

An Outline of the History of Poles in Kishinev (1863-1918): Contribution to the Discussion

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Abstract

The main goal of this article is to present the most important events in the social life of the Polish population who lived in Kishinev in the years 1863-1918 (this place was then part of the Russian Empire, which was reflected in the name of the city). The text presents the organizational development of Poles from Kishinev, who, having limited financial resources, set themselves the task of helping the poor and tried to develop education in Polish language. The article also presents the profiles of selected artists of Polish origin (Eugenia Maleszewska and Władimir Okuszko) who undoubtedly contributed to the development of culture in Kishinev. When preparing this text, the author also read the press from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, which allowed him to select useful, and sometimes perhaps previously unknown, information and expand on some issues.

Keywords: Poles; Kishinev; Russian Empire; Bessarabia; the Society of Charity in Kishinev; Eugenia Maleszewska; Władimir Okuszko.

Introduction

The history of Polish-Moldovan relations dates back to the Middle Ages, but in Polish literature there are opinions that until the 19th century the areas forming part of the present-day Republic of Moldova were not the target of organized settlement by the Polish population. The influx of Poles to these areas was particularly noticeable since the annexation of part of Moldova to Russia and the creation of the Bessarabian Governorate at that time. The settlement process was certainly influenced by tax breaks, exemption from military service and numerous privileges. The possibility of purchasing land was of great importance, which caused some Poles from the Russian Partition (the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were annexed by the Russian Empire as a result of late-18th-century partitions of Poland) to decide to move to the above-mentioned gubernia. In the 19th century, the Russian authorities issued a legal act according to which Poles were prohibited from acquiring land in the Lithuanian, Belarusian

and Ukrainian gubernias. This caused the influx of the Polish population to the neighboring gubernias, where they began to acquire estates¹.

It should be emphasized that not only peasants (representatives of this social stratum came to Bessarabia not only from the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Lithuania, but also from Galicia, which was confirmed by the press from the 1880s²) and townspeople settled in this area, as families of Polish nobility also decided to come. Representatives of this social class often held state administrative positions. It happened that Poles were sent into exile in Bessarabia, especially after the November Uprising and then after the January Uprising (Polish national uprisings against the Russian Empire – the first armed uprising lasted in the years 1830-1831, and the second uprising took place between 1863-1864)³.

In the years 1843-1844, Poles appeared for the first time as a separate ethnic group in the documents of the Bessarabian administration (the first partial census)⁴. According to the data collected at that time, 50% of Poles in Bessarabia lived in Khotyn (Romanian: Hotin) and the surrounding area, 25% - in Kishinev (Romanian: Chişinău) and nearby villages, 5% - in Reni, Izmail (Romanian: Ismail) and Kiliia (Romanian: Chilia Nouă)⁵. The year 1863 turned out to be crucial for the Poles who lived in Bessarabia at that time. First of all, some of them left the governorate to support the January Uprising. For this reason, the tsarist police began to closely monitor the Polish community. There was even a list of Poles living in Bessarabia. There were 916 Polish families (i. e. 5-6 thousand people)⁶. The census showed that 40% of all families lived in Khotyn and its suburbs, 20% of Polish families lived in Kishinev and its suburbs, and 15% in Soroca and its suburbs⁷.

The census conducted in the Russian Empire in 1897 showed that the Bessarabian governorate was inhabited by 1.935.412 people, including 11696 people of Polish nationality (7432 men and 4264 women). Poles thus accounted

¹ Zygmunt Łukawski, *Ludność polska w Rosji 1863-1914* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978), 39.

² "Kronika prowincjonalna", *Kraj* 4 (1883), 14.

³ Jarosław Derlicki, "Wśród „koniunkturalnych Polaków”? Polskość i organizacje polonijne w Mołdawii", Dagnosław Demski, Jarosław Derlicki, Anna Woźniak (eds.), *Antropologiczne wędrówki po „miejscach” bliskich i dalekich: księga jubileuszowa dla Profesor Iwony Kabzińskiej* (Warszawa: Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN: Komitet Badań Etnologicznych PAN, 2020), 122.

