
ADAM KOZAK*

[REVIEW]: *Iura vicariorum. Kopiařusz kolegium wikariuszy katedry poznańskiej*, ED. BY T. JUREK, FOLIA JAGIELLONICA. FONTES, 18, POLSKIE TOWARZYSTWO HISTORYCZNE, POZNAŃSKIE TOWARZYSTWO PRZYJACIOŁ NAUK, POZNAŃ 2023, PP. XLVIII + 816.

The late medieval cartulary of the College of Perpetual Vicars at Poznań Cathedral, traditionally referred to as the *Iura vicariorum*, has an incredibly complex and fascinating history that could even inspire a thriller. Founded around 1420, likely in the wake of the chancery reforms initiated in Poznań by Andrzej Łaskarzyc (1414–1426), the learned bishop and eager advocate of conciliary reforms, it remained in continuous use for over 250 years. During this time, it was supplemented with charters, primarily concerning the bequests of redeemable annuities for vicars and altars at Poznań Cathedral, but their subsequent redemptions were also carefully recorded. An index was even added to the book in the early sixteenth century, facilitating the quick retrieval of inscribed documents. By the late eighteenth century, when the manuscript had fallen out of everyday use, it had become the subject of the first scholarly studies. In 1784, an abbreviated summary of the manuscript was produced by Canon Mateusz Zymchanowski of Poznań (d. 1824).¹ The manuscript was later examined, albeit rather cursorily, by Stanisław Smolka (d. 1924)² and Adolf Warschauer (d. 1930).³ Surprisingly,

* Adam Kozak – PhD in history, medievalist and historian of law at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland; e-mail: akozak@ihpan.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-7601-5298.

¹ Poznań, Archiwum Archidiecezjalne, Ms CP 14, 600–47.

² S. Smolka, 'Archiwa w W. X. Poznańskim i w Prusiech Wschodnich i Zachodnich. Sprawozdanie z podróży odbytej z polecenia komisji historycznej w lecie 1874 r.', *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*, 4 (1875), 191.

³ A. Warschauer, *Stadtbuch von Posen*, Poznań 1892, 3.

documents from the cartulary were not included by the publishers of the *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*: Ignacy Zakrzewski (d. 1889) and his successor Franciszek Piekosiński (d. 1906).⁴ In 1925, the manuscript came under the care of the newly established Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań. The first director of this institution, Father Edmund Majkowski (d. 1951), even undertook to make copies of the oldest documents from the cartulary (issued before 1385). However, the work he prepared was never published.⁵ During World War II, the manuscript was initially hidden in the Capuchin friary in Lubartów near Lublin (400 km east of Poznań). However, it was quickly stolen by Nazi troops (autumn 1939) and taken to Berlin, where it disappeared without a trace. All attempts to determine its fate were unsuccessful, and the cartulary was therefore considered irretrievably lost, forcing researchers to rely on imprecise *regesta* by M. Zymchanowski and sparse copies by E. Majkowski. Meanwhile, in 2004, more than 60 years after the theft, the cartulary was discovered among Hebrew manuscripts in the Jewish Museum in Prague (identification by Olga Sixtová and Zdeňka Hledíková).⁶ However, the circumstances under which the manuscript came to Prague could not be determined. In 2007, the cartulary returned to Poznań, and two years later, its thorough conservation was completed. Now, fortunately, the time has come for its publication. Tomasz Jurek, a distinguished Poznań medievalist and experienced source publisher,⁷ undertook the difficult task of preparing an edition of the cartulary.

The *Iura vicariorum* cartulary consists of 557 *in quarto* paper folios (dimensions approximately 20 × 26 cm), arranged in 49 quires.⁸ The manuscript, which posed a significant challenge for the publisher,

⁴ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, ed. by I. Zakrzewski, I–IV, Poznań 1877–1881; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, ed. by F. Piekosiński, V, Poznań 1908.

⁵ The copies produced by E. Majkowski are preserved in his papers, see Cracow, Biblioteka Naukowa PAN i PAU, Ms 3519.

⁶ Z. Hledíková, 'Rukopis kolegia poznaňských vikářů nalezen v Praze', *Roczniki Historyczne*, 71 (2005), 201–16.

⁷ To mention here just a few of his editorial works: *Księga ziemiska kaliska 1400–1409*, ed. by T. Jurek, Poznań 1991; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, ed. A. Gąsiorowski, T. Jasiński et al., XI, Poznań 1999; *Landbuch księstw świdnickiego i jaworskiego*, ed. by T. Jurek, I–III, Poznań 2000–2007; *Metryka Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego z lat 1400–1508. Biblioteka Jagiellońska rkp. 258*, ed. by A. Gąsiorowski, T. Jurek et al., I–II, Cracow 2004; *Najstarsza księga promocji Wydziału Sztuk Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego z lat 1402–1541*, ed. by A. Gąsiorowski, T. Jurek et al., Warsaw 2011.

⁸ Poznań, Archiwum Archidiecezjalne, Ms CP 10.

has survived to this day with serious defects – the original binding has disappeared, the ink has faded on some of the folios (fortunately, the writing is still visible under UV light), and many (fols 270–365) have gaps caused by crumbling paper (now filled with paper pulp). Over 650 documents (and much less frequently, summaries) were entered onto the cartulary folios in several stages (circa 1420, circa 1490, 1520–1579, as well as irregular later additions). The documents date from 1284–1675, with three of the oldest dating back to the thirteenth century, sixty-eight to the fourteenth century, 403 to the fifteenth century, and the rest from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Almost all of the documents were written in Latin, with the exception of three privileges in German. As mentioned earlier, they primarily concern bequests of annuities redeemable for the College of Perpetual Vicars (certified by the starosts general of Greater Poland, the municipal authorities of Poznań, and Poznań vicars general *in spiritualibus*). The cartulary also contains judgments of ecclesiastical courts and the erection of altars in Poznań Cathedral (often served by cathedral vicars). The manuscript's content is therefore largely repetitive, but it also allows for a detailed reconstruction of the functioning of the Poznań College, which is important not only for regional research but also from a comparative perspective.

