

Polish literature in major British translation prizes

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Abstract: This article offers a short desk-based overview of how works of Polish literature translated into English have performed in the upper stages of four major British prizes for literary translation: the International Booker Prize, the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, and the EBRD Literature Prize. Initially, some historical and present-day information about Polish language and culture in the United Kingdom is given before the core details of the four selected prizes are presented. Subsequently, using data taken from the websites for each of the awards, the presence of Polish literature in the shortlists and among the eventual prize-winners is highlighted. This is done through analysing relevant information regarding the selected works, including details about the particular works, their original authors, their literary translators, and their publishers.

Key words: Polish literature in translation; International Booker Prize; Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize; Warwick Prize for Women in Translation; EBRD Literature Prize

Literatura polska w najważniejszych brytyjskich konkursach przekładowych

Abstrakt: Artykuł omawia przeglądowo miejsce anglojęzycznych tłumaczeń literatury polskiej wśród prac nagradzanych w czterech najważniejszych brytyjskich konkursach dla przekładów literackich: Międzynarodowej Nagrodzie Bookera, Oxfordzkiej Nagrodzie Weidenfelda, Nagrodzie dla Tłumaczeń Literatury Kobiecej Uniwersytetu Warwick oraz Nagrodzie Literackiej Europejskiego Banku Odbudowy i Rozwoju (EBOR). Część wstępna artykułu obejmuje szkicowe uwagi o obecności języka i kultury polskiej w Zjednoczonym Królestwie oraz kluczowe wiadomości o specyfice brytyjskich nagród literackich. Następnie miejsce tłumaczeń literatury polskiej na listach utworów zgłoszonych i finalnie wyróżnionych omówione jest na podstawie informacji udostępnianych przez organizatorów konkursów w oficjalnych źródłach internetowych. Ich analiza uwzględnia zakres danych odnoszący się do wybranych tekstów literackich, autorów(-ek) polskich oryginałów, tłumaczy i wydawców

Słowa kluczowe: literatura polska w przekładzie, Międzynarodowa Nagroda Bookera, Oxfordzka Nagroda Weidenfelda, Nagroda dla Tłumaczeń Literatury Kobiecej Uniwersytetu Warwick, Nagroda Literacka Europejskiego Banku Odbudowy i Rozwoju

As Piotr Florczyk and W.A. Wisniewski state in the Introduction to the recently-released edited collection *Polish Literature as World Literature*, “the Polish literature canon has played a vital role in shaping literary conversations around the world”.¹ Indeed, this observation is all the more noteworthy given that Polish language and culture has often been subjugated in past centuries,² particularly when Poland’s status as a medieval and early-modern power was followed by a lengthy period when the country disappeared as an independent nation. Florczyk and Wisniewski’s observation is also exemplified by the fact that the Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded to five authors writing in Polish thus far: Henryk Sienkiewicz in 1905, Władysław Reymont in 1924, Czesław Miłosz in 1980, Wisława Szymborska in 1996, and most recently, Olga Tokarczuk in 2018.³

As demonstrated by a previous thematic issue of this journal, there is a strong interest in Polish literature from abroad.⁴ Accordingly, in providing a short overview of the presence of Polish literature in the British context through analysis of a series of major translation prizes, this article aims to add to discussions on the role of Polish literature in the international context. This builds on other studies which, following Johan Heilbron’s conceptualisation of Polish as a (semi)-peripheral literature,⁵ have explored various facets relating to the literary translation of Polish works. These include, for example, noted scholar Paweł Zajas’s work on the circulation of Polish literature in Germany, as well as Hanna Pięta’s study charting the history of the translation of Polish literary works into Portuguese.⁶

For the purposes of this overview, Polish literature is here narrowly defined as literature written in the Polish language. This is despite the fact that the historical and contemporary context of Poland has been characterised by multilingualism as well as linguistic and cultural diversity. This designation is not intended to demonstrate ethnolinguistic nationalism,⁷

¹ P. Florczyk, and K. A. Wisniewski, “Introduction”, in P. Florczyk and K. A. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Polish Literature as World Literature*, New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, p. 1.

² A. Hoyte-West, “Exploring the Changing Status of Six Slavic Languages: A Historical and Contemporary Overview”, *Revista de Etnologie și Culturologie*, vol. 32 (2022), p. 7.

