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Galicia in the Realm of Habsburg Mythology¹

I.

The Habsburg dynasty ruled various areas of Europe for over six centuries. At one point, it even reigned over the first global empire in history. Its last domain, formed at the turn of the 19th century (formally in 1806), covered the territory that is today frequently described as Central Europe (German: Mitteleuropa) and for a period exceeded its current delimitation thanks to its extensive properties in Italy.²

In the final phase, the area covered around 676,500 km², stretching from the northern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains to the shores of the Adriatic Sea, and from Bavaria to Bukovina. It was a territory of varied geography, wildlife, ethnicities, denominations, cultures, and, last but not least, nationalities. This genuine mosaic was a characteristic feature of that territory. Politically, it was first the Austrian Empire, and then the dual Austro-Hungarian state. From 1848 nearly to the end of its existence, it was the monarchy of Franz Joseph, the emperor and king.³

The disappearance, breakup, or perhaps absolute dissolution of that huge state during the last few days of the "Great War" does not mean that

1. This article is based on a lecture delivered at a conference *Co po Habsburgach? Ład polityczny i społeczny w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej po rozpadzie monarchii austro-więgierskiej* held at the Pontifical University of Pope John Paul II in Kraków on 20 and 21 May 2019.

2. See: S. Grodziski, *Habsburgowie: dzieje dynastii*, 2nd edition, Kraków 2013.

3. More on the subject, see: Ch. Dickinger, *Franciszek Józef I*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 7 and ff.

time and history disappeared without a trace. What was left was the vast, rich, and varied heritage: one that all the former subjects of the "Good Old King" were bestowed with in various ways, often against their will, and which they considered a noxious burden. That heritage had different dimensions, with two coming to the fore – the material and the spiritual, both strongly differentiated internally.

I will discuss the former, seemingly simpler and easier to interpret, towards the end of this paper. As far as the latter goes, it consists of intertwined collective and cultural memories which turned into a mythology over time.⁴ I embark on that subject being aware of the infinite number of methodological, interpretive, and other pitfalls that could waylay me. Plenty of suggestions on how to approach that phenomenon can be found in academic publications from various fields of humanism, essays, and belles-lettres. In the case of historical studies, I will refer to a statement by a researcher who is far more competent in the area, Professor Krzysztof Zamorski, who both wrote and said that "a historian is helpless when facing the phenomenon of the birth of a myth, and can only analyse its already extant shape, presence, and operation. Moreover, the answers that are given here are frequently significantly different, and at times even mutually exclusive."⁵

In the process of avoiding entanglement in the analysis of the sources of myths, their types and classifications, manners of functioning and influencing human communities, following the partisans or the caustic critics of the concept of Mircea Eliade, one should still refer somehow to the phenomenon. Therefore, I believe that you can say the following about the phenomenon in question: a myth – let me generally call it the Central European historical myth – is a complex, multi-threaded relationship between time and space that contains elements of the real and the imaginary. It feeds on memory, which as a rule is selective and free from chronology, about a world that is long gone. Or, in other words: a myth is a parallel knowledge of the past, at times obscuring it, if not simply replacing. It is a chronotope of life, furnished with values that are not necessarily real and that are currently assigned to it. However, it is not a fairy tale, as,

4. See: M. Pollack, *Topografia pamięci*, Wołowiec 2017.

5. K. Zamorski, *O galicyjskich mitach*, in: *Mit Galicji*, eds. J. Purchla, W. Kos, Kraków 2014, pp. 129 and ff.

apart from imagination, the past reality is its source as well — to a greater or lesser extent.⁶

