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FOREWORD

We invite you to read the third annual IBSC newsletter in which you will find a report on our activities in 2023.

The highlight of this year was the *Border Seminar 2023*. The fourth edition of our flagship international conference was titled “Migration Narratives and Border Studies” and gathered together more than fifty scholars from around the world. The events included keynote addresses by ancient historian Andrew Gardner (University College of London), David Newman (Geopolitics chair at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev), theater scholar Stephen Wilmer (Trinity College in Dublin) and American documentary filmmaker Jesse Lerner. Hosted at the Faculty of Languages and Museum of Emigration in Gdynia, *Border Seminar 2023* also offered student workshops: *Writing Fronterizo!* focused on border storytelling and was led by Chicano authors Carlos Morton (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Santiago Vaquera-Vasquez (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque); *Gdansk City Symphony: Border Metropolis* was led by Jesse Lerner and resulted in an experimental film about 24 hours in the life of Gdańsk. Apart from multiple panels focusing on, among others, refugee crisis and narratives of crossings, *Border Seminar 2023* also featured a performance by a California-based troupe led by playwright and hip-hop theater pioneer Rickerby Hinds (UC Riverside). *Dreamscape* performed by actress/dancer Natalie Micciche and beatboxing artist John “Faahz” Merchant was an amazing success. During the conference we joined forces with the Melammu Project, an international group of scholars of antiquity. Their parallel workshop session entitled “Experiencing Borders in Antiquity” was another important landmark event in our Center’s history as we expanded our horizons into ancient history. Further collaboration is planned for the future. Finally, the conference featured a panel roundtable on the future of border studies at which, apart from David Newman, Stephen Wilmer and Santiago Vaquera-Vasquez, we were joined by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (Border Studies, University of Victoria) and Astrid Fellner (Border Studies and American Studies, Saarland University). The number of events and the community of scholarship exceeded our expectations when we began six years earlier on a much smaller scale. Many thanks are due to all our collaborators, colleagues and interns, who made it a reality. Thanks also to the artist Maiza Hixson who designed the conference poster and the performance artist Martin Blaszk who accompanied the proceedings with a three-day performance of endurance dedicated to an embodied investigation of the process of crossing borders!

Another important event the IBSC was involved in was Cambridge University's Center for Geopolitics' Baltic Summer School "Border Infrastructures Changes and Socio-Cultural Impact (Past and Present)". Members of the IBSC helped organize the events centered on Gdańsk and its region and provided invaluable insights into the history and the present day of the region, as well as into border theory.

In the fall, the IBSC hosted four special lectures by guests from abroad. The first was by legal scholar Dr. Lorena Calvo-Mariscal of the University of Cadiz's SEA-EU Observatory for Migration and Human Rights. It was followed by American actor and professor Irwin Appel's talk on borders in Shakespeare and by American author Georgia Scott's talk and reading from her new book *American Girl: Memories that Made Me*. The series closed with social anthropologist Magdalena Brzezińska's talk "'Emigration is luck': Destiny, uncertainty and witchcraft in migratory journeys from the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau" in December.

There were many other events and successes of our members that you will learn about in this Newsletter. Two, however, deserve special mention. One was our collaboration in organizing an international conference "Borderlands facing a polycrisis in the 21st century. Resilience and future perspectives of cross-border relations" hosted by the University of Wrocław and the University of Opole in September 2023. This relationship testifies to the recognition of the work of the IBSC by these well-known centers for border studies and we will continue working together in the future.

Another extremely important event happened this year. On September 1st, our senior member, professor Carlos Morton, the recipient of the first artistic commission by the IBSC, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Black and Latino Playwrights Award by the Texas State University in San Marcos. We wholeheartedly congratulate Carlos! We are also proud to announce that *Trapped in Amber/Zakłete w Jantarze*, his play about Gdańsk as the borderlands will be published next year. Orale!

We envisage our work as what American studies scholars Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipstiz call "accompaniment." We want to foster communication, imagine new ways of doing scholarship and relating to the community and academia. We hope our work can contribute to a better understanding of our condition in a polarized world, to build bridges between different worlds and worldviews, and to recognize what differences make a difference. If you think you share this sentiment, consider joining us. Thank you for supporting our work!

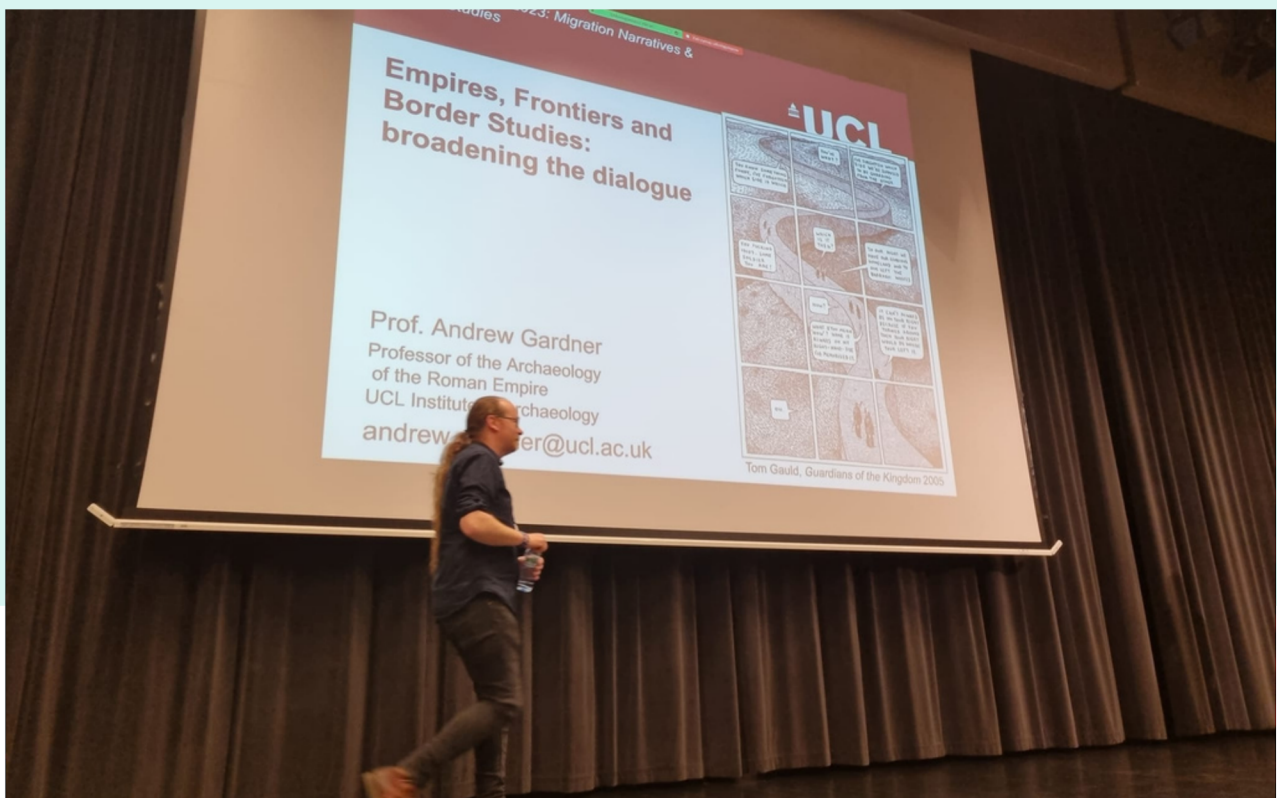
GRZEGORZ WELIZAROWICZ

CONFERENCE

BORDER SEMINAR 2023 **MOST SPECTACULAR SO FAR!**

The *Border Seminar 2023: Migration Narratives and Border Studies* took place between 15–26 May, spanning almost two weeks. During that time, the participants had many opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of border studies thanks to the varied program of the conference.

