

Introduction

The Dictionary of Polish Women Classicists, while assembled with considerable care, in consultation and with generous assistance of many members of the classical community, makes no claim of being a complete and definitive listing of all women active in the field of classics during the twentieth century. The bulk of the entries is composed, naturally, of women who had academic careers: classical philologists, archaeologists, ancient historians, papyrologists. Living scholars¹ have been excluded according to the logic of the Dictionary, but any other omissions are unintentional and sincerely regretted. For some entries willing authors proved impossible to find. These are briefly mentioned in this introduction; the memory of others has already lamentably faded. Fellow classicists who answered our nationwide call for biographies either agreed to write themselves about their mentors and friends, helped find contributors, suggested specific entries, or indicated potential sources of information; some others ignored our appeal for reasons that must have been compelling at the time but made the work on the Dictionary occasionally discouraging.

Women classicists who did not work at universities or at the Polish Academy of Sciences, such as translators of ancient texts, editors at scholarly publishing houses, or teachers, especially those who did not publish their research or make significant contributions to the activities of the Polish Philological Society, are certainly under-represented. Efforts were made to identify and include these classicists, provided they left evidence of their personalities and activities in the memory of their students.

As the Dictionary is intended for an international public, a general historical context to the biographies is provided below. It offers a brief review of the secondary school system in Poland and discusses access to university education and to academic careers for women in the twentieth century.

Secondary Schools

Historically, in Poland, girls were educated either at convent schools run by a number of Roman Catholic orders² (even – surprisingly – cloistered ones), or at home. While individual Polish public intellectuals expressed on occasion their views on the matter, state authorities did not get involved in the education for girls until the nineteenth century.

¹ With the exception of one almost centenary classicist (born in 1920) who is still with us.

² There is evidence that girls were taught Latin at convent schools, in the eighteenth century. See Małgorzata Borkowska, *Zakony żeńskie w Polsce w epoce nowożytnej*. Lublin: KUL, 2010, 258–259.

The situation varied from region to region, mainly because for well over a century and until the end of WWI in 1918, the country was not a sovereign state but a territory partitioned and controlled by its three neighbours, Russia, Austria, and Prussia.³ Educational policies regulating secondary schools in general and teaching of classical languages in particular were also far from uniform. In the Russian and Prussian partitions, the languages of instruction were, respectively, Russian and German; educational policies in Polish schools there were more restrictive than in the Austrian partition where the population enjoyed more cultural independence, especially after the territory was granted autonomy in 1867.

Government goals and social attitudes towards education for girls were also not the same in all three regions. The least favourable to the idea of granting women the right to education prevailed in the Prussian partition where the basic rules for schooling for girls were formulated only in 1894. Foreign languages were part of the school curriculum but not the classical languages. The girls' school diplomas did not give access to university studies. In 1908, a school reform in Prussia created a special type of secondary school for girls giving the right to enter either universities or teachers' colleges; teaching (of younger children and girls) was considered an occupation women were well suited to.

In Małopolska (Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria under the Austrian rule), a tradition developed of state schools for boys and private schools for girls. The latter were often boarding schools run by religious organizations, teachers' societies, or private individuals; school fees limited access to this form of education only to wealthier parents, even if a number of gifted students from disadvantaged families were often accepted at reduced or no cost.

The need to reform secondary schools was well understood and discussed by the local teachers who in April 1884 created the Society of Higher School Teachers⁴ (higher in the sense of higher than elementary); less than a month later, a Kraków chapter of the Society was created. The organization became active in the entire Galicia and beyond. In 1895, the Kraków chapter met to discuss high schools for women and formed a special committee to follow up this issue. In 1905, Professor Kazimierz Twardowski,⁵ a philosopher from Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów and a champion of education for women, became president of the Society, significantly developing its periodical *Muzeum* which regularly published articles on schools for girls.

³ See my discussion of this diversity in the chapter "Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland," in *Classics & Class. Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Elżbieta Olechowska and David Movrin (eds). Warsaw, Ljubljana: Faculty of "Artes Liberales," University of Warsaw, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, DiG, 2016, 213–219.

