

SHOULD THE READER REALLY PAY NO ATTENTION  
TO THE STAGE DIRECTIONS SUPPLIED IN THE  
TRANSLATIONS OF ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDIES?  
(THE CASE OF AESCHYLUS' *ORESTEIA* IN POLISH  
RENDITIONS)\*

by

BARBARA BIBIK

ABSTRACT: Some scholars claim that neither the reader nor the stage director should pay any attention to the stage directions supplied in modern renditions of ancient Greek tragedies because there were none in the Greek originals. Such an attitude, they claim, will get both the reader and the stage director closer to the interpretation intended by the author of the play in question. But is it really that simple? In my paper I would like to focus on the stage directions supplied by Polish translators of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* as a vehicle for the translators' alleged interpretation, the staging plan designed in a rendition, and the history of classical scholarship, and thus to show that when paying some attention to them, both the reader and the stage director may find relevant, interesting or unexpected information there.

1. INTRODUCTION

There were no stage directions<sup>1</sup> in ancient Greek tragedies. This is a well-known fact, together with the fact (brought to light thanks to the research and publications of Oliver TAPLIN) that these plays were devised by their authors – Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides – to be performed on an Athenian stage in the fifth century BC. Moreover, their authors were not only playwrights, but were actually the creators of the whole performance as they themselves were stage directors and stage managers of their plays. The plays were indeed theatre- and performance-oriented. Therefore, as some scholars claim<sup>2</sup>, they should be

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<sup>1</sup> As understood today, cf. P. PAVIS, *Słownik terminów teatralnych*, transl. by S. ŚWIONTEK, Wrocław 2002 [*Dictionnaire du théâtre*, Paris <sup>3</sup>1996], p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. AXER, *Teksty tragików greckich jako scenariusze*, in H. PODBIELSKI (ed.), *Literatura Grecji starożytnej*, vol. I: *Epika – Liryka – Dramat*, Lublin 2005, pp. 647–668; R.R. CHODKOWSKI,

considered theatre scripts. However, in the following centuries they started to be regarded rather as pieces to be read than to be staged. Such an attitude was quite common among both Polish scholars and the general public in the nineteenth century, when the first complete translations of ancient Greek tragedies started to be published in periodicals or in separate volumes. By that time the way of writing drama had also changed. At around the time of the eighteenth century, the close connection between creating and staging a piece of drama ceased to be as obvious as it had been in the case of ancient dramas or those by Shakespeare or Molière. Playwrights were not sure any longer whether, and when, if at all, their works would find their way onto a theatre stage. Therefore, because they usually could not have any direct influence on a performance when working in a theatre or with a group of actors, if they wanted to leave any suggestions about how they imagined the piece being staged, or a blueprint for the future staging, this had to be included within the text in the supplied stage directions. Although not every playwright included them, stage directions started to appear in published dramas at more or less about that time. In the nineteenth century – the century of realism and illusion on the theatre and opera stage – their presence in dramas was at last established, and today it seems to be a common practice<sup>3</sup>. This holds true even in the case of the translations of ancient Greek tragedies, both into Polish (which will be my main concern in this paper) and into other foreign languages.

There were no stage directions in ancient Greek tragedies though, to repeat my opening sentence. Therefore any stage direction that is supplied is always the translator's decision and is literally an addition given by him/her. That is why this issue – whether a translator should or should not insert stage directions into his/her translation – divides scholars. There are some who strongly oppose their inclusion and propose getting rid of them, or not taking them into consideration – as they are part of the translator's, not the author's interpretation – while reading any ancient Greek dramas. But, whether they want to accept it or not, every translation is an interpretation. So, should the reader really pay no attention to the stage directions in translations of ancient Greek tragedies?<sup>4</sup>

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*Funkcja obrazów scenicznych w tragediach Ajschylosa*, Wrocław 1975, pp. 5–11; R. NÜNLIST, *The Ancient Critic at Work. Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia*, Cambridge 2009, p. 345; O. TAPLIN, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, London 1978; J.M. WALTON, *The Greek Sense of Theatre. Tragedy and Comedy Reviewed*, London–New York 2015, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> PAVIS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 101 f., 592–595; W.B. WORTHEN, *Drama. Between Poetry and Performance*, Chichester 2010, p. XV.

<sup>4</sup> Bearing in mind the notion that these plays may be regarded as theatre scripts and being aware of their theatre- and performance-oriented role, my focus in this paper will be on the Polish translations of ancient Greek plays as written texts with all the paratexts to be read and/or analysed by the reader, whoever (s)he may be (since even a stage director is firstly a reader).

