

# Polish Nobility and Its Heraldry: An Introduction

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## Introduction

It will not be an overstatement to say that Polish heraldry is unlike any other style of heraldry, as it is considerably different from the Anglo-Norman heraldry with which most people in the Western countries are familiar. Many

heraldists from a non-Polish background with whom I came to contact had very little understanding of it. Some thought of it as being *exotic*, "poor" or *inferior*. Because of thoughts like these, there seems to be a tendency to downgrade Polish nobility itself and to treat it as something *second rate*.

It is my belief that those opinions derive solely from the lack of knowledge and understanding, which is due to the shortage of literature on the subject in languages other than Polish. I believe that once we will fill the gap and more information on the subject will be published in English and other languages, people fascinated with heraldry will begin to see that Polish herby, just like Hungarian cimerei, have a unique style and are worth studying on their own. I happen to believe that Polish heraldry is fascinating precisely because it is different.

I hope that the following article will explain the various aspects of the Polish heraldry. I hope it will clarify past confusion and thus become the first small step towards its understanding.

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## **History of Polish Nobility, Its Origins, Prerogatives and Structure**

To fully understand Polish heraldry, one needs to know more about Polish nobility. As compared to its counterparts from the Western European countries, as a social class, Polish nobility was quite unique, both in its structure and prerogatives. Unlike in England, France or Germany, in Poland, from the ancient times up until the Third Partition in 1795, apart from dozens of families who held the title of Prince, there existed only one class of nobility - szlachta [1] (read as shlahta).

It is widely believed that all forms of government in Poland were due to the great influence of the ancient Slavic institution called rod (clan) and that szlachta, which in The Cambridge History of Poland [2] is referred to as the *knighly class* or *knighthood*, originated from the descendants of these ancient clans. Recent archeological discoveries show, however, that the first forms of government were completely separate from the clan system. This system was predominantly based on the notion of common ancestry and kinship. This was due to the fact that by the 10th-11th century Poland was already a monarchy. The influence of the old clan system on the governing of the country was almost non-existent. The ancient clans, however, played a vital role in the area of establishing the country's customs and private law

relationships.

By the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century one could observe the emergence of a new style of clans which was based on patronage, and thus called *ród klientarny* or *clan of clients*. The role of a patron or a sponsor in this instance was played by the king - assigning new knights to the clans of his choice - or by prominent knights (land owners) - who would receive their friends and relations into their clan on their own private initiative. The creation of such clans was based on various criteria, e.g. according to the heraldic criteria, several clans which shared common or similar arms would form a union; or groups of foreign immigrants would form ethnic clans. There were, of course, those clans that emerged from the old root system, (where members were descendants of a common ancestor), but according to Zajaczkowski [3], most of the formed clans were certainly of the new style. In his opinion, this new *ród* system should be identified as a catalyst responsible for the eventual establishment of Polish szlachta.

Let us now look more closely at the clans themselves. They were certainly of no equal size nor of equal political or financial importance. Structurally, some of them were very big - comprising several families, while others only a single family; some were land owners on a large scale, while others consisted of groups of small land holders. Needless to say, the possession of land played an important role in acquiring a nobility status. In the period between 1228 and 1378 especially, land was granted to the individual clan members thus becoming the basis of some families' fortunes. The land was also granted to commoners who then had an obligation of military service and who later sought adoption into existing clans. Families of lower status were also very often integrated by more powerful, noble clans. Such was also the case with members of the clans' households or even foreigners. This tendency for the more powerful clans to absorb the smaller and poorer ones was even stronger especially when their arms were similar.

The origins of a great majority of clans were local Polish, however, groups of foreigners also formed a number of clans. Quite few originated from the descendants of knights who had sought better fortune and promotion in Poland. Klec-Pilewski [4] states that in this way there began a number of clans of Bohemian, Polabian, Luisatian and even German origin. He also mentions one proven example of a clan of Scandinavian origin.

The emergence of szlachta as a distinct estate was well advanced by the reign of Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great, 1333-1370), however, the

process of reinforcing and codifying its legal privileges continued up until the middle of the 16th century, when, as it is commonly held by the academics today, nobility became a closed society.

As Klec-Pilewski [5] and Davis [6] indicate, this society grew in importance due to a number of political and fiscal privileges.

*Throughout the earlier period, Polish rulers had granted immunities to individual knights or clerics, freeing them from particular taxes or from obligation to submit their subjects to the royal justice. But as from the late XIV century similar concessions were exacted for the nobility not by individuals, but by an estate demanding its corporate rights. In times of crisis, during the war or before the succession, the Nobility's bargaining power was very high [7].*

The following is a list of some of the more important privileges, which in time allowed the nobility members to proudly exclaim, *nic o nas, bez nas* ('nothing concerning us, without us') and which constituted the backbone of the concept of *Noble Democracy* :

**1374 Statute of Kosice** - anxious to secure the succession of his daughter Jadwiga, King Louis of Anjou, exempts all noble demesnes from the land-tax, and reduces the rate levied on noble tenants to one-sixth of its previous level;

**1422 Statute of Czerwinsk** - an act is passed protecting a nobleman's land and property from the Crowns confiscation unless a sentence is passed against him in a court of laws;

**1430 Statute of Jedlno** - King Wladyslaw (Vladislav) Jagiello concerned with the succession of his son to the throne of Poland passes the law, known in its Latin form as *Neminem captivabimus nisi iure victum* ('no one who has not been convicted can be imprisoned') - similar in the principle to the English *Habeas Corpus*, protecting a nobleman from the arrest unless sentence is passed against him in a court of law;

**1454 Statute of Nieszawa** - King Kazimierz (Casimir) Jagiellonczyk concedes that no new tax will be levied nor army raised without the consent of the new noble dietines - seymik, (a meeting at which all nobles of the district could join in discussion, vote and choose delegates to the noble assembly called Seym. According to Zamoyski [8], Seym - the principle of government by consensus -

derives its origin from the times of early Polish kings; by the 13th century it played a major role in the governing of various provinces, and later of the entire Commonwealth);

**1496 Statute of Piotrkow** - King Jan Olbracht (John Albert) grants the noble monopoly of land holding, and takes pains to restrict rights of the clergy (henceforth, all of the senior appointments in the Church are limited to noble candidates), the burghers, and the peasants;

**1505 Nihil Novi Constitution of Radom** - Sejm passes a constitution of nihil novi nisi commune consensu which proclaims that no new laws can be introduced without the consent of both Sejm and Senate [9];

**1 July 1569 Union of Lublin** - a final stage of the Union between the Kingdom of Poland *Korona* and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (earlier stages took place in 1385 - Constitutional Union of Krewa; and 1413 - Personal Union of Horodlo). Both nations were to be joined together in Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów (The Republic of Both Nations - commonly known as Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or, later, as Republic of the Nobility) which was to have a common king - elected, not born, common Sejm, currency and common politics [10].

Granting of such extensive privileges to the nobility was justified by its obligation to provide unpaid military service. Throughout the Middle Ages, the possession of land was rationalised by the necessity to support a military cast. The expenses of this cast were great but, on the other hand, its services were also in constant demand. In the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth this ancient protocol still made good sense even in the 15th century. In the Polish military history of that age there are many examples of the practice of the nobility customarily confirming or even extending its privileges in its armed camp before proceeding to the battle with the enemy. In the course of time, however, with the ever changing military strategies, the noble *pospolite ruszenie* or *levée-en-masse* lost its effectiveness. Therefore, as Davis rightly points out [11], by the 16th century, the idea that the growth in noble privileges was balanced by a corresponding growth in responsibilities in the military sphere, became quite anachronistic.

Despite the decrease in responsibilities, concessions gained were rarely

relinquished. As indicated above, the Nihil Novi Constitution marked an end to the evolution of the clan system; by 1505 szlachta had become a separate, closed, hereditary estate jealously guarding its rights, privileges and all means by which it could be accessed.

A very interesting description of Polish szlachta was given by Bernard O'Connor, an Irish physician to King Jan III Sobieski. O'Connor, who lived in Poland at the end of the 17th century, published in 1698 (in English) two volumes of "The History of Poland" [12]:

*All gentry of Poland are equal by birth, and therefore they do not value titles of honour, but think that a noble Pole or gentleman of Poland the greatest they can have. Neither the King nor the Republic bestow the title of Prince, which belongs only to the sons of the royal family; for some are made Princes of the Empire and as such enjoy the title of Prince. They have no precedence upon that account. Nor have they any Dukes, Marquises, Counts, Viscounts, or Barons, but a few have foreign titles which the rest generally despise; for they do not value any borrowed character or external denomination, but say that it is intrinsic worth and service done to their country that deserves preferment... Those great privileges made the Polish gentry very powerful. [13]*

Apart from being very powerful, Polish nobility by general European standards was also quite numerous. Any discussion of its structure has to begin by establishing some facts about its population. In Rzeczpospolita in the 16th century there was some twenty five thousand noble families, including at least half a million individuals, (6.6% of total population of about 7.5 million). Later, according to the most comprehensive estimates made by Korzon [14], this number rose to about 8% in 1791. At the same time, the number of the nobility in the Western countries averaged 2-3%, (Spain and Hungary ca. 5%, England ca. 2%, France ca. 1%). It is important to stress that the percentage of Polish nobles established by Korzon relates to the total population of Rzeczpospolita which includes a mosaic of various ethnic groups. Szlachta, on the other hand, was ethnically almost homogeneous - nobility was either of Polish nationality or was polonised. If we assume that the size of Polish ethnic group within Rzeczpospolita was virtually the same as the size of a Roman-Catholic group, (Roman-Catholicism was the predominant religious denomination among Poles - with 53% of Catholics in the whole country), then the percentage of Polish nobility in relation to the size of the Polish ethnic group doubles, and comes to ca. 16%. This means that by the end of the 18th century one in six Poles was a member of szlachta.

As explained earlier, the majority of szlachta was of local Polish origin, however, there was a number of noble families of foreign descent that became polonised. Such families entered the ranks of local nobility through ennoblements, naturalisation, or as a result of a number of unions and incorporations. The following, in chronological order, are such acts of unions and incorporations which took place between 1413 and 1795, and which formed Rzeczpospolita:

**1413 Union of Horodlo** - the second stage of the Union between Poland and Lithuania which resulted in the extension of the privileges enjoyed by the Polish szlachta onto the Lithuanian boyars. Forty seven Polish heraldic clans adopted to their ranks as many Lithuanian members. Territories such as the districts of Podolia, southern provinces of Volhynia and Ukraine were incorporated into Rzeczpospolita;

**1434** - the Ruthenian boyars of the Orthodox Church, living in the above districts, were granted equal status with the Catholics;

**1454** (legally) - 1466 (physically) - incorporation of Royal Prussia (West Prussia) resulting from the request of its gentry to come into union with Poland. Noble families of Royal Prussia of mixed Polish, German, Prussian (Baltic), Cassubian and other origins acquired equal status with Polish szlachta. Up until 1772 Royal Prussia kept its own social and political structure;

**1529 - incorporation of Masovia** inhabited mainly by Poles. According to Klec-Pilewski [15], this Duchy had the highest number of minor nobility which retained its clannish tradition for a long period of time;

**1564** - incorporation of two small principalities of Silesia: Oswiecim and Zator. Although the initial incorporation took place in 1455-56 only in 1564 were they completely absorbed by the Polish legal and political system;

**1561** - part of Livonia (in Polish - Inflanty) became condominium of Poland. Ancient nobility of that territory acquired all privileges of Polish nobility;

**1790** - finally, principality of Siewierz (bought in 1422 by the Bishop of Cracow who, as a Duke of Siewierz, became vassal of the Crown. He exercised his power to grant the rank of nobility in his principality, however, until 1790, such nobility was not regarded as the equivalent of the Polish one) was

incorporated directly into the Polish Kingdom and only then did its nobility achieve equal status with szlachta.

