

**PAWEŁ GOLDA**

University of Silesia in Katowice, Institute of Linguistics  
pawel.golda@us.edu.pl  
ORCID: 0000-0001-5505-7731

**JOANNA RYSZKA**

University of Silesia in Katowice, Institute of Linguistics  
joanna.ryszka@us.edu.pl  
ORCID: 0000-0002-5142-3949

**AMI TOREN**

Independent Scholar, Zurich, Switzerland  
amimoshe.toren.wg86@alumni.upenn.edu

## **On Helena Hellerówna. The Life and Achievements of a Polish Literary Translator**

### **Abstract**

Helena Hellerówna, a Polish interwar literary translator, was born in Cracow on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1899, and died as a U.S. citizen in New York on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1978, under the name *Helen Antonia Atlas*. She translated, among others, awarded works (e.g. *Fiancée d'Avril* by Guy Chantepleure or *Le repos de Bacchus* by Pierre Boileau) and recognised authors (e.g. André Maurois, François Mauriac, or Maria Peteani) frequently signing as *Hel Hel* or *H.H.* Her career was interrupted by WWII, during which Hellerówna became a victim of the Holocaust. Her contribution to the Polish translation community has been largely forgotten, to the point where even the *Polish National Library* has no accurate information about her. This paper presents a preliminary study on Helena Hellerówna as a translator, with the aim of reconstructing her biography and compiling a complete list of her translations, to facilitate further research on her works within the framework of Translator Studies (Chesterman 2009). The objective of this approach is to bring the translator out of the “shadow” of the author, as mentioned by Venuti (2008). In the case of translators about whom little is known – such as Hellerówna – conducting in-depth research in Translation Studies is challenging without first establishing a comprehensive biographical account, and this study seeks to provide it.

**Keywords:** Helena Hellerówna, Helena Heller, Helen Atlas, biography, literary translation, translator studies

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Translator Studies focus on the figure of the translator, who sometimes is overshadowed by their translations or whose role is perceived as less important than that of the original author (Venuti 2008). Nowadays, many scholars also recognise this importance and analyse the biographies of various translators who have made significant contributions to the development of literature, frequently drawing on anthropological translation studies (e.g. Płużyczka 2021). Among the analysed translators, we can find Zofia Chądzyńska (Gaszyńska-Magiera 2012), Wanda Kragen (Eberharter 2014), Wiktor Baworski (Eberharter 2017), Jan Nepomucen Kamiński (Eberharter 2018), Bolesław Leśmian (Górski 2018), Irina Adelgejm (Krajewska 2022), and Marcelli Tarnowski (Golda, Ryszka 2024). The interest in these translators often stems from the fact that their contribution to the development of foreign literature was long overlooked (Gaszyńska-Magiera 2012; Krajewska 2022), even though traces of their character can be found in the translation. As Andrew Chesterman (2009: 19–20) suggests, it is crucial to consider the cultural, cognitive, and sociological aspects that leave an imprint on the translator's (and interpreter's) language and perspective, sometimes visible through the translation.

This paper aims to present the biography and translation work of Helena Hellerówna, a Polish-American literary translator whose career spanned the 20th century, with her most active period being during the interwar years (Sobesto 2024: 192). Despite the extensive bibliography of her contributions, and her role as the translator of awarded works (e.g. *Fiancée d'Avril* by Guy Chantepleure or *Le repos de Bacchus* by Pierre Boileau) and recognised authors (e.g. André Maurois, François Mauriac, or Maria Peteani), Hellerówna has remained relatively overlooked and unknown in scholarly discourse until now. There is no biographical information about her in the *Polish National Library*, the *Scientific Information Laboratory*, or the Polish online biographical dictionary, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*. Only the dictionary of pseudonyms of Polish writers, *Słownik pseudonimów pisarzy polskich*, edited by Edmund Jankowski (1996), provides the place and (incorrect) year of her birth.

Importantly, this paper does not apply or adhere to any specific methodology; it should be perceived as a preliminary study on Helena Hellerówna, aiming to reconstruct her biography and to facilitate further research on her works and language within the framework of Translator Studies (Chesterman 2009). This approach allows the translator to come out of the “shadow” of the author, as described by Lawrence Venuti (2008). However, in the case of translators about whom little is known – such as Hellerówna – conducting in-depth research in Translator Studies is challenging without first establishing a comprehensive biographical account<sup>2</sup>, and this study seeks to address that gap.

1 The completion of this paper was made possible by several documents provided by Ami Toren, Hellerówna's relative, preserved in his private archives. These will be referred to as *Toren's archives* throughout the paper. The majority of these documents date from 1954 to 1968 and pertain to Hellerówna's postwar claim for reparations from the German authorities. They include her own curriculum vitae (hereafter referred to as *HHCV*), as well as statements and testimonies, including Hellerówna's affidavit from February 27, 1968 (hereafter referred to as *HHAF*), and those of other individuals who were witnesses in her reparations claim. Most of these documents were signed in the presence of a notary and were written in German. Other relevant information was also provided by the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw (hereafter referred to as *AINR*).

2 Compare the research on Marcelli Tarnowski: the first (biographical) paper (Golda, Ryszka 2024) presenting the preliminary biographical study is followed by another article that examines elements of Tarnowski's biography and their influence on his translations (Ryszka, Golda, in press).

According to her birth certificate, Hellerówna was born on February 27, 1899. Her birth certificate lists her given name as *Helena* and her father's surname as *Heller*. However, throughout her life, she also used other names: *Helena Hellerówna*, *Helena Antonina Heller* (AINR), *Helena Atlas* (after her marriage), and *Helen Antonia Atlas* (after her naturalisation as a United States citizen). Additionally, in some documents, she appears as *Hélène Heller* (documents related to her stay in France), or her family name is misspelt as *Heler* (both instances observed in materials from AINR). As for the first form, *Hellerówna*, which was used, among others, to sign her translations, the suffix *-ówna* was traditionally a linguistic marker of subordination and affiliation, indicating the unmarried daughter (Skudrzyk 1996). Thus, *Hellerówna* means the *daughter of Heller*. The occupying authorities prohibited using this suffix (and similar ones), but after Poland regained independence, the Polish authorities abolished this prohibition in 1919. During the interwar period, some offices mandated using such forms of women's surnames (Ostrowska-Knapik 2020), allowing Heller to sign her translations as *Helena Hellerówna*<sup>3</sup>.

Hellerówna's birth date warrants closer examination. As mentioned, she was born in 1899, but some sources report her birth year as 1909. The earliest record in which she appears to be ten years younger is dated May 13, 1945. However, upon her entry to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, her date of birth was recorded as February 28, 1903, making her four years younger. Interestingly, upon her liberation, Hellerówna's birth date was registered as February 28, 1909, suggesting that her age had been further reduced by six additional years while at Langenbielau. Hellerówna most likely used the chaos of the final months in the concentration camp to fabricate a birth date that made her ten years younger. Presumably, she realised that the authorities would no longer scrutinise individual details like dates of birth, especially since many prisoners were likely to perish before being liberated. A younger age may have enhanced Hellerówna's chances of survival during the brutal selection process.

Once she adopted a new birth date, Hellerówna continued to use it throughout her post-war life. Her decision to maintain this altered birth year may have also been motivated by a desire to improve her employability and chances of obtaining a visa for emigration. Consequently, Hellerówna consistently reported her birth date as February 28, 1909, in all subsequent documents. This date appears in numerous post-war records, including her Holocaust survivor registration card signed in 1947 (Yad Vashem), her passport questionnaire from the same year (AINR), various documents in *Toren's archives* (including sworn and notarised documents where she acknowledged that making a false statement was punishable by law), and her 1951 petition for American naturalisation (Ancestry). The 1909 birth year is also recorded in the *Polish National Library's* archives. In contrast, the actual birth year of 1899 appears less frequently in official records, though it can still be found in documents such as her registration cards for the Jagiellonian University.

Regarding Hellerówna's place of birth, there are two possibilities. For instance, the birth certificate from *Toren's archives* states that she was born at Jasna 4 in Stradom, a district of Cracow. However, records from the *Jewish Community Centre*<sup>4</sup> list her place of birth as Borek Fałęcki, which was not part of Cracow at the time of her birth, but was later incorporated into the city.

