

# SHORT NOTES\*

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## GENERAL WORKS

Anna Janicka, Corinne Fournier Kiss, and Mariya Bracka (eds), *Przemiany dyskursu emancypacyjnego kobiet* [Changes in Women's Emancipation Discourse], Series 1: *Perspektywa środkowoeuropejska* [The Central European Perspective], Białystok, 2019, Temida 2, in cooperation with Wydział Filologiczny Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku and Katedra Badań Filologicznych „Wschód-Zachód”, 746 pp., bibliography, ill., portraits, English, French, Russian, Ukrainian sum., index of personal names; series: *Przełomy/Pogranicza: Studia Literackie 27, Studia Kobiecte 1*

Anna Janicka, Corinne Fournier Kiss, and Barbara Olech (eds), *Przemiany dyskursu emancypacyjnego kobiet* [Changes in Women's Emancipation Discourse], Series 2: *Perspektywa polska* [The Polish Perspective], Białystok, 2019, Temida 2, in cooperation with Wydział Filologiczny Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 729 pp., bibliography, ill., English, French, Russian, Ukrainian sum., index of personal names; series: *Przełomy/Pogranicza: Studia Literackie 28, Studia Kobiecte 2*

These two voluminous volumes are related to the International Scientific Conference on the 'Changes in the Formula of Women's Emancipation between the Seventeenth Century and the Two Interwar Decades [1918–39]', held on 26–27 September 2013 at the Branicki Palace in Białystok and the Faculty of Philology, University of Białystok. Though several years have passed since the conference, they reasonably well render the current state of research as represented by over 120 contributing scholars from Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Switzerland, the United States, and Lithuania.

The volume one studies show the phenomenon of women's emancipation from the Central European and, primarily, East European perspective, with

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volume two focusing on the Polish one. Volume one outlines a long-term, non-linear dynamism of the emancipation movement in Central and Eastern Europe, between the eighteenth century and our own time. Volume two explores the history of emancipation in Polish lands, with particular focus on nineteenth-century *belles-lettres* and cultural history. Discussed are the figures and activities of Polish female historians, columnists, and writers active from the beginning of the eighteenth century and during the ‘long nineteenth century’, along with a number of women intellectuals from the interbellum years struggling for emancipation; many of them resumed their activity in the field of the ‘female question’ in post-war communist People’s Republic of Poland. The picture that emerges from the presentation of those intellectuals activists is one of a rather ambiguous process.

What difference is between those two approaches, apparently based on different geographies? With more than three decades of studies on gender, the ‘Polish perspective’ is obviously still in search of its own topic or subject matters and the process of discovering its own roots – a reconstruction exercise that is far from completion. A considerable portion of material valuable in terms of facts shows the public figures that once proactively marked their presence and afterwards got wholly marginalised in the national historiographies – to name the spectacular cases of Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa and Helena Duninówna. A significant portion of the studies deals with literary characters or literature as such, rather than real-life social activists – as if literature could offer a substitutive life, or were the actual primary emancipation space. Even if included in a smaller proportion, the essays from Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine vastly reproduce the model and, indirectly, show how considerable the resistance offered to female studies that try to persist. The scholars from the Western world, represented by Switzerland (primarily Corinne Fournier Kiss) and the US, are somewhere else now: their essays are distinct with their in-depth theoretical background and stronger pressure on crossing the space of national discourse.

Both volumes are equipped with valuable bibliographies, notes on the authors, and brief summaries in Ukrainian, Russian, French, and English, plus an index of names. (GK)

Tomasz Kurpierz, *Henryk Sławik 1894–1944. Biografia socjalisty* [Henryk Sławik 1894–1944: Biography of a Socialist], Katowice–Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, 836 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, index of personal names, photographs

In history, Henryk Sławik earned the name of the ‘Polish Wallenberg’ and the ‘Silesian hero of the three nations’. These terms perfectly illustrate his life

and the ideas he was dedicated to. In the most recent biography of Sławik, Tomasz Kurpierz attempts to describe his protagonist against the background of the turbulent time of the first half of the twentieth century. The book is divided into two parts. The first (*Interwar*) is dedicated to Sławik's life until the outbreak of the Second World War. The second part (*War*) describes his fate in the years 1939–44. *Epilogue* completes the book, where Kurpierz highlights the posthumous fate of remembering this figure in Poland and Hungary. The author used a variety of sources in his book, ranging from archival materials collected both in Polish and foreign archives, as well as the press and existing literature on the subject. Sławik's biography is organised chronologically. The author traces the fate of his protagonist from birth (the village of Szeroka, presently a district of Jastrzębie-Zdrój) until his death (as a result of torture in the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp). While Sławik is best known for his activities during the war, when together with József Antall they rescued tens of thousands of people, in his biography, Kurpierz puts tremendous emphasis on his pre-war history. This was inextricably linked with Upper Silesia. Sławik participated in all Silesian uprisings, previously working as a worker in Hamburg, from where, as a soldier in the German army, he went to the eastern front. After the incorporation of Upper Silesia to Poland, he took up residence in Katowice, where he devoted himself to journalistic (*Gazeta Robotnicza*) and social work. From the beginning, he was associated with the PPS socialists. Kurpierz devotes a lot of attention in particular to the time of the great economic crisis in Upper Silesia. This period, alongside the Silesian Uprisings, was particularly decisive in the case of Sławik's biography. After the Second World War outbreak, his figure was so well-known that the German occupier placed him on the list of people to be arrested. Sławik fled to Hungary, where he joined the work of the Citizens' Committee for the Care of Polish Refugees in Hungary. It is estimated that the organisation helped nearly thirty thousand Poles, including approximately five thousand Polish Jews, who were provided with false documents. In mid-1944, as the political situation in Hungary changed, the situation of Sławik and his family deteriorated. Soon, both Sławik and his wife, Jadwiga, were arrested. During the brutal investigation, he did not denounce any of his co-workers, assuming the entire responsibility for the operation of rescuing the Jewish population. During the Polish People's Republic, his figure was erased from history textbooks. It was not until 1989 that the way he was characterised changed, restoring his rightful place in European history. (HW)

Zbigniew Mentzel, *Kołodkowski. Czytanie świata. Biografia* [Kołodkowski: Reading the World. A Biography], Kraków, 2020, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 509 pp., bibliography, index of persons, photographs

Zbigniew Mentzel is an essayist, columnist, author of several books – including a two-part (2007, 2008) conversation with Leszek Kołodkowski, philosopher, one of the most outstanding Polish twentieth-century intellectuals.

The study is composed of thirty-nine short sections showing the vicissitudes of the eminent philosopher. The author's focus is on the life and professional activities of Kołodkowski: "it is primarily an intellectual biography, a biography of thoughts", Mentzel declares, but those otherwise abundant passages do not rank among the book's highlights. A book announced as the first complete biography of Kołodkowski seems to herald an in-depth portrait of a scholar, historian of philosophy, and an active columnist, against the background of his time. Although the author skilfully picks up the threads in Kołodkowski's output that are of timeless value, the portrait of him as a person, and those of his numerous polemicists (incl. British historian E.P. Thompson), appear flattened.

While the author does not refrain from touching upon the problematic aspects, such as Kołodkowski's membership with the ruling communist party (Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR]) – a tread of importance to many a contemporary reader – his proposed explanation of the philosopher's ideological evolutions is glaringly formulaic. The same is true for the extensively addressed aspect of Kołodkowski's attitude toward Christianity.

All in all, the book is a classical biography. Its definite asset and strong point is its quasi-reportage style; its structure is considerate, and the reader is deftly and articulately guided through the multithread matter. The intellectual portrait of the character leaves the reader with considerable doubts and question marks. An addendum 'Alphabet of the friends' is attached, along with a list of abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index of personal names, and sources of illustrations. (GK)

#### MIDDLE AGES

Anna Marciniak-Kajzer, *Rzeczy ludzi średniowiecza w domu* [Medieval Household Objects], Łódź, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, ill., bibliography, list of abbreviations, 440 pp.

The book comes as volume one of a planned cycle on things in the life of mediaeval people. In the introduction, the author makes it clear that, chronologically, her focus is the thirteenth to the early sixteenth century; the

area concerned is Poland, but due to gaps in archaeological or iconographic material, she makes broad use of West European examples. The volume on objects will be followed by those dealing with labour, culture, entertainment, and religion. The author defines the 'house' based on a lexicon of Old Polish: a building and its particular section where its dwellers lived and stayed permanently. Although written as a scholarly archaeological monograph, the study does not target archaeologists but rather a broad circle of readers. The author avoids using specialised language and does her best to communicate the content in a possibly approachable way.

Chapter One is on walls, the materials they were made of, and how they were insulated. This topic relates to the division of larger spaces (rooms) into smaller ones, tapestries, and methods of making the floors, doors, and locks; windows and methods of their making are also covered. Chapter Two, dealing with the heating and lightening of inner spaces, focuses on obtaining and maintaining the fire. The following two chapters concern the preparation and eating of meals. Vessels used for cooking means and used at the table are discussed in detail. The final chapters are on sleep, relaxation, and hygiene; a brief conclusion is attached.