Having established the ethnic composition of szlachta we shall now explore its socioeconomic structure. On the basis of some major differences in wealth among szlachta Zajaczkowski [16] and Davis [17] divide it into several groups:

1. **magnateria** (magnates) - extremely wealthy and influential families. Representatives of this group tended to control the key offices of the state, they were strongly represented in the senate. Although no individual magnat possessed any of the special rights or privileges, the group as a whole exercised power and influence on a scale regarded as quite disproportionate to its numbers;
2. **szlachta zamożna** or **folwarczna** (nobles with means) - owners of both land and serfs. The scale of wealth in this group would vary, yet if the nobleman held two or three properties as well as serfs to work on them, he owed his living to no-one. Often nobles of this group were known, in Latin, as *bene natus, possessionatus et dominus* (well born, propertied and a *Sobie Pan* - a *lord unto himself*). This *middle nobility* group made up about forty percent of all Polish nobility;
3. **szlachta cząstkowa** (noble owners of fragmented properties) - noble families which resided only on fragments of larger estates broken for sale or tenancy. Such families generally shared the serfs and material resources of the original estate with their neighbours;
4. **szlachta zagrodowa** and **szlachta zasciankowa** (noble small-holders) - owners of land but not serfs - had to work the land for themselves. Some noble families of this group lived in exclusive noble villages called *zascianki* (*behind-the-wall*), protected by its walls from the rest of the plebeian world;
5. **szlachta czynszowa** (rent-paying nobles) - nobles of this group were tenants, or leaseholders of their more prosperous countrymen. It is believed that this group was the most numerous;
6. **szlachta służebna** (nobles performing menial duties) - nobles of this group held positions of responsibility at estates belonging to magnates or wealthy nobles;
7. **szlachta bezrolna** or **holota** (landless nobles or *rabble*) - nobles of this group possessed neither land nor serfs. They worked as tenant farmers, labourers, soldiers, domestics, etc;
8. **szlachta brukowa** - (street nobility) although in a very small number, this was a group of nobles reduced to eking out a penurious living in the towns.



The position of szlachta within the above groups was certainly not static. According to Piechowski [18], constant movement of its members up and down the scale resembled the biblical *Jacob's ladder* (Gen.28:12). Fortunes increased and deteriorated depending on particular situation and abilities of different families. There are various examples in the history of Polish nobility where relatively poor and unknown families e.g. Firlej or Rzewuski became extremely wealthy and influential, and vice versa - wealthy families such as Tarlo or Boner became poor and powerless.

Although not the main subject of this article, it is also worth remembering that szlachta had its own culture, its own value system and its own *savoir-vivre* [19]. Since szlachta was so numerous, its prevailing culture, its way of being and etiquette influenced many areas of life and was by and large accepted by other social classes. Some aspects of this influence can be observed even among contemporary Poles.

Finally, it has to be noted that the noble pedigree, *wolnosc szlachecka* (nobleman's liberty) of which O'Connor remarked: *Had we in England but the third part of their Liberty, we could not live together without cutting one another's Throats* [20], and the coat of arms were always regarded as much more valuable than land estates; one could comparatively easily acquire such estates, but joining the ranks of hereditary szlachta with all its privileges was extremely difficult.

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2.

## **Polish Heraldic Law**

In the early stages of the formation of the nobility estate, coats of arms were acquired freely and were not protected by law. However, together with the emergence of the class-structured society, coats of arms became the sign of a distinct class - szlachta - entry into which was by birth rights. Kulikowski [21] indicates that in the middle of the 14th century it was agreed that belonging to szlachta comes from belonging to one of the knightly clans - *nobilitatis stripes ex progenitoribus eorum originem semper ducunt* - as it was outlined by the statutes of Kazimierz Wielki, King of Poland (1333-1370).

According to the Polish customary heraldic law, both the coat of arms, as well as the nobility status were inherited only by the children born in wedlock. Polish heraldic system has not developed, however, any stable institutions which would safeguard its heraldic laws, even despite the fact that the office of a herald was known in Poland already by the Middle Ages and that by the 15th century the prerogatives of the Polish nobility came under the protection of the law.

During the late 14th and the early 15th century there were several known heralds at the court of Wladyslaw (Ladislav) II Jagiello, King of Poland (1386-1434). Probably the first recorded herald was Swieszko who was mentioned in the patent of 1395 granting him 80 grzywna[s] (ancient monetary unit) guaranteed by the State revenue from the Iskrzyna Wola village near Sandomierz. Another two heralds are mentioned in the 1403 document, where King Jagiello granted 600 farthings from the revenue from the salt mines. Those two were Jasko (John) and Wawrzyniec (Lawrence) Polanlant. Professor Docent Dr Stefan K. Kuczynski, an outstanding expert in the Polish heraldry of the Middle Ages believes that the name Polanlant, like the names of the foreign heralds in the Middle Ages, was based on the name of the country which it represented [22], for example, Claes Heijnen or Heijnszoon - herald in the service of Jean de Chatillon, Count of Blois, Duke of Gelderland, was known as Gerle (Gelderland); same herald in the service of Albert of Bavaria, Count of Holland, was known as Beyeren (Bavaria); another herald in the service of the Margrave of Meissen bore a title of Meissenland; or the herald of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights was titled Preussenland.

The position of the court herald in Poland, as compared to the Western courts, was of rather low importance. Unfortunately, we know very little about the responsibilities of Swieszko, Jasko or Polanlant, apart from the fact that they were subordinate in their duties to the Royal Court Marshal. However, one can safely presume that their duties had to be rather similar to the ones held by their Western counterparts. It is probable that they were authorities on coats of arms, responsible for the rules of the heraldic art, heraldic law; that they supervised the selection of new designs and kept track of genealogies to make sure that people did not claim ancestry to which they were not entitled. They could have also been the authors of the official rolls of arms, which unfortunately have not survived until the present day. This last point may be especially true if we accept the view presented by Klec-Pilewski [23]

that the majority of the fifty-eight coats of arms belonging to Polish nobility, contained in the Polish section of the Armorial of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, were copied by its author - Sire de Saint-Remy - from the contemporary or older rolls of arms of, presumably, Polish origin.

The lack of the appropriate institution which would safeguard both the heraldic law and keep track of the genealogical records caused two main problems. Firstly, there were usurpers to the noble status and to the use of the arms, and secondly there was a problem of people's use of someone else's arms without official permission.

Polish nobility was aware of such intruders of nobility. There are legal cases, called Nagana Szlachecka (accusation of false nobility), published subsequently for the period from 1327 to 1688 which illustrate this awareness. Klec-Pilewski explains Nagana as being: *...a process of civil law by which an accused man lost all his estates to the person who brought the case to court, if he could not prove his status* [24]. To prove it in Greater Poland, the accused had to bring forth six witnesses to testify on his behalf: two from the family of his father, two from his mother and two from that of his paternal grandmother. In Little Poland, on the other hand, six witnesses only from his father's family were needed. The cases were resolved by the land courts established to deal with matters brought forward only by the land owning nobility. In 1601 the act of Sejm transferred the Nagana cases to the local meetings of the nobility. In the printed sources we can find no cases against noblemen without land (*gołota*) for the simple reason that the accusers would have nothing to gain from them financially. When the matter of the arms concerned was brought to light, the witnesses came with their escutcheons [25] to present them to the bench. This practice, unfortunately, was not always efficient because the accused could hire such witnesses. Once he managed to prove his nobility and the right to bear arms in this way, he continued as a nobleman and this right was passed on to his descendants.

Surprisingly, it is possible to trace in different historical sources some of such usurpers who managed to produce false witnesses and win their cases. Their descendants are obviously not aware of these facts which have been successfully concealed for generations. After all, such usurpations were not difficult to execute in so large a state, (as a result of colonisation of the vast territories of Byelorussia and Ukraine,

thousands of families were involved [26]) where there was no formal registration or heraldic office and where arms were subject to the civil, not public law. Additionally, there was the problem of exchanging of arms among the nobility which was also done without any authorisation. It should be stressed once again that the boyar families of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, (both from Lithuania proper, Byelorussia and parts of Ukraine) had never been adopted by armigerous families. Their use of the arms was thus illegal as was the change of their arms to *better* ones by members of the smaller clans. Having said that, there is a possibility, however, that such change could have been an unintentional mistake as the majority of the original Polish arms being marks of ownership (some quite primitive and simple) have been transformed into arms, so the probability of similarity between them was very high.

Although the nobility status was inheritable only by children born in wedlock, some noblemen were trying to extend their rights to their illegitimate offspring, (for which they wanted to care semi-officially) by giving them their surname and parts of land. Such process was described in detail by the 17th century controversial Polish writer Walerian Nekanda Trepka in his famous *Liber generationis plebeanorum. Liber chamorum* [27]. Through the later years the origins of such offspring were often forgotten which allowed for the new family to enter unquestioned into the ranks of nobility [28].

There was also the case of many noblemen forgetting their arms as a result of the disintegration of the clan system or the mass movement to the East. Because of the lack of registers, when needed, the noblemen would sometimes adopt either a coat of arms of other family with the same surname or a coat of arms which they believed to be similar to their original one, (e.g., members of the clans Momot and Biberstein merged with clan Rogala [29]). In the cases of families which wanted to improve their traditional standing, however, such changes were quite intentional, (e.g., the renowned Szeptycki family, being of Walachian origin and belonging to clan Sas, changed its arms to Pobog. Later, it further fabricated its own family arms together with the tradition of being of Ruthenian origin [30]).

To remedy the situation, in 1601 Sejm passed a ruling which protected the surnames and their arms. The usurpations became so common, however, that in 1633 Sejm decided to punish false usurpators with the

loss of their nobility rank. Klec-Pilewski rightly concludes that even this was of no help, so the legislation became another law without force [31]. He also suggests, however, that the older Polish armorials may also be to blame for this chaos, as they included many false traditions which were being taken seriously. As a result, many families which lost their armorial tradition simply found other families with the same surname but with different arms, and adopted them [32].

The above conclusion brings us to considering the true legal way of using arms which were already in existence. In the Polish system such way was through adoption or by ennoblement, which was usually combined with adoption.

Adoption was the basis of *nobilitacja*, a legal act issued by the monarch to a person from a lower class, (often a foreigner). This pure form of ennoblement, was taking place in a situation when a person of the lower class was adopted into a clan and into its coat of arms (*herb*) by its armigerous representative/s. The first recorded adoption took place between 1404 and 1420 when Konstanty, the son of Hanoul of Domyslin was adopted to the arms *Labeledz* by Mszczuj of Skrzywna. The most famous act of adoption was the mass adoption of *Horodło* in Volhynia on 2 of October 1413. During the signing of the *Union of Horodło*, which was the second step in establishing the permanent union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, forty-seven Lithuanian boyars (noble families) were adopted to the same number of Polish noble clans and thus were allowed to use their coats of arms. The first recorded ennoblement took place in 1419 when Szymon Szczecina, burgher of Brzesc Kujawski, was ennobled for his deeds carried during the war against the Teutonic Knights.

*Szlachta* was rightly cautious, however, when it believed that not all ennobled persons were worthy of this honour. It's apprehension was even more justified by the rapid increase in the number of the ennoblements owed to merits rendered doubtful by *szlachta*. For example, there was a curious situation in the University of Cracow where after ten years of service the professors were granted a nobility for life. After a twenty-year service, however, this nobility grant was becoming hereditary. Because many of the ennobled were priests, their privileges could be passed on to their brothers or male lineal descendants. We can question whether it was justified for each professor of the Cracovian academy to be ennobled almost

automatically, (especially when he was of plebeian background), however, allowing his descendants and his family to take on the arms granted to him is viewed by some heraldists as a certain mistake [33].

It should not be surprising then, that szlachta wanted to defend itself against usurpers by many acts passed by Sejm. In 1505 one such act forbade noblemen to engage in trade or commerce, with the penalty of loss of the noble status. In 1578 Sejm passed, what has been called *Plebeiorum Nobilitato*, a law depriving the sovereign of his power to create new grants of ennoblement. The only exception to this rule was ennoblement on the battlefield for outstanding bravery. All other cases from then onwards had to be first consulted with Sejm and receive an approval from the Upper House (Senate). Other restrictions followed - in 1638 the ban on the use of foreign titles and honorary orders, and in 1673 the ban on the use of foreign titles already granted to some families. From then on monarchs could grant titles only to foreigners.

