

SHORT NOTES*

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GENERAL WORKS

Marcin Wołoszyn (ed.), *Od Grodów Czerwieńskich do Linii Curzona. Dzieje środkowego Pobuża w wiekach średnich oraz postrzeżenie formowania się wschodniej granicy Polski w historiografii XVIII–XXI wieku* [From Cherven Towns to Curzon Line. The Lands on the Middle Bug during the Middle Ages and the Historiographic Perspective on the Formation of Poland's Eastern Border, 18th–21st cc.], vols 1–2, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, Kraków–Leipzig–Rzeszów–Warszawa, 2017, Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, 720+696 pp., indices; series: U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej / Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas, 1

The book focuses on attempts to identify the Cherven' Towns (Grody Czerwieńskie), which in early medieval time were an object of rivalry between Piast-ruled Poland and Rus. Whereas the preceding volumes were specialist elaborations of earlier archaeological research (Matthias Hardt and Marcin Wołoszyn (eds), *Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Czerminie w świetle wyników badań dawnych (do 2010). Podstawy źródłowe*, vols 1–2, Kraków [etc.], 2016; Michał Auch, *Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Czerminie w świetle wyników badań dawnych. Ceramika naczyniowa*, Kraków [etc.], 2017; Marcin Wołoszyn (ed.), *Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych*, Kraków [etc.], 2018), the extensive publication under review revolves around the history of historiography and other humanistic areas, the main focus being the history of Polish eastern border in a long time perspective, until present. Apart from the foreword by M. Wołoszyn, the book opens with studies by Adrian Jusupović and Andrzej Janeczek on the Cherven' Land, in the early and late Middle Ages, respectively. They are followed by the contributions of linguist Christian Zschieschang, anthropologists Roman Czemlyk and Lech Mróz, and art historian Mirosław P. Kruk. Aleksander Musin and Marcin Wołoszyn discuss the first attempts to identify Cherven' Towns with Chermno and Gorodok, by nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiographers. Part one ends with recollections of those

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who participated in the excavations in the first half of the 1950s – incl. Andrzej Abramowicz, Jerzy Gąssowski, Jerzy Okulicz-Kozaryn, and Konrad Jażdżewski. The topic of Cherven' Towns in modern historiography is revisited by Katarzyna Błachowska in an extensive study, which fills part two of the monograph. (RR)

Mateusz Ratyński, *Jan Dębski (1889–1976). Polityk kompromisu* [Jan Dębski (1889–1976): A Politician of Compromise], Warszawa, 2019, Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 414 pp., index of persons, bibliog., list of acronyms/abbreviations

This study by a scholar employed at the Museum of Polish Peasant Movement History is composed of seven chapters showing, chronologically, the stages in the life of the outstanding politician from the Second Republic of Poland, his childhood and youth years and early public activities (chap. 1); his activity with the Legislative Sejm of 1919–22; the heyday of his political career, including as Chairman of the PSL-'Piast' Parliamentary Club (chap. 2), Chairman of the parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs (chap. 3); years in anti-Piłsudski opposition, incl. his contribution to the establishment of the Centrolew coalition (chap. 4); astonishingly, Dębski afterwards joined the *Sanacja* camp and was elected Senator for the Fifth Term-of-Office (chap. 5). The last two chapters (6 & 7) describe Dębski's involvement in independence-oriented underground during the Second World War and probably the least-known episode of his post-war engagement in the building of the People's Republic, including as a Superintendent of Schools in Lower Silesia and Chairman of the Provincial Branch of the United Peasants' Party [ZSL]; finally, his retirement as a 'veteran' of the peasant movement.

Originally prepared as a master's thesis submitted at the University of Warsaw, the study no doubt reflects its author's inquisitiveness as a researcher and offers a skilfully structured research questionnaire. Fascinated with Jan Dębski, the author has successfully traced most of the relevant records; not only has he examined the sources but also compiled a list of references/bibliography. There is a number of meticulously and reliably described episodes in Dębski's life, such as his first years in the Second Republic and the climax of his political career; but those which seem to be the most fascinating ones include his involvement with the Maritime and Colonial League, as one of the organisation's leaders before 1939 (as Vice President, in charge of public events and publications), or his ambiguous post-war vicissitudes. The monograph portrays an interesting case of a man with a noble background, raised by an intellectual family, whose childhood taught him a sense of wrong against and alienation of peasants, the challenges he addressed throughout his life. (GK)

Radosław Bugowski, *Miasto w ruchu. Studia z dziejów przemieszczania na przykładzie Torunia 1891–1939* [City in Motion: a Study in the History of Transportation. The Case of Toruń 1891–1939], Toruń, 2018, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 492 pp., personal and geographical indexes, English sum., bibliog., 4 annexes

This book is a highly detailed and informative study in the history of transportation in Toruń (Thorn) from the introduction of public transportation in the city up to the Second World War, which brought major physical damage to the urban infrastructure. The city was a Prussian border fortress before 1914, and a capital of the Polish voievodship between 1920 and 1939. It was connected to the Prussian railway system in 1861, and in 1873 the first bridge on the Vistula was constructed. In the period under consideration, the number of inhabitants rose from 27 thousand up to 78 thousand, with the annual growth of about 2 per cent during the Prussian times, and 4 per cent under the Polish administration.

The author bases his study on an impressive variety of sources: the local archival materials, as well as those available in Berlin, Gdańsk, and Warsaw; the local press, memoirs, diaries, pamphlets, and literature regarding automobile usage and the like. It is a meticulous study, filled with rich factual and statistical information while also elegantly and intelligently written. The author's main line of reasoning concerns the rising (and declining) needs of the population as correlated with its numbers and economic situation, as determined by two great depressions: the first resulting from the Great War, and the early 1930s global crisis. An interesting aspect of this study is also the struggle for the primacy, in both the legal and mental senses, between the pedestrians, the public transportation, and the private vehicles, which was mirrored by the organization of the streets and other elements of public space. Although tramways seemed to have prevailed in this fight by 1899, in legal terms, as the author demonstrates, up to 1939 the majority of the city dwellers still predominantly travelled on foot. The increase in the number of vehicles never caught up with the increase in the number of inhabitants. In 1928, the most prosperous year of the period, the city had 122 cars, 28 motor bikes, 1786 bikes and 886 horses – capable of transporting less than 6 per cent of the population.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first provides an overview of the economic situation and spatial developments. The second concerns individual vehicles and pedestrians. The third chapter discusses the development of the public transportation, and the last one presents changing legal norms and the urban infrastructure. (AK)

Marek Kornat and Rafał Łatka (eds), *Polskie wizje i oceny komunizmu (1917–1989)* [Polish Visions and Evaluations of Communism, 1917–1989], Warszawa, 2020, Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 384 pp., index of persons

This publication comes as a result of a conference held jointly by the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute of National Remembrance in June 2017. It contains several dozen texts grouped into five subject-focused chapters. The first two discuss the perception of communism in Poland by various social groups and institutions, prior to and after 1939. Two texts stand out, the ones by Adam Bosiacki and Tadeusz Rutkowski – dealing, respectively, with Polish scholars' contributions to Sovietology and Polish historians' attitudes toward communism. A separate chapter addresses the attitudes of individual Catholic Church hierarchs – incl. Pope John Paul II, Primate Stefan Wyszyński, and Romuald Jałbrzykowski, Metropolitan Archbishop of Wilno – to the communist system. The fourth section is biographical, with articles on Władysław Gomułka, Adam Michnik, and others. Marek Kornat discusses General Władysław Sikorski's opinions on the Soviet Union, expressed between 1922 and 1939; as it turns out, Sikorski aptly foresaw that the Soviet state would be among the beneficiaries of the impending war. The analyses of communism proposed by Leszek Kołakowski and Fr. Józef Maria Bocheński are described by Marek Bankowicz, with an emphasis on the differences between the two scholars in the approach toward the ideology. Whereas Kołakowski was initially fascinated with communism and only with time became one of its most ardent critics, Bocheński considered communism, from the very beginning, dangerous to the European civilisation. The last section contains three texts, dealing with the political transformation/transition, as a broad concept. Among them is Maciej Zakrzewski's study on how a group of communist-party reformers of the Kuźnica Association 'settled the accounts' with the Stalinist period in *Zdanie* periodical. A questionnaire "When 'Stalinism' comes to my mind...", carried out between September 1988 and May 1989, has brought a number of interesting and critical reflections on the period, in both the Soviet Union and Poland.

The final text, in which Antoni Dudek deals with the Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government facing the issue of de-communisation, focuses on the neglects and omissions of the first non-communist prime minister's team, particularly when it came to the seizure of the former communist party's (i.e. the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR]) assets. The actions of the team that governed Poland in 1989–90 were evolutionary rather than radical. All the three parties that had ruled Poland (i.e. PZPR, the Polish Peasant Party [PSL] and the

Democratic Party) were allowed to keep remarkable assets. In the author's opinion, this was the actual reason behind the wealth of the post-communist party that was a straight-line heir of PZPR and of PSL. (HW)

Wokół Pierwszego Marszałka Polski Józefa Piłsudskiego, męża stanu, wodza i bohatera narodowego [Studies on Józef Piłsudski, a Statesman, Soldier, and National Hero], ed. by Aleksander Smoliński and Jarosław Durka, Toruń, 2020, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 348 pp., 16 ill.

This book is a collection of eight essays on various issues related to Józef Piłsudski, a revolutionary and socialist in his youth, the leader of the independence movement in the second decade of the twentieth century, the first Marshall of Poland and commander of its army after 1918, and *de facto* dictator 1926–35; one of the best known figures in Polish history.

Two of the essays concern his activities in the reborn Poland, particularly after the coup of 1926. The essay by Aleksander Smoliński discusses his various actual and honorary functions in the army. The essay by Henryk Walczak analyses the Polish-Romanian military negotiations in 1928 and 1930.

The remaining essays regard Piłsudski's legend and his position in the Polish historical memory and propaganda. The essays by Maria Radziszewska and Elżbieta Magiera present Piłsudski's dominant role in the patriotic education in interwar Poland, whereas the essay by Marek Białokur, Dariusz Gołębiowski, and Agnieszka Misiurska analyses the uses of the figure of the Marshall in contemporary Polish high school education. Jarosław Durka analyses the attempts of the communist party and its security forces to erase the memories of Piłsudski and his legacy during the 1945–1989 epoch. Przemysław Sowiński discusses contemporary monuments of Piłsudski in public spaces, and Patryk Tomaszewski investigates the role of the figure in modern Polish pop-culture and counter-culture. (AK)

Hayden White w Polsce: fakty, krytyka, recepcja [Hayden White in Poland. Facts, Criticism, Reception], ed. by Ewa Domańska, Edward Skibiński and Paweł Stróżyk, Kraków, 2020, Universitas, personal index, index of concepts, bibliog. of White's texts published in Poland

Hayden White, the author of *Metahistory*, was one of the most famous modern theoreticians of history, and one of the fathers of the so-called narrative turn in the theory of historiography. He was also an expert on the Italian Renaissance

culture. White established vivid contacts with the Polish scholars in the 1990s, visited Poland a number of times, and served as professor at the Poznań University in 1997. Ewa Domańska, the editor of the present volume, has been his most devoted enthusiast in Poland, as well as a translator and editor of his books. The present study crowns a series of selected essays by White edited by Domańska, and might be considered as the most serious response to his writings in Poland so far.

The volume consists of one essay by White himself, concerning the relationship between historical narratives and fiction, and 14 essays assessing his impact and interpreting his contribution to various aspects of historical studies. Ewa Domańska and Jan Pomorski present his reception in Poland and his impact on the Polish theory and history of historiography. Ivan Peshkov does the same with respect to Russia; Jerzy Kałużny discusses the case of Germany; and Maciej Bugajewski investigates the French reception of White's contributions.