The stage directions supplied in translations of ancient Greek tragedies are undoubtedly paratexts, to use the term coined by Gérard GENETTE<sup>5</sup>, which have been added by someone other than the author of the work in question. These paratexts mediate between the author and the reader, between an alien past and an apparently familiar modernity<sup>6</sup>, which results in an imaginative and creative dialogue. But this mediation concerns two very distant cultures: the ancient and the modern one (of the nineteenth, twentieth or twenty-first century). The latter one, the receiving culture, will be my main focus of interest in this paper, in agreement with the claim upheld by the proponents of culture-oriented approaches to translation studies that any translation belongs to the target culture rather than to the source one<sup>7</sup>. Actually any drama from the past, which scholars agree will have a double nature, consequently, as part of the receiving culture, undergoes an adjustment from antiquity to the contemporary world, because in one way or the other it needs to be re-imagined and re-fashioned for the audience which is not original and never will be, because the audience's mindset from the time of the original staging cannot be reconstructed<sup>8</sup>. Perhaps the stage directions therefore reveal something of the complex relation and mediation between the cultures and thus are of some significance?

The actual aim of my paper is to present what kind of information the reader may find if (s)he pays at least some attention to the stage directions that are provided. Given that it is impossible to present all the Polish translations of ancient Greek tragedies (there have been more than one hundred renditions since the beginning of the nineteenth century), I have decided to narrow my paper to the renditions of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which I have studied thoroughly<sup>9</sup>. I will take into account the following translations, which I am listing in chronological order<sup>10</sup>: by Zygmunt WĘCLEWSKI<sup>11</sup>, Józef SZUJSKI<sup>12</sup>, Kazimierz KASZEWSKI<sup>13</sup>, Jan

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<sup>5</sup> G. GENETTE, *Paratexts. Threshold of Interpretation*, transl. by J.E. LEVIN, Cambridge 1997.

<sup>6</sup> D. HOPKINS, *Colonization, Closure or Creative Dialogue?: The Case of Pope's Iliad*, in: L. HARDWICK, Ch. STRAY (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, Malden 2008, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. M. HEYDEL, *Zwrot kulturowy w badaniach nad przekładem*, *Teksty Drugie* 2009, fasc. 6, pp. 21–33.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. ZIOMEK, *Powinowactwa literatury. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 1980, p. 117; J.M. WALTON, *Translating Classical Plays. Collected Papers*, London–New York 2016, p. 11; J. BALMER, *What Comes Next? Reconstructing the Classics*, in: S. BASSNETT, P. BUSH (eds.), *The Translator as Writer*, New York 2006, pp. 184–195; HOPKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 129–140.

<sup>9</sup> B. BIBIK, *Translatoris vestigia. Projekcje inscenizacyjne wybranych polskich tłumaczy "Oresteii" Ajschylosa*, Toruń 2016. This paper refers to the ideas expanded on in the book.

<sup>10</sup> To acquaint the reader with the Polish translators mentioned in this paper, an appendix with short biographical notes has been added at the end.

<sup>11</sup> Z. WĘCLEWSKI (transl.), *Eschylos: Tragedye*, Poznań 1873.

<sup>12</sup> J. SZUJSKI, *Dziela*, Kraków 1887.

<sup>13</sup> K. KASZEWSKI (transl.), *Eschilos: Tragedye*, Warszawa 1895.

KASPROWICZ<sup>14</sup>, Stefan SREBRNY<sup>15</sup>, Artur SANDAUER<sup>16</sup>, Maciej SŁOMCZYŃSKI<sup>17</sup>, and Robert CHODKOWSKI<sup>18</sup>.

## 2. STAGE DIRECTIONS AS A VEHICLE OF THE TRANSLATOR'S INTERPRETATION

The first issue that I would like to discuss concerning stage directions that are provided is the notion that they are the only vehicle for the translator's interpretation. But it is the text as a whole given by a translator that presents the interpretation; it is this text that has its emphases and stresses, that nuances the details, that has its own key words, allusions and references, that enlightens or overshadows some parts of the original. Jerzy ŁANOWSKI<sup>19</sup> and Ewa SKWARA<sup>20</sup> (both Polish classicists and translators of Euripides, and Plautus and Terence, respectively) rightly argue in their papers that translators usually give in the stage directions they insert pieces of information which have been extracted from the original and which concern names (or the addressees of the utterances), places, gestures, behaviours, props, or costumes. Sometimes, adding one stage direction is a way to render the original more comprehensible to the modern reader, or more concise, transferring information (or abundant information) from the words given by a character into the stage directions, or may reveal the stage action encoded within words. In a comedy, sometimes it is the only way to save the comic nature of a joke (which needs to be explained or otherwise stays incomprehensible). Therefore, neglecting the stage directions will not necessarily get the reader any closer to the ideas or 'pure' interpretation of what the author was conveying, but may sometimes deprive him/her of some information extracted from the original (which may be of some importance at least for a stage director when designing the stage action). After having scrutinised the stage directions in Polish translations of the *Oresteia*, I have to admit that additional information

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<sup>14</sup> J. KASPROWICZ (transl.), Ajschylos: *Dzieje Orestesa*, Lwów 1908.

<sup>15</sup> S. SREBRNY (transl.), Ajschylos: *Tragedie*, Kraków 1952.

<sup>16</sup> A. SANDAUER (transl.), *Dramaty greckie: wybór*, Warszawa 1977.

<sup>17</sup> This rendition remains unpublished; it was used for the first time in the staging of the *Oresteia* in 1982 by Zygmunt Hübner in the Helena Modrzejewska National Stary Theatre in Cracow.

