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Food Symbolism and Imagery in the Polish Translations of William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Abstract: The paper presents Polish equivalents of William Shakespeare's food vocabulary based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* The analysis entails all Polish versions of the comedy, both its nineteenth-century renditions and contemporary post-war readings. The research aims to demonstrate how the lexical choices of Polish authors affect the interpretation of the play; in particular, it seeks to answer the question of how the imagery and symbolism of Shakespeare's food vocabulary were altered in the process of translation.

Keywords: food, Shakespeare, translation, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Food studies is an area of research that has gained wide recognition. Food is an instrument through which writers and playwrights carry specific meanings. It is a marker of people's emotions, habits, fears and prejudices. Food is also strongly intertwined with culture. There is no better way to immerse in another culture than through its cuisine. As Joan Fitzpatrick writes: "Literary critics who write about food understand that the use of food in novels, plays, poems, and other works of literature can help explain the complex relationship between the body, subjectivity, and social structures regulating consumption" (Fitzpatrick 2012, 122).

Shakespeare's plays are replete with the names of food and drinks. The characters of the Bard's plays spend their time feasting, taking delight in various delicacies and conversing about their favourite specialities of English cuisine. The culinary language does not only reflect the eating habits of Shakespeare's times, but also conveys a deeper meaning that has a bearing on interpreting and understanding the literature of the English playwright. Food vocabulary depicts the characters; in particular, it accentuates their weaknesses and vices, as is the case with Falstaff and Slender, the protagonists of the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the historical chronicle *Henry IV*. Food is also an instrument of defaming the antagonists

and stereotyping and marginalising the communities perceived as inferior and alien. Last but not least, in Shakespeare's works, food features as an integrating factor that unites the people sharing religion, rites and nationality. The famous sentence uttered by Shylock, the Jewish usurer, one of the main dramatis personae of *The Merchant of Venice*, "I'll not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (1.3. 34-35), addressed to Bassanio and Antonio after signing the loan contract, is a marker of Jewish and Christian animosity that prevailed in sixteenth-century Venice, the venue of this dark comedy. Many scholarly works have examined various aspects of food in Shakespeare (e.g. Goldstein and Tigner 2016; Fitzpatrick 2010; 2016). The literature devoted to Shakespeare also abounds in cookery books that collect the recipes for the dishes that the playwright alludes to in his plays (Segan 2003). No attention, however, has so far been devoted to commenting upon translating food vocabulary in the Polish versions of Shakespeare's works, which is the concern of this research.

The paper fills the gap in multicultural Shakespeare studies by bringing to light the reception of the food lexicon in Polish versions of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597-1598). Due to space constraints, the analysis entails selected food references that carry a specific figurative meaning. It aims to establish how Polish translators approached the original food vocabulary and whether they managed to adhere to the hidden symbolism and imagery. In the nineteenth century, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was translated by such authors as Placyd Jankowski, who wrote under the pseudonym John of Dycalp (1842), Felicjan Faleński (1875), Józef Paszkowski (1877) and Leon Ulrich (1895). After the Second World War, the comedy was rendered by a new group of translators such as Krystyna Berwińska (1954), Maciej Słomczyński (1983) and Stanisław Barańczak (1998). In the course of the study, all the Polish texts have been consulted, which gives an overview of the changing views on translating food in Shakespeare's comedy.[1]

Before proceeding to the analysis of specific lexical items, let us ponder over the problems of translating food in literary texts. As Javier Franco Aixelá rightly states, cultural diversity is one of the biggest complexities of translation studies. The scholar distinguishes two approaches to translating cultural variance: conservation and naturalisation. Conservation is utilised when a translator reproduces the cultural signs into the target text. Naturalisation is defined as a "transformation of the other into a cultural replica" (Aixelá 1996, 54). Another notion that should be taken into consideration is the concept of "translatability". Translatability depends on the symmetry between two cultures and languages. When two cultures are parallel, it is easier to achieve equivalence. In the case of translating Shakespeare's food vocabulary into Polish, it is apparent that not only two diverse cultures are compared, but also different time frames are at stake. As it is demonstrated below, specific symbolism of Shakespeare's food lexicon disappeared in the contemporary language. What is more, many food items mentioned by Shakespeare are alien to the Polish culinary tradition. To alleviate the challenge of translating culture, scholars

propose various techniques. One of the most well-known and often quoted catalogues of translation tools is offered by Peter Newmark. The list of his techniques includes transference, naturalisation, cultural, functional and descriptive equivalent, synonymy, modulation, compensation, paraphrase and glosses (Newmark 1988, 81–93). Javier Franco Aixela lists many strategies that are commonly used when transferring the meaning of culture-specific items from one language into another. Within the conservation approach, he mentions the following techniques: repetition, orthographic adaptation in the form of transcription and transliteration, linguistic translation, and extra or intertextual gloss. The second group of strategies is labelled as a substitution and entails such procedures as synonyms, limited or absolute universalisation, naturalisation, deletion and autonomous creation. The choice of the strategy or strategies depends on many factors, mainly the target audience's expectations (Aixelá 1996, 52–78). It is of interest to examine what approaches and strategies dominate in the Polish versions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and how they affect the interpretation of the play by the Polish audience. The following examples illustrate not only various categories of food meaning but also display the Polish translators' methods of handling culture-specific items.