Though the typesetting is meticulous and appealing, the chapters are regrettably not divided into subchapters; the issues addressed are not highlighted graphically in the text. The numerous recommended reading items are helpful to those readers who have no expert archaeological background. The book is richly illustrated, with a quantitative prevalence of items from British and US museums, due to the high cost of using illustrations from Polish institutions. Altogether, the book can be regarded as a guide to the medieval household – a handbook rather than a scientific monograph. (AG)

Aleksandra Losik-Sidorska, *Katalog Nagrobków Piastowskich/ The Tombs of the Piast Dynasty*, Poznań, 2020, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, photographs, ills, list of figures, 140 pp.

Published in Polish (as *Katalog Nagrobków Piastowskich*) and English version *The Tombs of the Piast Dynasty* (transl. Agnieszka Tokarczuk-Różańska) at the same time, the study is a catalogue of thirty-one Piast tombs, grouped by regions. The first part is on the House-of-Piast members of Greater Polish [Wielkopolska] lineage, then come those of Lesser Poland [Małopolska], Kuyavia, Masovia and, finally, Silesia. The work on the study started with the elaboration of the material left by Kazimierz Jasiński, who had gathered it in view of his planned publication on the background and lineage of the Piasts. Having edited the material, the author added to it the information she has gained regarding the present-day condition of the necropolises and the archaeological research conducted in those sites.

Each of the tombs described by Losik-Sidorska has a separate catalogue sheet, specifying the tomb's location, size, description, genealogical data on the interred, the origins and history of the tomb, and the reference literature. Some of the historical discussion sections are divided into subparts; one such case is the tomb of Boleslaus III the Prodigal [Bolesław III Rozrzutny], for which not only the burial site, condition, and maintenance details are provided but also the ideological aspect of its foundation, the atelier/makers, and the founder are specified.

The author has decided not to quote the inscriptions, claiming that the publication's objective is to introduce the reader to the current state of research rather than express her own opinion in a scholarly discussion; the study is meant to be a scientific aid. Despite this ascertainment, it seems that, especially in those cases where the reading is undisputable, the author should have quoted it. The rich photographic material in the final section, Losik-Sidorska suggests, is to enable the reader to read the inscriptions on their own; however, these photographs do not feature all the tombs discussed. Moreover, in some cases, the discussion of a tomb in the catalogue includes the quoted inscription – as, for instance, in the discussion of the aforementioned Boleslaus III's tomb. And, it is a pity that the catalogue items are not numbered.

The English version is based on a rather literal translation, sometimes overly so. Based on the catalogue, a larger publication might be compiled in the future, taking account of the inscriptions, iconography for each tomb, and maps to help situate each of them in space. (AG)

Marian Rębkowski, *Jak powstało Pomorze? Studium tworzenia państwowości we wczesnym średniowieczu* [The Origins of Pomerania. A Study on the Formation of a State in the Early Middle Ages], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, Muzeum Historii Polski w Warszawie, 228 pp., ills, bibliography, index of geographical and ethnical names, English sum.

This book represents an important contribution by the director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a Szczecin researcher who combines the competences of a historian and archaeologist. The author discusses the processes of state formation in the early Middle Ages, referring to an extensive bibliography, and not only this related to Central and Eastern Europe. Inspirations flowing from these works are correlated with a special case, which is Western Pomerania: a political creation which, being in the orbit of the clashing Danish-German-Polish influences, failed to create its own identity and become a separate, permanent state. The work opens with an introductory chapter in which the author discusses

the current state of research. What is more, the book's theoretical basis and structure are presented. Chapter Two provides an overview of the political situation in Pomerania in the earliest period (ninth–tenth centuries) in the light of the theoretical considerations on tribes, early states and chieftains, as well as the archaeological materials. In Chapter Three, we are brought to the eleventh century, when the Duchy of Pomerania was established. In Chapter Four, we are transported to the twelfth century, the times of Prince Vratslav I and his successors. Rębkowski discusses the issues of settlement and political continuity, minting, funerary rites, the organisation of the state and the symbolism of power. The final Chapter Five is a recapitulation of what has been discussed and asks the question: How was a state that does not exist formed? (RR)

Szymon Wieczorek, *Galla Anonima opowieść o królu Bolesławie i ubogim kleryku. Moraliter, anagogice, allegorice, historice* [A Story about King Boleslaus and a Poor Cleric by Gallus Anonymus. Moraliter, Anagogice, Allegorice, Historice], Rzeszów, 2020, Publishing House of the University of Rzeszów, 148 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, list of sources, English sum.

This book, the debut of a medievalist, stands out against other works written in recent years on Gallus Anonymus (it is worth recalling here that the author was an active participant in discussions about the origin of this chronicler). This short, though dense, monograph is the first-ever depiction of the story about the King Boleslaus' generosity to a poor cleric (I, 26). Although well-known and often invoked (sometimes in surprising and very different contexts), this story has not engaged the attention of researchers to the same extent as the incomparably more laconic presentation of St. Stanislas by Gallus. Wieczorek shows, however, that the story's motifs – generosity beyond measure – must have been convincing to readers from the era, and illustrated Boleslaus' generosity. The author also engages in a polemic with researchers (primarily with Przemysław Wiszewski) who contended that the king is criticised in the story (which would be supported by Gallus's ambivalent attitude towards this character, as well as its philologically ambiguous ending, and finally a later version by Master Vincent [Kadłubek], in which the cleric dies under the burden of the gifts). However, it turns out that in this particular passage Gallus is being unambiguously praiseful, and it was, in fact, the chronicler Master Vincent who incepted the negative interpretation. From there, the author goes on to discuss the interpretation according to which, when creating the figure of the cleric, Gallus would suggest to Boleslaus the Wrymouth [Krzywousty] an equally generous remuneration for himself. As Wieczorek points out, both the chronicler and his character are nameless. This is an extremely important

piece of information, illustrating that while the recipient of the gift fell into oblivion, his royal donor continued to flourish and enjoy deserved fame. In the end, Wieczorek admits that no one will defend the historical character of the cleric anymore, especially due to the anecdotal nature of the story. But not without contrariness does Wieczorek point to a certain trail related to the gift to the monks of Zwiefalten by Princess Salomea, the widow of Wrymouth. The work offers detailed analyses and rich interpretational passages, coupled with an extensive overview of the literature on the subject. (RR)

Małgorzata Dowłaszewicz, *Diabeł w legendzie. Wyobrażenie diabła antropomorficznego w średniowiecznej literaturze niderlandzkiej* [The Devil in Legend. The Image of the Anthropomorphic Devil in Medieval Dutch Literature], Wrocław, 2020, Oficyna Wydawnicza Atut, 153 pp., annex

The author, a lecturer at the University of Wrocław, is a specialist in medieval Dutch culture and literature. This alone may make the item under discussion stand out in Polish historiography. The work refers to the tradition of research on the medieval imagination, which originated in the works of Aron Gurevich and the historians of the Annales School, as represented by such scholars as Bronisław Geremek, Teresa Michałowska, and in a diabolical context, especially by Wojciech Brojer. In this context, it is not surprising that Małgorzata Dowłaszewicz's reflections are based on Dutch vernacular texts from the late Middle Ages (fourteenth–fifteenth centuries), partly translated from Latin, especially the collections of exemplar and hagiographic works. The structure of this small book is very clear; the first two chapters are devoted to the characters under which the anthropomorphic devil would appear: as a black man and as a beautiful woman, and the next two – the devil in terms of unrecognition and recognition. The book opens with an engaging introduction and ends with an appendix featuring two of the analysed texts. (RR)

Anna Horeczy, *Recepcja włoskiej kultury intelektualnej w krakowskim środowisku uniwersyteckim w drugiej połowie XIV i w pierwszej połowie XV wieku* [Reception of Italian Intellectual Culture in the Cracow's University Environment in the Second Half of the Fourteenth and First Half of the Fifteenth Century], Warszawa, 2021, Instytut Historii PAN, 459 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, list of tables and diagrams, index of persons, annexes, English sum.

Anna Horeczy is a researcher of the younger generation from the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Her doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Professor Halina Manikowska, concerns the reception of Italian intellectual culture – rhetoric and law – in late-medieval Cracow (mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century). The work can be placed at the crossroads of codicology and cultural history. The concept of reception is not treated statically here but rather as a complex process conditioned by capabilities. This comprehensive book opens with a concise, clearly written introduction that discusses the basic concepts and structure of the book. Chapter One presents an overview of Poles attending Italian universities, which undermines the statistical and prosopographic method scholars have hitherto applied. Chapter Two, the longest, is a detailed analysis of the BJ 126 code, a collection of Italian rhetorical texts, which is a copy of the code brought to Cracow by Jan of Ludzisko. In the last Chapter Three, the author focuses on the reception of the work of Leonardo Bruni, discussing the individual manuscripts of his works and their links. In the short conclusion, the study's reception is assessed in a way that is disproportionately wide and complex in relation to the small number of Poles studying in Padua, Rome or Bologna. Finally, there are annexes with an index of Polish students who attended Italian universities, as well as the content of the BJ 126 code and its parallels. The entire work is especially impressive in terms of its richness and the thorough treatment of the source material. The vast majority of the work's findings are set out here for the first time, indicating the effort put into collecting the materials and their analysis. (RR)

## EARLY MODERN TIMES

Jacek Pielas, *Oleśnicy herbu Radwan w XV-XVII wieku. Z dziejów szlachty małopolskiej doby nowożytnej* [The Oleśnicki Family of the Radwan Coat of Arms. From the History of the Gentry of Lesser Poland in the Early Modern Period], Kielce, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 186 pp., list of abbreviations, annex including source document edition, genealogical tables, cartographic material and photographs, bibliography, indexes of personal and geographical names

The presented work is a standard monograph of a noble family. The author's objective was to trace the history of a less-known family of nobility from Lesser Poland [Małopolska] from the first source references about the said family until its extinction. At the beginning, the author points out that historiography has hardly paid any attention to the Oleśnicki family of Radwan coat of arms. As the reason for this, the author cites the confusion between the representatives of this family and the Oleśnicki family of Dębno coat of arms. This confusion was evident already in the third volume of the *Golden Book of Polish Nobility* published by Teodor Żychliński at the end of the nineteenth century. The scarcity of references to representatives of the Oleśnicki family of Radwan coat of arms in old Polish armorials also contributed to their misidentification in later studies.

