

CHAPTER II

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Family cultural heritage and the subjective right to participate in local government as foundations underlying the position of an individual in contemporary society. Part I

SUMMARY

The first part of the chapter deals with the systemic characterization of the rank of family cultural heritage in the context of broadly understood cultural heritage.

KEY WORDS: family cultural heritage, cultural heritage, monuments, family historiography, local government

1. INTRODUCTION

Family history plays a very important role in the current state of the society's cultural identity. It holds true both in regards to non-tangible and tangible family cultural heritage. It is increasingly more common that people, on the one hand, perceive the social and cultural dimension of their family historiography in the framework of the non-tangible and tangible and cultural heritage, but also its personal and individual dimension, with its subtly expressive and important significance for the individual persons and their loved ones. Undoubtedly, in the 21st century family cultural heritage, regardless of the social background, should be seen through the prism of the *valorem affectionis* convention (sentimental, emotional value) in regards to these individuals whose tangible and non-tangible values refer to in any relevant dimension. Family cultural heritage "(...) remains in a positive and stimulating correlation with other kinds of cultural heritage, e.g. local heritage" [Dobosz, 2019a, p. 18]. I am convinced that we can speak about a growing popularity of research into family historiography. As a contribution, I also presented my position in an article titled: "*Popularization of the need to research the history of one's own family as a symptom of active participation in genealogical cultural heritage. Case study – selected aspects of own family research dedicated to Irena Dobosz (1940–2018) – guardian and propagator of family remembrance*". There I wrote

the following: “Contemporary families undertake the research into the history of their own families increasingly more frequently, although still not on any impressive scale”. This type of activity is, on the one hand, a result of the need observed among many people to search for their family roots, and on the other hand, of the breaking of a certain stereotype stating that family genealogy refers only to royal, aristocratic and noble families and its aim is to prove the many centuries of existence of a given family and execution of a genealogical tree in a form of a drawing or family graph. Therefore, as some people think, it is not worth researching one’s own family history” [Dobosz, 2019b, p. 20].

2. A NOTION OF A FAMILY AND ANCESTRAL LINE VERSUS A DEFINITION OF FAMILIAL AND ANCESTRAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Familial and ancestral cultural heritage is connected with notions of a family and ancestral lineage. We can refer to a *sensu stricto* family and *sensu largo* family. A *sensu stricte* family consists of parents and children. A *sensu largo* family includes also relatives of affinity and consanguinity, who create separate families. This broader approach to a family places a group of families within their ancestral lineage, being a compact social group built on the basis of *sanguinem necessitudines*, i.e. bonds of blood constituting a family community based on a criterion of blood and consisting of families deriving their lineage from a concrete shared ancestor. Contemporarily, we may assume that family cultural heritage is a complex of non-tangible attributes (values) and tangible objects which are set in time and space and connected with a history of a specific family and which are cultivated in the tradition and reality of a given contemporary family. Thereby, this heritage constitutes a factor of a vivid intra-family impact, regardless of the family’s social background. The ancestral cultural heritage, in turn, is a complex of non-tangible attributes (values) and tangible objects set in time and space which are connected with a history of a specific ancestral lineage and which are a subject of cultivation in a tradition and contemporary reality of a given family group. Thereby, it constitutes a factor of vivid intra-family group impact, regardless of the social background of the family groups.

Contemporarily we may classify family groups based on various criteria of social sense of identity. This includes, for example, family lines of low or high nobility, aristocracy, duke families, gentry, townfolk, tradesmen, craftsmen, working class, farmers or peasantry. In the past, family lines defined as “of noble birth” were distinguished by their coat-of-arms which was used to define a community referring to single persons and entire families who were using their specific coat-of arms.

From the perspective of today's knowledge of the history of family lines we can also distinguish mixed family lines where social background and professions were strongly mixed. A glance at the professional placements of noble families shows that it was subject to significant modifications.

