

Popular summary

Translating Toleration: Concepts, Texts, and Intermediaries between Poland and Protestant Germany (1645–1795)

Nowadays, religious toleration is regarded as one of the most important achievements of the early modern era. Previous research has presented the concept of toleration either as an idea (theory) developed by intellectuals or as a practice of coexistence of different faiths and religions in one territory. This project aims to reveal a different meaning. We intend to look at the phenomenon of tolerance as a subject, an object, and an effect of broadly understood diplomatic relations between the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth and Brandenburg-Prussia in the 17th-18th centuries.

During this period - opened by the Colloquium Charitativum in Toruń in 1645 as organized by the Polish king, and closed by the last partition of the Republic of Poland in 1795 – the relations between Poland and Brandenburg-Prussia were extremely tense. Moreover, religious relations in both countries developed in opposite directions: in the Commonwealth, the political rights of the Protestants were gradually restricted, while Brandenburg was from 1613 onwards a bi-confessional state, where toleration was the product of *raison d'état*. During this period, toleration became an important, if not a pivotal, political tool.

In our approach, tolerance is not an abstract idea or rule of coexistence, but rather it is a category of perception and evaluation used by states in international politics. We posit that this concept was the subject of translation, i.e. adaptation and modification, resulting from the strong ties between the two countries. At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, the concept of tolerance became increasingly important in European political language. Our project investigates: the transformations of this concept and the characteristics of the "tolerant state"; the ways of creating an image of a tolerant state and promoting this image in the public sphere; the social and political consequences of acquiring the title of a "tolerant state"; and the translation of this concept between different political languages.

The project will result in a monograph prepared by the project managers, and a series of monographic articles.