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## **The problems of research into wartime bell losses in Lower Silesia\***

### **Introductory remarks**

In 2011 I published a catalogue of bells which survived the requisitions during the Second World War and, as a result of post-war decisions, were mostly disposed of in the area of the later Federal Republic of Germany. The catalogue has become the basis for further more detailed studies on this issue in terms not only of Polish-German relations after the Second World War, but also as a stimulus for material research and the search for specific sources and lost objects. This second aspect, which is of more interest for the present contribution, regards the knowledge of specific losses in relation to individual villages or churches and forms the basis for the proper identification of the state of cultural heritage and the conduct of research and protection activities in relation to the real state of possession. In principle, it should be emphasised that the study of war losses can be related to two principled objectives. The first, which has been raised in Poland in recent years, can be a tool of state policy with regard to possible compensation measures against another state. This dimension of war loss investigation is also most often present in the broader public perception, which, however, does not always have a clear meaning for the understanding of cultural heritage itself in the dimension of protection measures. The second dimension of this investigation is precisely the aforementioned documentation and preservation activities, material research of a historical or historicist nature, serving at a basic level to secure the possession of preserved heritage.

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The purpose of this contribution is to make an attempt to address the state of knowledge on the loss of bells in Lower Silesia<sup>1</sup>, including an indication of some of the difficulties associated with possible research. The thesis is that the research of this kind in the indicated historical area remains at a very poor level. This article is an attempt to formulate a postulate to carry out a comprehensive study of the bell losses and the state of preservation in the area of interest, with particular emphasis on the study of the oldest objects – medieval and modern, as the most valuable in historical and monumental terms. At the same time, this statement does not claim to indicate solutions which will answer a number of questions on how to carry out this research. The thesis is that Lower Silesia, as a province of great artistic importance in the past, has so far not lived to see a monograph presenting the losses of cultural property in this area in a comprehensive manner, including the problem of the loss of bells, which is of particular interest to the author. It should be pointed out here that such an undertaking, in view of the area and scale of the research, is not an easy one. Nevertheless, it is precisely the artistic importance of the area, as well as the scale of losses, especially in the 20th century, that seems to be one of the main arguments for tackling the problem raised here in a comprehensive form.

### **Research on historical bells in Lower Silesia**

A fundamental dilemma within the scope of possible research remains the establishment of a baseline. One of the most significant obstacles remains the state of knowledge about the bells in view of the losses during the Second World War, but also – and this should be pointed out at this point – in view of the considerable dispersion of cultural heritage from the areas incorporated into Poland after 1945. The latter problem (see also below), is very often overlooked within research on the losses of the areas mentioned, and as such is the basis for the often erroneously attributed war requisitions. The historic area of Lower Silesia at the turn of the 20th century was inventoried in terms of the state of preservation of historic buildings, including movable monuments, within the framework of the catalogue for the Silesian Province by Hans Lutsch (Lutsch 1886-1903).

This study, which is considered to be the most complete list to date of historic buildings, including bells in Lower Silesia, nevertheless contains a number of impediments to a full depiction of the state of preservation in situ on the eve

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<sup>1</sup> By Lower Silesia, the author means the German province from 1919 to 1945.

of the First and then the Second World War. In his study, Hans Lutsch referred primarily to the oldest bells – those of the Middle Ages, or the more interesting early modern ones. As early as the 17th or 18th century, objects from the 17th century were covered much less frequently and, of course, the catalogue makes no reference at all to castings created later in the 19th century, which were simply not regarded as historic at the time. Although Lutsch's catalogue is not the only study<sup>2</sup>, the main obstacle here is the incompleteness of the publication in relation to many interesting objects, as well as the great dispersion – in practice making it very difficult to gather comprehensive material for detailed analysis of such a large research area as Lower Silesia.