<sup>18</sup> R.R. CHODKOWSKI (transl.), Ajschylos: *Tragedie*, Lublin 2016.

<sup>19</sup> J. ŁANOWSKI, *Przekłady dramatu antycznego. Z doświadczeń tłumacza*, in: J. AXER, Z. OSIŃSKI (eds.), *Siew Dionizosa. Inspiracje Grecji antycznej w teatrze i dramacie XX wieku w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej: rekoniesans*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 179–185.

<sup>20</sup> E. SKWARA, *Skąd się biorą didaskalia w przekładach dramatów antycznych? Exemplum: Asinaria Plauta w tłumaczeniu Ewy Skwary*, *Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae XVI* 2004, pp. 67–76; EADEM, *Spektakl zaklęty w tekście. Wizja antycznego przedstawienia "Captivi" Plauta*, in: J. OLKO (ed.), *Obrzęd, teatr, ceremoniał w dawnych kulturach*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 243–260.

not extracted from the original or clearly modifying the interpretation of the play is rare. This does not mean that it does not happen, but it is quite rare and usually reduced to adjectives or verbs which precisely inform the reader how a character looks, behaves or reacts. Thus the reader finds (for example) the following adjectives or information describing a character: that Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* turns away from Clytaemnestra proudly and with disgust (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>21</sup>); or that Orestes is eighteen years old when appearing on stage in the *Libation Bearers* (KASPROWICZ<sup>22</sup>). The information the reader gets about the behaviour of a character may differ slightly in various renditions, for example: whether the Watchman from the opening part of the *Oresteia*, after having spotted the fire, goes down from the roof of the palace calmly (KASZEWSKI<sup>23</sup>) or in a hurry (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>24</sup>); or whether Clytaemnestra in the *Libation Bearers*, before being murdered by her son, is introduced or pushed by him into the palace; or whether Orestes at the end of the same play goes out or runs off the stage; or whether at the beginning of the *Eumenides* Pythia re-enters the stage leaning against the walls of the temple (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>25</sup>), or leaning against a stick (KASZEWSKI<sup>26</sup>), or rushes off the temple (SZUJSKI<sup>27</sup>), or steps back terrified when seeing the inside image (CHODKOWSKI<sup>28</sup>); or whether the Erinyes when re-entering the stage in the *Eumenides* run onto it quickly (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>29</sup>), or appear in a row (KASPROWICZ<sup>30</sup>), or just enter (SŁOMCZYŃSKI), or enter tracking Orestes' footprints (SREBRNY, CHODKOWSKI<sup>31</sup>); or whether Athena in the third part of the *Oresteia* enters the stage (SZUJSKI, KASZEWSKI, SREBRNY, SŁOMCZYŃSKI, CHODKOWSKI<sup>32</sup>), or runs onto it (KASPROWICZ<sup>33</sup>), or appears above the stage on a chariot pulled by horses (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>34</sup>). The reader is also given some hints about the psychology of a character or how they react in a given situation, for example: that Electra in the *Libation Bearers* hesitates before offering sacrifices

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<sup>21</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 91.

<sup>23</sup> KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 226.

<sup>24</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.

<sup>26</sup> KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 340.

<sup>27</sup> SZUJSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 196.

<sup>28</sup> CHODKOWSKI, Ajschylos... (n. 18), p. 189.

<sup>29</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 157.

<sup>30</sup> KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 158.

<sup>31</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 453; CHODKOWSKI, Ajschylos... (n. 18), p. 199.

<sup>32</sup> SZUJSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 206; KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 353; SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 459; CHODKOWSKI, Ajschylos... (n. 18), p. 206.

<sup>33</sup> KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 165.

<sup>34</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 162.

on her father's tomb (SREBRNY<sup>35</sup>); or that, when having recognised Orestes in the same play, she is amazed (WĘCLEWSKI<sup>36</sup>), moved (KASZEWSKI<sup>37</sup>), or full of joy (SREBRNY, CHODKOWSKI<sup>38</sup>); or that Clytaemnestra, still in the same play, having heard of her son's alleged death, loses control over herself and Orestes feels really restless on hearing her mourning him (SREBRNY<sup>39</sup>). Sometimes an added stage direction may clarify the ambiguity of Aeschylus' play, for example when it comes to the disappearance of Apollo in the *Eumenides* after the trial: whether he leaves the stage before Orestes' final speech, as it is in the renditions by WĘCLEWSKI and KASZEWSKI<sup>40</sup>, or during it, as in KASPROWICZ's translation<sup>41</sup>, or afterwards together with Orestes, as the stage directions given by SREBRNY and CHODKOWSKI say<sup>42</sup>.

### 3. STAGE DIRECTIONS AS A VEHICLE FOR THE STAGING PLAN DESIGNED IN A RENDITION

What some stage directions actually present is the assumed staging plan designed in a rendition by one translator or another, although this may vary considerably<sup>43</sup>. Ancient Greek tragedies were clearly devised to be performed on stage. It is believed by drama and theatre scholars that such works – devised with a certain stage in mind – have some potential staging included within them<sup>44</sup>. It goes without saying then that to some extent they reflect the theatre stage they were created for, as well as the theatrical, literary and cultural conventions that were contemporary to the author<sup>45</sup>. But the theatre stage of the nineteenth, twentieth

<sup>35</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 398.

