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From the History of Sigillography and Heraldry of Private Towns in Western Pomerania. A Case Study of the Seal and Coat of Arms of Łobez

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The heraldry of the cities of contemporary Western Pomerania seems to be well recognised, as evidenced by the fact that at least a dozen or so cities currently have Polish-language studies of the history of their coats of arms.¹ In many cases there are also older monographs, most notably Otto Hupp's fundamental work *Die Wappen und Siegel der Deutschen Städte, Flecken und Dörfer* from the end of the 19th century.² Particular summaries and synthetic presentations of the civic heraldry of Western Pomerania can also be found in the study by Wojciech Strzyżewski from 1999

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- 1 The status as of 2005 has been presented in the article entitled "Heraldyka zachodniopomorska w historiografii polskiej," in: *Wokół znaków i symboli. Herby, pieczęcie i monety na Pomorzu, Śląsku i Ziemi Lubuskiej do 1945 roku*, ed. Agnieszka Chlebowska, Agnieszka Gut (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2008), 16–17. In the following years, I authored several other monographic articles: "Rozwój i symbolika herbu Maszewa," in: *Maszewo i okolice na przestrzeni wieków*, ed. Agnieszka Chlebowska (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Hogben, 2008), 45–58; "Rozwój i symbolika herbu Nowogardu," in: *Nowogard i okolice na przestrzeni wieków*, ed. Agnieszka Gut (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Hogben, 2010), 111–120; "Herb Gryfic," in: *Gryfice – dzieje miasta*, ed. Tadeusz Białecki (Szczecin: Uniwersytet Szczeciński; Oficyna Wydawnicza Archiwum Państwowego "Dokument"; Gryfice: Urząd Miasta, 2013), 551–558; "Herb Koszalina z 1938 roku," *Scripta Historica* 23 (2017): 161–180; "Herb miejski jako medium społecznej komunikacji. Treści symboliczne herbu Kamienia Pomorskiego do końca XIX wieku," *Zapiski Historyczne* 85 (2020), 3: 5–34. I am also familiar with the unpublished expert opinions by Agnieszka Pawłowska on the coat of arms of Gryfino (German: Greifenhagen) and Jerzy Grzelak on the coat of arms of Banie (German: Bahn).
 - 2 On Pomorze, see Otto Hupp, *Die Wappen und Siegel der Deutschen Städte, Flecken und Dörfer*, Bd. 1: *Königreich Preussen*, H. 2: *Pommern, Posen und Schlesien* (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag von Heinrich Keller, 1898).

and Agnieszka Gut from 2014.³ However, the existing literature does not mean that everything is known about the coats of arms of cities as well as civic heraldry of the former Duchy of Pomerania, the Province of Pomerania or the present Western Pomerania. In particular, problems related to the uses and functions of civic coats of arms require research, such as, for example, the place of the coat of arms among other municipal signs (seals, burgher and guild coats of arms, trademarks in the form of lead seals or craft punches, border and mint marks, etc.), the communication function of the civic coat of arms, the use of historical (“German”) civic coats of arms on the so-called Recovered Territories by the Polish administration or problems, already signalled in the subtitle, related to the creation and functioning of coats of arms of private towns.

Posing new research questions, however, requires a new look at the source material collected so far, as well as – and perhaps above all – an expansion of its source base. This article is an attempt at such a broad approach, the aim of which is not only to determine the “correct” form of the coat of arms of Łobez (German: Labes), but also to answer the question of what influenced (or could have influenced) the changes taking place over time in the appearance of the seal and coat of arms of the town. Particularly interesting is the period from the moment of its chartering until the beginning of scientific heraldry, which in Western Europe dates back to the 17th century,⁴ whereas on its peripheries, including the contemporary Polish lands and Western Pomerania, of most interest to us, to the broadly understood 19th century.⁵ In the case of Łobez, this time additionally coincides with the moment of political transformations in the Kingdom of Prussia.

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- 3 Wojciech Strzyżewski, *Treści symboliczne herbów miejskich na Śląsku, Ziemi Lubuskiej i Pomorzu Zachodnim do końca XVIII wieku* (Zielona Góra: Wydawnictwo WSP, 1999); Agnieszka Gut, “Gryf w herbach miast, gmin wiejskich i powiatów Pomorza Zachodniego od średniowiecza do współczesności,” in: *Pod skrzydłami gryfa* (Szczecin: Zamek Książąt Pomorskich: Archiwum Państwowe, 2014), 70–87.
 - 4 Torsten Hiltmann, “Legenden im Zweifel. Die Frage nach Herkunft der Wappen und das Ende der mittelalterlichen Heraldik im 17. Jahrhundert,” in: *Kontinuitäten, Umbrüche, Zäsuren. Die Konstruktion von Epochen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit in interdisziplinärer Sichtung*, hrsg. v. Thomas Kühnreiter, Gabriela Schichta (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016), 309–329. For more on the origins of the scientific of heraldry in Germany, see Ludwig Biewer, “Wissenschaftliche Heraldik in Deutschland vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert. Einige biographische Skizzen,” in: *Vom Nutz und Frommen der Historischen Hilfswissenschaften. Beiträge der gemeinsamen Tagung des Herold mit seiner Fachgruppe “Historische Hilfswissenschaften” anlässlich ihres fünfjährigen Bestehens am 5. Oktober 1999 im Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin-Dahlem*, hrsg. v. Friedrich Beck, Eckhart Henning (Neustadt a. d. Aisch: Degener, 2000), 79–90.
 - 5 Beata Możejko, Błażej Śliwiński, “Najważniejsze momenty z dziejów heraldyki i weksylologii wschodniopomorskiej,” in: eidem, *Herby miast, gmin i powiatów województwa pomorskiego*, vol. 1 (Gdańsk: Oficyna Pomorska, 2000), 16–19; Agnieszka Gut, “Prawne podstawy pruskiej heraldyki samorządowej w latach 1918–1939,” *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne* 55 (2003), 2: 274–275; Henryk Seroka, “Heraldyka miejska w zaborze austriackim w świetle dokumentów cesarskich z lat 1785–1914,” in: *Herby miast polskich w okresie zaborów (1772–1918). Materiały sesji naukowej, Włocławek 5–6 grudnia 1996 r.*, ed. Stefan Krzysztof Kuczyński (Włocławek: Oficyna Wydawnicza WTN „Lega”, 1999), 51–66.

