REVIEWS

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Viktor Zaruba, *Polovytsia polovetskykh stepiv. Zhyttia ta naukova pratsia Mariana Dubetskoho u Prydniprovi vprodovzh 1874–1880 rr.* [*Polovytsia* of the Cuman Steppes: The Life and Scientific Work of Marian Dubetsky in the Dnieper Region in 1874–1880], Dnipro, 2023, Lira, 192 pp.

A small, elegant, and richly illustrated book by the well-known Ukrainian historian Viktor Zaruba has recently been published, dedicated to the activities and work in Dnipro (then Ekaterinoslav) of the prominent Polish historian and public activist Marian Dubiecki (1838–1926), whose figure continues to attract the attention of contemporary Polish historiography.[1] At the same time, this figure, with strong ties to Ukrainian lands, is only now beginning to interest Ukrainian historians.

The book's edition is minimal: 20 copies, which makes it immediately a bibliographic rarity. The first thing worth noting as a sign of a professional approach to an assignment is the consistently contextualised presentation of the material. Analysing Dubiecki's contribution to the development of historical science, Zaruba outlines a detailed 'historiographical map' of Ekaterinoslav in the last quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He presents an almost complete picture of Dubiecki's contributions to Polish, Ukrainian, and regional historiography, enabling the precise identification of key research issues. Such an approach prevents the subject from becoming hermetic, situates it in an appropriate historiographical context, and provides a solid foundation for further critical reflection. The subject of the monograph is set in the context of regional history, a domain in which the stay of the Polish historian in the Ekaterinoslav Governorate (1874–80) remains poorly studied due to the limited availability of documentary sources, publications, and archival ego-documents. Moreover, in both regional historical studies and synthetic works on the history of Ekaterinoslav,[2] the role and importance

[1] See Zbigniew Wójcik, 'Marian Dubiecki – z Wołynia na Syberię', in Wiesław Caban, Lidia Michalska-Bracha (eds), *Polskie dziewiętnastowieczne pamiętniki i listy z Ziem Zabranych – rola i miejsce w badaniach historycznych* (Warszawa, 2017), 407–17; Paweł Pryt, 'Powstańcza działalność Mariana Dubieckiego – sekretarza Rusi w Rządzie Narodowym 1863 roku', *Prace Historyczne*, 1 (2024), 73–83.

[2] See Dmitrij Javornickij, *Istorija goroda Ekaterinoslava* (Dnepropetrovsk, 1989), 197; Anatolii Bolebrukh (ed.), *Dnipropetrovsk: vikhy istorii* (Dnipropetrovsk, 2002),

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of the Polish community in shaping the urban environment are almost wholly ignored.

The research's source base comprises original archival materials, biographical-historical literature, published documents of personal origin, and Dubiecki's works. What becomes the key reference for the book, however, is a two-volume collection of autobiographical and historical essays by the Polish historian, published in Kyiv in 1914. The second volume contains six essays that, in the free form of memoirs, depict, according to the author, the most important places and events in the history of the Central Dnieper region. Despite a certain degree of fictionalisation, emotional tone, and stylisation of the conversational manner of narration, Zaruba rightly considers these essays to be a valuable source not only for Dubiecki's biography but also for understanding his way of thinking about history and studying the history of the region.

One cannot help but notice that the author is congenial toward his protagonist. As if fascinated by Dubiecki's way of presenting the material, Zaruba gives his monograph the character of a popular narrative in which academic research style blends organically with journalistic reflections, artistic insertions, and fiction treatments.

The book is structured chronologically. The author invites the reader to follow the paths of his hero, one of the active participants of the January Uprising of 1863–64, who, after the Siberian exile, like many other Polish insurgents, returned to the European part of the empire.[3]

The preface provides a concise outline of Dubiecki's long, complicated, and rich biography. We learn that the nobleman from Volhynia, who studied at the history and philology departments at Kharkiv and Kyiv universities, took an active part in the January Uprising and, in 1864, was arrested and sentenced to death, which was commuted to a ten-year term of imprisonment. When the time came to return from Siberia, Dubiecki consciously chose the Ekaterinoslav Governorate since his circle of scientific interests was closely related to the history of this region. He believed that it was essential to become directly acquainted with the area – to see the remnants of the old days and to interview local residents.

From 1874 to 1876, Dubiecki lived in Novomoskovsk (now Samar), and from 1875 to 1880 – in Ekaterinoslav. It is this period – the moment of

256; Anatolii Bolebrukh (ed.), *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovska* (Dnipropetrovsk, 2006), 596; Andriy Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City* (Boston, 2022), 374; Andrii Portnov, Tetiana Portnova, *Dnipro. Biohrafiia velykoho mista v stepu* (Kyiv, 2024), 208.

[3] Ołeh Żurba, 'Archiwalia dotyczące uczestników powstania styczniowego w zbiorach Archiwum Państwowego Obwodu Dniepropietrowskiego', *Almanach Historyczny*, xxvi (2024), 175–88.

encounter between the Polish historian and the historical-geographical reality of the region – that constitutes the central point of the monograph. The author seemingly invites the reader to join him on a journey with Dubiecki to recall the old days of Sloboda Polovitsa, to drive through the villages on the left bank of the Dnieper River that were built on the site of former Cossack settlements, to visit the fortress of Kodak, to look carefully at the remains of antiquity, and to sympahise with the tragic situation of Polish settlers in southern Ukraine, who tried to bring civilization to this wild country. Zaruba uses Dubiecki's texts to express his views and interpretations. Moreover, he uses the Polish historian's narrative structure and historical constructs to produce an extramural dialogue, continuing the age-old debate over the primacy of Poles, Russians, or Ukrainians in settling (colonising) the Central Dnieper region.

The first chapter describes a steamboat journey from Kyiv to Ekaterinoslav in 1874. Dubiecki did not limit himself to reporting on the landscapes he observed, but, above all, he floated reflections on the loss of the former borderlands, the sites of Polish glory, and the sinister role of imperial power. He referred with satisfaction to the failure of Prince Grigory Potemkin's plans to make Ekaterinoslav the third capital of the empire. His opposition to the empire's influence was also reflected in the terminology used. He referred to Ekaterinoslav as Polovitsa, Novomoskovsk as Samar, and the region above Samara as Samaria, which was associated with Sarmatia and the 'Sarmatian noble nation' known from early modern Polish chronicles. These chronicles were not only a historical source for him but also shaped his perception of history, becoming a kind of 'spectacles' of the historian's research optics.

The second chapter is devoted to Dubiecki's stay in Novomoskovsk, where he spent less than a year, having already obtained permission to move to Ekaterinoslav in the summer of 1875. During this time, in addition to reading the works of Polish early modern writers and historians such as Marcin Bielski, Alessandro Guagnini, Adam Naruszewicz, and others, he actively travelled, trying to revive in his emotions the pages of ancient history. According to him, they were related to both the heroic moments of the Polish past and the destructive effects of the rule of the Moscow invaders (p. 39). Fascinated by the Polish past, the historian eagerly searched for Polish roots in everyone he encountered, seeking traces of Polish heritage. Comparing the distinctive features of peasant huts in the Samaria region with the descriptions of small Russian towns contained in the works of Nikolai Gogol, he did not forget to emphasise that Gogol himself was of Polish origin.

Ekaterinoslav is the main character of the next chapter. Dubiecki lived here from 1875 to 1880. As Zaruba notices, he consistently ignored signs and symbols of the Russian Empire. He meticulously omitted descriptions of and references to such important memorials to Ekaterinoslav at the time as the Potemkin Palace, the Transfiguration Cathedral, founded by Catherine II, and the monument to the Tsarina herself. The Polish historian cited the

well-known history of the city's founding, but he also recognised the Russian empress, King Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski, and Austrian Emperor Joseph II as its founders.

Zaruba manages to 'drag' his protagonist into a sterile discussion about the date of foundation and the 'real' founder of Ekaterinoslav. By reporting on Dubiecki's account of the detailed biography of Zaporizhian Cossack Lazarus Globa, who, as early as 1743, founded a settlement with mills, fish ponds, and orchards on the site of the future Ekaterinoslav, and by the end of the eighteenth century had become a substantial landowner, Zaruba strengthens his position in this debate. Although, like Dubiecki, he recognises Globa as the real founder of Polovitsa-Ekaterinoslav, he fails to completely 'sever' the city from its imperial roots.

