

Book Notice

Polish First Names. By Sophie Hodorowicz Knab. New York: Hippocrene [Books], [171 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016]. 2000. Pp. 123. \$11.95, hardcover.

Polish First Names begins with a brief history of Polish names, from the first period dating from ancient times to the acceptance of Christianity in 966 through the second period, from 966 to the present. The importance of a child's baptismal saint is explained; that is, the feast day for the saint which falls on the date of a child's birth (or the feast day of the saint the parents have chosen). The child would then be under the protection of that saint.

There are some 200 main entries of names for girls and about 250 for boys. Each entry lists the name in Polish, the English equivalent if there is one, the language of origin and meaning of the name, and some background information. If there are diminutives, they are also listed. Finally, the feast days for the name are given (some names have more than one feast day). A sample entry is:

Klementyna. Clementine. Latin. Feminine form of Klemens (Clement). "Merciful."

The name became popular in Poland during the 18th century. Maria Klementyna was the granddaughter of King Jan Sobieski (1674-1696). Klementyna nee Tanska Hoffmanowa (1798-1845) was a well-known Polish author who wrote for women and children.

DIMINUTIVE: None

FEAST DAYS: September 9, November 23

Language sources of the names include Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Latin, Old German, Slavic, and Swedish.

While there are many books on first names which include at least some Polish names, and several worthy books on Polish surnames, this is the most complete book on Polish given names, at least in English, that I have seen and for this reason alone will be welcomed by genealogists, onomasts, and anyone interested in Polish culture. I especially recommend it for libraries with onomastic and genealogical collections. The author, Sophie Hodorowicz Knab, heritage editor for the *Polish-American Journal*, is to be commended.

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