

Е. ЛУКОВСКИ, Х. ЗАВАДСКИ. КРАТКАЯ ИСТОРИЯ ПОЛЬШИ

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Автор рецензирует второе издание обобщающей работы Е. Луковского и Х. Завадского по истории Польши. По его мнению, это лучшая однотомная книга, в которой рассматривается развитие Польши с древних времен до наших дней.

Ключевые слова: история Польши, разделы Польши, Вторая Республика, Третья Республика.

J. Lukowski, H. Zawadzki. A Concise History of Poland. Cambridge Concise Histories. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Second Edition. 2006. 371 p.

Cambridge Concise Histories have acquired a reputation as a reliable, accessible series of national histories. Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki's *A Concise History of Poland* is the first in the series to be co-authored. It was enthusiastically received by most reviewers following its initial publication in 2001. They succeeded in providing a clear narrative of Poland's political history. This is no mean achievement considering that the existence of the state – hitherto considered almost co-terminous with the nation – was interrupted by the partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795. In their introduction the authors speak of two 'Polands' – before 1795 and after 1918, connected by a long, stateless cocoon of a nineteenth century. The caesura of 1795 is also the point at which Jerzy Lukowski hands on the pen to Hubert Zawadzki.

Lukowski and Zawadzki are well aware of the profound otherness of the Polish past. They take the reader into a lost world of the multi-confessional, multi-ethnic Jagiellonian realms (1386-1572) and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1795) – and explored its long and colourful twilight until its destruction by Nazi and Soviet occupations during Second World War (1939-45), which in turn were followed by four and a half decades of rule by Soviet-sponsored Communists. Lukowski and Zawadzki do not eulogize that lost world. In particular, they do not idealize the oft-mythologized Polish cultural, social, economic and political hegemony in the eastern borderlands or *kresy*, which survived the tsars, but not Lenin, Trotskii and Stalin. Nor do they neglect the central Polish lands. The authors stress the continuities as well as the discontinuities of Polish history, and understandably emphasize whatever can be identified as the most distinctly 'Polish' part of the story at any given time. Theirs, however, is not a martyrological or hagiographical book. Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian national perspectives receive due consideration alongside Polish ones.

In the first edition, Lukowski's political narrative of the centuries to 1795 was at times too pared-down, too austere. Zawadzki covered economic, social and cultural transformations more expansively. Cambridge University Press has wisely permitted the authors an additional 54 pages in the second edition. Lukowski's three chapters now contain much new material, primarily on social and economic developments, which has been well blended into the old. The story these chapters tell has become more coherent. Lukowski has an eye for folly and absurdity, and he stresses the fragile foundations of late medieval and early modern expansion. Zawadzki's four chapters in the first edition have become five in the second. The last deals in a commendably fair-minded way with the period 1989-2005.

Lukowski's specialist field is the later eighteenth century; Zawadzki's is the early nineteenth. As one might expect, the sections on these decades are especially illuminating. Lukowski explains how Polish culture and politics were being transformed for the better at a time when the state had ceased to be able to defend itself from its predatory neighbours.



Russia, Prussia and Austria snuffed out the danger, but not before the refuelled torch of Polish culture and learning had been passed on to a brilliant generation of writers and pedagogues. Zawadzki is particularly cogent on the opportunities presented by the encouragement given to this efflorescence by Tsar Alexander I. By the end of his reign, more inhabitants of the Russian Empire could read and write in Polish than in Russian.

On the whole, Zawadzki is keener to write of Polish successes than Lukowski – there may be an element of balancing history itself here, as Poland was proportionately stronger in earlier centuries. Zawadzki gives a not uncritical, but generally positive assessment of the achievement of the Second Republic (1918-39) in welding together lands ruled in three different ways, and which had taken different paths of social, economic and political development. His account of the Second World War conveys the enormity of suffering without hyperbole. He does not shrink from confronting controversial questions such as the diverse responses of Christian Poles to the Holocaust of Polish Jews. The successes of the Communist period are largely those of a society that drew the worst fangs from a regime imposed from without.

Zawadzki also emphasizes the efforts made since 1989 by many Poles to repair their relations with those other nations, with whom they once shared the lands of the Commonwealth: especially Jews, Ukrainians and Lithuanians. Looking back, the caesura of 1989 now seems to have brought a happy end to more than two centuries of national struggle for independence and even survival. The significance of Poland's entry into the European Union is rightly stressed in the second edition; any third edition will no doubt highlight the migration and tourism that have brought Poles into contact with Western Europe, and Western Europeans into contact with Poles, as never before.

The book is well written and attractively designed. In their contrasting styles, both authors are masters of the English language; Lukowski has pungency, Zawadzki grace. 58 well-chosen illustrations are accompanied by apt and informative captions. In sum, *A Concise History of Poland* is the best one-volume history of Poland in any language.

J. LUKOWSKI, H. ZAWADZKI. A CONCISE HISTORY OF POLAND

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The author reviews the second edition of the book “Concise History of Poland” by E. Lukowski and H. Zawadzki. He comes to conclusion that it is “the best one-volume history of Poland in any language”.

Key words: history of Poland, partitions of Poland, Second Republic, Third Republic.