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Bruises, Bumps and Bloody Wounds. Body Injuries to the Victims of Physical Violence in Gdańsk in the 16th–17th Century

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On 7 May 1616, a certain Lucia, the wife of a carpenter from the Gdańsk (Danzig) Old Town, was beaten by her husband during a trivial marital quarrel. The injuries sustained by the woman during the incident were as follows:

[...] die rechte arm an der schulter bis an die elbogen braun undt blaw, am lincken arm ober vor der schulter bis an der elbog[en] braun undt blaw und neben dem elbogen drey braun undt blaw, die rechte vor undt mittel finger, sowol auch auff die rechte hant braun und blaw, die rechte Brust braun undt blaw, auff die lincke hufft, so wol auch oben auff daß lincke bein braun undt blaw, Item ein beule aufm heupte.¹

Meanwhile, in the case of Johann Schlebusch, a salesman of Cologne merchandises, who was assaulted by unknown assailants outside the entrance to one of the town's taverns in September 1619, is recorded:

1 große beinschrötige gehawene wunde an dem lincken arm, 1 gehawene wunde an demselben arm nebenst dem gelencke an der hant, 1 wunde auff der rechten

¹ State Archive in Gdańsk, hereafter cited as APG, 300, 3/46, p. 6. In English translation: “bruises on the right arm from the shoulder up to the elbow (brown and blue), bruises on the right arm up to the elbow, three bruises on the elbow, two fingers on the right hand and the whole right hand bruised, bruises on the right breast, bruises on the left hip and on the left leg, besides a bump on the head.”

schulter, 1 gehawen blut auff der lincken schulter, 1 wunde uber dem daumen der rechten hant, 1 wunde uber daß gelencke des forder fingers der lincken hant, 1 wunde uber daß gelencke des mittel fingers der lincken hant, 1 gehawen blutt eines fingers lang uber dem lincken backen.²

Such descriptions of body injuries were made in connection with the legal proceedings initiated against the perpetrator of the incident in cases of violation of bodily integrity. In early modern Gdańsk, it was customary to appoint the seniors of the barber (surgeons) guild for this purpose, who were legally obliged to inspect the condition of the injured (and, incidentally, to treat their wounds) at their own request as soon as possible after the incident.³ This obligation was introduced into the content of the statute of the local barbers promulgated in 1522.⁴

However, it was not always possible for the barbers to comply with this legal recommendation, as it occasionally happened that participants or victims of fights/beatings preferred to avoid contact with a licensed municipal surgeon and thus confrontation with the municipal authorities, and therefore refused to undergo official examination or even allow their wounds to be dressed. For example, a bricklayer's apprentice, who on the night of 28 January 1620 was assaulted in the street and wounded in the head by two soldiers of the city garrison, stubbornly refused to undergo a physical examination, no doubt because of the associated need to denounce the perpetrators in a dishonourable manner in his opinion (the surgeon treating his wounds nevertheless made a note of it anyway).⁵ Similarly, there was in the case of a tailor's wife beaten in May 1625, who refused to consent to an obduracy by a surgeon (despite her rather extensive wounds) because the perpetrator turned out to be her own husband.⁶

The precise, even detailed description of all kinds of wounds and injuries to victims of physical violence or participants in violent incidents was due to the need for the municipal authorities to establish the legal classification of the deed. Above all, it was important to establish whether the perpetrator should be liable to court for committing a criminal offence such as a manslaughter (when the victim died within a few days due to the wounds) or whether the perpetrator should rather be tried only for violating bodily integrity and causing injury to the victim's body.

² APG, 300, 3/49, p. 36. In English translation: "large deep laceration on left arm, cut wound on same arm up to forearm, stab wound on right arm, cut wound on left shoulder, wounds on fingers and thumb of right hand, broken finger of left hand, cut wound of length of finger on right cheek."

³ Stanisław Sokół, *Historia gdańskiego cechu chirurgów 1454–1820* (Wrocław–Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1957), 120ff.

⁴ APG, 300, C/57, art. 25, 9.

⁵ APG, 300, 3/49, 1377: "hat sich nicht besichtigen wollen laßen, und ist nicht weiter verbunden."

⁶ APG, 300, 3/57, 7.

Following the classic classification of injury categories once proposed by the legal historian Rudolf His, and modifying it slightly in relation to the specifics of the Gdańsk sources, bodily injuries (wounds) can be divided into three main categories: 1) severe, dangerous wounds carrying significant bodily harm, often inflicted with so-called “deadly weapons,” furthermore often resulting in the death of the victim or requiring prolonged treatment; 2) milder injuries, where there was only injury to the body (more specifically, a breach in the continuity of the skin) and, above all, blood loss (cuts, bloody wounds, bleeding areas) requiring only standard surgical procedures (usually simple wound care); and 3) superficial injuries where surgical intervention was generally unnecessary (bruises, bumps, haematomas, swelling, abrasions) and the role of the surgeon was usually limited to describing for the judicial authorities the injuries sustained by the victim of the incident.⁷

In the case of serious wounds (category one) threatening the life of the victim or leading directly to his death, the act was treated by the authorities either as mortal wounding (“tödliche Verwundung”) or as homicide (“Totschlag”), which under German criminal law was punishable by penal sanctions ranging from banishment from the city (where it was established that the incident was accidental and the intention of the perpetrator was not to cause the victim’s death) to the death penalty (beheading with a sword).⁸ In the case of the other two categories of wounds, the perpetrator was tried only for violation of the victim’s bodily integrity and a standard penalty was imposed on the municipal authorities (a fine), financial compensation for the injury suffered by the victim and payment of medical expenses (restitution) and, in addition, the so-called “Friedegebot”,⁹ i.e. a court-imposed restraining order, was often imposed on the perpetrator for their future behaviour.¹⁰

In practice, this meant that in the first case the authorities classified the act as a criminal offence, prosecuted *ex officio*, while in other cases it was treated as a semi-criminal offence, dealt with following a private complaint from the injured party or a cross-complaint lodged simultaneously by both parties in the case of, for example, a simple brawl.¹¹ Besides, irrespective of the legal classification of the deed (manslaughter, fatal wounding, superficial injury), the infliction of body injury,

⁷ Rudolf His, *Die Körperverletzungen im Strafrecht des deutschen Mittelalters* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1920), 75–126; *idem*, *Das Strafrecht des deutschen Mittelalters*, Teil 2: *Die einzelnen Verbrechen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1935), 96–103.

⁸ Dariusz Kaczor, *Przestępczość kryminalna i wymiar sprawiedliwości w Gdańsku w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Officina Ferberiana, 2005), 89–90.

⁹ Carl Wilke, *Das Friedegebot. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Strafrechts* (Heidelberg: Karl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1911).

¹⁰ Dariusz Kaczor, “Rozwiązywanie konfliktów interpersonalnych w Gdańsku we wczesnej epoce nowożytnej – zarys problematyki” in *Gdańsk w okresie nowożytnym. Kultura, religia, polityka, społeczeństwo i stosunki międzynarodowe*, eds. Wiesław Długokęcki, Jürgen Sarnowsky (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2021), 226–243.