The following essays regard the uses and misuses of White's theoretical considerations in particular subdisciplines: Edward Skibiński discusses medieval studies, Danuta Minta-Tworzowska analyses archeology, Henryk Markiewicz and Marek Wilczyński investigate literary history, and Bartłomiej Krupa examines literary testimonies. Jakub Muchowski, Tomasz Wiśniewski, and Dariusz Andrzej Sikorski discuss various aspects of White's reception by historians proper, including the limits of his impact, and the problems connected with the practical implication of his theoretical postulates in historical research and writing. The volume is crowned by an essay by Jörn Rüsen, the most distinguished theoretician of history in today's Germany, who reassesses the history of the field in the last two hundred years, with emphasis on the origins and parallels of White's position. (AK)

Marta Kubiszyn, *Niepamięć – post-pamięć – współpamięć. Zagłada lubelskich Żydów jako przedmiot kultury pamięci* [Oblivion – Post-Memory – Co-Memory: The Annihilation of the Jews of Lublin as an Object of Remembrance Culture], Lublin, 2019, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 238 pp., index of names, bibliog., ill., list of ill., English sum.

This dissertation has resulted from years of research (the author is associated with the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University of Lublin). There are three chapters, the first of which deals with memory studies, discussing the category of collective memory – in a historical and cultural-studies aspects, the category of non-memory or oblivion – emptiness and lack of narration, and categories and exemplifications of post-memory. The latter group embraces a wide scope of detailed oral history studies, so-called substitute

witnesses and co-memory of the Holocaust – creation of relevant narratives and commemoration.

Chapter two deals with culture of remembrance as the supreme perspective in respect of various forms of memory in the Holocaust studies. The field and forms of such research are described, along with the definitions and scope of the concept in present-day research. The extermination of the Lublin Jews is singled out as an object of remembrance culture: this extends to the sites and spaces (landscapes) in a theoretical aspect, as well as the related symbols, carriers, implants, and the so-called prosthetic memory.

Chapter three, ‘The annihilation of Lublin Jews as an object of co-memory’, built on an illustrative and empirical basis, shows the artistic and educative/popularising output of Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN as the regional leader in the work on memory, in a descriptive form and with use of several examples (Lublin’s Jewish district of Podzamcze, the ‘Nie/Pamięć Miejsca’ installation at the Lublin Umschlagplatz, the multimedia exhibition ‘Lublin. A Memory of the Place’, and more). The study proposes an important periodisation for the commemoration processes, and initiates a valuable discussion around the co-memory category, defining it as “extension of the memory of a community, in a geographical sense, by inclusion of the awareness of presence of the Other in the given place” (pp. 209–10). This meticulously thought-over and precisely structured dissertation, based on a rich and versatile theoretical and methodological output, is eclectic, which should be seen as its another strong point. The proposed multi-perspective approach enables to identify and analyse a number of conceptual problems and, especially in the third section, to illustrate them with a considerable, skilfully and comprehensively selected documentary material. (GK)

MIDDLE AGES

Grzegorz Pac and Krzysztof Skwirczyński (eds), *Liber Romani. Studia ofiarowane Romanowi Michałowskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* [*Liber Romani. Studies Offered to Roman Michałowski on His Seventieth Birthday*], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 388 pp., bibliog.

This is a second festschrift offered to Roman Michałowski, a coryphaeus of Polish medieval studies, former student of Aleksander Gieysztor, professor emeritus with the University of Warsaw and the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences. Compared to the preceding book (Krzysztof Skwirczyński [ed.], *Christianitas Romana. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Romanowi Michałowskiemu*, Warszawa, 2009), the authors’ team, originally consisting of the Professor Michałowski’s students, has been joined by authors less strictly

associated with him (including foreign scholars: Glauco Maria Cantarella, Éric Palazzo, Ludwig Steindorff). Among the twenty-plus studies, the most important are, apparently, Marcin R. Pauk's essay on Heiligenkreutz Code 217, related to St. Adalbert, and a new interpretation of the ethnogenetic myth of the Longobards, proposed by Robert Kasperski. There are articles dealing with the temple in Chełm (Andrzej Buko), the relations between Bamberg and Trzebnica (Anna Dryblak), the plenary indulgence in Wrocław (Halina Manikowska), the skald poetry (Jakub Morawiec), Virgin Mary as the patroness of female Ottonian rulers (Grzegorz Pac), fatherhood in the Carolingian period (Aneta Pieniędz), and the role of St. Peter in the works by Bruno of Querfurt (Maksymilian Sas). The book opens with a bibliographical breakdown of Roman Michałowski's studies for the ten-year period of 2009–19. (RR)

Wojciech Drelicharz, *Unifying the Kingdom of Poland in Medieval Historiographic Thought*, transl. Anna Skucińska, Kraków, 2019, Towarzystwo Naukowe *Societas Vistulana*, 477 pp., bibliog., maps, indices, ill., list of abbreviations

The book was originally published a few years ago (as *Idea zjednoczenia królestwa w średniowiecznym dziejopisarstwie polskim*, Kraków, 2012). The author, presently the most outstanding expert in medieval Polish annals and annalistic writing, does not follow the very process of unification of Poland, formerly divided into provinces, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but the development of the unification idea in medieval historiography and hagiography, not necessarily in connection to political activities. The subject-matter is considered in an extremely broad chronological spectrum, from the birth of the idea of the Crown of the Kingdom in the earliest annalistic records and in Gallus Anonymus's chronicle, up to the late medieval and early modern reflection – woven at the time when the claims to Pomerania, Prussia, Silesia and Masovia were still topical. The proposed analysis is deeply anchored in the records and accompanied by a critical discussion with the relevant literature (which, regrettably, is only selectively reflected in the bibliography specified at the book's end). The book has already been reviewed by (too) few authors (Paweł Żmudzki, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cxxii, 4 [2015], pp. 855–76; Piotr Węcowski, *Początki Polski w pamięci historycznej późnego średniowiecza*, Kraków, 2014, p. 24 f.) and was awarded with Stefan K. Kuczyński Second Prize by *Studia Źródłoznawcze* periodical's editorial board. Its recent English-language edition exactly follows the original version, with a short foreword added (pp. 7–9); let us hope that it will help the book to reach a broader, international audience. (RR)

Michał Łuczyński and Grzegorz Antosik, *Badania nad wierzeniami Słowian* [Studies on the Beliefs of Slavs], Owidz, 2020, Muzeum Mitologii Słowiańskiej, 223 pp.

The book is composed of the replies to a questionnaire on aspects of research into the beliefs of Slavs. Even though all of those requested to complete the survey have responded positively, finally replies came from as many as eighteen Polish and fifteen foreign scholars. The responses of the latter have been published in the original languages as well as in a Polish translation. Each of the replies is preceded by a short biographical note of the responding scholar.

As we can learn from a brief introduction, it is the second such project after the 1984 questionnaire survey published by *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* (edited by Nikita I. Tolstoy and Svetlana M. Tolstoy). Antosik and Łuczyński posed the following questions: (i) What is the purpose behind exploring the pre-Christian religion of Slavs? Is a reconstruction of the history (and evolution) of their religion possible? (ii) Was there one religion/mythology of Slavs, or were there several ones? (iii) What is the importance of the syncretic Christian religiosity ('dual faith') to the research in question? (iv) What is your evaluation of the progress in the research on Slavic beliefs? What is, in your opinion, the present-day condition of the research? (v) What methods/sources are presently unsatisfactorily used while potentially offering a special cognitive potential? (vi) What discoveries, or theories, coming up in the recent years, should be deemed of particular importance to our knowledge on the beliefs of the early Slavs? (vii) What sort of action might contribute to speeding up the progress of our knowledge in this respect? (viii) What are the prospects of comparative studies on Slavic religion/mythology?

Some of the answers are perfunctory, others pretty extensive. One value of such a book is that considerable opinion (and orientation) splits among the historians; a survey like this one helps to get to know more about the ideas of diverse scholars on the beliefs of Slavs. (AG)

Krystian Chrzan, Sławomir Moździoch, and Sylwia Rodak (eds), *Współczesne metody badań wczesnośredniowiecznych grodów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* [Modern Research Methods of East Central European Early Medieval Burg-cities], Wrocław, 2019, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, Ośrodek Badań nad Kulturą Późnego Antyku i Wczesnego Średniowiecza, 313 pp.

The volume includes papers delivered at a conference on Central European burg-cities, which was held in 2016 as part of a broader project meant to produce an *Atlas of Early Medieval Hill-forts in the Territory of Poland*. It opens by an

introduction penned by Sławomir Moździoch, discussing the state of research on Slavic burg-cities. The first such projects were initiated in the Congress Kingdom time; considerable progress was made thanks to the excavations related to the Millennium of Poland and, subsequently, the Archaeological Photograph of Poland project. The research team, representing several scholarly institutions, have tasked themselves with stocktaking of the known material and with identifying the actual functions of the burg-cities under research. The subsequent sixteen texts are case studies on Poland's burg-cities (Nasielsk, Radom, Dąbrówka, Krosno Odrzańskie, Chełmno Land, Jaćwież) as well as Czech, Slovak, and German ones (dealt with by Felix Biermann, Roman Křivánek i Nad'a Profantová). (RR)

Kamil Kajkowski, *Obrzędowość religijna Pomorzan we wczesnym Średniowieczu. Studium archeologiczne* [The Religious Rites and Rituals of Early Medieval Pomeranians. An Archaeological Study], Wrocław, 2019, Wydawnictwo Chronicon, 494 pp., indices of local names and supernatural beings, English sum., ills, maps, bibliog.

The book offers a detailed discussion of the religious rites and rituals of the Pomeranians. It is composed of eight chapters and two annexes, without a preface or conclusion. The first chapter forms an introduction, to the extent that it discusses the chronological and territorial framework covered, the study's content-related scope and its objectives – the latter being summarised overly briefly. The actual question posed by the author is: To what extent the available archaeological sources enable one to reconstruct the mythology, religion, or magic of the Pomeranians? This concerns both the ideas and the practices, and the space in which they functioned.

Chapter two discusses the present state of research. Chapter three considers the possibilities of application of archaeology and archaeological research in determining the functioning of the spiritual culture. Chapter four presents the sites of worship, morphology of the worship centres, sanctuaries, worship burg-cities, buildings oriented on the sacral/ritual function, and necropolises. Chapter five deals with sculptures. Chapter six presents different categories and types of offerings (from humans, animals, and other) and discusses amulets. The final chapter summarises these issues, discussing the religious rites and rituals, organisation of the space, manifestations of the magical and religious thinking, and more. The annexes discuss boat burials and animal skeleton deposits.

The study is pretty detailed and meticulous, based on carefully studied material; the research results are presented conscientiously. Not an easy piece of reading, the book is a valuable elaboration on the subject – and is

a must-read for scholars dealing with religiosity in Pomerania and in (at least) the whole territory of Slavdom. (AG)

Kinga Zamelska-Monczak (ed.), *Santok. Strażnica i klucz Królestwa Polskiego* [Santok: The Watchtower and Key of the Kingdom of Poland], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 501 pp.; series: *Origines Polonorum*, 13

The multi-volume series ‘*Origines Polonorum*’ is meant to remind and verify the archaeological research pursued several decades ago in conjunction with the Millennium of Poland. Each publication in the series deals with a specified burg-city [*gród*] within Poland’s post-war borders. Santok, a village situated in the flood plain of the Warta and the Noteć, forty kilometres east of Gorzów Wielkopolski, is the subject of volume 13. The book’s title is drawn from Gallus Anonymus’s chronicle: the phrase “Zutok, regni custodiam et clavem” (II, 17) had once been used by the authors of a book published ten years earlier: Wojciech Popek (ed.), *Santok. “Strażnica i klucz królestwa”: 30 lat Muzeum Grodu w Santoku: wydawnictwo pokonferencyjne, 13 czerwca 2008 r., Gorzów Wielkopolski 2010* (not mentioned in the bibliography of the book under review). The excavations carried out between the late 1950s and the middle 1960s in Santok have enabled to recognise the development of the settlement between the eighth and the fifteenth centuries. This multi-author work contains archaeological, historical, geological, and archaeozoological analyses, shedding light on the history of the medieval castle-city in a long chronological sequence. (RR)

Stanisław Rosik, *The Slavic Religion in the Light of 11th- and 12th-Century German Chronicles (Thietmar of Merseburg, Adam of Bremen, Helmold of Bosau). Studies on the Christian Interpretation of Pre-Christian Cults and Beliefs in the Middle Ages*, transl. Anna Tyszkiewicz, Leiden–Boston, 2020, Brill, 442 pp., bibliog., indices, figures, map; series: *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 60

The religion of pagan Slavs, poorly represented in the records, has been broadly commented upon by scholars of diverse disciplines, including historians, archaeologists, religious scholars, ethnologists, and linguists. The now-classical book by Wrocław medievalist Stanisław Rosik, is an important contribution to the subject-matter (first published as *Interpretacja chrześcijańska religii pogańskich Słowian w świetle kronik niemieckich XI–XII wieku*, Wrocław 2000).

