

PRO MEMORIA

Acta Poloniae Historica
127, 2023
PL ISSN 0001-6829

STANISŁAW SALMONOWICZ (9 NOVEMBER 1931 – 24 MAY 2022)

Professor Stanisław Salmonowicz, Polish lawyer and historian and an outstanding scholar of the history of law, constitutional systems, education, science, culture, and early modern and modern history, died on 24 May 2022. For many years, he was an academic teacher at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and head of the Section for the History of Pomerania and the Baltic Countries at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, based in Toruń. He left behind a vast body of work that comprises 1,100 academic papers and several hundred popular articles; he published sixty books.

The monumental and rich oeuvre of Professor Salmonowicz is well-known in Poland and abroad. A bibliography of his works appeared in two parts: the first, covering the years 1953–2000, in *Historia Integra. Księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana Prof. Stanisławowi Salmonowiczowi w siedemdziesięciolecie urodzin* [*Historia Integra. In Honour of Prof. Stanisław Salmonowicz on the Seventieth Anniversary of His Birth*, Toruń, 2001]; the second, covering the period between 2000/2001 and 2021, in the academic journal *Zapiski Historyczne*.¹ The latter recently published a Polish-language article entitled ‘On the phenomenon of the scholarly contributions of Professor Stanisław Salmonowicz’.² Its authors, Jerzy Dygdała and Danuta Janicka, presented the academic works of Stanisław

¹ Henryka Duczkowska-Moraczewska, *Publikacje Prof. S. Salmonowicza*, in Jerzy Dygdała, Grzegorz Górski, Danuta Janicka and Ryszard Łaszewski (eds), *Historia Integra. Księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana Prof. Stanisławowi Salmonowiczowi w siedemdziesięciolecie urodzin* (Toruń, 2001), 27–82; Stanisław Salmonowicz, Maciej J. Mazurkiewicz, and Adam Biedrzycki (eds), ‘Bibliografia publikacji Stanisława Salmonowicza za lata 2001–2021’, *Zapiski Historyczne*, lxxxvi, 3 (2021), 35–60.

² Jerzy Dygdała and Danuta Janicka, ‘O fenomenie dorobku naukowego Profesora Stanisława Salmonowicza’, *Zapiski Historyczne* lxxxvi, 3 (2021), 5–33, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15762/ZH.2021.21> [Accessed: 7 March 2023].

Salmonowicz and clearly showcased its character features: a rare thematic versatility and temporal breadth extending from the sixteenth century to the present day.

Stanisław Salmonowicz was born on 9 November 1931 in Brest-on-the-Bug to a family of former landowners. The place of his birth was, in fact, fortuitous since his father Antoni was a civil servant in interwar Poland and held mayoral offices in cities in the Eastern Borderlands. Antoni Salmonowicz died prematurely, orphaning two sons. His widow, Stefania née Muzyczka, moved to Wilno/Vilnius with the children. During the Second World War, the family moved to Warsaw with the help of Stefania's brother, Ludwik Muzyczka, a Home Army staff member. At the war's end, another relocation took place – this time to Cracow, where Stanisław's grandparents lived. It was in Cracow that Stanisław Salmonowicz obtained his high school diploma and graduated from the Faculty of Law at the Jagiellonian University. His master's thesis dealt with the history of France, specifically the judiciary, during the revolutionary period.

Upon graduation, Stanisław Salmonowicz completed his judicial apprenticeship in Cracow and then served as a judge in the civil divisions of the courts of Cracow and the surrounding cities. In 1956, he was admitted as a doctoral student at the University of Warsaw, under the eminent legal historian Karol Koranyi (1897–1964). His doctoral thesis, published as *Krystian Bogumił Steiner (1746–1814), toruński prawnik i historyk. Studium z dziejów nauki prawa doby Oświecenia w Polsce* [Krystian Bogumił Steiner (1746–1814), Toruń Lawyer and Historian. A Study in the History of Legal Science during the Enlightenment in Poland] (Toruń, 1962), discussed the history of law in the Age of Enlightenment. After earning his doctorate in law, he began academic work in the Department of the World History of State and Law at the Jagiellonian University under Professor Michał Patkaniowski (1907–72). He continued his research on the Age of Enlightenment and the codification movement in European criminal law. In 1960–1, he pursued postgraduate studies at the European University Centre in Nancy, graduating with honours.

