REVIEWS

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Słownik wsi śląskich w średniowieczu [The Dictionary of the Medieval Silesian Rural Settlements], ed. Dominik Nowakowski, vol. 1: *Powiat lubiński* [*Lubiń district*], ed. Dagmara Adamska, Agnieszka Latocha, Dominik Nowakowski, Aleksander Paroń, Marcin Siehankiewicz, Robert Sikorski, Wrocław, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, Ośrodek Badań nad Kulturą Późnego Antyku i Wczesnego Średniowiecza, 2014, pp. 308, 89 maps.

In 2014 a research group based at the Centre for the Study of Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Culture at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology (Pol. *Ośrodek Badań nad Kulturą Późnego Antyku i Wczesnego Średniowiecza*) published a historical and archaeological dictionary of Silesian medieval rural settlements. Funded by the National Centre of Science (Pol. *Narodowe Centrum Nauki*) for the last three years, the project was directed by Dominik Nowakowski (PhD). The research team was composed of historians, geographer, archaeologists and a classical philologist. Schematically, the book is divided into four main parts: (1) the foreword which contains a description of methodology, source materials, and a short history of the development of settlements in medieval Silesia; (2) the second part which includes a full description of the villages with a significant number of additional photographs, plans, and artifact drawings; and, finally the last two parts which contain a cartographical reconstruction of the villages (3) and a personal and geographical index (4). The book is published in Polish with a German summary at the end.

The main purpose of this project was the publication of medieval source materials for the history of Silesian rural settlements in an ordered way, where each village has their own headword and contains basic information about its history, geographical location and archaeological artifacts, and excavations and/or any remains of buildings (for example, a late medieval moated side belonging to nobility). Despite its title, the book is quite a new look at current historical and geographical studies in Poland. It touches upon the most basic problems of this research domain such as identification, location, and ownership of rural settlements. Moreover, a reader should be reminded that the idea of a medieval dictionary of rural villages is not a new one. After

the Second World War, historians affiliated with the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences under the direction of Karol Buczek made an attempt to collect materials for historical and geographical dictionaries of all the historical lands of medieval Poland from the earliest times till the year 1530. The original plan was to develop all the basic source materials during the years from 1958–1963, and then publish them before the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland in 1966. Unfortunately the plan fell through, and, as a result, some of the gathered materials for Silesia, New March (Neumark) and Lubusz Land went missing. The *Dictionary of Medieval Silesian Rural Settlements* attempts to fill this gap in Polish historiography and also aims to add some new elements based on archaeology and the usage of historical geography's retrogressive method.

The reviewed publication contains information about 104 medieval villages which existed surrounding the current district of Lubiń located 65 km NW from Wrocław. Each entry in the dictionary has several uniform elements: (i) the name of the settlement in Polish and German as well as information about the current Polish borough; (ii) the different variations of the settlement's name with an annual date for each variation's mention; (iii) information from historical records such as settlement ownership, economical transactions concerning almost every settlement, local borders, routes and much more. The second part contains text about geographical conditions of each village such as its location and its neighbourhood with a description of rivers, streams, hills, forests and other topographical survey elements. The third part is the most unique – this is an archaeological overview of all published and unpublished materials for the history of each settlement. In this part we can examine data from the Archaeological Survey of Poland (Pol. *Archeologiczne Zdjęcie Polski*), Silesian archaeological museums and other research centers. The authors publish many plans of the moated sides belonging to nobility, and drawings of artifacts such as ceramic pieces, keys, swords, work tools and noble seals. They also include photographs of churches, medieval stone crosses, cadastral maps and even a gravestone from 1520. All pictures in this part are printed in black and white. However, it is worth noting that many pieces of these materials are published here for the very first time.

The last part of the book is an attempt to reconstruct the area containing these medieval settlements, mainly based on eighteenth (L. W. Relger plans, 1764–1770) and nineteenth century maps such as *Urmesstischblätter* (1824–1826), *Messtischblätter* (1887–1894), and the cadastral maps which survived the Second World War. Plans are published in a colored version on a scale of 1:25,000. They include contour lines, forests, watercourses, village centers with the number of homestead, mills, granges, and moated sides. In some cases the medieval place names of roads, woods, hills or streams are added. Each plan includes supporting miniature maps that show the center of each village. The authors claim that each of these reconstructions are

developed from the specific practices of the retrogression method called 'Dorfkernforschung', which is characteristic of contemporary German scholarship.

The reviewed book seems to be a fairly innovative idea combining the old tradition of historical geography dictionaries with a new overview introducing current perspectives based on archaeological materials. Going forward, many perhaps will have reason to debate the work's methodological premises and their effects. However, the publication of the *Dictionary of Medieval Silesian Rural Settlements* is definitely a positive occurrence as an example of cooperation between researchers of various specializations.

proofread Aron Law and Antoni Górny *Tomasz Związek*

Christoph Schmidt, *Pilger, Popen und Propheten. Eine Religionsgeschichte Osteuropas*, Paderborn, 2014, Ferdinand Schöningh, 293 pp., bibliog., index.

The study being reviewed is a new book by Christoph Schmidt, professor of Eastern European history at the University of Cologne, specialising in the social history of Russia in the sixteenth to nineteenth century. His new study thematically follows up a number of this author's monographs dealing with aspects of religious history in East European territory in the modern era.[1] The study consists of an introduction, two sections composed of chapters, a conclusion, a concise glossary of basic terms, a bibliography and an index of names.

Schmidt starts his considerations of the specificity of East European religious history with a handful of 'programme' statements, expressed in the introductory section. In his view, religion needs no church organisation ("Religion braucht Kirche nicht", p. 8), and perhaps even should position itself as its opponent; this results in a non-identity of *Religionsgeschichte* and *Kirchengeschichte*. It is the first that the author focuses on, the latter remaining collateral in his narrative.

The diversity of the religious landscape of Eastern Europe outmatches what one finds in the European West: Judaism and Islam have an older background there than Christianity, both being the traditional religions in this eastern territory; the Uniate Church, the Old Believers movement, Chassidism – all emerged there. Shamanist and Buddhist believers have survived in these lands till our day (in the north of European Russia and Kalmyk people living by the Caspian Sea, respectively). Hence, the resumption of religious

[1] *Auf Felsen gesät: die Reformation in Polen und Livland* (Göttingen, 2000); *Gemalt für die Ewigkeit. Geschichte der Ikonen in Russland* (Cologne, 2009).

practices after a long period of overwhelming atheism has a stronger incentive behind it than in the West (pp. 9–10).

The title of the initial section ('Die Konferenz der Vögel') intentionally refers to the famous work by Persian mystical theologian and poet Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1221), *The Conference of the Birds*. It is, namely, and allegory where the soul's journey to God, as its very source, is shown as the birds' trip to their king, the mythical Simurgh. Having reached the destination, the birds discover that they are Simurgh themselves: Simurgh is everyone of them, and all of them together. In the context of the study in question, the allegory may be read as an ascertainment that religious diversity forms a constitutive aspect of Eastern Europe – and it is the coexistence of various religions and beliefs that makes this area peculiar and unique.

Among the shortcomings of modern historiography, the author identifies inappreciation of dialogue and reciprocal influence of various beliefs (*interreligiöser Dialog*); underdeveloped research in folk religiosity and local-level research (particularly with respect to earlier periods); and, prevalence of history of the Church(es) over history of religion (pp. 10–20).

The study's first part, 'Entstehung und Verbreitung', comprises six chapters, discussing, in a sequence, the emergence and propagation in Eastern European territory of shamanism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.

Chapter one raises the issue of attitude toward shamanism in Europe from the time the term 'shaman' was coined in the seventeenth century to nineteenth-century religious-study theories, stressing the importance of the political factor in the evaluations of shamanism, particularly in the twentieth century. Some focus is also given to the various research methods, including the first attempts of so-called 'participant observation'. In the dispute over the essence of shamanism: a religion, or a complex of practices?, the author stands with those who share the former view: in fact, shamanism bears certain characteristics identifiable also in other, posterior forms of religiosity (pp. 34–5).

The second chapter, 'Orthodoxie und Lateiner', considers various models of introduction and dissemination of Christianity in the east of Europe – that is, in Poland, Ruthenia (Rus'), Prussia and Lithuania; shared characteristics (in Poland and Ruthenia, the new religion introduced 'from above'; Christianity accompanied by development of statehood, pp. 54–6) and specific traits (particularly with respect to Lithuania, pp. 56–60) are discussed. Christianisation of Kievan Rus', which is the author's special focus, is considered through the prism of the dilemma of whether to receive the faith from the West, or from the East. The second option was supported, Schmidt argues, by pragmatic arguments (geographical, economic, foreign policy and other factors), along with aesthetic arguments: in the areas where urbanisation and literate culture were basically lower compared to Byzantium, the means of visual messaging (icons) played in the propagation of new religious beliefs much more a part critical than texts (p. 45). The specific function of icon in

Orthodoxy is referred to at multiple occasions (pp. 244–55). Crucial to the promulgation of Christianity in the territories of Kievan and Muscovite Rus' was the progress of colonisation (three phases are discerned: before 1240; during the Mongol expansion; and, after 1380; pp. 47–51), which added certain specific traits to eastern Christianity. The chapter is concluded with considerations regarding the emergence of a confessional borderline between the two wings of Christianity, which was set through the central area of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Discussed are also the basic differences between the *Orthodoxie* and the *Lateiner*, which weighed heavily on the further history of Christianity adherents dwelling in that territory (pp. 61–3).

