

## Abstract

### *The Policy of the Greater Poland Voivodeship Regional Assemblies (Sejmiki) Towards Towns and the Burghers, 1572–1793*

The aim of this dissertation is to conduct a multifaceted analysis of the attitudes of the nobility of Greater Poland proper (comprising the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, and from 1768 also Gniezno voivodeship) towards towns and their burghers from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, examined through the policies of the regional assemblies (sejmiki). This pioneering study seeks to present a bottom-up perspective on the issue and to define both the scope and the conditions of the nobility's engagement with urban affairs. It identifies the points of contact between two key estates of the Commonwealth's social order and demonstrates the potential of regional assemblies records as sources for research into the history of the burghers in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth — an area still only marginally represented in historiography.

Ultimately, this dissertation proposes a classification of urban-related matters recorded in the Greater Poland assemblies materials, which then serve as the basis for a comprehensive discussion of the subject and for numerous statistical analyses that further illuminate the issues under investigation. The findings indicate that, contrary to the widespread belief that regional assemblies addressed urban centres and their burghers solely in fiscal contexts, the source material frequently also covers questions of defence, economy, judiciary, law, as well as social and even religious concerns. Throughout the entire period examined, the nobility remained aware of the role of towns and did not regard them merely as rivals. No evidence has been found of open or permanent conflict between the nobility and the burghers that might have led the assemblies to pursue explicitly anti-urban or hostile policies.

Finally, it should be stressed that the interest shown by the regional assemblies in towns beyond their own territories provides further proof of the existence of state bonds transcending local particularism, reinforcing the cohesion of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth despite the limited development of central authorities and institutions.