In fact, to illustrate the state prior to the requisitions in 1917 – it is worth noting here that in, for example, Grundmann's catalogue there are also references to the state prior to the First World War requisitioning – we can refer most fully to medieval bells in relation to the oldest objects. However, this is only a part of the historic substance that was requisitioned and destroyed as a result of both wars. Assessing the state of knowledge at this point, especially in view of the poorly preserved and scattered (sometimes still within the parish) archival documentation in relation to the First World War period, the question arises whether detailed research is possible at all, and if so, to what degree of accuracy? With regard to the obstacles to our knowledge of the baseline, the scale of the loss of medieval bells, best described especially in older German literature, also remains uncertain to discern. A solution to the lack of complete data for the First World War period could be provided by requisition documents produced during the Second World War. I refer here primarily to requisition questionnaires prepared by administrators of churches for the administrative authorities. This is because the questionnaires indicate a detailed state of possession, taking into account both the oldest objects and the newer ones, often cast as a supplement to the First World War losses. Then, on this basis, individual bells were assigned to requisition groups and removed from the towers. Although, even here, it should be noted that bells assigned to group D were to remain as objects of special historical value, while bells from groups B and C were reserve bells, because of their historical value, and were not always removed, or were intended to be removed at a later date (Tureczek 2011, pp. 17-43; Lunga, Roháček 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> There is a number of other studies focusing on the past of individual towns or monuments, such as Günther Grundmann's catalogue (Grundmann 1933; bells from Lower Silesia were also the subject of other works: Otte 1884; Walter 1913), where bells also constitute an important element of the published considerations.

Hence, many objects have survived in the towers to the present day, despite the fact that all copper alloy bells during both the First World War and the Second World War were assigned to their respective requisition categories. The problem of referring to Second World War documentation would be all the more important, as the data contained therein would make it possible to define the scale of additions in the period after World War I, which in turn would indirectly define the losses from 1917-1918. Unfortunately, with regard to the existing studies, in principle, apart from Wrocław and the cited Grundmann catalogue, we do not possess such data in full (Grundmann 1933, pp. 71-72). Referring to the difficulties outlined here, the question arises as to whether the losses from 1917-1918 and 1941-1944 can be separated in the perspective of the state of knowledge currently available and the residual source material available. In fact, even the most extensive documentation in this regard, which was examined by the author in Nuremberg for the Lower Silesian area, also remains largely incomplete. Its main deficiency is the lack of lists of bells inscribed in group A – according to the guidelines, these castings were mostly made in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This was the largest group of bells actually requisitioned and melted down.

The above general observations – I refer more broadly to the literature in Tureczek 2019, pp. 69-98 – raise the question about the very purpose and methods of bell loss research in the context of the need to make an inventory of bells as cultural heritage within particular localities, and to protect those resources which are still in local churches. The research into the loss of historic bells carried out to date for the Lower Silesian area has made it possible to document precisely 558 objects (Tureczek 2011, pp. 384-707), which survived the Second World War despite requisitioning and are now to be found in Germany. This number includes both medieval and modern bells, and it should be noted that during the Second World War, the Silesian Province also included the district of Wschowa, which had previously been part of the Frontier March of Posnan-West Prussia (German: Grenzmark Posen-Westpreussen), which was liquidated in 1938, and the district of Rothenburg (now within German borders) which should also be taken into account when considering the historical boundaries of Lower Silesia. As a supplement, it should also be noted here that a group of 558 bells are those included in the list of Leihglocken from the Lower Silesian area. The author's research has shown that an unspecified number of bells from the former eastern German territories also found their way into the area of the later German Democratic Republic. In total, there were approximately 300 sites (this is an estimate based on calculations of identified sites), and these may have included those from the Lower Silesian area. This issue

has not been explored so far, and the single examples that have been identified only make one consider also this kind of search within possible future research (Tureczek 2020, pp. 29-64).

