

AGATA BRAJERSKA-MAZUR

ITALIAM! ITALIAM!

LANGUAGE – INTERPRETATION – TRANSLATION

Not much has been written about the poem *Italiam! Italiam!*¹ – perhaps because the poem appears to be quite non-typical for Norwid². Its most important side seems to be the lyrical (over)organisation of the text, regular structure, melody, melic character and most of all: poetic imaging, rather than an intellectual message or deep philosophical sense:

1

Pod latyńskich żagli cieniem,
Myśli moja, płyn z aniołem,
Płyn, jak kiedyś ja płynąłem:
Za wspomnieniem – płyn wspomnieniem...

2

Dookoła morze – morze –
Jak błękitu strop bez końca:
O! przejasne – pełne słońca –
Łodzi! wioseł!... szczęść ci, Boże...

¹ Bibliography of interpretations of Cyprian Norwid's poems (prep. by A. Cedro, P. Chlebowski, J. Fert, Lublin 2001) lists the following publications: S. SKWARCZYŃSKA, *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze*, Warszawa 1954, vol. II, p. 487; J. PRZYBOŚ, *Próba Norwida*, "Twórczość" 1959, No. 4, pp. 67-69; T. SKUBALANKA, *Styl poezji Norwida na tle tradycji poetyckiej romantyzmu*, "Studia Norwidiana" 8: 1990, p. 29; T. KORPYSZ, *Kilka uwag na temat Norwidowego rozumienia zwrotu "szczęść Boże"*, "Prace Filologiczne" 43 (1998), p. 259.

² Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół Italiam! Italiam!*, "Studia Norwidiana" 20-21: 2002-2003, p. 102: "On the surface, *Italiam! Italiam!* seems to diverge from the young artist's poetry of the 1840s. A poetry saturated with reflection, characterised by search for new forms of expression and an awareness of the individuality of the writer himself".

3

Płyn – a nie wróćże mi z zalem
Od tych laurów tam różowych,
Gdzie Tass śpiewał Jeruzalem,
I od moich dni-laurowych...

4

O! po skarby cię wysłałem:
Cóż! gdy wrócisz mi z tęsknotą –
Wiem to, ale proszę o to –
Niech zapłaczę, że płakałem...

5

Pod latyńskich żagli cieniem,
Myśli moja, płyn z aniołem,
Płyn, jak kiedyś ja płynąłem:
.....
Za wspomnieniem – płyn wspomnieniem...
(PWsz I, 77, 78)

The poem is a regular accentual-syllabic octosyllable, formed by trochees (according to some³) or dactyls (according to others). In fact, Stefania Skwarczyńska attributes the particular musicality of the poem to its dactylic nature:

The given pattern leaves no doubt that a dactylic rhythm holds in this poem. Naturally, that involves consequences for recitation. And we must admit that this poem uncovers the entirety of its artistry only when read in dactyl; the metric form remains a servant to content; auditory sensations make us feel a gentle rocking of a boat on water. A trochaic interpretation would ruin that effect, reducing the metric expression to a metric wood-chopping⁴.

And yet, it is trochees which would indicate the poem's connection to a folk song. In the view of Lucylla Pszczołowska each:

octosyllable is generally a very frequent form of folk songs, and as a rule is used in literary stylisations. So when a reader [...] realises [...] that [...] whole parts [...] flow in a trochaic octosyllable, their associations are directed – or at least should be – towards a folk song⁵.

³ See M. GŁOWIŃSKI, T. KOSTKIEWICZOWA, A. OKOPIEŃ-SŁAWIŃSKA, J. SŁAWIŃSKI, *Podręczny słownik terminów literackich*, Warszawa: OPEN, 1998, 11th ed., and <http://www.limeryki.pl/terminy.html>; Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół „Italiam...”*, p. 110.

⁴ S. SKWARCZYŃSKA, *Wstęp*, p. 487.

⁵ L. PSZCZOŁOWSKA, *Semantyka form wierszowych*, [in:] EADEM, *Wiersz – styl – poetyka*, Kraków: Universitas 2002, p. 283.

It is that very folk song, though Italian and not Polish, that is indicated by some researchers as the construction framework of *Italiam! Italiam!*. Teresa Skubalanka, Tomasz Korpysz and Zofia Dambek⁶ seek the source of the literary allusion presented in this work by Norwid in the Venetian barcarole:

Both the topic of the poem and its linguistic, metric shape indicate that the poem belongs to the lyrical genre of called a barcarole. [...] It is clear that a specific stylistic outline of folk songs, sang by sailors and fishermen, is realised here. There likely existed various subgenres of the outline at that time, depending on the topic: prayers, erotic or recollective songs. Norwid's poem would be placed in that last group [...].⁷

Beside the barcarole, Zofia Dambek saw further literary allusions, intertextual references and cultural motifs in the poem. The researcher reads the poem “through topics rooted in European culture”, which makes her list plenty of works from antiquity to Romanticism which take up – like *Italiam! Italiam!* – a common motif of yearning “to an ideal country, which Italy may be”⁸. Among others, Dambek cites Virgil's *Aeneid*, Goethe's *Italian Journey*, Krasieński's barcarole⁹ *Czy pamiętasz*, Siemieński's poem *Italiam! Italiam!*, Mickiewicz's *Wezwanie do Neapolu*, or Gaszyński's *Tęsknota do Włoch*. Another topos beside seeking a new Arcadia in Italy is, in the researcher's view, the motif of “creating as sailing”¹⁰, which also links Norwid's poem to extensive European literary tradition.

