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## THE ROLE OF BIOGRAPHY IN MARIA BOGUCKA'S ACADEMIC OEUVRE

### Abstract

Biography was a prominent component of Maria Bogucka's research output, encompassing reviews, encyclopaedic entries and extended articles. She would also publish four biographical monographs. Bogucka was very eager to include in her biographies, especially those relating to women rulers, colourful accounts, expressive assessments and controversial opinions. Her biographical writing was 'journalistic' in essence, and looked to make emotive links with the heroes and heroines of her studies. Sensitive to economic issues and changes which had taken place in the mentality of societies, Bogucka was also interested in writing biographical accounts of representatives of the bourgeois elites. Biography in Bogucka's oeuvre allowed her to analyse historical figures' lives insightfully, thus exploring outstanding individuals' personal fates.

**Keywords:** gender studies, culture and economy of the 16th century, dynasties, urban elites

At first glance, biographies seem to play a marginal role among the over 1,300 scholarly works written by Maria Bogucka, which include dissertations, articles and reviews.<sup>1</sup> She would write 'only' four extensive monographs, out of a total of over fifty, which were reissued and supplemented many times; many of which were devoted to the rulers of Poland and Scotland. Her biographical achievements also included three articles in strictly scholarly journals and a dozen more in collective works and collective monographs. Two more biographical entries in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [Polish Biographical

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<sup>1</sup> Andrzej Karpiński, 'In memoriam. Maria Bogucka (1929–2020)', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cxxix, 1 (2022), 259.

Dictionary] (including one co-authored), a dozen or so biographical entries in various thematic and regional lexicons, and an inestimable number of entries in such compendia as the *Słownik Biograficzny Historii Powszechnej do XVII stulecia* [Biographical Dictionary of World History until the Seventeenth Century],<sup>2</sup> *Słownik Historii Polski* [The Dictionary of Polish History],<sup>3</sup> and *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN* [The PWN Great Encyclopaedia].<sup>4</sup> We can also add to this list an autobiography where Bogucka described her childhood growing up in the Eastern Borderlands [*Kresy Wschodnie*], being of the landed gentry, and being perceived as a historian of the People's Republic of Poland for many years. The balance of biographical studies is somewhat improved by Bogucka's journalism, as featured in such magazines as *Kultura*, *Problemy*, *Razem* or *Polityka*, totalling approximately twenty articles. At the end of her life, her biographical sketches would also come to the fore as obituaries. Biographies formed an essential element in the entirety of Bogucka's writings, both scholarly and popular. In her long academic career, she also wrote twice as many – about fifty – reviews of biographical books, collective lexicons, and regional and thematic dictionaries. It is difficult to find better proof of such a thesis.

Who were the central figures of Bogucka's biographical endeavours? In addition to the abovementioned 'line' of rulers clearly related (with the exception of Mary Stuart!) by blood and affinity with the Jagiellonian dynasty, there are more than a dozen other figures who were not always in the foreground regarding their historical contribution. Most often, they represented the sixteenth century, although a number of them also lived in the fifteenth century and in the following centuries, the seventeenth and eighteenth, and even later. Determining the gender parity of these figures, it should be stated that despite Bogucka's apparent interest in 'women's history', the list of her studies includes the biographies of seven women, as opposed

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<sup>2</sup> Kazimierz Lepszy and Stanisław Arnold (eds), *Słownik biograficzny historii powszechnej do XVII stulecia* (Warszawa, 1968). One can surmise that she was the author of such entries as 'Anna Jagiellonka', 'Bona Sforza d'Aragon', the brothers 'Jan and Mikołaj Firlej', and 'Eberhard Ferber'.

<sup>3</sup> Tadeusz Łepkowski (ed.), *Słownik historii Polski* (Warszawa, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN*, i–iv (Warszawa, 2001). In the bibliography it was noted that Prof. Bogucka had written four entries for this edition. See Andrzej Karpiński, Edward Opaliński, and Tomasz Wiślicz (eds), *Bibliografia prac profesor Marii Boguckiej za lata 1949–2003* (Warszawa, 2004), 118.

to twenty devoted to men. Excluding those with royal connections, a large proportion of these politically and economically engaged individuals lived and worked in Royal Prussia, with links to Gdańsk. Thus, it is clear how different areas and directions of Bogucka's scholarly research represented a collective of human individualities.

Concluding these preliminary remarks, one more observation should be made: almost all biographies were published by Bogucka between 1964 and 1990, following her dissertation in 1956<sup>5</sup> and her obtaining of habilitation in 1962.<sup>6</sup> The year 1990 would see the closure of an important sequence of studies on the craft and manufacturing trades of late medieval and early modern Gdańsk, and mark the beginning of Bogucka's engagement with gender studies. The feminist perspective of her historical research<sup>7</sup> would be discernible following a paper presented in Prato in 1989, and published in a post-conference volume in 1990.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the yield of her detailed research on the biographies of late medieval and early modern personages, representing as it did the "social history of economy, studied in long cross-sectional periods", would prove to be a springboard for an engaged exploration of the spiritual culture and mental changes in the supra-regional area of early modern Europe.<sup>9</sup>

If the idea of "a description of the life and activity of a person; a biography"<sup>10</sup> did not immediately appear in the range of topics touched upon by Maria Bogucka, the same idea certainly quickly found itself within the focus of her interests, wherein biography with all its social, cultural and even psychological complexity presented historical figures not only as participants in events and creators of facts, but also as living, thinking people, who experienced dilemmas, problems, and sensations. This important feature of her works, with

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Gdańskie rzemiosło tekstylne od XVI do połowy XVII wieku* (Wrocław, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> *Ead.*, *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny w XIV–XVI wieku* (Warszawa, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Edmund Kizik, 'Pożegnanie – Prof. dr hab. Maria Bogucka', <https://ug.edu.pl/news/pl/491/pozegnanie-prof-dr-hab-maria-bogucka> [Accessed: 30 June 2022].

