

III. THE MARKET SQUARE IN THE LIGHT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

1. A PREHISTORIC EPISODE? – A BRONZE AXE-HEAD OF THE LUSATIAN CULTURE

A unique find from the excavated area is a bronze Lusatian Culture axe-head (field inventory 338), a stray find with no archaeological context (Fig. 51). It was discovered in grid square 26, in quadrant A, within stratigraphic unit no. 6. Grid square 26 was laid out in front of the southern wall of the Town Hall. The axe-head rested within a layer of humus mixed with brick rubble (s.u. 35) spread in the Market Square for the first of its modern period pavements. Both deposits (s.u. 16 and 35) were dated broadly to the 16th–17th century. A small hollow in the humus near to the western boundary of grid square 26 retained a fragment of the stone paving (s.u. 101) from the 17th–18th century, which had been dismantled everywhere else in the same area.

No other prehistoric objects were recorded in the area of the excavation, including fragments of Lusatian pottery. We may assume that the bronze axe was dropped by its user and found its way into the ground by chance.

The axe has a small slender and slightly asymmetrical form, with an uneven surface, porous on the butt, and covered with a dark green patina, worn down in places to the original metal (Fig. 1). The butt is chipped, rectangular in cross-section, with slight flanges; the heel is not too long, funnel-like. The blade is chisel-like, narrow, slightly chipped, and oval in cross-section. The dimensions of the axe are the following: surviving length of 9.5 cm, blade length approx. 3.3 cm, blade width 3 cm, maximum width of the butt 2.3 cm, maximum thickness 2.2 cm and a weight of 165 g (Fig. 52).

Typologically this is an axe-head with a funnel-like heel classified as “Bohemian type” (Kostrzewski 1964, p. 11), closest to types known as the “Rawicz

variant” (Blajer 1999, 24). These are slender forms, with a gently modelled, usually attenuated, heel and a narrow blade. They are known from a number of hoards (Dobroszów Oleśnicki, Jelenia Góra Grabary, Korzecznik, Lubsko, Piestrec, Ułany), and from twenty or so single finds (Blajer 1999, p. 24, Pls. 29:6; 50:1; 58:5; 82:1; 133:3 and 185:4). By their association with other elements of the deposits from Lubsko and Ułany, they may be dated to the period Ha A1. The same variant presumably was represented by two axe-heads from the Sucha Wielka hoard (Kleemann 1977, 365) and single finds from Rawicz (Kostrzewski 1953, p. 187; Kurnatowski 1966, Fig. 51, Pl. V: 1), Łuszczewo, Przystajnia oraz Tarnów (Kaczmarek 2002, p. 95, footnote 204). According to J. Kostrzewski (1953, p. 187) some axe-heads with the Bohemian type heel retained traces of casting (flashes) in a two-piece mould, e.g., the finds from Dobroszów Oleśnicki and Rawicz.

On the territory ascribed to the Western Greater Poland group – a sub-unit of Lusatian Culture, axe-heads with a funnel-like heel are known only from two sites – a specimen lacking context from the cemetery at Oborniki Wielkopolskie, and a single find from Melpin (Kaczmarek 2002, p. 92, List 12, Fig. 37:1). Both are slender, with a straight butt, a high and tapering funnel-like heel, and a lightly bowed blade. Taking his cue from J. Říhovský (type 7) the author places these forms chronologically in Central Europe (Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, central Germany and SW Poland) in the late Tumulus Culture to the early and older phase of development of the Urn-field Culture (BD-Ha A1). The finds from Poland are concentrated in Silesia and western Lesser Poland, their chronology defined as Ha A1 – Ha A2 (second

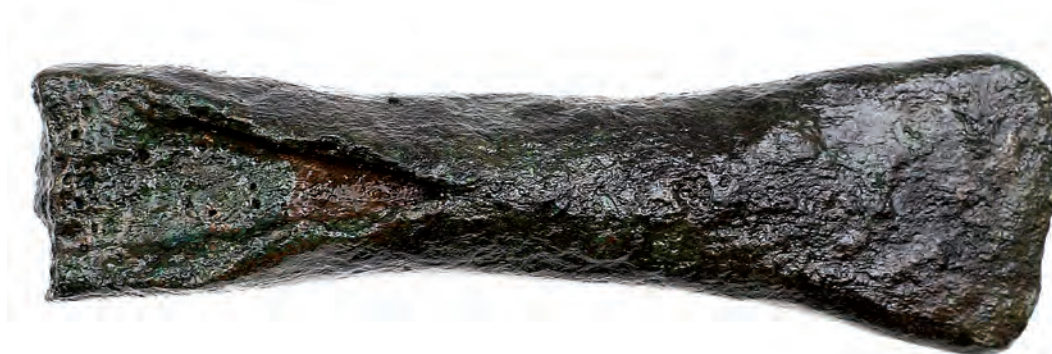


Fig. 51. Gliwice, Market Square. A bronze axe-head of the Lusatian Culture. Photograph W. Turkowski

