

Hanna Kozińska-Witt. *Krakau in Warschaus langem Schatten: Konkurrenzkämpfe in der polnischen Städtelandschaft 1900-1939*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008. 231 pp. EUR 35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-515-08666-0.

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Long Shadows and the Polish City

Hanna Kozińska-Witt's *Krakau in Warschaus langem Schatten* (Kraków in Warsaw's long shadow) is a study of Krakowians' discursive uses of Polish "invented traditions" from the era of Habsburg Galician autonomy to the start of World War II. The author investigates how and why Polonized elites who administrated the Kraków municipality and presided over its distinctive history of independence and regional autonomy referred to it so commonly as a Polish intellectual/cultural capital (in German *geistige Hauptstadt*, and in Polish *stolica duchowa*) during the expanding city's modernization and democratization.

Kozińska-Witt essentially argues that the establishment of Poland's Second Republic in 1919 and Józef Piłsudski's Warsaw-based military centralization of power in the late 1920s and 1930s presented a trying situation for Krakowian politicians, jurists, journalists, and other urban professionals. Reasons for this included Kraków's vaunted historical status, Habsburg legacy, fractious interwar politics, pluralistic media, and the mixed demography of Galicia and "Lesser Poland" (Małopolska). Having been the capital of Poland and seat of the Jagiellonian dynasty, a "free city" chartered by Vienna Congress signatories, and the center of the Grand Duchy in the era of partition, Kraków's nineteenth-century elites had long grown accustomed to autonomy and decentralization. By the twentieth century, Polish conservatives had begun to cooperate with Habsburg rulers and established a formidable bureaucracy. After the war and foundation of the Second Republic, Krakowian modernizers came to

view Warsaw abstractly as a commercial and cultural rival; Piłsudski's Polish Socialist Party (PPS) was relatively weak in the city, and his *sanacja* (cleansing) campaign after the 1926 coup increased suspicions of state centralization and militarization. Problems of modernization were evidenced in the Kraków press: interwar Warsaw became a nationalizing catalyst for the Krakowians' mythmaking about "historic Poland," especially as a pre-1914 consensus on "organic work" fractured into modern parties and coalitions, and then into economically neoliberal and neoconservative camps. Invariably, the Warsaw metropole accelerated an older and provincial patriotism, beginning with the conceit Krakowians had developed for their city's independent "civilization," its libertarianism, and its apparently advanced level of intellectual and cultural life.

In terms of scope and content, by tracing the evolution of Kraków's intellectual and political leadership from 1866 to 1939, Kozińska-Witt focuses on the city's intellectual history in Polish macrocosm. She frames Kraków's evolution in a somewhat conventional teleological and therefore political manner, through the developmental lens of Polish nation-state and late Habsburg history. The scope spans three eras: from Galician autonomy under the Habsburg monarchy (1867-1914) to the experience of World War I (1914-18) and the establishment of the Polish Second Republic (1919-39). Organizationally, the five chapters are divided into topical case studies. First, Kozińska-Witt examines Kraków's provin-

cial self-government, with elites' understanding of "civilization" under the laws and conditions of Galician autonomy after 1866. Second, she discusses the special electoral order of Kraków with its presidency, and the impact of Austrian- and Polish-initiated statutes on governance at federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Her third case study addresses how influential administrators in the newly incorporated Kraków center expanded and transformed the city from a Polish national memory space (*Erinnerungsort*) into an urban center and tourist destination. Next, she focuses on how Krakowian elites commemorated their "Polishness" in continuity across the three periods; and lastly on how and why Kraków's interwar press deployed tropes about Warsaw during the interwar period. The author's extensively documented research will appeal to German historians of East-Central Europe and urban historians alike.