However, according to Julian Przyboś, it is not the literary allusions or the musicality which constitute the major features of the poem (although the researcher does appreciate their great import¹¹). This interpreter gives a higher value to its picturesqueness and the manner of imaging:

It is, like any true poem, a discovery and definition of an unknown emotional condition, a poetic definition, meaning one where it is moving images and not concept which convey and embody the feeling. [...] This poem has a visionary transfer of an image-emotion from

⁶ T. SKUBALANKA, *Styl poezji*, p. 29; T. KORPYSZ, *Kilka uwag*, p. 259; Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, p. 101.

⁷ T. SKUBALANKA, *Styl poezji*, p. 29.

⁸ Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, pp. 102-104.

⁹ Further works by Krasieński are listed by Magdalena Woźniewska-Działak in her article *Italiam! Italiam! Cypriana Norwida. Liryczny dialog w samotności* ([in:] *Seminaria bielańskie. Prace ofiarowane profesor T. Kostkiewiczowej*, T. Chachulski, D. Cielak, M. Ślusarska (eds.), Warszawa: UKSW 2015, pp. 129-143). The author lists also works by Asnyk, Zaleski, Witwicki and Wolski as those which follow the genre of the Italian song.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹¹ J. PRZYBOŚ, *Próba Norwida*, p. 69: “That poem has a musical soul”.

the present into the past, but not only the faraway past happened and gone, but this one that constantly appears. Times change and visions shift. [...] The poet follows a memory – already a memory¹².

Thus the poem, listed by Przyboś among the “uppermost masterpieces of Polish poetry”¹³, is both musical and picturesque. Both the melodiousness, which introduces a “floating rhythm of a lulling longing”¹⁴, and the imaging which bring the poetic vision to life and adds colour and lustre to it, serve Norwid to express his yearning “for the sunny Italy, if not always carefree and happy for the lyrical persona”¹⁵.

According to Zbigniew Dokurno, who noticed the significance of the “smoothly composed harmony of sounds” and “alluring images”¹⁶ created in the poem, Norwid’s poem “does not go beyond human boundaries” and is “dedicated exclusively to immersing in feelings” – i.e. “pensiveness”, “subdued sadness controlled by reflection” and painful experiences “soothed with recalling a joyful vision”¹⁷.

Skubalanka also relates the imaging manner and the poem’s versification construction to the thematic role they play. In her view, that role is subordinated to expressing a passage from the real world into a world of memories. That is proved e.g. by:

the metre, [...], then whole sets of words in the function of creating the theme (a sphere related to sailing and water, a landscape and colour sphere, [...], an angelic sphere [...], finally a sphere of words and memories, which Norwid expands and subjects to a metaphor: “za wspomnieniem – płyn wspomnieniem” [to follow a memory – flow with a memory]). That phrase indicates a transposition of real events into an unreal world of memories, where those events lose their real character¹⁸.

That passage from reality into unreality invoked by memory, feelings and emotions, is seen as the poem’s highest value by Przyboś, who attributes the poem’s genius and mastery to that particular feature:

That poem has no descriptiveness, no images of landscape or scenes from aesthetic tourist adventures in Italy, with an interwoven chorus – like in Goethe’s *Kennst du das Land* and

¹² Ibid., pp. 68-69.

¹³ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁵ T. KORPYSZ, *Kilka uwag*, p. 259.

¹⁶ Z. DOKURNO, *Kompozycja utworów lirycznych C.K. Norwida*, Toruń: PWN 1965, p. 141.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ T. SKUBALANKA, *Styl poezji*, p. 30.

Mickiewicz's [translation] *Znasz-li ten kraj*. In *Italiam! Italiam!* Norwid is a forerunner of integral poetry, i.e. such in which each element taken from the outer reality transforms into an equivalent of emotion. In such a poem, a word does not name, but rather invokes, reveals and presents lyrical situations and the corresponding plexus of emotions/images¹⁹.

Yet in contrast to Dokurno, this researcher does not treat the poem's recollective theme, transposing reality into an "equivalent of emotion", as "exclusively immersing in feelings", but as poetry of thought – i.e. poetry which attempts to capture past moments mentally, by way of cognition. To recall the words of Przyboś: "It is [...], a **discovery** and **definition** of an unknown emotional condition. [...] And that poem speaks of **thought**"²⁰.

