

= Sejmik =

A sejmik ( Polish pronunciation : [ ʂɛjmʲik ] , diminutive of sejm , occasionally translated as a dietine ; Lithuanian : seimelis ) was the name of various local parliaments throughout the history of Poland . The first sejmiks were regional assemblies in the Kingdom of Poland , though they gained significantly more influence in the later era of the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth . Sejmiks arose around the late 14th and early 15th centuries and existed until the end of the Commonwealth in 1795 , following the partitions of the Commonwealth . In a limited form , some sejmiks existed in partitioned Poland , and later , in the Second Polish Republic . In modern Poland , since 1999 , the term has been revived with the voivodeship sejmik ( sejmik województwa ) , referring to the elected council of each of the 16 voivodeships .

The competences of sejmiks varied over time , and there were also geographical differences . Often , numerous different types of sejmiks coexisted in the same governance structure . Almost always presided over by the marshal of the sejm , sejmiks could often elect delegates to the national sejm , and sometimes could give them binding instructions . Sejmiks attained the peak of their importance at the turn of the 18th century , when they effectively supplanted the inefficient national sejm .

= Etymology =

The word sejm and sejmik are derived from old Czech sejmovat , which means " to bring together " or " to summon " .

= History =

The traditions of a sejmik can be traced to the institution of the wiec that actually predates the Polish state . They originated from gatherings of nobility , formed for military and consultative purposes . Historians disagree about the specific date of origin of the sejmiks , with some proposed dates being 1374 ( the Privilege of Koszyce ) and 1454 ( the Nieszawa Statutes ) . Geographically , sejmiks first arose in central Poland ( Greater Poland province ) . Over the next century or so , they spread to other provinces of Poland , and finally , by the 16th century , to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania . Sejmiks were legally recognized by the 1454 Nieszawa Statutes , in a privilege granted to the szlachta ( Polish nobility ) by King Casimir IV Jagiellon , when the king agreed to consult with the nobility concerning certain decisions . Casimir 's recognition of the sejmik stemmed from an attempt to limit the growing power of the magnates , and counteract it with the middle nobility .

With the creation of a national Sejm in 1493 , which took over the powers of taxation and the pospolite ruszenie previously granted to sejmiks at Nieszawa , the importance of regional governance somewhat diminished . Still , the sejmiks continued to play an important role in the governance of Poland as the most direct form of political enfranchisement of the nobility .

After the Union of Lublin in 1569 , the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth had about 70 sejmiks ( out of those , 24 were in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ) . Jacek Jędruch notes a trend of an increasing number of sejmiks over time , from about 16 in the 15th century to 104 by the late 18th century , as nobility sought to meet in places that required less travel time . Stanisław Pęza also estimates about 100 at the turn of the 18th century . Those sejmiks elected 170 deputies ( 48 from Lithuania ) . Most sejmiks elected 2 deputies , but there were exceptions . Wojciech Kriegseisen notes that until the late 18th century , there were 44 sejmiks in Poland proper ( the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland ) , 24 in Lithuania , and 1 in Inflanty province .

The sejmik 's role grew again in the late 17th century , as central power weakened . Sejmiks attained the peak of their importance at the turn of the 18th century , when they often set their own time limits - that is , they extended their authorized periods of operation . In the face of an inefficient central government , with the national Sejm often disrupted by the liberum veto and the office of starosta losing much of its importance , sejmiks administered a portion of the taxes , and raised their own military ( wojsko powiatowe ) . This period , which was known as the " rule of sejmiks " ( rządy sejmikowe ) , was brought to an end by acts of the one - day Silent Sejm ( Polish : sejm niemy )

of 1717 , which removed most taxation and military competences from the sejmiks . Some sejmiks were also affected by liberum veto until it was abolished for sejmiks in 1766 ; this was not always the case , as some decided to forgo unanimity and move to majority rule .

