

# **Translation Policies of the Polish Literary Journal *Rocznik Literacki* [The Literary Annual] 1932-1938: Towards The Interdisciplinary Approach Within Translation History**

Joanna Sobesto  
Jagiellonian University, Poland  
joanna.sobesto@doctoral.uj.edu.pl

## **Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to identify and unpack ideological strategies manifested through translation criticism in the Polish literary review *Rocznik Literacki* published in the years 1932-38. With the help of the toolbox from Translation and Cultural Studies, I will trace the complex relationship between sociology (of translation) and (translation) history. Inspired by Christopher Rundle's interdisciplinary approach towards the latter, I will test historical discourses in order to seek possible answers to the following question: how did translation (as a process, and as a product) function in the 1930s in Poland; how was it evaluated and perceived?

By applying historical tools to the context of *Rocznik Literacki*, the dynamics of socio-political tensions in Poland in the 1930s will be traced. The sections of the Annual devoted to works translated from various languages reflected the reviewers' urge to establish norms for translation and literary market that are apparently solely linguistic in nature. In fact, they reflected the discussions on the role particular cultures (should) play in the multilingual and divided state shortly after regaining its independence. The particularly complex representation of Antique (Latin) and Jewish (Yiddish) tradition in *Rocznik Literacki* were traced.

## **1. Introduction**

Translation history is no different to any other history, except, perhaps, in the importance that it attributes to language [...] (Rundle 2018, 235)<sup>1</sup>

Christopher Rundle's words concerning the nature of translation history may sound a bit anachronic, especially for contemporary Translation Studies scholars. As it was realized through the cultural turn in Translation Studies, language does not have to be (and nowadays very often is not) the

---

<sup>1</sup> In this respect, it is worth noting that "Translation history" and "history of Translation Studies" are strongly interconnected and developing rapidly. I am following Lieven D'hulst's insight into the shift within the discipline that might be symbolically represented in the shift in capitalization: from the history of Translation Studies to the History of translation studies in the transnational perspective that is going to be presented in the 6-volumed *Cultural history of translation* (D'hulst 2023).

main focus of the discipline. Translation in its broad definition can be considered both as a “historical product that serves a specific function within the target culture” (Fólica et al. 2020, 5) and as a complex process of cultural transfer (Espagne 2013) involving institutions (Lefevere 1992; Hermans 2007) and individuals (Delisle and Woodsworth 2012; Pym 1998).

Thus, the scope of translation history nowadays exceeds the investigation of texts: be they translated literary texts, paratexts written by translators, or philosophical essays on the nature of translation. I would like to argue, though, that Rundle’s seemingly anachronistic statement provides Translation Studies scholars with a productive yet challenging insight into the essence of its interdisciplinarity.

In order to demonstrate that, in what follows, I will sketch the development of the complex relationship of translation sociology and history of translation in relation to the notion of translation policies (Meylaerts 2011, 167)<sup>2</sup>. The interdisciplinarity of Rundle’s concept of translation history demonstrated in his study of fascism (Rundle and Sturge 2010) can successfully be applied in different historical and socio-cultural contexts – and even extend towards global history in order to “consciously construct a series of historical narratives that offer insight into the political, social and cultural contexts in which [...] ideas circulated” (Batchelor 2017, 7-8).

The main aim of this paper is to unpack translation policies in the interwar period (1918-1939) in Poland through various historical discourses and interdisciplinary approaches inspired by contemporary interest in transnational Translation Studies. The article will provide a novel interpretation of the socio-political changes in the 1930s in Poland by studying the way translation policies were reflected in the publishing activity of the literary journal *Rocznik Literacki* [the Literary Annual]<sup>3</sup>.

In the 1930s there was still a need for naming tendencies of the entire book market in Poland, especially with regards to the production of translated literature. Respective issues of the Annual published by the Literary Institute in Warszawa present the urge of editors to classify the

---

<sup>2</sup> The notion of translation policy has a long tradition within Translation Studies (Meylaerts 2011, 163). Nowadays the concept is understood not only as a set of official regulations of language policy but also, in a broader sense, “as the management, practice, and beliefs surrounding the use of translation” (González Núñez 2016, XIV). The very inclusive definition of policy refers to various cultural and social practices: “prizes or scholarships which promote (or, in case of their absence, hinder) translation activities, [...] more broadly to translation strategies, tactics, guiding principles or procedures and may thus be related to all possible choices involved in the translation process, to all possible actors (not only governments but also translators, interpreters, publishers, etc.) implementing these choices; these strategies may apply to all possible products (literature, media, science, law, etc.) and form a conceptual tool in whatever theory or model [...]” (Meylaerts 2011, 167).

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of clarity and conciseness, throughout the entire paper I refer to *Rocznik Literacki* as the Annual.

entire literary production – both original and translated. The Annual was aimed at reaching wide and diversified audiences: common readers, translators and publishers – recipients with different interests, knowledge, and needs. Also, the authorship varied; editors of the Annual invited eminent literary historians, translators and philologists to create their own subsections. Respective issues varied in categories and volume, but always included: a bibliography of works written in Polish (divided into four categories: Poetry, Drama, Prose and reprints), works translated from various languages, reviews of travel books, diaries, children’s books, essays on current trends in literary studies, philosophy, and the report on the press market.

