

MARTA PSZCZOLIŃSKA

University of Warsaw
ORCID: 0000-0002-2473-8144
e-mail: m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

NOT ONLY PARANDOWSKI: THE ICARUS MYTH ADAPTED AND MODIFIED FOR CHILDREN IN PEOPLE'S POLAND*

ABSTRACT. Pszczolińska Marta, *Not Only Parandowski: The Icarus Myth Adapted And Modified for Children in People's Poland*.

The article offers an overview of adaptations of the Icarus myth aimed at child readers in People's Poland, published either within the official education system, in children's magazines reinforcing the school curriculum, or in stand-alone illustrated storybooks. These adaptations, interpretations and retellings, both written before and after WW2, while presenting the same mythical tale of the first aviators, employ specific narrative and adaptation strategies to adjust the myth to the age of the audience and to the values promoted by the authors. In the case of pre-war writers, their interpretation had to be adjusted to meet the requirements of communist censorship, with which the post-war writers were necessarily in agreement.

Keywords: myth of Daedalus and Icarus; mythology in education; textbooks; magazines for children in People's Poland; Tadeusz Zieliński; Jan Parandowski; Jadwiga Żylińska; Marian Grześczak; Irena Parandowska; Anna Maria Komornicka.

This article examines the adaptations of the myth of Icarus for children in People's Poland (Polish People's Republic, PRL), as presented in primary school textbooks and children's periodicals *Plomyczek* [Tiny Flame] and *Plomyk* [Little Flame].¹ It demonstrates that these short texts were thoroughly prepared and far from being neutral. The Greek myth was adapted at several

*The article presents the result of research conducted within the project "Classical Antiquity in Periodicals for Children and Young Adults in Polish People's Republic (PRL) – Classical Education, Promotion of Political Ideology, or Expression of Resistance? Changes in the Reception of Classics in the PRL from 1945 to 1989", funded by the National Science Centre (NCN) prelude grant no 2022/45/N/HS2/00549.

¹I am sincerely grateful to the organizers of the conference "Od Hezjoda do Parandowskiego: transmisja mitu i mitografia w kulturze Europy. W 100. rocznicę wydania *Mitologii* J. Parandowskiego [From Hesiod to Parandowski: myth transmission and mythography in European culture. On the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Mythology* by J. Parandowski (Białystok, 28th–29th November 2024)]." Valuable comments made by the conference participants allowed me to re-think and develop the first version of the text.

levels and presented in different ways, since it was included in school curricula at multiple stages of education. Furthermore, the myth was disseminated through periodicals and booklets intended for children so that they know the story from an early age. Using this myth about flying, which expresses a human longing for the unreachable sky and is particularly appealing and inspirational to children who dream of flying one day, facilitates the promotion of relevant content. Notwithstanding, or perhaps even because of, the censorship at the time, certain adaptations devised a mythical code that enabled them to make allusions to the political situation in People's Poland by means of what is termed Aesopian language.

EMBRACING ANTIQUITY IN PEOPLE'S POLAND

The communist regime did not regard Greek and Roman antiquity as an unnecessary, useless or undesirable heritage. At the beginning of their Communist Manifesto (1848), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, both classically educated, suggested that class struggle was the driving force of world history and in doing so mentioned the ancient Roman classes of patricians, knights, plebeians and slaves.² It was no coincidence that references to the ancient world appeared in many Marxist texts. Greek and Roman antiquity provided Marxist ideology with splendid examples of heroes, who were used as embodiments of the proletarian struggles against the imperialists, such as the mythical Prometheus, who favoured man over the gods or Heracles, who struggled against monsters which could be seen as symbols of social evils, e.g., the hydra(s) of capitalism, imperialism, colonialism etc.³ Furthermore, historical figures were selected for their propaganda value, for instance, the Gracchi Brothers,⁴ Marcus Iunius Brutus and Spartacus,⁵ all of whom could serve as role models engaged in the class struggle on the side of workers, meaning the people. Among them, Spartacus emerged as the most influential

²Marks and Engels 1977 [1848], 36.

³On using characters of Prometheus and Heracles in Soviet animation for children, see But 2022, 533–553; Paulouskaya 2017, 287–312.

⁴E.g., a school reading by Anna Kowalska and Jerzy Kowalski, “Matka Grakchów” in Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c, 136–141.

⁵In People's Poland, the novel by Halina Rudnicka *Uczniowie Spartakusa* [The Disciples of Spartacus], 1951, awarded the Polish National Award (2nd Rank), was very popular. For many years, the book was compulsory reading for 5th-grade pupils and was reprinted since its first edition (Nasza Księgarnia) 32 more times, including 16 times after People's Poland. In the Stalinist era, stories with/about Spartacus were provided in textbooks Lausz, Staszewski and Ferencowa 1949: 184, 189; Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954: 209. On appropriating Spartacus for the masses in the Soviet Union and Soviet-dependant states see, e.g., Rudenko 2020: 333–56, Rudenko 2022: 69–99. On utilising Spartacus in the GDR, see Kümmerling-Meibauer 2025 (forthcoming).

and appealing ancient hero for the masses, cherished, praised and followed in public discourse in the USSR and the countries under Soviet domination. Marx (Marx 1861) called him “most splendid fellow in the whole of ancient history. Great general (...), noble character, real representative of the ancient proletariat”⁶ and Lenin mentioned him as revolutionary who initiated the war “against the yoke of capitalism” “in the defence of the suppressed class”.⁷ Given that the *Manifesto* and Lenin’s works were regarded by the communists as a new, secular *Bible*, ancient myths and history could not be discarded by the regime. Not only was Antiquity not rejected but it was used (and misused) to promote and propagate new values.

Following the establishment of communist rule in post-war Poland, the authorities assumed control of the educational sector to influence young minds with a new ideology. The pre-war school system was to be reconstructed, or rather created in the spirit of reflecting political, ideological and social changes,⁸ presenting socialist civic role models in children’s and young adults’ education. The new regime no longer needed Roman role models of patriotism significant in the pre-war period, such as Mucius Scaevola or Horatius Cocles, known to well-educated people who had studied Latin and Greek in classical gymnasia; instead, it favoured proletarian heroes who could embody the idea of class struggle and international communism. The textbook readings, with their introductory and framing messages used as a tool to guide the readers’ understanding, soon depicted a range of figures, including political leaders,⁹ heroes of the communist

⁶Marx’s letter to Engels of 27th February 1861: “As a relaxation in the evenings I have been reading Appian on the Roman Civil Wars, in the original Greek text. A very valuable book. The chap is an Egyptian by birth. [Friedrich Christoph, 18 vols *Weltgeschichte für das deutsche Volk*, 1844–57] Schlosser says he has “no soul,” probably because he goes to the roots of the material basis for these civil wars. Spartacus is revealed as the most splendid fellow in the whole of ancient history. Great general (no Garibaldi), noble character, real representative of the ancient proletariat.”

⁷In a 1918 meeting in Moscow at the Polytechnic Museum, see Rudenko 2022: 74.

⁸For further information about reconstruction, see Wyspiański 1945, Potyrała 1991. A detailed account of the programme discussions can be found in Ogólnopolski Zjazd Oświatowy w Łodzi. 18–22 czerwca 1945 r. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1945.

⁹Especially Lenin, Stalin, Bierut, e.g., [according to Paustowski], “Lenin i Fajreddin” in Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1953, 192; M. Kwiatkowski, “Lenin w Mansfeld” in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 123; A. Uljanowa, „Szkolne lata Lenina” in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 243; Maria Kasprończowa, “Spotkanie z Leninem” in Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1963b, 160, Aleksandrak, Przyrowski and Wójcik 1976, 130; Jan Czerski, “Góralskie opowieści o Leninie” in Cackowska, Kaznowska and Wąsakowa 1975, 98; Helena Bobińska, “Dziecięce lata Stalina” in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 246; Władysław Broniewski, “Słowo o Stalinie” in Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1950, 249 and 1956, 181; R. S., “Stalin w Krakowie” in Dembowska and Rudnicka 1950, 119, Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1954, 128; Halina Rudnicka, “Pięć groszy (opowiadanie z dzieciństwa B. Bieruta)” in Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1953, 205.

movement,¹⁰ work leaders,¹¹ and ordinary people,¹² united in their efforts to rebuild Poland and create a better, socialist future. The accompanying comments played a significant role in elucidating the stories and ensure comprehension according to specific requirements.¹³ The press, which was under state control, was expected to support and complement school curricula.¹⁴ The accessibility of this medium, combined with its extensive availability and affordability, often led to its utilisation in the classroom. Each publishing house was subject to rigorous oversight to ensure that readers were not exposed to material that might be deemed to stand in opposition to the ideological tenets of the regime. It was not unusual for an author included in school selections of readings to be the author of texts in children's periodicals, or even to work as the editor-in-chief, ensuring quality of education. Stanisław Aleksandrak, who authored and co-authored

¹⁰ E.g., Wilhelm Liebknecht, "Karol Marks i dzieci" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a, 162; Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 231; Wilhelm Liebknecht, "Ze wspomnień o Marksie" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949b, 113; Wilhelm Liebknecht, "Marks przy pracy" in Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1950, 200; Władysław Broniewski, "Elegia o śmierci Ludwika Waryńskiego" in Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1948, 190, Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949, 206, Pauszer-Klonowska 1949b, 234, Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1950, 211 and 1956, 168, Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1958, 127, Kubski and Kubski 1960, 164 and 1963, 115, Sufinowa 1984, 69; A. Próchnik, "Ludwik Waryński" in Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1951, 241; Z. Marchlewska, "Moja lalka (ze wspomnień córki J. Marchlewskiego)" in Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1953, 203; Jerzy German, "O Feliksie Dzierżyńskim" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949b, 254; Halina Rudnicka, "W mieszkaniu zegarmistrza (opowiadanie o F. Dzierżyńskim)" in Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1953, 198; Janina Broniewska, "Młodość Karola Świerczewskiego" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a, 174, Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 256 and 1955, 183; Władysław Broniewski, "Opowieść o życiu i śmierci Karola Walter-Świerczewskiego, robotnika i generała" in Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949, 237, Dembowska, Saloni and Wierzbicki, 1966, 83; Helena Balicka-Kozłowska, "Wspomnienie o Hance Sawickiej" in Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1957, 220 and 1958, 214 and 1963a, 204; [based on K. Kosińska], "Małgorzata Fornalska" in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 261 and 1955, 188.

¹¹ E.g., Czesław Zieliński, "Ze wspomnień przodownika pracy" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a, 88; M. Terpilak, "Przodownica łódzka" in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 48.

