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English 18th-Century Women Poets and Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski

Adaptation, Paraphrase, Translation

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Abstract

The paper deals with six poems of three 18th-century English women poets—Lady Mary Chudleigh, Mary Masters, and Anne Steele “Theodosia”—inspired by the works of the greatest Polish Neo-Latin poet Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski. The aim of the study is to present the three authors, their biographies and literary *oeuvres*, and to attempt an analysis of the poems in question within this context.

The biographies, social position—Chudleigh was the wife of a baronet, the two others belonged to the middle class—and education of the three authoresses differ and yet they all shared the limitations resulting from the fact that they were women in 18th-century England, and were therefore denied access to academic education. The analysis of the texts and biographies has proven that it is highly improbable that either of the three women poets could translate the poems from Latin originals. All of their translations are based on earlier renditions; in the case of Chudleigh it is possible to identify the source text, that is the translation by John Norris.

Inasmuch as it can be ascertained from the available biographical and critical sources and the results, the attitudes of the three poetesses towards their work varied. Only Masters acknowledged the source material in her publications. Although the current concepts of translation are different, her two poems: *On a Fountain. Casimir, Lib. Epod. Ode 2* and *Casimir, Lib. I. Ode 2*—qualify as translations by the standards of her times. They are analysed here in detail. Neither Chudleigh nor Steele mentioned Sarbiewski in their publications. Their decision can be justified by the fact that their poems, even if clearly (though most likely indirectly) inspired by his lyrics, must be classified as free adaptations or even original poetry influenced by Sarbiewski or earlier translations and adaptations of his works.

Keywords

Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Mathias Casimirus Sarbievius, literary translation, Neo-Latin poetry, Augustan poetry, adaptation, poetry in translation, women poets

In Great Britain the early 18th century saw a gradual decline in the interest in the works of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, the greatest Polish Neo-Latin poet, who had enjoyed an immense popularity there since the 1640s.¹ At the beginning of the century there was still a noticeable interest in the works of the poet among the dissenters,² once it disappeared, Sarbiewski's poetry was gradually relegated to the sphere of education as material on which students practiced their skills as translators. Outside schools the poetry became with time the source material for translations popular mainly among minor poets of the Augustan period.³ The three women poets whose translations are the subject of the present paper undoubtedly belong to the latter group but their attempts at translation certainly deserve individual presentation.

Among numerous, probably over fifty, British translators, adaptors, and emulators of Sarbiewski's poems active from the first half of the 17th century to the mid-19th century we find only five women, the works of three of whom will be discussed here.⁴ Even if this number may not seem impressive we must be aware of the conditions in which they approached their task. The gentlemen translators of Sarbiewski were almost to a man university graduates or at least students while academic education was not generally available to women in Great Britain until the end of the 19th century.⁵ It is also another reason which makes these women's interest in Sarbiewski's poetry and their attempts at rendering it in English the more interesting, although perhaps more as a social phenomenon than as actual literary achievements. At the time of Sarbiewski's greatest popularity English women

¹ On the reception of Sarbiewski in Great Britain see e.g. P. Urbański, *Theologia Fabulosa: Commentationes Sarbievianae*, Szczecin 2000, pp. 187–230; D. Money, "Aspects of the Reception of Sarbiewski in England: From Hill, Vaughan, and Watts, to Coleridge, Bowring, Walker, and Coxe", in *Pietas Humanistica: Neo-Latin Religious Poetry in Poland in European Context*, ed. by P. Urbański, Frankfurt am Main 2006 pp. 157–188; J. Starnawski, "Casimir w angielskiej poezji XVII–XVIII wieku", in *id.*, *Pisarze jezuitów w Polsce (wiek XVI–XIX)*, Kraków 2007, pp. 220–262; *Casimir Britannicus. English Translations, Paraphrases, and Emulations of the Poetry of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski. Second expanded and corrected edition*, ed. by K. Fordoński and P. Urbański, rev. and expanded edition, London 2010, pp. 20–27.

² See K. Fordoński, "Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski and English Dissenting Poets of the Early 18th Century: A Study in Reception of Neo-Latin Poetry in Great Britain", *Terminus* 13 (2011), issue 2, pp. 71–85.

³ See K. Fordoński, "'To Secure a Favourable Reception'—The Role and Place of Translations of the Poetry of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski in 18th Century Collections of Minor English Poets", *Journal of Neo-Latin Language and Literature* 19 (2017), pp. 157–173.