¹¹ Albrecht Meye, *Das Strafrecht der Stadt Danzig von der Carolina bis zur Vereinigung Danzigs mit der preußischen Monarchie (1532–1793)* (Danzig: Kafemann, 1935), 81.

whatever it may be, resulted in the initiation of legal procedures, since it was treated as a violation of bodily integrity, subject to legal protection.¹²

The court's decision on the classification of the deed often depended on the aftermath of the injuries, and here it paid particular attention to whether the health of the victim of physical violence had deteriorated in the days following the incident. During this time, the patient should have remained under the observation of a barber-surgeon, who treated his/her wounds and usually continued the treatment. In the obduction protocols, this state of affairs was recorded by surgeons in the form of the customary formula: "was daraus entstehen wirt, wirt die Zeit geben" ("what comes of it, time will tell"). This was, for example, the case of the clothier Isaack Petersen, who on 4 July 1616 was stabbed with a knife in the lower abdomen, close to the genitals.¹³ In the conclusion of his opinion on the wounds sustained by one of the participants in a brawl between soldiers of the city garrison (enlarged in connection with the Polish-Swedish war, which was just beginning), which took place in the street in January 1626, another barber (or, to be more precise, a military feldsher) had serious doubts as to whether the victim would recover from his wounds and survive: "doch ist gar gefahr dabey."¹⁴ Such concern was usually based on the nature of the injury or its extent; thus, for example, in the case of Paul Strömer, a musician who was beaten by the violinist Dolle Janneke at the end of September 1605, the barber describing the injury pointed to the denting of the skull bone as a factor that could soon change the victim's state of health (and thus the legal qualification of the deed).¹⁵ On 7 March 1633, a surgeon assisting Maria Möller who was in a state of advanced pregnancy, and who had been brutally beaten in her own home in the absence of her husband by the skipper Hans Schmid, expressed his concern that as a result of her injuries there was a high probability of a miscarriage (which would consequently worsen the legal status of the perpetrator).¹⁶

The need to adjust the amount of the fine and the forms of compensation to the victim of the incident meant that the descriptions of the wounds and injuries inflicted had to be as precise as possible. For this reason, knowledgeable experts, namely the city's licensed barbers-surgeons, were appointed to draw up official,

¹² Govind P. Sreenivasan, "Prosecuting injuries in early modern Germany (ca. 1550–1650)," *Central European History* 47 (2014): 544–584.

¹³ APG, 300, 3/43, 14.

¹⁴ APG, 300, 3/57, 42.

¹⁵ APG, 300, 3/33, 17.

¹⁶ APG, 300, 3/65, p. 60: "[sie] hat blut ausgespiehen, klaget sich sonsten daß sie ehren halben nicht weisen darauff, auch ist sie Schwanger gewesen aber von dem schlegen undt überbeugen ist ehr die frucht abgegangen, was daraus entstehen gibt der Zeit;" Dariusz Kaczor, "Ludzie morza w konflikcie z Temidą. Sprawy przeciw marynarzom przed sądami gdańskimi w XVI–XVIII wieku" in *W epoce żaglowców. Morze od antyku do XVIII wieku*, ed. Beata Możejko (Gdańsk: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Gdańska, 2016), 186.

written and personally-signed reports of injuries. These were able to describe with professional expertise the type and extent of injuries, but also to estimate the degree of risk to life and to determine the expected time and extent of treatment for the effects of the beating.¹⁷ In addition, they paid attention in this connection to the type of wounds (punched, bruised, cut, stab, gunshot wounds, etc.), the nature of the wounds (bloody wounds, injuries without traces of blood), the size of the wounds (length, depth, surface area) and even their characteristic colouring (for minor injuries).

As a rule, in addition to listing the types, extent and nature of the injuries sustained by the victims of physical violence, the surgeons also formulated an assessment of the general state of health of the victims, adding to the description any elements that might affect their physical condition and at the same time adding detail to the description of the injuries, namely: broken bones (upper and lower limbs, ribs),¹⁸ suspicious or health-threatening haemorrhages (e.g. from the ears),¹⁹ spitting blood,²⁰ general well-being (stupor, reduced perception, speech disturbances).²¹

In this context, it seems interesting to note the way in which the Gdańsk barbers-surgeons estimated the size of wounds, especially their width, length and depth. As they did not use any precise measurements for this purpose, they were forced to find other points of reference; in such situations, reference was usually made to elements which were familiar from everyday experience, easy to visualise and imagine, and at the same time obvious, such as body parts (hand, palm, fingers), everyday objects, and standard coins. Thus, for example, a certain Elisabeth Walter was struck twice in the street in July 1612 with a whip by a carriage driver, which resulted in two solid welts on her arm, which were found to be a finger's length by the surgeon who treated her.²² In the case of Christian Rosenberg, a student at the Gdańsk Academic Gymnasium who got into a fight in the summer of 1616, the surgeon who looked at his injuries estimated that the wound he sustained on his thumb was a fingernail deep.²³ And furthermore, a boy named Hans Janeke attacked under unknown circumstances by a Polish raftsmen at the end

¹⁷ Olivia Weisser, "Boils, pushes and wheals. Reading bumps on the body in early modern England," *Social History of Medicine* 22 (2009): 321–339.

¹⁸ For example, in the case of a certain Hede, a tailor's wife in August 1592, a complicated leg fracture with displacement was found, because, as the bagman noted, the bone had pierced the skin: "hatt das bein zerbrochen, das ihr der knochen durch die hault gehet," APG, 300, 3/19, 20.

¹⁹ APG, 300, 3/46, 19.

²⁰ APG, 300, 3/19, 17 (11 July 1592); 300, 3/21, p. 4 (10 April 1594); 300, 3/46, p. 17 (18 July 1616).

²¹ For example, a boardcutter hit on the head with a paddle in the spring of 1619 during a quarrel in the harbour was so badly frazzled that he was unable to speak or hear, according to the barber treating him: "kan nicht wol hören, auch nicht wol reden," APG, 300, 3/49, 5.

²² APG, 300, 3/43, 11: "zwee striemen am arm eines fingers langk."

²³ APG, 300, 3/46, 20: "1 wunde oben in den lincken daumen als ein nagel vom finger lanck tieffe."

of May 1609 suffered a dented skull bone the size of half an eggshell.²⁴ In addition, the surgeon inspecting the state of health of the blacksmith Michel Mosch, who was attacked in his own workshop in September 1619 by his own apprentice, scrupulously entered in the minutes information about a one-shilling wide haematoma on his elbow.²⁵ However, on the body of Hans Bahr, a labourer, beaten in November 1625, the surgeon drafting the obduracy report noted, among other things, a wound on the knee the size of one thaler²⁶.

The municipal authorities entrusted the examination of victims of violent incidents to the licensed guild surgeons, an action that was as much intentional as it was obvious, as they were the only professional group in the cities of the Middle Ages and early modern period who were predestined to perform this kind of task due to their competence (the few physicists with university education were more involved in theoretical medicine).²⁷ It should be noted here that treating injuries and curing victims of fights (and to a lesser extent victims of accidents) was in fact the main form of professional activity of Gdańsk's barbers.²⁸ Thus, they were forced to deal with real, concrete injuries almost every day, in addition to very numerous ones, and had to reach a high level of experience in their field. As a result, they were in a position to constantly confront the "scientific" knowledge contained in the available, popular (at least in the German cultural area) surgical compendia, such as those by Hieronymus Braunschweig²⁹ or Paracelsus,³⁰ to mention only the most common textbooks, with the practical knowledge they gained in the course of their professional activities.³¹

²⁴ APG, 300, 3/38, 6: "die hirnschale an der rechten seite eingezogen, wie ein halber eyher schal gros."

