

The aim of the Project is to elaborate and make available for the science a collection of archival records of fundamental importance for investigation of the history of the country, especially of The Small Poland (Małopolska region), the Sandomierz region and the town of Sandomierz. They concern mainly the period of the Old Polish Republic and are in conjunction with the manuscripts of the Archive of the Chapter of Collegiate and Cathedral of Sandomierz (AKKKS) which had been previously discovered and elaborated by the manager of the Project. They may, in relation to the lands of central Poland, significantly fill up the source emptiness caused by devastation of the archives, especially during the two world wars. They constitute materials of first-class importance which enable one to conduct fundamental research.

Their discovery we considerably owe to: firstly - general restoration of the chancel of the cathedral of Sandomierz, secondly - acquiring many source old masterpieces originating from parish archival records, as well from private persons. It turned out that they make up a stock of unknown so far manuscript and narrative sources: 30 parchment documents and 80 paper documents (mostly originals), as well as more than 60 document cases (files) of manuscripts, as well as 30 coloured plans of towns, individual landed property/ demesne and old maps. Undoubtedly they are new sources which deserve scientific examination and use by the historians, art historians, town planners, as well as representatives of other segments of learning. They were discovered by the manager of the Project, already after publishing by him a catalogue of parchment documents (2002) and an inventory of manuscripts (2010).

One can undoubtedly include to most valuable sources of this collection parchment originals, issued by the chancellery offices of the Polish kings starting from Władysław Jagiełło and ending at the last crowned rulers of Poland. They represent mainly location privileges for the towns and villages of the area of the Crown, foundation of parishes and parish churches, as well as hospital churches, church priories and collegiate churches. Similar substance contents comprise paper documents which additionally inform us abundantly about border disputes, as well as issues related with inheritance matters. Moreover, they reveal an unprecedented and nowhere else found genealogical-heraldic issues. Within this group of paper documents one can find a dozen or so location privileges for towns and villages concerning colonization and complexes of forests and virgin forests of The Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Moreover, one can find among them numerous diploma referring to economic life of the country, including handicrafts and trade mobility of the traders of Sandomierz and Opatów, as well as stallholders and small traders coming from small towns of the Sandomierz, Radom and Lublin regions, located especially in the vicinity of the Vistula artery. An appreciable collection of the manuscripts concerns also the crucial economic-social and cultural issues of the country. However, the most valuable document, dating back to the 17-th and 18-th centuries, refers to the collegiate church (for two hundred years now - cathedral of Sandomierz) in the period of its general reconstruction. It makes a substantial and sensational source material which enables one to determine the dates of the reconstruction works in the church, names/ surnames of the main contractors of the repair works, handicraftsmen and artists which created the inner decoration of the collegiate church. As it results from them, it was the black marble (being the primary building-sculpture material of the Baroque), from which there were constructed: the main altar and side altars, door frames, floors balustrades and others, in the collegiate of Sandomierz. That in turn caused that the collegiate of Sandomierz became the leading Baroque church in the country. The marble originated from quarries located in the Cracow's nearby neighbourhood of Dębnik near Czerna and Krzeszowice. The manuscript issue under question, howsoever of unique nature, as it discloses the names of the artists involved, does not fulfill the collection of manuscripts, because equally imposing is the material referring to the town church of St. Peter and Paul in Sandomierz, the monastery church of St. Spirit de Saxia, hospital and church of St. Jerome and others. Some archives originating from churches and monasteries outside Sandomierz should be also added to them; among them: comprising more than 20 volumes of obese, stapled together folio volumes of the Conventual Franciscans monastery at Smardzowice near Tomaszów Mazowiecki, four books of the "oficjał" of Tarnów (priest, performing in place of a diocesan bishop the fullness of episcopal jurisdiction), acts of a few country parishes. We would like to add that among the manuscripts under discussion there is also a priceless duplicator from the monastery of The Pauline in Beszowa. This monastery was strongly associated with the town of Mielec.

While providing information concerning the new, specific and comprehensive group of manuscript source, we take the liberty to express our opinion that its scientific usage shall initialize growth of research in scope of the historical lore, especially the issues related with the history of the economic-social life, as well as the history of culture and art on the national scale. It shall also arise research works in the sphere of history of regions, as well as individual towns and villages of The Small Poland, from the regional point of view. Simultaneously, it shall facilitate us to fill up with facts many gaps in the hitherto existing learning of the general history, as well as regional one. It will also verify many allegations which are not supported by steady source works.