'Muslime', the subsequent chapter, is on the history of Islam in Eastern Europe. Discussed is the proliferation of Islam in the area; also, the specific characteristics of the beliefs of Volga-Kam Bulgarians (p. 69); the thread is raised of the Muslims–Orthodoxy relations in the Middle Ages (p. 70); described are various models of integration of Muslim people within Orthodox countries (the latitudinarianism towards Muslim elites in the seventeenth century; the beginnings of coerced Christianisation in the context of Tsar Peter I's Enlightenment policies; a liberalisation in the religious policy under Tsarina Catherine II and in the nineteenth century (pp. 73–6); and, persecutions of individual groups of Islamic believers in the Soviet state (pp. 81–3).

The chapter 'Juden' shows Eastern Europe as a *sui generis* centre of the Jewish life. Outlined are the assumption of Christianity by the Khazars; the beginnings and the course of Jewish settlement in Poland and Lithuania; the legal status and privileges enjoyed by local Jewry, unprecedented in Europe and implying cultural development of the Jewish communities (pp. 87–93). The situation of Jewish people and Judaist believers was better than in Western Europe owing, among other things, to the multi-ethnicity tradition characteristic of the eastern lands (p. 97), whist the 'belated' christening of Lithuania fostered toleration with respect to Islamic as well as Judaist believers (p. 95). Although the Reformation and the Catholic reform brought about a worsening of the circumstances, this occurred on an incomparably lesser scale than in Western European countries. A major breakthrough came only with the Cossack wars of the mid-seventeenth century. The common path of East European Jewish population was split after the partition of Poland-Lithuania, resulting with a diversification of the Judaist culture. The establishment of the Pale of Settlement in Russia, which Schmidt names the largest ghetto of all time, the emergence of Zionism in response to the pogroms, the mass wave of Jewish emigration and its accompanying destruction of religious communities all fundamentally gave rise to the Jewish *Religionsgeschichte* in the modern era (pp. 103–15).

Albeit Buddhism never played a significant role in the east of Europe, the fact that it has appeared there adds to the picture of considerable diversity of the area's religious landscape. 'Buddhisten', the last chapter of the book's

first part, describes the history of the Kalmyk people in Russia between the early seventeenth century and the Soviet time. A concise essay on the origins of Buddhism is included, along with considerations of how the geographical factors have influenced the choice of specific beliefs (p. 123).

Part two of the study, entitled 'Spezifik und Dynamik', consists of five chapters which deal with radical trends in the Reformation in Poland-Lithuania; depict the development, at the borderline of the *Pax Slavia Orthodoxa* and the *Pax Latina*, of the unique religious movements such as the Uniate Church (since the sixteenth c.), Old Believers (seventeenth c.) and Chassidism (eighteenth c.); and, discuss the influences of the Enlightenment age and the Soviet atheism on the history of (the) religion(s). The final chapter, titled 'Religion als historische Kraft oder der Gottesmann siegt?', serves as a conclusion.

The chapter titled 'Von West nach Ost: Die Täufer' is much broader in content than the name would suggest, as it also touches upon the specificities of the Reformation in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The author adumbrates the development of the science of the Reformation's radical wing, taking account of its individual factions (pp. 131–9); he discusses the general course of the Reformation in Poland and in Lithuania, emphasising the specificity of the Grand Duchy's lands compared to those of the Crown (pp. 140–4), as well as the cultural differences between Ukraine and Belarus (p. 153–4). Highlighted is the unique role of the Commonwealth as an oasis for refugees from Muscovy in the sixteenth century (pp. 155–9), as well as for exponents of some radical Reformation groupings from the West.

'Zwischen Ost und West: Die Unierte Kirche': the subsequent chapter describes the history of the Uniate Church since its emergence in 1596 until present. Schmidt focuses on the role of the Union of Lublin as one of the premises for the conclusion of the Union of Brest (pp. 162–4) – the latter, instead of a unity, having led to a split among the Orthodox population, and encouraged estrangement (*Entfremdung*) in the relations between Warsaw and Ukraine, elevating the religious dimension to the rank of a decisive circumstance in the Polish-Cossack armed conflict (p. 166). The destiny and legal status of the Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century, and the setting up and development of the Mohyla Academy, described by the author as a 'hothouse' (*Treibhaus*) for the later development of the Enlightenment in Russia (p. 165), are described. The problem is discussed of the progressing Latinisation of the Uniate Church and its vicissitudes under the Partitions and in the Soviet era. Schmidt attempts to evaluate the Uniate Church's contribution to the occurrence and development of Ukrainian nationalism (p. 177). He also considers the question to what extent the tradition of Ukraine's territorial, political and ecclesiastical disunion implied the failure of the attempted reestablishment of the country's statehood in 1918 (p. 171).

The subsequent chapter (still within part two), 'Spaltung im Protest: Altgläubige und Chassidim', deals with yet another cleavage in East European

religious area in the modern period. Both the Old Believers movement, which appeared in the Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century, and the eighteenth-century Chassidism are described as dissident religious movements occurring from within. The basic reasons behind the occurrence of these movements are discussed, along with the phases of the policy pursued by Russian state authorities with respect to the Old Believers, and the latter's contribution to Russia's economic and cultural development (pp. 182–4). The basic ideas of Chassidism are sketched and the movement's most eminent representatives portrayed, it being emphasised that the area stretching between Lvov and Kiev, by no coincidence, became the cradle of the Chassidic movement (p. 186).

The influence of Enlightenment ideologies on the religious history of Eastern Europe is covered in the chapter 'Der aufgeklärte Gottesacker?'. The Enlightenment is considered as the first intellectual movement which, to a varied degree, has affected all the Abrahamic denominations (p. 197); this was true also with the intensity of anticlerical tendencies. The reform of Russia's Orthodox Church implied a radical division of the Church into different segments (the Synod leadership, monasteries as defenders of tradition, parish clergy: illiterate and imbued with superstitions; p. 202), and retreat of the Church from the state. In contrast to what was the case in Russia, the Enlightenment in Poland contributed to a rapprochement between the Church and the state (p. 204). The author pays particular attention to the Jewish Enlightenment – the Haskalah, comparing the course this movement took in various parts of Europe (pp. 206–17).

Part two's last chapter ('"Politische Religion" und sowjetischer Atheismus') outlines various effects of atheistic campaigning on the religions of the East European area. Islam in the Soviet Union proved to have the strongest survival power because, inter alia, the destruction of its high places or shrines, or extermination of Muslim clergy, would have not caused (as opposed to believers of Judaism or Christianity) an automatic destruction of the community of the faithful. The atheistic influence entailed an almost complete evanescence of the Orthodox culture.

The history of the Catholic Church in Poland took a different course, the reason for which, as recognised by the author, having been no atheistic campaigning in their interwar period and the Church's sustained influence after WWII (pp. 233–5). An 'open' form of the protest in Poland has been contrasted with the 'escape into within' occurring among Orthodox believers: to a monastery, or to the taiga – the Orthodoxy being compared to a tortoise which in face of a danger hides inside his coating (p. 237).

The final and conclusive chapter ('Religion als historische Kraft oder der Gottesmann siegt?') revisits the earlier-described specific characteristics of *Religionsgeschichte* in the East European territory (recapitulated in six points, pp. 241–3) and concludes his considerations with a comparison of the

secularisation processes in various parts of Europe, illustrating the argument with twentieth-century history of icons and sacred images in Russia.

What is, actually, new about this erudite book? The phrase 'religious history of Europe', in itself, usually connotes the history of Christianity in this territory. Yet, rather than settling with this, the author has included in his considerations all the Abrahamic religions, as well as Buddhism and shamanism. Much of relevance is interreligious dialogue as well as reciprocal influences of various confessions and beliefs, emphasised throughout by the author, as the traits determining the specificity of Eastern Europe. The research option chosen by the author evokes sympathy in the reader: in his assessment of individual phenomena, he quits the West European model as an etalon of sorts, considering the East European history of religion(s) as a phenomenon worthy of special attention. Moreover, the author has eventually transgressed the limits of *Religionsgeschichte*, as a strictly denoted concept (staying within which was one of the study's primary intents). In fact, he unceasingly teeters on a borderline between religious history and a *Kirchengeschichte*, and it is, rather, the latter that he devotes more attention to, in some of the chapters. This is clearly visible in the fragments describing the assumption of Christianity by Kievan Rus', Poland, Prussia, and Lithuania, and those concerning the emergence of the Uniate Church and its later history.

This so happens perhaps because, as in the author's opinion, it was only in the middle of the nineteenth century that ethnographic research, inter alia, enabled to cognise the contents of the actual beliefs of Christian believers (p. 222). The author has unfortunately neglected the sources – rather scarce as they are and, some of them, not completely reliable, but all the same giving an insight in the popular piety. Let us mention, for instance (to remain within the Christian circle): municipal and rural court files (for Poland: dating to 16th/17th cc.)[2]; inspection records (for the Catholic/Uniate Church)[3]; court trials of the Most Holy Governing Synod (for eighteenth-century Russia)[4]; numerous polemic and evangelistic (preacher's) literary pieces (sixteenth–

[2] The study by Warsaw researcher Tomasz Wiślicz (*Zarobić na duszne zbawienie. Religijność chłopów małopolskich od połowy XVI do końca XVIII wieku* [Warsaw, 2001]), mentioned in the introductory section (16–17), has not been suitably taken advantage of.

