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Open Sesame! The Polish Translations of *The Thousand and One Nights*

ABSTRACT: The author discusses the Polish twentieth-century translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* indicating different translation strategies and shortcomings of the Polish versions of the book. This article also signalises the process of mythologisation, orientalisation, and fairytales of the tales. The author indicates the need of retranslation of *The Thousand and One Nights* and proposes to perceive the translations of the book and its numerous versions and adaptations through the metaphor of the sesame overfilled with translation treasures which are 'discovered' by the reader in the act of reading.

KEYWORDS: *The Thousand and One Nights*, Polish translations, translation, fairytales

It would be challenging to find a reader who has not heard of Scheherazade's stories, Aladdin's magic lamp, Sinbad or Ali Baba. The cycle of *The Thousand and One Nights* has been translated into a plethora of European languages and has been retranslated many times (also into Polish). In spite of its complex Arabic origin *The Thousand and One Nights*¹ has been a part of the Western culture. Yet, the popularity of the book and its characters does not project onto at least superficial knowledge of this collection of stories, legends, fables, fairy-tales and, last but not least, poems. *The Thousand and One Nights* is usually associated with book adaptations and Walt Disney's animated films for children such as *Aladdin* (1992) or *Duck Tales the Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp* (1990). Although *The Thousand and One Nights* appeared on a European literary stage more than three hundred years ago, the popularity of the above-mentioned films and book adaptations for children resulted in putting aside the very book itself.

1 The English translations encompass several titles of this book: *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights*, *The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights*, *Thousand and One Nights*, and *The Arabian Nights*.

The Book of the Thousand and One Nights has been present in the Western culture since the eighteenth century, the time of the first European translation of the cycle. In the year 1704 Antoine Galland translated the tales from Arabic into French; his translation contributed to the rising popularity of Scheherazade's stories and fascination with the Orient itself. Undoubtedly, Galland's translation became very popular in Europe and contributed to the vogue of an oriental tale.² Many critics studying the *Nights* share an opinion that Galland invented some of the stories, such as "Aladdin," "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and "The Ebony Horse" and thus has become one of the co-authors of this work, to quote Irwin: "[these stories] have not been found in any surviving manuscripts written before Galland's translation of the *Nights* has been published" (Irwin 1994, 18–19). The origin of *The Thousand and One Nights* has been complex, since the existing four nineteenth-century Arabic manuscripts³ were published much later than Galland's translations, and the book, having Arabic, Persian, and Indian influences, additionally changed its shape in Galland's *Les Mille et une nuits*. In consequence, the European translations appearing after Galland's text substantially differed – as the presumably invented by the French translator tales have been inserted to the canon of Scheherazade's stories.

Surprisingly, the reception of the tales in the East was quite different than in Europe – which was charmed with the Orient and its promising exoticism. In the Eastern culture the book had a status of a "marginalised work" (Beaumont 2002, 34) and its popularity has never been comparable to the fascination and interest it evoked in the Western culture. In my previous book on the transformations of *The Thousand and One Nights*, I proposed the analysis of this work in terms of nomadic literature, concluding that "the tales, bearing no author(s) and being in a constant state of flux during a never-ending journey through cultures as neither the East nor West has ever been their 'home'" (Mamet-Michalkiewicz 2011, 34). This

² See R. Irwin, *"The Arabian Nights": A Companion* (London: I B Taurus & Co, 1994), 16–17.

³ The critics of *The Arabian Nights* enumerate usually four significant manuscripts: Calcutta I, Bulaq, Breslau, and Calcutta II. See M. Gerhardt, *The Art of Storytelling: A Literary Study of "The Thousand and One Nights"* (Leiden: Brill, 1963); R. Irwin, *"The Arabian Nights": A Companion* (London: I B Taurus & Co, 1994); or T. Lewicki, Wstęp, in *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy* (Warszawa: PIW, 1974).

particular situation of the *Nights*, which meant existing permanently in-between the two cultures, facilitated the process of metamorphoses of the work and a polyphony of translations. We can speak of the phenomenon of retranslation of the book in case of almost each European language it was translated into, including the Polish translations.

