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## *Early Modern Polish Parliamentarism (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> C.): Directions of the Newest Research*

### Abstract

The article shows a progress in researches on Polish parliamentarism in the period of the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth. The literature on the old Polish Sejm is currently very extensive. On the basis of archival printed and manuscript sources (especially Sejm's diaries), the authors prepared monographs of individual parliaments, then the synthesis of longer periods in the history of the parliament, and finally they became interested in particular problems of the parliamentary system. The main examples of the research directions are indicated. In the conclusion, the author suggested, that it would be appropriate to examine specific issues such as the nature of the parliamentary mandate, because to this day, views from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are reiterated in historical literature.

**Keywords:** Polish parliamentarism, Sejm, historiography, constitutional history.

**Słowa kluczowe:** parlamentaryzm polski, Sejm, historiografia, historia ustroju.

Parliamentary system means that the highest of all central authorities is the parliament. In the old Polish Republic (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries) this sovereign institution was an authority named General Sejm. The first problem which the researchers have been interested in was a date of its beginnings. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century some historians claimed that the Polish parliament was created in 1468. Nonetheless, in the historical literature, especially after the World War II, the opinions of historians who located the beginnings of the Sejm in year 1493 became accepted. Recently, Waclaw Uruszczak has returned to the older views and provided a source material supporting an earlier date.<sup>1</sup>

The General Sejm consisted of three parts (estates): deputies elected by noblemen, senators nominated by the king and a monarch himself who was elected through free election (in Latin: *viritim*) by noblemen. But in fact two chambers only were functioning, because the king took part in the activities of the Senate – he was its chairman, although current sessions were conducted by the Grand Marshal or the Marshal of the Court. The entire three-estate parliament was an image of the republic (in Latin: *res publica*), a reflection of the Commonwealth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. Uruszczak, *Poselstwo sejmowe w dawnej Polsce. Poslaniec, mandatariusz, poseł narodu*, CPH 2009, vol. 61, issue 1, pp. 47–63; *idem*, *Najstarszy sejm walny koronny „dwiuizbowy” w Piotrkowie w 1468 roku* [in:] *Narodziny Rzeczypospolitej. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów wczesnonowożytnych*, red. W. Bukowski, T. Jurek, vol. II, Kraków 2012, pp. 1033–1056.

<sup>2</sup> W. Uruszczak, *Historia państwa i prawa polskiego*, vol. 1: (966–1795), ed. 2, Warszawa 2013, p. 137.

This old Polish parliament, its competences and importance were changing throughout the centuries. Firstly, the most significant role belonged to a king, but in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century a balance between a monarch with the Royal Council (named a Senate) and the deputies from local assemblies was established. At that time the mass of nobles struggled for the growth of importance of the Chamber of Deputies. This situation remained unchanged until the end of the reign of Sigismund III Vasa. After his death the influence of the king and the senators was of lesser importance, while deputies had a stronger position, especially from 1652, when the representative Władysław Siciński submitted the first individual effective objection (in Latin: *veto*) against the prolongation of the General Sejm. We should stress that his was a legal action, because from 1633 a protraction of the Sejm sessions was banned by law.<sup>3</sup>

The parliament changed from an area of the public common agreement (in Latin: *communis consensus*) to a place of never-ending quarrels. It was caused by a lot of reasons, e.g. wars in which the First Republic was involved although the noblemen did not want them, a decreasing economy, and huge differences inside the noblemen estate. Some of the nobles were affluent, others were getting poorer. The richest of them became oligarchs, who had landed estates like small states with their own armed forces. Their financial resources were bigger than the entire state budget. They were going to change the old political system from the almost direct democracy to the indirect democracy, or in fact, oligarchy. Meanwhile, kings planned to change the electing republic / monarchy to a hereditary state.<sup>4</sup>

The Chamber of Deputies considered it its major task not to change the old political system since they believed it to be the best government ever introduced. The General Sejm stopped to adopt new laws, but focused on controlling the actions of the king. From this moment the old Polish parliament became primarily a controlling authority, not a legislative organ.