[3] The material related to the Uniate Church has been edited by Ihor Skoczylas [Skochilas], a Lvov-based researcher; the most recent monograph co-authored by him is: Andrzej Gil, Ihor Skoczylas, *Kościoły wschodnie w państwie polsko-litewskim w procesie przemian i adaptacji: metropolia Kijowska w latach 1458–1795* (Lublin, 2014).

[4] Research of these sources was commenced by Moscow-based scholar Elena Smilânskaâ (*Volšebniki. Bogohul'niki. Eretiki. Narodnaâ religioznost' i 'duhovnye prestupleniâ' v Rossii XVIII v.* [Moscow, 2003]).

eighteenth cc.); reports on popular mission (esp., eighteenth-century Jesuit and Basilian missions). These examples can be multiplied.

The author can also be reproached for his not-always consistent use of certain ethnic names. He refers to the population dwelling in Kievan Rus' at the time of the land's Christianisation as the *Russen* (p. 47), while the colonisation in that period as well as in the later times is named a *russische Kolonisation* (p. 48). Elsewhere, one encounters the phrase *russischer Islam* (appearing in inverted commas on p. 65, but without quotes on the back cover). The designation *Russland*, which overlaps with the entire *Ostkirche* area at some points of the narrative (p. 62), sounds anachronous with regard to the fourteenth century. Otherwise, the standard historiographic names *Moskauer*, *Moscowiter* are used (p. 72).

Ethnic nomenclature has always been, and still is, quite a sensitive topic in Eastern Europe. Whether in historiography or in modern discourse, this matter has an ideological colouring to it, and testifies to political preferences of the uttering person. In the study reviewed, the problem is rooted in the fact that the German language (as opposed, for instance, to Russian) is not sufficiently precise to differentiate between *russisch* (*russkiy*, in Russian) and *rus'kiy*.

Some wariness should be taken concerning the author's intention to correct the erroneous or imprecise opinions prevalent (mostly, in Soviet and Russian) historiography. One such opinion claims, for instance, that Christianity was easily and quickly domesticated in Kievan Rus' area, with elements of pagan beliefs dwindling fast (a *Doppelglaube* situation, following the author's term; pp. 51–2). Again, no researcher name or study title is mentioned, though. Elsewhere, the reader comes across an objection that historiography has not appreciated the influence of the Reformation on Orthodox believers in the seventeenth century Poland-Lithuania (p. 139), and in the Muscovite state earlier on. At this point, the author refers to two English-language studies (p. 276, notes 39 and 41), while this particular subject has been elaborated on by East European historiographers – in a pretty profound, even if not exhaustive, manner.[5] In his discussion of the Brest Union, the author neglects the question of the extent in which the conflict between the fraternities and the Ruthenian episcopate influenced the decision of the latter to enter a union with Rome. Historiography perceives it today as a decisive

[5] This would include, i.a., the work of Moscow researcher Mikhail V. Dmitriev (*Pravoslavie i Reformaciâ. Reformacionnye dviženiâ v vostočnoslavânskih zemlâh Reci Pospolitoj vo vtoroj polovinie XVI v*. [Moscow, 1990]; French version: *Dissidents russes: Feodosij Kosoj* [Baden-Baden, 1998]); studies in Ukrainian (V. Zema, O. Zadorožna). For more on the literary output of Polish Lutherans on Orthodox literature in Poland-Lithuania, see, e.g., Margarita Korzo, *Ukrainskaâ i belorusskaâ katechetičeskaâ tradiciâ konca XVI–XVIII vv.: stanovlenie, ēvolûciâ i problema zaimstvovanij* (Moscow, 2007).

factor.[6] The author's individual utterances might even be understood as resumption of the statement, long ago abandoned by historiographers, that the Jesuit Order contributed heavily to the conclusion of the Union (p. 162). The excellent study by Moscow researcher Elena Ŷhimenko about the Old Believers' monastery on the Vyg River in Karelia[7] is the only example quoted of a positive development of our contemporary historiography with respect to the topic researched, as far as post-Soviet space is concerned (p. 16). Again, the findings of that book have not been used in Schmidt's considerations, nor is the publication mentioned in the bibliography.

There is no doubt that the author's knowledge of Polish-/Russian-language research and studies far exceeds the modest list as detailed in the footnotes or the bibliography. It is no less obvious that a study like the one under discussion, whose purpose is popularisation and which is targeted at the German-speaking reader for whom the lands beyond the Bug River (if not as close as beyond the Oder!) are, possibly, a *terra incognita*, all the reference literature in Slavic languages has been minimised. This being the case, while the outcome is a quite a thoroughgoing study on Eastern Europe, it was written without the East European 'voice' taken into consideration.

trans. Tristan Korecki *Margarita A. Korzo*

Veronika Čapská, in collaboration with Robert Antonín and Martin Čapský (eds.), *Processes of Cultural Exchange in Central Europe, 1200–1800*, Opava, 2014, European Social Fund – Silesian University in Opava, 431 pp.

This collection of studies concerning the cultural transfer process, understood as exchange of thoughts, ideas, behavioural patterns and human attitudes, occurring on various planes (social, economic, political, cultural) in Central Europe over six hundred years comes as a result of the effort taken within the Historicising Central Europe grant delivered by the Silesian University (SU) in Opava. Specifically, the book is a harvest of a three-year project that has focused on the following issues: the clash of cultures and traditions – perceptions of 'our folks/familiars' and 'alien' people; acculturation processes; forms and carriers of historical memory – beginning with the Middle Ages, until the professionalisation of historical memory by twentieth- and twenty-first-century historiographies. The project extended to scientific and didactic research.

[6] Svetlana S. Lukašova, *Mirânie i Cerkov': religioznye bratstva Kievskoj mitropolii v konce XVI v.* (Moscow, 2006); Mikhail V. Dmitriev, *Meždu Rimom i Car'gradom. Genezis Brestskoj cerkovnoj unii 1595–1956* (Moscow, 2003).

[7] *Vygovskaâ staroobrâdčeskaâ pustyn': duhovnaâ žizn' i literatura* (Moscow, 2002).

The texts submitted for publication by the invited project participants, from the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Italy, and the UK, were edited by Veronika Čapská of SU Opava. In an introduction, the editor points out the major problems she had to tackle: the various historiographic schools represented by authors from multiple countries; the differing levels of research on cultural transfer in the various countries; also, the linguistic specificity of the project. Some of the texts were written in the authors' national languages and subsequently translated into English, while others were written originally in English. The publication aims at portraying the current knowledge and, primarily, the present state of research on cultural exchange processes in Central Europe over more than half a millennium. As conceived by the project's originators, a mosaic of subject-matters and methodologies is shown, with varying views on the issues concerned, and a diversity of research outcomes: from mutually close and correlating conclusions up to completely dissimilar findings.

The book is minutely edited and neatly published, which is true for the artwork as well as the content-related and linguistic aspects. Especially the latter deserves emphasis, since the reference literature embraces studies in some ten languages – not only conference ones (German, English, and French) but also Czech, Polish, Russian, Slovak, and Italian. I have found no instance of erroneously spelled author's name or study title in Polish; all the diacritical marks of Polish have been preserved. As a side remark, let us note that a minor inconsistence is traceable only in the spelling of the names of Polish journals.

The book has five thematic chapters: 'Between Texts and Social Practices'; 'Cultural Intermediaries'; 'The Challenge of *Histoire Croisée*'; 'Social Elites and the Processes of Cultural Transmission'; and, 'East Meets West – Patterns of Cultural Transmission'. In the preceding introduction, Dana Štefanová of the University of Vienna deals with cultural transfer, studies done in the respective countries, and comparative history as a subject of research. Štefanová considers this issue in a threefold manner: outlining the definitions of cultural transfer; addressing the question of conceptualising space in recent regional history; reviewing and comparing the research, using the concept of cultural transfer with comparative approaches. As shared by the recent literature (the German research forming the groundwork for Štefanová's considerations[1]), the definition of cultural transfer assumes simultaneous studies of the histories of countries and societies, consequently demonstrating the sameness of the patterns, their similarities or differences on various levels of social interaction – some of them having been underestimated or neglected: "Literature, myth, religious beliefs, form of art are social modes

[1] The achievements of German historiography are the strongest emphasised methodological and cognitive perspective in other essays as well.

of expression which fulfil the task to preserve group identity, the national unity" (p. 13). Štefanová points to the lack of full integrity of research on the thus understood cultural transfer, both in micro-historical terms and in the historical-anthropological theories in Central Europe – particularly, in Czech, Polish, and Slovakian historiographies. She mentions in this context, among other things, the *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, a quarterly published since 1953 by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, and the contributions made by the eminent Polish historian Oskar Halecki to Central European research. In her opinion, the said quarterly partly reflects the modern approach to research in the area of cultural transfer, as the topics dealt with are focused on consumption, production, the society's material culture (the periodical's profile was heavily influenced in its first decades by the Marxist theoretical school) and, to a lesser extent, on other aspects of social history.

The most recent cultural transfer research allow for a somewhat broader concept of social and economic history of Central Europe, without a strict East/West division. Thus, what we deal with is not a history of comparing the civilisations, but a history of transfer and entanglement. Comparative studies on cultural enable one to discover certain hitherto-unnoticed or unknown subject-matters and areas.

