

Ryszard Löw

(Israel)

## Polish Literature in Hebrew Translations

### I

The tradition is long and rich: the adoption of the works of Polish literature into the Hebrew language has been going on for one hundred and sixty years. Hebrew is the Oriental language to which the largest amount of Polish poetry, drama, fiction and essays, as well as works for children and teenagers has been transmitted in translations always made directly from the original. Notably, these works have been transmitted without any inspiration from the Polish side, which has customarily focused its efforts and endeavors in this regard on Paris, Berlin, Rome, and London. It is, and always has been, the result of the initiative of the translators – Polish Jews who were personally familiar with Polish literature.

It can also be added that Hebrew literature is the oriental literature in which diverse studies of Polish literary works have been undertaken in the form of reviews, discussions, review essays, and even monographs on its particular issues, authors, and works.

First, for a very long time – roughly the diasporic century, these translations were made and published in Poland and intended mainly for readers residing in Poland. These readers were familiar with the local realities and intellectually prepared to understand – and perhaps even accept – the characteristic features of Polish literature; those very features that make its reception in foreign language translations generally difficult, such as

the supremacy of the national element over the universal one, the predominance of Polish topics and the burdening of literary works with patriotic and social servitude. These features, as formulated by Henryk Markiewicz, included a strong “expression of a consciousness or overriding idea, the advocate of which in history is a given nation.” I think that this last feature of this Polish cultural code was particularly close to the Jewish national consciousness, and it did – and perhaps still does – completely fit within the system of concepts of Hebrew readers. Since that was the case, therefore, there was no problem with the identification of the criteria for selecting works to be translated into the Hebrew language.

## II

The beginning was marked in the 19th century by Julian Klaczko with his translation of Mickiewicz’s poems. The archaic nature of the Hebrew language, which was just beginning its process of modernization, and the generally poor translational skill of the translators meant that most of these early translations are no longer suitable for reading. And yet as early as in that period – before 1939 – works were translated, without which the landscape of Polish literature is most unthinkable. After all, these translations included (in chronological order): Kochanowski’s *Laments* (1930), Mickiewicz’s *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [Books of the Polish nation and the Polish pilgrimage] (1881) and the first three “Books” of *Pan Tadeusz* (1921) translated by Józef Lichtenbaum, as many as three different versions of Słowacki’s *Ojciec zadżumionych* [*The father of the plague-stricken*] (the first in 1883), *W Szwajcarii* [In Switzerland] (1923), and Seter’s translation of Słowacki’s *Anhelli* (1928) and Krasiński’s *Irydion* (1921), as well as minor works by Konopnicka, Orzeszkowa (*Ogniwa* [Links] 1909), novels by Sienkiewicz, whose readership did not diminish over the next decades, and then their first editions were published: *With Fire and Sword* (1929) and *Deluge* (1930–1931), *In Desert and Wilderness* (1928), and *Quo Vadis* (1928); Reymont’s *Peasants* (1928), Przybyszewski’s *Dla szczęścia* [For happiness] (1929), Wyspiański’s *The Wedding* (1938) in an excellent translation by B. Pomeranc; and Żuławski’s drama *Koniec Mesjasza* [The End of the Messiah] (1924) staged a few years after its book publication (1927) by a theater in Tel Aviv.

This block of translations also includes the first Hebrew anthology of Polish prose: Jehuda Warszawiak's *Polin*, or *Poland* (1936), which included works by Orzeszkowa, Konopnicka, Prus, Sienkiewicz, and Żeromski. Like the vast majority of the publications mentioned above, it was published in Warsaw, which until the outbreak of World War II was one of the most important centers of literature and the Hebrew publishing movement.

It will certainly not be inappropriate to recall the opinion expressed in 1879 by Piotr Chmielowski, who mentioned, among other works, *Pan Tadeusz*, *The Father of the Plague-stricken*, *In Switzerland*, and *Irydion* as the most perfect Polish works; half a century later Janusz Kleiner saw "world values of Polish literature" (1929; 1938) in the works of Kochanowski and in *Anhelli*, *Quo Vadis*, *With Fire and Sword*, *Peasants*, and *The Wedding*. Importantly, all of these works had already been translated into Hebrew at the time.