More than the phenomenon itself, it places an emphasis on its reflection in the records – specifically, its ‘Christian interpretation’. To this end, the author analyses three selected early medieval German chronicles, whose authors dealt at length with Slavdom. Of value is a comprehensive discussion of the current state of research on the Slavic paganism and the sources available. The study was originally as a PhD thesis written under Professor Lech A. Tyszkiewicz; its English edition twenty years later preserves the content of the original version. (RR)

Andrzej Buko (ed.), *Średniowieczny zespół rezydencjonalny na Górze Katedralnej w Chełmie* [The Medieval Residential Complex at the Cathedral Hill in Chełmno], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 464 pp., annexes, bibliog., English sum., figures and tables

A result of the recent research managed by Professor Andrzej Buko, an eminent Polish archaeologist, the book deals with the High Hillock (Wysoka Górka) or Cathedral Hill (Góra Katedralna) in Chełm, which, as testified by the *Halychian-Volhynian Chronicle* was the residential place of King Daniel Romanovych in the thirteenth century. Excavation survey of the topography of this unique area was commenced in the early twentieth century; the history of the research is discussed by Andrzej Buko in the opening chapter. Among other aspects, the view that Daniel’s *palatium* was erected in lieu of an earlier burg-city was overturned recently; the hill’s spatial layout turned out to be much more complicated than assumed until very recently; a wall built of Roman brick, not to be met elsewhere in this part of Europe, has been discovered. Next, Dariusz Dąbrowski discusses the written records. The following chapters deal with environmental, non-invasive, stratigraphic, architectural, ceramological, and archaeozoological research. Annexes specifying the dating of the monuments with use of the ¹⁴C method, a bibliography and an English summary are added. (RR)

Adrian Jusupović, *Kronika halicko-wołyńska (Kronika Romanowiczów) w latopisarskiej kolekcji historycznej* [The Halychian-Volhynian Chronicle (the Romanovych Chronicle) in the *letopis* Historical Collection], Kraków, 2019, Instytut Historii PAN – Avalon, 208 pp., bibliog., English sum., index of persons, geographical and ethnic names, illis

In his new book, Adrian Jusupović embarks on describing the narrative strategies of the author of the Halychian-Volhynian Chronicle, addressing the questions whether it was actually part of a larger historical collection and whether the Halychian-Volhynian chronicler and Jan Długosz used the same version of the Rostislavovych *Letopis* of Kiev (the author's answer is that they used two different versions), and, "analysing the chronological method applied by the Chronicle's author".

The study has five chapters, plus an introduction, conclusion, and a chronological table appended. The first chapter describes how the chronicler removed from the text the notes included in the Kiev *Letopis*, apparently the Chronicle's source, and inserted there pieces of information from the *Enkomion* of Roman Mstislavovych. Chapter two points to the Kiev *Letopis* as the chronological basis for the Chronicle. Chapter three discusses the use of the so-called Daniel's Collection, in terms of chronology and provision of historical material for diverse additions/comments. Chapter four discusses the text's composition. Chapter five covers the chronicler's background and the techniques and methods of work he applied. While this short account might suggest that the book's arrangement is subject-oriented, it basically follows the Chronicle's content, and the respective chapters refer to the consecutive parts of its text. The annexed table clearly reflects it, as it specifies (apart from the yearly dates) the 'content', pages of the critical edition, translations, references to the pages of the book concerned (referred to as 'Discussion'), and a column headed 'Structure of the narrative'.

The book is targeted at a reader who is well-versed in the subject-matter and the literature. Other readers would be thrown in at the deep end, without having the basic terms explained. There is no detailed description of the Halychian-Volhynian Chronicle – no date of compilation, and no reference to the content: the author assumes that the reader knows his understanding of certain terms, so he neglects some relevant issues in his arguments. It may be assumed that the scholar wanted to avoid repeating certain information from the Chronicle's edition prepared within the MPH series; the result is, though, a book which is quite unreadable for those who do not know Jusupović's previous publications. (AG)

Beata Wywrot-Wyszkowska, *Rzemiosło w późnośredniowiecznych miastach południowego pobraża Bałtyku. Studium archeologiczne* [Craftsmanship in Late Medieval Towns of Southern Baltic Coastal Zone], Szczecin, 2019, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 312 pp., index, bibliog., German sum.

The book is authored by an archaeologist, employee of the Szczecin branch of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, whose previous focus was leathersmaking (esp. Beata Wywrot-Wyszkowska, *Skórnictwo w lokacyjnym Kołobrzegu. XIII-XV wiek*, Szczecin 2008). Now, from a selected branch of craftsmanship, she has turned to manufacture in a broader take. The study in question deals with urban centres of the southern Baltic coastal zone in the post-location period. Archaeological sources have been used a great deal, which – as we can learn from the introduction – is not backed with many years of research tradition. A discussion of the current state of research is followed by a description of the records and presentation of the fields of craftsmanship, including pottery, blacksmithing, bell-founding, boatbuilding, etc. The subsequent chapters concern chronological and regional changes in manufacture and the position of manufacture in urban space. (RR)

Łukasz Burkiewicz, *Życie codzienne w podróży na przykładzie Ambasady do Tamerlana (1403–1406). Z badań nad relacjami międzykulturowymi* [A Daily Life of Travellers: the Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403–1406. Aspects of Studies on Intercultural Relations], Kraków, 2019, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum w Krakowie, 524 pp., bibliog., indices, English sum.

At first glance, this book arouses considerable hope: very nicely published, with more than five hundred pages filled with text, an extensive methodological introduction and a broadly drawn general background, plus an enormous bibliography. The core subject is the *Embajada a Tamórlan*, the Castilian account of the journey to Samarkand. Yet, a glance at the foreword suffices to see that there is Koneczny alongside Heidegger, the *Annales* School alongside Malinowski... The author's methodological inspirations form a long list, apparently without much coherence. Defining himself as an interdisciplinary scholar, he dissents from specifically historical objectives whilst referring to them in an attempt to verify the chronicler's geographical knowledge, and pondering about the political circumstances surrounding his writing activity. The other questions – such as, particularly, the travelling conditions and intercultural relations – are much broader, though not more novel. Is this all not too much, even for such an extensive study? The book consists of six chapters (and subchapters). (RR)

EARLY MODERN TIMES

Agnieszka Bartoszewicz, Andrzej Karpiński, Maciej Ptaszyński, and Andrzej Zakrzewski (eds), *Z historii kultury staropolskiej. Studia ofiarowane Urszuli Augustyniak* [Aspects of the History of Old Polish Culture. Studies Offered to Urszula Augustyniak], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 362 pp.

This commemorative book dedicated to Professor Urszula Augustyniak has come out owing to the joint effort of a group of outstanding researchers in early modern period in history, Professor's longstanding close associates, colleagues, and students. Presented volume contains a *tabula gratulatoria*, a bibliography of Urszula Augustyniak's works (1975–2018) and a biographical essay summarising her activities and output both as a scholar and a university teacher, compiled by Maciej Ptaszyński, Professor's former student and co-editor of the book. Her biography is shown in the context of the political changes of the second half of the 20th century, which heavily influenced the situation of the University of Warsaw and the circle of historians associated with it. The scholar's outlined portrait is accompanied by reflection on the activities of several generations of historians employed at the University's Institute of History. In the course of Urszula Augustyniak's scientific path and career the formative role of the seminar held by Jarema Maciszewski, once attended by a number of illustrious experts in the history of early modern period and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, is emphasized. In her studies, Urszula Augustyniak addresses aspects of early modern political culture, including issues related to the royal court and monarchical power, the *sejm/diet*, communication processes, the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and attempts at its modernisation, collective identity and national awareness in the early modern Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Commonwealth's magnate elites (its courts and clientele), the social and political history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, history of religious relations and conflicts with an emphasis on the history of Protestantism in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and more. The years of her research into early modern history were crowned in 2008 by the synthetic study she authored, entitled *Historia Polski 1572–1795* [A History of Poland, 1572–1795]. The introductory section of presented volume is followed by three parts, divided thematically: 'Political culture', 'Cultural and religious history', and 'Magnate courts and elites', comprising, respectively, eight, seven, and five chapters. Selection of the subjects in the individual parts well corresponds with Urszula Augustyniak's scholarly interests. The volume comprises texts of renowned scholars specialising in the history of an early modern age, addressing issues concerning court rituals, tyranny, communication system,

information transfers and propaganda, funeral culture, political system and political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with a special focus on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, religious (denominational) relations and early modern religiosity, inter-estate relationships and conflicts, client relations and cultural heritage of the magnate elite. The considered structure and selection of texts – in spite of so diverse subjects, typical of texts submitted to a *Festschrift* – has produced a coherent and well-thought volume, which not only adequately reflects the research interests of Urszula Augustyniak herself, but also embeds them in a broader context of scholarly activities of her associates and students. (*MJO*)

Piotr Guzowski, *Rodzina szlachecka w Polsce przedrozbiorowej. Studium demograficzne* [Noble Family in Pre-partition Poland. A Demographic Study], Białystok, 2019, Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 268 pp., ill., tables, charts, bibliog., index of persons, Prace Centrum Badań Struktur Demograficznych i Gospodarczych Przednowoczesnej Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, ix; series: Dissertationes, 28

The presented study on historical demography and social history is a significant contribution to the hitherto insufficient achievements of Polish historiography in relation to the demographic structure of the early modern Polish nobility. Despite their leading role played in the Kingdom of Poland and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the nobility and magnates have paradoxically rarely been the subject of studies of a demographic nature. In contrast, the demographic structure of peasants and townsmen has been much better recognized and examined. The aim of the presented monograph is to fill this gap in the research on the noble family in pre-partition Poland, and to outline the demographic framework for the functioning of the elite in the early modern society of the Kingdom of Poland. The work consists of an introduction, in which the author briefly discusses the modest state of research on the demography of the nobility, as well as outlines the purpose and structure of his monograph. The introduction is followed by five chapters, each of which is in fact a separate in-depth study. The chapters examine, respectively, the noble family in the fifteenth century; the noble family in the early modern era; the demographic differences in the rural areas (a comparison of the nobility and the peasantry in this respect); the demographic state of noble households at the end of the eighteenth century; and, in a broader context, an outline of the demographic conditions of the Polish nobility from an international comparative perspective. Each chapter is based on a diverse and changing

primary source base. The monograph ends with a concise, short conclusion. The study provides above all tables and charts that gather, in a systematised form, substantial demographic data collected and analysed by the author. The chronological scope of the work – from the late Middle Ages to the decline of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the eighteenth century – is explained by the relative demographic stability and the functioning of the same economic model, and does not raise objections. The primary source base of the work consists primarily of tax registers, court and municipal registers, obituaries, wills, baptisms, weddings and death records, and registers of Civil-Military Order Commissions from the end of the eighteenth century. As the subject of his research, Guzowski took into account the nobility from various regions of the Kingdom of Poland (and, as he points out, he not only examined ethnically Polish nobility, but also included the families of German origin from Ducal Prussia and inhabitants of the Polish-Ruthenian borderland). Not the entire state of the nobility is subjected to demographic analysis. Guzowski decided to exclude magnate families from the analysis for the early modern period because of the lack of precision in defining this group, and the existence of demographic studies of this stratum of the nobility estate (however, for the medieval period, the elite of the nobility was not excluded from the analysis). As the author rightly points out, until now the entire nobility was viewed predominantly through the prism of the magnate elite, while there is a noticeable lack of a comprehensive approach and research on the inequalities within the entire noble estate. The historiography to date has been dominated by ideas and stereotypes based on the experiences of magnate families, extrapolated to the whole estate, which few researchers have challenged so far using statistical analysis, quantifiable and comparative methods, as well as other tools developed by historical demography. (MJO)

Andrzej Karpiński, in cooperation with Emil Kalinowski and Elżbieta Nowosielska, *Požary w miastach Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku i ich następstwa ekonomiczne, społeczne i kulturowe. Katalog* [Fires in the Cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries and Their Economic, Social and Cultural Consequences. A Catalogue], Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa, 2020, 334 pp.

