

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLDEST SEAL OF PRAGUE UNIVERSITY

František Šmahel

The oldest preserved seal of Prague university, which has been its official emblem up to the present day, has recently become the object of broader scientific interest. On the basis of source analysis it seems certain that the university which combined three faculties had a large seal of its own, and that it was identical with the print of the preserved silver stamp. Not certain, however, is whether the "larger" seal of the law faculty was identical with the large seal of the three-faculty university, since we have neither a print nor a description of the former. As both universities derived its privileges from the deed of foundation for Prague university as a whole, it was kind of compulsory for them to act as a corporation in their external relations. In this respect, the debated legend could be interpreted as the necessary compromise. The fact that doctors and masters of all three faculties, in the years 1408-1417, considered the large seal their insignia, does not leave any scope for maintaining the traditional construction based on the institutional and social interpretation of the words *universitas scholarium* in the legend of the large seal of Prague University.