⁴ The translations of the fourth woman poet has been presented in K. Fordoński, "Lucy Hutchinson and Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski's Epigram 34: The Puritan Poetess as a Translator of Neo-Latin Poetry", in *Between Cultures, Between Languages*, ed. by I. Szymańska and A. Piskorska, Warsaw 2020, pp. 56–64; and the fifth woman poet has been presented in K. Fordoński, "Caroline de Crespigny Translates Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski: Forgotten Romantic Poetess as Translator of Neo-Latin Verse", in *From Queen Anne to Queen Victoria: Readings in 18th and 19th Century British Literature and Culture*, vol. 4, ed. by G. Bystydzińska and E. Harris, Warsaw 2014, pp. 121–130.

⁵ For more specific information on Sarbiewski's translators see K. Fordoński, "Recepcja poezji religijnej Macieja Kazimierza Sarbiewskiego na Wyspach Brytyjskich w wiekach XVII i XVIII", *Barok* 2 (2012), pp. 136–137.

in general had little opportunity both to learn Latin and get to know the works of the Polish poet which is confirmed by the sample we deal with here—six translations but of only four original poems, three of them are various renderings of Sarbiewski's *Lyr.* II 5 "E rebus humanis excessus". Only a few were lucky enough to receive at least in part the kind of education which was reserved for men, including knowledge of Latin.⁶ Consequently, the relations of their poems to the original texts must also be regarded with caution and only those which actually qualify as translations will be analysed further in the present paper.

The three women who are our subject here are Lady Mary Chudleigh, a noblewoman residing in the country, Mary Masters, a middle class Londoner, and Anne Steele, Baptist hymn writer from rural Hampshire. I refer to them here as women poets on purpose as each of them left an impressive body of original poetry apart from the discussed translations. The limitations of their skills and achievements as translators of the Latin poetry of Sarbiewski must not overshadow their achievements as original authors which in each case were remarkable.

The first of the English women poets discussed here was Lady Mary Chudleigh (*née* Lee) (1656–1710), a poet and essayist, engaged in literary pursuits from her early childhood. According to information from a family memoir quoted by George Ballard in *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*, "she was ever from her infancy addicted to reading and [had] naturally a genius for poetry."⁷ Margaret J.M. Ezell, her biographer and the editor of the 1993 edition of Lady Mary's works⁸ summed up her *oeuvre* as follows: Chudleigh's "published writings reflect her interest in classical literature (probably read in translation), history, and contemporary natural philosophy."⁹ The crucial phrase is in the parenthesis, well-read as she was Chudleigh apparently did not know Latin well enough to read Classical works in the original. Consequently, we must assume that the sources of her translations from the Latin of Sarbiewski were either earlier English translations or that she had to resort to seek the assistance of some of her better skilled friends.

Chudleigh enjoyed the friendship of numerous important literary personalities of her age, most notably that of John Dryden and John Norris. She was also a friend of several other women writers such as Mary Astell and Elisabeth Thomas

⁶ The matter has recently been the subject of lively academic inquiry and the interested reader will find appropriate information e.g. in E. Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*, Cambridge 2004; J. Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 2005; M.W. Ferguson and M. Suzuki, "Women's Literacies and Social Hierarchy in Early Modern England", *Literature Compass* 12 (2015), no. 11, pp. 575–590.

⁷ G. Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS Ballard 74, fol. 301r as quoted in M.J.M. Ezell, "Chudleigh, Mary, Lady Chudleigh (bap. 1656, d. 1710)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, online edition, May 2005, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5383> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

⁸ M. Lady Chudleigh, *The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh*, ed. by M.J.M. Ezell, New York and Oxford 1993.

⁹ Ezell, "Chudleigh, Mary".

with whom she exchanged numerous letters and to whom she often dedicated her poems.¹⁰ Most of her life Lady Mary spent on her husband's estate Ashton in Devonshire near Exeter. Chudleigh's works are an ample testimony to her broad interest in classical literature. Her published *oeuvre* is relatively small and includes two collections: *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703), reprinted repeatedly during the next five decades, and *Essays upon Several Subjects in Prose and Verse* (1710), as well as a long verse dialogue, *The Ladies Defence*, published separately in 1701.

