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## Relief with Crucifixion Scene in St Martin's Church in Jawor – the Oldest Silesian Pictorial Epitaph and its Ideological and Artistic Contexts

### Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of the relief block with the Crucifixion scene preserved in the St. Martin's parish church in Jawor, an important town in the Duchy Jawor-Świdnica in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. According to the 17<sup>th</sup> century's written sources the relief was originally located on the wall of the church's cemetery mortuary, however the primary written source pertaining to the artwork in question is the inscription running along its three sides. The slab commemorates Johann Sapiens and his family. It is the earliest preserved pictorial epitaph in Silesia and in this part of Europe. Its votive purpose is stated. Moreover, a passage referring to biblical texts as well as formulations, which entered into the consecration rites of churches and altars, provide a premise to interpret this family memorial and epitaph, at the same time, also as an ossuary foundation memorial. These circumstances allow searching for possible models and references in places where the pictorial epitaph found favourable conditions for development already at the dawn of its existence as a type of sepulchral monument. At first sight, Thuringia with Erfurt seem the place geographically closest to Silesia, where stylistically and typologically related artworks have been preserved. However, the crucifix depicted in the relief from Jawor turned out to be rather typical for the contemporary Silesian sculpture too, in contrast to the assisting figures of Virgin Mary and St. John. In consequence, the references and sources of inspiration applied in the process of creation of the assisting figures in relief from Jawor should be searched in western territories of Silesia or having regard to the possibility of drawing inspiration from much older portable microplastic objects as, for example, Byzantine or Romanesque ivory.

**Keywords:** pictorial epitaph, gothic sculpture, Silesia, devotional image, foundation inscription, Thuringia, ivory microsculpture

## I

Among the many works of medieval stone sculpture, which were given a shelter in St. Martin's parish church in Jawor (before 1945: Jauer), an important town in the Duchy Jawor-Świdnica in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the relief block with the Crucifixion scene may not represent the highest level of art, but its form and function certainly deserve interest (see Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Epitaph of Johann Sapiens' family in the church of St. Martin in Jawor, 1362, photo: R. Kaczmarek

The artwork, carved in sandstone, in the form of vertical rectangle, measures 150 cm high, 103 cm long, by a 22 cm thick (the slab alone), whereas the relief reaches 10 cm. The stone frame is 9.5 cm wide. The recessed bas-relief image, featuring Crucifixion with Virgin Mary and St. John, is surrounded on three sides by a band of bordering rim, with cambering on the inner edges. From the bottom the relief block is framed by a plain edge without any decorations. The band is filled with a majuscule inscription across its width. Christ is stretched on a cross with narrow beams, with recessed edge profiles and regularly spaced schematic branch knots. All ends of the cross beams meet the edges of the image field. Titulus with the letters

INRI is already placed on the bottom of the upper border of the slab. Christ's rather slender body hangs almost symmetrically on diagonally straightened arms. The deviation of the body from the cross axis to the right (from the viewer's side) is almost imperceptible. Despite the noticeable inclination of the head towards the right shoulder the face remains visible, facing straight ahead, oval in shape, surrounded by slightly wavy strands of hair that fall across the chest. The beard appears very sparse (the lower part of the chin is stubbled). The head shows a fine, rolled form of a crown of thorns. Christ's face, expressing suffering, was formed with moderate expression and by means of lines: a few wrinkles run across the forehead, the lines of the eyebrows rise up over the nose and droop noticeably at their edges, whereas furrows run from the nose toward the slightly drooping corners of the mouth. The tendon tension of the crooked neck seems more clearly and artfully marked. The rotund and somewhat flatly rendered torso, is marked by schematically engraved bowlike ribs, with a triangle of Christ's belly cutting in between them, on which several upwardly directed arched folds of muscle in contraction can be discerned. The chest crumples flat in the upper torso. The perizoma, covering the hips and slightly the knees, is laid out in small, parallel V-shaped folds, more voluminous in the central part, with a slight disruption of its rhythm at the top. At the sides hang conical festoons, of almost equal length, the surface of which is decorated with S-shaped curve lines at the edges. Legs with marked shin edges, now devoid of foot parts, are grinding together.

The figures of Mary (on the left) and St. John the Evangelist (on the right), with their heads turned towards the Crucified Christ, are placed on small, rectangular, pedestals on both sides of the cross. Despite the severe damage to the faces of both (especially St. John), the essentially linear shaping of the eyes and mouth, similarly to Christ's face, remains apparent. Mary's head is wrapped tightly in a shawl, the right end of which, drawn under her chin, falls along her left shoulder, and the left end, thrown back, is hooked over her right shoulder. John's oblong face is fringed by strands of long, slightly wavy hair. While Mary's posture, with slightly tilted head, joined hands raised in a gesture of despair, and minimally bent left leg, is fairly typical, things are different for the figure of St. John, being almost convulsively distorted. The lowered elbow of his left hand, in which he is holding the book, reaches down to the hip, while the right hand, with the forearm almost vertically positioned, supports the chin of the upraised face and the unnaturally tilted head. This gesture simultaneously imposes an arched and taut line on the entire backward-tilted figure. The robes of these two figures are gouged with vertical, parallel folds, the surface of which is varied here and there by a delicate grid of S-shaped curve lines marking the flow of the robe edges. The three-dimensionality of the folds seems only reinforced at the hip level of the figures, on the outer sides of the composition, where the robes slacks form the V-shape. At the bottom of the scene, squeezed between the pedestals, kneel tiny figures of orants facing the cross - one pair between Mary and John, the other at the edges, in the corners of the slab (see Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** Epitaph of Johann Sapiens' family in the church of St. Martin in Jawor – lower part with the figures of the commemorated family members, photo: R. Kaczmarek

Unfortunately, the poor state of preservation of this fragment of the artwork makes impossible determining the gender of the kneeling persons. Perhaps the figure on the left in the central pair is wearing a shorter gown (caftan reaching mid-thigh?), judging by the more clear-cut form of the thin legs than it is among other kneelers. They all are basically of the same scale and follow a similar scheme of elongated figures, almost squatting in a kneeling position and holding in their folded hands flat ribbons of tightly rolled bands (phylacteries). Amid the outermost figures they run upwards, while in the central pair they wrap over their heads to fall behind their backs. A small, schematically rendered skull can be discerned between these orants, lying beneath the cross. Faint traces of red and blue in the background and intrados, red and green on the cross, and red alone on the mantle of St. John, are evidence of the panel's former polychromy. There are also traces of polychrome on halos of Virgin Mary and St. John.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The state of research on the discussed artwork is rather inconsiderable. Its findings are limited to establishing the artwork's role, dating, as well as formal and stylistic analogies of the cross itself. The relief in question has been referred to as

<sup>1</sup> In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relief was covered with oil paint, removed during the restoration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See: *Prace konserwatorskie na terenie województw jeleniogórskiego, legnickiego, wałbrzyskiego, wrocławskiego w latach 1974–78*, Wrocław, 1985, p. 65.

a grave stone (*Grabstein*),<sup>2</sup> a memorial stone (*Denkstein*),<sup>3</sup> a votive relief (*Votivrelief*)<sup>4</sup> or simply as a "relief with the Crucifixion",<sup>5</sup> "gravestone"<sup>6</sup> or "tombstone".<sup>7</sup> At the end of the 1980s, the term epitaph began to be used, somewhat intuitively, as the content of the inscription was not yet full deciphered.<sup>8</sup> The dating of the artwork has always oscillated around the date "1362", placed in the background of the scene, on the sides of the cross, written in Arabic numerals, the role of which has not been identified so far. All scholars, except perhaps Alwin Schultz, have doubted the possibility of its simultaneous graving together with the whole relief.<sup>9</sup> It was not stated, however, when this would take place.