⁴ Known under its Polish abbreviation as TNSW (Towarzystwo Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych).

⁵ See *Kobiety w Szkole Lwowsko-Warszawskiej*, Dariusz Łukasiewicz, Ryszard Mordarski (eds). Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, 2016.

The J. I. Kraszewski Society for Assisting in the Education of Polish Women [Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Naukowej dla Polek J. I. Kraszewskiego] was successful in promoting the idea of a classical gymnasium for girls, equivalent to the one for boys. Admission to classics at the university level required a diploma from a classical gymnasium which until late nineteenth century accepted only male students. The first classical gymnasium for girls was opened in 1896 in Kraków, and a year later another one appeared in Lwów; by 1914, there were ten private classical gymnasia for girls in Galicia: three in Kraków, three in Lwów and four in smaller centres.⁶ Students who attended the remaining private schools for girls, or those who were educated at home, had to take the final examinations as external students at gymnasia for boys, if they wanted to study at the university.

The history of Polish convent schools for girls in the nineteenth and twentieth century has not yet been fully researched and the available information remains fragmentary; still, there is evidence for instance that by 1907 the High School for Girls run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Jazłowiec (today in Ukraine) was preparing students for the external examinations leading to admission to universities.⁷ Latin was taught at some of the non-classical private schools for girls but it usually depended on the availability of teachers and the desire of parents and pupils.

In the Russian partition, failure of the January Uprising of 1863 resulted in massive deportations, jail terms, or emigration abroad, as well as confiscation of the lands and wealth of the Polish gentry; consequently, many impoverished families were forced to move to the cities. There was no questioning of the need for education for women who in the absence of their husbands – killed or deported – had to ensure the family's survival; their daughters could not expect to marry into wealth and needed education that would make them employable.

The January Uprising also convinced Tsar Alexander II of the advisability of taking control of the education of girls as a guarantee of bringing up new generations of Poles favourable and loyal to Russia. Nikolay Milyutin – of the 1861 abolition of serfdom fame – was delegated by the Tsar to deal with the situation in Poland. On top of his many accomplishments leading to further weakening of the patriotic Polish gentry, Milyutin produced in 1864 a promptly-enacted law on state-run secondary schools for girls. The same year, the Tsar decreed a forced transformation of schools for girls run by various Roman Catholic orders⁸ into state schools with Russian as the language of

⁶ See Bogusława Czajeczka, "Wokół wykształcenia kobiet w Galicji. Towarzystwo Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych," in *Kobiety i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, Anna Żarnowska & Andrzej Szwarz (eds.). Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny UW, DiG, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 35–36.

⁷ *Poszłam ścieżką do Polski... i weszło. 150 lat pracy Zgromadzenia Sióstr Niepokalanek*, Hanna Kosyra-Cieślak, Romana Szymczak, Siostry Niepokalanek (eds.). Vol. 1. Szymanów: Wyd. Sióstr Niepokalanek, 2004, 78.

instruction. The Russian authorities were suspicious of private schools for girls that were not under their direct control; these schools were also targeted for closure as suspected champions of anti-Russian sentiments and Polish aspirations to sovereignty.

This type of persecution led straight to clandestine teaching. There were over a dozen underground private high schools for girls in Warsaw in the 1880s. Occasionally the official high schools would have a hidden higher level or “illegal” subjects for which the Russian educational authorities would not give permission, or over which they would want to exercise total control.⁹

Following the creation of sovereign Poland after WWI, new educational policies discussed already before and during the war and aiming at a gradual unification of the three diverse systems were being put in place. In the capital, Warsaw, all eighty-one high schools for girls active in 1918 were private; the first state school began operating in September 1918 when Jadwiga Sikorska Private High School was transformed into Queen Jadwiga State Gymnasium. Out of four types of high school planned and debated in 1919, only three were put into practice: mathematics-biology, humanities with Latin, classical high school with Latin, Greek and classical culture; the fourth type, humanities without Latin, never saw the light of day. Detailed curricula for teaching classical languages retained certain regional distinctions between Wielkopolska, Pomerania, and Małopolska for a few more years.¹⁰