Many scholars have engaged in the study of *The Thousand and One Nights*, mostly American, British, and French, taking different perspectives, from purely linguistic, through cultural or psychoanalytic points of view, and last but not least, through the prism of translation studies. Yet, in Poland *The Thousand and One Nights* is neither read nor studied⁴ – not taking into account the often reprinted children's adaptations of the popular stories from the cycle, such as *Baśnie tysiąca i jednej nocy* (Warszawa 2011 – an audiobook), *Baśnie tysiąca i jednej nocy* (Warszawa 2010) or *Baśnie z tysiąca i jednej nocy* (Warszawa 2004). In the light of the above, the aim of this article is to briefly discuss the Polish translations of *The Arabian Nights* and to indicate its shortcomings and the peripheral position in the polysystem of translated literature.

Władysław Kubiak, tr., *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy: wybrane opowieści* (1959)⁵

In his introduction, Lewicki rightly notes that – contrary to general understanding of the book as a collection of fairy tales – “*The Book of the Thousand and One Nights* (in Arabic: *Kitab alf lajla wa-lajla*) [...] is a collection of fables, legends, novels, short stories and anecdotes of various kinds” (Lewicki 1974, III). In the most detailed and extensive Polish introduction to *The Thousand and One Nights* Lewicki also pinpoints the origin and beginnings of the cycle (which existed at first only in the oral tradition), the first Arabic manuscripts, and last but not least, the European and Polish translations (before the twentieth century). Kubiak's selection of stories is

4 I have not found a single entire article on *The Thousand and One Nights* written by a Polish scholar, apart from references to this book (usually referred to as a collection of fairy tales) and its most popular stories in particular.

5 The English translation of the title is: *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights: A Selection of Stories*.

based on the so-called new Egyptian version from the end of the eighteenth century, which, as Lewicki states, “undeservedly has become the canon⁶ of *The Thousand and One Nights*” (Lewicki 1974, XX).

The present collection characterises inclusion of the full version of the “Frame Story” opening the cycle, titled “Opowieść o królu Szahrijarze i bracie jego, królu Szahzamanie” and the one closing Scheherazade’s stories: “Zamknięcie opowieści o królu Szahrijarze i bracie jego, królu Szahzamanie” which is an advantage of this translation, as it clearly indicates that the book – with its tales emerging from the “Frame Story” – is an example of nesting narratives (which is characteristic for Indian *Panchatantra* and for Iranian *dastan*⁷). Both Polish and other European translations differ – apart from the question of including the “Frame Story” – in several other aspects. First of all, the differences appear in portraying Sheherazade either only as the character of the “Frame Story” – who willingly marries the vengeful king and disappears from the cycle – or as both, the character of the “Frame Story” and the narrator of the cycle who, after telling tales through one thousand and one nights (or less – depending on the edition), lives happily with the king and their children.

A matter of contention among the editors and translators of *The Thousand and one Nights* lies within including and enumerating the number of nights when Scheherazade tells her stories and also categorising the *Nights* as either a bunch of fairy-tales or indicating diversity of stories in generic, formal, and also cultural terms. Last but not least, the editors differ in terms of inclusion of such famous stories – such as for instance about Sinbad which, as has been already mentioned, with a great probability was invented by Galland – whether it should be included in the canon of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Kubiak’s translation includes Scheherazade as both the protagonist and the narrator of the tales. The book is divided into the main tales and collections of tales, including nested stories, yet a division into nights and Scheherazade’s interruptions in telling the tales are visible in the text, but are very subtle, and thus they do not interfere with

6 Since the time when Kubiak translated the *Nights* (1959) the so-called “canon” of the cycle has already changed, but what was meant by Kubiak was the new Egyptian version of the tales, the so-called Zotenberg’s edition from before 1781.

