlin and the stole from the Museum of Kraków Archdiocese come from the Istanbul workshops or from Bursa, at the beginnings of the 16th century and can serve as an example of the textiles noted in the customs chambers as *pavoloki*, brought into the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania and Russia.²⁵

The fabrics from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, whose pattern contains a rhythmically repeated Arabic inscription, make up a separate group and are currently studied under the grant.²⁶ This group comprises two chasubles, all sewn from textiles with inscriptions (ref No.: M.30, MNG 238, fig.6)²⁷ and (ref. No.: M.33,

24 I. Vishnrvskis, "Precious textiles" in *Treasures of the Armoury: Ambassadorial Gifts*, Moscow 1996, pp. 229–266.

25 Cf. footnote 3.

26 Cf. footnote 15.

27 A. Hinz, *Die Schatzkammer der Marienkirche zu Danzig*, Danzig 1863, 33; J. Karabacek, *Die liturgischen Gewänder mit arabischen Inschriften aus der Marienkirche in Danzig*, No. 5, Wien 1870, pp. 141–147; O. Falke, *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenwebereien*, Berlin 1913, vol. 2, p. 38, fig. 31, 308, abb. 350; W. Mannowsky, *Kirchliche Gewänder und Stickereien aus dem Schatz der Marienkirche*, No. 30, Danzig 1929, p. 15; W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, vol. 2, pp. 3–4, category 30, table 46; M. Żelewska, *Wystawa gdańskiego zbioru tkanin zabytkowych*, „Warszawa–Poznań 1964, p. 113, fig. 86; M. Żelewska, *Gdański zbiór tkanin średniowiecznych*, Gdańsk 1966, p. 1, fig. 2 (Asia Minor, 14th c., Syria); B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Orient w sztuce*

8. Part of a chasuble;
St Mary's Church
in Gdańsk, National Museum
in Gdańsk,
(MNG 280), China, approx. half
of XIVth century
(photo by Monika Stachurska)



MNG 239);²⁸ a cope covered with satin with a stripe of a fabric with inscriptions (ref. No.: M.17, MNG 232);²⁹ two dalmatics whose middle parts are made of a fabric with inscriptions, identical in both cases, and with flanks made of another fabric (Ref. No.: M.113,114, MNG 275, 276, fig. 7).³⁰ Specific fields in the stripes with rhythmically changing widths and background colours are filled with a pattern in which there is a rhythmically repeated inscription in a Arabic script, in the *naskhi* style: [السلطان [ا]لعالم] — as-sultān [a]l-‘ā[lim] — wise sultan;³¹ in the case of the fabric of the middle parts of the dalmatics, apart from the stripes with a repeated expression “as-sultan al-alim” (learned sultan), the narrower stripes contain two types of larger and smaller medallions with an inscription imitating the *nashi*³² script. The inscriptions are accompanied with spiked medallions, in diverse arrangements, with lotus flowers, rosettes with geometrical ornaments and between them — rhythmically placed pairs of antithetic birds (peacocks?), placed alternately with antithetically placed animal silhouettes: running dogs with collars and deer separated with closed crescents.

All the studies published so far follow the attribution proposed by W. Mannowski, suggesting that these fabrics have been made in south-eastern Asia, most probably Mesopotamia in the 14th century, whereas

polskiej, Kraków 1992, cat. No. I/54, fig. 26 (the entry was edited by B. Szybert: Syria, end of the 14th century).

- 28 J. Karabacek, *Die liturgischen Gewänder*, pp. 141–147; J. Lessing, *Die Gewebesammlung des K. Kunstgewerbemuseums*, Berlin 1900, pl. 1203; L. Żarnowiecki, *Historia tkanin jedwabnych*, Kyiv 1915, pp. 68, 70–71, fig. 29; W. Mannowsky, *Kirchliche Gewänder*, p. 15; W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, pp. 3–4, category 33, table 49; *Aus dem Danziger Paramentenschatz und dem Schatz der Schwarzhaupter zu Riga*, Nuremberg 1958, p. 11; B. Biedrońska-Słotowa, *Orient w sztuce*, cat. No. I/55, il. 27 (the entry was edited by B. Szybert: end of the 14th century).
- 29 W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, vol. 2, Berlin 1930–1933, cat. 17, table 22.
- 30 J. Karabacek, *Die liturgischen Gewänder*, pp.141–147; A. Hinz, *Die Schatzkammer der Marienkirche zu Danzig*, Danzig 1863, p. 57; W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, vol. 2, cat. 113, 114, table 124, 125.
- 31 The inscription was retranslated by doctor Dorota Malarczyk.
- 32 As above; The information about the lack of grounds to read out the motifs in small cartouches was provided by doctor Dorota Malarczyk.

post-war publications sometimes refer to Syria as the place of the production.³³

Taking into consideration the iconography of these fabrics and their similarities both with the works of Persian art from the period of the Mongolian conquest and the rule of the Ilkhanate (descendants of Hulagu 1257–1381), and on the basis of the source literature, the production place of these fabrics might be northern Persia, during the Mongolian Ilkhanate, during the reign of Ilkhan Abu Sa'id (1317–35), the successor of Genghis Khan.³⁴

In the Ilkhanate state, textiles played an important role, being the status symbol of the thriving and expansive elite. Other fields of art were developed in a lesser degree.³⁵ Another significant aspect was that glamorous and expensive textiles, easy to transport, could give some substantial income. They played the role of a symbolic currency and were sometimes used as an equivalent of money. As they were used to pay tribute, they became a symbol of political power and prestige.³⁶ Importing textiles to Europe soon became an important attribute of power.

