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FOUND IN TRANSLATION: DORA GABE, SLAVA SHTIPLIEVA AND ANASTASIA GANCHEVA IN THE EDITIORIAL OFFICE OF *THE POLISH-BULGARIAN REVIEW*

Abstract: Despite the growing interest in women's writing, women translators and their achievements are rarely discussed. The article focuses on mechanisms behind the exclusion of women's writing from literary history. It examines the social status of three women translators and demonstrates how their social position contributed to their invisibility. Dora Gabe, Slava Shtiplieva and Anastasia Gancheva were co-workers at *The Polish-Bulgarian Review.* Each developed a different strategy to cope with the unfavourable intellectual climate of interwar Bulgaria. Their biographies show an interdependence between the marital and social status of a woman writer and the esteem of her literary output. They also confirm the claim that translating was thought to be a more appropriate artistic occupation for women because of its lower status than that of writing.

Keywords: Bulgarian interwar literature, gender in translation, translator's social status, women translators.

> We have to devote our life to one highest purpose. If a man carries this purpose within him, a woman should undoubtedly (…) submit to it. To her, serving this purpose means serving the highest aspirations of her husband. A man must not descend to a woman's level! A woman, in turn, should not love a husband who in whatever respect is below her. A man must be much stronger, much deeper. Let him elevate the woman to his level, let him persuade her that every wife has a duty to herself and that this duty compels her to elevate herself to his ideals by understanding him (…), to inspire his spirituality, courage and self-confidence (Kraleva 1987: 77; trans. I.Ś.).

This description of a woman's role can be found in a diary of Boyan Penev, a literary historian, critic and one of the founding fathers of the Slavic Faculty at the University of Sofia. As a polonophile, Penev devoted his entire life to the propagation of Polish culture in Bulgaria. He was the editor of *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* ("Полско-български преглед") and the husband of the poet and translator Dora Gabe.

Research on translation activities of *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* (which helped to establish closer relations between Bulgaria and Poland in the interwar period and greatly influenced members of the Polish-Bulgarian Association in Sofia[1]) rarely considers the work of its female contributors and editors. Moreover, it relegates to marginal comments on Dora Gabe the discussion of relationships between renowned male and female authors – a vital aspect of Bulgarian literary history that deserves scholarly attention (cf. Dąbek 1969; Georgieva 1997). Therefore, I propose to discuss not only the largely forgotten prose translations of Dora Gabe, but also those by Slava Shtiplieva and Anastasia Gancheva, her two contemporaries. The three women worked for *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*; Gancheva was even its editor in the 1930s, thus fulfilling her student dreams. The biweekly published articles devoted to women's issues. It celebrated Anna Karima, one of the most controversial Bulgarian suffragists; it featured translations of Zofia Daszyńska-Gołyńska and Irena Kosmowska.[2] Its editors and contributors were interested in gender issues not only because there were so many educated women writers in the Polish-Bulgarian As-

[1] The members of the Polish-Bulgarian Association were the intellectual elite: politicians, male and female writers, university professors, lawyers, doctors, male and female teachers. Among others were: Mikhail Madjarov, Stefan Mladenov, Alexander Todorov-Balan, Hermenegild Škorpil, Anna Karima, Venelin Ganev and Sabka Koneva. See *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* 5 (1919), 3 (1920), 8 (1920), 32 (1920), 4 (1921), 5 (1921), 1 (1923), 7 (1923), 22 (1923), 22 (1923), 1 (1924). It is also worth quoting Vladimir Svintila's comment on the impact of the translation series published by the Polish-Bulgarian Association from 1919–1925, which produced eleven volumes of Polish classics: "The representatives of the older generation remember the significance of *Biblioteka Polska* (The Polish Library) as well as works by Przybyszewski and Tetmajer for the Bulgarian intellectuals. (…) Such views were also shaped by *The Anthology of Polish Poets* by Dora Gabe, a book which I still see in my mind's eye on my gymnasium desk" (Nichev 1981: 138; trans. I.Ś.).

