

After the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, foreign legislation were gradually introduced on Polish lands. During the Napoleonic Era, in the Duchy of Warsaw (1807-1815), Emperor of the French establishment, new laws were also applied, including the French Civil Code of 1804 (Code Napoleon) and the French Code of Civil Procedure of 1806. Both of them stayed in force in the Free City of Cracow, commonly called the Republic of Cracow. They were used in local courts: the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal and the Court of Third Instance (merged later to the Higher Court), and also justice of the peace courts. In the National Archives in Krakow (display in Spytkowice) there are the complete books of civil judgments issued by these courts, numbering nearly 550 volumes. Along with the available literature on subject (studies on the history of private law and legal commentaries), they will allow to present the ways the French civil law was interpreted by Cracow judges, also in the scope of its suitability for socio-economic conditions of the Free City of Cracow.

Of interest to the authors of the project will be the subject of ownership, as one of the key institutions of the post-revolutionary (post-feudal) legal order. The issues of its acquisition, whether by obligations (law of obligations), succession (law of succession), marriage or its dissolution through divorce (matrimonial property law) will be presented, as well as the issue of co-ownership and ways of its abolition, the legal protection of ownership and limited real rights. In the course of the analysis the basic research methods will be used, that is, historical and formal-dogmatic alongside with statistical methods.

One of the reasons why it is worth to take the study of the law formerly in force in the Polish lands, is the possibility of getting know the legal heritage of earlier generations. Modern civil law is firmly rooted in the past, which is beyond doubt of high importance for the application and further development of contemporary law. The results of the analysis can also be useful for comparative research on different legal systems, especially in the context of the nowadays aspirations for the unification of private law within the European Union.