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THE ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS OF NORWID'S POETRY

1. NORWID'S RECEPTION IN ITALY

To the average Italian, the name Cyprian Norwid says very little. In the popular post-war review of Polish literature,¹ geared towards readers interested in the history of Central European writing, Marina Bersano Begey described Norwid as “oryginalną osobowość poetycką” [“a genuine poetic personality”], an artist misunderstood by his contemporaries, who “pisał dla siebie i potomnych”² [“wrote for himself and posterity”]. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century that a somewhat deeper and more extensive characterization of the poet's creative profile written by Krystyna Jaworska appeared in *Storia della letteratura polacca* edited by Luigi Marinelli.³ Before the outbreak of World War II, Giovanni Maver, in the entry for *Cyprian Norwid* in *Enciclopedia Treccani* (1934), referred those who were interested to a French selection of Norwid's works compiled by Paul Cazin, *Le Stigmate*,⁴ because there was not a single Italian translation of his work. The

¹ Published in 1953 and 1957 as *Storia della letteratura polacca* and renewed (under the new title *La letteratura polacca*) in 1968, this volume was the only Italian textbook on the history of Polish literature for many years (up until 2004), cf. O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Bersano Begey, Marina*, [in:] *Wielki Leksykon Pisarzy Polskich*, vol. I, ed. J. Pieszczachowicz, Kraków: Fogra 2005, p. 218.

² “Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883), originale personalità di poeta, che scrisse per sé e pei posteri, senza essere compreso dai contemporanei.” M. BERSANO BEGEY, *La letteratura polacca. Nuova edizione aggiornata*, Florence–Milan: Sansoni-Accademia 1968, p. 192.

³ K. JAWORSKA, *Il romanticismo dopo l'insurrezione. 4: Cyprian Kamil Norwid*, [in:] *Storia della letteratura polacca*, ed. L. Marinelli, Turin: Einaudi 2004, p. 248-255.

⁴ G. MAVER, *Norwid, Cyprian*, [in:] *Enciclopedia Treccani* (1934), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cyprian-norwid_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cyprian-norwid_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/) [accessed: 15.02.2016]. In the introduction to this collection Cazin presented Norwid as “the first Polish poet to establish contact with Europe;” cf. P. CAZIN, *Cyprien Norwid*, [in:] C. Norwid, *Le stigmate*, transl. P. Cazin, Paris: Gallimard 1932, p. 12.

relatively late – compared to other Romantics – discovery of Norwid by his native readers affects, of course, the extent of his popularity among foreign readers. Whereas Mickiewicz's works were translated in Italy while he was still alive, and the lesser-known Słowacki's writings – towards the end of the 19th century,⁵ the first translations of Norwid's poetry were not made until the second half of the 1940s.

This being the case, it should not come as a surprise that researchers' interest in Norwid's reception in Italy is small, although the Italian themes in his writing continue to be a popular research subject.⁶ For example, in the anniversary edition of the volume of studies devoted to the creator of *Promethidion*, there was an article about Norwid's Roman apartments,⁷ but in the section concerning translations, there was no mention of any of his works having been translated into Italian (it seems that in 1973 this might not have been possible for political reasons), despite the fact that the translatability of Norwid's idiolect into German, English, and Hungarian⁸ were considered, and anniversary versions of the Czech, Lithuanian and even Bulgarian translations were presented.⁹ Ten years later, the chapter pertaining to translations in the volume devoted to the history of Norwid's reception¹⁰ contained several sketches related to the Czech, Slovakian, Ukrainian, French and English language translations.¹¹ Italian translations are rarely mentioned, and when they are, it is rather documentarily, as an afterthought of discussions on other topics (for example in the context of musings on émigré literature, divagations about other Romantics or translators' activities).¹² Even the

⁵ G. MAVER, *Mickiewicz i Włochy*, [in:] *Literatura polska i jej związki z Włochami*, Warsaw 1988; O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Włoskie przekłady dzieł Juliusza Słowackiego*, Kraków 2004, p. 9.

⁶ The 14th conference hosted by the Cyprian Norwid Literature Research Department in the cycle *Colloquia Norwidiana* (September 2015), *Italiam, italiam*, was also devoted to this topic.

⁷ Cf. B. BILIŃSKI, *Norwid w Rzymie*, [in:] *Cyprian Norwid w 150-lecie urodzin. Materiały konferencji naukowej 23-25 września 1971*, ed. M. Żmigrodzka, Warsaw 1973, p. 151-195.

⁸ R. FIEGUTH, G. GÖMÖRI, [voices in the discussion], *ibid.*, p. 232-234.

⁹ J. PILAŃ, T. VENCLOVA, A. RADEVA [voices in the discussion], *ibid.*, p. 239-246; 237-238; 247-252.

¹⁰ Cf. *Norwid. Z dziejów recepcji twórczości*, selected and compiled by M. Inglot, Warsaw 1983.

¹¹ There are reprints and translations of articles by Jan Paweł Kaczkowski (Jean-Paul D'Arderschach), Adolf Černý, František Kvapil, Pavol Winczer, Krystyna Kardyni-Pelikánova, George Gömöri, Aleksander W. Lipatow, Mykoly Bazhan and Teodor F. Domaradzki, cf. *Norwid. Z dziejów recepcji twórczości*, p. 439-498.

¹² Cf. e.g. *Literatura polska na obczyźnie 1940-1960*, vol. I-II, ed. T. Terlecki, London 1965; G. MAVER, *Literatura polska i jej związki z Włochami*, transl. A. Zieliński, Warsaw 1988; *Maestri della polonistica italiana. Atti del convegno dei polonisti italiani 17-18 ottobre 2013*, ed. M. Ciccarini, P. Salwa, Rome 2014.

proactive Lublin researchers do not postulate an overview of the Italian translations when they identify the areas of Norwid studies that remain to be explored.¹³ English-language translations, on the other hand, constitute the most numerous group of the translations of Norwid's achievements, and are also among the most thoroughly researched domains of the foreign interpretations of his work.¹⁴ The opinions expressed by translators and commentators on the suitability of Norwid's works for translation could be summed up in the following way: those features of his works, such as "specyficzny dystans wobec romantyzmu, aluzyjność, eliptyczność, 'gęstość' semantyczna"¹⁵ ["an unusual disconnect with Romanticism, allusiveness, ellipticity, semantic 'density'"] make it completely impossible – or, on the contrary, can determine the success of a translation.¹⁶ Either way, they are certainly challenging to translate.

As a side note, it should be added that Przemysław Dakowicz, who studied the reception of Norwid's works between 1939-1956, in a recently published monograph focused on how the poet's output was manipulated by the Polish People's Republic¹⁷ (PRL), disregarding the issue of the writer's foreign success. It would have been extremely valuable if he had also considered, for example, the history of the interest in Norwid's works among the post-war Polish community abroad, because this interest is not a simple continuation of Norwid's reading from the Young Poland and Interwar periods; it is also subject to ideologisation processes.

2. FROM THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATING NORWID'S POETRY INTO ITALIAN

Italian translations of Norwid's poems appeared for the first time in the magazine "Iridion. Quaderni di cultura polacca," published between 1945-1946 in Rome by intellectuals associated with the II Corps of the Polish Armed Forces

¹³ P. CHLEBOWSKI, *O sytuacji w badaniach nad Norwidem. Preliminaria*, [in:] *Jak czytać Norwida? Postawy badawcze, metody, weryfikacje*, ed. B. Kuczera-Chachulska, J. Trzcionka, Warsaw 2008, p. 68-72.

¹⁴ Cf. A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach utworów Norwida*, Lublin 2002, bibliography of English translations: p. 387-395.

¹⁵ T. VENCILOVA [voice in the discussion], [in:] *Cyprian Norwid w 150-lecie urodzin*, p. 238.

¹⁶ K. WYKA, *Wstęp*, [in:] C.K. NORWID, *Wybór poezji. Garstka piasku. Ad leones/Choix de poèmes. Poignée de sable. Ad leones*, Kraków 1974, p. 8-10.