³ For more information, please see Research in Poland, “Polish Nobel Prize Laureates”, <https://researchinpoland.org/polish-nobel-prize-winners/>

⁴ J. Pasterska, A. Luboń, and M. Wyrembelski, „Zagraniczne istnienie literatury polskiej”, *Tematy i Konteksty*, vol. 15 no. 10 (2020), pp. 15-22.

⁵ J. Heilbron, “Towards a Sociology of Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World-System”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol.2 no. 4 (1999), pp. 429-444.

⁶ For example, see P. Zajas, “An Ethnography of the Production of Translation: Literatures from the (Semi) Periphery on the German Publishing Market”, *Teksty Drugie*, vol. 2 (2016), pp. 154-173; H. Pięta, “On Translation Between (Semi-) Peripheral Languages: An Overview of the External History of Polish Literature Translated Into European Portuguese”, *The Translator*, vol. 22 no. 3 (2016), pp. 354-377.

⁷ For more information on relevant discussions, see T. Kamusella, “Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism in the Concept of Polish Literature”, *Śląskie Studia Polonistyczne*, vol. 17 no. 1 (2021), pp. 1-18.

but rather to offer a frame of reference for the specific purposes of analysing the performance of literature written in a particular language (Polish) in the selected British literary prizes. However, several luminaries have been excluded through the adoption of this narrower conceptualisation. One important example is the 1978 Nobel Prize for Literature laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer, who was born near Warsaw but wrote in Yiddish.⁸ Other writers include the Romantic-era nobleman Count Jan Potocki, author of the famous French-language novel *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa* [*Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse*], as well as Joseph Conrad and Jerzy Kosinski, who wrote in English.⁹ In addition, literary production in Poland's minority languages also falls outside the scope of this definition, given that there are small but burgeoning literatures in previously minoritised languages such as Kashubian and Silesian.¹⁰

Therefore, in exploring the visibility and presence of Polish literature in a series of major British translation prizes, the present study develops the author's more expansive project which has zoomed in on the presence of so-called "smaller" or less-commonly translated literatures in literary translation awards in the United Kingdom. To date, this has included profiles of selected awards as well as general observations on the presence of smaller literatures in the wider translational landscape, encompassing also training programmes, mentorships, and other pertinent elements.¹¹ Thus, in highlighting a particular language (Polish) linked clearly to a particular national literature (Polish literature), this study aims to profile the recognition of related works in the higher levels (i.e., the shortlist and prize-winners) of four major British literary translation prizes: the International Booker Prize, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize, and the EBRD Literature Prize.

⁸ See P. Wilczek, "Polish Nobel Prize Winners in Literature: Are They Really Polish?", *Chicago Review*, vol. 46, no. 3/4 (2000), pp. 375–377.

⁹ For more details, see E. Ranocchi, "Jan Potocki, the Greatest Author of the Polish Enlightenment as a French Writer", in P. Florczyk and K. A. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Polish Literature as World Literature*, New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, pp. 35–48; Z. Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Life* [Trans. H. Najder], Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007; E. Rokosz, "Controversies Around The Painted Bird," in L. Harmon (Ed.), *Kosinski's Novel The Painted Bird in Thirteen Languages*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022, pp. 14–23.

¹⁰ For example, see K. Pospiszil-Hofmańska, "Confluences: On the Possibility of Describing a Transcultural History of (Micro) Literature – The Upper Silesian Perspective", *World Literature Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2022), pp. 60–78; A. Jabłoński, "Funkcje literatury kaszubskiej, jej potencjał edukacyjny i wykorzystanie mediów elektronicznych do jej propagowania", *Ars Educandi*, vol. 12 (2015), pp. 11–20.

¹¹ See A. Hoyte-West, "The EBRD Literature Prize: Exploring Geographical and Linguistic Diversity in a New Translation Award", *Ezikov Svyat (Orbis Linguarum)*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2022), pp. 412–421; A. Hoyte-West, "Exploring the Presence of Smaller Literatures in Two British Prizes for Literary Translation", *Ars et Humanitas*, vol. 17 no. 1 (2023), pp. 77–92; A. Hoyte-West, "On the Visibility of Literary Translators Working From Smaller Languages Into English: Some Observations From the British Context", *Analele Universității „Ovidius” Constanța. Seria Filologie*, vol. 34 no. 2 (2023), pp. 235–250.