¹² E.g., Janina Broniewska, "Skład stryj Szczepan znał Pana Prezydenta" in Broniewska 1949, 105; K. Staszewski, "W Centrali Mleczarsko-Jajczarskiej" in Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949, 280; Mieczysław Ziemiński, "Górnik Mieczysław Janus" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a, 205; Tadeusz Kubiak, "Ballada o palaczu kolejowym, który czytał Marksa" in Pauszer-Klonowska 1949b, 111; J. Musiałkowski, "Jak murarz Poręcki odnalazł swą kielnię" in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954; Karol Lausz, "Socjalistyczny wyścig pracy" in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954, 59 and 1955, 47.

¹³ On imposing specific ideological contents in order to indoctrinate children, see, e.g. Bober 2011, Mrozek 2019, Kosiński 2000, Brodala 2021.

¹⁴ On using the press and periodicals in supporting education, see, e.g., Groniowska 1946, Bańkowska 1963, Aleksandrak 1964a, Aleksandrak 1964b, Aleksandrak 1965, Papuzińska 1972, Frycie 1977, Aleksandrak 1979, Frycie 1982, 174–211, Rogoż 2009, Niesporek-Szamburska and Rogoż 2013.

numerous textbooks and served as editor-in-chief of *Iskierki* (1945–1950) and *Płomyczek* (1947–1985), wrote the following (Aleksandrzak 1965: 21–22):

All children's magazines published in socialist countries serve the cause of educating the child in the spirit of noble, progressive ideals, correlated subtly with the tasks of the school and children's organisations. (...) [A] good children's magazine, (...) without duplicating the textbook, is connected with school work and should offer great opportunities for updating, deepening and widening the work of education and teaching.¹⁵

Aleksandrzak's objective was to position children's periodicals as an ally and supporter of the teacher and he ensured that this principle was implemented in the periodical he published.

DAEDALUS (AND ICARUS) IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

As the entire educational system was strictly controlled, mythological and historical content was subjected to the same rules.¹⁶ Which then of Greek and Roman myths and legends were deemed suitable for inclusion in the new curriculum? Which were selected and approved for teaching to Polish children in primary schools soon after the war, and how were they taught? It is important to note that the integration of mythological content into the curriculum did not occur immediately following the war, when the communists took power. The first post-war textbook for the 5th grade (children approximately 11 years old) published in 1946 by the state publisher PZWS, entitled *O świcie*¹⁷ [At Dawn], did not include any content related to Classical antiquity in its initial six printings. Neither did the textbook *W naszym kraju*¹⁸ [In Our Land] for the 5th grade, published in 1947 by another publisher, Gebethner and Wolff. However, in 1949 in the seventh edition of *O świcie*,¹⁹ the ancient world appeared among school readings with several mythical characters, such as Prometheus,²⁰ Heracles,²¹ Daedalus and Icarus,²² and King Midas²³ placed in part IV. *Wieść gminna* [Common Tale], as well as Spartacus²⁴ in the next part V. *O wolność i sprawiedliwość* [For Freedom and Justice]. The same mythical characters, namely King Midas, Daedalus and

¹⁵ Transl. M.P.

¹⁶ For more see, e.g. Ryba 2021a, Marciniak and Strycharczyk 2021.

¹⁷ Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1946.

¹⁸ Zarembowie 1947.

¹⁹ Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949.

²⁰ "Mit o Prometeuszu", p. 153.

²¹ "Mit o Heraklesie", p. 157, and "Najdziwniejsza przygoda Heraklesa", p. 163.

²² "Dedal i Ikar", p. 167.

²³ "O królu Midasie", p. 170.

²⁴ "Spartakus", p. 184, "Spartakus", p. 189.

Icarus, as well as Prometheus, were selected for inclusion in a new textbook for the 5th grade, entitled *Dzień dzisiejszy*²⁵ [The Present Day], published by Nasza Księgarnia in 1949. The simultaneous appearance of mythological content in both textbooks was, of course, no coincidence; this content simply matched the prevailing curriculum for the 5th grade. In 1948, the first reform of education was implemented,²⁶ resulting in changes to the structure of the schooling system and its curricula. The decision to make mythology the subject taught in Polish classes in the 5th grade of primary school²⁷ was maintained until the end of People's Poland, although the authors of the included texts did not remain the same during this whole period. Despite the diversity of interpretation and adaptation, all school textbooks and selected readings were required to obtain the approval of the Minister of Education before being used in the classroom.

In *O świecie*, four “ancient” stories were written specially for the textbook by Karol Lausz,²⁸ while the myth of King Midas was presented according to Nathaniel Hawthorne (misspelled as Hawdhorne²⁹). The myth of Daedalus and Icarus was adapted by Wanda Markowska and Anna Milska. It is likely that the adaptation was Markowska's work, as it bears a strong resemblance to the version published in Markowska's 1953 *Greek myths*. Markowska eventually gained recognition for her contributions to the field of mythology for young readers.³⁰ In collaboration with Anna Milska, she also collected, translated and adapted lore and tales from various lands and diverse cultural backgrounds.³¹

Classically educated, Markowska adapted the myth according to the fairy-tale convention, treating it as if it were a legend. Basing her text loosely on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (VIII 183–235), she provided in brackets a sub-title “a Greek legend.” The myth starts with the phrase “once upon a time...”, introducing a sculptor, and master builder, named Daedalus, who once lived on Crete as an exile, and despite his fame, was unhappy there because he was not allowed

²⁵ Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a.

²⁶ *Instrukcja programowa na rok szkolny 1948/49*, Archiwum Akt Nowych, section Ministerstwo Oświaty, Departament Reformy Szkolnictwa i Wychowania, reference no. 2/283/0/4266. For more, see Ryba 2021b.

²⁷ An exception was first print of the textbook for 7th grade *Jednością silni* by Pauszer-Klonowska from 1948, where excerpts from Parandowski's *Mythology* on Prometheus and on the Argonauts were published. From the second print of this textbook mythical contents were removed and appeared in the textbook for 5th grade.

²⁸ Namely: “Mit o Prometeuszu”, “Mit o Heraklesie”, „Najdziwniejsza przygoda Heraklesa”, and “Spartakus”.

²⁹ The same misspelling Hawdhorne was present in Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954.

³⁰ *Mity greckie: w opracowaniu dla młodzieży* (1949), *Mity greckie* (1953), *Mity Greków i Rzymian* (1968).

³¹ E.g., *Baśnie z całego świata* (1946), *Baśnie narodów Związku Radzieckiego* (1950), *Księga papugi. Baśnie perskie* (1951), *Pańczatantra, czyli Mądrości Indii ksiąg pięcioro* (1956), *Baśnie księżycowe* (1972), *Za siedmioma morzami, za siedmioma wyspami* (1973), *Prządki złota. Na podstawie ludowych wątków estońskich* (1981).

to return to his homeland (cf. Ov. *Met.* VIII 183–185). No reason is given for the exile, the Minotaur and the Labyrinth are absent from the narrative, exactly matching Ovid's fragment. The emphasis is on Daedalus and the process of the construction of wings in his workshop, seen not as a discovery or revelation of the natural order and scheme, but rather as a masterful victory over nature in solving and appropriating the mystery of flight.³² His achievement makes the constructor proud and self-assured and, as a result, he feels equal to the gods. Ovidian inspiration resonates throughout the text, it is easy to recognise Daedalus' comment *omnia possideat, non possidet aera Minos* (Ov. *Met.* VIII 185–187), Icarus who *quas vaga moverat aura, captabat plumas, flavam modo pollice ceram molliabat* (Ov. *Met.* VIII 197–199), Daedalus' rehearsal (Ov. *Met.* VIII 200–202), the flight above the islands of Samos, Delos and Paros (Ov. *Met.* VIII 221), and a scene of a fisherman witnessing it in awe (Ov. *Met.* VIII 217). It is evident that Icarus is the secondary protagonist. The story concludes without the motif of Perdix presented in the *Metamorphoses*:

Daedalus invidit sacraque ex arce Minervae
praecipitem misit, lapsum mentitus;³³

The reason for removing the motif is evident: the protagonist, Daedalus, is a role model, and as such cannot be blamed for spilling his family blood, particularly when the victim is a young boy, potentially of the same age as the reader from grade 5. It should be noted that Markowska is not the first and nor will she be the last author to remove Talos/Perdix subplot from Daedalus' myth. This narrative approach in retellings of mythology intended for Polish children has been employed previously (Zipper 1886, 149, Zipper 1897, 112, Parandowski 1927 and later), typically for moral reasons, despite the fact that Daedalus had also been presented to Polish readers as being guilty of Talos/Perdix' death (Parandowski 1924, 144, Zieliński 1930, 277–278, Kingsley 1935, 181–182, Zieliński 1936, 48–49). In post-war adaptations, particularly prior to the October 1956 Thaw, Daedalus was predominantly depicted as an engineer. An example of this post-war perspective on Daedalus can be observed in 1946, in the bi-weekly *Teka szkolna* [School Satchel].³⁴ A translation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (VIII 183–235) accompanied a text about a flight over the Atlantic Ocean, written by Stanisław Skarżyński, a pilot who executed this

³² Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949, 162.

³³ Ov. *Met.* VIII 250–251: Daedalus envied the lad and thrust him down headlong from the sacred citadel of Minerva, with a lying tale that the boy had fallen. (Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, Volume I: Books 1–8. Translated by Frank Justus Miller. Revised by G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 42. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916, 422–423).

³⁴ Ovid, trans. Bruno Kiciński. 1946. "Dedal i Ikar." *Teka szkolna. Czasopismo dla VII klasy szkoły powszechnej* 3–5 (1946): 7–8.

flight in 1933 on board a small aeroplane. Daedalus, the first flyer is matched with another flyer, thus confirming a strong bond between his character and modern technologies. He can be regarded as a pioneering figure in the history of aviation and in 20th-century technological thought, with this association proving to be very strong. In later periodicals aimed at children and teens, the title or text of the publication would only mention Daedalus, as a term synonymous with the master inventor, brilliant constructor, designer, and artist, without referencing his son.³⁵

In another textbook from 1949, the previously mentioned *Dzień dzisiejszy*, the myth was adapted anonymously, although another edition (Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954) reveals that it was the author of the textbook, Gabriela Pauszer-Klonowska, who wrote the story. It is also loosely based on Ovid, with the same Ovidian motifs, but with some additional elements that Markowska did not include in her version of the story, such as information on the Labyrinth (Ov. *Met.* VIII 159–161), or calling of Icarus name by the worried father (Ov. *Met.* VIII 231–233). Pauszer-Klonowska also adds another ending. While Markowska ends the narrative with Icarus' death and the description of golden feathers floating on the waves, Pauszer-Klonowska satisfies the reader's curiosity and answers the question of what happened next. In contrast to Ovid, who explicitly describes Daedalus burying his son (Ov. *Met.* VIII 234–236), the Polish author follows Apollodorus (Apollod. *Bibl.* II 6.3) while describing how Heracles found Icarus' body washed ashore and buried it; she adds a happy ending with Daedalus eventually returning to Athens. In sum, the story is similarly shortened, modified, with some elements glossed over or removed.