¹⁷ Cf. P. DAKOWICZ, "Lecz ty spomnisz, wnuku..." *Recepcja Norwida w latach 1939-1956. Rzecz o ludziach, książkach i historii*, Warsaw 2011.

in the West.¹⁸ It is therefore safe to assume that these were not translations motivated by Italians' autonomous interest in "exotic" Polish poetry, but rather – in accordance with the publishing politics of the II Corps¹⁹ – made and published for propaganda purposes.

In the first and second notebooks of "Iridion," edited by Włodzimierz Sznarbachowski (1913-2003), Norwid's poems²⁰ became a supplement of sorts to the first journalistic text that Gustaw Herling-Grudziński published in Italy,²¹ namely his article *Guida essenziale della Polonia*,²² in which he challenged the stereotypical vision of Polish Romanticism and the nationalism attributed to Poles.²³ In the third and

¹⁸ For information on the periodical cf. A. ZIELIŃSKI, „Iridion” – *periodyk 2. Korpusu Polskiego we Włoszech (Z dziejów polskiej kultury emigracyjnej)*, “Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej” 29(1993), p. 71-102; also: W. SZNARBACHOWSKI, *Iridion*, [in:] IDEM, *300 lat wspomnień*, London: Aneks 1997, p. 287-302; J. KOWALIK, *Czasopiśmiennictwo*, [in:] *Literatura polska na obczyźnie 1940-1960*, vol. II, p. 442; R.K. LEWAŃSKI, *Literatura 2. Korpusu Polskiego we Włoszech*, [in:] *Literatura polska na obczyźnie*, ed. J. Bujnowski, London 1988, p. 36.

¹⁹ “Nie zaniedbywano także ważnego odcinka propagandy oraz pielegnowania tradycyjnych, polsko-włoskich stosunków międzynarodowych” [“Nor were the important elements of propaganda and nurturing of traditional, Polish-Italian international relations neglected”], J. KOWALIK, *Czasopiśmiennictwo*, p. 442. For further information on “korpus” publishing activities cf.: K. JAWORSKA, *Wydawnictwa i działalność informacyjna Drugiego Korpusu w języku włoskim*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 16(1991) [London] and A. ZIELIŃSKI, *Książka polska we Włoszech. Repertuar wydawniczy Drugiego Korpusu i oficyn z jego orbity, 1944-1947*, “Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej” 35(2003), p. 305-338.

²⁰ C.K. NORWID, *Rapsodia funebre in memoria di Bem; Santa pace; Dammi il nastro azzurro; Autunno, A Verona*, “Iridion. Quaderni polacchi di cultura” May 1945, vol. 1-2, p. 8-11, anonymous note about the poet [by A.M. Ripellino], p. 12.

²¹ M. HERLING, *La poesia per sopravvivere nel gulag. A sessant'anni dalla pubblicazione di «Un mondo a parte» di Gustaw Herling: testimonianze d'archivio*, “Samizdat. Ex Oriente Libertates” December 2011, no. 45, p. 36, 48, http://www.libertates.com/docs/riviste/samizdat_45.pdf [accessed: 15.02.2016]. The text published in “Iridion” was a reprint from the first Italian post-war bi-monthly literary magazine “Aretus,” cf. A. ZIELIŃSKI, “Iridion” – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 81.

²² Cf. G. HERLING-GRUDZIŃSKI, *Guida essenziale della Polonia*, “Iridion,” May 1945, vol. 1-2, p. 1-6.

²³ “Si può essere nazionalisti perché convinti della supremazia della propria nazione, ma anche perché compresi della diversità della propria nazione. In una parola esiste un nazionalismo naturale o biologico e un nazionalismo umano e culturale. I tedeschi sono nazionalisti del primo, i polacchi non rinunzieranno mai al nazionalismo del secondo tipo” [“You can be a nationalist because you are convinced of the superiority of your nation, but also because you are aware of the difference of your nation. In a word, there is natural, or biological nationalism, and human, or cultural nationalism. Germans are nationalists of the first type, Poles will never give up the second type of nationalism”], *ibid.*, p. 3. For further discussion of the article cf. A. ZIELIŃSKI, “Iridion” – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 81-83.

fourth notebooks (prepared by Sznarbachowski, but published with Carlo Verdiani as its editor²⁴), *Fortepian Szopena*²⁵ [*Chopin's Grand Piano*] was one of the texts comprising a miniature anthology of Romantic poetry. The title of the quarterly, the most valuable cultural magazine published in Rome at that time,²⁶ and the fact that it frequently mentioned the Romantic tradition with its subsequent literary interpretations (e.g. Żeromski's insurrectionist short stories) were no mere coincidence. For it suggested that the soldiers in General Anders's army and the wave of Polish emigrants following the successive uprisings in the 19th century shared a similar fate. "Iridion" can be interpreted as the catchphrase of an ideological program addressed to Poles (who would be able to recognize its allusion to Krasiński's drama);²⁷ however, the periodical's potential readers were not only native Poles, but also Italians. The goal of the magazine, which thematically drew on "White Eagle," established back on the USSR's territory, was to influence "opinię włoską w duchu przyjaznych stosunków" ["Italian public opinion in the spirit of friendly relations"] and raise its awareness of the dangers of "Soviet imperialism."²⁸ Nevertheless, regardless of its political goals, "Iridion" was a highly artistic magazine and – as Andrzej Zieliński pointed out – the first attempt after 1939 to introduce old and new Polish literature to the "Italian cultural scene."²⁹ The objective was, among other things, to acquaint the Italian public with literary works traditionally considered to be significant in the formation of the Polish national character, which simultaneously explained the phenomenon of Poles' emigration during times of occupation by foreign powers. Thus, the subject of the journal revolved "wokół takich wartości duchowych, jak ojczyzna, niepodległość czy wolność narodu, której utrata przekreślała wiarę w sens

²⁴ R.K. LEWAŃSKI, *Literatura 2. Korpusu*, p. 36. Verdiani took over the position as a result of an internal conflict between Sznarbachowski and Zdzisław Stahl, the Head of the Culture and Press Department Bureau, responsible for the editing of the quarterly, cf. A. ZIELIŃSKI, "Iridion" – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 73-76. Sznarbachowski also explains the circumstances surrounding this change (*300 lat wspomnień*, p. 288-290). For information on Verdiani's Polish Studies career (which did not begin until after the fall of the quarterly) cf. among others W. JEKIEL, *Carlo Verdiani*, "Ruch Literacki" 19 (1978), no. 4/5; S. GRACIOTTI, *Carlo Verdiani*, "Ricerche Slavistiche" 1980-1981; G. BROGI, *Carlo Verdiani e lo 'studiolo fiorentino' di polonistica*, [in:] *Maestri della polonistica italiana*, p. 79-93.

²⁵ C.K. NORWID, *Il pianoforte di Chopin*, "Iridion" September 1945, vol. 3-4, p. 116-119.

²⁶ J. KOWALIK, *Czasopiśmiennictwo*, p. 442.

²⁷ Włodzimierz Sznarbachowski thinks Italians could have been familiar with Krasiński's drama, which was translated into Italian in 1926 (W. SZNARBACHOWSKI, *300 lat wspomnień*, p. 287).

²⁸ "Sprawozdania z działań 2 Korpusu we Włoszech" from 4 V 1946, as in: A. ZIELIŃSKI, "Iridion" – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 72.

²⁹ A. ZIELIŃSKI, "Iridion" – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 72.

ofiar wojennych, podczas gdy interpretacja tych wartości, bez martyrologicznego rozdierania szat, wynikała z trzeźwego na ogół rozrachunku z realnym rozwojem wydarzeń³⁰ [“around such spiritual values as the homeland, the independence or freedom of the nation, whose loss blighted faith in the sacrifices of war, while the interpretation of these values, without martyrological garment rending, was the result of a sober reckoning with the real development of events”]. Given these premises, Norwid was ideally suited to be “symbolem niezatartym narodu, który tułaczkę i poniewierkę przedkładał nad niewolę³¹ [“an indelible symbol of a nation, which would rather wander and rove than be enslaved”]. One can suppose, that the decision to bring his work closer to the Italian public was inspired precisely by the literary preferences of Herling-Grudziński, who was active on the editorial team at “Iridion.” The publicist often referenced the writings of the author of *Vade-mecum*, he readily quoted him on the pages of “White Eagle” and other émigré periodicals published in Polish,³² based on the presumption that “jeden maleńki wierszyk Norwida oddaje [...] myśl piękniej i głębiej niżby to uczyniły najmądrzejsze księgi³³ [“one little poem by Norwid expresses [...] a thought more beautifully and more deeply than the wisest books ever could”].

