

## Reports and reviews

**ČAPSKÝ, Martin, *Město pod vládou kazatelů. Charismatictí náboženští vůdci ve střetu s městskou radou v pozdně středověkých českých korunních zemích* [Charismatic Religious Leaders in Conflict with the Town Councils in the Late Medieval Lands of the Bohemian Crown], Praha: Argo 2015, 200 pp., ISBN 978-80-257-1426-3.**

In his most recent work Martin Čapský confirmed that the scope of his interest still rests between the peak and the late periods of the medieval history of Bohemia, Moravia and also Silesia, of course, in regard to its widespread historical significance. He also demonstrated his abiding interest in the urban culture and its inner workings. For his comparative study entitled *Město pod vládou kazatelů* he chose five examples of Bohemian and Silesian cities (Prague, Plzeň, Hradec Králové, Wrocław, Legnica), in the fates of which he discovered situations that were worth comparing and the common denominator of which is one of the most interesting phenomena of urban life: urban revolt and the related introduction of a new order in the city administration, whereby, under the leadership of the preachers, any future activity is decided by the general urban population. In regard to these events (which all took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, but at different times) the author is not interested in the charismatic power of the spiritual leaders, based on which they were able to induce an urban society to break-away from the long-established order and also, for example, to even refuse to obey their previous rulers, nor in an overly detailed study of the crowd that constituted that “public” which listens to the calls of preachers and grasps onto rebellion as representing a means of change. In this instance closer to the centre of interest is the tension existing between the secular authority and the town’s representatives – i.e. the councillors, and the spiritual authority – whereby there are preachers whose words, whether spoken from the pulpits of temples or from makeshift podiums on town squares, are gaining momentum – especially in politically tense periods. The interaction between the town officials and skilful preachers, the manner of their cooperation or conversely of their conflicts and their power-struggles for obtaining popularity and the favour of urban society, offer the reader an interesting perspective for understanding another very important aspect of urban community life: i.e. the different levels of communication.

The author exhibited his sound orientation in the field of communication studies, from which he drew both his personal inspiration and the methodological basis of his interpretation. He also observed such processes as which information was being

communicated and how public opinion was being influenced in a medieval urban society. He also reflected specific means of communication together with their urban context (e.g. at the Town Hall, on the square, in parvis). Thereby we can experience the power of the spoken word, a powerful weapon of the clergy and of all those who are seeking to increase the effectiveness of their message – as well as of their written communication – which is more relevant to town councils. Although at first glance it may appear that the written word does not carry the punch and/or the power of the spoken word (even if the spoken word is additionally enriched by the rhetorical skills of the church clergy), in the historical distance – as the author presents it – the written word already brings its rich fruit in the manner of the creation of a memory in regard to the specific event. The formation and the codification of the memory of that revolt and of its preaching “dictates” represent an equally important chapter in regard to this manner of town communication. Its sources are mostly town chronicles written by municipal clerks who often recorded the opinions and the positions adopted by the town councillors. They acted as supporters of the old order and, accordingly, they also made-known their views on the self-appointed leaders from among the clerics who were disrupting this old order. And, as the author confirms, it is their record of events acquired during the time gap following the decline of a specific preacher that will ultimately remain as valid evidence of the past events that the urban society had experienced. Based on their civic role of chroniclers and town administration members the urban scribes had the lion’s share of the interpretation of the turbulent events and their related works passed-on this interpretation viewed from the perspective of the “winners’ side” to the following generations.

In those chapters that are dedicated to the examples of five selected cities and their experiences of the urban rebellion that occurred under the leadership of the preacher, many of the nuances of these folk stories can be monitored in detail. Inevitably, of course, the highest degree of attention is paid to those who were heading them. We follow the controversy regarding the legitimacy of those who have traditionally or recently been governing the city: the legitimacy of the town council granted by tradition and by social consent and the legitimacy of the spiritual leaders who are supported by their faith in the rightness of acting in the name of God’s word and law. We can participate at times when the loyalty of the councillors to the municipality is being questioned or when the councillors are dithering between the favour of their townspeople and their own allegiance to the king. While the crowd itself also becomes a major actor, that crowd of people without names and without political expression, which, however, in tense moments overcomes its traditional passivity even seizes arms and commits violence to express its disagreement. This public activity adds weight to the words of the preachers and gives them the political power of being their spokespersons. As a background to these events, however, the author

also allows a warning voice of urban conscience to be heard that is precisely aware that in times of revolt it is violating well-established rules and acting in opposition to the social consensus. Perhaps this is also the reason for an occasional search for internal and external perpetrators being implemented and for executions that are not consistent with the generally accepted legal practices.

Although the story from each of the five cities includes its own specific details, whether in the form of an external enemy of the city or in relation to the linguistic and/or the religious aspects of the dispute or to the preachers themselves and their tactics, Martin Čapský's investigations have many traits in common, the generalisation of which is certainly both practicable and beneficial. Townspeople, their scribes and the memories of their preachers represent the witnesses for the next chapter of the history of the medieval mentality, in regard to understanding the mechanisms of urban communication, religious symbolism that pervades secular space and vice versa, and also for other areas of life in relation to the urban communities of Central Europe. Currently the examples selected are specifically suitable and pertinent because of the extremity of the current situation. Emerging strongly now are traditional and well-established rules, precisely because they are being broken, as well as an unusual surge of individuals and categories that otherwise usually remain rather passive.

Certainly one important contribution of the book is that it also incorporates the revision of several significant historical clichés and claims, or, to be more precise, emphasises the interpretive shift that these historical images have been undergoing in recent years. Amongst the first of these that the author targets, is a vision of the secularisation of the church in the late Middle Ages and of the consequent separation of the secular from the sacred space (p. 26n). This theory dignifies the emancipation of the urban (secular) authority over the church. The author, on the contrary, however, refers to studies that define the links between the town councils and the church leaders, the jointly secular and sacred character of the town celebrations or the town's influence on the occupation of ecclesiastical benefice, and links them to his own research, from which the link between the council and the town preachers emerges as being absolutely crucial. Priests are also amongst the most powerful promoters of urban policy and order. The town council relies on them for its support. In the event that any of the preachers decided to take his own path and oppose the municipal administration, the councillors would then lose a very powerful asset for communication with and for reaching out to the public, or might even face a powerful negative campaign against themselves. The additional certain revision was also induced by the opinion of František Graus, that the ecclesiastical space was the only kind that was "*able to offer the society of the premodern period an index of understandable symbols capable of surpassing the segmental character of urban social space*" that is capable

of arousing large-scale social unrest (pp. 40, 150). Although the author of the present work does not display either an unambiguous agreement or disagreement with Graus' thesis, he does offer a clear comparison between two kinds of rebellion: i.e. between unrest that is led by preachers, who, in accordance with his interpretation, do not only go just against the town council, but also against the actual royal power and thereby have a significant social impact, and between the rebellions implemented without any spiritual leaders, perhaps merely based on disagreement with the government's recent decisions will quickly fizzle out without achieving any major results. This final evaluation thereby supports Graus' theory.

The actual manner of the division of the book and the processing of the individual chapters do not entirely follow mainstream habits, which does not do any harm but perhaps, only occasionally, may lead to some uncertainty on the part of the reader. At the beginning the author introduces the reader to the issues defined in his book by "throwing" the reader directly into the story, while leaving him or her to find out for him/her-self what are actually the main issues and/or the problems of the present study. Indeed the following chapter that comprises a critical evaluation of literature in regard to the history of communication and urban culture in general is both detailed and already conceptually charged. On the basis of the varied theoretical approaches of different authors, the reader is becoming acquainted with the conceptual aspects of communication studies and also with specific terms that will be used in the subsequent text. In regard to some terms, however, the author requires the reader to be overly autonomous in regard to the understanding of terms, particularly in regard to the interpretation of some special categories, which indeed are very specific to communication studies, but less so to general historiography. Although such concepts as "*komunikačně utvářená veřejnost*" or "*segmentární veřejnost*" (the latter is explained on p. 34 based on the previous concept but I was not able to find a more precise explanation however) are approximately comprehensible, their interpretation would certainly have been more helpful if it had included the author's statement concerning which specific idea he is trying to elucidate by using these concepts.