<sup>8</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Women and Economic Life in the Polish Cities during the 16th–17th Centuries', in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), *La donna nell'economia, secc. XIII–XVIII. Atti della "Ventunesima Settimana di Studi" 10–15 aprile 1989* (Prato, 1990), 185–94.

<sup>9</sup> Kizik, 'Pożegnanie'.

<sup>10</sup> *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* (Warszawa, 2006), 53.

its panoramic perspectives, could be discerned in one of her earliest books, *Szkice gdańskie* [Gdańsk Sketches], which included the 'fictionalised' description of an outrage committed in Gdańsk in April 1411 by the Teutonic commander, Henryk von Plauen "proud and malevolent" [*pyśzny i nieużyty*];<sup>11</sup> who murdered two mayors and a councillor. The accusatory lament of Anna Grossowa, who had been widowed and orphaned in a single instant, resounded in a special way on the pages of this sketch. And the same style of historical writing could be found in *Opowieści wiślane* [Vistulan Tales], published more or less at the same time, where the reader was able, for example, to distinguish through a simple literary device the thinking of Duke Konrad of Masovia who had invited the Teutonic Order to Poland.<sup>12</sup> The biographies and monographs written later were full of such inclusions, presenting not only facts from life and the circumstances of events, but also surmisable thoughts and feelings, and even actions and gestures.

A good opportunity to write biographical texts came with Bogucka's editing of the magazine *Mówią Wieki*; where she was the editor-in-chief from 1958 to 1978. In her first year, she published a sketch about the life, customs and vices of Ladislaus Jagiello. In the subsequent years, Bogucka would provide sketches on Barbara Radziwiłł, the second wife of Sigismund Augustus, and Queen Christina, the ruler of Sweden in the first half of the seventeenth century. Other biographical articles would appear, though only occasionally, such as one on Mahatma Gandhi, in 1969, and another on Nicolaus Copernicus, in 1971.

The inclusion of Kasper Goebel's biography, a minter and merchant from Gdańsk, published in 1959/1960 in the eighth volume of the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, was of a different nature.<sup>13</sup> This, Bogucka's first fully professional biographical text, primarily reflected the research profile of the co-author of the entry, Marian Gumowski (1881–1974), an eminent historian and numismatist affiliated to Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, who retired in 1960.<sup>14</sup> One can surmise that

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<sup>11</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Szkice gdańskie (XV–XVII wiek)* (Warszawa, 1957), 19–23.

<sup>12</sup> *Ead.*, *Opowieści wiślane* (Warszawa, 1957), 40–1.

<sup>13</sup> Maria Bogucka and Marian Gumowski, 'Goebel Kasper', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, viii (Wrocław, 1959–1960), 196–7.

<sup>14</sup> Sławomir Kalembka (ed.), *Pracownicy nauki i dydaktyki Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika 1945–2004. Materiały do biografii* (Toruń, 2006), 259–60.

Bogucka, a specialist on Gdańsk's craft guilds of that period, had been asked to supplement, refine and finalise the biography.

It is also worth mentioning that in 1961, in the period preceding the publication of the first fully original biographical monograph devoted to the last representative of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Maria Bogucka published the book *Żelazny książę i żebracy. Z dziejów rewolucji w Niderlandach* [The Iron Prince and the Beggars. History of the Revolution in the Netherlands].<sup>15</sup> Of course, it should be perceived as a fragment of the history of the sixteenth-century Netherlands, the turbulent years of the anti-Habsburg uprising and the birth of the first 'bourgeois' republic in Europe,<sup>16</sup> but the structure of this volume was extremely 'biographical'. Contrary to the inference that the title offers, however, it was not about the biography of the 'Iron Prince', Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, Duke of Alba, the would-be tamer of Dutch insurrectionists, who incidentally plays a marginal role in the monograph, but about the illegitimate daughter of Emperor Charles V, Margaret the Duchess of Parma, who for some time was the governor of the Netherlands. The main part of the book is devoted to her biography, the vicissitudes in her exercising of power, and her relatives (many of whom happened to be her enemies).<sup>17</sup> Margaret was emblematic of the kind of female protagonist that Bogucka was most interested in – powerful women operating in the ruthless world of male-dominated politics.

Attempts and efforts to write her own, fully original biographical study; searching for the most appropriate way of presenting a given figure, were discernible in the reviews Bogucka wrote at that time; indeed, reviewing happened to be her favourite way of actively participating in scholarly life. Prior to the publication of her first biographical monograph in 1964, she had written twenty such reviews (out of a total of about fifty), all of them published in *Mówią Wieki*. Six of them concerned biographical collections, lexicons, dictionaries, and dynasties. In half of these early writings, the subjects of the

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<sup>15</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Żelazny Książę i żebracy. Z dziejów rewolucji w Niderlandach* (Warszawa, 1961). Earlier, a text with the same title appeared in 1960 in *Mówią Wieki*.

<sup>16</sup> And the idea of writing a monograph on the history of the Netherlands, developed several years later in partnership with Jan Balicki as part of the Ossolineum series on the history of individual countries.