When discussing the Cossacks' attitude during the liquidation of the Sich in 1775, both Dubiecki and his biographer describe it as collaborationist. Both unanimously condemn the "true founder of Ekaterinoslav" for having "gone over to the side of the occupying forces in 1775 to avoid confiscation of their property" (p. 65).

Zaruba notices an important aspect of Dubiecki's writing strategy – the complete omission of the description of the contemporary city. Instead, the historian limited himself to general, mainly negative remarks. At the time, there were dozens of Poles living in the Ekaterinoslav Governorate, just like him – former participants in the January Uprising. After gruelling labour in Siberia, they were exiled to the region, where they remained under constant police surveillance[4] and often found themselves in extremely difficult material conditions. It is hard to believe that in such small towns as Ekaterinoslav and Novomoskovsk, Dubiecki did not meet friends who shared his fate as an insurgent. However, his texts lack any mention of them. At the same time, he established contacts with representatives of the influential part of the Polish community in Ekaterinoslav – businessmen, landowners, officials, and merchants, with whose children he worked as a home teacher and tutor. Carefully observing this environment, he saw its moral decline, spiritual degradation, and gradual distancing from its native language and culture. Nevertheless, Dubiecki left a unique testimony to the unity of the Polish community, whose efforts led to the construction and opening of St. Joseph's Church – consecrated in 1878 – which became an important centre of Polish culture in the region.

The part devoted to the story of the Polish Abramowicz family is separated from the main narrative thread. This family was closely related to the protagonist – he lived with them and acted as the guardian of their children.

[4] Oleh Zhurba, 'Osobovi spravy uchasnykiv polskoho povstannia 1863–1864 rokiv u Derzhavnomu arkhivi Dnipropetrovskoi oblasti: dzhereloznavchyi analiz ta informatsiinyi potentsial', *Rukopysna ta knyzhkova spadshchyna Ukrainy*, iv (2024), 220–35.

Zaruba uses this theme to present the genealogy of the Abramowicz family, their history of resettlement to Ekaterinoslav in the early nineteenth century, as well as their family ties and social customs. The result is the first historical and genealogical study of a Polish family in Ekaterinoslav, based on rich source material. The author has obtained information from both published sources and manuscripts stored in the State Archive of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, the Russian State Historical Archive, and the Russian State Military-Historical Archive.

The research focuses on four generations of local officials – the Abramowicz family, which achieved professional success in Ekaterinoslav, raised the next generation, and held a prominent place in the city's educated community. Zaruba also reflects on Dubiecki's attitude to the emigration of the Abramowicz family and the fate of Poles in the Central Dnieper lands in general, portraying it as a national tragedy. Dubiecki's words resound with a dramatic reflection: "The mother of the Polish nation became an orphan, having lost her sons, who went into exile across the vast territories of the neighbouring aggressive empire" (p. 80). The author cites an episode from Dubiecki's joint expedition with fifteen-year-old Oleksandr Abramowicz to the rapids of the Dnieper River, during which the young man admitted that he did not understand a phrase addressed to him in Polish. Indeed, Oleksandr's father had already embraced the Orthodox faith and married an Orthodox Polish woman, meaning he was a Pole by blood and bones, but assimilated into the Russian-Ukrainian linguistic, cultural, and religious space. This, as the book's author writes, "made a huge impression on the ethnically exalted Pole Dubiecki" (p. 81). As if contradicting his hero, the author concludes this chapter by stating that in the early 1920s, after the revolution, the civil war, and the death of their father, Oleksandr Abramowicz's two daughters, Olga and Maria, returned to their historical homeland, Poland.

Dubiecki gained a significant reputation in scientific circles for his study of the Kodak fortress. A key and indispensable step in this process was his expedition to this southernmost Polish stronghold on the Dnieper River. It became the focal point of both his memoirs and one of the chapters in Zaruba's book. The text is largely ethnographic and memoiristic. Particularly valuable and unique were the folk accounts contained therein regarding the magical properties of the Kodak ruins and the figure of Marusya-cripple (*Marusya-kalechka*) – these accounts are not found in any other folklore records. In addition, Dubiecki noted traces of the old Polish presence in the peasant consciousness – echoes that had survived for many generations, though they gradually lost credibility over time.

The result of Dubiecki's visit was the first historiographical study of Kodak's history.[5] In the later years, it was repeatedly re-published, revised, and

[5] Marian Dubiecki, *Kudak. Twierdza kresowa i jej okolice. Monografia historyczna* (Kraków, 1879), 91.

supplemented by the author. In 2005, the work was translated into Russian and published in a reprint of *Letopis Ekaternoslavskoj uchenoj arhivnoj komissii*.[6] This publication became more than just an important historiographical contribution to the study of the history of southern Ukraine. The discussion of the creative techniques and methods of historical thinking of the Polish historian raises the question of the presence of Dubiecki's ideas, works, and activities in the regional historiographical space. It once again highlights the problem of intellectual, regional, and national identity of historians of Ukraine, their interactions and dynamics.

The goal of M. Dubiecki's next steppe expedition was to search for the site of the 1648 Battle of Zhovti Vody. Equipped with available historical information and having rented a carriage, he set out on his longest expedition – the journey to the village of Zhovti Vody took two days. There, on 19 October 1879, after a two-hour survey of the area, he made what he believed was an outstanding historical discovery: he managed to locate the site of the first battle of the Great Cossack War. He immediately shared his findings with the academic world. As Zaruba aptly noted, the direct survey of the area and its detailed description, the sketches of the allegedly existing fortifications, and also, may I add, a great deal of self-confidence, for many years made Dubiecki a monopolist in presenting the events of the initial stage of the Khmelnytsky Uprising. This notwithstanding, Zaruba's statement that "disputes around the battle site continue even today" does not seem exaggerated (p. 145).

A brief overview of Dubiecki's Odesa period in Ukraine (1880–83) highlights his involvement in the life of the local Polish community and his ongoing work in the archives of the Zaporizhzhya Sich, then owned by Apollon Skałkowski. In 1883, Dubiecki eventually moved to Krakow, where he devoted himself to teaching and research. He lived to see Poland regain its independence and continued his faithful service to his homeland in the field of history.

In the concluding section, in addition to the undoubted merits of his protagonist in updating and resolving the key issues of the history of the Central Dnieper lands and the Polish diaspora in the region, the author of the monograph harshly criticises Dubiecki's historical interpretations. At their core was a hermetic ethno-national approach, according to which local history appeared to be a process of struggle between, on the one hand, the progressive civilizational influences of the Polish state and the Poles, and on the other, Moscow's imperial barbarism, whose victory led to the total backwardness and savagery of the local population. Zaruba demonstrates the limitations of narrowly national perspectives in analysing the region's key historical problems.

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[6] Marian Dubiecki, 'Kodak, pogranichnaya krepost i eyo okresnosti', in *Letopis' Ekaterinoslavskoj uchenoj arhivnoj komissii*, ii (Dnepropetrovsk, 2015), 353–500.

Zaruba's monograph has every chance of becoming a significant achievement, especially in the field of research on the Polish component of the history of southern Ukraine – demographic processes, the history of the diaspora, family history, and the mentality of local Poles. It significantly broadens understanding of regional historiography as a complex, heterogeneous, multinational cultural phenomenon, in which Dubiecki's work cannot be excluded. After all, he was a representative of one of the national groups of the Ekaterinoslav intellectual elite and society, which, along with others, co-created a unique and specific regional cultural landscape.

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Matthias B. Lehmann, *The Baron: Maurice de Hirsch and the Jewish Nineteenth Century*, Stanford, 2022, Stanford University Press, 400 pp., 4 ills, maps; series: Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture

Matthias B. Lehmann's *The Baron: Maurice de Hirsch and the Jewish Nineteenth Century* is an important contribution to Jewish history, situating one of the nineteenth century's wealthiest philanthropists at the crossroads of European nascent capitalism, imperialism, and Jewish emancipation. Until now, Hirsch has remained a somewhat marginal figure in modern Jewish history, often overshadowed by more prominent leaders such as Sir Moses Montefiore. The few existing biographies are dated or limited in scope.[1] Lehmann's book is the first to synthesise an impressive range of archival sources, and in doing so, the author reframes Hirsch as a central actor in nineteenth-century Jewish politics and global philanthropy. In line with the 'biographical turn' in writing history, Lehmann demonstrates how tracing the life of one individual opens new perspectives on the entanglement of Jewish emancipation with empires, capitalism, and colonialism. Therefore, the book is far more than a biography; it offers a transnational history of Jewish modernity, showing how Hirsch's life illuminates broader questions about what it meant for elite Jews to become 'European' in the imperial times.

