

STRESZCZENIE W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM

Marta Raczyńska-Kruk, the PhD thesis: *In search of identity. The anthropological study of amateur genealogy in contemporary Poland*

The idea of telling story, as Carlo Ginzburg suggested, first appeared in the hunters' society, in the practice of reading traces. Similarly, the genealogist collects and reads archival traces and clues. As a method of learning about the family past, amateur genealogy is a unique, human-specific form of experiencing ancestral traces and providing them with meaning. In this way, genealogists combine various memory circles: those bottom-up, and also top-down, socially constructed narrative structures. Therefore, as a subject of anthropological reflection, amateur genealogy seems to be a king of the 'second degree history'. It is a tool that gives contemporary Poles agency in shaping stories about their own place in the structure of kinship and affinity, as well as about the past in its various dimensions: family, local, national etc.

The aim of this dissertation is to construct and apply an anthropological key to interpretation of genealogical practices, experiences, and imaginations in contemporary Poland. The first chapter contains theoretical proposals (definitions, categories, concepts) for studying this phenomenon. The second one contains the methodological assumptions of the research, and description of the methods and tools used in the field. The third chapter covers the characteristics of local and global conditions shaping the amateur discourse in the Polish genealogy. The next two parts constitute the analytical part of the dissertation. The aim of the fourth chapter (the 'collective portrait of Polish genealogists') is to examine the mechanisms ruling the collective imagination among researchers, on the basis of ethnographic sources online mainly. This part touches upon, among other issues, a problem of mediatization of memory in so-called 'cybergenealogy', that is significant mainly from the point of view of contemporary culture. The fifth chapter, essential for the entire dissertation, is in fact a kind of triptych: an attempt to portray three amateur genealogists in the light of materials collected during multi-stage and multi-station research. These anthropological portraits both show the ways of experiencing and reinterpreting traces of ancestors by each of the interlocutors, and



display his/her narrative as a story in which a duo of ethnographer and genealogists immerses like in 'the other world'. The sixth chapter organizes the conclusions from the research by placing the phenomenon of contemporary Polish amateur genealogy in the following contexts: identity practices (in the fields of both genealogical identity, and the identity of the genealogist-researcher), the turn to locality, the dialectical entanglement of the 'great' and 'small' historical narratives (including the processes of mythization of the past), and finally the digital turn and complex relationship between the genealogist and cybertraces of his/her ancestors as well.

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