<sup>17</sup> *Ead.*, *Żelazny książę i żebracy*, 67–153.

biographies were men (among them Sigismund Augustus).<sup>18</sup> In five cases, these were the biographies of outstanding women, including two of the protagonists of Bogucka's later books, Bona Sforza and Mary Stuart. In fact, all the 'female' biographies featured outstanding female rulers, who manipulated or held sway over men. Bogucka would continue to write reviews of biographical works up until 1990, following which she became involved in the writing of biographies herself.

Her first biographical monograph was a pocket-sized edition devoted to the life of Anna Jagiellon, the last representative of the Jagiellonian dynasty, and also the second woman (after Jadwiga of Poland), who was crowned Queen of Poland.<sup>19</sup> The first edition, consisting of 236 pages, was published in 1964 by the Warsaw Publishing House Książka i Wiedza, as part of the 'Światowid' series, which specialised in books on historical topics in a straightforward and unannotated form. Using this formula, these books could find their way into school curricula with a minimum print run of 20,000 copies. In this series, Anna Jagiellon was the 55th volume. The list of authors who contributed to the 'Światowid' series included well-known historians such as Henryk Samsonowicz, Andrzej Zahorski, Irena Koberdowa, Janusz Tazbir, and Zofia Libiszowska, and individual volumes were treated as specific syntheses. The arrival of Bogucka's publication would be warmly welcomed by Benedykt Zientara in the pages of *Mówią Wieki*.

Why from among so many interesting heroines did Maria Bogucka choose Anna Jagiellon: a figure – as she herself wrote in the conclusion – who was “uninteresting and colourless, not very intelligent, petty, sometimes funny, always unhappy”?<sup>20</sup> Bogucka would justify her choice by pointing to the absence of a modern biography (earlier ones had been written in the nineteenth century, including Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's unsuccessful novel, *Infantka*). At the same time, Bogucka wanted to bring Queen Anna out of the shadows, as she had not been traditionally included in the pantheon of Polish rulers (and she had

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<sup>18</sup> As many as two reviews concerned the biography of Maria Ludwika Gonzaga, and among the collective works there were the *Sekrety rodu Gonzagów*. Perhaps Maria Bogucka was planning her own elaboration of the fate of this seventeenth-century female personage. However, Zofia Libiszowska wrote a biography of the “wife of the two Vasas”, first popularising account, and then a fully scholarly edition.

<sup>19</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Warszawa, 1964).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

been a Queen, after all!). And so, it was thanks to Bogucka that Anna Jagiellon would be included in the book *Poczet królów i książąt polskich* [Poland's Royal Rulers and Princes] edited by Andrzej Garlicki.<sup>21</sup> Bogucka's 1964 biography on Anna Jagiellon had neither footnotes nor a bibliography; albeit the shortfall was redressed by the elaborate narrative; which looked to encompass the sweep of political, cultural and economic events. Bona Sforza's activities were also foregrounded. In this work, Bogucka repeatedly fictionalised the narrative, introducing dialogues based on excerpts from Anna's letters (and also those of her sister, Zofia, Duchess of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, and brother, King Sigismund Augustus); as well as on the chronicles of Łukasz Górnicki. Such fictional flights vividly demonstrated the feelings, values and mentality of the princess, for whom the prospects of marriage and crown (and indeed personal happiness) came late in life. Indeed, Bogucka was fascinated by Anna's transformation from an 'ugly duckling' to the first lady of the kingdom, at some point playing a role – albeit somewhat clumsily – in the great affairs of state. An expert on early modern economic history, Bogucka was interested in Jagiellon's achievements in the field of economics, including her management of Mazovia (her mother's estate); and the resources and maintenance of her personal court. Bogucka managed to create a lively and pacy story about the last woman of the Jagiellonian line. It was mirthful in places not devoid of tragedy. After all, Anna was eventually removed from all political influence by her beloved nephew, Sigismund III Vasa, upon whom she had settled the throne.

Thirty years later, the biography of Anna Jagiellon underwent a significant metamorphosis and was re-published under the same title by the Ossolineum publishing house as part of the biographical Ossolineum series,<sup>22</sup> celebrating Bogucka's 65th birthday (it would be reissued in 2009 by the same publisher, but outside the cycle, to mark Bogucka's 80th birthday).<sup>23</sup> The layout of the chapters remained basically the same, although the ending was expanded. The new edition saw a more thorough review of the historiography and literature on Anna, with polemical engagements with related

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<sup>21</sup> *Ead.*, 'Anna Jagiellonka', in Andrzej Garlicki (ed.), *Poczet królów i książąt polskich* (Warszawa, 1996), 353–62, and republished in 1998.

<sup>22</sup> *Ead.*, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Wrocław, 1994), 179.

<sup>23</sup> *Ead.*, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Wrocław, 2009<sup>2</sup>), 205.

publications that had appeared since the first edition of the work.<sup>24</sup> The newly conducted query made it possible to add a number of new details from the life of the queen, although it did not change the general assessment of the character under examination.<sup>25</sup> All ideological formulations from the era of the Polish People's Republic in the style of "a patron of retroactive, reactionary forces"<sup>26</sup> (pertaining to Anna's affirmation of Catholicism) would also be excised. However, the pictorial style and direct mode of conveyance were maintained. Bogucka clearly identified with Anna on many levels and endeavoured to instil this sympathy among her readers.

