A Unique 14th Century Seal-Matrix from Giebło, Zawiercie District[1]

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A unique lead seal-matrix with majuscule legend: LUCIANI PRESBITERI belonging to a priest was found by the Romanesque castle church in Giebło. The name of its owner is mentioned in written sources from the years 1325–1327 as *plebanus ecclesie de Kebel*. As PRESBITER he probably didn't enjoy all privileges that the collator usually bestows on a parish priest on his property. Possibly for that reason he had his matrix made in an easy-to-process material, infrequently used for such objects in this part of Europe. The use of this raw material suggests someone who tried avoid the high costs of making the item.

Special attention is merited by the composition of a *fleur-de-lis* crowned with the cross engraved on the seal face that resembles a heraldic device. The repetition of a schematic lily flower on the reverse of the matrix shows the special importance of this sign (identified in medieval time with the Blessed Virgin Mary); this symbol was treated in this way by, for example, Cistercians. By presenting his name in the company of these symbols, Lucianus gave his seal strength and credibility.

KEY-WORDS: Giebło, Cracow-Częstochowa Upland, Romanesque castle church, lead seal-matrix, *fleur-de-lis*, gothic majuscule, presbiter Lucianus, heraldic signs

INTRODUCTION

A seal is a sign that authenticates a written message, sometimes used to protect valuable items, an idea well known already in the Near Eastern civilizations. Quite early on, the owner's name began to be placed on them and thereby the seal matrix was a kind of identifier, and at the same time it could have served as a talisman since mythological creatures and deities were often engraved on them (Przeworski 1938: 75; Grant 1991: 128; Ameri *et al.*, 2018).

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Among the peoples of early medieval Europe, unfamiliar with writing, seal impressions evoked a pious reverence towards the mystery protecting the document, which placed both the seal and the document in a sphere outside reality. This impression was probably sometimes even more important than the content of the script (Bresslau 1958: 689 ff; Mikucki 1960: 12; Szymański 1981: 47).

At the dawn of the middle ages, wax and metal were in use for sealing. For example, the papal chancery used bullae – metal seals mostly made of lead, but for important documents gold bullae were adopted. An important step in understanding sealing as an identification instrument was made in the year 1166 when the bulla *De fide instrumentorum* of Pope Alexander III, confirmed the idea of *sigillum authenticum*.[2]

Lead and wax seals appeared also in the early Piast state in the 11th–12th centuries. Already, five Polish lead bullae dated to the first half of the 12th century have come to light during the last 20 years and have been published (Jurek 2006; Sawicki 2007; Dębska *et al.*, 2008; Andrałojć and Andrałojć 2009; Hlebionek 2009; Suchodolski 2009). The allegedly oldest documents of a ruler of the Piast state, mentioning a seal (dated 1051–1054) comes at least from the 1130s,[3] even the forged seal was based on an original (Pac 2015: 6–7). But still the document for the cathedral in Bamberg, issued c. 1100 by the Piast duke Władysław Herman is considered to be the oldest Polish sealed document. In turn, the earliest preserved church document on which the seal has been preserved is the foundation document of the Cistercian monastery in Łekno from the year 1153 (Dobosz 2003: 74). Two documents of Sierosław II – the bishop of Wrocław originate from the end of the 12th century, the impression on them are considered to be the oldest seal of a Silesian clergyman (Krahmer 1935: 5).

SEALING BY THE CHURCH

In the second quarter of the 13th century, the practice of sealing documents became common. Not only papal, bishop, royal and princely letters were sealed but also documents issued by knights, townspeople and lower clergy (Krahmer 1935: 5–6; New 2019). The synod held in 1248 in Wrocław introduces the obligation for *offici* of the church to use a seal (Krahmer 1935: 8). In the mid-thirteenth century in Lower Silesia, most monastic organizations and the abbots, as well as the church clergy, had their own seals (Krahmer 1935: 5). The chronology of such changes in other centres of religious life in the

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[2] A *sigillum authenthicum* "should be well known and famous" – in the words of Conrad de Mure (Bedos-Rezak 2008: 4).

