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## MARIA BOGUCKA. A WOMAN WRITING ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN

### Abstract

Issues related to women's history and feminism occupied a central place in Maria Bogucka's research. It is not without significance that her work in this area corresponds to the dynamic development of research on the history of women in Western Europe and the United States. Women, often overlooked in historical research, represented important heroines not only as queens or saints, but also as characters whose group portrait was essentially worth recreating. Maria Bogucka looked to address women's (and feminist) issues in biographies, monographs, articles and essays. To this end, she introduced the findings of foreign researchers into Polish historiography, and emphasised the specificity of the situation of women in Poland over the centuries.

**Keywords:** Maria Bogucka, the history of women, families of Old Poland, custom

The scholarly achievements of Maria Bogucka are particularly abundant and varied. The theoretical reflections developed in numerous texts by Bogucka, evoking as they did discussions between various research options,<sup>1</sup> show in clear terms that the choice of writing women's stories was not due to chance but deliberation. The historian, with a scholarly legacy spanning decades – monographs, biographies, articles in journals and reviews, as well as essays – demonstrated that research in the field of the history of women warranted elevation, especially

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Historia gospodarcza a historia mentalności: jeden czy dwa kierunki historiografii', in Marek M. Drozdowski (ed.), *Między historią a teorią. Refleksje nad problematyką dziejów o wiedzy historycznej. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Topolskiemu* (Warszawa–Poznań, 1988), 442–6; *ead.*, 'Życie codzienne – spory wokół profilu badań i definicji', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 3 (1996), 247–53.

on the part of Polish scholars whose research output in the 1980s and 1990s lagged behind the Western world.<sup>2</sup> During this period, not only did monographs on the history of women begin to appear, but journals also began to align with this subject, as could be seen with *CLIO*, *Histoire, femmes et sociétés*; *Women's Studies*; *L'Homme. Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, and *Gender and History*. The question of how to write women's history has been a key question that historians have had to grapple with, and this problem extends to the 'forgotten' in history.<sup>3</sup> Maria Bogucka, a researcher focused on the economic history of urban families in the early modern period (along with Andrzej Wyrobisz and Andrzej Karpiński), contributed significantly to the development of Polish research in women's history. Bogucka would deal with this issue more broadly later in her academic career.<sup>4</sup> During the Fifteenth General Congress of Historians in 1994, Bogucka delivered a paper synthesising her research on the position of women in Polish society during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,<sup>5</sup> which demonstrated the research potential for this topic. However, she never became a member of the Women's History Commission at the Polish Academy of Sciences, established in 1996. The postulate of writing history in such an approach from the Polish perspective would remain valid,<sup>6</sup> but we cannot forget about Maria Bogucka's

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<sup>2</sup> Maria Bogucka, [Review], 'Małgorzata Borkowska, *Życie codzienne polskich klasztorów żeńskich w XVII–XVIII wieku*', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxxviii, 1 (1997), 184–5. See also Élisabeth Badinter, *L'Amour en plus. Histoire de l'amour maternel (XVIIe–XXe)* (Paris, 1980); Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660–1770* (London, 1995); Michelle Perrot and Georges Duby (eds), *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, i–v (Paris, 1990–1); Barbara Whitehead, *Women's Education in Early Modern Europe: A History 1500–1800* (New York, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Michelle Perrot (ed.), *Writing Women's History*, transl. Felicia Pheasant (Hoboken, NJ, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Kizik, 'Profesor Maria Bogucka (1929–2020)', *Studia Historica Gedanensia*, xi (2020), 346.

<sup>5</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVII wieku', in *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich*, ii: Anna Żarnowska (ed.), *Przemiany społeczne a model rodziny* (Gdańsk–Toruń, 1995), 3–15.