### III

Although literary magazines had printed occasional translations of poems by Leśmian, Tuwim, and Słonimski even before that, it was older Polish literature that generally was the focus. This was probably related to the immediate reception: the translators chose works that were close to them and that they read when they were growing up. During World War II and the first post-war years in what was then Palestine, which was transforming into the only center of Hebrew writing, a shift in interest took place as recent and contemporary literature received more attention. The new translators, often authentic Hebrew poets, were influenced in their work by Polish poets who were more or less their contemporaries.

Mickiewicz's uninterrupted presence in Hebrew translations is documented by Szlomo Skulski's translation of *Konrad Wallenrod* (1944); realistic prose was also translated – from Orzeszkowa's *Mirtala* and Prus's *Pharaoh*, to Żeromski's *Ludzie bezdomni* [Homeless people] and *Dzieje grzechu* [The history of sin] (all in 1947). Benjamin Tenenbaum-Tene translated Brzozowski's *Płomienie* [Flames] (1939–1940) – a novel that, both in the original and in the translation, played such a large role in the ideological crystallization of Socialist Zionism – but also Wittlin's *Hymny* [Hymns] (1942) and *The Salt of the Earth* (1945), and a fairly large number of Tuwim's lyrical poems, which was soon to publish in a separate book (1946). A collection of Polish poems

about the Holocaust (*Mi-shirei geto. Mi-ma'amakim*, 1947) was also published in his translation at the time, the original of which, titled *Z otchłani* [From the abyss], was published clandestinely in Warsaw in 1944.

Lichtenbaum's anthology *Givot olam* or *Heights of the World* (1946) occupies an important place in this translation process. Lichtenbaum collected there his own translations of poems from various languages, including translations of Polish verse. Lichtenbaum was a very average poet, and his translations of poetry, which he was an expert in, after all, are no better. This is evidenced by the Polish poems he included in his anthology: from those by Mickiewicz and Słowacki, through those by Asnyk, Leśmian, and Staff, to those by the Skamander poets – Tuwim, Słonimski, Iwaszkiewicz, and Wierzyński.

The wartime events and migrations brought many Polish writers, poets, and scholars to Palestine. Władysław Broniewski, Roman Brandstaetter, Anatol Stern, and many others stayed there in that period. Two of Stern's novels written at the time were immediately translated from the manuscript and published in Hebrew: *Odpowiedzialność nazisty* [The Nazi's responsibility] (1944; years later published in Poland under the title *Ludzie i syrena* [The people and the mermaid]) and *Żyd z Polski* [A Jew from Poland] (1946; known only in fragments titled *Uczta w czasie dżumy* [Feast during the plague]). During the wartime period (1941), the Habima theater staged Brandstaetter's *Kupca warszawskiego* [The Merchant of Warsaw], which was the first play written by that poet.

#### IV

The output of the past half-century, since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, has been particularly bountiful. It surpasses the significant achievements of previous periods. This is because the centralization of Hebrew cultural life in a geographically defined territory, with a steady increase in the number of readers in Hebrew, created more favorable conditions for publishing companies, the literary press, and theaters than before. These circumstances were accompanied for a long time by the active presence in Hebrew writing of people who knew Polish and were interested in Polish literature. The large selection of published translations, reviews, discussions, and notes – in other words, a whole set of

manifestations of a friendly attitude of the press – is due specifically to their work.

However – which should also be kept in mind – the composition of the Israeli literary audience has changed over the years. Works of Polish literature are now read by those who were born in Israel and are personally completely uninvolved in Polish affairs, which played such a great role in the biographies of their fathers and grandfathers. This group also includes readers with completely different family backgrounds, mentalities, and cultural roots.