An important function of food in Shakespeare's play is to denote specific personality traits or habits of the main protagonists. One of the characters that is frequently characterised by means of food is Falstaff. In Act 2, Scene 1, Pistol decides to reveal Falstaff's insincere advances toward the two titular wives of Windsor, Margaret and Alice. He approaches Ford, who, initially, does not give credit to such revelations. Ford is convinced that his wife's beauty has faded, and she is no longer capable of triggering another man's attraction. Then Pistol explains that Falstaff prefers women of various ages and social statuses. In Pistol's words: "He loves the gallimaufry" (2.1.107).[2] In contemporary English, *gallimaufry* denotes a medley of different things. It also describes a dish consisting of various ingredients, mostly leftovers, mixed together (Fitzpatrick 2011, 185).

Two Polish translators, Berwińska and Słomczyński, failed to reflect on the double meaning of the English word. Both translators paraphrased the original fragment. Berwińska's Pistol simply says: "On kocha wszystkie" ['He loves all women'] (Szekspir 1954, 53). Słomczyński's equivalent phrase is "gustuje w rozmaitości" ['He likes variety'] (Shakespeare 1983, 49). Ulrich altered the original. His Pistol warns Ford that Falstaff "chce mu podebrać miodu" ['he desires to pick up his honey'] (Shakespeare 1895, 33). Falstaff's fondness for all women is not accentuated in this Polish rewriting, as it is in Shakespeare's text. Rather, Ulrich's comedy reads that Falstaff has the intention to steal something sweet and valuable from Ford. *Miód* (honey), a sweet syrup produced by bees from the nectar of flowers, is associated with something precious (Arct 1916, 769). In the context of the play, *miód* refers to Ford's wife. In the texts authored by Dycalp, Paszkowski and Barańczak, the cultural equivalent of *gallimaufry* is *bigos* (stew). Dycalp's text reads: "Przysmak hultajów bigos" ['*Bigos* is the favourite snack of rogues']

(Szekspir 1842, 59). Paszkowski rendered the original into "Lubi miłosny bigos" ['He likes *miłosny bigos*'] (Shakespeare 1877, 117). Barańczak's version goes as follows: "Hultajski bigos *z* przeróżnych składników to ulubione jego danie" ['His favouirte dish is *hultajski bigos* made from various ingredients'] (Shakespeare 1998, 49). *Bigos* is a traditional Polish dish prepared from cabbage and meat. It consists of a mixture of ingredients such as cabbage and sauerkraut, herbs, mushrooms, spices, prunes, and sometimes wine. Polish *bigos* neatly corresponds to the English gallimaufry. A dish with a blend of ingredients, both sour, sweet and spicy, as well as meat and vegetables, reflects Falstaff's inclination to seduce women of various characters, appearances and classes. Dycalp's rewriting implies that *bigos* is the favourite food of rogues, to which group Falstaff obviously belongs. Paszkowski created a new phrase *miłosny bigos* (love stew) thus stressing Falstaff's love endeavours. Some resemblance to Dycalp's text can be found in Barańczak's version. Barańczak added the adjective *hultajski*, which means 'roguish'. The name *hultajski bigos* (roguish stew) signifies food made of chopped meat and lard (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1964, 518). As Gloger explains, it takes its name from *hultajstwo* (roguery), the lifestyle based on robbery (Gloger 1900, 273). Barańczak's choice is an excellent metaphor for Falstaff. It not only emphasises this character's pursuit of female attention but also his roguish habits and propensity to crime.

In Shakespeare's play, food is a marker of insults. Food is used by the main characters to offend others. In Act 1, Scene 1, John Falstaff and his companions, Bardolph, Pistol and Nim, argue with Robert Shallow, Justice of the Peace and his cousin, Abraham Slender. The subject of the dispute are the accusations levied against Falstaff and his band. Shallow informs Falstaff that he will bring legal action against him in *The Star Chamber* by charging him with battery and illegal hunting. Slender also lodges complaints against Falstaff and his men, accusing them of stealing money. Hearing this, Bardolph calls Slender *Banbury cheese*: "You Banbury cheese!" (1.1. 117). Pistol reacts to the insult by calling Bardolph: "How now, Mephostophilus?" (1.1.119). *Banbury cheese* is a name for the cheese made from cow's milk in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Its characteristic feature is its oval shape and dark colour. *Banbury cheese* excellently matches Slender, a small, thin, and weak man. Scholars also propose another interpretation of *Banbury cheese*. In the Renaissance, Banbury was a hub of the Puritan community, and relatedly the phrase *Banbury man* denoted a Puritan. Reading Shakespeare's comedy in this light, Bardolph is calling Slender a Puritan (Fitzpatrick 2011, 26-27; Brewer 2014, 62; Vienne-Guerrin 2016, 26).