3 In this research paper, we use the latter form of her name, the one that includes the suffix.

4 Her case in *Jewish Community Centre* was registered under the number 20944.

## Family Background

The family background of the protagonist will serve as the starting point for this paper. Helena Hellerówna was born to Wilhelm Heller, also known as Schmerl Wolf Heller (Hirschberg 2024) and Chana (*JRI-Poland; The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, hereafter referred to as *USHMM*), Hana (Minakowski 2024), Anna-Maria (AINR), or Anna Heller née Frommer (*Toren's archives*). Wilhelm Heller was born in 1864 in Tarnopol, Poland, into a wealthy family. He was the son of Dawid Heller, the owner of a hotel in Lviv, and Jutta née Mantel. He worked for the postal service (Minakowski 2024; *JRI-Poland*), and according to the knowledge of his descendant, Ami Toren, he headed a post office branch in the city centre of Cracow. Anna Frommer was born on December 26, 1885 (Minakowski 2024), April 7, 1871 (*USHMM*), or April 4, 1871 (Jewish Historical Institute, hereafter referred to as *JHI*), as the daughter of Izaak (Minakowski 2024) or Izak (*JRI-Poland*) Frommer and Malka (Minakowski 2024) or Amalia (*JRI-Poland*) Frommer née Hirsch. Hellerówna's parents married on May 4, 1893, in Cracow (*JRI-Poland*). Then, Wilhelm Heller passed away before WWII in 1936 (*Geneteka*), and his wife died during the war in 1942.

Helena Hellerówna had an older brother, Tadeusz Heller, born on July 10, 1894 (Hirschberg 2024). He was a gynaecologist, graduating with a Doctor of Medicine degree from Jagiellonian University in 1922 (Minakowski 2024), and served as an officer during WWI and the Polish-Soviet War. Tadeusz Heller passed away on February 28, 1942 (Goląb 1945: 4) in Uzbekistan, where, as his old university friend testified after WWII, Tadeusz had travelled to Kermine (today's Navoiy) to enlist in Anders' Army after being just released from forced labour in the gold mines in the North Siberia. On September 11, 1927, he married Rozalia, also known as Irena, born on December 25, 1902, the daughter of Leib Schonfeld and Freida née Gutter (Hirschberg 2024). Tadeusz and Rozalia had one daughter, Ewa, the mother of Ami Toren, the co-author of this paper. The family left Poland in 1945. Ewa later married and lived as Eva Toren in Israel. She passed away in 2022 at the age of 94. She had two sons and two grandchildren.

Helena Hellerówna's family resided at Ułańów 457 in the Łagiewniki district of Cracow (Hirschberg 2024) and at Grabowskiego 13 or 13/4 (*JHI*). They lived there until the outbreak of WWII (*HHCV*). She was born into a family of consciously assimilated Jews (Adamek, Radwan-Pragłowski 2006: 382). Her mother's father, Isaak Frommer, fiercely opposed religion and broke away from it<sup>5</sup>. On her father's side, the Heller family's roots extend back hundreds of years, and her ancestors came from long lines of venerable rabbis. However, the translator's father, Wilhelm, deviated from the rabbinical tradition. After marrying Anna Frommer, Wilhelm's family severed ties with him, resulting in no contact with that side of the family. Despite not becoming a rabbi, Wilhelm refused to renounce his Jewish faith, even though converting to Christianity would have improved his legal career prospects. Hellerówna's brother, Tadeusz, named after Tadeusz Kościuszko, also refused attractive offers to convert to Christianity, which was a precondition for advancing his medical career. Neither her father nor brother was religious, but they considered abandoning their heritage an affront.

5 Frommer was a cousin of Ludwik Gumplowicz (they were both grandsons of Label Gumplowicz and Reisel née Mincer, according to Minakowski 2024), who was one of the forerunners of scientific sociology (Adamek, Radwan-Pragłowski 2006: 381). Before Gumplowicz left Poland in the 1870s, because of his father, he helped with the Polish Insurrection in the 1860s (*ibid.*: 382). Gumplowicz advocacy for Jewish rights could have an impact on Hellerówna's grandfather, who spent considerable time in Gumplowicz's reading room – a library dedicated to enlightening Jews in Cracow and promoting atheism and anticlericalism.

The family was distinguished and artistically inclined, enjoying an enlightened and assimilated upbringing with strong artistic leanings in early 20th-century Cracow. Hellerówna's uncle, Artur Frommer, established the first X-ray medical clinic in Cracow and developed a thriving medical practice (Urbanik, Wyka, Urbanik 2016: 181–182). Another uncle, Szymon Frommer, was a painter who studied fine arts in Cracow and tragically died of tuberculosis in 1911 at the age of 28. Szymon Frommer was also closely connected with the artistic community. His friend, the sculptor Xawery Dunikowski, immortalised him as Jesus above the entrance to the Jesuit church at Mikołaja Kopernika 26 in Cracow.

Hellerówna's cousin, Róża Aleksandrowicz, was a patron of many painters in Cracow until WWII. Róża generously supported numerous Cracow artists with art supplies, and in gratitude, they created portraits of her. As a result, she is immortalised in many portraits displayed in national galleries in Warsaw and Cracow. After the war, Aleksandrowicz, under the threat of imprisonment, was forced by the communists to donate her extensive collection of paintings by leading artists to the Cracow National Museum. It is also worth mentioning Hanka Ordonówka, the famous singer and actress of that time. Whenever she visited Cracow in the 1920s, she stayed with Hellerówna's mother's sister, Zofia Frommer.

## Early Life and Education

Irena Weissowa, the wife of painter Wojciech Weiss and a talented painter herself, mentioned the translator in her memoirs. She noted that they frequently painted Hellerówna, describing her as having a beautiful light complexion and dark hair. Weissowa also highlighted her patience and enjoyment in posing for the artists. One of the portraits, titled *The Violinist* (Skrzypaczka, 1921), is presented above. In general, Hellerówna had a strong affinity for the arts. As a young girl, she developed exceptional talent in playing the violin and cello, with her teachers predicting a great future for her as a concert performer. However, performing on stage caused her significant stress, leading her to abandon this vocation abruptly.

During her early years, Hellerówna had a unique affection for the colour green, which she incorporated into her clothing, accessories, and interiors. Notably, she kept a green leather-bound book in which she collected autographs from renowned composers and concert performers, including pianists, violinists, violists, conductors, and singers. This collection began in Cracow in 1919 and continued through the 1960s in New York. The autograph book, preserved in *Toren's archives*, contains signatures from notable figures from around the world, such as Feodor Chaliapin, George Enescu, Grzegorz Fitelberg, Walter Gieseking, Emil Gilels, Grace Moore, Mieczysław Horszowski, Henri Koch, Benno Moiseiwitsch, David Oistrakh, Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin, or Arturo Toscanini.

Some of the autographs also include brief notes from the authors. For example, one of the earliest pages, likely from the early 1920s, features a dedication from Paul Grüümmer, a German cellist: "Fräulein Heller für ausgezeichnete I. Geige!" (eng. "To Miss Heller, for an excellent first violin")<sup>6</sup> and "Mit herzlichen Dank für die freundliche Führung" (eng. "With heartfelt thanks for the kind guidance").

<sup>6</sup> All translations in the body of the paper are by Ami Toren, and those in the bibliography are by Paweł Golda, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>7</sup> In an orchestra, the first violin section holds a leading role within the string section, often carrying the melody and the most prominent parts of the musical piece. In German, as well as in Polish, the term can also be used metaphorically to describe someone who plays a dominant or leading role in a group or situation, making the dedication a clever wordplay.



Photo 1. *The Violinist* – Portrait of Helena Hellerówna by Wojciech Weiss (Konopacki, Weiss 2013). Reproduced with permission from the copyright holder

In her affidavit dated March 30, 1955, submitted as part of her compensation proceedings, Hellerówna stated that her parents ensured she received a good education. She reported attending high school and graduating with the *matura* in 1927 (*Toren's archives*). However, since Hellerówna made herself ten years younger than she was, it appears that the correct graduation year was likely 1917. Unfortunately, we do not know which high school she graduated from. In the same affidavit, she also claimed to have studied at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow until 1931, completing her studies with a degree in Philosophy. However, this information appears to be inaccurate in light of the records found in the Jagiellonian University archives.

First of all, Mariusz Kulczykowski (2004: 570), in his book, which serves as a database of Jewish students at the Jagiellonian University between 1918 and 1939, indicates that Helena Hellerówna began her studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in the academic year 1918/1919. This information is confirmed by several documents preserved in the Jagiellonian University archives, most of which were compiled and signed by her. These documents prove that Hellerówna studied from the spring semester of 1918/1919 until the academic year 1922/1923. It means that she correctly enrolled each year as follows: 1918/1919 (spring semester only), 1919/1920, 1920/1921, 1921/1922, and 1922/1923, thereby completing a total of four full years. Her documents do not provide any information about the high school she graduated from, nor is there any evidence of her entry exams.