[2] See the column "Świat Kobiet" (Women's World), *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* 16 (1921), 127–128; Wanda Kosmowska, "Kobieta w polskim sejmie" (A Woman in Polish Sejm) 17 (1922), 134–135, 20 (1922), 159–160, 21 (1922), 166–167; Irena Kosmowska, "Polska kobieta w ogniu bitew" (A Polish Woman in the Heat of Battle), 24 (1922), 191–194; Zofia Gołyńka-Daszyńska, "Rozwój stosunków ekonomicznych między Polską a Bułgarią" (The Development of the Polish-Bulgarian Economic Relations), 9 (1925), 67–68.

sociation, but also because in the interwar period the debate about emancipation intensified.

The story of suffragists

Articles on equal rights for women began to appear more frequently outside committed female press, that is, outside *Female Voice*, *Equal Right* or *Women's Magazine* (Daskalova 2004; Dimitrova 2009) due to the increased political activity of the National Social Movement (Народно социално движение) as well as the fascist and national propaganda, which subordinated the social role of women to the interests of the party. Although women had already made their debut on the political stage, this fact did not strengthen emancipation movements in Bulgaria, which suffered a series of defeats. For example, up to 1901 only men were allowed to study at the University of Sofia, established in 1888. Regulations that already limited female teachers' career (for instance, their salary was ten per cent lower than that of men) were changed for others, equally repressive (for example, married women were forced to give up teaching). The right to vote was granted only to married women, widows or divorcees, as late as 1937 (Daskalova 2004: 182).

In this atmosphere discussions of women's creativity were conducted. The Bulgarian debate was entangled in two great narratives: evolutionist-biological and nationalist. Its participants, who resorted to medicine and biology in order to explain the absence of women in high culture, science and public life as well as women's "natural" lack of imagination and talent, expressed surprisingly similar opinions on the subject of female self-fulfilment. Some of them declared that women's destiny had been shaped by the specificity of their biological make-up, thus the only truly female occupation was giving birth and bringing up children. Women, as a rule, remained closer to nature, closer to instincts; unlike men, they were incapable of abstract thinking and of climbing spiritual heights. As Ivan Ivanov concisely put it in an article entitled "A Man and a Woman in Art, Science and Philosophy": "A man employs logical thinking and creates in sciences and philosophy, a woman does not apply the rules of logic and thus cannot create" (Dimitrova 2009; trans. I.Ś.).

Others saw a woman in the traditional roles of a mother and a wife. Her status defined in relation to the specific conceptual centre – a man

and a family created with him – allowed certain privileges. In accordance with this vision, women had a right to education that would prepare them for the duties of a man's companion and a mother. As wives and mothers, women could also become muses of their husbands and sons; they could inspire man's creativity. The opposing images of the woman of intellect and the woman of inspiration, described by the Nietzschean philosopher Janko Janev, are very telling: "A true woman is a woman of inspiration, the one for whom a genius lives. A woman of civilisation, in turn, become cold and strange to instincts. The first hates most the abstract sciences and theoretical intellect in general, the second reads thick books and likes writing treatises" (Dimitrova 2009; trans. I.Ś.). Also one of the well-known suffragists, Ljuba Kasarova, saw the muse as the main occupation for women: "By looking casually at the work of a woman as a male poet's inspiration, we can see his greatness and authority" (Dimitrova 2009; trans. I.Ś.). Even if a woman was granted the right to take part in creative processes, she was not considered able to create truly "original" genres; she was only allowed to pursue the writing which "accompanied" literature, namely literary criticism and journalism.

The belief in creative possibilities of women followed the conventional gender divide, with biology sanctioning the higher value of male creativity. When female writing met male standards, it was valued. Such a positive evaluation was evident in similes used by literary critics and writers: "a woman like a man," "a woman on a par with a male poet," "a woman, similarly to a man." Significantly, women themselves defined their writing through gender and in opposition to men's work, internalizing the divide, acknowledging that a woman wrote best, when she wrote the way a man did (Jovcheva, Bojadzieva 1927).

Towards the end of the interwar period it was exactly a woman, a recognized author of historical novels, Fani Popova-Mutafova,[3] who presented nationalist views on the women's question and the traditional thinking about the social status of women. In a debate about "a new Bulgarian woman,"[4] which started in the 1930s and was analysed by Nina Dimitrova, Fani Popova-Mutafova claimed that emancipation caused nothing but loss

[3] She published more than thirty works with the print-run of 3000–6000 copies, although at the time the largest was usually 1500–2000 (Daskalova 1993).

