Database of Belarusian Periodicals

Introduction

Research on the processes of formation of literary markets has shown the crucial role of literary periodicals (van Rees 2012, Bourdieu 2002). Literary periodicals serve as central organizational platforms in literary life. Thus, we consider these magazines as a medium that allows us to reconstruct and to analyze the specific structure and internal development of a given literary field of action, e.g. to trace the 'movements' of single authors and/or literary groups within this field, the differentiation of a literary genre system, the formation of literary criticism and so forth.

The case of Belarusian literature seems to give particular insight into the early stages of these developments since here the formation of a literary market started only at the beginning of the 20th century.

Additionally, the events of the period beginning with WWI and October Revolution up to the integration of Belarus into the Soviet Union with its political, economic, social and cultural implications severely disrupted the development of an 'autochthonic' Belarusian literary market: After a phase of relative flourising of Belarusian cultual life during the 1920s, the cultural and economic nationalization policy ended in the infamous 'cleansings' ('čistki') of the 1930s.

This highly dynamic phase in Belarusian literature is reflected in the pages of its literary magazines, which are the focus of the 'Database of Belarusian Periodicals'.

Bourdieu, P. (2002). Die Regeln der Kunst. Genese und Struktur des literarischen Feldes. Frankfurt a. Main.

Genette, G. (1989). Paratexte. Frankfurt a. Main.

Kohler, G.-B. (2016). "Success" and "Failure" of Literary Collaboration between Authors in Belarus in the 1920s. In: M. Butler, A. Hausman, & A. Kirchhofer (Eds.), Precarious Alliances. Cultures of Participation in Print and Other Media, 207-240.

Van Rees, K. (2012). Field, Capital and Habitus. A Relational Approach to 'Small' Literatures. In: G.-B. Kohler, P. Navumenka, & R. Grüttemeier (Eds.), Kleinheit als Spezifik. Beiträge zu einer feldtheoretischen Analyse der belarussischen Literatur im Kontext 'kleiner' slavischer Literaturen. Oldenburg, 5-56.

Periodicals

In order to analyze the processes in question the prototype of the Database includes the four most important Belarusian literary periodicals published between 1920 and 1940.

For the time being it focuses on capturing these periodical's tables of content, assuming that a systematic analysis does not necessarily need the literary texts themselves but rather makes do with the corresponding 'paratexts' (cf. Genette 1989).

Maladnyak

(Minsk, 1923-1932): The main outlet of the organization "Maladnyak" ("Saplings"), founded in 1923 – a programmatic melting pot and laboratory of young Belarusian authors of mainly 'proletarian' and 'rural' descent, promoting literary advancement in the constitution of a socialist society.

Uzvyshsha

(Minsk, 1927-1931): Founded by a splinter group of "Maladnyak". Some of the most important members of the organization publicly declared their resignation and founded the new group "Uzvyshsha" ("Excelsior," literally: 'elevation,' 'raising'). Uzvyshsha—the group and the magazine — was active until 1931, when the group dissolved and simultaneously ceased to publish the magazine.

Polymya

(Minsk, 1922-1939): In 1927/28 "Maladnyak" experienced a "Second Split" which led to the loss of its founders and several other main authors. They reorganized into mainly two new groups, one of which was the group "Polymya" ("The Flame"). Founded in 1927 and lasting until 1931, it headed up the eponymic magazine, that was first published in 1922.

Kalos'se

(Vilna, 1935-1939): Main literary periodical in Belarusian language in Western Belarus (not yet integrated into the Soviet Union before WWII, comprising parts of modern-day Poland and Lithuania) (cf. Kohler 2016).