Dambek also believes that "thought [...] is the key to understand this work". The researcher is the only one who describes the means used by Norwid in *Italiam! Italiam!* to achieve the effect of transition from the real present into an already unreal past. In the first stanza she indicates the "angel" who "seems to play the role of a being mediating between the human world and the divine world [...] it is to give divine wings to thought"²¹. In the second stanza, she sees light as the binder between the two worlds:

By placing sun in the sea [...] a joining of two spheres: water and skies, is accomplished. The light unites the areas of the seas and the sky in *Italiam! Italiam!*. In that space floats the boat with a "lateen" sail. Thanks to the light, that world is spiritualised²².

According to the researcher, in further stanzas of the poem the "thought" joining the "laurel days" with the present moment is seen even more expressly; a thought which brings back the happy days of creation, but which is also aware of the illusion it creates. The keywords here are "I know", as with them:

the protagonist accomplishes the act of dividing the past and the present, and yet in the same verse asks for its return (Cóż! gdy wrócisz mi z tęsknotą – / Wiem to, ale proszę o to –). The protagonist looks deep within himself, and the bond between his present "I" and the "I" from his past is thought (imagination). In *Italiam! Italiam!* is it not the memory or the past that is most important, but time – the instant of bringing light to past moments – "time regained"²³.

¹⁹ J. PRZYBOŚ, *Próba Norwida*, p. 69.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68 (emphasis mine – A. B.-M.).

²¹ Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół "Italiam..."*, p. 105.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Those “past moments”, filled with the azure of water and sky, are according to researchers a memory of “Norwid’s sea voyages along the Italian coast: in 1844 on the Adriatic Sea”²⁴, and in 1845, likely in the company of e.g. Maria Kalergis, in the area of Italy’s west coast: Naples, Sorrento and Capri.

Norwid wrote the poem already after leaving Italy, which he longed for and where he returned briefly (in 1847-1948), to later only be able to dream of the country where: “słońce uzupełnia linie, a suszy kolor farby, i człowiek ma wieczność przed sobą”²⁵ [sun completes the lines, and dries the colour of paint, and a man has eternity in front of him]. Lack of date in the manuscript allows researchers to agree only on the fact that *Italiam! Italiam!* was written after 1845. Gomulicki gives December 1845 or January 1846 as the date²⁶, Przesmycki suggests the December of 1846²⁷, Mieczysław Ingłot recalls the context of Norwid’s trip with Maria Kalergis and her friend Maria Trębicka in June 1845²⁸, and Zbigniew Sudolski connects the writing of the poem with the seaside scenery of Ostend, Belgium²⁹, where Norwid went in late 1846 as a political émigré³⁰. In an attempt to solve the dilemma, Dambek states that the poem “was written in Berlin in 1845/46, on Norwid’s return from Italy”³¹. It is certain that the poet wrote it at a distance from Italy, which caused his longing “do Włoch (gdzie powietrze słuch [...] powraca)” [for Italy (where the air brings back your hearing)] and whose “język i naród, i historia, i literatura, [...] zwyczajnie nie są obce”³² [language and nation, and history, and literature, [...] are simply not foreign] to the writer.

Małgorzata Rygielska³³ believes that the date of the poem’s creation dictates its interpretations, since the poem can be seen either (like Gomulicki and Ingłot suggest) as “clearly recollective”, which “would concern mainly recalling the joyous

²⁴ C. NORWID, *Dzieła zebrane*, prep. by J.W. Gomulicki, Warszawa 1966, vol. II, com. 28, p. 335 (further as DZ); cf. PWSz XI, 194; Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, vol. I: 1821-1860, Poznań 2007, p. 178 (further as Kal).

²⁵ Norwid to J. Kuczyńska, Neuilly – Paris, 7th August 1866. PWSz IX, 255-256.

²⁶ DZ II 72; PWSz II, 344.

²⁷ C. NORWID, *Pisma zebrane*, Z. Przesmycki (ed.), Warszawa–Kraków 1911, vol. A, p. 775.

²⁸ M. INGŁOT, *Cyprian Norwid*, Warszawa 1991, p. 15.

²⁹ Z. SUDOLSKI, *Norwid. Opowieść biograficzna*, Warszawa 2003, p. 106.

³⁰ See J. FERT, *Norwidowskie inspiracje*, Lublin 2004, pp. 15-16; Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, *Rzecz o młodości Norwida*, Poznań 1968; Kal, vol. I, p. 219.

³¹ Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, p. 101.

³² Norwid’s letter to J. Pusłowska of 12th February 1874 (Kal, vol. II, p. 560); Norwid’s letter to W. Zamojski of 19th April 1852 (PWSz VIII, 168).

