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FRENCH HISTORIOGRAPHY AND OSKAR HALECKI¹

Abstract

Oskar Halecki's reception in French historiography is one of the interesting examples of difficulties in understanding Polish historical thought in France. As one of the leading authors of the concept of East-Central Europe in world historiography, a descendant of the Viennese aristocracy and an ambassador of Polish humanities in the League of Nations Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, he promoted the history of the countries of the region, considering their independent of Russia cultural specificity, deeply connected with the values of the Christian Europe. Meanwhile, after the Second World War, the socio-economically oriented historiography of "Annales" was gaining more and more popularity in Paris – and in Warsaw itself ...

Key words: Oskar Halecki, Polish historiography, French historiography, Idea of East Central Europe, history of Poland.

¹ The article was originally published in the series *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vol. 3, ed. by Małgorzata Dąbrowska (Warsaw-Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2014), 220-231. The text is the result of an inquiry carried out by the author at Bibliothèque François Mitterrand and the Polish Library in Paris. Although the collections of both institutions make it possible to determine the French reception of Oskar Halecki's works, the scope of research would have to be expanded in order to exhaust this issue. Due to time restrictions, the author was unable to carry out research into the traces of Oskar Halecki in French historiography at Bibliothèque Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 (the justification for awarding Halecki honoris causa doctorate at this university); in the Centre d'Études Polonaises at Institut d'Études Slaves in Paris; in the archives of Institut de France (in connection with Halecki's longstanding corresponding membership of Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris); in the archives of Institut Français d'Études Byzantines. According to Ewa Rutkowska, head of the research reading room, an unprocessed archive of the editorial board of "La Voix de Varsovie", created by Halecki, for 1939–1940, most likely remains in the Polish Library in Paris.

Oskar Halecki's ties with France date back to the second decade of the twentieth century. As an expert of the Polish delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference (1918–1919), he also held the position of Secretary General of the Congress Work Office. From the very beginning, the nature of those contacts was more related to public activities and the organisation of scholarly life than to research. From May 1922 to March 1924, he served as Secretary of the International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations. In 1925–1926, he was chairman of the University Section of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation in Paris,² moreover, he was a member of such institutions as the Académie Diplomatique Internationale in Paris, the Centre International de Synthèse Historique in Paris and a corresponding member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.³ In 1935 he received an honorary doctorate from the Université de Lyon. Moreover, on behalf of the Polish Academy of Learning (*Polska Akademia Umiejętności*, PAU), he was a member of the Scientific Council of the Institut Français de Varsovie (1932–1939). In 1927, together with Marcelli Handelsman, he established the International Federation of Institutes of History of Eastern Europe, and in 1933 he co-organised the International Congress of Historians in Warsaw.

Immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War, he went from Switzerland to Paris and there began to organise the Polish University Abroad and to edit the biweekly “La Voix de Varsovie” at the Polish Library in Paris; he came to reap the fruits of his labours in French intellectual circles. “Professor, you have been kind enough to inform me of the imminent publication, under your direction, of the first issue of ‘La Voix de Varsovie’, a journal devoted to political, intellectual and social issues raised by the painful circumstances in which Poland found itself. Please allow me to congratulate you on this venture! [...] I have no doubt that, under the leadership of such an eminent historian and representative of high European culture of particular merit, it will be an absolute success,” wrote the French Ambassador to Poland, Leon Noël,⁴ in his letter opening the first issue of the periodical.

Initially, Halecki's appeal to cooperate with the journal was answered by a group of prominent French scholars, including André Toledano, Secretary General of the Centre International de Synthèse, Paul Cazin, Professor at the Centre d'Études Polonaises in Paris, Yves de La Brière, professor at Institut

² See Andrzej M. Brzeziński, „Z działalności Oskara Haleckiego w Międzynarodowym Instytucie Współpracy Intelktualnej w Paryżu (1925–1926),” in: *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vol. 3, ed. Małgorzata Dąbrowska (Warszawa–Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2014), 154–171.

³ Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris, a scientific society founded in 1663 with the humanities in mind, is one of the five academies of Institut de France. On 10 June 1960, Halecki, as a corresponding member of the Academy, delivered a paper entitled “Le projet de Ligue Anti-Ottomane à la fin du XVIIe siècle,” subsequently published by the Academy in 1961: “To dear Professor Z. Lubicz-Zaleski, with very cordial greetings, from the author” (Polish Library in Paris, depository of the Archive of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, F.N. 8.988).

