

Biblia jako źródło historyczne do dziejów Wschodu starożytnego w książkach szkolnych polskiego Oświecenia

The Bible as a historical source in Polish school-books in the Age of Enlightenment

SUMMARY

In the article the author deals with the use of the Bible as a historical source in Ancient Near East studies by Polish school-book writers in the Age of Enlightenment. He argues against the view, which has often been expressed in the existing literature on Enlightenment historiography, that the use of the Bible as a historical source in Polish 18th-century school-books was a symptom of outdated, panmosaistic views, while abandoning ancient Hebrew history was the manifestation of modern conceptions of historiography, and marked a with europocentrism and panmosaism. The author writes that there were not available, credible sources in Ancient Near East studies besides Bible in destruction Nineveh, which were available in Enlightenment, was insignificant. Archaeological discoveries and philological researches, were to begin in the next century. In the 18th century knowledge about ancient Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt, in comparison with present knowledge, was an accumulation of legends and fables which came down from the Greeks, while 18th century knowledge about ancient Palestine was not so different because the Bible continues to be a basic source in the study of ancient Jewish history. Some of 18th century authors – for example authors of *Wstęp do historii powszechnej mianowicie kościelnej...*, who very precisely motivated their point of view – knew very well that Greek, Roman and Byzantine works about Ancient Near East history before fall of Nineveh were of little value and they also knew that the Bible, even disregarding the argument of its Divine inspiration, has great historical value. In conclusion, the absorption of ancient Hebrew history and overlooking the history of Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt before the destruction of Nineveh was a conscious choice which was a result of knowledge, and not a manifestation of backwardness.