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Karolina Dębska
University of Warsaw
k.debska@uw.edu.pl

"Shy Characters" and Flesh-and-bone People

A Case Study in the History of Translators

The status of translators as invisible and unimportant shadows is described and deplored by many scholars [e.g. Ortega y Gassett 2000, Venuti 2008]. It is also bluntly put by M. Papadima:

> Tłumacz jest co najwyżej niewiele mówiącym nazwiskiem, bez wyraźnych konturów. Pisanym literami nieporównanie mniejszymi niż nazwisko autora, co stanowi niezaprzeczalny znak jego niższości i podrzędności, jego statusu „gryzipiórka", który zazwyczaj ujawnia się już w samym wyglądzie książki [Papadima 2011: 13].[1]

The obscure and contour-less figure of the translator described by Papadima has become slightly less shadowy in recent years. While as early as 1989 Berman suggested the study of translators as one of the necessary branches of the general translation studies [Berman 1989: 677], it was only a decade later that Chesterman [2009] posited a new

[1] The translator is at most an obscure name without clear contours. It is set in a much smaller font than the name of the author, which is an undeniable sign of the translator's inferiority and subaltern status of a "pen-pusher" that is clear in the very look of the book [Papadima 2011: 13, translated by K.D.].

subfield of translation studies focused exclusively on the translator and the circumstances of his or her activity.

1. Translators as the object of study

On a map of the subfield, Chesterman [ibidem] traced three branches: cultural research, focused on the worldview, ethics, roles, history, and the influence translators have as agents of cultural change; cognitive research, or the study of the thought processes, emotions and attitudes of translators; and sociological studies to analyse the networks, associations, status, image, and working conditions of the translator. In the same article the author remarked that translator studies should above all focus on all aspects of translators' identity and activity, including their wages, role models, access to the profession, their rights, sexual orientation, gender, motivations, and choices [ibidem].

In the same year, Pym [2009] set a similar task before translation studies: rather than studying texts, focus on translators and their interactions, and study agents' activities in professional intercultures. D'hulst [2015: 3] suggested the object of study of translation historians should be, among other things, translators' activities and attitudes, their interactions with their social environment, and their history and impact. The history of translators is, after all, a basis on which to build the history of translation [Zaradona 2006: 310].

There is one other branch of translation studies which has focused on translators for a very long time. Feminist translation studies has been working to "recover" forgotten women translators for years [see e.g. Flotow 1997, 1998; Simon 1996]. Flotow explains that this "recovery":

> […] stems from the need to recognize the contributions that women have made to society in spite of enormous obstacles; it seeks to re-vamp and re-establish a lineage of intellectual women who, by dint of their persistence against substantial odds, managed to have an influence on their societies [Flotow 1997: 75].

The aim of this feminist genealogical project far surpasses the purely academic scope: it is meant to emphasize women's contributions to the social and cultural life of their societies [Flotow 1997: 75], to question the established literary canons and uncover the facts of women's life in past centuries [Wallace 2002: 67], to bring to light the role of women in

the cultural and intellectual movements of their time and their methods of overcoming patriarchal oppression, and finally to understand "the conception that half of humanity had about the act of translation" [Castro 2009: 8].

To carry out such a project, scholars [e.g. Flotow 2005; Krontiris 1997; Martin 2011; Simon 1996] begin with simple biographical data, like place of origin, histories, actions, networks, education and cultural formation, financial status, social class, and choice of texts, to later reflect on broader and varied topics, such as the women's identities, points of view revealed in their translations, their aims and motivations, tastes, the impact of their economic status on their ability to register dissent with dominating ideologies, and the ways of expressing this dissent, their attitudes towards their texts and towards the act of translation, and their own role as mediators.

To analyse all these factors, scholars take into account social, political and cultural contexts which are, according to Flotow [2005: 39 and ff.], crucial to understanding the factors shaping production, publication, distribution, reception, and revival of texts. Taken together, this information allows the scholars to draw conclusions regarding the translators' impact on "the intellectual and political life of their times" [Simon 1996: 39], as well as on their roles and reception [Flotow 1997: 90].