<sup>6</sup> Krzysztof A. Makowski (ed.), *Dzieje kobiet w Polsce. Dyskusja wokół przeszłej syntezy* (Poznań, 2014). The issue was discussed at the panel 'History of Poland from the Perspective of Women' during the 20th General Congress of Polish Historians, see Mariusz Mazur and Jan Pomorski (eds), *Wielka zmiana. Historia wobec wyzwania... Pamiętnik XX Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Lublinie 18–20 września 2019 roku*

opinion that there is a need to rethink the current periodisation of history by adopting women's optics.<sup>7</sup> Parallel to her scholarly work, Bogucka would popularise historical knowledge also on the situation of women from antiquity to the present day.<sup>8</sup>

In Bogucka's work on women, several comparative texts give readers a clear picture of Polish and foreign research studies in this field. Two studies that could be categorised as popular history are certainly to the fore, as the scholarly framework is less than overarching. The first of them, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce. Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVIII wieku na tle porównawczym* [Women in Old Poland. Women in the Polish Society of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries against a Comparative Background], first published in 1998, was focused, following its title, on the specificity of the situation in Poland. It also looked to take into account the broader European context.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, this represented an important broadening of the parameters compared to the publication *Kobieta w dawnej Polsce* [Women in Old Poland] by Łucja Charewiczowa, published just before the Second World War.<sup>10</sup> Polish readers who did not speak foreign languages for a long time did not have access to the findings of Western historiography, which would have allowed them to understand the differences between and similarities with the situation of women in modern society. The above-mentioned synthesis by Bogucka, focusing on the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries, was an increasing component of research trends in Polish

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(Warszawa–Lublin, 2021), 243–304, especially Aneta Pieniędzy, 'Polskie badania nad historią kobiet w epokach dawnych u progu XXI wieku – rozkwit, ale czy na pewno?', *ibid.*, 272–82. It is worth emphasising that there has not only been a significant increase in the number of works created in the last decade, but we have also seen an expansion of research on the history of women in Poland from the Middle Ages to the present day, one that is not limited to analysing their roles as wives and mothers.

<sup>7</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'New Perspectives on Gender', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 82 (2000), 185–209.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Bogucka was the first editor of the journal *Mówią Wieki* [Centuries Speak] from 1958 to 1978. After her death, the editorial team honoured her passing by reprinting her article 'Kobieta na wsi polskiej w XVI–XVIII wieku', *Mówią Wieki*, 1 (2021), 7–11.

<sup>9</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce. Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVIII wieku na tle porównawczym* (Warszawa, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Łucja Charewiczowa, *Kobieta w dawnej Polsce. Do okresu rozbiorów* (Lwów, 1938; Poznań, 2002<sup>2</sup>).

historiography at that time, which offered an overview of the situation of women from the perspective of the social as well as historical and cultural.<sup>11</sup> It was also a response to European research on women's roles in the early modern era. Bogucka suggested that women in the period covered by her research had been defined primarily by gender and their resulting biological functions, which marked out for them a specific place in the basic social unit, i.e. the family, that being certainly the role of wife and mother. It is much more difficult to find a reflection on the relations between women of different generations themselves, such as the less obvious relationship between a grandmother and a granddaughter.

The book *Gorsza płeć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy od antyku po wiek XXI* [The Inferior Sex. Women in the History of Europe from Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century], which was published in 2005, proved to be a landmark publication, especially in the absence of a Polish translation of the five-volume work *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, edited by Michelle Perrot and Georges Duby.<sup>12</sup> In laying the research groundwork for the book, Bogucka looked to the source material she had compiled, supported by the findings of Western European historiography. Contrary to the monograph of *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce*, the image of women in England, France, and Germany was foregrounded in the considerations of *Gorsza płeć*, where the Old Poland thread completes the picture of the role of women in society, family, politics and literature. As a result, the work highlighted women's achievements in specific areas and geographies and the potentialities that existed in their activities. At the same time, the work considered the social frameworks and legal barriers that were almost impossible to overcome. That Bogucka adopted such an approach was hardly

