

Marianne Vasara-Aaltonen, *Learning Law and Travelling Europe: Study Journeys and the Developing Swedish Legal Profession, c. 1630–1800*, Leiden: Brill, 2020, 427 pp.

The title of book under review would seem to suggest that its author has focused on the legal studies undertaken abroad by Swedes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and on the process of development of the Swedish legal profession in the early modern period. However, in her extensive introduction she presents in great detail the topical issues of her study and the source base. Upon reading the introduction we find that the book's scope is somewhat narrower than the title would indicate, and also clearly determined by the sources. At the very outset she explains the term *Turku law students* (pp. 5, 18), which appears very often in the book and indeed functions to define of the collectivity upon which the author has focused her research. The term itself is used to describe those students of the Academy of Turku who studied abroad and thereafter held functions or offices in the legal professions.¹

As if anticipating the reviewer, the author herself puts forward the question: since this is a work on the education of Swedish lawyers, why is it focused on the Finnish Academy of Turku (Swedish Åbo), and not on the oldest Swedish university, namely Uppsala? (p. 14). Established in 1640, the Turku Academy was the first university to be opened in Finland. While summarizing the history of these lands, Marianne Vasara-Aaltonen devotes a few sentences to the historiographical disputes concerning the status of Finland within the Kingdom of Sweden. According to 'nationalist Finnish historiography', from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries Finland enjoyed a special position in the Swedish realm, as is evidenced, for example, by its elevation to the status of Grand Duchy in the sixteenth century. In recalling these discussions, the author is quick to stress that although they should be taken into account we ought to keep in mind that the same laws were in force on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia, and that the provinces were subject to the same central authority. She therefore concludes that the Academy of Turku was a Swedish university, and was similar to Uppsala. Obviously we may agree with this approach, however it

¹ 'For the sake of simplicity, the group of students I examine are referred to as "Turku law students", regardless of their origins. Thus, the term "Turku law students" in this research refers to any men found in the online database of the Academy of Turku (*ylioppilasmatrikkeli*) who studied at foreign universities and who ended up working with legal matters, or who are known to have enrolled at a law faculty.' (p. 18).

should be noted — in my opinion at least — that by citing these historical aspects and discussions the author is in fact trying to justify herself. This becomes evident if we take into consideration that her primary source is the internet register (matriculation records) of the Academy of Turku; in fact this is no ordinary register but rather an enormous database which was created at the University of Helsinki and contains biographical information relating to the progress of studies, the social origins of students, and the subsequent careers of alumni.² Clearly, such a source base is an immense help, however the fact that no similar set of data has been created for the University of Uppsala cannot serve as a justification. In fact a traditional register actually does exist, and its utilization, while time-consuming and laborious, would have been completely feasible. The initial date used in the work is on the whole conventional, while the terminal date — the year 1809, when Finland passed under Russian rule — is more clear-cut.

The book has a very complex structure, comprising three main sections divided into numerous chapters, which in turn are split into subchapters. This arrangement is, however, quite useful and allows the reader to proceed to specific topical issues, with the process being additionally facilitated by the inclusion of two indices: one of persons and one of subjects, which is combined with a geographical index. A problem of sorts that arises from the structure are the numerous repetitions of certain matters and a confusing chronology.

The first section ('Setting the Scene for Swedish Lawyers' Travels' — pp. 3–70) comprises the aforementioned introduction and a chapter entitled 'Studies Abroad as a European Phenomenon' (pp. 28–70). The chapter focuses on a discussion of issues encompassing decidedly more than the foreign study trips mentioned in the title, which in the Middle Ages — and particularly in the early modern period — were a typically European phenomenon. The author starts off with a presentation of the origins of universities in Europe. She explores the changing currents and methods of teaching, writing about scholasticism and its subsequent abandonment under the influence of Humanism. Vasara-Aaltonen then states that from the sixteenth century onward the primary role of universities consisted in supplying states and societies with specialists in various professions, among them lawyers and doctors, and also in preparing students — and in

² The online matriculation records of the Academy of Turku 1640–1817 (*ylioppilasmatrikkeli*) are, however, much more than just the historical records of the university, as they have been augmented with biographical information on the students' backgrounds and careers. All in all, the records compile the information of over 17,000 students who enrolled at Turku and Helsinki (numbers 1–17,116), regardless of their origin. Some of them also spent some time at foreign universities. In addition, there is information on Finnish students who only studied abroad (numbers U1–U1,343). These students did not study at the Academy of Turku or the University of Helsinki but have been identified as Finns according to the historical borders of Finland. These Finnish students who studied only at foreign universities were taken into the Turku records from approximately 1635 onwards' (p. 13). The database is available at the address: <<https://ylioppilasmatrikkeli.helsinki.fi/>> [accessed: 27.03.2021].

particular those of noble birth — for public service. She reminds her readers that in the eighteenth century, that is in the early years of the Enlightenment, it became clear that traditional universities were not fully fulfilling their role, which was then gradually being assumed by independent scientific societies. This brought about the need to create specialist schools for ‘the practical teaching of vocations’. Not all colleges succeeded in adapting to the new reality. Some, such as those in Halle or Göttingen, fared better (p. 34). As regards the issue referred to in the title, the author includes a description of the specific nature of legal studies, through a brief synthesis outlining how the state of things changed over the centuries. She mentions important events from the eleventh and twelfth centuries which facilitated the development of law studies, such as the elaboration of the *Decretum Gratiani* or the discovery of the *Code of Justinian*, which for years functioned as the basis for the academic interpretation of Canon law and Roman law. Over time, the evolving socio-political situation and various accompanying transformations led to a situation in which Roman law no longer provided all the answers, and thus individual states proceeded to create written legal codes that took into consideration the output of classical law, but at the same time adapted it to their specific realities. As an example, the author gives the elaboration in Germany of the *Ius Publicum Sacri Imperii Romano-Germanici* (p. 39). She mentions the names of eminent thinkers and advocates of different legal theories whose concepts contributed to the development of modern standards and doctrines of law, among them Jean Bodin, Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes and others. A considerable part of the chapter — as its title would suggest — is devoted to the issue of foreign study trips undertaken by young men, while also providing a detailed clarification of the terms *peregrinatio academica* and *grand tour*, which are of particular significance in this context. Vasara-Aaltonen notes that before the 1350s, study journeys were the only way for young men of Germany (the Holy Roman Empire), Scotland, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe to obtain a university education and, in consequence, that these men were very active peregrinators. Passing on to the history of foreign educational trips undertaken by Swedes, the author has chosen as the initial date the year 1225, when the first Swedish undergraduates were reported to be studying at the university in Paris, although she believes that they could have been present there even earlier. Looking at the issue in a broader context, though obviously focusing the majority of her attention on the realities of Sweden, the author analyses the changes that occurred under the influence of the Reformation. She notes the increase in interest in German universities, and enumerates the most popular centres, among them Wittenberg and Rostock.

Gustav I of Sweden, who supported the Reformation, needed knowledgeable, trained professionals to implement his political plans and reforms. The problem was pressing, since the best-educated sector of Swedish society was the Catholic clergy, whom the monarch did not trust. Thus, as the author states, he had to devise a different solution. This necessitated the provision of long-term

financial assistance in order to enable Swedish youths to study abroad at Protestant universities (the funding of which the king rapidly organized), while a quicker route consisted in creating an administrative cadre by awarding offices to nationals who had already received a foreign education, or using the services of non-native specialists. The author places particular emphasis on this latter aspect of Gustav I's plan, giving the well-known example of Konrad von Pyhy, a German doctor of law who for a number of years was one of the monarch's closest collaborators.

Passing on to the reign of John III of Sweden, during which a more or less concerted effort was made to re-Catholicize the country, Vasara-Aaltonen writes about the Counter-Reformation activities of the Jesuits, and in this context mentions the Jesuit College in Braniewo. I think that the case of Braniewo is deserving of closer analysis. For although the author recognizes its role as an intellectual base for the *Missio Suetica* of the Jesuits and the Holy See, and also writes about its popularity among the Swedish youth (particularly in the 1570s and 1580s), this seems to exhaust her knowledge about the school, whereas research conducted by Jerzy Michalewicz shows that in the years 1579–88 Swedes made up nearly 45 per cent of the student body at Braniewo.³ Taking the language barrier into account, it would be unfair to criticize Vasara-Aaltonen for not making use of the sizeable body of Polish-language writings present in the literature. However, it is more difficult to understand why she did not utilize the Braniewo register elaborated by Georg Lühr, which is available in the public domain.⁴ The most extreme example in this regard would be the case of Johannes Messenius (1579–1639). The author states that in 1609 he was appointed professor of law and politics at the University of Uppsala, when legal studies had been resumed there following its reopening after a period of lengthy crisis (p. 255). However, she appears not to know that Messenius was educated precisely at Braniewo, and thereafter obtained a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Ingolstadt.⁵

The second part ('Swedish Lawyers' Education Abroad', pp. 73–211) contains a detailed analysis of the studies undertaken by Swedes at selected foreign universities. The author focuses on five colleges which were most readily attended by the researched collectivity: Leiden in the Netherlands; and

³ Jerzy Michalewicz, 'Dwór szwedzki Zygmunta III w latach 1587–1600', *OiRP*, 11, 1966, pp. 161–80 (p. 162).

⁴ *Die Matrikel des päpstlichen Seminars zu Braunsberg 1578–1798*, published by Georg Lühr, Braunsberg, 1925.

⁵ *Uczniowie – sodalisi gimnazjum jezuitów w Brunsberdze (Braniewie) 1579–1623*, prepared and compiled by Marek Ingłot with the co-operation of Ludwik Grzebień, Cracow, 1998, p. 199, no. 1366; Rafał Zielonka, 'Losy studentów Alumnatu Papieskiego w Braniewie w XVI i XVII wieku', *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 2017, 3 (297), pp. 409–44 (pp. 428–30). Wojciech Krawczuk recently made the following observation: 'Braniewo's influence on the development of Swedish culture is indisputable, to give but the example of Johannes Messenius, mentioned previously'. Cf. Wojciech Krawczuk, *Wierni królówi: Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźstwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Cracow, 2019, p. 93.