<sup>36</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 294.

<sup>38</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 403; CHODKOWSKI, *Ajschylos...* (n. 18), p. 131.

<sup>39</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 422.

<sup>40</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 176; KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 365.

<sup>41</sup> KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 182.

<sup>42</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 476; CHODKOWSKI, *Ajschylos...* (n. 18), p. 225.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. B. BIBIK, *Didaskalia w przekładzie tekstu dramatycznego (na przykładzie Oresteji Ajschylosa)*, Między Oryginałem a Przekładem XIX 2013, fasc. 4 (22), pp. 57–75; EADEM, *Didaskalia w "Oresteji" Ajschylosa jako projekt inscenizacji tłumacza (na przykładzie "Agamemnona")*, Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae XXVI 2016, pp. 53–75; EADEM, *Didaskalia w "Oresteji" Ajschylosa jako projekt inscenizacji tłumacza (na przykładzie "Ofiarnic")*, Przekładaniec XXXI 2016, pp. 75–89.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. B. SCHULTZE, *Przekład dramatu i przekład teatru. Rozważania nad problemami tłumaczenia sztuk teatralnych*, Ruch Literacki XXXI 1990, p. 139; A. CETERA, *Enter Lear. The Translator's Part in Performance*, Warszawa 2008, p. 65; D. RATAJCZAKOWA, *W kryształach i w płomieniu. Studia i szkice o dramacie i teatrze*, vol. I, Wrocław 2006, pp. 40 f.

<sup>45</sup> T. HERMANS, *Norms and the Determination of Translation: A Theoretical Framework*, in: R. ÁLVAREZ, M.C.-Á. VIDAL (eds.), *Translation, Power, Subversion*, Clevedon 1996, pp. 25–51.

and twenty-first centuries was and is completely different to that of ancient times, for which these plays were created. This obviously raises the question of whether it is a translator's task to adjust the performative values of an ancient text to the contemporary stage. J. Michael WALTON<sup>46</sup> once wrote, however, that better translators are those who are aware of the performative values of a translated text, and not those who focus only on the words. Some Polish translators wanted to highlight the staging features of ancient dramas and render the plays performable on a contemporary stage, even though there were no stagings in the nineteenth century and only a few at the turn of the twentieth century based on ancient dramas that were performed in theaters and thus these texts were regarded mainly as literature. The staging plan proposed by one translator or another, who is in this way taking up the role of a stage director (the case of translators of classical texts is not exceptional<sup>47</sup>), is usually the outcome of many intertwined factors that influenced him (there are no women among the Polish translators of ancient Greek tragedies) and created his 'horizon', to borrow a phrase from Antoine BERMAN<sup>48</sup>. These factors include the text he is translating and the knowledge he has about the author of the play in question and the time in which he was writing, but also the translator's linguistic and theatrical intuition as well as his knowledge of the theatre practice of the Ancients and of his contemporaries. In a way, as the reader may see in the Polish translations, it is usually a question of choosing between realism/illusion and symbolism, as Arthur Wallace PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE rightly noticed long ago:

Unfortunately scholars are far from being agreed as to the interferences to be drawn from the plays, and there may always remain differences of opinion on the fundamental question of the amount of illusion which an Athenian audience expected. Did they require a considerable degree of realism in the representation, or were they content to take a good deal for granted, and to see only with the mind's eye much of what poet described or hinted at, just as in vase-painting and sculpture a very few figures might stand for many, and much might be conveyed by very simple symbols? This question must inevitably complicate the discussion at many points<sup>49</sup>.

Therefore, in nineteenth century renditions (by WĘCLEWSKI and KASZEWSKI) the reader can observe to what degree their authors were influenced by contemporary tendencies in theatre and opera, especially those which were particularly instrumental in producing a sense of (theatrical) illusion. Stage directions in these renditions are packed with precise information describing stage settings: places,

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<sup>46</sup> WALTON, *Translating...* (n. 8), p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. A. CETERA, *Lear w "reżyserii" Stanisława Barańczaka*, *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* VI 1999, pp. 115–128.

<sup>48</sup> A. BERMAN, *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*, Paris 1995, pp. 64–83.