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<sup>11</sup> Historians would take on the overlooked and under-researched topic of the place of women in cities; and also their roles in cultural life. See Antoni Gąsiorowski (ed.), *Kobieta w kulturze średniowiecznej Europy. Prace ofiarowane Profesor Alicji Karłowskiej-Kamzowej* (Poznań, 1995; 1999<sup>2</sup>); Andrzej Karpiński, *Kobieta w mieście polskim w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1995); Małgorzata Borkowska, *Życie codzienne polskich klasztorów żeńskich w XVII–XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 1996); Karolina Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce w XVII wieku. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich* (Warszawa, 1997); Cezary Kukło, *Kobieta samotna w społeczeństwie miejskim u schyłku Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej. Studium demograficzno-społeczne* (Białystok, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Gorsza płeć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy od antyku po wiek XXI* (Warszawa, 2005; 2006<sup>2</sup>); Perrot and Duby (eds), *Histoire des femmes*.

surprising, particularly taking into account the imperative of drawing a comparative background for research on the situation of women (both in terms of their life in the countryside, in cities, in manors or cloisters) in Poland, as emphasised by Bogucka herself.<sup>13</sup>

A valuable contribution by Maria Bogucka to biographical writing are her extensive works on the lives of Anna Jagiellon and Bona Sforza.<sup>14</sup> Certainly, the significant merit of these biographies was, at least partially, the filling of a gap in Polish historiography, which had hitherto marginalised the problem of women in power. Indeed, not all female rulers (especially those from the eighteenth century) have been the subjects of an authoritative biography, with the only notable monographical work being *Żony królów elekcyjnych* [The Wives of the Elective Kings] by Edward Rudzki, which was a part of the series 'Polskie królowe' [Polish Queens].<sup>15</sup> Maria Bogucka would also write, in 1990, a popularising biography of Maria Stuart, Queen of Scotland.<sup>16</sup> From the point of view of the Polish reader, it was undoubtedly an important work, as it referenced materials in English that, till then, had been inaccessible. At the time when Maria Bogucka wrote biographies of female rulers, Polish historians were more interested in the scholarly and artistic activities at women's courts.<sup>17</sup> Contrary to them, Maria Bogucka chose to look at the political entanglements of the queens, who turned out to be women of flesh and blood, full of emotions and passion, "wives leading an old, less gifted husband

<sup>13</sup> Bogucka, 'Recenzja pracy Małgorzaty Borkowskiej', 188.

<sup>14</sup> *Ead.*, *Bona Sforza* (Warszawa, 1989; Wrocław, 1998); *ead.*, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Wrocław, 1994; Warszawa, 2009<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>15</sup> The subjects which attracted most interest were Ludwika Maria Gonzaga, see, *i.a.* Zofia Libiszowska, *Królowa Ludwika Maria* (Warszawa, 1985); Michał Komaszynski, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski (1641–1716)* (Kraków, 1983); Edward Rudzki, *Polskie królowe*, ii: *Żony królów elekcyjnych* (Warszawa, 1987; Warszawa, 1990<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>16</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Maria Stuart* (Wrocław, 1990); Jean Héritier, *Catherine de Médicis* (Paris, 1940).

<sup>17</sup> See Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce*. See also *ead.*, *Le mécénat de Louise-Marie de Gonzague et les liens scientifiques franco-polonais au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1968); *ead.*, *Uczony dwór Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi (1646–1667). Z dziejów polsko-francuskich stosunków naukowych* (Wrocław, 1975; 2015<sup>2</sup>); *ead.*, *La cour savante de Louise-Marie de Gonzague et ses liens scientifiques avec la France, 1646–1667* (Wrocław, 1982); *ead.*, *Piorem zakonniczy. Kronikarki w Polsce XVII w. o swoich zakonach i swoich czasach* (Kraków, 2002). From the most recent studies see Bożena Popiołek, *Benefactresses and Clients: Women's Patronage and Clientelism in the Saxon Era* (Warszawa, 2020).

