

Popular science summary of the project

The aim of the research is to present the problems of relations between the last kings of the Piast dynasty, Louis I the Angevin and the Jagiellonians with their dependent lords. This concerns the Piasts of Kuyavia and Masovia in the first period (during the rule of the last Piasts) and, again, the Dukes of Masovia, Moldavian hospodars, Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order (after 1466) and, finally, the Dukes of Oświęcim and Zator starting from 1456. The final timeframe of the project is approximately the first decade of the 16th century. The essence of the problem is to analyse the importance of feudal forms, especially in the situation when they were adopted in Poland as a systemic solution from other countries and did not apply to internal relations within the Kingdom itself. The major problem is the answer to the question how the contemporaries saw and viewed the dependencies related to feudal relations and - more broadly - how these relations was understood. What should be investigated is the scale of this adoption, the functioning of feudal relations and their dependence on the current political context, the balance of powers, etc. and the ways they were used by dependent lords for their own purposes.

The research will include a library search in the field literature (regarding the fiefdom system in late medieval Europe as well as detailed problems of countries and regions being the subject of the project). It will be conducted in scientific libraries of Warsaw, Berlin, Vienna, Vilnius, Budapest and Bucharest. Another vital element of the research is the search in archives, especially in the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz) which has the most extensive collections of materials and goes beyond the issues of relations with the Teutonic Order. The next stage will be the development of the collected material in order to prepare a monograph. The problem of "Royal Vassals" has not been comprehensively undertaken in Polish historiography; some detailed studies were conducted many years ago, therefore, focusing on this topic is highly recommended.