The presented catalogue is the result of a research project, funded by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities, under the same title. It is supposed to be a part of a monograph devoted to history of fires in cities in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The publication

consists of a short introduction by Andrzej Karpiński, followed by the main part – a catalogue, arranged according to the territorial-administrative division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into districts and voivodships (with the exceptions of Dobrzyń Land, Warmia and the Duchy of Samogitia). Cities are listed in alphabetical order together with information and a brief description (when possible) of the fires recorded in them. The catalogue ends with an extensive bibliography. Data on fires was collected from the entire territory of Poland and Lithuania (not including the fiefs and territories on the eastern border, which only temporarily were within the borders of Polish-Lithuanian state). The chronological framework of the catalogue covers the period of 1501–1795. The authors managed to gather information about 4,731 known fires that took place in the cities, which according to them is only a fraction – 10 per cent – of fire disasters that are estimated to have occurred in reality. The information was obtained from both archival materials and literature. The catalogue, as is pointed out in the Introduction, is the first of its kind in Polish historiography. In both Polish and European historical studies, the topic of fires in early modern cities has not been sufficiently researched. Although the authors, whose objective was to fill this gap, have collected a considerable amount of materials and references to the occurrence of fire catastrophes, the use of the catalogue is limited by the fact that each catalogue note, which consists of a description of fires in one city, is accompanied by a collective bibliography of sources and literature on the subject. This means that the reader has to search through all the listed positions him/herself to find a reference to the year or event of interest to him/her. While in the case of smaller towns, where only one or several fires at most were recorded, this does not pose great difficulties, in the case of metropolises such as Cracow, where the material collected is quite substantial, the catalogue becomes much less useful and serves only as a recognition and introduction to the main query, which the reader will have to carry out him/herself in the listed numerous sources. A layout in which a separate bibliographical note would be assigned to each of the fires mentioned in one catalogue note (for one city or town), would be much more clear in this case, and the reader would be able not only to find the information that interests him/her, but also would be directed to one of the sources and/or literature for further reading. However, despite the aforementioned concerns there is no doubt that the bibliographic material gathered by the authors is impressive, and the presented catalogue marks significant progress in the research and constitutes a basis for further studies in this field. (MJO)

Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (ed.), *„Najwyższa Pani swoich praw”. Idee wolności, niepodległości i suwerenności Rzeczypospolitej 1569–1795* [“The Supreme Lady of Her Rights”. The Ideas of Freedom, Independence and Sovereignty of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569–1795], Warszawa, 2019, Muzeum Historii Polski, Polskie Towarzystwo Badań nad Wiekiem Osiemnastym, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 345 pp., index of persons

This joint publication stems from a conference held (under the same title) in November 2018 by the Polish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies; the Department of Enlightenment Literature, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences; and the Royal Castle in Warsaw. The book opens with an introduction by Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (the editor and author of one of the texts contained in the volume), followed by sixteen articles/chapters and an index of names. The volume’s leitmotif is interdisciplinary reflection on the functioning and understanding of the ideas of ‘independence’ and ‘sovereignty’ in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early modern period. The chronological framework corresponds with the dates of the Commonwealth’s emergence and decline, as adopted in historiography – respectively, the Union of Lublin, 1569, which sealed the political association between the Crown of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and 1795, the date which marked the Third Partition and the end of the Polish-Lithuanian statehood. The contributors, apart from historians, include historians of art, literary scholars, historians of law, and political scientists. The texts are arranged in a chronological order, and consist both of synthetic reviews and in-depth studies dealing with shorter periods and selected aspects of the extensive problem of sovereignty in the early modern period. The authors interpret the ways in which aspects of sovereignty of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were dealt with and perceived in arts and literature (Magdalena Górka, Estera Lasocińska, Marcin Cieński, Katarzyna Grzymała, Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee, Maciej Pieczyński, Igor Kąkolowski), as well as in political and public discourse during internal and external political conflicts (Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, Michał Zwierzykowski, Anna Czarniecka, Urszula Kosińska, Rafał Niedziela). In addition, presented volume offers a reflection on the Commonwealth’s position in foreign relations and independence in the international arena (Zofia Zielińska), analysed as well in the religious context (Urszula Augustyniak), and on the issues of ‘internal’ sovereignty – from the point of view of one of the Commonwealth’s two constituent entities, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and its position held in relation to Poland (Andrzej Zakrzewski, Andrzej Rachuba). However, as the editor admits in the introduction, the points-of-view under analysis are limited to

those of the nobility only, while it would be beneficial and valuable to include in the study other estates or national/ethnic communities of Poland-Lithuania. The publication does not pretend to be an exhaustive discussion on the issues of independence in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, nonetheless it does provide an interesting and valuable overview of recent historiography on the subject of early modern concept of sovereignty and serves as a significant point-of-departure for further research. (MJO)

Bartosz Dziewanowski-Stefańczyk, *Pieniądz w służbie króla i Rzeczypospolitej. Polityka monetarna w dyskursie sejmowym w latach 1658–1668* [Money in the Service of the King and the Commonwealth. Monetary Policies in the Sejm Discourse of 1658–1668], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 280 pp., list of acronyms/abbreviations, bibliog., index of names, 29 ills in colour (facsimiles, archival documents, old prints, coins, medals, portraits, figures)

Under the reign of King John II Casimir, the last Polish monarch of the House of Vasa, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was ravaged and desolated by foreign invasions and a civil war. Long-lasting wars and military struggles led to the country's economic decline, indebtedness of the treasury, and inflation. Bartosz Dziewanowski-Stefańczyk remarks that it was the state's paralysis, caused by unstable financial situation and increasingly frequent practice of breaking the *Sejm* (diet) sessions, that forced non-standard and efficient solutions in the area of monetary policy, defined by the author as "all and any actions taken within the period concerned in the field of issue of currency in the territory of the Commonwealth by all the entities dealing with currency" (p. 6). The decision to limit the chronological scope of the study to the second decade of John Casimir's reign – the years 1658–68 – was explained by the author as due to the abundance of the available sources and the willingness of the author to present a cohesive analysis of one monarch's monetary policy in the time of a crisis. Since at the diet held in 1658 the first project of issuing a special currency designed to support the state's finance, tarnished by warfare, was proposed, and year 1668 was, in turn, the last year of King John Casimir's rule, the proposed chronological scope seems justified. The study opens with a foreword introducing issues addressed later on in the monograph, outlining the current state of research, source base and the monograph's structure. Its main part constitutes of six chapters arranged in chronological and thematic order, followed by a summarizing conclusion. The monograph ends with a list of acronyms/abbreviations, bibliography, and index of names. The author seeks to present the associations between politics and

minting, trying to determine who namely pursued the monetary policy, what were the reasons behind it and what were the effects of that policy, taking into account the diverse stances expressed by the political actors, mainly at diet sessions. To this end, the political (mainly, diet-related) discourse is analysed (*Sejm* constitutions, King's instructions for the dietines, dietine instructions, letters, mint regulations). These findings are complemented with analysis of selected elements of public discourse (primarily, economic and political writings). The monograph successfully demonstrates that the premises behind the disorganisation of the Commonwealth's monetary policy should be identified in the system-wide institutional determinants and conditions. The author points, especially, to the division of the responsibility for the monetary policy between several rivalling institutions, persons and entities (the *Sejm*, diet committees, the king, the Senate Council, Prussian towns and the Ducal Prussia). (MJO)

Piotr Ugniewski (ed.), *„Sklócony naród, król niepewny, szlachta dzika”? Polska stanisławowska w świetle najnowszych badań* [“Nation Conflicted, King Uncertain, Noblemen Savage”? Poland under King Stanislaus Augustus in the Light of Recent Research], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Neriton, Muzeum Historii Polski, 282 pp., 4 ills in colour

Consisting of eleven scholarly articles, with an introduction by Piotr Ugniewski, this anthology responds to the recently growing interest in eighteenth-century studies, especially the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The intensified interest in the Age of Enlightenment and Stanislaus Augustus's reign has in the recent years been manifested (among others) in the development of scientific research that has led to an abundance of conferences and studies dealing with this time period. The collection of studies under review, published with support from the Polish History Museum, is composed of articles written both by scholars with noted output and younger-generation researchers. Addressed are diverse issues in political history, the domain that forms the background and bond for all the texts in the volume. In specific, there are considerations on political culture and discourse (Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz on changes in the political language and Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski on the political culture under Stanislaus Augustus), diplomacy (Jakub Bajer on diplomatic relations with the Viennese court; Rafał Waszczuk on the relations with France), royal propaganda (Jakub Frejtag's essay on how Stanislaus Augustus used the Old Testament topos of King Salomon), economy (Stanisław Zawadzki on the salt crisis and its consequences; Zofia Zielińska on the Russo-Courland commercial treaty),

artistic and literary production of the period concerned (Magdalena Górka on Enlightenment emblematics; Teresa Kostkiewiczowa on the portrayals of the historical past in literary works of the second half of the eighteenth century). The collection moreover contains articles on aspects of military history (Ewa Zielińska on the everyday reality of the stationing of the Russian troops in Poland-Lithuania) and social history (Michał Bąk's biographical essay on Jan Chrzyciel Komarzewski, illustrating the social advancement opportunities in late-eighteenth-century Poland-Lithuania). The book is primarily targeted at historians specialising in the history of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early modern period. It is, moreover, an interesting joint voice of elder- and younger-generation scholars in the ongoing, years-long discussion over the significance of the Stanislaus Augustus's reign in the history of Poland. (*MJO*)

Tomasz Ciesielski (ed.), *Studia nad konfederacją tarnogrodzką i Sejmem Niemym* [Studies on the Tarnogród Confederation and the 'Silent' Sejm], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo Neriton, 186 pp., notes on authors, list of acronyms/abbreviations, bibliog., index of persons

