



Agnieszka Słaby, *Macierzyństwo: Studium z historii mentalności szlachty Rzeczypospolitej czasów saskich* [Motherhood: A Study in the History of the Mentality of the Nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Saxon Period], Cracow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 2023, 753 pp.

Agnieszka Słaby has carried out research into the experience of motherhood in the first half of the eighteenth century in Poland. The results are presented in a book consisting of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an index of persons. Słaby is undeniably well-versed in the literature on motherhood in its broadest sense as a 'leading form of transcending the self' (p. 11), and, admittedly, the issues addressed by her are among topics arousing keen interest in Western historiography (European and American) in recent decades.<sup>1</sup> Słaby deserves praise for undertaking to write a monograph on motherhood in the first six decades of the eighteenth century. The question is, however, how does she carry out the second part — a study of mentality? The very titles of the successive chapters ('Expectation', 'Lying-in', 'Mothers' relationship with their offspring — from childhood until adulthood', 'The decline of the relationship') guide the reader along the path of the successive stages experienced by a woman as a mother. Is Słaby's description of various actions — for example, choosing a place of delivery or a wet nurse, a doctor for the babies — a study of mentality announced in the title? For the author the activities presented are intended to provide information needed to 'show the models of motherhood followed within a specific group' (p. 32), in this case mainly the noble elite (especially the magnates). What is sometimes missing from the author's analysis is the promised reflection on mentality. Słaby does not always analyse the mindset, views, attitudes of both women and their loved ones, as well as the motives behind their actions associated with giving birth and assuming the role of a mother. Her references to successive actions found in the sources are too rarely crowned with a reflection on the principles that guided the way people acted around, felt about, judged or reacted to motherhood-related events.

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<sup>1</sup> For example Nadia Maria Filippini, *Pregnancy, Delivery, Childbirth: A Gender and Cultural History from Antiquity to the Test Tube in Europe*, Oxford and New York, 2021; Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism*, Philadelphia, 2006; Lisa Forman-Cody, *Birthing and Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons*, Oxford, 2005.

The diverse source material used by the author is the book's strongest point. Its extensive and varied source base was compiled thanks to the author's extensive preliminary research carried out in Poland and abroad. It is made up primarily of letters, but also sources less frequently used by historians, like calendars and newspapers. Iconography was used by Słaby to a 'lesser extent' (p. 53). However, research conducted in Western Europe shows how significant a potential is behind it and how important a role it can play in the interpretation of written sources.<sup>2</sup> Słaby stresses the lack of portraits of pregnant Polish noblewomen and magnates (she leaves out portraits depicting nursing mothers or those involved in the feeding of their infants by a wet nurse). In interpreting the small number of paintings depicting pregnant women, the author follows the findings of the British art historian Karen Hearn, who sees this as a manifestation of the female body being treated as a taboo subject. However, we find no such inhibitions in the presentation of pregnant women, for example portraits of queens such as Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII, who posed when she was eight months pregnant. There are no such restrictions either in Leonty Miropolsky's portrait of Aleksandra Branicka, née Engelhardt (1754–1838), who gave birth to five children. Perhaps the small number of portraits of pregnant women is associated with a fear that the pregnancy might end badly and that the image would serve as a reminder of the unborn or prematurely deceased offspring? Thus, it would be wrong to limit the thinking about iconography depicting pregnant women to female portraits. Instead, it is worth referring to illustrations of medical manuals that Słaby has analysed on the textual level. Progress in learning about female anatomy is best reflected in numerous medical manuals, also those for midwives, which included drawings.<sup>3</sup> The realistic rendering of the structure of the inside of the human body made a huge impression, as is evidenced by the reminiscences of the painter Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, who saw *Venus de' Medici* (also known as 'blond Venus'), a life-size wax figure with long hair, a pearl necklace and removable entrails.<sup>4</sup> Interest in female anatomy was not limited to medical circles. Denis Diderot noted in 1774 that a lecture by the well-known and respected anatomy specialist Marie-Marguerite Bihéron (1719–95) was attended by more than a hundred women of various ages.<sup>5</sup> During demonstrations and lectures in

<sup>2</sup> It is worth referring to two articles from the multi-authored volume *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (ed. Laetitia Dion, Adeline Gargam, Nathalie Grande and Marie-Élisabeth Henneau, Arras: Artois, 2017): Emmanuelle Berthiaud, 'Soulever "le voile derrière lequel la nature se cache": Les représentations anatomiques de la grossesse (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle): quels savoirs masculins et féminins?', pp. 175–93 and Marion d'Amato, 'La représentation de la femme enceinte et de la parturiente: quand les domaines artistiques et médicaux modèlent le corps féminin', pp. 195–211.

<sup>3</sup> The first obstetrics manual with colour illustrations was published in 1759 and its author was a midwife, Angélique Le Boursier Du Coudray (*Abrégé de l'art des accouchements*, Paris, 1759).

<sup>4</sup> Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, Paris, 1835, vol. 2, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> Adeline Gargam, 'Marie-Marguerite Bihéron et son cabinet d'anatomie: une

her own cabinet of curiosities Bihéron taught the attendees about the structure of the reproductive organs, using wax models. The encyclopaedist emphasized the educational value of these lectures, which enabled young women to prepare consciously for pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>6</sup> Diderot's way of thinking was by no means common, but it was an expression of his Enlightenment attitude towards exploring the world.

We should agree with Ślaby that pregnancy was a state full of secrets and taboos, an experience marked by uncertainty, anxiety, the spectre of a life-threatening illness and incapacity. In the course of her analysis the author points to the difficulties noblewomen encountered when writing about motherhood. In her discussion Ślaby refers to research carried out by Cathy McClive and Sarah Read (p. 104). Their findings, important with regard to the Anglo-Saxon cultural milieu, represents a point of departure and reference for Ślaby in her work on the Polish source material. However, what should also be taken into consideration is research carried out in France on the same period on which Ślaby focuses. That research suggests that uncertainty concerning pregnancy diagnosis may not have been all that common. Many women knew already at an early stage (and with absolute certainty) that they were pregnant. This was made possible by the fact that they knew their own bodies and paid attention to the changes taking place in them, as can be seen in the fragments of correspondence cited by Ślaby (pp. 104–05). The symptom regarded as the most common when it came to pregnancy was the lack of menstruation, which married women menstruating regularly were able to predict quite accurately. In France women openly wrote about their monthly cycles, not only to their mothers or sisters, but also to their husbands. Other symptoms of being with child indicated by women and cited in medical texts included abdominal pain, nausea, weakness and more frequent urination. In addition, the experience gained with successive pregnancies enabled women to declare they were pregnant even as early as in the second month. It is also worth considering whether the uncertainty or shyness in talking about pregnancy was due to shame and reluctance to describe intercourse, rather than the pregnancy itself and the related physiology. This is because pregnancy was a visible result of a sexual act. The shadow of original sin provoked by Eve hung constantly over the entire female sex. According to the Church Fathers, the body and sexuality were associated with original sin; moreover, in the church manuals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries motherhood was not considered to the noblest of states. Female carnality, visible especially during childbirth, was degrading and only breastfeeding seemed to deserve appreciation.