The publication, prepared by Tomasz Jurek, opens with a lengthy introduction (pp. VII–XLV). It discusses, among other things, the history of the Poznań College of Perpetual Vicars and the history of its archives (in 1218, more than a dozen vicars were already mentioned; in 1300, posts of perpetual vicar were established as separate prebends; the first records of an organized college date from 1360 and 1387). The publisher then moves on to present the cartulary itself (the history of the manuscript and its research, a detailed codicological description, its method of growth, and a discussion of numerous marginal glosses, as well as an index of documents added in the early sixteenth century). This section is supplemented by fifteen illustrations, which perfectly complement the study. Considerable space is also devoted to the characteristics of the documents included in the manuscript (chronological and geographical scope, issuers, and content). At the end of the introduction, Tomasz Jurek outlined the editing principles: the publishing instructions adopted in Volume VI of the *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski* were

applied;⁹ the manuscript was published in its entirety, in its original layout and wording (the subject of the edition was the cartulary himself, not the privileges entered into him); no abbreviations were made in the documents, ultimately facilitating research into their form. In the case of the index, various fonts were also used to distinguish between notes entered at different times. The introduction to the edition of the *Iura vicariorum* cartulary should be considered exemplary, as it goes far beyond the abbreviated descriptions found in many other source publications. However, not only the extensive research questionnaire but also the meticulousness of Tomasz Jurek's analyses deserve praise. Ultimately, the reader receives a complete monograph of the precious manuscript, which is a breathless read.

On pages 1–687 of the edition an index as well as 660 documents and summaries entered into the cartulary are published. Each document is provided with a serial number, date, a summary in Polish, information about any subsequent additions, and textual footnotes. These footnotes note, among other things, differences in the wording of a given document's text in the cartulary compared to the original or other surviving copies. The source text is generally accurate, although a relatively large number of minor errors and omissions are surprising, likely resulting from haste and insufficiently careful collation of the readings.¹⁰ It should be emphasized that none of these affect the understanding of the source. It is also worth appreciating that the publisher has tackled a difficult text, which has survived to this day with numerous defects (faded

⁹ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, ed. by A. Gąsiorowski, H. Kowalewicz, VI, Poznań 1982, XIII–XVIII.

¹⁰ To demonstrate the problems with the accuracy of published editions I collated a few documents selected at random. For example in document No. 52 the transcription is as follows: *Mey civis; ad festum beati Michaelis archangelis; subicientes*; though the correct reading is: *Mey civium; ad festum beati Michaelis archangelis* and *subicientesque*; in No. 92 it runs: *Santhocensis; Bloczesschewo; quibus dictis vicariis providus vir; singulis annis exigendas et recipiendas; et officiales Poznanienses; non alio*, though the correct reading should run: *Santhociensis; Bliczesszewo; quibus dictis dominis vicariis providus vir; singulis annis exigendas et repetendas; et officiales pro tempore Poznanienses and non alias*; in No. 377 it runs: *in honorem; grossorum; Kelczewo; Kelczew; tres missas, prima* though the correct readings should run: *in honore [sic!], grossorum grossorum [sic!], Kelczowo, Kelczow and tres missas, primam*; in No. 624: it runs *ratifficavimus; nobilis Laurencio Prziborowsky etc.* instead of *rafiffica<vi>mus* and *nobilibus [sic!] Laurencio Prziborowsky etc.* While collating document No. 213 no errors or omissions were found.

handwriting) and omissions, which have been meticulously reconstructed in the edition. The only questionable aspect is the publisher's decision to publish the documents of cathedral vicars *in extenso*, as their content is highly repetitive and often stereotypical. From the perspective of the publisher's workload versus potential benefits, it would perhaps have been better to publish only excerpts or summaries of documents from the cartulary. It is also worth noting that the scribes of the vicars' college themselves were sometimes content (most often at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) with entering only short summaries of documents into the cartulary, clearly recognizing that entering them in full was unnecessary and too time-consuming. Important additions to the edition include a chronological concordance (pp. 689–97) and a detailed index of persons and place names (pp. 699–809). Importantly, the latter successfully replaces the footnotes providing explanatory notes on all the individuals and places mentioned in the documents.

Tomasz Jurek's edition undoubtedly has a far-reaching significance. The *Iura vicariorum* cartulary is a rare example of such a comprehensively preserved collection of documentation relating to the college of the lower clergy, which is undoubtedly valuable for comparative research. It also allows for the reconstruction of religious life and the liturgical order in the cathedral. The publication itself can be considered almost exemplary, primarily thanks to its extensive introduction and excellent indexes. There is a small disappointment resulting from the insufficiently accurate collation of the published documents with the cartulary's manuscript. It is gratifying that the edition is available online in an open access format on the Polish National Library's website (polona.pl¹¹).

¹¹ Direct link: <<https://polona.pl/preview/e2fb2034-1b4c-4ee2-8fed-be9f217ecdfe>> [accessed 8 October 2025].