

Summary of doctoral thesis

Łukasz Kossacki-Lytwyn
RESPUBLICA TARNOVIENSIS

Study on the townspeople of Tarnów in the era of princes Ostrogski 1603 - 1635

History of Old Polish Tarnow is only partially elaborated. The first decades of the seventeenth century are still ones of the poorly identified periods in the history of the town. Meanwhile, those are the times of breakthrough in the history of Tarnow. In 1603 there appeared a formal division of the county of Tarnow between two sons of prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski. Department turned out to be permanent and was finally abolished only in the mid-eighteenth century. The death of Teofila Ostrogska, the widow of Prince Janusz is deemed to be the end date.

During this period, the townspeople Tarnow repeatedly described their city as the Republic of Tarnow. The aim of this study was to verify what actually life was like in the then Tarnów and whether it was close to the beautiful idea hidden under the said slogan. After the query, which was based mainly on the Tarnow municipal records, it turned out that it had been a medium-sized town, which had not exceeded three thousand inhabitants. Most of them, however, did not live within the city walls, but in the suburbs. These in turn were divided into urban suburbs and castle suburbs (under the jurisdiction of the castle). With the exception of sacred objects and the marketplace, most buildings were made of wood. The city was surrounded by walls, which was not renovated for several decades. The study proved existence of fourteen townhouses around the marketplace and the final collapse of the local bathhouse.

Townspeople and suburbs inhabitants of Tarnow were mostly craftsmen. Between 1603 and 1635 over two hundred and fifty craftsmen were in the municipal records. Most of them, however, lived in the suburbs. Popular were migrations to the suburbs which were under jurisdiction of the castle. It has been proven that the craftsmen who settled there remained members of the Tarnow corporation, without falling into the group of bungles. There existed a big group of people involved in trade on a large scale. Documentation recorded twenty-three such persons, conducting their business mainly in the direction of Hungary and Silesia. Most traders were Scots who in an unprecedented number settled in the city. Only in 1603 - 1635 the municipal law in Tarnow adsorbed eighty-five Scots. For comparison, before this dissertation it was assumed that between 1599 and 1686 there were sixty-eight Scots in the town. This research has allowed to determine Tarnow as one of the largest Scottish colonies in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The preserved sources made it possible to prove forming of the Jewish community. Surprising was a far-reaching exchange of elites. Most elite families did not have ties or kinship with the families whose members had sat on the city council in the era of the princes Tarnowski. There was also a large group of clergy coming from the environment of townspeople and inhabitants of the Tarnow's suburbs, as well as isolated cases of illegal diffusion into the nobility.

There have been revealed several signs of degradation of the town (inter alia as a result of the loss of residential character of the Tarnow's castle), as well as a small role of the townspeople during the process of election of municipal authorities (in particular in the third decade of the seventeenth century). The average class of the townspeople did not have a representation of « trzeci ordynek ».

The residents of widely understood Tarnow represented a relatively high (compared to other towns in the voyevodship of Sandomierz) the level of material culture. It is characteristic that ownership of more expensive clothing or weapons was common also among medium-wealthy craftsmen. On the other hand, the town was not conducting any major public investments. Social life of the townspeople was concentrated on religious activities and simple entertainment provided by inns. Low was the level of intellectual culture, as evidenced by few mentions of books.

In summary it must be stated that the idea of the Republic of Tarnow was never executed. Tarnow's society in the discussed period is another example of limited possibilities of private towns' inhabitants in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