The artwork's form and style was explored most extensively by Erich Wiese, who saw certain similarities between the crucified Christ depicted here and the wooden crucifix from the church of the Ursulines (originally the Poor Clares) in Breslau (since 1945: Wrocław). He compared the shape of the cross in the form of Tree of Life with the crucifix, which at that time was mounted in the northern gallery of the St Barbara's Church in Breslau (both works are now in the National Museum in Warsaw). At the same time, he pointed to the „very old hand gestures” („sehr alten Gestus der Hände”) of Mary and St. John the Evangelist, the emphasis on suffering in the expression on Christ's face, and the artist's familiarity with the ivory carving technique evident in the relief, similarly to the Crucifix from the Poor Clares. Four small figures, kneeling at the bottom, were identified as the supposed funders.<sup>10</sup>

2 "Die Pfarrkirche zu St. Martin und die Engelsburg in Jauer", *Silesia. Museum für schlesische Vaterlandskunde mit Inbegriff der Lausitz*, 1841, 1, Lief. 6, p. 55; A. Schultz, "Analecten zur schlesischen Kunstgeschichte", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertum Schlesiens*, 1870, 10, H. 1, p. 143.

3 A. Knoblich, "Das Pacificale von Liebenthal", *Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift*, 1866, 1, Bericht 6, p. 46.

4 E. Wiese, *Schlesische Plastik vom Beginn des XIV. bis zur Mitte XV. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1923, p. 21.

5 H. Lutsch, *Verzeichnis der Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Schlesien*, Bd. III, Breslau, 1891, p. 403; Wiese, op. cit., pp. 73, 100, 102; O. Koischwitz, *Jauer. Ein Wegweiser durch die Heimat und ihre Geschichte*, Jauer, 1930, p. 55.

6 S. Jastrzębski, *Jawor i okolice. Przewodnik turystyczny*, Wrocław, 1973, p. 90.

7 *Prace konserwatorskie...*, loc. cit.

8 I. Błaszczyk, "Temat drzewa w średniowiecznej sztuce śląskiej", in: *Sztuki plastyczne na średniowiecznym Śląsku. Studia i materiały*, Wrocław – Poznań, 1988, p. 12; R. Kaczmarek, J. Witkowski, "Ze studiów nad gotyckimi epitafiami obrazowymi mieszczaństwa na Śląsku", in: *Sztuka miast i mieszczaństwa XV-XVIII w. w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, ed. J. Harasimowicz, Warszawa, 1990, p. 171; R. Kaczmarek, J. Witkowski, "Gotyckie epitafia obrazowe na Śląsku, cz. I", in: *Sztuki plastyczne na średniowiecznym Śląsku. Studia i Materiały II*, Wrocław – Poznań, 1990, p. 19; R. Kaczmarek, J. Witkowski, "Gotyckie epitafia obrazowe na Śląsku, cz. II, Zarys Katalogu", in: *Sztuki plastyczne na średniowiecznym Śląsku. Studia i Materiały III*, Wrocław – Poznań, 1990, p. 113.

9 Schultz, op. cit.: 1362; Knoblich, op. cit., probably mistakenly provides the date 1363; Wiese, op. cit.: ca. 1360; *Prace konserwatorskie...*, ca. mid-14<sup>th</sup> century; Kaczmarek, Witkowski, *Gotyckie epitafia*, cz. II: ca. 1360.

10 Wiese, op. cit., p. 21, fig. II,2.

## III

The present location of the artwork in the Gothic Marian Chapel, which opens into the northern aisle of the church, is not the original. The earliest information about its location provide two sources written in Jawor. The first is a manuscript by Joachim Profe, an Evangelical archdeacon at St. Martin's Church, written around 1624. It states under the date 1362 that in addition to the information about the fire in Złotoryjska Street, "auch das Epitaphium am Beinhaus aufm Kirchhofe aufgerichtet".<sup>11</sup> This is also confirmed by a passing reference in the *Annales Jaurani*, ending in the year 1619 and published in fragments in 1693. It refers to the same artwork: "Optimum Antiquitatis monumentum in ossuario Dormitorii S. Martini exstare scribit, ubi haec leguntur verba: Johannes sapiens me sculpsit, additis numeris 1363".<sup>12</sup> The wall of the mortuary (*ossuarium*, *karner*, *Beinhaus*) was therefore probably the original location of the relief in question. The building was once located within the church cemetery and is also mentioned by Christian Friedrich Emanuel Fischer, who provided the date 1363 as the year of its construction without any indication of its source.<sup>13</sup> The mortuary may have been erected earlier (the church itself existed before the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century), and such dating was most likely based on a misread or incorrectly transcribed date shown on the relief in question.<sup>14</sup> The original church cemetery was enclosed to the north and northeast by the town wall; near the presbytery to the east stood the parsonage building, which has survived to this day. The mortuary was probably located in the south-eastern part of the church square, judging by its present topography, but especially deducing from the description in the church visitations. According to the visitations, the ossuary is mentioned in 1651 as a place where water from the washing of liturgical vessels and used water from the baptismal font was poured out, and also in 1677, when more details were provided. A large stone building, which the visitor associated

11 *Joachimi Profii Javoriensia Memorabilia...*, manuscript from the collection of University Library in Wrocław (pol. Biblioteka Uniwersytecka Wrocław, BUWr.) in the Department of Manuscripts (pol. Dział Rękopisów), sign. R 613, pages have no numbers, in chronological order. About the author see: G. Schönaich, *Die alte Fürstentumshauptstadt Jauer. Bilder und Studien zur jauerischen Stadtgeschichte*, Jauer, 1903, p. 95.

12 *Godofredi Rhonii Vratislaviensis Epistolarum Historicarum secunda de Quibusdam Ineditis Historiae Silesiacae Scriptoribus*, Vratislaviae, 1693, p. B2, the term "Dormitory" used here certainly refers to the cemetery grounds; there is an obvious mistake in the date.

13 Ch. F. E. Fischer, *Geschichte und Beschreibung der schlesischen Fürstentumshauptstadt Jauer*, Th. 1, Jauer, 1803, pp. 72–73. The incorrect date of 1363 with reference to the epitaph was first provided by G. Rhonius, op. cit. which can probably be regarded as a printing or reading error. He was probably followed by Fischer, op. cit., who regarded it as the date of construction of the mortuary. Similarly it is written with an error by Knoblich, op. cit.