Just before the first major educational reform over a decade after WWI, the majority (72.9%) of high schools in Poland had a humanistic profile. The reason for this significant preference was certainly the fact that alumni of these schools had access to all university programs. 14% of high school students attended schools with a classical profile.¹¹

The new law on education adopted in March 1932 – known as the Jędrzejewicz Reform from the name of two brothers, consecutive education ministers¹² – introduced

⁸ Wizytki [*Ordo Visitationis Beatissimae Mariae Virginis*], Sakramentki [*Moniales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti ab Adoratione Perpetua*], Norbertanki [*Candidus et Canonicus Ordo Praemonstratensis*], Benedyktynki [*Moniales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*]; see Adam Winiarz, “Kształcenie i wychowanie dziewcząt w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim,” in *Kobiety i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, Anna Żarnowska & Andrzej Szwarz (eds), Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny UW, DiG, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 12–13.

⁹ See Maria Nietyksza, “Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym. Królestwo Polskie na przełomie wieków,” in *Kobiety i edukacja...*, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 72–73.

¹⁰ Annual curricula were published in 1920, 1922, 1923, 1924, and so on, with marginal differences; for the question of post-WWI Latin & Greek at high schools see Wanda Popiak, *Języki klasyczne – łacina i greka w średniej szkole ogólnokształcącej w Polsce w latach 1919–1939*. Warszawa: Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, 1990, 39–68.

¹¹ Data from 1931, see Józef Miąso, “Kształcenie dziewcząt w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej,” in *Kobiety i edukacja...*, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 52.

¹² Janusz (1885–1951) and Wacław (1893–1993) Jędrzejewicz.

a six-year secondary school composed of two levels: a four-year gymnasium with Latin, offering the same program for all students, followed by two years of several different types of high school (one of them classical with Latin and Greek), each ending with an examination [*matura*] giving the right to enroll at universities.¹³ WW2 broke out before the results of the reform could have been properly evaluated. Under German occupation, secondary and high schools were forced underground. Clandestine courses had one unexpected consequence: they were out of necessity co-educational, an arrangement disapprovingly looked upon before the war. In 1945, coeducational schools became a fact of life in spite of the re-opening of a number of high schools for boys or girls only.

With the imposition of communism after WW2, teaching of classical languages, ideologically associated with tradition, bourgeois mentality and the Catholic Church, was not favoured by the new regime and, in spite of efforts by the classical community, the number of class hours of Latin at school was gradually shrinking.¹⁴

Universities

First anecdotal evidence of a female student at a Polish university dates from early fifteenth century. The future Abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Vienna, Martin of Leibitz tells the unusual story of Nawojka in his autobiographical dialogue. Disguised as a male student, she studied with success for two years in Kraków, at the Jagiellonian University. When her subterfuge was accidentally discovered, she was brought before the episcopal tribunal and confessed to acting *amore studii* – “for the love of learning.”¹⁵ It took almost five hundred years before women gained access to the Jagiellonian University.

In the nineteenth century, Classics were being taught at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, at the Stefan Batory

¹³ For a detailed discussion of the curricula designed under the new law see Wanda Popiak, *Języki klasyczne – łacina i greka w średniej szkole...*, 69–87.

¹⁴ For a thorough discussion of the situation of classics at school during communism, see Barbara Brzuska, “Latin and Politics in People’s Poland,” in *Classics & Class. Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School...*, 229–286.

¹⁵ Nawojka’s character was apparently unimpeachable and she was offered the possibility of joining a monastery where she became Magistra (of novices) and then Abbatisa. See “Senatorium sive Dialogus Historicus Martini Abbatis Scotorum Viennae Austriae,” in *Scriptores rerum Austriacarum veteres ac genuini...*, Hieronymus Pez (ed.), Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1725, 2nd vol., col. 629 ff. See also Michael H. Shank,

“A Female University Student In Late Medieval Krakow,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12/2 (1987), 373–380 and Harald Tersch, “Monastic Reform and Autobiographical Dialogue: the Senatorium of Abbot Martin of Leibitz,” *Medievalia* 20/1 (2017), 41–59. The story with its dramatic motif of male disguise used in hagiography and literature for children is widely known in Poland and through its several variations became a legend. See e.g. Maria Krüger, “Jadwisia córka Nawoja,” in *Złota Korona. Opowiadania z historii Polski*. Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1976.

