Obituary

Henryk Łowmiański (1898-1984)

One of the world's foremost authorities on the early history of the Slavonic and Baltic peoples, Professor Henryk Łowmiański, died on 4 September 1984, in Poznań, Poland.

Łowmiański was born in Dauguda, in central Lithuania, on 22 August 1898. He studied at the universities in Kiev and Wilno, obtaining his doctorate in history from Stefan Batory University in Wilno in 1924. After a year of post-graduate studies at the University of Paris, supported by a Polish Ministry of Education stipend, Łowmiański returned to Wilno where he held a junior faculty position at the university and worked in the Wilno city archives. In 1934 Łowmiański was appointed to the Chair of East European History, a position he occupied until 1939, when the Polish university was closed down by the Lithuanian authorities. During the war Professor Łowmiański returned to employment in the Wilno archives, where his work was devoted primarily to the study of the early social and economic history of the Lithuanian state. His most important works of that period were his fundamental, two-volume, study of the origins of Lithuanian society and state (*Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*, Wilno, 1931-2), and a treatise on the social and economic basis of the Jagiellonian Union (*Uwagi w sprawie podłoża społecznego i gospodarczego Unii Jagiellońskiej*, Wilno, 1934).

Professor Łowmiański resumed his academic work in 1945 at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. After World War II he concentrated mainly on the early history of Poland and of the Eastern Slavs, largely leaving Lithuanian history to his students whose work he inspired and directed. His books on the economic developments associated with the formation of Slavonic states (*Podstawy gospodarcze formowania się państw słowiańskich*, Warsaw, 1953) and about the role of the Normans in the same process (*Zagadnienie roli Normanów w genezie państw słowiańskich*, Warsaw, 1957) provided a solid foundation for the most important scholarly contribution of his lifetime, a multi-volume study of the origins of the Polish state (*Początki Polski*, Warsaw, 1963-). The sixth, and final, volume of this work, already in print at the time of the author's death, will soon be released.

In addition to several major books mentioned above, Professor Łowmiański's scholarly bibliography includes some 300 items. His important contributions to Byelorussian historiography, aside from his numerous studies devoted to various aspects of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, include a history of the Navahrudak region prior to 1795 (*Rys historyczny województwa nowogródzkiego w jego dzisiejszych granicach [do r. 1795]*, Wilno, 1935) and two studies of the commerce and economic structure of the city of Mahiloŭ in the 16th century ('Handel Mohylewa w XVI w.', *Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby*, Cracow, 1938, t. 2, 517-47; 'Struktura gospodarcza Mohylewa w czasach pomiaru włócznie', *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, VIII [1939], z. 1. 37-91). A few months before Professor Łowmiański's death the first volume of his selected works, devoted to topics in Lithuanian and Byelorussian history, appeared (*Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, Poznań, 1983). The continuing timeliness and scholarly value of these works are a tribute to the great historian.

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