[4] This term followed the Anglo-Saxon phrase used to describe the 1920s as "the time of the new woman," although one has to remember about significant differences between the suffragist movements in the Balkans and in Western Europe.

to both women and the nation; that fashionable ladies wore the masks of lawyers, writers and teachers, but in truth they were fulfilling themselves only in the role of mothers; that their most important duty was to give birth to healthy and numerous offspring.[5] According to Dimitrova, this discourse tries to separate Bulgarian women from the global suffragist movements. By claiming that Bulgarian women kept the "eternal" attributes of their womanhood and gracefully assumed the roles of mothers, wives and inspirers of men, their special, supposedly "better" place among other European women was postulated (Dimitrova 2006). It was yet another strategy aimed at neutralizing local aspirations to acknowledge women's subjectivity.

Translators, writers, wives and lovers

It comes as no surprise that so many female translators contributed to *The Polish-Bulgarian Review.* They perfectly fit the role of imitators appointed to them by the society – they practise an invisible profession which cannot compete in prestige with the social standing and authority of the original author. Moreover, the translators working for *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* acted out the strategy of Boyan Penev, who "colonised" Bulgarian literature, trying to force it to follow the models of Polish Romanticism (Simeonova-Konach 2003). Slava Shtiplieva and Anastasia Gancheva were his students. In her *récit de voyage* Gancheva admits that she owes her way of understanding Polish culture, literature and reality to Boyan Penev and to his apotheosis of Romanticism:

> I was walking down an ancient street of Vilnius, separated from it by a curtain of tears. I was weeping with the emotion I could not subdue. "You are deeply affected by it," a kind-hearted Vilnius matron who accompanied us said, a bit surprised; she was the head of a trade school for women and watched me and my colleague Shtiplieva crying with emotion. "We come here as if it was a pilgrimage to Jerusalem," we answered, "up until now these places were legendary to us" (1924: 92; trans. I.Ś.).

[5] Fani Popova-Mutafova promoted large families, but she herself had only one child. She believed that women should not pursue careers after having children, but she supported her husband and was politically active. These discrepancies between Mutafova's claims and her biography are pointed out by Nina Dimitrova and Inna Peleva, whom I often quote here.

Further on, Gancheva explains the reason for her attitude towards Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn:

> Someone who knew how these first students of Polish literature course, enchanted by professor Boyan Penev, worshipped Mickiewicz would not find it odd that those who arrived at this place, sacred in their memories, felt as if they were in a fairy land (based on the translation by Teresa Dąbek-Wirgowa 1969: 22; trans. I.Ś.)

Boyan Penev's wife, who had an opportunity to become acquainted with her husband's didactic method, was "infected" by him with the awe for Mickiewicz, Polish Romanticism and Polish literature, as an expert on the history of Bulgarian literature Teresa Dąbek-Wirgowa put it (1969: 28).

Behind this qualification, used quite subconsciously, hides a narrative unarticulated in the Slavonic studies not because of prudery, but because of the unwillingness to deal with non-literary texts (letters, diaries, memoirs) or simply because of too optimistic an oversight. However, the story of women writing in Bulgarian should be supplemented with information from less canonical sources because it has the aura of scandal and gossip.

The majority of writers and suffragists came from the wealthy middle class. Their husbands and lovers had a high social standing, performed important state functions or were acclaimed journalists, magazine editors, respected writers and poets. Julia Malinova was the wife of Aleksander Malinov, Vela Blagoeva of Dimitri Blagoev, Kristina Gicheva-Michailcheva of Dimitri Michialchev (the editor of *Philosophical Review*), Mara Belcheva of Pencho Slaveykov. Anna Karima divorced Yanko Sakazov, Evgenia Mars had an affair with Ivan Vazov, Iana Iazova with Aleksander Balabanov, Elisaveta Bagrjana with Boyan Penev. The list of marriages and relationships is very long. In an article on organisations promoting women's right to vote, Svetoslav Zivkov (2006) claims that marriages of female activists did not have a positive influence on the development of the women's liberation movement because their husbands often were members of competing political camps, which caused disagreements in women's organizations.[6]

Relationships of writing women with talented writers and poets had, in turn, other consequences – they kindled discussions about the true authorship of texts signed with female names. Literary disagreements which