Brief remarks on Polish literature and culture in the United Kingdom

There has been a Polish community in the United Kingdom since the 1830s,¹² and the United Kingdom and Poland have had close links since Poland's independence was restored after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Indeed, the catalyst for Britain's entry into World War Two was Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939.¹³ During the subsequent Nazi occupation, some Poles were able to escape to Britain; as chronicled in the memoir *Dywizjon 303* [*Squadron 303*], by the author and explorer Arkady Fiedler,¹⁴ the bravery of the Polish pilots was an important factor in Britain's victory in the Battle of Britain in 1940. The Polish contribution to the war effort was also immortalised in the 1941 motion picture *Dangerous Moonlight*, which starred Anton Walbrook as a Polish concert pianist who became a Royal Air Force pilot.¹⁵ After World War Two, a significant number of Poles (152,000) remained in Britain.¹⁶ The Polish émigré community was active in Polish-language literary and cultural circles, as demonstrated by the 'Kontynenty' group of poets (Bogdan Czaykowski, Adam Czerniawski, Janusz Artur Ihnatowicz, Zygmunt Ławrynowicz, and Bolesław Taborski) who were associated with the similarly-named periodical, as well as the Scottish-educated Jerzy Pietrkiewicz.¹⁷

After the fall of Communism and the restoration of democracy to Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, British-Polish relations entered a new phase after 2004, when Poland joined the European Union as one of ten new member states. With the United Kingdom one of the few countries not to enforce initial labour migration quotas, significant numbers of Poles came to Britain to live, work, and study: from a low of 58,000 in the 2001 census, 676,000 Polish-born people were recorded as living in Britain in 2011.¹⁸ Accordingly, during those first few years after the EU enlargement, it was common to hear Polish on the streets of most major cities as well as in smaller towns.

¹² M. A. Bowers and B. Dew, "Introduction", in M. A. Bowers and B. Dew (Eds.) *Polish Culture in Britain*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, p. 5.

¹³ See Republic of Poland, "The United Kingdom", <https://www.gov.pl/web/unitedkingdom/bilateral-relations>

¹⁴ A. Fiedler, *Dywizjon 303*, M.I. Kolin: London, 1942.

¹⁵ IMDb, "Dangerous Moonlight", <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0033511/>. Nowadays, the film is mostly known for the famous 'Warsaw Concerto', composed by Richard Addinsell.

¹⁶ M. Okólski and J. Salt, "Polish Emigration to the UK after 2004; Why Did So Many Come?", *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, vol. 3 no. 2 (2014), p. 12.

¹⁷ See A. Luboń, *Poza protokołem tłumacza: refrakcje znaczeniowe w teorii i praktyce przekładu poetów kręgu "Kontynentów"*, Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2019; A. Luboń, "Comparative Hints Included: Contextual Links in English and Polish Poetry Translations by Jerzy Pietrkiewicz", *Tematy i Konteksty*, vol. 15 no. 10 (2020), pp. 84-100; R. Moczko, "The Problem of "Polishness" in the London Student Periodicals (*Życie Akademickie – Kontynenty*)", *Tematy i Konteksty*, Special Issue 1 (2020), pp. 248-274.

¹⁸ M. Okólski and J. Salt, "Polish Emigration to the UK after 2004; Why Did So Many Come?", p. 12.

As with the immediate postwar generation, many Poles chose to settle in the United Kingdom long-term, becoming integrated into British society. Consequently, current official data shows that Polish is the most widely-spoken ‘main’ language after English and/or Welsh in England and Wales;¹⁹ with regard to the latter, some Polish immigrants to Wales have also learnt Welsh.²⁰

Moving to the education system, final school-leaving (A-level) examinations in Polish are available,²¹ and the language is taught to undergraduate and postgraduate degree-level at prestigious tertiary institutions such as the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, and University College London, with research in Polish studies also conducted at these and other universities.²² In terms of literary translation, of the three named postgraduate programmes in literary translation studies currently available in the United Kingdom, two are non-language-specific; hence, provision for Polish is certainly implied.²³ In addition, Polish has also featured prominently in the annual cohorts of the literary translator mentorship scheme offered by the Norwich-based National Centre for Writing, which was launched in 2010.²⁴

On British translation literary prizes: A brief overview of the research approach

Translation prizes have often been viewed as an understudied area from literary, sociological, and other perspectives. However, as illustrated by several recent international analyses, things are certainly changing.²⁵

¹⁹ See Office for National Statistics, “Language, England and Wales: Census 2021”, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/bulletins/languageenglandandwales/census2021>

²⁰ K. Rosiak, “Polish New Speakers of Welsh: Motivations and Learner Trajectories”, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, vol. 31 no. 2 (2018), pp. 168-181.