The first chapter contains texts by Lucie Storchová of the Charles University in Prague concerning the role of exchange of thoughts and ideas, with a focus on the developmental paths of Renaissance humanism in Moravia and in Bohemia. Then, Veronika Čapská deals with transfer of ideas and forms of religiosity, based on analysis of receptions of religious literature in Bohemia in the modern period and the publishing activities of religious institutions (such as Jesuits, and others) as well as laypersons (the noble houses of Sporck and Swéerts-Sporck). This section also comprises Pavla Slavíčková's (Palacký University, Olomouc) description of how books of account were kept before 1800.

Storchová has applied the cultural transfer methodology with respect to research concerning the transfer of ideas, assuming as a point of reference the findings of German and Anglo-Saxon literature. She focuses on how the Czech and foreign researchers perceive the process and ways of development of humanism in Olomouc, the historical metropolis of Moravia, which was in bloom in the sixteenth century, and in Prague. Čapská describes the printing and editorial activities of the Jesuits, with the central hub in Prague, the Servite Order (Ordo Servorum Mariae, formed 1233 in Italy), with its main centre in Halle, as well as private persons – the Sporck count family. They sought to transfer into the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Bohemia the modern models of piety and religious practices, both Counterreformation and Protestant ones. These ideas were transferred by means of religious books and writings translated from Latin, English and French into Bohemian and

German. Čapská shows the relationships and rivalries between the three printing centres whose activities and influences crossed one another and crossed geographical and social borders.

Based on the preserved account books from the Bohemian territory, Slavíčková described the types of such books and the accounting methods based on double-entry accounting of receivables (income) and payables (expenditure). We owe the knowledge of this system to Venetian Franciscan friar Luca Pacioli, who in his work *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni et proportionalita*, published in Venice in 1494 comprised a treatise on double-entry accounting. The entries were made chronologically, based on annual, monthly or daily reckoning, using two books: a journal and a ledger. The author compares the Bohemian sources with the clearing methods used in other parts of Europe.

The second part of the volume under review offers several studies, including the one by Alessandra Becucci (European University Institute in Florence) on the cultural transfer actors: merchants, agents, or military-men, using the examples of noted seventeenth-century individuals. The article penned by Janine Christine Maegraith, University of Cambridge, deals with healthcare, particularly with respect to the indigent, and the medical art in Central Europe in late Enlightenment period. Becucci traces the network of contacts of the Habsburg imperial general Ottavio Piccolomini, Duke of Amalfi, whose life and public activities fell on the first half of the seventeenth century, and the personages connected with him: Luigi Malo, Tuscan merchant and banker; Niccolò Siri, secretary and diplomat; and, Captain Giovanni Battista Formarini, a serviceman. They were representatives and intermediaries of the duke, who was a connoisseur of painting, in his contacts with visual artists; to an extent, they were his spying agents as well. Their activities show certain multi-level structures and multidimensional social-economic contacts of European seventeenth-century elites. Maegraith shows the transfers of thought and sciences in the eighteenth-century Europe, taking as an example members of one professional group: travelling across the Old Continent, physicians became the carriers, or *transporteurs*, of the know-how, examination and healing methods. Joseph von Schirt (1765–1835) from Überlingen and Carl Endres (1768–after 1825) of Niederalfingen (both localities located in Baden-Württemberg) initiated the considerations on healthcare extending, in particular, to the poor. Both endeavoured to engraft and adapt new therapeutic methods in the local environments they had joined in the course of their practice.

The third section includes studies by Martin Čapský of SU in Opava, who retraces the process of the shaping of urban identity in mediaeval Prague and Wroclaw from the standpoint of *histoire croisée* ('entangled' history), and Przemysław Wiszewski, University of Wroclaw, describing the mechanisms of government applied by the Piast dynasty in thirteenth-century Poland and the

dukes' communications with the society. Čapský investigates the formation of identities in the Bohemian Kingdom's cities: the 'first' being Prague, called by the rulers *Mater urbium* and *Civitas Pragensis, sedes et caput regni nostri Bohemiae*; Wroclaw coming 'second', with its prominent political, administrative, social and economic aspects. The asymmetrical relationships and rivalry between the cities would not have not obstructed the flow of information or the cultural and behavioural transfers. The identities of the dwellers of both cities was built using similar methods. Based on written and iconographic sources, Wiszewski analyses elements and symbols through which the Piasts manifested their ducal power and authority, and their purport in outward communication and inward communication – that is, respectively, with the rulers in the neighbouring countries and the subjects. In his opinion, the behavioural patterns shown by the Piasts remained rather homogeneous until the end of the twelfth century. Beginning with Duke Boleslaus I the High, the dynasty ruling in Silesia launched certain new methods, adapting the Western – that is, imperial – models via Bohemia.

In section four, which focuses on social elites in the perspective of transmission of ideas and patterns of behaviour, University of Ostrava Robert Antonín raises the issue describable as the exemplar of ideal sovereign ruler in the cultural change process taking place in Europe until the thirteenth century. Marcin R. Pauk of the University of Warsaw describes, in turn, the role of private castle as a social change driver in the thirteenth to fourteenth-century Bohemia. As Antonín remarks, de-sacralisation of the ideal of royal authority (and power) occurred since the thirteenth century, whilst in the tenth/eleventh century this authority was treated as an imitation of Jesus Christ's rule on the Earth. The *rex-sacerdos* was gradually replaced by the *rex-iustus* in the development of European statehoods. The reception of the ideas and of the legal and political thought crossed the borders of nation-states, which the author demonstrates using the examples taken from Bohemian sources referring to the *Regnum Bohemiae* rulership.

Pauk considers, in turn, the emergence of private castles in Bohemian territory in the thirteenth and fourteenth century as a factor of crucial importance for the social and cultural changes occurring in the country of the Přemyslid and Luxembourg dynasties. The high point in erecting private castles was the period 1270–90, with Bohemia seeing twenty-five and Moravia seventeenth such edifices emerging; the total number of strongholds built between 1220 and 1310 was fifty-three and thirty-nine, for Bohemia and Moravia, respectively. The author's considerations are based on the period chronicles, including the so-called Chronicle of Dalimil, the one by Peter of Zittau from the cloister of Aula Regia in Zbraslav, near Prague (*Chronicon Aulae Regiae*), and the *Chronica Domus Sarensis*, written by a monk named Jindřich Řezbář at another Cistercian monastery of Žďár nad Sázavou. The former two authors considered private castles an adverse manifestation of Western European

cultural influence on Bohemian statehood. The latter mentioned chronicler, the author of German origin who dwelled the monastery founded by Boček of Jaroslavice and Zbraslav, of a Moravian noble family, was of a completely different opinion about the *incastellamento* process: he namely considered the private castle of his family in Obřany a factor and symbol ensuring peace within the magnate's territory and guaranteeing safety and security to the cloister.

In the last chapter of the monograph, Jitka Komendová (Palacký University in Olomouc) analyses rituals as an element of intercultural communication in mediaeval Eastern Europe, while Jan Hrdina of the Prague City Archives describes the process of granting papal privileges – the indulgences of the Great Western Schism period, 1378–1417 – as distribution of incorporeal property.

In her analysis of the behaviours of thirteenth-century Ruthenian rulers, on selected examples, such as the ritual of kissing the Cross or paying homage to the Khan of the Horde, Komendová finds that the Rurikovich house incorporated the Byzantine and Mongolian tradition into their culture. However, the mediaeval historiographers purposefully passed in silence over the cultural elements which originally came from the world of Golden Horde rulers. Chroniclers built an image of Ruthenian rulers as real defenders of the Christian faith, who fostered their own customs and traditions. Hrdina focuses on papal indulgences perceived as a transmitter of European culture into the Kingdom of Bohemia. He emphasises the massive appearance of papal privileges or charters since the pontificate of Pope Boniface IX, particularly during the Jubilee Year 1390, the announcement of which gave an impulse for soliciting papal privileges of this sort. Described is the typology and style of indulgence documents: the *litterae gratiae* were compiled according to the elaborated and strictly determined style of the curial chancellery (*stilus curiae*). The *ad instar* indulgences, which were approached as a form of plenary indulgences, were modelled after two prototypic patterns, forming their 'spiritual foundation': St. Marc's Basilica in Venice and the Franciscan Porziuncola of Assisi. The former type of indulgence prevailed in Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, the Dioceses of Passau and Salzburg and in the territory of the Empire; the latter appeared in the Apennine Peninsula, and was preferred by Silesian, English, Scandinavian and Dalmatian claimants. In Boniface IX's time, the papal chancellery issued ninety-five indulgences for recipients from the area of Bohemia. The author has analysed the scale of Bohemian indulgences in comparison with other Central European regions (such as the Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary, Moravia and Silesia) and has portrayed the groups of recipients.

Both the case studies (Becucci, Maegraith, Wiszewski) and the synthetic studies (Čapský, Pauk, Komendová, Hrdina) make one reasserted that there is a need for comparative studies. This conviction shared by the project's originators: the potential and research prospects for such studies has been emphasised. In spite of the varying research approaches and subject areas

covered, the unquestionable value of this publication lies in demonstrating how critical international cooperation of scientists from various centres, representing the standpoints of their national histories, is for the research in mediaeval and modern cultural heritage. A new, creative approach to cultural transfer processes in Central Europe seeks to render the reader aware of the limitations generated by distinct schools to comparative studies. Primarily, however, the barriers separating the scientific and scholarly milieus have been lifted, to hopefully make a good start.

trans. Tristan Korecki *Olga Miriam Przybyłowicz*

Peter Oliver Loew, *Wir Unsichtbaren. Geschichte der Polen in Deutschland*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2014, 336 pp., indexes.