In 1966, Stanisław Salmonowicz received his habilitation from the Jagiellonian University. His habilitation thesis was entitled *Prawo karne oświeconego absolutyzmu. Z dziejów kodyfikacji karnych przełomu XVIII/XIX w.* [Criminal Law under Enlightened Absolutism: From the History of Criminal Codification at the Turn of the Nineteenth

Century]. It discussed the criminal law of the Age of Enlightenment, particularly the penal codes of the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That same year, he made a decision that would affect the rest of his long life – he moved from Cracow to Toruń. At the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, he took over the Department of the History of the Polish State and Law at the Faculty of Law and Administration. It was in Toruń that he found his lifelong companion – Maria (née Michnicka), then a judge. The marriage lasted more than fifty years until her death in 2021.

Stanisław Salmonowicz's promising academic career was abruptly and brutally interrupted by the Communist Security Service. After four years of work as a scholar, teacher, and organiser, Stanisław Salmonowicz was arrested on charges of acting against the political interests of the People's Republic of Poland. He spent four months in detention. After his release, he was immediately dismissed from his job at Nicolaus Copernicus University. For many months, he remained financially dependent on his wife. In 1972, he finally found employment at a regional institution of the Polish Academy of Sciences – the Section for the History of Pomerania and the Baltic Countries in Toruń. This is where he developed new lines of scientific research on the history of Gdańsk Pomerania: the history of the city of Toruń, Royal Prussia, Ducal Prussia, West Prussia, and East Prussia. He studied the evolution of the constitutional system, science, education, and culture broadly understood within these territories. The research eventually led to insightful studies on the Prussian state and Polish-German relations.

Stanisław Salmonowicz returned to Nicolaus Copernicus University in the wake of the political events related to the emergence of the 'Solidarity' movement. He became head of the Department of the History of German Law in Poland, and later transformed into an independent chair. At the same time, he continued his research in the Section on the History of Pomerania and the Baltics. He maintained lively contacts with foreign universities and historical research centres and published abroad. In 1983, he became an associate professor, and in 1989 – a professor. During Poland's systemic transformation, he also became involved in political activity, lending his authority to organisations formed by 'Solidarity' activists. He also initiated research into the recent history of Poland. This yielded several groundbreaking studies on the Polish Underground State, the Warsaw Uprising, and society and academic circles in the People's Republic of Poland during the Stalinist era.

Professor Stanisław Salmonowicz did not seek awards and honours. However, he did find recognition for tremendous achievements and civil courage during the Communist era. The highest state decoration he received was the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. In 2022, the Senate of Jagiellonian University, Poland's oldest academic institution, awarded him the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*. He did not live to receive this unique award. He passed away three weeks before the scheduled ceremony. The insignia of the honorary doctorate was given to his niece during the funeral ceremony on 3 June 2022 in Toruń.

As already mentioned, the scholarly oeuvre of Professor Stanisław Salmonowicz was characterised by unprecedented diversity resulting from a genuine passion and love for history in its various aspects. In the field of law, or more precisely, the history of law, the most important subject of his research was criminal law and legal science from the early modern period to contemporary times. Works by Stanisław Salmonowicz discuss early modern criminal codifications in Europe and the Polish lands, witchcraft trials, humanitarian thought in criminal law, the death penalty, regional codes of the former Prussian territory, and legal science from the early modern era to the twentieth century, including the interwar period and the times of the People's Republic of Poland – as indicated in his article 'The Contribution of Polish Jurisprudence to the World's Heritage'.³ He also endeavoured to popularise the history of criminal law, including as co-author of the *Pitaval krakowski [Cracow Pitaval]*, a collection of accounts of famous criminal trials in the former capital of Poland.⁴

