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TOWNS IN 15TH, 16TH, AND 17TH CENTURY DESCRIPTIONS OF POLAND

I will compare here three geographical descriptions of Poland and the way in which they presented towns. These will be Jan Długosz's *Chorographia,* Marcin Kromer's *Polonia* and Szymon Starowolski's *Polonia*, three geographical works written not be geographers but by historians representing three epochs in the history of Polish and European culture: the late Middle Ages, the mature Renaissance and the Baroque, that is, three different perceptions of the world, the natural environment, man and history.

The work on *Chorography* must have taken Długosz much time, but we do not know exactly when he wrote it. It may have been intended as a separate work. He must have given it the final shape in the years 1475–1480 and included it as an introduction to his monumental *History of Poland.* Like the whole of Długosz's work, *Chorography* had, for over two hundred years, been accessible only in manuscripts, for the endeavours to publish it at the beginning of the 17th century ended in failure. However, this did not prevent it from becoming known, at least to learned men, for Długosz's work was circulated in the many hand-written copies which began to be made soon after the author's death (1480). According to Aleksander Przezdziecki, there were at least 34 manuscripts of Długosz's work, excluding summaries, in Poland at the end of the 16th century. *Chorography* must have also existed in the separate hand-written copies.[1]

[1] For information on Długosz see M. Bobrzyński, S. Smolka, *Jan Długosz, jego życie i stanowisko w piśmiennictwie* (*Jan Długosz, His Life and Place in Literature*), Kraków 1893; *Długossiana. Studia historyczne w pięćsetlecie śmierci Jana Długosza* (*Długossiana. Historical Studies on the Quingentenary of Jan Długosz's Death*), parts 1 and 2, Warszawa-Kraków 1980–1985; *Jan Długosz. W pięćsetną rocznicę śmierci* (*Jan Długosz.*

Kromer wrote his Polonia nearly a hundred years later, in a completely different intellectual climate. The idea to write a geographical study which, like Długosz's *Chorography*, would be a preface to his historical work and "a kind of key facilitating the understanding" of his *History*, was born in 1556 at the latest. The first version of *Polonia* was probably written in Cracow in 1556–1558; Kromer gave it the final shape in Lidzbark in 1575. At first, *Polonia* was circulated as a manuscript and it was in this form that it was presented to Henry of Valois after his arrival in Poland, but as early as 1575 an unauthorised edition was brought out in Frankfurt, and in 1577 two authorised ones were published in Cologne and Basle; *Polonia* had another three editions by the end of the 16th century and five more editions in the 17th. It was, therefore, easily accessible amd was probably very popular.[2]

Starowolski's *Polonia* was brought out for the first time in 1632, that is, less than sixty years after Kromer's work, but also in a different cultural situation. Three more editions appeared in the 17th century, which would indicate that this was most probably a well known and widely read book.[3]

In the fragments concerning Polish towns the three geopraphical

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On the Quingentenary of His Death), Olsztyn 1983. *Chorografia* has been discussed by W. Szelińska, *Chorographia Regni Poloniae Jana Długosza*, Kraków 1980 (the book contains a bibliography of old, mostly obsolete and fragmentary literature); *eadem*, *Jan Długosz — opis Małopolski w jego „Chorografia Regni Poloniae"* (*Jan Długosz — the Description of Little Poland in his „Chorographia Regni Poloniae"*), in: *Długossiana*, *op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 224–253; *eadem*, *„Chorographia Regni Poloniae" Jana Długosza. Problem autopsji autora* (*Jan Długosz's „Chorographia Regni Polonise". The Question of the Author's Own Observation*), in: *Jan Długosz*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141–151; *eadem*, *Jan Długosz, Storico e primo geografo polacco*, Wrocław 1984, pp. 25–107. For the manuscripts of Długosz's work see in particular, J. Dąbrowski, *Dawne dziejopisarstwo polskie* (*do roku 1480*) (*Old Polish Historiography* (*up to 1480*)), Wrocław 1964, pp. 220–222; W. Semkowicz-Zarembina, *Teksty „Historii" Długosza* (*The Texts of Długosz's „History"*), „Rocznik Krakowski" vol. XLVII, 1976, pp. 5–21 (*ibid.* old literature), and *eadem* in the introduction to a new edition of *Annales*; H. Barycz, *Dwie syntezy dziejów narodowych pod sądem potomności. Losy „Historii" Jana Długosza i Marcina Kromera w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (*Two Syntheses of National History in the Judgment of Posterity. The Fate of the „History" by Jan Długosz and Marcin Kromer in the 16th and the First Half of the 17th Centuries*), „Pamiętnik Literacki" vol. XLIII, 1952, No. 1–2, pp. 202–206, 245–251; S. Cynarski, *Uwagi nad problemem recepcji „Historii" Jana Długosza w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku* (*Remarks on the Reception of Jan Długosz's „History" in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries*) in: *Długossiana*, *op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 281–290 (including the literature on this subject).