Estimates based on the continuous numbering assigned to bells in the various requisitioning districts in Lower Silesia indicate that, for example, only in the Wrocław requisitioning district (the districts usually coincided with the counties of the time), a minimum of 425 bells were to be removed, while in the remaining districts – there were 35 in total in Lower Silesia – the minimum number of bells was on average ca. 120 in each. In the whole province, according to the inventory, only 156 bells were assigned to group D (Tureczek 2011, pp. 90-98) – considered to be the oldest bells of the highest historic value according to the guidelines adopted by the German authorities. Thus, the author's calculations based only on accepted estimates put the number of bells to be requisitioned at over 4,500 (Tureczek 2019, pp. 79-86). At the same time, the number of bells assigned to groups B and C nowhere exceeded 30% of the total in the respective requisitioning districts. The latter figures for Lower Silesia are based on the detailed census preserved in Nuremberg with a list of localities and category data (DGa, Niederschlesien, ref. 9). It should also be noted here that the requisitions did not take into account bells cast from iron alloys (cast steel and cast iron), which were very often ordered by parishes after the First World War (as much cheaper – approx. 10 times cheaper than bronze bells in view of the post-war crisis in Germany), supplementing the losses of 1917-1918 (APG, Evangelische Gemeinde Tierschtigel, Bausachen, Orgeln, Glocken 1915-1943, ref. 9; Mertinat 1941, pp. 59-74; Mertinat 1942, pp. 99-185). In practice, only by collating knowledge of bronze bells and iron alloy bells would it be possible to determine the overall numbers. For comparison, it is worth pointing out here, for example, that Lutsch alone, within his inventory, in 1903 showed 716 objects made up to 1550 (Lutsch 1903, p. 238). Thus, looking at the entire list from the Second World War, one can conclude that also in the case of the bells recorded in the years 1940-1941 in group A – these were bells dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries, and what is important, the guidelines for this group did not differ significantly from similar ones from the First World War period – not all bells were requisitioned, leaving a significant proportion in churches as reserve resources. Thus, referring to the precise numbers of bells requisitioned in Lower Silesia from groups B to D, one can conclude that we do not have any certain data also on the bells of group A, which were requisitioned first. If these had been requisitioned in their entirety, we would not today have bells from the 19th and early 20th centuries on the bell towers of Lower Silesian churches.

Kreishandwerkerschaft W o h l a u <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">9/18</span>			
Gemeinde und Kirche	Kennzeichnung u. Nr.	Gewicht der Glocke in kg.	abgesandt nach:
Kath.K. Altteichenau ✓	9/18/2/B ✓	190	Zinnwerke
" " Gr.Kreidel	9/18/24 C	372	"
ev. " Großendorf ✓	9/18/27 B ✓	240	"
kath." Guhren	9/18/32 B	215	"
" " "	9/18/33 B	25	"
" " Kranz	9/18/52 B	100	"
Ev.Kappel.Krummwohlau	9/18/56 B	400	"
ev.K. Lampersdorf	9/18/61 C	245	"
kath.K. Liebenau ✓	9/18/67 C	310	"
" Neudorf	9/18/78 B	100	"
" Ölschen ✓	9/18/79 B ✓	150	"
" " "	9/18/80 B	35	"
" " "	9/18/164 B	7	"
" " Preichau ✓	9/18/86 C	465	"
" " " ✓	9/18/88 B ✓	25	"
" " Ransen	9/18/89 B	350	"
kath.K. Seifersdorf	9/18/99 B	200	"
" " Thiergarten	9/18/125 C	210	"
Kuratie Kloster Leubus	9/18/158/C	310	"
kath.K. Wahren	9/18/129 B	155	"
ev. " Wischütz	9/18/134 B	400	"
kath." "	9/18/137 B	120	"
?	9/18/46 B	Kath. Kirche Kranz?	
C	9/18/22 C	Dyrenfurth	
	1138 B	Wischütz	
	1150 B	Kloster Leubus	

List of bells from groups B and C requisitioned in the former Wołów County, source: DGa, ref.: 9/18.

Kreishandwerkerschaft Frankenstein. 9/3

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Gemeinde und Kirche	Kennzeichnung und Nr.	Gewicht der Glocke in kg.	abgesandt nach:
Ev. Gemeinde Olbersdorf	9/3 150	470	Zinnwerke in Wilhelmsburg
Kath. Gemeinde Seitendorf	B 200	290	"
Kath. " Weigelsdorf	C 201	658	"
Ev. " Lampersdorf	B 213 )	1 050	"
" " "	B 215 )		"
" " "	C 216 )		"
Kath. " Heinrichau	C 2	1.400	"
Kath. " Wiesenthal	B 207	177	"
Kath. " Gr. Nossen	C 177	442	"
Kath. " Baumgarten	C 161	?	"
Kath. " Altaltmannsdorf	C 152 )	730	"
" " "	C 153 )		"
" " "	C 154 )		"
Kath. " Baitzen	B 157 )	683	"
" " " "	B 158 )		"
" " " "	B 156 )		"
Kath. Filialgemeinde Dörndorf	C 165 )	283	"
" " " "	C 166 )		"
Kath. Kirche Kamenz	B 179	?	"
Kath. Kirche Wolmsdorf	C 209 )	433	"
" " " "	C 210 )		"
Kath. Kirche Follmersdorf	B 170	70	"
" " " "	B 171 )	45	"
Ev. Gemeinde Reichenstein	B 144	390	"
" " " "	B 145	197	"
Kath. Filialgemeinde Gierichswalde	B 173 )	430	"
" " " "	B 174 )		"
Kath. Gemeinde Wartha	C 19	?	"
Kath. " Frankenstein	C 49	900 ca.	"
St. Georgsmünster Münsterberg	C 193	?	"
"	B 194	?	"