Where the middle nobility had been the leading force at the sejmiks in the 16th century , the magnates became increasingly influential in the 18th century . This stemmed from their ability to bribe masses of poorly educated , landless nobility ( known as magnate 's " clients " or " clientele " ) , as all nobles were eligible to vote in the sejmiks . Sejmiks in Lithuania were dominated by the magnates to a greater extent than those in Poland proper , as the Lithuanian magnates were more powerful than their Polish counterparts . The magnate @-@ dominated sejmiks , which gathered impoverished nobility , have been described as more concerned with eating and drinking than debate ; for the poorest of nobility , they were a rare occasion to participate in feasts sponsored by the magnates . When they met , the drunken nobility was known to fight among themselves , which on occasion led to fatalities .

Sejmiks were significantly reformed by the Prawo o sejmikach , the act on regional sejms , passed on 24 March 1791 and subsequently recognized as part of the Constitution of 3 May . This law introduced major changes to the electoral ordinance , as it reduced the enfranchisement of the noble class . The voting right became tied to a property qualification ; to be eligible to vote , a noble had to own or lease land and pay taxes , or be closely related to another who did . Some 300 @,@ 000 out of 700 @,@ 000 otherwise eligible nobles were thus disfranchised , much to their displeasure . A document from 1792 lists only 47 sejmiks .

Although the independent existence of the Commonwealth ended with the partitions of Poland in 1795 , the institution of the sejmik continued , albeit in a somewhat restricted fashion . In the Duchy of Warsaw , sejmiks elected deputies to the Sejm of the Duchy of Warsaw . Similarly , sejmiks of Congress Poland elected deputies to the Sejm of Congress Poland until its abolishment in 1831 . Even in the Lithuanian territories incorporated into the Russian Empire , some judicial sejmiks were allowed to elect lower court judges ; it was the only elective representative institution to survive in the Lithuanian territories after the partition . In the Prussian partition there were provincial sejmiks ( Provinziallandtag ) and powiat sejmiks ( Kreistag ) . Near the turn of the century , some limited local representative institutions existed in the Russian partition and Austrian partition , but they did not bear the name of sejmiks .

After Poland regained independence , provincial sejms were restored in the Second Polish Republic , although they were called sejms rather than sejmiks . They included the short @-@ lived Sejm of Central Lithuania ( 1921 ? 1922 ) ; the three voivodeship sejms ( Silesian Parliament , Greater Poland Sejm , and Pomeranian Sejm , 1920 ? 1939 ) , which preserved the tradition of sejmiks in the former Prussian partition ; and the county sejmiks , of which there were 264 in 1939 . The existence of these institutions was interrupted by the occupation of Poland during the Second World War , and they were not reestablished in the era of communist Poland .

The sejmiks were revived again after the fall of communism in modern Poland . Since 1999 , the term sejmik ( in full , sejmik województwa ) has been used to refer to the elected council of each of the 16 voivodeships or regions ( see voivodeship sejmik ) . The word sejmik was chosen by lawmakers in order to eliminate the term rada wojewódzka ( voivodeship council ) , which conjured memories of voivodeship people 's councils during the communist Poland era .

= = Sejmiks of the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth = =

= = = Features = = =

Sejmiks were usually held in a large , open field . The nobility would elect a presiding officer ( marsza?ek sejmiku : sejmik marshal ) , whose role was analogous to the marshal of the sejm at national Sejms . ( This term has been revived since 1999 , but it now refers to the chairman of the voivodeship executive board rather than the presiding officer of the sejmik itself . ) While the sejmiks were originally convened by the king , soon a loophole was exploited : the sejmiks would limit the

number of issues discussed , using that as a pretext to reconvene later at a time chosen by the marshal . Voivodes and starosts also had the ability to convene some sejmiks . Until the reforms of the Constitution of 3 May , all the nobility residing in the territory that was holding a sejmik were eligible to participate in the sejmik .

It is estimated that most sejmiks drew around 4 to 6 % of eligible participants .