14 Examples of charnel houses preserved in Silesia: at the parish church in Lwówek and in Słup near Jawor, see: R. Kaczmarek, "<Ossuarium> przy kościele w Słupie. Funkcje i analogie", in: *Cysterskim szlakiem przez województwo legnickie. Materiały z konferencji w Muzeum Okręgowym w Legnicy*, ed. A. Niedzielenko, Legnica, 1995, pp. 49–57.

with some kind of “mausoleum”, stood to the south of the parsonage building; it was to be decorated with some unspecified statues (*statuae*) carved in stone and already at that time bearing traces of neglect menacing further deterioration.<sup>15</sup> The demolition of the ossuary must have taken place between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was the reason for moving the Crucifixion slab to the church wall.<sup>16</sup> From there, it was moved before 1866 (perhaps in 1864) – possibly during one of Pastor Neugebauer's first restoration campaigns (1855-1899) – to its present location in the Marian Chapel.<sup>17</sup> Here, then, the lower edge of the slab was obscured with ceramic flooring and its surface covered with oil paint. Both were removed during a comprehensive restoration in 1976–1977.<sup>18</sup>

## IV

The primary written source pertaining to the artwork in question is the inscription running along its three sides (Fig. 3). So far overridden, it daunted researchers by its bad state of preservation and illegibility increased by layers of paint. In 1879, Alwin Schultz had already lamented that the inscription was “nur stückweise erhalten” and “längere Zeit zur Entzifferung in Anspruch nehmen würde, als ich ihr widmen konnte”.<sup>19</sup> Today its fragments are completely obliterated, especially on the upper band of bordering trim. The Latin inscription begins in the lower left corner of the slab and ends in the lower right corner.<sup>20</sup> The text is in relief, gothic majuscule, characterised by rather slender proportions. A clear tendency to form letters with closing forms is regarded as typical of the time around the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. The typeface of the individual letters, which form numerous ligatures, varies. There are also two different types of the same letter (e.g. H, N, T, U). The following reading is based on an *in situ* inspection,<sup>21</sup> then verified with photographs taken under oblique illumination.

15 *Visitationsberichte der Diözese Breslau. Archidiakonat Liegnitz*, ed. J. Jungnitz, Breslau, 1908, pp. 2, 70 – “In aditu coemeterii (...) aedificium ex meris lapidibus valde spatiosum per modum mausolei. Pulchram illud e lapidibus excisae statuae administrant apparentiam et venustatem. (...) sensim per iniurias aeris interibit.”

16 Rhonius, loc. cit., writing in 1693 about the mortuary could only quote an older chronicle. Fischer, op. cit., pp. 72–73, wrote in 1803 about the mortuary as “once existing”, at the same time in that year the “Monument mit der Jahreszahl 1362” was already “in der hintern Kirchenmauer”, cf. *ibid.*, p. 66, note 20.

17 By the time of Knoblich, op. cit. the epitaph was already standing in its present location. On the activities of parish priest Neugebauer see: Schönaich, op. cit., p. 9.

18 *Prace konserwatorskie...*, p. 65, fig. 18a-b – the works were carried out by students of the Conservation Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow under the tutelage of Ireneusz Pluska.

19 Schultz, loc. cit.; Lutsch, loc. cit. found it similarly unreadable – in ganz unleslichen Majuskeln”.

20 Wiese, op. cit., p. 73, suggested that the text was supposed to be Czech: “Stark verzierte Majuskel. Tschechisch?”.

21 It took place in the late 1980s. At that time I was assisted by Jacek Witkowski.



**Fig. 3.** Band of bordering rim with inscription from the epitaph of Johann Sapiens' family in the church of St. Martin in Jawor, 1362, photo: R. Kaczmarek

A[NNO] D[OMI]NI MIL[LESSIMO] · CCC · LXII · I[O]H[ANN]ES<sup>22</sup> · SA-  
PIENS · SCULPSIT .... IH · PETRAM · C[H]RISTI / ..... SIME ·  
ET · ANIM[A]E · SU[A]E · ET · / UXOR[A]TA<sup>23</sup> · H[V]IVS + EN · ANNA · P[RI]MA  
· GIRTRUDIS HINC · KATH[AR]I[N]A · UT · SIT[AE] · ASTANTES · PETI[UNT]  
· P[RO] NO[BIS] · ORA.

(Translation: In the year of our Lord 1362 Jan Sapiens sculpted ..... the stone of  
Christ ..... and of his soul and that of his wife + Behold, Anna the first,  
Gertrude next, Catherine as buried ask passersby, pray for us)

The provided reading of the inscription,<sup>24</sup> although hypothetical in several places, gives premises to formulate the following conclusions. First, the dating of the artwork in question to 1362 should be accepted as certain. Secondary chiseling of the same date in Arabic numerals in the center of the relief occurred probably in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest.<sup>25</sup> This can be inferred from the date 1573 with a similar typeface, also carved secondarily on the lintel of the entrance to the stair turret at the tower in the northwestern corner of the nave, with an inscription stating that its portal was erected in 1446. In this case, it may have been to immortalise the construction work carried out at that time on the church and its surroundings.<sup>26</sup>

22 The abbreviation “Ihes” for the name Johannes is noted for the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (A. Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed Italiane...*, Milano, 1954, p. 175).

23 This term, rare in inscriptions, meaning married or married persons, is recorded for the Middle Ages, see. Ch. du Fresne (Du Cange), *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, Vol. 6, Paris, 1846, pp. 899–900.

24 Rhonius, loc. cit., cites only a fragment of the inscription in the version: “Johannes sapiens me sculpsit”.

25 Arabic numerals appear in wider use in Europe only from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, see: *Clavis Mediaevalis. Kleines Wörterbuch der Mittelalterforschung*, eds. O. Meyer, R. Klauser, Wiesbaden, 1964, p. 112. At least since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century there has been a tendency in humanistic circles to use “retrospective” typefaces, e.g. in tombstones of people who had died much earlier; there is also an “ancient” interest in old lettering connected with a more general one concerning the history, see: R. M. Kloos, *Einführung in die Epigraphik des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Darmstadt, 1980, pp. 131–143. Taking into consideration both these trends, the incising of the new date on the epitaph in Jawor should be interpreted.

26 F. A. Zimmermann, *Beyträge zur Beschreibung von Schlesien*, Bd. VI, Brieg, 1786, pp. 63, 71, mentions the construction of a new school “behind the church” (at its northwest corner) in 1573 and a complete renovation of the church in 1577.



An indication of the moment *ad quem* of the chiseling of the Arabic numerals on these two stone blocks in the church may be the phrase quoted after the *Annales Jaurani* – “additis numeris 1363 [sic!]”, i.e. they were considered then (the annals end in 1619 and were published 1693) as an added element.<sup>27</sup> An example of a similar procedure, i.e. the posterior dating of a medieval stone artwork, is the relief in Würzburg, featuring the couple of funders kneeling before the Throne of Grace. It was originally placed in the *Totenkapelle* of the urban hospital. Dated around 1340–1350, it bears the date 1319 on its base, the same date as the foundation of the hospital, which was rebuilt at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries after being destroyed. Then this inscription was applied to the transferred slab.<sup>28</sup>

Secondly, the slab commemorates Johann Sapiens with his family. Johann appears in the sources for the history of Jawor only once, among the witnesses on a document issued in Jawor on 31 May 1359.<sup>29</sup> He was a town juror, just like his father (ϥ) Konrad (Cunrad) Sapiens, who testified on a document dated 11 January 1324.<sup>30</sup> The inscription also mentions Johann's probably already deceased wife. However, it is difficult to decide which of the three female names refers to her. Most probably the first one - Anna. The next two, Gertrude and Catherine, refer to his subsequent wives or deceased daughters of Johann and Anna.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the number of people mentioned in the inscription corresponds to the number of figures kneeling under the scene of the Crucifixion.<sup>32</sup> The inscription does not include a date of death for any of the women mentioned or a formula that refers to them (e.g., *obiit*).

<sup>27</sup> Rhonius, loc. cit.

<sup>28</sup> See: *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Königreichs Bayern*, Bd. 3, *Die Kunstdenkmäler von Unterfranken und Aschaffenburg*, XII. *Stadt Würzburg*, ed. F. Mader, München, 1915, pp. 535, 538–539; *Die Parler und der Schöne Stil 1350–1400. Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern. Ein Handbuch zur Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Kunsthalle Köln*, ed. A. Legner, Köln, 1978, Bd. 1, p. 349 (entry by: T. Breuer).