[1] See Kurt Grunwald, *Türkenhirsch: A Study of Baron Maurice de Hirsch, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist* (Jerusalem, 1966); Samuel J. Lee, *Moses of the New World: The Work of Baron de Hirsch* (New York, 1970); Dominique Frischer, *Le Moïse des Amériques* (Paris, 2002); Serge-Allain Rozenblum, *Le baron de Hirsch: Un financier au service de l'humanité* (Paris, 2006).

Born into a newly ennobled Bavarian Jewish family in 1831, Maurice (Moritz) de Hirsch rose to prominence first as a railway magnate, constructing the Ottoman railways that earned him the nickname 'Türkenhirsch'. Yet Hirsch's reputation among Jews rested not on the railways project but on his philanthropy. From funding Jewish schools in Galicia to refugee aid and culminating in 1891 with the founding of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), Hirsch used his wealth to confront what he saw as the 'Jewish question'. As Lehmann shows, philanthropy was not supplementary to politics: it *was* politics, the primary form of Jewish collective action before the rise of mass parties. Against the widespread assumption that Jews had no autonomous political history until the rise of mass politics, Hirsch's activities exemplify how philanthropy operated as Jewish politics. Its emphasis on modern education in the Jewish 'frontier', from the Ottoman Empire to Habsburg Galicia, was as political as the educational initiatives of national governments, while the colonisation schemes in Argentina represented ambitious attempts at Jewish self-emancipation. Lehmann thus places philanthropy alongside nationalism and socialism, not as their opposite but as a parallel and equally political mode of collective action. In this reading, Hirsch emerges not merely as one of the greatest Jewish philanthropists of his age but also as one of the central figures of modern Jewish political history.

Lehmann's narrative also convincingly highlights the transformation of the Jewish elite in the nineteenth century. Figures like Hirsch resembled the court Jews [*Hofjuden*] of earlier centuries in their fortunes and their ability to act as negotiators between Jewish communities and European states. Yet there was a crucial difference: unlike the court Jew, whose power was contingent on the ruler's favour, Hirsch's wealth rested on the impersonal structures of modern capitalism. This independence from dynastic patronage endowed him with a new form of leverage. He could negotiate with governments as an autonomous actor and create his own networks of influence.

What is more, Lehmann powerfully argues that Hirsch's primary self-identification was as a European. His philanthropy was designed to facilitate that process by turning Eastern European and Ottoman Jews into what he regarded as proper Europeans, equipped with the skills, habits, and outlooks of modern bourgeois life. This is a theme that resonates with my own research on Polish-Jewish elites and intelligentsia in the interwar period, who likewise endured the long duress of thinking about themselves as Europeans. Hirsch's life illustrates an earlier phase of this phenomenon: elite Jews (not living in the frontier) who remade themselves Europeans, yet were never entirely accepted as such.

The decision to emphasise these broader contexts is not incidental: Hirsch himself had ordered his personal papers destroyed, leaving Lehmann with business correspondence, institutional records, and the traces of public activity. The absence of the private pushes Lehmann to reconstruct the Jewish

nineteenth century through the projects Hirsch shaped and the political realities he inhabited. The richest materials come from the archives of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), preserved at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, and the records of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris. These are complemented by an extensive documentary collection assembled by Max Kohler, lawyer, board member of several Jewish organisations, including the Baron de Hirsch Fund in New York, and an amateur historian who had once planned a biography of Hirsch. Kohler's papers, now housed at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York, along with materials at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Leo Baeck Institute, further illuminate Hirsch's philanthropic endeavours. To reconstruct Hirsch's railway empire, Lehmann turned to the correspondence of the Ottoman Imperial Bank (today in the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail in Roubaix), diplomatic and political papers in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna, and records from the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in Istanbul. In Argentina, sources include the Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno and the Centro Mark Turkow of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), supplemented by published memoirs of JCA settlers and a wide range of press publications in French, German, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, and Spanish. Family papers also survive in the Archives Générales du Royaume in Brussels (sequestered by the Belgian state after the First World War from Hirsch's granddaughter Lucienne, who had married a German banker) as well as the private correspondence of Hirsch's son Lucien with Lady Jessica Sykes, preserved in the East Riding of Yorkshire Archives. Taken together, this mosaic of sources explains the book's strong focus on Hirsch's public persona rather than his inner life.

On this basis, Lehmann structures the book in four thematic (mostly chronological) parts, each subdivided into three chapters. Part I, 'A European Family', situates Hirsch's family within the newly moulded Jewish aristocracy of Central Europe, exploring their social ascent and cosmopolitan networks. Part II, 'Ottoman Railways', focuses on the Ottoman railway projects, placing Hirsch at the centre of imperial rivalries and showing how railroads altered perceptions of space, time, and 'progress'. Part III, 'The Politics of Philanthropy', turns to Hirsch's philanthropic undertakings among the Jews (as well as non-Jews) in the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe (refugee relief, schools in Galicia), while the fourth, 'Argentina', examines the boldest experiment of all: the JCA's colonisation projects in Argentina. This architecture enables Lehmann to follow Hirsch across geographies, while also situating him in the *longue durée* of imperialism, Jewish emancipation, and antisemitism.

The Galician schools project described by Lehmann in the third part of the book illustrates both the ambition and the limitations of Hirsch's civilising mission. Lehmann rightly emphasises the scale of the endowment and its

significance among the educational initiatives of the period. Yet his account privileges the perspective of institutions, activists, and politicians, leaving aside the everyday realities of pupils, teachers, and parents. It also speaks more to Hirsch's projections about Galicia than to the local experience. In Galicia, where by the late nineteenth century over 80 per cent of Jewish children attended public (rather than philanthropic) schools, Hirsch's foundations were never the dominant site of Jewish education. Moreover, as recent scholarship has shown, girls in fact outnumbered boys in Galician public schools, yet they receive only a passing mention in Lehmann's treatment.[2] By focusing on Hirsch's vision and the politics of elites, the book risks overstating the transformative reach of philanthropy while underplaying how Jewish families on the ground negotiated integration in pragmatic ways.

Despite this, Lehmann's study is a landmark achievement. *The Baron* restores Hirsch's place in the centre of the nineteenth-century Jewish experience, situating him within the intertwined histories of capitalism and empires. The book succeeds in portraying philanthropy as a form of Jewish politics: both an assertion of solidarity and an effort to secure recognition through 'soft power'. Based on meticulous archival research, Lehmann's book offers an essential portrait of a figure whose projects embodied the hopes and contradictions of the Jewish nineteenth century. It is a crucial reading for anyone interested in modern Jewish history.

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Emilia Kledzik, *Perspektywa poety. Cyganologia Jerzego Ficowskiego* [A Poet's Perspective. Jerzy Ficowski's Gypsiology], Poznań, 2023, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, 686 pp.

Emilia Kledzik, an accomplished and acclaimed literary scholar[1] associated with the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, published her book discussing Jerzy Ficowski's Gypsiological endeavours on the eve of the one-hundredth

[2] Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska, 'Sabbath and Sunday, Passover and Easter, Judaism in the Afternoon: Jewish Time in the Galician Public School', *Acta Poloniae Historica* 130 (2024), 33–54 ; ead., *Poza chederem. Żydzi w galicyjskiej szkole publicznej* (Kraków, 2025).

[1] Among the several dozen articles, chapters in monographic works, and other publications which Emilia Kledzik has authored since 2013, a special place is occupied by writings concerning Romani studies or postcolonialism. Even a preliminary look at their titles shows that the two themes have long been present in the author's scholarly efforts. Moreover, Kledzik does not limit herself to the domain of literary

anniversary of the poet's birth. Her monograph thus comes ahead of numerous talks and other events on Jerzy Ficowski and his literary projects,[2] as well as new editions of his prominent works.[3] Although Emilia Kledzik's publication does not fall in line with the tone of the anniversary, intended rather as a deconstruction of the poet's oeuvre, the scholar nonetheless breathes new air into the reception of the author of *Cyganie polscy* [Polish Gypsies] by enriching it with new elements. In addition, and most importantly, she makes space for asking broad questions, the starting point of which is Ficowski's Gypsiology. I am convinced that this is precisely what makes the book under discussion so valuable. The scholar aims to analyse Ficowski's Gypsiology as a complete system of knowledge on the people referred to as Gypsies.[4] Her interdisciplinary line of argument should prove equally inspiring to historians, ethnographers, and literary scholars. The detailed discussion and the wealth of consulted sources (some previously inaccessible to researchers) have enabled many questions to be answered, but, even more importantly, they hint at areas that merit further exploration.