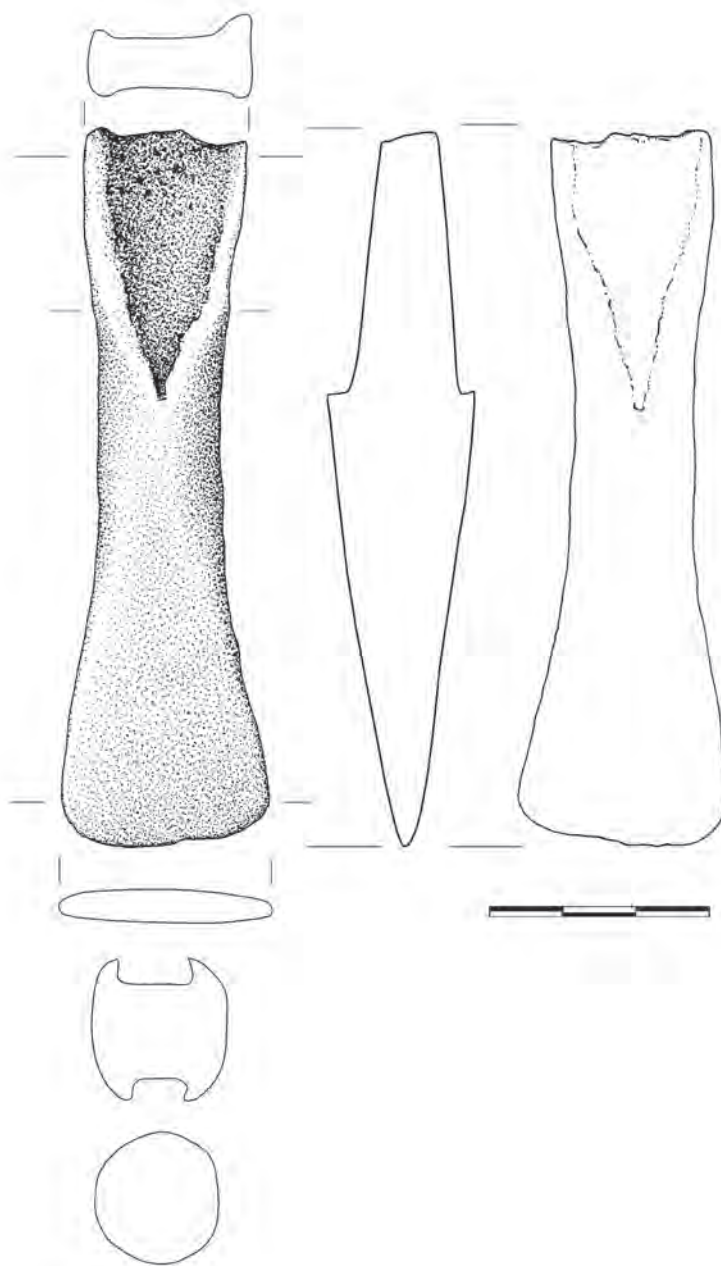


Fig. 52. Gliwice, Market Square. A bronze axe-head of the Lusatian Culture. Drawing N. Lenkow

half of BA III – first half of BA IV). It is also possible that this form continued in use to the end of BA IV, i.e., until Ha B1 (Kaczmarek 2002, p. 92, 9).

The axe-head from Gliwice is a new addition to our list of early Lusatian Culture axe-head finds

from Silesia. However, lacking a context, it cannot improve our understanding of bronze metallurgy in the region or of the connections the people of the Lusatian Culture had with societies in other regions of Central Europe.

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2. THE USES OF THE MARKET SQUARE IN THE LIGHT OF ANALYSIS OF METAL FINDS

Most of the metal finds from the Market Square in Gliwice date from the 14th–15th century. Chronologically, they range from the bronze axe-head discussed in the preceding section to lead shot and metal fittings of wooden water pipes (Fig. 53).

Analysis of this series lends support to the conclusion that a builders' guild was active at some time in the Market Square, possibly involved in the construction of the Town Hall. This is suggested both by the fairly numerous finds which include stonemasons' broad bladed stone chisels, heavy iron wedges (or punches?), carpenters hand-drills and heading tools (Fig. 63), as well as lumps of raw lead and copper alloy, slag, scraps of metal sheet, wire and bars. There were also quite a few very short nails with very large heads tentatively interpreted as decorative features of gates (Fig. 64a–g). The number of ordinary knives (Fig. 65b–f) was unexpectedly small in comparison. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the obvious overrepresentation of horseshoes in the series of metal finds from the Market Square is related to

the activity of the builders' guild, which would have needed frequent supplies of material necessary for their work (Figs. 54, 66). Another possible explanation is that there used to be a smithy and a foundry on the site. Bearing in mind the difference of scale, the number of horseshoes recovered in the Market Square in Wrocław is much smaller (admittedly, this site was investigated less comprehensively) than the large number of horseshoes recorded e.g. in Szewska Street in Wrocław (Jastriemska, Jaworski 2010). As regards numerous finds of architectural elements such as brackets, hinges, hooks, keys, padlocks, hasps, etc. (Figs. 55, 64h–o), it is unclear whether they can be attributed to the activity of the builders or originate from derelict buildings, none of which have been identified in the Market Square.

If we are to believe the view put forward in earlier analyses of everyday life in towns, the Market Square would have been the site of commercial activity and



Fig. 53. Gliwice, Market Square. A metal water pipe fitting (coupling piece). Photograph W. Turkowski



Fig. 54. Gliwice, Market Square. Horseshoe. Photograph W. Turkowski