

JUSTYNA ŻUKOWSKA – SŁUPSK

THE INFLUENCE OF URBAN CULTURE ON THE IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF TOWN AND CITIES IN ROYAL PRUSSIA IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY

Identity is a term with plenty of meanings that are more or less coincident. In any case the point is that individuals and groups inevitably undergo alterations during their existence. Moreover, they maintain certain constant features deciding about who they are, and simultaneously, distinguishing them from other individuals and groups. Social identity, whether it is national, cultural, political, religious or generational identity is based on unconscious and conscious involvement in a specified social group by lifestyle, tradition, culture, origin, asset. It is also based on understanding the difference of this group from the other groups of a given kind, such as nations, or religious communities etc.¹

The definition of urban culture is not unambiguous as well as the definition of culture itself. How to distinguish it from the whole of cultural phenomena of

JUSTYNA ŻUKOWSKA – since 2001 an academic at the Institute of History at the Pomeranian University of Słupsk, the department of modern and 19th history. Obtaining the title of PhD in the field of history in 2010. In 2016, the publication of a doctoral dissertation entitled: Jan Poszakowski - a historian from the Saxon times. Research group leader: Pomerania and the Baltic area, and the Republic of Poland in the modern times. NR ORCID??? Brak danych kontaktowych!

1. <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/tozsamosc;3988537.html>, 09.11.2019. Por.: *Modi memorandi. Leksykon kultury pamięci*, red. M. Saryusz-Wolska, R. Traba, Warszawa 2014, s. 489-496.

the examined period? The most accurate would be defining urban culture as an aggregate of phenomena born and functioning in the urban environment. Since the title of the article is urban culture and not the bourgeoisie one the emphasis has been put on a city as a specific culture-forming centre populated not only by the bourgeoisie, but also by other various segments of society, such as clergy, magnates, nobility, and loose people.^{1a} Therefore, urban culture is an environment that determines the identity of social groups populating cities.

A city, from its very beginning, had been creating particular conditions for cultural development due to the vast accumulation of creative human potential and economic potential in its area. In that very location huge groups of producers and consumers of culture came into existence. Fairs were an opportunity to broaden the knowledge about the world, exchange opinions and thoughts. New customs had been shaped. As a result, new material, intellectual and aesthetic needs evolved. Plenty of pieces of art from the field of architecture and painting appeared in the urban areas. What is more, it influenced the intellectual level and sensitivity of the residents. Access to education and academic institutions, public or private collection of books or manuscripts in cities was easier. The intellectual life of a country concentrated there and also new groups of the pre-intelligentsia such as clerks, teachers, doctors appeared².

Incorporation of Royal Prussia initiated a long-term process of assimilation of this area with the Crown. A complicated operation of re-polonization and polonization particular centers, and social groups, or consolidation of the German ethnic element depended on ethnic, economic, and religious factors³.

All of these phenomena were especially prevalent in the lands of Royal Prussia created during the years 1454-1466, and confirmed by the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466 between Jagiellonian Poland and the Teutonic Order. Since then, Royal Prussia became a part of the Polish Crown in the terms of social and legal aspects. Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg were classified as large Prussian cities, and for this reason the political and legal concept of "great Prussian cities" was created in Royal Prussia in the 15th century⁴.

Royal Prussia was divided into 11 counties and 4 separated districts, i.e. Bishopric of Culm and the territory of 3 big cities, that is, Gdańsk (approx. forty thousand

-
2. M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, Wrocław 1986, p. 547-549.
 3. *Historia Elbląga*, red. A. Groth, Gdańsk 1996, p. 143.
 4. *Panorama lojalności. Prusy Królewskie i Prusy Książęce w XVI w.*, w: *Eseje i Studia*, red. J. Axer, t. 4, Warszawa 2001, p. 7.

citizens in the 16th century), Toruń (approx. twelve thousand citizens in the 16th century) and Elbląg (approx. fifteen thousand citizens in the 16th century)⁵.

In the years 1526-1569 in Royal Prussia the concept of further applying the Crown system to the lands of Royal Prussia, forced by the middle nobility, clashed with the concept of further autonomy maintained by the powerful Prussian men and large cities. Moreover, evident is the fact that in Royal Prussia the group of the Polish Prussian began to form. It consisted of the middle Pomeranian nobility and the Culm nobility with a similar language and customs to the Crown Nobility. Simultaneously, a group of the German Prussians was being formed, which included wealthy men from big cities and small towns, such as Malbork⁶. It is an example of particular political notions being identified with the mentioned social categories. The structure of the population was diverse in every aspect. Polish population was prevalent among clergy, nobility and rural people.

However, in big cities, and in some smaller ones, the population of German origin was dominant⁷.

