

Institution: University of Aberdeen		
Unit of Assessment: UoA28 (History)		
Title of case study: The Past in the Present. Influencing Popular and Official Views of the Legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian Union in Modern Eastern Europe		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Robert Frost Karin Friedrich	Professor Professor	09/2004-present 01/2005-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>History casts a long shadow in Eastern Europe, where national frontiers have shifted substantially across the centuries. Frost and Friedrich challenge nationalist interpretations of the region's history through a radical reinterpretation of the Polish-Lithuanian union (1386–1795). The research has attracted significant attention across the union's successor states and advanced understanding of the influence of the region's complex past on the present. It has contributed to civic events, inspired creative works, and underpinned museum displays to promote alternative, more open and inclusive understandings of the region in a complex, often conflict-ridden region on the frontiers of NATO and the EU.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Frost and Friedrich have researched the Polish-Lithuanian Union since the 1990s. Friedrich has worked extensively on citizenship, national identity, and political ideas in Poland-Lithuania, focusing particularly on the German-speaking elites of Royal Prussia, united with the Polish crown since 1454, and Silesia, lost in the twelfth century, but which retained significant cultural links with Poland. She has published widely on the Polish-German borderlands, and, as co-editor of <i>German History</i> (2001–2006) promoted publication of articles on Polish-German relations. Her research demonstrates that the German-speaking urban elites of Royal Prussia, far from identifying with 'Germany' as nineteenth-century nationalist history assumed, were loyal to the Commonwealth, defended the Prussian union with Poland, and developed their own Prussian national identity as loyal citizens of a free republic.</p> <p>Frost is writing a three-volume history of the Polish-Lithuanian union for the major Oxford University Press series <i>The Oxford History of Early Modern Europe</i>. Volume 1, <i>The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385–1569</i> challenged negative nationalist interpretations of the union's formation, which see the nation-state in teleological terms as the natural end of political modernisation and accuse the union of hindering the development of national states for Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians. It questions the traditional Polish view of the union as an essentially Polish creation, part of a supposed Polish civilising mission in the east by demonstrating how the union was formed as a common project between the elites of Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia (modern Belarus and Ukraine), and was constituted in a series of mutually-negotiated union treaties that established a union of unions within the framework of a common republic, and maintained religious peace in a religiously-divided polity during an age of religious war.</p>		

Overall, Frost and Friedrich's research challenges the dominant interpretation of the union as a failed exercise in state-building and hence, by stressing the importance of the civic, republican tradition, counters the well-entrenched view that East European nationalism is intrinsically ethnic rather than civic in nature.

Their work has received substantial recognition across central and eastern Europe. Friedrich's *The Other Prussia: Poland, Prussia and Liberty* (2000) won the 2001 Orbis prize for the best work in Polish Studies by a foreign author and was translated into Polish (2005). The Polish translation of Frost's book sold 3,721 copies in the first three months, a considerable achievement for a scholarly monograph as the publishers acknowledged [S1]. It was awarded the *Pro Historia Polonorum* for the best foreign book on Polish history 2012–2017 by the Polish Historical Association; the Polish Foreign Ministry Prize for the best foreign book promoting Polish History published 2016–2017; and he received the Benedict the Pole Prize by the Polish Travellers Club (2018) for his overall scholarly achievement. For his services to the 2019 celebrations of the Lublin union, he was awarded the City of Lublin Medal by the Mayor of Lublin and the Knight's Cross of the Order for Merits to Lithuania [S4]. This academic recognition has served as a major pathway to impact.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The quality of the underpinning research is evidenced by the amount of competitive and peer-reviewed grant funding. The English-language publications were peer-reviewed by major academic presses; [1] was awarded three major prizes in Poland; [6] was an output from a peer-reviewed AHRC funded project.

Publications

- [1] Robert Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania* vol. 1 *The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385–1569* (OUP, Oxford, 2015); Polish translation: *Oksfordzka Historia Unii* (Rebis, Poznań, 2018).
- [2] Robert Frost, 'Medicinal Herbs and Poison Plants: Reading Machiavelli in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1560–1700', in *Unie międzypaństwowe, parlamentaryzm i samorządność Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów* ed. Waław Uruszczak, Zdzisław Noga & Krzysztof Fokt (Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warsaw, 2020).
- [3] Robert Frost, 'Lenkijos-Lietuvos unijos tapsmas, 1385–1569', *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis* (2013), 2, 37–48. [Lithuania].
- [4] Karin Friedrich, 'Rola i znaczenie Prus Królewskich w życiu politycznym i intelektualnym Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII wieku, szczególnie w dobie reform ustrojowych', in *Pamięć „chwili, która nas samym sobie wróciła...”. Wykłady Trzeciomajowe w Trybunale Konstytucyjnym w latach 2000 –2016*, ed. A. Rzepliński, K Budziło, & A. Jankiewicz (Warsaw, 2016), 231–53.
- [5] Karin Friedrich, 'Citizenship in the Periphery: Royal Prussia and the Union of Lublin 1569', in Karin Friedrich & Barbara Pendzich, eds *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth. Poland-Lithuania in Context, 1550–1772* (Brill, Leiden, 2008), 49–70.
- [6] Karin Friedrich, 'Poland-Lithuania', in *History of European Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. Howell Lloyd, Glen Burgess & Simon Hodson (Yale UP, New Haven, 2007), 208–42.

