



# The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture

*Larry Wolff*

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Galicia was created at the first partition of Poland in 1772 and disappeared in 1918. Yet, in slightly over a century, the idea of Galicia came to have meaning for both the peoples who lived there and the Habsburg government that ruled it. Indeed, its memory continues to exercise a powerful fascination for those who live in its former territories and for the descendants of those who emigrated out of Galicia.

The idea of Galicia was largely produced by the cultures of two cities, Lviv and Cracow. Making use of travelers' accounts, newspaper reports, and literary works, Wolff engages such figures as Emperor Joseph II, Metternich, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Ivan Franko, Stanislaw Wyspianski, Tadeusz "Boy" Zelenski, Isaac Babel, Martin Buber, and Bruno Schulz. He shows the exceptional importance of provincial space as a site for the evolution of cultural meanings and identities, and analyzes the province as the framework for non-national and multi-national understandings of empire in European history.

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