[3] Rycheza, the daughter of the north German duke Enzo and Mathilda, sister of Kaiser Otto III, married Mieszko II (1025–1032) the second king of Piast state, and stayed till his death (1034) in Poland (as a queen till 1032). She issued the two documents mentioned after returning to Germany and entering the monastic house in Brumweiler; so they are not connected with the Piast state but were signed by former queen of it.

Piast state did not differ much. In 1257, during the synod in Łęczyca, the parish priests were ordered to mark all correspondence with a seal containing the name of the church (Gromnicki 1885: 87). In the first place, parish offices signed documents regulating matters important for religious communities with a seal (Bünz and Kubin 2004: 44). There was also a second circulation of letters in the form of confirmations of bishop's ordinances, correspondence between parish priests, property confirmations, or benefits in disputed property matters, e.g., inheritance and division of property. Probably in such cases the personal seal of the priest managing the parish was used (Bünz 2007: 40–41).

The oldest medieval seal matrix type was a ring, a form already known in antiquity. A connection between the seals of antiquity and the Middle Ages might be the seal ring of the Merovingian king Childeric (458–481) found in his grave (Engler 1989: 243). Later, seal matrices were in the form of an incised metal slab, made of copper, copper alloy, and seldom of lead; sometimes, but rarely, silver and gold seal-matrices were used. This metal plate frequently had the shape of sharp-ended oval often called a mandorla, and these were used by representatives of the church, especially in the 12th to the first half of the 14th century (Schulz 1871; Krahmer 1935; Gumowski 1960).

THE FIND FROM GIEBŁO

A unique and well-preserved medieval seal matrix was discovered in the village of Giebło,[4] Ogrodzieniec municipality, Zawiercie district in the Cracow-Częstochowa Upland, a territory belonging to Lesser Poland (and administratively to the present-day Silesian Voivodeship; Fig. 1). It was found by the wall surrounding the churchyard of the Romanesque church of St. James the Apostle, 14.2 m from the southern wall of the church. The artefact was located at a depth of 10–15 cm under a layer of fine rubble mixed with humus. The place was originally occupied by the church cemetery, and both church and the former churchyard were surrounded by a stone wall from 1787, pulled down 10 years ago and replaced with a new limestone wall.[5] The church itself is considered to be one of the oldest surviving rural knight's churches in the historical region of Lesser Poland. Originally it had the form of an aisleless Romanesque square structure with a triforium in the western part, where the bell-tower was located (Fig. 2). On the basis of architectural features, the Romanesque church in Giebło was determined to date to the second quarter of the 13th century (Świechowski 2000: 56) although it is possible that it already existed in the middle of the 12th century (Kutrzebianka 1953:

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[4] Mentioned in medieval sources as Kebel (1325), Kepl (1335), Kbel (1336) and in 15th century Gyeblo (Leszczyńska-Skrętowa 1986: 724–726).

[5] The finder was Mr Leszek Dziaduch who handed over the seal matrix to the Silesian Provincial Office of Monument Preservation in Katowice through the author of this text.
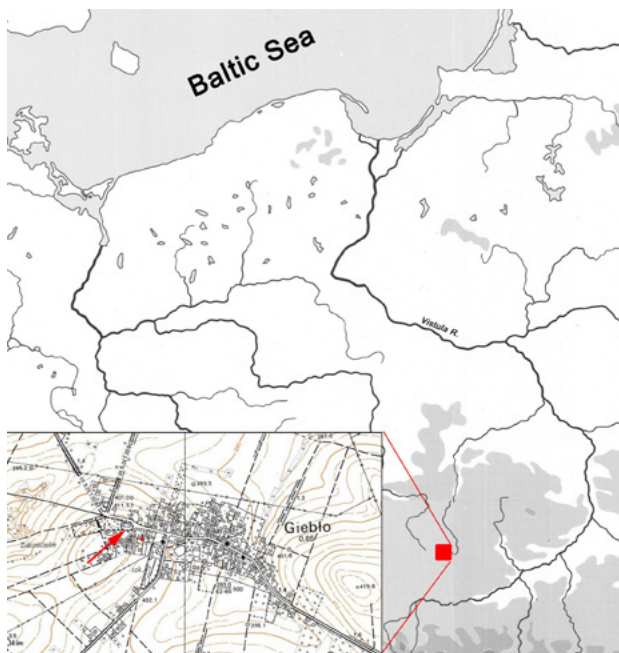
Fig. 1. Giebło, Zawiercie district. Location of the village and location of the discovery (arrow) and knightly seat (square). Source: Geoportal.gov.pl

Fig. 2. Old church in Giebło, Zawiercie district, Silesian Voivodeship bevor demolishing of the tower. Photo by O. Sosnowski.

