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Sacral Architecture in the Regierungsbezirk Posen of the Grand Duchy of Posen in the First Half of the 19th Century.

Summary

The PhD thesis examines sacral architecture in the area of Regierungsbezirk Posen, then part of Prussia (48 churches, including 13 Protestant and 35 Catholic ones). The architecture has been presented within the context of intricate national, political, and religious ties. The dissertation explains the relationships between the buildings of the two confessions and suggests a way of reading their meanings. The research revealed that patrons and architects played an important role in this. The Prussian government set the tone of the construction. It exercised patronage over the Protestant construction in its entirety and had only minority control over the Catholic one. The Prussian government saw architecture as a vehicle for bringing together the new provinces and spreading state propaganda. In this regard, Friedrich Wilhelm III and IV, as well as Karl Friedrich Schinkel, played a significant role. Catholic patronage developed in parallel with the government actions. The exercise of this power was carried out by the patriotic Polish aristocracy, wealthy nobility, and clergy. The count Edward Raczyński, who was involved in numerous realizations both financially and organizationally, played a noteworthy role. The situation in the Regierungsbezirk Posen was different from that in other Prussian provinces. Comparison with the sacral buildings of these regions also proves the originality of the works of this Regierungsbezirk, which are free from imposed patterns. The buildings, which were then constructed and have been largely overlooked, represent a distinguished artistic class and are linked to the main fads in the sacramental architecture of Europe at that time. The dissertation aims to restore the sacral architecture of the Regierungsbezirk Posen to its rightful place.