[2] For Kromer see L. Finkel, *Marcin Kromer, historyk polski XVI wieku. Rozbiór krytyczny* (*Marcin Kromer, Polish 16th Century Historian. A Critical Analysis*), Rozprawy

accounts depend on one another. Kromer and Starowolski knew and made use of Długosz's *Chorography*; Starowolski also made use of Kromer's work, borrowing entire phrases referring to individual towns. But the choice of the towns referred to is different in each work and so is their number, which increased as time went by. The scope of factual information on towns is similar in the three accounts; it is only the concept of the description and the way in which they place the towns that differ.

In a special chapter of *Chorography* entitled "The Best Known Cities and Towns of Poland"[4] (this is the fragment of Długosz's work from which one can best learn the author's view on the nature of towns and their role, not from the many references scattered throughout the descriptions of the course of rivers, from the whole text of the *Chronicle* or from Długosz's other works) Długosz enumerates 18 archiepiscopal and episcopal sees, 23 seats of collegiate churches as well as Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg, all in all 44 town (not counting four satellite towns of Cracow and Poznań) from the territory of the Polish Kingdom, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Moldavian fief and the territories which Poland had lost (Silesia, the Lubusz region, Western Pomerania); Długosz does not mention the towns in the Prussian fief and Warmia. Out of the territory of the Kingdom of Poland (in its frontiers as they were in Długosz's times), to which we will pay special attention for it can be easily compared with the later descriptions, Długosz mentions 10 archiepiscopal and episcopal sees and 15 towns with collegate churches (Warsaw is unincluded in them but mention is made of Głuszyna, which was only a village) and also Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg "in spite of the fact that they do not glow with the honour of a bishopric or of collegiate churches." Possession of a cathedral or a collegiate church was for

Akademii Umiejętności, Wydział historyczno-filozoficzny, vol. XVI, 1883, and R. Marchwiński's introduction to the edition of *Polska*. For the editions of *Polonia* see *Bibliografia literatury polskiej* (*Bibliography of Polish Literature*), *Nowy Korbut* vol. II, Warszawa 1964, p. 414.

[3] For Starowolski see F. Bielak, *Działalność naukowa Szymona Starowolskiego* (*Szymon Starowolski's Scholarly Activity*), „Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej" series A, No. 1, 1957, pp. 201–326, and A. Piskadło's introduction to the edition of *Polska albo opisanie położenia Królestwa Polskiego* (*Poland or a Description of the Position of the Polish Kingdom*), Kraków 1976. For the edition of *Polonia* see *Bibliografia literatury polskiej* (*Bibliography of Polish Literature*), *Nowy Korbut vol.* III, Warszawa 1965, p. 283.

[4] Joannis Dlugossii *Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Polniae lib.* I, Varsoviae 1964, pp. 109–114.

Długosz the most important criterion distinguishing a town and making it "famous". Let us point out that such being this criterion, Długosz ignored three important mining centres in Little Poland: Olkusz, Wieliczka and Bochnia, as well as Lublin, which in Długosz's times was one of Poland's largest towns outdistancing even Cracow and Gdańsk by its commercial importance. As we see, Długosz had no understanding for urban economy.

Długosz awards the first place to Cracow, not only as an episcopal but also the royal capital, the place of "the birth and childhood diversions of Polish kings and dukes", the place of their coronation and burial. Cracow "is also famous for its university" and four collegiate churches. Długosz draws attention to Cracow's favourable commercial situation, enumerates the countries from which this city "imports goods of various manufacture, despatching them on" and recalls that Cracow lies on the Vistula, "a navigable river which can be used to bring in everything that is needed."