⁴ Anna Skowronek, "Poles in Russian Bessarabia – stages and reasons for their inflow", *Tyragetia* 2 (2019), 133.

⁵ Władysław Boradyn, *Polacy w Mołdawii (cz.2)*, <https://wb24.org/2021/10/14/polacy-w-moldawii-cz-2> (accessed on 23.02.2024).

⁶ Anna Skowronek, „Polacy w Besarabii wobec powstania styczniowego”, *Jutrzenka* 1-2 (2020), 19-23.

⁷ Boradyn, *Polacy w Mołdawii (cz.2)*.



for 0.6% of the population⁸. A lawyer, a journalist, and a Duma deputy – Pavel Aleksandrovich Krushevan (1860-1909) claimed that 15000 Poles lived in the governorate. At the beginning of the 20th century a Romanian journalist, activist and essayist – Alexis Nour (1877–1940) designed and published in Bucharest an ethnographic map of Bessarabia. The mentioned map was prepared on the basis of calculations by the Russian general staff and gave the number of Poles per 20000 people⁹.

The above information indicates that Poles did not constitute a large percentage of the population of Bessarabia. The Polish population in Kishinev was also unremarkable in terms of its size in the years 1863-1918. However, in spite of this, Poles in the indicated period were more and more organized and distinguished themselves in Kishinev through their activities. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that Poles in Kishinev had a positive impact on the development of the city, although their role in social life seems to be underestimated.

The social life of Poles in Kishinev

At the end of the 19th century, the correspondence of a journalist from the Russian-language newspaper *Varšavskij Dnevnik* received wide attention among the Polish population¹⁰ (summaries of the article were published in several press titles, including those outside the Russian Partition). An extensive article described the life of Poles in Kishinev at that time. The journalist of the mentioned newspaper then claimed that, according to the data of the Tiraspol diocese, about 4000 Catholics lived in Kishinev, the main city of Russian Bessarabia, at that time, the vast majority of them Poles. At the same time, the *Varšavskij Dnevnik*'s correspondent expressed the opinion that in fact the number of Poles was up to 6000, because church lists did not include many people who married people of the Orthodox faith. The newspaper also pointed out that among the Poles of the Roman Catholic faith in Kishinev clearly predominated officials of various categories, doctors, lawyers, merchants and craftsmen¹¹.

There were also about 2000 soldiers of Polish nationality in the Kishinev garrison. From 1884, 1/8 of the local recruits came from the Congress Kingdom

⁸ Skowronek, "Poles in Russian Bessarabia...", 134.

⁹ Stefan Kolbusz, „Liczba i rozmieszczenie Polaków w Rumunji”, *Polacy Zagranicą* (1936), 15.

¹⁰ However, it should be mentioned that *Varšavskij Dnevnik* was primarily interested in the events in the life of the Russian diaspora living in the Polish lands that were within the borders of the Russian Empire. The newspaper often took up, among others: about the activities of the Russian Charitable Society. See: Andrzej Buczyński, „Mikołajewska Ochronka Dzieci Żołnierskich w Warszawie”, *Kronika Warszawy* 2 (2013), 13.

¹¹ „Polacy w Kiszyniowie”, *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 1 (1897), 18.

of Poland (until 1889 from the Kielce Governorate, and then from the Warsaw Governorate). There was also a large number of Catholics of higher rank, starting with the chief of the garrison and ending with podpraporshiks (lit. sub-lieutenant). In general, at the end of the 1890s, there were about 40 Polish officers in all local regiments in the above-mentioned garrison¹². According to the reports of the Warsaw press at that time, the Poles were the commander of the 14th infantry division and the commander of the 14th artillery brigade. However, in the 58th Volyn Infantry Regiment, apart from the colonel, there were 8 Polish officers¹³.