The Oleśnicy of Radwan coat of arms were a middle-income noble family from Lesser Poland. Their lineage stretched out over two centuries from the end of the fifteenth century. In 1565, the family was divided into two separate lines, the traces of which are analysed by the author in Chapters Two and Three. From the mid-sixteenth century, representatives of both lines also functioned among the Protestant community of Lesser Poland and participated in the life of the local Calvinist church.

The work has a very clear and well-justified chronological structure. Chapter One concentrates on presenting the origins of the Oleśnicki family history from the end of the fifteenth century (i.e. from the appearance of the first source references to the family) to 1565, with particular focus on Jan Oleśnicki, the creator of the social and material foundations of the family. The following two chapters are devoted consecutively to the history of two lines of the Oleśnicki family – the Cracow-Sandomierz line (until its extinction in 1618) and the eastern, Lublin-Ruthenian line (until its extinction in 1688). The family history is shown mainly by tracing the fate of the members of each of the two lines.

As the archive of the Oleśnicki family of Radwan coat of arms did not survive, the author of the presented work focused mainly on the land and

estate registers of the Lesser Poland nobility, and also made use of published source materials such as, *inter alia*, records of Sejm [Diet] and sejmiki [dietines] sessions, tax sources, and other fiscal materials. The author's findings will certainly contribute to increasing knowledge useful for further research on the nobility of the Lesser Poland region, their careers as officials, and the activity of the noble local government. (MJO)

Piotr Miodunka, *Spółeczność małych miast południowej Małopolski od końca XVI do końca XVIII wieku* [The Community of Small Towns in Southern Lesser Poland from the Late Sixteenth to the Late Eighteenth Century], Kraków, 2021, Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych 'Universitas', 553 pp., list of abbreviations, annexes, bibliography, lists of tables and diagrams, ills and list thereof, index of geographical names; series: Historia Życia

In this work on the history of urbanisation, the author aimed to adopt a broader perspective and go beyond the typical and limited monographic works on cities or towns and to fill a particular research gap in the study of smaller urban centres of the early modern era. The main objective was to verify the author's conviction about the incomplete state of urbanisation and his concerns about the alleged rural nature of smaller urban centres; and to examine the functioning and identity of their inhabitants in this respect, based on the example of southern Lesser Poland, mainly through the analysis of demographic structures. The work points out that urban studies are often conducted within the methodology of socio-economic history, and from this perspective, smaller towns are seen as economically backward and agricultural, based on which they are attributed a rural rather than an urban character and relegated to the margins of historical analysis.

The study concerns the smallest, least developed urban entities, although the author is well aware of the imprecise and conventional definition of the term 'small town' (he assumes the upper limit for a small town as 2,000 inhabitants). It examines in more detail the characteristics of three small towns – Pilzno, Przeclaw, and Wojnicz – for which an exceptionally large number of archival sources have survived. The author's findings lead to the conclusion that all three urban entities played the role of administrative and economic centres for the immediate vicinity.

The source base consists primarily of two types of preserved archival legacies: municipal books and other materials generated by municipal offices and institutions (currently stored in state archives), and parish metric books (stored in the parishes of their origin). To analyse the collected data, the author

used the statistical method (commonly adopted in historical demography) without, however, abandoning narrative accounts and sources. The author also created databases on the basis of each of the types of sources used in the study (collecting approximately 30,000 records concerning events and persons living in the towns under examination in the selected period).

The book is divided into three parts. The first part introduces the subject of the work – the profile of small towns and their influence on the countryside, together with demographic characteristics; the second part is devoted to social structure, i.e. the social stratification of the townspeople in terms of their material position and ways of earning a living (reconstruction of the occupational structure was one of the author's main objectives) and within the local power structures; and the third part is devoted to individuals – the history of a burgher family and an attempt to trace the life cycle of a small-town citizen. It seems that one of the most important goals of the author was to revise the common belief about the agricultural character of the way the citizens of small towns made their living. And although he himself points out that his research requires further confirmation, it has already been established that there are no grounds to make such an assumption for many analysed centres, for the source data indicate instead that crafts were the main source of income for the inhabitants of such centres. The author concludes that smaller towns were indeed 'urban' in the full sense of the word, and their inhabitants were fully aware of their burgher status. (MJO)

Aleksandra Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec elekcji Władysława IV Wazy i Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* [Attitudes of the Elites of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania towards the Elections of Ladislas IV Vasa and Michael I], Kraków, 2020, Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, 332 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, English sum., index of personal names

The purpose of the discussed study is to analyse and compare the political and social attitudes of Lithuanian elites during two selected interregnum periods and their positions with respect to the elections of King Ladislas IV Vasa and King Michael I (Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki). The author compares these two periods and the said elections, as each took place in a very different political atmosphere. In the case of King Ladislas IV, we can speak of a prepared election of a ruler who appeared to be an obvious successor to the Vasa dynasty. In contrast, in the case of the second, less apparent, election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, the election was quite unexpected and took place after a turbulent and devastating period of war, at a time of severe internal crisis and the abdication of the previous ruler. The decision to study the views of the Lithuanian nobility was also dictated by the strong

and extensive clientele relations which had developed among them, as well as by the particular way in which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania functioned within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (related mainly to the fact that the King spent a considerable amount of time in the territory of the Polish Crown, mostly leaving the Lithuanian nobility and Grand Duchy to tend to themselves when it came to matters of land administration, etc.).

The main question posed in the presented book concerns how the Lithuanian nobility regarded each of these candidates for the throne, and why they decided to support (or not support) him, as well as how the prevailing attitudes of the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth changed during the period that separated those two elections. The author chose to omit the election of John II Casimir in 1648 because of the short time which separated it from the election of Ladislas IV in 1632. The author concludes, in line with previous historians of this period, that there was a visible change in the attitudes of the magnates in the second half of the 17th century when, as the central power weakened, they made efforts to strengthen their position. The author claims that the chosen topic has not yet been fully explored in the previous literature, and the work presented here is intended to fill this gap in historiography.

The work has a problem-based structure and is divided into an introduction and four factual chapters, followed by a conclusion. Chapter One introduces the main subject of the study, where we can find the characteristics of the key research issues and terminological considerations. Chapter Two deals with the political activity of Lithuanian elites during the interregna preceding the elections of Ladislas IV and Michael I. It outlines the Lithuanian political scene on the eve of each interregnum and compares the two periods. Chapter Three is a study in social communication and is devoted to an analysis of the means which were used to influence and shape the views and attitudes of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The last factual chapter is a kind of catalogue of the characteristics and expectations of a future ruler in the eyes of the Lithuanian elites.

The primary source for the study of the topic undertaken by the author is correspondence. Apart from that, however, various other source materials, such as Sejm and sejmiki documentation (instructions, speeches, diaries, etc.), political pamphlets, and other writings, were used. Library and archival queries were conducted in Poland and foreign institutions (e.g., Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, France, Italy). The declaration in the introduction that no materials from Byelorussian institutions (out of so many stored there concerning the chosen periods and topic) were used in this presented study may be surprising insofar as the selection of sources for the study of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the selected period is concerned. (MJO)

Bożena Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich* [Benefactresses and Clients. Female Patronage and Clientelism in Saxon Times], Warszawa, 2020, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 632 pp., lists, list of main archival abbreviations, bibliography, index of personal names, English sum.

This impressive single-volume work is part of a well-established field of research in Polish historiography on the phenomenon of clientelism, conceived as one of the basic mechanisms governing socio-political relations in the early modern period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the eighteenth century, the phenomenon of clientelism was widely known and rooted in the society of the Commonwealth. The author's main area of research was female patronage and women's capacity to build their own clientele. Even though the issue of women's patronage and clientelism has been very rarely taken up by researchers or mentioned in historiography, women actively pursued their own political goals through patronage or supported the activities of their husbands and relatives as intermediaries and clients. Most frequently, the specific situation of women in these arrangements was that following the loss of a husband, widows had to, to ensure their security, either acquire a suitable clientele (if they wanted to keep their independence) or be forced to marry again.

The chronological scope of the study covers the end of the reign of John III Sobieski and the times of Augustus II the Strong Wettin. The author points to the important role of the court of Marie Casimire and John III Sobieski as a centre from which a considerable number of women – who played an important role as patrons in the later period – originated. Thus, the group of noble women under study is the generation born and educated in the second half of the seventeenth century, whose considerable public and economic activities took place in the first four decades of the eighteenth century.