As the ancient sources of the myth recount a plethora of misfortunes and horrors, such as envy, manslaughter, escape, a hybrid monster born to a queen as a punishment for the king's hubris, imprisonment, a tragic death of a young boy, grief and mourning, it is imperative to explain, omit or modify some of these difficult themes to adjust the story to the age of young readers and present Daedalus as a positive character. So why was the myth of Daedalus chosen – he who was the uncle who spilt blood of his nephew, and fled from Athens to avoid a criminal trial for murder? Why was the myth of Daedalus and Icarus included in *O świecie* alongside Spartacus, Prometheus and Heracles, favourite heroes of Marxists, and with the addition of King Midas, for whom riches were essential, i.e., an archetype of a class enemy?³⁶ As Janusz Ryba (2021, 220–

³⁵ E. g., “Dedal z pedałem”, *Dookoła świata* 28 (654) 1966 – anonymous article about a bicycle-powered aircraft; Górzewski, Andrzej, “Śladami Dedala”, *Plomyk* 15–16 1976 – an article on hang gliding; Łopuszyński, Jacek, “Następcy Dedala”, *Świat młodych* 23 1976 – a report from the hang-gliding competition; Weinfeld, Stefan, “Śladami Dedala”, *Plomyk* 4 1979 – an article on aviation, praise of Aeroflot, and forecasts in passenger flights.

³⁶ In exercises appearing under the text in the form of nine questions regarding the King Midas myth it is explicitly said that “a characteristic trait of the rich was already highlighted in this

221) observes in his study of Latin stories in school textbooks, the selection of mythological content was not random, and the texts were adapted in order not to arouse ideological reservations. In the Latin textbook by Stanisław Skimina,³⁷ published in 1949:

[t]he text “De Daedalo et Icaro” reflected the ideological assumptions of the new school. The mythical Daedalus was presented, above all, as a brilliant craftsman, diligent designer and builder. One of the aims of the new regime was to develop technical education and raise young people within the cult of work. The myth of Daedalus fitted precisely into this narrative, telling the story of a man who, thanks to his practical skills and work, could liberate himself and his son from captivity, and at the same time achieve what had previously not been possible for any man – to rise up in the skies. The messages of education were endorsed by the story: since man, through his work and skill, can achieve anything, the task of schools should be to shape, above all, practical skills, useful in the contemporary world, through which a plan for the development of civilization and the economic state of the country could be implemented.³⁸

Highlighting Daedalus’ skills and his almost obsessive dedication to work and technical solutions is a fundamental aspect of the interpretation in *O świecie*, which is evident even in the length of text devoted to the subject. The initial part, describing Daedalus, is more extensive, while the next part, which introduces Icarus, is considerably briefer. The boy is not an autonomous protagonist but rather a complement to his father. Similarly, in *Dzień dzisiejszy*, Daedalus assumes the primary role in the narrative, while Icarus plays a marginal one. During the Three-Year Plan and the later Six-Year Plan, the skilled hardworking craftsman, builder, inventor, designer and engineer became a mythical role model contributing to society and benefiting industry.

In 1955, the fifth edition of *Dzień dzisiejszy* underwent a series of alterations. The number of stories was reduced from 120 to 76, and the Greek myths were among the eliminated contents. In the new textbooks for the 5th grade (Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957a, Kubski and Zieliński 1958a), mythical content was also absent. The situation changed only in 1963, when the myth became part of the new 5th-grade curriculum and new textbooks (Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1963b). From this moment on and until the end of People’s Poland, Jan Parandowski’s interpretation known from his *Mythology* remained the only one present in these textbooks (Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1963b, Nagajowa and Świerczyńska 1969, Aleksandrak, Przyrowski and Wójcik 1976, Nagajowa 1982). It is interesting to note that from 1963 to 1982, the story of Daedalus and Icarus was the only Greek myth included in Polish language

ancient myth by the ancients” (charakterystyczna cecha bogaczy została już w tym pradawnym micie uwydatniona przez starożytnych), p. 177.

³⁷ Skimina 1949.

³⁸ Ryba 2021, 220–221.

textbooks for the 5th grade. The change came with the last PRL textbook (Nagajowa 1982), which promoted the ancient world and demonstrated the richness of mythological references. It contained a total of 13 stories concerning Greek and Roman antiquity, including fragments of the *Odyssey* translated by Parandowski, poems, commentaries, and a variety of exercises.

Although Parandowski's *Mythology* (1924), republished three times before WW2, remains the most significant and popular mythology in Poland, it was not included in the 5th-grade curriculum in the first post-WW2 years. The authors of textbooks initially opted for new texts written after the change of the regime.³⁹ And yet, in 1950, Parandowski's *Mythology* was issued again (by Czytelnik) and its popularity continued to grow; it soon became compulsory reading for various types of schools, whether in its entirety or as a selection, depending on the year and the curriculum. In 1957, fragments of Parandowski's Olympic novel *Dysk olimpijski* [The Olympic Discus] dating from 1933 were included in the curriculum for the 8th grade (Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c, Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958), along with summaries and fragments of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as other texts set against an ancient background. Moreover, his elegant yet simple style and sophisticated yet comprehensible language led to the incorporation of additional non-mythological readings into textbooks at various levels of education.⁴⁰

It is obvious that *Mythology* and the fragments from it used in school, including Parandowski's adaptation of the myth of Daedalus and Icarus, were subjected to a censorship procedure prior to their publication by the state-run publishing houses, either as reprints and as educational materials for primary schools. From the moment they were authorized by the authorities, the myths in Parandowski's interpretation became the most popular choice for publication and for readers until the end of People's Poland (and beyond). Curiously, even though Aleksandrzak (1965: 21–22) did not advise “duplicating the textbook” by publishing the same texts in periodicals for children, Parandowski's school readings were printed in *Plomyk* and *Plomyczek* in order to reinforce the content

³⁹ An exception was made for myths of Prometheus and of the Argonauts in Pauszer-Klonowska 1948.

⁴⁰ E.g., “Praca archeologa” in Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c, 53–55, Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958, 101–103; “W kamieniołomach” in Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c, 155–161, Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958, 230–236; “Z dworu Zygmunta Augusta” in Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c, 178–187, Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958, 272–278; “Liść wawrzynu” in Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958, 173–178; “Grzegorz” in Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1958, 170–174; “Fonograf” in Dembowska, Saloni and Wierzbicki 1966, 173–177; fragments of *Alchemia słowa* in Kopczewski 1966, 303–306, Kopczewski 1976, 335–338, Nagajowa 1987, 108–109; “Mały Kopernik” in Nagajowa and Świerczyńska 1969, 310–313, Nagajowa 1976, 339–343, Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957b, 170–175, Kubski and Ziełński 1958b, 156–163, Kubski 1962, 137–143; “Róża i pióro” in Nagajowa 1976, 83–86.

known from school, and to highlight its popularity.⁴¹ The same situation also applied to excerpts from *Mythology*.⁴²

DAEDALUS AND ICARUS BEYOND SCHOOL CURRICULA

Prior to the beginning of the 1963/64 school year, when the new obligatory textbook by Aleksandrzak and Przyrowski included the story of “Daedalus and Icarus” by Parandowski, the same myth had been published in *Plomyczek*, a widely read bi-weekly magazine targeting children aged nine to eleven. In one of the August 1963 issues, a parachute jumper against the background of the sky appeared on the front cover, suggesting aviation and aerospace as the leading theme.⁴³ In the magazine, the myth of Daedalus and Icarus was illustrated by two characteristic black-and-white ink drawings by Mieczysław Kościelniak. The first illustration at the beginning of the story presented the Minotaur, the second, placed at the end, featured Icarus about to fall down, observed by his distraught and powerless father. No information was provided about the text originating in Parandowski’s *Mythology*. However, a close reading reveals a strong similarity to the version published in the 1927 edition (Parandowski 1927, 152–155), reprinted since then. 5th-grade students found the same version in their textbooks when classes resumed in September. Slight changes were made to adjust a part of a chapter to the rules of a stand-alone tale, but the fundamental structure remained unaltered. In total, the incipit was shortened, and three sentences, loosely connected with the narrative, were removed.

Parandowski presented the myth in a fairy-tale convention adjusted to the age of the reader. The text starts with the following paragraph:

Minos ruled on Crete. He was a prudent king who knew how to extend his power without conquests, only by skilful coexistence with other countries, from where he drew his profits by extensive trade. He had a large fleet and was a true ruler of the seas. However, there was no happiness at home. His wife, Pasiphaë, gave birth to a child who was shaped like a bull and a man. This hideous son grew into a menacing monster and was named the Minotaur. The king, fearing that the bogy might harm his subjects, decided to lock him in a safe place.⁴⁴

⁴¹ E.g. Jan Parandowski “W dawnej szkole”, *Plomyczek* 2 (1956) matching the school reading “Grzegorz” from Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1958, “Róża i pióro”, *Plomyczek* 10 (1961), “Fonograf”, *Plomyczek* 24 (1984).

⁴² “Herakles”, *Plomyczek* 10 (1957): 294–297, “Dedal i Ikar”, *Plomyczek* 42 (16): 422–423.

⁴³ *Plomyczek* 42 (16), 16–31. VIII. 1963.

⁴⁴ “Minos panował na Krecie. Był to rozumny król, który swoją potęgę umiał rozszerzyć bez podbojów, jedynie przez umiejętne współzycie z innymi krajami, skąd ciągnął zyski rozległym handlem. Miał wielką flotę i był prawdziwym władcą mórz. Nie było jednak szczęścia w domu. Jego żona, Pazyfae, urodziła dziecko, które miało kształt byka i człowieka. Ten syn szkaradny wyrósł na groźnego potwora i nazwano go Minotaurem. Król, obawiając się, aby straszidło nie szkodziło jego poddanym, postanowił je zamknąć w jakimś bezpiecznym miejsku.” (transl. M.P.)