## **2. Sociology, history and translation studies: towards an interdisciplinary approach**

The concept of investigating cultural policies, power relations and norms through translation is already well recognized in the discipline of Translation Studies. A huge inspiration for scholars in this respect was the target-oriented, dynamic framework of the Polysystem Theory created by Itamar Even-Zohar who identified translation as a social practice at a very large scale. Establishing of the vast and diversified field of sociology of translation can be ascribed to Daniel Simeoni and his seminal article “The Pivotal Status of the Translator’s Habitus” in *Target* in 1998. Yet the title of Simeoni’s work demonstrates the impact of sociology on Translation Studies: the discourse used to describe power relations and (inter)cultural negotiations. In her analysis of the development of sociological models within translation studies, H el ene Buzelin identified the moment of the growing importance of sociology with the extensive development of the young field of Translation Studies in the mid-1990s, when the gap between the theoretical and applied approach was widening dramatically (Buzelin 2018, 339). Sociology was seen as an opportunity to bridge it and maintain the coherence of Translation Studies as a discipline. As Buzelin puts it:

[...] sociological discourse – constructivist sociologies in particular – came to be seen by researchers as an opportunity to foster reflexivity and cohesion within the discipline. It was also deemed a way to better problematize, rather than deny, the relation between theory and practice, ultimately more clearly positioning TS within the humanities (see Gouanvic 1999; Simeoni 1995; Wolf 2007). Sociology, it was felt, could provide “bridge” concepts (Chesterman 2007) and establish a stronger theoretical basis for historical accounts of translation practices (Simeoni 2007) (Buzelin 2018, 339).

Buzelin describes a very complex relationship between translation sociology and the history of translation (Buzelin 2018): while translation sociology shifted its interest from text to context and agents (Milton Bandia 2009), history of translation for a long time “has not received the attention it merits in terms of research” (D’hulst 2010, 21 as cited in Rundle 2020, 232). The interest in individual translators treated as “active effective

causes with their own identity and agenda as a professional group" (Pym 1998, 160) was developed within the area of sociology of translation. Here Andrew Chesterman's notion of Translator Studies – a branch focused on people producing translations and relations between them – is particularly relevant. Chesterman's framework might serve as proof of Buzelin's insightful observation that it was the "sociological turn", not the development of the history of translation, that introduced growing interest in translators as human beings and their archives as a potentially inspiring source of materials in Translation Studies" (Buzelin 2018, 344). Only recently translation history (and the history of Translation Studies) has started to develop quickly; from journals dedicated particularly to translation history: *Chronotopos*, *Revista de la Historia de la Traducción*, *Studies in Translation History*, to the e-repositories of translators (i.e. Polish *Nowa Panorama Literatury Polskiej*, German *Germersheimer Übersetzerlexikon*) and local translation histories, i.e.: Finnish (Riikonen et al. 2007), Slovak (Bednárová 2013; Tyšš and Gromová 2020), Turkish (Tahir Gürçağlar et al. 2015) and Spanish (Pegenaute 2019). It is evident that the local translation histories are usually divided along the nation-state lines and often remain scattered and/or isolated. An attempt at overcoming these strongly petrified distinctions between languages and intellectual circles, enabling a broader, more inclusive view on translation is a transnational perspective (Castro and Ergun 2017). The recently established "History and Translation Network" connects scholars from different contexts and backgrounds, and is in line with the approach of Anthony Pym. In his seminal *Method in Translation History*, Pym reveals the reason behind the interest translation history paid to the past: the desire to understand present times and solve contemporary problems. To Pym, translation history can be inspiring for other branches of the humanities as:

[...] a source of ideas and data for the political or sociological study of international relations; it might have more than a few words to say in the development of language policies [...]; it has a great deal to contribute to general history of literature and of ideas, especially given the way nationalist paradigms have traditionally excluded translators from such fields of inquiry (Pym 1998, VII).

Pym mentions both sociology and history, seeing them as complementary approaches towards understanding the phenomenon of translation. Pondering on the future of the subdiscipline of translation history, he anticipates the importance of the wider context of cultural relations:

[...] translation history will eventually have to become [...] something wider, and not necessarily part of a revitalized comparative literature (there are more things in the world than literature) [...]. If we learn to focus on human translators, and if translators can be seen as members of intercultural groups, a logical extension of our discipline could be to study all kinds of intercultural groups, in the sense of intersections of cultures. Translation studies could become intercultural studies; translation history could be an essential part of intercultural history (Pym 1998, XI).

This prediction of the interdisciplinary integrated studies on translation was repeated by other scholars, i.e. Yves Gambier in his wish for the development of the „socio-history of Translation Studies“ (Gambier 2007). In this respect, I consider Rundle’s contribution as yet another way of conceptualizing the openness of Translation Studies towards the transnational perspective. Recently it has also been expressed by the editors of *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge* (2018) who broadened the scope of interest from Translation Studies to a more universal and inclusive notion of knowledge.