Three chapters describe the characteristics of the analysed group of female patrons and the different forms of the female patronage and female clientele circles, based on the examples of seven female patrons as well as more general considerations on the female nobility court in the clientele system and the mechanisms of its functioning (based on three selected examples). The author used a wide and varied source base, and the comparative method adopted in work makes it possible to identify elements characteristic for the construction of a patronage circle and the establishment and maintenance of clientele relations. The book joins the efforts of historians in recent years to show that in the Saxon times, traditionally perceived as the era of the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the first attempts at

the economic and cultural reconstruction of the country were made, and that women also took the initiative in these efforts.

In the book, the author demonstrates the active role of women and proposes an approach different from the traditional view of women as passive and powerless observers of socio-political life by showing a new role for them outside the family: a patroness creating her clientele. Of course, the opportunities available to women of noble origin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should not be overestimated, and the legal restrictions, the inaccessibility of offices, and the strong dependence of women on male relatives and family should not be ignored. The author emphasises that although female patronage may have differed somewhat in character and in available opportunities from male patronage, both forms of patronage used the same mechanisms and activities to create and sustain a clientele circle. (MJO)

Urszula Kicińska, *W tym osieroconym stanie. Pozycja wdowy w społeczeństwie szlacheckim w Rzeczypospolitej (od schyłku XVII do połowy XVIII wieku)* [In This Orphaned State. The Position of the Widow in the Noble Society of the Commonwealth (from the late seventeenth until the mid-eighteenth century)], Kraków, 2020, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 680 pp., list of main abbreviations, bibliography, English sum., index of personal names; series: Prace Monograficzne – Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie, 1001

The presented study is intended to fill a gap in historical research on the widow's position in early modern Polish-Lithuanian society, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In her introduction, the author also signals other important research postulates connected with the subject under study, drawing particular attention to topics related primarily to the emotions which accompanied women after the loss of their husbands, noting that the experience of mourning and their relations with children should be more thoroughly explored in the future. The author's research focuses on a group of about 200 widows, mainly from the gentry, from which a group of about 50 of the most active magnate and noblewomen widows are distinguished. The aim is to create a group portrait of Polish-Lithuanian early modern noble widows who, despite their differences in wealth, shared common beliefs and values. The chronological scope (from the end of the seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century) is determined by the years of the reign of the Wettin dynasty rulers: Augustus II the Strong and Augustus III (1697–1763).

The book has a problem-based structure, and its main part consists of five chapters, consecutively describing the legal and proprietary situation of widows

in noble society in the early modern era; the position of the widow in the family and her relations with individual members after the death of her spouse (particular attention is paid to their relations with the children of the deceased husband from his previous relations); the economic activity of widows (primarily the administration of their deceased husband's estates); the public, social and cultural endeavours of widows (female patronage indicating the increased position of women in eighteenth-century society); and finally their religious life.

The author researched Polish and foreign archives (e.g. in Vilnius, Lviv, Kiev, Minsk, Dresden, and Berlin). The most important primary sources used in this work include ego-documents, such as correspondence, wills, diaries, etc., as well as normative acts. Secondary sources used include petitions, prayer books and other legal documents, especially those which protected a woman in the event of widowhood already at the time of entering into marriage, such as a prenuptial agreement and a so-called 'lifetime contract', i.e. mutual agreements between spouses under which a widow could manage inherited property for the rest of her life on condition that she did not marry again. The author draws attention to the fact that in the early modern period, already at the stage of planning a marriage, noble wives-to-be were well secured legally by both their parents and future husbands, which later gave them a high social position and economic freedom. As a result, widows often chose not to marry again, which would have meant restrictions on their social and family roles. Instead, they focused on their role in raising and caring for children and engaging in patronage, educational, and charitable activities. One of the study's conclusions is that widowhood changed a woman's position in society and restored her almost total legal capacity and social responsibility. (MJO)

## NINETEENTH CENTURY

Jarosław Kita and Maria Korybut-Marciniak (eds), *Kariera w optyce prywatności* [Career and Privacy], Łódź–Olsztyn, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 364 pp., selected bibliography; series: *Życie prywatne Polaków w XIX wieku*, 9

The present volume is the ninth in the series 'Życie prywatne Polaków w XIX wieku' [The Private Life of Poles in the Nineteenth Century] published by the University of Łódź Press and co-edited by Jarosław Kita, a distinguished social historian. As in the previous volumes, the approach this book represents is dominated by the biographical perspective. A collection of biographical sketches concerning both a number of celebrities and some largely forgotten individuals, is supposed to represent a broader social picture. This picture, however, is virtually limited to the members of the upper classes: artists and

intellectuals, military officers and state officials, doctors and other members of the intelligentsia, including some of the most humble members of this group. Notably, the biographies of women are emphasised.

The book consists of nineteen individually authored studies, based on memoirs, letters, and local archival sources. Three of the studies escape the biographical pattern: one concerns the Polish officers as clients of the notaries of Lublin and Zamość in 1810–14; one analyses the career perspectives and paths in the Polish Kingdom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; one discusses the early years of the Zakopane mountain resort as a meeting and recreational destination of the Polish intelligentsia. One of the studies is a group portrait of three eminent female representatives of the Polish intellectual elite – Maria Skłodowska (better known as Marie Curie), Eliza Orzeszkowa, and Maria Szymanowska – a portrait that focuses on the ways women of the second half of the century combined their careers with their domestic and family obligations. Among other studies devoted to women, the one regarding the career of Karolina Kocięcka deserves attention – the protagonist, largely forgotten, was a pioneer sportswoman and champion cyclist of the Russian Empire in the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries. Another interestingly reconstructs the life and the worldview of the wife of a provincial official in the north-western region of the Empire. One more concerns the career of a pioneer female doctor Teodora Krajewska, who obtained the position of a government-hired doctor in the Austrian-occupied Sarajevo, in Bosnia, in 1893. Krajewska owed her position to the recognition of the local population's prejudice against the treatment of Muslim women by male doctors. The other studies regard men: in particular, the essays concerning the once-popular artists such as singers, whose names quickly fell into oblivion, seem interesting.

Clearly, the concept of the private life advocated by the authors of the volume, and indeed the series, is as inspiring as it is questionable for the nineteenth-century realities. In most cases discussed in the book, the distinction between the private concerns related to family, home, and love, and the professional, was fluid – and what the book emphasises is actually the latter. (AK)

Monika Bednarczuk, Katarzyna Filutowska, Marta Kopij-Weiß, and Mirja Lecke, *Kulturtransfer in der Provinz. Wilna als Ort deutscher Kultur und Wissenschaft (1803–1832)*, ed. by Monika Bednarczuk, Wiesbaden, 2020, Harrassowitz Verlag, VI, 251 pp., bibliography, index

The study presents the outcome of a pioneering project on the ‘Transfer of ideas – mobility – change: German culture and science in Wilno’, pursued at the Ruhr University Bochum. In the introductory section, the authors – including Monika Bednarczuk, author of several valuable studies on Polish nationalism – describe their methodological approach. The dissertation takes advantage of the intercultural transfer concept developed by Michel Espagne and Michael Werner as well as the studies and findings of the Palestinian scholar Edward Said. The research and scholarly output of German sociologist Dieter Henrich is also generously referred to.

Selected aspects and facets of Polish-German academic and cultural transfer are described, beginning with 1803, the date the (Polish) University of Wilno was renamed as the Imperial University of Vilna [the latter being the Russianised spelling], under Tsar Alexander I. As is known from the literature, while initially contacts with France – pre- and post-revolutionary, primarily Napoleonic – were crucial, German culture gained in importance since the early years of the nineteenth century. As suggestively shown in this study, the University became a key centre of transfers from the German cultural area; moreover, herds of students from Wilno/Vilna started to attend German universities. The four essays in the study analyse the spaces between the personal, spatial, and conceptual levels, so-called mediators (using M. Werner’s theoretical concept), between ideas, places/sites, media, and practices, as well as reciprocal penetration of diverse levels in culture and society.

As argued by the authors – basically, Bednarczuk and Kopij-Weiß – the cultural transfer was fostered by the fact that the principal decision-makers of that time considered an exchange of ideas with Western Europe to be an indispensable condition for social and scientific progress; to enable it, they provided funds to cover travel expenses, cost of purchase of books, etc. A vital element of this policy was the provision of grants for gifted students and research scholars. The process was, however, interrupted by political action: in the mid-1820s, the Russian authorities perceived the transfers as a means of imports of student unrest, whilst the Germans saw in the students from the East agents of dangerous political trends. From 1823 onwards, study visits to German universities were restricted, if not completely banned. The authors demonstrate that this process gave rise to disturbances that pestered the whole region’s social life for some fifty years afterwards. It should be hoped that this original and innovative study, with its extensive catalogue of research queries, will inspire more transnational studies. (GK)

Jakub Grudniewski, *Pruska elita władzy na Górnym Śląsku 1871–1918* [The Prussian Political Elites in Upper Silesia, 1871–1918], Katowice, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 512 pp., index of personal names, annexes, bibliography, English and German sum.

The book by Jakub Grudniewski is a monograph on the Prussian political elite in Upper Silesia as a social group, it is a comprehensive prosopographic study. It focuses on the regents of the Opole (Oppeln) Regency – an administrative district within the province of Silesia, covering the territories of today Upper Silesia, the mayors of major cities, and the *Landrats* (heads of the basic administrative units, the *Kreise*) of this region. The group under consideration consisted of slightly more than 100 people, carefully listed in one of the indexes at the end of the book.