Two phases — or perhaps two periods — that emerged after both world wars, respectively, can be distinguished in the functioning of Habsburg mythology. The first is the Habsburg mythology proper, and the second I would tentatively call ‘post-Habsburg.’ Following in the footsteps of the first one, I shall be guided by Claudio Magris, a professor at the University of Trieste who was born in 1939 in post-Habsburg Trieste. In his works, Magris analysed one of the mechanisms of the Habsburg myth creation, which he found in the literature of Austrian modernism. He looked for its beginnings in certain conscious activities of the monarchy already under Maria Theresa and Joseph II, but the proper version of the myth only came out after 1918, motivated by the longing for lost values. There were three fundamental components in the Habsburg mythology as analysed by Magris, and they surfaced after the disappearance of the Empire. They were: the supranationality that clashed with the later nationalisms, a stable moral order and a sense of security destroyed by numerous political and social tremors, and the sensual and joyful hedonism that contrasted with the post-war traumas.⁷

Nonetheless, the literary or — more extensively — cultural inspirations of Habsburg mythology could only transform into lasting community emotions thanks to favourable external circumstances. Those were born from the hardships of everyday existence in the new, post-war period, when life was speeding up, full of violent changes that generated uncertainty about the coming day and forced the need to make sudden and difficult decisions. The living conditions also deteriorated. In such circumstances, memory eagerly returned to an (after all) not-too-distant, stable, safe, secure, and foreseeable — albeit perhaps somewhat monotonous at times — life in a lawful state that was turning more and more into a liberal constitutional monarchy. It was governed by a monarch — admittedly ageing but unchanging, seemingly immortal — whose lifestyle reminded one of a mid-ranking civil servant.⁸

6. J. Ronikier, *Mit i historia. Mitotwórcze funkcje podręczników szkolnych*, Kraków 2002, pp. 61 and ff.

7. C. Magris, *Mit habsburski w literaturze austriackiej moderny*, Kraków–Budapest–Syracuse 2019, pp. 41 and ff.

8. Ibidem, pp. 357 and ff.

It was precisely such images stored in the collective memory that gained warmth and lustre over time and exuded an elusive sense of peace, providing a sense of internal order in a world torn by opposition, and finally kindled a nostalgia for bygone days. Moreover, which is important, it was the time of youth. All this favoured the idealisation of the past and the birth of a single, however not the only one, Arcadian version of Habsburg mythology which followed the notion of *et tu Austria felix nube*, a paraphrase of Ovid made once by King Matthias Corvinus.⁹

The second phase, which came after the Second World War, no longer made direct references to the past monarchy, as the carriers of its memory were mostly gone and the vast share of the material heritage had been destroyed. However, that place was taken over by a myth, or perhaps, a mythology reborn in the early 1970s, even though it donned a new, more political costume. That was the myth of a Central Europe stretching between Russia and Germany, capable of safeguarding its European identity despite the brutal oppression of both the totalitarian empires and the need to exist in one of them for over five decades. We are not 'East,' we do not want to be 'East,' is what its population seemed to be crying with a single voice. In order to point to substantive arguments validating that claim, they made a precise reference to the Habsburg past, but only in a mythologised form. A large role in the development of such an attitude was played by a group, albeit small, of Hungarian and Czech intellectuals.¹⁰

Moreover, they followed – and I do not know whether fully consciously – in the footsteps of historians of the previous generation. Let me mention here the person of Oskar Halecki as a good example. He was the one to have convincingly denied – already in the early 1930s at the International Congress of Historians in Warsaw – the dichotomous division of Europe into West and East, pointing to its third, equivalent component. Reaching to times far more distant than the Habsburg 19th century, that is to the early modern era, he distinguished "Central and Eastern Europe," or "Jagiellonian and Habsburg Europe." After the Second World War, as an émigré, he expanded on the subject in his works.¹¹

9. E. Wiegandt, "Austria felix", czyli o micie Galicji w polskiej prozie współczesnej, Poznań 1997, p. 5.
10. See e.g.: J. Szuecs, *Trzy Europy*, Lublin 1995 (1st Polish edition).
11. O. Halecki, *Historia Europy: jej granice i podziały*, 2nd edition, Lublin 2002; see also: J. Cisek, *Oskar Halecki: historyk – szermierz wolności*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 193, 208 and ff.