Even in the biographical field, the subdiscipline of translation history encounters many difficulties: historians of translations (and translators) have to face the non-existence or incompleteness of archives and embrace various techniques in order to legitimize and complete their research (Buss 2001; Munday 2014; Paloposki 2010). In this respect, an important approach to data collection was proposed by D’hulst. By borrowing questions from the classic rhetorics (quis? quid? ubi? quibus auxiliis? cur? quomodo? quando?) one might extend the understanding of the archive and find out “who-when-why-whom” translated:

Since the set of material objects of translation historiography is virtually identical to the set of objects that may be studied by all branches of translation research (translation communication processes, translation theories, translation institutions), we need to concentrate on the formal objects or the proper historical viewpoints of historiography (D’hulst 2010, 399).

The conscious choice of the type of object of study within the subdiscipline of translation history seems to be key in the reflection on the contemporary development of the field; however, while identifying its research object, D’hulst focuses on “translation” and Rundle on “history”. Christopher Rundle, though, differentiates the “History of translation” from “Translation in history”. The first, for a long time prevailing, approach towards translation within translation history treats it as “a historical object in its own right” and the other “as an approach to interpreting other historical subjects” (Rundle 2014, 7). The latter, as “the lens through which we research our historical object” (Rundle 2011, 33) provides opportunities to investigate roles translation played in wider socio-cultural contexts. As a consequence, the mechanisms on how translation reflected and affected socio-political situation in given circumstances might be identified. The new way of thinking about translation history proposed by Rundle requires an openness to the possibility that the importance of translation in the investigated context is less prominent than expected:

[T]here is potentially a danger that our set of values may condition the way we interpret the documentary evidence and induce us to exaggerate its importance. This is, of course, a risk that all historians face; the difference for translation and interpreting historians lies in the fact that the a priori standpoint that they adopt is, to a greater extent than in the case of other historians, the very justification of their work as researchers. How easy is it for a translation historian to acknowledge that, in fact, in this

or that particular respect, translation was not particularly significant in the historical theme they have chosen to research? (Rundle 2021, 14).

This paradoxical elaboration on Pym's idea of integrated history and sociology of translation seemingly distances Rundle from the very field of Translation Studies. He invites scholars to free themselves from the ascribed *a priori* importance of translation. As a consequence, there is no need (and sometimes no possibility) to maintain the arbitrary coherence of the field. In order to continue researching within translation history, a shift in discourse is needed. Rundle overtly proposes addressing the outcomes of one's research to the deliberately selected audience that can provide inspiring feedback. As he argues:

[I]f I seek a dialogue with a 'conventional' historian who works on [the] same historical subject, it is because that historian will have a similar expertise to mine and will therefore be in a position to appreciate the value of any historical insight that I have to offer. We engage in the same discourse and he or she will be in a position both to appreciate my own position and influence it (Rundle 2014, 4).

By identifying himself as a historian rather than translation scholar, Rundle paradoxically works towards the development of Translation Studies. He consciously fights against "[...] accumulating a vast archive of heterogeneous case studies [...]" (Rundle 2012, 236) that might isolate the discipline from others and result in the lack of communication and exchange not only between them, but even within Translation Studies.

Openness to integrated tools from various disciplines postulated by Rundle allows us not only to ask some more inspiring questions, but also to benefit from achievements in different fields. This "necessary step towards developing a genuinely interdisciplinary discourse on translation history" (Rundle 2014, 7) can apparently bridge the gap between historians and translation scholars who present substantial "asymmetry of engagement" (Rafael and Rundle 2016, 28).

### **3. Methodology**

Translation policies are usually analysed within the framework of the sociology of translation. Focused on various institutional bodies responsible for funding, promoting, establishing and evaluating translations, policies stress social networks and flows between different agendas of translation. I would like to argue, though, that the notion requires a more transnational and interdisciplinary perspective, especially in the case of such a complex, fluid, multidimensional and interactive formations as periodicals (Williams 1981 paraphr. in Fóllica et al. 2020, 3).

In this paper, I will focus on eight respective issues of the Polish periodical *Rocznik Literacki* as both its hybrid content and meticulously designed form refers to translation in a way that has not been investigated before. The Annual was established in the early 1930s, an important time for the formation of Poland's cultural identity as a modern and independent state after 123 years of foreign rule. From regaining independence in 1918 up to World War II, Poland was a dynamic, multilingual, and multinational

society, even though it also had to face the shadow of fascist ideology escalating throughout Europe. The state was trying to recreate a coherence on the administrative, economic and cultural level. Stefan Żeromski – one of the leading writers active in this literary period, was aware of the unifying power for the nation’s restoration of language and language policies. He put forth a project for the Polish Academy of Literature. For him, only the institutional and financial support for writers could effectively invigorate the literary market in Poland which was stagnating after regaining independence<sup>4</sup>. The first step was to consolidate all writers and provide those in need with scholarships and then start the discussion on possible new approaches to national literature in the international context. Żeromski saw the opportunity in focusing on contemporary European literature: the exchange with modernist authors and translations of their works into Polish could inspire local authors in creating a coherent artistic programme (Żeromski 1918, 8-9). Thanks to Żeromski’s effort, Polish PEN was established in 1925. Along with the Polish Academy of Literature, it supported translator training, production of translations, and theoretical approaches to translation – not only as a linguistic, but also as a social and cultural phenomenon (Bukowski and Heydel 2019, 1-2).