As previously mentioned, Hellerówna was a student at the Faculty of Philosophy, where she took courses in the sciences, including organic chemistry, experimental physics, heredity and reproduction, and anthropology. She also attended courses on foreign art, such as the history of art in Italy, Italian

painting, the history of Greek sculpture, the history of opera, and German painting of the 15th and 16th centuries. Regarding Polish art and culture, she studied contemporary Polish painting, Polish literature of the 15th and 16th centuries, and the history of mediaeval architecture in Poland. Additionally, Hellerówna took foreign language courses in English, French, and Italian. Her language instructors included Polish professors, such as Michał Dziewicki and Bolesław Kielski, and foreign teachers like Fr. Fortunato Giannini for Italian and Louis Bernard for French. She also participated in a course on translating classical works taught by Michał Dziewicki for several semesters.

As previously mentioned, Hellerówna claimed in her affidavit to have studied at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow until 1931. Another source, the 1975–1976 edition of the American Biographical Institute's *Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans*, lists her as having obtained an *absolutorium*<sup>8</sup> in Philosophy in 1930<sup>9</sup>. However, the Jagiellonian University archives contain no evidence that she was enrolled after 1923, and she indeed completed her studies that year. The discrepancies in the reported years of completion – 1931 in the affidavit and 1930 in the biographical dictionary – are likely due to her attempts to make herself younger.

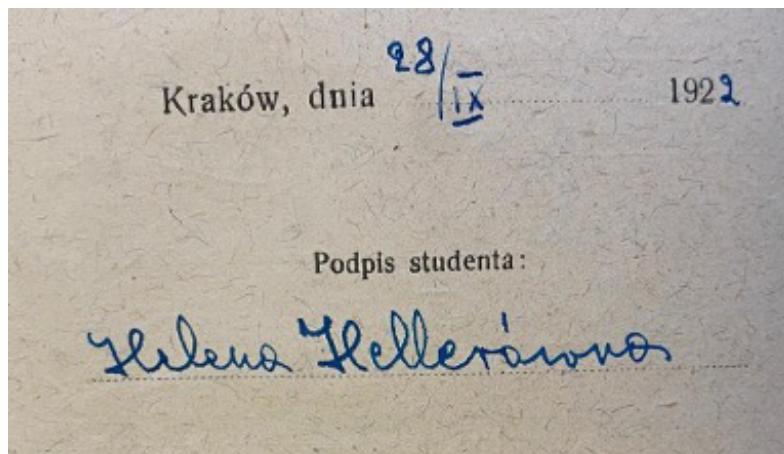


Photo 2. Helena Hellerówna's signature on her registration card for the Jagiellonian University, dated September 28, 1922 (Jagiellonian University Archives, ref. WF II 406)

---

8 It is also worth noting that, at that time, diplomas for completing studies, other than doctoral diplomas, did not exist. Students who discontinued their studies had two options: they could request a certificate from the university, either an *absolutorium* (eng. "certificate of completion"; [translation by Joanna Ryszka]) if they had completed a sufficient number of courses and years, or a *świadczenie o odejściu* (eng. "certificate of departure"; [translation by J. R.]) if they had not completed the required number of courses and years. Alternatively, they could simply leave without any formal confirmation of their studies. Presumably, Hellerówna did not request either type of certificate, as the university has preserved many copies of such certificates, but none were issued to her.

9 This entry was likely based on self-reported information provided by Hellerówna, given that, as the Library of Congress informed us, this publication included details about individuals who contacted the editors and paid a fee for their information to be included.

According to Ewa Kołodziejczyk (2019–), in the 1930s, while professionally active, Hellerówna travelled abroad regularly. However, despite the extensive scope of our research, we found no clear evidence to substantiate this claim. We hoped to confirm this information through her previously mentioned autograph book, a collection that began in Cracow in 1919 and continued through the 1960s in New York. Upon reviewing the approximately one hundred autographs Hellerówna collected, we identified one from Leipzig in 1923 and another from Vienna, though the latter lacked a date. This limited evidence is insufficient to conclude that her travels abroad were regular. Most of the 1920s and 1930s autographs originated in Cracow, with others lacking any location indication. While the collection includes numerous signatures of international musicians, these could have been gathered during performances in Cracow. There is also one inscription from Krynica. Ami Toren recalls that, according to his mother's testimony, their relative spent significant time travelling between Cracow and Warsaw. However, we found no autographs explicitly linked to Warsaw. Autographs from the 1950s and 1960s clearly indicate her presence in New York.

### Translation Career

After examining her early life and education, we will proceed to discuss her professional life. During her translation career, which likely began in 1928, Hellerówna translated at least seventy literary works, which she usually signed as *Helena Hellerówna*, but also as *Hel Hel* (Bar 1936: 147; Bar 1938: 40, e.g. *Babel d'amour* by Pierre Zenda) and *H. H.* (e.g. *Mariages* by Charles Plisnier). She worked with various publishing houses in Poland, including *Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Rój,"* *Wydawnictwo Współczesne*, and *Stanisław Cukrowski*. Hellerówna translated books from German (e.g. works by Goll, Gaugenwald, Heuer, and Kaus), French (e.g. Mauriac, Benoit, and Morand), English (e.g. Hichens, Bradley, Marshall King, Parke, Parrot, Queen, and Thomas), as well as, from Italian (e.g. Pitigrilli), and possibly Norwegian (e.g. Haakon Bugge Mahrt)<sup>10</sup>. She published and contributed to *Around the World, New Daily, AS*, and *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny (Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans 1975)*. For her work for the latter, she is recognised by some scholars, e.g. Bańdo (2006: 135), who mentioned her as the translator of, for instance, André Maurois and Haakon Bugge Mahrt.

Table 1. The source language of the translated books

English	French	German	Italian	Norwegian
14	40	11	1	1

<sup>10</sup> It is uncertain whether Hellerówna translated *Orkanen* directly from Norwegian or maybe used another language as an intermediary. This doubt arises from the fact that Norwegian is significantly different from any other language Hellerówna knew, and it would have taken her a considerable amount of time to learn it fluently enough to translate books from Norwegian efficiently. Moreover, Haakon Bugge Mahrt wrote *Orkanen* mostly in riksmål, though some of the fragments were written in dialect, which would have been extremely difficult to render correctly without proper knowledge of the language.

According to Hellerówna's information in her autobiographical note, she was also the translator of short Italian stories and contributed to *Around the World* and *New Daily* (*Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans* 1975). However, the search for confirmation of this information has posed some challenges. *Google News Archive* does not list any periodicals under these two titles. We can find some periodicals titled *New Daily* (e.g. edited by Edward Martell and published between 1960 and 1967, see Green 2002: 230); yet none of them were published when Hellerówna was professionally active. It is highly probable that *Around the World* and *New Daily* are actually English translations of the Polish periodicals' titles. *New Daily* refers most likely to *Nowy Dziennik*, published 1918–1939 (*Jagiellońska Biblioteka Cyfrowa*, cf. Brzoza 1998), which in the issues from 188 to 199 from 1931, edited by Zygmunt Hochwald, included fragments *Le Soleil de minuit* written by Pierre Benoit and translated by Helena Hellerówna. This provides some evidence that the *New Daily* mentioned by Hellerówna is the Polish Jewish *Nowy Dziennik* published in Cracow. Moreover, according to the recollections of Ami Toren, Hellerówna's cousin, Zygmunt Aleksandrowicz, was a sponsor of the journal in question. Their families were close, and it is possible that Hellerówna began her collaboration with *Nowy Dziennik* with Aleksandrowicz's help.

When it comes to *Around the World*, it could either refer to *Dookoła Świata* (eng. "Around the World"; [translation by J. R.]) or *Okienko na Świat. Pismo dzieci i młodzieży* (eng. "Window to the World. Periodical for children and youth"; [translation by J. R.]). The argument for *Dookoła Świata* is that the title translates perfectly into English *Around the World*, yet it was published between 1954 and 1976 (*Polish National Library*), which was after Hellerówna ended her professional career. On the other hand, *Okienko na Świat. Pismo dzieci i młodzieży* was published between 1937 and 1939 and, like *Nowy Dziennik*, was a Jewish periodical published in Cracow (Szablowska-Zaremba 2015). Moreover, *Okienko na Świat. Pismo dzieci i młodzieży* published short stories translated from various languages, including German, French, and Italian. Yet, none of the issues available at *Jagiellońska Biblioteka Cyfrowa* includes Hellerówna's name or her name's acronym as the author of the translations. Additionally, her name does not appear in the article by Szablowska-Zaremba (2015), which discusses the history of *Okienko na Świat. Pismo dzieci i młodzieży* in great detail and lists most of the contributors who worked for this periodical.

The argument for Hellerówna's decision to translate Polish periodical titles into English is that the biographical notes in *Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans* (1975), as already mentioned, were published for a fee. The price likely depended on the length of the note, which may explain why Hellerówna opted for shorter English titles. It is also possible that, after many years, she did not fully recall the names of the journals she had translated for or worked with.

Kołodziejczyk (2019–) also suggests that Hellerówna translated works from Spanish, potentially referring to some translations published in periodicals. However, we were unable to confirm this information.