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studies – her interdisciplinary studies cross over to research fields traditionally occupied by ethnography or intercultural education (more at https://researchportal.amu.edu.pl/info/author/UAM190459?tab=publications &title=Profil%2Bosoby%2B%25E2%2580%2593%2BEmilia%2BKledzik%2B%25E2%2580%2593%2BUniwersytet%2Bim.%2BAdama%2BMickiewicza%2Bw%2BPoznaniu&lang=pl&pn=1&p=qki [Accessed: 22 Feb. 2025]).

[2] Their list and reports from some of the events can be found on the website of the Jerzy Ficowski Foundation (https://jerzyficowski.pl/aktualnosci/ [Accessed: 23 Feb. 2025]. The National Library has published manuscripts with the poet's pieces in open access (see https://www.bn.org.pl/aktualnosci/5384-rekopisy-wierszy-jerzego-ficowskiego-na-polonapl.html (Accessed: 23 Feb. 2025).

[3] Among those *Regiony wielkiej herezji i okolice. Bruno Schulz i jego mitologia* (Kraków, 2024); *Niepamiętnik* (Poznań, 2024); *Cyganie na polskich drogach* (Warszawa, 2024); *Gałązka z drzewa słońca. Baśnie cygańskie* (Sejny, 2024). There has also been a reedition of Papusza's poem collection *Lesie, ojcze mój*, translated and with introduction by Jerzy Ficowski (Warszawa, 2024).

[4] Emilia Kledzik introduces the term 'people referred to as Gypsies' [Pol. *ludzie nazywani Cyganami*] in her book, arguing that 'Romani/Roma' is not a term synonymous with 'Gypsy', and the difference between them goes beyond the issue of political correctness. The Gypsyness is a collection of defined essentialising features, a foundation on which the field of Gypsiology was built. The term 'Romani culture' emerged from questioning Gypsyness, and today it is primarily used in the context of the Roma's emerging political identity. The scholar displays consistent use of these terms throughout the six hundred pages of the monograph, reflecting the assiduousness with which she approaches the analysis. The cited term itself is an example of Kledzik distancing herself from the discourse associated with the topic.

In this review, I will present an overview of Jerzy Ficowski and his work, to the extent necessary for the subsequent discussion. I will then go over the contents of individual chapters in the monograph and their major conclusions. At this point, it is worth emphasising that the book's topic-based structure, devised to serve its primary purpose (as defined above), has been carefully planned and that individual sections directly reference preceding units. As a consequence, it is best to read the monograph in the intended order. Nonetheless, it is possible to read selected fragments, as each chapter ends with a short summary of its key points and opens with the author's introductory remarks. This also helps give the extensive argument (over six hundred pages) a clear structure and thus makes it precise and logical. In the final section of the review, I mention several examples of topical issues – points of discussion directly associated with *Perspektywa poety* or themes exemplified by the monograph. I have chosen them subjectively, drawing directly from my ethnographic experience. I am certain that the book could also inspire reflections in other domains, sometimes only tangentially associated with the principal topic.

Emilia Kledzik's goal, as elucidated above, clearly demonstrates that *Perspektywa poety* is not a biography of Jerzy Ficowski. And yet, the reader cannot help but wonder about how the poet became interested in the Gypsy community and who its representatives are. The author asks the same questions and retraces the Gypsiologist's path in many aspects. As it turns out, today it is impossible to reconstruct the course of events: the mail exchanged by the Wajs family and Ficowski suggests that the latter spent no more than seventeen days with a Gypsy caravan train, but he himself talked about being on the road for several months at a time over a period of two years. Depending on whom Ficowski talked to and when, he would also give different reasons for joining the caravan train (p. 268[5]). To get in good graces of the group, he offered some form of payment – material or institutional support, help with dealing with red tape, etc. Discussing the different versions of the story told by Ficowski over the years, Kledzik concludes that the poet's contacts with Gypsy dynasties and stays in Gypsy camps contributed to his auto-creation and legitimised his subsequent publications.

Jerzy Ficowski's first forays into a career in Gypsyology date back to the period immediately following the end of the Second World War. From the very beginning, he had very ambitious plans, and although he did not manage to fulfil them all, his work is to date the most extensive Polish contribution to the study of the people referred to as Gypsies.[6] He was also a pioneer

[5] For the sake of brevity, when directly referring to the findings included in Emilia Kledzik's monograph, I only give the page number in the main body of the text and not the full citation.

[6] Ficowski's *magnum opus* is the monograph with its subsequent editions: *Cyganie Polscy. Szkice historyczno-obyczajowe* (1953), *Cyganie na polskich drogach* (1965),

in popularising Gypsy poetry, which he considered a repository of intangible heritage essential to understand the studied culture. By publishing their songs and poems, Ficowski sought to familiarise the Polish majority with the folk culture of this minority group and, at the same time, to support the latter and protect it from marginalisation and discrimination. He worked on a poetic description of Gypsy communities without denying the existence of the structuralist opposition – savage (primitive) versus civilised – which constituted a pillar of the universal development model. Consequently, although Ficowski exhibited a great degree of sensitivity and openness to otherness and tried to avoid stereotyping, he still developed a construct of Gypsy identity which exoticised people referred to as Gypsies and was based on a set of inalienable features attributed to them.

In reality, the claim of the study's unprecedented nature, echoed by Ficowski himself, is unsubstantiated. Kledzik's argument clearly demonstrates that the poet's work was a synthesis of research carried out in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, and that he interpreted his experiences of staying with the caravan train precisely through the framework imposed by this research (p. 238). The literary scholar also points out the political context of the times in which Ficowski started his career. The settlement and productivity campaign carried out by the Polish People's Republic against the Gypsies influenced both the reception of Ficowski's output and the content of his publications. His writings display, on the one hand, an attempt to counter the majority's prejudice towards minority groups, efforts to include the latter in his own cultural community, praise of the modernising trend, and on the other, a sense of nostalgia for what the Gypsy population was seen to embody: freedom, community. This ambivalence finds expression in many of Ficowski's works, as Kledzik repeatedly points out in her monograph. A symptomatic example is how he approached the biography of Bronisława Wajs, known as Papusza (see chapter 6 in *Perspektywa poety*). In the early 1950s, the poet primarily emphasised Papusza's emancipation, her ability to read and write, and her attitude toward itinerancy. Several years later, he argued that the poems she wrote at the time, praising the drive to productivity, were among her weakest efforts. He said that she contradicted herself, as the institutional initiatives led to the end of nomadism – the defining feature of Gypsy culture (p. 486).

Cyganie w Polsce. Dzieje i obyczaje (1989). Concomitantly throughout the years, Ficowski prolifically produced articles, collections of poems (including the poetry of Bronisława Wajs , which was one of the main pillars of his Gypsiological career), translations, interviews. He also published works with a different character: a collection of Gypsy fairy tales titled *Gałązka z drzewa słońca* (1961) and a memoir, *Demony cudzego strachu* (1986), in which the author reminisces on his wanderings with the Gypsy caravan trains and the people he met along the way.

Emilia Kledzik's analyses summarised above lead to a conclusion which I would consider paramount for her work. Namely, the figure of Jerzy Ficowski and his rich contributions to Gypsiology should be considered in a specific cultural and temporal context. This makes it possible to notice certain biases which generated the earlier-mentioned contradictions. The first of these is the paradigm within which researchers operate, influencing not only the methods adopted and the topics studied, but also the conclusions drawn. The author of *Cyganie polscy* worked within the model of Gypsiology developed since the eighteenth century. According to this framework, the people referred to as Gypsies are a distinct, exotic ethnic group, with a culture which has remained unchanged for centuries and which has elements making it difficult (if not outright impossible) to assimilate into the majority group. During the period when Ficowski was most prolific, research standards were moving away from the evolutionist bent prevalent earlier, but the Gypsiologist seemed oblivious to this transition. The other bias was directly associated with the Polish political system. The state institutions of the Polish People's Republic launched a settlement and nationalisation campaign, which resulted in increased interactions between the majority population and the people referred to as Gypsies. Not only did the poet support the campaign in his output, but he would also, at times, serve as an expert for some state institutions.