In the translations published in Israel, poetry is represented by poets from different eras of Polish literature with obvious preference given to modern ones. An anthology composed of translations scattered in various periodicals would include works by poets from Kochanowski to Krynicki, through Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Ujejski, poets of the positivist “non-poetic times” (Konopnicka and Asnyk), to poets of the Young Poland and those whose works linked the beginning of the century with later periods – Leśmian and Staff. The Polish interwar period seen with Hebrew eyes is dominated by the Skamander group, then the poems of those who wrote before, during, and after World War II – the list is long and continues to get longer: Wittlin, Broniewski, Jastrun, Ważyk, Przyboś, Wygodzki, and Śpiewak, but also Miłosz and Gałczyński; poets who did not survive the war – Ginczanka, Szlengel, Łazowertówna, and Baczyński. There is also a very large block comprising the works of post-war debutants, who also belonged to several generations: Różewicz, Ficowski, Herbert, Twardowski, Szymborska, Woroszyński, Grynberg, Urszula Koziół, Ewa Lipska, etc.

All in all, such an anthology would comprise the works of about sixty poets (with striking gaps: no Norwid or Czechowicz) in translations of a widely varying quality by Józef Lichtenbaum, Beniamin Tenenbaum-Tene, and Szymson Malcer, who won the Alfred Jurzykowski Prize, as well as Ryfka Gurfin-Uchman, Arie Brauner, Szalom Lindenbaum, Dawid Weinfeld, Jakow Beser, Szoszana Raczyńska, Rafi Wichert, etc.

However, there is no such anthology. Its substitute for many years were Gila Uriel’s books which, along with translations of poems from other languages, also contained poems by Polish poets – *Peninim mi shirat ha-olam* [Pearls of world poetry] and *Nofim dovevim* [Speaking landscapes]. There

is also Samuel Scheps' somewhat hybrid collection, edited by Aszer Wilcher, titled *Safrut polanit by-livush ri* [Polish literature in Hebrew garments, 1989], where literary profiles of sixteen poets and four prose writers are illustrated with a large selection of their works. A team of currently active translators is preparing for publication – on the initiative of Miriam Akavia – a selection of Polish poetry of the second half of the past century.

A lot of poignant poems about the Holocaust have been written in Polish. Half a century after the volume titled *From the Abyss*, Arie Brauner published, mostly in his own translation, an anthology titled *Nose ha-shoa by-shira ha-polanit* [The topic of the Holocaust in Polish poetry] (1996) where he included some thirty works by thirteen poets – from Miłosz and Bro-niewski to Ficowski, Herbert, Różewicz, and Szyborska.

## V

In the literary awareness of the Hebrew reader, Polish poetry was for a very long time epitomized by two names: Mickiewicz and Tuwim. The reception of their works in Hebrew is confirmed by both the uninterrupted tradition of translation, the large number of frequent mentions about them, as well as the reminders of their works in publications that are even not directly associated with Polish literature.

The publication in 1953 of the only complete Hebrew version of *Pan Tadeusz* to date, translated by Józef Lichtenbaum, was an important literary event. Mickiewicz's arch-poem – the first three "Books" of which were published by Lichtenbaum as early as in 1921 and a number of excerpts of which he published in various periodicals for many years – appeared in two editions, quickly following each other, with a total circulation of five thousand copies. 1950 was the year of Szlomo Skulski's translation of Mickiewicz's *Grażyna*, and 1958 – of the second Hebrew translation of *Konrad Wallenrod* by Szulamit Harewen. A number of Mickiewicz's poems – including some *Sonnets from the Crimea* translated by Szymson Melcer – were published by various translators in magazines, anthologies, and books composed of their own poems and translations.

Tuwim's poems were translated in large numbers. Lichtenbaum's 1954 selection of poems titled *Tohen lohet* [Burning content] – the second Hebrew selection of Tuwim's poems after Tenenbaum-Tene's 1946 volume *Shirim*

[Poems] – comprised 88 of them. Six books of poetry for children were also published. The majority of Tuwim’s translated works, however, were published in magazines. In total, more than 200 poems were published, and some – “Do prostego człowieka” [To the simple man], “Nie ma kraju” [There is no country], “Jewboy,” and others – in multiple translations. Tuwim’s works were translated by Hebrew poets who either did not translate them from Polish or did not translate at all – which seems to indicate a special predilection for Tuwim in Hebrew literature.

In two editions – a bibliophile one (1984) and a circulated one (1985) – Chone Szmeruk published a book titled *We, Polish Jews...*, which, in addition to the title text, contained Tuwim’s article “The Memorial and the Grave” in the original Polish version and translated into Hebrew, English, and Yiddish.

