

## ARCHIVE

*The initial version of Halina Manikowska's text on social differentiation of cultural phenomena was a paper delivered at the conference entitled Social History of the Late Middle Ages: Current State – Challenges – Perspectives, held in December 2008 in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> The participants reflected on the problems and research methodology in the field of social history of the medieval period, with emphasis on the tradition of Polish historiography. In the following year, the conference papers were published in print, with a version of Manikowska's article whose English translation follows herein below.<sup>2</sup> The author seeks to determine the correlations and interdependencies between the ways in which culture and social history are practiced and discusses the impact of twentieth-century cultural theories, beginning with the classical pre-war sociological works, on the change in medievalist research pursued in Poland and in the West. The article's keynote is reflection on the extent of autonomy of the methods of research into cultural history of the European Middle Ages, since these methods have been overwhelmingly influenced, from the early twentieth century onwards, by theories elaborated by sociologists. Manikowska contrasts this methodological orientation with the formula of research in cultural conditions and determinants of social phenomena, which emerged in the late twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>*

*The article can also be read as a collective autobiography of a circle of historians that has prevalently contributed to modernisation of the methods of research on cultural history in Poland – namely, the team associated with the Centre for Medieval Culture (presently, Department of Medieval Studies) set up in mid-twentieth century by Tadeusz Manteuffel (1902–70) within the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences (IH PAN). Manteuffel originated and initiated a multigenerational research project that has produced a two-volume synthetic study on Polish medieval culture.<sup>4</sup> Manikowska's article deals exten-*

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<sup>1</sup> The conference was jointly organised by Institute of History, University of Warsaw; Polish History Museum; and Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences.

<sup>2</sup> Halina Manikowska, 'Społeczne zróżnicowanie zjawisk kultury', in Sławomir Gawlas (ed.), *Historia społeczna późnego średniowiecza. Nowe badania* (Warszawa, 2011), 141–158.

<sup>3</sup> A similar problem, not related to Polish historiography, is addressed by Krzysztof Pomian in the introduction to his article: *id.*, 'Jak uprawiać historię kultury', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxxvi (1995), 1–13, here: 1–4.

<sup>4</sup> Jerzy Dowiąt (ed.), *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X–XIII w.* (Warszawa, 1985); Bronisław Geremek (ed.), *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.* (Warszawa, 1997).

sively with Manteuffel's approach to cultural theory, drawing our attention to its inspiration by the output of Cracow sociologist Stefan Czarnowski who pioneered a cultural theory based on social conditions. While Manikowska finds that Czarnowski's arguments "affected Polish medieval studies, at least until the 1970s", she subsequently notices that his theories "shared the fate of other modernising currents in Polish historiography (and sociology) in the interwar period that were terminated by the war and replaced by rote Marxism imposed as the official methodology". Let us add that Czarnowski's theories were an important source of inspiration for Bronisław Geremek (1932–2008), who succeeded Tadeusz Manteuffel as head of the aforementioned team of medieval culture researchers.<sup>5</sup>

Halina Manikowska does not delve into the discussions on the ways in which Marxism impacted the cultural history research methodology in Polish medieval studies. Instead, she addresses the fundamental change in the paradigm of practicing cultural history, which, in her opinion, is attested by the papers presented at the Ninth General Congress of Polish Historians in September 1963.<sup>6</sup> The contributors and panellists debated on the new questionnaire that would support the cultural-historical research, enabling the scholars to distance themselves from a granite-hard version of Marxism that was promoted in the preceding years. Their opinions crowned, in a way, the discussions going on among Polish medievalists for a few years by then – as is testified by the materials of the 'Discussion on the issue of cultural history' (1962) held in 1961 as part of a special meeting of the Editorial Committee of *Kwartalnik Historyczny* (The Historical Quarterly).<sup>7</sup> This initiative gave rise to a series of programme articles published in the quarterly in the consecutive decades. The presumption shared by the 1961 disputants was that cultural studies call for a bold transgression of the legacy of methodological patterns and

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<sup>5</sup> Bronisław Geremek as a cultural historian is discussed by Hanna Zaremska in *ead.*, 'Bronisław Geremek, historian', in Bronisław Geremek and Hanna Zaremska (eds.), *On the Middle Ages*, trans. by Jerzy Szenderowicz (Warszawa, 2017); see <http://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=63208>, 7–33 (Accessed: 5 Feb. 2019).

<sup>6</sup> These contributions were published as Aleksander Gieysztor (ed.), *Historia kultury średniowiecznej w Polsce. IX Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich w Warszawie, 13–15 września 1963: referaty* (Warszawa, 1963).