Chudleigh is appreciated by contemporary scholars for her protofeminist views, many of her poems deal with position of women and pitfalls of marriage. Her political and religious views have been recently the subject of fairly heated debate with opinions ranging between latitudinarian Whig and die-hard Tory, which basically covers majority of available political and religious options at the time, though the former seems much more justified.¹¹ Barbara Olive calls her "a writer of Puritan background"¹² and, indeed, it is hardly a debatable point with Chudleigh's uncle, William Sydenham, serving as commissioner of the Treasury under Oliver Cromwell, and her father, Richard Lee, winning twice a seat in the House of Commons from Barnstaple, a Puritan enclave in Devon, in the 1680s. Bronwen Price claims that Chudleigh was a "conforming nonconformist", applying a term she took from Neil Howard Keeble.¹³ If we consider Chudleigh a dissenter, her interest in Sarbiewski can be seen as foretelling the immense fascination with Sarbiewski's poetry sparked at the turn of the 18th century by Isaac Watts which then spread among his followers.¹⁴

Chudleigh's unorthodox (even if discrete) religious affiliations are the more interesting when we consider the fact that she was willing to be inspired in her poetry by the works of a Jesuit, a representative of the exactly opposite end of the religious spectrum at the time. And yet Chudleigh's religious views as they can be inferred from her writings were apparently greatly distant from any sectarianism. As Price commented on *The Song of Three Children*, one of the poems inspired by the poetry of Sarbiewski:

Written following a period of significant religious division and persecution within the established church, it intervenes with compelling vision and conviction with the religious

¹⁰ See: R.M. Mills, "Mary, Lady Chudleigh (1656–1710): Poet, Protofeminist and Patron", in *Women and Poetry, 1660–1750*, ed. by S. Prescott and D.E. Shuttleton, Houndmills 2003, pp. 50–51.

¹¹ See B. Olive, "A Puritan Subject's Panegyrics to Queen Anne", *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 42 (2002), no. 3, pp. 475–476; and B. Price, "'In One Harmonious Song Combine': Inclusiveness, Toleration, and Liberty in Lady Mary Chudleigh's 'The Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd'", *English* 62 (2013), issue 237, pp. 195–197.

¹² Olive, "Puritan Subject's Panegyrics", p. 475 and p. 477.

¹³ See B. Olive, "The Fabric of Restoration Puritanism: Mary Chudleigh's 'The Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd'", in *Puritanism and Its Discontents*, ed. by L. Lunger Knoppers, Newark 2003, pp. 122–142. Neil Howard Keeble, in his *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester 1987), mentions several figures in the discussed period who identified themselves in these ambiguous religious terms (pp. 33–40).

¹⁴ See Fordoński, "Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski", pp. 71–85.

controversies of the time. Chudleigh's poem demonstrates a concern to foster openness and comprehensiveness in its devotional stance, providing fresh perspectives on ideas of toleration, exclusion, and inclusiveness.¹⁵

It seems telling that for the introduction to such a poem Chudleigh chose passages taken from an author who could have been reasonably considered her foe.

It is actually quite debatable whether the three poems by Chudleigh we discuss here, apart from *The Song of Three Children* their list includes also *The Elevation* and *The Happy Man*, may be regarded (and/or were intended) as translations or at least re-translations at all and whether Chudleigh saw herself as a translator. Actually, none of the studies in her works and life I could access discusses her as such, no other translations she wrote are known. It should be stated here very clearly that Chudleigh did not acknowledge the connection of her works with Sarbiewski in any way.¹⁶ Consequently, it is quite obvious that she did not attempt to strengthen her position by associating herself with a famous foreign poet as was often the case in the 18th century.

The very comparison of the lengths of Sarbiewski's and Chudleigh's poems is telling: *The Elevation* cuts the original 88 lines of *Lyr. II 5* down to 24 while in *The Song of the Three Children. Paraphras'd* similarities with Sarbiewski's *Lyr. II 5* end in the first stanza. 104 lines of *Ep. 3* are rendered in mere 30 of *The Happy Man*. In the case of *The Happy Man* the source of influence might have been one of the two earlier translators of Sarbiewski's *Ep. 3* prepared by George Hils (1646) or (far more likely) Henry Vaughan (1651) but there are no direct similarities and her approach to the original text is greatly different from either. Actually, the differences between the original and what we suppose to be a translation are such that it cannot be ruled out that the very idea of writing a palinode to Horace's ode *Beatus ille*, which *Ep. 3* actually is, came to Lady Mary as a result of her own reading of one of the numerous translations and adaptations of Horace available at the time. Rebecca M. Mills sees the poem merely as an example of the „beatus vir” poems.¹⁷

The connection of two other Chudleigh's poems with Sarbiewski's *Lyr. II 5* is far clearer—the direct source seems to have been the translation of Lady Mary's personal friend the philosopher John Norris entitled *Elevation*, first published in 1687, as the comparison of the titles (Sarbiewski's original is entitled *E rebus humanis excessus—A departure from things human*) and the first stanzas quite clearly suggests:

Take wing (my Soul) and upwards bend thy flight
To thy originary Fields of Light (Norris)¹⁸

¹⁵ Price, 'In One Harmonious Song Combine', p. 194.