The afore-mentioned *Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*], *Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod* [*Funeral-Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*] and the poems *Święty-pokój* [*Blessed-Peace*], *Daj mi wstążkę błękitną...* [*Give Me a Sky-Blue Ribbon*], *Jesień* [*Autumn*], and *W Weronie* [*In Verona*] were translated by Angelo Maria Ripellino (1923-1978), a student of Giovanni Maver³⁴ and Ettore

³⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

³¹ G. HERLING-GRUDZIŃSKI, *List C. K. Norwida do emigracji polskiej* (1944), [in:] IDEM, *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. II: *Recenzje, szkice, rozprawy literackie 1935-1946*, compiled by Z. Kudelski, ed. W. Bolecki et al., Kraków 2009, p. 486.

³² In 1945 Herling-Grudziński brought attention to the universality of Norwid's writing: “Wielkość poezji Norwida bierze [...] swój początek z wiary w ponadczasową trwałość dzieł ludzkich, w których ucieleśniony został bezimienny duch twórczy. Poczucie nieprzerwanej ciągłości kulturalnej opiera się na głębokim przekonaniu, że dzieło sztuki jest formą stwarzania, kreacji i prawdziwy artysta nie tyle wyraża, ile przezwycięża i obiektywizuje w nim swoją osobowość” [“The greatness of Norwid's poetry [...] is rooted in a faith in the timeless durability of the human works, in which a nameless creative spirit was embodied. The sense of uninterrupted cultural continuity is based on the deeply held conviction, that a work of art is a form of production, creation, and a true artist not only expresses, but also overcomes and objectivizes his personality in making it”] – G. HERLING-GRUDZIŃSKI, *Mowa cieni* (1945), [in:] IDEM, *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. 1, p. 289-290.

³³ IDEM, *W rocznicę Powstania Listopadowego* (1945), *ibid.*, p. 300.

³⁴ It is likely that his lectures sparked Ripellino's interest in Norwid's work, cf. A. ZIELIŃSKI, *Słowo wstępne*, [in:] G. MAVER, *Literatura polska i jej związki z Włochami*, p. 28.

Lo Gatto, and so, a pupil of the Slavic school, fascinated by Romantic and Modern literature,³⁵ and later known mostly as a translator of Russian literature and writer. Ripellino made his translatorial debut in "Iridion," launching his career with translations of not only Norwid's works, but also those of Mickiewicz and Słowacki.³⁶ A testament to the quality of the 22-year-old Italian's translations is the fact that they were still reprinted and referenced many years later in M. Bersano Begey's history of Polish literature³⁷ and in the monthly "Tempo presente" from 1966, in an improved form (*Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*] from the previously mentioned titles was not included, but there were new versions of earlier texts, and, in addition, *Trzy strofki* [*Three Stanzas*], *Ironia* [*Irony*], *Socjalizm* [*Socialism*], a fragment of *Lapidaria*, *Sieroctwo* [*Orphanhood*] and *Moja piosnka (I)* [*My Song (I)*]).³⁸ Recently, the online journal "pl.it/ rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi" (2013)³⁹ featured poems from "Iridion." The objective of the 2013 reprint, however, was not to popularize the writings of Norwid (who was rather surprisingly introduced as *Kamil Cyprian Norwid*),⁴⁰ but to present Ripellino's achievements in the field of Polish Studies. We should emphasize that although with time the slavist began to pursue his own writing career, and the bulk of his translation work and subject of research was Russian and Czech literature,⁴¹ he was devoted to promoting Polish literature in Italy until he died.⁴² As the tes-

³⁵ M. CICCARI, G. TOMASSUCCI, *Angelo Maria Ripellino (1923-1978)*, "pl.it/ rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi" 2013, p. 180-188, sketch and anthology of Ripellino translations, p. 178, http://docs.google.com/gview?url=http://www.plitaip.com/pdf/2013/plit_2013_10_angelo_maria_ripellino.pdf&embedded=true [accessed: 16.02.16].

³⁶ M. TOMASSUCCI, 'La miniera abbandonata'. *La cultura polacca nelle collaborazioni Einaudi di Angelo Maria Ripellino*, [in:] *Maestri della polonistica italiana*, p. 105-106.

³⁷ C. NORWID, *Il pianoforte di Chopin*, [in:] M. BERSANO BEGEY, *La letteratura polacca*, p. 195-196.

³⁸ C.K. NORWID, *Poesie scelte. La mia canzone, A Verona, Autunno, In memoria di Bem. Rapsodia di requiem, Tre strofe, Santa pace, Ironia, Dammi il nastro celeste, Socialismo, Lapidaria (frammento), Le due tutrici*, transl. A. M. Ripellino, "Tempo presente" January 1966, no. 1, p. 15-21.

³⁹ The poems were published with the Polish text *a fronte*, cf. M. CICCARI, G. TOMASSUCCI, *Angelo Maria Ripellino*, p. 180-188, biographical sketch and anthology of Ripellino's other translations, p. 178-201.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴¹ Cf. M. TOMASSUCCI, 'La miniera abbandonata,' [in:] *Maestri della polonistica italiana*, p. 106-107.

⁴² *Bibliografia polonistica di Angelo Maria Ripellino*, [in:] *Maestri della polonistica italiana*, p. 121-124.

timonies of his students reveal, he considered the works of Mickiewicz, Norwid, Gombrowicz, Schulz and Witkacy to be “canonical” works of world literature and considered them essential reading for every scholar aspiring to be a true philologist.⁴³ It is surprising, given this context, that the authors of the anthology of Ripellino’s work chose to reprint the original versions of his Norwid translations (from 1945), while his improved and revised translations of those same pieces (for example, the corrected *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* [*Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*]) are available in “Tempo presente.” Could it be that the periodical’s reputation as one being financed by “Western imperialists” influenced the authors’ decision?⁴⁴ Regardless of their motives, it is a shame that readers were not presented with the newer translations which show just how much twenty years of practice in translation work can make, and how profoundly the translation can change over time, when a translator gains experience and more in-depth linguistic and encyclopedic competencies.

Angelo Maria Ripellino’s translations of Norwid’s poems published in “Iridion,” whose “adequacy” (despite not having given them “rhythmic, Italian form”) was ensured by “wysoki procent pełnych leksykalnych zgodności z oryginałem”⁴⁵ [a high percentage of full lexical consistency with the original], that is, by the achieved “dynamic equivalence,”⁴⁶ complemented the panorama of Polish Romantic literature offered to foreign readers. Together with the other texts in that publication, they were to serve as an example of Polish literature and the ideas expressed therein, both specific (the issue of patriotism), and universal (the artist and art’s purpose, the problem of sacrifice and struggle, Italian themes), drawing from the European heritage embodied by the legend of Romeo and Juliet or Chopin’s music. The translations themselves were surrounded by a legend: Włodzimierz Sznarbachowski recalled them (still in the 1945 versions) as “congenial,” citing the opinion of Benedetto Croce, who was enchanted by them, and who supposedly “uznał za wielką stratę dla kultury europejskiej to, że nikt dotychczas nie zajął się udostępnieniem Zachodowi całej twórczości Norwida”⁴⁷ [“considered it a great

⁴³ L. MARINELLI, response from the survey *Angelo Maria Ripellino. A 25 anni dalla morte e 80 dalla nascita*, „eSamizdat” 2003 (I), p. 172, [http://www.esamizdat.it/anketa_rip_eS_2003_\(I\).pdf](http://www.esamizdat.it/anketa_rip_eS_2003_(I).pdf) [accessed: 16.02.16].

⁴⁴ S. GUAGNELLI, *Tempo presente. Una rivista italiana cripto tamizdat*, eSamizdat 2012-2013 (IX), p. 89. [http://www.esamizdat.it/rivista/2012-2013/pdf/guagnelli_eS_2012-2013_\(IX\).pdf](http://www.esamizdat.it/rivista/2012-2013/pdf/guagnelli_eS_2012-2013_(IX).pdf) [accessed: 15.02.2016].

