The present paper concentrates on the issues resulting from religious differences and their influence upon literary translations which are not only the transfer from one language into another but the transfer takes place also from one religious community to another. The analysed material is a selection of religious lyrics of the Polish Neo-Latin poet Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, a Jesuit and, consequently, a devout member of the Roman Catholic Church, in the translations of several members of the Church of England in the late 17th and the 18th century, starting from the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The aim of this analysis is to seek answers to the following questions: how can a translator deal with a text which was created within the sphere of influence of another religion, perceived as threatening to one’s own? What can a translator use to hide, soften, or remove such elements of the text which may be a possible source of problems – for the reader or for the translator himself?

In the poetic oeuvre of Sarbiewski various types of religious poetry stand out due to their number and importance. This is comprehensible as the poet in question was a Jesuit, a fact which makes his lasting British popularity even more striking. And yet this major part of his work seems largely missing when we analyse the English translations, especially those created after the removal of the last Roman Catholic British monarch, James II, in 1688. The question which the present paper attempts to answer is consequently also what, if anything, is left of Sarbiewski’s religious poetry in English translations in the period under discussion?

It is hardly surprising that religious poetry created by a Jesuit, consequently, saturated with Roman catholic spirit, did not enjoy much of a popularity in a predominantly protestant country such as Great Britain. It may be surprising, however, that among the English translators who dealt with
Sarbiewski’s religious poetry there were no Roman Catholics.⁴⁶ There are, however, representatives of the more extremist protestant denominations for whom, as it was in the case of Isaac Watts, “even the Protestant Church of England was far too Popish” (Money 2006: 157). And yet some of them found ways of approaching Sarbiewski and his religious poetry in ways which would not be offensive to their own religious views. It was very much in line with the views of the earlier generations when “it did not seem unnatural for seventeenth-century Protestant Englishmen to enjoy Roman Catholic artistic creativity” (Money 2006: 170), even though the attitude towards Roman Catholicism itself was probably even more hostile at the turn of the 18th century.

The lack of Roman Catholics among the translators may be explained most convincingly by the fact that Sarbiewski’s popularity spread mostly through the academic level education from which English Catholics were barred. It was at the universities where young Englishmen read Latin and Neo-Latin literature, and practiced the art of translation, using for the purpose also the poetry of Sarbiewski (Urbański 2000: 190-193). This was true also in case of the dissenting academies such as that run by Thomas Rowe in Little Britain street where the prospective translators such as Isaac Watts, Samuel Say, and John Hughes (Fordoński 2011: 71-85) first became acquainted with the Polish poet. At the same time even the affluent Roman Catholics were forced to rely on home education where, apparently, their chances of reading Sarbiewski were slimmer.

The six translations which we are going to analyse further were exclusively the work of Protestants for whom the more specifically Catholic character and context of the originals could be either invisible or doubtful from the point of view of Protestant orthodoxy. They could hardly be unaware of these issues as they were not only well educated but at least two of them (of the three we know by name, three translations are anonymous) were members of the protestant clergy. They simply must have been sensitive to the potentially dangerous elements of the texts, their theological knowledge, however, helped them steer clear of any dissident religious views.

The key strategy in their approach to the religious poetry was selection. The strategy was not applied exclusively to this particular subject matter which, to a various degree, constitutes approximately 40 out of 141 Sarbiewski’s odes and over 100 of his 122 epigrams. We know of translations of 56 odes and 24 epigrams, usually more than one of each, the untranslated ones were more often than not religious in character. Major part of the English interest in Sarbiewski’s religious poetry present in the decades immediately following his death seems to have evaporated by the year 1688, the material discussed in the present paper consists only of 6 translations while in the four decades between 1646 and 1688 there had been 17 translations, almost thrice as many

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⁴⁶ A detailed analysis of Sarbiewski’s translators’ religious adherence may be found in Fordoński 2012: 133-153. The present paper expands and develops certain elements taken from this earlier paper. It was originally published in Italian in “Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny” vol. 61 (2014).
(Fordoński 2012: 133-153). However, it should be noted here that major part of them was not published in the period. There were English translators interested in Sarbiewski’s religious poetry but few of them were courageous enough to make this interest known publically.

The most interesting of these six poems is Isaac Watts’ free adaptation of Sarbiewski’s Epode 5 “Ad pedes Christi in cruce morientis poeta provolutus” (“The poet kneels at the feet of Christ dying on the Cross”) entitled “Salvation in the Cross” (Watts 1786: 162). There are several reasons why Watts’ free adaption of the poem attracts the attention of scholars. The English poem misses the title of the Latin original (the very existence of an original is not suggested at all in the 18th century editions), and the original length is expanded by four lines. The tendency to expand upon the translated texts was actually quite characteristic for Watts (Starnawski 2007: 246ff). Somewhat more striking is the place of its original publication; Watts included the poem in a volume of religious hymns, an edition specifically addressed to dissenting congregations. However, he did not, as he otherwise customarily did in case of other translations or adaptations, reveal whose poem was the source of his inspiration.