The majority of Hellerówna's translations were prepared by her alone, with a few exceptions. She collaborated with Małgorzata Sokołowska on *Bacchante* by Robert Smythe Hichens, which was published by *Biblioteka Groszowa* in 1929. She also worked with Tadeusz Ćwikliński on *Aerodrome* by Rex Warner, published by *Wydawnictwo "Awir"* in 1947. Additionally, she partnered with Witold Zechenter, who translated the poems included in her version of André Maurois's *Silences du colonel Bramble – Les discours du dr. O'Grady*, first published by *Biblioteka Groszowa* in 1930.

It is important to note that the number of translations attributed to Hellerówna may not necessarily reflect the total number of books she translated. This discrepancy arises from her translations being

published either twice<sup>11</sup> or the translation being divided into two parts<sup>12</sup>. The fact that the translations were republished under different titles did not go unnoticed by critics. For instance, Witold Chwalewik (1932: 185) commented on Vioux's *Le requin*, and Zygmunt Czerny (1933: 154) did the same for Dyvonne's *Chipette et lui* (1933: 154) and Ursula Parrot's *Ex-Wife* (1932: 122). Notably, the initial preparation of the complete list of Hellerówna's translations suggested that one manuscript, *Baskijski dzwonek*, was published posthumously. However, this book, published in 1993, is actually a reprint of Hellerówna's 1936 translation of Martha Ostenso's *Prologue to Love*, which was originally titled *Prolog miłości*.

Table 2. The reasons for multiple presence of the same source books

Divided into two parts	First published in a newspaper	First published under a different title
7	11	7

Naturally, columns two and three in Table 2 are not mutually exclusive. Some of the books, whose fragments were first published in newspapers, initially had different titles, which later changed when published as books. However, three book translations were published under two different titles from the start, e.g. Ursula Parrott's *Ex-Wife* was published in Poland in 1932 by *Wydawnictwo Współczesne* under titles *Eks-żona* and *Rozwódka*.

Notably, the *Polish National Library* questions the translatorship of *Le Soleil de minuit* by Pierre Benoit, published in 1932 by *Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Rój"*. This doubt likely arises from the fact that *Rocznik Literacki za rok 1932* (1932: 182) lists this translation as without specifying a translator. However, as noted earlier, Hellerówna did indeed translate *Le Soleil de minuit* into Polish, with the first publication appearing in *Nowy Dziennik* in 1931.

After WWII, Hellerówna planned to continue her career as a translator, as she commented in 1946 for *Tygodnik Odrodzenie*. She mentioned that she had just completed the translation of Mauriac's *La Chair et le Sang*, a work she had already translated, but whose typescript had been destroyed during the war. She also expressed her intention to continue translating Mauriac's *Mamona*, the typescript of which had also been lost. Hellerówna noted plans to translate four novels by William Somerset Maugham: *The Razor's Edge*, *Up at the Villa*, *The Mixture as Before*, and *Christmas Holiday* (*Tygodnik Odrodzenie* 1946: 21). However, her career as a literary translator most likely ended in 1947 with the publication of her last two translations, Mauriac's *La Chair et le Sang* and Warner's *Aerodrome*.

11 Some of her versions were published under two different titles, e.g. *Prologue to Love* by Marta Ostenso or *Der Page vom Dalmasse-Hotel* by Maria Peteani, or by two different publishers, e.g. *The Wife* by Helen Grace Carlisle was published by both *Biblioteka Tygodnika Ilustrowanego* in 1938 and *Powszechna Spółka Wydawnicza "Płomień"* in 1939.

12 For instance, *Bernard Quesnay* by André Maurois or *Voici ton Maître* by Marcel Prévost.

Table 3. Translations per publisher

	<i>ABC – Nowiny Codzienne</i>	<i>Wydawnictwo "Awir"</i>	<i>Biblioteka Groszowa</i>	<i>Biblioteka Tygodnika Ilustrowanego</i>	<i>Dad. powieściowy „ABC”</i>	<i>Graf</i>	<i>Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny</i>	<i>Institytut Wydawniczy „Plan”</i>	<i>Lektura</i>	<i>Nowy Dziennik</i>	<i>Powszechna Spółka Wydawnicza „Plomień”</i>	<i>Premie Powieściowe „Świata”</i>	<i>Stanisław Cukrowski</i>	<i>Towarzystwo Wydawnicze „Rój”</i>	<i>Udziałowa Spółka Wydawnicza</i>	<i>Wydawnictwo „Globus” we Lwowie</i>	<i>Wydawnictwo Współczesne</i>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>1928</b>																		<b>1</b>
<b>1929</b>		1																<b>1</b>
<b>1930</b>		2																<b>3</b>
<b>1931</b>									1							2	4	<b>7</b>
<b>1932</b>															1	2	5	<b>8</b>
<b>1933</b>			1									1			1	1	2	<b>6</b>
<b>1934</b>				1		1									1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>1935</b>					2							14	1	1		1		<b>19</b>
<b>1936</b>	1			1		1				1		9	2					<b>15</b>
<b>1937</b>										3				1				<b>4</b>
<b>1938</b>				1			4	1	1		3			4				<b>14</b>
<b>1939</b>							3	3			1			1				<b>8</b>
<b>1947</b>		2																<b>2</b>
<b>1993</b>						1												<b>1</b>
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>93</b>

In 1967, Hellerówna applied for reparations under the German Federal Act (BGBL I S. 559). In her application, she stated that she had joined the PEN Club, which granted translators the same rights as authors. According to her statement, her work as a translator earned her a decent salary of approximately PLN 25,000–30,000 per year. Additionally, she was a member of the Association of Polish Writers in Cracow and the Association of Authors, Composers, and Publishers in Warsaw (ZAIKS) (AINR). This suggests that she was well-connected in the literary community, rather than isolated.

Interestingly, some authors, for instance, Eugenia Prokop-Janiec (2023: 202) – most likely mistakenly – suggest that *Helena Heller* was a pen name of Róża Heller (1906–1936, according to Minakowski 2024). Róża Heller, “the only daughter of the wealthy owners of Hotel Europejski and a student of the Jagiellonian University” (Prokop-Janiec 2023: 202), was an influential figure in Cracow’s literary and artistic salons (*ibid.*) and an acquaintance of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński (Landau-Czajka 2006: 102–103). Prokop-Janiec (2023: 202) further claims that Róża Heller translated for *As* journal, where *Helena Heller*’s translations were also published. However, it seems highly unlikely that both Helena and Róża would have published under the same name and in the same journal.



Photo 3. A portrait photo of young Helena Hellerówna (AINR, ref. IPN BU 1540/1707)

### During the War<sup>13</sup>

Helena Hellerówna lived in Cracow at Grabowskiego 13 until December 3, 1940. During this period, she and her mother sought baptismal certificates from the Catholic Church in an attempt to avoid Nazi

13 This part of the paper is mainly based on several documents from 1954 to 1968, related to Hellerówna’s postwar claim for reparations from the German authorities, preserved in the *Toren’s archives*. Another important source of information is Ami Toren’s knowledge, based on familial memory of those events. His insights were particularly valuable in determining

persecution. Despite applying to the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow and even writing to the Mayor of Cracow on September 15, 1941, there is no record of a response (Grądzka-Rejak 2018: 105–106). Family records, however, suggest that they eventually received the certificates. Unfortunately, these documents offered little protection against the harsh realities that followed.

On December 3, 1940, Hellerówna, her mother, and her aunt Zofia Frommer were arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Piaski, near Lublin. After three months, on March 2, 1941, the translator managed to escape and fled to Łagiewniki, near Cracow, where she worked at a brick factory and stayed until September 1941, with her mother and aunt still by her side.

In September 1941, Hellerówna sought refuge with a friendly Aryan family, the Murdzinskis (most likely *Marudzińscy*), in Gorlice, where she pretended to be their Aryan cousin. This family provided her with a hiding place in a small wooden chamber, measuring 1.5 metres in length and 1 metre in width. Inside this confined space, she was given two horse blankets, a straw mat, a pot of drinking water, and a bucket for basic needs. At night, food – typically stale bread and boiled potatoes – was passed to her through a small opening. The situation took a dangerous turn in October 1942 when a neighbour suspected her of being Jewish and reported her to the local authorities. Her identity card was confiscated for verification, which was supposed to be completed the next day. To avoid detection, Hellerówna fled to Drochlin, near Koniecpol, where the Murdzinski family's relatives provided her with a new identity card under the name *Helena Dembowska*.