⁴⁵ A. ZIELIŃSKI, “Iridion” – *periodyk 2. Korpusu*, p. 90.

⁴⁶ A. HURTADO ALBIR, *La notion de fidélité au sens*. Paris: Didier Érudition 1990, p. 105-113.

⁴⁷ W. SZNARBACHOWSKI, *300 lat wspomnień*, p. 295.

loss for European culture that no one had thus far made the entirety of Norwid's oeuvre available to the West"].

New translations of the poems *W Weronie* [*In Verona*] and *Bema pamięci żałobnego rapsodu* [*Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*] were included in the anthology *Le più belle pagine della letteratura polacca*,⁴⁸ compiled by Marina Bersano Begey (1907-1992), the granddaughter of the Towianskite Attila Begey. The volume's editor is the author of both translations.⁴⁹ Marina Bersano Begey also translated a fragment (the second to last and last stanzas) of *Moja Piosnka (I)* [*Żle zawsze i wszędzie*] [*My Song (I)*] [*Oh sorrow, sorrow from end to beginning*] which – along with Ripellino's translation of *Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*] – illustrate the passages devoted to Norwid's work in the textbook *La letteratura polacca*. In discussing Norwid's artistic activity as a whole, Bersano Begey draws attention to its ideological affinity with the works of Słowacki (whose poetics were completely different)⁵⁰ and claims, among other things, that the most important and most valuable part of Norwid's writing is his poetry, “complessa, ricca di interiorità” [“complex, internally rich”].⁵¹ From Bersano Begey's perspective, similar to the modernist reception of Norwid, the author of *Promethidion* appears to be the embodiment of literary and real loneliness, a philosopher-individualist, whose message can be understood only when permeated by – as in *Vade-mecum* – emotions. The texts included in *La letteratura polacca – Moja piosnka* [*My Song*], with its desire to return to the “Czarnolas matter” and *Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*], with its vision of the profaned ideal – are proof, that the most prevalent among these emotions is the experience of “tragic loneliness” and – as Herling-Grudziński noticed earlier – the conviction of the immutable value of art, threatened by the element of barbarism.⁵² In analyzing the sources of Norwid's poetic inspiration, Bersano Begey points out the limited – in her opinion – number of Italian literary stimuli, among which she lists Dante's works, Michelangelo's poetry, Salvator Rosa's satires and Giovanni Maria Cecchi's dramas,⁵³ at the same

⁴⁸ C.K. NORWID, *A Verona, Rapsodia funebre in memoria di Bem*, transl. M. Bersano Begey, [in:] *Le più belle pagine della letteratura polacca*, ed. M. Bersano Begey, Florence: Nuova Accademia 1965, p. 117-118.

⁴⁹ It is possible that she worked on them with her mother, Maria Bersano Begey, who died in 1957, was a lover and propagator of Polish culture, publicist, translator, and to whom the entire anthology is dedicated. Cf. O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Bersano Begey, Maria*, p. 215.

⁵⁰ M. BERSANO BEGEY, *La letteratura polacca*, p. 193.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 194-195.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

time overlooking many of the poet's other Italo-thematic interests (and studies). Although his work was presented in the poetic anthology and discussed in the synthesis of the history of Polish literature in the 1960s, Norwid is still relatively unknown to the Italian reader, and presented only "z kronikarskiego obowiązku" ["on the basis of the chronicler's duty] rather than because of any specific interest.

The context in which Norwid's poems (translated by Angelo Maria Ripellino) appeared in "Tempo Presente" (1956-1968), one of the most important cultural magazines in post-war Italy, was similar to that of their publication in "Iridion" (although the historical circumstances were different). The creation of the magazine is most likely associated with the revival of Western interest in Eastern European problems, producing such initiatives as the establishment of a committee to assist Eastern intellectuals, conceived by Konstanty Jeleński, Daniel Bell, and Ignazio Silone in 1955, as well as the meeting of literary magazine publishers from France, Italy, Great Britain, and editors from Poland, Yugoslavia, and the USSR in Zurich (1956).⁵⁴ Ignazio Silone and Nicola Chiaromonte were the founders of "Tempo Presente," and their regular Polish affairs correspondent was Gustaw Herling-Grudziński (whom they called "trzeci mózg" ["the third brain"] behind the magazine),⁵⁵ who worked in close contact with Jerzy Giedroyc and "Kultura" in Paris. The magazine was financially supported by the European Foundation for Intellectual Self-Help,⁵⁶ created by the afore-mentioned "assistance" committee, which in this case meant the Ford Foundation (it was precisely because of the use of American subsidies that "Tempo presente" was considered to be a magazine funded by the CIA).⁵⁷ The journal was interested not only in political matters (viewed from the perspective of the conflict East vs. West, divided by the Cold War), but also in modern international culture. The individual issues, consistent with the magazine's "informational-polemical" character, abiding by the principles of critical freedom, in addition to articles on the subject of politics and essays devoted to current events, there were texts on literature, book reviews, the inedita of Italian and foreign writers, and translations.⁵⁸ The series of poems translated by Angelo Maria Ripellino, who collaborated with Poles since the days

⁵⁴ K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Zarys życiorysu*, [in:] *Zbiegi okoliczności*, Paryż 1982, p. 12-13.

⁵⁵ Cf. S. GUAGNELLI, *Tempo presente. Una rivista italiana cripto tamizdat*, eSamizdat 2012-2013 (IX), p. 89, [http://www.esamizdat.it/rivista/2012-2013/pdf/guagnelli_eS_2012-2013_\(IX\).pdf](http://www.esamizdat.it/rivista/2012-2013/pdf/guagnelli_eS_2012-2013_(IX).pdf) [accessed: 15.02.2016].

⁵⁶ K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Zarys życiorysu*, p. 13.

⁵⁷ S. GUAGNELLI, *Tempo Presente*, p. 89. Cf. also F. STONOR SAUNDERS, *La guerra fredda culturale. La CIA e il mondo delle lettere e delle arti*, Rome: Fazi 2004.

⁵⁸ Cf. S. GUAGNELLI, *Tempo presente*, p. 91.

of "Iridion," appeared in the January issue of the magazine in 1966. This issue is unavailable in Polish library collections, and can be found only in certain Italian libraries.⁵⁹ The series of Norwid's works is preceded by the article *Norwid nostro coetaneo* by Konstanty Jeleński,⁶⁰ containing a short biography of the poet, simultaneously an aristocrat and proletarian, who "scrisse molto, pubblicò poco, non fu letto da nessuno,"⁶¹ and a penetrating characterization of his work and the ideas expressed therein. Jeleński presented Norwid as a thinker attempting to reconcile Christianity with Socialism, whose views on the industrial revolution and labor were similar to those of Marx: "Come Marx, Norwid crede che l'uomo, creatore e produttore, sia anche il prodotto della propria attività,"⁶² he also drew attention to the modernity of Norwid's concept of poetry (he perceived it to be related to Mallarmé's theories)⁶³ and the originality of his poetic language. Jeleński quotes Norwid's views on the formal imperfection of poetry, preparing the reader for contact with poems whose literary "impurity" is a programmatic feature,⁶⁴ and not the result of the author or translator's incompetence. Jeleński's introduction (who, after all, not long before translated "practically the entirety of Norwid's (most famous) poetry into French"⁶⁵) perfectly prepares a reader accustomed to the accentual-syllabic verse of Polish Romantic poetry, for the

⁵⁹ I would like to thank Professor Claudia Degan and Reverend Cesar Contarini from the Collegio Barbarigo in Padua for their help in gaining access to the texts.