36–37; Zachwatowicz *et al.*, 1971: 686; Pierzak 2014: 206). The structure was rebuilt and enlarged in the years 1911–1912, which unfortunately resulted in the demolition of the Romanesque western tower and its replacement with a new one. It is possible that during this great reconstruction, the seal matrix was moved with earth to the church yard wall. It cannot be ruled out that the artefact originated from the damaged tomb of a priest.

The seal matrix from Giebło is made of a lead alloy.[6] It has the form of an almond-shaped plate (mandorla) with a longer axis of 4.2 cm and a transverse axis of 2.4 cm, the weight is 24.9 g. The plate, 3–4 mm thick, is equipped on the back with a 9 mm raised rib running longitudally, provided with an ellipsoidal shaped pierced lug through which a cord, thong or chain was threaded.[7] The base of this rib is a slightly marked in relief with a *fleur-de-lis*. The face of the die is engraved with a *fleur-de-lis* crowned with a cross.[8] The inscription in Gothic capital letters on the face begins with an initial **+** and reads: *S*(igillum)*LUCIIANIPRESBITERI*. This indicates that the user of the matrix was a priest named Lucianus. The schematic engraved lily flower is separated from the legend by an engraved line (border), reflecting the arched shape of the edge (Fig. 3).

Fig 3. Giebło, Zawiercie district. Lead seal matrix – 14th century; a – the seal face; b – back; c – three quarters side view. Photo by L. Krudysz and J. Popielarz.

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[6]   No metal analysis was made but this was the opinion of the conservation workshop of the museum where the seal matrix is exhibited. Jacek Pierzak who describes this find in *Hertitage Conservation News* also concurs (Pierzak 2014: 210).

[7]   Currently, the artefact is in the collection of the Castle Museum in Będzin – inv. No. MB/A/1/2015.

[8]   Reading of the legend, starts from the top usually (Kittel 1970: 199–202); in this case, the lily flower would be perched on the cross; to have the inscription starting with the initial cross from the top, the *fleur-de-lis* should be upside down down (see Fig. 6).

THE LEGEND

Except for the smaller PRE letters, the letters of the inscription are more or less of the same height, but they differ significantly in width (Fig. 4). Romanesque and Gothic letters are mixed, which is typical for 14th century inscriptions (Trelińska 1991: 28). Apart from the closed letter "E", all other letters of the inscription are derived from Roman square capitals. Nevertheless, the typeface of some letters indicates that we are dealing with a Gothic script. The letter "I", bold in half, indicates an inscription made at the earliest at the beginning of the 14th century (Trelińska 1991: 33). Another feature of the Gothic letters are the wedge-shaped stems of "A, N, I, L, T". The drawn upper bar of the letter "A" and the thinned parts of the convexity of the bellies on letters "P, B and R" are also characteristic (Semkowicz 2011: 480–482). The character of the letter "E" is similar to an uncial script and is closed with a perpendicular line joining its ends. These features of the script allow us to classify the inscription on the seal matrix from Giebło to the early phase of the Gothic letter case, the duration of which was determined from the turn of the 13th/14th centuries to c. 1380 (Trelińska 1991: 33). Careful examination of the legend allows us to observe that the engraver working on the circumference of an object of a particular shape, made the letter "R" – located in the highest point – a little less skillfully, which stands out from the rest of the inscription. However, it is puzzling to see the use of the double letter "I" in the name of Lucianus. Is it a mistake of the engraver, or was this procedure aimed at marking some peculiarity of the name (lack of "J" underlined by a double "I"?). Most likely it was about the symmetrical arrangement of words along the edge of an oval object. Probably for this reason the engraver tried to lengthen the word by one letter to ensure balance in the inscription on the seal; it seems that keeping the letters of the same size and without introducing a "filler" in the form of an additional sign, a space between the cross separating the inscription and the last "I" of the word PRESBITERI ending the inscription would be difficult to complete. However, although the engraver who made the seal took care in equal spacing between letters and words, it was at the expense of the width of the letters. This is clearly visible in the word defining the church function – PRESBITERI, where, after engraving PRESBI the letters TERI are stretched and widened so that the closed "E" and extended "R" are as wide as the beginning of the section of the word with five letters – RESBI. The