Royal Prussia was a territory which during the period from the 16th and the 18th century was characterized by significant dynamic of intellectual culture growth. It is depicted i.a. by quantitative development of print production. Moreover, it is especially noticeable in the 17th century and until the half of the 18th century. In comparison to nationwide data, Royal Prussia in that time was almost the main centre of intellectual culture, and particularly of education advancement in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The reason for that was the flourishing and economic role of the province. Especially, it was the dynamic role of the local bourgeoisie that the other parts of the country lacked. Royal Prussia became a huge centre of humanism in the Polish lands at the end of the 16th century, and subsequently, the centre of Baroque culture and the early Enlightenment. Printing, literature, science and education, theater and music, visual arts, handicrafts⁸ were developing at that time.

An incredibly important aspect in the culture was, of course, patronage which fostered the expansion of the very culture. The most active patrons of the Renaissance in Poland include authorities of such rich centres, such as Gdańsk,

5. *Atlas Historyczny Polski. Prusy Królewskie w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, oprac. M. Biskup, Warszawa 1961, p. 34-69.

6. M. Biskup, *Prusy Królewskie w II połowie XV i w XVI stuleciu*, w: *Panorama lojalności. Prusy Królewskie i Prusy Książęce w XVI w.*, t. 4, p. 13. Zob.: *Akta Stanów Prus Królewskich*, t. V, cz. 3, 1511-1512, wyd. M. Biskup, Warszawa 1975; *Akta Stanów Prus Królewskich*, t. VI, 1512-1515, wyd. M. Biskup, I. Janosz-Biskupowa, Warszawa 1979.

7. S. Salmonowicz, *Prusy Królewskie w XVII-XVIII wieku. Studia z dziejów kultury*, Toruń 2002, p. 11.

8. Tamże, p. 23-24.

Toruń, or Elbląg. They also comprise fraternities and guilds. An example of this was probably the activity of the Artus Court in Gdańsk, or rich patrician families including the Ferbers of Gdańsk. A dual role was played by the splendid houses of the most affluent bourgeoisie, glittering with gold in the exact centre of the city, an amazing city hall as a seat of the authorities, rich tombstones and family epitaphs of the bourgeoisie in churches emphasized illustriousness of the city governors and their economic power. All of this, on the one hand, was supposed to command respect among common people and the plebs. On the other hand, it was supposed to impress the nobility coming to a city. One example is a "Pro invida" inscription, situated around the year 1620 on a decorative facade of Henryk Ferber's tenement in Gdańsk at 29 Długa Street. The splendor of the bourgeois architecture was aimed at increasing the prestige towards the hostile nobility society⁹.

The 17th century is full of amazing achievements of bourgeois architecture, and therefore, the patronage of that social strata. In the years 1602-1605 Antoni von Opbergen built the Arsenal, Abraham van dem Blocke remodeled a 13th-century gothic gate, the Brama Długouliczna (eng. Long Street Gate) into the Golden Gate (1612-1614), he also rebuilt the facade of Artus Court (1616-1618) and designed famous Neptune's Fountain (1606-1633). The tenement of the mayor Johann Speymann, located at 41 Długi Targ (eng. The Long Market) received such a brilliant facade that henceforth it was called Golden (1609-1617). More prominent epitaphs and bourgeoisie tombs were created in that time too. To a large extent, the Renaissance was the work of the bourgeoisie, and was represented by city halls, patrician tenements, or other city buildings. However, the Polish Baroque, and later classicism consisted virtually of only churches and magnate palaces. Only the cities of Royal Prussia, to some extent, continued the earlier traditions. In the urban environment, the demand for aesthetic experiences increased. It was expressed in collecting, by not only rich bourgeoisie, paintings and other often impractical objects i.e. trinkets made of glass, amber, metal, or jewellery. It was proof of the beginning of mass culture at the turn of the 16th and 17th century, which in the half of the 17th century was inhibited due to the wartime devastation and the economic collapse of cities.

In the 16th century a number of primary and parish schools, to some extent, came under the supervision of the bourgeoisie, as a result of certain reformations. The city council provided funds for the schools located there. The council also had an impact on teachers selection and creation the curriculum in accordance with the notion of humanistic pedagogy. For instance, the statute of the Gymnasium of Toruń precisely defined student's responsibilities: "(...) Niech nie dręczą swoich

9. M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, p. 550

współtowarzyszy, nie wyśmiewają się z nich, nie nazywają ich obelżywymi imionami, niech okazują miłość i życzliwość wszystkim, z którymi wspólnie oddają się nauce”^{10,10a}.¹¹ The attention was paid to coexistence of both Poles and Germans at school, and due to the fact of using the Polish language by the bourgeoisie, there was the following clause in the above mentioned statute: “Ponadto i Niemcom, aby tym łatwiej i szybciej douczali się języka polskiego, lekcję szczególną przepisano, w której komedie Terencjusza, niektóre listy Cyncerona, Rozmowy Erazma oraz liczne teksty klasy piątej czystą i właściwą polszczyzną mają być tłumaczone”^{11,11a}.