by the nose”,<sup>18</sup> often squeezed into the rigid rules of court life. It turns out that regardless of whether these aspects are analysed in the context of Polish or foreign experiences, it is possible to identify commonalities and divergences.<sup>19</sup>

Maria Bogucka’s work on women’s history would parallel other research threads undertaken throughout her career. This could be seen, for example, in texts focusing on the history of everyday life, wherein the historian saw history as “an apparently invariably flowing river of everyday life, formed from repeated human efforts, emotions, and individual and collective experiences”, including threads related to the position of women and the role they played in everyday life from the standpoint of various social classes.<sup>20</sup> Bogucka eagerly referred to the issues of gender relations<sup>21</sup> over extended periods (from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century), offering insights and providing framework observations. In her reflections, Bogucka combined considerations (including economic ones) on the history of cities with the functioning of families.<sup>22</sup> As she contended: without indicating the legal and the customary functioning of women, it is impossible to understand the specifics of their history in Poland, primarily to conduct comparative research. And indeed, in Bogucka’s deliberations, we do not find any overarching desire to insistently present women primarily as victims of male domination in marriage or, more broadly, in the family and society.

Analysing everyday life in Gdańsk in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bogucka saw the female inhabitants of this city as fully-fledged heroines who contributed to its economic development.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Bogucka, *Bona Sforza*, 255–6.

<sup>19</sup> Most evident in Bogucka, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce*. Cf. Monika Malinowska, *Sytuacja kobiet w siedemnastowiecznej Francji i Polsce* (Warszawa, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> *Ead.*, ‘Controversies about Everyday Life. Profile of Research and Definition’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 85 (2002), 5–16.

<sup>21</sup> The formulation of ‘gender relations’ is included in the title of the last part of Maria Bogucka’s collected articles *Człowiek i świat. Studia z dziejów kultury materialnej i mentalności XV–XVIII w.* (Warszawa, 2008), 419–43.

<sup>22</sup> To emphasise after J.W. Scott, gender perspectives cannot be only assigned to the history of women, Joan Wallach Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *American Historical Review*, 5 (1986), 1053–75.

<sup>23</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Życie codzienne w Gdańsku. Wiek XVI–XVII* (Warszawa, 1967), 113–17.

In her 1967 monograph, Bogucka proposed juxtaposing the image of a townswoman living according to moral precepts with the harlots who brought joy to the inhabitants of the port. This direct approach allowed Bogucka to go beyond typical representations of women utterly dependent on a male guardian. In the last chapter, a brief overview of the mentality of the Gdańsk citizen is extended to include well-educated and active women numbered among the city's patricians, which was discernible based on the source material.<sup>24</sup> However, Polish historians would have to wait many years for in-depth research on the female mentality in the modern era.<sup>25</sup> Bogucka also returned to the problem of the functioning of women in the city in articles, analysing the structure of the family in an urbanised space without losing any genealogical and demographic elements in terms of the research presented.<sup>26</sup> The issue of marrying among the townspeople was connected with the question of the position of women among the patricians. The author indicated that the opinion about their total legal impotence and economic activity should be verified in the case of cities such as Warsaw or Poznań because property independence allowed them to make several independent decisions, even if they were not widows. Among the poorer classes, there was no question of locking up the wife in the home space, as she had to work to support the family together with her husband. The possibility of conducting even small trade created an opportunity for greater independence.

In the 1960s, during her research on the economic history of Gdańsk, Maria Bogucka analysed the crafts of the town's inhabitants.<sup>27</sup> The historian also explored the role of women in trade, where a progressive feminisation can be noticed, especially at the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 207–8.

