

Siewierski, T. (2016). *Marian Małowist i krąg jego uczniów. Z dziejów historiografii gospodarczej w Polsce*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, pp. 276 + illustrations.

First of all, a potential reader of the present review deserves a brief explanation from its author, in order to dispel any potential doubts that might have arisen from the very title of the reviewed volume. Such doubts could be expressed in the shape of the following question: why the book which, on the one hand, is a biography of a distinguished University of Warsaw historian Marian Małowist (1909-1988), and a sketch of the development of research from the field of economic history in Poland on the other, is being reviewed in the journal focused upon the reflection concerning broadly defined education of a contemporary man? Even though the publication under review here is indeed concerned with history understood as an academic discipline and with one of its luminaries, the careful inspection of Tomasz Siewierski's book title (born in 1985; he is a history graduate from the Catholic University of Lublin; the reviewed volume is based upon his doctoral thesis defended in January 2016 at the same University) indicates that among the subjects discussed in it, there are also Małowist's disciples. Therefore, a reader is faced with a text in-depth discussing his didactic and pedagogical experiences, that is matters tightly correlated with educational processes. What is more, Siewierski's central research question is: was there/is there a research school in Polish historiography, which could be described as Małowist's school?

In order to answer such a question, the author divided analyzed material into four parts. The first of them, entitled "Ocalony dla historii: Marian Małowist (1909-1988)" is a biographical one (it translates into English as 'Saved for history...'). In the opinion of the present reviewer three threads are dominant here. The first thread – it is rather obvious, as it is explicitly signalled in the chapter's title – concerns the Holocaust, as Małowist came from secular and assimilated Jewish family from the city of Łódź. It took enormous toll on his life. His wife, Maria Frydland, with whom he had lived in the Warsaw Ghetto, was taken to and murdered in Treblinka. Soon after learning that she was in one of the transports leaving from Umschlagplatz, Małowist was able to escape from the Ghetto to

the Aryan side. With the help from – among others – his fellow historians Stanisław Herbst and Witold Kula, he was able to survive until the end of war, hiding in the village of Jabłoń in the contemporary eastern Poland. The second thread is Małowist's perseverance and passion, characterizing his approach to the work of a historian. He was capable of sustaining those qualities even under the most difficult of circumstances. The final one touches upon Małowist's outstanding linguistic skills. Thanks to that capability, he was not only able to use foreign-language primary sources or literature, but to publish in major languages and maintain intense professional as well as personal contacts with distinguished foreign historians too, e.g. Fernand Braudel, Michael Postan or Eric J. Hobsbawm. That particular factor – of course, along with the highest quality of his academic output – contributed to Małowist's strong international reputation (one has to remember that such a high status was achieved by him during the times of communist rule in Poland; during that period, the ties between Polish and western academics were a lot less intense than today).

In the second chapter entitled “Badania naukowe Mariana Małowista na tle polskiej historiografii gospodarczej” (“Marian Małowist's research in the context of Polish economic historiography”), Siewierski offers a succinct analysis of main issues covered by Małowist in his research, against a broader background describing the evolution of the reflexion concerned with the economic history in Poland. It is here, where Małowist's academic versatility powerfully comes through (he was a specialist in the economic history of late Medieval and early Modern periods, among others focused upon such subjects as: trade in the Baltic region; trade in the Black Sea region; the history of crafts in Poland and Western Europe; trade contacts between Europe and Africa; the history of Portuguese colonial expansion; economic divisions between eastern and western Europe), together with a set of methodological positions, which was guiding his research throughout his academic career (what is simultaneously intriguing and paradoxical, Małowist – as Siewierski points out – had never been particularly fond of methodological considerations; e.g. see p. 114-115). For the sake of example, the following ones deserve to be singled out: interdisciplinary and comparative approach; the perspective of *longue durée*; integral understanding of history displayed in global – and thus not limited by political borders – approach to certain phenomena or structures.

Chapters three and four entitled “Pokolenia uczniów Mariana Małowista” (“The generations of Marian Małowist's disciples”) and “Szkoła historyczna Mariana Małowista” (“Marian Małowist's historical school”) are focused primarily upon the central research question mentioned above.