Chapter One ultimately focuses on the period before 1871 (or, more precisely, 1872 – the year of the administrative reform which gave Silesia the shape it kept until the end of the German Empire). It presents the region's evolution from its conquest by Prussia in 1740, the administrative arrangements of the early nineteenth century, and the subsequent discussions considering the planned reforms, particularly the controversies between the liberals and conservatives within the Prussian bureaucracy.

Chapter Two presents a broad picture of the Upper Silesian upper bureaucracy as a social group: it discusses their social origins, education, participation in student and political associations, military service, career paths, and distinctions. The author emphasises that the majority of these men (roughly 76 per cent) came from other regions of the Empire, and just about half of them were Catholics: they were strangers to the area and remained so despite having performed years of service in Silesia. However, most of them were members of the pro-government political parties and organisations. As a result of Upper Silesia being a border region, inhabited mostly by the Polish-speaking population, and undergoing rapid and massive industrialisation, it was considered as a challenge for the officials from other regions of Germany: a problematic part where people who had been unwanted by their superiors were sent, and an opportunity for the ambitious ones to demonstrate their skills in the service for the Emperor.

Chapter Three discusses the officials' activities in the processes of modernisation and industrialisation of the region; it became the second mining centre of the Empire in the period in question, rapidly changing from a rural province to an urban hub. The chapter includes negotiations with the authorities in Berlin, with local entrepreneurs, deputies to the local assemblies, and unionists, the efforts for construction of the modern infrastructure and, of course, for funds.

Chapter Four concerns the two major political issues that the governing elite of Upper Silesia had to face – religion and nationality. The province's overwhelmingly Catholic and predominantly Polish character made it a troublemaker from the Berlin point of view, particularly in the *Kulturkampf* period, crowned with the 1887 introduction of the new, more opportunistic archbishop of Wrocław (Breslau). Dominated by the Catholic Centre party and the Polish nationalists, Upper Silesia remained 'suspicious' from the perspective of the subsequent governments and their representatives, who supervised and manipulated the elections in the region.

The book is based on an impressive collection of evidence from the local archives, as well as the national ones in Berlin. It is informative, transparent, coherently constructed, and should certainly remain an unchallenged source of information for other scholars of the period for many years. (AK)

#### INTERWAR PERIOD

Klaus Richter, *Fragmentation in East Central Europe. Poland and the Baltics, 1915–1929*, Oxford, 2020, Oxford University Press, 368 pp., ills, maps, index

The German scholar Klaus Richter, author of several studies in the history of Lithuania, with a focus on the history of Jews and anti-Semitism in the Baltic region, associated for years with the University of Edinburgh, is dealing in his new book with the problem of interactions between national sovereignty and fragmentation during the First World War and the first post-war decade. He explores the continuities and discontinuities on several levels – economic, social, political, and diplomatic, in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – which are not often juxtaposed as a group. The key assumption is that the Great War and the first post-war years created completely novel conditions for the functioning of the entire region, the primary one being a fundamental demographic change (only too often escaping the scholars' attention).

As Richter demonstrates, the new succession states followed the logic of developments and occurrences, trends and institutions inherited after their former imperial hegemony. Rejected, or rather neglected in their aspirations by the international system established by the League of Nations, these countries fervently turned toward statism and statist-mindedness and, thereafter, authoritarian dictatorships.

As if independently of one another, each of these states discovered for itself that the state was, and was supposed to be, the central organising principle. Small and medium nations capable of surviving were expected, in the first place, to invest in their organisational structures. Richter calls this view 'state socialism' and derives the principle from Walther Rathenau,

German businessman and economic politician in the war years and, later on, an outstanding diplomat of the Weimar Republic, who got killed by rightist hit squads.

It is now pretty obvious to anyone interested in the period concerned that the German occupation of 1915–18 left a lasting imprint on the reviving states. Richter goes even further as he shows that also the German military management model, the *Ober-Ost*, with its far-fetched control over the aspects of economic, social, and political life, ploughed the length and breadth of the region, contributing to the antagonising effect on ethnic groups and, significantly, elaborating diverse society management models, which were later eagerly taken up by local elites, irrespective of their ideological choices. Leaving aside a number of the author's detailed findings, original observations, and analyses of the period's literature (in many languages), let us observe that along with presenting the tracks of thinking on the time and region, the author incites the formulation of a new research query catalogue.

Richter supports his argument with a rich, versatile, and comprehensive inquiry and research, encompassing as many as seventeen archives in the region, systematic visits to libraries and archives in Germany and Britain, and use of a total of eighty-three period newspapers and magazines. His study, original and innovative in several aspects, will hopefully be of interest not only to specialists and a source of scholarly inspiration. (GK)

Zbigniew Girzyński, Jarosław Kłaczko, Tomasz Łaszkiwicz, and Przemysław Olstowski (eds), *„Zanim zbudowano Gdynię...”: wpływ odrodzenia państwa w 1918 roku na procesy modernizacyjne ziem polskich* [Before Gdynia Was Built: How Poland's Revival in 1918 Influenced Modernisation Processes in Its Territory], Toruń, 2020, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 361 pp., ill., index of persons; series: O Niepodległą i jej trwanie

The book is a collection of texts by some leading researchers specialising in interwar Poland, describing the beginnings of the revived country and state, its institutions and curiosities. The volume includes essays by: Anna Tarnowska – on the law and its unification in the Second Republic; Janusz Mierzwa – on modernisation of the state administration in the early years of the revived Poland; Aleksander Smoliński – on the Polish Army between October 1918 and March 1919; Wojciech Mazur – on the French Military Mission to Poland in 1919–22; Tomasz Kawski – on the Jewish community and its strategies in the new state; Tomasz Krzemiński – on the social peasant movement in Pomerania; Joanna Dufurat – on the role of the country's revival in the emancipation of women; Mateusz Hübner – on the forms of sponsoring

of Polish culture before the establishment of the central National Culture Fund; Piotr Cichoracki – on the north-eastern voivodeships on the verge of the country's independence. There are, moreover, two essays on the Voivodeship of Kielce: Elżbieta Słabińska's on the local economy and Edyta Majcher-Ociesa's on the industry in Kielce land in 1918–26. The anthology is rounded off with Zbigniew Zyglewski's contribution on the Silesia–Baltic waterway (1919–26).

While the book has been produced as a final result of an anniversary scientific conference held at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń on 6–7 December 2018, it well and reliably renders the dominant subjects and motifs as well as the most recent trends among Polish scholars researching into the *interbellum* period, marked, *inter alia*, by disputes shifting from political history towards social and economic history. The essays are preceded by an introductory section by Przemysław Olstowski, a historian affiliated to the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences and the academia institutions of Toruń, entitled 'Poland on the threshold of regained statehood: the independent country as a modernisation challenge', offering a methodological introduction to the texts contributed by the co-authors. Worth taking note of and reading in depth, they are primarily targeted at experts in the field. (GK)

Ralph Schattkowsky, *Osteuropaforschung in Polen 1918–1939*, Wiesbaden, 2019, Harrassowitz Verlag, XII, 342 pp., bibliography, index

This dissertation is by Ralph Schattkowsky who in 2001 joined the staff of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, dealing with East European studies in the Second Republic of Poland. The publication fits in the broad trend of transnational studies, which has recently gained considerable popularity in Western historiographies. The author directly refers to the research field that links the German *Ostforschung* research current with the Polish current of 'Western studies' in the interwar period. The author's focus is the relations between science and politics, consideration of the influence of East European studies on the elaboration of a dedicated Polish Eastern policy. Schattkowsky's assumption is that those two 'subsystems' in Polish society were strictly interrelated and points to the Polish humanists' and social scholars' involvement in approaching sciences as a national 'task'. He moreover assumes that science's entry into politics ensued not only from the academia's sharing the 'national' discourse but was also a practical requirement of the time, based on the specific conditions in which the academic environment emerged – on the spot, in a sense.

There are five chapters and an introduction; the core section analyses the major institutions dealing with studies on Eastern Europe and Russia. A separate chapter deals with the position of Eastern Europe in the Second

Republic's political discourse and with the role of three influential researchers of the Polish academia – the historians Oskar Halecki and Feliks Koneczny, and the Slavic scholar and philosopher Marian Zdziechowski in the academic institutions of Warsaw, Cracow, and Wilno/Vilnius. Discussed is also the research conducted in off-university centres (to complement the main picture).

As if in opposition to Polish historiography, Schattkowsky tries to show how much the diverse and numerous academicians from opposing camps (mainly, those sympathising with the Piłsudski camp versus the followers of National Democracy) had in fact in common. For instance, they shared the opinion that the region was governed by virtually irremovable antagonistic laws. All were involved, to a smaller or larger degree, in the state's engagement in favour of independence strivings of non-Russian ethnicities. Schattkowsky, moreover, is of the opinion that the differences between the Piłsudskiite camp and the National Democrats were not insuperable, including at the very beginning.

