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Research Project

Gender and nation in the biographical interpretations of Lesya Ukrainka's life and works: Ukraine-Russian Empire-USSR, 1898-2022

Project funded by own resources

Project title Gender and nation in the biographical interpretations of Lesya Ukrainka's life and works: Ukraine-Russian Empire-USSR, 1898-2022

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Organisation / Research unit

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Project Website <https://dg.philhist.unibas.ch/de/personen/nikol-dziub/forschungsprojekt/>

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Lesya Ukrainka (1871-1913) is undoubtedly the most significant figure in Ukrainian women's literature: her works are full of both mythical and historical heroines torn between tradition and modernity; she wrote comparative studies on the European women's literature of her time; and she has played (and still plays) a major role in feminine and Ukrainian emancipations.

Due to her emancipatory ideas, Ukrainka's works enjoyed unparalleled popularity during the Russian Empire, in the USSR and in post-1991 Ukraine. But they have been the subject of contradictory interpretations.

The aim of this project is therefore to understand how biographical studies of Ukrainka have transformed her into a mythical figure who is a projection of the dominant ideologies of the three aforementioned eras.

The project has three aims: 1) to improve the analysis of the status of gender and national issues in biographical studies of Ukrainka; 2) to build a classification of the types of biographical interpretations and the rhetorical, comparative and intertextual tools used to construct them; 3) to make our analytical models applicable to other writers.

We will use a methodology at the crossroads of three disciplines (comparative literature; Eastern European history; Slavistics) and two transdisciplinary fields (women's/gender studies; post-imperial studies). The project will raise awareness of Ukrainian literature and the works of Ukrainka, which continue to have a significant impact on the development of the idea of the emancipation of women and "small" nations.

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