The author's knowledge of Polish historiography is extensive and relevant to any urban study. She effectively shows the influences of the "Kraków historical school" (Józef Szujski, Stanisław Tarnowski, Stanisław Koźmian, Ludwik Wodzicki, Karol Estreicher, and Michał Bobrzyński) and conveys to a German audience recent Polish scholarship (by Andrzej Grabski, Aleksandra Lityńska, and Maciej Janowski) on the city's history, recent scholarship by locally based historians (Jan M. Małecki, Józef Buszko, Kazimierz Karolczak, Elżbieta Adamczyk, and Wojciech Bałus), and the important interdisciplinary work of the Kraków-based cultural historian Jacek Purchla. The author also applies new German research on discursive constructions and stereotypes in Polish political mythology (Hans Henning-Hahn, and Heidi Hein). To this historiographical point, she elucidates how generations of the "Kraków historical school" since at least the 1860s understood and packaged cooperation with the state, especially at the moment when Polish urban officials held the balance of shifting loyalties from Vienna in 1918 to Warsaw in 1919. Her retelling of how "organic work" formed a key part of Krakowians' mythmaking and figured into the evolution of Kraków's Polish media, academe, and city politics is very thoroughly researched.

Overall, Kozińska-Witt does a good job detailing the specifics of the changing outlooks of Kraków's urban and financial planners, and its bureaucratic leadership. In chapter 3, she profiles Juliusz Leo, one of Kraków's modern founding fathers, who governed from 1904 to the end of World War I. Leo embraced the functionality of an independent provincial bureaucracy in Kraków, in harmony with Austro-Hungarian rule and Poland's

libertarian tradition, as a surrogate for centralized state power. In chapter 5, the author shows that when Habsburg rulers visited the city prior to World War I, city organizers projected for insiders and visitors the official image of a "living monarchy" supportive of Poland and Kraków's historical freedoms. Likewise, architects of an "all-Polish" sacred mound for Piłsudski imagined a "Geist- König" in May 1935 and revived urban spaces in the royal tradition. Kozińska-Witt's original research on the fluidity of Polish memory is especially good here, and she refers to Hein's interesting work on the supplanting of the Tadeusz Kościuszko cult by the Piłsudski cult to support her point. She would also have benefited from Patrice Dabrowski's *Commemorating Poland* (2004) and the volume on *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (2006), edited by Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker.

One tradeoff of providing such a wealth of primary source research is that the book's organization is somewhat impressionistic. The chapters are self-standing and topically concentrated, more like essays, starting with Habsburg Galicia and ending with the demise of the Second Republic. The story line is one of continuity, but the world wars are happily skirted, and the leitmotif for each chapter (Warsaw vs. Kraków in discourse, centralization vs. decentralization, independence vs. autonomy) is very Polish centered and not always consistent. Despite the title, interurban competition does not run through every chapter; one must wait until the end for the Warsaw-Kraków conflict "im Doppelpack" to be studied (p. 192). Once the subject is covered in chapter 5, the discursive mapping does not yield surprises: that a rivalry developed, and that "Warsaw" writ large became a rhetorical proxy for the Polish central government and its policies—which, for better or worse, it was—is not altogether astonishing. For, as the historian shows elsewhere, the Krakowian media landscape had a pluralized yet fragile press that revolved around personalities and factions: Piłsudski's PPS, the Christian Democrats (*chadecja*), Roman Dmowski's National Democrats (*endecja*), and more. In general, modernization is not the answer to every question; it is not made clear what made Krakowians' construction of "Warsaw" different from other interurban competition in Poland.

The monograph's methodology is plainly empirical and historicist, although it borrows from nationalism studies. The author's intelligentsia-centered and Weberian top-down focus on state administration is warranted, but the cultural application of Eric Hobsbawm and a "construction-of-Mythos/Topos" paradigm is prob-

lematic. In accounts of national intelligentsias, nationalism studies such as those by Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson cannot always be transposed into a Polish canonical framework of historiography and intellectual history. As such, the power of intellectual constructors is far too easily overstated. Austro-Polish proponents of “organic work” stood Max Weber on his head; they viewed the municipal bureaucracy, in continuous form, as a natural and necessary expression of modern Poland, and as statist, they continued the Polish reform program of the late eighteenth century. Being members of the early modern *naród* (nation/people) and of aristocratic origin, they would hardly have viewed the nation as an “invention” or “construction” in the modernist theoretical way, though this is what the author’s approach implies. Something of a historical disconnect from the early modern political nation is evident here. In addition, regarding the terminology of modernization, actual Polish *modernism* does not make an appearance in this account of the city’s history, for the modernists advocated a different kind of historical rupture. If one omits a fin-de-siècle history of a “decadent” avant-garde in urban Kraków (“Young Poland” or *Młoda Polska*, etc.), traditional urban patriots get to document the city’s entire organic and institutional development. That the elders of interwar Kraków referred to Warsaw as the embodiment of modernity (Paris, anyone?) would be the ultimate provincial national conceit. In the monograph, what was problematic was not Warsaw’s “long shadow” alone, but a Polish traditional understanding of patriotism in search of an early modern or earlier “historical” license to make modern nation-statehood a reality.