Depending on the perspective, aim, and method of their studies, translator historians, feminist or otherwise, focus on many different facts and aspects, although their approaches have some things in common. The studies usually consist in several stages and take several kinds of factors into account. One indispensable stage regardless of one's approach is "archaeology" [Pym 1998: 5], or looking for answers in bibliographies, biographies, and catalogues. Another is the study of individual biographies which can serve as a basis for a translator profile [e.g. Whitfield 2012: 176] and provide answers to D'hulst's [2010: 400-403] questions: *quis*, *quid*, *ubi*, *quibus auxilis*, *cur*, *quomodo*, *quando* and *cui bono*. The final stage is explanation of the broader social and cultural environment that impacts the translator's decisions and is in turn shaped by the translator's actions [Pym 1998: IX-X; Whitfield 2012: 181].

In the present article, which is part of a genealogical project in the sense described above, I will try to follow the same path to determine who women translators of scientific texts in 18th- and 19th-century Poland were, what they did, and how they shaped and were in turn shaped by

their contexts.[2] Such a study can serve as a basis for further research on their textual decisions.

2. Women translators of scientific texts

In the first step of Pym's [1998: 5-6] method, the search for translations and translators, ten texts belonging to the domain of natural sciences (medical, agronomical or botanical, either academic or popular) were found, signed by eight women: the sisters Sosnowski, translators of *Sokrates wieśniak* by Hans Caspar Hirzel [1770]; Barbara Sanguszko, translator of *Opis chorób prędkiego ratunku potrzebujących* by Franciszek Curtius [1783]; Aleksandra Wolfgang, author of Polish versions of several scientific texts, among them *Monografia skrzypów* by Jean Pierre Vaucher [1826] and *O pellegrynie albo perle nieporównanej braci Zozima* by Gotthelf Fischer von Waldheim [1822]; Helena Prószyńska, who rendered into Polish *Uprawa, zbiór i zachowanie buraków* by Mathieu Dombasle [1852]; Stanisława Byszewska, translator of *Elektrohomeopatia* by Cesare Mattei [1881]; Rozalia Nusbaum, author of the Polish version of *Zasady fizjologii* by Thomas Huxley [1892], *Mózg i jego czynności* by Edouard Toulouse and Ludovic Marchand [1904], and co-translator of the popular scientific book by Amédée Guillemin, *Siły przyrody* [1894]; as well as Wanda Szczawińska, who translated a fragment of Yves Delage's *Zagadnienia biologii ogólnej* [1900].

The period under study is very broad, and to make the presentation of the collected facts clearer, in the following section the translators will be divided into three groups according to their epoch: the 18th century, early 19th century, and late 19th century. In each section, we will then discuss the basic biographical and bibliographical data collected, focusing especially on the women's backgrounds, education, non-translational activity, and their translatorial choices.

Let us now trace the progress of their paths, and study the contexts, to attempt further on to explain, according to Pym's [1998: 5-6] programme, how their trajectories coincided with changes in the social and political world.

[2] For the purposes of the present study, I consider as translators those women who translated at least one text.

2.1. The 18th century

All of the selected translators from the 18th century were rich aristocrats. Barbara Sanguszko (1718-1791)[3] was born into a poor but noble family, but in 1735 she married an old and rich duke, Paweł Karol Sanguszko; Katarzyna Plater (ca 1748-1832) and Ludwika Lubomirska (ca 1750-1836)[4] were daughters of Tekla Despot-Zenowicz and Józef Sosnowski, an influential magnate. In 1770, Katarzyna married Józef Wincenty Plater, also a high-ranking aristocrat, while the younger sister, Ludwika, was married off against her will to Duke Józef Lubomirski, one of the richest men in the land.

They were well educated at home in a manner typical of their time: they were not expected to have any deeper knowledge of science. Sanguszko's education in a convent was "French", but she later eagerly learned all her life. The Sosnowski sisters were more carefully educated, they knew foreign languages, history, geography, mathematics, drawing, music, and dance; they had a French governess. The younger one also attended a school for girls in Warsaw. All three women were considered well educated for their time, and their family homes provided them with great cultural capital, mainly linguistic, but no particular knowledge of science. This last point set them apart from Western European women translators of scientific texts at the time, who – apart from regular home schooling – were fortunate enough to learn from educated fathers (like Elizabeth Carter, who studied classical languages with hers [see Agorni 2002]), husbands, or lovers (Marianna Fiorenzi learned languages and philosophy from hers [see Rosini 2002]; Emilie du Châtelet's mathematics teacher was Maupertuis, and her English teacher was likely Voltaire [see Whitfield 2002]).

