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INTRODUCTION

An online international conference under the title *Szkoły uczuć. Płeć w historycznych procesach kształtowania emocji* [Schools of Emotion. Gender in the historical processes of shaping emotions] was held on 23–24 June 2022; it was organised by the Commission of Women's History at the Committee on Historical Sciences [Komitet Nauk Historycznych, KNH] in the Polish Academy of Sciences (renamed in 2024 to KNH Commission of Women's and Gender Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences), as well as the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw and the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The conference was initiated by members of the Commission, who conduct research on different historical eras and represent various research centres. These members have been involved in launching and developing research projects devoted to social and cultural history, with a particular focus on the category of gender, for years. The achievements of Polish historiography in this area clearly point to the necessity of combining research on the social history of women and the construction of gender with the history of emotions. The latter have been used more than once in the past to define gender differences, justify the assignment of different social roles to women and men, perpetuate gender inequality, and serve as proof of the advantages of gender segregation in education, labour, or social activities.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the writer Klementyna Hoffmanowa, *née* Tańska, published a guidebook for young women,¹ styled as an intimate farewell to a fourteen-year-old daughter by her dying mother; the text appealed to the reader's emotions and was emotional in some passages. For Hoffmanowa, female beauty, richness of feeling and following one's heart made it a woman's calling to obey and please a man, to devote herself to domestic life, motherhood and caring for loved ones, while weakness of mind, succumbing to emotions and lack of physical strength made her incapable of making rational decisions, leading others, participating in politics and waging wars. The differences between the genders, which, in her view, were a work of God, determined the social roles of man and woman, but also the necessity of their coexistence and complementarity.² For the writer, femininity was the total of tenderness, gentleness, modesty, kindness, sweetness, affection, submissiveness, patience and forbearance. However, Hoffmanowa criticised any instances of exaggeration in displaying these qualities, as well as acting under the influence of emotions. To best fulfil her role as a wife, mother, and lady of the house, she recommended that women should be "steady in humor", that is, control their emotions and discipline their feelings.³ Hoffmanowa's guidebook, which was repeatedly reissued throughout the nineteenth century, taught this art of conduct to several generations of women.

Nearly a hundred years later, in 1907, at the Congress of Polish Women in Warsaw, an activist in the Polish feminist movement, Maria Dułębiana called on women to be independent on the political stage, create a separate organization and adopt their own independent strategy

¹ Klementyna Hoffmanowa, *Pamiętka po dobrej matce czyli ostatnie jej rady dla córki* (Warszawa, 1819).

² "Nature has endowed man with strength, for it has entrusted him with the defence of the weak, fighting injustice, and the punishment of wrongdoing. He sheds his blood on the battlefield, composes wise laws, ensures their enforcement, conquers countries, builds them up, defends them, and rules over them: in a word, he is a man. God created woman to be more sensitive and weaker: she should soften, appease, and make her bold companion happy. The world would be a wild and dire place if it were populated only by men; it would be sluggish and inactive if it were populated only by women. Their union and mutual assistance are the principle of social order, and as the male sex rules the world, ours beautifies it", *ibid.*, 19; "her mind is weaker, her heart more sensitive than a man's, she is more capable of accepting false opinions, of believing in excessive emotions", *ibid.*, 97.

³ *Ibid.*, 159.

of action; she argued that there were many arguments in favour of that stance. She pointed not only to the negative experiences of cooperation with mass political parties, which marginalised women's demands for political emancipation, but also to the different approach of women themselves to politics, resulting from their more subtle, emotional and ethical nature.⁴ Women, by acting honestly, nobly, and gently, were to bring a new quality to the world of politics, to put an end to the practice of deliberately evoking strong emotions in public debate and mobilising electorates with negative feelings.⁵ Women were to serve as "harbingers of peace, serenity and harmony", making politics ethical and based on strong moral foundations.⁶ In turn, opponents of the idea of gender equality stood up for the traditionally conceived emotionality of women while accusing them of succumbing to emotions in the workplace, and protested their entry into professions that were considered masculine.⁷

The history of women's emancipation in the Polish lands, while reasonably well recognised by researchers in the past, has not yet been analysed using the category of emotions. In light of the remarks above, this deficiency may come as a surprise; it is due to the somewhat lagging interest of the Polish historical community, compared to world historiography, in the study of affects, including their gender context. The intensification of this type of research around the globe, the emotional turn⁸ declared by some scholars, encouraged Polish historians and researchers of the past from other academic fields to study the history of emotions or to include this approach in studies on the broader social and cultural history, including the history of women and gender.