A few decades later Central Europe, resurrected at the time in a quite uniquely motivated manner, again attracted the attention of contemporary historians and anthropologists, as well as political scientists. One of its aspects, the more bucolic and Arcadian one, is sometimes treated as the particular pre-figuration of the contemporary multinational and multicultural United Europe. In turn, its quick demise in 1918 is construed as a warning against a contemporary reprise of that catastrophe - one that, by the way, some insightful observers such as Michał Bobrzyński had rightly foreseen already in the early 1920s.¹² This is how the author of the latest synthesis of the history of the Habsburg monarchy, Pieter M. Judson, seems to perceive Austro Hungary: as a commonwealth of nations.¹³

That myth, or rather mythology, had and still has plenty of versions that are connected to individual territories, regions, and lands that were once parts of the monarchy and obviously their residents – once “my peoples” (in the words of Franz Joseph) and today mostly nationalities and nations, with some also being regional communities and ethnic groups. This took place despite significant migrations, whether voluntary or forced, connected to the significant changes of borders after both the world wars and immigration. A trace of that last phenomenon is the evidence of the Habsburg myth’s presence among the Jewish population of the Bronx in New York.¹⁴ Obviously, that mythology has its specific versions that often differ significantly from one another depending on when they originated, their creators, and the functions they play.¹⁵ Certainly, the myth of Galicia holds a significant place in this multicultural structure of Habsburg mythology.

II

The time has then come for a moment's reflection over the history of Galicia – or rather the former Galicia – after the fall of the monarchy. That chunk of the southern territories of the former Commonwealth of Poland– Lithuania entered the Habsburg space-time late in the 18th century, and by

12. M. Bobrzyński, *Wskrzeszenie państwa polskiego*, vol. 2, 1918–1923, Kraków 1925, pp. 273 and ff.
13. P.M. Judson, *Imperium Habsburgów: wspólnota narodów*, Warszawa 2017, pp. 21–24, 361, 453–456.
14. J. Shanes, *Tworzenie się narodu. Żydzi galicyjscy w państwie austriackim*, in: *Mit...*, op. cit., p. 165.
15. *Europa Środkowa: mit czy rzeczywistość?*, "Pressje. Teka druga Klubu Jagiellońskiego", Kraków 2002, pp. 5–11.

the will of Emperor Joseph II, it was formed into the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria¹⁶ and its final borders drawn at the Congress of Vienna. Like the entire monarchy, of which it became a peripheral part (province, and later the crown lands of Cisleithania), Galicia was strongly diverse in all the above-mentioned aspects and shared the history of the entire monarchy until the autumn of 1918.

However, did that date put a final end to the existence of Galicia? For the sake of order (even though I would rather treat it as a digression) let me note that some researchers of Galician Jews, and especially of the Eastern Galician Jews, postpone that moment to 1939 if not even to 1941. This is because to them, Galicia, or rather "Galicianness" — certainly construed in cultural sense — carried on in the territory. The fact that from 1918 onwards it was Eastern Małopolska, a part of the reborn Republic of Poland, was only treated as an insignificant, cosmetic change. And it cannot be ruled out that they were not completely wrong!¹⁷

However, my reflections go in another direction, as they aim to point that it was only the form of existence of Galicia that changed at the time. Its presence, still visible in the public sphere, seems to suggest that it continued in two areas of the public realm. Let me first deal with the one that is nearly within hand's reach, especially if that hand is armed with a smartphone capable of ordering "a Galician kebab" for example (which can be done in Rzeszów) and washing it down with "Galician mulled wine." This is the commercial realm.

