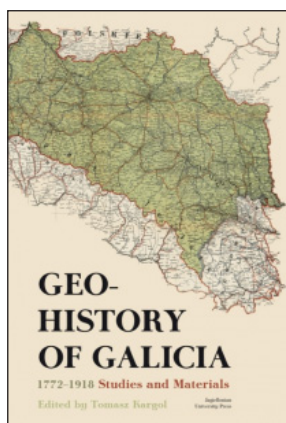


**Geohistory of Galicia 1772–1918: Studies and Materials**, edited by **Tomasz Kargol**, translated by **Krzysztof Barnaś**, Jagiellonian University Press, Kraków, 2024, 431 pp., list of illustrations

This valuable book is the first work of its kind dealing with the former Habsburg province of Galicia. It reviews a range of



sources available for those who wish to work on the region's geohistory, that is, history with a firm geographical/spatial grounding. It also shows, via case studies, how one might undertake such research. One might call the book a must-read for those considering research in Galician geohistory and other related disciplines, such as environmental history.

The introduction provides a thorough overview of the history of the term geohistory and the relevant extant Polish literature, beginning with the study of natural disasters in the interwar period. Other topics covered include (among others) the natural environment, climate and crop failures, changes in the landscape, rivers and forests, as well as the literature connected with travel and tourism.

An initial substantial chapter by the volume's editor, Tomasz Kargol, provides an excellent, systematic, up-to-date guide to pertinent sources in Galician geohistory in Polish, Ukrainian, and Austrian

archives as well as in published form. The author divides his sources into three categories. At 40 pages in length, written sources – further subdivided by category – comprise the bulk of the chapter. The author also covers cartography (12 pages; several important maps are noted as now being available online) and iconography (especially photographs; 4 pages). With its 10-page bibliography, this chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

It is not a stand-alone chapter, however. In three places in his chapter, Kargol defers to the coverage elsewhere in the book. One of these concerns the use of the press, its advantages and pitfalls, which is the focus of Adam Świątek's thoughtful chapter, which examines more than just the Polish-language press. Likewise, it is Łukasz Jewuła who deals with descriptions of Galicia by Polish and German travelers in the late 18th and early 19th century. Featured are German-language accounts by Franz Kratter, Baltazar Hacquet, Joseph Rohrer, Karl Feyerabend, Sameul Bredeztzky, and their Polish counterparts by Ewaryst Kuropatnicki, Stanisław Staszic, and Maciej Bogusz Stęczyński. There are also two chapters on Austrian land surveys. In addition to his assessment of the sources, Krzysztof Ślusarek demonstrates how tax documents and property inventories can be used to reconstruct the geographical space of Zabolotiv/Zabłotów, in eastern Galicia. Second, an extensive chapter by Daniel Krzysztof Nowak uses data from the Josephinian Land Survey (second half of the 1780s) on the Dukla district to demonstrate how soil type and natural conditions determined the profitability of a given piece of land. While religious denomination played no role in

determining agricultural outcomes, the Greek Catholic population, historically settled on less profitable land under Wallachian law, faced the consequences of that settlement.

In another informative chapter, Krzysztof Ostafin and Jarosław Działek examine medium-scale (1:25,000–1:200,000) topographic and economic maps produced, in the main for military purposes, at different moments during the history of Galicia, beginning with the so called Mieg's map (Josephinian Land Survey), which gives one a starting point from the beginning of the partition period, through the photogrammetrical Fourth Military Survey (1896–1915). Most of these maps are available online. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the cartographic section of Kargol's chapter. Robert Lipelt's solid contribution covers sources (again, grouped by category) for the history of forests and forestry in Galicia, which possessed significant timber reserves. It turns out there is much less information about the period before the mid-19th century, when forest cover began to recede significantly.

Several chapters deal with case studies, such as Paweł Franczak's on epidemics in the highland region of Babia Góra, during the mid-century conclusion of the Little Ice Age, in which he put parish registers to good use. Klemens Kap

analyzes transregional trade statistics for the entirety of Galicia's existence to explain how the region was peripheralized. Roman Masyk has written an interesting history of the gasification of cities in Eastern Galicia, from the mid-19th century to the 1930s, demonstrating how the region's abundant natural gas was long undervalued. A final chapter seems not entirely to fit a book focusing on Galicia: Andrzej Przegaliński's study of the landed gentry in the Kingdom of Poland in the twenty years from 1864 to 1884. While the post-emancipation transition could be instructive for students of the parallel (if somewhat earlier) phenomenon in Galicia, the source base reflects a different political entity and reality.

All told, this book provides an exemplary source base for the study of spatially conditioned aspects of Galician history. It should be on the reading list of scholars and graduate students interested in either Galicia or geohistory, as it opens up venues for future research. This researcher learned a good deal from the book. Kudos to the "Seminar on the Geohistory of Galicia (1772–1918) Research Platform" that produced this work; one hopes for further fruitful international and interdisciplinary projects like this in the field. ■

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