

Summary

AGNIESZKA ZABLOCKA-KOS (The University of Wrocław) / Foreign power. On Russians in the Kingdom of Poland

Malte Rolf's book entitled *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland. Das Königreich Polen im Russischen Imperium* [The Imperial Rule in the Vistula Land. The Kingdom of Poland in the Russian Empire] (1864–1915) (De Gruyter Verlag Oldenbourg, München 2015) deals with a difficult topic of the Russian presence in the Kingdom of Poland and their rule from the fall of the January Uprising to the escape and the abandonment of the annexed land during WW1 in 1915. The author explains not so well recognized, and exceptionally important in understanding by the German public opinion the current political situation in Central and Eastern Europe, the issue of Russification, de-Polonisation and the extent of the Russian Partition. The book is based on solid archive research and thoroughly studied German, Russian and English-language current states of research, Polish topic literature is mentioned relatively less. For art historians, especially those focusing on Warsaw and the metropolis development, this title may be an important support in their research, mainly in the context of the hitherto published, modest and piecemeal papers concerning architecture and urban planning studies of this city. Exceptionally valuable is opening of the new viewpoints, first of all the Russian ones, towards the development of "Paris of the East". Warsaw, perceived by the Poles as an underinvested city, oppressed, suffocated in a tight ring of the fortifications, and also deprived of elementary civilisation devices as well as edifices of public utility, for the Russians was an example of a modern metropolis, or even a Western European city. Rolf's thesis states that Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland were for the Russians as an area of experiment and gathering experiences in order to transfer them onto the won and captured by the Empire lands. He does not claim however, that Polish lands of Russian Partition became "an inner colony" of Russia. They were rather a specific sort of "laboratory" where various concepts of integration were tried out or even elaborated. Vistula Land acquired, according to the author, a prominent status, which introduced incorporation and transformation of the peripheries practices, the possibilities, range and results of such actions were examined here by inscribing them in strategies of the entire empire operating system. A look at history of Vistula Land in the second half of the 19th century in this context is new and inspiring from the viewpoint of Polish history.