<sup>25</sup> A key work here is: Bożena Popiołek, *Kobiety świat w czasach Augusta II. Studia nad mentalnością kobiet z kręgów szlacheckich* (Kraków, 2003). Cf. Agnieszka Jakuboszczak, *Rodzina i rodzinność szlachcianek wielkopolskich w XVIII wieku. Perspektywa kobieca* (Poznań, 2016); Urszula Kicińska, *W tym osieroconym stanie. Pozycja wdowy w społeczeństwie szlacheckim w Rzeczypospolitej (od schyłku XVII do połowy XVIII wieku)* (Kraków, 2021).

<sup>26</sup> Maria Bogucka, 'Rodzina w polskim mieście XVI–XVII w. Wprowadzenie w problematykę', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxiv, 3 (1983), 495–507; *ead.*, 'Społeczne i religijne konteksty zwarcia małżeństwa w Gdańsku w XVI–XVIII w.', in Henryk Suchojad (ed.), *Wesela, chrzciny, pogrzeb w XVI–XVIII wieku. Kultura życia i śmierci* (Wrocław, 2001), 115–25.

<sup>27</sup> *Ead.*, *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny w XIV–XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1962).

level of ordinary exchange.<sup>28</sup> In her much later texts, Bogucka noted that "... ordinary women, deemed not suitable to be the heroines of widely read biographies", were "the silent parts of old societies" and many times "marginalised" not only by their contemporaries but also by historians, who focused primarily on the spectacular figures, such as saints, poetesses, courtesans, queens or colourful witches.<sup>29</sup> The postulates and conclusions indicated by Maria Bogucka resulting from research on the role of women in cities and towns would pave the way for a collective portrait of women of the modern era in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>30</sup> It would be the collective collage of peasant women, townspeople and noble women, happily not suspected of practising witchcraft,<sup>31</sup> which brings us closer to writing the story of women in Poland, also postulated by Maria Bogucka.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Bogucka looked to acquire a broad understanding of the achievements of European historiography, which allowed her to include women in her analysis of the customs and traditions of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. A small book entitled *Staropolskie obyczaje w XVI–XVII wieku* [Old Polish Customs in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] from 1994 systematised and popularised in an accessible way the most important social issues of Old Poland, especially those pertaining to the nobility.<sup>32</sup> When this work was published for the first time, Maria Bogucka

<sup>28</sup> *Ead.*, 'Women and Economic Life in the Polish Cities During the 16th–17th Centuries', in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), *La donna nell'economia, secc. XIII–XVIII. Atti della "Ventunesima Settimana di Studi" 10–15 aprile 1989* (Prato, 1990), 185–92.

<sup>29</sup> *Ead.*, 'Problematyka genderowa w perspektywie europejskiej', in Katarzyna Justyniarska-Chojak and Sylwia Konarska-Ziemnicka (eds), *Per mulierem... Kobieta w dawnej Polsce – w średniowieczu i w dobie staropolskiej* (Warszawa, 2012), 13.

<sup>30</sup> See Andrzej Karpiński, *Kobieta w mieście polskim w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1995); and Cezary Kukło, *Kobieta samotna w społeczeństwie miejskim u schyłku Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej: studium demograficzno-społeczne* (Białystok, 1998). See also Anetta Głowacka-Penczyńska, *Kobieta w małych miastach Wielkopolski w drugiej połowie XVI i XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 2010); Andrzej Groth, 'Gospodarcza aktywność kobiet w wielkich miastach Prus Królewskich', in Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Kobiety w Prusach Królewskich* (Pelplin, 2020), 159–66. For wider perspectives on current research pertaining to women in history see Cezary Kukło, 'Badania nad historią kobiet w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku w latach 2011–2020. Niezmienna atrakcyjność, ale czy nowe pytania?', *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica*, cvii (2020), 13–57.

<sup>31</sup> Bogucka, 'Problematyka genderowa', 14.