Among the towns mentioned by Długosz, the most extensive and comprehensive description concerns Cracow and its two satellite towns, Kazimierz and Kleparz. Długosz calls Gniezno "the mother of Polish towns" but points out that it is famous "more for its old glory than its present lustre", its importance lying mainly in the fact that it is the seat of the primate. Speaking of Lwów, which he calls "the third capital city of Poland" (because of the seat of Poland's second archbishopric), he says that the city has two castles, lacks a navigable river but has "an abundance ... of various commodities ... which are sent to Lwów by land."

Długosz always scrupulously describes the hydrographic conditions of each town, whether it lies on a navigable river, and whether its area is marshy, important qualities from the point of view of defence capacity. He always mentions castles or says that the town is defenceless (Włocławek). He rarely speaks of commerce. In addition to the already mentioned examples of Cracow and Lwów, it is only when referring to Kamieniec Podolski that he mentions that it is "rich (one can assume that this is due to trade) in honey, wax and cattle", and writing of Opatów he says that it is "famous for its market ant the goods brought in for sale." Speaking of Gdańsk he writes that it is famous for its "well developed trade, for commodities of various kinds are brought to it both by the Vistula" and by sea. Not once does he mention the local

handicrafts. In a few cases he pays attention to the fertility or infertility of the soil in the neighbourhood and the abundance of food (Kurzelów, Skalbmierz, Kruszwica, Pułtusk). Only once does he mention the administrative function of the town (Sandomierz, "the capital of the great Sandomierz district"). Only when speaking of Toruń does he write that it is "so splendid in its beautiful buildings roofed with glittering tiles that practically no other town is equal to it as regards beaty of situation and splendour of appearance"; when describing Cracow he says that "in its neighbourhood it has an abundance of stone, timber and all the other materials needed for building walls and erecting the necessary scaffoldings." Długosz is rarely interested in demographic relations: he writes that Gniezno "abounds in empty plots", probably wanting to draw attention to the depopulation of the town, that Chełmno is "not populous", that Kurzelów is "sparsely populated" and that Łowicz has "a large number of inhabitants."

Thus, Długosz perceived towns chiefly as seats of Church institutions and centres of defence. He was interested in their topography but paid little attention to eonomic questions and population, though he seems to have regarded the latter question as important for the condition of a town. The way a town was built up and its layout, that is, the way in which the space of a town was utilised, were practically of no interest to him. He wrote nothing about the governing system of towns and their role as seats of the state administration and of law courts, and only briefly mentioned scientific life (the Cracow Academy, but he may have regarded it only as a Church institution); nor did he write much about religious life (the famous church fairs in Sandomierz, St. Adalbert's relics in Gniezno, various relics in Cracow).

Marcin Kromer also begins his description of Polish towns with Cracow and enumerates all the episcopal sees, but the construction and conception of his description depart far from the prototype provided by Długosz. Kromer describes towns as an element of settlement in the section entitled "The Way the Country Is Inhabited",[5] which starts with the following sentence: "The population of Poland has from times immemorial lived mainly in villages and hamlets... Poland has few fortified and orderly towns..." Next he enumerates and describes the

[5] *Martini Cromeri Polonia sive de situ, populis, moribus, magistratibus et Republica regni Poloniae libri duo*, ed. by W. Czermak, Kraków 1901, pp. 40–45.

towns which he considered to be important, one province after another: first Little Poland and in it Cracow with Kazimierz and Kleparz, Lublin and another seven towns, then Great Poland and in it Poznań with Śródka and Wieliszewo and five other towns, Ruthenia with Lwów and three other towns, Podole with Kamieniec, Mazovia with Warsaw and another three towns, Kujawy with two towns, Royal Prussia with Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląd and another 14 towns, and finally the province omitted by Długosz but very close to the heart of Kromer: Warmia with 10 towns. Kromer also mentions the capital of the Duchy of Prussia: Królewiec. In sum, Kromer mentions 53 towns (43 excluding Warmia) from the provinces taken into account by Długosz in his *Chorography*, that is 25 (15) more than his predecessor. But the most important thing is that he did this in a way which presented a picture of urban settlement and the density of towns; arbitrary and incomplete as this picture was, it was not, as in the case of Długosz, an enumeration of the seats of bishops and collegiate churches. Długosz's enumeration of the towns lying on the most important Polish rivers did not give any idea of urban settlement ("What towns adorn the Vistula, more famous than other rivers, and the more important rivers, such as the Odra, the Warta and the Dniepr")[6] for it was subordinated to the description of the river network and was not intended to present the urbanisation of the country.[7]