⁴ Leon Noël, “Lettre de M. Leon Noël Ambassadeur de France en Pologne,” *La Voix de Varsovie* R. I, no 1 (1939): 5.

Catholique, Gabriel Hanotaux of Académie Française, René Pinon of École des Sciences Politiques, Paul Hazard of Collège de France and, last but not least, Henri de Montfort of Institut de France, a scholar of Polish history, devoted advocate of the Polish cause. Also involved was the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean Verdier. However, the journal closed down when the Polish government in exile moved to London, and Halecki himself left for the United States.

There is much to suggest that by 1939 Halecki was popular in France as a politician, an informal ambassador of the Polish cause, rather than as a historian. This seems to be confirmed by the awarding of the Knight's Cross of the Legion of Honour to Halecki in 1924, as well as the authority he enjoyed in the circles of the International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation, even after his resignation from the post of chairman (Charles-Marie Garnier, a French historian of English culture who collaborated with Halecki in this institution, wrote about that in more detail in his biography).⁵ Paradoxically, even the request from the French side for Halecki to prepare a concise synthesis of Polish history, on the wave of interest in that subject after the 1933 International Congress of Historical Sciences in Warsaw, seems to have stemmed from the publisher's concern to ensure the success of the publication thanks to the popularity of the author.⁶ I would say that the case was similar with respect to the pamphlet *Pologne*, published in the series *Les Nations Martyrs* in 1940, the tone of which attempts to contradict the fatalism implied by the title of the edition.⁷ It is likely that Halecki decided to undertake the work out of concern for the broadest possible publicity for the Polish cause in the face of war.

Halecki's more scholarly, serious works published in French in that period comprised mainly articles from historical conferences and lectures at Institut de France, i.e. minor pieces, not necessarily forming a single field of interest that would allow him to be classified as a specialist in a particular branch of historiography.

It is difficult to discuss Halecki's reception in France in the 1920s without relating it to how much the French knew about Polish historiography in general. The answer to that is very little.⁸ As Alfred Coville, a member of Institut de France, wrote in his introduction to Halecki's concise *La Pologne de 963 à 1914...*, published in Paris in 1933, "Here is a book that is needed and expected [...] Poland [...] is very poorly known to the broader public and even to the majority of those who call themselves historians, which is a source of misunderstandings and often erroneous, unjust judgments." Further, regarding Polish historical writing, "Poland has had excellent, well-educated historians. But

⁵ Polish Library in Paris, Archive of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, ref. 3842, Charles-Marie Garnier, Oscar Halecki, manuscript.

⁶ Oskar Halecki, *La Pologne de 963 à 1914. Essai de synthèse historique*, preface by Alfred Coville (Paris: Alcan, 1933), XV, 348.

⁷ Halecki, *La Pologne*, 32.

⁸ See Daniel Beauvois, "Main historians of Poland in France in the twentieth century," paper delivered at the 17th General Meeting of Polish Historians, Krakow 2004, <http://jazon.hist.uj.edu.pl/zjazd/materialy/beauvois.pdf> (accessed: 14.10.2012).

almost all Poles, out of a sense of national pride, prefer their own language, the knowledge of which is unfortunately still quite rare in other countries.”⁹

The motto “Toute la France est polonaise,” repeated with pride by the post-November emigration in the early 1830s, had long since faded, and the Historical and Literary Society in Paris and the Polish Library had been in crisis since the early twentieth century. In any case, both institutions were primarily focused on preserving Polish archives and book collections, with a view to a future independent Polish state, rather than editing them in France. It was not until 1921 that the Polish Academy of Learning (Polska Akademia Umiejętności) began to reorganize the collection in the building at Quai d'Orléans 6. The Sorbonne and other French universities were relatively popular places of study for Polish youth, but historians lacked personalities to match that of Maria Skłodowska.

