

Piotr Z. Pomianowski: Napoleonic Divorce Law in Poland (1808–1852). (Legal History Library, Bd. 57.) Brill Nijhoff. Leiden – Boston 2022. XX, 281 S., Ill. ISBN 978-90-04-50669-5. (€ 117,70.)

An examination of court records can deepen our understanding of the past on multiple levels: from the efficiency of local administration and the ability to execute law to social problems encountered by bygone societies. This is clearly visible in the newest book by Piotr Z. Pomianowski, assistant professor at the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw. In his research, he focuses, *inter alia*, on the Polish legal history of the nineteenth century, particularly on the reception of the Napoleonic Civil Code in the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1812) and its succeeding states. The main goal of his newest book is to challenge a popular opinion that French law and, more precisely, its provisions regarding divorce were merely a dead letter in the case of Poland. Another aim of the book is, in the author's words, "to establish to what degree the Polish courts and state officials observed the French law" (p. 250). Additionally, P. also seeks to present a coherent picture of Polish divorcees: their social status, confession, educational background, and reasons for breaking up with their partners; finally, he assesses the scale of this newly implemented phenomenon.

Besides the introduction and conclusions, the book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One traces the origins of divorce with a particular focus on both the Polish legal and historical context in which the Civil Code was introduced in the Duchy of Warsaw. Chapter Two presents the structure and workings of courts and officials involved in divorce proceedings. Chapter Three is, to some extent, a continuation of Chapter Two, as it deals with the course of divorce proceedings and premises conditioning divorce obtainment. Chapter Four refers extensively to the court records and attempts to indicate the main reasons for a decision to formally end a marriage. Chapter Five focuses on subsidiary matters following a decision of divorce, such as custody of children or punishment for adultery. Chapter Six is devoted to divorce statistics, followed by a short subchapter allocating them within the European context. The last chapter's aim is to provide characteristics of divorcees: their age, profession, educational background, etc.

The book covers 1808–1852 and, in geographical terms, Polish lands on which the French Civil Code was implemented. It is based on extensive research in national and municipal archives supplemented by research in ecclesiastical and private resources as well as online resources. Nonetheless, due to the deficiency of some archival resources (caused, among others, by the damage inflicted during World War II), the author was forced to reconstruct some data. To do so, he extensively used methods typical of the discipline of statistics.

In the reviewed book, P. convincingly shows that the provisions of the Napoleonic Code concerning divorce were not a dead letter in the Polish case. Thanks to his minutely conducted research, more than 900 examples of divorce are proven, and based on his statistical method, he is able to estimate the total number of divorces at ca. 2,000. He also demonstrates that the application of the Civil Code, except for some minor changes, was rather smooth, and decisions made by Polish courts and tribunals did not deviate from the original spirit of French law as such. P. also delivers an interesting and detailed portrayal of the people who divorced. Probably one of his most insightful theses is that in the researched period, legal awareness started to emerge among the third-estate representatives, including peasants, as—with time—they were increasingly eager to use the Code's provisions regarding divorce to their benefit.

It seems, however, that sometimes the author goes too deep into detail (for example, in the subchapters offering a detailed description of proceedings and functions of every clerk in a court). The book also leaves the reader hungry to learn more about situating the Polish case within the European context. Nonetheless, these minor remarks do not change the fact that the examined book is written in a well-organized and clear manner, with numerous diagrams that only make it easier to trace the author's conclusions. Its statistics, as well as

extensively cited extracts from the archival sources, are thought-provoking and, as such, can be very useful—not only for historians working on legal or Polish history, but also for those working on European social history, the history of emotions, or even the history of social problems (alcoholism, adultery, etc.).

In sum, P.'s study might be of interest to historians working on the nineteenth century, particularly on the Napoleonic period, but also to those interested in social and legal changes that took place in Europe through the modern period. It might also be useful for scholars working on the transfer of ideas between the East and the West and the workings of modern administration and bureaucracy. Most importantly, however, it sheds new light on social history and family life, particularly the problems encountered in daily life by modern families that were difficult for them to overcome. Finally, this book is highly recommendable for those who not only want to deepen their understanding of past societies but also for those interested in modern societies and their behaviors.

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Staged Otherness. Ethnic Shows in Central and Eastern Europe, 1850–1939. Hrsg. von Dagnosław Demski und Dominika Czarnecka. Central European University Press. Budapest u. a. 2021. IX, 449 S., Ill. ISBN 978-963-386-439-5. (€ 88,—)

„Völkerschauen“ oder *ethnographic/ethnic shows* avancierten in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jh. in vielen europäischen Städten zu einem Publikumsmagneten. In den *shows* wurden nicht nur außereuropäische Menschen ausgestellt, sondern es wurden mit ihnen auch kulturelle Aktivitäten wie Jagd, kriegerische Auseinandersetzungen oder künstlerische Darstellungen inszeniert, die allesamt als charakteristisch für die jeweiligen „Exoten“ angesehen wurden. Auch wenn sie von manchen *show*-Unternehmen wie Gefangene gehalten wurden und die Orte der Präsentationen meist in einem kolonialen *setting* struktureller Ungleichheit stattfanden, so konnten einige Nicht-Europäer doch zuweilen die Aufführungen mitgestalten und sogar zu wichtigen Geschäftspartnern aufsteigen.

Ethnic shows bilden im westlichen Europa schon seit über drei Jahrzehnten einen wichtigen Forschungsgegenstand in der Diskussion von Alterität und Kolonialismus. Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchungen haben mittlerweile auch im medialen Alltag Einzug gehalten, wie etwa verschiedene Fernsehdokumentationen¹ beweisen. Gleichwohl stehen solche Forschungen zu Mittel- und Osteuropa (im Folgenden in Anlehnung an den rezensierten Band abgekürzt als CEE) erst am Anfang. Der Aufarbeitung dieses Desiderats hat sich der vorliegende Sammelband verschrieben. Seine 13 Artikel resultieren aus Forschungen zu *ethnic shows*, deren Untersuchungsergebnisse sich in Ausstellungen, Konferenzen, Sonderveröffentlichungen und Einzelartikeln in Fachzeitschriften niedergeschlagen haben.

In der recht umfangreichen, tiefeschürfenden, aber auch recht thesenstarken Einführung geben die Hrsg. den Stand der Forschung wieder und beleuchten die von Westeuropa abweichenden Rahmenbedingungen der *ethnic shows* in CEE. Dabei betonen sie, wie auch viele Autor:innen im Sammelband, die großen Probleme bei der Quellenerschließung.

Der Band will zum einen Licht in die Eisenbahnrouen der *show*-Gruppen in CEE und in die teilweise parallel stattfindenden *shows* bringen. Festgestellt wurden neun solcher Reiserouten, deren Hochphase zwischen den 1870er-Jahren und dem Ende der 1920er-Jahre lag. Eine wichtige logistische Rolle kam den Häfen Hamburg und Triest sowie der Eisenbahn zu. Es wurden nicht nur Menschen ausgestellt, sondern auch Gegenstände und Tiere. Nach dem Ende der Aufführungsreisen wurden in der Regel die Tiere an Zoos verkauft und die Menschen in ihre Herkunftsländer zurückgeschickt.

¹ Vgl. z. B.: „Die Wilden“ in den Menschenzoos, Dokumentation von BRUNO VICTOR-PUJEBET und PASCAL BLANCHARD von 2017, Arte, 05.04.2022, oder: Menschenzoo: Das dunkle Erbe des Tierparks Hagenbeck, Bericht von ANNE RUPRECHT und MIRCO SEEKAMP, ARD, Panorama, 24.11.2022.