Nowadays, Polish historians, literary historians, linguists, and culture studies scholars, rarely focus on the relation between language and socio-political circumstances of the interwar period. If language is taken into consideration at all, it is usually in the context of purely linguistic features of the native language; if there is a reference to language policies, they are perceived as modifications within the monolingual state (Woźniak 2020). The most prominent study on translation in the context of interwar Poland is Jan Wnęk’s *Polskie przekłady literatury zagranicznej (1918-1939)* [Polish Translations of Foreign Literature (1918-1939)]. The author stated that according to his research, in the period under study there were 9826 works translated into Polish from various languages (Wnęk 2006, 3). I would like to build on his statistical approach while answering the question of what was translated between the First and the Second World War in Poland and ask for reasons behind and consequences of the dynamics within translations from various languages.

In his research, Wnęk did refer to the Annual but treated it as a coherent and neutral substitute of proper archives (Wnęk 2006, 4): he did not analyse it as a highly subjective, collaborative, complex body of works of various editors and reviewers, a collection of individual policies that were changing throughout time. As I would like to show in my analysis of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, the end of foreign occupation in 1918 in Poland was a challenge for writers focused for decades on the issue of uplifting the suppressed nation and finding possible ways to fight against the oppressors. Thus, it was necessary to establish a new, positive model of identity-building based on relations with other states. The value of martyrology was questioned (Janion 2007). The lack of systematic financial support for writers, expected to write voluntarily in the service of a nation was also a source of common frustration (Żeromski 1918, 6).

Annual, the interdisciplinary perspective, inspired by Rundle and supported by the integrated approach of the editors of the volume *Translation in Literary Periodicals* (2020) can provide a new insight in the relationship between translation and socio-cultural situation in interwar Poland.

In order to investigate this unexplored and seemingly neutral phenomena, it is essential to implement the integrated socio-historical approach and investigate the empirical shifts (Fólica et al. 2020, 2). I have focused on the "syntax" of the Annual and the way presented material was grouped, because "how the textual and visual material is presented [...] can matter more than the content itself" (Sarlo 1992 paraphr. in Fólica et al. 2020, 3). I have also looked at the paratexts by the editors: preface to the first issue and further commentaries. In the translations' reviews I tried to identify norms through the attitude towards refractions (Lefevere 2000, 234-37). I have also investigated sections related to cultural transfer.

#### **4. Translation in the Annual**

The most extensive section of the Annual was devoted to translated literature divided into subsections according to source languages.<sup>5</sup> In the course of the journal's operation following subsections appeared: English, Spanish, Yugoslavian (later called Slavic), French, Russian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Scandinavian (including Norwegian, Danish and Swedish), Latin and Greek, Yiddish, Dutch and Lithuanian. Some of them appeared regularly (every year or every other year), others only once. The very division into languages (or national literatures) was arbitrary, and it was changing. In the course of the Annual's operation, there were two major revisions: the addition of a section devoted to Latin and Ancient Greek in 1934 and discontinuation of the Jewish (Yiddish) section in 1936. The former case was stated overtly, the latter happened without any notification. Both alterations were influenced by the ideological rationale: escalating nationalistic and antisemitic tendencies in Poland (Tomaszewski 2016). The shift towards antiquity stated in the preface to the 1934 issue of the Annual stresses the effort on the part of its editors to inscribe Polish literature into the traditions of Hellenism and Roman Empire, both of which were considered common European roots. The affirmation of the "universal" past was an attempt to establish a coherent, leading narrative of the Polish state in the 1930s. Editors aimed directly at bringing Polish literature and literary market closer to what they called the "civilized Europe" (Chwalewik 1935, 136). Poland aspired to the wealth and development usually identified with the Western part of Europe. The interest in Latin – the traditional language of the Catholic liturgy – could also be considered as yet another confirmation of belonging to the Christian (especially: Catholic) tradition. It

---

<sup>5</sup> The distinction was not always obvious and often arbitrary: in the first issue of the Annual, English-language literature was divided into British and American considered as different cultures and traditions; later a unified English-language section divided into smaller subsections (Britain, the US, Canada) was added.



is worth noting that those shifts on the cultural, ideological, religious and political level situated Poland in opposition to the Jewish tradition and the Soviet Union as a political and cultural force.

The way translation as a cultural practice was presented in the Annual is incoherent: reviewers who focused on original Polish writing largely ignored or even overtly attacked translated literature. To them, the wide and detailed critical representation of translation of foreign literature was unnecessary (Czachowski 1935, 6). Bearing in mind the growing number of translations, the hostile attitude towards translation criticism can be seen as a sort of backlash. From such a vantage point, the need for translation from other languages was seen as a sign of a lack of power and prestige. Christopher Rundle reflected on that principle while investigating translation in fascist Italy:

[...] these attitudes towards translation resulted not from the potential impact of the texts themselves, or from perceived changes within Italian literature, but instead from [...] the symbolic value that the regime attached to translations as a cultural phenomenon - a value first defined by a notion of culture as an arena in which different nations vied for dominance, and then by the notion of culture as the nation's spiritual lifeblood, in which translations circulated as a form of corruption or contamination (Rundle 2012, 238-239).