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femme de science et une pédagogue', in *Femmes éducatrices au siècle des Lumières*, ed. Isabelle Brouard-Arends and Marie Emanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, Rennes, 2007, pp. 147–56.

<sup>6</sup> Denis Diderot, 'Mémoires pour Catherine II', in *Œuvres complètes*, 15 vols, Paris, 1969–73, vol. 10, 1971, pp. 714–15.

What remained common to all women regardless of their background was certainly their fear of the so-called *faux germe* or false seed — a false embryo or follicle that led to miscarriage. Both women and physicians feared pregnancy loss. No one was able explain with any certainty why it happened, and this recurring source of anxiety was exceptionally strong, as the rejection of a pregnancy might cause uncontrolled, fatal haemorrhage and result in the birth of a stillborn child who would die unbaptized.

Pregnancy and childbirth (rightly discussed by Słaby in separate chapters, as separate experiences), reveal the complexity of the nobility's beliefs, attitudes and views. We can conclude that, irrespective of whether a woman was giving birth to her first or subsequent child, pregnancy and birth were felt as a significant emotional burden. The source material cited by Słaby demonstrates the attitudes of the mothers-to-be to God, other human beings and themselves; it shows their approach to health, pain and physical suffering, as well as material objects. The realization of the hardships and complications associated with childbirth clearly provided motivation to be even more conscientious in preparing for subsequent childbirths, and the burden of responsibility resting on persons rendering assistance was more serious, because other offspring was alive. This was the experience of Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłł, referred to repeatedly in the book, and her entourage. The magnate wrote a testament, as it were, for her daughters. It was an instruction she prepared for them for their adulthood, in case she was unable to accompany them.<sup>7</sup> She pointed to the values that were the most important to her and thus revealed her way of thinking about the world, developed on the basis of her relationship with her own mother and, more broadly, her family. Słaby points first of all to Franciszka Urszula's husband (Michał Kazimierz 'Rybeńka') and mother-in-law (Anna Radziwiłł, née Sanguszek) as important figures from the point of view of her experience of motherhood (for example, pp. 178–85). However, we should not forget about Franciszka Urszula's mother, Teofila née Leszczyńska, *primo voto* Konarzewska, *secondo voto* Wiśniowiecka, who in her letters made a number of remarks concerning her daughter's behaviour during pregnancy, showing her own model of beliefs about what motherhood should look like.<sup>8</sup>

In the light of Słaby's reflections childbirth opened the next stage of motherhood, in which mothers were involved to very different degrees. The source material analysed in the book reveals a certain repetitiveness of activities around childbirth and confinement, as well as beliefs associated with them, based on group experiences, which, however, were sometimes confronted with a reality different from the Polish (noble) one, for example with French practices (p. 359). The

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<sup>7</sup> Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłł, 'Przestrogi Córce moiej Annie Maryi iaka ma bydź w dalszym życia swego bieg', Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN, no. 1604.

<sup>8</sup> Bernadetta Manyś, Agnieszka Jakuboszczak, 'Interesa światowe i sprawy rodzinne w korespondencji Teofili z Leszczyńskich Wiśniowieckiej (1680–1757)', *Balcánica Posnaniensia: Acta et studia*, 29, 2022, pp. 145–68, doi: 10.14746/bp.2022.29.11.

decision to use the services of a wet nurse and the choice of a particular woman to be entrusted with the care of the newborn (including, above all, breastfeeding) were among the key events immediately following childbirth and had an impact on the future of the mother and the child. Touching upon this topic in a study of motherhood is very important, especially if we consider the matter in the context of mentality research. Słaby refers to (p. 352) the treatise *De institutione regii pueri* (On the Upbringing of a Prince), written at the dawn of the sixteenth century. Its authorship is attributed to a woman — Queen Elizabeth of Austria (1436–1505), who apparently shared her insights with her daughter-in-law. Regardless of whether these are indeed reflections of the mother of kings herself, what is striking about them is the observation that maternal milk is crucial for the proper development of the child, not only physical, but also mental. It is viewed as a carrier of nutritional values as well as character traits, disposition, emotional construction.<sup>9</sup> In other works we can find the observation that it is a transmitter of serious diseases (such as epilepsy).<sup>10</sup> This is when we can notice the influence of the Greco-Roman tradition, which is cursorily pointed out by Słaby (pp. 19, 106), and which we also observe in the eighteenth century. It can be clearly seen well in the *Encyclopédie* of the Enlightenment era, which, although it does not go as far as Scèveole de Saint-Marthe (1536–1623) in claiming that a non-nursing mother is only half a mother,<sup>11</sup> nevertheless argues that the mother's presence, her contact with the infant under the father's control, is the best solution for the offspring.<sup>12</sup> Let us pay attention at this point to the position in the decision-making process of the man, who is actively involved in shaping the course of motherhood. Leaving the choice to the father would indicate his pivotal role and (after *Encyclopédie*) the perception of the mother, who in the eighteenth-century mentality was viewed as a person limited by her emotionality, not always capable of rational action. The source material collected by the author suggests, however, that mothers did participate in the decision to choose a wet nurse, that they consulted with other women and decided to breastfeed at least for a few weeks (pp. 359–68). Let me refer here, after a letter quoted by Słaby, to some interesting words by F. U. Radziwiłł: 'each drop of breast milk

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<sup>9</sup> For more, see Dorota Żołądź-Strzelczyk, "Niemowność" — czyli początek życia człowieka: Opieka nad niemowlęciem i małym dzieckiem w Polsce w czasach nowożytnych', *Studia Gdańskie*, 28, 2011, pp. 325–48.

<sup>10</sup> Angélique Marguerite Le Boursier Du Coudray, *Abrégé de l'art des accouchements*, Paris, 1759, p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> Scèveole de Saint-Marthe's 1580 poem (Latin edition) was published for the first time in French in 1698 as *La Manière de nourrir les enfants à la mamelle*. P. M. Dunn, 'Scevole de Ste Marthe of France (1536–1623) and *The Paedotrophia*', *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 67, 1992, 4 (Spec. no.), pp. 468–69.

<sup>12</sup> Agnieszka Jakuboszczak, 'Matka — mamka — guwernantka: Kobięce role w procesie wychowawczym w świetle *Encyclopédie* Diderota i d'Alemberta', in *Guwerner — preceptor — nauczyciel: Szkice z historii edukacji w Polsce i Europie Zachodniej (XVII–XIX w.)*, ed. Agnieszka Jakuboszczak, Adam Kucharski and Agnieszka Wieczorek, Toruń, 2022, pp. 189–202.

flowing into the girl's mouth will teach me this rule whereby she should love for the other, making sure that if I saw the slightest alterations in her for this reason, I would give her up for her to get better nourishment' (p. 361). We could venture to say that in the mentality of this noblewoman breastfeeding was one of her priorities; she made such a choice consciously and believed that in this way she was building a bond between herself and her child; the decision may have even been an expression of her affection for her daughter. There were numerous factors that could discourage noblewomen from deciding to breastfeed and persevering in this, as can be clearly seen in the contents of herbals or calendars. Transferring feeding duties from the mother to a wet nurse enabled the woman to provide the best nourishment, that is breast milk (there was a consensus on its qualities) for the child. At the same time, it gave mothers the possibility to decide to stop breastfeeding. Since the Reformation breastfeeding had taken on a new dimension — from 'sacred' (the Virgin Mary nursing Jesus) to 'natural', enabling women to maintain a humoral balance thanks to the exchange of fluids between the mother and the infant.