To avoid the motif of Pasiphaë having been cursed by Poseidon with an unnatural passion for a bull as a punishment for Minos' hubris and impiety, which was seen as morally inappropriate for children, the story says nothing specific about the Minotaur's father and the circumstances of his birth. Minos is portrayed as a good king, who despite qualities such as pacifism, enterprising skills and concern for his subjects, simply had bad luck. It is within this context of ensuring the safety of others that the architect hired to build a secure prison for the Minotaur is introduced. The reason given here for Daedalus' arrival in Crete varies from the one in the original version of *Mythology* (Parandowski 1924, 144) but is the same as in later versions (Parandowski 1927 and later). The story of Perdix' death, the reason why Daedalus had to leave Athens, is not mentioned. Minos invites Daedalus to Crete, as he believes the famous constructor can rise to the challenge of building the Labyrinth. Later, Minos likes him so much that he wishes to keep Daedalus for himself on Crete. The building of the wooden cow for the queen (cf. Zen. 4. 92) or Theseus' escape (cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 1. 12) are not part of the explanation given for Daedalus' detention. It is the king's wish to keep him. Out of his profound longing for Athens, Daedalus constructs wings to escape Crete by flying with his son, whom he instructs to fly *medio limite*, not too close to the sea and not too close to the sun. When the aviators are seen in the sky, the Ovidian motif emerges: a fisherman, a shepherd and a ploughman (cf. Ov. *Met.* VIII 217–220), who, raising his eyes to the sky in utmost awe, *credidit esse deos* [thought they were gods]. Parandowski, however, modifies the fragment about the gods into:

People were astounded to see the wizard who had snatched the secret of flight from the birds and conquered the air, hitherto inaccessible to the inhabitants of the Earth.⁴⁵

The next segment of the reading matches *Metamorphoses*, respecting the itinerary (Samos, Paros, Delos), Icarus' joy of flight, his downfall and the burial of "the unfortunate remains".⁴⁶ Parandowski concludes Daedalus' story in Sicily, where the artist erects more extraordinary constructions and lives respected to the end of his days. It is not a conventional happy ending, but still somehow a positive one. What is more, in the end, Minos dies during a later war (and not murdered in a boiling hot bath by the daughters of Cocalus, the King of Sicily, who were trying to prevent him from imprisoning Daedalus again),⁴⁷ which was a way of presenting him as a just ruler and not a wicked and cruel man.

The adaptation of the Daedalus myth could be considered quite convenient for the official requirements. The text is both elegant and polite, and it also contains

⁴⁵ "Zdumienie ogarniało ludzi na widok czarodzieja, który ptakom wydarł tajemnicę lotu i pokonał powietrze, dotychczas niedostępne dla mieszkańców ziemi." (transl. M.P.)

⁴⁶ Trans. Brookes More 1922.

⁴⁷ For how Minos pursued Daedalus and how he died in Sicily, see Apollod. *Epit.* 1.14–15.

elements that were highlighted in the first post-war textbooks: Daedalus' technical skills and his love of work. The fragments regarding Daedalus' mind, talent and passion for work resonate well with late-1940s school readings, particularly with Markowska's interpretation, which incorporates the same motif of a human "snatching the mysteries of nature". The resemblance is unlikely to be a mere coincidence, as Markowska, a graduate in Classical and Polish philology, was undoubtedly acquainted with Parandowski's *Mythology*, and certain inspirations by Parandowski's work are evident in her own mythological texts.

With *Mythology*'s subsequent editions, and especially from 1963 when the myth was incorporated for good into the 5th-grade curriculum, Parandowski's interpretation emerged as the most prominent and the most frequently read by school children, yet this interpretation was not the only option available to young readers. Markowska's books were still in print and in 1957 *Starożytność bajeczna* [Fabulous Antiquity] by late professor Tadeusz Zieliński was re-published with Parandowski's preface. Also, Parandowski's wife, Irena, a great admirer of her husband works, decided to bring Greek mythical stories closer to children in her own book *Ze świata mitów* [From the World of Myths], which included a chapter "Daedalus and Talos" (Parandowska 1967, 12–20). The 1970s adaptations are also worth mentioning, for instance, *Mistrz Dedal* [Master Daedalus] (Żylińska 1973), the Icarus-themed *Płomyk* from 1974, or a book about the human dream of flying by Maria Kann (1975), including, of course, the Greek flyers' myth. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, adaptations by Marian Grześczak (1979, 120–122; 1981) and a new one by Irena Parandowska (1981, 307) were published. The latter shifted the myth's centre of gravity, changing its perspective and emphasising aspects that allowed them to refer to the present day through allusions and Aesopian language.

Jadwiga Żylińska, the first Polish author of "herstory" in mythological writing before the term was coined and years before it became popular, published mythical stories in a series of five small booklets aimed at the child reader (Sucharski 2016, 122–123).⁴⁸ The first of these, *Mistrz Dedal* [Master Daedalus], presented Daedalus' life story from his childhood in Athens, adulthood in Athens and Crete, stay at King Cocalus' court on Sicily and, finally, his journey to Sardinia. As the booklet is aimed at children, a child's point of view is present with the device of introducing children as protagonists: Daedalus, Ariadne, Phaedra, Androgeos, Deucalion, Glaucus, Icarus, and the daughters of King Cocalus, all of whom are of an age similar to the reader. However, children familiar with the popular versions of the myth thanks to mythologies by Parandowski and Markowska, may have been shocked not so

⁴⁸ Namely, *Mistrz Dedal* (1973), *Opowieść o Heraklesie* (1973), *Tezeusz i Ariadna* (1973), *Młodość Achillesa* (1974), and *Wypława po złote runo* (1976), illustrated by Bohdan Wróblewski (Master Daedalus) and Janusz Towpik.

much by the fact that Daedalus was once a child, but rather by new facts from his life and how they were interpreted. Żylińska confronts the reader with controversial events from Daedalus' life, such as the manslaughter of Talos and indirect responsibility for the death of Androgeos, son of Minos. What might have been even more shocking at the time of the first edition is how it highlights the role of women in Cretan society. Contrary to the generally accepted versions of mythical stories, she asserts that Pasiphaë was the hereditary ruler of Crete, and that the cult of the Great Goddess was even more important than that of Poseidon. She also names Daedalus' wife, Naucrater⁴⁹, who is rarely present in other adaptations. Additionally, in the course of narrating the myth, Żylińska rationalises some of its mythical elements that are already familiar to children. However, not to lose the coherence of the narrative, she indicates versions known from school as an effect of rumours that escalated and became myth.⁵⁰ Similarly, her reinterpretations of the myths of Heracles, Theseus, Achilles, and the Argonauts reveal that the purpose of her work is to demonstrate that the mythical fabric is still alive and vital and can be reshaped. The author's endeavours to reinterpret Greek mythology as a cohesive whole that does not match the standardised version, and retell it differently from what we know from school, demonstrates the inherent power of myths to be reimagined, reshaped, and reinterpreted, thus maintaining their appeal to new generations. Her approach surprisingly closely mirrors the ancient practice of utilising myths, choosing less-known versions, and seeking alternative subplots that occasionally contradict the prevailing narrative, and recycling them in a new spirit. Noteworthy is the fact that *Mistrz Dedal* is recommended to children in the bi-weekly *Plomyczek* aimed at the same target group (9–11-year-olds).⁵¹

A year later, on March 10, the bi-weekly *Plomyczek*, initially intended “for students of 5th to 7th grades” and later for “older children” or “youngsters” between the ages of 12 and 15, released the issue concerning the myth of Daedalus and Icarus in three separate texts. In its first post-war years, *Plomyczek* was closely associated with educational programmes intended for the final years of primary school, thereby aligning itself with the mission outlined by Aleksandrak (1965, 21–22). From 1952 onward, it evolved into a kind of literary and social magazine (Niesporek-Szamburska and Rogoż 2013, 241). The leading literary theme in the 5th issue published in 1974 was the *opus*

⁴⁹ Cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 1.12.

⁵⁰ For more, see Ciolek, A. and M. Pszczolińska, “Entry on: Master Daedalus [Mistrz Dedal] by Bohdan Wróblewski, Jadwiga Żylińska”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1354>. Entry version as of February 25, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013.

⁵¹ E. g., “Kącik ciekawej książki.” *Plomyczek* 6 (1974): 192.

of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, who celebrated his 80th birthday that February. Iwaszkiewicz was the author of the short story *Icarus* (1954), which at that time was included as a school reading in the textbook *Ta ziemia od innych droższa* [This land more precious than others] for the 8th grade (Kopczewski 1971), and printed between 1971 and 1982. The story begins with the author's describing the *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* by Pieter Brueghel, in which the fisherman, shepherd and ploughman (known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) fail to notice the death of the boy. Thereafter the author recollects an incident he witnessed in Warsaw under Nazi occupation in 1942 or 1943.⁵² A teenager immersed in reading a book stepped out into the street in front of an oncoming car of Gestapo secret police. He was taken away, yet nobody noticed his fall and disappearance, which linked the myth, the painting, and the war reality of omnipresent death. It is possible to comprehend Iwaszkiewicz's narrative without knowing the myth, as the mythical painting by Brueghel is sufficiently explicit. Nonetheless, the reader would benefit from being familiar with the myth itself in order to understand and analyse allusions and cross-references in this text and others featured in primary school curricula. To facilitate understanding of this school reading and to deepen the context behind the story, the editors of the issue prepared three associated texts. The first text, printed on the inside cover as an editorial, was entitled "Autor *Ikara*". It was written by (jsk), i.e., Jan Stanisław Kopczewski, the editor-in-chief and at the same time the author of the current textbook for the 8th grade. Kopczewski focused on commemorating Iwaszkiewicz's 80th anniversary and explained:

We would like the readers of 'Płomyk' (especially eighth-grade students, who by reading the story 'Icarus' included in the programme make their first acquaintance with an excellent writer) to get to know the author, whose works will probably provide them with many more profound experiences in the future.

Literature helps you learn about the world and people. The wisdom and insight of the writer opens up new areas of experience for the reader. It helps to perceive many things that are important and unnoticed, unseen – like Icarus in Brueghel's painting or like his counterpart, the unknown boy in Iwaszkiewicz's short story.⁵³

So the leading motif of the issue is not solely Iwaszkiewicz but also Icarus. The entire narrative was not included in the issue, as it had been already available in textbooks for the 8th grade, but an excerpt describing *Landscape with the*

⁵²For more, see Marciniak 2015, 57–61.

⁵³"Chcielibyśmy, żeby Czytelnicy „Płomyka” (szczególnie ósmoklasiści, którzy czytając objęte programem opowiadanie „Ikar” zawierają pierwszą znajomość ze znakomitym pisarzem) mogli poznać autora, dzieła jego dostarczą im w przyszłości zapewne wielu jeszcze głębszych przeżyć. (...) Literatura pomaga poznawać świat i ludzi. Mądrość i przenikliwe spojrzenie pisarza otwiera przed czytelnikiem nowe obszary doznań. Pomaga dostrzegać wiele spraw ważnych, a nie zauważanych, nie dostrzeganych – jak ów Ikar na obrazie Bruegla lub jak jego odpowiednik, niezany chłopiec w opowiadaniu Iwaszkiewicza.” (transl. M.P.)

Fall of Icarus was published, accompanied by a full-page reproduction of the painting's detail with the drowning boy, and an invitation to peruse the next text – the Greek myth adapted by Tadeusz Zieliński.