The literature used as a methodological basis for this work mostly emanates from the German environment and therefore it particularly accentuates the examples and phenomena that are traceable to the medieval Imperial Cities. This choice of German literature has its own logic, of course – whether on the basis of the historical geographical and cultural proximity of the Empire and the Czech lands and thereby also the anticipated contact points in regard to the development of an urban culture in both of the countries or based on the high level of frequency of contemporary supporting studies while their authors are dedicating their work to the urban communities and to the manner of their interaction. It would certainly be an interesting enrichment for the research foundation if Anglo-Saxon literature or literature from the Latin countries were included, especially

in regard to such topics as cooperation between the preachers and the town or the legitimisation of social stratification while also applying to participate in the town's administration. In comparison with the more advanced Italian urban culture the different standards for burghers in Southern and Central Europe would probably stand out more clearly, for example, at the "boundary of disobedience" to the supreme or the anointed authority (p. 77). The author decided to not broaden his base, however, and to not include sources of another provenance, probably based on the excessive expanse of the secondary material collected and also because of greater cultural "separation" between, for example, Italian and Bohemian cities than in comparison between the Bohemian and the Imperial cities.

The publication entitled *Město pod vládou kazatelů* which first saw the light of day last year at Argo Publishing (which unfortunately – and traditionally – also includes a considerable number of typos and of grammatical errors, which, however, is not the fault of the author, but of the publisher) represents a detailed study that uncovers some rules concerning the flow of information and propaganda or conversely of the defensiveness of political representatives and the interaction between the authorities and the public during the medieval culture. The topic of communication fully updates this medieval theme, including for the contemporary reader.

Kateřina Ptáčková

**KOSIŃSKA, Urszula, *August II w poszukiwaniu sojusznika. Między aliansem wiedeńskim i hanowerskim (1725–1730)* [Augustus II and his Search for Allies: Between the Treaty of Vienna and Hanoverian Alliance (1725–1730)], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton 2012, 557 pp., ISBN 978-83-7543-227-5.**

The historical resort often omits to mention certain periods of history about which it could be said that they are just not popular. Should these periods involve domestic historians and sensitive episodes from the history of their country, even less emphasis is placed on them. In Poland, for example, such a period is the period known as the Saxon era, i.e. the period of the rule of the Polish Kings of the Saxon Wettin dynasty, Augustus II the Strong (1697–1733) and his son Augustus III (1733–1763). The Poles themselves call this period between the years 1697–1763 using the working title "Dark Ages". They associate the rule of a sovereign from a foreign dynasty with the decline of Rzeczpospolita, which culminated in the division of the Republic at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. For the subsequent more than a hundred years the Polish State entirely disappeared from the World Map, hence the aversion of Polish historians and of the general public to the Saxon Period is easily understandable.

However, this unwillingness to deal with the unpopular part of its history is clearly reflected in Polish production. If you are looking for local monographs referring to the Saxon period, you will probably not meet with great success.<sup>1</sup> The meagre number of historians who contributed their piece include Józef Gierowski<sup>2</sup> and Jacek Staszewski. The latter can then boast of having written the biographies of both these Wettins, though we are already talking about somewhat older works.<sup>3</sup> Over the last fifteen years nobody has followed-up on his research particularly in regard to Augustus II, while in the Polish environment he represents a very much ignored person. We can obtain a basic idea about his reign after reading the classical overview of the history of Poland<sup>4</sup> or publications that focus exclusively on the lives of Polish monarchs.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, there is no problem with reading about the process of the election of Augustus II to the Polish throne (1697), about his subsequent forced abdication in 1704, about the dissatisfaction of the Polish gentry with his centralising efforts and we can thereby reach cca. the half-way point of this sovereign's rule, until the Tarnogród Confederation and the subsequent "Silent Sejm" in 1717. The relatively detailed description of the first half of his reign is abruptly interrupted, however. The informative character of the second half of his reign constitutes a huge contrast to the earlier part. Basically, you will not learn anything more about Augustus II than that he tried to ensure his son Frederick Augustus' succession to the Polish throne. Although this is not a false statement, from the logic of things it must be clear to everyone that Augustus II did not dedicate fifteen years of his rule to this single objective. One of the few (recent) publications that refer to this monarch in detail was written by the Polish historian Jacek Kurek.<sup>6</sup> In his work he maps the final years of Augustus II the Strong on the Polish throne, focusing solely on the years 1729–1733, however, and as the author himself admits in the introduction, the entire second half of the reign of the Elector of Saxony and Poland, still remains unexplored.

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1 I do take into account the Polish historiographical environment; in regard to foreign production, relatively-speaking the situation is better. Undoubtedly one of the most important historians who has been dealing with Augustus II is Karl Czok. See, for example, Karl CZOK, *August der Starke und seine Zeit. Kurfürst von Sachsen und König von Polen*, München 2006. The situation in the Czech environment is very similar to that of the Polish environment, if not worse - neither of the Wettins has yet received any substantial attention in the Czech language.

2 Józef GIEROWSKI, *Dyplomacja polska doby saskiej (1699–1763)*, in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Tom II (1572–1795), Warszawa 1982, pp. 331–480; Józef GIEROWSKI, *Historia Polski, 1505–1764*, Warszawa 1982.

3 Jacek STASZEWSKI, *August II Mocny*, Wrocław 1998; IDEM, *August III Sas*, Wrocław 1989.

4 Maria BOGUĆKA, *Dzieje Polski do 1795*, Warszawa 1964; Józef GIEROWSKI – Stanisław GRODZISKI, *Wielka historia Polski III.*, Kraków 2003; Mariusz MARKIEWICZ, *Historia Polski 1492–1795*, Kraków 2004; Jerzy TOPOLSKI, *Historia Polski*, Poznań 2003, etc.

5 For example Mariusz TRĄBA – Lech BIELSKI, *Poczet królów i książąt polskich*, Bielsko-Biała 2003.

6 Jacek KUREK, *U schyłku panowania Augusta II Sasa*, Katowice 2003.

Therefore, in light of the facts described above, Urszula Kosińska has truly become a groundbreaking author. This Polish historian who works at the University of Warsaw has been devoted to the Saxon period for quite some time already. So far in her monographs, however, she has only ventured into the waters of the 1720's very carefully.<sup>7</sup> In addition, however, the studies currently published appeared to suggest that she was definitely not avoiding their publication and that writing the actual monograph itself was only a matter of time and of lengthy research.<sup>8</sup> Given the current absence of any detailed work concerning the second half of Augustus II's reign in Poland, I would like to say that, literally, the reviewed book fills a white gap in Polish history (at least in accordance with the time period that it covers).

I definitely do not consider myself as a person who is relevant in regard to a critical evaluation of the book, which primarily draws attention by the actual breadth of its source base.<sup>9</sup> I would primarily rather draw the attention of historians who are mainly outside Poland to this unique and, in my opinion, superior work. Based just on the above reasons, I consider that the chosen topic of the book clearly places it in the fundamental book category and that, for a long time, it will establish the direction of research concerning Augustus II and the second half of his reign, not only in Poland.

Before we focus on the book itself, it is probably necessary to mention that Kosińska is not yearning for any clarification of the internal situation in Rzeczpospolita. She is especially involved with political history and therefore she examines the reign of Augustus II with international eyes, i.e. within the broader context of the events that were taking place on the European continent. She does not seek to pin-down domestic politics, the economic status nor life at court, but she does look at how the position of Poland in the international arena was affected by the union of two sovereign states through the person of their joint ruler. In my opinion, in the latter scenario, she is also suggesting to what

7 Urszula KOSIŃSKA, *Sejm 1719–20 a sprawa ratyfikacji traktatu wiedeńskiego*, Warszawa 2003; EADEM, *Sondaż czy prowokacja? Sprawa Lehmana z 1721 r., czyli o rzekomych planach rozbiorowych Augusta II*, Warszawa 2009.

8 From amongst a large number of studies I would particularly like to mention, for example, EADEM, *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-pruskich w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta II: Misja Franza Moritza von Viebahna w Saksonii i Polsce w latach 1727–29*, in: Ryszard Skowron (red.), *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacji i stosunków międzynarodowych w XV–XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2009, pp. 483–494; EADEM, *August II i król Fryderyk August w latach 1725–1729 a problem elekcji vivente rege*, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 119, 2012, 2, pp. 305–321; EADEM, *Stosunki sasko-polsko-rosyjskie a sprawa Maurycego Saskiego i aliansu dynastycznego z Rosją w świetle relacji saskiego posła w Petersburgu Jeana Le Forta (lata 1726–28)*, in: S. F. Sokal - A. M. Janyškevič (red.), *Vjalikae Knjastva Litouskae i susedzi: Prava. Vajna. Dyplamatyja*, Minsk 2012, pp. 349–366.