Translation was not the only occupation of the Polish ladies, although none of them seemed to be particularly keen on science, and all the domains they were active in were rather typical for women of their sphere and epoch, unlike their counterparts in Western Europe, who wrote their own scientific treatises or at least critical commentaries to their scientific translations. In 1750, Sanguszko became a very rich widow and lived the rest of her life quite independently; she managed extensive property

[3] Data on Sanguszko come from: Aleksandrowska 1992-1993; Maciejewska 2013; Widacka 1987; Wiśniewska 2013.

[4] Data on the Sosnowski sisters come from: Kowalczyk 2013; Kowecki 1972.

and several businesses, and participated in the political life of the country, working to influence elections of deputies while maneuvering quite adroitly to stay on friendly terms with all parties. She was a *salonnière*, a poet as well as a patron of poets, a philanthropist, and a translator of religious and anti-libertine texts. The interests of the other two were less varied but even more typical: Katarzyna Sosnowska moved in the highest circles of the *beau monde* and travelled; on one of her travels across Europe she wrote a French travel journal. Ludwika performed in society theatre. It seems likely that the skills, dispositions and habits formed in those other domains influenced their translation activities. This is most probable with regards to both their own original writing, which might have inspired them to translate, and travel, which not only gave them the opportunity to improve their language skills, but also to observe foreign customs and meet Western European women authors. Finally, their public activity might have given them the courage to try their hand at translation and to publish the results at a time when publishing was by no means the obvious course of action.

The texts they chose to translate were much less scholarly than those translated by the great ladies in Western Europe, where women like Châtelet and Fiorenzi translated serious scientific works and did not mind being criticized for that. However, it is worth remembering that in Western Europe as well, outside of the aristocratic sphere, science was taboo for women, so women translators usually chose texts which were addressed specifically to women, like those by Elizabeth Carter [Agorni 2002] and Aphra Behn [Simon 1996: 52-58; Agorni 1998; Gardiner 1980; Hunter 1993: 3; Knellwolf 2001], who rendered into English dialogues popularizing sciences and did not carry out scientific work of their own.[5] Two other Polish translations are rather popular as well. *Sokrates wieśniak albo opisanie życia gospodarskiego y cnotliwego filozofa rolą bawiącego się* by 18th-century Swiss medic and agricultural scientist Hans Caspar Hirzel, is, rather typically for its time, a novelized description of agriculture, a treatise on the perfect farmer, prefaced in its Polish version by eminent professor Ignacy Nagurczewski, who lavished praise on the

[5] Behn was a curious character: she wrote for the theatre, spied and travelled, and only occasionally translated science [Simon 1996: 52-58; Agorni 1998; Gardiner 1980; Hunter 1993: 3; Knellwolf 2001], while Elizabeth Carter is above all known for her translation of Epictetus [Agorni 2002].

young translators, especially for their good grasp of Polish style and their intellectual ambitions. *Opis chorób prędkiego ratunku potrzebujących* is a medical book, more of a manual than a purely scientific work: according to its author's preface, it was intended to be accessible to laypeople, so that they could recognize diseases, know their causes, and prevent and treat them. The author, Franciszek Curtius, was Sanguszko's personal doctor and she also commissioned the original from him. *Sokrates* was originally written in German, but the Polish version was based on the French rendering, and *Opis chorób* was originally written in French.