In November 1942, her mother fell gravely ill with pneumonia. Neighbours urged the translator to call a priest to administer last rites, but fearing exposure due to their lack of knowledge of catechism, her mother insisted on leaving their hiding place. Tragically, she passed away destitute and homeless on November 15, 1942, in her daughter's arms on the cold streets of Drochlin. She was buried in the church cemetery in Lelów, near Częstochowa. *The Book of the Deceased* in 1942 from the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Martin in Lelów, held by the parish, contains an entry for Anna Frommer. Unfortunately, the exact location of the grave is not specified, and it is likely that, after being unattended for many years, the grave was removed.

After her mother's death, Hellerówna continued to hide with her aunt Zofia. From January 10, 1943, they stayed in Swoszowice and Prądnik near Cracow. They lived in deplorable conditions, constantly fearing for their lives, often starving, and suffering from extreme weakness. The Bandurowski family, who hid them, provided some shelter, but their safety was always at risk. The hardships continued until March 21, 1944, when both Hellerówna and her aunt Zofia were arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Montelupich Prison in Cracow. Zofia and nine other prisoners arrested that day were taken to be shot the next morning at the nearby camp Płaszów. Montelupich prison was notorious for detaining Jews who had been caught outside the ghetto while trying to live under Aryan identities. Prisoners there were either murdered or sent to concentration camps like Auschwitz, Płaszów, Gross-Rosen, or Pustków (Kostkiewicz 2020: 55). Due to her pre-war work as a translator, Hellerówna was forced to translate German documents for her captors, Herr Kindermann and Herr Lohsen. Despite this, she was subjected to daily beatings and the constant threat of deportation to a concentration camp.

---

whether Hellerówna's mother and aunt accompanied her during subsequent stages of their ordeal and in clarifying the fate of both women. Moreover, all the information presented in this section of the paper, including the precise dates, was further confirmed with several documents from the Arolsen Archives, copies of which were provided for our examination by the Institute of National Remembrance in March 2025.

On January 16, 1945, just two days before the arrival of the Red Army, Hellerówna was transferred to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp and then to Langenbielau, near Breslau, where she became prisoner No. 93504. She was forced to work at the Lehmann aircraft factory until her liberation on May 8, 1945.

On May 8, 1945, she was liberated by the Soviet Army. Since the train connection to Cracow was not operational at this time, Hellerówna had to work at the Flechtner factory in Reichenbach to earn a living.

Table 4. The place and dates of Helena Hellerówna's residence in 1940–1945

Place	Date
Cracow	November 18, 1939–December 3, 1940
ZAL Piaski	December 3, 1940–March 2, 1941
Łagiewniki	March 2, 1941–September 1941
Gorlice	September 1941–October 1942
Drochlin	October 1942–January 10, 1943
Swoszowice	January 10, 1943–January 30, 1943
Prądnik	January 30, 1943–March 21, 1944
Montelupich Prison	March 21, 1944–January 16, 1945
KL Gross-Rosen, KL Langenbielau	January 16, 1945–May 8, 1945

The table above helps to summarise Hellerówna's location and periods of displacement. It also suggests where further information about her might be discovered in the future.

## Postwar Life

In July 1945, Helena Hellerówna, unexpectedly for her family, arrived in Cracow, having just been released from a concentration camp. Her arrival came at a crucial moment for her family: the morning before her relatives – her sister-in-law Irena (Rozalia) and Ewa Heller (mother of Ami Toren) – were scheduled to leave Poland. They had decided not to remain in Poland, which they considered “a graveyard for Jews”, and had arranged a clandestine route to Palestine. Hellerówna's arrival was met with indescribable surprise and joy. During the reunion, she learned of her brother's death and recounted the tragic fates of her mother and aunt. Although Hellerówna's return was a momentous event, Ewa Heller hesitated to delay their departure due to the difficulties in arranging it. At the same time, the translator needed time to settle her affairs in Cracow. As of 1946 and 1947, she resided at Grabowskiego 13 (Hirschberg 2024; *JHI*), 13/4 (*JHI*; *AINR*), or 130/3 (*JHI*), or alternatively at Grabowskiego Boczna 3 (*AINR*) in Cracow. There, in Cracow, Hellerówna met her future husband, Dr. Adolf Atlas.

Adolf Atlas was born on August 15, 1890, in Rzeszów, as the son of Herman or Hersz Atlas and Franciszka or Fany Atlas née Raff (Hirschberg 2024; *Military Historical Centre; JRI-Poland*). On November

1, 1918, he enlisted as a volunteer in the Sanok Rifle Battalion<sup>14</sup>. He earned a Doctor of Law degree and practised as an attorney in Sanok until 1939 (Hirschberg 2024; Kirkiczenko, Kraczkiewicz 1929: 219, 1939: 277). Dr. Atlas was a member of the Association of Economic Journalists, serving on its board of directors. Additionally, he was a prolific publicist, contributing to various economic journals and newspapers such as *Bank* and *Dziennik Gazeta Handlowa*<sup>15</sup>. He was also elected a councillor of the Sanok City Council in mid-1939, just before the outbreak of WWII (Drwięga 2008: 46). Adolf Atlas was married before. With his wife Roża (born in 1891 as the daughter of Samuel and Eugenia), he had a son, Ryszard, born in Lviv on August 19, 1929 (*Yad Vashem*).

In 1939, Dr. Atlas visited his brother, Marcelli Atlas<sup>16</sup>, in the United States<sup>17</sup>. During his stay, WWII broke out, preventing him from returning to Poland. He made several, unfortunately unsuccessful, attempts to rescue his family from occupied Poland<sup>18</sup>.

The 1940 *United States Federal Census* lists Dr. Atlas as *Adolph Atlas*, using the English spelling of his name, with a residence at 1222 48th St, A.D. 9, Kings, New York, United States. Most likely, somewhere around that time, and presumably with the help of his brother, he obtained American citizenship. After the war, Atlas still actively searched for his family, and when his efforts yielded no results, he travelled to Poland personally. Upon his return, he learned that his wife and son had perished<sup>19</sup>. During this time, he also met Helena, whom he decided to marry before returning to the United States.

14 He participated in the combat against the Ukrainians for Eastern Galicia as an aide to General Henryk Minkiewicz. Following the disbandment of the battalion, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the 2nd Podhale Rifle Regiment, with which he fought in the Polish-Bolshevik War. In May 1920, near Narajówka, he sustained severe injuries, and after recuperating in a hospital in Kharkiv, he regained his health but was left with lasting disabilities. He was repatriated to Poland as part of a prisoner exchange. He was awarded the Cross of Valor and the Orlęta Honor Badge. Additionally, he served as the vice-president of the Union of Jewish Participants in the Fight for Polish Independence in Sanok (*Sztetl*).

15 As a columnist for *Dziennik Gazeta Handlowa*, he won second prize in a competition organised by PKO, the Polish bank, on the topic of the importance and conditions of capitalization in Poland in 1933 (*Głos Narodu* 1933: 6).

16 He also signed himself as *Marcel Atlas* (e.g. 1950 *Census* or his passport applications from March 1920 and March 1924), *Marcel A. Atlas* (e.g. several contact directories of Detroit available on *MyHeritage*), *Marcel Alfred Atlas* (e.g. *October 14, 1937 New York Passenger List*), or *Alfred Marcel* (*August 15, 1950 New York Passenger List*). He was born on June 9, 1892, in Limanau, Austria. He studied in France and later emigrated to the United States, sailing from Hamburg on April 11, 1910. He lived in New York, Ohio, Toledo, and Michigan and was naturalised as a United States citizen in Detroit on September 3, 1917 or September 29, 1916 (cf. his passport applications). In the United States, he became the president of Mechanical Engineer Ing Service Corp based in Detroit. Before 1936, he married Blanche or Beatrice Blanche Atlas, born on February 8, 1907 in Kokomo, Indiana (*October 14, 1937 New York Passenger List*). They had no children. Marcel Atlas died on January 24, 1979, and Blanche probably passed away in the 1980s (*MyHeritage*).

17 His name appears on the *List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States No. 4*, which records passengers sailing from Gdynia on July 23, 1939 and arriving at the Port of New York on August 2, 1939. He paid for the ticket himself and declared having a wife, Roża Atlas, residing in Sanok, and a brother, Marcelli Atlas, living at 153 East Elizabeth St., Detroit, Michigan.

18 Dr. Atlas even travelled to Europe, and his name also appears on another passenger list, the *List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States No. 5*, which records passengers sailing from Southampton on October 14, 1939, and arriving at the Port of New York on October 24, 1939.

19 His wife, Róża Atlas née Ende, was residing at Sapieha 47 in Lwów at the time of her disappearance in August 1942, during the German liquidation actions against the Jewish population (*Monitor Polski*, April 10, 1948: 11). According to the Institute of National Remembrance, she was executed – most likely shot – in Lviv in 1942. The circumstances surrounding the death of their son remain unknown.