9 The basis of the book consists of material from unpublished sources from domestic archives located in Cracow and Wrocław and also from abroad, i.e. from Berlin, Dresden, Moscow and Vienna. In addition to these sources, the author makes use of over thirty different editions of source materials.

extent the Saxon ministers asserted themselves at the Royal Court at the expense of the Polish gentry and how the government tried to centralise its power in accordance with electoral Saxony. However, rather than its internal development, it is the coverage of the international activities of Rzeczpospolita that remain the author's primary objective.

Kosińska obviously did not choose the period between the years 1725 and 1730 for her work randomly. In the introduction she justifies her choice when several breakthrough situations occurred in Europe in 1725. The most important of these included the change of personnel on the Russian throne, when after the death of Tsar Peter I, his wife Catherine I took over the throne. In parallel, there were concluded two treaties – the Treaty of Vienna and the Treaty of Hanover – that for the next five years split Europe into two camps, while the neutral nations – Saxony and Poland – found themselves in the viewfinder of both of the alliances. Compared to the initial date mooted, concluding the work by the year 1730 seems somewhat less logical. The author herself justifies it first based on purely practical aspects; namely that the scope of work “*would grow to an irrational size*” (p. 11). Eventually, however, she stated reasons that would convince everybody that the final year of her work had been chosen deliberately. As the most important milestones from amongst those that Kosińska refers to I consider another change on the Russian throne (Empress Anna Ivanovna ascends to the throne), and especially the disintegration of the already mentioned two alliances based on which the entire book essentially revolves.

In addition to the usual introduction and conclusion the publication consists of nine chapters, while the last two I will additionally mention critically below. The first chapter entitled “*Sytuacja w Europie po zakończeniu wojny północnej. Czas zmiennych przymierzy*” serves as a broad introduction to achieve a better understanding of the subsequent detailed description. Here Kosińska describes the complicated international relations during the first half of the 1720's, when Europe was slowly beginning to differentiate into two camps, i.e. the Vienna Alliance and, against it, the Hanover Alliance (both were concluded in 1725). Just to give a specific idea of what the European international situation was like then I will add that the Vienna Alliance was originally instigated by the concluding of a treaty of alliance between Austria and Spain and subsequently, in 1726, the alliance was expanded to include Russia and the Bavarian, the Palatine and the Cologne Electors. Two countries, which had originally stood by the Hanover Alliance, Prussia and Sweden, thereby also joined on the Emperor's side. The rival Hannover Alliance comprised England, France and Holland. At that time Saxony and Rzeczpospolita constituted interim neutral countries about whose participation in alliances a high-stakes game was played.

While the first chapter discusses the international scene, the second takes-on the task of viewing the same period (i.e. until the mid-1720's) from the perspective of domestic

activities (“*Pozycja Augusta II i Rzeczypospolitej w układzie międzynarodowym a problem sukcesji saskiej w Polsce*”). The view of course is two-fold, since lives at two separate courts – in Dresden and in Warsaw – are intertwined there, which are personally linked, however, both by the person of the ruler and by many (particularly Saxon) ministers. Amongst other things, also described here are the problem of the *vivente rege*<sup>10</sup> election and the concept of “*łagodnych rządów*”, which Augustus II initiated after the “Silent Sejm” in 1717.

The third chapter entitled “*Między sukcesją polską a austriacką. Dyskusje o pryncypiach polityki Augusta II w latach 1725–1726*” I consider as representing one of the most important parts of the entire book. It discusses the actual motives of Augustus II and his ministers for taking specific steps in regard to both international and domestic politics. Her text suggests that she has confidence in these lines and that she knows exactly what she is talking about. Using preserved correspondence between the ruler and his ministers and between the ministers themselves, instructions to ambassadors abroad, memorials (e.g. the memorials of Field Marshal Count Flemming – the first Saxon minister) together with many other archival materials and also foreign literature, in this chapter Kosińska compiled a very detailed insight into the negotiations that were taking place at the Saxon-Polish Court. Out of the many topics that were discussed eventually three main issues crystallised; specifically 1) whether and/or which of the alliances the Saxony-Polish union should join or whether or not it should continue to further maintain its neutrality, 2) how to ensure the success of Frederick Augustus in the election of the new King of Poland subsequent to the death of Augustus II and 3) how, at the same time, to maintain the demands of the Saxon dynasty for Austrian Succession (in 1719 Frederick Augustus married the Austrian Archduchess Maria Josepha, but the renunciation clause of Maria Josepha was enshrined in the marriage contract).

The following four chapters (the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter entitled “*Rokowania o traktat partykularny z cesarzem w latach 1726–1727*”, the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter entitled “*Stosunki sasko-austriackie w latach 1727–1729*”, the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter entitled “*Stosunki z Prusami w latach 1725–1728*”, the 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter entitled “*Ostatnia próba Drezna dogadania się z Austrią i Prusami (1729–1730)*”) subsequently chronologically – and in great detail – describe how Augustus II tried to achieve these objectives in the years 1726–1730 with only mixed success. A separate chapter is devoted to the relations between Saxony and Prussia, since the Prussian King was the biggest rival of the Polish ruler. At the same time the manoeuvring of Prussia between the Hanover and the Vienna alliances had a significant effect on the relationship between Emperor Charles VI and the Saxon-Polish monarch, whereby in 1726 it was of paramount importance for Vienna to get Augustus on their side, but after the transition of Prussia

10 Kosińska also dedicated an independent study to this topic: *August II i królewicz Fryderyk August w latach 1725–1729 a problem elekcji vivente rege*, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 119, 2012, 2, pp. 305–321.

to the imperial camp this need was considerably reduced, which was reflected primarily in the negotiation of the conditions for the accession of Augustus to the Vienna Alliance.

The entire story is interwoven with an abundance of personal names. To identify all the individuals that figured on behalf of all the parties mentioned in the negotiations probably also represented a very difficult challenge because of the scant information available concerning what was happening during this time. Thanks to this, however, the story does not slip into a dry description of the political history, which tends to be very complex and therefore also often very dull too. On the contrary, the presence of real characters adds freshness to the description and also complements the picture of the negotiations because Kosińska shows how much depended on the individual actors in the specific game.

In addition to the countless pros that the book has, I cannot omit also mentioning certain negatives. Of these the only major problem is the presence of the last two chapters. The entire book, as has already been mentioned, is concerned with Augustus II's foreign policy and his decision-making between the Vienna and the Hanover alliances, while the vast majority of it focuses on negotiations with Emperor Charles VI. By contrast, the last two chapters are somewhat external to this concept. The eighth chapter, entitled "*Stosunki z Francją w latach 1725–1730*", describes relations with France, whereby information is provided in it about the marriage of Louis XV with Marie Leszczyńska and the course adopted by the diplomatic missions of the Saxon ministers at the Paris Court. Also conceived in a similar manner is the ninth chapter entitled "*Stosunki z Rosją w latach 1725–1730*". In that chapter Kosińska discusses the problem of the succession of Maurice of Saxony (the stepson of Augustus II) in Courland and the attempts to turn Russia onto its side in the matter of the succession of Frederick Augustus in Poland. I certainly do not want to claim that this represents unnecessary information, but it does seem somewhat undeveloped in comparison with the previous parts of the work. In certain cases information that has already appeared in the previous chapters is just additionally repeated several more times. In comparison with the previous logically assembled sections, in the context of the whole book the last two are a bit distracting. Additionally, based on the list of the archives that were visited, it is clear that the author could not have compiled the comprehensive view that she presents, since she more or less drew on unilateral information that was submitted mainly by Saxon ministers. The French archives are not featured here at all, while in the case of Russia, though the Moscow archive is represented, the materials studied would certainly not have been sufficient, however.<sup>11</sup> At this point, therefore, I have to ask myself whether or not it would be more beneficial to devote a separate study to these issues and instead of filling the remainder of the time

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11 Kosińska had available only one extensive study fund, which in comparison with the study funds of the Dresden, Berlin or Vienna archives is grossly insufficient.

by continuing the narration until the year 1733, as the author rejected it in the introduction because of the volume of the work involved. If, after all, I did adopt the concept of the last two chapters, as a Saxon perspective of negotiating with two major allies of opposing alliances – France with England, Russia with Austria – then I am missing at least one chapter regarding the relations with England as the hegemon of the Hanover Alliance and thereby as a counterweight to the detailed, already described relations with Austria. Still, it would be probably better to remove those – in my opinion – redundant chapters and, on the other deepen the perspective of the negotiation between the Saxon-Polish Court and the Emperor. Convenient for negotiations with England regarding the accession of Saxony-Poland to the Hanover Alliance would be a separate monograph that would define in detail the problems outlined in the reviewed book.