= = = Types = = =

Historians distinguish several types of sejmiks , depending on their geographical scope :

General ( Polish : *generalny* , Latin *conventiones generales* ) , held in western Poland ( Greater Poland ) at KoŃo , in southern Poland ( Little Poland ) at Nowe Miasto Korczyn , in Masovia at Warsaw , in Red Ruthenia at Sadowa Wisznia , and in Lithuania at Volkovysk . The General Sejmiks were composed of delegates elected at the provincial sejmiks , and of Senators . Their goal was to agree on a position for the General Sejm ( *Sejm Walny* ) and issue instructions for the deputies on how they were supposed to vote during the General Sejm . The competences of the general sejmiks were defined by precedent and custom rather than law ; on rare instances when external circumstances prevented a national Sejm from being convened ( such as 1511 , 1513 and 1577 ) , the general sejmiks were seen as competent to legislate on national matters . In the 15th century some general sejmiks reserved the right to accept or reject national legislation . In the 16th century they were tasked with preparing drafts of legislation to be discussed at Sejms . Around the 17th century general sejmiks were mostly abandoned ( with the exceptions of those in Royal Prussia , see Prussian estates ) ; instead , provincial deputies would meet in special sessions during the Sejm proper .

Provincial , Territorial , Voivodeship or County ( Polish : *ziemski* , Latin *conventiones particulares* , *conventiones terrestres* ) . The names of these sejmiks varied depending on their administrative level and local traditions ; PŃaza lists *powiat sejmiks* ( county sejmiks ; *sejmiki powiatowe* ) , *ziemia sejmiks* ( territorial sejmiks ; *sejmiki ziemskie* ) , *voivodeship sejmiks* ( *sejmiki wojewódzkie* ) and *provincial sejmiks* ( *sejmiki prowincjonalne* ) . A theoretical hierarchy that almost never existed in practice could be drawn starting from the *powiat sejmiks* , and moving upwards to *ziemia* , *voivodeship* , *general* ( of several voivodeships ) and *provincial sejmiks* ending with the final , *national sejm* . Almost all *ziemias* had their own sejmiks , but the importance of the sejmik varied based on whether the given *ziemia* was autonomous ( that is , whether it was part of a voivodeship ) . *Powiat sejms* were common in Lithuania , but were rare in the Crown of Poland , where instead *voivodeship sejms* were much more common . Some voivodeships could hold a single voivodeship sejmik , and others might be covered by more than one sejmik . The importance of the local sejmiks began to diminish with the formation of the national sejm . Thereafter the local sejmiks were relegated to dealing with local matters and electing deputies to the General Sejms . They rose in importance again in the second half of the 17th century , as the central Sejm grew weaker .

Kriegseisen , quoting Adam LityŃski , argues that there was only one type of sejmik and that the only difference between various sejmiks was the purpose for which they were convened . Nonetheless other scholars often distinguish between different types of sejmiks . Juliusz Bardach and JŃdruch , for example , divide sejmiks based on their purpose as follows :

Pre @-@ sejm ( Polish : *przedsejmowe* ) sejmiks were convened by the king who sent a writ ( *legacja królewska* ) to each sejmik , outlining the reasons the next Sejm would be held . Such sejmiks elected one to six deputies ( *poslowie* ) , depending on the size and importance of the sejmik 's territory , to the ordinary General Sejm ( Polish : *Sejm Walny* ) that was held every two years , and to any extraordinary General Sejm that might be called at any time in an emergency . Sometimes pre @-@ sejm sejmiks were referred to as electoral . In some cases , a sejmik could be called for two voivodeships ? in that case it could elect more than 6 deputies . Deputies were given instructions on how to vote during the sejm proper , although on occasion the instructions could be vague , or even give the deputies full freedom . These sejmiks arose in the late 15th century .

Relational or Debriefing ( Polish : *relacyjne* ) sejmiks heard the reports of deputies returned from the General Sejm , usually presenting the law ( *konstytucje sejmowe* ) decreed by the Sejm . They

passed specific instructions with regards to the execution of sejm decrees , and other local resolutions . Such sejms could also receive special requests from the king ; this happened if the sejmik deputy was bound by instructions not to vote on certain issues that subsequently were voted on and passed in the national sejm . In such cases the king would request the sejmik to reconsider their decision and support the national legislation . These sejms arose in the 16th century .