Rostock, Jena, Halle and Greifswald in Germany. Based on this breakdown, successive chapters present brief histories of the universities and outline the law curricula which they offered, proceeding to an analysis of the social origins of the students, the course of their studies, and their subsequent careers. Leiden was immensely popular — and not only with Swedes. The author emphasizes its tolerant atmosphere, which allowed ‘Lutheran Swedes to enrol at the Calvinist Leiden University without any hindrance’ (p. 66). We may add that the school also attracted a large group of Catholic youth from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Another influential factor was the reputation of the teaching staff, which included the renowned Justus Lipsius, to give but one example. His writings had an impact on, among others, Count Per Brahe the Younger (who went on to translate one of his works into Swedish) and Baron Johan Skytte, who served as tutor to Gustavus Adolphus, while even the king himself read many of the works written by this Flemish scholar. The name of Lipsius, even though he did not specialize in law, has not been given here accidentally, for at Leiden political studies were second only to law in terms of popularity (p. 83). Among the sixty-nine students from Turku entered in the Leiden register, twenty-six could be considered as law students or future lawyers. Fifteen of them came from the nobility, while the rest were commoners, although five were later ennobled. In comparison with the other universities, a fact repeatedly stressed by the author is that Leiden attracted by far the greatest number of noble Swedes. Legal studies at this college were most popular among Swedes in the 1630s and 1640s. The author notes that for the Swedish state, which was undergoing a period of rapid modernization, it was especially important to secure the services of persons who while abroad had gained not only academic knowledge, but also specific technical skills. In this context she gives the revealing example of the ‘dockyard worker’ Herman Fleming, who learned how to build ships in the Netherlands and after returning to Sweden was appointed manager of a shipyard and received high appointments in the admiralty (pp. 118–19). Proceeding to a description of the researched collectivity’s studies at German universities, the author notes a clear difference in comparison with Leiden. In Rostock, for example, only one out of ten Swedish students was of noble birth. We should not be surprised therefore that graduates of middle-class origin found employment mainly with municipal courts and the civil service, which fact the author has emphasised in her analysis of the careers of alumni of the University of Jena (p. 150). When discussing the University of Halle, which was set up at a somewhat later date (1694), she stresses that its registers compare favourably with those of the other researched centres, for they even inform us of the fields of study selected by undergraduates (p. 161). As a side note, it is worth mentioning that the only other university with a precise register was Leiden. The final German college to be discussed in greater detail is Greifswald. Marianne Vasara-Aaltonen has determined that this school was most popular among Swedes in the years 1730–70. Interestingly, this was influenced by the ease with which one could

obtain an academic degree there. Also of importance was the fact that at the time Greifswald had been under Swedish rule for nearly a century. Greifswald attracted mainly commoners; the author discovered only one nobleman in the researched group of students, and the rest were the sons of townsfolk or of Lutheran clergymen. Studies in the Holy Roman Empire were most in vogue in the second half of the seventeenth century. The critical date here would be the end of the Thirty Years' War, when there was an increased influx of Swedish students to German universities (p. 194). As regards other centres of learning, Dorpat (present day Tartu in Estonia) and Rome are mentioned in brief, as are other, less prestigious, places of study. The University of Dorpat — as the author herself notes — cannot really be described as 'foreign', for it was established by the Swedes following their occupation of Livonia. Nevertheless, the realities of life there were in many ways different from those in ethnically Swedish territories. The relative unpopularity of Italian academic centres within the researched collectivity was highly characteristic, and contrasted sharply with the attitude of youth from other countries, among them those from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In the third part of her book, which is titled somewhat enigmatically 'Reasons and Consequences' (pp. 215–357), the author discusses a number of issues relating to the social and political history of Sweden in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The reign of Gustavus Adolphus and the reforms which he introduced — especially his thorough reform of the Swedish judiciary and the civil service — were clearly important with respect to the issues touched upon in the book. In 1614, following the restructuring of the court system and the establishment of courts of appeal, demand grew for educated officials who would have a proper grasp of the law. The author reminds us, however, that there was no formal requirement that freshly appointed judges hold a degree in law (p. 230). The vigorous efforts undertaken by Gustavus Adolphus and his chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, to modernize the state laid bare the very same problem that had hampered the reforms of Gustav I, namely a shortage of personnel. This was made all the more acute by the fact that lawyers were useful not only in courts, but also in the diplomatic service which, like the legal profession, was undergoing increasing professionalization under the influence of the numerous wars conducted by the 'Lion of the North' and his successors. Like his namesake before him, Gustavus Adolphus focused on providing support for Swedish youths to study abroad, while at the same time financing the development of the national education system. Among other actions, he re-established and provided generous funding for the University of Uppsala. Soon a department of Swedish law was opened at the college, and scholars engaged in comparative studies devoted to national and Roman law which, as the author points out, was a very modern approach and placed Sweden at the forefront of contemporary educational development. Lund University, which was opened in 1666, was another centre of learning that quickly gained a high reputation. This was due mainly to one of the pre-eminent lawyers of the times, the German Samuel Pufendorf, who already in 1668 was appointed its professor of natural

law and the law of nations. Oxenstierna, ‘frankly horrified’ — in the author’s somewhat exaggerated opinion (p. 261) — at the low level of education of the Swedish nobility was among the many patrons of scholars and of the foreign study journeys undertaken by Swedes. As a result of all these activities, the number of thoroughly educated men available for employment in the judiciary, the military, and the diplomatic service increased systematically. The rising status of national universities was one of the factors which led to the decline in interest in foreign study trips in the eighteenth century. Others included socio-political change and Sweden’s decline as a great European power. In turn, changes in internal policy had an impact on the method of selecting candidates for administrative and judicial positions. Under the Absolute Monarchy, from 1680 to 1719, the monarch enjoyed practically unlimited freedom in granting offices; whereas in the ‘age of freedom’ (1719–72) the situation was different. Tellingly, during this latter period, in 1745 the so-called Committee of Education was created, which in 1749 issued a statute whereby persons applying for positions in the judiciary were obliged to pass an exam supervised by a university (p. 308).

In the conclusion to her book, Vasara-Aaltonen states that ‘the foreign studies of Swedish lawyers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are at once the story of the professionalization of the judiciary’. It should, however, be made clear that at the time the term ‘professionalization’ had a very specific meaning — of which, as her statements suggest, the author is abundantly aware. We should keep in mind that university studies, particularly in the case of the nobility, had a certain unique characteristic. Namely, those that were undertaken abroad usually focused on gaining a general humanistic knowledge and the practical study of languages, combined with learning the customs of the visited nation, establishing potentially useful political contacts, studying the art of war. The members of the nobility, who throughout the analysed period enjoyed a numerical advantage in terms of the number of offices held (particularly in the appellate courts of Stockholm and Turku (Åbo), and also at the highest levels of the administrative apparatus and in the military), were not required to graduate in law or hold any academic degrees or titles. This does not mean, however, that they were not educated people. Quite the contrary. For example, the first head of the court of appeal in Turku was Niels Bielke, a representative of the old noble elite who had received a classical, general humanistic education in Rostock, Siena and Venice (p. 89). On the whole, therefore, the issue concerned — in the author’s own words — training ‘capable officials, not specifically lawyers’ and ensuring a steady stream of individuals educated to a level sufficient to cope efficiently with the daily tasks of the civil service and the judiciary.⁶

⁶ Vasara-Aaltonen’s conclusions can be best described in her own words, and I quote *in extenso*: ‘law seems to have been only one aspect of the educational palette, reflecting the fact that the judiciary and the civil administration, and the positions within them,

The present review is by necessity limited in its scope and does not fully convey the richness of content of the reviewed book. In my opinion, the work's greatest merit is its level of factual detail and the abundance of information which it presents on the history of the state and law, and on the history of education and of the elites of the Kingdom of Sweden in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Referencing the latter aspect, I must say that it is a valuable prosopographical study which contains a wealth of biographical data regarding a few dozen persons who held positions in the judiciary, civil service, diplomatic service and the military, and will undoubtedly be of use for comparative research into the elites of early modern Europe.

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Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie (XVII-XVIII wiek): Źródła [Jewish Territorial Self-Government in the Crown in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Sources], ed. Adam Kaźmierczyk and Przemysław Zarubin, Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2019, 679 pp.

This pathbreaking book is a companion volume to *Sejm czterech ziem: Źródła* (Council of Four Lands: Sources), which was published by Jakub Goldberg and Adam Kaźmierczyk in 2011 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe). The earlier publication is a collection of 255 documents in Polish, Latin and German (with some Hebrew language names, phrases and technical terms) pertaining to the highest institution of Jewish autonomy in Crown Poland, called in Hebrew *Va'ad Arba Aratsot* (VAA). The book under review presents 256 documents in the same languages. These relate mainly to the level of Jewish governing institutions beneath the Council of Four Lands, the Jewish *ziemstwo* (*land* or *territory*; Hebrew: *galil*) councils. Their name in Hebrew is *va'ad galil*, usually translated as regional council. The individual Jewish communities, each governed by its own local council (*kahal*), were the constituent components of the regional councils, which in turn sent representatives to the VAA. In the documents in both books, the VAA is typically referred to as the Jewish *kongres* or *sejm*, while the Jewish *ziemstwo* councils are called *sejmiki*.

were not yet seen as separate entities in early- to mid-seventeenth century Sweden. The main goal was to train capable officials, not specifically lawyers. For noblemen, academic studies and physical exercise were seen as a whole — both were needed to educate capable future statesmen and officials' (p. 269). And: 'The central administration did not expect or seek to gain doctors of law in high numbers, as degrees were not a requirement for judicial office for a long time to come; they just needed men with enough learning to handle the day-to-day running of the administration and the courts of appeal' (p. 361).

Both books are organized into three sections: documents created by authorities of the Polish Crown; documents originating with the Jewish councils and translated into Polish for the benefit of Polish officials; and documents issued by courts and of miscellaneous origin. The earliest document in the Goldberg-Każmierczyk book about the VAA is from 1588; the first one in *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie* is dated 1603. However, in both books most of the documents come from the eighteenth century, dating especially from the reforms of 1717 until the abolition of the VAA in 1764.

The documents were transcribed according to the guidelines set out in *Instrukcja wydawnicza dla źródeł historycznych od XVI do połowy XIX wieku*, ed. Kazimierz Lepszy (Wrocław, 1953). This included modernizing the spelling in most cases and marking errors of grammar and syntax in the original documents. Each document is headed by a title and summary, rendered in both Polish and English, and an apparatus. The apparatus lists the archival source or sources where the document can be found, as well as, in the case of previous publication, where it has already appeared in print. In addition there are cross references to other relevant documents and to scholarly works that have been discussed in a given document. Where necessary, a document is followed by brief footnotes clarifying textual problems, identifying persons and places, and providing other essential information. Occasional Hebrew signature lines and other short annotations are reproduced and translated into Polish.

In both books there are, in both Polish and English, extensive introductions and helpful tables of contents listing each document by title. There are separate subject, name, and geographical indices. The subject index is wonderfully detailed. The geographic index gives the current country and administrative unit where the place in question is located, while the name index attaches essential identifying details to the names; for example *Iciek, Marek starosta kaliski; Icko (Icek) Lejzorowicz, arendarz grabowiecki*. The *samorząd ziemski* volume added a useful glossary of Old Polish terms. Both books would have benefited from maps delineating the geographical entities to which the documents refer. All in all, these are meticulously researched, skillfully presented, user-friendly volumes that will save researchers hundreds of hours of archive visits and make available to teachers and students material of which they would otherwise be unaware.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of both the *Sejm czterech ziem* and the *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie* books. Jewish autonomy institutions have been a central topic of Jewish historiography for more than a century. Historians have made no secret of their admiration for the capacities and sophistication of the arrangements for Polish Jewish autonomy. Scholars like Majer Bałaban, Simon Dubnow, Raphael Mahler, Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, Shmuel Ettinger, Jacob Katz and, especially, Israel Halpern published descriptions of the Jewish autonomous institutions and their organization and operations. These were based mainly on Jewish sources. The outstanding source collections were Dubnow's edition of the *pinkas*, or record book, of the Jewish

council for Lithuania, and Halpern's magisterial collection, which he called *Pinkas Va'ad Arba Aratsot* (PVAA), containing some one thousand documents either issued by or relating to the VAA. The vast majority of the PVAA documents were in Hebrew and Yiddish. There were, however, eighty-five in Polish, German or Latin. Later, Israel Bartal issued a revised edition of the Hebrew and Yiddish material only.