²⁵ APG, 300, 3/49, 1390: "hat ein blut eines schillings breit auff dem rechten elbogen."

²⁶ APG, 300, 3/57, 35: "ein wunde eines thalers gros auff dem knochen am rechten knie."

²⁷ Werner Buchholz, "Das Amt der Bader und Wundärzte. Zur Geschichte der Chirurgie in Stralsund, Teil I," *Greifswald-Stralsunder Jahrbuch* 6 (1966): 125–162; *idem*, "Das Amt der Bader und Wundärzte. Zur Geschichte der Chirurgie in Stralsund, Teil II," *Greifswald-Stralsunder Jahrbuch* 7 (1967): 175–210; Manfred Stürzbecher, "The physici in German-speaking countries from the Middle-Ages to Enlightenment" in *The town and state physician in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, ed. Andrew W. Russell (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1981): 123–129; Sabine Sander, *Handwerkschirurgen. Sozialgeschichte einer verdrängten Berufsgruppe* (Göttingen 1989).

²⁸ Robert Jütte came to similar conclusions with regard to Cologne in the sixteenth century – Robert Jütte, "A seventeenth-century German barber-surgeon and his patients," *Medical History* 33 (1989): 188.

²⁹ Jeronymus Braunschweig, *Chirurgia / das ist / handwürckung der wundartzney... die von vil erfarnen Artzeten gelernet / unnd inn seiner Practica löblich gebraucht hatt* ([Straßburg] 1534).

³⁰ Paracelsus, *Drei bücher von wunden und schäden / sampt allen jhren zufellen / und derselben vollkommener Cur* (Frankfurt am Meyn 1563).

³¹ Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and early Renaissance medicine. An introduction to knowledge and practice* (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 153–186; Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and practice in english medicine, 1550–1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 210–274; Justin Colson, Robert Ralley, "Medical practice, urban politics and patronage. The London

The obduracy protocols, officially drawn up by the Gdańsk surgeons, were then entered in the official books of the burgrave³² – one of the main judicial institutions in the city (in part, alongside the courts of the presiding burgomaster and also vice-presiding burgomaster)³³ dealing mainly with cases of violations of bodily integrity and public disorder. In total, protocols of this kind are preserved almost completely for the years 1580–1641 and contain a total of several thousand (around 17,000) such texts. In spite of the high probability of a high “dark number” of cases of beating or physical aggression, such an abundant, preserved source material provides the opportunity to examine in detail (including quantitatively) issues related to physical injury and the extent of bodily harm in the Baltic city of the early modern era.³⁴

The injuries noted in the surgical obduction protocols were the result of numerous (an average of three hundred, four hundred or even more court cases each year in the reality of a city with a population of around 70,000) and daily interpersonal conflicts within the city’s community.³⁵ Taking into account the social and professional composition of people appearing on the pages of the Gdańsk court records at the end of the sixteenth and in the first half of the seventeenth century, both as perpetrators and as victims, it can be concluded that we are mainly dealing here with interpersonal conflicts taking place within the lower and middle social classes.³⁶ In fact, as a detailed analysis of the source material shows, the use

«commonalty» of physicians and surgeons of the 1420s,” *English Historical Review* 130 (2015): 1102–1131.

³² APG, 300, 3/10, fol. 1v–13r (1580/1581); 300, 3/11, fol. 1v–25v (1581/1582); 300, 3/14, 112–128 (1584/1585); 300, 3/16, 33–70 (1588/1589); 300, 3/17, 738–814 (1589/1590); 300, 3/18, 1–22 (1591/1592); 300, 3/19, 3–42 (1592/1593); 300, 3/20, 2–34 (1593/1594); 300, 3/21, 2–31 (1594/1595); 300, 3/22, 4–23 (1595/1596); 300, 3/23, 22–43 (1597/1598); 300, 3/25, 3–14 (1598/1599); 300, 3/27, 2–22 (1599/1600); 300, 3/28, 2–35 (1600/1601); 300, 3/29, 2–25 (1601/1602); 300, 3/30, 2–26 (1602/1603); 300, 3/31, 2–32 (1603/1604); 300, 3/32, 2–26 (1604/1605); 300, 3/33, 2–26 (1605/1606); 300, 3/34, 2–24 (1606/1607); 300, 3/35, 2–27 (1607/1608); 300, 3/36, 2–34 (1608/1609); 300, 3/38, 1–24 (1609/1610); 300, 3/40, 1–35 (1610/1611); 300, 3/42, 1–30 (1611/1612); 300, 3/43, 2–28 (1612/1613); 300, 3/44, 2–39, 1330–1342 (1615/1616); 300, 3/46, 2–47 (1616/1617); 300, 3/47, 2–34 (1617/1618); 300, 3/48, 1–44 (1618/1619); 300, 3/49, 2–51, 1373–1391 (1619/1620); 300, 3/51, 2–50 (1620/1621); 300, 3/52, 2–56 (1621/1622); 300, 3/53, 2–46 (1622/1623); 300, 3/54, 1–56 (1623/1624); 300, 3/55, 2–50 (1624/1625); 300, 3/57, 1–45 (1625/1626); 300, 3/58, 32–80 (1626/1627); 300, 3/59, 2–39 (1627/1628); 300, 3/60, 1–25 (1628/1629); 300, 3/62, 1–13 (1629); 300, 3/63, 1–24 (1630/1631); 300, 3/64, 2–73 (1631/1632); 300, 3/65, 2–71 (1632/1633); 300, 3/66, 3–55; 300, 3/67, 2–56 (1634/1635); 300, 3/68, 2–51 (1635/1636); 300, 3/69a, 1–39 (1636/1637); 300, 3/70b, 1–30 (1637/1638); 300, 3/71b, 1–31 (1638/1639); 300, 3/74 (1641).

³³ APG, 300, 5/16 (1602); 300, 5/19 (1612); 300, 5/38 (1622).

³⁴ Cf. W. von Brunn, “Fragment des Gichtbuches eines Stralsunder Amtschirurgen des 16. Jahrhunderts,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 19 (1927): 287–293.

³⁵ Richard Mc Mahon, Joachim Eibach, Randolph Roth, “Making sense of violence? Reflections on the history of interpersonal violence in Europe,” *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 17 (2013): 5–26.