Thus, over the past several years, we have witnessed an increase in the number of publications addressing these issues. These certainly

⁴ Maria Dulębianka, *Polityczne stanowisko kobiety* (Warszawa, 1908), 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷ Such arguments have been expressed in public debate from the early 1870s on a reasonably regular basis. Eliza Orzeszkowa, in her novel *Marta*, published in 1873, was one of the first to polemicise against the notion that women's work in occupations considered masculine and with men, and the assumption that it has pernicious effects on female nature, is detrimental to women.

⁸ Jay Plamper, 'The history of emotions: An interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory*, 49 (2010), 237–65.

include Tomasz Wiślicz's monograph *Love in the Fields. Relationships and Marriage in Rural Poland in the Early Modern Age: Social Imagery and Personal Experience*,⁹ a collective work edited by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz entitled *Zapisy cierpienia* [Records of Suffering], which features texts that take into account the category of gender,¹⁰ some studies from the collection *Kobieta i mężczyzna: jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy* [Woman and Man: One Space – Two Worlds], edited by Bożena Popiołek, Agnieszka Chłosta-Sikorska, and Marcin Gadocha,¹¹ a study by Bożena Popiołek entitled *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich* [Benefactors and Clients. Specifics of Female Patronage and Patron-Client Relations in Saxon Times],¹² and Agnieszka Słaby's *Macierzyństwo. Studium z historii mentalności szlachty Rzeczypospolitej czasów saskich* [Motherhood. A Study in the History of the Mentality of the Polish Nobles in Saxon Times].¹³ The question of emotions also appears in selected texts by Barbara Klich-Kluczewska on the history of the Polish People's Republic or in Katarzyna Sierakowska's articles on the First World War.¹⁴ Not to be overlooked is a special issue of the journal *Prace Historyczne*, published at the Jagiellonian University, titled *Wojna emocji. Historia emocji a studia nad*

⁹ Tomasz Wiślicz, *Love in the Fields. Relationships and Marriage in Rural Poland in the Early Modern Age: Social Imagery and Personal Experience*, trans. George Szenderowicz (Warsaw, 2018). Polish original: *Upodobanie. Małżeństwo i związki nieformalne na wsi polskiej XVII–XVIII wieku. Wyobrażenia społeczne i jednostkowe doświadczenia* (Wrocław, 2012).

¹⁰ Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz (ed.), *Zapisy cierpienia* (Wrocław, 2011).

¹¹ Bożena Popiołek, Agnieszka Chłosta-Sikorska, Marcin Gadocha (eds), *Kobieta i mężczyzna: jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy* (Warszawa, 2015).

¹² Bożena Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich* (Wilanów, 2020).

¹³ Agnieszka Słaby, *Macierzyństwo. Studium z historii mentalności szlachty Rzeczypospolitej czasów saskich* (Kraków, 2023).

¹⁴ Eg., Barbara Klich-Kluczewska, 'Przypadek Marii spod Bochni. Próba analizy mikrohistorycznej procesu o aborcję z 1949 roku', *Rocznik Antropologii Historii*, ii, 1 (2012), 195–209; *ead.*, 'Kobieta wobec rodziny', in Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, Piotr Perkowski, Małgorzata Fidelis, Barbara Klich-Kluczewska, *Kobiety w Polsce 1945–1989. Nowoczesność, równouprawnienie, komunizm* (Kraków, 2020, 311–27); Katarzyna Sierakowska, *Kobiety dokument osobisty z czasów I wojny światowej jako źródło historyczne*, in Szczepan Kozak, Dariusz Opaliński, Janusz Polaczek, Szymon Wieczorek, Wioletta Zawitkowska (eds), *Człowiek – Społeczeństwo – Źródło. Studia dedykowane Profesor Jadwidze Hoff* (Rzeszów, 2014), 537–45.

wojna [The War of Emotions. The History of Emotions and the Study of War], which also includes the category of gender.¹⁵

However, it seems that the study of emotions or the study of emotions in the context of gender history have still not become particularly popular in Polish historiography. Scholars still need to argue that these tools broaden the research perspective. They enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the motives behind the actions and reactions of the protagonists in historical events. As indicated in the multi-volume *A Cultural History of the Emotions*, covering the period from antiquity to the present, the expression of emotions, or their articulation, is closely correlated with historical time, with the cultural environment in which individuals live and act, and, last but not least, with the notions, ideals, mental paradigms prevailing in a given era.¹⁶ It is worth referencing here the works of American cultural anthropologist William Reddy, who popularised the notion that the way emotions are expressed is closely related to culture and that emotions are socially constructed. However, in his writings, Reddy failed to take into account, as his critics pointed out, one factor crucial for a historian – the passage of time and, consequently, the work of memory. After all, it is highly unlikely that actors of historical events felt the same emotions at the time of said events and ten or thirty years later. It seems, therefore, that memory studies can support historians' reflections on emotions.