## VI

Israel’s book market is receptive; books by Mickiewicz and Tuwim have long been absent from the bookstore circulation, and do not appear very often in antiquarian bookstores. In fact, the same is true of books by other Polish poets: there are about a dozen of them.

In 1962 Daniel Leibel-Seter reissued his old 1928 translation of *Anhelli*, and in 1978 Szymson Melcer made a new translation of the poem.

Selections of poems of the following poets have been published: Leśmian (1992), Staff (1997), Słonimski (1993), Maurycy Szymel (1995), Anda Eker (1966), Wygodzki (1988), Władysław Szlengel (1987), Pope John Paul II (1981), Anna Kamińska (1981), Stefan Borkiewicz (1992), Aleksander Ziemny (1989), and Czesław Ślęzak’s cycle *Wołam Cię Jeruzalem* [I’m calling you Jerusalem] (1967). Also, *Wesołe smutki* [Merry Sorrows] (1974) by Tadeusz Kotarbiński and a collection *Uncempt Thoughts* (1997) by Lec have been published. Most of these books are accompanied by introductions or afterwords with information on the authors.

The works of Jerzy Ficowski, Zbigniew Herbert, Czesław Miłosz, and Wisława Szymborska have enjoyed significant attention. Their books, published in Hebrew, certainly do not cover all the works by many translators published in literary magazines at various times, while book editions are accompanied by reviews and discussions in the press and on the radio.



Ficowski's "List do Marka Chagalla" [A letter to Marc Chagall] (1968) was translated by Jakow Beser, while Shalom Lindenbaum translated *A Reading of Ashes* (1986) was published on the occasion of Ficowski being awarded the Israeli Ka-Tzetnik Book Prize, intended for a foreign-language author writing about the Holocaust. The poems of Henryk Grynberg, whose selection *Po zmartwychwstaniu* [After the resurrection] (1985) was translated by Arie Brauner, remains in the circle of the Jewish topics.

Herbert and Miłosz – as well as Świrszczyńska, Twardowski, and Zagajewski – found a dedicated translator in the person of David Weinfeld. First, he periodically published their poems in the press, and then published them in separate books; Herbert has four books published so far: *Mr. Cogito and Other Poems* (1984), *Report from a Besieged City* (1990), a selection of poems (1996), and *Elegy for the Departure* (1998). Weinfeld is also the author of the translation of Herbert's *Dutch Apocrypha* (1997), which was awarded the highly prestigious Jerusalem Prize in 1991.

Miłosz's *Where the sun rises and where it sets* (1981) and *The Wormwood Star* (1989) are selections of poems from different periods of the poet's work. The first included "Campo dei Fiori," a poem written under the impression of the burning Warsaw Ghetto, which was translated by as many as five translators. A new selection of that poet's poems, *On the bank of the river*, has been published in 1999. In Hebrew literature, Miłosz is first and foremost a poet, because small fragments of his essays remain scattered throughout periodicals and certainly – which is a very great pity – cannot attest to the enormous importance of this writing. This means that the situation in Israel is opposite to that in Western languages and countries, where a lot of Miłosz's prose has been translated.

Translations of Szyborska's individual works have long been published in the press by various translators, but it was only the young poet Rafi Weichert who began to systematically introduce the Polish poet's work to the Hebrew culture, even before she received the Nobel Prize. Like Weinfeld, he published his translations first in periodicals and then collected them into separate selections, which have achieved great readership: *Atlantis* (1993), *The End and the Beginning* (1996), and *The End of the Age* (1998) – about a hundred works in total. Weichert has also translated individual poems by Lechoń, Tuwim, Lipska, Krynicki, and Wojacek, and



a large block of poems by Różewicz, a book selection of which he is preparing for publication.

Weinfeld and Weichert translate in a language register that is very different from that used by their predecessors (and many of their contemporaries). They become co-authors of the text, while capturing the resonance of the thoughts and spirit of the original without discoloring it. Their translations function in the literary circulation of the modern Hebrew and reach readers who have nothing to do with Poland and only know contemporary poetry. It is a lively and enthusiastic reception, discernible “in person” at promotional meetings for newly published books. And thanks to the constantly and consistently made and published translations of specifically these poets – Miłosz, Herbert, Różewicz, Szymborska, Zagajewski (a collection of his poems *Mystics for Beginners* has been published in 1999), Lipska – Miłosz’s remark about the Polish school in world literature can also extend to the Hebrew language.