³⁶ Cf. Susanna Burghartz, *Leib, Ehre und Gut. Delinquenz in Zürich Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Zürich: Chronos, 1990), 123ff.

of physical violence and related injuries most often occurred in situations of interpersonal conflicts among dock workers and the municipal officials responsible for port services, and among craftsmen (here especially conflicts within the same workshop, the (over)use of physical violence against subordinates, i.e. masters against journeymen and apprentices, as well as conflicts between craftsmen of related specialities (here disputes of a competence and economic nature).³⁷ In addition to this, domestic physical violence was also quite prevalent during this period, with the phenomenon of husbands beating their wives,³⁸ or of family members and the administration of patriarchal (informal) justice beating household members who occupied a lower position in the social hierarchy: servant girls, lackeys and errand boys).³⁹ Not irrelevant in this context was also the issue of resolving interpersonal conflicts by the use of violence related to the presence of the city's army (the city's garrison), whose numbers periodically increased during periods of war (in the period under discussion, for example, during the Polish-Swedish war of 1626–1629).⁴⁰ And finally, one cannot forget also the ordinary, banal and random conflicts taking place directly in the street, in the market, and especially in any of the numerous taverns in a large port city.⁴¹

The use of physical violence and the subsequent violation of bodily integrity and causing injury to interpersonal adversaries of this type of conflict was a derivative and at the same time one of the basic (final) elements of a socially, culturally and legally established form of interpersonal conflict resolution. Usually, the conflict situation had a fairly constant, repetitive, almost ritualised course, which can be reproduced in this form in almost every court case of this kind. First, there was verbal violence (insulting words) or/and symbolic violence (abusive, often obscene gestures) and then and finally the use of physical violence

³⁷ Cf. Katharina Simon-Muscheid, "Gewalt und Ehre im spätmittelalterlichen Handwerk am Beispiel Basel," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 18 (1991): 1–31.

³⁸ See: Elizabeth Foyster, "Male honour, social control and wife beating in late Stuart England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 215–224; Laura Gowing, *Domestic dangers. Women, words and sex in early modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 99ff.

³⁹ Cf. Manon van der Heijden, "Domestic violence, alcohol abuse and the uses of justice in early modern Holland," *Annales de démographie historique* 130 (2015): 69–85; Karen Jones, *Gender and petty crime in late medieval England. The local courts in Kent, 1460–1560* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), 61ff.

⁴⁰ Cf. Martin Dinges, "Soldatenkörper in der Frühen Neuzeit. Erfahrungen mit einem unzureichend geschützten, formierten und verletzten Körper in Selbstzeugnissen" in *Körper-Geschichten. Studien zur Historischen Geschichtsforschung V*, hg. v. Richard van Dülmen (München: Fischer Verlag, 1996), 71–98.

⁴¹ See: B. Ann Tlusty, "The public house and military culture in early modern Germany," *Faculty Contributions to Books* 78 (2002): 1–22; Beat Kümin, "Friede, Gewalt und öffentliche Räume. Grenzziehungen im alteuropäischen Wirtshaus" in *Gewalt in der Frühen Neuzeit*, hg. v. Claudia Ulbrich, Claudia Jarzebowski, Michaela Hohkamp (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005), 130–139; Beat Kümin, "Public houses and civic tensions in early modern Bern," *Urban History* 34 (2007): 89–101.

(fighting, beating, assault with bare hands or with a weapon in hand).⁴² Conflicts of this kind were therefore predominantly about the place in the social hierarchy (occupational group), economic matters, but above all about honour.⁴³ Hence, it should be noted that the issue cited at the beginning of this text was one that was typical of the social reality of the city in the early modern period, but by no means dominant. The analysis of the source material – the books of the burgrave’s office from the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries – shows that the physical examination reports drawn up by surgeons after beatings often contained information about only minor injuries and single blows inflicted on the adversary, and were usually limited to a single sentence or even just the equivalent of a sentence: e.g. “ein blau auge” (“a black eye”), as recorded by a surgeon treating a grinder’s helper in autumn 1580⁴⁴ “eine beule auff dem kopff” (“a bump on the head”), as noted in the case of the shoemaker Hans Hubber in September 1594,⁴⁵ or: “ein geschnitten wunde auff der linken handt” (“a cut wound on the left hand”), as the barber as laconically as precisely described the state of health of the brewer Casper Schöder injured in a fight with his professional colleague at the beginning of June 1612.⁴⁶

In the vast majority of cases of this kind, the reason for filing a lawsuit and initiating a case in court was not solely a desire to punish the perpetrator, especially when a particularly brutal physical assault had taken place, but rather the need for an official, formal settlement of the conflict by the authorities, with a reparation sentence at the forefront.⁴⁷ For it was primarily a matter of a formal and symbolic restitution, announced by the authorities, of the violated honour of the victim of the incident (or, in the case of a two-sided conflict, of both adversaries).⁴⁸ For this reason, even minor violations of physical integrity and unwanted bodily contact prompted the victims of incidents to take formal proceedings (i.e. first to inspect the often superficial injuries and then to take their case to court).⁴⁹

Thus, there was usually a quick and intense interaction between the adversaries of a dispute or quarrel, which most often ended in a violation of bodily integrity,

⁴² Kaczor, “Rozwiązywanie konfliktów,” 233ff.

⁴³ Gerd Schwerhoff, “Early modern violence and the honour code. From social integration to social distinction?,” *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 17 (2013): 27–46.

⁴⁴ APG, 300, 3/10, fol. 13v.

⁴⁵ APG, 300, 3/21, 17.

⁴⁶ APG, 300, 3/43, 9.

⁴⁷ B. Ann Tlusty, “Violence and urban identity in early modern Augsburg. Communication strategies between authorities and citizens in the adjudication of fights” in *Cultures of communication from Reformation to Enlightenment. Constructing publics in the early modern German lands*, ed. James van Horn Melton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 10–23.

⁴⁸ Cf. J.N.J. Nammensma, “Het belang van eer. Verbaal en fysiek geweld in het zeventiende-eeuwse Almelo,” *Overijsselse Historische Bijdragen* 113 (1998): 82ff.

⁴⁹ Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117ff.

although – it should be noted – to a rather limited extent, namely, colloquially speaking: only to the first blood. As can be assumed, the intention of the often random perpetrators during the casual incidents was not to inflict serious injuries on the victim and to deform/mutilate his/her body, but only to show their own superiority or dominance and thus also to prove their case in the dispute.⁵⁰

The incidentality and randomness of interpersonal conflicts and their dynamics resulted in the means of inflicting injuries, which were most often – as a reading of Gdańsk court records of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries proves – carried out without the use of any weapons, and therefore usually with the bare hands. It was not uncommon for the physical inviolability of an opponent to be violated in a dispute with the use of everyday objects that were readily at hand (e.g. jugs, glasses, kitchen knives), or for craftsmen with the typical basic tools of the profession. Interestingly, weapons (swords, daggers or firearms) are not often mentioned in the texts of surgeons' reports after beatings, despite the fact that it was quite common practice in medieval and early modern cities (including Gdańsk) for authorities at different levels to announce bans on coming forward with weapons⁵¹ or sharp objects (including knives) in public places of assembly (e.g. at the town hall, during municipal celebrations, at meetings of members of craft corporations and journeyman fraternities, etc.).⁵²

The manifestations of physical violence reported by Gdańsk barbers-surgeons in the obduracy reports of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which resulted in only minor and superficial injuries, can therefore, following the typology proposed by the German literary scholar and sociologist Jan Philipp Reemtsma, be described as locative violence (“lozierende Gewalt”)⁵³ – when the violation of someone's physical integrity was only a means for someone to achieve their own ends/needs, most often to protect their own property, position and place in the social hierarchy or to defend their own honour.⁵⁴

This is undoubtedly also evidenced by the statistical data obtained from an analysis of Gdańsk's obduction protocols from the years 1580–1641, which make it possible to determine which parts of the body of victims of physical violence were

⁵⁰ Gerd Schwerhoff, “Justice et honneur. Interpréter la violence à Cologne (XVe–XVIIIe siècle),” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62 (2007): 1040ff.