It should not be difficult to understand then, why prince Charles de Ligne from Belgium, who in 1784 was trying to receive the Polish nobility status, supposedly commented that: *It is easier to become duke in Germany, then to be counted among Polish nobles* [34]. Indeed, from the moment of the prohibition of private adoptions, Polish nobility became a closed cast entry into which could be achieved only in two ways. First, as it was already mentioned, through nobilitacja (ennoblement) and secondly through the institution of indygenat (naturalisation). Both ways will now be considered in more detail.

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3.

### ***Nobilitacja or Ennoblement***

In the beginning nobilitacja (the Royal grants of ennoblement) followed the adoption rules - it entitled many ennobled persons to bear already existing arms used by different noble clans and share in all privileges of the nobles. However, since 1633 when Sejm passed a law which put a definite end to the adoption and granting of old coats of arms, each new nobleman had to have new arms created specifically for him [35].

By 1669 this restriction became even more severe as Sejm created an institution of uncompleted ennoblement - in Polish, skartabelat, (in Latin - praeciso scartabelatus). This meant that a newly ennobled person was

not able to fully acquire all privileges of the nobility, e.g., holding of an office, representing the country in foreign delegations, serving as a commander of a castle or fortress, up to the third generation. Only those who *zdrowiem i majątkiem zaszczytili ojczyznę* (people of outstanding service to fatherland) were exempt from this law. Such cases came under a *full ennoblement without skartabelat*, (Latin - *non praeciso scartabelatus*). Another restriction came into power in 1775 when Sejm obligated the newly ennobled to purchase estates valued at, at least 50,000 zlotys (Polish monetary unit) under the penalty of nullifying the grant. Only meritorious military men were released from this obligation. From 1789 the fees for letters patents were raised to 18,000 zlotys for a full ennoblement without skartabelat, and to 9,000 zlotys for an uncompleted ennoblement. However, even with such drastic restrictions, the number of ennoblements grew rapidly until the end of the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1794. In all, around 1600 such grants were registered; almost half of them issued by the last Polish monarch, King Stanislaw II August (1764 - 1794).

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4.

#### ***Indygenat or Naturalisation***

... was the second official way of becoming a member of the Polish nobility. This one concerned only foreigners of noble origins, (Latin - *indigenatus*). The procedure involved here was also quite difficult, and many foreigners voiced their unhappiness in that matter, among others the already quoted Prince de Ligne. The first act of indygenat was recorded in 1519 and it was granted to Jan Frezer of Wissemburg [36]. Before 1573, that is the times of elective kings, applicants taking pains for such grants had only to take an oath of faith and prove their noble descend. The provision of taking an oath was so strict that even the families of the kings (during the elective period) were not exempt from it. Such was the case of two nephews of Stefan Batory King of Poland (1576-1586) - Cardinal Andrzej and Baltazar - who were granted indygenat in 1588 for their service during the war with Muscovites (1579-82) and the battle at Byczyna with Archduke Maximilian (1588) [37].

>From 1573 onward, the terms presented by Parliament on which such grants were made, were becoming more and more demanding. Firstly, a candidate had to demonstrate his merits toward the country; secondly, he was obliged to prove his noble status from his country of origin

before the Crown or the Lithuanian Chancellery; thirdly, in Parliament - in the presence of the Upper and the Lower House, the candidate had to take a personal oath of faith to the King and Rzeczpospolita (the Commonwealth). Next, he had to purchase an estate before a subsequent gathering of the Parliament. Sometimes the candidate was forced to comply with additional conditions, e.g., he had to move his permanent residence to Poland within a defined limit of time; and finally, from the second half of the 17th century, it was desirable for the candidate to be of a Roman Catholic denomination. In all, until 1794, around four hundred and thirty foreigners of noble descent had become members of the Polish nobility [38].

The partitions of Poland between 1772 and 1795 and the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth resulted in the territory of Rzeczpospolita becoming part of Austria, Prussia and Russia. Each of those countries had their own specific structure and laws concerning nobility and its heraldry which, eventually, seriously affected the status of the Polish nobility as a whole. *In theory, the invading Emperors of Austria and Russia, as well as the King of Prussia recognised and legalised all Polish coats of arms and treated their bearers as equal to the Austrian or German Ritter von (a hereditary Knight)* [39]. However, at the same time, they tried to win over the more influential families by the conferring of titles, and through a process of registration, (taking away of privileges) of the landless and the poor nobility. According to the laws of nobility upheld in Russia, Prussia and Austria these groups of the Polish nobility could not claim to be included in their ranks. Even though the partitioners created a new type of nobility, members of which came mostly from the ranks of public servants, first class officers and industrialists, (people who did not belong to the noble class in Poland in the first place), overall the numbers of nobility plummeted down. As a result, thousands of ancient (from German - Uradel) but impoverished knightly families had totally lost their noble status. In all, only about twenty percent of the pre-1795 Polish nobility succeeded in registering. This proved to be the final blow given to the genealogy and heraldry of the Polish nobility, from which it will probably never recover.

In the Austrian sector of Poland partitioned in 1775 the nobility was divided into titled nobility and knights. The first group included princely, ducal, count and baronial families, and the second - everyone who did not obtain registration in a higher rank of nobility or who did not qualify for such registration. Among the lower-ranking nobility there was a so



called qualified nobility (Uradel) and nobility of letters patents (ennobled or naturalised - Briefadel). In order to successfully register, one was obliged to verify that among his ancestors there were people who held offices or were past members of the senate or Sejm. This criterion effectively stripped the noble small-holders, the rent-paying nobles and other groups of less wealthy nobility from the privileges and the right to bear arms.

In 1782 the heraldic officials of the Austro-Hungarian Empire decided that anyone who wants to register their noble pedigree and thus be recognised as belonging to the gentry, had to table the colour illustration and the blazon of arms, together with the documents verifying the right to those arms to appropriate institutions.

In the Prussian occupation zone of the partitioned Rzeczpospolita the registration was held in 1777. The criterions for the registration were similar to those employed in Galizia, however, there was also an additional requirement of owning a land estate. As in the Austro-Hungarian Empire this additional condition effectively demolished the privileges and rights of poorer nobility. From 1848 until 1855 all matters regarding registrations were dealt with by the Heroldsamt in Berlin.

According to a decree by the Governor General Chernyshev (1772) in order to register in the former Polish provinces occupied by Russia after 1772, members of Polish nobility had to prove their pedigree before a district court. Required documentation included detailed genealogies, blazons of arms and other relevant materials. After examining the tabled documents such court would issue a verdict on inclusion into the nobility caste. If, in the process, the pedigree was approved, the court would issue a so called *descend decree* - letters patents which verified the rights of a particular person or a family to noble privileges and their right to bear arms. In 1785, the Russian Empress Catherina II ordered the preparation of separate and distinct genealogical archives for the nobility in all provinces of the Empire. Those archives (sometimes referred to as books) were divided into six categories - each corresponding to a different group of nobility:

1. untitled nobility by imperial letters - families unable to prove their noble pedigree dating more than a hundred years back;
2. noblesse d'epée - officers of the army who reached the rank of

colonel and officers of the navy who were captains of the first rank and above;

3. noblesse du cap - government officials who reached a rank equivalent to colonel;

4. foreign nobility - that became naturalised in Russia;

5. titled nobility;

6. ancient noblesse - old aristocracy, noble families before 1685.

Using the registration data from Grodno, Minsk, Mohylew, Smolensk and Witebsk provinces as indicative of the trends in all Polish provinces which after 1772 fell under the Russian occupation, it is possible to conclude that the majority of registrations were contained in the first and the sixth category. In the above provinces, from the total number of registered families (approx. 6888) around 39% (2681 families) were registered in the sixth and around 28.6% (1969 families) in the first category [40].

In the beginning, the registration process utilised in Russia was rather liberal when compared to the rules of registration devised by the Austrian and Prussian officials. In Russia, more rigid rules were introduced during the reign of Tsar Alexander I, when the control over all matters regarding registrations was transferred to the Heraldry Office in Petersburg. Tsar's decrees aimed at lowering the number of nobility, and just as elsewhere, affected the less wealthy nobility, majority of which belonged to the old nobility (Uradel). The decrees, however, did little to protect from the registration of the wealthy usurpers, (families which before the Partitions did not belong to nobility at all). As a result, a large number of families which ancestors were army or civil officials, (and who often were of lower social class) was admitted among the ranks of nobility; while a great number of old noble families lost its caste.

In 1836 Heroldia Królestwa Polskiego - the Heraldic Office of the Kingdom of Poland, (between 1815 and 1863 a small self-governing kingdom was established under the Russian control) was officiated in Warsaw. It functioned undisturbed until 1861. In all, Heroldia confirmed the pedigrees of 84,500 nobles. This meant that only one in six old nobles was able to successfully complete the registration procedures. This, in turn, resulted in a strong decrease of nobility in proportion to the rest of the total population of the Kingdom of Poland - the numbers of nobility plummeted down from 7.5% before registrations, to around

1.7% after registrations [41]. A similar process took place in other Russian-occupied provinces. In the guberniyas of Kiev, Kamieniec Podolski and Wolhyn the number of nobles decreased between 1831 and 1853 from 410,000 to 70,000 [42]. As Krzysztof Pomian [43] wrote in the introduction to the book by Beauvois, this could only be described as social death of mass proportions.

Apart from downsizing the noble caste, the registrations introduced by the Partitioners also added much confusion with respect to genealogy and heraldry. Klec-Pilewski describes this, as follows, *the heraldic officials, even those who were appointed in the Kingdom of Poland under Russian rule after 1815, were not historians or specialists in heraldry and genealogy, but clerks of different grades. They legalised many usurpations and false traditions still current in Poland* [44]. It is often still extremely difficult to establish the coats of arms of many Polish families and clans to which they belong. This is especially true of cases where several families use the same surname.

In 1921, the first Constitution of the Polish Republic after World War I finally terminated all privileges of nobility and forbade the usage of arms (Article 96 [45]). The later Constitution of 1935 (Article 81, §2) cancelled this paragraph, so de facto this meant the restitution of some old laws regarding the use of arms and honorary titles. However, the privileges were cancelled by another paragraph of the same Constitution which says that all citizens are equal by law. Such situation remains to this day.

A few words should be added about the usage of the titles and honorary orders by the nobility. As it was already mentioned, Polish nobility was zealously protecting both its privileges and the idea of *noble equality* (*rownosc szlachecka*). For this reason alone, from the very beginnings of Rzeczpospolita, the use of both titles and orders was discouraged. During the rules of the Piast Dynasty, that is until the 14th century the only title used in Poland was that of a dynastic prince (*książe*). It was used solely by the members of the numerous branches of the Piast family. However, from the time of the Jagiellons none of the Royal Princes were called a Prince (*sic!*). The Union of Lublin allowed for the use of the *prince* title by families which could prove their descent from Gediminas, Rurik or other dynastic princely families living in the past on Lithuanian territories. This included families such as Czartoryski or Sanguszko - descendants of Gediminas; Czetwertyński or Massalski

- descendants of Rurik; and families such as Borkowski or Glinski - descendants of other princely families. From the 15th century until 1795 the title of prince was granted to the Polish nobles by Sejm only three times: in 1764 to Poniatowski; in 1768 to Sapieha; and in 1773 to PoniYski family. Other titles of prince found among szlachta were granted by foreign monarchs. Families which received such title from the Holy Roman Emperors were: Radziwill (grant dated 1547), Ossolinski (1634), Lubomirski (1647), Sapieha (1700), Jablonowski (1743) and Sulkowski (1752).

Grants of titles such as margrave, count, vicecount and baron were also bestowed mainly by foreign monarchs. According to Konarski [46], until 1772 there were only seven families which received such grants. There is only one instance (recorded in the Polish language) of a Polish monarch granting such title to the Polish noble family - in 1568 Zygmunt II August (Sigismund Augustus) King of Poland granted the title of count to the Chodkiewicz family.

The very small number of the Polish titled families has to be explained by the different laws passed by Sejm. For example, in 1638 there came the ban on the use of titles and honorary orders, and in 1673 the ban on foreign titles already granted to some families. In light of such bans, Polish monarch could grant titles only to foreigners. That is why, other titles which can be found among the Polish nobles were either brought to Poland by naturalised foreigners or were granted in the post-1795 period by foreign monarchs. Most grants of this period were issued by the Partitioners, although there were also examples of Papal or Napoleonic grants.

