

In Memoriam

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STANISŁAW RUSSOCKI

11.04.1930 – 20.07.2002

Polish science has suffered a great loss. A scholar whose works have enriched the knowledge of researchers specialising in the history of law and political systems, social and economic history and regional development has passed away. Stanisław Russocki was a rare example of a scholar engaged in various research regions, a scholar faithful to the best traditions of the Polish humanities.

He was interested not only in legal questions but, like his great predecessors Romuald Hube, Oswald Balzer, Stanisław Kutrzeba and Juliusz Bardach, who laid the foundations of critical historical science in Poland, he also studied various questions concerning the past. In his nearly fifty-year research work he focused on the history of political and legal culture which he examined both on a macroscale and locally. He made a name for himself as one of the most prominent experts in the history of Mazovia, as an author of successful studies on the history of Poland, as a scholar whose opinions on such important issues as "the forms of feudalism", on questions which concerned the past of almost the whole of Europe were listened to with respect. What is more, his original, deep studies based, as they were, on a profound analysis of sources, have an extremely wide chronological range. The epoch to which he paid most attention and which he knew best was the late Middle Ages, but in examining the relations that were springing up at that time he extended his vision to include more distant times, even the first centuries of our era, as well as contemporary times. The Middle Ages were for Russocki a signal embodying a vast research field which included the early stages of the emergence and development of European civilisation. Especially important were for him such phenomena as the formation of nations, the emergence of different social groups, the relationship between them, and the beginning and development of parliamentary system. His work on the last-named subject ensured him an eminent place among scholars researching social structures and their legal representations.

Making use of comparative sources, in particular Czech ones, Russocki depicted the beginning of estate assemblies, stressing the interdependence between pre-parliamentary church, synodal assemblies and the meetings of representatives of power élites. In both cases the participants did not represent a legal group but spoke on their own behalf. The principle of estate representation appeared later, in the middle of the 14th century, first in Bohemia, which had the most developed administrative structure. In neighbouring countries, including Poland, the process took place nearly half a century later. In his reflections on this subject Russocki emphasised the significance of royal power, the role of the courts of justice held by kings and the transformation of royal councils into senates. By combining these reflections with an analysis of the then existing social groups Russocki could formulate conclusions which are still an important base for research. He concluded that there was no absolutism in the countries of Latin Europe and drew attention to the importance of the group of oligarchs, who constituted the base of royal power. In practice these conclusions apply to the history of political systems on an all-European scale. As far as Poland is concerned, Russocki pointed out that estate assemblies of a representative character did not appear in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until the end of the 15th century when a general assembly which included country deputies,

some of whom (in Lithuania and Mazovia) represented the knighthood, was set up. It is worth adding that the questions posed by Russocki, his alternative solutions of doubtful questions and his proposals for further research are very instructive.

Russocki formulated his research proposals on the basis of two theoretical principles. One was a rejection of a priori assumptions and a search for data that would confirm their correctness. He determinedly and consistently applied the method of induction in his research, starting from detailed source information and going deep into his subjects, and this yielded excellent results. The other principle of his research was linguistic purism, which is not met frequently in the works of scholars-humanists. Russocki's language was simple, there was no room in it for allegories and remote associations. Precision of the word distinguished his scholarly writings and whenever he introduced a new term or used a little known one he always strictly defined them. He cannot be regarded only as a historian of political systems for he also considered all sorts of factors which shaped legal relations in the countries of medieval Europe. His observations also concerned the material conditions of new social groups (e.g. the noble small-holders, a group to which he paid great attention) and, what is particularly noteworthy, the significance of collective consciousness in the formation of ties between members of a community. In his analysis of the attitude of knights in East-Central Europe he considered their duties and privileges, that is their place in the prestige hierarchy, the size of their property, that is their position in economic hierarchy, and the self-consciousness (*Wir Gefuehl*) of the nascent knights' class. In this connection he examined the oldest forms of national consciousness, an extremely important subject. In his view, nations played an important role in building state ties; he supplemented other researchers' conclusions by his remarks on the significance of the norms of law and of the subjects' personal contacts with the ruler. He drew attention to the coexistence of various forms of territorial ties defined more or less precisely as "neighbourhood", "district" (judicial district), "land" (administrative unit), "the crown" (in the sense of the state). He combined studies on medieval communities with research into the forms in which the pressure groups, the social strata participating in the wielding of power, expressed their "collective will". These strata strove to acquire an adequate property base, which implied diverse forms of land ownership, beneficiary systems, that is, an imprecise (thinned out, as he called it) property law in the system defined as "feudal". According to Russocki, these systems were the foundation of social structure, political relations and the material conditions of people's lives.

Russocki saw the inconstancy of societies, the evolutionary changes of political systems, the delays and accelerations occurring in legal systems, in economy and collective consciousness. He depicted this superbly in his analysis of the history of Mazovia, a Polish region which preserved a specific character of social relations and political system from the 13th to the end of the 18th century.

