

# Reviews

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## **Book review: Roman Pelczar, *Main Schools in Galicia in the years 1775–1873*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2021, pp. 313**

The work presents the activities of main schools between 1775 and 1873, which were then the highest level of Austrian folk education intended for the plebeian population originating from Galician towns and villages. The time caesuras adopted by the author are not accidental. They are very relevant to the topic under discussion at this particular time. The first caesura (1775) is the establishment and organisation of the first normal (main) school in Lviv and Galicia. The turning point in the title is the year 1873, which is related to the adoption and announcement of a new educational law for Galicia, which at the same time liquidated the existing structure of folk education.

When discussing the scholarly output of Polish and Ukrainian historiography to date, the author noticed a distinct lack of studies dealing exhaustively with this subject. This was also his the inspiration for the present publication, to develop a synthesis of the history and thus fill the gap in the historiography of Galician education.

Manuscripts and printed sources form the essential basis for this study. The most extensive use has been made of the very interesting and useful schematism of the Latin and Unitarian folk schools operating in the Galician dioceses and schools of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. This is because they provide valuable information for historical-educational research in localities and population centres of Jewish origin. The author approaches them rather critically, noting their negative side, i.e. the lack of data for some institutions. This fact undermines to some extent their completeness and reliability. The present study is supplemented and complemented by various documents and school chronicles authored by teachers and school managers. The author also tries to make scrupulous use of all available, both older and more recent, literature on the subject.

The work is structured in four chapters. The first chapter presents the development of the main school network and its legal and organisational basis. The second chapter characterises the student community. The third one deals with the teaching and management staff of the schools in question. In the last chapter, the author deals with the course of the teaching and educational process. The author has successfully reconstructed the activities of the main schools, accurately indicating the scale and directions of the organisational and qualitative changes that have taken place over the century. He takes a critical approach to earlier findings, trying to draw correct and objective conclusions. He disagrees with earlier assumptions that the purpose of the schools of the time was to educate the younger generation in allegiance to the Emperor and the state authorities. He sees the reason for these erroneous conclusions in the poor choice of teaching methods and forms, and the destructive means used in them. The content of the reviewed publication is enriched by interestingly compiled tables, which additionally testify to the author's in-depth analysis of the issue.

The factual and methodological value of the book is enhanced by the use of sources not yet compiled, both in manuscript and printed format. From the research point of view, the range of sources analysed, the detail of the literature used, the reliability, and criticality of the deliberations and narrative used, are also very impressive. This study makes a significant contribution to the history of education. Its rich and clear content, based on the source material used, provides valuable material not only for researchers dealing with this somewhat overlooked subject, but also for students of the humanities and pedagogy.