7 See J. Cejpek, “History of Iranian Folk-Literature,” in *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. J. Rypka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 2011), 642.

the stories themselves. Quite the opposite, Scheherazade's interruptions and postponements make a reader more eager to find out the end of stories. The present translation includes also the tales invented presumably by Galland and added by him to the canon of the book, such as about Sinbad and Aladdin.

Kubiak's translation does not aim to "bring the text to the reader" (to refer to Schleiermacher's concept), but to bring a reader closer to the source text and simultaneously to the culture of the Other, which denotes the Orient. Although, for instance, some names are given Polish equivalents, that is, 'Szeherazada,' most of the names and cultural references are rendered just as in the original, yet they are followed by footnotes with explanations. For instance, the name 'Jusuf' is explained to derive from the biblical Joseph known to the Arabs from the Quran (Kubiak 1959, 20). The language of translation is formal and archaic, and resembles biblical translation due to the use of specific words that are typical for the Scripture translations, such as "prawią" (Kubiak 1959, 6) which in English translations is rendered by Lane as "It is related that there was" (Lane), or by Burton (the translator who also had a tendency of using archaic forms of English) as "Therein it is related that" (Burton); or "zwał się" (Kubiak 1959, 8) rendered by Lane as "He was called" (Lane) and by Burton as "His name was" (Burton), and for instance, "kochano go przeto w całym królestwie berłu jego podległym" (Kubiak 1959, 8) which Lane translated as "whole empire loved him" (Lane) and Burton as "he was beloved by all the peoples" (Burton).

As it is clearly visible, the language used by Kubiak in the Polish translation is more archaic than language used by the two English translators. This translation is also typical of an extensive use of the perfect participle which reinforces archaism of the language, to give an example: "I przygotował się do drogi, a zabrawszy namioty i wywiódłszy wielbłądy, muły, niewolników i świąte, powierzył wezyrowi rządu w swoim kraju i ku ziemiom brata ruszył" (Kubiak 1959, 9). All in all, its undoubted advantage is an inclusion of the full version of the beginning and the end of the "Frame Story," remaining Scheherazade as the narrator of the tales and including the most popular tales to the volume.

**Andrzej Czapkiewicz et al., *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy* (1974)
and *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy: Wybór* (1982)⁸**

The second twentieth-century Polish translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* (in a chronological order) is the complete translation rendered by Andrzej Czapkiewicz and others, titled *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy* (constituting nine volumes), and published eight years later – under the same title – a one-volume selection of the tales. The first seven volumes contain the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights*, the eighth volume consists of the additional tales which are not included by some scholars to the so-called canon of the *Nights* (such as the already-mentioned tale about Sinbad), and the ninth volume constitutes translators' ubiquitous footnotes.

The first volume is preceded by a long, detailed and thorough introduction also written by Tadeusz Lewicki (and bearing many resemblances to the introduction in the previously discussed edition). There are a few but significant differences between this and the latter translation. The first visible difference appears in the list of contents. When in the previous translation all the stories are consequently named as 'opowieść' or 'zbiór opowieści,' in this translation the main sections (collections of tales/stories) are translated as 'bajka' ('fable') (Czapkiewicz 1974, 378). Thus, the list of contents indicates that there are 95 fables in the book which constitute either a collection of stories or a single tale. Such a solution seems baffling, as on the one hand, in the introduction Lewicki emphasises diversity of stories in generic terms (Lewicki 1974, 5), and on the other, the collections of tales (constituting fairy-tales, fables, legends, short stories, and others) are labelled as 'fables.' To add to this, in the introduction Lewicki interchangeably uses the terms 'fable' and 'story'⁹ which are obviously not synonyms.

There are similarities between these two translations in terms of including the "Frame Story" with its opening and its end, a division into nights, and inclusion of Scheherazade as the narrator of the tales. Yet, contrary to

8 The English translations of the titles are: *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights* or *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights: A Selection*.