The 1994 edition was reviewed in several scholarly journals. In *Studia Historyczne*, Irena Kaniewska, a specialist on the modern era, and in particular on the issues of Polish parliamentarism,<sup>27</sup> was relatively critical of the work and enumerated mistakes and oversights (wrong names, wrong titles, erroneous descriptions of illustrations, and incorrect interpretations of facts and documents). Kaniewska also disagreed with Bogucka's assessment of the nature of Anna's political engagement, rejecting the thesis of her mediocrity and blandness and elevating – even more clearly – Queen's economic and cultural merits.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, however, Kaniewska stated that Bogucka's book constituted "a step forward for historiography, one that will inspire further studies; and the author's keenness for the subject, and the style of the publication itself, means that this book will be widely read".<sup>29</sup> In *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, another historian, Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, noted in turn that the heroine of Bogucka's book was – due to the scarcity of sources about her youth – only "a backdrop for issues important for the fate of the state";<sup>30</sup> and criticised perceived inaccurate analyses of political perturbations during the first

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<sup>24</sup> Bogucka was especially critical of Paweł Jasienica's popularising book, *Ostatnia z rodu* [The Last of the Line] (Warszawa, 1965), which received many subsequent reprints.

<sup>25</sup> As the author herself indicated in the bibliographic note of the reprint, *ead.*, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Wrocław, 2009<sup>2</sup>), 188.

<sup>26</sup> *Ead.*, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Warszawa, 1964), 195.

<sup>27</sup> Irena Kaniewska, [Review], *Studia Historyczne*, xxxvii, 4 (1994), 571–4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 573.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 574.

<sup>30</sup> Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, [Review], *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, xl (1996), 148.



and second interregnum. However, Dubas-Urwanowicz praised the broadening of knowledge about Anna Jagiellon, especially related to her final declining years,<sup>31</sup> the precision of the findings regarding her everyday life, and concluded that "in Bogucka's biography, the somewhat enigmatic, yet extremely significant figure of Anna has brought to us by way of a whole range of dimensions and human weaknesses."<sup>32</sup> To sum up, Bogucka biographical debut was regarded as a significant work, and its subsequent transformation to a popular science compendium testified to the great skills of the author.

In 1970, the second of Bogucka's biographical monographs, devoted to Kazimierz Jagiellon,<sup>33</sup> appeared in the same 'Światowid' series; and in the same edition and format. The popularising nature of the book precluded, as already mentioned, the presence of footnotes, but this time Bogucka equipped her publication with a bibliographic note entitled "What's worth reading?".<sup>34</sup> The researcher, more and more often associated with research on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reached for a figure from the late Middle Ages, thus reminding us that her detailed research on Gdańsk craftsmanship concerned this particular century.<sup>35</sup> The 'Światowid' volume on Kazimierz Jagiellon did not introduce anything that had not already been presented in the literature on the subject. The bibliographic note mentioned above contained about twenty publications, including several detailed studies by Marian Biskup and Karol Górski.<sup>36</sup> As suggested by the author, a more complete list of titles could be found in the *Polski Słownik*

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>33</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk* (Warszawa, 1970).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 279–81.

<sup>35</sup> Earlier, she wrote only a modest sketch about Kazimierz Jagiellończyk for *Mówią Wieki*, *ead.*, 'Słońce Jagiellonów w samo południe. Z dziejów polityki dynastycznej Kazimierza Jagiellończyka', *Mówią Wieki*, 10 (1967), 7, 9–16.

<sup>36</sup> Years later, in 1987, Bogucka commented rather harshly in her review on the collection of these articles which, according to her, had been confusingly signalled with the phrase 'Kazimierz Jagiellończyk' in the title, see Marian Biskup and Karol Górski, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk. Zbiór studiów o Polsce drugiej połowy XV wieku* (Warszawa, 1987), 375 pp. In her opinion, it was not a correct biographical formula, and the reprints had not taken into account the rich literature accumulated in the intervening years (including her books, which seemed to be strongly suggested between the lines). At the same time, in her opinion, they contained theses that were not always credible, and were most certainly anachronistic.

*Biograficzny*.<sup>37</sup> Bogucka's undoubted merit was her creation of the first relatively complete compendium of knowledge about Jagiellon, because the work spanned his entire life. Eight years later, the same Książka i Wiedza published the second edition of *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk*.<sup>38</sup> The title page announced the fact that it was an extended edition, but it had the same internal structure and exactly the same historical sources. Reviewed by Stanisław Russocki, a researcher on the history of the Polish system and law in the modern era, the book was praised for the substantive level of research which was associated with the author; but Russocki also made some comments regarding the presented balance of power between the individual estates in both Jagiellonian countries, which, in his opinion, had been insufficiently explored. Most of all, he took Bogucka to task for being too much in thrall to Jan Długosz, indicative perhaps of Bogucka's "infatuation with the writings of her great predecessor". Russocki would conclude that "the greatest value of Maria Bogucka's book is that despite the fluency of the style, readers will not be able to coast along simply, but will have to think for themselves, whether they want to or not".<sup>39</sup>

A few years later, the third version of the monograph on the younger son of Ladislaus II Jagiełło appeared on the book market. The new edition brought a new quality and presented a wider spectrum of knowledge about the monarch and the era in which he lived and ruled.<sup>40</sup> The publisher of the book was the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy [National Publishing Institute, PIW], which for some time had been publishing biographies of various eminent figures from different eras and parts of the world, and each of these profiles was initially provided with an additional specification of "his/her times", suggesting that the reality of the times would also be emphasised. Kazimierz's biography in the new version acquired the features of scholarly synthesis, with footnotes, indexes (geographical and personal), a list of illustrations, and finally a bibliographical note with the expanded literature on the subject; albeit not all source materials were listed. A broader view of the epoch was provided

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<sup>37</sup> Stefan M. Kuczyński, 'Kazimierz Andrzej Jagiellończyk', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, xii (Wrocław, 1966–1967), 269–74.