<sup>29</sup> E. Graber, *Die Inventare der nichtstaatlichen Archive Schlesiens. Kreis Jauer* (Corpus Diplomaticus Silesiae, Bd. 35, further CDS), Breslau, 1930, p. 40, no. 20; *Regesty śląskie*, vol. 4: 1358–1359, ed. J. Gilewska-Dubis, K. Bobowski, Wrocław – Warszawa (no publication date given), p. 202, no. 509.

<sup>30</sup> Graber, op. cit., p. 34, no. 4, and *Regesten zur schlesischen Geschichte 1316–1326* (CDS, Bd. 18), eds. C. Grünhagen, K. Wutke, Breslau, 1898, p. 237, no. 4316, in the index (pp. 377, 387) suggestion concerning the identity of the surnames Sapiens and Weise (Wyse). If this is accepted, then another progenitor of the family in Jawor would be a member of the city council of Wrocław elected in 1316, Nikolaus der Weise (Nyckil Wyse) (ibid., pp. 6–7), who was recorded in Jawor as a juror in 1335, as a councillor in 1343, and as a mayor in 1357 (Graber, op. cit., pp. 36, 39).

<sup>31</sup> A separate issue that requires verification is the possible identity of Johann, the founder of the 1362 slab, with Johann Sapiens, a burgher appearing in the Wrocław sources, including his wife Anna (sic!) between 1366 and 1397, see: R. Stein, *Der Rat und die Ratsgeschlechter des alten Breslau*, Würzburg, 1963, p. 82; *Katalog dokumentów przechowywanych w Archiwach Państwowych Dolnego Śląska*, vol. 7, 1392–1400, ed. R. Stelmach, Wrocław, 1993, pp. 34, 41, 64, 82 (no. 123, 157, 271, 359).

<sup>32</sup> This is not the rule in epitaphs, but in the early artworks dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century the rule practice to keep the congruence between the number of people mentioned in the inscription and featured in the epitaph image, seem to be followed more strictly.

However, that all three or at least some of them were dead in 1362, can be inferred from the passage “ut sitae astantes petiunt pro nobis ora”.

Thirdly, Johann Sapiens is also the founder of the artwork, for this is how the words “sculpsit (...) petram” should be understood. The phrase equating the act of foundation with the personal execution of the work has a parallel in German inscriptions, e.g. on Tile von Dale’s epitaph featuring the Crucifixion between the saints and the kneeling founder (c. 1350), located in the north wing of the cloister of the monastery church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Magdeburg, which reads “disen sten het ghegheven tile von dem dale got si em gnedich”<sup>33</sup> or very similarly worded on an epitaph or foundation slab (?) from the former church of St. Gangolf in Erfurt (1356).<sup>34</sup>

Fourthly, the inscription text makes it possible to clearly identify the relief memorial in Jawor as an epitaph founded by Johann Sapiens for his wife or wives, daughters and himself. It is the earliest surviving pictorial epitaph in Silesia and in this part of Europe. The mid-14<sup>th</sup> century is commonly referred to as the beginning of the popularity of this form of sepulchral monument.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, one cannot deny the founder’s intentions to create some kind of votive work, which may be evidenced by the original location of the relief on the wall of the cemetery ossuary. Although the graves of Johann Sapiens’ family may have been located near it, the image of the Crucified Christ also had the customary function of a crucifix in a cemetery, as a sign of the promise of salvation (the Tree of Life!) and a request for intercession.<sup>36</sup> Such a “monumental” and votive aspect of the foundation is emphasised by the first part of the inscription, in which Johann’s personal contribution to the founding of the work is highlighted by its significant and symbolic designation as the “Christ Stone”.<sup>37</sup> The play on the meanings of the word “petra”, originating in the text of Matthew’s gospel (16.18), is known from medieval epigraphy. Mostly, however, these words referred directly to the sepulchral stone (*sepulcro lapideo*),

33 K. Weidel, H. Kunze, *Das Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen in Magdeburg*, Augsburg, 1925, p. 111, fig. 115; H. Möbius, *Das Liebfrauenkloster in Magdeburg* (Das christliche Denkmal, H. 84), Berlin, 1972, p. 28.

34 R. Jahr, W. Lorenz, “Die Erfurter Inschriften bis zum Jahre 1550”, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertums von Erfurt*, 1915, H. 36, p. 138. The slab in the collection of Angermuseum in Erfurt.

35 P. Schoenen, “Epitaph”, in: *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Bd. 5, 1967, pp. 874, 877.

36 A similar case of a personal, private devotional (?) foundation determined by the common good can be found in Erfurt. There, a depiction of the Man of Sorrows and the monk-founder kneeling before him with a phylactery reading “Christ geruche zu labine di sele der begrabine Amen” (ca. 1350–1370) is carved on the wall of St. Peter’s Church and is undoubtedly associated with the entire cemetery that once surrounded it, see among others: Jahr, Lorenz, op. cit.; O. Buchner, *Die mittelalterliche Grabplastik in Nord-Thüringen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Erfurter Denkmäler*, Strassburg 1902, p. 52.

37 Also in Erfurt, inscriptions on carved epitaphs (J. v. Allenblumen + 1432, 1429) or votive works (inscription from the former church of St. Gangolf, 1356) emphasise the merit of the founder in the execution of the work, but refer to it only as “steyn” without reference to the subject of the image, see: Cf. Buchner, op. cit., pp. 169–170; Jahr, Lorenz, op. cit., p. 138.

sometimes using wordplay when the commemorated person was named Peter.<sup>38</sup> In medieval Latin “petra” was even synonymous with stone – “petra seu lapis”.<sup>39</sup> However, finding analogies for the wording used in Jawor in epitaph inscriptions turned out to be impossible.<sup>40</sup> The closest to it seems a passage in St. Paul's I Corinthians (I Cor. 10:4), which speaks of the spiritual rock that was Christ (“petra autem erat Christus”). These words echoes clearly in texts for the consecration of churches, such as the treatises of St. Bruno of Segni or Sicard of Cremona.<sup>41</sup> The same is true of Paul's words in his letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:20–22), in which he calls Christ the cornerstone on which “all building is erected”.<sup>42</sup> The meaning and context of the wording used in the inscription in Jawor makes probable the multiple intentions of the founder of the bas-relief and its function on the ossuary wall. Among the multiple aspects and functions of epitaphs, a possible reference to foundations of another kind (chapel, altar, mass, light), linked to the founding of this artwork itself, is also indicated. The pictorial epitaph itself, with its devotional image – in this case Christ on the Cross of Life could also be regarded and treated as a devotional object.<sup>43</sup> The memorial purpose of the Jawor epitaph is obvious, as it commemorates four specific persons, and possibly more, not necessarily indicated by name, if we assume that the missing part of the inscription mentioned, for example, the founder's parents. The votive purpose is stated – despite the absence of the destroyed key word defining the intention, we can guess it from the phrase “et animae suae” as the salvation of souls. Finally, a passage containing multilevel references to biblical texts as well as formulations, which entered into the consecration rites of churches and altars, provide a premise to interpret this family memorial and epitaph, at the same time, also as an ossuary foundation memorial. Of course, this is