The struggle for a dominant position among the groups involved in the Sejm proceedings ended in a dramatic way, although at a certain moment a remedy for the ineffectiveness of parliamentary sessions seemed to be found. The point is that in the course of the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Sejms began to be convened under the slogan of confederation. The confederated Sejms could not be disrupted by *liberum veto* therefore they were capable of passing effective legislation. Thanks to this device also the so called Four-Year Sejm (1788–1792) could introduce a fundamental constitutional reform by adopting a new Constitution on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1791. This constitution created a modern parliamentary monarchy with the separation of powers and with ministers who counter-signed all executive acts of the monarch, thereby taking on themselves the responsibility for him. It was also the Constitution which introduced political responsibility of government to parliament through vote of no confidence. Therefore the king could form the government only out of the party which had a command of parliamentary majority.

After the loss of independence at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Polish historians assessed the old constitutional system in a very negative way. The historical literature

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<sup>3</sup> *Volumina Constitutionum*, t. III: 1611–1640, vol. 2: 1627–1640, ed. S. Grodziski, M. Kwiecień, A. Karabowicz, wstęp W. Uruszczak, Warszawa 2013.

<sup>4</sup> I. Lewandowska-Malec, *Demokracje polskie. Tradycje – współczesność – oczekiwania*, Kraków 2013, pp. 376–377.

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century made a search for the reasons of the disaster of the Commonwealth. Polish parliament, especially, was treated with huge criticism. Deputies were blamed for squabbling and pettifogging. Historians thought that, in effect, the First Polish Republic, consisting of Polish and Lithuanian territories, lost its independence. During the period between the First and the Second World War the interpretation of Polish history was very similar. During the interwar period the most famous book was *Liberum veto* written by Władysław Konopczyński and published in French.<sup>5</sup> The General Sejm was described as an institution which was the cause of anarchy. Owing to this French publication it was commonly believed that the Polish parliament was organized in a very bad way. But we have to notice that many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century historians and other individuals interested in Polish history, published many archival sources: e.g. parliament diaries, which proved to be useful to those, who continued the research on this subject.

Directions of interest in the old Polish parliament history changed in the positive way in the period of the Polish People's Republic, although communist authorities promoted aversion to the old Polish past. At that time many fairly interesting monographs about parliamentary system in the First Republic, (listed below in an alphabetical order) were published (apart from extensive literature about the local assemblies).

- Byliński Janusz, *Sejm z roku 1611*, Wrocław 1970;  
 Byliński Janusz, *Dwa sejmy z roku 1613*, Wrocław 1984;  
 Czaplinski Władysław, *Dwa sejmy w roku 1652*, Wrocław 1955;  
 Cześnik Łucja, *Sejm warszawski w 1649/50 roku*, Wrocław 1978;  
 Filipczak-Kocur Anna, *Sejm zwyczajny z roku 1629*, Warszawa–Wrocław 1979;  
 Kaczorowski Włodzimierz, *Sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny w okresie bezkrólewia 1632 r.*, Opole 1986;  
 Kwak Jan, *Sejm Warszawski 1626 roku*, Opole 1985;  
 Matwijowski Krystyn, *Sejm Grodzieński 1678–1679*, Wrocław 1985;  
 Ochmann Stefania, *Sejmy z lat 1615–1616*, Wrocław 1970;  
 Ochmann Stefania, *Sejm koronacyjny Jana Kazimierza w 1649 r.*, Wrocław 1985;  
 Pietrzak Jerzy, *Po Cecorze i podczas wojny chocimskiej. Sejmy z lat 1620 i 1621*, Wrocław 1983;  
 Pietrzak Jerzy, *W przygaszonym blasku wiktorii chocimskiej. Sejm w 1623 r.*, Wrocław 1987;  
 Pirożyński Jan, *Sejm warszawski 1570*, Kraków 1972;  
 Poraziński Jarosław, *Sejm lubelski w 1703 roku i jego miejsce w konfliktach wewnętrznych na początku XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 1988;  
 Rzońca Jan, *Sejmy z lat 1597 i 1598, cz. I: Bezowocny sejm z 1597 roku*, Warszawa–Wrocław 1989;  
 SereDYka Jan, *Sejm w Toruniu z 1626 roku*, Wrocław 1966;  
 SereDYka Jan, *Sejm zawiedzionych nadziei (1627)*, Opole 1981;  
 SereDYka Jan, *Sejm z 1618 roku*, Opole 1988;  
 Wąsicki Jan, *Konfederacja targowicka i ostatni sejm Rzeczypospolitej z 1793: studium historyczno-prawne*, Poznań 1952.

