

The Need for a Translator

In the first part of *Oresteia* by Aeschylus – the only trilogy of Greek tragedies that has survived – in the fourth epeisodion, which is perhaps most poignant and important for the understanding of the entire tragedy, the chorus, seeing still silent Cassandra “like game chased” [“podobna do zwierzyny, ściganej pogonią”]¹ says, “a clear interpreter she needs” [“snać bardzo dokładnego trzeba jej tłumacza”]. I make these words, explicitly expressing the need for a translator, a starting point for further deliberations on translation, in particular about one passage in Jan Kasprowicz’s translation from the beginning of the second part of the trilogy, in which Orestes – the avenger – appears on the stage at the tomb of his father, Agamemnon. This section is missing in the surviving manuscripts. When it comes to the original text, only nine lines from its beginning have survived, reconstructed on the basis of other surviving accounts (and published in critical editions at least from the beginning of the nineteenth century), and twelve from the end of Orestes’ speech. In Jan Kasprowicz’s translation, this passage consists of forty-six lines.

Before explaining and analysing why the introduction to the second part of the *Oresteia* is almost twice as long as in the original, and before describing what role earlier translations played in it, I will first present the context of Kasprowicz’s translation.

The Young-Poland poet had been fascinated by the author of the *Oresteia* since his school years. This mysterious, metaphysical affinity with the Greek poet, this peculiar spiritual kinship, already noted by Kasprowicz’s contemporaries, is reflected in numerous Aeschylean elements present in his original work. Kasprowicz openly admits it: “Aeschylus is the king of tragedians, the most powerful tragedian in the world” [“Ajschylos jest królem tragików, najpotężniejszym tragikiem świata”].² This explicit admiration for Aeschylus was combined with his love for him. Maria Kasprowiczowa, the poet’s third wife, writes, “How faithfully does he feel timeless works. Goethe, Shakespeare, Shelley, Aeschylus, Dante – these are poets who to him ‘will remain forever’. He especially loves Aeschylus and Shelley” [“Jak wiernie

¹ Translations from Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* from Jan Kasprowicz (*Dzieje Orestesa* [*The Story of Orestes*], Lwów [Lviv] 1908).

² Ajschylos [Aeschylus], *Prometeusz skowany* [*Prometheus Bound*], trans. J. Kasprowicz, Kraków 1921, p. 71.

natomiast odczuwa dzieła nieprzemijające. Goethe, Szekspir, Shelley, Ajschylos, Dante – to są dla niego poeci, którzy »pozostaną na zawsze«. Zwłaszcza kocha Ajschylosa i Shelleya”].³ The essence of this admiration and love was his translation of all of Aeschylus’ dramas, which were included together with translations of Euripides in fifteen volumes published in 1931. In the introduction to the *Oresteia*, Kasprowicz combined both elements:

Oby książka niniejsza, w którą niemałom włożył miłości, przyczyniła się do ukochania prawdziwej, wielkiej sztuki; oby najpotężniejszy tragik świata nie był tylko przedmiotem badań filologów i estetów, lecz zmienił się w ogólną własność społeczeństwa naszego; oby twórca grecki, choć i w moim przekładzie greckim być nie przestał, powiększył nieliczne grono prawdziwych twórców polskich.⁴

In the last part of the cited sentence, we can find two signals of Kasprowicz’s translation strategy, which, although not complementary,⁵ coexist in his translation. On the one hand, he believes that he has remained “faithful” [“wierny”] to the Greek author; elsewhere in the introduction, he writes directly: “[...] my translation is faithful, although not always externally” [“przekład mój jest wierny, choć nie zawsze zewnętrznie”].⁶ We can find the confirmation of this conviction in his wife’s journal, in which she quotes her husband’s words on his translation work: “when I begin to translate a poet, I see his entire artistic forge immediately” [“gdy zaczynam tłumaczyć jakiegoś poetę, widzę natychmiast całą jego artystyczną kuźnię”]⁷ and on the pride with which he sees his work: “nobody could translate Aeschylus like myself. Of this I am proud” [“nikt nie potrafił tak tłumaczyć Ajschylosa jak ja. Z tego jednego jestem dumny”].⁸ It is worth remembering these words as they are a kind of creation, irrespective of whether they are engendered by Kasprowicz himself or by his wife, kindling the flame of his legend. This does not change the fact that the phrase “kinship of spirits” [“pokrewieństwo

³ M. Kasprowiczowa, *Dziennik [Journal]*, Warszawa 1958, p. 79.