Therefore, one could assume that Polish soldiers could have been perceived by the Romanian-speaking population of Kishinev as collaborators with the Russian authorities. However, the press published on Polish lands indicated that many young soldiers of Polish nationality decided to stay in Kishinev in the years 1884-1896 after completing their military service, because they had no prospects for a decent quality of life in their homeland. At the same time, it was emphasized that wages in the main city of Bessarabia were good, and the inhabitants and authorities of Kishinev perceived Poles as modest, calm, hard-working and, above all, honest people. Poles acclimatized easily, often taking up jobs as guards, butlers, messengers, carters, policemen and firefighters¹⁴. Poles who married Orthodox women often retained their Roman Catholic faith, but slowly forgot the Polish language. Some Poles were Romanized (at that time they were mostly considered Moldovans), others were Russified. In the mentioned article, *Varšavskij Dnevnik's* correspondent even cited the example of a former soldier from the Lublin Governorate who had forgotten Polish and did not learn Russian, but spoke Romanian fluently. The journalist even stated that Poles often lost their nationality because the Romanian environment was characterized by an extraordinary assimilation force¹⁵.

In her monograph, Anna Skowronek points out that in 1884 the statute of the Society of Charity in Sankt Petersburg was adopted, which intended to work for the benefit of poor Catholics. However, it was not until 1897 that the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs approved a legal act regulating the tasks, organizational structure and method of operation of the mentioned organization. This opened the possibility of establishing similar social organizations in other cities of the Russian Empire¹⁶. However, in the Polish press there were opinions that Poles, who belonged to the intelligentsia in Kishinev, did not care about

¹² „W dali. Kiszyniów”, *Prawda* 4 (1897), 47.

¹³ „Polacy w Kiszyniowie”, 18.

¹⁴ „W dali. Kiszyniów”, 47.

¹⁵ „Polacy w Kiszyniowie”, 18.

¹⁶ Anna Skowronek, *Polacy w rosyjskiej Besarabii w latach 1812-1918* (Poznań: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2018), 119.



cultivating national traditions. This social stratum was accused of not forming a coherent whole in Kishinev, and moreover of not being able to focus on the national idea. In Odessa at that time there was already a Catholic Charity Society, which maintained a parish school and a shelter for the poor. In Nikolaev, such an institution had a school under its care. In Kishinev at the beginning of 1897, according to press reports, nothing like this existed, and Poles lived scattered, and everyone thought of themselves and did not care about others¹⁷.

However, Poles in Kishinev cared about Polish culture, but interestingly, they were active, for example, in the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków (Polish: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, abbreviated TPSP). The association of artists, artisans and their supporters was founded in 1845 in Kraków (under the Austrian Partition of Poland) on the initiative of Mikołaj Walery Wielogłowski¹⁸. Interesting material is provided by the report on the activities of the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków for the years 1880-1881. It contained a list of members of the above-mentioned society, indicating their place of residence, often occupation or position. The report indicated the following people from Kishinev as members of TPSP (in alphabetical order)¹⁹: Paweł Bimman (geometer), Mikołaj Bongardt (pharmacist), Aleksander Dun. Borkowski (notary), Marya Bortkiewicz, Grzegorz Cygler, Leonida Kristi, Karol Lewicki, Franciszek Łomiński (both lawyers), Ludwik Merkisz (merchant), Zygmunt Oziembłowski²⁰ (architect), H. Piotrowski (investigating judge), Ludwik Puriszkiwicz, J. Siomaszko (assistant mayor of Kishinev), Jakób Szardt (priest)²¹, Karol Szmidt (mayor of Kishinev)²², Karol Ways²³ (geometer) and Władysław Ways.

¹⁷ „W dali. Kiszyniów”, 47.

¹⁸ *History - TPSP*, <http://palac-sztuki.krakow.pl/en/tpsp/historia> (accessed on 29.02.2024).

¹⁹ *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcyi Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie z czynności w roku 1880/81* (Kraków: Nakładem Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych, 1881), 29-97.