<sup>5</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Le liberum veto. Étude sur le développement du principe majoritaire*, Paris 1930.

We also should notice the synthesis of longer periods in parliamentary history or general publications referring to the constitutional history of Poland like (in an alphabetical order):

*Historia sejmu polskiego*, edited by Jerzy Michalski:

volume I: *Do schyłku szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1984;

volume II, part I: *W dobie rozbiorów*, Warszawa 1989;

volume II, part II: *II Rzeczpospolita*, Warszawa 1989;

volume III: *Polska Ludowa*, Warszawa 1989;

Łaszewski Ryszard, *Sejm w latach 1764–1793: studium historyczno-prawne*, Warszawa 1973;

Olszewski Henryk, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej epoki oligarchii 1652–1763. Prawo – praktyka – program*, Poznań 1966;

Uruszczak Waclaw, *Sejm walny koronny w latach 1506–1540*, Warszawa 1981.

While considering the scarcity of historical archival sources like the Sejm diaries, public letters and other documents, we should emphasize the significance of W. Uruszczak's publication. It is worthwhile to note that the researchers were particularly involved in the history of parliamentarism of the Vasa's reign. In this period there were many more of the aforementioned sources which have survived until our time.

At the time in various academic centres there were created historical schools gathered around the famous researchers. We can distinguish the centre in Wrocław and Opole, associated with Władysław Czapliński.

I think that a special interest of the entire academic community in the old Polish parliamentarism was due to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creating the General Sejm in 1493. At that time, firstly, there appeared a very important publication about old Polish parliament:

*Dzieje Sejmu Polskiego*, edited by Juliusz Bardach, Warszawa 1993.

And, secondly, researchers, both historians and historians of the Polish law, tried to diagnose the state of research on Polish parliamentarism. In 1993 Stanisław Grodziski published an article on this problem in the periodical entitled "Przegląd Sejmowy". Two years later Juliusz Bardach and Wanda Sudnik did the same by publishing some texts of Polish historians and historians of law concerned with the bibliography of the old Polish parliamentarism. The texts discussed the results of the previous research and put forward some proposals for the future. It is worthy of note that the journal named "Przegląd Sejmowy" ("The Sejm Review") was created with regard to the anniversary of the beginning of the Sejm. Maria Kruk, the authoress of the article on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this periodical emphasized that point, the periodical being published until the present.<sup>6</sup> Stanisław Grodziski described the efforts of a lot of researchers who tried to present the history of old Polish parliamentarism.<sup>7</sup> At this time, coming back to our initial considerations, it was thought that Polish Sejm began in 1493. This problem was discussed in two articles by Antoni Gašiorowski and Waclaw Uruszczak published in the above-

<sup>6</sup> M. Kruk, *Referat recenzyjny – 20 lat „Przeglądu Sejmowego”*, "Przegląd Sejmowy" 2013, issue 115, pp. 10–11.

<sup>7</sup> S. Grodziski, *Pięćset lat sejmu polskiego. Rzut oka na stan badań*, "Przegląd Sejmowy" 1993, issue 1, pp. 20–24.

mentioned periodical.<sup>8</sup> Both scholars were asked to do the research into the precise date of the beginning of the Sejm in 1493. And both of them individually reached a conclusion that the Sejm in 1493 was created on January 28<sup>th</sup>. In turn, the book about the Polish parliamentarism as presented in the historiography consists of articles concerning the literature of particular, separated periods of the functioning of the Sejm in the past. Juliusz Bardach described the effects of research on the beginnings of this organ. He claimed that previous literature, both on the Polish Sejm but also the comparative works referring to it, was fairly useful but insufficient, and that the most important thing is to write syntheses of the history of the Polish Sejm<sup>9</sup>. Waław Uruszczak in his turn, stressed a large role played by publishing historical sources: diaries, constitutions as legal acts approved by the General Sejm and other written pieces of evidence of the plenteous parliament life.<sup>10</sup> Another author – Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska – described the historiography of the times of the reign of king Jan Kazimierz. She noticed there was a lack of monographies concerning this period.<sup>11</sup> The next period to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was presented by Krystyn Matwijowski in his article about parliamentarism under the reign of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and Jan III Sobieski. Although more works about the times of the last Polish monarchs of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were published, yet also the earlier period required monographic research.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, nobody wrote about the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century in the discussed publication.