Basing descriptions largely on material originating from Jewish sources necessarily led to viewing the VAA through a Jewish prism. Many questions about the VAA could be answered only partially, or not at all. Issues of the configuration of Jewish leadership, the relationship between the various levels of Jewish institutions, and the interface of the VAA with the Polish authorities were especially. Moreover, there was a tendency to emphasize the extent to which these Jewish institutions were indeed autonomous, being an expression of Jewish political power and administrative self-rule.

Two research ventures radically altered the source base for the subject of Jewish autonomy. In 1998, Judith Kalik discovered the lists of the Jewish poll tax assessments for Crown Poland, 1717–64. Based on these she published *Scepter of Judah: The Jewish Autonomy in the Eighteenth-Century Crown Poland*, elucidating, among other things, the leadership and structure of Jewish autonomy institutions. (However, see the review by Adam Kaźmierczyk in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 118, 2011, 3, pp. 577–83). The second enterprise was the painstaking collecting of Polish, Latin and German documents concerning the VAA from assorted archives and other sources. This began with Jakub Goldberg and continued in his joint project with Adam Kaźmierczyk, which culminated in the *Sejm czterech ziem: Źródła*. As Kaźmierczyk has demonstrated in various publications, this collection has the potential to clarify numerous topics in the history of the VAA and Jewish autonomy in Poland. A desideratum is a major study coordinating the material in the Goldberg–Kaźmierczyk collection with the Hebrew-Yiddish documents in PVAA. This would likely lead to significant changes in our understanding of the structure and functioning of the VAA.

As a large collection of Hebrew-Yiddish documents relating to the *ziemstwo* (*galil*) level of Jewish councils (Jewish *sejmiki*), *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie* is doubly important. Until now, relatively little has been understood about the form, authority, and functions of these councils; how they interacted with the communities for which they were responsible; and how they related to both the VAA and to Polish authorities.

The documents in *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie* provide basic information about these councils. We learn, for example, that each was headed by a *marszałek* (marshal; Hebrew: *parnas*), the chief executive and a *wiernik* (literally trustee; Hebrew: *ne'eman*, the treasurer-comptroller). The *wiernik*, who oversaw tax assessment, drew up the budget, kept financial records, made disbursements, and dealt with general financial matters, was often also referred to as *pisarz* (scribe). *Symplarze* (appraisers; Hebrew: *shamaim*) assigned the tax burden for each constituent *kahal*. The *syndyk* (agent, lobbyist; Hebrew: *shtadlan*) was

responsible for contact with the Polish authorities. The main communities each sent to their *ziemstwo* council representatives, called in Polish *starsi* (elders) and in Hebrew referred to variably as *alufim*, *ketsinim*, *roznim*, *negidim*. There was also a *szkolnik* (Hebrew: *shamash*, Yiddish: *shamess*) who served as the council's bailiff, performing routine administrative tasks. (This must be differentiated from the alternate application of the term *szkolnik/shamess* to the synagogue beadle.)

The basic duties of the council were to allocate the tax burden among the constituent communities, manage indebtedness, adjudicate disputes within and between communities, choose representatives of the *galil* to the VAA, and appoint the *galil* rabbi. The documents reveal how the officials and members of the councils were chosen and remunerated.

In addition to such basic information, there are documents that contain facts which are significant in and of themselves and useful as building blocks of larger research projects. For example: Document no. 68 gives an accounting of how much tax money was collected from the communities of Wielkopolska 1709–12, and to whom various sums were distributed. Document no. 20 establishes regulations for moneylending that set both limits and protections for Jewish moneylenders. Document no. 149 presents the budget of the Chełm-Belz *ziemstwo* for fiscal 1751/52, and documents nos. 76 and 78 list the salaries of both Polish and Jewish officials. In document no. 193 Marek Becalowicz, the marshal of the Ruthenian *ziemstwo*, gives a detailed accounting of his income and expenses for the years 1722–25, offering a glimpse into the range of activities he was involved in and the extent of his authority. Documents nos. 155 and 224 cite the obligations, in addition to tax commitments, that a sub-community owed the main community under whose jurisdiction it fell.

In the category of piquant phenomena, documents nos. 143 and 206 highlight the obligation to purchase citrons (*etrogim*) for the Sukkot holiday as a cogent symbol of the Maciejów community's subordination to the larger one in Luboml, which sold the expensive ritual fruit to them. Tantalizingly, one document (no. 17), a royal universal dated 4 May 1666, speaks of 'false news' about 'some sort of messiah', alluding to the excitement engendered in Poland by the news of the messianic pretender Shabbetai Zevi. Its language clearly implies that neither King John Casimir nor the Jewish officials looked kindly on what they considered a disruptive movement.

With respect to the potential of these documents to complement or shift the perspective of existing Hebrew-Yiddish material, we can use the example of documents relating to figures who appear in both the PVAA and the volume under review. The rabbi of the Cracow community and *ziemstwo* from 1731 was David Szmelka. He is mentioned in the PVAA in only two footnotes. Halpern observed laconically that Szmelka's contentiousness and certain 'family matters' led to his removal from the Cracow rabbinate. Majer Bałaban had earlier noted the (in Bałaban's opinion, unproven) conversion of the rabbi's brother, Joshua, to Christianity as a putative 'family matter', and briefly described a few controversies Rabbi Szmelka was involved in. The *samorząd ziemski* collection

contains nine documents that enable tracing the course of the struggle over Szmelka's rabbinic tenure. (These were a key element in Adam Kaźmierczyk's thorough analysis of this whole episode ('Konwersja, jichus i walka o władzę w ziemstwie krakowsko-sandomierskim w latach czterdziestych XVIII wieku'), where, *inter alia*, he put forth proof of Joshua's conversion and the shadow it cast over his brother, Rabbi David.) The *samorząd ziemski* collection offers analogous material for examining the careers of other notable Jewish leaders, some highlighted in the PVAA such as the royal factor and Poznań rabbi Naftali Ickowicz (ben Yitshak) Kohen, and the doctor and *parnas* of the VAA, Abraham Izaak (Yitshak) Fortis.

Analysing this collection as a whole yields some distinct themes. Most of these documents represent a response to some conflict or problem. The most common cause of strife was taxation. A typical complaint was that a main community was imposing an unfair tax burden on one or more of its sub-communities. Conversely, main communities would assert how difficult it was to collect tax money from their hinterland (as long as it was the Jewish *ziemstwo's* responsibility to both allocate and collect the taxes; after 1717, collection was the purview of army units). Communities sometimes abused tax collectors, who also faced dangers on the roads. Often powerful nobles extended their *protekcja* to communities in towns they ruled over to ease these communities' tax burden or exempt them altogether. The Podolian governor (*wojewoda*) Stefan Humiecki, for example, demanded the recognition of the communities under his aegis as a separate fiscal unit to get them a more favorable tax allocation and tighten his control over them. One of the innovative interpretations of these documents by the editors is to point out how main communities like Cracow and Poznań sought to separate administratively from the rest of their *ziemstwo* so as to shed the responsibility for taxing the sub-communities, with all of its attendant headaches.

Other types of conflict centered on the issue of which main community had jurisdiction over which sub-communities; disputes between rabbis and their *kahal*; disputes over debts; and battles over the choice of rabbis and Jewish *ziemstwo* leaders. The conflict was so intense in Wielkopolska in 1687 that rebels violently ousted the *starsi* (no. 167). Another source of conflict was occasionally a suspicion of corruption in appointments or misappropriation or embezzlement of public funds. There were also confrontations with Polish officials, Church representatives, and powerful noblemen.

A fundamental aspect of Jewish autonomy reflected in these documents is the extent to which the Jewish councils were an integral part of the Polish administration. The simple fact that so many of these documents were translations of Jewish documents into Polish for the benefit of Polish officials bespeaks the intention of those officials to supervise Jewish affairs closely. The contents of the documents demonstrate how deeply the King, royal officials, and noble landowners were involved in the routine operations of the Jewish councils. Setting up rules for collecting and disbursing tax monies, the King and treasury officials also often

sought to protect the Jewish councils and individual Jews from rapacious officials, violent elements, and competing authorities. There are many examples of Jewish authorities combining with Polish lay or clerical ones to enforce rulings or oppose moves by recalcitrant communities or individuals. Over time, there was a growing tendency for Polish officials to intervene directly in budgetary matters, in the appointments of rabbis and Jewish leaders, and in relations between the main and sub-communities and intra-Jewish controversies. In some cases, a Polish official dictated where and when the Jewish *sejmik* would meet, in the presence of his representatives.

An instant classic, *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie* is a treasure house of information, data, and themes. Kaźmierczyk and Zarubin have presented researchers with a wonderful gift. It will serve as a foundation for myriad projects for many years to come.

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Éric Anceau, *Les élites françaises: Des Lumières au grand confinement*, Paris: Passés composés, 2020, 462 pp.

The growing rift and misunderstanding between the elites and the rest of society are all but ever-present in French newspapers headlines. However, the media's broad interest in the matter has so far not been reflected in historiography. It was not until a few months ago that there appeared a study that could be regarded as an in-depth and systematic analysis of the evolution of the relations between French society and its elites over the centuries.

The problem was tackled by Éric Anceau (born in 1966) in *Les élites françaises: Des Lumières au grand confinement*. Associated with the Sorbonne (Sorbonne Université, formerly Paris-Sorbonne IV), Anceau specializes in the social and political history of the nineteenth century, particularly the history of the Second French Empire (1852–70). He is the author of dozens of books and articles, which have brought him recognition and numerous awards, from, among many others, the Académie Française and the Fondation Napoléon. In addition to the Sorbonne, Anceau has also lectured at Sciences-Po. The possibility of lecturing at these two different universities — the former is regarded as having a strictly academic profile, while the latter is famous for being more practical in its teaching — became for him one of the main inspirations to explore the question of the French elites and their relationship with the rest of society.

Anceau defines the elite as a not very large but cohesive group of people who wield influence over society on the local, national, and supranational levels (p. 20). In his study, however, the author focuses mainly on the political elites exerting pressure on French society from the national level. Another issue that should be clarified is the plural form of the noun 'elite' used in the book's title.

Contrary to what might be expected, the author does not analyze with equal attention elites representing various milieus, for example, economic or cultural. In fact, elites other than the political one interest him insofar as they spread to the latter. Yet this does not mean that the term 'elites' has been placed in the title by accident. It draws the readers' attention to the constant change French decision-makers undergo regarding both their origins and values.

