

Contact:  
Terry Tegnazian  
[terry@aquilapolonica.com](mailto:terry@aquilapolonica.com)  
310-470-0770  
For immediate release

## **The 2021 Aquila Polonica Article Prize Winner Announced** Biennial Prize Awarded for Best Article on Polish Studies

LOS ANGELES, December 9, 2021 — We're thrilled to announce that **Jessica Robbins**, Associate Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Wayne State University, has won the 2021 Aquila Polonica Article Prize.

The biennial Aquila Polonica Article Prize is given to the author of the best English-language article published during the previous two years on any aspect of Polish studies. Administered by the Polish Studies Association ("PSA"), which appoints the independent judges, the award carries a \$500 honorarium donated by Aquila Polonica Publishing.

### **About the Winning Article:**

Jessica C. Robbins, "Expanding Personhood beyond Remembered Selves: The Sociality of Memory at an Alzheimer's Center in Poland," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Vol. 33, Issue 4, 483–500, ISSN 0745-5194, online ISSN 1548-1387.

The prize committee was deeply impressed with Robbins's examination of a case study of elderly Poles being treated for memory loss. Robbins observed treatment that encouraged the recall of common national memory as opposed to individual memories, with salutary effects on the patients. Her argument about what she calls the "sociality of memory" offers a way forward for the care of those with Alzheimer's disease, but also offers broader insights about the social position of the elderly, nationalism, memory, and modern Poland.

Robbins's solid methodology, clear research design, sustained argumentation, reference to the relevant scholarship, and careful attention to the specifically Polish context of her study made her piece stand out. Specifically, she shows that individuals with memory loss may have access to a shared historical narrative specific to Poland. More importantly, she demonstrates that this narrative generates the possibility of new social bonds where "personal" memories have lapsed, and creates pathways for support and treatment on the part of caregivers who also have access to this narrative. Robbins's work positions "national memory" in a new role—inherently neither exclusionary nor inclusionary, but rather a functioning memory structure generating a sense of personhood when other sources are no longer accessible.

In addition to the winner, the committee also awarded honorable mention to the following two articles:

Tomasz Grusiecki, "Close Others: Poles in the Visual Imaginary of Early Modern Amsterdam," *Slavonic and East European Review* 98, no. 4 (2020): 654–89.

Oliver Zajac, "The Map as a Political Manifesto: The Case of *Karta dawnej Polski* and Hôtel Lambert's Concepts of the Polish State and Nation," In *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung/Journal of East-Central European Studies* 69, no. 3 (2020): 327-54. ISSN 0948-8294.

"It is our very great pleasure to congratulate Professor Robbins and our two honorable mentions, Professor Grusiecki of Boise State University and Oliver Zajac of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, for their outstanding work on three wide-ranging topics," said Aquila Polonica president Terry Tegnazian. "I also wish to thank this year's prize committee, which consisted of Jadwiga Biskupska and Janine Holc, for their hard work and thoughtful commentary."

Ordinarily, the prize is presented during PSA's annual meeting at the national convention of the Association for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies ("ASEEES"). However, because the 2021 ASEEES convention was split between in-person and remote sessions over different weeks, the PSA annual meeting was cancelled for this year. The 2021 Aquila Polonica Article Prize award will therefore be celebrated at next year's convention in Chicago.

PSA president Keely Stauter-Halsted commented, "Overall, the committee was quite impressed with the quality of the submissions. The state of publishing in Polish studies (in all disciplines) appears to be quite strong, and the existence of this prize helps to highlight the accomplishments of our membership."

#### **About the Winner:**

Jessica Robbins, Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Wayne State University, received her Ph.D. and M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Michigan. She has won several awards and grants, and authored numerous articles, book chapters and her first book, *Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland: Memory, Kinship, and Personhood*, which was recently published by Rutgers University Press.

#### **About Aquila Polonica Publishing**

Aquila Polonica is an award-winning independent publisher based in Los Angeles, specializing in publishing, in English, the World War II experience of Poland—the first of the Allies to fight Hitler. It is a member of Association of American Publishers and the Independent Book Publishers Association. All of its books to date have won awards. They have garnered rave reviews in major media such as the *New York Times*, *New Republic* and *Atlantic*; most have been Selections of the History Book Club, Military Book Club and/or Book-of-the-Month Club. They've been translated to foreign languages and licensed as audiobooks. See more at: [www.AquilaPolonica.com](http://www.AquilaPolonica.com).