Most Polish translators rendered *Banbury cheese* directly into *banburski ser* (Banbury cheese). Ulrich's texts reads: "A ty banburski serze!" ['You Banbury cheese!'] (Shakespeare 1895, 16). Barańczak added the adjective *chudy* (thin), which emphasises Slender's small figure: "Ty chudy banburski serze!" ['You thin Banbury cheese!'] (Shakespeare 1998, 15). Słomczyński had a different idea about

translating the original. His proposal reads: "Ty dziurawy serze z Banbury!" ['You Banbury cheese with holes!'] (Shakespeare 1983, 15). Słomczyński amplified the English phrase by adding the word *dziurawy* (full of holes), thus suggesting that *Banbury cheese* has holes. The word *dziurawy* (scruffy) also means 'messy', 'sloppy' and 'untidy'. In this sense, Słomczyński's Bardolph insinuates that Slender has many deficiencies. Although faithful to Shakespeare's play, the phrase *banburski ser* is devoid of the cultural associations that the original carries. To fully comprehend Bardolph's slander, the Polish audience has to first decipher the cultural allusions hidden in the Bard's comedy. Paszkowski resigned from a literal equivalent. He replaced the original with the phrase "Ty chudy owczy serze!" ['You thin goat cheese!'] (Shakespeare 1877, 106). The adjective *chudy* (thin) corresponds to the appearance of Slender. The other part of the phrase created by Paszkowski, *owczy serze*, denotes goat's cheese, which does not tally with the original meaning. Berwińska's text stands out when compared to other Polish renditions. Her Bardolph offends Slender by the following invective: "Ty portugalski śledziu" ['You Portuguese herring'] (Szekspir 1954, 20). The Polish female translator purged the text from the associations with *Banbury cheese*. In Polish, *śledź* (herring) denotes various things. In the first place, *śledź* is the name for a fish commonly eaten by Poles, especially in the past and during Berwińska's times. In the inter-war period, *śledź* was a popular appetiser consumed with vodka before the main dish. *Śledź* (commoner), however, was also an offensive word used to address a person of low status, inferior position and class. The meaning of this word is reflected in the phrase "z drogi śledzie" ordering commoners to step aside to give way to a prominent person to pass. The M. Arct dictionary of 1916 notes another meaning of *śledź*, which overlaps with the portrayal of Slender by Shakespeare. According to this source, *śledź* implies a thin, impoverished and pale person, which is the exact depiction of Slender (Arct 1916, 8). Berwińska resigned from the phrase *banburski ser* preferred by her male predecessors and domesticated the original text so that it sounded less obscure to the Polish audiences. Her substitute characterises Slender as a slim man of inferior rank. It cannot be forgotten that she translated the text in 1954. For contemporary recipients, the analogy between *śledź* and slenderness may not be clear. If one is to accept the hypothesis of the affiliation between Slender and puritanism, Berwińska's choice is not entirely apt. In Poland, herring was associated with Catholicism, the origin being the custom of eating fish by Catholics on Friday. In the Warsaw dialect, for example, *śledź* was a nickname for a Catholic person (Wieczorkiewicz 1968, 98). It is worth commenting on the adjective *portugalski* (Portuguese), which comes before the word *śledź*. It might allude to the Jewish community of Portuguese origin that lived in England in the sixteenth century. Some of the Jews of Portuguese descent even served at the court of the Queen, the most famous example being Roderigo Lopez (1525–1594), a physician of the monarch executed for treason in 1594 (Seton-Rogers 2018, 6–12). Berwińska was probably inspired by Slender's first name,

which is Abraham. Before proceeding to another translator, it is worth indicating that in the Renaissance, herring had a sexual meaning (Fitzpatrick 2011, 213; Limon 2018, 247).

Dycalp, for example, translated Shakespeare's passage differently: "Co? pieczone jaje!" ['What? baked eggs!'] (Szekspir 1842, 16). To understand the meaning of Dycalp's translation, we have to refer to the old definition of the word *jaje* (eggs). Apart from its basic meaning of eggs, this noun also denotes something of low value (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1859, 227-228). Pistol compares Slender to Mephistofel, which in Polish finds the following equivalents: *Mefistofilu (*Shakespeare 1983, 15), *Mefistofelesie* (Szekspir 1954, 20), *Mefistofelu* (Szekspir 1842, 17), *Mefostofilu* (Shakespeare 1895, 16; Shakespeare 1877, 106). Only Barańczak's version deviates from the other texts: "Jak śmiesz, diaboliczny nabiale?" ['How dare you, you devilish dairy product'] (Shakespeare 1998, 16). Here, the translator adheres to the theme of food and retains Slender's link with cheese.