Private schools more practicality oriented that taught a merchant trade and foreign languages developed in larger cities of Royal Prussia (Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg). However, the teaching staff was of bourgeois origin. The notion of humanistic pedagogy, which was from that moment an element of national identity, was built mainly by the bourgeoisie. Great academic gymnasiums, such as in Gdańsk, in Toruń, in Elbląg established in the 16th century competed effectively with educational institutions including the Academy of Kraków and the Academy of Vilnius, the Lubrański Academy, or gymnasiums, such as in Pińczów, Raków, and Leszno. They constituted amazing research centres which gathered remarkable scholars and founded science societies creating social identity. A percentage of the bourgeoisie in gymnasiums in the lands of Royal Prussia exceeded 90 %¹². The situation changed only in the second half of the 17th century and in the 18th century.

The wealth of Royal Prussia and considerable significance of the social stratum of the bourgeoisie influenced the direction of didactics both in academic colleges and gymnasiums. They aimed at preparing the youth for participating in public, social, artistic life and for professional work related to the specificity of a region. Protestant gymnasiums, maintaining their bourgeois nature, educated for future administrative, judicial, merchant, or sailing jobs. In both types of schools i.e. protestant and catholic the military knowledge was broadened. It should be em-

10. *Statut Gimnazjum Toruńskiego (1568-1600)*, w: *Ziemia chełmińska w przeszłości. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, red. M. Biskup, Toruń 1961, p. 134-135.

10a Translation: (...) they shall not torment other schoolmates, they shall not mock or laugh at them, they shall not use invective language towards the others they shall show love and kindness everyone that shares the interest to devote themselves to pursuing the knowledge.

11. Previously mentioned text, p. 134.

11a Translation: Moreover, and for Germans, in order to easier and faster learn the Polish language a special task has been assigned, in which the comedies of Terence, some letters of Cicero, conversations of Erazm, and numerous tekst of the fifth grade shall be translated into the pure and proper Polish language.

12. M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, p. 555.

phasized that the educational institutions in Royal Prussia kept the bond with the local communities and made effort for the demands formed by them. The Polish language was perfected and the necessity of teaching it was appreciated, because of the needs of public life and merchant activity. In the 17th century polonisation of the Jesuit Collegium teachers was visibly accelerated¹³.

Bibliophilic passions flourished in the age of the Renaissance and in the early Baroque in the bourgeoisie circles. They collected particular books i.e. law, medical, and historical titles. The first public library was opened in Gdańsk thanks to the patronage of the city council by the end of the 16th century. Books reached the hands of the bourgeoisie faster and easier than the noble manor houses. The cities frequently constituted centers of printing to quite a large extent, as it was in Gdańsk, however, the Polish printing houses initially worked mainly on the order from the clergy and the nobility, partly from the royal court, and then for the needs of the bourgeoisie. This process was also connected with a reformation movement and later a counter-reformation movement¹⁴.

In the bourgeois circles the first scientific societies were formed in Gdańsk just by the end of the 17th century. Eventually in 1720 so-called Societas Literaria was established. Affluent patrician families also often funded scientific research, paid salary and grants to the writers, poets, researchers, they were among others, the Strobands of Toruń and the Ferbers of Gdańsk. The less fortunate ones had to combine education with, for instance, a job of a merchant and doing crafts as Johannes Hevelius made his living brewing and Nicolaus Copernicus occupying church prebends.

Urban culture is also connected with spectacles which were the beginning of theater life. City authorities organised them as well as city institutions i.e. fraternities, guilds, school on usually public occasions, such as entrances of rulers to the city, coronations, royal funerals, visits of diplomats. In Gdańsk in 1654 and in 1754 the anniversary of the return of the Pomeranian region to Poland was celebrated in a very solemn way. Organising events including tournaments, shooting contests, athletic competitions, religious celebrations such as a Nativity play, the carnival, festive spectacles, ceremonies and confraternity and guild festivities constituted not only attractions for local residents, but also maintained social bonds, national and religious affiliation. They strengthened patriotism and formed national identity too. The events involved tens of people, both actors and spectators. The amazing artistic and musical layer, especially in the times of the Baroque, made those occasions the precursor of, available to the wide groups of the audience theater, opera and ballet. As a consequence, music also developed,

13. L. Mokrzecki, *Wokół staropolskiej nauki i oświaty*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 323-325.

14. M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, p. 557.

particularly in the protestant cities where it was an essential element of the life of the citizens. The evidence of this is possessions of the inhabitants that included musical instruments. It is also the information stating the fact that buskers and even entire bands were supported by the city council. Great theatrical, dramatic and musical achievements of particular educational institutions in Royal Prussia played a very important role in solidifying their connection with the closest environment¹⁵.