Similarly, these textiles were enthusiastically accepted in the church in Gdańsk, where the clergy could pride themselves on them as a sign of wealth and prestige. In the period when the fabrics were being purchased, Gdańsk was subjected to the authorities of the Teutonic Order. It cannot be excluded that St Mary's Church in Gdańsk received these expensive and exquisite fabrics from the Order representatives.³⁷

In the Polish collections there is also a group of textiles attributed to Chinese workshops.

The Museum of the Archcathedral Basilica in the Wawel Castle houses a chasuble dated for 14th century, constructed of two different pieces

33 M. Żelewska, *Gdański zbiór tkanin średniowiecznych*, p. 1, fig. 2 (Asia Minor, 14th c., Syria); B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Orient*, cat. No. I/54, fig. 26 (the entry was edited by B. Sztybert: Syria, end of the 14th century).

34 See: B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Tkaniny zdobione napisami arabskimi w szatach liturgicznych pochodzących z kościoła Mariackiego w Gdańsku, przechowywanych w Muzeum Narodowym w Gdańsku*, "Folia Historiae Artium. New series" 16 (2018), pp. 19–34 (details on p. 28).

35 J. C. Y. Watt, A. E. Wardwell, *When the Silk was Gold*, New York 1997, pp. 60–61.

36 A. E. Wardwell, *Indigenous elements in Central Asian Silk designs of the Mongol Period, and their impact on Italian Gothic silks*, "Bulletin CIETA" (2000) No. 77, pp. 86–98.

37 B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Tkaniny zdobione*, pp. 33–34.

of fabric, sewn with each other along the vertical axis. These textiles are described in the publications available so far as Italian and Chinese.³⁸ The group of textiles attributed to Chinese workshops or Italian workshops influenced by China in 15th century³⁹ contains a chasuble and the fabric of the flanks of the dalmatic from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, kept at the National Museum in Gdańsk (MNG/280), with a geometric pattern. The construction of the pattern and the execution point to the origin of the fabric from Chinese workshops in the 14th century (fig. 8).⁴⁰

All the fabrics described here make up interesting examples of a trans-European exchange of motifs and techniques and are indicative of a fascination with distinct and extraordinary forms expressed in the fabric compositions.

38 *Wawel 1000–2000. Wystawa Jubileuszowa*, cat. No. I/28, il. 32–33.

39 W. Mannowsky, *Der Danziger Paramentenschatz*, vol. 2.

40 Victoria and Albert Museum No. 7082–1860, fragment described as made in China in 1280–1360.

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Abstract

Beata Biedrońska-Słota

Medieval fabrics with eastern provenience in Polish collections

Textiles produced in the leading weavers' centres of the Orient and used in Poland during the Middle Ages make an interesting and valuable complex. They were imported mainly for liturgical vestments but also for decoration of chapels and secular interiors. Richly and uniquely designed, woven in specialized workshops from silk with large amount of gold, they demonstrated prestige and taste of the ecclesiastical and secular elites. Eastern textiles in Polish collections may be combined in separate groups. The first group, perhaps the most uniform in style and technique, comprises textiles whose origin is attributed to the workshops in Cyprus and Cairo, active under the Mamluc Sultanate (1250–1517), especially in the period 1250–1382. The second group are the textile produced in Constantinople or Brusa before 1449. Another group comprises paraments made of textiles whose pattern includes a rhythmically repeated Arabic inscription stored at National Museum in Gdańsk and coming from the store of the St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, produced in workshops of northern Persia around the middle of the 14th century.

Keywords:

textiles, silk, merchant, Orient, artistic

Abstrakt

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*Średniowieczne tkaniny o wschodniej proveniencji
w zbiorach polskich*

Tkaniny używane w Polsce w okresie średniowiecza pochodzące z wiodących ośrodków tkackich położonych w krajach Wschodu stanowią ciekawy i wartościowy zespół. Sprowadzano je przede wszystkim w celu wykonania z nich paramentów, stanowić też mogły elementy wystroju kaplic lub wnętrz świeckich. Bogate i oryginalne pod względem wzorów, tkane z jedwabiu z dużą ilością złota w wyspecjalizowanych warsztatach, były wyrazem prestiżu i gustu elit zarówno kościelnych, jak i świeckich. Tkaniny wschodnie w zbiorach polskich można połączyć w grupy. Pierwsza, może najbardziej jednolita stylistycznie i technicznie, składa się z tkanin, których wykonanie przypisywane jest warsztatom Cypru i Kairu czynnym w okresie panowania sułtanatu Mameluków (1250–1517), szczególnie w okresie 1250–1382. Drugi zespół tkanin stanowią wykonane w Konstantynopolu lub Bursie przed 1449 rokiem. Odrębną grupę stanowią paramenty z tkanin, w których wzorze występuje rytmicznie powtarzany arabski napis przechowywane w Muzeum Narodowym w Gdańsku, pochodzące z kościoła Mariackiego w Gdańsku, wykonane w warsztatach na terenie północnej Persji około poł. XIV wieku.

Słowa kluczowe:

tkaniny, jedwab, handel, Orient, sztuka