⁴ *Dzieje Orestesa [The Story of Orestes]*, p. 11. “May this book, in which I have put a lot of love, contribute to the love of true, great art; may the most powerful tragedian in the world not only be studied by philologists and aesthetes but be transformed into the common property of our society; may the Greek artist – although in my translation he would not cease to be Greek – enlarge the small group of true Polish authors.”

⁵ Cf. T. Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, *Modernist Translation. An Eastern European Perspective. Models, Semantics, Functions*. Frankfurt am Main, 2016.

⁶ *Dzieje Orestesa [The Story of Orestes]*, p. 10.

⁷ *Dziennik [Journal]*, p. 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

duchów”] was characteristic of early modernists.⁹ On the other hand, he immediately admits certain “unfaithfulness” [“niewierność”], hoping that the ancient poet in his translation will be considered a non-Greek author. The confirmation of this strategy, the strategy of domestication, can be found in his entire translation, starting with the title. Aeschylus’ trilogy is commonly known in Polish as *Oresteja* [*Oresteia*], and its parts as *Agamemnon*, *Ofiarnice* [*The Libation Bearers*], and *Eumenidy* [*The Eumenides*]. All Polish translations have such titles, except for the one in question. Kasprowicz gives Aeschylus’ work the title of *Dzieje Orestesa* [*The Story of Orestes*] and its parts, *Agamemnon*, *Ofiary (Choefory)* [*Sacrifices (Choepori)*], and *Święto Pojednania (Eumenidy)* [*The Feast of Reconciliation (The Eumenides)*]. The words in parentheses are a kind of nod to the foreignness of the text. The title of the last part imposes the interpretation of the entire tragedy and draws the reader’s attention to its conclusion straight away, in a way anticipating it. In effect, when seeing the common title *The Eumenides*, the reader does not know what to expect and awaits the unfolding events in suspense; the reader of the translation in question, on the other hand, is basically deprived of this suspense. Other translation elements confirming the domestication strategy are phrases that Kasprowicz derives from Polish culture and Christian religion; he also avoids using archaic and artificial language and reproduces Greek metre through the common at the time and dominating Polish (rhyming) verse.¹⁰

The Story of Orestes translated by Kasprowicz was published first in 1908 in Lviv. The copy I am using used to belong to Stefan Srebrny (1890–1962), a distinguished classical philologist of the first half of the twentieth century, theatre producer (in 1938 in Vilnius) and translator of the *Oresteia* (his translation was not published until 1952).

According to the aforementioned introduction, the reference point of Kasprowicz’s translation was an earlier translation by Zygmunt Węclewski, which, according to the poet, “forced me to rack my brains over and admit many times: I do not understand” [“trzeba łamać sobie głowę i niejednokrotnie powiedzieć: nie rozumiem”],¹¹ and editions by Henryk Weil¹² and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931), the most eminent German philologist

⁹ Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, *Wczesnomodernistyczna krytyka przekładu (w Polsce)* [*Early Modernist Translation Criticism (in Poland)*], in: *Historyczne oblicza przekładu* [*Historical Faces of Translation*], eds. P. Fast, A. Car, W. M. Osadnik, Katowice 2011, pp. 35–49.

¹⁰ Cf. T. Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, *Przekład udomowiony w kulturze polskiej wczesnego modernizmu* [*Translation Domesticated in the Culture of Early Polish Modernism*], “Między Oryginałem a Przekładem” [“Between Original and Translation”], vol. 26, pp. 101–115.

