

1. Research project objectives

The proposed project has two main goals.

The first goal is analysis of the process of symbolic appropriation of erstwhile Eastern Galicia, a part of Austrian province inhabited mostly by Ukrainians, Poles and Jews before 1918, to the political, social and cultural sphere of Polishness in the Second Polish Republic, 1918-1939. A discursive dimension of this process will be investigated with special consideration, what means that textual, particularly literary, mechanisms of Polonization of the region will find themselves in the crux of the project. The process of symbolic appropriation of former Eastern Galicia to Polishness aimed at legitimization of Polish power in the region and tightening its ties with the Second Polish Republic thanks to sense-creating undertakings, a vast part of which manifested in the sphere of discourse. This process can be described as a rhetorical shift, from the idea of multinational Galicia with its Habsburg past to the concept of national Galicia referred to as Eastern Lesser Poland and conceived as an inherent part of Polish state and nation. It was thematically and ideologically established in various Polish texts, particularly literary works but also memoirs, journalism, sermons and political speeches. During twenty years of the interwar period they created the picture of former Eastern Galicia as a deeply Polish region and an integral part of interwar Poland, as well as the image of former Galicians as Poles and non-Poles hostile towards the Polish community.

The second goal of the project is identification and critical elaboration of selected voices, called in the project "counter-discourses," which opposed the process of symbolic appropriation of former Eastern Galicia to Polishness and tacitly or overtly stood against the exclusive, national Polish perspective on the region. Such voices could not provide an effective counterbalance to the dominant Polish vision of the province, as they had minor or suppressed character but nevertheless let themselves be felt in Polish, as well as Ukrainian, Jewish and German-language discourse in 1918-1939. It seemed to apply especially to the discourse on the battle of Lviv, which opened the Polish-Ukrainian war of Eastern Galicia (1918-1919). In the Polish national discourse it is called the "Defence of Lviv", while in the Ukrainian national discourse it is referred to as the heroic "November deed." Apart from these two visions, however, it had different ones like: the Jewish one (on trauma of the Lviv pogrom, 22-24 November 1918), the Austrian and German ones (on uncertainty of the end of the Habsburg epoch, fear and desire to return to one's own country), and the transnational and supranational vision in different languages (on tragedy of mixed families, the common land and city ridden with national divisions and frontlines). The project will aim at investigating selected counter-discourses to the dominant Polish perspective on the province, which were generated in the whole interwar period. First, however, it will head to analyse contested voices pertaining to the fight for Lviv, the common, Polish-Jewish-Ukrainian city, where after 1918 mobilized "imagined" national communities had precarious influence on life of "experienced" communities.

In order to elaborate these issues, the project provides for elaboration of (1) a monograph analysing both the dominant Polish discourse on former Eastern Galicia and its selected counter-discourses in 1918-1939, (2) an anthology of interwar voices on the battle of Lviv, showing it from Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, Austrian, German, as well as trans- and supranational perspective.

2. Research to be done in the project

In the project the following research activities will be run: identification of library and archival materials on the Polish and other perspectives on former Eastern Galicia in 1918-1939, selection of the materials, their translation, analysis and academic elaboration. While the Principal Investigator will investigate sources in Warsaw libraries and archives, the Principal Investigator and the Co-executor together will take the same task in libraries and archives in Wrocław, Lviv, Berlin, Jerusalem, New York and Vienna. Both Investigators will translate selected materials into Polish. One part of them will be elaborated in the monograph in the form of contextual interpretation of various texts with literature ahead. The Principal Investigator will be the author of this publication. The other part considering the battle of Lviv will be elaborated in the anthology in the form of scientific apparatus, i.e. introduction and footnotes, which will explain the context and details of the archival documents. The Principal Investigator and the Co-executor will be the co-editors of the volume.

3. Reasons for undertaking the proposed topic of research

Despite multilateral development of Galician studies, historians, as well as historians of literature and culture very rarely analyse the process of symbolic appropriation of former Eastern Galicia to Polishness in interwar Poland. Voices, which opposed the dominant Polish vision of the region, are even less investigated, especially in Polish Galician studies. Meanwhile, this process and these voices were of great importance in the interwar period. The project will show that ones of fundamental myths of the Second Polish Republic – the "Defence of Lviv" and the vision of Polishness of the province – constituted symbolic constructions aiming at certain ideological goals. It will uncover voices, which were distorted or concealed in order to create and establish these constructions. Finally, it will provide Polish scholars with archival sources, translated into Polish and critically analysed, which are unknown, hard-to-reach and, thus, very rarely used in Galician, especially Polish Galician studies.