³³ M. RYGIELSKA, *Przybóś czyta Norwida*, Katowice: UŚ, 2012, pp. 41-73.

moments spent with a woman favoured with exceptionally strong affection”, or as “covertly political”³⁴, if one were to follow Sudolski’s suggestion of 1846 and Ostend being the time and place of writing. “However, shifting the moment of the poem’s creation by (yet another) couple of months may encourage to read it in the context of autobiographical reckoning poetry”³⁵. Then, the interpretation of Norwid’s poem (the fullest one in my view) focuses on explaining the poet’s request: “Niech zapłacę, że płakałem” [May I cry that I cried]. The poem becomes a self-reflexive attempt to capture the experienced emotions – even if they were not the most pleasant ones for the speaker. It is likely hence that Norwid refers to the figure of Torquato Tasso, who is not merely a symbol of Italy (as Gomulicki sees it³⁶), but also and foremostly a symbol of unhappy love. Also the “laury różowe” [pink laurels] and “dni laurowe” [laurel days] direct the readers to Italy (through the reference to Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*) and at the same time indicate the “days of splendour past” and the “memory of past emotions”³⁷.

It ought to be stressed that the speaker is utterly aware of diving into unreality, dealing with sometimes bitter memories and pursuing them. Emotion is subjected to thought, distance and self-reflection:

Cóż! gdy wrócisz mi z tęsknotą –
Wiem to, ale proszę o to –
Niech zapłacę, że płakałem...

The sigh “cóż” accompanying the utterance plays an expressive role, but also serves to stress the speaker’s self-knowledge: the recollecting person is focused not so much on himself as on the thinking process which he is the subject of. The repetitive phrase: “Niech zapłacę, że płakałem...” [May I cry that I cried] may thus be read as a sense of distress at the thought of past experiences (I regret crying) or as a judgement of the self due to a change which has already occurred for the speaker, although we do not know its cause (may I cry over the fact that I once knew to cry)³⁸.

The movement of thought, registering of changes, pursuit of time past and its evaluation, and constant recalling of the images of flowing/sailing and expanse give the poem a particular dynamism. That feature of Norwid’s works was already indicated by Jadwiga Puzynina³⁹, although she did not cite *Italiam! Italiam!* in her

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 58-65.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

³⁶ DZ, vol. II, p. 335.

³⁷ M. RYGIELSKA, *Przyboś czyta*, p. 63; cf. Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, p. 109.

³⁸ M. RYGIELSKA, *Przyboś czyta*, p. 63.

³⁹ J. PUZYNIŃA, *Język – interpretacja – przekład*, “*Studia Norwidiana*” 11(1993), pp. 31-51.

reflections. Yet they may be a key to this poem, as well, as the dynamism shows in it on various planes. Everything is motion here: the reflection on the changed state – a certain “self-reflexivity”⁴⁰ of the writer; the shape of the text, formed e.g. with “syntactic echoes of verses” or “sonic returns”⁴¹; versification which gives the effect of waves rocking a boat; images of sailing; distance/space created by the poetic visions and aided with specific lexical choices (eightfold call to move – seven times “płyn” [sail/flow] and one “wróćże” [return]; calls to change location – “płyn do”, “wróćże od”, “wysłałem po” [sail to, return from, I sent for]). Dambek also notices that the very title of the poem, the Latin *Italiam! Italiam!* “indicates the place and direction of the movement – i.e. to Italy”⁴². Beside that, the researcher notes the dynamism in the third and fourth stanzas, where:

a change occurs in how the protagonist sees the world [...]. In the poem, reality is divided into a “there” of the subject, marked by “pink laurels” and blue water, and his current situation. “There” belongs to the past, and “here” – to the present. “There” is a space in motion: the thought flows, the ship sails, Tasso’s song can be heard. The space is thus animated by the will of the subject, because he is its actual creator. His thought dictates the rhythm of space creation⁴³.

Thus all in *Italiam! Italiam!* flows, sails, rocks and changes in the brief poetic capture of lost time, which took 16 verses with Norwid, as compared to 3 volumes of prose with Proust.

It ought now to be considered which of the above listed features of the poem (or a compilation of those) is the most important one, and which one(s) should be saved in translation in order to obtain an equivalent identity of the original. In order to answer that question and evaluate the quality of Jerzy Laskowski’s translation⁴⁴ and the aptness of his choice of translation strategies, I use the *katena*

⁴⁰ M. RYGIELSKA, *Przyboś czyta...*, p. 53: “Looking at himself with a distance, self-reflexiveness, intertwined times, clash of the past “I” with the current one, finally its dependence on the author’s “I” which can only be recovered in the poetic presentation – all that concretes Norwid’s poem”.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴² Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, p. 104.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110. M. Woźniewska-Działak (*Italiam! Italiam!*, p. 136) sees that split into “here” and “there” in a different fragment of the poem: “In the second stanza the subject «splits» place and space into two planes: that of a spiritual experience and of physical being: «here and now» and «there and then». Thus on the one hand, the lines of the second stanza describe a concrete image seen by someone (most likely) from the deck of a ship, and on the other, they are the contents of a memory, or rather are the memory of a trip or a sea voyage”.