The presence of Galicia in the commercial realm hits you between the eyes and, what is interesting, is not limited only to the former territory of Galicia on either side of the border. Its traces can be found in Łódź and the regions of Podlasie and Mazovia. The term "Galicja" is used in the brands of various products and the names of assorted service businesses, ranging from tax consultants, to advertising agencies, hotels, and restaurants, and even more frequently inns and taverns scattered throughout the country. There are very many of them, which is why it does not seem necessary to include all their addresses in this publication. What, in turn, is worth emphasising is that such establishments are entirely new in the sense that none of

16. See: L. Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia*, in: *History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*, Stanford 2010.

17. See: N. Davies, A. Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and USSR 1939–1946*, London 1991, p. 23.

them has any truly Galician roots. Galicia — or to be more precise, the words *Galicja* and *galicyjski* meaning "Galicia" and "Galician," respectively — is only a kind of a brand used for the promotion of goods, manufacturers, and service providers. It is not more than an idea of producers, company heads, institutions, and the like that such a distinction has a positive impact on the potential buyer. So to conclude, it could be claimed that this type of Galicia which functions in the contemporary world seems like a place that is highly desired by Polish people to live in.

It is not difficult to see, however, that this approach is almost completely detached from the historical context of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria that once actually existed.¹⁸ Was it really a land of advantages, highly appreciated by its inhabitants, Austrian officials, and Poles from the two other partitions, as well as visitors and travellers? And perhaps this is why it is able to make a positive impression on today's consumers of the products branded with its name? Or is it rather the restored, and at the same time strongly modified, memory of its appearance that allows such positive contemporary references?

The unexpected emergence of Galicia in the commercial realm, also on the other side of the border, was not born from nothing. Where does this phenomenon come from, then? What is its source? And from where does it draw its substance, so that it can be constantly renewed, at least so far? There must have been a reference to something that still existed and operated in reality. It was a reference to heritage, memory, and myth, and not even to the elementary knowledge of the reality that those symbols denoted. For it was precisely a part of the torn-apart Commonwealth, one of the three partitions — the Austrian one!

During the course of nearly a century and a half of its existence, Galicia underwent major transformations.¹⁹ It should be noted that "in its lifetime" it did not have a good record among its contemporaries, whether foreigners or Poles from the two remaining partitions. Alluding to the official name, terms such as "*Golicja i Głodomeria*" that were used at the time (meaning "the land of the naked and hungry") certainly did not sound encouraging. It was often perceived through a handful of unfavourable

18. S. Grodziski, *W Królestwie Galicji i Lodomerii*, Kraków 1997, p. 19.

19. See: T. Gąsowski, *Dzieje Galicji 1772–1914*, in: *Historie Polski w XIX wieku*, ed. A. Nowak, Warszawa 2013, col. 2, pp. 217–401, vol. 3, pp. 261–347.

stereotypes. I believe three of them come to the fore here: "poverty," "ignorance," and *szwarcgelberstwo* (sycophantic Austrian patriotism). The stereotypes can also be observed in the historiographical narrative. Some contemporary researchers, including the famous British-Polish historian Norman Davies, even consider them the fundamental constituents of the Galician mythology that took the form of "the kingdom of the poor and starving" or the "almshouse" — a diagnosis that does not seem to be fully correct.²⁰ For towards the end of the 19th century the original, hardly attractive Galician reality, and consequently its image, began to undergo clear and beneficial changes; a fact perceived at least by the Poles living outside it. That positive side became inscribed in the collective memory. In turn, it is worth noting that external opinion did not become more favourable at the time.

That improvement of the image of Galicia, combined with the far higher appreciation in the eyes of Poles, becomes understandable once you take a look at the situation of Poles in each of the three partitions at the time. Some liberal order had persisted in the Russian (Kingdom of Poland) and Prussian (Grand Duchy of Posen) partitions until the late 1840s, albeit in different forms that were moreover gradually modified. This made the servitude of the Polish nation relatively bearable in those areas. The harsh and constantly intensifying Russification and Germanisation only took off in the 1870s and carried on until the outbreak of the "Great War." In turn, the police regime of the Austrian Partition, harsh from the outset and not free from Germanising tendencies either, was only maintained until the late 1850s. Later came a profound re-evaluation and — compared to the two remaining partitions — Galicia became a haven of Polishness and an oasis of freedom within a liberal constitutional monarchy.²¹ These were also the impressions and feelings of the contemporary Poles who arrived in Galicia from the two remaining partitions.

