

Lviv: City – Society - Culture Research and Publishing Project

1. The History of the Project

The Research and Publishing Project “Lviv: City – Society – Culture” was initiated in 1992 by historians from the Ivan Franko State (currently, National) University in Lviv, and the Commission of National Education Senior Pedagogical School (currently, Pedagogical University) in Cracow.

By agreement a biennial conference would be held alternately in Lviv and Cracow, and the scientific research papers read there published in a compendium. Heedful of Lviv’s multicultural history, Diplomatic Services and municipal administrations have not been sparing in their support, and the events have typically enjoyed the attention of researchers and public alike.

In terms of its comprehensive substance and methodological approach, the thematic trajectory of the conferences has undergone a number of changes. The initial conferences were accompanied by a certain emotional heightening, and yet despite the end of decades of isolation, and the formation of mutual (and too often pejorative) stereotypes and the functioning of mononational historical narratives, Ukrainian and Polish historians were afforded the opportunity to carry on an open scientific dialogue. Yet at that time, the circle of specialists in Lviv history was rather limited, and thus the bulk of the materials available related to the wider Galician context, with occasional illustrations drawn from Lviv history.

In 2002, with the benefit of a decade’s experience, the need for a change in approach became apparent, and thus was born the concept for the thematic direction of all future conferences. The inaugural themed conference – “Lviv-Cracow: the Dialogue of Cities in Historical Retrospective” – was held in Lviv in 2002. In truth, the organizers at the time were not able to fully carry out their aims. The conferences conducted in those early days were marked by a certain methodological naïveté, and perhaps the inopportune pursuit of occasional issues proposed for consideration. In untiring anticipation of newly developed research, the publication of the volumes of conference papers was delayed for five years.

Yet, with the passage of time, conference organizers showed resolve in holding to their research track. Subsequent conferences bore the subheadings of “The People of Lviv” (Cracow, 2004), “Government Authorities, Officials, & Institutions” (Cracow, 2008), “Confessional Groups in Lviv: Nearby and/or Together – Neighborly or Merely Nearby” (Lviv, 2010), and “The Everyday Life of the City” (Cracow, 2012). In keeping with the 750th Anniversary of Lviv, the 2006 Conference held in Lviv possessed a somewhat wider focus. It was felt that a large-scale scientific event like the conference should address core issues from Lviv history – on correlations of the national history in the cultural and political traditions of the city, on its joint aims and everyday realities, on the cultural singularities and commonalities of the city from a central European perspective. The research materials produced by this conference were published in two volumes.

As of this writing nine conferences have taken place, the most recent in Cracow in 2012, and eight volumes of assembled scientific research articles have been released. The conference materials are published in both Ukrainian and Polish, and are comprised of 285 articles by 145 Ukrainian and 137 Polish authors. Researchers from Germany, the United States, and Russia have occasionally taken part in the conferences, attending by private invitation.