

Description for the general public

The project envisages achieving two major objectives: compiling a unique online database of towns and their inhabitants and defining components of the social space of towns and small towns of Galicia at the end of the 18th century. The above mentioned project objectives will be realised by using mass and complementary historical sources from the 80s of the 18th century, created during the period of intensive political reforms in Galicia as well as the whole Austrian monarchy, i.e. the Josephinian Cadastre Survey and the so called urbarial descriptions.

The land measurements that constituted the basis for the Josephinian Cadastre were carried out in the years 1785-1788. They covered the whole area of Galicia. Most of the documents from that operation survived to modern times, including the following documents concerning towns: descriptions of the towns' borders, rules of income calculating – describing all the settlements and sites, measurement books and register books stating the area of the land property of the inhabitants, the town owner and the presbytery. The most important and most valuable part of the cadastre operates are the measurement books that specify, settlement after settlement, all the plots within the town borders. The books stated data in the following order: the topographic number of the plot, name and surname of the owner, type of agricultural condition (arable lands, meadows, gardens, pastures and forests), the plot area and obtainable harvest.

An excellent supplement of the Josephinian Cadastre are the so called urbarial descriptions, created on a great scale following Joseph II's famous regulatory patent of February 10, 1789. The descriptions consisted of two basic parts: descriptions of town communities with their supplements (*alegata*) and final registers. The descriptions of town communities stated general information on a town as well as the list of feudal duties of the inhabitants. They first specified the number of a town's owners and then listed categories of inhabitants and their obligations towards the owner. The *alegata* contained the list of all the inhabitants, including their names and surnames, conscription numbers, topographic numbers of their houses and lands, the amount of income, the number of days of serf duties and the amount of the annual tributes and the amount of the rents paid.

The town database compiled on the basis of the above mentioned sources will consist of two parts. The first part will contain transcripts of original documents characterising the physical space of towns, including, among others, distribution and area of settlements and sites, number of households and types of building development, existing utility buildings; the second part will contain a detailed description of the social space, including name lists of inhabitants with types and floorage of their estates, amounts of income, social status and ethnicity.

The components of the social space will be defined through compilation and printed publication of a collection of monographic studies on selected issues characteristic for the functioning of Galician towns at the end of the 18th century (case studies). That concerns issues like: coexistence of various national groups (Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, Armenians, Germans), religious groups (Roman Catholics, the Uniates, Protestants, Jews) and social groups (petty nobility, townspeople, peasants) as well as functioning of various centres of government during the period of intensive political changes (state, church and town authorities).

The idea to undertake the above mentioned research problem has been based upon the conviction that there is a need to share with a wide range of researchers, both domestic and foreign, the unique and very valuable sources, i.e. the Josephinian Cadastre and the urbarial descriptions. These sources have been very rarely used in research on towns and townspeople. One also needs to remember that the history of Galician towns, especially from the end of the 18th century, has never been presented in a monograph and the Josephinian Cadastre and the urbarial descriptions are the only source materials (due to lack/incompleteness of town records) that allow to recreate the demographic, legal, religious and property status, the geographical environment, urban development and economic changes undergoing at the time.