Reflections on the evolution of the relations between the French elites and the rest of society also inspire the author to try to answer whether it is possible to rebuild the damaged authority of contemporary French decision-makers. Thus the author's attempt to understand what determines membership in this privileged group, how its relations with society have changed, and whether it has always been blamed for all of the nation's ills and failures turns into a contribution from the sphere of political science and sociology.

Formulating such research questions determines, in some sense, the methods used by the author. Although, at first, the book may seem to be a classic example of an analysis dealing with French political history, it is impossible not to notice the influence on the author of the Annales School. Anceau likes to draw on the achievements and methods developed in related sciences: philosophy, political science, or sociology, especially participant observation. Such an interdisciplinary approach is, in a way, demanded by the fact that the analysis concerns 'three hundred years of confrontation and lack of understanding' between the French elites and French society, a period encompassing not just events going back as far as the early eighteenth century, but also contemporary events including the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The book under review refers to several hundred studies and articles relating to historical and social sciences. In archival research, it is hard to speak of any new material that was not used earlier. However, bearing in mind that the author's aim is to analyse specific phenomena over time, such archival research seems neither necessary nor relevant.

The book, which is 400 pages long, comprises 11 thematic chapters. They concern: attempts to expand the French political elite to include wealthy and distinguished individuals under the absolute monarchy in the eighteenth century; calls for valuing merit and talent over class background and for granting equal political rights to women during the French Revolution; attempts in the Napoleonic era to create the so-called 'new nobility' comprising people from noble families and people without the right connections but with merits in various fields; failed attempts to reestablish the old order during the Bourbon Restoration and the eventual acceptance of bankers and merchants among the French decision makers during the July Monarchy period; the introduction of male universal suffrage, which led to the strengthening of bonds between the elites, society and government during the reign of Louis Napoleon (1848–70); attempts to put into practice the ideas of egalitarianism and professionalism of France's political elites during the Third Republic; strong divisions of the elites during the inter-war period; the gap between the expectations of society and the activities of the French political

elites during the Second World War; including women among decision makers and attempts to introduce technocracy in the second half of the twentieth century; the growing misunderstanding between the elites and society, compounded by new forms of media over the last two decades. In addition, at the end of the book, the author adds an unplanned chapter devoted to the COVID-19 crisis. In it, Anceau illustrates society's huge distrust in the Paris decision-makers and sheds light on the growing role of local elites to whom the central government is forced to listen more and more. The book ends with an epilogue which, in addition to conclusions stemming from the analysed material, also contains suggestions concerning possibilities of ending the impasse characterizing the current relations between the elites and society.

The political crises which serve as dividing lines between the successive chapters in each case led — to a greater or lesser extent — to transformations within the ruling elites and in the relations between them and the rest of society. Yet, despite the violent nature of these external events, the very process of transformation and expansion of the elites should be described as evolutionary and ongoing. It is not without reason that the author begins his analysis with a description of the rule of the absolute Bourbon monarchs, when the French elite, hitherto open only to those bound by blood ties (*noblesse d'épée*), began increasingly to accept wealthy individuals of high merit but without family connections (*noblesse de robe*). These changes were sanctioned by the events of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. On the other hand, what can be regarded as a genuine contribution of the events of 1789–1815 is the beginning of a discussion about power-sharing with representatives of the people — not wealthy but of high merit — and women. Another change, which came after defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, is the adoption of the concept of the need for people aspiring to join the official and political cadre to have professional education. As we read the book, we may gain the impression that in France, a diploma from a specific university is often a fig leaf for people who are predestined to rule by their family connections but who, under the impact of the revolutionary slogans, need some proof of talent and professionalism in order to take up such positions. In practice, such schools usually remain inaccessible to representatives of groups without the right connections; this means that such a method of selecting the elites comes up against increasing criticism, forcing the decision-makers to create a new formula to expand political elites in France.

The author also examines how the people became more and more involved in the affairs of the state and thus — by becoming interested in matters of national importance — became more demanding and critical when it came to its elites. As in the case of transformations of the elites, these are gradual changes. A turning point in this process came with the organization of plebiscites in the early nineteenth century; from this moment on, France's government came to be legitimized by society's universal consent. The consent subsequently evolved into will, manifested today in general elections, although this method of legitimizing

government seems to be increasingly contested. This phenomenon is associated with the problem of the decline of the ruling elites' authority in society's eyes. As the author notes, while previously a crisis in the form of a revolution or lost war was needed to bring this about, now this happens almost on a daily basis, sometimes even for quite trivial reasons. The main role in this process is played by news and daily gossip sites, which — by publicizing politicians' slip-ups — manage to ridicule them, undermining their right to decide the country's fate, especially in the eyes of people who support opposing political parties.

The author tries to explain the reasons why society used to challenge its elites. As a rule, the reasons fall into one of two categories. The first, with a longer tradition, brings together arguments highlighting the alienation of the elites. Initially, this was symbolized by a lack of family ties going beyond the narrow circle of privileged individuals, then by the representation of economic interests of strictly selected groups. What is regarded as a manifestation of such alienation today is the preferment of European to national affairs. The next category emerges in connection with the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. It highlighted the weakness of the elites understood as a lack of practical preparation for governing the country and an inability to make decisions. This was to have been remedied by the opening of schools providing a comprehensive education for future public officials. However, the Second World War revealed a failure of the system when the French decision-makers incompetently tried to hide their lack of values and indecisiveness behind a mask of cold calculation. Nevertheless, after 1945 the concept of professionalizing the cadre was chosen again. This was the basis of the prestigious *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), whose diploma today provides a ticket to the French government and regional administration and thus to the country's political elite.

The book under review will certainly bring much insight into the elites and their relations with French society. Presenting the subject matter over such a long period and with the use of methods typical of various scholarly disciplines makes it possible to understand the relations better and to observe the patterns of their evolution. The study is also an excellent example of how to use methods and terminologies typical of sociology or political sciences in historical research without losing sight of the tools of historians. While this has been well known for decades to scholars studying social history, in the case of political history — of which the book under review is an example — an interdisciplinary approach is not very frequent. From the point of view of Polish readers, another asset of the book is that it provides an insight into the mentality of the contemporary French elites and France's political life, introducing such figures as Didier Raoult or Alexandre Benall. In addition, it helps readers understand what institutions like the ENA, an essential element of the political and cultural identity of France's political elites, commonly mean to the French.

Still, some opinions or comparisons seem too simplified, particularly in the chapter discussing contemporary events. An example is the comparison of

the Parisian elites fleeing to their houses in the provinces during the COVID-19 pandemic to the behaviour of the elites during the Second World War. According to the author, in both cases, the elites cared about their own comfort, disregarding the consequences these moves had for people living in the provinces (p. 362). Another issue that may make reading a bit harder is the presence of lengthy sentences of as many as fifteen lines. The same goes for the author's excessive tendency to refer to facts, which sometimes also disrupts the clarity of the message, making it more difficult to follow the evolution of the elites and their relations with society.

Nevertheless, despite minor shortcomings, the book is a fascinating source for discussing and reflecting on historical and contemporary topics. Paraphrasing the words of Marc Bloch, Anceau stresses that it is impossible to understand and write history well without being an attentive observer of modern life. Having read the book, it can be also said that it is impossible to understand well the political life of modern France without having some knowledge of its history.

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Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2020, 936 pp.

Despite calls — emerging already in the 1990s — for the replacement of nation-centric perspectives in Napoleonic studies with pan-European ones, scholars have remained mainly overwhelmingly faithful to the former. Even rarer are studies that go beyond Europe in their reflections. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that the Napoleonic era had to wait a long time for the publication of the first significant monograph analysing its course and consequences from a broader, global perspective. This difficult task was taken on by a Georgian historian from Louisiana State University, Alexander Mikaberidze.

Although Mikaberidze was fascinated with the Napoleonic period from an early age, there was initially no indication that his life would be associated with academia. While studying law at the University of Tbilisi, he simultaneously worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. In the end, however, his childhood fascination won. Mikaberidze decided to continue his career at one of the most thriving academic centres of French studies: Florida State University.

Having defended his doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Donald D. Howard, Mikaberidze focused on the study of military history. His studies have been translated into several foreign languages bringing him several awards, including the Polish Golden Bee award for the Napoleonic Book

of the Year. However, if his previous works made him known mainly to scholars of military history, his book *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*, published by Oxford University Press in 2020, should bring him recognition on a much broader scale.

As the author himself stresses in the preface to his monograph, the Napoleonic wars were not the first conflict in history that became global. Unlike in previous periods, however, these wars left their mark on world history on a scale never before imagined. Consequently, as Mikaberidze puts it, 'Napoleon indirectly became the architect of independent South America, reshaped the Middle East, strengthened British imperial ambitions, and contributed to the rise of American power' (p. XI). Understanding this phenomenon has been hampered by a lack of studies which would focus on local narratives and histories (p. XV). A desire to fill this research gap was Mikaberidze's main motivation to prepare the study under review.

The ambitious goals set by the author are reflected in the book's unusual size. Its nearly 1,000 pages are grouped into 24 chronological-geographical chapters, which trace the political and military history of the period from the pre-revolutionary times to the Congress of Vienna. The monograph is based on an impressive number of studies and sources from many European archives, including those in Sweden, Spain, and Russia, written mainly in English, French, Russian, and, to a lesser extent, Spanish and German.

Although the book focuses on events in Europe for the most part, the author does not analyse the various phenomena solely from the French perspective. The English and the Russian viewpoints appear just as frequently. Significantly, in describing Europe's history Mikaberidze devotes much attention to regions so often overlooked in Napoleonic historiography, such as Scandinavia, the Balkans, or Eastern Europe. In addition, there are also chapters devoted to the Americas, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire, as well as references to the history of the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, and the Indian Ocean basin. Although this is not a rule, in most cases, the chapters begin with an introduction to the internal situation of a given country or region prior to 1789. Then the author usually analyses the military, internal, economic, and political reforms carried out in a particular region in the beginning of the nineteenth century. This clear structure helps readers who do not necessarily specialize in the history of such regions as the Caribbean or Indochina to find their way around the book.

Worthy of note and praise is the scope of Mikaberidze's reflections: this is the first study on the period written with such geographical breadth. Nonetheless, those who assume that the book will provide them with only a factual insight into the general history of the nineteenth century, will be pleasantly disappointed. Even if sometimes a bit too factual and detailed, the study leads to some original observations concerning the Napoleonic era in both its European and global dimensions.

For example, the author demonstrates that the French plan for the invasion of British India, often presented as a quixotic episode, was taken very seriously at

the time by Britons and Frenchmen alike. Such conclusions can be reached by a simultaneous analyse of the British diplomatic efforts in Oman, Afghanistan, and Persia, whose ultimate goal was to secure the 'jewel in Britain's crown' against an expected French invasion. Another interesting conclusion formulated thanks to the global perspective embraced, is that even before June 1812, Napoleonic France was in a hopeless situation in its rivalry with Britain. The latter, having dissuaded French allies such as Persia, and having stripped France of its overseas colonies, consolidated its supremacy, shattering the French dreams of becoming a global superpower.