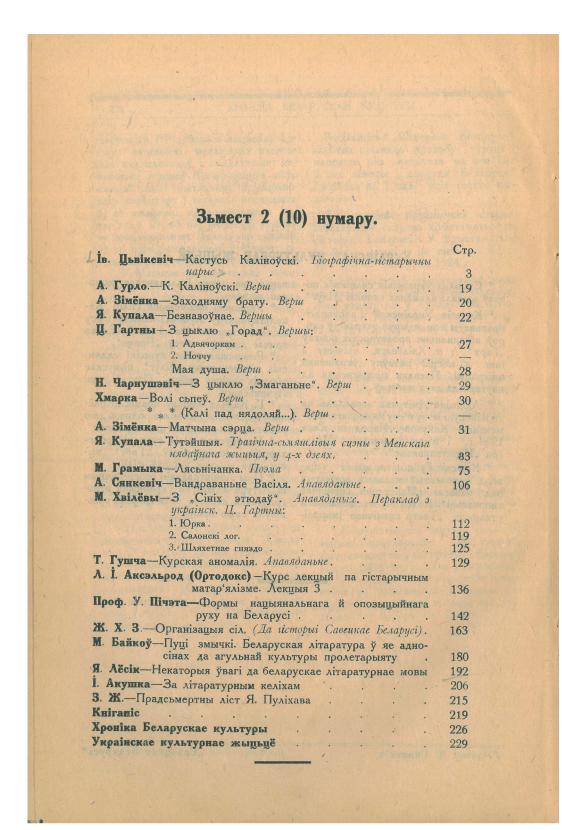▲ Cover of Kalos'se 1938 (1) by V. Prakapovičanka
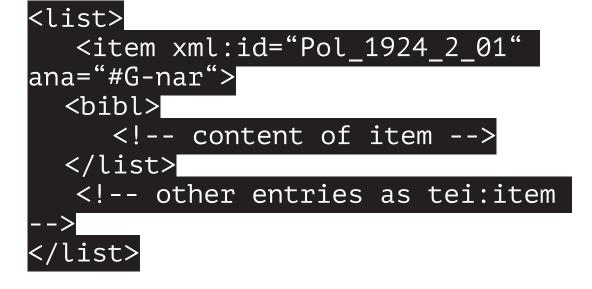
Data capture, Encoding, Analysis

Preparation of files

The tables of content were transcribed manually in Open Office using predefined styles for the relevant metadata and were then transformed via XSLT to TEI-XML, enriched further and stored in a XML-Database (exist-DB).

▲ Table of Content of Polymya 1924 (2)

Table of Content

```
<list>
    <item xml:id="Pol_1924_2_01"
ana="#G-nar">
    <bibl>
    <!-- content of item -->
    </list>
    <!-- other entries as tei:item
-->
</list>
```

Analytic data is captured in the @ana-Attribute of each item and is linked to a taxonomy in the `<encodingDesc>` of a separate file which contains the metadata on periodicals, authors and analytic encoding (included via x:include).
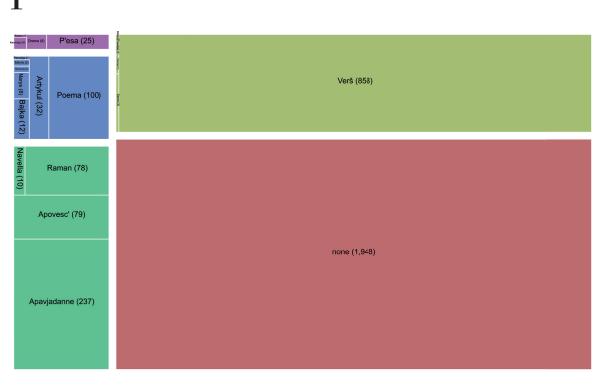
Authors

are encoded as `<author>` in `<bibl>` and linked to `<person>` in the Metadata-File. Challenges in encoding:
- spelling variants
- pseudonyms
- different roles: author, translator
- missing entries in authority files for some Belarusian writers

◄ Network visualization of co-publication of 207 authors in the four periodicals

Genre

The tables of content contain information regarding the genre for about 30% of the texts. This information is used for automated allocation of @ana-Attributes and can be used for analysis of developement of genre in the periodicals.

▲ Treemap showing the distribution of genre in all four periodicals

Statistics

The prototype of the database contains:
168 Issues
3563 Texts
207 Identified authors

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