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Early Medieval Textile Production in Silesia (10th-13th centuries)

The doctoral dissertation focuses on the study of early medieval textile production in the Silesia region, specifically spanning the 10th to 13th centuries. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the textile industry during this period and its significance in the context of Polish lands.

The study begins by emphasizing the importance of investigating early medieval textile production in Silesia, considering the region's notable advancements in textile manufacturing during the late Middle Ages and early modern period. By examining whether similar developments occurred earlier, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of textile production in Poland.

Due to limitations in available written and archaeological sources specifically pertaining to the early medieval period, the study relies on reconstructions based on information from later times. The primary focus of the research is on the analysis of textile artifacts discovered through archaeological excavations, with particular attention given to the examination of raw materials and technological aspects.

One of the key challenges in the research is the identification and differentiation of locally produced artifacts from imported fabrics. Microscopic observations are employed to discern similarities and differences in the raw materials used in the examined artifact collection, enabling the determination of various textile production techniques. Additionally, this analysis facilitates the establishment of temporal boundaries for different fabric types prevalent during the investigated period.

The dissertation reports the collection of 1,997 archaeological textile fragments specifically gathered for this research. Of these, 1,616 fragments (81%) are classified as early medieval artifacts, while the remaining 380 fragments (19%) pertain to the late Middle Ages and serve as comparative materials.

The findings of the study underscore the significance of Silesia's archaeological textile discoveries, which, alongside Pomeranian finds, represent the largest textile assemblage in Poland. The dominance of Opole and Wrocław artifacts within this collection highlights the importance of these two settlement centers as significant sources of information concerning the pace of transformative processes within the textile industry.

The research indicates that woolen fabrics from the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century correspond to the formative period of the woolen cloth industry. Conversely, products from the second half of the 13th century and the 14th century represent characteristic developments within the guild-based cloth production.

Ultimately, the study confirms that Silesia's weaving production during the Middle Ages followed a similar trajectory to that of European textile centers. The rapid growth of the textile industry, supported by Western European settlement, was facilitated by the well-developed local craftsmanship. As a result,

Silesia became a leading region in woolen cloth production during the late Middle Ages and early modern period in Poland.

In addition to woolen textiles, the presence of other archaeological textile materials, such as silk, semi-woolen, linen, cotton, lace, felt, and cords, contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of textile consumption and trade connections among the inhabitants of medieval Silesia.

The research outcomes represent an important contribution to the study of early medieval textile production in Polish lands, providing valuable insights into the historical context and production transformations of the era.