Watts’ adaptation differs from the original also in its specificity. While in the Latin original the forces which attempt to tear the poet away from the holy cross seem to have no face or name, where Sarbiewski chooses synecdoche i.e he fears “ferrum” (“iron”) or describes natural phenomena such as raging sea and fiery rains trying to separate him from his Saviour, Watts prefers to challenge “tyrants”, “hell”, and “all its legions” as it can be seen in the following initial stanzas:

Here at thy cross, my dying God,
I lay my soul beneath thy love,
Beneath the droppings of thy blood,
Jesus, nor shall it ever remove.

Not all that tyrants think of say,
With rage and lightning in their eyes,
Nor hell shall fright my heart away,
Should hell with all its legions rise.

Should worlds conspire to drive me thence,
Moveless and firm this heart should lie;
Resolved, for that’s my last defence,
If I must perish, there to die (Watts: 1786: 162).

47 They were first published in Fordoński and Urbański 2010.
Although J. C. Arens claims that “Watts’ meditation on the “Groans of an Expiring God” on the Cross contrasts sharply with the merely idyllic sentiments of the Jesuit” (1963: 238) this opinion does not seem justified. The image of adversities the poet is ready to face in Epode 5 is anything but idyllic, Sarbiewski describes the raging elements with the gusto fully becoming a Baroque poet.

The crucial difference between the Latin original and the English adaptation does not boil down to a removal of sentimentality. From the purely religious, spiritual context of the original, Watts moves closer to the political context of the life of his religious community to which he addresses his hymn which the community is to perform during services. In early 18th century England the choice of religious confession made by Watts and other members of his congregation was still as much religious as, if not to a larger degree, political. While in Sarbiewski’s poem “iron” or “sword” are used exclusively in the metaphorical sense, as the Polish poet speaks about spiritual struggle, the internal world rather than the external, Watts sees in them symbols of actual, contemporary persecutions.

It should be noted here that Watts’ translations belong to the early part of his literary career, mostly to the turn of the 18th century (this particular poem was first published in 1709) when the threat of religious persecution was still quite real. The poet’s personal experience is also of importance, his father was imprisoned thrice for his religious views (in 1674, 1678, and 1683), after the third term in prison, lasting for six months, Isaac Watts senior was forced to go into hiding in London for two years while his wife and children lived in Southampton (Rivers). Memory of these events must have been quite vivid still when some twenty years later his son put his pen to paper to write this hymn.

Although varied and ample, Sarbiewski’s poetry addressed to Virgin Mary hardly spoke to the English of the Baroque and the Enlightenment periods. Naturally, Sarbiewski was not an exception, there was little if any Marian sentiment in the British Isles at the time. Only one of such poems, Lyr. IV 18 “Ad Rosam. Quotannis Kalendis Iunii D. Virginis caput coronaturus” (“To Rose which every year in June 1st is to crown the head of the Holy Virgin”), attracted the attention of as many as three English poets. Although all three are quite minor poems, as translations they are worthy of attention as they show what different attitudes the translators exhibited and how various motives they were able to introduce in their work.

The original poem is quite remarkable as through a sequence of literary (both classical and biblical) allusions and phrases Sarbiewski creates „niebiański obraz Maryi (Rosa mystica, czyli róża duchowna w aktualnym tekście Litanii loretańskiej)” (Buszewicz 2006: 371). Buszewicz further calls the ode „retorycznym, moralitetywym przesłaniem dla człowieka-chrześcijaniny mającego kroczyć pod przewodnictwem Wenery niebieskiej, jak Eneasz,

48 “a heavenly image of the Virgin Mary (Rosa mystica or the spiritual rose in the text of “The Litany of Loreto” or “The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary”).”
ku prawdziwej mądrości” (2006: 372). If reverend James Hervey was aware of any of the above, he was quite successful in hiding the fact from his readers. His translation of Lyr. IV 18 was published simply as “Ode from Casimire” with the Marian subtitle and two final stanzas missing. The three stanza long little poem is an extremely free paraphrase of the first half of Sarbiewski’s ode, resulting in an idyllic image which bears little similarity to the spirit of the original.

Ode from Casimire

Child of the Summer, charming Rose,
No longer in Confinement lie,
Arise to Light, thy Form disclose;
Rival the Spangles of the Sky.

The Rains are gone; the Storms are o’er;
Winter retires to make the way;
Come then, thou sweetly blushing Flow’r
Come, lovely Stranger, come away.

