

Andrzej F. Grabski, *Zarys historii historiografii polskiej (An Outline of the History of Polish Historiography)*, Poznań 2000, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 278 pp., bibliogr., index of persons.

The author of the book, a professor at Łódź University who died prematurely when his book was in the press, was one of the most energetic Polish historians of the last few decades. He made his name as a medievalist with his biography of Boleslaus the Brave (1964, 2nd ed. 1966) and two volumes, based on detailed studies, on the West's opinions of 10th–15th century Poland. He then switched to the history of historiography and wrote several monographs (analyses of the 19th century) and syntheses on this subject. The work he was preparing for Wydawnictwo Poznańskie was to crown his career. Death interrupted his work but he prepared for print an outline which shows the main lines of development of Polish historiography from Gallus Anonimus to Polish works written in Poland and abroad during the last fifty years.

In the preface to the *Outline* the author says: "Since the subject ... of my reflections is historiography, that is, the product of historians' work and not the historians themselves, I have confined the information on their life and activity to what was absolutely indispensable to explain their historical work ... I have tried to make this book as clear as possible so that it should be understandable to persons who have not yet gained skill in the field of history of historiography or methodology of history".

The author has fulfilled his by no means easy task creditably for the *Outline* is an excellent work both as regards its substance (a masterly command of an enormous material) and its form (a clear, lucid style). The structure of the book is chronological and within each epoch the author presents the achievements of the science of the past. The main text is preceded by a preface (*From the author*) and an *Introduction* in which he discusses the concept of historiography, the structure of historical knowledge and the "operating fields" of the history of historiography. The *Introduction* ends with an extensive quotation from Lucien Febvre, who in 1942 discussed the connections between pictures of the past and the epochs which create these pictures.

The main part of the book is divided into 14 chapters which deal with historiography in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Baroque, the Age of Enlightenment (a discussion of Polish historiography is here preceded by a discussion of the transformation of European historiography during the Age of Enlightenment). The times of partitions (1795–1918) are presented in three chapters; the first concerns the view of the past before the January Uprising, the second depicts the birth of modern historiography after 1863, and the third deals with historiographic reorientation at the turn of the 19th century. The part concerning the interwar period in Poland (1918–1939) is again, as was the case with the age of Enlightenment, preceded by a characterisation of European historical science and so is the period after World War II. This is a good starting

point for examining historiography in People's Poland, Polish historiography abroad (in the right proportion of 3:1) and for a concise characterisation of the most recent period (from the events of 1980).

The author does not avoid difficult problems and writes about them expertly without going to extremes or displaying emotion, so characteristic of many researchers. He sees the ups-and-downs of the past 50 years and their causes. He presents Polish historiography in a European context. The last chapter, which is a synthesis of many years of experience and observation, is a specific testament of the author. It deserves to be read attentively not only by historians.

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