Fig. 4. Giebło, Zawiercie district. Inscription on the face of the matrix. Drawn by L. Krudysz.

letter "R" itself, placed in the highest point, the least regular of the entire writing, is twice as narrow as the second R in this word. The engraver clearly assumed that the lowest, last letter of the inscription –"I", should be located at the same distance from the mark that begins and separates the legend of the matrix as the letter "S" stands for *SIGILLUM*. As a result, the distance of both letters from the cross corresponds to the spacing between the particular letters. Moreover, the placing of "P" without separating it from *LUCIIANI*, as if it were one word *LUCIIANIPRESBITERI*, also indicates that for the seal manufacturer the most important thing was the distribution of the letters along the entire edge, with no empty spaces that would disturb the rhythm of the inscription. The letters themselves fell victim to this compositional procedure, a kind of epigraphic *horror vacui*. At the beginning they are neat and regular, which indicates that the engraving was carried out in accordance with the content of the inscription and first was + *S.LUCIIANI*, and then *PRESBITERI*, later the letters lose their proportions. The question arises about the professionalism of the workshop and the proficiency of the craftsman. The engraver attempted to circumvent the spacing difficulties by doubling the letter "I", which took up the least space. The artisan's difficulty was caused by the large number of these letters. In both words "I" occur twice, so it is not surprising that one more letter was added to fill the space. Of course, with the precise drawing of the intended inscription, it was possible to evenly distribute the letters by using, for example, one more separating mark on the axis of the matrix (where the first letter "R" is). Despite all the imperfections, the craftsman coped with the difficult task and the inscription, as well as the sign, remain in complete harmony in the seal impression.

Increasing the length of a word by adding the same letter, and some flexibility in doubling the letters, was a common practice in the Middle Ages. This can be observed even on coin dies, probably slightly later than the discussed seal matrix. On one of the preserved coins of Kazimierz III the Great from the collection of the National Museum in Cracow, a circumferential inscription: + *GROSI CRACOVIENSESS* (Kałkowski 1974: 97, Fig. 70b) was engraved on the reverse, where the craftsman "lost" an S in the word defining the face value. The correct spelling *GROSSI* occur on the numerous Prague groschen and on a various coins of Kazimierz III the Great (Szwagrzyk 1973: 58, No. 150). The artisan added an "S" at the end of the name of Cracow, although the correct entry in the *genetivus* is CRACOVIENSES.

Even more interesting is the engraving of the 14th century seal matrix of the leather belts manufacturers containing not only the second "I" in the name of the capital of the kingdom, but also city name in a different grammatical case, which in turn lengthened the inscription by two places and the word – CRACOVIIENSIUM (Wyrozumski 1992: 333) was created.

Such examples of medieval epigraphy, revealing the commonality of duplicating or juxtaposing letters so that the inscription has the number of characters needed by the

engraver can be found relatively often in the 14th and 15th centuries. This procedure was also used by the workshop from which the Giebło seal matrix originates, especially since the "I" that occur four times did not facilitate the even distribution of the short inscription. Moreover, the letters, not yet understood by everyone, complemented the mark placed on the matrix and play the role of an ornament.