A multi-author book of studies on the Tarnogród Confederation and the diet session known as the 'Silent' Sejm of 1717 comprises six scholarly articles by specialists from Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, edited by Tomasz Ciesielski, who is the author of one of the chapters and the introduction which deals with the treasury and military resolutions of the 'Silent' Sejm. The introduction offers a concise but exhaustive summary on the current state of research and discussion of Polish historiography's most important findings on the events of 1715–17, which previously tended to be shown (with few exceptions) in a negative light. It is only recently that we can observe a turn in the research on the importance of the one-day diet of 1717 as an essential caesura in the Commonwealth's history. The laws and the treasury and military solutions established at that session remained valid for at least fifty years, some of them as long as until the Great Sejm's reforms adopted at the end of the eighteenth century. The volume contributors adopted as the point-of-departure for their considerations the view whereby the importance of the reforms proposed by the so-called 'Silent' Sejm is attested not only by their long validity but also the role they played in the attempts at modernisation of the Polish-Lithuanian state made in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Albeit scholars have so far mostly diminished the importance of the 1717 resolutions and subjected them to critical evaluation, the authors of the book under discussion emphasise their groundbreaking significance for power relations and political culture, reminding that the package of reforms laboriously worked out came as a result of bargaining conducted under acute

political conflict, internal and external. Some of the authors (Tomasz Ciesielski, Adam Perłakowski) had in their earlier works revised the overly critical views of the previous historiographers, pointing to the positive effects of the 'Silent' Sejm. The first three chapters of the presented volume deal with the military struggles (Ciesielski writes about the campaign of the Tarnogród Confederation army, commanded by Chryzostom Gniazdowski, in Greater Poland) and financial matters (the condition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's finances and treasury in 1716, based on the files of Confederation's treasury committee, is discussed by Mindaugas Šapoka; financial and economic affairs related to the Przemysł Land in the Ruthenian Voivodeship in 1715–17, are covered by Adam Perłakowski, based on surviving municipal registers). The subsequent studies are basically editions of the records of relevance to further research on the last stage of the Tarnogród Confederation, i.e.: (i) a fragment of a diary by Antoni Sebastian Dembowski sheds light on the course of negotiations between commissioners of King Augustus II and the confederates, held in December 1716 (with an introduction and scholarly apparatus prepared by Michał Zwierzykowski); and (ii) correspondence between Prince Grigoriy Dolgorukiy, tsarist envoy, and Stanisław Ledóchowski, the Confederation Marshal (edited and with an introduction by Karol Kościelniak). The final chapter discusses the international dimension of the conflict known as the Great Northern War, which went on in East Central European territories in the first quarter of the eighteenth century: Sergey Efimov focuses on the actions of the Russian army in 1712–19, pursued as part of the European and imperial ambitions of Tsar Peter the Great. (MJO)

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Polak w carskim mundurze: wspomnienia Aleksandra Skolimowskiego (1817–1895) [A Pole in a Tsarist Uniform: The Memoirs of Aleksander Skolimowski, 1817–1895], ed. and with an introduction by Wiesław Caban and Jerzy Szczepański; transl. from Russian by Łukasz Guldon (with contributions from W. Caban and J. Szczepański), Kielce, 2015, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 239 pp., ill., list of ill., index of persons, index of geographical names

Another valuable testimony of the period concerned, these memoirs of a Polish nobleman and officer with the Russian army have come out as one of the effects of a multiyear research project on Polish deportees in Western Siberia, coordinated by Wiesław Caban and joined by Polish and Russian scholars. While the account was originally in Russian, one clearly sees that it had been actually written in Polish, given the characteristic traits of the language

(especially the syntax and phrases) used by the author and his rootedness in Polish intellectual culture.

The recollections open with a foreword that smoothly turns into a brief section discussing the lineage, childhood, upbringing and education of Aleksander. The largest passages deal with his military service (September 1838 to 24 June 1870). An account from the village of Mikhailovskoe and the one from Warsaw, dated 1874, stand out, along with observations regarding a short retirement period. Altogether, this vivid and stereotype-breaking account should be of interest to readers these days, when the presence of Russian culture and language in Polish public space are becoming re-mythologised. The careful linguistic and content-related edition and the editing standard in general are worth appreciating. (GK)

Dorota Malczewska-Pawelec and Tomasz Pawelec, *Karol Szajnocha. Codzienność, kobiety, historiografia* [Karol Szajnocha. Everyday Life, Women, Historiography], Katowice, 2019, Uniwersytet Śląski, 284 pp., personal index, English and German sum.

Karol Szajnocha (1818–68) was a Polish historian, journalist, and playwright, active in Lviv. In his youth, Szajnocha spent eighteen months in an Austrian prison because of his involvement in patriotic political activities. He struggled against financial problems all his life, combining research with journalism and teaching, and could not accept the professorial position he was offered in Cracow in 1862 because of declining health. He spent his last years completely blind, but still continued writing. His oeuvre is dominated by *Jadwiga and Jagiello*, a multivolume biography of the first Jagiellon king of Poland and his wife, which includes a broad social and political panorama of their time. Elegantly and passionately written, the book was perhaps the most popular Polish historical monograph of the nineteenth century. Hence his legacy and its impact on Polish historiography have been extensively studied by such scholars as Andrzej Wierzbicki, Violetta Julkowska, and Janusz Kosteci.

The present biography of Szajnocha is divided into three parts, presenting the protagonist as a man of his time, a representative of the nascent urban intelligentsia, and as a historian with a particularly powerful vision and temperament. The book profits from its authors' earlier studies on the intellectual milieu of Lviv, its first part being a portrait of the city in which Szajnocha lived and worked. The second part is quite original and discusses Szajnocha's involvements with women: sentimental, amorous, and intellectual; it constitutes a passage between the biographical and historiographical parts, as it also involves analysis of the role and images of the female protagonists in his writings, coloured with psychological investigations. The last part presents two main trends in his historical philosophy: his vision of the

so-called Jagiellonian idea in Polish history, i.e. the impact of the dynasty on the course of Polish history, and his undeniable and passionate anti-German sentiment, which permeates most of his writings. (AK)

INTERWAR PERIOD

Grzegorz Kucharczyk (ed.), *Pierwsza niemiecka okupacja: Królestwo Polskie i kresy wschodnie pod okupacją mocarstw centralnych 1914–1918* [The First German Occupation: the Kingdom of Poland and the Eastern Borderland Occupied by the Central Powers, 1914–1918], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Historii PAN, 872 pp., index of persons, German sum.

A collection of seven extensive studies by scholars associated, mainly, with scientific institutions of Poznań, dealing with the seizure and occupation of Polish territory by the Central Powers, especially the Second German Reich, during the First World War. The publication summarises its namesake research project pursued at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences.

Grzegorz Kucharczyk, the editor, writes on the German visions of the East, with an emphasis on the Polish lands. Damian Szymczak specifies the differences between the German and the Austro-Hungarian occupation. Rafał Łysoń discusses the German civil administration in the years 1915–18. Alina Kucharska analyses the attitudes of Poles employed by the German civil administration of the Kingdom of Poland. Damian Zieliński discusses the attitude of the German right-wing circles, the conservatives and the nationalists, to the 'Polish cause' during the Great War. Joanna Gierowska-Kałużur writes of the Polish society in North-Eastern Lands, being the *Ober-Ost's* borderland; Volha Volkava takes a look on the Belorussian lands during the First World War.

These mini-monographs (each extending to 100-odd pages) certainly provide a considerable resource of facts-based knowledge. The proposed research catalogue, rather conservative as it is, is not as impressive. For instance, the authors focus on colonial and predatory aspects of politics, virtually leaving aside the social and political effects of the German authority in the lands concerned. The conclusions referring to the 'first' occupation and the 'second' one, perpetrated by the Third Reich, do not seem entirely clear. An index of persons and a German-language version of the conclusion are attached. (GK)

Kręgi rewolucji. Rok 1917 w Rosji – konsekwencje wewnętrzne i międzynarodowe [Circles of a Revolution. The Year 1917 in Russia: Its Internal and International Consequences], ed. by Łukasz Adamski and Bartłomiej Gajos, Warszawa, 2019, Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 350 pp., index of persons, notes on authors

An outcome of an international conference organised by the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding (16–17 October 2017, Warsaw), the book contains a representative review of articles addressing the problems around which the discussion on the heritage of the Revolution of 1917 in the East Central European region presently revolves. The editors cleverly introduced this scope in the introductory essay, entitled ‘The Russian Revolution and its circles’, which moreover points to the present directions of research in international historiography. With its seventeen articles, the publication is basically composed of two parts, the first comprising studies showing general historiographic trends and problems; among them is Marek Kornat’s essay ‘A desolated century’. Did the Bolshevik revolution give a face to the twentieth century?’; the essay by British historian Stephen A. Smith, ‘The most recent historiography of violence in the Revolution and civil war in Russia in 1917–22’; Adam Bosiacki’s ‘From a utopia to a country of anomy. Russian Marxism and Russian revolutions as a totalitarian system project’; Sarah Badcock’s ‘Centres of political power: the 1917 Revolution in Russia in a regional aspect’; or, the text by Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, ‘Rebellion. Social conflicts in East Central Europe, 1917–20’, plus a whole array of studies addressing regional or subject-based problems, incl.: Petr Kaleta’s ‘Karaites, their political and social activities during the Revolution and Russian civil war’; Aliaksandr Smalianchuk’s ‘The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Belorussian national movement’; Jan Jacek Bruski’s ‘Great Britain and the 1917 Revolution in Ukraine’; Kari Alenius’s ‘Finexit: the revolution in Russia and Finland’s independence’; Frédéric Dessberg’s ‘French political circles in face of the consequences of the Russian Revolution in Eastern Europe (1917–21)’; Isabelle Davion’s ‘The Revolution in Russia and its influence on the Western powers’ attitude toward the Polish cause’; Lothar Höbelt’s ‘Austro-Hungary facing the Revolution in Russia’; Evgeny Sergeev ‘Great Britain and the Russian Revolution of 1917’; Boris Kolonitski and Maria Matskevitch’s ‘Unexploited memory: the 1917 Revolution anniversary in contemporary Russia’; Olga Malinova’s ‘An anniversary on-the-quiet: the practices of political commemoration of the centenary of Russia’s 1917 Revolution’; and, Bartłomiej Gajos’s ‘The (r)evolutionary memory in Tambov (1991–2017)’.

All these studies share a generally pessimistic vision of the effects and consequences of the events of the years 1917–21; virtually no positive effects

are recognised. In the reflection of a number of authors, a revolution in an authoritarian country like the Russian Empire must intrinsically have led to some form of ideological utopia and, outright, genocide; this perspective is shared by the scholars from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. As a counterbalance, a study on the great expectations related to the events in question might have been included. The revolutionary developments certainly transformed the region and the entire world. In a shorter perspective, they affected the region's political cultures as well. These heritages are hard to overestimate. The anthology's English edition is forthcoming with Routledge. (GK)

Metamorfozy społeczne [Social Metamorphoses], xxii: *Wokół nowej syntezy dziejów Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* [Around a New Synthetic Review of the History of the Second Republic of Poland], ed. by Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, Warszawa, 2019, IH PAN, 192 pp., notes on authors, index of persons

This collection of essays and sketches written in the context of the General Convention of Polish Historians in Lublin in September 2019 sums up, at least partly, a project on research into the Second Republic of Poland, entitled 'The society of the Second Republic: a new attempt at a synthetic review', pursued under Włodzimierz Mędrzecki and the late Janusz Żarnowski (d. 2019). The publication is composed of eleven cross-sectional essays penned by outstanding experts in the field (four of them associated with the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences [IH PAN]), who have synthetically compiled relevant aspects of present-day historiography dealing with the Second Republic. The authors and the subjects addressed include: Marek Kornat (Polish foreign policy), Marek Sioma (political history), Przemysław Olstowski (role of the state and administration), Janusz Mierzwa (so-called local Poland), Paweł Grata (social policies), Cecylia Leszczyńska (economy), Włodzimierz Mędrzecki (society), Tadeusz Stegner (religions and denominations), Roman Wysocki (ethnic/national issues), plus studies of Joanna Dufurat and Katarzyna Sierakowska on the place of women in public life and the role of gender in social structures.

In his introduction, Włodzimierz Mędrzecki finds that facts-based knowledge has seen an enormous increase, while there remains a need for synthesising studies (p. 15). Most of the authors are ready to accept that the current state of knowledge suffices to compile generalised studies; however, contributory articles still seem to prevail. Some authors have also found that Polish studies on the twenty-year interwar period go, as it were, alongside the historiographic currents practised elsewhere: a low internationalisation of Polish research is no less astonishing than the lack, or small range, of discussions with arguments proposed by foreign scholars. The condensed

collection under review, of use primarily to expert scholars and those interested in the Second Republic, proposes an interesting, though at times arguable, research catalogue and, to a smaller extent, attempts at crossing the bounds of legacy patterns (as in the essays by Olstowski or Sierakowska). (GK)

Grzegorz Kucharczyk, *Wersal 1919. Nowa kultura bezpieczeństwa dla Polski i Europy* [Versailles 1919. A New Security Culture for Poland and Europe], Poznań, 2019, Instytut Zachodni, 209 pp., bibliog., English sum.