Kledzik discusses the cultural and political context of Ficowski's work under the Polish People's Republic in the first chapter: 'Cygan, obywatel Polskiej Rzeczpospolitej Ludowej. Cyganologia Jerzego Ficowskiego pomiędzy akcją osiedleńczą a festiwalem w Opolu' [Gypsy, a Citizen of People's Poland. Jerzy Ficowski's Gypsiology between the Settlement Campaign and the Opole Festival]. She devotes the section to the settlement campaign itself as well as to the first Gypsyological publications of the writer, then a young man. Ficowski's early works reflected the vision of Gypsy people dominant at the time and bore testimony to the author's field work, which soon started to legitimise his claims and lend him credibility as an ethnographer.

A particularly interesting section comes in the third part of the chapter in question, devoted to the phenomenon of Gypsy motifs at music festivals and their immense popularity. Marginal as this theme may be for the main line of argument, it embodies, on the microscale, nearly all the factors which determined the nature of Ficowski's Gypsiological endeavours and their reception. As the scholar points out, there was a need to improve the public image of the Gypsy to facilitate assimilation. For this purpose, a narrative emerged to paint the Gypsy people as wonderfully free, colourful, and unbridled. The story fell in line with the expectations of the majority group and fed itself on the corpus of frequently reproduced, and often stereotypical, Gypsy features. To avoid excessive exoticisation, which would offend the

tastes of the middle class, the narrative was naturalised – instead of inviting Gypsy performers to music festivals, as had been the case in the past, the organisers relied on star acts wearing costumes designed in line with Gypsiological clichés. An exception to the rule was Michaj Burano, who sang lyrics penned by Ficowski in the Romani dialect. This reflects the multitude of domains in which the poet operated as a populariser, authority, and expert. The latter roles gave him the sanction to decide which features to use when constructing the image of the people referred to as Gypsies, according to the current needs. It would seem that this very mechanism applied, for example, when Papusza's poems were being prepared for print, although Kledzik does not emphasise the similarities in these two spheres of the writer's activity. What she does point out is that in all his endeavours, Ficowski operated within the limits of the Gypsiological model, which he developed in his early publications and later consequently built on.

The subsequent chapter discusses the poet's contributions to Gypsiology and his literary inspirations. We find out how Ficowski was emerging as the observer and chronicler of minority or discriminated groups. He achieved this, among other things, by paying attention to these groups' pasts and studying memory. After Piotr Sommer, Kledzik cites a sentence which seems to embody this theme in the poet's output: "I have to | prevent everything | that has already happened" (p. 138). Ficowski's activity in this respect did not concern solely the people referred to as Gypsies but also Jews – or more precisely, Holocaust victims – and was aimed at bearing witness and saving their stories from oblivion. The same theme, strictly in terms of Gypsiology, returns in one of the subsequent chapters. 'Cygańskie imaginarium literackie Jerzego Ficowskiego' [Jerzy Ficowski's Gypsiological Literary Imaginarium] presents to the reader how the poet constructed the language of description he used in his Gypsiology, spanning the gap between poetic and academic style, between literature and ethnography. Interestingly, Ficowski's output unequivocally suggests that the boundaries between poetry and research are quite blurry, despite the poet denying it in interviews and arguing for a clear distinction between genres of expression.

This last theme mentioned, namely walking the tightrope between the language of poetry and of ethnography, is significant in the context of subsequent chapters, especially chapter 3, in which Emilia Kledzik analyses successive editions of the aforementioned monograph by Ficowski, *Cyganie polscy*. The book offers a confrontation of the material gathered by the author in Gypsy caravan camps with scholarly Gypsiological publications. The former helps build the poet's self-constructed image of an eyewitness to the disappearance of an authentic culture and, at the same time, legitimises (in the popular understanding) the academic nature of his approach. In reality, however, the monograph – just like Ficowski's other works – does not have the appropriate back matter. Yet it operates in scholarly discourse in a double

role: as a primary and a secondary source.[7] Kledzik demonstrates how citation network legitimises knowledge as scientific and allows it to be taken at face value, without the need for verification. Another important theme in chapter 3 is the 'construction of Gypsyness', as expressed in the chapter title. This review is not an appropriate place to discuss in detail the model constructed by Ficowski, but it is necessary to point to its key element, namely the figure of belated modernisation. Despite the declarative sensitivity of the author, his output highlighted the otherness and anachronism of the people referred to as Gypsies.[8]

The chapter 'Zagłada Cyganów w piśmiennictwie Jerzego Ficowskiego' [The Gypsy Holocaust in Jerzy Ficowski's Writing], which could be a separate publication, demonstrates in full Kledzik's methodical and analytical approach to the overall topic. The scholar traces the chronology and the methods of collecting material by the poet, as well as the places where he published his works. She also points out that the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland [Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce], despite working with Ficowski and showing interest in his endeavours, did not publish a text summarising his research, deeming it inadequate due to its imprecise factual content. Although Kledzik shows where Ficowski lacked precision and how he distorted accounts of the Holocaust he collected, she does not minimise his achievements or question the innovative nature of his findings. His study of Gypsy martyrology was a pioneering work both in Poland and on an international scale (p. 397).

The last two chapters form a single conceptual unit. The first of these is devoted to an analysis of Gypsy songs, which in Ficowski's view constituted the most important repository of knowledge on the studied group's customs and culture. By studying songs encountered in field research and, most importantly, in earlier Gypsiological publications, the scholar is able to shed light on the editorial techniques used by Ficowski. These included not only modifying the format (e.g. changing how the text was divided into lines) and style of the pieces, but also more radical interventions, such as removing fragments, adding new lines or transforming the existing ones,

[7] The lack of back matter is not an accusation against the poet, but he does not give the readers any information on the sources of the claims he makes. This is especially glaring since, as Kledzik euphemistically puts it, the narrative in his Gypsiological output uses 'the method of thick compilation of various secondary and primary sources' (p. 239), including publications from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, material from field research, and second-hand opinions and hearsay.

[8] Other elements of this construct of Gypsyness include: nomadic lifestyle, atemporality, anti-anthropocentrism resulting in love for nature, the need to be free, strong communal and familial ties.

thus influencing their meaning. The poet applied similar measures when dealing with Papusza's output. Over the several years during which they were in touch, Ficowski became her promoter, an intermediary, in fact, the main administrator of her biography. Even though Papusza's legend has been alive for many years and has managed to traverse the borders of Poland, it has only recently become possible, thanks to previously unresearched sources,[9] to analyse the woman's relationship with Ficowski and her poems, which he edited and subsequently published. Emilia Kledzik's exegesis of the poet's editorial interventions in Papusza's works will surely be of interest to both literary scholars and enthusiasts of her poetry. It also urges the reader to ask about the methodology of translation, especially as Kledzik posits the thesis – supported by examples – that the discussed pieces of poetry are Ficowski's forgeries, or, namely, imperfect imitations of folk language. With the changes made in Papusza's poems and the mythologisation of her biography, "the first conscious Gypsy poet" turned out to be a construct falling perfectly in line with the assumptions of Jerzy Ficowski's Gypsiology and supporting his authority as a Gypsiologist. The objectifying tone of this last sentence is intentional – as Kledzik concludes, "one may consider Papusza's poems, presented in the context of her life story, some of the most instrumentalised narratives in the post-war history of Polish literature" (p. 617). Kledzik's discussion of the above issue, of the reception of Papusza's output, and most importantly of her relationship with the author of *Cyganie polscy*, should prove interesting for anthropologists and historians alike.

The only element which, in my view, is missing from the monograph *Perspektywa poety* is a recapitulation and summary of the theme which periodically reemerges in the successive chapters, namely the relationship between the researcher and the object of research – between Ficowski and the people referred to as Gypsies. Ethnographic reflection requires considering this sphere, especially when these relations are pretty complex, as is the case here. Paul Rabinow has remarked on this issue as follows, arguing that fieldwork accounts are the foundation of knowledge in anthropology: "Anthropological facts are cross-cultural, because they are made across cultural boundaries. They exist as lived experience, but they are made into facts during the process of questioning, observing, and experiencing—which both the anthropologist and the people with whom he lives engage in".[10]

Although Ficowski's experience in the field was quite short, all of Emilia Kledzik's findings in this respect suggest that the relations he struck up

[9] Following the interventions of many people, including the author of the reviewed monograph, the most extensive collection of letters written to Ficowski by Papusza was published in 2020.

