

‘MONUMENTS LONGER LASTING THAN BRASS’? RECOLLECTION OF FUNERARY TEXTS AND THEIR FEMALE HEROES: EDITION OF FRAGMENTS FROM THE ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF DISTINGUISHED POLISH WOMEN IN LVIV, 1929–39*

The texts proposed in this section belong to their own specific historical and literary category, particularly given the circumstances of how they came about. They are memoirs possessing a strong didactic character, not devoid of individual identity, and boasting creative and affirmative traits. The authors of both texts, and their protagonists, were women: they represented the privileged classes in Polish society (they belonged to the gentry and the intelligentsia). They possessed appropriate cultural and economic capital for their writing endeavours, were engaged in pedagogical and civic work, and participated in the independence movement. Through their activities and positions, both the authors and the protagonists were also points of reference, models for the positions and attitudes taken by women, and vanguard adherents of the women’s movement, who espoused causes such as education, grassroots activity, independence and emancipation. The texts aimed to persuade society of the merits and sacrifices of their protagonists. An important thread in these memoirs is, of course, the collective experience: the struggle for the independence of Poland and women’s participation in historical events. This collective experience was also assigned a cultural code: the fulfilment of the roles of mothers, home carers and advocates of national culture.

Both texts are held in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv¹ and are a part of the legacy store of the Museum of Distinguished

* This text was prepared as part of the project “Patriotki jutra? Działania niepodległościowe, postawy obywatelskie i praca edukacyjna Polek we Lwowie (1863–1939) w świetle materiałów zebranych przez Muzeum Zasłużonych Polek we Lwowie oraz Ossolineum. Edycja i komentarz” (National Programme for the Development of the Humanities, no. 11H 18 0367 86).

¹ Up until 1940, the archive functioned as Archiwum Grodzkie i Miejskie Lwowa, and retained the name after the incorporation of Lviv into the Ukrainian

Polish Women [Muzeum Zasłużonych Polek], which are in turn a part of the files of the Union of Polish Christian Women's Societies [Akta Zjednoczenia Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobiety].² The archival resource of the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women is the result of the activities carried out by this same institution in the years 1929–39. The archive is made up of collected memories, recollections and personal accounts, ego-documents and other forms that commemorate the achievements of Polish women.³ The two biographies presented in this volume were collected as part of a campaign to publicise the goals of the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women, carried out by female activists from Lviv just before the opening of the institution. In the press and during occasional social gatherings, museologists called for a compilation of the testimonies of these women's lives, their activities and heroism; and for these materials to be shared with the newly established initiative. The texts submitted to the Museum were of various length, written in various languages, and were characterised by a varied literary phrase and haptic (typescripts vs manuscripts, the cheapest paper vs letterheads with coats of arms, etc.) – and at the same time, they had one goal in common: to collect, edit and store the remembrances of deceased female citizens, the inhabitants of Polish lands, most often representatives of the gentry and the intelligentsia. The Museum's task was to create an almost national pantheon of Polish women, to include their lives and achievements in a universal narrative about patriotism, service on behalf of the country and civic attitudes.

The activity of the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women covers the last decade of the Second Polish Republic (1929–39). It is related to Lviv's traditions of women's emancipation and the organisation of the women's movement in this

Soviet Republic; whereas after 1990 it carried the title Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України, м. Львів (ЦДІАЛ). Its English title is the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv.

² About the union and its characteristics, see Lidia Michalska-Bracha, 'Akta Zjednoczenia Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobiety w Lwowie (1913–1939) w zbiorach lwowskich', in Lidia Michalska-Bracha and Magdalena Przeniosło (eds), *Znani i nieznanie międzywojennego Lwowa. Studia i materiały* (Kielce, 2007), 111–22.

³ The very name of the umbrella organisation for women's initiatives in Lviv, i.e. the Union of Polish Christian Women's Societies, contained a specific assumption pertaining to the homogeneity of the 'Polishness' of distinguished Polish women (Christian, meaning Catholic). Lviv's multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity, also in the women's movement and organisations has been addressed by contemporary historians such as Dietlind Hüchtker, *Geschichte als Performance. Politische Bewegungen in Galizien um 1900* (Frankfurt–New York, 2014); Angélique Leszczawski-Schwerk, *Die umkämpften Tore zur Gleichberechtigung. Frauenbewegungen in Galizien (1867–1918)* (Wien, 2014).