This is validated by the highly exalted entry from the late 1880s in the diaries of Stefan Żeromski which accompanied a highly critical assessment of the Stańczyk faction governing the country.²² A century later, on

20. N. Davies, *Zaginione królestwa*, Kraków 2010, p. 410.
21. H. Wereszycki, *Pod berłem Habsburgów: zagadnienia narodowościowe*, 2nd edition, Kraków 2015, pp. 175 and ff.
22. S. Żeromski, *Dziennik*, vol. 6, Warszawa 1966, pp. 194–195; a note from 1889 expressing elation with the atmosphere of the "thoroughly Polish" Kraków.

reminiscing his youth in Lviv before the First World War, the excellent Polish historian Henryk Wereszycki (1898–1990) recalled a sense of freedom that was absolutely unfettered and never again experienced in his long life.²³ That contrast, emerging at the turn of the 20th century became, I believe, a fundamental source for the reinforcement of the collective memory of Galicia, purified by the passage of time of the various dark aspects of the actual existence.

It was precisely the collective memory that was, beyond doubt, an important, or perhaps the most important starting point for the development of the Galician mythology. All the more so, as that memory proved surprisingly robust. In my childhood, I happened to hear, albeit on infrequent occasions, a characteristic tune with lyrics hummed in Polish and sometimes even in German: *Boże wspieraj, Boże ochroń / Nam Cesarza i nasz kraj* (that is “God Save, God Protect / Our Emperor, Our Country”) or browse through the impressive picture book *Unsere Monarchie* published to commemorate 50 years of the reign of His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty Franz Joseph. I treat these as evidence of the strong cultural rooting of the Galician identity instilled at school, in military or civil service, etc. among its people, which could be transferred to the next generation.

The Kingdom of Galicia was swept out of its former territory by the disasters of two wars, after which its further existence proved to be no longer possible, even if only in some vestigial form. Its rescued relics were subsequently destroyed, often in a premeditated manner, by the activities of the communist regime. However, despite all those efforts, the memory of that kingdom managed to weather this unfavourable time, which proves how deeply it was rooted. It is still very much alive today, even though ostensibly highly reprocessed. To put it more precisely, these are different types of memory that gather together individual and unordered fragments of the past. They can be treated as particular nodes of memory.²⁴

That is precisely why, in spite of the seemingly valid conclusion about the nonexistence of Galicia, and contrary to the opinion of aforementioned Norman Davies, Galicia is not one of the many vanished kingdoms mentioned in his book. The Kingdom of Galicia is still alive and doing quite well.

23. *Unas w Austrii... [mówią prof. Henryk Wereszycki]*, "Merkuriusz Krakowski i Świątowły", no. 8/9 (1980), pp. 61–65.

24. More on the notion, see: *Węzły pamięci niepodległej Polski*, eds. Z. Najder et al., Warszawa 2011, p. 5.

Obviously, it lives in memory and the mythology developed on its foundation, but also in reference to the preserved heritage. How long this "life after life" is going to last is hard to foresee, but at this point the current existence of Galicia seems stable.

The long-observed presence of the myth of Galicia, as well as its operation in the public realm, have inspired much academic research as well as coverage in journals, most of which has been neutral if not favourable towards the phenomenon. This was corroborated by the prominent exhibition *The Myth of Galicia* (Kraków, Vienna, 2014–15) organised by the joint forces of the Austrian and Polish museum services. It enjoyed a great deal of interest from the people of Kraków and Vienna who mostly accepted its positive message, as proved by the recorded evaluations and reactions, and as attested by the high turnout and publications in the press.