¹⁶ The "paraphrase" in the title refers to the biblical Book of Daniel.

¹⁷ Mills, "Mary, Lady Chudleigh", p. 55.

¹⁸ J. Norris, *A Collection of Miscellanies: Consisting of Poems, Essays, Discourses, and Letters, Occasionally Written*, Oxford: J. Crosley, 1687, p. 53.

Ascend my Soul, and in a speedy Flight
Haste to the Regions of eternal Light (Chudleigh, *Song...*)¹⁹

Upon the Wings of Thought she [the Soul] flies
Above the reach of Sight,
And finds a way through pathless Skies
To everlasting Light (Chudleigh, *The Elevation*)²⁰

Maren-Sofie Røstvig simply calls Chudleigh's *The Elevation* "her paraphrase of Norris's *Elevation*".²¹ Similarities may be found also in the lengthy prefaces to Norris's poem and Chudleigh's earlier poem *The Song of the Three Children*²² further proving the suggested connection. However, Røstvig also points out further existing differences when she claims that Chudleigh departed from the versions of Abraham Cowley and Norris who "retained much of the mystic fervour of the Polish Jesuit" and "invested the theme with scientific, rather than mystic overtones."²³

And yet close reading of the four texts in question reveals certain surprising discrepancies such as this example. Sarbiewski's image "Suoque semper terra minor globo / Iam iamque cerni difficilis suum / Vanescit in punctum?"²⁴ ["The ball of the Earth decreases still / it gets still more difficult to see it / as it vanishes into a point"] is rendered in Norris's translation as "that ball below! But ha, I've lost the little sight, / the Scene's remov'd."²⁵ Chudleigh's respective image (present only in *The Elevation* but not in *The Song...*) is, however, more succinct but also closer to the original "Yonder's the little Ball of Earth, / It lessens as I rise."²⁶ The inspiration with Norris's poem is clearly visible but a more direct influence of Sarbiewski's original (or other English translations) cannot be ruled out entirely.

A close reading of Chudleigh's poems *The Happy Man* as well as *The Elevation* and the initial stanzas of *The Song of the Three Children. Paraphras'd* reveals that they offer at best a general rendering of selected elements of the original content with scarce attention to the details of the original poems. Røstvig wrote about the latter poem that "the various echoes from Sarbiewski, Boethius, and Lucretius ... form a curious mixture, together with the psychology of Locke and the new Cartesian world view."²⁷ They are consequently best described as extremely free paraphrases or,

¹⁹ M. Lady Chudleigh, *Poems on Several Occasions: Together with the Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd*, London: B. Lintott, 1703, p. 1. Note: pages of *The Song...* are numbered separately from the main collection.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²¹ M.-S. Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal*, 2nd ed., 2 vols, Oslo and New York 1962, vol. 1, p. 305.

²² Urbański, *Theologia Fabulosa*, pp. 213–214.

²³ Røstvig, *Happy Man*, vol. 1, p. 305.

²⁴ M.K. Sarbiewski, *Carmina*, Paris: J. Barbou, 1759, p. 62.

²⁵ Norris, *Collection*, p. 53.

²⁶ Chudleigh, *Poems on Several Occasions*, p. 34.

²⁷ Røstvig, *Happy Man*, vol. 1, p. 307.

perhaps, it is the safest to present them as original poems inspired by Sarbiewski's verse rather than translations or adaptations.

The situation of the poems of the second woman poet we intend to discuss here could not be more different as in this case we deal with actual and indeed very successful translations. Mary Masters (c. 1694–1771) was a poet active in the literary circles of London of the mid-18th century. She published two volumes of poetry: *Poems on Several Occasions* (1733) and *Familiar Letters and Poems on Several Occasions by Mary Masters* (1755). The latter volume includes several translations from Horace and Catullus as well as a selection of paraphrastic verse translations of several Psalms.²⁸ Among the three women poets presented here she was the only one to engage in translation on a more serious scale, although just as the other two she most probably had to rely on the knowledge of others as far as foreign languages were concerned.