To this end, Kozińska-Witt’s application of “discourse” is focused more on national production than reception. After the deconstruction of all the *nationalized* mythmaking is over, urban cultural anthropologists are left to conjecture who was “in” and “out” of the modern Krakowians’ heavily Polonized mythos and topos. Were the selected presidents of Kraków wholly representative of the city? In her conclusion, the author rightly points out how progressives before 1939 “invented” an “all-Polish” culture and history in the heart of Poland, one that would integrate populations and evoke a patriotic appreciation and (ultimately) assimilation. The book never indicates whether or not the “invented traditions” actually took root beyond the intelligentsia, given other factors, such as Soviet policy, the flourishing of Jewish intellectual life culture in interwar Poland, or “pacification” policies of the Polish state against its minorities. According to Kozińska-Witt, Polish administrators in Kraków

envisioned their city, nation, and state as *organically* Polish. Even if sources may be limited, one can take the “Kraków historical school” and its concentration on an “organic” or official intelligentsia too far; it is also the “people” who constitute the city.

Kozińska-Witt does provide some insight into urban administration, and the periodical press. In chapter 4, she points out that even the Social Democrats were cautious about seeming too “cosmopolitan” or “a-national” in Kraków. At risk of diminishing their shrunken base, they came out in support of nationally (one might say, fanatically) constituted Polish urban festivals. In chapter 2, she details the dogmatic “instrumentalization” of anti-Semitism by the *endecja* and their supporters during allegations of electoral fraud in Kraków in 1938, and also the sponsorship of a “Christian Nationalist Self-Government Front and Polish Catholic Bloc” in 1939 at the behest of Kraków’s city’s elected president, Bolesław Czuchajowski (p. 83). These paradoxes embedded in the modern city’s Habsburg-Polonized and Catholic establishment—its protection of religious spaces, its veneration of the free city’s “invented traditions,” its admixture of tolerance and intolerance, and its useful and yet often hazardous conjunction with Polish politics—is something the author could have developed further.

If Warsaw in the Krakowians’ discourse embodied modernity, decadence, and the “west,” industrialized, urbanized, and so on, what then was Kraków’s prewar and interwar “east”? Przemysł? Bielsko-Biała? Stanisławów? Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv? Probably civilization’s timeline for the Kraków constructors ended in western Galicia. Since Kozińska-Witt does not address the Ukrainian question beyond a cursory demographic overview, one is left to conclude that modern Ukrainian efforts at achieving nation-statehood had little impact on Kraków’s “western” or “world-historical” intellectual history. This seems doubtful, and rather Polonocentric. The long shadow in Kraków matched Warsaw’s: the indefatigable nineteenth-century Polish intellectual quarrel regarding the utility of revolt, of independence or autonomy. While the post-1863 Kraków “organic workers” went out of their way to reject an insurrectionist tradition embodied by the new Warsaw state and Piłsudski’s PPS, their piedmont principle dictated that anyone could assimilate to the legal and professional order of a modern Polish nation-state if its prototype was the Kraków model. In the old pedagogical style, citizens of Poland only needed to be taught a few unifying, compensatory foundation myths to get there.

In sum, Kozińska-Witt's Kraków in Warsaw's long shadow is informative and solidly documented, if slightly disappointing. She thoroughly shows Kraków's modernization and democratization, and how urban Krakowian elites entered into dialectic with Warsaw. In divining the city's historical continuities and intellectual history, old mythologies sometimes replaced the new, but by 1939 Krakowians paradoxically had become centrally located

Polish provincials. With its complex urban and institutional history of independence, autonomy, civil society, and pluralism, the population of Kraków was fatefully left not only in the hands of the Warsaw metropole, Poland's Second Republic, and the city's patriotic elders, but also amid the long shadows of their city's Polonized traditions.

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