3. TRADITION AND FAMILY – REFERENCE IN MASS CULTURE

In the times of interdisciplinary nature of social sciences one may refer to film studies to find the mass culture exemplification of the values presented in this article. An understanding of the notion of tradition was very well presented in a Polish comedy directed by Stanisław Bareja and titled "Miś" ["Miś" ("Teddy Bear"), 1980]. It is presented in a narration which reappears for several times in different scenes of the film, starting with an unambiguously comic motif and ending with a "serious" message of a young coal-trader (played by Marek Siudym) who intended to name his daughter Tradition. In a conversation with his colleagues he showed them a newspaper. Stanisław Paluch, another coal-trader, (played by Stanisław Tym) read a paragraph, appropriately stressing particular phrases: "Following a ceremony in a wedding hall... the newlyweds went to the council in their workplace, where they received bouquets of wedding flowers. All were touched with the fact that they witnessed the birth of new, lay tradition" [„Miś" ("Teddy Bear"), 1980].

In the final act of the film *Tłoczyński*, an elderly coal-trader (played by Stefan Śródka) made the following statement; not only did he strongly oppose against naming a child Tradition, but he also explained the reasons for his position, finding that: "She cannot be called: **TRADITION**. You are asking me why? Well, because you cannot name anything a tradition. Neither can you order it with a special resolution, nor establish it. Who thinks differently, shines like a blown-out candle in the sunny outdoors! Tradition is an oak-tree which had been growing for thousands of years. Let nobody match a small sprout with an oak-tree! Tradition of our history is a wall of a stronghold. This is a Christmas carol, a Christmas Eve super, this is singing of the country folk, this is our father's speech, this is our history which cannot be changed. And what is being built around us is being created anew; this is our everyday reality in which we are living" ["Miś" ("Teddy Bear"), 1980].

However, in a song titled "*Family, ah, family*", which was performed by Jeremi Przybora and Jerzy Wasowski of *Kabaret Starszych Panów* [the Elderly Gentlemen's Cabaret] in a poetic, lyrical and satirical, yet also axiological manner they drew the attention to the potential, magnetism and power of a family with such words:

Family, family, family, ah, family.
 You do not enjoy family when it is there,
 But when you don't have it
 You're lonely like a dog.

A guy had a villa with a garden
 He had a garage and a car,
 So everybody who did not have them,
 Immediately desired to have them, along with
 a telephone made of plastic, a record-player, and a coat of tails...
 So what could the guy lack?

Family, family...

He got five years of jail as an effect
 Of this villa with a garden.
 They pass by quietly
 In his spic and span cell.
 Reading, walking, quite tasty food.
 So what could the guy lack?

Family, family... [Przybora, Wasowski, 1962].

4. GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORIOGRAPHY

A notion of genealogy, derived from the Greek words *γενεά*, *genos* – “family line” and *λόγος*, *logos* i.e. „word”, „knowledge” is defined on several levels. Firstly, it is seen as “history of a family line, written or preserved in oral tradition, taking into consideration its origin, a sequence of generations and the bonds of kinship among its members” [*Słownik Języka Polskiego (Dictionary of the Polish Language)*, 1960, p. 1087]. In another approach it is: “an auxiliary science to history dealing with analysis of the origin, family relationships and history of families” [*Słownik Języka Polskiego (Dictionary of the Polish Language)*, 1960, p. 1087]. Genealogy also means: “an origin, a beginning of something” [*Słownik Języka Polskiego (Dictionary of the Polish Language)*, 1960, p. 1087].

Genealogy is unjustly associated with the professional work solely aimed at a preparation of a genealogical tree and evidence of a noble birth or background of a socially ennobling character. Such attitude places a certain barrier on the actions of a genealogical nature. It may also cause disappointment with the results of the professional genealogical research. An alternative notion eliminating the mental barrier and fears of showing the background in the so-called lower social classes

or discrediting genealogical research results from a recent period is a notion of an amateur family historiography which uses contemporary tools of documentation and presentation of family history. However, once we adopt some distance and humility to our own family history we can avoid the potential unreliability of some individual genealogists or genealogical offices whose activity may make a client happy with their “coat-of-arms history” but which do not have anything to do with reliability and honesty. This phenomenon is described by P. Dudziński in the following way: “The coat-of-arms is indeed connected with a certain nostalgia. Many people browse through armorials in hope of finding their surname, sometimes falling prey to various kinds of “offices” and creating fiction of possessing a coat-of-arms, or searching for false ancestors, or bestowing new coats-of-arms on people” [Dudziński, 1997, p. 243].

