

somewhat rooted in the sanity of ancient philosophy and theology saw them for what they were and remained sane. When the Soviet Union finally collapsed, it was around the figure of Pope John Paul II, representative of ancient Christianity in fruitful dialogue with modernity and gratefully mindful of its Biblical roots that the uncompromised intellectuals rallied. ▲

## *Ex fumo in lucem*

### Barokowe kaznodziejstwo Andrzeja Kochanowskiego

(*Ex fume in lucem*: Andrzej Kochanowski's Baroque Homiletics) By Anna Nowicka-Struska. Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press (www.wydawnictwo.umcs.eu), 2008. 247 pages. Index, bibliography. ISBN 978-83-227-2915-1. Paper. In Polish.

### Joanna Kurowska

This is a study of a series of funeral sermons delivered by the seventeenth-century Carmelite preacher Andrzej Kochanowski. For purposes of comparison, the study also deals with homiletics of several other Carmelite preachers. Nowicka-Struska maintains that while displaying many characteristics typical of the genre, time, and culture in which they were created, in many ways Kochanowski's sermons are exceptional. Her approach is twofold. She discusses the sermons from the point of view of a literary scholar and while doing so, weaves in the cultural and historical background of the Polish Baroque. This discussion constitutes the book's main corpus (chapters 1–3). Since sermons represent a religious type of writing, the closing chapter of *Ex fumo in lucem* discusses the various aspects of Carmelite religiosity.

The theme of death looms large in Baroque artists' works, and thus the topic (funeral sermons) seems well chosen. Nowicka-Struska evokes not only the main tenets of seventeenth-century mentality and cultural *topoi* in their particular Polish setting, but also an entire gamut of historical, social, religious, and psychological details. The first chapter briefly discusses the history of funeral sermons, focusing particularly on those that appeared in print. We are reminded of the traditional structure and function of a funeral sermon (*docere, laudare, delectare*) and learn interesting details regarding their publication. While connecting funeral ceremonies with the Baroque's overall fascination with the theater, Nowicka-Struska argues that the seventeenth-century *pompa funebris* was in fact a performance that involved the deceased (typically someone from the social elite), the preacher, and his

audience. Such a performance reflected many aspects of seventeenth-century society including culture, religion, and history. In the context of the funeral as part of the *theatrum mundi*, Nowicka-Struska discusses a number of rhetorical and literary characteristics of the sermons themselves, such as the use of visual effects and the dialogue, formulaic expressions, voice, and gestures.

The second chapter focuses on correlations between history and Carmelite preaching, particularly the ways in which the latter employed historical sources. Nowicka-Struska first outlines the fundamental and fascinating problem of historical evaluation, then discusses the main influences that conditioned such evaluations in the seventeenth century. We are reminded of the epoch's turbulent history (the Swedish wars and Khmelnytsky's uprising), of the Polish *szlachta*'s conservative outlook regarding politics and culture; of Sarmatian myths about the origin of Poles and their historic role; and finally, in the context of the post-Trent developments and Counter-Reformation in Poland, of the Sarmates' beliefs regarding Poland's role as the *Antemurale Christianitatis* and "Gate to Europe." As Nowicka-Struska demonstrates, all these developments found their echoes in Carmelite funeral sermons, whether as a ground for social criticism or as an opportunity to reinforce and foster the Sarmates' view of history. This chapter also explores the presence in sermons of such *topoi* as the opposition between the "Golden Past" and depraved present; the notions of history being God's playground and of God toying with human fate; as well as the Baroque's favorite notion of the vanity of history and individual human life. Finally, in this chapter Nowicka-Struska discusses the parenetic aspects of the sermons, especially the role models for male and female members of the *szlachta* and aristocracy, both lay and consecrated.

In the third chapter Nowicka-Struska tackles various aspects of the Carmelite sermons' aesthetics and style. While discussing applications of the baroque conceit in religious writing, she shows the sources from which Andrzej Kochanowski derived his conceits including nature, astronomy, astrology, mythology, the Bible, fine arts, architecture, and literature. While the sermons are described as sources of information regarding social mores in seventeenth-century Poland, the only customs mentioned in this part of the book are culinary ones. A large part of the chapter discusses various rhetorical figures employed in the sermons. Chapter 3 seems less well organized and occasionally repeats material already discussed in earlier parts. For example, while discussing the employment of literary motifs by

Andrzej Kochanowski and other Carmelite preachers, Nowicka-Struska returns to topics already covered such as the theatrical aspects of funeral sermons, the significance of the printed word, and the Baroque's preoccupation with *vanitas*.