It is also worth drawing attention to Russocki's studies on "legal culture". Without going into the details of his methodological proposition let us point out that he stated that the history of a political system should be examined in as broad a context as possible; it should comprise research into the concept of law in a given epoch, an analysis of its content, of the norms applied and of actual practice which depends on various political, economic and cultural factors. These propositions are important not only for the discipline that was closest to Russocki, that is, the history of law. They are important for all humanistic disciplines in the broad sense of the term.

Stanisław Russocki's scholarly output comprises over seven hundred items whose titles testify to the wide range of his interests and universality of his mind. The impressive number of his critical studies on works dealing with the history of nearly all the countries of Europe, with epochs from the Middle Ages to the end of the 20th century, shows his most characteristic feature: the study of history was his passion. He devoted his life to it. He made himself known not only as a

researcher but also as an experienced, consummate academic pedagogue who treated students as partners in the acquirement of knowledge of the past. He was linked with Warsaw University for more than half century. When he was still a student he was engaged as an assistant at the Institute of the History of Law. He finished his studies in 1953, in 1960 he obtained the little of doctor of law, he qualified as assistant professor in 1973, obtained the title of associate professor in 1983, and the title of full professor in 1993. During the university career he was deputy director of his Institute, chairman of its Scientific Council, head of the Centre for the History of the Polish State and Law. He was a member of the Committee of Historical Sciences, chairman of the Commission for the History of Parliamentarianism, deputy chairman and chairman of the Polish Historical Society's Medieval Commission. For many years he co-operated in editing "Acta Poloniae Historica" as executive secretary of its editorial board and then as deputy editor in chief. He was well known as a member and deputy chairman of the International Commission for Estate Assemblies and Parliamentarianism connected to the International Committee of Historical Sciences. He collaborated with Société Jean Bodin as well as with Société Anciens Pays et Assemblées d'Etats. His death is a great loss to international science, to all historians and law historians, to his colleagues and friends.

Henryk Samsonowicz

ANTONI MAĆZAK

30.03.1928 – 6.03.2003

Antoni Maćzak was a historian who had for decades practised his profession with unabated passion and unconcealed delight. But the choice of history was not the obvious solution. The intellectual atmosphere of his home could have channelled the adolescent boy's interest into many directions, into architecture (for some time it looked as though this would be his choice) or biological sciences, the domain of his parents. When the young Warsaw insurrectionist returned home from German captivity, he had first to make up for the war-caused arrears in his school education and then choose a line of study. He considered studying technology for he wanted to create measurable things, but it was history, his favourite reading matter in his childhood and youth, that triumphed.

This was the line of study which was then being rebuilt in Warsaw by prominent prewar professors and consequently, was resistant to primitive political indoctrination, at least at first. Soon he had to decide which epoch he would specialise in. His interest in contemporary history gave way to more distant epochs for this was the branch that could boast of such first-rate scholars as Tadeusz Manteuffel, Aleksander Gieysztor, Stanisław Arnold, Witold Kula and, first and foremost, Marian Małowist, who was soon to become the patron of an energetic group of young researchers, a group which, in addition to Maćzak, included Henryk Samsonowicz, Janusz Tazbir and Benedykt Zientara as well as Maria Bogucka, Bronisław Geremek and Andrzej Wyrobisz, who were slightly younger.

It was there that Antoni Maćzak came to know the flavour of team work and friendly, intellectually stimulating rivalry, qualities which, in addition to their talents and hard work, helped the members of the group to achieve significant research results and obtain ever higher scientific degrees. The reason why they studied economic history was not only that this was the Marxist fashion that

prevailed at that time; economic questions fascinated young historians; they wanted to examine long-term phenomena, identify social and economic processes and impart scientific qualities to this discipline of learning.

Maćzak's long involvement in the study of economic subjects is by no means surprising, given his passion for quantitative formulations and his ability to draw clear conclusions from numerical data. This approach, which combined an analysis of economic phenomena, frequently backed up by modern statistical methods, with synthesising conclusions referring to social history, was the characteristic feature of two of his books (on peasant economy in Malbork Żuławy /1962/ and Baltic trade which he examined through the prism of Denmark's Øresund customs house /1972/), and also of a whole series of articles and papers read at scientific conferences. In order to make a larger circle of readers interested in economic subjects Maćzak brought out small book written with great verve, the title of which, *At the Source of Modern European Economy* (1967), clearly depicts its content.

Maćzak's research into economic history consolidated his position among historians, but because of their subject and their purely scientific character his publications did not win a wider circle of readers. This changed when he took up other subjects, one of the most important of them being the history of modern travels across Europe.