²⁰ In 1863, the Kraków's press reported that a person with this name and surname, a student of the construction school in Livonia, was deprived of his civil rights by the Russians and was transported to line Siberian battalions. See: „Inflanty Polskie 2 września, (spóźnione)”, *Czas* 223 (1863), 2.

²¹ At the end of the 1870s, he was sent to the Catholic church in Kishinev to help Canon Mikołaj Ćwikła. According to the Polish press, thanks to Jakób Szardt, the Kishinev's parish, which had been immersed in lethargy of inactivity, came to life. See: „Z miasta. Kiszyniów, 5 lutego”, *Gazeta Polska* 33 (1882), 3.

²² As Anastasia Felcher points out “in fact, Schmidt was of German-Polish origin, but his Polishness generally goes unremarked upon”. See: Anastasia Felcher, “Thinking Differently, Acting Separately? Heritage Discourse and Heritage Treatment in Chişinău”, *Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 235 (2021), 184.

²³ At the turn of the 1870s and 1880s, he was actively involved in the church syndicate of the Catholic Church in Kishinev. See: „Z miasta. Kiszyniów, 5 lutego”, 3.

Over time, the Polish community became increasingly better organized. In 1899 in Kishinev, local Poles founded the Charity Society (Polish: Towarzystwo Dobroczynności) with more than 200 members. Two years later, a Polish school was opened in the city, which was attended by 90 students during the year²⁴. The Polish school began to function in 1901 with the consent of the authorities in Odessa. The educational institution was established as a result of an agreement in 1900 between the Polish Charity Society in Kishinev and the Parish Council of the Catholic Church. The teaching took place in a building made available by the parish priest in Kishinev, Josef Alois Kessler. Until 1917, the facility was maintained by the above-mentioned entities. Then the school was financed from public funds²⁵.

At the same time, a second group of Polish activists also began to work towards building a Polish House in Kishinev²⁶. These efforts led to the opening of the Adam Mickiewicz Polish Hall in Kishinev, which could accommodate over 400 people. The hall was located in a separate building, together with the school and the Polish library, in close proximity to the Catholic church. The president of the Polish Charity Society in Kishinev, Marian Walery Żurkowski (1860-1932)²⁷, took part in the opening ceremony of the mentioned hall at the end of 1907. Alojzy Dłuski, the president of the Polish Charity Society in Odessa, gave the speech, saying: "Hall in Kishinev will become not only a temple of mercy, but also of national work. The national spirit flows from the instinct that once motivated us to thin forests, establish villages and cities, and form unions. Today, the same thing drives us to create societies and unions. You have achieved your goal most perfectly - love for your neighbor and love for your countrymen, combining not kopeck's alms, but considering school and the library as the most necessary things"²⁸. In the evening, there was a concert and dance party in the Polish hall. Representatives of other national communities present in the city – Romanians, Armenians and Russians – also took part in these celebrations.

As the press confirmed in 1908, that on the initiative of Andrzej Kalenkiewicz, the Polish House Association in Odessa was founded in 1906. This activist was also the founder and chairman of the Council of the Polish House. This activity found imitators, because in a short time the Polish House in Kishinev was established²⁹.

²⁴ Boradyn, *Polacy w Mołdawii (cz.2)*.

²⁵ Petru Ciobanu, "L'insegnamento cattolico di Bessarabia nel periodo interbellico", *Dialog Teologic* 41-3 (2020), 45-46.

²⁶ Skowronek, *Polacy w rosyjskiej Besarabii...*, 120.

²⁷ Doctor of medicine. The famous doctor in Kishinev, who worked in the ambulatory of the Gerbovetsky Red Cross community. See: *Romania Moldova Bessarabia Pridnestrovia. Genealogy*, <http://www.bessarabia.ru/cat-necro.htm> (accessed on 29.02.2024).

²⁸ „Sala polska w Kiszyniowie”, *Dziennik Kijowski* 244 (1907), 3 (transl. from the Polish by W. A. Świąch).