The first keynote lecture was given by Prof. Andrew Gardner from the University College of London on May 23rd. The following day's proceedings began with a lecture by Prof. David Newman from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, while on Thursday, May 25th, it was the turn of Prof. Stephen Elliot Wilmer from the Trinity College in Dublin to give a keynote speech. Each of these lectures had something in common – their focus was on borders and migration.



The crowning event of the *Border Seminar 2023* was the roundtable debate “Border Studies in Gdańsk: Towards a Border Aesthetics Program at the University of Gdańsk”. Chaired by Ross Aldridge, the discussion included contributions by: Astrid Fellner (North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Saarland University and UniGR-Center for Border Studies), Stephen Wilmer (School of Drama, Trinity College Dublin), David Newman (Department of Politics and Government, Ben-Gurion University), Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez (Department of Spanish and Portuguese, UNM Albuquerque), Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (Professor & Jean Monnet Chair, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria). The speakers discussed two major issues: the state of Border Studies worldwide and the new goals of the IBSC.

More than 70 participants from around the world took part in the *Border Seminar 2023*, and around 45 of them attended in person. It was the biggest event yet to be organized by the IBSC and the largest of the Border Seminars to date. The conference brought together researchers from many countries, including Germany, United States, Great Britain, Canada, Israel, China, Pakistan, Ukraine, Finland, Lithuania, Czechia, Austria, and Italy. The conference’s program was created and coordinated by Grzegorz Welizarowicz with a team including Ross Aldridge, Martin Blaszk, Krzysztof Ulanowski and Anna Mazurkiewicz.





Rickerby Hinds with John "Faahz" Merchant



Jesse Lerner



Border Seminar, session on Ukrainian Border-Crossing chaired by Magdalena Nowak. Presenters (left to right): Maryna Keda (Chernihiv), Yulia Kiselyova (Kharkiv), John P. Dunn (VSU)



Izabela Morska



Grzegorz Welizarowicz

GDANSK CITY SYMPHONY: BORDER METROPOLIS

On 15–19 May the first student workshop, Gdansk City Symphony: Border Metropolis, took place. It was conducted by Jesse Lerner, a Southern California-based American documentary filmmaker. Inspired by the international cycle of city symphony films of the 1920s avant-garde (*Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, *Man with a Movie Camera*, etc.), the aim of this intensive workshop was to produce a symphony of 24 hours in the life of Gdansk, with an emphasis on the city as a border zone, a crossroads of cultures, and a hub of trade, migration, and commerce. The students worked collectively to conceptualize, shoot, edit, and create a soundtrack for the short documentary project, which was then presented on the last day of the conference, 26th May.



PRESENTS

carlos morton and santiago vaquera-vásquez

**WRITING FRONTERIZO!
CREATIVE WRITING
WORKSHOP WITH
CHICANO AUTHORS**

FOR MORE INFO GO TO: [HTTPS://IBSC.UG.EDU.PL/EVENTS/OTHER/](https://ibsc.ug.edu.pl/events/other/)

MAY 22, 23, 25, 2023

artwork: *border jump* by ricardo duffy

border seminar 2023

WRITING *FRONTERIZO!* CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH CHICANO AUTHORS

On the afternoon of May 22nd, the next student workshop of the *Border Seminar 2023* began, Writing *fronterizo!* with Carlos Morton and Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez, two prominent Chicano authors.

Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez espouses the critique of “migritude”. His epistemic and aesthetic orientation can be termed as *pensamiento fronterizo*. He proposes a “migratory aesthetics” of the “unbearable lightness of being *fronterizo*” where the sense of lightness is the result of in-betweenness and freedom engendered by the borderlands. Thus, a *fronterizo* practice undermines reifying narratives and posits contestatory strategies for emerging cultures.

Carlos Morton’s work, driven by his Taoist sense of *mestizaje*, is part morality play and commedia del’ arte and utilizes archetypes of the picaro and ritual. His theater is “necessary”, both entertaining and vital to the well-being of the community it addresses. In 2022 Morton wrote *Trapped in Amber*, a play about Gdańsk as the border region.

During the workshop, Vaquera-Vásquez and Morton offered an introduction to the theoretical and imaginary horizon of *fronterizo* and *mestizo* thinking and aesthetics. The writing exercise involved using this model to create a new scene for Morton’s play *Trapped in Amber*, to write a narrative in prose about one of its characters, or a poem based on the play or history of the region, its everyday life, or even a memory or a confession from a particular day in one’s life in the city, etc. Participants were also able to develop soundtrack and staging ideas. The results of the students’ work were presented in front of an audience on the second to last day of the *Border Seminar 2023*, May 25th.



STAGE PLAY: *DREAMSCAPE*

On May 23rd, as a part of the *Border Seminar 2023*, a theatre performance *Dreamscape* by Rickerby Hinds was performed by Natali Chloe Micciche and John "Faahz" Merchant.

Dreamscape depicts the death and inner life of a young woman, "Myeisha Mills," who dreams though the impact of the twelve bullets that kill her. A meditation and reimagining of the night of December 28, 1998, when nineteen-year-old Tyisha Miller was shot and killed by four Riverside Police Department officers while she lay unconscious in a car; the play takes a powerfully clear-eyed look at the relationships between race, the body, and violence.

Through Beatboxin', spoken word and dance the performance is structured around an autopsy report recited by a dispassionate coroner. As each of the twelve bullet wounds is described in horrifying clinical detail—the damage done to the arm, shoulder, scalp, teeth, thigh, neck, back, breast, eye, mouth, skull—Myeisha reminisces about her life, using each body part as a jumping off point. She describes the pleasures of softball, dancing, kissing, and hair styling with sweetness, humor, and all the insight of a nineteen-year-old.

A full recording of this beautiful performance is available on the International Border Studies Center YouTube channel and the IBSC website.

University of Gdańsk

International Border Studies Center
Faculty of Languages
present

Rickerby Hinds'

DREAMSCAPE
performance at
the Border Seminar 2023

John "Faahz" Merchant

Natali Micciche

Jerzy Limon Theater, Neophilology, UG, May 23, 2023

IBSC

FILM SCREENINGS

Another part of the *Border Seminar 2023* comprised of multiple film screenings. These events were truly special, clearly showcasing the artistry of all of the filmmakers.

On May 19th, the first screening took place. It was Jesse Lerner's *Ruinas/Ruins* (1999), which was presented at UG's Main Library. Surveying representative moments from the history of Mesoamerican antiquarianism, this experimental documentary suggests how diplomacy and Pan-Americanism framed the recontextualization of archeological objects as art. Part faked newsreel, part diffusionist rant, *Ruins* uses appropriated sounds and images to contemplate a history of appropriated objects.