To some extent, the aristocratic titles and honorary orders and decorations in Rzeczpospolita were replaced by the grants of offices and ranks - many of which were merely sinecures and were of a purely honorary character. Despite this facts such ranks and offices were viewed by szlachta as equal if not superior in status to the Western hereditary titles without offending the egalitarian ideals of the Polish nobility. Between the 14th and the 18th century there were three main groups of such offices: senatorial, court and land offices. Their main characteristic was that they were granted for life (*do>ywotnio*). One of the requirements for the granting of the offices was the age criterion - the candidates had to be 23 or over. There was also the proviso that the offices should be granted to *stateczny, godny i zasłużony* (earnest,

worthy and meritorious) men. Grants of juridical offices additionally required the candidates to be *aetate et intelligentia bene vigentibus* - mature in age and mind.

The hierarchy of the offices was laid down by Sejm. And so, the general hierarchy for the land offices in the Polish Crown established by Sejm of 1768 was as follows [47]:

1. **podkomorzy** (Latin: succamerarius) - a chamberlain. In the hierarchy of the court offices second only to marszałek (marshal). Responsible for the safety of the king. During the royal travels and in the war camps, one of the closest associates of the king. As a land office, podkomorzy played the role of a royal magistrate - he arbitrated in border disputes, issued summons and passed judgments;

2. **starosta grodowy** (Latin: scultetus or capitaneus cum iurisdictione) - a starost. From the ancient times Poles were bestowing this title onto a leader, a superior and a person of the highest office in a particular town, province or region. Sejm decided that grants of this office should be done as gratification for people meritorious towards their country. For this reason, this office was sometimes referred to as *chleb dobrze zasłużony* (Latin - panis bene merentium, English - *bread well deserved*). The starost was a chief leader of a land or a district and as such exercised total control over its administration and military forces. During the war, the starost called up the levy in mass and led the nobles into battle. He also held the police powers and the so called *prawo miecza* (the law of the sword) to enforce and execute verdicts of any instance in his district;

3. **chorazy** (Latin: vexillifer) - a standard-bearer. He bore the standard while leading knights of his district into battle. The land standard-bearer (chorazy ziemski) took place of the great (chorazy wielki) and court (chorazy nadworny) standard-bearers in the event of their absence. He was present at the royal burials and he also headed the levy in mass;

4. **sedzia ziemski** (Latin: iudex terrestris) - a district magistrate. His duties were similar to those of podkomorzy;

5. **stolnik** (Latin: dapifer) - an esquire carver; one of the oldest court offices, later used as an honorary land office;

6. **podczaszy** (Latin: pincerna) - a cup-bearer. He held similar functions to those of **czesnik**;
7. **podsedek** (Latin: subjudex) - a subaltern judge and an aid to the district judge;
8. **podstoli** (Latin: subdapifer) - a lord high steward - later an honorary title which originated from the function of preparing the royal table;
9. **czesnik** (Latin: pincerna) - a royal cup-bearer. One of the oldest offices which originated in the Piast courts. The primary function of **czesnik** - the handing of the cups of wine to the king - disappeared in later centuries. This was due to the expansion of the royal court and the creation of various new functions. From about the 16th century onward this office was viewed merely as an honorary title;
10. **lowczy** (Latin: venator) - a master of the royal hunt;
11. **wojski wiekszy** (Latin: tribunus) - a high military tribune. In the event of the nobles going to war under the command of wojewoda (voivode), chorazy (standard-bearer) and/or kasztelan (castellan) **wojski's** duty, among others, was to remain in the deserted province and take care of the security over their districts;
12. **pisarz ziemski** (Latin: notarius terrestris) - a district writer and an aid to the district judge;
13. **miecznik** (Latin: ensifer) - a sword-bearer. His presence was required in similar circumstances as those of **chorazy**. He carried a sword with its pommel pointing upward - as a symbol of a military command - in front of the king. During the king's burial, **miecznik** was to throw the sword on the ground or to brake it - if the king was the last member of his family's line;
14. **wojski mniejszy** (Latin: tribunus) - a military tribune. In general, he held similar functions to those of **wojski wiekszy**;
15. **skarbnik** (Latin: thesaurarius) - a treasurer. [Top of the page](#)

## Origins of Polish Heraldry

Any study of the Polish heraldry should begin with a warning that in the past many articles on this subject, written in languages other than Polish, usually contained more anecdotal information than factual data. At the same time, other papers clearly represent outdated knowledge and so their value is rather diminished - for example, the section about the Polish heraldry published in *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* by A. C. Fox-Davis [48]. I would like to strongly advise any serious heraldist to consider similar materials with maximum caution.

It should be also remembered that Polish herby constitute one of the oldest and the most important monuments of the Polish culture, of which not many other relicts have survived. It is worth mentioning that the oldest monument of Polish prose - Kazania Swietokrzyskie (the Swietokrzyski Sermons) come from the first half of the 14th century, and the oldest Polish sentence (recorded in writing): *daj, ac ja pobrusze, a ty poczywaj* (*giveth to me, I shall stir and you shall rest*) survived in the Latin text of Księga Henrykowska (Henry's Book) from the turn of the 14th century. Significantly, the first Polish coats of arms (e.g., Topor, Lis, Rawa, Leszczyc) come from the same time period. There are some coats of arms which could be considered as being even older, e.g., the charge of the Awdaniec clan derives its origin from the property mark which became hereditary since the beginning of the 13th century.

In Poland, as a general rule, one rod had one herb (coat of arms) which was shared by all its members. When a clan was divided into separate families, all of them retained the original arms without any differencing or cadency. Paszkowski characterised this peculiarity by stating:

Whereas in Western Europe a coat of arms *belonged* to a person or family, in Poland a family or a person *belonged* to the coat of arms. Thus, some of the families were bearing their own coat of arms, but many, sometimes hundreds of (clan) families, shared or *belonged* to one coat of arms. [49]

This peculiarity may be best illustrated by the example given by Paprocki [50] who mentions the Rosciszewski family which took a surname different from the names of the land properties it had owned. Those of the Rosciszewski family who settled in Chrapunia became known as Chrapunskis; those who settled in Strykwina were known as Strykwinskis; and those who settled in Borkow became known as Borkowskis. Since they shared a common ancestor and belonged to the same clan - they were entitled to bear the same arms as

Rosciszewskis.

As Konarski [51] points out, there was a different process involved when members of the different heraldic clans were adopting surnames derived from the commonly occurring names of villages, such as: Baranow, Chrzanow, or Zakrzewie. In this process, quite accidentally, identical surnames were formed by members of different clans. For example, there was the Konarski family which used the Jastrzebiec arms. At the same time, there was another, unrelated family of the same surname which belonged to the Awdaniec clan. This resulted in the distinct feature of the Polish heraldic system where people belonging to the same heraldic clan and using the same coat of arms could have different surnames, while people sharing the same surname were using different arms. Some families which were ennobled or naturalised and which maintained their own *foreign* family coat of arms, with no doubt have found this practice to be quite confusing. Perhaps even more confusing was the tradition that the coats of arms of the Polish nobility had names of their own; names which derived their origins from the ancient war-cries also called proclamations (Latin: *proclamatio*). Another peculiarity of the Polish heraldry was the custom that all legitimate children of a nobleman, both male and female could inherit their father's coat of arms, (without any alterations, i.e., marks of differencing, and cadency - called *brisures* in French) together with all his privileges as a noble.

As a result of the union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Duchy of Lithuania, noble families of the Duchy (boyars) were adopted by Polish clans and began to use their arms. Moreover, some boyars followed the Polish example and transformed their old property marks into heraldic devices. Until 1795, which marks the end of the Polish Commonwealth, adoption into a clan constituted the most common form of ennoblement (even though this right was reserved by Szym). Foreign families, naturalised or ennobled in Poland from the 16th century onward, usually kept their own family coat of arms, and so did the nobility of Royal Prussia and Livonia after their union with the Polish Commonwealth. Cassubian arms of Polish Pomerania are very similar to those of Poland. Silesian nobility, (mainly Polish in origin, yet politically separate from Poland since the beginning of the 14th century) also maintained certain Polish heraldic characteristics despite much stronger Western influence. The same Polish characteristics can be observed in the heraldry of Western Pomerania and East Prussia.

At an initial glance, Polish heraldry may seem to be quite simple and relatively poor in its design - with its rules much less rigid than the ones developed in



Western Europe. In the eventual absence of an institution of a herald, (it disappeared during the 15th century) and heraldic visitations, as well as with the disintegration of the clan system, it deteriorated by the 16th century. In time, the old Polish heraldic terminology became forgotten and foreign influences, introduced without control, overwhelmed it. The lack of proper terminology resulted in very long and awkward blazons which uncontrollably entered Polish armorials. Only relatively recently - in 1960s - following earlier attempts by Joachim Lelewel, Franciszek Piekosinski and Helena Polackowna, Polish heraldist Adam Heymowski [52] commenced his systematic research in this field and created proper heraldic terminology based on the original mediaeval heraldic language.

The tribal system influenced all the countries included in the Polish Commonwealth. As a result, the nobility consisting of more than forty thousand families, used about seven thousand arms including family coats of arms of Western origin. Moreover, the homonymous families, with their surnames derived from estates with identical names, bore different arms depending on the clan to which they belonged.

It is important to note that most Polish coat of arms depictions consist only of a shield, a crest, a helmet, a crest coronet, as well as of a crest and mantling. Let us consider them individually.

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## SHIELD

In Polish heraldry little concern was given to the various forms of the shield. During the times of the *living heraldry* the shields of heraldic art were based on the examples of shields used in battles or tournaments. Polish shields followed the examples of the western form. From the 16th century onward the form of the shield in the coat of arms of paper heraldry, just as elsewhere, was heavily influenced by artistic fashion and style. They became characteristic of the beginnings of the heraldic decadence. The best examples of such shields can be found in armorials of Paprocki (see illus. no 7), Okolski and Niesiecki (see illus. no 8). From the early 19th century Polish paper heraldry was dominated by the 19th century rectangular French-style form of the shield. This form was probably popularised by Pawliszczew, who in 1853 published an armorial under the auspices of the Heroldia of the Kingdom of Poland. Because of its official character many people used it as the basis for further heraldic studies. This probably constitutes the reason for the adoption and the

use of shields similar in form in the armorial compiled later by Boniecki. In 1927 the same French-style shield was also given to the official coat of arms of the Republic of Poland which is still in use today.

Nowadays Polish heraldists tend to support the view that the shape of the heraldic shield should correspond to the epoque from which the particular arms came. Therefore, the arms of the old noble families are depicted in the 14th century-style - with the triangular form of the shield (see illus. no 4 and no 5). The round-based Spanish-style shield, on the other hand, is considered to be universal and as such can be used to portray heraldic achievements of any time period.

Just as in the Western heraldry, Polish heraldry also uses divisions and lines of partition, although, especially in the mediaeval heraldry such divisions of the shield were very rare. According to Szymański [53] who compiled a list of all known 274 [54] coats of arms from that period, (he used the end of the 15th century as a bench mark), the most common divisions recorded were: *per pale* (which can be found in 6 arms), *per fess* (4 arms), *per bend* (1 arms), *paly* (2 arms) and *checky* (2 arms). In later periods, divisions *per cross*, likewise known as *quarterly*, also became popular but were used distinctively for the marshaling of arms. The *quarterly* shield divisions were predominantly used on epitaphs, and in the 15th century could be found almost distinctly in churches. In Great Britain or Spain the marshaling of the arms followed strict rules, thus the *quarterly* division was set out as follows: in 1st quarter - paternal arms, in 2nd quarter - maternal arms, in 3rd quarter - arms of the paternal grandmother and in 4th quarter - arms of maternal grandmother. On the other hand, in Poland there was no rigorous observance of such rules - the displaying of the pedigree could have different arrangements. According to Kulikowski [55], most popular arrangements were marshalled in the following fashion: 1st quarter - paternal arms, 2nd quarter - maternal arms, 3rd quarter - arms of maternal grandmother, 4th quarter - arms of the paternal grandmother. He also suggests that in some instances in the 4th quarter the arms of paternal grandmother were replaced by the arms of paternal great grandmother. This was especially common when the paternal arms and the arms of paternal grandmother were the same, (as to avoid repetition).

