

In Memory of Professor Anna Pałubicka (November 15, 1947—January 21, 2026), Editor-in-Chief of *Sensus Historiae* from 2015 to 2018

Wspomnienie o Profesor Annie Pałubickiej (15 listopada 1947—21 stycznia 2026), w latach 2015—2018 redaktorce naczelnej kwartalnika „Sensus Historiae”

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The academic community associated with the journal *Sensus Historiae* received the news of the passing of the distinguished scholar and philosopher, Professor Anna Pałubicka, with sadness and deep regret.

From the time *Sensus Historiae* was first published (in 2010) until almost her final days, Professor Pałubicka supported the journal. As a member of its editorial board, she ensured its academic standards, and as a reviewer of articles published in the quarterly, she contributed to their substantive quality. Finally, when she served as Editor-in-Chief of *Sensus Historiae* from 2015 to 2018, she not only ensured the journal’s scholarly content, but also upheld high ethical standards. She led the editorial team with tact and great empathy. She collaborated with the academic advisory board and, on editorial matters, with the then-publisher of *Sensus Historiae*, the Epigram Publishing House. In the introduction to Volume XIX (2015/2) [“From the Editor”], which served as her policy statement, she wrote that the quarterly would remain,



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Manuscript received: March 23, 2026; revised manuscript received: March 6, 2026; accepted for publication: March 11, 2026.

as before, primarily devoted to “historical issues.” Professor Anna Pałubicka valued empirical historical research and consistently regarded the research efforts of historians—carried out in a variety of ways—as an indispensable cognitive foundation for all contemplation and reflection on the state of historical sciences. Taking into account the added subtitle “Interdisciplinary Studies,” she added that the journal “would remain open to interdisciplinary historical studies, particularly in the field of cultural studies.” This statement reflected her main interests and research achievements in the fields of the philosophy of science and the philosophy of culture.

Under the Editor-in-Chief’s guidance, the journal remained a “forum” for presenting historians’ intellectual insights and the research they conducted. It also continued to be a place for confronting historical achievements with methodological and meta-scientific inquiries, with particular emphasis on the philosophy of the humanities as a cultural discipline; in this respect, her achievements in cultural philosophy were reflected in her distinctive and unique approach to running and editing the quarterly.

In her own reflections on the study of history and the work of historians, Professor Anna Pałubicka drew on the tradition of the Poznań School, which—it should be added—remained under the influence of the Lviv-Warsaw School, particularly the semantic logic of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz. History as part of culture was therefore understood by the Professor primarily from an epistemological perspective.

Consequently, under her editorship the quarterly journal *Sensus Historiae* also featured articles on the philosophy of culture, epistemology, the philosophy of the humanities and the methodology of history, thereby complementing the texts presenting the achievements of historical research in the traditional sense. This served to consolidate and expand the scope of issues previously covered in the journal, concerning the results of “reliable empirical research”—and such was the Editor-in-Chief’s intention. In her view, historical research into human actions and their consequences highlighted the significance, for historical understanding, of the study of consciousness as a mental collection of the “motives” of human activity and their effects—either “conscious” or “unconscious,” yet objectively occurring and empirically knowable.

For Professor Anna Pałubicka—with her characteristic philosophical and historical-cultural reflection on history and the historical record as part of culture—the most important task of historians was to understand the mindset of a given historical community and, in so doing, to relate in their research not only to the values of that past community, but also to the values of the contemporary world, in which they participate and are entangled, again: consciously or unconsciously. The Professor thus acknowledged that the knowledge resulting from analytical efforts of historians remains largely

susceptible to manipulation (whether they are aware of it or not), arising not only from the research difficulties inherent to historical sciences, but mainly from the entanglement of historians and their understanding within their own, contemporary world of values. She emphasized that this way of establishing knowledge of the past/history through historical sciences—that is, through reference to and entanglement within the world of values (the mental worlds of historians and of people active in history, studied by historians)—makes historical knowledge, by its very nature, susceptible to “intellectual abuse committed against and upon the past.” She included in this category historical over-interpretations and any rhetorical and ideological constructs “transcending the horizon of credibility established and nurtured in academic history, defined by the empirical scrutiny to which formulated judgements are subjected.” Thus—contrary to certain possible opinions—she affirmed her own high regard for history as an empirical science and for the achievements of historians in this respect.

In her view, however, the fact that historical research, required by history, necessitated empirical confirmation was not sufficient to lend credibility to its understanding of the past, as it also required a “rethinking of the problem of empirical access to the mentality of another subject,” a meta-reflection on historical research and history as part of culture in the light of the specific problems posed by the philosophy of culture.

If, therefore, the beliefs commonly held within a given historical community can also be the subject of historical inquiry, then, according to Professor Anna Pałubicka, these beliefs are given as a historical community of meanings, “which enables an understanding of mutually undertaken actions, agreement between its members, and all forms of interpersonal interaction.” In this sense, the historian puts into practice the study of past history—even when focused solely on the empirical and methodical investigation of what happened—not merely through their own cognitive activity. Their study of the past is, in a sense, creative as well. As the Professor claims, the historian draws on creative “constructivism” to mitigate the cognitive shortcomings arising from the entanglement of both themselves and the “subjects” operating in history within diverse value systems. Understood in this way, the research perspective of history “seeks to influence contemporaries primarily through intellectual means: by prioritizing a reliable understanding of a nuanced cultural past over emotional manipulation of the past. Achieving this goal is . . . possible through rational methods, subject to scrutiny in epistemological inquiry.” And she adds: “The proposed perspective on historical research into culture breaks with the notion that historical research has nothing to do with the present, and that history can be practised in an antiquarian manner—as Friedrich Nietzsche might have put it. It turns out to be quite the opposite: historical research paves the way to understanding the present,

whilst preserving all distinctions between the thinking of the researcher, of the historical subject under study, and that of us today.” This conviction reflects not only an appreciation of the empirical research and creative efforts of historians, but also an equally significant aspect of Professor Anna Paľubicka’s philosophical thought—her commitment to the contemporary epistemological condition of history as a discipline. A clear sign of this commitment was her decision to take on the post of Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Sensus Historiae*, in line with her own research and philosophical convictions, and this during a difficult period for the humanities, when their traditional grounding in rational and critical research methods was at times undermined, or even denied, for non-academic reasons.

The appeal she made to the authors and readers of the quarterly upon taking up the position of Editor-in-Chief remains relevant today: “We, as contemporary people living in a world of axiological pluralism, can perhaps achieve the credibility of a comprehensive narrative in a different way, namely through the process of consultation amongst specialists and experts. To put it plainly, we can negotiate an interpretation that is credible for the times in which we live, either one or several equivalent ones. A completely different question is: do we make use of this opportunity?”

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT: The Authors declares that there was no conflict of interest in this study.

AUTHOR’S CONTRIBUTION: The Authors is solely responsible for the conceptualization and preparation of the article.

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