Richard Butterwick, *The Polish Revolution and the Catholic Church, 1788–1792: A Political History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012, 369 p. ISBN 978-0199-250-33-2

Richard Butterwick, *Polska rewolucja a Kościół Katolicki (1788–1792)*, tr. M. Ugniewski, Kraków: ARCANA, 2012, 988 p. ISBN 978-8360-940-22-8

In 2012, two monographs by Richard Butterwick, in English and Polish, appeared. Although the titles are the same, the publications differ significantly in their scope. As the author himself admitted in the introduction to the Polish version of the monograph, the editors at Oxford University Press asked him to shorten the text of the book as much as possible, and adapt it to the needs of English-language readers. The full text of the monograph was translated and published at the initiative of the Museum of Polish History, in cooperation with the author (p.14). In addition, in the introductory part of the English-language version, Butterwick notes that the condensed book is essentially aimed at those ‘who are not specialists in Polish or Polish-Lithuanian history’, and suggests to those wanting to look more deeply into the problem to seek answers in the Polish version of the monograph (p. vi).

Although the chronological limits of the subject of both editions are the period of the Four-Year Sejm, the author begins the Polish version with the election of King Stanisław Augustus in 1764, and ends with the reforms of hostile confederations, short accounts of the 1794 uprising, and an epilogue in which the fate of the state and its major political players is presented. The English version of the book, from beginning to end, concentrates on the work of the Four-Year Sejm, and ends with a shorter version of the epilogue, covering both the 1792–1793 confederations and the 1794 uprising, and the turns in the fates of the main political figures. In both versions, the author pays more attention to the events of the Four-Year Sejm before the 3 May Constitution. About a sixth of the Polish book, and less than a third of the English version, is devoted to the period of the adoption of the 3 May Constitution and its entry into force, which was a period of more than a year. This decision is rather questionable, as this was the zenith of the author’s ‘Polish revolution’. The hierarchs of the Church, along with the noblemen and gentry, created a new Republic, became involved in the activities of the state administration, and actively participated in the meetings of the Sejm. Were these events not so significant?

Both versions of the monograph, using the words of the Polish vice chancellor Hugo Kołłątaj and other contemporaries, Butterwick entitles the same: 'The Polish Revolution and the Catholic Church in 1788–1792'. In the introductory part of the book, the author discusses the title of the book. However, the discussion shows that namely the period of the 3 May Constitution best fits his expressed views that the state of Poland and Lithuania more often began to be called Poland (p. 23). Yet the Polish-Lithuanian state, later also called 'the Republic', 'the States of the Republic', and 'common homeland' (not only in the text of the Constitution, but also in the acts of the Sejm in 1791–1792), did not withdraw from the political debate and laws on the question of the political status of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the joint state. Alongside the nation of boyars, there also existed a concept of two nations. Proof of this is the 'Mutual Pledge of the Two Nations', approved by the Sejm on 20 October 1791, on the initiative of Lithuanian envoys and with the mediation of King Stanisław Augustus, and the titles of the common central institutions (e.g. the Commission of the Treasury of Both Nations). These trends were expressed even more fiercely in the years of the GDL General Confederation in 1792, the Grodno Sejm in 1793, and in the uprising in 1794. On one hand, of course, the title chosen by the author should not provoke additional passions, especially since the author often mentions in particular 'the Polish-Lithuanian noblemen', the 'state of Poland-Lithuania', and supports the statements by historians that the 3 May Constitution did not repeal the GDL's separation from the Kingdom of Poland (p. 716), and notes in the introduction that 'it should be clear that the use of the term *revolution of Poland* does not have the aim of recognising the heritage of the Four-Year Sejm only for the current ethnic Polish nation and to take it away from other nations whose ancestors also lived in the *Republic*. Regardless of the ruler, there lived one nation of boyars citizens, who in the 18th century were usually called "Poles", the *Republic* [my emphasis] [also] was the home and homeland of most people and the new nations'. However, admitting that in the 18th century, 'Republic' and 'Poland' were essentially synonymous, and the 'meaning of the words both of *Poland* and *Lithuania* changed dramatically from the 18th century', perhaps one should have avoided the title 'Poland', which in the 20th century acquired an entirely different meaning, and relied on other, even new creations (e.g. the Polish-Lithuanian state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). The chosen title itself implies 'the dependency of the heritage', because not everyone will read carefully not only the introduction, but all of the nearly one thousand pages of the book. And yet, in the last sentences, reviewing the crucial changes in the 19th and 20th centuries and mentioning John Paul II, the author

seems to confirm that he is following the Polish tradition, in which one sees broken continuity (p. 331, s. 898).

Based on the works of Smolenski and Kądziała¹, 'traditionally' the position of Marshal Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha of the GDL Confederation in the decisive moments of July 1792 was downgraded (p. 862). Even though he wavered (in the English version this episode is omitted, p. 318), he, as well as the main creators of the 'Polish Revolution', clearly not lacking the author's obvious sympathies, protested at the king's decision to take the oath to the Targowica Confederation, and left for the West, but returned to the Republic when the 1794 uprising began, in which he participated. I think that these examples demonstrate the author's involuntary provisions because still the claims of Smolenski and Kądziała are not identical. The book highlights the role of Sapieha in the discussions on the future of cities in April 1791. The author discovers him in the proceedings of the Sejm (pp. 704, 708), because the role of the Marshal of the GDL Confederation is essentially omitted in Polish historiography, the importance of his position on 3 May is emphasized (p. 714). However, at the end of the book, it is stated that after departing from the Republic, Sapieha chose a dissolute lifestyle, which accelerated his premature death in 1798. This point reminded me of the conscious irony encountered in the writing of Norman Davies, that the author's provision about a person's character and value impose upon the reader: e.g. Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki allegedly withdrew from the world, 'probably having eaten too many pickled cucumbers'². I am convinced that the complex political biography of Sapieha is still waiting for a historian.