The adaptation, published in *Płomyk* 30 years after the author's death, is, in fact, the oldest among those presented in this article, preceding even the publication of Parandowski's *Mythology*. The source of this text is readily identifiable; it is the chapter "Daedalus' Wisdom" from Zieliński's *Сказочная древность* [Fabulous Antiquity], which was first published in three fascicles in Petersburg by the Sabashnikov Brothers in 1922–1923. As the author explained,⁵⁴ it was written in a few years after the Bolshevik Revolution during his enforced inactivity as a professor of classics. As a tireless populariser of antiquity, he conceived and realised the idea of writing mythical stories for the young reader based on tragic works as the first part of a four-volume work on the ancient world. Soon after his arrival in Poland, his dream and intention was to have his mythological stories translated for Polish children, despite the fact that they already had access to Parandowski's *Mythology*. The book was translated by two professionals: the classical philologist, Gabriela Pianko, Zieliński's assistant and long-standing collaborator, and by Julia Dickstein-Wieleżyńska, a writer, poet, literary critic, philosopher, and professional translator from 12 languages. It was published in 1930 by Jakub Mortkowicz Press under the title *Starożytność bajeczna*. This meant that though the book was written earlier than Parandowski's, it appeared in Polish six years later. Zieliński was aware of this situation and praised Parandowski as an excellent author. However, he considered writing a mythology book for children based on ancient tragedies to be a concept unusual enough to merit a place both in Polish and world literature. In People's Poland, *Starożytność bajeczna* was published twice: in 1957 with a preface by Parandowski, and in 1987 with a foreword and edited by Aleksander Krawczuk, a philologist and ancient historian, keen admirer and populariser of antiquity, a bestselling author, and at that time the Minister of Culture and Art.⁵⁵

For many post-war years, Zieliński, despite his indisputable merits in the field of Classics in Poland, was considered inconvenient and the memory of this eminent scholar was met with hostility by the Communist authorities.⁵⁶ And yet, in *Płomyk*, his interpretation of the myth was selected by the editors to accompany Iwaszkiewicz's *Ikar* in order to recall the myth itself. Given that *Płomyk* was aimed at an older readership, the editors might have chosen not to repeat Parandowski's text known to the reader from the fifth-grade curriculum and to include Zieliński's adaptation.

⁵⁴ See his Afterword to the Polish edition from 1930. Consulted at Polona <https://polona.pl/item-view/3ab147d4-bc89-4c29-b46c-3f5b09ea91dc?page=496> (accessed 25th Feb. 2025).

⁵⁵ For more on Tadeusz Zieliński and his work, see, e.g., Zieliński 2005, Olechowska 2011, Zieliński 2012, Marciniak 2015, Olechowska 2016, 225–228.

⁵⁶ For the communist attitude to Zieliński, see Olechowska 2024.

The excerpt from the chapter “Daedalus’ Wisdom” is entitled “Opowieść o ojcu Ikara – mądrym Dedalosie” [The Tale of Icarus’ Father – the Wise Daedalus].⁵⁷ It corresponds to the ‘wisdom’ that Zieliński underlined in the chapter, while also highlighting Daedalus as the primary protagonist. In comparison to the text of the first Polish edition, the changes consist in minor abbreviations aimed at creating a coherent short story based on an extensive chapter, and in updates to the spelling as required by the rules current in 1974. The core of the mythical story is preserved as Zieliński intended. The story retains all the important mythical elements of the 1930 edition, despite the removal of some passages by anonymous censors or editors.⁵⁸ Befitting the title in *Plomyk*, the short story does not end with Icarus’ death, as was the case in school texts from the late 1940s, but covers Daedalus’ life from his early years in Athens to the Sicilian events at the court of King Cocalus. However, it does not start from the conventional “once upon a time there lived Daedalus”, but from introducing Minos who, in contrast to Parandowski’s interpretation, is depicted not as a just but luckless ruler, but as a weak mortal, whose successes and prosperity lead him to excessive pride. The adaptation from *Plomyk* begins:

When the omnipotent Minos, king of Crete, grew so proud that he felt almost equal to the gods ... then Zeus sent him a terrible warning: after several beautiful children, a monstrous boy was born to him, with the body of a man but the head of a bull. The monster grew, became enormous, and of great strength. He despised plant food and preferred human flesh to [animal]

⁵⁷ For more, see Królak, T. and M. Pszczolińska, “Entry on: The Tale of Icarus’ Father – the Wise Daedalus [Opowieść o ojcu Ikara – mądrym Dedalosie] by Tadeusz Zieliński”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1414>. Entry version as of February 25, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013.

⁵⁸ For instance, a closing paragraph, or a fragment about the elimination of deformed children by the government, that might not have carried the same meaning in the Soviet Union in 1922 as it would in 1974 People’s Poland: “After his [the Minotaur’s] coming into the world, the most bizarre rumours spread, which I will not repeat here; the point is clear to us anyway. A bull’s head on a human body, that is the true picture of one who an animal’s self-will made the head of his being. But what was to be done? The government took the monstrous children away from their parents in order to put an immediate end to their miserable existence, if some of them did not die a natural death. There was no power over Minos – he himself could not kill a creature that, after all, was his son. And the monster somehow did not intend to die; on the contrary, it was growing (...)”. (transl. M.P.)

“Po jego przyjściu na świat rozniosły się najdziwaczniejsze plotki, których nie będę tutaj powtarzał; sedno sprawy i tak jest dla nas jasne. Łeb byka na ludzkim ciele, oto prawdziwy obraz tego, kto zwierzęcą samowolę uczynił głową swojej istoty. Ale co było robić? Rząd odbierał rodzicom potworne dzieci, aby niezwłoczną śmiercią położyć kres ich nieszczęsnemu istnieniu, o ile które nie umarło śmiercią naturalną. Nad Minosem władzy nie było – sam nie mógł uśmiercić stworzenia, które bądź co bądź było jego synem. A umierać potwór jakoś wcale nie myślał, przeciwnie rósł, (...)”

meat. The shame of his parents grew with him. They wanted to hide him, if it was the only way so that at least the people would not see this ‘Minotauros’, the ‘bull of Minos’, as the Cretans called the hideous offspring of the king.⁵⁹

Although the issue of Pasiphaë’s lust for the bull is omitted as inappropriate for children, and the Minotaur is born as Minos’ son, this ‘hideous offspring’ serves as a punishment-warning to Minos, whose hubris made him consider himself almost equal to the gods. Zieliński’s narrative has a moralising dimension, a trait that is inherent in fairy tales; the editors of *Plomyk* additionally used the character of Minos as a kind of compositional frame to strengthen the didactic effect. Having removed the passage in which Minos becomes an old embittered grumpy man after the escape of his daughter, the editors reduced the complexity of this character, rendering him one-dimensional. The tale begins with a description of Minos’ excessive pride, and since “pride goes before a fall”, it ends with the fairy-tale retribution for the villain. Minos gets what he deserves: intending to rinse himself after his bath, he reaches for a water jar perfidiously filled by Cocalus’ daughters with freshly boiled water. “He poured a flood of boiling water over his head and fell lifeless to the ground.” A drastic end, but without epic cruelty.

Although Zieliński presents the Minotaur as a monstrous son of Minos, other plots, which are seldom encountered in adaptations for children, adhere to the ancient sources. Zieliński is honest with the reader: the reason for Daedalus’ exile from his native Athens is his nephew’s death. This narrative element was not removed by the editors, perhaps in consideration of the target readership aged between 12 and 15 years, more mature than children reading the myth for the first time at school (10- to 11-year-olds). According to Zieliński, it was not a cold-blooded murder, but more akin to ‘homicide under emotional restraint’, the result of an argument during which Daedalus lost his temper with the disrespectful teenager. In any case, he was still guilty of his nephew’s death, so he had to leave Athens and go to Crete to Minos, who married him to a Cretan woman. An important element of this version is that Zieliński explicitly states how Icarus was born and bred on Crete, to a Cretan mother (cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 1.12) who later died. Thus, when both flyers leave the land and rise into the air, it is not due to a longing for Athens, which equally causes them to dream of a return there, because one of them actually leaves his homeland, the only place

⁵⁹“Kiedy wszechwładny Minos, król Krety, tak dalece wzrósł w pychę, że poczuł się równy niemal bogom ... wtedy Zeus zesłał mu straszne ostrzeżenie: po kilkorgu prześlicznych dzieciach urodził mu się potworny chłopiec o ciele człowieka, ale z łbem byka. Potwór ów rósł, olbrzymiał, siły się stawał potężnej. Gardził strawą roślinną, a nad mięsną przedkładał ludzką. Razem z nim rósł i wstyd jego rodziców. Pragnęliby go ukryć, jeśli już inaczej nie można, aby przynajmniej ludziom nie nawijał się na oczy ten “Minotauros” – “byk Minosa”, jak przezywali Kreteńczycy odrażającą latorośl królewską.” (transl. M.P.)

he has ever known on Earth until that point. Yet Icarus is not a central character in this narrative; his point of view is absent, and it is the tale of Icarus' father, and not of Icarus himself. The short story reveals to the reader that the myth and Daedalus' life do not end with the death of Icarus. School renderings of the myth usually ended exactly at the moment of Icarus' fall or with at most a sentence or two added.

In this version, the reader can gain an understanding of the concept of cenotaphs as empty graves for those who died at sea, providing a haven for their souls on earth. Prior to heading to Sicily, Daedalus prays to Athena and sacrifices the fatal wings to her as a "pious debt". Having fulfilled this act, he can seek a quiet haven for himself to spend the rest of his life.

A REVERSED PERSPECTIVE: ICARUS AND DAEDALUS BEFORE MARTIAL LAW

Although earlier post-war interpretations depicted Daedalus at his workshop, deeply immersed in technological thought, focused on ideas and inventions that the human mind can snatch from nature, the next two adaptations that are discussed here centre on entirely different aspects of the myth, adjusting the story not only to the readers' young age, but also to the reality of communist Poland.