Although in a creative and, definitely, inspiring way does this study highlight a certain asymmetry in the development of 'neighbour regions' research in Poland as compared to Germany, the argument at times lacks an interpretive horizon and a theoretical framework that would go beyond the context of Polish national history. Such a perspective may prove all the more annoying that in recent years, a number of scholars – Schattkowsky among them – have pointed out that the Polish humanities and social sciences, despite their dependence on internal politics, were strongly networked in the international arena. Altogether, this valuable study should appeal to the scholars dealing with the Second Republic; other researchers can find there a considerable amount of illustrative material of use in transnational studies in the region concerned. (GK)

Dietmar Müller, *Bodeneigentum und Nation. Rumänien, Jugoslawien und Polen im europäischen Vergleich, 1918–1948*, Göttingen, 2020, Wallstein Verlag, 479 pp.; series: *Moderne europäische Geschichte*, 17

The book by Dietmar Müller, a researcher at the Leipzig University, an outstanding scholar focusing on Eastern and Southern Europe, is a comparative and interdisciplinary East European history of ownership of rural lands in Poland, Yugoslavia, and Romania in the years 1918–48. It should undoubtedly draw scholars' attention specialising in the region since it shows and analyses the diverse and changing features, meanings, and social functions of rural land ownership. Based on the agrarian reforms in the three East Central and South Eastern European countries, demonstrated is the significance and heritage of the interwar period for the development and changes in the concept of ownership in those countries. The 'land ownership policy' is shown as

a 'population policy' and as a project that sought accelerated modernisation and homogenisation.

The introductory section unfolds the questions, describes the details of the research field and the research methods applied, thus delineating the concept of ownership and its management as the central field of study. Outlined is the shaping in the nineteenth century of the liberal and individualistic notion of ownership as "indivisible and comprehensive material control of persons over things" (p. 14), which since around 1900 was subject to changing discursive and legal restrictions with regard to the 'social function of ownership' (p. 15). On the other hand, Müller investigates how ownerships were handled – including land record systems (cadastre records, land-and-mortgage registers), ownership-related professions (surveying/geodetic technicians, land-and-mortgage registry officers, notaries, and lawyers) – and summarises his findings within the ownership management concept.

Müller suggestively describes agrarian reforms in Central East and South Eastern European countries after the First World War as unique compared to the rest of Europe, in terms of the scale of implemented projects and the number of social groups covered. Chapter One analyses the legal regulation of ownership in its constitutional and agrarian aspects. Chapter Two shows the changes in ownership management in the interwar period. Chapter Three deals with the ethnic/national dimension of land ownership in the international context, primarily showing the "ethnopolitical impact of the agrarian reform" in the exemplary regions and among minorities. Chapter Four describes the 'people's democracies' in 1944/5–8 – the period marked by the communist parties forming coalition governments with left-oriented, peasant, and bourgeois parties in the territory from the Baltic Sea down to the Black and Adriatic seas (certainly, one of the study's highlights). Müller believes that the post-war policies came in response to the national socialist policy of expulsions and exterminations; whilst integrally associated with Stalinism, it was organically bound with the nationalistic projects of the interwar period.

The book is a pretty concise and deeply thought-over study on the topic that has been touched upon fragmentarily by particular national historiographers but never-as-yet investigated so systematically. The explanatory potential of this valuable work on agrarian reforms and land ownership in the former half of the twentieth century in East Central and South Eastern Europe far exceeds the national/country-related cases analysed by the author. (GK)

Sebastian Rosenbaum, *Między katolicyzmem i nacjonalizmem: Związek Niemieckich Katolików w Polsce w województwie śląskim 1923–1939* [Between Catholicism and Nationalism: The 'Association of German Catholics in Poland' in Silesian Voivodeship, 1923–39], Katowice–Warszawa, 2020, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Katowicach, 804 pp., bibliography, German sum., indices

This extensive monograph of the Verband deutscher Katholiken in Polen (VdK), one of the largest countrywide organisations of the German minority in the Second Republic of Poland and one of the biggest national minority organisations overall, is penned by Sebastian Rosenbaum, a scholar affiliated to the Institute of National Remembrance, Branch of Katowice, and with the University of Silesia, and is worthy of attention for numerous reasons. The Association of German Catholics in Poland was set up in 1923 in Katowice – shortly after the conflicts polarising the population of that multiethnic region faded out. The organisation was active in Silesia Voivodeship as well as in Pomerania, Greater Poland and, partly, Lesser Poland and parts of Voivodeship of Łódź. At the climax of its activity, VdK had 27,000 members, its key district undoubtedly being Upper Silesia. Its main task was to integrate the German Catholics within the revived Poland. The Germans were one of the best-organised groups in the re-established country and became an object of watchful observation to the Polish administration from the very beginning.

The study primarily consists of meticulous analysis of the Association's activities, based on a thorough survey, including organisation of pilgrimages to cult sites in and outside Poland, lectures, teachings in German, sports events, extensive (at least in the initial period) press and publishing activities, and so on. Rosenbaum shows two somewhat different leadership styles – the one pursued by the VdK founder Eduard Pant, who chaired it from 1923 to 1934, and Otto Olbrich (1934–9), who was made the leader after Hitler's coming to power.

The study shows the social and political specificity of Catholicism in Germany as well as in Upper Silesia, and is an important contribution to the discussion on the situation of the German minority and German Catholics in the interwar Silesia Voivodeship. Along with the group's social and denominational structure, its legal situation in the Second Republic is discussed. Altogether, essential complementation of the existing literature. (GK)

Zofia Zakrzewska, *“Cukier krzepi”*. *Propaganda konsumpcji cukru w Polsce w latach 1925–1932* [Sugar Strengthens: Sugar Consumption Propaganda in Poland, 1925–1932], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, 192 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, index of personal names, ills, photographs, English sum.

This modestly sized book concerns a very interesting issue in the history of propaganda, media and advertising, and the economic history of the interwar period, with a particular emphasis on the 1925–32 period. The slogan ‘Sugar strengthens’, invented by Melchior Wańkiewicz, is a firmly established colloquialism in the Polish language. In seven thematic chapters, the author convincingly describes this process using various sources, ranging from the press to archives. In addition, very interesting material illustrating the findings completes this very intriguing book. Using the example of England and France, the researchers agree that the increase of sugar in people’s diets was caused by the actions of its producers and not the actual demand from consumers. In the Polish territories under the partitions, the sugar industry developed very dynamically, constituting an important element of the economy of individual regions. After Poland regained independence, Polish sugar beet producers became the most important sugar beet manufacturers in the world within a few years. However, in the mid-1920s, the industry plunged into an overproduction crisis. The solution to the problem was supposed to be the increased consumption of sugar. Therefore, the General Council of the Polish Sugar Industry established the Sugar Consumption Propaganda Commission. Its activities focused primarily on the publishing of propaganda posters and postcards. Additionally, articles and advertisements promoting the consumption of sweetener were placed in the press. The limited impact of these actions prompted the Commission to establish a new body responsible for propaganda. In this way, the Sugar Propaganda Bureau, headed by Melchior Wańkiewicz, was established. The statistical data on the actions taken shows that the propaganda campaign definitely accelerated. The number of visual elements increased (primarily through posters and leaflets), while at the same time, the actions became more diverse. New media (radio, cinema) were used, a lot of time was devoted to ‘field activities’: agitators, competitions for schools. However, the actions of the new propaganda body did not yield the expected results. Sales of sugar in the periods of the strongest propaganda declined, although it should be noted that possibly the lack of such campaigns during the great economic crisis would have caused even greater dips in the consumption of this product. The book was awarded the Best Historical Debut of the Year in the Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski competition. (HW)

Jarosław Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku nacjokracji. Tendencje autorytarne, totalistyczne i profaszystowskie w polskiej myśli politycznej (1933–1939): narodowcy – narodowi radykałowie – narodowi socjaliści* [Toward Nationcracy. Authoritarian, Totalistic, and Pro-fascist Trends in Polish Political Thought of 1933–1939], Katowice, 2019, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 412 pp., bibliography, English and German sum., index; series: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 3822

The study by Jarosław Tomaszewicz of the University of Silesia in Katowice follows up his dissertation entitled *Naprawa czy zniszczenie demokracji? Tendencje autorytarne i profaszystowskie w polskiej myśli politycznej 1921–1935* [Mending or Destroying the Democracy? Authoritarian and Pro-fascist Trends in Polish Political Thought of 1921–35] (2012). The book's clear structure consists of a thorough introduction, five thematic chapters – i.e., 'Nationalists'; 'National Radicals'; 'Statehooder Nationalists'; 'Dissident Nationalists'; 'National Socialists' – and a summary. Several subsections meticulously discuss the proposed programmes of the parties and factions. The author is mainly interested in political thought (as a broad concept), and leaves aside the political practices (as a result, the evolution of Poland's *Sanacja* regime is shown in a truncated way). Such a concept is, potentially, the strength of the study and its major weakness at the same time. In any case, the literature has once again been enriched by the exquisite scholar, with years of experience in the subject matter, with a considerable portion of documentary knowledge that complements and importantly rectifies the image of the evolution of Polish political thought in the period concerned. Ethnically Polish, let us add, for the peer concepts of the Ukrainian, German, or Jewish thinkers inhabiting the Second Republic are basically out of the author's scope. However, as a documentary study, the book is definitely useful.

