

Fellows



Jan Fellerer

City of Vienna/IFK_Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. March 2021 bis 30. June 2021

Jan Fellerer

PROJECT TITLE

Historical Urban Multilingualism in East Central Europe: ?ód? around 1900

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The autochthonous population of many East Central European cities was linguistically diverse until World War II. Today, for some, this fact conjures nostalgic projections of an allegedly genteel multicultural past. Many others associate it with conflict-laden national antagonism and hegemonic oppression tilted toward a dominant language. However, even amid ideologies and politics, everyday life needed to go on. Modern cities required ever-growing forms of interaction between their inhabitants for work, the provision of services, trade and commerce, local affairs, leisure, and the foundation of families. Speakers of different languages had no choice but to communicate with each other in one form or another.

It remains by and large unknown how this worked in actual practice in the workshops, offices, communal tenements, streets, markets, and inns of a historically grown multilingual urban society. One such city was the Polish industrial hub of Łódź, sometimes dubbed the ‘Polish Manchester.’ Under Russian rule until World War I and subsequently part of the Second Polish Republic, Łódź was home to speakers of Polish, Yiddish, German, and Russian. By applying contemporary sociolinguistic concepts, it becomes possible to recreate fragments of the city’s multilingual historical reality on the ground. Criminal court records of the time provide a particularly rich source toward this end. They offer privileged glimpses into everyday life in historical Łódź and its residents’ multilingual practices. Some of them were bi- or even trilingual, others resorted to forms of mixing and blending dialects, while officialdom required translations. These workings of urban polyglossia were fluid, adaptable, and efficient—while also clearly an expression of social inequality and political conflict.

CV

Jan Fellerer graduated in Slavonic languages from the University of Vienna, including semesters abroad in Prague and Cracow. After several years at the University of Basel, he took up the post of Lecturer, and is now Associate Professor, of non-Russian Slavonic languages at the University of Oxford, Wolfson College. His main areas of research are in the history and structure of West and East Slavonic languages, in particular, Polish, Czech and Ukrainian.

Publications

Urban Multilingualism in East-Central Europe: The Polish Dialect of Late-Habsburg Lviv (=Studies in Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European Languages and Cultures, Lanham/MD), London 2020; ed. with R. Pyrah, *Lviv and Wrocław, Cities in Parallel? Myth, Memory and Migration, c. 1890–present*, Budapest 2020; ed. with R. Pyrah and M. Turda, *Identities In-Between in East-Central Europe* (=Routledge Histories of Central and Eastern Europe), London/New York 2019; *Mehrsprachigkeit im galizischen Verwaltungswesen (1772–1914). Eine historisch-soziolinguistische Studie zum Polnischen und Ruthenischen (Ukrainischen)* (=Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte 46), Cologne/Weimar 2005.