<sup>38</sup> Bogucka, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk*, 256.

<sup>39</sup> Stanisław Russocki, 'Perspektywy', *Nowe Książki*, 6 (1979), 56–7.

<sup>40</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk i jego czasy* (Warszawa, 1981), 288.

primarily by the introductory chapter added at the beginning of the work, entitled 'Polska a Europa u progu XV stulecia' [Poland and Europe at the Threshold of the Fifteenth Century].<sup>41</sup> Chapter fourteen, 'Polska w kręgu gospodarki europejskiej' [Poland in the European Economy]<sup>42</sup> and in part chapter seventeen, 'Świt nowych czasów' [The Dawn of a New Age]<sup>43</sup> had the same character. In a review published in 1982 in the journal *Nowe Książki*, Edward Potkowski, a specialist in medieval history, and an expert in the manuscript culture of that period, summarised its content, recognising that "M[aria] Bogucka's book is a very interesting encounter with a Poland that was experiencing at the time great breakthroughs, and which had an outstanding ruler". The abundance of information, the accuracy of the judgments, and the originality of opinions and interpretations are just some of the compliments included in this extensive review.<sup>44</sup> This same review would be reprinted a year later in *Acta Poloniae Historica*<sup>45</sup> (at that time, Bogucka was the editor-in-chief of this journal). In a short review published in 1983 in *Przegląd Historyczny*, the historian Wojciech Fijałkowski emphasised the book's suggestiveness and vividness, and praised the exhaustive discussion on the long reign of Jagiellończyk, one that took into account the most important phenomena and processes of the era. Bogucka's extensive disquisitions on the economy and the situation of the Polish bourgeoisie in the second half of the fifteenth century were considered a highlight of the work, corresponding as they did with the considerations on the king's policies. One of the few shortcomings of the publication, according to Fijałkowski, was – as can be seen still – its excessive reliance on the opinions and judgments of Jan Długosz.<sup>46</sup>

The next edition of *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk i jego czasy*, this time officially as part of the celebrated series 'Biografie sławnych ludzi' [Biographies of Famous People] of the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, took place in 1998 (close to the author's seventieth birthday). The book did not change the layout of the chapters, but it gained something

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 168–78.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 213–40.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Potkowski, 'Czasy wielkiego przelomu', *Nowe Książki*, 2 (1982), 71–3.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*, [Review], *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 45 (1983), 215–18.

<sup>46</sup> Wojciech Fijałkowski, [Review], *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxiv, 2 (1983), 404.

in terms of content and bibliography (Bogucka wrote about this in the 'Bibliographic Note').<sup>47</sup> However, the geographical and personal names indices were abandoned. The same model (and content) was used in the third edition of the book, this time in the pages of the Cracow publishing house Universitas, in the series 'Władcy Polski' [The Rulers of Poland]. And this book, together with all other biographical monographs written by Bogucka, was published in 2009 to mark the occasion of her 80th birthday.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, in all five editions, Bogucka kept the furthest distance from the figure she looked to describe. There were no intimate 'close-ups' and 'personal' explorations of the protagonist, so typical for her other biographical works.

The third of Bogucka's great biographies was a monograph devoted to Queen Bona Sforza; and it was probably her most mature undertaking of this kind. Bogucka had been interested in Bona Sforza for some time. That said, it is difficult to assess whether it was her work on Sforza's daughter, the *infanta* Anna Jagiellon, that ultimately inspired Bogucka to devote herself to writing an account of Sforza herself; an account that would look to foreground the queen's trail-blazing pre-eminence. One thing is certain, research for the reedition of Anna Jagiellon's biography and that of Bona Sforza had to be undertaken at the same time. Before the monograph on Sforza was completed, Bogucka published a biographical entry on Sforza in the first volume of the *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945* [Encyclopaedia of the Economic History of Poland until 1945].<sup>49</sup> In 1984, Bogucka's article about the 'black' legend of Bona was published in the social and political weekly *Polityka*, a highly regarded current affairs magazine.<sup>50</sup> The publication of the book in 1989 was accompanied by three other texts devoted to Italy. First of all, it was an extensive, richly illustrated article in the second volume of the collective work *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne* [Historical, Literary and Legendary Biographies].<sup>51</sup> At that time, Bogucka also provided an extensive article on the cultural and moral role of the royal court

<sup>47</sup> Bogucka, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk i jego czasy* (Warszawa, 1998), 265–6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ead.*, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk i jego czasy* (Warszawa, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> *Ead.*, 'Bona Sforza d'Aragona', in Antoni Mączak (ed.), *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945 roku*, i (Warszawa, 1981), 46.