The book by Peter Oliver Loew resembles in itself, in a sense, the topic it deals with. As is the case with the Poles in Germany, present there since long ago but almost unknown, the study takes up an issue that has been (re)visited by historians and sociologists for years now, and is a pioneering work all the same. It is hard to believe that the interest in migrations, assimilations and acculturations, so considerable over the last decades, has never before yielded a like work: a concise and all-encompassing synthetic study on the history of the Poles' association with Germans and, primarily, the presence of Polish people in Germany. Loew's book is targeted at a broader public, as attested by its accessible form, a popular publishing house issuing it, and a high circulation. There are no revolutionary claims or arguments proposed, and experts in the subject-matter will probably find no astonishing pieces of information (and not too many errors, let us add). Loew has, instead, proposed a personal utterance – and an emotionally imbued one, of which I will have an opportunity to mention further on.

The study includes six chronologically arranged chapters, the size of which increases as they approach the present day. The author has confined the Middle Ages and the modern era within a mere thirty pages, whilst the last chapter, describing the period after 1989, is twice as long. Earlier on, the temporal caesurae mark the epoch-making events in the history of Poland – to a larger extent than Germany: the Partitions, the years 1918, 1939, and 1945. The name index and the index of geographic names specify, quite expectedly, the German as well as Polish forms of the itemised words. The book has been based on studies and sources published in both languages.

In assessing the book's contents, one should not disregard the target reader: an 'average' German who, statistically, has no chance to avoid a personal encounter with representatives of a large ethnic minority in the

Federal Republic (second only Turks), and still knows very little, if anything, of Poland and its people. The author's frequent references to pieces of basic – if not, at times, textbook-level – information, is justified by the poor knowledge of the topic in this group of readers. This might sometimes be found irritating, particularly at the beginning of the book, with the centuries and dynasties appearing and disappearing so quickly. The value of this particular book is not based, however, on revolutionary discoveries or on the way it catalogues the knowledge, but on the context in which Loew has placed it. The idea is expressed – familiar as it is to those sharing the Polish and German culture – that Poles in Germany have in the last two hundred years, at least, gained a unique significance in the history of Germany; so considerable that, as Loew puts it, one cannot anymore figure out a Germany without Poles. This finding is important and, probably, rightful. It can be added, with some satisfaction, that such conclusion coincides with the research scheme pursued since 2006 by the Centre for Historical Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, in Berlin. The point of departure for a large exhibition 'My, berlińczycy! / Wir Berliner!' [We, Berliners! A history of Polish-German neighbourhood], opened in 2009 in Berlin, was the intent to show Poles "as an integral part of the social and political organism of the capital city of Berlin".[1] Loew's book assumes a similar perspective, matching it with the history of the entire state.

It would not make much sense to summarise a synthetic study running more than a thousand pages. Instead, I should like to refer to a few moments and problems in this history, which have seemingly attracted the author's attention the strongest. One of the toughest is the question of identity – as topical in the Middle Ages as it is in our day, when it assumes the shape of dispute around the ethnic minority status for the Poles in Germany. Loew's stance is as flexible as it is pragmatic: he reports on specific interpretations and declarations, but in practice assumes an inclusive strategy. He is interested in all the categories of Poles dwelling in the German countries, regardless of whether they had moved there on their own or, not changing their abode, assumed a new nationality resulting from an annexation or invasion. The emphasis is, however, on the history of Poles as a minority, and hence Greater Poland occupies less space in the book than the areas of Polish labour migration. Loew describes the second and third generation of migrants (even though many of its members would not feel affinity, in the least, with their parents' or grandparents' country) as well as of Polish Jews (even though their Polish identity be problematic). Quite importantly, he does this in a consistent manner; Polish education (or, in many a case, descent) of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German rabbis is covered no less extensively than the political emigration that followed the anti-Semitic

[1] Robert Traba, 'Wprowadzenie', in *idem* (ed.), *My, berlińczycy! Wir Berliner! Historia polsko-niemieckiego sąsiedztwa* (Berlin, 2009), 7–9, cit. 8.

witch-hunt of 1968. There are no daring conclusions to be found with respect to the attitudes of the book's characters, though: individual issues such as those covered by Loew are not easy to generalise about. The treads of this sort are summarised, in most cases, with a commonsensical ascertainment that things went 'occasionally different'.

Another aspect of the same problem is the regionalisms that have emerged in the Polish-German borderland. These include Silesians, assuming various shades of identity – from complete identification with Polishness to complete Germanisation; Kashubians; and, Masurians: Lutheran, Polish-speaking and (mostly) anti-Polish in their attitudes. As far as Masurians are concerned, the role of the short occupation of East Prussia by the Russian army during WWI could have been discussed at more length. The role of this occupation as a catalyser of Germanisation and political radicalisation of the province was interestingly discussed a few years ago by Robert Traba.[2] Loew, for a change, draws our attention to the various motivations of Polish-language minorities, most of whom opted in 1920 for German affiliation of their regions. As he points out, the interests of the German state and Masurian people proved mutually consistent: both parties highlighted the province's ethnic Germanness. Pretending that the Polish-speaking people of East Prussia were indigenously German suited all just fine.

Another interesting issue which reappears in *Wir Unsichtbaren…* is the role of modernisation processes in the history of Polish-German relations. It is sometimes hard, the author tells us, to discern between the modernisation-oriented actions of Prussian or German authorities and the repressions against the minority. Poles were often affected resulting from broader actions, and not always deliberately. On the other hand, the several times repeated, ideologically motivated action of removing from Germany the Polish farm workers not being the Hohenzollerns' subjects invariably resulted in a catastrophic outcome for eastern-German agriculture. Hence, grand landowners sought to relax Berlin's position (in the 1990s, Brandenburg asparagus growers strove for a similar effect). An interesting continuation of organised labour trips to the country behind Poland's western border was the economic cooperation of the socialist states, the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Poland. In line with the tradition, Poland supplied the workforce, while East Germany provided money and goods not easily available in Poland. In the context of the bilateral relations, modernisation extended to culture as well. Loew moreover mentions the role of Lutheran pastors in East Prussia, who paid attention to good communication with the faithful, and thus used Polish in speaking and writing (and published confessional literature in Polish). Another Polish-German contact, whereby the different cultures and

[2] Robert Traba, *Wschodniopruskość. Tożsamość regionalna i narodowa w kulturze politycznej Niemiec* (Poznan, 2006).

ways of life met, took place in the area of hard-coal mining industry, seeing a dynamic development since the 1870s in Lower Silesia and in Westphalia. The slow and tough acculturation of Polish miners and their families in the German environment is a reappearing subject in the book. Loew sceptically approaches the conviction, popular in Germany, that the Westphalians have been the most successful model of assimilation.

The long time perspective assumed in the book enables to grasp the permanent mechanisms of migration and acculturation. These include not only regional specificity (associating the specific regions in Polish lands with specific German regions) but also the code of conduct specific of Polish migrants. Over more than a hundred years, at least since the nineteenth century, those willing to leave were recruited by way of informal exchange of oral information. Whispering while speaking Polish, remaining unobtrusive and discrete, was a strategy of Polish Berliners, no less obvious in the beginning than at the end of the twentieth century. Particularly important seem the fragments of Loew's book which concern the period immediately after WWII. Evoking a series of individual recollections and real-life stories, the author shows how strong the reluctance toward the Poles was at that time, paradoxically accelerating – as it can be guessed – their superficial assimilation. A chaotic landscape of Polish organisations, no less frequently mutually cooperating than fiercely combating one another, has remained a constant feature.

The interest in such long-term processes has very clearly affected the profile of the book under review. Social and economic phenomena and, in the first place, the mechanisms of assimilation and acculturation occupy most of its space. The fragments devoted to Polish culture and Polish political life appear rather meagre compared to those, although explicit emphasis is put on the achievements of German Poles. This perspective partly ensues from the 'volumetric' prevalence of the recent history (after 1918). The emergence of independent Poland triggered an exodus of Polish intelligentsia, which accelerated the assimilation of those who remained in the Weimar Republic and straitened the Polish cultural life in Germany. Submission of social history to the pattern set by political history brings about a tension. Although the importance of the year 1918, or 1945, for the Poles in Germany seems unchallengeable, a different caesura of importance for them was placed in the middle of the post-war years chapter. From the standpoint of the social character of Polish migrants and their behaviours, the martial law played a special part. With the inflow of the 'Solidarity'-related émigrés, many of whom arrived in Germany not as 'late re-settlers' but political refugees, Poles became more visible in Germany and, as far as a historian can assess it, more sure of themselves. The most recent chapter in their history might have begun in 1980-1 or thereabouts, rather than in 1989.

Focused on permanent and repeatable phenomena, the narrative comes to a climax when dealing with the war and occupation period. The author

observes that Germany had never before, and has never afterwards, been home to as many Poles. He gives their individual groups due attention and empathy. Apart from forced labourers (Poles among them being less numerous only than the German prisoners) and *Volksdeutsch*s (the German reader takes the opportunity to learn about using their ancestors' service with the Wehrmacht in contemporary Polish political disputes), the vicissitudes of the Poles displaced and 'ousted' from the territories annexed by the Third Reich are described. Loew points to a certain paradox in this context. For the Polish minority, inflow of coerced labourers meant revived connections with Poland. The influence of the war and of the Nazi legislation did not come to an end in 1945. The author several times much virulently criticises the CDU-branded citizenship policy, which generated the 'expellees' almost fifty years after the expulsions came to a stop, and indirectly referred to the idea of nation prevalent in the Third Reich.