He started this stage of his research in a modest way. When he was still dealing with economic history, he looked for the possibility of comparing the level of prices and the cost of living in the countries of modern Europe. This was by no means an easy task, given the great differences in the monetary systems of European states. Travellers who had crossed several countries and had fixed consumption needs, irrespective of where they were, could supply him with the necessary information, especially — and this was a frequent occurrence — if they had to account for the money spent during their journey (this applied, for instance, to diplomats and also to young noblemen whose parents checked the cost of their sons' education). On the basis of these sources Maćzak produced a map of Europe with cost of living indices, a map which showed drastic differences on the Old Continent. This research proposal provoked an animated discussion among European historians, in which also Fernand Braudel took part.

This episode encouraged Maćzak to go on with his study of the history of travelling. He wrote more books on this subject (*Everyday Life during Journeys across Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries* /1978, 1980/, *Peregrinations — Voyages — Tourism* /1984/, *Discovering Europe* /1998/). In addition to presenting a vivid panorama of travels, a phenomenon which had never before been so deeply examined, his book drew attention to the important cultural role played by early modern travels in Europe. In Maćzak's view, the role of travels in promoting mutual understanding and bringing the people of Europe closer together was as important as Gutenberg's invention, as the revolutionisation of the spread of information and thoughts and ideas through print.

Travels also provided a gallery of interesting personages, brought information on various routes and motives for travelling and on the different ways in which travellers reacted to a new reality. They supplied Maćzak with the pilgrims' observations and comparisons, which depended on their knowledge and earlier experiences, depicted their intellectual calibre and cultural background. This was a fantastic material for an analysis of differences between the individual countries and regions of Europe. Travel was a subject which Maćzak never abandoned; he returned to it shortly before his death, presenting new themes and research ideas in an unfinished work.

After the first period of an intensive involvement in the history of travelling, Maćzak focused attention on the modern state, its structures, functioning and the system of power. He started with social themes, taking an interest in the role of informal ties. He introduced the concept of cliential ties into Polish historical science by interpreting social reality through the system of patronage and

clientele. He tried to identify the social contexts in which ties of this kind played a particularly important role. According to him, the emergence of cliental ties was promoted by the social and political realities of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, a state dominated by the noblemen's self-government, a state which had weak bureaucratic structures and practically no administration, especially in the provinces, and which therefore had to function on the basis of informal systems of links and dependences.

Realising that informal ties can be found in most structures and historical epochs, Mączak emphasised that they played a special role in old Poland. He presented the relationship between the patron and his clients as part of social history, stressing that loyalty, faithfulness and the performance of various services were the duty of both sides and that these ties were sometimes preserved from generation to generation. As was his practice, he presented these ties in the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against a European background (*Clientship. Informal Systems of Power in Poland and Europe from the 16th to the 18th Century* /1994, 2000/).

His research on clientele led him to new subjects, the most important of which concerned the systems of power, state structures, and the élites. It was in his analysis of the early modern state that Mączak applied the comparative method on probably the largest scale. He co-founded the concept of "the state as an enterprise", that is, an institution which imposed the principles of the game on its citizens and in effect brought benefits (or simply profits) to a narrow élite of power. He analysed "the inflation of dignities", that is, the rapid increase in positions (sold for money to the willing), which lessened the importance of many positions and the prestige of the officials holding them, and led to social and also political complications. He developed a comparative analysis of the "centre" and the "peripheries", an idea formulated in Germany and the United States (Immanuel Wallerstein) on the scale of one country and the whole continent; he co-founded the models of European regionalisms as concentric circles ever more distant from the centre and accordingly, ever more backward. His most important reflections on this subject, accompanied by a presentation of a whole gamut of European state organisms in the 16th and 17th centuries, are included in one of his most important books, *The Rulers and the Governed* (1986, 2002).

Antoni Mączak wanted to find out why the development of Poland and our region differed from that of the rest of Europe and to explain the causes of our civilisational backwardness. He was in close contact with the most prominent historians of Europe and America, was frequently invited to give lectures (long sojourns in France, the United States, Canada, Germany and Scandinavia) and take part in scientific conferences; he participated in international research programmes, wrote and edited syntheses (*Poland's Economic History up to 1939* /1965, 1973/, *Polish Society from the 10th to the 20th Century* /1979/, *The Encyclopaedia of Economic History* /1981/, *Europe and the World at the Beginning of the Early Modern Epoch* /1991, 1992/, *A History of Europe* /1997/, *The Dynasties of Europe* /1997/, *From Tribes to the Commonwealth* /1996, 1999/), co-founded programmes for history teaching, reviewed textbooks and sat on the editorial boards of Polish and foreign periodicals ("Przegląd Historyczny", "Social History", "European History Quarterly", "French History").

We have lost not only a prominent scholar but a person of great importance for the Warsaw academic milieu. What distinguished Antoni Mączak was not only his intellect and his worth as a scholar of the highest class but also his openness to the world's diversity. He seemed to have been cast in a universal mould, also in the mould of those who lacked the qualities of his mind and spirit. He was a modest unassuming man who liked simplicity, a researcher and intellectual who was concentrated on his work but also curious about people; he was a sociable, witty, brilliant, charming man.

Wojciech Tygielski