It would seem that in the vortex of the discussion on the rights of non-Catholics, while debating the project of the cities law, room should be found for the words of the Breslau envoy Tomasz Wawrzecki³ and the Orsha envoy Ludwik Gutakowski in the Sejm on 18 April 1791, so that the differences between the Kingdom and the Grand Duchy should be revealed more: 'As an envoy of Lithuania, I have to say that we do not have around here [other] than dissidents, and the cities of our [GDL] province have suffered the most, [therefore] if we only patronise some by the same way we will block the road for others?'⁴ Maybe these examples would also better explain the position of Sapieha in the discussions, and would also help to answer the question why in the cities law room was

¹ W. Smoleński, *Ostatni rok sejmu Wielkiego* (Kraków, 1897); Ł. Kądziała, Sapieha Kazimierz Nestor h. Lis (1757–1798), *PSB*, t. XXXV/1, zesz. 144 (Warsaw–Kraków, 1994), pp. 52–67.

² N. Davies, *Dievo žaislas: Lenkijos istorija*, t. 1 (Vilnius, 1998), p. 506.

³ AGAD, Archiwum Sejmu Czteroletniego, t. XVII, fos 292–292a; L. Glemža, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės miestų sąjūdis 1789–1792 metais* (Kaunas, 2010), p. 73.

⁴ AGAD, Archiwum Sejmu Czteroletniego, t. XVII, fo. 284.

not found for the patronage of Catholics. After all, not only in the Grand Duchy, but in part of the lands of the Kingdom (e.g. the current territory of Ukraine) non-Catholics comprised a majority.

The author's avoidance of unfavourable details describing the fates of the heroes of the monograph, the opponents of the reforms, and not sparing bitter words for the 1794 rebels, apparently does not show his intentions to revise the provisions entrenched in historiography. Butterwick begins the epilogue with the words: 'The Kosciuszko rebellion brought death, disrepute, honor, grief and collapse.' The question also arises, on the basis of what tradition is the police institution that functioned in the Republic in the second half of the 18th century written in quotation marks? Even if the concepts of the 18th century police and the 19th century police differed, the police functions of the 19th to 21st century are the consequence of the 18th-century reforms.

Butterwick's study is a significant contribution to research on the reform of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 18th century, the spread of Enlightenment ideas, the international situation, the work of the Sejm, the world-view of the gentry, education, the clergy, and the organisation of the Church. The results and the author's insights and completed analysis (especially of the instructions of the *sejmiks*, the discussions in the Sejm) will obviously assist other research. I think that today Butterwick's study is one of the most solid and most important investigations of the Four-Year Sejm. In writing observations of a critical nature, I have wanted to draw attention to the fact that the two parts of the joint Republic, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, did not lose their differences during the whole duration of their existence, which perhaps should have been emphasised more. Moreover, I think that it is important not only to non-Poles, whose 'ancestors lived in' the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In summary the author very consistently describes the relationship between the development of the modernising state and the vision of the Church, and defines the connection between the conceptions of the Enlightenment epoch with the dictated needs of the state. Comparisons between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and other countries in Europe highlight its specifics in Europe. The questions and versions raised by Butterwick provoke additional studies, because the influence of the Church included many spheres of political-social life (e.g. censorship, cooperation between Church institutions and the state administration, the attitude to the revolution in France, the Uniate question, etc). Even though the Catholic Church is at the centre of the monograph, questions regarding other religious faiths and communities in the reform years are also touched on. The especially consistent description of the work of the Sejm is associated with factors in the international situation and domestic politics which had an effect on the nature of the debate and the Sejm's decisions. Even though

the reproach is still heard that the 3 May Constitution was ‘mediaeval’ because, unlike the first constitution of France, it proclaimed Catholicism the supreme religion of the Republic, after reading the monograph, this fact will look a bit different. Butterwick claims that before ethnic nations existed, the Catholic Faith at the end of the 18th century strengthened the civil foundations of the Republic, and the supporters of reform intentionally walked on this path. Their thoughts, according to the author, did not miss the ideals and values of the Enlightenment. The review of the role of the Church in the state (the introduction of taxes, the transfer to the state of part of the holdings of the Diocese of Krakow, etc) raised tensions with the Pope. Especially eloquent are the author’s comparisons between the Republic and the developments in France. The author’s attempt to supplement information and retrace the attitude of society towards the evolution of revolutionary France interested me. Although there are already works by historians, Butterwick, on the basis of sources, comes to the conclusion that the events in France were viewed with sympathy until the turn of 1790–1791, but later public opinion in the Republic and the paths of both countries separated, as the states, to put it in the author’s words, ‘did not stand still’ (pp. 277–280, pp. 817–824).⁵

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⁵ Cf.: H. Kocój, *Francja wobec sejmu wielkiego: zarys stosunków dyplomatycznych między Francją a Polską w latach 1788–1792* (Kraków, 2001); J. Michalski, ‘Stanisław August obserwatorem Rewolucji Francuskiej’, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 97, no. 1–2 (1990), pp. 45–60.