The owner of the seal matrix was *PRESBITER* Lucianus. In medieval church hierarchy till the end of 12th century, this was the title given to the parson (Wiśniowski 1969: 57), lat. *plebanus*. Later a person ordained to the presbyterate met the requirements for receiving the parish priesthood.[9]

In fact, a priest of this name was mentioned when calculating the amount that the parish of Giebło (then called Kebel) was obliged to pay to the Pope in Rome in the years 1325–1327. Thanks to the Peter's Pence census, we learn that the Kebel parish managed by Lucianus was estimated at 1.1/2 grzywna [half-pound], of which the levy was 1 skojec 19 denarii: "*Item Lucianus, plebanus de Kebel, de marc. cum dim. pro medietate decime presentis anni solvit I scot. et XIX den*" (Ptaśnik ed. 1913: 211). It is the first mention of this parish – according to historians – existing before 1250 (Laberschek 1986: 246) and the first historically mentioned parish priest of Kebel. We do not know more about this person.[10] Perhaps the matrix recently discovered permits a closer look at this individual.

The Giebło artefact indicates, that apart from various types of copper alloys used to produce seal matrices up to the 19th century, lead was also used as a raw material. It is not surprising that this metal was used in the area where mining centres were active since the 13th century, mainly around Bytom and Sławków, and in the 14th century in Olkusz and Trzebinia (Molenda 2001: 14). The lead that was commonly used in the Middle Ages to make roofing sheets, window cames, weights, goods seals and so on, was also used near the places of mining to make objects of greater value, including those with inscriptions. The use of lead in the case of medieval ducal and papal bulls and the recovery of five early Piast bullae provides support to this idea. In contrast to medieval continental Europe, in England this metal seems to have been commonly in use to produce seal matrices in the 13th century. According to New (2019), lead and lead alloy were "most commonly used for personal seal-matrices owned by members of the lower classes". The British collections confirm a great amount of lead matrices. The online catalogue of the British Museum collection of medieval seal matrices

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[9] The presbyter's place in the church hierarchy has not changed since the Middle Ages. The presbyter proclaims the Word of God, administers the sacraments and guides the faithful community entrusted to him by a bishop (Gigilewicz ed. 2012: 387–388). A clergyman of this rank was ordained higher than a deacon and lower than a bishop, and was subordinate to the bishop, differing only in the degree, and not in the essence of the priesthood (Pastuszko 2008: 39).

[10] Archival resources in Sosnowiec, Silesian Voivodeship – 50 km south-west from Giebło may perhaps have contained some documents signed by Lucianus, but they were burned down during World War II.

presents 68 items, made of lead, most of them dating back to the 13th century,[11] and almost all of them belonged to the non heraldic personal matrices (New 2019), depicting easy pattern like a star, or schematic plants. Sometimes a *fleur-de-lis* occurred on seal faces, such as BM 1988, 1006.16; see also examples in the Portable Antiquities Scheme.[12] Lead is soft, easy to melt, to hammer and engrave a sign which is not too complicated, needs not as special hardened tools as copper and copper alloy items. So the product should be not as expensive as in case of copper and copper alloy. For the priest from Kebel, the production costs could play an important role too, especially since in the times of Lucianus, the profession of seal engraver was not common, these craftsmen were sworn in, but did not create guilds, so the purchase of a well-made seal matrix could involve a considerable expense (Janowski 2013: 457). It is possible that it was a by-product of specialized engravers commissioning production to their students. More likely we do not have enough artefacts from that age, obviously this special product was not as common as in England. In the collection of the Cracow City Archives there is a lead seal die that in earlier literature was attributed to the alleged son of Duke Władysław II the Exile (Jelonek-Litewka 2009: 88) who reigned 1138–1146 but this claim is not credible.[13] In two other specimens – originating from Tyniec (Włodarek 1994) and Poznań (Dębski and Marciniak 2005) dated to the 13th century, only an admixture of lead added to copper was found.

FLEUR-DE-LIS

The repetition of the lily motif both on the face and back of the Giebło seal matrix seems to suggest the importance this motif for Lucianus (Figs 5 and 6). The lily flower motif, initially symbolizing Christ and later most often related with his mother Mary, was quite common in the iconography of Gothic sacral art (Foerstner 1990: 18). It is well known from matrices in British collections, as well as from nearer regions. In Prague, in layers dating back to the 13th/14th century, a circular seal matrix with a stylized lily on the face was found. There are a crescent and a star located on the sides of the lily. The name of the owner is visible in the legend: *MIKULAS SINEBERG*. According to the discoverer, the symbolism would indicate a member of the knightly class (Vysohlid 2014: 214).