Cities by themselves created places where one could experience culture on a daily basis. When it comes to architecture and the exterior artistic design of a building, the recipient was every passer-by. Therefore, they had a wide range of impact, which in turn shaped the preferences and aesthetic sensitivity of the group of recipients. So urban architecture was an instrument used to influence common and mass culture, regional, local and even national identity. Secular and religious foundations created by the prominent noble landowners were becoming an inseparable component of urban culture. Suitable examples were the Artus courts in large cities of Royal Prussia. One of them in Toruń, erected by the end of the 14th century originally as the corporate house of craftsmen of the Brotherhood of Saint George. The Artus court together with the Patrician Hall, a summer residence of the brotherhood, represented religious and knightly preferences of the mentioned fellowship and at the same time it showed typical gothic architectural forms of Toruń. The facade of this very court was characterized by a unique paint decoration present in the portraits of the Polish kings and ancient historical figures, or city coats of arms¹⁶.

The 16th and the 17th century is the time of constant competition between the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The numerous laws against the excess of luxury enacted for the bourgeoisie and largely not obeyed by them were the reason for the conflict between these two classes. The bourgeoisie dissatisfied with their social status, expelled from political and partially economic life, were focused on following the concept of the noble sarmatism.

The difference in the quality of life of the urban population expanded in the mentioned period: the patricians followed the model of the noble style. However, the culture of the poor bourgeoisie, which was much more numerous, became more peasant-like. At the same time, the gap in the terms of the culture level between particular cities widened. On the one hand, metropolitan centers as Gdańsk or Warsaw, on the other hand rural towns¹⁷. Nevertheless, small towns

15. L. Mokrzecki, *Wokół staropolskiej nauki i oświaty*, p. 329.

16. J. Remer, *Toruń. Historia – ludzie – sztuka*, Toruń 1970, p. 69-70.

17. M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, p. 562-563.

of Royal Prussia had their own rights, which was evident because the towns representatives were present during the Royal Prussia regional council sessions¹⁸.

The life in cities revolved around legal and moral norms and a basic social and family unit functioned according to patriarchal principles. In the affluent bourgeois circles a family household contained servants, merchants and craftsmen. The other relationships i.e. brothers, sisters, brothers and sisters in law, parents in law had very limited significance. The social status of women was not bad, although the widows who could control the assets of deceased husbands had the most rights. Great importance was attached to the legality of a marriage (*coniunx legitima*).

Bourgeoisie's affiliation to a wider urban community was realized by various functions, which apart from economic functions, performed also social and cultural ones (social life, common religious practices, participation in major events of a city). In some bigger locations there were institutions that gathered the wealthier bourgeoisie for social and entertainment purposes. They were, inter alia, the fraternities of assessors, Ławy^{18a} in the Pomeranian Artus Courts, organisations of military nature, such as rifleman's fraternities and plenty of religious fraternities related to the cult of particular saints, rosary fraternities. The characteristic feature was the exceptionality of those narrow social groups. They originated from the Middle Ages, so their identity was rooted deeply, when the urban community was not numerous and closed. At that time there were special regulations referring to the worn clothes or organisation of family celebrations. For instance, in Toruń it was decided that only the city officials could wear items made of velvet, satin or silk. However, respecting the wedding it was decided that: "Do aktu weselnego żaden dzień niedzielny, ale raczej poniedziałek, wtorek czy czwartek ma być postanowiony"^{19,19a}, which proves the protestant nature of the place.

In the modern times a new, broader society encompassing the suburbs began to develop. It created associations and an advanced parish system. Because the parish was the most universal unit representing the identity of an urban community citizen. It provided a feeling of bonds with, larger than a city, catholic fellowship, it set the rhythm of life by determining religious festivals and family traditions (christenings, weddings, funerals). The Baroque and the counter-reformation

18. *Udział przedstawicieli małych miast w obradach sejmiku generalnego Prus Królewskich (1621)*, w: *Ziemia chełmińska w przeszłości*, p. 145-146.

18a. Ława (plural ławy) is a term describing the seat of the fraternities in the Artus Court.

19. *Zarządzenie Rady Miasta Torunia w sprawie ubiorów i uroczystości rodzinnych (1722)*, w: *Ziemia chełmińska w przeszłości*, p. 162-163. Por.: J. Żukowska, *Pozycja wdów w Polsce nowożytnej*, w: *Prawa kobiet dawniej i dziś. W 100-lecie nadania praw wyborczym kobietom w Polsce*, Słupsk 2020.