The need to expand the research material has resulted in the decision to use the *case study* method, which, although it will limit the analysis to the seal and coat of arms of one town, will allow full use of the available source material.

The source material, which so far consisted primarily of descriptions of the civic seals of Łobez contained in the study by Otto Hupp and Marian Gumowski,⁶ as well as Georg Sello's remarks on the beginnings of the town and traced copies of civic seals,⁷ has been broadened in this study. The author used not only descriptions by O. Hupp, but also his collection of traced copies and seal impressions and other notes made for *Die Wappen und Siegel...*, located in Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem, and containing i.a. traced copies made in the 18th century by Johann Carl Conrad Oelrichs.⁸ Another 18th-century collection of traced copies of civic seals, *Apparatus Sigillorum Pomeraniae et Rugiae Civitatum*, from the collection of Matthäus Heinrich Liebeherr, a well-known collector from Szczecin (Stettin), was also included in the analysis.⁹ The collection of seals and stamps stored in the State Archives in Szczecin was also used, which in coffer II contains wax reproductions of West Pomeranian city seals. In search of the original impressions of the seal of Łobez, three archival fonds stored in the State Archives in Szczecin, where more of them could have been expected, were also systematically searched. These fonds are: the Ducal Court of Justice in Stargard (Sąd Nadworny w Stargardzie), the Archives of the Dukes of Szczecin (Archiwum Książąt Szczecińskich) and the Regency of Stettin (Rejencja Szczecińska). In order to explain the changes taking place on the seals and coat of arms of Łobez in the 18th century, records of disputes between the town and its owners proved necessary. This evidences the fact that, apart from the iconographic material, one should also delve into the 18th-century history of the town and written sources, which – although in this case they do not provide direct information about the seal or coat of arms – enable the researcher to try to find the intention behind the modifications introduced to the town's symbolism. For the post-war period, the fond

6 Hupp, *Die Wappen*, 11; Marian Gumowski, "Pieczęcie i herby niektórych miast pomorskich," *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 15 (1971), 3: 124–127. For more on M. Gumowski's research, see Agnieszka Gut, "Heraldyka i sfragistyka zachodniopomorska w badaniach Mariana Gumowskiego," *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego seria nowa* 12 (2013): 147–157.

7 *Geschichtsquellen des burg- und schloßgesessenen Geschlechts von Borcke*, hrsg. v. Georg Sello, Bd. 1 (Berlin: J. A. Stargardt, 1901) (hereinafter: UBB).

8 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem (hereinafter: GStA PK), VIII. HA, I.9 Slg. Otto Hupp, Kasten I, Heft 11–15.

9 Landesarchiv Greifswald (hereinafter: LAG), Rep. 41 Plathe, ref. no. I 41. Recent research by Łukasz Koremba has shown that the collection could have been created between 1742 and 1749 on the initiative of Liebeherr himself, in the academic community of the university (Greifswald) association *Collectores Historiae et Juris Patrii*, see Łukasz Koremba, "«Apparatus Sigillorum» – nieznanne źródło do sfragistyki miejskiej Pomorza Zachodniego. Autorstwo, czas i okoliczności powstania," *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 35 (2020), 1: 5–21.

of the Voivodeship Office of Szczecin (Urząd Wojewódzki Szczeciński) was reviewed, although the search did not bring positive results, thus confirming the earlier findings of Bogdan Frankiewicz.¹⁰ Iconographic reproductions of the coat of arms of Łobez were also taken from the 19th and 20th century armorials, i.e. from the so-called New Siebmacher (*Neuer Siebmacher*),¹¹ from armorials by Otto Hupp¹² and Marian Gumowski¹³ as well as from two heraldic studies from the 1960's.¹⁴ Unfortunately, of little effect was the research on the legacy of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, containing, among others, opinions issued in the 19th and early 20th centuries in heraldic matters of cities by the Royal Prussian Heraldry Office (*Heroldsamt*), and stored in Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem, as well as one involving heraldic opinions of Szczecin archivists from the 1920's,¹⁵ which proves that the authorities of Łobez were not particularly interested in changes in the existing coat of arms of the town. The article has been supplemented with illustrative material that collects images of the town's seals and coats of arms until 2017, when the new graphic design of the historic coat of arms of Łobez received a positive opinion of the Heraldic Commission functioning at the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

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The problem of coats of arms of private towns in Western Pomerania is an unexplored issue, and it seems interesting on account of the research on mutual relations between representatives of the townspeople and town owners and attempts by towns to emphasise their "independent" position in the late Middle Ages and early modernity. Particularly interesting may be centres established by knightly families that did not exercise superior authority over a given area and had not created their own territorial dominion. In the case of seals and coats of arms of such towns, attempts at emphasising

10 Łobez belonged to the group of West Pomeranian towns which in the years 1945–1950 used the state emblem on their official seals, and not the pre-war civic coat of arms, see Bogdan Frankiewicz, "Pieczęcie miast i administracji polskiej na Pomorzu Zachodnim z lat 1945–1950," *Szczeciński Informator Archiwalny* 13 (1999): 82–83.

11 *J. Siebmacher's grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch in einer neuen, vollständig geordneten und reich vermehrten Auflage mit heraldischen und historisch-genealogischen Erläuterungen*, Bd. I, Abt. IV: *Städtewappen*, Vol. II (Nürnberg: Verlag von Bauer und Raspe, 1885).

12 Hupp, *Die Wappen*; idem, *Deutsche Ortswappen. Die Wappen des Königsreichs Preußen, Provinz Pommern*, n.p. and n.d. [the 1920's].

13 Marian Gumowski, *Herby miast polskich* (Warszawa: Arkady, 1960).

14 Tomasz Szczuchura, ed., *Polskie herby miejskie* (Warszawa: "Wspólna Sprawa" Wydawnictwa Oświatowe, 1963); Mateusz Siuchniński, ed., *Miasta polskie w Tysiącleciu*, vol. II (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1967).