²⁹ „Kronika Polska”, *Dziennik Kijowski* 59 (1908), 3.



The Polish community in Odessa in 1909 argued that the Poles in Kishinev were well organized. It was admitted that the Polish colony in the above-mentioned city of Bessarabia, having modest resources at its disposal, was able to send delegates to the congress of representatives of Catholic societies in Moscow. Moreover, Poles in Kishinev managed to build their own building and could use the Polish club, library, reading room and hall located next to the school building³⁰.

It should be mentioned that in the years 1906-1920, Cezary Szyszko³¹ was an active member and vice-president of the Polish Charity Society in Kishinev. Thanks to the activities of this lawyer, the above-mentioned organization had a three-class free school for Polish children³², an orphanage for children and an old people's home opened in Kishinev in 1912³³. Moreover, during World War I, from 1914, on the initiative of Cezary Szyszko, the Polish Charity Society in Kishinev organized a shelter in its buildings for a number of Polish officers arriving in Kishinev from the Rovno front³⁴.

The contribution of Polish artists to the culture of Kishinev – selected examples

Despite the indisputable fact that Poles did not constitute a large national group in Kishinev, they left behind a legacy that undoubtedly had or still has a positive impact on Moldovan culture, including art.

³⁰ „Kuryerek Odeski. Praca kulturalna”, *Dziennik Kijowski* 74 (1909), 2.

³¹ Cezary Szyszko (born in Voznesensk in 1872, died in Poznań in 1938) – Polish lawyer. He earned a law degree in 1897 from the University of Kyiv. After moving to Kishinev, Szyszko became a judge (1899), an investigating judge (1901) and a deputy prosecutor at the local District Court (1905). He started his practice as an advocate and became a member of the Kishinev Bar. Until 1920, he was a social activist in Kishinev, and then moved to Poland. In the 1920s, he worked in the judiciary in Białystok, Nowogródek and Wilno. In the years 1930–1934 he was the president of the Court of Appeal in Toruń, and then in Poznań. See: Kazimierz Przybyszewski, „Szyszko Cezary”, Krzysztof Mikulski (ed.), *Toruński Słownik Biograficzny, tom 4* (Toruń: Towarzystwo Miłośników Torunia, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2004), 258-259; Kazimierz Przybyszewski, „Szyszko Cezary”, Zbigniew Nowak (ed.), *Słownik biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego, Suplement II* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Uniwersytet Gdański, 2002), 277-278.

³² E. g. Maria Suszyńska (1906-1981) graduated from the Polish school in Kishinev, organized by the local Charity Society at the Roman Catholic parish. Maria Suszyńska, born in Kishinev, was taken from Bessarabia by one of her teacher permanently going to Poland. Suszyńska was a teacher, social and educational activist and editor. During World War II she was a signal officer of the Commander-in-Chief of Peasant Battalions (Polish: Bataliony Chłopskie, abbreviated BCh). In 1944, Maria Suszyńska was deported for forced labor to the Nazi Germany. See: *Suszyńska Maria ps. „Marta Krzemcza” BCh*. https://kpbcm.umk.pl/Content/202248/Suszyńska_Maria_3668_WSK.pdf (accessed on 29.02.2024).

³³ Boradyn, *Polacy w Mołdawii (cz.2)*.

³⁴ [*Odnaczenia, ordery*] T. II, Kancelaria Cywilna Prezydenta RP w Warszawie (Warszawa: Archiwum Akt Nowych, 1929-1938, sygn. 2/4/0/7/18), 167.

Eugenia Maleszewska (Romanian: Eugenia Maleșevschi) was one of the most outstanding figures of artistic life in Bessarabia during the period in which she created. Eugenia Maleșevschi (1868-1942) is placed in one row with such artists as: Alexandru Plămădeală, Auguste Baillayre, Pavel Șilingovschi and Șneer Cogan. These artists associated with Kishinev, including Maleszewska, tried to introduce the latest European trends to the art of Bessarabia.