Słaby's research indicates that building a mother-child relationship was a lifelong process. Being daughters themselves, women became mothers after giving birth. They became anxious about the health and lives of their children, and wanted to provide an appropriate education for them to help them in pursuing their careers and maintaining (improving) their social position and financial situation (this included arranging marriages). With time the nature of this relationship changed. Feelings, hopes and expectations were sometimes transferred by women from their own daughters and sons to their offspring. The period when children grew up and became independent coincided with a difficult time for mothers, the menopause, regarded as a limit time as well, but omitted by Słaby from her research. The end of the reproductive stage in a woman's life meant the loss of the chance to experience motherhood biologically; what remained was the emotional dimension of the relationship with children, which we can observe when a woman becomes a grandmother.

It would not be correct to say that motherhood was accompanied only by difficult emotions like fear or anxiety. Nevertheless, these seem to be the ones most often recorded in the sources. In the perspective of Słaby's research, for the mother the death of her adult child represented suffering that was difficult to come to terms with. The author has also showed how the offspring responded to the passing of their mother. In the context of the analysed material the death of the mother was an opportunity for the adult orphaned child to recognize and name the bond that existed between him or her and the deceased (p. 607). The final period of the mother's life is marked by a kind of reversal of dependence — the child, who was dependent on her in the womb and immediately after birth, becomes independent, while the mother often becomes (as a result of legal and customary actions) dependent on him or her.

It should be stressed that the vast majority of women wanted to achieve the universally respected status of mother, but this did not change the fact that

pregnancy remained a personal and intimate experience. Giving birth to a large number of viable children (especially sons) ensured respect and protection from husbands or relatives. Moreover, for women, as well as for eighteenth-century physicians and thinkers, being pregnant played an important biological and social role.<sup>13</sup> That century was marked by a series of changes affecting the experience of motherhood and the pregnancy leading up to it. The perception of the family, the relationship between a man and a woman as well as the relationship with the children evolved, and, most importantly, there began the process of medicalization of birth. Undeniably interesting and innovative, and filling a gap in Polish historiography, Słaby's book certainly inspires reflection on women's experience of their gender, their discovery of the body and the definition of the role assigned to them by the world of the Saxon-era nobility.

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Michał E. Nowakowski, *Ambasador na rozdrożu: Świat wartości w poradnikach dyplomatycznych Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej oraz ich europejski kontekst* [An Ambassador at a Crossroads: The World of Values in Diplomatic Handbooks of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and their European Context], Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2023 (Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Literatury Wczesnonowożytnej, 10), 236 pp.

Early modern writings on diplomatic missions, taking various forms and having roots dating back to at least the Middle Ages, have in recent years become the subject of research yielding some interesting conclusions. Dante Fedele, author of an important new study of the 'birth' of diplomacy, sees this varied literature as the result of a dialectical relationship between theory and practice, in which the authors — exploring the legal, ethical and political problems associated with the function of an envoy — seek to discursively problematize the experiences stemming from the increasingly intense diplomatic contacts in the early modern era.<sup>1</sup> Michał E. Nowakowski, who openly admits to being inspired by Fedele, seems to fit in with his research concerning this renewed interest in writing about diplomacy. His declared main objective is to analyse the 'world of values' (the term is not specified; its content is suggested by the research problems selected) expressed in four Polish 'diplomatic handbooks' —

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<sup>13</sup> Emmanuelle Berthiaud, 'Le vécu de la grossesse aux XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles en France', *Histoire, médecine et santé*, 2, 2012, pp. 93–108.

<sup>1</sup> Dante Fedele, *Naissance de la diplomatie moderne (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles): L'ambassadeur au croisement du droit, de l'éthique et de la politique*, Baden-Baden, 2017, pp. 27–30.



three from the turn of the seventeenth century by Krzysztof Warszawicki (*De legato et legatione*), Ławryn Piaseczyński and Stanisław Miński, and one from the late eighteenth century by Tadeusz Morski — and to compare them with Western European writings on envoys and embassies. Nowakowski is a literary scholar and describes the chosen method of his study as interdisciplinary. Methodologically, he first follows the call to move ‘away from the artificial separation of historical and literary-historical research and to look at early modern writings [...] in both literary-rhetorical and historical-social contexts’, and declares himself inspired by *New Diplomatic History* (pp. 26–27).

The author is a young researcher — a doctoral student at the Catholic University of Lublin — and the book under review is the result of a research project funded under the ‘Diamond Grant’ programme. Nowakowski is the author of three articles on the issues raised in the book, two of which are included in it, either in large part or in full.<sup>2</sup>

The book is comprised of an extensive introduction (entitled ‘Ad lectorem’, pp. 9–45) with a rather chaotic structure; four chapters; a conclusion; a bibliography; and an index of ‘historical figures’, not including — unfortunately — the authors of the literature. Selected as the main source base, the four works by the above-mentioned Polish authors, although well known in the literature, have not been the subject of in-depth study for a long time. This remark applies in particular to Morski’s work which, although mentioned in various compilations, with a few exceptions has not been studied extensively. This corpus of sources is additionally enriched by other authors associated with Poland: Jakub Przyłuski, Jan Nixdorff, and Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro. Nowakowski’s intention, as indicated in the title, is to embed the works of Polish authors in the European tradition of writings on diplomacy, which is why the source base is supplemented, for comparative purposes, by *de legatis et legationibus* treatises, and later those on *l’art de négocier*. Works of this *sui generis* genre, relatively well identified in previous research, were written from the fifteenth century until at least the mid-eighteenth century, and were increasingly published in print. They functioned within the framework of the European *respublica litteraria*, intertextually linked to each other. Nowakowski has selected those treatises that might have been known, also indirectly, to the Polish authors; that is, in the cases of Warszawicki, Piaseczyński and Miński, primarily pieces by Bernard de Rosier, Étienne Dolet, Conrad Braun, Torquato Tasso, Alberico Gentili and Ottaviano Maggi; and in the case of Morski — works by Abraham de Wicquefort, François de Callières and Gabriel Bonnot de Mably.

<sup>2</sup> The articles included in the book: Michał Nowakowski, ‘Polskie poradniki dyplomatyczne przełomu XVI i XVII wieku wobec dylematu “wola władcy czy dobro wspólne”’, *pl.it / rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi*, 12, 2021, pp. 163–79; idem, ‘Poradnik dyplomatyczny Tadeusza Morskiego na tle europejskich poprzedników’, *RHum*, 71, 2023, 1, pp. 107–21. See also idem, ‘How to Survive in the Renaissance Tatar Crimea: Ławryn Piaseczyński’s Ambassador’s Duties in the Context of His Unique Diplomatic Experiences’, *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 53, 2022, 1, pp. 277–305.



