

Juozas Tumas's Family Correspondence

Summary

The publication comprises correspondence of the family of Juozas Tumas Vaižgantas (1869–1933), one of the central figures in the Lithuanian national movement, the creator of modern Lithuanian national ideology, a journalist, priest, writer, literary critic and historian, literature professor, and a public figure. The letters are stored in the Manuscript Department of the Vilnius University Library. The book includes 824 epistolary texts consisting of letters, postcards, cards, telegrams and notes that cover the period from 1914 to 1933. The letters are divided into two polylogues of familial correspondence: (1) Tumas's correspondence with his sister's daughter Bronė Mėginaitė-Klimienė, her husband Petras Klimas, and their children Eglė Klimaitė and Petras Klimas Jnr., and (2) Tumas's correspondence with his sister's daughter Barbora Mėginaitė-Lesauskienė, her husband Pranas Lesauskis, and their son Vytautas Lesauskis.

The corpus of the published correspondence is unique in many aspects. As most of the correspondence has survived, the publication of the letters of all the correspondents in one volume reproduces a fairly consistent epistolary narrative, and the polylogues of the letters are closely interrelated because of the close relationship between the families of the Mėginaitė sisters. All correspondents belonged to the elite of the society of their time. Bronė Klimeinė (1892–1957) was an employee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania; after she married Petras Klimas, [Bronė Klimienė (1892–1957) – Užsienio reikalų ministerijos Lietuvoje darbuotoja, po santuokos su Klimu – diplomato užsienyje žmona, gerai ėjusi reprezentacines savo pareigas.] Petras Klimas (1891–1969) was the youngest signatory of the Act of Independence of Lithuania of 16 February 1918, the Lithuanian ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Rome and later to Paris, the author of numerous historical works, and a bibliophile. Barbora Mėginaitė-Lesauskienė (1896–1975) was a teacher and later a clerk at the embassy of Lithuania in Rome. Her husband Pranas Lesauskis (1900–1942) had a PhD in mathematics; he was an officer in the Lithuanian armed forces and a pioneer of management science in Lithuania. In the correspondence, all these individuals feature both as family members and representatives of the Lithuanian society of the time, whose letters show very different perspectives on the life and self-awareness of this society. The correspondence opens deeply personal aspects of Father Tumas's life: how he perceived the family, how he built and nurtured his connection with the families of his nieces, how the nieces saw the role of their uncle – a priest – in their personal and family lives, and how they interacted with Tumas. At the same time, these letters form a narrative of the society of interwar Lithuania, its concerns, problems, ideas, self-awareness, and solutions as seen from different perspectives. They relate how life in independent Lithuania was built, how the necessity of individual contribution to the construction of society was perceived, how families

that had excellent opportunities to live and settle in the West linked their future and that of their children with Lithuania, how they trusted the stability of the state and saw themselves as the guarantors of that stability.

Since the publication is intended for the general public, the aim was to render its reading smooth and convenient. For this purpose, the spelling and punctuation of the texts are adjusted to the standards of modern spelling and punctuation. At the same time, efforts were made to preserve the linguistic fabric of the correspondents' language, which represents the linguistic singularity of the first half of the twentieth century, as intact as possible. With this aim in mind, dialectal phonetic, lexical, and morphological features were retained just as the spellings of foreign words, personal names, place names, the titles of books and publications, companies, and the like. For those interested in learning more about the properties of the autographs and their presentation, detailed descriptions of archival sources, along with text preparation and editorial principles are given in the appendices. To avoid overloading the main text, the majority of the commentaries are given in the form of an annotated index of personal and other names and subjects. The main text is accompanied by commentaries on the properties of the autograph and translations of foreign words and phrases. The appendices also include a glossary and a chronological index of all the letters, which offers the possibility of reading the letters in a chronological order.

The information given in the early pages of the publication will help the reader to gain the necessary information that will ensure smooth and coherent reading of the letters. The introduction to the book, 'Juozas Tumas's Family Correspondence', provides a detailed discussion about the type of this correspondence, the peculiarities of the formation of a particular epistolary narrative, and the specifics of each individual's epistolary style and his or her relation with Tumas. The section 'The Correspondents' *Curriculum vitae*' gives the key facts about the lives of the writers of these letters and a brief account of their lives after their correspondence had been disrupted by Tumas's death. A family tree based on these letters was drawn to give the reader a clear picture of the relationships between the correspondents and their relatives mentioned in the letters.