## VII

Israel’s audience’s interest in Polish poetry – with probably a few exceptions – is actually the interest of the translators themselves, presumably without inspiration from publishers. The selection of authors and translated works is determined by the translators’ own taste, personal discernment, and then their entrepreneurship that enables publication.

The situation is different with respect to prose, where the proposals of publishers, guided by the various attractive characteristics of works that can count on readership, play a role. Readership has in fact been achieved in Israel by novels and novellas – including a significant number of works for children and young people – written by many Polish writers. Their books, for the most part, also do not pass unnoticed by reviewers.

A good introduction to the world of Polish prose fiction were once two anthologies, published almost simultaneously in 1959.

The first is *Mivchar ha-sippur ha-polani* ([A selection of Polish short stories], translated by Beniamin Tenenbaum-Tene and Szulamit Harewen) bearing the subtitle *One hundred years of Polish prose*, which contains novellas and excerpts from novels by twenty-one writers from Kraszewski to Hłasko. In addition to texts already known from other publications and translated

in the past, the anthology includes samples of writings by authors hitherto absent from the Hebrew language, such as Maria Dąbrowska, Pola Gojawiczyńska, Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Kazimierz Tetmajer, Emil Zegadłowicz, etc.

The second anthology, *Ha-zaam ve-ha-lev* ([Anger and heart], translated by Cwi Arad and Tene) comprises short stories of the Polish “turbulent time,” the “spring in October” of 1956, by Jerzy Andrzejewski, Kazimierz Brandys, Zofia Bystrzycka, Andrzej Kijowski, Aleksander Mańkowski, Tadeusz Różewicz, Maria Paczowska, and Jerzy S. Stawiński.

Both of these selections – questionable and indeed debated by numerous reviewers at the time – were preceded by introductions and supplemented by the authors’ biographical notes.

Among the old classical fiction writers Orzeszkowa (*Meir Ezofowicz*, 1951), Konopnicka (*Olimpijczyk* [The olympian], 1958), a true popularity was gained by Sienkiewicz with the reissues of Lichtenbaum’s translation of *In Desert and Wilderness* in 1970, with two new translations of this novel at the same time – by Uri Orlev (his translation of the novel was prepared for and broadcast on the radio in 13 episodes in 1977) and Shulamit Harewen, and yet another one by Michael Handzelzalec in 1991; and with the reissues *Quo Vadis*, *With Fire and Sword*, *The Deluge*, and *Sir Michael* (the latter translated into Hebrew only in Israel), and a collection of novellas.

Sienkiewicz’s books circulating in Hebrew are intended mainly for young people, and many books by Janusz Korczak, Kornel Makuszyński, Halina Górska, Arkady Fiedler, Ferdynand A. Ossendowski, Jan Brzechwa, Ludwik Jerzy Kern, Igor Newerly, Gustaw Morcinek, Halina Rudnicka, Władysław Umiński, Zofia Urbanowska, and Stanisław Wygodzki were also published (often in several editions) for this category of readers.

## VIII

Prose fiction in translations published in Israel is available both in separate book editions and – with more permanent availability obviously problematic in this case – through publications in magazines and very popular literary supplements to daily newspapers. These translations are numerous, and the preponderance of contemporary, post-World War II works is understandable. However, the pace of publication over the last half-cen-

ture has been noticeably uneven. The previously lively interest in Polish prose seems to have subsided since the end of the 1980s (perhaps in favor of poetry?), which is associated with the perceived crisis of contemporary Polish prose, as well as with the decreased activity or even passing away of translators, critics, reviewers, literary journalists – people on whose activity reception depends.

The interwar literature is represented by:

Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz with a volume including *The Birch Grove* and *The Wilko Girls* (1983); Bruno Schulz with *The Cinnamon Shops* and *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* (1979, 2nd edition 1986) in the same volume; and Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz with *The Career of Nicodemus Dyzma* (1991). The works by Iwaszkiewicz and Mostowicz were translated by Yoram Bronowski, who is also the co-translator – along with Uri Orlev and Rachela Kleiman – of the works by Schulz.