¹¹ *Dzieje Orestesa* [*The Story of Orestes*], p. 10.

¹² Aeschylus, *Tragoediae*, Lipsiae 1891.

at the time. Of the latter Kasprowicz writes, “[...] [I translated to Polish] ‘Choephori’ from Wilamowitz, whose studies and translations have opened my eyes to the way in which one should understand and recreate in today’s language the everlasting, immortal Greek tragedy” [“[...] »Choefory« {spolszczyłem} z edycji Wilamowitza, którego studia i przekłady otworzyły mi oczy, jak należy pojmować i jak w języku dzisiejszym odtwarzać wiecznie żywą, nieśmiertelną tragedię grecką”].¹³ Although Kasprowicz mentions several important names of philologists, the influence of the latter scholar is of key importance, not only with regard to the second part of the trilogy, about which he writes directly, and the beginning of which is the subject of my interest, but to the entire tragedy. Kasprowicz does not mention this, but Srebrny notes it in his copy, adding appropriate annotations.

In 1885, an edition and a translation of *Agamemnon* was published by Wilamowitz, and in 1896 – of *Choephori*. A selection of Greek tragedies he translated appeared in print from 1899 onward. In the second volume of *Greek Tragedies*, in 1900, a translation of all three parts of the *Oresteia* was published. Based on this information and Kasprowicz’s annotations,¹⁴ we can deduce that he began working on the *Oresteia* after 1896 when *Choephori* he used was released. Only indirectly does Kasprowicz mention German editions in Wilamowitz’s translation (as those that “opened” his eyes, emphasising the German scholar’s edition as the basis for his translation). However, taking into consideration that he mentions taking stage notes “from Węclewski and Wilamowitz” [“z Węclewskiego i Wilamowitza”], as well as the fact that the editions of the original text of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* in Wilamowitz’s study do not have such information, but his German translations do, and also the comparisons of the stage directions introduced into the Polish translation with those proposed by the German scholar,¹⁵ there is no doubt that Kasprowicz not only knew these translations but also used them extensively, especially the 1900 edition. In 1908, when the Polish translation was published, there had already been five editions of the second volume of *Greek Tragedies* in circulation.

So, what does the passage in question look like in the translation of the poet who “for none but for a few insignificant, very small inserts, [allowed] himself no concessions” [“na żadne, oprócz kilku nic nie znaczących, bardzo drobnych wstawek, nie {pozwalał} sobie

¹³ *Dzieje Orestesa* [*The Story of Orestes*], s. 10.

¹⁴ He claims that *Agamemnon* in Wilamowitz’s edition was out of print at the time while *The Eumenides* was not yet published (*Ibid.*, p. 10). The edition of the original text of the *Oresteia* by Wilamowitz was published in 1914; this edition contains staging information in Latin under the text (*actio*).

¹⁵ Cf. Bibik, *Translatoris vestigia*, pp. 165–244.

ustępstwa”],¹⁶ who felt this metaphysical affinity with Aeschylus, who perceived his entire artistic method, and was faithful to him as his best translator, in the context of certain dependence from another translator’s work, which he does not hide: “this section in the Greek text is heavily damaged; I supplemented it according to the study by Wilamowitz” [“ustęp ten w tekście greckim mocno zniszczony, uzupełniłem go według opracowania Wilamowitza”]¹⁷? Let us say it right away: this “supplementing according to” is translating. It is in Wilamowitz’s translation that this passage consists of forty-five lines¹⁸ (in his critical edition, we find only reconstructed lines of the original text¹⁹). However, it is worth examining it in detail.

The title of the second part of the *Oresteia* already alludes to the German translation. *Ofiary (Choefory)* [*Sacrifices (Choepori)*] focuses the reader’s attention on the important activity performed in the first part of the work, not on the people performing or even influencing the course of events, as the Greek title does. The same is true in the German translation entitled *Das Opfer am Grabe*.