As regards the popularisation of Polish historiography in France at that time, a more important figure for was Marcei Handelsman, who, expelled from the University of Berlin for political reasons, in 1907 came to Paris to complete his historical studies. At Collège de France, under the supervision of Gabriel Monod, he prepared his doctoral thesis *Napoléon et la Pologne 1806–1807*, which appeared in print in 1909. Until 1912, unable to return to Poland, he developed his historical passion based on the Parisian milieu, including in his research interests Polish-French relations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰

While Handelsman was conquering Paris, Oskar Halecki, fulfilling his father's wish, was discovering the Polish Kraków, beginning his studies at the Jagiellonian University. However, having been brought up among the Viennese upper classes, he had Paris in his blood. To a fresh graduate of Collège de France, this must have seemed a strange irony in the following years. Research experience gained during the several years in exile and his uncommon organisational talent made Handelsman a perfect candidate to play a leading role in the formation of the Warsaw's, or even country's historical community after Poland regained independence. More importantly, it seems that he himself wished to play such a role, a fact maliciously pointed out by his professional colleagues, with Witold Kamieniecki at the forefront: “Not being able to become an ambassador of the Republic, he appointed himself ambassador of Polish science.”¹¹

Against such background, the conflict that sources suggest between the ambitious Marcei Handelsman and Oskar Halecki, who conquered national and international circles with the charm of a cosmopolite devoted to the Polish cause, had every chance to develop.¹² Moreover, Handelsman shaped the milieu

⁹ Halecki, *La Pologne*, XII.

¹⁰ Piotr Węcowski, “Marcei Handelsman (1882–1945)”, in Marcei Handelsman, *Historyka*, ed. by Piotr Węcowski (Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego – Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2010), 338–339.

¹¹ Węcowski, *Marcei Handelsman*, 340.

¹² For a broader background of the complicated relations of the researchers, see: Tadeusz Rutkowski, “Halecki a warszawskie środowisko akademickie,” in: *Oskar Halecki i jego*

of his pupils, while in the case of Halecki's protégés it is difficult to speak of a shared vision of history. It was Handelsman who was approached by the young Ambroise Jobert, fascinated by Polish history, in search of a topic for his doctoral dissertation during his stay at Institut Français de Varsovie. This would be significant for the reception of Halecki in France in the post-war years.

For Oskar and Helena Halecki, the end of the Second World War and the entry of Poland into the USSR's sphere of influence meant a difficult but indisputable decision to remain in exile. The years which followed their departure for the United States, filled with intellectual work, gave the Polish historian a secure position in American academic circles, even given the somewhat niche character of Fordham University. The inner urge to oppose the post-Stalinist reality shaped Halecki's historical reflection and led to the formulation of a specific vision of East-Central Europe, of which the interpretation of Polish history became an integral part. At this point, two things should be noted. After 1940, Halecki published mainly in English, while his most comprehensive work in French, *Histoire de Pologne*, was published in New York.¹³

For Halecki, the end of the war marked a return to activity in the international community of historians. He certainly visited France from time to time from 1950 (historians' congress in Paris) until the early 1960s, on his own or in the company of his wife, who had fond recollections of the time spent in Paris during her husband's presidency of the International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation, as evidenced by regular, albeit conventional letters exchanged with Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, president of the reactivated Historical and Literary Society in Paris from 1946, and his wife Maria, née Zdziarska, available in the Archive of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski at the Polish Library in Paris.¹⁴ It seems that the Zaleski family were Halecki's main contact among Polish emigrants in France, given the disagreements between him and Jerzy Giedroyc. In 1954, he prepared a series of lectures at the invitation of Faculté des Lettres of the Université de Strasbourg, and in 1960 he delivered a lecture on the Anti-Turkish League at the invitation of Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, but these were activities resulting from his pre-war research contacts.¹⁵

Interest in Polish historiography in France was to the greatest extent shaped by Polish researchers. Enthralled by communist ideas, the French intelligentsia of the late 1940s and 1950s was not interested in Polish issues. Paradoxically, the departure of Polish scholars representing national historiography from national themes in favour of broadly conceived social and economic history led to their interest in the output of the "pope" of French historiography of the time, Fernand Braudel. For the first time in the history of both historical circles, there

wizja Europy, vol. 2, ed. Małgorzata Dąbrowska (Warsaw-Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2014), 91–109.

¹³ Oskar Halecki, *Histoire de Pologne* (New York-Montreal: Les Editions Roy, 1945).

¹⁴ Polish Library in Paris, Archive of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, ref. 3912, 3925, Oskar and Helena Halecki.