Our knowledge of Masters's life is extremely limited and consists mainly of what may be found in the "Preface" to her first volume of *Poems on Several Occasions* (1733):

The author of the following poems never read a Treatise of Rhetorick, or an Art of Poetry, nor was ever taught her English Grammar. Her Education rose no higher than the Spelling Book, or the Writing Master: her Genius to Poetry was always browbeat and discountenanced by her Parents, and till her Merit got the better of her Fortune, she was shut out from all Commerce with the more knowing and polite part of the world.²⁹

In her autobiographical poems she presents herself as an "unletter'd Maid . . . wholly unpractis'd in the learned Rules", she insists that she writes "simple Nature unimprov'd by Art", yet clings to "distinguishing Defects to prove them Mine."³⁰

Although this self-presentation may be largely true, even our specific knowledge of Masters' social position is extremely limited. We know only that she never married and spent most of her life as guest in various London households and in an estate in Derbyshire. However, she rose to certain prominence in London literary milieu. According to James Boswell, she knew and occasionally visited Dr Samuel Johnson who allegedly revised her volumes of poetry and "illuminated them here and there with a ray of his own genius."³¹ Dr Johnson was certainly one of the subscribers of Masters's volume of *Familiar Letters*, the list of whom includes also Samuel Richardson and Christopher Smart.³² Modern critics such as Robert Cummings are, however, far less pleased with the effect accusing Masters of using "elaborations, ineptly handled, [which] render [her] versions ridiculous."³³

²⁸ P. Demers, "Masters, Mary (fl. 1733–1755)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, online edition, May 2005, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18316> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

²⁹ M. Masters, *Poems on Several Occasions*, London: T. Browne, 1733, p. A2.

³⁰ M. Masters, *Familiar Letters and Poems on Several Occasions*, London [s.n.] 1755, p. 45.

³¹ J. Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. J.W. Croker, rev. J. Wright, vol. 8, London: J. Murray, 1835, p. 241.

³² See Demers, "Masters, Mary".

³³ R. Cummings, "Post-Classical Latin Literature", in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, vol. 3: 1660–1790, ed. by S. Gillespie and D. Hopkins, Oxford 2005, p. 500.

Masters was the first English woman poet to publish her two translations of Sarbiewski—*On a Fountain. Casimir, Lib. Epod. Ode 2* and *Casimir, Lib. I. Ode 2*—clearly indicated as such, probably in an attempt to strengthen her literary credentials, which was very typical of her times.³⁴ Although both poems had been translated before (*Epod. 2* by Hils in 1646 and *Lyr. I 2* also by Hils as well as by Joshua Dinsdale in 1741) her work is certainly original, there are no similarities between these translations.

The first poem follows the path chartered by Chudleigh (and numerous other poets, especially of the 18th century), Masters starts with translation, addressing the fountain (in the original the source of the small river Sona in Sarbiewski's native northern Mazowsze) and describing it, but then she expands the descriptive part into two stanzas after which only to return to the original content. However, she either misunderstands or purposefully alters the situation presented in the poem. Where Sarbiewski recollects his return from studies in Italy where he was hailed as seer by Pope Urban VIII, Masters avoids any such personal details, creating a different and for more general story of a poet who is tired after long night's work and retires to the bank of the river in order to rest and enjoy the nature.

The form is also quite distant from Sarbiewski's original poem, unrhymed iambic stanza is replaced with iambic tetrameter rhymed in couplets. While the original is only 20 lines long, the translation is 38 lines long, Masters expands and embellishes her text with numerous details. Where Sarbiewski writes "Permittere libari manu"³⁵ ["Let me drink with my hand"] Masters expands it to four lines:

But o'er thy Mirror let me lave,
My lips in thy full brimming Wave,
Or from my Palm thy Crystal sup,
Or through the Reed imbibe it up.³⁶

Sometimes the resulting meaning of her translation is exactly the opposite of the original. Where Sarbiewski writes "Sic te quietum nulla perturbet pecus, ramusve lapsus arbore"³⁷ ["Do not let any cattle or a falling twig disturb your peace"] Masters writes:

So may the Cattle from thy Brink,
Dash the loose Earth, and as they drink
With miry Hoofs thy Course restrain,
And mar thy Beauties with a Stain.³⁸

³⁴ See Fordoński, 'To Secure a Favourable Reception', pp. 157–158.

³⁵ Sarbiewski, *Carmina*, p. 265.

³⁶ Masters, *Familiar Letters*, p. 165.

³⁷ Sarbiewski, *Carmina*, p. 265.

³⁸ Masters, *Familiar Letters*, p. 166.

The conclusion departs completely from the original, perhaps Masters refers here to an autobiographical detail. Instead of promising the fountain eternal fame, exceeding that of the spring Blandusia (Bandusia) hailed by Horace (Ode 3.13) and of the waters of Lago Garda surrounding Sirmio (Sirmione) praised by Catullus, as it is in Sarbiewski's poem,³⁹ Masters writes:

May Larks and Linnets cease to sing,
And Zephyrs check their wanton Wing,
To catch thy Gurgles as they rise,
Mixed with the Strains the Lyre supplies.