[6] In this way the author explains the reasons behind the fierce conflicts between Julia Malinova and Anna Karima over the post of the chairman of the Union of Women Writers.

originated in drawing-rooms developed into moral scandals, which always started with questioning the legitimacy of the authorship of a given work. The Bulgarian patriarchal society could not allow women to achieve the status of an artist and used current popular culture catches to refuse them any creativity. Texts by women in intimate relationships with writing men were said to be authored by someone else. Aleksander Balabanov, the translator of Goethe, was supposed to have written texts of Iana Iazova, one of the few female poets of the time. The works of Evgenia Mars, playwright and prose-writer, were claimed to have been authored by Ivan Vazov.[7] The second, kinder, way to prove the hypothesis that women could not create independently, was the analysis of their works within the master-student model. When it concerned a creative couple who maintained an intimate relationship, the model had its complementary subcategory: the inspirer-mother. Thus the relationships between Mara Belcheva and Pancho Slaveykov, Dora Gabe and Peyo Yavorov, Elisaveta Bagrjana and Boyan Penev were (and still are) described.

This peaceful model of the male teacher and the female student is used by Teresa Dąbek-Wirgowa to analyse Gabe's recollections of her beginnings as a translator. The scholar censors them slightly in her own translation:

> Penev, convinced of the benefits of translating Polish poetry, **encouraged** his wife to try her pen at translation. He himself chose the fragments of *Pan Tadeusz*, which he analysed during his Polish seminar and prepared a word-for-word translation of the texts. **On his recommendation**, on the basis of the word-for-word translation, Gabe made her first attempt at translation. The scholar pinned his hopes on his wife, so he **urged** her to work systematically and corrected her first translations himself. According to the belief that a translation should be based on the original, he started to teach Polish to the poet. So Gabe made her first steps in the field of translation under the guidance of the distinguished Slavic scholar. Let us hand over to the translator herself: "When life again carried on as usual, in Boyan Penev's lectures there appeared pages devoted to Mickiewicz and Słowacki," Dora Gabe remembers the year 1917. And later on: "I haven't started learning Polish yet. Boyan Penev translated a fragment of *Pan Tadeusz* and **persuaded** me to draw it up in verse. In this way we translated the second and third fragment, and in 1919, when I went to Krystec in the Tryavna Balkan, he sent me some translations from *Sonety krymskie* (*Sonnets from the Crimea*) by Mickiewicz, again **urging** me to work. When I came back, he started to teach me grammar, he examined me each morning, and after consciously misleading me, he **laughed** at my mistakes and helplessness. That is

[7] Gossip and literary scandals have been interestingly described by Inna Pelewa (2009).

> how – I don't know when – I have learned to read and understand. Penev half jokingly made me his **zealous** helper, and then – an enthusiastic propagator of Polish poetry" (Dąbek 1969: 28–29; emphasis added; trans. I.Ś.).[8]

When one compares the above-quoted fragment with the text of the poet's memoirs in Bulgarian, one clearly sees a discord between the historical and literary discourse and that of autobiography and memoirs. Gabe does not use such mild verbs as "encourage," "recommend" and "persuade," but monotonously repeats *застави ме* (to make somebody do something by exerting pressure; to force somebody, to oblige somebody to do something). In her memoirs she presents her mountain trip as a little forced by her husband: *изпрати ме* (he sent me) and Penev is not so jovially playful in his laughter, but he is mockingly sarcastic: *надсмива се*. The Polish translation omits the sentence: *Но той не се задоволи с това* (He did not settle for this only), which introduces the grammar lesson episode.

A couple years after Dąbek-Wirgowa, another scholar, Petyr Dinekov, describes Gabe's first translations using love metaphors:

> **The strongest** and **the most beautiful love** of Dora Gabe's youth is embodied in her Polish translations; the poet remains **faithful to this love** to this day: she does not shun any initiative connected with Polish poetry, she is still its **fervent admirer**. Probably **this fervent attachment to the first passions** of her youth makes her so astonishingly lively, energetic and active in our times (Dinekov 1977: 563; emphasis added; trans. I.Ś.).