Nim joins the wrangle by retorting: "Slice, I say. *Pauca*, *pauca*. Slice, that's my humour" (1.1.121). It is not hard to see the analogy between Nim's words and *Banbury cheese*. Nim wants to mutilate Slender. The sense of the original was altered in the eldest Polish texts. Paszkowski rendered the English text thus: "Cicho, mówię! *Pałka wełba*! To sens moralny mojego humoru" ['Silence! *Pałka wełba*! That's the sense of my humour'] (Shakespeare 1877, 106). The phrase *pałka wełba* (blow to the head) has no associations with cutting cheese. It denotes giving a blow to Slender's head. There is no allusion to Banbury cheese in Ulrich's text either: "Porąbać go! pauca, pauca! porąbać, to moja reguła" ['Chop him! pauca, pauca!, this is my rule'] (Shakespeare 1895, 16). This translator used the word *porąbać*, which means 'to chop'. Dycalp purified Shakespeare's comedy from the food symbolism. He modified the play by placing it in a different cultural setting. His version reads: "Fryc! – powiedziałem pauca, pauca! To mój szał moja słabość!" ['Fryc!- pauca, pauca, I said! That is my frenzy, my weakness!'] (Szekspir 1842, 17). *Fryc* is an offensive word for a German person. In the second sense, it means a layman (Arct 1916, 345). A characteristic feature of Dycalp's text is making references to the German language and culture, which, as Alicja Kosim has already remarked, echoes the nineteenth-century antagonisms between Poles and Germans (Kosim 2018, 141–154). The post-war translations also show many deviations from the original. Słomczyński chose the equivalent *rozpłatać* (to cut): "Rozpłatać go, powiadam! *Pauca*, *pauca*, rozpłatać; taki mam humor!" ['Cut him, I say! *Pauca*, *pauca*, cut him; that is my humour!'] (Shakespeare 1983, 15). *Rozpłatać* means 'to cut into smaller parts'. The verb is not usually used in reference to cheese. Berwińska continues the associations with herring: "Opraw go, powiadam! pauca, pauca! Opraw go! Mam apetyt na śledzia" ['Trim him, I say! pauca, pauca! I feel like having some herring'] (Szekspir 1954, 20). Only Barańczak preserved the analogy between *slice* and *Banbury cheese* by using the expression *pokroić w plasterki* (to cut into pieces): "Pokroić go w plasterki, powiadam! Tnij bez

gadania – taki mój temperament"['Cut him into pieces, I say! Cut him – that is my humour'] (Shakespeare 1998, 16).

Before proceeding to another instance of food vocabulary in Shakespeare's comedy and its Polish renderings, it is necessary to comment on the word *humour* that comes from Nim's mouth. The noun refers to the theory of there being four humours, which dominated sixteenth-century medicine. Humoralism, as it is sometimes called, proclaimed that the bodily fluids, specifically blood, phlegm, black and yellow bile, triggered the development of a specific humour in a person. The prevalence of a particular fluid determined the person's temperament. Depending on the level of the fluid, people were described as choleric, sanguine, melancholic or phlegmatic. What is relevant for the present study is that these humours were conditioned by the person's diet. It was believed that certain foods and drinks could boost one of the temperaments. For instance, a patient afflicted with choleric moods was advised to abstain from hot and spicy foods, which, it was believed, increased the symptoms of his or her condition (Jouanna 2012, 335–360).

It is very difficult to preserve the allusions to the medical knowledge of Shakespeare's epoch in translation. An overview of all the Polish texts shows that only Barańczak managed to reproduce the original meaning. The other translators departed from Shakespeare's message. The literal equivalent of *humour* in the Polish language is the similarly sounding *humor*, which explains why some translators chose this substitute. *Humor* features in Paszkowski's and Słomczyński's versions. *Humor* conceptualises something amusing. It also stands for a temporary mood. Ulrich's phrase "taka moja reguła" ['such is my method/way of acting'] implies that recurse to violence is Nim's tactic to deter the opponent. The allusion to the theory of four humours, however, is absent in Berwińska's rendering. Barańczak's *temperament*, which denotes a person's emotional character that takes outer manifestations, is most fitting in this context.

In Act 2, Scene 2, Ford visits Falstaff in the disguise of Brook. Concealing his identity, Ford encourages Falstaff to seduce Alice. During the conversation, the name of Ford is mentioned. Falstaff screams: "Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue!" (2.2. 263). Here, again we can see the food-related invective. *Salt-butter* was a type of butter of inferior value imported from Flanders. As compared with domestic butter, salt-butter was of poorer taste and quality. It was also cheaper than the English product (Fitzpatrick 2011, 63–65). By calling Ford *salt-butter*, Falstaff asserts that his interlocutor is a man of lower rank. Is this portrayal reconstructed in the Polish texts? Butter is only mentioned by Ulrich, Słomczyński and Barańczak. In the translations by Ulrich and Barańczak, Ford is depicted as salt butter, which resembles the original: "Na szubienicę z tym urwiszem, z tą osełką solonego masła!" ['Send this rogue to the gallows, this salt butter'] (Shakespeare 1895, 44) / "A niech go powieszą, tego prostaka, tą osełkę solonego masła!"['Hang him, this simple man, salt butter'] (Shakespeare 1998, 69). In Ulrich's text, we can find an archaic word, *urwisz*, the equivalent of which in English is *rogue*. Słomczyński altered the