2.2. Early 19th-century

Aleksandra Wolfgang[6] and Stanisława Byszewska[7] were part of the then-emerging social group, the intelligentsia, and their fathers had paid intellectual occupations, as did Byszewska's husband. Wolfgang (1805-1861) was the eldest daughter of Aloiza Helena Pacowska and Jan Fryderyk Wolfgang, professor at the University of Vilnius, specializing in pharmacy and botany, publisher of *Pamiętnik Farmaceutyczny Wileński* and co-founder of *Dzieje Dobroczynności Krajowej i Zagranicznej*; Stanisława Byszewska (ca 1827-?), much less known, was the daughter of Izabela Baliska and Stanisław Kaczkowski, politician, journalist, historian, and lawyer.[8]

It is clear that they learned from their fathers, as with no access to higher education and the poor standard of schools for girls, basically the only teachers available to them were male family members, like in the case of the French translator Marie Anne Lavoisier, who married a chemist and

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[6] Data on Wolfgang come from: Głowacki 1960; Urbanek 1995; as well as: Dominik Chodźko (1863), "Jan Fryderyk Wolfgang, profesor farmacji, farmakologii i chemii policyjno-sądowej w b. Uniwersytecie Wileńskim", *Przegląd Europejski, naukowy, literacki i artystyczny J. I. Kraszewskiego*, vol. 1, No. 3: 145-162; B. Hryniewiecki (1933), "Udział kobiety polskiej w rozwoju botaniki", *Czasopismo Przyrodnicze*, vol. 7, No. 1-3, 11: 9; Irena Mikulewicz (2017), "Od botaniki do historii – Aleksandra Tekla Sofia Wolfgang. Portret wyjątkowej kobiety", *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny*, No. 11, [online:] http://www.tygodnik.lt/201711/bliska4.html – 29.09.2017.

[7] Data on Byszewska come from: Więckowska 1964-1965.

[8] It seems Helena Prószyńska, translator of the French treatise on beetroots by Mathieu Dombasle, might have belonged to this group, but nothing is known of her.

soon became his collaborator and translator of chemistry texts from English [Ogilvie 2011: 106; Sirois 1997: 36; Miller 1990: 307].

Women translators of scientific texts at the time had broad knowledge of their domains and often, like Jane Mercet [see Martin 2011] and Clémence Royer [see Wilson 2011; Brisset 2002] in Western Europe, displayed it not only in their translations, but also in their original writing and activity in scientific associations. Wolfgang and Byszewska did so too: both helped their fathers in their intellectual endeavors; Byszewska published her father's writings, and Wolfgang completed the dictionary of botanical terminology her father had begun before his death. Not much is known of Byszewska's activities beside that, but we do know Wolfgang also wrote and translated poetry and medical and botanical texts (e.g. *Rys historyczny usiłowań w uczeniu głuchoniemych i zakładów na ten cel przeznaczonych*), and she had an interest in homeopathy. She often published her writings in her father's scientific journal.

In the 1820s Wolfgang translated from French *Monografia skrzypów* by 18th-century Swiss clergyman and amateur botanist Jean Pierre Vaucher, and *O pellegrynie* by a Russian scientist active in the late 18th and early 19th century, Johann Fischer von Waldheim, the director of the museum of natural history in Moscow and a specialist in fossils; Byszewska in 1881 translated from French a book on electrohomeopathy authored by Cesare Mattei, who at the time was enjoying a Europe-wide reputation for his miraculous (and fraudulent, of course) herbal cure for cancer. The source of Byszewska's interest in electrohomeopathy is unclear, but her preface to the translation shows that she knew the author personally and he gave her permission not only to translate the book, but also to popularize his theory and practice. All the books mentioned in this section were translated from French.

2.3. Late 19th century

The women translators of the late 19th century not only came from working families but had the opportunity to have their own careers as well. Rozalia Nusbaum (1859-1933)[9] did not have a wealthy background and neither did her husband, a zoologist and later professor of the University of Lviv. It was only after years of financial problems, when they moved

[9] Data on Nusbaum come from: Brzęk 1978, 1984, 1987; Chajn 1960-1961; Creese 2005; Filar 1960-1961.

to Lviv and he found employment at the university, that their economic situation improved. Wanda Szczawińska (1866-1955)[10] was the daughter of Bronisława Gumbrycht and Wojciech Szczawiński, a railway clerk, and the sister of Jadwiga Dawid, also a translator and the founder of Uniwersytet Latający.[11]

Rozalia Nusbaum and Wanda Szczawińska received excellent higher education. Nusbaum had a BA in natural sciences from the University of Geneva, and she studied philosophy at the University of Lviv. She knew French very well. Szczawińska first attended a school for girls and a high school in Warsaw. In 1883 she received a teaching permit but continued her studies at the natural science department of the Uniwersytet Latający. In 1888 she moved to Geneva where she earned a doctor's degree, followed by a medical degree in Paris in 1902. She specialized in pediatrics.