Despite the aforementioned minor criticism that I allowed myself to make in regard to Urszula Kosińska's book, this work remains as a high standard achievement. A list of the materials analysed gave rise to a detailed explanation of the international politics of the Saxon-Polish Court (especially in regard to its negotiations with Austria). Numerous ambassadorial instructions, multitudinous correspondence, memorials of individual ministers and many other sources, serve, at the political level to provide a very detailed view of the functioning of the Court of Augustus II during the second half of the 1720's. Despite the considerable complexity both of the events and of the political history involved, the author managed to refrain from tangling herself in a veritable plethora of facts and figures and thereby being able to offer not only a comprehensive narrative, but also, from the reader's perspective, easily read and understandable story.

Nela Michalicová

### **The rules of inheritance in historical Poland. Reflections on the dissertation**

**KITOWSKI, Piotr, *Sukcesja spadkowa w mniejszych miastach województwa pomorskiego w II połowie XVII i XVIII wieku. Studium prawno-historyczne [Inheritance Succession in Smaller Towns of the Pomeranian Voivodeship in the Second Half of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century. A Legal and Historical Study]*, Warszaw 2015, 320 pp. ISBN 978-83-7543-374-6.**

The dissertation *Sukcesja spadkowa w mniejszych miastach województwa pomorskiego w II połowie XVII i XVIII wieku. Studium prawno-historyczne* by Piotr Kitowski is devoted to an increasingly popular subject of study, namely the history of marriage and family analysed from a historical, mentality, religious, theological, anthropological and cultural

perspective.<sup>1</sup> Until recently, the subject of inheritance and succession law discussed in the monograph has been mostly neglected by researchers. According to Kitowski, in their studies on inheritance (among both the nobility and townsfolk) most researchers analysed source documents (post-mortem inventories, last wills and testaments, life estate deeds, inheritance treaties) from the point of view of the material culture and the history of mentality, while disregarding the legal and jurisprudential aspects thereof (p. 17).<sup>2</sup> In the author's opinion, there is still "a noticeable lack of comprehensive and systematic analyses combining two distinct perspectives (a historian's and a lawyer's) and methods of proceeding that could fill the existing void in Polish historical research" (p. 17). Such is, therefore, the role of the reviewed dissertation. Kitowski's study covers the period from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 1772. This choice is due, on one hand, to relative political stability enjoyed by Royal Prussia following the 1655–1660 war against Sweden and, on the other hand, the first partition of Poland and the resulting changes in borders and laws. The area of study focuses primarily on four towns – Chojnice, Kościerzyn, Nowe nad Wisłą and Skarszewy – which despite being included in a "joint group of towns" also present "certain differences, mainly in terms of population and economic profile" (p. 19). The aim of the study is to analyse all stages of the inheritance process – starting with the opening of succession and ending with the legal distribution of property among heirs – based on the most relevant legal source documents (i.e. inventories, family division of property,

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- 1 Cf. Rafał SZCZUROWSKI – R. ZAWADZKI (eds.), *Małżeństwo i rodzina w okresie staropolskim. Teologia – demografia – wychowanie*, Kraków 2002; Danuta PENKALA-GAWĘCKA, *Małżeństwo w perspektywie antropologicznej*, Czas Kultury 2006, Nr. 4, pp. 4–17; Cezary KUKLO (ed.), *Rodzina i gospodarstwo domowe na ziemiach polskich w XV–XX wieku. Struktury demograficzne, społeczne i gospodarcze*, Warszawa 2008; Anetta GŁOWACKA-PENCZYŃSKA, *Rodzina staropolska w świetle źródeł z małych miast wielkopolskich w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku*, in: Andrzej Karpiński – Iwona Dacka-Górzyńska (eds.), *Spółczesność staropolskie. Seria nowa, vol. 3: Społeczeństwo a rodzina*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 131–147; Bożena POPIOŁEK – Agnieszka CHŁOSTA-SIKORSKA – Marcin GADOCHA (eds.), *W kręgu rodziny epok dawnych. Dzieciństwo*, Warszawa 2014; Bożena POPIOŁEK – Agnieszka CHŁOSTA-SIKORSKA – Marcin GADOCHA (eds.), *W kręgu rodziny epok dawnych: Kobieta i mężczyzna. Jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy*, Warszawa 2015.
  - 2 Andrzej WYCZAŃSKI, *Szlacheckie inwentarze pośmiertne z XVI w. jako źródło do dziejów kultury materialnej w Polsce*, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* (henceforth KHKM) 1954, Nr. 4, pp. 691–699; Urszula AUGUSTYNIAK, *Inwentarze mienia radziwiłłowskiego z XVI–XVII wieku jako źródło do historii mentalności i życia codziennego – możliwości badań*, KHKM 2003, Nr. 2, pp. 231–247; Dariusz GŁÓWKA – Andrzej KLONDER, *Inwentarze mienia w badaniach kultury Europy od średniowiecza po nowożytność*, KHKM 2003, Nr. 3, pp. 157–174; Ewa DANOWSKA, *Inwentarze pośmiertne krakowskich mieszczan z lat 1697–1795 w zbiorach Biblioteki Naukowej PAU i PAN w Krakowie*, KHKM 2004, Nr. 1, pp. 79–84; Jan GŁÓWKA, *Zasobność domów mieszczan kieleckich na podstawie księgi Rady Miejskiej z końca XVIII w.*, KHKM 2004, Nr. 1, pp. 85–92; Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK, *Inwentarze pośmiertne z ksiąg miejskich Sandomierza z XVII wieku*, KHKM 2004, Nr. 1, pp. 37–50; EADEM, *Testamenty i inwentarze pośmiertne z ksiąg miejskich województwa sandomierskiego (XVI–XVIII wiek)*, Kielce 2010.

donations, sale deeds, last wills and testaments, and estate appraisals) used in Royal Prussia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and originating from nearly 120 town records (pp. 21–22). The source material has been analysed using three research methods: legal-comparative, descriptive-analytical, and quantitative (p. 25).

The dissertation is divided into two parts, different in terms of content but mutually complementary. The first part titled *Inheritance under the Culm law* (pp. 33–203) comprises four chapters dedicated to different legal aspects of inheritance proceedings. The second part titled *Material culture of the citizens of smaller towns in Pomerania in the light of inheritance documentation (wills and testaments, post-mortem inventories, divisions of property)* (pp. 207–285) comprises three chapters (distinctly historical in character) and aims to present the material culture (real estate and chattel) of the citizens of small towns in Royal Prussia involved in the inheritance process. The dissertation ends with a concise summary including final conclusions and research desiderata, two appendices on the measurements and monetary units used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a list of tables, and a bibliography including source documents (handwritten and printed) as well as a selection of source literature (mostly in Polish) (pp. 286–320).

In the first chapter titled *Normative bases for inheritance succession* (pp. 33–46), the author focuses on the origins of the Culm law and its application in the territory of Royal Prussia. In his observations Kitowski points out that the introduction of the Culm law in Prussia was a result of the activity of the Teutonic Order, which granted municipal charters to two towns: Toruń and Chełmno (English: Culm). In time, the influence of the Culm law expanded onto other Polish territories, according to Kitowski, thus becoming “*a basis for the regulation of legal matters [...] among the nobility, townsfolk, and peasantry*” (p. 35), the key aspect thereof being that both sons and daughters had the same rights to claim inheritance. The nobility disliked the fact that both genders could inherit; the nobles were particularly displeased with the women’s right to inherit real property, concerned that this would result in fragmentation of the already impoverished estates that “*in extreme cases could led to [...] a complete economic downfall and taking over of the nobility’s property by townspeople*” (p. 38). Throughout the centuries, however, the Culm law took on its final shape, effective in towns, its legislation being largely based on city laws, municipal ordinances and resolutions.