A screening of Jesse Lerner and Rubén Ortiz-Torres' *Frontierlandia/Frontierland* (1995) was next and took place at the Emigration Museum in Gdynia on May 24th. It was accompanied by a lecture by Lerner, titled "Hall of Mirrors". The movie explores the points of contact between the United States and Mexico. Through the medium of an experimental film, the borderlands are presented as a laboratory of hybridization that continues to exceed the expectations of each nation.

On May 23rd, David Newman conducted a border film workshop where he presented and discussed his movie *Peeking Over the Wall* (2016) about the Israel-Palestine separation barrier.

Although the screening of Alain Berliner's *Le Mur/The Wall* (1998), a surrealistic story about barriers and crossing them, was unfortunately cancelled, the film was made available to the participants and a list of thought-provoking discussion points was prepared by David Newman.



On the final day of the *Border Seminar 2023*, the participants could experience *The Fragmentations Only Mean...* (2021) directed by Jesse Lerner and Sara Harris. The screening was followed by a discussion with Lerner himself, who provided invaluable insight. The documentary is an audiovisual landscape of the Noah Purifoy Outdoor Museum, located in the California high desert. The artist spent the last eighteen years of his life creating an ambitious series of over a hundred assemblage sculptures that address issues of North American history, race relations, social justice, contemporary philosophy, and human interactions with an impact upon the environment.

The screening of Stephen Wilmer and his son Alex's documentary *One in a Million* (2023) concluded the *Border Seminar 2023*.



ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE: TWO NIGHT WALKS *THREE BORDERS*



Border Seminar 2023 artist in residence Martin Blaszk's performance *TWO NIGHT WALKS THREE BORDERS* began at night on Tuesday, May 23rd, when he started to walk from Gdansk Wrzeszcz to the port of Gdynia. It continued on May 24th at the Emigration Museum and onto the following day, Thursday, May 25th at the UG Campus to which Martin walked back overnight. After 11:20 a.m. that same Thursday, Martin presented his paper on "Ambulant Process" at the *Border Seminar 2023*. Congratulations to Martin Blaszk for this outstanding and discreet work of art/scholarship or research-based practice.



INTERVIEW

WITH PROF. MIŁOSŁAWA BORZYSZKOWSKA-SZEWCZYK



Hello, Professor Borzyszkowska-Szewczyk. You are a professor at the Institute of German Philology at the University of Gdańsk. How did your interest in the German language and the culture connected with it begin?

Hello. Thank you for inviting me.

For generations, my family has been connected to Pomerania, Kashubia and Gdańsk. You could say that we are an example of the rich fabric of the borderland, living on the border of Polish and German culture “since the beginning of time”. The Borzyszkowski family comes from the south of Kashubia; the village Borzyszkowy lies near Bytów, and Jabłuszek Wielki – the home of the part of our family dubbed Fiszka/Wyszka – near Lipusz, almost exactly on the interwar Polish-German border. The Kosznik family from my mother’s side came from Kociewie to Kościerzyna, and from there my grandfather travelled to Lviv to study. His later wife and my grandmother Hildegarda or Lila Makowska was born to a Polish-German family in Tczew and graduated from the Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa [High School of Commerce] in the Free City of Danzig, which was founded by the Polish Educational Society. My parents’ friends from different parts of Kashubia would meet at my family home, alongside postwar Gdańsk residents with various family stories, including ones from the Free City of Danzig, as well as prewar ones, from the west and east of Germany. If the adults started talking about things not suitable for a child’s ears, a ritual phrase “Kinder sind hier”, that is “children are here”, would be said, and the conversation would swiftly continue in German.

For a child habitually eavesdropping on adults' conversations, such situations of being cut off from the source of information were extremely annoying. Because of this, in the last grade of primary school, I entered an intensive German course, which was conducted in the afternoon in my neighbourhood, Morena. In high school, I chose an advanced-level German class and persevered in that decision, despite being moved, after entrance exams, to a mathematics-oriented class, which taught English instead.

During the summer before I started high school, my parents' friends from Frankfurt am Main, who visited us every year, invited my little sister and I to spend three weeks in Germany. Dr. Otto Kulcke grew up in Oliwa in the Free City of Danzig, loved classical music, and in the 80s founded an organization for the restoration of the organ at St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk. After passing away, he was the only German man and Protestant to after the war be laid to rest in his beloved church in his native city. Gerda Schneider represents the wave of feminism of the 70s and listens to a lot of German rock music. Udo Lindenberg, Peter Maffay, Herbert Grönemeyer – it was precisely during the summer of 1987 that I heard those classics for the first time. Gerda and Otto took us around Hesse, Rhineland and Palatinate, trying to explain to us this new world full of colours, foreign sounds, scents and flavours, and new landscapes. My mind was practically a whirlwind of questions, the headache from overstimulation was almost a constant for a girl from behind the "iron curtain". Neither they nor their friends, whom we visited, knew Polish. So I was thrown in at the deep end. With my basic knowledge of vocabulary gained after a year of intensive studying, I was also playing the role of an interpreter for my sister.

This visit further strengthened my desire to learn about German culture, as well as understand otherness, my own too, and my reactions to the German environment. At the time, I intuitively picked up on a lot of the signs of cultural differences and the prejudice-laden mutual perception of Poles and Germans. I felt the foreignness, often remarks or looks stung, and I couldn't put my finger on the reason. The lack of sufficient knowledge made my desire to understand Polish-German cultural interconnections grow stronger. And as you can see, it's still fuelling my new undertakings.

With regard to the feelings of otherness I felt, an important role was played in my childhood by my grandmother's name – Hildegarda. It was the name I used to put on the envelopes of the letters I sent her regularly, it was also the one on the door of her apartment, but we were not allowed to use it to address her in person. Until she met Gerda, my grandmother's only use for German was communicating when she had to hide something from her grandchildren. Despite growing up bilingual, she didn't approve of my choice of high school class and university major. Another borderland mystery to be unravelled by grown-up Miłka, similarly to her husband's experiences during the war.

You studied in Germany, at the Universität Leipzig, then in the Promotionskolleg Ost-West at the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum. Did this fact change the way you perceive German culture and literature? In what way?

I also took part in Polish-German trips, summer schools, seminars and workshops. For a semester, I worked as a visiting professor at the University of Mainz.

Of course, all these experiences were formative. Thanks to the openness of my parents' home and their friendships, German culture was never completely foreign to me, because it also had the face of specific people who sat down at the table with us. It also manifested itself in the stories that were told, and I soaked them up.

The packages with nutella, bars of chocolate, powdered milk for my little sister, washing powder, etc., with which my parents' friends supported us during martial law, weren't insignificant either. The image of the enemy, omnipresent in popular culture at the time (including circulating jokes, the *Four Tank-Men and a Dog* series, or *The Knights of the Cross* movie, etc.), thus reached a mind already resistant to such explicitness contained in cultural stereotypes. This does not change the fact that for years, while meeting new people from Germany or looking at old men on the German streets, the question-exclamation of *what were you doing during the Second World War?* was loudly ringing in my mind. The possible answers haunted me in the form of nightmares. All the more so, since at the end of primary school, war and camp literature dominated my reading for several years.