²¹ M. A. Kozińska, “Zrozumieć A-level Polish, czyli o angielskiej maturze z języka polskiego jako obcego”, *Języki Obce w Szkole*, vol. 2022, no. 2 (2022), pp. 107-116.

²² Instytut Polski, “Polish Studies”, <https://instytutpolski.pl/london/polish-language/polish-studies/>

²³ A. Hoyte-West, “University-based Training Courses for Literary Translators in the Twenty-First Century: An Overview from the United Kingdom”, *Translation Studies: Theory and Practice*, vol. 3 no. 1 (2023), pp. 5-13.

²⁴ National Centre for Writing, “Emerging Translator Mentorships”, <https://national-centreforwriting.org.uk/get-involved/translators/etm/>

²⁵ For example, see F. Fernández, “Assessing Masculine Domination In A Cultural Field: Women Translators and Book Translation Awards in Spain (1984–2012)”, *The Translator*, vol. 20 no. 2 (2014), pp. 162-177; V. Steemers, “La reconnaissance du récit francophone et subsaharien en édition anglophone à travers les prix de traduction”, *Nouvelles Études Francophones*, vol. 32 no. 1 (2017), pp. 6–26; A. Hoyte-West, “Translation Prizes and National Identity: A Case Study of the Ramon Llull Prize for Literary Translation”, in L. Harmon and D. Osuchowska (Eds.), *National Identity in Translation*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019, pp. 215–226; G. Dionísio da Silva, “Translation Awards in Brazil: Revisiting the Literary/Nonliterary

In the United Kingdom, excellence for translated literature is recognised by a series of annual prizes: some are exclusively for translations from a specific language into English, whereas others are awarded to highlight translated works from a particular genre (for example, poetry or drama translation). Accordingly, of the different awards available, the four prizes considered here represent the principal translation awards that recognise literary translations from multiple languages into English.

Aside from the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize (founded in 1999), the four selected prizes are largely recent initiatives dating from within the last decade. For example, the updated format (since 2016) of the International Booker Prize now recognises a single translated book each year, rather than an author's entire career; the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation was first awarded in 2017; and the EBRD Literature Prize had its inaugural prize-giving in 2018. The prize money varies between the awards (up to GBP 50,000, in the case of the International Booker Prize), and two of the awards have a specific focus – the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation recognises translations of writing by female authors (the translator can be of any gender) and the EBRD Literature Prize specifically aims to highlight literatures from less-translated languages and cultures in English. However, all four awards give prominence to the literary translators of the winning works.²⁶

As mentioned previously, several of these prizes have already been profiled by the author in various studies, focusing primarily on numerical analyses. In taking a more qualitative approach, this study aims to not only ascertain how visible Polish literature is in these prizes, but also to examine the authors who have won the awards, their respective translators, and also their publishers. It will not focus on the intricacies of the various translations themselves, and other aspects of the translator-publisher process and discussions of which texts are translated will be reserved for future research. In terms of the format and approach, the year 2017 was selected as the starting point, thus aligning the present analysis with the other studies conducted as a part of this project. The selected methodology was qualitative and desk-based,²⁷ and the websites of the four respective prizes were used as the main data sources, thereby providing the core information about the titles, authors, translators, and publishers of the shortlisted and prize-winning works concerned.

Debate,” in G. Dionísio da Silva and M. Radicioni (Eds.), *Recharting Territories: Intradi-
sciplinary in Translation Studies*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022, pp. 175-200;
N. Codina Solà and J. McMartin, “The European Union Prize for Literature: Disseminating
European Values through Translation and Supranational Consecration”, in E. Carbó-Catalan
and D. Roig Sanz (Eds.), *Culture as Soft Power: Bridging Cultural Relations, Intellectual
Cooperation, and Cultural Diplomacy*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 343-372, etc.

²⁶ For more information, see: The Booker Prizes, “The International Booker Prize”,
<https://thebookerprizes.com/the-international-booker-prize>; The Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize,
<https://occt.web.ox.ac.uk/the-oxford-weidenfeld-prize>; The Warwick Prize for Women in
Translation, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/womenintranslation/; EBRD Literature
Prize, <https://www.ebrd.com/ebrd-literature-prize.html>.