15 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 479, No. 92, Bd. 1–25; Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie (the State Archives in Szczecin, hereinafter: AP Szczecin), ref. no. 753–755.

the degree of independence of the knightly/gentry town owners from their superior rulers can also be observed. That is the situation in the case of Łobez in terms of its seal and coat of arms. In the second half of the 13th century, in the Rega river basin, the Bork (von Borcke) family began the construction of a compact estate complex with the central seat in the Wulfberg Castle (now Strzmielo), where between the 13th and 15th centuries representatives of the family granted town rights to four centres – Łobez, Resko, Strzmielo and Węgorzyno.¹⁶

The oldest written records of Łobez come from 1271, when the knight Borko, *dominus de Lobis* was mentioned among the witnesses of a document issued by the Pomeranian duke, Barnim I.¹⁷ Before coming to Łobez, Borko was the castellan of Kołobrzeg (Kolberg) of Duke Wartislaw III of Demmin, and after his death (1264) he still remained close to the ruler who united both Pomeranian provinces, i.e. Barnim I. Under unknown circumstances and for unknown reasons, Borko moved from the Kołobrzeg region to the land of Łobez, where he received the town itself and the surrounding lands as a fief.¹⁸ The exact date of conferring civic rights to Łobez is not known, because the chartering privilege itself has not been preserved. However, it must have happened between 1271 (first mention) and 1285, in which, on 6 December, the town council of Łobez sent a letter to the councillors of Kołobrzeg, which they also sealed with its own seal.¹⁹ Rudolf Benl believed that the chartering could have taken place around 1280,²⁰ which indeed seems probable, taking into account the fact that 5 years later there was already a municipal council in town with its own seal at their disposal.

As a result of the chartering, Łobez was probably conferred the Lübeck law, which it certainly used in 1348.²¹ Since 1285, the existence of a municipal council has also been confirmed. The council also elects a mayor from among its members, which is

16 Eberhard Sauer, *Der Adel während der Besiedlung Ostpommerns (der Länder, Kolberg, Belgard, Schlawe, Stolp) 1250–1350* (Stettin: Verlag Leon Sauniers Buchhandlung Stettin, 1939), 198–212; Rudolf Benl, *Die Gestaltung der Bodenrechtsverhältnisse in Pommern vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Köln-Wien: Böhlau, 1986), 243–246, 250–251.

17 *Pommersches Urkundenbuch* (hereinafter: PUB), Bd. 2, Abt. 1, hrsg. v. Rodgero Prümers (Stettin, 1881), no. 942; Ernst Zernickow, *Geschichte der Stadt Labes in Pommern von der Gründung bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Labes: Otto Schimmelpfennigs, 1922), 5; Jerzy Podrański, “Z dziejów Łobza,” in: *Z dziejów ziemi łobeskiej*, ed. Tadeusz Białecki (Szczecin: Instytut Zachodniopomorski, 1971), 54–55.

18 Edward Rymar, “Pierwsze generacje rodu pomorskich Borków (XII–XIV w.),” *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 18 (2003), 3: 14–16; Wulf-Dietrich von Borcke, “Pochodzenie rodu von Borck,” transl. Gabriela Rutkowska, *Łabuź*, Numer specjalny (2002): 28–30 (reprint of: Łabuź, 1997, no. 23).

19 PUB, Bd. VI, bearb. v. Otto Heinemann, (Stettin, 1907), no. 4002. The existence of this document was only pointed out by Benl, *Die Gestaltung*, 246. Earlier, the year 1295 was considered to be the first mention of Łobez as *civitas*. That year, on 12 July, Dukes Bogislaw IV and Otto I decided on the border between the districts of the Duchy of Pomerania divided between them (PUB, Bd. III, Abt. 1, hrsg. v. Rodgero Prümers (Stettin, 1888), no. 1730). Among the many towns that belonged from then on to Bogislaw IV’s Wolgast domain, *civitas Lobese cum castro et terra* were also mentioned here.

20 Benl, *Die Gestaltung*, 246.

21 UBB, Bd. I, No. 205, pp. 205–208; cited on p. 206.

confirmed by the document of 5 February 1369, pursuant to which the mayor and councillors of Łobez sold an annual pecuniary annuity to the vicar in Kamień Pomorski (Cammin in Pommern).²² The same document, however, also confirms the close dependence of the town on the Bork family, because the legal act stipulated in it is made with the consent of the named members of this family, whom the town council calls their lords.²³ Nothing is known about the functioning of the council in the Middle Ages, and the first known names of mayors come from the 17th century.²⁴ Certainly, however, the town did not enjoy full freedom of action, which was limited by its owners – the Bork family. Even at the end of the 18th century, members of the town council, composed of the mayor (who was both a judge and a secretary) and two senators (one of whom was also a treasurer), although being elected by the townspeople, still had to be approved by the gentry owners. The Bork castle court also functioned as the court of appeal against the judgements of the municipal court.²⁵ The independence of the town was brought by the Prussian Municipal Ordinance announced on 19 October 1808, which abolished the division of cities in the kingdom into those directly dependent on the state and private cities.²⁶

Despite the fact that Łobez was a private town for most of its existence, it used its own municipal insignia, and above all the seal, which differed in appearance from the owner's coat of arms. As it has already been stated above, the first mention of the town council having its own seal dates back to 1285,²⁷ and another to 1369.²⁸ Unfortunately, the first of these documents is known only from a copy, while the original of the second of these documents lacks the seal of Łobez which has been destroyed.

The oldest descriptions of the Łobez seal known in the literature refer to the first half of the 15th century. Information about the first one is quoted by Georg Sello, who refers to a letter from Greifswald Professor Albert Georg Schwarz²⁹ dated 1745. The eighteenth-century researcher claimed in it that he had a traced copy of the town's seal attached to a document from 1420. This seal was supposed to depict a crowned

22 UBB, Bd. I, no. 235.

23 Ibidem, 240.

24 Gustav Kratz, *Die Städte der Provinz Pommern. Abriss ihrer Geschichte, zumeist nach Urkunden* (Berlin: In Commission bei A. Bath, 1865), 242.