As I have mentioned, Loew has avoided serious content-related errors. The spelling of Polish personal and other names is not of an issue for this author. The only error I have spotted with respect to the facts is related to the history of Poland. In spite of what the author says, the Kościuszko Insurrection was aimed against Russia and Prussia (rather than Russia and Austria; p. 34). Another thing is that the repressions applied by the Prussian authorities with respect to the insurgents seem to have been somewhat more legitimate than the author presumes.

Apart from its content-related values, Loew's book has an advantage of importance especially for readers other than professional historians: an endearing sincerity and openness with which he approaches sensitive issues. This is heralded by the short, three-sentence note on the author on the cover's flap, which tells us about his employment, the book he had earlier published with the same publisher, and his marriage to a Polish woman. This latter, personal confession is meant to clearly delineate the perspective from which Loew views the object researched. In this particular case, it should probably be taken as a declaration of identity: the author sees himself as a part of the Polish-German history he describes. This is why he would not feel constrained when formulating his appraisals concerning Germans and Poles alike. I have already mentioned Loew's resolute criticism of the Federal Republic's long-term policies toward migrants from Poland. No less virulent is his approach toward the troubles and disagreements amongst various Polish minority organisations. He mentions the hostility of German immediate-post-war society with respect to the displaced persons, along with naming the reasons for increased crime among the latter group. While stigmatising German stereotypes, he would not dissemble the statistically ascertainable facts such as Polish crime in frontier regions, or the considerable proportion of Polish women (especially in the 1980s) among Berlin prostitutes. Furthermore, he critically views the postulate of granting the Polish minority

in Germany the minority status – remarking that most of these people have arrived as members of the German majority, or as political refugees.

Presently, Loew observes, the Polish history of Germany is entering a new phase, where low birth-rates has called into question the previous model of Polish migration. The almost incessant inflows of people from behind the eastern frontier, which have been the case for the recent few centuries, or the inflows from the former Reich's eastern provinces, may considerably weaken or even come to an end. In parallel, new, sometimes quite diverse, identities are emerging, stretching between Polishness and Germanness whilst renouncing neither. From the author's standpoint, it is these identities that form the brightest element in the history of Polish-German relations.

trans. Tristan Korecki *Maciej Górny*

Tomasz Kizwalter, *W stronę równości* [Towards Equality], Universitas, Kraków 2014, pp. 198, personal index.

Tomasz Kizwalter, professor of Warsaw University, is a distinguished specialist in the social history of the "long nineteenth century". He is particularly known for his works on the multifold and multifaceted processes of modernization of Polish lands within the larger European context, detailing the transformation from a post-feudal society based on estate divisions and agriculture into an urbanized, class-divided, and industrialized one. Apart from his monographs, Kizwalter has published an historical textbook for Poland in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as well as dozens of scholarly articles, earning himself a reputation as, all things being equal, a Polish Nipperdey or Hobsbawm. Hence, his present book may seem surprising: as thin in size as it is broad in scope, the book takes the form of an elegant and eloquent essay on the history of political ideas, spiced with the author's personal comments on historiography, philosophy, economics, and the political debates of today. As is typical for this genre, the general public may find it a useful historical introduction into a general and rather slippery problem, whereas those familiar with the author's earlier writings will rather appreciate his remarks on other scholars as well as particular controversies in modern historical literature.

Naturally, equality is a concept that is both ubiquitous and imprecise enough to be employed by ideologues of all possible affiliations, and the wide variety of its meanings and contexts make its definition a discouraging and perhaps pointless challenge. Nonetheless, readers of *Towards Equality* may still feel confused with the author's flamboyant attitude to this popular idea. Kizwalter regards equality as a self-evident concept: what he discusses in the book is, predominantly, the general, ontological equality of humans

that manifests itself – again, quite generally – in their right and capability for political representation and participation. Apparently, it is equality as it is addressed in constitutions and not in specific bills, not to mention specialists' dissertations. Of course, his approach is not legalistic but historical: what he analyzes is how equality has become the foundation of modern political organization, a pillar of its legitimacy, and a slogan for both its enthusiasts and critics. So those interested in electoral systems, quotas, enslavement by machines and large corporations, the superstructure and the subconscious, access to natural resources, neocolonialism, gay marriage, and EU decision-making processes will rather be disappointed, although biopolitics is addressed in the book.

The book is divided into three parts. The more traditionally-inclined readers should appreciate, as did the author of this review, that part one begins with discussion of Aristotle's attitude toward human equality concerning legal status, sex, and age. Needless to say, the idea was as alien to ancient Greek democracy as it was to the great philosopher, and the author takes pleasure in asking whether this makes him immoral in our eyes, as well as in quoting some answers to this question as provided by embarrassed historians of philosophy. He emphasizes that ancient authors, such as Aristotle, Homer, and Plato, regarded democracy as the rule of the poor which inevitably deteriorated into the anarchy of the irrational mob. He reminds us that the idea that political power should rest with the elite of educated, mature, and wealthy men remained virtually unquestioned for most ages of history, and that it was based on the belief that humanity itself is rankable, and that one needs a certain degree of education, wealth, rationality, and dignity in order to enjoy political privileges. He then quickly moves through many centuries of feudalism, briefly mentioning the inconsistencies of medieval Christian political doctrine, social divisions among monks, the idea of the king's two bodies, and the early modern fear of the poor.

The moment when the idea appeared that humans are equal not only in the eyes of God, but also politically speaking, and how it got recognized and won popularity surprisingly escapes his attention, even though he briefly mentions Jean-Jacques Rousseau and crowns this historical overview with Saint Just's speech condemning Louis XVI as an usurper (p. 33). Instead, Kizwalter focuses on the *negative* impact of the age of revolutions on the idea of equality: he analyzes the fear which the "masses" inspired in educated and wealthy elites in the long nineteenth century and beyond. On the one hand, he reminds us about the number of prominent authors popularly considered "liberals" or even "liberators" in a number of spheres, from politics to sexuality, who – such as John Stuart Mill and Sigmund Freud – were nevertheless profoundly afraid of instinctive, emotional, and irrational "simple men." These authors believed that the masses should be carefully supervised and guided toward higher levels of rationality and responsibility by the elite.

To a further extent, some authors, like Gustave le Bon, were afraid that "the masses" would inevitably get out of control. As illustrations of this tendency, he emphasizes the nineteenth-century obsession with decency and discipline, and nation-building projects: all based on hierarchy and the leadership of social elites. However, he also stresses that nationalism, criticized as it is today for its exclusivism, was generally an emancipatory power that removed old, post-feudal social divisions (p. 76). Apparently, Kizwalter shows more understanding for authors who were troubled with the masses' anarchic and destructive inclinations in the aftermath of Nazism and the Bolshevik revolution than for the "conservatives" of the previous century. In the final analysis, however, he dismisses the concept of populism, which he argues (pp. 79–80) is evidently related to the idea that some people's incompetence (mental or intellectual) makes them unfit for politics and is therefore irreconcilable with the fundamental principle of representative democracy. This claim, which crowns the first part of the book, may seem astonishing because the author frequently disapproves of or, to say the least, advocates skepticism towards assessing the moral standards of the past with our modern values – not in this case however.

In the second part of the book, Kizwalter moves to consider his area of expertise: the social history of Poland since the late eighteenth century. Thus, this part may actually be considered a treatise of its own in which the author reconsiders the crucial issues he has addressed in his research during the last thirty years. Consequently, the idea of equality becomes overshadowed by his favorite problem, that of modernization, which, as he later explains (pp. 182–8), equals the gradual emancipation of the masses. However, this is an evaluation provided *a posteriori* from the perspective of the twenty-first century, and it is not evident in following Kizwalter's earlier narrative. For example, the readers may find paradoxical his straightforward assessment of nineteenth-century land reform in the three parts of partitioned Poland. The impact of reform on modernization was flawed in Austrian- and Russian-administered parts, he argues, because, for political reasons, the reforms aimed to weaken the position of the gentry and satisfy as many peasants as possible. By contrast, in Prussia, the reform actually privileged large- and medium-sized estates, resulting in an economically healthier structure for farms (pp. 92–5). As a consequence of this fatal fragmentation, producing an ever larger number of undersized farms, Polish rural life stayed essentially backward, and peasant culture remained hostile towards modernity well into the second half of the twentieth century. Kizwalter approvingly cites Barrington Moore, who claimed that the successful commercialization of agriculture had been essential for democratization (p. 153). Moreover, the author emphasizes a number of times throughout the book that he finds the concepts of backwardness and periphery – politically and culturally determined as they may be – crucial for understanding Polish and East European social history.

The author is not original in his claim that the main obstacle on the Polish road to modernization was the weakness of the bourgeoisie, which he views as the direct predecessor of the twentieth-century middle class (p. 152); nor is he original in the emphasis he puts on the tragic fact of the huge losses which the Polish educated strata suffered during World War II (p. 137). The latter observation nuances his highly critical assessment of communist attempts at modernization in Poland. He claims, as does a recent study by Marcin Zaremba, that the post-World War II condition of Polish society on the eve of communist rule was lamentable: the elites were decimated, social norms profoundly shaken, and people were traumatized, demoralized, and full of anger and mutual distrust (p. 137). Still, he concludes that, although the communist project in Poland had its egalitarian effects, it resulted in a "superficial and indeed illusory democratization" (p. 147). It remains unclear, however, if this opinion should simply remind us about the banal truth that communism was not a *political* democracy, or that it was not an *economic* success, or if this is to say that communism actually did not annihilate class divisions as it had declared. The confusion grows when in the next sentence he declares that "communism minimalized differences in wealth and social status only temporarily…." This astonishing opinion is only partly clarified by Kizwalter's claim that, after Stalinism, communism in Poland had "reactivated and conserved the division into lords and plebeians," which is supposed to explain the flawed nature of communist modernization (p. 155–6).