Nor count it a Disgrace that I,
Should join the warbling harmony;
For W*** approves my early Flame,
And W***'s Vote is endless Fame.⁴⁰

The poet joins the sound of flowing water with her song, rejoicing in the fact that her early attempts have been appreciated by the otherwise unknown W***. The resulting poem is quite successful, the preoccupation and realistic descriptions of nature show clearly Masters' interest and involvement in the early pre-Romanticism even though her sophisticated vocabulary still belongs to the Augustan Age. However, it fails completely to render justice to Sarbiewski's original. Masters appropriates elements of the original work as she sees fit in order to create her own poem markedly distant (both in form and content) from the original.

The second translation of Masters is by far more interesting as she does not attempt here to create her own work but renders the original as closely and precisely as she can. Consequently, of all the poems mentioned here it deserves to be quoted in full and a more detailed analysis.

Ad Aurelium Lycum – Ne plus aequo de adversa Fortuna queratur (Lyr. I 2)

Indignas, Lyce, nenas,
Et maestum gemitu pectus et hispidis
Frontem nubibus expedi,
Cum Sol non solito lumine riserit
Et Fortuna volubilis
Fati difficilem iecerit aleam.
Quod vexant hodie Noti,
Cras lambent hilares aequor Etesiae.

³⁹ See Sarbiewski, *Carmina*, p. 265.

⁴⁰ Masters, *Familiar Letters*, p. 167.

Maestum Sol hodie caput,
 Cras laetum roseo promet ab aequore.
 Alterno redeunt choro
 Risus et gemitus, et madidis prope
 Sicci cum lacrimis ioci.
 Nascuntur mediis gaudia luctibus.
 Sic fati placitum: suis
 Tempestiva fluunt fata periculis.
 Fessos duxit heri boves,
 Dat magnis hodie iura Quiritibus;
 Et quae bobus ademerat,
 Imponit Gabiis et Curibus iuga.
 Idem Phosphorus aspicit
 Magnum, quem tenuem viderat Hesperus.
 Quod si seria ludicris
 Fortunae placeat texere, rusticus
 Hesternam repetet casam,
 Ridentis populi non humilis iocus;
 Et quis rexerat omnia,
 Findet laurigeris ligna securibus;
 Quod si defuerit salix,
 Fasces pauperibus subiiciet focus.⁴¹

Which may be rendered in English prose as follows:

Quit, Lycus, these unworthy wailings, / Free your breast of sadness and / Chase away the
 clouds from your brow, / Even though the Sun does not shine its usual light upon you, / And
 volatile Fortune / Chances to throw inauspicious dice. / The sea that today is disturbed by
 the Notus [southerly wind] / Tomorrow will be caressed by the gentle Etesius [northerly
 wind]. / The face of the Sun is sad today / Tomorrow it shall rise joyful from the rosy
 sea. / Laughter and wailing return in an alternating chorus, / Wet tears are followed by dry
 jokes, / Joys are born among sadness. / This is the way the fate wants it, / Tempestuous
 events flow in a dangerous current. / Yesterday he ploughed with his weary oxen, / Today he
 gives laws to great Romans, / And the yoke taken from his oxen, / He lays on the Gabii and
 the Cures. / The morning star, too, sees as a great person, / Whom the evening star saw as
 a weak one. / But if Fortune chooses to mix the playful / With the serious, the swain / Will
 return to his old house / And he will be not a mean joke to the jeering crowd. / And with
 the laurel-bearing axe, with which he had ruled over all, / He will now cut down wood, / But
 if there is not enough willow, / He will feed the humble fire with this bundle of twigs.

⁴¹ Sarbiewski, *Carmina*, pp. 4–5.

Masters translated the poem as follows:

Casimir, Lib. I. Ode 2.

My Friend forbear th'unmanly Cry,
 Nor let the Bosom heave the Sigh,
 Nor cloud thy Looks with Woe,
 If Phoebus' Rays should be restrained,
 And Fortune from her fickle Hand,
 Some luckless Die should throw.

Today th' un-prisoned Whirlwinds sweep,
 And rouse to Wrath the Boiling Deep,
 And warning Billows roar:
 But ere th' approaching Morning comes,
 Zephyr shall play his silken Plumes,
 And general Peace restore.

The Sun that sunk with Clouds opprest,
 Tomorrow rising in the East;
 In his full Flame shall glow,
 Grief and gay Smiles alternate rise:
 Joy wipes the Dew-drop from your Eyes
 And transport treads on Woe.

The fullest Tides of Affluence,
 And ev'ry Joy that springs from Sense;
 O'er Rocks of Danger roll:
 Thus Heav'n decrees till the Great Day,
 That sweeps these changing Scenes away,
 And rests the tossing Soul.