25 Ludwig Wilhelm Brüggemann, *Ausführliche Beschreibung des gegenwärtigen Zustandes des Königl. Preussischen Herzogtums Vor- und Hinter-Pommern*, II. Teil, 1. Bd.: *Beschreibung der zu dem Gerichtsbezirk der Königl. Landeskollegien in Stettin gehörigen Kreise* (Stettin: gedruckt bey H. G. Effenbart [...], 1784), 322.

26 Alfred Wielopolski, *Ustrój polityczny Pomorza Zachodniego w XIX wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1965), 53–54.

27 PUB, Bd. VI, no. 4002.

28 UBB, Bd. I, no. 235.

29 Theodor Pyl, "Schwarz, Albert Georg," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 33 (1891), 223–226.

fox (sic!) and bear the inscription: *Sigillum burgensium in Labes*.³⁰ Another description of the seal of Łobez attached to a document from 1450 was provided by Otto Hupp. This researcher also knew this seal only from a copy traced by another 18th-century scholar, Johann C. Oelrichs. According to this drawing, the seal bore the inscription: +SECRET:CIVITAT:LABSS (diameter 40 mm) and depicted a wolf with a marked collar around its neck (fig. 1a).³¹ However, both of these descriptions – based on 18th-century sources – seem to be somewhat false. In Schwarz's description, objections are raised by the inscription in which the modern form of the town's name, i.e. "Labes" is surprising, whereas in medieval written sources the dominant form is "Lobese" or "Lobeze". In the case of Oelrichs's drawing, in turn, the existence of a collar on the wolf's neck is hardly credible, as it is certainly absent from the traced copy presented in *Apparatus sigillorum* (fig. 1b). It seems that this addition may be an extrapolation of the appearance of the Borks' coat of arms in the times when the drawing was created. In the 18th century, the Bork wolves actually did have collars on their necks, but this element was not featured on family seals until the 16th century.³² Therefore, it could not appear on the municipal seal in the 15th century.

Despite these reservations, it seems that the image of the wolf could have been included in it from the very beginning of the town's seal. The oldest preserved family seal of Borko himself already depicted two wolves – one above the other (fig. 2). At the beginning of the 14th century, crowns also appeared above the heads of these wolves (fig. 3, 4). Particular attention should be paid here to a fragment of Bork's seal from 1333 and 1338 (fig. 3). The oldest preserved impressions of the town's seal, which were found during the archival research, come from the mid-16th century.³³ They depict a leaping crowned wolf placed on a base, possibly with waves marked below it.³⁴ The stamp which made the impressions, however, seems to be much older and may originate from the 14th century. This seal is round with a diameter of 38 mm. The seal inscription was made with a capital majuscule typical of the 14th century with a characteristic round E and reads: +S:CIVITATIS:LOBEZE (fig. 5). A very similar typeface and spelling of the local name can also be found on the above-mentioned seal of Bork from 1333 and 1338. The silhouette of a wolf in the town's *sigillum* was also stylised in a similar way as on the seal of Bork. The same image appeared on the next known

30 UBB, Bd. I, 96–97.

31 Hupp, *Die Wappen*, 11.

32 UBB, Bd. I, 21.

33 AP Szczecin, Sąd Nadworny w Stargardzie (the Ducal Court of Justice in Stargard), ref. no. 506, no pagination (1550), ref. no. 516, no pagination (1553), ref. no. 565, no pagination (1569, 1572). This seal has not been recorded in the literature.

34 They are only visible on the impression of 1572.

seal, the oldest impression of which dates back to 1630,³⁵ and the last recorded to 1748 and 1750.³⁶ This seal, with the inscription +LABESS.SIGILLUM.CIVITATIS (26 mm), depicts a crowned wolf striding to the heraldic left (sinister) (fig. 6).

New stamps with a modified seal image appeared in the second half of the 18th century. In three of them, a new element appeared in the seal field in the form of the date 1400 placed above the crowned striding wolf. Compared to the earlier period, the waves of the river at the base of the field have also been replaced by a grassy hill. On all three, the inscription is placed in a semicircle above the drawing and reads SIGILLUM CIVITATIS LABES. Two of these seals – recorded in the literature – have an oval shape (30x27 mm and 23x21 mm, respectively) (fig. 7, 8)³⁷ while the third one is probably round (approx. 21 mm).³⁸

In 1777, another new oval stamp (26x23 mm) was made with the inscription [rosette] SIGILLUM:CIVITATIS:LABES [rosette] 1777 (fig. 9).³⁹ A heraldic shield was placed in the seal field, on which a crowned wolf was depicted on a grassy base, walking towards the heraldic right (dexter) side. Above the shield there is also an additional crown with seven (five?) fleurons. This seal was still in use in the 19th century – with a fairly high frequency until the mid-1820's, but occasionally also later.⁴⁰

At that time, Ludwik W. Brüggemann wrote that “Das Wapen der Stadt bestehet in einem gekrönten laufenden Wolfe.”⁴¹ On one of the seals, hatching is visible in the seal field, which indicated that the tincture of the field of the coat of arms was gold.⁴² However, all tinctures of the coat of arms were shown only in 1885 in the “New Siebmacher” in the volume devoted to cities, in which it was stated that since the running wolf comes from the Bork coat of arms, it must be red and placed in a gold field.⁴³

35 AP Szczecin, Archiwum Książąt Szczecińskich (the Archives of the Dukes of Szczecin, hereinafter AKS), ref. no. II/2052, f. 30.

36 Gumowski, “Pieczęcie i herby,” 125; AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. I/5811, f. 9.

37 AP Szczecin, Zbiór pieczęci i tłoków pieczętnych (Collection of seals and stamps) – seal impressions, coffer II (hereinafter: Collection of seals), No. 274, 276; UBB, Bd. I, 97; Gumowski, “Pieczęcie i herby,” 125–126. According to information from Sello, the stamp of the smaller seal (fig. 8) still existed even at the beginning of the 20th century (UBB, Bd. I, 97), and the seal itself was still used by the town in 1824. AP Szczecin, Rejencja Szczecińska (the Regency of Stettin, hereinafter: RS), ref. no. I/3219, f. 6, f. 12; ref. no. I/2666, f. 16).