Electoral ( Polish : elekcyjne ) sejms elected higher voivodeship officials , judges in particular . They were convened irregularly , as such offices were usually held for life . Several candidates would be nominated , and the king would make the final appointment from among them . These sejms arose in the 15th century .

Deputational or Judicial ( Polish : deputackie ) sejms met on a yearly basis and elected deputies ( deputaci ) to tribunals ( Crown Tribunal and Lithuanian Tribunal ) from the times of King Stefan Batory onwards ( starting in 1578 in Poland , and from 1581 in Lithuania ) .

Administrative or Economic ( Polish : gospodarcze ) sejms oversaw voivodeship self @-@ government . Often , they were held on the day following the deputational sejmik . Their decrees were known as laudas . Some of the specific issues that these sejms addressed included : dealing with taxation ( distribution of national taxes ) and tax collectors , managing the local ( voivodeship ) taxes and treasury , recruiting local military and ( from mid @-@ 1700s ) election of deputies to the Treasury Tribunals . These sejms arose in the early 16th century .

Hooded ( Polish : kapturowe ) sejms had special powers during an interregnum . These sejms were organized as confederations , and would elect confederation officials . The name was derived from hoods worn in the period of royal mourning . These sejms began during the interregnum of 1572 .

= = Assessment and historiography = =

Kriegseisen notes that the institution of the sejmik gained a negative reputation following the partitions of Poland , and it has been described as one of the dysfunctional elements of the Polish political system that contributed to the fall of the Commonwealth . He cautions against such simplistic assessments , and traces them to 18th century publications whose negative views of the sejms have been rarely challenged since . The stereotype of a group of drunken , fighting nobility , found in some literature , should not be seen as representative , particularly outside the period of the sejmik 's decline in the 18th century . He argues that while many sensationalist descriptions of debauchery , brawling or outright bloody violence at sejms have survived , they did so because they were just that ? sensationalist ? and should be seen as exceptions to the long , uneventful , but usually constructive proceedings that were much more common .

Kriegseisen also remarks that there is a myth about the uniqueness of sejms to Poland , and notes that similar institutions of self @-@ governance and regional parliamentary participation by nobility can be found in other places , such as in Hungary and various German provinces ( Silesia , Prussia , Brandenburg ) .

= = Locations of provincial ( or territorial ) sejms = =

The following is a list of locations at which the provincial ( or territorial ) sejms were held .

= = = Province of Lesser Poland = = =

Beż ( for Beż Voivodeship ) , four envoys elected to the Sejm ,  
Chełm ( for the Land of Chełm ) , two envoys elected ,  
Czernihów ( for Czernihów Voivodeship ) , four envoys elected ,  
Halicz ( for the Lands of Halicz , Kołomyja , and Trembowla ) , six envoys elected ,  
Kamieniec Podolski ( for Podole Voivodeship ) , four envoys elected ,  
Łuck ( for Wołyń Voivodeship ) , six envoys elected ,  
Opole ( for Sandomierz Voivodeship ) , six envoys elected ,

Proszowice ( for Kraków Voivodeship ) , six envoys elected ,  
Urzędów , also Lublin ( for Lublin Voivodeship , three envoys elected ,  
Winnica ( for Bracław Voivodeship ) , three envoys elected ,  
Sądowa Wisznia ( for the Lands of Lwów , Sanok , and Przemyśl ) , six envoys elected ,  
Zator ( for the Duchy of Oświęcim , and the Duchy of Zator ) , one envoy elected ,  
Żytomierz ( for Kijów Voivodeship ) , three envoys elected .

