

From a sphragistic and heraldic point of view, Hungarian royal double seals constitute one of the most important source groups of the representation of royal power as they appear on the most important legal documents, issued in the form of privileges, thus represented the power of the monarch to the wider public. Moreover, by means of symbols known to all, i.e. coats of arms, they also indicated the extent of the territory under the power of the monarch and even the coats of arms of the territories claimed on a historical basis, thus having not only a public legal but also a foreign policy content. In contrast, the royal crown jewels and the coronation flags generally considered the par excellence symbols of royal power were on public display exclusively on occasions of coronations.

Despite the importance of Hungarian royal double seals, an in-depth analysis focusing on a catalogue-like enumeration and identification of all the coats of arms on this particular type of sources after 1526 has not yet been carried out. In my thesis, I have set myself the goal of proceeding with this analysis and I will also provide the blazons of the identified coats of arms. Though the primary source group is, of course, the royal double seals, I also had to include the Hungarian royal grants of nobility and coats of arms in the analysis, as they, in fact, often include different royal arms as accompanying insignia and, since the 16–17th-century seals do not indicate the tinctures of the coats of arms with graphic symbols, this information cannot be recovered from historical pieces of evidence other than heraldic sources.

Another group of heraldic sources from the 16–17th centuries are the armorials, which in many cases already contain coloured coats of arms, so I also used them to determine the tinctures. From the 18th century onwards, the files of the Royal Hungarian Court Chancellery already contain designs for the royal double seals, so naturally I included these sources in the analysis as well.