<sup>49</sup> A.W. PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE, *The Theatre of Dionysos in Athens*, Oxford 1946, p. 31.

props, supernumeraries<sup>50</sup>, and machines. They are definitely the most elaborated ones when it comes to giving a sense of theatrical illusion: not only do they incorporate everything that is mentioned in words, but even more, including the change of stage setting in the third part of the *Oresteia*, *Eumenides*, when the action moves from Delphi to Athens. Setting aside the current state of knowledge and looking more thoroughly, taking account of the theatre or even more importantly of the opera stage of the time, it is obvious that all the pieces of information given in the stage directions, although making reference to the ancient stage<sup>51</sup> as well, could be realised on a stage of the time with its theatrical devices and arrangements like painted scenery, wings, blackcloths, trapdoors, etc. All of these stage directions render the translations really spectacular. Even though we now know that theatre and its arrangements in Aeschylus' time were much simpler than what translators of the time imagined, they strongly believed then that it was the way that theatre had looked (which, unsurprisingly, was in line both with scholars' knowledge about ancient theatre and its performances and the cultural tendency of the time). Renditions given at the turn of the twentieth century (by KASPROWICZ<sup>52</sup> in this case) were definitely limited in the stage directions as far

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<sup>50</sup> Actually, if these staging plans had been staged, there would have been quite a crowd on stage; for example, Agamemnon in the first part of the *Oresteia* comes back from the Trojan War together with carts full of war-brides, war booty and soldiers (WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* [n. 11], p. 68), or in the *Eumenides* the chorus consists of fifty [sic!] Erinyes (KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* [n. 13], p. 239). Such directions also prove that translators thought rather of the contemporary than the ancient theatre stage as the latter, according to knowledge at the time, was believed to be quite narrow (on which see the following section).

<sup>51</sup> WĘCLEWSKI (*op. cit.* [n. 11]) retains Greek theatre terminology in the inserted stage directions: the names of *orchestra*, *thymele*, and *ekkyklema*. Such an attitude may be considered to be a strategy of foreignisation. WĘCLEWSKI also retains the distance between the actors performing their roles on stage and choreutes performing theirs in the *orchestra*, as he believed it was the case in Aeschylus' time (later in my paper, I will discuss how he was influenced by the classical scholarship of his period). In any case, it is possible, although controversial, to imagine such a realisation on a contemporary stage with the *orchestra* pit well below the level of the stage. SREBRNY (*op. cit.* [n. 15]), however, although retaining the ancient name of *orchestra* in his rendition, actually devises actors' and choreutes' performance on the same level (as it probably was on the Athenian stage, according to current knowledge about ancient Greek theatre, and that of SREBRNY's generation as well). Nevertheless, it proves that looking attentively at the proxemics (how characters are located on stage and in relation to one another) devised in the stage directions may lead the reader to interesting observations about what one translator or another really thought about the stage.

<sup>52</sup> Jan KASPROWICZ was widely acknowledged as one of the greatest Polish poets of his days. His translations (and he rendered an astonishing number of works from Greek, English, German, Italian, French and Latin) illustrate the ways and the extent to which a personality of his stature leaves their own traces on someone else's work. However, this attitude was not exclusively characteristic of him, as it was also in line with the conventions of translating at that period. It was at the turn of the twentieth century when translators came to be regarded as artists who were entitled to leave their own mark on the works they translated, a signature of their own personality, aesthetic sense, and ideas; cf. E. BALCERZAN, *Literatura z literatury (strategie tłumaczy)*, Katowice 1998, p. 200; T. BRZOSTOWSKA-TERESZKIEWICZ, *Wczesnomodernistyczna krytyka przekładu*



as the staging plan was concerned and focused more on the characters of the play (and their gestures, costumes, behaviours, all given sometimes in great details), which was in line with the conventions of the time and the public's interests, which shifted from the staging and theatre arrangements towards the actors and their performances<sup>53</sup>. In turn, renditions from the first half of the twentieth century (by SREBRNY in this case<sup>54</sup>) responded to the new ways of staging introduced into European theatre by such artists as André Antoine, Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, Georg Fuchs, Otto Brahm, Konstantin Stanislavski, and in Poland by Stanisław Wyspiański. Among other significant changes, those reformers rejected the painted scenery so commonly used in nineteenth century theatre in order to shape the whole theatre space and instead of illusion and realism they promoted symbolism. All those elements may be found in the stage directions provided by SREBRNY in his rendition<sup>55</sup>, with the additional psychological information about the characters' behaviour (which I partly mentioned in the previous section among the examples given; anyway, it should be remembered that the role of psychology increased greatly at the time thanks to, to mention only one name, Sigmund Freud). The unmentioned translations usually have limited amounts of such information (especially the one rendered by SZUJSKI where there is only a little, but also those by SANDAUER, SŁOMCZYŃSKI and CHODKOWSKI) in the stage directions provided when compared to the above-mentioned ones.

The staging plan proposed in one rendition or another is usually based on the design of the author of the play in question, but, as I have tried to point out, it may also convey some of the translator's own ideas for the staging or his/her contemporary cultural background of which any reader should be aware. Nevertheless, I would not neglect the stage directions that are provided, because they indeed bring the reader closer to the translator and his/her work, cultural background and imagination. But above all, they reveal both the creativity of the translators who tried to render these plays performative and alive on contemporary stages and the ways of re-fashioning and re-imagining of an ancient drama in different times, and thus broaden our knowledge about the reception of ancient drama in general.

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(w Polsce), in: P. FAST, A. CAR, W.M. OSADNIK (eds.), *Historyczne oblicza przekładu*, Katowice 2011, p. 46; M. HEYDEL, *Gorliwość tłumacza. Przekład poetycki w twórczości Czesława Miłosza*, Kraków 2013, p. 103. And this is probably the most important role of KASPROWICZ as a translator.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. A. MARSZAŁEK, *Prowincjonalny teatr stoletczny (trzy spojrzenia na scenę lwowską lat 1864–1887)*, Kraków 2011, pp. 110, 270.

