

Reformacja w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i jej europejskie konteksty. Postulaty badawcze

(Reformation in the Old Republica and Its European Contexts) Edited by Piotr Wilczek. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Sub Lupa (www.sublupa.pl), 2010. 230 pages. ISBN 978-83-9292-44-3-2. Paper.

Howard Louthan

Scholars of the early modern world with an interest in eastern and central Europe have long lamented a basic shortcoming in the field: English-language historiography on the Polish Reformation is remarkably thin. The last monograph specifically devoted to this subject, Paul Fox's short study *The Reformation in Poland*, appeared in 1924 and focused primarily on the economic and political aspects of this phenomenon. Other texts have, of course, appeared since Fox's time, but these have focused on specific aspects of Polish religious life and come with their own sets of problems. Two themes in particular have attracted at least modest attention from Western scholars. Janusz Tazbir's *Państwo bez stosów*, famously translated as *State without Stakes* (1973), highlighted the issue of toleration and to some degree celebrated it as a great patriotic virtue of the kingdom's Golden Age. We will return to the issue of toleration later in this review. The activities of Poland's antitrinitarian community have also generated interest in the Anglophone world. The studies of G. H. Williams and E. M. Wilbur and the translations of Stanisław Kot and Lech Szczucki are relatively well known, but as with the case of toleration they bring with them some particularly difficult methodological questions.

Against this backdrop *Reformacja w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i jej europejskie konteksty* highlights the work of younger scholars in the field. The volume is a result of a conference held in Warsaw in December 2009 and is connected to a broader undertaking, *Cultures of Knowledge*, led by Howard Hotson at St. Anne's College, Oxford. *Cultures of Knowledge* (<http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/cofk/>), a large-scale project funded by the Mellon Foundation, seeks to reconstruct intellectual networks of the seventeenth century with a significant emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe. *Reformacja w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i jej europejskie*

konteksty is the result of this December conference. The volume is not a traditional collection of essays around a central theme; instead, as the title indicates, it is a series of short papers that highlight work in progress and themes for future research. As such, it offers a broad array of topics that the editor Piotr Wilczek has organized under five general headings. Part 1 examines general themes of the Reformation in Poland set within a larger European context. Here there is discussion of Polish political thought, the role of women in religious reform, the impact of Erasmianism and religious toleration. Part 2 looks more closely at the humanist world and considers the contributions of individuals such as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and Peter Ramus. Part 3 shifts to a theological examination of biblical exegesis in this period. Part 4 focuses on sources and plans to publish primary material on the Polish Reformation. Part 5 considers the place of Calvin and Polish Calvinism. A final section turns to the Radical Reformation and a reassessment of the Polish Brethren.

There are many issues that could be discussed in relation to this volume since it does cover significant ground. In a compelling presentation Alan Ross suggests that we examine the intellectual history of this period from a new vantage point, while Joanna Partyka encourages researchers to turn to the study of gender for a new set of questions and methodological tools. Theologians and philosophers too raise a series of intriguing questions. However, I will focus on two issues that to my mind lie at the heart of this volume. The first concerns sources. A number of scholars who contributed to this project comment on the pressing need for new primary source editions to replace or augment old standards such as Theodor Wotschke's *Der Briefwechsel der Schweizer mit den Polen* (Leipzig, 1908). Dariusz Bryćko and Piotr Wilczek propose a Calvin reader in Polish that would include selections from the *Institutes* and other writings. Special attention would be paid to Calvin's correspondence in the late 1550s when the Christological disputes began. Dariusz Chemperek calls for a team of scholars to commence work on critical editions of Polish Protestant texts. One of the most important of these text projects is highlighted in the work of Anna Skolimowska who heads the "Laboratory for Editing Sources" (<http://dantiscus.ibi.uw.edu.pl/>). The crown jewel of this center is its work on Jan Dantyszek, or Johannes Dantiscus (1485–1543). Humanist, diplomat, and churchman, Dantiscus served three Jagiellonian kings shuttling around Europe on their behalf. His travels

took him as far afield as England where before Henry VIII he sought to establish an alliance with the island nation against the double threats of the Turks and the Teutonic Knights. Dantiscus carried on a lively correspondence with Erasmus, who dedicated his translation of Basil of Caesarea's *De Spiritu Sancto* to his friend and kept a bust of the Polish humanist in his study.