Nusbaum and Szczawińska both had great cultural and academic capital, but they made very different use of it. Nusbaum largely gave it up to support her husband, his ambitions and career. She helped him in his scientific work, typed up and proofread his manuscripts, looked for foreign scientific publications that would be of use to him, prepared specimens for his study, and improved the style of his popular texts. Amidst all of that, she did find the time for her own work as well. After her return from Geneva, she was a teacher in clandestine schools in Warsaw, then in Lviv she founded a high school for girls and taught them mathematics. She was a philanthropist and wrote on philosophy, pedagogy, animal psychology, and comparative physiology (e.g. *Szkice naukowe*, *Jędrzej Śniadecki i Herbert Spencer jako pedagogowie*, *O doświadczeniach Loeba nad samorództwem*), and in her free time she is said to have translated Maupassant's stories. Their ornamental style is said to have been highly praised by her contemporaries, but the stories have not been found.

Szczawińska never married and did not sacrifice her ambitions for anybody. From 1885 she taught Polish language and geography in a private school for girls. After her return from Geneva she lectured on natural sciences at the Uniwersytet Latający and in schools for girls. When

[10] Data on Szczawińska come from: Sroka 2010-2011; Konstanciński Dom Kultury (no date), "Wanda Szczawińska", Wirtualne Muzeum Konstancina, [online:] http://www.muzeumkonstancina.pl/293_szczawinska_dr_wanda – 14.02.2018.

[11] Flying University, an organization founded in 1885 in Warsaw to provide informal higher-level education for women at a time when they could not attend official universities in Poland [see e.g. Suchmiel 2004].

she failed to secure employment at the University of Warsaw, she left in 1894 for Paris, where she researched the nervous system at the Sorbonne, organised a histology lab at the Psychology Institute, and worked at the Institut Pasteur. After her return to Warsaw, she established a Chair of Hygiene at the Wszechnica Polska,[12] founded a clinic for infants, and lectured on hygiene in private schools and in public. She was a philanthropist and member of international associations like the Société zoologique de France, and author of both scientific and popular articles in scientific journals and newspapers in Poland and France.

Nusbaum translated several scientific and popular-scientific texts, including a book by Edouard Toulouse and Ludovic Marchand, French psychiatrists active in late 19th and early 20th centuries, *Mózg i jego czynności*; Thomas Huxley's *Zasady fizjologii*; and together with Henryk Silberstein she co-translated *Siły przyrody* by Amédée Guillemin. Szczawińska rendered into Polish a fragment of a monograph written by her mentor, the embryologist and biologist Yves Delage, *La biologie générale*, which was a synthesis and critique of 19th-century theories of heredity.

3. Discussion of the results

In an attempt to apply Pym's [1998: 5-6] method, let us now try to find explanations for the above-described facts, focusing on the causes of the translators' actions: starting with their motivations to translate and to choose their texts, then reviewing the impact that the contexts they operated in had on their lives and choices, to finally attempt to make a brief synthesis of the translators' profiles.

3.1. Motivations

The translators had varied reasons for translating. For the great ladies of the 18th century, it was either a language exercise (as in the case of the two young women, Katarzyna and Ludwika Sosnowski), a pastime, a way to impress their elders, or (a hypothesis better suited to account for Sanguszko's choice, who not only translated, but also commissioned the original version of the medical book) an attempt to enrich the Polish culture and to

[12] Free Polish University, a private higher-education institution founded in 1918 in Warsaw, see [online:] https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Wolna-Wszechnica-Polska;3997741.html – 14.01.2019.

spread the ideas of the Enlightenment. It is clear that, like the aristocratic women translators in Western Europe discussed above, they did not translate to make a living; unlike them, they do not seem to have tried to satisfy their scientific interests. It is also interesting to emphasize the largely gratuitous nature of their translations: they translated from French, which was current among the Polish aristocracy of the time, and so their readership could have just as well read those books in the original.