Abandoning a Franco-centric viewpoint allows us to see the analysed events from the perspective of other great powers. Particularly interesting seems to be the Russian one, at which Mikaberidze excels. The author presents Russia's policy towards Europe, the Caucasus and even towards Latin America. In doing so, he successfully tries to challenge the common belief that the ambitions and horizons of the nineteenth-century Russian elites did not go beyond the Asian steppes.

On the other hand, the multiplicity of the themes covered in the book made it sometimes hard to follow. Moreover, it seems worth asking whether the long introduction to the French Revolution or the description of the events in France, Spain and Great Britain – which takes up nearly half the book – was really necessary. While it is understandable that the author wants to present a complete picture of the period, it seems that more interesting than a factual summary of the well-studied political history of Western countries would have been to ponder more on the impact of the Napoleonic era on these countries' colonial policies and their relations with the less-studied regions.

Unfortunately, the partial abandonment of the Western research perspective has not set the author free from the charms of Anglo-Saxon historiography. Sometimes, when formulating theories concerning the functioning of the Napoleonic empire in Europe, it seems that he embraces too easily some old British concepts, which do not work well in the Eastern European context. Unverified assumptions lead to questionable conclusions, which, repeated uncritically by other authors, perpetuate a simplistic picture of the Napoleonic era.

For example, when Mikaberidze touches upon the Polish question, one may have an impression that he uncritically draws on several Anglo-Saxon studies and repeats both, their conclusions and references. Following them, and referring readers to some outdated analyses when an English-language monograph on the Duchy of Warsaw has been available for several years (Jarosław Czuby, *The Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815: A Napoleonic Outpost in Central Europe*, 2017) shows that the author did not necessarily apply the required dose of criticism when selecting the literature. And while it is easy for a Polish reader to spot these shortcomings in the case of the Duchy of Warsaw, it can be a problematic task in the case of regions of which we know very little.

These minor shortcomings, so inevitable in books of such a scope, do not make it any less worth reading. Nonetheless, I am far from sharing the opinion

that after the publication of Alexander Mikaberidze's book Napoleonic scholars can finally intellectually retire. Quite the reverse. Overcoming old patterns of thinking about the Napoleonic era as an event relevant only to Western Europe, the book opens brand new chapter in the Napoleonic studies.

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Ewa Wólkiewicz, *Proletariusze modlitwy? Drogi karier, finanse i kultura materialna niższego kleru w średniowiecznej Nysie* [Proletarians of Prayer? Career Paths, Finances and Material Culture of the Lower Clergy in Medieval Nysa], Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 2020, 612 pp.

In recent years we have been observing the development of prosopographical research into the clergy that is focused primarily on an analysis of cathedral and collegiate chapters. To date, the lower clergy has garnered considerably less interest in Polish historiography, even though the prosopographical method is also promising regarding this category.¹ An example of an attempt to take up the issue is a work written by the author of the present review on the topic of the clergymen of Toruń (German: Thorn).² An appreciably fuller response to the shortage of such studies is Ewa Wólkiewicz's monograph on the lower clergy in medieval Nysa (German: Neisse; Czech: Nisa). The book is a sui generis continuation of her research into the history of the Church in Nysa.³ In her previous monograph, she included lists of clergymen who became the protagonists of her study this time around.

The book is divided into two parts. The first — analytical — discusses the issue of how the clergy functioned and comprises five chapters. The second — factual — presents the biographical notes of clerics in seven annexes. In the introduction, apart from reference to typical matters, such as the state of research and the source basis, the author has undertaken an analysis of terminological issues that are vitally important in the context of the diversity of the lower clergy (pp. 8–11). Starting from the classical interpretation of the term

¹ See Enno Bünz and Klaus-Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt, 'Zu den geistlichen Lebenswelten in Holstein, Lauenburg und Lübeck zwischen 1450 und 1550', in *Geistliche Lebenswelten: Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte der Geistlichen in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen, Neumünster, 2005, pp. 11–57 (pp. 15–16).

² Marcin Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni w średniowiecznym Toruniu: Studium prozograficzne*, Toruń, 2012.

³ Ewa Wólkiewicz, *Kościół i jego wierni: Struktury kościelne i formy pobożności w średniowiecznej Nysie*, Cracow, 2014.

'lower clergy' (German: *Niederklerus*), proposed by Dietrich Kurze,⁴ the author has defined this group as 'holders of lower benefices' (p. 10), which constitutes the most apt definitional proposal for future research.

Chapter 1 concerns Church institutions and benefices in Nysa. The sacral topography of the city, which the author presented in detail in her previous book⁵ constitutes an excellent point of departure for her deliberations on the clergy. Firstly, it allows an attempt at determining their number in the city. However, in light of the fragmentary nature of data, this can only be a rough estimate — as has been rightly stressed in the monograph. The chapter is supplemented with a tabular list of prebends held by altarists, with information about the date of foundation, the invocation, stipends, and founders.

Chapter 2 references the classical research questions of prosopographical research and includes an analysis of the social and territorial origins, educational backgrounds, and career paths of various categories of clergy. The author has presented these issues separately for parish priests, altarists proper, preachers, chaplains, vicars, mansionaries, and Church servants. Particularly interesting is the comprehensive subchapter devoted to altarists. This contains prosopographical analyses and presents significant issues concerning the entitlements and duties of this category of the clergy, and outlines the path to receiving a prebend. The matters mentioned above are associated with the problem of the material foundation upon which the lower clergy functioned, which is discussed using a most intriguing source, namely extant bills from one prebend.⁶

The next three chapters go outside the realm of traditional prosopography and propose a much broader look at the lower clergy. In Chapter 3, the author presents the issue of the living conditions of the lower clergy (a topic strongly neglected by historiography), focusing on fascinating matters such as the residences of the clergy and their furnishings. At the same time, Chapter 4 discusses the book collections and writings of the lower clergy, which constituted an element of the intellectual culture of this milieu. The final — fifth — chapter is a brief review of the clergy's stance towards the Reformation.

Two-thirds of the work is devoted to biographical notes of clerics from Nysa, which are preceded by a list (Annex 1). The author has included the profiles of thirty-one parish priests of the parish of St James and three parish priests of the Church of St John in a chronological arrangement (Annex 2). Annex 3 contains five biographical notes of clergymen whom historiography has incorrectly recognized as having held the parish of Nysa. In contrast, in

⁴ Dietrich Kurze, 'Der niedere Klerus in der sozialen Welt des späteren Mittelalters', in idem, *Klerus, Ketzer, Kriege und Prophetien: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Jürgen Sarnowsky, Marie-Luise Heckmann and Stuart Jenks, Warendorf, 1996, pp. 1–36 (pp. 2–3).

⁵ Wólkiewicz, *Kościół i jego wierni*, pp. 41–156.

⁶ Conclusions drawn from this chapter have already been published in English: eadem, 'The Ecclesiastical Proletariat? The Income of the Lesser Clergy in the Late Middle Ages Is Exemplified with the Accounting Book of St. Martin's Altar in Nysa', *KHKM*, 67, 2019, 1, pp. 3–16.

Annex 4, the author has assembled clerics who held ineffective provisions for the parish of St James. The biographical notes of the remaining clergymen from Nysa, arranged alphabetically, have been incorporated in Annex 5, which contains the numbered biographical notes of six hundred and twenty-three clerics who were confirmed as having held benefices in Nysa and biographical notes of persons who were unconfirmed holders of benefices. These two groups have been presented jointly and in alphabetical order. However, persons of uncertain status have been omitted from the numeration, and their personal details entered in square brackets. In her analysis, the author turns attention to a problem that remains of considerable significance when studying the lower clergy: the difficulty of unequivocally determining which clergymen associated with Nysa held benefices in the city. This was connected, among others, with the activities of the local priestly fraternity, of which even parish priests from nearby villages could become members. As we can see, providing a universal and all-encompassing definition of the 'lower clergy' is no easy matter. Analytical categories such as 'the clergymen of Nysa' will always be open, which is aptly stressed by the very arrangement of the biographical notes. The book ends with presenting a cleric erroneously considered an altarist from Nysa (Annex 6) and of seven clergymen who held ineffective provisions for prebends in the city (Annex 7).

It is worth noting here that the author's research questions do not simply follow other studies into canonical milieux regarding issues of prosopography. As she has correctly indicated, when analysing the lower clergy, we should not 'simply apply the research tools developed in the course of studies of the higher clergy. In particular, practically all statistics based on prosopographical materials should be treated as highly conventional' (p. 10). This appropriately expresses the specific autonomy of research into the lower clergy, which requires a separate methodological procedure. The need for such a reflection on the part of scholars follows from the sheer number and variety of clergymen and the somewhat different source base, which necessitates a different interpretational approach.

The gathering together of detailed biographical data is without doubt an immense achievement of the reviewed work. The elaboration of biographical notes that are as full as possible is the basis of prosopography, as Radosław Krajniak has stressed in his comprehensive research into the clergy.⁷ However, the method would lose much of its potential without an in-depth analysis of the collected data and their placement in the broader context of living conditions, culture, and social relations. Thus, the author has rightly observed that 'the classical prosopographical study does not exhaust the subject matter connected with the presence of the lower clergy in the city' (p. 22). Her proposed conjoining of biographical notes with an analysis of various issues from the life of the clergy must be

⁷ See recently Radosław Krajniak, 'Around the Late Medieval Clergy of the Wieluń Region: Notes and Additions on the Margins of Tadeusz Nowak's Book, *Duchowieństwo ziemi wieluńskiej w drugiej połowie XV i początku XVI wieku: Studium prozopograficzne*, Wieluńskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wieluń 2017, pp. 177', *Res Historica*, 50, 2020, pp. 627–44 (p. 641).

considered as particularly important and, indeed, as a considerable contribution to prosopography as we know it.⁸ Such an approach fits in with the research of Dietrich Kurze, cited above, who also stressed that the financial affairs and social life of the clergy were important research topics.⁹

Therefore, the contents of the monograph fully correspond with the promise of its title. In its analytical part, the work focuses on careers, finances, and the material culture of the lower clergy. And while it may have been worth the effort to analyse the clergymen of Nysa as a group with the activities of the priestly fraternity, the author has, in fact, already discussed this confraternity in her previous book.¹⁰ However, the lack of a summary to gather together answers to questions posed in the work may be a drawback.

My remaining comments are solely technical. Perhaps the alphabetical order numbering and joint arrangement of all biographical notes and using these numbers as references to specific persons in the analytical part and the list in Annex 1 would have provided greater clarity. At the same time, a list of tables would have further increased the ease of use of the study. Additionally, the book lacks an index, although the alphabetical arrangement of most biographical notes ensures that finding individual persons is not markedly difficult.