<sup>50</sup> *Ead.*, 'Czarna legenda Bony Sforza', *Polityka*, xxviii, 38 (22 Sept. 1984), 1–3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ead.*, 'Bona Sforza d'Aragona', in Janusz Tazbir and Zofia Stefanowska (eds), *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne* (Warszawa, 1989), 79–100.

at Wawel in a volume of collected essays edited by her;<sup>52</sup> and she also wrote a review of Danuta Wójcik-Górska's popularising biography of Bona Sforza (1987).<sup>53</sup>

Bogucka's *Bona Sforza* was published in the series 'Biographies of Famous People'.<sup>54</sup> The monograph was accompanied by both footnotes and an extensive bibliographic note. The final chapter featured an overview of the literature on the subject: both the sources and the studies relating to the history of the only Italian woman to occupy the Polish throne. Among the long list of witnesses to her life, and then those who shaped the legend and then tried to investigate the same, Bogucka placed herself in the role of an objective arbiter of Sforza's achievements and historical significance. But there was objectivity with bias, as Bogucka looked to restore the reputation of her heroine. In this respect, Bogucka presented herself as a continuator of the line adopted by Władysław Pocięcha, a librarian, historian, and expert on the culture of the Renaissance from the first half of the twentieth century. Pocięcha, in Bogucka's opinion, had been right in terms of his positive assessment of Bona; but he had done so 'on his knees', in a hagiographic manner.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the unquestionable merit of Bogucka's approach was her detailed and insightful discussion of the last years of the queen's life (Pocięcha had written his biography up to 1539), devoting much attention to Sforza's economic achievements and tracing the origins of the unjust historical assessments pertaining to her legacy. Favouring Bona entailed Bogucka looking askance at the accomplishments of her husband, which allowed the historian to emphasise Sforza's far-sightedness and to state that the queen

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<sup>52</sup> 'Bona a rola dworu monarszego jako centrum kulturalno-obyczajowego 1518–1548', in Maria Bogucka (ed.), *Triumfy i porażki* (Warszawa, 1989), 98–119.

<sup>53</sup> Danuta Wójcik-Górska, *Niedoceniana królowa* (Warszawa, 1987). Wójcik-Górska's book was a popularising work, and published in the Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza publishing house. In her review, Bogucka first wrote at length on Bona Sforza, explaining the backdrop of the black legend of Sigismund I's consort, revealing her in-depth knowledge of the literature on the subject, and converging with the theses of the last chapter of her own monograph. She referred to the reviewed book at the very end, accusing it of having depended too greatly on Władysław Pocięcha's monograph, and also describing it as one-sided and shallow in its assessments, praising only its accessibility. See Maria Bogucka, 'Królowa Bona', *Nowe Książki*, 1 (1989), 99–100.

<sup>54</sup> *Ead.*, *Bona Sforza* (Warszawa, 1989), 334 pp.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

had been being guided by a 'Polish' (or dynastic) *raison d'état*. In this regard, Bogucka achieved her aims convincingly, supporting her theses with facts and a knowledge of the realities of the era; whilst again making recourse to a journalistic close-up profile. This mode of narration would win plaudits and sympathy for both Sforza and Bogucka.

Interestingly, the publication of the book was noted in Czechoslovak scholarly journals,<sup>56</sup> while in Poland the publication only received scant mentions in the daily and weekly press, albeit praise was heaped on Bogucka for having understood the symbolic importance of Sforza: being able and wise, tenacious, knowledgeable of the political and financial realities of her age; and a reformer of public life in Poland. This is how Sforza was now hailed both in the daily press (*Życie Warszawy*), and in women's glossy magazines (*Kobieta i Życie*);<sup>57</sup> and even in the Catholic newspaper *Powściągliwość i Praca*.<sup>58</sup> *Królowa Bona* would be published three more times, each time as part of the biographical 'Ossolineum' series.<sup>59</sup> With each new edition, and this was especially evident in the second edition from 1998, Bogucka would add new items, monographs and articles to the bibliographical notes.<sup>60</sup>

The fourth biography was a book devoted to the tragic fate of the Scottish monarch Mary Stuart. The first edition of this book was published a year after the Bona Sforza biography, in 1990, which coincided with the beginning of the 'Ossolineum' biographical series.<sup>61</sup> The second edition was released by the same publishing house in 2009.<sup>62</sup> Apart from the weekly press, no one actually commented on the publication, and this obtained for both the first and second editions.<sup>63</sup> Parallel to the book, in 1990, Bogucka published in *Acta Poloniae Historica*,

<sup>56</sup> Jiri Pešek, [Review], *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xxi, 43 (1991), 84–6; Josef Macek, [Review], *Český Časopis Historický*, 88 (1990), 761–3.

<sup>57</sup> Beata Sowińska, 'Prawda o Bonie', *Życie Warszawy*, xlvii, 30 (5 Feb. 1990), 3; Michał Radgowski, 'Sto pytań do królowej Bony', *Kobieta i Życie*, 34 (22 Aug. 1990), 14–15.

<sup>58</sup> Katarzyna Żukowska, 'Bona Sforza czyli epizod o ładzie i samorządności', *Powściągliwość i Praca*, xlii, 5 (1991), 16.

<sup>59</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Bona Sforza* (Wrocław, 1998<sup>2</sup> – 290 pp.; 2004<sup>3</sup> – 311 pp.; 2009<sup>4</sup> – 301 pp.).

<sup>60</sup> See *ead.*, *Bona Sforza* (Wrocław, 1998), 248–51.

<sup>61</sup> *Ead.*, *Maria Stuart* (Wrocław, 1990).

<sup>62</sup> *Ead.*, *Maria Stuart* (Wrocław, 2009<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>63</sup> See Piotr Adamczewski, [Review], *Polityka*, xxxiv, 49 (8 Dec. 1990), 8.

which she still edited, an extensive English-language article about the legend of the Scottish queen in history and literature.<sup>64</sup> As Bogucka herself stated in the article's first footnote, she had collected materials for the essay (and therefore the book) over the course of two foreign research trips which took her in 1984 to the Wolfenbüttel in Germany (here probably as part of a supplementary query to the biography of Anna Jagiellon and Bona Sforza; after all, in the years 1556–68 Zofia Jagiellon had been the Duchess of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel) and in 1988 to Wassenaar in the Netherlands.