19a. Translation: No wedding shall take place on Sunday, but rather Monday, Tuesday or Thursday shall be selected.

embellished the religious life creating more colourful theatrical performances. They were a great opportunity to meet in a wider group, exchange ideas and talk. Therefore, as well as in the countryside, in the city the church was not only a centre of cult, but also a place of social gatherings, and its theatrical aspects of the mass involved educational elements.²⁰

Gdańsk was a centre of social life, and also the mentioned earlier Artus Court was a great attraction for numerous visitors from abroad, which prosperity occurred in the 16th century. The purpose of such gatherings was not only to spend a pleasant time, but very frequently at that time to deal with various business matters, discuss conditions of planned transactions, to inform about acquisition and selling prices of goods. Musicians and singers performed every day there, gambling enthusiasts played cards and dice. The rules existing at the Artus Court placed a great emphasis on savoir-faire and tactful behaviour. Every violation was punished by fines and with a ban on entry²⁰.

The hospitals and almshouses served an essential function of supporting the most underprivileged residents. Simultaneously they built social bonds and they were significant cult centres. Those institutions were engaged in charity activities of a municipality, they offered help to the sick, the elderly, widows, pilgrims and travelers. A different and common example of establishing communities for the poor were the beguinages. At the same time they gathered people with strong religious predispositions. The first beguinages came into existence by the end of the 13th century in the old city of Toruń and the old city of Elbląg and in the 14th and 15th century in Gdańsk, Chełm and Królewiec. They constituted an addition to the hospitals which did not fulfill all of the needs of the poorer population and over time were available for the wealthy bourgeoisie²¹.

Another important culture-forming places of the less affluent bourgeoisie were inns and taverns which did not differ from the ones in the countryside. However, the life in the city developed individual and specific mental features i.e. greater knowledge about the world as the result of larger movement of social units and contacts with foreigners, being more open-minded in the terms of innovations, an ability to make instant decisions and to adapt to the changing conditions, and finally a different sense of time. A more precise count of time was important for economic reasons. The evidence of this is the placement of clocks at the towers of city halls, or at bigger industrial plants. Nevertheless, they were a rarity in the bourgeois houses until the 18th century.

20. *Historia Gdańska*, t. II, 1454-1655, red. E. Cieślak, Gdańsk 1982, p. 348.

21. P. Oliński, *Fundacje mieszczańskie w miastach pruskich w okresie średniowiecza i na progu czasów nowożytnych (Chełmno, Toruń, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Królewiec, Braniewo)*, Toruń 2008, p. 434-435.

Each city in Poland in the 16th century was a closed community, including merely local residents (*cives*) fighting for their local rights. At that time there were no unions of cities or agreements between cities (apart from guilds). Only the cities of Royal Prussia could, if necessary, rise above disputes and fight for shared goals. The existence of a parliamentary representation of those cities played a significant role as well as the presence of large centres, such as Gdańsk, which triggered a joint action of all the province cities. However, that solidarity did not go beyond the interests of Prussia. We also find evidence of the Polishness of smaller Pomeranian cities including Kowalewo whose citizens addressed a letter to the authorities of Gdańsk: "Przesłali nam Wasze Miłości list przez kursora swego niemieckim językiem, któregośmy zrozumieć nie mogli, ponieważ że sam w miasteczku u nas nie mamy nikogo co by po niemiecku czytał i rozumiał, a wszakże domyślamy się nieco ze strony akcyzy, którąśmy powinni oddać (...)"^{22,22a}.

Group solidarity in Gdańsk was strongly developed, present both in a close relation among the members of the same social strata, such as the patriciate, the common people represented by merchants and craftsmen in the city council and the members of other groups (guilds, merchant guilds, fraternities of the Artus Court). The greatest level of the very solidarity was the feeling of a bond connecting all of the Gdańsk's residents who had civil rights regardless of the language and nationality. Due to its port nature, the city presented a brilliant spectrum of different nationalities (Poles, Germans, Dutchmen, Swedes, Danes, Englishmen, Flemings). In this multilingual place the origin differences were not the most vital matter. From their customs and habits a new Gdańsk style of life was created, Gdańsk patriotism, Gdańsk culture with strong social identity²³. It involved considerable interest in history and politics as evidenced by private book collections, memoirs and journals. It was the consequence of spreading the idea of humanism. It also concerned the use of historical tradition to strengthen the current city status, its fame and power. Every day in the Artus Court rich merchants and skippers commented on the most important events that happened in Poland and abroad. Inns, taprooms, markets, fairs, or the streets were also great places for discussions.

At the same time in Gdańsk the sense of cultural unity with the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was being formed. Polish was taught intensively in

22. Świadectwa polskości miasta Kowalewa (1617), w: *Ziemia chełmińska w przeszłości*, p. 144-145.