The second element referring directly to the German translation is the stage directions which, in translations of ancient dramatic texts, are always paratextual, showing (although rarely recognised) the translator to the reader.²⁰ There were no stage directions in the Greek originals, as their authors were also responsible for the theatre production of the play. This does not mean that there is no information about their staging. A lot can be gathered from the texts themselves, which some believe to be merely blueprints. There are many reasons why Kasprowicz cannot be denied theatrical awareness: he collaborated with Tadeusz Pawlikowski; he also wrote theatre reviews and his own dramas. And yet, he translates the stage directions literally, which makes one wonder whose stage proposal we are “watching” when reading the Polish translation. There are slight differences. As for the introductory stage directions, Kasprowicz omits the fact that the tomb located on the stage near one of the two entrances is surrounded by a fence and that the round forecourt in front of the palace (represented by the back wall) is the stage. On the other hand, when Orestes and Pylades notice the chorus of women servants approaching and they walk aside to hide, he omits the information that they

¹⁶ *Dzieje Orestesa* [*The Story of Orestes*], p. 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁸ As far as I know, Wilamowitz does not explain it anywhere, nor does he show the source of the supplemented passages. If we follow the path indicated by Węclewski, we learn that the passage in question has already been supplemented in Droysen’s translation (*Des Aischylos Werke*, Berlin 1842).

¹⁹ Cf. Aischylos, *Orestie*, p. 50, 52. This edition, together with the translation it contains, is the basis of this comparison.

²⁰ K. Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts*, London 2018.

remain invisible to the audience (Kasprowicz says that they “are hiding in one of the two entrances” [“chowają się w jednym z dwóch wejść”]). In the stage directions, Wilamowitz describes the women accompanying Electra as slaves, while Kasprowicz uses “maidservants” [“dworki”]²¹ who “perform the role of mourners” [“występują w roli płaczek”].

I will compare the German and Polish translation in the following order: first, I will discuss the translation of the surviving passages (which is based on the Greek text), then the translation of the supplemented passages of the missing text (which is based exclusively on the German text); and finally, I will move to the last twelve extant lines of Orestes’ speech (in Greek). When we compare the microparticles of the Polish and German translations, we will see the differences and the directions of interpretation in both.

The second part of the *Oresteia* begins with an apostrophe to Hermes, the messenger of the gods and the one who leads the souls of the dead to the underworld. The god’s name is the first word spoken in this invocation. The same is true in Kasprowicz’s translation. Three elements seem particularly interesting here. In the Greek text, the word “σύμμαχος” appears, which is omitted by both translators, even though Hermes is supposed to be the one fighting along with Orestes. Instead, they focus on the second word of the apostrophe, “σωτήρ” (“saviour”). Wilamowitz goes so far as to emphasise it, writing of mercy that Hermes is to show: “steh mir rettend bei / ich fleh’ dich an, erbarm’ dich meiner”. Kasprowicz, in turn, redirects attention from the pleading Orestes (“μοι [...] αἰτουμένωι”) to the recipient of the words, Hermes: “turn your face to me” [“zwróć ku mnie swe lica”]. They both also omit in their translations the emphasis present in the original version, so important for the rest of the trilogy. Orestes says that he has come to this land (“ἤκω”) but also has returned from the exile (“κατέρχομαι”). This return has already been prophesied by Cassandra in the first part of the trilogy. Orestes does refer to himself as an exile a number of times and – in spite of the preceding joy – remains one at the end of the second part. The translators, however, feel somehow obliged to explain that the hero has come to his “homeland” [“ziemi ‘rodzinnej’”] (“heimgekehrt”, “stehe hier im vaterland”). Wilamowitz even introduces the name Argos. A fascinating moment of this invocation comes with the words: “πατρῷ’ ἐποπτεύων κράτη”.²² To Kasprowicz, they mean that Hermes, being the god who brings the souls of the dead to the underworld, rules over Orestes’ father staying there. Wilamowitz’s translation is intriguing:

²¹ Later in the translation, however, he does not hide the fact that they are slaves. The chorus of women servants sings: “obedient like slaves, in disgrace / we must endure everything” [“w niewolniczego posłuszeństwie sromu / trzeba nam wszystko znieść”]; Elektra calls them “handmaids” [“służebnice”].