Through the profiles of Małowist's disciples Siewierski attempts at indicating in what way they were influenced by him. It needs to be stressed that he nurtured plenty of eminent Polish historians, for example Maria Bogucka, Bronisław Geremek, Krystyna Kersten, Jan Kieniewicz, Antoni Mączak, Henryk Samsonowicz, Michał Tymowski, Benedykt Zientara or Andrzej Wyrobisz. The reading of the reviewed volume leaves one with a strong impression, that such a high percentage of them among Małowist's students was not a product of sheer coincidence. The premise of his pedagogical success was foremostly the careful selection of seminar participants at both M.A. and Ph.D. levels (Małowist's second wife, the professor of ancient history, Iza Biezuńska-Małowist contributed to that process too; see p. 212) as well as the unique atmosphere created by him during them. Due to that special atmosphere and Małowist's very demanding approach, the students not only thoroughly learned the historian's craft or how to work systematically (he employed, and always preferred, the classic seminar method). Their "master" was also able to inspire them to learn new foreign languages (usually less obvious ones, e.g. Dutch or Swedish), to work as an effective research team, to skillfully direct their academic interests (usually towards new and thus not well-researched areas) or to support their efforts to establish their own contacts with foreign historians. He was shaping their characters and personalities too. It was not a minor or secondary thing as, for example, his disciples acted impeccably during – for Małowist personally very painful – anti-semitic campaign of March 1968. As a consequence, the graduates of his seminars were ambitious young academics, well-prepared to perform independent research work (also covering areas other than economic history), open towards the world and always ready for multi-dimensional dialogue with their foreign peers. What is important, almost all of his disciples (a prominent exception is Maria Bogucka), also after several decades, still had very fond memories of Małowist. Additionally, a significant number of them sustained a longstanding and intimate relations with him.

Can one state that, that indeed there was/is Małowist's school in Polish historiography? Siewierski has no doubts in that respect. In the light of a comprehensive and profoundly analyzed material, his conclusion does not rise any reservations. Among the main characteristics of Małowist's school, Siewierski mentions:

1. Readily identifiable bond uniting the disciples with their mentor (Siewierski does not hesitate to classify some of such relations as resembling a father and son bond) and disciples among themselves;

2. The set of general and common for the school representatives methodological assumptions, for example: openness towards comparative approaches and *longue durée* perspective;
3. Common evolutionary trait characterizing the development of academic interests of the most of Małowist's disciples, i.e. from economic history towards broadly defined history of culture;
4. The number of disciples.

As it was indicated above, the reviewed volume draws upon a comprehensive number of sources. What is particularly noticeable in that respect is the substantial amount of interviews conducted by the author with Małowist's disciples or the people who knew him, as well as the access he had gained to the private archives of such persons (above all that of Włodzimierz Lengauer). The illustrations provided at the end of the book constitute a valuable addition to the written material too (probably the most telling among them is the one on which Małowist exchanges a cordial handshake with Fernand Braudel). On the occasion of the present remarks concerning the sources used by Siewierski, it is worth to mention that one of the most important sources regarding the figure of Małowist (at the same time it is a unique autobiographical source) is his interview for "Estudios Latinoamericanos" academic journal. The prime mover behind that interview and one of its authors was professor Ryszard Stemplowski, who between 2010 and 2016 had been employed at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, that is the publisher of the present journal.

The reviewed book is not free of minor imperfections. For example on the p. 131 as well as in the index, the name of a prominent American female scholar Theda Skocpol is distorted (in Polish it is written twice in masculine form). In turn on p. 230 the attention is drawn to the lack of consistency in the numbering of successive points characterizing methodological features of Małowist's school (number four follows number one). Is it just an editorial mistake or actually two features are missing, which – if present – would additionally bolster the book's main thesis? Fortunately, such shortcomings are few and far between, so they do not jeopardize the logical structure of the author's argumentation or hinder the book's reception.

In 2009 Siewierski published in the biggest Polish daily "Gazeta Wyborcza" the article discussing Małowist's life. It was entitled "Małowist, historyk z Ligi Mistrzów" ("Małowist, a Champions League historian"). His important and timely book in a nuanced way proves that Małowist also as an academic teacher – to continue the metaphor from the universe

of sports – played among the elite. Thanks to that fact the reviewed volume should soon become a standard text not only for readers interested in economic history or the history of Polish intellectual life, but also for those who are interested in pedagogy or would like to know what does it take to be a very good teacher at the university level.

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