

SUMMARY

The dissertation explores Gothic wall tabernacles and sacrament houses in contemporary Poland, focusing on their historical and artistic aspects. Serving liturgical purposes, these objects stored the consecrated Host outside the main altar. They varied in design, including wall niches with stone or painted decorations and more elaborate "tower-like" structures either freestanding or attached to a wall. Despite their cultural and historical significance, this type of artifact lacks a comprehensive study, prompting the current research.

Terminology poses a challenge, as various terms like "sakramentarium," "sakararium," "cyborium," and "tabernakulum" have been used interchangeably in Polish scientific literature. The dissertation adopts "sakararium" for precision. Wall tabernacles and sacrament houses in Poland originated during the Gothic period. The oldest extant wall tabernacles here date back to the second quarter of the 13th century, establishing the lower chronological boundary for this dissertation. The upper limit is defined by the first half of the 16th century. During this period, wall tabernacles and sacrament houses continued to be constructed in the Gothic style, but mixed Gothic-Renaissance forms also emerged. Their evolution and changing designs were significantly influenced by the development of Eucharistic devotion. Ecclesiastical regulations predominantly governed aspects related to the secure and appropriate storage of the Eucharist.

Wall tabernacles and sacrament houses were commonly positioned in the presbytery or occasionally in the sacristy. In the presbyteries of Western and Southern European churches, they were generally located on the Gospel side. However, in Poland, the Epistle side was also frequently utilized.

The dissertation encompasses 208 objects preserved in 206 churches. One of the assumptions of this work was to outline the similarities and differences in the formal structure of these objects, along with material preferences, across historically established Polish territorial units. Preserved historical material was discussed within the following divisions: Silesia, Małopolska, East Pomerania, West Pomerania, and Wielkopolska with Mazovia. The largest group comprises 137 Silesian objects, followed by 22 in Małopolska and 22 in Eastern Pomerania. West Pomerania has a slightly smaller group of 20 objects. In Wielkopolska, only three objects have been preserved, and in Mazovia, four. The dissertation focuses on the artistic aspect of the objects and the symbolism of their decoration. The analysis of these objects within territorial groups yielded interesting results, highlighting regional preferences. Distinct characteristics divide southern and northern Poland, attributed to regional availability

of materials. Southern Poland's wall tabernacles feature sculptural stone frames extending beyond the wall, adorned with metal grilles. In contrast, central and northern Poland's tabernacles are embedded within walls, often with wooden linings and doors containing the entire iconographic program. Silesian sacrament houses are primarily stone, Małopolska features a mix of stone and wood, while Pomeranians and Wielkopolska with Mazovia show a prevalence of wooden constructions.

Attempting a linear chronological presentation for dating purposes proves challenging, as forms repeat over decades and centuries. Simple-shaped objects are dated based on presbytery construction. Grouping objects into workshops yields limited success, with Silesian objects showcasing diverse types and distinct craftsmanship. Some objects in Poland exhibit affinities with those in German-speaking countries, suggesting potential cross-cultural inspirations.

This dissertation contributes a comprehensive analysis of Gothic wall tabernacles and sacrament houses, shedding light on their historical development, regional variations, and cultural influences in medieval Poland.

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