German literary classics appealed to me strongly during my studies of German philology at the Jagiellonian University. The first year was marked by a fascination with the works of the second half of the 18th century, which was taught by Prof. Olga Dobijanka-Witczakowa – especially the works of Goethe and Lessing. I spent my summer vacation on the island of Fehmarn as a “Gasttochter”, a guest daughter, in the family of a pastor from Lübeck, born in pre-war Słupsk. My conversation with the host about the homily he was preparing for each Sunday based on a specific biblical passage and with references to literature was a weekly ritual. The pastor's wife and her mother spoke in Plattdeutsch dialect. I spent the last week of my stay in Germany alone in their home in Lübeck, a 16th century house belonging to the parish, surrounded by their library and five children, graduates and students of various fields of study. As a farewell gift, I received the novel *Momo* by Michael Ende, which keeps me company to this day.

The second year of university was spent devouring the works of Hermann Hesse – such as the novels *Steppenwolf*, *Siddhartha* or *The Glass Bead Game* – one after the other, compulsively, continuously. Meanwhile, as part of the subject practical study of German, we explored the meaning – sentence by sentence – of Hans Fallada's social novel *Little Man, What Now?* concerning the Great Depression.

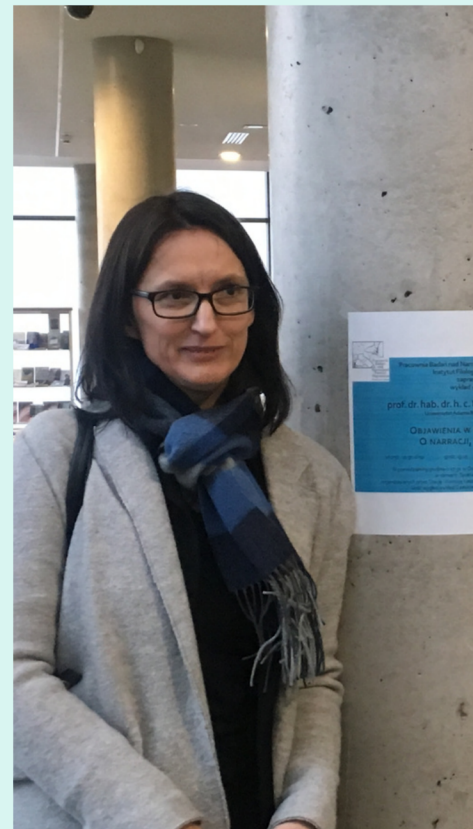
The memory of the third year was dominated by the preparation of a term paper, the topic of which I chose myself. It concerned the image of Gdańsk in the novels *The Tin Drum* by Günter Grass and *Who was David Weiser?* by Paweł Huelle. Exploring this subject helped me understand the distinctiveness of my family's memory in the postwar reality of Gdańsk. In the meantime, I began attending chosen classes from Ethnology on images of familiarity and foreignness, taught by the first Roma graduate of the Jagiellonian University, Andrzej Mirga.

But in fact, it is due to my participation in a seminar led by Prof. Henryk Samsonowicz and Prof. Michael G. Müller on religious, linguistic and national diversity in Royal Prussia from 1466 to 1772, as part of the Polish-German Summer Academy and a Tempus scholarship in Leipzig in the mid-1990s, that I accustomed myself to researching on my own, in the sense of active, individual pursuit of knowledge, finding the answers to the questions plaguing me, as well as formulating questions. Attending classes in Leipzig on German literature, history and sociology of culture taught me to independently develop an assigned topic at the library, to critically argue and discuss when different stances and points of view collide. I also realized that knowledge of a language is merely a tool and not a goal in itself. It's a gateway to a different world that I can use in a variety of ways – either moving through this world, trying to understand it in my own way and leaving behind a trace of a different perspective on reality in my personal and professional interactions, or merely effusing about German culture, repeating what others have already said or written.

I always say that university studies are first and foremost a time given to us to search for inspiration, sharpen our curiosity about the world, and gather knowledge and skills; a time to create connections and friendships, which will help us understand ourselves and the world around us, and choose our own path. It is our engagement and our ability to use the available opportunities that decides just how much we will benefit from this “self-service buffet”.

You are the Chair of the Research Lab for Memory Narratives of Borderlands at UG. How did it start, and what does the future have in store for it?

We created the Lab in December 2012 as a group of interdisciplinary Doctors in the fields of German and Polish philology and literary studies, history and cultural studies. Our members include Maciej Dajnowski and Janusz Mosakowski (Institute of Polish Language and Literature), Eliza Szymańska and Marta Turska (Institute of German Philology), Magdalena Sacha (Cultural Studies Division), and Felicitas Söhner (Heinrich Heine Universität in Düsseldorf). We took advantage of the opportunities which presented themselves at the Faculty of Languages during the time Prof. Stanisław Rosiek was the Deputy Dean for Research, and Prof. Andrzej Ceynowa was the Dean. Creating the Lab was supposed to unleash the hidden scholarly potential lying dormant within the deeper recesses of the hierarchical structure. From my perspective, it was a crucial step towards scholarly and organizational emancipation.



As I look back on the then formulated program of the Lab's interdisciplinary activities concerning the Polish-German borderland in comparison to other borderlands at the interface of science, culture and civil society, I still find it strongly relevant. From the beginning, the Lab's character was cross-departmental and cross-university – we expanded our group to include the sociologist Dr. Magdalena Lemańczyk (IFiS PAN), ethnographers/cultural anthropologists Dr. Katarzyna Kulikowska (MPE in Wdzydze) and Dr. Oliwia Murawska (Universität Innsbruck) and the sociolinguist prof. Goro Christoph Kimura (Sophia University in Tokio).

Already within this structure, I was able to develop my scholarly interests in border studies, which I continued from my master's thesis on the basis of travel accounts of Pomerania published in the *Pommersche Zeitung* between 1989–1993. It continued in my PhD thesis about the memory and ethos of Prussian nobility from West Pomerania and East Prussia, and by coordinating, as a postgraduate, the Polish-German-Israeli project *Odczytując mowę kamieni. Śladami żydowskimi po Kaszubach* [Reading the language of stones. Jewish traces in Kashubia], which culminated in publishing a pioneering Polish-German historical and literary guide. In 2012, the concept for my postdoctoral dissertation on the memory of Pomeranian Jews also began to take shape. As well as two more historical and literary guides, *Kaszubski wanożnik po Gdańsku. Znaki i miejsca w przestrzeni kulturowej Miasta* [Kashubian Guide of Gdańsk. Signs and Places in the Cultural Space of the City] (2018), written jointly with Bogumiła Cirocka and Prof. Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński, and *Wędrówki z Günterem Grassem. Kartografia literacka Miasta* [Wandering with Günter Grass. A Literary Cartography of the City] (2022) in Polish and English co-edited with Dr. Marta Turska, it (*Jüdische Gedächtnisopographien im Grenzraum. Autobiographik nach 1945 von Autoren jüdischer Herkunft aus dem Pommernland (Pommerellen und Hinterpommern)*) (2019) was already created as part of the Lab's activities. An English translation of it is being prepared as part of the IBSC.