Helena Hellerówna was always an opponent of Communism. She worked for a newspaper in Poland that was well-known for its anti-Communist stance. After WWII, when the Communists came to power, the newspaper was banned, and all its employees faced persecution. As a Jew, Hellerówna feared for her life, mainly due to the anti-Semitic sentiments among the Polish population. She witnessed the Kielce pogrom in 1946 with horror and attempted to leave Poland at that time (*HHAf*). Unfortunately, leaving Poland proved difficult (Semczyszyn 2018), and she was forbidden to emigrate due to her poor health (*HHAf*). Around that time, Hellerówna was accused of collaborating with the Nazis, and her case was brought before a court in Cracow. Since the Gestapo had imprisoned her under duress, she was eventually acquitted.

After the war, Hellerówna began working as a translator for the French consulate in Cracow. In May 1948, the consulate facilitated her travel to Paris under various pretexts (*HHAf*). In her application for a passport and visa, she emphasized her membership in the Association of Polish Writers in Cracow and the Association of Authors, Composers, and Publishers in Warsaw (ZAIKS). To strengthen her application, in addition to assistance from the French consulate, she also received an attestation from the ZAIKS stating that she was traveling to Paris on behalf of this association. The purpose of her trip was to acquire the rights to works by French authors and to sell the copyrights of Polish novelists (AINR). Dr. Atlas, already in France, awaited her arrival, and they married on August 28, 1948 (*HHCv*) at the town hall of the 1st arrondissement of Paris (AINR)<sup>20</sup>. In the marriage certificate<sup>21</sup>, Hellerówna listed her profession as *Femme de Lettres* (eng. "woman of letters")<sup>22</sup>.

In January 1949, Mrs. and Mr. Atlas arrived in New York. Hellerówna entered the United States as the wife of an American citizen (*HHAf*)<sup>23</sup>. Since her Polish citizenship was never formally revoked, she was Polish until her naturalisation on July 26, 1951, as a United States citizen, and after that, she held two citizenships (*Ancestry; HHAf*).

While living in the United States, Hellerówna did not continue her professional career. Dr. Atlas's brother, Marcelli, who had amassed considerable wealth in Detroit, ensured that his relatives would not need to work (*HHCv*). Dr. Atlas passed away on September 20, 1963. Due to the limited availability of burial plots in Manhattan, he was interred at Riverside Cemetery in Saddle Brook, Bergen County, New Jersey (*Find a Grave*)<sup>24</sup>. After his death, Marcel Atlas continued to support Hellerówna financially until her passing (*HHCv*). According to Ami Toren, Hellerówna had a close relationship with her family, even after her move to the United States.

20 It is worth noting an anecdote: Hellerówna's former sweetheart, from a conservative elite family, whose identity remains unknown, had been reluctant to marry and only sought her hand later on. His letter reached Hellerówna just as she was marrying another man in Paris.

21 The marriage certificate number 043416 issued by the Town Hall of the 1st arrondissement of Paris on August 31, 1948 (AINR).

22 The current records of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Paris, including data from the now-closed General Consulates in Lille and Strasbourg, do not contain any documents pertaining to Hellerówna (based on correspondence with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Paris on August 5, 2024).

23 They lived at several addresses, including 250 West 82nd Street, New York, NY 10024 (Bandurkowa *et al.* 1960: 115) and 21 West 95th Street, New York, NY 10025, in 1951 (the latter address appears on her naturalisation petition). Their last known address was 340 West 87th Street, New York, NY 10024.

24 Hellerówna's last known address was approximately a 25-minute cab ride from Riverside Cemetery.

Helena Hellerówna had a remarkable talent for spotting collectables and art. After her husband's death, she began collecting antiques on a significant scale. She stopped collecting autographs and attending concerts and, instead, focused on auctions and estate sales. Her knowledge of European art and interior styling was extraordinary. Hellerówna was adept at identifying outstanding pieces at unusual venues. Her home became a repository of valuables<sup>25</sup>.

### Final Years

Despite living independently, Helena Hellerówna's final years in New York were marked by happiness and fulfilment. She was able to pursue her interests and utilise her extensive knowledge.

In her last year, Hellerówna was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and her condition deteriorated rapidly. She was admitted to a hospital, where the significant costs of her treatment necessitated the liquidation of her most cherished possessions through two large auctions. During this challenging period, Hellerówna received invaluable support from her best friend, Carola Rowe<sup>26</sup>.

In her final months, Hellerówna experienced hallucinations, believing she was back in the concentration camp. She was terrified of the nurses, whom she imagined to be angels of death. Hellerówna passed away on June 25, 1978, with her death notice published in the *New York Times* the following day: "ATLAS – Helen A., beloved wife of the late Adolph, loving aunt and friend to many. Services Tuesday, 2 PM at Frank E. Campbell, Madison Ave at 81 St." She was laid to rest in an eternal grave at Maple Grove Cemetery, located on Kew Gardens Road, Kew Gardens, NY 11415, in Section E, Lot 252, Unit B, Grave #3.



Photo 4. Helena Hellerówna's grave. The photograph originates from the private archive of Ami Toren and is published with the author's permission

<sup>25</sup> After Helena Hellerówna's death, the family organised several auctions. Her belongings can be found for instance in the auction catalogue of the sale of Fine Jewelry at Phillips in New York, December 12, 1978.

<sup>26</sup> Carola Rowe née Bauer, born on October 10, 1920, in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, was a concentration camp survivor like Hellerówna. After WWII, Carola vowed not to have children. Consequently, when she married Arthur Rowe (originally Rabinowitz, born in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, in 1917 and died in 2017 in New York), they did not have any children. They resided at 18 West 70th Street, New York City. Carola passed away on February 22, 2012, in Hartsdale, New York.

## Reception of the Translations and Reviews

Opinions on Helena Hellerówna's translations varied. In *Kurjer warszawski: wydanie wieczorne* from January 17, 1931, we can read that translating fast-paced Paul Morand's *New-York*'s plot was beyond Hellerówna's depth, suggesting she did not do very well. Moreover, this translation was also criticised due to the number of mistakes, which the reviewer perceived as disrespectful to the reader (Sobesto 2024: 315, who quotes an article from 1931 published in *Kurjer Lwowski*). The review by Chwalewik (1932: 130) praised her for few linguistic mistakes in her translation of Ursula Parrott's *Ex-wife* but criticised her neutral treatment of a plot that was supposed to shock. The following year, she was praised by Czerny (1933: 167) for an improvement in the quality of her translation based on Maurois' *Cercle de famille*. However, Czerny (1933: 168) also expressed his surprise at Hellerówna's decision to translate the "pornographic" *Babel d'amour* by Zenda.

In *Rocznik Literacki* from 1934, Wanda Tyszkowa criticised Hellerówna's translation of Maurois' *Les discours du docteur O'Grady – Les silences du colonel Bramble* for its numerous linguistic errors and discrepancies with the original work. Tyszkowa (1934: 157) made similar comments on Hellerówna's language in the translation of Morand's *France la Doulce*. Henryk Elzenberg (1936: 122) also found Hellerówna's translation of Maurois' *Voltaire* to be "strongly flawed."

In 1935, Andrzej Mikułowski and Stanisław Kaliszewski offered their critiques on Hellerówna's translations of *Bernard Quesnay* by André Maurois and *L'Île verte* by Pierre Benoit, respectively. Mikułowski (1935: 5) pointed out some semantic mistakes, suggesting that there were likely many more to be found. Kaliszewski (1935: 5), on the other hand, commented that her translation "leaves a great deal to be desired."

In 1937, Bruno Schultz (1937: 4) reviewed Mauriac's *Anges noirs* but did not comment on the quality of Hellerówna's translation. Similarly, Adam Bar (1938: 10) discussed Carlisle's *Mother's cry* without further comments on the translation, proving Venuti's (2008) point of translators being overshadowed by the work or original author. After some time, once negative or critical reviews became more positive, describing Hellerówna's translations as "correct," e.g. *Ilustrowany Tygodnik AS* from December 18, 1938, on Mauriac's *Fleuve de feu* published in Polish as *Strumień ognisty*. It is worth highlighting that the mentioned review was printed in the newspaper where Hellerówna also published her translations (*Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans* 1975). This shared affiliation may have contributed to the positive tone of the review.

Unfortunately, despite translating many books by at least forty authors, Hellerówna's work did not gain significant scholarly attention until recently. However, it should be admitted that her translations had to be somewhat popular since out of seventy translated titles, eleven (e.g. *Edouard VII et son temps* by André Maurois and *Anges noirs* by François Mauriac) were first published in newspapers or periodicals before being released in book form. It seems unlikely that publishers would have opted to print translations that did not resonate with Polish readers. While the decision to republish these translations in book form may have been driven by the popularity of the original authors, the success of Hellerówna's translations likely played a role as well.