2 B 13 lt. Korb: Nr falsch, geben in nr 211  
 2 C 83 nicht bei 9/3/213 B 3

List of bells from groups B and C requisitioned in the former Zabkowitz County, source: DGA, ref.: 9/3.

An interesting example of documentation well illustrating the way in which bells were entered into particular groups is the well-preserved collection from the area of the then Wałbrzych County (German before 1945: Landkreis Waldenburg). Within the documentation there are three lists of bells from the Wałbrzych County area, with a breakdown of the temporary storage sites to which the bells were transferred. According to an annotation within these documents, the bells were to go to the central depots in Hamburg-Wilhelmsburg respectively. The first temporary storage site was Boguszów Gorce (German before 1945: Gottesberg – Rothenbach) followed by Szczawienko (German before 1945: Niedersalzbrunn, Sorgau) and Głuszyca (German before 1945: Nieder Wüstegiersdorf). It should be noted at this point that the information at our disposal concerns those bells which were found at the storage sites, and therefore already after the bells had been removed from the towers. The data does not refer to all the bells marked within the requisitioning surveys; moreover, these records did not include bells made of iron alloys, which means that the number of all bells within the various districts was considerably higher (DGA: Kreishandwerkerschaftlisten Niederschlesien, ref. 9/17). The details are presented in the table below.

Bells from Wałbrzych County	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Storage Boguszów Gorce (Gottesberg – Rothenbach)	17	8	5 (-2)	3
Storage Szczawienko (Niedersalzbrunn, Sorgau)	26	4	1	
Storage Głuszyca (Nieder Wüstegiersdorf)	25	3	6	

The summary in the table allows some conclusions to be drawn as to the scale of the requisition. There were 92 bells found on storage sites. Adopting the method of calculation published by the author in 2019, based on the sequential numbering of the bells that were on the requisition lists from individual counties, it can be indicated that the highest figure for the Wałbrzych County is 137. Therefore, if one were to assume that 137 bells were destined for requisition from the area of this county, more than 67% of the bells were actually removed and transferred to storage sites. This figure coincides with the author's calculations for the whole of Lower Silesia, which were published in 2019. Another conclusion is also that the Group A bells which were requisitioned all went to the steelworks. Research within the Nuremberg documentation, which refers not only to the Lower Silesian area, confirms that among the objects that sur-