General strategies towards translation presented in the Annual were in line with the model presented by Rundle: reviewers were interested in a wider literary production in Polish, so that the local audience would not need foreign books. Only in the children's books section, the implementation of Western (especially English) patterns through translation was accepted. As the Annual's reviewers believed, only by establishing political relations between Poland and Western European countries, coherent cultural policies could be implemented, and Polish literature could be translated into (preferably) English, seen as both the prestigious *lingua franca*, and the language of possible political allies (Kurowska 1987, 5, 10). At the same time, there was a clear lack of ideas on what exactly contemporary Polish literature that might attract Western states should look like.

Nevertheless, reviewers responsible for the translation section in the Annual tried to create a new, unifying tradition in order to support national identity through translation: as it was stated in the introductory essay to the first issue of the periodical, the aim of the publication was an ample presentation and unbiased evaluation of literary works in Poland in the 1930s (Szweykowski 1933, 5-6). The reviewers of translation in the Annual argued that translation choices should be made very carefully: in order not to "contaminate" the language, and "corrupt" the audience. One of the reviewers proposed a set of questions in order to evaluate translations: was the translation informative? Was it a faithful rendition of the original? Were linguistic norms of the Polish language respected? It is worth checking, he

argues, whether translators understood correctly the source text and do they master the target language (Chwalewik 1933, 127).

Reviewers attacked not only translators who did not fulfil the rules presented above, but also publishers who selected foreign books for translation which were either difficult to understand outside the local context, or lacking artistic values (Birkenmajer 1937, 159). The works worthy of translating would have to be chosen with respect to the aesthetical trends they introduced: the English novel was seen as the most attractive genre to import – and, simultaneously, the most difficult to translate (Chwalewik 1933, 123). Translation was also acceptable if it addressed universal issues delivered in a standard Polish language. Here, it was particularly important to avoid loanwords, false friends, and to domesticate proper names to maintain the impression that the text was written in Polish (Borowy 1933, 120). In fact, that was considered an indicator of the perfect translation (Mianowska 1939, 142).

In terms of norms, reviewers agreed that the quality of translation depends on the degree to which translator is familiar with the cultural context of the work; the main aim of translated text would be to bring the reader of the target text closer to the source culture (Chwalewik 1933, 123). Omissions were in fact accepted as long as they were caused by the awareness of the issues potentially controversial in the target culture (Birkenmajer 1938, 165). When they were caused by the lack of understanding of the content, translators were criticised (Czerny 1934, 154).

The activity of the reviewers can be seen as a way to redress the “mistakes” made by translators: they often provide a wide audience with the reception of the original or even suggest their own rendition of the source text (Brahmer 1933, 177). What they all shared was the belief in the missionary character of their work in order to stop the random and chaotic translation policy. As a consequence, they aimed at raising the awareness of the general audience, by simultaneously ameliorating the linguistic level of translations, and, as a result, professionalizing the occupation of the translator.

## **5. Józef Birkenmajer and Piotr Grzegorzczak and their cultural programmes**

Although there were some general principles in the Annual in order to differentiate acceptable translations from the poor ones, the approach of each reviewer, scholar and/or translator himself<sup>6</sup>, varied depending on the source language. Many experts ran their language subsections for years, trying to trace more general tendencies in a wider timeframe. Józef Birkenmajer, translator and critic responsible for the antiquity section, was the most committed proponent of translation as an independent

---

<sup>6</sup> The gender factor is also worth mentioning, and it needs further investigation. The overwhelming majority of reviewers were male with only 11 female authors throughout 8 years of the operation of the Annual.

cultural phenomenon. He considered Polish translators from Greek and Latin as fully fledged authors: literati and scholars. He meticulously traced the development of careers of young professionals in the field. For him, multiple renditions of the same source text were beneficial for the target culture. He argued that in such a way, translation exceeds the utilitarian purpose; it is not reserved for those, who do not know the language of the original (Birkenmajer 1938, 161). Birkenmajer was equally revelatory in his understanding of the mechanisms of the book market. He postulated a better recognition of translations from Latin through institutional support: establishing literary prizes devoted directly to the field (Birkenmajer 1938, 151).