¹⁵ Polish Library in Paris, Archive of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, ref. 3887, Letter from Oskar Halecki to Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, 28 May 1951.

was fruitful scientific cooperation on a global level.¹⁶ For the then young researchers from the Sixth Section of the Paris-based École Pratique des Hautes Études, later École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, the names of Witold Kula or Aleksander Gieysztor (incidentally, Handelsman's pupils) meant outstanding specialists, setting the tone for medieval studies or economic history. Since 1958, the Station of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Paris became a centre for exchange between Polish and French researchers, and only a few, such as Jacques Le Goff, married to Anna Dunin-Wąsowiczówna, had the opportunity to hear why not all Poles regarded that place as representative of the tradition of Polish science (which is why Le Goff attended lectures at rue Lauriston alone).¹⁷

Given what I have written above, this was bound to fail. Post-war Paris no longer understood Halecki. His concise synthesis of Polish history was also forgotten, after a popular version of Polish history by a native Frenchman, Ambroise Jobert, was published (it had three reissues).¹⁸ In a sense, however, it is to Jobert's interests that Halecki owes his return to French historiography. After the pioneering monograph on the Commission of National Education (enthusiastically received in Poland), the subsequent major monograph by the French scholar was *De Luther à Mohyla, la Pologne dans la crise de la chrétienté 1517–1648*,¹⁹ published in 1974. Jobert noted Halecki's *From Florence to Brest* in his bibliography, even if without enthusiasm.

It became the subject of criticism in Harold S. Henry's review in *The Polish Review*: "Although Prof. Jobert described Oscar's Halecki *From Florence to Brest* (1958) as 'the fundamental work' on the Union of Brest (p. 428), he took no note of Halecki's later articles or of the revised second edition which appeared in 1968. Examples could be multiplied indefinitely, but it is already clear that Prof. Jobert felt under no compulsion to review Western secondary literature with care."²⁰ Obviously the review made little impression in France, although for the author himself it provided some interpretative guidance.

¹⁶ A comprehensive study of cooperation between French and Polish historical circles after World War II has been presented by Patryk Pleskot (see: Patryk Pleskot, *Intelektualni sąsiedzi. Kontakty historyków polskich ze środowiskiem „Annales” 1945–1989* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2010)). Marcin Kula's work (Marcin Kula, *Mimo wszystko bliżej Paryża niż Moskwy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010)), written partly from the perspective of a witness, is also a valuable source of information.

¹⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *Avec Hanka* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 82.

¹⁸ Ambroise Jobert, *Histoire de la Pologne* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953, 1965, 1974).

¹⁹ Ambroise Jobert, *De Luther à Mohyla, la Pologne dans la crise de la chrétienté 1517–1648* (Paris: Institute d'études slaves, 1974) (Polish edition: Ambroise Jobert, *Od Lutra do Mohyły. Polska wobec kryzysu chrześcijaństwa 1517-1648*, transl. Elżbieta Sękowska (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza VOLUMEN, 1994)).

²⁰ Harold S. Henry, "Ambroise Jobert, *De Luther à Mohyla, la Pologne dans la crise de la chrétienté, 1517–1648* (Collection Historique de l'Institut d'Études Slaves, No. 21). Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1974. Pp. 483, Book Reviews", *The Polish Review* 21, no 4 (1976): 116, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25777442?refreqid=excelsior%3A7935615847bc84db02df559f08fdcf3&seq=1> (accessed: 15.01.2021).

If Ambroise Jobert described Halecki's work as "fundamental" without relying on American historiography, the question arises as to what allowed him to make such an assessment. Of course, he could have read *From Florence to Brest*, although the lack of references to Halecki's later work in this field allows us to assume that he did not become a particularly convincing author for the French historian. It is likely that Jobert was drawn to Halecki's monograph by a favourable review by Father Raymonde Janin, an Assumptionist²¹ and Byzantine historian, which appeared in 1959 in "Revue des études Byzantines."²² The clergyman had been interested in Halecki's works since *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome: vingt ans de travail pour l'union des églises et pour la défense de l'Empire d'Orient, 1355–1375*,²³ published in Warsaw, albeit in French. As a Habsburg Austrian-born historian with distinctly Christian views, and one who understood the need for dialogue with the Orthodox Church, Halecki fitted perfectly into the philosophy of the history of the congregation to which Janin belonged. And it must be admitted that the French monk tried to broaden his interest in Halecki to include the context of the most recent Polish historiography.²⁴ This is probably the most extensive example of a scholarly reception of the eminent historian on French soil. Although, due to the background associated with the Order's mission, it is also quite exclusive.