9 To learn more on the genres of the tales, their structure and material, refer to Mia Gerhardt's *The Art of Story-telling: A Literary Study of "The Thousand and One Nights"* (Leiden: Brill, 1963).

the previous translation, all the names are given the Polish spelling, as the translators express a belief that their text is dedicated to general readers (Lewicki 1974, 36). As far as the language used in translation, it is definitely less archaic. For instance, in the previous translation I discussed the word “prawia” which in Czapkiewicz’s text appears as “mówią” (Czapkiewicz 1974, 51). Similarly, instead of “zwał się” here it is “nosił imię” (Czapkiewicz 1974, 51), and also the sentence translated by Kubiak as “kochano go przeto w całym królestwie berłu jego podległym” is rendered here as “toteż kochał go lud w całym kraju” (Czapkiewicz 1974, 51). To sum up, Czapkiewicz’s translation is far more readable and ‘digestible’ for the readers, and an inclusion to the volume the “Supplementary nights” containing the most popular tales discussed above is also its advantage.

Krzysztof Radziwiłł and Janina Zeltzer, trs. *Baśnie z 1001 nocy* (1986)¹⁰

The next Polish translation to be discussed is *Baśnie z 1001 nocy* – a collection of the so-called Oriental fairy tales. In the afterword of the text Krzysztof Radziwiłł, one of the translators of the book, writes that “*The Book of the Thousand and One Nights* – the masterpiece of folk literature – is a collection of 300 hundred fantastic stories, fairy tales and eastern parables [...]” (Radziwiłł 1986, 439). Radziwiłł is wrong to claim that the collection is the masterpiece of folk literature as *The Thousand and One Nights* entirely belongs neither to folk nor children’s literature. To give an example, let us quote Daniel Pinault – one of the most prominent scholars studying the *Nights*, who explicitly state that the book “cannot be described only as a collection of transcribed folktales: for it survives as the crafted composition of authors who used various forms of written literary Arabic to capture an oral narrative tradition” (Pinault 1992, 17). Although Radziwiłł is aware of the fact that the book is not a pure collection of fairy tales, but a complex collection of stories belonging to different genres, further in the afterword he writes: “a volume of fairy tales [sic], which we put to the hands of young readers, is a translation of the German translation of *The Book* rendered by Enno Littmann” (Radziwiłł 1986, 439). It seems baffling that Radziwiłł,

10 The English translation of the title is: *The Fairy Tales of 1001 Nights*.

after introducing *The Book* as a collection of fantastic stories, fairy tales, and parables, presents this edition as a volume of fairy tales.

In her elaborate study on *The Nights*, Mia Gerhardt differentiates the following types of tales: fairy tales, stories (including short/long stories, thief stories, travel stories), fables, fabliaux, pious and moral tales, anecdotes, adventures, rhyming prose, and last but not least, poetry (Gerhardt 1963, 18). In the light of the aforementioned, it seems evident that the strategy of presenting the book as a collection of fairy tales was used by the author of the afterword with a great probability as a means of attracting attention and a bow towards young readers. Having changed the title of the book into *The Fairy Tales of 1001 Nights*, has had a profound influence not only on the contents of this book, but also on the perception of the *Nights* in the Polish culture.

Let us focus on the contents of this edition in the first place. The editor, Izabella Korsak, has included the “Frame Story,” titled “O okrutnym Shachrijarze i mądrej Szeherazadzie,” yet it is a shortened version and its ending is revealed already in the beginning of the book – before Scheherazade’s even starts telling her tales. Such a solution is a strong disadvantage of this book for at least several reasons. First of all, the meaning of the “Frame Story” in the cycle of tales cannot be underestimated, as it indicates that the collection is an example of a Chinese-box narration, a story within a story within a story – a number of tales included within other tales at some point seems endless, yet not in this edition. Secondly, such a solution erases Scheherazade from a position of a narrator, since in the end of the “Frame Story” it is written: “And now listen to the most beautiful among Scheherazade’s fairy tales [...]” (Radziwiłł 1986, 8). What comes next is a collection of ‘fairy tales’ among which we may find these tales which were not included in Arabic manuscripts before Galland’s translation: “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,” “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp,” “The Story of Sindbad the Saylor” and others.

In both previously discussed editions at the end of the book (just like in the Arabic editions and most English translations) there appears an end of the “Frame Story” titled “Zamknięcie opowieści o królu Shahrijarze i bracie jego Shahzamanie.” Thus, another reason why a shortened version of the “Frame Story” included in the discussed edition is a drawback, is the fact that it deprives the book of its continuity and cyclicity. What is

more, to accentuate it again, it deprives Scheherazade her voice and ability of seducing the king – and, at the same time, the readers – with her ability of storytelling that saved her life.

The title and contents of this translation have had a profound influence of the next editions of the tales directed to young readers and its perception. Together with Walt Disney's animated films based on the *Nights* and adaptations of the book for children which are published under different titles, yet always containing the word 'fairy tales,' the book has become in the Polish culture a bunch of popular exotic fairy tales. This perception of *The Thousand and One Nights* as a collection of fairy tales is so prevailing that it is shared not only among uninitiated readers, such as children and young readers, but also by some Polish translators and scholars.¹¹ Popularity of editions titled *Fairy Tales of The Thousand and One Nights* together with Disney's animated films has contributed to the process I propose to be labelled as 'fairy-talisation' of Scheherazade's stories on our culture.

Marian Leon Kalinowski and Robert Reuven Stiller, trs. *Tysiąc i jedna noc z Szeherezadą* (2013)¹²

The last translation to be discussed in this article is the latest Polish translation of the *Nights* titled *Tysiąc i jedna noc z Szeherezadą*. Let us first refer to the afterword written by Robert Stiller, one of the translators of this edition. In "Tysiąc czy nie tysiąc opowieści? Odwieczne czytadło" Stiller makes several important comments, such as when discussing an endless number of transformations, redactions, translations, and films, he indicates that "*The Thousand and One Nights* ceased to be entirely Oriental. It has become a hybrid of Eastern and Western cultures [...]" (Stiller 2013, 657). Such a conviction is also shared by many scholars studying the *Nights*.

¹¹ In order to read more on the perception of the book as the collection of fairy tales among some Polish translators and scholars, refer to M. Mamet-Michalkiewicz, *Between the Orient and the Occident: Transformations of "The Thousand and One Nights"* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), 161.

¹² The English translation of the title is: *One Thousand and One Night with Scheherazade*.

Stiller also rightly accentuates that the “world popularity has least influenced the culture of Arabic countries” (Stiller 2013, 657) – quite contrary to the influence it has had on Western culture.

Yet, he also makes comments which seem invalid – such as the following one: “Claudia Ott’s translation and our translation are ground-breaking, since for the first time they contain the whole content of this [Mahdi’s] manuscript” (Stiller 2013, 659). Before discussing this comment, let us discuss briefly the Arabic manuscript Stiller refers to. Muhsin Mahdi edited the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript *Alf layla wa layla* (the antecedent of Galland’s manuscript) which consists of 282 nights. Yet, the discussed Polish translation Stiller believes to be groundbreaking is not a direct translation from the Arabic edition, but instead, from the German translation of the Arabic edition. This fact seems to be the first significant drawback of this book. It needs to be added though, that all poetic texts are translated from Arabic directly into Polish by Marek M. Dziekan and Robert Stiller. Interestingly, the latter writes the following in the matter of indirect translation in the afterword: “When I was working on poems included in the text, it was obvious to me that I cannot render poetry on the basis of Claudia Ott’s translation, at least because you are not allowed to translate poetry, and versified poetry in particular, from the second hand” (Stiller 2013, 666). Taking into consideration the above citation, it seems incomprehensible why the full edition of the book was not translated directly from the Arabic manuscript. Yet, in the light of the aforementioned, it is difficult to agree that a translation which is based on another translation instead of on the original is a groundbreaking text and that it should receive great acclaim.

The second drawback of this edition is its title. In the aforementioned afterword, Stiller criticises all the previously existing titles of the book, taking an assumption that the first editions were titled “*Alf lajla: Tysiąc nocy* (eng. *Thousand Nights*)” (Stiller 2013, 663), which is true, yet already in the twentieth century the book has obtained its contemporary title *Kitab alf lajla was lajla* (*The Book of the Thousand and One Nights*) or *Alf lajla was lajla* (*Thousand and One Nights*) (Pinault 1992, 5). Nevertheless, the translator believes that the chosen title *One Thousand and One Night with Scheherazade* to be the most appropriate which seems more than problematic. First of all, judging by such a title, a reader may presuppose that the

book belongs to the same genre as the popular *Kama Sutra*.¹³ The editors deliberately contained only 282 nights in the volume, just like Muhsin Mahdi, the editor of the Arabic edition which was a basis for German translation. In this light, it seems inconsequential to, on the one hand, state that there were only 282 nights, and on the other, to accentuate in the title the number of 1001 nights.

What is more, the editors' choice to add the words 'with Scheherazade' to the title misleads a reader. Such a title implicitly suggests that the titular nights are the nights 'spent' with Scheherazade, and thus it evokes an erotic undertone in the sense the book is deprived of. The nights the vengeful King Shahriyar (who was early betrayed by his unfaithful wife) spends with Scheherazade are the nights filled with Scheherazade's tales which function as a cure to his devastated ego.¹⁴ Thus, knowing the context of Scheherazade's predicament, it seems obvious that the narrator, through the art of storytelling, takes the King to different worlds in order to heal his ego. The title of the Polish translation of the book is the only edition known to me having Scheherazade's name included in it. To give an example, in the very popular English translation of Muhsin Mahdi's edition (rendered by Husain Haddawy) the book received the title *The Arabian Nights*¹⁵ which neither contains the number of nights, nor mentions Scheherazade in the title.

The question of Scheherazade and her position in the text reappears when discussing the "Frame Story." The present translation opens the "Frame Story" introducing: "Opowieść o królu Szahrijarze i Szeherazadzie, córce jego wezyra," but at the end of the book the cycle of stories is interrupted without explanation after the 282 night. It needs to be mentioned, though, that in this case, such a solution has also been chosen by Mahdi. The advan-

13 R. F. Burton, trans., *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana: The Classic Burton Translation* (Dover: Penguin, 2006). The text is widely considered to be the standard work on human sexual behaviour, an example of Sanskrit literature written by Vātsyāyana.

14 To learn more on the power and sexual relations between Scheherazade and King Shahriyar (analysed through the prism of psychoanalytic theory) refer to: D. Beaumont, *Slave of Desire: Sex, Love and Death in The 1001 Nights* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002).

15 M. Mahdi, *The Arabian Nights*, trans. H. Haddawy (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995).

tage of the editions and translations of the *Nights* which contain a closure of the “Frame Story” seems explicit.¹⁶ Bearing in mind that *The Thousand and One Nights* is a collection of stories deriving from the Iranian ‘dastan’ and is an example of nesting narratives, a closure by means of the end of the “Frame Story” is a justified solution – regardless of the fact whether the book contains exactly 1001 nights or less, depending on the edition/translation.

The Thousand and One Nights has been translated into uncountable number of languages and its stories have not ceased to flourish and cast a spell on readers worldwide. Summing up what has been written so far, I would like to refer to the world-wide known spell cast by Ali Baba: ‘Open Sesame’ which appears in the title of this article. The titular metaphor of the sesame illustrates the translations of the book which constitute a vault overfull with different types of ‘treasures.’ While in the story of “Ali Baba and the forty thieves” the vault contains precious treasures, here it serves as an illustration of the polysystem of translations of the book having either fairytalised, eroticised, sexist, misogynist, or archaic undertones. The above-mentioned vault contains also children’s adaptations and references to the book – hence I believe that *The Arabian Nights* constitutes a polysystem of (translated) literature per se. Aliba Baba knew the secret spell which opened the void – and a reader of *The Thousand and One Nights* functions here as the titular poor woodcutter, yet while the vault remains open, he or she is overwhelmed and perplexed due to plurality and diversity of *The Arabian Nights*’ ‘treasures.’

Among the Polish translations *Tysiąc i jedna noc z Szeherazadą* bears a significant space in the Polish sesame of translations of the *Nights*, yet neither this nor previous Polish translations have cast such a spell on the book market as all kinds of *Fairy Tales of the Thousand and One Nights* did, and in consequence the fairytalised versions of the book supplanted *The Thousand and One Nights* itself. To add to this, apart from the enumerated shortcomings of the newest translation (which in general is a very neat translation enriched with beautiful illustrations), it lacks the additional tales – in the form of a second volume or supplementary stories. Whether

16 See M. Mamet-Michalkiewicz, “The Frame Story as the Papergon,” in *Between the Orient*, 61–73 to read more about the significance of “The Frame Story” and its perception in terms of Derridean concept of the parergon.

we agree with this fact or not, the stories of “Sinbad,” “Ali Baba and the forty thieves,” and “Aladdin and the magic lamp” have been (undeserv- edly?) the core of *The Arabian Nights* and have successfully attracted dif- ferent readers for more than 300 hundred years. In the light of the above, there still seems to be space for a new Polish translation of Scheherazade’s stories, a translation that would conjoin the traditionally included tales to the canon with the most popular ones, a translation that would attract (un)initiated readers and would depict the charm of these tales through a broader context than a fairytales world of Orient.

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Sezame, otwórz się! Polskie przekłady *Księgi tysiąca i jednej nocy*

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł omawia dwudziestowieczne polskie przekłady *Księgi tysiąca i jednej nocy*, analizując przyjęte przez tłumaczy różne strategie przekładowe oraz wskazując na liczne uchybienia w przekładach opowieści Szeherazydy, które przyczyniły się do procesu mitologizacji, orientalizacji oraz „ubaśniowienia” *Księgi tysiąca i jednej nocy* – niesłusznie postrzeganej w polskiej kulturze jako zbiór baśni. Autorka uważa, że w polskiej przestrzeni literacko-kulturowej wciąż pozostaje przestrzeń dla kolejnego przekładu *Księgi tysiąca i jednej nocy* oraz proponuje postrzeganie tego wielowymiarowego dzieła oraz jego licznych wersji i adaptacji poprzez metaforę sezamu, który jest swoistym skarbem przekładów ‘odkrywanych’ przez czytelnika w akcie czytania.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: *Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy*, baśnie, polskie przekłady, tłumaczenie, ubaśniowienie

Marta Mamet-Michalkiewicz

Sesam, öffne dich! Polnische Übertragungen des Buches *Tausendundeine Nacht*

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: In ihrem Beitrag befasst sich die Verfasserin mit den im 20.Jh. entstandenen Übertragungen des Buches *Tausendundeine Nacht*. Sie analysiert verschiedene Übertragungsstrategien und weist auf mehrere Fehler hin, die bei der Übertragung von Geschichten der Scheherazade begangen wurden. Diese haben dazu beigetragen, das *Tausendundeine Nacht* mythologisiert, orientalisiert und in der polnischen Kultur zu Unrecht als eine Märchensammlung betrachtet wurde. Die Verfasserin vertritt die Meinung, dass es

im polnischen Literatur- u. Kulturraum immer noch einen Platz für weitere Übersetzungen des Buches *Tausendundeine Nacht* gibt. Sie schlägt vor, das mehrdimensionale Werk und dessen mehrere Versionen und Bearbeitungen als eine Metapher des Sesams – spezifischer Fundgrube der vom Leser bei der Lektüre zu entdeckten Übertragungen zu betrachten.

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER: *Tausendundeine Nacht*, Märchen, polnische Übertragungen, Übersetzung, zum Märchen machen