Apart form this, the information on towns in Kromer's work is by no means richer than in Długosz's *Chorography*; it seems to be even more meagre. Kromer does not say much about economic life either except for some brief information on trade in Cracow, Lublin, Lwów, Gdańsk and Toruń. In most cases Kromer confines himself to mentioning the name of the town. He does not even mention all the voivodship capitals (Sieradz, Łęczyca, Rawa Mazowiecka and Inowrocław are missing in his description) and he writes nothing about towns as administrative centres. As far as schools are concerned, he mentions only the Cracow Academy, the Lubrański Academy in Poznań and the Jesuit college in Braniewo. There are only fortuitous remarks about the population and the way a town is built up. Instead, Kromer brings a handful of information on the governing system of towns, but he does this in the

[6] *Joannis Dlugossi Annales*, pp. 88.
[7] *Martini Cromeri Polonia*, pp. 101–102, 105–106.

second book of this work, entitled "The Officials of the Populace", where he writes about *advocati*, benchers, mayors and councillors, and even about craftsmen's guilds and their elders. In this way the urban communities have been presented as an integral part of the social structure of the whole country.

Starowolski enumerates 268 towns[8] in his Polonia, five times more than Kromer; 48 of them are from Great Poland and Kujawy (Długosz and Kromer mention 8 each), 80 are from Little Poland (both Długosz and Kromer mention 9), 37 from Mazovia (Długosz 3, Kromer 4), 55 form Ruthenia (Długosz 3, Kromer 4), 15 from Podole (Długosz and Kromer mention one each), 23 from Royal Prussia (Długosz 4, Kromer 17), 10 from Warmia (as many as in Kromer's work from whom he probably took the entire description of this province). This number includes not only all the episcopal sees and the seats of Długosz's collegiate churches (with the exception of the doubtful Głuszyna which was not a town, and Kurzelów), but also the capitals of all the voivodships and districts.

What is important however is not only the great number of the towns mentioned by Starowolski.Two questions should be put at the outset: about the sources of information and the criteria of choice (for Starowolski does not mention all the towns; in the first half of the 17th century when Starowolski wrote his work, there were more than four times as many towns in the Kingdom of Poland as the number given by him). There is no full reply to either of these questions. We do not know Starowolski's sources of information, apart form the earlier descriptions by Długosz and Kromer, who enumerate only a small part of the towns considered by Starowolski. He may have collected information from various informants whom he must have had when he was collecting epigraphic materials for another work of his, *Monumenta Sarmatarum*. He may have made use of the cartography of his times. Many towns were marked on the maps of Poland in Starowolski's times, but they do not correspond to those enumerated in *Polonia*. Besides, maps could have only supplied Starowolski with information about the names of towns and their geographical situation; they could not have been a source for a more extensive description. Neither do we know what

[8] *Simonis Starovolsci Polonia sive status Regni Poloniae descriptio*, Coloniae 1632, pp. 16–84, 99–116, 126–130, 150–174.

criteria of choice guided the author, except that he enumerated all the capitals of voivodships, and districts, but after all this was the concept he accepted in his description of Polish territories. A large majority of the towns in Starowolski's list had already existed in the times of Długosz and Kromer, but Starowolski also considered those founded in modern times, such as Zamość, Janowiec or Tarłów, which could not have been known to his predecessors.

The mere enumeration of such a large number of towns created a new situation unknown to Długosz and even Kromer. Starowolski's work made possible the discovery of the urban network density, the advancement of urban settlement and the urbanisation processes on the scale of the whole country and in individual regions.

The most essential difference between Starowolski's account and those of his predecessors is the difference in construction. Starowolski, unlike Długosz and Kromer, did not construct his work according to subjects (hydrography, orography, mineral resources, climate, flora and fauna, settlement, etc.), but according to the administrative division of the country: provinces, voivodships, districts. Since in Starowolski's times the administrative division was not created artificially but was a result of a centuries-long historical development, we can assume that Starowolski's work is a descrption of the historical regions, the descritpion of towns as an integral part of the knowledge of a region occupying the most space.

