

SCIENTIFIC SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The aim of the project is to analyze and examine the academic staff constituting the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius in the interwar period. The project has been initiated by the fact that so far no other scientific work discussing the Faculty of Fine Arts and its academic staff has been conducted. There have been some insignificant contributions to the research on biographies of some academics of the faculty. The research aims to determine the impact of the academic staff on the development of the Faculty of Fine Arts and to determine its changes and reasons for such changes. Another aim is to determine the position of the faculty in an academic environment of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. The activities and initiatives undertaken by academic teachers and their involvement in student movements, cooperation with scientific circles, as well as the organization of academic events need to be examined. It is also important to determine the impact of scientific and artistic activities of the academic staff on the cultural development of the city of Vilnius, their cooperation with existing societies and the reception of the initiatives undertaken by the academics by the local inhabitants.

The project requires a detailed analysis of the sources preserved in the archives, including the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Archives of New Records in Warsaw, the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius, and in numerous university archives, including in the archives of the Warsaw Technical University and the archives of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun. The preserved documents will determine the impact of both individuals and the whole group of academic teachers on the development and functioning of the faculty. The main database includes, among others, personal files of the faculty lecturers which will determine the artistic and scientific career development of the academic teachers. The specificity of the project requires the use of personal documents. The preserved correspondence of both official and private nature makes it possible to specify a range of academic activities, initiatives, social contacts and scientific cooperation. Determining the impact of the faculty on the development of scientific and artistic communities in Vilnius will be facilitated by the analysis of diaries and memoirs. They often include subjective feelings of their authors, however, they are a valuable material for the study of various scientific and cultural contacts. Additionally, both local and national press constitutes a valuable source of research. Press releases provide information on the activities of the faculty as well as cultural and scientific initiatives. The specialized press presents journalistic activity of the lecturers of the Faculty of Fine Arts. The preserved literature of the interwar period will allow for detailed analysis of the activity of both authors associated with the faculty as well as those describing its activities.

The biographical method constitutes the basic research method in the project. It will focus on the context of the life of the academic staff. The lives of the academic staff as well as the time context, their beliefs and social, cultural and political circumstances will constitute an important factor of the entire research. The analysis of facts, events and the data from the period of activity of the academic staff at the Faculty of Fine Arts will shape the socio-historical context of higher education in the Second Republic. The research methodology will also include research techniques generated in the fields of psychology and history. The study of the source material, analysis and criticism of the sources, and the correct formation of the historical narrative are crucial elements of the research project.

An important research question concerns the impact of psychological factors, e.g. the impact of emotional ties on the cultural environment of Vilnius or on understanding the notion of patriotism. This is connected with another important aspect of the research project, namely regionalism. The study will determine how the concept of regionalism was understood at the time of establishing the Faculty of Fine Arts as well as how the concept changed over the years of the Second Republic. The activities of the faculty members aiming at the development of culture, art and science in the Vilnius region will be analyzed together with methods to promote the place as well as the means of disseminating knowledge and information. Various means of the dissemination of knowledge including monographs, papers or articles as well as public speeches, lectures, meetings, literary evenings, or radio broadcasts will be discussed. The analysis will also include the frequency of the use of innovative forms of reaching out to the public such as the use of the advertising or image creation. The project aims to present the changes and highlight the differences in the understanding of the concept of regionalism by individual teachers and artistic and cultural groups operating in Vilnius. The project will determine the place of the Faculty of Fine Arts in the cultural development of the city of Vilnius and of the academic environment of the Stefan Batory University. The project will expand the knowledge of the history of Polish higher education in the Second Republic. It will also constitute an important contribution to the study of the nature of artistic education in that period and the teaching methods used by academic staff. The project will determine the scope of cooperation between the academic community of the Faculty of Fine Arts and other cultural centers in Vilnius. The study of scientific and artistic contacts between students, joint initiatives, activities of the academic staff in the field of journalism and their involvement in cultural projects and research will provide a broad knowledge of the group and the changes that occurred within it.