In *Płomyczek* 5–6 from 1979, Marian Grześczak, a poet, novelist, playwright and translator, who often referred to Greek mythology in his works, published his own mythical story of Icarus for children. This adaptation could also be suitable for *Świerszczyk*, a magazine targeting younger readers aged 7–9. The title, *O chłopcu, którym jesteś i ty* [About a Boy Whom You Also Are], does not explicitly refer to the myth, but rather suggests reading the story as if it were an ordinary tale about a contemporary character. The title suggests that the true protagonist is a boy. This is confirmed in first lines of the text, when Icarus addresses his father, while looking up and considering laws of nature. He appears to be of preschool age, the father calls him 'little boy'. He repeatedly calls Daedalus 'daddy', asks questions typical of his age group and displays great enthusiasm or profound sadness in response to various situations, always reacting emotionally. A strong bond between the child and father is evident in the way they speak, care and support each other in acts expressing mutual love. Because the boy arrives in Crete on a ship alone with Daedalus, and there is no mention of his mother, it can be assumed that Daedalus is a single father. A brilliant, wise, hardworking constructor and artist, he is first and foremost a decent, kind-hearted man devoted to his child, almost too noble to be real. Yet this is a mythical story, and Icarus is also portrayed as a child as perfect as his father. Daedalus' kindness and genius is matched with the boy's exceptional

qualities. Out of his desire to help his father and make his work easier, the boy asks insightful questions and considers matters that serve as a catalyst for his father talents, leading to new inventions, such as a saw, drill, or a level and handy hatchet. When Daedalus is imprisoned for an unclear reason, the boy is deeply troubled by what he perceives to be an injustice and endeavours to support his beloved father in a role reversal. The reader is not told who in these circumstances takes care of the child, who ensures that his personal needs are met, as if parentification was the only required consequence. Icarus bribes the guards to let him visit the prisoner. He then inspires Daedalus to construct wings, smuggles the necessary materials into the jail and works together with him as an equal partner. The misfortune strengthens the bond between father and son, as the boy expresses his love and devotion to Daedalus by undertaking dangerous activities, that would challenge even someone older. During this dark times, he seems prudent and reasonable beyond his age, but the final scene in the sky shows him as just a little boy delighted with flight, as if the weight of acting as an adult has been left behind. The accident occurs without the intention and agency of either flier. The fall is caused by a gust of the wind and not by Icarus' reckless behaviour. The ending shows the grieving Daedalus flying to infinity to seek solace and respite. Hope and mythical distance are communicated to the reader with these words: "And he flies perhaps to this day, with sunshine and dreams as friends."

Grześczak deliberately removes, modifies and changes elements of the myth to create a coherent retelling in which the young boy is the important main character, who has a voice, thoughts, doubts, questions, and agency. This narrative strategy serves to establish a connection between the reader and the myth, facilitating the recognition of similarities between the situation of the mythical character and their own. Daedalus is not portrayed traditionally, as a 'wise Daedalus, the father of Icarus', the protagonist, but as an ordinary hardworking father who loves his child, a decent man, kind, just, and loyal to whom a grave misfortune happens: he is locked in prison without charges and a fair trial. These traits make him an unlikely suspect in the assassination of his nephew, a boy like his own child. Thus, having eliminated Talos' subplot from the narrative, the author attributes Talos' inventions to Icarus, creating a character endowed with a sharp mind and great curiosity about the world and the laws of nature. These inventions and ideas come out of observing and understanding the natural world and not from 'snatching out' its mysteries. Icarus, despite his young age (or maybe because of curiosity and open mind natural for children), seems somehow to be his father's partner in creative thinking.

The second notable absence pertains to the subplot of Minos and the Minotaur. The Labyrinth has been built, yet the reader is left unaware whether there were special reasons for its construction. Minos is barely mentioned as one of Daedalus' customers, for whom he undertook various projects. Additionally,

it is not Minos who appears to forbid his return to Athens, or to confine the constructor in a Cretan prison. The circumstances leading to imprisonment are unclear; the reader does not know why it happened, but there is no suggestion that Minos was involved. Without charges and a fair trial, a decent man is imprisoned by unspecified authorities for an unspecified reason; it is rumoured that probably the delay in completing the construction of a ship for a merchant played a role, but this seems an unlikely cause, and Icarus knows that his father is not a criminal. Such a situation may have resonated with Polish children of that period, who could have witnessed cases of family members being detained by the communist authorities during political repression, often without any formal charge or legally punishable offence. Raising such a complicated issue through the agency of the myth can be a beneficial pedagogical strategy that could help the child understand that such events also occurred to other children, at other times. Another aspect of the same kind of allusion to the reality of the late 1970s is the issue of conspiracy. A young boy, a child, is tasked by his imprisoned father with the clandestine transportation of certain materials. The boy not only “understood his father and was happy as he used to be before, because he had been ordered to do an important errand”,⁶⁰ but also knew that he should not attract attention and keep the prison activity secret. When they constructed the wings “both of them were silent, but both knew where they were heading”.⁶¹ This means that the boy clearly understood that to avoid detection, he should keep quiet about what they were doing, which made him fully complicit in the conspiracy.

The author's use of Aesopian language became even more evident when the short story from *Plomyczek* was developed into a stand-alone booklet published in a characteristic small square format in 1981 (Grześczak 1981) within a popular series *Poczytaj mi mamo*, intended for younger children. The booklet (only 24 pages, including 10 pages of text) was illustrated by Zbigniew Łoskot and enriched with additional subplots and elements when compared to the previous version.⁶² The initial passages present both characters and their life together prior to their arrival in Crete. Icarus is six years old and to avoid being mocked at school, is reluctant to be called a ‘little boy’. One day, Daedalus asks him whether he would like to sail to Crete. They are travelling for a long time and due to their expulsion from Athens, they are unable to return. Thus, not only does Daedalus

⁶⁰ “Ikar zrozumiał ojca i był znowu, jak dawniej, szczęśliwy, ponieważ kazano mu zrobić coś ważnego (...)”. (transl. M.P.)

⁶¹ “[K]ażdy z nich milczał, ale każdy wiedział, ku czemu zmierzają”. (transl. M.P.)

⁶² For more, see Karpińska, M. and M. Pszczolińska, „Entry on: About a Boy Whom You Also Are [O chłopcu, którym jesteś i ty] by Marian Grześczak, Zbigniew Łoskot”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1123>. Entry version as of February 27, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłós and Kucharski 2013.

come from Athens with Icarus, but they are also described as refugees fleeing from unspecified threats and dangers. This element of the retelling reflects another aspect of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a significant number of Polish families emigrated from Poland for political reasons; those who left knew that they would be unable to return to their homeland. It is worth remembering that the year of the publication of the booklet, 1981, was the year when Martial Law was imposed and the resulting sinister atmosphere even affected children. The book about the boy whom they also were – a dreamer who realised his dream of flight, a loving son dealing with the injustice meted out to his father in their homeland and abroad, a child suffering together with his persecuted parent – resonated on a painful, personal level. The mythical antiquity was presented to them not as a reading from a dusty old book but as an ongoing situation.

The mythical tale entitled “Opowieść o Ikarze i Dedalu” [A Tale of Icarus and Daedalus], published by Irena Parandowska in *Plomyczek* in the same year,⁶³ is another important adaptation of the myth that merits discussion. Bearing in mind that her husband’s version is part of the curriculum for the 5th grade, the author carefully designed her own tale to be significantly different in order to draw attention to the elements that were altered. It begins in almost the same way as the chapter “Daedalus and Talos” in her book published 14 years earlier.⁶⁴ In that chapter, Daedalus was presented as guilty of Talos’ death and this issue played a significant role in the development of the plot. However, in 1981, Parandowska changed the title, indicating Icarus as the primary protagonist by placing his name before his father’s, and removed Talos and manslaughter from the narrative. Consequently, instead of escaping a criminal trial, Daedalus and his son flee their homeland together, fearing persecution. What persecution? The readers do not know, but they can assume that the authorities were abusing their power against ordinary people. While in Crete, Daedalus is instructed to build an edifice which would be “easy to enter and difficult to exit”. In a terrifying plot twist, Minos locks the architect along with his son inside the building that he constructed. Just as in Grześczak’s retelling, there is no Minotaur in this story. In the school textbook available at that time, i.e., Parandowski’s version: “[t]he king, fearing that the monster

⁶³ For more, see Pszczolińska, M., “Entry on: A Tale about Icarus and Daedalus [Opowieść o Ikarze i Dedalu] by Irena Parandowska”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1409>. Entry version as of February 25, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013.

⁶⁴ For more, see Szczęsny, K. T. and M. Pszczolińska, “Entry on: From the World of Myths [Ze świata mitów] by Irena Parandowska, Józef Wilkoń”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1534>. Entry version as of February 25, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013.

might harm his subjects, decided to lock him in a safe place.” With no Minotaur in Parandowska’s adaptation, Minos orders a prison to be constructed, not to protect society from the monster, but rather to achieve absolute domination over his people. Such a reworking of the narrative makes the story even more terrifyingly relevant. As Minos’ kingdom is not a democracy, his decisions make the state an instrument of threatening control against its citizens. In 1981, the sinister atmosphere described in the text retelling the ancient myth mirrored the reality of what was going on in Poland just before and after the December 13 declaration of Martial Law. Against this background, the scene of the flight for freedom becomes particularly impressive. The flyers leave the land of Minos, and take to the sky in full view of the public.

The whole city saw, for it was daytime, and crowds of people watched with uplifted heads the extraordinary journey of these two, up there. They believed that it was Zeus himself, king of the gods, who appeared in the sky, accompanied by his favourite Hermes. They devoutly followed this flight.⁶⁵

They are seen and admired by ordinary people, who regard them as deities (cf. *Ov. Met.* VIII 220). Their quest for a free life makes the people, who still remain under oppression, watch with reverence. In the end, the fall of Icarus is depicted as a transition from the mortal world to the world of the gods. Icarus flies higher and higher, ‘gazing at the sun god, dazzled by his radiant splendour.’ He falls, his life ends, and so does the story, with no continuation for Daedalus.

For Grześczak and Parandowska, the myth becomes a canvas on which they weave new elements creating a modern story adjusted to the readers’ age and to the reality of communist Poland. It is evident that the majority of these modifications are made to avoid mentioning that the unfortunate actual reason Daedalus leaving his homeland is the manslaughter he has committed. Instead, the message highlights the idea that sometimes people need to emigrate with their children in search of a safe place on Earth, outside of their homeland, where they suffered persecution or mistreatment. The motif of imprisonment, whether alone or together with a child, also plays an important role: the child protagonist has to deal with a calamity which happens without an obvious reason. These modifications help young readers identify with Icarus as their peer who faced the same problems and situations – emigrating with parents or feeling unsafe in a state which abuses power.

⁶⁵ “Całe miasto widziało, bo to było w dzień, i tłumy ludzi patrzyły z zadartymi głowami na niezwykłą wędrówkę tych dwóch, tam w górze. Sądzili, że to sam Dzeus, król bogów, ukazał się na niebie, w towarzystwie swego ulubionego Hermesa. Nabożnie śledzono ten lot.” (transl. M.P.)

CHILDREN'S POWER:
ICARUS AS ONE OF US BUT NOT FROM THIS WORLD

In 1987, Anna Maria Komornicka, an eminent classicist and a renowned populariser of Antiquity for children and teens, published a book aimed at primary schoolers, entitled *Historie nie z tej ziemi* [Stories Not from This World]⁶⁶. To introduce them to the realm of Greek myths, the author employs a narrative featuring three Polish siblings, Krzyś, Stefanek, and Elżbietka as protagonists, who encounter mythical characters in the contemporary world. Each chapter presents a separate adventure centring on a different Greek god or hero. Rather than presenting a tedious lecture providing information in a formal style, the narrative is vibrant, engaging, and full of interesting situations and dynamic adventures, letting the reader learn while being entertained and having fun.