<sup>32</sup> *Ead.*, *Staropolskie obyczaje w XVI–XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1994), 64.



drew attention to the innovative approach to customs as “a regulator of social relations, an instrument of group rule over an individual and entire group over other groups”.<sup>33</sup> The book explored the roles women had to play in their immediate family; to encompass the extended family. First of all, Bogucka looked at the relationship between husbands and wives. Marriage was the foundation on which women could position themselves;<sup>34</sup> where women could play roles thanks to their strong temperament, entrepreneurship, intelligence, and resourcefulness; and also perhaps because of the husband’s weak character.<sup>35</sup> Not without significance for a wife’s situation was the dowry she brought into the marriage, her family relationships, and her ability to further her husband’s career. She was to become a mother immediately and then continue as a devoted and faithful wife. Bogucka also gave consideration to the issue of the nature of the emotional relationship between parents and their children, especially between a mother and her offspring, which French and English historians had widely researched. This issue, very much the fore in today’s historiography, shows the specificity of the Polish situation, eluding as it does the findings of Western European historiography of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>36</sup> Bogucka emphasised here that one should not be deceived by the conventions of the epoch, “resulting from an awkwardness in expressing personal feelings”, which left its mark on various types of sources.<sup>37</sup> To avoid the trap of interpretation, she used literary texts that reflected the emotional complexity that accompanies the difficult moments in a woman’s life, such as the death

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<sup>33</sup> Andrzej Wyrobisz, ‘Nowe spojrzenie na historię obyczajów (w związku z książką Marii Boguckiej, *Staropolskie obyczaje w XVI–XVII wieku*)’, *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxvii, 2 (1995), 209.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*, ‘Staropolskie wzorce rodziny i kobiety – żony i matki’, *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxxiii, 3 (1992), 405–21.

<sup>35</sup> The most prominent women who were particularly active in the political and economic arenas, independent of their spouses, were certainly Elżbieta Sieniawska and Anna Radziwiłł née Sanguszkó, see Bożena Popiołek, *Królowa bez korony. Studium z życia i działalności Elżbiety Sieniawskiej ok. 1669–1729* (Kraków, 1996); Wanda Karkucińska, *Anna z Sanguszków Radziwiłłowa (1676–1746): działalność gospodarcza i mecenat* (Warszawa, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Such as Badinter, *L’Amour en plus*; Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery*; Whitehead, *Women’s Education in Early Modern European*.

<sup>37</sup> Bogucka, *Staropolskie obyczaje*, 74.

of a child.<sup>38</sup> Published in 2013, the book *Między obyczajem a prawem. Kultura sarmatyzmu w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku* [Between the Custom and the Law. The Culture of Sarmatism in Poland from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century] represented another attempt at arriving at a synthetic presentation of social mores, discussed both based on the findings of historiography and research on the sources that Bogucka had conducted for many years.<sup>39</sup> These considerations also included the topic of women's history, which was analysed primarily in the chapter 'The Foundations of the Old Polish world: patriarchalism and family'.<sup>40</sup> This part refers to the findings of Polish researchers at the time, who had looked to elucidate the situation of the family in the countryside; and, against this background, also addresses the situation of women.<sup>41</sup> Analysing the patriarchal model of the family, Bogucka notes that widowhood was a chance for a woman's independence.<sup>42</sup> The topics related to a widow's position in the Old Polish society became important from the researcher's point of view, as it illustrated boundaries of agency wherein it became possible for women to function outside male-dominated control. The problem of the functioning of women in religious congregations remained for Bogucka a marginal topic, probably because she had not conducted any research in this area. Having said that, she could rely on the then-current findings of other researchers,<sup>43</sup> so Maria Bogucka introduced into her syntheses the religiosity of women, endeavouring to complete the picture of women's activities not limited to duties towards their husbands and children.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 73–4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ead.*, *Między obyczajem a prawem. Kultura sarmatyzmu w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 91–125.

<sup>41</sup> Maria Bogucka regarded the following title by Tomasz Wiślicz as extremely important, *Upodobanie. Małżeństwo i związki nieformalne na wsi polskiej XVII–XVIII wieku. Wyobrażenia społeczna i jednostkowe doświadczenia* (Wrocław, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Bogucka, *Staropolskie obyczaje*, 64.

