

postulate of this essay is that research competencies must be continually broadened – especially by creating truly functional research teams with an interdisciplinary profile – or that, at least, wide-ranging consultations must be conducted. This programme, in connection with self-restraint and caution in formulating hypotheses and conclusions, is a necessary condition for stepping onto the fascinating path of discovering the hidden meanings of medieval buildings.

SUMMARY

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 BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING.
 RESEARCH ON GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE
 AS A BEARER OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT
 IN POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY
 OF THE LAST FIVE DECADES

The current essay pertains to a particular thematic trend in Polish research on medieval, especially Gothic, architecture, that is, its broadly understood iconography, interpreted as attempts to read the works of architecture as carriers of varied ideological contents. It must be emphasised that Polish achievements in this field, although not extensive in terms of quantity, stem directly from the main research currents in international scholarship of the last century. Admittedly, nearly all of those studies refer to issues of, at most, Central-European significance; however, considering the choice of subjects and specific research tools applied thereto, they may be perceived as an integral and representative component of the whole research yield in that particular area. Quite numerous and diverse are the results of research on the historical meanings (in the sense proposed Günther Bandmann) of medieval buildings in Poland, within the country's former and contemporary borders. It is noticeable that numerous works published by successive generations of historians of medieval art often pertained to the same key buildings or their regional clusters; this, however, is not very surprising, considering that these are, above all, the Gothic cathedrals and the few most important collegiate churches and parish churches, including those founded by King Casimir the Great, and the castles of the Teutonic Knights in former Prussia. The final postulate of this essay is that research competencies of art and architectural historians of the Middle Ages must be continually broadened – especially by creating truly functional research teams with an interdisciplinary profile – or that, at least, wide-ranging consultations must be conducted. This programme, in connection with self-restraint and caution in formulating hypotheses and conclusions, is a necessary condition for stepping onto the fascinating path of discovering the hidden meanings of medieval buildings.