

The edition of records of Kaunas assemblies for the years 1733-1795

Since 19th century editions of assemblies' records have been indicated as one of the most significant tasks of historians. Nevertheless few scholars undertook publication of these documents. Editions of records of Lithuanian assemblies were particularly neglected. Only recently research on this subject has been intensified, thanks to the project of edition of Nowogródek record. It is realizing by team managed by Andrzej Rachuba. The proposed project will be continuation of this publication. Objective of this task is editing of Kaunas assemblies' records for the reign of two last kings of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, August III and Stanisław August. This project allow to illustrate changing in organization and functioning of assemblies and the nobility's political culture since the anarchy of the Wettins' reign trough first symptoms of the Enlightenment to reforms of the reign of Stanisław August which were crowned by the Third of May Constitution. We have decided to show it on the example of Kaunas assemblies, since it played significant role in this period. During the reign of August III this council enjoyed particular concern of the leaders of magnates parties, because it avoid "liberum veto". Whereas during the reign of Stanisław August this assembly was the main arena of struggle between courts party and partisans of Zabięłłos' family. In the result assemblies were several times split.

Primary stage of the proposed project is collecting documents of Kaunas assemblies scattered in various archives and libraries There are documents related with participation of assemblies in central politic as well as in judiciary, election of officials and economical projects. Some records illustrate provincial politics, local government and other regional problems. We have already find more than 150 documents, but that future research make this collection bigger. Next stage will be selection, deciphering and rewriting of collected documents. It will be especially laborious, in case of records written regardless and preserved in bad condition. Then we would elaborate documents in a textual and substantial way and prepare them to publication. To make it easier to reach information above footnotes to facts and text, we will prepare classified index of persons and geographical index, preface and short introductions before separated records. These elements would be significant facilitation to unprofessional readers and historians.

The edition of Kaunas assemblies records will allow to expand particular study of organization and politics of assemblies and analyze role of these councils in the Commonwealth. Records of assemblies contain information about different aspects of life. These documents can be useful in genealogical, prosopographical, social, religious and even economical studies. Records of assemblies are only sources to study public opinion in different subjects. We have to stressed that this edition will be interesting not only for Polish, but also Lithuanian researchers as well as scholars from other countries derived from the Great Duchy of Lithuania.