38 In the sources found, this seal was used as a closing seal and all its impressions have been broken, which makes it difficult to determine its shape. The seal was found on documents from 1789–1802. AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. I/5818, f. 247 (1789); ref. no. I/5819: f. 32, 58, 59 (1790), f. 261 (1797); ref. no. I/5820: f. 321 (1801), f. 380, 381 (1802).

39 Hupp, *Die Wappen*, 11; Gumowski, “Pieczęcie i herby,” 127; AP Szczecin, Collection of seals, no. 275.

40 AP Szczecin, RS, ref. no. I/3237 (years 1815–1822), ref. no. I/2639 (years 1812–1823), ref. no. I/3225 (1887).

41 Brüggemann, *Ausführliche*, 324.

42 AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. I/5818, f. 247.

43 *J. Siebmacher's*, 151.

This is how it was presented in the illustration included in the present study, where the colours were rendered using conventional graphic signs (fig. 14). These colours were recorded in the municipal armorial of Otto Hupp⁴⁴ (fig. 15). The coat of arms of Łobez has been presented in the same colours in all subsequent heraldic publications created after 1945.

The source material presented so far shows, in fact, the permanence of the image on the seal as well as the coat of arms of Łobez in the period when the town was in private hands. It is an abated knightly coat of arms of the town's owners. In the context of mutual relations between the town and its direct overlords, the iconography of the seal indicates the town's dependence on its owner and founder. Emblems of knightly owners were a typical image in the insignia of medieval private towns, most often in combination with other iconographic motifs symbolising other elements important for medieval cities, such as city walls, patron saints or symbols related to their natural and economic landscape. In the case of Łobez, such an element is the waves at the base of the seal's field, which symbolise the River Rega flowing through the town as a characteristic element of the landscape.

From the point of view of mutual relations between the town council and its owners, however, the changes that occur in the seal image in the mid-18th century are more interesting. The newly added element on the seals which draws special attention is the date 1400, which appeared almost throughout the entire subsequent period, until 1945. Marian Gumowski, who did not know the history of the town very well, considered this date mysterious and tried to relate it to the extinction of the Bork family,⁴⁵ although – as we know – this family lives to this day. The mystery of this date was to some extent solved by the German historian of the town, Ernst Zernickow, who linked it with the oldest document kept in the municipal archives of Łobez. It was a transumpt issued by Duke Bogislaw XIV in 1623, in which the duke confirmed an older document issued by nine representatives of the Bork family as a confirmation of all previous privileges, rights and possessions. In the transumpt, this document was dated 3 May 1400. In the opinion of the town's inhabitants, it was also the oldest historically confirmed date in the history of Łobez, and therefore it was placed on the seal and in the coat of arms.⁴⁶ The date 1400 was not removed from the seal image or the coat of arms, when the research of historians from the late 19th century showed that the confirmation of the town's rights made by the Borks was rather issued in 1460.⁴⁷

44 Hupp, *Die Wappen*, 11; idem, *Deutsche*.

45 Gumowski, "Pieczęcie i herby," 125–126. On p. 127, he writes that the last of the family was Sidonia von Borcke, which is obviously a mistake.

46 Zernickow, *Geschichte*, 14–15.

47 Kratz, *Die Städte*, 241; UBB, Bd. I, 331; UBB, Bd. II, 151.

The appearance of this date on civic seals in the mid-18th century seems to be no accident. It is not only about the desire of the townspeople of Łobez to refer to the oldest history of the town, as Zernickow interpreted this addition on the seals and in the coat of arms. The introduction of the date 1400 in the field of the seal can be associated with a great dispute between the town council of Łobez and the owners of the town, i.e. the von Borcke family, which began in 1750 and lasted formally until 1753, but effectively ended only in 1777.⁴⁸ The main issue was the method of selecting and approving the new managing mayor, whom the townspeople wanted to elect independently without any involvement of the town's owners. As an argument in the dispute, the town used the transumpt from 1623, in which the privilege dated back to 1400 was repeated.⁴⁹ The new seals, in which this date was placed, seem to be a propaganda element of the fight waged by the town, and especially by the new mayor – Johann Gottfried Severin (elected in 1752), with the line of the von Borcke family, to which Łobez belonged.

A unique seal made in 1777 can also be hypothetically associated with Johann Gottfried Severin. His figure seems to be extremely interesting in the history of the eighteenth-century Łobez, although it requires more detailed research. However, even the analysis of the letters preserved in connection with the above-mentioned dispute shows that he played a huge role as mayor in the conflict with the Borks. He attempted to secure more funding from the owners to maintain order and security in the town, and he even informed the king himself about the despicable condition of Łobez during his visit to Stargard in 1774. There are many indications that Severin proved at least “a great nuisance” for the Borks. However, to explain the seal with the date 1777 (fig. 9) the most significant fact to take into account is that Johann Gottfried Severin died on the night of 8/9 February 1777.⁵⁰ The process of selecting a new mayor then began, and Samuel Jancke was elected on 1 May 1777. However, it took almost two months for the Borks to approve this result.⁵¹ In the absence of direct information, the making of a new stamp can only be hypothetically related to these events. However, both the date placed in the rim and the appearance of the seal image itself – a wolf placed in the field of the shield topped with a crown – suggest that it was created this time on the initiative of the von Borcke family, the owners of Łobez, and was a propaganda response to the seals with the date 1400.

The date 1400 – although it no longer performed a propaganda function – was on the new seals of Łobez, which were created in the 19th and 20th centuries. None of them

48 AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. I/5809, I/5811, passim. Cf. Brüggemann, *Ausführliche*, 322; Heinrich Berghaus, *Landbuch des Herzogthums Pommern und des Fürstenthums Rügen*, II. Teil, Bd. VII (Berlin–Wriesen a/O.: Verlag von F. Riemschneider, 1874), 135.

49 AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. I/5809, 29–36.

50 *Ibidem*, 122–129.