## Conclusions

Helena Hellerówna was an extraordinary and captivating figure. Her family background played a crucial role in shaping her career path, and she surrounded herself with many inspiring individuals, including artists and intellectuals. Deeply devoted to her family and friends, her social relationships remained a cornerstone of her life until the end. Hellerówna was fortunate to live and work during the interwar period, a time when translation was thriving (Sobesto 2024), which allowed her to achieve financial independence and live on her own terms. Though her life during the war was marked by tragedy and hardship, she overcame these challenges through her inner strength. Fortunately, after the war, she was able to lead a happy life with her loving husband.

The analysis of Hellerówna's post-war life suggests that translation was her primary source of income before the war. The discontinuation of her translation career after marrying Dr. Atlas could stem from the negative impact that her work for the Nazis had on her perception of this translation. As a result, after the war, she worked briefly for the French consulate, and her translation plans, outlined in *Tygodnik Odrodzenie* (1946), never came true. Another possible reason for ceasing her career was the fear of her co-workers, which she mentioned in her application for reparations. We can assume that translation was mainly a means of income for Hellerówna rather than her passion, as she did not pursue it after moving to the United States. Nevertheless, these are mere speculations that can naturally be difficult to confirm or deny. Among the questions that arose during the analysis and can be further pursued are those related to the character of Róża Heller and the possibility that Róża is the author of one translation attributed to Helena Hellerówna.

Lastly, the number of translations presented in Table 3 is naturally impressive. However, it has to be noted that twenty-two positions from this list are reprints, and the final list consists of seventy distinct original titles. Nonetheless, Hellerówna translated at least seventy books over the course of eighteen years (with at least a three-year break) from at least five languages. Hopefully, the compiled list of translations and the information provided prove that Helena Hellerówna deserves recognition as one of the most prolific Polish translators of the twentieth century.

## Acknowledgements

The authors express their gratitude to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Paris, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in the United States, the Jewish Historical Institute, the Jagiellonian University Archives, the Archives of Gross-Rosen Museum, the New York State Archives, the U.S. Consulate General in Cracow, the Polish National Library, the Library of Congress, Andrzej Mrowiec, Zofia Weiss (Foundation of the Wojciech Weiss Museum), Alla Roylance (Bobst Library, New York University), and Markus Eberharter (University of Warsaw).

## Attachment

The complete list of the translations written by Helena Hellerówna is available at <http://tiny.cc/ojcpx>.

## References

Adamek, Wojciech, Janusz Radwan-Pragłowski (2006) "Ludwik Gumplowicz: A Forgotten Classic of European Sociology." [In:] *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 6(3); 381–398.

American Biographical Institute (1975) *Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans*. Raleigh: American Biographical Institute.

Bańdo, Adam (2006) *Nie tylko krew na pierwszej stronie. Problematyka kulturalna na łamach "Ilustrowanego Kuriera Codziennego" w latach 1918–1939*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej.

Bandurkowa, Zofia (ed.) (1960) *Dwa dni w mieście naszej młodości*. Warsaw: Zakłady Graficzne PZWS.

Bar, Adam (1936) *Słownik pseudonimów i kryptonimów pisarzy polskich oraz Polski dotyczących T.1 Pseudonimy i kryptonimy od A-K*. Cracow: Gebethner i Wolff.

Bar, Adam (1938) *Słownik pseudonimów i kryptonimów pisarzy polskich oraz Polski dotyczących T. 3 Wykaz nazwisk pisarzy*. Cracow: Gebethner i Wolff.

Brzoza, Czesław (1998) "Pierwsze lata 'Nowego Dziennika', organu syjonistów krakowskich." [In:] *Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej*, 1(1–2); 23–47.

Chesterman, Andrew (2009) "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies." [In:] *Hermes – Journal of Language and Communication Studies*, 42; 13–22.

Drwięga, Marek (2008) "Samorząd miejski Sanoka w latach 1918–1939." [In:] Franciszek Oberc (ed.) *Zeszyty Archiwum Ziemi Sanockiej, Tom 8*. Sanok: Fundacja "Archiwum Ziemi Sanockiej"; 36–79.

Eberharter, Markus (2014) "Socjologiczne spojrzenie na rolę tłumaczy literatury. Na przykładzie Wandy Kragen i recepcji literatur niemieckojęzycznych w Polsce po 1945 r." [In:] *Rocznik Przekładoznawczy*, 9; 115–128.

Eberharter, Markus (2017) "Wiktor hr. Baworowski. Bibliofil i tłumacz." [In:] *Rocznik Przekładoznawczy*, 12; 101–115.

Eberharter, Markus (2018) "Tłumacz i człowiek teatru: Jan Nepomucen Kamiński (1777–1855)." [In:] *Miedzy Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 24(1/39); 43–54.

Gaszyńska-Magiera, Małgorzata (2012) "Tłumacz w kontekście kulturowym i społecznym. O Zofii Chądzyskiej." [In:] *Przekładaniec*, 26; 68–86.

Golda, Paweł, Joanna Ryszka (2024) "O Marcelim Tarnowskim – tłumaczowi, redaktorowi, księgarzu." [In:] *Academic Journal of Modern Philology*, 22; 143–166.

Górski, Tomasz P. (2018) "Bolesław Leśmian jako tłumacz." [In:] *Rocznik Przekładoznawczy*, 13; 67–82.

Grądzka-Rejak, Martyna (2018) "'We Recognised Each Other by Our Eyes'. From Research on the Survival Strategies of Jewish Women Living 'on the Surface' on the 'Aryan' Side in Occupied Cracow and its Vicinity." [In:] Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, Adam Sitarek (eds) *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*. Warsaw: IPN; 94–126.

Green, Ewen H. H. (2002) *Ideologies of Conservatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jankowski, Edmund (ed.) (1996) *Słownik Pseudonimów Pisarzy Polskich*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Konopacki, Adam, Renata Weiss (2013) *Aneri Irena Weissowa – Wojciech Weiss. Travelling Exhibition Catalogue*. Łaziska Dolne: Encounters with Art.

Kostkiewicz, Janina (2020) "Niemiecka polityka eksterminacji i germanizacji polskich dzieci w czasie II wojny światowej." [In:] Kostkiewicz, Janina (ed.) *Zbrodnia bez kary... Eksterminacja i cierpienie polskich dzieci pod okupacją niemiecką (1939–1945)*. Cracow: Uniwersytet Jagielloński; 51–65.

Krajewska, Monika (2022) "Irina Adelgejm – tłumaczka (nie tylko) noblistki." [In:] *Rocznik Przekładoznawczy*, 12; 133–144.

Kulczykowski, Mariusz (2004) *Żydzi-studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*. Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności.

Landau-Czajka, Anna (2006) *Syn będzie Lech... Asymilacja Żydów w Polsce międzywojennej*. Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, Neriton.

Ostrowska-Knapik, Agata (2020) "Nazwiska w językach polskim i czeskim." [In:] *Studia Slavica*, 24(1); 77–84.

Płużyczka, Monika (2021) "Tłumacz miarą wszechrzeczy. Translatoryka antropocentryczna jako koncepcja prekursorska względem Translator Studies." [In:] Jolanta Knieja, Jarosław Krajka (eds) *Teksty, komunikacja, translacja w perspektywie antropocentrycznej. Studia dedykowane Panu Profesorowi Jerzemu Żmudzkiemu*. Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie; 91–111.

Prokop-Janiec, Eugenia (2023) "Mapping Modern Jewish Kraków. Women – Cultural Production – Space." [In:] Halina Goldberg, Nancy Sinkoff, Natalia Aleksiuń (eds) *Polish Jewish Culture beyond the Capital. Centering the Periphery*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; 188–211.

Ryszka, Joanna, Paweł Golda (in press) "Między życiorysem a maszynopisem. Przebłyski biografii Marcelego Tarnowskiego w jego przekładach."

Semczyszyn, Magdalena (2018) "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski 1944–1947 – kontekst międzynarodowy." [In:] *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 50(1); 95–121.

Skudrzyk, Aldona (1996) "Nazwiska żeńskie z przyrostkiem -owa we współczesnej polszczyźnie ogólnej." [In:] *Język Polski*, 76(1); 17–23.

Szablowska-Zaremba, Monika (2015) "Okienko na Świat. Pismo dzieci i młodzieży" 1937–1939. [In:] *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia ad Bibliothecarum Scientiam Pertinentia*, 13; 184–203.

Urbanik, Andrzej, Ewa Wyka, Monika Urbanik (2016) "Początki radiologii w Polsce w świetle dokumentów i eksponatów znajdujących się w zbiorach Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego." [In:] *Opuscula Musealia*, 24; 173–186.

Venuti, Lawrence (2008) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.