This discourse highlights the private biography of translations from Polish published in *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*. Undoubtedly, they resulted from the marriage of Dora Gabe and Boyan Penev. Keeping in mind the turbulent history of this love and art relationship (Boyan Penev's unfaithfulness, Dora Gabe's suicide attempt, separations), about which Snezina Kraleva, Dora Gabe's biographer, wrote: "The marriage of Dora Gabe and Boyan Penev sentenced Dora Gabe the poet to silence" (1987: 77; trans. I.Ś.), we have to attempt to uncover what the scholarly metaphors hide. Following in Lori Chamberlain's footsteps, we can read in these metaphors the configuration of power in the Bulgarian society. Boyan Penev succeeded in infecting his wife with his great idea and Gabe began to serve it zealously. Between the first poetry collection published in 1908 and the second

[8] Emphasis added. Compare Dora Gabe, *Боян Пенев и полско-българско сближение* (1994: 422).

published in 1928, the poet translated Polish poetry. She translated Juliusz Słowacki's *Anhelli* and Adam Mickiewicz's *Sonnets from the Crimea*; she published *The Anthology of Polish Poets* and Jan Kasprowicz's *Hymny* (Hymns). She herself thus commented on this period: "When I married Boyan Penev (…), I was more engaged in his pursuits. I was enriched by his influence, but I was losing my identity. I did not live my own inner life, but his. Unfortunately, my development came only after his death" (in: Kraleva 1987: 77; trans. I.Ś.). Behind the love metaphors hides also the tension between an imitator and creator, between a "fertile" translator publishing "beautiful" books and the original poet, who, according to Miglena Nikolcina, always surpasses the receptive abilities of her readers (2002: 21).

Nikolcina explains how romantic relationships of female writers influence the construction of repetitive plots which sanction the existence of the historical and literary hierarchy. Those plots, akin to *Pygmalion*, legitimize the position of a man as the only guarantor of literary quality. The deliberate forgetting of selected biographical facts enriches them. When commenting on Gabe's strategy (in order to rewrite such stories that are told and taught ad infinitum), Nikolcina forgets, however, about women from Boyan Penev and his wife's circle who had no chance of claiming any position in the historical and literary hierarchy because they did not find their courageous "creator" and guardian.

Without a husband

While Boyan Penev's authority secured good conditions for Dora Gabe's translation (he gave her the opportunity to publish and the editorial guidance of an expert), the unmarried translator and poet Slava Shtiplieva had no such literary ally. Moreover, she earned herself a mighty enemy, who always pointed out her translatory clumsiness and misguided ambition to appear alongside Dora Gabe as a translator of Polish Romantic poetry. This unfortunate positioning led to the scholarly neglect of Shtiplieva's biography, her eleven books of original poetry and numerous translations from Polish as well as an anthology of Polish poetry which she published at her own cost.

Shtiplieva regularly contributed to *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*, long before Gabe mastered her Polish. She was born near Sofia. After graduat-

ing from the University of Sofia, where she took part in Boyan Penev's Polish seminar, she taught in the countryside for many years. Her life ended in the capital, in solitude, poverty and complete oblivion.

Shtiplieva's poetry deserves a mention, given the number of poems and prefaces accompanying them as well as journalistic pieces, which provide a metatext for the interpretation of her poetry. Recent commentaries emphasise the conventionality of Shtiplieva's poetics. Her characteristic themes, such as spinstership, relationships with a sister and a friend, the absence of a mother figure and the architectural presentation of the domestic space, open up interesting scholarly perspectives, especially if they are discussed in the context of Shtiplieva's peers. However, when one looks for an answer to the question why this poet's translations are most often neglected, one has to tell the story of Shtiplieva's fight for a literary ally who could have competed with Penev's authority.