51 *Ibidem*, 130–162.

was a heraldic seal and all were based on 18th-century *sigilla*. They differed only in shape and small details of the drawing. For the mid-nineteenth century, fragments of a seal with the inscription [...] STADTVERORDNETEN [...] were found, displaying the date 1400 and a crowned wolf's head facing the right (heraldic dexter) side.⁵² In the years 1900–1924, an oval seal measuring 29x27 mm with the inscription: MAGISTRAT DES STADT LABES in a solid line frame in a semicircle above the figure was used. In the seal's field, on a grassy base, there was a crowned wolf striding to the right with its tongue sticking out, above it 1400 (the number one resembles a minuscule T) (fig. 10).⁵³ In November 1924, the first use of a new round seal (28 mm) has been noted. Compared to the previous seal, the differences consisted in the correct drawing of the digits in the date 1400, the lack of the wolf's tongue outstretched and the lack of clearly marked grass (fig. 11). The use of this seal has been registered until 1932.⁵⁴

The inhabitants and the local authorities of Łobez treated the chronological element as part of the image of the coat of arms, which is clearly visible on the 20th century municipal substitute money issued in the 1920's (fig. 12) or in the tradition nurtured by the pre-war German inhabitants of the town displaced after World War II, who – in the publication of 1971 entitled *Labes – unsere liebe Heimatstadt* published by Heimatfreunde der Kreisstadt Labes in Pommern – in the field of the coat of arms also placed the date of the supposedly oldest document confirming the rights and privileges of the town (fig. 13). The date in the shield field of the Łobez coat of arms also appeared in the so-called New Siebmacher (*Neuer Siebmacher*), in a volume published in 1885 devoted to municipal coats of arms (fig. 14). Only Otto Hupp, in his 1898 armorial, removed the date 1400 from the coat of arms of Łobez,⁵⁵ which had an impact on the appearance of the town's coat of arms in the period after World War II.

What happened to the seals and coat of arms of Łobez after 1945, of course, resulted from the aforementioned political changes, as well as changes in the ethnos in the so-called Recovered Territories. Therefore, the coat of arms of Łobez disappeared from the municipal seals at the end of World War II. In the initial period – until 1950 – authorities could still use the coats of arms of their cities on official seals, but this was not the case in Łobez. The first post-war seals of Łobez had a round shape (40 mm), with the following inscription in the rim: ● ZARZĄD MIEJSKI ● in Łobez, and in the seal field the emblem of the state coat of arms.⁵⁶ From 1948, a different seal was used, adapted to the then more common oval form (25x35 mm), in which in the seal field there

52 Ibidem, ref. no. I/3221, f. 17 (1845), 202 (1851).

53 Ibidem, ref. no. I/3223, I/3222, I/3231, I/3233, I/ 3226, I/3230.

54 Ibidem, ref. no. I/3226 (f. 133: first use), I/3230, I/3231, I/3235, I/3234, I/3223.

55 Hupp, *Die Wappen*, 11. Similarly, Kratz, *Die Städte*, 240.

56 AP Szczecin, Urząd Wojewódzki Szczeciński (Voivodeship Office of Szczecin, hereinafter: UWS), ref. no. 2298, 2376 (annual reports of the Municipal Board in Łobez for the years 1946, 1947).

was an image of the state eagle at the top, and an inscription ZARZĄD – MIEJSKI – in Łobez below.⁵⁷ The Act of 20 March 1950 on local bodies of the unitary state authorities (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] of 1950, No. 14, item 130) abolished local municipal self-government while introducing municipal authorities to the system of state national councils, which was manifested by seals deprived of municipal coats of arms, replaced by the state coat of arms.⁵⁸

This legal situation lasted until 1990, when, after the breakthrough of 1989, the local self-government was restored and, along with it, its right to officially use its own symbols in the form of e.g., a coat of arms and a seal with the coat of arms,⁵⁹ although the coat of arms itself was known and appeared in various armorials published in Poland in the post-war period. The first drawing of the town's coat of arms was published in 1960 by Marian Gumowski in his work entitled *Herby miast polskich (Coats of arms of Polish cities)*. The red wolf in a golden crown was probably modelled on seals originating from the early 20th century. It was neither a running wolf (as in modern descriptions or medieval seals) nor a leaping wolf (as in the widespread version of the coat of arms by Otto Hupp), but a striding wolf – standing on green grass with three paws, and with a raised front paw signalling a move forward (fig. 16).⁶⁰ Equally unusual was the emblem of Łobez coat of arms in the study from 1963, entitled *Polskie herby miejskie (Polish municipal coats of arms)*. Here a red running wolf is shown, but instead of a green hill, a green base was drawn. The wolf is also not crowned, because the gold open crown was placed loose above his head (fig. 17).⁶¹

However, the extensive publication entitled *Miasta polskie w Tysiącleciu (Polish Cities in the Millennium)*, which was issued in 1966–1967, had a much greater impact on the appearance of the Łobez emblem and the entire municipal coat of arms. Its second volume discusses the then Szczecin Voivodeship, in which Łobez was located. The image of the Łobez coat of arms placed there had been modelled on the coat of arms by Otto Hupp, although it differed from it in details. It depicted a leaping red wolf in a golden field on a green hill with its tail tucked, wearing a golden three-point open crown (fig. 18). The coats of arms presented in the aforementioned publication became models of official

57 AP Szczecin, UWS, ref. no. 2634, 3134 (annual reports of the Municipal Board in Łobez for the years 1948, 1949).

58 Marek Adamczewski, *Pieczczę urzędowe władz lokalnych z obszaru Polski centralnej, cz. 3. Pieczęce władz miejskich do 1950 roku* (Zgierz: Marek Adamczewski, 2010), 296, 301.

59 Wojciech Drelicharz, Zenon Piech, "Podstawy prawne symboliki samorządowej III Rzeczypospolitej," in: *Współczesna heraldyka samorządowa i jej problemy*, ed. Wojciech Drelicharz, Zenon Piech (Kraków: Oficyna Cracovia Sp. z o. o., 2000), 19–20.