Jerzy Kłoczowski, founder and long-standing director of the Institute of East-Central Europe (IECE) in Lublin, summarised the international scope of Halecki's work as follows: "One can speak of a scholarly movement inspired, to a greater or lesser extent, by Halecki and his works primarily in Anglo-Saxon and, significantly, German, and since the 1970s – slowly – also in Poland and Hungary. Two concepts of Halecki's view of East-Central Europe became clearly visible. The first, broad, is particularly representative of the multi-volume *History of East Central Europe* published from 1974 (University of

²¹ Assumptionists, Augustinians of the Assumption, Augustiani ab Assumptione, Pia Societas Presbyterorum ab Assumptione (AA), a religious congregation based on the rule of St. Augustine, founded in 1845 in Nîmes, France, by Emmanuel d'Alzon to work for the revival of higher education according to the principles of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the unification of the Eastern Churches with the Catholic Church, and the suppression of opponents of the Church cantered in secret organizations. Circa 1895, they founded École des Hautes Études Byzantines in Istanbul, later moved to Bucharest, and then to Paris (under the name of Institut Français d'Études Byzantines); the Institute published the periodical "Échos d'Orient" (from 1943 "Revue des études Byzantines"), quoted at: <http://www.eduteka.pl/doc/assumejonisci> (accessed: 15.01.2021); see also <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001/acref-9780192802903-e-521> (accessed: 28.10.2021)

²² Raymond Janin, "Oscar [original spelling – A.B.] Halecki. From Florence to Brest. 1439–1596," *Revue des études Byzantines* 17 (1959): 254–255. Another review appeared in the popular socio-cultural monthly *Relations: Jacques Cousineau*, "Oscar Halecki. From Florence to Brest. 1439–1596," *Relations* 225 (1959): 241–243.

²³ Oskar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome: vingt ans de travail pour l'union des églises et pour la défense de l'Empire d'Orient, 1355–1375* (Warszawa: Société des Sciences et des Lettres de Varsovie, 1930).

²⁴ Raymond Janin, "Bronisław Dembinski, Oskar Halecki, Marcell Handelsman, *L'historiographie polonaise du XIXe et du XXe siècle*," *Échos d'Orient* 33 (1934): 249.

Washington Press, Seattle-London, edited by Peter F. Sugar and Donald W. Treadgold); the second is Piotr Wandycz's concise synthesis focusing on the historical Czechia, Hungary and Poland (*The Price of Freedom. A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*, London-New York 1992, and translations into many languages, including Polish).²⁵

Halecki returned to French historiography in the early 1990s, thanks to the activities of an international group of intellectuals gathered around the Society for the Institute of East Central Europe, which initiated the founding of the Institute of East Central Europe in Lublin. Of course, there is no point in discussing in detail the purpose of the founding of the Society.²⁶ For the purposes of the subject of this text, I would just like to emphasise that the debate on European identity postulated by the Society, fundamental from the perspective of the reason of state of the former Eastern Bloc countries that were beginning to strive for accession to NATO and the European Union, for most French historians was an attempt to reinvent the wheel. From their point of view, the boundaries of European culture were more or less identical with the post-Carolingian Europe, while the countries of Eastern Europe only aspired to it. A quote from Georges Duby, who knew Poland relatively well, comes to mind, "I remember my first stay in Poland, in Krakow, and the impression – very keen – that I was on the frontier of Asia,"²⁷ or the opinion, shocking to Polish readers, expressed by Roger Portal, a French historian of considerable merit in Slavic and Polish studies, "[World War II – A.B.] brought satisfactory solutions [...] especially through the development of a federal organisation which included Slavic states of various languages and cultures."²⁸

The most committed promoter of Halecki's work on European themes among French scholars was Jerzy Kłoczowski, who knew the field very well. Regarding the results of those efforts in relation to the work by French historians, it would seem that Halecki's name as one of the theoreticians of East Central Europe was indeed familiar, but mainly to researchers affiliated with Polish Institute of East Central Europe, such as Georges-Henri Soutou, Daniel Beauvois, Chantal Delsol or political scientist Jacques Rupnik. The reception of the work of the recluse from White Plains is essentially restricted to two works: *The Limits and Divisions of European History* (Sheed & Ward, New York 1950, p. 242) and *From Florence to Brest. 1439–1596* (Sacrum Poloniae Millennium, Roma 1958, p. 444). It is worth adding that the above-mentioned researchers did

²⁵ Jerzy Kłoczowski, "Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w przestrzeni europejskiej," paper presented during the 17th General Meeting of Polish Historians, Krakow 2004, <http://jazon.hist.uj.edu.pl/zjazd/materialy/kloczowski.pdf> (accessed: 14.10.2012).