38 As in the case of the Bishop of Exeter, Peter de Quivil (d. 1291) – “Petra tegit Petrum...” (E.P. Weber, *Des Todes Bild*, Berlin, 1923, p. 86), or the Archbishop of Mainz, Peter von Aspelt (d. 1320) – “Petrum petra tegit”, see: [https://www.inschriften.net/suchergebnis.html?tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5BsearchMode%5D=20&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5Bquery%5D=searchstrings%3A10%3B1%3BPetra%3B0&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5BitemsPerPage%5D=10&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5BborderBy%5D=70&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5BascDesc%5D=10&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5BcurrentPage%5D=3&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5Bsource%5D=4325&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5Baction%5D=searchdetails&tx\\_hisodat\\_search%5Bcontroller%5D=Sources&cHash=039c95a0637c73c66cadf49f14ef6963](https://www.inschriften.net/suchergebnis.html?tx_hisodat_search%5BsearchMode%5D=20&tx_hisodat_search%5Bquery%5D=searchstrings%3A10%3B1%3BPetra%3B0&tx_hisodat_search%5BitemsPerPage%5D=10&tx_hisodat_search%5BborderBy%5D=70&tx_hisodat_search%5BascDesc%5D=10&tx_hisodat_search%5BcurrentPage%5D=3&tx_hisodat_search%5Bsource%5D=4325&tx_hisodat_search%5Baction%5D=searchdetails&tx_hisodat_search%5Bcontroller%5D=Sources&cHash=039c95a0637c73c66cadf49f14ef6963) [accessed 16 February 2022].

39 Ch. du Fresne (Du Cange), op. cit., t. 5, Paris 1845, pp. 228–229.

40 Jean Michaud (+2001), with whom I consulted this passage of the inscription from Jawor in Poitiers in 1989, was not familiar with the phrase “petra Christi” in connection with the Crucifixion scenes, but he expressed the conviction that its origins should be sought in the liturgy and in the dedication inscriptions of altars and churches.

41 J. Michaud, *Les inscriptions de consécration d'autels et de dédicace d'églises en France du VIII<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Épigraphie et liturgie*, (thèse de 3<sup>e</sup> cycle), Poitiers, 1978, pp. 30–32, 45–46.

42 See: C. Treffort, “Une consécration <à la lettre>”. Place, rôle et autorité des textes inscrits dans la sacralisation de l'église”, in: *Mises en scène et mémoires de la consécration de l'église dans l'Occident médiéval*, D. Méhu (dir.), Turnhout, 2008, pp. 227–228.

43 Schoenen, op. cit. – “Auch das E. selbst konnte als Andachtsbild mit der Stiftung gemeint sein, wobei der Verstorbene als Dank ein Gebet für seine Seelenruhe erwartete”.

solely on the assumption that the ossuary was not erected earlier, which could only be verified by archaeological research. It probably consisted of a crypt for bones and an upper storey with a chapel and altar. Johann Sapiens would thus have provided a “public utility” foundation, intended for the community of the dead buried in the cemetery and those whose bones had already been dropped into the ossuary crypt. It was primarily for their intentions that masses were offered in such *Totenkapellen*. The depiction of Christ on the cross shaped as the Tree of Life seem an appropriate image to all these potential aspects of the foundation.

## V

One of the reasons why the epitaph in question can be regarded as being an artwork of value is its status of the “first work” in Silesia in the category of a pictorial epitaphs, regardless of its other potential functions. Additionally, remarkable seem the time gap separating the Johann Sapiens family epitaph from subsequent stone epitaphs in the region, executed as early as in the 1490s.<sup>44</sup> Before this date, however, painted epitaphs preserved at this territory came into existence. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Silesia, the epitaph from Jawor is both the first and an unique work, as the time of popularity of this type of stone epitaphs in the region came only at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, although limited mainly to Breslau.<sup>45</sup>

These circumstances allow of searching for possible models and references in places where the pictorial epitaph found favourable conditions for development already at the dawn of its existence as a type of sepulchral monument. At first sight, Thuringia with Erfurt seem the place, geographically closest to Silesia, where stylistically and typologically related artworks have been preserved. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the flourishing of Erfurt found reflection in numerous artistic foundations, among which, in the middle of this century, the carved stone epitaphs emerged as the most preferred type of sepulchral monument among the wealthy burghers.<sup>46</sup> The earliest Erfurt epitaphs date from the 1360s.<sup>47</sup> In the following decades, a few major formal and compositional types of this artworks emerged, repeated with only minor modifications until the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The essential elements constituting the form of the epitaph from Jawor bore analogies to them, including: the shape of vertical rectangle with an inscription border covering only three sides; a hugely popular theme of the Crucifixion with figures of Mary and St. John

44 Pictorial epitaphs dated to 1494 in Wrocław: Fogelers in St. Mary Magdalene Church and Catherine Eszligeryn from the cemetery at St. Elizabeth Church.

45 Kaczmarek, Witkowski, “Ze studiów...”; idem, “Gotyckie epitafia...”.

46 See among others: Buchner, op. cit.; H. Kunze, *Die Plastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts in Sachsen und Thüringen*, Berlin, 1925.

47 The oldest in Thuringia is an epitaph from the Dominican church in Eisenach, dating to around or just after 1350, see: Buchner, op. cit., pp. 81–82.

placed on consoles;<sup>48</sup> a cross with a horizontal beam elevated high to the edge of the epitaph slab, which means that the titulus must often be placed already in the field of the bordering rim with inscription;<sup>49</sup> finally, the very type of the crucified Christ with a straight-up body, symmetry of which is disturbed only by the inclination of the head, an articulated torso and a perizoma with two evenly flowing cascades on the sides<sup>50</sup> (see Fig. 4). However, all the features provided are at most contemporary to the relief from Jawor, never earlier.



**Fig. 4.** Epitaph of Johann Sapiens' family in the church of St. Martin in Jawor, 1362, fragment, photo: R. Kaczmarek

Recognising the unquestionable commonality of the forms of the artworks from Jawor and Erfurt, the sculptures executed in the workshops connected to "the artistic circle of Magdeburg and Halberstadt", as the monographer of Saxo-Thuringian

48 The early Franconian and Swabian epitaphs, dating from the 1360s., are dominated by Marian scenes, which do not begin to predominate in Thuringia until the late 15<sup>th</sup> century (Buchner, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

49 E.g., relief from the tower of St. Nicholas Church (1361); epitaph with the Crucifixion from the Franciscan Church, now in the Angermuseum in Erfurt (1360–1370); epitaph of Rudolf von Vitztum and his daughters in the Dominican Church (c. 1365).