⁴⁴ *Italiam! Italiam*, transl. by J.A. Laskowski, “Modern Poetry in Translation” 1975, No. 23/24, p. 4.

method⁴⁵. It consists in compiling comments and interpretations concerning the original text in order to define on their basis its major structural and semantic features which must absolutely be saved in translation. Referring to various readings of the original allows to view it broadly and avoid subjectivism. It also summarises the general knowledge of the researchers, which is naturally very useful in building a hierarchy of the most important features of the original which must be saved in order to retain equivalence in translation.

The *katena* method – about whose relation with Barańczak's *semantic dominant*⁴⁶ and *katenas*⁴⁷ used by the Church Fathers I wrote more extensively in other papers⁴⁸ – converges with the earlier findings of Jadwiga Puzynina⁴⁹. When reviewing German translations of Norwid's works, the researcher adopted the following principles, applied also in *katena*:

1. Interpretation of the original lies at the heart of the translation and “usually concerns both the form and meaning, as well as the reality presented in the given work”⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ I described that method in more detail in: A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach utworów Norwida*, Lublin: TN KUL 2002, pp. 8-12 and EADEM, *Filutka z filigranu paraduje w cudzym losie*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012, pp. 18-22.

⁴⁶ See S. BARAŃCZAK, *Mały, lecz maksymalistyczny manifest translatoologiczny*, [in:] IDEM, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*, Kraków 2004, 3rd ed., pp. 20 and 35-36.

⁴⁷ J.M. SZYMUSIAK, M. STAROWIEYSKI, *Słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, Poznań: Księgarnia Świętego Wojciecha 1971, p. 248; B. ALTANER, A. STUIBER, *Patrologia*, Warszawa: PAX 1990, pp. 662ff; *Praktyczny słownik biblijny*, A. Grabner-Haider (ed.), transl. and prep. by P. Pachciarek, Warszawa: PAX 1994, p. 546; B. BURDZIEJ, *Super Flumina Babylonis. Psalm 136 (137) w literaturze polskiej XIX-XX w.*, Toruń: UMK 1999, pp. 31-34.

⁴⁸ Beside the papers listed in note 47 above, see also: A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, *Katena and Translations of Literary Masterpieces*, “Babel” 51(2005), pp. 16-30; EADEM, *O przekładzie na język angielski wierszy Norwida “Śmierć”, “Do Zeszłej...”, “Finis”, “Pamiętnik Literacki”* 47(2006), vol. 4, pp. 229-237; EADEM, *Norwid, “Spartakus” i Internet*, [in:] *Strona Norwida. Księga poświęcona profesorowi Stefanowi Sawickiemu*, P. Chlebowski, W. Toruń, E. Żwirkowska, E. Chlebowska (ed.), Lublin: TN KUL 2008, pp. 7-28; EADEM, *Ten Commandments for the Translation of the Works of Cyprian Norwid (and what came from them, or, on the translations of Danuta Borchardt)*, “The Polish Review” 53(2008), No. 4, pp. 495-540; EADEM, *Katena a przekład współczesnej poezji polskiej*, [in:] *Translatio i literatura*, A. Kukułka-Wojtasik (ed.), Warszawa: UW 2011, pp. 27-34.

⁴⁹ J. PUZYNNINA, *Język – interpretacja*, pp. 31-51.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. Puzynina's assumptions, as well as mine, oppose some of the modern translation theories which dethrone the original and/or allow its free interpretation. See P. BUKOWSKI, M. HEYDEL, *Wprowadzenie: przekład – język – literatura*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie przekładu. Antologia*, P. Bukowski, M. Heydel (eds.), Kraków: “Znak” 2009, pp. 5-37 and M. HEYDEL, *Zwrot*

2. A translation “is tied with a cause and effect relationship to interpretation in both its meanings – not being an interpretation itself, however”, as “it can only be an expression of one certain understanding of the text”⁵¹.

3. “A translation of a literary work is the better, the better and fuller the interpretation which lies at its heart”. Hence important is an interpretation “reaching the senses conveyed by the author” and reflecting “what comprises the poetic model of the world: rhyme, rhythm, the whole music of the poem, onomatopoeias, alliteration and other means of poetic language”⁵².

4. “Both interpretation and translation are subject to assessment” – which means that an interpretation is the better, the “broader semantic horizon is considered by the interpreter” and the “better the interpreter can, in that horizon [...] isolate what is crucial, what impacts other levels of the text”⁵³.