Starowolski regarded fortifications and brick buildings as the distinguishing mark of towns. Enumerating after Poznań and Gniezno nine other towns in the Poznań voivodship, he writes: "which are adorned with walls and quite populous; the remaining ones do without any fortifications and consist only of wooden buildings, except for churches and castles... or very rich abbeys and (other monasteries) of mendicant orders". Speaking of Kalisz, he emphasises that it is encircled by a brick wall with turrets; Wieluń has "beautiful brick houses", Rawa is, according to Starowolski, "monotonous because of its wooden buildings, but quite populous", but "Łowicz is much more populous". Nieszawa is "made entirely of bricks", and Brześć Kujawski "is surrounded by a rampart, a wall and a moat, and is adorned with brick houses standing among wooden ones". In describing Cracow he repeatedly emphasises "the splendour and defensiveness" of its buildings. The town of Olkusz "is surrounded by walls and its beautiful

houses have been built of bricks". Iłża is distinguished by its "brick houses", while Szydłowiec has "beautiful municipal buildings". The town of Jarosław "is also quite significant owing to its buildings and its fortified castle". Starowolski pays attention to the town hall in Toruń, "beautifully built in the centre of the market square, the like of which you will not see anywhere", but he notices neither the magnificent town hall in Poznań, expanded a short time before in the Renaissance style, nor the many interesting town halls in other towns. Starowolski always mentions castles and writes at length about sacral buildings in towns. To use the terminology of present-day geographers, one could say that he was interested in the physiognomy which distinguished towns from rural settlements. But like his predecessors he was not interested in the layout of towns, which is surprising, for Starowolski lived in times when modern town-planning principles were being applied in Europe as well as in Poland; the people of the Baroque were very conscious of these principles, regarding them as an important element giving a settlement a truly urban character. Only once, when speaking of Zakliczyn, did Starowolski pay attention to "the strikingly beautiful market square".

Starowolski gives a little more information about economy than his predecessors did. He refers several times to the fertility of the soil in the neighbourhood of towns and the abundance of food (the environs of Rzeszów, Sandomierz, Opatów, Pińczów, Kujawy, Great Poland). Crafts are only incidentally mentioned by him. "Iłża, a town of the bishop of Cracow... supplies and Poland with beautiful pots", Łagów "a town of the Kujavian bishop (is) famed for the production of pots which sell like hot cakes all over Poland." Częstochowa is „renowned for good beer, which goes like hot cakes not only in Poland, but also in the neighbouring provinces of the German Empire.". There is more information about trade. Starowolski enumerates the fairs in Lublin, Lwów, Przemyśl, Jarosław, Rzeszów, Krosno, Śniatyń and Łęczyca. He says that Kazimierz (Dolny on the Vistula) has many merchants, he refers to "the abundance of foreign goods" in Cracow, a storehouse of "Hungarian commodities" in Krosno, to Poznań "noted for its trade with German markets", the inhabitants of Płock who "apply themselves to trade", the trade carried on by Armenians in Kamieniec Podolski, Elbląg, which owes its glory and richness to "the great number of overseas merchants", and to Gdańsk, which "can compete with the most important European towns" in the abundance and variety of the

goods brought threre by sea, by the river Vistula and by land from various parts of the world.

Starowolski not only described, though not always competently, Poland's mineral resources[9] (this had also been done by Kromer[10], and, to some extent, by Długosz[11]), but was the only one of the three authors to draw attention to the links between their exploitation and individual towns. Speaking of Sławków he writes that it is "widely known for its silver mines and is consequently, very dear to the bishops of Cracow", while "the neighbouring Olkusz,a royal town, (is) also rich and noted for its silver and lead mines." "Going on in the direction of the foothill region", goes on Starowolski, "you will see Wieliczka, a small town famous all over Europe for its rock salt... and also Bochnia, Wieliczka's rival, rich in the same material." "Near Kielce there are the Cracow bishop's famous copper, bronze and lazurite mines, and in Chęciny... there are the royal lead and silver mines and a marble quarry." Szydłowiec has "many iron mines", "Kunów is widely known for its varied many-coloured marbles" and Wąchock "has the best stone for building purposes and for making the whetstones used to sharpen iron." The environs of Pińczów abound in "solid stone good for building work". Kołomyja owes its splendour to its abundance of table salt.

The information on schools and academies is much more extensive in Starowolski's work than in those by Długosz and Kromer. Starowolski describes the Cracow Academy and its branch, the Lubrański Academy in Poznań, mentions the Zamoyski Academy and the castle secondary school in Płock. He enumerates many Jesuit colleges and mentions, though with distaste, the Arian academy at Raków and the then famous Arian secondary school at Jedlińsk. Nor does he omit the well known Lutheran schools in Toruń, Elbląg and Gdańsk.