He⁴² who last Night his Oxen drove,
 Today to Rome makes his remove;
 An Orb supreme to fill,
 The Yoke his Oxen wore he throws,
 Resistless on his Country's Foes:
 The Vassals of his Will.

⁴² Cincinatus. [Footnote (misspelled) by Mary Masters], Masters, *Familiar Letters*, p. 168.

The evening Star the Man beheld,
 A humble Tiller of the Field;
 But when the Morning came,
 He by the Senate's suffrage raised,
 In highest Rank of Glory blazed;
 And Realms revered his name.

Should Fortune, who delights to twine,
 A Sable with a silver Line;
 But take a different Thread;
 He a poor Swain hissed by the Throng,
 That with his Triumph swelled his Song,
 Must seek his humble Shed.

His Axes that with Laurels crowned,
 Once struck a trembling Terror round;
 His stubborn Billets rend,
 His Rods⁴³ which once the World controlled,
 To mend his Fire and chase the Cold,
 Their last Assistance lend.⁴⁴

The form and length of the original is, as previously, changed. Sarbiewski's *Ad Aurelium Lycum – Ne plus aequo de adversa Fortuna queratur* (Lyr. I 2) is 30 lines long, Masters' *Casimir, Lib. I. Ode 2*. 48 lines long. The Latin original is unrhymed and written in Lesser Asclepiads, Masters replaced it with a complex rhyme pattern (AABCCB known in English as tail-rhyme stanza) twined with a complex metric pattern of 8 syllables, 8 syllables, 6 syllables, thus forming a (sometimes imperfect) sequence of 4 + 4 + 3 iambs, repeated twice in every stanza which in most cases covers the content of two original Latin stanzas. This increase in size may be explained as "elaborations" as Cummings did but in fact it is a fairly standard solution applied by majority of Sarbiewski's translators. Sarbiewski's Latin all too often proved too concise to be rendered in English in a poem of the same length.

Masters replaces the original (fictitious after the fashion of Horace) addressee Aurelius Lycus with an anonymous "Friend", but other than that her translation follows faithfully the contents of the original poem. Reference to the gods of southerly and northerly winds, Notus and Etesius, disappears but Masters replaced them with Zephyr, god of westerly wind. The alteration does make some sense, however, as in British reality westerly wind, coming from the Atlantic, is more likely to change

⁴³ "An Axe and Rods were carried before the consuls of Rome as Marks of their Dignity" [Note by Masters], *ibid.*, p. 170.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168–170.

the weather, although not necessarily “restore the peace”. In general, the introductory part delivers the message of the original, even if some of the images such as the “laughter and wailing [which] return in an alternating chorus” are missing, Masters matches them with imagery of her own.

In the first part the poem Sarbiewski attempts to put the addressee at ease by pointing out the volatility and changeability of nature which one should approach with the neo-Stoic virtue of *constantia*, knowing that every good turn of events must be followed by a bad one and then, in turn, by a good one, on which we have no influence. In the second part this volatility is presented on an example taken from Ancient Roman history—the life of Cincinnatus.

Sarbiewski introduces the topic tongue in cheek, the name of the great Roman politician and military commander is not mentioned. The reference is also partially hidden by the fact that he names the defeated tribes are given as the Gabii and the Cures while Cincinnatus fought against the Aequians and the Sabines (who lived also in the city of Cures). However, any contemporary reader of Sarbiewski would immediately recognise the story of Cincinnatus by the very fact that the hero moves on from ploughing the field with his oxen one day to commanding the army of Rome on the next. However, Masters, who certainly succeeded fully in translating the poem, did not trust her readers quite so much and chose to clarify the allusions. It must be mentioned here in her defence that she chose to do so in the paratext, leaving the contents of the poem untouched.

It may be regarded as a rather unexpected token of recognition of the quality of Masters’ translation of *Ad Aurelium Lycum* that it was plagiarized by the reverend Thomas Gibbons who published it with slight alterations first in 1769 in *The Universal Magazine* (signed T.G.) and then republished it in his collection of poems *The Christian Minister* in 1772.⁴⁵ However, it may also mean that by 1769 (although probably still living) Masters had been completely forgotten and Gibbons could reasonably hope that he would get away with the plagiarism.⁴⁶

The connection of the third woman poet, Anne Steele (1717–1778), better known as “Theodosia”, her pen-name, with Sarbiewski’s work might have been similar to that described above in the case of Lady Chudleigh. Steele was a celebrated poet and one of the first female British hymn writers, certainly the very first to rise to fame as such. Steele never married (the often repeated story of her fiancé’s drowning on the morning of their wedding day has since been disputed⁴⁷) and spent all her adult life in the house of her father William Steele, timber merchant and Baptist pastor, at Broughton, Hampshire. Steele suffered a hip injury at the age of eighteen

⁴⁵ See Fordoński, “Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski”, pp. 81–82.