22a. Translation: They sent us your letter of love through the messenger in their German language, which we could not understand, because we do not have anyone in our town who can read or understand German, but we can guess a bit from the page about the excise duty, which we should pay back (...)

23. *Historia Gdańska*, t. II, 1454-1655, red. E. Cieślak, Gdańsk 1982, p. 678-679.

Gdańsk which resulted in the establishment of the largest centre in the country for creating the Polish language textbooks. There was an active interest in Polish history and its modern problems. Gdańsk's economic advancement went hand in hand with its growing importance as a great centre for the accumulation and exchange of cultural goods. Thanks to this city various cultural phenomena with universal nature, necessary for mental and artistic life, reached Poland. Gdańsk was an international centre collecting and producing current news referring to important political events. This place was also an exporter of Polish culture and political, economic, geographical and historical information about Poland.

The role of a culture-forming institution in Gdańsk was played by the city council which established several institutions, such as the Academic Gymnasium or the City Council Library (1596). A significant function was served by the Artus Court. It was a gallery of non-contemporary and contemporary art, both religious and secular. Music concerts were held there. What is more, it was a meeting place for merchants and their guests in Gdańsk.

The 16th century was a great flourish of bourgeois culture of Toruń. The city, apart from numerous problems in the terms of the affluence, reached its cultural development apogee during the 16th and 17th century ruled by a great mayor Henryk Strobant²⁴. In this era there were not only profound changes and interesting cultural advancement of the city elite, but also the general culture level in the city grew, both material and spiritual culture. It concerns the prosperity of city education, the progress of general literacy of the population and also dynamic development of reformation and later Catholics in the times of counter-reformation. Considering the change of mentality of the bourgeoisie living in Toruń, it should be mentioned that in the second half of the 16th century humanistic ideals and enormously increased interest in science and knowledge became widespread due to Protestantism being strengthened in the city which caused doctrinal disputes. Strong humanistic influence was noticeable in education in Toruń, as well as in literary and scientific interests. Incredibly immense in Toruń was the influence of the more erudite bourgeois group and simultaneously of the court culture of German and Dutch bourgeoisie. The aim of the Toruń patriciate to catch up with the Nobility is evidenced by the organisation of shooting contests or knight's tournaments, the end of which was a feast and a ball at the Artus Court only for the elite (1593). It was, in a sense, an identification with Sarmatian culture in the terms of lifestyle, fashion, customs. Despite having various financial, political and religious disputes with the central authorities, the governing groups

24. *Historia Torunia*, t. II, cz. II, red. M. Biskup, p. 169; zob. J. Małek, *Henryk Strobant (1548-1609). Reformator i współtwórca Gimnazjum Akademickiego w Toruniu*, „Echa Przeszłości”, t. XI, 2010, p. 63-68.

of the educated bourgeoisie in this city felt mostly the citizens of Royal Prussia comprised in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It needs to be realized that the ideology and customs of a greater part of the city population in the second half of the 16th century were determined by Protestantism which was based on an austere concept of life, where work, family and religious life were important. Surprisingly, religious and moral censorship in the city, already present in the 16th century, was very strict. For instance, there were plenty of regulatory acts, such as an ordinance from 1623 concerning outfits, wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions, christenings, and funerals. Toruń was also a location of institutions that represented historical and cultural continuity. What is more, they had an impact on the intellectual level and ideology of the residents. An important function was served by craft guilds and craftsmen fraternities which cultivated the tradition of social and religious life. The patriciate was also important as it had funds to support education, science and art. The patriciate represented high intellectual standards due to the education and great connections developed during economic and political activity. The patricians were also involved in patronage and they promoted new ideas, such as humanism or the reformation²⁵.

The mentality of an average Toruń's citizen did not differ so drastically from the mentality of an inhabitant of Gdańsk, as in both places their mindset was determined by the reformation and close relations with the Germans countries. For the bourgeoisie of German descent in Poland, Lutheranism became a means by which they found their individuality and strengthened their cultural identity, also in the religious aspect. Lutheranism was as well a factor that ensured the maintaining a separate position of this group that could completely disappear in the crowd of the Polish and catholic population, without powerful impulses of the reformation.

Due to its location, connections, and multiculturalism, Toruń was a city open to not only everything that came from the vast areas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also to innovations from entire Europe. Apart from Gdańsk, it was one of those places whose culture was rich, diverse and fascinating. Numerous cultural events, with streets, squares as scenery, gathered considerable groups of the residents who worked more than 10 hours every day. In the first half of the 17th century the place of Calvinism in Toruń was taken by strict, intolerant and orthodox Lutheranism, which is hostile to all other faiths. It also influenced the intensification of antagonisms in Royal Prussia. During the 16th and 17th century a significant percentage of Toruń's population was of German origin. However, ethnic and nationality matters did not play a crucial role at that era. The national consciousness and identity were usually replaced by the feeling

25. *Toruń dawny i dzisiejszy. Zarys dziejów*, red. M. Biskup, Warszawa 1983, p. 179.

of greater family bonds – in the city and provincial scale, undoubtedly the religious element came to the foreground here. Merely the crisis elements i.e wars, tumults vitalized the sense of community, but they increased hostility towards the others, xenophobia that had a substantial impact on forming the nationality divisions in the 18th century²⁶.