Keeping in mind Puzynina’s findings and the *katena* which corresponds to them and which also considers the primary task to be conveyance in translation of as many possible interpretations of the original as a reader of this original has available, let us verify the comments accumulated around *Italiam! Italiam!*, in order to establish a hierarchy of features of this Norwidian poem necessary to save in translation.

The major features which form the poem’s identity are as follows:

1. Passage from the real world into the world of memories (bound by the words “anioł”, “światło”, “myśl” and “wiem” [angel, light, thought and “I know”]).

2. Self-reflexive, recollective structure and theme of the poem, the “poetic form of consideration of thinking itself, of memories, a verbal reconstruction of a past lost forever”⁵⁴.

The following important features support and construct the two major ones:

3. Poetic imaging (transposing concepts into images of the azure of water and sky, of flowing/sailing and motion of thought),

4. Dynamism (motion of thought; following and being aware of the changes of time, place and space; sailing).

5. Musicality (brought about by the poem’s regular structure and references to the barcarole and folk song).

kulturowy w badaniach nad przekładem, “Teksty Drugie” 6 (2009), pp. 21-33; T. BILCZEWSKI, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków: Universitas 2010.

⁵¹ J. PUZYNNINA, *Język – interpretacja*, p. 32, note 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵⁴ M. RYGIELSKA, *Przyboś czyta*, p. 65.

6. The vision of Italy seen through memories.

7. Intertextual and autobiographical references (the motif of Italy as Arcadia; the topos of sailing as creation; Tasso, laurels, Petrarch, sea voyage with Maria Kalergis).

Let us examine how many of those elements “defining the unique identity of the work”⁵⁵ are saved in its only English translation made by Jerzy Laskowski:

*Italiam! Italiam!*⁵⁶

1

Sail away angelic mind
Under masts in Latin shades,
Make the journey I once made –
Memories remembrance find.

2

All around is sea – just sea,
Endless like the azure sky,
The sun so bright it hurts my eyes,
Boats, oars – happy memory –

3

Sail, but don't return that way –
In sorrow at laurels bare.
Tasso sang Jerusalem there,
There I left my laurel days.

4

I sent you out to espy
Those riches – and you'll return
Nostalgic – I know and yearn –
Let me cry for I did cry.

5

Sail away angelic mind
Under masts in Latin shades,
Make the journey I once made –
Memories remembrance find.

Berlin 1845-46

⁵⁵ S. BARAŃCZAK, *Mały, lecz maksymalistyczny manifest translologiczny*, [in:] IDEM, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*, Kraków, 2004, 3rd ed., p. 15.

⁵⁶ Transl. by J.A. LASKOWSKI.

Already at the first glance, even before reading the translation, a careful reader who remembers the original may notice two things. First: the translator gave a set place and time of the poem's creation, second: he did not use the silence of a long ellipsis in the last stanza. The dating (Berlin 1845-46) directs the reader towards recollective poetry, and lack of a pause between the third and fourth line of the last stanza makes the translation to a completed whole, which is not the case with the original. Dambek notes that:

After the third line the poet put an ellipsis. Was that for ease of recitation? And that detail is very symptomatic. An ellipsis does not close an entity, but opens it, keeps the poem unfinished, the melody not completed, and it can be conjectured to return, but perhaps in different circumstances, in a different key⁵⁷.

According to Magdalena Woźniewska-Działak, that silence in *Italiam! Italiam!* "is a kind of incomplete closure which indicates a silent further train of confession", and "The work's open perspective allows to see the ellipsis as a signal of thought in epistemological terms. Cognition would concern own personality and identity, the self"⁵⁸. However, with Laskowski everything is established and completed, although (as we shall see later) not fully recognised and realised.

On the first reading of the translation there appears the impression of a somehow different melody of the poem. Despite great similarity to the original, in recitation the English-language version resembles precisely that metric wood-chopping mentioned by Skwarczyńska. The translator used the same accentual feet as were used in the original – trochees, thus the marching impression given by the translation may be surprising. However, it turns out that, first: he chose masculine rhymes, which are perfectly natural for the English language system and literary tradition, but they break off the lines rather violently and give the poem a very specific rhythm; second: trochees are not the best equivalent for the Polish metre in British poetry at all. Stanisław Barańczak was right to state that the same poem-forming factors play different semantic roles in different linguistic systems⁵⁹. That principle concerns in particular rhythmic feet dependent on accents:

For natural prosodic reasons, English favours iamb in poetry; trochee is a metre diverging from normality marked as if with greater emphasis. In Polish poetry it is exactly the op-

⁵⁷ Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół "Italiam..."*, p. 110.

⁵⁸ M. WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK, *Italiam! Italiam!*, p. 142.

⁵⁹ S. BARAŃCZAK, *Mały, lecz maksymalistyczny*, pp. 51-52.

posite: our paroxytonic stress makes trochees a more “natural” metre – the role of a carrier of sound emphasis, intensiveness, or anxiety should be played by the iamb⁶⁰.