⁴⁶ On plagiarism in 18th century England see R. Terry, *Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne*, Basingstoke 2010.

⁴⁷ See J.R. Watson, N. Cho, “Anne Steele’s Drowned Fiancé”, *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (2005), pp. 117–121.

and her health was delicate for the rest of her life⁴⁸ as she probably suffered from chronic malaria.⁴⁹

In 1760, she published *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional*, a collection including metrical versions of forty-seven Psalms, with religious poems and hymns. She was apparently quite successful financially in her literary work but remained modest and gave away her income to worthy causes. In her works she was heavily indebted to Isaac Watts (from whom she might have taken her interest in Sarbiewski), Alexander Pope, and Thomas Gray. Some of her hymns, such as *Father of Mercies*, remained in circulation at least until the early 20th century.⁵⁰

It is almost impossible to approach Steele's *The Elevation*⁵¹ as a translation. To use a phrase taken from her favourite Watts, she "borrowed the first hint from"⁵² Sarbiewski's poem which presents a hermeneutic vision of soul's flight through the space towards the creator which proved vastly popular among English poets at the turn of the 18th century.⁵³ However, although her attitude is very much in line with that practiced by Watts⁵⁴ in her case the direct source of inspiration was most likely either the translation of Norris (1687) or that of Chudleigh (1703) which is confirmed by the choice of the title. The number of possible sources is actually much larger and includes Abraham Cowley (1668), John Hughes (1720), Joshua Dinsdale (1741), and Aaron Hill (1753). Surprisingly enough, the rather brief paraphrase of Sarbiewski's poem by Watts entitled *Strict Religion Very Rare* (1705), which Steele certainly knew and from whom she borrowed freely,⁵⁵ is the least likely source of inspiration. Consequently, her poem can be more precisely called a free interpretation (Piotr Urbański uses a term derived from Roman law, *specificatio*⁵⁶) of numerous earlier translations of this poem, extremely popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. Hoxie Neale Fairchild was far less indulgent calling it "a kind of serious evangelical parody of Casimir's much imitated ode."⁵⁷ It is certainly not a translation in either the 18th century or the modern sense of the word.

⁴⁸ See M.F. Dixon and H.F. Steele-Smith, "Anne Steele's Health: A Modern Diagnosis", *The Baptist Quarterly* 32 (1988), no. 7, pp. 351–356.

⁴⁹ See J. Porter, "Songs of Suffering and Sanctification: The Hymnody of Anne Steele", *Puritan Reformed Journal* 5 (2013), no. 2, pp. 169–190.

⁵⁰ See J.R. Watson, "Steele, Anne (1717–1778)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, online edition, May 2005, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/artsicle/26343> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

⁵¹ [A. Steele], *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional. In Two Volumes. A New Edition. To which is added A Third Volume, consisting of Miscellaneous Pieces. By Theodosia*, Bristol and London: W. Pine, 1780, pp. 122–127.

⁵² I. Watts, and T. Yalden, *The British Poets: Including Translations. In One Hundred Volumes*, vol. 46: *The Poems of Watts*, vol. 2—and [the Poems of] Yalden, Chiswick 1822, p. 47.

⁵³ See Urbański, *Theologia Fabulosa*, p. 115–128 and Røstvig, *Happy Man*, p. 305.

⁵⁴ See Fordoński, "Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski", pp. 71–85.

⁵⁵ See Watson, "Steele, Anne".

⁵⁶ Urbański, *Theologia Fabulosa*, p. 219.

⁵⁷ H.N. Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, vol. 2: 1740–1780: *Religious Sentiment in the Age of Johnson*, New York and London 1942, p. 112.

The reservation made at the beginning of this article seems to have been fully justified. The English women poets we discussed here did not translate Sarbiewski from the original Latin and had to rely at least to some extent on English language sources. Although the inclusion of their works in the volume *Casimir Britannicus: English Translations, Paraphrases, and Emulations of the Poetry of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski* is fully justified, of the six poems mentioned above no more than two can qualify as translations. The other four may be variously listed either as adaptations, paraphrases, emulations, or even original works merely inspired by the poetry of Sarbiewski, status which they share with many other poems collected in the volume. Regardless of their literary merits they remain a valuable testimony to the intellectual and literary pursuits and ambitions of English women from the reign of Queen Anne to the early part of the reign of King George III. They also remain a testimony to the impressive popularity enjoyed on the British soil by the Polish Baroque poet Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski.

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