Shtiplieva's unpublished correspondence with the symbolist poet Nikolai Liliev and with the university professor and old Bulgarian literature researcher Emanuil Dimitrov proves that she tried to secure their support. Her letters to Liliev from the end of 1936 are concerned with the translation of *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*) by Adam Mickiewicz. The drama was staged at the National Theatre in 1937. Shtiplieva asks Liliev, who was then a programme director, to intervene in the editing of the already translated text:

> Would it not be proper, if my translation, finished on 15th of this moth and passed on to Mr. Adreichinov to be checked for "philological correctness," was also edited by you, because it is translated in verse? The more so, because philological coherence is one thing and translation in verse another: every word, which was removed earlier, carried by the wave of the poem, now will come back and transform [the translation], and possibly nothing will remain of my translation. I believe that the last word belongs to somebody else, who will compare both editions. And maybe [the manuscript] is already being copied on a typewriter. Take an interest in this, Sir.[9]

A year earlier, the poet used a similarly commanding and desperate tone while addressing Dimitrov to beg him for a review of her poetry book entitled *Apocrypha*:

[9] The НБВК – БИА Archive, F. no. 719, inventory no. 341, 1–7; trans. I.Ś.

> I ask you sincerely, Sir, because apart from you I don't know anybody who has entered our old literature in order to carry its lyrical-poetic analysis, for you to do me a hyperfavour of writing several lines on my *Apocrypha* in the near future. (…) If there is such a need, Sir, I will pay for your work. I have no other way of fighting the ignorance which overwhelms us. Your name and understanding will save me. Do it, Sir!! I'll be waiting.[10]

The history of Liliev's editorial help continues; unfortunately, it is not entirely documented, but a lot can be guessed. In 1955, on the one hundredth anniversary of Mickiewicz's death, the poet thanks for editing her translation and admits: "I remain with best feelings towards you, Sir, and with those words I want to apologise for the time when I felt differently."[11] From this letter we also learn that the anniversary collection of the Bulgarian translations of the great Polish Romantic poet edited by the Slavic professor Petyr Dinekov, contained the fragments of *Dziady*, edited by Liliev. Shtiplieva herself was apparently not informed about the fact and she only read about the publication in the literary press. What are those not best feelings of the poet? Did the theatre director make corrections that were too daring? Did the translator think that he should have informed her about the collection? Does, finally, this note have a more personal character? Whatever the answer, we find ourselves again in the circle of unequal literary relationships, where men decide about the creativity of the woman. As in Gabe's case, Shtiplieva engages herself in a conflict with a poet who is to help her and whom she later forgives.[12] However, unlike Gabe, surrounded by Penev's influences, Sthiplieva cannot count on Dinekov's support. The Slavist criticizes her work several times and as a reviewer he does not allow her translation of *Pan Tadeusz* to be published (Dinekov 1955: 89).

The absence of an legislator of Shtiplieva's creative attempts is not the only explanation of the fate of her translations. In the literary world mirroring the asymmetry confirmed by the state law, where the privilege of having a say belonged exclusively to wives, widows and lovers, Shtiplieva's translations had no chance of reaching the audience. They did not follow Penev's ideas, which strongly influenced the reception of Polish culture in Bulgaria in the interwar period and later on. Desislava Georgieva describes two main models of the reception of Polish literature in Bulgaria in the

[10] The НБВК – БИА Archive, F. no. 292, inventory no. 8, 502; trans. I.Ś.

[11] The НБВК – БИА Archive, F. no. 719, inventory no. 341, 1–7.

[12] I mean the relationship between Gabe and the symbolist poet Yavorov, which is considered crucial to her career.

1920s and 1930s, which have emerged from her study of the constructs of "Europeanism" and "Slavism" functioning in Bulgarian culture (1997: 157–158). One model, called *polonica incognita*, encompasses the utopian aesthetics represented by Boyan Penev. Here otherness plays a crucial role. Mysticism, the cult of national heroes, the respect for the past, messianism – these are the characteristics of Polish poetry underlined by Penev. Thus he creates a neo-romantic style of reading Polish classics. The culmination of this type of reception is *The Anthology of Polish Poets* published in 1921. The featured works present more than a hundred years of Polish poetry, from Adam Mickiewicz to Kazimierz Wierzyński, in Dora Gabe's translation. The second model of reception was called *slavica cognita* – the key to understanding Władysław Reymont and Gabriela Zapolska is that which is known, comparable, typical, not only of Poles but also of other Slavs. While the first model compensates for the lack of Bulgarian Romanticism, the second is, paradoxically, closer to the synchrony of translation postulated by the supporters of Europeanization of Bulgarian literature. Shtiplieva decidedly supports the synchronization of the reception of Polish literature in Bulgarian, also trying to shorten the distance between the foreign text and its reader. In her anthology of Polish poetry, which she sees as a continuation of Penev's and Gabe's work, Shtiplieva introduces works of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Leopold Staff, Kazimierz Wierzyński and Kazimiera Iłłakowiczówna. This collection is less representative than Penev and Gabe's anthology, but Shtiplieva hopes to supplement it in the next part, which is to contain works by Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and others.