5. AN INDIVIDUAL – A PERSON IN SIX MAIN PLANES OF INDIVIDUAL SELF-REALIZATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT VERSUS FAMILY HISTORIOGRAPHY

A human being (an individual) may be situated in six main planes of individual self-realization and personal development. The first plane which can be called “a lone sailor” refers to an alienated person performing all social functions by him/herself. The second plane is the family, which in the opinion of the author of this text is socially fundamental. The third plane is local government, and especially its basic unit. The fourth plane is the nation without a state and the nation within the entity of an existing state. The fifth plane is a supranational structure, e.g. the European Union. And the last, sixth plane is the global structure.

All of these planes mutually intermingle to some extent. Either in an institutionalized or non-institutional manner. Helvetia is an example of such reciprocities among some of the listed planes. According to P. Dudziński, who researches Switzerland “(...) heraldry is present at every corner, either in the coats-of-arms used by the overwhelming majority of families regardless of their background – peasantry, tradesmen, craftsmen or nobility, whether the flags wave in front of companies, private homes, which are adorned by coats-of-arms of a commune, canton, company or family (the rules of using these signs and other symbols related to them is specified by the governmental document of 1957). Each Swiss person knows the coats-of-arms of their cantons, is able to recognize the emblems of towns and communes of befriended families that are close to his/her heart. Knowledge of those signs is taken into account in school syllabuses. And in this way a cult of family and the family line, becoming strong in a specifically placed regional homeland,

and along with it in a wide notion of one federalized homeland, becomes a seed for love of tradition and native land, and all of this is happening in one of the most democratic political systems in the world” [Dudziński, 1997, p. 244].

6. PROPAGATING THE AWARENESS OF FAMILY (ANCESTRAL) HISTORY DURING THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF POLAND, AN ATTITUDE OF A SOCIALIST (COMMUNIST) STATE IN POLAND AND AN ATTITUDE OF THE CONTEMPORARY POLISH STATE TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH AND FAMILY HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the Second Republic of Poland the culture of national, state and family awareness was popularized. A presentation of this issue in a broader perspective is yet beyond the scope of this paper. The words of Władysław Pulnarowicz, a senator during the Second Polish Republic are yet expressively valid. He advocated “an obligation to become familiar with the life and work of our ancestors” [Pulnarowicz, 1937, p. 5]. He saw the foundation of the Polish society in family awareness, which he expressed while writing: “(...) the old history of both individual families as well as of the entire nation is the foundation which the contemporary society is based on” [Pulnarowicz, 1937, p. 5]. Recognizing the cognitive function of the family (ancestral) historical knowledge he saw it having not only the cognitive but also a preventive element. Thus, he stated: “(...) the history of past generations, history is the mistress of life we can learn a lot from. Getting to know our ancestors’ lives we can avoid many errors which they had committed or we can follow many things which turned out to be good” [Pulnarowicz, 1937, p. 5]. In another place W. Pulnarowicz wrote: “(...) The forefathers should be honoured not only while they are alive, but also their memory should be respected. And we deem also our ancestors, grandfathers and great-grandfathers as forefathers, constituting the basis of our family today. One should follow their good deeds and avoid the bad ones. This is the reason why we have to know the past. To know the history of our country, of our native village and the history of our family” [Pulnarowicz, 1937, p. 5 and the following ones].

An attitude of the socialist (communist) state to genealogy and family historiography had a defensive and ambivalent dimension in Poland. In regards to genealogy and family historiography the People’s Republic of Poland adopted an ideological and depreciating approach, significantly narrowing down any activity in this respect. The attitude of today’s Polish state is undergoing a certain metamorphosis which takes the path from institutional indifference to a relative organizational creativity. Examples of the latter include support from local government

to social archives projects, collecting and digitalizing family memorabilia and collecting testimonies from people living in localities. These are also museological projects emphasizing the social rank, for example, of traditional family albums. As a proverb goes “one swallow does not make a summer”, but certainly this is a good beginning.

Regardless of the expectations towards the system of public education which should awaken the students’ interest in their family history, a broader perspective should also include support for amateur family historiography. In the opinion of the author of this text: “The findings of family historiography of each historic period are valuable, without the need to list the documented traces of a family in very distant centuries” [Dobosz, 2019b, p. 20].

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