⁵¹ Valentin Groebner, “Der verletzte Körper und die Stadt. Gewalttätigkeit und Gewalt in Nürnberg am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts” in *Physische Gewalt. Studien zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, hg. v. Thomas Lindenberger, Alf Lüdtke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 169f.

⁵² B. Ann Tlusty, *The martial ethic in early modern Germany. Civic duty and the right of arms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 58ff; Kaczor, “Rozwiązywanie konfliktów,” 227ff.

⁵³ Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Vertrauen und Gewalt. Versuch über eine besondere Konstellation der Moderne* (Hamburg: Verlag des Hamburger Instituts für Sozialforschung, 2008), 108ff; English version: Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Trust and violence. An essay on a modern relationship* (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 57ff.

⁵⁴ Eddie Hartmann, “Die Gewalttheorie von Jan Philipp Reemtsma. Programmatische Impulse für eine Allgemeine Soziologie der Gewalt,” *Zeitschrift für Theoretische Soziologie* 1 (2019): 74–85.

most frequently reported by the city's surgeons as bearing traces of injuries (even minor ones). It appears that in more than half of the cases (60% to be precise), injuries to the head were noted⁵⁵ – in addition to general references to this part of the body, injuries were reported on the forehead, around the eyes (especially under the eyes), on the mouth and on the cheeks;⁵⁶ in just under a fifth of cases (18%), injuries to the hands were recorded (which is understandable, given that in many cases there was mutual violence, e.g. fights); surprisingly the same percentage (18%) of cases involved injuries to the torso, while injuries to the lower limbs were reported in only less than one in twenty cases (4%).⁵⁷

On the basis of the texts of the protocols of Gdańsk barbers from the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, the following types of standard injuries to victims of physical violence, recorded most frequently, can be established, namely: 1) bumps and scarring (“beulen, geschwollen, geschwulst”); 2) bruises of all kinds, which were further differentiated by the use of colour terms, most frequently “brown and blue” (“braun und blau”), and less frequently by other colours (red, yellow, dark, black);⁵⁸ 3) haematomas, blood pools, cuts (“blut, mit blut auffgelauffen”); and 4) injuries described as wounds (“wunden”), defined as when there has been a more significant injury to the body or a rupture of the skin of the injured person, sometimes with an additional term to specify the nature of the injury, e.g. when the wound was open (“fleischwunde”) at the time of inspection or when it was a deep wound extending to the bone (“beinschröttige wunde”).⁵⁹ Not only did the legal classification of the deed depend indirectly (as already mentioned) on the type of injury reported, but above all on the type of treatment given by the surgeons, namely whether all kinds of ointments and plasters were used, or whether the treatment required more invasive surgical procedures (e.g. suturing of the wound, or care and monitoring of the injured person's state of health).⁶⁰

Statistical analysis of surgical obduction protocols for a sample of the year-books between 1580 and 1641 conducted in relation to the types of injury reported by victims of violent incidents confirms the trends outlined above and proves that wounds in the strict sense accounted for just over 20% of all injuries recorded

⁵⁵ Hans de Waardt, “Ehrenhändel, Gewalt und Liminalität. Ein Konzeptualisierungsvorschlag” in *Verletzte Ehre. Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, hg. v. Klaus Schreiner, Gerd Schwerhoff (Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 1995), 317.

⁵⁶ Emily Cock, “Wounded. «A small scar will be much discerned.» Treating facial wounds in early modern Britain,” *Science Museum Group Journal* 11 (2019): no pagination.

⁵⁷ As in footnote 32.

⁵⁸ APG, 300, 3/27, 20.

⁵⁹ APG, 300, 3/21, 9.

⁶⁰ See: *Wundartznei / und der Chirurgen handtwirkung. Zu allen gebrechen des gantzen Leibs / Mit was zufällen die entsteht Artzeneien / Rath und Meisterstück* (Frankfurt am Meyn 1534). Cf. also: Robert Jütte, “Die medizinische Versorgung einer Stadtbevölkerung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert am Beispiel der Reichsstadt Köln,” *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 22 (1987): 173–184; Robert Jütte, *Ärzte, Heiler und Patienten. Medizinischer Alltag in der frühen Neuzeit* (München: Artemis & Winkler, 1991).

by the barbers-surgeons in Gdańsk at the time (with a slightly higher percentage of injuries recorded in the context of injuries to the head and – surprisingly – in the case of injuries to the lower limbs).⁶¹

Although in Gdańsk in the second half of the sixteenth and in the first half of the seventeenth century there were quite frequent cases of violations of bodily integrity, which resulted in the local barbers being summoned every now and then to inspect people who had suffered some kind of injury, it was relatively rare for there to be any serious injuries jeopardising the health of the victims, and very rare for more serious injuries to result in permanent deformations of the victims' bodies or injuries threatening their health and life.⁶² It is therefore fair to conclude that physical violence and aggressive behaviour, which were the order of the day and constituted the almost daily experience of a wide range of the Gdańsk urban population in the early modern period, resulted in the majority of cases only in minor injuries or even quite superficial damage, more painful for the soul (violation of honour) than for the body.⁶³

Interestingly, and in keeping with the context of the issues at stake here, in the Gdańsk obduction protocols, a great deal of importance was attached to injuries which only slightly endangered the life and health of the victims, but clearly led to a violation of their honour and dignity by violating the integrity of their distinctive features. One such form of behaviour, quite typical, and at the same time characteristic of violations of bodily integrity, which was essentially in the nature of a kind of customary ritual, was the jerking, tugging and pulling of hair from the head of the victim of an incident/opponent during a brawl.⁶⁴ This form of physical aggression has traditionally been used in disputes/quarrels between women or juveniles (children). Thus, as an example from the Gdańsk sources, at the end of November 1628 a certain Orthie, the sixty-year-old wife of Jonas Dorsche, who got into a fight with another elderly female resident of the suburb ("Vorstadt"),

⁶¹ APG, 300, 3/10 (1580/1581), fol. 1v–13r; 300, 3/11 (1581/1582), fol. 1v–25v; 300, 3/14 (1584/1585), 112–128; 300, 3/17 (1589/1590), 738–814; 300, 3/19, 3–42 (1592/1593); 300, 3/20 (1593/1594), 2–34; 300, 3/21 (1594/1595), 2–31; 300, 3/23 (1597/1598), 22–43; 300, 3/27 (1599/1600), 2–22; 300, 3/30 (1602/1603), 2–26; 300, 3/33 (1605/1606), 2–26; 300, 3/35 (1607/1608), 2–27; 300, 3/38 (1609/1610), 1–24; 300, 3/43 (1612/1613), 2–28; 300, 3/46 (1616/1617), 2–47; 300, 3/49 (1619/1620), 2–51, 1373–1391; 300, 3/52 (1621/1622), 2–56; 300, 3/57 (1625/1626), 1–45; 300, 3/60 (1628/1629), 1–25; 300, 3/65 (1632/1633), 2–71; 300, 3/67 (1634/1635), 2–56; 300, 3/69a (1636/1637), 1–39; 300, 3/71b (1638/1639), 1–31; 300, 3/74 (1641).