<sup>54</sup> Although his rendition was published in 1952, it was carried out mainly in 1938 (see the following footnote), and finalised during World War II.

<sup>55</sup> SREBRNY prepared both the new translation and the staging plan for the performance at the Municipal Theatre in Vilnius, the so-called Pohulanka Theatre, in April 1938. Part of the staging in which he was really involved during the rehearsals is still 'visible' to an attentive reader in the published rendition.

#### 4. STAGE DIRECTIONS AS A VEHICLE FOR THE HISTORY OF CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP

The last issue I would like to discuss is the fact that the stage directions provided (translations included) may be testimonies of the history of classical scholarship.

In the nineteenth century, before the archaeological excavations (led mainly by Wilhelm DÖRPFELD, who published the results in his book of 1896, entitled *Das griechische Theater*) that proved him wrong, it was commonly believed that ancient Greek theatre looked like Vitruvius presented it in his work *De architectura* (V 7). And definitely what the reader gets from both the stage directions and the introductions to the translations of that period is a round orchestra (the greater part of which was dedicated to the choreutes and a smaller, rather shallow one which formed the stage) situated well below the raised stage (*proskenion*) with the painted *skene* building. Translations which appeared after the results of the excavations were published responded to them and adjusted the image of the ancient theatre to the updated knowledge (which may be more noticeable in the paratexts such as introductions or in academic books and papers given by translators than in the renditions themselves). Nonetheless, although scholars argue as to how many entrances there were in the *skene* building in Aeschylus' time, Polish translators – following so-called common knowledge about the ancient theatre – are quite unanimous: there were three entrances and the reader gets such an image from the renditions. One scene in the *Libation Bearers* also proves how strongly Polish translators adhere to the commonly believed 'ancient theatrical rules'. Oliver TAPLIN argues that in the crucial scene from the second part of the *Oresteia*, the *Libation Bearers*, the scene when Orestes is going to murder his mother, "...were it not for the scholion and the three-actor 'rule', no one would have supposed for a moment that Pylades entered later than Orestes" and, since "everything points to Pylades' entry at 892", thus "it is by no means impossible that Aeschylus was allowed a fourth actor with just three lines of speech"<sup>56</sup>. Nevertheless, Polish translators, who are quite unanimous that Orestes enters the stage together with Pylades<sup>57</sup>, remove the servant Clytaemnestra calls to bring her the weapon with which she killed her husband off-stage before Orestes' and Pylades' appearance on it – just to be faithful to the 'ancient rule' of no more than three speaking actors on stage at the same time<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> O. TAPLIN, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus. The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy*, Oxford 2001, p. 354; cf. T.G. ROSENMEYER, *The Art of Aeschylus*, Berkeley 1982, p. 48; G. LEY, *The Theatricality of Greek Tragedy: Playing Space and Chorus*, Chicago 2007, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 136; KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 316; SZUJSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 183; KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 132; SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 431.

<sup>58</sup> KASPROWICZ (*op. cit.* [n. 14], p. 132), SREBRNY (*op. cit.* [n. 15], p. 431) and CHODKOWSKI (Ajschylos... [n. 18], p. 160), insert stage directions to make it even more clear.

One of the moot points in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* are lines 205–211<sup>59</sup> from the *Libation Bearers*, when Electra, after having offered sacrifices, notices the footprints on the tomb of Agamemnon. The question of whether the lines are genuine or spurious divides (or, more precisely, divided) scholars<sup>60</sup>. Translators, usually when they are academics as well, have to respond to this, unless they use the newest edition and base their rendition on it without further consideration<sup>61</sup>. WĘCLEWSKI, then, included the translation of this passage with a critical commentary (admitting that the lines are controversial<sup>62</sup>), while SREBRNY did not include them at all, which resulted in changing subsequent lines as well<sup>63</sup>. It has to be noted that the lines were included in the editions by HERMANN<sup>64</sup> and WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF<sup>65</sup> on which WĘCLEWSKI and SREBRNY, respectively, based their translations. In translations rendered by SZUJSKI<sup>66</sup>, KASZEWSKI<sup>67</sup> and KASPROWICZ (with stage directions provided in this case)<sup>68</sup> the reader finds the lines without any comment, while in the translation by CHODKOWSKI<sup>69</sup> the passage in question is supplemented with a remark in the commentary that the reader should not take Electra's words literally as they reflect her state of mind.

Other lines that once raised some questions are 691–699<sup>70</sup>, also from the *Libation Bearers*. These are lines which are now commonly attributed to Clytaemnestra, but once were given to Electra, as recalled by Albin LESKY<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> U. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF (ed.), Aeschylus: *Tragoediae*, Berlin 1914, p. 254.

<sup>60</sup> A. LESKY, *Greek Tragic Poetry*, transl. by M. DILLON, New Haven–London 1983, p. 83; CHODKOWSKI, *Funkcja...* (n. 2), p. 82.