### Press and Brochures

(1929) "Izba adwokacka w Przemyślu." [In:] Jerzy Kirkiczenko, Marian Kraczkiewicz (eds) *Kalendarz sądowy na rok 1929*. Warsaw: Kadra; 216–220. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns2b> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1931) "Fatalna noc w Mukdenie" Tłum. Helena Hellerówna. [In:] *Nowy Dziennik*, 191 from July 18, 1931. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/r6981s-6> (date of access: October 8, 2024).

(1931) "Kronika Literacka." [In:] Bruno Kiciński (ed.) *Kurjer warszawski: wydanie wieczorne*, 111(17) from January 17, 1931. Warsaw: Dmuszewski; 9. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8f> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1933) "Wynik konkursu P.K.O. na temat kapitalizacji." [In:] Józef Warchałowski (ed.) *Głos Narodu*, 142 from May 28, 1933. Cracow: Karol Holeksa; 6. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8q> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1938) "Nowe książki" [In:] Franciszek Czajk (ed.) *Ilustrowany Tygodnik AS*, 51 from 18 December 18, 1938. Cracow: Zakłady Graficzne "I.K.C"; 32. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns87> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1939) "II Izba Adwokacka w Krakowie" [In:] Jerzy Kirkiczenko, Marian Kraczkiewicz (eds) *Kalendarz i informator sądowy na 1939 rok*. Warsaw: Biblioteka Prawnicza; 274–300. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns23> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1946) "W pracowniach pisarzy i uczonych. Ankieta 'Odrodzenia.'" [In:] Karol Kuryluk (ed.) *Tygodnik Odrodzenie*, 16–17 from April 21, 1946. Cracow: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Czytelnik"; 21. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8g> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

(1948) "IV. Do Sądu Grodzkiego w Krakowie." [In:] *Monitor Polski. Dziennik urzędowy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 36 from April 10, 1948. Warsaw: Polska Agencja Prasowa. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8d> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Bar, Adam (1938) "Czytamy powieści." [In:] Józef Wojciechowski (ed.) *Ilustrowany Dziennik Śląski*, 13(215) from August 7, 1938. Katowice: "Polska Zachodnia" Spółka Wydawnicza; 10. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8c> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Chwalewik, Witold (1932) "Literatura anglo-amerykańska." [In:] Zygmunt Szweykowski (ed.) *Rocznik literacki za rok 1932*. Warsaw: Instytut Literacki; 120–132. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns2s> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Czerny, Zygmunt (1933) "Literatura francuska." [In:] Zygmunt Szweykowski (ed.) *Rocznik literacki za rok 1933*. Warsaw: Instytut Literacki; 154–174. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns2v> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Elzenberg, Henryk (1936) "Literatura francuska." [In:] Zofia Szmydtowa (ed.) *Rocznik Literacki za rok 1936*. Warsaw: Instytut Literacki; 120–132. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns22> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Gołęb, Jan (1945) "Lista strat." [In:] Jan Hozer (ed.) *Przegląd lekarski*, 1 from July 1, 1945. Cracow: Krakowskie Towarzystwo Lekarskie; 4. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8x> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Kaliszewski, Stanisław, Andrzej Mikułowski, Alfred Jesionowski (1935) "Recenzje książek." [In:] *Prosto z Mostu: tygodnik literacko-artystyczny*, 51 from December 8, 1935. Warsaw: Zakłady Drukarskie F. Wyszyński i S-ka; 5. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/tcn81m8q> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Schultz, Bruno (1937) "‘Czarne anioły’ Mauriaca." [In:] Mieczysław Grydzewski (ed.) *Wiadomości literackie*, 19(705) from May 2, 1937. Warsaw: Grydzewski, Borman; 4. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns8w> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

Tyszkowa, Wanda (1934) "Literatura francuska." [In:] Zofia Szmydtowa (ed.) *Rocznik Literacki za rok 1934*. Warsaw: Instytut Literacki; 149–161. [At:] <https://tiny.pl/dns2k> (date of access: September 6, 2024).

## Archives

(1978) *Fine Jewelry To Be Sold By Auction Tuesday, December 12, 1978 at 1:30 p.m.* New York: Phillips (Exhibition Catalogue).

"1940 United States Federal Census." [In:] Population Schedule for Kings County, New York, Enumeration District: 24–958; 61A. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

"1950 United States Federal Census." [In:] Population Schedule for Wayne County, Michigan, Enumeration District: 85–17(3); 3. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

"Application for a passport, form for a naturalised citizen: Marcel Atlas", submitted in Ohio and admitted on March 26, 1920, by the Department of State. Retrieved from NARA.

"Application for a passport, form for a naturalised citizen: Marcel Atlas", submitted in New York and admitted on March 31, 1924, by the Department of State. Retrieved from NARA.

"List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigrant Inspector at Port of Arrival, No. 5", containing passengers sailing from Southampton on October 14, 1939 and arriving at the Port of New York on October 24, 1939, aboard the S.S. Georgic. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

"List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigrant Inspector at Port of Arrival, No. 4", containing passengers sailing from Gdynia on July 23, 1939 and arriving at the Port of New York on August 2, 1939, aboard the S.S. Batory. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

“New York Passenger Lists, No. 3”, containing passengers sailing from Le Havre on October 7, 1937 and arriving at the Port of New York on October 14, 1937, aboard the S.S. Washington. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

129

“New York Passenger Lists, No. 3”, containing passengers sailing from Cannes on August 3, 1950 and arriving at the Port of New York on August 15, 1950, aboard the S.S. Saturnia. Retrieved from *MyHeritage*.

“Passport Records: Heller Helena, father’s name: Wilhelm, date of birth: 28-02-1909” [Akta paszportowe: Heller Helena, imię ojca: Wilhelm, data urodzenia: 28-02-1909] [In:] *Ministry of Public Security in Warsaw [1944], 1945–1954* [Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Warszawie [1944], 1945–1954]. Warsaw: Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance; Reference no: IPN BU 1540/1707.

Copies of certificates of completion and certificates of departure 1929/30–1930/31 [Kopie absolutoriów i świadectw odejścia 1929/30-1930/31]. Cracow: Jagiellonian University Archives; Reference no: S II 649.

Helena Hellerówna’s “Registration Cards” [Karty wpisowe] for the Jagiellonian University. [In:] *Student Catalogues [Katalogi studentów]*. Cracow: Jagiellonian University Archives; Reference no: WF II 386, WF II 390, WF II 394, WF II 397, WF II 399, WF II 406.

*The Book of the Deceased* for the year 1942 from the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Martin in Lelów, held by the parish itself.

Weissowa Irena ‘Aneri’ (1888–1981) Unpublished memoirs kept in the Weiss family archive. Provided by Zofia Weiss from the Foundation of the Wojciech Weiss Museum.

*Wykazy Żydów przebywających w obozach*. Wałbrzych: Gross-Rosen Museum in Rogoźnica; Reference no. 124/93/MF.

## Webography

*Ancestry*, <https://www.ancestry.com/> (date of access August 1, 2024).

*Association of Cracowians in Israel*, <https://www.cracow.org.il/pl/elementor-2910/> (date of access: September 15, 2024).

*Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Geneteka*, <http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Google News Archive*, <https://news.google.com/newspapers/> (date of access July 15, 2024).

Hirschberg, Dan (August 2, 2023 [date of last modification]) *Jewish Krakow genealogical documents*, <https://ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakow/Families/Sessel.html> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Institute of National Remembrance* [Instytut Pamięci Narodowej], <https://www.straty.pl/index.html> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Jagiellońska Biblioteka Cyfrowa*, <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl> (date of access: September 1, 2024).

*JRI-Poland*, <https://legacy.jri-poland.org/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

Kołodziejczyk, Ewa (2019–) “Hellerówna Helena.” [In:] *Słownik Tłumaczy*. <https://slownik.nplp.pl/people/482> (date of access: December 10, 2024).

*Military Historical Centre* [Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne], <https://wbh.wp.mil.pl/pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

Minakowski, Marek J. (August 1, 2024 [date of last modification]) *Wielka Genealogia Minakowskiego*, <https://wielcy.pl/wgm/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*MyHeritage*, <https://www.myheritage.pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Polish National Library* [Biblioteka Narodowa], <https://katalogi.bn.org.pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, <https://www.psb.pan.krakow.pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

Sobesto, Joanna (2024) Podwójny margines. Praktyki i polityki przekładu literackiego w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym (PhD Thesis). Cracow: Jagiellonian University. [https://tiny.pl/9p44\\_mg1](https://tiny.pl/9p44_mg1) (date of access: June 6, 2025).

*Sztetl*, <https://sztetl.org.pl/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <https://www.ushmm.org/online/> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

*Yad Vashem*, <https://www.yadvashem.org/fr.html> (date of access: August 1, 2024).

Received:  
12.12.2024  
Reviewed:  
22.02.2025  
Accepted:  
02.07.2025