vived the Second World War after the requisition and ended up in Germany, the bells listed in group A did not survive. What does this knowledge give in relation to contemporary research needs? First of all, referring to estimates, the contemporary state of preservation of historic bells in Lower Silesia, not counting the bells cast after the Second World War (especially in recent years), amounts to about 20-30% of the state of preservation of bells from the first half of the 20th century in this area. A fundamental problem relating to possible field research is to answer several questions about what has been preserved. The priority task should be to make an inventory of all the oldest bells, created on the basis of traditional casting, i.e. those cast up to the beginning of the 19th century<sup>3</sup>. An inventory carried out in this way (an example would be the area of the contemporary Lubuskie Voivodship, where all the surviving bells, created up to the beginning of the 19th century, were identified, also the ones from the areas of the historical Lower Silesia) would not only be an important contribution to preservation efforts, but would also make it possible to clarify knowledge on wartime losses in view of the fact that relatively representative data is preserved, especially in Nuremberg, for the area of Lower Silesia. The inventory of bells within the records of movable relics of the Lower Silesian Voivodship, carried out by the author for the purposes of this article in the resources of the delegations of this office in Wrocław (German before 1945: Breslau) and Legnica (German before 1945: Liegnitz), showed that the card inventory registered respectively: 210 bells in the area of the Wrocław office and 188 bells in Legnica. The register includes bronze bells, as well as cast-steel and cast-iron bells, and in terms of chronology, these are items dating from the Middle Ages to the mid-20th century. Assessing the area of the Wrocław delegation's operations, the oldest bells in the register include 82 objects created up to the end of the 18th century, of which only 28 bells are the oldest castings, created up to the end of the 16th century. The remaining bells date from the 19th and 20th centuries. It is also significant that the vast majority of bells within the listing are copper alloy castings. If we assume only by estimation, as shown above, that the number of bells to be requisitioned in the Lower Silesian area during the Second World War was approx. 4500-5000 objects, and that after the Second World War approx. 30% of this number remained, then it can be estimated that today there are approx. 1500-2000 objects of historical character remaining on church towers in the area of interest. The state of the inventory within the DWKZ documentation (also taking into account the documentation in Jelenia

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<sup>3</sup> The 1830s saw the gradual decline of traditional foundry work in favour of large industrial foundries producing bells on a large scale according to type patterns.

Góra – 1945: Hirschberg and Wałbrzych – 1945: Waldenburg) is estimated to be only about 30% of what should be recognised. Naturally, the documentation in the form of provincial historic monuments registry is characterised by specific requirements and its aim is not to register all the objects, but those which have values in terms of historic buildings. At the same time, the question arises as to whether such records in Poland, not only in Lower Silesia, with regard to bells are created based on a specific methodology, or whether the cards are established on a random basis. Unfortunately, which is not only a characteristic of the Lower Silesia area, the bell cards in Poland are quite often of a low standard, and it should be emphasised here that provincial monument registers are still the best tool for the inventory of movable monuments in the absence of systematic documentation and research programmes of a scientific nature, including those directed towards bells. What has been achieved in the Lubuskie Voivodship remains essentially unique in Poland, and it should be emphasised here that this bell inventory programme was established on the margins of documentary research into the oldest inscriptions within the *Corpus inscriptionum Poloniae* research programme. At present, the bells to be catalogued are the younger ones, created in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, the quality of existing records remains a major problem. A review of the cards in the Lower Silesian Voivodship Conservator of Monuments holdings in Legnica and Wrocław revealed a number of inaccuracies. The most glaring examples include medieval bells which, when incorrectly described and researched, were listed as, for example, bells from the second half of the 19th century. An example of such an object may be the bell from the village of Snowidza (Jawor County – before 1945: Landkreis Jauer), which, being a medieval object, was described as having been cast in the late 19th century (AWUOZW-L: Dobrzyniecki 2012). The question that arises here is how many such objects have been erroneously described? In order to ascertain this, field study would need to be carried out again. This is important for many research aspects of this type of object, but also for conservation protection in case of possible undesirable activities. A review of all the cards in the Wrocław and Legnica collections revealed large gaps within the inscription copies, manufacturing identification, significant gaps within the technological descriptions. If we additionally take into account the very limited state of research into the Lower Silesian bell-foundry, all this adds up to a poor picture of the existing

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<sup>4</sup> The programme was implemented between 2003 and 2018 (2023) and resulted in documentation issued in the form of 14 volumes, covering nearly 5,000 historic monuments after additions.

documentation, which also places the problem of bell research in Lower Silesia more generally at a distinctly low level.