<sup>7</sup> 'Dyskusja nad zagadnieniami historii kultury', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxxix, 1, (1962), 73–80. Among the disputants were Stanisław Herbst, Waldemar Voisé, Mieczysław Żywczyński, Żanna Kormanowa, Bronisław Geremek, Marian Henryk Serejski, Aleksander Gieysztor, Jerzy Dowiat, Stanisław Trawkowski, and Bogusław Leśnodorski.

chronological frames. The questions they posed were how cultural history could be incorporated in the Marxist perspective and attitude so that it could be used in understanding of the historical process as a whole, and, how to understand the notion of culture as such. They made references to attempts at defining culture by Polish (Kazimierz Dobrowolski, Henryk Łowmiański, Bogdan Suchodolski) as well as foreign scholars (Arnold J. Toynbee, Johan Huizinga, Jacob Burckhard, the circles of École des Annales and École Pratique). The dispute of 1961 was joined by Bronisław Geremek, then aged below thirty; as he then noted, "history of culture is a strife for a global view, a confrontation between grand structures in space and time. The notion of structure, which places an emphasis on the moment of duration and durability in historical transformations, and which enables one to observe critical changes in the course of events, is ... of special usefulness to cultural history and to an understanding history in general".

Tadeusz Manteuffel formulated the theoretical foundation for a synthetic study on the cultural history of medieval Poland referring to the categorisation into 'psychic' and 'material' culture.<sup>8</sup> However, the authors of volume two ("whose concept was for the most part the work of Geremek", as Manikowska points out) distanced themselves from this conception.<sup>9</sup> In his 1977 summarising statement on the team's achievements, Geremek almost completely rejected the reflection on material culture, refocusing instead on psychic culture: striving to delineate the limits of awareness and knowledge of medieval people and the cognitive mechanisms they applied should be the actual purpose of joint research effort, as he put it. The postulate to pursue research on collective memory can be heard in this utterance, among other things.<sup>10</sup> It is worth remarking that in the course of the last few years, with Halina Manikowska at the head of the

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<sup>8</sup> "Essential about culture is man's response to the two differently operating causes, the first being his care about preserving his own existence ... the other cause being the psyche of the reflective being. ... While the material-and-existential sequence, coinciding with socioeconomic and political-systemic history, has in practice been made part of integral history, the psychic sequence has completely been set aside of it", Tadeusz Manteuffel, 'Z rozważań nad historią kultury', in Jan Białostocki *et al.* (eds.), *Sztuka i historia. Księga pamiątkowa ku czci profesora Michała Walickiego* (Warszawa, 1966), 15–16.

<sup>9</sup> Bronisław Geremek (ed.), *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.* (Warszawa, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*, 'Metody badań nad świadomością społeczeństwa polskiego w średniowieczu', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxxxv, 2 (1978), 311–14; for Eng. trans., see *id.*, 'Methods of Research into the Consciousness of Medieval Polish Society', in *On Middle Ages*, 395–9.

*Department of Medieval Studies, it is history of memory that has been made the subject of a new joint scholarly project.<sup>11</sup>*

*We believe that the article published below illustrates the most outstanding characteristics of the scientific reflection of the scholar to whom this volume is dedicated. Apart from her interest in social and cultural history, Halina Manikowska's output is primarily characterised by a methodological pluralism, fascination with the achievements of French historiography, and perception of the past of Poland and other East Central European countries from the perspective of universal history. With the latter feature in mind, the article in question can serve as a guide for the foreign reader to the methodological trials and tribulations of Polish twentieth-century medieval studies. It may moreover be an interesting contribution to the discussions in the history of historiography presently going on in other countries and scientific milieus.*

*In preparing a translated version of the article, we have made slight modifications to its content so as to render it more approachable to non-Polish readers. Added to the core text are the birth and death dates of the deceased scholars; in some of the notes, titles of English translations of studies referred to in the original text are given, along with titles (added by us) of other foreign-language studies penned by Manikowska which concern the problems indicated in the article. All such addenda from the editors are in square brackets.*

*A more detailed picture of Halina Manikowska's output is reflected in the bibliography of her scientific works, compiled by Zofia Anuszkiewicz and Anna Horeczy.<sup>12</sup> Special thanks are owed to Zofia Anuszkiewicz for her editorial help with the texts translated from Italian and for her incessant support. Our gratefulness extends to the Acta Poloniae Historica Editorial Board whose considerable involvement on our initiative is not to be underestimated.*

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<sup>11</sup> See *Przeszłość w kulturze średniowiecznej Polski*, vol. 1, ed. by Jacek Banaszkiewicz, Andrzej Dąbrówka, and Piotr Węcowski; vol. 2, ed. by Halina Manikowska (Warszawa, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> See the APH website: [http://www.aph-ihpan.edu.pl/images/APH119/14\\_Archive\\_Bibliografia.pdf](http://www.aph-ihpan.edu.pl/images/APH119/14_Archive_Bibliografia.pdf).