original. In his version, Ford is presented as a man who has a habit of eating salt-butter: "Niech go powieszą, prostackiego, żrącego solone masło chłystka!" ['Hang him, a simple rogue eating salt butter'] (Shakespeare 1983, 69). Dycalp replaced the original with the equivalent *szperka mieszczańska* (bourgeois pork lard): "A niech go tam spotka szubienica, tę szperkę mieszczańską!" ['Hang him, this *szperka mieszczańska*!'] (Szekspir 1842, 85). *Szperka* is an archaic word that denotes fried pork lard. Apart from its culinary sense, *szperka* also depicts a miser (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1859, 607; Arct 1916, 879). Based on this definition, we can conclude that Dycalp's Ford characterises Falstaff as a man who is mean with his money rather than of lower social standing. The adjective *mieszczańska* (bourgeois) denotes one of the social classes in Poland. By choosing the word *mieszczańska,* Dycalp probably wished to underline Ford's affiliation with Windsor's inhabitants. Paszkowski deleted the associations of Ford with butter and proposed a different interpretation of this passage: "Kat mi tam po tym biednym, rogatym dudku!" ['Hang this poor hoopoe!'] (Shakespeare 1877, 122). *Rogaty* (horned) describes a man whose wife has committed adultery. In colloquial language, *dudek* (hoopoe) is a fool, a person who is easily deceived by others (Arct 1916, 238). In other words, Paszkowski's Falstaff calls Ford a silly man who does not notice that his wife, Alice, has a secret liaison with another man. Falstaff in Berwińska's version screams: "Na szubienicę z nim! Biedne, rogate bydlę!"['Hang him! Poor horned beast!'] (Szekspir 1954, 73). *Bydlę* (beast) does not only denote a male bovine but is also an offensive label for a person who is immoral, cruel and good for nothing that deserves contempt and condemnation. Its related word *bydlęcić się* (to degenerate) stands for moral degeneration (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1964, 758-759). Berwińska chose the most ominous term to depict Ford. Her translation of the passage specifies that, in the eyes of Falstaff, Ford is a rascal.

Interestingly, many food items are loaded with sexual undertones. In the Renaissance, food was a designator of various social classes and professions. One such example is *stewed prunes*. Apart from its culinary meaning, this fruit designated prostitutes and brothels, in which sex services were offered for money (Crystal and Crystal 2002, 421; Limon 2018, 308). The association of sweet prunes with illicit sex came from the conviction that this snack was a panacea for venereal diseases. Thought of as an effective antidote for sexually transmitted infections, stewed prunes were served in English bawdy houses (Fitzpatrick 2011, 344-345; 2016, 30; Williams 1997, 248-249). A reflection of the sexual meaning of this food can be found in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In Act 1, Scene 1, we witness the conversation between Anne Page and Slender. Anne invites Slender to the house of her father for dinner. The man refuses, explaining that the smell of meat brings back unpleasant memories. Slender tells her how once he became embroiled in a duel, the reason being stewed prunes. Reading between the lines, we surmise that the real cause of the conflict between the contestants was a lady who worked in a house of ill repute. It is very hard to transpose this lewd allusion into another

language. To understand the meaning hidden behind *stewed prunes*, the audience has to be familiar with the social context of sixteenth-century England.

Most Polish translators rendered *stewed prunes* literally. In the oldest texts by Dycalp and Ulrich, the equivalent of *stewed prunes* is "półmisek gotowanych śliwek" ['a plate of cooked prunes'] (Szekspir 1842, 28; Shakespeare 1895, 20). In Paszkowski's rendition, Slender talks about "porcyi duszonych śliwek" ['portion of stewed prunes'] (Shakespeare 1877, 110). Słomczyński rendered the original in a similar manner to his predecessors as "półmisek smażonych śliwek" ['a plate of stewed prunes'] (Shakespeare 1983, 23). Stewing is a process of long, slow cooking. Its Polish equivalent is *dusić*, as was indicated by Paszkowski. Other translators substituted the English verb with such words as *gotowany* (cooked) and *smażony* (fried). Barańczak coined the phrase "misce kompotu z suszonych śliwek" ['a plate of boiled prunes'] (Shakespeare 1998, 24). He chose the name *kompot* (fruit compote), a popular Polish drink made of seasonal fruit. Berwińska as the only translator attempted to convey the sexual undertones of the food that the original contains. Her text informs us that Slender fought with another man about "jedną … kurczę pieczone" ['one… baked chicken'] (Szekspir 1954, 28). The feminine form *jedną* implies that the argument concerned a woman.

