

PROJECT SUMMARY (ENGLISH VERSION)

The aim of the project is to show the role of women of the Saxon era in the development of cliental interrelations and the phenomenon of female patronage in a political, economic, educational and cultural field. These two issues have yet to be scientifically documented and few minor works that have been done so far do not fill the gap in overall knowledge on this subject. The Saxon era was the time of profound political, social and economic transformations, which influenced the change of women's role in the old-polish society on a large scale. At that time, women gained a considerable influence on family politics which included building the prestige of aristocratic families, children's education and career, matrimonial policy, management of latifundia and innovative economic initiatives. All of these were largely favored by informal social ties. During that period two important events took place: decentralisation of main structures of the state and the formation of provincial, strongly hierarchical social systems and complex cliental relations that dominated political life. Women had a significant share in all those changes. The project will aim at showing that women's involvement in the process of forming their cliental background did not differ much from the actions taken by men. Nevertheless, it had its specific nature resulting from women's administrative and executive power which was fairly different from that of men.

The aim of the project, basing on the source material which is to be collected, is to find the answers to a number of crucial questions: Who were women patrons? What communities did they come from? What were the goals of female patronage? What social areas were the bases for women's clientele? What was female patronage based on? What was the scope of female patrons' actions? How and to what extent was the creation of informal social ties by women different from male patronage standards? And finally: What were the political, economic and cultural consequences of female patronage? Another important issue will be an attempt to determine the influence of mental factors on the creation and functioning of cliental relations in the Saxon era.

Thorough analysis of the source material, mainly feminine correspondence, will provide the answers to the abovementioned questions. Correspondence is by far one of the basic testimonies to the formation of cliental ties. It also documents the processes of acquiring clients, prioritizing cliental groups, influencing customers' attitudes and achieving patrons' goals. On the other hand, this type of documents shows strong servile patron-client relations, regardless of their social background. It also demonstrates the mechanisms of creating both vertical (within various social groups) and horizontal (within one social group) cliental relations. Patron-client correlations can also be found in other specific sources for instance old-polish wills. Hence, this will be another group of interesting sources analyzed in this project. Another vital element such as cultural and economic patronage will constitute the research. Therefore, the third important group of sources includes court accounts and both formal and informal contracts of many kinds: artistic (with artists, craftsmen, newspapers editors) and economic (with servants, officials, leaseholders).

In order to accomplish the task, a broad library and archival query should be undertaken both in the country and abroad, where extensive family legacies can be found.

The research project will finally result in the publication of the synthesis (monograph) and sharing a definite part of the results in Open Access (for example graphical visualization, posters etc.).