French was still widely known among the Polish reading public of the 19th century [Kuszłejko 1997: 122], but the science enthusiasts of the beginning of the century also translated from this language. Why? The choice of some of the texts – *Elektrohomeopatia*, *Monografia skrzypów* – is clearly linked to the scientific interests of the translators. In the case of *Pellegryna* not much is known of motivations, although its author, Waldheim, was at the time the director of the Russian association of natural history, where Wolfgang's father was trying to publish his own book, so Aleksandra's choice might have been an attempt to flatter her father's potential publisher. We know very little of Byszewska's reasons for translating; it is possible she translated to make a living, although it seems she was also a staunch believer in Mattei's method. The financial motive can be excluded in the case of Wolfgang, as professors of the University of Vilnius enjoyed very good salaries at the time.

The choices of the late 19th-century translators reflected their scientific interests, especially those of Szczawińska, who translated the book by her mentor. Bret [2012: 954] emphasizes the militant motives of the scientific translators who aimed to advance scientific progress by spreading knowledge of new discoveries. This seems to be particularly true of the late 19th century, when developments in the natural sciences had the power to bring revolutionary changes to all spheres of life [Kuźnicki 1987: 304-305]. At the same time, Bret [ibidem] does not preclude financial motives, especially in the case of popularizers like Nusbaum.

3.2. Contexts

The evolution of these translators – the 18th-century aristocrats for whom translating was a pleasant pastime, the 19th-century intellectuals with no formal education but with great enthusiasm for science, and the late 19th-century scientists who occasionally translated works within their disciplines – reflects the changes in the situation of women in Poland over the

200 years in question. The most important of those changes concerned the access to higher education that European women started gaining in the 1870s, and Polish women in the last years of the century [Rogers 2006: 118-119]. Before that, they were home-schooled (especially in the 18th century), later also educated in girls' schools (with usually rather poor standards of education [see Janicka 2017: passim]), and in state-run schools. However, until they gained access to universities, their education was rather haphazard, especially in the domain of natural and exact sciences, which were only taught to those fortunate few who had scientists in their close circles, or immense personal drive to self-learning.

The second key element impacting on the translators was the change in attitudes towards professional women. Women's professional work was out of the question among 18th-century aristocrats, but already at the beginning of the next century, after Poland's loss of independence and due to the slow degradation of the position of the landed gentry, a new class of working intelligentsia emerged in which women's work became indispensable to make ends meet [Nietyksza 2000]. At first they worked casually, often from home, but with time it became more regular and full-time. The translators active in the 1890s sometimes even had careers, like Szczawińska. It is however important to note that scientific translation was never a full-time job, but merely always a sideline.

Finally, over time the attitudes towards woman scientists also changed, which entailed a change of status of their scientific translations as well. In the 18th century women translated (with the notable exception of prodigies such as Emilie du Châtelet) popular scientific works, fictionalized popularizations of scientific discoveries, often addressed to women readers and dilettantes. Over time they started choosing more serious texts, especially in the second half of the century, when professionalization affected original authors as well, and the distinction between popularizers and scientists became clearer [Pietrzak-Pawłowska 1987: 21-24]. It also entailed a change in the motivations of translators, as they became less personal: while 18th-century women translated largely to sharpen their wits, or for pleasure or prestige, their successors aimed to enrich Polish science.

4. Conclusion

"[T]he translator is usually a shy character," wrote Ortega y Gasset [2000: 50] in his classic text, and this view of the translator still holds if we consider the opening quotation to the present article. However, the cultural turn in translation studies has, among other interesting areas of research, opened the window to studying agents involved in translation in order to remedy the popular image of the translator as an obscure "paper-pusher". This new domain has also offered an opportunity to push forward a more militant agenda: to put the translator on a pedestal, to underscore his or her role and impact. Such a project can help "[...] translators, those discreet laborers, to emerge from the shadows and enables us to better appreciate their contribution to intellectual life" [Joly 2012: XX]. This is all the more important with regards to women translators, who have been doubly invisible, first as women and then as translators [Delisle 2002: 7].

