

The unwieldy length of the book's three main chapters and the many tangents the author pursues makes it easy to lose sight of his central arguments. The patient reader is ultimately rewarded with a fascinating exploration of politics, church-state relations, and piety in the early Middle Ages. While its title suggests a rather tight focus on a particular moment in Polish history, in fact the book encompasses the Frankish and Saxon worlds of the ninth and tenth centuries, with occasional forays further afield and further back in time. This makes good sense, for the early history of Poland's ecclesiastical development was firmly rooted in larger European conventions and processes. Michałowski builds his arguments on a truly impressive array of early medieval texts, complemented with considerations of other artifacts such as artworks, churches, and seals. He presents lengthy excerpts of his written sources in Latin (usually, but not always, accompanied with English translations), and his interpretations are consistently reasonable and judicious. The book deserves a broad readership not only among scholars of Poland's medieval history but medievalists in general.

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***White Eagle Black Madonna: One Thousand Years of the Polish Catholic Tradition.***

By Robert E. Alvis. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. xv, 349 pp. Notes.

Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Illustrations. Maps. \$125.00, paper.

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In the preface to his book, Robert E. Alvis confesses that he intended to produce a study "at once worthwhile to scholars and accessible to the general reader interested in the subject (xii)." The subject is none other than Polish Catholic history from its dawn in the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Alvis, a seasoned historian of the Church, modern Poland, religion, and nationalism, addresses his book to Anglophone audiences and largely delivers his promise. While surveying the long and dynamic relationship between Polish national identity and Catholicism, he skillfully avoids the murky waters of national clichés, apologetic historiographies, and confessional mythologies. Based on up-to-date secondary literature in English and Polish, the account consists of ten chapters that document the synergy between Polish history and Catholicism from the baptism of Mieszko I in 966 to the controversial internment of the late President Lech Kaczyński at the Wawel Royal Castle crypt in Kraków in April 2010.

Having already written on the entanglement of religion and nationalism in nineteenth century Poznań/Posen, Alvis knows that religious and national identities are anything but separate and stable constructs; on the contrary, they are interconnected and living phenomena, adaptable and capable of producing surprising metamorphoses. For instance, the sixteenth century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth constituted an oasis of confessional tolerance in Europe torn by religious wars. By contrast, during the age of Enlightenment, the country's elites turned against religious and ethnic minorities and sought refuge in political reaction and conservative Catholicism. Another twist concerns the participation of prewar anti-Semites, writer Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and Rev Marcei Godlewski, in operations to rescue Jews under Nazi occupation. In his treatment of anti-Semitism, whether of religious or secular creeds, Alvis does an admirable job. Not only does he provide proper contextualization, but he also confronts such sensitive issues as the worldview of Saint Maksymilian Kolbe, very much "a man of his times" (208), and the silence of Polish church hierarchs over the Shoah during the war.

The treatment of Catholic religiosity among the Polish diaspora from the nineteenth century to the present is a much-welcome theme complementing Alvis's narrative. It clearly distinguishes his work from accounts that tend to focus on Poland alone and ignore the mass phenomenon of the current migration, which encompasses millions of Catholic Poles working and residing in the European Union. The concerns of the British clergy and laymen, cited by Alvis, about the consequences of the Polish Catholic presence for the Church in the United Kingdom have acquired new meaning in the context of Brexit. Meanwhile, it remains to be seen what impact this migration experience will have on the discourse of tolerance and attitudes toward immigrants at home.

If there is anything I miss in this book it is a history from below, or broader society. The author sets his narrative around politics and historical figures: royals, bishops, thinkers and politicians; ordinary people make their debut only in Chapter 5, which covers the period from the mid-seventeenth century to the 1760s. Society's responses to evolving Catholicism and to the policies of both church and state are sketched out more effectively later, but lack sharper focus, which would make the book more compelling. Readers will look in vain for the impact of the 1905 Revolution on the Catholic Church and laity in the Russian partition. Reverend Stanisław Stojanowski, who "endured repeated jail sentences, and excommunication" (176) for advocating peasants' rights in Galicia, was not only a radical priest, but also one of the founders of the Polish peasant movement. His story points to the uneasy relationship between the church and agrarianism, which sprang in the religious countryside. Alvis spends little time discussing the new socialist labor force, catapulted from villages to cities in the 1950s and 60s, whose religious customs shaped the Solidarity Trade Union in 1980–81. Furthermore, I disagree with the claim that "the [Jerzy] Popiełuszko affair is . . . emblematic of the position that the Catholic Church occupied in communist Poland (219)." The brutal murder of Father Popiełuszko by the security police galvanized society precisely because such violence toward the clergy was unusual. The trial and imprisonment of the direct perpetrators demonstrated that even the Wojciech Jaruzelski regime could not take such acts lightly.

Notwithstanding these few shortages, *White Eagle Black Madonna* is a highly recommended, very fine book and a welcome addition to the study of religion and Polish history.

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***Written in Blood: The Battles for Fortress Przemyśl in WWI.*** By Graydon A. Tunstall.

Twentieth-Century Battles. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. xi, 386 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. Plates. \$45.00, hard bound.

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For six months, from October 1914 to March 1915, Fortress Przemyśl was front-page news. It enjoyed a strategic position at the intersection between the San and Dniester Rivers and stood as a guardian to the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. Since the seventh century, it had been a place of contention among Moravia, Kiev, Poland-Lithuania, Hungary, and Austria. Russia twice besieged it in the first year of the World War I, eventually forcing its capitulation. Hailed by historians as the Verdun of the East or the Stalingrad of World War I, Przemyśl today is "merely a relic to visit in Poland and its history is basically unknown" (339).