

The PhD DiSSERTATION Summary

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Title: **The Medieval Seals of the Cathedral Canons of the Province of Gniezno**

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The subject of the dissertation is the medieval seals of the cathedral canons of the Gniezno province. The analyzed period ranges from the beginning of the 13th century, when the first canons' seals have appeared, up to the first third of the 16th century (1539), when the Renaissance seals have been gradually introduced. The complex sigillographic analysis, which concerns the research of the genesis of the seals and the dynamics of the phenomenon of their usage, the modes of usage and the contents of the seals, was the starting point for the further analysis of the particular category of the seals' owners, constituted by the cathedral canons, in terms of the ecclesiastical, social and cultural history. The aim of the dissertation was the recognition of the canonical environments of the province of Gniezno, based on the seals used by its members. The thesis is an interdisciplinary study, concerning the disciplines as sigillography, diplomatics, iconography, heraldry, archeology of the legal culture and epigraphy.

I gathered all the available sources from the archives' queries and the literature, they revealed 666 seals, including 360 preserved and 306 non-preserved seals, confirmed in the documents. Also I systematically collected the perpetual seals of the diocesan offices (ecclesiastical courts, vicariates-generals, the Wroclaw diocese's administrators and the Wroclaw chapter's judges), which revealed 20 different seals' matrices. Every seal has a description in a catalogue, considering the information about every imprint of a seal.

A need for the seal emerged as a result of creation of the prebends-benefices and the spread of a written document. Canons had a rising position as individual representatives of the clergy and were hence required to own seals for many purposes. With their seals, canons issued and validated documents as arbitral judges, delegated judges, bishops' officials and vicars, administrators of the chapter's wealth and private wealth, papal collectors or ducal chancellors. They used seals to authenticate documents related to the chapter's affairs (a bishop's election, the federation of a chapter). Their seals also appeared on some international treaties. The legends of their seals reflected the wide range of the canons' activities. The analysis of representations on the seals allows to reconstruct the transition of ways of self-identification from iconic signs (figurative) to imaginary signs (armorial).

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