

abilities of the youthful performers and audience including Radziwiłłowa's children." The plays performed were often her own, some of which were idiosyncratic reworkings of Moliere's farces and comedies. Radziwiłłowa also attempted mystery plays which incorporated folkloric and classical motifs, indicating the extent to which literary traditions inhabited the spaces of the imagination and religious practices, and transacted with life's realities. The plays themselves represent a fascinating window into courtly entertainment taking place in the furthest reaches of Europe in the early eighteenth century.

Seven plays are included in the publication and each and every one is an intriguing piece. They are also eminently readable and performable thanks in no small part to the considerable achievements of the translator Patrick Corness. The play *An Act of Divine Providence* is a dramatization of the Snow White theme, whereas *Gold in the Fire* is a version of the Griselda story, which first appeared in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The literary merits and importance of the plays are wonderfully set out by Barbara Judkowiak, who in an extensive historical-biographical introduction not only incorporates interpretations of Radziwiłłowa's works but stakes a claim for their pioneering aspects. The accounts, arguments, and interpretations here are both insightful and perceptive, allowing the reader to understand the extent and context of Radziwiłłowa's creative achievements. The editor also convinces us that a historical neglect has taken place and that it is time to reassess the importance of "female voices" at the beginnings of the Polish theater.

Patrick Corness's translations of Radziwiłłowa's dramas and plays should delight and intrigue Baroque scholars, who will appreciate the extent to which the translator has looked to explore and elucidate the various literary traditions and sources present in the works. General readers in turn will admire the strength and beauty of dramatic lines made for an actor's delivery, lines such as

I'll see my realm is searched, the coast as well.

We'll gather news and runners will be placed  
in all our forests and fields; we'll ride  
meanwhile together through the dark forest. (*Love is Born in the Eyes*, p. 225)

What is most deserving of praise when it comes to the translations is the degree to which they seek to accentuate the authentic voice and idiom of Radziwiłłowa. The language of the poetry is quaint in places and perhaps of its time, but the intimations of disappointment with the present and unyielding hope reveal what true-to-life experiences and perceptions really meant for a woman of Franciszka Radziwiłłowa's ilk and stature:

If you can read the characters of people  
Their eyes will tell you straight away  
that world matters are quite different now. ("If you know how to read people's character," p. 354)

Altogether, a remarkable tome. △

## Year Zero A History of 1945

By **Ian Buruma**. New York: The Penguin Press, 2013. 368 pages. ISBN 978-1-59420-436-4. Hardcover.

### James Edward Reid

In *Year Zero: A History of 1945*, Ian Buruma surveys much of the history that unfolded in Europe and Southeast Asia after the Second World War concluded in 1945. He has also made occasional forays into the history of the years immediately before and after 1945. His survey is a challenging task, with notable gaps concerning the war and postwar history of countries such as Poland and Ukraine. While reading *Year Zero*, I accessed some of this missing history for Poland in recent works such as Tony Judt's *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* and for Ukraine in *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, (reviewed here in 2012) and *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (2015), both by Judt's colleague and good friend Timothy Snyder.

A lesser writer might have been daunted by the extent and complexities of surveying the histories in countries such as Indonesia before, after, and primarily during 1945. Buruma usually meets this challenge with telling details, lively character sketches, and his capacity for the ironic *aperçu sommaire*. Occasionally, however, his tone fails completely, as in the following statement about the results of a settlement by Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union: “The agreement, following decisions already made by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin two years earlier at a conference in Teheran about shifting a large slice of Poland to the Soviet Union, was in keeping with an atmosphere of peculiar bonhomie” (154). Might the agreement atmosphere be more appropriately described as taking place in another way? Surely the decision to abandon a large area of Second World War ally Poland and its citizens to the genocidal tyrant Stalin must have taken place in an atmosphere of callous obliviousness.

Buruma also errs in his unfortunate references to the wartime service of Günter Grass. When Grass revealed in 2006 that he had served in uniform in Germany during the war, his revelation in *Peeling the Onion (Beim Häuten der Zwiebel)* was greeted with a storm of controversy in Germany and beyond. Buruma does not clarify that Grass was in his teens when he was forced into service in Hitler’s Waffen SS near the end of the war, a time when Germany was drafting and sending boys and young men to the front.

Although *Year Zero* is an informative history in many ways, it is not a traditional scholarly work. It does not contain a bibliography associated with the almost 400 endnotes. These notes present article and book titles in French and German, which may be accessible to some readers; unfortunately, Japanese endnote titles are not translated into English, but are anglicized, leaving the reader puzzled by all of the Japanese titles, such as Morita Yoshio’s *Chosen Shusen no kiroku: beiso ryōgun no shinchū Nihonjin no hikiage*. With these minor cavils aside, Buruma’s book is an accessible introduction to the period between the end of the Second World War and the postwar economic

boom that followed. I plan to lend the book to my father. When he and his brothers removed their Royal Canadian Air Force and Army uniforms and returned to civilian life at the end of the war, they may have missed some of the history of 1945 as it unfolded overseas.

*A history of 1945* is a history that continues to extend its long reach through more than half a century. Just before the turn of this century I was a member of a Canadian delegation that met with a delegation of government officials from Indonesia. One of the Indonesian officials smiled as he reached out to shake my hand. I smiled in response, and said, “My name is James Reid.” As I clasped his outstretched hand in mine, he smiled broadly and his eyes brightened as he said with great pride “My name is Hitler.”

## Kaleidoscope of Poland A Cultural Encyclopedia

**By Oscar E. Swan with Ewa Kolaczek-Fila. Foreword by Adam Zamoyski.** Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. xxvii + 366 pages. English and Polish indexes. ISBN 13-978-0-8229-4438-6. Hardcover. \$39.95.

### James S. Pula

Published as part of the University of Pittsburgh Series in Russian and East European History, *Kaleidoscope of Poland’s* editor states that the book should be “of particular interest to tourists and foreign residents in Poland who want to acquire a broader context for the many unfamiliar cultural terms they will encounter while in the country.” This self-imposed audience seems rather small for a volume that ought to resonate with a broader spectrum of the general public. While most of the genre of reference works focus on political events, here the emphasis is on material culture rather than history or politics. The editor’s somewhat pedantic knowledge of the subject matter is evidenced by the inclusion of such obscure topics as the ritual first haircuts (unknown to most Poles) or a bat sanctuary (*ditto*). It is