⁶² Cf. Patricia Skinner, *Living with disfigurement in early medieval Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 65ff.

⁶³ Kristine Steenbergh, "Green wounds. Pain, anger and revenge in early modern culture" in *The sense of suffering. Constructions of physical pain in early modern culture*, eds. Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, Karl A.E. Enenkel (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009), 165–188.

⁶⁴ Cf. Bernhard Müller-Wirthmann, "Raufhändel. Gewalt und Ehre im Dorf" in *Kultur der einfachen Leute. Bayerisches Volksleben vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, hg. v. Richard van Dülmen (München: Beck, 1983), 109f.

lost – as the surgeon treating her meticulously noted – a whole handful of grey hairs from her head.⁶⁵

It should be noted that, contrary to the common stereotype rooted in popular culture and widespread in the moralising iconography of the early modern times (“zänckische Weiber”), picking at each other’s hair or pulling out hair as a sign of physical violence against the dominated person was not, however, only the domain of the female gender. As Francisca Loetz argues (and this is also confirmed by the Gdańsk source evidence), pulling each other’s hair, regardless of whether this involved hair on the head (usually long for women) or on the chin (in the case of adult men), was primarily due to a kind of ergonomics during a fight or an attack – hair was undoubtedly simply a good holding point and a handy platform for attacking the adversary.⁶⁶

Taking hair as a target was a fairly common form of aggression directed by perpetrators towards women; for example, a certain Susanna Bangersche, who was beaten up in April 1616 by her sub-tenant Gabriel Günther (they both lived in the same house), brought with her a whole handful of hair that had been torn out of her by her aggressor during the incident to show to the barber-surgeon as proof of her injury.⁶⁷ In April 1632, on the other hand, a certain Gerda, wife of Hans Bollers, claimed that the shoemaker Hans Redlich, with whom she had a sharp quarrel, had not only blackened her eye and smashed her nose, but had also plucked her hair from her head.⁶⁸ Getting hold of the hair or disfiguring the body of the victim of an incident by often violently pulling out the hair of the head also occurred during brawls between men. Such was, for example, the result of a brawl between two nail makers at the end of May 1638, when both adversaries wrenched some of the hair from each other’s heads.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the surgeon who treated Daniel Bose, who was severely bruised in the brawl, meticulously recorded in his obduracy report dated 24 December 1638 that the victim had lost almost all of his head hair, of which only a meagre remnant remained.⁷⁰ It is important to note here that in the case of intentional hair ripping (especially of the head),

⁶⁵ APG, 300, 3/60, 20: “ein hant voll grawe haar aus dem heupte gerissen.” A whole handful of hair on her head (besides a few more small injuries) was also lost during a street quarrel (with a plot of confessional conflict in the background) in the summer of 1634 by Catharina, the wife of a blacksmith in the Main Town (*Rechtstadt*), who was battered by a servant from a suburban Jesuit college, APG, 300, 3/67, 21.

⁶⁶ Francisca Loetz, “Zeichen der Männlichkeit? Körperliche Kommunikationsformen streitender Männer im frühneuzeitlichen Stadtstaat Zürich” in *Hausväter, Priester und Kastraten. Zur Konstruktion der Männlichkeit im Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, hg. v. Martin Dinges (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 280.

⁶⁷ APG, 300, 349, 5: “[...] zeigt ein hant vol haar, die ihr auß dem haupte gerissen.”

⁶⁸ APG, 300, 3/65, 3.

⁶⁹ APG, 300, 3/67, 9.

⁷⁰ APG, 300, 3/67, 24: “am heupt neben einem Kahlen stet, der das haar außgerissen ist, welches haar noch verhanden ist.”

there was also a deep-rooted cultural connotation with the traditional dishonest punishments still in use in the Middle Ages (and known in the Gdańsk criminal justice system in the early modern times),⁷¹ which included, among other things, the cutting off of hair.⁷²

As can be supposed, a somewhat different character was found in a related form of violation of bodily inviolability, namely beard pulling or the plucking of hair from the beard in the course of physical violence.⁷³ The beard had clear cultural and symbolic connotations – it was widely perceived as an important attribute of male maturity and also as a symbol of masculinity as such.⁷⁴ Therefore, these forms of behaviour, such as the attacks on the beard and/or the (aggressive) snatching of the opponent's beard, should also be interpreted as a premeditated assault on his masculinity or a symbolic contestation of it (which had the additional dimension of depreciating the honour of the adversary).⁷⁵ Such forms of physical violence were quite often recorded in early-modern Gdańsk court sources, although, interestingly, with greater intensity only from the second quarter of the seventeenth century onwards. Thus, one of the participants in a brawl (a certain Joachim Schreder), which took place on 21 November 1625, lost, apart from a few punctured bumps, some of his dentition, as well as tufts of hair ruthlessly torn out of both sides of his beard.⁷⁶ According to a report from 29 December 1638, a butcher's apprentice Michel Schmid picked during a brawl the hair from the beard of a much older foundryman, Peter Becker.⁷⁷ And also: on 22 July 1641, a furman's helper driving for the son of the Gdańsk burgomaster, Georg Rosenberg, pulled much of the hair from his beard out of the digger Marten Zimmermann during a fight.⁷⁸

A substantial consequence of physically violent incidents was also smaller or larger defects in the teeth of the victims. Information about knocked-out teeth did not appear very often in the texts of the examination reports after beatings.⁷⁹ And since bodily injuries located in the head area, including the lower part of

⁷¹ Kaczor, *Przestępczość*, 337f.

⁷² Rudolf Quanter, *Die Schand- und Ehrenstrafen in der deutschen Rechtspflege* (Aalen: Scientia, 1970 [1901]).

⁷³ APG, 300, 3/19, p. 16; 300, 3/67, 24.

⁷⁴ Herbert Moller, "The accelerated development of youth. Beard growth as a biological marker," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 748–762; Will Fisher, "The Renaissance beard. Masculinity in early modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 155–187.

⁷⁵ Loetz, "Zeichen der Männlichkeit?," 281.

⁷⁶ APG, 300, 3/57, 35: "zwee blut an der untersten lippe, ein blut inwendig im munde an der untersten lippen, drey Zahn im munde loß, ein blut am fordersten finger in der lincken hant, es ist ihm an zwen orten der bahrt ausgerißen."

⁷⁷ APG, 300, 3/71b, 25.

⁷⁸ APG, 300, 3/74, 13: "er hat ihm ein gut theil haare aus dem bart gerießen."