Toruń, as a large commercial and craft city, played an important culture-forming role, gathering many institutions and people who create and transfer intellectual and artistic values, i.e. doctors, pharmacists, teachers, officials and clergy. The sense of identity of the inhabitants of this city was influenced by the intellectual environment associated with the Reformation and Humanist movement, supported by convents, schools, a group of educated officials, people of liberal professions, members of the patriciate, wealthy guild masters²⁷.

The great Polish astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus, came from Toruń, whose work made a breakthrough and triggered one of the most important scientific revolutions since ancient times, known as the Copernican revolution. Copernicus was a patriot with a strong feeling of national identity, to an extent that when war between Poland and the Teutonic Order broke out in 1519-1521, he was delegated to negotiate with the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht Hohenzollern, and organised the defense of the fortress in Olsztyn, receiving i.e help from the city of Elbląg²⁸.

Elbląg, situated in Royal Prussia, based its formal and legal position in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, both on the general privileges of the province and the privileges received by the city, regulating the rules of its internal system. Due to the numerous privileges and wealth of the city, as well as the poor Polonization, the inhabitants of Elbląg created a culture-forming center with original and specific features. In the 16th and early 17th centuries, the bourgeoisie in Elbląg showed considerable ideological independence, manifesting itself, inter alia, in its criticism of the nobility and its political and social program. Elbląg was aware of its power, the distinctiveness of its interests, and pride in the fact of being part of the urban community of three great cities of Royal Prussia. The way of thinking, attitude to reality, general attitude to life, religiosity, as well as the degree of intellectual activity - these were the factors that shaped the specific mentality of the population of Elbląg, local identity. Its characteristic traits were a sense of its own dignity, courage in the implementation of pioneering plans, such as starting

26. *Historia Torunia*, p. 178-180.

27. *Toruń dawny i dzisiejszy*, p. 188.

28. J. Małek, *Kopernik a Krzyżacy*, w: *Kaszubi – Pomorze – Gdańsk. W kręgu pytań o kulturę, historię i tożsamość. Księga Jubileuszowa Profesora Józefa Borzyszkowskiego z okazji 70. rocznicy urodzin*, Gdańsk 2016, p. 135-144.

the Elbląg gymnasium, determination in the fight for the Lutheran character of the city, and the lack of bourgeois complexes towards the nobility. This new way of thinking formed Lutheranism significantly. The wealthy patriciate of Elbląg could afford to study in Europe, frequently several scientific disciplines. The acquired knowledge was transferred to Elbląg, propagating humanistic ideals, creating groups of people professionally performing important city functions.

The pride of belonging to an urban community came to the foreground with its special privileges and rights, which is characterized by courage and boldness in its actions, and being hardworking and well-organised. High intellectual level, familiarity with the world, the ability to create and multiply wealth by dominating the bourgeoisie went hand in hand with Protestant ethics²⁹.

In Elbląg, similarly to Gdańsk, Toruń, Tczew or other larger Warmian cities, in the 16th century the municipal law was divided into "large" merchants and "small" craftsmen. What is more, only patricians had full political and economic rights. The executive, legislative as well as judiciary and police powers were concentrated in their hands³⁰.

And how was the burgher seen in the eyes of a nobleman? In the eyes of a nobleman, the countryside is peace and prosperity, and the city is a community of vain, self-righteous individuals. Unnecessary crowds and noise, bad air, dishonest people everywhere - it is a city seen through the eyes of a nobleman who came from his farm. Social mentality sometimes gave rise to contempt for city dwellers. Among the noble masses there was a belief that every townsman was an enemy, vermin on a national scale.

The cities of Royal Prussia, both due to their vitality and wealth, as well as their weak Polonization (Lutheran and Calvinist denomination, strong connections with the Dutch and the German bourgeoisie etc.) were culture-forming centers with original and specific features. The Prussian bourgeoisie had considerable ideological independence in the discussed period, which manifested itself in criticism of the nobility and its social and political program. Political and legal as well as historical and economic literature of pro-bourgeois nature developed intensively here, in which there was an awareness of the power of the following large cities, Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg, and the distinctiveness of their interests. However, also in this situation we can find works with a little influence of mythology and Sarmatism, often dedicated to individual magnates and rulers. Therefore, one is dealing here with a model that is an interesting symbiosis of various ideas. The social identity of these cities is strongly associated with the religion (Protestant)

29. *Historia Elbląga*, t. II, cz. 1 (1466-1626), red. A. Groth, Gdańsk 1996, p. 142-143.