In the 17th century, apart from the *per cross* division of the shield, another one became very popular - the *quarterly with an inescuteon* (5 fields). The heraldic achievement with such division of the field had to fit the following requirements: 1st quarter - maternal arms, 2nd quarter - arms of the paternal grandmother, 3rd quarter - arms of paternal great grandmother, 4th quarter -

arms of maternal grandmother, and in ineschuteon - paternal arms. It should be remembered, however, that since there was no rigorous rules for the marshalling of the arms, many other variations have been documented in the history of the Polish heraldic art.

A popular use of the *quarterly* and *quarterly with an ineschuteon* divisions can be observed by the 18th century when they were widely used not only in churches put also in cemeteries. Such was the fashion also throughout the 19th, but almost disappeared by the beginning of the 20th century. This is also the reason why the arms marshalled in Poland are predominantly associated with the heraldic sepulchral art.

Ordinaries that are common in the British heraldry, for instance: pale, fess, chequy, chevron, chief, or paly were very rare in the Polish heraldry. According to Szymanski [56], in the mediaeval times, the most common ordinaries were: chief (3 arms), fess (5 arms), pale (3 arms), bend (1 arms), bend sinister (1 arms), chevron (1 arms), base (1 arms), cross (3 arms), inescutcheon (2 arms), and bordure (2 arms). Other divisions, ordinaries and sub-ordinaries already mentioned were at that time virtually unheard of. This situation changed a little between the 16th and the 18th centuries when coats of arms of foreign origin began to be introduced into Polish heraldry by the ennobled or naturalised families. This was also because the Polish nobility did not want to blindly follow the foreign examples and so kept local patterns of design. This resulted in the formation of some unique charges in the European heraldry.

Most of those charges derived their origin from znaki ziemskie (the clan property marks), which are older than heraldry itself. Those property marks consisted of some simple line designs which represented combinations of straight and curved lines. While some, as it is suggested by Klec-Pilewski [57], were later transformed into charges which could be described in heraldic terms that are known to the Western scholars, (i.e., straight lines changed to arrows, crosses, swords, lances, etc.; curved lines evolved into crescents, horse-shoes, scythes, and the like), other remained virtually unchanged and totally unknown abroad. Such charges include: krzywasn (illus. 17.1), lekawica (illus. 17.2), cross osmorog (illus. 17.3), and rogacina (illus. 17.4). Since it is extremely difficult to define charges such as krzywasn, as such definition would sound a little awkward if formed precisely, i.e.: *a bend couped curved at each end bent in chief basewise and in base chiefwise*, one has to applaud the proposition of Mariusz Cybulski, the translator of the English section in the Szymański [58] armorial, who suggested retaining the original

linguistic forms of such charges. One would hope that with time such terms could be accepted by the Western heraldists and this way help to enrich the English heraldic vocabulary, as has been the case with some French terms in the past. One would hope that the term cross osmorog could be accepted on the same grounds as cross pateé.

Apart from adding to the heraldic dictionary, in my opinion, the acceptance of the described charges is crucial for the proper blazon of Polish arms, since most of the other unique charges are based on them. Endorsing terms *krzywasn*, *lekawica*, *cross osmorog*, and *rogacina* would allow for the blazon of other more complicated charges, e.g., *rogacina przekrzyzowana* (illus. 17.5), *rogacina dwukrotnie przekrzyzowana* (illus. 17.6), *rogacina przekrzyzowana i rozdarta* (illus. 17.7) and *krzywasn w lewo* (illus. 17.8.) could become, respectively: *rogacina crossed fesswise*, *rogacina double-crossed fesswise*, *rogacina forked in base crossed fesswise* and *krzywasn sinisterwise*. Other charges such as animals, birds, buildings, human figures and plants, rather popular in Polish heraldry were, according to Klec-Pilewski [59], also often based on the extremely ancient totems of different clans. In contrast, other foreign and exotic objects or fantastic beasts used as heraldic charges were utilised quite rarely.

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## CREST

The crest in the Polish language is called *klejnot* (German - *kleinod*, *helmkleinod*) or *cymer* (French - *cimier*). Its use became popular at the beginning of the 14th century. According to Szymański, we know only of 54 (19.5%) different crests used in all 274 known mediaeval arms [60]. This does not mean that the rest of the arms did not have any crests, it rather suggests that in Polish heraldry their significance was much smaller than in the West. This view is reinforced further by the fact that fifteen descriptions of those crests, according to Szymanski [61], come from foreign sources. This lack of interest in the crest had to do with the fact that in reality there was no stable institution of the herald and that the tournaments conducted in Poland were not as numerous as in the West. To make matters worse, our knowledge of the crests is seriously jeopardised because in the 16th century many then known original crests were replaced by lazy printers of the Paprocki and later the Okolski armorials with a standard form of ostrich and peacock feathers. Since then, almost one in every four heraldic achievements has some form of feathers included in its crest. Polish heraldry knows considerably more about

the crests of arms from ennoblements and naturalisations, where each grant was recorded by the Royal Chancellery. Kulikowski [62] suggests that this was probably because the Chancellery followed the example of its corresponding offices in the foreign countries and recorded detailed blazons of both the shield and the crest. In the Polish heraldry, some princely families did not use the crest and instead opted to rest the prince's crown straight against the helmet, (today this is considered a bad heraldry) or as a coronet of rank on the manteau.

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## HELMET

The position of a helmet had absolutely no significance in the Polish heraldry. Only nowadays Polish heraldists postulate that helmets should be orientated according to the position of the crest. Helmet *in profile* position, (such as used by an esquire in English

heraldry) is suggested when the crest consists of an object facing to the dexter side of the shield, i.e., Odemi-lion rampantą or a Owingą. Helmet positioned *affronté* is preferred when the crest consists of an object facing as in real life, to the front of a helmet, (or in other words, an object which should be looked upon from the front) i.e., Odemi-maną or Ostags attireą. Similarly, in the past no significance was given to the type of a helmet used. The pot-helmet, the great-helmet and the tilting-helmet were usually found in the mediaeval heraldry, while barred-helmet (silver with gold bars) became almost universal from the early 16th century onward.

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## CREST CORONET

According to Szymanski, since the mediaeval times, after the shield and the crest, the crest coronet should be viewed as the third most important component of any coat of arms of Polish nobility. As proof for such statement Szymanski [63] stipulated that 11 out of 54 known Polish heraldic achievements of mediaeval times (which include helmets and crest), include crest coronet. He also pointed out an even more important fact, that all information about such coronets come from Polish sources.

While the use of shields and helmets has not been regulated by the Polish heraldic rules, the use as well as the shape of coronets was nevertheless outlined precisely.

Polish heraldry knows several types of crest coronets, however, since the early 16th century only two of them have been used by the majority of szlachta members in their arms:

- a. the circlet which consists of three leaf and two pearl points set (most commonly) with precious stones and very similar in design to those of French marquis coronet (see illus. 19.1). This type was predominantly used on helmets, but it could also be placed straight on the shield; and
- b. the circlet which consists of five pearl points and also set with precious stones (see illus. 19.2). This type was used directly on the shield (not used on helmets).

Other types of coronets were specific of relatively very small group of titled families and included the following types:

1. baron's (baron) coronet - the circlet (set with precious stones) which consists of seven pearl points - similar to the more recent form of the German Freiherr or the Belgian count coronet (illus. 20.1);
2. Napoleonic baron's coronet - plain circlet, three times wound around with a string of pearls (illus. 20.2);
3. viscount's (wicehrabia) coronet - plain circlet which consists of three large and two small pearl points - similar in shape to the more recent form of the French vicomte coronet (illus. 20.3);
4. count's (hrabia) coronet - the circlet (set with precious stones) which consists of nine pearl points - similar to the more recent form of the German graf coronet (illus. 20.4);
5. marquis' (margrabia) coronet - the circlet (set with precious stones) which consists of three leaf and two pearl points, the latter consists of three pearls each grouped in trefoil. Similar in shape to the more recent form of the French, Portuguese or Spanish marquis coronet (illus. 20.5);
6. prince's (książe) crown - a cherry red velvet cap, turned up with ermine, scalloped into round pieces, enclosed by four-sided arches of the crown set with pearls and with blue Imperial orb and gold cross at the top. In Polish, this crown is sometimes called mitra, its shape being similar to the German Fürstenhut (illus. 20.6).

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## MANTLING

It seems that Polish heraldry has never been too concerned with mantling. According to Szymanski [64], this was because in reality Polish knights did not

include lambrequins on helmets. In the West the lambrequins were in practical use until the end of the 15th century. That was why the lambrequins were part of heraldic design from the very beginning. In the Polish heraldic art, on the other hand, mantling was introduced rather late. The first iconographic example of the heraldic achievement with mantling comes from the 14th century. Szymanski points out that of all Polish mediaeval arms recorded by him only 37 contain lambrequins, of which 13 do not contain any description of the tinctures. In the 16th century - the beginning of the period of Opaper heraldry - mantling became more popular. Since it was popularised by the armorial *Orbis Polonus* by Szymon Okolski it became an essential part of the heraldic achievement of Polish nobility.

ROBE OF ESTATE in Polish heraldry was used only by princely and some count, (only those who received special exemptions in the grant of the title) families.

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## WAR-CRIES

Together with other heraldic devices the clans also used war-cries, which had strong links with their arms. The war-cries varied in their origins; they were either topographical, or derived from the names, sobriquets or totems of their founders, or were ideological in origin. The names of the arms usually alluded to the charges of the field or to the crest. Sometimes the old war-cries were considered as sui generis names of particular arms, (quite a few of them still are).

According to Szymański [65], apart from the heraldic charges, the war-cry or the proclamation (Latin: *proclamatio*) was the most important component of the coat of arms of Polish nobility. In the Polish tradition, each arms had a name of its own which derived from those proclamations. The best examples of such *proclamatio*-arms (as they are known), are the coat of arms called *Leliwa*, *Topor*, *Lis* and *Jastrzebiec*. To some extent, in my opinion, such *proclamatio*-names replaced the role of the blazon. This was simply because most noblemen knew from their experience descriptions of particular arms just by evoking the *proclamatio*-name. Thus, most of them would be able to correctly visualise the arms *Leliwa* without describing them using their blazon: *łAzure, a crescent Or surmounted by a mullet of six points of the Same.*

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## **SUPPORTERS, MOTTOES and other accessories**

The supporters were introduced into Polish heraldry in the 14th century when they could be found on the royal seals of Jadwiga Queen of Poland and Wladyslaw Jagiello. However, supporters never became popular among the nobles, and as a result were associated only with titled families, (with the exception of coats of arms belonging to naturalised foreigners which were introduced to Polish heraldry).

Another rare accessory in Polish heraldic art is motto. The first known examples of this device come from the 18th century. Mottoes were used more widely during the 18th century and almost entirely by the titled nobility. The use of the mottoes was not restricted by any laws and so families were free to choose them. Some of the most famous mottoes are those used by Count Zamoyski - *To mniej boli* (It hurts less); Prince Sanguszko - *Z przekonania* (Out of conviction); Prince Radziwill - *Bog nam radzi* (Lord guides us); Prince Czartoryski - *Badz co badz* (Let it be what has to be); and Prince Sulkowski - *Tout pour la patrie* (Everything for the Fatherland).

During the reign of Stanislaw August Poniatowski other symbols - of rank and office - placed behind, under, or on the sides of the heraldic shield also became popular. For example: two keys crossed in saltire were placed behind the shield of podkomorzy (chamberlain), two marshal's batons crossed in saltire were placed behind the shield of marszalek (marshal), two swords in pale were placed on the sides of the heraldic shield of miecznik (sword-bearer) and two bugles were placed below the shield in the arms of lowczy (royal hunt master).

Finally, it should be stressed once again that in Poland the most important factor was to have a rank of a nobleman. The coats of arms did not have the same importance. Despite widespread written and oral tradition on the subject, there was a general lack of serious interest about them.

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**The following is the list of various sources and bibliographical material helpful in obtaining iconographical references on Polish Heraldry.**

### **Polish Mediaeval Coats of Arms in European Armorials**

1. Bellenville Armorial, ca. 1364-1386.



Author: most probably Geldre Claes Heinen.