⁶⁰ On his knowledge of Italian and its place among the other languages that Jeleński spoke, cf. K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Czwórjęzyczne kłopoty*, [in:] *Zbiegi okoliczności*, Paris 1982, p. 114-115. On Jeleński's historical and critical literary activity cf. J. JARZĘBSKI, *Urok Jeleńskiego*, [in:] *Pożegnanie z emigracją. O powojennej prozie polskiej*, Kraków 1998, p. 204-213; L. BURSKA, *W poszukiwaniu treści życia (Konstanty Jeleński)*, [in:] *Sporne postaci literatury współczesnej. Krytycy*, ed. A. Brodzka-Waldemar, T. Żukowski, Warsaw 2003, p. 179-206; M. BIELECKI, *Konstanty A. Jeleński – historyk literatury nowoczesnej*, "Teksty Drugie" 2005, no. 6, p. 46-68.

⁶¹ ["wrote much, published little, was read by no one"], cf. K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Norwid nostro contemporaneo*, "Tempo Presente" 1966 (11), no. 1, p. 12.

⁶² ["Like Marx, Norwid believes that man, creator and producer, is also the product of his own work"], *ibid.*, p. 13. The correlation between Jeleński's views and the way Norwid's work was interpreted by members of the PAX association at the turn of the 1960s in Communist Poland seems surprising, cf. P. DAKOWICZ, "Lecz ty wspomnisz...", p. 196-198.

⁶³ K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Norwid nostro contemporaneo*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12-13.

⁶⁵ K.A. JELEŃSKI, *List 220 z [IX] 1962*, [in:] J. GIEDROYĆ, K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Listy 1950-1987*, ed. W. Karpiński, Warsaw 1995, p. 353-354. The results of Jeleński's work are found in *Anthologie de la poésie polonaise* (ed. C. A. Jelenski, intr. Cz. Miłosz, transl. S. Arlette, J. Audiberti, C. Aveline and A.-M. de Backer, Seuil, Paris 1965).

encounter with works that do not fit Romantic convention, but – as the essayist suggests – ideologically and formally correspond to the literature of the end of the 19th century.⁶⁶ The choice of poems presented in “Tempo presente”⁶⁷ is compatible with the magazine’s profile. They do not include *Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin’s Grand Piano*], but there is a new (the most interesting of those in existence) translation of *Bema pamięci żałobnego rapsodu* [*Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*] whose image of nations that “pleśń z oczu zgarną”⁶⁸ [“wipe the mold from their eyes], is clearly accentuated and strengthened by a final exclamation point (instead of an ellipses), and a handful of works with a clear social message, like *Święty-pokój* [*Blessed-Peace*], *Sieroctwo* [*Orphanhood*] and, of course, *Socjalizm* [*Socialism*], interspersed with lyrics comprising – in accordance with the popularizing convention – a poetic self-portrait of the author earlier characterized by Jeleński. The texts published in “Tempo presente” are of particular philological value, because they are not reprints from “Iridion,” but the results of the work of a translator, who is many years later perfecting the existing versions and correcting his own mistakes. We must add that Ripellino did this very well.

After the publication of the series of Ripellino’s translations in “Tempo presente,” the interest in Norwid’s work diminishes for over a decade. The next Italian publication of his poetry takes place in 1981. During this time the availability and editorial principles of Norwid’s poems changed significantly: in 1966 the first post-war edition of the annotated *Wiersze* [*Poems*] (volume I of *Pisma zebrane* [*The Collected Works*]) edited by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki was published. Three years later, work on *Pisma wszystkie* [*Collected Writings*] began at the State Publishing Institute (PIW), under his direction. When comparing the accomplishments of translators from before 1966 and 1971 with later ones, we need to consider that some of the translation choices significant to the interpretation of the text were determined by the existing source text, as edited. Outside the Leipzig edition, the basic source of reference for the first translators of Norwid’s poetry appear to have been, based on their availability, the volumes prepared by Zenon Przesmycki (between 1911 and the late 1930s), the edition compiled by Tadeusz Pini in 1934, reprints, Mieczysław Jastrun’s selection (1956) and

⁶⁶ K.A. JELEŃSKI, *Norwid nostro contemporaneo*, p. 12.

⁶⁷ C.K. NORWID, *Poesie scelte (La mia canzone, A Verona, Autunno, In memoria di Bem, rapsodia di requiem, Tre strofe, Santa pace, Ironia, Dammi il nastro celeste, Socialismo, Lapidaria, Le due tutrici)*, transl. A.M. Ripellino, “Tempo Presente” 1966 (11), no. 1, p. 15-21.

⁶⁸ C. NORWID, *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod*, [in:] *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. J.W. Gomulicki, vol. 1, part 1: *Wiersze*, Warsaw 1971, p. 187.

Wacław Borowy's "podobizna autografu" ["facsimile of the original"] of *Vade-mecum* from 1947.⁶⁹ However, taking into account the conclusion reached in the course of *Translation Studies*, that the ultimate identification of the source text does not change much in the comparative study of the translation,⁷⁰ it is enough to be aware of the potential for different translation interpretations, based on different variants of the original.

In 1978, the Centro Studi Europa Orientale (Eastern Europe Research Centre) in Bologna began publishing the series *Le vie dell'ambra*, whose premise was to present the poetic (and, in some cases, also prose) output of Eastern European authors.⁷¹ In practice, it turned out that also in this case "East" was understood in a geopolitical sense, as a synonym for the countries belonging to the so-called Soviet bloc, and not strictly geographical: in the first volume of the series there were poems by the Slovenian poet Edvard Kocbek (1904-1981), and in the second – the aforementioned selection of Norwid's poems.⁷²

It seems that, like in the 1945-1946 timeframe, the interest in Norwid's writing (and Polish literature in general) has a political foundation: the election of Karol Wojtyła, who quoted Norwid on various occasions, as Pope⁷³ and the events in Poland related to the strikes and the rise of the "Solidarity" movement, being contributing factors.⁷⁴ Thus, Italian readers began asking questions again about the specificity of "Polishness," its sources, traditions, and forms of expression. Perhaps this is why the publishers of the series of translations by two Italian language instructors, who worked at the Warsaw University (Silvano De Fanti) and Jagiellonian University (Giorgio Origlia) at the time, did not wait until the hundredth anniversary of the poet's death, but presented

⁶⁹ Cf. C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*, ed. W. Borowy, Warsaw 1947.

⁷⁰ G. TOURY, *Metoda opisowych badań przekładu* (1995), transl. A. Sadza, [in:] *Współczesne teorie przekładu. Antologia*, ed. P. Bukowski, M. Heydel, Kraków 2009, p. 208-209.

⁷¹ Cf. [anonymous], *La via dell'ambra*, [in:] C. NORWID, *Poesie*, transl. S. De Fanti, G. Origlia, CSEO, Bologna 1981, p. [7].

⁷² Francesco Origlia published a selection of the poet's artistic prose in the fifth volume of the series, published in 1983, which was also devoted to Norwid, cf. C. NORWID, *Fiori neri. Il mistero di lord Singelworth e altre parabole*, transl. G. Origlia, CSEO, Bologna 1983. A volume of prose translated by Mariagrazia Pelaia containing works such as *Stygmata*, *Łaskawy opiekun*, *Bransoletka*, *Ostatnia z bajek* was also published in the Santa Marinella series I quid in 1994, cf. C.K. NORWID, *Stygmata e altri racconti*, transl. M. Pelaia, Rome: Santa Marinella 1994.

⁷³ This theory is also supported by Italian scholars, cf. S. GUAGNELLI, *Tempo presente*, p. 90.