To write a history of translators, however, one has to start small, with what Pym [1998: 5] calls archaeology: finding the most basic data on the translators and answering the questions listed by D'hulst [2010]: who, what, when, where, why, how, for whom, and with whose help. These fundamental facts can reveal patterns in the translators' profiles and the way they were shaped by their contexts. The present article has attempted to do just that: determine who the women translating scientific texts in 18th- and 19th-century Poland were, what they translated, under what circumstances, and with and for whom.

The bibliographical and biographical data show that the profiles of the women changed along with social and political developments, and they form an interesting pattern, showing that the discussed translators belong to three very distinct groups. The first, encompassing the women translators of the Enlightenment (Barbara Sanguszko, Katarzyna Plater, and Ludwika Lubomirska), were aristocrats, dilettantes translating for pleasure or to satisfy some inner need, with no scientific background and no other visible scientific interests apart from their own translation. It is interesting to note that this last point makes them significantly different from their Western European counterparts, who were (self-)learned in the natural sciences and often devoted themselves to their own scientific work. Marquise Emilie du Châtelet, a specialist in physics and translator of Newton's treatise into French [Whitfield 2002], Marquise Marianna Fiorenzi, a scientist and specialist in Leibnitz's philosophy [Rosini

2002], and Marie Geneviève Charlotte Thiroux d'Arconville, who not only translated treatises on chemistry but also wrote her own [Carlyle 2011; Pieretti 2002], are some notable examples.

The second distinct group is that of 19th-century women who had a deep enthusiasm for science and broad informal scientific knowledge, but no formal education, as women still had no access to universities at the time. In Western Europe they included the botany enthusiast Eliza P. Reid and the popular science writer and translator Jane Haldimand Mercet in Great Britain [Martin 2011], and Darwin's translator Clémence Royer in France [Wilson 2011; Brisset 2002]. Sometimes their lack of academic credentials did not prevent them from gaining a position in the scientific field, like in the case of Royer, who became the first woman member of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris. Most often, however, women learned from the men in their lives who were already often professional scholars themselves, such as Marie Anne Lavoisier, who was married off at the age of 13 to a chemist, Antoine Lavoisier, started helping him in the lab and translating specialized texts, and with time became his collaborator so that today it is difficult in some cases to distinguish their contributions [Ogilvie 2011: 106; Sirois 1997: 36; Miller 1990: 307]. In the present study, this group is represented by Aleksandra Wolfgang and Stanisława Byszewska.

Towards the end of the 19th century, when women finally gained access to higher education, there emerged a new, third type of scientific women translators – fully-fledged scientists, specialists with formal education in their domains, working women for whom translation was a complement to their regular work. What is interesting, studies analysing Western European women translators of this kind separately are rare; the reason seems to be that translators like Nusbaum and above all Szczawińska represented a type of scientific translator who, regardless of their gender, were typical of the later 19th century [Bret 2012: 948], when science became well established, specialized and professionalized [Pietrzak-Pawłowska 1987]. These women were scientists who occasionally took up translation to render into their native tongue contributions they considered important to their discipline of study.

The results are somewhat paradoxical: their biographies and achievements show they were strong women who did not mind making themselves visible and bucking the expectations of society; as translators, however, they have been all but forgotten.

The present paper is part of a broader project of "recovery" of forgotten women translators. Further studies are needed to complement it: first, by adding new names that might have been overlooked here due to the incompleteness of Polish translation bibliographies [see Chrobak 2016]; second, by analysing in an in-depth manner their translatorial decisions on a purely textual level and relating them to the bibliographical and biographical contexts offered by this study.

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Abstract

The cultural turn in translation studies has brought about a focus on the translator and the opportunity to make him or her less invisible, as well as to understand the circumstances in which he or she had to live and work, and clarify the translatorial choices they made. The present article is a case study in the history of translators in Poland, focusing specifically on 18th- and 19th-century women translators of scientific texts and the contexts in which they operated.

Keywords: translators, translation history, women translators, 18th- and 19th-century translators, scientific translators