30. Previously mentioned text, p. 121.

and the region (Royal Prussia), it is difficult to talk about national identity at that time or a kind of patriotism.

Bibliography

- Akta Stanów Prus Królewskich*, t. V-VI, 1511-1512, wyd. M. Biskup, I. Janosz-Biskupowa, Warszawa 1975.
- Atlas Historyczny Polski. Prusy Królewskie w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, oprac. M. Biskup, Warszawa 1961.
- Bogucka M., H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, Wrocław 1986.
- Eseje i Studia*, red. J. Axer, t. 4, Warszawa 2001.
- Historia Elbląga*, t. II, cz. 1 (1466-1626), red. A. Groth, Gdańsk 1996.
- Historia Gdańska*, t. II, 1454-1655, pod red. E. Cieślak, Gdańsk 1982.
- Historia Torunia*, t. II, cz. II, red. M. Biskup, s. 169.
- Małek J., Henryk Strobant (1548-1609). *Reformator i współtwórca Gimnazjum Akademickiego w Toruniu*, „Echa Przeszłości”, t. XI, 2010.
- Małek J., *Kopernik a Krzyżacy*, w: *Kaszubi – Pomorze – Gdańsk. W kręgu pytań o kulturę, historię i tożsamość. Księga Jubileuszowa Profesora Józefa Borzyszkowskiego z okazji 70. rocznicy urodzin*, Gdańsk 2016.
- Mokrzecki L., *Wokół staropolskiej nauki i oświaty*, Gdańsk 2001.
- Oliński P., *Fundacje mieszczańskie w miastach pruskich w okresie średniowiecza i na progu czasów nowożytnych (Chełmno, Toruń, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Królewiec, Braniewo)*, Toruń 2008.
- Panorama lojalności. Prusy Królewskie i Prusy Książęce w XVI w.*, red. J. Axer, t. 4, Warszawa 2001.
- Remer J., *Toruń. Historia – ludzie – sztuka*, Toruń 1970.
- Salmonowicz S., *Prusy Królewskie w XVII-XVIII wieku. Studia z dziejów kultury*, Toruń 2002.
- Toruń dawny i dzisiejszy. Zarys dziejów*, red. M. Biskup, Warszawa 1983.
- Ziemia chełmińska w przeszłości. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, red. M. Biskup, Toruń 1961.
- Żukowska J., *Pozycja wdów w Polsce nowożytnej*, w: *Prawa kobiet dawniej i dziś. W 100-lecie nadania praw wyborczym kobietom w Polsce*, Słupsk 2020.

Summary

The article presents the shaping of the identity in its various forms, in the area of Royal Prussia, and especially in large cities, i.e. Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg. They were specific culture-forming centers. They were included in the circle of extremely active patrons of the Renaissance era. A great example is the famous Artus Court, reserved for the city elite. From the earliest times, culture had a great influence on shaping the national identity, territorial or state affiliation. The consequence of this, as presented in the article, was the development of urban culture uniting city residents. Urban culture is a group of phenomena born and functioning in the urban environment, where, on the margins of economic exchange, numerous opportunities for connections, expanding knowledge about the surrounding world, and confronting various life attitudes arose.

Keywords: Cities, identity, Royal Prussia, townsfolk, urban culture.

WPŁYW KULTURY MIEJSKIEJ NA TOŻSAMOŚĆ MIESZKAŃCÓW PRUS KRÓLEWSKICH W XVI-XVII WIEKU

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia kształtowanie się tożsamości w jej różnych odsłonach, na terenie Prus Królewskich, a szczególnie wielkich miast tj. Gdańska, Torunia i Elbląga. Były one specyficznymi ośrodkami kulturotwórczymi, zaliczano je do kręgu niezwykle aktywnych mecenasów epoki Renesansu, przykładem był słynny Dwór Artusa, zarezerwowany dla elit miejskich. Od czasów najdawniejszych kultura miała bardzo duży wpływ na kształtowanie się tożsamości narodowej, przynależności terytorialnej czy państwowej. Konsekwencją tego, jak przedstawia artykuł, był rozwój kultury miejskiej, scalającej mieszkańców miast. Kultura miejska to zespół zjawisk zrodzonych i funkcjonujących w środowisku miejskim, gdzie na marginesie wymiany ekonomicznej powstawały liczne okazje do kontaktów, rozszerzania wiedzy o otaczającym świecie, konfrontacji różnych postaw życiowych.

Słowa kluczowe: Tożsamość, kultura miejska, Prusy Królewskie, mieszczenie, miasta.