Another overlooked problem which must be taken into account in the assessment of wartime losses and contemporary research needs is the problem of post-war, secondary relocations to central and eastern Poland of historic monuments from the then so-called Recovered Territories. In addition to relocations to other churches in Poland, which constituted a kind of “substitute restitution”, even in the 1950s the state authorities in Poland carried out regular requisitions, especially within the post-evangelical properties taken over for the state treasury. Bells were transported to steelworks, and there was a scrap metal depot in Wrocław itself, where bells were also collected and then exported for industrial purposes as scrap metal. The scale of these losses remains unquantifiable today, however, as it seems from the estimates which have been compiled for the contemporary Lubuskie Voivodship, they must have been considerable since medieval and modern bells are mentioned in documents attesting to the transfer of bells for scrap. Naturally, concerning the first post-war period, the never fully estimated relocations to the Soviet Union must also be taken into account. This problem of research remains impossible to assess under the present conditions (Tureczek 2010, pp. 155-166 – there a wider reference to archival material in this respect). The author’s investigation in this area in the Lubuskie Voivodeship revealed a whole list of such events. Referring to this situation, which has not been studied in Lower Silesia to the extent that wider conclusions can be drawn, there is another argument and research difficulty. In practice, in view of the already discussed poor level of research and the far incomplete source base, the contemporary assessment of what was a loss and what was the result of secondary displacement, and therefore the objects can be assumed to have survived the war, makes it difficult to include them unequivocally as losses. The paradox of the study of bell losses in Poland, in the areas incorporated into Poland after 1945 – and these, as is well known, include Lower Silesia – is that within the Polish research today the objects which survived the war and are located in Germany have been much better studied than the ones which remained in situ or were already moved after the Second World War and may still be in Poland. Interestingly, this assessment also seems to fully reflect the state of knowledge about losses in the areas which were an integral part of Poland on 1 September 1939. The research carried out to date within the *Straty Kultury Polskiej* (Losses of Polish Culture) series covered only the area of the former provinces of Rzeszów and Kraków (Gołos, Kasprzak-Miler 2000), in addition to the former province of Poznań (Łuczak 2006) and the contemporary province of Silesia (Nadolski 2008). It should be

stressed here that the above-mentioned studies refer only to losses, whereas they do not take into account the state of preservation, which would complete the picture of assessment. Here, one can point to the long-standing publication *Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce* (Catalogue of Art Monuments in Poland), which also failed to cover, with only minor exceptions, the areas incorporated into Poland after 1945. A paradox, however, is the lack of broader studies for the areas of Mazovia or Gdańsk Region (recently a small but interesting study: Krupa 2023, pp. 399-409), Kraków Region, Lublin Region (Komorowski 1988; Rzepa, Kornecki 2001). Why, at the same time, is the reference to the areas distant from Lower Silesia relevant to the research in Lower Silesia? The essence of the comments made here relates to the need to recognise what has survived in order to ascertain what can be included in the problem of war losses. A telling example of the lack of knowledge in this regard remains the description of lost bells within the 2022 publication *Report on Losses...* On the subject of bells, as in the case of other handicraft products, only a perfunctory information is included in the study by Mirosław Kłusek and Tomasz Luterek that during the German occupation “utracono także wiele zabytkowych dzwonów” (“many antique bells were also lost”). In the subsequent narrative, the reasons for the requisitioning of the bells are explained (Kłusek 2022, p. 287). In principle, the question should be raised here as to how estimates of the value of these losses were prepared based on such data?

In practice, the cited study not only fails to refer to existing, admittedly incomplete, but in selected areas quite representative studies, where more accurate figures can be indicated despite the difficulties. It also fails to make a proper methodological assessment of such studies for the preparation of reliable numerical estimates, situating the research of craft monuments in a general way in the absence of pre-war inventories and destroyed documentation. It should be emphasised that this assumption, although partly justified, does not take into account a number of source materials of an indirect nature, e.g. German documentation preserved in the resources of German archives (Tureczek 2020; Łuczak 2006)<sup>5</sup>. As this statement does not refer to the estimation of the value of losses, but to the assessment of material in an area which is quite different in terms of similar research, I would like, by referring to this example, to demonstrate first and foremost the significant

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<sup>5</sup> Compare, for example, the numerical indications for Greater Poland based on the German documentation published by the author and the calculations of Tomasz Łuczak for this area. Both expert opinions, although independent, gave approximate results, which confirms the possibility of relatively accurate assessments within the subject area.

deficiencies in the assessment of the state of preservation, which is the basis for any baseline assessments and estimates, and, moreover, precisely the need to prepare such assessments irrespective of the area of research. On the other hand, the cited *Report on Losses...*, despite the disclaimer that it refers to the areas of Poland within the borders of 1 September 1939, in its elaborate narrative also refers to the so-called Recovered Territories. This part of the Report completely fails to refer to the losses of cultural property in these areas, despite the fact that Poland as a state is entitled to possible actions in this field also from the areas incorporated after 1945. Again, without going into the essence of possible compensation problems, the question should be asked about the position of artistic areas such as Lower Silesia in a comprehensive study of cultural heritage? The problem of antique bells, raised in this statement, is undoubtedly one of the underexplored issues in this area, requiring basic studies to be undertaken (Tureczek 2023, pp. 253-164).