60 Gumowski, *Herby*, 227. The information about the origins of the town is entirely wrong.

61 The editor of the study was Tomasz Szczechura, a historian, researcher of the peasant movement, not specialising in heraldry. The graphic design was provided by the graphic artist Ryszard Sidorowski, who had no competence in the field of heraldry, either. The graphic shortcomings of this study are quite characteristic (the lack of outlines is immediately noticeable).

insignia for Polish cities, which wanted to use their coats of arms in the period of the Polish People's Republic, for example for promotional purposes. This drawing was also repeated in two subsequent heraldic publications created after 1989 – in the study by Tadeusz Białecki *Herby miast Pomorza Zachodniego (Coats of arms of the cities of Western Pomerania)* from 1991 as well as in Andrzej Plewako and Józef Wanag's *Herbarz miast polskich (Armorial of Polish cities)* from 1994.⁶²

When in May 1990 the Act of 8 March 1990 on local government came into force (since 1998 with the title amended to the Act on commune self-government),⁶³ the town council in Łobez on 10 July 1990 passed a resolution on the coat of arms of the town and commune, under which “a red wolf in a golden crown standing on its hind paws against a yellow-green background” was recognised as the coat of arms.⁶⁴ The image of the coat of arms – incorrectly blazoned in the resolution – was presented in the attachment (fig. 19) and was approved in all subsequent statutes of the commune – from 1990, 1996 and 2000. In this form, the coat of arms functioned until 2017. In October 2016, a resolution was adopted to establish the Honorary Medal “of Merit for the Łobez Commune,” (Medal Honorowy “Zasłużony dla Gminy Łobez”) which was to feature the coat of arms of Łobez on the obverse. Pursuant to the applicable regulations, the design of the medal was sent for the opinion of the Heraldic Commission functioning since January 2000 at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration of the Republic of Poland. The Commission rejected the design of the medal mainly due to the lack of its positive opinion on the appearance of the town's coat of arms. For this reason, the beginning of 2017 was spent on the efforts of the council members of Łobez to secure a positive opinion of the commission, which was finally obtained in July 2017.⁶⁵ On 31 August 2017, once again after 1989, the municipal council in Łobez passed a resolution on the town's coat of arms, the appendix to which shows a coat of arms modelled on the image from 1967 (fig. 20)⁶⁶ In this form, the town's coat of arms is still valid today.

In the light of the collected material, in the case of the symbols of Łobez – private town of the Bork family – despite the constant clashes between the superior authority and the townspeople as well as municipal authorities, one can observe the stability

62 Tadeusz Białecki, *Herby miast Pomorza Zachodniego (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Polskie Pismo i Książka, 1991)*, insert before p. 81; Andrzej Plewako, Józef Wanag, *Herbarz miast polskich (Warszawa: Arkady, 1994)*, 117 (wrong spelling of the von Borcke family name).

63 Dz. U. (Journal of Laws) of 1990, No. 16, item 95; Dz.U. of 1998, No. 162, item 1126.

64 Uchwała nr IV/23/90 Rady Gminy i Miasta w Łobzie z dnia 10 lipca 1990 r. w sprawie ustalenia herbu gminy i miasta Łobez (Resolution No. IV/23/90 of the Commune and Town Council in Łobez of 10 July 1990 on establishing the coat of arms of the commune and town of Łobez), paragraph 1.

65 *Herb i Flaga*, accessed 5.05.2022, <https://lobez.pl/herb-i-flaga.html>.

66 Uchwała nr XXXIII/257/2017 Rady Miejskiej w Łobzie z dnia 31 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie ustanowienia herbu i flagi Gminy Łobez oraz zasad ich używania [Resolution No. XXXIII/257/2017 of the Town Council in Łobez of 31 August 2017 on establishing the coat of arms and flag of the Łobez Commune and the rules for their use].

of the seal's image and the emblem. The abated coat of arms of the Borks, introduced at the beginning, remained unchanged for years, just as the town was invariably owned by the same Pomeranian gentry family. Interference in the appearance of the seal's image, and then also the coat of arms, was caused only by a dispute between the two authorities in the mid-18th century, in which the then managing mayor, Johann Gottfried Severin, played a leading role. As a result, the date of the privilege that was used in the dispute was added to the seal and coat of arms. And although in the next century the meaning of this date was no longer known, it was still used in urban sigillography and heraldry. This was still the case when, at the end of the 19th century, Otto Hupp's civic armorial was issued, showing an undated coat of arms, and also when it was established that the privilege itself had rather been issued in 1460. This constancy seems to indicate that the local community was attached to the old image, treated it as a memory of the past and did not intend to change it despite the opinion of heraldists.

However, the situation after 1945 was different. First of all, the town's sigillography was obviously dominated by the state emblem, which resulted from the anti-self-government system of the People's Republic of Poland and the takeover of power at all levels by the authorities representing the state. Secondly, in terms of the municipal coat of arms, its image also remained outside the sphere of interest of the local community, which consisted of the Polish ethnos not related to the traditions of the place in any way. In this case, however, the image of the coat of arms was shaped by professional heraldists who based their work on the most famous armorial of the German period, i.e., on Hupp's armorial. And since the coats of arms presented in the publication *Miasta polskie w Tysiącleciu* were of the greatest importance for the post-war city heraldry in Poland, the image shown in it – closely modelled on Hupp's drawing – eventually became the coat of arms of Łobez, still used today and approved by the Heraldic Commission at the Ministry of Interior and Administration.

The conclusions formulated in this article, concerning only one private town in the former Duchy of Pomerania, and then in the Province of Pomerania, and finally in Western Pomerania, obviously do not allow for a conclusion of a general nature. Emphasising its dependence on the owner, or the lack of much interest on the part of local government authorities both in the German and Polish period, do not need to be binding conclusions for all coats of arms of private cities – and not only – in the area of Western Pomerania. It is clear that formulating general conclusions requires further in-depth research on seals and coats of arms of private cities and towns, which in relation to the present findings will allow in the future to create statements regarding seals and coats of arms as media of social communication both in the German and Polish periods.