Nowakowski points to the ‘specificity of the rather heterogenous source material’ which is the subject of the analysis (p. 26). In order to characterize it, the author has decided to compare it to early modern handbooks like the popular agronomic treatises by Jakub Kazimierz Haur. Similar to them, the ‘diplomatic handbooks’ — addressed however, to potential envoys — were marked by their usefulness and normativity (pp. 9, 19). Examples of such writings would include Piaseczyński’s *Powinności poselskie extra regnum* from around 1603, as well as Miński’s *Sposób odprawowania poselstwa, ceremonii, zachowania posłowi z obedyjencyją króla jego mości do Rzymu*, from around 1605–07. Both works remained in manuscript form for a long time and were not published in print until the turn of the twentieth century. Nowakowski rightly highlights the different nature of Warszewicki’s *De legato et legatione*, first published in 1595, which he places in the Renaissance tradition of erudite, parenthetical ‘mirrors’ showing ideal portraits of a ruler, a courtier, or a diplomat; and of Morski’s 1792 *Mysli o potrzebie i sposobie przysposobienia młodzieży do służby dyplomatycznej w Polsce*, a work drawing on Enlightenment concepts. These works, too, combine erudition with useful tips and references to diplomatic practice.

Comparing diplomatic writings to Haur-type handbook literature is a misguided idea. Of the four authors, Warszewicki and Morski obviously fit into the tradition of the treatises on ambassadors indicated above. When it comes to Piaseczyński’s and Miński’s works, which contain brief practical tips concerning, respectively, embassies to the Crimean khan and the pope, Nowakowski rightly assumes that they were addressed to their authors’ potential successors as envoys. When considering their form, it may be important to note the chancellery experience of both authors, as both were associated with the crown chancellery: Piaseczyński as a royal secretary, and Miński as vice-chancellor. Since the late Middle Ages European chancelleries had produced diplomatic aids for secretaries and future envoys in the form of experienced diplomats’ instructions for their successors or, according to the term coined by Bruno Figliuolo and Francesco Senatore, scholars studying the best-known Italian case, ‘*promemoria di comportamento*’. These chancellery products often circulated in manuscripts, and from the end of the sixteenth century were printed in compendia such as the famous *Tesoro politico* series, which featured instructions for envoys, accounts, and other diplomatic writings. The 1601 volume included the well-known *Ricordi in generale per ministri di principi presso ad altri principi*, a work similar in form to those by the Polish authors. Perhaps *Ricordi* (or similar memoranda) was a work known to Miński, an expert on Italian culture who wrote his piece while staying in Naples for a course of treatment. The problem of the form, as well as the purpose of the Polish authors’ works, in any case requires further research. Nowakowski has not formulated any new proposals in this respect, and his inclusion of Piaseczyński’s and Miński’s works is unconvincing. Given the comparative ambitions of the book under review, it may be worth expanding the source base to include such diplomatic aids produced by chancelleries. The only piece — in the form of *promemoria di*

*comportamento* — used cursorily by Nowakowski is Niccolo Machiavelli's 1522 letter to Raffaello Girolami, the Florentine ambassador to Emperor Charles V.<sup>3</sup>

The first three chapters are devoted to a problem-oriented analysis of the works by Warszewicki, Piaseczyński and Miński. All are constructed according to a similar pattern: exemplifications taken from European treatises on ambassadors are followed by a presentation of the position of the Polish authors, and the whole ends with a summary. In the first chapter Nowakowski seeks to place the authors' thought in the context of the pan-European reflections on the state and its political system in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (defining its poles as republican and 'pro-absolutist'). The author examines, on the one hand, the 'sovereign of the diplomats', and on the other — the extent of envoys' autonomy in relation to the instructions received, especially with respect to 'unethical orders'. With regard to the first issue, most authors would point to the ruler, less often to the republic. The Poles too emphasized the connection with the king — the problem of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's contribution to the creation of diplomacy seems to be invisible. Returning to the comments made in the previous paragraph, it should be pointed out that while in the case of Warszewicki's treatise — given the monarchical views attributed to him in the literature — such a stance can be viewed as a conscious choice; in the case of Piaseczyński and Miński, as Nowakowski notes, it stemmed more from the practical purpose of their works, that is providing advice for envoys going to Crimea or Rome. Exaggerated, therefore, are the first chapter's conclusions about the emergence from Piaseczyński's handbook of a figure of the king 'resembling more an authoritarian, majestic absolutist ruler rather than the figure [...] of the ruler as a partner, typical of the nobility's consciousness' (p. 90); or that 'the Polish political consciousness of that era was best reflected by Miński, who, although he also acted out of concern for the king, did so more from the position of a partner than a servant' (p. 91). The same reservation can be expressed — to a greater or lesser extent — with regard to Nowakowski's analysis of these authors throughout the book under review. Nowakowski presents in an interesting manner the scope of envoys' autonomy in the works by the authors of interest to him, convincingly pointing to the links between Warszewicki and the thought of his predecessors, especially Braun and Tasso; that is, the call for instructions to be followed exactly, but for 'disgraceful orders' to be firmly refused (preferably

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<sup>3</sup> For more on Machiavelli's memorandum in the context of the chancellery tradition indicated above, see Bruno Figliuolo, Francesco Senatore, 'Per un ritratto del buon ambasciatore: regole di comportamento e profilo dell'inviato negli scritti di Diomede Carafa, Niccolò Machiavelli e Francesco Guicciardini', in *De l'ambassadeur: Les écrits relatifs à l'ambassadeur et à l'art de négocier du Moyen Âge au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Stefano Andretta, Stéphane Péquignot and Jean-Claude Waquet, Rome, 2015, pp. 163–85. Nowakowski included the article in the bibliography, but did not use its contents. On *Tesoro politico* and *Ricordi*, see Francesco Senatore, 'Uno mundo de carta': *Forme e strutture della diplomazia sforzesca*, Naples, 1998, pp. 242–43, 441–45.

before accepting a mission), and for envoys to strive first and foremost for peace between rulers.

In the second chapter the author focuses on two – considered by him to be key – functions of the ambassador: representation and negotiation. He characterizes the first of these – in keeping with the topos appearing in treatises on ambassadors since the sixteenth century – using the metaphor of theatre. In doing so, he highlights the performative nature of the role of the envoy personifying his principal. Following the analysed authors, Nowakowski cites various aspects of the representative function: the criteria for selecting a potential diplomat (birth, appearance, ability); the significance of rhetorical skills and practical advice in this regard; and the question of the desirable lavishness of embassies (as Nowakowski points out, the Polish authors advised restraint in this respect). Nowakowski goes on to discuss issues relating to ceremony and precedence – associated with the need to care for the dignity of the ruler represented – and related practical advice on, for example, social life, challenges posed by the different customs (and even ‘cultural formation’ in Moscow and Bakhchysarai, for example) at the receiving court, as well as on giving and receiving gifts. In the case of the negotiating role of diplomats, Nowakowski also cites a number of examples from the sources used concerning the desired behaviour of envoys during negotiations (for example, restraint, and not showing emotion) and ‘negotiating strategies’.

In the third chapter the author discusses ‘the means an envoy could use during a mission, especially their ethical and practical dimensions’ (p. 146). The discussion is organized around the concepts of *dissimulatio* – dissimulation, not revealing the truth; and *simulatio* – pretending, deceiving. As Nowakowski points out, the first attitude (which can take the form of, for example, reticence, taciturnity) was widely accepted; while the second was rejected for ethical reasons and its frequent fruitlessness, both by Western European authors and by Warszewicki. The rest of the chapter deals with the ethical and practical issues associated with collecting information.

