

RESIDENCES IN MEDIEVAL AND MODERN TIMES

On October 27–28, 1999, a conference organized by the Polish Academy of Sciences (Institute of History and History of Culture Commission) took place in Warsaw. The session was devoted to the residences of rulers, seats of the members of the élite of power and of the knights in medieval and modern times. Territorially it dealt with the lands of the Polish Kingdom in the Middle Ages and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth including fiefs in modern times. The conference was of an interdisciplinary character. The papers centred round two major topics: monarchical residences and residences of the magnates and knights. Some reports were general in character and were devoted both to royal and knights' residences. The royal residences were discussed by: Almut Bues (The German Historical Institute in Warsaw), Urszula Borkowska (Lublin), and Walter Letsch (Vienna). U. Borkowska presented an attempt to classify the residences of the Jagellons, a dynasty ruling in Poland and Lithuania (15th–16th c.), W. Letsch analysed the residences of Sigismund III (1587–1632) and their functions. A. Bues devoted her paper to the seats of Courland dukes in Mitau. Magnates' and knights' residences were discussed by: Urszula Augustyniak (Warsaw), Bogusław Dybaś (Toruń), Jerzy Dygdała (Toruń), Henryk Gmiterek (Lublin), Ryszard Grygiel (Łódź) and Leszek Kajzer (Łódź). U. Augustyniak presented the wooden residences of a Lithuanian magnate family — the Radziwills — in the first half of the 17th c., B. Dybaś devoted his paper to the defensive and representative character of the magnate seats in the 17th c. J. Dygdała discussed the problem of the magnate residences in Royal Prussia, posing the question why these types of residences appeared in this territory only in the 18th c. Finally H. Gmiterek analysed the 18th c. residential plan of Feliks Antoni Łoś at Narol. Two reports with an archeological optics, dealing with medieval times, deserve to be especially mentioned. R. Grygiel presented the plan of *curia cum fortalicio* (manor-house with a defensive tower) as the basis of the residential plan of a knight's seat in 14th c. Great Poland, while J. Kajzer analysed the plan of "tower on a charter" as the main seat of a knight family in the 13th c. Of a more general character were the reports by Teresa Jakimowicz (Poznań) and Edmund Kotarski (Gdańsk). E. Kotarski presented the reflection upon Polish medieval residences in the old media. He distinguished the tonal media: songs, stories, chronicles; graphic media: writing and print; as well as patterns transmitted through models of behaviour such as knightly customs and knightly ethos. Rulers' and knights' seats constituted the frame within which these media operated. T. Jakimowicz analysed the ideological programmes of early modern residences, distinguishing their "hidden" programmes, designed foremostly for the owner and "open" programmes designed for the persons visiting the residence. B. Judkowiak (Poznań) demonstrated a special approach, presenting a residence — the frame of court life — as a theatrical scenography of its own kind.

The discussion centred round the functions of both royal and magnates' and knights' residences, and their changes with time. Special attention was drawn to the changes in the character of royal residences stemming from structural social and political transformations. For example the royal residences in Piłtów, Radom and Lublin lost their significance following the establishment of the seat of the Sejms in Warsaw in the 1560s. Only the main royal residences in Cracow and Wilno did retain their significance, while the importance of Warsaw was growing; from a local royal seat it rose to the main rank and became a permanent

residence of the ruler at the beginning of the 17th c. Social and political transformations resulted in the establishment of magnate or even gentry residences in Warsaw, which became the main Polish residential city. The changes in the types of residences went hand in hand with those in the art of war. Residences–strongholds, though still popular in the second half of the 17th c., ceased to be built in the 18th c. The discussion emphasized the variability of the architectonic forms and ideological programmes of residences. However, both the papers and discussion showed a number of permanent features characterizing the residences regardless of their owners. Thus both monarchs and magnates kept their main residences, chiefly of a representative character, which were at the same time administrative centres. Both groups of owners had also some private seats, serving recreation. Such functions were frequently fulfilled by wooden buildings where their owners could feel more relaxed and at ease.

The interdisciplinary character of the conference had its positive value. The problem of residences has been shown from many points of view. History, archeology, history of art, history of literature and theatre combined to create a coherent picture, viewed from many angles and presented in a complementary way.

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