The first act of the Lab's activity was a guest lecture by Professor Anna Wolff-Powęska in 2013, an authority on Polish-German-Jewish relations, a historian and political scientist from Adam Mickiewicz University and long-time director of the Institute for Western Affairs. And to this day, guest lectures are still an important area of the Lab's activities – we invite scholars from abroad as well as from Poland, who research the borderlands and intercultural literature. We have also organized presentations of projects *in statu nascendi* by researchers abroad. We have organized eleven conferences, nine of which were international, in co-operation with e.g. German Historical Institute in Warsaw, Institut Moderne im Rheinland at the Heinrich Heine Universität in Düsseldorf, Johannes Gutenberg Universität in Mainz, Institut für Deutschlandforschung at the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum, Academia Baltica in Sankelmark, University of Wrocław, Kashubian Institute, City Culture Institute in Gdańsk, European Solidarity Centre, museums, cultural institutions and non-governmental organizations in the region. We co-organized debates, a number of exhibitions, carried out international scientific projects, including student projects, such as “forschendes Lernen” – studying through researching (in co-operation with the University of Mainz), getting funds for our activities from various sources. Currently, the Lab is involved in carrying out my personal IDUB grant *Pogranicza w dialogu – dialogi na pograniczach. Narracje – pamięć – tożsamość* [Borderlands in dialogue – dialogues on the borderlands. Narratives – memory – identity], the respective subprojects being realized with the involvement of the Lab's members.

What drew you to the literature of the Polish-German cultural borderland? What can we learn from it? What images does it invoke?

Cultural borderland literature conveys the complexity of the experiences at the meeting point of the cultures of today and yesterday, reveals “lived worlds” (“Lebenswelten”) and explores the experiences of a subject influenced by the Great History and the proximity of borders, even past ones in phantom form.

Through words, it depicts the memory of various “memory communities” connected with a particular region, their many voices, multilingualism and nonconcurrency, the differences and similarities in perceiving the world. It contains stories marginalized within macro-narratives, supplementing the monologues of the “dominating cultures” with stories from the “counter-memory” (Michel Foucault) of minority groups, whose access to power is impeded.

I currently say my research interests are as follows: literature, memory, identity and landscape of the borderlands, with Gdańsk, Kashubia and Pomerania being both a laboratory of intercultural relations, a starting point for comparative studies with other borderlands and the main area of my activity profiled at the interface of science, culture and civil society.

What are you currently working on? What can we expect in the future?

When one makes plans, the devil supposedly laughs to his heart's content... In my spare moments from teaching and organizational work, of which there are few, I am working on a monograph collecting the results of my research on the works of Günter Grass, the social impact of which I carry out as the president of the Günter Grass Association in Gdańsk. Together with Dr. Marta Turska, we are working on a volume that will include articles by researchers from nine countries who participated in last year's anniversary conference on the occasion of Günter Grass's 95th birthday. The IBSC was also a co-organizer of that conference. In the spring, I am planning a 4th open guest lecture as part of a series presenting Grass Studies around the world, during which the newest literary biography of the writer will be presented. Additionally, as an international team, we are preparing a European celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize Winner's birth, which falls in 2027. The University of Gdańsk and the Günter Grass Association in Gdańsk will be co-organizing the European events.

Together with the Laboratory of Landscape Research at the University of Wrocław, we are finalizing an interdisciplinary pilot project on the process of incorporating the German legacy, comparing its course based on the state of preservation of cemeteries and small church architecture in the land of the Slovincians in Middle Pomerania and on the territory of the Czech Corner in Lower Silesia. With Prof. Agnieszka Latocha, a cultural geographer, we are also preparing a volume following the 16th Kashubian-Pomeranian Conference, which we organized last year at the Museum of Middle Pomerania in Słupsk together with the Museum of the Slovenian Village in Kluki. It concerned the memory of the borderland landscape. At the beginning of March 2024, we are planning a socio-cultural forum *Krajobraz a człowiek. Człowiek w krajobrazie* [Landscape and man. Man in landscape], which the Lab co-organizes with the Pomeranian Landscape Preservation Institute (pol. Instytut Ochrony Krajobrazu Pomorza) and the Laboratory of Geobotanics and Nature Conservation at UG.

In a couple of days, on the German-Danish borderland in Sankelmark near Flensburg at Academia Baltica, I will be conducting an interdisciplinary seminar titled *Jenseits der Nationen. Grenzräume und Lebenswelten in Polen* [Beyond nations. Borderlands and worlds experienced in Poland]. It is the third such seminar we have organized with this institution. Researchers from Czechia, Japan, German and Poland will share the results of their work on borderlands such as Lubusz Land, Cieszyn Silesia, Upper and Lower Silesia, Kashubia, Pomerania, Polish-Ukrainian borderlands, phantom borders, Polish-German communication on the border area, as well as the legacy of Walddeutsche/Taubdeutsche. The seminar will feature a meeting with Magdalena Parys, a Polish-German writer living in Berlin.

Meanwhile, a multi-author monograph is scheduled to be published in early December by the renowned publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, edited by Prof. Eliza Szymańska and myself. The book is the result of an international conference that took place in 2021 and was organized together with the IBSC and Pracownia Badań nad Interkulturowością w Literaturze i Teatrze. [Laboratory for Intercultural Studies in Literature and Theater]. It's the fifth post-conference volume created as a part of the Lab's activities.



I am also gradually working towards an exhibition on the migration of Jews from Kashubia, which I plan to organize with the Museum – Teodora and Izydor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park in Wdzydze. I already know that in the coming weeks I won't be leaving for research to Israel. And for next year I am planning a Polish-German-Japanese conference on border studies in particular research landscapes, which I am organizing with a member of our Lab Prof. Goro Christoph Kimura of Sophia University in Tokyo, and with Hokkaido University.

Hopefully, health and strength will be on my side so these plans can be completed. And there probably will be more subjects in the field of border studies that I will work on with the people following their research passions.

Thank you for your questions and the conversation.

The interview was conducted in Gdańsk on 19th November 2023 by P. M. Miryn



COOPERATION

BALTIC GEOPOLITICS NETWORK



On March 22–23, Anna Mazurkiewicz, Anna Sobecka, Kazimierz Musiał, and Jan Daniluk took part in the Baltic Seminar, an annual conference organized by the Center for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge, UK. The conference coincided with the annual meeting of the Baltic Geopolitics Network (BGN). It is a network of researchers from the Baltic Region, which is coordinated by the Centre for Geopolitics at Cambridge. During the meeting, a special Baltic issue of a UG journal, *Studia Historica Gedanensia*, was presented to the members of the network. It includes papers from the first joint conference of BGN researchers held in 2022.

BALTIC GEOPOLITICS NETWORK



Between 25–27 May, the conference “The annexation of the Klaipėda (Memel) region to Lithuania, 1923: its international significance and legacy in the context of European borderland micro-regions” took place in Vilnius and Klaipėda. It was organised jointly by the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University, the Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, and the Centre for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge.

The conference’s unusual format – the first day took place in Vilnius, in the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, after which all participants relocated to Klaipėda and its university – allowed the participants to experience the location which was the focus of the conference and provided the opportunity for lively discussions and the establishment of close relations.

The presentations and discussions not only focused on the annexation of Klaipėda in 1923 but put this event in the context of Lithuania’s relations with its neighbours, as well as in a comparative context with other, similar cases in contemporaneous Europe. These included the use of the so-called Danzig corridor, Poland’s access to the sea and the construction of Gdynia, which was presented by IBSC’s Marta Grzechnik.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR: KOR-GER-POL

On behalf of the IBSC, Anna Mazurkiewicz took part in an international seminar: "KOR-GER-POL Comparative Border Studies Workshop". The meeting took place on 26–29 January 2023 in Greifswald, Germany. Delegates of three universities: Greifswald (IFZO), Gdańsk (IBSC) and Chung-An University in Korea met to discuss the research conducted at these institutions pertaining to border regimes, borderlands, the past and current narratives related to borders, and their aesthetics. The event was founded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) and organized by Alexander Drost. It concluded with a trip to the German-Polish border crossing at the island of Usedom.



