

Witold Marciszewski/Roman Murawski. *Mechanization of Reasoning in a Historical Perspective*. Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi 1995. *Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*; 43). ISBN 90-5183-790-9, 267 pp.

Reviewed by

VOLKER PECKHAUS

Institut für Philosophie der
Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Bismarckstr. 1

D-91054 Erlangen

E-mail: vrpeckha@phil.uni-erlangen.de

The book to be reviewed is written by two Polish authors. Polish history of logic has a great tradition, connected with the names of Jan Salamucha, Jan Łukasiewicz, Joseph M. Bocheński and others. It is a common mark of contributions in this tradition to approach historical texts from the perspective of modern logic. They use modern methods and tools to interpret and evaluate past contributions to this science. As a result of their technique to interpret the history of logic from the standpoint of modern logic as opposed to using the philological method that has long predominated, Aristotle's logic, medieval and early modern Scholastic and Renaissance contributions can be viewed in terms of their significance for today's logic. There is no doubt that this is a great advance for our understanding of the development of logic up to its present state. This advantage, however, is in practice bound up with some shortcomings. Of course, authors using such an approach are not primarily interested in the development of logic in its context, i.e., to use "the standpoint of the past under study", as Marciszewski and Murawski put it (p. 11). In consequence they select only those parts of the development of logic which they consider as relevant for its present shape. From the methodological point of view this bears the danger of a "Whiggish" approach, i.e., to restrict history to the pre-history of contemporary states.