

The aim of the project is to add colour to the monochromatic popular perception of the prints circulating in the Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the late fifteenth and sixteenth century. The Gutenberg Bible (Mainz, ca. 1452-1455) had the text printed in red and black ink. Several copies of this incunabulum were additionally richly illuminated. Similarly polychromatic were the beginnings of printing in the Polish Kingdom and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The full-page woodcut opening *Osmoglasnik* (Cracow, ca. 1491), considered the earliest book illustration printed in Poland, was additionally hand-painted in the copy held today in the Moscow State Library, as were the ornamental frame and initial on the next page. Red paint was used here for painting the blood of Christ in the scene of Crucifixion, importantly for the devotional function of this image, as well as for decorating the print to make it more appealing and similar to a manuscript. Red ink in turn played practical functions, highlighted parts of the text to facilitate its vocalization.

The distinct cultural, confessional, social and political panorama of Polish and Lithuanian print production, linked by personal networks to the vibrant German print market, promises to contribute to the better understanding of the significance of colour and its regional particularity in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century prints. Still, very little is known about how, when and why colour was applied to prints in the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Hence, the aim of this project is to fill this gap and, in so doing, on the one hand to shift the research paradigm towards colour-oriented art-historical studies on the production and consumption of prints in these lands, on the other to incorporate East-Central Europe into the ongoing, quickly developing Western studies on colour printing and print painting.

The research objective of the project is to examine colour printing as well as practices of painting prints freehand or with the use of stencils and dabbers. The analysis of numerous functions which colour played, increasing the economic, decorative, aesthetic and informative value of prints, along with the ways colour printing and print painting was perceived by their contemporary audience, will shed a light on the importance of colour in the formative and most dynamic period of print production in the studied lands.

The main outcome of the project will be a reconstruction of the history of colour printing and print painting, centred around its actors and the objects they created, and set in the distinct confessional, social and political context of the Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The project will provide new information on the production, organization, and possibly also the regulation of the print market in the studied lands. The little-known but substantial corpus of both colour and coloured prints, successively established in the course of research, will lay the foundations for further studies on material and technical aspects of colour printing and print painting in East-Central Europe.

The research questionnaire includes following questions: who, when and how experimented with colour printing? Was printing colour a novelty imported from German lands or rather were the experiments incidental and more local in character? Furthermore, who were the people professionally illuminating incunabula for the Polish and Lithuanian markets and how were they organized? What was their relationship with the printers? Were there any attempts at more standardized and mass-produced colouring with the use of stencils and dabbers? How and why did print owner-consumers colour their prints? How did the 'styles' of colouring differ along social, professional and gender lines? What did they mean to the contemporary audience? Is there any discussion concerning colour printing and print painting and the status of printed and painted colour recorded in the writings of Polish humanists or in notes left in the prints by their consumers? Finally, what is idiosyncratic about the colour prints and painted prints in terms of their chronology, production, functions and reception in the Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania?