

MALGORZATA LABECKA-KOECHEROWA'S PLACE IN POLAND'S TURKOLOGY (1917-2011)

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Abstract: Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa is one of the important names in 20th century Poland's Turcology. She was born in Bronice, Pulawy in 28 September 1917, as the fourth daughter of five children. Malgorzata belonged to an aristocratic family. During her primary school education she took private lessons at home with her sisters and finished primary school by entering the school exams at the end of the academic years. She completed secondary school almost in the same way, a little bit at home, a little bit at school. After high school, she started studying at the university in 1935, but could not finish. She attended a commerce secretary course for one-year, got her certificate and in 1938 she was sent to a Polish company's office in Istanbul. World War II and the loss of her first husband created a deep trauma. But she never got tired of life and finished university in her 40s.

Malgorzata Labecka Koecherowa studied Turkology and served Turkology as a researcher and interpreter for many years. She wrote books and articles on Turkish culture; presented papers in Polish, Turkish, Russian and French. She wrote many articles in the encyclopedias about Turkish literature in and out of Turkey. In her researches, she focused on the former Turkish beliefs, light comedy and Meddah. She translated articles and books related to Turcology from Turkish and Russian into Polish. With translations in poetry, novels and plays, she proved how skillful she was in this area. Malgorzata Łabecka Koecherowa died on 11 July 2011.

Keywords: Poland, Turkology, Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa.

POLONYA TÜRKOLJİSİNDE MALGORZATA LABECKA-KOECHEROWA'NIN YERİ

Özet: Malgorzata Łabecka Koecherowa, XX. yüzyıl Polonya Türkolojisinin önemli isimlerinden biridir. 28.09.1917'de Pulawy'ya bağlı Bronice'de, beş çocuklu bir ailenin dördüncü kızı olarak dünyaya gelir. Aristokrat bir aileye mensup olan Malgorzata, ilkokulu evde ab-

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lalarıyla birlikte özel dersler alıp sene sonunda sadece okuldaki sınavlara girerek bitirir. Ortaokulu da aynı şekilde biraz okulda biraz evde tamamlar. Lise tahsilinden sonra 1935'te üniversiteye başlar; ancak bitiremez. Bir yıllık ticaret sekreterliği kursuna katılır ve sertifikasını aldıktan sonra 1938'de bir Polonya firmasının İstanbul'daki bürosunda çalışmak üzere Türkiye'ye gönderilir. II. Dünya Savaşı ve ilk eşinin kaybı onda derin bir travma oluşturur. Bu tür olumsuzluklara rağmen 40'lı yaşlarında üniversite eğitimini tamamlar.

Türkoloji bölümünü bitiren Malgorzata Łabecka Koecherowa, Türkolojiye araştırmacı, tercüman olarak uzun yıllar emek vermiştir. Türk kültürü üzerine kitap ve makaleler yazmış; Lehçe, Türkçe, Rusça ve Fransızca bildiriler sunmuştur. Türkiye ve Türkiye dışı Türk edebiyatları üzerine ansiklopedilere pek çok madde yazmıştır. Araştırmalarında, eski Türk inanışları, ortaoyunu ve meddah üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Türkçeden ve Rusçadan Lehçeye Türkoloji ile ilgili çeviriler yapmıştır. Şiir, roman, tiyatro gibi değişik türlerde yaptığı çevirilerle bu alanda ne kadar maharetliliğini göstermiştir. Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa 11 Temmuz 2001'de vefat etmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Polonya, Türkoloji, Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa.

A. HER CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY

Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa was born in Buronice, in Pulawy, on 28 September 1917. Malgorzata was the forth daughter of Antoni Wolk-Laniewski and Lubusza from Lopuskis, who had also a son. Her mother's father was from Olechowicz family from Lithuania Tatars. Her mother's side was Vieweger family, who emigrated from Vienna to Warsaw. Her mother's father, Jan Lopuski, was an engineer and had worked as an inspector for Volga River shipping company until the Bolshevik revolution. After the revolution, he returned to Poland and settled down Kazimierz near Visla River. Malgorzata has told about her mother:

*"My mother had been educated in Warsaw. She had an artistic spirit. She had no idea about culinary and had never wanted to touch anything in the kitchen. Her aunt, who had artistic music ability, had educated her very well. She was talented for drawing pictures and she had a style of 'Lubuszenka'. She was keen on art and philosophy and familiar with every field of culture"*¹

Malgorzata Łabecka's father's side was from a Polish family, who lived in Bronice. Her grandfather Stanislaw Wolk-Laniewski was a lawyer. He was graduated from Law School of Sorbon University, in Paris. Her father was graduated from Faculty of Agriculture in Bonn. He returned to Bronice and had cultivated the vast land, on which now there are many villages, until the World War II. In the World War II, his family had lived the drama, like many others, left their land and immigrated to Warsaw in 1945. Malgorzata, in her memory, has talked about her father like this:

*"My father was proud and brave. He was soft hearted. He was optimistic. He had always helped poor people. I do not think that he had ever shouted at someone in his life. Nowadays, I do not suppose that there is a man like him. Really, in 20th century there is no man like him."*²

Malgorzata has always told and never forgotten her childhood and teenage years that she had spent with her family until 1945. Her father's house in Bronice had been used as a headquarter by the German soldiers during the World War II, and this house was the place, where her personality had been formed. For this house she has written as follows:

*"Our house was very big. From the entrance side it had two floors; from the park side it had 3 floors. It had 22 big rooms and 2 small rooms. Nowadays, there are 24 rooms and an elevator has been installed. It has been used as a public library by the Lublin governorship on behalf of Lopacinski. In fact, this palace had been build by a famous architect Piotr Aigner in 18th century. We called it a house. Because our father did not want it to be called as a palace. But today, it has been called as a palace."*³

The following sentences emphasize that this house is very important in Turcologist Malgorzata's life: *"I have been living in Warsaw since 1945. But my roots are still tied up to the soil. I feel it at this age. I feel it especially when it rains and when the sun shines."*⁴

B. HER EDUCATION LIFE

Malgorzata was graduated from primary and secondary school by only taking the final exams at the end of the semesters under the observation of private teachers. She started Humanistyczne Siostry Urszulanek high school of in 1932 in Lublin and graduated in 1935. After she had graduated from high school she was in search of university for her higher education, she says:

*"I was in Warsaw in 1935 and trying to get information about universities. Medical school was interesting but it was not for me. Because when I saw blood I got fainted, and what's more it was 6 years. Academy of commerce was expensive. I wanted to study at polytechnic very much but I heard that only the girls who wanted to get married were attending that school. So I gave up polytechnic."*⁵

At the end she had her decision and attended Institute of West in Warsaw and the course of commerce of "The Association of Polish Abroad" and she graduated both of them in 1938. After the World War II, she wanted to study at the university and in 1951 she

registered in the Japanese language in the Institute of Oriental Studies of Warsaw University. But her father wanted her to study Turkish language, and she was impressed by the eastern tales that her uncle Jan had told her when she was a little child. She had also spent some time in Istanbul before the World War II, and had learnt some Turkish. Then she decided to continue her education in Turkish language second year. She talks about her changing Japanese language to Turkish language as follows:

*"I have always been interested in Near East. My father did not want me to study Japanese language, because Japan was too far away. She wanted me to study Turkish language, because Turkey was much closer to Poland. It was like this. So I started to study Turkish language at the second year."*⁶

Malgorzata had started the school in 1951-52 and graduated in 1959. Her M.A. thesis was "Language and Structure in the Poems by Nazım Hikmet". She had graduated a bit late just because she had been working and a bit older. So Malgorzata's school life ends when she was 42.

C. HER WORKING LIFE

Malgorzata Łabecka-Kocherowa's working life started on September 1938. She worked in Istanbul branch of a company named Polski Instytut Rozrahunkowy, which exported ethyl alcohol to Turkey and imported hazelnut, dried apricots and raisin from Turkey. Malgorzata's working adventure in Istanbul took her ten months when she was 20 years old. Malgorzata came to Poland in 1939's summer and at that time World War II started, so she could not go back to Turkey (1 September 1939). The first three years of the war she stayed with her father. She worked in a company called "Osobtorg" in Lublin as a worker from November 1944 to January 1946. She worked in Warsaw branch of Poland radio as a program director between 1946-1948, and as a secretary in "The Association of Film Writers" in Lodz between 1948-1949. When her second child Agnieszka was born, she returned to Warsaw. She restarted her job in radio in Warsaw. She worked as redactor at foreign broadcast department of the radio. She worked as an advisor of the Polish Theatre repertoire of the Ministry of Culture and Art between 1961-1963.

D. HER WORKS ON TURKOLOGY AND TRANSLATIONS

Malgorzata Łabecka-Koecherowa is a Turkolog, although she not an academician. But she has done scientific researches. M. Łabecka-Koecherowa's works are books, articles, book introduction writings, essays, theatrical analysis, plays for children and adults. She has presented papers about Turkish literature, theatre and mythology, art of puppet and drama at the national and international symposiums and conferences. Her works caused her known as a researcher of many parts in the world and Polish Turkology. "*Her interests are traditional Turkish theatre and contemporary poets, the products of folk literature written in Turkish language, which consist of not only Turkey but also the groups who speak Turkish out of Turkey.*"⁷ M. Łabecka-Koecherowa has researches in many fields of Turkology. These can be analyzed by diving into two groups.

1. *Her Sciences Works*: In this frame, we can talk about her works on Turkish literature, theatre and mythology. She accelerated her sciences researches after 1963. One of these works is *Historia Literatury Tureckiej (The History of Turkish Literature)*,⁸ she wrote it with Turkolog S. P_ackowicka-Rymkiewicz and Nazim Hikmet's wife Münevver Borz_ka. It is a work, which researchers from Poland and Polish speaking foreign researchers has been consulting about Turkish literature since 1971. In this work, Turkish literature after Tanzimat and folk literature were written by M. Łabecka-Koecherowa.

Among the works of M. Łabecka-Koecherowa, *Mitologia ludów tureckich*⁹ (*Turkish Folk Mythology*), has a special place.

"*In this book, there is interesting information about the life style of Turkish society, their outlook on life, beliefs, social symbols, mythology and rituals.*

In this research, there is detailed information about shamanism, the instruments they had played and their music and dances. There is a deep research about the source of the Turkish folk mythology, its improvement and epical expression.

She tried to tell the Polish readers the point of origin of the cultures in this research. Having detailed knowledge about her researches she had done, it is necessary to check out her articles published in the other journals."¹⁰

M. Łabecka-Koecherowa, as a scientific field, focused on traditional Turkish theater meddah, light comedy. On this field she published articles and presented papers. After 1963, she wrote 25 puppet plays and these plays were performed in Poland.

*"Her drama translations and the plays she wrote are interesting just because of having different personalities. Besides this, she wrote radio plays and television dramas for both children and adults. The plays she wrote and translated were played at many theaters and her poetry translations were performed as drama between 1967-1999"*¹¹

2. *Her Translations:* M. Łabecka-Koecherowa translated plays and poetry from Turkish, French and Russia into Polish. Her translating both poetry and essays from three languages indicates that she is not an ordinary translator. In the world, such kinds of translators are very few. Because the ones who translate ordinary articles and essays avoid of translating poetry. Moreover, while many of them claim that poetry can not be translated into another language, she translated bravely.

*"The first translations having her name are the ones she did were the radio plays from French in 1940s. Her poetry and tales translations for children were in 1950. The first translation she did from Turkish into Polish was published in the journal 'Przegląd Orientalistyczny' in 1952."*¹²

M. Łabecka-Koecherowa's translations are not only from contemporary Turkish literature but also from 13th century's poet Yunus Emre and present day poets and writers. She translated Arif Ali's "Danişmendname" and 14th century's poets "Işıkname"¹³ with Prof. Tadeusz Majda.

*"M. Łabecka-Koecherowa's works about east consist of detailed analysis. Among her works Nazım Hikmet has a very special place. She translated many of Nazım Hikmet's poetry. Her poetry translations, which were published in newspapers and journals, besides as a book, made Nazım Hikmet very famous in Poland."*¹⁴

She also translated into Polish Ahmet Adnan Saygun's *Yunus Emre Oratorio*, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's the poem of *In the Graveyard of Hafız*, and Mustafa Necati Sepetçioğlu's *The Sons of Graywolf*, Hal-dun Taner's tale called *Morning Walking of Sancho*, and a play called *Saga of Ali from Keşan*, Aziz Nesin's *Do Something Met* and many of his works.

Among the works of M. Łabecka-Koecherowa there are a few she could not complete to translate into Polish. They are: *The Saga of Manas* and *the Stories of Dede Korkut*. Because of her age, M. Łabecka-Koecherowa can not write with her hands. She is the member of many associations in Poland and abroad. She was the member of the writing board of the journal *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* published

by Polskie Towarzystwa Orientalistyczny (The Association of Polish Orientalists). M. Łąbecka-Koecherowa has had an important place in Poland's Turkology with her works and hard work.

HER WORK

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FOOTNOTE

- 1 M. Łabęcka-Koecherowa, *Moja Droga Na Wschod*, Her unpublished Memories.
- 2 20.05.1999, From my interview notes.
- 3 15.10.1999, From my interview notes.
- 4 16.11.1999, From my interview notes .
- 5 18.01.2000, From my interview notes.
- 6 20.02.2000, From my interview notes.
- 7 M. Łabęcka-Koecherowa, "z okazji 80. rocznicy urodzin", *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, S. 3-4, 1996, s. 175.
- 8 Zakład narodowy im. Ossolinskich- wydawnictwo: Wrocław, Warszawa, Krakow, Gdansk, 1971.
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- 11 25.05.2000, From my interview notes.
- 12 M. Łabęcka-Koecherowa, "z okazji 80. rocznicy urodzin", ... s. 177.
- 13 Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, Wrocław, 1987, 205 s.
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