The second and particularly extensive chapter titled *Inheritance rights* (pp. 47–109) opens with the observation that “*the division of property among heirs*” started upon death of the owner (followed by the opening of succession) and could follow either the statutory rules (*ab intestato*), the decedent’s last will and testament (*ex testamento*), or a halfway solution i.e. the so-called mutual will (*testamentum reciprocum*) (p. 47). Kitowski’s observations focus mainly on a comparison between the rules of inheritance under the

Magdeburg law and the Culm law, as well as a description of their fundamental principles, including the inheritance rights of spouses. Under the former of said laws, the decedent's spouses were only fourth in line to inherit. Under the latter, however, due to the existence of joint property the estate was divided into two equal parts, one passing on solely to the surviving spouse and another being divided between the remaining heirs. Kitowski also remarks that if no heirs appeared within an established deadline, the inheritance would escheat (Polish: *kaduk*) and its value would be allocated to funding detention houses, prisons, feeding the criminals and the poor (p. 55).<sup>3</sup> In the remaining part of this chapter, Kitowski discusses the inheritance by testament (pp. 65–107). Therefore, he focuses on the principles of formulating a will or testament, presents different types of testaments (private and public), and makes a thorough analysis of their structure. The chapter concludes with his thoughts on the so-called mutual testament (*testimentum reciprocum*) that allowed spouses to bequeath to one another a part of their properties that was “larger than the half established by the Culm law”, which in total could amount to as much as  $\frac{3}{4}$  parts of the estate (p. 107).

In the equally extensive third chapter titled *Inheritance proceedings* (pp. 110–183), Kitowski concentrates on stock-tacking of the inherited property by way of a post-mortem inventory, i.e. a legal instrument construed as a record “of the deceased owner's property including – at least in theory – the totality of the decedent's estate as well as all liabilities encumbering said estate” (p. 110). According to Kitowski such inventory was, therefore, useful to the decedent's heirs, providing them with information on debts linked to the inherited property, as well as to the decedent's children, who often would take possession of independent estate only after reaching adulthood.<sup>4</sup> Let us note that Kitowski closes the chapter with some interesting observations on the subject of disinheritance, enumerating specific reasons therefor (p. 172).<sup>5</sup>

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3 The principle of escheat also existed in the so-called country law (Polish: *prawo ziemskie*). See Zbigniew ZDRÓJKOWSKI, *Ziemskie prawo prywatne*, in: Juliusz Bardach (ed.), *Historia państwa i prawa*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1957, p. 294; Jacek PIELAS, *Podziały majątkowe szlachty koronnej w XVII wieku*, Kielce 2013, p. 36.

4 See Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK (ed.), “Wszyscy śmiertelni jesteśmy i dlatego rozrządzamy majątności swoje”. *Wybór testamentów z ksiąg miejskich województwa sandomierskiego (XVI–XVIII wiek)*, Kielce 2014, pp. 12–13. See also Karol KORANYI (ed.), *Bartłomiej Groicki: Porządek sądów i spraw miejskich prawa magdeburgskiego w Koronie Polskiej*, Warszawa 1953, p. 175.

5 Cf. Karol KORANYI (ed.), *Bartłomiej Groicki: Tytuły prawa majdeburgskiego*, Warszawa 1954, pp. 3–23, pp. 182–184; Juliusz BARDACH (ed.), *Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk – Bogusław Leśnodorski: Historia państwa i prawa Polski, vol. II, Od połowy XV wieku do 1795 r.*, Warszawa 1957, p. 165, pp. 179–180; Krystyna BUKOWSKA, *Orzecznictwo krakowskich sądów wyższych w sporach o nieruchomości miejskie XVI–XVII w.*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 98–99; Stanisław PŁAZA, *Historia prawa w Polsce na tle porównawczym, tom I, X–XVIII w.*, Kraków 1997, pp. 304–309; K. JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK (ed.), “Wszyscy śmiertelni jesteśmy i dlatego rozrządzamy majątności swoje”, pp. 9–10.

In the fourth chapter titled *Care of minors and widows* (pp. 184–203) Kitowski describes the role of legal guardians representing the interest of widows and orphaned children (p. 184). In his considerations, the author focuses primarily on legal guardianship over minors, which – in his opinion – “*was a substitute for the natural authority of a parent over a child*” (p. 193). Above all, the legal guardian’s duties consisted in watching over their ward’s estate and protecting it from dwindling; therefore, as soon as he took the position, the legal guardian would have a so-called repertory drawn up, i.e. a record of all movable and immovable property, including all debts. Considering the great importance of such record, any negligence or fraud in its elaboration was subject to punishment (pp. 194–199). Legal guardianship, as states the author, usually expired when the ward reached adulthood (21 years of age), in the case of a man, or contracted marriage, in the case of a woman, whose legal guardianship henceforth passed onto her husband (pp. 201–202).

The second part of the dissertation is titled *Material culture of the citizens of smaller towns in Pomerania in the light of inheritance documentation (wills and testaments, post-mortem inventories, divisions of property)* (pp. 207–285). It is historical in character and has been divided into three chapters, in which Kitowski presents movable and immovable property in the possession and at the disposal of townsfolk in smaller town in Royal Prussia.

In the first chapter titled *Immovable property* (pp. 207–227) Kitowski focuses on one of two principal types of assets most frequently seen in inheritance documents, namely the immovables. An appraisal of a homestead and the adjoining land was the first step in taking inventory of the inherited estate and, according to Kitowski, said information is present in two-thirds of all inventories found in smaller towns of Pomerania (p. 208). Subsequently, Kitowski concentrates on establishing the value of houses, outbuildings (barns, malthouses, breweries, distilleries) and land (pp. 208–223), which is presented in detailed tables (pp. 210, 214, 222) and accompanied by relevant commentary. The chapter ends with the conclusions of the author, who observes that “*in all [of the studied – U. K.] towns, the highest share of immovable assets belonged mainly to members of town authorities: mayors (either current or former), their deputies, town councillors, and judges*” (p. 223).

The second chapter titled *Movable property* (pp. 228–266) contains a detailed description of specific movables such as chattels (e.g. furniture, tableware, weapons, paintings, books, comestibles) belonging to the furnishings of houses and farms, livestock (e.g. oxen, horses, cows, sheep) and food (purchased by the husband before his death and sufficient for the period of one year),<sup>6</sup> analysed in terms of their actual and perceived value (pp. 237–262).

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6 Under the Magdeburg law, widows would also receive the so-called “food for the road”, i.e. a one-year food allotment, Cf. Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK, *Spadkobranie w rodzinach mieszczzańskich województwa sandomierskiego w XVII wieku*, in: C. Kukło (ed.), *Rodzina i gospodarstwo domowe*,

Let us also note the author's observations on trousseaus that appear in the inventories. They were a form of "*customary donation with a strictly defined purpose*" (p. 262), usually drawn up before a widow's or widower's next marriage, where they acted as disinheritor. Such trousseau included a wide range of foods for the wedding reception, wedding gifts, household goods, and livestock (pp. 263–264).<sup>7</sup>

In the last, fourth chapter titled *Debts and liabilities* (pp. 267–285) Kitowski remarks that a constant element in both testaments and post-mortem inventories was a record of all of the testator's debts and liabilities contracted before their death. The author rightly concludes that such a document is incomplete as a source, as it presents "*only a portion of the financial aspects of the inheritance*" (p. 267). Despite its incomplete character, such record facilitated establishing the condition of the testator's property, served for making bequests to non-relatives, and regulated debts incurred during the decedent's life. However, a more comprehensive picture of the decedent's estate could be found in the inventories, which disclosed assets and liabilities arising from both before and after the testator's death (p. 270).<sup>8</sup>

The dissertation ends with a brief summary in Polish (pp. 286–291), German (pp. 292–297) and English (pp. 298–302) containing general conclusions drawn from each of the chapters, as well as the author's statement that "*the manner of handling inheritance matters between family and other heirs*" was one of the elements that reduced social conflicts as well as a reflection of the legal awareness of the citizens of smaller towns in Royal Prussia (p. 286). Kitowski emphasises that the analysis of around 120 town records from Chojnice, Kościerzyn, Nowe nad Wisłą and Skarszewy allowed to conclude that "*in terms of inheritance law, ius culmense at times showed some considerable differences as compared to other legal systems in force at that time*" (p. 286). In addition to the conclusions, it is worth to note the research desiderata proposed by the author, in particular those referring to conducting equivalent studies for other smaller towns in the Voivodeships of Chełmno and Malbork as well as Warmia, and contrasting the obtained data with big cities such as Gdańsk, Elbląg and Toruń.