The last chapter contains an interesting (albeit concise) analysis of Tadeusz Morski’s diplomatic thought. On the one hand the author returns to the research questions formulated earlier; and on the other he places the book by the Polish envoy in Madrid in the context of Enlightenment philosophy and diplomatic treatises popular in the eighteenth century (Wicquefort, Callières, Mably). Outlining Morski’s vision, the author points, on the one hand, to his conceptualization of international relations as a system, the structure of which determines relations between states; and on the other hand to his belief in the agency of the professional diplomat who, when properly educated and prepared, would be able to influence the course of events.

In conclusion, the author deserves credit for his efforts in analysing multilingual sources. What is also impressive is the extensive bibliography of the literature. However, the present writer is of the opinion that the potential of the literature has not been fully exploited in the conceptualization of the research

problems and analysis of the source base, as is demonstrated by the selection and characterization of the latter. The ‘world of values’, referred to in the title and constituting the main focus of the analysis, remains unclear as well. Nevertheless, the book under review can certainly be a starting point for further research into diplomatic writings in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In addition, its author’s future works should be worthy of interest.

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Dorota Wiśniewska, *Salony, ‘salonierki’, polityka: Studium porównawcze Paryża i Warszawy w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku* [Salons, ‘Salonnières’, Politics: A Comparative Study of Paris and Warsaw in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century], Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2023 (Monografie Fundacji na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej [Monographs of the Foundation for Polish Science]), 455 pp.

Dorota Wiśniewska’s book is a revised and expanded edition of her doctoral dissertation, prepared within the framework of a joint partnership agreement (*cotutelle*) between the University of Wrocław and the University of Paris-Saclay (2014–20). Using the activities of two *salonnières* — the Parisian Marie de Vichy Chamrond, also known as the Marquise du Deffand, and the Varsovian Maria Karolina Radziwiłłowa, *née* Lubomirska — as examples, the author compares salons, salon culture and related correspondence in the second half of the eighteenth century. In her study, Wiśniewska demonstrates how the salon (a closed, stationary setting) was transforming into a new kind of space that served to break up the early modern *face-to-face* society, which could be described as a *salon de lettres*.<sup>1</sup> Using ‘grounded theory’, a method derived from the social sciences, the author boldly theorizes based on numerous sources. She brilliantly rises to the challenge of grounded theory, not only classifying and organizing the material she has collected, but also evaluating and interpreting it. Wiśniewska has analysed unpublished correspondence found in archives in France, Poland, Ukraine and Switzerland. She did not ignore printed sources while doing so. The work can be classified in various fields, such as the study of women’s mentality, the study of elites or political culture. The comparison of the two heroines and their social and political relations offers an interdisciplinary approach that has not yet been explored in Poland. The author draws on the experience of French researchers of salon culture. The works of

<sup>1</sup> Here I refer to the German notion of *Anwesenheitsgesellschaft* according to Rudolf Schlögl, see Rudolf Schlögl, ‘Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Zeitschrift für Historische Sozialwissenschaft*, 34, 2008, pp. 155–224.

Antoine Lilti and the studies on Madame du Deffand by Benedetta Craveri and Inès Murat,<sup>2</sup> for example, have been of fundamental importance in the academic world, which Wiśniewska cites.

The author rightly notes that research on salon culture in Poland and Warsaw is rather limited. Nevertheless, Władysław Konopczyński wrote about women's domination of Poland in his posthumous work *Kiedy nami rządziły kobiety* (London, 1960). Several works<sup>3</sup> were published later, but in fact there is no monograph devoted to salons hosted by women or to Varsovian salons of the eighteenth century. One of the protagonists of the book, Maria Radziwiłłowa, remained in the shadow of other important Warsaw salon hostesses, such as Barbara Urszula Sanguszkowa, Maria Amalia Mniszchowa, *née* Brühl, and the Queen without a crown — Elżbieta Sieniawska, *née* Lubomirska. Regarding the use of contemporary literature in the work under review, there are two major reservations. Firstly, there is sometimes a lack of in-depth exploration of the content of the studies.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the author omits one of the most important books on the history of Warsaw and does not take sufficient account of other important works in this field.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, I believe that Jacek Staszewski's writings could serve to change Wiśniewska's critical approach to the Saxon era.<sup>6</sup> And while she is keen to include French- and English-language studies, she omits recognized works written in German.<sup>7</sup>

The book is divided into two main parts. The first consists of four chapters divided into nine subsections and a summary. The second consists of five chapters and sixteen subsections. Each of the main sections concludes with a comprehensive summary, while each chapter separately discusses the dynamics of the Paris salon and the Warsaw salon. The study concludes with an appendix containing a list of all the Varsovian salon patrons, a list of sources and literature, a summary in English, and an index of persons.

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<sup>2</sup> Antoine Lilti, *Le monde des salons: Sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 2005; Benedetta Craveri, *Madame du Deffand et son monde*, Paris, 1987; Inès Murat, *Madame du Deffand, 1696–1780: La lettre et l'esprit*, Paris, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> For example: Bożena Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klienci: Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich*, Warsaw, 2020; *Słynne kobiety w Rzeczypospolitej XVIII wieku*, ed. Agata Roćko and Magdalena Górka, Warsaw, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> On page 38, the author cites purported critical comments made by Jędrzej Kitowicz regarding the architecture of Warsaw in Saxon times. And although Wiśniewska references the work of Anna Berdecka and Irena Turnau (in the context of a different problem), she fails to note that they are of a different opinion than Kitowicz. Anna Berdecka and Irena Turnau, *Życie codzienne w Warszawie okresu oświecenia*, Warsaw, 1969, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> *Warszawa w latach 1526–1795*, ed. Maria Bogucka et al., Warsaw, 1984; Marian M. Drozdowski, Andrzej Zahorski, *Historia Warszawy*, Warsaw, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Jacek Staszewski, *August III Sas*, Wrocław, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> The work *Europa — ein Salon? Beiträge zur Internationalität des literarischen Salons*, ed. Roberto Simanowski, Horst Turk and Thomas Schmidt, Göttingen, 1999; *Höfe — Salons — Akademien: Kulturtransfer und Gender im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Gesa Stedman and Margarete Zimmermann, Hildesheim, 2007 — although written in German — is interesting in the context of the subject matter touched upon.

The monograph opens with an aptly chosen quotation from Joachim Christoph Friedrich Schulz's description of his trip to Warsaw during the Four-Year Sejm. The author then turns to methodology, tracing the development of previous research on salon culture in France and Poland based on a Habermasian understanding of the public sphere. She shows that it was not only men who participated in it. In fact, salons offered women the opportunity to be active in the public sphere. At the same time, she defines the salon as a sphere that creates a semi-open parallel society in which the boundaries of what can be said are wider than in the official public sphere. At the same time, she emphasizes its exclusivity, that is the limits of its supposed openness, especially in relation to the bourgeoisie.