In the last part of the book the author returns to the pan-European (or indeed pan-Western) perspective. It is an engaging and passionate apology for modernity, democratic capitalism, and the "civilizing process" as defined by Norbert Elias. What was equality in the first part of the book becomes finally specified as "social emancipation." Eventually, Kizwalter argues that modernity is good for two general reasons. First, as J. P. Reemtsma has claimed, the progress of modernity correlates with the decline of human brutality. Kizwalter takes this argument to the extreme, confronting it with the "big question" of whether genocide, and the Holocaust in particular, may be considered a modern phenomenon, and he rejects this thesis with Peter J. Peukert's claim that racism was (or perhaps has been) grounded in the ancient idea of the division of humans into more and less valuable groups (p. 171). However, he also notes that racism arose from, or was inseparable from, eugenics: the revolutionary idea of improving the human race biologically. Finally, he argues that the epoch after World War II has been marked by the constant rise of "actual emancipation" based on economic growth, and the breakdown of the nineteenth century's elitist social discipline (p. 182–3). He dismisses all criticism of the modern socio-political order as "the rhetoric of complaints" and claims that economic growth is the true basis for the fulfillment of our dream of "perfect equality" (p. 186–7). So the final message of the book may be paraphrased as follows: the more modern

and the richer we are, the more equal we are, or the better chances we have to achieve the ideal.

Kizwalter modestly declares that his point of view is not a philosopher's one, and that he feels more comfortable in the realm of facts than in the realm of theories. Accordingly, his readers will certainly be impressed with his analyses of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Polish and European social history. They will also surely appreciate his critiques of a number of theoreticians – from Arendt and Marcuse to Foucault and Bauman – who, for various reasons, had a tendency to adjust past realities to their ideas. *Towards Equality* reminds us that historians also had their own say on the "big questions" of politics and morality: which was sober, competent, and no less eloquent than the perspectives of philosophers. On the other hand, as noted, some readers will probably get confused with the slightly hectic interplay of the main concepts interchangeably employed by the author, particularly with regard to the triad: equality – emancipation – modernization. In my opinion his passionate defense of capitalism and democracy after World War II also falls relatively flat, and the ease with which he dismisses any criticism of these two pillars of the modern order may seem astonishing. In short, his critical analyses are surely more convincing than his apologies. However, the author provides us enough of the former in the book to be pardoned for his incurable optimism.

proofread Aaron Law *Adam Kożuchowski*

Philipp Ther, *Die neue Ordnung auf dem alten Kontinent. Eine Geschichte des neoliberalen Europa*, Berlin, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014, 431 pp., ills., index.

The financial crisis which since 2007 has been affecting or convulsing a considerable portion of the world, has roused numerous sociologists, philosophers, and political scientists to propose increasingly bold and broad-based interpretations of the errors committed in the past and to seek for new ways of economic, political, and cultural development. Poland is no black hole in this respect – as testified by the intensely discussed studies of Jan Sowa, the criticism of Polish transition by Rafał Woś, or, Mirosława Marody's new book on postmodern society.[1] Yet, utterances of historians who would be

[1] Jan Sowa, *Inna Rzeczpospolita jest możliwa. Widma przeszłości, wizje przyszłości* (Warsaw, 2015); *idem*, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą* (Cracow, 2011). For a direct critique of economic liberalism, exceeding the limits of Poland-related issues, see: Ewa Majewska and Jan Sowa (eds.), *Zniewolony*

expected to lend the afterthought on the late, or perhaps bygone, modernity the characteristics typical of the science they practise: use of underlying sources, deeper temporal perspective, cautiousness in proposing radical conclusions, still remain 'bottleneck products'. All these elements of historian's methodology are apparent in the award-winning (incl. a Leipzig Fair award) book by German historian Philipp Ther, of the University of Vienna. His study excels with an untypical manner in which this author tackles the problem of the growth and (possibly, temporary) fall of the neoliberal order in Europe.

An excellent historian of East Central Europe, specialising so far in the history of nineteenth-century culture, forced migrations and nationalisms in the region, Ther starts his new book off by analysing the political-system transformation in the former Eastern Bloc countries, arguing that these developments have set up the principles to which the 'established' European Union countries have been trying to adapt, more (as Germany) or less (i.e. Greece) successfully. This is a pretty fundamental switch of perspective to which the observers on both sides of the Iron Curtain have become well accustomed. After all, it was the countries situated east of the Curtain that have been 'making up' lost time, and have not ceased doing so – on their 'way back to Europe', 'going Westwards', and so on. The approach proposed by Ther is that the transition in the East has transformed the entire continent. Consequently, the experiences of the East Central European transformation have offered a homework which the Western neighbours should also do, in order to avoid reproducing their old errors or lose the development opportunities their foregoers had managed to take. Some of the most recent problems occurring in the EU would, the author believes, be solved to its benefit if the political decision-makers assumed a similar perspective.

This would suffice to ascertain that *Die neue Ordnung…* is an important book; a contribution to the debate that presently absorbs the public opinion. No less importantly, the arguments proposed are grounded in the material gathered by the author, which included studies published not only in English (a frequent case with the 'transition literature' of the nineties) but also in the region's languages. Scholarly studies alternate with the statistics (frequently but reasonably referred to), while references to individual experiences make the reading even more attractive. The author has skilfully forged his lack of professional background in economy – a potentially weak point of his research – into a strength. Having assumed the standpoint of historian of culture, rather than historian of economy, he primarily takes a closer look at the language of the transition; at the whole symbolic and discursive areola of the developments concerned. Often (though not always, of which more will

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umysł 2. Neoliberalizm i jego krytyki (Cracow, 2007); Rafał Woś, *Dziecięca choroba liberalizmu* (Warsaw, 2014); Mirosława Marody, *Jednostka po nowoczesności. Perspektywa socjologiczna* (Warsaw, 2014).

be said later) taking a distanced stance against the disputes of economists, Ther tends to avoid a donnish tone, putting forth no overbearing judgments or verdicts.

An introduction is followed by nine chapters, of which a half focuses on economic and social history of East Central Europe (with rarer references to the Balkan countries and Russia) between the 1980s and today. Chapter 6 offers a case study of the transition, comparing the development of Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest after 1989 against Berlin and Vienna; Kiev is set at the background of these considerations. The last four chapters concern Europe as a whole, under (as Ther argues) a belated transformation corresponding with the process that had previously affected the former Eastern Bloc. This section brings rather frequent analogies between the economic crisis in the east of Europe in the early nineties and the current status of the economy of the southern EU area. The author's high competence, including linguistic, has helped prevent an excessive amount of errors (which, otherwise, mostly tend to appear in the terms quoted in Polish).

The story told by Ther may be summarised as follows, in considerable simplification: The second half of the 1980s saw neoliberals take the dominant position among economists in the United States and, to a degree, in the West of Europe. Their influence assumed the fullest manifestation in the Washington Consensus – a collection of recommendations regarding economic policy based on strong currency, privatisation, deregulation of markets, and ever-restricted role of the state. This intellectual impulse fell on an extremely fertile soil in the communist Europe, where the state discredited itself in a variety of fields, and the local economy was unable to fight off severe competition from the incrementally developing West. In the late eighties/early nineties, the first group of former Eastern Bloc countries entered a period of economic reform, which were more radical in Poland than in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, but everywhere inspired by the same neoliberal doctrine. The revolution was eased by the deadening of democracy, which was reflected, among other things, in low turnouts of voters. Poor political involvement of the societies experiencing the reform enabled the governments to take some rather drastic action, which under different conditions could have triggered public protest. The transition was detracted by neoliberal doctrinarism and corruption. The impetus of the transformation weakened by the mid-nineties; post-communist politicians came to power in several countries in the region. This did not result in altered direction of change, nor in quitting the neoliberal language; the only outcome was a slowdown in the processes taking place. The subsequent wave of transition embraced the countries which for various reasons had not joined the avant-garde of the change, which was formed by the Visegrád Triangle countries (then came a Tetragon, though Slovakia temporarily ceased being seen, in the nineties, as part of the 'Neoliberal Four') and Slovenia. Latecomers made up for lost distance by strengthened

radicalism, which was reflected, i.a., in the short-lived but intense popularity of prorated tax in Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, and Slovakia. Interestingly, Ther sees Germany as one among the stragglers. After a decade of pretending that the problems of former socialist societies had not affected the former East Germany, the language and the idea of transition reached this country as well, its climax being the launch by Chancellor Schröder of the so-called Agenda 2010 – a reform scheme that (as Ther stresses) was rooted, as to the idea and language, in the discourse that had for long been predominant in Germany's eastern neighbours. Some of the 'contestants' in the chase after the transition pioneers were so successful that the 'Baltic Tigers' seemed, at some point and for some time, more dynamic economically and more efficient in attracting investments than Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, or Slovenia.