The artist's father was Marcelin Martynowicz Maleszewski, a reserve captain from the Warsaw Governorate, who in 1903 was admitted to the Bessarabian nobility, and at the beginning of the 20th century he was appointed a Justice of the Peace of the Soroca district. Maleszewska studied in the years 1896-1903 at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg (professor's class Ilya Repin)

Maleszewska was engaged in 1903 by Riepin to work on a diorama entitled "The Assembly next to Peter I" (together with Yelena Kiselyova), which it was decided to paint on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Saint Petersburg. From 1906, the artist lived in Kishinev, where she taught drawing in private schools and also made illustrations for books, easel graphics and creating theater decorations. Maleszewska was the author of paintings on historical and genre themes, but also landscapes, including views of Saint-Petersburg and her native Bessarabia. The artist was appreciated after her death. Over 130 of Maleszewska's works are in the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova (Romanian: Muzeul Național de Arte al Moldovei). In 2011, the Post of Moldova honored the artist's memory, preparing and issuing a series of postage stamps³⁵. In December 2018, the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova prepared an exhibition entitled "Eugenia Maleșevschi – 150 years since her birth"³⁶.

Another unique figure in the artistic community at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was certainly Władimir Okuszko (Romanian: Vladimir Ocușco), the founder of the art school in Kishinev and for this reason, until recently, known even in the Republic of Moldova primarily for his pedagogical activity. His students were the painters Pertz Vaxman and Numa Patlagean, who also studied sculpture in Paris³⁷ (the works of the first of the above-mentioned artists are more widely known in the United States). Tudor Staviță (Habilitation Doctor in Art Studies, Institute of Cultural Heritage in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova) in his monograph pointed out that Władimir Okuszko was a Pole³⁸. However, it should be mentioned that Belarusians also consider Władimir Okuszko (Belarusian Latin: Uladzimir Akushka) to be their compatriot³⁹. Władimir Okuszko studied

³⁵ Marina Klipa, „Nieotwarte strony przeszłości: Eugenia Maleszewska”, *Afisz* 1 (2019), 3-5.

³⁶ Maria Sargun, *Cultura în Moldova: Buletin de informare și documentare: Ianuarie – Decembrie 2018* (Chișinău: Biblioteca Națională a Republicii Moldova, 2019), 85.

³⁷ Tudor Staviță, „Pictorii basarabeni și Școala de la Paris. (Sculptură)”, *Arta* 1 (2013), 55.

³⁸ Tudor Staviță, *Artele frumoase din Basarabia în secolul al XX-lea. Volumul II* (Chișinău: Editura Arc, 2020), 47.

³⁹ Вячаслаў Ігнаценка, „Не згубіўся ў Кішынёве”, *Голас Радзімы* 22 (2017), 1, 3.



painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sankt Petersburg, but in 1897 he settled in Kishinev. Okuszko then took over the leadership of the School of Drawing. For 22 years, until his death, Okuszko intensively dealt with the problems of the scientific and methodological organization of the school. Okuszko developed a plan to transform the School of Drawing into an art academy⁴⁰. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Society of Art Lovers (Romanian: Societatea Amatorilor de Artă) played an important role in the cultural life of Kishinev. It was created, among others, on the initiative of Władimir Okuszko. The above-mentioned organization gathered in its ranks both art connoisseurs and people with professional artistic education⁴¹.

As a painter, Władimir Okuszko specialized in landscapes. His paintings are devoted primarily to the nature of Bessarabia and rural life. The artist's paintings, depicting old Kishinev with its narrow streets and houses (with the ecclesiastical architecture), are also very impressive. Several works painted by Władimir Okuszko are in the collections of the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova⁴².

There is no doubt that Eugenia Maleszewska and Władimir Okuszko have a significant contribution to Moldovan art. For this reason, these artists are mentioned in this text, although they may not be widely known in Poland and there is still a lot to be done in this area.