city. Initiatives looked to commemorate the heroism of women during wars and uprisings, as well as their contribution to educational work in society. The direct originators of the establishment of the institution were two activists connected with Lviv. The first was Antonina Machczyńska (1837–1919), who prepared the groundwork for establishing the Museum at the beginning of the twentieth century, and who left behind an archive of collected materials.⁴ The continuator of her legacy was Maria Bruchnalska (1869–1944),⁵ a scholar and activist, who, with the cooperation and academic assistance of Łucja Charewiczowa (1897–1943) and the financial and local support of Eleonora Lubomirska, managed to found the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women, which was officially opened in January 1930.⁶ The unicameral exhibition space consisted mainly of portraits, busts or photographs of women with short biographical descriptions and objects related to Poland's past; artefacts that belonged to or had been made by women. In this way, in one room of the museum, the iconic female soldier Emilia Plater⁷ and the poetess Maria Konopnicka⁸ were displayed, as well as the images of women whose biographies were considered by the

⁴ Antonina Machczyńska (1837–1919) – teacher, social and independence activist, involved in the struggle for women's access to education; see S. Konarski, 'Antonina Machczyńska', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereinafter: PSB), xviii (1973), 626–7; Lidia Michalska-Bracha, 'Pamięć przeszłości własnej. Wokół idei Muzeum Zasłużonych Polek we Lwowie', in Marek Przeniosło and Katarzyna Sierakowska (eds), *Pamięć historyczna kobiet* (Kielce, 2007), 25–38 (here 28–36).

⁵ Maria Bruchnalska (1869–1944) – social and educational activist, writer and journalist, initiator of memorial publications and museum founder. See Lidia Michalska-Bracha, 'Maria Bruchnalska i jej badania nad udziałem kobiet w powstaniu styczniowym', in Leonid Zaszkilniak and Jerzy Maternicki (eds), *Wielokulturowe środowisko historyczne Lwowa* (Rzeszów, 2004/5), 435–48.

⁶ *Poświęcenie i otwarcie Muzeum Zasłużonych Polek we Lwowie 19 stycznia 1930 roku* (Lwów, 1930).

⁷ Emilia Plater (1806–31) – participant of the November Uprising of 1830–1, commemorated and made famous for posterity in a poem by Adam Mickiewicz. Emilia Plater enjoys a place of remembrance for the participation of women in war and insurrectionary struggles. Stories about her were strongly popularised in the 19th century, and maintained throughout the 20th century. See Dietlind Hüchtker and Karsten Holste, 'Die bewaffnete Heldin 1813–1913–2013: Wahrnehmungen, Deutungen und Gedächtnis', in Maria Dmitrieva and Lars Karl (eds), *Das Jahr 1813. Ostmitteleuropa und Leipzig: Die Völkerschlacht als (trans)nationaler Erinnerungsort* (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2016), 47–67.

⁸ Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) – poet and writer, who touched upon the themes of independence, and featured national and social motifs. Needless to say, Konopnicka in her lifetime was one of the icons of the 'patriotic' education of young people.

museum's employees to be in line with the goals of the Museum. In other words, these women were 'deserving of their place'.⁹ Most of the women featured were educational activists, who had participated in the independence movement and uprisings or wars. They were often writers, but most were teachers – a specific role model for those generations of women. The exhibition of the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women was a part of the larger Lubomirski Museum at the Ossoliński National Institute.

The Museum of Distinguished Polish Women was both the product and producer of a specific 'remembrance policy' (that is: a historical, archival, and scholarly activity aimed at locating in museums a past that belonged to women), which many activists of social movements, including women's emancipation movements looked to activate and implement from the end of the 1920s. The women's movement in Europe, including Poland, was a breeding ground for ideas and projects. As a result, treatises, pamphlets and articles were published relating to the production of knowledge and the storage of the memory of one's own past, aimed at inscribing women's history into the universal circulation of thought.¹⁰ In the Polish context, attention was paid primarily to publications closely related to the participation of women in the independence movement and their roles in uprisings and during the First World War. Two such publications were *Ciche bohaterki. Udział kobiet w powstaniu styczniowym* and *Wierna służba* [*Silent Heroines. On the Participation*

⁹ Anna Nowakowska-Wierzchość, 'Zasłużona Polka, czyli kto? Biografie kobiet zebrane przez Muzeum Zasłużonych Polek we Lwowie (1930–9)', in Joanna Getka and Iwona Krycka-Michnowska (eds), *Kobiety w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w perspektywie interdyscyplinarnej* (Warszawa, 2020), 217–27.