<sup>43</sup> Among the works on the issues of the functioning of cloisters in modern times, the most important are: Karol Górski, *Kierownictwo duchowe w klasztorach żeńskich w Polsce w XVI–XVIII wieku. Teksty i komentarze* (Warszawa, 1980); Małgorzata Borkowska, *Życie codzienne polskich klasztorów żeńskich w XVII–XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 1996); Czesław Gil, *Życie codzienne karmelitanek bosych w Polsce w XVII–XIX wieku* (Kraków, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> Bogucka, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce*, 86–113.

When analysing the scholarly achievements of Maria Bogucka, it can be concluded that her interest in women's issues is not a desire to show or recall collected anecdotes and curiosities; or to create panegyric texts about the 'inferior sex'.<sup>45</sup> Instead, Bogucka's oeuvre is a body of work that represents a legacy of painstaking research with sources that would allow us to address the place of women in the historical process, with all its nuances and complexities. For Bogucka, there are no "frivolous or trivial topics in scholarship; there can only be frivolous or trivial studies, bringing nothing new to learning".<sup>46</sup> The women Maria Bogucka studied were peasants, townspeople and noblewomen; their worlds would be revealed as having been more multi-dimensional than previously thought. Indeed, Bogucka postulated that regardless of whether women were described as mothers and wives, witches or poets, their situation should be understood against broader backgrounds, including Polish and Western European.

In 1993, Maria Bogucka declared, "I am not a feminist because I've never actually thought of myself as a woman, as a separate category in the throng of humanity. I've always felt myself to be just a human being, someone endowed with a human personality, for whom sexual characteristics are rather a secondary matter, such as the shape of the nose or the colour of the eyes".<sup>47</sup> She also applied this way of thinking about herself to her own vision of historical research; not writing the history of women as such but rather looking at the participation of women in history, which can be seen as having been most manifestly expressed in the titles of two publications-syntheses that take into account this very perspective:<sup>48</sup> the book mentioned above *Gorsza płeć* and the publication in English, *Woman in the History of Europe...*,<sup>49</sup> which was an overview of a particular

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<sup>45</sup> *Ead.*, 'New Perspectives on Gender', 200–1.

<sup>46</sup> *Ead.*, ['Review of Jan Seredyka *Książniczka i chudopacholek. Zofia z Radziwiłłów Dorohostajska – Stanisław Tymiński*'], *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxxvii, 3 (1996), 669.

<sup>47</sup> *Ead.*, 'Kwestia kobieca okiem historyka', *Teksty Drugie*, 4–5–6 (1993), 183.

<sup>48</sup> For more on the distinction between writing about women in history, the history of women, and the history of gender relations that are not identical with the history of women, see Dobrochna Kałwa, 'Historia kobiet – kilka uwag metodologicznych', in *Dzieje kobiet w Polsce*, 13–28; Maria Solarska and Maciej Bugajewski, *Współczesna francuska historia kobiet. Dokonania – perspektywy – krytyka* (Bydgoszcz, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Woman in the History of Europe: From Antiquity till the Begin [sic] of the XXIst Century* (Warsaw, 2008).

stage of research in the field of the history of women in European terms, and included explorations related to the specificity of the Polish situation; enumerating in turn the findings of Polish researchers.<sup>50</sup> Certainly, this publication introduced the Polish research perspective to English-language historiography, focusing as it did not only on the situation in Poland, but endowing it with a broader context. Indeed, Maria Bogucka devoted a lot of attention in her scholarly endeavours to disseminating knowledge in English about the situation of women in Poland over the centuries, including the beginnings of Poland's emancipation movement.<sup>51</sup>