The way of presentation of Yiddish literature testifies to a similar tendency, however, expressed differently. The superficial, cursory approach towards the culture of the most prominent minority of pre-war Poland was manifested in the short subsection of the Annual edited by Stefan Flukowski. The section devoted to "Jewish literature" appeared only in the first four volumes of *Rocznik literacki*. It referred vaguely to the general aspects of the original books, suggesting the hermetic quality of Yiddish literature. In 1936, the subsection was discontinued, however, the Jewish Question appeared in the next issue of the Annual – this time, in the section devoted to literary life in Poland. The turmoil at the 1937 PEN Congress in Paris, where members of the Polish PEN were accused of lack of intervention in the face of escalating antisemitism in Poland, was reported<sup>7</sup> thanks to Piotr Grzegorzcyk – one of the most interesting reviewers of the Annual. Grzegorzcyk was a bibliographer, editor and columnist particularly attentive to the issues of national minorities in Poland. In the years 1932-1937, he was the author of the section devoted to translations of Polish literature into foreign languages, whereas in the two last volumes he created a new chapter centred on the literary life in Poland. His ambition, clearly manifested throughout the entire period of the journal's operation, was to establish a strong position of Polish culture in Europe. His analyses of general tendencies in translation in Europe were the most comprehensive out of all presented in the Annual. He was the only reviewer who overtly stated his aims in the first issue: tracing the reception of Polish works abroad, including papers delivered by Polish scholars at European universities and also the work of Polish diplomats in the international context. According to Grzegorzcyk, while thinking about literature, „it is impossible to ignore what they [Western states] wrote [about Poland], as they write more than they translate, they are not interested in literature, but in the petroleum, coal, grain, import and national minorities” (Grzegorzcyk 1933, 324, my translation). Very much aware of the interrelations between non-literary circumstances and translation, Grzegorzcyk identified the biggest mistake made by Polish cultural policy in turning towards huge metropolises and ignoring smaller national markets

---

<sup>7</sup> For the more detailed recapitulation of the discussion during the 1937 PEN Congress in Paris see: *Jules Romains, Pen-Club, etc.*, "Prosto z mostu" (1938) 24 p. 8.

of states potentially much more interested in the Polish culture. For him, a serious threat to the international career of the state was the fact that Polish authors were glorified for their hermetic, moralistic, strongly national (thus inaccessible and boring for the non-Polish audiences) position (Grzegorzcyk 1933, 322; 1936, 326). His attitude towards socio-cultural mechanisms of reception was quite innovative: he paid attention not only to the literary production, but also to the consumption of literature (Grzegorzcyk 1937, 295). Grzegorzcyk was the only reviewer of the Annual who commented upon comprehensive accounts on prospective cultural policies presented in the press and proposed various ways of coping with the crisis of the nation: according to him, first, it was necessary to prove that disdaining entries on Poland in foreign academic books are inaccurate, then spark an interest in the meticulously designed cultural offer dedicated to foreigners, finally, promote learning of the Polish language through personal experience, i. e. trips to Poland (Grzegorzcyk 1936, 262). He stressed the role of the organizations promoting Polish culture abroad in the political exchange of ideas. In the 1937 issue of the Annual, Grzegorzcyk gave the sections of translations of Polish literature over to Stanisław Piotr Koczorowski, who did not focus on the actual content of translated texts and their renditions into Polish, or on a wider frame of cultural policies but only on the bibliography and the issue of collecting Polish texts published abroad.

Grzegorzcyk established his own brand new section devoted to literary life in Poland where he still elaborated on the potential of translation in creating cultural policies. In this section, he recalled complex political and press debates on Jewish participation in the formation of contemporary Polish culture. Grzegorzcyk discussed antisemitic statements by some intellectuals, i. e. Karol Irzykowski (literary critic and one of the reviewers of the Annual), who argued for the ostensible neutrality of antisemitism. He also provided a summary of the results of the survey organized by the literary weekly *Wiadomości Literackie* and the newspaper *Kurier Poranny*. The audience surveys on the impact of the Jewish community on the Polish culture revealed escalating aggression in the Polish society that blamed the Jewish community for the financial crisis in the 1930s. Jews were also accused of the backwardness of the Polish literature due to their allegedly planned and systemic booksellers' policy hostile towards Polish publications (Grzegorzcyk 1937, 303)<sup>8</sup>. The author of this recapitulation mentions those

---

<sup>8</sup> It was one of the frequent populist statements established both by the antisemitic Catholic press in the 1930s. and by nationalist journalists and politicians supporting the argument that the economic crisis in Poland was mainly caused by "the seizure of trade by Jews" (Trębacz 2017, 288-289). The discussion on the "Jewish Question" included the ideas on how to boycott Jewish entrepreneurs and artisans in all branches in order to force them to migrate (Trębacz 2017, 295-296). It is worth noting that Jewish contribution to bookselling and printing market in Poland has its roots in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Bałaban 1931) and in the interwar period was developing rapidly (Jamnicki 1936 as cited in Dylewski 2017).

who were against the antisemitic statements and supported the Jewish community, but the prevailing mood was negative.

In this section, Grzegorzczuk seeks also the reason behind the lack of interest in reading among Polish people. He condemned the situation of Polish economy and poor quality of cultural offer also for the native readers. As he wrote, Poland should be inspired by Italy and France – states very cautious with regards to importing books from foreign nations through translation (Grzegorzczuk 1937, 293).