⁷⁴ Oriana Fallacci's interview with Lech Wałęsa (for "Europeo") is proof of the curiosity that they generally evoked, Cf. O. FALLACCI, *Intervista con il potere*, Milan 2009.

them to booksellers two years earlier.⁷⁵ “Ciò che accade sulle rive della Vistola c’interroga e ci affascina” [“That which happens along the Vistula river’s banks intrigues and fascinates us”], declared the publishers of the volume, in whose opinion Norwid’s works could still help in the interpretations of Polish history and the role it continues to play in all of Europe.⁷⁶ In the introduction to the volume Silvano De Fanti attempted to explain the specific place that Norwid occupies in the history of Poland and the history of its literature. He sees in Norwid’s attitude towards life and the opinions he expressed a “spójność sprzeczności” [“cohesion of contradictions”] (*la coerenza nella contraddizione*) which was difficult for his contemporaries to accept, and later exploited by interpreters.⁷⁷ The translator sees Norwid’s poetry as mysterious, employing difficult metaphors, subtle irony, pathos full of rhetoric, simultaneously traditional and modern.⁷⁸ Essential to its understanding – according to the scholar – is a familiarity with Norwid’s concept of the truth (to which one aspires and which is never a fixed value) and Christian morality, in which the sacrifice (similar to Christ’s sacrifice, although not necessarily consistent with the dogma of the Church) is the most important value.⁷⁹ In this context, the presented selection of Norwid’s poems is an attempt to recreate the artist’s poetic dialogue about conscience and moral values.⁸⁰

The 60 texts collected in the volume are divided into four groups – three encompassing poetic works, the last one a supplement, or, in Norwid’s terms, a complement of the poetic anthology: the translation of two novellas, whose action takes place in Italy: *Menego* and *Ad leones*. The prose translations are not accompanied by the original text, while the poems are presented in a bilingual format. On the one hand, this attests to the courage of the translators, who were unafraid of the confrontation of their own work with the originals, and on the other, it qualifies the volume’s readers as those who know or are learning (as a part of their studies) the Polish language.

The first part of the selection is called *Poesie* [*Poetry*]. It contains 25 pieces: *Pióro* [*A Quill*], *Fraszka* [*Epigram*], *Epos-nasza* [*Our-epic*], *Pierwszy list, co mnie doszedł z Europy* [*The First Letter that reached me from Europe*], *Sława* [*Fame*],

⁷⁵ Editorial errors such as inconsistent page numbering in the table of contents and the book show the rush associated with the publication of this volume.

⁷⁶ [S. DE FANTI, G. ORIGLIA], *Nota di edzione*, [in:] C. NORWID, *Poesie*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ S. DE FANTI, *Introduzione*, *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19-20.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Żydowie polscy [Polish Jews], *Do wroga* [To the Enemy], *Dziennik-warszawski* [Warsaw-Diary] translated by Silvano De Fanti, and *Samotność* [Solitude], *Moja piosnka* (I) [My Song (I)], *Italiam! Italiam!*, *Jesień* [Autumn], *Pieśń od ziemi naszej* [Song from our Country], *Aerumnarum plenus*, *Siła ich* [Their Multitude], *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* [Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem], *L'inconnu aux inconnus*, *Trzy strofki* [Three Stanzas], *Ty mnie do pieśni pokornej nie wołaj* [Do not Call Me to a Humble Folk Song], *Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie* [What did you do to Athens, Socrates?], *Do obywatela Johna Brown* [To Citizen John Brown], *Daj mi wstążkę błękitną* [Give Me a Sky-Blue Ribbon], *Moja ojczyzna* [My Country], *Marionetki* [Marionettes], *Święty-pokój* [Blessed Peace] translated by Giorgio Origlia. The second part consists of 26 poems taken from Norwid's *Vade-mecum*. De Fanti translated *Ironia* [Irony], *Liryka i druk* [Poetry and Print], *Naturalia*, *Stolica* [The Capital], *Syberie* [The Two Siberias], *Królestwo* [The Kingdom], *Idee i prawda* [Ideas and Truth], *Purytanizm* [Puritanism], *Cacka* [Pretty Things], *Źródło* [The Spring], and Origlia *Ogólniki* [Generalities], *Klaskaniem mając obrzękle prawice* [Their Hands Swollen with Clapping], *Przeszłość* [The Past], *Socjalizm* [Socialism], *W Weronie* [In Verona], *Addio!*, *Larwa* [Larva], *Litość* [Mercy], *Specjalności* [Specialties], *Tymczasem* [Meanwhile], *Sieroctwo* [Orphanhood], *Obojętność* [Indifference], *Fatum* [Fate], *Kółko* [The Small Circle], *Nerwy* [Nerves] and *Fortepian Szopena* [Chopin's Grand Piano]. The third part, dedicated to Norwid's work from the "post *Vade-mecum*" period, encompasses only seven works, three in De Fanti's translation (*Na zgon poezji* [On the Death of Poetry], *Lapidaria*, *Rozebrana* [Disrobed] – unfortunately translated as *Svestita* [Unclothed], which practically rules out the possibility of an Italian reader noticing the ironic allusion to a partitioned Poland) and four translated by Origlia (*Do współczesnych* [To My Contemporaries], *Śluchacz* [The Listener], *Piękno-czasu* [Time-Beauty], *Miło być od swojego czasu zrozumianym* [It is Nice to be Understood by One's Generation]). The volume is supplemented with remarks and comments, that were intended to make the reading easier for those who have little knowledge of Polish culture, and to explain linguistic doubts to philologists.

It might seem that De Fanti's and Origlia's translations exhausted the demand for Norwid's poetry in Italy: they also included texts outside the 5-element canon established by the editors of "Iridion," and added further links in the translation series related to this canon. In addition, two more collections of Norwid's novels (translated by the indefatigable Origlia, 1983 and Mariagrazia Pelai, 1994) – mentioned in the footnote – were published. The Apennine Peninsula's Polish culture craze, characteristic of the first decade of John Paul II's pontificate and the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, treated as the symbolic fall

of communism, soon ended.⁸¹ New translations of Norwid's works (it is hard to say whether these are translations that are "niezależne od okoliczności zewnętrznych" ["independent of external circumstances"], because their author has been permanently living in Poland since the 1980s) appeared in the second decade of the 21st century, although they were not published in print, but posted on the internet as a part of the blog *Un'anima e tre ali – blog di Paolo Statuti*.⁸² Born in 1936, Paolo Statuti, a political scientist and slavist (Angelo Maria Ripellino's student), is a translator of Russian, Czech, and Polish literature, and sometimes also translates works by American, German, and English poets.⁸³ In 1973, he translated Jerzy Pomianowski's guide to contemporary literature, at the same time translating the works presented therein.⁸⁴ Translations of Polish poetry and prose (e.g. stories by Kazimierz Brandys, fragments of prose by Stanisław Dygat and Kazimierz Orłoś; poems by Tytus Czyżewski, Jalu Kurek, Paweł Hertz, Edward Balcerzan, Zbigniew Bieńkowski, Zuzanna Glinczanka, Andrzej Mandalian and many others) are also regularly featured – as inedita – in Statuti's blog. Statuti devotes a lot of attention to Norwid, because he not only translates his poems (or fragments thereof), but also thoroughly comments on his work, illustrating his arguments with excerpts from the poet's letters, for example to Konstancja Górską from 19 May 1862.⁸⁵ Translations of Norwid's poems *W Weronie [In Verona]*, *Moja piosnka (II) [My Song (II)]*, and a fragment of the so-called *Monolog z Modlitewnika [Monologue from a Prayer Book]* that Norwid had given to Włodzimierz Łubieński in 1846 were posted to the blog on 15 February 2012.⁸⁶ Statuti gives this text a form⁸⁷ which in both visual and rhythmic terms is more reminiscent of a traditional blank

⁸¹ The novel *Il polacco lavatore di vetri* (1989), by the actively engaged translator and reporter Edoardo Albinati, is one of the literary products of the interest in Poland during this period. Its film adaptation, the allegorically titled *Ballata dei lavavetri (Ballad of the Window Washers)* directed by Peter Del Monte and featuring Agata Buzek in her debut role, was presented (not competitively) at the Venice Film Festival in 1998.

⁸² Available at <https://musashop.wordpress.com> [accessed: 20.02.2016].

⁸³ Cf. P. STATUTI, *About*, <https://musashop.wordpress.com/about/> [accessed: 19.11.2015]; L. SORRENTINO, *Paolo Statuti e la traduzione della poesia* [accessed: 3.02.2012], <http://poesia.blog.rainews.it/2012/02/1a-traduzione-della-poesia-paolo-statuti/> [accessed: 21.02.2016].

⁸⁴ Cf. J. POMIANOWSKI, *Guida alla moderna letteratura polacca*, transl. P. Statuti, Rome: Bulzoni 1973.

⁸⁵ P. STATUTI, *Una lettera di Cyprian Kamil Norwid*, <https://musashop.wordpress.com/2013/05/23/una-lettera-di-cyprian-kamil-norwid/> [accessed: 19.11.2015].