The choice of salons in Warsaw and Paris was justified by the role these cities played in their respective countries. Comparing Paris and Warsaw based on their metropolitan function certainly makes sense, and Warsaw was the closest equivalent to Paris in Poland at the time. However, Paris was not only much larger in terms of population, but also played a more important role in the global context. Nevertheless, the comparison is worth making because Paris was a reference point for the whole of Europe, for Warsaw and for public life during the period under study. The analyses cover the period from 1764, the beginning of the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, to 1792, a period marked by the increasing radicalization of the French Revolution and the outbreak of the Polish–Russian War, which led to the decline of salon culture in Paris and Warsaw, respectively. But while the end date of these examinations is easy to justify, the same cannot be said for the starting date. In fact, there is evidence that a lively public life existed in Warsaw before 1764 — a fact occasionally acknowledged by the author herself, who writes that the first Varsovian salon was opened in 1738, during the reign of Augustus III. The lack of continuity between the so-called Saxon and Stanisław eras and the restriction of research to the second half of the eighteenth century are phenomena that affect numerous works. The periodization of the work therefore fits into a certain established pattern of thought.<sup>8</sup>

In the first part (pp. 27–146), Wiśniewska takes the reader on a visit to the open houses of the closed, mainly aristocratic society that existed during the reign of Stanisław August. She describes the functioning of salons in France and Poland and the similarities between them. The second chapter defines what a salon was, how it came into being, and what terms were used to describe and distinguish 'salons' from other forms of social life. The third provides an overview of the many different salons in Paris and Warsaw. It describes the hosts, the limits of

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<sup>8</sup> A general overview devoted to the periodization of the eighteenth century has been provided by Jacek Staszewski, 'Die Polnische Adelsrepublik im 18. Jahrhundert im Licht neuerer Forschungen', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 52, 2003, 4, pp. 572–83. For the history of Warsaw — Radziwiłłowa's city-cum-salon — a division into two periods has been suggested: 1655–1720 and 1720–95, which would correspond to Jacek Staszewski's proposal of adopting 1717, the year of the Silent Sejm, as the beginning of the eighteenth century, *Warszawa w latach 1526–1795*, p. 578.

each salon's activity during the summer months, which were usually spent in the countryside, the spatial infrastructure of the parties and, finally, the participants. In the fourth section, the researcher characterizes the various activities of the salon-goers: what was said, played, danced, listened to and read. The connections between the salons and the royal court and their political role are discussed. This chapter shows that the ideal of salon culture developed in Paris, the favourite destination of every Grand Tour, including those from Poland. From the banks of the Seine, the cultural practices of the salon spread throughout the contemporary world, reaching the Vistula in a modified form. The social specificity of the Polish Commonwealth (dominated by the *szlachta*) played an important role in the adaptation of Western models. Fundamental differences can be found not only at the level of the political constitution (the Polish Republic of the *szlachta* and the French *ancien régime* — absolutism), but also in the individual styles of power exercised by different rulers (the Polish king — a salon-goer, while the French ruler partied in the suburbs of Versailles and shunned the salons). The salon was rightly portrayed as a centre for the dissemination of news, including false news, and as the cradle of various fashions, or as a place for the lively development of theatre, literature and music. The historical narrative in this part of the work is done with admirable taste. However, I would have liked to see a more sympathetic view of the culture-forming function of the Warsaw bourgeoisie, to which the author denies any significant role — except for the bankers Piotr Fergusson Tepper and Piotr Blank, who, thanks to their financial resources, adopted the social patterns of the Polish *szlachta*. The research also points to the importance of the bourgeois printers Michael Gröll and Lorenz Christoph Mizler de Kolof (both of German origin) in promoting Polish literature without the necessity to engage in salon life.<sup>9</sup> As far as Warsaw is concerned, the thesis of the culture-forming role of the salons is of course valid, but it would have to be supplemented by taking into account the participation of the bourgeoisie in this process. The first part concludes with a successful, concise summary chapter.

The second part (pp. 147–383) presents two *case studies* of *salonnières* from a micro-perspective. The first chapter of the second part begins with an overview of the sources, mainly the extensive correspondence between Madame du Deffand and Maria Radziwiłłowa. Their well-preserved letters formed the basis for the selection of the Polish protagonist in particular. It is through this correspondence that the author aims to shed light on the mentality of these two 'marginalized women'.<sup>10</sup> However, because of the duo's

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<sup>9</sup> For example: Peter Collmer, *Verwaltete Vielfalt: Die königlichen Tafelgüter in Polen-Litauen, 1697-1763*, Stuttgart, 2022, p. 84, or Ewa Tomicka-Krumrey, 'Die Gelehrsamkeit und das Buchwesen', *Dresdner Hefte*, 50, 1997, pp. 27–34, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> The author is said to have drawn inspiration from Natalie Zemon Davis, who in *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* has brought together the biographies of three women: Glikl bas Judah Leib, Marie de l'Incarnation and Maria Sibylla Merian.



backgrounds, it is difficult to describe them as ‘women (existing) on the margins’. Moreover, considering the extensive scholarship on du Deffand, it is, in my view, questionable to speak of her as a ‘marginalized’ person. The sixth chapter justifies the choice of two heroines based on their similar backgrounds and their arrival in a large city. In the correspondence analysed, the author skilfully traces each woman’s network of connections — networks formed through family ties, political interests or simply the presence of interesting personalities in their respective worlds. The categorization of the correspondents of the two protagonists seems a little unclear. A separate subsection refers to ‘friends’, but it is not entirely clear how this concept is to be understood, as Wiśniewska makes no further reference to the familiar discourse on *amicitiae*. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the term ‘acquaintances’ appears later in the book. In the seventh chapter, the author turns to activities that were conditioned by the gender roles of the time. Several surprising themes emerge. Both women are portrayed as self-confident protagonists who knew how to represent both family and political interests. They sought to achieve these goals primarily through their interpersonal skills, which constantly opened new doors and provided them and their male favourites with specific sources of income. The author thus reverses the classic notion of gender roles.

The flow of information, opinion-forming processes and the sometimes strange logic of the eighteenth century are discussed in chapter eight. In addition to the newspapers, both women placed great importance on the spoken word of their confidants. The impact of political events, such as the First Partition of the Polish Commonwealth, on the views of the two ladies, has been impressively illustrated. Wiśniewska’s study presents two women who had well-established opinions and sometimes expressed them more or less openly. The final chapter deals with the political autostereotypes of the two women. Both saw themselves as capable and responsible social actors, and thus as *women* citizens, which reflects not only the mentality of women, but also the political mentality of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in general. At the end of this section, the author points out the biggest difference between the protagonists, namely the idea of the duo’s political abilities and their international connections — Paris was a cosmopolitan city, but Warsaw to a much lesser extent.

The book is a pleasant read. Quotations translated into Polish have been skilfully woven into the text, making it easier to read. Original extracts from the sources are given in the footnotes. The examples are well chosen and underline the author’s theses and arguments. Furthermore, the chapters are well constructed and ordered, giving the work a logical structure. The text is well edited and the occasional spelling mistakes are not significant. All this makes the book accessible to non-academic readers. Nevertheless, a slightly more critical approach to the sources and the use of a greater number of studies (especially Polish) would sometimes have helped to highlight certain aspects of the issues under discussion.