## **6. Conclusion**

*Rocznik Literacki* was created with the hope of developing regulations and norms for literature and translation in order to stop the chaotic and random moves within the literary market in Poland, the nation in search for its identity, questioning the present, re-inventing the past, and imagining the future. Editors of the Annual believed that they can re-create tradition not only by evaluating existing strategies, but also by suggesting possible directions for the development of Polish culture. Thus, they believed that the Annual should not be considered a summary, but instead a projection based on the aspiration of the Polish state to be a part of Western Europe. As I tried to show, it was not a coherent vision but rather a cluster of mixed, often contradictory views towards translation. Thanks to the interdisciplinary framework, translation can be identified in seemingly monolingual Polish literary journal and seen as an important interpretative key in the construction of historical narratives of and from a given socio-cultural context.

This brings us back to the initial quotation on the relation between translation history and history: translation history does pay attention to language(s), but these are viewed as indicators of a certain discourse, not neutral media as it is often perceived by traditional historians. Translation, as predominantly involving multilingual context, does not appear in the void. It:

[...] allows us to trace the workings of power and to cast its features into relief as it interacts with other cultures. [...] translation can become a weapon wielded in the service of an ideological project that sees language, and interlinguistic exchange, as a theatre of war in which to fight for influence and dominance (Rafael Rundle 2016, 45).

The insight into mechanisms of constructing traditions and establishing narratives in the Annual promises a multidimensional spectrum of histories that tell a lot about the reception and the very nature of historical discourses – not only in the history of translation.

## **References:**

Bassnett, Susan and Lefevere, André. 1998. *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bałaban, Majer. 1931. Drukarstwo żydowskie w Polsce XVI w. In: *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Naukowego im. J. Kochanowskiego*. Kraków. pp. 102–116

Batchelor, Kathryn and Harding, Sue-Ann (eds.). 2017. *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages*. London: Routledge.

Bednárová, Katarína. 2013. *Dejiny umeleckého prekladu na Slovensku I. Od sakrálneho k profánnemu*. Bratislava: Veda.

de Bończa Bukowski, Piotr and Heydel, Magda. 2019. Polish Concepts in Translation Studies. Scholars – Theories – Paradigms. In: de Bończa Bukowski, Piotr and Heydel, Magda (eds.). *Polish translation studies in action. Concepts – Methodologies – Applications. A Reader*. Berlin: Peter Lang, pp. 13-46.

Buss, Helen M. (ed.). 2001. *Working in Women's Archives: Researching Women's Private Literature and Archival Documents* Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Buzelin, Hélène. 2018. Sociological models and translation history. In: Gambier, Yves and D'hulst, Lieven (eds.). *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 337-346.

Castro, Olga and Ergun, Emek (eds.). 2017. *Feminist Translation Studies. Local and Transnational Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Chesterman, Andrew. 2009. The Name and Nature of Translator Studies. In: *Hermes* 22(42): pp. 13-22.

Czachowski, Kazimierz. 1935. *Rocznik literacki 1935* [recenzja] In: *Czas* (209): p. 6. <http://mbc.malopolska.pl/dlibra/publication/55185?tab=1>. Accessed on: 12 February 2021.

Delisle, Jean and Woodsworth, Judith (eds.). 2012. *Translators Through History*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

D'hulst, Lieven. 2010. Translation History. In: Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc (eds.) *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 1, Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Dylewski, Adam. 2017. *Żydzi w życiu gospodarczym II RP, cz. 5. Przemysł wydawniczy i poligraficzny*. <https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/tradycja-i-kultura-zydowska/historia-zydow-w-polsce/zydzi-w-zyciu-gospodarczym-ii-rp-cz-5-przemysl-wydawniczy-i-poligraficzny>. Accessed on: 2 September 2021.

Espagne, Michel. 2013. La notion de transfert culturel. In: *Revue Sciences/Lettres* 1. <http://journals.openedition.org/rsl/219>. Accessed on: 2 September 2021.

Fólica, Laura; Roig-Sanz, Diana and Caristia, Stefania. 2020. Towards a transnational and large-scale approach to literary translation in periodicals. In: Fólica, Laura; Roig-Sanz, Diana and Caristia, Stefania (eds.). *Translation in Literary Periodicals*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp 1-17.

Gambier, Yves. 2007. Y a-t-il place pour une sociotraductologie? In: Wolf, Michaela and Fukari, Alexandra (eds.). *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 205–217.

*Germersheimer Übersetzerlexikon* <http://www.uelex.de/>. Accessed on: 2 September 2021.

González Núñez, Gabriel. 2016. *Translating in Linguistically Diverse Societies: Translation policy in the United Kingdom*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Gouanvic, Jean-Marc. 1999. *Sociologie de la traduction. La science-fiction américaine dans l'espace culturel français des années 1950 (Traductologie)*. Arras: Artois Presses Université.

Hermans, Theo. 2007. *The Conference of Tongues*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Janion, Maria. 2007. *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Koskinen, Kaisa and Paloposki, Outi. 2010. Retranslation. In: Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc (eds.). *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 294–298.

Kurowska, Elżbieta. 1987. *Recepcja literatury angielskiej w Polsce 1932-1939*. Wrocław: Ossolineum.

Lefevere, André. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London, New York: Routledge.

Lefevere, André. 2000. Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System, and Refraction in a Theory of Literature. In: Venuti, Lawrence (ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*. London /New York: Routledge. pp. 233-249.