<sup>61</sup> Actually, this is usually the case in modern translations; translators from the past were far more critical towards their sources and thus their renditions are part of the history of textual criticism. For example, when considering the *amoibaion* scene between Orestes, Electra and the choreutes in the *Libation Bearers*, the reader finds that in the translations by WĘCLEWSKI (*op. cit.* [n. 11], pp. 117–124), KASPROWICZ (*op. cit.* [n. 14], p. 107–115) and SREBRNY (*op. cit.* [n. 15], p. 407–415) different lines are attributed to Orestes, Electra and the choreutes. Obviously, the edition on which a rendition was based was the main reason for that changed attribution; however, both WĘCLEWSKI and SREBRNY questioned their sources and made some changes in their translations when compared with the editions by, respectively, HERMANN and WILAMOWITZ.

<sup>62</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 409.

<sup>63</sup> SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 504 f.

<sup>64</sup> G. HERMANNUS (ed.), Aeschylus: *Tragoediae*, Lipsiae 1852.

<sup>65</sup> WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *op. cit.* (n. 59).

<sup>66</sup> SZUJSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 161.

<sup>67</sup> KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 293.

<sup>68</sup> KASPROWICZ, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 102.

<sup>69</sup> CHODKOWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 129.

<sup>70</sup> WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *op. cit.* (n. 59), p. 272.

<sup>71</sup> LESKY, *op. cit.* (n. 60), p. 84; for the description of the controversy, see W.A. McDONALD, *A Dilemma: Choephoroi 691–99*, CJ LV 1959–1960, pp. 366–370.

From among the translations that I analysed, only in that by WĘCLEWSKI it is actually Electra instead of Clytaemnestra who is lamenting over the alleged death of Orestes<sup>72</sup>; remarkably, he does not follow his source, the edition by HERMANN, in this respect. Attributing these lines to Electra justifies her presence on the stage<sup>73</sup> and thus contributes to WĘCLEWSKI's overall interpretation of the play: Electra's exaggerated grief is feigned, as she knows very well that Orestes is alive, but at the same time Clytaemnestra has no opportunity to express her genuine grief over her son.

The last passage which reveals something about the history of the textual criticism of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the scene in the *Eumenides* when the goddess Athena appears on stage for the first time<sup>74</sup>. In WĘCLEWSKI's rendition, in the stage directions<sup>75</sup>, the reader learns that Athena, armed with a shield and a spear, appears standing on a horse chariot above the stage (which is obviously really spectacular). This is the only rendition that describes the appearance of Athena in this way. The translated text (that is Athena's words) is in line with this description. It has to be noted that the Greek line: πώλοις ἀκμαίοις τόνδ' ἐπιζεύξασ' ὄχρον ("yoking this chariot to colts in their prime"<sup>76</sup>) is included both in the editions by HERMANN (as line 397)<sup>77</sup>, and WILAMOWITZ (as line 405)<sup>78</sup>; the latter one, though, puts the line in square brackets and adds in the critical apparatus: "delevi". Neither in KASPROWICZ's nor SREBRNY's translation, both of whom based their renditions on either WILAMOWITZ's edition (SREBRNY) or his previously published translation (KASPROWICZ), does the reader find this line; as a consequence, in accordance with the words she speaks, the goddess Athena enters the stage on foot. In the renditions by SZUJSKI<sup>79</sup> and KASZEWSKI<sup>80</sup>, the goddess Athena also enters the stage on foot, but the words in question are retained; the translations are slightly modified, though, to be in agreement with the stage

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<sup>72</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 131.

<sup>73</sup> Although he is not the only one who introduces Electra on stage in the second part of the *Libation Bearers*. SREBRNY, in the stage directions, does the same, even if Electra stays silent during the whole encounter between her mother and her brother in disguise. This is also part of SREBRNY's interpretation of the play: Electra knows very well that it is Orestes himself standing in front of his mother and lying, but she says not one word. Her presence proves that she belongs only to the world of her father and of Orestes, but not to the one of her mother; cf. SREBRNY, *op. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 316 f. (his introduction to the *Oresteia*).

<sup>74</sup> About the disputed lines, see L. HIMMELHOCH, *Athena's Entrance at "Eumenides" 405 and Hippotrophic Imagery in Aeschylus's "Oresteia"*, *Arethusa* XXXVIII 2005, pp. 263–302.

<sup>75</sup> WĘCLEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 162.

<sup>76</sup> Transl. by H.W. SMYTH (Loeb).

<sup>77</sup> HERMANNUS, *op. cit.* (n. 64), p. 285.

<sup>78</sup> WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *op. cit.* (n. 59), p. 307.

<sup>79</sup> SZUJSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 206.

