

### **Goal of the project**

The project aims to investigate the role of William Shakespeare's *oeuvre* in the intellectual biography of Roman Brandstaetter (1906–1987), a prominent and somewhat neglected Polish Jewish Catholic writer whose life is permeated by the faith of 20<sup>th</sup> century Poland and Europe. The process of reconstructing this influence will take its starting point in the analysis of previously unexamined archival material donated by Brandstaetter to different national research institutions and libraries. The research corpus will consist mainly of notes and reading lists, sketches and drawings, and correspondence. The information gathered from archival sources and supplemented by the results of the close reading of Brandstaetter's literary works. The results of the inquiries will help to delineate the origins of the critical tradition that Brandstaetter championed regarding Shakespeare works and to retrieve the historical and biographical contexts in which Brandstaetter took to a heterogeneous and multi-genre appropriation of Shakespeare through reading, adapting, translating, and poetically rewriting the Bard.

### **Research questions**

(1) What are the historical and biographical circumstances that cause Brandstaetter to resort to Shakespeare? (2) What was the critical background of Brandstaetter's understanding of Shakespeare (secondary literature, interpretative traditions, translations of Shakespeare from other languages)? (3) What social energies were comprised into Brandstaetter's appropriations of Shakespeare – poems, *The Merchant of Warsaw*, and the translation of *Hamlet*? (4) What are Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* to Brandstaetter's biography and to the European intellectuals and writers of the post-Holocaust period?

### **Expected results and contributions**

Research conducted on Brandstaetter's various colloquies with Shakespeare will constitute a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis combining a biographical, archive-based reading of a modern Polish Jewish writer's *oeuvre* with specific focus on its intertextual entanglements with Shakespearean tropes. The project will also provide an in-depth analysis of the genetical aspect of the process of translation by looking into the notes left by Brandstaetter while completing the translation of *Hamlet*. My work may also lead to placing Brandstaetter in an international context of writers and thinkers resorting to Shakespeare while dealing with the aftermath of the Holocaust and the repercussions of the Second World War and ensuing experience of expulsion, displacement, and in the face of the political dominance of the USSR regime in Central and Eastern Europe.