This academic discussion was very effective and fruitful. After the aforementioned anniversary had been celebrated, for a few years there were published numerous monographs on individual Sejms and local assemblies or on sequences of these local conventions.

In the first ten years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century many books or minor works on this subject were published. The attempt of creating a whole bibliography was made by Edward Mierzwa in the journal “Teki Sejmowe” (“The Sejm’s Folders”) in which, in the first volume, a few researchers published their articles about the state of research and put forward the research postulates. At that time there were published numerous monographs of individual Sejms, like (in alphabetical order):

Chmielowska Mieczysława, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego 1669 roku*, Warszawa 2006;

Ciesielski Tomasz, *Sejm brzeski 1653 r.: studium z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1652–1653*, Toruń 2003;

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<sup>8</sup> A. Gąsiorowski, *Data rozpoczęcia sejmku 1493 roku*, “Przegląd Sejmowy” 1993, issue 1, pp. 83–86; W. Uruszczak, *Datacja obrad sejmku walnego koronnego w 1493 roku*, “Przegląd Sejmowy” 1993, issue 1, pp. 86–87.

<sup>9</sup> J. Bardach, *O stawaniu się sejmku polskiego we współczesnej historiografii* [in:] *Parlamentaryzm w Polsce we współczesnej historiografii*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 1995, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> W. Uruszczak, *Suum cuique tribuere. Dwa stulecia badań nad sejmem polskim za panowania ostatnich Jagiellonów (1506–1572)* [in:] *Parlamentaryzm w Polsce we współczesnej historiografii*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 1995, p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> S. Ochmann-Staniszevska, *Uwagi o badaniach nad sejmem w okresie panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy* [in:] *Parlamentaryzm w Polsce we współczesnej historiografii*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 1995, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> K. Matwijowski, *Badania nad parlamentaryzmem polskim w czasach Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego i Jana III Sobieskiego* [in:] *Parlamentaryzm w Polsce we współczesnej historiografii*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 1995, pp. 94–97.

Danilczyk Adam, *W kręgu afery Dogrumowej: sejm 1786 roku*, Warszawa 2010;  
 Filipczak Witold, *Sejm 1778 roku*, Warszawa 2000;  
 Kołodziej Robert, *Pierwszy sejm z 1637 roku*, Toruń 2004;  
 Krakowiak Paweł, *Dwa sejmy z 1666 roku*, Toruń 2010;  
 Palkij Henryk, *Sejmy 1736 i 1738 roku: u początków nowej sytuacji politycznej w Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków 2000;  
 Polak Wojciech, *O dobro wspólne i egzekucję praw: sejm 1565 roku w Piotrkowie*, Toruń 2004;  
 Szczerbik Zbigniew, *Sejm koronacyjny Władysława IV*, Kluczbork 2001;  
 Wierzbicki Leszek Andrzej, *O zgodę w Rzeczypospolitej: zjazd warszawski i sejm pacyfikacyjny 1673 roku*, Lublin 2005.

And we should also emphasize the importance of the Sejm mini-monographs to be found in the 1<sup>st</sup> volume of the publication:

Ochmann-Staniszevska Stefania, Staniszewski Zdzisław, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy: prawo – doktryna – praktyka*, vol. 1, Wrocław 2000;

and synthesizing publications, like (in alphabetical order):

Dzięgielewski Jan, *Sejmy elekcyjne, elektorzy, elekcje 1573–1674*, Pułtusk 2003;  
 Lewandowska-Malec Izabela, *Sejm walny koronny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów i jego dorobek ustawodawczy (1587–1632)*, Kraków 2009;

Ochmann-Staniszevska Stefania, Staniszewski Zdzisław, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy: prawo – doktryna – praktyka*, vol. 2, Wrocław 2000;

Olshewski Henryk, *Sejm w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej: ustrój i idee*, vol. 1: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej epoki oligarchii (1652–1763): prawo – praktyka – teoria – programy*, Poznań 2002;

Opaliński Zbigniew, *Sejm Srebrnego Wieku 1587–1652: między głosowaniem większościowym a liberum veto*, Wrocław 2000;

Paradowski Przemysław, *W obliczu “nagłych potrzeb” Rzeczypospolitej. Sejmy ekstraordynaryjne za panowania Władysława IV Wazy*, Toruń 2005.

