



## HERALDICA

### **Heraldic Description of the Coat of Arms of the Family Schwierz from Upper Silesia**

A golden house sign is displayed on a red background and consists of a square-cut double hook turned to the left with a sickle handle, which is mounted with a small cross in the concavity on the right hand side. On the helmet with a red-golden bead and identical blankets there are two bent, crossed arms dressed in red, each swinging a golden catapult with a red stone.

### **Interpretation of the meaning of the Schwierz family coat of arms**

(\*\*\* Deutsche Wappenrolle (DWR), Volume 34, 7451/79, 1981, page 29)

The pattern is based on the Latin N-shape coat sign of the Polish clan coat of arms Swierczek, which has already been known in Poland since around 1400 and was possibly introduced from Greece; in this case, however, it was alienated to a shape of a double hook, thus simultaneously presenting the basic form of the letter S as the initial of the family name "Schwierz".

The aforementioned sickle-shape concavity, which is also present in the Polish coat of arms, was here fitted with a little cross as a symbol for the Silesian home of the clan.

It also profits from the formal resemblance to the crescent on the chest of the Silesian eagle.

(\* see also „Die Polnischen Stammwappen, ihre Geschichte und ihre Sagen“

(*The Polish clan coat of arms, their history and myths*),

1904, page 87, Swierczek (Tafel XI), by Emilian von Zernicki -Szeliga)

**According to existing research records of Lieutenant General (Retired) Guido Schwierz (1861 -1944) and his son Major General (Retired) Helmuth Schwierz (1893-1986) from Lower Silesia the name of Schwierz is of East European origin.**

**In the Old Russian language "swiercz" means "the slinger" (Latin.: funditor).**

Amongst other things, this "slinger" is also displayed both on their family coat of arms

(\*\* see also „Deutsche Wappenrolle“, No 163 (1678/1933), Volume 2, 1938, page 73.)

as well as on our family coat of arms, see above.

(\*\*\* see also „Deutsche Wappenrolle“, 7451/79, Volume 34, 1981, page 29)

*In the past the "slinger" was a hunter; but also a warrior, who used the catapult as a weapon.*

*About 25,000 years ago, it was allegedly first used in North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). Later on it found its way into numerous countries of the world.*

*King DAVID (about 1040 BC † 965/964 BC) and his warriors conquered Jerusalem, for example, only armed with catapults and stones.*

*The Roman commander Quinctilius VARUS was certainly less favoured by fortune. Despite superior numbers of 18,000 legionnaires, three cavalry brigades and also highly qualified slingers from the Balearic Islands, or Crete respectively, and to the disdain of Rome and Emperor Augustus, he lost the battle near the village of "Tutoburgiensis saltus" (probably near Kalkriese/Osnabrück) against the Teutons led by Hermann the Cherusk, called "Arminius" by the Romans.*

### **Heraldic Motto**

**"Cum recte vivis ne cures verba malorum"**  
(Do right and fear no man)

### **Scriptum Accuratum Personae**

**Lukas Schwierz, Roman Catholic, is mentioned as first bearer of our name around 1795.**

He was likely to be colonist for Frederick William II, King of Prussia, who was involved in the Upper Silesian mill foundations near the river Malapane, a tributary stream to the river Oder.

### **Fontinalis Documentum**

**As already mentioned the name of Schwierz is of East European origin and apparently derived from the Old Russian "Scwiercz", which has the meaning of "the slinger" (Latin: funditor).**

(Also displayed in the Schwierz Family Coat of Arms)

Amongst other things it is also the suffix that indicates this fact, as it is found in a series of Polish and Russian town and village names, e.g. Zgierz near Lodz.

The suffix "ierz", sometimes modified to "ierza", "ierez", "ierc", "ierce", "iercze", "ierczek" or "ierczów", or softened to "ice", is mainly found in connection with the consonant "m", e.g. "mierz" in "Sandomierz", but also (modified) with the consonant "w", e.g. "wierz" in the family name of Schwierz, the former Polish spelling of which was "Swierczek"; the official Polish spelling after the end of World War II in 1945 was "Świerc".

The **family name of Schwierz** has spread in Silesia mainly since the 18<sup>th</sup> century independent from the profession of faith people belonged to.

Jewish families as well, even rabbi families in Israel, were bearing this name, sometimes with artistic forms to their family trees, as it is particularly the case in Haifa/Israel.

## NAME-GIVING

**The >oldest known name-giving of Schwierz< can be found in Parish Register III of the years 1626-1650 of the catholic church district of Ostermiething in Upper Austria under Schwi(e)rz.**

(Archive for clan research, Limburg/Lahn, volume 32, November 1968, page 63)

Further references:

- „Familienkundliche Nachrichten“ (*Genealogical News*),  
Volume IV, No 14, March-April 1978, S. 233, publisher Degener & Co, Neustadt an der Aisch.
- „Archiv für Sippenforschung“, (*Archive for clan research*)  
Magazine 71, August 1978, page P 170, C.A. Starke-Verlag, Limburg/Lahn.
- Glenzdorfs „Internationales Genealogen-Lexikon“ (*International dictionary of genealogy*),  
Volume 2, 1979, Sp. 298, publisher Wilhelm Rost, Bad Münders.
- Wappenfibelf-Handbuch der Heraldik, (*Heraldic Handbook*) 16th edition, 1970, page 73, general,  
publisher Degener & Co, Neustadt an der Aisch.

## PLACE AND FIELD NAMES

**The same applies to place and field names,**

such as “**Schwierzmühle**“, district Rosenberg /Upper Silesia,

**Schwierz**, field name of a stretch of wood in the communal district of Wiersbel/Weidengut, district of Falkenberg/Upper Silesia,

**Schwierz**, field name in Brande, district of Falkenberg/Upper Silesia,

**Schwierzberg** (“Schwirzbiarrich” in the Luxembourgian dialect/patois), which has since 1618 been the name of a formerly 300,000 square metre elevation in Weiswampach/Luxembourg,

and of a **Roman villa around 250 AD**, which had been given the name of SOUERDIS VILLA – SVIRSHEIM in the year **893 AD**, and which today has the name of **Schwirzheim** in the Eifel and is situated between the towns of Prüm and Gerolstein.

( Author: Norbert Schwierz )



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