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, the dissertation by Piotr Kitowski titled *Inheritance succession in smaller towns of the Pomeranian Voivodeship in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> and*

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p. 285; Urszula SOWINA, *Wdowy i sieroty w świetle prawa w miastach Korony w późnym średniowieczu i wczesnej nowożytności*, in: Maria Dąbrowska – Jerzy Kruppé (eds.), *Od narodzin do wieku dojrzałego. Dzieci i młodzież w Polsce*, Vol. 1, Warszawa 2002, p. 19.

7 See Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK, *Wyprawy ślubne mieszczanek z województwa sandomierskiego (w XVII wieku)*, *Almanach Historyczny* 10, 2008, pp. 191–200.

8 See Agnieszka BARTOSZEWICZ, *Testament jako źródło do badań nad piśmiennością mieszczańską w późnym średniowieczu*, *KHKM* 2011, Nrs. 3–4, pp. 293–303; Magdalena WILCZEK-KARCZEWSKA, *Testamenty szlachty wielkopolskiej z XVII wieku*, *KHKM* 2011, Nrs. 3–4, pp. 337–342, p. 344.

18<sup>th</sup> century. A legal and historical study successfully combines research methodologies of a lawyer, a historian and a historian of material culture. The study offers an excellent comparative synthesis with an emphasis on both a detailed description of legal aspects and a historical interpretation thereof, despite the differences in methodology, supported by examples from testaments, post-mortem inventories, inheritance contracts, family divisions of property, and donation records. The author's professional approach is also evidenced by the introduction, which includes a thorough presentation of the source database as well as source literature on the subject. In addition, the dissertation abounds in interesting and valuable comparisons between the town law and the country law (Polish: *prawo ziemskie*), with some particularly noteworthy conclusions on the state of preservation of testators' property. Kitowski states that "*as opposed to the documents drawn up among nobility, scarcely any inventory, division of property or testament drawn up in a town included information on the appearance, structure or condition of real estate. In fact, this was not an exception but a common practice among real estate appraisers in many towns of the Commonwealth*" (pp. 225–226). One subject brought up in the monograph that deserves a more detailed study is the question of life estate rights authorising a surviving spouse to use the decedent's property (in part or in full), this being – according to the author – "*a provision widely used in historical Polish testaments*" (p. 97).<sup>9</sup> The way this right was construed, how much time it remained in effect (until the widowed spouse's death or until another marriage) and how it was formulated in the last will – all these constitute worthy subjects of study. It would also be interesting to analyse the financial situation of widows, since the life estate rights gave a widow a real opportunity to influence the distribution of her late husband's legacy.<sup>10</sup> The question of disinheritance is equally interesting: it affected people from all social strata, regardless of their wealth and religion. In practice, however, we find few examples of such practices in source documents, perhaps due to the laws that required a detailed statement of reasons. In such circumstances, most testators decided not to disinherit, considering a public disclosure of family issues too shaming and embarrassing.<sup>11</sup>

9 See Bożena POPIOŁEK, *Woli mojej ostatniej testament ten... Testamenty staropolskie jako źródło do historii mentalności XVII i XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2009, pp. 26–27.

10 Cf. Bogdan LESIŃSKI, *Stanowisko kobiety w polskim prawie ziemskim do połowy XV wieku*, Wrocław 1956, p. 119; Urszula KICIŃSKA, *Umowy dożywocia jako forma zabezpieczenia materialnego szlachcianki w dawnej Polsce*, *Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie* 18, 2013, pp. 182–200; EADEM, *Umowa dożywocia jako przykład regulacji majątkowej małżonków w dawnej Polsce*, *Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego* 5, 2013 (2014), pp. 266–283; J. PIELAS, *Podziały majątkowe*, pp. 206–207; IDEM, *Wdowa-matka a kwestie majątkowe w rodzinach szlachty koronnej w XVII wieku*, in: A. Karpiński – I. Dacka-Górzyńska (eds.), *Spółceństwo staropolskie*, pp. 175–176.

11 Cf. Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK, *Wydzieliczenie w testamentach mieszczzańskich z województwa sandomierskiego (w XVI–XVIII wieku)*, *Almanach Historyczny* 11, 2009, pp. 18–20.

While Kitowski wrote an excellent and innovative dissertation, he did not manage to completely avoid a few shortcomings. Considering the legal character of the monograph, the introduction seems to lack a more detailed explanation of the subject of succession (p. 12). Furthermore, a more detailed description of the scope and territory of the Pomeranian Voivodship in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century would be appropriate, considering that the term appears as an indication of the area of research in the title. The researcher's statement that his study focuses on four towns (Chojnice, Kościerzyn, Nowe nad Wisłą and Skarszewy) seems too vague for a reader not familiarized with the subject (p. 19). One would also consider too vague his observations regarding the statutory order of inheritance. The different kinds of law discussed by the author – Magdeburg law, Culm law and nobility law (the corrected Royal Prussia law, Polish: *korektura pruska*) (pp. 50–57) have not been described in detail, which gives an impression that the author only skimmed the subject and therefore directed his work to experts specialising in the subject. The work lacks a broader picture of the history and the existence of different types of law in the Polish territory, as well as at least some basic source literature on the subject. It is also unclear whether the rather lengthy considerations on the structure of testament were indeed necessary. (pp. 79–96) They seem justified considering the subject and structure of the monograph; however, doubts arise considering the fact that contemporary literature offers many pieces of research (by authors such as e.g. Bożena Popiołek, Katarzyna Justyniarska-Chojak, Mariusz Lubczyński, Henryk Suchojad, and Jacek Pielas)<sup>12</sup> where the structure of the last will has already been discussed in great detail.

However, the aforementioned concerns do not diminish the value of the dissertation, which offers an excellent legal and historical synthesis much needed in present-day research. The study, in particular the research pertaining to smaller towns in Royal Prussia, fills a void and paves a way for further interdisciplinary studies combining legal perspective with history, culture, and anthropology.

Urszula Kicińska

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12 Mariusz LUBCZYŃSKI – Jacek PIELAS – Henryk SUCHOJAD (eds.), *Cui contingit nasci, restatmori. Wybór testamentów staropolskich z województwa sandomierskiego*, Warszawa 2005; B. POPIOŁEK, *Woli mojej*; Katarzyna JUSTYNIARSKA-CHOJAK, *Testamenty i inwentarze pośmiertne z ksiąg miejskich województwa sandomierskiego (XVI–XVIII wiek)*, Kielce 2010; Ewa DANOWSKA (ed.), *Dług śmiertelności wypłacić potrzeba. Wybór testamentów mieszczan krakowskich z XVII–XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2011.

**MANYŚ, Bernadetta, *Uroczystości rodzinne w Wilnie za Augusta III (1733–1763)* [Family Ceremonies in Vilnius in the Times of Augustus III (1733–1763)], Poznań: Nauka i Innowacje 2015, pp. 408. ISBN 978-83-64864-05-6.**

In her publication,<sup>1</sup> Bernadette Manyś examines the customs of eighteenth-century Vilnius, focusing on important moments and the impact of events on the town's society. By using various sources, she attempts to reconstruct public opinion and citizens' attitudes towards these events. In her latest monograph the author analyses family life through the prism of Vilnius family ceremonies and celebrations during the reign of Augustus III. The life of the family is first investigated from the perspective of family ceremonies and celebrations, which are key moments in a person's life and their loved ones, and at the same time from two different perspectives, private and public. The author primarily focuses on Christian ceremonies and celebrations and also refers to those within aristocratic, noble and bourgeois families. This was achieved thanks to extensive study source material in the Polish and Lithuanian archival centres. The key source material for the author was from the press, mainly „The Polish Courier” from the years 1729–1733 and 1737–1760. In this publication of three hundred pieces covering Vilnius, half of them were devoted to family ceremonies and celebrations.