Grants

- [1.1] Leverhulme Major Fellowship 2016–2019 (Frost) 'The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569–1815'; GBP165,014
- [2.1] British Academy/Wolfson Research Chair, 2009–2013 (Frost) 'The Polish-Lithuanian Union 1386-1815'; GBP150,000

[3.1] Leverhulme Research Fellowship, 2018–2019 (Friedrich), 'Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Poland: Boguslaw Radziwill and his World'; GBP54,509

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The anniversaries of the Unions of Horodło (2013) and Lublin (2019) occasioned commemorations across the Union's successor states, prompting reflection on its history and its legacies. Frost and Friedrich made central contributions to major civic events. Frost gave a public address at a ceremony in Horodło to unveil an obelisk marking the 600th anniversary of the Horodło Union; his research was cited in a Polish Senate debate (October 2013) [S2]. Friedrich gave a public lecture on Royal Prussia and the Union at Poland's Constitutional Court and accompanied Poland's President at the official celebrations for the Constitution of 3rd May 1791 (2015) [S3]. They both appeared at a public event organised by the Polish Cultural Institute in Kyiv, Ukraine marking the 450th anniversary of the 1569 Lublin Union. Frost gave a keynote public address and other lectures during the city of Lublin's own celebrations (2019).

The Lublin Mayor wrote: *'It was an honour...to host...Professor Frost, who...gave... interviews in the local and national press, [and] Polish TV. [His research] had a measurable impact by disseminating new ways of thinking about [the] Polish-Lithuanian Union and the historical relations between the nations of its successors. All of these speeches had a broad, positive impact...'* [S4]. Frost was again cited in a Senate debate marking the occasion and was commissioned to write the official parliamentary brochure celebrating the anniversary and advised on the text of the joint statute passed by the Polish and Lithuanian Sejms. Mikołaj Kałuszek, from the Sejm Chancery wrote: *'Thank you...for your interesting...text that opens new perspectives...It is complimented a lot'* [S5].

Creative works amplified Frost's themes. His central argument concerning the collaboration of Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians in forming the union inspired the ambitious public *son-et-lumière* that formed the centrepiece of Lublin's public celebrations. The director stated that *'The narrative for our display was based on [Frost's book], which tells of the formation of a state based on consensus; a state that was multinational and religiously plural, built from above and below through peaceful negotiations, and not through war and conquest...Together with my co-director, Norbert Rudas, we are extremely grateful to him for that.'* [S6].

Frost's research has been central to the planning of the exhibits on the union in the Museum of Polish History, which is currently under construction. The Museum's mission is to 'present the most important motifs of Polish history...with special emphasis on freedom-related themes such as parliamentary traditions, civic institutions and movements as well as the fight for freedom and independence'. The Director writes: *'in recent years [Frost] has closely cooperated with the...Museum... we greatly value this cooperation and [how] it has been helping us to achieve our goals...the...focus of our cooperation...was the popularisation and contextualisation of the Polish-Lithuanian Union...since this is one of the key elements linked to our mission.'* The cooperation included public debates and interviews on the Museum's online outlets, portals with 800,000 and 130,000 readers monthly [S7].

The research has been of clear benefit for UK forces operating in the region. Frost briefed the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards before their deployment on Operation CABRIT, the British Army's contribution to NATO's enhanced forward presence in Estonia and Poland (2019). Major Alexander Jackson wrote: *'The...impact of Professor Frost on the Squadron's deployment was significant and directly linked to the planning and execution of multiple battlefield studies and cultural & historical visits across the region...it allowed all ranks to understand how events of history have shaped Polish national identity and perception of national threats'* [S8].

The research has facilitated UK-Polish and UK-Lithuanian Relations. The Polish ambassador wrote: *'[Frost's] research has...a wide-ranging impact...It helps inform our work in strengthening British-Polish relations...[He made] an important contribution...on the role of history in today's world at the [2018] Belvedere Forum...which aims to deepen...dialogue between British and Polish civil society...I...have chosen to include [his book] in my stock of diplomatic gifts'* [S9]. In 2019 Frost debated Lithuania, Scotland and union with Tomas Venclova, one of Lithuania's leading public intellectuals as part of the Lithuanian Embassy's Lithuanian Days in Scotland

Festival. The former Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, who hosted the event, wrote: *'In conversations with colleagues...in Warsaw, Minsk or Moscow, I gathered references ...acknowledging the quality and impartiality of [Frost's] insight: to the practitioners of international relations it is of a long and lasting value...History made relevant to the public. History shaping our public discourse; History inspiring different walks of life...were the features at full display in the Edinburgh discussion'* [S10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [S1] Emails from Rebis publishers, 28 & 31 May 2019.
- [S2] Speech of Senator Jan Maria Jackowski, 1 October 2018, Zapis stenograficzny z 206. posiedzenia Komisji Ustawodawczej; p.4.
- [S3] <http://trybunal.gov.pl/wiadomosci/uroczystosci-spotkania-wyklady/art/7558-4052015-uroczystosc-w-trybunale-konstytucyjnym-z-okazji-swiet-narodowego-trzeciego-maja/>
- [S4] Letter from Mayor of Lublin, 29 October 2020.
- [S5] Speech of Senator Antoni Szymański, 69th session 19-20 December 2018 *Porządek Obradu* p. 141; E-mail dated 12 June 2019 from Mikołaj Kałuszko.
- [S6] Testimonial from writer and director of the Lublin *Son-et-Lumière*, 4 November 2020.
- [S7] Testimonial from Director of the Museum of Polish History, Warsaw, 9 November 2020.
- [S8] Testimonial letter from Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, 11 November 2020.
- [S9] Testimonial letter from His Excellency, Ambassador of the Polish Republic to the Court of St James, 5 November 2020.
- [S10] Testimonial letter from Director-General of the Translation Directorate of the European Commission, and Lithuanian Permanent Representative to the EU (2005–2010), 31 October 2020.