The purpose of the following issue is to present current research conducted in the Polish academic community (not limited to historical sciences) on the history of emotions in connection with the category of gender. Examining the topics discussed at the conference and gaining insight into the research community clearly revealed that the most deficient area in this field is research on men's emotions. To offset this absence, at least to some extent, we decided to include a text by a German researcher alongside the Polish texts. We also wanted

¹⁵ 'Wojna emocji. Historia emocji a studia nad wojną', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne*, cli, 2 (2024).

¹⁶ *A Cultural History of the Emotions*, vols 1–6 (London, 2019–2021), vol. 1: Douglas Cairns (ed.), *In Antiquity*; vol. 2: Juanita Ruys and Clare Monagle (eds), *In the Medieval Age*; vol. 3: Andrew Lynch and Susan Broomhall (eds), *In the Late-Medieval, Reformation, and Renaissance Age*; vol. 4: David Lemmings, Claire Walker, and Katie Barclay (eds), *In the Baroque and Enlightenment Age (1600–1780)*; vol. 5: Susan Matt (ed.), *In the Age of Romanticism, Revolution and Empire (1780–1920)*; vol. 6: Jane Davidson and Joy Damousi (eds), *In the Modern and Post-Modern Age (1920–2000+)*.

the chronological range of the articles to encompass the broadest possible time perspective, while also reflecting, at least partially, the thematic proportions we observed at our conference. That is why we include articles on both medieval and contemporary history. By far the largest number of contributions are devoted to the nineteenth century, but the 1920s and 1930s are also represented.

In the articles featured in the volume, we also demonstrate the possibilities offered by analysing different types of sources. It turned out that even materials seemingly as unemotional as notarial records can have an emotive dimension. Marta Knajp (University of Warsaw) argues that the declarations of love to spouses contained in wills were not only utilitarian in nature: they were also an expression of appreciation of the years partners had lived together and must, according to the author, have at least testified to their warm feelings for each other. Kalina Słaboszowska (University of Warsaw) analysed the *Annales* by Jan Długosz in terms of emotions. Her paper clearly illustrates that historians possess the tools and research methods to enhance their understanding of social interactions, informed by the study of modes of expressing emotions. Sylvia Wehren (University of Hildesheim) and Marcin Wilk (Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences) showed in their articles how adolescent diaries can be used in the study of emotions: the former focused on boys, while the latter on girls. Justyna Górny (University of Warsaw) utilised literary and journalistic sources to investigate whether an emotional community of female students existed in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century and how it was constructed and perceived by its members. Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez (Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences) explored how the “politics of emotions” was created and how feelings were used to shape the National Democracy (*Endecja*) worldview and ideology. The contribution of Agnieszka Szudarek (University of Szczecin), based on press sources, provided insight into the issues of modern social welfare as developed by the German state at the turn of the twentieth century. Using the case of Poznań, the author examined the reaction of the Polish press to the work of women in the city’s welfare administration. Women’s emotionality, hitherto practised in the private sphere, was recognised by the state apparatus. The press encouraged Polish women to work in official assistance to the needy, recognising this as an expression of social solidarity and “a field for practising women’s ‘nature’”.

As for the theoretical inspiration of the texts, the authors most often cite the findings of Barbara Rosenwein.¹⁷ Her theory of emotional communities was found convincing not only by researchers of earlier periods but also by those dealing with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their analyses confirm Rosenwein's belief in the negotiation of emotional expressions between the particular emotional communities in which individuals operate and their individual experiences. The gender and age of the actors in the historical processes are also significant. The contributions included in this issue clearly indicate that the study of emotions expands our knowledge of the cultural context in which individuals act. The ways in which emotions are expressed become yet another factor that allows the researcher to better understand the times they are writing about, while also highlighting the distinctiveness of individual periods.

Translated by Krzysztof Heymer

¹⁷ Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge, 2016); *ead.*, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Age* (Ithaca–London, 2006).