²² Polish translations show that this phrase can be understood either in relation to the father of Hermes – Zeus, or Orestes – Agamemnon.

“meines haters macht / ist deines reiches”, which, instead, points to the fact that the might/power (κράτη) of the father comes from the kingdom of the dead (which could explain the later actions of Electra and Orestes pleading with their father for help and support). The final interesting element is that before the second surviving passage, in the supplemented one, the beginning of the apostrophe is repeated and expanded with the information that Hermes is the only Olympian god who has access to the underworld. Orestes’ request for support is also repeated. Thus, the surviving and the supplemented lines constitute a whole and introduce the next section.

In the second reconstructed excerpt, Kasprowicz consistently shifts attention from the speaker to the addressee. In the original, Orestes says that he is the one who calls his father at the tomb like a herald (“κηρύσσω”) so that Agamemnon can hear and listen to Orestes’ words (“κλύειν ἀκοῦσαι”); in Kasprowicz’s version, it is the voice of the herald himself: “let your voice, the messenger of heaven, sound on the grave / of the father” [“twój głos, wysłańcze niebios, niech zabrzmi na grobie / ojcowskim”]. The imperative used here emphasises the emotionality of this call. Wilamowitz does not use the first-person perspective either: “auf seines Grabes Hügel tönt der Heroldsruf / dem Vater”.

The third surviving passage in both cases is separated by a lengthy supplemented one. It suggests that Orestes offers the first lock of the hair he cuts (“πλόκαμον”) to Inachus, the god who is the personification of the river of the same name in Argolis, and the second one – as a sacrifice/mark of mourning (“τόνδε πενθητήριον”) – as the translators unanimously note, and the next passage suggests – to the father. In the next excerpt, Orestes addresses his father (in Kasprowicz’s version, he is given the title “lord” [“panie”]), explaining that he could not raise a funeral lament (“ᾠωξα”). This important, emotional element of the funeral is omitted by both translators, who replace it with a much less emotional greeting: “da konnt’ ich nicht / den abschiedsgruss dir rufen” (Wilamowitz), which Kasprowicz translates as “I could not, my lord, / whisper to you your son’s farewell words” [“nie mogłem ci, panie, / ni słowa na synowskie szepnąć pożegnanie”].

These reconstructed passages in Wilamowitz’s translation are accompanied by twenty-five lines supplementing the content of the apostrophe. After them, before the chorus appears on stage, another twelve lines of Orestes’ speech are translated. Let us take a look at this supplemented passage. Basically, in both translations, it contains information (given either in the first part, later parts of the second one, or in the third part of the trilogy) about the speaker (giving his name as well as his identification with the father), the reason and purpose of his arrival (including the expression of claims to regain the inheritance, as well as an indication of the role played in his return by Apollo) and the place of upbringing (which provides an

opportunity to mention the name of Orestes' inseparable companion, Pylades). In the last words of this supplemented passage addressed to the father, there is a promise made to him in exchange for supporting his son in achieving the goal of the return. The differences between the translations of this passage lie in the accents, nuances or emotions in the speech.