University in Vilnius, and at the University of Poznań. Bismarck's anti-Polish policies forced young Polish classicists with degrees from German universities to flee the Prussian partition where traditionally the study of classics was strong; they had to look for jobs in more welcoming centres to the east and south, reinforcing teaching staff there. There were no women at that time either among students of classics, or, naturally enough, among professors.

To promote higher education for women who were not permitted to enroll at universities, Adrian Baraniecki, a physician, anthropologist, and social activist, founded in 1868 in Kraków higher courses for women, informally called "Baraneum" from the name of the founder.¹⁶ After his death in 1891, the school was taken over by the city of Kraków¹⁷ and run until 1924, when, in view of the well-established open access to universities, it lost its *raison d'être*.

Members of the Society of Higher School Teachers – discussed above – organized lectures for women within the Pedagogical Society in Lwów, beginning in the early 1880s. While given by eminent scholars on a variety of subjects, they did not provide a systematic preparation for the exercise of a profession and did not grant qualifying diplomas. Complementary courses for women members of the Society of Higher School Teachers were initiated at the University of Lwów in 1897 and were continued until 1899, when women were able to enroll for regular classes at the university. These courses were taught, among others, by the eminent classicist Ludwik Ćwikliński (1853–1942) and the philosopher Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), discussed above. The enormous success of the courses and excellent results of examinations provided a powerful reason for the University and the Austrian educational authorities to grant access to women students.¹⁸

In 1885/1886 in Warsaw (under the Russian rule), clandestine courses for women, nicknamed "Flying University", were launched. They were transformed in 1905 into an openly operating Society for Scientific Courses [Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych]. The Flying University was organized into four faculties (social science, philology-history, pedagogy, and mathematics-physics) offering five- to six-year courses taught almost exclusively by male professors, many of them quite

¹⁶ The name, a play on the word "baran" – ram in Polish – has a humorous connotation. Ten years after the creation of the Higher Courses for Women, four-year-long Higher Courses for Women called Bestuzhev Courses were launched in St-Petersburg, by the Russian historian Konstantin Bestuzhev-Riumin.

¹⁷ A famous Polish painter, Olga Boznańska (1865–1940), studied fine arts there in 1884–1885. As an indication of the great variety of courses offered at Baraneum, let me quote a family example, the case of my grandmother (Julia Pinińska-Wolańska 1885–1975) who attended a course on gardens and landscaping before WWI.

¹⁸ See Bogusława Czajeczka, "Wokół wykształcenia kobiet w Galicji. Towarzystwo Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych we Lwowie i w Krakowie (1884–1914)," in *Kobiety i edukacja...*, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 36–37.

distinguished. About five thousand women successfully attended the school during its existence, among them Maria Curie-Skłodowska.¹⁹

The Jagiellonian University and Jan Kazimierz University, where at least professors of the humanities were quite vocal in their approval of women's right to higher education, began (with some restrictions) accepting women students at the end of the nineteenth century. Sometime later, during WWI, women began enrolling at the University of Warsaw.²⁰ After four years of studies and completion of a prescribed number of classes, students of classics were able to obtain a certificate known as 'absolutorium' which qualified them to pass two special exams called 'rigorosa,' covering an entire subject of study; the exams were followed by the submission and public defense of a doctoral dissertation. At the Jagiellonian University, between 1897 and 1918, 110 *alumnae* of the Faculty of Philosophy – where classics and other humanities belonged – received their PhDs.²¹

