

The goal is reconstruction and analysis of public ceremonies organized by the authorities of Gdańsk, Elbląg and Toruń (in Royal Prussia - Polish part of Prussia) between 16th century till 1793. Cities celebrated weddings, births of royal offspring, as well as deaths of Polish kings and members of royal family. Festivities happened to celebrate the military triumphs of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and especially long and extensive ones were held to honour royal visits. Analysis will include the scenarios of celebrations, including hierarchy of participants, as well as lasting and short-term effects of such festivities: panegyric literature, temporary architecture, theatre plays, ceremonial feast, music, painting, sculpture and decorative arts. It will be important to establish the role of public ceremony, its meaning in creating historical and citizen awareness of Prussian bourgeoisie, as subjects of the king of Poland. Public ceremony is usually an event of high rank socially, politically, educationally and propagandist, and at the same time artistically, involving by default majority of citizens and resulting in significant economic outcomes. The authors of the celebrations, as well as the participants, were creating an environment of total and by default compulsory gravity, sadness or joy. Such celebrations apart from forming awareness of the subjects and putting stress on hierarchy also create a vision of good taste, refinement and luxury. Because of the comprehensive character of this phenomenon, usually involving all social classes, from elite to the lowest classes, the sources available are very robust and describe a vast array of aspects forming public celebrations lasting from few to several hours, organized on the streets, public spaces and selected chambers of public and private buildings in major cities of Royal (Polish) Prussia. This research project is an interdisciplinary endeavour. The substance of existing sources forces us to apply methodologies developed in related historical fields, mainly art history (primarily iconography and iconology), literature and music. Because of that we expect great results from joining forces and methodologies of historian and art historian. Analysis of literary texts regarding ceremonial music has an important role in this project, nonetheless such studies will serve the purpose of social history study – ceremonials, “political economy” and social art history. Apart from sources originating from city offices (scenarios of the celebrations, correspondence between city council and royal courts in Poland and foreign, orders and contracts to complete works of art, city and church accounts), and narrative sources – diaries, memoirs etc., we will use sources that usually remain in scope of other historical faculties: art history, history of literature, history of music, opera and theatre, history of material culture, legal archeology. The authors are applying some methods of the new cultural history but that their goal is to develop a method using workshops and methods in the field of different schools and practices. Therefore, we use both classic quantitative methods, as well as the methods of literature research. We use also proposals of researchers of everyday life structures, microhistory, cultural semiotics (the opposition issues: weekday - a holiday, the symbolism of clothing). The choice of methods will be related to the final result of the planned queries.

Presenting a shape of ceremonial culture and political propaganda in the big cities of Royal Prussia, against the background of historical genesis is an important contribution to the understanding of social attitudes and mentality of their population - mainly German Protestant to the Polish kings. The work should show the European dimension of political patronage of the visual arts, literature, music in Gdańsk, Elbląg and Toruń modern era. The exact combination of workshops society historian and art historian, will create a unique research questionnaire and method of researching and studying ceremonial urban culture, which will be used in the study of other major cities of the Polish-Lithuanian State; also for Free Hanseatic f.e. Hamburg or Lubek. The main goal and outcome of this project is preparing a monographic book for print; side results apart from articles presenting partial research results, will include preparation in 2017 of an international symposium dedicated to ceremonial culture in Baltic cities from 16th century to 1815 (end of Napoleonic era).