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**PREFACE**

The topic of fascicle XXII in a series entitled 'Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae' is "The Hunt and Hunting Weapons in Antiquity and the Middle Ages". The fascicle is composed of papers presented at the 11th International Colloquium on Arms and Armour, which was organized by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Polish Academy of Sciences, Lodz Branch, and Office of the Marshal of Greater Poland Voievodeship, held in Ustronie near Kępno on 27th-29th November 2008.

Game shooting had long been considered a favourite form of entertainment of the wealthy. In addition, in the past, hunting or, more precisely, poaching was a significant way of fulfilling the dietary needs or completing the basic diet of poorer social classes. Another important function performed by hunting was the improvement of one's knightly skills. Finally, the chase was a way of gathering provisions and supplies for a forthcoming war. It should be noted that rulers

had always wanted to secure themselves the exclusive right of the hunt and lower social classes had attempted to break the monopoly.

Hunting weapons were mostly ordinary arms used for fighting. However, some specialised types of arms developed with time. Sometimes, typical weapons were adapted for use in the hunt.

Naturally, the papers included in the publication do not exhaust the topic of the hunt and game shooting. The single aim of the editorial board and the authors of the present articles is to draw military science historians and arms and armour researchers' attention to an important though frequently overlooked topic.

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*Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra*