<sup>80</sup> KASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p. 353.

action. CHODKOWSKI, for his part, puts them in brackets, as they are in the edition by Martin L. WEST<sup>81</sup> on which CHODKOWSKI's translation is based, and the goddess Athena enters the stage on foot as well<sup>82</sup>.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Gérard GENETTE proved in his book that paratexts deserve attention as they reveal relevant information about the relations between various factors at play and thus form the book's history. In my paper I wanted to show that stage directions do the same (which is much easier to notice when one takes into account and compares a whole series of translations of the same work). They should be given more credit, as they are part of the history: of literature, of theatre, and of classical scholarship as well. Therefore no reader should be too quick to neglect them or too hasty to label a translation in which they appear an obsolete one. Each rendition with stage directions (and other paratexts) provided is the outcome of the very careful and perceptive work of a translator, who is visible and proposes his/her own contribution to the interpretation of the ancient play. And this definitely enriches our knowledge about the classical reception of the work. In every rendition a careful and sensitive reader may sense some traces of the translator's personality, linguistic skills and creativity, traces of the process of translation, and of various historical, political or cultural circumstances that might have had an impact on his/her work. It is absolutely natural for all translations that they become outdated, because they are "inevitably re-visions from the perspective of their own moments in time and space"<sup>83</sup>. But even then they are still snapshots of the language, culture, and imagination at some particular moment in history and of some people – translators, so often underestimated and even neglected, who worked for their fellow citizens to give them the possibility of becoming acquainted with some of Europe's most important and influential literary works. Briefly concluding, every reader should at least pay some attention to the stage directions in translations of ancient Greek tragedies as (s)he may find relevant, interesting, or unexpected information therein.

*Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń*  
*bb@umk.pl*

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<sup>81</sup> M.L. WEST (ed.), *Aeschylus: Tragoediae cum incerti poetae Prometheus*, Stuttgartiae 1990, p. 365.

<sup>82</sup> CHODKOWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 206 f.

<sup>83</sup> P. BURIAN, *Translation, the Profession, and the Poets*, *AJPh* CXXI 2000, p. 302.

## APPENDIX:

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE TRANSLATORS REFERRED TO  
IN THIS PAPER

**Robert CHODKOWSKI** (b. 1938): Polish classicist, professor emeritus at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; his academic interests are centred on ancient Greek theatre and playwrights. He published numerous works on this subject. He is currently finalising his major project of translating all extant tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

**Jan KASPROWICZ** (1860–1923): one of the greatest Polish poets of his day; playwright, literary and theatre critic and reviewer; translator from Greek, English, German, Italian, French, and Latin. He studied philosophy and literature in Leipzig and Wrocław (Breslau); he held (since 1908) the chair of comparative literature at the John II Casimir University in Lviv (Lwów) and was rector of that university (in 1921/1922). He was active in the theatrical life of Lviv, collaborating with Tadeusz Pawlikowski, the director of the Lviv Municipal Theatre.

**Kazimierz KASZEWSKI** (1825–1910): an acclaimed Polish literary and theatre critic and reviewer, renowned for his vast knowledge of philosophy and literature; educator; translator from Greek, French and German; he took part in the January Uprising against Tzarist Russia (1863–1864).

**Artur SANDAUER** (1913–1989): Polish literary critic and writer; translator from Greek, Russian and German; from 1963 a lecturer (and from 1974 professor) of Polish literature at Warsaw University. He studied classical philology at the John II Casimir University in Lviv (Lwów). During the Stalinist period he openly criticised socialist realism (then the only officially sanctioned method of literary composition) and, as a consequence, was not allowed to publish.

**Maciej SŁOMCZYŃSKI** (1920–1998): Polish writer and prominent translator, renowned for his detective stories, scripts and plays (written under the pen-names of Joe Alex and Kazimierz Kwaśniewski) as well as for translating all the works of Shakespeare into Polish (at least two of them were commissioned by theatre directors). As a member of the Polish resistance movement, the Home Army, during World War II, he was later persecuted by the communist authorities.

**Stefan SREBRNY** (1890–1962): one of the most eminent Polish classicists of his time, professor at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius (Wilno) in 1923–1939 and, from 1945, at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. A skilled translator of ancient Greek poetry and drama (Aeschylus and Aristophanes), regarded as a leading specialist in the field of ancient Greek theatre. He was

interested in theatre in general and had a profound knowledge of theatre studies and European drama; he was particularly fascinated by artistic movements and literary works which were far removed from the tendencies towards realism or illusion. In the 1930s he prepared the stagings of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in the Vilnius Municipal Theatre; in 1944–1945 he was active as a director at the Polish Drama Theatre in Vilnius.

**Józef SZUJSKI** (1835–1883): a distinguished Polish historian and politician, one of the founders of the acclaimed Cracow Historical School; he was also a poet and playwright. He took part in the January Uprising (1863–1864). Professor at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow.

**Zygmunt WĘCLEWSKI** (1824–1887): one of the most distinguished Polish classicists of his time; he studied in Wrocław (Breslau) and Halle; in 1863–1869 he was professor at the Main School (Szkola Główna) in Warsaw, from 1872 at the University of Lviv (Lwów); rector of that university in 1877/1878. He translated into Polish all extant tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Renowned for his Latin-Polish and Greek-Polish dictionaries. One of his research fields was the Latin poetry of Polish humanists (Klemens Janicki, Andrzej Krzycki).