¹⁰ One of the most important promoters of women's history was the co-founder of the Museum, Łucja Charewiczowa, who, among others, at the forum of the 7th International Congress of Historians in Warsaw in 1933, delivered a lecture entitled 'Est-il fondé d'écrire une histoire spéciale de la femme?', in *La Pologne au VII-e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques. Varsovie 1933* (Warszawa, 1933). In contemporary humanities, many works have been written on feminist memorial sites, historicising the past of women, see Sylvia Paetschek and Sylvia Schraut, 'Erinnerung und Geschlecht – auf der Suche nach einer transnationalen Erinnerungskultur in Europa', *Historische Mitteilungen*, xix (2006), 15–28; Katarzyna Sierakowska and Marek Przeniosło, *Pamięć historyczna kobiet* (Kielce, 2007); Angelika Schaser, Sylvia Schraut, and Petra Steymans-Kurz, *Erinnern, vergessen, umdeuten? Europäische Frauenbewegungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main–New York, 2019); Francisca de Haan, 'Archive Fever, Resistance, and Loss: A Rereading of the IAV's Early History', *Yearbook of Women's History: Gender and Archiving. Past, Present and Future*, xxvii (Amsterdam, 2017), 21–38.

of Women in the January Uprising' and 'Faithful Service'].¹¹ Such publications revealed women's forgotten or unrecorded participation in these events. Here the aim was not only educational; the authors wanted to place these heroines within the frameworks and rituals of the jubilee celebrations of these events in the Second Polish Republic, as well as to give a voice to the participants of those events. Therefore, the authors or editors themselves played a unique role in these editions: Aleksandra Piłsudska played such a role in terms of her faithful service. Through her activities, coupled with the role played by her family, she defined the legitimacy of the merits and personal war experiences of women. In addition to recording the memories of the participants of war-time events, an important role in shaping the landscapes of remembrance of women was the series 'The Biographies of Distinguished Women', under the patronage of the Women's Civic Work Union [Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet], one of the largest women's organisations of the Second Polish Republic, as well as the smaller Polish Association of Women with Higher Education [Polskie Stowarzyszenie Kobiet z Wyższym Wykształceniem]. The series 'Biographies of Distinguished Polish Women', like the 'bibliographisation' of the contribution of women to the development of science, culture and society, was a 'wandering idea' specific to the women's movement in Europe, wherein particular contexts were variously implemented.¹² This series of commemorative, jubilee and exhibition initiatives represented an interesting example of the construction of a past and of an attempt to enter a narrative into wider circulation. It referred to the achievements of other institutions with the tasks of civic (patriotic) education and the creation of national awareness, such as the Polish Museum in Rapperswil or the Polish War Archives in Vienna.¹³

¹¹ Maria Bruchnalska, *Ciche bohaterki. Udział kobiet w Powstaniu Styczniowym (materjały)* (Miejsce Piastowe, 1934); Aleksandra Piłsudska et al. (eds), *Wierna Służba: Wspomnienia uczestniczek walk o niepodległość 1910–1915* (Warszawa, 1927); Aleksandra Piłsudska et al. (eds), *Służba ojczyźnie. Wspomnienia uczestniczek walk o niepodległość 1915–1918* (Warszawa, 1929).

¹² Dietlind Hüchtker and Alfrun Kliems (eds), *Überbringen – Überformen – Überblenden. Theorietransfer im 20. Jahrhundert* (Böhlau, 2011), 7; Iwona Dadej, *Beruf und Berufung transnational. Deutsche und polnische Akademikerinnen in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Osnabrück, 2019), 162–85.

¹³ On social and private archives as places of remembrance, see Magdalena Wiśniewska, 'Archiwum jako miejsce pamięci', *Archiwa-Zbiory-Kancelarie*, iv, 6 (2013), 137–48; Waldemar Chorażyczewski, 'Archiwa i pamięć. Z dziejów polskich archiwów', *Archiwa-Kancelarie-Zbiory*, i (Toruń, 2005), 23–4; Wanda Roman, 'Aby Polska nie zginęła. Polskie Archiwum Wojenne (1915–1921) i jego zbiory', *Archeion*, 120 (2019), 185–202.

The protagonists of the published memoirs and recollections are women associated with education and the independence movement. They were also writers and journalists:

Felicja Wasilewska-Boberska (1825–89) was a teacher and educational activist, a writer and an ‘ambassador of education’.¹⁴ She was closely associated with Lviv, where she established a boarding school for girls, around which a group of female alumni was formed, who continued the educational and social activities of their mentor. Boberska based her teachings on the achievements of the historian Joachim Lelewel¹⁵ and the pedagogical treatises of Klementyna Hoffmanowa.¹⁶ The reference to figures of merit for the Polish nation was the foundation of Boberska’s historical and patriotic educational approach. When educating girls, she recalled the women participants of the November Uprising, presenting them as models of virtue and true patriotism, women who claimed their rightful place next to men. She wrote that Polish women “had also fulfilled their duty, as they deserved their homeland and countrymen to no less a degree”.¹⁷ She emphasised the importance of belles-lettres in education, which shaped the spirit and awareness of one’s identity. She was a valued figure in the Lviv community, not only for her educational activity, but also for having played a foundational role in the city’s cultural and intellectual life. The biography of Boberska edited in this volume was written by Aniela Witosławska-d’Abancourt.¹⁸

Emma Jeleńska-Dmochowska (1864–1919) in her literary work, using her maiden name Jeleńska, was hailed as the ‘Polish Jane Austen’, she made

¹⁴ Aniela Witosławska-d’Abancourt de Franqueville, ‘Felicja Boberska’, in *PSB*, ii (1936), 145; the term ‘ambasadorka wychowania’ [ambassador of education] is taken from: Joanna Falkowska, *Ambasadorki wychowania. Poglądy pedagogiczne polskich kobiet w II połowie XIX wieku i początkach XX wieku* (Toruń, 2018), cf. also Joanna Falkowska, ‘W służbie edukacji kobiet. Działalność Felicji Boberskiej z Wasilewskich (1825–89)’, *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*, 3 (2016), 131.