Hence it is frequent that poems translated with the greatest care to the form have such an utterly different climate from the originals, as proven by the translations of the poem *W Weronie* made by Tymoteusz Karpowicz, Edmund Ordon, and Watson Kirkconnell⁶¹. That is also the reason why despite – or, actually, due to – using the catalectic trochaic tetrameter, Laskowski did not obtain the same melody and wave rocking effect in his translation of *Italiam! Italiam!* as there is in the original.

On the other hand, perhaps there was no such need, as it was not possible for him to refer to the barcarole genre. English dictionaries list barcarole only as a musical genre⁶², linking it to Venetian gondoliers, Offenbach, and Chopin, but not to literary tradition. English-language literature does not know the genre of a barcarole, because the Venetian song was not made into a poetic work in that tradition. Thus English speakers would not be able to associate Laskowski’s translation with the genre (even if it keeps the metre, topic and imaging of a barcarole). But they do know very well the envelope iambic tetrameter, started by Petrarch, which was a metric structure used commonly in British poetry in particular in the Romantic period⁶³. Hence iambs, more melodic to the ear of an English-speaking reader, would have been a better solution here than the trochees used by the translator. They would have referred to a different tradition than the original, but that would be a logical substitution, also for its distribution of rhymes (abba), so characteristic for the very iambic tetrameters in envelope stanzas or *In Memoriam* stanza⁶⁴, dating back to Petrarch. Additionally, *In Memoriam* stanza would invoke a recollective character (Tennyson’s poem was written in the memory of A.H.H.) and bring the readers of the translation into the 19th century.

Following the above introductory remarks, let us now go to *katena* and to the major and important features of the poem as indicated by that method. It seems

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ See A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, *O angielskich*, pp. 103-144.

⁶² See <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Barcarolle>: 1. A Venetian gondolier’s song with a rhythm suggestive of rowing; 2. A composition imitating a Venetian gondolier’s song.

⁶³ See L. TURCO, *New Book of Forms*, Hanover: University Press of New England 2000, 3rd ed. Lord Byron used that form when writing *Giaur*.

⁶⁴ The name stems from a poem by a contemporary of Norwid – Lord Alfred Tennyson, who wrote *In Memoriam A.H.H.* in a iambic tetrameter with an abba rhyme scheme.

that their reflection in the translation is adversely affected by the dating given by Laskowski as well as the changes in the graphic layout and melody of the poem.

The date added in the translation surely has impact on its reception as a recollective poem⁶⁵, which highlights the most important feature of the original – the passage from reality to the world of memories. Those memories, as well as bonding words bridging the two worlds are, however, different in the original and in the translation. There is no “anioł” [angel] in the translation, it gives us “angelic mind” instead, which both sublimates and trivialises the thought, directing readers’ minds to sweetness of memories rather than mediation between worlds. Also changing the word “światło” [light] in translation trivialises the poem and makes it sugary. In Laskowski’s text there is brightness enhanced with rhyming phrases “it hurts my eyes” and “happy memory”; these phrases change the climate and mood of the translation to much lighter and more serene than in the original. Another change is the meaning of the word “wiem” [I know]. Norwid’s “wiem to, ale proszę o to – ” [I know it, but I ask for it] is not tantamount to “I know and yearn”. With Norwid, thought encompasses emotions, is aware of them, tries to overcome them, seems to control the conflict and friction with emotions. With Laskowski, thought and yearning – the latter reduced in the translation to being “nostalgic” – balance each other out, or the yearning even dominates thought. That changes the other major feature of the poem: its self-reflexive and recollective nature and theme. In the translation, self-reflexivity is supplanted by recollectiveness, and one that is sweet and rather mushy – especially as the translator changes Norwid’s “szczęść ci, Boże...” [God bless you] to “happy memory”. According to Korpysz, who researched the meaning of the phrase used by the poet, the “szczęść Boże” in *Italiam! Italiam!* “function in the poem not so much as a blessing, but rather as a request indirectly aimed at God”⁶⁶. A simple “happy memory” is neither a blessing nor a request, neither a wish nor a greeting. A much better equivalent could have been Byron’s “fare thee well”, which does encompass the above senses and also refers the reader to another poet from the 19th century.

Imaging focused on clear blue water and sky is on the whole one of the strengths of the translation, although the translator gives generally brighter images. There are also some images which differ from the original, for instance

⁶⁵ It is the effect of merely adding a date (whatever it may be). I doubt that English-language readers would know details of Norwid’s life and work, and they were not given any in “Modern Poetry in Translation”.

⁶⁶ T. KORPYSZ, *Kilka uwag*, p. 259.