A special place in the historical and legal achievements of Stanisław Salmonowicz is occupied by matters pertaining to the constitutional system. With expertise and undisguised fascination, he described old Poland's legal system and public law,⁵ the organisation and operation of the Polish Underground State during the Second World War, and the legal systems of other countries, particularly Prussia. After years

³ Stanisław Salmonowicz, *Wkład polskiej nauki prawa do światowego dziedzictwa*, in Irena Stasiewicz-Jasiukowa (ed.), *Wkład osiągnięć polskiej nauki i techniki do dziedzictwa światowego* (Kraków–Warszawa, 2009), 305–21.

⁴ Stanisław Salmonowicz, Janusz Szwaja, and Stanisław Waltoś, *Pitaval krakowski* (Kraków, 1968; latest edition in 2020).

⁵ See e.g. Stanisław Salmonowicz, *Polen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Abhandlungen und Aufsätze* (Toruń, 1997).

of thorough research into German history, he also published a highly regarded popular academic work – a biography of the Prussian King Frederick the Great.⁶

In the field of history, the work of Stanisław Salmonowicz covered the Age of Enlightenment, its political, religious, cultural, and educational relations, as well as print media and daily life.⁷ Of great, perhaps even paramount, importance to the development of Polish history was his research into the history of Pomerania, the Pomeranian provinces in the Prussian state, and the city of Toruń. In this respect, Professor Salmonowicz made his mark, among others, as the author and editor of the monumental, multivolume work *Historia Pomorza* [*The History of Pomerania*].⁸ For its purpose, he compiled the history of the constitutional system, administration and law, as well as the cultural history of the region in the nineteenth century.

On the peripheries of the research into old Pomerania, Stanisław Salmonowicz studied aspects of the Prussian state. This subject soon became his great passion. Its ultimate result was the biography mentioned above of King Frederick II, the founder of Prussia as a world power, and a book on the history of the Prussian state and society: *Prusy. Dzieje państwa i społeczeństwa* [Prussia. The History of the State and Society] (Poznań, 1987, latest edition in 2004), also published in Germany as *Preussen. Geschichte von Staat und Gesellschaft* (Herne, 1996). These monographs were followed by other titles in German studies, including a book on Polish-German relations – *Polacy i Niemcy wobec siebie. Postawy – opinie – stereotypy (1697–1815)* [Poles and Germans in Relations. Attitudes – Opinions – Stereotypes (1697–1815)] (Olsztyn, 1993). Thanks to these publications, Professor Salmonowicz is counted among the most prominent historians dealing with the Prussian state's history, not only in Poland.

⁶ *Id.*, *Fryderyk II* (Wrocław, 1981; latest edition 2006).

⁷ See e.g. Stanisław Salmonowicz, *Polnische Preussen oder Westpreussen. Ausgewählte Studien*, transl. Magdalena Darska-Łogin (Gdańsk, 2018).

⁸ Stanisław Salmonowicz (ed.), *Historia Pomorza*, iv: 1850–1918, Part 1: *Ustrój, gospodarka, społeczeństwo* (Toruń, 2000); *Historia Pomorza*, iv: 1850–1918, Part 2: *Polityka i kultura* (Toruń, 2002); Marek Andrzejewski, Bolesław Hajduk, Tomasz Łaszkie-wicz, Przemysław Olstowski, Andrzej Romanow, Stanisław Salmonowicz, Ryszard Sudziński, and Mieczysław Wojciechowski (eds), *Historia Pomorza*, v: 1918–1939. *Województwo pomorskie i Wolne Miasto Gdańsk*, Part 1: *Ustrój, społeczeństwo i gospodarka* (Toruń, 2015).