From two biographies that both harmonize and contrast with each other, the author has skilfully created a nuanced picture of self-confident social actors in their contemporary political environment. Gender hierarchies were not an obstacle for them; on the contrary, their official powerlessness in the political arena favoured their unofficial power as grey eminences. Although Maria Radziwiłł did not have the right to vote in the Sejm, she took part in its deliberations as an observer and had confidants among the deputies whom she was able to influence.

The work does not claim to be a synthesis of the salon culture of Paris and Warsaw. Nevertheless, the author does not so much reproduce the existing state of knowledge as contradict certain narratives, deconstruct the open house, show the limits of hospitality and point out the obstacles to becoming part of an exclusive, privileged society. At the same time, she clearly challenges the assumption that the salons promoted progressive and democratic ideas. And it is this focused look at two salons that distinguishes Wiśniewska's work. All this makes her book a work of international importance — for the history of salon culture, politics and, above all, women in early modern France and Poland. At the same time, it demonstrates the urgent need for a comprehensive study of women's salons in eighteenth-century Poland; perhaps this will be Dorota Wiśniewska's next challenge.

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Aleksandra Oniszczyk, *Pod presją nowoczesności: Władze Księstwa Warszawskiego wobec Żydów* [Under the Pressure of Modernity: The Authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw vis-à-vis the Jews], Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2021, 462 pp.

The history of the Jewish population living in the Polish lands has hitherto been the subject of numerous scholarly studies. This also applies to the period of the Duchy of Warsaw, in which context it is sufficient to mention the works of eminent historians such as Waclaw Tokarz, Szymon Askenaze and Jakub Szacki. Moreover, for numerous other researchers, the history of the Duchy of Warsaw was only a prelude to the broader changes in many aspects of life in the nineteenth century. For decades, Artur Eisenbach was the undisputed authority in this field, with his works analysing, for example, the emancipation of Jews in Poland and the question of granting equal rights to Jews in the Kingdom of Poland. However, given the richness of the historiography, one cannot help but feel that Aleksandra Oniszczyk's book is unlike any other. The monograph under review is, in fact, the first attempt at a comprehensive discussion of the relations between the authorities and the Jewish population

against the broader background of modernization and the tensions brought on by disputes over different visions of modernity.

In her scholarly activity, in addition to the methodology used in the study of socio-political history, Aleksandra Oniszczyk has more than once drawn on the rich legacy of the legal historian's workshop. She has already discussed various aspects of the theory and practice of state administration in previously published articles. The book in question is a thoroughly refined version of the doctoral dissertation defended by the author in 2016 under the title 'Władze Księstwa Warszawskiego wobec Żydów: debata, ustawodawstwo, praktyka' (The Authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Jews: Debate, Legislation, Practice). This is significant insofar as we can find elements characteristic of this type of scholarly work in the monograph under review, particularly its layout. The structure of the introduction is fully synchronized with the standard model of academic papers; in it, the author outlines the current state of research, the source base and research problems and proceeds to explain her decisions regarding the composition of the work and presents her comments concerning the citation of sources. Particularly noteworthy is a passage on the interpretative possibilities of the concepts of modernization and modernity that underpinned the methodology of the work (pp. 36–41). The modernization projects adopted in the Duchy of Warsaw with regard to the centralization of power, the bureaucratization of the state and the unification of law became the point of departure for a comprehensive presentation of the policy of the Duchy's authorities towards Jews, and the classification of the creators of this policy. The author correctly points out the heterogeneity of the approaches taken to the problem in question by the various decision-making circles in the state. Often, they placed the demands of current politics above the full implementation of the modernization project — an approach not necessarily accompanied by conservative worldview tendencies on the part of reform opponents.

The layout of the book is clear and well thought out. As noted earlier, the author explained her motivations and research assumptions for the work in the introduction. The main body of the text consists of five chapters divided into subchapters, often broken down into further, still smaller text sections. The author's adoption of such an approach has significantly increased the clarity of the text and positively impacted the structure of the work. In addition, readers who are acquainted with the history of the Duchy of Warsaw can easily omit sections devoted to, for example, an outline of the history and functioning of this Napoleonic Polish quasi-state, which, however, will doubtless prove indispensable to those who are less familiar with the subject.

The first chapter of the book introduces those unacquainted with the history of the law and the political system of the Duchy of Warsaw to the most critical bodies of government, the competences of officials at each level, the specificity of functioning of government as such, and the reception of the administration in society. At this point of her work, the author has demonstrated that modern mechanisms, including the principle of egalitarianism, were introduced to the

state's bureaucratic apparatus at many levels. The preoccupation of the authorities with ensuring that the inhabitants of the Duchy of Warsaw believed in the fairness and legality of the action of the authorities of the newly formed state, among other things, led to the implementation of a coherent approach to individual petitions addressed to various offices of government, which also included representatives of the Jewish communities. A side-effect of building a positive relationship between the administration and the citizenry was empowering Jews in new areas of activity, thus allowing them to realize their distinctive aspirations. The very presence of Jews in the latest public courts — both as defendants and plaintiffs — heralded social change. Notably, the courts, like the administrative offices, provided a relatively neutral space for Christian-Jewish relations, which had previously been impossible.

The core of the work is the four remaining chapters, which deal with the most frequently discussed and legally regulated areas of Jewish life. The systematicity and consistency evident in the structure of these chapters are particularly noteworthy, for, considering the significant number of borrowings of existing legal provisions effected by the authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw, the author has provided each chapter with introductory notes. In them, she has focused primarily on acquainting the reader with the legal order of the pre-partition Polish Commonwealth, the Austrian partition, and the Prussian partition, which were the primary sources of these borrowings. In the second chapter, Aleksandra Oniszczyk also included the French model (pp. 121–25) as the primary reference point for the country that determined the direction of change in Europe. The author was equally consistent in presenting the solutions adopted in the Duchy for the generality of the population, using this as a backdrop to ascertain the extent to which the legal situation of the Jews differed in theory and practice. Here, the author has aptly portrayed the authorities' comprehensively discriminatory approach to the issue of the suspension of the civil rights of Jews in 1808 for a period of ten years, rightly pointing out, however, that this was not a continuation of earlier thinking. Indeed, a new rationale emerged in this area, one based on emphasizing that the main problem in relations between Christians and Jews was not religious dissimilarity *per se*. The differences between the Jewish community and the rest of society began to be perceived more in the field of civilization. This outlook was often accompanied by the belief of the Polish elites in their cultural superiority. Combined with the Enlightened mode of thinking, this led to the commencement of a process whereby the government introduced new laws to become the basis for transforming the state and its citizens in the spirit of a 'modern society'.

The third chapter focuses the reader's attention on the various taxes and dues collected from the Jewish population in the Duchy of Warsaw. The author, in line with earlier findings of historiography, has pointed out the inequality of the tax burden borne by Jews compared to other residents of the Duchy. The aspiration to achieve the uniform taxation of the entire population was in

apparent contradiction with the introduction of a series of laws which continued to define the fiscal situation of Jews differently. A valuable observation made by the author, which complements the outline of the legal and economic situation of Jews, concerns the fact that tax inequality could only become apparent after the formulation of uniform and assumedly universal principles. Following this line of thought, the comparative analysis of decrees from the pre-partition period and those introduced during the Duchy of Warsaw seems unjustified in the said approach due to the risk of arriving at misleading conclusions.