Through its title, but also thanks to the highly attractive arrangement, the exhibition itself finally sanctioned the existence of the Galician mythology, and it was a similar case with the lively public disputes and assorted publications – beginning with the vast catalogue and further, mostly journalistic, texts, including those in the special issue of *Herito* magazine – that accompanied it.²⁵ Despite many interesting and equally inspiring conclusions which were, in many cases, mutually contradictory, one does not get the impression that those publications provided a clear and coherent explanation of the origin of the Galician myth and the mechanisms of its cultivation, or especially the assessment of the desirability of its further cherishing. Because as much as most myths are born spontaneously, their maintenance – if not their dissemination – may, in a way, be managed.

Apart from the rare exceptions (such as Professor Krzysztof Zamorski), numerous distinguished participants in the debates hardly questioned the situation, with some even emphasising the positive impact of the myth of Galicia in the community dimension. In this context, the myth was something of a platform for supra-regional community identification, at the same time reinforcing the European cultural identity of its inhabitants. For that myth has a far broader scope than just Polish memory and culture: it extends beyond Polish borders to encompass primarily Ukraine, or at least its western expanses. It is also present, albeit to a lesser degree, in Austria, Czechia, and also in Israel and the United States. In each case, it functions

25. „Herito: dziedzictwo, kultura, współczesność”, no. 21 (2015).

in a peculiar shape generated by the sources that shaped it and by local circumstances. Despite the century-long absence of the very concept of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, its intensity and the scale of impact on Polish society can only be compared to the myth of the Kresy – the Eastern Borderlands – with both cases treated as particular Arcadias.

The collective memory of Galicia is first founded on a certain universal mechanism that means that the bygone years of youth are recalled in a positive light, even if they were difficult. The passing of the years favours the smoothing of the past, the healing of wounds, and the enhancement of memories with a lustre born from the hopes of young people entering maturity for a long and happy life. Its continuation, under the radically changed post-1918 conditions, often stood in stark contrast with the youthful plans and ambitions, which brightened the past even further.

That memory was cultivated precisely in that form after 1918, but mostly for private use, that is beyond the public realm. It was manifested in the retention and often conscious cherishing of various relics of Galician custom, tradition, and culture, and the artefacts and lifestyle they produced in many families, at least until 1939. That space of memory also encompasses the nostalgia for the lost land of youth spent in "Kakania," a slightly scatologically sounding term sometimes used for the "imperial-royal" state of the hoary-headed Franz Joseph, which extends far beyond Galicia.

For a time, initiated by the disaster of the Second World War and its aftermath, the collective memory of Galicia was concealed if not effaced. That was a consequence of the break in the continuity of existence caused by the deaths of the last generations of the inhabitants of Galicia, the wartime destruction, and the profound social, economic, political and cultural transformations of the area.

The moment of rediscovery of Galicia – fishing it out from the morass of official oblivion – can be dated to the mid-1960s. However, the first hints, later used as myth-forming material, emerged even earlier. The literary, ergo cultural, beginning of disclosure of that mood of nostalgia for a bygone world and time originated, to a great degree, in the works of Joseph Roth, a German-language writer born in Brody and active between the two world wars, which included numerous Galician themes.²⁶ Roth wrote of a non-existing