Like many Polish studies, this monograph poorly or in no way corresponds with the broad foreign literature as far as its subject matter is concerned. The proposed theoretical considerations are basically secondary throughout. The author accepts the imitations of Italian or German fascism as fascism-as-such, and such perception repeatedly leads him astray and entangles him in a multitude of contradictions. It is apparently not a great discovery to state that 'Polish fascism' never attained the position of its Italian or German 'counterparts', and that it was a rather peripheral phenomenon. With all that, was it not an interesting phenomenon, one that would deserve a dedicated research catalogue? The book, valuable all in all, will basically be read by experts in the field exploring the political and social evolution of Poland in the latter half of the 1930s. (GK)

## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Leon Rappaport, *Komitet Pomocy Uchodźcom Polakom w Wilnie (19 września 1939 – 1 stycznia 1941)* [The Committee for Aiding Polish Refugees in Wilno (19 September 1939 to 1 January 1941)], ed. by Alicja Gontarek, Lublin 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 180 pp., bibliography, ills, index

The aid provided to Polish September 1939 refugees in Wilno/Vilnius region – or, more broadly, the issue of Polish refugees after the outbreak of the Second World War – has so far been known partially. The book under review presents an important historical document, introducing us to the context and socio-political determinants of the events described. The recently-found material was authored by Leon Rappaport, treasurer with the Committee for Aiding Polish Refugees in Wilno. Not much information has been found about this man. The report has been edited, with an extensive introduction, by Alicja Gontarek, an experienced scholar associated with the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin and, recently, with the Institute of National Remembrance, author of an excellent monograph of the Jewish community of Mińsk Mazowiecki in 1918–39 (2015) and of a number of historical studies on ethnic minorities in the Second Republic of Poland. Here, she draws a comprehensive background picture behind the document in question and, more generally, the problem of Polish exiles and refugees of the year 1939.

The report consists of seven chapters, the first two introducing into the political and social background of the events concerned. Chapter Three describes the formula and detailed solutions applied by foreign refugee aid centres. Lastly, Chapters Four to Seven show the Committee in action.

A meticulous work of the witness, the report shows the context, the potential and realities of the aids provided. It offers a critical evaluation of the actions of Lithuanian authorities and institutions taken with respect to Polish refugees and the Committee as such, which is rather unique since the recent literature has tended to see those developments mostly in a positive light.

The editor has supplied the report with many valuable observations, details and specifications, contained in the introduction and conclusion. A helpful bibliography, a list of tables and drawings, and a name index are attached. This comprehensive edition of an important historical document is undoubtedly recommendable to experts in the field. (GK)

Carlos Alberto Haas, *Das Private im Ghetto: Jüdisches Leben im deutsch besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1944*, Göttingen, 2020, Wallstein Verlag, 370 pp.; series: *Das Private im Nationalsozialismus*, 3

Carlos Alberto Haas, a researcher affiliated to the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich and to the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, has researched – for his doctoral thesis – into the private lives of Warsaw Ghetto dwellers. Since there was no privacy in the ghetto, in the regular sense of the word, Haas defines the term as a ‘complex of social practices’, referring in his concept to micro-historical methodology and everyday-life studies.

The study is based on an extensive query that encompassed the institutions in Washington DC, New York City, Jerusalem, Ghetto Fighters’ House Archives at the Beit Lohamei Haghetot kibbutz and, primarily, at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (over 7,000 testimonies of various kinds), as well as surviving dispersed diaries and letters of inhabitants of the ghettos of Warsaw and Łódź and of the smaller ghettos in Tomaszów Mazowiecki and Piotrków Trybunalski.

As is known, the ghettos were marked by disastrous hygienic and sanitary conditions, lack of food, illnesses, forced labour, deportations; those enclosed within the ghetto walls increasingly shared the awareness of impending annihilation. It is difficult to use in this context the category of leisure time or private household sphere. The potential of conflicts in interpersonal relations was considerable; the permanent experience of threat reinforced the sense of belonging. The testimonies of the ‘ghetto people’ meticulously analysed by the author can be perceived as attempts to stay normal and human in reality governed by the rules of terror. The writing activity, as Haas observes, added a meaning to the world that had undergone decomposition. The writing Jews were not passive victims but they tried to actively determine their own private priorities, including one’s own form of resistance. It was writing and testifying that gave a number of ghetto dwellers a possibility to express their self-determination and autonomy in the environment determined by the others. In more general terms, Haas’s study reminds one of the original meanings of the notion of ‘private’ as something that calls for protection and defence. This important study opens an important research perspective of the history of the German Nazi occupation in Polish lands and, particularly, the Holocaust. (GK)

Marek Barański, *Wspomnienia 1943–1989* [Memoirs, 1943–1989], with foreword by Jan Żaryn, Warszawa, 2020, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 488 pp., index, ills

The author (born 1943), professor emeritus at the University of Warsaw and the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, is a well-known medievalist and author of a monograph on the dominium of the Poor Clares in Nowy Sącz (1992). He was also a member of the 'Czarna Jedyńka' scouting group and an activist for the Workers' Defense Committee [Komitet Obrony Robotników – KOR] and Solidarity. He was imprisoned for his oppositional activities. His memoirs cover the times from his birth (and, in fact, even earlier, as the author relates his family's history) to the political transformation of 1989. Although Barański's youth coincided with one of the most difficult periods in the history of Poland (war, communism), he writes about this period in quite a cheerful manner and in a colourful, anecdotal language well known to anyone who knows the author. It also features photos from his private archive. At the same time, the memoir represents a vital source for the history of modern historiography, for the past of the Warsaw academic community and its political engagement. Let us add that book won the weekly *Polityka's* History Award. (RR)

Sławomir Łukasiewicz (ed.), *Jalta. Rzeczywistość, mit i pamięć* [Yalta: Reality, Myth, and Memory], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 407 pp., list of abbreviations, notes on authors, index of persons

The book has come out as an aftermath of the scientific conference co-organised jointly by the Institute of National Remembrance, European Solidarity Centre, and the Second World War Museum in Gdańsk on the 70th anniversary of the meeting in Yalta of the political leaders of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, which re-established the post-war socio-political order in Europe.

The authors, outstanding researchers specialising primarily in the twentieth-century history of Poland (represented across the generations), including Marek Kornat, Tadeusz Wolsza, Karol Sacewicz, Małgorzata Gmurczyk-Wrońska, Piotr M. Majewski, Patryk Pleskot, address Yalta-related topics that have heretofore been represented marginally or offer novel perspectives. Three levels of the Yalta heritage are presented: (i) the meeting itself and its international significance; (ii) the Yalta conference and its decisions as a sort of myth implying a story on proud nations and states subdued by the political system

superimposed by the USSR and accusing the Western powers of betraying their allies; and, (iii) our recent – that is, post-Yalta – historical memory of the event. This section might appear really astonishing to the readers: the memory of Yalta is gradually fading, no more triggering acute emotions, and appears quite ambiguous.

The publication has been issued as part of the Institute of National Remembrance's central research project on Polish independence-oriented emigration from 1945 to 1990. Its meticulous editorial elaboration is remarkable. (GK)

Paweł Machcewicz and Andrzej Paczkowski, *Wina, kara, polityka. Rozliczenia ze zbrodniami II wojny światowej* [Crime, Punishment, Politics: Reckoning with the Second World War Crimes], Kraków, 2021, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Wydawnictwo Znak Horyzont, 640 pp., list of abbreviations, bibliography, index of personal names, ills and sources thereof

A joint book by eminent historians takes up the extremely interesting topic of reckoning with the crimes of the most dramatic armed conflict in history. As mentioned in the 'Introduction', the Second World War became a key watershed moment, because for the first time in history, the memory of crimes and the pursuit for justice aligned with the mainstream of world politics. Moreover, despite the differences resulting from geography and related local contexts, this process has become one of the key phenomena. In three parts, entitled respectively: 'War and Post-War', 'East and West', and 'The Past That Does Not End', Machcewicz and Paczkowski collected a dozen or so texts, constituting individual chapters that were published before, and now have been enriched with the latest findings and literature. It should be mentioned that a lot of additional information has been included in extensive footnotes. One of the book's greatest merits is its comparative nature. The situation of post-war reckonings with crimes committed during the war is described here according to a geographical key – organised by individual countries, which affords the opportunity to perfectly reflect differences in the treatment of the war crimes committed. An additional factor complicating the totality is the nature of participation in the conflict. In the first part, Machcewicz focuses mainly on the aggressors; in the second, Paczkowski describes the post-war situation in the victim states, although the situation is much more complicated in many cases. France is a prime example here. The culmination of the whole is the third part, authored again by Machcewicz. He depicts the issues of reckoning in the Cold War-world divided into two blocs. This is where the great political rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union most profoundly come to the fore. Machcewicz proves that responsibility for the

crimes of the Second World War is not constrained by limitation, as evidenced by the activities of the Israeli Nazi hunters or the trial of Ivan Demyanyuk. Polish issues do not dominate the narrative, although at the same time are presented quite extensively. (HW)

Anna Dobrowolska, *Zawodowe dziewczyny. Prostyucja i praca seksualna w PRL* [Professional Girls: Prostitution and Sex Work in the Polish People's Republic], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 233 pp., bibliography, photographs, ills, index of personal names

The book's main topic is a discourse on how, in the period of 1945–89, prostitution and sex work were spoken and written about in Poland. Thanks to this, it was also possible to look at the social and political changes of the post-war half-century.