Chapter four addresses the issue of being free to choose one's residence and the possibility of acquiring real estate. At the same time, the problems proposed by the author were a point of departure for the broader matter of presenting the dilemmas faced by the authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw in connection with their perception of the place of Jews in the public area. Decisions taken in this regard at the central level indicated that the aim was to distinguish a separate space for followers of Judaism. The constraints on the selection of place of residence, best visible in Warsaw, were also related by the author to several other urban centres, such as Cracow, Kazimierz, Wschowa, Płock, Maków and Przasnysz. A thorough analysis of the sources has allowed the author to submit conclusions contrary to the findings hitherto put forward by various researchers, among them Artur Eisenbach and Janusz Szczepański. The reviewed work rightly points out that the creation of districts-quarters for the Jewish population was neither common nor indeed a permanent element of the policies pursued by the Duchy's authorities, as the authors suggested. Examining the functioning of the historical *de non tolerandis Judaeis* privileges has provided exciting conclusions. Although the privileges ceased to have a legal effect because of the introduction of the new order, at the same time, they were not officially abolished. This sometimes led to bizarre situations where discriminatory decrees from the pre-partition era continued to be considered by certain local authorities and residents while often being opposed by the central authorities. It is noteworthy that it was not the decision-makers from the period of the Duchy of Warsaw but their successors in the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland that recognized the former privileges concerning bans on the settlement of Jews in certain districts of cities as valid, thus turning the problem of the settlement of followers of Judaism into an issue very frequently raised by applicants in the chambers and offices of the Kingdom.

In the fifth chapter, the author focuses on the varying approaches of the authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw towards the Jewish population depending on their employment in different sectors of the economy. In the first order, she draws attention to two diametrically distinct attitudes displayed by officials. On the one hand, followers of Judaism were openly given preferential treatment in numerous instances, for example, when they victualled the armed forces. On the other hand, representatives of various levels of the administration consistently combatted the activity of Jews in different areas of business activity, such as the monopoly sale of alcohol. These insights were complemented by

a valuable observation — that in most other instances, the Jewish population was subject to the same rules as Christians. Such an approach justifies repeating the question to which successive generations of researchers have persistently returned — namely, that concerning the role of Jews in the economy. When looking at the numerous examples of the involvement of Jewish residents in its various sectors, it comes as no surprise to see the author argue that their impact on the functioning of the state was considerable. It is sufficient to mention — to give but a few examples — their predominance in managing the flow of goods through commerce, handling orders for the military, or collecting taxes on government contracts. More interesting in this part of the publication are the observations made concerning the contact of Jews with the rest of the Duchy's population. This was because the professional sphere was the most frequent and intensive contact source. Both groups, functioning in the same space, had, over the decades, worked out a specific model of mutual relations and practices of everyday life, which could hardly have been influenced by any of the changes introduced either by the Napoleonic Code or the Enlightened projects pushed through by the authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw.

The most essential elements of the author's argument, collected in the conclusion, deserve to be highlighted. The new legal and organizational solutions that reached the Duchy of Warsaw and the Napoleonic Code clashed with the practice of functioning and customs originating from the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The different patterns of behaviour resulted in pluralism and inconsistency in the legal and administrative formulas adopted by the authorities. In her deliberations, the author has gone further than previous researchers, who, in their conclusions, have mostly limited themselves to stating the failure of the proclaimed demand of assuring the Jewish population equality of rights with other citizens of the Duchy. Here, the author should be credited for going beyond this observation and strongly differentiating her statement about government offices' various levels of functioning. Aleksandra Oniszczyk has clearly indicated the complexity of the determinants which impacted the policies pursued by the authorities while at the same time proving that the postulates for the introduction of 'modern solutions' were not relegated to a pipe dream — the changes, although not always spectacular or complete, were most noticeable mainly in the various fields of activity of the administration. Equally praiseworthy is her treatment of issues that have hitherto not been more widely touched upon in historiography, first and foremost, regarding the evolution of the functioning of the kahal as a quasi-state. The large degree of autonomy inherited from the pre-partition era persisted in the early years of the Duchy of Warsaw in executing tasks characteristic of the state administration — collecting taxes, introducing new legal provisions, taking censuses, and cooperating against crime. Over time, however, the intermediary role of the kahal between Jewish residents and the state underwent a gradual reduction as bureaucratic mechanisms developed apace and contacts between individuals

and the public authorities expanded. The progressive limiting of powers and competences continued in the early years of the Kingdom of Poland, ultimately leading to the abolition of the institution of the *kahal* in 1822. Finally, it is worth mentioning the author's valuable comments with regard to women's history. Despite women's vestigial presence in the state's political life, the attempt to break through the silence of sources must be appreciated. Although Jewish women rarely appear in the examined documents, this has not prevented the author from making valuable conclusions, such as the uniform application of legal norms — regardless of sex — in court disputes.

Aleksandra Oniszczyk's book brings together the legacies of many generations of researchers. She has drawn on the rich output of both Polish and foreign historiography in her work, supplementing it with her findings. Where she saw fit, she engaged in polemics, matter-of-factly substantiating her opinions on issues of contention with the existing findings of historiography. What is noteworthy is that the author moves very freely through a broad body of archival sources of diverse types. In addition, her legal education has allowed her to successfully integrate legal acts created by state authorities with the documentation produced by officials at various levels. The fonds of correspondence conducted by ministerial, departmental and municipal clerks with different administrative bodies and all kinds of stakeholders allowed the author to supplement the publication with valuable data on drafting and implementing new administrative orders. It is also worth mentioning here the meticulous process of reconstructing the essence of the problems and issues that plagued both petitioners and officials. Given the deficiencies of the extant source base, an invaluable achievement of the present work is the description of numerous cases, often solely based on letters written in the office's chancelleries, without any knowledge of the outcome of these cases. The hundreds of documents used by the author made the effective use of analogies and comparisons possible to augment and at least indicate possible decisions and resolutions. Another essential item in the source base used to write the reviewed work was archival materials originating from the Jewish commune and court records. The abundant source base gathered during meticulously thought-out preliminary research was supplemented with journalistic pamphlets, memoirs, several newspaper titles and Jewish communal materials.

It is a thankless task for a reviewer to criticize a book so solidly and carefully written — also because its style can be described as reader-friendly. In this respect, the only 'flaw' of the work is its reliability and the nature of its subject matter, which, due to the use of a large number of archival materials of an administrative nature, causes it to take the form of a discussion of documents and correspondence between officials at various levels of the administrative authorities of the Duchy of Warsaw — which may not always be palatable to the reader. However, this can hardly be viewed as a charge against the author, as abandoning these aspects would have deprived the work of the examples, thus potentially reducing its substantive value. Aleksandra Oniszczyk should undoubtedly



be recognized for her immense effort in preparing the dissertation. The author has indubitably brought together findings scattered throughout historiography, verifying hitherto functioning theses utilizing exhaustive preliminary research of sources and directing her deliberations towards new research postulates. The work is noteworthy for its systematic structure, which ensures that it is accessible to both experienced historians and budding enthusiasts of the history of Jews in the Duchy of Warsaw.

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