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[11] Among them: BM 1987, 0403.19; 25; 28; 32; 34. BM 1988, 1006.7; 9; 16. Electronic document: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection, accessed August 16, 2021.

[12] The author saw in British museums in Guilford (Surrey) and Bedford (Bedfordshire) lead matrices from the 14th century belonging to members of the knightly class. See also electronic document: https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/q/seals, Rec.ID LIN-515DBD; SF-3Fc3B3.

[13] According to the information received from prof. Zenon Piech from the Jagiellonian University, this matrix is not credible and cannot be considered as an artefact from the period to which it is attributed.

Fig. 5. Giebło, Zawiercie district.
The face of the seal matrix – drawing.
Drawn by L. Krudysz.

Fig. 6. Giebło, Zawiercie district, present-day
seal impression, the probable way it originally
occurred on a document, with the initial cross
at the top. Photo by L. Krudysz.

The lily as a symbol of the ruler's dignity is also a principal motif in the heraldry of medieval France, popularized in Poland by knights and the court of Louis I of Hungary (1372–1384). Thus, the lily motif adorns many of Polish coat of arms, for example Gozdawa or Komar. In fact, knightly coats of arms, derived from simple family signs – usually a combination of an arrow, a semicircle and a cross – were created in the fourteenth century (Piekosiński 1896). In the course of their evolution, coats of arms occur that have the so-called the "nailed" cross, i.e., stuck or stamped. One of them is the Nieczuja (in the blue field, an *ostrzew* with nailed silver cross). This *ostrzew* or *ostrew* is an oak trunk with knots sticking out on the sides. Thus, we are dealing with a representation of a plant with a cross in the upper part of the picture, as in the case of the Giebło artefact. There are many such representations, crowned with a cross, that appear in the seals throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, starting with the seal of Mark, voivode of Cracow from 1220 (Piekosiński and Diehl 1899: 57, No. 48, Fig. 41, 68, No. 72, Fig. 57, 81, No. 94, Fig. 72; 95, No. 126–127, Fig. 97–98, 107, No. 157, Fig. 113, 158, No. 179, Fig. 179). The Komar coat of arms, presenting an inverted lily topped with a cross (a white lily, turned downwards, with the cross standing straight on it), is the closest parallel to the motif of a lily with a cross on the discussed seal (Niesiecki 1839–1845: 164–165).[14] Therefore, one of the motives for

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14   In all cases, as in the Giebło artefact, the arms of the cross narrow towards the main stem. In the

placing the lily with the cross could have been the suggestion of belonging to the prestigious, economically superior social groups. Was Lucianus a skilful maneuverer that suggested he belonged to a privileged group by using the symbolism of "a white lily with a cross standing straight on it" – as one could paraphrase the heraldic description of the previously presented coat of arms? This is only a hypothesis, we have no premises to prove the above considerations.

Authors publishing considerations on the origin of the medieval strata of Polish society indicate that the sphere of the medieval clergy was generally derived from the nobility (Piekosiński 1896: 37; Wroniszewski 2006: 238). Assuming, that in most cases medieval parish documents were authenticated with the personal coat of arms seals of the parish priests, in the case of Lucianus we can presume some kind of ancestral mark (Adamczewski 2010: 120). Even if the parish priest from Kebel did not belong to a distinguished stratum of medieval society, he would have changed his status of a lower born person by receiving ordination to the presbyterate. And the benefices connected with this position gave him the conditions of a well-endowed person.