²⁷ B. Bassot, *Doing Qualitative Desk-Based Research: A Practical Guide to Writing an
Excellent Dissertation*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2022.

Findings and discussion

The information regarding Polish-language presence for each prize was obtained from the relevant websites. During the data gathering process, it was noticed that three of the prizes had the traditional format of shortlist, longlist, and winner. For the EBRD Literature Prize, however, a slightly different approach was taken, comprising a “selected shortlist” from which three finalists were chosen, leading to one overall winner and two runners-up. In addition, the nomenclature for the “selected shortlist” also varied slightly; for example, before 2021 it was known as a “selected longlist”. In the interests of consistency, it was thus decided to include the details from this “selected longlist” in this present study.²⁸ Regarding the number of works selected for the shortlists, these varied over time not only between the different prizes but also within each prize itself.²⁹ In terms of the present format (according to details of the prizes awarded in 2023), the International Booker Prize has a shortlist of 6 works, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation has a current shortlist of 8 works, as does the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize; the longest is the EBRD Literature Prize, with a shortlist of 10 items.

Arranged in chronological order, Table 1 summarises the presence of works originally written in Polish in the shortlisted works for each translation award. Table 2 then presents the two Polish-language works which have won the top prizes.

As shown in Table 1, 16 different entries translated from Polish have been shortlisted for the four major prizes between 2017 and 2023. Notably, each of the four awards has featured a work of translated Polish literature during that period, ranging from one (Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize) up to eight (EBRD Literature Prize). In the case of the latter, this perhaps can also be ascribed to that prize’s stated focus on less-translated literatures and cultures. Indeed, except for the prize’s first year, the shortlist for the EBRD Literature Prize has featured at least one work of Polish literature every year since it was created; 2019, 2022, and 2023 saw two items feature on shortlists of ten novels apiece. In terms of the winners of the main prizes, Polish works have emerged victorious in 2018 (International Booker Prize) and in 2021 (EBRD Literature Prize); a further work translated from Polish was also one of the three finalists for the latter award in 2023.³⁰

²⁸ See J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2019: longlist announced”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/ebrd-literature-prize-2019-longlist-announced.html>; J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2020: selected longlist announced”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2020/ebrd-literature-prize-2020-selected-longlist-announced.html>; J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2021: selected longlist announced”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-literature-prize-2021-selected-longlist-announced.html>

²⁹ For more information, please see the websites of the relevant prizes.

³⁰ L. Sconosciuto, “EBRD Literature Prize 2023: three finalists revealed”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebrd-literature-prize-2023-three-finalists-revealed.html>

Table 1: Shortlisted works translated from Polish³¹

Year ^r	Prize	Book	Author	Translator	Publisher
2017	Warwick Prize for Women in Translation	<i>Swallowing Mercury</i> [Guguly]	Wioletta Greg	Eliza Marciniak	Portobello
2018	International Booker Prize	<i>Flights</i> [Bieguni]	Olga Tokarczuk	Jennifer Croft	Fitzcarraldo Editions
	Warwick Prize for Women in Translation	<i>Flights</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Jennifer Croft	Fitzcarraldo Editions
2019	International Booker Prize	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i> [Prowadź swój plug przez kości umarłych]	Olga Tokarczuk	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Fitzcarraldo Editions
	Warwick Prize for Women in Translation	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Fitzcarraldo Editions
	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Fitzcarraldo Editions
		<i>Lala</i>	Jacek Dehnel	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Oneworld Publications
2020	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>Mrs Mohr Goes Missing</i> [Tajemnica Domu Helców]	Maryla Szymiczekowa	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Oneworld Publications
2021	Warwick Prize for Women in Translation	<i>Ellis Island: A People's History</i> [Wyspa klucz]	Małgorzata Szejnert	Sean Gasper Bye	Scribe UK
	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>The King of Warsaw</i> [Król]	Szczepan Twardoch	Sean Gasper Bye	Amazon Crossing

³¹ Based on data from J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2019: longlist announced”; J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2020: selected longlist announced”; J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2021: selected longlist announced”; J. Ross, “EBRD Literature Prize 2022: selected shortlist announced”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2022/ebrd-literature-prize-2022-selected-shortlist-announced.html>; L. Sconosciuto, “EBRD Literature Prize 2023: shortlist announcement”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebrd-literature-prize-2023-shortlist-announcement.html>; The Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize, “Previous Prize Years”, <https://occt.web.ox.ac.uk/past-winners>; The Booker Prizes, “Full list of International Booker Prize winners, shortlisted authors, translators and books”. <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/features/full-list-of-international-booker-prize-winners-shortlisted-authors-and-their-books>; The Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, “Shortlist 2017”, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/womenintranslation/winner2017/shortlist2017/; The Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, “Shortlist 2018”, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/womenintranslation/winner2018/shortlist2018/; The Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, “Shortlist 2019”, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/womenintranslation/winner2019/shortlist2019/; The Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, “Shortlist 2021”, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/womenintranslation/winner2021/shortlist2021/.