Bogucka's Mary Stuart biography was written in a light style, being notable for its verve, suggestiveness and insightfulness. The Queen of Scotland, sent to the scaffold, was a completely new type of woman for Bogucka: a beautiful but reckless victim of political machinations and poorly versed in the rules of governance: a victim of the intrigues of other female monarchs (first Catherine de Medici, and then Elizabeth I Tudor). Readers would once again achieve a personal sense of the protagonist: laughing and giddy on board a ship sailing for Scotland, again with a "melancholy reverie" on her face when faced with the prospect of having to govern Scotland.<sup>65</sup> It was in this monograph that Bogucka, the writer, had the most to say (she was, after all, a poet of some merit). But Bogucka, as a researcher of economic issues, paid attention to the minutiae regarding the conducting of Mary Stuart's court, and as an adept of gender research, noted not only the Queen's feminine weaknesses, but also her naive feminism. Mary would argue for equal rights for women at both the French and Scottish courts.<sup>66</sup> Years later, among her 'heroines', it was Mary Stuart whom Bogucka most often mentioned in the pages reviewing her research on the situation of women throughout history in the monograph *Gorsza pleć* [The Inferior Sex].<sup>67</sup>

Apart from these four monographs, did Maria Bogucka contemplate another major biographical project? It seems not. She did, however, devote a lot of attention to Barbara Radziwiłł; returning to this important figure several times, first in the magazine she edited

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<sup>64</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Mary Stuart in Legend', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 62 (1990), 45–89.

<sup>65</sup> *Ead.*, *Maria Stuart* (Wrocław, 2009), 18, 70.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 85.

<sup>67</sup> *Ead.*, *Gorsza pleć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy od antyku po wiek XXI* (Warszawa, 2006), 374.

in 1968, in an essay entitled ‘Barbara Radziwiłłówna. Legenda i fakty’ [Barbara Radziwiłłówna. Legend and Facts], and then years later, in 1978, in *Kultura* and finally, most extensively in a collective work edited by Janusz Tazbir and Zofia Stefanowska and entitled *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne*.<sup>68</sup> But these were rather side-line studies, pursued in reference to the figure of Anna Jagiellon and her mother, Bona Sforza. In the historiographical dispute over the true dimension of the relationship between the three women, Bogucka was clearly on the side of Anna and Bona, so it would not have been a stretch for her to discuss this issue again from a new perspective.<sup>69</sup> The autobiography written by Bogucka, although with scholarly footnotes, was a personal testimony, composed of memoirs and documents, which she had prepared “as the last participant of a community that had already passed”.<sup>70</sup>

Bogucka’s other biographical ventures did not go beyond the format of biographies, slogans, or, at best, contributions. Some ventures, such as biographical entries and an article devoted to the Firlej brothers,<sup>71</sup> digressions on the figure of the Great Chancellor of the Crown, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (1467–1532), continued to be researched with a mind to the times and biographies of those closely associated with the Jagiellonian dynasty. What is striking in Bogucka’s oeuvre is the number of biographical entries of Pomeranian (Prussian) figures, and particularly figures from Gdańsk. Such works included a biography of Peter Koenig, one of the leaders of the social revolt in Gdańsk in 1525, included in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*<sup>72</sup> the only one of her authorship

<sup>68</sup> *Ead.*, ‘Barbara Radziwiłłówna’, in Janusz Tazbir and Zofia Stefanowska (eds), *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne* (Warszawa, 1980), 67–88. Reprinted in 1985.

<sup>69</sup> In 1976, a biography of Radziwiłł by Zbigniew Kuchowicz was published: *id.*, *Barbara Radziwiłłówna* (Łódź, 1976).

<sup>70</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Ludzie z Kresów* (Warszawa, 2010), 145.

<sup>71</sup> On Mikołaj Firlej Bogucka provided the biographical entry, *ead.*, ‘Mikołaj Firlej z Dąbrownicy (?–1588), wojewoda lubelski’, in Zenon Ciesielski *et al.* (eds), *Zasłużeni ludzie Pomorza XVI wieku* (Gdańsk, 1977), 34–7. She then wrote about Mikołaj and his brothers, Jan and Andrzej in 1981 in the popular magazine *Kultura* and – finally – in the *Festschrift*: M. Bogucka, ‘Z dziejów kariery w szesnastowiecznej Polsce: trzech bracia Firlejowie’, in Tadeusz Epszstein, Sławomir Górczyński, and Andrzej Karpiński (eds), *O elitach polskich raz jeszcze. Studia ofiarowane Profesor Janinie Leskiewiczowej z okazji dziewięćdziesiątych urodzin* (Warszawa, 2007), 1–10.

<sup>72</sup> Maria Bogucka, ‘Koenig Piotr’, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, xiii (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 1967–1968), 257.