CAMBRIDGE SUMMER SCHOOL

On July 10–15, a summer school for students from the Cambridge University took place in Gdansk. Its focus was on “Border Infrastructures: Changes and Socio-Cultural Impact (Past and Present)”. The event was organized by the Baltic Geopolitics Network from the Centre for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge in co-operation with the IBSC and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Baltic Sea Region Research (IFZO), University of Greifswald. The aim was to raise awareness of this part of Europe among Cambridge students who have not yet had the chance to study about or visit the area, and also to deepen the knowledge of those who already work on topics related to Poland or the Baltic Sea region.

The first day of the summer school found the group visiting Malbork to learn more about the Teutonic Order, eating at a Mennonite house, and walking on a beach near the border with Kaliningrad. The focus that day was on **immersion**.

The following day, the students explored the National Museum in Gdansk, experienced the local delicacy: pierogi, and attended two fascinating lectures: “Borders of the Free City of Danzig (1920-39): problems, meanings, memories” by Dr. Jan Daniluk and “The memory of borders in Pomerania 1920-1939 (Polish-German-Danzig)” by Dr. Magdalena Sacha. As the titles of the lectures would suggest,, the focus was **Gdansk narratives and interwar borders between Poland, the Free City of Danzig, and Germany**.





July 12th was devoted to **de/rebordering**, as well as border narratives and media imagining, and these topics were presented by Grzegorz Welizarowicz and Ross Aldridge. Additionally, the students had an opportunity to explore the World War II Museum in Gdansk through a guided tour with commentary from a Polish-German perspective provided by UG's Dr. Jan Daniluk and Prof. Rainer Liedtke from the University of Regensburg.

Day four and there was time to further explore the idea of **borderland(s)**, with a lecture by Prof. Miłosałwa Borzyszkowska-Szewczyk: "Günter Grass' Gdańsk as borderland. A literary mapping of the city". Later, two additional lectures took place: "Legacies of Solidarity" by Dr. Jacek Kołtan and "Lithuanian borders under threat" by Dr. Kęstutis Kilinskas.





The last day of the summer school took place in Gdynia, first on a guided walk with Dr. Marta Grzechnik, then in the Emigration Museum where a concluding debate “What is the Baltic Sea region?” was held by Prof. Kazimierz Musiał and Dr. Alexander Drost. The accompanying theme of the final day was **Migration/Balticness**.



MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Prof. Izabela Morska conducted a series of creative writing workshops at the women's ward of the Krzywaniec Prison. The workshops took place on 30th and 31st October, and 1st November 2023. They were conducted in collaboration with the Womenstate Collective as a part of the newly created Inmate Arts Centre.



MEMBER ACTIVITIES

International Conference: *Borderlands facing a polycrisis in the 21st century. Resilience and future perspectives of cross-border relations*

Between September 10–13, Dr. Grzegorz Welizarowicz, Chair of IBSC, took part in an International Conference: "Borderlands Facing a Polycrisis in the 21st Century – Resilience and Future Perspectives of Cross-Border Relations" organized jointly by the University of Wroclaw and the University of Opole. The conference was an exceptional success and we congratulate and thank the organizers: Dr. Elżbieta Opiłowska, Dr. Wojciech Opiola and Dr. Marcin Dębicki and the whole team at both campuses. We would like to extend our gratitude for your hospitality and for the opportunity of networking with Border Studies scholars. Dr. Welizarowicz presented a paper on IBSC's recent theater production "Trapped in Amber" written by Carlos Morton and took part in the closing plenary "Future research perspectives of the borderlands studies".





MEMBER ACTIVITIES

The second workshop of the project "**Migration and Democracy: Confronting Illiberalism in the Baltic Sea Region (MiDem)**", financed by the Swedish Institute, took place at the University of Gdańsk on 21–23 May. Ten scholars from around the Baltic Sea and East Central Europe met in Gdańsk to discuss interdisciplinary approaches to research on migration and democracy from their vantage points in the Baltic Sea region, as well as a future Horizon application. The program also included an inspiring visit to the Emigration Museum in Gdynia. This workshop followed the first project meeting, organized in December at the University of Gothenburg. The IBSC was represented by Marta Grzechnik, Monika Mazurek and Michalina Petelska.



Between 12–15 May, IBSC's Marta Grzechnik took part in the **European Social Science History Conference** in Gothenburg, Sweden. The aim of the ESSHC is to bring together scholars interested in explaining historical phenomena using the methods of the social sciences. The conference is characterized by a lively exchange in many small groups, rather than by formal plenary sessions. At the conference, Marta Grzechnik had the opportunity to talk about "Colonial knowledge in interwar Poland: The case of the Maritime and Colonial League".





MEMBER ACTIVITIES

The Interdisciplinary Centre for Baltic Sea Region Research (IFZO) at the University of Greifswald, one of the partner institutions of IBSC, hosted its second annual conference on 7-8 June. The theme of this year's conference was **"Predictable Futures? On the Impact of Fear and Insecurity in the Baltic Sea Region"**. The region in question has seen its fair share of breaking points in the last decades, and the current war has brought new challenges. The fears and insecurities brought about by these events were among the themes discussed by the speakers and participants of the conference. The themes included e.g. language policies, energy transformations, arts and music, civil opposition, rural spaces etc. A member of the IBSC, Marta Skorek, argued in her paper for a common regional identity based on an understanding of the marine environment and of the interdependency of the social and the environmental dimensions. The panels also ventured into the future, especially the roundtable "Future of the Baltic Sea Region", in which panellists included both academics and policy practitioners, looking for answers about the shape of the region in the wake of the turbulent transformations.



GUEST LECTURES

Dr. Krzysztof Ulanowski writes about **Prof. Menachem Klein's visit to UG.**

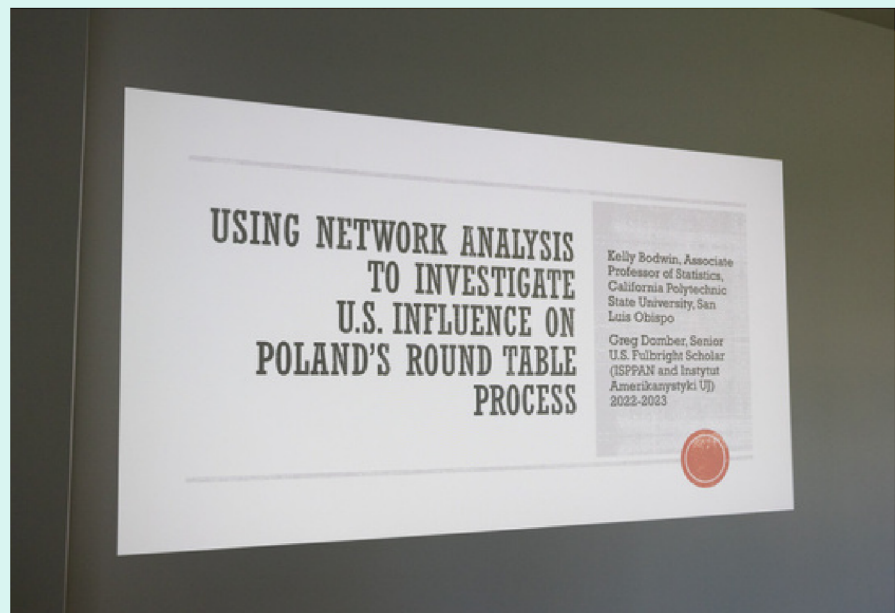
Professor Menachem Klein visited UG on March 23–24, and gave two lectures: **“Jewish and Muslim Holy Sites in Jerusalem”** on March 23rd, and **“Contemporary Trends in Studying the History of Palestine up to 1948 War”** on March 24th.

