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Nestelhülsen – Aiglets in Medieval and Post-Medieval Prague

ANNOTATION

This article is concerned with archaeological small artefacts cut from metal plates. Their for a time uncertain interpretation has been explained by comparison with iconographic sources as aiglets for laces, cords and ribbons applied on garments of various social levels. This material study summarises the finds of aiglets from rescue excavations within the historic centre of Prague. Producers of laces, cords and belts have been neglected in the Czech and Moravian professional literature. This article aims at this small but important part of the products by these narrowly specialised craftsmen and their wide use.

SUMMARY

Analysis of an assemblage of available archaeological finds and their comparison with the iconographic evidence indicate that the aiglets were in the 14th and 15th centuries used as a utilitarian item of the garment enabling connection of individual parts (coat, leggings, sleeves, fly). In the later period, in 16th–17th century, the esthetical impression is clearly more emphasized as noticeable in the greater quantity of diverse accessories and decorations, including ribbons, cords and laces, occasionally with decorated aiglets fitted to them. However that does not mean that their utilitarian purpose has been abandoned as shown on examples depicted in Post Medieval paintings.

Artefacts of a larger size (above 10 cm) are missing in the assemblage of aiglets from Prague, and the analysed exemplars lack complex decoration (with the exception of the finds from the excavation at the Republic Square). The presented artefacts can be therefore characterised as casual versions of aiglets, which can be connected with less quality garment corresponding with the social levels of the local inhabitants. Rich iconographic evidence shows that laces and metal reinforcement of their ends was an indispensable part of the Medieval and Post-Medieval garment regardless the social level of their users.

Fig. 1. Historic centre of Prague (Prague Heritage Reserve) with marked: archaeological sites with aiglets finds in red; selected houses belonging to lace makers (after Tomek 1866; 1870) in green; uncertain sites of selected houses belonging to lace makers (after Tomek 1866; 1870) in green circle. 1 – Pallace Národní, Národní – Mikulandská, no. 841, 842, 843, P1-New Town; 2 – Palladium, Republic Square, no. 640, 641; 3 – Národní Avenue, no. 37/38, P1-New Town; 4 – Karmelitská, no. 459, P1-Malá Strana; 5 – Letenská, no. 28–33, P1-Malá Strana; 6 – Valdštejnská, no. 154, P1-Malá Strana (depicted by T. Cymbalak, 2015).

Fig. 2. Coat of arms of the Krakowian pouch makers in the Codex of Baltazar Behem (1505; copied from Turnau 1983, ryc. 81).

Fig. 3. Jost Amman, 1568: Depiction of the workshop of leather shoe laces (copied from Sachs 1568). Available on <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2b/De_Stände_1568_Amman_042.png>.

Fig. 4. Interior of a lace makers' workshop in Regensburg (copied from Weigel 1689).

Fig. 5. Sandro Botticelli, round 1480–85: Portrait of a young man. National Gallery, London. Available on <<http://thisblueboy.tumblr.com/search/Sandro+Botticelli%2C+Portrait+of+a+Young+Man%2C>>.

Fig. 6. Gentile Bellini, round 1500: Portrait of a Cypriot Queen Catherine Cornaro. Renaissance dress with tied sleeves. The Hungarian National Museum, Budapest (copied from Kybalová 1996, 40, 146).

Fig. 7. Jan Wierix, 2nd half of the 16th century: portrait of the painter Pieter Coecke van Aelst. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Available on <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/626203>>.

Fig. 8. Mathias Zehender, 1676: Franz Karl Anton, count of Hohenems. Festive Baroque garment with a number of ribbons finished with tiny aiglets and a decorated cord. The Town Museum and Gallery Polička (copied from Kybalová 1997, 98).

Fig. 9. Unknown author, round 1470–1475: wall painting with a hunting scene. Chapel of St. Sebastian in Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée, Côte d'Azur, France. Available on <<http://www.medieval-fightclub.com/products/Padded-striped-arming-doublet.html>>.

Fig. 10. Albrecht Dürer, 1519: Peasant and his wife. Engraving. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. Available on <http://www.backtoclassics.com/gallery/albrechtdurer/the_peasant_and_his_wife_at_the_market/>.

Fig. 11. Pieter Breugel the Elder, 1568: The Peasant Wedding. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna Available on <<http://artboom.info/painting/painting-classics/painting-classics-pieter-bruegel-the-elder.html/attachment/1568-pieter-bruegel-the-elder-the-peasant-wedding-on-wood-114x164-cm>>.

Fig. 12a. Master with a carnation (Maître à l'oeillet), end of 2nd half of the 15th century: Whipping of Christ, detail of Passion. Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon (copied from Kybalová 2001, 172).