The recent centenary of the Versailles Treaty, which de facto was a top-level international agreement confirming the bringing back of Poland to the political map of the world, has not produced many new studies on this significant event, despite the announcements. Apart from two innovative studies by Maciej Górny (*Wielka wojna profesorów. Nauki o człowieku (1912–1923)* and *Kreślarze ojczyzn. Geografowie i granice międzywojennej Europy*) regarding the intellectual substratum of the Paris Conference, and the popular-science series 'Nasza wojna' by Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, no other studies worthy of note can apparently be mentioned. Most of these works are multi-author studies concerning the Conference. The work by Grzegorz Kucharczyk, a historian associated for years with the Polish Academy of Sciences' Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, seems to address this shortage. The study is composed of two parts, the first (chapters 1 to 4) presenting the new visions of Europe's security after the international conflict. Part two, also divided into chapters (5–9), discusses the practical attempts at international solutions, with special focus on the propositions and solutions which were due to be submitted by the Polish delegation. While the first part presents a very subjective insight (the author believes, inter alia, that Pope Benedict XV's 1920 encyclical *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum* was the most realistic vision of building a lasting peace), the second shows detailed conceptions that cropped up during the Paris Conference. The readers interested in the history of Poland and the country's revival should be intrigued mostly by chapters 7, 8 and 9, dealing with the 'Polish cause'. The author presents a strongly traditional concept, which is prevalent in Polish historiography, perceiving Poland as a beneficiary of the Treaty, reinforcing the arguments targeted against a 'liberal international order' pushed at the conference by the U.S. President Thomas Woodrow Wilson. Perhaps unlike any other Polish author, Kucharczyk boasts extensive knowledge of the recent literature, his arguments regarding the perception of the 'Polish cause' is rather simplified – particularly as regards the Minority Treaties entered into because of the pressure from an international Jewish lobby, or the vivid anti-Polish resentments in the West at the time, without showing the actual reasons behind these attitudes. With all such

reservations, the full list of which is not the point here, the study is certainly worthy of attention and systematic reading as it synthetically (though in a pretty geared way) presents the entire recent literature and rearranges the list of relevant research queries. (GK)

Dziennik Stanisława Borkowskiego, konserwatywnego ziemianina z jędrzejowskiego Lipna (1919–1921) [The Diary of Stanisław Borkowski, a Conservative Landowner from Lipno, County of Jędrzejów (1919–1921)], ed. by Mariusz Nowak, Kielce, 2019, Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, LXXXI + 201 pp., bibliog., webography, index

This diary reports, though not primarily, on the socio-political events taking place in Poland in 1919–21, with a special focus on the south-western part of the voivodeship of Kielce. The author is basically interested in the business life in the Kielce area – specifically, the connections of landed gentry’s estates to the local economy. The socio-political aspects, including the broad context of Poland regaining its independence and the Polish-Bolshevik war, are middle-distance realities. The notes of this landowner of moderate means (Lipno was a 557 ha estate at the time) are an interesting contribution to analysis of landed gentry’s economy in its everyday aspect. The rhythm of life of a traditional rural community, viewed from the perspective of the landowner’s manor, comes to the forefront. The diary is full of detailed descriptions of the organisation of harvest or agro-technical procedures in the spring and autumn. It abounds with information depicting the relationships between the landowners and members of other social spheres, especially the local elite. The author renders quite well the dilemmas faced by the provincial conservative elites as the new state was emerging. The prevalent tone is one of disappointment rather than hopes or expectations; fierce ideological disputes over the vision of Polish statehood and the landed gentry’s ethos, being subjected (as the diarist sees it) to yet another ‘fire test’, are the dominant motifs. The diary is an important historic record from the early years of the interwar Poland; the present edition is meticulous, and the publication will certainly be of interest to scholars exploring the period. (GK)

Sebastian Paczos, *Jan Bobrzyński. Portret polityczny* [Jan Bobrzyński. A Political Portrait], Poznań, 2018, Instytut Historii UAM, 407 pp., bibliog., annexes, English sum.

A biographical study of one of the most illustrious figures in the conservative circles of the Second Republic of Poland, the leader of the so-called neo-conservatives, consists of seven chapters arranged by subject. The figure of the conservative politician is shown in the context of the nodal problems of Polish traditionalism in the interwar period. Chapter two situates Jan Bobrzyński against Poland's political map and shows the evolution of conservatism toward the 'state-oriented thought'. Chapter three presents the conservatives' attitudes towards the Sanacja camp's authority and rule; chapter four – the circle's socioeconomic views; chapters five and six – their political-system and constitutional conceptions, and chapter seven – the conservative visions of foreign policy. Chapter one can be seen as stemming directly from the brief introduction where a portrait of Bobrzyński is drawn, as a successor of the thought and legacy of his father Michał, the outstanding historian and politician living in Austrian Galicia. The study certainly excels with its meticulousness and reliability in reconstruction of the individuals and the period described. The author has made use of virtually the entire existing literature; his efficient navigation amid the historical records is noticeable. The proposed research catalogue is somewhat disillusioning due to its conventionality. The final section is a conclusion; a meticulously compiled bibliography and annexes (a satirical piece among them) are attached. (GK)

Henryka Ilgiewicz, *Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy Europy Wschodniej oraz Szkoła Nauk Politycznych w Wilnie (1930–1939)* [The Eastern Europe Scientific Research Institute and the School for Political Sciences in Wilno, 1930–1939], Warszawa, 2019, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 245 pp., bibliog., biographical notes, tables, ills, list of ills, index of names

A Polish-Lithuanian scholar living in Lithuania and working for the Vilnius-based Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, expert in late-nineteenth-century/early-twentieth-century Wilno and author of a number of monographs, Henryka Ilgiewicz has compiled a monograph on two important research institutions active in Wilno in the Second Republic of Poland. The origins of both institutions, which differed in their organic association with Sovietology (which was a fresh domain then), their worldview profile, organisation and staffing are described exhaustively. The study consists of three subject-based chapters. Analysed are all the publications dedicated to both institutions;

The Eastern Europe Scientific Research Institute, affiliated to the Stefan Batory University, indisputably deserves greater attention, owing to its autonomous character. The list of research questions and the dispute with Poland's eastern neighbour, which to some extent determined Polish political history, seems overly modest in certain aspects. Nonetheless, this mostly informative study is a quite reliable introduction to the discussion on the heritage of both institutions and the personal histories of the founders and other leading individuals; these issues have been introduced in Polish historiography, in a grand style, by Marek Kornat (his major work in this respect being *Polska szkoła sowietologiczna 1930–1939* [Kraków, 2003]). Extensive biographical notes of persons associated with both institutions, tables specifying their cast of members and providing details on the lectures and public events, and a systematic bibliography are all very helpful to scholars; a list of illustrations, a conclusion (in Polish in Lithuanian) and an index of personal names are also attached. (GK)

Edyta Majcher-Ociesa, *Interwencjonizm państwowy w przemyśle Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1930–1939* [State Interventionism in the Industry of the Second Republic of Poland (1930–1939)], Kielce, 2019, Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 439 pp., tables, list of tables, bibliog., index of persons, English sum.

The study, written at the Institute of History of the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce (the author's long-standing employer), is an elaboration, the first so conscientious one in years, on the important problem in the foreign policy of the Second Republic of Poland. The book is composed of three extensive chapters arranged by chronology and subject, describing aspects of interventionist policies in the history of interwar Poland. Chapter 1 presents the issue in the early 1920s, the time when the role of liberalism in the country's policy was basically hegemonic. The author argues, among other things, that political crises such as the coup of May 1926 did not exert an essential impact on the thought trends. Chapter 2 describes developments at the climax of the Great Economic Crisis of 1929–35, and chapter 3 focuses on the latter half of the 1930s, after Józef Piłsudski's death, discussing in detail a number of then newly-established institutions, such as the Committee for Investigation of Interventionism in the Industrial Area. All the three sections place an emphasis on regulation of market prices, cartelisation and raw-material policy, interventionist instruments in the fields of investment projects, lending, taxation, and more. Central to the argumentation is, apparently, the conclusion that in spite of continuous increase of interventionism, a 'liberal thought' prevailed in economy as well as among

the elites and the political establishment; hence, the scale of interventionism “was conditioned by the state’s financial potential and by the flow of information and means of enforcement” (p. 416). The study is readable, the author is excellently versed in the literature (records stored at several Polish archives, including several dozen archival fonds, have been meticulously reviewed) and is capable of presenting in a compelling manner the behind-the-scenes of technically tough problems. The study can be recommended to economic and social historians, and will be of use to those less knowledgeable in macro-economy. (GK)

Joanna Ostrowska and Kamila Uzarczyk, *„Mój Führerze!” Ofiary przymusowej sterylizacji na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1934–44* [‘Mein Führer!’ Victims of Forced Sterilisation in Lower Silesia in 1934–44], Warszawa, 2019, Ośrodek Wydawniczy KARTA (digital ed. only), 260 pp., photographs; series: Poza seriami

The book includes a dozen of mini-biographies of victims of forced sterilisation from the area of the Regency of Breslau. This special place in the map of the Third Reich was part of so-called Prussia and was subjected to Nazification at a very early stage. The basic criterion behind the selection of the stories told in this book was the extant epistolary documentation discovered and collected by two experienced authors – Joanna Ostrowska, a historian exploring the fates of women in the Third Reich, and Kamila Uzarczyk, a eugenics researcher.

The final instance of appeal in the procedure of forced sterilisation was complaint to the leader of the Third Reich, and this path was often used by those concerned. The family and other relatives of those ‘singled out’, and sometimes even the victims-to-be, wrote letters begging for grace to the Chancellery of the Reich. These incomplete and strongly focused testimonies are today often the only surviving records of accounts of those persecuted. The ‘Act on protection against hereditarily malignant issue’, adopted six months after the Nazis came to power, could epitomise the new racial order. As is otherwise known, the Third Reich’s system was not as ‘innovative’ as it claimed to be; in fact, it comprised a number of elements of the old order. Those standing on the guard of the extended system of persecution and exclusion were, as the authors demonstrate, ordinary medical doctors and neighbours; so, not only the ideological frenzy but, primarily, the common conformism of the majority was responsible. Identification and stigmatisation were no less essential for the system than lack of interest. This book restores the memory and dignity to those who were first thrown into the machinery of mass discrimination that often led to genocidal practices. The documents and testimonies show how the condemned and their families defended themselves

against the verdict and how those around them responded. This moving and excellently written study should certainly be read not only by those interested in the specific phenomenon of the Third Reich. (GK)

Piotr M. Majewski, *Kiedy wybuchnie wojna? 1938. Studium kryzysu* [When Will the War Break Out? 1938: A Study of the Crisis], Warszawa, 2019, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 458 pp., bibliog., ill., index; series: Seria historyczna, 36

Employed at the University of Warsaw, Piotr Maciej Majewski is a scholar specialising in the Polish-Czech relations, and author of an excellent book on the development of nationalism in the Sudeten Germans community between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century. The book under review is a sort of historical reportage, rather unappreciated as it is by the Polish mainstream historiography. While it deals with an already well-researched subject, the author has demonstrated that the 1938 events in Europe can be recounted anew, in an interesting manner.

For Czechs and Slovaks, 'Munich 1938' is a traumatic fact (in the true sense of the word) and an unceasingly painful epitome of the Western countries' perfidiousness. Czechoslovakia, a democratically ruled country that was top-of-the-class in several domains and a model for the whole Central Europe to follow, lost in the diplomatic struggle to the Third Reich in 1938. Encouraged by its Western allies – United Kingdom and France, abandoned by its Eastern supporter – the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia had finally to meet Adolf Hitler's demands. It consequently ceded the borderland territories (Sudetenland), inhabited by chauvinistically inclined Germans, to the Reich.