The post-war literature is represented by:

Jerzy Andrzejewski with *Ashes and Diamonds* (1949), *The Inquisitors* (1962), *He Cometh Leaping upon the Mountain* (1964), and *The Gates of Paradise* (1974); Tadeusz Borowski with three short stories from the volume *Farewell to Maria* (1996); Kazimierz Brandys with *The Mother of Kings* along with *The Defense of Grenada* (1963); Tadeusz Breza with *Balthazar's Feast* (1956); Witold Gombrowicz with *Pornography* (1987); Henryk Grynberg with *The Jewish War* (1968); Marek Hłasko with *The Eighth Day of the Week* (1958); Tadeusz Konwicki with *A Dreambook for Our Time* (1966) and *The Polish Complex* (1985); Jan Kuczarb with *A Letter to Wojtek* (1971); Hanna Krall with *The Subtenant* (1989) and a selection of short stories *Evidence for Existence* (1999); Stanisław Lem with *Eden*, *Solaris*, *The Futurological Congress*, and *Perfect Vacuum* (all published in 1981), and *The Star Diaries* (1990); Sławomir Łubieński with *The Ballad of Johnny* (1984), Zofia Romanowiczowa with *Passage Through the Red Sea* (1995); Adolf Rudnicki with *Shakespeare* (1949), *The Dead and the Living Sea* along with *Golden Windows* (1964); Julian Strykowski with *Azril's Dream* (1977) and *Austeria* (1979); Andrzej Szczypiorski with *A Mass for Arras* (1981), *The Beginning* (1991), *American Whisky* (1992); and Bogdan Wojdowski with *Bread for the Departed* (1981).

In the annuals of various magazines, there are hidden short stories and fragments of novels: by Józef Hen, Sławomir Mrożek, Zofia Nałkow-

ska, Jerzy Putrament, Artur Sandauer, Piotr Szewc, Stanisław Vincenz, and Jerzy Zawieyski – to name just a few of the authors whose works have not appeared in separate books.

Essays, memoirs, and non-fiction prose are the genres of the books by Mieczysław Jastrun (*Mickiewicz*, 1956), Ryszard Kapuściński (*The Emperor*, 1989; *Imperium*, 1993), Hanna Krall (*Shielding the Flame*, 1982), Leszek Kołakowski (a collection of texts, 1964), Jan Kott (*The School of the Classics*, 1954), Kazimierz Moczarski (*Conversations with an Executioner*, 1981), Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa (biography of Korczak, 1961), Tadeusz Pankiewicz (*The Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy*, 1985), and Jan Parandowski (several reissues of *Mythology*, 1952). Journals published articles of such authors as Kott, Ryszard Matuszewski, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Jerzy Pomianowski, and Artur Sandauer.

Translations of Polish-language writers residing (permanently or temporarily) in Israel require a separate analysis. Their access to translators, publishers, and magazine editors is facilitated – or at least direct – by the mere fact of being in the same country, and their drive to cross the language barrier and appear in the Israel's “official” literature is certainly very high. This group includes bilingual writers who do not just translate, but simply create both Polish and Hebrew versions of their own texts – examples are Natan Gross, Józef Bau, Halina Birenbaum, and Irit Amiel. Others, despite knowing Hebrew, must rely on translators to some degree.

The entire output of two prominent contemporary Polish prose writers, Ida Fink and Leo Lipski, was written in Israel, but only Fink's books have been published in Hebrew (*A Scrap of Time*, 1975; *The Journey*, 1993; *Notes to Life Stories*, 1995), while Lipski's few texts remain scattered in journals. Selections of short stories by Herbert Friedman (*In the Abyss of Hell*, 1995) and Renata Jabłońska (*King Albert Square*, 1993), a novel by Mina Tomkiewicz (*Bombs and Mice*, 1956), and memoirs by Maria and Mieczysław Mariański (Peled) (*Among Friends and Enemies. Outside the Ghetto in Occupied Krakow*, 1987) were translated.