Also in her commentaries on Mickiewicz's *Dziady* Shtiplieva tries to bring the drama closer to the receptive abilities of the Bulgarian readers, playing down the usual pompous tone of writing about Polish Romanticism. On the one hand, as Penev's student, she continues his didactic strategy by translating works from which younger Bulgarian poets, both male and female, can learn. On the other hand, she stresses also other values of Polish Romantic poetry. When translating, she also gives herself a poetic license, which is inappropriate for a student of Penev, who postulates faithfulness towards the spirit of the foreign text.[13] It is significantly related to her own poetic creed and deserves a much more detailed analysis. Shtiplieva's translations do not conform to the reception model characteristic

[13] Penev and Gabe created the contemporary translation school. Their maximalistic approach was needed in the interwar period, when the ratio of translated books to books written in Bulgarian was 100 to 1. "A second-hand" translation was a common practice at the time.

of the 1930s. Polish literature, well known and often translated, had already secured its place in the canon of foreign literatures and its reception was considerably shaped by personal fancies of Boyan Penev, who thought that Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński were the most representative of Polish poets. The image of Polish spirituality, which Penev championed, was connected to an extreme nationalistic attitude. Polish martyrology was seen to mirror Bulgarian tragic history, which, in turn, made sense as an indispensable offering of Slavs in European history (Georgieva 1997: 156–157). Shtiplieva's translations did not fit the stereotype that added splendour to the ideas of Bulgarian messianism.

Not simply a carnival revolution

The above-mentioned model helps to explain why translations of Polish poetry were considered more valuable than translations of prose. It also allows an answer to the question why Anastasia Gancheva's translations remained unnoticed (Gabe's versions of Reymont and Sienkiewicz are also less known). Anastasia Gancheva studied at the University of Sofia with Slava Shtiplieva. She also took part in Boyan Penev's Polish seminar. Since 1917, when The Polish-Bulgarian Society was established, she was its secretary and librarian. Later on, she became a member of its board, was a co-editor of *The Polish Library* series, and from 1931 she edited *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*, while fascist propaganda intensified. The magazine had changed – literary themes were replaced by economic, political and social issues.

Gancheva is known as the translator of Zygmunt Krasiński's *Irydion*. Her translation was first published in *The Review* in instalments from 1919 to1920, and later appeared as a separate book with her preface. Moreover, during the several years of her collaboration with the magazine she translated many prose works by Henryk Sienkiewicz, Adolf Dygasiński and Gabriela Zapolska.

In Gancheva's biography, one can find a characteristic suffragist motif. In the early issues of *The Review*, in the reports of The Polish-Bulgarian Society, which give the names, surnames and occupations of its members, Gancheva's name is annotated with the word "teacher." In later issues, a rather enigmatic word "writer" appears next to her name. Krassimira Daskalova's bibliography mentions one book by Gancheva. It is a collec-

tion entitled *The Aegean Sea. A Students' Association*, about the history of the association. The book is an interesting record of the university life after the First World War and it can be treated as a predecessor of the academic novel. It is written with a frivolous sense of humour, which Gancheva did not allow herself when publishing in *The Review*. Alongside the story of the association, the author subtly describes the history of her friendship with Slava Shtiplieva, which began when both students had to defend their right to be present among the students forming the association:

> The last, third fantasy of our professor, which needed to be dispelled, was his opinion, or more accurately a question, aimed this time at the female students: would the fact that women engage in intellectual pursuits above their abilities affect badly the health of next generations. Here opinions for and against were voiced. Although this dispute did not lead anywhere, at least two female representatives of the association formed a friendship because one of them with conviction tried to defend inborn and wide intellectual possibilities of a woman's mind. This friendship continues to this day (1920: 16–17; trans. I.Ś.).

