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of Change and Crisis



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Sławomir Zonenberg, *Kronika Szymona Grunaua* [*Simon Grunau's chronicle*], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2009, 191 pp., 3 pictures, ISBN 978-83-7096-690-4.

The monograph presented here is the result of the author's research for his habilitation thesis. The foreword, *Wstęp* (pp. 7–10), describes the condition of the manuscript copy of *Kronika Pruska* (*The Prussian Chronicle*) based on the edition published in Leipzig between 1876–96 by *Verein für die Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen*. The introduction, *Wprowadzenie* (pp. 11–20), discusses the situation in the Dominican Order and the social, political and legal conditions in Royal and Teutonic Prussia during the lifetime of Simon Grunau, with particular emphasis on the period when the chronicle was written. In Chapter 1 (*Życiorys Szymona Grunaua*, pp. 21–34) the author brings forward the date of Simon Grunau's birth to around 1455–1465/70 and gives a more complete outline biography of the Dominican monk. He questions whether Grunau studied at the University of Padua, underlines the level of the monk's education through his position as lecturer (i.a. in Legnica in 1512 and 1514), suggests that he probably held the position of prior in the Elbląg monastery, notes that he was a general preacher, and that he could have been an expert in the theology of the Court of the Inquisition. Chapter 2 (*Kronika Szymona Grunaua*, pp. 35–122) examines thoroughly the following issues: the question of the authorship and affiliation of the chronicle (pp. 35–41); the date, the number of editions and the place where it was written (pp. 42–47); the reasons it was written and who commissioned it (pp. 47–51); its socio-political objectives (pp. 76–107); the chronicle as a preacher's compendium (pp. 107–112); and its style and lexis (pp. 115–121). Zonenberg collates the sources which were the basis for Grunau's compilation and maintains that the chronicle was written by a single author. He distinguishes three editions and gives dates to individual sections. The first edition, the anti-Teutonic one, appeared between April 1517 and 1521 (treatises 1–22), the second – from May 1521 to summer 1526 (treatises 22 and 23, with the former treatise 22 becoming no 24), and the third – from December 1526 to February 1529 and 1530 (a continuation from §146 of treatise 23). Both continuations are of an anti-Reformation nature. The author points out that the initiative to write the chronicle was connected with propaganda from states preparing for war, with his informers identified as the mayors of Gdansk, Eberhard Ferber and Philip Bishof. The Prussian Chronicle was to be a response to a book printed in 1518 concerning the history of Prussia written by Erazm Stella, *De Borvssiae antiquitatibus libri duo*. The continuations of the chronicle were an independent undertaking of the chronicler. It should be stressed that the author devotes much space to an analysis of Grunau's world view, with

Chapter 3 discussing the book's role and reception (pp. 123–128). Zonenberg's monograph is a detailed compendium of knowledge about Simon Grunau's chronicle, introducing many new findings and constituting a starting point for further research. Unfortunately, the author treats the issue of the indigenous inhabitants of Prussia only marginally. The book contains an extensive bibliography and a detailed index.

*Julia Możdżeń (Toruń)*