[10] Paul Rabinow, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 2007), 152.

when travelling with Gypsy caravans were ambivalent and volatile. The Gypsy people, acquainted with the poet, treated him as a figure of authority, a wise man, someone who supports and values the weaker party. On the other hand, however, he would be accused of modifying original texts or even revealing the secrets of the Gypsy community. Ficowski, declaring himself an ethnographer, entered the studied group as someone from 'his own' world – conditioned by the culture and the political and professional situation of the majority group. Kledzik clearly demonstrates that all these factors bore influence on the poet's activity. His involvement as an expert, writing lyrics for Michaj Burano and interfering with songs and poems authored by people referred to as Gypsies (particularly Papusza), combined with his role as an intermediary in contacts with those people, lead us to the reflection, already expressed in other ethnographic projects, that Ficowski may have "built his image as the only white man initiated into Gypsy knowledge", being "more an informant for the Gypsies than the Gypsies were informants for the poet".[11]

As I mentioned in the introduction, the monograph *Perspektywa poety. Cyganologia Jerzego Ficowskiego* urges us to raise several questions, which are quite pronounced in postmodern research and extend far beyond the field of Gypsiology. For example, are mechanisms of orientalisation, folklorisation, and exoticisation common for all subordinate and minority groups? What are the possibilities of applying the idea of heteroglossia (understood as the inclusion of voices of all the participants in the ethnographic experience) during and after research?[12] How should the process of writing produced

[11] I use inverted commas here because the cited sentences are a direct paraphrase of Dominique A. Lettens's critique of the ethnographic research carried out by Marcel Griaule's team among the Dogon (see Dominique A. Lettens, *Mystagogie et mystification. Evaluation de l'oeuvre de Marcel Griaule* [Bujumbura, 1971], 397). In all fairness, the accusations made by Lettens in terms of French ethnographers' field visits and their contacts with the local populations were largely groundless, and Marcel Griaule's book *Conversations with Ogotemmêli* (London, 2006) is a classic publication in the field of anthropology (its significance boosted by the fact that Griaule described the 'behind the scenes' of his research and the changing relations between its participants). As an aside, it is worth mentioning that *Conversations…* (first French edition in 1948) has something in common with *Cyganie polscy* (1953) – namely, they both lack back matter. However, in the case of the former author, it was a conscious decision made to help the book get a wider readership.

[12] Apart from texts well-known in the literature (such as the aforementioned works by Marcel Graiule or Paul Rabinow), new publications continue to appear, which shows that the issue of relations in the field is still relevant (see e.g. Katarzyna Kaniowska and Andrzej M. Kaniowski, 'Przyjaźń i zobowiązanie w relacjach badacz–badany', *Zeszyty Wiejskie*, special issue [2024], 129–44).

after field experiences (which naturally requires a reduction of voices) be approached?[13] What are the limits of the translator's freedom and their work? Which translation methods are a transgression of these limits?[14] How and to what extent is institutional power able to influence creative output? What is the impact of the paradigm and pre-research assumptions on the course and outcome of academic studies?

The perspective assumed by Emilia Kledzik in her monograph lends itself to the discussion of the above issues, which bears testament to the interdisciplinary nature of her work. I am sure that many readers will see the greatest value in the literary and comparativist analyses of Gypsy songs and of the editorial modifications made in them by Jerzy Ficowski. I will admit that I also followed this theme with great interest. However, as an ethnologist and historian, I primarily read *Perspektywa poety* as a story of relations of subordination and power across various dimensions: ethnicity, gender, authorship (during writing), and ethnography. As a fan of *The Cinnamon Shops*, I also wondered whether another scholar would be willing to equally diligently and attentively analyse Jerzy Ficowski's contributions to the study of Bruno Schulz's oeuvre.

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Krzysztof Bielawski, *The Destruction of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland*, translated by Richard Bialy, Boston, 2024, Academic Studies Press, 9 + 248 pp.; series Polish Studies

Krzysztof Bielawski traces the history of the human-made destruction of Jewish cemeteries in Poland from the period of Nazi occupation through to the twenty-first century. He investigates the fate of those sites in both large cities and small towns and villages, meticulously identifying state, institutional, and private actors involved in the process, as well as the wide range of forms that

[13] This is not a new problem, and it has been discussed in the Polish literature, for instance in the 1995 article 'O autorytecie etnograficznym' by James Clifford (*Polska Sztuka Ludowa – Konteksty*, xlix, 3–4 [1995], 19–31).

[14] These questions have long been present among authors, translators, and readers, and they are far from limited to social sciences – they also apply to fiction, nonfiction, or historical sciences. We continuously see new publications discussing this issue and highlighting its various aspects; see Marta Kaźmierczak, 'Autor tłumaczem, tłumacz autorem – mapowanie związków', *Rocznik Komparatystyczny*, 14 (2023), 17–44.

this destruction has taken. This volume is the English translation of a Polish book first published in 2020.[1]

Reviewers[2] of the Polish edition have praised the richness and diversity of the sources the author drew on. Bielawski uses not only materials from central and local archives concerning the fate of Jewish cemeteries across present-day Poland, but also the Archive of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw – the longest-functioning Jewish scholarly institution in the country. He further draws on doctoral and master's theses on the subject. In addition, he incorporates materials gathered through his own fieldwork, including interviews, testimonies, correspondence, and photographs. Reviewers have also singled out for special recognition his detailed discussion of the legal provisions governing Jewish cemeteries throughout the period under review. Furthermore, the author brings together information on the subject, dispersed across the existing literature concerning studies on cemeteries, the national and local histories of the Shoah, and Jewish heritage in Poland, drawing on works from various periods. As a result, Bielawski's book constitutes the first comprehensive monograph explicitly devoted to the destruction of Jewish cemeteries located in Poland.

The book consists of eight chapters, a conclusion, and an index of places and names. The opening chapters of the book address the nuanced definitions of Jewish cemeteries, their constituent elements, and the religious laws governing them across various Jewish traditions. They also provide a brief history of Jewish cemeteries and the relevant state legislation before 1939, beginning with the eighteenth century. The following chapter examines the fate and administration of Jewish cemeteries during the period 1933–45. Here, the chronological frame of the Second World War is extended back to Hitler's rise to power in order to include cemeteries that, after the war, were located within the borders of Poland but had previously belonged to the territories of the Third Reich. The author emphasises that many Jewish cemeteries survived the pre-war antisemitic actions of the Nazis, since burial sites were less frequently targeted than synagogues or Jewish communities themselves. The destruction of Jewish cemeteries was particularly severe in occupied Poland. It entailed deliberate humiliation and physical violence, including the use of Jewish forced labour by the German occupiers. Cemeteries became sites of both individual and mass murder of Jews, as well as of grave desecration, the destruction and looting of tombstones – frequently repurposed for road construction and other building works – together with levelling and

[1] Krzysztof Bielawski, *Zagłada cmentarzy żydowskich* (Warszawa, 2020).

[2] Tadeusz Zieliński, 'Krzysztof Bielawski, *Zagłada cmentarzy żydowskich*…, Biblioteka „Więzi" tom 359, Warszawa 2020, ss. 276', *Przegląd Prawa Wyznaniowego*, xiii (2020), 399–402; Anna M. Rosner, 'Recenzje', *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 1 (2021), 301–28.

agricultural use. At the same time, the destruction of Jewish cemeteries also resulted from the actions of the local population. As the author notes, "[s]ome residents of various nationalities, including Poles and Germans" (p. 62), looted cemetery elements and repurposed them as building materials (stone, wood, metal), while others plundered graves and desecrated human remains in search of valuables.

The next chapter examines the post-war history of Jewish cemeteries, first in the Polish People's Republic under communist rule, and later in democratic Poland after 1989. It clearly demonstrates that attributing the destruction of Jewish cemeteries solely to the Nazis during the war – a view still widespread in contemporary Poland – is a misconception. The book meticulously shows that neither the destruction imposed by the state's actions and laws, nor that carried out by the local population, ceased after 1945. Legislation regulating cemeteries of all denominations, together with laws concerning property rights imposed by the communist authorities, resulted in neglect, closure, or reappropriation of Jewish cemeteries and their elements (as well as sites of executions and mass graves of Shoah victims) for practical purposes. These actions were frequently undertaken regardless of Jewish religious law and, in many cases, with no respect for human remains. Jewish cemeteries and their elements continued to be used as sources of building materials (including soil mixed with human remains), as construction sites for public-use facilities, or as crop fields. The state simultaneously restricted the legal status and capacity of Jewish organisations to undertake genuine protective measures. At the same time, in the post-war social consciousness of the Polish population, Jewish cemeteries were frequently regarded as "no man's land" or foreign spaces. This perception encouraged individuals to engage in similar practices, such as the arbitrary adaptation of cemetery sites as grazing land. Although motivated by different reasons, such actions nonetheless mirrored those of the state and displayed the same disregard for traditions and for the dignity of the deceased.