²⁶ More on this subject: Anna Brzezińska, *Spór o średniowiecze. Z rozważań nad tożsamością kulturową Europy. Jacques Le Goff, Jerzy Kłoczowski, Aron Guriewicz* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2018), 180–190.

²⁷ Georges Duby, Bronisław Geremek, "Wspólne pasje," interviewed by Philippe Sainteny, transl. Elżbieta T. Sadowska (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995).

²⁸ Roger Portal, *Les Slaves* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965), 24; quoted after: Jerzy Kłoczowski, "Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w przestrzeni europejskiej," a paper delivered during the 17th General Meeting of Polish Historians, Krakow 2004, 3.

not treat Halecki's work as an intellectual discovery, but rather as a welcome addition to secondary resources. As Georges-Henri Soutou states, the foundations of reflection on East Central Europe in French historiography were laid by studies on the history of European civilisation initiated at the end of World War II by Lucien Febvre,²⁹ and continued in various ways in the 1950s by Fernand Braudel,³⁰ François Perroux³¹ and Henri Contamine.³² A popular study in more recent historiography was also Jacques Le Rider's³³ *Mitteleuropa*, published in 1996.

Thanks to Jerzy Kłoczowski's friendship with Jacques Le Goff, Bronisław Geremek and Krzysztof Pomian, in 2004 the French historical community took notice of the release of *Histoire de l'Europe du Centre-Est*, compiled by an international group of researchers and edited by Jerzy Kłoczowski, Daniel Beauvois and Chantal Delsol. Jean Delumeau wrote that "in my view, it constitutes a prologue to a future congress, which would be its logical continuation. Undoubtedly, the international community of scholars has been invited to reflect on the rich but difficult history of this part of our continent, which suffered so much in the conflicts of the twentieth century."³⁴

Authors of the volume compiled a bibliography of East Central Europe for the purposes of such future inquiries. Apart from *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, it included Halecki's article *Qu'est-ce que l'Europe Orientale?*, "Bulletin d'Information de l'Europe Orientale" (1934, pp. 82–93); *Borderlands of Western Civilisation. A History of East-Central Europe*, New York 1952; *History of the Jagiellonian Union*, vols. 1–2, Cracow 1919–1920; *Jadwiga of Anjou and the rise of East-Central Europe*, New York 1991; and of course, *From Florence to Brest. 1439–1596*, Rome 1965. It should be added that most of that list was compiled by Polish authors, which is why it is not particularly representative of the state of research on Halecki in French historiography.

The most recent publication on the French reception of Halecki in the context of the ongoing debate on East-Central Europe is the 2009 collection *East-Central Europe in European History*, edited by Jerzy Kłoczowski and Hubert Łaskiewicz. Numerous French authors give some insight into the fate of Halecki's work in their country's historiography in recent times. Referring to Halecki's concept of East-Central Europe, Chantal Delsol emphasized that it is difficult to accept the exclusion of Russia from that area, as advocated by the Polish scholar. For this reason she proposed replacing Halecki's East-Central

²⁹ Lucien Febvre, *L'Europe: genèse d'une civilisation* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1999) (series of lectures delivered by the author at the Collège de France between 1944 and 1945).

³⁰ Fernand Braudel, *Grammaire des civilisations* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987) (Polish edition: Fernand Braudel, *Gramatyka cywilizacji*, transl. Hanna Igalson-Tygielska (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2006).

³¹ François Perroux, *L'Europe sans rivages* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1954).

³² Henri Contamine, *L'Europe est derrière nous* (Paris: A. Fayard, 1953).

³³ Jacques Le Rider, *Mitteleuropa* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996).

³⁴ Translation mine. Jean Delumeau, "En guise de conclusion," in *East-Central Europe in European History. Themes and Debates*, ed. by Jerzy Kłoczowski, Hubert Łaskiewicz (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 493.