The myth of Icarus is presented on the occasion when the protagonists move to a different city and change schools. There, they encounter Icarus, a new boy joining Krzyś's class. Icarus is depicted as brilliant, intelligent, kind, humble, and helpful, but he appears to be harbouring a secret. When the students are about to read *Metamorphoses* together, they ask Icarus, because of his unusual name, to read the story about Daedalus and Icarus; however, the boy almost cries while reading. Sometime later, it turns out that he secretly works in a hangar. Initially, the boys suspect him to be a spy, but Elżbietka intervenes, offering him an opportunity to share his perspective and tell them his story. Thanks to her decision, they learn the myth of Daedalus and Icarus told from an inside perspective as a personal story of a father and son who escaped from Crete. The clever children ask Icarus to say some phrases in ancient Greek to confirm whether he is telling the truth. He quotes verses from Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Aristophanes' *The Frogs*.⁶⁷ The contemporary plot maintains the features of the ancient story of Icarus, who after prolonged torment in the underworld, still dreams of flying. Eventually, having accepted Icarus' explanations, the children help him finish the plane he has been secretly constructing, and finally, he is able to fly away towards the sun to fulfil his dream.

In Komornicka's retelling, the narrative set in the present not only reminds the reader of the myth from school readings, but also demonstrates how flexible and adaptable is the fabric of the myth. The story, told from a child's point of view, highlights the perspective of Icarus, encouraging contemporary children to contemplate and re-evaluate the mythical message concerning the power of

⁶⁶ For more, see Grabarek, O. and M. Pszczolińska, „Entry on: Stories Not from This World [Historie nie z tej ziemi] by Jerzy Flisak, Anna M. Komornicka”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1219>. Entry version as of February 25, 2025. Based on Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013.

⁶⁷ A. M. Komornicka specialised in ancient Greek comedy and lyric.

dreams, but also emphasising the importance of trust, understanding, acceptance, support, and friendship.

CONCLUSION

In People's Poland, the two mythical aviators used to appear in the official educational curriculum for primary school, but were also present in periodicals and literature for children published by state publishers, which reinforced school education. The myth about flight was particularly appealing to children who dreamt of becoming pilots one day: it not only nurtured their imagination, but was also used to shape their personalities in line with the spirit of state ideals. During the Stalinist era, the ideological instruction of future socialist citizens relied on a variety of literary texts including those inspired by ancient mythology viewed as useful educational aids in effectively modelling and shaping the young minds. The new socialist state promoted the pursuit of technical progress, and work performed in collectives. The mythical flyers became the symbol of technological thought, with Daedalus as a synonym for a master-worker, brilliant engineer, constructor, and artist, and Icarus as a symbol of an ideal member of a team working together to make an ambitious dream come true. For Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, the tragic fate of Icarus represented the loss of a wasted young life, in the midst of an indifferent crowd. For other Polish authors who published during communist rule, the myth might potentially have evolved into a symbol of rebellion, of a desire to escape oppression, of freedom and independence. The symbolism of the ancient material and the actual stories were adapted, altered, and "recycled" repeatedly, according to the evolving educational and cultural needs of the society and beliefs of each individual author.

As many elements of the myth were clearly unsuitable for younger children, specialised magazines (*Iskierki*, *Świerszczyk*, *Miś*) had limited use for mythological stories. *Plomyczek* and *Plomyk*, on the other hand, which targeted older children, delighted in classical adaptations (Parandowski, Zieliński) and during the last decade of the People's Poland era, they allowed innovative and even daring interpretations to be published. Given the pervasive control that the office of censorship exercised over the press and any publishing activities during this time, readers were skilled in deciphering hidden meanings and alternative interpretations in narratives that appeared innocent to often obtuse censors.

Grześczak and Parandowska made their modifications to adjust the story to the reality of communist Poland in a way comprehensible for the young reader and/or their parents⁶⁸, mainly by altering three elements: 1. It is natural to commiserate with Daedalus, the refugee forced to leave Athens for fear of persecution (in

⁶⁸For more on double address see Wall 1991.

Grześczak's case, he is even a flawless hero), but it would not be so easy if he were guilty of manslaughter and seeking to escape justice. 2. If the Labyrinth was not built to contain the Minotaur but was intended to be Minos' instrument of control, a prison from which there is no escape, the readers could interpret his reign as an oppressive totalitarian regime and relate it to their own situation. 3. If Icarus is a child, young readers can identify with this mythical boy struggling with similar problems and situations to those they faced in the People's Republic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions and commentaries

- Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1957: Aleksandrak, Stanisław and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1957. *Czytanki dla klasy IV* (wyd. II). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1958: Aleksandrak, Stanisław and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1958. *Czytanki dla klasy IV* (wyd. III). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1963a: Aleksandrak, Stanisław and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1963. *Czytanki dla klasy IV* (wyd. VIII). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak and Przyrowski 1963b: Aleksandrak, Stanisław and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1963. *Z bliska i daleka. Wypisy dla klasy V*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1951: Aleksandrak, Stanisław, Zofia Kwiecińska and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1951. *Na szerokiej drodze. Czytanki dla klasy IV*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak, Kwiecińska and Przyrowski 1953: Aleksandrak, Stanisław, Zofia Kwiecińska and Zbigniew Przyrowski. 1953. *Czytanki dla klasy IV*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Aleksandrak, Przyrowski and Wójcik 1976: Aleksandrak, Stanisław, Zbigniew Przyrowski and Janina Wójcik. 1976. *Lata dalekie i bliskie. Wypisy z ćwiczeniami w mówieniu i pisaniu. Klasa V*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Bagiński and Hajdrych 1958: Bagiński, Paweł and Włodzimierz Hajdrych. 1958. *Wypisy dla klasy VIII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Broniewska 1949: Broniewska, Janina. 1949. *W nowej szkole. Czytanki dla IV klasy szkoły podstawowej. Wydanie trzecie poprawione*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Cackowska, Kaznowska and Wąsakowa 1975: Cackowska, Maria, Kazimiera Kaznowska and Władysława Wąsakowa. 1975. *Razem, młodzi przyjaciele. Podręcznik do nauki języka polskiego dla klasy IV*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Dembowska and Rudnicka 1950: Dembowska, Janina and Halina Rudnicka. 1950. *Dom i świat. Wypisy dla klasy VI*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1950: Dembowska, Janina, Halina Rudnicka and Teofil Wojeński. 1950. *Na drodze przemian. Czytanki dla klasy VII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1954: Dembowska, Janina, Halina Rudnicka and Teofil Wojeński. 1954. *Dom i świat. Wypisy dla klasy VI* (wyd. V). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Dembowska, Rudnicka and Wojeński 1956: Dembowska, Janina, Halina Rudnicka and Teofil Wojeński. 1956. *Na drodze przemian. Wypisy dla klasy VII* (wyd. VII). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Dembowska, Saloni and Wierzbicki 1966: Dembowska, Janina, Zygmunt Saloni and Piotr Wierzbicki. 1966. *Świat i my. Podręcznik do języka polskiego dla klasy VI*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.

- Grzeźczak 1979: Grzeźczak, Marian. 1979. „O chłopcu, którym jesteś i ty.” *Plomyczek* 5–6: 120–122.
- Grzeźczak 1981: Grzeźczak, Marian. 1981. *O chłopcu, którym jesteś i ty*. Nasza Księgarnia.
- Kann 1975: Kann, Maria. 1975. *Niebo herosów i bogów. Literackie wyprawy w kosmos — Część I*. Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza.
- Kingsley 1935: Kingsley, Charles. 1935. *Heroje czyli klechdy greckie o bohaterach*. Translated by Waław Berent. Gebethner i Wolff. (ed. pr. 1885; PL 1926)
- Kopczewski 1966: Kopczewski, Jan Stanisław. 1966. *Miedzy dawnymi a nowymi laty. Wypisy dla klasy VIII szkoły podstawowej*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Kopczewski 1971: Kopczewski, Jan Stanisław. 1971. *Ta ziemia od innych droższa. Podręcznik do języka polskiego dla kl. VIII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Kopczewski 1976: Kopczewski, Jan Stanisław. 1976. *Ta ziemia od innych droższa. Podręcznik do języka polskiego dla kl. VIII*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Kubski 1962: Kubski, Benedykt. 1962. *Wypisy dla klasy VI*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Kubski and Kubski 1960: Kubski, Benedykt and Jacek Kubski. 1960. *Wypisy dla klasy VII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Kubski and Zieliński 1958a: Kubski, Benedykt and Jan Zieliński. 1958. *Wypisy dla klasy V*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Kubski and Zieliński 1958b: Kubski, Benedykt and Jan Zieliński. 1958. *Wypisy dla klasy VI*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1946: Lausz, Karol, Kazimierz Staszewski and Zofia Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa. 1946. *O świecie. Czytanka dla V klasy szkoły powszechnej*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1948: Lausz, Karol, Kazimierz Staszewski and Zofia Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa. 1948. *O świecie. Czytanka dla V klasy szkoły podstawowej. Wydanie II zmienione*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Lausz, Staszewski and Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa 1949: Lausz, Karol, Kazimierz Staszewski and Zofia Zwierzchowska-Ferencowa. 1949. *O świecie. Czytanka dla V klasy szkoły podstawowej* (VII nakład). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Marx 1861: Marx, Karl. 1861. “Letter to Engels, February 27, 1861” in Marx-Engels Correspondence 1861 accessed at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1861/letters/61_02_27-abs.htm (accessed February 18, 2025).
- Marx and Engels 1977 [1848]: Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1977. *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (2nd revised ed., ed. pr. 1848). Progress.
- Nagajowa and Świerczyńska 1969: Nagajowa, Maria and Aniela Świerczyńska. *W naszej ojczyźnie. Podręcznik do nauki języka polskiego dla klasy V*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Nagajowa 1976: Nagajowa, Maria. 1976. *W codziennej pracy. Podręcznik do nauki języka polskiego dla klasy V*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Nagajowa 1982: Nagajowa, Maria. 1982. *Język polski. Język i świat. Podręcznik do języka polskiego 5*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Nagajowa 1987: Nagajowa, Maria. 1987. *Język polski. Odpowiednie dać rzeczy słowo. Podręcznik do ćwiczeń w mówieniu i pisanu dla klasy ósmej szkoły podstawowej. Wydanie drugie*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Nagajowa 1988: Nagajowa, Maria. 1988. *Język polski. Język i świat. Podręcznik do kształcenia literackiego i kulturalnego oraz do ćwiczeń w mówieniu i pisanu dla klasy piątej szkoły podstawowej. Wydanie trzecie*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Parandowska 1967: Parandowska, Irena. 1967. *Ze świata mitów*. Nasza Księgarnia.
- Parandowska 1981: Parandowska, Irena. 1981. „Opowieść o Ikarze i Dedalu.” *Plomyczek* 11–12: 307.

