

durchaus gelungen, dass sie deren Einseitigkeit etwas verbirgt, indem sie sich nur auf sie konzentriert. Auch wenn in dieser Hinsicht klarstellende methodologische Reflexionen wünschenswert gewesen wären (und in einer eventuellen Neuauflage unbedingt nachgeholt werden sollten), wird dieses Buch aufgrund der in ihm dennoch geleisteten Übersichtsarbeit fester Bestandteil jeder Sammlung wesentlicher Forschungsliteratur zu Mitteleuropa und zum deutsch-tschechischen Verhältnis in Böhmen sein müssen.

Marburg

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**Lidia Jurek: Polish Risorgimento.** Visions of the Modern Polish Nation and Their Italian Foundations. Lang. Frankfurt am Main 2012. 417 S. ISBN 978-3-631-62401-2. (€ 68,95.)

Lidia Jurek's *Polish Risorgimento*, based on her thesis submitted to the EUI in 2010, is an ambitious, provocative and convincing new interpretation of the impact of the Italian national movement upon 19th century Polish elites. Drawing on the methodologies of transfer studies, J. ably demonstrates the importance of the Risorgimento in shaping Polish national discourse, opening up several new avenues for research in the field. The book makes numerous arguments, most importantly that the Italian national movement was interpreted and utilized in differing ways by various actors in the Polish debate, and that Polish perceptions underwent a major transformation as the political situation on the Italian peninsula developed. J. makes the claim that the ways in which the Risorgimento was perceived were vital in shaping the Polish elites' visions of their own nation.

In focusing on the broad array of Polish reactions, including negative ones, J. provides a much needed new impetus to the historiography of Italian-Polish relations, which has had a tendency to focus largely on positive aspects and the supposed fraternity of the two national struggles. She provides a welcome remedy to what she identifies as the 'selective nature and methodological imprecision' (p. 28) of research in this area through her investigation of the variety of Polish interpretations of the Risorgimento and the competing conceptions of Poland that were constructed around this foundation.

J.'s underlying argument is that the Risorgimento divided the Polish elite in its response, and as such she constructs her book around three major interpretations. Her first case study focuses on the democratic 'reformers', who were perhaps closest to the initial ideals of the Italian national movement and who saw in it a partner in a popular movement towards a new Europe of independent nations. She then goes on to explore the 'restorationist' liberal grouping centred around the Hôtel Lambert, for whom the legitimacy of the Polish nation correlated with Italian rights, and who sought to utilize the Risorgimento in strategic terms in order to establish the paramountcy of the principle of nationality. Finally, J. then moves on to investigate the largely negative perceptions held by the more conservative Polish elites for whom, she argues, the secular and anti-papal character of the Italian movement served to underline the Catholicity of the Poles. Across all three case studies she clearly demonstrates that the Risorgimento became one of the focal points for a transnational discussion and that the Polish elites sought to capitalize on this, making it a model from which both Polish supporters and opponents could borrow in order to reinforce their own particular national programmes.

The danger inherent in J.'s decision to focus on these three groupings is that it carries with it the risk of both oversimplifying the differences between these groups and downplaying the variety of responses within them, reducing each grouping to one particular response. This is a trap that she largely avoids, thanks to her nuanced argumentation, but she is not always entirely successful in this respect. The very fact that she chooses to focus on these three distinct groups implies that there were already pre-existing differences in their outlooks that served to shape the ways in which the Risorgimento was interpreted. This leads to the one major criticism of this work: Although it may be excusable, or even to an extent unavoidable given her research focus, J. does occasionally demonstrate a tendency to overstate the direct causal impact of the Risorgimento on Polish developments.

This can perhaps best be seen in relation to her third case study, that of the conservative and ultramontane groupings in Poland. Here, J. makes the bold statement that it was to a large extent the Polish response to the Risorgimento, and in particular to the divisions caused by the Roman Question concerning the role of the papacy in an independent Italy, that led to the development of the notion of the centrality of the Catholic Church in Polish national conceptions and to the growth of the concept of 'Pole-Catholic'.

Polish debates over the Roman Question were certainly very heated, and J. clearly demonstrates how the anti-papal nature of Italian unification led many conservative and clerically-minded Poles to view the Risorgimento as a kind of counterpoint to the model of independent nationhood they were seeking to achieve for Poland, with the insurrectionary Italian revolutionary contrasted with the patriotic and conscientious Catholic Pole. Furthermore, J. also convincingly shows that the success of the Risorgimento coincided with the decline of the Romantic revolutionary ideal in Polish nationalism and the onset of a more organic, positivist approach to nation-building, centred around the idea of 'work at the roots' and the desire to construct a broader sense of Polishness, based on Catholic values. However, she does occasionally run the risk of overstating the causal relationship between Polish interpretations of the Risorgimento and the particular programmes that the Polish elite were to follow. While she is certainly correct to claim that the Italian aspect has too often been overlooked, she does arguably assign to it too great an importance in the development of the 'Pole-Catholic'.

To be fair, J.'s primary intention is to focus on the symbolic significance of the Polish Risorgimento discourse as an *arena* for the discussion of Polish national visions, rather than to trace the transfer of concrete ideas and strategies, and she does speak in terms of investigating the impact of a 'Risorgimento ambience' (p. 32) upon the Polish discourse, but this sometimes has a tendency to become lost. In claiming that the Risorgimento 'reinforced or brought about' (p. 376) various national visions of Poland, she somewhat downplays the distinction between these two forms of impact. This occasional over-boldness, however, does not diminish from the real value of her book, which lies precisely in its opening up of such new avenues and questions for further investigation.

Ultimately, perhaps the major achievement of J.'s book is its outlining not only of the variety of Polish responses to the Risorgimento but also their changing nature. Across all three case studies she clearly demonstrates a growing Polish disillusionment with the movement as it approached and achieved its objectives of a unified, independent Italy. This disenchantment had different sources: 'reformers' were dismayed by the monarchical and state-led nature of unification, which seemed to betray the ideals of a fraternal popular revolutionary movement, both political and social in outlook; 'restorationist' liberals were dispirited by—and perhaps jealous of—the relatively seamless integration of the newly independent Italian state into the existing framework of 19th-century European diplomacy (not least in its alliance with Prussia and Russia), which abandoned Poland to a solitary and peripheral position; and conservative Polish elites found the anti-papal nature of Italian unification increasingly distasteful and disquieting. J. clearly succeeds in demonstrating that there was, across the board, a change in Polish perspectives, 'from an initial general enthusiasm towards an increasingly critical attitude' (p. 376).

This discussion of the Risorgimento as a 'fallen idol' is just one further respect in which J. offers a challenging new interpretation, capable of taking the research in this area in a promising new direction. Overall, this is a tremendously ambitious book which, through its carefully constructed and novel argumentation, succeeds in bringing new life to a fascinating field. It will prove to be of great interest not only to students of Polish-Italian relations but to all those with a broader interest in the Polish national movement in general.

Gießen

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