26. A. Sznajder, *Galicia – twórcza inspiracja Józefa Rotha*, "Krakowskie Pismo Kresowe", 6 (2014), p. 93.

Galicia, perhaps not fully seriously, as a "paradise with minor faults," Referring to the Polish-language literary output from between the two world wars, one should quote here its outstanding achievements, primarily Bruno Schulz's *Sklepy cynamonowe* (*The Street of Crocodiles* aka *Cinnamon Shops*) and *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* (*Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, perfectly turned into film by Wojciech Jerzy Has), and in the period after the Second World War by the works of Włodzimierz Odojewski – *Zmierzch świata*, *Wyspa ocalenia* and *Zasypie wszystko, zawieje*, of Andrzej Kuśniewicz – especially *Lekcja martwego języka* (very well adapted for the cinema, this time by Janusz Majewski), *Królestwo Obojga Sycylii* and *Strefy*, of Stanisław Vincenz – two volumes of *Na wysokiej Połoninie*, *Tematy żydowskie*, *Prawda starowieku: obrazy, dumy, i gawędy...* and *Barwinkowy wianek, epilog*, and to go further – a cycle of novels by Andrzej Stojowski which starts with *Podróż do Nieczajny*, Julian Strzykowski's trilogy *Austeria* (expertly filmed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz), *Głosy w ciemności* and *Echo*, and what could be considered their epilogue – *Wielki strach*, a novel based on memories. That impressive list could certainly be developed much further.

The list also includes diaries and memoirs, many of which have a high literary merit, for example Andrzej Krzeczonowicz's *Nasze Bolszowce* and the above-mentioned Andrzej Kuśniewicz's *Mieszaniny obyczajowe*, as well as the books trying to reconstruct the Galician past: Antoni Kroh's *Starorazecza*, and Tadeusz Olszański's *Kresy Kresów: Stanisławów*. Deserving of special attention are the works of Martin Pollack maintained in an original convention of a historical reportage. They include *Po Galicji: o chasydach Hucułach, Polakach i Rusinach. Imaginacyjna podróż po Galicji Wschodniej i Bukowinie, czyli Wyprawa w świat, którego już nie ma; Cesarz Ameryki. Wielka ucieczka z Galicji*; and *Topografia pamięci*; and also *Mythos Czernowitz: eine Stadt im Spiegel ihrer Nationalitäten*. Such works – and I have only quoted here spectacular examples of sophisticated literature – are also practised on the other side of the border. These works have strongly contributed to a particular deconstruction of the image of Galicia and to its subsequent restoration in a new, mythologised version that strongly differs from the original.

An important element supporting the collective memory is the presence of the remnants of the material heritage of Galicia, despite all the turmoil of history. It is best (and certainly most) visible in the quite prolific architectural heritage in towns both large and small (perhaps even more visible in the latter) as many of their centres were built late in the 19th century.

For this reason, attention should be paid to the fragments of metropolitan developments of Lviv and Kraków which maintained a near-uniform art nouveau appearance. In the latter city this extends to Matejko Square, and Retoryka, Długa and part of Karmelicka streets. This is also true for individual buildings, primarily public utility buildings, city halls, banks, courts of law, schools, theatres, and some churches, and more often – barracks, museums and libraries, railway stations, and headquarters of institutions as well as numerous assorted science, community, culture, charity societies and associations and so forth, in Galicia.

A separate place is occupied by the relatively infrequent, yet all the more precious, industrial sites, including the breweries in Żywiec, Okocim and Kraków, and industrial plants such as Kraków's Cygarfabryka, whose characteristic presence in the urban landscape seems to see its doom today.

Another, but no less important category comprises the still operating religious and secular institutions, and the associations that either originated or operated in the days of Galicia. They are still quite numerous and include Sokół – the 'Falcon' Gymnastic Society, the originally Galician, and later Polish, Tatra Society (currently: PTTK), the Archbrotherhood of Mercy, the Chamber of Commerce and Trade, the Congregation of Merchants, and an array of guilds and sports clubs. Let us finally adorn this arbitrary list with the Academy of Arts and Letters (currently: PAU).

The individual, variously composed fragments of that collective memory of a world that is increasingly distant in time favoured the birth of a positive myth of Galicia which was there to protect it from eventual disappearance. For it turned out that it was still needed and its mission has not yet been accomplished. Its effect was its reconstruction in thus-construed form, which, as I have mentioned, took place in the 1970s. At that time, the Galician myth again became part of the more extensive mythology of Central Europe, feeding to a great extent on the memory of the Habsburg monarchy.