Another sexually-charged scene can be found in Act 4 of the play. In Scene 1, Mistress Quickly observes the Latin lesson taught by Sir Hugh Evans (4.1). The teacher examines his pupil, the Pages' son, William, on his knowledge of Latin grammar. The Latin words discussed by the schoolmaster connote sexual intercourse and male body parts. One of them is *caret*, which Mistress Quickly takes for *carrot*. Due to its phallic shape, a carrot was associated with a penis (Williams 1997, 65; Kiernan 2006, 51; Limon 2018, 170). Evans speaks first: "Remember, William. Focative is caret". Mistress Quickly responds: "And that's a good root" (4.1. 48-49). It is worth adding that *root*, similarly to *carrot*, stood for the male organ (Williams 1997, 262; Limon 2018, 310). All Polish translators erased the sexual subtext of this "wonderfully obscene mock-lesson in Latin grammar", as Kiernan has called it (2006, 49). In the Polish versions, the sexual meaning of the vegetable is not pronounced. Barańczak and Słomczyński omitted the reference to carrot in their texts. The other Polish translators used the pair *caret-kareta* (carriage), which completely changes the original meaning. *Kareta* (carriage) is the name of an old four-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicle that was the primary means of transport among the Polish aristocracy. It does not connote any sexual allusions as can be decoded in the original.

One of the functions that food plays in Shakespeare's literary masterpieces, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* included, is to denote mockery. The characters of Shakespeare's plays very often use food to express the prevailing superstitions and clichés concerning specific nations. In Act 2, Scene 2 of the play, Ford makes a bold statement that expresses female unfaithfulness: "I will rather trust a Fleming with

my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself" (2.2. 284-289). The passage specifies the patriarchal family pattern of the Elizabethan society. As Rosemary Kegl has observed, the scene in question indicates Ford's fear that "Alice Ford's adultery would threaten his control over her sexuality, over his wealth, and most unendurably, over his good name" (Kegl 1994, 253). Alongside the infamous opinion about women, specifically Ford's wife, the quotation mirrors the stereotypical attitudes towards the Flemish, Welsh and Irish that plagued English society. In the Elizabethan epoch, the Flemish were considered butter-lovers. The connection between the Flemish and butter did not only originate from their supposed indulgence in butter but also from their recognised position as producers and importers of dairy products. The association of the Welsh with cheese stemmed from their image as a barbaric and poor minority leading simple pastoral lifestyles. It was generally considered that the Welshman's staple diet was made up of dairy products, hence so many allusions to cheese in Shakespeare's work (Fitzpatrick 2014, 85-86; Snyder 1920, 161-162, 163). It must be noted that Shakespeare's play contains many scenes illustrating the supposed addiction of the Welsh to cheese. Two examples will suffice. Sir Hugh Evans hurries to supper at Mr. Page's house which consists of "pippins and cheese" (1.2). Falstaff worries that the Welsh pastor will change him into cheese in another part of the comedy (5.5). The Irish are depicted by Shakespeare as people drinking *aqua vitae,* which implies alleged drunkenness.

A survey of all available Polish translations indicates no problems with rendering *butter* and *cheese* into the target language. The Polish texts feature direct equivalents of the English words, which are *masło* (butter) and *ser* (cheese) respectively. However, there appear different substitutes for *aqua vitae*. In Shakespeare's times, *aqua vitae*, known also as the water of life due to its medicinal properties, was strong alcohol made by distilling wine or ale (Fitzpatrick 2010, 20–21; Rasmussen 2014, 91). In the oldest Polish texts by Dycalp and Ulrich, this beverage was rendered into *wódka* (vodka) (Szekspir 1842, 87; Shakespeare 1895, 45). Paszkowski substituted the name of the English alcoholic drink with the phrase *skład wódczany* (alcoholic beverages) (Shakespeare 1877, 123), which denotes a collection of alcoholic beverages. This choice does not overlap with the English *aqua vitae*. Paszkowski replaced the concrete name of alcohol with a term that denotes alcoholic drinks in general. Słomczyński, Berwińska and Barańczak, contrary to their nineteenth-century predecessors, used the Polish word *okowita* (Shakespeare 1983, 70; Szekspir 1954, 74; Shakespeare 1998, 70). The name *okowita* (*akwawita*) derives from the Latin *aqua-vitae.* It refers to an old Polish homemade alcohol produced from potatoes and barley (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1859, 536; Pacuła 2017, 126-127). Of all the Polish proposals, *okowita* is the most convincing word. It relates to the English *aqua vitae* etymologically and semantically. It also accentuates Ford's liking for strong alcohol.