= = = Province of Greater Poland = = =

Bielsk ( for the County of Bielsk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Ciechanów ( for the Land of Ciechanów ) , two envoys elected ,  
Czersk ( for the Land of Czersk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Drohiczyn ( for the County of Drohiczyn ) , two envoys elected ,  
Gubin ( for the Land of Gostynin ) , two envoys elected ,  
Lipno ( for the Land of Dobrzyń ) , two envoys elected ,  
Liw ( for the Land of Liw ) , two envoys elected ,  
Łomża ( for the Land of Łomża ) , two envoys elected ,  
Mielnik ( for the County of Mielnik ) , two envoys elected ,  
Nur ( for the Land of Nur ) , two envoys elected ,  
Parzęczew ( for Łęczyca Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Raciąż ( for Płock Voivodeship ) , four envoys elected ,  
Radziejów ( for Brześć Kujawski Voivodeship and Inowrocław Voivodeship ) , four envoys elected ,

Rawa Mazowiecka ( for the Land of Rawa ) , two envoys elected ,  
Różan ( for the Land of Różan ) , two envoys elected ,  
Sochaczew ( for the Land of Sochaczew ) , two envoys elected ,  
Szadek ( for Sieradz Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Żroda Wielkopolska ( for Kalisz Voivodeship and Poznań Voivodeship ) , twelve envoys elected ,  
Warszawa ( for the Land of Warszawa ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wieluń ( for the Land of Wieluń and the County of Ostrzeszów ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wizna ( for the Land of Wizna ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wyszogród ( for the Land of Wyszogród ) , two envoys elected ,  
Zakroczym ( for the Land of Zakroczym ) , two envoys elected .

= = = Royal Prussia = = =

Czuchów ( for the County of Czuchów ) , two envoys elected ,  
Kowalewo Pomorskie ( for Chełmno Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Malbork ( for Malbork Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Mirachowo ( for the County of Mirachowo ) , two envoys elected ,  
Puck ( for the County of Puck ) , two envoys elected ,  
Starogard Gdański ( for the Counties of Gdańsk , Tczew , Nowe , and in 1642 ? 1655 for the Łębork  
? Bytów Land ) , two envoys elected ; in 1642 ? 1655 , four envoys elected ,  
Żwiecie ( for the County of Żwiecie ) , two envoys elected ,  
Tuchola ( for the County of Tuchola ) , two envoys elected .

= = = Grand Duchy of Lithuania = = =

Brasław ( for the County of Brasław ) , two envoys elected ,  
Brześć ( for the County of Brześć ) , two envoys elected ,  
Grodno ( for the County of Grodno ) , two envoys elected ,  
Kowno ( for the County of Kowno ) , two envoys elected ,  
Lida ( for the County of Lida ) , two envoys elected ,

Mi?sk ( for the County of Mi?sk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Mozyrz ( for the County of Mozyrz ) , two envoys elected ,  
M?cis?aw ( for M?cis?aw Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Nowogródek ( for the County of Nowogródek ) , two envoys elected ,  
Orsza ( for the County of Orsza ) , two envoys elected ,  
Oszmiana ( for the County of Oszmiana ) , two envoys elected ,  
Pi?sk ( for the County of Pi?sk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Po?ock ( for Po?ock Voivodeship ) , two envoys elected ,  
Poniewie? ( for the County of Upita ) , two envoys elected ,  
Rosienie ( for the Duchy of Samogitia ) , two envoys elected ,  
Rzeczyca ( for the County of Rzeczyca ) , two envoys elected ,  
S?onim ( for the County of Nowogródek ) , two envoys elected ,  
Smole?sk ( for the County of Smole?sk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Starodub ( for the County of Starodub ) , two envoys elected ,  
Troki ( for the County of Troki ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wilno ( for the County of Wilno ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wi?komierz ( for the County of Wi?komierz ) , two envoys elected ,  
Witebsk ( for the County of Witebsk ) , two envoys elected ,  
Wo?kowysk ( for the County of Wo?kowysk ) , two envoys elected .

= = = Duchy of Livonia = = =

According to the 1598 bill of the Sejm , regional sejmiks for Livonia took place in Kie? , in some cases also in Ryga . After Swedish conquest of most of Livonia in the 1620s , the sejmiks were moved to Dyneburg . The nobility of the County of Pilty? , formally equal to the nobility of the Commonwealth , did not elect any envoys to the Sejm .