- Parandowski 1924: Parandowski, Jan. 1924. *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian*. Księgarnia Wydawnicza H. Altenberga.
- Parandowski 1927: Parandowski, Jan. 1927. *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian. Wydanie nowe*. Księgarnia Wydawnicza H. Altenberga we Lwowie.
- Parandowski 1963: Parandowski, Jan. 1963. „Dedal i Ikar”, *Plomyczek* 42 (16): 422–423.
- Pauszer-Klonowska 1948: Pauszer-Klonowska, Gabriela. 1948. *Jednością silni. Wypisy dla klasy VII szkoły podstawowej*. Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza „Wiedza”.
- Pauszer-Klonowska 1949a: Pauszer-Klonowska, Gabriela. 1949. *Dzień dzisiejszy. Wypisy dla kl. 5 szkoły podstawowej*. Nasza Księgarnia.
- Pauszer-Klonowska 1949b: Pauszer-Klonowska, Gabriela. 1949. *Jednością silni. Wypisy dla klasy VII szkoły podstawowej. Wyd. II*. Nasza Księgarnia.
- Pauszer-Klonowska and Lausz 1954: Pauszer-Klonowska, Gabriela and Karol Lausz. 1954. *Dzień dzisiejszy. Wypisy dla klasy V* (4th ed.). Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Sufinowa 1984: Sufinowa, Stanisława. 1984. *Język polski. Mowa rodzinna. Podręcznik do kształcenia literackiego i kulturalnego dla klasy siódmej szkoły podstawowej*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.
- Skimina 1949: Stanisław Skimina. 1949. *Elementa Latina. Podręcznik do nauki języka łacińskiego*. Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich.
- Zarembowie 1947: [Szelburg-] Zarembina, Ewa and Józef Zaremba. 1947. *W naszym kraju : czytanka dla 5 kl. miejskich i wiejskich szkół podstawowych aprobowana przez Ministerstwo Oświaty*. Gebethner i Wolff.
- Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957a: Zespół Redakcji PZWS. 1957. *Wypisy dla klasy V*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957b: Zespół Redakcji PZWS. 1957. *Wypisy dla klasy VI*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1957c: Zespół Redakcji PZWS. 1957. *Wypisy dla klasy VIII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Zespół Redakcji Polonistycznej PZWS 1958: Zespół Redakcji PZWS. 1958. *Wypisy dla klasy VII*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Zieliński 1930: Zieliński, Tadeusz. 1930. *Świat antyczny. Część pierwsza. Starożytność bajeczna*. Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza. (ed. pr. 1922)
- Zieliński 1936: Zieliński, Tadeusz. 1936. *Klechy Attyckie. Serja trzecia*. Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza. (ed. pr. 1922)
- Zieliński 1974: Zieliński, Tadeusz. 1974. „Opowieść o ojcu Ikara – mądrym Dedalosie.” *Plomyczek* 5: 146–147.
- Zieliński 2005: Zieliński, Tadeusz. 2005. *Autobiografia. Dziennik 1939–1944*, do druku podali Hanna Geremek i Piotr Mitzner. OBTA & Wydawnictwo DiG.
- Zieliński 2012: Zieliński, Thaddäus. 2012. *Mein Lebenslauf — Erstaussage des deutschen Originals — und Tagebuch 1939–1944*, edited by Jerzy Axer, Alexander Gavrilo and Michael von Albrecht. Unter Mitwirkung von Hanna Geremek, Piotr Mitzner, Elżbieta Olechowska und Anatolij Ruban. Peter Lang.
- Zipper 1886: Zipper, Albert. 1886. *Mitologia Greków i Rzymian dla młodzieży*. Nakładem księgarni J. Leona Pordesa.
- Zipper 1897: Zipper, Albert. 1897. *Opowiadania z mitologii Greków i Rzymian dla użytku młodzieży szkolnej*. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.
- Żylińska 1973: Żylińska, Jadwiga. 1973. *Mistrz Dedal*. Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza RSW „Prasa–Książka–Ruch”.

Studies

- Aleksandrak 1964a: Aleksandrak, Stanisław. 1964. „Niektóre zagadnienia czytelnictwa dzieci w świetle ich własnych wypowiedzi.” *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 2: 81–97.

- Aleksandrak 1964b: Aleksandrak, Stanisław. 1964. "Czasopismo i książka dziecięca w pracy dydaktyczno-wychowawczej szkoły." *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 2: 102–107.
- Aleksandrak 1965: Aleksandrak, Stanisław. 1965. "Niektóre problemy czasopisma w szkole." *Życie Szkoły* 4: 20–24.
- Aleksandrak 1979: Aleksandrak, Stanisław. 1979. "O czasopismach dziecięcych." *Wychowanie w przedszkolu* 4: 178–181.
- Bańkowska 1963: Bańkowska, Anna. 1963. "Pół miliona „Płomyczków” – rozmowa ze Stanisławem Aleksandrakiem redaktorem naczelnym dwutygodnika „Płomyczek”." *Poradnik Bibliotekarza* 4: 83–86.
- Bober 2011: Bober, Sabina. 2011. *Walka o dusze dzieci i młodzieży w pierwszym dwudziestoleciu Polski Ludowej*. Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Brodala 2001: Brodala, Marta. 2001. "Propaganda dla najmłodszych w latach 1948–1956. Instrument stalinowskiego wychowania." In M. Brodala, A. Lisiecka, T. Ruzikowski, *Przebudować człowieka. Komunistyczne wysiłki zmiany mentalności*, edited by M. Kula. Wydawnictwo Trio.
- But 2022: But, Ekaterina. 2022. "Prometheus in Russia: from revolution to dissidence." *Classical Receptions Journal* 14 (4): 533–553. <https://doi.org/10.1093/crj/clac015>.
- Franaszek 2006: Franaszek, Anna. 2006. *Od Bieruta do Herlinga-Grudzińskiego. Wykaz lektur szkolnych w Polsce w latach 1946–1999*. Biblioteka Narodowa.
- Frycie 1977: Frycie, Stanisław. 1977. "Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży okresu powojennego (1945–1970)." *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 3: 49–73.
- Frycie 1982: Frycie, Stanisław. 1982. "Czasopiśmiennictwo." In S. Frycie *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1945–1970*.
- Groniowska 1946: Groniowska, Barbara. 1956. "Jak korzystać z czasopism." *Dzieci i wychowanie* 3–4: 36–38. Accessed February 21, 2025. https://archive.org/details/jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/NDIGZAS095935_1946_003_004/page/36/mode/1up.
- Kosiński 2000: Kosiński, Krzysztof. 2000. *O nową mentalność. Życie codzienne w szkołach 1945–1956*. Wydawnictwo TRIO.
- Kümmerling-Meibauer 2025: Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina. 2025 (forthcoming). "The most splendid guy of ancient history: Facts and Fiction on Spartacus in German Children's Literature." In *Our Mythical History: Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to the Heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Katarzyna Marciniak. University of Warsaw Press.
- Marciniak 2015: Marciniak, Katarzyna. 2015. "(De)constructing Arcadia: The Polish Struggles with History and Differing Colours of Childhood in the Mirror of Classical Mythology." In *The Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children's Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, edited by Lisa Maurice. Brill.
- Marciniak and Strycharczyk 2021: Marciniak, Katarzyna and Barbara Strycharczyk. 2021. "Macte animo! – or, The Polish Experiment with "Classics Profiles" in Secondary School Education: The Warsaw Example." In *Our Mythical Education. The Reception of Classical Myth Worldwide in Formal Education, 1900–2020*, edited by Lisa Maurice. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. <https://doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323546245.pp.237–294>.
- Marciniak, Olechowska, Kłos and Kucharski 2013: Marciniak, Katarzyna, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos and Michał Kucharski, eds. 2013. *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue*. Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw.
- Mrozek 2019: Mrozek, Justyna. 2019. "Dzieci – ideologia – indoktrynacja. Czasopismo „Płomyczek” w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej, PRL i III RP." *Studia Edukacyjne*, (52): 303–315. <https://doi.org/10.14746/se.2019.52.20>
- Niesporek-Szamburska and Rogoż 2013: Niesporek-Szamburska Bernadeta and Michał Rogoż. 2013. "Czasopisma dziecięco-młodzieżowe w latach 1945–1989." In *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży (1945–1989). T. 3*, edited by Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz and Katarzyna Tałuc. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

- Olechowska 2011: Olechowska, Elżbieta, ed. 2011. *Tadeusz Zieliński (1859–1944). W 150 rocznicę urodzin*. IBI AL UW, KNoKA PAN.
- Olechowska 2016: Olechowska, Elżbieta. 2016. “Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland.” In *Classics and Class. Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, edited by David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska. Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Wydawnictwo DiG.
- Olechowska 2024: Olechowska, Elżbieta. 2024. “Tadeusz Zieliński (1869–1944), A Reappraisal *Sine Ira et Studio*,” *HCS* 6: 381–401
- Papuzińska 1972: Papuzińska, Joanna. 1972. *Wychowawcza rola prasy dziecięcej*. PWN.
- Paulouskaya 2017: Paulouskaya, Hanna. 2017. “Steht Herakles für den Westen? Oder: die griechisch-römische Antike im sowjetischen Animationsfilm.” In *Verjüngte Antike: Griechisch-römischer Mythologie und Historie in zeitgenössischen Kinder- und Jugendmedien*, edited by Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer. Universitätsverlag Winter.
- Pawlak 2023: Pawlak, Grażyna. 2023. *Jan Parandowski. Życie i dzieło*. Instytut Badań Literackich PAN. <https://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/publication/276979/edition/240609/content>.
- Potyrała 1991: Potyrała, Bolesław. 1991. *Przemiany oświaty w Polsce w latach 1944–1948*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Rogoż 2009: Rogoż, Michał, 2009. *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży Instytutu Wydawniczego „Nasza Księgarnia” w latach 1945–1989. Studium historycznoprasowe*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego.
- Rudenko 2020: Rudenko, Oleksii. 2020. “The Making of a Soviet Hero: The Case of Spartacus.” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 47: 333–56.
- Rudenko 2022: Rudenko, Oleksii. 2022. “Spartacus and His Early Soviet Theatrical Representation.” *Clotho* 4 (2): 69–99. <https://doi.org/10.4312/clotho.4.2.69-99>.
- Ryba 2021a: Ryba, Janusz. 2021. “Greek and Roman Mythology in Classical Education in Poland after 1945.” In *Our Mythical Education. The Reception of Classical Myth Worldwide in Formal Education, 1900–2020*, edited by Lisa Maurice. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Ryba 2021b: Ryba, Janusz. 2021. *Język łaciński w średniej szkole ogólnokształcącej w latach 1945–2004*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Sucharski 2016: Sucharski, Robert A., “Jadwiga Żylińska’s Fabulous Antiquity.” In *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, edited by Katarzyna Marciniak. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004335370_009.
- Wall 1991: Wall, Barbara. 1991. *The Narrator’s Voice: The Dilemma of Children’s Fiction*. London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s.