It is worth emphasizing, however, the church in Giebło, in which Lucianus performed his pastoral service, is considered to be a defensive church (Wojciechowski 1912: 8; Świechowski 1990: 41). In the empora (*triforium*) in the western wall originally sat the *collator* (the owner of the estates in a parish).[15] It cannot unambiguously be stated who the owner of Giebło in the first half of the 14th century was. There are sources suggesting that in that time the village belonged to the property of a magnate house, using the Pobóg coat of arms[16] ("In a red field, a silver horseshoe with a golden knight cross nailed on the shoulder"; see Paprocki 1858). A knightly seat has been located nearby. Only 40 m from the church in Giebło, on the S-E slope of the hill relics of a residential and defence tower, built on a square plan with a foundation thickness of 2.05 m and a side reaching 14.70 m have been discovered (Kosmala 2000; Pierzak 2014: Fig. 2; 2000). The lack of clearly chronologically defined materials and the poorly preserved cultural layer make it possible to date the excavated building only generally to the first half of 14th century.[17] So it is very likely that this knight's seat already existed when Lucianus held his priestly service in Giebło. The contact between the parish priest and nobleman seems to be obvious. A medieval magnate as the church

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medieval heraldic description of the Nieczuja coat of arms there is a mention of "a studded Knightly cross".

[15] The *triforium* was located in the wall of the tower forming the western wall of the church, dismantled in 1911.

[16] The first owner of the village, confirmed in sources, is Piotr of Giebło, noted in 1394, grandson of Przedborz of Koniecpole, of the Pobóg coat of arms (cf., Sikora 1983: 24).

[17] According to Jacek Pierzak, the thickness of the walls and few pieces of pottery in the research excavations, suggesting a multi-storey structure from that time; later he suggested dating of the relics to the 13/14th century.

patron took care of the priest's salary, giving him a benefice, which included church land, tithes, and pastoral donation (Wiśniowski 1969: 71). His contact with the parson was inevitable, because he and his family sat in the empora during the mass.

Medieval seal matrices of the lower clergy are extremely rare discoveries, although already at the turn of the 13th/14th centuries, the sealing of documents by priests was quite common (Kozłowska-Budkowa 1950: 490–491). In German territory for instance, thousands of matrices had been used, but only a few were still preserved. Such items were destroyed to avoid them being misused to authenticate a forgery, sometimes they were put in the grave of the owner (Ewald 1914: 109; Bresslau 1931: 554–558).

Until now, the only discovery of a seal of a clergyman holding the office of a parish priest, which chronologically corresponds to the discussed Giebło artefact, is the ring of Przecław, which was found in 1958 on the site of the former Canons Regular abbey in Czerwińsk, Płońsk district, Masovian Voivodeship. The ring has a circular bezel engraved with a decorative letter "T" and the legend: *S.PRCCSLAI.CUR.CON*. Przecław, as *Curator* or *Curatus*, was a parish priest in a town whose full Latin wording could have been *Conecensis* (Chojnice) or *Coninensis* (Konin). According to the eminent medievalist, author of the note about this discovery, the typeface of the letters indicates at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries (Kozłowska-Budkowa 1950: 490). It is also worth mentioning the medieval seal matrix of the Dominican lector Jacob (Dębski and Marciniak 2005: 161–167) as well as the still unpublished discovery of a medieval seal matrix from Cracow.[18] Finds of this type are also rare in the neighbouring countries. There are references to two specimens from western Czechia in the literature. The first is a seal matrix that was discovered in 1985, during the archaeological research of the Pusperk stronghold in western Bohemia (Durdík 1985: 175–177), and a second, engraved with a legend: + *S.PETRI PLEBANI DE GLAThOVIA* from the early 14th century, used to seal documents in Klatovy parish, western Czechia, currently in the collection of the Kestner Museum in Hanover (Battenberg 1985: 199, No 72). The collection of the Town Archives of Arnsberg in Northrhein-Westwalen contains a bronze seal matrix dated 1300. It belonged to a member of the local aristocracy, Friedrich von Hüsten, the parish priest in Hüsten – the oldest part of Arnsberg in Nordrhein-Westfalen, district Hochsauerland (Gosmann 1992: 37–39). It is worth mentioning also the seal matrices of this type of the parish of St Peter in Döhren in Niedersachsen[19] and a bronze example of this type found in Banská Štiavnica of the *presbiter* Henry dated to the 13/14th centuries: *S*(igillum)*HENRICI P/RES/B/ITE/RI D/E/SELLINA*

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18   Information entitled: medieval seal matrix of the Dominican brother John – the archaeological context of the discovery and an attempt of historical interpretation, presented by dr hab. Tomasz Gałuszka OP and dr Dariusz Niemiec at the 230th meeting of the Polish Heraldic Society, Cracow Branch on June 10, 2019.