¹⁵ Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861) – historian, Slavist, numismatist, bibliographer and politician; regarded as one of the founders of Polish historiography, who was open to comparative studies, the extensive use of sources, and incorporating research on less privileged social groups. Cf. Stefan Kieniewicz, ‘Joachim Józef Benedykt Lelewel’, in *PSB*, xvii (1972), 21–5.

¹⁶ Klementyna Tańska-Hoffmanowa (1798–1845) – educational activist, considered to be the precursor of educational thought for girls in Poland.

¹⁷ Felicja Boberska, *O Polkach, które szczególnie zasłużyły się Ojczyźnie w powstaniu listopadowym* (Lwów, 1893), 1.

¹⁸ Aniela Witosławska-d’Abancourt (1862 or 1870–1928) – educational activist, involved in supporting the People’s School Society.

her debut in the daily *Kurier Codzienny* in 1898 with the short story *Panienka* ['A Young Maiden'] for which the editorial office awarded her the Bolesław Prus prize. Jeleńska-Dmochowska in her writings was interested in social change and the transformation of social roles for women. She was associated with the Vilnius Circle of Polish Women's Equality [*Koło Równouprawienia Polek*], she also co-founded the Ladies Patriotic Circle [*Koło Patriotek*], the aim of which was to create a 'national awareness among women of the working classes' by educating them and linking them with emergent Poland, minimising the impact of slogans about the break-off or future independence of Lithuania. The edited biography also includes the figure of Emilia Węławska (1863–1921), a teacher, an educational activist, a children's writer, and a translator associated with Vilnius – she produced the first Polish translation of *Lord Jim*, and her biography was also included in the collection of the Museum of Distinguished Polish Women. In the interwar period, the writer's biographical profile was featured in the widely read series 'Biographies of Distinguished Polish Women', initiated and created by the sympathisers and members of the women's movement. In 1951 her work was censored and withdrawn from libraries. Today Jeleńska-Dmochowska is a forgotten figure and known only to a small group of researchers on the era.¹⁹ The author of *Emma Jeleńska's* biography was Maria Reutt, whose professional and social work in many cases resembles the protagonist's life.²⁰

While editing the texts, we followed the methodology as set out by Ireneusz Ihnatowicz.²¹ The persons or events (known and reconstructed) featured in the text have been provided with footnotes. In the English version, we decided to excise text fragments that were too detailed in terms of their descriptions of events, landscapes, people, etc. We marked the editorial intervention (text abbreviations) with an ellipsis ..., while restating in the footnote what the

¹⁹ Ludwika Życka and Wanda Niedziałkowska-Dobaczewska, *Emma Jeleńska-Dmochowska: strażniczka kresowa* (Kraków, 1932); Zdzisława Mokranowska, 'Emma Jeleńska-Dmochowska dzisiaj. Między Rodziewiczówną a harlequinem?', in Krzysztof Fiołek (ed.) *Literatura niewyczerpana. W kręgu mniej znanych twórców polskiej literatury lat 1863–1914* (Kraków, 2014), 126.

²⁰ Maria Reutt (1862 or 1867–1942), writer, author of novels for young people, journalist, and dramatist, educational activist, co-founded a network of Polish secret schools and libraries in the Russian partition, activist in women's organisations, including the Women's Equality Club. For many years she worked in the libraries and primary schools section of the Polish School Society in Vilnius, co-organised by Emma Jeleńska and her husband, Kazimierz Dmochowski.

²¹ Ireneusz Ihnatowicz, 'Projekt instrukcji wydawniczej dla źródeł historycznych XIX i początku XX wieku', *Studia Źródłoznawcze. Commentationes*, vi (1962), 99–124.

deleted fragments referred to. Both texts are located in the collections at the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, as Files of the Union of Polish Christian Women's Societies. A text about Felicja Boberska by Aniela Witosławska-d'Abancourt is kept under the reference number 841/1/122, pp. 32–7); the typescript contains corrections: punctuation, misprints and errors handwritten in black ink. The text about Emma Jeleńska-Dmochowska by Maria Reutt has the reference number 841/1/122, pp. 76–80; it is a typescript, and also contains handwritten corrections of misprints and errors in black ink.

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