50 Among others, the first two examples in the footnote no. 49.

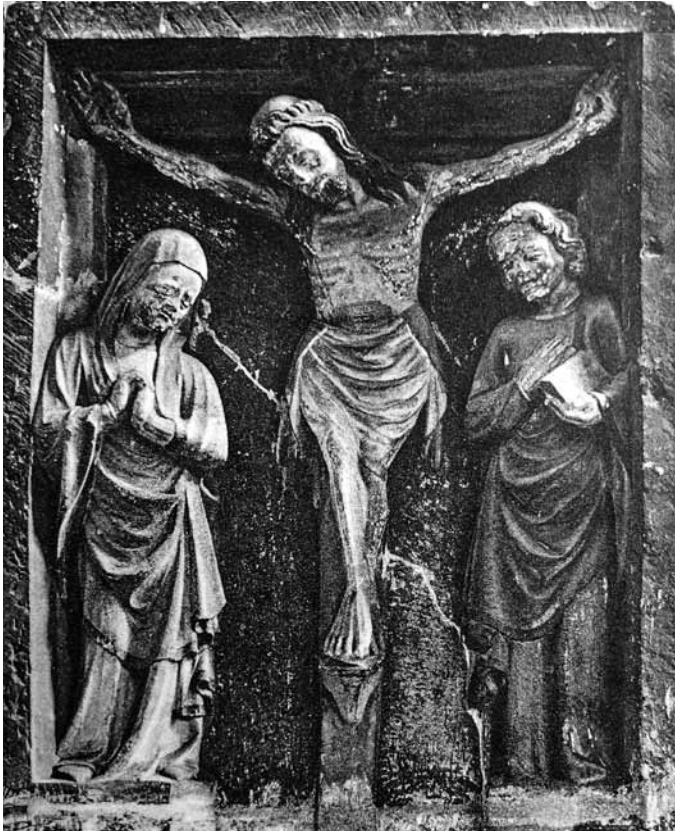
art Hans Kunze called them, should be also taken into consideration. According to Kunze's findings, it was an artistic region that, like Nuremberg, adopted certain tendencies of Strasbourg sculpture in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In these circumstances, shortly after 1360, a workshop emerged, which would determine the character of stone sculpture in Thuringia, and to some extent Saxony, for many years to come.<sup>51</sup> The origins of the formal and stylistic features of Johann Sapiens' epitaph would not, of course, lie in the leading works from Halberstadt or Erfurt, but in certain sculptures dependent on the main workshop. Before they appeared, there were some prototypical solutions applied in this artistic circle, although stylistically different. They are exemplified by the already mentioned Magdeburg epitaph of Tile von Dale (ca. 1350), which featured a crucifix type repeated by the another and later active workshop (see Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5.** Epitaph of Tile von Dale (ca. 1350), Magdeburg, Unser Lieben Frauen Monastery, photo: R. Kaczmarek.

<sup>51</sup> Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–64.

A type of crucifix similar to the one in Jawor can be found on the stone retable of St. Elisabeth in Magdeburg Cathedral, dating from the 1360s (see Fig. 6).

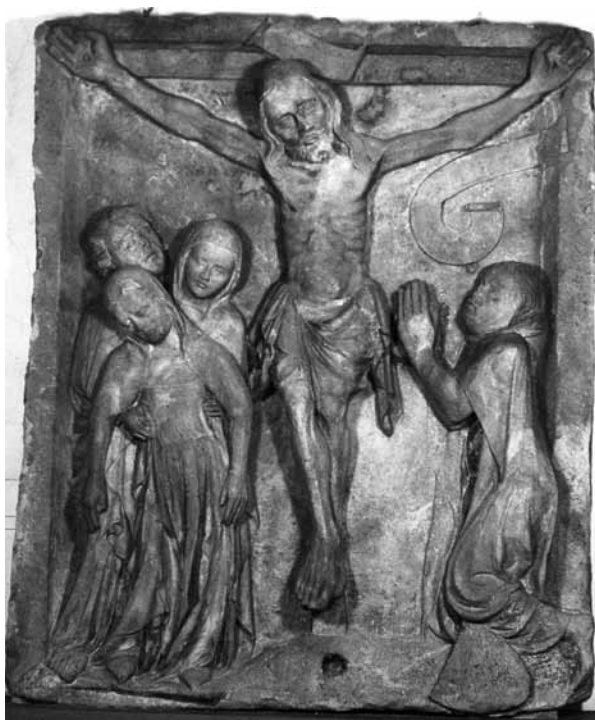


**Fig. 6.** Crucifixion – upper part of St. Elisabeth's altarpiece in the Magdeburg Cathedral, ca. 1360, photo after: H. Kunze, *Die Plastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts in Sachsen und Thüringen*, Berlin, 1925.

This work is stylistically related to the earlier and precisely dated epitaph of Sophie von Warberg (+1358) at the Marienberg monastery near Helmstedt,<sup>52</sup> important in this research, as it is the earliest precisely dated example from that area of a fully developed epitaph form, which also had a strong impact on Erfurt art. The functional aspect of the new type of sepulchral monument is important with reference to the Jawor artwork, but so is the pose of the kneeling and almost squatting orant with the band wrapped above her back, as seen in the microminiaturised and multiplied version in the Jawor relief. As analogies from Erfurt itself, two other early examples of the stylistic transfer of the “artistic circle of Magdeburg and Halber-

<sup>52</sup> See: *ibid.*, pp. 53–56, 79–80.

stadt” to this area need to be provided. In the epitaph (¿) featuring the Crucifixion, preserved in the Angermuseum in Erfurt and dated to 1360–1370 (see Fig. 7), the crucifix type mentioned above appears, while the large-scale figure of the founder can be traced back to the epitaph of Sophie von Warberg.<sup>53</sup> However, the closest in time and composition to the Silesian epitaph is the foundation relief from 1361, now built-in the tower of St. Nicholas Church in Erfurt<sup>54</sup> (see Fig. 8).



**Fig. 7.** Slab of stone epitaph (¿) from Franciscan monastery church in Erfurt, ca. 1360–1370 (Erfurt, Angermuseum), photo from R. Kaczmarek’s archive.

Even though it is impossible to provide a detailed comparison of these two objects, mostly due to the poor state of preservation of the relief, the already described form of the crucifix, as well as the similar pose of St John, characterised by a curve of the silhouette similar to the one in Jawor, emphasising the fact, that he is looking at Christ, can be observed in the artwork from Erfurt. What is more, it is also an example, rather rare in the sculpture of Erfurt in the years 1360s–1370s, of featuring the donors in a notably reduced scale, characteristic for the relief from Jawor.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 17, 55, 74.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 18, 76. Kunze dates it to 1360–1370, while Jahr, Lorenz, op. cit., p. 138, give an inscription with the date 1361, read despite heavy deterioration.





**Fig. 8.** Relief from the tower of St. Nicholas Church in Erfurt, 1361, photo after: H. Kunze, *Die Plastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts in Sachsen und Thüringen*, Berlin, 1925.

The presumption of a connection between the Silesian epitaph and the sculptures of the “circle of Magdeburg and Halberstadt” may also be strengthened by the dependence on ivory carving emphasised in both cases. However, Kunze rightly put it, when he claimed that “if types come from ivory relief, they are already rooted in the homeworkshop”.<sup>55</sup> A similar view has recently been expressed regarding the role of Byzantine patterns in late 12<sup>th</sup>- and early 13<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture in the territory of German Reich, which “had already incorporated Byzantine elements into its stylistic and motivic canon”.<sup>56</sup> In a similar way, the characteristic gestures and postures of Mary and John in the Byzantine Crucifixion scenes and their imitations probably influenced the monumental sculpture of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, such as the groups of figures mounted on the beams of chancel archs or rood screens (Wechselburg and Freiberg in Saxony, or Gualöv in Skåne).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Kunze, op. cit., pp. 54–55.

<sup>56</sup> M. Beer, *Triumphkreuze des Mittelalters. Ein Beitrag zu Typus und Genese im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert. Mit einem Katalog der erhaltenen Denkmäler*, Regensburg, 2005, p. 618.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. D. Schubert, *Von Halberstadt nach Meißen. Bildwerke des 13. Jahrhunderts in Thüringen, Sachsen und Anhalt*, Köln, 1974, pp. 73–74, 249.