19   It is not a *sigillum* with the name of the priest, but of the parish: *S*(igillum) *EEC*(LESI)*E SANCTI PETRI IN DORNDE* with the impression of St. Peter on the face (Bünz 2007: 33).

(Labuda and Glejtek 2020). The above-mentioned artefacts of medieval epigraphy were made of copper alloys; there are no reports on a 13th or 14th century seal matrix made of lead in this part of Europe. This emphasizes the uniqueness of the discovery from Giebło. In the absence of such finds in Poland and abroad, it must be assumed that the use of lead in the production of this type of objects was not common in our lands. The fact that lead required a less proficient engraver is demonstrated by examples from British collections with simple, uncomplicated symbols, belonging to less affluent people, some of those items are listed above.

Kebel was located near the border with Silesia. The name Lucianus does not appear in the list of old Polish names, rather it is a name that has a tradition in Western Europe. It is possible that Lucianus came from Silesia and took over the parish in Kebel. He adopted a distinctive sign resembling a noble coats of arms as his attribute on the seal. No doubt we are dealing with a personal seal matrix. Medieval seals of parsons usually contain the name of the parish preceded by *de* (Bünz and Kubin 2004: 37–38; Sobel 2020).

As mentioned above, the lily is a symbol that expresses devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Finally, it should be mentioned, that it was a frequent motif on the seals of Cistercian abbots, because this order had special devotion to the Virgin Mary, who was the patron of this congregation (Mussbacher 1986: 151–177). It occurs for example on the seal of Martin, the presbyter from Osina, which is preserved on a document of May 6, 1312, issued in Otmuchów (now Opole Voivodeship, Nysa district), next to four other seals of the parsons (Sobel 2020: 45, 57–59, 64). A high similarity to the discussed artefact from Giebło may be seen here. The iconography of both of them involves a heraldic lily (*fleur-de-lis*), and there is another similarity in the content of the legend. The Otmuchów seal refers to the priest Martin himself: +S.MARTINI PRESBIT but not to his parish just like on the seal from Giebło, therefore both legends are identically individualistic/personal. They are also similar in belonging to individuals of the same function which, as we know for the times of Lucianus and Martin, meant only a ministering priest, not a parish administrator, i.e., a parson/parish priest (Wiśniowski 1969: 71). This is also how the author of the studies on the Otmuchów diploma presents it; accepting the thesis that placing the title *presbyter* and not a *plebanus*, as on the other seals of the discussed document, resulted from Martin's subordination to the Cistercian abbot in Kamieniec Śląski (Sobel 2020: 59). Did Lucianus have anything to do with the Cistercians? This is hard to determine. Jacek Pierzak, the author of the first extensive note on this find, draws attention to the fact that parsons often served various parishes. Therefore, he assumes the hypothesis that in order to avoid costs, sometimes a universal seal was made, not assigned to one parish, and that would have happened if the name was written on the seal matrix (Pierzak 2014: 205); in this case it would be *de Kebel*. The author of this text believes that the use of the word *PRESBITERI* might be more due to the restrictions imposed on Lucianus, as was in

the case of Martin, the presbyter from Osina Wielka. In both cases, the name of the parish is missing in the legend and, strangely, in both cases, a *fleur-de-lis* is depicted. Only the cross, which prompted reflection on the cause and symbolism of the depiction placed on the seal from Giebło, differentiates both images. Placing a cross on the seal face (apart from an initial cross in the legend) was an easy way to show that the seal's owner was a representative of the Church. Perhaps in this way, Lucianus also "secured" his seal by supplying it twice: with the basic sign of Christians and with Mary's sign, which was particularly important to him. In this way, by putting signs of Mary and her Son, which doesn't exclude a deliberate reference to heraldic signs, the presbyter Lucianus splendidly engaged with the idea of a *sigillum authenticum*.

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