After the end of the war in 1918, the newly independent Polish state gave women full access to university education. It took a while though before the new *alumnae* were able to join the teaching staff. Until the end of WW2, women classicists usually taught classical languages at private high schools for girls. Only a handful of women, who completed their studies of classics (Latin & Greek philology, ancient philosophy, history, or classical archaeology) at various universities in Poland before WW2, became scholars. Among those born in the nineteenth century, barely five names come to mind: Daniela Gromska (1889), Mieczysława Ruxerówna (1891), Maria Maykowska (1892), Gabriela Pianko (1893), and Halina Evert-Kappesowa (1898).²²

One of the reasons for this small number was the reluctance of the universities to grant to women *habilitation*, the title conferring the right to teach at the university as autonomous scholars. The Austrian educational authorities requested an opinion on the matter from the Jagiellonian University in 1904. The Faculties of Law, Theology, and Medicine were strongly against, the Faculty of Philosophy on the other hand expressed its consistent support for women scholars. The Senate of the University went along with the more conservative opinions and formulated a negative position. The Austrian authorities however allowed habilitation to be granted to exceptionally talented women scholars. Fifteen years had to pass before the first such title was granted, to a specialist in comparative anatomy.

¹⁹ See Maria Nietyksza, "Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym. Królestwo Polskie na przełomie wieków," in *Kobiety i edukacja...*, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 73–74.

²⁰ See for instance the biography of Gabriela Pianko.

²¹ See Urszula Perkowska, "Formacja zawodowa i intelektualna studentek Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego z lat 1894–1918," in *Kobiety i edukacja...*, 1995, vol. 2, 2, 43.

²² See bios of all five scholars in the Dictionary.

In spite of the 1920 Law on Higher Education based on full equality of rights, until WW2 only fifteen women obtained habilitation at the Jagiellonian University,²³ among them one classicist, Mieczysława Ruxerówna²⁴ in 1937.

Women scholars born during the first decade of the twentieth century and who studied already in the sovereign Poland are not much more numerous: Janina Czerniatowicz²⁵ (1903), Izydora Dąmbska (1904), Lidia Winniczuk (1904), Janina Pliszczyńska (1904), Zofia Abramowiczówna (1906), Maria Ludwika Bernhard (1908), and Leokadia Małunowicz (1910).²⁶ The second decade witnessed the coming of many more women classicists but, due to the war losses, again only a handful survived and made their way to active scholarship. Among them three future scholars received their MA degrees before WW2: Irmina Lichońska (1912–1969)²⁷ in 1935, Iza Biezuńska-Małowist (1917–1995) in 1938, and Zofia Gansiniec (1919–1988) right at the beginning of the war in Soviet-occupied Lwów, in December 1939. Several others embarked on successful high school teaching careers, including Stefania Światłowska (2014–2009), Eliza Danuta Guzy-Zazulowa (1914–2011), Helena Liberowa (1915–2013), Maria Wikarjakowa (1916–2010), Maria Wujtewicz (1917–2011), and Ludmiła Preiss.²⁸

During WW2 high schools and universities were banned by the Nazis, whose aim was to wipe out Polish scholars and intellectuals rather than educate new generations. Poles were quite adept at circumventing the rules imposed by foreign authorities and underground education at all levels was launched almost immediately with massive participation of women as teachers and students. Involvement in clandestine schooling appears as a constant theme in the biographies included here. Without blocking access to higher education, the six years of war significantly slowed down academic careers, for men as well as for women. They resumed in 1945 but in a changed reality of new territorial borders and Soviet domination, combined with the threat of becoming another Soviet republic.

Two strong university centres, Stefan Batory University of Wilno and Jan Kazimierz University of Lwów were lost to the Soviet Union, with the two cities inte-

²³ See Urszula Perkowska, "Kobiety w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim," *Forum Akademickie* 7–8 (1999), available online: http://forumakad.pl/archiwum/99/7-8/artykuly/kobiety_na_uj.htm.

²⁴ See her biography in the Dictionary.

²⁵ Janina Czerniatowicz (1903–1997), née Maculewicz, worked at the Department of History of Science & Technology of the Polish Academy of Sciences; reception of Greek literature and of Christian Antiquity in the 15th–18th-century Poland and history of books were at the centre of her interests. She produced a publication on Menander in 1934 and ten other books on topics related to her areas of expertise between 1961 and 1991.