At the early 21<sup>st</sup> century the Jagiellonian University organized a project of major significance – the 56<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions, which was held in Cracow and Radom (5–8 September, 2005). Its theme was “Separation of powers and parliamentarism. The past and the present: law, doctrine and practice”. During that conference the historians from all over the world presented results of their research into Poland’s parliamentary system. The General Sejm and the local assemblies of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were the subject of a lot of articles, which explored their history from the beginnings of parliament (the enactment of the *Nihil novi* statute) through the functioning of this agency until its decline and fall.<sup>13</sup> This conference demonstrated that the

<sup>13</sup> *Podział władzy i parlamentaryzm w przeszłości i współcześnie. Prawo, doktryna, praktyka. 500. rocznica konstytucji Nihil novi z 1505 r. 56. Konferencja Międzynarodowej Komisji Historii Instytucji Reprezentatywnych i Parlamentarnych w Krakowie i Radomiu (5–8 września 2005). Separation of Powers and Parliamentarism. The Past and The Present. Law, Doctrine, Practice, Five Hundred Years Anniversary of the Nihil novi Statute of 1505 56<sup>th</sup> Conference of International Commission for the History of Representative*



interest in Polish parliamentarism was unabating. It was also the last project, in which Professor Stanisław Płaza, who died six months later, took part.

Works the aim of which was to create a bibliography of the old Polish parliamentarism were still being undertaken. Now, we can see the last big project of the parliamentary system bibliography, namely, *Bibliography of the parliamentary system of the Nobles' Republic*, published in Poznań, 2012 by Robert Kołodziej and Michał Zwierzykowski.

This work is a collection of 2751 publications, consisting of books, articles, reviews and source books concerning General Sejm as well as local assemblies.

Lately, on that basis, one of the authors, Robert Kołodziej, has published the article entitled *Z najnowszych badań nad parlamentaryzmem szlacheckim Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku* (*The latest research into Nobles' parliamentarism of the Commonwealth in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries*).<sup>14</sup> The author distinguishes four directions of the research into old Polish parliamentarism: Monographs of individual General Sejms; Synthesis involving longer periods; Monographs of individual local assemblies; Editions of archival sources. The author rightly noticed an insufficient number of publications about the reign of the first two elective kings (Henryk Walezy and Stefan Batory), on the other hand one should emphasize the unpublished doctoral dissertation concerning Sejms of Stefan Batory written by Anna Karabowicz.<sup>15</sup>

Also, this author writes about one important project aimed at creating a list of the Sejm deputies; now a book was published about the Sejm deputies from the Polish Kingdom during the period from the beginning of parliament to 1600.<sup>16</sup> This project is still continued. Also Leszek Andrzej Wierzbicki published the catalogue of the 17<sup>th</sup> century marshals and members of parliament from the Polish Kingdom.<sup>17</sup>

In recent times, in historical literature there have appeared many more texts about the Sejm procedure, the legislative process, not about the political relationships and the individual Sejm deputies and Sejm marshals. I think, it is a field on which there is still much to be done. R. Kołodziej claims that the publications concerning parliamentary procedure and constitutional matters are very different and because of this they are too difficult to compare. I think that the type of authors is the reason of it; the publications about Polish parliamentarism are prepared by historians and historians of law. This is the cause of difference because the two groups use different workshops. But, Robert Kołodziej tries to reconcile these two styles in his new book entitled: *“Ostatni wolności naszej klejnot”: Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana III Sobieskiego*, Poznań 2014 (*“The last jewel of our freedom”: Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the reign of Jan III Sobieski*).