Content: among 1,722 armorial shields, of which 478 with helmets and crests, 24 armorial shields of Polish knights, (2 arms were depicted twice, so in fact, only 22 arms) can be found.

Original: ?

Published: Jequier, L. (ed.), *L'Armorial Bellenville*, in Cahier d'Heraldique, Paris, vol. 5/1983.

Reports in the Recueil du I<sup>e</sup>le Congres international des sciences genealogique et heraldique, Liège 29 of May - 2 of June 1972, (article in French).

2. Wapenboek Gelre or Armorial de Gerle, ca. 1370-1386.

Author: Geldre Claes Heinen.

Content: among 1,755 achievements of arms in colour, 25 arms of Polish knights (this includes arms of 1 Hungarian and 3 Silesian knights who were owners of large estates in the Kingdom of Poland) can be found.

Original: Brussels, Royal Library, ms.15652-56.

Published: Galbreath, D. L., *La Suisse féodale d'après l'Armorial de gelre*, in Archives Heraldiques Suisses, vol.46/1932, (article in French).

Mikucki, Sylwiusz, *Rycerstwo slowianskie w Wapenboek Gerlego*, in Studia Zrodloznawcze, vol.3/1958, (article in Polish, concerned only with Slavic arms).

3. Armorial Equestre de la Toison d'Or et de l'Europe or An Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece and 15th Century Europe, early 15th century.

Author: most probably Jean Lefevre de Saint Remy.

Content: 53 armorial shields of Polish knights, in colour; depiction of the Polish king in the tournamental attire; as well as examples of civic heraldry (arms of provinces) can be found.

Original: Paris, Bibliotheque de Arsenal, no.4790.

Published: Larchey, L., *Armorial Ancien Equestre de la Toison d'Or et de l'Europe au XV siecle*, Paris, 1890 (article in French).

Pinches, R. & Wood, A., *An Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece and 15th Century Europe*, London, 1971 (there is an introduction in English to Polish heraldry by B. J. Klec-Pilewski).

4. Books of the Brotherhood of St.Christopher on the Arlberg, ca. early 15th century.

Content: among the arms of the Brotherhood's members, 12 armorial shields of Polish knights can be found.

Original: Vienna, Österreichisches Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

Published: Hupp, Otto, *Die Wappenbücher von Arlberg v.1: Die drei Original-Handschriften vom St.Christoph dem Arlberg aus den Jahren 1394 bis rund 1430*, Berlin, 1937-1943 (article in German).

Polackowna, Helena, *Księga bracka na Arlbergu w Tyrolu*, in *Miesięcznik Heraldyczny*, vol.10/1931 (article in Polish).

5. Bergshammar Armorial or Codex Bergshammar, ca. 1435.

Content: 3,388 arms with or without helmet or crest; 70 armorial shields of Polish knights, dignitaries and clergymen, as well as some examples of civic heraldry (arms of provinces) can be found.

Original: Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Bergshammarsamlingen.

Published: Raneke, Hans, *Bergshammarvapenboken*, in *Medeltidsheraldisk studie*, Lund, 1975 (article in Swedish).

Heymowski, Adam, *Herby polskie w sztokholmskim Codex Bergshammar*, in *Studia źródłoznawcze*, vol.12/1967 (article in Polish about Polish arms within the Armorial).

6. Armorial Gymnich (Lyncenich), ca. 1445.

Content: 46 arms of Polish knights (4 arms were depicted twice, so in fact, only 42 arms) can be found.

Original: Brussels, Royal Library, ms.II, 6567 (Fonds Houwaert).

Published: Heymowski, Adam, *Herby polskie w brukselskim Armorial Gymnich*, in *Studia źródłoznawcze*, vol.29/1985 (article in Polish about Polish arms within the Armorial).

7. Des Conrad Grünenberg Ritters und Bürgers zu Constanzer Wappenbuch or The Armorial of Conrad Grünenberg, 1483.

Content: 2 arms of Polish knights.

Original: Berlin, Private State Archives, Berlin-Dahlem, (contemporary copy: Munich, State Library).

Published: Stillfried R. von & Hildebrandt, A. M., *Des Conrad Grünenberg Ritters und Bürgers zu Constanzer Wappenbuch or The Armorial of Conrad Grünenberg*, Frankfurt am Main, publishing date unknown, (article in German).

8. Das Concilium co zu Constanz or Chronicle of the Council of Constance, 1483.

Content: 17 arms of Polish knights.

Original: ?

Published: Polackowna, Helena, *Najstarsze źródła heraldyki polskiej*, in *Archiwum Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie*, Lwów, 1924, vol. 1, pp.3-10.

Mikucki, Sylwiusz, *Barwa w heraldyce sredniowiecznej*, in Rocznik Towarzystwa Heraldycznego, Lwow, 1928-1929, vol. 9, pp.210-212.

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## Polish Mediaeval Coats of Arms in Polish Armorial and Other Sources

1. A Legend of St. Hedwig in Codex of Ostrow (in Polish: Legenda o sw. Jadwidze w Kodeksie ostrowskim), 1353.

Content: 8 arms of Polish knights, in colour.

Original: ?

Published: Stronczynski, Kazimierz, *Legenda obrazowa o sw. Jadwidze ksieznie slaskiej wedlug rekopisu z 1353 przedstawiona i z późniejszymi tejze treści obrazami porownana*, Krakow, 1880 (in Polish language).

Wasowicz, Tadeusz, *Legenda slaska*, Wroclaw, 1967 (in Polish language).

Braunfels, von W., *Der Hedvigs-Codex von 1353*, Berlin, 1972 (in German language).

2. The heraldic frieze from the Chapel of St. Jacob of Lad (in Polish: Fryz heraldyczny z kaplicy Sw. Jakuba w Ladzie), 1357-1372.

Content: among 21 arms, 17 are of Polish knights.

Published: Lojko, Jerzy, *Fryz heraldyczny z kaplicy klasztornej sw. Jakuba w Ladzie nad Warta*, in *Studia zrodloznawcze*, vol.22/1977, pp.125-150, (in Polish language).

3. *Insignorum clenodiorum Regis et Regni Poloniae descripto* or *Klejnoty Dlugosza* or *Armorial of Jan Dlugosz*, 1462 -1480.

This most important Polish armorial has survived in subsequent seven copies. Because those copies differ from each other, we list them in chronological order below:

3a. *Rekopis Biblioteki w Kórniku*

(Copy from the Library of Kórnik)

Original: Library in Kórnik, Poland.

3b. *Rekopis Biblioteki Zakladu Narodowego im. Ossolinskih*

(Copy from Library of Zaklad Narodowy Ossolinskih)

Original: Library of Zaklad Narodowy Ossolinskih in Wroclaw, Poland.

3c. *Rekopis w Kodeksie Biblioteki XX Chigich*

(Copy from the Codex of Library of XX Chigich in Rome, Italy)

Original: Library of Rome.

3d. Rekopis Letkowskiego

(Copy of Letkowski)

Original: Library in Wilanów, Poland.

3e. Rekopis paryski (Paris copy), known also as Herbarz arsenalski (Armorial of Arsenal), 1570s.

Content: 178 arms in colour (of those 118 belong to Polish knights). The other arms consist of ecclesiastical arms, civic arms, etc.

Original: Paris Library of Arsenal, no.11114.

Published: Polaczkowna, Helena, *Stemmata Polonica, rekopis nr 11114 Klejnotów Długosza w Bibliotece Arsenalu w Paryżu*, in *Prace sekcji historii sztuki i kultury Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie*, Lwów, vol.1/1927, pp.161-250 (article in Polish language).

3f. Kodeks Erazma Kamyna (Codex of Erasm Kamyn), 1575.

Original: Library of the Lvov University.

3g. Kodeks Erazma Kamyna (Codex of Erasm Kamyn), 1575.

Original: Library of Ordynacji Zamojskich in Warsaw.

Note: There are several reeditions of the Armorial of Jan Długosz, of which the most noticable are:

- Gorski, Krzysztof (ed.), *Banderia Prudentorum*, Warszawa, 1958.
- Friedberg, Marian (ed.), *Klejnoty Długoszowe*, in *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, Lwów, 1931, vol.10/1930.
- Muczkowski, Józef (ed.), *Banderia Prudentorum tudziez Insignia Seu Clenodia Regni Poloniae*, Krakow: Drukarnia Uniwersytecka (1851), republished by WAI F, Warszawa, 1979.

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## Polish Armorial (16th - 20th century)

Since the 16th century, almost all Polish *armorials* (English translation for the Polish term *herbarz*) have not only been covering heraldry, but also dealt with genealogy. Klec-Pilewski [66] suggests that the whole term *heraldry* was, and still is, often used in the Polish language to cover both subjects.

1. Arma Regni Poloniae or Herbarz Marka Ambrozego, 1562.

Author: Marek Ambrozy.

Content: 112 coats of arms.

Published: Marek Ambrozy, Arma Regni Poloniae, Antwerpia, 1882.

2. Herbarz rycerstwa polskiego, 1584.

Author: Bartosz Paprocki.

Content: armorial contains genealogies of Polish nobility and description of their arms where applicable, reprint of Polish 16th century classic, arranged alphabetically, supplemented by index.

Published: Paprocki, Bartosz, Herbarz rycerstwa polskiego, 2nd edition, K. J. Turowski (ed.), Kraków, 1858.

3. Orbis Polonus, 1614-1645.

Author: Szymon Okolski.

Content: this armorial was written in Latin. Its author based his writings on earlier published

works of Dlugosz and Paprocki (see above). As other Polish armorials, it contains genealogies of Polish nobility and description of their arms where applicable.

Published: Okolski, Szymon, Orbis Polonus, 3 vols., Kraków, 1614-45.

4. Herbarz szlachty Prus Królewskich, 1632-1654.

Author: Jan Karol Dachnowski.

Original: There are two original manuscripts written by Dachnowski, as well as the 18th century copy. In chronological order these are:

4a. Rekopis Biblioteki w Korniku (Copy from Library of Kórnik).

Original: Library in Kórnik, Poland, signature BK 474.

Content: Copy made between 1632-1648.

4b. Rekopis Biblioteki Narodowej w Warszawie

(Copy from the National Library in Warsaw).

Original: National Library in Warsaw, Poland, signature III 3143.

Content: Copy made between 1650-54.

4c. Rekopis torunski (Copy from the Archives in Torun).

Original: State Archives in Toruń, Poland, signature II. III. 13.

Content: Copy made between 1705-1716 (?).

Content: armorial contains arms of Polish nobility of the Royal Prussia province as well as some genealogical data. It was written in Latin and Polish.

Published: Pentek, Zdzislaw, Jan Karol Dachnowski: *Herbarz szlachty Prus Królewskich z XVII wieku*, Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN, Kórnik, 1995.

5. *Compendium (Nomenclator) or Herbarz rycerstwa Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego*, 1658.

Author: Revd Wojciech Wijuk Kojalowicz (SJ).

Content: armorial contains genealogical data as well as blazons of arms of the Polish noble families of Lithuanian origin. Supplemented by index of family names. In Polish it has been published under the title *Compendium*, and in Latin - *Nomenclator*.

Published: Kojalowicz, Wojciech Wijuk, *Herbarz rycerstwa Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego tzw. Compendium*; in Piekosinski, Franciszek (ed.) *Herold Polski*, vol.1/1897.

Kojalowicz, Wojciech Wijuk, *Herbarz szlachty Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego tzw. Nomenclator*; in Piekosinski, Franciszek (ed.) *Herold Polski*, vol.3/1905.

6. *Poczet herbów szlachty Korony Polskiej i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, 1694.

Author: Wacław Potocki.

Content: in essence this armorial has been rewritten in a rhyme form from the armorial of Okolski (see no.3). It contains 320 poems about arms of Polish nobility and royalty.

Published: Potocki, Wacław, *Poczet herbów szlachty Korony Polskiej i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, 1694.

7. *Korona polska przy złotej wolności starożytnymi wszystkich katedr, prowincji i rycerstwa klejnotami ozdobiona, potomnym zaś wiekom na zaszczyt i niesmiertelną sławę pamiętnych w tej ojczyźnie synów podana*, 1728.