The Sun is dressed in beaming Smiles,
To give thy Beauties to the Day:
Young Zephyrs wait, with gentle Gales,
To fan thy Bosom, as they play (Hervey 1779: 201).

It is quite striking that Hervey actually quotes in his book the original poem. Not a line, however, beyond what he chose translated, and the poem is included in Hervey’s essay Reflections on a Flower Garden.

Such a lack of respect for the original was not punished, however, quite on the contrary. Hervey’s Meditations and Contemplations in which volume it was first published in 1747 was reprinted 26 times by the end of the century (Rivers), while the translated poem appeared at least three times reprinted in various magazines. It is also the only known English translation of Sarbiewski’s poem which was set to music (Fordoński / Urbański 2008: 221-223).

Two anonymous translators of the same poem followed the path chartered by Hervey. The earlier of them, entitled From Casimir’s Ode In Rosam, is by far more interesting of the two. It was included in the anonymous collection entitled Meli Ephemera published for the author in 1783 in Oxford. The anonymous author was apparently very proud of his two translations from Sarbiewski, as he began with them the slim volume of mere 36 pages. Inasmuch as the first ten lines follow quite closely the introductory stanzas of the Latin ode, the final ten lines (the anonymous translator also felt the need to

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49 „rhetorical, morality-like message to a Christian who is expected to follow the heavenly Venus as Eneas did towards the true wisdom.”
add a whole quatrain to his translation) are a curiosity worth quoting in extenso:

    Rise then – nor let thy blushing honours bind
    The forehead of the rough unpolish’d hind,
    The sacred altar courts thy hallow’d wreath,
    In chaste Diana’s honour fragrance breathe;
    Or seek some Nymph, whose pure and spotless heart
    With conscious virtue glows, unknown to art,
    Where charms of Chastity and Honour meet,
    And Beauty serves to make the whole complete.
    Fly to Lucinda’s breast, and settle there,
    For know Lucinda is as chaste as fair (Meli Ephemera 1783: 3-4).

The anonymous poet from Oxford clearly succeeded in turning a religious ode into a typical sentimental love poem.

The second, also anonymous, translation of Lyr. IV 18 about whose author we know only that he lived in Edmonton, a quarter in the north of London, deserves even less attention. Although the title, Casimir’s Address to the Dormant Rose. (From the Latin.) (1752: 128), suggests that it is a translation from Sarbiewski, it was quite certainly not the case. It is actually a free adaptation of the earlier translation of Hervey. The source of inspiration can be traced in the very title. The anonymous Londoner most probably found an old copy of The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure from 1748 which published the translation of Hervey without the name of its author as The dormant Rose: In Imitation of Casimir.

The translation consists of three stanzas as does that of Hervey, they are also a free paraphrase of the first two stanzas of the Latin original. The similarities may be seen in the following excerpts:

    Child of the Summer, charming Rose, (Hervey)
    Child of the vernal sky, fair flow’r! (Anonym)

    Arise to Light, thy Form disclose; (Hervey)
    Awake to hope! Awake to pow’r; (Anonym)

    To fan thy Bosom, as they play. (Hervey)
    Thy balmy kisses, as they play. (Anonym)

Hervey seems to have been peculiarly attractive for plagiarisers. In 1783, another anonymous gentleman, using the pseudonym Aramont, published Hervey’s translation of Lyr. IV 18 as his own “Imitated from Casimire” (1783: 384). Maybe this was Hervey’s punishment for mutilating Sarbiewski’s ode.
The two other translations of Sarbiewski’s religious poems are translations of epigrams dedicated to saints – St Mary Magdalene (Epig. 16) and the Roman martyr St Ardalio (Epig. 100). This lack of interest in other Sarbiewski’s poems dedicated to the saints (there had been nine such poems translated between 1646 and 1688 but most of them have not been published before 2010) is easily explicable. The problem was not so much the very presence of the saints, after all the Church of England has retained to a degree the cult of the saints, as the very specific choice of the saints the Polish poet decided to address. For obvious reasons the English poets were not interested in celebrating Roman Catholic saints, especially the Jesuit saints such as St Aloysius Gonzaga, the addressee of 24 epigrams of Sarbiewski.

An adaptation of Epigram 100, dedicated to the early Christian martyr St Ardalio, by Isaac Watts is by far more interesting of the two poems. Watts, as was his habit, almost doubles the size of the poem, increasing its length from eight to fifteen lines in five stanzas (rhymed AAA BBB CCC etc.). He cannot help spelling out what Sarbiewski merely suggests as it can be seen in the final lines:

Sic sic, inquit, abit nostrae Comoedia Vita,
Terra vale, caelum plaud, Tyranne feri (Sarbiewski 1759: 61).