⁷⁹ APG, 300, 3/21, 7 (1594/1595); 300, 3/27, 6, 9, 20 (1599/1600); 300, 3/35, 5 (1607/1608); 300, 3/43, 5 (1612/1613); 300, 3/46, 5, 6 (1616/1617); 300, 3/57, 1, 15, 35 (1625/1626); 300, 3/60, 25 (1628/1629); 300, 3/67, 4, 33 (1634/1635).

the face and in the mouth and chin area, were in turn recorded very frequently, it can be hypothesised that this was related to the fact that the injuries reported by the injured persons were usually and in most cases superficial, in any case probably not resulting in the loss of teeth or parts thereof. It should be noted that, in general, surgical reports were drawn up rather carefully and generally meticulously, so that even such trivial and relatively unimportant injuries as the loss of even a single tooth did not escape the attention of the barbers-surgeons drawing them up. For example, under the date 17 April 1628, the surgeon treating the beaten painter Hans Friese noted the following in an obdication report as matter-of-factly as laconically and dispassionately: “a front tooth knocked out in the mouth” (“ein Zahn vorn aus dem munde gestoßen”).⁸⁰ Obviously, surgeons paid more attention to recording more dangerous injuries, when there was a more extensive devastation of the victims’ dental condition, resulting in a greater degree of damage to their health. Thus, in November 1605, the sailmaker Henrick von Leyen lost a total of three teeth during a brawl, according to the precise mention of the barber, not counting several bruised bumps.⁸¹ On the other hand, according to the account of a brawl that took place on 3 July 1612 between two carpenter’s guild apprentices, the assailant accidentally shot his adversary in the face with a bandolet, as a result of which the latter lost four of his upper teeth.⁸²

In this context, attention should also be drawn to another important element of the reported bodily injuries, namely the so-called “schandmal” (“a mark of shame”) – meaning permanent damage (deformation) to the victim’s body, which, after healing, takes the form of a clear scar, and thus signifies permanent disfigurement, located in a visible place, which, moreover, cannot be covered by hair or a piece of clothing, e.g. on the forehead, face, cheek.⁸³ Such disfigurement was widely regarded in the Middle Ages and early modern times as a dishonourable element, constituting not only a blemish on the body of the injured person, but also on his or her honour.⁸⁴ This was mainly due to the then widespread conviction that this kind of injury coincided with the intentional stigmatization of criminals, especially repeat offenders, by the authorities.⁸⁵ It was also significant that, according to the custom prevailing in almost all of Europe at the time (including

⁸⁰ APG, 300, 3/60, 6.

⁸¹ APG, 300, 3/33, 20.

⁸² APG, 300, 3/43, 12: “ist mit Puffer ins gesichte geschossen, 4 Zaenen oben aus dem maulle, die lippe zue schmettert, das gesichte verschwollen.”

⁸³ See keywords: “Schandmal” and “Schamwunde” in *Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch*, Bd. XII, H. 7/8 (Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 193–194, 209–210.

⁸⁴ Patricia Skinner, “«Better off dead than disfigured?» The challenges of facial injury in the pre-modern past,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (2016): 25–41.

⁸⁵ Florike Egmond, “Execution, dissection, pain and infamy. A morphological investigation” in *Bodily extremities. Preoccupations with the human body in early modern European culture*, eds. Florike Egmond, Robert Zwijnenberg (London–New York: Routledge, 2016), 93–127.

Gdańsk),⁸⁶ the mark was usually branded on criminals in visible places, on purpose on the forehead and/or cheek.⁸⁷ It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the choice of the head in particular (as a kind of *pars pro toto* of the human being) as the target of ruthless, often also violent attacks by participants in brawls or aggressors in physically violent assaults, was not accidental.⁸⁸ It cannot be ruled out that other specific parts of the head, especially the face and (according to Valentin Groebner's research), also e.g. the nose, were to some extent affected.⁸⁹

The laconic nature of the narrative of the surgical obduction protocols does not allow for a more detailed examination of the issue, especially to determine specifically what kind of permanent injury was involved here and what the Gdańsk barbers actually meant by the customary term "mark of shame." There is, therefore, nothing left to do but to look at a few concrete uses of the term contained in the sources. Thus:

- on 5 March 1595, in the case of Hans Gosserler, a furrier's apprentice from Nuremberg who had been beaten in the street, the surgeon drafting the obduracy report described the following injuries as a "mark of shame": an ear torn off together with a piece of flesh and a handful of hair pulled together with the skin out of his head (scalp);⁹⁰
- on 27 January 1597, in the obduction report of a certain Michel Brier, who had been the victim of a rather harsh beating, the term "mark of shame" was used to describe a localised bruised wound on the forehead the size of a one thaler coin;⁹¹
- in the surgeon's note of 2 July 1599, it can be read that a labourer, a certain Lorentz, lost almost half of his ear in a brawl, which was bitten off by an unknown perpetrator (another labourer, by the way);⁹²
- in the case of Andres Ehler, an another furrier's apprentice assaulted in the street and brutally beaten by unknown perpetrators in February 1600, the barber considered a deep cut wound on the cheek extending from the mouth to the ear to be shameful;⁹³

⁸⁶ Kaczor, *Przestępczość*, 331ff.

⁸⁷ Wolfgang Schild, "Der gequälte und entehrte Leib. Spekulative Vorbemerkungen zu einer noch zu schreibenden Geschichte des Strafrechts" in *Gepeinigt, begehrt, vergessen. Symbolik und Sozialbezug des Körpers im späten Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, hg. v. Klaus Schreiner, Norbert Schnitzler (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992), 147–170.

⁸⁸ Esther Cohen, "The meaning of the head in high medieval culture" in *Disembodied heads in medieval and early modern culture*, eds. Catrien Santing, Barbara Baert, Anita Traninger (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2013), 59–76.

⁸⁹ Valentin Groebner, "Losing face, saving face? Noses and honour in the late medieval town," *History Workshop Journal* 40 (1995): 1–15.

⁹⁰ APG, 300, 3/21, 29: "das lincke Ohr mit ein stuck fleisch und Hahrt vom Haupte abgehawen, es ist ein schandtmahl"

⁹¹ APG, 300, 3/23, 40: "ein aufgehaugen schandtmal ungefehr eines thalers breit an der stirn."

⁹² APG, 300, 3/27, 6: "ein schandtmahl ahm ohr, ist halb weg gebissen."

⁹³ APG, 300, 3/27, 21: "schandtmahl kwer uber die backe vom munde biß anß ohr."

- on 31 July 1602, the town surgeon preparing a report on the beating of a certain Henning (without specifying who he was), describing a deep wound on his forehead that reached all the way to the bone, added that inevitably such an injury would leave a permanent scar – “a mark of shame”⁹⁴.

A statistical analysis of the Gdańsk records of surgical obductions after beatings prepared at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries clearly shows that permanent disfigurement, defined as “marks of shame,” was most often recorded almost exclusively on the head of the victims of fights and beatings (especially when brutal hand-to-hand combat took place), primarily on the forehead and cheeks, and to a lesser extent on the face, especially around the eyes and on the nose; much less frequently in other places – on the mouth and chin; only occasionally, in separate cases, was reference made to such disfiguring wounds located in other parts of the body (on the back, chest).⁹⁵ They accounted for a very low percentage of all injuries recorded by surgeons, ranging from 0.5–2% of cases per year.⁹⁶ Interestingly, the term “schandmal” was only used on a larger scale by early modern Gdańsk surgeons until the end of the sixteenth century, and from the beginning of the next century the term quickly disappeared from the vocabulary of the local inspecting surgeons, finally being completely forgotten after 1605.⁹⁷ If we assume that such permanent injuries continued to take place, it is reasonable to assume that from the beginning of the seventeenth century some kind of mental change began to take place, as a result of which the disfiguring scars on visible places/parts of the body of the victims of beatings lost their dehonour context, and thus the previous connotations of dishonourable punishments applied in the justice system of the time began to disappear.