As a side note, it is worth mentioning the Polish translation — a practice concordant with Polish historiographical tradition — of the names of persons from the German linguistic circle, to which a large part of the clergymen of Nysa undoubtedly belonged. The author has systematically employed the Polish wording of names. Perhaps, however, the appropriateness of this approach should have been given more consideration, with it being limited — for example — to names commonly recorded in this way in historiography. It is challenging to decide the matter unequivocally, especially if we consider the problem of determining the descent of many members of the lower clergy. Maybe the addition of variant spellings of names and surnames to the biographical notes would have been helpful. The matter is interesting, all the more so as attempts at revising the traditional approach are becoming increasingly more frequent; Krzysztof Kwiatkowski has been particularly active in this regard,¹¹ while the author of the present

⁸ Cf. a similar proposal: Alois Trenkwalder, *Der Seelsorgeklerus der Diözese Brixen im Spätmittelalter*, Brixen, 2000.

⁹ Kurze, 'Der niedere Klerus', pp. 9–36. Cf. questionnaires: Kazimierz Dola, 'Der Breslauer Diözesanklerus im Mittelalter', in *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens im schlesischen Raum*, ed. Joachim Köhler and Rainer Bendel, 2 vols, Münster, 2002, vol. 1, pp. 393–420; Marcin Sumowski, 'Kler diecezjalny w społeczeństwie średniowiecznego Torunia — przyczynek do badań nad funkcjonowaniem duchowieństwa miejskiego epoki', in *Kościół i duchowieństwo w średniowiecznej Polsce i na obszarach sąsiednich*, ed. Andrzej Radziwiński and Radosław Biskup, Toruń, 2013, pp. 167–96.

¹⁰ Wólkiewicz, *Kościół i jego wierni*, pp. 186–95.

¹¹ See Krzysztof Kwiatkowski, *Zakon niemiecki jako 'corporatio militaris', part 1: Korporacja i krąg przynależących do niej: Kulturowe i społeczne podstawy działalności militarnej zakonu w Prusach (do początku XV wieku)*, Toruń, 2012, p. 79.

review and Radosław Krajniak¹² have taken a similar stance with respect to the Prussian clergy. A discussion on the topic could prove beneficial for contemporary Polish historiography.

Ewa Wólkiewicz's book is an example of the successful broadening of the classical research focus of prosopographical research. The author has tackled a complex of important issues that continue to be marginalized in historiography and thereby helped open new research fields for Polish historians. In this sense, her monograph will prove its worth as a complete study of the clergy in one city and provide an impetus for further research. I am convinced that the book will constitute a point of reference for scholars specializing in the history of the clergy for a long time to come. Therefore, we should express the hope that it will contribute in particular to furthering research into the living conditions and book collections of the lower clergy, or, to put it more broadly, into the material and intellectual culture of the titular 'proletariat.' Finally, it would be beneficial if this were undertaken for a broader territorial scope, and perhaps with the participation of a larger research team.

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Adam Leszczyński, *Ludowa historia Polski: Historia wyzysku i oporu: Mitologia panowania* [A People's History of Poland: History of Exploitation and Resistance: Mythology of Dominance], Warsaw: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2020, 669 pp.

It is a strenuous task to review the monumental historical essay by Adam Leszczyński. I dare say very few people would be able to critically review all (or even most, for that matter) of the author's theses on Polish history between the tenth century (occasionally even earlier events are discussed) and 1989 (and sometimes after). In this book, the selection and interpretation of facts are as important as the ideological framework and messaging.

As the author writes in the introduction, his work is devoted to three main topics. The first one is 'the history of the mechanisms of exploitation in Poland'. Putting the matter in social science terms, he states that 'the objective of the book would be the following: it is a story of how much surplus value the elites of our country appropriated and what social institutions enabled them to do so; what evolutions these institutions underwent; and finally — to what degree were they similar to Western institutions, and to what degree were they peripheral

¹² See Radosław Krajniak, *Duchowieństwo kapituły katedralnej w Chełmży do 1466 roku: Studium prosopograficzne*, Toruń, 2013.

and idiosyncratic' (p. 14). The second problem examined in the book is 'the rule over others' and the way it was justified. Already at this point the author puts forward theses that are essential to his reasoning. As Leszczyński claims, these justifications were initially

rooted in the religious order (even as late as in the nineteenth century) or ethnogenetic mythology: many authors believed that the nobility (*szlachta*) and peasants came from different peoples (some even claimed, as recently as the twentieth century, that the two groups belonged to genetically different 'races'). In the twentieth century, the clerical intelligentsia that ruled the Second Polish Republic justified its dominant position by the necessity to protect the common good: the regained Polish state. However, for many peasants and proletarians (not to mention national minorities), this state was just as oppressive as the former partitioning powers. In later history, the Polish People's Republic mercilessly exploited the same working class whom, according to the dominant ideology, the communist party allegedly represented. Finally, as the Third Polish Republic built democracy, the industrial working class was sentenced to social and material degradation, once again, on behalf of the national interest (pp. 14–15).

The third objective of the book is to present the history of resistance to authority — 'resistance that was aimed not at the ethnically alien occupying powers but against the social order' (p. 15).

Who is the collective protagonist of the book? The answer Leszczyński offers is somewhat labile, even given that the term as such seems vague. In the closing methodological essay, the scholar defines 'the people' (*lud*) as the "bottom 90 per cent" inhabiting the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and in the later period — the resurrected Polish state' (p. 569). As the author further elaborates, a people's history of Poland is a history of 'the governed, and not the government; the poor, and not the rich; those who were mostly uneducated and always subjugated to authority' (p. 569). As another fragment reads, those subjugated include 'peasants, the urban poor, women, Jews, and other categories of people whom the elites expected to be obedient and who often did not have full political rights (different in different historical periods)' (p. 570).

As these citations demonstrate, the definitions used by Leszczyński are imprecise. It is dubious whether women and Jews were 'common people' *en bloc* — it seems 'subjugation' is not the best criterion to decide whether particular women or Jews belonged to the group Leszczyński is most interested in. To provide a *reductio ad absurdum*: were wealthy Jewish factory owners from Łódź 'common people'? I would not say so. By the same token, different women had different social statuses.

The author declares he always sides with the underprivileged and tries to give them a voice (p. 15). Leszczyński also does not believe that historians should use disengaged language (p. 14). As the scholar claims, the role of 'a people's history of Poland' is to 'do justice to the governed instead of repeating what has already been written in hundreds of textbooks'. This systematic emotionality is

similar to the approach employed by Henryk Ślabek in his work on the social history of Poland after 1944 which Adam Leszczyński did not use as a source.¹ However, the author is aware that many aspects of the common people's behavior and mentality were ethically reprehensible (Leszczyński mentions this multiple times while discussing particular events). In the last paragraph of the work, the author writes that amongst the Polish nobility and the intelligentsia 'there was an array of righteous, just people who selflessly worked for a truly democratic Poland. A "people's history" cannot be reduced to a simplistic Manichean parable' (p. 572).

The author claims that the chronology of his essay is dictated by the objectives he wants to achieve. Consequently, Leszczyński deliberately decided not to periodize Polish history in a traditional manner, 'with each turning point in the story marked by a political event such as the fall of the First Polish Republic' (p. 16). Hence the period between the mid-eighteenth century and 1864 (described in Chapter 5: 'The End of Serfdom') is treated as a cohesive unit — the focus is on the gradual abolition of serfdom rather than the partitions, military conflicts, and national uprisings. Leszczyński also proposes to treat the period between 1864 and 1944 as another such unit (Chapter 6: 'Peripheral Capitalism'), even though it was 'marked by the restoration of Poland's independence and two world wars'. In fact, World War II is almost absent from the narrative (except for few remarks, including pp. 444–45, 498 ff.). Given the subject of the work, this decision is quite risky, not to say wrong. The social processes that occurred during World War II (what I mean here are not only the consequences of the Holocaust) profoundly influenced the people Leszczyński examines.

The author does not explain the chronological frameworks of other chapters. While the periodization of Chapter 7 is clear 'The Polish People's Republic: Exploited for the Party 1944–1989', the decisions behind some other parts of the books are ambiguous — specifically, Chapter 1 — 'Two Nations: Myths of Domination and Enslavement', Chapter 2 — 'The Beginnings (Until the Fourteenth Century)', Chapter 3 — 'Melioratione Terre (Until 1520)', and Chapter 4 — 'Turning the Screws: 1520–1768'.

Apart from being a narrative on the people's history of Poland arranged in a chronological and topical structure, the book includes a methodological essay titled 'How to Write a People's History of Poland?'. I will further elaborate on this subject later in this review.

The sources used by the scholar include academic works, published editions of primary sources, press articles, and, rarely, archival resources. The number of sources Leszczyński researched is enormous — the book includes 2,060 footnotes. Nevertheless, the author faced a major difficulty — the protagonists of his book themselves created almost no primary sources. This is hardly surprising, since for centuries they were mostly illiterate and did not create many ego-documents. It is all the more noteworthy that the author looked for 'traces of

¹ Henryk Ślabek, *O społecznej historii Polski 1945–1989*, Warsaw and Kutno, 2009.

peasants' in primary sources created by representatives of other social groups, although the author is aware of all the methodological difficulties of this task (p. 117). Leszczyński primarily examined legal norms, court records, inventories, wills, and transaction records. He also inspected the literature and journalistic texts. The scholar offers an interesting analysis of laments and supplications, two primary sources that common people produced. Apart from their content, Leszczyński also points to formal differences (linguistic formulae that expressed submission or dignity).

As the research objectives are presented in the context of socio-political and economic transformations in Poland, the essay is more than just a history of peasant oppression.

In the chapters devoted to medieval and early modern Poland, Leszczyński focuses on the conflict between the peasantry and the nobility. In his opinion the Khmelnytsky Uprising was the most significant popular revolt in the period. The author analyses it as a social conflict.

According to Leszczyński, elements of the titular 'mythology of domination' were already present in the Middle Ages and in the early modern era. The scholar thus analyses the myths produced by Sarmatism and the so-called 'conquest' theory of the genesis of the Polish state; he also provides extensive quotations from works that justified the differences between the ruling nobility/lords and their subjects, manifested not only in their respective wealth and clothing, but also in their ethnicity. The latter concept was still treated as 'scientific knowledge (or a viable hypothesis at the very least)' (p. 47) as late as the beginning of the twentieth century.

As Leszczyński notes, early modern handbooks on land management by esteemed authors such as Anzelm Gostomski and Jakub Kazimierz Haur include excerpts demonstrating that 'absolute power over the subjects — the power over life and death' was considered as something obvious. Haur even wrote that 'the harder peasants work, the healthier they are' (p. 131). Leszczyński also mentions that the nobility could easily punish peasants with the death penalty (p. 163).

As the author notes, between the mid-sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries 'the legal status of serfs drastically deteriorated. They were downgraded from human beings — lower in rank and dependent on their lord — to what was essentially almost "movable property"' (p. 158). While noting incidents of serf peasant trade, the author adds that the phenomenon was not specific exclusively to Poland but also occurred in German states, including East Prussia, as late as in the eighteenth century (p. 161).