²⁶ See biographies of Dąmbska, Winniczuk, Pliszczyńska, Abramowiczówna, Bernhard, and Małunowicz in the Dictionary.

²⁷ See bios of Lichońska, Biezuńska-Małowist, Gansiniec, and Światłowska in the Dictionary.

²⁸ Ludmiła Preiss belonged to the same generation but I was unable to establish the exact dates of birth and death.

grated into the Lithuanian and Ukrainian Republics, respectively. Scholars – those who survived the war – moved west, to Toruń and its newly founded Nicholas Copernicus University and to Wrocław, ruined during the German last stand at Festung Breslau in early 1945. Most of the Stefan Batory University academics arrived in Toruń, while those from Jan Kazimierz University came mainly to Wrocław. The first MA degree at the restored University of Wrocław was granted in 1946 to the future classics professor Jerzy Łanowski, the second to his colleague and also future professor Ludwika Rychlewska.²⁹

Communist ideology imposed in Poland after WW2 displayed an alleged silver lining, as it declared itself a champion of women's rights, including rights to education and equality in the workforce. Like other lofty ideals which communists appropriated into their vocabulary, these were part of propagandistic rhetoric rather than reality, but there is little doubt that women's education and academic careers knew no formal restrictions, with a possible exception for those scholars who were known to oppose the regime.

In parallel to the entire classical community, the great majority of women classicists were brought up as Roman Catholics and Polish patriots; during WW2 they took part in the resistance, as clandestine teachers but also as soldiers of the Home Army. They were as a rule opposed to communism. Few were sympathetic to the new ideology and even fewer joined the party. These rare communist sympathisers were more noticeable among historians than philologists. Some found such declared sympathies useful in facilitating progress in their academic careers, but most became disenchanted at various tipping points in the history of the People's Republic of Poland, and decisively so after martial law was declared in 1981, when traditional communist control proved inadequate in dealing with massive anti-communist opposition.

The first post-WW2 cohorts included a wider range of ages: older women who for various reasons were unable to continue or begin university during the war and the younger ones who just finished or were completing clandestine high school education. Several older students – all figure in the Dictionary – passed their delayed final MA exams a year after the war; among them were Katarzyna Augustyniak (1916–2000), Ludwika Rychlewska (1917–2010), Helena Gesztoft-Gasztold (1917–2003), and Bronisława Kurzynina (1919–1993). A year later, in 1947, Barbara Filarska (1922–2007) received her MA, while in 1948 two future Warsaw professors, Hanna Szelest (1920–2006) and Maria Cytowska (1922–2007), completed their studies. In the following year a future classical archaeology

²⁹ See Professor Rychlewska's bio in the Dictionary.

professor, Anna Sadurska (1921–2004), and a classical philologist and outstanding future papyrologist and biblical scholar Anna Świderkówna (1925–2008), received their MAs.

The following year, two future classical scholars graduated, Irena Kazik-Zawadzka (1920–1975) at the Jagiellonian University and Maria Pąkcińska-Niepolomska (1927–2006) at the University of Warsaw, followed the next year by Anna M. Komornicka (1920) at the Jagiellonian University, as well as Krystyna Kreyser (1924–2009), a philologist and Maria Jaczynowska (1928–2008), an ancient historian, both at the University of Warsaw. In 1952, two classical archaeologists completed their graduate studies at the same university: Maria Nowicka (1927–2015) and Ludwika Press (1922–2006); for the latter it was her second MA, as she had already graduated in English Philology in 1949 at the University of Wrocław.³⁰

Another future professor of archaeology, Jadwiga Kubińska³¹ (1932?–2008) studied at the University of Warsaw and later held the chair of Mediterranean Archaeology until her retirement; as Professor *emerita*, she worked at the Institute of Archaeology teaching Ancient Greek and conducting MA seminars on Christian epigraphy, particularly on inscriptions found in Nubia. She specialized in Greek epigraphy in Asia Minor (her PhD subject being funeral inscriptions) and wrote her habilitation in 1972 on the subject of Greek Christian inscriptions in Faras (*Les inscriptions grecques chrétiennes de Faras IV*). Dr. Barbara Gąssowska (1932?–2010) another classical archaeologist employed during most of her career at the University of Warsaw, participated in the Polish excavations in Tell Atrib, Alexandria and Palmyra.³²