The second press material analysed was the „Lithuanian Courier” from the years 1760–1763, which contains many entries of family ceremonies and celebrations. In addition, the author used „Supplements to The Vilnius News”, „The Warsaw News”, „Literary News” and „Gazeta Vilnius”, as well as newspaper manuscripts stored in the archive section of the Radziwiłł Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. The author also sourced material such as seasonal literature, wills, accounts from different congregations, weddings, baptisms and deaths as well as registry books. Furthermore correspondence, records, diaries, post-mortem registries, inventories from churches in Vilnius, confraternities books and records of the cathedral chapter were employed. The author was able to gather such

1 Bernadetta MANYŚ, *Pompa funebris a życie codzienne w świetle XVIII-wiecznych oracji funeralnych Pawła Giżyckiego*, in: Homo sum: humani Nil a me alienum puto. Życie codzienne wczoraj i dziś, Poznań 2011, pp. 191–201; EADEM, „Propaganda rodowa” podczas uroczystości pogrzebowych Pawła Karola Sanguszki oraz Michała Serwacego Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego, in: Vade Nobiscum. Materiały studenckiego koła naukowego historyków Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Vol. VII, Łódź 2011, pp. 343–350; EADEM, „Przeznaczony wodzu Litwy Palemonie, Twoja stolica często w ogniu płonie”. Obraz Wilna po pożarach z 1748 i 1749 roku na podstawie relacji Bazylego Bonifacego Jachimowicza, in: „Trzeba dyscypliny – bez niej nie da się pasji składnie wyrazić...” Studia z dziejów nowożytnych (XVI–XVIII w.), Poznań 2012, pp. 287–303; EADEM, *Anna Katarzyna z Sanguszków Radziwiłłowa i Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. Relacje matki z synem na podstawie dziurysza wojewody wileńskiego*, in: Kulturowe wzorce a społeczna praktyka. Studia z dziejów kobiet, Poznań 2012, pp. 127–139; EADEM, *O „tekstach”, Wilnie i wilnianach słów kilka...*, Klio vol. 25, no 2, 2013, pp. 269–276.

impressively diverse source material making it possible to trace the organization of the celebrations, characterize these rites, and to show the evolution of these different customs.

The source material collected required a compilation of literature on the subject and a better understanding of Lithuanian historiography. It should be noted that the Lithuanian historians' findings here are especially valuable. They conducted research on the matter of the ceremony which is not widely known amongst Polish experts. Just as advanced is the research on cultural activities of the Oginski family which Manyś also uses in her work.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted, however, that the author does not take into account the latest position in this field, namely the findings of recent work by Lina Balaišytė.<sup>3</sup> The author was also inspired by findings of western researchers.<sup>4</sup>

The study is interdisciplinary in its nature and a variety of sources were employed and many methods and analytical techniques were used from the fields of the history of mentality, sociology, social history as well as historical demography.

Manyś in similar vein to Maria Bogucka, recognized these customs as being a starting point for the development of civilization, one which allowed the operation of both the family and society.<sup>5</sup> Chronologically speaking, the work covers the reign of Augustus III

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- 2 See: Vladas DRĖMA, *Vilniaus bažnyčios: iš Vlado Drėmos archyvu*, Vilnius 2008; Algirdas BALIULIS (sud.), *Lietuvos magdeburginių miestų privilegijos ir aktai*, t. 6, Vilnius 2008; Romualdas BUDRYS et alii (red.), *Auksakalystė. XIII–XX a. Pirmoji knyga: Kolekcijos*, Vilnius 2006; Lina BALAIŠYTĖ, *Oginskiai viešajame XVIII a. valstybės gyvenime: iškilmingi įžengimai į Vilniaus ir Trakų vaivadijas*, in: Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė (sud.), *Kunigaikščiai Oginskiai Lietuvos istorijoje. Kultūrinės veiklos pėdsakai*, Vilnius 2010, pp. 63–76; EADEM, *Valdovo vaizdinys Stanislovo Augusto karūnavimo iškilmėse*, *Menotyra* 16, 2009, Nr. 3–4, pp. 91–99; EADEM, *Publicum dolori theatrum: kilmingųjų laidotuvių apipavidalinimas Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje XVIII a. viduryje*, in: Lina Balaišytė – Auksė Kaladžinskaitė (sud.), *Dailės istorijos studijos*, t. 3. *Ars memoriae: atmintis – dailės funkcija ir tema (XVIII–XXI a.)*, Vilnius 2008, pp. 9–23; EADEM, *Vilniaus pasaulietinės iškilmės ir jų apipavidalinimas XVIII a. viduryje*, in: Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė (sud.), *Viešosios ir privačiosios erdvės XVIII amžiaus Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje*, Vilnius 2008, pp. 121–147; Darius BARONAS, *Vilniaus pranciškonų kankiniai ir jų kultas XIV–XX a.*, Vilnius 2010; Antanas Rimvydas ČAPLINSKAS, *Vilniaus istorija: legendos ir tikrovė*, Vilnius 2010 i in.; Olga DADIOMOVA, *Mykolas Kazimieras Oginskis ir jo muzikinis palikimas*, in: Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė (sud.), *Kunigaikščiai Oginskiai Lietuvos istorijoje. Kultūrinės veiklos pėdsakai*, Vilnius 2010, pp. 373–378.
- 3 Lina BALAIŠYTĖ, *Valdovo pašlovinimui, šlovintojo atminimui: Augusto III iškilmės Vilniuje*, in: Jolita Liškevičienė – Sigita Maslauskaitė – Gabija Surdokaitė (sud.), *Lietuvos kultūros karališkasis dėmuo: įvaizdžiai, simboliai, reliktai*, Vilnius 2012 (=Acta Academiae Artium Vilmensis, T. 65–66), pp. 307–318; EADEM, „*Marcijono Mykolo Oginskio dorybių portretas*“: *apie didiko vaizdinį XVIII a. proginėje architektūroje*, *Menotyra* 19, 2012, Nr. 4, pp. 301–309.
- 4 Norbert ANGERMANN, *Die Deutschen in Litauen. Ein geschichtlicher Überblick*, Lüneburg 1996; Rolf BECKER, *Van der Döpe – Das neue Ritual der deutsche Taufe*, in: Karl Georg Kaster – Gerd Steinwascher (Hg.), *450 Jahre Reformation in Osnabrück – V. D. M. I AE. Gottes Wort bleibt in Ewigkeit*, Bramsche 1993, pp. 303–312.
- 5 Maria BOGUCKA, *Staropolskie obyczaje w XVI i XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1994, detailed explanation of the concept of custom, see. pp. 11–24.

and this defined time allows us to get to the know the source material and try to focus on this specific period better (which can be distinguished from the more general term „Saxon times” used in earlier historiography). This approach appears suitable because more and more attention is currently being focussed on the changes in cultural life during the 1830’s, steering culture towards a new era of the Enlightenment as a later period of Saxon times.

The work consists of three chapters covering the order of family life and also associated celebrations, weddings and baptisms and funerals. The main aim was to show the organization and conduct of individual family ceremonies and celebrations as well as their impact on individuals and families, the urban community, which as the author writes, can not be seen in the construction, but it helps her as a reference point. The choice of Vilnius, as one of the largest and most dynamic cities in the Republic, is significant. Moreover, a similar study for the cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has not yet been undertaken. Another objective was therefore to highlight the characteristics of the Vilna family ceremonies and celebrations and, where possible, contrast them with similar ceremonies and celebrations elsewhere in the kingdom.

In the first chapter of *Vilnius – A Picture of Wedding Celebrations*, pre-wedding celebrations such as courting, engagement, the maiden’s evening, the idea of separating the blessings of the wedding, and finally the wedding ceremony and the wedding feast themselves are all discussed. When talking about the next stages of preparation and the event itself, the author has attempted to reconstruct their importance both for the individuals concerned and for their loved ones. The author has also characterised this from a broader perspective through functions that were fulfilled for society. This emphasis on the social aspect and the penetration of the symbolic sphere with a the real sphere is particularly interesting and has not yet been analysed in other studies. In this way, betrothal has been characterised, a ritual of a symbolic nature, but with sealed contracts (p. 39). The author dedicates much space analysing the Tridentine reform reception, verifying the implementation of its objectives. As a result this section focuses on the conditions of publishing the announcement, with certificates required by the Church and also the manner of selecting witnesses. The author’s research has produced interesting results. This requirement was also quite fluent compared with other conditions as the method of announcing the declaration evolved, and its observance was not as rigid. However the declaration had to meet a number of important functions in addition to the certification to prevent irregularities and ensure the readiness of the contracting parties for the Sacrament (p. 59). The author herself suggests that not much space was devoted to the issue of prenuptial and dowries, showing that the issues and circumstances surrounding the preparation of contracts were not inherent in rituals. It seems, however, that the definition of these principles is essential for this research and Manyś makes a brief summary, focusing on the most interesting cases where writing

a prenuptial occurred at a time different than generally accepted i.e. before or during the engagement. Writing these contracts resulted from a policy pursued by the families, which in turn created an image of the power of the family and its splendour; matrimonial politics were a deliberate strategy, taking into account benefits such as defined social status and wealth (p. 35), and was part of greater efforts to bring these to a marriage. This constituted an important, if not the most important part of the preparations. A further study and exploration of this theme could result in interesting data on this subject.

