

Description of the project for the general public

Studies on women's courts in the Saxon era open a completely new exploration path in Polish historiography, which in fact has been greatly popular in European science for many years. The fact of neglecting such an important research issue by Polish researchers creates a chance for undertaking thorough, **in-depth and comprehensive studies on the structure, organization and functioning of nobles' courts, especially female courts**. The latter is a completely unknown issue, and yet women's courts played a crucial role in the process of creation of politics, economy, cliental ties and cultural patronage. These analyses will be of international character, since they are **to be conducted in cooperation with the representatives of foreign research institutions, in particular the Centre for Polish-Lithuanian Studies at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland)**. This will allow us to determine and compare the similarities and differences between the functioning of women's courts in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Europe.

The key component of the project will be to demonstrate the issues related to the establishment, structure and functioning of noblewomen's courts and women's activities not only within their patronage and their own interest groups, but also in educational and social spheres (e.g. social and literary salons or aristocratic courts). The analysis of a broadly understood court patronage and material culture is an important objective, closely connected with a subsequent determination of the standards of living at women's courts in the Saxon era.

The originality and potential of the project are supported by the fact that in consequence, such broadly **defined research objectives will allow us to take a holistic approach to the discussed subject and provide its thorough and exhaustive analysis**. This will be achieved thanks to the extensive source material available in Polish and foreign archives, which has never been used by researchers. The studies will be of pioneering and innovative character, and the opportunity to take an innovative approach to the subject and present the specificity of diverse female activities, life at noblewomen's courts, and the process of its evaluation will be possible not only thanks to traditional research methods but also interdisciplinary ones – comparative, sociological and anthropological, among others.

The final objective of the studies will include preparation of articles published in renowned international scientific journals and presentations of the findings at broad-scope international conferences. A bilingual *Słownik kultury dworskiej* [Dictionary of Court Culture] (Polish–English) will be a pioneering outcome of the project. Prepared in an electronic version and available to a wide international group of researchers, the dictionary will include the entire collected material on functioning of nobles' courts, their structure, organization, culture and everyday life.