Hanna Geremek (1930–2004), an ancient historian and historian of classical scholarship, graduated in 1954 at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw. Thirteen years later, she defended her PhD dissertation (under the direction of Prof. Iza Biezuńska-Małowist) entitled *Karanis communauté rurale de l'Égypte à IIe-IIIe siècle de notre ère*. She worked at the Institute of History until her retirement in 1982; later she collaborated with the Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition in Poland and East-Central Europe [OBTA], University of Warsaw. Her husband, Bronisław Geremek, a professor of cultural and mediaeval history at the University of Warsaw, was a former communist who became an anti-communist in 1968 and a Minister of Foreign Affairs in post-communist Poland (1997–2000).

³⁰ See the bios of all these scholars in the Dictionary.

³¹ Information on Prof. Kubińska was provided by Prof. Adam Łukaszewicz, University of Warsaw.

³² We failed to find younger colleagues or students willing to write bios of Prof. Kubińska and Dr. Gąssowska.

An unusual, charming episode in the life of classicists in Warsaw during the first post-war decade (1954) highlights the active role played by women as members of the community. In the grim reality of communist rule, the need for a lighter mood, humour, intellectual and artistic satisfaction manifested itself in the creation of an informal, quasi-underground group composed of classicists and admirers of antiquity from and outside the university who amused themselves writing poems, reading and translating ancient texts, setting and solving classically oriented riddles, and hiding behind strange nicknames. The idea and model for the *Sodalitas Crocodiliana*, as it was called, came from a Renaissance learned society *Sodalitas Vistulana* founded in Kraków by Konrad Celtis, a German-Latin poet, in the late fifteenth century. The nicknames of the dozen members of *Sodalitas Crocodiliana* were borrowed from Celtis and his Cracovian friends: *Aesticampianus* (Kazimierz Kumaniecki), *Eurydyka* (Lidia Winniczuk), *Philemon & Baucis* (Ryszard & Krystyna Kreyser),³³ *Praxilla* (Kazimiera Jeżewska),³⁴ *Spumella* (Gabriela Pianko),³⁵ *Pan* (Henryk Ładosz, an actor), *Chelidon* (Zofia Lindorówna) and *Fannia* (Jolanta Skubniewska), both well known actresses, *Melpomene* (Stefania Linowska, professor at the Theatre School), *Witruwia* (Maria Szpachta)³⁶ a Vitruvian scholar, and *Hasilina* (Antonina Jelicz),³⁷ an expert on early Cracovian Renaissance and Konrad Celtis. These ten women and only two men who were co-opted for prestige, personality, and special talents: Professor Kumaniecki was the head of the department and one of the most charismatic and admired classicists in Warsaw and Ładosz, an ‘unsurpassed’ reciter of poetry. Today we would call this illustrious dozen, dominated by women, a band of classical geeks.

It is significant that only one of these women – Dr. Lidia Winniczuk – was actually teaching classics at the university at the time. The group was diverse by design; the intention was to create a meeting point for those enthusiasts of classics who otherwise would maintain only official contacts, for instance at annual assemblies of Polish Philological Society. Women classicists during the first decade after WW2 were either teaching Latin at high school, working for large post-war projects, like the *Dictionary of Mediaeval Latin*, massive editions of Polish historical sources, translating ancient texts, or working for libraries and publishing houses – only a small number taught at university.

³³ See Krystyna Kreyser’s bio in the Dictionary.

³⁴ Kazimiera Jeżewska, a poet and outstanding translator; see her bio in the Dictionary.

³⁵ See Gabriela Pianko’s bio in the Dictionary.

³⁶ Maria Szpachta (1913–1989), a classical philologist, wrote a book on satire, *Satyra*, Warszawa: Min. Szkolnictwa Wyższego, 1952.