The history of prostitution written by Anna Dobrowolska turned out to be a remarkably interesting study, showing that it is impossible to understand the history of the Polish People's Republic without this section, the history of a group marginalised by historiography. The book consists of five chronological chapters, in which the image of women engaged in prostitution and sex work has been reconstructed. Each part covers one post-war decade. A very well-documented narrative (including militia and state sources, the press, and literature on the subject) shows the manner of speaking about and describing prostitutes and the presence of this issue in the public debate. The author explains where the terms, characteristic for individual epochs of the Polish People's Republic, and assigned to women providing sexual services, originated. 'Georgians', 'foreign currencies' or 'mews' not only reflected the changing social and economic realities of the Polish People's Republic but also showed how people engaged in this occupation were stigmatised. Much space is also devoted to legal issues and the legality of prostitution. The book primarily shows Warsaw's perspective and the largest cities in Poland. The author emphasises that the availability of sources imposed this perspective, and a closer look at similar phenomena from a local perspective requires further research. The observation concerning the era of Edward Gierek's rule is extremely interesting. The pro-consumption policy of the new government, coinciding with an improved quality of life, was to have a decisive impact on the attitudes of the younger generation, also in terms of sexuality. And it is in this period that we should look for sources of new phenomena that emerged in Poland after 1989 and the abundant development of the erotic press and sex shops. (HW)

Michał Jarmuż, *Problemy mieszkaniowe w PRL w latach siedemdziesiątych XX wieku w świetle dokumentów osobistych* [Housing Problem in the Polish People's Republic in the 1970s in the Light of Personal Documents], Warszawa, 2020, Instytut Historii PAN, 225 pp., bibliography, index of personal names

The book concerns a fundamental problem of the Polish People's Republic, although housing issues have not occupied a significant place in Polish historiography. Only the recent works of Dariusz Jarosz showed that this topic was an essential aspect of the everyday life of Polish society in the communist era. From this perspective, the book by Michał Jarmuż is a significant continuation. It is worth noting the composition of the sources. Jarmuż, in painting the image of the 'housing problem' of the Gierek era, reached for personal documents: letters written to the authorities and memoirs. Through supplementing the source material with extremely detailed archival research, we received an interesting work on the social history of the Polish People's Republic. The author has not explained in his introduction the chronology chosen in the title. Perhaps the decision to focus on the 1970s was due to the abundance of personal sources.

The book is divided into three thematic chapters. Two of them are devoted to discussing the titular issue, i.e., 'housing problem', with the first concerning the methodological aspects of using personal sources. Chapter Two focuses on housing issues, which occupied a prominent place in personal documents. The letters that Poles wrote to the most important people and institutions of the Gierek era come to the fore here. The catalogue of issues raised in correspondence with the authorities made it possible to recreate a rather dark picture of the Polish housing realities in the seventies. The extensive quotes that the author decided to include in the main text also allow the readers to familiarise themselves with the specific style in which the correspondence had been written. Particularly interesting are formal and informal (even illegal) measures taken by people to get their dream apartment. Much space was also devoted to the everyday difficulties that Poles encountered – the terrible quality of houses and apartments, insufficient amenities, but also interpersonal conflicts, that arose as a result of 'housing problems'. On the other hand, the final chapter is an extremely interesting methodological reflection on the usefulness and ways of using personal documents in historical research. Jarmuż devotes a lot of space to the definition of the biographical method and its importance when writing the so-called 'history of ordinary people'. The excellent linguistic side of the narrative, which has almost a literary value, deserves the most attention. Even though Jarmuż repeatedly allows himself quite extensive source quotations, the whole is coherent and adheres to the adopted structure and methodology. (HW)

Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Jan Olaszek, *Holokaust, pamięć, powielacz: zagłada Żydów i okupacyjne stosunki polsko-żydowskie w publikacjach drugiego obiegu w PRL* [The Holocaust, Memory, and Duplicating Machines: The Extermination of the Jews and Polish-Jewish Relations during the Nazi Wartime Occupation in Underground Samizdat Publications in Communist Poland], Warszawa, 2020, Biblioteka „Więzi”, 279 pp., tables, ills

The role played by the underground samizdat publications (often locally referred to as ‘the second circulation’, *drugi obieg*) in the formation of the memory of many Polish Jews during the Second World War has been penetrated by two younger-generation researchers. Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, a historian associated with the Institute of National Remembrance’s [IPN] Historical Research Bureau, has two valuable books published to her credit: *Przerwane dzieciństwo. Losy dzieci Żydowskiego Domu Sierot przy ul. Dietla 64 w Krakowie podczas okupacji niemieckiej* [Childhood Interrupted. The Fate of the Children from the Jewish Orphans’ Home at 64 Dietla St. in Cracow during the German Occupation] (2012), and *Kobieta żydowska w okupowanym Krakowie (1939–1945)* [Jewish Women in Occupied Cracow, 1939–45] (2016). Jan Olaszek is a member of the staff of the Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences [ISP PAN] and of the IPN’s Research Bureau; he has penned the books *Rewolucja powielaczy. Niezależny ruch wydawniczy w Polsce 1976–1989* [A Mimeograph Revolution: The Independent Publishing Movement in Poland, 1976–89] (2015); *Jan Walc. Biografia opozycjonisty* [Jan Walc. A Biography of the Oppositionist] (2018); and, *Podziemne dziennikarstwo. Funkcjonowanie głównych pism informacyjnych podziemnej „Solidarności” w Warszawie w latach 1981–1989* [Underground Journalism. The Functioning of the Main Information Periodicals of the Underground Solidarity in Warsaw, 1981–9] (2018).

The study arranges and synthesises the gathered material. The authors sought to determine what sort of publications covered the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish wartime relations/relationships, and where such topics were virtually absent. What image of the Germans as the organisers of the extermination system emerged from those publications? Based on them, the authors try to reconstruct the attitude of the Poles, as a cultural community, to the Jewish community. The attitude of different social groups to the Holocaust process is examined, as are their later descriptions and other communications in this respect. Whether, when, and in what circumstances aspects of memorisation of crimes against Jews were addressed is yet another topic under exploration. All these questions are posed in the context of the ‘historical policy’ pursued by the communist authorities in the 1980s – and, less frequently, in the international context; an important historical context is thereby added to these considerations.

As the authors demonstrate, before the essay *Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto* [Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto] by the literary scholar Jan Błoński was published by the (official) Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 1987, the annihilation of Jews was a secondary topic in the democratic opposition (dissident) literature, apart from a few important texts. Hence, the study under review seeks to determine to what extent the 'opposition discourse' influenced the public opinion's attitudes in this respect, including whether it tried to face Holocaust issues and the Poles' attitudes toward the crime. The answers are, expectedly, not unambiguous and easy to generalise. However, there is no doubt that the book is important among the rich literature on the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations in the occupation years; its strength is rich illustrative material. It makes an important contribution to the research on the history of the democratic opposition in post-war communist Poland. This valuable case study describes an essential aspect of the formation of twentieth-century public discourses, thus filling a research gap. A relevant bibliography and index are attached. (GK)

Rafał Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL. Zamiast podręcznika* [Polish Historiography of the Communist Period: An Alternative to a Textbook], Łódź, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 289 pp., index of personal names, bibliography and biographical lexicon of the Polish historians of the 1945–89 period

Rafał Stobiecki is a leading specialist of the Polish historiography of the 1945–89 period, who has published extensively both on the development of historical studies in communist Poland, particularly in the Stalinist period, and the émigré historians in the United Kingdom and the United States. Hence, the present book may be considered a summarising of his three decades of research. Its shape is indeed special, if not peculiar, as it is a combination of a monograph, a textbook, and a reader for students. It would be most appropriate, perhaps, to consider it a companion to the historiography in question.

The book consists of six chronologically organised chapters, of which three consider the 1945–56 period, which clearly mirrors the development of the author's personal interests in the subject. Each chapter is divided into the narrative part, synthetically presenting the most important developments of the historical studies in Poland in the relevant period, and a corresponding selection of source material. The two parts are roughly equal in size, so the actual authorial text does not exceed a half of the relatively thin book.

Clearly, this atypical and indeed unique structure is designed to be used for in-class discussion for the students of the historiography course: the course the author himself has taught for decades at his home University of Łódź. The source material includes a variety of texts: fragments of academic

papers, minutes of discussions of the meetings of Polish historians from the most important academic centres, prefaces, and fragments of some of the most outstanding books they produced.

As far as the authorial narrative is considered, it presents a broad and informative synthesis of the development of historical studies in Poland, including both the statistical information on the growth of the number of historians and their publications, their topics and affiliations, and the analysis of the main intellectual and methodological trends of the relevant periods. As mentioned, Stobiecki evidently emphasises the early years, which were marked by the growing state control of academic life and attempts to organise it according to the Soviet patterns, the communist Party pressure on ideological purity, and the offensive of Marxism, as orchestrated by the authorities and a number of scholars enjoying their confidence. This pressure gradually faded away after 1956, when the communist Party limited its direct control to a few academic centres openly dedicated to promoting Marxism, and a supervision of the publications by censorship. Therefore, the problem of political involvements occupies less space in the last three chapters, which are consequently richer, as far as the analysis of the actual professional achievements of the Polish historians is concerned. Regrettably, the parallels with other communist countries, which would perhaps be illuminating, are relatively few and isolated, and the Western context, be it crucial for the Polish developments or not, is also marginal.

Still, the problem that clearly attracts the author's most attention is the political involvements of the Polish historians under communism, their attitudes to the authorities, and their strategies of avoiding the pressure of the official dogmas. Despite an obvious ethical motivation of these investigations and the temptation to divide his protagonists into collaborators and servants of the regime, and its noble opponents, the author avoids any conclusions, and indeed classifications of this kind. He seems profoundly confused with the question of the moral and professional evaluation (apparently, and perhaps intentionally, he does not clearly distinguish the two) of the compromises historians make under an authoritarian regime, the question he powerfully addresses. (AK)