The closing chapter focuses on Carmelite religiosity. Here the author demonstrates to what extent Andrzej Kochanowski's sermons diverged from those of other Carmelite preachers. However, here her methodology becomes somewhat unclear; the reader is not sure whether she writes this part of her book from the point of view of a literary scholar, an anthropologist of religion, or a religious person. For instance, the previous chapter ends with the following sentence: "Kończąc [ten] rozdział. . . wypada podpisać się pod niepodważalnym słowem Biblii, siebie uznając za filologicznie grzesznego autora" (Concluding [this] chapter. . . it is proper to endorse the indisputable veracity of the Bible while declaring oneself a philologically sinful author) (188).

Overall, Anna Nowicka-Struska's book is a rich source of information about seventeenth-century Carmelite sermons, their authors, and the milieu from which they emerged. As such, it is recommended for scholars studying European literature in general and European Baroque in particular. ▲

## MORE BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

**Więszego cudu nie będzie, by Zdzisław Krasnodębski.** Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2011. 427 pages. Index, Bibliographical Note. ISBN 978-83-62628-06-3. Paper. In Polish.

A collection of essays—most of them previously published in Polish periodicals—on issues vital to contemporary Poland. The first section compares the European Union and Barack Obama's America. In spite of shortcomings, America wins the comparison while the author wisely observes that in many ways American social habits are closer to the Polish than to German or French. America has not thrown away patriotism, love of liberty, and religious belief, three features that are also prominent in Poland. The second section contains essays on issues of Polish history such as the Warsaw Rising, and includes a useful survey of changes in the understanding of liberty in Europe and the United States. Krasnodębski points out that individual freedom is possible only when a national group lives in a free state. This position, also held by British politologist Margaret Canovan and, according to Krasnodębski, by Liah Greenfeld, is being elbowed

out of public view in many ostensibly "free to all" public fora. Then come essays about heroes, prestige, myths old and new, tolerance and its implications. Section 2 ends with an essay on subtle forms of discrimination against Poles in German and American academia and mass media.

Section 3 deals with religion and politics in the contemporary world. Krasnodębski deconstructs the Enlightenment falsifications of the role of Christianity in European civilization. He writes about the acknowledged philosophers of modernity, from Voegelin and Strauss to Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. This section demonstrates that Krasnodębski's easy essayistic style has deep grounding in philosophy. He repeatedly stresses that in matters of religious belief Poland is an exception in Europe and can only be compared to the United States where being religious is also taken seriously in social life and in politics. In contrast, the laicization of Western Europe is now so deep that Polish migrant workers' churchgoing habits evoke amazement in citizens of countries where Poles go in search of jobs.

Section 4 deals with problems of modernization in Poland. This ambiguous term requires explanation, and Krasnodębski provides it. Unlike in section 3, here he quotes mostly Polish thinkers. Section 5 gathers Krasnodębski's articles on literature, and section 6 deals with universities.

The book is a compendium of contemporary thought. It mentions numerous popular philosophers and sociologists of the twentieth century. A good percentage of them hail from Germany, a country that has usually stood ready to provide verbalizations and explanations of the phenomena that were sometimes beyond the understanding of the individual human mind (e.g., Hegel's theory of history). While these verbalizations often issued from plain ignorance of data (German opinions about Poland), they gained wide recognition. Krasnodębski provides an admirable introduction to all these voices while damping the enthusiasm of the naive believers in the demise of the national state. (*SB*)

**Report o zagrożeniach wolności słowa w Polsce w latach 2010–2011** (Report on dangers to the freedom of speech in Poland in 2010–2011), issued by Stowarzyszenie POLSKA JEST NAJWAŻNIEJSZA ("Poland Comes First" Association). Warsaw: SPJN, 1 October 2011. 69 pages. Endnotes, Addendum on lawsuits. In Polish; chapter 1 and Addendum available in English.

The *Report* charges that owing to the monopolization of power by the ruling party (Platforma Obywatelska), Polish courts, television, and press exclusively promote an interpretation of the social and