³⁷ Antonina Jelicz (1923–2003), editor and translator of Polish mediaeval poetry written in Latin and of Polish historical chronicles, author of a book on Konrad Celtis’ stay in Poland, and of another on the daily life in mediaeval Kraków. She worked in publishing houses, mainly in the State Publishing Institute (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy).

Kazimiera Jeżewska, Antonina Jelicz, Maria Szpachta, and Julia Mrukówna (1917–2003) (Mrukówna was an excellent Latinist, translator of Jan Długosz's *Chronicles*, of a volume of Cicero's speeches, of sermons by Peregrinus of Opole, and contributor to the *Dictionary of Mediaeval Latin*), all members of the *Sodalitas Crocodiliana*, were perfect examples of women classicists working outside of academe. Alongside them was also Irena Krońska (1915–1974), wife of Tadeusz Juliusz Kroński, a vocally pro-communist professor of philosophy at the University of Warsaw; she was a distinguished translator of Plato and other philosophers, as well as editor of the *Library of Classics of Philosophy* published for many years by the State Scholarly Publishers [Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe].³⁸ Translators from classical languages do not constitute a separate category, as it was usually an activity complementary either to scholarly, editorial, or didactic pursuits.

Winding up our discussion of Polish women classicists, we come to those who devoted their talents and energy to teaching at school. High school Latin teachers, while crucial for the development and future of classics, have been as a rule not so visible, or easily identifiable. Regrettably, only a few are included in the book. Among those who are not were some extraordinary women, revered by generations of students, who at least deserve a mention.

Maria Wikarjakowa (1916–2010) from Poznań, was head of clandestine teaching at elementary level in Ostrów Wielkopolski during WW2 and wife of a classics professor at the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Jan Wikarjak.

Helena Liberowa (1915–2013) who taught at Bolesław Limanowski High School nr 1 in Warsaw, is remembered by students as a dedicated “model teacher” who, with enthusiasm and understanding, insisted on talking about classical antiquity and inspired even those who were not taking Latin. She was the wife of Professor of Polish literature at the University of Warsaw, Zdzisław Libera, and mother of Antoni Libera, a writer, literary critic, translator, and theatre director.

Ludmiła Preiss was a highly respected and appreciated Latin teacher – in spite of her openly communist views – at Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski High School Nr. 17 and at Narcyza Żmichowska Generalist High School Nr. 15 in Warsaw, until 1962 one of the few state schools for girls.

The Polish Philological Society traditionally awarded high school teachers who were also active in the organization with the title of honorary member. They include a Warsaw teacher Irena Borzymińska-Majowa³⁹ (died in 1997); Maria

³⁸ See her obituary and bibliography by T. Długokęcka in *Studia Filozoficzne* 4 (1974) 210–212.

³⁹ Named honorary member in 1983, see *Antiquorum non immemores... Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne (1893–1993)*, Jerzy Łanowski, Alicja Szastyńska-Siemion (eds). Warszawa: PTE, OBTA, 1999, 298.

Wujtewicz (1917–2011) teacher at the A. Mickiewicz High School in Gdynia;⁴⁰ Eliza Danuta Guzy-Zazulowa (1914–2011), a Latin teacher and High School director in Kraków, as well as academic teacher at the Jagiellonian University.⁴¹

The *Dictionary of Polish Women Classicists: 20th Century* includes almost forty entries presenting women who were all thoroughly trained in the two classical languages regardless of their particular scholarly interests and area of expertise. Among these classicists the most numerous were classical philologists, then archaeologists, ancient historians, philosophers, and six high school teachers, all listed in one alphabetical sequence. The entries are constructed on the same general template: they begin with a portrait, followed by data on studies and degrees, personal and professional biography, and end with bibliography in chronological order (to highlight the development of scholarly interests), as well as sources for the entry.

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⁴⁰ Honorary membership granted in 1984, see *Antiquorum non immemores...*, 331–332.

⁴¹ Honorary member since 1987. See *Antiquorum non immemores...*, 332.