

Summary

"The History of Gniezno Craft Guilds" is the first attempt to present the history of craftsmen and their organizations from the Middle Ages to modern times. The elaboration consists of three parts. The first of them presents the history of Gniezno craft guilds from their inception until the first half of the 19th century, that is, until the Prussian authorities abolished the obligation to belong to a guild and introduced voluntary association in its place. In this part, attempts were made to determine the number of guilds operating in Gniezno in the 17th and 18th centuries. This was done on the basis of entries in the city council's books made on the occasion of the election of the guild elders. In addition, mainly on the basis of previous historiography, the functions performed at that time by the guilds, the path of craftsman's promotion from apprentice to master, and the history of the 14 guilds operating in the city in different years of this period were presented.

The second part discusses the history of the Gniezno guilds and craftsmen from the first half of the 19th century until the communist authorities reintroduced guild compulsion and top-down combining individual guilds into collective guilds. It presents the main problems faced by craft guilds in the interwar period and the conditions under which private workshop owners had to operate in conditions of imposed command and distribution economy. Particular attention was paid to the "socialization" of crafts imposed by the communists in the 1950s. This part of the elaboration, like the next one, is based mainly on archival sources, which have not been used in research by Polish historians so far.

Part three presents the history of Gniezno's craft from the creation of six so-called unified guilds in 1950 until the first graduates were released by the Gniezno's Craft Guild School in 2019. An ideologically motivated battle, which was waged particularly strongly until 1956, was described. The changes that the communist authorities introduced to the policy towards the craft movement in the following years were presented. Mention was made of the difficulties encountered by members of the Gniezno guilds despite the relaxation of the course in relation to the owners of private workshops. The final part illustrates the difficulties faced by local craftsmen after the introduction of the market economy in Poland and the restoration of the principle of voluntary association of craftsmen in guild organizations. The narrative was led up until the creation of the Gniezno's Craft Guild School and the graduation of its first graduates in 2019.

Attached to the work are appendices illustrating the transformations of the Gniezno guilds over the centuries, a list of older guilds, the statute of the Potters' Guild from 1522, renovated in the year 1700, examples of the 19th-century student records and excerpts, units of measurement, weights, distances, monetary units used in the past and scans of royal and municipal documents issued for Gniezno guilds, photographs of guild banners, guild insignia and scans of guild stamps.