‘So goes the comedy of life away;
‘Vain earth, adieu; heaven will applaud today;
‘Strike, courteous tyrant, and conclude the play (Watts 1753,4: 367-368).’

Two scholars, Charles S. Kraszewski and George Gömöri have recently commented upon this particular translation, seeking the reasons why Watts chose the poem. In Kraszewski’s opinion:

By no means was Watts attracted to the Catholic theme of Sarbiewski’s epigram. Rather, it is the very puritan spirit of total conversion and rejection of all the pomp and fumes of this world in favour of Christ that drew the dissenting minister’s attention to this one, of all of Sarbiewski’s saints (Kraszewski 2006: 22).

Gömöri also felt obliged to remark that:

Watts did not think of Saint Ardalio as a Catholic martyr – for him the actor was an early Christian, so by his definition a proto-Protestant victim of state terror (Gömöri 2011: 830–831).

It is not quite clear what so specifically Catholic Kraszewski and Gömöri saw in the legend of the actor turned martyr in the ancient Rome. The idea of mar-
tyrdom was hardly alien to the members of the Church of England as well as to representatives of other protestant denominations present in Great Britain. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants celebrated the memory of their martyrs from the 16th and the 17th centuries. The poem should be read in the same context as the previously analysed Watts’ paraphrase of epode 5. The poet feels a strong connection with the 3rd century martyr. He believes they share the same adamant faith which made Ardalio sacrifice his life and made Watts reject opportunities of academic education and career in the Church of England.

Sarbiewski’s epigrams were praised for their conciseness, consequently, they should have appealed to the English poets. The conciseness, however, often means that the structure of the poem is very complex. The translation of Epig. 16 “Diva Magdalena sub cruce flens” (“Saint Magdalene crying at the cross”) by a minor Augustan poet John Glasse is an example of what a treacherous task they could be. In the original it is Christ who is thirsty and asks Mary Magdalene for something to drink, in response to which the poet suggests that Christ should drink from the rivers of tears flowing from the saint’s eyes. Glasse doubles the original length (mere two lines) and, erroneously assuming that it is Mary Magdalene who complains of thirst, reverses the situation described by Sarbiewski:

“Oh, sitio!”, clamas; absunt his rupibus undae,
sola fluunt oculis flumina, sola bibe.

I thirst, I thirst! thou, Magdalen, dost cry.
And yet no friendly stream these rocks is near:
Does not a torrent issue from thine eye?
Then, Magdalena, drink the briny tear (Glasse 1760: 156).

As it can be seen from the very number of the discussed examples, the religious poetry of Sarbiewski had a very limited appeal to his English translators at the turn and through the 18th century. Even though in total there were almost seventy translations published during the period, religious poems make up less than 10% of the number. It was apparently something like a mine-field to be avoided whenever possible and treaded lightly if one wandered there at all. Any remaining interest in Sarbiewski’s religious poetry, quite lively before the Glorious Revolution, dwindles down to next to nothing by 1750 after which it is represented only by the variations on the Lyr. IV 18.

The pronouncement of Kraszewski originally referring mostly to earlier translations:

Sarbievius encountered by the learned British public who might reach for the translations of Hils, Vaughan or Watts [was not the real poet] ... even the Christian themes introduced by the Polish Jesuit in his English garb are such as would not ruffle the feathers of the most sensitive Protestant dissenter (2006: 24).
rings even more true in reference to the period under discussion. English poets were much more likely to seek in Sarbiewski new models for the odes, Neo-Stoic inspirations, and, ultimately, locis communis which they would be able to use in their own Neo-Latin compositions. If they approached his religious poetry at all, it was through careful selection and extremely free adaptation. They used Sarbiewski as they saw fit, as it was in the case of Watts speaking through Sarbiewski about his own fears and experiences. The very name of the Polish poet could be hidden from the readers (epode 5) but just as well it could be used to advertise poems which, though originally inspired by Sarbiewski, through the process of free paraphrase lost the original message entirely. Possibly offending elements, such as references to Virgin Mary, were skilfully excised from the text of the poems, resulting in new compositions which, regardless of their aesthetic merit, did not bring the readers any closer to the original, religious poetry of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski.

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RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES AND THEIR REFLECTIONS IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: MACIEJ KAZIMIERZ SARBIEWSKI AND HIS ANGLICAN TRANSLATORS

The present paper discusses issues resulting from religious differences between the author and the translator, and influence of such differences upon resulting literary translations which are not only the translation from one language into another but also from one religion into another. The analysed material is a selection of religious poetry of the Polish Neo-Latin poet Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, a Jesuit, in the translation of several members of the Church of England in the late 17th and the 18th century. The paper includes brief analyses of English translation of Sarbiewski’s religious from the period, concentrating on the translators’ strategies applied in hiding or effacing their original content and message.