(except for her supplement to Gumowski's entry about Goebel), in this dictionary. For Bogucka, analysing the biographies of the patrician elite of the city would prove to be of particular importance. Bogucka wrote four times about Koenig's contemporary, the "king" of Gdańsk, Mayor Eberhard Ferber; including an entry in a German-language collective work devoted to the people of the Hanseatic League of that period.<sup>73</sup> Other members of the Ferber family and mayors of Gdańsk, Eberhard's father Jan (1430–1501) and his son Constantin the Elder (1510–88), also found their way onto the pages of the *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945*.<sup>74</sup> The researcher's interests also included Rudolf Feldstete (c. 1420–89), a Gdańsk juror and councillor, the first of the outstanding representatives of this family, which would rival the Ferbers.<sup>75</sup> The last Gdańsk resident whose biography Bogucka was interested in was the outstanding painter and engraver of the eighteenth century, Daniel Chodowiecki. The supranational character of this artist and the 200th anniversary of his death were commemorated by a number of publications, especially collective works, to which Bogucka was invited as an outstanding expert on the material and spiritual culture of the era. The nature of these projects reflected the importance of the researcher and her role in Polish and European historiography.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ead.*, 'Eberhard Ferber', in *Zasłużeni ludzie Pomorza XVI wieku*, 26–33; *ead.*, 'Ferber Eberhard', in *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945*, i, 168; *ead.*, 'Człowiek przełomu epok: Eberhard Ferber 1463–1529', in Janusz Bieniak *et al.* (eds), *Homines et Societas. Czasy Piastów i Jagiellonów. Studia historyczne ofiarowane Antoniemu Gąsiorowskiemu w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin* (Poznań, 1997), 205–12; *ead.*, 'Eberhardt Ferber, Bürgermeister von Danzig 1463–1529', in Detlef Kettinger and Horst Wernicke (eds), *Akteure und Gegner der Hanse – zur Prosopographie der Hansezeit* (Weimar, 1998), 165–72.

<sup>74</sup> *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945*, i, 168. In addition to the Ferbers, Bogucka also wrote entries for this publishing house about Copernicus, Melchior Wahlbach, and collectively about the Fuggers and the Loitzes.

<sup>75</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Model kariery mieszczańskiej w Gdańsku w drugiej połowie XV wieku. Rudolf Feldstete jako fundator potęgi rodziny', in Roman Czaja and Janusz Tandecki (eds), *Studia nad dziejami miast i mieszczaństwa w średniowieczu: studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Antoniemu Czachorowskiemu w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej* (Toruń, 1996), 257–66.

<sup>76</sup> *Ead.*, 'Daniel Chodowiecki, seine Familie und Danzig', in Erich Hinrichs and Klaus Zernack (eds), *Daniel Chodowiecki (1726–1801)* (Tübingen, 1997), 23–42; *ead.*, 'Gdańskie korzenie Daniela Chodowieckiego', in Zdzisław Kropidłowski (ed.),

Of course, the above discussion has not exhausted all of Bogucka's biographical texts. She was invited to contribute a piece on the Jagiellons for a popular compendium on the dynasties of Europe;<sup>77</sup> she would also write once again about the life and achievements of Nicolaus Copernicus. She would also return to her favourite characters (especially Anna Jagiellon and Bona Sforza) in subsequent scholarly publications, as well as in the press, especially the weeklies *Problemy*, *Razem*, and *Polityka*. Indeed, for *Polityka*, in the 1980s, she also wrote about other figures, including women (Elżbieta Granowska, the third wife of Ladislaus Jagiełło, and Katharina von Habsburg, the third wife of Sigismund Augustus). Granowska's biographical entry would appear in a prominent German edition.<sup>78</sup> At the end of her life, Bogucka would write biographical obituaries for outstanding (known or valued) figures of Polish and foreign historiography.<sup>79</sup>

Biography was certainly not the focal point of Maria Bogucka's research, but it was a prominent element of her scholarly output. And this could be seen particularly in her large monographic studies, where Bogucka chose characters whose historiographic assessment was ambiguous and whose rich life stories, being filled with twists and turns, allowed her to demonstrate both brilliance and insightful analyses. In her postulations, the researcher did not avoid expressive, sometimes controversial, and very often innovative judgments and opinions, which sometimes provoked critical retorts or objections. Bogucka's best and most original biographies concerned women in the throes of great historical events. Indeed, here her whole historical passion was revealed, creating evocative works that could appeal to both the experts of the era and ordinary readers. Not without significance was her talent for creating journalistic snapshots, and specific close-ups, ordering the reader to identify with the heroes (heroines) of her studies. When she touched upon economic themes in her

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<sup>77</sup> E.g., *ead.*, 'Jagiellonowie', in Antoni Mączak (ed.), *Dynastie Europy* (Wrocław, 1997), 161–82. See also editions from 2003 and 2007.

<sup>78</sup> *Ead.*, 'Eine Königin, um die niemand trauerte. Elisabeth, die dritte Ehefrau König Jagiello', in Gerald Beyreuther, Barbara Patzold, and Erika Uitz (eds), *Fürstinnen und Städterinnen. Frauen in Mittelalter* (Freiburg–Basel–Wien, 1993), 212–23.

<sup>79</sup> She wrote obituaries for Konrad Zawadzki (2003), Jan Pirożyński (2005), Edmund Cieślak (2008) and Jacques Le Goff (2014).

biographies, her findings were never questioned, which was a clear recognition of her expertise in the study of the material culture of the era. However, her knowledge of the issues of spiritual culture, mentality and the feminist themes of world history was also greatly esteemed. In minor biographies and biographical entries, Bogucka shared her knowledge about the communities and environments she had written about on other occasions and in different forums. Biography was, therefore, an important element in the evolution of her scholarly profile, representing as it did an opportunity to present her flair for analysing characters. These biographical forays were also moments of respite, savoured between tasks that looked to tackle some of the great topics of history when Maria Bogucka was truly in her element.

*transl. Barry Keane*

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