One final comment to close: the cultivation of the current, mostly commercial function of Galicia is hardly ever accompanied by reflections on the sense or reason for cherishing its mythology, for this is what I believe this to be. Are the material benefits, because there must be some, a sufficient justification for the glorification of the Austrian partition in contemporary Poland?

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Abstract

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Galicia in the Realm of Habsburg Mythology

Keywords:

Habsburg
myth, House of
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The disappearance, breakup, or perhaps the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy into nonexistence in the last several days of the "Great War" did not mean that time and history disappeared without a trace. For it left a rich and varied heritage consisting of intertwined collective and cultural memories that transform over time into a mythology. An important place in that Central-European, Habsburg mythology is taken by the myth of Galicia. The evidence of its existence and vitality is in its emergence several years ago, as unexpected as it was intensive, in the commercial realm. That was made possible by drawing references on heritage, remembrance, and myth, and not by a knowledge — even elementary — of the reality under this banner. The Kingdom of Galicia was wiped out from the territory it used to occupy by the disaster of two wars. Yet a memory of it, evidently strongly rooted, managed to survive that unfavourable time and today it is still very much alive, even though greatly transformed. The time that has passed, together with all the historical tremors during that time, resulted in a kind of deconstruction from which a new, mythical form of Galicia emerge. It began to live its own peculiar life which has hardly anything in common with the original. The realm in which its presence is best visible today is what can be broadly called "commercial use." The cultivation of the current, predominantly commercial functionality of Galicia is only rarely accompanied by a reflection on the sense or reason for the cherishing of its mythology, which is what is actually taking place. Are the material benefits — because there must be some — a sufficient justification for the glorification of the Austrian partition in contemporary Poland?

Abstrakt

Tomasz Gąsowski

Galicia w kręgu habsburskiej mitologii

Zniknięcie, rozpad czy też może rozpłynięcie się w niebycie monarchii habsburskiej w ciągu kilku ledwie ostatnich dni „wielkiej wojny” nie oznaczało, że czas i historia wyparowały bez śladu. Pozostało bowiem po niej bogate i różnorodne dziedzictwo. Tworzą go splecone z sobą – pamięć zbiorowa i pamięć kulturowa przeobrażające się z czasem w mitologię. W tej śródowo europejskiej, habsburskiej mitologii ważne miejsce zajmuje mit Galicji. Świadectwem jego istnienia i żywotności jest tyleż niespodziewane co intensywne pojawienie się jej przed kilkunastu w obszarze komercji. Było to możliwe skutkiem odwołania się do dziedzictwa, pamięci i mitu, nie zaś do elementarnej choćby wiedzy o rzeczywistości kryjącej się pod tym szyldem. Królestwo Galicji zostało zmiecone z zajmowanego niegdyś terytorium dwoma kataklizmami wojennym. Wszelako pamięć o nim, głęboko jak widać zakorzeniona, zdołała jednak przetrwać ten zły czas. Dziś żyje nadal, choć mocno przetworzona. Upływające lata wraz ze wszystkimi towarzyszącymi im dziejowymi wstrząsami dokonał jej swoistej dekonstrukcji, z której wyłoniła się nowa, mityczna postać Galicji. Zaczęła ona żyć niejako własnym życiem, właściwie bez związku z oryginałem. A sferę, w której jej obecność jest dziś najbardziej widoczna stanowi właśnie szeroko pojęta komercja. Kultywowaniu aktualnej, komercyjnej głównie funkcjonalności Galicji rzadko towarzyszą refleksje nad sensownością czy też celowością pielęgnowania, bo tak w istocie się dzieje, jej mitologii. Czy korzyści materialne, bo zapewne takie istnieją, stanowią wystarczające uzasadnienie dla gloryfikowania w Polsce zaboru austriackiego?

Słowa kluczowe:
mit habsburski,
Habsburgowie,
Franciszek Józef,
Galicia, Autonomia
Galicyjska