After the political changes of 1980, and especially after the watershed of 1989, Professor Salmonowicz openly took up topics that had previously been subject to censorship restrictions. He dedicated a great deal of time to studying underground organisations that operated in Polish lands under Nazi occupation – for example, in the book *Polskie Państwo Podziemne: z dziejów walki cywilnej 1939–45* [The Polish Underground State: From the History of Civil Warfare, 1939–45] (Warszawa, 1994). He studied and discussed the legal position of Poles under Nazi occupation, as in the article on the legal status of Poles under German occupation (1939–45).⁹ He was among the pioneers of modern research on the Warsaw Uprising of 1944; his first study devoted to this subject appeared under a pseudonym as samizdat in 1981 (Antoni Nowosielski, *Powstanie Warszawskie. Próba uporządkowania problemów genezy i oceny ogólnej* [The Warsaw Uprising: Towards a Systematic Account of Its Genesis and General Assessment]). Subsequently, he published a number of studies on the activities of the Home Army and other underground organisations, primarily in Pomerania. He contributed a chapter on the Polish Underground State during the Second World War to a volume entitled *The Home Army in Gdańsk Pomerania* (Toruń, 2014). He courageously addressed complex topics concerning the occupation, which had been suppressed due to the negative impact they had on the public image of the Polish society during the war and the Stalinist period – such as in the articles ‘The Tragic Night of Occupation: On “Collaboration from Below” in the General Government (1939–1945)’,¹⁰ and ‘Between Terror and Manipulation: The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of Stalinism’.¹¹

Lastly, it should be reiterated that Professor Salmonowicz’s plethora of publications includes several hundred reviews. He practised the art of reviewing throughout his life, being, admittedly, rather strict and uncompromising in his opinions. He published reviews and

⁹ Stanisław Salmonowicz, ‘The Legal Status of Poles under German Occupation (1939–1945). Some Remarks on the Need for Research’, *Krakowskie Studia z Historii Państwa i Prawa, Special English Issue* (2017), 95–110.

¹⁰ *Id.*, ‘The Tragic Night of Occupation: on “Collaboration from Below” in the General Government 1939–1945’, *American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies*, [http://www.aapjstudies.org/manager/external/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Salmonowicz%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.aapjstudies.org/manager/external/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Salmonowicz%20(2).pdf) [Accessed: 7 March 2023].

¹¹ *Id.*, ‘Between Terror and Manipulation: The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of Stalinism’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 100 (2009), 221–39.

review articles both domestically and abroad. A selection of extensive reviews appeared in a separate volume entitled *O rzemiośle recenzenta. Studia z warsztatu historyka* [The Craft of the Reviewer. Studies on the Workshop of a Historian] (Warszawa, 1999), giving it the character of a methodological work. In addition to his activities as a reviewer, he wrote newspaper columns. A selection of his journalistic works on social, moral, and cultural issues appeared in the form of a book entitled *Gawędy o ludziach i książkach: felietony publikowane w "Pomeranii" w latach 2013–2019* [Tales of Men and Books: Columns Published in Pomerania in 2013–2019] (Gdańsk, 2019).

Throughout his life, Professor Stanisław Salmonowicz considered himself a lawyer, or more precisely, a legal historian and a historian. He emphasised this repeatedly, pointing out the important role of comparative research. He always defended the history of law as a subject of legal studies. His discipline and diligence were widely known. Despite deteriorating health, he continued to work until the last moments of his life.

Professor Salmonowicz was truly erudite – throughout his life, he took a keen interest in Polish and European literature, art history, culture, and politics – which he even took an active part in for a time. He enthusiastically travelled around Europe, drawn to the beauty of France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Croatia, and other countries. He impressed with his knowledge and influenced many people with his intellect and personality. He was the epitome of the highest academic standards and thus earned an excellent reputation as an authority.

We commemorate the life of an outstanding researcher, patriot, teacher, and genuinely erudite scholar.

proofreading Antoni Górny

Danuta Janicka

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2873-8088>