## VI

The artist responsible for the execution of the stone epitaph from Jawor, as this text has attempted to demonstrate, could have been familiar with the art of Saxony and northern Thuringia, especially with the sculptural production of the workshop that came to Halberstadt in the 1350s, and in the following years remained active in the region, making Erfurt an important centre of medieval sculpture. He was no stranger to certain formal and content-related “innovations” in sepulchral art emerging at the time. At the same time, in terms of technique, the artwork in question does not exceed the average for Silesia, which in the 14<sup>th</sup> century experienced its first heyday of stone sculpture and woodcarving. Taking into consideration its functional type, however, the epitaph from Jawor remained unique in Silesia. Thus, we are dealing with a singular order, not to say accidental, at least against the background of Silesian works preserved to our times. But are the formal and stylistic features of the Crucifixion relief in question as distinct in Silesia in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century as the functional type of this work? Erich Wiese did, after all, point to a Breslau context for it in the two wooden crucifixes. Undoubtedly convincing is his comparison of the form of the cross itself, the one on the epitaph, and the one from the group from St. Barbara’s Church: their proportions, the cambering on the edges of the beams, and the truncated branches placed in them. Currently it is an individual preserved example of such, from many that surely existed, not only in Silesia. More significant, therefore, are certain similarities in the shape of the figural part that seem to occur when comparing the Christ from the Jawor epitaph to several other Silesian sculptures of the Crucified Christ. Erich Wiese pointed to a crucifix from the former church of the Poor Clares (later known as the Ursulines) in Breslau, which would also bear some analogies to the image from the epitaph.<sup>58</sup> Of the individual features of the first sculpture listed by him, only “a certain tendency to keep flatness”, “a flat torso and thin, short arms”, “a slight inclination of the head and a moderate tilt of it to the right” are actually similar.<sup>59</sup> The crucifix from the Poor Clares has a decidedly dynamic composition and a different form of the perizoma. Dating its composition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> third of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>60</sup> may be subject to correction if compared with the well-dated Crucifixion in Missal R 164, on which work began in 1325.<sup>61</sup> However, among quite a number of preserved Silesian crucifixes of that time, there are also a few others, which partly show some formal similarities with the stone crucifix in

58 Wiese, op. cit., p. 21 – “hat manche der genannten Eigentümlichkeiten (...) gemein”.

59 Wiese, op. cit., p. 21, 94 – “Streben nach Wahrung der Fläche”, “der flache Oberkörper und die dünnen, kurzen Arme”, “Haupt (...) nur leicht herabgesunken und mäßig nach rechts geneigt”.

60 Wiese, op. cit., pp. 21, 94; *Schlesische Malerei und Plastik des Mittelalters. Kritischer Katalog der Ausstellung in Breslau 1926*, eds. H. Braune, E. Wiese, Leipzig, 1929, p. 16; *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Breslau* [Die Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Niederschlesien Bd. I], Teil 2, ed. L. Burge-meister, G. Grundmann, Breslau, 1933, p. 35; M. Wiśłocki, “XIV-wieczne krucyfiksy na Śląsku”, *Dzieła i Interpretacje*, 1993, 1, pp. 13, 19.

61 E. Kloss, *Die schlesische Buchmalerei des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1942, p. 221, fig. 46. Wiśłocki, op. cit., compared a crucifix from the Poor Clares with this miniature, but placed it shortly before 1350.

question. When excluding from the further considerations crucifixes characterised by a more three-dimensional shape of the chest, characteristic intercostal M-shape below the sternum, pronounced bending of the legs and a different composition of the perizoma (e.g. crucifixes from the churches of St. Barbara and St. Elizabeth and Corpus Christi in Breslau), then in addition to the sculpture from the Poor Clares, two others objects, both currently stored in the Archdiocesan Museum in Breslau, should be taken into account. The first is a crucifix of unknown origin (see Fig. 9), the second is a torso of a crucifix from the church of St. John the Baptist in Kunzendorf (pl.: Chichy) (see Fig. 10, 11).



**Fig. 9.** Breslau, Crucifix (Archdiocesan Museum in Wrocław), photo: M. Kujda.



**Fig. 10.** Torso of a crucifix from the church of St. John the Baptist in Kunzendorf (Archdiocesan Museum in Wrocław), photo: M. Kujda.

What they do have in common with the relief from Jawor is primarily the general composition of the figure stretched almost symmetrically on the cross, with its legs only slightly bent at the knees and its head tilted to the side, but with its face still clearly visible to a viewer situated straight ahead. What is more, the same shape of the body with the chest flattened from above, the slight arches of the ribs falling horizontally, separated by a sharp triangle of the rib arch can be observed. Within it, muscles above the slight protrusion of the belly have been marked.



**Fig. 11.** Crucifixes: a) from Jawor epitaph, photo: R. Kaczmarek; b) from Kunzendorf (in 1926), photo after: *Schlesische Malerei und Plastik des Mittelalters. Kritischer Katalog der Ausstellung in Breslau 1926*, eds. H. Braune, E. Wiese, Leipzig, 1929.

The perizomas slightly covering the knees, below which the almost symmetrical festoons end, differ in the details of the middle part. Undoubtedly, however, these three crucifixes (from the epitaph and the two carvings) demonstrate some unity – the application of similar formula by three different artists at a similar time and within the broader Silesian artistic community.

The abovementioned conclusion seems crucial for defining the chronology of wooden crucifixes, as it can be related to the precisely dated image from Jawor. The crucifix from Kunzendorf has been dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half or the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>62</sup> whereas the second sculpture to ca. 1380.<sup>63</sup> One can, of course, assume the persistence of certain formal types, but the examples compiled here do not reveal any changes of a stylistic nature that would justify a significant extending of their chronologies. Thus, in all probability, the carved crucifixes in question were created around 1360, or in the years 1350–1370. This assumption in no way alters the chronology of other Silesian wooden crucifixes of the type mentioned above from the churches of Corpus Christi, St. Barbara, St. Elizabeth, and related to them,

62 Braune, Wiese, op. cit., p. 19; Nowack, 1932, pp. 55–56; Wiśłocki, op. cit., p. 11.

63 A. Ziomecka, "Materiały do drewnianej rzeźby XIV wieku na Śląsku", in: *Sztuki plastyczne na średniowiecznym Śląsku. Studia i Materiały III*, Wrocław – Poznań, 1990, pp. 48–49; Wiśłocki, op. cit., p. 11.

whose proposed time of execution is determined to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They do represent only a slightly different and simultaneously applied formal modus. The origin of both *modi* characterised here goes back at least to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The crucifix depicted in the relief from Jawor turned out to be rather typical for the contemporary Silesian sculpture, in contrast to the assisting figures of Virgin Mary and St. John, whose archaic nature of gestures was pointed out by Erich Wiese. In Silesia, Bohemia and Poland, however, no examples of sculptural assisting figures from before the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century have survived. In consequence, the references and sources of inspiration applied in the process of creation of the figures of Virgin Mary and St. John in relief from Jawor should be searched for in territories west of Silesia or having regard to the possibility of drawing inspiration from portable microplastic objects and miniature painting. The closest sculptural precedents for this 'archaic' expression of gestures of ancient origin in the relief from Jawor, especially the figure of St John with his right forearm raised vertically and his hand touching the cheek in a gesture of grief, can be found in the above-mentioned examples of monumental groups of Crucifixions from Germany and in the microplastics of the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Fig. 12, 13).