Another work by Maria Bogucka from 2018, with the concise but promising title, *Mizoginia* [Misogyny], is also worthy of mention, offering as it did, as the author declared, "a collection of several essays presenting various eras, which looks to thread together the situations of women; and the role that misogyny played in their lives", and not scholarly considerations focused on one historical period.<sup>52</sup> A clear-eyed scholarly synthetic assessment of the morbid aversion of men towards women had been absent in Polish historiography, unlike in the European and American historical works,<sup>53</sup> available to Polish readers

<sup>50</sup> Among the works on the mentality of women, see Bożena Popiołek, *Kobiety świat w czasach Augusta II. Studia nad mentalnością kobiet z kręgów szlacheckich* (Kraków, 2003); Krzysztof Jakubiak (ed.), *Partnerka, matka, opiekunka. Status kobiety w dziejach nowożytnych od XVI do XX w.* (Bydgoszcz, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> See Maria Bogucka (ed.), *Society and Culture. Poland in Europe. Studies in Social and Cultural History. Poland at the 18th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Montreal* (Warszawa, 1995); Maria Bogucka, 'Gender in the Economy of a Traditional Agrarian Society: the Case of Poland in the XVIth–XVIIth Centuries', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 74 (1996), 5–20; *ead.*, 'Women and Culture in Poland in Early Modern Times', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 80 (1999), 61–97; *ead.*, 'Le mariage dans l'ancienne Pologne', in Perrine Mane *et al.* (eds), *La femme dans la société médiévale et moderne* (Varsovie, 2005), 153–66; *ead.*, 'At the Dawn of Emancipation', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 92 (2005), 76–7.

<sup>52</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Mizoginia* (Warszawa, 2018), 7.

<sup>53</sup> R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny, and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago, 1991); Joseph A. Kestner, *Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical-Subject Painting* (Wisconsin, 1989); Jean Cournot, *Pourquoi les hommes ont peur des femmes* (Paris, 2001); Adeline Gargan and Bertrand Lançon, *Histoire de la misogynie de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris, 2015); Detlef Roth, *Misogynie in "Die Sieben weisen Meister". Frauenfeindliche Tendenzen im "Libellus muliebri nequitia plenus" und einer bayerischen Fassung der "Historia septem sapientum"* (München–Ravensburg, 2018); shortly after the publication of the Bogucka's study,

at the beginning of the twenty-first century thanks to translations.<sup>54</sup> As Cezary Kuklo points out, since the beginning of the present century, inspired by Maria Bogucka's trailblazing research, Polish historiography has made great strides in terms of the research produced on the history of women, the fruits of which have been a more vivid appreciation of the complex picture of the female world from past eras.<sup>55</sup> In 1998, the French historian Geneviève Fraisse spoke about writing the history of women and their historical emancipation, and perhaps Polish historiography has played a participatory role in mapping out the history of gender equality and providing platforms to further ends and redress wrongs.<sup>56</sup> It is difficult to know the extent of these achievements fully, but it is worth returning to the words of Maria Bogucka from 1993, in which she indicated that the vision of the history of women, as proposed by her, is a story about people. Bogucka would conclude her considerations as follows: "even a very self-preoccupied person could not fail to be cognizant of the fact that it is better not to be a woman, especially a young woman".<sup>57</sup> One should hope, however, that the next generations of female historians will be able to find redress for these words; and that the women will forge successful careers, find fulfilment, and set new directions for research on both women in history and on the history of women.

*transl. Barry Keane*

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<sup>54</sup> For an anthropological perspective, see David Gilmore, *Misogyny: The Male Malady* (Philadelphia, 2001).

<sup>55</sup> Kuklo, 'Badania nad historią kobiet', 13–57.

<sup>56</sup> Geneviève Fraisse, 'Avant-propos', in *L'Histoire sans les femmes est-elle possible?*, ed. Anne-Marie Sohn (Paris, 1998), 13–14.

<sup>57</sup> Bogucka, 'Kwestia kobieca', 183.

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