In this context, it is impossible not to remember to mention another form of aggressive behaviour on the borderline between physical and symbolic violence (and also a peculiar form of gesture), namely the widespread custom of slapping (“ohrfeige”), which was in fact a clear way of expressing superiority in social relations and during interpersonal conflicts. The dehonour aspect, which is somehow customary in this form of behaviour, meant that slapping was (understood) as an element of discipline, as well as a consolidation of the rules of social hierarchy, so that children (by parents and preceptors),⁹⁸ servants (by their masters), and

⁹⁴ APG, 300, 3/30, 11: “eine wunde biß auff den Kochen vor der stirne, kan noch wol ein schantmal werden.”

⁹⁵ See: APG, 300, 3/17, 739–814; 300, 3/19, 3–42; 300, 3/23, 22–43; 300, 3/27, 2–22.

⁹⁶ APG, 300, 3/10, fol. 1r–13v (1580/1581); 300, 3/11, fol. 1r–25r (1581/1582); 300, 3/14, fol. 112v ff (1584/1585); 300, 3/17, 738–814 (1589/1590); 300, 3/19, 3–42 (1592/1593); 300, 3/21, 2–31 (1594/1595); 300, 3/23, 22–43; 300, 3/27, 2–22.

⁹⁷ APG, 300, 3/30, 2–26 (1602/1603); 300, 3/33, 3 (1605).

⁹⁸ Cf. Anita Traninger, “Whipping boys. Erasmus’ rhetoric of corporeal punishment and its discontents” in *The sense of suffering. Constructions of physical pain in early modern culture*, eds. Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, Karl A.E. Enenkel (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009), 39–57.

apprentices and journeymen (by guild masters) were customarily subjected to slapping.⁹⁹ Furthermore, this kind of “petty violence” can be interpreted as a spontaneous response in the context of litigation over honour violations.¹⁰⁰ It should be noted, however, that in the Gdańsk obduracy protocols, this kind of issue was not recorded at all. In fact, it seems evident that the slapping simply did not leave any traces, nor could it be classified in any way as bodily injury (although this form of behaviour appears quite frequently on the pages of court books containing cases of honour violation). Although Gdańsk surgeons often recorded injuries on the cheek in their reports on the victims of physical violence (these accounted for around 10% of all head injuries), it must be pointed out that these were not associated with classic slapping (nor were they literally referred to as such), as the cases in question were simple injuries that left specific marks.¹⁰¹

At this point, we should also add a form of aggressive behaviour that is situated on the borderline between physical violence (attack on the body) and symbolic violence (attack on “social capital”), i.e. an intentional assault on the genitals or the targeted grabbing of the genitals of the opponent in a brawl or the victim of an incident.¹⁰² However, this kind of behaviour almost never appears on the pages of the Gdańsk court records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, of the few isolated incidents of this type (genital injuries), only one can be cited in which the aforementioned intentionality is unquestionable and undoubted; on 16 November 1619, a brawl took place in the guildhall between two thrashers boardcutters (Hans Kerschber and Anton Schultz), during which one premeditatedly kicked the other in the genitals, which – as the barber treating the victim of the incident noted – soon “swelled up a lot.”¹⁰³

The mass preserved obduracy records of Gdańsk barbers-surgeons from the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries thus offer the possibility of conducting a detailed and comprehensive analysis (including statistical analysis) of the phenomenon of physical violence in a major Baltic port city. The narratively attractive, though admittedly in part very laconic, form of these records also allows one to achieve an orientation on the state of medical knowledge at the time, and, moreover, allows one to confront the surgical textbook

⁹⁹ Alf Lüdtke, “Gewalt als Sprache?” in *Gewalt in der Kultur*, hg. v. Rolf W. Brednich, Walter Hartinger (Passau: Universität Passau, 1993), 71ff.

¹⁰⁰ Michaela Hohkamp, “«Auf so ein erlogenes Maul gehört eine Maultaschen». Verbale und körperliche Gegen-Gewalt von Frauen. Ein Fallbeispiel aus dem Schwarzwald des 18. Jahrhunderts,” *Werkstatt Geschichte* 4 (1993): 9–19.

¹⁰¹ Patricia Skinner, “Visible prowess? Reading men’s head and face wounds in early medieval Europe to 1000 CE” in *Wounds and wound repair in medieval culture*, eds. Larissa Tracy, Kelly DeVries (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2016), 81–101.

¹⁰² Hans Peter Duerr, *Obszönität und Gewalt*, Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozeß, Bd. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Surkamp, 1993), 354ff.

¹⁰³ APG, 300, 3/49, 47: “ist mit dem fuße gestoßen an sein menlich glied, welches sehr geschwollen.”

knowledge with the surgeons practice in a concrete place and time. The diverse bodily injuries recorded in the Gdańsk surgeons' obduracy protocols of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are an interesting supplement to the research carried out in recent years on the almost equally massive injuries sustained by soldiers during battles, conducted as a kind of battlefield archaeology.¹⁰⁴ And finally, the constations contained in this text seem to be a good contribution to the question of the role of physical violence in everyday life, as well as the question of the perception of the body (more precisely, the beaten, mutilated, deformed body)¹⁰⁵ in the mentality and system of cultural imagery in an early modern city.

SUMMARY

The paper explores the issue of physical injuries resulting from interpersonal conflicts, in particular arguments, disputes, ordinary brawls and deliberate acts of physical violence occurring in the lower and middle classes in urban settings, based on the example of Gdańsk at the end of the 16th century and in the first half of the 17th century. This is based on the records of physical examination reports drawn up by the city's barber-surgeons on behalf of the municipal authorities for law enforcement purposes, subsequently appended to the burgrave's and deputy mayor's registers. In total, more than 18,000 such documents dated between 1580 and 1642 have survived. This enables an analysis of the subject at hand on a micro-historical scale, as well as employing a statistical (quantitative) approach. The paper considers fundamental issues pertaining to the nature and extent of injuries, common injury types, lasting damage, as well as questions regarding injuries, the origin and cause of which fall between physical and symbolic violence – this concerns aggressive demonstrative behaviour, marks of shame and others.

¹⁰⁴ See: Eric Gruber von Arni, *Justice to the maimed soldier. Nursing, medical care and welfare for sick and wounded soldiers and their families during the English civil wars and Interregnum, 1642–1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Jon Clasper, "The management of military wounds in the Middle Ages" in *Wounds in the Middle Ages*, eds. Anne Kirkham, Cordelia Warr (London–New York: Routledge, 2014), 17–42; Karine van't Land, "The solution of continuous things. Wounds in late medieval medicine and surgery" in *Wounds in the Middle Ages*, 89–108; Robert C. Woosnam-Savage, Kelly DeVries, "Battle trauma in medieval warfare. Wounds, weapons and armor" in *Wounds and wound repair in medieval culture*, eds. Larissa Tracy, Kelly DeVries (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2016), 27–56.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Phillip L. Walker, "A bioarchaeological perspective on the history of violence," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 573–586.