⁸⁶ Cf. C. NORWID, *Monolog*, [in:] IDEM, *Pisma wszystkie*, vol. I, part 1, p. 79-80.

⁸⁷ C.K. NORWID, *Poesie*, <https://musashop.wordpress.com/2012/02/15/poesia-polacca-8/> [accessed: 19.11.2015].

verse than the original form, which is closer to prose poetry. The internet text does not begin with the “breviary” sign of the cross that was important to Norwid and, what is characteristic, the translator intervenes in a place where – according to the theory of communication – the author’s eloquence undermines the credibility of the message, that is, in the phrase “To jest szczęściem prawdziwym” [“This is true happiness”]. In translation, the epithet “weakening” the degree of happiness is removed: the Italian *Questa è la felicità* emphasizes its absolute (non-adjectival) value. Among Statuti’s works, there are also his translations of *Fortepian Szopena* [Chopin’s *Grand Piano*],⁸⁸ as well as stanzas XIII and XIV of *W pamiętniku* [In a *Diary*] (although, without the division into quatrains). In September 2015, in response to a request from one of the blog’s readers – Statuti reposted the link to his translation of *Monologo*.⁸⁹ In 2018 he published his version of *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* [Funeral *Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*].⁹⁰

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that Statuti’s internet translations are probably not the end of the history of the translation of Norwid’s poetry into Italian. In 2015, the Società Dante Alighieri, Carlo Rossa Academy in Tusacany and The Italian Institute of Culture (Istituto Italiano di cultura) announced an international contest, *Grandi polacchi nella lingua di Dante*, for the translation of Polish literature from the XVI-XIX centuries, in honour of Dante’s 750th birthday⁹¹ (the prize is the publishing of the translation).⁹² Three people (a Polish woman living in Italy (an office clerk and translator) and two students working in tandem – a Polish student from the Silesian University of Technology and her Italian peer from Pavia) submitted their versions of the poems *Moja piosnka* (II) [My *Song* (II)], *Aerumnarum plenus*, *Samotność* [Solitude], *Co? jej powiedziec* [Tell Her – What?], *Obojętność* [Indifference], *Czulość* [Tenderness], *Specjalności* [Specialties], and *Mój psalm* [My *Psalm*].⁹³ Although all the translations were disqualified (mainly

⁸⁸ IDEM, *Il pianoforte di Chopin*, <https://musashop.wordpress.com/2012/02/15/poesia-polacca-6/> [accessed: 19.11.2015].

⁸⁹ IDEM, *Monologo*, <https://musashop.wordpress.com/2015/09/04/cyprian-kamil-norwid-1821-1883/> [accessed: 19.11.15].

⁹⁰ He writes more broadly on the subject in *O Norwidzie komparatystycznie*, ed. M. Siwiec, Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ [print].

⁹¹ Cf. <http://ladante.it/96-lingua-italiana/188-l-italia-celebra-il-750-anniversario-dalla-nascita-di-dante-alighieri-tutti-gli-imperdibili-appuntamenti-in-programma.html> [accessed: 16.03.2016].

⁹² Participants in the contest also presented translations of fragments from the works of Adam Mickiewicz, Cyprian Norwid, Eliza Orzeszkowa and Stanisław Wyspiański.

⁹³ A. PIFKO [grandipolacchi@gmail.com], *Grandi polacchi nella lingua di Dante – concorso di traduzione*, e-mail to O. Płaszczewska [accessed: 12.02.2016].

on account of their utter incomprehensibility, errors, and misuse of language),⁹⁴ their entry into the contest testifies to the interest in Norwid's work among non-professional readers and students.

3. A HANDFUL OF CONCLUSIONS

Norwid's presence in the minds of Italian readers has not been firmly established. His poetry was introduced into the Italian book market by Poles in 1945, which is why the most frequently translated works duplicate the traditional "school-based" literary canon of the "late Romantic's" work, encompassing his programmatic poems with historiosophic interpretations, like *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* [*Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*] and moralizing (like *Święty-pokój* [*Blessed Peace*]), metacritical poems, with prominent Polish motifs (*Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*]) and reflective poems on subjects dear to Romantics: *Daj mi wstążkę błękitną...* [*Give Me a Sky-Blue Ribbon...*], *Jesień* [*Autumn*] and significant on account of its Italo-Shakespearean context *W Weronie* [*In Verona*]. It seems that in the process of discovering Norwid's work in Italy, there was no element of independent discovery based on an interest in the legend surrounding the artist. That had been the case with Mickiewicz, the author of *Księgi narodu* [*The Books of the Nation*] and *Księgi pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [*The Books of the Polish Pilgrimage*], which moved the European public, "zauważalny" ["a noticeable"] participant in the liberation movement in Italy in the late 1940s, considered a Towianskite by the descendants of the Italian supporters of his doctrine. That also happened with Słowacki – who fascinated scholars interested in the fabular history of Poland, like Aglauro Ungherini, or who were interested in the problems of mysticism and captivated by his use of the Polish language, like Aurelio Palmieri.⁹⁵ In Italy Norwid has long been considered "jeszcze jeden" ["just another"] Polish Romantic, who should be remembered on account of his connection to Mickiewicz and Słowacki and, possibly, because of his Etruscan and Italian fascinations. Supporters of the Republic rather disliked Norwid's defense of the Pope during the riots of 1848 – which could have also influenced the reception of his works in Italy.

Looking at the growing interest in Norwid's works in Italy, one can notice that translators are also drawn to those works, whose fragments have gained

⁹⁴ AA.VV. [grandipolacchi@gmail.com], *Risultati del concorso*, e-mail to members of the scientific committee and jury [accessed: 5.03.2016].

⁹⁵ Cf. O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Włoskie przekłady*.

the status of “skrzydlate słowa” [“winged words (aphorisms)] in Polish, and constitute a repository of quotes used outside their original literary contexts as maxims, with meanings imposed on them by interpreters, and not necessarily consistent with the original message of the piece as a whole. Norwid’s poetry, when viewed through the prism of translation, turns out to be a difficult literature that poses both linguistic and ideological difficulties. Another significant challenge presented in translating Norwid’s literature into Italian is conveying the elements of individual and national psychological specificity⁹⁶ contained therein, which are incongruent with the Italian national identity. Norwid’s “postawa aksjologiczna”⁹⁷ [“axiological stance”] is also decidedly foreign, and therefore difficult to reconcile with what the readers are accustomed to. From the poet’s standpoint, one of the distinctive features most often lost in the translation of Norwid’s poetry is irony, which many consider⁹⁸ to be the writer’s signature mark (this is perfectly illustrated by Origlia’s translation of the epigram *Sila-ich* [*Their-Multitude*], using the title *La loro forza*,⁹⁹ overlooking the Old Polish meaning of the term ‘siła ich’ not in the sense of ‘their strength,’ but their number (‘many of them’) which, perhaps, would sound more dramatic if the variation **Son tanti* or a similar one were used).

It is impossible to analyze the history of the translations of Norwid’s works separately from the history of the reception of his writing in Italy.¹⁰⁰ The Italian translations of his poetry can be divided into two categories: works translated for ideological reasons (these include both versions of Ripellino’s translations in “Iridion” and “Tempo presente”) and those created for popularizing purposes, mainly on the initiative of Italian slavists (the translations of Marina Bersano Begey and Silvano De Fanti and Giorgio Origlia, although their publication was prompted by an increased interest in Polish affairs in the West). The “slavistic” translations seem to be guided by the idea of philological correctness (although they are not – in spite of their authors’ greatest efforts – perfect), but they gen-

⁹⁶ J. LOTMAN, *Il problema della traduzione poetica (Problema stichotvornogo perevoda*, 1964), transl. M. De Michiel, [in:] *Teorie contemporanee della traduzione*, ed. S. Nergaard, Bompiani, Milan 2007, p. 257.

⁹⁷ Cf. R. LEWICKI, *Obcość w przekładzie a obcość w kulturze* (2002), [in:] *Polska myśl przekładoznawcza. Antologia*, ed. P. de Bończa Bukowski, M. Heydel, Kraków 2013, p. 317.