Nevertheless, in these parts of the book the author tries to see peasants as more than victims of exploitation by the nobility. Their resistance strategies included not only the relatively rare peasant revolts (according to the author, these hardly occurred because the people feared cruel punishment) but also sabotage and theft of the lords' property (p. 178). As Leszczyński notes, these strategies were rational in the reality of serfdom, evolved depending on the economic and

political circumstances, and could be divided into 'collective strategies' (such as revolts) and 'private strategies' (for example flight). The author also argues that the peasant uprising of 1038 was one of the foundations of Polish statehood. In my opinion this thesis is somewhat difficult to prove.

Further on Leszczyński discusses the peasants' position during the Enlightenment era, noting that no real reforms were undertaken. He also writes about the approach the leaders of the Polish national uprisings had towards the peasant question, and describes the reforms that ultimately led to the abolition of serfdom in Poland. These topics are well recognized and have been extensively analysed in secondary sources. What Leszczyński manages to contribute is a vivid account of the discord between the national question and the agrarian question — as he writes, the peasants robbing one of the landed properties in 1831 screamed: 'Hura! Polska w skórę wzięła' (Hurrah! Poland took a beating!) (p. 303). The author also underscores the extreme poverty the peasants had to endure in the nineteenth century, including cases of cannibalism in Galicja in 1847 (p. 335).

In Chapter 6, Leszczyński yet again shows his talent for vivid description as he describes the formation of workers' groups: 'The first generations of Polish workers [...] were managed with a whip — economically and literally' (p. 305). He also interestingly presents account of nineteenth- and twentieth-century labour revolts and strikes. His visions of the Łódź revolt of 1892 and the revolution (or perhaps uprising?) of 1905–07 are particularly attention-grabbing. As the scholar describes the latter event, he elaborates on the wave of lynchings, criminal and political violence (p. 421), the fights between political parties that devoured over a thousand lives (p. 424), etc. The scholar is right not to reproduce the idea that the peasantry was particularly patriotically involved in the 1920 Polish-Soviet War, contrary to what historiography may suggest. His portrayal of the common people in the Second Polish Republic is bitter and centred on deep conflicts with the ruling elites. Leszczyński also describes police brutality against the peasantry, especially in the 1930s (pp. 464–65). According to the scholar, the Second Polish Republic belonged to 'the clerical and military intelligentsia' (p. 474).

Chapter 7 presents the role of the communist era in the people's history of Poland. I will discuss it more extensively here because of my own research interests. The author focuses on the 1940s, 1950s, and — to a lesser extent — 1960s, examining four topics: protests in factories; land reform; agricultural collectivization; and upward social mobility.

Adam Leszczyński is right to elaborate on the repressions against the revolting workers and the upward social mobility, experienced chiefly by the rural population moving to urban areas, although it should be noted that the latter process began decelerating in the 1960s. The author however does not discuss the stigma of upward mobility; neither does he describe the social consequences that followed the shift of the main focus of economic activity to the industrial

sector in the 1970s.² It is hard to understand why Leszczyński chose to include remarks on alcoholism, corruption, and theft in the section devoted to upward social mobility.

Given that the author chose to treat women as a group that belongs to the common people, he should have provided more details about their situation after 1944. Most academic works on women in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, propose that after the collapse of communism, a conservative backlash against gender equality occurred. Researchers note that attempts to exclude women from the public sphere were caused by problems such as high unemployment rates. In Poland, the 1993 abortion ban is a spectacular example of backlash. However, gender equality was targeted already during de-Stalinization. After the death of Stalin, mass layoffs of women workers took place; the local branches of the League of Women in workplaces were shut down; and women were encouraged to return to domestic labour rather than work in the industrial sector.

From this point of view, the last two decades of communism mark a peak of traditional gender politics. Pro-natalist policies were employed, on the one hand introducing support for pregnant and child-rearing women, and on the other — reinforcing the reproductive role of women. To what extent were these policies aimed at excluding women from the workforce? This issue deserves further investigation.

This decline of gender equality in post-Stalinist communism, justified by traditional cultural norms and hierarchical gender relations, has been dubbed ‘conservative modernity.’³ Unfortunately, Adam Leszczyński does not discuss these issues in his work.

As Leszczyński claims in the concluding chapter of the book (‘Conclusion: Violence and Emancipation’), ‘the people’s history of Poland is a history of emancipation, strenuously and forcefully obtained’ (p. 530). However, I failed to find a precise definition of emancipation in the work, unless the enumeration on page 529 can be treated as such. It mentions: personal freedom, abolition of serfdom, land reform, workers’ self-governing bodies, better wages, and efficient allocation of public housing (p. 529). It does not seem like this list can replace a proper definition. Leszczyński does not clarify the relationship between emancipation and equality for different groups (for example women in the Polish People’s Republic). It also remains unclear which groups enjoyed equality in the Polish People’s Republic, and to what extent.

² Maria Halamska, *Wieś polska 1918–2018: W poszukiwaniu źródeł teraźniejszości*, Warsaw, 2020, p. 19.

³ Małgorzata Fidelis, ‘Równouprawnienie czy konserwatywna nowoczesność?: Kobiety pracujące’, in *Kobiety w Polsce 1945–1989: Nowoczesność, równouprawnienie, komunizm*, Cracow, 2020, pp. 103–64; Dariusz Jarosz, *Polacy a stalinizm*, Warsaw, 2000, pp. 121–24, 134–36.

Anti-Semitism is a prevalent subject throughout the book, and the author dedicates a separate section of Chapter 6 to this matter. Discussing the era of the so-called *demokracja szlachecka* (democracy of the nobility), Leszczyński claims that 'In the sixteenth and seventeenth century in Ukraine, local insurgents massacred Jews just as vehemently as they massacred the gentry' (p. 228). As he writes about the 1936 Przytyk pogrom, the scholar concludes that anti-Semitism 'captured the imagination of a large part of the Polish common people' (p. 444). Leszczyński extensively discusses the pogroms that took place during the 1892 strike in Łódź (p. 358) and the 1905 revolution (p. 359). He also (albeit rather briefly) writes about anti-Semitism during World War II and in the post-war era, discussing such events as the 1940 Easter Pogrom in Warsaw, the Kielce Pogrom, and the denunciation of Jews under German occupation (pp. 444–45). The author also notes that after the perpetrators of the Kielce Pogrom were sentenced to death in July 1946, 16,000 workers went on strike in Łódź to protest the decision (p. 489).

Leszczyński claims that starting in the 1880s, anti-Semitism played a 'crucial' or even 'leading' role in Polish politics for 'the next several decades' (p. 436). I have my doubts about this blanket statement, which seems to me to be somewhat exaggerated.

A People's History of Poland by Adam Leszczyński is incomplete — as its subtitle reads, it is limited to the analysis of exploitation, resistance, and the mythology of domination. The scholar does not discuss matters such as culture — including the culture of everyday life — that undoubtedly had a heavy impact on the situation of the common people. The work also lacks a systematic analysis of the social rights the common people gained or the traditional strategies they used to secure bearable living conditions in old age (such as an annuity in the rural areas or the introduction of social insurance in the nineteenth century⁴).

It is worth noting that Leszczyński's book offers more than just a narrative on Polish history. The scholar also chose to express his stance on the development and quality of contemporary historiography. As shown in the closing essay, titled 'How to Write a People's History of Poland?: Methodological Essay', the author clearly has a talent for polemics. The essay has two basic objectives: an evaluation of the existing historiography centred on people's history; and a presentation of Leszczyński's postulates regarding further research in the field.

Leszczyński writes that many of the works of Marxist historiography are defective and anachronistic. However he also claims that: 'The problem is we often do not have anything better at our disposal. A people's history of Poland

⁴ See for example: Urszula Lehr, 'Od dożywocia do emerytury: Społeczno-kulturowe uwarunkowania strategii przetrwania', in *Ludzie starzy i starość na ziemiach polskich od XVIII do XXI wieku (na tle porównawczym)*, ed. Agnieszka Janiak-Jasińska, Katarzyna Sierakowska and Andrzej Szwarz, 2 vols, Warsaw, 2016, vol. 2: *Aspekty społeczno-kulturowe*, pp. 123–49; Bartłomiej Gapiński, 'Życie ludzi starych na wsi polskiej przełomu XIX i XX wieku oraz w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym', in *Ludzie starzy i starość na ziemiach polskich od XVIII do XXI wieku*, vol. 2, pp. 111–21.

written as dictated by the authorities [of the Polish People's Republic] did ultimately produce a body of basic research, publications of archival works, and an array of literature on people's history.' (p. 541)

This nuanced critique becomes more vehement when Leszczyński writes about Polish historiography after 1989. The scholar is particularly eager to attack the syntheses written by Andrzej Nowak, claiming that the historian's work is driven by his political agenda — “Soil, people, language and culture, the state, religious faith”, as the author himself summarizes in the first volume of his work devoted to the genesis of Polish statehood and the beginning of the reign of the Piast dynasty' (p. 543). This critique is also aimed at other Polish historians: ‘Nationalism — the more unwitting it is, the more dangerous it becomes — and the anachronic focus on meticulous monographs on peripheral issues [...] are two problems that still plague Polish historiography’ (p. 562). Leszczyński's own project of *A People's History of Poland* was largely inspired by the experience of Howard Zinn, the author of the widely-discussed *A People's History of the United States*. As the Polish scholar writes, ‘the history of Poles is too important to relinquish it to historians whose writing is influenced by nineteenth-century nationalism and whose methodology is based on naive realism’ (p. 567). A page later, Leszczyński asserts: ‘A people's history of Poland cannot be reduced to the history of common Polish men and women.’

Leszczyński aspires to be a historian of the people; this surely is a praiseworthy intent. His extensive research of sources is impressive. Captivating and skilfully narrated, the book has a chance to appeal also to readers who are not professional historians.

Despite occasional imprecisions, the work certainly remains an interesting read, deliberately limited to certain thematics. In point of fact, the book is a polemic against Polish historiography post-1989. In this sense, it becomes a part of the debate on the current ideological conflicts in Poland AD 2021 (as its reception proves).⁵

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⁵ For one of the most polemical reactions, see ‘Polskość znieawidzona: Zniszczyć wspólnotę, by zbudować inną — z prof. Andrzejem Nowakiem, historykiem, rozmawia Krzysztof Masłoń’, *Do Rzeczy*, 2021, 25, pp. 14–19.

Wojciech Kozłowski, *The Thirteenth-Century Inter-Lordly System: Lordly Identity and the Origins of the Angevin-Piast Dynastic Alliance*, Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2020, 439 pp.