If a study of feminist awakenings of women writing in Bulgarian was to be written, Gancheva's documentary book would feature in it importantly. A couple of pages further, the writer describes a carnival journalist revolution which she organised with Shtiplieva: while the editors were absent, the two women prepared their own issue of the magazine published by the association: "When the only two members of the Aegean Sea were left (…) they thought that the magazine wouldn't come out that week due to the editors' absence, so they decided to transform themselves from authors into editors and publish their own magazine" (1920:18; trans. I.Ś.). Although their issue was "light-hearted," in the 1930s Gancheva actually took over the editorship of *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*. Her own recognition of herself as a writer – Gancheva wrote literary commentaries, reportage and travelogues as well as translated from Polish – is telling. On the one hand, it proves that her self-confidence was growing and that she consciously shaped her own identity; on the other, it shows how low the status of a translator was.

In her translation career Gancheva did not meet any guardians or inspirers. Gabe and Shtiplieva were higher in the literary hierarchy because both of them signed their names under their own original works. In 1932 Shtiplieva was even awarded a first prize by the minister of culture for her collection of poems entitled *Нива* (Field). To put her name down in history, Gancheva needed the status of a creator, not of an imitator. However,

she did not live as long as Gabe to be able to reverse the laws governing Bulgarian literary life and she did not make an effort to gain more respect for female translators. Clearly, she had political aspirations and tried to engage herself in the activities which would give her more opportunities than translation. She did not limit herself to pleading for Boyan Penev's aesthetic ideals and looked for other authorities.

The spring of 1925 sees an issue of *The Review* where Gancheva's picture has a caption: "editor and administrator."[14] The majority of the articles in this issue are dedicated to the history of the Polish-Bulgarian Society and to the achievements of Tadeusz Grabowski, a Slavist from Kraków, who for many years was an editor of *Biuletyn Polski* (The Polish Bulletin)[15] and then a chairman of the Polish legation. In her text Gancheva, a consummate chronicler, writing about the society and the hardships that accompanied the legalization of a Polish branch in Sofia, does not forget about the active women who supported Polish organisations with their skills and talents. She devotes quite a lot of space to Wanda Zembrzuska and Helena Grabowska. The first edited *Biuletyn Polski* during Grabowski's absences, while the second helped her husband to establish contacts with Bulgarian intellectuals. Gancheva mentions in passing the female translators cooperating with the magazine, Gabe and Shtiplieva. She treats herself with a similar severity. She claims matter-of-factly that she will not pause to describe the magazine she edits because its readers have access to annual reports, which contain detailed descriptions of its activities. Gancheva often underlines the fact that *The Review*'s layout and its columns resemble *Biuletyn*, edited by Grabowski and Zembrzuska. Thus she presents herself continuing Grabowski's work, supporting the clear political stance of the magazine, where the cultural column is a mere supplement. After all, Gancheva reduces the number of translations from Polish literature published in the magazine, as well as the funding for "The Polish Library" series, while expanding the economic and social sections "because of their crucial importance at present."[16] Translating was only one step in her career as a journalist and editor. Gancheva's self-fulfilment is an

[14] See *The Polish-Bulgarian Review*, 5–6 (1925), 48.

[15] It was a section of the Press Office established by Tadeusz Grabowski in 1915. It represented the political interests of the Supreme National Committee in Sofia and in the Balkans.

[16] *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* 5–6 (1925), 45.

example of successful emancipation in the era not beneficial to Bulgarian women's movements.

Each of the three translators cooperating with *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* worked out her own model of independence from the patriarchal rules and demands. Their intellectual biographies are impressive in view of the inefficiency and weakness of such organisations as The Women Writers' Union. However, taking into consideration the easiness with which their names have been erased from the history of the magazine, one can assume that their strategies of making a mark in public life were subject to all the limitations affecting women in Bulgarian patriarchal society. Dora Gabe, Slava Shtiplieva and Anastasia Gancheva internalised the "male" ways of functioning in literature, society and private life. The women's activity in *The Polish-Bulgarian Review* can be described as self-restrictive, considering the models of Polish female creativity in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century outlined by Grażyna Borkowska (1996: 29) – with the reservation that analogies between the historical and social conditioning of these models in Poland and in Bulgaria should be avoided. There still remains a question to be answered: how many of these limitations were women translators able to overcome thanks to their familiarity with European and Polish feminist thought?

trans. Ilona Śmietana

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