The first decade of the transformation impaired the situation of certain regions and social groups. Among the aggrieved parties were, primarily, women, ethnic minorities (the Romani), rural residents (at this point, the author identifies a number of parallelisms with Western Europe) as well as some regions (of particular interest, in this context, seem to be the considerations on a 'post-Habsburg area of poverty'; pp. 147–9). The change turned out the more poignant the weaker the state structures and social assistance systems. Ther points to the fact, discrepant as it is with the neoliberal creed, that in the longer run those countries evolved more auspiciously which provided relatively the most for the social policy sphere. The enlargement of the EU became momentous for the region. As calculated by the author, the inflows of capital related to this very decision equalled the aggregate amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) previously received, now with a refocus on the sectors that had been neglected. The convergence slogan accompanying the enlargement soon began materialising, until the economic crisis quashed the growth in most of the region's countries. The crisis reinstated, in a sense, the earlier hierarchy, as it was relatively the least burdensome for East Central European countries, whereas the Baltic countries (particularly Latvia) and the Balkan ones suffered a deep economic collapse. The character of FDI had a bearing on these differences, Ther argues: in ECE, the investment was primarily linked with industrial production, whereas in the Baltics and the Balkans, FDI was mostly speculative. Moreover, in response to the crunch, the states' policies diverged: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia resorted to instruments that had not much to do with the neoliberal orthodoxy, whilst some of the other states kept their previous course. Some countries, like Russia or (to an extent) Hungary, experimented with a capitalist system which, with time, appeared to have less and less to do with liberalism – whatever the understanding of the notion.

There are two sources to the originality of the image of transformation of former Eastern Bloc countries as portrayed by Ther. One is this author's inventive approach, and sensitivity, toward the language of the period of his

interest. He analyses semantic differences between *transformation* and *transition*; the local varieties of the slogan 'There is no alternative (to economic policy)', borrowed from Margaret Thatcher; the tones or tints added to the word 'progress' in English-language and local press. Ther uses a few picturesque examples to analyse the role of PR in the shaping of 'investment climate' on the scale of countries and regions, and the struggle for his own country's adequately prominent place in the mental map of prospective investors and political partners.

The other source of originality of the standpoint proposed by this author comes as a direct result of the comparative method used, which opens new vistas even for certain issues multiply researched, and which enables to appreciate the really unique phenomena. One such phenomenon is, as it seems, the success of neoliberal evolutions in Poland: originally a potential source of problems, this country established itself within a dozen-or-so years as a top-of-the-class in the transformation exercise (the author goes as far as stating that a *Wirtschaftswunder* can be referred to in the case of Poland, in the same dimension as West Germany witnessed it in the 1950/1960s [p. 137]). Ther identifies the background behind the phenomenon as the social capital that had been amassed by the nation since the seventies, partly enforced by the floundering socialist economy. The value of this capital becomes particularly evident when juxtaposed with the strategies currently assumed by the societies of southern European countries, affected by the crisis. The comparison reveals the uniqueness of the social base behind the Polish transformation. The Polish reader will probably find the proposed evaluation of the economic migration to Western Europe no less astonishing than the aforementioned accolades. Despite the feelings of the local public opinion and politicians' statements, Poland is *not* the region's leader, related to the country's population. Ther moreover finds that the structure of Polish emigration is more beneficial (or rather, less detrimental) to Poland than, say, for Hungary, a country with an disproportionately high numbers of young and educated dwellers of its capital city leaving the country.

The chapter on central European metropolises is an excelling example of analytical benefits of comparison. The author, seemingly, somewhat contrives the reality as he includes Vienna and West Berlin of the eighties in the 'area of greyness' where Warsaw or Bratislava belonged; but the decision to describe these two West European cities in terms of transformation appears very well grounded. This has enabled to show both the achievements and the missed opportunities in a very interesting way. To give an example, Vienna makes use, to a much larger degree than Berlin, of its location between the 'old' Europe and the other one under transformation. Vienna proves more efficient in attracting capital from both sides, whereas the proportion of aliens in the city's population is twofold higher in the Austrian than in the German capital. The disparities between metropolises are correlated with economic as well

as with cultural phenomena, such as the attitude toward strangers, or urban culture. By juxtaposing these cities, the argument (put forth many a time in this book) that efficiency of political transformation depends to a large degree on the social capital is reinforced. The differences in this respect between Warsaw and Berlin, measured in terms of, for instance, economic activity of their dwellers, indicate that convergence will probably go on.

The comparative perspective has enabled the author to display the correlations and interdependencies within the region and outside its borderline. For instance, the competition is pointed out between the countries following in parallel the same economic recipes. Mass privatisation across the region resulted, quite expectedly, in a depreciation of the enterprises on sale, just because it was carried out almost concurrently in many a country. Time appeared to have been another important factor. As Ther stresses over and over again, the Visegrád Group states, along with Slovenia, earned benefits from their first call on access to foreign capital in almost the entire period researched. Even if the other 'racers' were close to catch up with these leaders, the FDI of the transition avant-garde countries turned out qualitatively better (that is, more stable and less prone to sudden outflow) than the capitals invested in Latvian banking system, for instance. Comparisons reappear across the book to China or Vietnam – the countries that resolved, at almost the same time, to have their economies partially transformed, without a political change, which otherwise accompanied the process in the Central and South Eastern Europe. Ther refers to Russia and Ukraine much more frequently, particularly focusing on the local reception and attempts at imitating the western neighbours. The author, at last, draws our attention to an important link between the transformation and exacerbated xenophobia in Western Europe. In his perception, the turn that took place in our part of the continent had a decisive bearing on the transitions in the West; at the same time, the Western societies were permanently convinced that nothing was about to change in their lives, and that the transformation only concerned Eastern Europe. The dissonance between the slogans or proclamations and the reality was, Ther believes, partly responsible for public fears and disinclination for the 'cheap competitors from the East', as German tabloids put it.

As aforementioned, the tenor of the narrative, far from authoritative, is a major strength of this book. The author shares his doubts with the reader, considers various options, potential directions of economic and political development, shunning easy generalisation, in most cases. Such is the case, for instance, with the section on the success and failure story of the privatisation. While Ther casts a rather critical eye on the process, he can see that the countries where no privatisation took place were no more successful in their transition exercise at all. Albeit presenting its arguments calmly, the author assumes a clearly-defined stance with regards to the disputes he analyses. He does it pretty outspokenly at several moments, as when he states, for

instance, that in the face of the Greek crisis the EU should assume a position similar to what it did earlier on with respect to East Central Europe, which means establishing a 'Keynesian' development adjustment instead of forcing a neoliberal reform. This argument is certainly worthy of discussion; the fact is apparent, for example, that the crunch has now affected a country that has been taking advantage of the EU funding much longer than the new Member States, the reasons for its economic breakdown being different. Incidentally, the author's opinion in this respect would be more valuable had he used an analysis of the transformations within the EU after 1989, apart from pointing out to the analogies between the crises in the East and the South of Europe. Yet, this would remain beyond the scope of the study. Reluctance toward the neoliberal doctrine is also quite clear in this book, although the author moves away from the recently popular neo-liberalism-bashing trend. This stance is inconsistent, to a slight extent, since the belief that there is a need for new 'post-neoliberal concepts' (p. 346) appears in the conclusive remarks of the analysis of this process which, though uneasily, pushed the economies in this part of the world forward. Although the price paid by individuals and social groups turned out to be high, the proposed conclusion seems to refer more to the present-day situation in southern Europe than to the transition occurring in the continent's east – the area which has proved capable of managing the situation relatively decently. At times, one may get the impression that neo-liberalism, in Ther's concept, probably gains too broad a meaning, extending, merely, to any 'dark side' of capitalist economy. The outcome is sometimes rather funny, no doubt contrary to the author's intention. For instance, he observes (p. 211) that the shadows of neoliberal economy make themselves clearly apparent in those spheres of economy whose privatisation is not an easy task. The example of public transport in East Central European metropolises (particularly, in Warsaw, to which the related section refers) is not quite a good argument in support of this statement – contrary to what the author would declare. It would be more reasonable to decide that, in certain aspects of life, the collapse of the late real socialism was deep enough for any new order to be capable of bringing about a resolutely improved situation.

The definitely positive characters in the story Ther tells us are, for a change, the societies of the post-communist Europe, which have proved capable of tackling the utterly new and tough conditions unexpectedly well. The author is especially fond of the Democratic Opposition. The fact that neo-liberalism had, almost straight away, invalidated the entire intellectual output of the latter's economic thought adds an almost tragic aspect. At the same time, this is one more strong argument supporting the inclusion of Germany in the compass of the analysis in question. The marginalisation of the intellectual output of the GDR's dissident groups took an even more spectacular course and, primarily, was completed faster than in Poland or Czechoslovakia.

Trying to find the strongest point about Philipp Ther's book, the focus should probably be put on the consistent linking of phenomena and occurrences on both sides of what was the Iron Curtain. The way the history of the transformation is told in this book – interesting, intelligent, multidimensional, and emphatic – is obviously worthy of highest recognition. The more important thing, however, is the way in which the author makes use of this knowledge in order to say things of relevance about today's Europe as a whole. The key notion in his considerations is *co-transformation*, rather than transformation. The impression that the change after 1989 was only confined to the post-communist Europe has been illusory. As Ther pointedly remarks, it would be no less erroneous to expect that the series of crises that has affected the continent would have passed away without stamping their imprints on all of us.

trans. Tristan Korecki *Maciej Górny*