The second issue that comes to the fore is the study of toleration and irenicism. The contributors to this volume consciously push our understanding of this phenomenon both chronologically and geographically. Gergely Schreiber-Kovács examines the famous 1573 Warsaw Confederation, and muses over the possible connections to Transylvania where the religious acts of the diets of Torda mirrored what would occur a few years later along the Vistula. Dariusz Bryćko considers the irenic activities of the Polish Calvinist Daniel Kałaj (d. 1681). While in exile Kałaj wrote the intriguing text *A Friendly Dialogue between an Evangelical Minister and a Roman Catholic Priest* (Gdańsk, 1671), which illustrates that irenic tendencies still existed in the Polish Calvinist community as late as the second half of the seventeenth century. Finally, the philosopher Steffen Huber returns to a classic source, Frycz Modrzewski's *Sylvae*, to work through the tangled skeins of these complicated treatises that spoke to the issue of religious toleration. These papers point to the vitality of the debate that Tazbir's early work helped stimulate. In closing two final texts should be highlighted that are important contributions to this ever-changing scholarly debate. Wojciech Kriegeisen's *Stosunki wyznaniowe w relacjach państwo-kościół między reformacją a oświeceniem (Rzesza Niemiecka, Niderlandy Północne, Rzeczpospolita polsko-litewska)* (Warsaw, 2010) examines toleration in a broader European context, primarily from a political and social perspective. This work will be an important starting place for future discussions on this theme in Polish historiography in particular. In the Anglophone world Magda Teter has now published two monographs on Christian-Jewish relations in the early modern era. Her most recent work, *Sinners on Trial: Jews and Sacrilege after the Reformation* (Cambridge, MA, 2011) works very carefully through sets of court records and explores the tension and violence that existed between these two communities in the Commonwealth. In sum, *Reformacja w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i jej europejskie konteksty* highlights a significant research agenda for the next generation of scholars. Essays are accessible to an Anglophone audience since they are written either in English or appended with a short English summary.▲

Stone Upon Stone

By Wiesław Myśliwski. Translated by Bill Johnston. New York: Archipelago Books (www.archipelagobooks.org), 2010. 534 pages. ISBN 978-0-9826246-2-3. Paperback.

Dorothy Z. Baker

Stone Upon Stone is an interestingly untidy novel whose tensions, confusions, lacunae, and contradictions conspire magically to communicate the mystery of being human in this world. The narrative does not purport to deliver truth. Rather, it illustrates the path of an earnest man who takes wild pleasure in the many joys of life and knows how to withstand its unrelenting pain. This man is Szymek Pietruszka, born between the wars to peasant parents, whose main ambition at the end of his life is building a family tomb, placing stone upon stone to immortalize a life that is no more.

Stone Upon Stone is a rush of stories, this being one of the productively disordered aspects of the novel. One tale is barely finished when the next begins. Appearing to lack any design, the narrative is fashioned anecdote upon anecdote, stone heaped upon stone. In this respect the novel's structure mimics a life, the shape of which is often discerned only at its close. *Stone Upon Stone*'s seemingly naive structure also suggests the immediacy and veracity of Szymek's voice. His tales are artless because he is artless. Szymek Pietruszka commands an epic memory of his peasant family, their village life, his brawls and romances, days in the army and then in the resistance, a brief career in the new socialist bureaucracy, and his return to the family farm. Raw, elegant, humiliating, proud, sensual, and brash, these richly detailed accounts are not reined by chronology or theme. They express only the unbridled memory of their teller.

Central to the novel's fruitful uncertainty is its protagonist. Szymek Pietruszka is an unlikely candidate to win our respect, let alone our admiration. By most standards, his life is a failure. No longer a young man, Szymek has no wife and no family. The one girl he hoped to marry betrayed him by aborting his child. He buried his parents alone. Szymek has lost contact with two brothers and cares for another, Michał, who is mute and simpleminded. As a boy Michał was the favored son, so bright that he would have been a priest if the family could have paid for the schooling. We never learn why Michał returns home as a broken man, but