Author: Revd Kasper Niesiecki (SJ).

Content: one of the most important genealogical and heraldic works in Polish bibliography. This four-volume armorial was arranged alphabetically by family names and by the names of the arms. Its genealogical and heraldic value was recognised in the 19th century by the heraldic offices of Polish partitioners, who used it on equal terms with other documents for registrations of arms and/or pedigree.

Published: Niesiecki, Kasper, *Korona polska przy złotej wolności starożytnymi wszystkich katedr, prowincji i rycerstwa klejnotami ozdobiona, potomnym zaś wiekom na zaszczyt i niesmiertelną sławę pamiętnych w tej ojczyźnie synów podana*, 4 vols., Lwów, 1728.

8. Herbarz wielu domów Korony Polskiej i W. X. Litewskiego, 1757.

Author: Stanislaw J. Dunczewski.

Content: this armorial which has a form of a compilation, was based mostly on Niesiecki's armorial.

Published: Dunczewski, Stanislaw J., Herbarz wielu domów Korony Polskiej i W. X. Litewskiego, T. I-II, Zamosc, 1757.

9. Herbarz szlachty Inflant polskich, 1778.

Author: this armorial is based on registration acts of the provincial Court of Dyneburg of 1778. Later, as part of the collection of the Central Archives of Vitebsk those acts were held in the National Archives in Vilnius (at least until 1939). A copy of those registrations was made around 1931 by Z. Belina-Prazmowski. Adam Heymowski published, edited and footnoted duplicate in 1964.

Content: this alphabetically arranged armorial contains arms and genealogies of 127 noble families of Polish Livonia.

Original: ?

Published: Heymowski, Adam, *Herbarz szlachty Inflant polskich z 1778 roku*, in *Materialy do biografii, genealogii i heraldyki polskiej*, Buenos Aires-Paris, 1964, vol.2.

10. Herbarz: Dopelnienie Niesieckiego, end of the 18th century.

Author: Ignacy Kapica-Milewski.

Content: armorial of the nobility of Mazovia and Podlachia, supplement to Item no. 7, arranged alphabetically.

Published: Kapica-Milewski, Ignacy, Herbarz: Dopelnienie Niesieckiego, Kraków, 1870.

11. Herbarz Polski, 1839-1845.

Author: Revd Kasper Niesiecki (SJ).

Content: this ten-volume armorial contains genealogies of Polish nobility and description of their arms where applicable. This armorial edited and published by J. N. Bobrowicz is a reedition of the Polish 18th century classic, Item no. 7. It has been updated with footnotes from DuYczewski, Krasicki, Kuropatnicki, Wieladek and its editor. It was arranged alphabetically and supplemented.

Published: Niesiecki, Kasper, Herbarz Polski, 2nd ed., J. N. Bobrowicz (ed.), Leipzig (1839-1845), republished by WAI F, Warszawa, 1979.

12. Herbarz rodzin szlacheckich Królestwa Polskiego najwyzej zatwierdzony, 1853.

Author: Mikolaj Pawluszczew, privy councillor of the Russian Tsar delegated to

Poland to compile an armorial of Polish nobility.

Content: this armorial published by the Heraldic Authority of the Kingdom of Poland, is viewed by experts as a publication of very low value, as it is teeming with various and serious mistakes.

Published: Pawliszczew, Mikołaj, Herbarz rodzin szlacheckich Królestwa Polskiego najwyzej zatwierdzony, 2 vols., Warszawa: Heroldia Królestwa Polskiego, 1853.

13. Herbarz Polski i imionopis zasłużonych w Polsce ludzi wszelkich stanów i czasów, 1855-1862.

Author: Hipolit Stupnicki.

Content: essentially it is a three-volume compendium of Herbarz Polski, Item no. 11.

Published: Stupnicki, Hipolit, Herbarz Polski i imionopis zasłużonych w Polsce ludzi wszelkich stanów i czasów, Lwów, 1855-1862.

14. Złota księga szlachty polskiej, 1879-1908.

Author: Tadeusz Zychliński (ed.).

Content: genealogical monographs of Polish noble families arranged alphabetically within each volume (31 volumes).

Published: Zychliński, Tadeusz (ed.), Złota księga szlachty polskiej, 31 vols., Poznań, 1879-1908.

15. Poczet Rodów w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XV i XVI wieku, 1887.

Author: Adam Fredro Boniecki.

Content: armorial of noble families of Great Duchy of Lithuania of the 15th and the 16th centuries. Genealogical and heraldic material published by Boniecki was based strictly on source materials, and therefore, was acclaimed as model for future scientifically orientated works in this discipline.

Published: Boniecki, Adam, Poczet Rodów w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XV i XVI wieku, Warszawa, 1887.

16. Księga herbowa rodów polskich, 1896.

Author: Juliusz R. Ostrowski.

Content: the role of arms of Polish nobility. The effect of over 20 years of research allowed Ostrowski to complete an unparalleled in Poland heraldic work which contains over 3700 b/w illustrations of Polish arms. The role is arranged alphabetically, (by the proclamatio-names used for Polish coats of arms) up to the letter "S".

Published: Ostrowski, Juliusz R., Księga herbowa rodów polskich, Warszawa, 1896.



17. Herbarz Polski, 1899-1913.

Author: Adam Fredro Boniecki.

Content: genealogies of Polish nobility and description of their arms where applicable. As in his previous work, Boniecki based his Herbarz on source material, (he included over 147 source type references; acts, documents, etc.). This armorial, arranged alphabetically, covers names beginning with letters "A" to "M" only. It has 16 volumes and 6 supplements. Other unpublished volumes from letters "M" to "Z", edited by W. Dworzaczek and awaiting publication, were destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

Published: Boniecki, Adam, Herbarz Polski, 16 vols., Warszawa, 1901-1913.

18. Rodzina: Herbarz szlachty polskiej, 1904-1938.

Author: Seweryn Uruski.

Content: genealogies of Polish nobility and description of their arms where applicable, based on the official registration of the 19th century, arranged alphabetically and covering names beginning with the letters "A" to "R" only, 15 volumes and a supplement.

Published: Uruski, Seweryn, Rodzina: Herbarz szlachty polskiej, 15 vols., Warszawa, 1904-1938.

19. Herby szlachty polskiej, 1908.

Author: Zbigniew Leszczyc.

Content: a concise one-volume armorial of the Polish nobility. It includes 440 colour pictures of arms. The new edition published by Paszkiewicz and Kulczycki is updated with an introduction in English, a list of surnames of Polish noble families and an index of arms.

Published: Paszkiewicz, Mieczyslaw & Kulczycki, Jerzy, Herby rodów polskich / Polish Coats of Arms, London: Orbis Books Ltd, 1990.

20. Tablice odmian herbowych, 1909.

Author: Stanislaw Chrzanski.

Content: the role of arms of Polish nobility, arranged by charges. It contains colour illustrations of Polish arms and names of families which used such arms.

Published: Chrzanski, Stanislaw, Tablice odmian herbowych, Warszawa, 1909.

21. Herbarz rodzin tatarskich w Polsce, 1929.

Author: Stanislaw Dziadulewicz.

Content: armorial of Polish nobility of Tartar origin of both Moslem and

Christian faith. Like other Polish armorials, it contains genealogical data. Arranged alphabetically.  
Published: Dziadulewicz, Stanislaw, Herbarz rodzin tatarskich w Polsce, Wilno, 1929.

22. Armorial de la noblesse polonaise titrée, 1958.  
Author: Szymon Konarski.  
Content: armorial of Polish titled families.  
Published: Konarski, Szymon, Armorial de la noblesse polonaise titrée, Paris, 1958.

23. Herby szlachty polskiej, 1990.  
Author: Slawomir Gorzynski & Jerzy Kochanowski.  
Content: *pocket size* armorial which includes 150 b/w pictures of most common Polish coats of arms and a list of surnames of Polish noble families.  
Published: Gorzynski, Slawomir & Kochanowski, Jerzy, Herby szlachty polskiej, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i Wydawnictwa Alfa, 1990.

24. Herbarz sredniowiecznego rycerstwa polskiego, 1993.  
Author: Józef Szymanski.  
Content: one of the most recent and most comprehensive armorials of Polish nobility of the mediaeval period. It contains illustrations and blazons of 274 arms used in Poland between the 13th and the 15th century. All entries have been painstakingly attained with source documents, iconographical references, bibliographical data, footnotes, etc. Parts of the armorial have been written both in English and Polish.  
Published: Szymanski, Józef, Herbarz sredniowiecznego rycerstwa polskiego, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993.

25. Herbarz mazowiecki, 1997-  
Author: Jerzy Lempicki.  
Content: the most recent armorial of Polish nobility. It contains detailed information on Polish nobility of Masovia. So far, only three volumes have been published. They contain: vol. I - Introduction, vol. II - Nobility of the Plock district and vol. III - Nobility of the Bielsko district.  
Published: Lempicki, Jerzy, Herbarz mazowiecki, 3 vols., Poznan: Wydawnictwo Heroldium, 1997-.

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## Notes

- [1] Although the word *nobility* is generally used as a counterpart of *szlachta* (as etymologically analogous and close in reference), it should be remembered that *szlachta* was a class of people for which there is no precise equivalent in English, (as noted by Monica Gardner in her biography *Kosciuszko*, published by Allen & Unwin, London, 1942, p.14). This will become apparent in the paragraphs that follow.
- [2] William F. Reddaway (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Poland*, 2 vols., London, 1950.
- [3] Andrzej Zajaczkowski, *Szlachta polska; kultura i struktura*, Warszawa: Semper, 1993, ch.1.
- [4] Bernard Klec-Pilewski, *Studies and Contributions to Polish History, Genealogy and Heraldry*, London, 1991, p.24.
- [5] *ibid.*
- [6] Norman Davis, *God's Playground: a History of Poland*, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- [7] *ibid.*, p.211.
- [8] Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of The Poles and Their Culture*, London: John Murray, 1987, p.51.
- [9] Andrzej Zajaczkowski, *Główne elementy kultury szlacheckiej w Polsce*, Warszawa, 1961, p.24.
- [10] Davis, *God's Playground*, p.153.
- [11] *ibid.*, p.214.
- [12] Zygmunt Gloger, *Encyklopedia Staropolska*, 2 vols., Warszawa, 1901, vol.2, p.586.
- [13] Lech Paszkowski, *Social Background of Sir Paul Strzelecki and Joseph Conrad*, Melbourne, 1980, p.25.
- [14] Tadeusz Korzon, *Wewnętrzne dzieje Polski za Stanisława Augusta*, 6 vols., Kraków, 1897-98, vol.1, p.320.
- [15] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.25.
- [16] Zajaczkowski, *Szlachta polska*, ch.2.
- [17] Davis, *God's Playground*, p.137.
- [18] Jerzy Piechowski, *Ukryte światła herbów*, Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1991, pp.125-7.
- [19] A very interesting account of the main elements of culture of the Polish nobility is given in already mentioned book by Andrzej Zajaczkowski, *Główne elementy kultury szlacheckiej w Polsce*, Warszawa, 1961, (unfortunately this valuable book is in the Polish language).
- [20] Richard Brzezinski, *Polish Armies 1569-1696*, 2 vols., London: Osprey, 1987, vol.1, p.6.