“Latin shades”, which have little to do with “latyńskich żagli⁶⁷ cieniem” [the shadow of lateen sails] – the latter suggests on the one hand a repeated image of reality⁶⁸ – a memory – and on the other the topos of sailing as creating. The movement of thought and image of sailing changed also due to the epithets describing them: “angelic” or “happy”, and the verb “płyn” [sail/flow], used seven times by Norwid, has various counterparts in Laskowski’s version, such as: “make the journey” or “memories remembrance find”.

In consequence, the dynamism of the original is slowed in translation, where not only the motion, but also the awareness of thought decreases. Moreover, in Laskowski’s version the movement goes only one way, because his text misses the preposition “od” [from] (“Od tych laurów tam różowych”; “I od moich dni – laurowych...”), and so the thought is directed only towards memory, and not towards reflection. The use of the single word “return” is not enough to indicate the reflexivity of the original⁶⁹.

It is now clear that the metric structure of the poem so meticulously reproduced by Laskowski did not work; its trochaic rhythm does not invoke the effect of sailing and rocking on water for an English-speaking reader. Yet it must be admitted that the translation sounds very good in the target language and is pleasant to the ear. It may not be as song-like as the original, and could not be sang in the style of Polish singers (Czesław Niemen, Stanisław Soyka, Natalia Sikora or the Soundrise band⁷⁰), but the march-like melodiousness of the translation also invites possible musical interpretations.

Readers would also find pleasant the vision of Italy, more strongly associated with sweet memories in the translation than the bitter-tinged ones from the original. Undoubtedly significant here is the fact that the translation enhances the

⁶⁷ “Lateen (latin-rig), which is characterised by sails in the shape of triangles or trapezes, was used in the Mediterranean Sea and seas of the Middle East” (Z. DAMBEK, *Wokół “Italiam...”*, p. 104).

⁶⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

⁶⁹ A much better expression would have been “come back”, where the “back” would indicate the returning movement of thought.

⁷⁰ Norwid’s *Italiam! Italiam!* performed by Czesław Niemen was recorded in the album of 1971, titled *Niemen*, and known to music experts and lovers of the composer’s work as *Czerwony album*. The poem was also sung in the album *Spizowy krzyk*, containing Czesław Niemen’s songs chosen by his wife, Małgorzata Niemen-Wydrzycka. The album was issued on 30th May 2008 by Polskie Nagrania. Stanisław Soyka announced his interpretation of Niemen’s song to be issued as a single in 2015; Natalia Sikora recorded *Italiam! Italiam!* in her album *Absurdustra. Próba Norwida* in 2011; the *Soundrise* band issued a jazz album with Norwid/Niemen works on 16th April 2012.

motif of Italy as an Arcadia, but the topos of sailing-creating and autobiographical references are less obvious.

The above-presented analysis of the English translation of *Italiam! Italiam!* has indicated that Laskowski's translation diverges from Norwid's original in each point of *katena* to a lesser or bigger extent. It is a copy well-retouched: sweeter, brighter, more serene and, unfortunately, also shallower. It is a beautiful work, but not as deep as the original, and reaching towards just one – recollective – facet of its interpretation.

Translated by Anna Maria Gernand

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ITALIAM! ITALIAM!
JĘZYK – INTERPRETACJA – PRZEKŁAD

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Za pomocą metody kateny oraz założeń prof. Puzyniny zbadane jest anglojęzyczne tłumaczenie wczesnego wiersza Norwida „*Italiam! Italiam!*”, którego trocheiczna struktura i niejednoznaczny sens utrudniają dobranie odpowiedniej metody oraz stylu translacji. Pieczołowicie odwzorowana przez tłumacza forma metryczna wiersza nie daje takiego samego efektu jak w języku polskim (płynięcia i kołysania na fali). Przeprowadzona analiza wykazuje, iż tłumaczenie w każdym innym punkcie kateny także mniej lub bardziej odbiega od wierności wobec oryginału. Jest jego pogodniejszą kopią: także piękną, ale mniej głęboką i sięgającą tylko do jednej (wspomnieniowej) interpretacji pierwowzoru.

Słowa kluczowe: katena; Puzynina; *Italiam! Italiam!*; Norwid; Laskowski; ocena przekładu; interpretacja.

ITALIAM! ITALIAM!
LANGUAGE – INTERPRETATION – TRANSLATION

S u m m a r y

English translation of Norwid's early poem *Italiam! Italiam!* is analysed by means of katena method and Prof. Puzynina's assumptions. The trochaic structure of the original poem and its polysemantic meaning impede the proper selection of translation strategy. The carefully copied metrical form of the text does not exert the same effect in the target language as in the source one. The results of the analysis show that Laskowski's translation also diverges from Norwid's lyric in all other aspects that create the poem's identity. Its English version is a more cheerful, less profound and one-sided copy of the original.

Key words: katena; Puzynina; *Italiam! Italiam!*; Norwid; Laskowski; translation assessment; interpretation.

Summary translated by Rafał Augustyn

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