Obr. 12b. Czech Master, before 1500, altar wing with The Flagellation of Christ, National Gallery in Prague No.O1429, until 1926 parochial church of St. Vojtěch/Adalbert in Jílové u Prahy; originally the church of St. Wenecelas, Prague 2-New Town (derived from Pešina 1950, 113, fig.77).

Fig. 13. Carlo Crivellio, 1493: St. Rochus. Wallace Collection, London. Available on <<http://www.backtoclassics.com/gallery/carlocrivelli/stroch/>>.

Fig. 14. Prague 1-Malá Strana, Letenská ulice no. 28–33/III, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2006/12. An aiglet decorated by engraving, inv. no. 2006/12-826 (photo M. Kalíšek, 2015).

Fig.15. Frans Hals, 1633–1637: The Company of Reynier Real – a section of the painting. An example of a male Baroque garment. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Available on <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/Frans_Hals%2C_De_magere_compagnie.jpg>.

Fig. 16. An aiglets with a securing hole: **a** – Prague 1-New Town, Republic Square no. 460–461, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2006/01. An aiglet with a securing hole, inv. no. 2003/01-8039; **b** – Prague 1-Malá Strana, Valdštejnská Street no. 154/III, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2003/03; **c** – Prague 1-New Town, Národní–Mikulandská no. 841, 842, 843, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2013/33, inv. no. 2013/33-E03-010 (photo T. Cymbalak, 2015); **d** – Prague 1-New Town, Republic Square no. 460-461, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2003/01, inv. no. 2003/01-89, post Medieval aiglet with a securing hole, shape segmentation and silver surface (photo T. Cymbalak, 2015).

Fig. 17. Prague 1-New Town, Republic Square no. 460–461, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2003/01. Late Medieval (?) aiglet with vegetable ornament, inv. no. 2003/01-1864 (photo T. Cymbalak, 2015).

Fig. 18. Prague 1-New Town, Národní–Mikulandská no. 841, 842, 843, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2013/33. Post Medieval aiglet with a plaited cord, inv. no. 2013/33-H06-007 (photo M. Kalíšek, 2015).

Fig. 19. Prague 1-New Town, Národní–Mikulandská no. 841, 842, 843, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2013/33. **a** – aiglet decorated by torsion of the tin, inv. no. 2013/33-O03-012; **b** – aiglet decorated by engraving on the tin, inv. no. 2013/33-M09-005; **c** – aiglet decorated by torsion of the tin, inv. no. 2013/33-O07-036 (photo M. Kalíšek, 2015).

Fig. 20. Prague 1-New Town, Republic Square no. 460–461, excecation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2003/01. Small assemblage of aiglets found in the central area of the originally burgher plot, inv. no. 2003/01-3458a-e (photo T. Cymbalak, 2015).

Fig. 21. Prague 1-New Town, Národní–Mikulandská no. 841, 842, 843, excavation NPÚ ÚOP HMP no. 2013/33. The excavated area with the trenches in grey with the marking of the original Gothic cellars in **red**, **blue** and **green** hatching; boundaries of individual burgher properties reconstructed after V. V. Tomek in broken **green**, wells and cesspits. Finds of medieval and Post Medieval aiglets depicted by red rings. (Based on the sources of AO NPÚ ÚOP HMP, elaborated by E. Ditmar, M. Kalíšek and T. Cymbalak, 2015.)

Fig. 22. Unknown author of the Flemish school, 17th century: Portrait of a man on a stone balcony. Available on <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flemish_School_17th_century_Portrait_of_a_Man.jpg>.

Fig. 23. Unknown author of the British school, 1st half of the 17th century: Portrait of Sir Percy Herbert the second baron from Powis. National Trust, Powis Castle (Wales). Available on

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/sir-percy-herbert-c-15981667-2nd-baron-powis-102211>>.

Fig. 24. Jean de Reyn, round 1640: Portrait of a man playing lute. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Available on <<http://educators.mfa.org/node/19727>>.

Fig. 25. Pieter Jacobsz, round 1625: Portrait of a standing young man. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Available on <<http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/objects/makedetail.php?pmu=730&mu=732>y=qsea&sec=&dtn=15&sfn=Artist%20Sort,Title&cpa=1&rpos=0&key=WA1845.21>>.

Fig. 26. Agnolo Bronzino, round 1528: Late Renaissance portrait of Lorenzo Lenzi. Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. Available on <<http://www.wikiart.org/en/agnolo-bronzino/portrait-of-lorenzo-lenzi#supersized-artistPaintings-268014>>.

Fig. 27. Hans de Clercq, 1599: Portrait of Hector van Bouricius. Fries Museum, Leeuwarden. Available on <<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/543598617498505119/>>.

Translated by Linda and Patrick Foster and Bohumila Cymbalak Jankovská