Gestures made their home in Silesian miniature painting for a long time, as they continue into the 14<sup>th</sup> and up to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The fact is that with reference to all examples given, the composition of the figures and draperies are definitely in keeping with the style trends of the era.<sup>64</sup> What distinguishes the figure of St. John in the work from Jawor, is the dynamics of bending his body backwards, corresponding with the face directed upwards towards Christ, and the gesture of touching or supporting the beard. One cannot exclude that the artist compiled two main types of St. John's figure – the first of presentational mode appearing in Crucifixion scenes and the second one that appeared in more dramatic, narrative compositions or being supplemented with personifications of the Ecclesia and Synagogue. Such dynamic poses of the two assisting figures representing both mentioned types can be found in microplastics, but are seemingly more natural in their second type, from which they probably originate.<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, similar dynamism of the poses and the gesture of the upraised hand can be found among the secondary figures in the Crucifixion scene – such as in the depiction of the centurion standing under the cross in the miniature in the Breslau Missal of 1366.<sup>66</sup> The origins of the parallel and vertically running folds of Mary's and John's robes on the epitaph from Jawor, in turn, should be searched for in the monumental wooden sculpture of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as well as in microplastics, sometimes passing on distant traditions of Byzantine reliefs, or in the miniature painting of that time.

64 Kloss, op. cit., fig. 36, 37, 46, 51, 84, 147.

65 A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII. – XI. Jahrhundert*, Bd. II, Berlin, 1918, Pl. XVIII, 57; idem, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit, XI.–XIII. Jahrhundert*, Bd. IV, Berlin, 1926, p. 41, Pl. XLIX, 137.

66 Ibid., p. 211, fig. 88; Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu, Oddział Rękopisów, sign. B 1711.

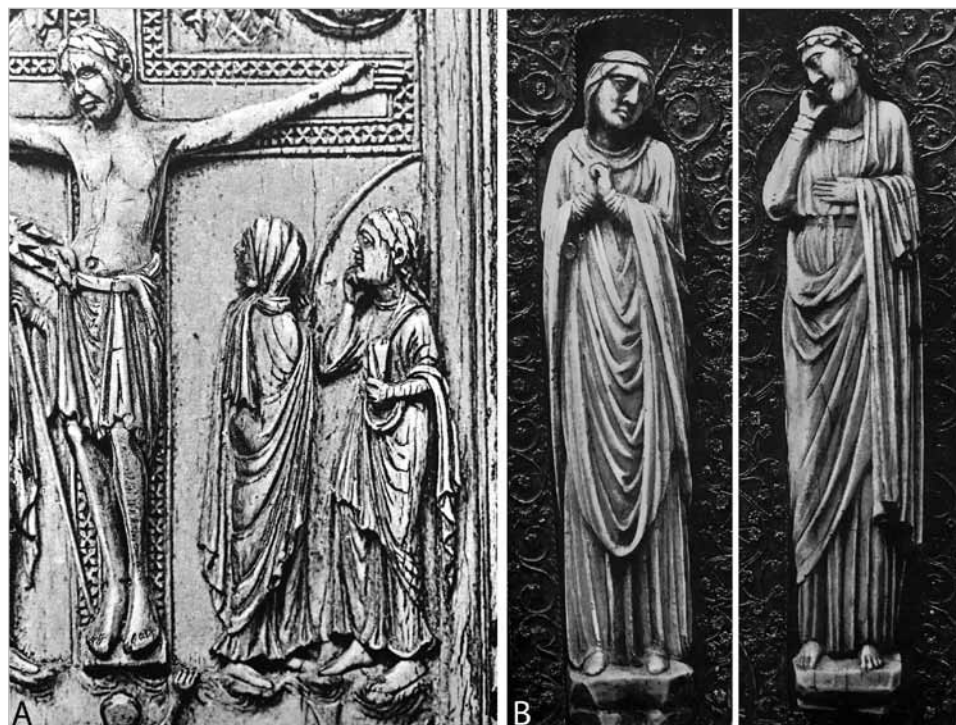


**Fig. 12.** Assisting figures of Virgin Mary and St. John of monumental Crucifixions from: a) Altenstadt bei Schongau, beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München, photo after: M. Beer, *Triumphkreuze des Mittelalters. Ein Beitrag zu Typus und Genese im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert. Mit einem Katalog der erhaltenen Denkmäler*, Regensburg, 2005; b) Kathedral in Freiberg, source: *Freiberg Dom*, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Freiberg\\_Dom,\\_romanische\\_Kreuzigungsgruppe-005.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Freiberg_Dom,_romanische_Kreuzigungsgruppe-005.jpg) [accessed 16 February 2022]

What should direct attention to microplastics in particular, however, is the peculiar wrapping of Mary's maphorion with one end flipped from the front and the other at the back. For both of the above-mentioned formal features there is no analogy in Silesian, Bohemian and, it seems, also Central European sculpture of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>67</sup> The composition of the maphorion's folds seems as archaic as the gestures of the figures. Even more telling is the lack of analogies for the specific wrapping of Mary's head in the German sculptural Crucifixion groups of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries, gathered together in the publication of Manuela Beer. In contrast, they were

<sup>67</sup> An exception is the painting of the Throning Madonna of Archbishop Ernst of Pardubice from around the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, where the maphorium has a similar arrangement, which is supported by the Italian-Byzantine origins of the work (Gemäldegalerie Berlin, inv. no. 1624).

detected in microplastics between the 9<sup>th</sup> and mid-12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>68</sup> (see Fig. 14). On the other hand, precedents for the use of pedestals under the assisting figures in the Crucifixion group appear both in ivory reliefs and in monumental sculpture.<sup>69</sup>



**Fig. 13.** Assisting figures of Virgin Mary and St. John in microplastic: a) Cathedral of Tongeren, fragment of a cover, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century; b) Fragment of a codex cover, ca. 1250, Nationalmuseum København; photos after: A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, Bd. II, Berlin, 1918.

It turns out that the relief, which for various reasons has not aroused much interest so far, gives rise to many interesting epigraphic, iconographic and artistic problems and controversies. As far as its function is concerned, it is the oldest known example of a pictorial epitaph in Silesia, definitely predating the local development of this type of sepulchral monument. Perhaps the founder intended

68 A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII. – XI. Jahrhundert*, Bd. I, Berlin, 1914, p. 48, Pl. XXXVI,86; Goldschmidt, op. cit., Bd. II, Berlin, 1918, p. 50, Pl. XLVI,163; p. 50, Pl. XLVII,167; idem, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit, XI.–XIII. Jahrhundert*, Bd. III, 1923, p. 14, Pl. VII,24.

69 Cf. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen ...*, Bd. III, Taf. VII,23, XLVI,27.



**Fig. 14.** Maphorium of Virgin Mary from the crucifixion scenes: a) Jawor epitaph, photo: R. Kaczmarek; b) Belgium/Rhineland (?), ca. 1100, Aachen Domschatz; c) Belgium/Rhineland (?), ca. 1100, British Museum, London; d) Belgium, ca. 1150, Sigmaringen; photos after: A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, Bd. II, Berlin, 1918.



the memoria of his own family to be linked to a more general purpose – the good of the community – as a sign of salvation placed in the space of the parish cemetery. This was expressed in the iconography, the soteriological aspect of which was raised in an erudite passus in the inscription. In terms of formal and stylistic characteristics a multi-layered genetic threads has been revealed, linking the work to both chronologically and geographically distant European pictorial tradition, furthermore showing the most probable location from which the new functional type was drawn, and finally allowing it to be well embedded in local Silesian art around the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the epitaph slab became a testimony of interest of an unknown antiquary-epigraphist, focused on the local history, who may have read the inscription at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and had it engraved with the date of the artwork's execution, which was already defined as "Optimum Antiquitatis monumentum", for the benefit of others.

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