Conclusions

Poles were not a large national group in the years 1863-1918 in the main city of Bessarabia, i.e. Kishinev. However, with limited financial resources, the Polish community was able to organize itself to a degree that it was possible to achieve the main social objectives, although the beginnings were undoubtedly difficult. A valuable source in this matter is the press from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, which shows the resourcefulness of Poles in Kishinev and the willingness to help weaker individuals through various forms of support, including free education. It seems that the activities of Poles in Kishinev have not been sufficiently researched by scientists from Poland and Moldova. However, it is worth mentioning the book by Anna Skowronek, *Polacy w rosyjskiej Besarabii w latach 1812-1918*⁴³ (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza. Instytut Historii, 2018). One should mention the research attempts undertaken by Petru Ciobanu from the university community in Chişinău, to which reference is made in this text. There is no multi-author monograph, i.e. a collective work edited by several authors. We should think about a thematically coherent scientific study, focused on the issue of the role of Poles in the development of Chişinău

⁴⁰ *Personalitatea zilei. Vladimir Ocuşco, un pictor al peisajului basarabean și al Chişinăului vechi* <https://timpul.md/articol/personalitatea-zilei-vladimir-ocusco-un-pictor-al-peisajului-basarabean-si-al-chisinaului-vechi-67180.html> (accessed on 29.02.2024).

⁴¹ Stavilă, *Artele frumoase din Basarabia...*, 93.

⁴² Stavilă, *Artele frumoase din Basarabia...*, 48-49.

⁴³ English: *Poles in the Russian Bessarabia from 1812 till 1918*.

(Kishinev), prepared by several research centers in Poland and Moldova. This would contribute to building knowledge bridges, which should foster mutual understanding and trust.

Republic of Moldova should also conduct a cultural offensive in Poland to present such outstanding figures as Eugenia Maleszewska and Vladimir Okusko. The works of these artists should be exhibited in renowned Polish cultural institutions. This would be beneficial to both parties and would allow us to look at mutual relations through a different prism, undoubtedly at a higher level.

Scientific and cultural cooperation can be successfully implemented using existing resources and tools. The legal basis for bilateral relations is the Basic Treaty of 15 November 1994 and the intergovernmental agreements⁴⁴, including the Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, done at Chişinău of 10 December 1997. Executive Program between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of Moldova in the fields of culture, education and science for the years 2022-2025⁴⁵ signed in Warsaw of 8 April 2022 seemed to be a significant step in achieving mutual goals. The opportunities associated with the above-mentioned program should be used to the maximum. There is little time left until the end of the program, but it is never too late to draw conclusions for the future.

Rezumat

Scopul principal al acestui articol este de a discuta cele mai importante evenimente din viața socială a comunității poloneze din Chişinău între anii 1863 și 1918. Textul descrie dezvoltarea organizațională a comunității poloneze din Chişinău. Având resurse financiare limitate, aceasta și-a propus sarcina de a-i ajuta pe cei săraci și a încercat să dezvolte educația în limba poloneză. Articolul prezintă, de asemenea, profilurile biografice ale unor artiști de origine poloneză (Eugenia Maleszewska și Władimir Okusko), care au contribuit, fără îndoială, la dezvoltarea culturii în Chişinău acelei perioade. În timpul elaborării acestui text, autorul a consultat, de asemenea, presa de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea, ceea ce i-a permis să selecteze anumite informații utile și, uneori, necunoscute anterior.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunitatea poloneză; Chişinău; Imperiul Rus; Basarabia; Societatea de Caritate din Chişinău; Eugenia Maleszewska; Władimir Okusko.

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⁴⁴ *Polonia în Republica Moldova*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/republicamoldova/moldova> (accessed on 29.02.2024).

⁴⁵ *Program wykonawczy między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Republiki Mołdawii w dziedzinie kultury, edukacji i nauki na lata 2022-2025, podpisany w Warszawie dnia 8 kwietnia 2022 r.* (Dz.U. 2022 poz. 1106), <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20220001106/O/D20221106.pdf> (accessed on 29.02.2024).