The subject of this review, a book by Wojciech Kozłowski, is based on his PhD thesis, which he defended at the Central European University in 2015 and which was published in Kiel, Germany in 2020. The Polish author dedicated his work to a special aspect of Medieval Polish-Hungarian relations; his research focused on the marriage of the Hungarian king Charles I of Anjou (also known as Charles Robert; 1301–42) and Elizabeth (Elżbieta Łokietkówna), the daughter of the new Polish king, Władysław Łokietek (1320–33). Nevertheless, Kozłowski's research covers a relatively wider spectrum of time and a wider topic as well. As he stresses himself, his aim is to investigate the origins of the aforementioned marriage, and thus the alliance between the two houses and the circumstances which led to it. The author looked at the marriage from a retrospective point of view in regard to its later effect on the cooperation of the two dynasties, which eventually led to the succession of Charles I's son, King Ludvig of Hungary, or in other words the Hungarian Angevins, to the Polish throne.

Kozłowski's approach is partially traditional insofar as he analyses the events of the previous decades, although he has also applied theories from the field of international relations (IR) to determine the motives behind the well-known historical events. The author himself sees this method as the main novelty of his research, which in his view could eventually lead to a better understanding of the chain of events. Apart from the motivation of the main characters, namely King Charles I of Hungary and King Władysław I Łokietek of Poland, this approach also covers the so-called 'inter-lordly' relations of thirteenth and fourteenth century Poland during the period of fragmentation, as does the analysis of the so-called 'lordly identity' of the actors of this era. To achieve his goals Kozłowski applies the neorealist and constructivist theories of IR, so he claims that the assumptions and the intuition of historians can be replaced by empirical evidence.

The book starts with a preface, followed by acknowledgements and the introduction. In the latter the author offers, beside general remarks, a brief overview of his book, the sources he used, and the way he formulated his arguments. The main part of the work is divided into five chapters, and the book ends with the author's conclusions and a bibliography. Unfortunately the book lacks an index, which would be useful to its readers.

The first chapter of the book is dedicated to issues of terminology, the medieval concepts of 'international relations', and the introduction of the main aspects of the research. The author makes an effort to give precise definitions of the terms and notions he uses in the book. For instance in the case of 'lordship' he emphasizes, they were 'generally monarchically-governed units ruled by a lord (or occasionally by a group of a few persons) who claimed domination over a given territory and people living there'. Furthermore, Kozłowski

underlines that 'lordships' in the Middle Ages were more human-dependent than in the case of modern states, while noting that in the selected era, that is in the thirteenth century, there were various kinds of lordships to be found in Christian Europe and they were hardly identical; the sole common feature was their monarchical concept of lordly power. Beside the questions of power, the author also focuses attention to the so-called 'lordly-identity' as a cultural and shared phenomenon as well.

Kozłowski stresses many times how the international relations of the Middle Ages diverged from those of later centuries. These statements are probably meant to reach the readers coming from the direction of IR theories, since they can hardly be seen — from the perspective of medievalists — as a *novum*. It has to be emphasized that the author was well aware of the dual nature of his own approach as well as the expected readership. As regards the applicability of IR theories, he notes that medievalists generally show a tendency to rely on interpretation of the sources rather than on a synthesis of the available data, even if the latter could lead to a better understanding of the patterns and attitudes behind events. According to Kozłowski IR theories can contribute to this goal. Nevertheless, the order is crucial in our opinion, as the analysis of the sources should always come first, which can be followed by an interpretation with the help of certain theories.

Before he turns his attention to East-Central Europe, in the second chapter of his book Kozłowski deals with the inter-lordly relations of the Western part of Latin Christendom. From a methodological point of view, we have to add that the circumstances in various regions of East-Central Europe are sometimes not comparable with one another, therefore a historian has to be especially cautious with Western parallels and their application to Polish or Hungarian affairs. The author seeks an answer to the question of how the system can be described from the point of view of IR theory: was it determined by anarchy or rather by hierarchy; or it was in fact a hybrid variation of both? Kozłowski's analysis is based on his own selection of relevant political events and he comes to the conclusion that the collected data offer a picture of a hybrid system, which has both anarchical and hierarchical components. The author stresses several times that not each and every IR theory is sufficient to explain the events and processes of thirteenth–fourteenth century East-Central Europe and the so-called *inter lordly* mechanism of this period.

The third chapter of the book covers the formation and the characteristics of the so-called *lordly identity*, based on internal Polish relations of the thirteenth century. The aim of this approach is to uncover the motives behind Władysław Łokietek's actions. As in the previous chapter, the research is based mostly on secondary literature. Regarding the results of this analysis it can be stated that according to Kozłowski almost every male member of the Piast dynasty over the age of twelve received their own territory to rule, and political relations in Poland were shaped by their claims for lordship and their lordly identities. The research also considers conflicts between members of the dynasty; the instances

are classified according to four categories based on the relations between the actors. In the view of the author each and every case can be interpreted as competing legitimization within the dynasty, therefore it caused only limited aggression. Kozłowski agrees with criticism of the traditional view that Poland was characterized by anarchy in the thirteenth century, which therefore can be understood as an era of crisis. The author pays attention to the parallel situations in Bohemia and Hungary. The lordly relations of Pomerania and the state of the Teutonic Order are also touched upon.

Kozłowski focuses in the fourth chapter on the rivalry between King Charles I and the later Bohemian king Wenceslas III for the kingdom of the Saint Stephen. He bases this endeavour on the conclusions drawn from his analysis of the thirteenth century Polish situation. From a Hungarian point of view perhaps this is the part of the book which could benefit the most from a deeper analysis and use of recent results of Hungarian Medieval studies, especially since several works, including in languages other than Hungarian, have been published on this topic in recent decades.¹ Nevertheless it has to be stressed that Kozłowski's interpretation is quite valuable. The introduction of the possible candidates for the Hungarian throne and the analysis of the motivations behind the decisions of the pretenders to compete, or not to compete, for the crown of Hungary are especially important. It is also praiseworthy that the author used royal charters to analyse the strategies of Charles I, although this part could also have profited from the results of recent studies published on this topic.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to the synthesis of the results of Kozłowski's research, and the focus is on the exploration of the roots of the Angevin-Piast marriage. According to the author's analysis of narrative sources it

¹ For example Enikő Csukovits, 'Le innovazioni istituzionali nell'età angioina e i loro parallelismi napoletani', in *L'Ungheria angioina*, ed. idem, Rome, 2013, pp. 59–119; Renáta Skorka, 'With a Little Help from the Cousins — Charles I and the Habsburg Dukes of Austria during the Interregnum', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2, 2013, 2, pp. 243–60; Attila Zsoldos, 'Kings and Oligarchs in Hungary at the Turn of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2, 2013, 2, pp. 211–42; Victória Kovács, 'Causae coram nobis ventilatae: Beiträge zu der Jurisdiktionstätigkeit von Papstlegat Gentilis de Monteflorum in Ungarn (1308–1311)', *Specimina Nova Pars Prima Sectio Mediaevalis*, 7, 2013, pp. 39–69; Gergely Kiss, 'Les légats pontificaux en Hongrie au temps des rois Angevins (1298–1311)', in *La diplomatie des états Angevins aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles / Diplomacy in the Countries of the Angevin Dynasty in the Thirteenth–Fourteenth Centuries: Actes du colloque international*, ed. Zoltán Kordé and István Petrovics, Rome and Szeged, 2010, pp. 101–16; Péter Báling, 'Personal Network of the Neapolitan Angevins and Hungary (1290–1304)', *Specimina Nova Pars Prima Sectio Mediaevalis*, 8, 2015, pp. 83–107; Miloš Marek, 'Missions of Papal Legates in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary I. Niccolò Boccassini (1301–1302)', *Slovak Studies: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico Slavacco di Roma*, 2016, 1–2, pp. 7–23; Ágnes Maléth, 'The ambassadors of Charles I of Hungary in the papal curia (1301–1342)', in *Formations et cultures des officiers et de l'entourage des princes dans les territoires angevins (milieu XIII^e–fin XV^e siècle) / Percorsi di formazione e culture degli ufficiali e dell'entourage dei principi nei territori angioini (metà XIII–fine XV secolo)*, ed. Isabelle Mathieu and Jean-Michel Matz, Rome, 2019, pp. 165–86.

seems that the contemporary accounts were not aware of the significance of the marriage. Nonetheless, over the course of time this evaluation has changed: the fifteenth century chronicler Jan Długosz saw the marriage already as the origin of the Angevin succession to the Polish throne. Besides the data of the narrative sources Kozłowski also utilized the results of German, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian historiography on this topic. The path of Władysław Łokietek to the Polish throne is analysed by the author, whereas the relevance of the desired royal titles for both sides in their pursuit of the marriage also has to be taken into consideration. It should be underscored that Kozłowski himself acknowledges that it is hard to reach beyond speculations regarding these questions, even if – according to him – IR theories can be applied in order to help find the necessary answers. In Kozłowski's view it was an integral part of the lordly identity to try to keep one's lordly state and to hand it over eventually to the male descendants. The lords also pursued the expansion of their territories, the acquisition of new titles, and made concerted efforts to maintain good relationships with other rulers. It cannot however be stated that this diagnosis can be understood as a complete novelty provided by IR theory for research into the Middle Ages.

Kozłowski's work is indeed a valuable contribution to the history of thirteenth-fourteenth century East-Central Europe. Among other features, the analysis of the prelude to the struggle for the Hungarian throne, the investigation of the motivations behind the pretenders' decisions, their strategies to gain power, and the roots of the Piast-Angevin marriage are all important and essential parts of the book. The utilization of certain IR theories in dealing with a topic of Medieval history is especially valuable and can help the reader to gain a better insight into a special episode of the Hungarian-Polish past.

Nevertheless, a handful of further considerations can be offered regarding the book. For instance, the analysis could have benefited from the results of certain respected German historians, like Harald Zimmermann and Johannes Fried. The former wrote an excellent monograph on the Hungarian episode in the history of the Teutonic order, while the latter covered the topic of papal protections in his fundamental book.² These two particular topics could have been extended with further data in the book, as they are quite important in Kozłowski's argumentation.

The style and the language of the book is distinguished, although in the case of personal names a certain inconsistency can be seen. Kozłowski kept the Polish forms in almost every case, but he used the English versions of the German and Hungarian names, and hybrid versions, like 'Duke Jerzy I of Halich' can be found in the text as well. For Hungarian readers the mention of 'Steven the Great of

² Harald Zimmermann, *Der Deutsche Orden in Siebenbürgen: Eine diplomatische Untersuchung*, 2nd edn, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2011, *Studia Transylvanica*, vol. 26; Johannes Fried, *Der päpstliche Schutz für Laienfürsten: Die politische Geschichte des päpstlichen Schutzprivilegs für Laien (11.-13. Jahrhundert)*, Heidelberg, 1980.

Hungary' seems odd, while the usage of the form 'Máté Csák' (*Mateusz Czak*) is questionable in the case of an English book, and the version 'Matthew' would probably have been a more correct choice.

To sum up it can be stated that Wojciech Kozłowski's work is, despite the above-mentioned criticisms, a valuable contribution to the history of Poland and Hungary and the relations between the two territories in the high Middle Ages. The book offers helpful insights for both Polish and Hungarian readers, even though it is definitely aimed above all at an international readership.

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