There is much information about religious life in towns in Starowolski's book. In addition to the descriptions of the more interesing churches, we read about valuable relics (Gniezno, Cracow, Lwów, Płock) and places of pilgrimage (Borek in the Kalisz region, a town "famous for its miraculous picutre of the Holy Virgin... where crowds of pious people from all over Poland gather", Starowolski writes, of course, about Częstochowa, famous "in almost the whole of the

[9] *Simonis Starovolsci Polonia*, pp. 58–59, 64–65, 70, 114.
[10] *Martini Cromeri Polonia*, p. 24.
[11] Cf. W. Szelińska, *Chorographia*, p. 32.

Christian world for its miraculous picture of the Holy Virgin... It has become customary for pious people from the most remote parts of Europe to come here", and about Leżajsk with its micraculous picture of the Virgin).

Towns were also sometimes the scene of the gentry's gatherings, especially judicial ones. In Piotrków, "the Tribunal of the Kingdom assembles solemnly once a year", Łęczyca is known for its "meetings of the gentry of this voivodship who assemble there to hold assizes"; in Sandomierz "there is no end to... large gentry gatherings because of the offices of the province situated there and constant trials." "Crowds of the gentry come" to Lublin for the trials before the Tribunal, writes Starowolski.

Not only is the number of towns many times higher in Starowolski's Polonia than in the works of his predecessors, but the range of information is also greatly expanded, although it concerns the same matters as were mentioned, though much more briefly and sometimes even marginally, by Długosz and Kromer. Starowolski regarded towns as an element of the cultural landscape of a region, as settlements with a specific physiognomy distinguishing them from villages, as administrative and judicial centres concentrating social life, as religious, educational and also commercial centres.

When comparing the geographical descriptions of Poland by Długosz, Kromer and Starowolski we notice a gradual development of knowledge about towns, a development which is, however, first and foremost quantitative: the number of the towns mentioned increases severalfold, the amount of information increases too, but this information concerns the same categories. The evolution goes through the typically medieval concept of towns as seats of ecclesiastical authorities and defence centres and seats of the feudal authorities (castle), a concept presented by Długosz, to the concept of the town as an element of the cultural landscape and a centre of various fields of social, economic, political, religious and cultural life, presented in embryonic form by Kromer and developed by Starowolski. The changes in the concept of the town and its place in geography and history did not take place suddenly but gradually, in proportion to the growth of information. It is this widening of the amount of information about towns that is to the credit of the successive authors of the geographic descriptions of Poland.

Despite the fact that the amount of information on towns is meagre

in the three geographical descriptions of Poland from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and that they do not contain any information that would not be known from other sources, these are important texts for a historian of urbanisation. The urbanisation of a country can be measured not only by the number of towns, the number of their inhabitants and the percentage of the population living in towns, but also by the extent to which the urban style of life has been adopted and popularised. Some sociologists maintain, and I think they are right, that urbanisation refers not only to towns but to the state of an entire society.[12] The state of social consciousness is therefere an extremely important factor of urbanisation and also its measure. This consciousness is, in a way, reflected in the geographical descriptions analysed by me (or in the literature of that epoch).[13] The place accorded to towns in these descriptions is probably the place they occupied in the social consciousness and denotes the degree to which the gentry in old Poland adopted urban ways of life. It is not surprising that this degree was still low; we know from other sources and historical studies that the urbanisation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonweath lagged far behind the urbanisation of the West European countries, even if the number of towns and the density of the urban network were not below the West European standards. The evolution of the geographical descriptions shows the grownig changes in social consciousness as regards towns: they occupy more and more place and become an increasingly indispensable element of a description of the country. For the historian of urbanisation this is an important conclusion and this is why it is worthwhile to continue studies on old Polish literature concerning towns and townspeople.

(*Translated by Janina Dorosz*)

[12] E. Shevsky, W. Bell, *Social Area Analysis*, Stanford, Cal. 1955, p. 8, quoted after J. Węgleński, *Urbanizacja. Kontrowersje wokół pojęć* (*Urbanisation. Controversies over the Concept*), Warszawa 1983, p. 70; cf. ibid., pp. 9–16.

[13] A. Wyrobisz, *Mieszczanie w opinii staropolskich literatów* (Townsmen in the Opinion of Old Polish Writers), „Przegląd Historyczny" v. LXXXII, 1991, No. 1, pp. 51–77.