The book in question is composed of a series of short chapters, or episodes, forming a panorama of the incoming political crisis. In a series of close-ups, we can follow the process of making decisions by Czechoslovakia's politicians, and follow the German-British diplomatic meetings; we learn the details of the secret plans of high-ranking officers of the German and Czechoslovak General Staffs, and even the advances of the intelligence services of the parties involved. Majewski offers us vivid portraits of the leading politicians, such as President Edvard Beneš, Prime Ministers Neville Chamberlain, Edouard Daladier, and others – at times taking into account the faces and gestures they made, as recorded by the witnesses at breakthrough moments. The author shows that politics is a work of people, and an individual politician's features of character can be decisive for a failure or success of entire states. The unmatched style of this historian is worthy of note: when evoking an aphorism or proverb, he is able to render the importance and significance of a given event in a literary fashion. On Poland's disastrous claims against Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1938, he comments: "The sabre-rattling

finally became so noisy that it drowned out the voices of common sense". The book was honoured with the second-degree Klio award in 2019. (BK)

Marek Rodzik, *Polska a Wielka Brytania: od kryzysu sudeckiego do 15 marca 1939 roku* [Poland and Great Britain: From the Sudeten Crisis to 15 March 1939], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 175 pp., bibliog., index of persons, list of acronyms/abbreviations, English sum.; series: Monografie, 141

The book is a monograph of a short period, but pregnant with events, in interwar Polish-British relations. Its three chronological/subject-related sections describe the consecutive stages of Britain's evolving attitude toward the Second Republic in the tense period between autumn 1938 and March 1939. Chapter one draws the policies of Arthur Neville Chamberlain's Cabinet with respect to the Third Reich; chapter two analyses the place of Britain and British Empire in the political imagination of Minister Józef Beck and his closest associates of the 'Wierzbowa' circle (Jan Szembek and Ambassador Edward Raczyński, first of all); lastly, chapter three shows British post-Munich policy in the opinion of the Polish diplomatic service. The author painstakingly measures and separates the considerations of economic policy and concerns about the Empire's integrity (in the context of, inter alia, the pressure from the Dominions in internal British relations) from the post-First World War trauma (the public opinion's pressure upon the policies pursued by Britain, among other things). Rodzik repeats the opinion, well-grounded in the literature that London sought to win a peace rather than a war. However, he polemicizes against the image of Chamberlain as a 'defenceless man with an umbrella', committed to the idea of coming to a peaceful agreement with the Germans, regardless of the price. The author stresses the importance of the episodes which affected the course of Polish-British relations: the role of the Zaolzie affair in the suspension of the contacts with the British politicians, or Ambassador Raczyński's utterly wrong judgment that the English wanted to refocus Germany's expansion on Poland first, and afterwards on the Soviet Union, etc. The discussion on the division of the British political imagination's content into 'vital' and 'non-vital' zones (following Anna Maria Cienciala's concept) and around the alleged underestimation of the importance of East Central Europe countries is interesting. The study is based on reliable sources, incl. the documentation of Poland's Embassies in Berlin, London and Rome, the Hoover Institute, the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, the National Archives in London. The book was honoured with the second-degree award in the Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski's Contest for the Best Historical Debut. (GK)

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* [Forced Collaboration, or Treason? Around the Cases of Collaborating Jews in Nazi-Occupied Cracow], Kraków, 2019, Universitas, 448 pp., with a foreword by Isaac Wolhendler (transl. Dariusz Sajdera), ills, conclusion, annexe (4 documents), bibliog., list of acronyms/abbreviations, list of photographs, index of names, English sum.

The author, historian and Jewish studies scholar, has embarked on a difficult subject, fraught with controversies. Of the three chapters, the first portrays the Jewish community in the late years of the Second Republic of Poland, with a focus on its situation between 1939 and 1941 and after the Holocaust was launched in the area of Cracow (1942–5). Chapter 2 describes the institutionalised forms of collaboration with the Third Reich – incl. the local *Judenrat* and Jewish police, the activities of the Jewish Self-Help in 1940–2 and institutions such as the Jüdische Unterstützungsstelle für das Generalgouvernement (1942–5), with its major figure Michał Weichert. Chapter 3 analyses the conditions of agency-based and individual collaboration (including the role of the German intelligence, with special focus on Cracow), the position of the Reich's security apparatus, the Jewish Affairs Section/Section IV-n KdS Cracow, presents portraits of the main local Gestapo agents and describes the so-called Diamant network (which, as the author argues, was a fabrication of the Cracow conspirers, and never existed in reality).

As Jarkowska-Natkaniec convincingly argues, the scale of collaboration with the Germans cannot be precisely established. The post-war trials of collaborators are not reliable in this respect as those who evidently abused their power in ghettos and concentration camps were generally called to account. A larger reliability can be associated with the lists of collaborators compiled by the Polish underground. It cannot be responsibly established whether there was an active network of Gestapo agents; the author's opinion on the *Judenrat* is far from unambiguous (Dawid Gutter, for example, is shown as a negative figure). Most of the vicious collaborators were killed after the liquidation of the Płaszów camp in December 1943.

The study meticulously and innovatively analyses the concepts of treason and collaboration during the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust. It has been based on conscientious analysis of documents of the so-called social courts, conspiratorial files (Home Army and Government Delegation for Poland, Institute of National Remembrance – branches of Cracow and Rzeszów), Israeli archives (primarily, the Ghetto Fighters' Museum and Yad Vashem), the USHMM in Washington, D.C., the USC Shoah Foundation, and the

archives of Ludwigsburg. The basic research material was the documentation of the Social Courts affiliated to the Central Committee of Polish Jews (153 files). (GK)

Dziennik Janki Goldstein [The Diary of Janka Goldstein], with an introduction by Katarzyna Zimmerer, foreword and conclusion by Ewa Czekaj, Kraków, 2019, Żydowskie Muzeum Galicja, 349 pp., index of persons, ill.

Written in the years 1940–42, and preserved afterwards by Andrzej and Alicja Łach, this record of the life of a young Jewish woman living in Cracow under the German occupation deserves attention for several reasons – primarily, as a testimony of a young person exposed to the pressure of brutal history. In this diary, however, History (with a capital ‘H’) is not at the forefront. Rather than a chronicle of the occupied city, it is an intimate diary, hidden even from Janka’s closest relatives, and containing numerous understatement, broken-off stories, not-full-comprehensible fragments. Janka records everyday events, ordinary and extraordinary ones, and extensively reports on her relationships with family members, friends and acquaintances. Above all, though, it is a record of the love life of a young girl who happened to live on the eve and during the Holocaust. Hence, apparently, there is no room for a broader breath or distance, and there is a throng of casual names and occurrences, not always recounted coherently or logically by this sensitive individual. The social and political reality is rarely commented on; frequent are, for a change, the records of sentiments, daydreams and longings, and there is a great platonic love looming at the background. For the reader who knows all too well what is about to happen, this egocentrism is often frustrating, the escape from the realities incomprehensible. But if one reads this record as a survival strategy, the testimony gains a new meaning. Janka kept her notes from mid-June 1940; they stop short on 17 August 1942. Two months later, on 29 October 1942, the inhabitants of the Cracow ghetto were deported to the extermination camp in Bełżec. Whether the young diarist survived the war is not known. The edition is richly illustrated, based on the resources of the National Archives in Cracow, Ewa Czekaj’s private archive, the Jewish Historical Institute, and the National Library of Israel. (GK)

Gustaw Herling-Grudziński and Jerzy Giedroyc, *Korespondencja* [Correspondence], i: 1944–1966; ed. by Włodzimierz Bolecki (chief editor), Sylwia Błażejczyk-Mucha, Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk, Aleksandra Siwek, Violetta Wejs-Milewska, Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec, Mirosław Wójcik, and Marek Żebrowski, Kraków, 2019, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 900 pp., index, reproductions, ills; series: *Dzieła zebrane*. Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, 12

The book is volume one of an edition of the extensive correspondence exchanged between the two illustrious personages of Polish political emigration, the actual initiators of the Paris-based monthly journal *Kultura*. The prospective final date is 1996, the year Herling left the journal's editorial circle due to a political conflict with Giedroyc. The volume-one letters were written in 1944–66; from 1957 on, the exchange turns into a chronicle of a closer acquaintance between the two gentlemen – abounding in facts and penetrative portraits of persons and descriptions of events (such as publications of important texts by *Kultura* and books issued under the journal's aegis), along with controversial opinions regarding the Polish émigré circles and a number of developments taking place in Poland and elsewhere – especially, the numerous anticommunist initiatives (among them, the Culture Freedom Congress in Berlin) attended by Giedroyc and (co-)sponsored by *Kultura*. The edition contains notes, commentaries and glosses to the texts, an extensive editorial note by Włodzimierz Bolecki, an essay on Jerzy Giedroyc's activities in the period concerned by Marek Żebrowski, and Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk's essay 'The epistolary republic around the Paris *Kultura*', reproductions of selected letters and postcards, and an index of names. (GK)

Katarzyna Person, *Dipisi: Żydzi polscy w amerykańskiej i brytyjskiej strefach okupacyjnych Niemiec, 1945–1948* [DPs: Polish Jews in the U.S. and British Occupation Zones of Germany, 1945–1948], Warszawa, 2019, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 382 pp., annexes, ills, list of ills, list of acronyms/abbreviations, index of persons, bibliog.

This study, another one by a young-generation scholar associated with the Jewish Historical Institute, has eleven chapters preceded by a historiographical introduction and proposition of a research catalogue. A skilful combination of description and analysis of individual cases, breaking down into pieces of the social mechanisms and processes to which the specific social group defined in the title yielded, rank among the study's main strong points. The structure is chronological and subject-based, narrating – in line with

the order of events – the history of Polish Jews who after the Second World War found themselves in occupied Germany, primarily in the camps for the ‘Displaced Persons’ or DPs, in the British and American occupation zones. The author shows how a social group of Jewish DPs was getting formed, describes the institutional conditions of the DPs’ stay, draws an image of post-war Germany, the so-called Jewish space in Germany, the memory and forms of commemoration of the Holocaust, the Jewish cultural life in Yiddish. The problem of the new generation and the so-called *Meschiaskinder* has been identified, along with the relations between the Poles and the Jews in occupied Germany, with special focus on anti-Semitism. The argument is disciplined and precise, high methodological awareness stands out; the author’s knowledge of the subject-matter is accompanied by her moving freely around the literature and recent historiography. Sources from several countries have been used, incl. the AJDC Archives in New York City, Ghetto Fighters’ House Archive and the Yad Vashem in Israel, and German archives; press and published sources have been used extensively. It is an important study in the social history of the Polish Jews’ community and the post-war Jewish diaspora in the world. The publication is modest but neat. (GK)

Grzegorz Piątek, *Najlepsze miasto świata. Warszawa w odbudowie 1944–1949* [The World’s Best City. Warsaw under Reconstruction, 1944–1949], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo WAB, 512 pp., photographs, ill., index of persons

Composed of twenty-three chapters grouped into three parts, the book describes the history of redevelopment of Warsaw after the Second World War destruction, from the standpoint of experts – architects, urban planners and preservationists, as well as politicians. The chronology spans between two dates: the moment the right-bank district of Warsaw, called Praga, was liberated (17 January 1945) and the completion of the activities of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office (Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy [BOS]; originally set up, in February 1945, as the Office for the Organisation of the Reconstruction of Warsaw). The final date is the moment when socialist realism became the compulsory style, including in architecture. In spite of its popular character, the study is furnished with scholarly apparatus. The author has done a thorough source and bibliographical query. The narration is enriched with numerous illustrations and photographs, making the whole thing extremely interesting. The author’s findings regarding the post-war plans and intentions of the individuals gathered around the Office focus on the activities of the few men made central to the story. Marian Spychalski, Józef Sigalin, Jan Zachwatowicz, and Piotr Biegański decisively influenced BOS’ operations with their activities. By focusing on those few, Piątek has shown the political

diversity within the milieu under analysis, thus trying to overturn one of the myths about BOS as a communist 'outhouse'. In parallel, he tries to portray this group of people as genuine enthusiasts and fantasists who, despite the piling-up problems, endeavoured to implement their visions of a modern city, some of which they created when the war was still on, in line with the then-current trends in architecture and town planning. The chief driving assumptions behind the Office's activity included the city wider open toward its river, the Vistula; construction of modern edifices to house state institutions and representative buildings; and, above all, improvement of residential conditions. The ideas that came true were the W-Z Route, the Muranów residential neighbourhood, the ministerial quarter in the downtown area (Krucza St. and its vicinity), the Sejm complex, and the representative routes of Krakowskie Przedmieście and Nowy Świat Sts. However, the list of never-fulfilled plans has remained much longer. (HW)