Of all the play's characters that are subject to constant mockery and defamation,

Falstaff deserves special attention. The culinary language that Shakespeare adopted to portray Falstaff marks out this protagonist's overweight. As Henry Buchwald and Mary E. Knatterud have convincingly demonstrated, Falstaff suffers from morbid obesity, the illness that manifests itself in such symptoms as, among other things, shortness of breath, flatulence, excessive perspiration, fatigue, and depression (Buchwald and Knatterud 2000, 402–408). As a way of illustrating Falstaff's heavy weight, we can quote the passage in which Mistress Page, as a reaction to the love letter sent to her by Falstaff, states: "His guts are made of puddings" (2.1.29). *Pudding* has a variety of meanings in English. It usually stands for a type of desert, but it also refers to animal entrails mixed with various ingredients, as in black pudding (Fitzpatrick 2011, 345-346; Vienne-Guerrin 2016, 333). Ben and David Crystal's dictionary defines *pudding* as 'dumpling', 'pastry' or 'stuffing' (Crystal and Crystal 2002, 352). Another meaning of this dish listed in the dictionaries is 'human entrails' or 'big, fat person' (Fitzpatrick 2011, 345). It is also important to add that, in colloquial language, pudding designates sexual arousal and intercourse or its result, as some being in the pudding club – or pregnant (Vienne-Guerrin 2016: 334). The manifold meaning of *pudding* disappears in all Polish versions. The nineteenth-century Polish texts feature a literal equivalent of the English word, which is *pudyng*. Ulrich reduced the original into "brzuch jego ulepiony z pudyngu" ['his belly is made from *pudyng*'] (Shakespeare 1895, 30). Similarly, Dycalp rendered pudding into *puddyng*: "ta ładowna waliza stworzoną jest tylko do puddyngów!" ['this big belly is made only for *puddyng*!'] (Szekspir 1842, 53). *Waliza* (large suitcase) is a colloquial name for a big belly (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1861, 1806). Paszkowski departed from the sense of the English text. His Mistress Page speaks about Falstaff's heart, not his guts: "jego serce jest z puddyngu" ['his heart is made from pudding'] (Shakespeare 1877, 115). The contemporary Polish translators made an effort to find the equivalents that would correspond to the English cuisine. Słomczyński and Barańczak employed the word *flaki*. Barańczak rendered the original into: "bandzioch ma wypchany flakami" ['his bandzioch is filled with guts'] (Shakespeare 1998, 46). *Bandzioch* is a synonym for a big belly, which neatly depicts Falstaff's corpulence. Słomczyński's translation reads: "kiszki ma wypchane flakami" ['entrails is filled with guts'] (Shakespeare 1983, 45). Berwińska paraphrased the original into "on ma w brzuchu otchłań zamiast żołądka" ['he has space in his belly instead of a stomach'], emphasising Falstaff's appetite (Szekspir 1954, 49).

Falstaff's links with food are also portrayed in the final part of the play. Ford, Mistress Page and Page offend Falstaff using food imagery. Ford harangues Falstaff as follows: "What, a hodge-pudding? A bag of flax?" (5.5. 151). *Hodge-pudding* refers to stuffing made of various ingredients such as meat and vegetables (Fitzpatrick 2011, 215; Crystal and Crystal 2002, 223). The look of *hodge-pudding* embodies Falstaff's appearance. The Polish texts contain various equivalents. Dycalp's substitute for *hodge-pudding* is *puddyng*: "W taką górę puddyngu!" ['Into such a mass of

pudding!'] (Szekspir 1842, 200). Paszkowski chose the word *plumppuddyng*, a dish made from suet, flour and cream with dried fruits and spices, served traditionally at Christmas: "Taki plumppuddyng? taki wór konopiany" ['Such *plumpuddyng*? Such hempen sack'] (Shakespeare 1877, 152). Ulrich domesticated the text by choosing a dish from the Polish cuisine: "Co, do takiej lemieszki, takiego woru wełny?" ['Into such *lemieszka*, such a sack of wool?'] (Shakespeare 1895, 92). *Lemieszka*, known also as *prażucha*, *fusia,* is an old Polish dish prepared from boiled potatoes, flour and water, served with pork rinds (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1859, 618; Arct 1916, 659). Barańczak chose the words *baleron* (pork) and *wór konopi* (hempen sack): "Do takiego tłustego baleronu? Takiego wora konopi?" ['Into such fat pork? Such hempen sack?'] (Shakespeare 1998, 170). Although *baleron* has nothing in common with the English pudding, it exposes Falstaff's obesity. It is also an offensive word used to depict someone who is fat and ugly. Słomczyński rendered the original into: "Co? Tę kupę flaków? Ten wór konopi?" ['What? These entrails? This hempen sack?'] (Shakespeare 1983, 167). Berwińska's text reads: "Co, tę galaretę? Ten worek siana?" ['What? This jelly? This sack of hay?'] (Szekspir 1954, 166). In the first sense of the word, *galareta* (pork aspic) is a Polish dish prepared from different parts of the pig. To add colour and extra flavour to this food, cooked vegetables, such as carrots or beans, are added. *Galareta* also conceptualises cowardice and extreme fear that manifests itself in body shaking (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1964, 1021). Berwińska's choice amplifies the meaning of the original. This equivalent directs our attention to Falstaff's pusillanimity. Her choice of equivalent tallies with the portrayal of Falstaff in the comedy. Throughout the whole play, he proves to be a coward who regularly escapes any danger or confrontation.