Prof. Menachem Klein is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He previously studied, lectured, and visited as visiting professor Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Leiden, Florence, St. Anthony's College at Oxford and King's College at London.

The originator of the professor's invitation, the moderator of the discussion and interpreter of the professor's lecture in the synagogue was Krzysztof Ulanowski. The whole stay was organized jointly by IBSC, The Social Sciences Department UG, Historical Department UG, The Association of the Religious Study Students UG, and also the Jewish Community in Gdańsk, and The Cultural Foundation „Zbliżenia”. In addition to the official events, the professor visited the synagogue and met members of the Jewish community. At the University, he met not only academics, but also students of sociology, history, political science, and religious studies. Discussions concerned Jewish-Muslim relations from the end of the 19th century to the present day, research methodology, “sharing” of holy places by the Jews, Muslims and Christians and related religious and social rituals, and also forecasts for the possibilities of political and religious dialogue in the coming years.



GUEST LECTURES



On 21st April, the IBSC helped organize a lecture titled **“Using Network Analysis to Investigate U.S. Influence on Poland’s Round Table Process”** by two visiting professors from San Luis Obispo in California: Dr. Gregory F. Domber (Senior U.S. Fulbright Fellow 2022-2023) and Dr. Kelly Bodwin (California Polytechnic State University). During the meeting, chaired by Prof. Anna Mazurkiewicz, Dr. Domber presented a research project which involved him gathering biographical information on the 567 participants of the Round Table negotiations. Dr. Kelly Bodwin presented a computer program of her making which created a graphical representation of the connections between the participants. The emphasis during the meeting was on the representatives of both sides, governmental and oppositional, participating in exchange programs financed by the U.S. government.



GUEST LECTURES

During the fall semester, the IBSC organized a series of guest lectures, the first of which was by Dr. Lorena Calvo Mariscal from Universidad de Cádiz on September 4th. The lecture's title was **"Migration in Europe's Southern Border: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights at Borders and Beyond Borders"** and it addressed new EU developments in migration management in Europe's external borders, especially the issue of the externalisation of migration management through cooperation with third countries, as well as how human rights apply to migrants and asylum seekers at land and sea borders in this new context of externalisation of border functions.



The second lecture took place on October 19th and was given by Prof. Irwin Appel. The title **"Shakespeare Without Borders: 'Naked Shakes' and a Life in the Theater"** aptly introduced the listeners to the talk in which Irwin Appel, a professional actor, director, composer, sound designer, and artistic director of his California-based Shakespeare company Naked Shakes, discussed both the physical borders in Shakespeare's plays, but also the hinderances in terms of accessibility and appreciation of Shakespeare's works. Prof. Appel is also the director and creator of "The Death of Kings" his original adaptation of Shakespeare's history plays, from which he showed video examples and discussed the inspiration behind the creation of his adaptation.

GUEST LECTURES

Georgia Scott, Boston born writer, critic, and poet, delivered the third talk, titled **“Borders, Bodies and Bogeymen: (Re)Writing Childhood in America”** on November 16th. During the talk, she read from her memoir *American Girl: Memories That Made Me* about growing up on the borders of whiteness, wellness, and the American Dream, Scott took her audience on a captivating journey through her childhood years in 1960s Massachusetts.



The final lecture of the series was by Dr. Madgalena Brzezińska. Titled **“Emigration is luck: Destiny, uncertainty and witchcraft in migratory journeys from the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau”** it explored the interpretation of uncertainty and contingency of the migratory journey to Europe, which in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau stems from particular views on human destiny, ‘luck’, and the intervening cosmological powers of witchcraft and sorcery. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, her analysis contributed to recent discussions in anthropology on destiny and uncertainty, and on contemporary African migrations, exploring the ways in which people manage contingency and unpredictability of migration to the Global North.

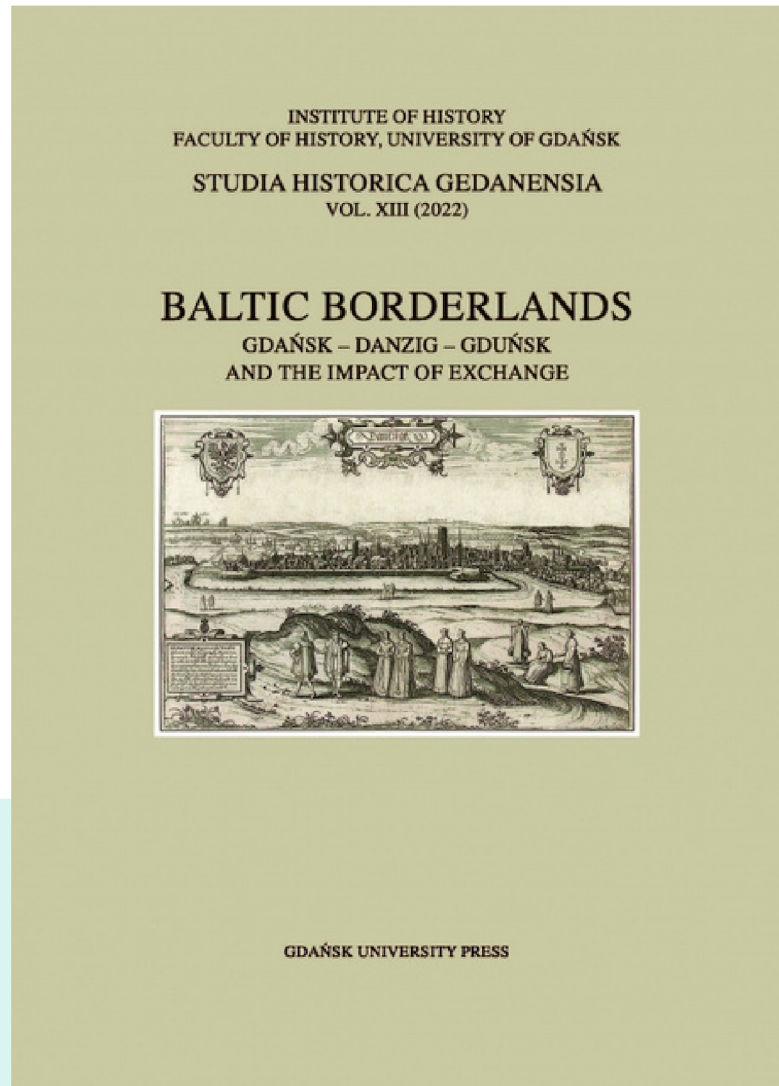


OUR PUBLICATIONS

THEMATIC VOLUMES

In late 2022 a thematic volume **“Baltic Borderlands. Gdańsk-Danzig-Gduńsk and the Impact of Exchange”** was published. It is the thirteenth issue of a journal *Studia Historica Gedanensia* published by the Faculty of History at the University of Gdańsk. The issue containing articles written mostly by scholars from the University of Cambridge (UK) and the University of Gdańsk was edited by Alexander Drost of Interdisziplinäres Forschungszentrum Ostseeraum (IFZO), University of Greifswald and Anna Mazurkiewicz of the IBSC, UG. The preface to the volume was written by Norman Davies of University of Oxford who recalled his travels in the Baltic Sea Region and works he authored on the countries around the Baltic see during his career.