A whole series of memoirs, especially from the period of the German occupation, were once published as a Hebrew translation of an unpublished manuscript in the original language. Selections of poems by Łucja Glikzman

(1993) and Sonia Mandel-Joffe (1994) were published in a bilingual version, with the original Polish accompanied by a Hebrew translation.

On the other hand, collections of short stories by Władysław Bąk (*Dog, King and Man*, 1972), Aniela Jasińska (four selections published in 1976–1987), Kalman Segal (*Death of an Antiquarian*, 1972), Stanisław Wygodzki (*In Hiding*, 1970), as well as the novel *Detained for Clarification* (1968) were written (in whole or in part) before the authors arrived in Israel.

Without assigning translators' names to individual Polish prose books, it is possible to list collectively some of those whose names have not yet been mentioned – in an approximate generational order: Perec Nof, Dawid Lazer, Mordechaj Chalamisz, Józef Chrust, Teodor Hatalgi, Miriam Akavia, Icchak Komen, Ruth Szenfeld, Ada Pagis, and Irit Amiel.

We should also mention the popularity of contemporary Polish drama. Hebrew theaters have staged the plays of Tadeusz Różewicz (*Card Index*), Sławomir Mrożek (*Tango, The Police, Emigrés*), *Szczęśliwe wydarzenie* [The fortunate event]; *Vatzlav* was published by the theater magazine *Bama* in 1987), Janusz Krasiński (*Czapa* [The death sentence]), and Witold Gombrowicz (*Ivona, Princess of Burgundy*). Strykowski's novel *Przybysz z Narbonne* [Stranger from Narbonne] was prepared (by Jasińska, according to Weinfeld's translation) for broadcasting on the Israeli radio, and Michał Tonecki's plays were broadcast and shown on television many times.

## IX

If one were to describe succinctly the results of this translation process – a long process with varying emphases on interest and publication intensity – the words variety and richness seem the most appropriate.

Translations from Polish appeared in a country that was well prepared for their reception. This was done thanks to historical and literary commentaries, critical interpretation, and biographical information provided by numerous publications that had made the Hebrew literary audience familiar with Polish literature and its individual authors.

Polish literature in Hebrew is treated with the full rights of a living, communicative, artistically and intellectually enriching literature, for which no “leniency” justifying its transmission is applied. This is evidenced by reviews and discussions of Polish works that have not been translated

into Hebrew and by analyses of the work of writers with no works translated into Hebrew (e.g. Norwid, Witkacy, Boy-Żeleński, and others). Another evidence of this is the large number of biographical notes on Polish authors in Hebrew encyclopedias and literary lexicons, the inclusion of, for example, the works of Mickiewicz and Słowacki in textbooks on the history of world literature, and the synthetic sketches on particular eras or types of Polish literature, such as Old Polish literature, modern poetry and prose, the Polish novel, and Polish theater. It was also in Hebrew that the first monograph on Adolf Rudnicki's writing (1991) has been written (by Ruth Szenfeld), well ahead of the Polish scholars.

The sign of a vital – renewed reception, on the other hand, is the resumption of translations of works already published in Hebrew in the past, with their adaptation to the ever-modernizing language. Two different translations of *Anhelli* and *Konrad Wallenrod*, four of *In Desert and Wilderness*, multiple new translations of some poems by Mickiewicz (“Alpujarra” and “The Faris”), Tuwim, Miłosz, Szymborska – testify to the scale of the phenomenon, which can be supported by additional examples.

Perhaps one can even speak of a closing circle: the January (1999) issue of the central monthly Hebrew literature magazine *Moznaim* had the following subtitle on its cover: “Polish issue: the 200th anniversary of the birth of Adam Mickiewicz.” This, I believe, is symbolic, for it closes the circle of publication of this Archpoet's works in the Hebrew language that was started one hundred and sixty years ago by Klaczko's translations of his poems.

Original issue: “Archiwum Emigracji” 2000, no. 3

[https://www.bu.umk.pl/Archiwum\\_Emigracji/gazeta/ae\\_3.pdf](https://www.bu.umk.pl/Archiwum_Emigracji/gazeta/ae_3.pdf)