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## NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

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HENRYK ŁOWMIAŃSKI, 1898–1984

With the death on 4 September 1984 of Henryk Łowmiański, the Polish historical profession and the community of scholars of all nationalities lost a figure of towering proportions. His presence was felt as an insightful “głos w dyskusji” [participant in discussion] in dozens of major conferences, as a mentor for numerous students who have themselves made important scholarly contributions, as the long-time director of the history program in the post-war university at Poznań, and—above all—as a scholar whose many works have come to be regarded as authoritative. Henryk Łowmiański was born in Daugudzie (now Lithuanian SSR) on 22 August 1898. He attended the University of Wilno (Vilnius, Vil’no) from which he received his Ph.D. in 1924. He began his teaching career there in 1923 and was promoted to professor in 1934; between 1929 and 1932 he was the archivist of the city of Wilno, a function that he carried out again during the period of German occupation. After World War II he resettled in Poznań, where he was appointed professor at Adam Mickiewicz University. From 1957 until his retirement in 1968 he was director of the History Institute and helped the department develop into one of the leading centers of historical research in Poland. In addition to memberships in the Polish Academy of Learning [Polska Akademia Umiejętności] and, later, the Polish Academy of Sciences [Polska Akademia Nauk] and in other learned societies, he was awarded honorary doctoral degrees from his own university in 1966 and from Warsaw University in 1973. He also was the recipient of a number of state prizes in Poland. Upon the occasion of his thirty-fifth anniversary of scholarly activity, his colleagues, coworkers, and students honored him with a festschrift, *Studia Historica* (Warsaw, 1958), which contains more than a score of outstanding articles whose high quality was fitting homage to the individual whom they honored.

Łowmiański’s reputation as a major scholar was early established by his two-volume *Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego* [*Studies on the origins of the society and the state of Lithuania*] (Wilno, 1931–1932). Numerous other prewar publications confirmed his reputation in Lithuanian and Baltic social, economic, and political matters. After 1945 he turned to the broader question of the origins of Slavonic states. His *Podstawy gospodarcze formowania się państw słowiańskich* [*The economic foundations of the formation of Slavonic states*] (Warsaw, 1953) and his careful analysis of the Norman question in *Zagadnienie roli Normanów w genezie państw słowiańskich* [*The problem of the role of the Normans in the origin of Slavonic states*] (Warsaw, 1957) were but *Vorarbeiten* for his magisterial *Początki Polski* [*The origins of Poland*] (5 volumes, Warsaw, 1964–1973). (A sixth volume in two parts was published posthumously in 1985.) Leaving no shred or shard of evidence unexamined in these volumes, he traced the development of Polish history and society during the first millennium of the Christian era. Eventually he carried his analysis forward to the beginning of the fourteenth century. While numerous specialized points may yet remain to be resolved, Łowmiański’s general picture has become the standard against which all else is measured. In addition to its erudition, this synthesis is marked by the compelling logic of a single, powerful mind. One final major work also deserves mention here. This was Łowmiański’s stimulating comparative study, *Religia słowian i jej upadek* [*The religion of the Slavs and its decline*] (Warsaw, 1979), which analyzed the confrontation between native Slavonic religion and Christianity in the sixth through the twelfth centuries.

Henryk Łowmiański will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues in Poland and abroad. We shall not soon again see a scholar of his magnitude and individual accomplishments.

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