Monika Wiśniewska, *Przedszkola Polski „ludowej”. Ideologizacja instytucji 1944–1965* [Kindergartens in the 'People's' Poland. The Ideologisation of Preschool Institutions, 1944–1965], Warszawa, 2019, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 551 pp., index of persons, list of acronyms/abbreviations, photographs, ill., tables

The author, a historian employed with the Institute for the History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences, has addressed a highly interesting fragment of the history of children's upbringing and education through kindergartens. The youngest citizens of the People's Republic of Poland were subjected to active indoctrination in their earliest contact with the education system, which was pursued in line with the binding communist ideology. The book describes, in five chapters, the functioning of kindergartens not only in the institutional aspect but also in a broad socio-political context. The considerations focus on the 'ideologisation' of the preschool education system, which spanned over more than twenty years. 'Ideologisation' is defined as subjecting the kindergartens to the communist ideology: rather than a 'pure' Marxism-Leninism, its official interpretation prevailed, which was produced by the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. The date at which the considerations come to an end is 1965 – the year in which several legal acts appeared which turned out to be momentous with respect to preschool education. Standing out among them is the Ordinance of the Minister of Education which integrated the relevant international legal solutions; what it means is that non-state-owned early education units and institutions were

allowed to operate, at least theoretically. This, *de facto*, did not change the state's monopoly position in this respect, though. The parents of preschoolers strongly opposed the ideologisation, submitting their protests at multiple levels, the Ministry of Education included. A particularly high number of such actions were recorded among the rural people. Wiśniewska dwells at length on (female) nursery school teachers. After the Second World War, such teachers were preferably recruited from the worker and peasant circles. The author points to the enormous dissonance between the official sphere (reports, circumstantial actions) and ordinary everyday realities, with kindergartens wrestling with shortages and inconveniences typical of post-war communist Poland. (HW)

Miotła Stalina. Polska północno-wschodnia i jej pogranicze w czasie obławy augustowskiej w 1945 roku [Stalin's Broom. North-eastern Poland and its Borderland during the 1945 Augustów Roundup], ed. by Łukasz Adamski, Grzegorz Hryciuk, and Grzegorz Motyka, Warszawa, 2019, Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 336 pp., index of persons

This collection of records from Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian archives, regarding the events of July 1945, prepared by three outstanding historians, is preceded by an introduction of several dozen pages, summarising the current state of research into the action of Polish-Soviet security forces targeted against the independence-oriented underground organisations in north-eastern Poland. The wide-ranging action, colloquially referred to as the 'Augustów Roundup' [*obława augustowska*], in the course of which several thousand inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian borderland areas were detained and interrogated, led to the killing of more than a thousand of Poles and Lithuanians suspected of actions aimed against the communist authorities. The corpses of the Polish victims of the action, sometimes called a 'lesser Katyn Massacre', have not been found to date. The authors of this selection of documents analyse various hypotheses of the reasons behind such an extensive action taken by the communist authorities. In their opinion, explaining the action taken by the joint Soviet and Polish forces in terms of protecting Stalin and his retinue on their way to the conference in Potsdam, is erroneous. Instead, the roundup was, apparently, similar to the analogous actions aimed at that same time against the independence-seeking underground forces carried out in eastern Poland as well as in Ukraine, Byelorussia, or Lithuania. The probable incentive was the Kremlin's concern that in case of a possible failure of securing the Soviet Union's interests in Potsdam, a series of armed anti-communist actions could possibly take place, resulting in the loss of control over these areas. However, the authors point to the unique scale of the events concerned.

At least six hundred people executed by firing squads on the Polish side places the Augustów Roundup' among the severest crimes perpetrated after the Second World War came to an end. Some of the several dozen documents shown in this collection have already been published elsewhere, but a definite majority now see the light of day for the first time. These documents very precisely show the preparations and the course of the actions targeted at the Polish-Lithuanian underground fighting for independence, and set the July 1945 events in a broader political and social context. (HW)

Grzegorz Mnich, *Stalinowska codzienność. Łódź w latach 1949–1956* [Stalinism Daily. Łódź in 1949 to 1956], Łódź, 2019, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 236 pp., photographs, index of persons; series: Łódź w PRL. PRL w Łodzi, 2

The book is volume two in the popular-science series 'Łódź w PRL. PRL w Łodzi'. The author, a historian of the local press and journalistic milieu, describes the daily realities of Łódź in the Stalinist period, in six subject-based chapters, covering the following: activities of the apparatus of repression; journalists, as a pretext for a story of how the official propaganda functioned in the city; the censorship; the workers; the social and infrastructural facilities of Łódź; and, the events of the breakthrough year 1956. The image of the city in the Stalinist period drawn by the author is rather dark, and the repression apparatus heavily contributed to it. The inhabitants of Łódź had to take into account severe verdicts that could be passed for any manifestation of opposition against the new authority, including the capital punishment, which was imposed two hundred times in those very years. The city which shortly after the war was almost promoted as the new capital of Poland, had to face a devaluation of its position in the years that followed. In spite of lavish announcements (chapter 'Great visions, small achievements'), Łódź received in the later period no great infrastructural investments with a potentially positive impact on the life of local workers (of either sex). It was them, the central characters of the chapter 'Go on strike, or go to work?', employees of textile industry, the major local industrial sector, that very loudly signalled their dissatisfaction with the situation in the city. The strikes caused by provision, residential, and low-income problems became an important element of the first years of the city's Stalinist everyday reality. Owing to his interests, the author separately deals with the journalists, describing their milieu's attitudes toward the communist authority, their financial standing, and their network of dependencies. The considerations on the Łódź press gave a pretext for describing the activities of the propaganda apparatus which in the worker-dominated city had a really important part to play. (HW)

Stefan Korboński, *Listy amerykańskie 1953–1983* [American Letters, 1953–1983], ed. by Roman W. Rybicki and Bartosz Nowożycki, Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 367 pp., index of persons; series: Z Archiwum Emigracji, 6

The edition is a selection of letters of the last Government Delegate for Poland, who after the Second World War was an emigration and international activist (with, *inter alia*, the Assembly of Captive European Nations). Stefan Korboński is known to the readers primarily for his source-historical studies, on the Polish Underground State and other. The collection in question should certainly be read by experts in Polish twentieth-century political emigration; it is an important contribution to the history of Polish emigration, Polish anticommunism and the position of the ‘irreconcilable’ individuals. It will also be of interest to those interested in the history of defence of ‘reputation of Polishness’. Worthy of note are the dozen-odd letters to American newspapers pointing to the fact that no help was offered by the U.S. to European Jews during the Holocaust. Some of the 148 letters were previously published, primarily in the press. Most of them were once sent to American opinion-making daily papers and journals, mainly on the occasion of international events but also in relation to Polish internal events with international resonance. A foreword by Wojciech Roszkowski portrays the author and describes in detail his post-war years; an essay by Rybicki discusses Korboński’s output related to America. An editorial note is added. The letters are conscientiously edited. (GK)

Bartłomiej Noszczak, *Antymilenium. Konflikt państwa z Kościołem na tle obchodów tysiąclecia chrztu Polski (1956–1966/1967)* [Anti-Millennium: The State’s Conflict with the Church in the Context of Celebrations of the Thousandth Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland, 1956–1966/1967], Warszawa, 2020, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 504 pp., index; series: Monografie, 150

The book mainly explores the events occurring between the State and the Catholic Church around the celebrations of the thousandth anniversary of Poland as a state and the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland. As the author demonstrates, the dispute between the two actors involved multiple issues and was doubtlessly envenomed by the state’s ‘two number-ones’ – Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland. The Millennium celebration, we are reminded, would not have been possible

if not for the political ‘thaw’ of October 1956, which effectively enabled the Catholic Church to act more freely in a number of respects. Of the eight chapters of which the narrative is composed, the first six cover the events preceding the main celebrations, the latter being discussed in chapter 7. The Church’s and State’s preparations for the Millennium are covered separately (in chaps. 3 and 4, respectively). The *Pastoral Letter of the Polish Bishops to their German Brothers* (also known as the *Letter of Reconciliation*) is dealt with quite at length (chap. 6). In Noszczak’s opinion, it brought about a *casus belli* that caused a massed attack of government agencies at the Church. The final part summarises the 1966–67 events. This enables us to follow the preparations of both parties to the dispute to the celebration proper. The author notes that the public authorities treated the Church’s celebration as a challenge in the struggle for the ‘rule of people’s hearts and minds’ and endeavoured to make shallow, at any expense, the spiritual significance, which was extremely important for a majority of the society. A ‘neutralisation’ was meant to consist in organising state-wide ‘public service’ actions or solemn celebrations of state anniversaries, which legitimised the communist authority, which had been tattered after the October 1956 upheaval. Although after the celebrations both parties announced their success, the author points to the Church as the winning party, while remarking that it was a “jubilee of missed opportunities” that turned into a “conflict of mutual prejudices”. (HW)

Rafał Łatka, *Episkopat Polski wobec stosunków Państwo-Kościół i rzeczywistości społeczno-politycznej PRL 1970–1989* [The Episcopate of Poland’s Position in Respect of the State-Church Relations and Socio-Political Realities of Communist Poland, 1970–1989], Warszawa, 2019, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 846 pp., list of acronyms/abbreviations, index of persons; series: *Biskupi w Realiach Komunistycznej Władzy*

Rafał Łatka, an expert in the history of the Catholic Church in post-war communist Poland, has embarked on an extremely difficult task, which is a task of importance from the standpoint of Polish historiography. His new, pretty extensive book comprehensively focuses on the attitude of the Episcopate of Poland towards the state authorities and the socio-political realities of the last two decades of the People’s Republic of Poland. Characteristic of this period was, on the one hand, a definite though short-lived improvement in Polish society’s quality of life and, on the other, a severe economic crisis, mass protests, and appearance of a force that challenged the team in power. The nine chapters, arranged by chronology and problems under discussion,

deal with the most important events of the years 1970 to 1989. Let us note that in his effort to introduce the reader into the complex institutional structure of the Church, the author uses the first chapter to explain the rules of functioning of the Episcopate's major internal institutions. The subsequent sections basically deal with the State-Church relations in the first years of Edward Gierek's rule as Poland's communist leader, the contacts between Poland and the Vatican, the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope, or the relations with the Solidarity trade union and movement. The turning points in the narrative proposed by Łatka are marked by the imposition of the martial law in December 1981 and the political transformation of 1989. The significance of Pope John Paul II should be kept in mind all throughout, as the author aptly remarks. The book is based on a broad array of sources encompassing archival materials of public institutions and, above all, Church records and accounts. It is worth noting that the time when Edward Gierek and his successors were in power brought about virtually no change for the better; what is more, the policy took an even sharper turn then, as attested by certain actions taken by the government agencies. Łatka is repeatedly critical with respect to members of the Episcopate, as he observes a somewhat conservative attitude towards the state authorities, which finally resulted in their reluctance with respect to the idea to 'square the accounts' after the year 1989. The evolution of the attitudes of the Church's major figures towards the political dissidents also looks interesting: their initial distancing from the Solidarity turned, with time, into serious involvement in the Round Table negotiations and the parliamentary election of June 1989. Altogether, author believes that the Catholic Church played a crucial role in the political transition in Poland. (HW)