It would also be worth widening the investigation into marriage, which is discussed in one of the subsections. Under the terms of the Council of Trent, the appropriate place for a wedding was a parish church of the marrying couple, however, we know, as the author emphasizes (p. 78), the nobility and prosperous parts of the nobility (and the bourgeoisie), established a habit of concluding the act of the wedding on the premises of their own foundations (churches, chapels, monasteries), and even in private palaces. This certainly influenced the visual and symbolic realm of the rites, specially prepared rituals for the occasion. Its analysis in the context of this topic might prove very valuable, however we cannot see information in the sources.

In the next chapter called „*I baptise you...*” *Baptisms in Vilnius* issues related to baptisms granted by parish churches in Vilnius are discussed. The author depicts the sacrament of baptism through the prism of time and place where the ceremony was organized, a selection of friends, and how birthdays and name days were celebrated, in order to complete the picture of family celebrations. The material appears to be lacking information on baptisms in Vilnius in the years 1733–1763 and this prevents us from determining the type of gifts handed out or children’s costumes (p. 140). The study, however, enables the author to precisely determine popular names and the season in which they were given (for 1749), which was illustrated in Tables 6 and 7 (pp. 142–143) and is an interesting example of the long-lasting trends in society’s mentality. The role of celebrating name days and how it gave colour to everyday life is highlighted, this celebration also allowed an opportunity for reunions, maintaining social contacts and making new acquaintances (p. 144). These celebrations which took place within the sphere of the sacred and the profane, are another example of their pervasiveness, so frequent in Old Polish society<sup>6</sup> (p. 145).

The third chapter *Funerals in Vilnius*, is the last and is dedicated to the following; preparing for death, preparing outfits for the funeral, and from the testament funeral, the anniversary ceremony of the funeral, the cost of the funeral, the wake, the décor of the temple and finally, the burial place. The source material, which was used in this chapter

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6 Cf. Bożena POPIOŁEK, *Sacrum przestrzeni domowej w czasach saskich*, in: Bogdan Rok – Filip Wolański (red.), *Staropolski ogląd świata. Poszukiwanie sacrum – odnajdywanie profanum*, Wrocław 2013, pp. 35–50.

is highly comprehensive. This is a result of the special relationship and the Old Polish society's attitudes towards death, and thus the careful preparation of the dying for death itself. In this chapter an analysis of the audiovisual realm was carried out, one which was created and built specifically for the funeral. The author devotes a separate section to the audio sphere *The Sound of the Bells* which is extremely important for several reasons. A supplementary description of the preparations for the funeral is given here, and also how a family celebration belonged to the whole community living space; the urban space. This analysis gives us an insight into the glamour associated with these organized events and the wealth of the deceased. It also leads to the conclusion about the events awareness as „a kind of building” and the relationships with specific religions, temples and thus the spirituality of given meetings (pp. 188–189). The author devotes a lot of space to the visual sphere by describing the Vilnius ceremonial route (p. 196), the temples' decor (p. 244), burials (p. 256 et seq.), but also the procession (pp. 199 et seq.) which formed part of the visual element. The gravity of these events for the community demonstrates the need to continue research into the cultural sphere of Old Polish society, which would undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms of how it worked. In this chapter the author wanted to discuss a family occasion in a broader context and how it was an event built for a larger group, not only the family but also the community in which they lived.

An important supplement which helps gives greater context to the book is the list of selected information in the tables contained in the annexes of the publication. A list of those responsible for the burials is shown in *Annex 1 – List of Persons Responsible for Vilnius Burials between 1733–1763*, defining their relationship with the deceased, and showing who undertook these tasks. Annex 2 summarizes the place of burial and the estimated costs, and in Annex 3 the *List of Aristocratic and Noble Funerals in Vilnius between 1738–1759* is presented. Complementing this information in Chapter III is the *Song of Death* (Annex 4). Annex 4 presents the summary of marriage days in an urban parish church in the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the years 1733–1742.

In conclusion, the study is the first such comprehensive look at ceremonies and celebrations in the community of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It highlights the features and characteristics of these celebrations in this area. However, since the author refers to a medium sized town, which Vilnius was, it is not necessary to extrapolate these mechanisms to the rest of the Lithuanian state, but rather reconcile it with other cities of the kingdom, to some extent Manyś tries to show this in her work. This brings two benefits because it shows the specifics of Lithuanian culture, as well as elements of family rituals in the Crown.

Of huge importance is the vast use of Lithuanian studies concerning the range of issues of ceremony and urban space. This brings historians closer to the centres of Lithuanian

methodology and the state of research, knowledge of which outside Lithuania is still underdeveloped undoubtedly because of the the language barrier.

The layout of the paper is clear and readable, both for professionals and for those unfamiliar with the subject. In the introduction, the author briefly introduces the history of the city and its development over the centuries, outlining its territorial development and describing the function of Vilnius during the analysed period. In this type of work, this procedure was undoubtedly necessary, but it somewhat breaks down the introduction's structure and narration dealing with the research and delineated targets. I think that dividing the part devoted to the history of Vilnius would be beneficial for both the narrative carried out in the introduction as well as for the study itself.

The monograph is written in a meticulous scientific way with a detailed list of annexes, illustrations, tables, charts, an index and a summary both in English and Lithuanian, which helps in using individual chapters.

It is worth noting that the tables presented in the annexes which take into account the lists of people linked to the aforementioned ceremonies and festivities are not only an important, graphic supplement to our knowledge. This is shown by the careful examination of the sources that made it possible to organize the dispersed knowledge in a clear manner, as well as being useful in further research into the noble family during Saxon times.

In conclusion it is worth noting again that there is a lack of similar studies devoted to customs and habits in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Manyś's work certainly helps fill this knowledge gap, and at the same time also points towards further detailed research.<sup>7</sup> The comments above have no bearing on the huge value of the work but are the result of fundamental archival and bibliographical query. By analysing the cultural importance of family ceremonies and celebrations, the author manages to present a view of the family and reveal a fragment of the history of the city, showing its space through the prism of culture, which compels us to further deepen our research into the cultures and ceremonies of the modern era.

Agnieszka Słaby

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7 The problem is mentioned in Juliusz CHROŚCICKI, *Pompa funebris. Z dziejów kultury staropolskiej*, Warszawa 1974; IDEM, *Od śmierci do egzekwii*, in: Joanna Dziubkova (oprac.), VANITAS. Portret trumienny na tle sarmackich obyczajów pogrzebowych, Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, listopad 1996 – luty 1997, Poznań 1997, pp. 28–33; IDEM, *Oswajanie śmierci pięknem*, Barok. Historia – literatura – sztuka 2004, Nr 1, pp. 17–39; Michał ROŻEK, *Uroczystości w barokowym Krakowie*, Kraków 1976; Bogdan ROK, *Zagadnienie śmierci w kulturze staropolskiej*, Wrocław 1995; IDEM, *Zakony wobec śmierci hetmanów w czasach saskich (1697–1763)*, in: Marek Derwich – Anna Pobóg-Lenartowicz (red.), *Klasztor w państwie średniowiecznym i nowożytnym*, Wrocław 2005, pp. 289–298; Bożena POPIOŁEK, *Woli mojej ostatniej testament ten... Testamenty staropolskie jako źródło do historii mentalności XVII i XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2009; Edmund KIZIK, *Wesele, kilka chrztów i pogrzebów. Uroczystości rodzinne w mieście hanzeatyckim od XVI do XVIII wieku*, Gdańsk 2001; Izabela BOGDAN, *Ceremonie ślubne i renesansowa muzyka weselna w Królewcu w latach 1582–1645*, Poznań 2009.