- [21] Andrzej Kulikowski, *Heraldyka szlachecka*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Chateau, 1990, p.22.
- [22] Jerzy Lojko, *Sredniowieczne herby polskie*, Poznan: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1985, pp.131-32.
- [23] Bernard Klec-Pilewski, *Remarks on the Polish heraldry in the Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece*, in Pinches, R. & Wood, A., *An Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece and 15th Century Europe*, London, 1971.
- [24] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.27.
- [25] Escutcheon - the shield or shield-shaped surface on which a coat of arms is depicted; the shield together with its armorial bearings; a coat of arms.
- [26] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.27.
- [27] Walerian Nekanda Trepka, *Liber generationis plebeanorum. Liber chamorum*, 2 vols., Wroclaw: Ossolineum, 2nd edition, 1995.
- [28] For examples of such illegal acquiring of the noble status see Zajaczkowski, *Szlachta*, pp.37-38.
- [29] Leszek Bialkowski, *Ród Czamborów-Rogalów w dawnych wiekach*, in *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, Kraków, vol. 4, 1923; see also Leszek Bialkowski, *Ród Bibersteinów*, Kraków: G. Gebethner i Ska, 1908; Leszek Bialkowski, *Ród Bibersteinów a ród Momotów godła Jeleniego Rogu w wiekach XIV-XVI*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1948.
- [30] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.28.
- [31] *ibid.*, p.29.
- [32] *ibid.*
- [33] Kulikowski, *Heraldyka*, p.26.
- [34] *ibid.*, p.27.
- [35] There were few women who were granted ennoblement: e.g., Katarzyna Czeplewna from Poznan, ennobled in 1504, granted Korab arms; Dorota Czimmerman ennobled in 1505, granted Godzieba arms; Barbara Skromowska ennobled in 1511, granted BoYcza arms; and Gertruda Ferber ennobled in 1515, granted Odrowaz arms. This last ennoblement is especially interesting because in the same grant of 1515 Gertruda's husband, Eberhart Ferber, and their children: Jan, Tideman, Jerzy and Barbara were also ennobled, but were granted different coat of arms than Gertruda. (Zygmunt Wdowiszewski, *Regesty nobilitacji w Polsce (1404-1794)*, in *Materialy do biografii, genealogii i heraldyki polskiej*, Buenos Aires, 1987, vol.9.)
- [36] Zygmunt Wdowiszewski, *Regesty przywilejów indygenatu w Polsce (1519-1793)*, in *Materialy do biografii, genealogii i heraldyki polskiej*, Buenos Aires, 1971, vol.5., p.19.
- [37] *Volumina Legum. Przedruk zbioru praw*, 9 vols., Petersburg 1859-1889, reedition Warszawa, 1980, vol.2, no.1239.
- [38] All acts of ennoblement and that of naturalisation were scrupulously

registered among others in:

\* Volumina Legum (printed volumes of Polish laws and constitutions laid down by Sejm; they contained materials from 14th to 18th century; unfortunately many entries do not contain blazons of arms);

\* Ksiegi Kanclerskie (volumes of acts registered by the Crown or the Lithuanian Chancellery; they contained exact copies of Letter Patents and, as a rule, most of the entries in those acts contained not only blazons but also pictures of granted arms);

\* Metryka Koronna (register of issued documents and dealings with public law carried out for variety of recipients by the Crown Chancellery from 1447 to 1794; almost all registrations were based on original documents);

\* Metryka Litewska (acts similar to Metryka Koronna, but kept by the Chancellery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from 1569 to 1794);

\* Sigillata (synopsis of documents issued by the Crown or the Lithuanian Chancellery).

[39] Paszkowski, Social, p.17.

[40] Stanislaw Dumin & Slawomir Górzynski, Spis szlachty wylegitymowanej w guberniach grodzienskiej, minskiej, mohylewskiej, smolenskiej i witebskiej, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1992, p.XI.

[41] Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN, 6 vols., Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Naukowe PWN, 1996, vol.2, p.742.

[42] Daniel Beauvois, Polacy na Ukrainie 1831-1863: szlachta polska na Wolyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie, Paryz: Instytut Literacki, 1987, p.7.

[43] *ibid.*, pp.10-11.

[44] Klec-Pilewski, Studies, p.29.

[45] Kulikowski, Heraldyka, p.31.

[46] Szymon Konarski, O heraldyce i heraldycznym snobizmie, Warszawa: Adiutor, 2nd edition, 1992, p.14.

[47] Zbigniew Góralski, Urzedy i godnosci w dawnej Polsce, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1988, pp.186-87.

[48] Arthur C. Fox-Davies, A Complete Guide to Heraldry, New York: Bonanza Books, 1978, p.449.

[49] Paszkowski, Social, p.14.

[50] Bartosz Paprocki, Herbarz rycerstwa polskiego, 2nd edition, K. J. Turowski (ed.), Kraków, 1858, p.324.

[51] Konarski, O heraldyce, p.14.

[52] Results of his research were published in Introduction to *Herbarz szlachty Infant polskich z 1778 roku*, in *Materialy do biografii, genealogii i heraldyki polskiej*, Buenos Aires-Paris, 1964, vol.2; and in commentaries to *Herby polskie w sztokholmskim Codex Bergshammar*, in *Studia zdrojoznawcze*, vol.12/1967.

[53] Józef Szymanski, *Herbarz sredniowiecznego rycerstwa polskiego*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993, p.25.

[54] *ibid.*, p.20.

[55] Kulikowski, *Heraldyka*, p.49.

[56] Szymanski, *Herbarz*, p.26.

[57] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.20.

[58] Szymanski, *Herbarz*, p.72.

[59] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.20.

[60] Szymanski, *Herbarz*, pp.48-49.

[61] *ibid.*, p.50.

[62] Kulikowski, *Heraldyka*, p.194.

[63] *ibid.*, p.48.

[64] Szymanski, *Herbarz*, p.60.

[65] *ibid.*, p.11.

[66] Klec-Pilewski, *Studies*, p.12.

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### Illustrations:

1. Portraits of Polish noblemen (in E. Cieslak (ed.), *Historia Gdanska* vols. 1 & 2, Gdansk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1982):
  - 1.1 Jerzy Ossolinski (1595-1650) Grand Chancellor of the Crown, copperplate by J. Falck based on an oil painting by B. Strobel;
  - 1.2 Łukasz Opalinski (1581-1654) Grand Marshal of the Crown, copperplate by J. Falck;
  - 1.3 Konstanty Ferber (1586) of a patrician family of Gdańsk. According to

Cieslak, Konstanty was a great grandson of Eberhart and Gertruda Ferber ennobled in 1515. Ferber family coat of arms is displayed on the right, while the arms of his paternal grandmother on the left side. See also footnote no. 35.

2. Polish Marshal; a woodcut from S. Sarnicki, Statuta i metrika przywilejów koronnych, Kraków, 1594, (in Z. Góralski, Urzedy i godnosci w dawnej Polsce, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1988).

3. Arms of Henryk Pobożny (the Pious), Duke of Silesia (1191-1241) of the Piast Dynasty, as recorded in the Legend of St. Hedwig in Codex of Ostrów, 1353.

4. Arms of the Ogonczyk clan. First iconographical records of these arms come from the Bellenville Armorial, ca. 1364-1386, Armorial de Gerle, ca. 1370-1386 and the seal of Piotr the Castellan of Lublin 1384. According to Górzynski & Kochanowski more than 210 families shared these arms.

5. Coat of arms Buzewoj, first recorded in 1353 in the Legend of St. Hedwig in Codex of Ostrów. These arms became extinct (disappeared from armorials) in 15th century.

6. Arms of the Odrowaz clan from the bookplate of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, 16th century. According to Górzynski & Kochanowski more than 160 families shared these arms, (in P. Trzeciak, 250 razy o sztuce polskiej, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa, 1969).

7. Arms of the Jastrzebiec clan from Herbarz Rycerstwa Polskiego by B. Paprocki. According to Górzynski & Kochanowski more than 650 families shared these arms. First seal with these arms comes from 1319. They were recorded for the first time in the Bergshammarm Armorial, ca. 1435.

8. Arms of the Gryf clan from Revd Kasper Niesiecki's, Herbarz Polski. First seal with these arms comes from 1366. These arms were recorded for the first time in the Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece, early 15th century.

9. Arms Jelita of the Wolski family of Stablewice from the armorial of J. K. Dachnowski, (in J. K. Dachnowski's, Herbarz szlachty Prus Królewskich z XVII wieku, Kórnik: Biblioteka Kórnicka, 1996).

10. Arms granted to Michal Andrzej Ginter (Günther) ennobled by Jan III Sobieski, King of Poland (1676-1692) in 1676.

11. Arms of Gutteter family naturalised in Kraków on 29 June 1543.

12. Arms Celejów granted to Marcin Klemensowski on 6 May 1851 by Tsar Nicholas I. It is interesting to note that Marcin came from an already armigerous family (sic!). Marcin's grandfather Jan Pawel Klemensowski registered his noble pedigree in 1782 with ancient Polish arms - Gozdawa.

13. Arms of Czudnochowski-Biegon ennobled in Prussia on 7 November 1786, (matriculation 22 April 1804).

14. Arms Prus I of the Wisniewski family. Tadeusz Stanislaw Konstanty Wisniewski (1824-1888) was granted a hereditary count title from Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austro-Hungary in 1876, (letters patent of 1877).

15. Arms of Jan Fryderyk Sapieha from a bookplate; beginning of the 18th century, (in A. Tlomacki, Sapiehowie: linia kodenska, Mada, Warszawa, 1966).

16. Arms Pogon Ruska of Princes Czetwertynski-Swiatopolk, an ancient princely family descending from Rurik.

17. Arms Topór of the Ossolinski of Teczyn family. Jerzy Ossolinski (1595-1650) Grand Chancellor of the Crown was granted a hereditary princely title from Pope Urban VIII in 1633, and similar title from the Emperor Ferdinand II in 1634. Similar title was granted to Jerzy's cousin Franciszek Maksymilian Ossolinski (1676-1756) from Louis XV King of France in 1736. Both titles became extinct in 1790.

18. Examples of unique Polish charges:

18.1 krzywasn

18.2 lekawica

18.3 cross osmoróg

18.4 rogacina

18.5 rogacina przekrzyzowana

18.6 rogacina dwukrotnie przekrzyzowana

18.7 rogacina przekrzyzowana i rozdarta

18.8 krzywasn w lewo

19. Examples of coronets used in Polish heraldry by szlachta:

19.1 used predominantly on helmets

19.2 used directly on the shield (not on helmets)

20. Examples of coronets used in Polish heraldry by titled families:

(in S. Leitgeber, Nowy almanach blekitny, Poznan-Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Adiutor", 1993)

19.1. baron's (baron) coronet 19.4. count's (hrabia) coronet

19.2. Napoleonic baron's coronet 19.5. marquis' (margrabia) coronet

19.3. viscount's (wicehrabia) coronet 19.6. prince's (książe) crown

21. Examples of symbols of rank and office used during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski:

(in Z. Góralski, Urzędy i godności w dawnej Polsce, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1988)

20.1. podkomorzy (chamberlain)

20.2. chorąży (standard-bearer)

22. Arms from Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece and 15th Century Europe, early 15th century:

(in R. Pinches & A. Wood, An Armorial of Knights of the Golden Fleece and 15th Century Europe, London, 1971)

1st row: Arms of Duke of Mazovia, Arms of Greater Poland, Arms of Lwów District in Ruthenia, Arms of the Jagiellonian dynasty;

2nd row: Arms of the Strykon clan, Arms of the Rawa or Rawicz clan, Arms of the Poraj clan, Arms of the Nalecz clan;

3rd row: Arms of the Odrowaz clan, Arms of the Sulima clan, Arms of the Topór clan, Arms of the Jelita clan;

4th row: Arms of the Niesobia clan, the oldest form of the arms of the Silesian Wierzbno clan, Arms of the Ciolek clan, Arms of the Rola clan;

5th row: Arms of the Swinka clan, Arms of the Lis clan, Arms of the Łódzia clan, Arms of the Koscieszka clan.

23. Arms from the Armorial of Jan Długosz, 1462 -1480:

(in J. Muczkowski (ed.), Banderia Prudentorum tudziez Insignia Seu Clenodia Regni Poloniae, Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytecka (1851), republished by WAI F, Warszawa, 1979)

1st row: Arms of the Amadej clan, Arms of the Belina clan, Arms of the Biberstein clan;

2nd row: Arms of the Godula clan, Arms of the Bogoria clan, Arms of the Bożezdarz clan;

3rd row: Arms of the Cholewa clan, Arms of the Cielatkowa clan, Arms of the Ciolek clan;

4th row: Arms of the Dabrowa clan, Arms of the Debno clan, Arms of the Dolega clan.

24. Title page from J. K. Dachnowski's Armorial of the Royal Prussia, (in J. K. Dachnowski, Herbarz szlachty Prus Królewskich z XVII wieku, Kórnik: Biblioteka Kórnicka, 1996).

25. Title page of A. Boniecki's Herbarz Polski, 1899-1914.