In Kasprowicz's translation, we can find many more details informing the reader about the hero's emotional state than in the German one (in which the speech tends to be more informative). In Kasprowicz, Orestes, whose "soul is full of pain" ["*dusza bolem przepełniona*"], is more concerned with the fact that he returns in hiding. He says it twice: "[...] but no one is waiting for me – / Not welcomed by anyone" ["[...] *lecz nikt mnie nie czeka – / Nie witan przez nikogo*"]. Under the care of Strophius, in this strange place (even though Wilamowitz uses the phrase "*gastverwande haus*" since this house was connected with the House of Atreus by ties of hospitality and also kinship: Strophius was Agamemnon's brother-in-law) "was brought up and grew [again, a doubling in the place of "*hat bechützt*"] poor youth" ["*chowała się i rosła biedna młodość*"] of Orestes. Pylades, on the other hand, is his "dear" ["*miły*"] companion, who "alone has kept [his] spirits up" ["*jeden podpierał {jego} siły*"], which points to his active role in Orestes' return to the homeland, "on the road which I must [...] hurry through so stealthily" ["*na drodze, którą muszę [...] śpieszyć tak ukradkiem*"] (which suggests to the reader that there is another character playing an active part in this return). When Orestes speaks of Apollo, he focuses on the god who is his witness (another doubling in the place of the German "*berufen*"): "[...] Apollo is my witness / As he is the one who called me" ["[...] *Apollo mi świadkiem, / Bo on to mnie powołał*"] than on the deed, which Wilamowitz mentions: "*zu dem schweren werk*". In Kasprowicz's translation, there is only an ellipsis at the end of this sentence, a telling suspension of the voice denoting an understatement. Orestes, addresses Hermes again with "humble prayers" ["*korne modły*"] so that his request would be "worthy of hearing" ["*wysłuchania godna*"] (in the German text, it is not Orestes who is the subject but his father who is to graciously – "*gnädig*" – accept it). Addressing his father, he calls him "sublime" ["*wspaniały*"] ("*erhabner*"). He emphasises this bond more when he repeats the word "father" ["*ojcze*"], promising better "filial sacrifices" ["*synowskie obiady*"] if only he reclaims the sceptre "by the power of your defence" ["*mocą twej obrony*"]. Thanks to this, Agamemnon will walk "in honour and reverence / That no dead can attain" ["*we czci i honorze / Jakiego żaden ze zmarłych dostąpić nie może*"] (in the place of the German respect, high regard – "*hochgeehrt*").

The insight into the emotional state of Orestes in Kasprowicz's translation is continued when we turn to the translation of the last twelve surviving lines of Orestes' speech (in

Wilamowitz's translation, there are eleven lines, in Kasprowicz's – ten). They begin with a series of questions uttered by Orestes at the sight of the approaching group of women dressed in black robes of "deep mourning" ["głębokiej żałoby"]. The third question, suggesting that the sight heralds a misfortune ("ποία ξυμφορᾷ") finds its equivalent in German: "was bedeutet dies?", which Kasprowicz translates almost literally ("What does this procession mean?" ["Cóż ten pochód znaczy?"]), adding further questions to it: "What is happening?" ["Cóż się dzieje?"] (such amplification has already been seen), by which he increases the anxiety accompanying this scene. This is especially true in the next line, which goes: "immersed in fresh despair" ["w świeżej pogrążon rozpacz"] ("gilt [...] einem frischen schmerz"; Greek: "πῆμα": "suffering, misery, calamity, woe, bane"), which evoke a very dark image. After a series of questions in Kasprowicz's translation, there is a series of exclamations. Two declarative sentences of the Greek original (which are retained in the German translation) Kasprowicz reproduces as five. The Polish Orestes does not share the doubts of his Greek ("δοκῶ") or German counterpart ("glaub' ich"). He is sure ("I see" ["Widzę"]) that among the approaching women, he can see his sister, Electra. He recognises her because he sees on her temple "too great a shadow of grief not to recognise / my sister by!" ["zbyt wielki cień żałości, bym nie poznał po niej / mej siostry!"]. Just as in the remaining part of the work Electra wants to believe that Orestes has returned to Argos based solely on the lock of hair – similar to hers – she has found on the tomb of her father, so does Orestes, in Kasprowicz's translation, have no doubt that he is seeing his sister, based solely on her sad countenance. In this way, the bond between the siblings and the emotions of the speaker who wants unity with someone close, the only remaining member of their family, are emphasised.