Europe with the concept of Junior Europe used by Jerzy Kłoczowski, since it does not exclude Russia. Delsol's voice was interesting insofar as it reversed the trend in the Polish discussion of the problem, where the axis of the dispute was perhaps not so much Russia as the category of cultural juniority. Still, the French concept of *l'Europe cadette* holds much charm. Jean-Marie Mayeur referred to Kłoczowski in a similar way, omitting Halecki, when speaking of East Central Europe. Antoine Marès did not notice Halecki. He relied on the concept of *Mitteleuropa*, borrowed by Jacques Le Rider from German historiography,³⁵ and on *L'Europe. Le malentendus de l'élargissement* by Jacques Rupnik. The latter referred to Halecki's vision of Russia as significant for Poland's eastern policy after the fall of communism.³⁶

Interestingly, Halecki was not mentioned in Le Goff's article, which analysed the debate on the nomenclature and cultural-geographical character of East-Central Europe.³⁷ This does not mean that the doyen of French medieval studies failed to notice the achievements of Polish historiography. He developed and explained the concept of East Central Europe after Aleksander Gieysztor. And although Le Goff's voice was isolated in the way it presented the understanding of East Central Europe in historiography against the background of the statements of other French historians invited to participate in the conference, it was a trace of a phenomenon which may have contributed to Halecki's marginalisation in French historiography after World War II. Le Goff, who knew the Polish historical milieu very well, was among the Warsaw scholars associated with the pre-war school of Marcei Handelsman. Halecki and Handelsman were able to cooperate in the most important matters, such as ensuring the good name of Polish science, but that was the extent of their relationship. It would seem that the master of the Warsaw milieu, who was not very favourably inclined towards

³⁵ In German historiography the term "Mitteleuropa" has always been confronted with Halecki's term "East-Central Europe", cf. Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, "Oskar Halecki i historiografia niemieckojęzyczna," in *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vol. 1, ed. by Małgorzata Dąbrowska (Warsaw-Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012), 208–222; Klaus Oschema, "Les Europes des médiévistes. Remarques sur la construction d'une identité entre science historique et actualité politique," in *Être historien du Moyen Âge au XXIe siècle: XXXVIIIe Congrès de la SHMESP (Cergy-Pontoise, Évry, Marne-la-Vallée, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, juin 2007)*, ed. by Régine Le Jan (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008), 42, 47–48.

³⁶ Jacques Rupnik, French political scientist of Slovak origin, since 1982 Professor at L'Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris; since 1996 Director of Science at Centre d'études et de Recherches Internationales, attached to La Fondation nationale des sciences politiques. In an article devoted to Poland's contemporary geopolitical situation in the Euro-American context, on p. 144 he referred to Halecki's *The Limits and Divisions of European History* in connection with Poland's position vis-à-vis Russia in the political balance of power on the continent (Jacques Rupnik, "La Pologne à l'heure Américaine. Entre l'Europe et les États-Unis," *Pouvoirs. Revue française d'études constitutionnelles et politiques* 118, 3 (2006): 137–151).

³⁷ Jacques Le Goff, "Préfiguration de l'Europe du Centre-Est autour de l'An Mil," in *East-Central Europe in European History. Themes and Debates*, ed. by Jerzy Kłoczowski, Hubert Łaszkiwicz (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 43–44.

the historical vision of the author of *From Florence to Brest*, simply did not recommend his works as particularly important to his students. After the Second World War, the situation was made even more complex by the political context.

A glance at the circumstances in which Halecki's work is cited by contemporary French scholars allows us to conclude that the poor reception of the Polish historian in France is first and foremost affected by Halecki's fate in Polish historiography. As Daniel Beauvois wrote, "Polish history has a very modest place in France. [...] Of course, during the last century, especially in the second half, there was no shortage of rather occasional academic sessions, but usually the discussions took place among specialists invited from Poland, in the presence of a handful of little-informed French colleagues."³⁸ Halecki did not live to see the "fashion for Poland" signalled in the above fragment, associated with the advent of the "Solidarity" movement. Even if this had been the case, his vision of history would not have found its way into the French model of research, which in the second half of the twentieth century was shaped by the various hypostases of the "Annales" milieu, the political fascination with Marxism and Sartre's decadence.

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³⁸ D. Beauvois, *Główni historycy Polski...*, p. 1.

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