Illustrations



a)



b)

Figure 1. Traced copies of the oldest seals of Łobez in 18th-century scientific collections: a) Traced copy in the collection of J. Oelrichs (GStA PK, VIII. HA, I.9 Slg. Otto Hupp, Kasten I, Heft 12); b) Traced copy in Apparatus sigillorum (LAG, Rep. 41 Plathe, ref. no. I 41, p. 26)

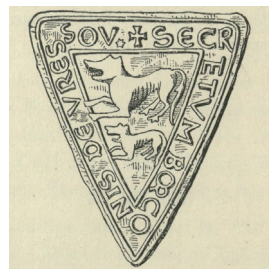


Figure 2. Seal of Borko from 1282 (UBB, Bd. I, p. 72)



Figure 3. Seal of Borko from 1333 and 1338 (UBB, Bd. I, p. 340 and Siegeltafel II, no. 2)

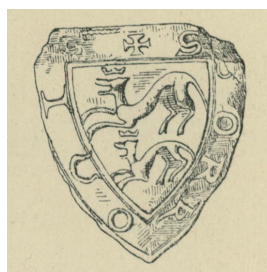


Figure 4. Seal of Borko from 1327 and 1338 (UBB, Bd. I, p. 340 and Siegeltafel II, no. 3)



Figure 5. Impression of the 14th-century seal of Łobez in documents from the 16th century (AP Szczecin, Sąd Nadworny w Stargardzie [the Ducal Court of Justice in Stargard], ref. no. 565)



a)



b)



c)

Figure 6. Seal of Łobez from the 17th–18th century a) Impression from 1630 (AP Szczecin, AKS, ref. no. II/2052, f. 30); b) Traced copy in the collection of J. Oelrichs (GStA PK, VIII. HA, I.9 Slg. Otto Hupp, Kasten I, Heft 12); c) Traced copy in Apparatus sigillorum (LAG, Rep. 41 Plathe, ref. no. I 41, p. 26)



Figure 7. Seal of Łobez from the 18th century (AP Szczecin, Zbiór pieczęci i tłoków pieczętnych [Collection of seals and stamps] – seal impressions, coffer II, no. 274)



Figure 8. Seal of Łobez from the 18th century (GStA PK, VIII. HA, I.9 Slg. Otto Hupp, Kasten I, Heft 12)



Figure 9. Seal of Łobez from 1777 (AP Szczecin, RS, ref. no. 3237, p. 62: impression from 1818)



Figure 10. Seal of Łobez from 1900–1924 (AP Szczecin, RS, ref. no. I/3326, 11)



Figure 11. Seal of Łobez from 1924–1932 (AP Szczecin, RS, ref. no. I/3231, 446)



Figure 12. Substitute money of Łobez from 1921 (accessed 23.12.2016, www.flickr.com/photos/94791180@N06/12908336353)



Figure 13. Coat of arms of Łobez according to Labes – unsere liebe Heimatstadt. Kreisstadt des Kreises Regenwalde. Stadt des Pommerschen Landgestüts (Bd. 1, hrsg. v. F. Wilke, Lübeck 1971)



Figure 14. Coat of arms of Łobez according to "New Siebmacher" from 1885 (J. Siebmacher's, table 181)



Figure 15. Coat of arms of Łobez in the study by O. Hupp from 1898 (Die Wappen, 12)



Figure 16. Coat of arms of Łobez in the study by M. Gumowski from 1960 (Herby, 227)



Figure 17. Coat of arms of Łobez in the study Polskie herby miejskie from 1963 (table 25)



Figure 18. Coat of arms of Łobez in the study Miasta polskie w Tysiącleciu from 1967 (vol. II, table CI)

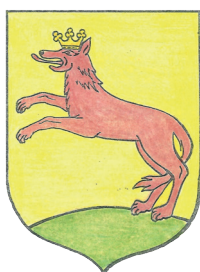


Figure 19. Coat of arms of Łobez according to the design from 1990 (Załącznik do Uchwały nr IV/23/90 Rady Gminy i Miasta w Łobzie z dnia 10 lipca 1990 r. w sprawie ustalenia herbu gminy i miasta Łobez [Appendix to Resolution No. IV/23/90 of the Commune and Town Council in Łobez of 10 July 1990 on establishing the coat of arms of the commune and town of Łobez])



Figure 20. Coat of arms of Łobez according to the design from 2017 (Załącznik do Uchwały nr XXXIII/257/2017 Rady Miejskiej w Łobzie z dnia 31 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie ustanowienia herbu i flagi Gminy Łobez oraz zasad ich używania [Appendix to Resolution No. XXXIII/257/2017 of the Town Council in Łobez of 31 August 2017 on establishing the coat of arms and flag of the Łobez Commune and the rules for their use])

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SUMMARY

The aim of the present article is to answer the question about the functioning of seal images and coats of arms of private towns in Western Pomerania. Achieving this goal – given the current state of research – is possible only through the use of the case study method, which, owing to the analysis of all available sources, can reveal the intentions of the creators of civic seals, primarily in the early modern period. The seals and coat of arms of one of the Pomeranian private towns – Łobez were selected for the analysis. As a result of the analysis, it has been established that the seal of Łobez manifested the dependence of the town on the owner, but in the 18th century it was used in the propaganda actions related to the struggle for independence from the gentry family von Borcke. The chronological element added at that time proved to be long-lasting still in the times when Łobez became a royal town after 1808. The date was removed from the field of the coat of arms only after 1945, when the German population was replaced by the Polish population.

Z dziejów sfragistyki i heraldyki miast prywatnych na Pomorzu Zachodnim. Studium przypadku pieczęci i herbu Łobza

Słowa kluczowe: heraldyka miejska, Pomorze Zachodnie, pieczęć miejska, Łobez

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie o funkcjonowanie wyobrażeń napieczętnych i herbów miast prywatnych na Pomorzu Zachodnim. Osiągnięcie tego celu – przy obecnym stanie badań – możliwe jest jedynie poprzez wykorzystanie metody *case study*, która dzięki analizie przeprowadzonej w oparciu o wszystkie dostępne źródła może pokazać intencje twórców pieczęci miejskich, przede wszystkim w okresie wczesnonowożytnym. Do analizy wybrano pieczęć i herb jednego z pomorskich miast prywatnych – Łobza. W wyniku analizy ustalono, że pieczęć Łobza pokazywała zależność miasta od właściciela, ale w XVIII w. wykorzystana została do propagandowej walki o niezależność od szlacheckiego rodu v. Borcke. Dodany wówczas element chronologiczny wykazał także dużą trwałość już w czasach, gdy Łobez stał się miastem królewskim po 1808 r. Usunięcie daty z pola herbu nastąpiło dopiero w okresie po 1945 r., kiedy ludność niemiecka zastąpiona została ludnością polską.

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