## Conclusions

The problem of antique bells, including their losses during both World Wars and in the context of the post-war period, with particular reference to medieval and modern objects, has not yet been researched in Lower Silesia. This applies both to older German studies, which have become outdated mainly as a result of wartime losses and post-war relocations, and to contemporary Polish research. The undertaking of such investigation should be systematic, taking into account both scientific needs and the needs of conservation services for their further protection. A fundamental problem in the implementation of such an undertaking remains the development of appropriate methods, which must take into account both field work, detailed exploration of scattered archival documentation and research within the existing state of research. Finally, due to the fact that Lower Silesia in the legal-administrative sense is an area incorporated into Poland as a result of World War II, documentary research must take into account the situation of movable monuments in the post-migration Poland in the reality of the so-called Recovered Territories. Only research that takes into account such a broad methodological spectrum will make it possible to precisely determine the losses and identify the state of preservation. At the same time, the postulate to work on the oldest substance, which is particularly important due to its historical and artistic value and, moreover, threatened in terms of conservation, remains fundamental.

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**Słowa kluczowe:** Dolny Śląsk, straty wojenne, dzwony, stosunki polsko-niemieckie

**Keywords:** Lower Silesia, war losses, bells, Polish-German relations

#### ABSTRACT

*Lower Silesia, a historical province of great artistic standing, was an area of massive requisitions of historical bells during both World Wars. Following World War II, the region experienced additional losses as a result of repeated unregulated transports to Poland's interior, and in the early period also to the Soviet Union.*

*The aim of the article is an attempt to respond to the current state of knowledge regarding the loss of bells in Lower Silesia, particularly highlighting certain obstacles associated with potential research.*

*The author contends that despite the passage of 80 years since the end of World War II, Lower Silesia has not received a comprehensive investigation on losses and current state of possession. The article attempts to formulate a postulate to carry out extensive research on bell losses and the current state of possession in the area under discussion. The importance of this region, as well as the extent of losses, especially in the 20th century, appear to be among the primary justifications in support of addressing the situation at hand in a comprehensive way.*

*According to the catalog published in 2011, which lists bells that survived requisitions during World War II and as a result of post-war decisions, they were mostly disposed of in the territory of the later Federal Republic of Germany. The catalog became the basis for further detailed studies on this issue, not only in the context of Polish-German relations after World War II, but also as a stimulus for material research and the search for specific sources and missing objects.*



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### **Wyższy Sąd Krajowy w Poznaniu 1939-1945. Zarys działalności wraz z wyborem dokumentów**

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Wyższy Sąd Krajowy w Poznaniu był najważniejszym sądem powszechnym w Kraju Warty i jedną z głównych instytucji niemieckiego terroru. Pod pozorem czynności prawnych zwalczał on bezwzględnie wrogów III Rzeszy.

Przed sądem odbywały się przede wszystkim rozprawy dotyczące przygotowywania zdrady stanu. Były to sprawy polityczne wymierzone w Polaków, którzy przynależeli do organizacji konspiracyjnych. Drugim ważnym polem orzeczniczej działalności sądu były sprawy o defetyzm, którego dopuszczali się Niemcy. Przed Wyższym Sądem Krajowym stanęło ogółem blisko 1700 osób. 472 oskarżonych skazano na karę śmierci.

Publikacja, wydana jako XVIII tom w serii Documenta Occupationis, zawiera ponadto wybór wyroków wydanych przez sąd – w języku niemieckim oraz w tłumaczeniu na język polski. Jej istotną częścią jest także obszerny aneks z wykazem przeprowadzonych rozpraw oraz alfabetycznym spisem osądzonych osób.

Książka ukazuje nie tylko różne aspekty działalności sądu, ale jest także punktem wyjścia do charakterystyki funkcjonowania niemieckiego wymiaru sprawiedliwości w Kraju Warty.