2022	International Booker Prize	<i>The Books of Jacob</i> [Księgi Jakubowe]	Olga Tokarczuk	Jennifer Croft	Fitzcarraldo Editions
	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>Karolina, or the Torn Curtain</i> [Rozdarta zasłona]	Maryla Szymiczkowa	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Oneworld Publications
		<i>Doctor Bianco and Other Stories</i> [Doktor Bianco i inne opowiadania]	Maciek Bielawski	Scotia Gilroy	Terra Librorum Ltd
2023	Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize	<i>The Map</i> [Mapa]	Barbara Sadurska	Kate Webster	Terra Librorum
	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>According to Her</i> [Według niej]	Maciej Hen	Anna Blasiak	Holland House Books
		<i>The Books of Jacob</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Jennifer Croft	Fitzcarraldo Editions

Table 2: Prize-winning works translated from Polish³²

Year	Prize	Book	Author	Translator	Publisher
2019	International Booker Prize	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Antonia Lloyd-Jones	Fitzcarraldo Editions
2021	EBRD Literature Prize	<i>The King of Warsaw</i>	Szczepan Twardoch	Sean Gasper Bye	Amazon Crossing

The 16 different shortlisted entries reflect 12 different works. Of these, translated novels by Olga Tokarczuk are particularly prevalent, as demonstrated by 3 nominations for *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, 2 nominations for her novel *Flights*, as well as 2 nominations for *The Books of Jacob*. All the other shortlisted works feature once only, thus displaying a degree of heterogeneity. It is also noteworthy that all of the shortlisted entries could be considered as contemporary literature, with a predominance of prose fiction in the form of novels, though non-fiction has also featured (e.g. the prize-winning translation of Małgorzata Szejnert's *Ellis Island: A People's History*).

In terms of the Polish authors represented, Olga Tokarczuk again dominates the shortlists with 7 nominations. The only other writer to appear multiple times is Maryla Szymiczkowa (the *nom de plume* of author duo Jacek Dehnel and Piotr Tarczynski), who has two shortlisted entries. In addition, Jacek Dehnel features in his own right, with his book *Lala* shortlisted for the 2019 EBRD Literature Prize; the other authors also feature only once. In observing the abovementioned focus on contemporary literature, it is notable that the shortlists exclusively feature translated works by living authors.

³² See The Booker Prizes, “The Man Booker International Prize 2018”, <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/prize-years/international/2018>; EBRD Press Office, “The King of Warsaw wins the EBRD Literature Prize 2021”, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/the-king-of-warsaw-wins-the-ebrd-literature-prize-2021.html>.

Regarding the translators of the shortlisted works, 7 different literary translators working from Polish into English are represented. These include prominent names in the literary translation world who are well-known for their expertise, such as Antonia Lloyd-Jones (6 shortlisted works),³³ Jennifer Croft (4 shortlisted works),³⁴ and Sean Gaspar Bye (2 shortlisted works).³⁵ The remaining four translators each feature with one shortlisted work, also demonstrating that there is certainly an active community of Polish-English literary translators within the British publishing context.

Finally, 7 different publishers are represented among the shortlisted works, with independent publishers predominating. The most prominent is Fitzcarraldo Editions (with 7 entries), which in recent years has become increasingly known for publishing works by current and future laureates of the Nobel Prize in Literature; to that end, it has published several English translations of Olga Tokarczuk's works.³⁶ Oneworld Publications features with three shortlisted items and Terra Librorum with two. The others appear only once (including the now-closed Portobello imprint)³⁷ and are also independent publishers, save for the notable exception of Amazon Crossing. Owned by the global ecommerce behemoth Amazon, it has made a significant impact on the publishing of translated literature in the English-language market, as testified to by relevant media coverage.³⁸