The article of R. Kołodziej does not mention another problem, namely the necessity to compare parliaments operating in different European time in the same era. This was the postulate put forth by Joanna Choińska-Mika some time ago. She noticed the need to

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*and Parliamentary Institutions in Cracow and Radom (5–8 September 2005)*, ed. W. Uruszczak, K. Baran, A. Karabowicz, Warszawa 2007.

<sup>14</sup> R. Kołodziej, *Z najnowszych badań nad parlamentaryzmem szlacheckim Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku*, “*Historia Slavorum Occidentis*” 2013, issue 2 (5), pp. 43–57.

<sup>15</sup> This dissertation will soon be published.

<sup>16</sup> *Posłowie ziemscy koronni 1493–1600*, ed. I. Kaniewska, Warszawa 2013.

<sup>17</sup> L. Wierzbicki, *Marszałkowie i parlamentarzyści. Studia z dziejów sejmu polskiego w XVII wieku*, Warszawa 2014.

re-examine historical sources from that perspective.<sup>18</sup> In one of her articles she notes that English academic milieu had begun to do such research.<sup>19</sup> This kind of research should be also made in the Polish world of learning. It seems that we should analyze historical sources which were used in publications written a long time ago. The opinions formed by the present-day researchers sometimes considerably depart from those produced by their predecessors.

The need to re-analyze the archival historical sources is closely related to the necessity of editing parliamentary documents in a new way; by digitization and publication online, on the Internet, especially the parliamentary diaries in German. In the past there was launched the project of digitizing the legal acts of the king's Chancery named "Metryka Koronna" ("Crown Metrica"). We have a limited access to the analogous "Lithuanian Metrica". The last edition of the Sejm diary in the paper form are *Diariusze sejmu koronacyjnego Zygmunta III Wazy 1587/1588 roku* prepared by Irena Kaniewska in 2016.

We cannot forget about the new edition of the old Polish parliamentary legislative achievements in the form of *Volumina Constitutionum*: up to the present time there have been published four volumes from the Sejm's beginnings to 1658 (part 1). Those who have been engaged in publishing them were: Stanisław Grodziski, Waclaw Uruszczak, deceased Irena Dwornicka, Marcin Kwiecień, Anna Karabowicz and Krzysztof Fokt.

In general, the last years have produced a great deal of highly diverse research in the discussed field. Apart from monographs of individual Sejms and local assemblies, which represent the time-honoured historical research, we have also seen a number of more broadly-based studies which explore the functioning of the parliamentary system during one reign or a sequence of reigns of one dynasty. They have been complemented by more detailed studies focused on the individual careers of deputies and senators and their parliamentary work. More recently, there has been a marked growth of interest in issues of law-making and parliamentary procedure.

The author of the above considerations think that currently the research on the Sejm as a public-law institution and the most important part of a political system would be extremely useful. The analysis of institutional relations between the Sejm and the local assemblies as a parliamentary system should be considered important. In addition, from this angle, it would be appropriate to examine specific issues such as the nature of the parliamentary mandate, because to this day, views from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are reiterated in historical literature.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Choińska-Mika, głos w dyskusji [in:] *Polska na tle Europy XVI–XVII wieku. Konferencja Muzeum Historii Polski Warszawa 23–24 października 2006*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 37–38.

<sup>19</sup> J. Choińska-Mika, *Dwa parlamenty nowożytne – polski i angielski (wieki XVI i XVII)* [in:] *Dziedzictwo Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej w doświadczeniu politycznym Polski i Europy*, ed. J. Ekes, Nowy Sącz 2005.



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**Streszczenie**

Artykuł przedstawia rozwój badań nad polskim parlamentaryzmem w dobie Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów. Literatura poświęcona tej problematyce jest bardzo obszerna. Na podstawie źródeł archiwalnych i drukowanych (zwłaszcza diariuszy sejmowych) opracowane zostały liczne monografie poszczególnych sejmów, następnie syntezy dziejów parlamentaryzmu, by powrócić do szczegółowych zagadnień dotyczących parlamentaryzmu. Najważniejsze przykłady tych prac zostały wskazane w niniejszym opracowaniu. W podsumowaniu autorka zwróciła uwagę na konieczność podjęcia zagadnienia natury mandatu poselskiego, ponieważ jak dotąd dominują w literaturze poglądy jeszcze dziewiętnastowieczne.