⁹⁸ Cf. e.g. S. KOŁACZKOWSKI, *Dwa studia: Fredro, Norwid*, Warsaw 1934; B. WOSIEK, *Ironia w liryce Norwida*, “Roczniki Humanistyczne” 6 (1956-1957), nb. 1, p. 176-277; Ł. NIEWCZAS, *Wokół definicji poetyckich Norwida*, “Studia Norwidiana” 29: 2011, p. 258-268.

⁹⁹ C. NORWID, *Sila ich – La loro forza*, transl. G. Origlia, [in:] IDEM, *Poesie*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁰ G. RITZ, *Krytyka przekładu jako przyczynek do historii recepcji*, transl. M. Frankiewicz, [in:] *Krytyka przekładu w systemie wiedzy o literaturze*, ed. P. Fast, Katowice 1999, p. 43-44.

erally do not aspire to be artistic translations. In accordance with the terminology in effect at the time they were made, they are metaliterary forms, which (with varying results) strive to convey the widest range of the original's value by means of prose, limited in scope and themes.¹⁰¹ The ideologically motivated translations – regardless of whether they are poetic or metaliterary in form, are one of the additional tools transmitting information to Italians about the mentality of the Poles and the specificity of their understanding of patriotism and responsibility.

Despite the relatively short presence of Norwid's poetry on the Italian cultural scene (it spans less than 100 years) these translations are rather numerous and – what is important – although initiated by Poles, they were made by *native speakers*. Among them we can distinguish at least three translation series:¹⁰² (*Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* [*Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem*] was translated five times; *Fortepian Szopena* [*Chopin's Grand Piano*] – determined to be a difficult and hermetic poem because of its ideological message, which requires knowledge of Polish history¹⁰³ – three times; *W Weronie* [*In Verona*] five times, which is comparable with the number of times it was translated into English, a language in which, as Agata Brajerska-Mazur pointed out, and its six translations confirm, the poem enjoys the greatest popularity);¹⁰⁴ and over a dozen translation dyads. The number of translations does not necessarily correspond to their artistic level (with the exception of a few of Angelo Maria Ripellino's versions from 1966 and some – by his student, Paolo Statuti from 2012-2018). We can assume that this relates to the essence of poetry, whose principle is – according to Yves Bonnefoy – transgression, eluding the rules of language, stereotypes of the imagination, literary conventions.¹⁰⁵ If these attributes are lost in translation – the text is perceived as shallow, uninteresting, unworthy of attention, and the translation itself – as bad or “unfaithful.” The imperfection factor of the translation, combined with the natural or programmatic imperfection of Norwid's poetry,

¹⁰¹ J.S. HOLMES, *La versificazione: le forme di traduzione e la traduzione delle forme* (originally *Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Form*, 1969), transl. A. Bernardelli, [in:] *Teorie contemporanee della traduzione*, p. 241-242.

¹⁰² Discussed separately elsewhere.

¹⁰³ Adam Czerniawski, who translates Norwid into English, recently admitted that he did not feel capable of translating this piece (A. CZERNIAWSKI, *Translator's Note*, [in:] C. NORWID, *Selected poems*, transl. A. Czerniawski, intr. B. Czaykowski, London: Anvil Press Poetry 2004, p. 21).

¹⁰⁴ A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ Y. BONNEFOY, *La comunità dei traduttori*, ed. F. Scotto, Palermo: Sellerio Ed. 2005, p. 48.

made it so that it never became “katalizatorem przełomu”¹⁰⁶ [“a breakthrough catalyst”] for Italian literature, although it certainly marked the biographies of its translators.

Thus, we may conclude that Norwid’s love for Italy – if such a sentiment could be discerned in the way he perceived, was affected by, and described this territory – seems to be a love which is not entirely reciprocated or, simply, unfortunate. It seems as if it was weighed down from the beginning by the same fate that determined Norwid’s fate in the 19th century. In Italy his poems were translated “a bit too late” in comparison to the works of other Romantics, in addition they were always translated at the wrong time and published within the wrong context. For example, in 1945 – on the pages of the ambitious émigré magazine with limited reach or, in 1966 – in the periodical enjoying great interest, but devoted primarily to political issues, in which the series of translations of the 19th-century Polish author’s poetry disappeared under the weight of the neighbouring ideological polemics of the Cold War. At that time the attention of potential recipients was more focused on the violent events of history, and poetry which did not require intellectual engagement and time for reflection. The publication of the volume of translations in 1981 – also politically motivated – was meant to popularize Norwid’s poems, but contributed to moving into the shadows those of Ripellino’s translations (published in “Tempo presente,” which the publishers also mentioned), which – thanks to their literary value – could have sparked the interest of not only slavists, but also “ordinary” readers of European literature. Only the emergence of new translations of Norwid’s works, disseminated via the internet, serves to paraphrase Sante Graciotti’s thesis on the meaningfulness of translating Polish literary classics: it seems that knowledge of Norwid’s poetry is not a necessary burden¹⁰⁷ to the Italian reader who is interested in, for example, “jak dziewiętnastowieczny Polak (ale także żołnierz walczący pod Monte Cassino) pojmował wojnę” [“how a 19th-century Pole (but also soldier fighting at Monte Cassino) understood the war”], but has the potential to become a cognitive challenge for him.

Translated by Monika Lutostanski

¹⁰⁶ G. RITZ, *Krytyka przekładu*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. S. GRACIOTTI, [response from the editorial survey „Czy warto dziś tłumaczyć klasyków literatury polskiej?”], “Przekładaniec” 2 (2005), no. 15: *Polscy klasycy w przekładzie*, p. 11.

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WŁOSKIE PRZEKŁADY POEZJI NORWIDA

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

Artykuł dotyczy kilku odrębnych i nieomawianych dotąd szczegółowo zagadnień. Wprowadzenie daje krótką charakterystykę recepcji poezji Cypriana Norwida we Włoszech i przedstawia jej nietypowość w konfrontacji z twórczością pozostałych polskich romantyków, tłumaczoną na język włoski już w XIX stuleciu. Kolejnym wątkiem jest problem polskiej refleksji badawczej nad odbiorem poezji Norwida we Włoszech. Następnie zaprezentowane zostały najważniejsze etapy historii przekładów twórczości poetyckiej Norwida na język włoski (począwszy od czasopisma „Iridion” i miesięcznika „Tempo presente”, przez antologie i wydania monograficzne, a na tłumaczeniach publikowanych w Internecie i konkursach translatorskich skończywszy). Omówienie uwzględni także sylwetki tłumaczy i charakterystykę poszczególnych edycji w powiązaniu z dostępnością tekstów źródłowych. Całość zamyka seria wniosków dotyczących znajomości poezji Norwida we Włoszech – wierszy i urywków najczęściej tłumaczonych, typologii przekładów oraz ich funkcji we współczesnej kulturze włoskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Cyprian Norwid tłumaczenia włoskie; „Iridion”; „Tempo Presente”; Angelo Maria Ripellino; Carlo Verdiani; Maria Bersano Begey; Marina Bersano Begey; Silvano De Fanti; Giorgio Origlia; Paolo Statuti.

THE ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS OF NORWID'S POETRY

S u m m a r y

The article deals with several separate issues that have not been discussed previously. The introduction gives a brief description of the reception of poetry by Cyprian Norwid in Italy and presents its unusual character in confrontation with the works of other Polish Romantics, translated into Italian already in the 19th century. Another topic is the problem of Polish research reflection on the reception of Norwid's poetry in Italy. Further, the most important stages in the history of translation of Norwid's poetic output into Italian were presented (starting with the magazine "Iridion" and the monthly "Tempo presente," through anthologies and monographic editions, and concluding with translations published on the Internet and translation contests). The discussion also takes into account the profiles of translators and the characteristics of individual editions in connection with the availability of source texts. The whole is closed by a series of conclusions regarding the knowledge of Norwid's poetry in Italy – poems and fragments most often translated, the typology of translations and their function in contemporary Italian culture.

Key words: Cyprian Norwid's Italian translations; "Iridion"; "Tempo Presente"; Angelo Maria Ripellino, Carlo Verdiani; Maria Bersano Begey; Marina Bersano Begey; Silvano De Fanti; Giorgio Origlia; Paolo Statuti.

Translated by Rafał Augustyn

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