Concluding remarks

The present article has aimed to give an overview of the presence of Polish literature in four major British translation prizes since 2017. As demonstrated by the considerable number of works (16) translated from

³³ V. Esposito, "Good Storytelling Still Trending: An Interview with Antonia Lloyd-Jones", *World Literature Today*, vol. 94 no. 2 (2020), <https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2020/spring/good-storytelling-still-trending-interview-antonia-lloyd-jones-veronica-esposito>

³⁴ A. Alter, "Shining a Spotlight on the Art of Translation", *The New York Times* (February 11), 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/books/literary-translation-translators-jennifer-croft.html>

³⁵ Center for the Art of Translation, "Sean Gaspar Bye", <https://www.catranslation.org/person/sean-gasper-bye/>

³⁶ A. Cafolla, "Four Nobels and counting: Fitzcarraldo, the little publisher that could", *The Guardian* (October 10), 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/oct/10/four-nobels-and-counting-fitzcarraldo-the-little-publisher-that-could>

³⁷ B. Page, "Granta Shuttters Portobello Imprint", *The Bookseller* (September 14), 2018, <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/granta-shuttters-portobello-imprint-865286>

³⁸ For example, see A. Baddeley, "In Anyone's Language, Amazon Crossing Is a Hit", *The Guardian* (June 22), 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/22/in-anyones-language-amazon-crossing-hit>; A. Flood, "How Amazon Came to Dominate Fiction in Translation", *The Guardian* (December 9), 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/dec/09/amazon-publishing-translated-fiction-amazoncrossing-sales>

Polish which feature on the relevant shortlists, Polish literature is certainly present at the upper levels of the four awards, particularly the EBRD Literature Prize. In terms of the genres, novels predominate, and the most shortlisted author is the Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk. However, it is also notable that other voices do feature, thus representing a range of contemporary literary production in Polish. With regard to the literary translators featured in the shortlist, over half of the works are by well-known Polish-English translators, but other practitioners also feature. And lastly, small independent publishers are the most common outlet for the shortlisted works.

In focusing solely on desk-based research, the findings obtained could certainly be augmented by additional context. This could include a broader focus on extra-literary factors by, for example, examining discussions on which books are to be translated as well as including the issue of publishing rights and copyright. This could be supplemented by email or face-to-face contact with literary agents, translators, and the original authors of the works concerned. Further research could also compare the presence of translated Polish literature in these awards with that of other national literatures.

As demonstrated by the diversity of shortlisted works and the heterogeneity of authors, translators, and publishers featured, it is clear that the market for works of translated Polish literature in the British context is vibrant. This has been demonstrated, for example, by recent occurrences such as the appearance of Anna Zarenko's critically-acclaimed translation of Nobel laureate Władysław Reymont's early 20th-century novel *The Peasants* [*Chłopi*],³⁹ as well as the award of the 2024 Society of Authors' TA First Translation Prize to Marta Dziurosz's translation of Marcin Wicha's *Things I Didn't Throw Out* [*Rzeczy, których nie wyrzuciłem*].⁴⁰ In addition, as Antonia Lloyd-Jones highlighted in her 2020 interview, in general terms translation prizes "are playing an increasing role in publicizing [literary translators'] work and offer a great opportunity to bring it into the mainstream".⁴¹ In the specific context of translating Polish literature into English, the foregoing analysis has illustrated that its continued presence in these four major awards – and by extension, in the wider British literary market – is certainly important and will continue to be so in the future.

³⁹ For example, see B. Paloff, "Flow of Colours: The Impressionist Prose of the Polish Master Stylist Władysław Reymont", *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 6266 (2023), <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/the-peasants-revolt-of-the-animals-wladyslaw-reymont-review-benjamin-paloff/>; Instytut Książki. "Anna Zaranko Receives the 2023 Found in Translation Award", <https://instytutksiazki.pl/en/news,2,anna-zaranko-receives-the-2023-found-in-translation-award,9223.html>

⁴⁰ T. McDonald, "Marta Dziurosz's 'Truly Astounding' Translation From Polish Wins TA First Prize", *Society of Authors* (February 8), 2024, <https://www2.societyofauthors.org/2023/02/08/marta-dziuroszs-truly-astounding-translation-from-polish-wins-ta-first-prize/>

⁴¹ V. Esposito, "Good Storytelling Still Trending: An Interview with Antonia Lloyd-Jones".

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