

## **GENERAL AUDIENCE SUMMARY**

*God in Heaven, Tsar on Earth:*

*Imperial Authority and Peasant Religiosity in Russian Poland, 1905-1915*

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The aim of the project is to examine how the imperial Russian government instrumentalized religious issues to influence the largest social stratum of the Kingdom of Poland (also known as Russian Poland) – the peasants. The agency of the villagers themselves will also be taken into account – how they related to Russian policies and what steps did they take at the intersection of state and religious affairs. The years 1905-1915 are particularly interesting in this regard: the Kingdom was then in a state of turmoil related to the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath. On the one hand, at that time the administration was increasing its control over society, aiming to pacify it, while, and on the other hand, censorship was loosened and religious organizations were given greater freedom than before. Religion was an object of close attention by tsarist officials, and a key element of the peasants' identity, both individual and collective. In the case of Catholicism, it was an object of a conflict, while Orthodoxy was an element of the imperial ideology. All three major religions professed by the rural population of the time – Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Mariavism – will be taken into consideration. The final caesura of the project is marked by the retreat of Russian troops from the Kingdom during the First World War. The new – German and Austro-Hungarian – occupation authorities differed significantly in their attitude towards religious matters.

In order to carry out the project, research will be performed in three types of sources. Firstly, in documents of the Russian administration and clergy, which are well-preserved in Polish archives. Another important source will also be letters or diaries of the peasants themselves or the spiritual leaders of various denominations. The project will also be based on the peasant-addressed newspapers.

The importance of the project is rooted primarily in gaining knowledge about the peasantry – the largest social stratum in Europe, including the Polish lands at the time. Despite its historical importance – resulting not only from its demographic dominance – villagers are rarely the object of historians' interest. The project will join international debates on the history of religion and religiosity, in which, unfortunately, the perspective of Central and Eastern Europe is sometimes overlooked. The project will also contribute to the very actual discussion on the nature and tools of Russian imperialism throughout its history. The results of the research will be disseminated by presentation of conference papers and a book, summing up in one place the final conclusions of the inquiry.