The 1990s brought, on the one hand, legislation aimed at restoring communal rights in post-communist Poland (1997), together with a growing recognition of the value of Jewish heritage and the establishment of both domestic and international institutions dedicated to its protection and restoration. On the other hand, Jewish cemeteries often became the subject of conflicts of interest in the context of public and private investment within a capitalist economy. These challenges were exacerbated by persistent social perceptions of Jewish cemeteries as abandoned spaces suitable for secular use. During the 1990s, further issues arose from the reluctance or lack of resources to recover desecrated elements, such as tombstones (*matzevot*) repurposed as building materials. Finally, the sheer scale of the destruction and appropriation of Jewish cemeteries over time posed a serious difficulty in itself.

The three concluding chapters focus on Polish and Jewish perceptions, attitudes, and initiatives in relation to the long history of the destruction of Jewish cemeteries in Poland. One chapter explores Polish responses to this destruction during the period under study. It describes attempts by individuals to prevent the damage or reclaim these sites, often undertaken in hostile political and social circumstances, as well as artistic and cultural initiatives to honour Jewish heritage in Poland. At the same time, the author highlights the persistence of indifference – stemming from the conviction that Jewish cemeteries did not hold the same rights or status as other burial places – alongside the presence of antisemitic resentment in post-war Poland. The remaining two chapters address the Jewish perspective. They examine Jewish reactions to the destruction of cemeteries during and after the war, emphasising its profound traumatic impact on Polish Jews. They also discuss Jewish initiatives to protect and reclaim cemeteries, detailing a wide range of both private and institutional efforts in this regard.

The richness of the author's source base and his ambition to explore the subject in depth are clearly evident in the book's structure. Each chapter begins with an account of the historical background and the legislation in force at the time that influenced Jewish cemeteries. This introduction is followed by detailed descriptions of various forms of destruction of specific Jewish cemeteries, enriched with photographs and personal testimonies. Each case study includes a list of places where analogous actions took place, among them: Warszawa, Łódź, Kraków, Białystok, Sochaczew, Międzyrzec Podlaski, Sieniawa, Ułanów, Żyrardów, Supraśl, Przeworsk, Kunowice, Kleczew, and Gąbin. The study presents 470 localities altogether. Additionally, each specific example is accompanied by identification – in most cases by name – of individual and institutional actors involved: perpetrators, victims, and witnesses alike.

It is also worth noting that this monograph covers the fate of Jewish cemeteries within the territory of present-day Poland. The chapters, arranged in chronological order, provide an overview of their history while also addressing cemeteries which, although now situated within Poland's contemporary borders, were historically located in the territories of other states. In this way, the book offers readers unfamiliar with Polish history a clearer understanding of the subject in its historical context.

Another striking feature of the book is the author's nuanced understanding of what should be regarded as the destruction of Jewish cemeteries, both in material terms and in relation to Jewish religious tradition. Throughout the book, Bielawski examines a wide array of such instances, including – but not limited to – destruction resulting from military operations, legal and practical actions of the state, archaeological interventions, and the participation of the local non-Jewish population. He also considers less obvious causes, such as the actions undertaken by Jews themselves in their attempts to survive the Holocaust during the Second World War. The breadth and depth of Bielawski's

work become further evident in his recognition of destruction not only as a material phenomenon but also as a symbolic one, especially in the eyes of Jews confronted with instances of destruction and desecration of cemeteries across Poland at various points in the history he covers.

Bielawski provides a measured and balanced account of the phenomenon, combining meticulous illustrations of the many aspects of the destruction of Jewish cemeteries with meta-analysis of the socio-political circumstances and possible motivations behind it. At the same time, he conveys the daunting persistence and scale of the destruction throughout the period under review, while also acknowledging changes over time and the varying degrees of success in attempts to counter these actions. Additionally, the author conscientiously highlights the cultural context surrounding the destruction of Jewish cemeteries in the Polish milieu, presents both Polish and Jewish perspectives on the subject, and debunks myths surrounding this phenomenon in Polish collective memory. For this reason, an English translation of Bielawski's comprehensive and multifaceted historical monograph is particularly valuable for readers outside the Polish cultural context.

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Władysław Czapliński, *Dziennik 1958–1981* [Diary 1958–1981], ed. Tomasz Siewierski, Warszawa, 2024, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 758 pp.

The publication of *Dziennik 1958–1981* [Diary 1958–1981] by Władysław Czapliński, professor at the University of Wrocław, is of great importance both for Polish historiography and for research on the history of academic life and intellectual and social culture in the Polish People's Republic. This is the first diary of a scholar of this calibre to be comprehensively edited and uncensored, and it includes over two decades of personal reflections and institutional observations. It is also a testament to an exceptional representative of the pre-war school of science who endeavoured to maintain intellectual sovereignty under an authoritarian state. It is a distinctive source in terms of genre, facts, and knowledge, not only because the author was one of the most exceptional modern historians of the twentieth century, but also because of the rarity of preserved and published ego-documents of a researcher.

The publication has been carefully put together, but there are some mistakes I will discuss in more detail later in this review. Tomasz Siewierski, the scientific editor of the publication, not only succeeded in the challenging role of commentator and custodian of the text but also provided it with

a comprehensive introduction, substantive explanations, and biographical notes, which make the diary accessible to readers of all levels. The publication encompasses a list of individuals, abbreviations, and illustrations, which is highly advantageous.

It should be noted that Czapliński's *Dziennik* is a special kind of personal document. Unlike the memoirs published during their authors' lifetimes, which were popular in the Polish People's Republic and were more or less polished retrospectives, often edited with publication in mind, this diary is a text that was not intended for publication during the author's lifetime and was not edited by him. It is a personal source that was consciously constructed as a document of its era and was kept fairly regularly from 1958 until the author's death in 1981.

Unlike many diarists, the author regularly and methodically documents events from his academic, institutional, and social life rather than merely describing personal experiences. In his notes, he contemplates the university's future, the Wrocław Scientific Society's operations, personnel changes, relations with his colleagues, and ideological and political tensions within the academic community. The entries also show the inner turmoil of a scientist who upholds the pre-war university's values while attempting to preserve his individuality in the face of mounting opportunism and conformity pressure.

Czapliński's diary serves as a case study in this regard, as it records not only his surroundings but also his identity as a representative of a particular intellectual and ethical heritage. The text can be interpreted as both a historical source and a distinctive intellectual biography due to the author's conscious self-creation, which is characterised by a restrained, analytical, yet penetrating tone. In my opinion, Czapliński comes across in his diary as an extremely modest figure, displaying great humility. He mentions his successes, subsequent works, awards, and distinctions in a few words. His often-critical attitude towards the environment is evident, for example, in his comments on scientific discussions during various conferences and meetings. He describes overly flattering and unjustified comments as "smacking" and their authors as "smackers". The author repeatedly demonstrates his restraint and realistic view of the reality surrounding him. He sarcastically comments on pompous speeches which exaggerate certain figures. I particularly liked the term "high-pitched" (p. 679) used to describe the speeches given during Henryk Zieliński's jubilee in February 1981. The fact that this legacy has been made accessible to researchers without interference from the heirs, abridgement, or censorship is all the more commendable. As noted by the editor, the family's clause expired in 2001, thereby enabling the manuscript's complete publication.

The diary delves into the period of the Polish People's Republic, which was characterised by exceptional dynamism, from the rule of Władysław Gomułka (1956–70) and the apparent stability of the Edward Gierek decade

(1970–80) to the emergence of Solidarity (1980). The diary encompasses a broad spectrum of topics, including daily life in Oporów, a residential district of Wrocław that was only slightly damaged during the Second World War, and university life. The diary presents Czapliński as a genuine university man who is actively involved in the school's operations and its ups and downs. He remains a vigilant observer of academic life, and his notes are replete with detailed accounts of faculty council meetings, senate committees, meetings of the Wrocław Scientific Society, community discussions, and party rallies (in which he participated as a formally non-party member). Special place is given to his thoughts on the operations of the University of Wrocław's Institute of History and the interactions between the younger generation of historians, who frequently had connections to the Polish United Workers' Party [Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR], and the older generation of scholars. He also pays attention to the mechanisms of academic promotion, the instrumentalisation of history, and the reception of Marxism in science.