The last two sentences of the translation are the apostrophe to Zeus, in which Orestes clearly explains the purpose of his return, which is to avenge his father's fate ("με τεῖσασθαι μόνον / πατρός"), and then asks the god for support in his actions (the word "σύμμαχος" is repeated here once more). Kasprowicz's Orestes even "begs" ["błaga"] (although in the original and the German translation, the request for the consent of the god is expressed in the imperative mood: "δόξ", "vergönne mir") the god for support, because he calls the imperative to avenge his father his desire ("I desire to avenge my father, the hero" ["śmierć ojca pragnę pomścić, ojca-bohatera"]). This sentence by Orestes ends this passage of the work in the poet's translation. The last two lines, in which Orestes addresses Pylades and tells him they should move aside and find out for certain why the chorus is heading towards Agamemnon's tomb, are missing from Kasprowicz's translation. Therefore, the last line of the hero's speech resounds stronger than in the German counterpart, especially since in the theatrical context, we must

assume a moment of pause between Orestes and Pylades hiding, the chorus entering the stage and setting up, and the beginning of its song.

While the Polish poet does not follow the phrase of the German philologist submissively and definitely leaves a trace of his interpretation and poetic individuality in his translation, he undoubtedly makes use of Wilamowitz's translation. Some elements even suggest that he uses it more than the Greek original. Kasprowicz was taught classical languages at school, but his marks were poor.²³ This does not, however, preclude the possibility of him being able to read, or at least verify, the original text. Moreover, this analysis concerns a short, although specifically chosen, particular passage. We do not know if the translation Kasprowicz presents to the reader is the result of his trust in the German scholar, who is widely considered the best expert in the subject; or if it is the effect of fury which, as noted by Jan Parandowski²⁴ (although his words come from the time when translations of ancient texts had to meet different expectations), overwhelmed the poet on numerous occasions, but thanks to which "he could do in one day something that would take another person weeks or even months to achieve" ["potrafił zrobić w jeden dzień to, na co inny potrzebowałby całych tygodni albo nawet miesięcy"]; or, if it is really due to his "genius poetic intuition" ["genialnej poetyckiej intuicji"].²⁵ Perhaps the answer is the combination of all of these at once, which testifies once again to the complex, multidimensional and variously influenced translation process, which often requires interpretation and explanation. How would we classify the translation of this passage by Kasprowicz: is it a direct or indirect translation? Does it belong to the symbolic or neoclassical trend?²⁶ Whose text is being translated here, Aeschylus' or Wilamowitz's? In this particular case, it is both: it bears the hallmarks of all the above-mentioned elements. And, perhaps most importantly, it is also Kasprowicz's original version because a poet of this stature undoubtedly leaves an imprint on the text of another poet, both ancient and his later scholar. Can we, therefore, judge it if all categories are insufficient? Without presenting a broader context, it seems that we cannot do justice to it; we can only describe and explain.

In the very idea of supplementing the missing original text and presenting it to the reader without warning, there is something of a theatrical illusion (the German translator "disguises himself as a Greek poet" ["przebiera się za poetę greckiego"]) and then is succeeded by the

²³ Cf. Z. Wasilewski, *Jan Kasprowicz. Zarys wizerunku* [*Jan Kasprowicz: An Outline of Image*]. Warszawa, Kraków, ca 1923, p. 119.

²⁴ J. Parandowski, *Mowa przy wręczaniu nagrody P.E.N. Clubu Stefanowi Srebrnemu 5.IX.1949* [*Speech at the presentation of the P.E.N. Club Award to Stefan Srebrny 5.9.1949*], "Meander", vol. 4, issue 8, pp. 357–358.

²⁵ Cf. *Dziennik* [*Journal*], p. 79.

²⁶ Cf. *Modernist Translation*, pp. 77–113.

Polish translator), creativity and pride, as well as a sense of strength that one is able to assume this role – successfully and convincingly if we are to believe the reviews of the Polish translation at any rate.