All the texts dealing with various aspects related to Gdansk's location in the Baltic Borderlands throughout the ages are available in open access via the ejournals website. This volume proves that the cooperation of the IBSC with the scholars of the Baltic Geopolitics Network housed at the University of Cambridge and the Baltic Interdisciplinary Research Center in Greifswald is strong and delivers scientific output beyond multiple conferences, meetings, and faculty and student exchanges.



THEMATIC VOLUMES

MISCELLANEA

ANTHROPOLOGICA ET SOCIOLOGICA

23(2-3)

The special Border Studies issue of the *Miscellanea* 23(2-3) journal gathers the work of a number of members of the IBSC to present a non-exhaustive but representative measure of our interests. The general characteristic is that this is a non-orthodox approach to border studies for, as we declare in the "Introduction", we want to breathe air into border studies, to be brave and welcoming, to "mark our place but also to always seek relation, reach out across distance." In the collection one will find a personal essay by Carlos Morton about his life's trajectory in *mestizaje*, an investigation of colonial and gendered representations in the Santa Barbara's public spaces (Hixson), an essay on the theory of borderlands (Welizarowicz) and one on divination techniques in the ancient world (Ulanowski). Izabela Morska offers an imaginative and moral interpretation of the migrant crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. There is an essay on the work of migrant drivers on demand (Mika) and on the dementia care among ethnic immigrants in Norway (Czapka). Finally, there are essays by Martin Blaszk (on the theory of research practice), Marta Skorek (on boundaries in environmental governance) and Katarzyna Mirgos (on Basque language). The collection is closed with a review by Monika Mazurek. If the collection seems diverse in its coverage it reflects and fits our ambitions which, following Georg Simmel, we refer to as an interest in the different contents in life's diverse provinces.



In 2023, IBSC in co-operation with the Polish Society for the Study of Religions which is a member of the International Association for the History of Religion (IAHR) published volume no. 2 of The Religious Studies Review, a result of the 2022 conference titled "Sacred Places. Sacredness – Open to Dialogue or Closed to Changes?" organized in Gdansk by the IBSC and The Melammu Project. Thus, a remarkably interesting volume was created, containing fourteen texts by authors from different continents, published fully in English. The texts focus on the concept of "sacredness", considering connected issues from varied perspectives: historical, anthropological, as well as that of the religious and literary studies.

BOOK TRANSLATIONS

Prof. Magdalena Nowak's book "Two Worlds. The Problem of Andrzej Sheptyts'kyi's National Identification in the Years 1865-1914" (original title: "Dwa światy. Zagadnienie indentyfikacji narodowej Andrzeja Szeptyckiego w latach 1865-1914") was first published in 2018 by the University of Gdańsk Publishing House, Poland. Publication of its translation into Ukrainian ("Два світи. Проблема національної ідентифікації Андрія Шептицького в 1865-1914 роках") is a response to the growing need of knowledge on Archbishop Andrei Sheptyts'kyi's life in Ukraine. The book was translated by the excellent translator and historian Andryi Pavlyshyn and published by the "Svichado" Publishing House in Lviv. This is the first extensive and comprehensive work of its kind on Sheptyts'kyi in world historiography. It analyzes the process of his transition to a Ukrainian national identity. It should be emphasized that Dr. Nowak's work has been positively assessed and widely reviewed in Poland, Ukraine and the USA. The book has been published thanks to the fruitful cooperation of the "Svichado" Publishing House with the UG Publishing House and thanks to the support of the IBSC.



Wydawnictwo Widnokrąg, with the IBSC as co-publisher, published a translation of *Usoa - Hegan etorritako neskatoa* (*Usoa, the Girl Who Flew to Us*) written by Patxi Zubizarreta, who is a Basque writer and translator. In his work, Zubizarreta focuses on many topics, namely familial bonds, migration, love, and cultural diversity. The subject of immigration is especially important to him, and he explains it in his writing in a way that is understandable for children, which we can also see in this particular example.

The translation was done by Katarzyna Mirgos of IBSC and Barbara Stawicka-Pirecka.

UPCOMING BOOK TRANSLATION

IBSC is happy to announce an English translation of the book *Still life in Early Modern Gdańsk: The Culture of Collecting* by Anna Sobecka, which has already been published in Poland by słowo/obraz terytoria under the title *Obrazowanie natury w nowożytnym Gdańsku. O kulturze kolekcjonerskiej miasta* in Gdańsk (2021). It will be published by the Brill Publishing House and translated by Mikołaj Golubiewski. The Polish version has already received many awards in Poland: in 2022 the Award of the Committee for Research on Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Main Prize in the Competition for the Rev. Edward Pudełko Award of the Association of Higher Education Publishers 2023, as well as the Award of the City of Gdansk in the Splendor Gedanensis Culture Category. A brief summary of the book reads:

At the beginning of the early modern era, private collections began to emerge in Gdańsk, which gave rise to a rare long-term collaboration between the arts and sciences. Women artists—mostly collectors' daughters—engaged in visualizing family collections. Until the nineteenth century, the houses of learned Gdańsk burgers gathered decorative vessels, valuable textiles, hunting trophies, weapons, alongside paintings, drawings, prints, and finally, *naturalia*, collected with equal passion. At the time, interest in various collectible objects became one of the trademarks of the city's culture. I found relevant sources not only in Gdańsk but also in Amsterdam, Berlin, Dresden, Florence, Gotha, The Hague, Hamburg, Marburg, Munich and Wolfenbüttel, among other places, which allowed me to reconstruct the story of the forgotten Gdańsk collectors and the objects they collected.





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EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Issue Editor:

P. M. Miryn

Publisher:

International Border Studies Center, University of Gdańsk

Proofreading:

Martin Blaszk

Layout design and typesetting:

Kinga Alina Langowska / Canva.com

Artwork on the cover:

Maiza Hixson

Photographs and illustrations (alphabetically with page numbers):

Agnieszka Bresler, Stowarzyszenie Kobietostan (31); Magdalena Brzezińska (41); Aleksandra Hołomej (23); Bogna Kociumbas (24); Lucyna Lewandowska (44); Dawid Linkowski (45); Anna Mazurkiewicz (2, 3, 27–30); Members of the IBSC (6–11, 13–15, 25, 26, 32–38, 40, 41); Monika Nagórska (39); Przegląd Religioznawczy (43); Maciej Rusinek (18); słowo/obraz terytoria (45); Marta Turska (21); Grzegorz Welizarowicz (8, 9, 12, 16); Wydawnictwo UG (42, 43).

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