Furthermore, his observations concerning the establishment and development of the Wrocław academic centre after 1945 are of great interest. His notes are a valuable addition to the study of post-war science, particularly from a microhistorical perspective. Disputes over academic promotions, faculty council meetings, dean elections, personal intrigues, social exclusion and political pressure are just some of the topics that Czapliński describes in detail. The author of the diary reveals the internal functioning of the university in the context of 'dual loyalty': to scientific truth and ideological imperatives. The diarist discloses the inner workings of the university within the context of 'dual loyalty': to scientific truth and to ideological imperatives.

Czapliński's observations regarding the Kraków milieu, the academic community with which he was emotionally and intellectually associated, are equally captivating, despite their occasional harsh criticism. His recollections of historians such as Władysław Konopczyński, Józef Feldman, and Kazimierz Piwarski are not merely biographical notes – they are also testimonies to the memory of the community, the values, and the norms of the scientific ethos, which the diarist constantly confronted with the new realities of the Polish People's Republic. The author of *Dziennik* perceived himself as the intellectual heir to these pre-war traditions and saw numerous contemporary issues through the lens of Kraków.

Entries pertaining to intergenerational relationships are particularly significant. The new conditions posed a challenge for generations of historians educated in the Second Polish Republic, as exemplified by Czapliński. The attitudes of his younger colleagues were complex, ranging from open collaboration to symbolic resistance (including support for the Student Committee of Solidarity [Studencki Komitet Solidarności, SKS] and Workers' Defence Committee [Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR]). Additionally, Czapliński was a multifaceted individual. He was not only an academic but

also a devout Catholic. He was involved in the Catholic Intellectuals Club and eagerly gave lectures, for example, at the Dominican monastery in Krakow. He was also very fond of young people and met with secondary school pupils and university students outside the university walls.

Additionally, Czapliński was an astute observer of political developments, including those at the local level (such as the activities of the SKS and the disputes surrounding the Institute of History at the University of Wrocław) and across the country (such as anti-intellectual campaigns, student sentiment, and opposition activities). His notes contain references to the antisemitic campaign of March 1968, the workers' strike in December 1970, censorship, reports from Radio Free Europe, as well as bitter reflections on the moral condition of the academic community. His deep distrust of members of the Polish United Workers' Party, his criticism of opportunism, and his aversion to any external pressure on scholars give his notes a decidedly nonconformist tone.

The diary is a remarkable prosopographic source. There are numerous characters that appear in the text, including lecturers, students, officials, party decision-makers, and editors. The editor of the publication has appropriately augmented the text with biographical references that provide insight into the lesser-known and underrepresented figures. The sections devoted to people from the author's inner circle are particularly valuable, including historians Henryk Wereszycki, Adam Kersten, Józef Andrzej Gierowski, and Stefan Inglot, and the literary scholar Marian Jakóbiec.

The diary entries allow us to reconstruct informal relationships, social networks, ideological conflicts, as well as exchanges of letters, foreign contacts, mutual inspirations, and misunderstandings. Czapliński frequently revisits personal subjects, expressing his ambivalence toward certain former students, including Jarema Maciszewski and Jan Seredyka (both historians of the early modern period), and commenting on their attitudes. This depth of psychological insight is a unique feature of his notes.

Additionally, the diary's autobiographical aspect must not be disregarded. From the first to the last page of *Dziennik*, its author is a serious, resolute man, living in accordance with the pre-war scientific ethos and aware of the concepts of academic sovereignty, intellectual integrity, and loyalty. This is confirmed by his colleagues and students in their memoirs, including Sybilla A. Hołdys-Bidwell,[1] Grażyna Pańko,[2] Włodzimierz Suleja,[5] Krzysztof Kawalec,[6] and Edward Czapiewski.[7]

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[1] See Sybilla A. Hołdys and Włodzimierz Suleja, 'W. Czapliński jako wychowawca historyków', in Krystyn Matwijowski (ed.), *Władysław Czapliński jako uczony i wychowawca* (Wrocław, 1984), 87–8.

[2] Grażyna Pańko (b. 1948), historian of the twentieth century, history educator; graduate and academic employee (since 1971) of the University of Wrocław. See

The editor approached the diary with respect and limited himself to the necessary stylistic corrections, standardisation of the notation, and deciphering abbreviations. The edition preserves the original author's style while adding necessary editorial explanations in footnotes. Regarding the latter, I do not quite understand the idea behind them. The publication is dominated by concise footnotes containing identifying information (names, functions, dates), though for a dozen or so characters, this rule has been abandoned in favour of more detailed biographical information. These exceptions, however, have not been explained in the editor's introduction. Moreover, the introduction does not explain the reasons behind selecting these biographical references (do they only apply to important people, or to every person mentioned?), it is not clear on what sources the footnotes are based, there is no information on whether the footnotes are complete or represent a selection. The absence of a detailed explanation of the text editing guidelines (the so-called 'editor's note') is another problem. Even though interference with the text has been mitigated on numerous occasions, the editorial principles are not systematically and clearly defined, but rather loosely dispersed throughout the text. The editor's somewhat digressive narration does not fully explain the range of his interventions. There are also some typos, the most obvious one being on page 252, where 'Merseburg' appears instead of 'Lerseburg'.

Explicit explanations of Latin quotations and literary and historical references are also included in the footnotes. Additionally, numerous entries have been confronted in the footnotes with other sources which provide additional details or substantiate the author's claims. The work is based on a microfilm that was provided by the Ossoliński National Institute Library in Wrocław. It has been carefully compared with the original that is kept in the Wrocław Library.

The editor generally follows the practices of editing personal sources, including the recommendations of Wiktoria Śliwowska, to whom this edition is dedicated, and does not change the author's style, syntax, or language. Thus, the professor's pre-war idiom, characterised by the style of the era, erudition, and precision, has been preserved. Władysław Czapliński's language

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ead., 'Wspomnienie seminarzystki o Profesorze Władysławie Czaplińskim', in *Czasy nowożytne. Wspomnienia o śp. prof. Władysławie Eugeniuszu Czaplińskim*, part 2 (Wrocław, 2006), 39–40.

[3] Włodzimierz Suleja (b. 1948), historian of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; graduate of the University of Wrocław, student of Henryk Zieiński; academic employee at the University of Wrocław from 1972 to 1995 and from 2013 to 2019.

[4] See Krzysztof Kawalec, 'Profesor Władysław Czapliński. Jak go zapamiętałem', in *Czasy nowożytne*, 29–31.

[5] See Edward Czapiewski, 'Profesor Władysław Czapliński. Trwanie we wdzięcznej pamięci', in *Czasy nowożytne*, 33–6.

can also be treated as a testament to his high personal culture, which is an additional value of this publication.

The publication of Władysław Czapliński's diary is a significant event in the field of research on academic culture, Polish historiography, and the history of science in the twentieth century. Although I found the introduction to be lacking references to other source publications of a similar nature (such as the diaries of Witold Kula[6] or Józef A. Gierowski from 1981–85[7]), which would have allowed the edition to be placed in a broader historiographical landscape and created a context for further comparative research, I have no doubt that the edition prepared by Tomasz Siewierski will serve as a point of reference for all future research on the history of academic circles in the Polish People's Republic. Czapliński's *Dziennik* prompts reflection on generational memory, university autonomy, scholars' ethical attitudes, and the significance of individual resistance in the face of political pressure. This work will be essential for all researchers who are interested in the history of historiography, the history of science in the Polish People's Republic, academic biographies, and, more broadly, Polish culture in the second half of the twentieth century. I do hope that this edition will be followed by others that further our understanding of the complexities of academic life in postwar Poland.

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[6] Witold Kula, *Rozdziałki*, ed., introd. and footnotes by Marcin Kula (Warszawa, 1996).

[7] Józef Andrzej Gierowski, *Dziennik, 1 września 1981 – 13 grudnia 1981*, ed. Andrzej Kobos, introd. Andrzej Leon Sowa (Kraków, 2011).