



Toruń, 16. listopada 2025.

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Scientific discipline: Archaeology.....

Title of the doctoral dissertation: The role and significance of the Lednica settlement complex as a central place from the 9th to the 11th century, in the light of archaeological finds.

Doctoral dissertation abstract: This work aims to determine the role and significance of the Lednica settlement complex as a central location in the 10th and 11th centuries. The research is based on movable archaeological material obtained during many years of excavations on Ostrów Lednicki and in its vicinity.

The study uses a comparative method, comparing finds from Lednica with similar artefacts from other early medieval centres in Europe. The categories of artefacts with the greatest informational potential were selected for the study: devotional objects, selected jewellery, military items, equestrian equipment, items related to trade (weights, weighing scales) and products made from foreign materials (e.g. slate spindle whorls, precious stone beads).

In the synthetic part, which integrates archaeological data with theoretical models, such as Walter Christaller's theory of central places, and conclusions from historical anthropology, four key functions that were to determine the importance of the centre were identified and evaluated: administrative, productive, commercial and cultic.

The results of the research clearly indicate that Ostrów Lednicki was a multifunctional centre of strategic importance in the 10th and 11th centuries. Its administrative function is confirmed by monumental investments, such as multi-phase defensive fortifications, a palatium with a chapel, and the longest early medieval bridges in Europe, whose construction required efficient organisation and elite resources. This is also evidenced by the presence of prestigious artefacts, including weapons



(e.g. Ulfberht swords), luxurious equestrian equipment and chamber tombs. Its productive function is evident from the traces of specialised jewellery and blacksmith workshops, as well as local weapon production. As a pan-European trade hub this space is documented by numerous finds of weights and scales, as well as imports from distant regions, from Scandinavia to Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate. Finally, the cult function is reflected in numerous sacrificial deposits from the lake, the symbolism of the decoration of objects, the sacred nature of the island as an axis mundi, and the later construction of Christian temples on the site of the former cult. The synergy of these four functions allows us to consider the Lednica Settlement Complex as one of the key centres of power, economy and belief in the early Piast state.

Konrad Leweł

doctoral student's signature