Meylaerts, Reine. 2011. Translation policy. In: Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc (eds.). *Handbook of Translation Studies 2*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 163–168.

Milton, John and Bandia, Paul (eds.). 2009. *Agents of Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Munday, Jeremy. 2014. Using Primary Sources to Produce a Microhistory of Translation and Translators: Theoretical and Methodological Concerns. In: *The Translator*. 20(1): pp. 64–80.

*Nowa Panorama Literatury Polskiej*. <http://nplp.pl/kolekcja/slownik-tlumaczy/>. Accessed on: 2 September 2021.

Paloposki, Outi. 2013. Translation Criticism. In: Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc (eds.). *Handbook of Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 184–190.

Pegenaute, Louis. 2019. Spanish Translation History. In: Valdeón, Roberto A. and Vidal, África (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Translation Studies*. London: Routledge. pp. 13-43.

Pym, Anthony. 1998. *Method in Translation History*. Manchester: Routledge.

Riikonen, Hannu Kalevi; Kovala, Urpo; Kujamäki, Pekka and Paloposki, Outi (eds.). 2007. *Suomennoskirjallisuuden historia I-II*. Helsinki: SKS.

Rundle, Christopher and Rafael, Vicente. 2016. History and Translation. The Event of Language. In: Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc (eds.). *Border Crossings. Translation Studies and Other Disciplines*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 23–48.

Rundle, Christopher and Sturge, Kate (eds.). 2010. *Translation Under Fascism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rundle, Christopher. 2011. History through a Translation Perspective. In: Chalvin, Antoine; Lange, Anne and Monticelli, Daniele (eds.). *Between Cultures and Texts. Itineraries in Translation History/Entre Les Cultures et Les Textes. Itinéraires En Histoire de La Traduction*. Berlin: Peter Lang. pp. 33–43.

Rundle, Christopher. 2012. Translation as an approach to history. In: *Translation Studies*. 5(2): pp. 232-248.

Rundle, Christopher. 2014. Theories and Methodologies of Translation History: The Value of an Interdisciplinary Approach. In: *The Translator*. 20(1): pp. 2-8.

Rundle, Christopher. 2018. Temporality. In: Gambier, Yves and D'hulst, Lieven (eds.). *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge: Sources, Concepts, Effects*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 235–245.



Rundle, Christopher. 2020. Historiography. In: Baker, Mona and Saldanha, Gabriela (eds.). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Third Edition). London: Routledge. pp. 232-237.

Rundle, Christopher. 2021. Friedrich Wilhelm IV's Tailor and Significance in Translation History. In: Baker, Mona (ed.). *Unsettling Translation: Studies in Honour of Theo Hermans*. London: Routledge.

Simeoni, Daniel. 1995. Translating and Studying Translation: The View from the Agent. In: *Meta* 40(3): pp. 445-460.

Simeoni, Daniel. 2007. Between Sociology and History. Method in Context and in Practice. In: Wolf, Michaela and Fukari, Alexandra (eds.). *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 187-204.

Szweykowski, Zygmunt. 1933. [preface to the first issue of the annual-*Rocznik literacki for 1932*]. Instytut Literacki: Warszawa. pp. 1-5.

Szweykowski, Zygmunt and Szmydtowa, Zofia (eds.). 1932-1938. *Rocznik Literacki* Instytut Literacki Warszawa (sections edited by Birkenmajer, Józef (1937, 1938); Borowy, Waław (1933); Brahmer, Mieczysław (1933); Chwalewik, Witold (1935); Czerny, Zygmunt (1934); Mianowska, Zofia (1939) and Grzegorzczak, Piotr (1933, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938). <https://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/publication/24692#structure>. Accessed on: 15 June 2021.

Tahir Gürçağlar, Sehnez; Paker, Saliha and Milton, John (eds.). 2015. *Tradition, Tension and Translation in Turkey*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Tomaszewski, Jerzy. 2016. *Żydzi w II Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa: Neriton.

Trębacz, Zofia. 2017. Prasa katolicka drugiej połowy lat trzydziestych wobec idei masowej emigracji żydowskiej z Polski. In: *Studia Historica Gedanensia*. VIII. pp. 281-302.

Tyšš, Igor and Gromová, Edita. 2020. Taking Matters into our Own Hands: Humanizing Slovak Translation History. In: *Porównania* 1(26): pp. 157-176.

Wakabayashi, Judy. 2018. *Microhistory*. In: Gambier, Yves and D'hulst, Lieven (eds.). *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 251-254.

Williams, Raymond. 1981. *Culture*. London: Fontana Paperbacks.

Wnęk, Jan. 2006. *Polskie przekłady literatury zagranicznej (1918-1939)*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo MCDN.

Wolf, Michaela. 2007. Introduction: The emergence of a sociology of translation. In: Wolf, Michaela and Fukari, Alexandra. 2007. *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 1-36.

Woźniak, Ewa. 2020. *Przełomowe dwudziestolecie – lata 1918-1939 w dziejach języka polskiego*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Żeromski, Stefan. 1918. *Projekt Akademii Literatury Polskiej*, Warszawa: Redakcja „Myśli polskiej”.