Mistress Page adds: "A puffed man?" (5.5. 152). Barańczak chose the phrase *rozdęta dynia*: "Takiej rozdętej dyni?" ['Such a puffed pumpkin?'] (Shakespeare 1998, 170). *Dynia* (pumpkin) is commonly associated with a big belly and gluttony (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1964, 502-503). Barańczak's choice perfectly matches the outward appearance of Falstaff. Both Słomczyński and Ulrich used synonymic words *wzdęty* and *wydęty* (flatulent). "Tego wzdętego człowieka?" (Shakespeare 1983, 167) / "Wydętego człowieka?" (Shakespeare 1895, 92). *Wzdęty/wydęty* describes a medical condition of accumulating too much gas in the stomach and bowels, attributed to gluttony and abusing alcohol. One of the visible signs of flatulence in a person affected by this common ailment is a swollen belly. Słomczyński's and Ulrich's choices aptly characterise Falstaff. Both Polish texts stress Falstaff's insatiable appetite for food and indulgence in alcohol. Paszkowski and Berwińska selected the noun *purchawka*. In Paszkowski's version, Mistress Page asks: "Takie purchatkowate stworzenie?" ['Such a puff-shaped creature?'] (Shakespeare 1877, 152). Berwińska's equivalent resembles that of Ulrich's: "Tę purchawkę?" ['This puffball?'] (Szekspir 1954: 166). *Purchawka* (puffball) is a whitish mushroom of circular shape and swollen texture. In shape, the mushroom resembles Falstaff's figure. In the second sense of the word, which also applies to Falstaff, *purchawka*

depicts a person who is old, mean and grumpy (Arct 1916, 477). Linde's dictionary adds a medical sense of *purchawka*, which is 'ulcer' (*Słownik języka polskiego* 1859, 723). To put it simply, Falstaff is like a *purchawka* both by his external look and his personality. A yet different equivalent was proposed by Dycalp. This translator associated *puffed man* with *pierzyna*: "W taką pierzynę!" ['Into suchan eiderdown?'] (Szekspir 1842, 200). *Pierzyna*, an eiderdown in English, has a dense, feathery and puffy structure, which relates to Falstaff's belly. M. Arct's dictionary specifies that in the colloquial sense *pierzyna* is a token of laziness, heavy weight and lack of stamina. *Pierzyna* has also sexual undertones. Thus Dycalp directs his viewers' attention to Falstaff's fatness as well as his stealthy plans to seduce Margaret and Alice and deprive them of money.

As stated in the opening paragraph, food permeates Shakespeare's plays. The audience of his works can find multiple references to the names of food and drink. Food vocabulary is the catalyst of a specific meaning which has to be decoded in the process of translation. The above survey of selected excerpts of the Polish renditions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* shows that the translators employed various strategies to unveil the English culinary world to the Polish audience. The asymmetry between English and Polish cultures prompted the Polish translators to follow naturalisation. The prevailing techniques that the translators used were paraphrases, cultural, functional and descriptive equivalents. No usage of repetitions, deletions, glosses or footnotes can be noticed. Shakespeare's plays are intended for the stage rather than reading. The performativity of the play is a crucial factor that has to be taken into consideration when rendering the original meaning into the target language. Providing explanations in the form of endnotes or glossaries does not fit the purpose of the Bard's plays. Interestingly, various choices affect the portrayal of the main characters, the most illustrative example being Falstaff. The Polish translators painted different portraits of Falstaff. Some emphasised this character's fatness. Others highlighted other traits of the man, such as his avarice and lust. Shakespeare's food vocabulary is rich in double entendres. Many of the names of the food products evoke an additional sexual meaning such as *stewed prunes* and *puddyng*. Unfortunately, the sexual associations disappear in the Polish texts. Based on the research conducted in this paper, we can draw some general conclusions regarding translating food vocabulary in literary texts. As stated previously, rendering culture-specific items is one of the most challenging aspects of translation. It requires not only the knowledge of the social and cultural setting of the source text but also the application of specific strategies. When two different cultures do not overlap, as is the case with English and Polish cultures, the translator has to search for functional equivalents that will be as close as possible to the original meaning. The difficulty of translating Shakespeare's food lexicon is surmounted by the shift in the time period. The cultural realia of the sixteenth century that food carries are obscure to the contemporary audience. Some losses of meaning seem to be inevitable. In Maria Dembińska's book about food and drink in medieval

Poland, we read the following: "Food, like language, is a transmitter of culture, a set of signals that define a people in terms of time and place" (Dembińska 1999, 1). It is no wonder, then, that transmitting the cultural code into another language in the process of translation has proved so hard.

Notes

1 *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was also translated in parts by Felicjan Faleński in *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści*. F. Faleński, "Wesołe Mieszczki z Windsoru", *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści*, 1875, Vol. 16, 181–183.

2 All quotations from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are based on W. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. T.W. Craik, Oxford 2008.

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